



Achieve, an independent 501(c)3 organization that serves as the local education foundation for the School District of South Orange & Maplewood, strives to ensure that all students in our public schools receive a high-quality education that prepares them for the future. We do this by supporting our educators, addressing resource inequities, and inspiring innovation throughout the school district. Over the past two decades, the organization has raised more than \$4 million to promote academic excellence and equity in all our public schools.

The Achieve Foundation is known for its flagship [Volunteer Tutor Program](#), which provides free academic support to students at all grade levels across the District, and has inspired innovation by awarding over 1,000 educator grants for classroom projects, professional development opportunities, and district-wide initiatives.

Recently, the organization has worked to bridge the digital divide in our schools by piloting a Chromebook loaner program at Columbia High School and by funding the purchase of hotspots when schools were closed in the spring of 2020 due to Covid-19. Achieve also promotes hands-on learning through its free Maker Madness STEAM fair, and enhances music education through programs like the [Vanessa Pollock Music Initiative](#) and the [Ted Cole Clarinet Project](#).

To learn more, donate, or volunteer, visit <https://achievefoundation.org/>

[ACHIEVE VOLUNTEER TUTORS](#)

Achieve recruits and trains volunteers to provide extra academic support to district students, especially those whose families would not otherwise be able to afford private tutoring. This fall all sessions will continue to meet remotely, scheduled and supervised by staff. In addition to individual and small group sessions for all grade levels, Achieve is partnering with CHS Elementors to pair volunteer tutors with small “squads” of elementary students for both academic and social-emotional support.

Does your CHS student need help with their school work? Or are they looking for a community service opportunity? Contact Amy Forman (aforman@somsd.k12.nj.us).

[GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS FOR EDUCATORS](#)

Achieve’s grants committee has been pouring over grant applications this summer and will be awarding teacher grants in September for use this school year. Principals and supervisors will be invited to apply for Administrator Grants for department, grade or school-wide initiatives later this year. Achieve also offers Riecke Teaching Fellowships for summertime professional development programs for teachers. Over the years, some programs first funded by Achieve grants (such as Robotics) have served as pilots that were later adopted by the school district.

[DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP FUNDS](#)

Achieve has collaborated with SOMSD administration to provide seed money or fund special projects. In 2019, we donated more than \$12,000 to help pilot a Chromebook and hot spot loaner program at Columbia High School, and when school buildings closed in March, we partnered with the Parenting Center to fund the purchase of 100 hotspots to ensure connectivity for students during distance learning.

This fall we are partnering with the District and the South Mountain Y to raise scholarship funds to remove financial barriers so SOMSD students who are eligible for free & reduced lunch are able to participate in the Y’s ‘aftercare’ program during distance learning. This will provide the most at-risk students with a safe, active, structured learning environment that will set them up for success both in and out of the classroom.

✓ Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

More than 80% of Achieve’s annual budget goes toward programming. We receive grants to fund some initiatives, but the vast majority of financial support comes via donations from the community. Here are some of Achieve’s annual fundraising initiatives:

COMING SOON! THE INSTEAD 5K RACE – September 25-27!

Due to Covid and social distancing requirements, we won’t be able to gather and run the annual Newstead 5K together this September, but we can walk or run the **INstead 5K!** Choose your day, time and route anytime during the weekend of September 25-27. Select from one of several suggested race routes that pass by our beloved SOMA school buildings, or run right from your front door. Get your friends and family (even those who aren’t local) and sign up today! [Note: scholarships are available so don’t let the registration fee deter you.]

ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN AND HONOR ROLL

Achieve appeals to the community to contribute generously to sustain annual programs. Achieve’s Honor Roll donors pledge \$1,000 or more for a three-year period to enable us to undertake new initiatives.

DIRECT FUNDING OF GRANTS

Achieve allocates \$50,000-\$75,000 for educator grants each fall, but it’s not enough to cover all the worthy proposals received. The Foundation publishes a list of projects that are not fully funded so that community members can donate to fulfill specific requests for projects they wish to directly support.

NIGHTS OF 100 DINNERS

Let’s hope that by March, we’ll all be able to gather again as fun-loving, community-minded hosts invite their friends and neighbors to intimate house parties that benefit Achieve. Instead of bringing wine or dessert, guests make contributions to the Achieve Foundation. Learn more about hosting on behalf of Achieve by emailing 100dinner@achievefoundation.org.

HONOR YOUR TEACHER TRIBUTES

One way to thank teachers and other school staff members for their hard work is by ordering HYT tributes through Achieve. For a minimal donation per tribute, we will share your student’s personal message of gratitude any time of year.

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