



Facts & Accomplishments

- The Big Shoulders Fund, inspired by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, was founded by a group of business leaders in 1986 to provide support to Catholic Chicago inner-city schools. Since its inception, the Big Shoulders Fund has raised more than **\$175 million** and currently awards approximately \$11 to \$12 million annually in grants and scholarships.
- The Board of Directors of the Big Shoulders Fund is co-chaired by Mr. James J. O'Connor, retired Chairman & CEO of Commonwealth Edison, and John A. Canning, Jr., President of Madison Dearborn Partners. The full board is composed of over 150 men and women who are Chicago's corporate and civic leaders.

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS AND ACHIEVEMENT

- 93 schools in every neighborhood of Chicago.
 - 76 elementary
 - 17 secondary
- 62 Patron Schools –individuals, corporations, or foundations committed to these schools to provide \$300,000 in support, as well as to work with school leadership to build a long-term plan for viability.
- \$4.5 million in scholarships to over 4,500 students.
- More than 25,000 students.
- Invest more than \$1,000,000 each year in professional development and programmatic enhancements (early childhood, extended day, professional development, vision / hearing screening, and more)
- Provides more than \$260 million in taxpayer savings.
- Studies have shown the longer a student remains in a Big Shoulders Fund school, the greater the improvement they will show on standardized test.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- 80% of Big Shoulders school students are minorities (*39.4% Hispanic; 35.2% African-American; 17.6% White; 4.4% multi-racial; 3.3% Asian/Pacific Islander and 0.1% Native American*).
- 32% of Big Shoulders school students are not Catholic.
- 58% of Big Shoulders Fund students' live in families are at or below the poverty line, as calculated by the federally funded free and reduced lunch rate.
- 96% of Big Shoulders secondary school students graduate from high school. 87% of Big Shoulders students go on to higher education.
- 97% of Big Shoulders Fund elementary schools offer extended day programs.
- 98% of Big Shoulders elementary schools have kindergarten and 91% have preschools.
- The average class size in Big Shoulders Fund schools is fewer than 20 students.
- The elementary school student attendance rate is 97%. The high school student attendance rate is 95%.
- By the time a student is in the 7th grade at a Big Shoulders Fund school, they are scoring 10 points higher than the national average on Social Studies and 18 points higher on Language Arts Terra Nova tests.