



TEACHROCK

2025

Annual Report



Our Journey

At TeachRock, music is more than a soundtrack. It's a powerful lens through which students can understand the world.

Founded by Stevie Van Zandt with support from Bono, Jackson Browne, Martin Scorsese, and Bruce Springsteen, TeachRock started to keep music and the arts in school systems and help teachers reach a generation with the internet in their pockets.

For over ten years, with lessons designed by educators and artists, we have provided free, standards-aligned resources so that teachers, students, and families have the resources they need to succeed.

We are on a mission to help students find meaning and purpose by bringing core subjects to life through music and culture, and to help teachers connect with students in new and engaging ways. From exploring the impact of The Beatles to learning Beyoncé's influences, our curriculum covers Kindergarten through AP History. We offer these lesson plans at no cost to encourage deeper learning

by bridging student interests and academic goals.

We don't do this work alone. Our partners include the Library of Congress, Connecticut State Department of Education, school districts, including NYC Public Schools and the Los Angeles Unified School District and teachers in all fifty states.

When we use music to connect lessons to real life, we do more than teach history. We spark curiosity and help students learn to think for themselves.

To learn more about us, what we do, and why we do it, visit teachrock.org.

Photo Credit: Rob DeMartin

From Our Founder



Stevie here.

For the past several tours, I’ve been doing what I always do between shows — visiting TeachRock schools. Red-state schools. Blue-state schools. Urban, suburban, rural.

And I always see the same thing.

Passionate, hardworking teachers whose single purpose is preparing their kids for meaningful and successful lives. That’s it. No agenda. No politics. Just educators who have decided to show up — every day — for kids who need them.

Those teachers are fighting a hard battle. Against indifference. Against a system that underfunds and undervalues them. Against a culture that has made it harder than ever to hold a young person’s attention. TeachRock exists to help those teachers win that battle.

If you’re reading this, you are likely one of the thousands of people who have helped. Together, we’ve put free, research-backed curricula in teachers’ hands that makes history, science, and language arts come alive through music in ways that make kids want to be in the classroom. We’ve reached more than 1 million students so far. But there are tens of millions more who deserve that same chance.

I’ve stood in classrooms all over the country. The politics of the towns might look different. But the dedication — the belief that these kids matter — is exactly the same everywhere.

Unity is possible. I see it in schools every day. Let’s make it happen together.

In Solidarity,

Our 2025 in Review

As we look back on 2025, we’re excited to share the moments that made this year special for our TeachRock community.

Amplifying Jewish Heritage Curriculum

TeachRock launched Amplifying Jewish Heritage, a curriculum that brings the important cultural contributions of Jewish Americans in art, industry, and society into the national K-12 curriculum. Through the lessons in this curriculum, students dive into the journeys, triumphs, and struggles of Jewish artists, innovators, and leaders whose stories have shaped American culture.

A People’s Playlist: U.S. History with Music as a Primary Source

TeachRock published 46 lessons featuring hundreds of primary sources from the Library of Congress, accompanied by analysis guides and handouts. Through these materials, students explored historical events more deeply and developed their critical analysis skills by linking music to important moments in U.S. history.

Candid Platinum Score

TeachRock earned Platinum transparency status with Candid, the highest level of recognition for nonprofit accountability. A Platinum seal indicates that a nonprofit

shares comprehensive, up-to-date data on its goals, strategies, and measurable impact. It is awarded to less than 1% of U.S. nonprofits, signifying exceptional commitment to accountability.

Georgia Council for Economic Education

TeachRock and the Georgia Council for Economic Education partnered on four workshops to expand access to our work across the South. The first pair of workshops occurred on October 6 and 7 and supported history and economics teachers in Gwinnett and Cobb counties in Georgia. The latter pair of workshops occurred on November 12 and 13 in Tusculum, AL, and Villa Rica, GA.

Harmony Student Wellness Program

TeachRock reached a milestone by publishing 36 Harmony lessons with each lesson consisting of a week of programming — four days of exploration and a fifth day in which students tackle an arts activity that combines reflection on the subject matter and creative expression. The curriculum offers a comprehensive three-year learning plan, with lessons distributed throughout the years to ensure proper scaffolding.

Honor Roll Membership

The Honor Roll unites donors who believe music keeps students engaged and inspired in school. In its first year, member support reached 76 classrooms. Every membership helps turn classrooms into places where students discover their voice, confidence, and joy in learning.

Teacher Council

TeachRock launched our inaugural Teacher Council — a group of 39 teachers selected from more than 400 applications. The primary goal of the Teacher Council is to amplify teacher voices and guide our efforts to create meaningful and relevant educational experiences in their communities. Council members serve as ambassadors, thought partners, and leaders.

2025-2026 Rock & Roll Classroom Professional Learning Tour

TeachRock collaborated with the NYC Public Schools Department of Civics & Social Studies to launch a series of six professional learning events for NYC public school teachers. This partnership brings the TeachRock Method to the largest school district in the country.

Executive Director Report



For as long as I’ve worked in education, teachers have told me that connecting with students is only getting harder. During that time, an entire industry arose to help them with “classroom management” — a professionalized term for what is, at its core, the oldest challenge in teaching — keeping young people present. I watched technology flood classrooms until each student was independently connected to their own device. It didn’t work. In fact, it may have done more harm than good.

And now, the pendulum is swinging — at least 37 states and the District of Columbia have moved to restrict cell phones in schools as of 2026, as parents and districts begin to reckon with what screens have cost. The share of U.S. teenagers reporting they are online “almost constantly” doubled between 2014 and 2022. Mental health consequences have followed.

Throughout it all, TeachRock has stayed fixed on the same goals — curiosity, connection, and the kind of critical thinking that prepares students to participate in the world they’re inheriting. These are skills students need more than ever. Though TeachRock has never abandoned

printed handouts, we also embrace the future, and we are exhilarated by the possibilities of the AI prototype we’ve co-developed to reduce the administrative burden on educators with students who have IEPs. It allows teachers to generate tailored versions of lessons for students at different reading levels, multilingual learners, and those who need additional scaffolding. It doesn’t collect personal student data, and every adaptation is reviewed before it reaches a student. The teacher’s prep time is reduced, and their face-to-face time with students can be increased.

Trends come and go, but TeachRock has always understood that the real classroom management is a room full of students who are engaged and inspired. Every student Stevie describes in his letter deserves that experience, and their teachers deserve our support to make it possible. That is the work, and we have never been more committed to it.

Bill Carbone

On the Horizon

In 2026, TeachRock continues on our mission to help every student discover joy and a sense of purpose by bringing learning to life through music.

Library of Congress

As a Lewis-Houghton Grant Recipient, we are continuing our work with the Library of Congress’s Teaching Primary Sources program to develop A People’s Playlist: U.S. History with Music as a Primary Source curriculum. This partnership gives TeachRock access to resources from the Library of Congress and opportunities to work with other Lewis-Houghton Grant Recipients.

2026 TeachRock Teachers Summit

This summer, the National Humanities Center will host educators for the 2026 TeachRock Teachers Summit, a residential summer institute exploring how music can serve as a powerful primary source for historical inquiry and civic learning.

2026-27 Rock & Roll Classroom Professional Learning Tour

Plans are already in place for the 2026-27 Rock & Roll Classroom Professional Learning Tour. Designed and delivered in collaboration with NYC Public Schools, workshops are held in museums, cultural institutions, and music venues around the city and equip teachers with lesson plans, materials, and strategies to bring this transformative cultural movement to life in their classrooms.

Teachers Hall of Fame

October 17, 2026, Stevie Van Zandt and TeachRock host the Teachers Hall of Fame event at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank, NJ. Van Zandt will be honored with a star on Basie’s Walk of Fame, and, in turn, he will honor several

teachers with induction into the Teachers Hall of Fame.

New Website

Stay tuned for our new website, continued opportunities to support our work as an Honor Roll member, and an array of unique performances and learning opportunities throughout the year.

Story of Change

How Ben Wides Uses Music to Bring History to Life



Ben Wides is a veteran educator and TeachRock Trailblazer Award recipient who goes beyond just using our curriculum. He builds on it, showing how music can help students make sense of the world around them.

When Wides first discovered TeachRock, he knew he wanted to bring the materials to his New York City classroom. But for him, simply using a few lessons wasn't enough. He saw an opportunity for something bigger. He worked closely with the TeachRock team to go beyond the lessons, eventually designing an entire course titled "A Rock and Roll History of Post-War America."

For Wides, his partnership with TeachRock has been more than a teaching tool; it has been transformative — allowing him to integrate his love of music into history teaching and connect with students in unprecedented ways.

During an appearance with our founder, Stevie Van Zandt on The Kelly Clarkson Show, Wides has shared,

“As a teacher, I want to thank you [Stevie] for transforming my professional life. TeachRock was like this door, and I stepped through it. It allowed me to put my love of music at the center of my work as a history teacher and help me connect with my students and see them get excited and engaged in a way that I haven’t seen happen before.”

— The Kelly Clarkson Show
December 14, 2025

By helping them see the links between modern artists and those who came before, he also helps his students start to connect different moments in history. And for Wides, that is the ultimate goal — using music to make history intellectually rigorous and, at the same time, incredibly exciting.

For many of his students, his class has changed their entire relationship with school in a positive way. It has motivated them to get their work done and show up to class. Having music as part of their history lessons and learning the background to an artist and their music — the lyrics, the melody — as reflections of the world they lived in at the time makes learning feel more personal, relevant, and deeply meaningful.

In today’s classrooms, sparking student engagement is the greatest challenge. History can sometimes seem like just a list of names and dates, far from students’ own lives. At East Side Community High School in New York’s East Village, Wides brings history to life by transforming lessons into playlists, turning the past into a dynamic soundtrack that resonates with his students. Wides does more than teach history — he helps students see themselves as part of America’s ongoing story.

“Having music in my history class has definitely impacted my learning in a positive way. It’s definitely made me more engaged in the class. To me, it’s had a personal connection because I’m in a rock band. So hearing Ben talk about these rock artists and like the development of rock and roll, where it comes from, how it’s a fusion of all these genres, it definitely drew me into his class and I felt so much more focused and engaged in what we’re learning.”

— Faith, Student
East Side Community High School

Program Highlights

An American History of Rock and Soul

TeachRock’s An American History of Rock and Soul is a high school American Music History course that examines how popular music reflected and shaped U.S. history during the twentieth century. This course is comprised of over 100 lessons featuring media from partners including PBS, CNN, and Amazon Studios.

Featured Lesson:

Jimi Hendrix: Rock’s Trailblazing Innovator and Influential Guitarist

In this featured lesson, students explore Hendrix’s blend of classic blues and psychedelia through documentary clips and interactive sound tools, developing a new style of American Music. It highlights how Hendrix blends the emotional depth of blues, the rhythmic discipline of R&B and soul learned on the road, and the experimental sounds of the late 60s.

A People’s Playlist: U.S. History with Music as a Primary Source

Our music-integrated high school U.S. History II course begins with Reconstruction and is built around a wide range of resources from the Library of Congress. In this course, students engage in a process of historical inquiry that cultivates critical thinking skills.

In 2025, we published 46 lessons featuring hundreds of primary sources from the Library of Congress, accompanied by analysis guides and handouts. Through these materials, students explored historical events more deeply and developed their critical analysis skills by linking music to important moments in U.S. history.

Featured Lesson:

Early Reconstruction Featuring the Hyers Sisters

In this lesson, we honor the Hyers sisters’ innovative work in Musical theatre and their strong commitment to showing the humanity of all people through their work on stage.

When we look back at the Reconstruction era, we see a country struggling to redefine itself after the Civil War. While the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments promised freedom and citizenship, the reality for African Americans was often met with intense prejudice and the harmful stereotypes of minstrelsy.

We encourage students to learn how these “voices for freedom” found their way in a changing nation by examining their groundbreaking work, “Out of Bondage,” the first American musical ever produced.



“TeachRock has made it easier for me to learn since I am a really slow learner. I used to struggle with my work in History until I came across these lessons.”

Student, West Wendover High School, Wendover, NV

Harmony Student Wellness Program

TeachRock’s Harmony Student Wellness Program is a holistic, three-year Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum designed to support the whole student.

In this curriculum, we focus on building five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, and social awareness. Topics include handling criticism, self-reflection, empathy, and embracing cultural identity.

In 2025, we reached a milestone by publishing 36 Harmony lessons. Each lesson consists of a week of programming — four days of exploration and a fifth day in which students tackle an arts activity that combines reflection on the subject matter and creative expression. The curriculum offers a comprehensive three-year learning plan, with lessons distributed throughout the years to ensure proper scaffolding.

Featured Lesson: Unbreakable — Developing Resilience for Life’s Challenges

In this featured lesson, we invite students to investigate resilience as a concrete, lived experience through stories of admired artists. We examine how musicians have historically transformed struggle into strength, and encourage students to analyze the “hardware” and “software” of their own emotions.

By connecting music history to SEL skills, we help students understand that their challenges are part of a longstanding human tradition of perseverance.



Classroom Impact

93%

of educators agree TeachRock curriculum is more engaging than textbooks

Source: A Mixed-Methods Study on How TeachRock Curriculum supports Teacher Well-Being and Creativity, David Mattson, PhD, Drexel University/Freddie Reisman, Center for Translational Research in Creativity and Motivation

8%

decrease in chronic absenteeism

10%

decrease in multiple behavior incidents

20%

decrease in out-of-school suspensions

Source: Data shared by partner schools using Harmony Student Wellness Program

Driving Change Together

New York Public Schools Department of Civics and Social Studies: TeachRock Professional Development Tour

In Fall of 2025, TeachRock collaborated with the Department of Social Studies and Civics to deliver a focused day of professional learning at Brooklyn Bowl as part of the event “A Day of Teaching the Grateful Dead.” At the event, attendees explored TeachRock’s resources and Passport to Social Studies curricular materials on the Grateful Dead and heard from special

guests. This session initiated the 2025-2026 Rock and Roll Classroom Professional Learning Tour and provided teachers with lesson plans, materials, and strategies to bring this transformative cultural movement to life in their classrooms.

Amplifying Jewish Heritage

Also in Fall of 2025, TeachRock launched Amplifying Jewish Heritage, a curriculum that brings the important cultural contributions of Jewish Americans in art, industry,



and society into the national K-12 curriculum. Through the lessons in this curriculum, students dive into the journeys, triumphs, and struggles of Jewish artists, innovators, and leaders whose stories have shaped American culture. Through music, we fill the gaps in history classrooms and bring these essential narratives to life.

ences in their communities. Council members serve as ambassadors, thought partners, and leaders.

Through the Teacher Council, we will deepen our impact in a way our central team could not achieve alone—bringing authentic, teacher-driven support to educators everywhere.

Teacher Council

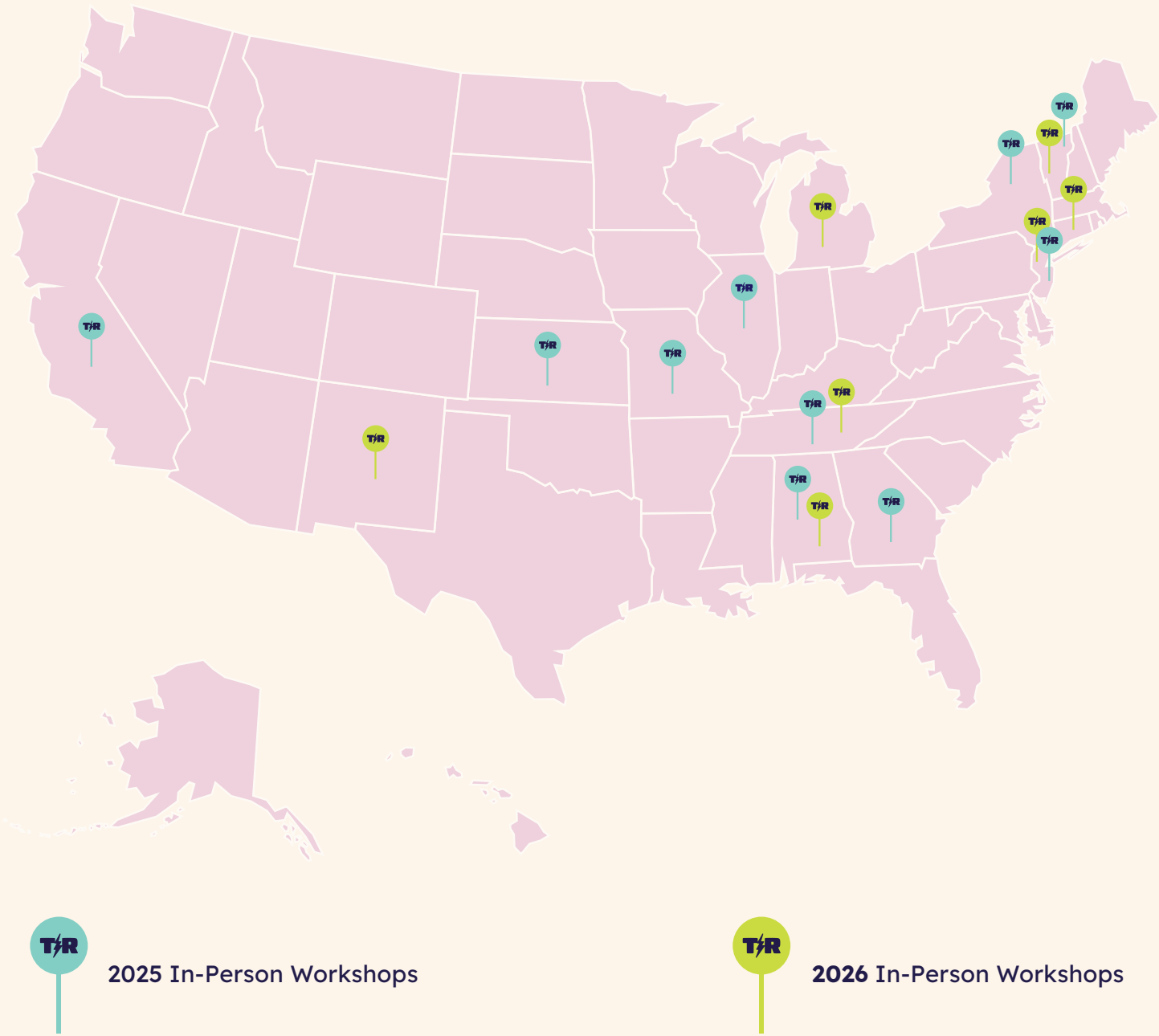
At the heart of our partnerships are the educators who bring TeachRock to life in their classrooms every day. Last year, we launched our inaugural Teacher Council—a group of 39 teachers selected from more than 400 applications. The primary goal of the Teacher Council is to amplify teacher voices and guide our efforts to create meaningful and relevant educational experi-



Support for Educators

Throughout 2025, we broadened our network by expanding our professional development offerings — both in-person and virtually. We led engaging webinars

via the edWeb platform and conducted immersive workshops that demonstrated the impact of music-integrated learning to diverse audiences throughout the country.



Teaching Women’s History Through Music with TeachRock



Engaging Students in Environmental Action Through Music: For Earth Day and Beyond



Foster Engagement and Critical Thinking in Any Subject Using Music: The TeachRock Method



Teaching Hispanic Heritage Through Music, Movement, and Culture with TeachRock



Creating Calm and Resilience Through Music with TeachRock



Engage Students in Economics and U.S. History Through Arts-Based Teaching Strategies

Staff Spotlight



Amanda Harris joined TeachRock in 2022, after 8 years as a Social Studies teacher at Southeast Raleigh Magnet High School in the Wake County, North Carolina public school system.

Amanda’s classroom experience and curriculum design expertise are evident in the quality of the educational resources we produce. Her impact is especially evident in *A People’s Playlist: U.S. History with Music as a Primary Source*, our High School U.S. History course that features American music as a source of historical inquiry.

When on the road with the TeachRock team, Amanda shines on conference stages and always finds the tastiest spots for an after-hours hang.

Raising Awareness

Help On The Way Fundraising Event

The Help On the Way holiday concerts in Fairfield, Connecticut and in New York City at the Cutting Room assembled an all-star lineup of musicians, including Moe, Eggy, Lotus, Bearly Dead, and Max Creek, to celebrate community and support teachers and students.

The benefit concerts featured VIP experiences and honored local education leaders, raising funds to expand TeachRock’s free, music-centered curriculum and professional learning programs. Because of this support, TeachRock

will offer five free professional learning days to NYC teachers in 2026. Together, we are helping educators bring joy, relevance, and real-world context to their classrooms, giving students more reasons to attend and succeed.

Party at The Pony Fundraising Event

Bruce Springsteen, Gary U.S. Bonds, Darlene Love, Jesse Malin, and members of the E Street Band family came together at The Stone Pony for a night of unforgettable performances. We celebrated the birthday of



our founder and host, Stevie Van Zandt, honored outstanding Asbury Park educators, and featured a music memorabilia garage sale. The evening raised vital support for TeachRock’s mission to bring music-centered education to classrooms nationwide.

ASU+GSV Summit

At the ASU+GSV Summit, TeachRock founder Stevie Van Zandt joined principal Ginger Frady from Red Bank Middle School in Chattanooga, TN for a fireside chat on the future of education. He made the case that music and arts integration are essential tools for preparing students to thrive in an AI-powered world. This conversation in front of an audience of leaders from education, technology, business, and

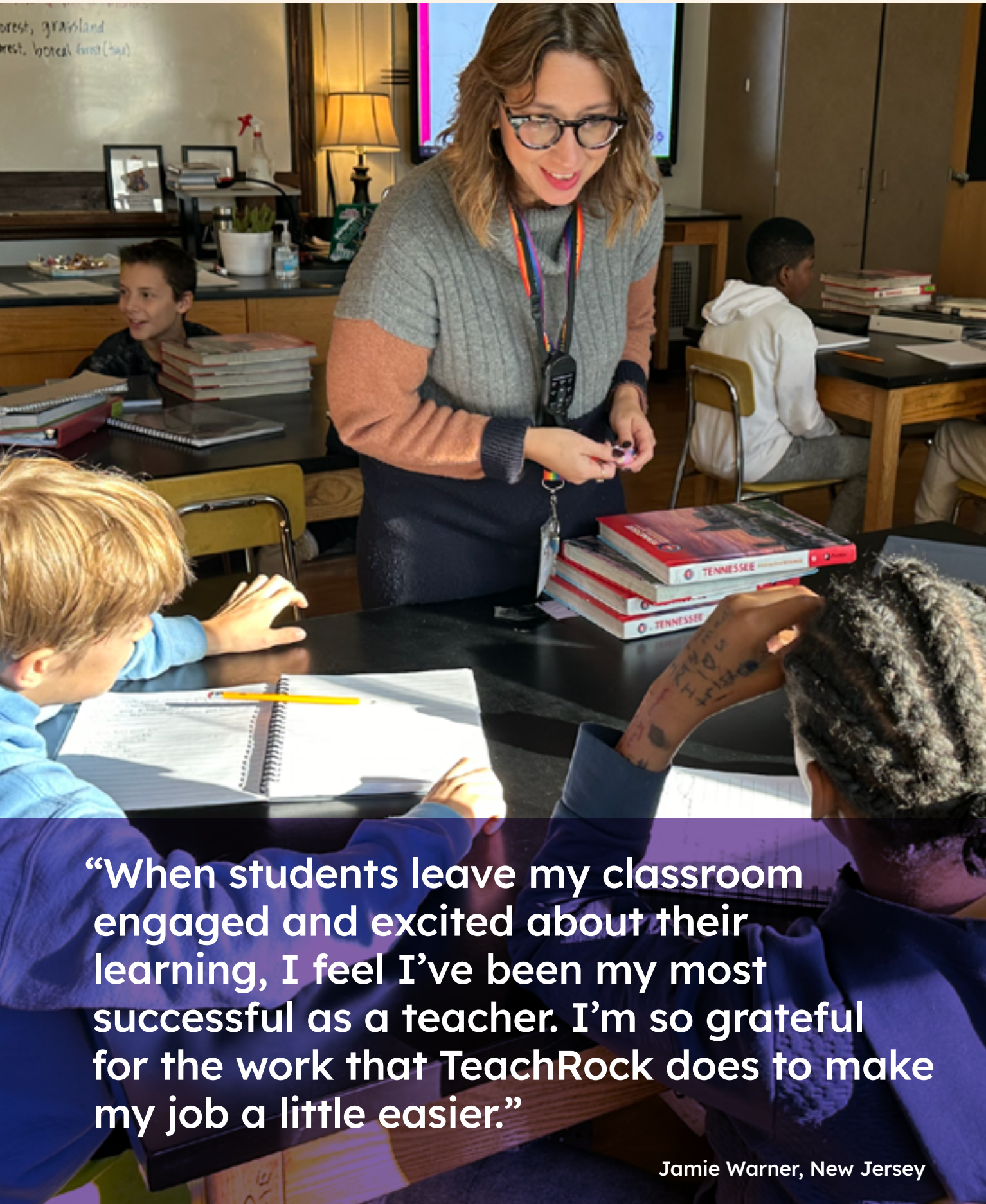
policy underscores TeachRock’s growing influence in the conversation around student creativity and critical thinking, and the future of learning.

SXSW with Triza Cox & Imani Wilson

For the third consecutive year, TeachRock presented at SXSW EDU. Our Program Manager, Triza Cox, offered a hands-on Harmony workshop for over 60 educators.

“SEL & Music to Cultivate Community & Curb Absenteeism” highlighted the Harmony Student Wellness Program’s pedagogical approach and led participants through arts-based activities including songwriting, neurographic art, and applied theatre.

In addition to the capacity crowd that attended our workshop at SXSW EDU, we were also present at the SXSW Film & TV conference where Imani Wilson, our Chief Strategy & Innovation Officer, was one of three panelists who shared on the latest trends at the intersection of futurism, education, and technology.



“When students leave my classroom engaged and excited about their learning, I feel I’ve been my most successful as a teacher. I’m so grateful for the work that TeachRock does to make my job a little easier.”

Jamie Warner, New Jersey

Measuring Impact

From improved attendance to deeper student engagement, TeachRock’s impact is documented in schools across the country.

Our Reach

80K
of teachers have used TeachRock

1M+
students reached

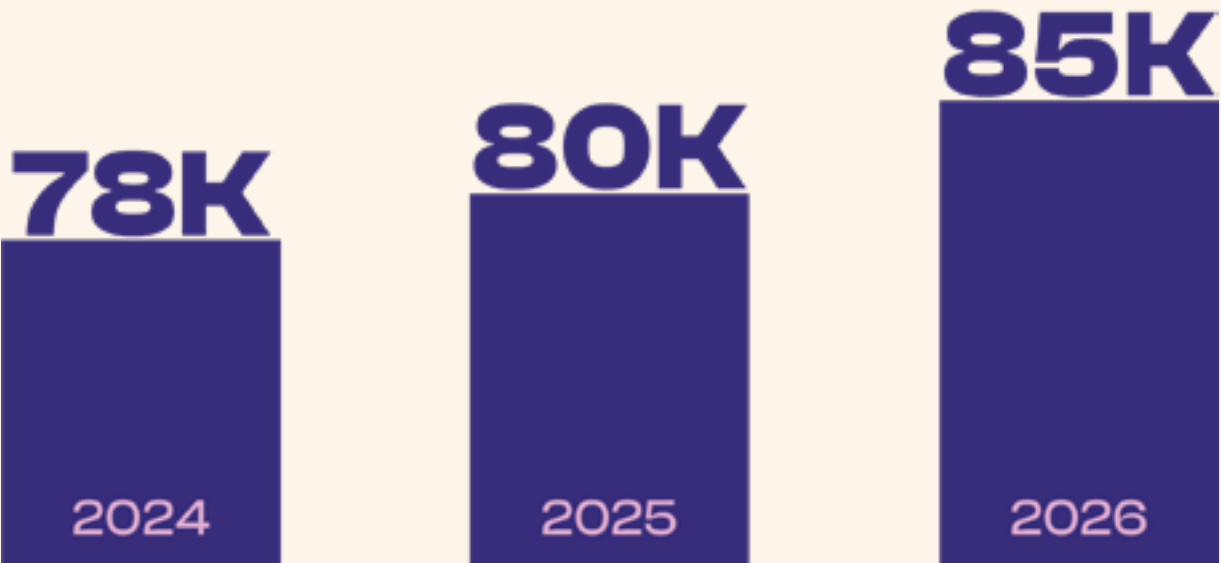
Our Impact

86%
of teachers say students are more engaged during TeachRock lessons

98%
of teachers rated TeachRock PD 4 or 5 out of 5

50%
drop in disciplinary incidents in our partner school over one year

Since 2024, we’ve supported more teachers with our free, open-source curriculum.



Independent evaluations by Drexel University and the Emergence Collective Study highlight TeachRock's positive impact.

Student Engagement

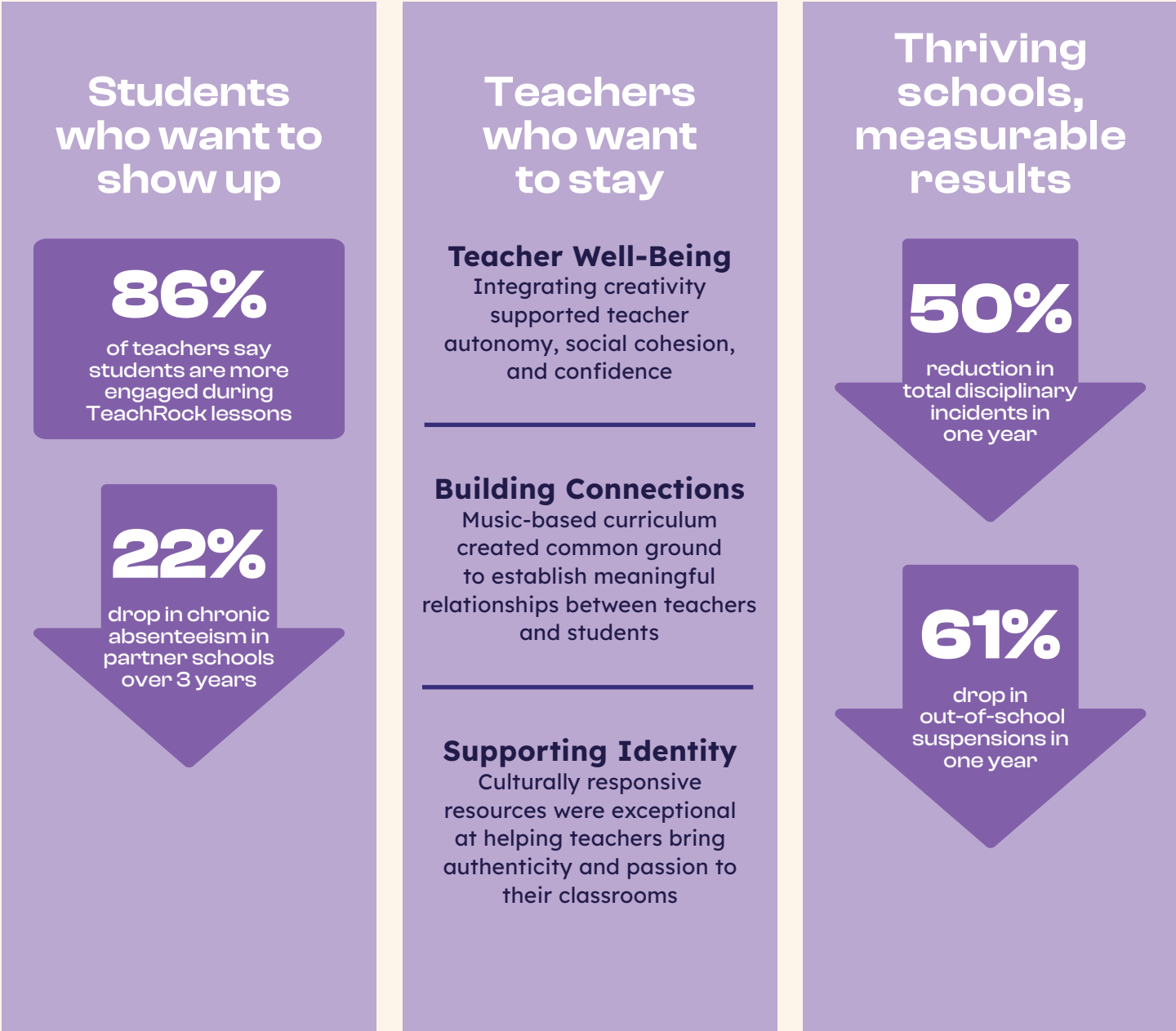
76% of surveyed teachers saw a spike in student participation after using TeachRock curriculum. Students describe the lessons as a reason to come to school, and stay engaged when they get there.

Teacher Well-Being

A 2024 Drexel University evaluation found that TeachRock improves teachers' classroom experience by supporting creativity, fostering stronger student-teacher relationships, and helping educators bring their authentic selves to work.

School Communities

Across the country, our partner schools report reductions in disciplinary incidents, absenteeism, and out-of-school suspensions, alongside stronger school culture.



Collaborative Relationships

We partner with organizations nationwide to help teachers connect learning to students' lives and cultures. We help schools build stronger, more vibrant communities through the power of music.



Financial Highlights

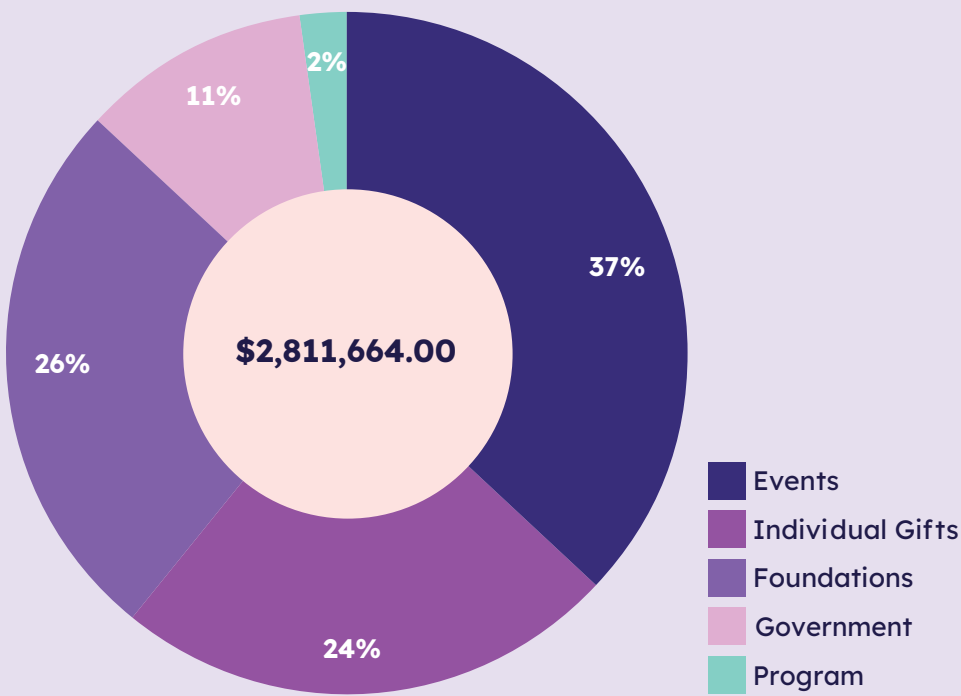
Our financial highlights reflect a year of intentional investment in the future of music-integrated education. By keeping our curriculum 100% free for teachers and students nationwide, we ensure that every dollar raised goes directly toward maintaining and expanding our resources, building partnerships, and supporting educators. With the ongoing support of our donors and partners, we make every contribution count, turning smart financial choices into real classroom impact across the country.

Candid Platinum Score

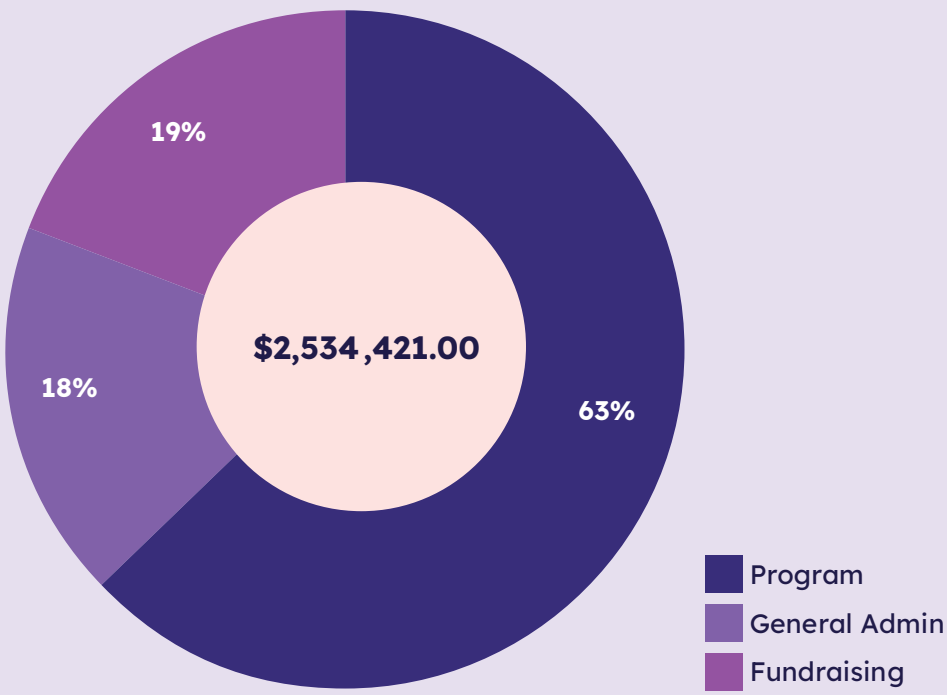
TeachRock earned Platinum transparency status with Candid, the highest level of recognition for nonprofit accountability. A Platinum seal indicates that a nonprofit shares comprehensive, up-to-date data on its goals, strategies, and measurable impact. It is awarded to less than 1% of U.S. nonprofits, signifying exceptional commitment to accountability.



2025 REVENUE



2025 EXPENSES



Your Support Makes It Possible

In its first year, Honor Roll members like you, reached **76** classrooms. This year your support can help us reach **200**.

When you join the Honor Roll, you help us keep at-risk students in school and bring science, sounds, and stories of music to the learning process. Each membership helps us transform classrooms into places where students discover their voices, build confidence, and experience joy in learning.

With a small monthly gift, you can make a huge impact in classrooms across the country. Honor Roll Members fuel free, standards-aligned resources and community for teachers nationwide. You also get unique perks

all year, like our member-only monthly raffle series, event presale access, and more. Join us as we shape the future at TeachRock. Become an Honor Roll member to help our programs grow, and share our mission with others to expand our community. Visit [Honor Roll Membership](#) to join.



Why It Matters

120

2025 Honor Roll Members collectively made a BIG impact

76

new classrooms were funded by 2025 Honor Roll Memberships

10

Teachers received FREE Professional Development to expand learning

Get to Know Us



Our Team

Bill Carbone Executive Director	Ben Dumbauld Director of Content	Imani Wilson Chief Strategy & Innovation Officer
Rolando Alvarado Chief Operating Officer	Michael-Ann Haders VP of Development	Joshua Zarbo Associate Director of Content
Stacy Cannamela Director of Development Operations & Events	Amanda Harris Curriculum Specialist	
Triza Cox Program Manager	Gina Machado Director of Programs & Partnerships	

Our Board of Directors

Vagn Sørensen , Chair	Rob Imparato	Bruce Resnikoff
Sandy Alouete	James O’Sullivan	Peter Shapiro
Susie Buffett	Amit Patel	Maureen Van Zandt
Jon Harris	Dr. Joely Proudfit	Stevie Van Zandt
Kevin Keyes		

Our Leadership Council

Jeff Rusnak , Chair	Bruce Glassman	David Pratt
Tracy Baldwin	David Haas	Swati Scanlon
Timothy Birch	Mark Hall	Deborah Solomon
Rick Buck , Past Chair	David Jacobson	Susan Strauss
Greg Damico	David Lubliner	Josh Wachs
Howard Dessau	Jim McDermott	Susan Walsh
David Epstein	Greg Miller	Richard Wilkinson
Jim Farber		

Empowering teachers and engaging students through music-integrated education.

Keep the Music in the Classrooms

Your support helps us continue to provide free, open-source curriculum for teachers to connect learning with students' lives and cultures nationwide.

Support Our Mission

Visit teachrock.org to explore our free curricula, support our mission and help us keep the music playing in classrooms.

Follow us [@teachrockorg](https://twitter.com/teachrockorg) to help share our mission with others and expand our community.

TeachRock functions as part of the 501(c)(3) The Rock and Soul Forever Foundation and is endorsed by the National Council for the Social Studies, the National Association for Music Education, and the National Council for Geographic Education.

