

news p.2-7

6

Since the 2016 election, the GOP has experienced a major shift, affecting school community

3

DFW becomes the first carbon neutral airport and is moving toward zero-waste

Alumni giving shows gratitude, engagement

Administration working to increase giving rate in the school community

Story by Brooke Ebner Staff Writer

When it comes to alumni giving, ESD stands above the National Association of Independent School's average, but the alumni giving rate is still not quite as high as many of our other peer schools.

ESD trails behind Hockaday's alumni participation of 22 percent in the 2021-2022 school year and Greenhill's alumni participation of 17 percent also from the 2021-2022 school year.

During the senior retreat, Assistant Head of Upper School Henry Heil had the class call out their estimate on the percentage of alumni who support and give back to the school.

"Mr. Heil asked the class what we thought was the number of alumni that give back to the school and most of the answers we shouted out were the same," senior Sally Tomlin said. "We all started throwing out random percentages between 70 to 80 percent. The answer that he gave us was shocking."

Director of Alumni Asia Hawkins '13, along with the ESD board and community, is not satisfied with the school's current percentage, and is trying to find ways ESD can encourage alumni to give back.

"Currently, we average about 9 percent a year of our alumni that give back in terms of making a gift," Hawkins said.

Hawkins believes that what matters, in terms of alumni giving, is participation.

"We want alumni to participate and give what they can," Hawkins said. "Gifts of \$10, \$20 impact what we do daily, and will ultimately help our participation increase from 9 percent to 20 percent"

But financial support is not the only way alumni can help the ESD community there are a variety of ways one can volunteer.

"We have a few [alumni] that volunteer through our alumni board. We have 24 alumni on the alumni board that come to meetings every other month and help create events," Hawkins said. "And we also have alumni that participate in the WORX program with offering interviews or helping to conduct those and then offering internship opportunities."

NAIS, a membership organization for non profit private schools, alumni giving average is seven per-

cent, landing us a little over their average.

"We're above average, but we definitely have work to do to improve that number and be better and on par with some of our other peer schools in the area," Hawkins said. "Spreading awareness on the impact that giving has on students in our community at ESD is important [to get more alumni involved in giving] along with education in ways you can give."

Hawkins knows that a lot of people want to know where their dollars go and the alumni association wants to be more transparent.

ESD's percentage of 9 percent is close in comparison to Parish's range of 6 percent to 9 percent participation, while St. Mark's alumni giving is over 50 percent. But one reason why our alumni giving rate is lower than our other peer schools is due to how young ESD is.

"Since we're still a pretty young school and we haven't even reached our 50th anniversary yet, I would say probably it's doable [to reach 20 to 30 percent giving] within the next three to five years," Hawkins said.

And Tomlin agrees. "I know ESD is a younger school in comparison to Hockaday and St. Marks, but that number still seems unusually low," Tomlin said.

Alumni Board President Lauren Bellemare '05, thinks it essential that the community communicates to alumni about the need for involvement and engagement as they may seem to think that they're not needed.

"I think that people who attended ESD believe the school is well off and doesn't necessarily need their support, which is a misconception," Bellemare said.

Alumni board member Camie McKee '09 participates in the alumni board and is devoted to giving back and supporting the commu-

nity. She has been more involved since she got back to Dallas from the East Coast, Washington D.C., and law school at the University of Texas.

McKee, who has been part of the ESD community for a long time, feels it's right for her to give back to the school to help shape other students just like she was.

"[I give back] to show my appreciation and gratitude for a community that shaped me since I enrolled at age 6 for first grade," McKee said. "I benefit from getting to meet

and make connections with our alumni from different class years and that are doing incredible things both here in Dallas and across our nation."

But she thinks it is equally important to give back to any other communities that have helped shape her.

"So, In addition to giving back to ESD, I also give back to my undergraduate institution and my law school because each of these communities has helped shape my character and helped me develop skills that have helped me become the person I am today," McKee said.

"And I think it's important to invest in our future leaders by investing in students through educational institutions like ESD."

It's essential for our community members including alumni to know and understand what their gifts are being used for when contributing. Funds can highly impact students by allowing them to attend ESD, and awarding alumni of how their funds supports the school, like scholarships for example, could help bring more interest.

"The annual giving represents maybe 6 or 7 percent of the operational budget and so one way of looking at it is, 7 cents of every dollar that the school spends is on faculty salaries, professional development, student programming [and athletics]," Chief Advance-

ment Officer Denis Stokes said. "It doesn't sound like a lot, but it is a difference maker, in the sense that, without that, there'd be some things we'd have to make some choices about. And so [gifts] give us the opportunity to sort of fully fund rather than having [to] make compromises."

Stokes emphasized the need to be able to maintain and grow the number of alumni contributors to the school.

"Alumni [have] benefited by what the school has offered. [Some students] spend 12, 13 or 14 years [at ESD] and so in terms of their formation, it's who they are as individuals [and] is a pretty significant influence in somebody's life," Stokes said. "I think it becomes sort of a sense of responsibility and a duty to give back so that those who follow us will benefit by something just as good if not better."

And Katie Young, director of alumni relations at Greenhill, hopes that alumni understand that their education was partially funded through the generosity of graduates who came before them.

"Alumni contributions show gratitude for their student experience while helping to sustain the same experience for future generations," Young said. "Alumni continue to be an essential part of Greenhill's philanthropic culture."

Head of School David Baad is working with both Stokes and Hawkins to increase alumni engagement. He thinks financial engagement is essential to the community.

"Creating good relationships with our alumni is extremely important, and I want to emphasize to you all that the money giving part of it is nice and, obviously, we all need to remember that what people donate to ESD, does a lot of really wonderful things," Baad said. "It keeps everybody's tuition lower, it allows students whose families might not be able to afford to go here."

He also said that donations allow the school to pay teachers "the wage they deserve to do the really good work they do with [students], so donations are really important."

But to him, it is also important that alumni feel like ESD is home.

"I want you and I want them [alumni] to feel like this is home," Baad said. "That this is a place that they feel connected to."

Visit esdallas.org/giving for more information on ways to give.



ALUMNI WEEKEND '22 Donny Carty '17 (left) stands next to classmate William Watson and his fiancée, Ashley, during the April 23 and 24 Alumni Weekend event held on campus. Photo provided by alumni office

3,320

total number of alumni

\$142,100

amount raised by alumni for The ESD Fund for the 2021-2022 academic year

199

gifts given by alumni to The ESD Fund for the 2021-2022 academic year