BIG THOUGHT
Big Thought brings relentless optimism, innovation and imagination to the biggest problem facing education today: the opportunity gap.
The Gap

The opportunity gap is not only the biggest problem facing education today, it’s a crisis that’s threatening our very social fabric. Here’s what you need to know about the gap:

It isn’t just one simple problem to be solved.
The opportunity gap is the complex web of challenges blocking under-resourced young people from reaching their potential. Tackling the gap requires an innovative, multifaceted approach to education and the cooperative effort of the community.

The gap is a growing problem.
Our society is creating ever-increasing disparities between students. We’re in a state of inertia, where the amount of resources funnelled to kids is increasingly unequal. Deliberate, innovative interventions are the only way to ensure opportunity and resources for all young people.

Our false perceptions are perpetuating the gap.
Our belief in the American dream is a dangerous misperception. We want to believe anyone who works long and hard enough can overcome all obstacles and achieve the success of their dreams. The reality is, the opportunity gap has widened to the point it is a true impasse. We must adjust our mindset and invest in solutions that offer under-resourced kids an equal shot at success.

The cost of the gap is too high.
We’re wasting human capital and talent at an alarming rate. During this time where human resources are being stretched more and more to meet increasing societal needs, the loss of a huge pool of talented, intelligent and motivated young people has escalated to a crisis.
Big Thought believes the opportunity gap will only be solved by bringing the right opportunities to the kids who need them most. We believe the right opportunities—the ones with the power to transform young lives—all have one thing in common: they ignite the imagination. Here’s why:

**A Case for Imagination**

Big Thought believes the opportunity gap will only be solved by bringing the right opportunities to the kids who need them most. We believe the right opportunities—the ones with the power to transform young lives—all have one thing in common: they ignite the imagination. Here’s why:

**Igniting the imagination unleashes human potential.** When we use our imagination, we tap into our full creative and intellectual potential. Think of an engaged imagination as the prerequisite or gateway to every important 21st century skill: empathy, leadership, creativity and critical thinking. Any learning opportunity that fails to ignite a young imagination isn’t an effective opportunity, period.

**Imagination breeds grit.** An engaged imagination turns on grit, the stick-with-it-ness that is a proven predictor of future success. A wholly engaged young person stays invested in their own learning outcomes. And later, their own life outcomes.

**An ignited imagination recharts the future.** In fact, an ignited imagination is the most powerful tool we can give a young person. Engaging the imagination builds confidence in their own abilities and voice, ultimately equipping them to chart their own course in life.
We are experts at igniting young imaginations (especially the not-yet-sparked). Here’s how we do it:

**Our Innovative Model**

**Connect**

We seek out relentlessly optimistic educators, leaders, organizations and businesses who are as passionate about igniting the imagination as we are. We manage this powerful network of partners to help us scale programs and expand the scope of services. Collectively, we reach unprecedented numbers of kids once considered unreachable.

**Ignite**

We work together with these partners to custom-design programs that ignite the imagination (and engage the whole child).

**Learn**

Each program offered tackles the opportunity gap in a new and unique way. We are committed to taking a step back at every turn to scrutinize our programs (relentlessly). We measure, we learn, we adapt, we change. We document our successes and failures to endlessly optimize what we do.

**Share**

We are committed to sharing expertise locally, nationally and abroad with educators, leaders, cities and governments. We invite meaningful dialogue to advance our audacious goal: to ignite the imagination of each and every child.
The Future is Bright

Big Thought’s innovative approach to tackling the opportunity gap is working in Dallas, Texas. The results are clear: under-resourced students do better when their learning is personalized and supplemented with quality, imagination-based programming.

**Academic Impact**
Many students participating in Big Thought programs increased their writing abilities, performed better on state mandated tests and started school with a meaningful advantage in math.

**Social-Emotional Impact**
52% of students assessed showed positive gains in Relationship Skills competency (DESSA, 2014).

**Instructional Impact**
71% of instructional observations in 2014-2015 were ranked proficient or advanced, a 20% increase from 2013-2014.

**Parent/Caregiver Impact**
75% of caregivers surveyed indicated that without the after-school or summer program their child would be at “home” or at a neighbor’s house. 79% of our caregivers said it would be difficult or very difficult to find another after-school or summer program.

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**The Future is Bright**

433
learning locations

18,322
hours of programming offered annually

143,944
students served

1,722,875
student learning hours
Our Programs and Services

Big Thought’s programs and services are designed to make imagination a part of everyday learning for under-resourced students. Each program has been uniquely developed to address a specific facet of the opportunity gap—we call these our Big Opportunities. Together with our partners, we tackle each Big Opportunity with programming and interventions that give students unprecedented access to imaginative experiences.
Creative Solutions

Our Big Opportunity
Once juveniles are convicted of a crime, the opportunity gap widens exponentially—making it even more difficult for youth to chart their own path.

Our Big Thought
We engage the imaginations of these high-potential young people through the performing and visual arts.

Our Innovative Approach
We partner with the Dallas County Juvenile Department and Southern Methodist University to develop and manage an intensive performing and visual arts program for disengaged youth in the juvenile system.

Together we instill skills associated with job and college readiness including teamwork, decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking and communication. We structure the program like a job. To earn a stipend at the end of the program, participants must act professionally, just as they would in any other job. We develop critical social-emotional skills including communication, empathy, engagement, self-control and cooperation.

We rigorously train professional artists to lead arts instruction, ignite the creativity of participants, gain their trust and implement youth development best practices.

Participants publicly showcase their work at exhibitions and performances, often for the first time.

Our Impact
Creative Solutions has revealed the potential of more than 10,000 students for over 20 years. According to the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) analysis over the past two summers:

41% of youth increased their social skills score by more than 5% (considered statistically significant)

40% of youth decreased their problem behaviors score by more than 5% (considered statistically significant)

Youth who participated in Creative Solutions in 2014 and returned in 2015 experienced a 22% increase in social skills and a 15.9% decrease in problem behaviors over the course of two summers.*

*In 2014, their average social skills score was below average and in the 32nd percentile when compared to a nationally normed sample. At the end of their second summer in the program, their average social skills score was above average and in the 82nd percentile.
Dallas City of Learning

Our Big Opportunity

Many children do not have access to summer learning, widening the opportunity gap as hours of learning loss accumulate from K through 12.

Our Big Thought

We can harness technology to build powerful learning networks that connect students to the city’s most valuable resources and prolific community partners. In doing this, we can spark imaginations while reversing cumulative learning loss.

Our Innovative Approach

Dallas City of Learning is a public-private citywide commitment to ensure all students have access to summer learning opportunities as we collectively combat summer learning loss and the growing opportunity gap that disproportionally affects low-income youth.

We connect youth to in-person and online educational experiences provided by hundreds of partners both nationally and locally, deploying technology and programs to our most underserved neighborhoods and raising the quality of instruction in summer. The initiative is convened by the City of Dallas and Dallas ISD, and managed by Big Thought.

In our most underserved communities, we direct financial, programmatic and educational resources to engage students right in their own neighborhoods.

Students can earn digital badges in many subject areas, which can:

- Recognize their out-of-school learning achievements
- Encourage new and deeper experiences based on their interests
- Map out learning pathways toward college or career.

Our Impact

Enthusiasm and participation in Dallas City of Learning activities is strong. Dallas City of Learning is built on a decade of research by The MacArthur Foundation that demonstrates connected learning has substantial positive impact on traditional academic outcomes such as scoring higher on mathematics and language arts skills assessments, and the acquisition of 21st century skills. In the past two summers since our launch:

- 34,743 student accounts registered
- 37,727 badges awarded
- 1,753 learning opportunities listed
- 454 unique badges created
- 285,140 student learning hours logged
- 70% of students served were economically disadvantaged
- 200+ partners worked together to create a powerful learning network
DaVerse

Our Big Opportunity
The lack of access to performing arts and other modes of self-expression increases the opportunity gap for young people.

Our Big Thought
We use imagination to help middle and high school students master the art of spoken word—a powerful mode of expression—and give them a supportive forum to be heard.

Our Innovative Approach
Together with our community partners, we help young people find their voice through a three-ti ered approach:

Learn. We build a curriculum that teaches and develops skills in the spoken word craft of their choosing (poetry, rap, song, movement, performance, etc.).

Practice. In partnership with Journeyman Ink, we provide ongoing instruction through after-school clubs and events.

Perform. We provide a unique open-mic setting, DaVerse Lounge, including live music and art to showcase their work throughout the year at Life in Deep Ellum.

Our Impact
DaVerse continues to empower young people in many ways.

2,504 DaVerse Lounge participants
40 DaVerse Works poetry club participants
570 average attendees at each signature DaVerse Lounge show.

74% of students improved their writing skill in one or more traits over the course of the program
50% of the early achieving students developed their writing across all five writing traits taught
Learning Partners

Our Big Opportunity
Public school programming offers increasingly less exposure to hands-on, real-world experiences outside of the classroom in the arts, humanities and sciences, further expanding the opportunity gap.

Our Big Thought
We provide educators with access to thousands of imaginative, high-quality programs and field trips that are vetted for quality and aligned to state education standards.

Our Innovative Approach
We cover the cost of transportation and admission so every elementary student in Dallas ISD has access to an out-of-school/informal learning experience each year. We are the only community in the country providing ongoing, equitable access of this caliber.

We developed a user-friendly, online portal for educators to find programs or field trips that support their academic goals.

All programs are vetted for quality, including a listing of TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) for each educational experience.

The program was expanded in 2015 for field trips and on-campus programming to include fine arts, humanities and STEM learning.

We manage a grant distribution process to ensure funds are equitably distributed among students in the Dallas Independent School District.

The portal is also accessible to the public to utilize and book quality education experiences.

Our Impact
Between 2011-2015, Learning Partners (formerly ArtsPartners) provided access to every elementary school student in Dallas ISD including:

- 20,000+ hours of programming
- 80+ partner organizations
- 1,500,000 total student hours

The four-year longitudinal study, Enriching Minds. Growing Our Future, 2005, found:

- Arts Partners programs immediately help students become active learners
- Students involved in Arts Partners have a positive attitude about school and demonstrate increased motivation
- Arts Partners students place great emphasis on the power of ideas, word choice and personal expression.
Library Live

Our Big Opportunity
When children lack access to literary experiences, their vocabulary and reading comprehension skills are significantly lower than their peers, further deepening the opportunity gap.

Our Big Thought
We leverage public libraries—a neighborhood-based resource where imaginative opportunities abound—to foster a love of reading in children and their caregivers.

Our Innovative Approach
Each month, we host free, interactive programs at Dallas Public Library branches.

Children and their caregivers can explore various cultural traditions through storytelling, the visual and performing arts.

Activities integrate seasonal themes or events (Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Earth Day, etc.), reinforcing pride and understanding by celebrating different cultural backgrounds.

Master storytellers and performers bring featured works to life.

Our Impact
We are encouraged that Library Live has been embraced by the community. This program is designed to increase access among families to literacy-based programming.

10,120 participants (FY 2015)

278 program hours (FY 2015)

27 Dallas Public Library sites
Thriving Minds

Our Big Opportunity

The opportunity gap prevents many students from expanding their curiosity and discovering their potential during the critical after-school and summer hours in a safe, supportive and engaging environment.

Our Big Thought

We make imagination central to after-school and summer learning programs, creating essential periods of enrichment.

Our Innovative Approach

We strategically connect partners and resources across the city to address the specific educational needs of students and families. No two programs are alike because they are tailored to the communities in which we serve, including school and community-based sites. Our two main modes of engagement are:

After-School Programs:
Deliver creative and artistic activities that support what kids learn in school
Develop social-emotional skills such as building relationships and showing empathy for others
Offer college prep and career readiness resources for students

Summer Camp:
Cultivate social-emotional skills through hands-on fine arts and enrichment activities,
Reduce summer learning loss by preparing students for school in the fall
Explore possibilities in higher education and careers


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After-School Programs:</th>
<th>Summer Camp:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39 sites</td>
<td>17 elementary campuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21,500 students</td>
<td>23,000 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100+ partner organizations</td>
<td>4M hours of student programming</td>
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<tr>
<td>95% of after-school participants showed better classroom behavior (principal survey)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/3 of after-school participants moved from “non-proficient” to “proficient” on state-mandated tests</td>
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Students participating in Thriving Minds Summer Camp enter the fall with a meaningful advantage in math. Students who attend at least 22 days or receive 39 hours of reading instruction also enter school in the fall with a meaningful advantage in reading.*

52% of students assessed showed positive gains in Relationship Skills competency (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment, 2014)

Our Services: Program Consulting and Custom Curriculum

Our Commitment

The Big Thought Institute develops innovative education curricula aligned to state standards. Our custom learning plans transform real-world spaces into engaging interactive classrooms and laboratories.

Our Approach

We establish a collaborative relationship with our partners focused on identifying real-world educational opportunities and setting clear and attainable learning objectives. We then leverage our internal expertise to write curricula that is uniquely relevant to students’ life experiences and local environments. A hallmark of Big Thought’s approach is our emphasis on developing social-emotional skills, engaging the imagination and building on the state’s academic standards. Throughout the duration of each program, we continue to work closely with our partners to assess student success and finetune our approach.

Our Work

Here are a few examples of how our custom curricula are transforming everyday spaces into imaginative learning environments:

Klyde Warren Park

Students engage with unique features of the park’s environment (food trucks, ecosystems, architecture/design and more) to develop a wide range of academic and social-emotional skills. Our multi-layered curriculum emphasizes problem solving, sense of perception, creativity and reasoning. It’s the first alternative educational program in the nation to be aligned with state standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills).

AT&T Dallas Cowboys Stadium

While receiving a real-time view of the stadium, students sharpen target skills (math, science, language arts and social studies) and obtain a better understanding of career opportunities ranging from engineering to visual artistry.

State Fair of Texas

Students develop STEM skills by engaging with the local fairgrounds in unique ways. From calculating the ‘revolutions per minute’ of the carousel to creating a periodic table based on fair food, our State Fair curriculum connects relevant real-life experience with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

DaVerse Works

DaVerse Works is a curriculum developed by Big Thought to help students explore poetry writing and performance. The curriculum provides content for one year’s worth of after-school club workshops, integrating teaching artistry best practices and the Six Dimensions of Quality to measure instructional excellence. The curriculum is divided into three units: self-exploration to get students engaged in writing, how to use poetry to elicit emotional responses, and poetry design to address social justice issues.

SLANT

Service Learning Adventures in North Texas is a curriculum designed to help students self-direct a quality service-learning project. Big Thought produced the original curriculum for the North Texas Super Bowl Host Committee. The program engaged more than 44,000 youth in service-learning in the months leading up to Super Bowl XLV. The SLANT curriculum was revised as part of the NCAA Final Four® in 2013 in an effort to inspire youth the service throughout the Dallas area.
Our Services: Public Speaking and Policy Advising

Our Commitment

We promote imagination-based learning across the globe by sharing our expertise with educators, policy makers and civic leaders, both in public and private institutions.

Our Approach

We influence educational policy by participating in strategic planning conversations and speaking publically about our methods for improving learning practices. From lectures to custom workshops, we participate in school district panels, community events and government conferences locally, nationally and abroad.

Our Work

Here are a few examples of how we are influencing learning around the globe:

Policy Advisory and Public Speaking

Led international consulting projects and public presentations including:

- Korea Arts and Culture Education Services in Seoul, S. Korea, a nationwide effort to transform public education among disengaged youth
- Creative Scotland in Edinburgh, Scotland, capacity building and raising achievement
- Advised in the development of the national Cities of Learning movement
- Provided strategic planning services for the National Arts Education Partnership

Led professional learning discussions for Creative Cities (Boston, Seattle, Dallas and Chicago)

Participated as a member in strategic conversations of the White Riley Peterson Policy Fellowship Group at Furman University, South Carolina

Big Thought Leadership

As a force for educational reform, Big Thought President and CEO Gigi Antoni has been named to:

- The Harvard Graduate School of Education, Arts in Education Advisory Council
- The White House Champions of Change for Arts Education—an extraordinary group of luminaries, educators and organizations creating innovative programs across the country—by the Obama Administration

Professional Development

In an effort to continuously provide quality instruction, Big Thought offers our educators and program partners with numerous professional development opportunities throughout the year, including the Big Thought Partners Institute, a peer-to-peer training module to strengthen skills such as fundraising, board management, capacity building and program design.
NOTE ON FY15 FINANCIAL RESULTS: Big Thought manages its organizational budget and financial reporting on a cash basis. The FY15 accrual-based deficit of $3.1M was incurred primarily due to: 1) the recording of $850K of pledged income in FY14, with the associated accrued-based deficit of $1.3M was incurred primarily due to: 1) the recording of $850K of pledged income in FY14, with the associated

Big Thought Donors

Thank you to our many individuals, corporate and foundation donors who make our work possible. We are grateful for your continued support of Big Thought.

Anonymous (4)
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Communities Foundation of Texas
The David M. Crowley Foundation
The Dallas Foundation
Dallas Jewish Community Foundation
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Fossil Foundation
Frost Bank
HFS Wealth Management
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NBC Universal Foundation
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Safeway, Inc.
Sammens Enterprises, Inc.
Target Corporation
Texas Instruments Foundation
US Trust Bank of America
Private Wealth Management
Organizations
Absolutely Blooming America’s Charities
Big Box, Little Box
Carter High School Alumni Creative Arts Center of Dallas
Dallas County Community College District
Hispanic 100
The Hodges Foundation
Horizon Unicanter Universalist Church
IJPRA
Klabaza Realty, LLC
Momentous Institute
Network for Good
New Venture Fund
Photographs Do Not Bend Gallery
The Real Estate Council Foundation
TACA
Thomas L. Tolbert Elementary
School
Degas
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas
Young Audiences, Inc.
Government
City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs
National Endowment for the Arts
Texas Commission on the Arts
Texas Education Agency
Family Foundations
Catherine A. Corrigan Fund of The Dallas Foundation
Durham Family Foundation
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Patricia Wolffson Fagelau Philanthropic Fund of the Dallas Jewish Community Foundation
Mark T. and Carol Pierce Goglia Fund
Rita Sue and Alan J. Gold Philanthropic Fund of the Dallas Jewish Community Foundation
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Braun and Nancy Hanley Foundation
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Manoff Family Foundation
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The Pavey Family Foundation
Perot Family Foundation
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Fiscal Year 2014-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Income</th>
<th>Uses of Income</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions and Grants</td>
<td>Supporting Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Service Fees</td>
<td>Fundraising</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Program Services</td>
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<td>To Organizations</td>
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<td>To Individuals</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>$9,021,426</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Fiscal Year 2014-2015**

- **Sources of Income**
  - Contributions and Grants: $6,400,081
  - Program Service Fees: $992,876
  - Other: $318,621

- **Uses of Income**
  - Supporting Services: $619,881
  - Fundraising: $964,736
  - Program Services: $7,436,809
  - Total: $9,021,426
We often think of ‘imagination’ as something extra: extracurricular, extraneous, only for the extraordinary.

It’s not.

The truth is, imagination is fundamental to each and every one of us: the source of all grit and creativity, the core that powers our mind, body and spirit.

Big Thought believes that within every one of us, no matter where we come from or where we appear to be headed, there is an imagination that’s waiting to fire up, waiting to learn, waiting to energize and explore. And when fully engaged, it’s only imagination that can chart the course of a life forever, for the better.

Imagination Isn’t What You Imagine
Our mission:
To make imagination a part of everyday learning.