



National
Math Stars

2024 Annual Report



Letter from the CEO



Dear families, supporters, and cheerleaders,

2024 was quite the year for National Math Stars! We:

- Officially launched as a non-profit
- Garnered 1,300 applications, from 8% of Texas elementary schools
- Onboarded our 61 Texas Stars, including hosting our first Welcome Weekend
- Hired 18 wonderful mathematician mentors
- Grew from a full-time team of 2 to 7 (and more in early 2025)
- Began outreach in 5 additional Midwest states

We've been blown away by how enthusiastically districts responded to us, and by the level of reach we were able to achieve in our first year. It speaks to both the relentless hustle of our team and the need educators and families feel for a program like this.

And this summary doesn't even begin to capture what we've learned through the initial months of working with our 2024 cohort. These Stars are incredible! Keeping them challenged is a constant dance of adjusting math class levels, advocating with schools, coaching mentors, connecting Stars with peers, and researching additional opportunities (in coding, physics, and so much more). It's exciting work, and we can see the growth it enables.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us. We've only just begun!

Ilana Walder-Biesanz
Founder and CEO, National Math Stars

Who we are

Our mission

National Math Stars ensures mathematically extraordinary students from all communities have the resources they need to reach the frontiers of math and science.

Our history

National Math Stars (NMS) began as a project incubated by Carina Initiatives in summer 2023, with the goal of helping more kids from more communities reach the highest levels of STEM achievement. Starting with 12 Pilot Stars around the country in Fall 2023, our founding leaders worked to develop and refine a 10-year program of wraparound support for mathematically extraordinary students and their families.

In May 2024, NMS spun out of Carina Initiatives and announced \$16.5M in initial funding commitments. Texas was chosen as the inaugural region for Star recruitment. Our Partnerships team launched our Awards Program to great success -- Texas schools nominated 1,700 of their top math students. After a careful selection process, we invited 61 Stars to form our first cohort.

As we move into 2025, we are expanding our reach. We expect to admit 350 Stars into two different programs, drawing from not just Texas but also the Midwest (Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin).

Organizational values

- Choose impact over ego
- Share openly; listen actively
- Keep learning
- Focus on what matters
- Persevere

Pedagogical values

- Math is personal
- Math is rooted in creating and solving hard problems
- Math is joyful
- Math happens in a community
- Math is interconnected



Awards Program

For most families, the Awards Program is the first step on their journey with National Math Stars. Our team works with school and districts to identify 2nd- and 3rd-grade students in the top 2% on math achievement tests. These students receive award medals celebrating their accomplishments, as well as invitations to apply to become Stars.

The Awards Program is free for schools, districts, and families. All awardees who sign up receive newsletters about STEM opportunities as well as access to free enrichment resources provided by our partners. Families may also choose to apply to the Stars program.



Awards Stats

1,700

Award letters distributed

76%

Of Star applications came from Awardees

1,302

Total Star applications from all sources

482

Schools with Stars applicants (8% of TX elementary schools)

1029

Completed Star applications (including screening test)

61

Stars selected



Stars Program

The Stars Program is a 10-year, fully funded program that supports our Stars' love of mathematics from early elementary through high school.

That journey looks different for every Star, so we work with each family to design a path that aligns with their Star's strengths and interests.



The Stars Program provides four pillars of support

Math Development	Financial Support	Family Advising	Supportive Community
<p>Advanced math courses</p> <hr/> <p>Weekly math mentoring</p> <hr/> <p>STEM summer camps</p>	<p>Welcome package with laptop, peripherals and math swag</p> <hr/> <p>Annual family budget for STEM enrichment opportunities (e.g. robotics kits, 3D printers, museum memberships)</p>	<p>Dedicated family advisor</p> <hr/> <p>School selection and advocacy support</p> <hr/> <p>Individualized plan to track progress toward goals</p> <hr/> <p>College counseling and career exploration</p>	<p>Cohort model with virtual and in-person events</p> <hr/> <p>Welcome weekend to introduce and orient each cohort</p> <hr/> <p>Family and students online forums</p>





Meet our 2024 Stars

- **61 total Stars** - 27 girls (44% of the cohort) and 34 boys (56%)
- **Ages** ranging from **6 to 10** (at time of admission)
- Hailing **from 26 cities**, with population sizes from 2,300 to 2.3M
- The **Stars farthest from each other** geographically live in San Juan and McKinney - **461 miles apart**
- **10** are **enrolled in charter schools**, **6** are **homeschooled**, **1** is at a **private school** and the remainder (**44**) are in **Texas public schools**
- **Household sizes** ranging from **2 to 10 people**
- **22 Stars** are from **first-generation immigrant families**
- **8 Stars** have **parents whose primary language is not English**
- The majority have **household incomes <\$75,000**
- **Average CogAT scores** of **>99th percentile** on both quantitative and nonverbal sections
- **Math class levels** ranging from **Beast Academy 3A/B to Algebra**



Star family stories



Zhoie, age 9, from Austin

"NMS has helped my family by providing exceptional mentoring, long-term support, and financial assistance. Their guidance led us to high-quality programs like AoPS, Brilliant, and summer camps. With their support, she has gained confidence, honed problem-solving skills, and developed a deep love for math and programming. More importantly, NMS has connected us with a community of like-minded families. Through competition coachings, meetups, and STEM events, Zhoie has built lasting friendships with peers who share her passion for discovery. Their support has made our STEM journey both rewarding and inspiring, opening doors to incredible opportunities."

~ Zhoie's parents



Adaline, age 9, from Rhome

"It helps to talk to other moms. We're all figuring it out—how much to lean into math, how much to encourage other passions. It's good not to feel alone. [Adaline's] an all-rounder. She loves to learn, but we also want to support her emotionally and socially. That's what we love about National Math Stars. It's not just about academics—it's about the whole child."

~ Adaline's parents



Holden, age 10, from Katy

"National Math Stars has given Holden a space where he can truly challenge himself, connect with like-minded peers who share his passion for mathematics, and grow both academically and personally. The invaluable support from NMS staff, who truly understand his needs and his potential to learn above-grade-level mathematical concepts, has made all the difference. The mentorship and opportunities have pushed him to think in new ways, and it's been amazing to watch his confidence and excitement for math grow. As parents, we've realized that we are no longer navigating this journey alone."

~ Holden's parents



Our Star community



This [NMS] has entirely reshaped the educational landscape for my child. The opportunities he has been able to access are truly life changing in affording him a chance to reach his potential. He's finally being challenged and able to actively learn and develop a work ethic, which will be invaluable in all he does. The support we have received throughout has been exceptional and the commitment to my child still leaves me in awe.



2024 Program Highlights

Achievements

- 5th grader scored 23/25 on AMC8 (Distinguished Honor Roll)
- A Star founded the NMS Cubing Club for 8 other Stars
- 3rd grader placed third in Wisconsin Math Kangaroo competition
- 5th grader scored first in the individual round of Math Masters (out of 5,500+ students)
- A Star attended the Harvard Society AI Bootcamp
- Two Stars were invited to speak with the Desmos team to share their experiences with the platform
- 6th grade Star scored a 32/36 on the ACT Math

Summer Camps Attended by Our 12 Pilot Stars

- Epsilon Camp (4 Stars)
- Math In The Mountains (2 Stars)
- Center for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins (1 Star)
- iD Tech (2 Stars)

Star Stats

325

Hours of math mentoring

95%

Attendance of math mentoring sessions

271

Family advising touchpoints



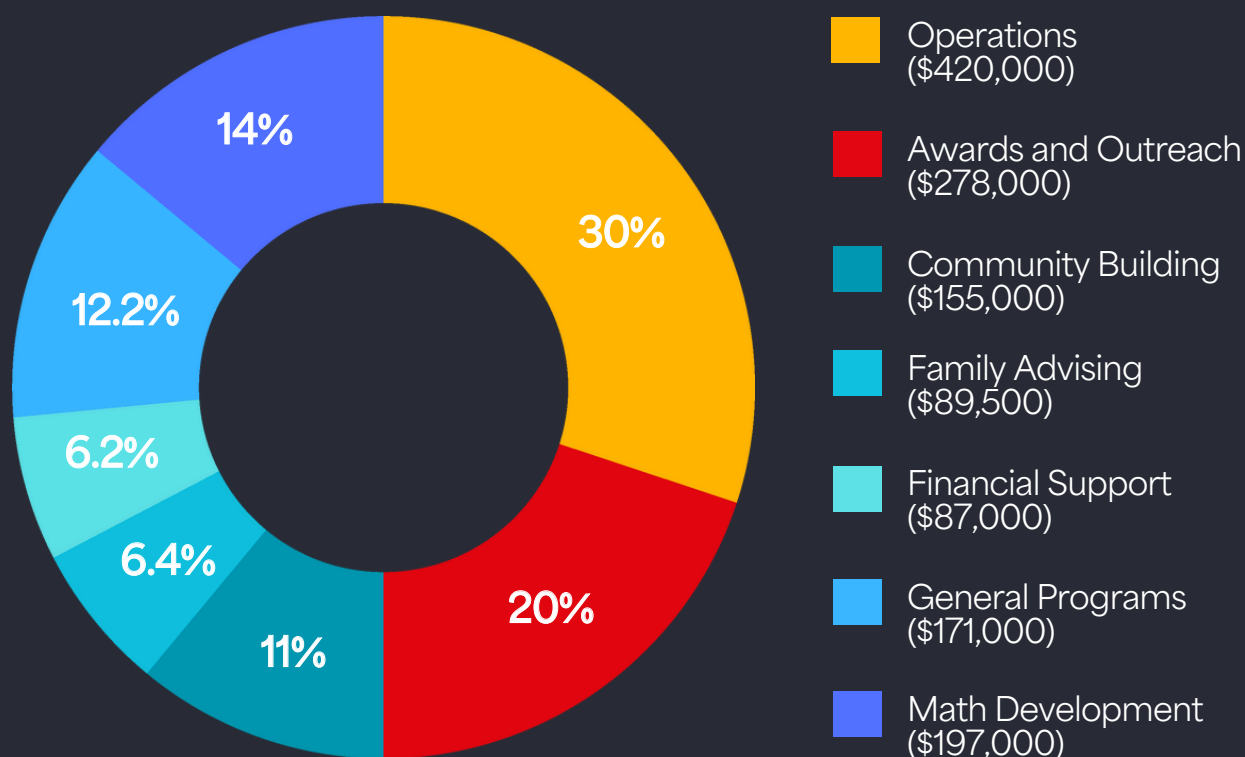
Financial overview

\$3.17M

in revenue

\$1.38M

in expenses



Thanks to our donors for
supporting our Stars!

Carina
Initiatives

Polynera
Fund

Anonymous
(x2)

David
Vincent



Bright Stars, Bold Steps: what's next in 2025

Expanding the Awards Programs

- Distribute 6,250+ awards in Texas
- Distribute 2,500+ awards in our new Midwest region (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin)
- Secure 3,500+ eligible applicants, across our two regions

Growing and evolving the current Stars Program

- Select and onboard 100 new Stars
- Host Welcome Weekend 2025 for 250+ participants
- Refine our program model based on early data and feedback
- Add 3 Family Advisors, ~25 Math Mentors and a Programs Operations Manager to support our growing NMS community

Piloting an expanded Stars Program

- Design an additional, more scalable family support program
- Pilot this program with ~250 families in the 2025-26 school year
- Create a roadmap for expanding this program to serve thousands of families per cohort (in parallel with the growth of our existing Stars program)





National
Math Stars