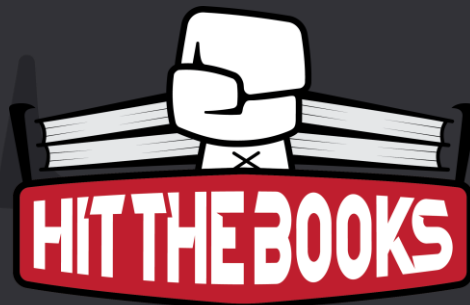


2025 Annual Report



EST. 2019

'Tough Times Don't Last, Tough People Do'

I. Hear From Leadership

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Letter from the Executive Director



When I joined Hit the Books, I stepped into an organization with a powerful mission, deep community roots, and extraordinary potential. Over the past year, I have had the privilege of leading Hit the Books through a period of meaningful growth, reflection, and strengthening, work that has positioned us not only to serve more students, but to serve them better.

In 2025, Hit the Books continued to expand its impact across Harlem. We served over 160 students, increased the consistency and quality of our academic and mixed martial arts programming, and deepened our focus on student development to support our holistic approach - academically, physically, and emotionally. As families continued to place their trust in us as a stable, caring presence in their children's lives, our students showed measurable gains in math, literacy, and fitness.

This year was also defined by the work behind the scenes that provided HTB with the highest impact results to date. We invested heavily in strengthening our internal systems, policies, and staff training to ensure that our growth is sustainable and replicable. We optimized roles, improved communication channels, and reinforced our commitment to safety, accountability, and excellence. These operational improvements may not always be visible, but they are essential to creating an organization that functions with intention and integrity.

My time at Hit the Books has reaffirmed what I have believed throughout my career: young people thrive when expectations are clear, they are surrounded by caring adults, and programs are designed with heart, consistency, and rigor. Our model, combining academic intervention with mixed martial arts, continues to be a powerful tool for engagement, confidence building, and resilience in action. We see daily how students transfer lessons from the mat into the classroom and beyond.

As we look ahead, the future of Hit the Books is focused on depth, not just scale. We are committed to refining our academic approach, strengthening staff leadership, expanding partnerships, and increasing our financial sustainability. Our goal is not simply to grow bigger, but to grow smarter, ensuring that every student who walks through our doors receives high quality support and leaves with stronger skills, greater confidence, and a belief in what is possible for their future.

None of this work happens alone. I am deeply grateful to our staff, Board of Directors, families, donors, and community partners who believe in this mission and show up for our students every day. Your support makes our work possible, and your trust pushes us to lead with care, clarity, and ambition.

Thank you for being a part of the Hit the Books community. I am proud of how far we have come, and even more excited about where we are going.

With gratitude,

Jhae Thompson
Executive Director
Hit the Books



Jhae Thompson
Executive Director

As we close out our 5th full year of operations and reflect on our journey to this point it has been a surreal and humbling experience. Every step of the way we have faced challenges, but with the help of our stakeholders the organization has persevered, adapting to changing circumstances to best serve our students and their families. For the first four years, our job as the Board was survival, constantly scrambling to ensure Hit the Books had sufficient funding to allow our team to do the work that we knew would make all the difference for our students. This year, our job has evolved.



Justin Haber
Board Chair

For the first time since our founding, 2025 has put Hit the Books in a position to play offense. In addition to our largest fundraising surplus to date, several core donors came together to create the Educational Excellence and Capital Fund (“EECF”). This \$1,000,000 fund that Tom Coleman spearheaded and anchored, will act as a catalyst for future growth and a sustainable source of capital funding for future expansion. We cannot express enough gratitude for Tom’s belief in us and for setting us up for long-term sustainable growth.



Zach Levy
Board Vice Chair

In addition to the EECF, we ended the year with our highest cash balance ever. Without the constant strain of low working capital, we can better focus our attention on time consuming yet critical strategic opportunities. Examples of these include improving our retention, partnering with organizations like WIN to expand our programming platform, and exploring opportunities to incorporate AI into our educational programming. These are just a few of the many ways we are working to continually improve the way we operate to ensure we are constantly leading the fight for educational equality.

This also means that, while in the past donations to Hit the Books allowed us to keep the doors open, future donations will allow us to grow. Your support in 2026 means we will be able to work with more students and have a deeper impact with each of those students. We cannot thank all of our stakeholders enough for helping us get to this position and could not be more excited to see where your continued partnership will take us in 2026 and beyond!

Best,



Justin Haber and Zach Levy
Co-Founders of Hit the Books

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Our Mission

Hit the Books (“HTB”) aims to **bring additional educational resources** to underserved communities through a sports-based development approach, with tutoring and mentorship at its core and mixed martial arts as the ‘hook’. HTB **serves as an after-school community center** to facilitate development and help make any and every goal achievable for its students.

How We Will Achieve Our Mission

- We provide after-school educational programs, mentorship, and mixed martial arts classes to children in Harlem aged 6-13 to help students progress intellectually, emotionally, and physically.
- We expose our students to educational opportunities that may otherwise pass them by, enhancing the educational resources available to children in our targeted communities and fostering an environment of educational equality.
- We serve as a community within a community, where children feel safe and view the facility as a second home.

Our Core Values

- Our members believe in a **commitment** to their academic goals and put the value of education first.
- Our members believe that they are capable, **resilient** and can bounce back from anything.
- Our members are **ambitious**, and they believe every opportunity can be achieved with a positive attitude, hard work and tenacity.
- Our members are **self-disciplined**. Focus and consistent practice lead to success—in the ring, and in all corners of life.
- Finally, HTB members are **compassionate**. They believe in being empathetic toward each other, their families, and other HTB members. They are champions for their communities and strive to make the world a better place.

Our H.I.T. approach is Holistic, Intentional, and Transformational.

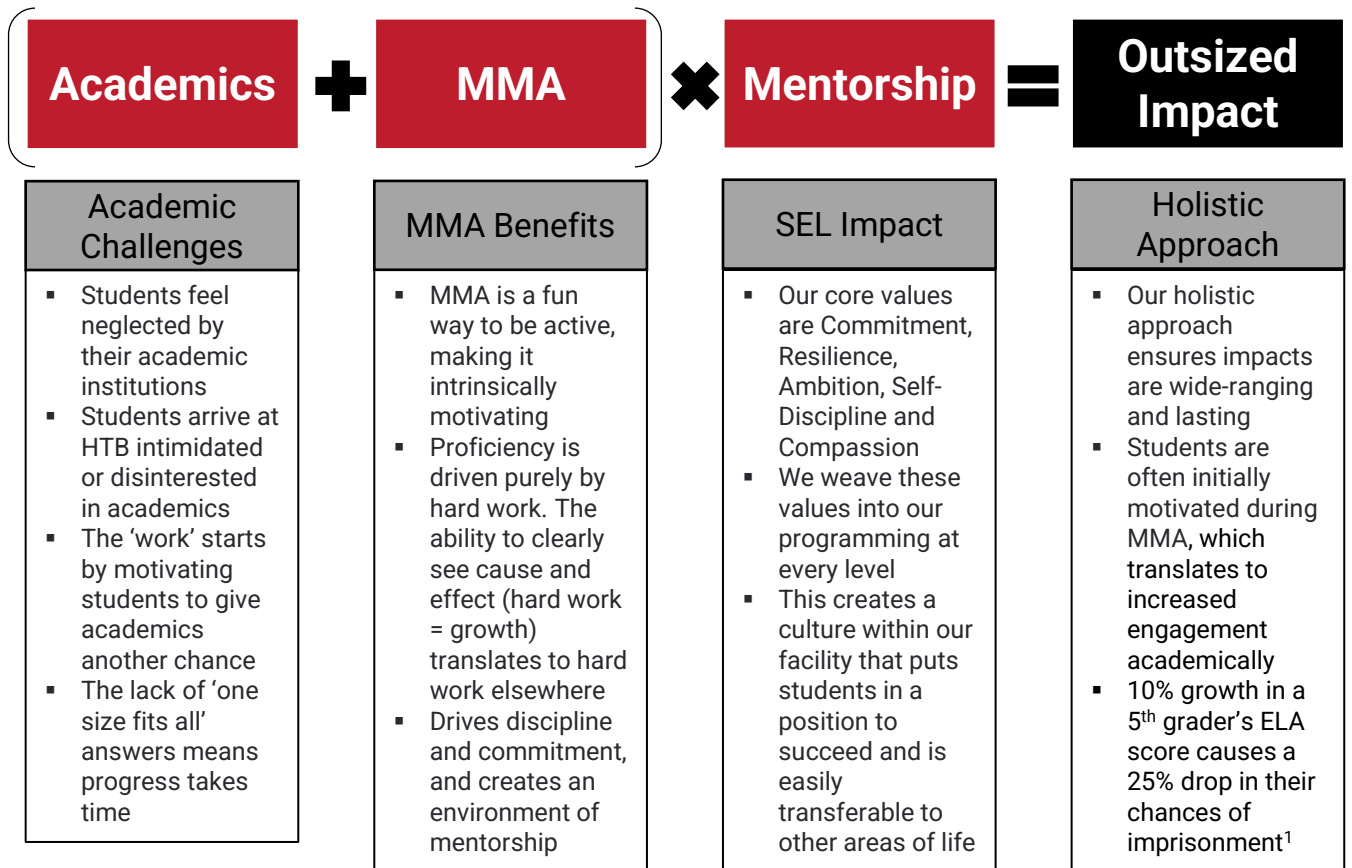
Holistic Approach is Core to the Hit the Books Model



Hit the Books takes a holistic approach across academics, mixed martial arts / fitness, and mentorship to improve overall wellbeing for our students and maximize our impact

Academics	Mentorship	Mixed Martial Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ HTB has a full-time staff focused on creating a positive learning environment and a tutoring curriculum, leveraging the iReady educational learning platform ✓ HTB has recruited talented local high school students and graduate school interns to provide individualized instruction to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ HTB employs passive mentorship, whereby the staff and tutors act as role models through their daily interactions with our students ✓ HTB provides daily dinner for students to foster a communal experience and bonding among the students, tutors, and HTB staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mixed Martial Arts encompasses Muay-Thai Kickboxing, Boxing, Wrestling, and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu ✓ The benefits of martial arts include improvements in focus, discipline, self control, and coordination. At HTB, we have blended those benefits with mentorship that focuses on camaraderie, goal setting, compassion and work ethic

Every facet of our program is intentional. It is designed based on extensive research on effective academic strategies and the benefits of an interdisciplinary (sports + academics) approach



* Defined as achieving true mastery of a topic before moving on to the next, more advanced subject.
 1. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/origin/ny/report.html>

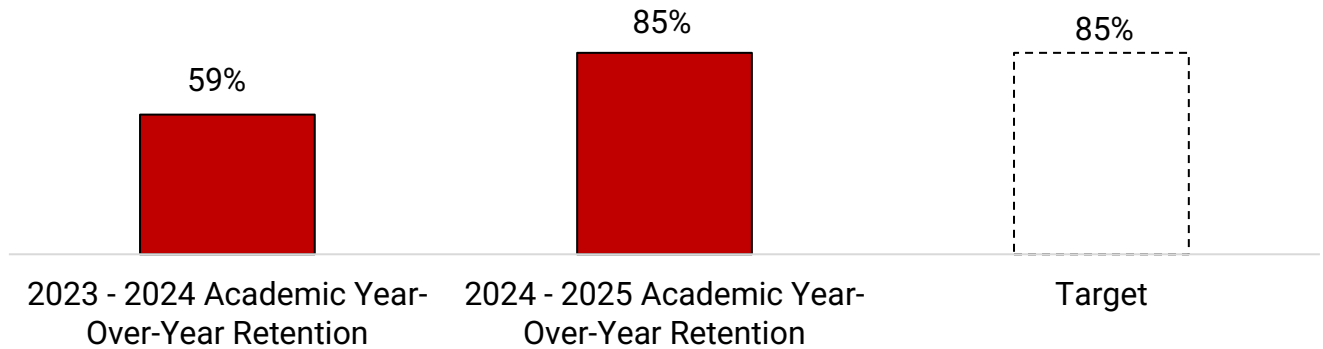
Intentionality is Core to Everything We Do



Hit the Books is constantly improving and evolving. We track our KPIs closely and we make metric-driven decisions to increase our impact

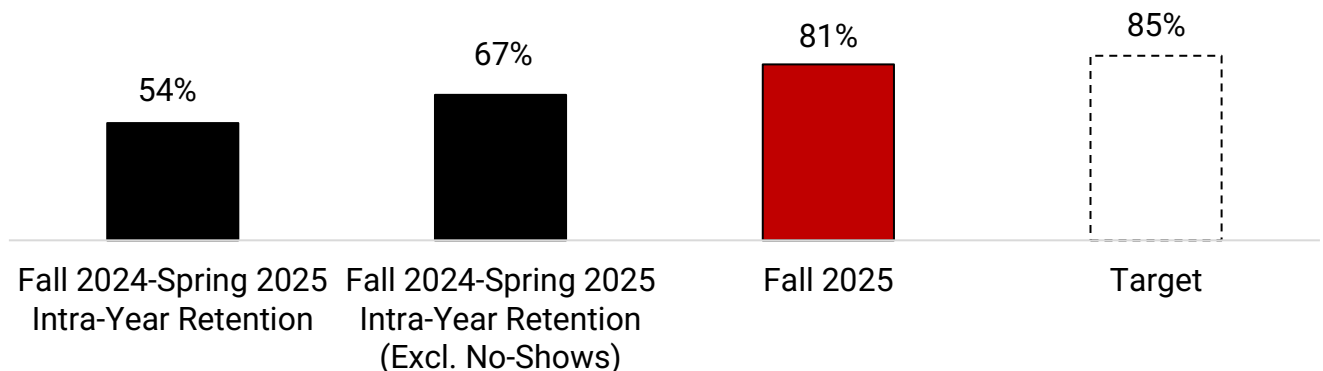
Year-to-Year Retention

- We identified an issue in our retention of students year-over-year, which was just 59% from Spring 2023 to Fall 2024
- **We set a goal to increase year-to-year retention over time to 85%, and this year we hit that target!**
- Our strategy began with identifying the key reasons for churn, reducing friction that contributed to churn, and establishing better dialogue with parents after the school year ended
- **Serving students consistently year-to-year will increase the long-term impact we can have!**



Intra-Year Retention

- On intra-year retention, our goal is to reach 85%
- Actual intra-year retention in the 2024 – 2025 academic year was 54%, but excluding no-shows, **intra-year retention was 67%**
- As a result, for the 2025-2026 academic year, we have implemented a much better system of evaluating scheduling conflicts at the time of enrollment to prevent no-shows, and are **tracking towards our target of 85% intra-year retention**



Our Impact is Transformational at Every Level



We aren't focused on just passing time or changing our students' day. We are focused on altering the trajectory of their entire lives by unlocking their potential. We see this as not only having an impact on our students, but on the entire community we serve.

- 1 When students stay in Hit the Books for multiple years, on average they grow 9 percentile points in reading and 10 percentile points in math

1 HTB Students Multi-Year Percentile Growth

9%



10%

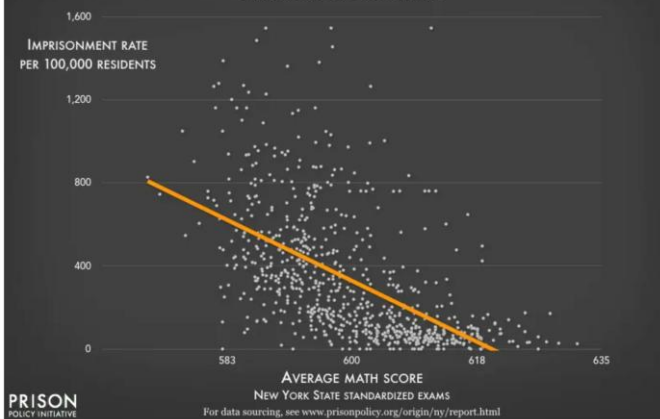


Reading

Math

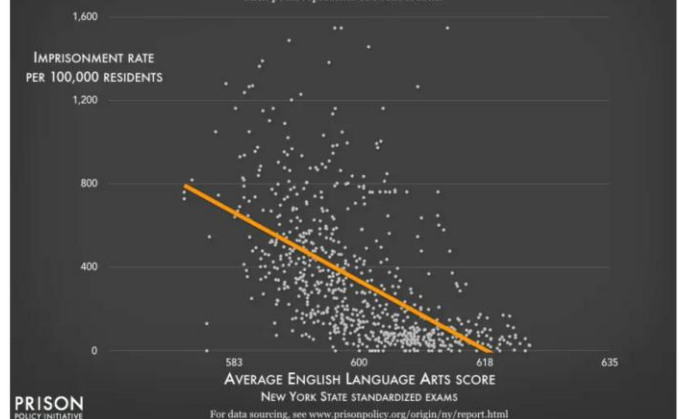
2 High imprisonment communities have lower 5th grade math scores

Number of people from each elementary school zone in New York City that are incarcerated in state prisons (per 100,000 residents, in 2010) compared with the local school's average 5th grade standardized math score in 2019. Each point represents one school zone.



High imprisonment communities have lower 5th grade ELA scores

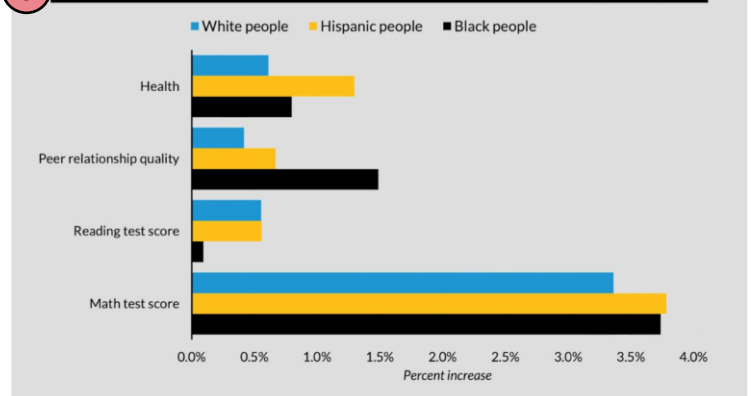
Number of people from each elementary school zone in New York City that are incarcerated in state prisons (per 100,000 residents) compared with the local school's average 5th grade standardized English Language Arts score in 2019. Each point represents one school zone.



- 2 A prisonpolicy.org study shows an inverse correlation between imprisonment rates and math + ELA testing. It implies that 10% growth in either math or ELA academic scores translates to a ~25% reduction in imprisonment rates for students.

- 3 A study conducted by the Urban Institute showed that improved math scores had a +3% impact on future earnings. This impact was largest for Black and Hispanic students. While not as large, improved health, peer relationships, and reading scores also had positive impacts on future earnings. At HTB, we focus on not one, but all of these contributors to adult outcomes.

3 Predictive Factors from Middle Childhood for Increase in Earnings at Age 30



Urban Institute

HTB helps its students improve academically, live healthier lives, and develop socio-emotional skills that keep them out of trouble and earn higher incomes as adults

Sources: Prisonpolicy.org, The Urban Institute.

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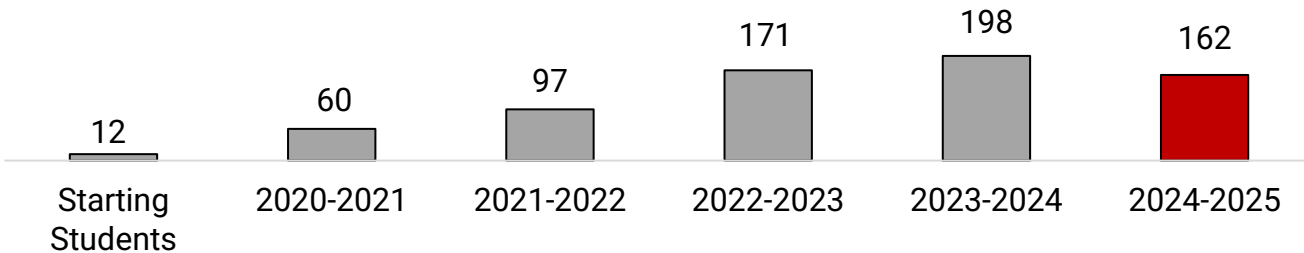
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Organizational Growth

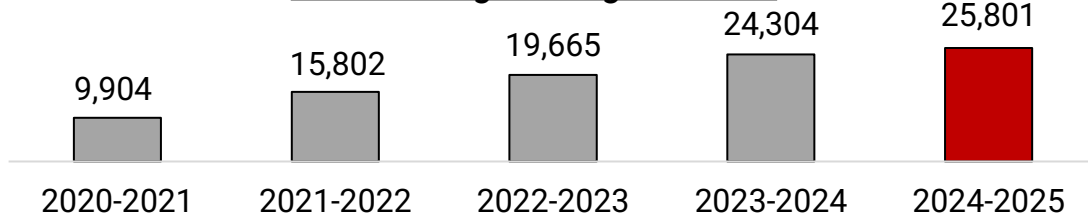


In 2025, we experienced continued growth in hours served, as we have consistently done since our inception. In particular, we significantly grew the numbers of hours of programming per student.

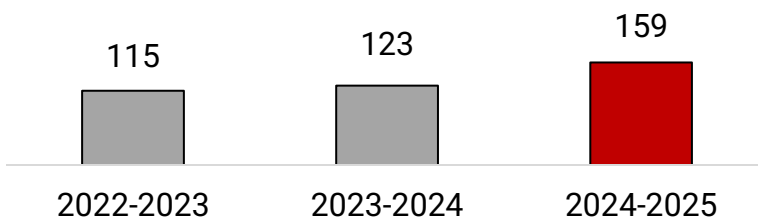
Student Count Over Time



Hours of Programming Over Time



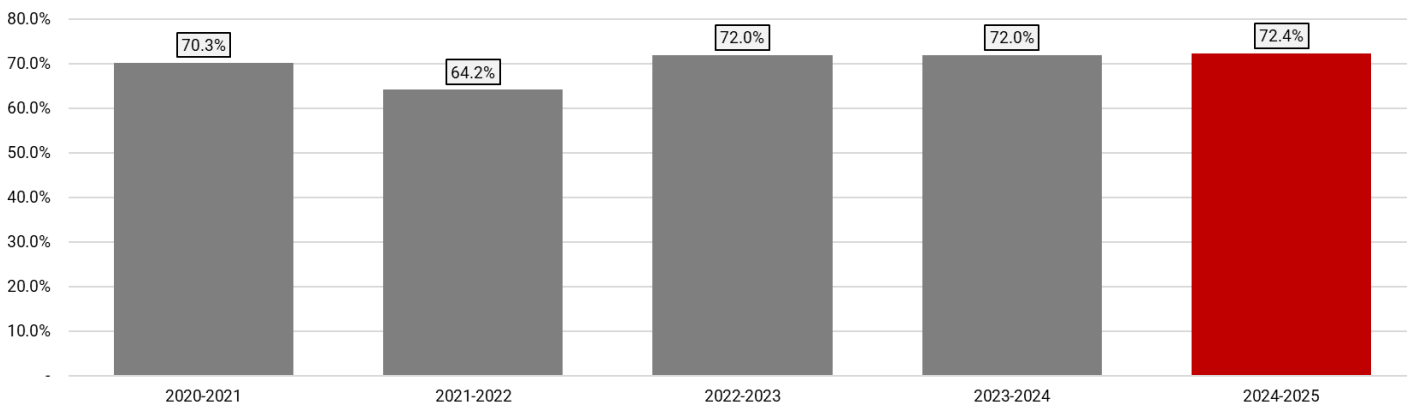
Hours of Programming Per Student



Intentionally reduced student count in Fall 2024 to optimize attendance and hours of programming we could offer each student

Attendance has remained consistently above 70% and hit a new high in 2024-2025

Attendance Over Time



Go to our [Website](#) to see our program in action!



Students at work in the learning center!



Students in action at the MMA training center!



Group shot from the UFC training session

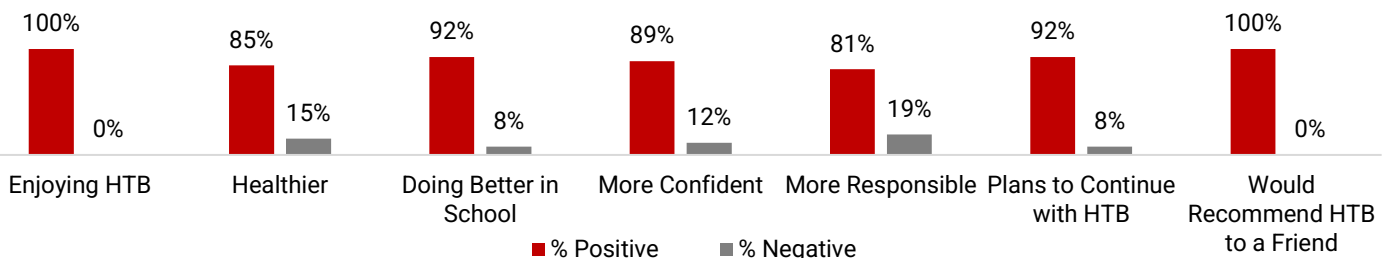


Students on a special field trip to meet with one of our corporate sponsors

Parent Satisfaction Survey

- The results of our parent satisfaction survey were overwhelmingly positive, and 100% of parents indicated that they would recommend HTB to a friend!

2024-2025 Parent Survey Results



Our most important stakeholders have been and continue to be our students and their parents. Below we highlighted feedback from our HTB families!

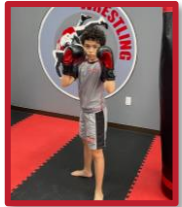
Student Anecdotes



Emani C.
6th Grade

“ it feels like a place where you can come and feel safe. It feels like we're in our comfort zone and that we can speak our minds. ”

“ The friendships that I have built here. It's so easy to connect with everyone - not just the students but the coaches and the teachers. There are so many possibilities for fun and engagement. It keeps me motivated to know that there are achievements that I can strive for here. ”



Wafy B.
8th Grade

“ After a hard day, I come here and get to share my feelings and feel better. Sometime I come in tired and after training I leave full of energy. ”



Ryan P.
8th Grade

Parent Feedback

Why Did you Choose Hit the Books For Your Child?

“Hit The Books is an asset to my child and the West Harlem community. It's a safe environment that supports educational enrichment as well as Mixed Martial Arts.”

“This is a great program... I appreciate that something like this has been offered in the community.”

What Does Your Child Enjoy About Hit the Books?

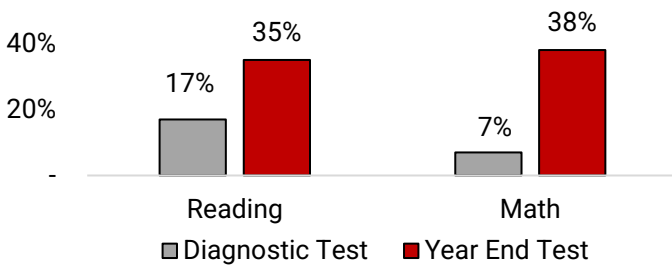
“Since attending Hit The Books for the past 3-4 years, her ability to regulate her emotions has greatly improved... she now uses the conflict resolution principles she learned at Hit The Books at school.”

“They've made so many new friends and love the relationships they've built with the staff and other students.”

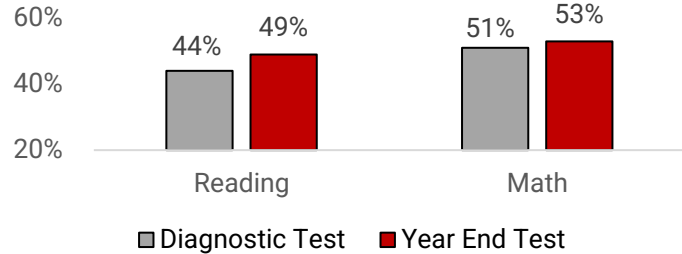
We continue to have a wide-ranging impact on our students academically, physically and socio-emotionally as shown by our data and as seen by their families at home

Academic Data

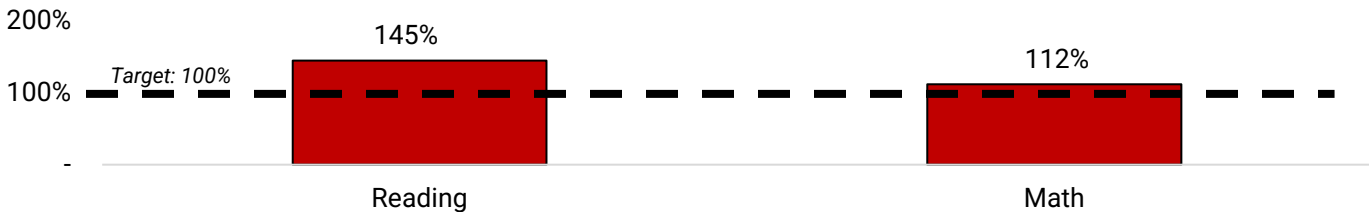
% of Students on Grade Level



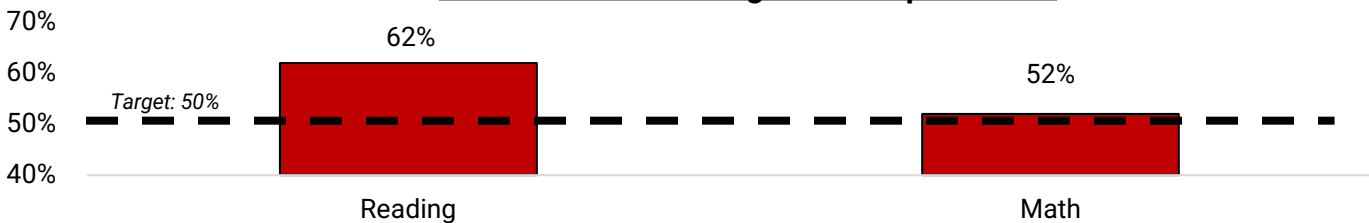
Absolute Student Improvement



HTB Growth vs. IReady Expectations



% of Students Growing Above Expectations



Fitness Data

Student Fitness Growth From Day 1

Squats
4,600%

Push Ups
488%

Sit Ups
3,700%

Laps
260%

Improved Students
~100%

HTB Records

Squats
3,410

Push Ups
160

Sit Ups
2,100

Laps
650

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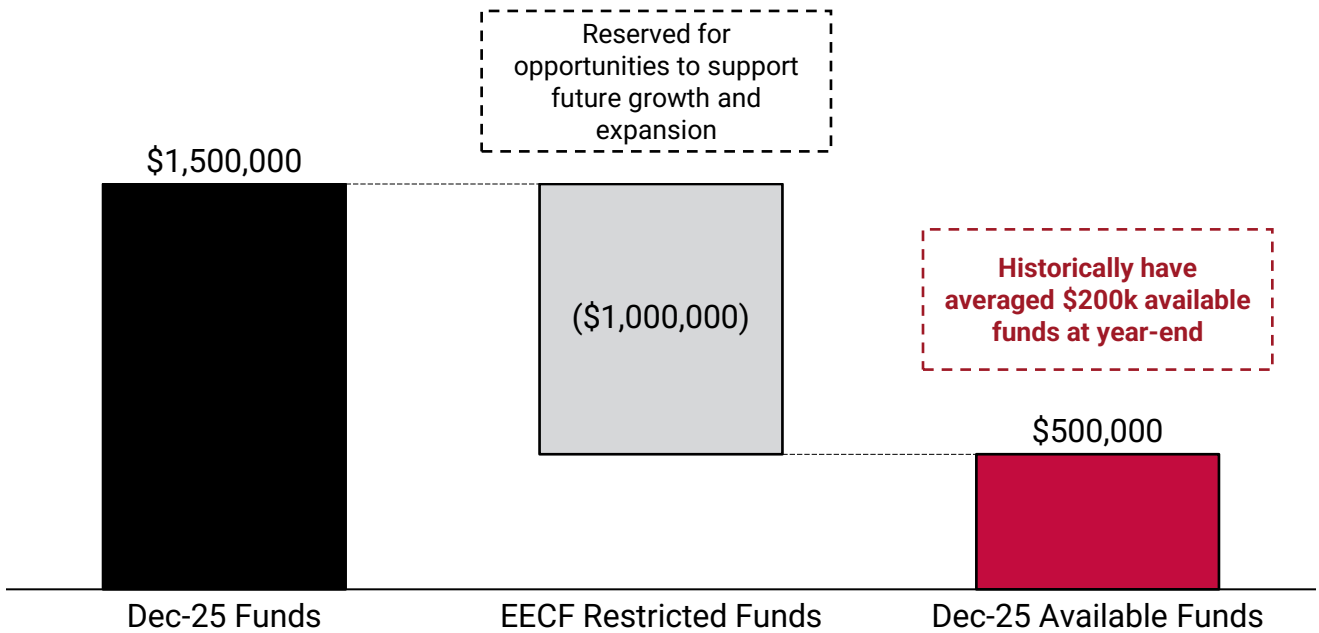
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Significant Growth Opportunity in 2026



We ended 2025 with significant excess funds relative to where we typically enter the new year, enabling us to invest in growth efforts without working capital constraints

December 2025 Ending Funds Available



Opportunity to Invest in Long-Term Growth Initiatives

1. Hiring a new Managing Director of Operations and Strategy to lead day-to-day facility and program management, providing our ED with leverage to allocate more time to strategic initiatives, partnerships, and fundraising
2. Pursuing external programming opportunities at partner sites to efficiently expand our reach and impact; initiated contract with WIN NYC in December 2025 to provide academic support at their facilities
3. Exploring hiring a Director of Development to drive fundraising growth
4. Evaluating AI tools that can enhance learning effectiveness

We have strategically evolved our growth model to enable faster growth, at lower costs and less upfront capital investment required. Our pilot satellite program launched in November with WIN.

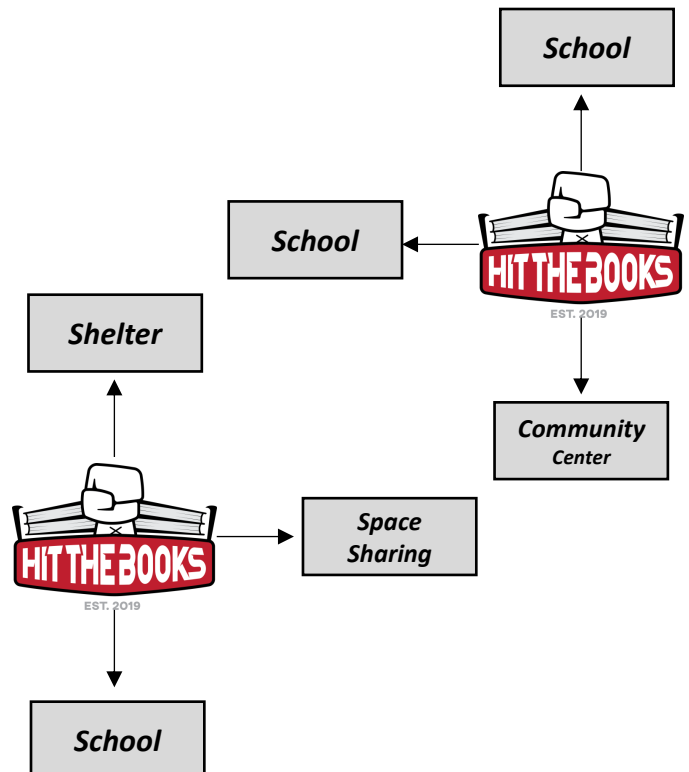
Old HTB Model – Building Out Facilities 1 by 1

Our original model was simple: succeed with one facility and then build more. At a cost of ~\$1,200,000 per facility and ~150 students of capacity we would operate at a cost of \$8,000 per student spot. Up front capital spending would be ~\$200,000 per facility.



New HTB Model – Hub + Satellite locations

Our new model leverages inbound interest we have received to bring the success of our model to other programs. By partnering with schools, shelters, community centers and other mission aligned organizations we can expand our single facility capacity by 50-100 students. Simultaneously, we can reduce our operating cost through earned income from these programs, reducing our cost per student to \$4,000 -\$6,000.



EECF – Unlocking Long Term Growth Opportunity

This year several of our donors came together to launch the Educational Excellence and Capital Fund ('EECF'). This fund is designed to be invested for the long-term, with investment returns to support future initiatives in innovative academic programming and capital spending for growth. Given our current financial footing and budget for 2026, we project the EECF having multiple years of compounding before being utilized.

EECF Today - \$1,000,000



EECF Year 3 - \$1,331,000



EECF Year 5 - \$1,610,510

At 10% Annual Return EECF would generate \$331,000 over 3 years, with potential use cases including:

- Investing in new AI tools for education support
- Investing in incremental academic staff to enhance individualized lesson plans
- Building a fundraising team for new donor cultivation
- Building out a new facility

At 10% Annual Return EECF would generate \$610,000+ over 5 years, with potential use cases including:

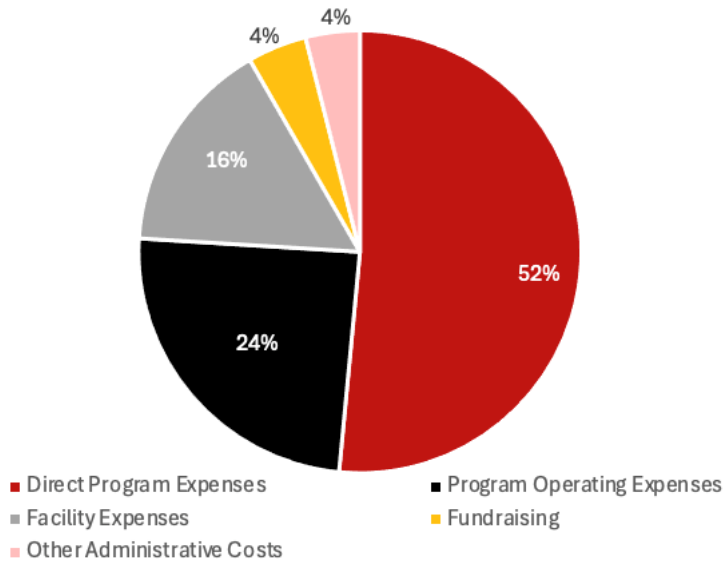
- Building a fundraising team for new donor cultivation
- Hiring additional directors such as a CFO, Director of Impact, and Director of Development
- Building out a new facility with 50% of 1st year operating budget pre-funded

We are currently working on an investment policy for the EECF with the goal of optimizing returns, liquidity, and loss avoidance. While we cannot commit to how the funds will be used in the future, the creation of this funding vehicle creates a clear path to long term growth at Hit the Books.

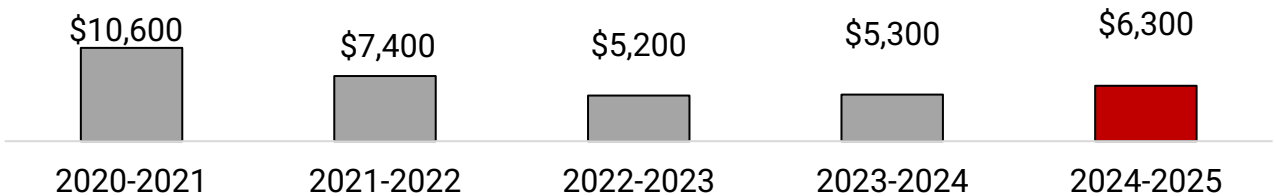
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In 2025 our budget continued to be +90% allocated to programming and operations with minimal spending on fundraising. While our cost of operations per student increased in 2025, our cost per hour of programming decreased. This change was intentional as we shift our focus from the number of students we work with to the depth of work we do with each student.

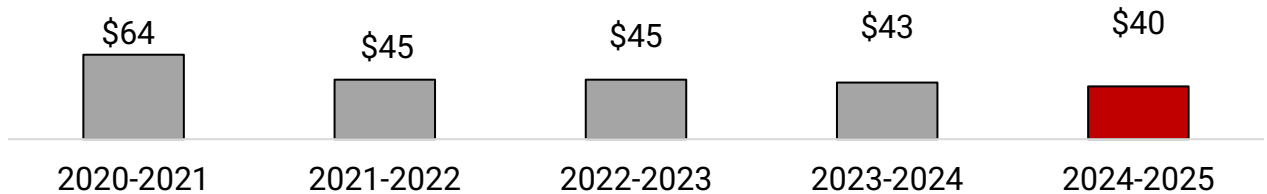
2025 Budget Breakdown



\$ per Student



\$ per Student Hour

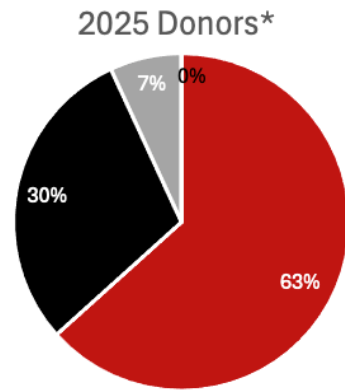
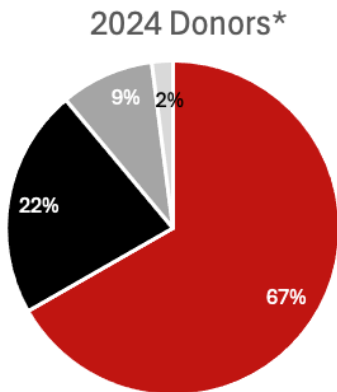


*Numbers are approximate due to fiscal year (calendar) and operating year (August end) mismatch

Donor Summary

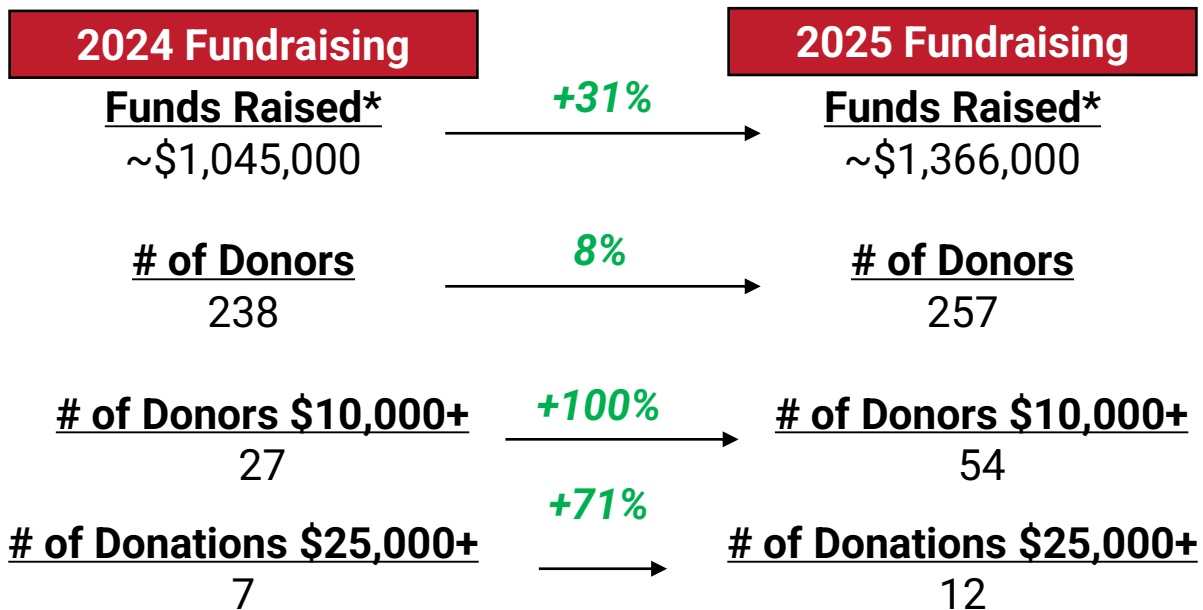


In 2025 we had our best fundraising year to date, raising over \$1,350,000 for our annual fund and \$1,000,000 for our newly established Educational Excellence and Capital Fund. This included a 24% increase in Board + Individual donations and 75% increase in Foundation funding compared to 2024.



■ Individual + Board ■ Foundations ■ Corporate ■ Government ■ Individual + Board ■ Foundations ■ Corporate ■ Government

In 2025 we were able to focus our attention to cultivating new donors in the \$10,000+ category, driving our total funds raised 31% above 2024 levels. This included both individual donors as well as foundations. As our messaging resonates with more people, we plan to continue to prioritize large dollar, transformational fundraising opportunities in 2026.



*Excludes donations to the EECF

Thank You!



- We continue to be ***incredibly grateful for all of the support*** our donors provided. We mean it when we say, ***the organization would not function without you!***
- **THANK YOU** to everyone who has contributed, and we hope we will continue to have your support for years to come!

Corporate Donors

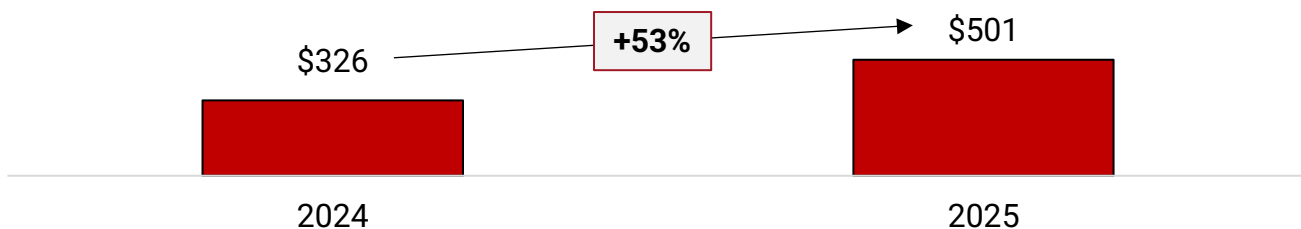


Foundation Donors



Foundation and Corporate Funding Continues to Grow to Become a Larger Portion of our Budget!

Foundation & Corporate Funding (\$ in millions)



- On October 14th, we hosted our **second annual benefit dinner**, welcoming over 100 guests to celebrate another successful year at Hit the Books!
- We also **honored Tom Coleman with the HTB Champion Award** for his dedication and contributions to the organization
- We **raised over \$400,000**, far exceeding our goal, which will set us up to invest behind several exciting growth initiatives in 2026!
- In addition, Tom catalyzed an effort to set up the **Educational Excellence and Capital Fund**, which will be set aside for **opportunities to support future growth and expansion**
- We are incredibly grateful for Tom's efforts and the amazing turnout!



The House was Packed with Different HTB Stakeholders



Tom Coleman
Champion Award Recipient



Musical Performance from Courtney Stars of Tomorrow Entertainment



Our Attendees got a Special Look at our Life Changing Programming

2025 saw our largest surplus in funding since our inception as well as the creation of the EECF, positioning us well for growth in 2026

Unaudited Statements of Financial Activity - Cash Basis

	FY2025
Starting Cash Balance	\$191,097
<i>Revenue</i>	
Individual + Board Contributions	\$865,411
Foundations Contributions	\$406,375
Corporate Contributions	\$94,267
Government Contributions	-
Total Contributions	\$1,366,052
<i>Expenses</i>	
Staffing	(\$609,869)
Program Expenses	(\$79,903)
Facility Costs	(\$250,904)
Administrative	(\$44,339)
Fundraising	(\$40,611)
Total Expenses	(\$1,025,625)
Net Income/(Deficit)	\$340,427
Ending Cash Balance	\$531,524
Starting EECF	-
Plus: Funds Raised	\$1,000,000
Plus: Investment Income	-
Less: Cash Uses	-
Ending EECF	\$1,000,000
Total Ending Capital	\$1,531,524

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Board Members

HTB's Board continues to evolve to reflect the growth ambitions of the organization



Justin Haber

Justin co-founded Hit the Books in 2019. Justin serves as Chair of the Board of Hit the Books and currently works at Point72.



Zach Levy

Zach co-founded Hit the Books in 2019. Zach currently serves as Vice-Chair of the Board and currently works at New Mountain Capital.



Jhae Thompson

Jhae joined the HTB Board in 2023. Jhae currently serves as Executive Director of HTB, and has 15 years of nonprofit leadership experience.



Jordan Barrow

Jordan joined the HTB Board in 2025 and was HTB's Champion Award honoree in 2024. Jordan serves as Co-Head of Liquid Credit at Shenkman Capital Management.



Sushma Chennubhotla

Sushma joined the HTB Board in 2024. Sushma is a neurologist with a specialty in headache medicine. She is a proud mom to two young children, and is passionate about youth causes.



Tushar Khadloya

Tushar joined the HTB Board in 2024. Tushar is a Managing Partner of Rock Capital Investments. He has supported a variety of nonprofit causes over the years, particularly those involving education and youth, in the U.S. and abroad.



Andrew Silver

Andrew joined the Hit the Books Board in 2025. Andrew currently serves as a Partner at Ropes & Gray.



Mark Bai

Mark joined the HTB Board in 2023. Mark is currently a Partner with True Search, where he focuses on placing senior executives for the world's most innovative technology companies.

Please meet our incredible staff, led by Jhae, Kalima, and Stan, and supported by our talented operations, MMA, and education team members



Jhae Thompson
Executive Director



Kalima Gilkes
Director of Education



Stan Dryev
Director of Mixed Martial Arts

**Elisabet
Concepcion**
Academic Program
Coordinator

Dallas Sanchez
Achievement
Coach

Iya Samuels
Achievement
Coach

Alex Morgan
Achievement
Coach

Joseph Weisman
MMA Coach

Jesus Bautista
MMA Coach

Jean Kim
MMA Coach

Romi Attas
MMA Coach

High School
Interns

Columbia
Teachers College
Work Study



Thank You