

# GALS 3.0 STRATEGIC PLAN



2024-2027



## A NOTE FROM THE GALS DENVER BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

In 2010, a bold vision set the foundation for what has now become a thriving reality—GALS Denver, a place where dreams take flight, voices are heard, and leaders are born. Today, we stand proud of the journey we've traveled together and eagerly anticipate the boundless possibilities that lie ahead.

When Liz Wolfson and Nina Safane opened our middle school doors in 2010, they envisioned a unique space where girls could grow into strong, confident leaders—where education went beyond academics to include nurturing both the mind and body. What began as a daring leap of faith has evolved into a vibrant community that stretches from Denver to Los Angeles.

At GALS Denver, we don't just educate; we ignite passion, nurture resilience, and inspire greatness. Movement and mental wellness are at the heart of everything we do, ensuring our students are not just prepared academically, but empowered holistically. Our students don't just attend school—they own their education, break through barriers, and lead the way forward. We are proud to be Colorado's only public, tuition-free, all-girls school, and even prouder to welcome gender non-binary and transgender students into our diverse and vibrant community.

This year, we're turning the page to a bold new chapter with GALS Denver 3.0. This strategic plan is our commitment to continue pushing boundaries, raising the bar, and empowering every student to surpass her wildest dreams. We're here to redefine what's possible, and we're doing it together.

To the entire GALS community: your passion and dedication are what make GALS Denver unstoppable. Together, we will continue to evolve our model, forge new paths, and set the standard for excellence in education and empowerment.

Here's to the next 15 years of unmatched momentum, impact, and greatness!

With unwavering gratitude,

The GALS Denver Board of Directors



## ABOUT GALS DENVER.

At GALS Denver, we channel the transformative power of rigorous academics, movement, emotional wellness, with a positive gender focus to create a vibrant community where young women and gender-diverse students are empowered to excel. Our students are driven to succeed and inspired to explore passions, nurture well-being, find their voices, and shape their futures.

From day one, students dive into an environment that fosters growth in every dimension. Movement is seamlessly woven into daily routines through sports, yoga, and mindful brain breaks, boosting confidence, reducing stress, and instilling a lifelong love of physical health. We understand that when students feel strong in their bodies and secure in their identities, they're better equipped to conquer academic challenges and personal goals.

Our unwavering commitment to mental health, gender positivity, and diversity is just as crucial. Mindfulness practices, gender-positive dialogues, and relationship-building techniques are woven into our curriculum, providing students with tools to manage life's challenges, build resilience, and embrace their authentic selves. Our proprietary GALS Series course nurtures a culture of kindness, respect, and resilience, empowering students to navigate challenges and form healthy relationships. This holistic approach creates a supportive space where each student thrives—academically, emotionally, and physically.

At GALS Denver, we ignite passion, nurture perseverance, celebrate diversity, and inspire greatness. Together, we cultivate an environment where every student can rise to her/their full potential, supported by a community that believes in her/them every step of the way.



**250+**

MIDDLE SCHOOL  
STUDENTS

**14:1**

STUDENT TO  
TEACHER RATIO

**100%**

HIGH SCHOOL  
GRADUATION RATE

**100%**

ACCEPTANCE TO  
COLLEGE

**1500+**

ALUMNAE

**90%**

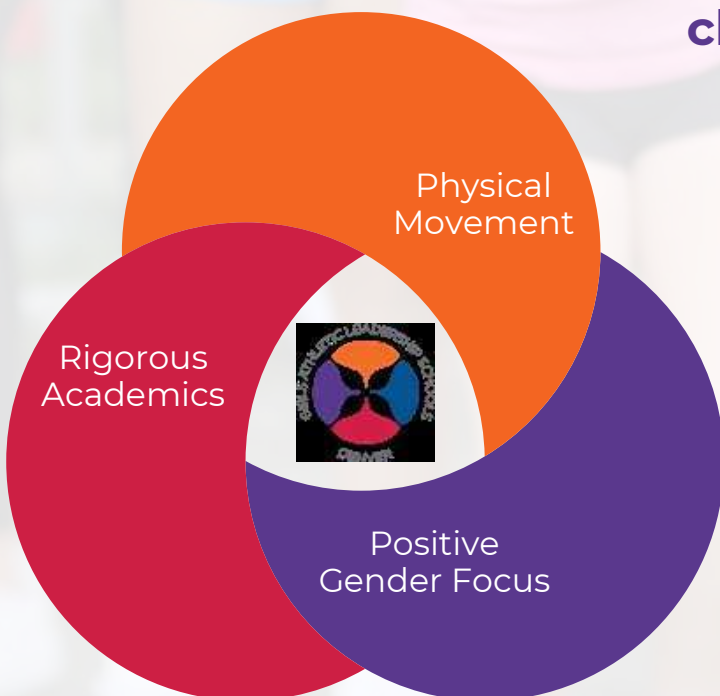
OF STUDENTS SAY "THEY WORK  
HARD, ARE GOOD STUDENTS &  
WILL GO TO COLLEGE."



# THE GALS DENVER SCHOOL MODEL

**“When you walk into a GALS’ classroom, it feels different.”**

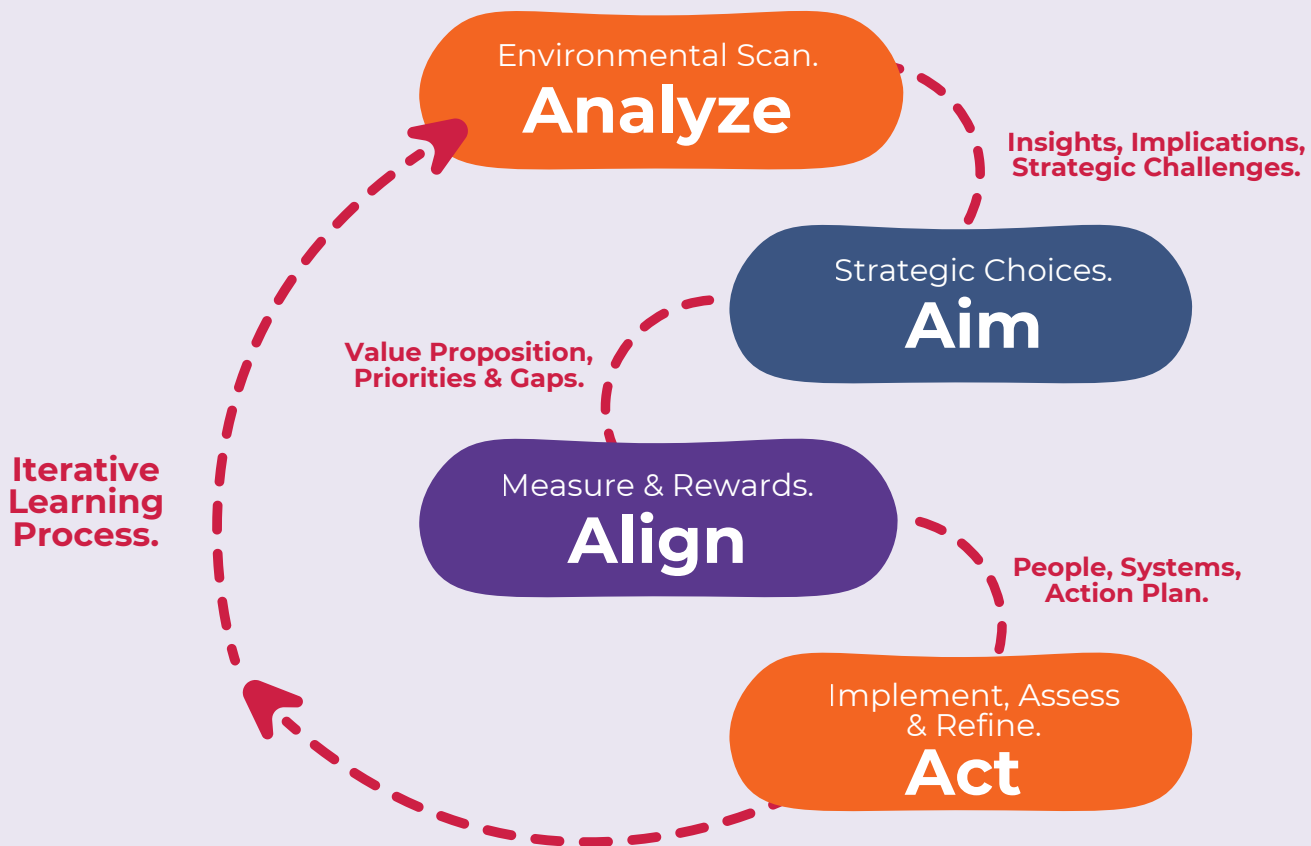
The GALS Denver model is a vibrant and holistic integration of academic, social, physical, emotional, and relational learning. Set in a dynamic, diverse and supportive environment, GALS Denver fosters healthy competition while empowering students to discover their voices and embrace their most authentic selves. Here, every aspect of our curriculum is designed to inspire and uplift, ensuring that students not only excel academically but also thrive physically, emotionally and socially.





# LEADING THROUGH OUR STRATEGIC GROWTH FRAMEWORK.

As we set out to develop our 3.0 strategic plan, we adopted a framework designed to keep us focused and purposeful every step of the way. This flexible, iterative approach ensures GALS stays energized and ready to tackle new challenges, all while staying true to our core mission.





## DEVELOPING OUR STRATEGIC VISION.

GALS Denver 3.0 strategic plan is a dynamic 3-year blueprint inspired by the voices and visions of our vibrant community.

Throughout the planning process, we opened channels of dialogue across the GALS Denver community—engaging students, families, staff, board directors, founders, and strategic partners. With over 350 touchpoints, we crafted a plan that resonates with the collective heartbeat of GALS Denver, ensuring that our path forward is as bold and inclusive as our mission.



- STUDENTS & ALUMS
- PARENTS/FAMILIES
- TEACHERS/STAFF
- BOARD MEMBERS
- DPS AUTHORIZORS
- OUR FOUNDERS
- STRATEGIC PARTNERS
- PROSPECTIVE FAMILIES



# OUR VISIONARY TARGETS

These 'Visionary Targets' are the North Star of our strategic plan, rooted in our mission, vision, and unique school model. They guide every strategic decision, initiative, and action within the GALS Denver community, uniting us with a common purpose and ensuring that every effort drives us toward meaningful outcomes. These targets provide clear direction, focus our resources, and inspire everyone to advance the mission of GALS Denver.

## 1. Unleash the Full Power of the GALS Model.

Ignite every corner of GALS Denver with the bold spirit of our unique school model—which seamlessly integrates movement, a single-gender focus, and social-emotional learning with academic rigor. From the classroom to the community, we will fully embrace GALS values—empowering staff, students, and families to lead confidently, live boldly, and thrive together. This is about GALS Denver being the best version of itself—a dynamic force driving growth, impact, and greatness.

## 2. Elevate Academic Excellence Across All Grades.

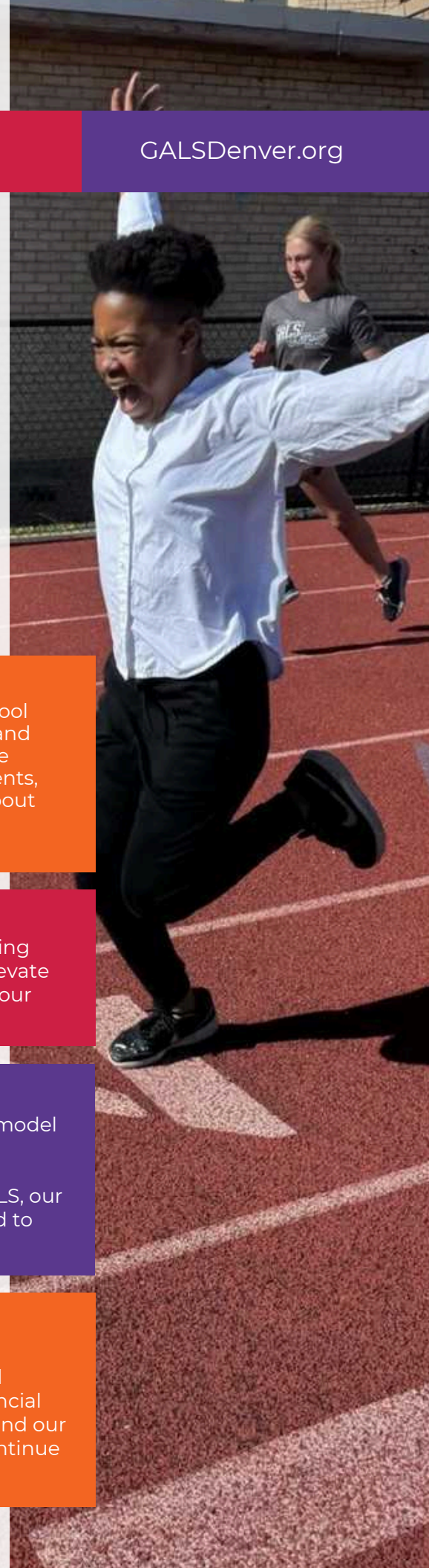
Unlock the full potential of our GALS Middle by wholeheartedly embracing and integrating the GALS model while ensuring academic excellence. Elevate both schools to their peak performance so that they serve as beacons of our vision and values.

## 3. Inspire Unstoppable Success in a Transforming World.

Prepare students to flourish in a dynamic and evolving world. The GALS model nurtures adaptability, creativity, and emotional intelligence, building a foundation for academic excellence, well-being, and leadership. We're preparing trailblazers who face the future and shape it. Upon leaving GALS, our students aren't just ready for the next stage—they're unstoppable, poised to lead, innovate, and drive meaningful change.

## 4. Fortify GALS Denver's financial future.

Fuel GALS Denver's future by strategically strengthening our financial foundation. This allows us to expand our impact, invest in innovation, and elevate every student's educational experience. Our commitment to financial sustainability ensures we meet today's needs while securing our future, and our promise to families. With a robust financial strategy, GALS Denver will continue to shine, evolve, and fulfill its core mission.



## OUR STRATEGIES.

**1** TOGETHER WE THRIVE: GALS CULTURE IN ACTION.

**2** LEVELING UP ACADEMIC RIGOR & OUTCOMES.

**3** PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS: DEEPENING & EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES.

**4** EMBRACING OUR BIGGEST CHAMPIONS: OUR GALS DENVER FAMILIES.

**5** ADVANCE ACADEMIC INCLUSION.

**6** ELEVATING OUR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS TO A NEW LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE.





# 1 TOGETHER WE THRIVE: GALS CULTURE IN ACTION.

## Goal:

Nurture, grow and further “GAL-vanize” our staff culture.

## Strategic Rationale:

By deeply embedding our GALS model into our culture, we’ll amplify our staff’s commitment to GALS, to one another, and to our students. By truly “practicing what we teach,” we will set a powerful example, spark vibrant collaboration, elevate accountability, and empower our staff and leaders to achieve new heights. This vibrant culture, in turn, will bring joy and inspire staff to engage fully, enhancing student outcomes and propelling GALS Denver to remarkable success.

## Key Moves:

- Delegate leadership roles to amplify clarity, streamline operations, ignite accountability, and cut burnout.
- Cultivate a culture of vibrant collaboration and open transparency at every level.
- Ignite staff engagement and fuel leadership growth with dynamic support.
- Drive innovation and accelerate growth through energetic teamwork and bold new ideas.
- Empower staff with cutting-edge professional development opportunities that spark growth.
- Celebrate and spotlight both staff and student achievements with enthusiasm and flair.



## Results to Watch:

- 90% of staff meet or exceed performance goals.
- 85% of staff, when offered, express intent to return annually.
- Consistently meet or exceed teacher and leadership satisfaction ratings (3+) on our monthly staff survey.





## 2 LEVELING UP ACADEMIC RIGOR & OUTCOMES.

### Goal:

Increase academic rigor and student success by elevating instructional excellence.

### Strategic Rationale:

At GALS Denver, rigorous and transformative student learning is fueled by our unwavering commitment to instructional excellence and leadership. In a dynamic and impactful learning environment, students are not just motivated and engaged but fully equipped to reach their highest potential. By advancing our teaching methods and enriching our curriculum through the distinctive GALS model—which seamlessly integrates movement, a single-gender focus, and social-emotional learning—we cultivate a vibrant academic culture where every student is empowered to excel.

### Key Moves:

- Hold a high and consistent bar for academic rigor across grades and subjects, where students are consistently met with worthy challenges that require deep and clear thinking, skilled analysis and creative problem-solving.
- Build a powerful, holistic learning experience that deepens understanding and brings knowledge and skills to life in meaningful ways.
- Ignite a culture of collaboration where our educators are sharing best practices, driving curriculum innovation, and elevating each other through peer observations and coaching.
- Ignite our community's spirit by recognizing and rewarding both instructional brilliance and academic achievements.



### Results to Watch:

- Surpass district and state achievement outcomes for students across all grade levels each year.
- Exceed district and state growth in standardized test scores across all subjects.
- 25% increase in teacher effectiveness ratings using the FEET Rubric.





# 3 PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS: DEEPENING & EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES.

## Goal:

Forge powerful partnerships with external organizations to amplify our schools' presence, unleash fresh opportunities for our students, and accelerate growth.

## Strategic Rationale:

Building strong partnerships with external organizations is crucial for both student success and financial growth at GALS Denver. By cultivating a network of mission-aligned relationships, we unlock opportunities that elevate our students, strengthen our school, and propel our mission forward. These connections enhance our visibility, attract new students and teachers, provide real-world learning experiences, and secure essential funding, all of which contribute to our sustained success.

## Key Moves:

- Identify and build rock-solid partnerships with mission-aligned local and national groups.
- Expand opportunities for real-world experiences for our GALS Denver students across all grade levels.
- Grow our GALS network for fundraising.



## Results to Watch:

- Cultivate 3-4 valuable and enduring partnerships each year.
- Drive a year-over-year increase in funds raised for GALS Denver by 10%
- Set and achieve annual enrollment goals by school.
- Track growth through an increase in student shadows and first-choice selection in DPS Choice.





# 4 EMBRACING OUR BIGGEST CHAMPIONS: OUR GALS DENVER FAMILIES.

## Goal:

Mobilize our GALS families and communities as engagement ambassadors and harness their positive energy to further drive success.

## Strategic Rationale:

By embracing our GALS families, we unleash a powerful force of positive energy and community influence. Our families amplify our mission, extend our reach, and deepen connections both within and beyond our school. Research shows that when families actively engage, we collectively build a stronger, more cohesive community that boosts student achievement, drives enrollment, and enhances overall support. Harnessing their enthusiasm ensures GALS Denver will continue to thrive and grow.

## Key Moves:

- Transform staff/family communication into a two-way dialogue—listen, engage, and connect.
- Empower staff to become strong relationship builders with families.
- Embrace parents as powerful ambassadors to drive enrollment growth.
- Think creatively to welcome and engage all families in innovative ways – meet families where they want to be met.
- Create welcoming opportunities that engage families from all backgrounds and increase access for everyone.



## Results to Watch:

- Capture and disaggregate across lines of diversity
  - 90% of families satisfied with the school
  - 90% of families are satisfied with staff/teacher communication
  - 80% of families agree “GALS Denver embraces diversity encouraging family participation”
  - 15% increase in family enrollment referrals.
- Capture and track results:
  - Track family participation in school events
  - Annually capture insights regarding why parents choose GALS Denver.
  - Track the number of the school’s intentional moves to encourage diverse family participation
  - 10% increase in family participations in school events (in years 2 & 3)
- Increase the number of family donors each year by 10%



# 5 ADVANCE ACADEMIC INCLUSION.

## Goal:

Ensure every learner thrives

## Strategic Rationale:

Being laser-focused on every student's success is at the heart of our GALS mission – from inclusion (special education) students to gifted and talented learners. By advancing our inclusion strategies to meet the unique needs of all of our students, we cultivate a stronger learning environment for all. This is an environment where every student owns their space, is truly seen, and thrives academically, emotionally, and physically.

## Key Moves:

- Evolve the GALS inclusion approach to meet every learner's needs from intervention through acceleration for all learners (inclusion to gifted and talented)
- Bolster co-teaching model.
- Encourage seamless, student-centered collaboration between teachers and support teams to enhance collective success.
- Clearly communicate our approach to set expectations with families and ensure the GALS model aligns with students' needs.



## Results to Watch:

- Ensure 100% of our students are assigned to the correct placement to meet their unique needs annually.
- Meet or exceed district and state academic student performance and growth metrics across all programs annually
- 90% family academic satisfaction – disaggregated across all programs



# 6 ELEVATING OUR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS TO A NEW LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE.

**Goal:** Level up and amplify the impact of the GALS' mental health and wellness programming for teen/adolescents, and mental health workforce training.

**Strategic Rationale:** GALS has set the benchmark for mental health and wellness programming, embedding it as a cornerstone of our holistic approach to student development. By continually evolving these practices, we not only enhance our students' emotional and academic well-being but also reinforce our role as visionary leaders in education. This forward-thinking commitment solidifies GALS Denver as the gold standard for nurturing empowered, resilient, and future-ready students, ensuring they thrive in all aspects of life.

## Key Moves:

- Take the integration of our cutting-edge mental health practices, physical activity and the experience of our highly trained clinicians to advance our GALS Series and GALS Actions curriculum to the next level.
- Invest in advanced mental health training for all GALS Denver educators and support staff to better support our students in real time, i.e., mental health best practices, and trauma-informed and healing-centered.
- Evaluate and refine our social-emotional learning (SEL) and mental health assessment tools, and effectively put the tools into practice.
- Continue to provide our one-on-one student mental health services.
- Continue to integrate the mental health and wellness components identified into key student supports (ESS and character and culture).
- Continue to contribute to the Denver mental health ecosystem by providing internship opportunities and community programming.



## Results to Watch:

- Exceed national and state growth in Social Emotional Learning on SEL assessments.
- 85% of families of students who are receiving mental health services are satisfied or highly satisfied with their student and families' mental health services.
- Measure global mental health and emotional intelligence via the Pulse survey





# THE GALS DENVER PLEDGE

I know who I am.

**I know that I matter.**

I know what matters to me.

**I pay attention to what I feel and  
what I need.**

I make choices and decisions that are  
good for me.

**I take good care of my body.**

I stand up for what I believe in.

**I let people know what I think even  
when I'm angry or confused or in  
disagreement with everyone else.**

I am a valuable friend.

**I know I can make a positive  
difference in the world in my own  
unique way.**



# Thank you!

The GALS Board of Directors extends its heartfelt gratitude to our remarkable students, supportive families, and dedicated staff. We are equally thankful to our DPS Authorizers, visionary founders, and strategic partners for their continued belief in and support of our mission.

A special thank you goes to Maria Kernen for her exceptional project management and guidance throughout this strategic planning process.

We also wish to express our deepest appreciation to Carol Bowar and Timeri Tolnay for their unwavering commitment and passion for GALS Denver. Their leadership and vision continue to inspire and propel us forward.

## 2024-25 GALS Denver Board of Directors.

Margaret-Ann Burness  
*Board Chair*

Shannon Saviers  
*Vice Chair*

Pam Horiszny  
*Treasurer*

Angie McPhaul  
*Secretary*

Jennifer Evans - *Emeritus*

Michelle Hurt

Kerry Lander

Rebecca Leatherman

Vivian Morales

Emily Ragan

Allison Romagnoli

Sara Taylor

Stephanie Sundberg

## GALS Denver

750 Galapago Street  
Denver, CO 80204

GALSDenver.org  
303-282-6437

