

Annual Impact Report 2024

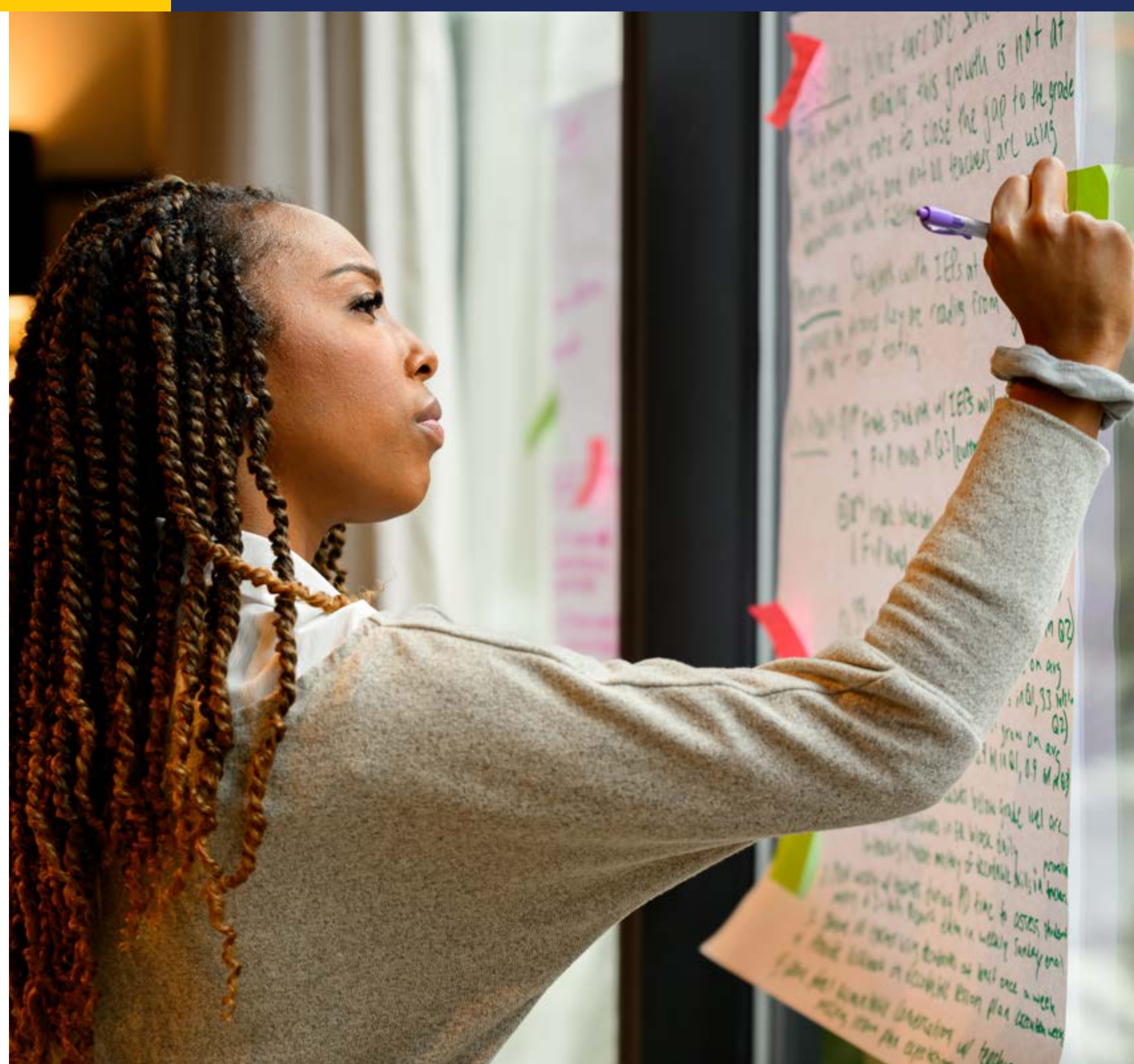


school
LEADERLAB



Table of Contents

A Message from Our Executive Director.....	pg. 3
About School Leader Lab.....	pg. 4
The Challenge	pg. 5
The Leadership Pipeline.....	pg. 6
The Cohort Model.....	pg. 7
Our Project Work.....	pg. 8
Our Strategic Priorities.....	pg. 9
Strategic Priority Updates	pg. 10-13
What Our People Are Saying.....	pg. 14-15
Our Board.....	pg. 16-17
Who We Are.....	pg. 18
Gratitude.....	pg. 19



A Message from Our Executive Director



Dear Friends and Supporters,

Every child deserves a school led by experienced, committed, and transformational leaders. At School Leader Lab, we develop inspiring leaders who challenge racism and promote rigorous learning. Significant disparities¹ exist in leadership experience and sustainability between affluent, predominantly white schools and leaders serving mainly Black or Brown students from families with limited financial means:

- Principals in affluent schools stay six years on average, compared to three years in Title 1 schools.
- Only 28% of leaders in schools impacted by the opportunity gap stay 5+ years, versus 47% in affluent schools.
- Teacher retention is 78% in low-income schools, compared to 89% in affluent public schools. Leadership dissatisfaction was the top reason DC teachers left in SY 22-23.
- Principals in low-income schools report higher stress (71% vs. 52%) and longer work hours (63 vs. 57 hours weekly).

Effective leadership significantly impacts...

- **Student achievement:** Principals are second only to teachers in influence.
- **School improvement:** Highly effective principals can boost performance by 15-20 percentile points in 2-3 years.
- **Teacher quality:** Effective principals retain high-performing teachers and remove low performers.
- **School climate:** Effective leaders can reduce disciplinary incidents by 15-20% and improve attendance.

School Leader Lab is writing a different story. In the following pages, you'll hear from leaders like Belicia Reaves, who is increasing staff retention at Two Rivers PCS in DC. You'll learn about our partnerships with DC Public Schools and Teach For America, where 100% of leaders report improved effectiveness and longevity. Most importantly, you'll see evidence that our work makes a difference for leaders, teachers, and students.

We're building a future where all students can thrive, led by inspiring, committed, and diverse leaders. Thank you for being our partner in that fight.

In solidarity,

Erica Beal

Executive Director, School Leader Lab

¹Data pulled from Wallace Foundation, Learning Policy Institute and RAND research and studies

About SLL

Launched in 2017, School Leader Lab was founded to fill a need for development and support to create a steady pool and pipeline of talented, impactful, and committed leaders for public and charter schools. School Leader Lab supports transformational training for education leaders largely in schools that receive Title I funding, aiming to develop inspiring leaders who disrupt racism and champion rigorous learning.

School Leader Lab has worked with nearly 500 leaders, 83% of whom identify as BIPOC, ultimately impacting over 300,000 students and counting. Through our work, Black and Brown students see themselves reflected in strong leaders who stay and transform schools.



Vision

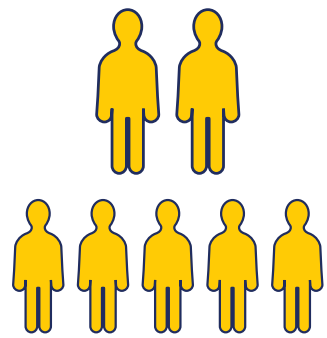
Leaders who inspire students to grow and teachers to thrive.



Mission

We partner with leaders to disrupt racism, inspire staff, and champion rigorous learning.

The Challenge

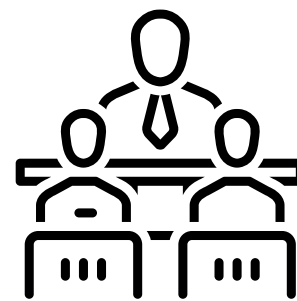


School leaders impact **483** students on average vs. **20–30** students in an individual classroom on average.



Effective school leadership is key to addressing teacher shortages and improving retention, as leaders significantly influence teachers' decisions to stay at their schools.

Replacing a below-average principal with a highly effective principal results in **2.9** more months of math learning gains and **2.7** more months of reading gains per year.



The ***principal role*** is especially **critical** in low-performing schools, where improvement depends on strong ***leadership***.

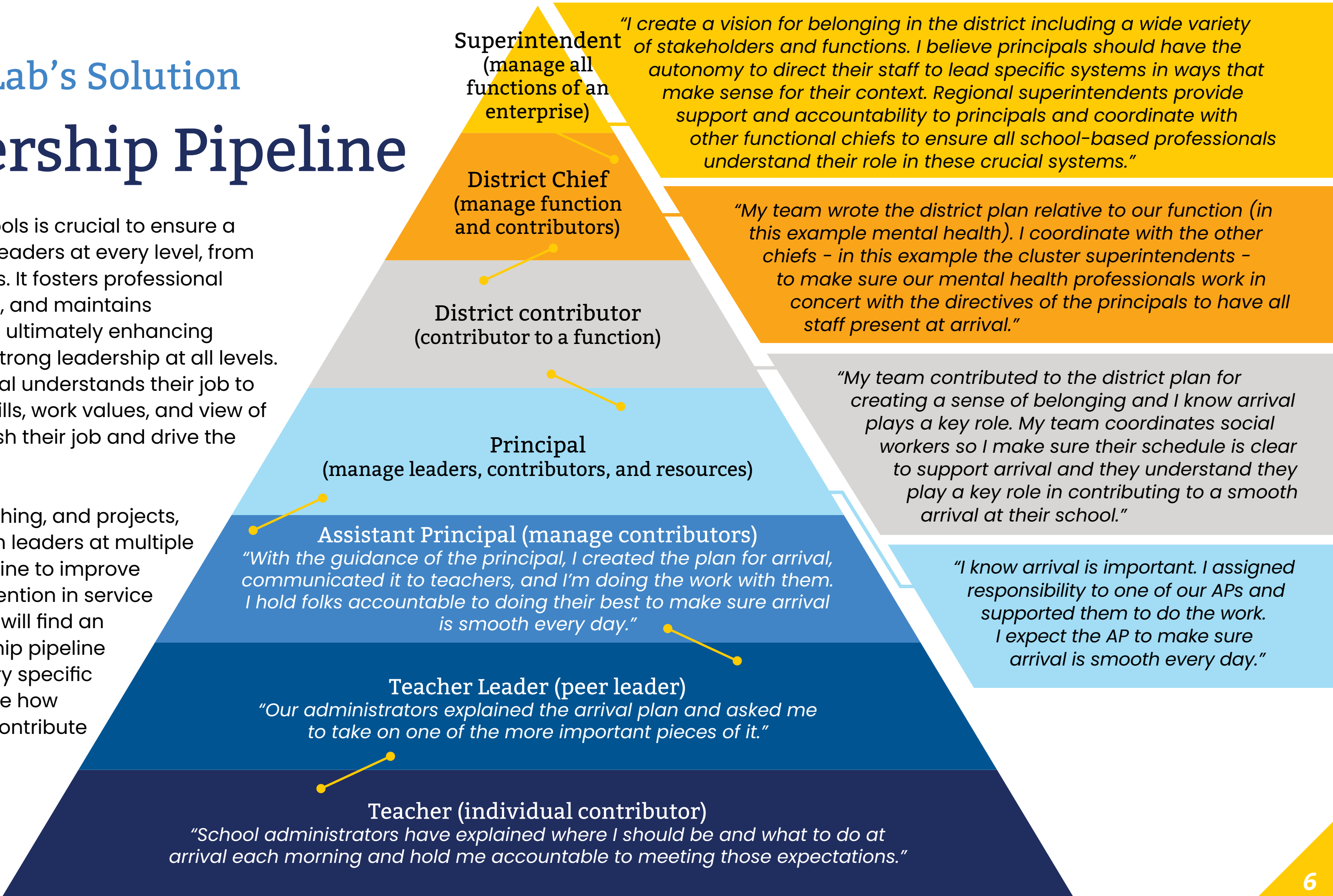
Despite the documented importance of school leaders, they typically have limited high-quality opportunities for professional development after they are placed in their role. The most common opportunities tend to be “one-shot” conferences and workshops that do not reflect best practices of sustained development over time with an emphasis on practicing new skills and ongoing coaching. School Leader Lab provides tailored, multi-faceted development rooted in cultural context, antiracism and transformational instructional and people leadership.

School Leader Lab's Solution

The Leadership Pipeline

A leadership pipeline in schools is crucial to ensure a continuous flow of capable leaders at every level, from teacher leaders to chief roles. It fosters professional growth, succession planning, and maintains organizational effectiveness, ultimately enhancing student outcomes through strong leadership at all levels. It ensures that each individual understands their job to be done and takes on the skills, work values, and view of time necessary to accomplish their job and drive the overall mission.

Through our cohorts, 1:1 coaching, and projects, School Leader Lab works with leaders at multiple levels of the leadership pipeline to improve leader effectiveness and retention in service of students. To the right, you will find an example of how the leadership pipeline might play out through a very specific case – morning arrival. Notice how professionals at each level contribute to the student experience.



School Leader Lab's Solution

The Cohort Model

Our cohorts develop professionals at every level of the leadership pipeline.

Cohort enrollment
increased by 65%
from FY23 to FY24



Executive Leader Cohort (EdEx)

Purpose: Develop high-performing and diverse systems leaders with the key skills and competencies needed to lead strong teams in chief-level executive roles.

Target Audience: Managing directors, directors, heads, and chief-level roles (excluding executive directors). Accomplished principals with the potential to transition into executive-level leadership in the next 1-3 years.

Length: 10 months



School Leader Cohort (SLC)

Purpose: Develop exceptional principals and assistant principals to inspire staff, disrupt racism, and champion rigorous learning.

Target Audience: Principals and assistant principals at any point in their careers.

Length: 15 months



Teacher Leader Cohort (TLC)

Purpose: Develop teacher leaders to guide their teams, departments, and committees to achieve excellent results.

Target Audience: Teacher leaders, grade-level chairs, department chairs, instructional coaches, and equivalent roles.

Length: 8 months

School Leader Lab's Solution

Our Project Work

We partner with schools and networks to build customized projects around antiracism, people, or academic needs. Projects begin with listening and understanding the nuances and opportunities of our partner schools and are individualized so participants can implement changes. Recent customized projects include partnerships with Goodwill Excel Center, Two Rivers PCS, and Capital City PCS.



77% of the schools we work with receive Title 1 funding.

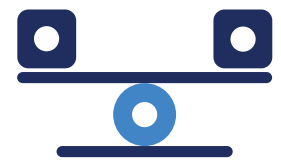
Strategic Priorities

With unprecedented philanthropic support, robust cohort enrollment, and engagement with key partners like DCPS and TFA, we have substantial external investment in our vision. Going forward, we will remain focused on the meticulous attention to detail that we are known for. Our motto for the year ahead is Big Vision. Small Details.



Priority #1:

Continue to establish School Leader Lab as the premier one-stop shop for cohort development at multiple levels of the leadership pipeline.



Priority #2:

Ensure organizational sustainability.



Priority #3:

Expand our regional and national influence.



Priority #4:

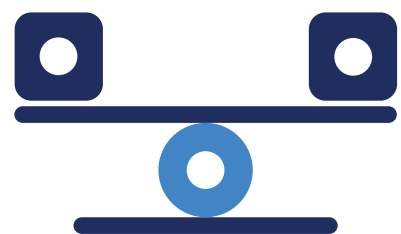
Facilitate an influential alumni community and support their longevity in schools.



Priority #1: Continue to establish School Leader Lab as the premier one-stop shop for cohort development at multiple levels of the leadership pipeline.

School Leader Lab continues to grow and expand our program offerings. This past year, we enrolled and developed our largest number of school leaders to date across six different programs in district and charter schools throughout all eight wards of DC. We also launched our newest offering, the Executive Leader Cohort (EdEx), with the support of Education Forward DC and recruited our largest ever School Leader Cohort (SLC 2024), representing a 65% increase in overall enrollment compared to the prior year.





Priority #2: Ensure organizational sustainability.



Recognizing our work and impact, MacKenzie Scott's Yield Giving announced in March 2024 that School Leader Lab would receive a gift of \$2 million. This grant is part of the Yield Giving Open Call which awards organizations working with people and in places experiencing the greatest need in the United States. With over 6,500 applicants, School Leader Lab was honored to be among the 1% of organizations chosen to receive funding.

We also received substantial gifts from Education Forward DC for our EdEx cohort and from the Aviv Foundation to support our work with TFA and DCPS. Additionally, Aviv is investing in School Leader Lab to partner with Bellwether Education to define our program's impact to date and inform how we should measure impact in years to come.

83% of our leaders identify as BIPOC.

100% of alumni still in school-based leadership roles cite their experience with SLL as influencing their capacity and desire to stay in the role.



Priority #3: Expand our regional and national influence.

Strategic Priority Updates

As School Leader Lab's reputation has grown, we have established multi-year partnerships with the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and Teach for America (TFA). We have also had the opportunity to present with the DC Policy Center.



Launched with an initial investment from Aviv and in partnership with DCPS, AP Leadership Academy (APLA) is a 10-month cohort designed for DCPS Assistant Principals (APs) in their second year and beyond. In the program, DCPS APs develop the adaptive and equity-centered leadership skills to address complex challenges in support of district strategic priorities. By the end of the cohort, 100% of supervisors reported seeing positive growth in the leadership of their participating AP.

In partnership with Teach for America D.C. and Virginia, we launched the School Leader Professional Learning Community (PLC) to support Washington, DC principals leading schools with Teach for America teachers, with a focus on Wards 7 and 8. Each month, a principal in the community hosts a visit for their fellow leaders highlighting best practices and sparking important connection and conversation. Due to the success and impact of this work in DC, School Leader Lab is expanding our partnership with TFA by piloting a similar PLC in the Greater Delta region.



In April, we collaborated with the D.C. Policy Center to host a debrief of the DC State of Schools Report 2022-2023. We convened talented and influential leaders from every sector of D.C. education to discuss leader retention and development to make progress on the challenges presented in the State of Schools Report. A principal's impact extends across the entire school. Black and Brown students are disproportionately led by inexperienced leaders who are less likely to persist in their roles, making leader retention and development critical equity issues. As our city continues to recover from the effects of the pandemic, it is essential to unite and support and retain the leaders on the front lines.



Priority #4: Facilitate an influential alumni community and support their longevity in schools.

Strategic Priority Updates

School Leader Lab alumni love our Alumni School Walkthroughs! This past year, leaders reunited at Washington Latin PCS, The Sojourner Truth School, E.L. Haynes PCS, and DC Prep Benning Elementary.



School Leader Lab has worked with almost **500 leaders** and over **120 schools**, reaching approximately **300,000 students** and growing.

Leadership Stories from the Field



BELICIA REAVES

Executive Director

Two Rivers Public Charter School

As the new Executive Director of Two Rivers Public Charter School network, Belicia Reaves has expanded SLL’s longstanding partnership with the network. For years, Two Rivers has sent leaders through SLL cohorts. In her new role, Belicia continued and broadened this collaboration, leveraging SLL coaching and cohorts to enhance her own leadership and support leaders at multiple levels. Shares Belicia:

“I cannot tell how valuable [my sessions with my coach are] for processing emotions and feelings. [She] is someone I can turn to for deep reflection on challenges. She provides the direct feedback I need and holds me accountable.”

“Teachers were already receiving coaching at Two Rivers, but there was no coaching for our senior leadership team. Our mentality is that this is something that enhances our practice.”

Belicia has also continued to invest in SLL’s cohort model, placing two leaders in SLC 2024.

Under Belicia’s leadership, Two Rivers PCS has achieved noteworthy early results, including a shared leadership language, aligned professional development, an 80% decrease in middle school discipline incidents, and a 10 percentage point increase in staff retention.



RYAN TAURIAINEN

Executive Director

Teach For America D.C. and Virginia

Ryan Tauriainen, Executive Director of Teach for America (TFA) D.C. and Virginia, fulfilled a long-held vision by collaborating with School Leader Lab to create a School Leader Professional Learning Community (PLC) in 2023. This unique initiative, supported by Education Forward DC, brought together 18 principals from both DC Public Charter schools and DC Public Schools, representing seven of DC’s eight wards, with a focus on schools receiving Title I funding.

Ryan reflects on the impact of the PLC, stating, “The PLC has certainly proven its success when everyone on their closing survey says, ‘I want to do it again next year.’” Many participants, with over a decade of experience, claimed it was the best professional development series they had ever participated in. One story that stands out is about a principal who, after participating in the PLC, was inspired to request a transfer to a school that needed her most, demonstrating the program’s profound impact. Ryan notes, “That type of impact and change is not something I would have anticipated if someone had asked me what I dreamed of ten years ago.”

Ryan especially appreciates School Leader Lab’s commitment to reflection and continuous growth. “That I and others could give feedback, and it would be immediately implemented...we saw real action from it.”

As they prepare to expand the PLC to other regions, Ryan emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive community for school leaders, noting that “School Leader Lab has the chops and the history to prove it.”

Leadership Stories from the Field



GREG MOFFITT

Director of Principal Development

District of Columbia Public Schools

I never imagined I would go into education. I had no dreams of becoming a teacher or a principal,” says Greg Moffitt, Director of Principal Development at DC Public Schools (DCPS). His career took a turn after observing the stark contrast between two high schools, which sparked his desire to create change. Greg’s journey led him to DCPS, where he now supports 115 principals, 200 assistant principals (APs), and nearly 100 aspiring APs, impacting 51,000 students.

While DCPS had strong programs for newer leaders and principals, as a District, they identified a gap for more experienced APs seeking further growth. In collaboration with School Leader Lab and with funding from the Aviv Foundation, DCPS launched AP Leadership Academy (APLA) to fill this need. Greg shares, “APLA created a space for 19 DCPS assistant principals to come together, identify real challenges, and develop solutions with the support of School Leader Lab and their fellow APs.”

The impact was profound. “These were stellar, rockstar APs that have been in DCPS, some for over a decade, doing incredible things. And every single one of their principals saw growth and development from their participation in AP Leadership Academy.” Greg adds, “School Leader Lab values the expertise, knowledge, insight, and experience of the school leaders. They recognize that these leaders directly impact student success and empower them to find their own solutions. That level of respect and trust is rare.



JESSICA LAW

Vice Principal

Ingenuity Prep Public Charter School

Jessica Law never envisioned herself as a school leader. “If you had asked me about school leadership in my early years of teaching, I would have said, ‘Absolutely not, never. I don’t want to lead adults.’ But the reality was that I didn’t feel equipped to lead adults.”

After eight years in the classroom, Jessica stepped into the role of Elementary Vice Principal at Ingenuity Prep. Seeking support, she joined School Leader Lab’s School Leader Cohort (SLC), finding it instrumental in her development. “It offered substantial support, particularly around self-reflection, giving and receiving honest feedback, and anchoring work in anti-racism.”

The sense of belonging in the SLC 2021 Co-Fam was central to her success as a new Vice Principal. “School Leader Cohort was incredibly valuable in shaping both my reflection and communication as I navigated many challenging situations.”

Ingenuity Prep is a long-time partner of School Leader Lab, having put multiple leaders through our various cohorts over the years. Jessica notes the impact of this investment sharing, “Being part of School Leader Lab’s alumni network feels like we all attended the same high school but graduated in different years. Many leaders at Ingenuity Prep have completed cohort, and this shared experience helps us solve problems more effectively because we have a common language from the program. I often hear Ben, our Chief Academic Officer, or Kate, my principal, or Brittany and Natalie, my co-vice principals, reference something they learned in their cohort, saying things like, ‘I think someone in my cohort did XYZ, or they’re trying this at their school.’ This collective experience means our impact extends beyond our smaller leadership group at Ingenuity Prep. With connections to various leaders, we’ve effectively multiplied the intellectual resources available to us.”



"I feel more empowered to take on the role of leader and lead others from a place of knowledge and support."

Lydia Helgesen

Kindergarten Team Lead

Randolph Elementary School (TLC 2023)



"The pillars of School Leader Lab's programming and development still drive my work to this day! I am a completely different leader because of this experience and so grateful for SLL."

Franchita Eborn

Principal

Simon Elementary School (DC PLC 2023)

Note from the Board Chair



Dear School Leader Lab Community,

As I reflect on FY24, I'm energized by our progress and grateful for your support in our mission to develop transformative school leaders.

This year, we significantly expanded our reach by deepening partnerships with DCPS and TFA and achieved record enrollment in our leadership programs.

As we move forward, the need for our work has never been greater. In a landscape where educational leadership is increasingly challenging, School Leader Lab provides crucial support and development for those shaping the future of our schools and our students.

Together, we're building a network of inspirational leaders equipped to drive positive change. Thank you for being part of this vital mission.

Sincerely,

Tatiana Epanchin
Board Chair, School Leader Lab



Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors brings a diverse blend of relationships, business acumen, and drive to ensure we bring our mission and vision to life. The Board provides governance, serves as advocates and ambassadors, supports the Executive Director and senior staff, and engages business and philanthropic partners.



Tatiana Epanchin
Board Chair
Co-Founder, Catalyst Public Schools
Co-Founder, School Leader Lab



Joaquin Tamayo
Chief of Staff,
Office of the Deputy Secretary
- U.S. Department of Education



Kelly Gleischman
Founder and CEO,
KLG & Associates



Matt Bosch
Head of Strategy
and Operations,
Walton Enterprises



Jonathan Caldera
Principal,
Catalyst Public Schools,
School Leader Lab alum



Raymond Weeden
Executive Director,
Thurgood Marshall Academy,
School Leader Lab alum

Who We Are

School Leader Lab Staff



Erica Beal
Executive Director



David Ayala
Managing Partner



Akosua Kelley
Partner



Kim Beck
Partner



Eryn Cochran
Director of Communications
and Development

School Leader Lab Advisors



Jessica Akoto
Greenhouse E3 Partner



Kaya Henderson
CEO of Reconstruction,
Former DC Schools Chancellor



Catalan Conlan
Catalan Conlan Consulting

School Leader Lab Adjuncts



Brendan O'Day
Meristem Group



Keith Brooks
Noble Story Group



Dr. Derek Musgrove
University of Maryland,
Baltimore County

Our 2024 Funders

Thank you for your generous contribution to School Leader Lab. Your commitment has helped support transformational training for education leaders in Washington, DC, and the surrounding areas.



100% of School Leader Lab participants across all of our programming named that their experience with us had a deep impact on their ability to lead and sustain in schools.

“If it weren’t for **School Leader Lab**, I would have not only left DC education but the profession altogether.”
- Cohort Participant

Annual Impact Report 2024

