



GREAT SCHOOLS
NEED GREAT LEADERS

2017 Annual Report



MISSION & VISION

We envision a nation where every school and school system is led by transformational leaders who prepare all children, especially the traditionally underserved, for success.

We build the capacity of educational leaders, at every level of the system, to confront inequities and create the conditions necessary for all students to thrive.

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Organized under the laws of New York State as a not-for-profit corporation, the NYC Leadership Academy is exempt from tax under Section 501 © (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is governed by an independent and non-salaried Board of Directors. The NYC Leadership Academy qualifies for the maximum charitable contribution deduction by donors. A summary of activities and financial highlights for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2017, is described in this report.



We now have worked with more than 150 school systems in 32 states. Our mission of training great leaders who can lead great schools, including by confronting the many inequities in our education system, remains paramount.”
 – Jonathan Moses, Board Chair, NYC Leadership Academy

A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



Fifteen years ago, the Leadership Academy began the critical work of building a leadership pipeline for New York City public schools. We knew that schools couldn't be great without great leaders. We are extraordinarily proud of what we accomplished working with the New York City Department of Education. Our groundbreaking Aspiring Principal Programs trained more than 550 principals who have served in some of the City's most challenging schools. And, we helped the Department of Education build its own leadership training program.

In the meantime, our work outside New York City has grown. Seeing our success here in New York, school systems across the country started calling asking for help in developing their own leadership pipelines. The result is that we have taken the lessons we learned in New York throughout the country. We now

have worked with more than 150 school systems in 32 states. Our mission of training great leaders who can lead great schools, including by confronting the many inequities in our education system, remains paramount. And, our own work has only improved as we engage with so many diverse communities. This report is particularly meaningful as it marks the first year of our strategic plan, Leadership Academy 2020, by which we will seek to strengthen our ability to realize our mission and set the stage for responsible future growth.

While we take great pride in how we have helped educators throughout the United States take on the challenges of school leadership, we know we have only scratched the surface. As we look ahead to 2018, we embrace the opportunity to continue working with district, charter, and private schools in urban and rural areas across the country.

None of this would be possible without the dedication and support of our team of educators and other professionals whose drive for ensuring that all children have great schools defines the Leadership Academy, as well as our board members, funders, alumni, and partners. I am grateful to you and privileged to serve as the Leadership Academy's Chair of the Board of Directors.

We look forward to partnering with you on this work that will shape the next generation.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Moses
Board Chair

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO



For 15 years, the NYC Leadership Academy has carried the banner of high quality school leadership, leveraging the incredible experience of our staff, many of them former school and school system leaders, to provide direct support and build the capacity of districts. We have strengthened educational leadership in more than 150 school systems in 32 states and internationally.

I am pleased to introduce this report which serves as a reminder of where we have been and a signal of where we are going. In 2017, we took bold steps to expand our work at the nexus of leadership and equity, where we know great leadership must live to improve learning for students, especially in our most underserved and under resourced communities.

We pushed our growth as a national organization with a continued focus on creating innovative learning opportunities for school leaders and preparing them for the many challenges facing education in the 21st Century. We also named two retired leading superintendents credited with achieving significant student gains as the Leadership Academy's inaugural "superintendents in residence." In this role, Ann Clark and Valeria Silva are key advisors to provide practical advice and insights to educators about infusing equity into leadership practices.

As we work toward the goals articulated in our three-year strategic plan, Leadership Academy 2020, we eagerly anticipate new levels of recognition as thought leaders, advocating for policies that support professional learning and development.

I look ahead to 2018 and beyond with excitement. Your support and commitment have helped to get us here and will take us into the future.

This work is urgent. The time is now. Our children cannot wait.

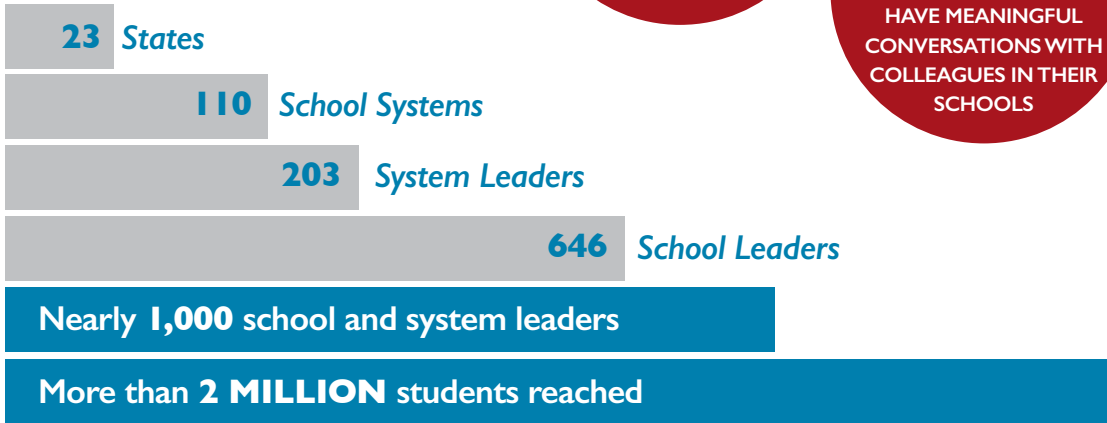
In gratitude for your support,

Irma Zardoya
President & CEO



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 – Irma Zardoya, President & CEO

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

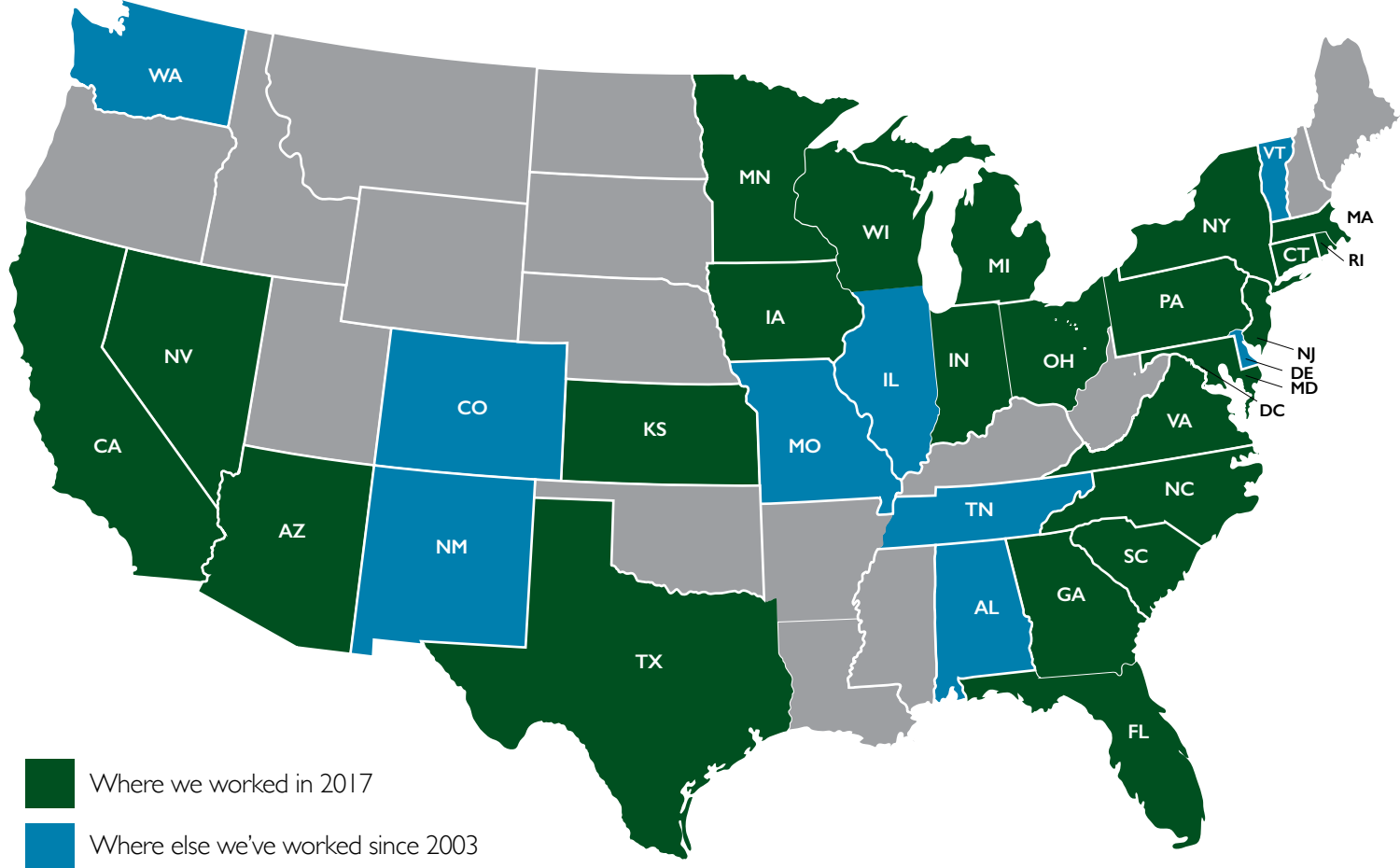


99%
OF PARTICIPANTS
LIKELY TO RECOMMEND
TRAINING FROM
THE LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY

100%
OF PARTICIPANTS
WERE INSPIRED TO
HAVE MEANINGFUL
CONVERSATIONS WITH
COLLEAGUES IN THEIR
SCHOOLS



EXPANDING OUR REACH



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14TH COHORT OF THE
LEADERSHIP ACADEMY'S
FLAGSHIP ASPIRING
PRINCIPALS PROGRAM,
TOTALING
562 ALUMNI
SINCE 2003





We are excited about the partnership between the Nevada Department of Education and NYC Leadership Academy. Their collaboration in the past and their long-standing reputation in delivering this evidence-based professional development will bring strategies, best-practices, resources and support that these school leaders have never been offered before.”

– Steve Canavero, Ph.D., Nevada Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUPPORTING STATES

Recognizing school leadership as a critical lever for improving school performance and student outcomes, the Nevada Department of Education has engaged the Leadership Academy to develop and support a statewide network of principals.

Over the next two years, we will facilitate a community of 150 educational leaders from 10 districts, improving their skills and capacity to:

- support and coach their teachers
- conduct productive learning walks that identify instructional challenges in classrooms and address them in ways that improve teaching
- create strong school leadership teams

In the first year, Leadership Academy facilitators will provide in-person and online learning sessions for Nevada principals. In the second year, we will train state education leaders to facilitate sessions and provide on-going support for the principal network.



STRENGTHENING SCHOOL SYSTEMS

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA

Hillsborough County Public Schools made a historic move by adopting a district-wide racial equity policy to identify and address the root causes of racial disparities in student learning.

The district leaders knew implementing this policy would not be easy, so they contracted with the Leadership Academy to support its 28 senior staff and board members in examining district policies and goals through an equity lens and having productive conversations about race.

Beginning this year, Leadership Academy facilitators led school board members in reflecting on their own racial histories and the impact implicit biases have in schools. They discussed how to champion the district equity policy, and developed succinct ways to talk about the policy with community members. Our team also worked with district senior staff to begin defining the conditions needed to implement racial equity plans connected to the district policy.

We also developed an equity learning walk tool for area superintendents or principal supervisors to use to better identify and address inequities during classroom observations.



Usually when you talk about equity and diversity, people have an idea of what that means. But when it comes to moving academic achievement, principals need the resources to know what equity looks like on a daily basis. NYC Leadership Academy is helping district leaders provide this support to principals so that they can create school cultures that are conducive to learning for all students.”

– Minerva Spanner-Morrow, Chief Diversity Officer, Hillsborough County Public Schools



“What I learned in Foundations has been very impactful on helping us increase student learning. The chance to tap into the vast experience and knowledge of my more seasoned peers was invaluable. I think back on many of the discussions as I do my work today.”

— Peggy Goodman, Assistant Superintendent, Gwinnett County Public Schools

LEXINGTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

When Dr. Gregory Little became superintendent, he realized he would be losing a number of principals in the coming years, and the district lacked a leadership pipeline to fill those critical jobs. He engaged the Leadership Academy to help create a district-based Aspiring Principals Academy. In the summer of 2017, the first cohort of eight aspiring principals completed a three-week summer intensive, and are currently in a year-long residency to practice and reflect on leadership activities in a school setting.

A few months into the aspiring principals program, Mary Gaskins, the district’s Director of Professional Learning, reported, “The aspiring principals are now more aware of their own mental models as well as those of others. They are more prepared to

view things through the lens of equity, they have expanded their definition of data, and they are thinking about intended and unintended consequences.

“Those eight people alone will have a huge impact on our district.”

Based on this early success, the Lexington School District One is deepening its work with the Leadership Academy. We are working with 33 district staff members to define leadership roles, identify the leadership standards associated with each role, and to support opportunities for staff to meet these standards. We are also delivering professional development for district leaders on equity, collaboration, and team work.

FOUNDATIONS OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISION

When she and her colleagues attended the Leadership Academy’s inaugural Foundations of Principal Supervision program, Peggy Goodman had just become Assistant Superintendent of Gwinnett County Public Schools. She hoped to learn to ground her thinking and practice in the Leadership Academy’s research-based district leadership standards. The year-long program, which aims to improve principal supervision and support, helped her reflect on what her role should look like and how she and her team would work together to support principals and improve schools.

Three years later, Goodman credits the Foundations training with helping her and her team members improve low-performing schools in the district. She has been better able to debrief with principals after classroom observations, offer useful tools, and support principals in developing strategies for improving student learning.



Over three years, the Foundations program has supported 56 principal supervisors from 21 districts across 12 states. Those supervisors have in turn reached more than 700 principals, and close to 400,000 students.

HELPING SCHOOL LEADERS GROW

With our coaching funded by the Booth Ferris Foundation, some New York City principals put in place innovative solutions to better engage students who were struggling and missing school. They expanded professional learning communities for teachers and created mentoring and arts programs for young men of color. In a short amount of time, students’ grades and attendance improved, discipline incidents dropped, and fewer teachers left at the end of the year.

PRINCIPAL DORIS LEE: “I knew there was a gap in understanding between the cultures of the kids and the teachers, not only by race, but also by economic level and by background. We had to build relationships with kids. Teachers started reading articles about student behavior and teacher expectations in urban schools. They discussed skin color, culture, upbringing, views on how children should behave and whether they should be seen and not heard. We were asking, ‘What are your expectations for our kids and how do they align with the kids’ culture?’”

7TH GRADE ENGLISH TEACHER: “I had always run a strict classroom. My attitude was, ‘It’s my way and that’s it.’ I realized they may be sitting there compliant with me, but they’re not enjoying it or engaged in anything I’m doing. You can’t motivate a child by talking down to them. Now my students feel comfortable saying to me, ‘I think you’re being unfair right now,’ and we can compromise, or I can explain the rationale behind my decisions so that they understand why I am asking them to do something. It’s no longer me telling them to do something just because I said so.”

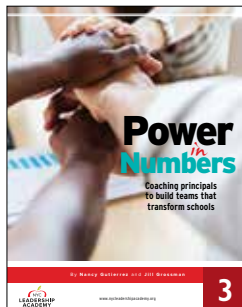
PRINCIPAL KIM SWANSON: “I think for a lot of these kids; their mentor is somebody who is checking on them when a lot of other people have written them off. The mentors are men who look like them, have had similar experiences to them, and are open to speaking to them about those experiences.”

11TH GRADE STUDENT: “If our mentors could change to get to be who they are now, I can do the same thing. I started thinking, ‘If I change my ways, I can be something instead of being a statistic.’ So, I just started acting different.”

“ We urge states to launch initiatives that will produce principals and district leaders who can lead for equity and access. Only then will all students have a shot at getting the best academic experience to prepare them for graduation and beyond. And only then will we, as a nation, have a shot at leveling the playing field and ending educational inequities.”
 — Irma Zardoya, President & CEO, in *Education Week*

IN THE NEWS

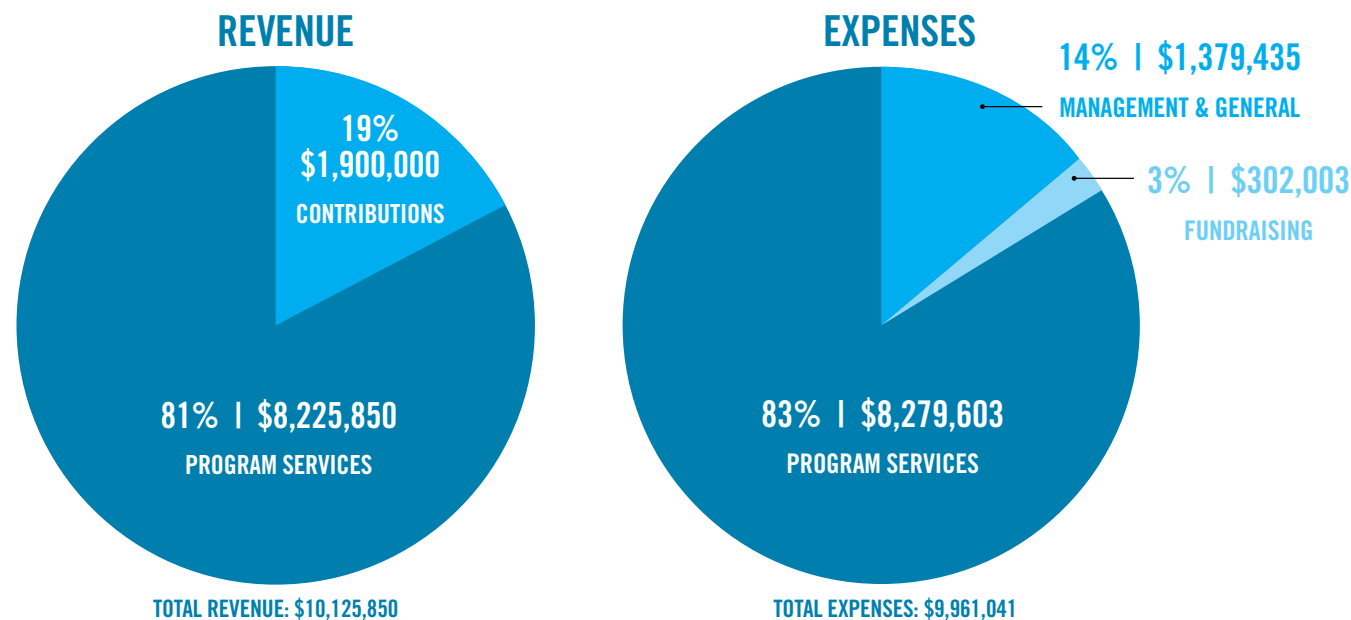
With all our exciting work and programs in 2017, the Leadership Academy was featured in major media outlets. We also shared our expertise on leadership and equity on our new blog, *Leadership Insights*, in white papers, and at conferences, including AASA, the Principal Supervisor Summit, the NASSP's National Principal's Conference and the Coalition of Community Charter Schools Symposium.



1. We advocated for public funding to support school leadership and provide professional learning on equity.
2. We have been recognized for the success of our equity training for principals.
3. We published a guide on coaching principals to lead strong teams.
4. We advised leaders on the importance of ongoing professional learning for confronting racial inequities in schools.
5. We shared how school leaders can support undocumented students.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

We acknowledge the generous financial support of foundations, corporations, and individuals during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. On behalf of all who benefit from the leadership investment of our donors, we say thank you as we invite your continued engagement with, and support of the NYC Leadership Academy.



Our auditors have expressed an unqualified opinion on our June 30, 2017, and 2016 financial statements. A printed copy may be obtained from NYC Leadership Academy.

CELEBRATING THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

We had a remarkable celebration to honor our 14 years of supporting educational leaders in June at the New-York Historical Society.

We were joined by Schools Chancellor Carmen Farina, former Schools Chancellor Joel Klein, and New York State Board of Regents members Kathleen Cashin, Judith Chin, and Lester Young; hundreds of graduates of our Aspiring Principals and Leadership Advancement programs; and coached principals, donors, and leaders in education. Klein and founding Leadership Academy Board Member Sy Sternberg recalled when public and private entities, corporations, non-profit groups, and foundations invested \$80 million to create the Leadership Academy. Led by Kathy Wylde, the Partnership for NYC raised more than a third of that. The Wallace Foundation was another leading funder.

Said Klein, being a great educational leader “is about how to deal with human beings, understand budget, deal with parents, set high expectations. The Leadership Academy is about all of that.”

Declaring June 14 “NYC Leadership Academy Day,” Mayor Bill de Blasio’s office issued a proclamation stating, “NYCLA is an

important partner in our efforts to run our schools on the twin engines of equity and excellence.”

Said Chancellor Farina, “As a former principal, I know how rewarding, challenging, and important the work of leading a school is. I congratulate the Leadership Academy for its tremendous work to prepare and support great school leaders.”

We were proud to hear from principals we have supported. Alumni speaker Wanda Vazquez, principal of El Puente Academy in Brooklyn, inspired us, saying, “I am here to highlight the potential for power within this room. Our work as educational leaders calls on us to create the conditions that will prepare our young people for college, careers, life, and liberation.”

We also premiered our short film, *The Power of Leaders*, featuring the voices of nearly a dozen New York City students talking about the impact their principals have had on their lives. The film features APP graduates Vazquez, Dr. Reggie Landeau of George J. Ryan Middle School 216, and Seung Yu of Academy for Software Engineering.



DONORS AND PARTNERS

American Express, in partnership with the **National Association of Secondary School Principals Path to Leadership** program, generously supported expansion of our flagship Aspiring Principals Programs in two of New York State's largest school districts, Rochester City School District and Yonkers Public Schools. The \$600,000 grant is enabling the development of a new pipeline of principals with strong preparation and support services to advance student achievement.

A grant of \$250,000 from the **Booth Ferris Foundation** expanded the Leadership Academy's Alumni Network and galvanized participants to be change agents around educational equity. Funding supported our Mini-Grant Program for Equity and Excellence at Village Academy (Far Rockaway, Queens), Life Sciences Secondary School (Harlem, NY), and Bronx High School for Writing and Communication Arts (Bronx, NY) that transformed academic, social experiences, and outcomes for boys and young men of color.

The **Carnegie Corporation of New York** philanthropic foundation's \$1.3 million grant was an extension of previous generous funding that developed a Virtual Learning Platform and expanded our systemic focus on equity, diversity, and social justice. The grant will leverage technology to develop innovative online and blended learning services and tools for school and system leaders. Two additional grants totalling \$400,000 helped develop our Virtual Learning Platform and further strengthen capacity through a strategic planning process.

An Investing in Innovation (i3) grant totaling \$3 million from the **United States Department of Education** launched the Leadership Academy's Teaming Model in 2014. We have prepared and supported teams of highly qualified school leaders for success in some of New York City's most challenging schools, having an impact on 30,000 students annually. Funding also supports a partnership with the RAND Corporation for an extensive study of the Teaming Model.

We are grateful for ongoing support from and partnership with **The Wallace Foundation**. The Foundation awarded two grants totalling \$400,000 to develop a Virtual Learning Platform and complete a strategic plan that charts an extended course for our growth. Working collaboratively, we have been engaged in facilitating the Foundation's Principal Pipeline Initiative to help six urban school districts develop a much larger corps of effective school principals in high need schools as well as the Principal Supervisor Initiative, which supports 14 districts in improving the effectiveness of the administrators who oversee principals.

We have also been working with the Wallace Foundation to convene teams from 10 states for the ESSA Leadership Learning Community (ELLC). The ELLC in partnership with CCSSO, Council of Great City Schools and the National Urban League, has provided valuable opportunities for states to learn from and support one another as they develop their federal ESSA plans focusing on leading for equity and especially in support of turnaround schools.

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