

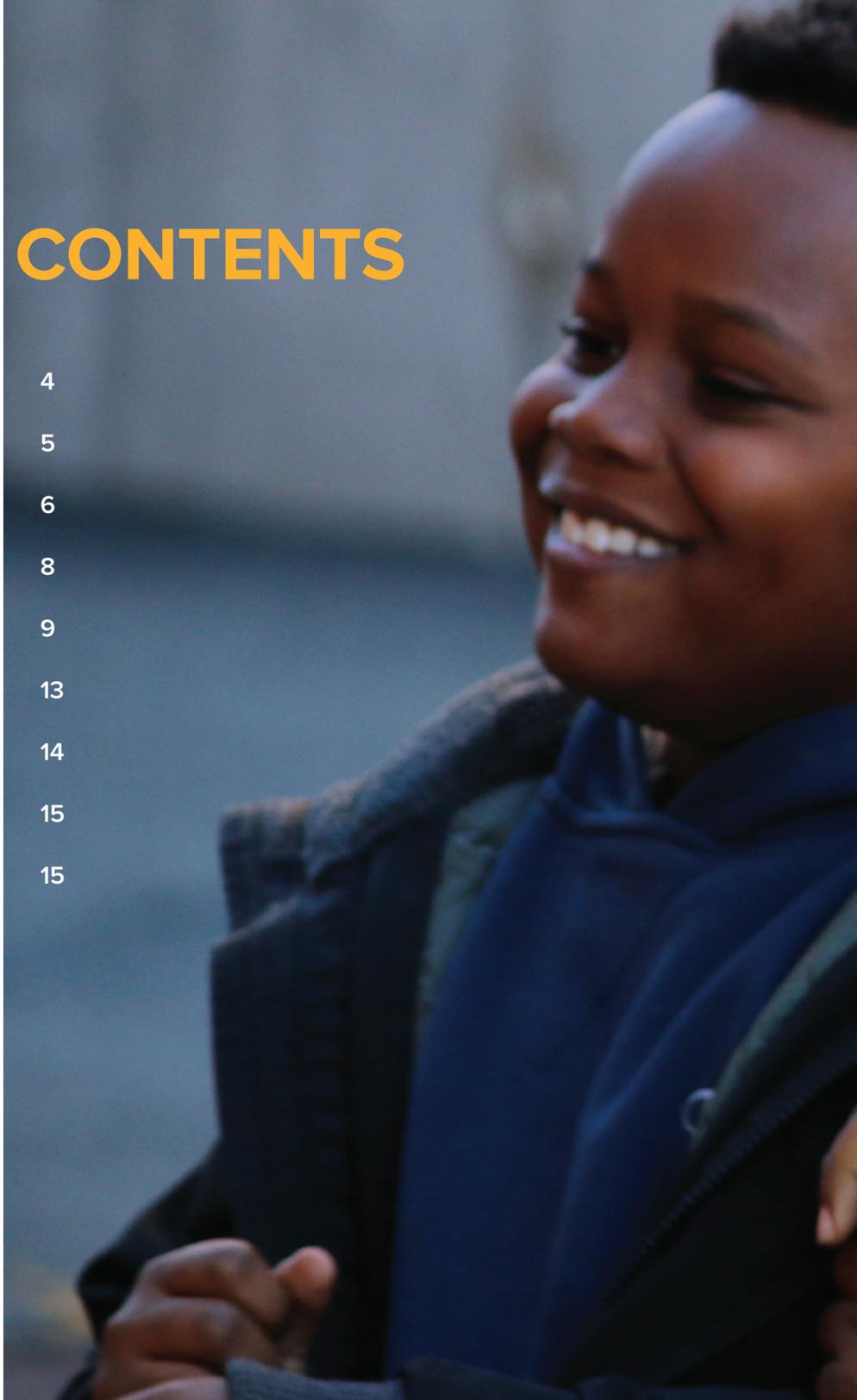


# ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT 2018



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ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT 2018



NANCY B. GUTIÉRREZ, ED.L.D

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

I have been inspired by the thoughtful work that our partners in schools and school systems across the country have done over the last year. We have seen an increasing number of leaders take bold risks, moved by the urgent need to improve learning for every child and to close unrelenting and unnecessary gaps in performance. We have seen leaders listen closely to their stakeholders, seeking out the answers in the room and building teams to act on those answers. We have seen leaders create and sustain systems and structures that will last long beyond their tenure. That is what strong leadership is about. That is what we at the NYC Leadership Academy are about: intentional, equity-driven leadership.

In Somerville, MA, for example, we engaged with the school board members, superintendent, and school and district administrators as they pushed themselves in uncomfortable conversations to identify barriers standing in the way of system-wide improvement. They asked, “What do we in our respective roles need to know and be able to do to set the foundation for an equitable school system?” In Godfrey Lee Public Schools in West Michigan, newly appointed Superintendent Kevin Polston invited stakeholders from across the district to assess and reflect upon his first six months in the district: He wanted to know, “What do I need to do to be the leader Godfrey Lee needs? How should I be challenging my leadership moves and mental models?” He knew that the community knew what it needed.

As we work to develop the whole leader, we at the NYC Leadership Academy are driven by the fact that our education system offers fewer effective learning opportunities like expert teachers and challenging coursework to our most marginalized students: students of color, English language learners, low-income students, and students with special needs. We know that a critical part of being a leader is being willing and able to recognize and address those disparities, however unpopular or uncomfortable it might be to do so. Our expertise lies in helping leaders take on and successfully manage this process.

While we expand our work in schools and school systems in 2019, we will continue to give context and meaning to the term “equity” so that it is not an empty word but rather a substantial and compelling call to action.

As my colleague Mary Rice-Boothe, Chief Access & Equity Officer, so wisely says, “You might not be responsible for creating the inequities, but you must take responsibility for dismantling them.” Intentional leadership is the lever for that change.

***Nancy B. Gutiérrez, Ed.L.D***



JONATHAN MOSES

## A NOTE FROM OUR **BOARD CHAIR**

The year 2018 was one of exciting change and growth for the NYC Leadership Academy. As we celebrated 15 years of developing outstanding leaders at every level of the education sector, we welcomed Dr. Nancy B. Gutierrez as our new President and CEO. A former teacher, principal, and district leader, Nancy brings a strong vision for and commitment to educational leadership as the key lever for improving schools for every child. In her fifth year at the Leadership Academy, most recently as our Chief Strategy Officer, Nancy is eager to continue to expand the depth and breadth of our work and has already begun doing so by forging new partnerships. Under Nancy's leadership we are expanding our work in our home base of New York City, as well as in New England, the Midwest, and the South. This year we reached our 33rd state – Virginia, supporting Virginia State University's efforts to redesign its principal training program.

We are also hearing from respected leaders in the field who want to actively support our mission by joining our organization. We recently welcomed two new board members who bring expertise and perspective from different areas of the country. Longtime education leader Dr. Hector Montenegro has served as a superintendent for three school districts in Texas and is past president of the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS). Dr. Kendra Ferguson is Chief Executive Officer of KIPP Memphis, and previously spent five years at KIPP Bay Area Schools, where she led efforts to increase teacher and school leader diversity and established a baseline for excellence in teaching.

We are humbled that the word about our good work continues to spread, and the movement to expand great education leadership development is growing.

Thank you for your support.

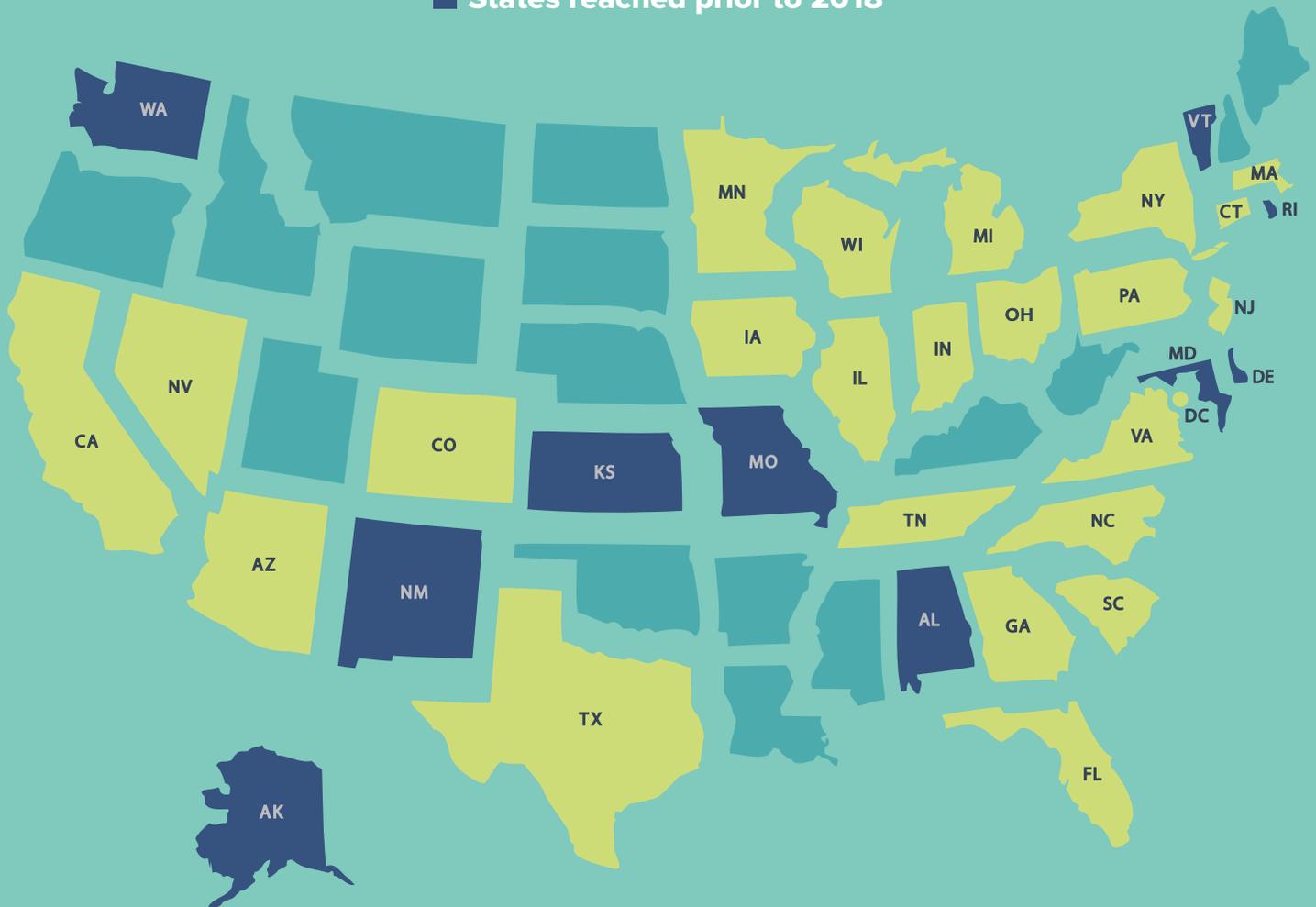
***Jonathan Moses***

# OUR IMPACT

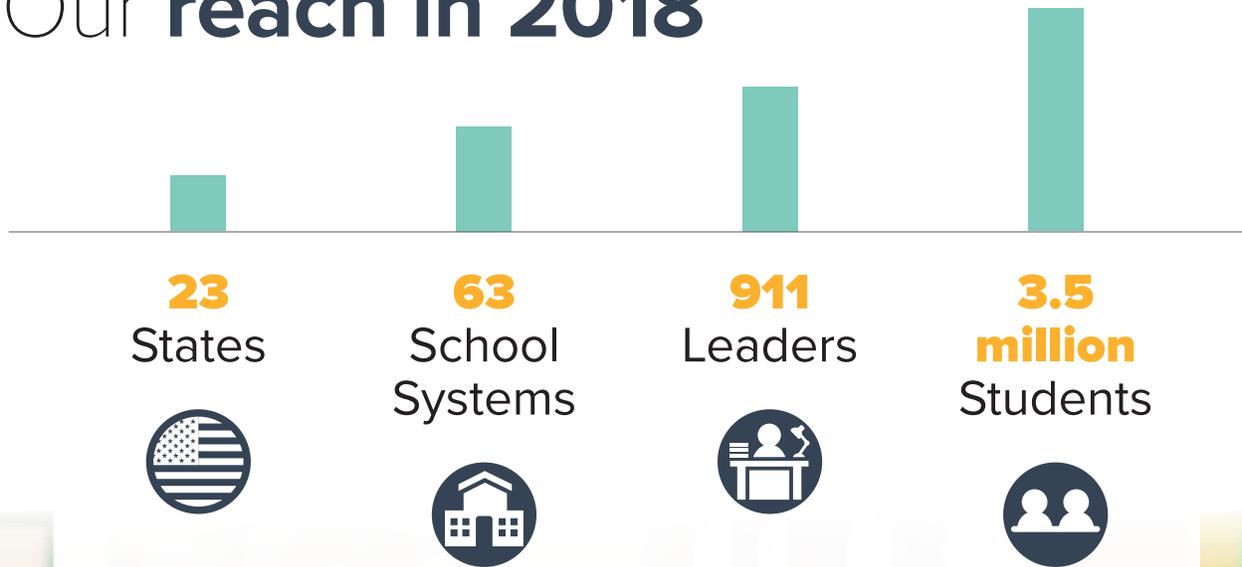
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■ Where we worked in 2018

■ States reached prior to 2018



# Our reach in 2018



**96%** Participants who said our training developed their thinking around equity

**94%** Participants who said our training developed their skills for leading and/or coaching for equity



# SUPPORTING STATES

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Recognizing that transforming schools requires a systemic approach, some state departments of education have invited us to work with leaders across many of their districts. In **Wisconsin**, we helped launch the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute to develop principals in the state's five largest urban districts. In **Nevada**, we continued our work with the state's School Leadership Network, developing an equity learning walk tool aligned with state standards and building leaders' capacity to use it in their schools, and supporting the state in launching its second cohort of the leadership network.



# SUPPORTING SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Sixty-three districts across the country engaged with us to develop effective education leaders. In **New York City**, we supported the onboarding of the district's new Executive Superintendents. In **Lexington County School District One**, South Carolina, we have helped the district establish its own leadership academy, the 10th aspiring principal program we have helped develop. With our fourth cohort of **Foundations of Principal Supervision**, this program has now supported 73 principal supervisors from 27 school districts across 15 states and Washington, D.C., ultimately reaching 800 principals and nearly 450,000 students.



**The district needed to move to a more instructional focus at all levels. With the Leadership Academy's support, the district has adopted a coaching stance with regard to school improvement. The conversation at administrative meetings prioritizes curriculum, instruction, and data-driven decision making. Principals are much more focused on the learning of both teachers and students and the moves they need to make to maximize the growth of all.**

— Dale A. Norton, *Superintendent of Schools,*  
*Nye County School District*



## NYE COUNTY



In our second year of offering professional learning and one-on-one coaching to school leaders in rural Nye County, the district asked that we expand our efforts by doubling the number of principals and principal supervisors we support. For principals, we began the school year with a summer institute where we supported them to develop school performance plans and diagnose and devise strategies for addressing student inequities. Most principals are also receiving in-person and virtual support from Leadership Academy coaches. On the district level, we have helped principal supervisors develop a common language around school leadership; shift to a more adaptive process for developing school leaders; and lead professional learning sessions for their principals.





## SOMERVILLE, MA

It takes working across an entire school system to ensure equity is front and center for every single student. Leaders in Somerville, a small urban district, hired the NYC Leadership Academy for its experience working with school, district, and school board leaders. With a mostly white faculty and administrative staff serving a student body that is one-third black and nearly half Latino, district leaders saw the need to better serve students of color by assuring that they have more teachers who look like them, curriculum that reflects their background and experiences, and decision-makers who represent different perspectives and are deeply engaged in their personal leadership for equity. The Leadership Academy team is

working with dozens of leaders from assistant principals to school committee members to create a common definition of equity: After learning about the history of local and national educational inequities, school committee members are developing a public-facing student-focused theory of change and a plan for supporting the superintendent's efforts to lead for equity. District administrator teams are developing equity-focused goals and reflecting on the impact their personal identities have on the decisions and actions they make as leaders. One school's leadership team is working with us to better understand how implicit biases affect the curricular design and lessons teachers teach.



**We recognize that we need to create diversity in our system, to make sure students are reading literature about people who look like them ... To do this work well, you have to do it as a system. We know this work takes time, and as leaders we are ok with that. We don't have an expert on equity and the Leadership Academy is helping fill that gap.**

— Dr. Almi G. Abeyta,  
*Assistant Superintendent  
for Curriculum, Instruction,  
and Assessment,  
Somerville Public Schools*





## WEST MICHIGAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Prioritizing school leadership as a critical lever for improving student learning, five districts in West Michigan partnered with us to create the West Michigan Leadership Academy (WMLA). With leadership and support from the Doug and Maria DeVos and Steelcase foundations, WMLA aims to work with more than 120 school leaders over its first five years, equipping them with the skills to develop and implement solutions for some of their districts' biggest challenges, from principal turnover to significant student demographic shifts. The program fellows are spending the year tackling an equity-focused problem of practice that they identified in their school. They are exploring the root causes of the problem and developing a plan for addressing it. The fellows are also participating in a series of workshops and learning experiences that will help them develop a vision for equity and a plan for making and monitoring progress toward that vision, including staff and community roles in implementation. They will also engage in targeted sessions on communication, distributive leadership, data fluency and application, equitable practice, and assessing progress and impact, and work one-on-one with a leadership coach for the duration of the program.



**The opportunity to embed the NYC Leadership Academy and its educational leadership practices in the work of our community's academic leaders and educators is one that can benefit learning and understanding for students and staff alike. The NYC Leadership Academy is leading this locally comprehensive effort to deepen practice and learning, and ultimately better the lives of the children who are the reason for this program.**

— Julie Ridenour, *President, Steelcase Foundation*





## DES MOINES, IA

Seeking to address the opportunity gaps that persist for this district that serves 33,000 students who speak more than 100 languages, the Des Moines Public School District selected the NYC Leadership Academy to build the capacity of school-based equity coaches to support implementation of the district's equity plan. As part of a larger district initiative, the Leadership Academy is supporting efforts to develop culturally proficient leaders and educators. Over three years, the Leadership Academy

will facilitate the equity coaches' professional learning through in-person, job-embedded sessions and small group coaching, during which the coaches will learn the leadership skills needed to help principals and teachers identify and address inequities in their schools.



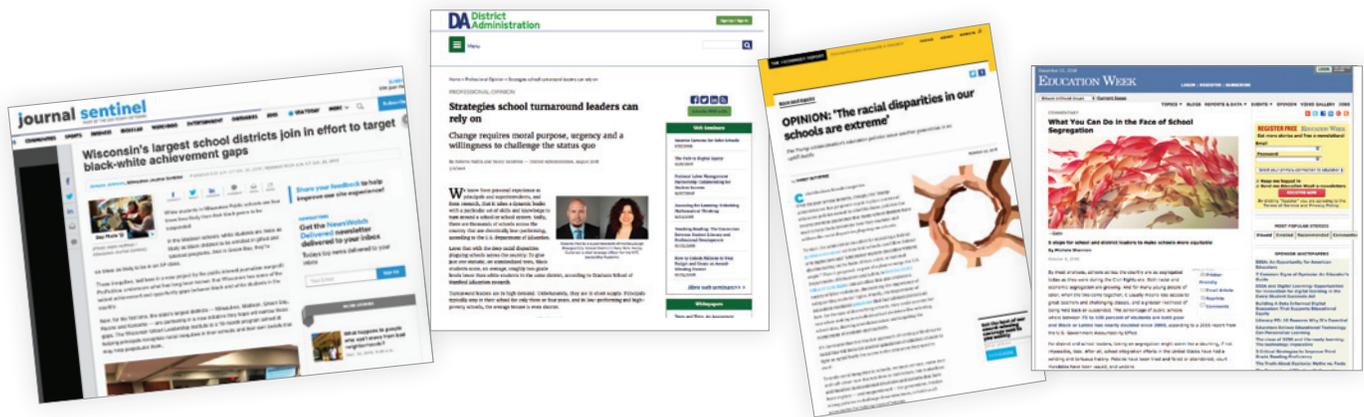
**The NYC Leadership Academy was selected as a key partner in this work because of their demonstrated expertise, systems perspective, and, perhaps most important, a belief in the importance of this work that matches ours. Our work together will accelerate our progress in developing our ability to work effectively in our cross-cultural context to eradicate our achievement gaps and characterize our differences as strengths from which we can grow rather than as barriers that must be overcome.**

— Dr. Thomas Ahart, *Superintendent,*  
*Des Moines Public Schools*



# THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

To further share our experiences and expertise with education leaders around the country, we had a busy year writing op-eds and articles and speaking with local and national media outlets. We published original research and policy recommendations on the impact ongoing coaching can have on principals' leadership skills and on their schools, in *Still in the Game: How Coaching Keeps Leaders in Schools and Making Progress*. We also shared our expertise on leadership and equity on our blog, *Leadership Insights*, and presented at conferences including AASA, the School Superintendents Association, American Educational Research Association, American Evaluation Association, Education Week's Leaders to Learn From, National Principal Conference, Association of Latino Administrators & Superintendents, and the National Summit for Courageous Conversation.



## STILL IN THE GAME

### How Coaching Keeps Leaders in Schools and Making Progress

Our original research found that principals who receive leadership coaching for at least five years

- Remained in their schools more than twice as long as the national average principal tenure in a school.
- Improved their ability to supervise staff, distribute leadership, communicate, and lead with resilience.
- Avoided complacency, working to make continuous improvements at their schools.



Currently, only about half of principals nationwide are engaged in mentoring and coaching as part of their professional development, and that support is typically reserved for first-year principals or leaders in need of remediation,

Our accompanying policy brief recommends eight policy shifts that school, district, and state educational leaders can make to provide needed ongoing leadership coaching for their school leaders.

# FUNDERS & PARTNERS

**The Carnegie Corporation of New York's** \$540,000 grant in 2018 enabled us to increase our presence in the field. The grant supported the development of professional learning programs that expanded our support to more and varied districts, and also allowed us to redesign our website, increase our social media activity, and publish an original research paper and policy brief, *Still in the Game: How Coaching Keeps Leaders in Schools and Making Progress*.

The **Doug and Maria DeVos Foundation** and the **Steelcase Foundation** have generously partnered with us and five school districts to develop the West Michigan Leadership Academy, which aims to serve more than 120 school leaders over its first five years, equipping them with the skills to develop and implement solutions for some of their districts' biggest challenges, from principal turnover to significant student demographic shifts.

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 schools most in need of improvement, having an impact on more than 15,000 students annually. Funding also supports a partnership with the RAND Corporation for an extensive study of the Teaming Model. This year marks the last for the i3 grant.



We are grateful for ongoing support from and partnership with **The Wallace Foundation**. The Foundation awarded two grants totaling \$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.

The **Bainum Family Foundation** is leveraging its original partnership with the NYC Leadership Academy to develop a leadership coaching program that supports administrators in faith-based schools. The multi-year program will build the capacity of leadership coaches who are paired with novice school administrators to maximize their impact and better serve students.



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