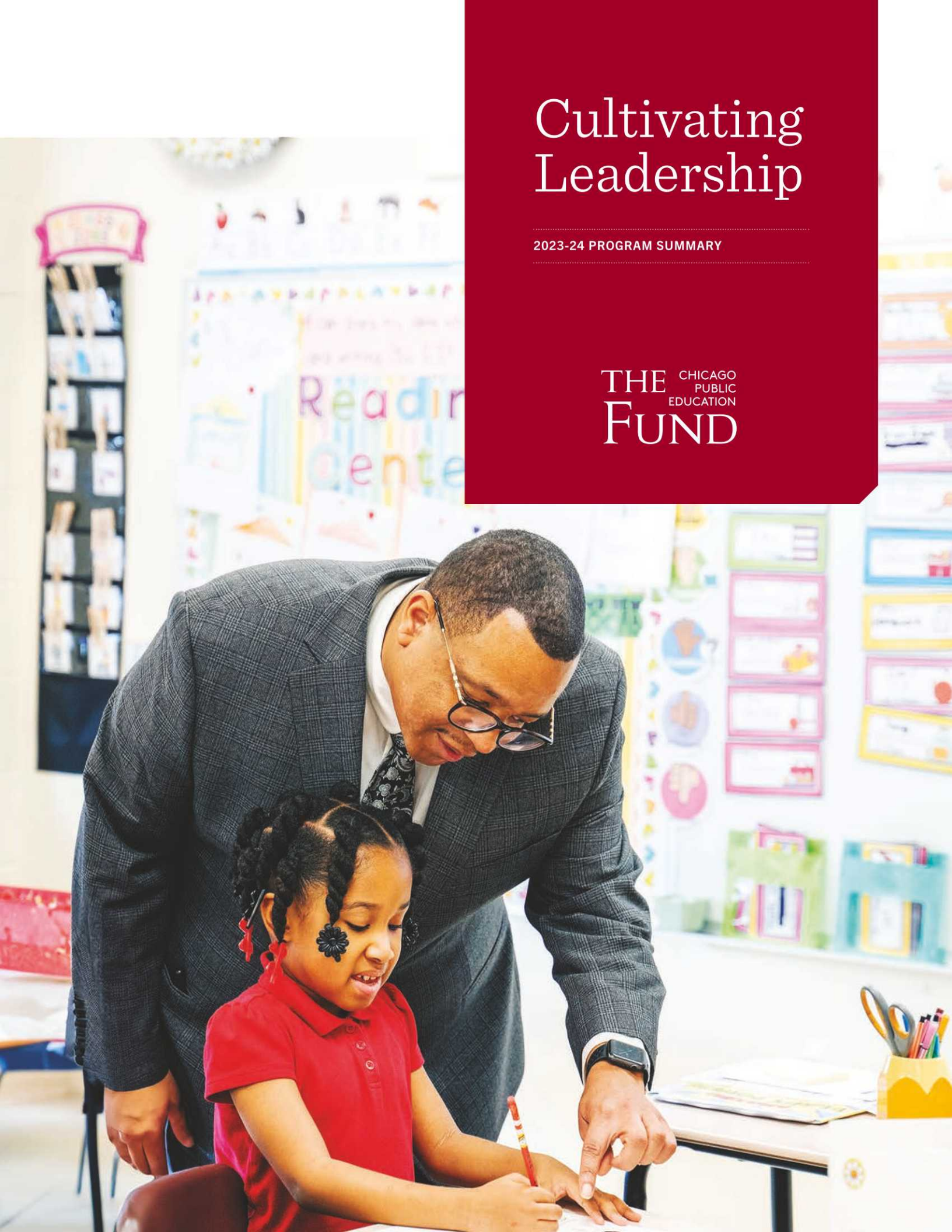


Cultivating Leadership

2023-24 PROGRAM SUMMARY

THE CHICAGO
PUBLIC
EDUCATION
FUND





The Chicago Public Education Fund (The Fund) is a nonprofit organization that improves Chicago's public schools by investing in the talented educators who lead them. For over 20 years, we have worked with our public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic partners to redefine what it means to lead a public school.

Introduction

In 2023-24, The Fund's eight programs are empowering 378 aspiring leaders, principals, and principal supervisors in Chicago to create enriching learning environments. Our programs offer targeted support at every career stage, adapting to the diverse needs of school leaders and cultivating excellence citywide.

After spending years on COVID-related operational issues, principals are working to prioritize students' socioemotional and academic needs. School leaders are engaging academic interventionists, refining instructional practices, cultivating teacher-principal trust, and promoting distributed leadership.

In The Fund's 2023 Principal Engagement Survey, 95% of principals shared a desire to spend more time on curriculum and instructional leadership. The Fund adapted our programming to support these efforts. We shifted our program objectives to better meet leaders' needs, introduced new incentives to increase attendance and deepen learning, and launched pilot initiatives to surface innovative practices in school communities most impacted by COVID-19, including Priority Schools.¹

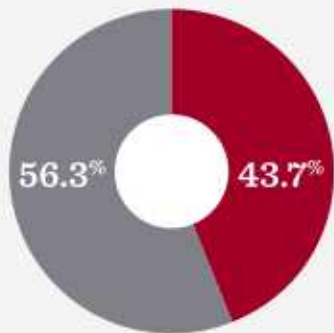
This report offers insights into our program offerings and partnerships during the 2023-24 school year.

¹ Priority Schools are defined as those experiencing high churn or high student mobility, as defined in research from the University of Illinois Chicago, and low culture and climate scores, as measured by the University of Chicago 5Essentials Survey. About 280 schools in Chicago fall within this category.

Program Summary

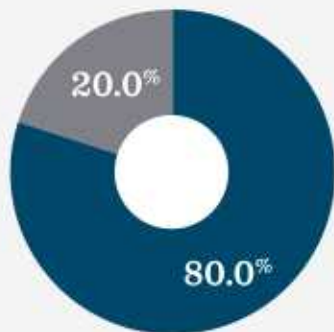
Currently, our participants lead in 245 district and charter-operated schools. Over half of our program educators are leaders of color, with 62% identifying as Black and Latino/a/x. In 2024, we are excited to serve additional educators in our second-semester pilots and programs.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS



Priority School

- Priority School
- Non-Priority School



School Level

- Elementary School
- High School

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

151

Principals

193

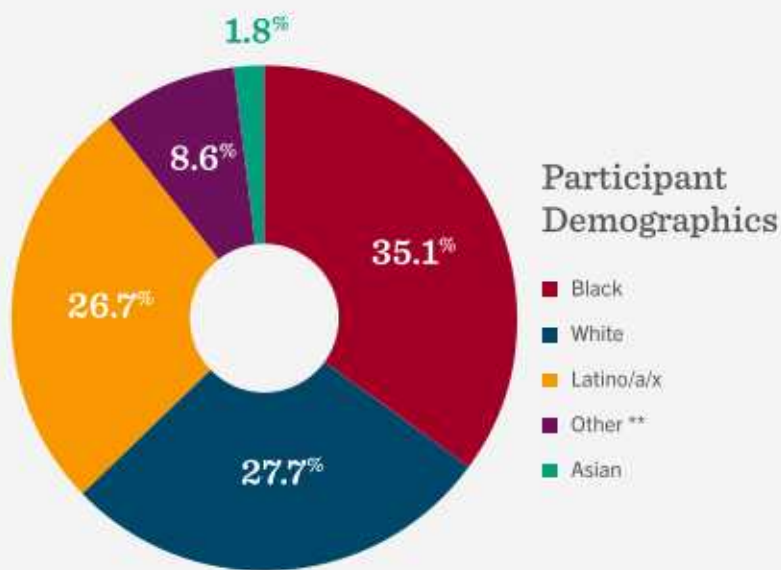
Aspiring Principals *

34

Principal Supervisors

139K

Students Impacted



Participant Demographics

- Black
- White
- Latino/a/x
- Other **
- Asian

* Aspiring principals include assistant principals, instructional leaders, and teachers.

** Includes participants with demographic data that was either unavailable or unknown at the time of data collection, participants who identify with multiple ethnicities, and participants who are American Indian or Alaskan Native.



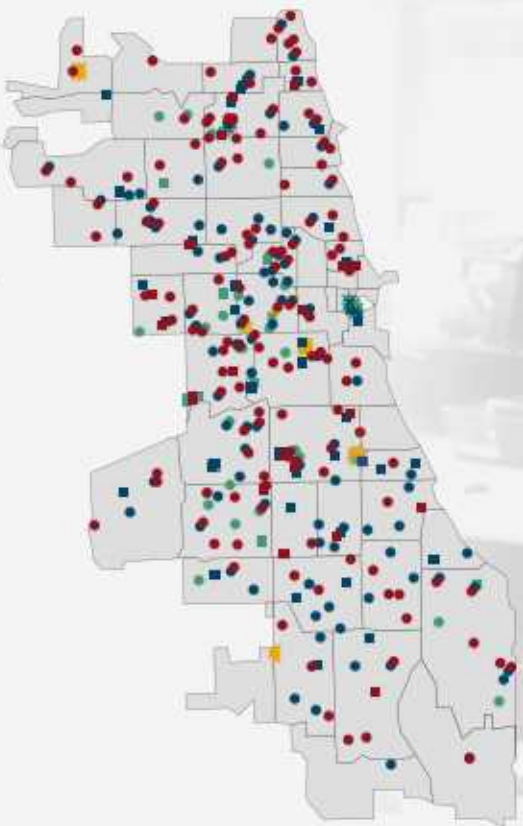
EDUCATORS SERVED

Educator Role

- Principal
- Assistant Principal (AP)
- Other School Leader
- Principal Supervisor
- School Community Member

School Level

- Elementary School
- High School
- × Nonschool Based



Program Investment Detail



					Students Impacted					Schools Impacted	
Program	Total Slots	Total Cost	Cost Per Slot		Diverse Learners	Economically Disadvantaged	English Language Learners	Temporary Living Situations	90%+ Black or Latino/a/x	Teacher Retention	Budget Change (FY23 to FY24)*
PILOT PROGRAMS & NEW OPPORTUNITIES											
Affinity Groups Program	33	\$100,000	\$3,030		17.4%	77.6%	37.2%	4.1%	89.3%	85.9%	4.2%
UWCEL Professional Learning Series**	34	\$92,500	\$2,721		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reimagining With Community Toolkit	17	\$40,550	\$2,385		17.0%	85.6%	32.6%	10.1%	84.6%	87.8%	9.1%
The Malott Educator Fellowship	22	\$550,000	\$25,000		16.2%	78.1%	22.2%	9.5%	72.7%	86.2%	5.6%
ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS											
Summer Design Program	15	\$264,000	\$17,600		15.9%	73.8%	15.2%	11.0%	66.7%	75.9%	1.0%
Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)	242 ***	\$436,300	\$1,803		17.0%	66.5%	28.2%	7.0%	52.5%	85.6%	3.7%
Masterclass Learning Series	80	\$58,000	\$725		17.2%	73.3%	26.2%	9.2%	69.4%	86.1%	3.7%
Leadership Bridge	18	\$322,500	\$17,917		18.1%	74.4%	14.3%	8.0%	77.8%	85.4%	4.2%
Chicago Average					17.8%	73.8%	21.8%	9.5%	72.0%	81.5%	1.7%
Total Program Slots		461									

* District schools only included in budget data.
 ** Participants have no associated school data.
 *** 200 school leaders are leading and contributing to 27 PLCs across 242 slots.

378

School leaders across Chicago — including principals, principal supervisors, assistant principals, and aspiring leaders — are served by our programs.

Our Programs

Peer learning is a powerful tool. Our core programs are designed to provide collaborative environments where current and aspiring principals, as well as principal supervisors, can share best practices and receive on-the-ground support from the city's top educators. We aim to ensure every leader is inspired, connected, and positioned to drive transformative change in their schools and communities.

PILOT PROGRAMS & NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Affinity Groups PILOT

- + 33 Aspiring Principals²
- + Launched in 2023

The Affinity Groups Program aims to propel Black and Latino/a/x educators into principal and assistant principal roles in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) by 2025. In 2023, we partnered with the Latino Leadership Pipeline (LLP) to provide aspiring leaders with robust professional networks, coaching opportunities, and targeted professional development to accelerate their path to formal school leader roles.

Through group sessions, participants deepen their understanding of the CPS Framework for Leadership and the CPS Equity Framework while exploring how to leverage their unique cultural identity as a cornerstone of their leadership. They refine their resumes to highlight the tangible results they achieve. By the program's conclusion, participants will take concrete next steps, such as enrolling in a principal prep program or applying for a next-level leadership role (assistant principal, Instructional Support Leader) within CPS.

UWCEL Professional Learning Series for Network Leaders PILOT

- + 34 Network Chiefs and Deputies
- + Launched in 2023

The University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership (UWCEL) Professional Learning Series offers development opportunities to CPS Network Chiefs and Deputies to enhance the quality of support they provide to principals.

The program aims to deepen the capacity of Chiefs and Deputies as supervisors of principals, as well as support them in coaching principals toward achieving equitable student outcomes. Chiefs and Deputies engage in a series of nine day-long sessions with experts from the UWCEL.

The UWCEL Professional Learning Series also works with the CPS Office of Network Support team to support best practices for adult learning grounded in UWCEL's Principal Support Framework. Chiefs will measure progress and practice through readiness assessments and coaching, as well as increased principal satisfaction in their network.

² Includes only aspiring school leaders who are part of the Latino/a/x affinity group; the Black affinity group is launching in 2024.



Mira Weber

Mira Weber served Chicago's students for over 16 years as a teacher and a principal. She is the current Chief of Network 10, overseeing 31 principals on Chicago's Southwest Side. Her passion for education began in childhood, where her father's mentorship instilled a love of learning. Her experience as a mother further defined her leadership style. As an education leader, Mira consistently advocates for special education students and inclusive classrooms.

During her 14-year tenure as principal of Tubman Elementary, Mira doubled her school's enrollment by welcoming students from over 40 Chicagoland zip codes, championed a comprehensive International Baccalaureate program, and guided a student-led school-renaming process that empowered her school community — experiences that were enriched by her own children attending Tubman. She also served as a Fund PLC leader, which sharpened her leadership skills and inspired her to cultivate school leaders' abilities in a formal capacity as Network Chief.

In her newest role, Mira is leading initiatives to develop her network's principals. This includes facilitating book studies on leadership development, holding monthly meetings around equitable student outcomes, leveraging data for decision-making, enhancing the student experience, and building safe, inclusive communities.

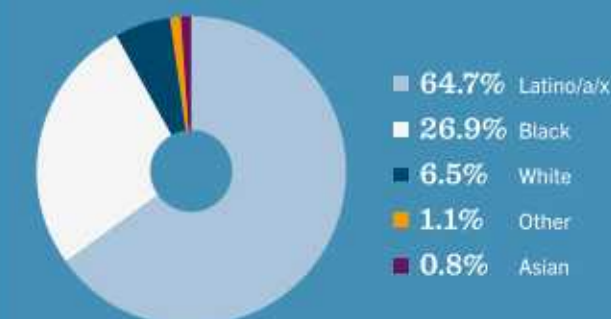
In 2023-24, Mira is participating in professional development alongside her fellow Network Chiefs led by The Fund and UWCEL. Through tailored coaching, she enthusiastically looks forward to adopting a "through line" approach to leading, ensuring alignment and impact from the network to the student level. ■

Network 10

31 Elementary Schools

17,253 Students

30.6%	18.2%	70.0%
English Language Learners	Diverse Learners	Economically Disadvantaged



Southwest Side



SPOTlight

Beverly Jordan

Jensen Miller Scholastic Academy

253 Students

1.2%

English Language Learners

13.4%

Diverse Learners

89.3%

Economically Disadvantaged



■ 98.4% Black
■ 1.2% Latino/a/x
■ 0.4% Other



East Garfield Park

In 2021, Dr. Beverly Jordan returned to Jensen Miller Scholastic Academy — where she served as a teacher, reading specialist, and assistant principal — to lead as principal. With 30 years in education and as a proud CPS alumna from Chicago's West Side, Beverly credits encouragement from her aunt — a fellow educator whom she taught alongside early in her career — as well as several other principal mentors with shaping her path.

Throughout her career, Beverly supported some of Chicago's students furthest from opportunity as she learned to navigate systemic barriers, limited resources, and administrative complexities head-on. Before her position at Jensen, Beverly led Nathaniel Pope Elementary School and transformed it from a Level Three school into an award-winning campus. She firmly believes that students' futures aren't defined by their beginnings, reinforcing that "success is attainable."

In 2023-24, Beverly is participating in The Fund's Malott Educator Fellowship. She views it as an opportunity to learn and to share her experience leading schools through complex challenges. Through the fellowship, she hopes to be a thought partner for other principals and to help build a supportive network where school leaders share their experiences and effective strategies to encourage and empower one another. ■

³ The 5Essentials, used in Chicago schools for over 25 years, focuses on five key factors: Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Ambitious Instruction, Supportive Environment, and Involved Families, with the goal to improve school culture and student outcomes. Involved Families measures how school staff build strong relationships with families and communities to support learning.



Reimagining With Community Toolkit PILOT

+ 4 Principals | 9 Aspiring Principals |
4 School Community Members
+ Launched in 2023

The Reimagining With Community Toolkit pilot is a collaborative effort between The Fund, Conic Group, and CPS' Department of Family and Community Engagement. Through this pilot, high school educator teams will use a design toolkit to enhance community partnerships and organize in-person forums to meaningfully engage stakeholders.

Participating high schools take part in a yearlong process to learn and apply the toolkit's nine modules, ranging from building trust and healing within the community to delivering recommendations to CPS' Central Office. School leaders select three to five staff members to participate in the two full-day professional development sessions, five coaching sessions, and optional one-on-one calls.

The program will culminate with school teams hosting a public community forum in spring 2024, where they will showcase their community development efforts and ideas. The program will measure impact via the Involved Families 5Essentials³ metric, which assesses parent trust, involvement, and decision-making in participating schools.

The Malott Educator Fellowship PILOT

+ 22 Principals
+ Launched in 2023

The Malott Educator Fellowship is a two-year leadership-development program operated in partnership with the University of Illinois Chicago's Center for Urban Education Leadership and Wise Leadership. The program creates a learning community that is specifically designed to support the unique needs of CPS Priority School leaders.

The fellowship combines monthly full-day learning labs with high-dose, individualized leadership coaching. During learning labs, fellows engage in small-group PLCs that collectively surface, learn about, and work to address pressing challenges within Priority Schools.

The fellowship aims to positively impact principal self-efficacy, practice, and retention to ensure that Priority School principals thrive in their school leadership positions. These impacts are expected to cultivate stronger organizational and student learning outcomes in schools led by Malott Fellows. The program will also contribute to valuable research around supporting the diverse needs associated with leading through pandemic recovery in Priority Schools.



ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS

Summer Design Program

- + 15 Principal- or Aspiring Principal-Led Teams
- + Launched in 2013

The Summer Design Program (SDP) helps school teams use design thinking to develop solutions that prioritize student needs and tackle pressing challenges that specific student groups face. Through a partnership between The Fund and Leadership+Design, participants engage in Design Studios — interactive two-day workshops that equip teams with skills in empathy interviews, design thinking-based problem-solving, and creating strategies to accelerate learning.

In 2022-23, we piloted coaching for select schools to kick-start their SDP projects. Following its success, this approach evolved into yearlong, tailored support. We partnered with Dr. Strugglish, Fulcrum Education Solutions, and Leadership Edge to provide individual coaching and group learning to ensure SDP initiatives are effectively implemented, supported, and sustained.

To measure impact and to better understand how participating teams are evolving and developing their leadership skills, we closely monitor targeted student outcomes associated with each project, as well as the 5Essentials Effective Leaders⁴ scores.

Additionally, The Fund organizes an annual Design Challenge competition to promote innovative thinking, celebrate exceptional design solutions, and encourage healthy competition among participants. For the first time, our 2024 Design Challenge will be open to all CPS schools, broadening the scope for innovative contributions and participation.

⁴ Effective Leaders measures how well principals work with teachers to develop a clear and strategic vision for the school.



Omar Chilous

Since 2018, Omar Chilous has served as principal of Social Justice High School (SOJO), located on the Little Village Lawndale High School campus — a hub of four schools with a strong tradition of community activism and a commitment to equity. Omar is guided by the belief that schools should actively serve their communities.

In 2022-23, SOJO saw a significant increase in newcomer students from Latin America, growing the Transitional Bilingual Program to represent 30% of the school. However, language barriers and limitations imposed by programmatic structures led to increased isolation and disengagement for students. Empathy interviews revealed students were facing difficulties in starting and successfully transitioning to their new lives in Chicago.

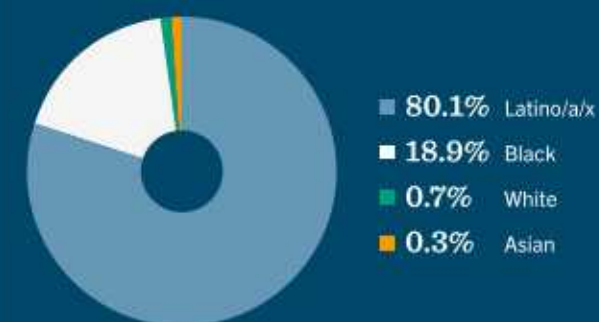
As part of SDP, teacher leaders Amy Levingston and Megan Montañez planned, launched, and facilitated an immersive summer program — *Puentes* (Bridges) — focused on engaging newcomer students in experiential learning, field trips, and team-building activities, aiming to build connections and create community. Upholding the tenets of distributed leadership, Omar empowered them to co-design and implement systems of support with their students. So far, Ms. Levingston's and Ms. Montañez's program has helped foster better relationships between newcomer and English language learner students, while enriching their language development.

SOJO was awarded the \$10,000 grand prize at The Fund's 2023 Design Challenge. Their future vision includes a culturally responsive curriculum for South Lawndale's newest students, providing holistic support that addresses students' basic needs. ■

Social Justice High School

302 Students

37.1%	14.6%	89.4%
English Language Learners	Diverse Learners	Economically Disadvantaged



South Lawndale



SPOTlight

Ernest Williams

Ernest Williams leads Ellington Elementary in Austin. Challenges during his middle school years shaped his leadership journey. Caring mentors recognized his potential and gave him a voice, inspiring him to champion youth throughout his career.

Ernest pursued education with a concentration in computer science at DePaul University before becoming a classroom teacher at Lane Technical High School and quickly rising to assistant principal at George Rogers Clark Elementary. Although opportunities arose in other cities, his commitment to Chicago students kept him local and brought him to Ellington in 2019.

Shaped by his personal experiences and academic research on the school-to-prison pipeline, Ernest's leadership approach is anchored in equity. He believes it is vital to bridge gaps between leaders, particularly Latino and Black male principals. Ernest emphasizes collaborative problem-solving, saying that "collectively, we can address some of these issues that we're facing, especially issues of equity."

In 2023-24, Ernest leads the Chicago Male Leaders of Color Learning Collaborative, a PLC aimed at nurturing growth among 10 male school leaders of color. By creating a space where these leaders can be their authentic selves and develop as courageous, transformative leaders, Ernest seeks to inspire and equip his PLC participants with fresh ideas and strategies to advance student learning in various contexts. Through his mentorship, Ernest hopes to cultivate a generation of leaders deeply attuned and committed to equity in their school communities. ■

Edward K. "Duke" Ellington Elementary

493 Students

3.2%

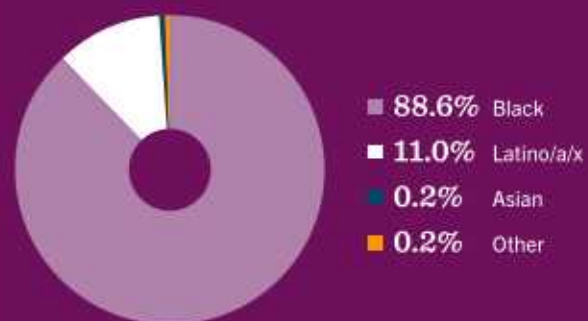
English Language Learners

19.5%

Diverse Learners

72.2%

Economically Disadvantaged



Austin



Professional Learning Communities

- + 171 Unique School Leaders | 29 PLC Leaders⁵
- + Launched in 2016

Led by the city's top educational leaders, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are peer study groups composed of eight to 10 current and aspiring principals.

In 2023-24, we are facilitating two types of PLCs: yearlong PLCs and semester PLCs. In both types of PLCs, school leaders build their own networks, gain exposure to new ideas, and learn to implement new solutions in their own school contexts. We assess impact via the 5Essentials and principal satisfaction on our annual Principal Engagement Survey.

Additionally, PLC Leaders enhance their skills through a Community of Practice facilitated by Lead by Learning from Mills College at Northeastern University. Four sessions focus on their PLC's vision, progress monitoring, data collection, and year-end reflections, which ultimately lead to better experiences for their PLC participants.

Yearlong PLCs

Fourteen yearlong PLCs are serving 98 participants via eight 90-minute sessions. An expert principal leads each PLC and creates a curriculum to facilitate sessions on student-centered instructional approaches, school management, community partnerships, differentiated instruction, leveraging student data and assessments, and more. To incentivize attendance and maximize the PLC's impact, yearlong PLC participants with an 80% attendance rate can apply for a grant of up to \$500 to attend or present at educational conferences.

Semester PLCs

Designed as a flexible alternative to our yearlong PLCs, our fall and spring semester PLCs accommodate principals and assistant principals seeking professional development with a reduced time commitment.

In fall 2023, we are offering 11 semester PLCs serving up to 94 participants, structured into four or five sessions lasting 90 minutes each. To ensure high-quality engagement, participants are limited to enrolling in only one semester PLC per term but can explore different topics in the subsequent term. Certain PLCs enable participants to earn Illinois Administrator Academy (IAA) credits, which helps to fulfill annual certification requirements.

Aspiring Principal PLCs

Since 2019, our Aspiring Principal PLCs have developed assistant principals and emerging leaders using our successful PLC framework. These PLCs pair assistant principals with experienced principals who mentor them through a curriculum designed to prepare them for the principal role, should they choose to pursue it.

In 2023-24, The Fund is launching two PLCs serving 13 participants aimed at enhancing the team-building, critical conversation, and change management skills of aspiring principals. These sessions equip participants with the leadership tools and understanding needed to make a difference in their current schools and beyond, preparing them for success in principal positions.

⁵ 34 school leaders participate and lead in more than one PLC.



Masterclass Learning Series

- + 24 Principals | 51 Aspiring Principals | 6 Masterclass Leaders
- + Launched in 2022

Led by experienced PLC leaders, our Masterclass Learning Series is now in its second year and serves principals and assistant principals new to Fund programming. The series offers comprehensive half-day sessions on budgeting, equitable grading, entry planning, and well-being in a flexible format.

In 2023-24, we are offering six Masterclasses. Upon completion, participants gain access to specialized resources on The Fund's website and to one-on-one coaching sessions to put their learning into practice. Like PLCs, select Masterclass sessions allow participants to earn IAA credits.

Leadership Bridge

- + 17 Aspiring Principals⁶
- + Launched in 2019

Leadership Bridge, in facilitated partnership with New Leaders, the University of Illinois Chicago, and Accelerate Institute, seeks to develop a robust, high-quality, and diverse pipeline of school leaders in Chicago. The program provides practical, on-the-job professional development and expert coaching to equip aspiring principals with the skills needed to secure CPS principal positions within three years.

Leadership Bridge guides principal and AP pairs through reflective self-assessment, collaboration, and comprehensive planning as they prepare for the principalship and develop succession plans. It ensures smooth transitions and maintains academic and cultural consistency in schools, as measured by tools like the 5Essentials.

Educator Advisory Committee

- + 21 Principals | 14 Assistant Principals
- + Launched in 2013

The Fund's Educator Advisory Committee (EAC) is a yearlong initiative that unites over 30 school leaders monthly to provide feedback on The Fund's work. The program aims to shape The Fund's policy agenda, generate recommendations on programming, and facilitate connections with other leaders across the city. The 2023-24 EAC also specifically focuses on co-creating the criteria, design, and implementation of awards for school leaders.

Each of the eight sessions is 90 minutes long and held virtually or in person at The Fund's office or a school. In appreciation of their commitment, participating leaders receive a stipend.

Local School Council Work

Local School Councils (LSCs) are critical levers for supporting principals. LSCs appoint and evaluate principals and approve school budgets and strategic plans. We support LSC members in navigating these important responsibilities.

As in previous years, we are offering four bilingual working sessions and focus groups for LSC members to connect, share ideas, and learn from one another. In 2023-24, we are expanding our support through a partnership with the CPS Office of Equity, Office of Local School Council Relations, and Department of Principal Quality to help deploy a citywide survey and develop an LSC-focused report.



Carson Elementary

748 Students

70.3%

English Language Learners

8.7%

Diverse Learners

82.4%

Economically Disadvantaged



Gage Park

Javier Arriola-Lopez

During his 17-year tenure as principal of Carson Elementary, Javier Arriola-Lopez has been a driving force in bilingual education, advocating for dual-language programs and fostering an inclusive environment for Spanish-speaking families. His leadership played a key role in establishing Carson as a front-runner in adopting dual language within the district.

Recognizing the crucial role of family involvement, Javier introduced bilingual reading groups eight years ago to bolster biliteracy and sustain community engagement beyond students' time at Carson. These initiatives have evolved into robust programs, including parent-led book clubs and monthly family nights, rallying the broader community to advance student's language and learning development.

In 2023-24, Javier is co-leading the Dual-Language Leaders in Action PLC with Principal Lourdes Jimenez of Ruben Salazar Bilingual Center. He is leveraging his years of experience to support and mentor school leaders new to dual-language programs. Building on the foundation laid by Dr. Olimpia Bahena — who is now the CPS Deputy Chief of Language and Cultural Education — Javier and Lourdes are creating space for peer learning and the sharing of best practices, all with one goal: to strengthen dual-language programs and support English language learners across the city.

Additionally, PLC participants will develop formal recommendations to expand the adoption of dual-language programs in CPS. ■

⁶ One additional participant became a principal during this program.



SPOTlight

Teresa Chavez

Teresa Chavez is the newly appointed principal of Casals School of Excellence in Humboldt Park. As an English language learner and a first-generation college graduate, Teresa's experiences as a student shaped her high expectations and unwavering support for all of Casals' students. Her approach to leadership embodies resilience, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to improving student outcomes.

During her nine years as an assistant principal and classroom teacher at Casals, Teresa's then-principal and current Deputy Chief of Network 8, Kristie Langbehn, frequently recognized her leadership ability. Kristie mentored Teresa as part of her succession plan, contributing to the school's continued success during the pandemic and Teresa's transition to principal. In 2023, Casals' 5Essentials Supportive Environment score rose by an impressive 32 points, and its Ambitious Instruction⁷ score increased by 12 points.

In 2023-24, Teresa is participating in Leadership Bridge to explore her strengths and growth areas. Through personalized coaching and a 360-degree assessment, she is learning how to approach problems from a principal lens. Simultaneously, Teresa is using Leadership Bridge to enhance her capstone project for her doctoral program at the University of Illinois Chicago. ■

⁷ Ambitious Instruction measures how academically challenging and engaging classes are for students.

Casals School of Excellence

372 Students

32.0%

English Language Learners

14.0%

Diverse Learners

79.6%

Economically Disadvantaged



Humboldt Park

Conclusion

As Chicago's school leaders continue to accelerate student learning and build school capacity, we are proud to support them through our array of programs and partnerships. We encourage practice change through individual coaching and leveraging the insights of Chicago's top principals.



We plan to track the ultimate success of these programs through participant satisfaction, improvements in capacity as indicated by the 5Essentials, and new learnings.

We are especially excited about our four new pilot programs supporting school leadership at all levels: aspiring leaders, current principals, and principal supervisors. The strength of our approach lies in its adaptability. We introduce new pilots to help us identify innovative practices that measurably support leaders and their schools, and we sunset programs when necessary.

Looking ahead, we will continue to refine and expand our initiatives, reinforcing our commitment to being a catalyst for strong school leadership in Chicago and beyond.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Fund team members Armando Sanchez, Ashton Yurk, Cheyane Bligen, E.J. Dubinsky, Eytan Cohen, Jennifer Cervantes, Patricia Mota, Savannah Payne, and Zach Jacobs. Our thanks also go to consultant Lauren B. Rapp and to Michael Karter for his expertise in design and layout. We would also like to express our appreciation to our partners at CPS and, most importantly, extend our gratitude to the school leaders who shared their valuable insights with us for this report.

Cultivating Leadership

2023-24 PROGRAM SUMMARY

THE CHICAGO
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Learn more about The Fund and the
innovative educators in our network.

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