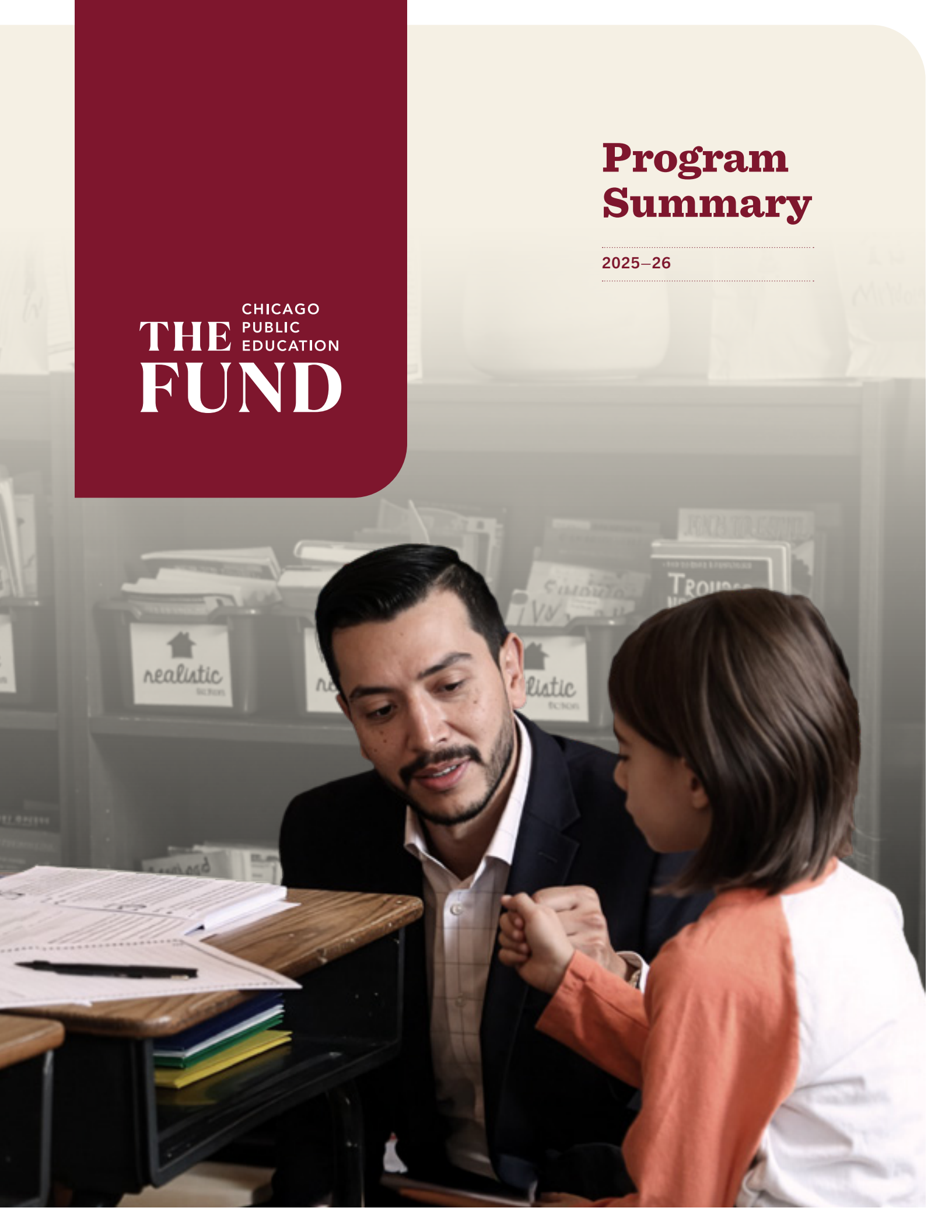


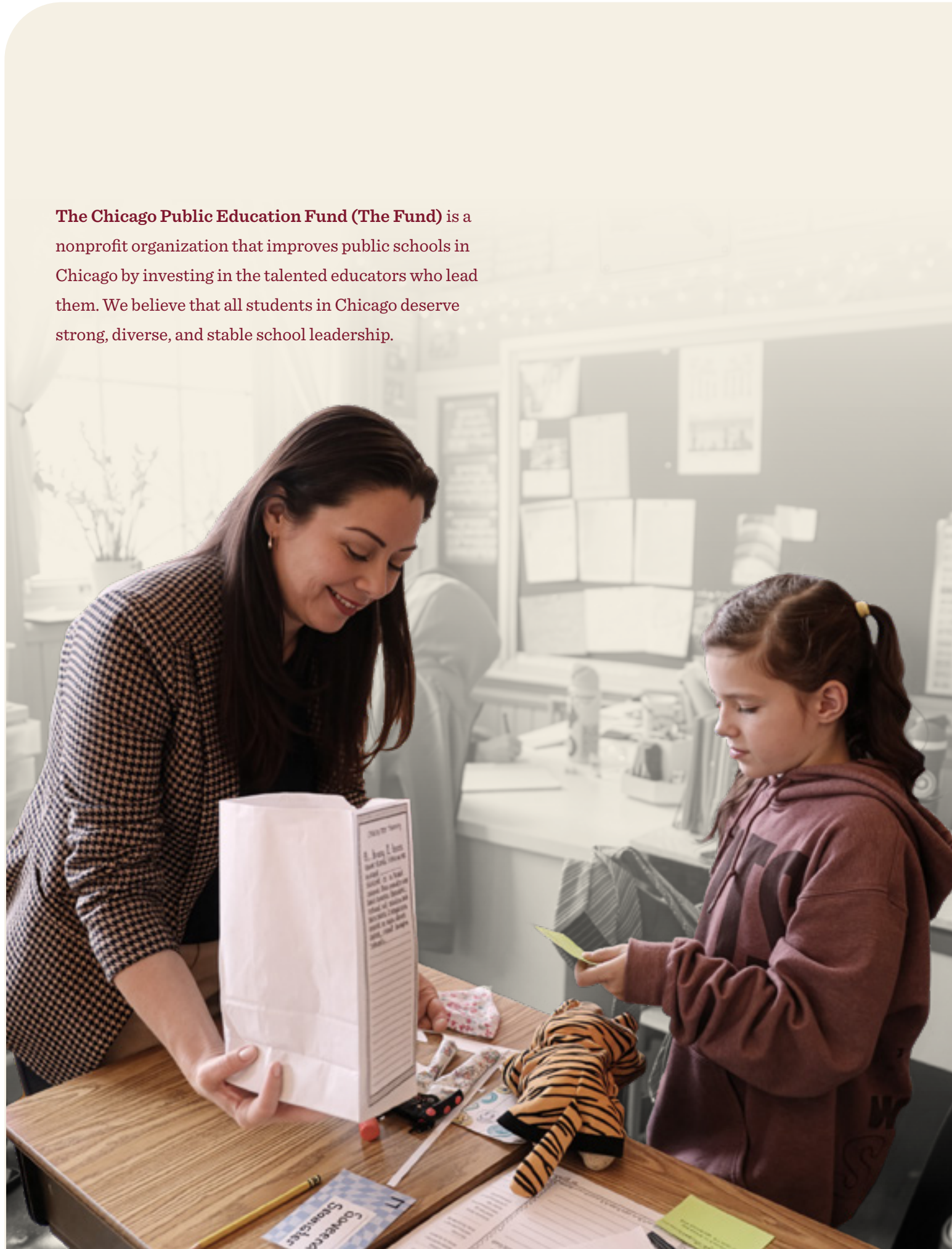
# Program Summary

2025–26

CHICAGO  
PUBLIC  
EDUCATION  
**THE  
FUND**



The Chicago Public Education Fund (The Fund) is a nonprofit organization that improves public schools in Chicago by investing in the talented educators who lead them. We believe that all students in Chicago deserve strong, diverse, and stable school leadership.



## Introduction

Chicago's students can — and do — learn at accelerated rates when they are supported by strong school leadership.

Over the past three decades, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has demonstrated what is possible when principals are empowered to lead. Between 2009 and 2014, CPS students in grades three through eight made more academic growth than students in 96% of districts nationwide, outperforming peers across Illinois and other large urban districts.<sup>1</sup> That momentum has continued: In 2024, CPS showed gains in reading and math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (the Nation's Report Card), despite national trends of decline and stagnation.<sup>2</sup>

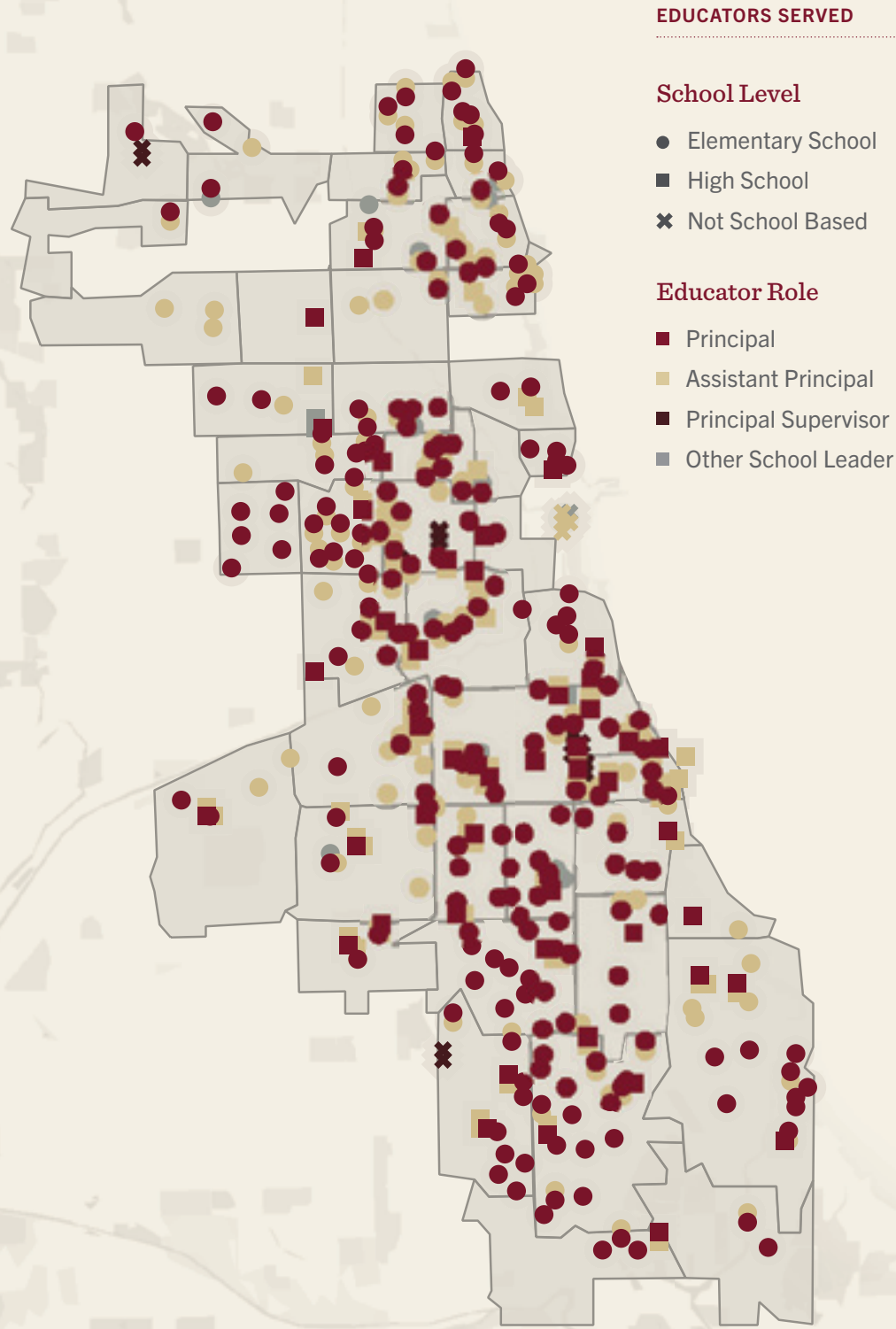
High school students have also achieved meaningful progress in graduation rates and college readiness, including increases in college enrollment. In 2024, CPS reached a near-record high graduation rate of 84%, more than doubling since the early 2000s. That same class achieved a college enrollment rate of 66% — 5 percentage points higher than the national average.<sup>3</sup>

Research spanning more than 20 years confirms what Chicago's progress makes clear: Principals have an outsized impact on student learning. This influence is especially pronounced in Chicago, where school leaders have greater autonomy than

their peers nationwide. According to research from the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, strong leaders remain the driver for change, and school improvement is highly unlikely without a strong leader.<sup>4</sup> Principals coordinate the work of the staff and school community toward a clear and coherent vision. Strong principals drive measurable gains for students — equivalent to additional months of learning in reading and math each year.<sup>5</sup>

The Fund aims to ensure public school leaders in Chicago continue to accelerate student achievement. Our programs strengthen principal quality and retention by providing rigorous professional learning grounded in school leader needs. We also partner with principal supervisors and Local School Councils (LSCs)<sup>6</sup> to ensure school leaders are supported, challenged, and positioned to succeed. Together, these investments help principals cultivate the learning environments that make positive student outcomes possible.

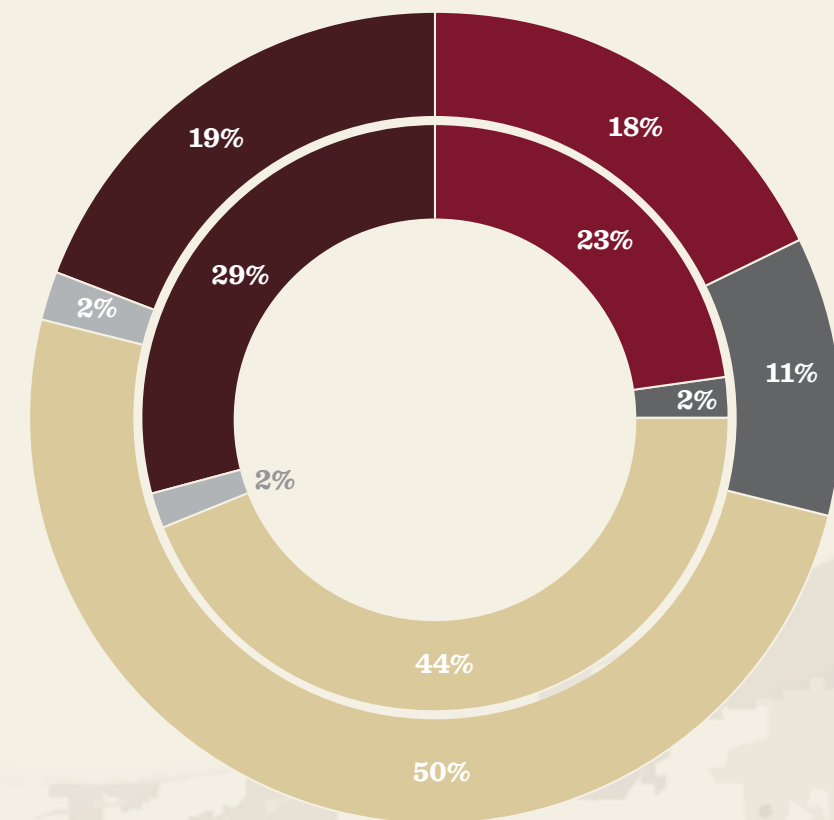
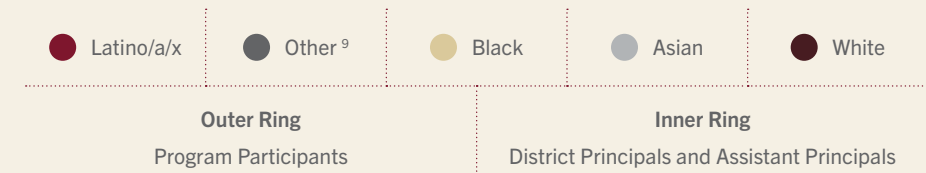
This mid-year report details our 2025–26 programs and highlights the school leaders who learn and grow through them.



## Program Participant Summary

There are 630 public schools in Chicago, serving a total of 316,224 students. Our 496 program participants<sup>7</sup> include school leaders at almost half (298) of the schools in CPS. Our participants are diverse, with 50% identifying as Black and 18% identifying as Latino/a/x, which is similar to the district average for principals and assistant principals. We will welcome new and past participants with additional pilots and programs in the second half of the 2025-26 school year.

### SCHOOL LEADER ETHNICITY: PARTICIPANT VS DISTRICT



### PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

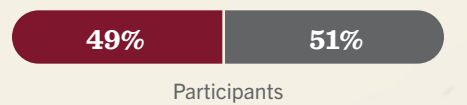
255  
Principals

215  
Aspiring Principals<sup>8</sup>

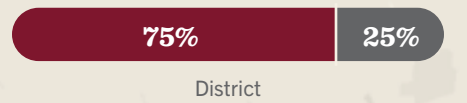
19  
Principal Supervisors

142K  
Students Impacted

### PRIORITY VS NON-PRIORITY SCHOOL<sup>10</sup>



### ELEMENTARY VS HIGH SCHOOL



# Program Investment Detail<sup>11</sup>

Program	Cost	Cost per Participant	Total Slots	Student Data				School Data			
				Disabled Students	Economically Disadvantaged	English Language Learners	Temporary Living Situations	90%+ Black or Latino/a/x	Student Mobility Rate	Teacher Retention	
For Principals and Aspiring Principals	Targeted Educator Learning (Fall 2025)	\$284,250	\$1,579	180	17.5%	74.1%	29.4%	9.6%	66.1%	13.2%	80.3%
	Malott Educator Fellowship	\$440,000	\$18,333	24	21.0%	81.3%	26.1%	10.1%	87.5%	16.5%	81.8%
	Design Studios and Challenge	\$30,000	\$1,200	25	19.2%	73.3%	29.9%	13.8%	68.2%	11.6%	82.8%
	Leadership Bridge	\$380,000	\$15,200	25	20.4%	71.6%	26.2%	12.1%	72.0%	16.8%	84.2%
For Networks and Principal Supervisors	Network Professional Development Grants	\$250,000	\$812	308	20.2%	78.9%	22.5%	11.7%	73.3%	15.3%	79.2%
	Network Professional Learning Community	\$7,000	\$438	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	The Cambiar Catalyst Fellowship	\$30,000	\$10,000	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
For Community and LSC Engagement	LSC Mentorship Program	\$44,000	\$2,444	18	17.4%	61.5%	30.8%	12.0%	38.9%	9.4%	83.4%
	LSC Election Accelerator	\$20,000	\$690	29	24.2%	80.3%	31.3%	13.2%	63.6%	16.2%	76.1%
	LSC Incubator Lab	\$9,000	\$692	13	21.9%	82.0%	25.1%	12.6%	76.9%	19.6%	73.1%
District Average					17.3%	71.3%	27.3%	5.4%	71.1%	10.0%	88.6%
Total Program Slots <sup>12</sup>				641							



## Our Programs

Providing educators with resources, strategies, coaching, and peer-learning opportunities, our programs accelerate professional development and enhance the educational experience for Chicago’s students.

**W**e continuously refine our approach based on data related to our programming and on what principals and assistant principals need most. The result is support that is practical and directly aligned with the challenges they face in real time. Across 10 programs in 2025-26, we are providing support for school leaders representing 298 schools, and working directly with 19 principal supervisors to increase their impact on the leaders they manage and support.

This year, we also launched two pilots for LSC members — the LSC Election Accelerator and the LSC Incubator Lab — recognizing the critical role these elected councils play in hiring and supporting school leaders. You can learn more about them later in this report.

In addition to launching new pilots as we adapt our program suite to meet school leaders’ needs, we often sunset or pause initiatives. In 2025-26, we discontinued three programs: Affinity Groups, Community Engagement Accelerator, and Design Coaching. Informed by stronger data collection, we are implementing effective aspects of each into our existing programming, while exploring and piloting new approaches that address school leaders’ current challenges.

PROGRAMS FOR PRINCIPALS AND ASPIRING PRINCIPALS

**Targeted Educator Learning Opportunities**

- + Professional Learning Communities and Masterclasses
- + 67 Unique Principals | 74 Unique Assistant Principals <sup>13</sup>
- + 15 School Leader Facilitators
- + Launched in 2016 and 2022

The Fund’s targeted educator learning opportunities provide meaningful, practice-driven professional development for principals and assistant principals, empowering them to learn from one another while strengthening their leadership skills. Through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Masterclasses, school leaders engage in peer-led learning that meets their needs and addresses the realities of Chicago’s public schools.

Since 2016, PLCs have supported principals in expanding their networks, sharpening their instructional and organizational leadership, and deepening their impact. PLCs bring together small cohorts of leaders to explore key leadership priorities — including family and community engagement, strategic scheduling, time management, and leadership-team development — while earning Illinois Administrator Academy credit.<sup>14</sup> PLCs are aligned to specific categories of 5Essentials Effective Leaders measures, supporting trust-building, instructional leadership, and program coherence.<sup>15</sup> In 2025-26, PLCs also include a new artificial intelligence-focused strand, developed in partnership with LEAP Innovations, to help leaders navigate emerging tools and practices.

Masterclasses are learning opportunities that address school leaders’ needs with a lower time commitment than PLCs. Since 2022, hundreds of principals and aspiring principals have participated in these sessions that are led by expert principals, building skills in areas such as scheduling, budgeting, staffing, and family and community engagement. This year’s offerings also include AI-focused Masterclasses, in partnership with LEAP Innovations, which introduce leaders to the practical applications of emerging tools in school settings. Masterclasses offer flexible entry points for leaders who are new to The Fund, seeking targeted support, or reengaging in professional learning throughout the year.

Across both programs, leaders engage in reflective practice, examining their own leadership decisions and outcomes; collaborative problem-solving, where peers work together to address real, shared challenges; and resource sharing, exchanging tools, strategies, and materials that they can adapt and apply in their own school communities.

SPOTLIGHT

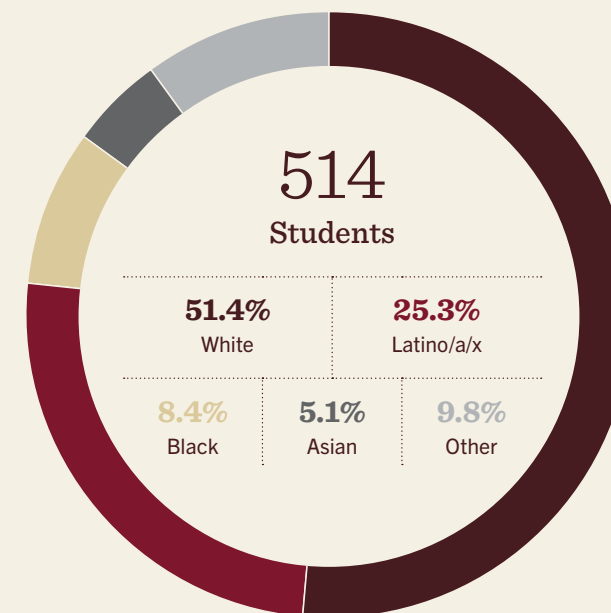
**Nicholas Guerrero**

Ravenswood Elementary School

Lake View



Student Ethnicity

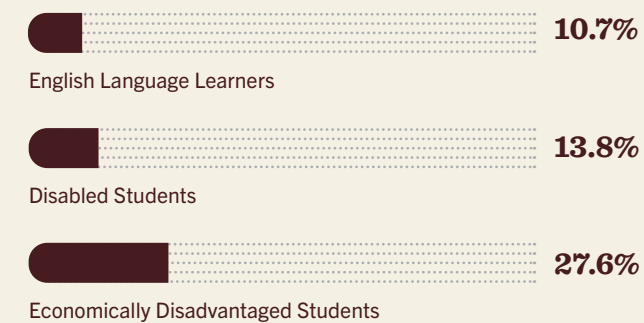


After serving as a teacher and assistant principal in CPS for seven years, Nicholas Guerrero stepped into the principal role at Ravenswood Elementary in 2020. His path to the principalship was shaped by strong mentors, including his mother, a Mexican immigrant and English language learner who attended CPS and went on to become a teacher and school leader in the district.

During his time at Ravenswood, Nick has prioritized Black students, Latino/a/x students, students with disabilities, English language learners, and students from low-income families. Goals and strategies for all of these student groups are captured in the school’s strategic plan. That level of intentionality has led to sustained schoolwide proficiency in English Language Arts, with higher than typical achievement for 2023-24 and 2024-25. Ravenswood students now have a proficiency rate of 78.9%, significantly over the average of 50.6% for his network.

Nick has been a long-time participant in The Fund’s programs, crediting the Aspiring Principal PLC with his leadership growth. In fall 2025, Nick led his own Masterclass — The Village Effect: Building Powerful Partnerships for Student Success — which is rooted in his belief that strong family and community engagement is one of the most critical levers a school leader can invest in. This Masterclass is a part of Nick’s commitment to helping fellow leaders, as others have helped him. He says, “My goal is to take the best practices that I have been able to foster and develop and ensure that they can be replicated at other schools around the city, regardless of the ZIP code.” ●

Student Demographics



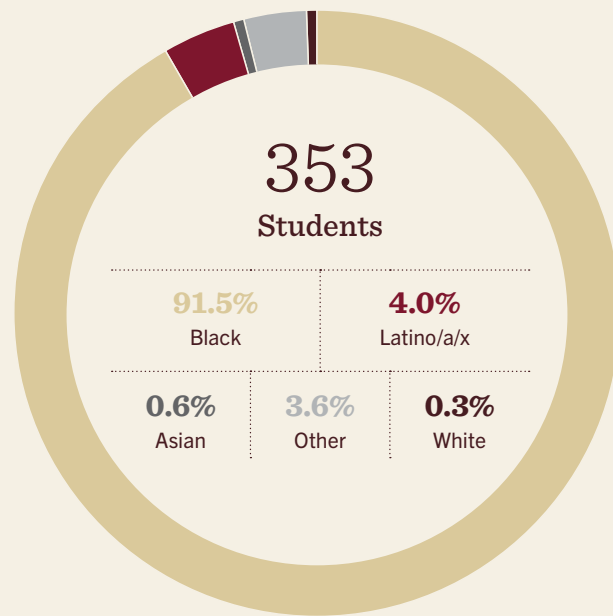
# Rashad Talley

## Wendell Phillips Academy High School

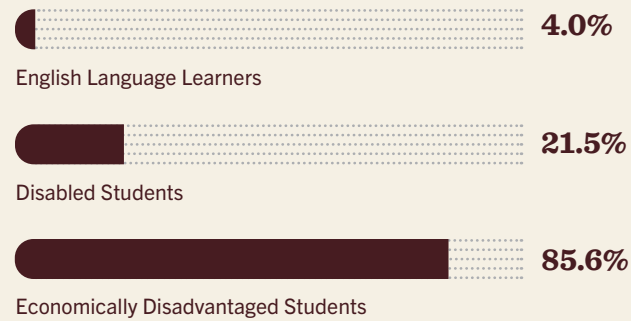
Douglas



### Student Ethnicity



### Student Demographics



Rashad Talley is in his fourth year as principal of Wendell Phillips High School, where he leverages his systems mindset and distributive leadership to ensure his team is efficient, coordinated, and well-informed, thereby meeting student needs.

Rashad’s vision for Phillips High School centers on rigorous, equitable academics paired with strong connections among students, staff, and families to support well-being. He prioritizes student empowerment through critical thinking, data-driven decision-making, and an inclusive school culture where students feel seen, valued, and supported. Grounded in a commitment to educational equity and leadership development, he focuses on building resilient learning environments for Black students and driving transformative outcomes that extend beyond the classroom.

Rashad is excited to continue working toward that vision with the Malott Educator Fellowship. He enjoys the learning labs where colleagues can share insights about the nuances of school leadership, while having time to examine their practices and focus on their well-being. “I enjoy the space and the time that we get to process and reflect because in a normal school day, you just don’t get that opportunity,” he says.

He also wants to enhance his team’s use of data to drive decisions. As a Fellow, he is focusing on the Cultivate and 5Essentials surveys to deepen his team’s understanding of the student experience and strengthen schoolwide practice. Cultivate helps Rashad identify what students need to feel a stronger sense of belonging, engagement, and support, he says. 5Essentials data provides direction for improving leadership, collaboration, and school culture. By using these tools, he aims to align his team around shared priorities and targeted strategies to make the positive outcomes he wants for his students become a reality. ●

### Malott Educator Fellowship

- + 24 Principals
- + Launched in 2023

Since 2023, the Malott Educator Fellowship has supported principals leading Priority Schools, who face complex, high-stakes challenges that demand specialized interventions. This opportunity provides intensive, multi-year professional learning and coaching designed specifically for these leaders.

Over two years, Fellows participate in small-group PLCs, monthly full-day learning labs, and individualized coaching, led by partners at the University of Illinois Chicago’s Center for Urban Education Leadership and Wise Leadership Consulting. Together, Malott Fellows identify challenges unique to Priority Schools, enhance leadership practices, and develop strategies to improve organizational health and student outcomes.

Now in its second cohort, the Fellowship is supporting 24 principals in 2025-26, with a focus on strengthening principal self-efficacy, practice, and retention. Fellows are engaged in learning that builds emotional capacity, reduces chronic absenteeism, strengthens 5Essentials Effective Leaders scores, deepens family engagement, and improves school culture and climate — laying the foundation for sustained improvement in their schools.

Previous Malott Fellows have demonstrated significant improvements in student engagement, attendance, and retention; school climate and culture; and self-efficacy and satisfaction within their roles. From 2023 to 2024, Malott Fellows grew their 5Essentials Effective Leaders scores by an average of 5 points, compared to 0.9 for leaders of other Priority Schools. From 2024 to 2025, they grew by an additional 2 points, compared to 0.6 for other Priority School leaders. Leaders also reduced absenteeism by 1.7% on average, compared to 0.7% across the district.

### Design Studios and Challenge

- + 25 Principal- or Aspiring Principal-Led Teams
- + Launched in 2012

Design Studios are single-day opportunities that introduce school teams to the power of design thinking and help them kickstart a project or strategic deliverable for their school communities. The Fund has offered Design Studios since 2012, and school leaders have consistently described them as one of the most impactful professional development sessions they have attended.

Design Studios are learning experiences intended to bring school teams together around solving an issue in their building using stakeholder input. During the studios, school design experts lead teams through the design thinking process, including identifying a design opportunity, collecting empathy data, prototyping, testing, and implementation.

In the 2025-26 school year, The Fund is offering four studios as opportunities to advance continuous improvement work in schools, but also as a place for educators to gather, share their insights on driving change in their buildings, and celebrate their accomplishments. This program culminates in the Design Challenge, a live event where schools have the opportunity to win from a prize pool of \$55,000 for their innovations.

The grand prize winners of the 2025 Design Challenge in the elementary and high school categories were Earle STEM Elementary and Chicago Tech High School, each earning \$10,000. Based on students needs, Earle STEM’s team developed a social-emotional learning framework that trains teachers, tracks student behaviors, and engages parents around improving students’ emotional regulation. To support 11th graders who were slipping “off-track” for graduation, Chicago Tech’s team prototyped an initiative that follows students from ninth to 12th grade and involves career exploration, skill-building, direct community mentorship, and an opportunity for students to gain on-the-job experience in a career field of their choice.



## Leadership Bridge

- + 25 Assistant Principals
- + Launched in 2019

Launched in 2019, Leadership Bridge addresses the critical need for high-quality, diverse school leaders in CPS. Through professional development, expert coaching, and collaboration with current principals, this program ensures assistant principals are prepared to lead CPS schools within three years. Central to its mission is planning for strong leadership transitions, which mitigates the disruption that data and experience show schools can experience when a principal transitions.

In partnership with New Leaders and the University of Illinois Chicago, the program has evolved to meet the changing needs of Chicago’s schools, focusing on reflective self-assessment, collaborative planning, and strategic succession planning. The 2025-26 cohort serves 25 assistant principals, with a focus on increasing the representation of Black and Latino/a/x leaders and addressing the unique needs of schools serving high populations of students with disabilities. Seats for this program are competitive and require a formal interview, as well as participation from the sitting principal, for the assistant principal to be considered.

Leadership Bridge has demonstrated success in building a sustainable leadership pipeline, with 50% of participants (76 out of 153 leaders) attaining principal positions, accounting for 18% of all new CPS principals since 2020.

## SPOTLIGHT

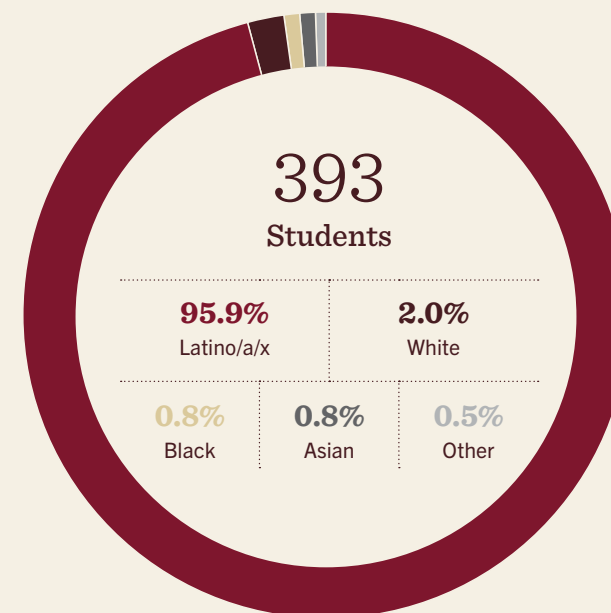
## Jose Alvarado

### James Shields Elementary School

Brighton Park



#### Student Ethnicity



Jose Alvarado is in his second year as assistant principal at James Shields Elementary, bringing more than a decade of experience from Marquette School of Excellence, where he served as an English learner teacher, instructional coach, and administrator. With a strong growth mindset, Jose has long sought coaching to strengthen his educational practices — a commitment he now extends to building coaching systems at Shields.

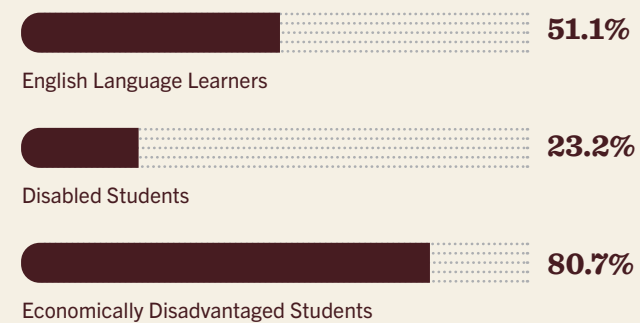
Upon joining the school in 2024-25, he began leading the attendance team to address high chronic absenteeism, which was at 46% in 2023-24. He brought together key stakeholders to design and execute a robust plan. Through data monitoring and evidence-based decision-making, they achieved immediate results: By the end of Jose’s first year, the team reduced chronic absenteeism to 28.2%, a 17.8 percentage-point decrease.

With the help of The Fund’s Leadership Bridge Program, he is continuing to coach his team members this year. They now spearhead major initiatives, demonstrating a sustainable model of distributed leadership.

That is only one benefit Jose is seeing as he uses the program to prepare for principalship in CPS. He is embracing it as an opportunity to learn alongside peers making the same transition, too. “Everybody is in the same boat,” he says of his fellow participants. “We’re all ready to make that leap.”

As part of Leadership Bridge, Jose is also partnering with Michael Pacourek, Shields’ principal, to assess key areas at the school, including talent, climate, culture, and academics. Together, they are beginning succession planning to ensure a seamless transition when the time comes for Jose to step up — strengthening the school today while preparing for its future. ●

#### Student Demographics



**PROGRAMS FOR NETWORKS AND PRINCIPAL SUPERVISORS**

Over the last several years, research has begun to focus on the critical role principal supervisors play in supporting effective school leadership. As such, The Fund’s Network Acceleration Strategy invests in the leadership capacity of CPS network chiefs and deputy chiefs to strengthen principal support and improve student learning.<sup>16</sup>

By combining systemwide data support with aligned professional development and collaborative learning, the Network Acceleration Strategy reinforces consistent, high-quality development. This investment strengthens principal satisfaction and retention, enhances instructional leadership, and contributes to sustained progress in student learning across CPS.

- + 19 Principal Supervisors
- + 180 Principals
- + Launched in 2024

**Quarterly Data Support**

All network chiefs and deputies engage in quarterly data review with The Fund that provides actionable insights, fosters shared accountability, and sustains continuous improvement.

**Professional Development Grants**

In 2025-26, 10 networks received \$25,000 grants to partner with external organizations and deliver professional development to school leaders aligned to their network strategy. These initiatives are designed to increase principal leadership capacity, strengthen instructional practice, and improve student learning outcomes.

**Network PLC**

Chiefs and deputies from eight networks, most receiving professional development grants, also engage in a PLC facilitated by content experts. Topics include change management, data analysis, and time management. The PLC doubles as a peer-learning space where chiefs and deputies exchange strategies to improve principal practice.

**The Cambiar Catalyst Fellowship**

With The Fund’s support, principal supervisors from Network 5, Network 11, and Options are participating in this year’s Cambiar Fellowship, a yearlong leadership development program designed for current and aspiring school system leaders. Its purpose is to equip them with system-level thinking and strategic leadership skills to drive transformational change in K-12 education.

**SPOTLIGHT**

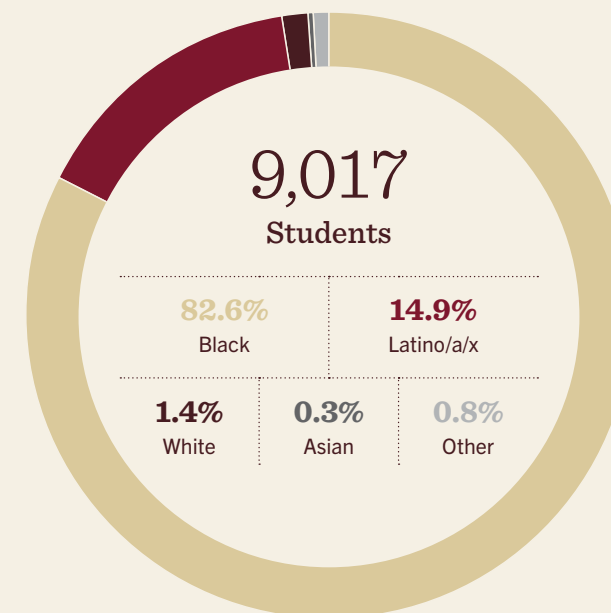


**Latasha Geverola & Elizabeth Meyers**

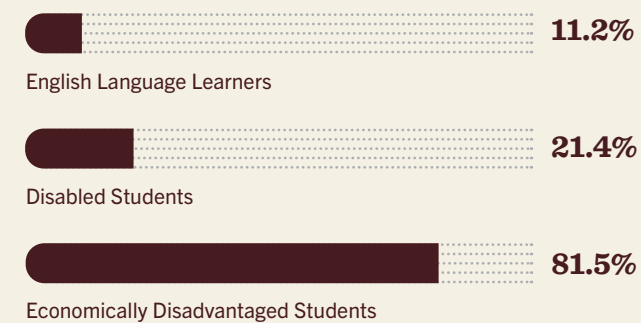
**Network 11**

South Side | 30 Schools

Student Ethnicity



Student Demographics



Chief Latasha Geverola and Deputy Chief Elizabeth Meyers bring complementary leadership paths and a shared commitment to strengthening principals across Network 11. Latasha began her career teaching on the West Side and later served as a principal and deputy chief before coming to the South Side, where she leads what she describes as “magical people” who want to be supported and seen. Elizabeth, a career-changer who taught in Englewood and previously served in Network 11 as a principal, returned to CPS after working in nonprofit leadership with a clearer understanding of what strong, executive-level leadership requires.

Together, Latasha and Elizabeth have listened closely to principals and analyzed exit surveys to identify a critical challenge: Many school leaders in Network 11 were losing confidence; hesitating to make decisions; and struggling to see themselves as executives responsible for instruction, equity, culture, and sustainability. In response, they secured a network professional development grant from The Fund and partnered with Wise Leadership Consulting to design a leadership series focused on restoring executive presence and reconnecting principals to their purpose.

Latasha and Elizabeth hope this approach will build on a successful improvement in 5Essentials Effective Leaders scores. From 2024 to 2025, Network 11 principals grew an average of 3.67 points on 5Essentials Effective Leaders scores, compared to a district average of 0.17. This year, through support of the professional development grant, principals are spending more time on strategic work, empowering staff-led initiatives, and reporting stronger partnerships across the network. Just as importantly, leaders feel seen and supported, shifting Network 11 from isolated problem-solving to a true community of leadership and care. ●

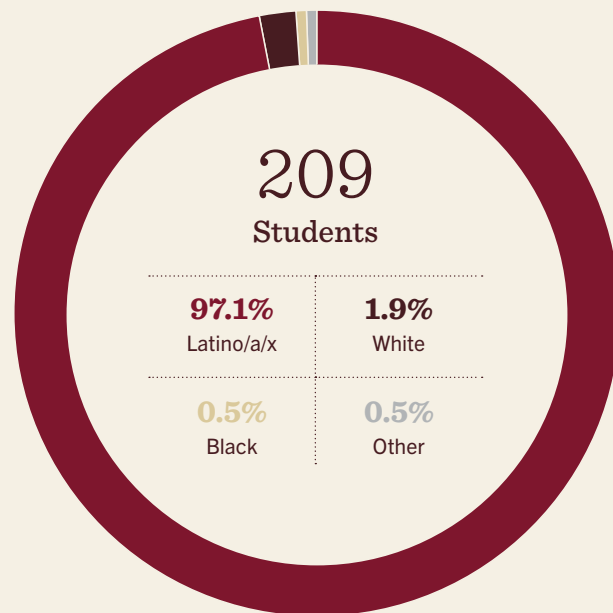
# Hamed Flores

Francisco I. Madero Middle School

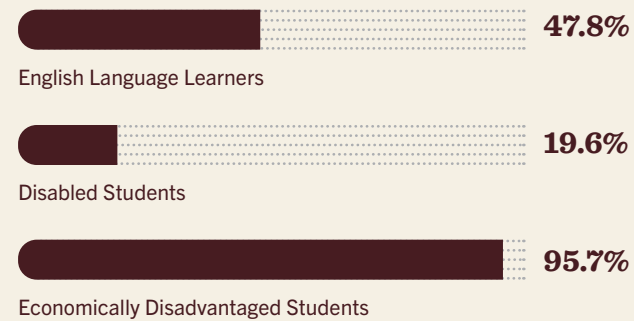
South Lawndale



Student Ethnicity



Student Demographics



**N**ow in his seventh year as principal of Madero Middle School in Little Village, Hamed Flores leads with a clear belief: No one runs a school alone. He centers distributive leadership — building capacity among teachers and sharing responsibility for decision-making — and extends this approach to Madero’s LSC, which he views as a vital partner in shaping the school’s direction. “As principal, I don’t see myself as the one running the LSC,” he says. “It’s more about building a team that can work together, where everyone is accountable for both successes and opportunities for growth.”

That commitment to shared leadership has produced measurable results. Madero’s Involved Families score on the 5Essentials Survey increased by 16 points between 2024 and 2025, from 81 to 97, reflecting a deep level of trust, engagement, and collaboration with families and the broader school community.

Hamed participated in the first cohort of the Malott Educator Fellowship, and he is continuing to work with The Fund. Through the LSC Mentorship Program, Hamed is sharing his successful practices with schools beyond his own. As a mentor, he is supporting two of his peers in strengthening their relationships with LSCs — helping them co-create meeting structures, build shared accountability, and foster collaborative partnerships that support student success. ●

PROGRAMS FOR COMMUNITY AND LSC ENGAGEMENT

## LSC Working Group

- + 18 LSC Members
- + Launched in 2024

LSCs play an important role in school governance and in the work of school leaders. Much of Chicago’s tradition of local control and school-level decision-making is formally grounded in the principal-LSC relationship. To strengthen this critical lever, the LSC Working Group convenes parents and community members from diverse schools and CPS networks to strengthen school governance across Chicago.

The 2025-26 Working Group will convene six times between July 2025 and May 2026 in 75-90 minute sessions. During the sessions, participants share experiences, address challenges, and design solutions that help LSCs fulfill their roles and responsibilities. Participants also craft and share impactful stories that highlight the importance of LSC participation, raising councils’ visibility and elevating their role ahead of the 2026 LSC elections.

Additionally, a dedicated subgroup collaborates with principals to develop tools that support the principal evaluation process and advance a shared definition of LSC effectiveness.

## LSC Mentorship Program

- + 12 Principals
- + 6 Principal Mentors
- + Launched in 2024

The LSC Mentorship Program, delivered in partnership with the CPS Department of Principal Quality (DPQ) and The Luminary Collective, provides structured, yearlong support to early-career principals as they strengthen their collaboration with LSCs. The program pairs participating principals with experienced mentors who offer guidance grounded in real school contexts and tailored to each leader’s needs. This program aims to improve principals’ ability to engage LSC members, build trust, and lead collaborative decision-making that strengthens school communities.

“It’s more about building a team that can work together, where everyone is accountable for both successes and opportunities for growth.”

— Principal Hamed Flores



### **LSC Incubator Lab**

- + 10 Principals
- + 3 Principal Facilitators
- + Launched in 2025

The LSC Incubator Lab, developed in partnership with DPQ, supports a cohort of principals in strengthening the systems and practices that make LSCs effective and sustainable. Principals participate in monthly learning sessions and small-group coaching led by experienced CPS leaders to clarify LSC roles, prepare for the 2026 election cycle, and refine meeting structures and shared decision-making processes.

Facilitators contribute by sharing their perspectives through workshops, panels, and sessions, ensuring the program is grounded in authentic principal experience. Throughout 2025-26, participants will work to create school-specific tools, including engagement plans, updated meeting norms, outreach calendars, and onboarding resources, to support a strong transition into the 2026-2028 LSC term.

### **LSC Election Accelerator**

- + 20 Principals | 2 Assistant Principals  
7 LSC members and other stakeholders
- + Launched in 2025

The LSC Election Accelerator Series supports schools in preparing for the March 2026 LSC elections by helping principals, assistant principals, parents, and community members strengthen participation, reduce vacancies, and deepen community engagement. Designed for schools that have experienced low LSC involvement or persistent vacancies, the series equips participants with the tools and strategies needed to build more inclusive election processes.

Through a flexible series of virtual and in-person workshops, planning support, and ready-to-use outreach materials, attendees learn to identify strong potential candidates and engage families more meaningfully. Running from August 2025 to February 2026, the Election Accelerator enables schools to apply strategies that reflect the needs and strengths of their communities.

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### **LEVERAGING SCHOOL LEADER INSIGHTS**

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### **Educator Advisory Committee**

- + 26 Principals | 9 Assistant Principals
- + Launched in 2013

The Fund’s Educator Advisory Committee (EAC) is a yearlong initiative allowing us to convene school leaders regularly. Leaders provide feedback on our overall strategy and specific workstreams, and offer insight into the conditions required for strong and effective school leadership. The EAC shapes The Fund’s policy agenda, generates programming recommendations, and builds connections among leaders across the city.

In 2025-26, the EAC is participating in The Fund’s development of AI-centered programming, generating recommendations to the state-level School Code Mandate Reduction Council, and discussing other updates in the sector as they occur. In appreciation of their commitment, participating leaders receive a stipend.

## Conclusion

The Fund has supported strong school leadership in Chicago for over 25 years.

**W**e remain committed to our investment in the talented educators who lead schools as they navigate an increasingly complex landscape at the local, state, and national levels. Principals create and sustain the environments in which students learn and grow. To support them, The Fund will continue to provide coaching, professional development resources, and collaborative spaces where they can share successful practices.

Our investment in network chiefs and deputies strengthens the conditions in which principals lead, while our pipeline programs cultivate the next generation of school leaders. Our support for LSCs strengthens the relationships between principals and their communities.

No matter what happens in the broader education sector, The Fund is dedicated to two core beliefs: Students thrive when supported by adults who prioritize their learning, and investing in principals is one of the best ways to advance student success.



## ENDNOTES

- 1 Sean F. Reardon and Rebecca Hinze-Pifer, "Test Score Growth Among Chicago Public School Students, 2009-2014," November 2017, <https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/chicago%20public%20school%20test%20scores%202009-2014.pdf>
- 2 Samantha Smylie, "NAEP Scores: How Did Illinois Students Do on the 'Nation's Report Card' in 2024?," Chalkbeat Chicago, January 28, 2025, <https://www.chalkbeat.org/chicago/2025/01/29/illinois-naep-scores-academic-performance-reading-math/>
- 3 Shelby Mahaffie et al., "The Educational Attainment of Chicago Public Schools Students: 2024," December 2025, <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/the-educational-attainment-of-chicago-public-schools-students-2024>
- 4 Holly Hart et al., "Supporting school improvement: Early findings from reexamination of the 5Essentials survey," June 2020, <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/2022-01/Supporting%20School%20Improvement%205Essentials%20Survey-Aug2020-Consortium.pdf> Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.
- 5 Jason A. Grissom, Anna J. Egalite, and Constance A. Lindsay, "How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research," June 2020, [https://www.google.com/url?q=https://wallacefoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/How-Principals-Affect-Students-and-Schools.pdf&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1768258854571526&usg=AOVaw1\\_p6h1LWJf2wdZYmIV3fn5](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://wallacefoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/How-Principals-Affect-Students-and-Schools.pdf&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1768258854571526&usg=AOVaw1_p6h1LWJf2wdZYmIV3fn5)
- 6 LSCs are elected bodies that provide governance for almost every CPS school. Comprising parents, community members, staff, and students, LSCs hold significant authority over school budgets, improvement plans, and principal evaluation and selection.
- 7 The total number of program participants includes principals, assistant principals, instructional leaders, teacher leaders, principal supervisors, and parents or partners participating in our LSC programming.
- 8 Aspiring principals include assistant principals, instructional leaders, and teacher leaders. An additional seven participants are parents or partners participating in our LSC programming.
- 9 Includes demographic data that was either unavailable or unknown at the time of data collection, individuals who identify with multiple ethnicities, and participants who are American Indian or Alaskan Native.
- 10 Priority Schools are 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.
- 11 This table includes programs launched in or before November 2025. Programs with later launch dates, such as the Learning Labs, are not included.
- 12 Principals, aspiring principals, and principal supervisors are able to participate in more than one program.
- 13 School leaders can lead and participate in more than one Professional Learning Community or Masterclass.
- 14 School administrators in Illinois who have an administrative endorsement on their educator license must complete relevant continuing education yearly through a provider that is approved by the Illinois State Board of Education.
- 15 The 5Essentials System comprises a framework and survey developed by the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research that aims to improve schools and, ultimately, student outcomes.
- 16 As of publication, 17 chiefs and 18 deputy chiefs support 550 district-run public schools in Chicago. There is one chief vacancy and one deputy chief vacancy. Per district policy, schools in the Independent School Principals group receive support from a deputy chief, rather than a chief.

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