

Media Contact:
Meg Kane
margaretkane@gmail.com
215-704-4745



TWO NEUBAUER FELLOW-LED SCHOOLS RECEIVE 2021 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON RECOGNITION

Girard Academy Music Program (GAMP) & Penn Alexander School Respectively Recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for Overall Academic Excellence and Progress in Closing Achievement Gaps

PHILADELPHIA (September 21, 2021) – [The Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders](#) (School Leaders), is proud to announce that two Neubauer Fellow-led schools have been recognized by the United States Department of Education as 2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools. Girard Academy Music Program (GAMP), led by principal [Jovan Moore](#), has been recognized for Overall Academic Excellence, and Penn Alexander School (PAS), led by principal [Lauren Overton](#), has been honored for making incredible strides in closing achievement gaps among target student groups. PAS’s former principal [Michael Farrell](#) also played a pivotal role in the school’s national recognition, driving incredible student outcomes under his leadership. Neubauer Fellows have led 9 of 12 (75%) of the National Blue Ribbon Schools in Philadelphia over the past six years.

Moore, Overton and Farrell are part of the Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders’ [Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership](#), a program that offers proven principals unmatched resources and expert guidance to sharpen their organizational leadership capacities.

“Research confirms that school leaders have the ability to transform education, drive systemic change, and improve the trajectory of students’ lives,” said Tracy Breslin, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders. “Neubauer Fellows Jovan Moore, Lauren Overton and Michael Farrell epitomize what it means to be strong school leaders, as evidenced by their schools’ recognition as National Blue Ribbon Schools. We are so proud of Jovan, Lauren, Michael, and their hardworking teams and students for receiving this distinguished honor, and we look forward to supporting them on their path of success.”

GAMP has continued to ignite excellence among students of diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds under the leadership of Moore. Leveraging the school’s renowned music education program and award-winning academics, GAMP saw a nearly 100% college acceptance rate among the 2020 senior class, with scholarships valued over \$1-2 million. Since becoming principal in 2018, Moore consistently increased daily student attendance rates year-over-year while sustaining a 100% high school graduation rate.

“Receiving the National Blue Ribbon Award for Overall Academic Excellence is a testament to the hard work and engagement of GAMP’s team of educators, students and our entire school community” said Jovan Moore, principal of GAMP and 2019 Neubauer Fellow. “An honor such as

this takes a village to achieve, and I feel fortunate that I was able to have the Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders among my village. As a Neubauer Fellow, I was encouraged to look at every challenge as an opportunity to strengthen our school. Ultimately, it was those values that enabled me to lead our team at GAMP to drive strong student outcomes while continuing to create a diverse academic community that embraces the love of music.”

Penn Alexander School (PAS) is among an elite network of schools that have been recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School twice. After first being recognized in 2016 for its exemplary work in narrowing the achievement gap under the leadership [Michael Farrell](#), PAS is again recognized in 2021 for its continued efforts to improve achievement. The combined efforts of current principal and 2018 Neubauer Fellow Lauren Overton, Michael Farrell, and interim principal Megan Wapner produced 11 National Board-Certified Teachers, maintained a 98% acceptance rate to selective high schools and earned numerous achievements in science, technology, music, history, writing, and environmental and racial justice.

“Penn Alexander School is honored to again be recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School for Progress in Closing Achievement Gaps as it demonstrates our school’s continued commitment to bridging gaps related to gender, race and academic achievements,” said Lauren Overton, principal of Penn Alexander School and 2018 Neubauer Fellow. “For our school, this distinction was many years in the making as closing the achievement gap was introduced as an area of focus for Penn Alexander at its founding in 2001. With the support of the Neubauer Fellowship, I was able to join this high-achieving team to lead the ongoing efforts to provide an equitable and purposeful learning experience for our students. The Neubauer Fellowship played a pivotal role in my personal leadership growth, and I look forward to working hand-in-hand with the Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders as we roll up our sleeves to continue our efforts in the years ahead.”

On Tuesday, September 21, 2021 each school was recognized for their success during celebrations attended by Mayor Jim Kenney, City of Philadelphia; Dr. William R. Hite, Superintendent for The School District of Philadelphia; and staff, students and family members.

For more information about Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders and the Neubauer Fellowship, please visit phillyschoolleaders.org or follow the organization on [Twitter](#).

###

About the Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders:

The Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders (School Leaders) is a nonprofit organization that develops, engages, and retains principals and system leaders who transform schools, dramatically improve student outcomes, and drive systemic change to prepare all Philadelphia students for college, career, and life. Recognizing that principals are the catalyst for change,

School Leaders launched in 2015 to serve as a critical partner and cross-sector leadership development resource. School Leaders trains and supports principals and school system leaders across district, charter, and faith-based schools in Philadelphia. The organization's results-driven, evidence-based approach provides leaders with the necessary tools, skills, and networks to elevate their performance and improve school and student outcomes.

About the Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership:

The Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership, School Leaders' flagship program, is a transformative two-year leadership experience for proven principals with a track record of improving Philadelphia's district, charter, and faith-based schools. The program develops critical leadership skills needed to elevate school performance and student outcomes in their schools and across the city. Fellows receive best-in-class professional development, build deep relationships with a cohort of exceptional educators, and are treated like the important change agents they are. Local and national practitioners, authors, and researchers facilitate a curriculum that supports Fellows to produce measurable, meaningful results. The Fellowship is competitive and selective: the rigorous competency-based selection process includes an application, interviews, instructional analysis, data reviews, and school visits. The Fellowship currently reaches 128 Philadelphia principals and system leaders who serve over 100,000 students each day.