

ILLUMINATING CREATIVITY AND LEADERSHIP  
Jules E. Mastbaum Area Vocational Technical School Student Mural Project -  
Principal David Lon - 2022 Neubauer Fellow, Shining Light Award Recipient and 2024 Senior Fellow



PHILADELPHIA  
ACADEMY  
OF SCHOOL  
LEADERS

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT





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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2023-2024 marked an important milestone for the Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders (PASL): preparing for our 10th anniversary in 2025. Throughout last year, we reflected on our work empowering educational leadership and also laid the groundwork for our development plan for the future. This Annual Report highlights what was accomplished and outlines the dynamic foundation we set for PASL's next decade.

Our mission is clear: **to strengthen Philadelphia's K-12 education system by equipping school and system leaders with research-based tools and strategies that improve outcomes for all students.** PASL programming is designed to drive meaningful improvements in education through a foundation of collaboration, mutual respect, and measurable results. This is supported by our efforts to connect school, district, and system leaders with the wealth of resources available through PASL, the City of Philadelphia, and state and national experts.

PASL's **"WHY"** remains steadfast—**every Philadelphia student deserves an educational experience that prioritizes their well-being, broadens their horizons, and equips them to thrive as global and community citizens.** This purpose is reflected in our *new Leadership Competencies Framework for Professional Practice* introduced this summer, which shapes the training and support provided to participants in our through our flagship **Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership** (Fellows).

The Leadership Competencies, developed with input from national educational leadership experts, will anchor our programs moving forward. They focus on practical skills that empower leaders to:

- Implement research-based instructional strategies that improve student academic and well-being outcomes
- Retain and foster highly qualified educators
- Strengthen schoolwide equity practices
- Expand family and community engagement

This work is reinforced by our *new Coaching Blueprint*, which combines targeted professional development with personalized coaching for Fellows during their two-year cohort. With support from PASL staff and resources, our participants are better positioned to address the challenges their schools face and improve outcomes for the students they serve.

Since our founding, 173 leaders—42% of Philadelphia's District, charter, and faith-based school leaders—have participated in PASL's Neubauer Fellowship program, impacting more than 92,000 students. **Today, 103 current and Senior Fellows lead schools across 35 city zip codes, serving over 60,000 students—nearly a quarter of the city's school-age children.**

These numbers matter because high-quality, transformational school leadership directly improves student learning, safety, and well-being. By equipping our city's educational leaders with effective strategies and tools, we are helping to create schools where students are not only academically successful but also feel safe, supported and valued.

PASL's impact is possible because of the contributions and collaboration with invaluable partners within and beyond Philadelphia. As we look to the future, we know that deeper partnerships with the private donors, businesses, nonprofits, philanthropic organizations and the School District of Philadelphia will be essential to sustaining this trajectory of K-12 student success.

## *Thank You*

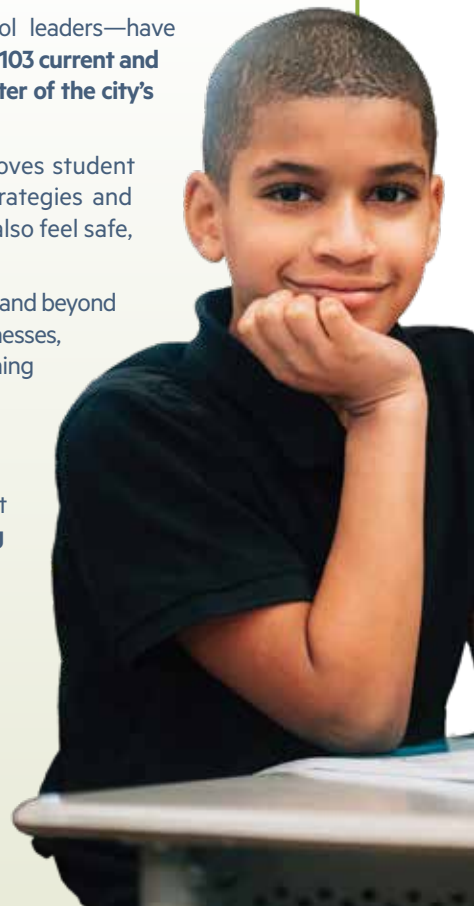
To our philanthropic partners, donors, and strategic collaborators: thank you. Your investment in educational leadership is an investment in Philadelphia's future. **Together, we are strengthening education and expanding opportunities for students across the city.**

With gratitude and determination,



**Joseph Neubauer**

CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
PHILADELPHIA ACADEMY OF SCHOOL LEADERS



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS & KEY STAFF

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**STEPHANIE NAIDOFF, ESQ.**  
Attorney  
Former Philadelphia Director of Commerce Founding President, Kimmel Center

**JOSEPH NEUBAUER**  
Board Chair  
Former CEO and Chairman, Aramark Corporation

**TIM O'SHAUGHNESSY**  
Senior Vice President & Chief Financial Officer, Aramark U.S. Food & Facilities

**SARA RAY STOELINGA**  
President and CEO, Easterseals Serving Chicagoland and Greater Rockford  
Former Director, Urban Education Institute

**NOAH TENNANT**  
Assistant Superintendent, School District of Philadelphia  
2016 Neubauer Fellow

**DALILA WILSON-SCOTT**  
Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, Comcast Corporation President, Comcast NBCUniversal Foundation

## NEUBAUER FAMILY FOUNDATION

REBECCA A. CORNEJO  
Executive Director

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At PASL, we strategically empower and build the capacity of school and system leaders across Philadelphia. Our mission is to provide quality programming that engages, develops, and supports transformative K-12 educational leaders who champion equity, inclusion, and excellence for every child.



PASL offers a unique opportunity to shape the future of educational leadership across Philadelphia's public, charter, and faith-based schools. We honor the deep commitment of the school leaders in our programs to their students' academic and social-emotional growth. Through intensive coaching, peer support, and practical, results-driven strategies, we equip these passionate leaders with the skills outlined in our Leadership Competencies framework. Our programs provide school leaders with the tools, networks, and evidence-based approaches they need to make meaningful improvements in school and student performance.

## *Accountability and Commitment to Results*

By incorporating both local and national best practices, we create programming that is relevant, impactful, and aligned with our mission. We engage high-level professionals from across the country to evaluate our impact and ensure we are responsive to the needs of our school leaders. Our commitment to accountability is reinforced through our partnership with the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania. Together, we regularly assess the quality and effectiveness of our program offerings and the impact of our learning experiences on student outcomes in our Fellows' schools. We also collaborate closely with an Evaluation Advisory Panel of experts in school effectiveness and professional learning, as well as a Practitioners Advisory Committee composed of Senior Fellows who contribute valuable perspectives, supporting the organization and the success of all PASL Fellows.

Reflecting on my first year with PASL, I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished. I am especially grateful to the PASL Board of Directors for their unwavering commitment to their Why and Core Beliefs. Fulfilling this commitment requires the expertise and dedication of our exceptional PASL staff.

**Significant foundational work was achieved last year, as highlighted in this Annual Report.** With the implementation of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, the redesigned Neubauer Fellowship Leadership Competencies, and our new Coaching Blueprint, 2024-2025 promises to be a year of growth, energy, and substantial impact. Together, we will continue to drive meaningful, positive change for the future of K-12 education in Philadelphia.

*Edwin M. Quezada, EdD*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
PHILADELPHIA ACADEMY OF SCHOOL LEADERS

## OUR MISSION

To provide quality programming that engages, develops, and supports transformative K-12 educational leaders who authentically embrace equity, inclusion, and educational excellence for every child in Philadelphia.

*We invest in Philadelphia's students and the future.*

The Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders provides high-quality, results-driven professional development for school and system leaders to accelerate learning and growth for every Philadelphia student. We invest in Philadelphia's education leadership with the conviction that this investment will yield dividends for the almost 200,000 school children who live here.

In fall 2014, driven by compelling research that leadership is the critical component to improving student outcomes, the Neubauer Family Foundation partnered with the University of Chicago's

Urban Education Institute (UEI) to design a program for school leaders. Educators from Philadelphia's charter, faith-based, and traditional public schools significantly contributed to the design work through focus groups and a think tank. Their work identified key factors that would enhance the development of educational leaders: the integration of theory and practice; networking opportunities with peers working across Philadelphia; and ongoing coaching and support from local experts.

Grounded in the belief that every child is capable of extraordinary things and that great schools require great leaders, the first initiative of the Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders — the Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership — was launched in summer 2015. The Fellowship is the flagship program that anchors all PASL work and has accepted 173 Fellows as of June 2024. This two-year, cohort-based program for dedicated principals develops the critical leadership skills needed to elevate school performance and advance student outcomes.

PASL serves leaders across district, charter, and faith-based schools, at all stages of their careers, creating a community of transformational professionals driven by innovation and continuous improvement. By leveraging the expertise of others, we aim to scale and replicate best practices tailored to individual and unique community needs.

Educational leaders receive best-in-class professional development and build deep relationships with a cohort of outstanding peers. They share strategies, problem-solve together, and enhance their skills while expanding their networks and resources throughout their career. This collegial bond assists them to redefine their leadership and, more importantly, improve the lives and outcomes of their students.

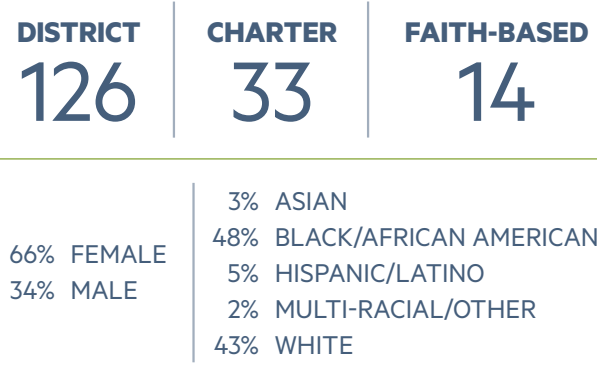
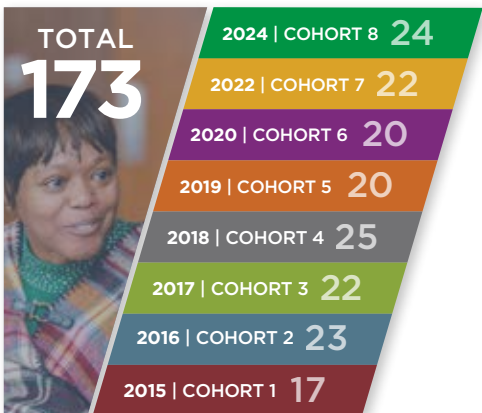
Through PASL's work with these dedicated professionals, we help drive students' academic growth and enhance their well-being, increase community engagement as well as elevate educational experiences across Philadelphia.

*Our goal is to empower students to succeed in the K-12 experience and beyond.*



# NEUBAUER FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY

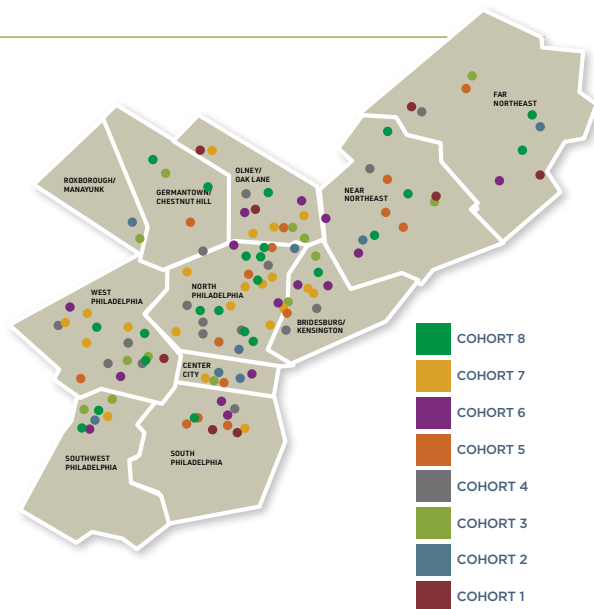
## A DECADE OF IMPACT



Since 2015, the **173 Neubauer Fellows** in Leadership roles at the School District of Philadelphia (SDP), Charter Network organizations, Non-Profits and Institutes of Higher Learning include:

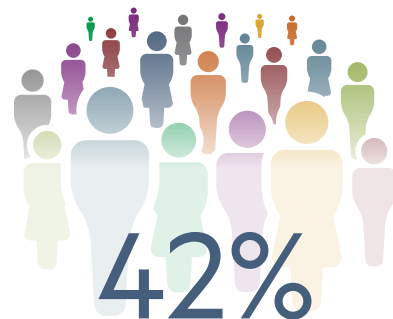
- 11 serve as an Assistant or Associate Superintendent in SDP
- 12 serve in other SDP leadership roles
- 8 serve in Philadelphia Charter Networks
- 15 serve Non-Profits including PASL

- 45 Neubauer Fellows received the Philadelphia Lindback Award for Distinguished Principals representing 80% of the winners since 2015.
- 11 Neubauer Fellows led Philadelphia's U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools representing 31% of the winners since 2015.
- 92,000+ Philadelphia's K-12 students directly or indirectly benefited from school and system educational leaders who participated in PASL programs.
- Leadership retention fosters a positive school culture, improves teacher retention, and drives student achievement. Principals who participated in the Neubauer Fellowship are 8% more likely to stay in a leadership position in Philadelphia as compared to schools never led by a program participant.



In schools led by Neubauer Fellows as compared to schools never led by a program participant data indicates a school climate transformation that fosters inclusive, supportive environments, enhance student engagement, well-being, and academic success.

- 3.9% points more students meet proficiency or advanced on the English Language Arts Pennsylvania System of School Assessment standardized tests
- 4.6% points more students meet proficiency or advanced on the Math Pennsylvania System of School Assessment standardized tests
- .5% points more students attend school 95% or more days
- 4.3% points more teachers identified as distinguished or proficient remain in the school



42% OF PHILADELPHIA'S DISTRICT, CHARTER AND FAITH-BASED SCHOOL LEADERS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN PASL'S NEUBAUER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

# NEUBAUER FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY

## 2024 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IMPACT



In 2024, Neubauer Fellows remain committed to the educational landscape in Philadelphia. 85% remain school or system leaders in Philadelphia and the surrounding area. 58% are principals and 20% serve system-level positions.

**Currently, 103 Fellows & Senior Fellows lead schools in 35 Philadelphia zip codes.** These leaders are **25%** of the **412** principals in all three sectors.

**DISTRICT**  
**84** PRINCIPALS  
 33% of the 240 total principals

**CHARTER**  
**13** PRINCIPALS  
 12% of the 110 total principals

**FAITH-BASED**  
**6** PRINCIPALS  
 10% of the 62 total principals



These **103 schools** serve over **60,000 students**, almost **25% of Philadelphia's school age children** (5-18 years old), approximately **5,000 teachers** and **3,000 support professionals and staff**.

### SCHOOL GRADE LEVELS

K-5TH GRADE	K-8TH GRADE	6TH-8TH GRADE	6TH-12TH GRADE	9TH-12TH GRADE	OTHER
26	47	7	6	16	1

In 2024, a higher percentages of students attending District schools led by Neubauer Fellows scored Proficient or Advanced on state standardized tests—Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and Keystone Exams (Keystone)—compared to schools with non-Neubauer Fellow leaders. This trend holds true for all subjects.

**6** PERCENTAGE POINTS HIGHER  
**GRADES 3-8 ELA PSSA**

**7** PERCENTAGE POINTS HIGHER  
**GRADE 11 ALGEBRA KEYSTONE**

**8** PERCENTAGE POINTS HIGHER  
**GRADES 3-8 MATH PSSA**

**7** PERCENTAGE POINTS HIGHER  
**GRADE 11 LITERATURE KEYSTONE**

**5** PERCENTAGE POINTS HIGHER  
**GRADES 4 & 8 SCIENCE PSSA**

**8** PERCENTAGE POINTS HIGHER  
**GRADE 11 BIOLOGY KEYSTONE**





# ADVISORY PARTNERS

## ACHIEVEMENT NETWORK (ANet)

## CONSORTIUM FOR POLICY RESEARCH IN EDUCATION (CPRE)

## EDUCATION ANALYTICS

## EVALUATION ADVISORY PANEL

**Frederick Brown**, *President and CEO, Learning Forward*

**Steve Cantell, PhD**, *Founder and Principal, Middle, LLC*

**Gina Ikemoto, PhD**, *Senior Education Leadership Policy Consultant, Education Research and Development, LLC*

**Jenny Nagaoka**, *Deputy Director, Chicago Consortium on School Research*

**Sara Ray Stoelinga, PhD**, *President and CEO, Easterseals*

**Jennie Weiner, PhD**, *Professor of Educational Leadership, University of Connecticut*

## INSIGHT EDUCATION GROUP

## NATIONAL POLICY BOARD FOR EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

## NEUBAUER FELLOWSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP - LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REVIEW AND REDESIGN ADVISORY GROUP

**Al Bertani, EdD**, *Former Senior Advisor*

*Urban Education Institute at the University of Chicago*

**Natalie Catin-St. Louis**, *2018 Neubauer Fellow*

*Principal Coach, School District of Philadelphia*

**Rebecca Cornejo**, *Executive Director*

*Neubauer Family Foundation*

**Janine de Novais, EdD**, *Sociologist and Author*

**Michael Farrell, EdD**, *2016 Neubauer Fellow*

*Chief Learning Officer, The School District of Philadelphia*

**Jovan Moore**, *2019 Neubauer Fellow*

*Leader Coach, Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders*

**Edwin M. Quezada, EdD**, *Executive Director*

*Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders*

**Latanya Simmons, EdD**, *2019 Neubauer Fellow Program Director*

*Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders*

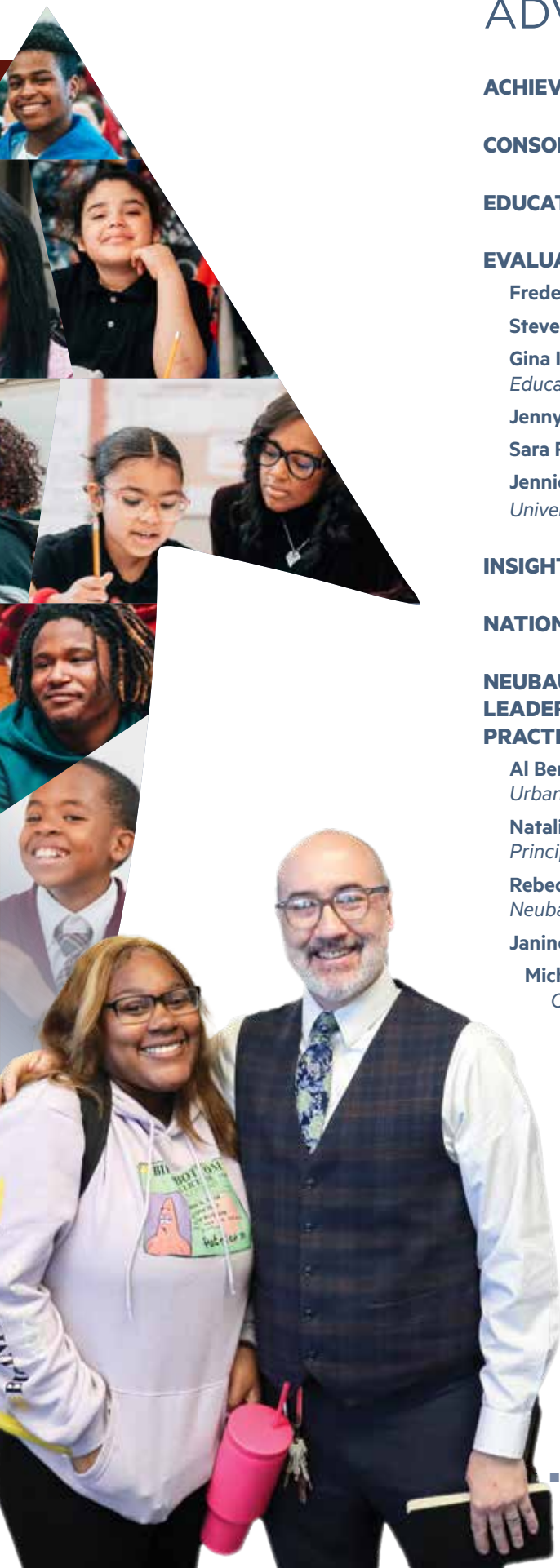
**Leslie Torres-Rodriguez, EdD**, *Superintendent*

*Hartford Connecticut Public Schools*

**Jackie O. Wilson, EdD**, *Executive Director*

*National Policy Board for Educational Administration*

## NEUBAUER SENIOR FELLOWS PRACTITIONERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE





# *Trajectory of the* **PHILADELPHIA ACADEMY OF SCHOOL LEADERS**

## **INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

*A one-year program that supports Philadelphia principals with a focus on foundational teaching and learning best practices to drive results for students*



## **NEUBAUER FELLOWSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

*A transformative two-year program that develops the critical leadership skills needed to create school conditions where all students and staff thrive*

- NEUBAUER FELLOWSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES
- CROSS SITE CONSULTANCIES
- DINNER WITH DECISION MAKERS





# Student Success

## LEADERS OF LEADERS

*A partnership with the School District of Philadelphia that reimagines the role of Assistant Superintendents via coaching strategies*

## SENIOR FELLOW PROGRAMMING

*A range of ongoing Post Fellowship opportunities designed to support school and system leaders*

- BREAKTHROUGH RESULTS COLLABORATIVE
- BLACK EDUCATOR PIPELINE
- RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN ACTION
- COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE
- SENIOR FELLOW INSTITUTES
- PRACTITIONERS ADVISORY PANEL

# Portraits of **NEUBAUER FELLOWS**

## TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP COACHING: EMPOWERING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

PASL empowers transformational school leaders with essential knowledge and skills to navigate the complexities of educational leadership. Grounded in the belief that every child deserves an education that allows them to achieve their dreams, PASL emphasizes results-based leadership as essential for creating successful learning environments.

Through its coaching process, PASL develops leaders who excel in their roles, inspire teachers, meet community expectations, and foster high performing, engaged learning communities. This evidence-based approach empowers leaders to create educational environments that earn family trust, make students feel welcomed and valued, and drive growth in attendance and academic achievement.

**PASL's foundational beliefs, coaching philosophy, and strategic objectives cultivate educational leaders who are skilled, driven, and firmly committed to the success and well-being of every student every day.**



*It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.*

— Nelson Mandela



# JOVAN MOORE

*PASL Leader Coach*

*Former Principal Girard Academic Music Program  
(District-Grades 5-12)*

*Cohort 5 Fellow (2019)*

*2021 United States Department of Education Blue Ribbon  
School of Excellence for High Performing Schools*

## **As a Cohort 5 Fellow, what was most valuable from your PASL experience?**

“The sense of empowerment and an emboldening to do the work that my students needed. I was charged to look past the burdensome paperwork and channel my focus on what would make a lasting impact on my students' success.”

## **“Aha moments” that shifted your leadership efforts.**

“Realizing that I had the power to act on what was best for my students and school community—without waiting for permission—was a game changing moment in my leadership. It allowed me to move forward with confidence and purpose, focused solely on achieving the best outcomes for my students.”

## **As a PASL Leader Coach, what are you utilizing from your Fellows experience?**

“I want them to recognize the power they hold as true leaders of their schools, entrusted with the responsibility to do what is best for the children in their school communities.”

As a PASL Leader Coach, Jovan plays a pivotal role in the Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership program, providing dedicated coaching and guidance to school leaders over their two-year cohort journey.

From 2018 to 2023, Jovan served as the principal of Girard Academic Music Program (GAMP), a Special Admissions school for grades 5-12 focused on both academics and music education. Under her leadership, with a focus on equity and positive school culture, GAMP achieved several key milestones:

- Implemented Restorative Practices in Action, resulting in a **3.1% increase in students attending school at least 90% of the time,**
- **Maintained a low 1% suspension rate**—99% of students not being suspended,
- **12.4% increase in the number of ninth graders on track to graduate** in four years, and
- **9% increase in 2019 Science Achievement** on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).

These successes culminated in GAMP being named a 2021 Blue Ribbon School for Excellence, underscoring her leadership impact on academic and community-focused outcomes.

Jovan's ongoing role as a PASL Leader Coach allows her to extend this legacy by mentoring new school leaders, equipping them with the tools, strategies, and mindset to effect meaningful change in their own schools.



# NICHOLE POLK

*Principal Potter-Thomas School (District-Grades K-8)*

*Cohort 7 Fellow (2022)*

*Senior Fellow (2024)*

## **What motivated you to seek a Fellowship?**

“My desire to deepen my impact within my community and broaden my leadership capabilities. The Fellowship offers unique, hands-on learning experiences that go far beyond traditional professional development. Immersing myself in this opportunity has given me new perspectives on systemic challenges, allowed me to collaborate with like-minded leaders, and helped me refine strategies to drive sustainable improvement within my school.”

I am especially inspired by the opportunity to explore innovative educational approaches that can create lasting, positive change. Through this Fellowship, I gained insights and skills that empower me to serve my school community even more effectively, contributing to meaningful progress across the School District of Philadelphia.”

## **What was most valuable from your Cohort 7 experience?**

“A profound journey of self-discovery. Through the ‘Story of Self’ activity, I uncovered a childhood trauma that I hadn’t fully processed until now—when I was in the 5th grade, I struggled with stuttering and faced ridicule not only from my classmates but also from my teacher. This experience silenced me. Revisiting this part of my life was eye-opening and painful, yet ultimately empowering. It gave me clarity on my leadership *why* and has redefined my mission for my school community.”

This newfound understanding has inspired me to create a school environment where all staff and students feel safe, valued, and genuinely loved—a place where all individuals are not only encouraged but also empowered to learn and grow without fear. It is my duty to ensure that no child or teacher ever feels silenced or unsupported and that our school stands as a nurturing space for growth, belonging, and continuous learning.”



## **“Aha moments” that shifted your leadership efforts.**

“One key realization was understanding the depth of impact that personal experiences and unresolved challenges had on my leadership style and approach. By uncovering my own childhood trauma and its influence on my journey, I recognized the critical importance of empathy and safety in creating an inclusive environment. This shifted my focus toward ensuring that every voice in my school community feels heard and respected.”

I came to see that true growth requires embracing discomfort. To create a learning-focused environment, I had to model continuous growth myself, encouraging my team to step outside their comfort zones. These insights transformed my approach from simply managing a school to leading a mission-centered community where safety, support, and growth are at the heart of everything we do.”

## **How were these leadership shifts evident in improved student success at your school?**

During the two-year Fellowship (2022-2024) Potter-Thomas School realized significant improvements that impacted student success across key assessments.

- **4.2% increase in English Language Arts Achievement on the 3rd-8th grade Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)** – Potter-Thomas met its 2023-2024 PSSA ELA school goal for students at proficient or advanced
- **9.8% increase in STAR Reading**
- **2.4% increase Math Achievement on the 3rd-8th grade Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)**
- **4.3% increase STAR Math**
- **7.3% increase Science Achievement on the 4th & 8th grade Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)**
- **21.5% increase in Student Attendance** for students attending school 90% of the time
- **12% increase in Teacher Attendance** – 81.4% of the teachers through October 2024 attended school 90% of the time

“These gains reflect the success of our strategic, data-driven approach. By cultivating an environment where students feel safe, valued, and engaged in learning, we have built a stronger foundation for academic achievement and growth across our Potter-Thomas School community.”

# DAVID McDONOUGH

*Principal St. James School  
(Faith-based-Grades 4-8)*

*Cohort 7 Fellow (2022)*

*Senior Fellow (2024)*

## **What motivated you to seek a Fellowship?**

As a principal with over 22 years of experience, I felt I was plateauing in my own professional growth and in what I was providing for my staff. I still had 'plenty of gas left in my tank,' I was eager to learn and I had some things to share with others as well. I needed to expand my skills to improve both achievement and social-emotional outcomes for my students. In summary, I needed to sharpen the tools in my toolbox and pick up a few new tools as well!"

## **What was most valuable from your Cohort 7 experience?**

"The practicality of all the sessions really stands out—topics were less theory and more about actionable, realistic strategies. I left each session equipped with tools, strategies, plans, leadership practices I could quickly implement back at school.

The trip to the National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Holocaust Memorial Museum was a capstone experience. It seamlessly blended history, leadership, social justice and showed the impact of leadership and education on individuals and nations.

The Fellowship provided access to extraordinary resources for improving students' academic outcomes. Partnering with Black Girls Love Math has been transformative for our girls. They're not only improving in Math achievement and motivation but, perhaps most importantly, they're now enjoying Math and seeing themselves as mathematicians."

## **"Aha moments" that shifted your leadership efforts.**

"During the first Summer Institute the 'What's Your Why?' activity was powerful. I thought I was a transparent and personal leader. What I realized was the importance of being even more open with my entire team about how my early experiences with education and racism have fueled my career. I often remind my staff, 'the children are watching.' This activity helped me recognize that adults are watching too. Being transparent and vulnerable not only builds trust among colleagues, it also models the practice of reflecting on our inner motivations, which shapes how and why we show up each day for our students and each other.

Another stand-out was Sharifa Edwards' workshop on retaining and recruiting staff. It underscored the need for principals to create strong structures for developing talent among faculty and staff. They are our most valuable resources in building a vibrant school culture. The pandemic made it clear that we must rethink how we recruit, onboard, train, coach, support, and retain high-quality teachers and staff."

## **How were these leadership shifts evident in improved student success at your school?**

"Significant professional development has been focused on teacher planning using data and student work to drive Math outcomes.

During the two-year Fellowship (2022-2024) St. James School realized significant improvements that impacted student success across key assessments."

- **11% increase on Math Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Achievement Assessment**
- **5% increase on English Language Arts Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Achievement Assessment**
- **2% increase in Teacher Attendance** – in 2024 95% of the teachers attended school 90% of the time
- **Maintained 90% in Student Attendance** for students attending school 90% of the time

"Another point of pride at St. James School is our daily 3:15 to 5:00 p.m. Enrichment Program, which has greatly strengthened our school community. By embracing the talents and interests of our staff and our belief to nurture each child's artistic, academic, athletic, social, and spiritual gifts, we offer 49 enrichment activities. These activities provide a safe space where students can explore new experiences, enjoy themselves, and deepen relationships with both peers and staff outside the traditional classroom setting."



# RESET OUR WHY, VISION, MISSION & CORE BELIEFS



## OUR WHY

Every Philadelphia student deserves an educational experience that centers their well-being, expands their ideas of what is possible, and helps them define as well as achieve success to thrive as community and global citizens.

## OUR VISION

Philadelphia students receive a high-quality educational experience, advanced through innovative, effective leadership, that supports their achievement and social-emotional growth to realize success in and beyond the K-12 experience.

## OUR MISSION

To provide quality programming that engages, develops, and supports transformative K-12 educational leaders who authentically embrace equity, inclusion, and educational excellence for every child in Philadelphia.

## OUR CORE BELIEFS

At Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders, we recognize that deep-rooted systemic inequities have created barriers to student achievement. To directly address this inequity in support of children and their educational experience, our organization and its work are based on the following Core Beliefs:

- Student success is the number one priority.
- Every child is capable of extraordinary things and has the ability to achieve and succeed.
- Excellent education is rooted in equity.
- Learning occurs in a safe, nurturing, equitable, and culturally responsive environment.
- Adults are accountable for student success.
- Educational leaders are the most critical factor for the success of a school community.

## NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 2023, PASL appointed Dr. Edwin M. Quezada as its third Executive Director following a nationwide search. Dr. Quezada retired as Superintendent of Yonkers Public Schools, the third largest school district in New York State, which under his tutelage was the highest performing large city school district in the state. With 35 years of experience working in education, serving as a teacher, school counselor, development professional, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, and deputy superintendent he has a proven track record of developing educational leaders—planning and delivering professional development and experiences that bolster the leadership competencies required to create a school culture in which the needs of all learners are met—and implementing systems of support to create a district-wide educational culture focused on accountability, achievement, sustainability, and educational opportunities for all.



In his first year, with his expertise in the attributes of impactful leadership, Dr. Quezada captained the transformative efforts PASL undertook to prepare for their next decade's work. Throughout 2024, PASL developed a 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, redesigned the Neubauer Fellowship Leadership Competencies Framework for Professional Practice, and implemented a new Coaching Blueprint. This work lays the foundation for PASL to continue to dramatically impact the educational experience and the lives of all Philadelphia students.



# 2024-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

April 2024, the 2024-2027 PASL Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Directors to reset PASL’s work and growth plan with a dynamic, ambitious commitment to a 2nd decade of support for Philadelphia’s K–12 educational systems. The plan serves as a roadmap for PASL to continue to deliver sustainable, high-quality support to educational leaders ready to hold themselves accountable for students’ success.

“Principals are a critical school-level factor influencing student outcomes, including student achievement, graduation rates, and attendance rates.” To quickly improve and sustain results requires research-based ongoing professional development to enhance requisite leadership skills for quality educational leaders. “It is difficult to envision an investment in K–12 education with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership.”\*

To support Philadelphia educational leaders’ skills to meet the complex and shifting challenges they face, PASL embraced its responsibility to research, develop, and rigorously evaluate new and innovative ways to serve the leaders who serve our children and community.

The entire stakeholder community was engaged in the development of the Strategic Plan. Contributions to this plan came from the knowledge and experiences of national subject matter experts; alumni from all cohorts of our flagship program, the Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership; and the PASL Board. The plan is grounded in its clarified Why, Vision, Mission, and Core Beliefs and four dynamic Strategic Priority Goals.

\*(Grissom, Jason A., Anna J. Egalite, and Constance A. Lindsay. 2021. “How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research.” New York: The Wallace Foundation. Available at <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/principalsynthesis>.)



VIEW OUR 2024-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN HERE



## FOUR DYNAMIC STRATEGIC PRIORITY GOALS

### HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMMING

Provide consistent high-quality programs and supports to develop school leaders who are powerful positive forces for change to improve students’ academic and social-emotional outcomes, whether it be in a charter, faith-based or School District of Philadelphia schools, utilizing research-based national best practices in urban education.

### SUSTAINABILITY & GROWTH

Ensure current and future financial sustainability and growth for programming and operational expenses.

### HUMAN CAPITAL

Cultivate and sustain a highly motivated workforce to support PASL’s Why, Vision, Mission, and Core Beliefs.

### COMMUNICATIONS

Increase PASL’s comprehensive timely communications capacity to build audiences and community engagement to replicate and expand data-proven programs and best practices to improve instruction and school climate.



# REDESIGNED NEUBAUER FELLOWSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

## FRAMEWORK FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Since the inception of the Neubauer Fellowship in 2015, the world has changed dramatically. School leaders facing new challenges: learning recovery and re-entry following the pandemic; community tensions created by racial injustices and street violence; and growing political divisions breeding strife for the institutions that serve Philadelphia’s K-12 students. Educational leaders learned valuable lessons around equity and improving student outcomes for all children. Today, principals are attentive not only to the academic but also the social-emotional challenges facing our students, families, and staff.

New research about the impact of school leadership has strengthened the argument that investments in principal development are critical to ensuring equity and improving outcomes for students.

In this evolving context, PASL launched an ambitious and rigorous Review and Redesign Process in the fall 2023 to reconceptualize and reinvent programming for the Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership. National educational leadership subject matter experts, local K-12 leadership practitioners and alumni Fellows crafted the 2024 Leadership Competencies Framework for Professional Practice which was launched in July 2024 with the Cohort 8 Fellows.

### The new Leadership Competencies will serve as the foundation for PASL’s programming moving forward.



#### ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

Leads by applying systems thinking to manage complex challenges. The school leader is explicit in modeling equity and inclusion principles by engaging stakeholders transparently, fostering a culture of continuous care, improvement, and empowerment, and leveraging cross-cultural communication, data literacy and student voice.



#### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Leads by serving as an agent of change and continuous improvement to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.



#### EQUITY

Leads with an understanding of the historical and contemporary manifestations of racial, sociocultural, and economic inequities and engages self and staff in continuous learning about the manifestations of those inequities in the school and district.



#### FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Leads by adopting research-based family and community engagement best practices that support student success and uses this knowledge to design and maintain family and community partnerships that link academic learning to the community’s resources such as culture, language, and ethnicity.



#### INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Leads teachers in implementing a dynamic, culturally relevant curriculum integrating equity and research based instructional practices; strategic use of data; and the inclusion of modern technologies grounded in a compelling future-ready vision for students.



#### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Leads by building teacher and staff capacity through high quality, school-based professional learning programs and activities focused on: subject matter; equity-based teaching strategies; data-driven improvement of instructional practices; nurturing collaborative learning communities; and promoting an improvement and innovation culture.



#### SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS

Leads strategically with a focus on equitable resource allocation, data-driven decisions, and compassionate crisis management, ensuring a supportive, efficient, and transparent operational environment.

Effective principals are key to improving student learning outcomes and ensuring equity. Working with teachers, staff, parents, families, and community members, principals shape the future of their students. The redesign consisting of 7 Leadership Competencies is intended to inspire, guide, and support school leaders across Philadelphia as they engage in one of the most exciting and significant roles undertaken by any individual in our modern day society—

*Being a school principal!*

## NEW COACHING BLUEPRINT

### NURTURING EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN PHILADELPHIA: EMPOWERING PRINCIPALS WITH CORE COMPETENCIES FOR TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT



*By systematically training mentors and coaches in the blended coaching model, we've empowered them to provide more personalized and effective support to novice principals and assistant principals. This approach has not only improved their instructional leadership but also strengthened the overall capacity of school leadership teams.*

— **Michael L. Saylor**

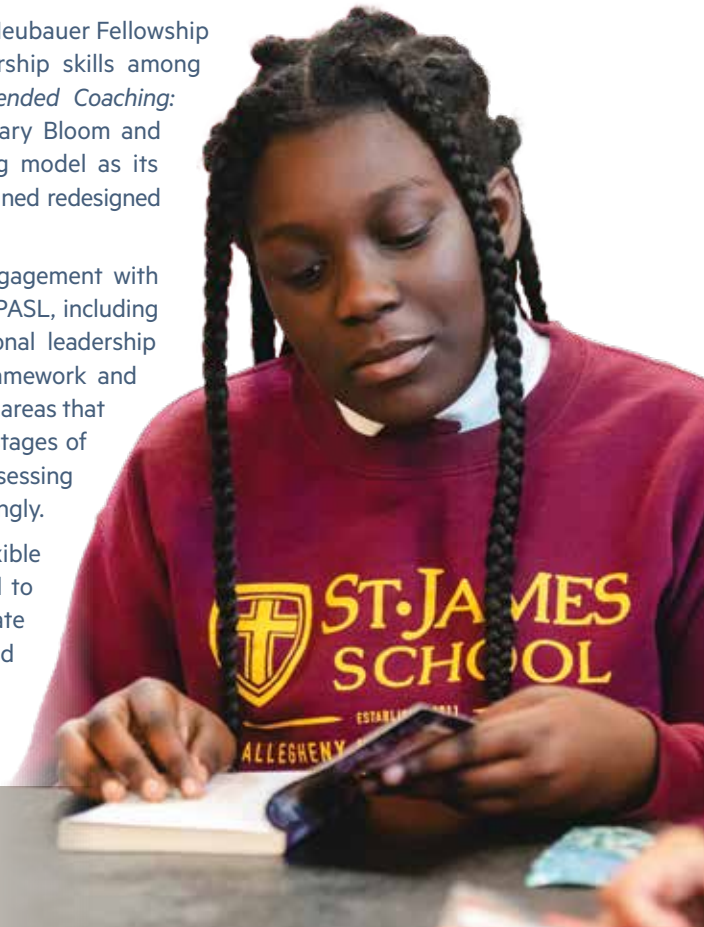
Director, Educator Excellence, Delaware Department of Education

In August 2023, PASL, in partnership with Insight Education Group and other collaborators from both within and outside the School District of Philadelphia, began developing a redesigned coaching model to provide individualized support for Neubauer Fellowship Fellows. To facilitate this initiative, PASL hired two Leader Coaches, each responsible for a caseload of Fellows. Coaches meet with Fellows about twice per month, primarily in person at the Fellow's school, to ensure tailored and direct support.

The new PASL Coaching Blueprint serves as a dedicated resource for Neubauer Fellowship coaches, designed to streamline the development of critical leadership skills among Philadelphia's school principals. Based on the second edition of *Blended Coaching: Supporting the Development and Supervision of School Leaders* by Gary Bloom and Jackie Owens Wilson, the blueprint leverages the Blended Coaching model as its core methodology. It is structured to advance the seven key areas outlined redesigned Neubauer Fellowship Leadership Competencies.

The guide is structured to assist coaches at every stage of their engagement with Neubauer Fellows. It begins by outlining the foundational elements of PASL, including the core beliefs and coaching philosophy, which emphasize educational leadership through innovative practices. It delves into the PASL Leadership Framework and Competencies, providing a detailed overview of the skills and knowledge areas that are critical for transformative school leadership. It also introduces the Stages of Learning, based on the Conscious Competence Matrix, which helps in assessing the development stage of the Fellows and tailoring the coaching accordingly.

This blueprint is intended to be used as a dynamic coaching tool, flexible enough to adapt to individual coach and Fellow needs yet structured to ensure a consistent and high-quality coaching experience. The ultimate objective is to ensure that each coaching interaction is impactful and aligned with the overall goals of the Neubauer Fellowship.



## 2023-2024 PROGRAMMING AND IMPACT

Great schools require transformational school and system educational leaders who authentically embrace equity, diversity, and educational excellence for every member of the school community. These leaders collaboratively shift a school's trajectory toward greater student outcomes. This occurs when leaders use research-based knowledge interwoven with proven practiced skills that are encouraged through collegial support to create the conditions in which every child thrives. Research validates the key lever to quickly improve student outcomes is quality sustainable professional development to enhance leadership skills in principals.

This is precisely the objective of Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders: to improve student achievement outcomes for Philadelphia students by developing and supporting the leaders who create the educational environments in which all children learn and grow.

PASL's programs offer competency-based professional development opportunities for dedicated principals and system leaders from across Philadelphia's district, charter, and faith-based schools. Participants build their leadership skills to improve teaching and learning, drive student outcomes, and engage the entire school community. These committed professionals have access to PASL's network, expertise, and resources, empowering them to transform for the better the educational landscape in Philadelphia.



During 2023-2024, PASL provided programming for nearly 100 principals and school system leaders across Philadelphia through the four core programs: **Instructional Leadership Academy**, **Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership**, **Senior Fellow Programming** and **Leaders of Leaders**.

*Over 250 hours of professional development*

featured 19 guest speakers/facilitators from across the country.

*20 unique events*

were offered that were designed to build community and strengthen the networks among school and system leaders.

*12 school visits*

served as firsthand learning opportunities for school leaders to showcase their school community's progress as well as to provide energetic dialogue among the visiting leaders.

*Over 994 coaching hours*

were provided through group and 1:1 formats.

# INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

In partnership with Achievement Network (ANet), the Instructional Leadership Academy (ILA) is a one-year program that supports Philadelphia principals with a focus on foundational teaching and learning best practices that drive results for students. Many ILA participants matriculate into the Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership.

ILA leverages teacher coaching, professional learning time, and data-driven instruction to raise the bar for student learning. In addition, participants are paired with an Instructional Leadership Coach who provides individualized coaching each month (in addition to the monthly group sessions) to maximize principal growth.



**10** ILA PARTICIPANTS WERE SELECTED FOR THE 2024 COHORT 8 NEUBAUER FELLOWSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, ALMOST 50% OF THE JUNE COHORT 8.



*This program deepened my understanding of how to enact change at my school on a more enriching level, because I was able to collaborate with other leaders and not see myself as though I was operating in a vacuum.*

# NEUBAUER FELLOWSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP



The Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership (Neubauer Fellows), PASL’s flagship program, is a transformative two-year program that develops the critical leadership skills needed to create school conditions where all students and staff feel valued, respected, and cared for, which, data has shown, translates to growth in student achievement. In 2024, the Neubauer Fellowship undertook a rigorous review and redesign process with contributions from national educational leadership pundits, local educators, and Fellowship alumni. The new Leadership Competencies will serve as the foundation of our programming. The Neubauer Fellowship’s programming is tailored for established principals who are committed to their school communities and who recognize improving outcomes for all students requires comprehensive professional development for oneself as well as all stakeholders.

A two-year cohort-based program for dedicated principals, the Neubauer Fellowship in Educational Leadership develops the critical leadership skills needed to elevate school performance and advance student outcomes.

**2022 COHORT 7 PROGRAMMING ENDED IN JUNE 2024.** During 2023-2024 participants operated under the former Fellowship programming which utilized 4 Leadership Drivers: **Lead Authentically, Develop People, Advance Equity and Drive Results**—and 5 Pillars: **Capacity Building, Individualized Coaching, Supportive Network, Contextual Practice and Cross-Sector Programming.**

22  
PARTICIPANTS

56  
HOURS OF  
PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

7  
SCHOOL  
VISITS

6  
UNIQUE  
EVENTS

8  
GUEST  
SPEAKERS

285  
COACHING  
HOURS

**Exit evaluations from Cohort 7 offer valuable insight from participants:**

In feedback surveys taken after participating in each of the four institutes (summer, fall, winter, and spring) almost 100% of fellows agreed or strongly agreed that the sessions were relevant and applicable to their work. Additionally, over 95% agreed or strongly agreed that the sessions were a good use of their time and that the session prepared them to increase student outcomes as a school leader.



*Sessions were very beneficial because they caused me to reflect on my current practices, identify gaps between where I am and where I want to be, AND (most importantly) narrow my focus to drive results for students.*



**CROSS-SITE CONSULTANCIES**

The Consultancy is a collaborative professional development activity where Fellows visit a host school to observe practices, exchange insights, and provide constructive feedback. During these visits, participants conduct classroom observations and engage in in-depth discussions on instructional strategies, school culture, and leadership practices. This approach fosters reflective dialogue, helping both the host and visiting schools to identify their strengths and areas for growth. Key takeaways often lead to actionable recommendations that support the enhancement of teaching and learning across schools, creating a network of shared improvement and innovation. Fellows visited six schools.

**DINNER WITH DECISION MAKERS**

The *Dinner with a Decision Maker* series is a pivotal aspect of the Fellowship, offering principals the opportunity to gain insights from respected local and national leaders on a range of leadership perspectives, change management, and key trends in politics, community, and business. In each session, two Neubauer Fellows lead a “fireside chat” with the featured guest, asking questions that align with the foundational Leadership Levers for 2023-2024—competencies that research has shown to be closely tied to school improvement and student achievement. Through candid stories of navigating real-world challenges, these leaders provide Fellows with valuable perspectives and strategies, enriching their leadership toolkit.

Two sessions were offered featuring Mayor Chelle Parker, City of Philadelphia and Michael Smith, CEO, AmeriCorps that were attended by 197 Fellows and Senior Fellows.

**2024 COHORT 8 PROGRAMMING BEGAN IN JULY 2024.** At the Summer Institute, participants launched their two-year experience, which will run through June 2026, by engaging with the newly redesigned 7 Leadership Competencies. These competencies **Adaptive Leadership, Continuous Improvement for Student Success, Equity, Family and Community Engagement, Instructional Leadership, Professional Learning, and Systems and Operations**—are the foundation for the programming. By focusing on these areas, participants will build skills to drive meaningful change, foster inclusive environments, and enhance educational outcomes for students. Our week-long Summer Institute, Cohort 8’s first programming, featured:

24  
PARTICIPANTS

51  
HOURS OF  
PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

6  
UNIQUE  
EVENTS

11  
GUEST  
SPEAKERS



## SENIOR FELLOW PROGRAMMING

After completing their two-year Neubauer Fellowship program, participants become Senior Fellows. PASL continues to provide opportunities for professional development, community building, and recognition for our Senior Fellows. 4 programs were offered.

### BREAKTHROUGH RESULTS COLLABORATIVE (BRC)

In partnership with ANet, the Breakthrough Results Collaborative supports school teams (a Senior Fellow plus two of their school leaders) in accomplishing extraordinary results for students by improving the instructional systems and structures in their schools. To offset Philadelphia’s regression in students’ academic performance resulting from the unprecedented challenges over the past several years from COVID-19, BRC offers school teams strategies to design and execute more effective school-based teacher coaching, professional learning experiences and data driven instruction.

The goals are to develop, strengthen and retain competent Philadelphia school leaders who produce positive student growth and achievement outcomes in English Language Arts and Math. Participants attend monthly in-person development sessions and receive coaching from an Instructional Leadership Coach.



*This was a great program. I felt the continued team building and intentional time to collaborate and share best practices was invaluable.*

17

PARTICIPANTS

28

HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

5

SCHOOL VISITS

3

UNIQUE EVENTS



*This time is not only full of learning and exchanging ideas but it is also healing for me!!! It speaks to the power of creating opportunities for Black Educators to convene!*



*The facilitators engagement is positive and with an organic flow; not contrived they know and are grounded in this work.*

### BLACK EDUCATOR PIPELINE (BEP)

Led by Senior Fellows Sharif El-Mekki (Cohort 1), CEO of the Center for Black Educator Development, and Raymond Fields (Cohort 4), Executive Director of Urban Teachers Philadelphia, BEP’s learning arc focuses on the recruitment, selection, development, and support of Black educators to deepen and expand the pipeline. In 2024, PASL incorporated a White affinity group to strengthen the impact of this work.

12

PARTICIPANTS

18

HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

3

UNIQUE VISITS

22

COACHING HOURS



### RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN ACTION

Restorative Practices in Action is for schools committed to creating environments where everyone uses the restorative practice model to support the academic and social-emotional needs of all students. In 2023-2024, PASL partnered with the Restorative Practices in Action organization to offer virtual training on implementing restorative practices in schools. Teachers and coaches attended three virtual sessions.

6  
SCHOOLS

42  
HOURS OF  
PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT



### PRACTITIONERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)

To support PASL’s organizational priorities and program design, the Program Advisory Council (PAC) serves as an advisory thought partner, enhancing the learning arc for participants across all programming. Acting as a sounding board, PAC contributes to the development of effective learning opportunities, strengthens community connections, and ensures the availability of resources to meet the needs of PASL programming and alumni. Drawing from their perspectives on self, school systems, and the broader communities of school leaders, PAC members provide critical context, share valuable feedback and insights, and act as ambassadors to shape program design and inform strategic direction. The goal is to:

- Engage diverse stakeholders to share candid feedback
- Leverage practitioners’ insights, experience, and expertise to propose strategies and inform program design
- Ensure relevance to work happening on the ground
- Promote alignment to city-wide and school system priorities and needs
- Understand the impact of programmatic and organizational work
- Build buy-in by engaging committee members as ambassadors for the work

## LEADERS OF LEADERS

Developed in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, the 2024 Leaders of Leaders program reimagines the role of the Assistant Superintendent, moving them from compliance strategies to a coaching approach. Designed with support from Dr. Jackie Wilson, co-author of *Blended Coaching*, the program provides coaching strategies that District senior leaders can utilize to more effectively develop the principals they manage and improve the schools and communities they oversee. This systems-based approach drives planning and facilitating to maximize Assistant Superintendent’s positive impact.

20  
PARTICIPANTS

12.5  
HOURS OF  
PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT



# Who do we support?

Since 2015

**173**  
PHILADELPHIA  
EDUCATIONAL LEADERS



In 2024, PASL champions principals in 103 schools across Philadelphia, collectively impacting

**103**  
SCHOOLS



OVER  
**60,000**  
STUDENTS



**25%**  
OF PHILADELPHIA'S  
SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN



APPROXIMATELY  
**5,000**  
TEACHERS



APPROXIMATELY  
**3,000**  
SUPPORT  
PROFESSIONALS  
& STAFF



**38**  
SYSTEM-LEVEL  
LEADERS



*This extensive network reflects PASL's commitment to fostering leadership that enhances educational outcomes on a broad scale, benefiting not only individual schools but the wider community.*

## FISCAL YEAR 2024 FINANCIALS

Committed to accountability and fiscal responsibility, PASL is dedicated to maximizing our financial resources to positively impact the future of education in Philadelphia. Our prudent management practices and strategic initiatives support our mission and ensure sustainable growth for results-based leadership programming that fosters educational excellence for every child.

### REVENUE

TOTAL: \$4,396,263



CONTRIBUTIONS:  
**\$3,915,646**  
(89%)

FEE FOR SERVICE:  
**\$433,780**  
(10%)

OTHER INCOME:  
**\$46,837**  
(1%)

### EXPENSES

TOTAL: \$4,041,766



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING:  
**\$3,478,315**  
(86%)

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION:  
**\$469,961**  
(12%)

PROFESSIONAL FEES:  
**\$93,490**  
(2%)

# Thank You

TO OUR 2024 PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS,  
CONTRIBUTORS & SYSTEM PARTNERS

*\$1 Million+*

NEUBAUER FAMILY FOUNDATION  
ANONYMOUS

*\$100,000+*

ARAMARK CHARITABLE FUND  
COMCAST NBCUNIVERSAL FOUNDATION  
INDEPENDENCE BLUE CROSS FOUNDATION  
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

*\$50,000-\$99,999*

GREEN FAMILY FOUNDATION  
SPRING POINT PARTNERS

*\$25,000-\$49,999*

CONNELLY FOUNDATION  
MASTERY CHARTER NETWORK

*\$1,000-\$24,999*

ANDERSON FAMILY FOUNDATION  
ENERGIA  
GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY  
CHARTER SCHOOL - SOUTHWEST  
STEPHANIE AND MICHAEL NAIDOFF  
TIM O'SHAUGHNESSY  
TECH FREIRE CHARTER SCHOOL



PHILADELPHIA  
ACADEMY  
OF SCHOOL  
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