

2021-2022 LEVERAGE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE FELLOW PROFILES



Noah Angeles

PRINCIPAL, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BELLEROSE, NEW YORK

Dr. Noah Angeles currently serves as the Principal of York Early College Academy, a Title I Early College public school located in South Jamaica Queens. Through collaboration with the City University of New York's York College and the Early College Initiative, Noah has been successful in developing an accelerated academic program that provides students with an opportunity to earn up to 60 college credits by the time they graduate from high school. York Early College Academy was recognized as a New York State Rewards School for two consecutive years and currently holds a 98% graduation rate.

In addition to Noah's work as a school leader, he currently serves on the New York City School Diversity Advisory Group where he has worked collaboratively with community stakeholders to develop and provide recommendations to the New York City Department of Education on how to best integrate schools. Noah's commitment to equity is also reflected in his academic research. Noah's article, "Formative Assessment: Disrupting Inequities During the COVID-19 Pandemic" was recently published in the New York Academy of Public Education Journal and has been used in schools throughout New York City to support teacher practice in a remote environment.



Patricia Balbuena

PRINCIPAL, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CORTLANDT MANOR, NEW YORK

Patricia Estela serves as the principal of the Don Pedro Albizu Campos (DPAC) located in Harlem, New York. Throughout her life's journey she has served as a substitute teacher, classroom teacher, lead teacher, instructional coach, network coach and assistant principal. She received her bachelor's degree in Economics from Iona College, her master's degree in Elementary Education and School Building Leadership from Lehman College and the School District Leadership advanced certificate from Bank Street College.

Patricia was honored to participate in the New York City Department of Education District-Charter Collaborative. This opportunity provided a platform to collaboratively engage with District principals to build upon leadership practices focused on school culture, data driven instruction and observation and feedback. Currently, she has fostered a DDI culture at DPAC. She is passionate about data driven instruction and views it as an essential approach to building equity and access for all our students.

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Andria Caruthers Wilkerson

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERINTENDENT, DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SILVER SPRINGS, MARYLAND

Andria Caruthers is an Instructional Superintendent in DC Public Schools (DCPS) for K-8 education campuses and middle schools. She joined DCPS in 2009 as an Assistant Principal through New Leaders. Prior to this role, Andria served as the Deputy Chief of Leadership Development overseeing the districts' principal preparation programs, the Mary Jane Patterson Fellowship, and development efforts for school leaders across DCPS. She also served as the principal of West Education Campus for five years where she had double digit gains in Math and ELA, increased enrollment 15% and launched the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM). Andria is an alumna of Northwestern University (BA) and Vanderbilt University (M.Ed). She taught third through fifth grade in Los Angeles Unified School District and Nashville Public Schools before moving to the DC Area. She is a wife, proud mom to a five-year-old daughter and three-year-old son and enjoys al fresco dining!



Jallon Croskey

ASSOCIATE DEAN, RELAY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
HANOVER, MARYLAND

Jallon Brown-Croskey currently serves as an Associate Dean for Relay's Leadership Programs and Regional Support. In this role, she coaches and leads professional development for leaders in the District of Columbia's Public Schools. She also teaches Elementary Education graduate courses for Relay Graduate School of Education.

With over 20 years of experience in public education, Jallon has worked in elementary through high school grades as a teacher, educational consultant, coach, and administrator. After working for several years as a classroom teacher, Jallon accepted a fellowship with the KIPP Foundation. In partnership with KIPP, she founded one of the first charter schools in the state of Maryland. Jallon also served as the Director of Academics at The SEED School of Maryland, a public boarding school in Baltimore that serves low-income students. As the primary instructional leader there, Jallon helped the school expand from 160 to 400 students. Additionally, Jallon led the academic program as the Chief Academic Officer for KIPP Baltimore, a charter network in Maryland. Jallon has supported a variety of schools and organizations as a consultant where she facilitated professional development sessions, coached assistant principals and principals in their development of leadership skills, and offered expertise in education program development.

Jallon has earned a BA in Sociology and Elementary Education from The College of William and Mary and a graduate degree from George Washington University in Educational Administration.

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Grace Ghazzawi

PRINCIPAL, UNCOMMON SCHOOLS
LODI, NEW JERSEY

Grace Ghazzawi is a Middle School Principal at Uncommon Schools-North Star Academy West Side Park Middle School. Before becoming a school leader, Grace served as an 8th Grade English teacher and curriculum writer for Uncommon Schools. Grace received her B.A. in Political Science and English from Rutgers University, her M.A. in English Literature from Rutgers University, her M.A. in Educational Leadership from Montclair State University, and has done post graduate work in education in the Relay Alternate Route Program and the Relay National Principal Academy Fellowship. Grace is currently pursuing her Ed.D. in Leadership and Learning in Organizations from Vanderbilt University.



Amy Gile

PRINCIPAL, DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DENVER, CO

Dr. Amy Gile has been working in the field of education for twenty-nine years in predominantly diverse and marginalized communities. She has a relentless commitment to ensure that culturally and linguistically diverse students experience a positive and high-quality education. She has worked as a special education teacher, classroom teacher, and district special education curriculum coordinator. Most recently, Dr. Gile has been an innovation school leader in Denver Public Schools, serving as the founding principal for Willow Elementary. During her time at Willow, the school has grown from 200 students to over 600 students. Under her leadership, the school has experienced a high level of academic success. This success is a result of strong, distributive leadership-team structures that ensure the implementation of data-driven instruction, strong planning practices, and differentiated-instructional programming for all students

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Jaz Grant

PRINCIPAL, UNCOMMON SCHOOLS
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Jaz Grant is the Founding Principal of Uncommon's Ocean Hill Elementary School (Brooklyn, NY), which launched with kindergarten in the fall of 2018. Prior to his role as principal, Jaz served as a Principal Fellow at North Star Westside Park. He began his teaching career as a 2012 TFA Corp Member at Excellence Boys Charter School of Bedford Stuyvesant. During his tenure at Excellence Boys, Jaz served as a 2nd and 3rd grade teacher and instructional leader. Most notably, during the 2016-17 academic year, Jaz was a 3rd Grade teacher and Instructional Leader and led the team to impressive gains on the 2017 NYS exam, outperforming both district and state-wide averages. Under his leadership, scholars achieved 95% advanced/proficient on the math exam (+ 28 points from 2016) and 70% advanced/proficient on the ELA exam (+ 30 points from 2016). Jaz holds a B.A. in English from Morehouse College and a M.A. in Teaching from the Relay Graduate School of Education.



Julia Kaiser

PRINCIPAL, ST LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ST LOUIS, MISSOURI

Julia Kaiser became the proud principal of Hodgen Tech Academy after serving four years as an Academic Instructional Coach. Hodgen is a neighborhood elementary school in the St. Louis Public Schools District. Under her leadership, Hodgen Tech has made double digit gains in both ELA and Mathematics. Third grade scholars showed 8 months growth in reading achievement within 4 months of instructional time, this was more than double the district's expected growth.

Hodgen Tech Academy was awarded the 2020 Bayer School of Excellence Award for the achievements made and recognized for their advances in STEAM education. Julia was recently awarded the 2020-2021 Principal of the Year for St. Louis Public Schools. She is passionate about educational equity and excellence for all children.

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Doris Lee

PRINCIPAL, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BROOKLYN, NY

Dr. Doris C. Lee is the founding principal of Village Academy. Village Academy's innovative, civics based, culturally relevant curriculum, creative scheduling, community partnerships and restorative environment have been recognized across NYC. She collaborates with countless community organizations to support her community and procured over 11 million dollars to improve her school facilities. She is proud to serve as a mentor to aspiring leaders and teachers.

Dr. Lee is relentless in her goal to ensure access and equity for her students and her community. She received recognition for her efforts from Front Line Heroes, Women on Fire, and the Council of Supervisors and Administrators. Dr. Lee was also the recipient of the 2019 Equity Award in Leadership provided by NYC DOE Office of Leadership and received distinction as a Respect for All School. She has shared her successful practices in conferences around the country and endeavors to one day create policy that ensures equity and access for all students.



Amanda McDonald

PRINCIPAL, DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
AURORA, COLORADO

Amanda McDonald has been the principal at Lake Middle School in Denver Public Schools since 2018. She is honored and humbled to serve the Northwest Denver community. Prior to this role, Amanda served as a Dean of Instruction, Assistant Principal and Principal Resident for a turnaround school in Northeast Denver. Using the Relay levers, she was able to collaborate with fellow leaders to turn around a red school to a green school and achieve longitudinal high growth scores for 3 consecutive years. Additionally, they had the highest scores on ACCESS for second language learners in the state of Colorado. After one year at Lake Middle School, their English Language Arts growth moved from "approaching" to "meets expectations". Additionally, the Medium Growth Percentile for English Language Learners moved from "approaching" to "exceeds".

Amanda has worked in Denver Public Schools for 12 years and received an exemplary teaching award as an elementary teacher. She studied History at the University of Colorado for her undergraduate degree and attained her principal licensure through the Ritchie Program for School Leaders: Executive Leadership for Successful Schools at the University of Denver. She is a Denver native with 5 boys of her own all still currently in elementary school in Denver Public Schools!

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Jackson Olsen

SUPERVISOR OF PRINCIPALS, KIPP FOUNDATION
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

Dr. Jackson Olsen is the Director of High School Network Development at the KIPP Foundation where he coaches and supports high school principals across the country. Before joining KIPP, he was the Founding High School Principal and a School Leader Manager at Henderson Collegiate, an independent Title I charter school in North Carolina that has consistently been one of the top performing public schools in the state.

Jackson was a member of the 2015 NPAF cohort and has returned to Relay each summer as an adjunct coach. He earned his B.S. from Utah State University, his Masters of School Administration from N.C. State University, and his doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Heather Parsons

SUPERVISOR OF PRINCIPALS, GEM INNOVATION SCHOOLS
EAGLE, IDAHO

Heather Parsons currently serves as a Principal Manager/Coach at Gem Innovation Schools, a network of schools serving K-12 campuses in Idaho. Gem is committed to building transformational classrooms that give scholars the knowledge, characteristics, competencies and mindsets for success in college and the next generation workplace. As a former RELAY GSE National Principals Academy Fellow, Heather supports the development of instructional leadership through weekly leadership coaching such as data meetings, walkthroughs, huddles and observation/feedback meetings.

Before joining the Gem Innovation team, she enjoyed the privilege of wearing many different hats over the years such as Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Dissemination, Principal Supervisor, School Principal, Academic Coach, Blended Learning Facilitator, K-5 Teacher, and founding member of Navigator Schools in California.

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Alex Quigley

SUPERVISOR OF PRINCIPALS, HEALTHY START ACADEMY
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

Alex Quigley is the executive director and principal of Healthy Start Academy, a K-8 turnaround charter school serving over 500 students in Durham, NC. Prior to this role, he served as the managing director for PAVE Schools, leading the organization's school leaders and curriculum teams in New York and North Carolina and helping to found a new school in southeast Raleigh. Alex started in school leadership as the executive director of Maureen Joy Charter School in Durham, where he led the school through a six year turnaround. Before his time as a school leader, Alex worked on staff of Teach For America for six years, including three years as the executive director of the Eastern North Carolina region. Alex began his career as 2nd grade teacher in the rural Mississippi Delta where he met his wife of 19 years. They live in Durham with their four children.



Matthew Rooney

PRINCIPAL, ADELANTE SCHOOLS
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

Mr. Rooney is the founding Middle School Principal at Adelante Schools and is a native of Indianapolis, a first generation college student and the son of a single mom. He has served as Principal of Democracy Prep Harlem High School in New York City. Under his leadership, 100% of his students earned acceptances to at least two four-year colleges, as well as New York Advanced Regents Diplomas. In 2020, Democracy Prep Harlem was ranked the #1 Best Public Charter High School in New York City by U.S. News & World Report.

Before serving in school leadership at Democracy Prep, Rooney taught at Democracy Prep Harlem Middle School, KIPP Indy College Prep Middle School in Indianapolis, and as a Fulbright English Teacher in the Republic of Korea.

Rooney is a former Eli Lilly Scholar, as well as a proud graduate of Ball State University and the Relay National Principals Academy.

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Rob Sgobbo

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, UNCOMMON SCHOOLS
BROOKLYN, NY

Rob Sgobbo is an Assistant Superintendent with Uncommon Schools in New York City, managing the region's 8 elementary schools. Rob joined Uncommon Schools in 2011, having served as a Special Education Coordinator and a classroom teacher. In 2016, Rob founded Kings Elementary School - a K-4 school in Brooklyn. During his time at Uncommon, Rob has supported the development of instructional leaders and principals to strengthen teacher development and improve student learning – leading to outstanding results and growth for each of the schools he manages. Prior to joining Uncommon Schools, Rob was a 2007 Teach For America Corps Member in New York – teaching 3rd grade in the South Bronx.

Rob holds a Bachelors in Political Science from Haverford College, a Masters in Teaching from Pace University and a Masters in Journalism from Columbia University. Born in California, but raised in New Jersey, Rob is a proud resident of Brooklyn – where he has lived for the past ten years.



Jimmy Shaw

SUPERVISOR OF PRINCIPALS, FLORENCE CITY SCHOOLS
FLORENCE, ALABAMA

Dr. Jimmy Shaw has 19 years of experience in the field of education. He has served as a classroom teacher, Assistant Principal of a high school, Director of Federal Programs, Director of Instruction and Assessment, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, and he currently serves the Florence City Schools System as Superintendent. Jimmy has been in administration for 13 years.

Dr. Shaw is a graduate of Florence City Schools (Bradshaw Class of 1992) and has an Associate's degree from Northwest-Shoals Community College. He holds a Bachelor's, Master's, and Educational Specialist Degree from the University of North Alabama and holds a Doctorate of Education degree from Samford University. He has been married to wife, Felicia, for more than 20 years, and he has three sons. Jimmy is a member of the Florence Rotary Club, Class XXIX of Leadership Alabama, and the Kappa Nu Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated.

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Liz Suarez

CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER, UNIVERSITY PREP
DENVER, COLORADO

Liz Suarez has worked in education since 2008, first as a teacher, then an instructional coach, a Director with TNTP, and now Chief Academic Officer at University Prep. Her work at TNTP focused on academic planning, curriculum implementation, and teacher and leader development, with the goal of ensuring all students receive highly effective instruction.

Liz began her career as a teacher in New Orleans, where she taught multiple grades and content areas. During her time at TNTP, Liz managed partnerships to train and certify teachers through teachNOLA, the Collegiate Academies Teaching Residency, the Lincoln Parish Teaching Residency, and Teach Richland. She has also supported curriculum implementation, district-level strategic planning, and leadership coaching in partnership with districts across the country. In her current role, Liz oversees the academic program and serves as the Principal Manager at University Prep Charter Schools. Liz graduated from Tulane University in 2008.



Nicole Thieme

LEADERSHIP COACH, APTUS CHILE
SANTIAGO, CHILE

Nicole Thieme is a coach for the Instructional Leaders Program (PFLI), of Aptus Chile. This program is completely inspired by the Leverage Leadership model and its key levers: Data Driven Instruction, School Culture and Observation and Feedback.

Nicole coaches supervisors, principals and instructional leaders that serve students from the poorest 30% of the country, and their results in the national assessments far exceed results of schools with similar characteristics.

Prior to her work at Aptus, she was an elementary teacher and an instructional leader for Astoreca foundation, in the new San Juan School in Lampa, a school that serves nearly 800 students from high vulnerability contexts. This school has outstanding results above the national average. Nicole strongly believes that the levers are a replicable and concrete way of building great schools.

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Sonia Thompson

HEADTEACHER (PRINCIPAL), ST MATTHEW'S C.E.
PRIMARY TEACHING AND RESEARCH SCHOOL
BIRMINGHAM, UNITED KINGDOM

Sonia is the Headteacher, at St Matthew's C.E. Primary School, in Nechells Birmingham, United Kingdom. St Matthew's is a Teaching School and a Talk for Writing Training Centre. Sonia is also the Director of St Matthew's Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Research School. The Research School supports schools and teachers to use evidence-informed practice, to break the link between family income and educational achievement. Previously, she has taught/consulted in London and has worked as an English Consultant, for Birmingham Local Authority.

Sonia is passionate about evidence-based reading for progress for pleasure practices and her school won the 2018 Egmont/JKLA Reading for Pleasure Award. Sonia is a member of the UKLA National Council.

Sonia completed her Bachelor's degree at the University of Sussex. She has a Post Graduate Diploma in Speech and Language, a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGCE), National SENCO Award and the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH).



Mark Williams

PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR, MACASSAR & FALSE BAY PRIMARY SCHOOLS
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Mark is the Founding Education Director at Mathuba a lingana (Equal Opportunities) Education (NPO) in Cape Town Region, South Africa. In 2018 he joined the Collaboration School Movement as Head of School Leadership Development where he coached the School Management Teams of four schools. Prior to this, Mark was the proud principal of Macassar Primary School since 2000. Under his leadership and guidance, the school improved significantly, in external assessment scores, financial capacity, stability in staff and leadership, and accountability and oversight in governance. For the past 34 years, he served learners in both primary and high schools situated in high poverty communities.

Mark holds an Education Management, Administration and Policy Development qualification, a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and an Honour's degree in Educational Psychology from The University of the Western Cape. He also served as The President of the Western Cape Principals Association for over four years. Mark is a proud father of three daughters, who are all working within the teaching profession, and husband to a deputy principal.

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Brandy Woodard

SUPERVISOR OF PRINCIPALS, KIPP NORTHERN CA
EMERYVILLE, CALIFORNIA

Brandy Woodard is currently the Director of Schools for KIPP Public Schools Northern California. In this role, she coaches and manages high school principals while also creating and driving regional initiatives that serve K-12 schools.

Before joining the KIPP team, Brandy served as the principal of two beloved school communities in Chicago and Los Angeles. Previously, she served the Chicago community through several teaching and instructional leadership positions. Brandy believes that all scholars can become independent learners in environments that are safe, responsive, and respectful. Her schools have achieved success by supporting both the intellectual and social-emotional needs of each child.

Brandy is a proud alumna of the Relay National Principal and Principal Supervisor Academies. She is thrilled about continuing her learning journey with Relay in order to achieve large-scale impact for scholars and schools.

When Brandy is not working, she enjoys spending time with her fiancée, son and dog.

Over the course of the fellowship year, there are three key objectives that will guide our collective work together in the Leverage Leadership Institute:

OBJECTIVE 1:

Define a Replicable Pathway for Excellence

Define the criteria and pathway for exceptional, replicable results by:

- ▶ Identifying and codifying a set of best practices that guarantee exceptional results (advanced implementation of Leverage Leadership)
- ▶ Identifying and honoring exemplary instructional leaders that have both exceptional results and advanced implementation of these codified, replicable best practices
- ▶ Continuously improving these best practices by implementing and replicating the practices of honored instructional leader

OBJECTIVE 2:

Create a Community of “Proof Point” Practitioners

Create a worldwide community of proof point practitioners to:

- ▶ Strengthen and increase the number of proof point models for success and energized by engaging with other quality leaders outside of their home district
- ▶ Keep exceptional leaders refreshed

OBJECTIVE 3:

Coach Others to Meet the Bar

Certify and train exemplary leaders to develop other leaders by learning how to:

- ▶ Have advanced implementation of the coaching levers needed to coach other school leaders
- ▶ Lead professional development of the highest quality on the levers of the Leverage Leadership model

