



A YEAR IN REVIEW

Annual Report 2016-17

Words from the Founder



At the founding of Eskolta, we asked if we could redesign urban public schools to be motivating, empowering, and personalized for students who have been left behind. This was not only an issue of helping vulnerable youth, it was an issue of righting wrongs: of recognizing that too many children suffer because of economic inequality, racism, gender biases, and societal injustices that have saddled them with burdens that should not be placed on any child's shoulders.

Eight years later, the impact of our efforts stretches across New York City. We have helped 1,000 educators reach 20,000 underserved students—in schools where 84 percent of students are black or Hispanic and 84 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. From a high school in the Bronx where students who once felt disempowered by teacher feedback now use that feedback to gradually build their skills, to a middle school in Queens where students who once thought that they just weren't the "smart" kids now work harder and smarter because they believe they can, to a transfer school in Brooklyn where teachers revise and improve lessons based on close observation of student skills.

In 2016–17, we engaged in 34 design projects to help schools transform education for their most struggling students. By arming teachers and counselors with the latest research on the science of learning and development, our teams helped them turn knowledge into action. We acted as the strategists, analysts, and facilitators to make change possible.

But it is not only up to us to make this change. Knowing that teachers and counselors cannot succeed without support from the district, in 2016–17 we expanded our work. As research partner and strategic coaches, we worked with leaders in the school district to help them support school improvement and teacher leadership in hundreds of schools.

At the heart of our work is the belief that every child should be able to access a quality education that fosters their individual potential to succeed, and that the adults in school have powerful influence to help them make this happen. With thoughtful support of our partners, we will continue to empower educators to help students who have struggled the most reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in orange ink, which appears to read "Michael Rothman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "M".

Michael Rothman
Founder and Executive Director

Overview of Programs

218
EDUCATORS REACHED

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

School leaders and educators used the latest research on the science of learning and development to re-engage students who had fallen behind. In 2016–17, Eskolta’s work helped 218 educators to redesign practices to be motivating, empowering, and student centered for 3,508 students.

3,508
STUDENTS REACHED

- School Improvement Project
- Networked Improvement Project
- Community Building (Transfer School Conference attendee)

95
EDUCATORS REACHED

NETWORKED IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITIES

Educators at 20 schools used research-based school improvement methods to address specific needs of their students while connecting and exchanging effective practices across a network of colleagues tackling the same problem of practice.

3,476
STUDENTS REACHED

45
DISTRICT STAFF REACHING

LEADERSHIP CAPACITY BUILDING

Coaches and professional-development providers from the school district received training, coaching, and guidance on school improvement strategy and methods. A total of 45 coaches participated in School Improvement Fellows or engaged one-on-one with a Senior School Design Partner.

500
SCHOOLS

9
RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

RESEARCH AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Research projects helped education partners explore and rethink how educators are empowered to drive positive change in the classroom. By straddling change in school with change in the district, these efforts help to translate change in the lives of some students to change in the lives of thousands.

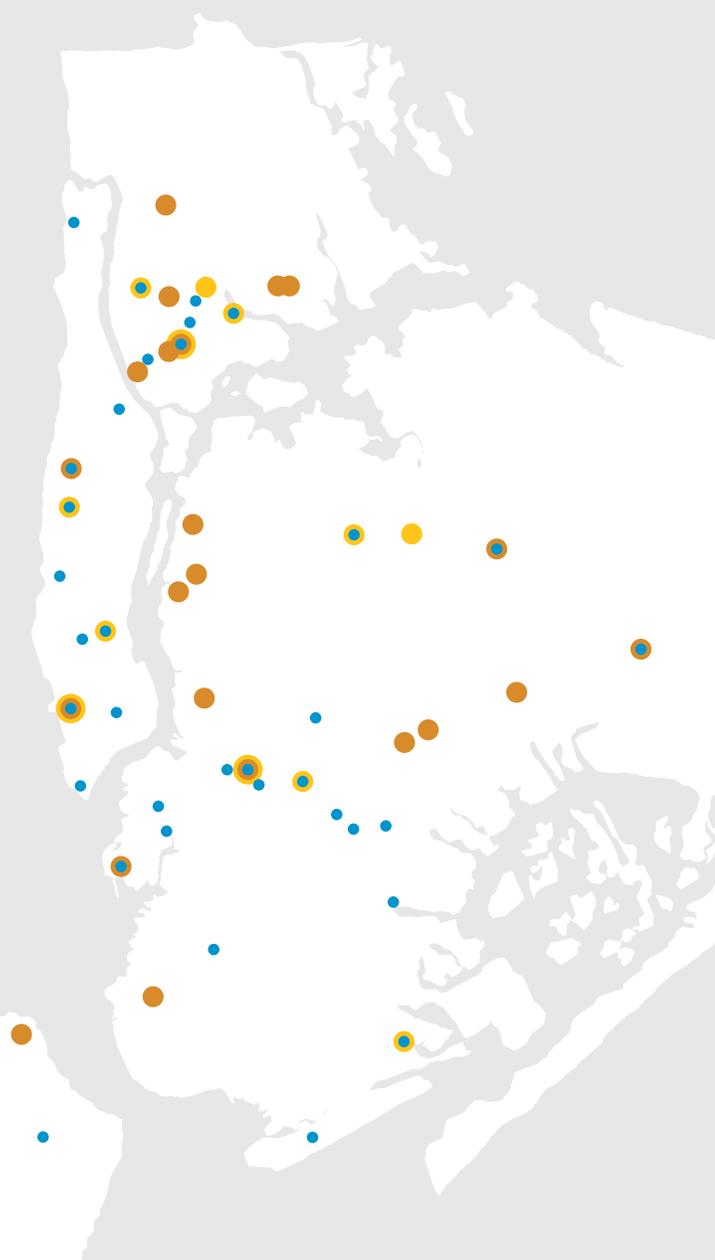
6,005
PARTICIPANTS

948
ATTENDEES

COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Seventh Annual Transfer School Conference brought together more than 950 teachers, students, alumni, and district and organizational leaders who shared a commitment to helping disengaged youth reignite a love for learning.

38
SCHOOLS



School Improvement Projects

Applying Research-Based Methods to Bring Sustainable Change to Educators and Students



Voyages Preparatory Academy history teacher Christian Suarez and assistant principal Katherine Martinez at an Eskolta-facilitated school improvement session

In School Improvement Projects, the talent of educators, guided by the latest research, drives changes in practices from the classroom all the way to the school level. In 2016–17, Eskolta teams worked side by side with principals, teachers, and counselors at 17 schools—helping **218 educators** to reach **3,508 students**.

At ELLIS Preparatory Academy, which serves 16-to-21-year-old English Language Learners in the Bronx, Eskolta helped a teacher team rethink how they give feedback to help students monitor progress toward their own learning goals. As a result, students who had once shied away from feedback were motivated to build their skills, revise their work, and engage as learners.

REACH

EDUCATORS



PRACTICES
PILOTED BY
97
EDUCATORS



EXPANDED TO
218
EDUCATORS

IMPACT

EDUCATORS REPORT IMPROVEMENT ON...

92% How they design teaching materials focused on rigorous academic skills

82% How they provide actionable, individualized feedback to students to promote learning mindsets

STUDENTS



EDUCATORS PILOTED
PRACTICES WITH
922
STUDENTS



EXPANDED TO REACH
3,508
STUDENTS

STUDENTS SHOW IMPROVEMENTS IN...

84% How they take and monitor steps to improve skills

Figures on improvement are based on data collected from a sample of respondents at projects involving related practices.

Student Voices

Chyna Hardy, Voyages South Preparatory High School



In 2016–17, Eskolta worked with a team at Voyages South Preparatory High School, a transfer school in Queens serving students who are overage and under-credited, to deepen their understanding of the skills of determining importance. One of the tools the team explored was I.C.E. (Introduce, Cite, Explain), a strategy for students to break down details in text, pull evidence out of reading, and explain their ideas. Chyna Hardy, an eighteen-year-old student, talks about her experience.

What did things look like at your previous school?

In my old school, the teachers were not really interested in me and my learning. It's different here. The teachers give me chances to ask questions and make time to explain things to me. I don't feel like I have to work alone anymore.

What do you find most helpful about I.C.E.?

I.C.E. is most helpful for me because it gives me a guideline to write—it's a one-two-three-step process. When I write an essay, I make sure now to have a

clear introduction, cite evidence from the reading, and explain my ideas. I didn't really know how to exactly do that before.

Has your writing changed since you've been here?

Before I was unmotivated and I wasn't into writing. Now being here and getting introduced to I.C.E., I like writing much more. Another thing that I've learned to do through using I.C.E. is instead of jumping into the reading right away, I would look at the questions of the assignment first, and this helps me to put things into context and to remember the key things I'm supposed to be looking for in the reading.

What are you thinking will come after school?

I already have two scholarships to go to college. I have one from Buffalo State College and one from Queens Community College. I want to study business—I play basketball too, so maybe something with sports and business.

Networked Improvement Communities

Building School Communities to Address Problems of Practice around Student Needs



Bhagwati Sampat, Geraldine Arandez, and Andrew Marquez brainstorming at a multi-school AAPBI meeting

Collaboration is key to deepening and sustaining change and spreading good practices from schools to systems. In 2016–17, Eskolta partnered with the New York City Department of Education to facilitate the Advanced Academic and Personal Behaviors Institute (AAPBI) and the Career Counseling Initiative, two networked improvement communities. Through this effort, **95 educators** used research-based, school-improvement methods to address specific needs of their students while connecting and exchanging effective practices across the network. In AAPBI, for example, nine schools worked together on the challenge of improving students’ sense of value and purpose of learning.

REACH

EDUCATORS



PRACTICES PILOTED BY
72
EDUCATORS



EXPANDED TO
95
EDUCATORS

IMPACT

EDUCATORS REPORT IMPROVEMENT ON...

96% How they codify and share what works

96% How they create environments that promote learning mindsets

STUDENTS



EDUCATORS PILOTED PRACTICES WITH
1,294
STUDENTS



EXPANDED TO REACH
3,476
STUDENTS

STUDENTS SHOW IMPROVEMENTS IN...

66% How they persist despite challenges

Figures on improvement are based on data collected from a sample of respondents at projects involving related practices.

Student Voices

Anlois Penolo, Soundview Academy for Culture and Scholarship



In the Advanced Academic and Personal Behaviors Institute, Eskolta worked with Soundview Academy for Culture and Scholarship, a middle school in one of the poorest districts in the Bronx, through the to increase student persistence in the face of rigorous learning challenges. Anlois Penolo, a seventh-grader, talks about his experience.

How has this year been different from last year?

This year we don't have to go through some of the systems that we went through in sixth grade. Now we know what our teachers expect of us, so we can really focus on our work. I was failing math in the middle of last year, but then I learned to get better.

How did your teacher help you get better in math?

We reviewed my grades from fifth grade and [they] gave feedback on ways I can improve, and it actually made me realize that I was good in math and made me question why I was failing. I kept working with my teacher and asked her for extra help. That process helped me a lot and changed my mindset about math. Now I'm in seventh grade and I'm already doing better.

How is the feedback you're getting helping you?

One of the things that has helped me a lot is getting to conference with my teachers. We have those moments where we have student-to-teacher meetings to check in on our writing and the progress we're making. I'm not bad at writing but getting feedback like that is very helpful.

How has your writing changed from before to now?

Well, I first discovered I love writing in second grade but I didn't speak much English because I came from the Dominican Republic. People would tell me, "Please speak proper English." I used to mix up my *w*, *m*, and *v* but I just kept practicing and I got better, and my writing got better. Last year we had a lot of writing and reading. I even wrote a whole story about a hero, but I didn't have a villain in my story because I feel like you don't have to fight a bad guy to be a hero.

Has this changed how you persist through challenges?

I have learned to not be shy and to speak up for myself. For example, because I asked for help in math and got the one-on-one feedback with my teacher, I got better.

Leadership Capacity Building

Spreading School Improvement Efforts by Training Agents of Change



2016-17 School Improvement Fellows from College Access for All with Eskolta Senior School Design Partner Nicole DeFino

In 2016–17, a total of **45 district and school staff** received coaching and guidance to turn their support to schools into strategic school improvement. For example, when the mayor of New York announced his Equity and Excellence agenda for education reform, a chief promise was to provide college access to every student. In 2016–17, the first year of the College Access for All initiative, the school district hired a team of former college counselors to help make this happen for 100 New York high schools. Eskolta led a school improvement fellows program, providing a series of training sessions to teach the coaches methods of school improvement.

IMPACT

COACHING FOR

45

DISTRICT AND
SCHOOL STAFF

REACHING

500+

SCHOOLS

COACHING FOCUS AREAS:

- › Empower educators to make change
- › Facilitate iterative adaptation of work
- › Use research and data to inform improvement
- › Codify and share practices

Research and Resource Development

Deepening Understanding through Studies and Materials to Inform Policy and Practice

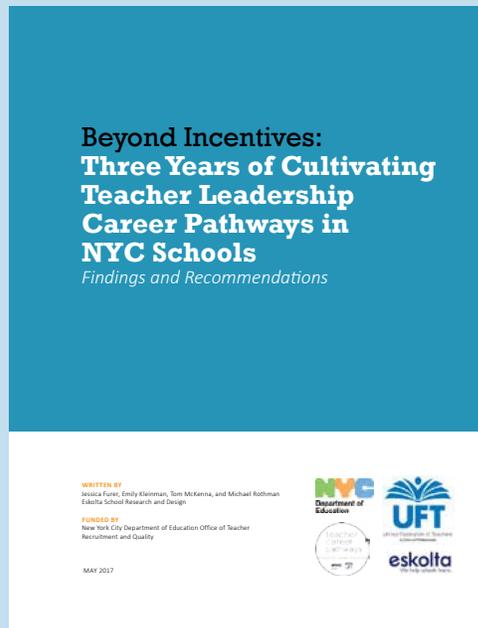
Research projects helped our partners in the school district explore and rethink how educators are empowered to drive positive change. In one research partnership, Eskolta worked with New York City to study its innovative approach to fostering teacher leadership. In another partnership, our study of principals' approaches to continuous learning is helping shape an ambitious effort across the district to promote continuous learning across the system.

It is impossible to re-engage students who are alienated by the system without changing the system itself. By straddling change in schools with change in the district, Eskolta translates change in the lives of some students to change in the lives of thousands.



Sam Milder and members of the NYC Department of Education Office of Strategy and Support at an Eskolta-facilitated district improvement session

2016-17 PUBLICATIONS



Beyond Incentives: Three Years of Cultivating Teacher Leadership Career Pathways in NYC Schools

Collaborating to Improve: Using the District Partnership Pilot and Distributed Leadership to Align Priorities in Teacher Leadership Work

Growing Academic Behaviors: How to Scale Up Classroom Practices for Teaching Mindsets

Finding Small Wins and Making a Large Impact: An Improvement Science Approach to Adult Learning at KAPPA International

From Knowledge to Action: Showcase and the Diffusion of Innovation

From Research to Practice: Supporting Student Achievement through Academic and Personal Behaviors

Showcasing Success: A Preliminary Study of the Experience of Three Schools Hosting Visits in the NYCDOE

Showcasing Success: Three Case Studies on the NYC Showcase Schools Program

Strengthening by Sharing: Creating Internal Coherence through the Showcase Schools Program

Community Building

Connecting Educators to Examine the Critical Issue of Re-engaging Learners



Attendees at the 2017 NYC Transfer School Conference responding to keynote speaker Dr. Christopher Emdin (at right)

On June 8, 2017, nearly **950 district and organizational leaders, teachers, students, and alumni** attended the Seventh Annual New York City Transfer School Conference, an initiative of the NYC Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Readiness in partnership with Eskolta. Representing **38 transfer schools** that together serve more than 8,000 high school students who were once considered at risk of dropping out, educators participated in **more than 70 workshops, panels, and lectures** exploring a wide array of topics uniquely chosen to meet the needs of the transfer school community.

The conference keynote speaker, Dr. Christopher Emdin of Columbia University, passionately challenged listeners to engage deeply in their work: "Being in a transfer school means consistently being a revolutionary about the work... If your pedagogy is a replication of the system of oppression that [students] were pushed out of, you ain't doing nothing." Speaking from his own learning experiences as a teacher and an advocate, Emdin

urged educators to consistently get to know the evolving culture of their students, however unfamiliar or uncomfortable that process may be.

IMPACT

THE 2017 NYC TRANSFER SCHOOL CONFERENCE BY THE NUMBERS:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Attendees | 948 |
| Schools | 38 |
| Workshops, panels, and events | 73 |
| Student presenters | 37 |

Change-Makers

On October 16, 2017, Eskolta held our first Change-Makers Cocktail Reception, celebrating the work of five phenomenal change makers making an impact on New York City education. With more than **150 attendees**, the event brought together donors, media, nonprofits, and educators from around the city.

The event honored Tanell Pendleton, an English teacher who has worked at Bronx Haven High School for eight years; Michael Wolach, founding teacher and instructional coach at Jill Chaifetz Transfer School; Cristal Cruz, a graduate of Brooklyn Frontiers High School and group leader at Good Shepherd Services; and Jeff and Tricia Raikes, co-founders of the Raikes Foundation, who have established national initiatives such as the Mindset Scholars Network.



Transfer school graduate Cristal Cruz speaking at the Change-Makers Reception



Change-Maker Tanell Pendleton and former colleague Marquis Martin

“

Every day, I work to embody the idea that **education promotes equality and lifts people out of poverty**. It is an idea that is wholeheartedly embedded into my pedagogy.

”

—Tanell Pendleton, 2017 Change-Maker

Supporters and Partners

Eskolta is grateful for the generous support of our partners and donors. Your generosity has made it possible for us to deepen school change efforts through our research, design projects, and fellows programs—helping students who had fallen behind reach their full potential. Thank you for your trust and partnership!

Our Partners

- › Booth Ferris Foundation
- › Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
- › New York City Department of Education
- › Queens Community House
- › SCO Family of Services
- › The Fund for Public Schools



Lainey Collins of the NYC Department of Education Office of Strategy and Support and Chris Hulleman, a fellow at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, discussing strategies for building student persistence with staff from schools

Our Donors and Supporters

- › The Afshar Family
- › Robert Aguirre
- › Ariel Amdur
- › Rick and Nurit Amdur
- › Sanda Balaban
- › Tarika Barrett, Ph.D.
- › Brad Bernatek
- › Blue Angel Wines
- › Kathy Brand
- › Brooklyn Brewery
- › Robert Bruns
- › Sonja Carter
- › Brian Cohen
- › Michael DeAddio
- › Allison Devore and Ross Levinsky
- › Kelli Doss
- › Cornelius Finley
- › Rachel Forsyth
- › Cristin Frodella and Conor Sheridan
- › Dana Guyet
- › Brian Hale
- › David Hermer
- › Evan Herring
- › JPMorgan Chase & Co.
- › Rebecca Klein
- › Doug Knecht
- › Steven Konstadt
- › David Levithan
- › Jeffrey and Danielle Lumby
- › Merill Martin
- › Chelsea and Jonathan Miller
- › Shane Mulhern
- › Alexandra and Matthew Murray
- › Smita Narula
- › Dan Nathan
- › Laura Nichols
- › Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow
- › Leonexy Oyola
- › Tanell Pendleton
- › Patricia Priolet
- › Kartik Raghavan
- › Raikes Foundation
- › Dan Rothman
- › David Rothman
- › The Rothman Family
- › Dan Siracuse
- › Fred Steinke
- › The Ready Foundation
- › Kristen Thiede
- › Jenny Tolan
- › Sophia Tsororos
- › Gretchen Wiker
- › Stephan Winkler
- › Jennifer Woodruff

Financials

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

| Current Assets | FY17 |
|---|--------------------|
| Cash | \$1,183,231 |
| Accounts Receivable | \$46,776 |
| Prepaid expenses and other current assets | \$16,266 |
| Total Current Assets | \$1,246,273 |
| Fixed Assets | \$56,684 |
| Total Assets | \$1,302,957 |
| Liabilities and Net Assets | |
| Total Liabilities | \$16,322 |
| Net Assets | |
| Unrestricted | \$1,175,885 |
| Temporarily Restricted | \$110,750 |
| Total Net Assets | \$1,286,635 |
| Total Liabilities and Net Assets | \$1,302,957 |

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

| Revenue and Support | FY17 |
|---|--------------------|
| Program Service Revenue | \$1,982,758 |
| Unrestricted contributions and grants | \$6,281 |
| Interest Income | \$2,751 |
| Total Revenue and Contributions | \$1,991,790 |
| Expenses | |
| Program Expenses | \$1,592,621 |
| Management and General | \$160,653 |
| Fundraising | \$101,743 |
| Total Expenses | \$1,855,016 |
| Change in unrestricted net assets | \$136,774 |
| Change in temporarily restricted net assets | \$110,750 |
| Net assets - Beginning of year | \$1,039,111 |
| Net assets - End of Year | \$1,286,635 |

Figures may not add up to totals due to rounding

Who We Are



2016-17 Staff

Sara Arcia, Research and Writing Intern

Aaron Boyle, Senior School Design Partner

Mai Brand, Development Manager

Amanda Crowell, PhD, Senior Researcher

Ruth Cosse, Project Intern

Adonia Dale, Transfer School Alumni Fellow

Mike Davis, Accounts Manager

Nicole DeFino, Senior School Design Partner

Cara Frattasi, Research and Design Facilitator

Jamie Ferrel, Research and Design Facilitator

Jessica Furer, Associate Director

Dierdre Faughey, Research and Design Facilitator

Katie Gleason, Research and Design Facilitator

Savanna Honerkamp-Smith, Manager of Communications and Design

Emily Kleinman, Senior School Design Partner

Ben Lorr, Research and Design Facilitator

Tom McKenna, Director of Strategic Initiatives

Karenna Martin, Project Associate

Catherine Pratt, Research and Design Associate

Michael Rothman, Founder and Executive Director

Alicia Wolcott, Senior School Design Partner

Brian Zimbler, Project Associate

2016-17 Board Members

Afsheen Afshar, Managing Director, JPMorgan Chase

Sanda Balaban, Cofounder/Director, YVote and Civics Unplugged

Kelli Doss, Chief Talent Officer, iMentor

Cristin Frodella, CS Education, Google

Doug Knecht, Executive Director, Bank Street Education Center

Dan Siracuse, Chief Financial Officer, Trumid Financial

David Yeager, Psychology Faculty, University of Texas at Austin

Where We Work

The Bronx

- Bronx Arena High School
- Bronx Bridges High School
- Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics
- Fannie Lou Hamer Middle School
- Jill Chaifetz Transfer High School
- KIPP NYC College Prep
- Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy
- International High School (KAPPA)
- New Directions Secondary School
- Soundview Academy for Culture and Scholarship
- University Heights Secondary School

Brooklyn

- High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology
- Nelson Mandela High School
- P.S. 089 Cypress Hills
- Professional Pathways High School
- Research and Service High School
- South Brooklyn Community High School
- Transit Tech Career and Technical Education High School
- Urban Dove Team Charter School
- Williamsburg High School for Architecture and Design

Manhattan

- Edward A. Reynolds West Side High School
- City-As-School
- Innovation Diploma Plus
- Murray Hill Academy

Staten Island

- Ralph R. McKee Career and Technical Education High School

Queens

- Albert Shanker School for Visual and Performing Arts
- Information Technology High School
- John Adams High School
- Newcomers High School
- North Queens Community High School
- Queens Community House
- Voyages Prep South Queens
- Voyages Preparatory

Key

Site was engaged in...

- School improvement project
- Networked improvement project
- Both

