

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18





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**COVER:** Student-researchers from the Transfer School Discovery Project during their presentation at the 2018 Transfer School Conference.

**ABOVE:** 2017-18 Eskolta Fellow Laura Soriano and Eskolta board member Wesley Toussaint discuss education policy during a roundtable with former U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King, Jr.

*Photo credits: Salahadeen Betts, Savanna Honerkamp-Smith, Emily Kleinman, and Mica Baum-Tuccillo*

# Letter from the Director



**Think of the teacher who impacted your life as a child: the one who motivated you, who supported you, who helped you to love learning.**

Some kids have never had that.

In our work this year, we helped 275 teachers identify better ways that they can be that for more than three thousand students. As a result of this work, students are experiencing school as a place where they are welcome, where they are respected and cared for yet challenged to be learners.

The teachers we work with are often the ones who are already working hard to make school a better place for students, so we are finding ways to help them transform their good work into leadership in their schools and coaching leaders in the public school system to create the environment for this thoughtful student-centered leadership to thrive.

We continue to envision new ways to ensure that our schools give every child the education they deserve. This year, we have been asking three questions that are pushing our thinking for the future:

In a society where historical racism has contributed to the challenges our students face, how can we ensure our efforts neither ignore nor condone this racism but instead work against it?

In a system where students who struggle are often treated as problems to be solved, how can our efforts help to elevate their voices to be respected as contributors to solutions?

In a policy environment where alternative high schools are judged against metrics that have contributed to a pathology of failure, how can we be part of rethinking accountability?

As we ask these questions of ourselves, I take pride in how our work continues to move forward and bring new practices and possibilities and hope to our teachers, our schools, and our students.

**MICHAEL ROTHMAN**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A handwritten signature in orange ink, reading "Michael Rothman".

# Achieving Sustained Excellence in Schools



## PHASE 1

### Workshops Turn Research into Inspiration

Professional development workshops introduce educators to research, exemplary practices, and a community of schools addressing the same challenge.



## PHASE 2

### School Teams Turn Inspiration into Practice

Teacher teams engage in a series of inquiry sessions to prototype, design, and refine practices that they have adapted from research and customized to their schools, classrooms, and students.

[SEE P.7 FOR MORE](#)



## PHASE 4

### Publications Turn Exemplary Practices into Research and Data

The most exemplary practices are documented, data is analyzed, and together, these are turned into new research publications and videos to inspire future teacher teams.

[SEE P.5 FOR MORE](#)



## PHASE 3

### Leaders Turn Classroom Practice into School-Wide Practice

Talented educators are taught the leadership skills and strategies to guide their colleagues through design and inquiry themselves, to scale these practices to more classrooms.

[SEE P.6 FOR MORE](#)



# 2017–18 in Review

## 20 School Improvement Projects

We share the latest research with school teams and help them develop and test a practice for their school, department, or classroom.

**25** schools  
**154** educators  
**2,295** students

## 6 School and District Coaching Projects

For educators and district staff leading professional development, we provide training, coaching, and resources on school improvement strategies and methods.

**78** coaches  
*working directly with*  
**280** schools

## 22 Networked Improvement Projects

We bring together educators from multiple schools to connect and share research and insights, and help them develop and test a practice.

**31** schools  
**112** educators  
**3,522** students

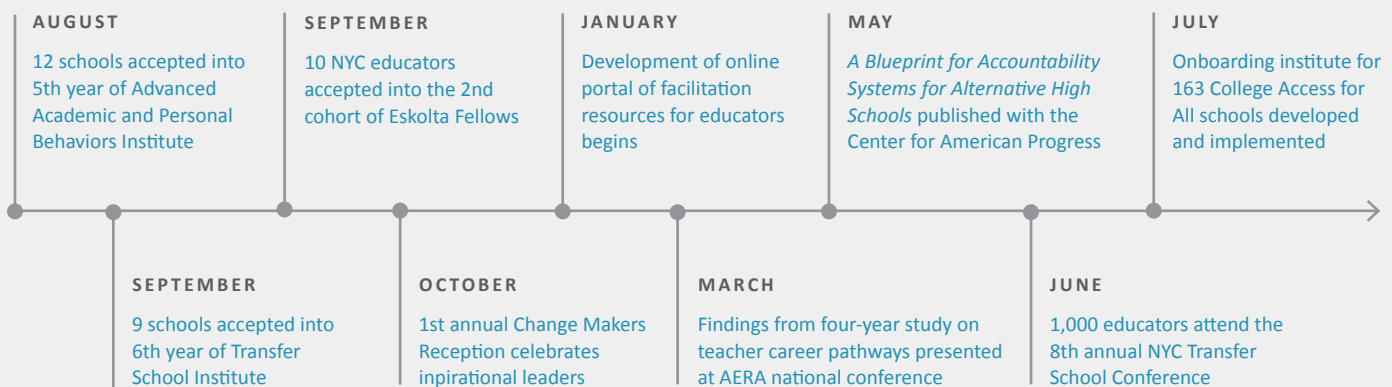
## 10 Research Publications

Our analysis and studies help partners drive positive change from the classroom to the district.

### Where We Work



## 2017–18 School Year





# Exploring Our Schools through Students' Eyes

Marquise, Student and EVC Producer, City As School

## NYC EDUCATORS FOR BETTER ALTERNATIVES

*"It's been the first place where I feel like I'm doing something important and I can do something important. They're giving me a platform for social injustices."*

—SUNNI, STUDENT AND EVC PRODUCER,  
CITY-AS-SCHOOL

In 2017, the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gave states significant latitude to rethink how they hold alternative schools accountable, offering the chance to change a system that often confuses schools that reach out to struggling students with schools that fail to help those students. We helped launch NYC Educators for Better Alternatives, a coalition of transfer school educators, community partners, and alumni, to study and advocate for better alternatives within the public education system for students failed by traditional high schools.

**A Study in Resilience: A Curriculum for Participatory Action Research at Transfer Schools.** Three participating transfer schools—Voyages Preparatory High School, John V. Lindsay Wildcat Charter School, and City-As-School—helped develop a curriculum they then used in three unique ways: as a full-credit course, by building the lessons into their own curriculum, and as a documentary film project with the Education Video Center (EVC). Sunni, a City-As-School student and EVC youth producer, shared the impact of this work project on her: "It's been the first place where I feel

like I'm doing something important and I can do something important. They're giving me a platform for social injustices."

### **Transfer School Student Discovery Project.**

With students as co-creators, we designed a survey to understand and highlight the experiences of overage, under-credited students and how transfer schools in New York City offer unique environments, pedagogy, and curricula that build on students' strengths and support them to overcome obstacles. A group of seven students helped conduct a preliminary analysis of the 800+ responses from over 20 schools that they presented to educators at our 2018 Transfer School Conference. Our findings reveal students' stories of struggle, resilience, and persistence in an educational system that has not always served them.

Through this work, we hope to better understand the experiences of overage, under-credited students; recognize the meaningful progress they make in alternative school settings; and challenge institutionalized injustices many transfer school students have had to navigate.

# Research & Publications



## Transfer School Accountability

Last year's highlight was a policy paper co-published with the Center for American Progress in anticipation of imminent changes in the state's accountability system. *Blueprint for Accountability Systems for Alternative High Schools* provides analysis and recommendations on how to better evaluate alternative high schools—schools established to serve the unique needs of students who have been failed by traditional schools.

Our commitment to research at the district, program, and school levels stems from a clear need for high-quality evidence that enables policy makers and schools to understand the effects of their programs and make changes based on data. Following is a selection of the sixteen publications from 2017–18.

## Teacher Training and Hiring

We developed an evaluation plan and conducted a baseline analysis to support the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality as they launched a new multimillion-dollar initiative to transform the human resources landscape for K–12 education in the Bronx.

We documented the ways NYCDOE **Teaching Academies**, school-based settings for preservice teachers, prepare them, promote teaching and learning in host schools, and help establish a hiring pipeline in historically difficult-to-staff locations.

## Teacher Career Pathways

We published an update to our 2016–17 report, *Beyond Incentives*, with new data and key findings about the impact of the district's efforts to develop teacher leadership.

We explored how **Showcase Schools**, a project in which schools with promising practices host visitors from other schools, promotes a deep understanding among visiting educators of showcased practices and school structures.

We developed the *Distributed Educational Leadership Toolkit*, a set of three practical guides being used by the school district to help principals better understand how to staff and support teacher leaders.

We wrote a profile exploring the ways an effective New York City superintendent has supported teacher leadership.

## RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

10 PROJECTS  
16 PUBLICATIONS

# Agents of Sustainable Change



## ESKOLTA FELLOWS PROGRAM

10 SCHOOLS  
10 EDUCATORS

*"If you took a snapshot two years ago, and one now, you can see that the way teachers are engaging with one another has changed a lot."*

—JASMINE HOSKINS  
2017-18 ESKOLTA FELLOW AND  
DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND  
INSTRUCTION, URBAN DOVE TEAM  
CHARTER SCHOOL

Each year, a cohort of talented educators is selected as Eskolta Fellows. During their fellowship, they deepen their training in school improvement methods, exploring research and strategies rooted in participant-driven action research processes, and then apply them to their own school settings.

Jasmine Hoskins, director of Curriculum and Instruction at Urban Dove Team Charter School in Brooklyn, explains how she has used her learning as a fellow to change the landscape of collaboration in her school.

### ***How did you apply what you learned as a fellow to your work at Urban Dove?***

**JH:** I focused last year on inquiry teams, where, when we had our department meetings, we would alternate between having the grade teams together and then the content teams together. Sometimes we were looking at curriculum design, sometimes we were looking at data, but there was this space for people to talk

about what they were doing and sharing and giving each other feedback and making changes.

I saw two science teachers talking to a year three math teacher, giving him feedback. That just made me so proud because we did not have that culture of collaboration before. Seeing that now we're in a space where our teachers can talk to each other and share ideas and recognizing that what they do is connected has made me really proud.

### ***What are you looking to do next?***

**JH:** One of my goals is using small-scale data more. I want to figure out a way to export different data sets that are directly connected to the work that we're doing and see how we are able to look at that and analyze that more regularly, how that fits into our content team meetings, and how that fits into the check-ins between the instructional coaches and the teachers.



# Building a Community of Sharing

Too much teaching happens in isolation. A central aim of our work is helping educators share practices—across classrooms, departments, and schools. One place we do this is through the Transfer School Institute (TSI), a multiyear professional development network we offer in collaboration with the New York City Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Readiness. The focus of TSI is to build the capacity of transfer school principals and teachers in order to help some of the city’s most vulnerable students build the academic behaviors and skills needed for postsecondary success.

As one facet of our 2017–18 Institute, we brought together three schools interested in developing Lesson Study, a model of lesson planning in which a group of teachers collaboratively develops, tests, and refines a lesson plan. East Brooklyn Community High School served as a host school, sharing their knowledge and experience at convenings and structured cross-site visits to classrooms and department meetings with two schools just starting the practice: Murray Hill Academy and Jill Chaifetz Transfer School.

Through this work, Murray Hill math teacher Brandon Kline saw firsthand different models of collaboration and feedback between teachers that helped inform his team’s work. As they designed their own practice, he witnessed the unique way Lesson Study strengthened collaboration in his department.



“It brought us together in a way that I’ve never seen before,” Brandon says. “When we’re all co-invested in a project or a lesson, the bind is there and we all want it to succeed.”

The new perspectives and practices Murray Hill’s team experienced through TSI have had effects beyond Brandon’s immediate team. Lesson Study has now spread to all departments throughout the school. In addition to improving the quality of lessons, this work has affected their model of teaching in a profound way, paving the way for deeper collaboration and team-building between teachers in the future.

“Lesson Study is designed to help us build better lessons to help other students, but it’s also a team-building activity,” remarks Brandon. “This is such a good way to collaborate.”

## TRANSFER SCHOOL INSTITUTE

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9 SCHOOLS  
51 EDUCATORS

“It brought us together in a way that I’ve never seen before. When we’re all co-invested in a project or a lesson, the bind is there and we all want it to succeed.... This is such a good way to collaborate.”

—BRANDON KLINE, MATH TEACHER  
MURRAY HILL ACADEMY

# Reach & Impact

In 2017-18, our projects reached...

**5,426**

students

**345**

educators

**33**

schools

## OUR APPROACH

Start small and use data to guide decisions

Through our institutes and independent projects, we guide teams of educators as they develop research-based interventions, test them out at a small scale, and iterate using data to inform changes, until they have optimized the practice and are ready to scale it to more students, classes, or departments.

## Institutes

We offer three major institutes in partnership with the NYC Department of Education:

**Academic and Personal Behaviors Institute (APBI)**

12 schools | 61 educators  
1,249 students

**Transfer School Institute (TSI)**

9 schools | 51 educators  
821 students

**College Access for All (CA4A)**

13 schools | 82 educators  
486 students

## Student Impact

Educators in our three institutes create and then test classroom practices designed to improve student outcomes across a range of different areas:

AT NINE SCHOOLS:



**64%**

of students

who ended the prior year with a score of 80% or below showed  
**IMPROVEMENT IN MATH GRADES**

Sample of 233 students who received mindset interventions developed by their teachers in the 2017-18 APBI.

AT THREE SCHOOLS:



**70%**

of students reported

**IMPROVEMENT IN METACOGNITION**

Sample of 80 student self-assessments from the students who received interventions through the 2017-18 TSI and CA4A to build their critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and ability to take and monitor steps to improve their skills.

AT FOUR SCHOOLS:



**76%**

of students

improved their ability to engage in  
**CRITICAL THINKING +  
PROBLEM SOLVING**

Sample of 21 of the 100 students who received interventions through the 2017-18 TSI on their critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and ability to take and monitor steps to improve their skills, as assessed by teachers.

AT FOUR SCHOOLS:



**86%**

of students

improved their ability to engage in  
**READING, WRITING,  
+ COMMUNICATION**

Sample of 15 of the 350 students who received interventions developed by their teachers during the 2017-18 TSI to build their reading, writing, and communication skills, as assessed by their teachers.



Educators from schools across the city share practices at the annual NYC Transfer School Conference, an event Eskolta offers in collaboration with the NYC Department of Education

## Educator Impact

Across different projects, educators learn new practices or further develop existing ones, ranging from conducting effective teacher-student conferencing on academic skills, to teaching goal setting and metacognition, to building students' persistence in the face of academic challenges.

AT FOUR SCHOOLS:

 **71%**

of educators report an improvement in their ability to provide their students with

**INDIVIDUALIZED  
+ ACTIONABLE  
FEEDBACK**

Sample of 7 out of 27 educators who developed practices focused on feedback strategies.

ATTEN SCHOOLS:

 **91%**

of educators report an improvement in their ability to design teaching materials for

**RIGOROUS  
ACADEMIC SKILLS**

Sample of 31 out of 64 educators who developed practices focused on academic skills.

AT SIX SCHOOLS:

 **100%**

of educators report an improvement in their ability to create environments that promote

**LEARNING  
MINDSETS**

Sample of 20 out of 43 educators who developed practices focused on learning environments.



# Change Makers in Education



Clockwise from top left: 2018 Change Makers Hector Castillo Carvajal, John B. King, Jr., and Adrienne Andry

## ESKOLTA CHANGE MAKERS RECEPTION

"When I think about what the Eskolta community is and what it means for kids and communities... It is life-saving work. It is the difference for young people between a life of opportunity or a life of poverty."

—JOHN B. KING, JR.,  
2018 ESKOLTA CHANGE MAKER

On October 23, 2018, we held our second annual Change Makers Reception, honoring Hector Castillo Carvajal, a transfer school graduate whose passion for learning and community has led to both personal academic success and support for his peers; Adrienne Andry, a dedicated and exceptional educator committed to helping the most at-risk students discover their strengths; and John B. King, Jr., former U.S. Secretary of Education, for his lifelong dedication to education as a teacher, principal, leader, and New York City public schools graduate.

This evening was made possible thanks to the support of our donors and the nearly 200 people who attended.





# Partners & Supporters

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



## Individual Donors

- › Adrienne Hadaway
- › Alexandra Buckley Voris
- › Allison Devore
- › Annette Evans
- › Ariel Amdur
- › Charles Pryor
- › Christina Walsh
- › Cristin Frodella and Conor Sheridan
- › Dan Siracuse
- › David Levithan
- › Doug Knecht
- › Edward Linden

- › Frits Besselaar
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- › Good Shepherd Services
- › NYC Mission Society

## Foundation Supporters

- › The Booth Ferris Foundation
- › Fordham Street Foundation
- › Raikes Foundation
- › The Ready Foundation
- › Taproot Foundation



# Our Team



## 2017-18 Staff

**Sara Arcia**, Office and Research Associate  
**Mica Baum-Tuccillo**, Manager of Special Operations  
**Rotem Blat**, Project Associate  
**Aaron Boyle**, Senior School Design Partner  
**Mai Brand**, Development Manager  
**Amanda Crowell, PhD**, Senior Researcher  
**Mike Davis**, Manager of Operations  
**Nicole DeFino**, Senior School Design Partner  
**Jamie Ferrel**, Research and Design Facilitator  
**Cara Fratassi**, Project Associate  
**Jessica Furer**, Associate Director  
**Katie Gleason**, Program Manager  
**Danielle Green**, Director of Operations  
**Savanna Honerkamp-Smith**, Manager of Communications and Design  
**Emily Kleinman**, Senior School Design Partner  
**Alaina Leggette**, Research and Writing Intern  
**Ben Lorr**, Research and Design Facilitator  
**Karenn Martin**, Project Associate  
**Sable Mensah**, Research and Design Facilitator  
**Jill Ni**, Education Pioneers Fellow

**Catherine Pratt**, Research and Design Associate

**Fuschia Ray**, Project Associate

**Michael Rothman**, Founder and Executive Director

**Alicia Wolcott**, Senior School Design Partner

**Amy Zhao**, Communications Intern

**Brian Zimbler**, Research and Design Facilitator

## 2017-18 Board Members

**Afsheen Afshar**, Business Executive and Deep Artificial Intelligence Expert  
**Ariel Amdur**, Risk Strategist, Head of Investor Analytics, BlueMountain Capital Management  
**Tarika Barrett**, Vice President of Programs, Girls Who Code  
**Michelle Fine**, Distinguished Professor, CUNY Graduate Center  
**Cristin Frodella**, CS Education, Google  
**Doug Knecht**, Executive Director, Bank Street Education Center  
**Sophie Lippincott Ferrer**, Director of Learning and Quality Delivery, Education First  
**Danielle Moss Lee**, Chief of Staff, New York Civil Liberties Union  
**Dan Siracuse**, Chief Financial Officer, TruMid Financial  
**Wesly Toussaint**, History Teacher, Metropolitan Diploma Plus High School  
**David Yeager**, Associate Professor of Developmental Psychology, University of Texas at Austin

# Financials

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Current Assets	FY17	FY18
Cash	\$1,183,231	\$1,379,692
Accounts Receivable	\$46,776	\$35,177
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	\$16,266	\$15,380
Total Current Assets	\$1,246,273	\$1,430,250
Fixed Assets	\$56,684	\$48,032
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,302,957</b>	<b>\$1,478,282</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Total Liabilities	\$16,322	\$48,903
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted	\$1,175,885	\$1,479,379
Temporarily Restricted	\$110,750	\$(100,000)
Total Net Assets	\$1,286,635	\$1,379,379
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$1,302,957</b>	<b>\$1,428,282</b>

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Revenue and Support	FY17	FY18
Program Service Revenue	\$1,982,758	\$2,215,540
Unrestricted contributions and grants	\$6,281	\$208,414
Interest Income	\$2,751	\$2,264
<b>Total Revenue and Contributions</b>	<b>\$1,991,790</b>	<b>\$2,426,218</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Program Expenses	\$1,592,621	\$1,542,312
Management and General	\$160,653	\$516,946
Fund-Raising	\$101,743	\$92,061
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,855,016</b>	<b>\$2,151,319</b>
Change in unrestricted net assets	\$136,774	\$303,494
Change in temporarily restricted net assets	\$110,750	\$(210,750)
Net assets - Beginning of year	\$1,039,111	\$1,286,635
Net assets - End of Year	\$1,286,635	\$1,379,379

Figures may not add up to totals due to rounding.

