

2018-19

Annual Report





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Cover: A New York City educator at the ninth Annual Transfer School Conference in June 2019.

Above: A student-led session at the Transfer School Conference, bringing together transfer school educators from across New York City.

Photo credits: Salahadeen Betts, Savanna Honerkamp-Smith, and Dana Kurniawan

Students are at the heart of what we do.

Welcome to Eskolta's 2018–19 Annual Report.

I am happy to share that we continue to grow as an organization and are now, more than ever, a force for positive change in our schools, school districts, and nation.

This year our staff collaboratively wrote a Racial Equity Statement for the organization which will aid us in framing and growing in our work as we move forward. One commitment of that statement is to use a strengths-based approach to counter deficit-based language and assumptions. This approach is at the heart of our work with teachers to create positive classroom environments where students feel respected and trusted, see a connection between what they are learning and their values, and believe in their ability to grow through effort. In projects at 12 schools across New York City, Eskolta worked directly with 42 teachers to reshape their classroom practice to create these learning environments for 795 students. That work represents one slice of the 26 school-based projects we worked on in 2018–19, that directly reached nearly 2,000 students.

See Our Commitment to Racial Equity on p. 4

In this report, you will also see the growing impact of our projects that support educators who coach other educators. By teaching school principals, district professional development coaches, district leaders, and teacher leaders the tools and strategies of continuous improvement, we have helped hundreds of additional educators reaching hundreds of thousands of students to be part of change that is thoughtful, intentional, and empowering.

See Our Reach on p. 7

Read our interview with teacher Denise Montes on p. 8

Finally, you will read about the Eskolta Learning Center, our new online repository of free downloadable materials for leaders of professional development to plan and structure how they will re-engage students who have been underserved and under-appreciated by the system.

Learn more about the Eskolta Learning Center on p. 13

Public education will only change in a meaningful way if that change is driven by those in the field. As Eskolta grows, we continue to stay true to this conviction by empowering educators to turn research into practice and empower students who have been neglected and left behind.



Michael Rothman
Executive Director



Alumni panel from the ninth Annual NYC Transfer School Conference featuring (from left to right) Kyana Davis, Keith Ford, Leah Perry, and Brianna Orta.

Our Commitment to Racial Equity

Eskolta is on a path to becoming an anti-racist organization. This statement is a part of the ongoing process to identify and articulate our beliefs and our work. Therefore, this is an evolving statement. Eskolta is committed to actively working against racism within our organization and externally in our work with partner schools and organizations. We recognize that neutrality in the fight for racial justice is a myth and that colorblindness is a detriment to antiracist practice. With this in mind, we as an organization and as individuals commit to:

- Recognize the power and influence we have to make change at a structural level, and partner with policy makers, city officials, and educators to build knowledge and capacity to address racial inequity and establish a more equitable education system.
- Understand how interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism has shaped students' lives and the education system. Prioritize addressing the systemic inequality that students, families, and communities face because of racism and other forms of oppression.
- Use a strengths-based approach to our work with educators and students as a counter-narrative to the deficit-based language that saturates discussions about urban education and communities of color.
- Examine and become aware of implicit bias within our organization and externally in schools and communities, and learn multiple methods to disrupt white supremacy in our work with schools and in our organization.
- Create a structure for ongoing support and assessment within Eskolta to make sure we are living up to these commitments.

While we commit to racial justice explicitly, we see it as an element of a broader movement for social justice that includes an intersectional analysis of power, privilege, access, and discrimination. As we commit to racial justice, we also commit to seeing students and educators as complex and multifaceted. We commit to continued reflection about how students, educators, and our own lives are importantly influenced by race, class, gender, sexuality, immigration, religion, and disability.

Our Approach

We work with educators to create a more equitable society by fostering a culture of compassion, respect, and high expectations in public schools, so students who were once left behind can thrive.



Understand

We conduct school-based research, analyze data, and provide current educational research to teachers.



Improve

We use a researcher's mindset and designer's approach. We work with schools to create practices and tools, to test and modify them, and to measure their impact on student learning.



Spread

We aim to expand access to educational resources grounded in research and practice. We write guides about successful tools developed by our school and district partners.



Sustain & Scale

Our professional development provides opportunities for educators to learn from one another and builds the capacity in teachers and administrators to lead school change projects.

Our Work in 2018-19

26 Networked Improvement Projects

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

15 School and District Coaching Projects

We provide coaching and resources on school improvement strategies and methods to educators and staff who are leading professional development.

3 Institutes

We provide thought partnership for NYC Department of Education institutes: College Access for All, the Multiple Pathways Institute, and the Academic and Personal Behaviors Institute.

21 Publications

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

Our Impact

NYCDOE Institutes:

- › College Access for All
- › Multiple Pathways Institute
- › Academic and Personal Behaviors Institute

41
projects

193
educators

1,918
students

Educator Outcomes

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.

97% report increasing the frequency of practices that cultivate a classroom environment that fosters learning mindsets

92% report improving how they communicate with students about progress in the classroom

74% report more frequent collaboration with fellow teachers to improve their instruction

Student Outcomes

Educators in our networks and school improvement projects create and then test classroom practices designed to improve student outcomes across a range of different areas.

76% report their students were persisting through challenging work more frequently

95% report their students were tracking and monitoring their own growth in the classroom

85% agree that more of their students are demonstrating key academic skills in the classroom

This year we added rigor to our quantitative methodologies for increased accuracy when calculating reach numbers.

Our Reach

23 Total Schools

12,385 Total Enrolled Students

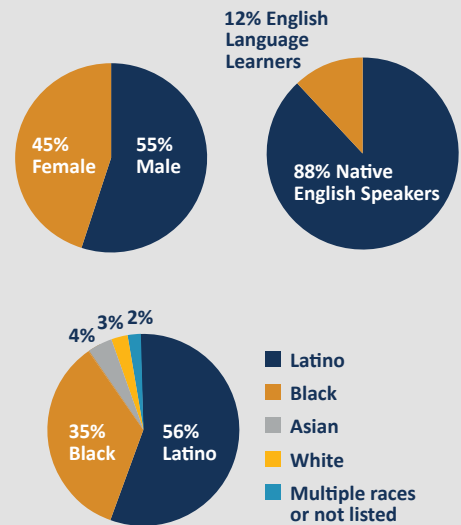
83% School Economic Need Index

The average Economic Need Index (ENI) calculated across schools with which Eskolta works. The ENI is a New York City Department of Education calculation that estimates the likelihood of a student to be living below the poverty line, based on a series of demographic factors.

Our Schools



Demographic Factors



Numbers are based on New York City Department of Education calculations.

893 Students

involved in projects focused on **learning mindsets** in the classroom

795 Students

involved in projects focused on **persisting** through challenging work

351 Students

involved in projects focused on student **metacognition**

Teacher Voice: Denise Montes

Denise Montes standing next to a shelving unit designed and built by her students in her plumbing classroom at Bronx Design and Construction Academy.

Denise Montes teaches 10th and 11th grade plumbing at Bronx Design and Construction Academy (BDCA), a career and technical education school in the South Bronx. In 2018–19, BDCA joined the Multiple Pathways Institute, an initiative of the NYCDOE Office of Postsecondary Readiness. Denise, a BDCA alumna herself, worked with an Eskolta coach to help foster academic behaviors in her classroom, in particular how to stick with a task, follow directions, and work independently. She created a reflection tool that described student performance of a given academic behavior at three levels: beginner, proficient, and advanced.

What did your classroom look like before this project?

Before I started this work, students would come at me from a million directions. I'd be overwhelmed by their questions. It felt like I had to think for them. And I didn't understand it. I would think, "Why wouldn't they ask each other?" But they wouldn't. They had a mental model where I was the source of information. And so I worked with my coach on a project to change that.

Tell me about your work with academic behaviors? Why does this matter?

I realize looking back that I had so many assumptions when we started. I thought things like following directions or working independently were things that

people just naturally knew how to do. But working with my Eskolta coach has really opened my mind. You have to teach those basics. And when I started doing that—teaching the basics—it ended up making everything else that I was teaching easier.

Where did you start?

We wanted them to see how often they were asking for help and then connect that to how it was affecting their performance. So we created a very simple reflection tool that gave descriptions of their performance on a given skill in three levels: beginner, proficient, and advanced. Then we used it. Every day. I evaluated them. They evaluated themselves. And a classmate evaluated them. They would read my feedback more carefully if it was combined with an answer they were getting from a classmate. It made them take my advice more seriously.

And how did this change behavior?

It worked slowly. We'd stick with it once a week. Eventually it became a ritual. Just a part of the class. And once that ritual became ingrained, we discovered we could abandon the sheet itself because students were doing it verbally.

What's class like now?

They don't need me every minute! Now students take a moment and think for themselves before they come to me. It makes a huge difference!

Multiple Pathways Institute: 11 schools

The Multiple Pathways Institute is a professional development opportunity provided by the NYCDOE Office of Postsecondary Readiness for transfer school educators to build teaching strategies with the goal of improving students' academic achievement and postsecondary outcomes.





Miyah Haythe in the halls of her former high school, Bronx Arena, a transfer school in the South Bronx. She graduated in May 2019.

Student Voice: Miyah Haythe

In 2016, Bronx Arena High School joined the Academic and Personal Behaviors Institute hoping to develop tools to strengthen student mindsets. As part of their work, a team of teachers created a video, featuring five alumni receiving their diplomas and talking about their high school experience. This work draws on cognitive science research on developing a sense of belonging in an academic setting. When you see others like you achieving similar goals, you can imagine doing so yourself.

In this interview, alumna **Miyah Haythe** discusses the impact the video had on her studies. Miyah graduated from Bronx Arena in May 2019 and is preparing to continue on to college.

What was your first experience of Bronx Arena?

When I first heard that it was an “alternative” school, I thought the students were going to be stupid, or angry, or throwing papers all the time. But that was all wrong. Bronx Arena was very calm. The teachers were cheering us on. It was my first time in a school where teachers just treated us like people. I knew it was a school where I could graduate.

When did you first see the graduation video?

Early on, my counselor asked me to watch this video of students walking across the stage to graduate. They all looked so happy! But when they talked about their lives, some of their situations were much worse

than mine. It made me realize that even though people go through things, they can get through them. Afterwards, I talked with my counselor about how it made me feel. She told me, “I’m going to remind you of that if you need it.”

Did she need to show you again?

She did. I really fell off after that. I got my heart broke. When I’m sad, I like to isolate. And so I stopped coming to school. When I did come, I watched my friends going forward. So that made me feel worse and I came even less. That’s when she showed me the video again. Watching it got me fired up. I only needed four credits and realized it was possible. This was in the beginning of May. I just knew it was time.

Why do you think it worked?

I realized I had this huge weight on my shoulders about graduation. I felt like I wasn’t smart enough. But when you see someone you know graduate, you say, if they could do it, I can do it too. And by talking about the video with my counselor, I realized I wouldn’t get anywhere by sitting around. At that point, I was at a standstill. But seeing the video, knowing this was something I could do... It gave me hope. I did homework every night. I would give my teacher all the makeup work. That video really pushed me to visualize what I wanted.

Academic and Personal Behaviors Institute: 10 schools

The Academic and Personal Behaviors Institute is an opportunity provided by the NYCDOE Office of Postsecondary Readiness that brings together teams of educators for professional development, coaching, and inquiry that are based in improvement science and cutting edge research on academic and personal behaviors.

Research & Publications



Studying Resilience

Last year we collaborated with *Voyages Preparatory High School*, *City-As-School*, *John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter School*, and the *Educational Video Center* to develop a curriculum guide featuring lessons to explore personal narratives of change and development; to interview peers, educators, and policy makers about their experiences and understanding of transfer schools; to examine contexts of systemic injustice and inequity that have affected their lives; and to report on what they learned about the role of transfer schools in public education.

21 Total Publications

2 Studies

9 Promising
Practice Guides

10 Starter Kits

Our commitment to research at the district, program, and school level 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. The following are a selection of publications written during 2018–19.

Strategies for Supporting Independent Learning from Hillcrest High School

A Starter Kit is a practical resource for teachers that describes a new practice, how to implement it, includes data on its effectiveness, and lessons learned by other teachers. Teachers Josue Barahona, Tiffany Patterson, and Raven Alcorn worked with Eskolta and the NYC Department of Education Office of Leadership to create three tools that help students identify strategies to work on challenging tasks in social studies class.

Junior Year College Application Road Map

This Promising Practice Guide was developed at the *Science Skills High School (SSHS)* in downtown Brooklyn as part of the NY Department of Education *College and Career Planning Team (CCPT)*. Eskolta worked with the CCPT Fellows to explore and share their work across schools. SSHS serves 575 students, 90% of whom get free or reduced-price lunch. CCPT Fellow Lorraine Drummond created the Road Map during her four years as a guidance counselor because she needed a tool that could organize and consolidate steps for supporting each student during the process of “matching” them to their best-fit colleges.

Welcome to the Eskolta Learning Center

In 2018–19 we continued work codifying our research-based expertise to create an easy-to-use online platform for educators to access original professional development materials, with generous support from the Booth Ferris Foundation.

The **Eskolta Learning Center** is a free toolkit for educators leading professional development with a focus on reengaging underserved students.

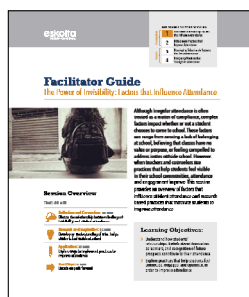
It contains hundreds of resources including ready-to-go workshops, complete with a facilitator guide, slides, activities, research briefs, and sample classroom tools from schools. These materials draw on Eskolta's work in more than 120 school change projects in New York City public schools on a topics ranging from giving students feedback to creating a welcoming learning environment. These resources have been designed, tested, and refined in partnership with teachers, school leaders, counselors, and district leaders.



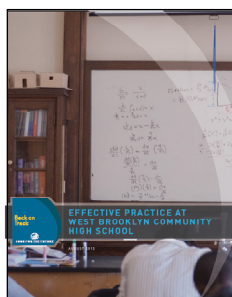
Eskolta staff introduced educators to the Eskolta Learning Center at the Transfer School Conference in June 2019.



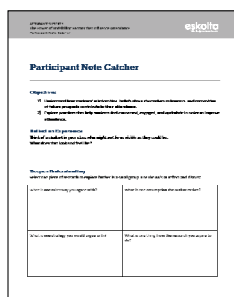
➤ Check out topics like mastery-based learning at www.eskolta.org/learningcenter/topic/mastery-based-learning/



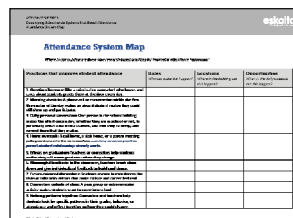
47 Facilitator Guides and Cheat Sheets



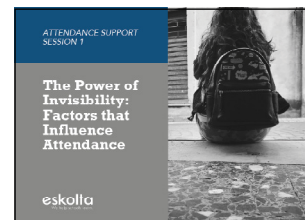
7 Research Briefs



103 Participant Handouts



22 Sample Tools



24 Slide Decks

Our Team



2018–19 Staff

Sara Arcia, Office Associate
Mica Baum-Tuccillo, Manager of Special Operations
Rotem Blat, Project Associate
Aaron Boyle, Director of Program
Mai Brand, Development Manager
Amanda Crowell, PhD, Senior Researcher
Nicole DeFino, Senior School Design Partner
Jamie Ferrel, Research and Design Facilitator
Rhina Garcia, Communications Intern
Katie Gleason, Senior School Design Partner
Danielle Green, Director of Operations
Savanna Honerkamp-Smith, Manager of Communications and Design
Emily Kleinman, Director of Knowledge Development
Dana Kurniawan, Design and Media Intern
Alaina Leggette, Research and Writing Intern
Ben Lorr, Research and Design Facilitator
Tatiana Matos, Operations Intern
Johanny Mejia, Research and Design Facilitator
Sable Mensah, Research and Design Facilitator
Sade Ortiz-Lucin, Research and Design Facilitator

Catherine Pratt, Research and Design Associate
Brady Robinson, Program Intern
Emma Werowski, Communications Fellow
Alicia Wolcott, Director of Program
Amy Zhao, Communications and Development Intern
Brian Zimbler, Research and Design Facilitator

2018–19 Board Members

Afsheen Afshar, *Senior Business Executive and AI 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, *Chief of Staff, New York Civil Liberties Union*
Winston McCarthy, *Principal, North Queens Community School*
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 as of July 31, 2019

Current Assets	FY18	FY19
Cash	\$1,379,692	\$1,150,604
Accounts Receivable	– \$1,323	\$121,539
In-Kind Receivable		\$58,000
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	\$15,380	\$15,657
Total Current Assets	\$1,393,750	\$1,345,800
Fixed Assets	\$54,546	\$56,209
Total Assets	\$1,448,296	\$1,402,009

Liabilities and Net Assets

Total Liabilities	\$143,028	\$263,698
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Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$1,205,268	\$1,038,311
Temporarily Restricted	\$100,000	\$100,000
Total Net Assets	\$1,305,268	\$1,138,311
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$1,448,296	\$1,402,009

Statement of Activities

Revenue and Support	FY18	FY19
Program Service Revenue	\$2,148,790	\$2,003,930
Unrestricted contributions and grants	\$68,714	\$348,786
Interest Income	\$2,264	\$1,049
Total Revenue and Contributions	\$2,219,768	\$2,353,765

Expenses

Program Expenses	\$1,439,764	\$1,671,631
Management and General	\$639,932	\$754,128
Fund-Raising	\$95,797	\$94,964
Total Expenses	\$2,175,494	\$2,520,722

Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 29,382	\$ (166,957)
Change in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$ (10,750)	
Net Assets—Beginning of Year	\$ 1,305,268	\$ 1,323,901
Net assets—End of Year	\$ 1,323,901	\$ 1,156,944

Figures may not add up to totals due to rounding.

Supporters

We are grateful to the Booth Ferris Foundation and the Fordham Street Foundation for their financial support during the 2018–19 year.

Thank you!

