

*annual report*



2022





***BES identifies and prepares  
excellent leaders to  
transform education in  
their communities.***



# *letter from the CEO*

When our world and communities experience dramatic change, what we expect and need from our public schools changes, too.

The education sector, and BES as an organization, have continued to evolve significantly over the past year to meet the changing needs of students, families, and communities. The challenges of the last few years have resulted in educator burnout and shortages, at a time when student learning gaps continue to widen.

We believe that, now more than ever, BES's charge to **identify and prepare excellent leaders to transform education in their communities** is the right one, and one that can play a key role in shaping the future of teaching and learning. This is evidenced by the six new Fellow-founded schools that opened doors in fall 2022 and the four (and counting) schools from the 2021 Fellow cohort that were authorized to open in the coming two years, amidst an increasingly challenging authorizing landscape across the country.

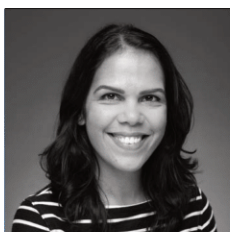
We are now in the final year of our current strategic plan – a plan that marked a necessary and fundamental shift to BES's approach. We vowed to center community in our work, to continue our push to be antiracist, to expand impact through scaled programming, and to set the organization up to sustain its work year over year.

In 2022, we returned to in-person training and school visits and significantly revised our curriculum to be more learner-focused and equity-centered. Thanks to the support of our generous funders and partners, we have continued to expand the number and types of schools we study to include over 100 schools across the country with a wide variety of models, sizes, focus areas, and leadership perspectives. We have established 17 new national, state, and community partnerships, and have established or scaled our presence in 23 regions.

At the same time, we are looking ahead to the next five years at BES, during which we will continue our incubation efforts while expanding the pipeline building and leadership development work we know is necessary to sustain generational change in communities across the country.

As we plan for a new era, we are inspired by the opportunities for impact, strong as a team, and well-positioned to deepen our work toward both excellence and equity in the national education landscape.

I am confident that we, collectively, can and will rise to the challenge and opportunity that the new year brings.



With deep gratitude for your continued commitment to this work,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aish'.

Aasimah Navlakhi



*believes*



## An excellent school leader ...

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Believes that all students can achieve at high levels and ensures equitable and robust supports for learners of all backgrounds, needs, and abilities.

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Ensures that all school systems, resources, and people align around a clear vision for an anti-racist learning environment.

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Builds, equips, and inspires a mission-driven team.

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Identifies and takes full advantage of coaching and support for themselves and intentionally develops a leadership bench.

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Holds themselves and their team accountable for the academic results and social-emotional health and development of all students.

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Builds authentic partnerships with the community, families, and students and actively seeks out and incorporates input and feedback into the school's design and operation.

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Advocates on behalf of the school in the community at large.





## An excellent school ...

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Prepares all students for self-determination and success in college, careers, and life.

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Fosters an inclusive, joyful culture that nurtures students' whole selves and celebrates academic and personal achievement and growth.

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Is organized around core values that affirm students' identities, support student leadership and agency,

build character, and teach students the skills and mindsets needed to deconstruct systems of oppression.

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Employs a diverse teaching staff that is knowledgeable and engaging, develops and cultivates teacher skills and leadership, and supports teachers' personal well-being.

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Uses rigorous, culturally relevant curriculum, and leverages assessment data to inform instruction, leading students to master critical habits, skills, and content.

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Ensures that time and learning opportunities are intentionally and flexibly designed and organized to prioritize student experience and learning goals.

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Has an engaged, mission-driven board focused on academic and fiscal accountability.





# *build*

Now more than ever, BES is working alongside local partners and identifying diverse leaders with a strong vision for schooling who place community input at the center of their work. With six BES Fellows opening schools across the country in fall 2022 and a cohort of 10 leaders currently building their vision for an excellent and equitable school, we continue to expand the number of regions and students served through our work.



## 9 out of 10

charter applications submitted  
by BES Fellows have been  
authorized nationwide.

*According to NACSA, only 34% of freestanding  
charter applications across 19 states and  
Washington, D.C. were approved in 2017-2018.*

BES Fellows have founded

**over 200 schools**  
**in 53 cities across**  
**20 states educating**  
**63,000+ students**





# 2022 School Launches

Six new BES Fellow-founded schools launched in fall 2022.



## DeKalb Brilliance Academy

Jocelyn Alter, 2019 BES Fellow  
Decatur, GA



## Destine Preparatory

Re'Shawn Rogers, 2020 BES Fellow  
Schenectady, NY



## Essence Preparatory

Akeem Brown, 2020 BES Fellow  
San Antonio, TX



## Intellectus Preparatory

Kenyah Miller, 2020 BES Fellow  
Mt Vernon, NY



## Little Water Preparatory

Antoinette Kane, 2020 BES Fellow  
Poughkeepsie, NY



## Sage Collegiate

Sandra Kinne, 2016 BES Fellow  
Las Vegas, NV

**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** Destine Preparatory, Intellectus Preparatory, Little Water Preparatory, Sage Collegiate





# demographic stats

**2022 Fellows** are hard at work engaging families in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas as they design unique and community-responsive school models that are committed to academic rigor, career pathways, character formation, and student well-being. The proposed models will serve students across the K-12 continuum and include Montessori, entrepreneurship, project-based learning, and STEAM/STREAM.

## Students Served by BES Fellow-Founded Schools



**82%**  
qualify for free or  
reduced lunch



**17%**  
English language  
learners



**14%**  
students with  
special needs

*In public schools nationwide, 52% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, 10% are English language learners, and 15% have special needs.*

**44%** Black

**44%** Hispanic

**6%** White

**5%** Other

**2%** Asian

*On average, public schools across the country enroll 15% Black and 26% Latinx/Hispanic students.*



# Leader *spotlight*

*"The community matters, and too often they are left out of decisions that directly affect them so I wanted their voices heard in this process. Sustainability requires community to be the foundation. When the excitement of being the new thing wears off, you'll need the community to continue forward. A community of supporters throughout my life have mentored and guided me. I wouldn't be where I am today without them. I wanted to design a school with the community at the forefront for all students."*

## **Brenda Jones**

2021-2023 BES Community Co-Design Fellow  
Proposed Founder, Invictus Nashville Charter School

### **Meet our 2022 cohort**

We are building our 2023 cohort and looking for committed, equity-minded leaders in the following regions:

ALABAMA  
ARIZONA  
COLORADO  
GEORGIA  
MISSISSIPPI  
NEW MEXICO  
TENNESSEE  
TEXAS

**Learn more and apply**



# *excel*

At BES, we recognize that leaders need to be supported and challenged in the right way at the right time. From yearlong cohort-based trainings to short, two-day intensives, to coaching tailored to specific needs, our leadership and organizational development programs are designed to do just that.

Our cohorts are intentionally diverse and reflective of the communities we serve because we know - and research increasingly shows - that better life outcomes are linked to shared identity and culture between students, teachers, and leaders.



## 82%

**of Fellows in our last three cohorts  
identify as leaders of color**

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**54% of leaders in our 2022  
leadership development programs  
identify as people of color**





Since 2012, LENS - our premier year-long, cohort-based leadership development program for emerging and experienced leaders - has successfully trained

**over 300 leaders.**

**75%** of LENS participants have moved into heightened leadership roles after completing the program.

This year, **100%** of LENS participants reported being satisfied or extremely satisfied with their experience.



"As a founding leader, I see building a solid leadership bench as the most critical component of school sustainability, and this begins before a school even opens. LENS has developed the mindsets, knowledge, and skills of our emerging leaders and equipped them to make a seamless transition from the classroom into leadership roles to help our school stay strong."

**Emily Castillo León**, 2015 BES Fellow  
Founder and Head of School, Ethos Classical,  
Atlanta, GA, Associate VP of Schools, redefinED  
Atlanta

"It's exciting that I have been able to use many things I learned in LENS in my new position as assistant principal, including how to effectively coach and support adults; lead my team to plan for inclusion, diversity, and equity; and use data to drive goals and priorities, which is a big focus at Forte Prep. I completed LENS knowing that being a school leader is not an easy job - especially after the pandemic began - but it is a really important job that makes a big impact."

**Angela Mu**, 2020 LENS Leader  
Assistant Principal, Forte Prep, New York, NY

"I can't imagine navigating my first year as a principal without LENS. The trainings have supported me as I grow into my new position, allowing me to practice my leadership presence when coaching the adults in my building and planning for challenging meetings. The relationships I've made with the leaders in my cohort and my LENS coach have been a lifeline for me this year."

**Jeff Kuhne**, 2021 LENS Leader  
Principal, Columbus Collegiate Academy, Columbus, OH

"As a department chair who also teaches, I can't say enough about how the LENS program has boosted my time management skills and increased my confidence as an educational coach. LENS has provided me with a supportive environment where I can polish my leadership skills, evaluate how I communicate and coach my team, and become more confident in having difficult but crucial conversations with teachers, staff, students, and parents. My teacher observation, appraisal, and coaching skills are miles above where they were last school year. My LENS coach has been a blessing to me and her impact on my leadership development is already leading to positive changes on campus that will impact our students this year."

**Daniel Bryant**, 2020 LENS Leader  
Dean of Science Dept., St. Thomas High School, TX



## *on the ground*

After nearly three years of virtual school visits and remote training, we brought our team and leaders back into schools to build community, study effective practices, and learn from those on the ground doing the challenging and rewarding work of running excellent and equitable schools. Our team also represented at several conferences through the year, and presented at the National Charter Schools Conference, the Texas Charter Schools Conference, and NACSA's annual convening.

### **A big thank you to all of the schools who welcomed us this year!**

- Avenues of The World School
- Brooklyn Prospect Clinton Hill Middle School
- Brooklyn Prospect Downtown Elementary
- Brooklyn Prospect High School
- Citizens of the World - Silverlake
- City School of the Arts
- Compass Charter School
- Creo College Prep
- Da Vinci Connect - Extension
- Da Vinci Connect - TK- 8
- Da Vinci High Schools
- East End Prep
- Ember Charter High School
- Forte Prep

- Intrepid College Prep:
- Independence Academy
- Intrepid College Prep:
- Opportunity Academy
- KIPP STAR Harlem College Prep Elementary
- Mott Haven Academy
- Nashville Classical
- Open Magnet Charter
- Perseverance Prep
- Purpose Prep
- Richland Ave. School
- Rocketship Mosaic
- Summit Denali
- Summit Tahoma
- The Dalton School







# *sustain*

The work we do is meant to create transformative, generational change in communities nationwide. From incubating new founders to developing a strong bench of leaders, BES's suite of supports is designed to support leaders at every level of the school building. Through this work, we ensure that schools don't just start strong, but stay strong and continue to create positive impact in their communities.

**82%** of leaders who founded schools in the last **10 years** are still leading (or still hold leadership positions at) those schools

**93%** of leaders who founded schools in the last **5 years** are still leading those schools

**25%** of Fellows have expanded or replicated their original school

BES has trained over **2,800 leaders** in **35 states** and Washington, D.C.

**7 out of 10** LENS participants moved into heightened leadership roles within two years of completing the program





# *partners*

Over the past three years, BES has leveraged local and national partnerships to strengthen our collective work towards shared goals. We are committed to continuing this collaboration in an effort to combine our national reach and existing infrastructure with the local insight, expertise, and advocacy we know is needed to ensure that our leaders and schools are successful. Our partners include local education champion organizations, regional incubators, charter associations, advocacy organizations, and national organizations that work on condition building and pipeline generation in our space.

BES worked in partnership with 12 local education champion organizations and charter associations in 2022.

BES designed and delivered multiple custom leadership trainings for partners interested in specific topics that would benefit leaders in their region.

Partner organizations at the local and national levels have supported Fellowship seats and sponsored leaders in LENS, enabling us to design and deliver ecosystem level support in several regions.

To explore partnership opportunities with BES, email us at

[partners@bes.org](mailto:partners@bes.org)



# *spotlights*



*shawn crosby*

2022-23 Follow On Support Participant  
Founder and Executive Director,  
The Legacy School  
Cleveland, OH

"The school founding journey can seem quite lonely. I have really valued having a cohort of other school founders that are on this journey in their respective states creating community. Collectively, my peers and I have created a professional learning community that has shared resources and provided words of encouragement, amongst other things."



*sarah harvey*

2021 BES Fellow  
Founder and Executive Director,  
Sankofa Montessori  
Atlanta, GA

"In the Founder space, I often hear the words, 'this work is so very lonely.' And it was, until I joined the BES Fellowship and met others who were just as committed as I am in answering the call from their communities to create additional high quality educational options. Being a part of this Fellowship provided me with a community that pushed my thinking, provided me with the practical tools and resources to ensure that I would be able to successfully launch a school, and, most importantly, gave me the courage to own my power and lean into my brilliance. I truly never felt lonely in my school founding journey, and that was in part because of my BES community."





*joseph cato*

**2022 LENS Participant,**  
**Principal, Meadow Creek Elementary**  
Fort Worth, TX

"My LENS experience has been a GREAT one. My coach has provided me with critical advice on how to grow my leadership team. He has been consistently pushing me to do things that make me uncomfortable, so I can be the best leader."



*jane henzerling*

**2009 BES Fellow**  
**Managing Director of Programs,**  
**Excellent Schools New Mexico**  
New Mexico

"After years of teaching, designing professional learning, and serving in nonprofit leadership, I was compelled to apply those experiences in a new and more powerful way. I had never truly seen an "excellent" school at that point in my career, and BES gave me a window into what schools can be. I was resolved to create a school that shows what's possible, and I had the privilege of creating The Mission Preparatory School in collaboration with families in San Francisco who wanted something more and better for their kids."



*sam brotman*

**2022 LENS Participant**  
**Assistant Principal, Creo College Prep**  
Bronx, NY

"As a first year assistant principal, the opportunity to exchange thoughts and ideas with such a diverse and intelligent group of professionals has been monumental to my growth and has allowed me to be the best I can be for our kids, their families, and our school community."



# Leader *spotlight*

*"The BES Fellowship brought us together! We had the unique opportunity to each experience the Fellowship and all of the leadership development that came with it together in the 2019-20 cohort. While we worked to develop our own charter school proposals, we got to know each of our own strengths and opportunities for growth as leaders. When Innova Girls Academy was approved, we reflected on our learnings from the Fellowship experience and realized that our skill sets are excellent complements of one another. While we could work individually towards improving educational outcomes in Rochester, NY, we knew we would be better together as a team.*

*The vision for Innova, a school that empowers girls to be confident leaders and innovative problem-solvers, was co-created with our community. We cannot wait for our opening day when students will begin to live this vision into reality. Innova will be the only all-girls elementary school in Monroe County, public, private, or charter, and will be the first Girl Scouts Academy in New York state. Through our partnership with the Girl Scouts of Western New York, all girls will have access to daily Girl Scouts programming embedded into their school day."*



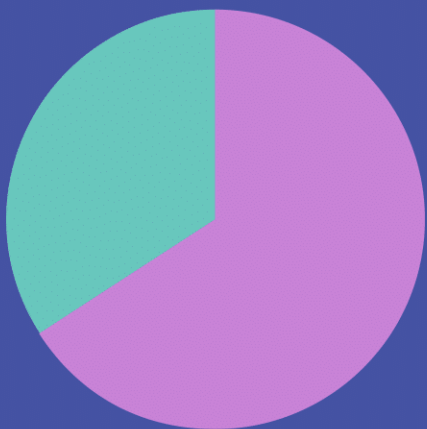
## **Lindsay Swanson and Brittany Rumph**

Co-Founders, Innova Girls Academy | Rochester, NY  
2019-20 BES Fellows



## our team

The BES team is composed of mission-driven individuals on staff and on the Board who are committed to creating and sustaining transformational change through education in communities nationwide. We continue to work to intentionally diversify our team and our Board to best reflect the diverse identities and cultures of the leaders and students we serve.



66%

of Board members self  
identify as people of color

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71% of BES staff, including 75% of  
the leadership team, identify as  
people of color

## board members

**Martin West, Board Chair**  
*Harvard Graduate School of  
Education*

**Ed Chang, Board Vice President**  
*redefinED atlanta*

**Elise Balboni**  
*Finance Professional*

**Jonathan Chaparro**  
*Braven*

**Hrag Hamalian**  
*Bright Star Schools*

**Shenita Johnson**  
*Illinois State Charter School  
Commission*

**Ebony Lee**  
*Charter School Growth Fund*

**Charles Mitchell**  
*All About People*

**Amanda Sanchez**  
*Raza Development Fund*

# *gratitude*

Many thanks to the generous supporters and anonymous donors who make our work in communities across the country possible.

Carnegie Corporation of New York  
Cedar Street Foundation  
Charter School Growth Fund  
D.W. Gore Family Foundation  
Excellent Schools New Mexico  
Fort Worth Education Partnership  
Good Reason Houston  
Houston Endowment  
Kern Family Foundation  
Memphis Education Fund  
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Mr. Arthur Rock and Mrs. Toni Rembe Rock  
Mr. Jim Mnookin and Mrs. Wendy Mnookin  
New Schools for Alabama  
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