



The Leadership School

STUDENT LEADERSHIP AT THE CENTER OF LEARNING

The Leadership School proposes the launch of a new K-8 school within the boundaries of the Normandy Schools Collaborative. Our school would serve all students residing in the 24 St. Louis County municipalities that make up the school district. This ethnically and socioeconomically diverse area has concentrated levels of poverty and a black race population significantly above the state average, resulting in a 96.6% free and reduced lunch rate and 99% student of color population within the school district. Our model aims to support the specific needs of current students, while also responding to insights gathered through significant engagement with families in these neighborhoods. Through one-on-one interviews and small group conversations with over 30 parents, we have heard that parents want schools to help set their children up for successful life outcomes and provide a safe, joyful, rigorous community in the meantime.

MISSION The Leadership School exists to create a space where children in our community grow their leadership capacity through earnest engagement in an academically rigorous, culturally relevant, and relationship-oriented environment.

VISION Our students will lead transformational change for their communities and our world. They will be thoughtful citizens who understand the responsibility of leaders to shape and create equitable spaces.

GRADUATE OUTCOMES Our students will:

- *Excel academically.* Students excel inside and outside of the classroom. They pursue engagement with rigorous content and learning experiences, achieve at and above grade level, and develop a love for learning.
- *Know themselves.* Students are self-aware. They know their strengths, passions and learning styles. Students are resourceful and seek necessary resources and support.
- *Act purposefully.* Students identify the intersection of their interests, abilities and passions. By taking charge of their own goals and directing their own learning, students develop clear and prioritized plans with their end goals in mind.
- *Collaborate with others.* Students work collaboratively to build knowledge, skills and solve problems. Students contribute to their school and local community.
- *Be socially conscious.* Students are aware of and empathize with injustices and instances of inequity around them. They value collective progress over individual outcomes.

Alumni of The Leadership School will be recognizable by the leadership they display in every facet of their lives: achieving their own life goals, adding value to group projects and group work situations, and addressing societal needs in an equitable and inclusive manner. Simply stated, our graduates will be changemakers and contributors to our community, region, and world.

SCHOOL DESIGN As we develop students who know themselves deeply and are poised to work with others to make a positive impact in the world, we believe we will get there by aligning all aspects of our school model to three key tenets. The first is developing a deep sense of belonging—ensuring that all students are safe, feel seen, and are thriving in a context of strong relationships. We believe this is the precursor and enabler of our second tenet: rigorous academic experiences. This goes beyond mastery of grade level content to include experiences that cultivate the skills needed to thrive in the 21st century. Lastly, the third tenet—authentic leadership—focuses on leveraging relationships and a sense of belonging, alongside each student’s toolkit of academic skills to practice and exercise leadership in one’s own life and the world around them.

Sense of belonging. We value the opinions and insights of young children. As a result, our students will learn and grow in a relationship-centered community that both reflects and honors their ideas,

experiences, and contributions. [The Aspen Institute's research](#) explains the strong connection between emotions and social relationships and how well students learn. Accordingly, we will do the following:

1. Ensure that our students’ learning experiences are centered around topics that matter to their lives and help them to build strong community relationships.
2. Employ relevant, community-centered practices that value our students’ identities and promote an anti-biased/anti-racist community.
3. Engage with individuals and organizations in close proximity to our students so that they learn to understand issues in their own community and address them.
4. Expose students to a range of literature and experiences that help them develop empathy for others and understanding of the world outside of St. Louis

Rigorous academic experiences. At The Leadership School, we believe that a focus on “deeper learning” is the best route for all students to reach the highest levels of academic success and be able to design and live a successful life. According to [Battelle for Kids](#) —a national nonprofit collaborating with school systems and communities to realize the power and promise of 21st century learning for every student— deeper learning occurs through purposeful integration of rigorous academic content with experiences that intentionally cultivate skills, mindsets, and literacies essential for students to become lifelong learners and contributors in the 21st century.

1. Our students will master core academic content and deeper learning competencies by focusing on big thinking at every moment.
2. Beginning in kindergarten and continuing throughout their time at The Leadership School, students will solve their own problems, apply their learning to real-life situations and collaborate with their peers to produce great outcomes.
3. Beginning in middle school, students will have real-world experiences with true internships, job-shadowing opportunities and exploration of career options available for their particular interests, gifts and abilities.

Authentic Leadership. Our emphasis on leadership stems from our trust in students to drive their own learning and to make the best decisions about how they engage in the school community, accomplish goals and take responsibility for their own success. Authentic leadership has three chief implications on the daily experience of students and teachers.

1. Our school model utilizes FranklinCovey’s [Leader in Me](#) program to deliberately teach and unpack the skills of leadership.
2. Teachers facilitate learning as guides, mentors and critical thought-partners to support every student’s process of leading and reflecting on their leadership.
3. In addition to the ways students will learn to lead themselves, we want all of our students to be a part of meaningful decision making for our collective vision. Essentially, we will give students multiple opportunities over multiple years to practice leadership and to make changes in our community—in small and big ways.

DAY IN THE LIFE

Our school day will run from 7:45am - 3:30pm, with building hours from 7:00am - 5:30pm. Before- and after-school care will be run by community partners.

<i>Schedule</i>	<i>Denise’s Experience</i>
7:45 - 8:10am Morning Meeting	Denise arrives at 7:40am and is greeted by her classroom teacher. They begin the morning meeting, which is a motivational and meditative time to celebrate one another, reflect on our goals and set intentions for the day.

8:15 - 9:40am Literacy Workshop	Denise begins the literacy block with a Foundations phonics lesson and independent work on Lexia before meeting in her reading group to learn the process for literature circles. Denise rotates through stations for guided reading instruction, phonics, reading comprehension and literature analysis using curriculum from Achievement First .
9:45 - 10:25am Science Lab	Denise’s class is investigating the properties of light and sound from the Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Curriculum . All of our elementary science labs consists of PLTW science lessons or school-developed curricular materials based on the Missouri Learning Standards and Next Generation Science Standards .
10:30 - 11:00am Physical Education	Denise’s P.E. activity this quarter is soccer.
11:05 - 11:45am Social Studies (M/W) Specials: Art + Music (Tu/Th) Leadership (F)	Today, Denise is learning to “Begin with the end in mind” in her Leadership block. On Mondays + Wednesdays, she has Social Studies, which consists of project-based learning units that are based on the Missouri Learning Standards and personalized to be culturally-relevant to the actual students in our classrooms. On Tuesdays + Thursdays, she has art and music. Older students will also have theatre, computer foundations and Spanish. On Fridays, students have a Leadership course for explicit lessons and reflection on leadership characteristics.
11:50 - 12:30pm Lunch + Recess	Denise goes to lunch where she is the student leader supervising her table’s family-style meal service and clean up.
12:35 - 12:55pm Choice Time	Denise writes another chapter of her book on how she fell in love with geology. Other classmates may choose to rest, read, write, draw or do puzzles.
1:00 - 2:25pm Math Workshop	After completing math stories with the whole class (using Achievement First ’s mathematics curriculum), Denise completes independent work before her small group joins the teacher for guided math instruction.
2:30 - 3:10pm Personalized Learning Lab	During Personalized Learning Lab, Denise has a brief check-in with her teacher to review weekly objectives and set priorities for the upcoming week. Today, she chooses to work on math fact families and completes two modules on iREADY based on her individualized learning goals.
3:15 - 3:30pm Closing Circle	Denise’s best friend, Ethan, leads the class in their daily reflection (what went well and what could have been done differently). After students share, Denise discusses her goals for the evening assignments with an accountability partner.
3:30pm Dismissal	Students have class jobs to make sure that the classroom is prepared for the next day. Denise’s weekly job is to reset the reading area. Her mother is able to check in with the teacher while waiting for her.

3:30 - 5:30pm After-school activities	The Leadership School will partner with Middle School students to supervise tutorial sessions for the students who may benefit from additional assistance. Other activities will be offered by community partners.
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GOALS/OUTCOMES

Academic: The Leadership School will open with kindergarten, first grade and second grade, adding one grade each year thereafter. We will measure academic growth in literacy and mathematics through local assessments and [NWEA](#) (a nationally normed assessment). Our students will grow at least 1.5 years each academic year on the NWEA. We will measure achievement of grade-level standards through the [Missouri Assessment Program](#), beginning in 3rd grade. Students enrolled for three or more years will score proficient or advanced on the state MAP test, with no performance gaps for subgroups. At least 75% of our students will perform at or above grade level upon graduating from The Leadership School.

Operational: We aim to have a 95% average daily attendance rate, and 90% re-enrollment each year. In addition to high re-enrollment rates, we aim to have 90% or more of our parents/family members express satisfaction with our school. We will partner with [Panorama Education](#) to survey our school community.

Governance: The Leadership School will be governed by an independent board pursuant to Missouri state statute for charter public schools. Our board will ensure that the faculty and staff successfully operates the school to fulfill our stated mission in ways that aligns to our stated values and beliefs. Each board member must be present at a minimum of 80% of board meetings, and each board member will meet our annual giving requirement.

Financial: By working with a national organization to provide operational, financial and accounting services, The Leadership School will develop a plan to become financially viable through public funds by our fifth year of operation. Leading indicators of financial sustainability will be: 30 days of cash on hand, positive cash flow, our debt-to-income ratio, and a positive fund balance.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT To ensure that we are able to achieve our mission and provide students with an excellent educational experience, we are learning from and leveraging the curriculum of some of the most successful schools across the country. Specifically, we are utilizing the literacy and mathematics curriculum from Achievement First. This network of charter schools has seen [tremendous success](#) with students who share the demographics of students in our target population. Since 2014-15, Achievement First NYC has grown 34% points in ELA, 24% points in math and 29% points overall—far outpacing the growth of the city and state. In addition to choosing rigorous curriculum and modeling our professional development practices off of strong schools, we are also leveraging research of [learning science](#) and children and young adult [developmental needs](#) to ensure that our academic model fully aligns with how students best learn and that the culture of our school best supports their learning. Finally, we are visiting and learning from successful schools that implement other programs essential to our model: [Van Ness Elementary School](#) in Washington, D.C. ([Conscious Discipline](#)), [Village Tech Charter School](#) in Dallas, TX (Leader in Me) and [Rocketship Public Schools](#), a national charter network (personalized learning).

FOUNDING TEAM

[Kimberly Townsend](#), Lead Founder and Executive Director

Kimberly began her teaching career as a middle school mathematics teacher with Teach For America in St. Louis. With over 16 years of experience teaching and leading school teams in public and private schools, Kimberly is a flexible leader, with an entrepreneurial spirit and unwavering focus on student learning and leadership. She is highly adept at accurately assessing student achievement and academic progress across a variety of settings. She has a wealth of experience in problem-solving around student progress and gaps, and supporting teachers to identify gaps in their own learning and development. At Crossroads College Prep, Kimberly led her team to target student needs more closely, develop personalized interventions and close

achievement gaps for students of color and students with learning differences. Kimberly earned a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies from The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Master of Arts in Teaching - Multidisciplinary Studies from Webster University. She is pursuing a Doctor of Education in K-12 Educational Leadership and Policy from Vanderbilt University.

Gina Watkins, Co-Founder and Director of Student, Family & Community Partnerships

Gina Watkins brings over two decades of experience as an educator and school counselor. She began her educational counseling career in the Riverview Gardens School District and was later recruited by Crossroads College Preparatory School to develop their guidance counseling department. Given her strengths in responding to the social needs of her students, she carved a niche in the school climate to create meaningful students experiences, which led to her additional title of Coordinator of Student Life. In addition to Gina's career as a school counselor, she has spent the past nine years as a Site Director for Aim High St. Louis, a program that serves underserved youth by providing academic and character enrichment for 5 weeks during the summer and one Saturday a month during the school year. Gina earned a bachelor's degree in Recreation and Park Administration from the University of Missouri-Columbia and a master's degree in School Counseling from Lindenwood University.

Kevie Hendrix, Founding Board Member

Kevie is an entrepreneur with more than 20 years of experience in the wholesale distribution industry. Prior to founding National Material Supply Co., LLC in 1999, he worked for Anheuser-Busch as a corporate engineer. At Boeing, he held several roles including engineering scientist, Enterprise Auditor, and a Business Development Manager with Boeing's Industrial Participation Programs Office. His specialties include international business development, start-up operations, online sales and marketing, and project management and logistics. Kevie earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and a Master of Business Administration from the Washington University Olin School of Business.

Lennel Hunter, Founding Board Member

Lennel has worked in the design-build profession for nine years. Over this time, he has gained exposure to nearly all aspects of the project cycle from design development to construction completion. In his current role, he has organized a framework for understanding BIM management comprised of four parts: a company-level strategy, a project-level strategy, a plan for technology research and acquisition, and a system for maintaining BIM assets. Lennel looks forward to leading virtual design and construction efforts in an integrated project delivery environment. He is motivated by opportunities to leverage the power of BIM throughout all project phases including facility operation. Lennel earned a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture from Washington University in St. Louis.

Marcus Robinson, Founding Board Member

Marcus Robinson is a native of St. Louis, Missouri and is the Executive in Residence at The Opportunity Trust. He previously served as the CEO of the Memphis Education Fund, a \$240 million philanthropic collaborative that invests in education improvement initiatives for Memphis schools. Prior to the Memphis Education Fund, Marcus was the Chancellor and CEO of the high performing Tindley Accelerated Schools for 14 years. As the founder and instructional leader, Marcus led Tindley's flagship school to national prominence as its student performance exceeded the district and state averages on the state test as well as the national average on the SAT, working with a student population that was primarily high need and low income. As the state's first Early College High School, Tindley maintained consistently high graduation rates and 100% four-year college placement. Marcus earned a bachelor's degree from DePauw University, a master's degree from Butler University, and a master's degree from Columbia University. He is a member of the Urban Education Leaders Program at Teachers College, Columbia University where he is a doctoral candidate. Marcus is an Aspen Institute Pahara Education Fellow, and he was selected from a group of national charter school leaders to participate in the inaugural Charter Network Accelerator in New York City.