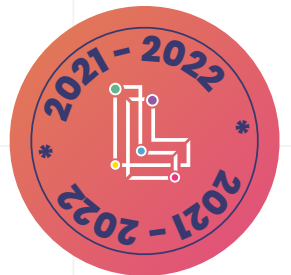


LEAD
co//laborative

Update



A message from our Founder and CEO

DEAR FRIENDS OF LEAD CO/LABORATIVE:

It is an exciting time for all of us at Lead. Our team is getting ready to welcome our fourth cohort of Leadership Institute Fellows, and I will begin a new chapter in my lifelong commitment to educational excellence, transitioning from my role as Saint John's Head of School to become our full-time Executive Director.

The urgency of the issue of public education in Puerto Rico has led me to dedicate all of my energy to this project. I am convinced that our work, coupled with the efforts of the partners and supporters of Lead, will continue to effect dramatic improvements for our school communities and the educational outcomes for all students in Puerto Rico. To this charge, we will: build the capacity of principals in instructional leadership, coach them to appropriately diagnose the issues that impede student achievement, and support them in designing innovative solutions—whether programs or entire schools—for the students they serve.

As we transition Lead into a new phase of growth, there are several partners we would like to thank. First, the Walton Family Foundation, for believing in our vision and providing the seed support for Lead Co/laborative as a program. Next, Saint John's School for housing Lead's program and supporting our operations, the Colibri Foundation for its programmatic and strategic support, and the Peter Alford Foundation for supporting the expansion of our programming. Moving forward, the Flamboyant

Foundation will provide fiscal and administrative support while we grow and establish ourselves as an independent organization.

This coming year we are also looking to grow our network of partners through listening tours and broader stakeholder engagement. As we step up the scope of Lead's work, we will turn to our community of leaders to help us to prioritize and strategically grow our focus. Through a community-focused effort, we will continue to collaborate with passionate, equity-minded organizations that drive change in Puerto Rico.

I trust that this Lead Co/laborative Update 2021-2022 reaffirms your commitment to improving education in Puerto Rico. Your partnership and support is the bedrock of our work, as the challenge to create equitable and high-quality education in Puerto Rico is a community effort that can only be realized together. I'm looking forward to working with you. Whether by supporting us, partnering with us, or helping us to tell our story, together, we will reach our goal of improving schools for all students on our island.

Warmly,

Lorraine Lago

Lorraine Lago
CEO



“

**Until we get equality
in education, we won't
have an equal society.”**

— Sonia Sotomayor



At **Lead Co/laborative** we incubate Puerto Rico's next generation of educational champions with one central aim in mind; provide students a quality education and prepare them for a lifetime of learning and opportunity.



Vision

All children and youth in Puerto Rico have access to equitable high-quality educational opportunities.



Mission

Our mission is to build the capacity of communities and their educational leaders by equipping them with the tools needed to improve student outcomes.



Why we exist

We aim to improve the quality of school leadership in Puerto Rico, and ensure its sustainability, through system-wide programs that support active school leaders and create a pipeline for new leadership.

59%

of Puerto Rico's students do not demonstrate proficiency in State assessments.¹

93%

of school principals felt they had escalating responsibilities assigned without adequate support.²

20%

of school directors are expected to retire by December 2023.³

Impact since 2019



2.5 years



15 schools



41 school leaders



3,000+ students

Theory of Change

If we implement effective instructional leadership professional development, promote communities of practice and provide individual leadership coaching, then the capacity of school leaders will be strengthened, leading to increased leader efficacy and more effective learning environments, which will eventually lead to improved student experiences and academic gains.

¹ Puerto Rico Department of Education. State Report Card Data Visualization. <https://rb.gy/vd6ckr>

² Who is Leading Public Schools in Puerto Rico? Flamboyant Foundation, 2010, p. 27

³ The Department of Education is full of vacancies for teaching staff due to retirement. <https://rb.gy/pllv3c>

A Dynamic Year

Leadership Institute

According to a study completed by Flamboyant Foundation in 2010, **the key lever in increased student achievement is the school principal.** Schools where principals are effective instructional leaders consistently achieve greater student gains. Yet, principals in Puerto Rico are neglected, and the pipeline of rising leadership is quickly declining. In response to the latest research and alarming need, the Lead Co/laborative (Lead) established the Leadership Institute Fellowship.

Since 2019, Lead Co/laborative has supported three cohorts of diverse and accomplished school leaders across Puerto Rico. We have worked with 28 dedicated educators and leaders, impacting over 2,000 students, who came to us with passion and drive to improve learning experiences and bring transformative change to their learning communities. The Leadership Institute guides principals in uncovering their personal leadership styles and establishing learning cultures within their school communities, all with the single focus of supporting great teaching and learning. The fellowship gives leaders the tools they need to effectively diagnose the issues that are preventing their students from achieving significant student gains and formulate effective solutions, following the Instructional Rounds model.

This academic year, as the COVID crisis stabilized, we were finally able to bring our work back to our core: working in schools with leaders, teachers, and students. We made in-person site visits to schools and each school leader was able to maximize the power of Instructional Rounds in their own learning environment. During these site visits, we conducted walkthroughs with our instructional leaders and analyzed objective classroom data, identifying common and impactful problems of practice for each school.



Our leader support extends beyond the school level. Via individual coaching and our participant network, we have worked on building capacity and creating systems to support the students that need us most. Principals have been supported in overcoming systemic barriers in order to build programs that are right for the students they serve. To scale their impact, teachers and leaders become well-versed in strategies for establishing a school culture that supports observation and feedback, goal setting, and collaboration.

We also modeled the walkthroughs, empowering principals to model instruction, make observations of teacher-student work, and later debrief with teachers, all with the aim of improving instruction. Participants were able to see the direct impact of day-to-day instructional modeling and immediate feedback sessions with teachers.

The Leadership Institute Fellowship culminates with each participant school creating a Capstone Project. Our participants have undergone a leadership transformation by this stage in the program, and have the skills, support, and vision to be agents of change in their schools and communities. These projects capture the spirit of **Lead's belief in high-quality, innovative school leadership in service of student achievement.**



A Dynamic Year

Design Lab

Over our first two years, our community of educators has sought pathways to design and implement new models and education strategies that get to the core gaps preventing learning in schools. As a result, the Lead Co/laborative Design Lab was developed. It seeks to support organizations and individuals in conceptualizing and creating learning environments that meet the needs of those they serve. The program guides leaders through a design curriculum led by experts in vision setting, community engagement, academic planning, as well as operations, and funding. Through the design process, participants validate their ideas—from new educational offerings in existing schools to entirely new academic programs to new schools altogether. The community of practice and individual coaching offers critical and consistent support as educators look to launch new learning environments across communities in Puerto Rico



In the Fall of 2021, the first cohort of dedicated leaders completed the Design Lab. Four organizations presented their pitches to potential funders and collaborators. The projects covered a wide range of proposals that further highlight the need for innovative programming in schools beyond whole school redesigns:

P.E.C.E.S

The Programa de Educación Comunal de Entrega y Servicio proposed a skills-based entrepreneurship educational program beginning with grades kinder and first, with the vision of adding an additional grade level to their program every year.

Caras con Causa

The group Caras con Causa designed a vocational school learning environment that promotes the human development of students and their families by offering education in a professional career, centered on a framework of sustainable social and community evolution.

Wesleyan Academy

The Wesleyan Academy Private School designed a STEM afterschool program for grades kinder through sixth, based on student interest and skill development.

South Bronx Charter School of International Cultures and Art (SBCSICA)

The SBCSICA proposed a dual-language arts-based curriculum developed for the Santurce community in San Juan, beginning with grades kinder and first, with the vision of adding an additional grade level to their program every year.

Following completion of the Design Lab, P.E.C.E.S and SBCSICA submitted applications to the Puerto Rico Department of Education Charter Program Office to open and operate schools under the Puerto Rico Charter school law. We are thrilled to announce that both PECES and SBCSICA were approved and will bring their visions to life when they begin operations in the Fall of 2022 and Fall of 2023.

New Partnerships and Collaborations



Community of Practice, Flamboyant Foundation

In 2022, we initiated new collaborations with current and established partners. One of our local partners, Flamboyant Foundation, has centered efforts on strengthening K-3 reading in Puerto Rico through initiatives including a read-aloud series, published research, and curated resources for families and educators. As part of its next phase to achieve the vision of giving students the strong start they need to thrive in school, Flamboyant partnered with Lead Collaborative with the end goal of developing a Design Community of Practice.

The Community of Practice is focused on solutions for learning and instruction that seek to:

1. Design specific strategies to help strengthen community-focused literacy programs.
2. Incubate new literacy initiatives or interventions for students.
3. Exchange experiences and best practices.

Participants include Lee Conmigo, Nuestra Escuela, Jane Stern Library, Wildflower Schools, and Red de Albergues.

Collaboration with Charter School Growth Fund

A new collaboration with the Charter School Growth Fund (CSGF) began due to the synergy and shared mission of both organizations' work. As a national nonprofit that makes philanthropic investments in talented education leaders who build networks of excellent public charter schools, CSGF was interested in further learning about Puerto Rico's education ecosystem and the early success of the charter school options on the Island. Lead planned and led a week-long learning visit for CSGF, that included meetings and site visits with local philanthropic organizations, stakeholders, and charter school leaders. Additionally, Lead supported Caras con Causa, Vimenti, SBCSICA, and PECES during the Seed funding application process and developed robust proposals with clear growth plans.

We continue our partnership with the aim to support:

1. Early charter ecosystem-building and advocacy guidance.
2. Building local capacity to remove systemic barriers and biases to enable the development of sustainable solutions to the capital gaps.
3. Leverage the extensive Charter School Growth Fund portfolio to share startups' best practices to address common challenges with proven solutions.



Fellow Stories

At **Lead Co/laborative**, we have witnessed the transformative power of bringing together like-minded individuals to grow, build and improve. Our Fellows have centered their voices, experiences, and identities in their work, and have begun dismantling barriers in their pursuit of improved opportunities for their students. Here are stories of team members from Cohort 3.

Alanis Rodriguez

3rd-grade Teacher at Vimenti School in San Juan, PR

Alanis has been a teacher for over 15 years. In the last two years, she joined Vimenti School and quickly demonstrated her leadership qualities. As a Teacher Leader, she has found great value in meeting within the Lead Co/laborative network and leaning in as they share common challenges and barriers. In reflecting upon the year, she shares: "I found my superpower in seeing things through a different lens. A lens to support other teachers, maybe even as a coach or a mentor teacher in the next few years." She has seen growth in her students, despite learning interruptions, and she celebrates the strategies, skills, and tools acquired through the program, and how she used them to improve student achievement. "We put too much pressure on ourselves, we need to step back and celebrate the knowledge and expertise we already have and help others to see that in their work".



Azalia Colon

Principal at Vimenti School in San Juan, PR

Sally, as everyone knows her, is a seasoned school leader with 20-plus years of experience. She joined the Vimenti School more than two years ago. When asked about her experience in the Leadership Institute, she says: "Coaching has been a transformative and essential piece in my growth as a leader." Sally explains the importance of self-reflection and of "finding answers from within." She values "looking at things from another lens, another perspective as a practice that is essential in [her] leadership style, thanks to my coach". She focuses on strengthening relationships with organizations and partners and finding the right resources for her teachers' and learners' needs. "As a leader, I continue to focus on motivating our staff to focus on resources and tools to continue improving the reading achievement of our students."



Looking Ahead

Cohort Four, Leadership Institute

June 2022 marks the kick-off of our 4th Cohort of the Leadership Institute Fellowship. Eighteen public school leaders from diverse backgrounds and communities will kick off a Summer Intensive that will be followed by a Community of Practice meeting and two days of convening in the fall and spring.

We look forward to meeting and greeting the new cohort with teams joining us from San Juan, Ponce, and Humacao regions, as well as Alianza Schools: LEAP STEAM Academy of San Juan, Caras con Causa and Santurce-SICA.

Looking Deeper into the Work of our Alumni

Next academic year we will continue to work with Lead alumni who are launching and leading schools and programs to support their new ventures and improve the quality of instruction for their students. We will continue to offer support via networking opportunities, coaching, resources, and a platform to collaborate with the broader network.

The alumni will focus on improvements to the educational ecosystem as they develop their coaching skills, facilitate training sessions, participate in the Design Lab to innovate learning environments or engage in advocacy capacity building to promote equitable and transparent policy implementation.

The Advocacy Lab

We plan to launch an Advocacy Lab that seeks to support and empower “Puerto Rico’s New Protagonists,” a base of school leaders, that will drive forward a common advocacy and policy agenda, moved by the mission to reform the education landscape of Puerto Rico.

Where We Find Our Motivation

Disrupting Ideas

We pay attention to ideas that disrupt the status quo of the education ecosystem in Puerto Rico. Municipal governments, for example, are getting involved in community schools. The municipalities of Loiza, San Juan, and Naranjito are providing new school options to meet students’ needs and interests. Led by experienced local leaders and organizations, rooted in community-based solutions that are relevant to the students they serve, these schools encompass programs in entrepreneurship, arts, early childhood, and STEM tracks.

School Leaders

A critical segment of the education puzzle is school leadership, which has been often overlooked in conversations about educational achievement in Puerto Rico. This segment, which studies have shown to be key to driving student success through instructional leadership, has been historically tasked with excessive responsibilities that don’t allow for true instructional guidance and support to a workforce of teachers. In addition, a crisis looms, as 20% of school directors are expected to retire by December 2023. Given the broader momentum to improve public education in Puerto Rico there is a historic opportunity to improve the quality of school leadership in Puerto Rico and ensure its sustainability, through systems-wide programs that support existing school leaders and create a pipeline for new leadership.



With Gratitude

To our community of fellows, alumni, funders,
mentors, collaborators, and partners:

**We could not do this work
without you.**



Our Supporters and Collaborators

FUNDACIÓN COLIBRÍ

FUNDACIÓN
FLAMBOYÁN

PETER ALFOND
FOUNDATION

WALTON FAMILY
FOUNDATION

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NEW LEADERS

PURE EDGE



@leadcolab



@LeadColabOrg



info@leadcolab.org



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