

# School Empowerment Network



## SCHOOL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

Annual Report 2022-2023



## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Since our founding in 2015, School Empowerment Network has been dedicated to enhancing educational opportunities for students without access to high-quality schooling. Over the past eight years, we've collaborated with more than 25 school districts across Michigan, New York, Massachusetts, Texas, Louisiana, and Georgia, positively impacting the educational journey of over 100,000 students.

Our boldest vision is to increase the number of districts and school leaders across the country who are developing transformational schools where students experience the joy of learning, feel a sense of belonging, and are prepared for future success. Over the next three years, SEN aims to expand its impact by 60%, increasing the number of transformational schools nationwide and positively affecting over 60,000 students in 25 school districts. To achieve this growth, we will increase our annual budget from approximately \$6 million to \$10 million through both earned revenue and philanthropic investment.

Looking ahead, we are excited to continue to learn and grow, enabling us to better fulfill our mission of *empowering local leaders to establish high-performing schools grounded in proven design principles, providing rigorous and engaging instruction, and fostering caring relationships between students and staff.*

We extend our gratitude to our supporters and our exceptionally talented and dedicated staff for your invaluable partnership in this transformational work.

Alex Shub  
Chief Executive Officer

November 2023

### GET IN TOUCH



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THEORY OF CHANGE

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

NEW SCHOOL DESIGN FELLOWSHIP

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEWS

CULTURE COACHING

EXECUTIVE COACHING

FINANCIALS



# SEN THEORY OF CHANGE

## THEORY OF CHANGE

Inputs	Outputs
<b>Leadership Development</b>	Diverse pipeline of entrepreneurial school leaders
<b>New School Design</b>	Detailed school design plans reflecting the wants and needs of local communities and districts
<b>School Quality Reviews</b>	School quality report- grounded in tested rubric - that identifies what works and provides practical action steps for immediate improvement
<b>School Culture Support</b>	Improved attendance, decreased referrals and suspensions, increased satisfaction for all community stakeholders
<b>Executive Strategic Support</b>	Action plan to improve student outcomes, especially for underserved, based on community feedback and school performance data

- HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT
- PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
- NEW SCHOOL DESIGN FELLOWSHIP
- SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEWS
- CULTURE COACHING
- EXECUTIVE COACHING
- FINANCIALS

### Short-term Outcomes

Best-in-class student results  
 A pipeline of exceptional local educators  
 Transformational school designs  
 Data-driven decision making  
 Positive school cultures where students and families feel valued and welcomed  
 Tools for continuous improvement

### Long-term Outcome

Transformational schools where all students are treasured, challenged, and inspired

**Build the ecosystem to support innovation and sustain the impact of transformational schools**



# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

## YEAR AT A GLANCE

- Provided intensive coaching to leaders in 25 existing schools, impacting over 10,000 students
- Supported the planning phase for three new schools in Texas
- Conducted comprehensive reviews of 97 schools, collectively serving approximately 30,000 more students.
- Assisted 11 NYC superintendents in revitalizing school districts

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

### PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



Our program in Springfield, MA boasts a 92% staff retention rate, with 60% of participants being people of color, surpassing the district's diversity representation. Notably, 60% of vacant leadership roles were filled by program participants.

PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

### NEW SCHOOL DESIGN FELLOWSHIP



SEN schools demonstrated strong outcomes in reading and math, surpassing state results. In the Fall of 2022, we launched 16 new schools, all of which showed growth in their Quality Reviews. 100% of Fellows rate our coaching as either effective or highly effective.

NEW SCHOOL DESIGN FELLOWSHIP

### SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEWS



SEN conducted 124 quality reviews in 97 schools. Over 98% of surveyed school leaders said that the written SQR report provided high-leverage recommendations, and 84% reported tangible school improvements resulting from the feedback received.

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEWS

### SCHOOL CULTURE COACHING PROGRAM



In schools with SEN culture coaching, suspensions and referrals dramatically decreased. 100% of staff and leaders affirm the program improved safety and student-staff relations. This year, we expanded our culture coaching practice to two new districts.

CULTURE COACHING

### EXECUTIVE COACHING



SEN partnered with NYCDOE to support 11 superintendents in creating effective planning frameworks and fostering engagement with students, families, and communities. Several districts are already seeing 5-10% increase in student enrollment.

EXECUTIVE COACHING

FINANCIALS



# PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP PROGRAM ● ●

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Leaders must be cultivated and developed over time to orient them to the task of visionary leadership centered on students. The **Pathways to Leadership Program** (PLP) was created to offer leadership development and access to career pathways, particularly for aspiring leaders of color. The program aims to identify talented and high potential educators early in their careers, train them to lead adults in their school community, and nurture them toward opportunities for increased impact.

## RESULTS IN SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

### Staff Retention

With a 92% retention rate, the program is steadfast in its mission. 60% of participants are people of color, surpassing the Springfield Empowerment Zone's (SEZP's) current representation, where half of its leaders also represent diverse backgrounds.

### Leadership Pipeline

60% of vacant Assistant Principal and Principal roles in SEZP were filled by promotions of participants in the EPL program.

### School District and Culture

An overwhelming 96% of participants found our 1:1 coaching effective, Moreover, 91% reported increased professional satisfaction, accompanied by a similar percentage witnessing significant improvements in their personal leadership skills.

### School Improvement

Five of six participating schools achieved significant student gains in the EPL focus areas, for example:

- **High School of Commerce:** 8-point rise in math MCAS proficiency and 15-point increase in SGP for IEP students.
- **Emergence Academy:** 15-point rise in math SGP and 23-point rise in ELA SGP, with fewer students scoring as Not Proficient.
- **Kiley Prep Middle School:** 32-point increase in 8th grade MLL students' ELA MCAS SGP.
- **Chestnut TAG Middle School:** Average 8-point increase in NWEA math scores from fall 2022 to spring 2023.



## PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP PROGRAM ● ●



*My coach's strength is having an incredible mix of competence & compassion. I had no idea what being both could look like... [my coach's] "way of being" has served as a role model for the leader I aspire to be.*



*I appreciate that [my coach] has a resource for almost everything. After every coaching session, I had a resource that I could immediately use going forward. That was super helpful. It was wonderful to work with someone that I highly respect and trust in the work.*



*Leadership training like no other*



*Amazing 1:1 coaching that advanced my professional leadership*

THEORY OF CHANGE

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



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SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEWS

CULTURE COACHING

EXECUTIVE COACHING

FINANCIALS

### The Commerce Aspire Program

**The Commerce Aspire Program (CAP) is an initiative within the High School of Commerce aimed at combating high school dropout rates. It focuses on building a community of At-Promise learners through a flexible and targeted learning approach.**

In its pilot phase during the 2022-23 School Year, CAP enrolled 26 chronically disengaged students, resulting in 2 graduates and 21 ongoing enrollments. In its first full year, CAP now serves 54 students, with plans to reach 75 by June 2024. The program offers thirteen distinct career pathways, each including a paid internship opportunity. Some examples of these partnerships include CVS Pharmacy Tech, Square One Childcare, ROCA (construction), and Holyoke Community College's culinary program.



## NEW SCHOOL DESIGN FELLOWSHIP ● ●

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

We believe that leaders can create transformational schools when allowed and supported to do so. To that end, SEN has created a year-long **School Design Fellowship** that gives leaders the time and space to develop detailed school plans for new, high-quality, inclusive schools. Concurrently, they develop the leadership and change management skills needed to lead new school communities toward dramatically improved outcomes. Our new schools typically receive two years of post-opening support to guide leaders through inevitable obstacles and avoid regression to business-as-usual practices as they guide their school community toward their transformational vision.

### RESULTS IN TEXAS

#### SEN schools have strong student outcomes

SEN supported schools continue to demonstrate strong student outcomes, especially in reading and math. On average, **60% of students in SEN-supported new schools are demonstrating on-grade-level proficiency in both reading and math**, as measured by either state or nationally normed assessments. This outpaces the state, where on average, only 53% of students are demonstrating on-grade-level proficiency in reading, and only 42% in math.

#### Even as we grow, our schools continue to improve

We launched 16 additional new schools in the Fall of 2022, all of which completed a Fall and Spring School Quality Review, a comprehensive review of school pedagogy, culture and programming. 100% of these schools demonstrated growth from their Fall to Spring review, meaning they improved in at least one category.

#### Our coaching is best in class

100% of our coaches are former school leaders of high-performing schools, and their experience shines in their work supporting new schools. 100% of our Fellows in the New School Design Fellowship in end-of-year satisfaction surveys rate the coaching they receive as either effective or highly effective, with 87% rating it highly effective.



## NEW SCHOOL DESIGN FELLOWSHIP ● ●



*AMAZING! Amazing! Amazing! There is always an agenda, but my coach also gives me time to explain the support I need, and he supports me in the moment. He has a protocol, book, system, or quote for anything I need. I've learned so much from him.*



*My coach really helps me see things through a different lens as he coaches me. He pushes my own thinking and has me reflect on my goals to improve my leadership abilities. We look at the goals we have established for our campus and the systems and practices that are in place to see if there is alignment. The way he coaches me has supported my coaching with my teachers. I try to model what he does with me as he coaches me.*



*SEN has helped me to identify, prioritize, plan, and implement intentional opportunities for our staff and students. SEN goes a step further by staying with me. In other words, SEN keeps me focused on the plan and implementation through reflection and encouragement even when it's easy to get caught up in the thick of all the distraction that comes the way of the principal.*



*My coach pushes and challenges me with good questions that help me to arrive at answers I didn't know I have. He also varies his support based on my needs. I need a lot of help with some things and he will help me see it through to completion and other times I just need a nudge or to get started so I can carry through the rest.*



# SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEWS ● ●

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Schools need meaningful feedback on their efforts and recommendations for high-leverage actions to take in support of their goals. Our in-depth **School Quality Review** process uses a research-backed rubric to locate school practices on a continuum and identify the actions that meet the school community where it is and can move the school to the next level of performance.

## RESULTS IN MASSACHUSETTS AND TEXAS

SEN conducted 124 quality reviews in 97 schools. 98% of school leaders found the 2021-2022 report's recommendations clear and actionable. Over 90% reported tangible school improvements from the feedback. In 2022-23, 91% found classroom visits and debriefs valuable for professional growth. 95% looked forward to receiving the 2022-2023 report.

### School Leaders' Opinion about the 2021-22 SQR process

#### Agree %

The 2021-2022 written SQR report provided high-leverage recommendations.	98%
SEN recommendations were considered while crafting schools' annual strategic plans, yearly goals, or similar.	90%
The feedback received in 2021-2022 resulted in tangible school improvements.	84%

### School Leaders' Opinion about the 2022-23 SQR process

#### Agree %

The end-of-review feedback conference was facilitated effectively & laid out emerging strengths and areas of focus.	97%
The classroom visits & debriefs conducted with the reviewer were valuable professional development for me as a leader.	91%
I expect that the 2022-23 SQR report will provide clear, understandable, and high-leverage recommendations.	95%



## SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEWS ● ●



*My pre-review person was amazing. He answered all my questions. Very friendly and knowledgeable. Their feedback was invaluable. I know the results will help me grow as an instructional leader. I am truly looking forward to the feedback.*



*The SQR visit is one of the best professional development experiences for ensuring that all stakeholder groups have a voice in the functioning of the school.*



*My SQR experience provided me with further insight on the perspectives of my students, parents, and teachers. It was very rewarding to hear what they had to say about each other and our campus. The SQR has been a very positive experience and receiving the feedback further motivated me and my leadership team to continue doing the work to successfully establish our campus. I look forward to receiving my spring SQR report to continue to plan and focus on our areas of opportunity. I greatly appreciate the SQR reviewers taking the day to visit with us and share with us their expertise, feedback and affirmations. During the debrief, I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude, when they shared how they envision the heights that we can take our campus.*



*I greatly appreciate the clear, honest feedback about what is going well and what areas there are for improvement!*



*Both reviewers clearly had extensive experience that I was able to benefit from.*



# CULTURE COACHING



THEORY OF CHANGE

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

SEN's culturally-responsive **School Culture and Climate Coaching** is grounded in the belief that transformational schools begin with a positive culture in which every student is valued as their authentic self and is supported to build a successful academic identity without compromising their personal identity. SEN works with elementary, middle, and high school leaders to revise schools' traditional systems and structures so they promote relationship-building, maximize student achievement, and create practices that are student-centered and student-empowering.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

## RESULTS

### Southbridge, MA

At Southbridge Middle School, notable progress was evident. Student attendance rose from 89% to 91%, while staff attendance increased from 95% to 97%. Suspensions saw a substantial 20% decrease. Additionally, there was a noteworthy enhancement in the Positive Learning Environment (PLE), with a greater number of students consistently engaged and participating in class.

PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

NEW SCHOOL DESIGN FELLOWSHIP

Southbridge High School saw significant improvements as well. There was a remarkable 62% reduction in suspensions, and daily referrals decreased by 27%.

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEWS

### SEN's Culture Coaching is delivering results and growing

The coaching relationship with Southbridge has remained highly successful, prompting the addition of West Street Elementary mid-year, driven by the high satisfaction expressed by district leaders. This partnership has been renewed for the upcoming year.

Lawrence, MA, a new client in 2022-23, experienced such satisfaction that not only was the contract renewed for the next year, but it was also expanded and doubled mid-year. Similarly, in Saugus, MA, also a new client, the coaching relationship was so effective that the contract was expanded, and there was a shift in focus to address staff morale in the district schools, leading to a contract renewal for the next year.

CULTURE COACHING



EXECUTIVE COACHING

FINANCIALS



# CULTURE COACHING



## KEY METRICS IN SOUTHBRIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL

SEN coaching began in Jan 2020

Safety	SY 18-19	SY 19-20	SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23
Suspensions	854	159	N/A	106	85

“  
**SEN has a unique perspective, because their vision of a positive and focused classroom aligns with ours. An important perspective that our SEN coach brings is that he steps back to look at objective data that we may lose sight of as we are 'in the arena' trying to improve our school**

Learning Environment	SY 21-22	SY 22-23
Students on-task	88%	95%
Participating actively	39%	51%
Avg. PLE Rating <sup>1</sup>	3.64	3.99

Attendance, Satisfaction	SY 21-22	SY 22-23
Student attendance	89%	91%
Staff attendance	95%	97%
Student satisfaction	67%	70%
Staff satisfaction	95%	95%

### CULTURE COACHING



## KEY METRICS IN SOUTHBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

SEN coaching began in Jan 2021

Safety	SY 18-19	SY 19-20	SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23
Suspensions		181	N/A	195	74

(1) An assessment on a “1-to-5” scale of the level of academic engagement observed and the level of safety, warmth, and respect demonstrated student-to-student and between Teacher and students.

Source: District referral logs and SEN classroom observations. Due to COVID-related school closures, SY 19-20 data is through March 2020 and there is no data available for SY 20-21.



# EXECUTIVE COACHING



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Transformational districts meaningfully involve the community in identifying the ways current school options are and are not meeting the needs of students and families. SEN's **Executive Coaching** service helps cabinet-level leaders to collect input, analyze data, consider political realities, and apply change management best practices to inform a multi-year plan for improving the collective offerings across the district.

## RESULTS IN NEW YORK CITY

### Overview

In the 2022-23 school year, SEN collaborated with New York City DOE to support Community Superintendents in revitalizing districts through the development of three-year Districtwide Increased Enrollment Plans (DIEP). SEN created a comprehensive planning framework to guide student, family, and community engagement efforts and districts used community input and school performance data to inform strategy and decision-making.

SEN provided tailored coaching sessions to 11 superintendents and their teams, resulting in deeper understanding of their data, clear targets for improved offerings, and multi-year plans focused on strategies to enhance education quality and attract more students to NYCDOE school options. Several districts are already seeing 5-10% increase in enrollment.



*Innovation and collaboration are some of the driving forces behind SEN, which have empowered our district's enrollment plan strategy with unwavering support. Through this collaborative effort, we have refined and enhanced our existing systems and structures. These improvements will pave the way for a transformative movement, aimed at enhancing the learning experience for all students and attracting more families to join our district.*

**Dr. Kristy De La Cruz,**  
NYC Community Superintendent



# EXECUTIVE COACHING

## RESULTS IN NEW YORK CITY (CONTINUED)

### Highlights of Activities and Accomplishments

**Community Engagement:** Crucial to the planning process was a thorough grasp of the district community's needs and inclusivity of historically marginalized perspectives. District teams actively involved staff, students, families, and local leaders through diverse methods. Feedback analysis pinpointed the top five data themes that aligned with the high-level strategy.

**District Data Analysis:** Teams delved into data from the Office of District Planning, encompassing 5-year enrollment trends, district capacity, school demand, specialized programs, partnerships, recruitment practices, student and family surveys, and school performance and quality. The top five data themes, connected to enrollment decline, guided the strategy.

**Strategic Alignment:** Teams devised a districtwide solution for declining enrollment, aligning with community needs, such as: the recently passed CEC resolution for Newest New Yorkers, the Chancellor's vision to shift student experience towards career connected learning, the Mayor's Task Force focused on rebooting the city's approach to talent and workforce development, and the city-wide priority of increasing access to comprehensive services at each school.

**Quality Districtwide Increased Enrollment Plans (DIEPs):** Teams pinpointed key areas for action, spanning district-wide enrollment enhancements, recruitment strategies, new school introductions, high-demand school expansions, existing school redesigns and mergers, grade reconfigurations, program additions, and leadership changes.



*SEN is a reliable partner, offering heartfelt district-level support. They empathize with District and Building Leadership, always eager to discuss solutions for district and school challenges. Their driven, proactive, and professional qualities made them exceptional thought partners in designing our enrollment plan. SEN coaches are brilliant planners who excel at creating tailored, practical plans for success.*

**Dr. Rebecca Lozada**  
NYC Community Superintendent



## FINANCIALS

Over the next three years, SEN aims to grow our impact by 60% by increasing the number of transformational schools nationwide, positively affecting over 60,000 students in 25 school districts.

This will require increasing the annual budget from approximately \$6 million to \$10 million, mainly to cover staffing costs for leadership development, culture and climate coaching programs, and a central team to support the growth strategy.

	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
<b>Operating Budget</b>	<b>\$5.8M</b>	<b>\$6.4M</b>	<b>\$7.2M</b>	<b>\$9.5M</b>
<b>Students</b>	41,200	43,200	51,700	62,000
<b>Schools</b>	103	108	129	155
<b>Districts</b>	19	21	22	25

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

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THEORY OF CHANGE

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

NEW SCHOOL DESIGN FELLOWSHIP

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEWS

CULTURE COACHING

EXECUTIVE COACHING

FINANCIALS