

ELEVATING STUDENT SUCCESS



AUSL

IMPACT REPORT
2023

OUR ANNUAL LETTER

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we turn the page and begin a new and reinvigorating era of service to quality education in Chicago and beyond, we must acknowledge the tremendous support of the partners and supporters that have made this work possible for over 20 years.

Looking back on the past two decades, AUSL has singularly focused on advancing educational equity for thousands of Pre-k to 12th-grade students in the most underinvested public schools in Chicago. One thing that has remained constant in all these years is our close collaboration with Chicago Public Schools, community leaders, civic champions, and parents to pursue our collective, tireless efforts to ensure students get an excellent education right in their own neighborhoods. We're so grateful to carry the strong partnerships we've forged into a new era of AUSL.

This past year marked our final year of school management. While our role in school management has concluded, our dedication to students across Chicago and the country remains steadfast. We've been hard at work recruiting passionate, diverse teachers in hard-to-fill positions and admitted a class of 89 teachers to the 2024 Chicago Teacher Residency cohort. Simultaneously, we're leveraging the lessons learned in 15+ years of school management by expanding our school and district advisory services, LiberatED Way, and engaging schools across six states in creating equitable, community-focused student experiences that rally teachers, school leaders, and communities together around a shared vision for student success.

This year's Impact Report captures the story of our work in action and its authentic results, while celebrating those that make this all possible. We enter this school year with appreciation for the progress we've already witnessed, gratitude for our partners and champions continued support, and a reaffirmed commitment to ensuring that all students have access to an excellent education.

On behalf of the AUSL Board of Directors, we thank you for your continued commitment to our partner schools, teachers, and students.

Sincerely,



Cardelle Spangler
Chair, AUSL
Chicago Managing Partner,
Winston & Strawn LLP



Martin J. Koldyke
Founder and Chair Emeritus,
AUSL



Donald Feinstein, Ph.D.
Executive Director
AUSL

MISSION AND VALUES

Our Mission

The Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) is a nonprofit organization that provides equity-focused programming to improve educational outcomes for students in underinvested communities. Our nationally-recognized Teacher Residency Program, recruits and trains diverse teachers with the long-term passion and skillset needed. By leveraging the success of our Advisory Services, AUSL is transforming schools to help school districts across the country.

Our Core Values

Accountability

Collaboration

Excellence

Initiative

Urgency



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NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Our Strategic Direction

AUSL has accomplished much in our short history, impacting thousands of teachers and students in our first two decades of work. After successfully transitioning our managed schools to their geographic networks, we are firmly committed to continuing our strong partnership with Chicago Public Schools by training high-quality teachers to serve in schools with the greatest need.

The AUSL Chicago Teacher Residency (CTR) seeks to:

- Increase the supply of teachers in hard-to-staff subject areas (including special education, STEM, PE, and bilingual education) and in low-income communities where positions are most likely to be vacant
- Help diversify Chicago's teacher workforce
- Ensure that incoming teachers are receiving rigorous and extensive training so that they are ready to provide high-quality instruction on day one
- Improve the retention of early-stage career teachers

Through an incredible partnership with DePaul University, we look forward to exploring the possibility of training even more new teachers. We invite our corporate and foundation partners and individual champions to support the CTR as an accelerant to other initiatives aimed at improving student achievement in under-resourced schools.

Our experience operating an innovation zone in the third-largest school district in the U.S. has catalyzed the next evolution of our Advisory Service work. LiberatED Way Advisory Services are partnering with schools and school districts around the country to engage communities in creating shared visions for student experiences that lead to whole-child success.

AUSL's LiberatED Way Advisory Services seek to:

- Help school districts define a community-driven and student-centered vision
- Establish foundational school structures for culture and instruction
- Foster authentic family and community partnerships
- Create a robust and aligned teacher development system

LiberatED Way partners with over 65 schools nationwide to help transform the vision of student success for over 50,000 students in Chicago and beyond. As we look to expand our partnerships, we invite our supporters to champion this opportunity to bring our expertise in instructional design, instructional leadership, and family engagement to help transform school communities across the country.



ABOUT CTR AND IMPACT DATA

The Chicago Teacher Residency

The Chicago Teacher Residency is one of the oldest, and one of the most successful teacher residency programs in the country. Since 2001, our nationally recognized Teacher Residency has developed effective teachers by training residents in evidence-based practices and creating space for them to practice applying strategies authentically.

The work of recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers happens in partnership with Chicago Public Schools, DePaul University, AmeriCorps, parents, students, guardians, educators, community partners and philanthropic supporters. Through this partnership, the program has graduated 1,371 highly effective teachers.

Chicago Teacher Residency Impact

CTR TRAINS TEACHERS



The Chicago Teacher Residency Program (CTR) has developed and supported **1,371** high-quality educators in the last 20 years for Chicago Public Schools.

CTR RETAINS TEACHERS



Over the last 3 years, **89.4%** of CTR graduates are still working in CPS, as compared to the approximate 50% national retention rate for all public school teachers¹.

CTR RECRUITS FOR TEACHERS OF COLOR



Within the incoming class of 2024, **75%** of residents identify as teachers of color, surpassing the national average (20% teachers of color²).

CTR TRAINS IN HARD - TO - STAFF AREAS

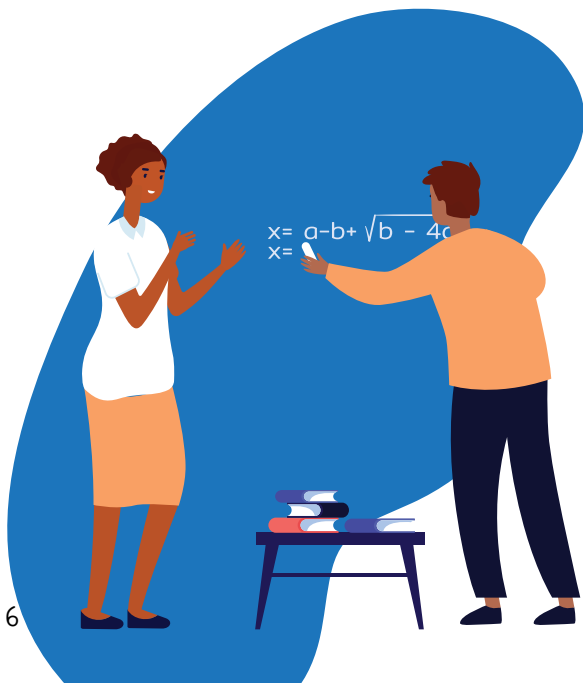


The incoming class of 2024 will train **69%** of residents in hard-to-staff areas: Special Education, Middle School Math and Middle School Science.

CTR RECRUITS DIVERSE LEARNER TEACHERS



48% of the incoming class of 2024 residents will train in the Diverse Learners program; CTR is committed to recruiting teachers with a commitment and passion for special education.

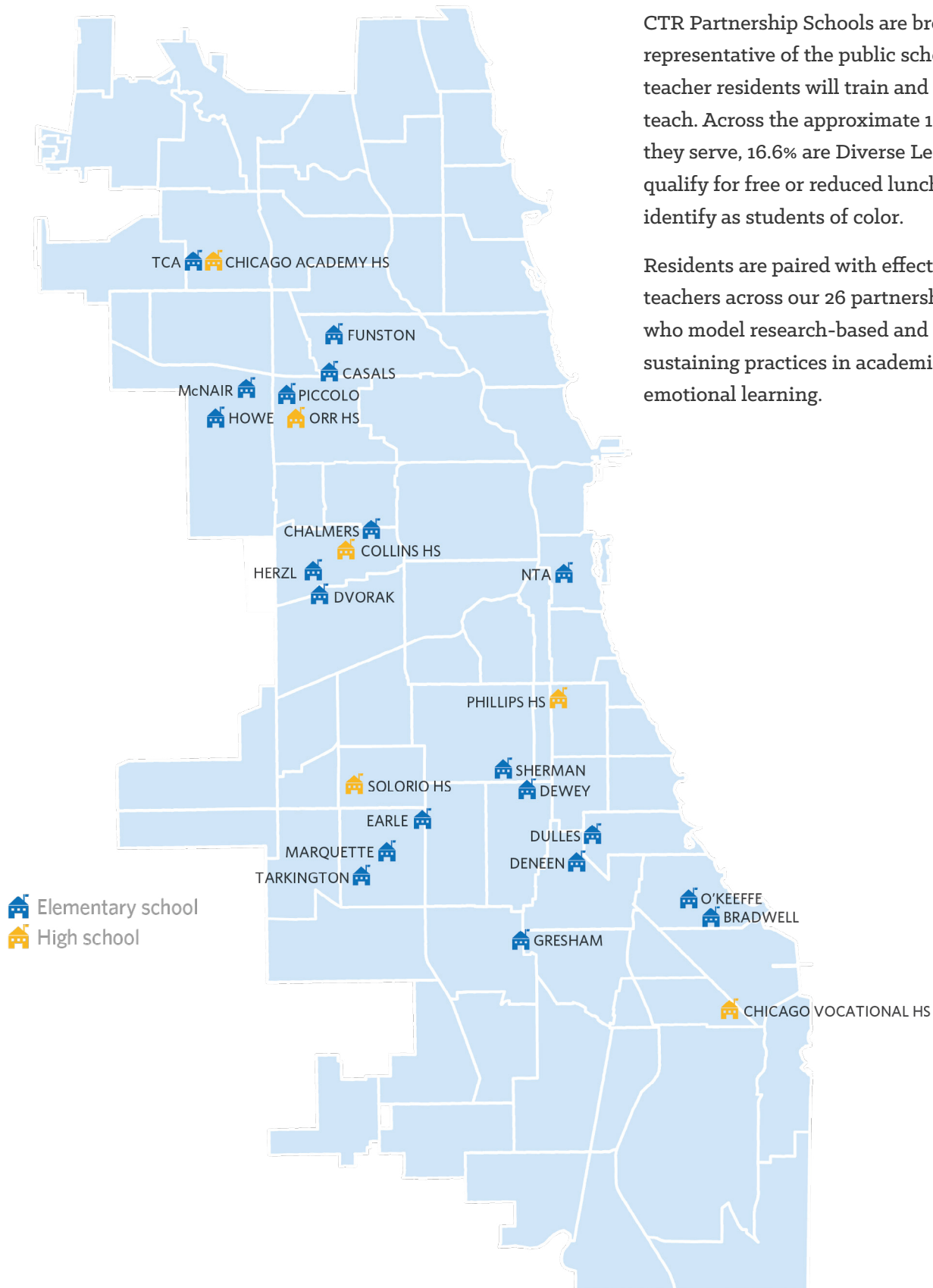




CTR PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS

CTR Partnership Schools are broadly representative of the public schools where teacher residents will train and eventually teach. Across the approximate 12,000 students they serve, 16.6% are Diverse Learners, 85% qualify for free or reduced lunch, and 95% identify as students of color.

Residents are paired with effective mentor teachers across our 26 partnership schools who model research-based and culturally sustaining practices in academic and social-emotional learning.





CTR PARTNERSHIPS

At AUSL, we believe that truly transformative impact necessitates a coalition of partners working alongside one another toward the same goal. AUSL is able to live out our mission because of our strong partnerships with AmeriCorps, Chicago Public Schools, and DePaul University.

We are pleased to partner with DePaul University’s College of Education and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to support the Chicago Teacher Residency (CTR) program. AUSL, CPS, and DePaul have worked in partnership since 2015 to address the challenges educators face, particularly within areas classified as high-needs districts, while expanding upon and improving the one year residency model. Together, we have increased the number of observation and student teaching hours in the classroom and have provided individual mentor training with experienced teachers. The partnership with DePaul University’s College of Education allows residents to take intensive coursework which culminates in their procurement with teaching licensure, and an optional certification in Special Education.

AmeriCorps’ partnership helps make participating in CTR a reality for many residents. AmeriCorps funding supports the recruitment of a diverse applicant pool, passionate about hard-to-fill teaching specialties (Special Education, STEM, PE, and Bilingual Education). Additionally, partnership with AmeriCorps provides residents access to childcare assistance and health insurance during the program, helping to remove significant barriers to participation. The AmeriCorps Segal Education Award and DePaul TEACH Grant, in conjunction with the AUSL Scholarship (funded in partnership with CPS), help cover resident expenses throughout the program up to \$31,095.

Importantly, these partnerships also address the teacher shortage in Chicago by creating a sustainable, scalable, and replicable human capital pipeline for the most at-need schools in CPS. Residents’ training and mentorship all takes place within CPS, where they will eventually lead their own classroom. This helps to build a network of support with the anticipated outcome being a higher teacher retention rate within these schools. In the years to come, continued expansion and innovation of the current program will produce more highly qualified teachers who are prepared to meet CPS’s specific needs.



AmeriCorps



The potential positive and lasting future impacts of the CTR program cannot be overstated.

—Paul Zionts, Ph.D.

Dean, DePaul University College of Education

We are convinced that the expansion and innovations of the current [CTR] program will produce more highly qualified teachers who are prepared to meet CPS’s specific needs.

—Ben Felton

Deputy Chief Talent Officer, Chicago Public Schools



CTR GRADUATION CEREMONY

After a year of growth and learning in their classrooms, the 2023 Chicago Teacher Residency cohort concluded their year-long program on May 30th, 2023 by celebrating their graduation.

At the graduation ceremony, Residents were officially conferred with their master's degree in a teaching field, adding 76 educated, diverse and well-equipped teachers to Chicago Public Schools.

DePaul University President Dr. Robert Manuel, AUSL Board Chair Cardelle Spangler and directors of AUSL addressed the graduating class, congratulating them on their achievement and underlining the importance of investing in the future of children's education in Chicago.

A few members of the class shared heartfelt speeches with their cohort and the attendees. Their words emphasized the strength of the community they built through CTR and the accomplishment of their mission to empower young students to be their best.





ABOUT ADVISORY SERVICES AND IMPACT

LiberatED Way Advisory Services

LiberatED Way is a national school Advisory Service that specializes in helping school leaders unlock the power of community-driven school improvement plans. We empower school communities to create a collective vision for students that guides the long-term, sustainable change that they want to see. This means providing and executing a structured school improvement approach that is uniquely tailored to each school/district's context and needs. We ground all our work in the unwavering belief that students deserve experiences that are rigorous, relevant, affirming to their identities, and conscious of their social and emotional needs.

Building on decades of school management experience, LiberatED Way began as a pilot within the AUSL network in 2019 to embrace innovation in school improvement with a focus on community-driven change.



LIBERATED WAY REACH:

- **65+ Schools**
- **50,000 Students**
- **6 States**
- **10 Cities**

LIBERATED WAY IMPACT:



96% of staff at our partner schools say that LiberatED Way is impactful or very impactful for their school



87% of staff say that LiberatED Way helped them articulate a whole child vision for student success



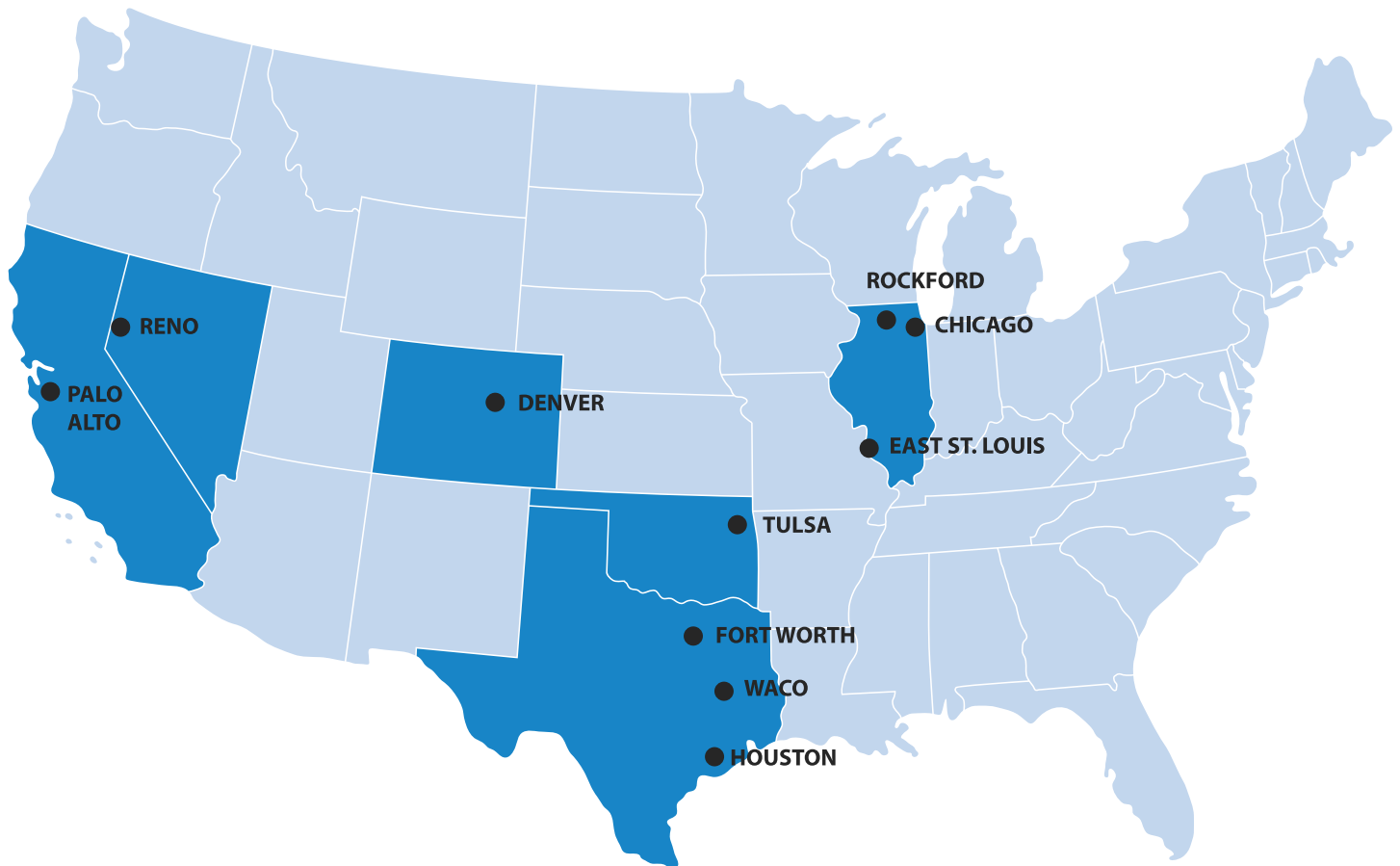
73% of staff say that LiberatED Way meaningfully grew collective leadership capacity to implement a community-driven vision for student learning

**Data compiled from FY22 surveys*



LIBERATED WAY PARTNERSHIPS

The schools and districts we are partnering with to reach 50,000 students:



ILLINOIS

- Carole Robertson Center for Learning
- Chicago Public Schools (through University of Virginia)
- Chicago Public Schools Network 11
- East St. Louis District
- Rockford Public Schools

CALIFORNIA

- Ravenswood City School District

COLORADO

- RiseUp Community High School

NEVADA

- enCompass Academy High School

OKLAHOMA

- Tulsa Public Schools

TEXAS

- Houston ISD
- Fort Worth ISD
- Transformation Waco

CURRENT PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS:

- New Schools Venture Fund
- Good Reason Houston
- Rainwater Charitable Foundation

6 states

10 cities

65+ Schools

50,000 students



ADVISORY SERVICES CASE STUDIES

LiberatED Way Case Studies

The LiberatED Way Advisory Services team has been busy transforming student experiences across the country. These are just a few relevant examples of LiberatED Way expertise in action:

Project Focus	Key LiberatED Way Areas of Expertise	Representative Case Study
Building a powerful community coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating learning/collaboration with diverse groups of adults and students Coalition recruitment Communication and storytelling tailored to diverse stakeholders 	<p>Tulsa Public Schools Graduate Promise Council: In spring of 2023, LiberatED Way recruited and onboarded a diverse council of 40 students, parents, and educators from across the city to shape and refine Tulsa's learner-centered Graduate Promise while engaging in relevant skill-building experiences along the way. Central to our approach was “flipping the fish-bowl” and empowering Council members as architects of the work.</p>
Assessing and building capacity, assets, and opportunities for growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating interviews and focus group spaces that yield candid, constructive, rich feedback Complex information synthesis and reporting Equity-focused/rigorous instruction, school culture/ climate, and family and community engagement best practices School and district leader coaching and professional learning 	<p>Houston ISD RISE Cohort Needs Assessment: LiberatED Way engaged with hundreds of stakeholders from across 24 different school communities in spring 2022 to uncover and articulate school-specific and district-wide assets and opportunity area trends/insights spanning classroom instruction, adult wellness, student belonging, programs/partnerships, and family engagement. The team then developed and unpacked a comprehensive report with district leadership that informed additional right-sized supports from our team for school and district leaders in the form of coaching and professional learning.</p>
Co-creating a shared vision for student success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning science across child development phases and skills needed to excel in the future world of work Liberatory design (design thinking + DEI) 	<p>RiseUp Way Graduate Portrait: Starting in spring 2022, LiberatED Way worked with a design team consisting of school staff, school leaders, parents, students, community members, employers and board members to publish and build a strategic plan around a unifying, whole student graduate portrait and priority look-fors, creating a shared language for student success. This holistic approach helped reclassify the school from the state equivalent of “needs improvement” to being back on track for sustained success.</p>



ADVISORY SERVICES: LIBERATED LINK - UP CONFERENCE

The 2023 LiberatED Link-Up Conference



In June 2023, AUSL's LiberatED Way brought more than 80 school leaders from across the country to Chicago for their second annual LiberatED Leaders Link-Up (L3). The three-day event began with a sunset cruise along the Chicago River for the leaders to connect over dinner and views of the city. The workshops and discussions continued at The Metropolitan lifestyle and business club on the 67th floor of Willis Tower.

The LiberatED Way team developed the sessions based on input from the attendees, following a non-traditional conference structure referred to as an "Unconference". The L3 Unconference centered around the voices of Gen Z, the trailblazing generation of current K-12 students and young teachers. Expert facilitators guided school leaders through sessions on reaching, teaching, and leading Gen Z students and teachers.

Throughout the Unconference, leaders chose small-group discussions to dive into the topics most relevant to their work. "One of the key takeaways from the Unconference was the reaffirmation of the importance of cultivating inclusive and student-centered learning environments," said Ulric Shannon, Director of Purpose at LiberatED Way. "The discussions emphasized the need to create spaces where every student's voice is valued, where their identities are celebrated, and where their individual strengths are nurtured."

Other topics ranged from managing workload and teacher mindset to engaging school families and communities. The attendees, from 10 school districts across 5 states, reflected on challenges and shared solutions to best serve each of their school communities.





ADVISORY SERVICES: LIBERATED LINK - UP CONFERENCE



Dr. Natalie Neris, Chief of Community Engagement at Kids First Chicago, delivered the keynote address, emphasizing the importance of authenticity and curiosity in relationship-building. LiberatED Way also invited a panel of six Gen Z students and a panel of seven Gen Z teachers who shared insights on how to best support them in the classroom. Exchanging values across generations refreshed leaders' perspectives on fostering community.



By investing in the professional development of educators, we aim to amplify our impact and create a ripple effect that positively influences the broader education community. We are excited about the positive impact we can make on education as we implement our next steps.





BENEFIT DINNER HIGHLIGHTS

2022 Benefit Dinner: Elevating Student Success



AUSL's Executive Director, Donald Feinstein Ph.D., stated,



AUSL's work has always been predicated on educational equity and excellence.

“Our supporters like Greg and Kim Wasson allow us to grow our teacher training program that has a record of recruiting, training, and retaining highly effective educators. DePaul University’s College of Education has provided invaluable support to the Chicago Teacher Residency, educating aspiring teachers whose future contributions will benefit Chicago’s students.”

The AUSL Annual Benefit Dinner helped raise nearly \$1 million, support that is essential to fund incremental support for educator training and professional development through the Chicago Teacher Residency program and innovative work to create equity-centered and community focused student experiences through the LiberatED Way Advisory Services program. The tremendous generosity of our supporters and partners is the reason we’re able to continue this work – thank you.



On November 9, 2022, AUSL hosted its Annual Benefit Dinner, “Elevating Student Success” at the Four Seasons Chicago Hotel to recognize leaders and institutions who are advancing educational equity.

This year, the AUSL community celebrated by honoring philanthropists Greg and Kim Wasson for their visionary leadership in and philanthropic support of AUSL’s mission to improve educational outcomes for students in underinvested schools and communities.

AUSL also recognized DePaul University as an honoree. Through DePaul University’s institutional commitment and collaboration, AUSL is able to continue developing more diverse, resilient, and talented teachers for Chicago’s neighborhood schools.





FINANCIALS, PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Financials

AUSL’s public-private partnership with Chicago Public Schools demonstrates an innovative model for school improvement that is proving effective in revitalizing low-performing schools.

Longitudinal studies of children growing up in high needs areas, like the neighborhoods AUSL programs serve, consistently reveal that students are at a high risk of educational underachievement as early as first grade. AUSL raises substantial funding from foundations, corporations, government agencies, and committed individuals to provide our teachers and partner school districts with extra support structures above and beyond resources made available by general school operating budgets.

Fiscal Year 2023 Expenses

Chicago Teacher Residency	\$4,054,456
School Management	\$432,608
LiberatED Way Advisory Services	\$2,824,014
Administration & Financial Development	\$2,092,695
Total	\$9,403,773





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Thank you to our generous donors for supporting AUSL with the following gifts received from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2023:

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How to Support Our Work

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