



FIRST RING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY & STUDENT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE 2022–2023 YEARBOOK



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SECTION I

ADVANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION TOGETHER



The First Ring Schools Collaborative (FRSC) is an organization of more than 100 superintendents and administrators from 16 school districts that border the City of Cleveland. The FRSC represents approximately 60,000 students, pre-K through grade 12, and serves as the sponsor of the Leadership Academy. The FRSC was established in 2000 to help districts address the interrelated challenges of poverty, mobility, diversity, equity, and the achievement gap. In addition to sponsoring the First Ring Leadership Academy (FRLA) and the First Ring Student Leadership Institute (FRSLI), the FRSC has implemented student wellness initiatives, student transition projects, academic achievement programs, and school-based health care programs. It has created Task Forces for Early Childhood Education and Career Readiness to drive key elements of its Strategic Plan. It also supports networks of colleagues in similar roles, including administrators in Curriculum, High School Principals, Public Relations and Communications, Pupil Services, Safety and Security, and Treasurers.

FRSC collaborates closely with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District as it serves the following 16 member districts:

- Bedford City Schools
- Berea City Schools
- Brooklyn City Schools
- Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools
- Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools
- East Cleveland City Schools
- Euclid City Schools
- Fairview Park City Schools
- Garfield Heights City Schools
- Lakewood City Schools
- Maple Heights City Schools
- Parma City Schools
- Richmond Heights Local Schools
- Shaker Heights City Schools
- South Euclid Lyndhurst City Schools
- Warrensville Heights City Schools

First Ring Leadership Academy

A Professional Development Program for District Leaders



The First Ring Leadership Academy (FRLA) is a year-long professional development and leadership training program for new and emerging leaders in the 16 districts contiguous to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Participants are nominated by their superintendents in the beginning of each school year to become part of the cohort. The FRLA provides participants with an expanded knowledge base and skill set foundation to prepare them to assume additional leadership roles within

their districts and continue improving district and individual outcomes to serve all levels of students within Cuyahoga County.

The Academy meets for nine sessions throughout the academic year with a focus on building leadership skills and district capacity to address the unique challenges of first ring, urban schools. Participants engage in a variety of learning activities including leadership trait analyses, case studies, readings and reflections, and coordinating and mentoring a team of high school student leaders within their district. Sessions are held at either the ESC of Northeast Ohio or Cleveland State University, and include a trip to Columbus to work with our sister program, the Ohio State University Student Leadership Research Collaborative. The FRLA is a key “build from within” system of teaching excellence and leadership development that supports and benefits the entire First Ring regional area.

This year, 26 district leaders participated in the Year 1 portion of the program and 6 prior-year district leaders returned to complete the Year 2 track. Participants are able to earn up to five credit hours through Cleveland State University.

What District Leaders have to say about the program

“

Our society is always evolving which means as an educator, I must be willing to adapt and reinvent myself.

“

I have had the opportunity to witness problem solving take place amongst passionate students from schools of all different backgrounds.

“

I have deeply enjoyed watching my students grow in multiple areas and acquire the leadership skills to collaborate with a diverse group of peers.

First Ring Student Leadership Institute

Empowering Students



The First Ring Student Leadership Institute (FRSLI) is a multi-year leadership program that inspires and empowers high school students to recognize and understand the issues impacting their lives, give voice to their ideas and perspectives about those issues, and take a seat at the

table to help solve them.

Every fall, five sophomores from each First Ring high school are nominated to FRSLI by their principals. Students begin the year by identifying an issue they feel passionate about in their school or community. Working in school-based teams, students gather data on the nature, scope, and impact of their issue, and then analyze their findings to identify possible solutions. At the end of the year, teams present their work and pitch their recommendations to First Ring superintendents and high school principals. This process of student-centered inquiry, called Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), develops students' leadership skills while building social connections and empowering them to make meaningful change within their schools.

For the 2022-2023 year, students from the 2021-2022 cohort were invited to return to FRSLI to learn how to put their recommendations into action. These "Year 2 students" also served as mentors to the Year 1 teams. Year 2 students had the option to earn college credit plus through Cleveland State University (CSU) for their work and experience. The culminating activity for Year 2 participants is attending a youth research symposium where they will share their work in a panel presentation.

Participants attend six full day in-person "work" sessions where they receive hands-on training and support from a team of facilitators from CSU's Center for Urban Education and the ESC of Northeast Ohio, among others. Sessions include a mix of large-group activities, individual team work-time, collaboration with other teams, and student-led activities. Each team receives help and guidance from one or more adults from their school district who are enrolled in a "con-joined" adult leadership program called the First Ring Leadership Academy (FRLA). This year, two work sessions were held jointly with our sister program, the Ohio State University Student Leadership Research Collaborative (OSU-SLRC). One joint session was held on the campus of Cleveland State University and the other on the campus of Ohio State University.

What this year's participants have to say about the program:

“

The most important thing I learned this year is to speak up. You never know what you are capable of until you try.

“

I am most proud of being able to meet so many unique people and growing my leadership skills.

“

The FRSLI has given me the knowledge, skills, and expertise to feel prepared for a leadership experience on a higher level.

OUR PARTNERS



MARTHA HOLDEN
JENNINGS FOUNDATION



The First Ring Schools Collaborative (FRSC), its networks and programs would like to thank the following partners and funders:

- Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio
- Center for Educational Leadership, Cleveland State University
- Center for Urban Education, Cleveland State University
- Levin College of Public Affairs and Education, Cleveland State University
- Martha Holden Jennings Foundation
- Ohio State University Student Leadership Research Collaborative



SECTION II – YEAR 1

DISTRICT RESEARCH PROJECTS 2022–2023

Bedford City Schools

“Lack of School Involvement at BHS”

To tell you the truth, many students are not that involved in school events, but after conducting research and talking to a few students, we decided to take matters into our own hands.

Our research question was “How do we help improve the school involvement and pride at Bedford high School?” We felt this was an important question because we could find out how other students were feeling. It would also allow us to come up with ideas that could help the student body be more engaged in in-school and out-of-school activities.

We collected our data by sending out a survey to the students and staff of BHS. We communicated about the survey by informing them on the announcements and setting up QR codes around the school building. By doing so we got 95 responses from the student body. Also we did a follow up in-person interview with the students and staff.

The freshman had more responses, Overall we found out students aren’t excited about school, School spirit is average. When we went out and surveyed students most students were indifferent to the social environment and indifferent to the school pride. They don’t hate the school but there’s no engaging activities going on during school and outside of school. We also asked students how we improve school spirit and student involvement, the top 4 ways to improve school spirit included (1) In school events , (2) more activities/clubs, (3) after-school events, and (4) better student’s section. We also asked what activities students would get the school involved in if it were available and the top things were (1) cooking club, (2) student lounge, and (3) photography club

Our recommendations are a 90s dance around 3rd quarter, Back to school bash/week which would include sign up sheets in the cafeteria and get introduced to different clubs, Pep rally which would introduce the fall sports teams and some activities for students like karaoke and tug of war, A winter pep rally and spring pep rally to introduce the winter and spring sports.



Bedford High School Leaders:

Amy Hujarski (District Leader),
Sierra Sledge, Sa'niyah Benton,
Bosson Krah, Fernando Bigsby, Jr.
and Darnise Stephens (District Leader)

SECTION II – YEAR 1

Berea-Midpark High School

“Improving Student Bathroom Environment”

We created a captivating visual style hook that outlined the average experience of what trying to use the restroom would look like for a high school student at Berea Midpark High School. As a group (including our instructor: Mr. Meyer) we decided that sending our survey out to the English teachers to distribute to all students would be the best approach for collecting our data. Altogether we gathered 1,078 responses from students and 86 responses from staff. Overcrowding in bathrooms is a major issue. Vaping in school and mostly in bathrooms is a big problem. Negative factors in the bathroom environment cause tardys for students every day. Three recommendations we have are to create creative posters that outline statistics about vaping and encourage students to not do it, install vape detectors and ban phones in bathrooms, and lastly, we could think about starting a club for students to help make responsible choices and help with addictions.



Berea-Midpark High School Leaders:

Pat Meyer (District Leader), Eden Gedamu, Courtney Knapik,
Aubrey Trzebuckowski, Mikayla Burke,
Madelynn Kaminski and Mallory Luca

Brooklyn City Schools

“Brooklyn Schedule Survey”

I used to look around my classroom and I always saw movement, enthusiasm, energy, and excitement; students bustling with work and motivation. Now, I look at my classmates and their vibrant energy, bustling enthusiasm, and high engagement have all been sucked out of them and they constantly put their heads down, go on their phones, do less work, and complain more, all because of Brooklyn’s boring 84-minute block scheduling. Our main research question was, “How does block and skinny scheduling affect students?” The Brooklyn First Ring Group decided on this question for our project as we always hear about people complaining about our schedule at school. The data for our project was collected using two separate Google Surveys, one for teachers and one for students, with 165 answers for students and 27 for teachers. We have found that 70% percent of students like or strongly like Friday “Skinny” scheduling, while only 30% of the students like or strongly like the Monday – Thursday “Block” schedule. Our teachers have also stated, “Students are able to stay focused for shorter periods and complete assignments at a higher rate.”, “Students begin to complain when we do multiple assignments in one block.”, “I find myself not introducing new content halfway through because I lost students’ attention”. Current recommendations include flipping the current schedule and making it so that all the weekdays are “Skinny” days, except Tuesday and Wednesday, which will be normal “Block” days. Another option we have made is that we simply have one week with “Block” schedule and another week with “Skinny” schedule, and this flips every week. Both options have ICE blocks with no more mandatory assignments, instead making it so that it’s more of a study period.



Brooklyn High School Leaders:

Kim Cramer (District Leader), Scott Urig (District Leader),
Elias Perez, Angelina Whittsette, Ava Hurguy , Florin Socol-Boeriu
Also shown: Mayhem Crowley (Year 2). Missing: Jeffrey Helmick



SECTION II – YEAR 1

Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools

This school year alone our school, Cleveland Heights High School has been on the News three times for fighting or unruly behavior. Even though we have had such negative media attention, only 35% of the students surveyed felt unsafe at school. We wanted to know how safe students felt in our school and how they would rate the school's current safety protocols. There has been an increase in news stories about violence at and around schools. We wanted to know how our school rates. We asked teachers from each grade level to give students our survey, which consisted of 10 questions, and was anonymous, and we had 86 students respond. Our research informed us that the majority (85%) of our students felt safe. The two biggest concerns were the easy access in and out of the building and students felt that security staff needed to have more training on how to work with students. Many students reported that having a trusted adult for students to go to was an effective way to keep students safe. 80% of the students surveyed have identified a trusted adult. We would recommend that the district continue to utilize and promote having students identify a trusted adult, and then have those adults check in with students. Our other recommendation is we need more trained security staff who can be more visible during all periods in the hallway but also who can be a support person for students. The security staff needs to have more training on how to manage students and not just yell at them.



Cleveland Heights High School Leaders:

Karen Hansen (District Leader), Kourtney Hannah, Egypt Sa'ad (Year 2),
MarleyDeDino-Sadler, Carlos Mitchell, J. and Toni White (District Leader)
Missing: Christopher Steele



Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools

“School Spirit: Getting Back to Where We Started”

School spirit seems to be drastically declining. Martin Luther King Jr. has said, “School takes 13 years, because that is how long it takes to break a child’s spirit”. Based on our survey, our peers are getting to this point. We hope to be the voice to make a change throughout the school. A Google survey was sent out to the entire Cuyahoga Heights High School and about 1/4 of the school body responded to help us in our process. The data has shown that the students want more of a voice in the school and the activities that take place. People aren’t interested in seeing other sporting events due to reasons such as transportation, work, and just not wanting to in general. The students that do attend sporting events are also athletes at our school.

Recommendations to help fix these issues are to implement more school spirit days after having a vote on what it entails and to make the sporting events more appealing to the crowd. The change that will be made will engage the students and promote more school spirit for the current and upcoming generations. Some recommendations that we received to help us move forward with making improvements are clap outs, ESPN tables, newsletter videos, cow bells or other little things for games, staff activities during pep rallies, and a bulletin board to spread information about activities and sporting events.



Cuyahoga Heights High School Leaders:

Kelsey Mason (District Leader), Erin Deka, Nick Dabrowski,
Tamir Julius, Arushi Shinde and Emilee Sanicky



SECTION II – YEAR 1

East Cleveland City Schools

“The Voice of a Shaw Student”

Growing up many of us watched High School Musical and Victorious dreaming of a fun high school experience but that was false advertising for many students. In many cases such as with Shaw High School, students don't have a voice in participating in the process of our high school experience. Because of this, our First Ring Leadership team decided to survey teachers and students to establish a need for an all student council in an effort to increase student voice and participation in our high school experience. Teacher survey results (18 responses): Do you think a Shaw student council is needed? 100% responded yes; Are there any issues you think student council can fix for teachers as well? 61% responded yes. Student Survey results (95 responses): Do you think a student council for every grade will help fix some of the student issues? 78% responded yes; Do you think it's important to have a student council for each grade? 87% responded yes.



Shaw High School Leaders:

Tishawn Benson (District Leader), Myles Jackson, Kashyra Gore,
Mitchell Spooner, Jae'Mahri Hanna and Dr. Ralph Murphy II (District Leader)
Missing: Lovely Marshall



EAST CLEVELAND
CITY SCHOOLS

Euclid City Schools

“Student Engagement and School Culture at Euclid High School”

Imagine your culture imprint being belittled to a month and you still aren't recognized or appreciated. At Euclid High School that's probably how our Hispanic peers felt during Hispanic heritage month. They weren't recognized because no one even knew. They didn't have a chance to embrace their culture. How can we improve school engagement while maintaining a positive school culture? That's important because we need to improve our school engagement while keeping what's already good about our school culture. We collected our data via a Google survey, and we got 258 responses. One of our key findings is people agree that more clubs would help improve the engagement. Another key finding is our most requested addition is Cosmetology class/club. Our 3 key findings are students do want to be involved. Most students aren't excited to come to school. The biggest ways to get more student engagement is by implementing more clubs.



Euclid High School Leaders:

Braylon Womack, Anyla Sloan, Mario Seats Jr., Toni Kincaid (Year 2), Phil Gasper (District Leader), Nandi Grant (Y2), Alex Abernathy Jr. (Y2), Sara Mattinson (Y2 District Leader), Madisyn Reed-Bennings and Ella Hewis. Missing: Amber Quigley (District Leader)

SECTION II – YEAR 1

Fairview Park City Schools

“Connecting our School: Enhancing Morale at Fairview Park”

A brief walk through the halls of Fairview High School would show the lack of appreciation for Fairview’s many opportunities. To combat this, we wanted to uplift and unite the student body by advocating for increased participation. To develop a “cure” we prompted our peers to take an insightful survey to acquire the consensus of the student body as well as interview multiple socially active individuals of our school. After analyzing the survey data as well as considering the personal experiences of our interviewees, we recognized a common theme in that our peers believe that there is a lack of school spirit, but also that there is a desire for more school spirit. Additionally, all our interviewees expressed to us their thoughts on the importance of pep rallies and spirit weeks and how with those we could increase school spirit. Through further discussion with First Ring peers, we concluded a number of newfound solutions such as, spirit buses for away games, more pep rallies with silly games, HOCO Olympics, and teacher involvement in sporting and school spirit events.



Fairview High School Leaders:

Ryan Barry (District Leader), Nicole Giang, Maxwell Edwards, Akira Wilson, Spencer Bruening, Alivia Lamontagne, Zach Sargent and Andy Slack (District Leader)



Garfield Heights City Schools

“Students Vs. Attendance”

The click of the keyboard just goes on and on, what sounds to be all day. The teacher couldn't possibly be checking all the absent students for a single day. Where are all the kids? Why aren't they attending school? Why is our school attendance declining? We conducted a survey for the students and teachers. We found that 75% of teachers deviate from their lesson plans sometimes or often due to student absences. But the question still stands, why aren't the students attending school? We also discovered that the top three causes for student absences in the school systems are due to mental health concerns, no parent called them out so it could be excused, and/or they just didn't want to attend school and skipped or missed a day. It's important to us because our peers are failing, academic performances are compromised, teachers are pushing their lessons back, and it's diminishing students' mental and physical health.

According to our data, many students have unexcused absences due to parents not calling them in. One way we can fix or improve this is to require students' parents to update contact information and make sure everything is up to date and so they can be notified if their child isn't at school. Secondly, many students do not attend due to mental health reasons. A solution we came up with that may help is doing daily or weekly check-ins during homeroom or during lunch periods. These check-ins could be done by either Google form or on paper, to involve both students and school staff. A third solution that we can incorporate is a mental health day for the students and staff members. Once a quarter for 2-3 hours at the end of the school day, we can have a modified bell schedule. During that time, we can watch movies, play games, meditate, draw, do missing work, have study sessions, and other things that we can do to help alleviate stress within our school. With the help of our administration, we can better our school community.

Garfield Heights High School Leaders



Student Leaders

Avah Robinson
Kamarri Thornhill
Kame'a Bolds
Mylee Wright
Precious Sadiq
Zaria Pitts (shown with Year 2 students)

District Leaders:

Jen Corrado
Khiara Rice



SECTION II – YEAR 1

Lakewood City Schools

“Mental Health”

The need for mental services and awareness is more important now than ever before. From the CDC’s Youth Risk Behavior report from 2021 the most startling findings are that 42% of high school students felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks in a row that they stopped doing their usual activities. In addition, more than 1 in 5 (22%) students seriously considered attempting suicide and 1 in 10 (10%) attempted suicide. Knowing that students are struggling we focused our research on mental health. Our research question was, “How often do you utilize the available mental health services offered at LHS?” We sent out a survey to 9th-11th grade students at Lakewood High School, 361 students answered. Our survey revealed that the majority (70%) of students go to friends when stressed or experiencing mental health concerns. Students are not seeking out adults for support. Instead, students want adults to come to them and check in regularly. If the school offered more resources students are not likely to use them (less than 10% are likely to utilize extra time with counselors). Based on these findings, our recommendations include having our guidance counselors set up meet-and-greet opportunities for students at the start of each school year; utilizing our school’s central courtyard and other safe useable spaces for mental health breaks; and establishing peer-to-peer mental health supports/groups (such as Hope Squad) at Lakewood High School.



Lakewood High School Leaders:

Tony Chiaravalle (District Leader), Jaylen Chappel, Jack Baron, Alexa De la Rosa, Kayla Carpenter and April Patton (District Leader). Missing: Azaia Novak



Maple Heights City Schools

“Adulting 101”

Our recent study shows that an average of 75% of students at our district’s high school do not feel prepared for adult life following graduation. We used an online survey to gauge and inquire on students’ needs as well as what they have already learned whether in school or from outside life. Our study immediately showed that nearly half of our high school’s student population would like to learn how to manage their money, as well as keeping a budget for adult life. Another outlier was cooking, approximately one-third of our student body desires to learn cooking skills and how to prepare foods. Self-care and managing stress was also a serious concern within our school, with 27% of surveyed students wanting to learn how to properly take care of themselves to avoid being overwhelmed in the future.

Recommendations: Revamp and expand current curriculums, include banking and budgeting, as well as taxes within financial literacy. Reinstate Home Economics as a curriculum. Possibly hire a new guidance counselor, making time for reflection circles. Instating a focus and sensory for restorative practices.



Maple Heights High School Leaders:

Student Leaders: Chinaemelu Ezeanyika,
Corwyn Collier, Jr., De’Asia Williams, Jaden Miller,
Myles Adams and Jasia Jones (Year 2)

District Leaders: Amelia Johnson and Thomas Meyer

SECTION II – YEAR 1

Parma City Schools

“Motivation”

“I can’t wait to go to school!” said only 18% of students who took our survey. Most of our kids are seen with a terrible posture and a miserable face; it’s almost like we’re sentenced to purgatory while walking these bland, boring halls. We found that most of the students that took our survey are unmotivated to come to school. The data shows that students do not want to come to school because of stress levels, horrid food, and a bland building. Our main research questions were what makes our students come to school, or what would make them want to come to school. This is important when we try to come up with a solution. We want to take our students’ voices and amplify them.



Normandy High School Leaders:

Student Leaders: Alya Ibrahim, Emily Juby, Jessyca Lampa, Logan Saban, Tyhjir Ryles-Shropshire and Wes Hollis (pictured with Year 2 students)

District Leaders: Zuraya Abdallah and Lynn Monaco (Year 2)

Richmond Heights Local Schools

“Graduation is so far away. I have time.” I said every year. Watching graduation happen before me was when I realized I didn’t know where to go from here. “It is shown that 75% of high school students expressed boredom, anger, sadness, fear, or stress while in school (Research.com).” That can lead to lack of motivation or just giving up. Our academic question follows, “How do we improve academic achievement for Richmond Heights Secondary School?” This question is important to us as we view academic achievement as a very important factor in students’ careers. Our research topic is about how to improve schools’ academic achievement and why people aren’t performing to the best of their abilities. This is very important to us because we feel it affects the students’ mental health, physical health, and future. In our survey we sent out, of the 57 responses we received, 24 received a D or an F. We found the teachers explanations in math, being unmotivated to complete the assignments, time management, and mental health were the biggest causes.



Richmond Heights Secondary School Leaders:

Autumn Perry, Cedvion Thornton, Angel Dinh, Penelope Zoldak
and Jasmine King (District Leader)

Missing: Tiffany Kilbane



SECTION II – YEAR 1

Shaker Heights City Schools

“Don’t Be Safety Blinded, Be Safety Minded”

“Safety is not an intellectual exercise to keep us in work. It is a matter of life and death. It is the sum of our contributions to safety management that determines whether the people we work with live or die.” - Sir Brian Appleton

School safety plays a huge role in students’ development and academic success. Students who feel safe at school usually have better emotional health and are less likely to engage in inappropriate behaviors. A sense of safety leads to a feeling of connection. Students who feel unsafe at school more often experience symptoms of depression, are late/absent more, and receive lower grades.

We want to create an organized system where we can learn and succeed without having to worry about bad things happening. We wanted to know how safe our classmates felt at school. We collected data by sending out a survey asking students to rate their level of safety in different areas of the building. We also asked students some open-ended questions on their personal experiences with regards to safety. We then analyzed the student responses and ranked the items based on frequency. Our key findings include students feel more safe in classrooms rather than the hallways, students do not feel safe in the bathrooms and it seems there is a need for better training for security guards. Our recommendation for the school is to create a club/space where students can anonymously voice their concerns and give suggestions to help improve our school with regards to safety. This will help to improve student voice and engagement within our school.



Shaker Heights High School Leaders:

Vernon Hills, London Fryer, Shaunna Bonner (District Leader),
Tessa Nickels, Amy Fogerty (District Leader),
Kameron Walls, John Garfield



**Shaker
Heights
Schools**

South Euclid Lyndhurst Schools

“Bathroom Conditions”

Imagine a bathroom where the sinks don't properly work, the stall doors can't close, and where the toilets don't flush. That's the reality of bathrooms at Brush High School. For our research question we asked what we could do to improve our school bathrooms. This is important to us since the bathrooms are supposed to be a safe and comfortable space for students to use. In order to collect data, we sent out a google form to all of the students in our school, and we received over 100+ responses. The survey shows that 50 percent of students found the bathrooms to be unclean, 84 percent said that it was a problem there are no mirrors. Not to mention most students say that the bathrooms need new toilets, sinks, and stall doors. Recommendations: 1) Ask students to be more respectful of the bathrooms 2) Spread the awareness of the bathrooms to students by showing it on the TV's in the hallways and cafeteria and 3) Install and update equipment to better improve the experience and prevent students from stealing and/or breaking more easily or causing harm to their students, as well as installing smoke detectors.



Charles F. Brush High School Leaders:

Student Leaders:

Briahna Whitmore, Jelani Carr,
Madison Evans, Ryan Stovall and Skylar Price

District Leaders:

Latricia Jethrow and Raymond Smith-Watkins



SECTION II – YEAR 1

DISTRICT RESEARCH PROJECTS 2022–2023

Warrensville Heights City Schools

“Preparing Students for Adulthood”

We’ve all had an influential teacher who wants to help you in every assignment and make sure you are understanding every concept of the lesson. Teachers like these help improve student/staff relationships by giving the students a support system they may not have had before. This allows the student to feel comfortable and confident once they have gotten the main idea of the lessons. Not only does this make the environment in the classroom better, but it opens a brand new branch of trust for students to come to that loving teacher for personal problems that couldn’t be addressed anywhere else.

But how do student/staff relationships look at Warrensville Heights High School? We have surveyed and interviewed 19 teachers and 67 students on this topic. When asked to rate the strength and positivity of student and staff relationships, both parties indicated that relationships between staff and students are strong and positive. However, the written responses tell a different story: neither students nor staff feel respected by the opposite party. Both teachers and students note that the disconnect between staff and students in our building can be frustrating. These negative aspects are something we want to change and help pass quickly into something positive in order to improve the learning environment at Warrensville Heights High School. We as representatives of Warrensville are working on changing this by listing recommendations of: 1) Creating bonding opportunities for students and teachers, such as game days and student-led pep rallies; 2) Increase opportunities for teacher-student communication and for students to provide input and feedback to staff, such as by inviting student presenters to staff meetings; and 3) Implement a “class fair” at the beginning of the year in which each teacher sets up a booth with information about the classes that they teach, who they are, and the activities they run so that students can visit with and meet each teacher, even if they don’t have their class.



Warrensville Heights High School Leaders:

Front row: Randy Harris and La’Velle Hall
2nd row: Sarah McCrea (District Leader),
Back row: Nicole Radford, Tristan Pace
and Kamari Boyd



SECTION III – YEAR 2

DISTRICT RESEARCH PROJECTS 2022–2023

Bedford City Schools

“How Does School Atmosphere Affect Mental Health and Academic Performance?”

The Bedford City School District Student Leaders decided to focus on the effect that school atmosphere has on mental health and academic performance. As academics have shifted from virtual learning to in-person instruction, students have found that a greater emphasis has been placed on school culture. Based on this focus, student leaders crafted a student survey and a series of interview questions to gain a better understanding of student and teacher viewpoints regarding this matter. Our student leaders are eager to share the process they completed to develop their data collection tools as well as the importance of their research focus. In the near future, they hope to complete their surveys and interviews to make recommendations to community stakeholders for the 2022-2023 school year based on quantitative data derived from surveying peers, teachers, administrators, and parents.



Bedford High School Leaders:

Amy Hujarski (District Leader), Rayhanah Niasse,
William Handrich, LaTia Grimes, Lee Hammock and Kayla Butler

SECTION III – YEAR 2

Brooklyn City Schools

“How to Make ICE Block More Beneficial”



Brooklyn High School Leaders:

Kim Cramer (District Leader), Scott Urig (District Leader)
and Mayhem Crowley (far right), shown with Year 1 team.

Missing: Tyler Morgan



Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools

“Providing School Transportation to Reduce Student Tardiness”

The Heights High YPAR Team identified the number of school tardies as problematic; particularly to first period classes. The team theorized that the number of tardies would be reduced if the district was able to provide busing to the high school. They then researched how students currently got to school, how students and parents felt about the available transportation options (car, RTA, biking, walking, etc.) and district and state policy on school-provided transportation. Parents, students, and district officials were reached out to through surveys and interviews. Findings showed that parents were in favor of busing for high school students while follow-ups with the transportation department gave insight into budgeting and legal considerations. In the end, the students were able to recommend a course of action that weighed several factors from the various stakeholders.



Cleveland Heights High School Leaders:

Karen Hansen (District Leader), Egypt Sa'ad (3rd from left) and Toni White (District Leader), shown with Year 1 team.
Missing: Ruby Tugeau

SECTION III – YEAR 2

Euclid City Schools

“Does Increasing Student Input Improve School Culture?”

Early in the school year, students attempted to adapt spirit week to their own liking and were prohibited. This served as a catalyst for our research. We did a school-wide survey, and our three key findings were: a need for better staff/student relationships, an increase in student involvement in decision-making and enhancing student engagement opportunities. This project highlighted the disparity between the number of students who are involved in decision-making and those that would like to be involved. Our team believes that by tackling these issues, we can positively impact the school experience for our classmates.



Euclid High School Leaders:

Alex Abernathy Jr., Toni Kincaid, Nandi Grant and
Sara Mattinson (District Leader)

Garfield Heights City Schools

“The Effects of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in Our High School”

Our project last year was on the Effects of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in our high school. Our research questions were: How can the school help students cope with stress? Do you feel that there are currently enough services in place within the building to support students' mental health? How do you handle stress? Do you feel that student substance abuse is currently an issue in this building? We collected data through surveys to teachers and students with open ended responses.

Our key findings were:

- The general consensus or 92% of teachers and students felt that there are not currently enough services in place to support students' mental health.
- 87% of students could not identify an adult that they felt comfortable talking to at school.
- 83% of teachers reported that student substance abuse is currently an issue in the building, more specifically in the restrooms and on school grounds.

Our recommendations were:

- Hire a mental health/substance abuse counselor and resources need to be made available at the high school.
- Staff and students need to be made aware of different services that are in place to help them by advertising in various ways.
- Train guidance counselors and teachers to be better equipped with strategies that help build positive relationships so that students feel more comfortable opening up.

This year several student groups have been created focusing on mental health and wellness. A peer mediation group was also created to help students work through issues and conflicts and more agency resources were made available to students. We hope that this continues and that students continue to get the support they need.



Garfield Heights High School Leaders:

Dionardo Askew, Khiara Rice (District Leader)
and Essence Jackson



SECTION III – YEAR 2

Maple Heights City Schools

“Does Not Knowing About Your Career Path Early Affect It Later on in Life?”

The First Ring Student Leaders from Maple Heights High School were passionately driven to find out why so many of their peers are challenged with not being able to identify a career pathway for themselves. They believe that too many students leave Maple Heights High School not fully prepared for life outside of the classroom walls. In addition to this, Maple Heights High School First Ring Student Leaders believe that students need to enter high school having a plan in place for them to experience a career path that is unique to their goals and talents. The plan would give students multiple opportunities to explore their careers in a systematic yearly approach that guides and leads students in learning about their career through research, partaking in field experiences of their careers, along with attaining guidance in choosing schools, filling out a job application and more to help them solidify their chosen career path for life after Maple Heights High School.



Maple Heights High School Leaders:

Student Leader Jasia Jones, shown with Year 1 team and District Leaders Amelia Johnson and Thomas Meyer

Parma City Schools

“Mental Health Resource Awareness”

The Normandy High School (Parma City School District) First Ring Leadership project is Mental Health Resource Awareness. Through a series of anonymous Google Surveys sent out to the students and staff the Normandy High School Year 2 Team discovered that 83% of the students surveyed did not know about the resources that Normandy High School has to offer. The Year 2 team on the first student survey asked the questions; Do you feel that you have a mental health issue? How long have you been struggling with a mental health issue? Do you know of any mental health resources that are available at Normandy High School? Of the 333 student responses, 62.7% of the students are struggling with a mental health issue and 52.6% of the students have been struggling with a mental health issue for 2 years or more. The Year 2 team also surveyed the faculty at Normandy High School and asked the questions; Do you think that a student's mental health affects their classroom performance? If so, how much of an effect does it have? Of the 128 Normandy High School faculty that responded, 100% of them agree that mental health issues affect a students performance in the classroom at least 60% of the time.

The Year 2 team became aware that there is a disconnect between the students and what resources there are available to them and they also really wanted the chance to help their fellow classmates who are struggling with mental health issues everyday. Their recommendations based on their findings were to create a mental health resource assembly / presentation for the student body, to start a mental health resource awareness campaign and a long - term goal would be to hire a non - insurance based therapist who just helps students who are struggling with mental health issues. The Year 2 team presented their Google Survey findings to the Normandy faculty during a staff meeting to increase awareness and to present their recommendations. They also created a mental health resource presentation for the health classes where the counselors introduced themselves and discussed what resources are available at Normandy and how to get involved in the various counseling groups. The Year 2 team also discussed and examined methods of music as self - care with the health classes.

To increase access to help and mental health awareness the Year 2 team placed large QR code posters around the school where the students can anonymously scan the code that links them to helpline.org and an online therapist.



Normandy High School Leaders:

Morgan Tomblin, Lynden Bryant,
Francesca Bubnick, Carleigh Greene
and Trey Brosemer
Missing: Lynn Monaco (District Leader)

SECTION III – YEAR 2

DISTRICT RESEARCH PROJECTS 2022–2023

Warrensville Heights City Schools

“Preparing Students for Adulthood”

Our project is focused on the development of an adult skills class in the district for students. The class will focus on topics such as filing taxes, how credit works, creating and keeping a budget and other time management skills that will all translate to helping students live on their own. We surveyed the entire student body population and found that 80% of the students in the school would want to take the class. We have a family and consumer science class already, and our adult skills class could be offered for juniors and seniors by the same teacher who teaches family and consumer science.



Warrensville Heights High School Leaders:

Kamari Boyd, Samaira Smith and Terrell Davis shown with 2021-2022 teammate and District Leader



SECTION IV

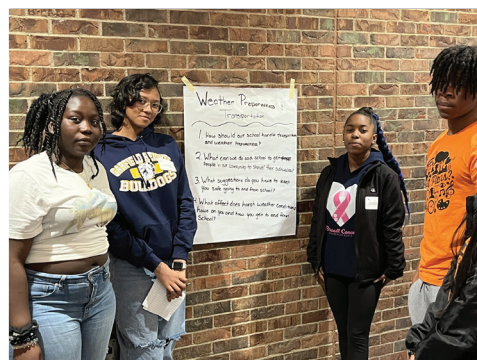
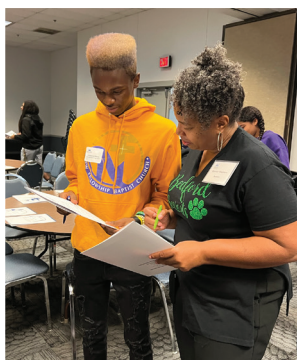
THE YEAR IN PHOTOS

YEAR ONE STUDENTS IN ACTION

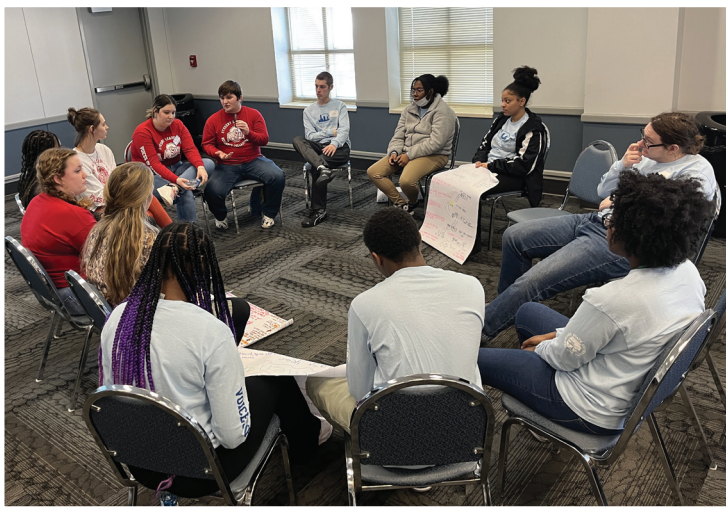
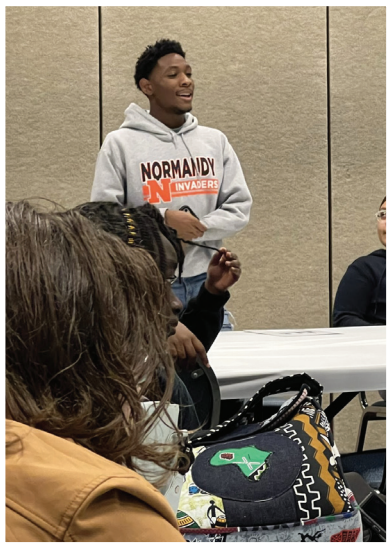


First Ring Schools Collaborative

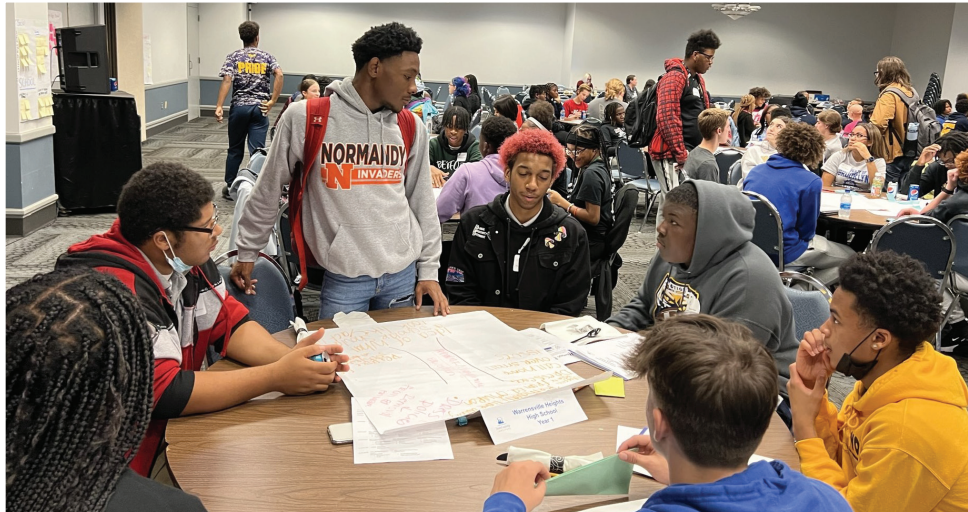
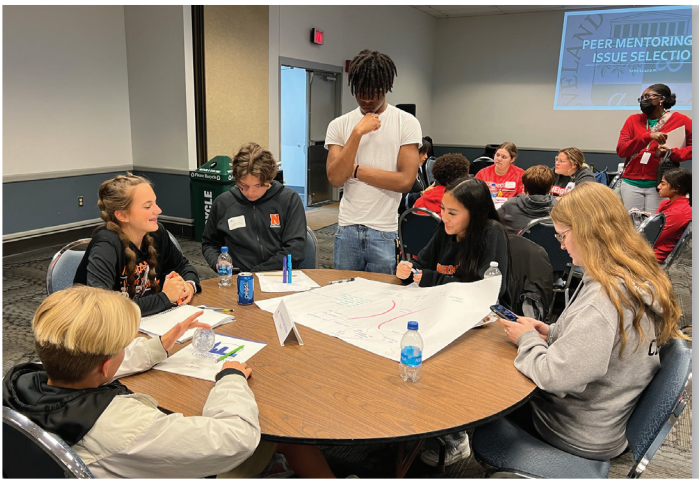
Student Leadership
INSTITUTE



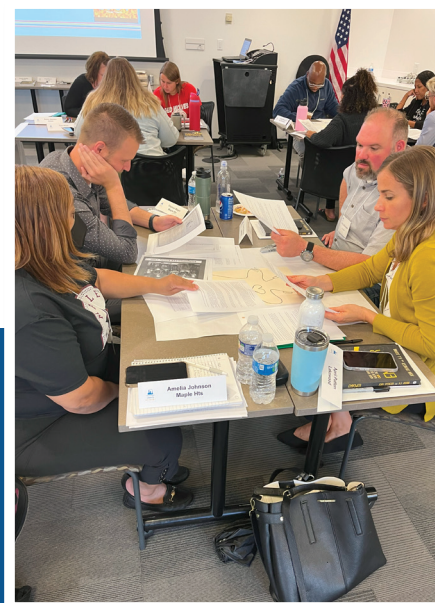
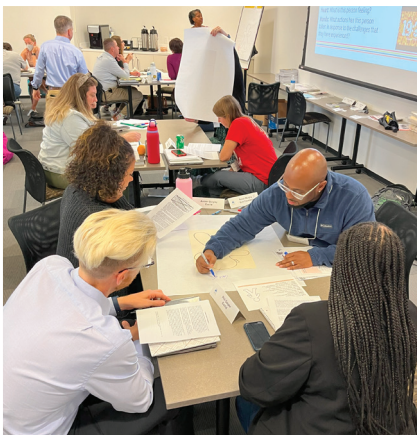
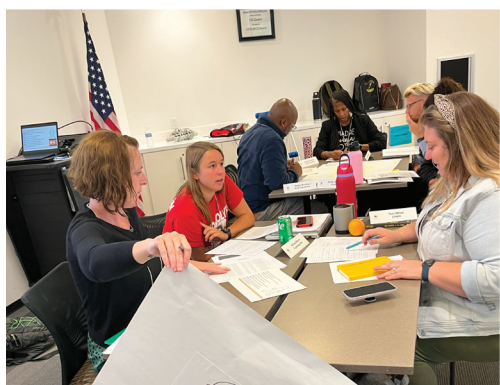
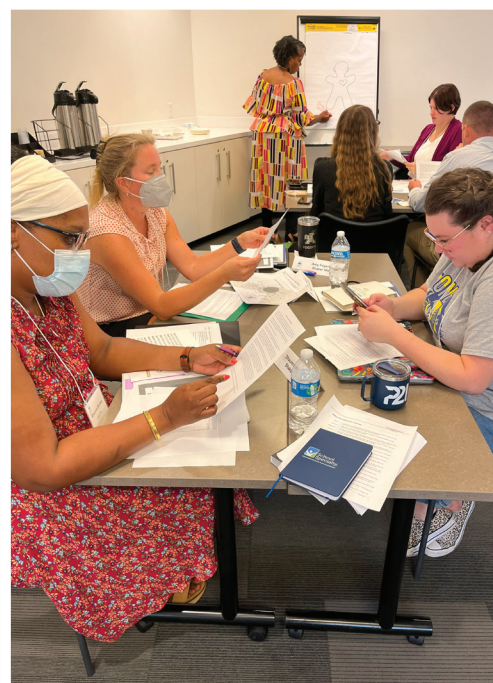
YEAR TWO STUDENTS IN ACTION



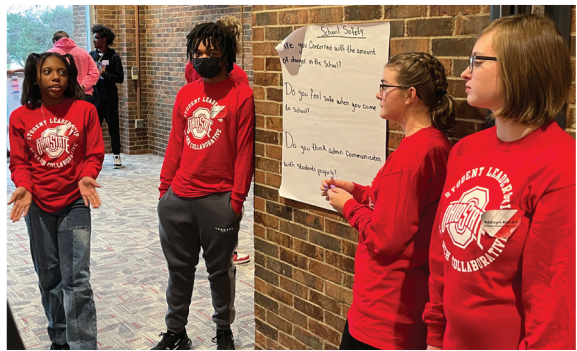
PEER MENTORING



DISTRICT LEADERS IN ACTION



JOINT SESSIONS WITH OSU SLRC



SECTION V

FIRST RING LEADERSHIP READING LIST

Year 1 FRLA

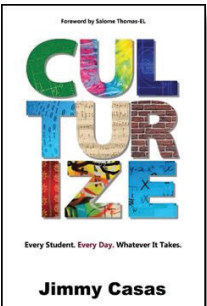


Empower:

What Happens When Students Own Their Learning.

Spencer, John & Juliani, A.J. (2017).

Columbia, SC: IMpress, Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc.

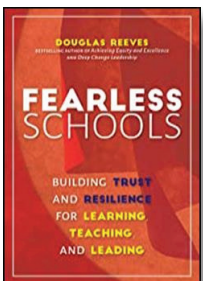


Culturize: Every Student. Every Day. Whatever It Takes.

Casas, Jimmy (2017).

Columbia, SC: IMpress, Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc.

Year 2 FRLA



Fearless Schools: Building Trust and Resilience for Learning, Teaching, and Leading.

Reeves, Douglas (2021).

Boston, MA, Creative Leadership Press.

SECTION VI

FIRST RING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY COHORT BIOGRAPHIES

Bedford City Schools - Amy K. Hujarski

Location: Bedford High School

Role: Science Teacher

Supplemental Duties: Building PBIS Leader, member of Healthcare and Wellness Committees, Building Technology Specialist, Excel Twilight Academy Teacher

Master's Degree - Kent State University

Bachelor's Degree - The University of Findlay

Other credentials - Cleveland State University - Inspiring Leaders Principals Program

Years in the District: 15

Years in Education: 18

Year 1

Bedford City Schools - Darnise Stephens

Location: Columbus Intermediate School

Role: 5th Grade Math and Social Studies Teacher

Supplemental Duties: Fifth Grade Chair

Bachelor's Degree - Cleveland State University

Years in the District: 27

Years in Education: 27

Year 1

Berea City Schools - Pat Meyer

Location: Berea-Midpark High School

Role: English Teacher

Supplemental Duties: 10th Grade Ex. Board Advisor

Master's Degree - Cleveland State University (Administration)

Bachelor's Degree - Quincy University, Ohio University

Years in the District: 30

Years in Education: 31

Year 1

Brooklyn City Schools - Kim Cramer

Location: Brooklyn High School

Role: 8th Grade Social Studies Teacher

Master's Degree: Kent State University

Bachelor's Degree: Kent State University

Years in the District: 2

Years in Education: 3

Year 1

Brooklyn City Schools - Scott Urig

Location: Brooklyn High School

Role: 9th Grade World History Teacher

Supplemental Duties: JV Boys Basketball Coach

Master's Degree: Marygrove College

Bachelor's Degree: Ohio University

Years in the District: 24

Years in Education: 25

Year 1

Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools - Toni Lynn White

Location: Noble Elementary School

Role/Grade: Title 1 Lead

Supplemental Duties: Building Leadership Team, District Leadership Team, Resident Educator Mentor, Building Union Steward, Threat Assessment Team, Teacher Administrative Partnership Team

Master's Degree: Notre Dame College

Bachelor's Degree: Notre Dame College

Other credentials: Principal Licensure - Inspired Leaders, Cleveland State University

Years in the District: 14

Years in Education: 16

Year 1

Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools - Kelsey Mason

Location: Cuyahoga Heights High School

Role: High School Math Teacher

Supplemental Duties: Head Volleyball Coach, Sophomore Class Advisor, Prom Promise Coordinator

Master's Degree: John Carroll University

Principal's Licensure - Baldwin-Wallace University

Bachelor's Degree - University of Dayton

Years in the District: 3

Years in Education: 7

Year 1

East Cleveland City Schools - Dr. Ralph Murphy II, EdD

Location: Shaw High School

Role: Assistant Principal

Supplemental Duties: Oversight 10th grade and Career and Technical Education Programs

Doctorate Degree: National American University Roueche Graduate Center

Master's Degree: Lourdes University

Bachelor's Degree: University of Toledo

Years in the District: 1

Years in Education: 14

Year 1

East Cleveland City Schools - Tishawn Benson

Location: Mayfair Elementary School

Role: 3rd-5th Grade Title 1 Literacy

Supplemental Duties: Lead Teacher, Science Fair Lead Teacher, Lead Teacher and Mentor

Master's Degree: Cleveland State University

Bachelor's Degree: University of Akron

Other credentials: National Board Certified Teacher

Years in the District: 25

Years in Education: 25

Year 1

Euclid City Schools - Phil Gasper

Location: Euclid Middle School

Role: ELA Teacher

Supplemental Duties: Cross Country and Track Coach

Master's Degree: Educational Leadership

Bachelor's Degree: Bachelor of Arts (7-12 AYA Literature)

Years in the District: 6

Years in Education: 10

Year 1

Euclid City Schools - Katie Gonakis

Location: Euclid High School

Role: Guidance Counselor, 9-12

Supplemental Duties: Guidance Department Chair

Master's Degree: Cleveland State University

Bachelor's Degree: University of Dayton

Years in the District: 19

Years in Education: 21

Year 2

Euclid City Schools - Sara Mattinson

Location: Euclid High School

Role: School Counselor, Class of 2025

Master's Degree: Malone University

Bachelor's Degree: Baldwin Wallace University

Years in the District: 5

Years in Education: 23

Year 2

Euclid City Schools - Amber Quigley

Location: Euclid High School

Role: School Attendance and Truancy Officer 9-12

Supplemental Duties: Student Engagement, PBIS, Mentoring Specialist

Bachelor's Degree: The University of Toledo

Years in the District: 1

Years in Education: 9

Year 1

Fairview Park City Schools - Ryan Barry

Location: Fairview High School

Role: PE and Health Teacher

Supplemental Duties: Head Boys Basketball Coach

Bachelor's Degree: Kent State University

Years in the District: 9

Years in Education: 13

Year 1

Garfield Heights City Schools - Jennifer Corrado

Location: Garfield Heights Middle School

Role: TSL Lead Teacher

Supplemental Duties: MS Drama Club Advisor, NJHS Advisor

Master's Degree: Cleveland State University

Bachelor's Degree: Cleveland State University

Years in the District: 26

Years in Education: 26

Year 1

Garfield Heights City Schools - Khiara Rice

Location: Garfield Heights High School

Role: Instructional Coach

Master's Degree: Concordia University - Chicago, Concordia University - Portland

Bachelor's Degree: Capital University

Years in the District: 4

Years in Education: 10

Year 2

Lakewood City Schools - April Patton

Location: Harding Middle School

Role: Assistant Principal

Master's Degree: Ashland University

Bachelor's Degree: Ashland University

Other credentials: Superintendent License

Years in the District: 17

Years in Education: 20

Year 1

Lakewood City Schools - Tony Chiaravalle

Location: Lakewood High School

Role: House 1 Principal

Master's Degree: Ashland University

Bachelor's Degree: Bowling Green State University

Years in the District: 12

Years in Education: 25

Year 1

Maple Heights City Schools - Amelia Johnson

Location: John F. Kennedy Elementary

Role: Dean of Students

Master's Degree: Cleveland State University

Bachelor's Degree: Cleveland State University

Years in the District: 2

Years in Education: 23

Year 1

Maple Heights City Schools - Thomas Meyer

Location: Maple Heights High School

Role: 11th Grade Principal

Master's Degree: Grand Canyon University

Bachelor's Degree: Geneva College

Years in the District: 6

Years in Education: 9

Year 1

Parma City Schools - Lynn Monaco

Location: Normandy High School

Role: Spanish Teacher 8th - 11th

Supplemental Duties: Building Leadership Team, Resilient Learner Team & 10th Grade Class Advisor

Master's Degree: University of Akron

Bachelor's Degree: University of Akron

Years in the District: 21

Years in Education: 23

Year 2

Parma City Schools - Zuraya Abdalla

Location: Normandy High School

Role: School Counselor, 11th Grade

Supplemental Duties: Counseling Department Chair, GSA Advisor, Embrace All Advisor, ROX Facilitator

Master's Degree: Cleveland State University

Bachelor's Degree: Cleveland State University

Years in the District: 6

Years in Education: 6

Year 1

Richmond Heights City Schools - Jasmine King

Location: Richmond Heights Upper School

Role: AVID Teacher/District Director, Leadership Teacher

Supplemental Duties: Student Council Advisor

Doctorate Degree: ABD, Grand Canyon University

Master's Degree: University of Akron

Bachelor's Degree: Wright State University

Years in the District: 4

Years in Education: 15

Year 1

Shaker Heights City Schools - Shaunna Bonner

Location: Shaker Heights High School

Role: School Counselor, 9-12

Supplemental Duties: CTE Liaison, SHTA Building Committee, Teacher Advisory Group, Black Teacher Task Force, Hiring Steering Committee (coming soon)

Master's Degree: Cleveland State University and John Carroll University

Bachelor's Degree: North Carolina Central University

Years in the District: 22

Years in Education: 25

Year 1

Shaker Heights City Schools - Amy Fogerty

Location: Shaker Heights High School

Role: Spanish Teacher 9-12

Supplemental Duties: Minority Achievement Committee, Scholars District Advisor

Doctorate Candidate: Youngstown State University

Master's Degree: Cardinal Stritch University

Bachelor's Degree: Carroll University

Other credentials: K-12 Administrator & District Curriculum

Years in the District: 9

Years in Education: 23

Year 1

South Euclid Lyndhurst City Schools - Latricia Jethrow

Location: Brush High School

Role: Assistant Principal Principal Licensure Program

Supplemental Duties: Inspired Leaders

Master's Degree: Master of Education with an Endorsement in Reading

Bachelor's Degree: Early Childhood (PK-)

Other credentials: K-12 Administrator & District Curriculum

Years in the District: 1

Years in Education: 23

Year 1

South Euclid Lyndhurst City Schools - Raymond Smith-Watkins

Location: District wide

Role: Youth Development Specialist/ K-12

Bachelor's Degree: University of Toledo

Years in the District: 2

Years in Education: 8

Year 2

Warrensville Heights City Schools - Sarah McCrea

Location: Warrensville Heights High School

Role: 9-12 Spanish

Supplemental Duties: Unified Arts Department Chair, Class of 2024 Advisor, DLT member

Master's Degree: John Carroll University

Bachelor's Degree: The College of Wooster (History), Oregon State University (Spanish)

Years in the District: 4

Years in Education: 4

Year 1

SPECIAL THANKS to guest speakers Greg Deegan, Michael Hollins, Gene Smith, Akii Butler, A.J. Juliani, Jimmy Casas, Donald Wayne McLeod, Dakota King-White, Alex Golden, Chanelle McCloud, Douglas Reeves and Jordan Davis; and to Dr. Deborah Morin and Staff, Center for Educational Leadership, Cleveland State University.

SECTION VII

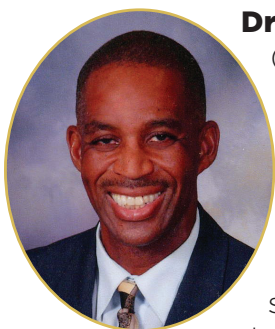
FIRST RING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY & STUDENT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE STAFF BIOS



Bill Wagner is Co-Director of the First Ring Schools Collaborative (FRSC). Bill coordinates the FRSC's activities across its many networks and programs and manages the operations of the First Ring Leadership Academy. He is a retired teacher and administrator of 33 years, last serving as the Superintendent of the Fairview Park City Schools from 2014-2021. Bill earned his Doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from Ashland University.



Wendy Jovan manages the operations of the First Ring Student Leadership Institute. Her previous work in education was as the Project Manager for a virtual intervention program, and as a Special Education Supervisor and School Psychologist. Prior to that she worked in the business community as a Research Analyst. Wendy completed her Psy.S. in School Psychology at Cleveland State University.



Dr. Keith Bell, Sr. Director of Leadership Services at the Educational Service Center (ESC) of Northeast Ohio. Additionally, he is the facilitator of the Ohio State Student Leadership Research Collaborative in partnership with OSU College of Education and Human Ecology. He is an Instructional Coach for Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AiPL) through the University of Cincinnati and works with Cleveland State University, Department of Urban Education to support the SchYPAR (School Based Youth Participatory Action Research) initiative. Dr. Bell has been a head basketball coach, teacher, principal and was superintendent of Euclid City Schools prior to joining the ESC. He received his doctorate from THE Ohio State University



Adam Voight is Director of the Center for Urban Education at Cleveland State University where he partners with urban schools, communities, and youth to create environments conducive to the learning and well-being of young people, particularly those affected by poverty and racism. Adam's community-engaged research and action has been supported by organizations such as the U.S. Department of Education and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Adam has a Ph.D. in Community Psychology from Peabody College of Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt University.



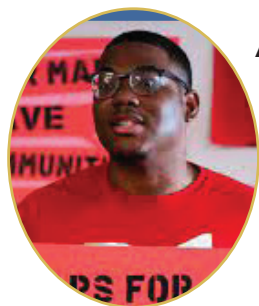
Elizabeth Benninger is a postdoctoral research fellow for the Cleveland Alliance for Education Research (CAER) through the Center for Urban Education and a Psychology Instructor at Cleveland State University. Her research interests include the study of children's well-being, health disparities, participatory research approaches, and community health promotion. Elizabeth additionally focuses on national and international collaborations with educational and governmental institutions and non-profit and nongovernmental organizations which specifically focus on improving the well-being of children and families within communities experiencing high levels of poverty and violence. She obtained her doctoral degree in psychology from the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa.



Kristine Kozlowski is an Administrative Assistant for the Educational Service Center (ESC) of Northeast Ohio. Prior to joining the ESC, Kristine spent 4-1/2 years in healthcare where she worked for Retina Associates of Cleveland and University Hospitals. Most recently, she was the Merchandise Operations Coordinator at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.



Donald Wayne McLeod is a professional speaker and consultant on the topic of interpersonal communication and the founder of Perceptionology, LLC. At his sessions and seminars in schools, businesses and community organizations, Donald Wayne covers topics such as the keys to effective communication, understanding how others perceive us, and building 21st century skills. His publications include two books titled *Perceptionology® 101* and *Lunch Matters*. Donald Wayne began working with FRSI & FRLA participants this year on personal presentation and public speaking.



Akii Butler is a Communications Associate at the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Ohio Council 8 and Communications Manager for Ohio Families Unite for Political Action and Change. He has experience in editing, writing, social media, public relations, grassroots organizing and community action. Akii earned his B.S. in Journalism from Kent State University in 2019. He worked with FRSI students this year on the topics of community action and organizing.



Xiaona Jin is a research assistant at the Center for Urban Education. She earned her Master of Arts in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at Yangzhou University in China and is a fourth-year student the Urban Education doctoral program at Cleveland State University. Ms. Jin's research interests include school climate, Chinese language teaching and learning, online teaching and learning. She has worked in the education field in both China and the U.S. as a college Chinese instructor, international culture exchange program manager, and pre-K Chinese teacher.

WORDS FROM OUR 2022-23 FRLA DISTRICT LEADERS



Through the FRLA, I got the opportunity to work with students I do not have in class, and build a rapport with them. The program gave us the opportunity to figure out a problem within the school building and come up with situations to solve the problem, which gave the students ownership and pride of their school. As a science teacher, I love the fact that the FRSLI allows the students to use the scientific method in a real-life application, that is outside of a lab setting. I have seen the students in this program step out of their comfort zones, and talk to individuals they would not normally work with or talk to. This program has also helped the students to become more open-minded, by accepting the opinions of others and asking others that they would have not thought to get their point of view.

- Bedford City Schools- Amy K. Hujarski

I was pleasantly surprised to be involved with the First Ring Leadership Institute at the beginning of the school year. The students have learned how to work together, create surveys, gather and analyze data, problem solve, in addition to many other valuable leadership skills. They have learned valuable lessons and enjoyed working with other students and staff. I look forward to their continued growth in the First Ring program.



- Berea City Schools - Pat Meyer



Being involved in the First Ring Leadership Academy has been very impactful. Learning from Donald Wayne McLeod the importance of connecting with people and using their name in conversations has improved my interactions with students in Brooklyn. Learning from Greg Deegan about the history of Cleveland has given me a much better understanding of the city Brooklyn is connected to and how this history impacts cities in the first ring. Watching students from Brooklyn grow and become more confident as they work together on their research project is great to see. Lastly, one of the most unique takeaways from the program was going to The Ohio State University. One of the schools there, Trimble High School, is where I did my student teaching 26 years ago. Talking to students from there brought back memories of my student teaching experience.

- Brooklyn City Schools - Scott Urig

The First Ring Student Leadership Academy has made me not only reflect and grow as a leader myself, but also helped me to realize how important my role in education is. I have been given the opportunity to learn from so many other district leaders and plan to utilize this new found knowledge in my future adventures in education.

Our society is always evolving which means as an educator, I must be willing to adapt and reinvent myself. The First Ring Leadership Academy has helped me understand more of who I am, which will help me to provide better opportunities for the students and staff around me.



- Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools - Karen Hansen

WORDS FROM OUR 2022-23 FRLA DISTRICT LEADERS

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The First Ring Leadership Academy has been a great way to connect with other educators and leaders around Northeast Ohio. I have been able to grow my skill set and leadership attributes in preparation for a greater leadership role in the future. Working with our students in the YPAR program has helped them to also develop leadership skills and provided opportunities for them to learn and grow those skills outside of our schools. I've truly enjoyed seeing their voices and confidence grow through these sessions.

- Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools - Toni Lynn White

It has been so awesome to watch my student leaders grow throughout the course of the First Ring Leadership Institute this year. I have had the opportunity to witness problem solving take place amongst passionate students from various schools of all different backgrounds. The respectful discourse these students have with one another and the willingness to provide solutions has made me proud to be an educator and also excited for the future of these leaders. When students have a voice for change, some truly remarkable things can happen!

- Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools - Kelsey Mason

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The opportunity to witness student development from other school districts in addition to students from Shaw High School is truly a privilege I do not take for granted. To watch students excel as researchers, scholars, and problem solvers this early in their learning career is extraordinary. At the same time, the friendship, comradery, and professional growth stimulating from shared experiences among colleagues as we encounter obstacles along the way has been a one-of-a-kind experience. The First Ring Leadership Academy has encouraged and inspired me many times this year-- I am elated to be a part of it

- East Cleveland City Schools - Ralph Murphy II, EdD

Being able to participate this year with the First Ring Leadership Institute has been awesome! Being provided a space for our students to work collaboratively with their peers and the research team at Cleveland State University has been priceless. Our students have worked so hard on making their school a better place for everyone and for that they deserve to be applauded. It's not often that teenagers are able to think outside of their comfort zone and the First Ring Student Leadership Institute project they have been a part of this year has encouraged them to do just that. The changes we are making due to their project will impact the high school experience for hundreds of students for years to come; who can't get excited about that!

- Euclid City Schools - Amber Quigley

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Returning to the First Ring Leadership Institute as a Year 2 District Leader allowed me the opportunity to collaborate with new district and student leaders in the area and provide further support to the student leaders I worked with in implementing their research. FRLA also allowed me the opportunity to further advocate for student needs and help provide students with the opportunity to take their research projects to the next level.

- Garfield Heights City Schools - Khiara Rice

WORDS FROM OUR 2022-23 FRLA DISTRICT LEADERS



The First Ring Leadership Academy has been such a positive experience for our students. Having the opportunity to collaborate with students and staff from various schools and communities has left a lasting impact on our students. Over the course of this year, I have enjoyed watching students become empowered to be leaders of change.

- Lakewood City Schools - April Patton

As a First Ring Student Leadership advisor I have deeply enjoyed watching my students grow in multiple areas. Not only have they acquired leadership skills, but they have also learned how to collaborate with a diverse group of peers. In addition, my students have been given the opportunity to use their voice, problem solve, and critically think to change their schools in a peer led productive setting.



- Parma City Schools - Zuraya Abdalla



This program provides scholars a great opportunity to identify challenges within their school, explore them in detail through research, and propose solutions. The students are engaged in the process and provides the foundation for student leaders to make change even at a smaller scale within their school community.

- Richmond Heights City Schools - Ms. Jasmine King

This program has enabled me to work with students in a different capacity. Being a Spanish teacher, I do not often get the opportunity to work with students on projects outside of my classroom content. It has been great to see how the students came together as a group and really worked toward a common goal to better an aspect of their school. These students did not really know each other before this opportunity and now I feel as though they have become friends. Relationships are so important in high school and this was an amazing way for leaders to work together and learn more about their leadership styles.



- Shaker Heights City Schools - Amy Fogerty



The First Ring Leadership Academy was a good experience. I had the opportunity to work with a great group of students from my school district, as well as work with many students from other school districts. I have seen the students grow in their confidence and realizing that they can produce quality projects, and work together to accomplish a goal. Being a Year 2 leader helped me grow as a leader by allowing me to “lead other leaders”.

- South Euclid Lyndhurst City Schools - Raymond Smith-Watkins

WORDS FROM OUR 2022-2023 FRS LI STUDENT LEADERS ON THEIR EXPERIENCES THIS YEAR:



The most important thing I learned this year is to speak up.
You never know what you are capable of until you try.

The program has taught me to be a better version of myself.

The First Ring Leadership Institute has given me the knowledge, skills, and expertise to feel prepared for a leadership experience on a higher level.

I learned to appreciate my school a little more than what I had been. I was so focused on everything that was wrong with our school that I forgot to appreciate everything that was right.

The most important thing I have learned is to know I have
a voice that can cause true change.

This program is fun!

I am definitely looking forward to coming back!

I learned to keep trying and never give in even if people don't want to hear what you have to say.

FRLA/FRSLI BY THE NUMBERS . . .



IN THE NEWS:



GOVERNOR VISITS LAKEWOOD STUDENTS

Students from Lakewood's Year 1 team had the opportunity to share their message about meeting student mental health needs with Governor Mike DeWine during his recent visit to Lakewood High School.

TRANSFORMING HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION WITH YPAR.

The success of the First Ring Student Leadership Institute allowed the planning team at Cleveland State University and the ESC to win a grant, entitled School-Based YPAR or "SchYPAR", from the U.S. Department of Education in 2022 to implement YPAR in high schools and study its effect on participating students and their schools. Over the course of the 22-23 school year, several FRSI Year two students and FRLA alumna worked with Dr. Adam Voight and Dr. Keith Bell to develop YPAR resources for students and teachers.

Visit the website at schypar.org for more information and access teacher and student resources.

DID YOU KNOW?

- FRSLI students attend 6 all-day “work” sessions and work numerous hours with their teams between sessions to complete their YPAR projects in one school year.

- **Students attending the 2021-2022 Institute said that as a result of participating they:**
 - Can make a difference in their school or community **(95%)**
 - Can help make the world a better place to live in **(93%)**
 - Think about doing things so that people in the future can have things better **(83%)**
 - Can express their views in front of a group of people **(76%)**
 - Feel important in their school or community **(62%)**

- Despite the rigors of the program, at least 75 sophomores participate in FRSLI each year.

- The framework for FRSLI, a process called Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), develops students’ skills in leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration while building social connections and helping students make real change in the schools.

- After participating in FRSLI last year, **98%** of students said completing a YPAR project was moderately to extremely valuable in building their leadership skills.

- The average session attendance rate for Year 1 students is **86%**.

- When we ask students what they would change about a session, their most frequent answers are more time to work within their teams and more time with students from other schools.



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