



#### FAST FACTS



**STUDENTS ENROLLED:** 63,405

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:** 54

**JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS:** 11

**HIGH SCHOOLS:** 10

**LOW INCOME:** 70%

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS:** 26%

**BLACK OR HISPANIC:** 69%

**“My team was willing to engage in intensive preparation and data analysis, identifying areas of growth using Emerging Leaders templates. We talked constantly of our vision of success for all students and together planned engaging, hands-on lessons that helped students develop true understanding.”**

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

## HELPING ARLINGTON BUILD CAMPUS LEADERS

### A CASE STUDY

In 2012, the Arlington Independent School District launched a strategic plan for school improvement that placed strong school leadership at its center. The district and school board established an ambitious goal for every school in Arlington to effectively prepare students for college or a career of their choice. To achieve this vision, they needed a pipeline of great campus leaders who had the skills to guide teachers to excellence and to implement strong college and career preparatory programs, such as early college, advanced academic tracks in math and science, and career-technical academies.

District Officials understood that developing highly skilled school leaders required a leadership training program with the following elements:

- A selection model that identifies candidates with clear leadership potential;
- A curriculum that helps participants master key leadership skills, particularly those related to instruction;
- Job-embedded coaching and feedback so participants can apply new techniques in a real-world setting;
- A robust system to measure program outcomes, including the program’s impact on student learning.

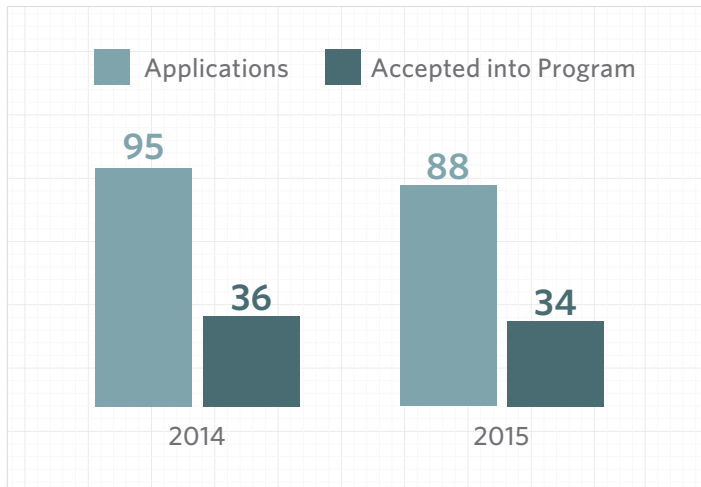
In the first year of its strategic plan, Arlington created an Aspiring Principals Academy for assistant principals and teacher leaders; however, district leaders recognized that the challenge of limited staff time and resources would prevent them from fully implementing the kind of innovative program they wanted. To address this challenge, Arlington began exploring possible external partners and soon learned about New Leaders, a national non-profit with more than 15 years of experience developing school and teacher leaders in America’s highest-need communities.

New Leaders’ work aligned perfectly with what Arlington sought for its schools and, with support from Raise Your Hand Texas and the Meadows Foundation, they hired New Leaders to partner with them on principal pipeline development. Since 2014, Arlington and New Leaders have worked hand-in-hand to implement Emerging Leaders, bringing to life the district’s vision for a high-impact training program that builds the school leadership pipeline and elevates instruction and student achievement across classrooms and schools.

## SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

When Arlington launched its Aspiring Principals Academy, officials became concerned that they were not meeting recruitment goals. New Leaders helped the district tackle this challenge, drawing on strategies that had helped to build robust pools of talented applicants in other cities.

Among other approaches, New Leaders deployed a targeted nomination process, reaching out to area superintendents and Arlington principals to solicit recommendations for high-potential candidates. New Leaders and the district carefully cultivated these candidates, through a mix of in-person and virtual information sessions, regular email outreach, and “open” office hours. This crucial step generated a sufficiently large pool of applicants to enable careful selection. A proactive approach to recruitment also allowed the district to engage candidates with characteristics and skills they sought — such as diverse backgrounds and Spanish-speaking ability — but who might not otherwise have considered applying.



Applicants also participated in a rigorous selection process, which uses objective, research-based criteria to identify educators with strong leadership potential. These include a deep belief that all students can excel, a track record of success as a teacher, and the right disposition to lead other adults. The program screens applicants against these criteria through a series of exercises: for example, they watch a video of a teacher in a classroom, critique instruction, and provide feedback that includes concrete guidance for improvement. These exercises, which New Leaders has developed and tested through years of work in leadership development, were cited by Arlington as particularly relevant and useful for a wide range of work.

In 2014-15, just 36 of 95 applicants (38 percent) were offered admission to Emerging Leaders, a level of selectivity that the Arlington Officials welcomed. Like many other system leaders, they had launched a district-run leadership program with the intent to be selective, but the applicant pool had not been substantially larger than recruitment needs, and ultimately, almost everyone who applied was accepted. The introduction of this selection model ignited a culture shift across the district. Arlington teachers and aspiring leaders now recognize that leadership roles must be earned, based on instructional expertise and demonstrated leadership skills.

**M** My Program Director is so adept at pinpointing areas of growth for each Emerging Leader and then helping us come up with a strategic plan that addresses that area. The assignments are challenging and the bar for success is high. My Program Director never allows me to settle, but I have had constant support throughout the process.”

TEACHER LEADER



## RESEARCH-BASED CURRICULUM

By partnering with New Leaders, Arlington was also able to take advantage of a proven curriculum that ensures Emerging Leaders master the key skills needed to coach colleagues to instructional excellence. Core competencies include: delivering effective feedback; managing difficult conversations; and guiding teams to use student data to better support students.

Research shows that adults learn best by doing, but this approach also delivers immediate benefits to Arlington schools, as participants work to advance school goals and improve achievement as part of their training experience.

## JOB-EMBEDDED COACHING AND FEEDBACK

Receiving personalized feedback is also critical to mastering new skills, and Emerging Leaders work closely with their Program Director and Leadership Facilitator — both successful former school leaders — who provide ongoing coaching and feedback throughout the training year. Participants have ample opportunity to practice both with peers and in their actual schools, and they regularly capture real-world leadership interactions (e.g., team meetings; teacher coaching sessions) on video so they can observe their practice in action while getting feedback about their performance. This allows Emerging Leaders to see firsthand where they're succeeding and where they need to grow.

## MEASURING PROGRAM OUTCOMES

New Leaders and the Arlington Independent School District are committed to developing school leaders who have the skills to help all children achieve at the highest level. To that end, Emerging Leaders continuously evaluates participants' mastery of key leadership competencies as well as their impact on student achievement.

At the outset of the program, all participants set SMART goals — specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time-bound goals — for student learning with their teams, and track progress toward them. In order to successfully complete the program, participants must demonstrate proficiency in key leadership skills as well as the ability to lead achievement gains across their teams. Additionally, the New Leaders Program Director and Leadership Facilitator share with the district which participants performed strongly in the program and are best positioned to grow into more senior roles.

## EMERGING LEADER SPOTLIGHT



### RAY BORDEN

PRINCIPAL, TURNING POINT HIGH SCHOOL

Ray Borden had served as an assistant principal for three years when he enrolled in Emerging Leaders. He thought this experience gave him a head start, but by December, student achievement had plateaued, and he realized that old habits were preventing him from building the trust and shared accountability needed to move students forward.

Borden decided to let go of his preconceptions and fully embrace his Emerging Leaders training. With the help of his coach, he studied state standards and implemented a data collection calendar to strengthen instruction. He also used tools from the program to structure conversations with teachers who needed to improve. "My coach pushed me to think hard about all of my choices, and when I consistently applied what she said, it worked."

Student achievement began to climb and by year's end, students had outstripped the team's ambitious goals, with 94 percent of first-time test takers passing the state biology exam. Based on that success, district leaders tapped him to become the new principal of Turning Point High School.

**Emerging Leaders provides a framework and essential principles to follow.**

**Now, I anticipate obstacles and plan for them. I guide people where I need them to go. The things I learned in the program — the mindset, the tools — I will use them forever. They are now the core of my management style."**

## PROGRAM RESULTS

Student achievement results for Emerging Leaders' first year in Arlington have been impressive, particularly when considering that they were achieved while participants were still completing training.

The strong partnership is powered by a perfect alignment between the district's priorities and New Leaders' expertise. Arlington wanted great school leadership as the centerpiece of its strategy to achieve college and career readiness for every student, but recognized it did not have the staff time and resources to bring this vision to life on its own. With support from Raise Your Hand Texas and the Meadows Foundation, the district and New Leaders quickly executed on the strategic plan, empowering teachers and assistant principals with the skills they needed to be highly effective leaders and to immediately boost student achievement. Going forward, the program will also be supported by an increased financial contribution from the district, along with a grant from American Express and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.



**72%**

of Emerging Leaders led gains across the classrooms they supervised.



**100%**

of Emerging Leaders in math led gains across their teams, with **75 percent achieving double-digit gains.**



**69%**

of Emerging Leaders oversaw student learning gains of at least five percentage points against their SMART goals.



**53%**

of Emerging Leaders were directly promoted into assistant principal or principal roles.

## PARTICIPANTS AND SUPERVISORS FIND EMERGING LEADERS RELEVANT AND EFFECTIVE

<b>Participants who find Emerging Leaders content relevant to their needs as a team leader in their schools</b>	97%
<b>Participants who say their skills improved in:</b>	
<b>Using data to understand students' academic achievement</b>	97%
<b>Building team culture around student achievement</b>	100%
<b>Providing instructional strategies to teachers</b>	100%
<b>Participants who say Emerging Leaders helped to build their leadership capacity</b>	97%
<b>Participants who say Emerging Leaders helped improve student achievement at their school</b>	100%
<b>Supervisors who saw growth in participants' team-building and instructional leadership skills</b>	95%
<b>Supervisors who felt having an Emerging Leader was beneficial, and would like one again</b>	100%



**"I am helping my team work together to meet the needs of all learners. The team mindset is one of growth and dedication to goals."**

INSTRUCTIONAL COACH