



**NYC OUTWARD BOUND
SCHOOLS**



IMPACT 2023

Students at the center

DEAR CREW,

This year has given us an important opportunity to assess how best to leverage our strengths to have the greatest impact on the current needs of our public school system, and design a roadmap for the future. As a result of this work, we have produced a robust three-year strategic plan that is grounded in our vision for a bright future: one where *all* NYC students are engaged in equitable, immersive and joyful learning that prepares them to thrive in community, college and career. To do this, we:

- **LEAD WITH SEAD.** We know that students’ social, emotional and academic development (SEAD) are interconnected and mutually dependent. The research shows that when students feel they belong and have a voice, they are more likely to succeed academically and become lifelong learners.
- **CENTER STUDENTS.** Our work is directly informed by students and guided by educators. We don’t prescribe answers; instead we partner *with* students, educators and schools, engaging them as co-creators in the work.
- **LEARN FROM OUR SUCCESSES AND FAILURES.** We facilitate continuous improvement networks so that we can all exchange and codify the best practices coming out of our school partnerships.
- **INNOVATE WITH OUR PARTNERS.** For 36 years, we have partnered with NYC public schools to implement new practices, approaches and ideas — proving that innovation can take root within school systems.

See this work in action on page:

14

5

15

10

I’m incredibly grateful to our students, staff, school leaders, educators and board, who have all played vital roles in developing our plan. Together with you, our supporters — and your belief in the intrinsic value and potential of every student — we’re able to bring our vision to life.



Vanessa Rodriguez

Vanessa Rodriguez
CEO, NYC Outward Bound Schools

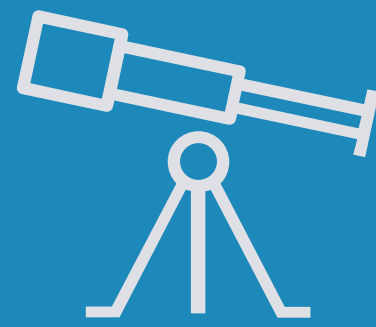


The beauty of a harness is that it allows us to take a leap of faith without the usual risk involved. NYC Outward Bound Schools' role in my education has been like a metaphorical harness by guiding me through confusing processes like college applications and encouraging me to reach for that next rock when I'm struggling.

AMELIE

2023 NYC Outward Bound Schools graduate
Current student at Macaulay Honors College

Thanks to partnerships with local climbing gyms in Long Island City, we offered indoor climbing through the winter season for the first time this year.



WE ENVISION A FUTURE WHERE

all NYC students are engaged in equitable, immersive and joyful learning that prepares them to thrive in community, college and career.

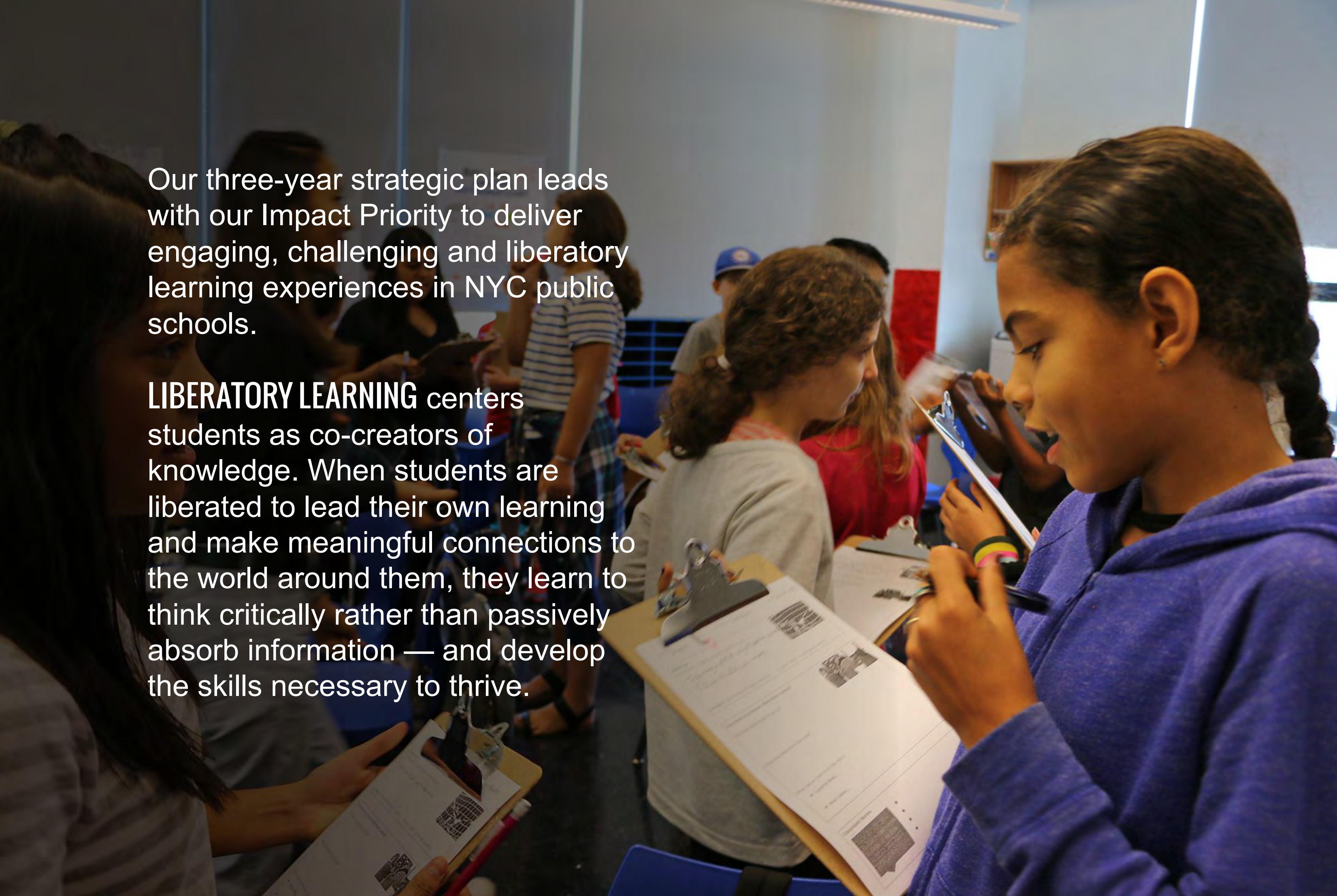


OUR MISSION IS TO

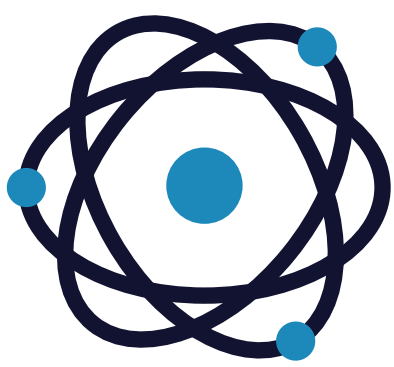
support NYC young people in developing the knowledge and skills to lead with confidence and curiosity, persist in the face of challenge and live fulfilling lives.

Our three-year strategic plan leads with our Impact Priority to deliver engaging, challenging and liberatory learning experiences in NYC public schools.

LIBERATORY LEARNING centers students as co-creators of knowledge. When students are liberated to lead their own learning and make meaningful connections to the world around them, they learn to think critically rather than passively absorb information — and develop the skills necessary to thrive.



WE DO THIS THROUGH...



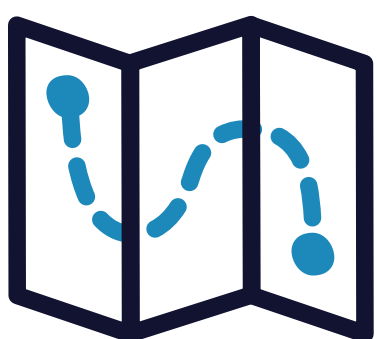
RELEVANT & ENGAGING ACADEMICS

We coach educators and school leaders to incorporate classroom practices that promote student voice and engagement in deeper learning that can be applied to the real world.



CREW

We coach NYC public schools through networked learning communities on how to implement Crew, our signature advisory structure that nurtures students' social, emotional and academic growth.



OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAMMING

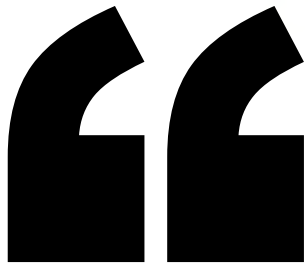
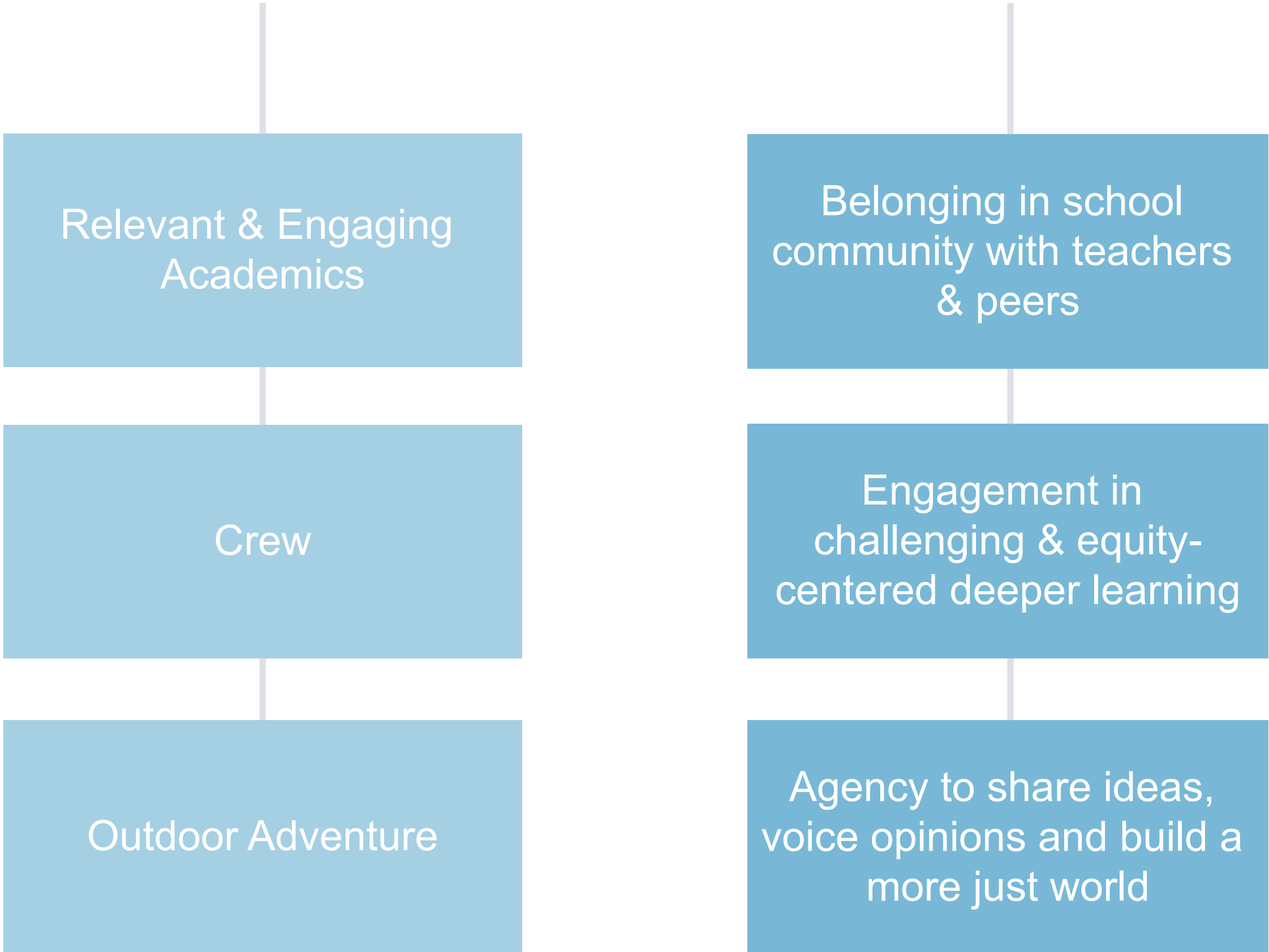
We provide catalytic outdoor experiences for students in the city and at our wilderness basecamp that develop transferrable skills like collaboration and perseverance.

OUR THEORY OF IMPACT



Our Work

...leads to better SEAD outcomes



As a member of the Student Advisory Council, I've spent countless hours listening to the needs of my peers and other students across the network, in order to help create a better school community that isn't just focused on academics, but on students' social and emotional needs, too.

LOOKMAN

2023 NYC Outward Bound Schools graduate
Current student at Columbia University

...and improves
measures of
academic success

...achieving our
ultimate goal.

90% attendance

80+% GPA

90% of seniors have a
high-quality postsecondary
implementation plan

95% high school
graduation rate

An increased number
of students with the
knowledge, skills and
habits of mind to thrive
in community, college
and career.



THIS YEAR, WE SERVED...



28,097

students



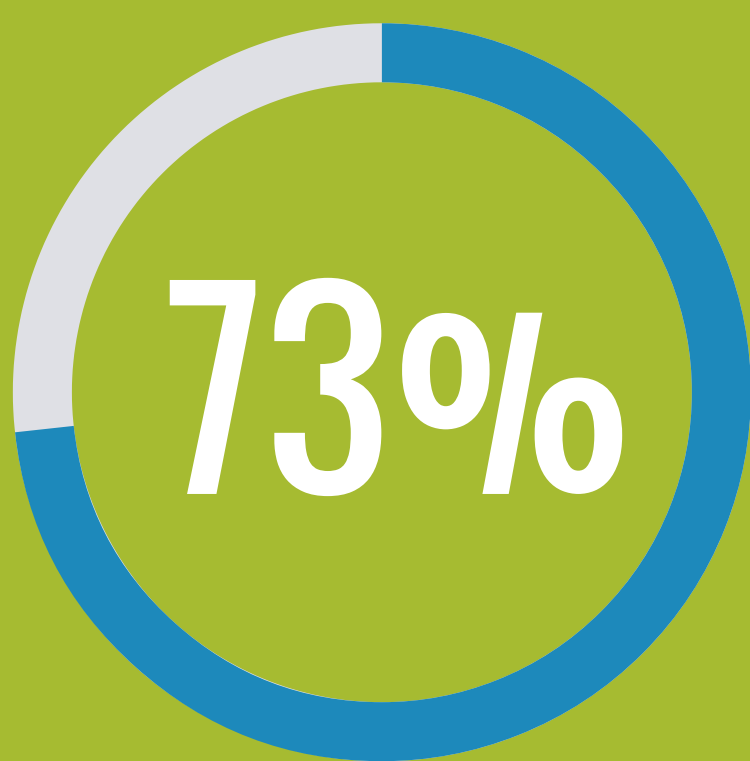
2,044

educators



78

public schools



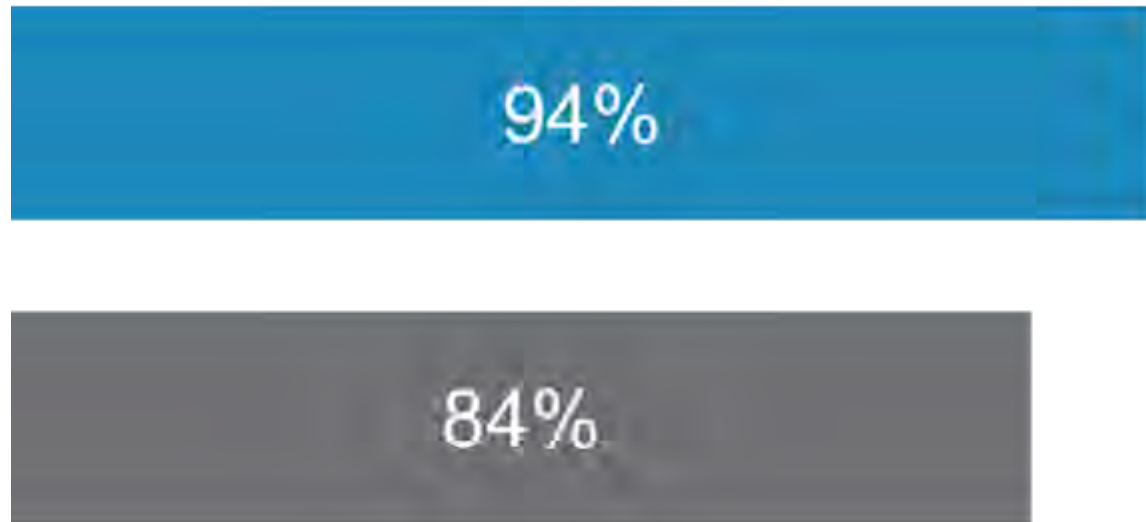
of our students are
Black or Latinx



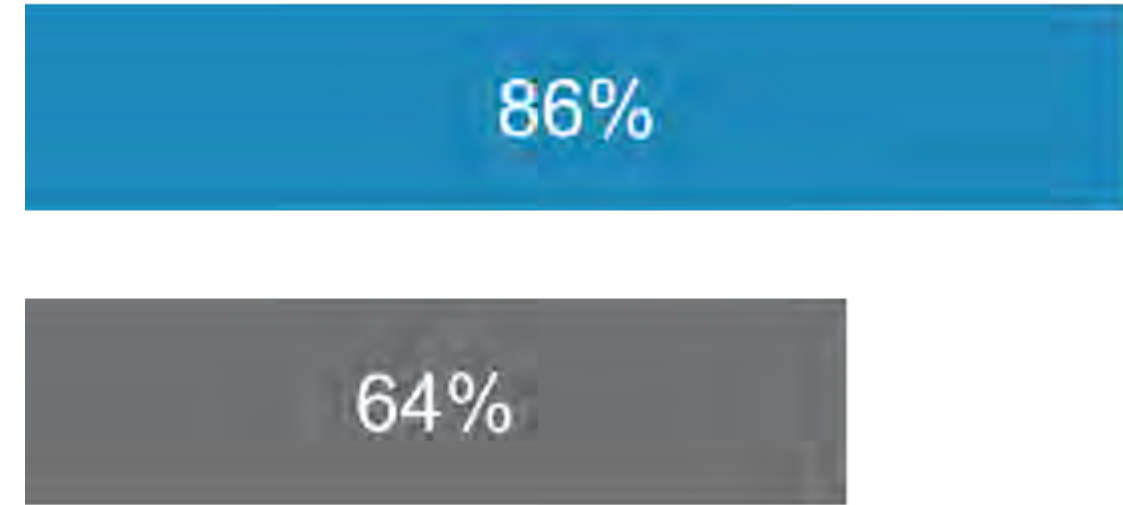
of our students qualify for
free or reduced lunch

OUR 4-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES *

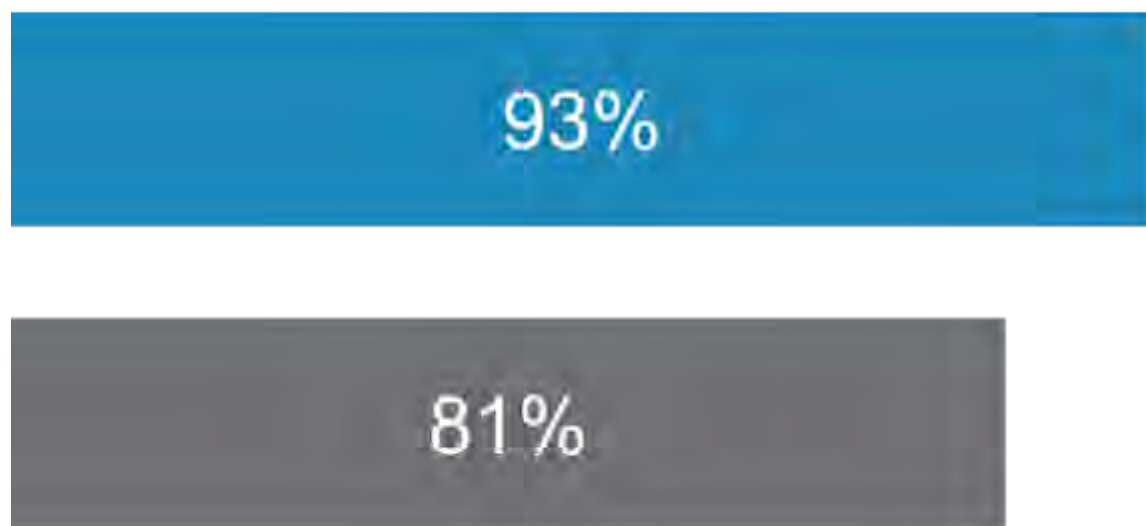
All Students



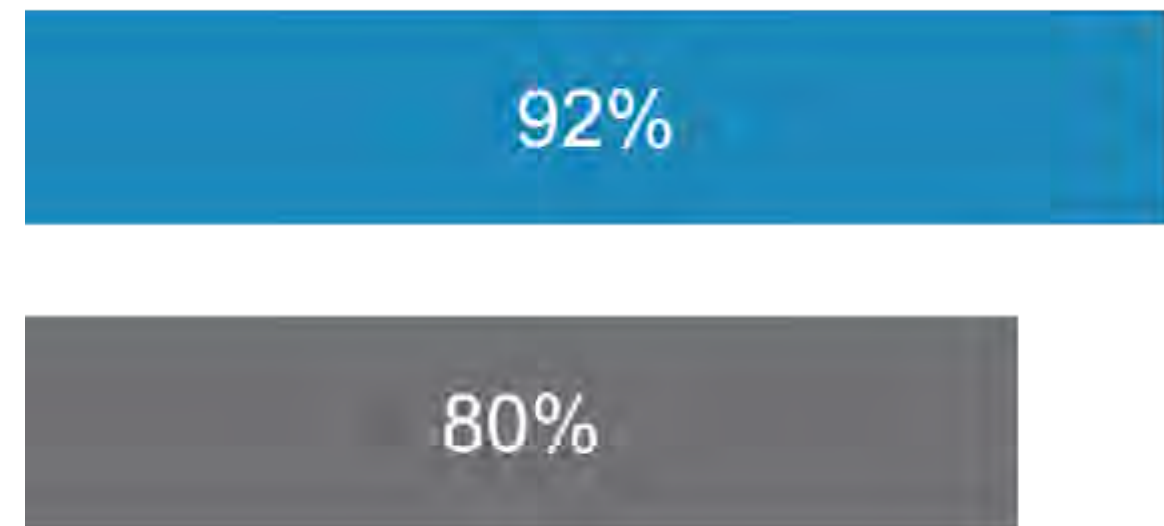
Special Education Students



Black Students



Latinx Students



Network graduation rate



City-wide graduation rate

COLLEGE-BOUND



Our graduates have enrolled in college at higher rates than the national average for the past

7 yrs

79%

of those enrolled persisted to their second year of college

**Graduation rates are from our 15 Network Schools as compared to the most recent city data available*



Acting as students and participating in the activities, systems and structures helped support my expectations for the school year, and identify my areas of strength and need for growth.

SUMMER INSTITUTE PARTICIPANT

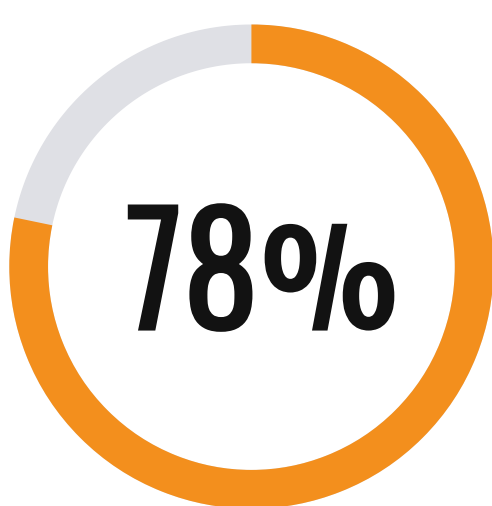


RELEVANT & ENGAGING ACADEMICS

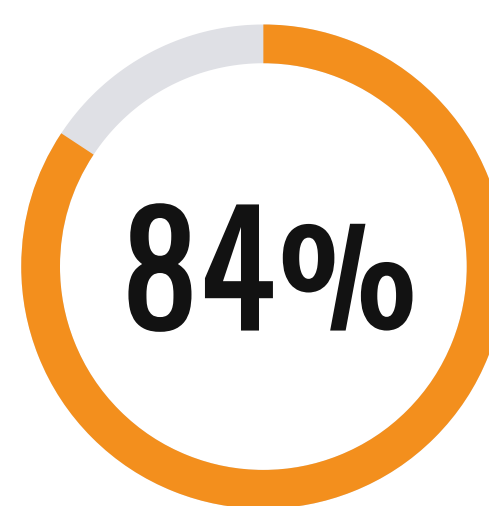
Our instructional leadership coaches work throughout the year to provide school leaders and educators at our partner schools with tailored strategies to increase relevant and engaging learning that centers student voice and helps students prepare for their futures. This coaching is complemented by professional development workshops, content area-specific convenings, and a summer institute for educators new to the NYC Outward Bound Schools network. This four-day intensive provides a strong foundation by introducing educators to the essential practices and structures found in our schools.

What does relevant and engaging learning look like in action? At this summer's institute, educators learned how to use student feedback and interests to drive planning, support equitable grading practices, cultivate high-quality student work, and center a culture of belonging across all classes. The highlight of the week was an immersive “slice” of the student experience, during which educators explored community opinions and proposals to shelter unhoused individuals on the Upper West Side — the outcomes of which will help inform their curriculum.

“The case study slice was super helpful. I feel like I learned the most when I had the ‘student hat’ on so I could experience the learning that we’re aiming to create,” said one participant. And when educators are engaged and supported, *students benefit*.



78% of our students agree that their teachers want them to become better thinkers, and not just memorize things.



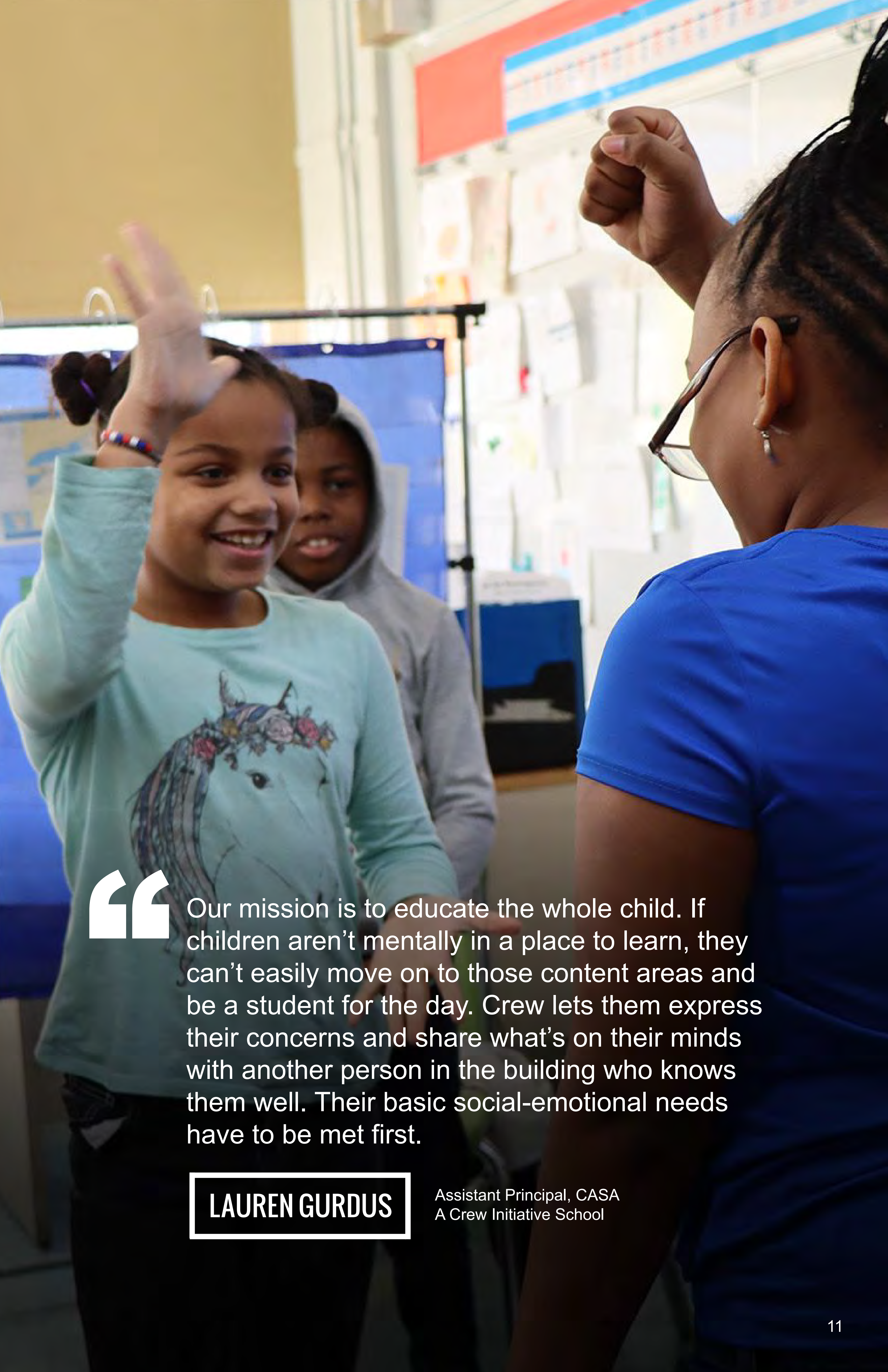
84% of our students say that the adults at their school talk to them about their post-secondary plans.

SPOTLIGHT ON SEDINA MONTOYA

Sedina Montoya, a Humanities, Literacy & Language Teacher at MS 839 — a NYC Outward Bound School in Brooklyn — was named the 2023 recipient of our Gaynor McCown Excellence in Teaching Award. Sedina was honored at this year's Gala for her dedication to MS 839's diverse community of multilingual learners.

[Watch a video](#) about Sedina's work:





“

Our mission is to educate the whole child. If children aren't mentally in a place to learn, they can't easily move on to those content areas and be a student for the day. Crew lets them express their concerns and share what's on their minds with another person in the building who knows them well. Their basic social-emotional needs have to be met first.

LAUREN GURDUS

Assistant Principal, CASA
A Crew Initiative School

CREW

This year, our Crew Initiative program supported 52 schools across NYC to implement Crew — our signature advisory structure that nurtures students' social, emotional and academic growth. Crew Initiative is a joint public-private partnership funded by the City and private grants.

Crews are teams of 8-16 students led by an adult Crew Advisor, often a teacher, who meet frequently to focus on team building, academic and postsecondary planning, conflict resolution and self-reflection. As a structure — and more broadly as a whole-school culture of community — Crew is proven to have positive impacts on student belonging, agency and engagement.

Our coaches work individually with Crew Guides, the educators leading Crew implementation at their schools, and support knowledge- and practice-sharing at network-wide gatherings once a month. This year, many Crew Guides broadened their impact by leading workshops (on topics like restorative justice and student-led conferences) and hosting inter-visitation days so that their peers could see Crew modeled across the network.

THIS YEAR, OUR CREW INITIATIVE PARTNERS SAW A:



30%
INCREASE

in students who feel like their teachers know them well.



19%
INCREASE

in students who feel like their classmates care about them.



10%
INCREASE

in students who feel like their classes helped them get ready for their academic futures.



IMPACT IN ACTION

Read our case studies:

- [South Brooklyn Community High School: A Responsive Solution to a Transfer School's Needs](#)
- [NYC Lab School for Collaborative Studies: Infusing Joy and Inclusion Into School Culture](#)
- [MS 419: Establishing Belonging and Pride in a New School Community](#)

[Watch a video about the Roles of a Crew Advisor, starring our Crew Coaches & school partners:](#)





At first, being a navigator for my Crew at Sharpe was overwhelming. I felt like there was a lot to know. But it turns out, when I got familiar with it, I learned it wasn't actually that hard, it was actually pretty simple. It's true — something might seem complex at first, but once you calm down and take the time to learn, it'll become simple.

ANDREW

First-time camper & 11th grader at Brooklyn Collaborative,
A NYC Outward Bound School



OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

[Watch a video](#) about the role social, emotional and academic development plays in both outdoor adventure & the classroom:

We see something *magical* occur when students step up to our climbing wall for the first time or arrive at our wilderness basecamp, not knowing what to expect, but trusting that they'll be met with the support they need. By the end of their program, they leave with a new realization — perhaps, that they're capable of more than they thought.



This *magic* of course, has its basis in a tried and true approach we've delivered for 36 years — one that balances challenge and support.

This year, in particular, our Outdoor Adventure programs played an important role in addressing the student mental health crisis by facilitating genuine connection and collaboration. Whether our students join us for a day of community building initiatives in the city, a climbing wall challenge, or an overnight adventure upstate, disconnecting from technology and connecting with peers provides lasting benefits. We find that the programs are particularly impactful during 6th and 9th grade — often when students are starting at new schools — and provide an outlet through which to build deeper relationships and trust among their Crew, connect with the identity and culture of their school and work on their own initiative and perseverance.

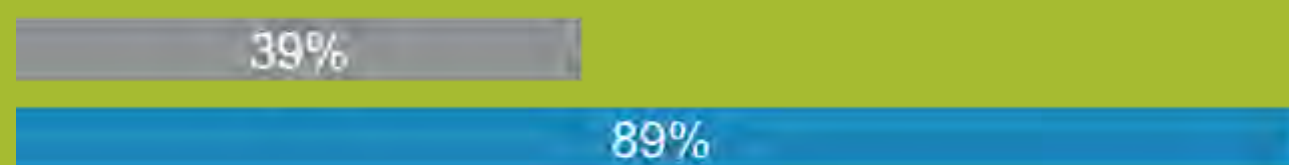
Long after our programs end, we continue to support students by fostering classroom environments that help nurture and grow the skills they learned outdoors.



IMPACT IN ACTION

- Before an overnight program
- After an overnight program

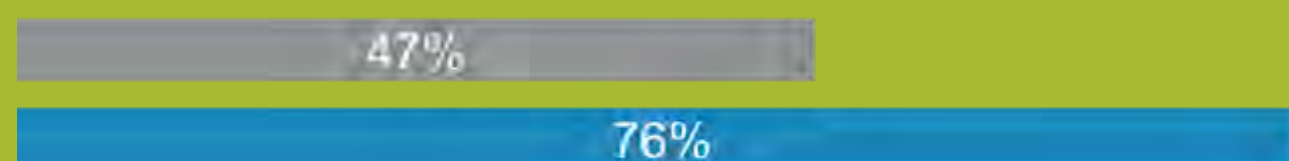
Students who feel they have supportive relationships in Crew



Students who feel they can collaborate to solve problems in Crew

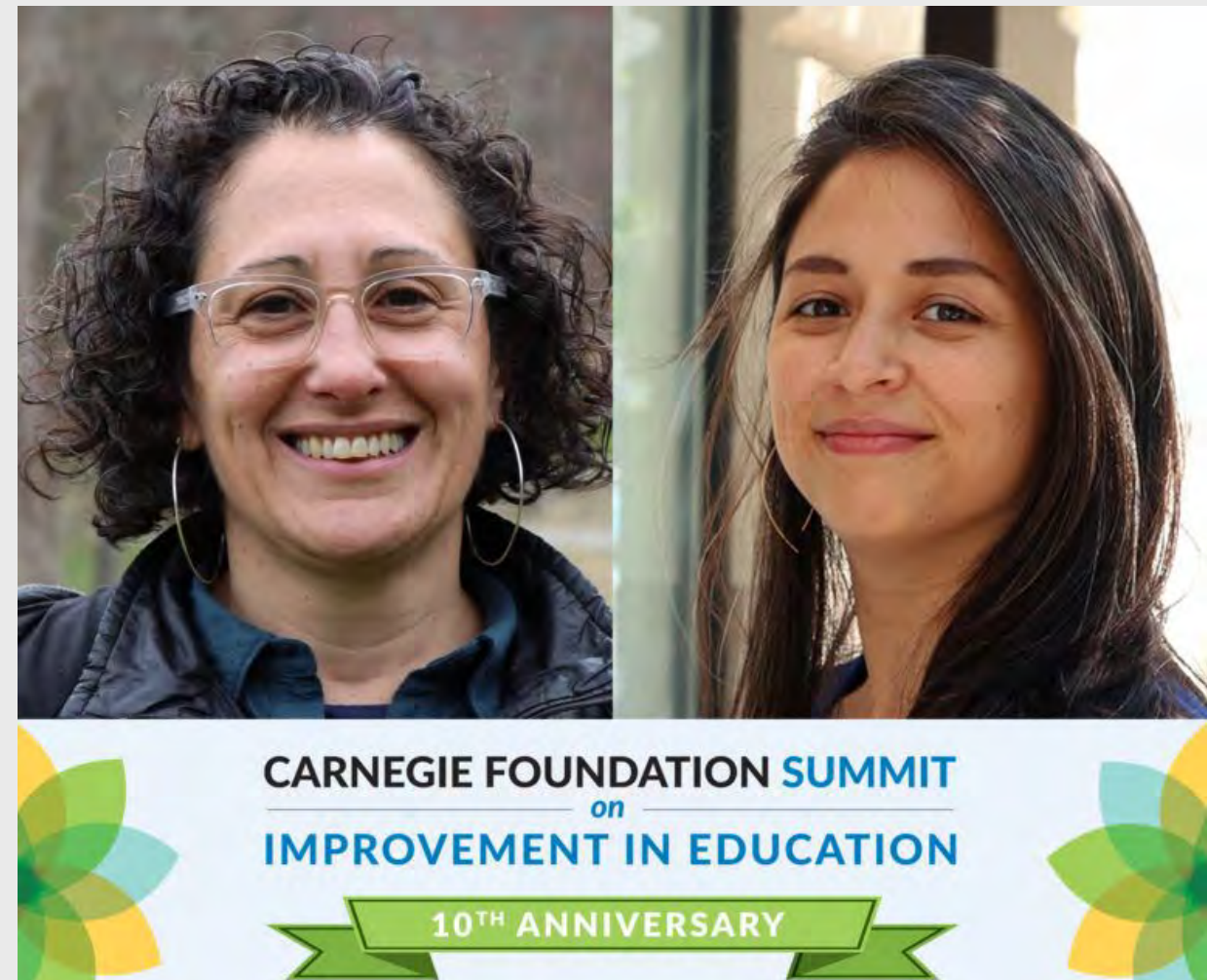


Students who feel they can set an attainable goal and work toward it



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Aurora Kushner, Director of Impact and Continuous Improvement, and Jessica Bardy, Director of Strategic Partnerships, were accepted from among a record number of applicants to present at the 10th anniversary of the Carnegie Summit this past spring. The Carnegie Summit is the lead gathering of teachers, leaders, schools and organizations around the country, and world, implementing continuous improvement science.

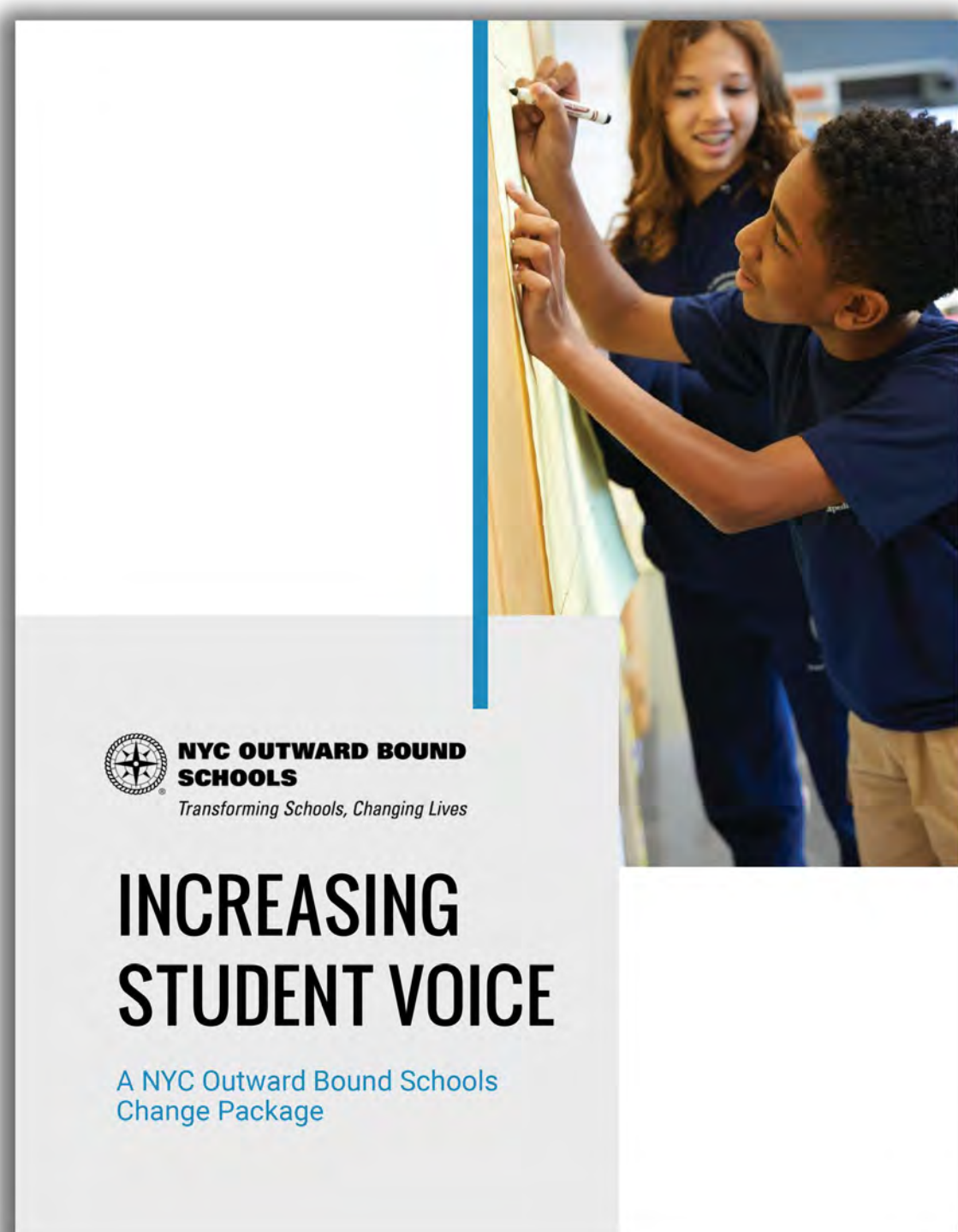


Their presentation highlighted how to manage change across an improvement network to support equitable outcomes, using the Crew Initiative model as the key example.

“It was clear that how we are organizing Crew Initiative around an improvement network and with an improvement lens differentiates us from others who are doing Crew,” said Aurora.

CHANGE PACKAGES

[Download our Change Package:](#)



In order to help other schools, teams and coaches work toward equitable outcomes for students, we are capturing sets of ideas, proven in practice, into what we call Change Packages — for the first time as an organization.

This spring, we published our first Change Package around Increasing Student Voice. The package is a comprehensive toolkit of implementation steps, data-driven case studies and suggestions on how to build community buy-in around a specific change idea. More change packages are on the way, thanks to the learnings emerging from our Crew Initiative improvement network.

THANK YOU, SUPPORTERS!

NYC Outward Bound Schools is deeply grateful to our many friends and supporters who support us in this work every day. This list reflects contributors in our 2022-2023 fiscal year, which spanned from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

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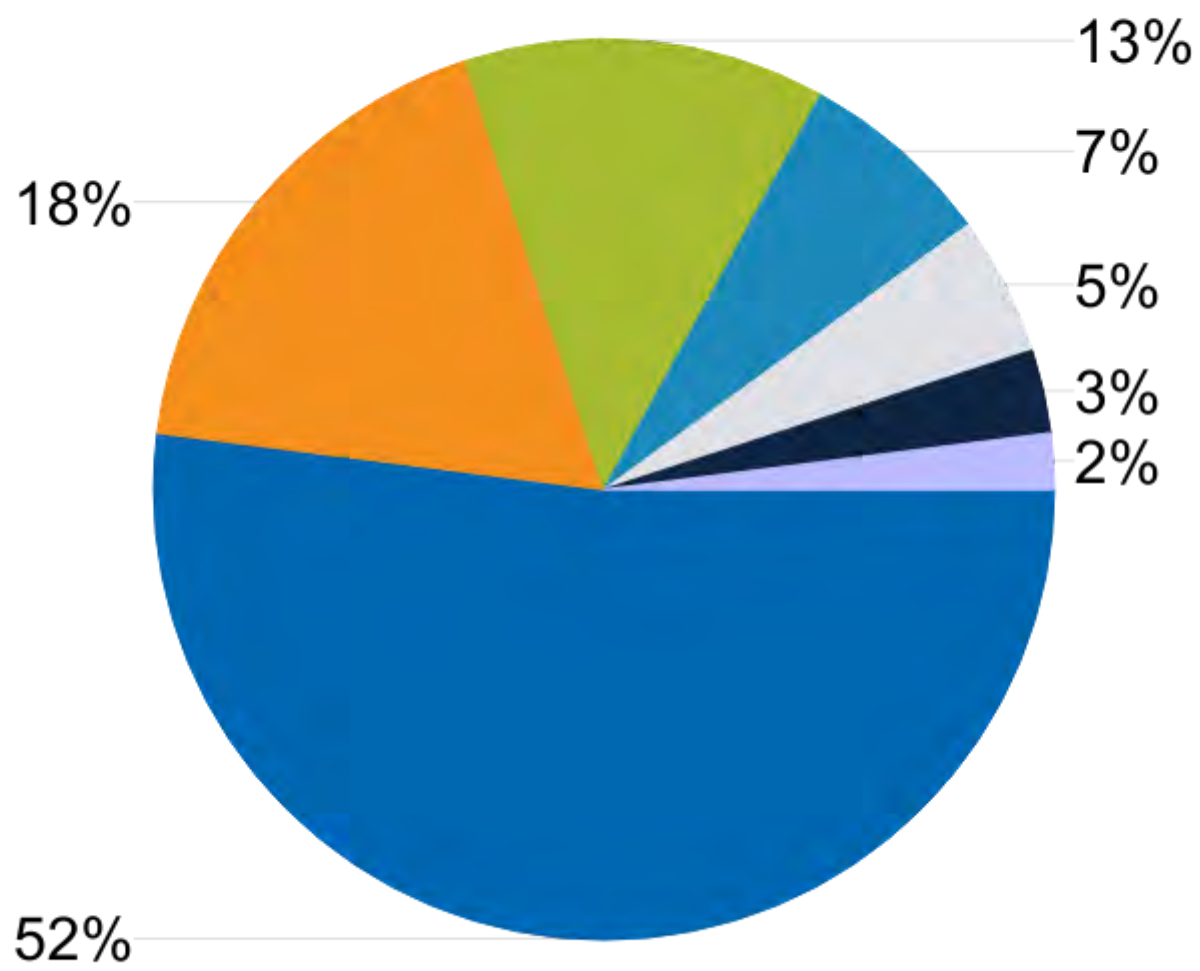
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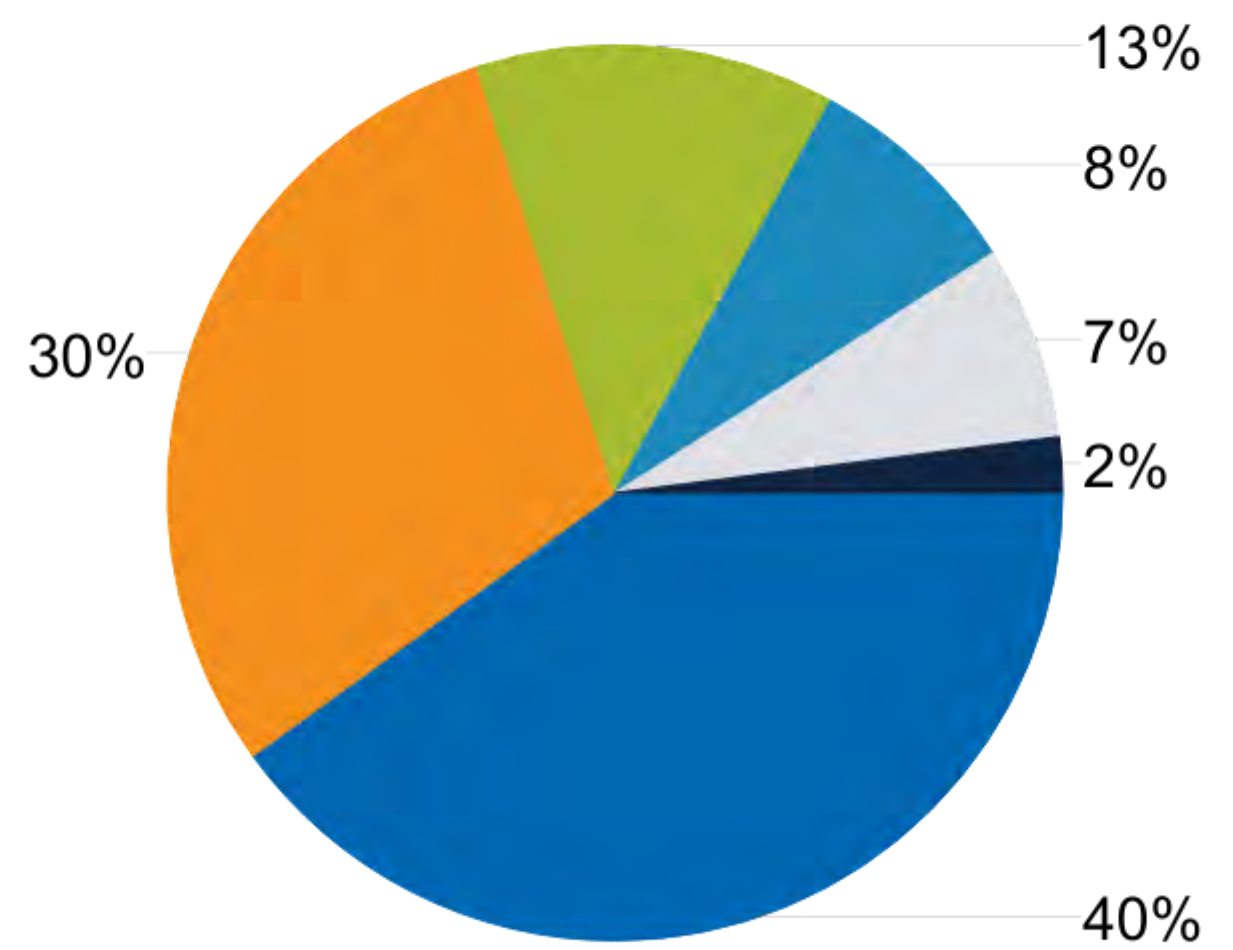
Year ending June 30, 2023
Preliminary 2022-23 Financials

Total Revenue: \$7,008,295



- Fee-for-Service
- Gala
- Foundations/Corporations
- Government Grants
- Individuals
- Federal Stimulus Funds
- Other

Total Expenses: \$7,909,674



- Network Schools
- Crew & Select Strategies Schools
- Outdoor Adventure Programs
- Fundraising General
- Management & General
- Gala

NYC OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOLS IN THE NEWS

[A Troubleshooting Tool for School Improvement](#)

HTH Unboxed | By: Julie Bennis, Jonny Soto-Altrogge & Aurora Kushner

[A School Without Walls Opens its Doors as a NYC Public School](#)

AP News

[3 Things Schools Can Do to Help Ease the Student Mental Health Crisis](#)

The 74 | By: Richard Stopol

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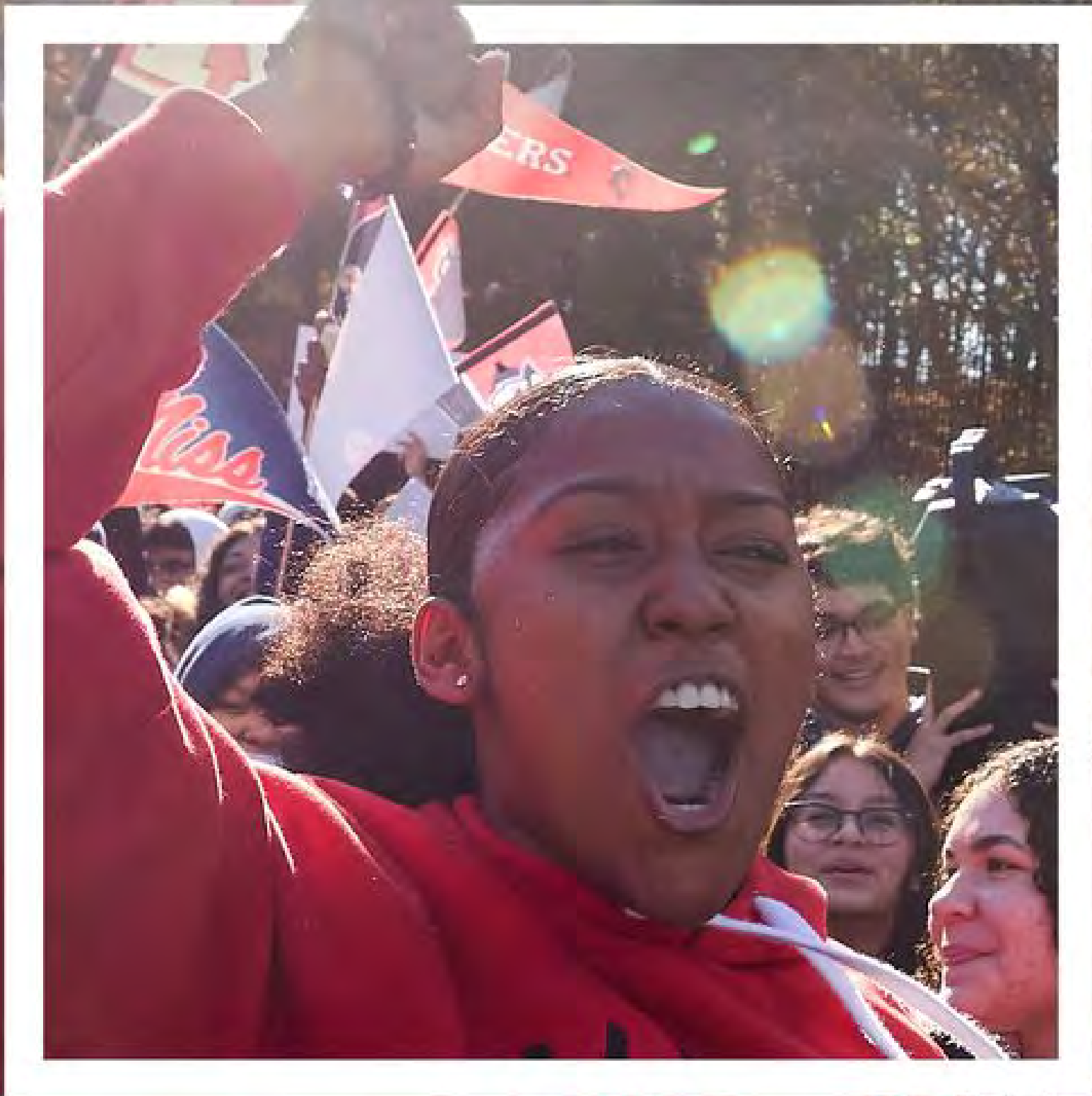
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Chalkbeat New York



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Over 1,000 NYC Outward Bound Schools
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