

# OUR IMPACT 2024 - 25





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# LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER



Brilliance exists in every child, but opportunity must be intentionally built. I founded Boldly Moving Education Ahead (BMEA) to dismantle systemic barriers and create learning environments where children, families, and educators can thrive together.

What began in Detroit has grown into a nationally relevant model. Through our Youth Leadership Development Program (YLDP), students achieve extraordinary gains in literacy and math while high school mentors develop as leaders and future educators. Families are engaged as partners in learning, and our teacher and principal fellowships ensure that educators stay in the field, supported and inspired.

The results speak for themselves: in just five weeks, students in our summer pilot achieved 157% math growth and saw Grade 3 ELA proficiency rise from 2.8% to 58.3%. High school mentors reported renewed motivation to pursue college and careers, while our educator fellowships have maintained a 100% retention rate.

The demand for this work continues to grow. Principals are asking for YLDP in more schools, educators are seeking deeper wellness and professional support, and families want continuity across grade levels. Together, we are proving that when children and families are given the right conditions, their brilliance shines.

With gratitude and resolve,



Curtis L. Lewis, Ph.D.  
Founder & President  
Boldly Moving Education Ahead (BMEA)



# ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

## MISSION / PURPOSE

We seek to transform the education ecosystem and to build liberatory school spaces for Black, Brown, and economically underserved students.

## OUR CORE VALUES

### Love & Care



We foster an environment of empathy and support, ensuring that every individual feels valued and respected.

### Integrity



We uphold the highest standards of honesty and transparency in all our actions and interactions.

### Commitment



We are dedicated to our mission and relentless in our pursuit of equity and excellence in education.

### Execution



We strive for excellence in all our endeavors, ensuring that our actions lead to meaningful and measurable outcomes.



# WHAT WE DO — FIVE STRATEGIES



**School Partnerships:** We partner with schools to foster relationship-centered cultures through Restorative Practices and implement instructional models that promote student independence. Our instructional model draws from each school's curriculum, enabling educators to deliver relevant, engaging instruction.



**Teacher Wellness & Professional Development:** SCECH-aligned PD and embedded coaching that strengthen practice, classroom culture, and retention for diverse educators.

**Principal Wellness & Policy Fellowship:** Coaching, communities of practice, and a policy/practice capstone to equip leaders to sustain wellness and lead restorative, high-performing schools.



**Youth Leadership Development Program (YLDP):** Pipeline for Black boys into teaching with paid leadership, mentoring, workforce skills, and university-bridge supports.



**Policy & Advocacy:** Partnerships with Michigan policy organizations to elevate practitioner voice, co-produce briefs, train for testimony, and advance equitable, liberatory policy.

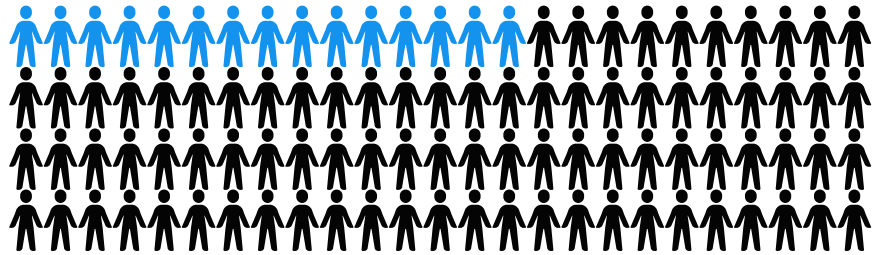


**The BMEA Independent School** exists to reimagine education for both boys and girls by centering joy, belonging, innovation, and academic excellence. Rooted in restorative practices, culturally responsive teaching, human-centered leadership, and project-based learning (PBL), our school is designed to nurture the whole child —intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Students will learn through real-world, inquiry-driven projects that build critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills while keeping their identities and voices at the center. We are building a space where every student sees themselves reflected in the curriculum, where they are supported by strong role models, and where wellness and community guide learning. The school serves as a living model of BMEA's mission: preparing the next generation of leaders, educators, and change-makers by **Boldly Moving Education Ahead.**

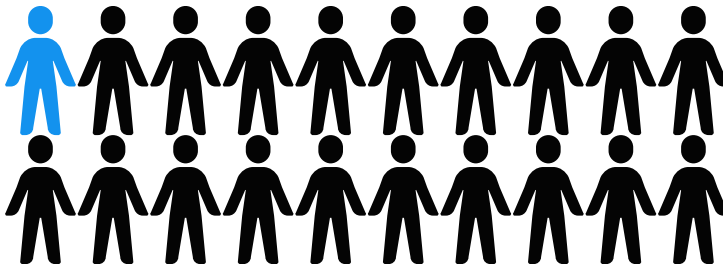
# WHY NOW?



Only **15%** of black children in 8<sup>th</sup> grade can read on level.



Only about **1 in 20** Black graduates in Michigan and nationwide meet college-readiness benchmarks by graduation.



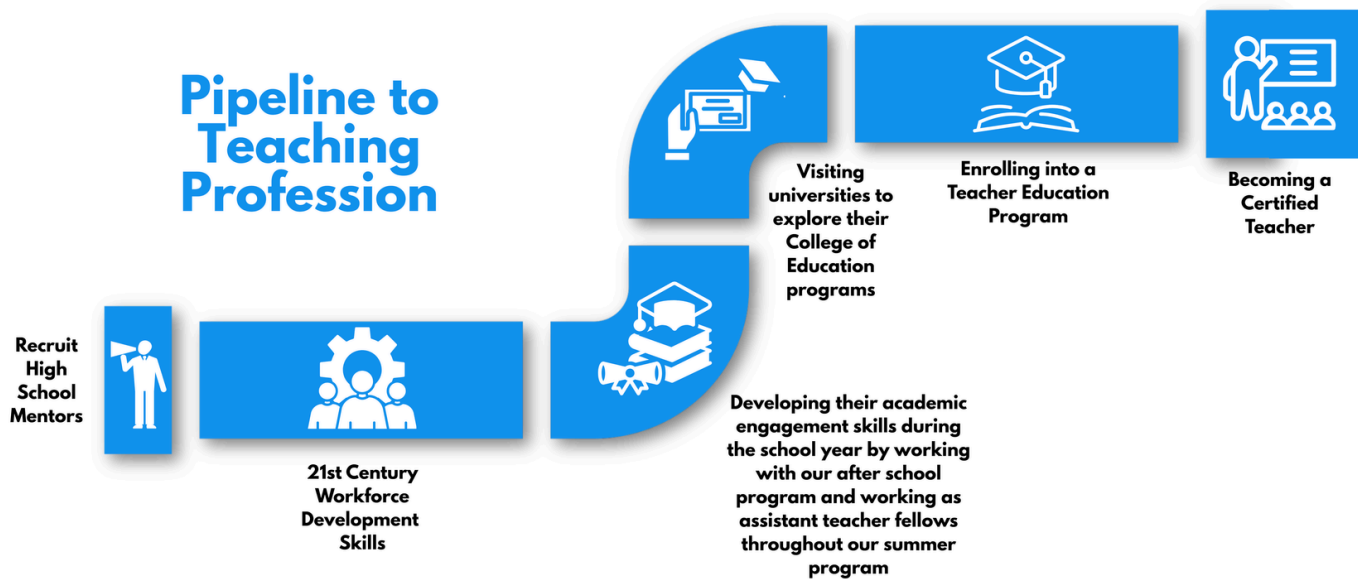
Nearly **59%** of U.S. teachers report frequent burnout, the highest of any profession and nationally, and **over 40%** leave the profession within five years.



# YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The BMEA Youth Leadership Development Program (YLDP) exists to cultivate a pipeline of future educators and civically engaged leaders who are rooted in identity, equipped with skills, and committed to transforming their communities.

Through culturally grounded mentorship, academic support, and leadership development, YLDP prepares students to become confident learners, effective communicators, and purpose-driven citizens—most of whom will become the next generation of transformative educators.



**400**  
Hours

Each High School Fellow in our program receives approximately **20 hours of training per month during the school year** and an additional **200-hour summer intensive**, totaling nearly **400 hours of structured, hands-on preparation annually**.

This includes monthly instructional workshops in the art of teaching, rooted in **project-based learning, restorative practices, and culturally responsive pedagogy**, along with weekly applied practice in our afterschool program and leadership as co-teachers during our summer sessions.

**77%**

**Career Interest in Education:** Notably, 77% of HS Fellows have developed a keen interest in pursuing careers in teaching or STEM fields, signaling the program's success in fostering a new generation of educators and STEM professionals.

**College & Career Readiness Supports:** YLDP helps students navigate the college process by offering scholarship preparation and application workshops, as well as tours that connect them directly with postsecondary opportunities.

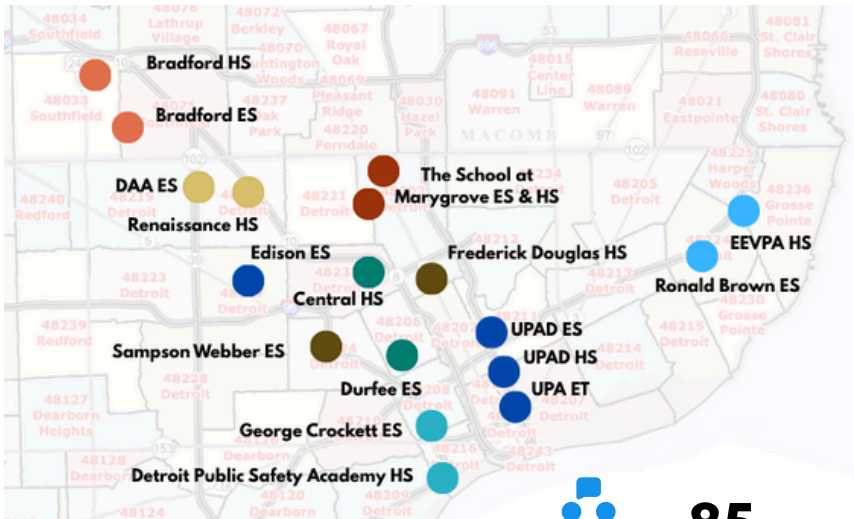
A unique feature of YLDP is that high school fellows receive training from veteran educators using a curriculum designed by a college professor, aligning with core standards and best practices. This early, research-informed exposure equips them to be effective mentors today while building a diverse, homegrown pipeline of future educators.

# YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ELEMENTARY IMPACT

## YEARLONG, INTERGENERATIONAL DESIGN & IMPACT

At the heart of YLDP is a unique model where high school fellows mentor and tutor elementary-age boys throughout the school year and summer. This intergenerational relationship reinforces academic growth, belonging, and character development while positioning high school students as leaders, role models and future educators.

### 18 SCHOOLS IN MICHIGAN



 **273**  
Students (2024: 161) ↑

 **85**  
HS Mentors (2024: 37) ↑

The YLDP operates at 10 different elementary school sites in Michigan and our goal is to double our program school sites.

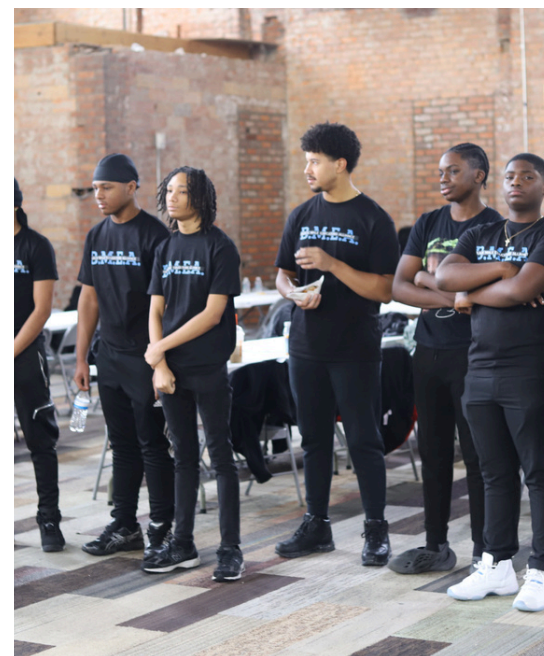
**75%**

**Math Proficiency:** Our Youth Leadership Development Program has significantly exceeded national growth targets, with **75% of our elementary participants achieving or surpassing significant growth benchmarks.**

This success underscores the effectiveness of our tailored instruction in critical algebraic math standards.

**157%**

**Exceptional Growth:** The program has recorded a remarkable 157% average growth in mathematics among elementary school participants, **outpacing the nationally expected growth rate for their grade levels by 57%**, as evidenced by standardized test results from a partner school.

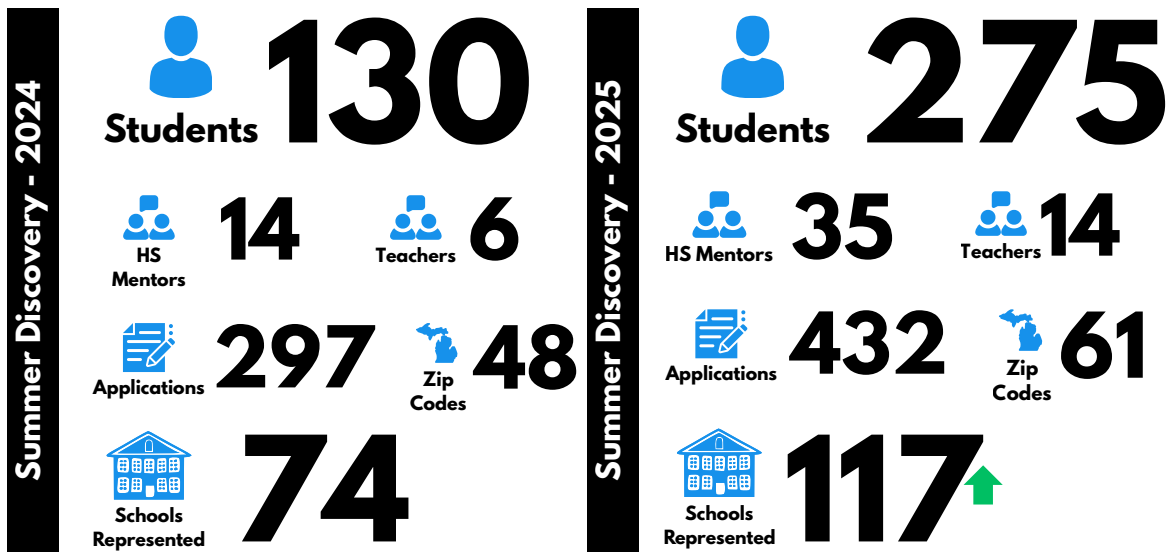






## YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM - SUMMER DISCOVERY

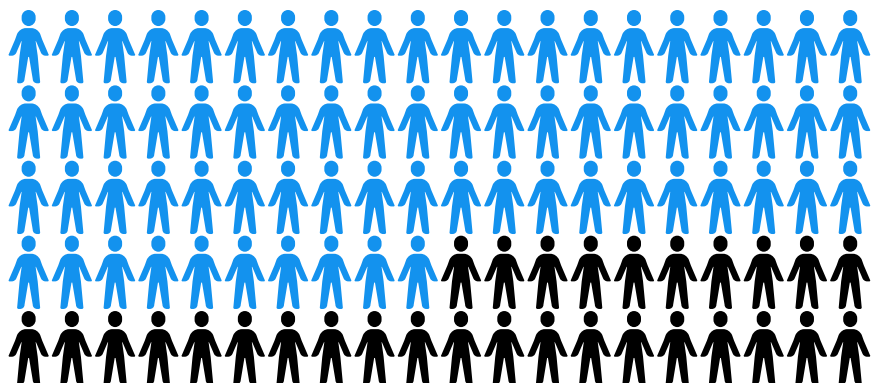
### YEAR OVER YEAR GROWTH



**68.8% OF GRADE 1  
MATH STUDENTS  
REACHED PROFICIENT**

**GRADE 2 MATH  
ELIMINATED ALL BELOW  
BASIC SCORES — 100%  
OF STUDENTS  
IMPROVED.**

**GRADE 3 ELA  
PROFICIENT SCORES  
JUMPED FROM 2.8% TO  
58.3%.**



**70%+ of students moved up at least one  
performance band in just 5 weeks**

# FAMILY FEEDBACK



**"Having the high school mentors is a really important piece. He looks up to them and says 'when I'm in high school and I'm a mentor'"**



**"My son told me, 'My teacher cares about our **destiny**'."**



**"The care and concern goes beyond these programs. It's a community. They're invested."**





As part of the fellowship, educators engage in the creation of personalized wellness plans that delve into the interconnectedness of Black Identity Development, social-cultural factors, and overall well-being. By collaboratively exploring these aspects, teachers strive to cultivate a sense of balance and prioritize their own well-being.

This newfound equilibrium allows them to provide stronger support to their families, students, and the school community, fostering a more harmonious and thriving learning environment.

**Participants are engaged through the following:**

- Monthly Group Sessions (facilitated on weekends)
- One-on-One Coaching
- On-Going Check-Ins and Support
- Monthly sessions with a professional therapist
- Travel and participation in national conferences



**100%**

**Retaining Teachers of Color**

of educators in the Teacher Wellness Fellowship have remained in the profession

**50%**

From 2024 to 2025, we increased our cohort size by 50%, admitting 30 teachers into the fellowship



## PRINCIPAL WELLNESS & POLICY FELLOWSHIP

This Fellowship cultivates a network of equity-centered school leaders who prioritize wellness, understand the power of policy, and lead transformative change in their schools and communities.

We support principals in deepening their personal leadership, advocating for policy impact, and building restorative, innovative school cultures.



150%

From 2024 to 2025, the Principal Wellness Fellowship has **increased participants by 150%**, across 2 states, ultimately **impacting over 9,000** in just 1 year

## Supporting School Leaders

We've supported **50** Black School Leaders from Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, and as far as China

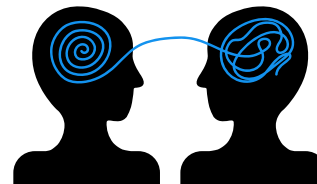
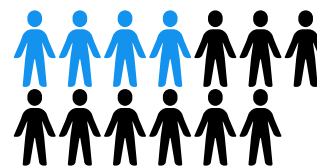


**Michigan:**  
Detroit, Lansing,  
Grand Rapids, Holt

Chicago, Illinois

Cincinnati, Ohio

Guangdong Province, China



A ONE-YEAR  
EXPERIENCE  
SUPPORTING  
PRINCIPALS IN  
WELLNESS,  
RESTORATIVE  
LEADERSHIP, AND  
POLICY  
ENGAGEMENT.

## Retaining Black Leaders in Education

↑ 100%

of school leaders in PWWF have remained in the profession





**BMEA collaborates with local and state entities to advocate for policy and system changes that will transform schools into more equitable spaces.**



## BMEA Leadership Team



**Curtis L. Lewis, Ph.D.**  
Founder & President



**Anton Horton**  
Executive Director of  
Programming



**Chris Waston**  
Chief Advisor to the  
President



**Staci L. Williams**  
Chief Development  
Officer



**Michael Payne, Jr.**  
Chief of Strategy & School  
Partnerships



**Michael Payne, Jr.**  
Chief of Learning and  
Innovation



**Joe Bush**  
Managing Director  
of Youth & Family  
Engagement



**Romney Lewis**  
Managing Director  
of Youth & Family  
Engagement



**Sarah Feldman**  
Director of Strategic  
Operations

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OF OUR COMMUNITY**

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