

Rising Every Day



We envision a day when...

Every Indianapolis resident is engaged in building a public education system that prepares every student for graduation and beyond.

Students and parents experiencing injustice in our system have a voice in the direction of our schools and can ally with the teachers and leaders fighting to improve outcomes for children.

Every elected leader — whether they are a school board member, a City-County councilor or a state legislator — is working toward a coherent and ambitious vision for improvement in our public schools.

Community leaders across Indianapolis are organized to bring new perspectives to persistent challenges and to amplify the voices of those who might otherwise be unheard.



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MISSION

We serve our community and Indianapolis students by convening a diverse group of local residents to improve public schools. We create opportunities for Indianapolis students by bringing together parents, teachers, students and community leaders.

VISION

We believe all children deserve an excellent education that prepares them for graduation and beyond.

VALUES

Our work and education policy agenda are based on three core values:

1. Students should be at the center of all education discussions.
2. Families should be empowered to choose and advocate for what's best for their children.
3. Educators should have autonomy and flexibility to meet the needs of students.

Letter From Our CEO

Dear Friends,

I founded RISE INDY in 2019 with a simple idea: To ensure all students have access to an education that prepares them for an ever-changing world.

My passion for revitalizing public education began with a firm commitment to justice that was modeled by my parents. Growing up, I saw my mother and father living lives of service to others in Indianapolis and beyond. They exemplified uplifting others, justice and sacrificing to ensure that their children received the educational foundation that would set us up for success in whatever we endeavored. As a mother of three, I want my children to have the same opportunity to learn, grow and thrive in a learning environment that sets them up for success now and in the future.

This community deserves an education system that brings people together, responds to challenges and improves outcomes for all. Now is the time to cultivate such an educational environment. We must nurture a pipeline of skilled and confident young people who will shape our city, state and country for years to come.

If we tap into the talents of all our young people, we will create a galvanized community that is poised to reshape families and neighborhoods. K-12 education is the foundation for that future. That's why RISE INDY works at both the grassroots and grasstops levels — with leaders embedded in the community as well as corporate and political leaders. This approach gives us a unique opportunity to bring parents, teachers and changemakers together to listen, learn and collaborate.

We've made tremendous progress in the past four years, and I'm excited to share our first-ever impact report with you. I hope it inspires you to join us as we continue to make quality public education a priority.

I'm so grateful to you for your support. Our efforts are changing conversations, changing policies and changing lives.

When we put students at the center, we all RISE together.

Jasmin Shaheed-Young
President and CEO
RISE INDY



Why We Need RISE INDY



Data shows that students who don't perform at grade level in elementary school experience higher rates of poverty, incarceration, unemployment, debt and other negative life outcomes.

What's an achievement gap?

In the context of K-12 education, achievement gaps occur when one group of students (for example, students grouped by race) outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is larger than the margin of error.

Is there an achievement gap in Indianapolis schools?

Yes, there is. Racial disparities in education outcomes, which have been an issue for decades, have escalated in recent years. For example, the 2023 ILEARN assessment shows that Black and Hispanic students in grades 3-8 achieve only 28% of the English and math proficiency of white students.

Marion County is one of the most diverse counties in Indiana, and its public schools reflect that diversity. The majority of Marion County students are Black (37.6%) and Hispanic (24.7%). In the Carmel Clay school district, 69% of the students are white. Only 4.1% are Black and 5.7% are Hispanic.

Student test scores show the disparity between Carmel and Marion County. In 2018, just before RISE INDY was founded, 70% of Carmel 10th graders were proficient in combined math and English language arts testing, compared to just 22.9% of Marion County 10th graders.

Comparing 11th grade SAT scores, students in Carmel earned a combined score of 67.8% and public school students in Marion County earned a combined score of 16.3%. Those SAT scores also showed that white students in Marion County were four times as likely to be proficient in math than Black and Hispanic students.

Why is there an achievement gap?

Researchers have found a strong link between racial school **segregation** and academic achievement gaps. Black and Hispanic student enrollment is often concentrated in high-poverty schools rather than well-resourced schools, which typically have a higher enrollment of wealthier, white students.

How does K-12 education affect our economy?

Here's an example focused on literacy: To succeed in life, children need to learn to read and read well. That's one reason the Governor's Workforce Cabinet in Indiana recently added "ensure students can read by the end of third grade" as an action item in its **recommendations** to tackle employer talent challenges and accelerate the state's economy.

Reading by the end of third grade has proven to be a critical benchmark of long-term academic and life success, but just 63% of Black and 58% of Hispanic third graders in Marion County were proficient readers on the 2022 IREAD-3 assessment, compared with 85% of white students.

Students who are poor readers by the end of **third grade** are likely to be poor readers throughout their lives. Children who can't read at grade level by third grade are four times less likely to graduate from high school on time than children who are proficient readers. Add poverty to the mix, and those students are **13 times** less likely to graduate on time.

Students' challenges with reading often follow them into adulthood. Twenty percent of Americans read below the level required to earn a living wage. In Indiana, one in six adults reads below a fifth grade level. And in Marion County, 50,000 adults can't read well enough to fill out a job application.

Why aren't students performing?

There are many reasons. One is that teachers can only do so much in the classroom. When it comes to

In Marion County, the English and math proficiency of Black and Hispanic students in grades 3-8 is **28%** of white students' proficiency.

Source: 2023 ILEARN assessment

supplementing a child's education, it's up to parents to provide support. However, parents who have their own educational challenges can pass on those struggles to their children. For example, according to the Migration Policy Institute, the children of parents who have low levels of education are **10 times** more likely to have low skills than the children of parents with higher levels of education.

How does public education affect our city's future?

In Marion County public schools, where students of color comprise 73.8% of enrollment and more than half (67.6%) of students qualify for free and reduced-price school lunch, systemic problems such as poverty have a direct impact on student achievement, graduation rates and workforce readiness. If students aren't prepared to graduate, our city won't have the workforce to power our economy and keep Indianapolis growing.

Why can't teachers do more?

There are more than **3,000** unfilled teaching positions in Indiana. Many of those jobs have been vacant since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Low pay and increasing class sizes have compelled many teachers to leave the classroom and choose other career options. The shortage of teachers has had a devastating effect on many students, schools and families. Support staff and counselors are being pulled into classrooms to teach, while the teachers who are left are already overworked and overwhelmed and cannot be expected to add even more to their jobs without additional pay.

What can the government do?

Our elected leaders can write, fund and pass policies that support high-quality education for all public school students. For example, **a new Indiana law**, which passed with bipartisan support and was signed by Gov. Eric Holcomb on May 4, 2023, requires school districts to adopt a curriculum that's aligned with the science of reading. In Indianapolis, Mayor Joe Hogsett supported Circle City Readers, which the City-County Council unanimously voted to fund (see page 19).

By the Numbers

Our children need to read to learn.

73%

Marion County public school students in grades 3–8 who read below grade level

Source: 2023 ELA 3rd–8th grade ILEARN results

70%

Incarcerated adults who can't read at a fourth grade level

Source: National Assessment of Adult Literacy

50,000

Adults in Marion County who can't read well enough to fill out a job application

Source: Indy Reads



1 in 6

Adult Hoosiers who read below a fifth grade level

Source: Indy Reads



3x

Likelihood of Hispanic students to fall behind in reading

4x

Likelihood of Black students to fall behind in reading

Source: 2023 ELA 3rd–8th grade ILEARN results

10x

Likelihood that children of parents with low levels of education will become low-skilled adults

Source: Immigrant parents and early childhood programs, Migration Policy Institute, June 2014

For marginalized students, education outcomes are at crisis levels.

TEST SUCCESS

10th graders who were proficient in combined math and English language arts testing, 2018

11th grade SAT scores, combined evidence-based reading and writing and math, 2023

CARMEL CLAY SCHOOLS

70%

67.8%

MARION COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

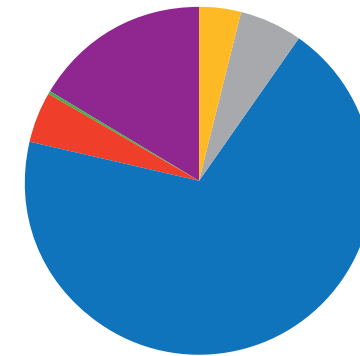
22.9%

16.3%

Source: Indiana Department of Education

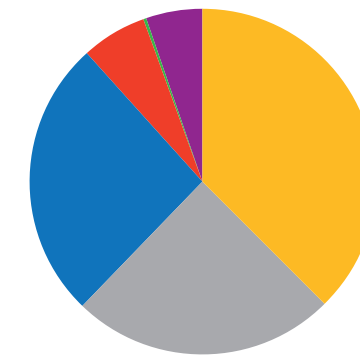
ENROLLMENT BY DIVERSITY

CARMEL CLAY SCHOOLS



- Black: 4.1%
- Hispanic: 5.7%
- White: 69%
- Multiracial: 4.6%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.1%
- Asian: 16.3%

MARION COUNTY SCHOOLS



- Black: 37.6%
- Hispanic: 24.7%
- White: 26.2%
- Multiracial: 6.2%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.07%
- Asian: 5.1%

Source: Indiana Department of Education 2022–2023

Students attending low-performing Marion County schools

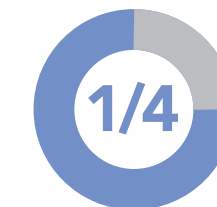


BLACK AND HISPANIC STUDENTS



WHITE STUDENTS

Source: Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation



Black and Hispanic students who are proficient in English and math compared to white students in grades 3–8

Source: 2023 ILEARN assessment

Our kids are the talent that will drive our economy.

3 out of 4

Indiana employers are leaving jobs unfilled

Source: Indiana Chamber 2022

63%

Indiana's labor force participation rate

Source: Indiana Department of Workforce Development



2020 college enrollment rates for Marion County students



WHITE STUDENTS



BLACK STUDENTS



HISPANIC STUDENTS

Source: Indiana Department of Education

13.8%

Young adults age 18 to 24 in Marion County who are not employed and not in school

Source: Measure of America: Youth Disconnection in America, 2022

We Build Bridges



At RISE INDY, we work to bridge the gaps in our public education system. We build programs to improve communication between parents, teachers and school administrators. We teach parents how to advocate for quality education and how to provide at-home support to reinforce what their kids are learning in school. When community leaders want to do more for students, we provide development opportunities to help them navigate the education system. We see the achievement gaps for marginalized students, and we bring communities together to advocate for policies to diminish them. By bridging these gaps, we pave the way for a brighter future for all Indianapolis students.

We give everyone a seat at the table.

We bring together parents, teachers, students, faith leaders, school administrators, policymakers and community leaders so they can listen to

each other, understand each other's challenges and concerns, and work on solutions together. When all the key stakeholders are brought to the table, and there's a forum for open communication, people and communities grow stronger. They discover how to shape the future of public education at the grassroots level.

We empower parents.

We focus on children's first and most important teachers: their parents. When parents begin to understand how the education system works, they develop a new vision of what school could look like for their kids.

Through RISE INDY programs like Freedom Readers, parents learn how to support their kids' language arts and reading skills at home. Through its School-Based Organizing program, RISE INDY gives parents tools to help them speak up for their children at school, trains them on the importance of reading with their children and provides them with tools to understand assessment data. When parents feel empowered, they work together to advocate for the issues they care about, they get creative about ways to improve their kids' schools and they develop the skills and confidence to seek a higher level of employment.

We cultivate changemakers.

RISE INDY programs like Circle City Leaders help community members from different sectors become education champions. RISE INDY helps leaders hone their skills so they can achieve more in their classrooms, at their jobs and in their communities. Program graduates include rising executive-level leaders at major corporations and educational institutions, as well as principals and teachers who, since completing the program, have joined public- and private-sector boards and hold active leadership roles in public education.

We also help leaders develop pathways to better support schools and students. Through our board governance program, RISE INDY provides training to public and nonprofit school board members. Participants learn best practices for governance and sharpen their skills so they can build more efficient budgets, help students grow academically and collaborate on effective education policy.

We put students first.

We believe all children deserve an equitable education that prepares them for graduation and beyond. We put the well-being and success of all Indianapolis students at the center of everything we do.

"RISE INDY creates a space for policymakers, parents and teachers to work together, **bridge gaps** and develop policy solutions. Its focus on both people and systems — school boards and the government — sets RISE apart."

— DR. ROSE MAYS, Professor Emeritus, Indiana University School of Nursing at IUPUI, RISE INDY Donor and Board Member

Power Tools

RISE INDY gives people tools to help them raise their voices and do more for their families, schools and communities. We provide skills in:

- ▶ **Mentorship**
We coach parents and volunteers on how to mentor K-12 students. Parents, teachers and students also build skills that can help them enter the workforce or get better jobs.
- ▶ **Civic Engagement**
We help our community understand systems, politics and policy.
- ▶ **Literacy**
We teach parents and volunteers science of reading principles for literacy education.
- ▶ **Advocacy**
We empower community members to mobilize and use their voices to raise awareness about issues that affect students.
- ▶ **Leadership**
We coach passionate people to improve their ability to communicate, collaborate and compromise.

Mother with a Mission

How RISE INDY helped one mother discover her own sense of purpose and empower her daughters to do the same

When Lettera Anderson first discovered RISE INDY, she was in a tough place. An abusive relationship and systemic lupus made Anderson's life a struggle. Her teenage daughters, Grace, age 17, and Zariah, age 16, had challenges, too. They weren't thriving at school, and depression and anxiety made things worse.

RISE INDY changed all that. "When I went to my first meeting at RISE, Ashley, she spoke life into me," Anderson said.

Ashley Thomas, RISE INDY's Vice President of Organizing, encouraged Anderson to leave home for the Julian Center, which supports victims of domestic violence and abuse. While she was getting back on her feet, Anderson started volunteering at RISE INDY. "Whenever an opportunity came up, I applied myself to it," she said.

Anderson learned what she calls "the proper way" to advocate for her daughters in school. "When people learn the right way to speak up, you don't have parents snapping at the teachers," she said. "At RISE INDY, they teach you about the school systems and what they're up against." Anderson learned the value of coming together as a community to make things better for kids. "When they say it takes a village, it really does," she said. "RISE INDY is our village."

Through RISE INDY, Anderson learned about all of the school options available to her and how to find the right schools for Zariah and Grace. She also developed so much confidence and so many skills as a volunteer leader that when she learned about an opportunity to become a tutor through Circle City Readers, she applied for and got the job. "My passion is working with the kids," Anderson said. "Especially the problematic ones who everyone wants to throw out."

Anderson wanted to do even more for students, so she started attending school board meetings and advocating for candidates — and she took her daughters with her. "Seeing me speak up made my girls want to speak for themselves," she said. "They've applied what they learned at RISE INDY to their lives. They've seen me do it, but they learned it here."



Through RISE INDY, Lettera Anderson and her daughters, Grace and Zariah, have found self-confidence and a sense of purpose.

"When they say it takes a village, it really does. RISE INDY is our village."

— LETTERA ANDERSON,
RISE INDY Parent Volunteer
Tutor, Circle City Readers

Q&A



What is RISE INDY?

We're an education advocacy organization dedicated to rebuilding our public education system with students at the center so that every child has an equal opportunity for success. We focus on the improvement of all public schools within the City of Indianapolis, which includes all of Marion County.

What does RISE INDY do?

We engage, educate and organize a diverse group of local residents to improve public schools. We create opportunities for Indianapolis students and residents by bringing together parents, teachers and community leaders to help close the opportunity gap for marginalized communities.

RISE INDY focuses on the improvement of all public schools in Indianapolis.

How is RISE INDY organized?

We work within three verticals to create an equitable public education system: advancing community-driven, multi-generational programming, policy and elections.

PROGRAMMING: Our charitable organization, also known as RISE UNITED, encompasses a large portion of our work. It includes programming for students, parents, teachers and changemakers. Our Circle City Leaders, School-Based Organizing, Freedom Readers, RISE + Shine and board governance programs all fall under our 501(c)(3) organization. These programs bridge opportunity gaps by creating pathways that bring people together to improve public education. For example, we train parents on effective ways to advocate for their children, monitor and understand their children's performance and become civically engaged in the community.

POLICY: Our 501(c)(4) organization trains courageous community leaders to advocate for policies that impact equitable funding for students, to support programs that promote and retain quality teachers and to push for solutions to increase literacy rates and mental health support for students across Indiana. We also support policies that add flexibility for school leaders and empower families to choose education options that work for their children.

ELECTIONS: Our nonpartisan political action committee supports the community and common good by strengthening the campaigns of candidates with equitable, education-forward policies and platforms. We focus on supporting candidates for school boards within Marion County, the Indianapolis-Marion County City-County Council and the Indiana General Assembly who have a students-first agenda in education policy.

What is a coalition?

Nonprofit organizations expand their reach by inviting stakeholders — students, teachers, parents, program participants, faith leaders and even businesses and

organizations — to work alongside them and make a bigger impact in their communities.

At RISE INDY, we mobilize people through our coalitions. RISE INDY provides these groups with programming and helps guide policy recommendations. We have specific coalitions for students, parents, teachers, school leaders, policymakers and education champions.

How is RISE INDY funded?

Our work is funded through grants from public and private charitable organizations, corporate donations and individual donors who support improving education.

Who is RISE INDY for?

We're for students, teachers and our Indianapolis community. We focus on the improvement of all of Indianapolis' public schools, and it's our goal to close opportunity and achievement gaps for historically marginalized students. We envision a day when every Indianapolis resident is engaged in building a public education system that prepares every student for graduation and beyond.

Does RISE INDY support charter schools?

We support quality public school options for all Indianapolis children. Kids learn differently, so we believe families have the right to select a school that meets the needs of their student, whether it's a traditional public school or a public charter school. We support all public schools that are committed to closing the achievement gap for historically marginalized students.

Why should I support RISE INDY?

Because we are all impacted by this issue. We believe that a strong public school system is the bedrock of a connected and thriving community. When you support our work to improve public schools for every child in our city, you are helping to maximize the potential of our future leaders.

It Takes a Village



Families come together to support students at RISE INDY Freedom Readers events.

There's no one solution to closing the achievement gap in K-12 education. That's why RISE INDY approaches the issue from multiple angles. Our areas of focus offer several pathways to improve K-12 education now, in the near term and in the long term.

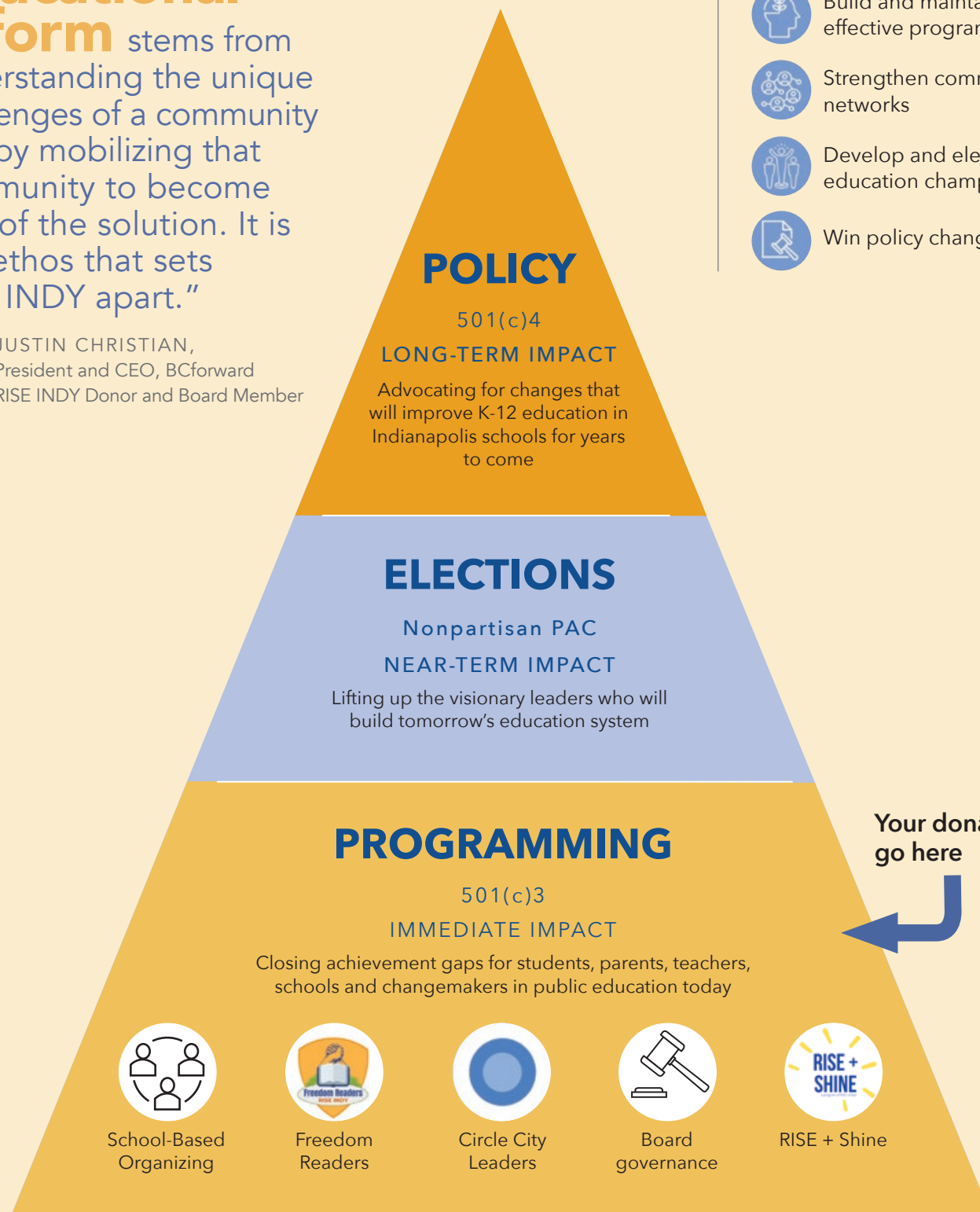
We work with people at both the grassroots and the grasstops levels — from parents and teachers in the community to influential leaders and those close to them. This approach gives us a unique opportunity to identify issues, find solutions and create sustainable change by building programs that engage the community, training bold leaders and organizing our network to hold elected officials accountable for their promises to create student-centered policies that improve conditions for students and teachers.

“True **educational reform** stems from understanding the unique challenges of a community and by mobilizing that community to become part of the solution. It is this ethos that sets RISE INDY apart.”

— JUSTIN CHRISTIAN,
President and CEO, BCforward
RISE INDY Donor and Board Member

What We Do

-  Build and maintain effective programs
-  Strengthen community networks
-  Develop and elect education champions
-  Win policy change



A Teacher's Journey

How RISE INDY inspired an award-winning teacher to step up and lead

Lidia Mercedes Vidal Sandate, an assistant principal in residence at Global Preparatory Academy at Riverside 44, believes that public education is a foundation for success. "Education should be fair and equal for everybody," she said. Yet it can be difficult for teachers to level the playing field for students when they're under-resourced themselves. "When teachers are given two dry-erase markers at the beginning of the school year, that makes it hard," Vidal Sandate said.

Vidal Sandate grew up in Nogales, a border city that straddles Mexico and Arizona. She could see the difference between her own education in Mexico and the bilingual education that a friend in Arizona received. "I'm passionate about bilingual education because I didn't have that opportunity," Vidal Sandate said. "For me, it's really important that kids have access."

A Teach Indy Latinx Teacher of the Year, Vidal Sandate first came to the United States on a visa and later became a resident. She found a home as a Spanish teacher at Global Preparatory Academy, which is a RISE INDY partner school.

Vidal Sandate is proud of Global Prep Academy's strong academic and global focus. "Giving students free access to two languages in school is powerful for the community," she said. "We want our students to compete with students from any part of the city, any part of the world. They'll grow up accepting that differences make us stronger."

Vidal Sandate learned about RISE INDY from a Global Prep Academy administrator. At a RISE INDY "Teachers Night Out" event, she met teachers who shared her vision and began to build a network. "RISE INDY brings communities together to ensure that every child has access to a great education, no matter where they live," Vidal Sandate said. "They do a great job at keeping all parties involved." Vidal Sandate stays informed on education issues and is looking forward to new opportunities as part of the RISE INDY teacher coalition.

As she started to see the wider education landscape in Indianapolis through the RISE INDY community, Vidal Sandate felt inspired to take her career to the next level. Over the years, she'd transitioned from teaching kindergarten to third grade to sixth and is now assistant principal in residence. "If we want students to become leaders, we must become leaders ourselves," she said.



Lidia Mercedes Vidal Sandate, who has taught students at Global Preparatory Academy since 2017, is passionate about quality bilingual education — and RISE INDY.

"Giving students free access to two languages is powerful for the community."

— LIDIA MERCEDES VIDAL SANDATE,
Assistant Principal in Residence
Global Preparatory Academy at Riverside 44

Adding Value to Policymakers' Work



Maggie A. Lewis, majority leader of the Indianapolis-Marion County City-County Council (District 10), believes in the value of offering a variety of public schools. "People come to and leave communities because of the schools," said Lewis, who believes quality schools "keep folks in our community" and "attract the best and the brightest."

A first-generation college graduate, Lewis is passionate about providing an excellent education to all students. "Excellent education means access to quality schools, preferably in your neighborhood or somewhere your family can easily get to," she said. Yet, as an elected official, Lewis discovered it could be challenging to achieve her goals.

"When RISE INDY came along, I didn't feel so alone," Lewis said. "I had a partner who could help me champion the issues. The folks on the RISE INDY team have their boots on the ground. They're in contact with the community, with the parents, with the young folks, and they get firsthand information they're willing to share." Armed with well-researched data, officials like Lewis can create policies that lead to lasting change.

Lewis believes nonprofits like RISE INDY help secure the foundation for a thriving, equitable city. "They've got a great team of people who are really committed to our young people and ensuring they have the best education," she said. "I'm proud of the work they do. RISE INDY is a great thought partner."

"RISE INDY is a great thought partner."

— COUNCILOR MAGGIE A. LEWIS
Majority Leader, Indianapolis-Marion County City-County Council (District 10)

RISE INDY provides research and tools that help elected officials like City-County Councilor Maggie A. Lewis turn their vision for quality public education into policies that create lasting change.

RISE INDY's Policymaker Hub trips to Washington, D.C.; Oakland, California and New York City have helped elected leaders turn vision into policy. The trips expose leaders to new ideas for closing student achievement gaps and improving K-12 education back home.

NEW YORK CITY

A Benchmark for Excellence

In May 2023, a group of elected leaders from Indianapolis took part in a public school learning and discovery trip to New York City.

The Indianapolis delegation learned how New York City faces challenges similar to those of Indianapolis in teacher retention, student mental health support

and addressing the achievement gap between students of color, low-income students and white students.

New York City also does things differently. For example, New York City offers school-based counseling in every public school building, free telehealth services to all high school students, shared building access between district and charter schools, and community education

councils, where appointed residents make school-based decisions. These efforts have helped New York City excel in student growth gains and in offering more transparency about student outcomes.

When the Indianapolis delegation returned, they proposed policy changes for Marion County, including investing in educators, identifying new ways to attract teacher talent, expanding mental health support and prioritizing public school transparency.



RISE INDY team members introduced Indianapolis leaders to New York City Mayor Eric Adams, New York City Schools Chancellor David Banks, Murmuration CEO Emma Bloomberg and Harlem Children's Zone Founder and President Geoffrey Canada and local educators and leaders.

Inspired by NYC

The Indianapolis delegation included Mayor Joe Hogsett, State Representative Blake Johnson, Indianapolis-Marion County City-County Councilor and Council Majority Leader Maggie A. Lewis and City-County Councilors Keith Graves and La Keisha Jackson. From the Indianapolis Public Schools Board of Commissioners, President Venita Moore, Vice President Angelia Moore and Nicole Carey attended.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Inspiration in Action



A delegation of Indiana policymakers and RISE INDY supporters traveled to Oakland, California, in May 2022 to learn about the city's approach to closing achievement gaps by improving literacy.

What does it look like to show up for kids? At RISE INDY, it looks like bringing people together and working on ways to improve our education system. That means parents, that means teachers and that means policymakers.

In May 2022, RISE INDY brought together a group of elected officials to travel to Oakland, California, to hear from local organizations and policymakers on bold education initiatives. The delegation included Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett, two school board commissioners, a City-County councilor, several Indiana state representatives, RISE INDY Board Member Dr. Rose Mays and RISE INDY staff.

Libby Schaaf, Oakland's mayor from 2015 to 2023, welcomed the group. She shared how Oakland had elevated the issue of literacy and successfully launched efforts to improve reading rates among students as well as their family members.

Oakland's approach is holistic. It began with parents frustrated that their children were falling behind, then expanded to include city leaders, grassroots organizations and corporate partners, all of whom have a vested interest in growing a more literate community.

In a meeting with parent-based organization Oakland Reach, the group learned about ways the community worked together to address Oakland's literacy crisis. Through a scientific approach called **"high-dosage" tutoring** — close instruction that happens during the school day at least three times a week — Oakland students mastered **half a year's worth of learning** after just a couple of months of support.

The Indianapolis delegation learned about Oakland's literacy campaigns, pre-K investment and initiatives to recruit teachers of color. They toured AIMS K-12 College Prep, met decision-makers and heard directly from students and parents advocating for better opportunities and improved outcomes.

Mayor Hogsett and other Indiana policymakers left Oakland inspired to tackle disparities. In partnership with RISE INDY, the City of Indianapolis launched Circle City Readers. The trip inspired RISE INDY's Freedom Readers program, too. To help Indianapolis parents build confidence and skills, RISE INDY's Freedom Readers program teaches them the basics of supporting their children's literacy education at home. So far, the program has inspired several parents to expand their impact in Indianapolis schools by becoming tutors through Circle City Readers.

Inspired by Oakland

The Indianapolis delegation that visited Oakland, California, included Mayor Joe Hogsett, Indiana State Representatives Blake Johnson, Justin Moed and Gregory Porter, City County-Councilor Keith Graves and IPS School Board Commissioners Kenneth Allen and Will Pritchard. The group also included RISE INDY board member Dr. Rose Mays, CEO Jasmin Shaheed-Young, Vice President of Policy and Chief of Staff Jasmine Jackson, Vice President of Community Affairs Duane Ingram and Senior Manager of Projects and Programs Lily Brown.



Coming Full Circle

In August 2023, the City of Indianapolis officially launched the Circle City Readers program, inspired by a similar program Mayor Joe Hogsett and RISE INDY visited in Oakland, California.

About 800 students in kindergarten through third grade in Marion County take part in optional "high-dosage" tutoring — 2- to 3-student sessions that happen at least three times a week — to help sharpen their reading skills.

The program aims to increase literacy and build a better city, spurred on by partnership between public and nonprofit entities. RISE INDY collaborated with the Mayor's Office of Education Innovation to design the program and recruit and train paid tutors, many of whom are parents and other community members. The City-County Council unanimously approved \$1 million in funding for Circle City Readers from Indianapolis' 2022 American Rescue Plan allocation.

Circle City Readers uses evidence-based science of reading curriculum from Amplify, a curriculum and assessment company. The Indianapolis Public Schools pilot included 36 students who received high-dosage tutoring for eight weeks. They showed progress in their fluency, in the number of words they could read and in their reading accuracy. All students in the pilot improved from where they began, and 100% of the students who took part in the Circle City Readers program grew in literacy comprehension. The program will expand to serve 1,000 students by the end of the 2024 school year.

Our Programs in Action



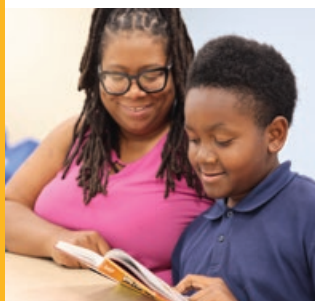
Circle City Leaders

This intensive leadership development program gives rising, executive-level leaders the tools and knowledge they need to build long-term influence in education, business and beyond. Fellows learn how to increase civic participation and individual impact in education spaces, preparing them to hold leadership roles in public education and the nonprofit sector.



School-Based Organizing

At its partner schools, RISE INDY meets parents where they are and provides the tools to help them champion their students' needs, improving student attendance, retention and academic outcomes. We energize parents and caregivers so they're ready to take part in their children's education by working with teachers, schools and leaders. By advocating for positive change, parents help shape Indianapolis schools for years to come.



Freedom Readers

This program empowers parents and caregivers to improve their students' literacy rates and get kids reading at or above grade level. Participants are trained in "science of reading" principles, which are based on an interdisciplinary body of science-based research about reading and writing, to complement their children's schoolwork. Through the program, parents also build self-confidence and improve their own literacy skills.



Board Governance Training

RISE INDY prepares community leaders who share our commitment to positive student outcomes to serve on nonprofit and public boards. Participants complete their training fully versed in the fundamentals of board governance, fiscal responsibility and strategic planning.



RISE + Shine

Through this speaker series, leaders in K-12 education engage the community in conversation about the challenges faced by students, families and educators, and discuss potential solutions. At these free educational events, speakers offer community members insights on the ins and outs of Indiana's educational system, from the financial to the structural, so they can participate fully in conversations about how our schools are run.

RISE INDY Partner Schools

All partner schools are located in Indianapolis.

School-Based Organizing Partner Schools

The following school partners share RISE INDY's vision and are supported by RISE INDY's Organizing team. To improve outcomes, RISE INDY team members organize and attend events at the schools, regularly connecting with parents about school priorities and RISE INDY's work. RISE INDY also exchanges data with the schools to support them in their parent and community engagement work.



- Avondale Meadows Elementary** 3980 Meadows Drive, 46205
- Avondale Meadows Middle School** 3980 Meadows Drive, 46205
- Charles A. Tindley Accelerated High School** 3960 Meadows Drive, 46205
- Enlace Academy** 3725 N. Kiel Ave., 46224
- Global Preparatory Academy at Riverside 44** 2033 Sugar Grove Ave., 46202
- Indiana Math & Science Academy West** 4575 W. 38th St., 46254
- Tindley Genesis Academy** 4020 Meadows Parkway, 46205
- Vision Academy Elementary** 1751 E. Riverside Drive, 46202
- Vision Academy Middle School** 1751 E. Riverside Drive, 46202

Other Partner Schools

The following schools share RISE INDY's mission and partner with us to stay connected to education needs and priorities for families. They also share data that helps the RISE INDY team connect with families and other members of the school community.



- Adelante at Emma Donnan Elementary and Middle School** 1202 E. Troy Ave., 46203
- Believe Circle City High School** 2540 N. Capitol Ave., 46208
- Circle City Preparatory Charter School** 4002 N. Franklin Road, 46226
- Christel House Academy at Emmerich Manual High School** 2405 Madison Ave., 46225
- Christel House Academy South** 2405 Madison Ave., 46225
- Christel House Academy West** 55 N. Tibbs Ave., 46222
- Matchbook Learning at Wendell Phillips School 63** 1163 N. Belmont Ave., 46222
- Paramount: Brookside** 3020 Nowland Ave., 46201
- Paramount: Cottage Home** 1203 E. St. Clair St., 46202
- Paramount: Englewood** 3029 E. Washington St., 46201
- Paramount Online Academy** 1203 E. St. Clair St., 46202
- Rooted School Indianapolis** 5750 E. 30th St., 46218

Circle City Reader School Partners

RISE INDY leads tutor recruitment and training to provide high-dosage tutoring in nine Indianapolis schools in partnership with the City of Indianapolis, Indianapolis Public Schools and the Metropolitan School District of Warren Township.

- Avondale Meadows Elementary** 3980 Meadows Drive, 46205
- Global Preparatory Academy at Riverside 44** 2033 Sugar Grove Ave., 46202
- Hawthorne Elementary** 8301 E. Rawles Ave., 46219
- Jonathan Jennings School 109's Boys & Girls Club** 6150 Gateway Drive, 46254
- Liberty Grove** 1002 W. 25th St., 46208
- PATH School** 653 N. Somerset Ave., 46222
- Run Elementary** 1800 N. Franklin Road, 46219
- Sankofa School of Success** 5801 E. 30th St., 46218
- Tindley Genesis Academy** 4020 Meadows Parkway, 46205
- Vision Academy Elementary** 1751 E. Riverside Drive, 46202

Our Impact

RISE INDY strives to close achievement gaps for all students. Because of our work, student test scores and literacy comprehension are on the rise.

100%

Students who took part in the Circle City Readers program who grew in literacy comprehension



Improved test performance

Improvement in combined math and English language arts performance for RISE INDY partner schools from 2022 to 2023

Better test scores for Black students

Black students in RISE INDY partner schools realized the most consistent testing proficiency growth from 2022 to 2023

1,003

New registered voters encouraged by the RISE INDY Organizing team from March 2020 to September 2023



11

Successful local and state policies for which RISE INDY has advocated

3

Successful literacy-focused policies for which RISE INDY has advocated

27

RISE INDY partner schools



\$27 million

Funds garnered to help schools close the achievement gap for Black and brown students

1,454

Coalition members recruited by RISE INDY

148

Marion county parents educated on the science of reading and the importance of reading with their children through Freedom Readers

32

Parents employed by the City of Indianapolis as Circle City Readers tutors



\$90+ million

Funding to benefit Indiana students that RISE INDY has helped advocate for and secure

\$70 million

Local and statewide commitment to literacy due to policies for which RISE INDY has advocated. The \$70 million includes these components:

\$1 million

Support for the Circle City Readers program, which RISE INDY helped develop, from the City of Indianapolis

\$14 million

Commitment from Indianapolis public schools toward tutoring match grants

\$15 million

Commitment from the Indiana Department of Education to fund a statewide literacy tutoring grant program

\$40 million

Investment from the State of Indiana on **House Bill 1558** (Science of Reading), which passed with bipartisan support and was signed by Gov. Eric Holcomb on May 4, 2023.

Shining Bright for Students



Keeanna Warren, CEO of Purdue Polytechnic High Schools, is a Circle City Leaders alumni and a RISE + Shine panelist and speaker.

“We have a literacy problem here in Indianapolis,” Purdue Polytechnic High Schools CEO Keeanna Warren said, “and RISE INDY has successfully partnered with the city to combat that problem directly.” By setting strategic goals, RISE INDY “hits the mark every time” through authentic engagement, said Warren, who has a doctorate in educational administration. “That’s a beautiful thing. Other organizations in this city operate without asking community members what they really need.”

Warren spent her early childhood in Atlanta, Georgia, and was homeschooled by her Spelman College-educated mother. “Instead of just reading from books, my parents took me around the United States to learn history firsthand,”

she said. “That experiential learning was great.” When Dr. Warren’s family moved to Central Indiana, she faced bigotry at school. “My mom was constantly advocating for me,” she said.

Her experiences drove Dr. Warren to advocate for equal access to quality education in Indianapolis schools. Along with other education leaders in the city, she’s helped shape RISE INDY since its inception. She took part in RISE INDY’s Circle City Leaders program and served as a panelist at a RISE + Shine session.

“RISE INDY lets parents know that their voices matter and that they have a right to choose educational environments where their children can thrive,” Dr. Warren said. “Programs like RISE + Shine let parents hear directly from elected officials and in turn share their concerns. In every way, this organization is representative of the community, and that’s what makes it one of the most successful nonprofits in the city.”

“RISE INDY lets parents know that their voices matter.”

— KEEANNA WARREN, PH.D.
CEO, Purdue Polytechnic High Schools
Circle City Leaders Alumni
RISE + Shine Panelist and Speaker

“RISE INDY has made a difference in our city.”

— BART PETERSON
President and CEO,
Christel House International
Mayor of Indianapolis,
2000–2008
RISE INDY Donor and
Board Member



“Being part of RISE INDY and Circle City Leaders exposes me to a larger context. I see the systemic issues we face. This experience has made me a stronger advocate for the education of my own child and the students in my care. I aspire to run for IPS school board one day.”

— JAVAUGHN HARDAWAY
6th Grade Teacher, Liberty Grove Schools
Circle City Leaders Fellow (Cohort III)



“I believe in RISE INDY because RISE INDY believes in me. I’m going to be a teacher.”

— YAIZA RAMIREZ, GRADE 3,
Global Preparatory Academy, Indianapolis

Look how they’ve grown

The RISE INDY team has been working with parents through School-Based Organizing partner schools since fall 2020. We’ve seen notable gains in academic outcomes for students, and enrollment has grown by

267 students.

Source: Indiana Department of Education Data Center and Reports

77 Leaders RISE INDY has helped grow through the Circle City Leaders program



“Before RISE INDY, I was starting to give up on school. At RISE, they listen to you and say, ‘We can help you.’ It gives you a different feeling.”

— GRACE ANDERSON, GRADE 11
Herron-Riverside High School,
RISE INDY Student Advocate

Our Visionary Leaders

Our Founding Board of Directors

RISE INDY's founding board of directors is comprised of leaders from Indianapolis and beyond who support our work to engage, educate and organize our community to build an equitable education system in Indianapolis.



John Ackerman
Managing Director
Cardinal Equity Partners



Gary Borden*
Managing Director
Public School Allies



Justin Christian
Founder and CEO
BCforward



Al Hubbard
Co-Founder and Chairman
E&A Companies



Marianne Glick
Owner, Glick Art
Chairwoman of the Board
of Trustees, Glick Family
Foundation



Dr. Rose Mays
Professor Emeritus
Indiana University School
of Nursing at IUPUI



Mayor Bart Peterson
President and CEO
Christel House International
Mayor of Indianapolis
2000-2008



Jasmin Shaheed-Young
President and CEO
RISE INDY

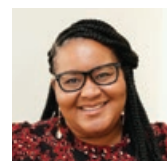


Bill Shrewsberry*
Founder
Shrewsberry & Associates

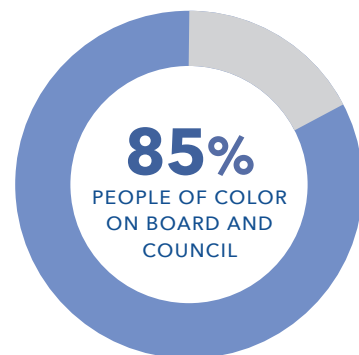
Board Members Elected in 2023



ZeNai Brooks
Executive Director
Indiana Democratic Party



Kimberly Neal-Brannum
Founder
BELIEVE Schools
Indianapolis



*These members also serve on RISE INDY's 501(c)3 organization board, along with RISE INDY CEO Jasmine Shaheed-Young and RISE INDY's Assistant Vice President of Communications and Development Katherin Chi, who serves as secretary.

Our Founding Advisory Council

RISE INDY's founding advisory council is comprised of public, private, nonprofit and faith community representatives in Indianapolis. The council is an extension of RISE INDY and serves as our community voice, representing diverse perspectives and experiences as they relate to Indianapolis schools.



Rev. Darian Bouie
Senior Pastor
Progressive Baptist
Church



John Brandon
President and
Executive Director
Marion County
Commission on Youth



Barato Britt
President and CEO
Edna Martin Christian
Center



Rosie Bryant
Director of Program
and Organizing
LIVE FREE USA



Jennifer Darby
COO
Indiana Youth Institute



Emil Ekiyor
CEO
InnoPower Indy



John Girton
Executive Vice President
and Chief of Staff
Martin University



Hollin Hart
Senior Marketing
Project Manager
Cummins Inc.



Gloria Jimenez
Multicultural Contributor
WISH-TV
TV Host
Telemundo Indy



Kai Johnson
Director of Global Field
Marketing
Salesforce



Patrick Jones
Senior Vice President of
Leadership and Equity
The Mind Trust



Emily Masengale
CEO
Christel House
Indianapolis



Josh Mason
Director of Client
Success and Experience
Pumpjack Dataworks



Lindsey Mintz
Former Executive
Director
Indianapolis Jewish
Community Relations
Council



Blake Nathan
Founder and CEO
The Educate ME
Foundation, Inc.



Tony Pearson
Senior Director
Diversity and Inclusion
in Trials
Eli Lilly and Company



Jordan Rodriguez
Deputy Director
Indianapolis-Marion
County Forensic Services
Agency



Cesar Roman
Director of Community
Engagement
Institute for Quality
Education



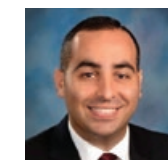
Rachel Santos
Director of Education
Policy and Strategic
Partnerships
Indiana Latino Institute



Rima Shahid
Executive Director
Indiana Donor Table



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North Campus Pastor
New Direction Church
President and CEO
Fathers and Families
Center



Justin Sufan
Senior Director
Regulatory
New Products
The AES Corporation



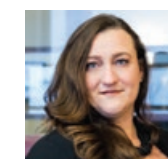
Sarah TeKolste
Spanish Teacher
Shortridge High School



Yecenia Tostado
Senior Program Officer
Nina Mason Pulliam
Charitable Trust



LaTonya Turner, Ph.D.
Dean for Academic
Quality
Marian University Klipsch
Educators College



Kendra Wilburn
Senior Vice President
Operations
RISE INDY



Charlie Wiles
Executive Director
Center for Interfaith
Cooperation

Support RISE INDY



Help us change conversations, policies and lives.

Are you inspired to bridge gaps for Indianapolis students and help children — and our city — thrive? Please consider donating to RISE INDY so we can help ensure every student receives an excellent education — regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, ZIP code or family income.

The future of our city, state and nation depend on an educated public who will become tomorrow's skilled workers and visionary leaders. If you feel called to act with justice and help children reach their full potential, please support RISE INDY.

Let's RISE TOGETHER

Financial contributions go directly to RISE INDY programs such as School-Based Organizing, the RISE + Shine speaker series and the Freedom Readers parent education program. Also known as RISE UNITED, our programming and community engagement arm is a tax-exempt organization, as defined by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Give Today!

To make a gift or pledge, contact give@riseindy.org or visit riseindy.org/donate.



Our Generous Donors

We wouldn't be able to do all that we do for students without the generous support of our donors, and we are immensely grateful. This list represents donors who have supported RISE INDY from June 2019 to August 2023.

INDIVIDUALS

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| John Ackerman | Alice Holst | Ahmed Young and Jasmin Shaheed-Young |
| Marc Allan | Andrew and Erin Hoover | Rima Shahid |
| Lauren Allan | Drew Horn | Robert and Shannon Shegog |
| Kenneth Allen | Jennifer A. Horner | William Shrewsberry |
| Luis Alvarez | Al Hubbard | Kervin Simon |
| Yesmin Alvarez | Lisa Hutchison | Kirk and Lynne Smiley |
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| Mustafa Arslan | Duane Ingram | Justin Sufan |
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| Lauren Bowers | Nancy Kohn | Mark Tomyn |
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| Brandon and Taylor Brown | Shanai Lee | Anthony Warren |
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| Jennifer Darby | Tyler Miller | Enlace Academy |
| Tyler Dawson | Alan Mills | Fathers and Families Center |
| Patrice Duckett | Lindsey Mintz | Fay Biccard Glick Neighborhood Center |
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| Amber Fields | Kimberly Neal | Geo Academies |
| Jasmine Fields | Alexander Nyirendah | GEODIS |
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| Ryan Gall | Katrina Owens | Indiana Latino Institute |
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| Kelly Herron | Mariama Shaheed and Mark Booth | |
| Monica Hingst | Kameelah Shaheed-Diallo and Mamadou Diallo | |
| Sherry Holmes | | |

Building a Legacy of Learning



RISE INDY Organizer and former Parent Coalition Member Shcarlett Estrada always knew the value of education but, as a teen mother, she struggled to attain it. She took dual-credit classes so she could finish high school early and focus on supporting her family.

Her mother, Eluvia Lucero, had encouraged Estrada's education but didn't know how to help her daughter finish school. "I wish an organization like RISE INDY had been there for my mom," Estrada said. "She tried to be at school events for me and my siblings, but she worked 12-hour shifts and came home exhausted."

With an enduring drive to succeed, Estrada finished high school and plays an active role in her children's education. She met RISE INDY Organizer

Shcarlett Estrada, a RISE INDY Organizer, got involved with RISE INDY as a member of its Parent Coalition.

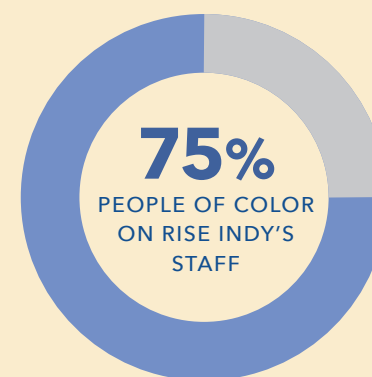
Veronica Romero at her daughter's school, and Romero invited her to RISE INDY's leadership training.

"At the time, I stayed home with the kids, but I wanted to get more involved in the community," Estrada said. As she attended RISE INDY programs, doors began to open for her. She discovered the Excel Center, where she enrolled to pursue a Microsoft Office Specialist certificate. Now, as a part of RISE INDY's staff, Estrada gives other parents the same opportunities that RISE INDY provided her. She has recruited a Latina author for a Freedom Readers program and, as a school-based organizer, she helps parents do more for their children both by tutoring at home and advocating for long-term change.

"The RISE INDY team believed in me, so now I believe in myself," Estrada said. "My daughter sees how I've grown since we got involved with RISE INDY, and her confidence has lifted, too."

"The RISE INDY team believed in me, so now I believe in myself."

— SHCARLETT ESTRADA
RISE INDY Organizer
Former Parent Coalition Member



Our Staff

Cassandra Anderson
Manager, Community Affairs

Aissatou Balde
Manager, Communications and Marketing

Lily Brown
Senior Manager, Projects and Programs

Katherin Chi
Assistant Vice President, Communications and Development

Jessica Cortwright
Senior Manager, Campaigns and Advocacy

Devin Craig
Organizer

Shcarlett Estrada
Organizer

Duane Ingram
Vice President of Community Affairs

Jasmine Jackson
Vice President of Policy and Chief of Staff

Jennifer Jamason
Executive Assistant

Lynnea Redmon-Williams
Manager, Organizing

Veronica Romero
Organizer

Jasmin Shaheed-Young
President and CEO

Nyvea Summers
Manager, Office and Development

Ashley Thomas
Vice President of Organizing

Kendra Wilburn
Senior Vice President, Operations

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Knowledge Is Power

University of Pennsylvania freshman Avery Cook got an early start in education advocacy. As a middle school student, she witnessed inequities that inspired her to take an internship with RISE INDY. "I felt like every day, bit by bit, we were making a difference," she said of her high school internship. Cook planned a field trip to the Indiana Statehouse, where middle schoolers met the legislators who represented their districts. "It's super important to teach kids how to make an impact from an early age," she said.

University of Pennsylvania freshman and philosophy, politics and economics major Avery Cook learned about advocacy while she was a high school intern at RISE INDY. She hopes to become a Supreme Court justice.



Ways to Get Involved



Be a Changemaker

As a leader in our community, you're already making Indianapolis stronger. We need your engagement to create an education system that produces, attracts and retains world-class talent. Let's build a collaborative partnership and create a network of support and advocacy that puts children at the center. Learn more about RISE INDY's advisory council and how to join at riseindy.org/advisory-council.



Join a Coalition

Make a hands-on contribution as a member of a RISE INDY community coalition. RISE INDY's community coalitions are groups of mission-driven community members who are determined to build sustainable change. To join a coalition for students, parents, teachers, school leaders, policymakers or education champions, fill out the form at riseunited.org/rise-coalitions.



Make a Donation

Financial contributions go directly to RISE INDY programs such as School-Based Organizing, the RISE + Shine speaker series, Circle City Leaders and the Freedom Readers parent education program*. To make a gift, go to riseindy.org/donate.



Know the Issues

To stay informed and learn more about education issues in the Indianapolis community, subscribe to RISE INDY news updates on our website, riseindy.org.









Vote Down Ballot

Make a difference in K-12 education by educating yourself on who's running in local school board races and supporting candidates who have a students-first agenda. Then vote for school board candidates you support, and tell others to do the same.

Be sure to review your entire voting ballot. Because school board elections are local and nonpartisan, they fall at the bottom of your ballot. If you vote a straight ticket, you'll skip the school board candidates. Your vote matters!



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"Education is the bedrock of a flourishing community.

We are all stakeholders in advocating for a quality education for everyone."

— DR. ROSE MAYS
Professor Emeritus, Indiana University School of Nursing at IUPUI
Donor and Board Member, RISE INDY



"RISE INDY strives to create a world where every child is given an equal shot at success."

— JUSTIN CHRISTIAN
President and CEO
BCforward
Donor and Board Member
RISE INDY



"RISE INDY supports the election of great school board members and pushes for reforms that benefit children and families across our city."

— BART PETERSON
President and CEO
Christel House International
Mayor of Indianapolis, 2000–2008
Donor and Board Member, RISE INDY

*Also known as RISE UNITED, our programming and community engagement arm is a tax-exempt organization, as defined by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.



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RISE INDY



RISE INDY



When we
put **students**
at the center,
we all rise
together.

