

**PROGRESS REPORT**  
**on the activities of The Literacy Lab's LEADING MEN FELLOWSHIP**  
**SY2021-22**

for

**Aimee Rogstad Guidera** Secretary of Education  
**Delegate Glenn Davis, Jr.** Chair of the House Education Committee  
**Jillian Balow** Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**Senator L. Louise Lucas** Chair of the Senate Education and Health Committee

**August 1, 2022**

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

August 1, 2022

The Honorable Aimee Rogstad Guidera  
Secretary of Education  
Patrick Henry Building  
1111 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Jillian Balow  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Department of Education  
P.O. Box 2120  
Richmond, VA 23218

The Honorable Delegate Glenn Davis, Jr.,  
Chair of the House Education Committee  
Pocahontas Building  
900 E. Main St.  
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Senator L. Louise Lucas  
Chair of the Senate Education and Health  
Committee  
Pocahontas Building, Room E604  
900 E. Main St.  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Superintendent Balow, Delegate Davis, Secretary Guidera, and Senator Lucas,

We are pleased to present our Progress Report on the Activities of The Literacy Lab's Leading Men Fellowship for the 2021-22 school year. The report and attached appendices, provided pursuant to Item 136.FF of the 2021 Budget Bill, consist of our summative representations of work conducted in Portsmouth and Richmond in furtherance of our shared goals for improved student literacy achievement and diversification of the educator pipeline. The report includes all applicable metrics collected in satisfaction of requirements related to the appropriation approved by the Commonwealth.

Our organization has undertaken this work motivated by the belief that literacy is a human right for every child. As we look to another school year in which high-quality, evidence-based literacy intervention will be essential to student success, we are grateful for your own collective commitment to advancing the cause of education across the Commonwealth.

We look forward to continuing to serve students, young men of color, and the Portsmouth and Richmond communities in the 2022-23 school year.

In service,



Matt Orlins  
Chief External Relations  
Officer



Emma Byrne  
Regional Director



Brandon Graves  
LMF Program Manager

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the SY2021-22 program activities and outcomes of the Leading Men Fellowship’s work in Portsmouth and Richmond. The program, which is administered by The Literacy Lab, places recent high-school graduates of a minority background and new to the field of education in Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) or Head Start classrooms of participating local school divisions or community-based early childhood centers, where they provide evidence-based literacy support to at-risk pre-kindergarten students.

According to eligibility criteria, the program must provide training, coaching, and professional development to Fellowship participants (hereafter referred to as “Fellows”), place Fellows for at least 800 paid hours within a pre-kindergarten classroom during a school year, work to diversify the educator pipeline, and assist Fellows in understanding the teacher education and licensure process in Virginia. The Literacy Lab shall partner with school divisions or community-based early childhood centers in Richmond and Portsmouth.

The program has three primary goals: increasing kindergarten readiness for 3- and 4-year-olds in at-risk schools, providing positive role models for students in at-risk schools, and diversifying the educator pipeline by introducing young men of color to careers in education.

The program in Richmond and Portsmouth has achieved progress on all three of these goals. Students made significant improvement on kindergarten readiness scores, program participants completed a meaningful year of workforce development in education and most are now pursuing careers in this area, and the Fellows provided positive role models for the preschool students.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY: SY2021-22

In SY2021-22, The Literacy Lab anticipated the placement of **5** Fellows in Richmond and **5** Fellows in Portsmouth. The Literacy Lab placed **5** Fellows in each region (**10** total Fellows). The Literacy Lab maintained rigorous selectivity standards and only placed young men who exhibited the skills and demeanor to be successful in a classroom with students.

Of the **10** Fellows placed at the beginning of the school year, **2** departed the program prior to completion (including **1** early departure initiated by the Fellow to finish his education-related degree by Spring 2022 graduation and afterward pursue long-term career opportunities within Portsmouth Public Schools). In total, **8** of **10** (**80%**) Fellows completed their year-long commitments with the program. The program filled all available slots and maintained an **80%** completion rate in the face of ongoing staffing challenges within education from which we have not been immune.<sup>1</sup>

Fellows were embedded five days per week for five hours per day in the following early childhood classrooms:

### **Richmond City Public Schools**

Oak Grove/Bellemeade Elementary  
Martin Luther King Jr. Preschool  
J.H. Blackwell Preschool  
Summer Hill Preschool  
Maymont Preschool

### **Portsmouth Public Schools**

Mt. Hermon Preschool Center  
Olive Branch Preschool Center  
Churchland Preschool Center

Fellows served **149** students over the course of the school year. In the fall, **84%** of students started the year with a composite assessment score that was far below kindergarten-readiness standards. By the spring, this number had been reduced to **37%**.<sup>2</sup>

Students were added to caseload over the course of the school year, and students enrolled in programming after the fall benchmark window (October 12 - October 29) did not have fall scores captured in initial assessment data. An additional **24** students enrolled in the program after this window were assessed during spring testing (April 25 - May 27; **127** total students assessed), many of whom achieved significant growth not reflected in direct comparison to available fall assessment scores. Unavailable data for **22** of **149** total participant students who were not assessed in the spring due to individual factors such as family relocation or extended absence during the testing window was not factored into program outcome results.

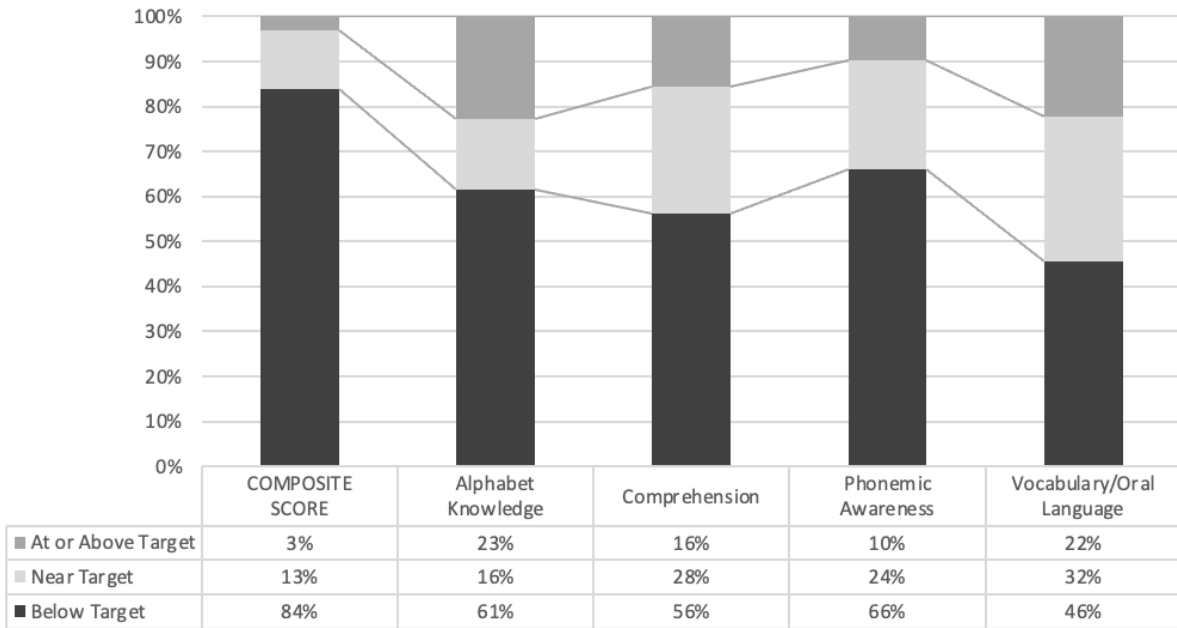
In total, more than ten times as many students achieved composite readiness targets by the spring after a year with the program, and almost three times as many ended the school year near target. Students showed comparable growth in individual assessment areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Masters, Kate. "Virginia Teacher Shortages Spiked during the Pandemic. Experts Are Worried about What's to Come. - Virginia Mercury." Virginia Mercury, 6 Dec. 2021, [www.virginiamercury.com/2021/12/06/virginia-teacher-shortages-spiked-during-the-pandemic-experts-are-worried-about-whats-to-come/](http://www.virginiamercury.com/2021/12/06/virginia-teacher-shortages-spiked-during-the-pandemic-experts-are-worried-about-whats-to-come/). Accessed 15 June 2022.

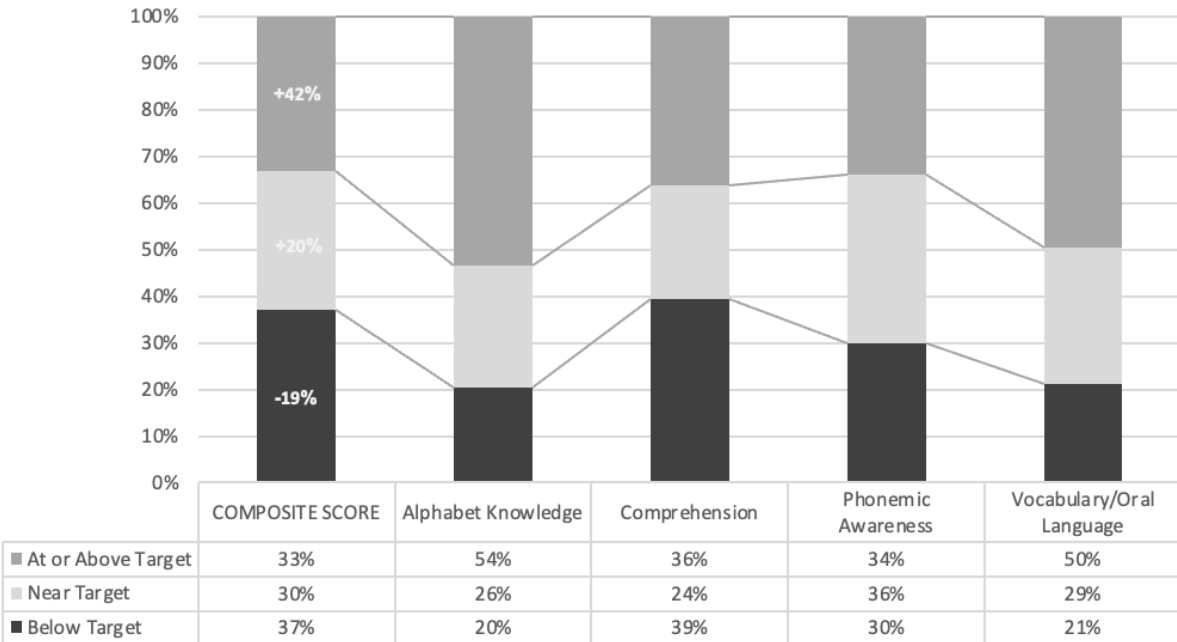
<sup>2</sup> Of the **149** total students served during SY2021-22, **15** on caseload were in the age-3 assessment category and will have another year with the program before entering Kindergarten. Based upon this year's results, we anticipate that the majority of these students will be Kindergarten-ready by the end of next school year.

### FALL SCORES



### SPRING SCORES

WITH GROWTH COMPARISON TO FALL COMPOSITE SCORES



## ACTIVITIES TO PROVIDE TRAINING, COACHING, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### OVERVIEW

Over the course of the academic year, Fellows participated in ongoing personal and professional development to ensure program fidelity and development of skills essential to prospective careers in education. The Literacy Lab deploys a multi-tiered system of support to actualize Fellow professional development outcome goals:

<b>Support Personnel</b>	<b>Role</b>
Classroom Teacher (with Teacher's Assistant, Aide, or Paraprofessional)	School staff member who leads daily classroom instruction for students, supports their classroom Fellow day-to-day, guides student selection for Tier-2 and Tier-3 intervention ( <i>see below for SEEDS interventions</i> ), and aligns the program with the school's priorities.
Leading Men PreK Leading Men Coaching Specialist	Literacy content expert who supports the Fellow in providing literacy intervention and conducting assessments and helps ensure fidelity to the model. The Coaching Specialist supports the team in program implementation in the classroom.
Leading Men Program Staff	Literacy Lab staff member who provides management and oversight to the Leading Men Fellowship program, including Fellow management, site management, and facilitation of biweekly after-school training sessions and Professional Learning Groups (PLGs).

### START OF YEAR TRAINING (80 Total Hours)

Prior to entering a classroom, Fellows completed a rigorous training course conducted by Literacy Lab Coaching Specialists, program staff, and guest instructors. This school year, training was conducted in a hybrid virtual/in-person format due to pandemic restrictions in 2021.

Fellows learned to build meaningful relationships with their students, assess student progress across five major signifiers of early literacy development, and implement an evidence-based early literacy enrichment framework in classrooms. Fellows also contextualized their role in relation to the larger educational landscape and reviewed standards of workplace professionalism.

Between September 8 and September 22, Fellows received foundational content training in the following:



Session Topic	Material Covered
Introduction to SEEDS	<p>Fellows introduced to the SEEDS framework for evidence-based literacy instruction and the five tenets of SEEDS-quality student interaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sensitivity</li> <li>– Encouragement</li> <li>– Education</li> <li>– Development of skills through doing</li> <li>– Self-image support</li> </ul> <p>Comprehensive training on SEEDS framework implementation in the classroom consisted of nine modules:</p>
<i>Early Learning</i>	<p><i>Fellows trained to recognize, and instruct for, the following “Big 5” early literacy predictors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Conversation skills</i></li> <li>– <i>Vocabulary and background knowledge</i></li> <li>– <i>Book and print rules</i></li> <li>– <i>Phonological awareness</i></li> <li>– <i>Alphabet knowledge</i></li> </ul>
<i>Quality Interactions</i>	<p><i>Fellows trained to incorporate SEEDS instructional principles into their daily interactions with students and develop meaningful relationships with children aged 3-5.</i></p>
<i>Vocabulary and Oral Language</i>	<p><i>Fellows trained to enrich student vocabulary and oral language skills through modeling and thematic lesson planning.</i></p>
<i>Book Awareness</i>	<p><i>Fellows trained to select developmentally appropriate texts and perform whole-group, small group, and one-on-one read-aloud activities.</i></p>
<i>Phonological Awareness</i>	<p><i>Fellows trained to identify the elements of the Phonological Awareness Continuum of Complexity and embed and explicitly teach Phonological Awareness throughout all daily routines.</i></p>
<i>Visual Discrimination</i>	<p><i>Fellows trained to instruct children ages 3-5 in visual identification and classification.</i></p>
<i>Print and Written Expression</i>	<p><i>Fellows trained to identify emergent writing signifiers and promote student development along the Continuum of Written Expression.</i></p>
<i>Social-Emotional Development</i>	<p><i>Fellows trained to understand the stages of psychosocial development of children aged 3-5 and implement appropriate coercive or cooperative strategies in response to individual student needs.</i></p>
<i>Response to Intervention (RTI)</i>	<p><i>Fellows trained to participate in data-based decision-making in response to student progress.</i></p>

Student Assessments	Fellows trained to conduct tri-annual PELI benchmark assessments and monthly progress monitoring and identify students who qualify for targeted one-on-one and/or small group services.
Literacy as a Human Right	Fellows instructed in the mission of The Literacy Lab and the adverse outcomes experienced by students who do not achieve Kindergarten-readiness and/or grade-level reading proficiency by third grade.
Family Engagement	Fellows trained to appropriately and effectively engage with households to accelerate student learning.
Data Management	Fellows trained to record student and program data completely and accurately in a secure online database and maintain confidentiality of all student data.
Training for Classroom and School Settings	Fellows trained in the essentials of classroom management, mandated reporting law, professionalism and workplace conduct, trauma-informed care, and a series of standard HR modules.
Context for Educators of Color	Fellows empowered to navigate potential personal and professional challenge areas specific to their identities as Black educators through a guest speaker series. Highlights included:
<i>Changing the Narrative</i>	<i>Fellows learned to use their voice, creativity, and talents to promote conditions for community transformation.</i>
<i>Black Mental Health Matters</i>	<i>Fellows learned about mental health challenges in the Black community and the importance of destigmatizing mental health dialogue.</i>
<i>Self-authorship</i>	<i>Fellows learned to challenge negative personal narratives and pursue a path of self and community inspiration.</i>
<i>The Empowering Role of Black and Brown Representation in Education</i>	<i>Fellows learned the impact Black and Brown educators have on student performance outcomes within historically disadvantaged populations.</i>
<i>No Small Matter</i>	<i>Fellows watched the "No Small Matter" documentary about the impact of high-quality preschool education on society.</i>

Additionally, Fellows participated in ongoing training with both The Literacy Lab and school division partners to master skills in the SEEDS framework. In the first month of the year, Fellow training included selection and implementation of specific interventions and how to build a literacy-rich environment in the classroom. Supplementary training included the following:

<b>Session Topic</b>	<b>Material Covered</b>
Building a Literacy and Math Rich Schedule	Fellows trained to build evidence-based routines, embedding the SEEDS essential skills into targeted, student-specific daily schedules. The Literacy and Math-Rich Schedule includes the following components:
<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Fellows trained to greet the children daily.</i>
<i>Sign-in</i>	<i>Fellows trained to support daily student sign-in, an essential component of introductory letter formation skill-building.</i>
<i>Mealtime</i>	<i>Fellows trained to participate in mealtime conversations with children using a “Strive for 5” conversation loop, with an emphasis on theme-related vocabulary.</i>
<i>Large Group</i>	<i>Fellows trained to facilitate whole-group classroom activities, with Lead Teacher guidance and approval.</i>
<i>Daily Message</i>	<i>Fellows trained to construct and implement 2–4-minute shared print activities to promote student engagement and letter recognition (usually done in large or small groups).</i>
<i>Repeated Read-Aloud</i>	<i>Fellows trained to conduct daily reading of the same book over the course of a week, incorporating talking, reading, and writing into each repetition to develop vocabulary and comprehension</i>
<i>Tier-1 Small Group High Quality Read Aloud</i>	<i>Fellows trained to lead an additional Tier-1 small group High-Quality Read Aloud once a week to every child in the classroom</i>
<i>Journal</i>	<i>Fellows trained to oversee weekly journaling activities wherein children are given the opportunity to write and draw something of personal interest.</i>
<i>Choice Time/Active Learning</i>	<i>Fellows trained to join children in play and engage in vocabulary and oral-language building conversations.</i>
<i>Tier-2 &amp; Tier-3 Interventions</i>	<i>Fellows trained to implement daily Tier-2 (small group, 10-15 minutes) or Tier-3 (one-on-one, 5-10 minutes) Repeated Read Aloud interventions with identified high-risk students.</i>
<i>Literacy Rich Transitions</i>	<i>Fellows trained to use song and rhyme featuring the “Big 5” early literacy skill to transition children from one activity to the next. Fellows learned the following nine short transition songs/chants:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Alliteration Song</i></li> <li>– <i>Rhyming Song</i></li> <li>– <i>Syllable Chant</i></li> <li>– <i>Letters Have Sounds</i></li> <li>– <i>Letters Have Names</i></li> <li>– <i>Alphabet Song</i></li> <li>– <i>Number Song</i></li> </ul>

- 
- *What is it?*
  - *Rapid Automatic Naming*
- 

*Family Engagement*      *Fellows trained to communicate program objectives with families and provide support as requested, under direction and approval from Lead Teacher.*

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### **ONGOING TRAINING AND COACHING (54 Total Hours)**

In addition to the facilitation of all content training, Coaching Specialists provided additional monthly training, regular instructional support through in-person observation and coaching sessions (2x/month) and triannual review and analysis of student data.

### **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GROUPS (30 Total Hours)**

Mandatory PLGs met regularly to explore education and career development concepts in a collaborative space. Each PLG was led by Program Staff and/or a PLG facilitator. Sessions included the following:

Communication and Public Speaking (Part I)	Fellows learned to speak confidently and consistently in interpersonal and large-group settings.
Professional Communication and Presentation Essentials (Part II)	Fellows learned workplace communication etiquette, how to apply emotional intelligence in workplace interactions, and how to present information effectively.
Goal Setting and Personal Development (Part 1)	Fellows learned strategies for setting and achieving attainable goals and the value of a long-term career plan.
One-on-One Goals Discussion (Part II)	Fellows met with the Virginia Program Manager to discuss their personal and professional goals and create action steps toward achievement.
Job Readiness Workshop	Fellows learned to apply their experience as Leading Men Fellows within the context of other education careers.
College Enrollment	Fellows learned the steps involved in applying to and enrolling in college, and the degree opportunities available to prospective education professionals.
Looking for Mentorship	Fellows learned how to identify the skills and characteristics they admire and pursue guidance with intention, gratitude, and humility.
Entrepreneurship	Fellows learned how to leverage their skills and interests toward reliable self-employment.
Wealth Building	Fellows learned to manage expenses and create strategies for sustainable long-term financial health.
Careers in Education	Fellows learned the professional options available within education, and the teacher licensure process in Virginia.

Rights and Civic Engagement	Fellows learned their basic rights under the U.S. Constitution, how to exercise them safely and appropriately.
Career Application Workshop	Fellows created résumés and applied for employment opportunities after the conclusion of their Fellowship year.
Freedom Schools	Fellows learned the history of Freedom Schools as a response to education inequity in the civil rights era.
Preparing for Full-time Employment	Fellows learned the differences between a part-time Fellowship year and full-time employment.
Financial Literacy	Fellows learned to create a budget, fill out tax forms, establish good credit practices, and save for emergencies.
Mental Health in Education	Fellows learned practical skills around managing mental health and avoiding burnout as an education professional.

Fellows also participated in biweekly reading group sessions designed to promote the Fellows’ own engagement with literacy in practice. Fellows engaged in a series of guided independent fiction and nonfiction book discussions and were empowered to read, analyze, and reflect critically on complex ideas from a variety of texts.

## METRICS ON THE SUCCESS OF FELLOWSHIP PARTICIPANTS

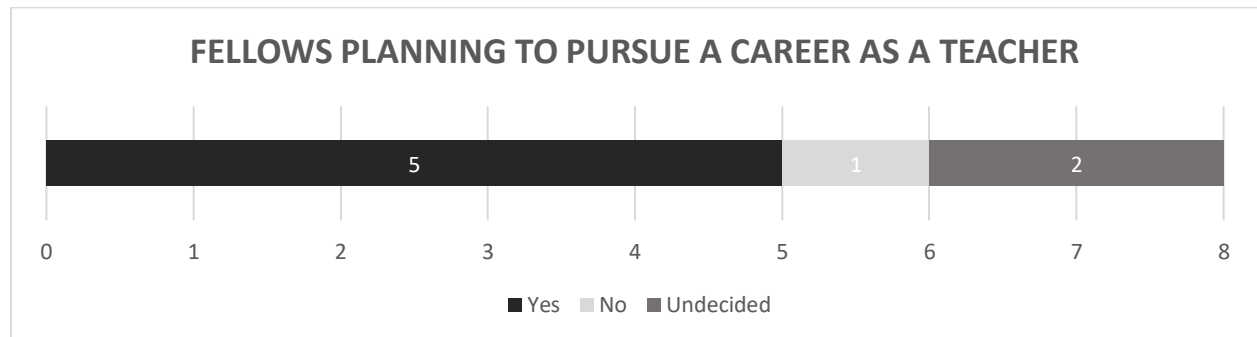
Of the **8 Fellows** who successfully completed the program year, **6** have taken active steps in the pursuit of an education career through employment, enrollment in a teacher preparation or degree program, and/or acceptance of a Senior Fellow or AmeriCorps position with The Literacy Lab.

Additionally, **1** previously mentioned Fellow who departed the program early successfully completed his degree and has begun applying for full-time Special Education teaching positions with Portsmouth Public Schools.

Attendance was mandatory at **9** career fairs and hiring events with local schools and school division leaders. Fellows also participated in a resume, application, and interview coaching workshop and were referred to various position openings in the Richmond and Portsmouth areas through an end-of-year Career Readiness Retreat.

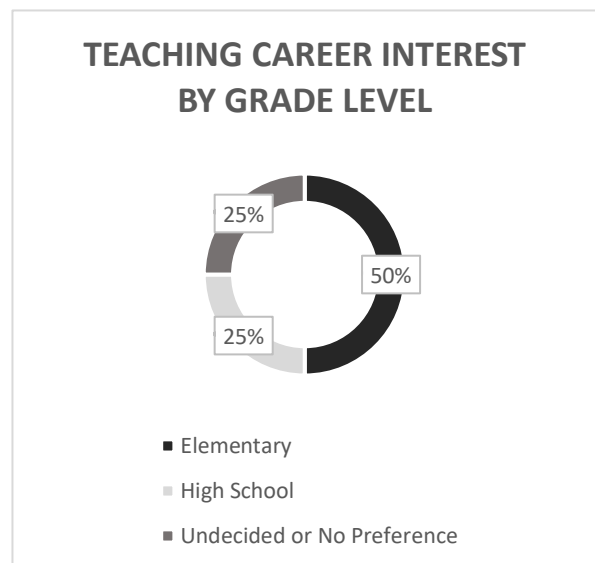
## EDUCATOR PIPELINE DIVERSIFICATION

In total, **5** successful Fellows have indicated an interest in pursuing a full-time teaching career after their experience with the program. **2** Fellows are undecided but may want to work in education in some capacity. **1** Fellow has decided to pursue a career outside of education:



Of the Fellows planning to pursue a full-time teaching career, **50%** are most interested in continuing to work in an elementary school setting. Remaining Fellows were undecided or would prefer to work with older students.

Many Fellows entered the program with some degree of interest in the education field but had made significant progress toward pursuit of other career paths. As a result of the program and exposure to various education-related careers, most of these Fellows have expressed interest in pursuing education-related careers in future.



**INDIVIDUAL FELLOW OUTCOMES<sup>3</sup>**

	Future Employment					Ongoing Education					
	<i>Senior Fellow</i>	<i>AmeriCorps Tutor</i>	<i>Employed in Education</i>	<i>Childcare Worker</i>	<i>Seeking Employment in Education</i>	<i>Other Employment</i>	<i>Enrolled (Education)</i>	<i>Enrolled (Non-education)</i>	<i>Graduated (Education)</i>	<i>Graduated (Non-education)</i>	<i>Pursuing Higher Learning</i>
<b>Fellow 1</b>	X										X
<b>Fellow 2</b>					X					X	X
<b>Fellow 3</b>		X									
<b>Fellow 4</b>					X					X	
<b>Fellow 5</b>					X		X				
<b>Fellow 6</b>			X							X	X
<b>Fellow 7</b>				X			X				
<b>Fellow 8</b>						X		X			
<b>Fellow 9</b>			X				X				
<b>Fellow 10</b>						X					

**Category Key**

<b>Senior Fellow</b>	Fellows electing to serve another year as a Senior Fellow while pursuing part-time education. In addition to regular program duties and enrollment in education-related higher education, Senior Fellows provide mentorship to incoming first-year Fellows.
<b>AmeriCorps Tutor</b>	Fellows enrolled as an AmeriCorps Tutor with our Reading Corps program. AmeriCorps Members are full-time literacy tutors who work with either Pre-K or K-3 caseloads.
<b>Employed in Education</b>	Fellows working in education as Paraprofessionals, Teacher’s Assistants, Classroom Aides, or Instructional Assistants.
<b>Childcare Worker</b>	Fellows working in early childcare settings.

<sup>3</sup> Fellows 9 and 10 exited the program early.

<b>Seeking Employment in Education</b>	Fellows actively pursuing teaching, paraprofessional, or classroom assistant positions.
<b>Pursuing Higher Learning</b>	Fellows planning to explore education-related degree options for future college enrollment. Fellows received an Education Award upon successful completion of the SY2021-22 program to be applied toward future education expenses.
<b>Enrolled (Education)</b>	Fellows currently enrolled in an education degree course through a two-year or four-year college.
<b>Enrolled (Non-education)</b>	Fellows currently enrolled in a non-education degree course through a two-year or four-year college.
<b>Graduated (Education)</b>	Fellows who graduated from a two-year or four-year college during SY2021-22 with an education degree.
<b>Graduated (Non-education)</b>	Fellows who graduated from a two-year or four-year college during SY2021-22 with a non-education degree.



## SY2021-22 CONCLUSION

The Leading Men Fellowship achieved meaningful progress in its three essential outcome areas.

Over the 2021-22 school year, **149** at-risk students made progress toward kindergarten-readiness through the presence of Fellows in **10** classrooms, and **63%** of students ended the year at or near kindergarten-readiness standards. Fellows focused on five fundamental early literacy skills and five target areas of social-emotional development.

Retention over the course of the school year was positive, with **80%** of Fellows successfully completing the terms of the Fellowship. Fellows spent approximately 6,500 classroom hours engaged in direct service with students and modeled behaviors consistent with program expectations.

The Literacy Lab introduced all Fellows to high-quality professional educational opportunities and provided ongoing coaching in pursuing permanent full-time classroom positions. Most successful Fellows (**5 of 8**) have already secured positions for the coming year, and others (**2 of 8**) are in active pursuit of teacher accreditation or a full-time classroom position. In total, **9 of 10** participants made progress toward an education career.

Given the challenges within the current education landscape in Virginia and the priorities of VDOE and the General Assembly, we are particularly encouraged by the results of the program in SY2021-22. We anticipate similar success in the coming school year, and hope that renewed focus on literacy and high-quality early intervention programming might drive change at greater scale in SY2023/24 and beyond.

## APPENDIX I: SY2021-22 END-OF-YEAR SITE SURVEY KEY HIGHLIGHTS<sup>4</sup>

The following pages detail key results from the End-of-Year Site Survey sent to all Richmond and Portsmouth school partners.

The survey was open from May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, to May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

### PRINCIPALS

School principals and/or district administrators select classrooms for program participation, oversee site-specific program operations and implementation, and participate in high-level data review to ensure that ongoing program outcomes are aligned with the needs of the school. From **8** total partner schools, **5** principals and/or administrators participated in our annual End-of-Year survey.

We are pleased to report that feedback from school leaders was consistently positive and reflects a strong desire for continued and expanded partnership. Feedback noted both significant impact on student outcomes and the Leading Men Fellowship's role in diversifying the qualified candidate pool for Richmond and Portsmouth education professionals.

Notable results included the following:

Survey Question (Agree/Disagree/Neutral)	
100%	I would recommend the Leading Men Fellowship to others in my network.
100%	I am interested in having more Leading Men Fellows at this site next year.
100%	The Literacy Lab is an integral part of our multi-tier system of supports.
100%	I would strongly consider hiring a Leading Men Fellow as a staff member at this site.
100%	Participation in the Leading Men Fellowship has a positive impact on my site.

Additional open-ended responses further expanded upon the willingness of principals to recommend the Leading Men Fellowship:

#### Please explain why you would or would not recommend the Leading Men Fellowship.

*"[The program provides] opportunities for young men to be in education."*

*"I think it is a good experience for the Fellow to gain knowledge of classroom procedures [by] being in a classroom setting of four-year-olds."*

#### Please explain why you would or would not strongly consider hiring a Leading Men Fellow as a staff member at this site.

*"Positive male role models are needed in the school system."*

#### Please tell us about the impact the Leading Men Fellowship has had on your school site.

*"He was well-liked by students and staff."*

<sup>4</sup> Select quotations have been edited for grammar and spelling.

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*“The Fellow has become a part of the school’s family. Students look forward to his presence.”*

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**Is there any additional information you would like The Literacy Lab to know about your experience with the Leading Men Fellowship?**

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*The Leading Men Fellowship has a lot of potential to broaden or [be] expanded to include more academic components in other areas.*

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**CLASSROOM TEACHERS**

Classroom teachers lead the daily Pre-K instruction within which Literacy Lab SEEDS routines and early learning interventions are embedded. Teachers support their classroom Fellow day-to-day and participate in regular data review with Fellows and Coaching Specialists to inform responsive individualized instruction planning. Of the **10** teachers who had a Leading Men Fellow in their classroom for part or all of the school year, **8** chose to participate in our annual End-of-Year survey.

Classroom teacher feedback was generally positive, although some respondents did identify obstacles in implementing a new program, staffed by early-career participants, during a school year affected by other challenges.

Notable results included the following:

<b>Survey Question (Agree/Disagree/Neutral)</b>	
<b>75%</b>	Participation in the Leading Men Fellowship has a positive impact on my site. <b>(25%</b> neutral; <b>0%</b> disagreed).
<b>75%</b>	Participation in the Leading Men Fellowship has a positive impact on students' academic progress. <b>(25%</b> neutral; <b>0%</b> disagreed).
<b>75%</b>	Participation in the Leading Men Fellowship has a positive impact on students' socioemotional wellbeing. <b>(25%</b> neutral; <b>0%</b> disagreed).
<b>75%</b>	Participation in the Leading Men Fellowship has an overall positive impact on students. <b>(25%</b> neutral; <b>0%</b> disagreed).

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## APPENDIX II: SY2021-22 END-OF-YEAR FELLOW SURVEY (KEY HIGHLIGHTS)<sup>5</sup>

The following page details key results from the End-of-Year Survey sent to all participating Leading Men Fellows. The survey was open from May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, to May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Of **8** successful Fellows, **6** participated in the End-of-Year survey.

Fellow feedback was positive, and in particular Fellows identified PLG sessions and service to at-risk children as valuable components of the program.

Notable results included the following:

Survey Question (Agree/Disagree/Neutral)	
<b>83%</b>	I would recommend serving as a Leading Men Fellow to others in my network. ( <b>17%</b> disagreed).
<b>100%</b>	I feel connected to The Literacy Lab's mission.
<b>83%</b>	Participating in the Leading Men Fellowship had a positive impact on me. ( <b>17%</b> neutral).
<b>100%</b>	Participating in the Leading Men Fellowship had a positive impact on the school I work in.
<b>100%</b>	Participating in the Leading Men Fellowship had a positive impact on the students I worked with.

Additional open-ended responses provided Fellows the opportunity to expound upon their service year experience in their own words:

### Please [...] explain why or why not you would recommend serving as a Leading Men Fellow.

*"I'd recommend this program for anyone who would like to be in the career of education [...] this program essentially would give them reps in a classroom atmosphere along with the similarity to lesson planning that we had to do for preparing activities for the students, the same way a teacher would."*

*"It's a meaningful job. Seeing the effect that I had on the quiet kids and the Spanish speaking kids was a testament to how our presence makes a big difference for the kids' morale and overall learning."*

### How do you see your experience with the Leading Men Fellowship helping you achieve your career goals?

*"It has helped connect me with many wonderful teachers/mentor who have networks that they are able to share with me and get me on my way [to a career in education]."*

*"[through] the Leading Men Fellowship I now feel I have the confidence to actually do something with my life."*

### How have your views on a career in education changed since the beginning of your Fellowship?

*"Talking with my lead teacher, I know the significance of early education, as it builds the foundation for the rest of the child's educational career."*

<sup>5</sup> Select quotations have been edited for grammar and spelling.

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*"I didn't expect the gap in literacy to be so huge [...] it really opens your eyes."*

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**In your own words, please share your career plans for the next 2-3 years after completing your Fellowship.**

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*"I plan on eventually getting my masters, or at least my teaching license [...] I don't mind what grade level I end up teaching, as long as I can teach English/reading and eventually with my Master's in Psychology that I aspire to acquire I can work my way to being a high school counselor."*

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**Please share a highlight story from your service this quarter (since March 1).**

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*"I have a student who has been having a hard time expressing himself verbally and will act out out of anger. So we would always have a one-on-one when that starts to happen and talk to him until we figure out what's bothering him and how he could channel that frustration using his words and having positive reinforcers so [that] he's continuously doing so. He got better and our bond is one I will forever treasure. He's like a little brother I never had."*

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*"When I came in this semester [REDACTED STUDENT NAME] was a very soft spoken child that would rarely speak or interact with the other kids. Since working with him, he has outperformed some of the "superstars" of the classroom on his PELI assessment, is talking in complete sentences, and [is] playing with the other kids more."*

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**How are you different now than when you started your Fellowship?**

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*"I came into the fellowship with a lot of talent and a strong desire to give back to my community. I now know from an educator's perspective how important it is to have a teacher that cares, along with a better understanding of how to use my talents."*

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APPENDIX III: LETTERS OF SUPPORT<sup>6</sup>

RENÉE HAILES, COORDINATOR FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMS (PORTSMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS)



July 29, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

Portsmouth Public Schools is pleased to support the Leading Men Fellowship. This program, operated by The Literacy Lab, provides children from low-income families with individualized reading instruction to improve their literacy skills, leading to more success in school and increased opportunities in life.

As outlined in the Strategic Plan for Portsmouth Public Schools, our team is focused on providing our students with opportunities to ensure their academic growth using research-based practices that support their social-emotional development while also maintaining a focus on recruiting and retaining highly qualified personnel.

The Literacy Lab's Leading Men Fellowship is aligned with these strategic priorities and actively supports the success of our students, teachers, and overall community. By providing research-based interventions to PreK students, the Leading Men Fellows help ensure that all our students are ready to enter Kindergarten with the literacy skills necessary for success in elementary school. This is critical as many students who are not building their literacy skills before they start school can quickly fall behind and, ultimately, may be left behind.

Additionally, the Fellowship is part of a long-term strategy to increase the number of qualified individuals who are entering the teacher pipeline. Fellows are provided opportunities to learn about and prepare for pathways to become teachers and are actively supported in pursuing this career track. Introducing these Fellows to the educational field creates an invaluable opportunity to diversify the teacher pipeline in the long run.

Portsmouth Public Schools supports the Leading Men Fellowship Program, and we hope that funding will continue to support this important and multi-pronged strategy for improving student outcomes, supporting teachers, and strengthening our educator pipeline. The children served by this program in Portsmouth deserve the opportunity to benefit from the service and commitment of The Leading Men Fellowship.

Respectfully submitted,

*Renée P. Hailes*

Renée Hailes, Program Coordinator

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[www.ppsk12.us](http://www.ppsk12.us)

<sup>6</sup> Select letters have been edited for grammar and spelling.

NAZIR WILLIAMS, SY2021-22 LEADING MEN FELLOW

Dear Reader,

My experience with the Leading Men Fellowship has taught me a few things about having a career. It has helped me realize how much attention and organization I need to incorporate into my working career so that I can keep better track of my responsibilities and duties. While still in progress, my time management skills have greatly improved and the experience has taught me how to overcome many unpredictable and/or unforeseen circumstances that hinder my duties. This experience has also shown me that I can rely on others when I have a responsible and dedicated team working with me which can provide room to better handle my duties efficiently.

Some of my favorite experiences are when the fellows gather together. This allows for not only networking but a connection with others that you may lean on when in need. The comradery that is supported built not just working relationships but a brotherhood that helps one another even outside of the fellowship. You get to learn of one another through various activities like trips to museums, a day out for lunch, PLG's, and the big event, Ascend.

The role I took and am going to take again this coming school year as a tutor is massively important and I only just realized how important education at a young age is due to having this job. It is a gratifying when you have spent so much time with the students and you get to see firsthand the growth that they demonstrate simply because you provided the extra care in the classroom. I think one of the more important parts is becoming familiar with the students. Even though we have a job to do and we shouldn't always allow such a relaxed environment that doesn't allow them to focus on learning, becoming a friend in the classroom lets them feel safe with you so that once we begin teaching they will tend to want to listen and interact more with you.

This job and position couldn't be any more important or critical to the future of our children and the next generations to come.

Thank you for your time,

*Nazir Williams*

Nazir Williams  
Leading Men Fellow 2021-22

BERAKI YOSEF, SY 2021-22 LEADING MEN FELLOW

[Dear Reader,]

From an early age, I was able to overcome challenges through hard work and determination, as well as the support of my teachers and family. Growing up, English wasn't my first language. My parents were immigrants from Eritrea. When they had me in the U.S., they made sure I learned the language and grasped my cultural roots. Going into school, English was pretty difficult. Through my personal struggles, I was inspired to become an educator so I could teach kids and challenge them to reach their full potential through hard work and the relentless pursuit to become their best self. My teachers also opened the door for growth and opportunity here in America. Many were also passionate, clever teachers that instilled a thirst for knowledge and love for math and books. They made solving problems exciting and literature come alive. But, more importantly, they made a difference in my life. My second grade teacher first exposed me to this attitude toward learning and made me realize very early in life that becoming a teacher was not only going to be my future but a lifelong passion. I also knew from the time I was young that I wanted to help others discover the wonders I had been shown.

I found a knack for guiding children in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. I also took pride in the success of others. The way their eyes lit up in response to understanding ignited my excitement for teaching. More importantly, knowing I was making an impact beyond that of academics cemented my decision to become part of this important, evolving and noble profession. The reason why I chose to join The Literacy Lab's Leading Men Fellowship was because I want to pursue teaching while still balancing other priorities until I hopefully can be qualified to be the full time educator I aspire to become. I was so confident that the fellowship would allow me to pursue that, and it did. While serving in a part-time capacity, 5 hours a day from 8 am - 1 pm for 10 months, I partook in all required professional development training while implementing feedback from coaches and program staff.

Tutoring a class of 15 preschool students was by far a privilege and honor. I was truly blessed to obtain a leadership role where I incorporate the foundations of literacy, reading interventions, assessing, progress monitoring, data-based decision making, and positive behavior management. I utilized specific data-based and scripted curriculum to help the students acquire the right skills to be prepared for kindergarten and beyond. In order to obtain these curriculums, I participated in ongoing training, and other Literacy Lab events and meetings, which were assigned by program staff. I provide the school with evidence-based literacy intervention and assessment tools. One of my favorite things was building the confidence of students by focusing on them, listening, and asking questions. I had to create a shared and positive learning environment by using intentional affirmations, and positive communication in order to make the students feel confident. The Literacy Lab helped me strengthen those skills. I was truly happy to be a part of developing early literacy skills towards the kids, utilizing specific data-based and scripted curriculum, SEEDS of Early Learning while also helping them explore their world



through hands-on learning and practice. Overall, this experience has set a strong foundation for my teaching path and has continued to expand my connections amongst powerful mentors who have helped shape my path towards the right direction. I honestly wouldn't be where I'm at, or have the pleasure to meet brilliant minds and souls, without The Literacy Lab. And for that, I'm eternally grateful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Beraki Yosief', written in a cursive style.

Beraki Yosief

Leading Men Fellow 2021-22

DEVIN BATTLE, SY2021-22 LEADING MEN FELLOW

### **My experience with The Literacy Lab**

My job search has always been difficult, as in high school I never really had anyone to show me how to properly create a resume. This all changed in a matter of a year working with The Literacy Lab. While my interest and career paths fluctuated, I decided that in the future, I would love to be an educator. Since I knew that I did not have a bachelor's degree or certification, I would either work in a daycare setting or somewhere that has children, and I would instruct or assist until I become a teacher. The process of getting a job working with children was lengthy, as I applied to as many daycare facilities and tutor positions for different public-school systems as I could. Only a few called back, and only a couple interviewed me. With the couple interviewing me, I heard nothing back within a month period of being interviewed, so I gave up on becoming an educator and lost hope, because I thought this is not the right career path for me.

When I told my family about how no one would hire me, my sister was also searching for a job at the time, so we were both on Indeed searching for jobs thoroughly. My sister ran across The Literacy Lab before I did on Indeed, and she forwarded it to me. After she forwarded it to me, I filled out the application and submitted it. I know that within the period of two weeks from when I applied, The Literacy Lab called me back and set up various times for various interviews. Everything seems like it happened so quickly. As I went from the interviewing process, going to [A]scend and being professionally trained for the classroom. Even with all the necessary [PELI] training and various training to be successful in the classroom, I still had a sense of nervousness that eventually faded away after about two weeks of working in the classroom. Not to scare anyone, but the first week for me was intimidating and nerve-racking. Children would stare, ask me questions I genuinely did not have an answer to, or I did not know how to respond, so I would just smile and continue to do what I was doing. After the first or second week, it gets better, I promise!

The Literacy Lab started to become fun and more interesting when I got more comfortable in the classroom. When we spend time together and have fun activities to bond and come together to better understand each other, it makes working with everyone in the program easier, because there is someone amongst the group that you share similar experiences with, there is someone in the group that has the same interest or loves the same hobbies that you love to partake in on your days off, and there is someone in the group that has similar goals and interests; this just makes work life easier.

My experience of working with The Literacy Lab was fun, exciting, and bittersweet when I had to leave for a Portsmouth Public School position. The Literacy Lab opened the door for me to even get the Portsmouth Public School position that I have today. By working with the Literacy Lab, I have greater experiences than negatives; as I was able to re-connect with my elementary principal (who is the principal of the school that I have a position at now!), I was able to meet other fun, exciting people who I previously knew because of the local high school that I attended (Janitor, Ms. Hailes, Dr. Williams, Mrs. Brooks, Ms. Ortin, etc.). My communication skills have improved since I started working with the Literacy Lab, as I was part of launching the program in the Hampton Roads area in front of senator Lucas. As nervous as I was, Brandon, Emma, Coach Trevina, [and] Coach A. believed in me, and I am forever grateful for the opportunity.

The Literacy Lab has taught me everything that I need to know to be successful as an educator. The pay is great, you go on trips, and they even pay for your food when we have meetings (Like what other job do you know?! It was such a bittersweet moment when I had to choose between being in Portsmouth's Public School system and work my way up through the system as an educator, or work for this wonderful

program again! I know that I will see new fellows at Mount Hermon Pre School, and I cannot wait to see you guys, Brandon, Coach Trevina, and Coach A!

Lastly, (I know that it is long!) one of the greatest things that the Literacy Lab has given me is the help with my Resume! Helping me fix my Resume was a life saver! After the Literacy Lab helped re-do my Resume, I received the most job offers in my entire 19-years of life! Again, thank you Brandon for the opportunity! I cannot wait to see you guys and the new Fellows the following year!

Sincerely,

*Devin Battle*

Devin Battle

Leading Men Fellow 2021-22