

**building21**  
2018–19 Annual Report

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# dear friends,

This year we graduated our first class of Building 21 Allentown scholars. Along with our second graduating class from Philadelphia, this brings our total alumni to almost 250 students. Throughout this report, you will get to know some of these talented young people and understand why we are so proud of them!

The combined graduation rate of 88% across our two Lab Schools now exceeds the Pennsylvania state average of 86% for all high schools and is significantly higher than schools in the state with similar student demographics. This, along with our strong college-going culture, speaks to the strength of the Building 21 model, and to the dedication and hard work of our students. As always, there is room for improvement—our Lab School test scores decreased some this year as compared to last. We have launched several initiatives to address this decrease, including a partnership with the Teaching Lab to build a continuous improvement culture at our schools that has been funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

In 2018-19, we continued to extend the reach of the Building 21 model. We welcomed another 250 9th grade students into our two Lab schools, and supported our Illinois affiliate in rolling out Building 21's competency-based learning model to over 1,500 students. Further, our web-based Open Resources materials continue to attract educators from around the globe interested in adopting pieces of our model, with an average of three to four new users registering every day.

All of this work is made possible by an incredible community of students, families, staff, volunteers, partners, and generous supporters. We are grateful to each and every one of you for your commitment to Building 21 and the faith you have placed in us.

Thank you for your support this year.

**Chip Linehan** and **Laura Shubilla**  
Co-Founders & Co-Executive Directors



# Angel



## Angel Lebron

Philadelphia Class of 2018

*Where  
I am now*

**Kutztown University**, majoring in Business Administration (*Angel also holds leadership positions in several campus organizations, including TRIO—a program that supports and mentors underrepresented college students.*)

*My advice to  
future B21  
students*

“Sometimes you have to step out and take a risk.”

*B21's  
impact  
on me*

“Our teachers knew what would be required and made sure we were ready. They stressed public speaking and presentations, time management, and constantly learning outside the curriculum – always taking advantage of what the school was offering both inside and outside the classrooms.”

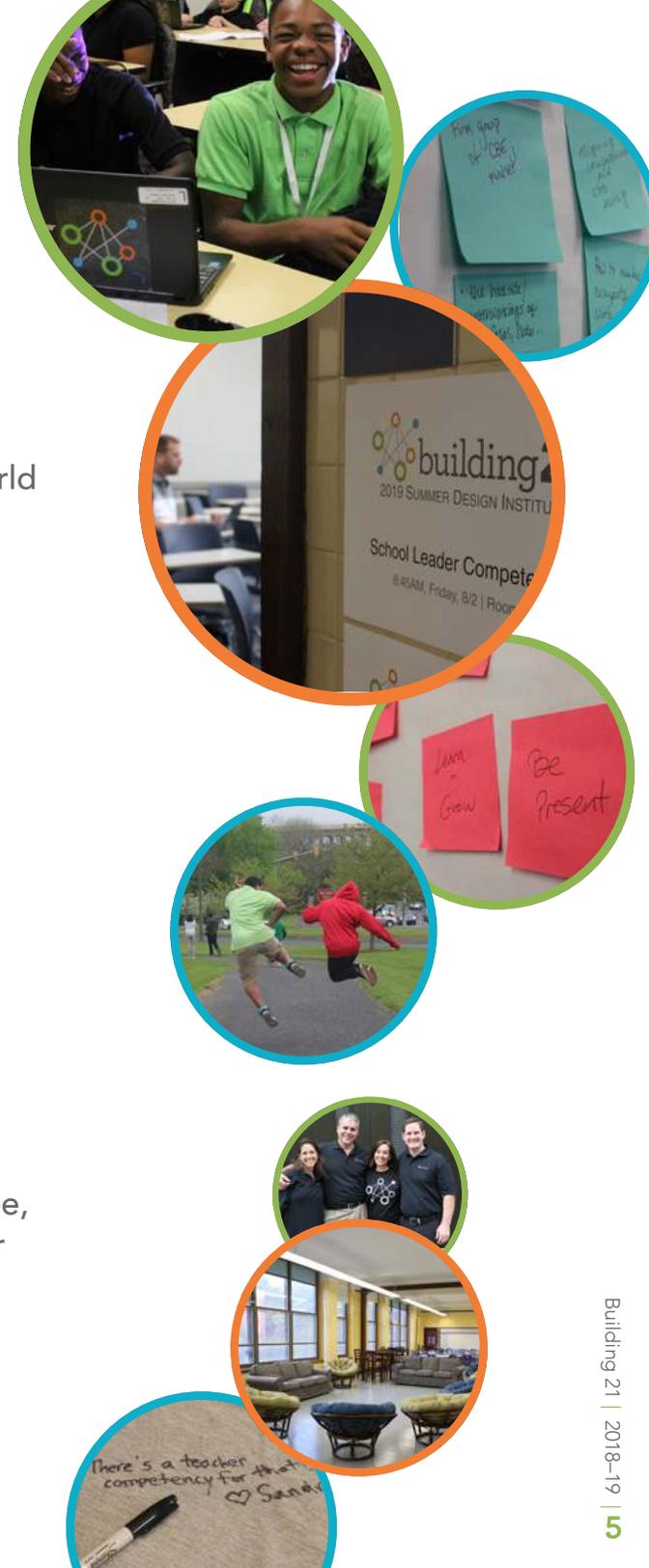
# About Building 21

At Building 21, we help students discover their passions, find their voices, and build their capacities to chart their own pathways and influence the world around them. We do this by focusing on five core design principles:

- A just, equitable, and caring learning environment
- A more robust set of graduation requirements
- Authentic and connected learning opportunities
- Strong instructional practices
- Adult growth and development

## What is Building 21?

The term "Building 21" means several things. Legally, we are a non-profit 501(c)3 organization based in Pennsylvania. Building 21 is also the name of two public high schools we designed, helped launch, and continue to support—in Philadelphia and Allentown (a.k.a. our "Lab Schools"). Furthermore, Building 21 refers to a new educational vision and school model that we are helping others nationally and globally to understand and implement, including our "affiliate" schools in Meridian, Idaho and Kankakee, Illinois. We consider all of the folks in our organization, our Lab Schools, our affiliates, and anyone who wants to be part of this movement, to comprise the Building 21 "Network."





# lab schools



**ASD Allentown**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

265 Lehigh Street  
Allentown, PA 18102

Opened: September, 2015  
Grades: 9-12  
School Leader: Jose Rosado

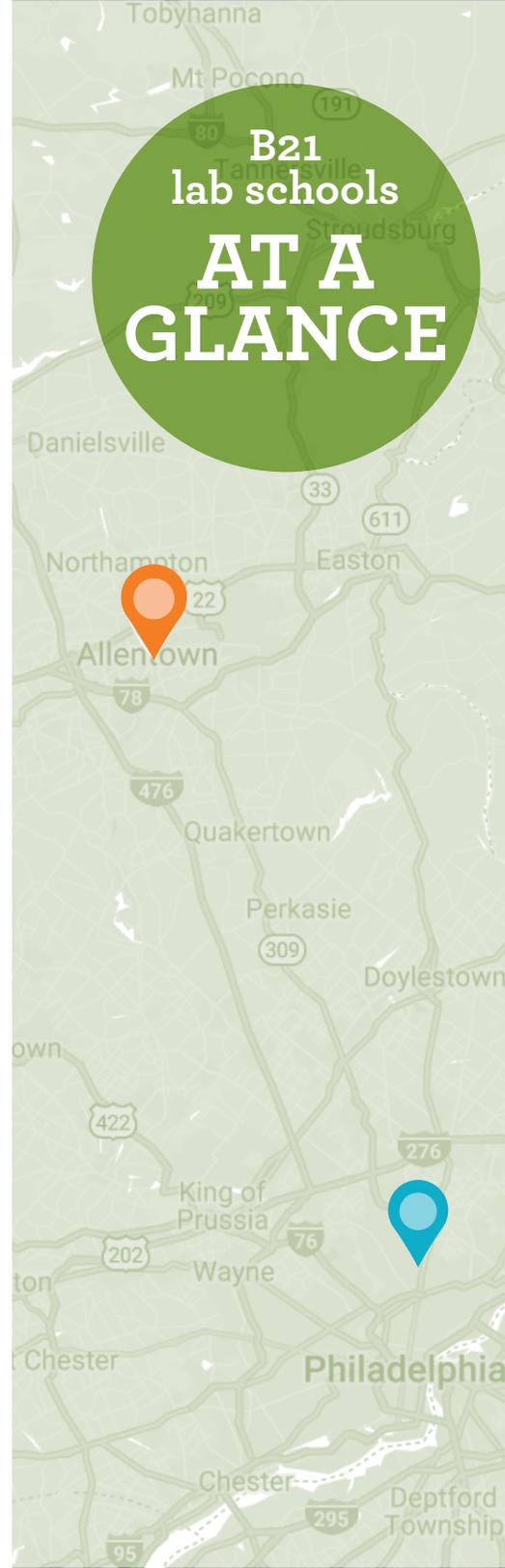


## 480 students

- 77.1% Economically Disadvantaged
- 11.0% English Language Learners (ELL)
- 19.4% Special Education

- 16.5% Black/African American
- 72.5% Hispanic
- 10.0% White
- 1.0% Two or more races / Other

# B21 lab schools AT A GLANCE



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
**PHILADELPHIA**

6501 Limekiln Pike  
Philadelphia, PA 19138

Opened: September, 2014  
Grades: 9-12  
School Leader: Ayris Colvin



## 334 students

- 75.5% Economically Disadvantaged
- 4.8% English Language Learners (ELL)
- 21.0% Special Education

- 82.6% Black/African American
- 13.8% Hispanic
- 0.9% White
- 2.4% Two or more races / Other

B21 lab schools

# NEW GRADS

## Graduating Success

In June, we celebrated graduations at both lab schools, with grad rates at each exceeding those of comparable schools across the state.

**88%**  
graduation  
rate\*  
across both  
lab schools

\*vs. an average of **71%**  
at comparable PA  
district schools.

(See page 8 for a description  
of the comparable schools.)

As Allentown's first and Philadelphia's second cohort of students set out to pursue their passions, we look forward to witnessing their continued growth and accomplishments in college and careers. From Penn State to DeSales, Temple to Kutztown, Boston University to community colleges across the region, our grads will continue to impact their world.

We welcome our graduates into our growing alumni network, now more than 200 strong.



**“I hope that the class of 2019 will remember that high school and college are two completely different things. Yet they both have one thing in common and that is the experience is what you make it. It's up to you to be accountable for yourself and to make it the best time for you.”**

Philadelphia valedictorian Tori Holt (above) gives advice to her peers in her graduation speech.





# Hope

## Hope Williams

Philadelphia Class of 2019

*Where I am now*

**Norfolk State University**, majoring in Performing Arts with a Vocal concentration (Fun fact: Hope tried out for the TV show, *The Voice*. She made it to the third round in NYC.)

*My advice to future B21 students*

“The school wouldn’t work without the relationships. When you find people who you can turn to when you need help – that’s what keeps you motivated and coming back. When people believe in you so strongly, it makes you believe, too.”

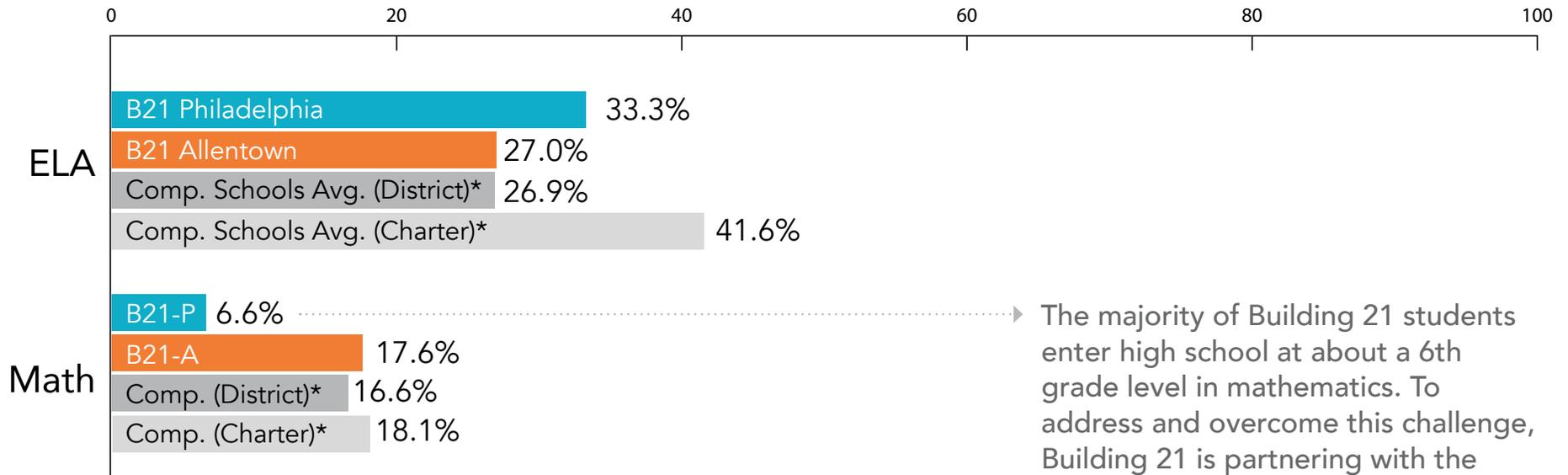
*B21's impact on me*

“Building 21 always tells students to be aware of their own voice and power, and encourages us to take action to solve problems.”

*That's my advisor, Mrs. Mac. I never truly understood the meaning of selflessness until I met her.*

# Standardized Test Results: Pennsylvania Keystone Exams

Proficiency (percent scoring Proficient or Advanced) for all 11th Graders in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math



The majority of Building 21 students enter high school at about a 6th grade level in mathematics. To address and overcome this challenge, Building 21 is partnering with the Teaching Lab, a highly respected national organization dedicated to improving teacher quality and promoting educational equity, to implement a new approach to instruction that will improve our student's mastery of foundational and analytical mathematics skills. This partnership is made possible by support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

\* The comparable (Comp.) set of schools includes all high schools in the Commonwealth of PA that are similar to our schools according to the following criteria:

	Building 21 Allentown	Building 21 Philadelphia	Comparable Schools in PA	
			10 District Schools	14 Charter Schools
Students of Color	90.0%	99.1%	≥80%	
Economically Disadvantaged	77.1%	75.5%	70%–90%	
English Learners	11.0%	4.8%	10%–20%	
Students With Disabilities	19.4%	21.0%	10%–30%	
No Admission Criteria	✓	✓	✓	
Urban	✓	✓	✓	
Total # Students	480	334	6,024	10,798

Source: <https://futurereadypa.org/>



# Yanalit

## Yanalit Maldonado

Allentown Class of 2019

*Where  
I am now*

**Kutztown University**, majoring in Elementary Education. (Yanalit also serves as student government board representative and president of her residence hall.)

*My advice to  
future B21  
students*

“Building 21 will help you explore what you want to do with your life. You get to try new things, and when you find something that clicks, they help you build the connections to pursue your dream.”

*B21's  
impact  
on me*

“That would have to be my 12th grade internship at McKinley Elementary. I was exposed to every adult role in the building, from the principal to the counselors, teachers, cafeteria staff. I knew I was interested in education, but this really solidified what I want to do with my life. I am going to be an elementary school teacher, and I intend on going back to the Allentown School District to work! I spent 12 years at ASD...I know what it's like to be a “city girl”, and I know what supports kids need to live their dreams.”

## *Building a Cultural Foundation:* **The Tri-Change Model**

Restorative practices • Trauma-informed care • Cultural competency

Building 21 Philadelphia continues to adopt and invest in effective practices emerging from the fields of behavioral health and adolescent brain development. In 2018, we launched our “Tri-Change Model,” a unified approach to **restorative practices**, **trauma-informed care**, and **cultural competency**. The new model recognizes that these three domains are closely linked, and that all are necessary to create a healthy culture that meets the needs of the school community. It also builds on one of Building 21's key design principles: **relationships at the foundation**, and honors and embraces our diverse community of students, families, and educators.

The model's components include:

- Understanding, awareness, and mutual respect for the culture of others and its importance in their lives;
- Understanding of trauma and its impact on the lives of all community members; and
- Understanding that establishing healthy relationships is not a finite process. We must constantly seek ways to proactively build positive relationships and repair harm to restore damaged ones.



# Leo



## Leocadia Nzigirabarya

Allentown Class of 2019

*Where  
I am now*

**Kutztown University** majoring in Business Administration

*My advice to  
future B21  
students*

“Go for it! But go knowing it will be different. You will be challenged. You will really have to put yourself out there, but it pays off in the end.”

*B21's  
impact  
on me*

“The Relationships! The whole school is designed to help build relationships with staff and other students. I never really enjoyed school until I arrived at Building 21 - and it was all because of the relationships I built with my teachers and my classmates.”

# Extended Learning Opportunities

A key part of our model is extending learning opportunities for our students well beyond our school. We do this at Building 21 Allentown in many ways, which include cultivating an extensive partner network and by supporting “dual enrollment” in college classes, making it possible for students to earn college credit while in high school. We also provide opportunities for deeper engagement through immersive, career-centered experiences.

Due to our strong **partnership network**, in 2018-19 there were:

**20** work-based learning fellowships

**32** studios **co-taught by partners** alongside our teachers

**59** placements in **summer enrichment** programs

**70** community partners offering **extended learning**

**1,250** opportunities for students to **learn in the community**

Helping our students **connect to higher education** led to:

**66%** of our 12th graders **dual enrolling**  
in **college courses**



# School Partners

Thank you to our generous partners for supporting our work and creating authentic, real-world learning opportunities for our students in Allentown and Philadelphia.



4H Clubs  
Air Products and Chemicals  
Allentown Art Museum  
Amogha Yoga  
ArtsQuest  
Associated Builders & Contractors  
Attorney Gavin Holihan  
B. Braun Medical Inc.  
Baum School of Art  
Casa Guadalupa  
Cedar Crest College  
Cetronia Ambulance  
City Center Allentown  
City of Allentown  
City of Philadelphia  
Civic Theater  
Communities in Schools  
Community Action Development Corp.  
Community Bike Works  
Community College of Philadelphia  
Crime Victims Council  
Crystal Springs Dairy Farm  
DaVinci Science Center  
DeSales University  
Eastern EMS Council  
Elizabeth Anthony's Salon  
Faces International  
Fe Foundation  
First Commonwealth Credit Union

Good Shepherd  
Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Gross McGinley  
Hala2GoCatering  
Haven House  
Head and Hand Publishing  
Health Network Labs  
IBEW Local 375  
Immersive XR  
Jocelyn Adams  
Kutztown University  
La Salle University  
Lafayette Ambassador Bank  
Lehigh Carbon Community College  
Lehigh County  
Lehigh County Bar Association  
Lehigh County Conservation District  
Lehigh University  
Lehigh Valley Child Care Centers  
Lehigh Valley Educators Credit Union  
Lehigh Valley Health Network  
Lehigh Valley Writing Project  
Lil Le-Hi Fish Hatchery  
Lutron, Inc.  
Manufacturers Resource Center  
Miller Keystone Blood Center  
Moravian College  
Muhlenberg College  
Office of the District Attorney, City of Philadelphia

PA Renaissance Fair  
PBS 39  
Peaceable Kingdom  
Penn State Lehigh Valley  
Penn State Univ. and Extension Center  
Penndot  
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts  
Phantoms Charities  
PHEAA  
PPL  
Promise Neighborhood  
Queen City Acres  
Reading Terminal Market  
Reciprocity  
Rider-Pool Trust  
Rilyc Community Arts Center  
Sean Tate  
Senator Pat Browne  
Spillman Farmer Architects  
St. Luke's University Health Network  
Tech Smart Kids  
Techicom  
Tee Academy  
Teigh Orthodontics  
Temple University  
US Armed Services  
Vetri Community Partnership  
Villanova University  
Wells Fargo  
Working Dog Press

# Nate



## Nate Andino

Allentown, Class of 2019

**DeSales University**, majoring in Computer Science and Cybersecurity.

*I spoke at graduation*

*Where I am now*

*My advice to future B21 students*

*B21's impact on me*

“Unlike many other schools, you will never feel like a number at Building 21. The teachers will be there to support you. Be sure to take advantage of that. Embrace the opportunities to learn from Building 21’s partners. These experiences will help guide you to your pathway.”

“I discovered my true passion at Building 21. Coming into high school, I thought I wanted to be a teacher but then I had the chance to spend the summer working at PPL in their IT department. And I just knew that it was for me. This experience launched me on my pathway to my future.”



**building a  
movement**

# Summer Design Institute

In July 2019, we hosted 90 colleagues, partners, and supporters for our Summer Design Institute, three days of learning, designing, and growing as professionals and adult learners within the Building 21 Network.

This year's focus was **personal and professional agency**. Participants were challenged to own their professional development experience and design an individualized conference path. Participants chose sessions and conversations that maximized both their preparation for the year and personal growth.

Workshops were facilitated by teachers and leaders from our lab schools, as well as other B21 leaders, partners, and experts. The Institute leveraged our growing internal expertise to provide participants an array of workshops, deepening their professional learning and practice.

**2019 workshops included:**

- Cultural Competency and Peer Mentoring
- Intro and Advanced Restorative Practices
- Understanding the Impact of Trauma
- B21 Coaching
- Data-Driven Decision Making
- Youth Court Model & Reform
- Designing with Google Sites



building a  
movement

## *Building 21 Affiliate:* **Kankakee High School**

Working with Kankakee High School, our affiliate in Illinois, has been our first experience in transforming an existing traditional high school to a competency-based education model. We are in our 2nd year of implementation, and over 1,500 students are now actively engaged in our competency-based learning model.

One of the key tenets of competency-based education is that students advance upon demonstrated proficiency, not based on a set amount of time in a course. Based on this personalized approach, students earned 200 credits which would not otherwise have been available to them.

Read more about Kankakee's move to competency-based education and how we have supported them at [CompetencyWorks](#).



Above: Kankakee teachers at B21's 2019 Summer Development Institute.

Below: Competency-based, STEM, and hands-on learning take place as a Kankakee team prepares for a robotics competition.



building a  
movement

## *Building 21 Affiliates:* **West Ada Alternative Schools**

Central, Eagle, and Meridian Academies, in Idaho's West Ada School District, are now in their third year of B21 model implementation. As alternative education schools, all three have unique challenges serving a population where traditional models have not succeeded. Our competency-based approach has allowed them to create a model that is more flexible and personalized for their students. In the past year, teachers have been designing curricular units and performance tasks aligned to the competencies. They have also utilized the Habits of Success competencies to create a mentorship model to ensure that all students are supported.

*Below and right:*  
West Ada educators  
at B21's 2019 Summer  
Development Institute.



building a  
movement

# Open Resources

Each year, several thousand educators access the free open resources we produce and publish on our website. They find us through word-of-mouth, referrals from others in the field, links on websites, conferences, and thought leaders.

**100** people per month  
have signed up to access  
Building 21's free Open  
Resources since we launched  
registration six months ago.

Visitors  
from **42** states &  
**48** countries  
have accessed the  
Competencies section of our  
Open Resources during the  
past year.

Our most popular resources are:

- [Competencies](#)
- [Curricular Resources](#)
- [Webinars](#)

building21.org/open-resources/

building21 ABOUT US LEARNING MODEL OPEN RESOURCES DONATE NOW HIRING BLOG

OPEN RESOURCES Home / Open Resources

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF CBE

GETTING STARTED WITH CBE

There are many entry points to this work. Over the years, Building 21 has curated resources to help schools and districts start their transition to CBE.

GET RESOURCES

CURRICULAR RESOURCES

Building 21 seeks to organize learning around relevant and authentic experiences that are aligned to our competencies. As our teachers design and share their resources, we will publish them here.

GET RESOURCES

LEARNING WHAT MATTERS Competency Frameworks

COMPETENCIES AND CONTINUA FOR STUDENTS

We co-created the Learning What Matters Competency Framework with the School District of Philadelphia. This open source competency framework enables personalized learning at Building 21.

GET RESOURCES

ADULT DEVELOPMENT

Coming soon!

CBE CREDITING GUIDELINES

The traditional factory model of education will not change over night. Located in two public districts in PA, we have created policies that help govern our work while translating our model for traditional systems.

GET RESOURCES

INNOVATIVE DASHBOARDS

Our flexible and open suite of dashboards set the bar high for transparency and student-centered design. We are putting performance and growth at the finger tips of all of our stakeholders to ensure our students will succeed.

GET RESOURCES

Search ...

Recent Resources Shared

Resource Categories

Admin Dashboard Dashboard

Getting Started Humanities

Learning Activity Guide

Learning Activity Templates

Math Performance Task Guide

Professional Development

Science Student dashboard

Studio Guide

Teacher Onboarding

Competencies

ELA.2.1 Math.1 Math.2

SCI.1 SCI.2

# IT Infrastructure and Data Visualization

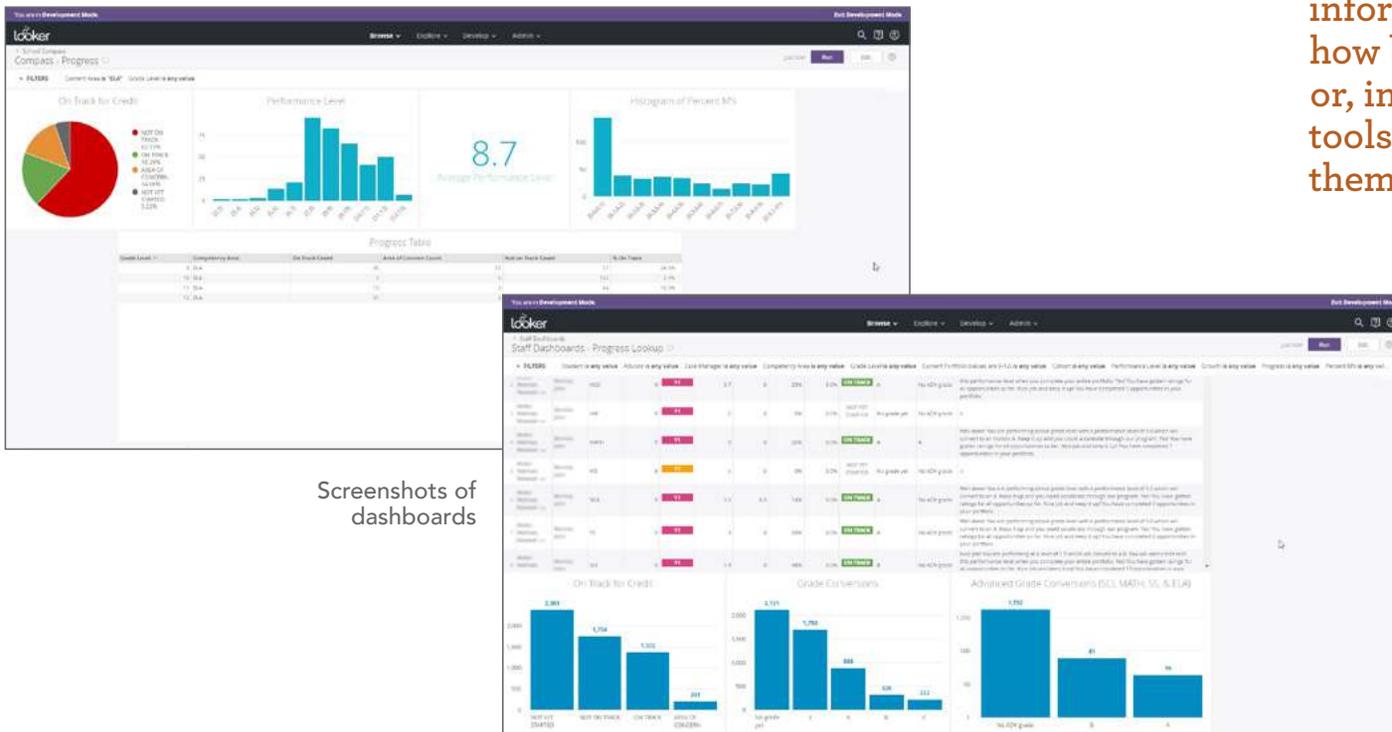
This year, Building 21 welcomed Eric Coronel to the team. Born and raised in Pottstown, PA, Eric brings expertise in data analysis and a passion for helping leaders use data to make effective decisions.

Eric is currently transitioning Building 21 to a cloud-based data infrastructure. He has built a central data warehouse, configuring multiple feeds and consolidating data from our various sources. Eric is leading our transition to Looker, a data visualization tool. To date, all teacher and administrator dashboards have been migrated to Looker. We project all student dashboards will be migrated by September 2020.



“I see my role as providing necessary tools to help our organization maximize its effectiveness. Good intentions are a great start, but everyone can make use of hard data to inform their choices about how best to support learners or, in the case of our student tools, how learners can help themselves.”

Eric Coronel  
Director of Data Analytics



Screenshots of dashboards

# Tori



## Tori Holt

Philadelphia Class of 2019

Temple University, majoring in Psychology

*Where  
I am now*

*B21's  
impact  
on me*

“At Building 21, I met so many different people from different backgrounds, but all of them had the same mindset: to get into a good college and succeed. I felt comfortable there, and that helped me to get over my anxieties. We felt like we were family – our classes were a close-knit group.”

“I never felt like I could speak up for myself before, but, at Building 21, I became very vocal on many issues and the school staff encouraged me to use my voice. Soon I was in the administrators’ offices all the time advocating for how things could be better.”

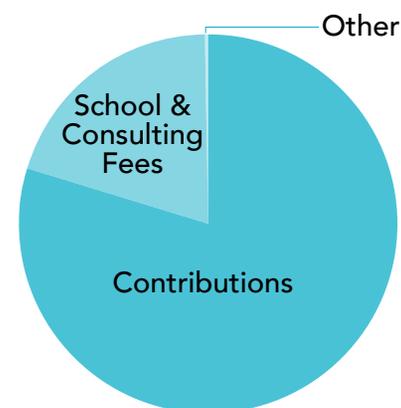
“They let you believe you can do it. If you had told me in middle school that I would have those opportunities and be where I am today, I wouldn’t have believed it.”



# Audited Financial Results July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019

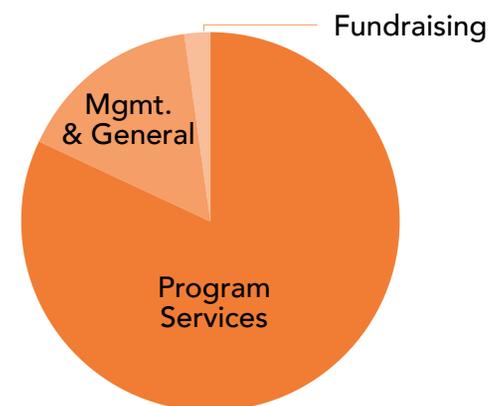
## Income

Source	Amount	Percentage
Contributions	\$2,229,605	87.79%
School and Consulting Fees	\$305,682	12.04%
Other	\$4,313	0.17%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$2,539,600</b>	



## Expenses

Source	Amount	Percentage
Program Services	\$1,659,207	85.40%
Management and General	\$232,856	11.98%
Fundraising	\$50,913	2.62%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,942,976</b>	



## Major Investments

### Allentown Building Renovation

\$553,809 **28.50%**

This investment allowed us to finish the three-year renovation of our 65,000 SF facility in Allentown. Included in this work was the construction of a state-of-the-art maker space.

### Data and Systems

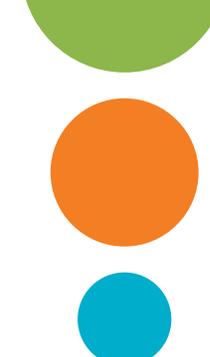
\$175,000 **9.01%**

We invested over \$175,000 in our learning management system and data analytics platform, with a particular emphasis on achieving scalability and improved user experiences.

### Capacity-Building

\$115,730 **4.89%**

Our impact is directly proportional to the skills and capacity of our team. As such, we made significant investments in professional development this year, including onsite professional development, our Summer Design Institute, and several trips to conferences and learning events across the country..



# Donor Recognition

We are extremely grateful for all of the support we received this year and since our founding.

## 2018-2019 Donors

*Gifts and grants received between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019*

### **\$100,000 or more**

---

The Lenfest Foundation  
New Schools Venture Fund  
Siegel Family Endowment  
Spring Point Partners

### **\$50,000 to \$99,999**

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Children Can Shape the Future  
Drant Charitable Giving Fund  
The Rider-Pool Foundation

### **\$10,000 to \$49,999**

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Capital BlueCross  
Philadelphia Schools Partnership  
PPL Corporation  
Wells Fargo Foundation

### **Up to \$9,999**

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American Bank  
Brown Advisory Foundation  
Doug Brown  
Laurie Gostley-Hackett  
Tony Karboski and Connie Mearkle  
Lissette Santana  
Don Spangler

## Honor Roll Donors

*Gifts and grants received since our founding in 2014*

### **Cornerstone Supporters**

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*Cumulative Gifts or Grants of greater than \$500,000*  
Air Products Foundation  
The Lenfest Foundation  
Philadelphia Schools Partnership

### **Keystone Supporters**

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*Cumulative Gifts or Grants of greater than \$250,000*  
The Century Fund  
Harry C. Trexler Trust  
Linehan Family Foundation  
The New Schools Venture Fund  
Next Generation Learning  
PPL Corporation  
The Rider-Pool Foundation

# Melanie



## Melanie Almonte

Philadelphia Class of 2019

*Where  
I am now*

**Community College of Philadelphia,** majoring in Nursing. *(Melanie hopes to transfer to Bloomsburg University upon the completion of her associate's degree.)*

*My advice to  
future B21  
students*

Building 21's advisory model "[helped me] grow from a shy and anxious young ninth grader to a schoolwide leader."

*B21's  
impact  
on me*

"[Building 21] gave us a chance to discover what kinds of careers we're passionate about, and how to prepare for them. Learning about different careers helped me decide what I wanted to do in college. "In my senior year, I explored resources on medical careers. Then, I visited Temple Hospital and made a connection with a neonatal nurse. I was able to interview her, understand what motivated her, and learn about the educational preparation nursing required. That helped me decide that I wanted to follow a similar path."

