Message From Our Leadership

Dear Friends,

When pausing in reflection over this past year, I have much gratitude. Gratitude for our incredible staff who arrive each day dedicated to closing the racial achievement gap, for our families engaged in true change in early education, and for our investors and partners, all of whom are committed to being a part of transforming the education system.

This year has been one of significance for us as we mark a decade of impact. We continue to demonstrate how a supportive, caring, and safe environment can help Black students develop their full potential and become compassionate leaders. Together with advocacy and strong family engagement, we are more committed than ever to move the needle on Black student success over the next decade.

Success for us is measured not just in the systemic changes we are making, but in the impact on individual Black children every day. A 3rd grade student who wasn’t doing well at his former school started this year at the KairosPDX Learning Academy. His mother reported continuous behavior issues and his academics were not strong. Since joining us this fall, he has built friendships, has built a trusting relationship with his teacher, and has benefited from rigorous and engaging culturally responsive instructional practices. He has shown significant growth in reading, math and writing in just a few months. The efforts taken to build a relationship with him and his family have resulted in his behavior changing from one of resistance to school to one of excitement for learning.

This is why we stay committed to this work: because of the everyday difference we are making. Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Marsha Williams
Chief Executive Officer
& Co-Founder

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HIGHLIGHTS

KairosPDX exists with the sole purpose to eliminate the prolific racial achievement and opportunity gaps we see in education. We do this by cultivating confident, creative, and compassionate leaders. Our goal is to exceed academic expectations at each developmental milestone.

264
KairosPDX Leaders

K-5 Learning Academy
- 250 student leaders
- 78% students of color
- 46% Black/African American

Early Learning Academy
- Preschool for 3-4 year olds
- 14 students
- 78% Black/African American

125
Participants in our Training Academy Workshops

Along with a year-long professional development series for educators and administrators offered through our Training Academy, we offered cross-sector trainings anchored in research and best practices. Through our combined training offerings, this past year we have reached over 125 educators and professionals across the State of Oregon and throughout the Pre-K - graduate school system.

92%
Attendance for Black students

For the 2021-2022 school year we saw an amazing 90% attendance rate across all demographics, with our Black students at a 92% rate of attendance. The district average for overall attendance in Portland Public Schools is 89% and for Black students is 84%.
EXPANDING EARLY LEARNING

In partnership with Preschool for All, the Spelman Jaguar classroom is a pilot site for Multnomah County's universal preschool initiative. It is offered at no cost to families. Designed to affirm and celebrate Black identity in young children and their families, the KairosPDX Early Learning Academy is a natural extension of our K-5 programming. Like all our work, it is grounded in the belief that culturally-specific learning experiences expand opportunities for children to actively engage in creating their own lives and to contribute fully to the quality of the world around them. This classroom expands upon our already existing Early Learning programming that includes our Kinder College and OMSI Play Lab experiences for families with children ages 0-6.
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Over the last 10 years, our approach to dismantling structural racism has deepened to include policy advocacy, professional development services, and hands-on learning through our flagship community schools and family engagement programs.

1. Public Academies Serving Preschool-5th Grade

We serve historically marginalized children through a free K-5 public charter school and a public preschool that is intellectually rigorous and healing-centered. We infuse mindfulness and restorative practices towards teaching the whole child, at all points of the day. Our 264 KairosPDX leaders and their multigenerational families receive year-round instruction and support. KairosPDX is built on the neuroscience of love and belonging, and we prioritize the following values in all our work and curricula: anti-racism, resilience cultivation, rehumanization, culturally-affirming Blackness, and empowering education.

2. Community Relations

Our Community Relations staff build trusting relationships with our KairosPDX families and throughout the larger community to provide wraparound support and link arms with partners in the fight for education justice. Through our Family Engagement & Community Relations Team, our staff, families, and partners are able to build relationships with one another. Meaningful community engagement occurs at all levels of the organization because KairosPDX believes that those who know the needs of our students best are those who exist in community with them: their parents and family. If we are supporting children to thrive, we need to support families to thrive as well.

3. KairosPDX Training Academy

KairosPDX offers culturally-competent professional development services across sectors through our Training Academy. Our trainings equip leaders to lead in an equity movement that is grounded in transformational change and rooted in the neuroscience of love and belonging.

4. Government Affairs

Our community partnerships and policy work have established us as a trusted voice in the community and a thought leader in the fight for justice in education. KairosPDX is actively represented at local and state policy tables to engage decision makers and policy makers to prioritize changes that further the opportunities for children of color to thrive.
Getting to know Kairos Love
We are different on purpose.

**CULTIVATING CREATIVITY**

You will see children playing during many parts of the day. You will see leaders using paint, markers, clay, blocks, and all kinds of things to practice telling stories and explaining how they think. We know this is how they strengthen their ability and use their imagination to lead.

You will see us problem solving with children. Creativity is a muscle that gets stronger with practice. We ask them to repair conflict with their friends and think about solutions when they are reflecting on an unexpected behavior.

**CULTIVATING CONFIDENCE**

You will hear us call our students leaders. We want to surround them with language that reminds them who they are. We value giving students feedback when they are meeting expectations because we believe students do best when we are patient, kind, and clear.

You will see us combine structure—lines in the hallway, hugs and bubbles, expected behavior agreements and high expectations for engagement—with freedom: collaborative conversations with children about how they are feeling, problem solving with students to address behavior, and play time during the school day.

We are helping children become independent learners. We know children need chances to make choices, make mistakes (that’s how you learn), and take responsibility for their actions. Neuroscience shows us that practice with choices leads to academic success.
CULTIVATING COMPASSION

You will see us model kind words. You will see us modeling repairs by apologizing to children and each other when we have made mistakes. You will see us helping children learn to share their heart and be honest about how they feel and what has happened. You will see us helping students respond to others with empathy rather than judgement. We have all felt frustrated, sad, lonely, hurt or embarrassed. Teaching the zones of regulation help children know that all the emotions happen to everyone. We teach children to breath and regulate themselves so they can make choices to reach their goals.

We love our KairosPDX leaders and believe that love is the strongest thing on earth. We are honest and expect their honesty. We are patient since we too have made mistakes. We hold them accountable to reflect and repair if they have caused harm. We teach them to understand what their brain needs to grow. We know that every child wants to do well and make us proud.

GOING DEEPER: CONNECTING TO HBCUs

Did you know that each of our classrooms is named after an HBCU? An HBCU is a historically Black college or university established prior to 1964 whose principal mission was—and is—the education of Black Americans. We have intentionally named our classrooms in honor of some of these amazing institutions.

HBCUs play a vital role in providing educational opportunities, scholarly growth, and a sense of community for Black students. HBCU graduates are barrier-breaking public servants, scientists, artists, lawyers, engineers, educators, business owners, and leaders. For generations HBCUs have been advancing intergenerational economic mobility for Black families and communities, developing vital academic research, and making our country more prosperous and equitable. Like KairosPDX, HBCUs center Black excellence and work to change the narrative around children and families of color by placing strength, excellence and achievement at the fore.
The community we serve is reflected in our founders, our employees and our board.

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