

## Closing the Achievement Gap Preparing a new generation of school leaders



By 2014, half of the current principals leading the 92 public schools in Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk and Stamford will retire, and there are few qualified, local candidates to take their place. At stake: the education and futures of 60,000 children already facing one of the largest achievement gaps in the nation.

To turn this crisis into an opportunity, the Foundation brought together the Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk and Stamford public school districts, the Connecticut Center for School Change and the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education. Together, we designed Urban School Leaders Fellowship to create a pipeline of visionary, enthusiastic school principals to lead our most troubled schools.

While good teachers are crucial, it's the school principal who establishes the vision for the school, creates its culture and is the instructional leader. Today's principals inspire teachers and staff to excel, recruit the community and parents to help children succeed, and foster an environment where children feel safe and can reach their potential.

The one-year Urban School Leaders Fellowship program begins where academic preparation ends. To qualify, applicants must be an educator with an 092 endorsement on their teaching certificate, and be committed to becoming a public school principal in Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk or Stamford. All candidates are nominated by their school districts.

Results to date: The first class of 29 fellows graduated in June 2009. The second class of 38 fellows will graduate in June 2010. As of September 2009, 11 of the Fellows had been promoted to positions of school principal, assistant principal and other leadership roles.

To learn how you can help change the future of 60,000 children in your own backyard, please contact Linda Franciscovich, J.D., Vice President of Development and Philanthropic Services, at 203.750.3202 or [lfranciscovich@fccfoundation.org](mailto:lfranciscovich@fccfoundation.org).

### In Their Own Words

"The curriculum is thoughtful, intelligent and well thought out for adult learning. It's impressive."

*Superintendent Joshua Starr  
Stamford Public Schools*

"I've had an 'Ah-ha!' moment after every session."

*Fellow from Bridgeport*

"I learned so much about myself, leadership and improving student achievement. I don't think my 092 course work inspired me as much as our sessions did."

*Fellow from Stamford*

"After this, I'll never be the same. I will never look at classrooms through the same eyes."

*Fellow from Norwalk*

"I want to let everyone know how much I value this program. After each session I feel more comfortable and competent in my role as an instructional leader. Thank you all very much."

*Fellow from Danbury*



Fairfield County  
Community Foundation