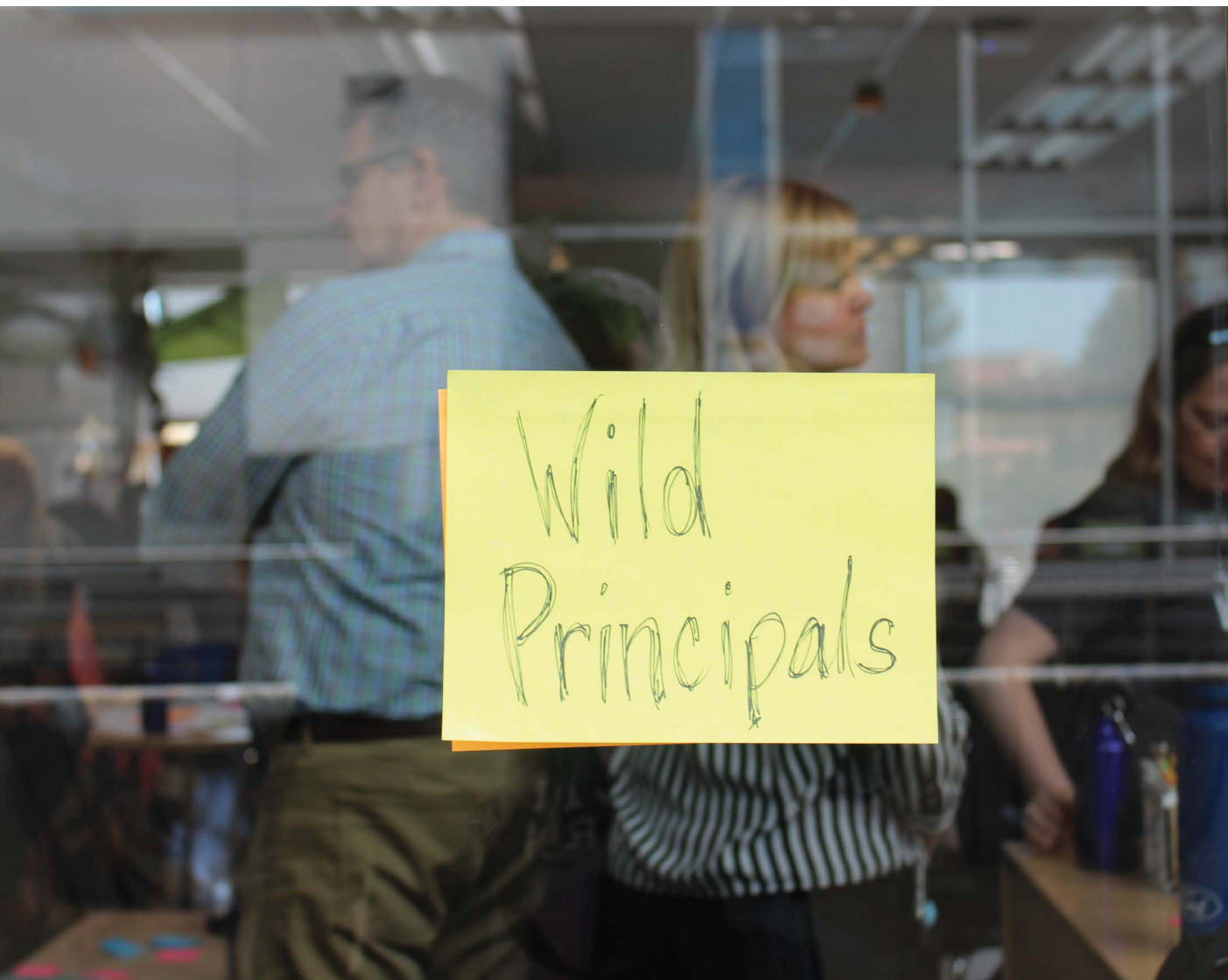




**the
year
before
opening**



All students can and should live lives of their own design. Lives supported by caring mentors and equitable opportunities to achieve their greatest potential. At Big Picture Learning, we activate opportunities through our global school community and suite of initiatives to make this so.

Big Picture Learning is perhaps best known for our network of schools, which started as a single geographic point three decades ago - The Met School in Providence, RI - and has since grown into 80+ schools across the United States and another 100+ around the world.

But a BPL school doesn't sprout up overnight. In any meaningful endeavor, there's a need for intentional planning, studying what has worked before and listening to the community in order to understand both assets and needs. To launch a successful innovative school, districts and school leaders need **one powerful planning year.**

What we call TYBO - The Year Before Opening.

TYBO is a cohort model of fellowship, mentorship and guided planning for successful school launch that has a proven track record of launching schools and leaders to help transform education and provide necessary opportunities for young people across the United States and abroad.

TYBO brings together leaders from cities and districts across the United States, for regular in-person and virtual check-ins, where leaders can share and learn from each other's planning work. Each new leader is partnered with a principal-mentor, whose school the new leader will visit - to shadow them and learn about student-centered learning design. TYBO leaders also receive coaching from a Big Picture Learning Coach, who advises them on family & community engagement, instructional design, resourcing, networking and recruitment. TYBO leaders build a comprehensive launch plan, utilizing many of the same processes that they will be making use of with staff and students; including: an Individual Learning Plan, a Project Launch Plan, and Exhibitions of learning - all **staples** of the Big Picture Learning design.

During my TYBO year, I was trying to figure myself out and was initially very skeptical about the Big Picture Learning design. But by the third day of our training, we were assigned to a school to roam and speak with kids. At that moment, I realized that if BPL could work here for students, it could work in Camden, too.

Tim Jenkins

TYBO 2003 Cohort

Founder and current Principal, CBPLA

What we consider BPL's 10 Distinguishers

One Student at a Time
Advisory
Learning Through Interests
Leadership Development
School Culture
School Organization
Professional Development
Post Secondary Planning
Family Involvement
Authentic Assessment

Check out
the 10
Distinguishers
Playlist



With the threat of an educational crisis predicted and felt by many communities across this country, we need to strengthen the development and support of school leaders now more than ever. In a survey* conducted in October 2021, 63% of superintendents considered quitting “as a result of the high-stress, no-win stakes of leading education today”. Those sentiments are matched by principals and teachers. School leadership requires persistence, influence, profound courage and collaboration.

These are qualities that result from TYBO and its intentional and cohesive community of leaders. School leaders need the time and space to build competency, capacity and courage in order to develop and launch schools that are community-based and democratic by nature (an anomaly in many educational arenas). School leaders need mentorship and coaching to provide insights, perspective and guidance. School leaders need exploratory and experiential learning through seeing and observing other schools. BPL’s TYBO program is both a learning opportunity and a community for committed leaders, especially leaders of color who seek to build and sustain empowering schools in their communities.



tybo leaders persist

- 7%** have gone on to launch more schools
- 32%** are still in school leadership
- 11%** still lead the schools they launched
- 27%** are now system-level leaders



*Forbes, “America’s Education Crisis is Costing us our School Leadership. What are We Going to Do About It?” February 15, 2022.

The Met (Launched 1995)

Providence, Rhode Island

The Met is a network of six small, public high schools located in Providence and Newport, RI. The Met’s individualized learning approach has proven successful in unlocking students’ passion for learning. The Met empowers its students to take charge of their learning, to become responsible citizens and life-long learners. The hallmarks of a Met education include internships, individual learning plans, advisory, an entrepreneurial center and a breakthrough college transition program. The Met has a 92% graduation rate (as compared with Rhode Island’s 85% rate). ([Source](#))

MetWest (Launched 2002)

Oakland, California

Essential to MetWest’s student success has been the network of supporting adults that has been built around students through the school’s internship program. In conjunction with their teacher-advisors and family members, each student designs a customized Learning Plan focused on their interests and passions. These Learning Plans incorporate two days each week spent at an internship in the community, as well as three days each week of academic study and project work on campus and across the street at Laney College. MetWest has among the highest attendance rates, highest California High School Exit Exam pass rates and lowest suspension rates of all OUSD high schools. ([Source](#))

San Diego Met (Launched 2004)

San Diego, California

San Diego Metropolitan Regional, Career and Technical High School is a public, innovative, student-centered school in the San Diego Unified School District. SD Met believes that every student has unique interests, skills and

learning styles and – as such – advisors focus on building a close relationship with each student and personalizing each student’s educational path. Being located on the campus of San Diego Mesa College, SD Met is able to leverage its strong relationship with the college to provide students with unparalleled access and preparation. SD Met has a 98% graduation rate (as compared with SDUSD’s 86% rate). ([Source](#))

Camden BPL Academy (Launched 2005)

Camden, New Jersey

CBPLA starts by giving its students the opportunity to learn in a place where they are known and treated with respect. It continues by designing a personalized learning plan for each student, providing real-world opportunities to connect their interests to their learning and expecting them to find authentic, meaningful ways to show what they’ve learned. It culminates in graduating self-directed thinkers and learners with the skills necessary to succeed in college and beyond. CBPLA is ranked in the top 4th percentile of schools in NJ, with 63% of graduates enrolling in college (Camden average: <30%). ([Source](#))

Highline Big Picture (Launched 2005)

Burien, Washington

Highline Big Picture Middle and High Schools use internships, apprenticeships and rigorous, interest-based projects to immerse students in work they are passionate about to develop their skills, habits and knowledge to succeed in higher education, overcome obstacles to their wellbeing and contribute positively to their communities. In 2020–2021, 27 graduating seniors received \$2.7 million in scholarship funding for college and other post high school opportunities, including the prestigious Act 6 scholarship. ([Source](#))



TYBO gave me the opportunity to open myself up to change. I was very quiet and soaked things in. I did not emulate anyone. I was a learner and a listener with a team surrounding me. Experiencing the leadership style of a diverse group made all the difference.

Mildred Phillips

TYBO 2003 Cohort

Founder and former Principal, San Diego Met

