Our Vision
When students and teachers are engaged in work that is challenging, adventurous, and meaningful, learning and achievement flourish.

Our Mission
To create classrooms where teachers can fulfill their highest aspirations, and students achieve more than they think possible, becoming active contributors to building a better world.

Our Approach
EL Education is a leading national K-12 nonprofit helping to build great schools in diverse communities across America. For over 25 years, EL Education has been bringing to life an expanded vision of student achievement that includes mastery of knowledge and skills, character, and high-quality student work.

EL Education’s expert educators work with public schools (both district and charter) across 35 states, serving over 200,000 students and 16,000 teachers in our school network and through multi-year literacy partnerships.

Grounded in decades of in-depth work with educators, EL Education creates highly respected, widely distributed open educational resources, including an acclaimed literacy curriculum, the world’s largest collection of exemplary student projects, inspiring instructional videos, and best-selling education books.
"We believe the purpose of education is to unleash and cultivate the passion and genius of every human being and that schools ought to be organized expressly for this purpose."

This quote is from the plan that, 25 years ago, envisioned a new school design integrating the best of K-12 education with the power of a “crew” to overcome daunting challenges. Led by educators Diana Lam, Meg Campbell, and Greg Farrell in collaboration with the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Outward Bound USA, the team’s winning proposal speaks eloquently to the abiding principles that still guide us today: We believe in the genius in every child, the power of great teaching, and the central role of public education in sustaining a democratic and just society.

As the first school coach hired by the brand-new “Expeditionary Learning” (as we were then called), my own journey is closely intertwined with that of EL Education. I am deeply grateful to those who have made it possible for us to grow, learn, and thrive: the Board of Directors providing steady vision and leadership; the supporters investing in our work; the school and district leaders ensuring that we have the foundations of policy, culture, and shared responsibility; and especially, the thousands of teachers who, every day in classrooms across this country, inspire students to do more than they thought possible.

In a world of increasingly complex challenges and inequality, rising student voices are helping us to move forward as a country. EL Education’s three dimensions of student achievement—academic mastery, positive character, and commitment to high-quality work—are more relevant than ever before. Our focus on equity and social justice, animated by a belief in the strength of great teaching, is being borne out in a growing body of evidence.

I have never been more proud or excited about what our work has to offer. You will see a slice of it in this report through the eyes of EL Education students, teachers, and school leaders. Please join us as we continue this journey, unleashing the potential of teachers and students across the nation.

Onward!

Scott Hartl
President & CEO
EL Education
"Once you build children’s belief in their potential and you build their self-efficacy, it doesn’t matter what they face."

Dr. Diamond Jack
Principal, Michael R. Hollis Innovation Academy | Atlanta, GA
On the Westside of Atlanta, steps away from the first home of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Diamond Jack has launched a new EL Education school for future global citizens, engineers, and innovators: Michael R. Hollis Innovation Academy, a K-8 Expeditionary STEM School. As emerging leaders, the students are in good company. The neighborhood is known for its trailblazers, including their school’s namesake: Michael R. Hollis, Esq., the first African American president of the American Bar Association and the first African American to own and operate a commercial airline.

Yet the Westside of Atlanta is also a place plagued by systemic inequality. One hundred percent of students at Hollis qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program, and some of them call the nearby shelter home. Test scores at their prior school, which was closed after a district intervention, were among the 10 lowest in the state. The district turned to Dr. Jack for a new vision of a public school, one that promised students the chance to achieve their greatest potential. That’s where the EL Education school model comes in: Dr. Jack believes that it gives children the skills and the strength of character to persevere. Hollis is a member of EL Education’s 150+ school network and is also implementing our K-5 Language Arts Curriculum.

“One group of students conceived of a cell phone app for supporting immigrant families in crisis,” says Laina Cox, Principal of Capital City’s middle school. “Another group designed a pair of glasses that would prevent jurors from seeing the race of a defendant, eliminating discrimination in court.”

It’s no coincidence that students from two distant communities are working toward similar goals. While the students are engineering justice for their neighbors, their principals are working together to engineer gains for the students, grounded in the EL Education school model.

A 16-year champion of the EL Education model, Capital City is a seasoned EL Education Credentialed School with every graduate accepted into college, and was recently featured as the first case study of The National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development.

Michael R. Hollis Innovation Academy is just beginning its journey to earn an EL Education Credential, but 3rd graders and 5th graders have already achieved double-digit gains in Math and ELA/Reading results on the state assessment after just one year with EL Education. Dr. Jack credits fellow leaders like Principal Cox, as well as her EL Education coach and network, with supporting her mission: to redefine what is possible for Atlanta students. She credits her students with the courage and knowledge to build a more just future for the Westside of Atlanta and beyond.
Designing Great Schools

In diverse communities across the country, EL Education partners with public schools where teachers can fulfill their highest aspirations and students achieve more than they thought possible, becoming stewards of a more just future.

One reason for our success: our school model is informed by decades of learning across our national network of over 150 urban and rural district and charter public schools, serving more than 50,000 students and 4,000 teachers. Refined in close partnership with educators, our school model, expert resources, and professional learning empower teachers and challenge students to meet the highest standards and beyond.

Our schools are guided by the motto, “getting smart to do good,” cultivating students who excel across all three dimensions, demonstrating high academic achievement and college readiness as well as pride in the mastery of complex work and the capacity to contribute to a better world. They outperform their peers in English and Math. They also step up as innovators, creators, and leaders.

Design Principles

EL Education is built on 10 design principles that reflect the educational values and beliefs of Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound.

1. The Primacy of Self-Discovery
2. The Having of Wonderful Ideas
3. The Responsibility for Learning
4. Empathy and Caring
5. Success and Failure
6. Collaboration and Competition
7. Diversity and Inclusion
8. The Natural World
9. Solitude and Reflection
10. Service and Compassion
Students in EL Education Credentialed Schools outperform peers in their districts

In 2016, students in EL Education Credentialed Schools outperformed their district peers in reaching proficiency on English Language Arts (ELA) and Math exams.

The chart below compares EL Education students and district peers by the average percent reaching proficiency or above on their state assessment.

### By the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
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<th>4,000+ teachers</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Math</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>All students</td>
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<tr>
<td>District</td>
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</tr>
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<td>27%</td>
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<td>Latino/a</td>
<td>42%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low income</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Credentialed Schools

The EL Education Credential recognizes mastery in three dimensions of student achievement: knowledge and skills, character, and high-quality work.

- Anser Charter School | ID
- Arbor Vitae-Woodruff Elementary School | WI
- Capital City Public Charter School | DC
- Casco Bay High School | ME
- Christa McAuliffe Charter School | MA
- Clairemont Elementary School | GA
- Codman Academy Charter Public School | MA
- Downtown Denver Expeditionary School | CO
- Entheos Academy – Kearns | UT
- Evergreen Community Charter School | NC
- Four Rivers Public Charter School | MA
- Fox Creek Elementary School | CO
- Genesee Community Charter School | NY
- Grass Valley Charter School | CA
- The Greene School | RI
- Harborside Academy | WI
- Kettle Falls Elementary | WA
- King Middle School | ME
- Leaders High School | NY
- MAELS | NY
- Marathon Venture Academy | WI
- MELS | NY
- Oakhurst Elementary School | GA
- The Odyssey School of Denver | CO
- Open World Learning Community | MN
- Pocatello Community Charter School | ID
- Polaris Charter Academy | IL
- Presumpscot Elementary School | ME
- Rimrock Expeditionary Alternative Learning Middle School (REALMS) | OR
- Sierra Expeditionary Learning School | CA
- Springfield Renaissance School | MA
- Tapestry Charter School | NY
- Two Rivers Public Charter School | DC
- William Smith High School | CO
“EL Education’s curriculum has changed me as a teacher, pushing my own growth mindset.”

Tracy Haynes
Teacher, Craigmont Middle School | Shelby County, TN
Tracy Haynes was held back in 6th grade, struggling with spelling and reading.

Tracy recalls that, as a student, many people questioned her ability to succeed until a new teacher, Mrs. Leevy, showed her that she had the power to master spelling, reading, and anything else that came her way.

The experience made Tracy want to become a teacher. “I know that children who struggle can overcome their challenges. I’m living proof.”

Now a 6th grade teacher at Craigmont Middle School in Shelby County, Tennessee, Tracy has come full circle, noting that the EL Education Language Arts Curriculum has transformed her teaching practice. “I know where my students are right now—I’ve been there. The curriculum is enabling me to give back to them. It inspires them to learn and engage in ways I’ve never seen.”

As a 14-year veteran teacher, Tracy didn’t think she would encounter anything new and different when the Shelby County School District selected a new literacy curriculum.

“EL Education’s curriculum has changed me as a teacher, pushing my own growth mindset. It pulled me off the stage and put my students on the stage. They’re leading conversations and thinking through their own answers and processes. Even if they don’t get it right the first time, they keep trying.”

Now in her second year of using the curriculum, Tracy is pleased with the progress she is seeing with her 6th grade students. Craigmont serves more than 590 students: 85% Black, 10% Latina/o, and 3% White. Sixty-eight percent of students are economically disadvantaged. This year, students are already showing increased growth. On the standards-aligned interim assessment used by the district, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), over 60% of students met or exceeded the targets.

“We’re planting the seeds in 6th grade for later harvest in 8th grade and beyond. My students are doing better with reading longer texts and getting the gist of pieces. I’m seeing their brains open up and consistent growth in their ability to develop well-constructed responses,” Tracy says.

Tracy attributes the transformation to the well-thought-out progression of the curriculum, the richness of the accompanying texts, and the EL Education classroom protocols that lay the foundation for constructive conversations.

She says that one of the major benefits of the EL Education curriculum is that it frees up her time to focus on individual student needs. “Before using the curriculum, I had to create my own lessons, which took a lot of time. Now I don’t have to spend all my time creating a lesson from scratch. I can focus on thinking through each lesson, determining where my students are going to struggle and what I need to do to make it accessible to them.”

Tracy believes that the curriculum is preparing her students for success in life. “It is broadening my students’ thinking away from the fixed mindset of ‘I can’t’ to ‘I can.’ It’s opening doors and fostering their ability to take risks and dream big.”

2017 Annual Report
Growing Literacy Partnerships

EL Education partners with schools to transform literacy education into a powerful experience for teachers and their students.

In over 330 schools across the country, EL Education is partnering with teachers and leaders to support implementation of our K-8 Language Arts curriculum. These schools are building equitable classrooms where all students can discover a love of reading, learn how to think critically, and communicate meaningful ideas.

Students in our literacy classrooms tackle texts that stretch and grow their abilities, while experiencing the joy of discovery in learning. They engage in original research and deep interdisciplinary investigations, developing habits of inquiry, analysis, and craftsmanship by exploring real world content. They read engaging primary texts (rather than textbooks or anthologies): expert-vetted and standards-aligned reading on subjects that are relevant to students’ lives.

This practice of engaged scholarship encourages compassion and thoughtful citizenship by helping students connect their learning to their communities, where school work has real impact.

The curriculum is a platform for educators to elevate their practice alongside their students. It is at the center of an ecosystem of expert support, including EL Education coaching, resources, institutes, and online courses, all customized to the needs of each school community. Our results tell a compelling story of growth in teacher quality and student performance. In partnership with districts, we are unlocking teacher potential and empowering students to achieve more than they thought possible through transformational literacy.
Literacy Partnerships: Compelling Curriculum + Professional Support

In a rigorous independent study by Mathematica Policy Research, teachers who received professional support from EL Education to implement our English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum were found to outperform a control group in key areas after just one year. These findings from an ongoing impact study indicate that EL Education empowers both novice and veteran teachers to help students meet higher standards.

These groundbreaking results suggest powerful new pathways to imagining and nurturing teacher potential.

Teacher used reading activities focused on the meaning of the text

| EL Education | 74% |
| Control     | 40% |

Students did close readings of text to look for answers to specific questions

|               | 70% |
| Control       | 47% |

Students cited text evidence to support their responses

|               | 59% |
| Control       | 23% |

Teacher asked students to reread the text

|               | 74% |
| Control       | 44% |

The observed lesson involved developing students’ content knowledge

|               | 37% |
| Control       | 16% |

By the Numbers

#1

EL Education curriculum earns top ratings by independent reviewer EdReports.org

8.7 million

Downloads of the EL Education curriculum

330 schools
150,000+ students

Served by Literacy Partnerships with EL Education
“With commitment and perseverance, I can accomplish anything.”

Atak Natali
Student, Casco Bay High School | Portland, ME
Atak Natali, a sophomore at Casco Bay High School, also attended Presumpscot Elementary School, both in Portland, Maine. Both schools serve a diverse student population, fully implement the EL Education model, and have attained an EL Education Credential. Atak shared his experiences in a keynote address at the EL Education 2017 National Conference in Chicago, excerpted here:

Hello, my name is Atak Natali.

Standing on the stage at the EL Education National Conference in Chicago means my first time on a plane, and being further from home than ever before. It means presenting my story, thoughts, and reflections to 1,200 people. As a naturally quiet and thoughtful person, it takes a lot of courage for me to stand here before you. But I have learned as a student in EL Education schools that with commitment and perseverance, I can accomplish anything. We don’t have to be great at things right away: we just have to be committed to revise and have the perseverance to stick with things—to go through multiple drafts and improve.

I have a great model of revision and perseverance in my parents. In 2001, my parents fled war-torn Sudan and immigrated to America. When I ask now about their leaving Sudan, my mother talks of troops and military forces breaking into homes and killing people. My parents’ willingness to take a risk, to start over, and to work hard in their new country is an inspiration.

I have had lots of opportunities for revision, especially in Math. I will never forget my second grade teacher Ms. Ridlon at the Presumpscot School, an EL Education school in Portland, Maine. I ended up learning a lot more than just Math from her, I learned I could do more than I thought possible if I refused to give up.

In January 2017, Atak and his friends were walking to a bus stop after school when they were accosted by strangers who shouted “Why don’t you go back to where you came from?”

I was shocked. But it was the response of the entire crew at Casco Bay High School that affected me the most. The students and faculty organized discussions and then a schoolwide march to the bus stop, all of us holding posters and chanting our messages of welcome, love, peace, and justice. The reaction from my EL Education school community let me know everybody had my back—mine and my friends.

The current climate about immigrants and refugees in our country is challenging, but my classmates and I refuse to give up and accept this. Someday I hope to be a lawyer and work to achieve social justice for all people.

It won’t be easy and that is ok. I will continue to revise to get great, stay committed to my goals, and work to improve my community.
Our Approach

Cultivating Character

“School has to be bigger, it has to mean more than ‘I teach my subject.’ School has to be about teaching people to change the world for the better...Teachers don’t just teach subjects; we teach people.”

Sydney Chaffee, 2017 National Teacher of the Year and EL Education teacher at Codman Academy Charter Public School in Boston

We believe that when a student is done with school and enters adult life, she will be judged for the rest of her life not by her performance on tests of basic skills, but by the quality of her work and the quality of her character.

In EL Education schools:

Character is seen as a dimension of student achievement, in addition to mastery of knowledge and skills and high-quality student work. Building all three dimensions of achievement is a single enterprise, interwoven throughout a student’s learning experiences. Student character is further defined by three components: being an effective learner, being an ethical person, and harnessing both of these habits to contribute to a better world.

Character is both a means to higher achievement and an end in itself. A powerful body of evidence now supports the idea that students who build character right along with literacy and numeracy are more likely to reach their full potential.

Character is built through compelling curriculum, deeper instruction, and student-engaged assessment in the context of a positive, empowering school culture. We believe that character is developed through challenging, meaningful work by students who collaborate, persist, achieve, and reflect. Cultivation of character is woven into the fabric of daily life in our classrooms.

Students work together to create greater equity and excellence in their school and beyond. The benefits of cultivating character accrue beyond the individual; we all gain from young people who are healthy, engaged members of the larger community. Parents, educators, and employers understand that creating a workforce and society prepared for the challenges of the future requires an education that embraces content knowledge, skills application, and character development.

For over 25 years, EL Education has been developing scholar-citizens who are “getting smart to do good.”
Building Equitable Learning Environments (BELE)

Funded by the Raikes Foundation, BELE is a three-year national learning community leveraging improvement science to build more equitable schools. Six EL Education schools* are working with EL Education to deepen our collective understanding and ability to ensure positive outcomes for all students. A major focus is Crew, a group structure that fosters relationship building, academic progress, and character development. Results from the first-year baseline survey of 1,425 students show percent agreement:

81.1%  
I feel respected by other students in my Crew.

81.5%  
The other students in my Crew expect me to treat everyone in the Crew with respect.

88.4%  
I feel respected and included by my Crew leader.

74.6%  
I feel like the other students in my Crew accept me for who I am.

*Participating Schools:
Amana Academy School, Alpharetta, GA | Capital City Public Charter School, Washington, DC
Expeditionary Learning Middle School (ELMS), Syracuse, NY | Health & Science School, Beaverton, OR
Open World Learning Community, St. Paul, MN | MELS, Queens, NY

EL Education Character Framework

EL Education develops students’ character by cultivating a sense of purpose, belonging and agency. Students engage in challenging learning experiences within a supportive learning environment, becoming effective learners and ethical people who contribute to a better, more equitable world.

Character Joined to Scholarship

» Curriculum is centered in compelling, meaningful work that contributes to the world.

» Instruction engages students to grapple with challenging concepts and create quality work.

» Assessment is student-engaged, with students owning, tracking, and presenting their progress.
“When you visit a school like WHEELS or Polaris,* it is hard not to feel hopeful, not just for the prospects of the students there, but for the possibility that a new approach to educating low-income children, rooted in the science of adversity, might be taking hold more broadly.”

Paul Tough
Helping Children Succeed: What Works and Why

*WHEELS is an EL Education school in the NYC Outward Bound Schools network in New York City; Polaris Charter Academy is an EL Education school in Chicago.
2017 At a Glance

Mathematica Policy Research: This independent research finds that EL Education’s literacy partnerships increase teachers’ use of the practices leading to high student achievement.

Our Literacy Curriculum Launches and Receives Top Rating
EL Education’s groundbreaking K-5 Language Arts Curriculum launches and receives the highest K-5 score by the independent reviewer EdReports.org.

Literacy partnerships grow by 15%, including new work with Wake County Public Schools in North Carolina and the Louisiana Department of Education.

EL Education schools, leaders, and teachers receive 55 awards of excellence, including the Teacher and Principal of the Year in New York state.

2017 National Teacher of the Year
Sydney Chaffee, a teacher at Codman Academy Charter Public School, an EL Education School in Boston, receives this national honor of teaching excellence.

A powerful new partnership with Open Up Resources, provider of high-quality open educational resources, is designed to connect schools with our acclaimed curriculum.

School Design Fellowship
We launch our immersive residency for visionary changemakers to design new EL Education schools.

The first case study from The Aspen Institute’s National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development features Capital City Public Charter School, an EL Education Credentialed School.
If we are to prepare all students for the deeper learning required for college, career, and life readiness, for teachers of what deeper instruction actually looks like. It is a guide to creating classrooms where students think and work passionately and analytically—classrooms that are more challenging, meaningful, and engaging.

Most contemporary writing about education either endorses or critiques a focus on basic skills, standardized tests, and job preparation. This book is a unique book; experts from EL Education not only highlight engagement, deep learning, artistry, and good character—they also demonstrate how to achieve an education that is worth celebrating.

Management in the Active Classroom

A well-managed classroom almost runs itself. Students are focused and respectful, whether they are silent at their desks or active throughout the classroom—collaborating, experimenting, discovering, and creating. This book is a guide for teachers who want their classrooms to run well in all settings, where students are self-directed and self-disciplined learners. It is a book of proven, practical strategies harvested from successful schools across the United States. Strategies are described in concrete language, illustrated through classroom examples, and illuminated by companion videos. This guide will equip teachers, whether veterans or brand-new, to join inspired, collaborative learning with a calm and thoughtful classroom culture.

“Ron Berger is one of the most profound thinkers and do-ers in education today. This book is a must-read. It is a tool that we have used during school-wide professional development, team collaboration, and student ownership.”

“Finally, a coherent collection of strategies that positions classroom management in service of student learning. Yes, it is important to make sure the “trains run on time,” but to do so without any deep thought as to the ultimate destination too often confuses compliance with engagement. Management in the Active Classroom reflects the collective wisdom of EL Education schools on how to create and sustain classrooms built upon teacher leadership and student agency. It should be a core text for every teacher, especially those at the start of their careers.”

“Leaders of Their Own Learning”

“Leaders of Their Own Learning” is a tool that we have used during school-wide professional development, team collaboration, keynotes, master classes and lift spirits at student celebration of our first 25 years of partnering with schools to transform teaching and learning across the country.

Better World Project

Eighteen carefully documented projects, combining character and scholarship, highlight a range of ways EL Education students contribute to a better world.

Largest library of exemplary student projects

Models of Excellence, our digital collection of exemplary student work, garners more than 90,000 visits in 2017.

1.3 Million+ video views

Our library of more than 200 expert instructional videos surpasses 1.3 million views.

EL25 National Conference

1,200 educators lift their craft in 92 different master classes and lift their spirits at student keynotes.

25th anniversary

We kick off the celebration of our first 25 years of partnering with schools to transform teaching and learning across the country.

Best-selling line of books

We publish our fifth book—Your Curriculum Companion: The Essential Guide to Teaching the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum.
**Financials**

**Statement of Activities for the year that ended August 31, 2017**

From EL Education's audited financial statements for the 2017 fiscal year

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2017 Cost Drivers

- General management and administration; and research (12%)
- Fundraising (4%)
- Direct support to schools and districts; and development of educational resources (84%)
2017 Supporters

We are grateful for the many individual donors and institutional funders that make generous philanthropic commitments to EL Education.

Lead Partners

These institutional funders are investing $1 million or more in EL Education.
Stewards

Exemplars
$100,000–$999,999
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Booth Ferris Foundation
Entertainment Industry Foundation
Fund for Teachers
Pritchard Foundation
Raikes Foundation
James and Marsha McCormick
Melissa and Bruce Rich
Carol and Irwin Silverberg
Harriet L. and Paul M. Weissman

Deep Learners
$25,000–$99,999
Jewelle and Nathaniel Bickford
Marjorie B. Buckley
Ravenel and Elizabeth Curry Foundation
The Estée Lauder Companies
Greg Farrell
Daney and Lee Klingenstein
Tracey and Phillip Riese
Stuart Foundation
The Dhuanne S. and Douglas T. Tansill Foundation
Virginia H. and Geoffrey F. Worden
Alexandra Buckley Voris

Character Builders
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