

VERNON-JAMES RILEY

A transformational Leader Driving Student Achievement, Educator Development, and Organizational Impact

PROFILE

Dynamic and student achievement-driven leader with extensive experience in teaching, leadership, and coaching, spanning school culture, operations, and instruction. Proven ability to inspire and empower educators to accelerate teacher development and improve student learning outcomes. Visionary strategist with expertise in designing and leading professional development, fostering collaborative environments, and implementing sustainable systems for transformational impact. Skilled in building strong relationships with colleagues and external partners through exceptional communication and thought-partnership. Adept at leveraging real-world experience and research-based practices to challenge the status quo, ignite change, and strengthen capacity across educational teams. Committed to cultivating a culture of reflection, feedback, and growth to enhance organizational effectiveness and broaden opportunities for collaboration and impact.

EDUCATION

Harvard Graduate School of Education | Doctor of Education Leadership, August 2022-May 2025 (anticipated)

Relay Graduate School of Education | Master of Education, Instructional School Leadership, with distinction

Teachers College, Columbia University | Master of Education, Organizational Leadership

Michigan State University College of Education | Master of Arts, Curriculum and Teaching

Yale University | Bachelor of Arts, American Studies, with honors; Certificate of Completion, Teacher Prep Program

CERTIFICATIONS

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent, All Levels, Provisional – issued July 2024

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

August 2022 – May 2025

Harvard Graduate School of Education

Cambridge, MA

Various Roles

- Completed full-time, 10-month residency in the Academics Division with Fulton County Schools (Atlanta, GA), a district of 90,000 students, under the tutelage of the Chief Academic Officer. Led a cross-functional team of school-based and central office staff to engage in an inquiry-driven continuous improvement cycle focused on middle school improvement, leading to Action and Monitoring plans to improve student engagement, literacy instruction, and leadership development. Provided direct executive coaching to early-career principal of one of the district's two STEM-focused high schools. Served as a contributing member of the division's executive team.
- Served as co-facilitator for Public Education Leadership Project, a joint initiative of the Graduate School of Education and Business School that aims to drive student achievement through improving leadership & management of complex urban school districts. Designed and facilitated learning and work sessions for the cross-sector East Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools team, including the Superintendent, senior cabinet members, Board chair, and representatives of the business community. Ushered the team through the problem-solving process with the goal of refining district strategy for Workforce Development with attention to complexity and context.
- Served as Teaching Fellow for the Data Wise Institute, supporting the learning of over 100 participants and directly coaching senior team members from Ritenour School District (St. Louis, MO) and Creighton School District (Phoenix, AZ) with developing their implementation plan. Completed the Data Wise Coaching Certification program, providing year-long coaching to the leadership team of Lane Elementary School (Bedford, MA) and co-facilitating plenary sessions for Data Wise in Action program participants.
- Completed 500 hours of experiential system-level leadership under the tutelage of a licensed school system superintendent, Rhonda "Nikki" Barnes, at KIPP Massachusetts. Quickly built relationships and credibility to support system leaders and teachers in clarifying their understanding of student academic performance post-pandemic, along with leveraging the PELP Problem-Solving Approach to support the development and early implementation of a more informed and robust plan intended to lead to accelerated student achievement gains.
- Served as member of "Workplace Lab" consultant team to Atlanta Public Schools' Center for Equity and Social Justice (CESJ). Worked closely with CESJ points-of-contact to provide regular updates, troubleshoot challenges, and navigate the organization. Completed academic research on change management and implementation science along with stakeholder empathy interviews to inform the development of an implementation plan for the CESJ's newly-created Equity Index Tool.
- Supported the planning of Askwith Education Forum event "20 Years of Education Reform: Lessons from Chicago," featuring Pedro Martinez, CEO of Chicago Public Schools, Janice K. Jackson, Former CEO of Chicago Public Schools 2017-2021, and Arne Duncan, Former CEO of Chicago Public Schools 2001-2008 and Former U.S. Secretary of Education.
- Served as primary case researcher and co-author of "Operation: Good Trouble: Leading for LGBTQ+ inclusion at KIPP Massachusetts," advised by Dr. Irvin Scott (in-progress).

VERNON-JAMES RILEY, p.2

A transformational Leader Driving Student Achievement, Educator Development, and Organizational Impact

July 2018 – August 2022

Relay Graduate School of Education

New York, NY

Vice Provost of National Leadership Programs (6/21 to 8/22): Set the vision and drive the implementation of best-in-class leadership programming via multiple, nationally-reaching, year-long fellowship programs for school and district leaders.

- Served as a member of the organization's Senior Leadership Team and manage a team of four national program leads.
- Collaboratively set the vision and managed the processes to revise and design the foundational leadership curriculum using inclusive practices and existing design groups.
- Successfully built and managed collaborative relationships with key stakeholders including national program partners, colleagues on Relay's Professional Education team, and other key internal and external stakeholders.
- Provided effective team training and development, ensuring Relay's national leadership programs faculty and staff were prepared to facilitate all program sessions with fidelity and at a high level of quality.
- Served as a model instructor and source of expertise for the national programs, consistently earning scores of 90%+ of participants who "agreed/strongly agreed" on post-session surveys that sessions offered high-quality facilitation.
- Collaborated closely with the Relay Professional Education Events and Operations team, providing exemplary participant experience before, during, and after national program events, consistently earning scores of 95%+ of participants who "agreed/strongly agreed" on post-session surveys that communications were clear and timely and that operations ran smoothly.

Dean of Leadership Programs (7/20 to 5/21): Serving as program and partnership lead for DC regional training and coaching program, supporting the development and delivery of national program content serving 400+ school and system leaders.

- Designed and facilitated virtual leadership professional learning sessions during national program summer intensive, intersessions, learning teams, and regional trainings.
- Provided virtual training and individualized coaching to principals, assistant principals, and instructional coaches across 22 DCPS schools, with a specific focus on instructional leadership during distance learning.
- Onboarded and managed a newly hired Associate Dean who positively agreed or strongly agreed with all ten upwards management feedback indicators on the mid-year review.
- Envisioned regional program expansion and spearhead recruitment efforts of prospective partner schools.
- Led and supported internal team efforts in partnership with external partner to redesign program content in response to participant feedback and aligned to the team's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Associate Dean of Regional Support (7/18 to 6/20): Provided coaching and on the ground support to principals, assistant principals, and instructional coaches in Relay partner networks and districts.

- Worked closely with partner networks and districts to facilitate the implementation and improve the effectiveness of Relay Leadership Program content.
- Conducted network/district site visits to observe and gather data, identify areas of strength as well as gaps, and lead site-based action planning driven by site visit outcomes and Relay leadership programs content.
- In the first year of support to DC Public Schools, 12 of 13 schools made growth in either ELA or Math on state assessment, with: seven schools making double-digit gains in ELA or Math compared to the previous year, three schools making double-digit gains in *both* subjects, and one school making 30+ point gains in ELA, the highest gains in the district; grew the partnership to 22 schools in the second year.
- In first year of support to DC Public Schools and Atlanta Public Schools, net promoter score (NPS) averaged above 80 across all trainings and site visits, indicating a high level of participant satisfaction.

August 2013 – June 2018

Uncommon Schools: North Star Academy

Newark, NJ

Principal (10/14 to 6/18): Responsible and accountable for student and staff culture, instruction, assessment, and professional development for a 5th-8th grade middle school.

- Collaboratively developed and communicated the school's vision, culture, and systems; created and implemented the plan to achieve vision and goals.
- Managed instructional faculty and staff of the school, including recruitment, selection, evaluation, supervision, professional development, and retention.
- Maintained communication and positive relationships with the families of the school, ensuring they were kept involved with and held accountable for their children's academic and socio-emotional progress.
- Led school to academic gains of 18 points in ELA and 6 points in Math on the state exam during principal tenure:
 - 5th-8th graders outperformed local district by over 30pts in Math and over 40pts in ELA.
 - 5th-8th graders outperformed the state average in Math on the state exam, with 7th and 8th graders outperforming the state's non-economically disadvantaged students.
 - 5th-8th graders outperformed the state's non-economically disadvantaged students in ELA on the state exam.

Atlanta, Georgia • phone: 917.684.7291 • e-mail: vernon@vernonthamesriley.com

VERNON-JAMES RILEY, p.3

A transformational Leader Driving Student Achievement, Educator Development, and Organizational Impact

Instructional Fellow (8/13 to 9/14): Engaged in a robust and immersive professional development and learning experience in preparation to serve as principal of one of the network's schools.

- Designed and taught 7th and 8th grade research course, taught 5th & 6th grade Science and 6th grade CTT Math.
- Led test prep theme committee as member of school's teaching staff.
- Served as Founding Director of Summer Teaching Fellowship program in the organization's Newark, NJ region at the middle school level, recruiting, training and mentoring college students of color to pursue careers in public education.

April 2011 – July 2013

Amani Public Charter School

Mt. Vernon, NY

Director of Operations: Accountable for the daily oversight of school operations in support of a high-quality instructional program at a new, 5th-8th grade middle school.

- Oversaw office management, financial coordination, human resources, compliance and reporting, enrollment and student services, and facilities management.
- Led a staff of six, including an office manager, bookkeeper, school aide, security agent, nurse, and custodian.
- Assisted in the recruitment of staff and the design of professional development program.
- Directly interfaced with multiple constituents, including students, parents, and vendors.
- Led school to achieve "clean" opinion by independent fiscal auditor in both years of leadership.

August 2009 – May 2011

Summit Academy Charter School

Brooklyn, NY

Dean of Scholar Life: Responsible for the design and implementation of school culture, disciplinary policies, advisory program, parent's organization, and other school-wide activities for a new, 6th-12th grade secondary school.

- Led school-wide meetings daily, supported staff in providing high-quality instruction and supporting scholar socio-emotional development, built positive relationships with scholars, and created a culture of achievement.
- Designed and implemented scholar information reporting systems for academic and socio-emotional progress and supported scholars and families through effective communication and fair implementation of school policies.
- Designed and managed teacher-student advisory system and implementation of character education program.

CONSULTING EXPERIENCE

2017 – Present

VJR Consulting Firm, LLC

As an independent contractor, support school and system leaders and teams to improve teaching and learning in service of student achievement through school audits, leadership coaching, professional development, and strategic planning. Current and former clients span PK-12 district and charter schools and systems and non-profit organizations. Overview of services, client list, and testimonials available at www.vernonjamesriley.com.

FELLOWSHIPS

July 2019 – May 2020

Leverage Leadership Institute, Relay Graduate School of Education

Member of a select cohort of leaders who have a track record of success to spend a year learning to increase their impact and achieve excellence in leadership. Attended 15 days of training and mentorship with the author Paul Bambrick-Santoyo on coaching school leaders. Certified "platinum" indicating consistent exemplary leadership in coaching school culture, observation feedback, and data-driven instruction based upon review of video of my leadership in action.

Summer 2009

Education Pioneers

Served for ten weeks as a Start-Up Fellow with the Founding Operations Team at Excellence Girls Charter School, a new, all-girls elementary school in Brooklyn, NY. Responsible for a range of deliverables related to preparing the school operationally for a strong opening and successful first year, including but not limited to sourcing and ordering curricular materials, vendor relations, classroom layout design, intake of students and families, and fiscal management.

ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

KIPP Massachusetts, *Teaching & Learning Committee of the Board of Trustees*, since 2023 | A shared brand name that oversees and supports our two districts of joyful, academically rigorous public schools located in Boston and Lynn, MA.

Education Leaders of Color, since 2023 | A network of values-aligned senior leaders of color who are explicitly focused on dismantling systemic barriers to the academic and economic advancement and success of young people of color.

REFERENCES

Furnished Upon Request

Atlanta, Georgia • phone: 917.684.7291 • e-mail: vernon@vernonjamesriley.com