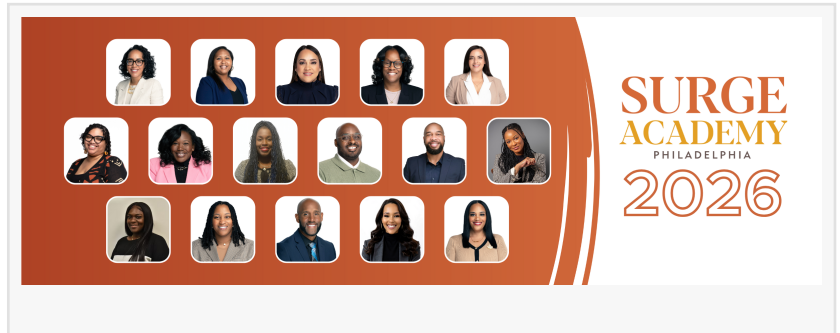


# 16 Education Leaders Ready to Change the Game in Philadelphia

*Surge Institute Welcomes the 2026 Philadelphia Cohort*

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES,  
December 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/  
-- Surge Institute's Academy

Philadelphia is thrilled to welcome its newest cohort, PHILA26, a powerhouse collective of 16 bold, brilliant education leaders launching into a six-month journey of leadership, transformation, and community impact.



These leaders didn't just apply; they answered the call with purpose in their stride and vision in their hearts. From seasoned school leaders who have weathered every storm with grace to rising innovators rewriting the blueprint for student-centered education, this cohort carries the full spectrum of Black and Brown brilliance that defines Philadelphia's legacy.

“

The leaders of PHILA26 reflect the heartbeat of Philadelphia. They are bold, brilliant, and deeply rooted in service”

*Andrea Black Evans, M.Ed.,  
Executive Director of Surge  
Academy*

“The leaders of PHILA26 reflect the heartbeat of Philadelphia. They are bold, brilliant, and deeply rooted in service,” said Andrea Black Evans, M.Ed., Executive Director of Surge Academy. “This cohort brings vision, courage, and an uncompromising commitment to young people. Their

leadership will shape classrooms today and community futures for generations to come.”

[Meet the 2026 Philadelphia Academy!](#)

Dr. Andrea Terrero Gabbadon, Founder, ILM Consulting Group; Program Director, Philadelphia Affinity Group Network

Destinee Harper, Associate Director of College Pathways, Heights Philadelphia

Dr. Jennifer Nieves, Assistant Principal, Impact Charter School West

Jennifer Rivers, Founding Director of Early College & Career, Early College Charter School of Philadelphia

Jessica Perez, School Social Worker, Mastery Charter Schools  
Dr. Jessica Thomas, Head of School, The Bridge Way School  
Karla Brooks-Hartsfield, Program Coordinator/SEL Specialist, School District of Philadelphia  
Marcia Ford-Bey, EIB Leader, Phoenixville Area School District  
Marlon Viaud, CR-PBIS Coach, School District of Philadelphia  
Michael Sanford, Middle School Principal, Boys' Latin of Philadelphia  
Mishel Williams, Assistant Head of School, Belmont Charter Network  
Dr. Morgyn Yates, Director of OST Programs, Sunrise of Philadelphia Inc.  
Quanisha Miller, Assistant Principal, School District of Philadelphia  
Ross Sterling Green, Manager, Workforce Programs, Philadelphia Academies Inc.  
Tia Llopiz, Dean of Students, YouthBuild Philly Charter School  
Tracey Felder, Student Success Advisor, Mastery Charter

Each of these 16 changemakers carries a story of perseverance. Each brings a vision shaped by lived reality. And each is prepared to lead with excellence, cultural grounding, and unwavering belief in the brilliance of Philadelphia's communities and young people.

During their time in the Surge Academy program, the collective will hone their executive skills, problem-solving abilities, and team-building techniques. They will also navigate complex topics related to historical inequities in education and politics. The Surge Academy Philadelphia is made possible through collaboration with and support from The Spring Point Partners.

PHILA26 is here to demonstrate what's possible when we invest deeply in the people who hold the future in their hands every day. The city is charged. The leaders are ready. The work is unfolding.

## About Surge Institute

Surge Institute is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 2014 with the mission to develop and elevate leaders of color who enact transformative change for children, families, and communities. Since its founding by Carmita Semaan, Surge has been dedicated to creating authentic and powerful leadership development experiences. [Learn more at surgeinstitute.org](https://surgeinstitute.org).

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