FullCircle Leadership **Business Plan**

A 501c3 non-profit corporation registered in the state of Washington since 2018.

September 2026







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We build schools where every student belongs, leads, and achieves.



Executive Summary

Full Circle Leadership (FCL) trains K–12 educators, students, and administrators in Democratic Classroom Leadership (DCL), a research-based model that shifts classrooms from one person holding all of the power to leadership shared across the whole room. Where other organizations specialize in a single discipline, DCL braids equity, restorative practices, behavior management, language access, and culturally responsive teaching into one integrated approach. The result is a classroom that doesn't react to learning disruptions but proactively prevents them while students walk away with the durable skills – critical thinking, leadership, collaboration, communication – needed to thrive in an AI economy. FCL has already reached 129,836 students before ever having to fundraise.

The moment for this work is now. A revised national teacher-evaluation standard now expects belonging and cultural responsiveness to be measured in the classroom. Most districts have no training built for it and with recent federal funding cuts, most lack the budget needed to meet the standard. Students deserve this higher standard of education now, not later. FCL is raising $2,512,500 over four years to reignite programming, build delivery capacity, and train a network of facilitators, scaling to 10 Seattle schools while establishing the infrastructure to replicate DCL in new cities. For the first time in FCL's history, meeting this moment depends on new support.

"The instructional model is a simple but profound shift that puts teachers into a shared leadership role with their students, fostering their self-respect for others and moving these students from passive to active change agents using their knowledge to change the world. Today more than ever with the turmoil and lack of thinking and problem solving being modeled in our society, we need this kind of learning in our schools. These young leaders will build a better world. And teaching this way will keep wonderful teachers in those schools, helping make it happen."

Terry Bergeson
Former Superintendent of Public Instruction of Washington State
Former Dean of the School of Education and Kinesiology at
Pacific Lutheran University

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"Full Circle Leadership has been transformative for our district... a framework to humanize students, give them ownership over their learning, and empower teachers to lean into best practices... reinvigorated their passion for teaching."

Dr. Marcus A. Campbell
Superintendent, ETHS
(Evanston, IL)

Reached
75
Schools

Served
2,019
Educators

Impacted
129,836
Students

Overview

Mission

We build schools where every student belongs, leads, and achieves.

Who and Where We Serve

Full Circle Leadership, or FCL, trains K–12 educators, students, and parents with its deepest impact in Seattle, Washington and Evanston, Illinois. With close to a decade in the field, FCL has reached 129,836 students across 75 schools in 15 states.

The Model

FCL equips educators with a research-based educational pedagogy to build student-centered learning communities where K–12 students develop the skills most essential to thrive in school, work, and civic life—: collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, leadership, and personal responsibility. Educators shift their role from Giver of Knowledge to Facilitator of a Learning Community and from Behavior Manager to Leader. FCLC helps educators facilitate classrooms where students share responsibility for learning, practice democratic leadership, and develop empathy, belonging, agency, and accountability.

The Need

Most schools react the same way to disruptive behavior. A student acts out, the student gets disciplined, a carrot-and-stick response. Its simplicity makes sense at face value: it's the way it's always been done. Yet the severity of the stick and the promise of the carrot aren't felt equally by every student. Various socioeconomic factors create an uneven playing field before a single rule is ever broken, and a reactive system only widens the opportunity gap.

In a 2019 white paper, Education Advisory Board (EAB) found that classroom behavioral disruptions led to nearly three weeks of lost classroom instructional time[1]. In 2022, NCES reported that more than half of school leaders saw an increase in classroom disruptions since the pandemic began[2]. Both studies predate the rapid rise of artificial intelligence in classrooms, raising the urgent question of what the loss of learning might look like today.

Left unaddressed, the same behaviors that cost a classroom three weeks of lost instruction time can cost a student their diploma[3]. A compliance-based system was never built to teach durable skills like critical thinking and leadership, exactly what's necessary to thrive in an AI economy. The whole classroom pays the price for one system that reacts instead of prevents.

"As a veteran teacher, I have faced many challenges in the classroom. With the implementation of a democratic classroom, I still face many of the same challenges, but now I have a classroom full of students who are ready, willing and able to find solutions with me. Over the years, I constantly found myself saying to the students, "You have to learn to be responsible," or "I wish you would learn to solve your problems without my intervening." The Democratic Classroom strategies showed me that I cannot teach responsibility to the students, but I can share responsibility with them, and that has made all the difference."

Alexis Guerriero
Teacher, Islander Middle School, Mercer Island

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Belong. Lead. Achieve.

Overview

Our Solution

Through professional learning, coaching, and implementation support, FCL enables educators to cultivate a culture where every student is given agency and ownership over their learning environment through Democratic Classroom Leadership, or DCL. DCL is democratic in the original sense of shared governance, not the political party. It is a learning environment structure where leadership is distributed, not held by one educator. It braids together disciplines including equity, behavior management, restorative justice, language access, and culturally responsive teaching into one holistic solution.

Whatever shape a learning disruption takes, FCL gives everyone in the room agency and ownership over their learning environment, proactively removing those disruptions before they compound. Whether it's the troublemaker who won't stop bothering others, who challenges every rule, FCL doesn't see a discipline problem but misdirected agency. They see the troublemaker as a leader with no role. Or maybe it's the kid whose homework was written by AI, who doodles instead of taking notes? FCL doesn't see this as laziness. They see a student whose agency over their own learning has never been encouraged.

Students are given real roles to contribute in classrooms like running the morning routine, mentoring a classmate, or greeting each of their peers at the door. Educators move away from the antiquated carrot-and-stick approach to motivating students by giving them opportunities to embody their own agency, practice leadership, and develop the durable skills that will carry them far beyond the classroom into the AI economy. The result is a classroom culture with fewer disruptions and a much deeper learning environment.

Research on practices aligned with DCL shows measurable academic benefits, including higher GPAs, better attendance, lower chronic absenteeism, six additional courses passed, graduation rates above 90% compared with approximately 75% for comparable peers, and a 15-percentage-point increase in college enrollment[4].

How We Do It

Full Circle Leadership starts with a week-long, experiential DCL Summer Institute for a cohort of 25 to 30 educators including teachers, administrators, principals, and student leaders. The cohort then moves into a year-long DCL Professional Learning Community[5] with coaching and observation support led by a member of the FCL team. Following the year, educators can continue to more advanced training and go on to become a certified DCL facilitator.

"Unequivocally transformative. I am a new teacher, and my relationships with my students are already benefiting. Our classroom communities are stronger, and the depth of our interactions are increasing."

Spanish Teacher
IL, 2020

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The model is grounded in research on democratic education, culturally responsive pedagogy, restorative practices, student voice, and relationship-centered instruction.

Behavioral issues decrease., engagement and academic performance improves., and cultural shifts persist for years after FCL's direct work ends. The model is grounded in research on democratic education, culturally responsive pedagogy, restorative practices, student voice, and relationship-centered instruction. While formal impact evaluation remains limited, 12 years of anecdotal evidence and strong supporting research point to consistent gains in engagement, climate, self-efficacy, and discipline outcomes.

Meeting the Moment

Why Now?

Post-2020, the Danielson Group revised the nation's most widely used educator evaluation framework[6], a research-based tool that breaks effective teaching into four domains and defines what strong instruction looks like in the classroom. The framework prioritizes belonging, inclusiveness, and cultural responsiveness. It's now adopted statewide in nine states, including Illinois, and is an approved tool of evaluation in 7 states, including Washington, with schools in 46 states using it in some form[7]. Many districts lack the training to meet these standards; Full Circle Leadership has developed a model that readies educators to meet the Danielson Group's standards, but the federal funding that once supported this work has disappeared.

Outcomes / Impact

Restorative, relationship-centered classrooms, like DCL have a documented track record. A Brookings-reported study of Chicago Public Schools found an 18% decline in suspension days across the four years following restorative practices rollout[9]. A three-year restorative justice pilot at one Oakland middle school cut suspensions by 87% and brought expulsions to zero, and district-wide, Oakland high schools using restorative practices saw dropout rates fall 56%, compared to 17% at schools that didn't[10].

Student voice produces similar results. A study of 11,680 Chicago high schoolers found that students in schools responsive to their input had better grades, better attendance, and fewer chronic absences[11].

DCL is built on more than these two domains. It centers belonging, shared leadership among students, culturally responsive teaching, and more.

Evaluation – How We Will Know It Works

When programming resumes in 2027, FCL will launch a formal evaluation using five methods: pre- and post-surveys for students and educators, existing school climate and belonging surveys, tracking of staff satisfaction and retention alongside academic and behavioral outcomes, control groups to isolate the program's actual impact, and a longitudinal study of educators trained since 2014. We will be gathering data and evidence to measure how DCL impacts students' engagement, grades, agency, belonging, leadership, and durable skills.

"Learning the principles of a democratic classroom has been a gamechanger in my classroom, my academic department and my home life. It is no exaggeration to say that since I participated in this workshop ten years ago, I have implemented the principles every single day. Class agreements and class roles continually increase student engagement and provide a strong sense of community within my classroom. Department-wide, the implementation of class meetings has built strong connections between teachers and students, while also helping students to develop leadership skills that will be valuable in their future careers. At home, family meetings have enhanced our sense of connection to each other, preventing conflict and promoting a sense of collective responsibility for parents and children alike. Because of this program, there has been more joy and satisfaction in my personal and professional life."

Julie Tilghman
Director of Campus Ministry and
AP Psychology Teach,
Holy Names Academy

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Photo credits: Full Circle Leadership Staff and Board.

Why Us

Full Circle Leadership Team

Our team of 10 educators, organizational leaders, and parenting educators brings 300+ combined years of experience.



Christopher Fontana, M.A., Founder/Executive Director

Nearly four decades of experience; co-founded Global Visionaries in 1998, growing it to a $1.1M budget serving 5,000 youth across the U.S. and Guatemala.



Ganae McAlpin, M.A., Program Director

20 years' experience; Director of Equity, Evanston Township District 202; completing a doctorate in Democratic Classroom Leadership at DePaul University.

"There is no doubt that the current system of education is broken. However, the democratic Classroom Institute has provided me with the strategies and tools to dismantle the system within the confines of my classroom, and to give agency back to my students. I feel empowered to empower."

Teacher
Mercer Island, WA, 2019

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Prevention

Why US

Unique Approach & Design Philosophy

In an increasingly AI-driven world, Full Circle Leadership centers human relationships and durable skills as the foundation for leadership. Participants leave with a stronger sense of belonging, clearer leadership intent, and practical tools for immediate use.

At its foundation, Democratic Classroom Leadership is Ubuntu, the Zulu and Xhosa word meaning "I am because you are." Rather than a hierarchical structure with one person at the top, FCL builds a roadmap for educators and students to co-create a classroom together, one where behavior isn't managed, it's given somewhere real to go. Decades of research on human motivation point to the same three drivers: autonomy, mastery, and purpose[12]. The DCL model is built around all three, real choice in the classroom, skills practiced and sharpened over time, and a genuine stake in something bigger than any one student. It's grounded in research on democratic education, culturally responsiveness, restorative practices, student voice, and relationship-centered instruction.

- **Self-reflection.** Educators, administrators, and students examine where their own identity and biases can create obstacles in their relationships with students. By practicing mindfulness meditation, they then nurture the real-time awareness to intervene before these obstacles occur.
- **Relationship building.** Educators build community and authentic relationships on the positive, downplaying the negative and inspiring students to their best selves.
- **Reframing behavior.** They learn to see what's underneath disruption, not a problem to manage, but energy looking for a role, and to redirect it into leadership.
- **Shared ownership.** Responsibility for the classroom and the community shifts from teacher-held to shared, giving every student a genuine stake.
- **Co-created agreements.** Classroom norms are written with students, not handed to them, moving the teacher's role from control to influence.
- **Weekly circles.** A standing ritual where the whole class builds trust and works through what's actually happening in the room.
- **Interactive, theater-based practice.** Roleplay and improvisational techniques build empathy and cooperation in ways a lecture never could.
- **Real-world problem-solving.** Students practice the durable skills, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, on genuine challenges, not hypotheticals.
- **Multilingual, multicultural integration.** Students' own languages and lived experience become part of the curriculum itself, not an accommodation bolted on.

"This seminar taught me that the best leaders allow others to lead, and it taught me how to implement that philosophy into my classroom without the classroom climate disintegrating into chaos."

High School Teacher
Middle School Teacher, Wenatchee, Washington

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Building a tipping point for cultural change.

Finances, Fundraising Strategy, and Growth Plan

FCL has spent more than a decade building and delivering Democratic Classroom Leadership through earned revenue, relationships, and word of mouth. The organization has already demonstrated significant reach and demand for its model.

Scale to Date

FCL has reached 2,019 educators | 517 Level 1 graduates | 75 schools | 15 states | 129,836 students

Full Circle Leadership's next phase comes at a moment of transition. After close to a decade of primarily earned revenue, restricted federal funding has tightened the resources districts have for professional development training[13]. FCL is responding by diversifying its revenue base while building the capacity to deepen its impact in Seattle and Evanston, develop facilitators, and ultimately replicate the model in new cities.

Revenue and Expenses to Date

October, 2017–September, 2025

Fiscal Year -->	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6 **	*7 ***	*8 ****	*Total*	*%*
	2017-18	*2018-19*	*2019-20*	*2020-21*	*2021-22*	*2022-23*	*2023-24*	*2024-25*		
Revenue										
Earned Income (Consulting & Coaching)	$ -	$ 14,250	$ 10,310	$ 24,014	$ 34,393	$ 71,540	$ 26,288	$ -	$ 180,795	*17%*
Earned Income (Workshops)	$ 53,415	$ 122,697	$ 96,882	$ 188,363	$ 105,778	$ 108,710	$ 46,709		$ 722,553	*68%*
Contributions	$ 2,985	$ 14,254	$ 32,977	$ 35,037	$ 16,123	$ 14,490	$ 18,973	$ 18,171	$ 153,009	*15%*
Foundations	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	*0%*
Total Revenue	**$ 56,400**	**$ 151,201**	**$ 140,169**	**$ 247,413**	**$ 156,294**	**$ 194,740**	**$ 91,969**	**$ 18,171**	**$ 1,056,357**	
Expenses										
Payroll Expenses	**$ 4,398**	**$ 67,599**	**$ 61,198**	**$ 138,670**	**$ 212,334**	**$ 147,509**	**$ 108,215**	**$ 1,170**	**$ 741,094**	*77%*
Contract Services	**$ 2,000**	**$ 14,041**	**$ 16,463**	**$ 64,658**	**$ 25,902**	**$ 14,401**	**$ 5,009**	**$ 210**	**$ 142,683**	*15%*
Operations	**$ 2,459**	**$ 15,971**	**$ 3,393**	**$ 3,780**	**$ 4,110**	**$ 9,498**	**$ 15,525**	**$ 3,998**	**$ 58,734**	*6%*
Other Expenses	**$ 10**	**$ 1,149**	**$ 1,670**	**$ 4,225**	**$ 4,760**	**$ 5,504**	**$ 3,286**	**$ 203**	**$ 20,806**	*2%*
Total Expenses	**$ 8,868**	**$ 98,872**	**$ 83,027**	**$ 211,974**	**$ 247,298**	**$ 176,913**	**$ 132,359**	**$ 5,581**	**$ 964,890**	
Other Income										
Net Revenue	**$ 47,538**	**$ 52,476**	**$ 57,164**	**$ 35,447**	**$ (90,996)**	**$ 17,872**	**$ (40,344)**	**$ 12,651**	**$ 91,809**	

** Executive Director, Christopher Fontana began writing book .25 FTE.*

*** Executive Director, Christopher Fontana writing book .5 FTE.*

*** Executive Director, Christopher Fontana dealt with health issues.*

$75,000 in cash reserves - 07/01/2026

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Finances, Fundraising Strategy, and Growth Plan

School Level Economics

FCL delivers school-wide impact for $54,000 a school year, which is roughly the cost of one paraprofessional in WA[14]. Within a year, schools start to see results and by year five they build internal facilitator capacity.

Four-Year Growth Plan

FCL is seeking investment to move through four stages of growth: reignite program delivery, build delivery capacity, multiply the model through trained facilitators, and establish the infrastructure for geographic expansion.

Stage	Reignite 2026-27	Build 2027-28	Multiply 2028-29	Establish 2029-30
Investment Required	$197K	$624.5K	$729K	$962K
Primary Milestone	Rebuild Seattle and Evanston partnerships	3 Seattle schools	7 Seattle schools	10 Seattle schools
Capacity Built	Restart programming; launch facilitator development and impact study	Train first 5 facilitators; expand Institutes	Establish national facilitator cohort	Build infrastructure for continued expansion
Result	Re-establish program pipeline	Demonstrate scalable delivery	Create replicable delivery model	Establish platform for geographic expansion

*Each figure is that stage's incremental funding need, not a running total.

What the investment builds

1. **Reignite** establishes the program pipeline and measurement infrastructure.
2. **Build** demonstrates that FCL can expand beyond its current direct-delivery model.
3. **Multiply** creates a facilitator network capable of carrying the model into additional schools and communities.
4. **Establish** creates the organizational platform for continued growth and geographic replication.

"In just a week's time, I went from being afraid of letting go of control to 'I can't wait!' to empower my students with control over their own classroom community and education."

High School Teacher, 2020
Chicago, IL

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Creating a Tipping Point For Cultural Change

"Every year my students surprise me with their engagement and ideas around what it means to take ownership of their learning: teaching has become even more joyful in the process. I have been using these tools and strategies for the last 11 years…"

Frances Tee
Teacher, Seattle, WA

Finances, Fundraising Strategy, and Growth Plan

Revenue/Expense and Impact Forecast

October, 2025–September, 2030							
Fiscal Year -->	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*Total*	*%*
	*2025-26**	*2026-27*	*2027-28*	*2028-29*	*2029-30*		
Revenue							
Fees for Service (School Districts, Corporate Consulting & Coaching)	$ -	$ 30,000	$ 110,000	$ 125,000	$ 210,000	$ 475,000	***19%***
Contributions	$ 20,000	$ 27,000	$ 39,500	$ 79,000	$ 137,000	$ 302,500	***12%***
Events- Luncheon Event & Zoom		$ 40,000	$ 80,000	$ 100,000	$ 130,000	$ 350,000	***14%***
Foundations	$ -	$ 100,000	$ 395,000	$ 425,000	$ 485,000	$ 1,405,000	***55%***
Total Revenue	**$ 20,000**	**$ 197,000**	**$ 624,500**	**$ 729,000**	**$ 962,000**	**$ 2,532,500**	
Expenses							
Payroll Expenses	$ 29,000	$ 177,000	$ 490,000	$ 592,330	$ 746,415	$ 2,034,745	***86%***
Contract Services	$ 2,000	$ 5,000	$ 15,000	$ 25,000	$ 40,000	$ 87,000	***4%***
Operations	$ 2,500	$ 10,000	$ 30,000	$ 50,000	$ 75,000	$ 167,500	***7%***
Other Expenses	$ 1,000	$ 2,500	$ 10,000	$ 20,000	$ 50,000	$ 83,500	***4%***
Total Expenses	**$ 34,500**	**$ 194,500**	**$ 545,000**	**$ 687,330**	**$ 911,415**	**$ 2,372,745**	
Other Income							
Net Revenue	$ (14,500)	$ 2,500	$ 79,500	$ 41,670	$ 50,585	$ 159,755	
Cash Reserves	$ 55,500	$ 58,000	$ 137,500	$ 179,170	$ 229,755		

$75,000 in cash reserves - 07/01/2026

Under Expenses, Contract Services includes bookkeeping, fund development, marcomms; Operations includes: rent, tech, office supplies, telephone/communications.

Impact - Number of Students Served	***2025-26***	***2026-27***	***2027-28***	***2028-29***	***2029-30***	***2030-31***	***2031-32***
	-	**-**	**3,750**	**11,250**	**22,500**	**33,750**	**48,750**

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Moving from Me to We

Finances, Fundraising Strategy, and Growth Plan

Fundraising Landscape

Nonprofits nationally are navigating a real shift. More than a third report declines in federal funding, and expectations have worsened sharply, in 2024, only 17% of organizations anticipated government funding cuts; by 2026, that number had climbed to 45%[15].

At the same time, philanthropy itself remains resilient. U.S. charitable giving reached a record $617 billion in 2025, this is growth that is outpacing inflation[16]. The shift isn't a retreat from generosity, it's a redistribution of it: fewer donors overall, but larger, more intentional gifts from people who trust where their dollars are going. Foundations are actively stepping into the space government funding once occupied, the large majority report rising demand, and many are increasing payouts and offering emergency funding beyond what they'd originally planned.

For an organization like FCL, historically reliant on fee-for-service revenue, this landscape means one thing clearly: diversification is no longer optional, it's how organizations remain stable when any single funding source becomes unpredictable.

Fundraising Strategy

FCL historically generated 85% of revenue through fee-for-service work. Following federal funding cuts, FCL is diversifying across four revenue streams: fees for service (19%), individual donations (12%), two annual fundraising events (14%), and grants and corporate sponsorships (55%).

Fee-for-service revenue combines paid consulting to corporate and nonprofit clients, including Fortune 100 companies like Intel, Liberty Mutual, and Equitable, with subsidized rates for schools and districts to meet organizations where their budgets actually are.

Individual donations grow through relationships, not cold outreach. FCL is expanding its board from 7 to 20 members, each carrying a fundraising expectation, alongside Christopher's own extensive network. The strategy will include storytelling by leveraging real accounts from classroom educators putting DCL into practice, and from students reaching breakthrough moments because of it. The organization will share through FCL's website, its growing mailing list of over 1,500 supporters, social media, and direct one-on-one outreach. Collateral like Business Plan, is designed to deepen engagement with everyone already in FCL's orbit.

Additionally, FCL will host two annual fundraising events a year including one in-person and one virtual.

The largest stream, grants and corporate sponsorships, is led directly by Christopher, who grew Global Visionaries' annual budget to $1.1 million through grants he personally secured. He will lead this work himself until FCL's growth enables a dedicated staff.

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Urgency.

A Democratic Civil Society is not a Priviledge.

It's a must-have.

Testimonials from Educators

"I took your democratic classroom workshop seven summers ago and I am really feeling the effect of practicing the democratic classroom. It has been a month since this school year started, I am seeing the great effect democratic classroom has on myself and my classroom community.

Despite of this unprecedented school year and many challenges, I am feeling a great sense of belonging, support, and care for one another in my 3rd grade Japanese immersion classroom. The new daily practice I am doing this year is this.

At the end of the day, I look at the list of my students. If I did not get to tell "Thank you" to the specific student, I know I either did not assign meaningful class job, or I took over his/her jobs, or I did not coach the student for the job well. Then, I assess how I can bring this students talent and create opportunities for them to shine. This school year, my biggest focus was Class Roles, and I am so glad I did that. I did have severe behavior issues at the beginning of school year but right now I am happy to say there is almost none (or at least I do not see them as issues.) I am more than ever embracing my "imperfection" and let the students know I am not perfect and I need their help every day, and they love to be part of it and they feel a sense of contribution to the community.

Before your training, I always tried to do many things on my own. I also tried to control my class. Now I am always telling myself to share my power and responsibilities with my students. That was the biggest secret I never knew before your training. I am feeling a great sense of gratitude for every single student. I hope you know the great effect on me and my students are massive. I thank you for that."

Yumiko Taniguchi
Third Grade Japanese Immersion Teacher,
McDonald International School, Seattle, WA

"Every year my students surprise me with their engagement and ideas around what it means to take ownership of their learning: teaching has become even more joyful in the process.
I am able to focus on building community and relationships without losing instructional time for content. I've had students speaking up for their right to learn as they make requests from other students aligned with classroom agreements that we make and update throughout the school year.

One of the students in my Geometry class shared, I felt empowered to speak for myself and use our classroom agreements to ask for class time to discuss what I saw as an issue affecting my right to learn.' The subsequent meeting allowed previously silent students to speak on their own behalf. The result was a better understanding of each other and an updated agreement about the kind of environment all students in the class needed to feel comfortable asking questions and doing their work.

Students thoughtfully co-create evaluation criteria for class assessments, which I use to assess their mastery and learning. Not only has this changed my teaching practices, DCL has also helped me to engage with my colleagues when I have to lead or facilitate programs. Building a strong community rooted in shared values around connection, being true to yourself and accepting others with a set of shared values is essential to any learning community."

Frances Tee
Third Grade Japanese Immersion Teacher,

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Appendices

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Mindfulness informs every strategy we pursue.

Organization Overview

Vision

We envision a world rooted in Dr. King's Beloved Community—where leaders of every age are equipped to build an equitable and ecologically sustainable world in which democratic values guide human relationships, mutual respect and dignity are guaranteed, and all life is treated as interdependent within the web of life on Earth.

Board

https://www.fullcircleleadership.org/board


Howard Choder


Wintana Dawit


Teshika Hatch


BreAnna S. Jones


Jessica Langmaid


Victor Nicio


Andrea W. Smith


Julie Tilghman

"I expected that I would leave this workshop with the tools to empower my students to have agency in their own classroom experience. What I didn't anticipate was the amazing cohort of educators whom I know will both provide and accept support as we dive into this work."

Teacher
Federal Way, WA

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Organization Overview

Staff

https://www.fullcircleleadership.org/staff


Corrie Cockrell, M.A.


Christopher Fontana, M.A.


Mary Dalton, M.A.


BreAnna S. Jones


Shomari Jones


Liesa Klyn


Justin Lehmann


Michelle Lyle-Berry


Ganae McAlpin, M.A.


Abdel Shakur


Chirona Rose Silverstein

Not pictured:
Anne Dalton

"This summer institute is the most transformational [professional developmet] that I have done. You'll learn the why and the how to democratize your classroom and get inspired to go inspire!"

Brandon Severance
Hamilton International Middle School, Seattle Public Schools

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Organization Overview

Volunteer Structure

- In 2026, Full Circle Leadership is increasing volunteer board members from 7 to 20 who will act as partners in resourcing and strategic planning. Additionally, it is convening a Board of Advisors with eight to ten members that will support the board and executive director in strategic thought partnership.

Who Makes What Happen*

- Fund Development and Resourcing/ Strategic planning: Executive Director, Christopher Fontana
- Strategy/Management/Hiring/Fund Development & Resourcing/Program and Content Creation, Implementation, and Execution – Executive Director, Christopher Fontana
- Educational Program and Content Creation, Implementation and Execution - Program Manager, Ganae McAlpin
- Corporate Programs and Content Creation, Implementation and Execution - Corporate Partnerships, Justin Lehmann
- Operations: Operations Manager, Anne Dalton
- Fiscal Oversight & Finance: Separation of duties distributed between
  - Bookkeeper, Adi Maxwell of Keolara, Inc. for reconciling and administration
  - Executive Director, Christopher Fontana for Quickbooks inputting and deposits
  - Board Treasurer, Howard Choder for auditing

**We have nine very talented part-time contractors who are ready to transition to become .5 - 1.0 FTE employees as workshop facilitators. Currently no full-time employees.*

Operations

Daily Operations and Management Structure

Board evaluates executive director annually and performs fiduciary responsibilities. Program manager and operations manager report directly to the executive director. Facilitators report either to program manager or executive director. As we grow, program manager and operations manager will take on more direct reports while the executive director will remain with two.

Currently, we run extremely low overhead relative to the impact we create. Staff work from home connecting with cloud-based programs like Microsoft360 and using Office Depot services as needed. This can foreseeably continue for three years.

Contingencies

Though doubtful, funding could be restored to states which would enable us to downsize this current fundraising push.

Insurance / Legal

- FCL is fully insured with Professional Liability, General Liability, and Directors & Officers insurance.
- FCL has participants sign release forms prior to engagement to limit and/or mitigate any potential exposure to lawsuits.

Staffing Needs

The graphic below represents the increase in staffing to accommodate our goal to scale impact in Seattle, Evanston, and beyond.

"Democratic education has changed the way I teach because it has shifted my perspective of what students are capable of."

Meg Luthin
Asa Mercer International Middle School

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Operations

FTE

	Position	Name	2025-26 - FTE	2026-27 - FTE	2027-28 - FTE	2028-29 - FTE	2029-30 - FTE
1	Executive Director	Christopher Fontana	0.10	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2	Program Director	Ganae McAlpin	0.05	0.10	1.00	1.00	1.00
3	Operations Manager	Anne Dalton	0.05	0.10	1.00	1.00	1.00
4	Facilitator	Abdel Shakur	0.00	0.01	0.05	0.20	0.50
5	Facilitator	TBD	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.20	0.50
6	Facilitator	Corrie Cockran	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.10	0.20
7	Facilitator	Michele Lyle-Berry	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.10	0.10
8	Facilitator	KK Williams	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.05	0.10
9	Facilitator	John Kennedy-Ferrel	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.05	0.10
10	Corporate Partners/Impact Study	Justin Lehmann	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.05	0.05
11	Corporate Partners	Chirona Silverstein	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
12	Parenting Facilitator	TBD	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10
	Total		**0.20**	**1.21**	**3.35**	**3.85**	**4.65**

Payroll

	Position	Name	2025-26 - FTE	2026-27 - FTE	2027-28 - FTE	2028-29 - FTE	2029-30 - FTE
1	Executive Director	Christopher Fontana	$ 16,500	$ 150,000	$ 159,000	$ 168,540	$ 178,652
2	Program Director	Ganae McAlpin	$ 8,000	$ 16,000	$ 159,000	$ 168,540	$ 178,652
3	Operations Manager	Anne Dalton	$ 4,500	$ 9,500	$ 100,000	$ 106,000	$ 112,360
4	Facilitator	Abdel Shakur	$ -	$ 1,500	$ 16,500	$ 39,000	$ 84,000
5	Facilitator	TBD	$ -	$ -	$ 16,500	$ 39,000	$ 84,000
6	Facilitator	Corrie Cockran	$ -	$ -	$ 8,250	$ 16,500	$ 39,000
7	Facilitator	Michele Lyle-Berry	$ -	$ -	$ 7,500	$ 15,000	$ 15,000
8	Facilitator	KK Williams	$ -	$ -	$ 7,500	$ 7,500	$ 15,000
9	Facilitator	John Kennedy-Ferrel	$ -	$ -	$ 7,500	$ 7,500	$ 15,000
10	Corporate Partners/Impact Study	Justin Lehmann	$ -	$ -	$ 8,250	$ 8,250	$ 8,250
11	Corporate Partners	Chirona Silverstein	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
12	Parenting Facilitator	TBD	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 16,500	$ 16,500
	Total		**$ 29,000**	**$ 177,000**	**$ 490,000**	**$ 592,330**	**$ 746,415**

Operations

Budget of Cost per School for Years 1, 2, 3 in a School

FCL leverages a school-wide impact for an average of $54,000 a year, the average cost of one WA school paraprofessional. Schools see results after one year and build staff capacity to train in-school/ district facilitators in five years.

	Program	*Year 1*	*Year 2*	*Year 3*		*Contact Hours*
	Number of Educators:	***25-30***	***50-60***	***75-90***		
1	Level 1 Summer Institute	$ 13,500	$ 13,905	$ 14,310		37
2	dcl PLC - Professional Learning Community for democratic Classroom Leader	$ 3,750	$ -	$ -		15
3	Small Group & Individual Coaching with Classroom Teachers	$ 10,000	$ -	$ -		40
4	Levels 2-4 Summer Institute	$ 6,000	$ 7,725	$ 11,588		12
5	Cultivate democratic Leadership with Administrators & Dept Heads	$ 6,000	$ -	$ -		30
6	Integration of dcl into new teacher training	$ 4,500	$ -	$ -		18
7	Develop Student dCL leadership via Civics classes	$ 3,600	$ 10,300	$ 10,600		18
8	Instructional Coaches	$ -	$ -	$ -		15
9	Develop dCL District Leadership	$ -	$ -	$ -		12
	Total (includes travel)	**$ 44,750**	**$ 55,853**	**$ 60,601**		**160**

"Studies show that students remember 10% of what they hear, and 90% of what they experience. The democratic classroom puts students in the driver's seat, helping them to be leaders and change-makers, both in the classroom and beyond."

Julie Tilghman
Campus Minister and Religion Teacher, Holy Names Academy

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Operations

Budget Detail for 1 School for 1 Year (Years 1, 2, 3)

	Programs	Months													Contact Hrs	Cost: Year 1	Cost: Year 2	Cost: Year 3
		AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG				
1	**Level 1 Summer Institute**																	
	democratic Classroom Leadership Summer Institute; **Intro Level;** in-person; 7-hrs/ day x 5 days and 15 hours of asynchronous learning)											15 -			37	**$ 13,500**	**$ 13,905**	**$ 14,310**
2	**PLC for democratic Classroom Leadership**																	
	Monthly PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) & ongoing follow-up individual personalized coaching calls and emails	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5				15	**$ 3,750**	**$ 7,725**	**$ 11,588**
3	**Small Group & Individual Coaching for Classroom Teachers**																	
	Identify and support self-organizing groups of 2-4 teachers [formed either by common planning periods and/or content areas and/or professional interests] and support of individual teachers unable to take part in small group coaching.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4				40	**$ 10,000**	**$ 10,300**	**$ 10,600**
4	**Levels 2-4 Summer Institute (Begins Yr. 2)**																	
	Summer Institute - **Levels 2 - 4** (for participants of last Summer Institute; 6-hrs x 2-days and 15 hours of asynchronous learning)											12	15		12	0	**$ 6,000**	**$ 6,180**
5	**Cultivate democratic Leadership with Administrators & Dept Heads**																	
	Five 2-hour workshops introducing and developing practices with dCL in school. Focus on Leadership and evalutation w/dcl & Danielson alignment; 1 & small group coaching with self-selecting Dept Heads		4	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	2			30	**$ 6,000**	**$ 6,180**	**$ 6,180**
6	**Integration of dcl into new teacher training**																	
	Work directly with the new teachers or in-school facilitators to develop integrate dcl curriculum into 3-year sequence of new teacher trainings.	2	2	2	2	1	2		2		2				15			
7	**Develop Student dc Leadership via Civics classes**																	
	Work with Civics teachers to develop student dCl. Cultivate student leadership. Short & Long-term outcomes include: students co-facilitate summer institutes and workshops for educators. Students lead dcl workshops for community constituencies (Students, Teachers, Administrators, Parents.)		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2				18	**$ 3,600**	**$ 3,708**	**$ 3,708**
8	**Develop dcl with Instructional Coaches**																	
	Identify self-selected Instructional Coaches who will participate in specially designed workshops to support their coaching work with teachers as well as their		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2				18	**$ 4,500**	**$ 4,635**	**$ 4,635**
9	**Develop dcl District Leadership**																	
	Cultivate a cadre of school leaders (5 - 8 Teachers & Administrators) committed to developing a deep understanding and dedicated praxis of DCL. This group will consist of adminitrators, Dept Heads, Instructional Coaches, & teachers who excel in dCL implementation.		2	2	2		2		2		2				12	**$ -**	**0**	**0**
	Total (includes travel)														160	**$ 44,750**	**$ 55,853**	**$ 60,601**

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Founder & Executive Director, Christopher Fontana's Full Bio

Christopher Fontana is an award-winning educator and nonprofit leader with nearly four decades of experience in public school teaching and experiential education, including 17 years teaching Spanish and Global Leadership in Seattle-area middle and high schools.

Christopher co-founded and led Global Visionaries, a nonprofit that brought together racially and economically diverse youth to experientially consider ways to address equity while exploring global leadership from a solidarity perspective. He designed and led multi-year leadership programs for high school youth in Guatemala and the U.S., building partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and municipalities in both countries that ultimately served over 5,000 young people.

It was during those years that Democratic Classroom Leadership began to take shape. Not as a plan, but as a question. Teachers kept asking Christopher the same thing: how do you get kids to change and grow this much, this fast? He started answering with small, two-hour workshops. Almost nobody came except his own friends. He kept at it, until a breakthrough session at the University of Washington drew 75 people. The following year, he ran the first week-long Summer Institute, and people started traveling from across the country to attend. Christopher eventually left Global Visionaries to found Full Circle Leadership. He never advertised. The organization grew through word of mouth alone.

Christopher's early career included co-organizing YES, youth-led Global Youth Environmental Summits that brought together 600 high school students from 32 countries and 40 states, work that earned the Colorado Partners in Education Award. He holds degrees from Washington University in St. Louis and an M.A. in Whole Systems Design from Antioch University, Seattle, where he was later named Alum of the Year, and has served as an adjunct professor at both Antioch and Seattle Central Community College. His honors include the Thomas C. Wales Passionate Citizen Award and Seattle University's Albers School of Business Redwinged Leadership Award.

Christopher has lived and worked across Spain, Guatemala, and Chile, with extensive travel throughout Central and South America, Western Europe, Southeast Asia, and Egypt. He is fluent in Spanish. He is a proud father of two.

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Where We Have Served

Chicago Public Schools (CPS)
- Mayer Magnet Elementary
- Gwendolyn Brooks College Prep
- Foreman College & Career Academy
- Little Village Academy
- Simeon Career Academy
- Dr. MLK Jr Academy of Social Justice
- Durkin Park Elementary
- Sarah E. Goode STEM High School
- Uplift Community High School
- Orr Academy High School
- Carl Schurz High School
- Williams Prep School of Medicine

Evanston Township High School

Niles Township High Schools
- CICS Northtown
- Chicago High School for the Arts

Highline Public Schools
- Cedarhurst Elementary
- Gregory Heights Elementary
- Bow Lake Elementary
- Hazel Valley Elementary
- Mount View Elementary
- Parkside Elementary
- Madrona Elementary
- Midway Elementary
- Mount Rainier High School
- Evergreen High School

Seattle Public Schools
- McDonald International School
- Beacon Hill International School
- Dearborn International School
- Asa Mercer International Middle School
- Ingraham High School
- Highline High School
- Ingraham High School
- Garfield High School
- Chief Sealth International High School

Mercer Island Public Schools
- Islander Middle School
- Mercer Island High School

Other
- Destiny High School
- East Lansing Public Schools, Michigan
- MacDonald Middle School

Independent Schools
- The Northwest School

Charter Schools
- Arts & College Preparatory Academy (ACPA), Ohio
- Destiny High School
- Pinnacles Prep Charter School, Wenatchee, WA

Non-Profits & Educational Organizations
- Confucious Institute
- Evanston Scholars
- OSPI
- WABE
- MSAN (Multicultural Student Achievement Network (30+ schools from 13 states)
- Washington Charter Schools Principals

Colleges
- Bellevue College
- Antioch University

Corporations
- Intel
- Liberty Mutual
- Equitable

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End Notes

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Available upon request:

- The landscape of national and local organizations doing similar work.
- White paper: Why Democratic Classroom Leadership?



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Developing Leaders at Every Age