



“Holdsworth is helping me grow not just as a leader, but a wife, a mother and a human being.”

Natasha Harris
Principal
Hale Elementary, Arlington ISD



At Holdsworth, we believe strong, inspiring leaders make for vibrant, successful schools. That belief is backed by research showing that after teachers, school leaders are the most important influence on student outcomes.

Our mission

To impact, over time, the quality of K-12 public education for all Texas students by supporting and developing educational leaders.

What we do

We help Texas public school districts grow their pipeline of inspiring leaders so that teachers thrive and students excel on every campus.

Who we serve

We partner with 13 school districts across Texas that serve a diverse population of students and are led by educators who are hungry to learn and focused on improving outcomes for students.

Who we are

Charles Butt, chairman and CEO of H-E-B, founded The Holdsworth Center in 2017. He named it for his mother, Mary Elizabeth Holdsworth, a former school teacher and philanthropist who inspired in her son a great admiration for educators and a passion for helping all students succeed.

Our partnership

Change can be hard. Making it stick takes time. We work with our partner districts for five years to not only grow individual leaders, but to help them build their own system for developing future leaders that will impact students for generations to come.

We start by giving individual leaders the inspiration, tools and resources needed to grow. Then we help them take what they've learned and adapt it, creating the cultural environment and systems needed to move other leaders through the pipeline in a thoughtful way.

Over time, our belief is those systems will become stronger by consistently cultivating leaders who can push student achievement levels to new heights.



Our history

Charles Butt, Chairman and CEO of H-E-B, founded The Holdsworth Center in 2017. He named the nonprofit organization for his mother, **Mary Elizabeth Holdsworth**, who taught school in the 1920s in Center Point, TX (near Kerrville).

Charles has directed much of his personal and corporate giving toward education, developing initiatives such as the annual H-E-B Excellence in Education Awards, the H-E-B Read 3 early literacy program and Raise Your Hand Texas, an advocacy organization focused on public policies that support and improve our public schools. The Holdsworth Center builds on those efforts by strengthening the leaders who serve educators and students.

A letter from our founder

We live in a time when support and funding for the nation's public schools is declining and faith in the system is eroding. My investment in The Holdsworth Center is a vote of confidence in our public schools. I believe that the future economic outlook for our state and our country depends on our ability to provide a high-quality education to each and every child.

With Texas school districts serving 10 percent of the nation's children, I believe we have a tremendous responsibility and opportunity to provide the best possible education to all kids. But it has to start with great leaders—supportive principals, administrators, superintendents, and teacher leaders in every classroom.

We need to strengthen the leadership pipelines that can build the foundation for a stronger system and provide more opportunities for growth for our teachers.



There is no shortcut and no silver bullet. If we want to get to the root of making long-term, sustainable improvements to public education, we've got to invest the time to go deep within our districts."



My hope is that over time, we provide education leaders a place to turn to for growth and that our comprehensive approach will serve as a model to replicate across the nation.

— Charles Butt

The Holdsworth Center is governed by a 15-member board of directors and guided by three core values: to drive for excellence and equity, believe in people, and be of service. Our board is chaired by Dr. Ruth Simmons and our staff of more than 40 is led by our president, Dr. Lindsay Whorton.



Dr. Ruth Simmons
Chair of the Board

Dr. Ruth J. Simmons is the president of Prairie View A&M University and former president of Brown University from 2001–2012. Under her leadership, Brown made significant strides in improving its standing as one of the world's finest research universities.

A French professor before entering university administration, President Simmons held an appointment as professor of Africana studies at Brown. After completing her doctorate in romance languages and literatures at Harvard, she served in various faculty and administrative roles at the University of Southern California, Princeton University, and Spelman College before becoming president of Smith College, the largest women's college in the United States. At Smith, she launched a number of important academic initiatives, including an engineering program, the first at an American women's college. Awarded numerous honorary degrees, she received the Brown Faculty's highest honour: the Susan Colver Rosenberger Medal in 2011. In 2012, she was named a 'chevalier' of the French Legion of Honour.



Dr. Lindsay Whorton
President

Lindsay's story with Holdsworth began in 2015, when she was tapped to develop the blueprint for the center's inaugural program while working as a consultant with the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in Washington D.C. Lindsay worked with the Holdsworth Center Organizing Board leading up to the launch in January 2017, and was quickly recruited to work for the new organization. As managing director of district support, Lindsay designed the strategy for supporting partner districts in their efforts to grow their pipeline of great leaders. In April 2018, she was named vice president and dean and in March 2019, president. Prior to working for BCG, Lindsay served as

legislative director for Colorado State Senator Mike Johnston. She also led the Urban Leaders Fellowship, which recruits up-and-coming leaders from across the country and builds their skills in policy and leadership.

Lindsay's dive into education research began in 2009, when she was named a Rhodes Scholar and went on to earn a master's degree in comparative social policy and a doctorate in social policy from Oxford University. Her research focused on the role of teachers' unions in education reform.

During her time at Oxford, Lindsay spent a year at the University of Helsinki, where she was a Fulbright Scholar. She visited schools and classrooms to understand Finland's world-renowned teacher education system. In 2015, Routledge published her book "Teachers Unions and Education Reform in Comparative Contexts."

THE HOLDSWORTH CENTER GOVERNING BOARD

Dr. Ruth Simmons, President, Prairie View A&M University; Former President of Brown University and Smith College

Dr. Shari Albright, President, Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation

Elisa Villanueva Beard, CEO, Teach for America

Bruce Esterline, Senior Vice President for Strategic Initiatives & Grants, The Meadows Foundation

Dr. Robert M. Gates, Chancellor, the College of William & Mary; Former Secretary of Defense and Director of the CIA; Former President of Texas A&M University

Pete Geren, President & CEO, Sid W. Richardson Foundation; Former Congressman; Former Secretary of the United States Army

Wallace Jefferson, Partner, Alexander Dubose & Jefferson LLP in Austin; Retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas

Elaine Mendoza, President & CEO, Conceptual MindWorks, Inc. in San Antonio; Chair of the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents

Ellen Moir, Retired Founder and CEO, New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz, California

Dr. Diana Natalicio, President, University of Texas at El Paso

Dr. Nolan Perez, Physician and CEO, Gastroenterology Consultants of South Texas; School Board Member in Harlingen CISD; Member of the University of Texas System Board of Regents

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Mark Rohr, Chairman and CEO, Celanese Corporation

Ann Stern, President & CEO, Houston Endowment

Guillermo (Memo) Trevino, President, Southern Distributing in Laredo



The decisions leaders make influence everything else. Building our leadership pipeline will pay dividends for many years to come.”

Ryan Smith

Director of Teaching and Learning
Round Rock ISD



We believe the most enduring work is done by teams. That’s why we involve superintendents, central office administrators, principals and their core teams in the 5-year partnership.

How we invest in district leaders

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Superintendents and their teams embark on a 2-year journey that includes learning sessions with some of the nation’s top leadership experts and site visits to study high-performing organizations in the U.S. and abroad, both inside and outside K-12 education. Each team works together to define what great leadership looks like for them, then collaborates on a vision to identify and develop up-and-coming leaders from within the organization.

DISTRICT SUPPORT

To help build capacity and keep the work moving forward, staff members are embedded in our partner districts over the 5-year partnership. They are a cornerstone of our model and a significant asset to our partner districts as they work hand-in-hand to take stock of talent management systems and design and implement new strategies that are built to last.

EXECUTIVE COACHING

Superintendents and their District Champion (a leader tapped to align the team’s efforts to develop a strong leadership pipeline) receive one-on-one executive coaching, as well as coaching centered upon feedback from stakeholders. All team members form peer coaching groups to provide feedback and accountability to one another.

How we invest in campus leaders

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Starting in the second year, cohorts of school principals and their team take a two-year learning journey similar to district leaders, which includes executive coaching for principals. They also tackle a significant challenge tied to school culture and student outcomes. Rolled out in four phases, the program aims to serve 50 percent of campuses in each partner district over the 5-year partnership.

OUR DISTRICTS

Our goal with each cohort is to represent the diversity of Texas. We select districts who are ready, willing and able to grow and lead strategic change across the organization, and who demonstrate a commitment to leadership development. Holdsworth's 13 partner districts educate a total of 460,000 students and employ more than 60,000 faculty and staff.



COHORT 1 7 DISTRICTS

2017-2023



42 District Leaders
Superintendent and Central Office
760 Campus Leaders
Principals, APs, and Teacher Leaders from 157 schools

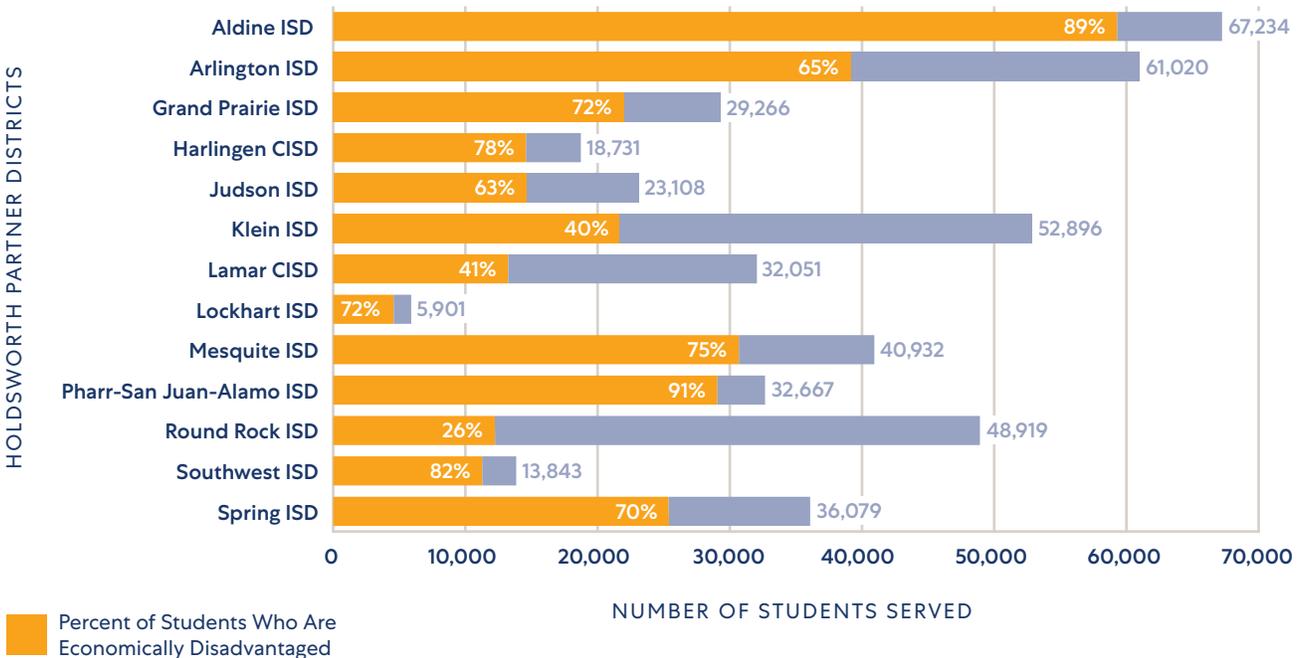
COHORT 2 6 DISTRICTS

2019-2024

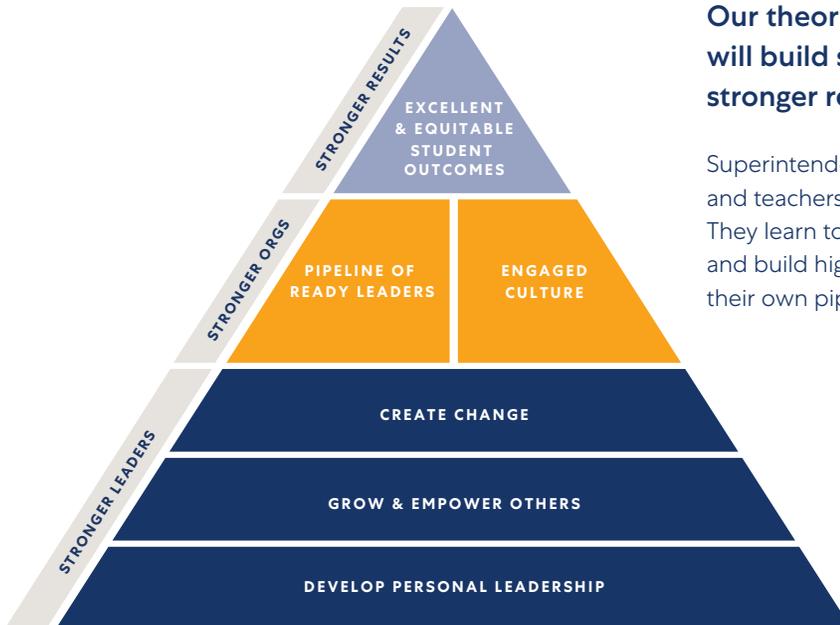


36 District Leaders
Superintendent and Central Office
600 Campus Leaders
Principals, APs, and Teacher Leaders from 120 schools

Student economic diversity relative to district size



Data source: Texas Education Agency, 2017-18



Our theory of action is that stronger leaders will build stronger organizations that achieve stronger results for students.

Superintendents, central office administrators, principals and teachers begin by focusing on their personal leadership. They learn to empower others, coach them to success and build high-performing individuals, teams and ultimately, their own pipeline of leaders at all levels.

Building a pipeline at Arlington ISD

Meet **Dr. A. Tracie Brown**, one of the district leaders in our program. This is the way Tracie describes the current reality in K-12 education systems when it comes to promoting educators into leadership roles:

“Spotting up-and-coming leaders has consisted of a hunch or a nudge or even a tap on the shoulder, with no in-depth understanding of a candidate’s real strengths and areas of opportunity.”



After two years of partnering with The Holdsworth Center, this is how Tracie describes the work underway at Arlington ISD:

“In my 20-plus years in education, I’ve never experienced a true talent development system like the one we are building now.”