



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DREAM Names Executive Director Richard Berlin and Chief Education Officer Eve Colavito as co-Chief Executive Officers**

*The new co-leadership structure formalizes the long-existing collaboration between the two roles, adding intentionality around how the organization operates in the midst of an exciting stage of growth.*

**New York, NY** — DREAM, a 30-year public charter school network and youth development organization that operates in East Harlem and the South Bronx, announced that Executive Director **Richard Berlin** and Chief Education Officer **Eve Colavito** will transition from their roles to officially share leadership of DREAM as co-Chief Executive Officers.

“We are incredibly fortunate to have not just one, but two world-class leaders at DREAM,” says **Vik Sawhney**, Chair of the DREAM Board of Directors. “As the organization continues its growth trajectory and serves more students in more places, stamping this transition officially feels not only natural, but essential to advancing our mission.”

“The best decision that we made in DREAM Charter Schools’ formative year was to hire Eve,” says **Berlin**. “This new leadership structure is a move to formalize how Eve and I already run the organization today, with added intentionality around how we partner, make decisions, and empower *others*—DREAM’s next generation of leadership talent—to make decisions in order to maximize our entire team’s effectiveness and potential. I’m as committed to DREAM as ever, and I’m excited to partner with Eve for many years in this manner.”

In Colavito’s 12 years at DREAM—during which the organization, formerly known as Harlem RBI, expanded beyond out-of-school and afterschool services to open a network of charter schools—she has driven the full integration of academic and social-emotional learning, health and wellness, and family supports in order to ensure positive outcomes for young people. Alongside Berlin, she has overseen the network grow from one DREAM Charter School to five, developed its extended-day and extended-year Grow the Whole Child model, and graduated 100% of founding DREAM Charter High School students.

The co-leadership model under which Berlin and Colavito will operate is similar to the co-teaching model that DREAM employs in all of its classrooms, which incorporates two teachers per classroom and creates space for every community member to be a leader in their own right. The model is built on the idea of shared power and shared leadership—values that Berlin and Colavito say they want to continue to nurture within and across DREAM.

“The spirit of partnership that underlies all our relationships at DREAM is what makes a model like this possible,” says **Colavito**. “And it’s particularly important to Rich and me at this moment, as we acknowledge our position as two white leaders of a majority Black and brown organization. DREAM’s persistence through the pandemic, and our ability to now position the organization for continued growth, is the result of the countless community members over thirty years who have believed in and worked tirelessly toward realizing DREAM’s most core values. Today and every day, I am humbled to be able to do this work.”

At DREAM, 95% of students are Black and/or Hispanic; 9 out of 10 qualify for free or reduced lunch programs; and 27% have identified special needs. Over the past 18 months, the organization has helped families weather the pandemic and its accompanying challenges by providing free technology for remote and hybrid learning, weekly grocery distributions, and direct financial support. DREAM has also continued to provide scholars with opportunities to support physical and social-emotional wellness, including through its award-winning summer programming, which operated fully in-person this year. DREAM is currently preparing to welcome back all of its students on a full-time, in-person basis on the first day of school, August 30.

Colavito started her teaching career in Mmabatho, South Africa, before returning home to New York City to teach third and fourth grade in East Harlem. She went on to become a founding teacher and director at Bronx Charter School for the Arts and eventually served as co-Executive Director alongside the school’s founder. Eve joined DREAM in 2009, first as a part-time Director of Instruction; then Principal; then as Head of School, where she led dramatic achievement gains and oversaw the expansion to Pre-K and high school; and most recently as Chief Education Officer, a title she has held for three years. She has a Bachelor’s degree from Brown University and a Master’s degree in Elementary and Special Education from Bank Street College of Education, and is a graduate of New Leaders and an Aspen Scholar. Colavito is a mother of three, including a child with special needs.

Berlin, founding Chair of DREAM Charter School, has served as DREAM’s Executive Director since 1997. Berlin joined DREAM as a volunteer baseball coach in 1994. During his tenure, DREAM has grown from a summer recreation program with one staff member to a thriving community-based organization recognized locally and nationally with numerous awards for programmatic and operational excellence. Berlin holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and attended a Master’s Program in Political Theory at the London School of Economics and Political Science in London, England. He also serves on the Board of Directors of The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools and the

National Advisory Board of the National Summer Learning Association. He has previously served on the Board of Directors of Up2Us Sports and the Partnership for After School Education (PASE). Mr. Berlin has also been a Leadership Fellow at the Citizens' Committee for the Children of New York City and a Greater NY Class of 2020 Fellow. He lives in Harlem with his wife, Kara, and two children, Logan and Sylvie.

### **ABOUT DREAM**

Originally founded as Harlem RBI, DREAM traces its beginnings to 1991, when a group of volunteers transformed an abandoned, garbage-strewn lot into two baseball diamonds for the youth of East Harlem. Thirty years later, the organization serves thousands of children across East Harlem and the South Bronx through a network of free, extended-day, extended-year DREAM Charter Schools and community sports-based youth development programs. By developing a whole child model that is responsive to the unique academic and social needs of every child, DREAM is creating a future where all children are equipped to fulfill their vision of success.

For more information on DREAM and its mission, visit [www.wearedream.org](http://www.wearedream.org).

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