

Student Leader Isn't a Title—It's a Skill

How Korea International School is using OTA's BeBOLD Student Leadership Course to make leadership more than a badge or line on a resume



At One Trusted Adult, we believe that students don't automatically become leaders just because we hand them a badge, a blazer, or a line on their résumé. **Leadership is learned. Practiced. Refined. Leadership is about contribution to the community.**

That's why OTA created easy-to-implement student leadership programs like BeBOLD for high school and Ripple for middle school Student Leadership. Both programs are research-based, and grounded in experiential learning, reflection, and shared responsibility. And when schools bring them to life in ways that fit their culture, the results are powerful. Some schools embed BeBOLD or Ripple into existing Health and Wellness classes.

Others offer the course as a "lunch bunch" opportunity, or spread sessions across advisory periods throughout the semester. Some schools choose to run the program as a full-day leadership training experience, while others implement it over time—before school, during free periods, or after school.

In some communities, students are required to complete the program before becoming eligible to run for Student Council or apply for formal leadership roles. We've also seen community centers and youth organizations offer OTA leadership programming on weekends to extend access beyond the school day.

However it's implemented, the goal remains the same: to help students understand that leadership is not just a title. We recently asked Nancy Weis-Sanfo, College Counselor at Korea International School (Jeju Campus), about her experience facilitating the BeBOLD Student Leadership program. Her approach is intentional, student-centered, and deeply aligned with what student leadership development should look like—not performative, but purposeful.

Here's our conversation with Nancy:

OTA: When and how did you initially learn about OTA?

Nancy: I was introduced to OTA by a former colleague while searching for leadership training that went beyond theory. What stood out immediately was how experiential the curriculum was. The activities aligned well with our school culture and allowed students to move, collaborate, and reflect together.

I didn't want something students would just sit through. I wanted something they would experience.



Nancy Weis-Sanfo, College Counselor at Korea International School, Jeju Campus

How to make Leadership at your school more than a badge or line on a résumé:

A Q&A with Nancy Weis-Sanfo, College Counselor at Korea International School, Jeju Campus



Prioritize student ownership.

Students will be your best marketing tool. Not everyone immediately sees the value of leadership training, so creating an environment that is engaging and student-centered builds buy-in.

OTA: What concern or hope did you have for your students or staff that you thought OTA's resources could support?

Nancy: My biggest concern was that students were being placed into leadership roles without being taught how to lead with intention, empathy, and accountability. Leadership positions were often viewed as résumé builders rather than opportunities to serve others or strengthen the school community.

My hope was that OTA's resources would help shift this mindset—encouraging students to see leadership as a responsibility and a skill set grounded in purpose.

That shift—from status to service—was really important to me.

OTA: What did leadership training look like at your school before BeBOLD?

Nancy: Prior to BeBOLD, leadership development was informal. Some advisors or coaches supported student leaders within their own programs, but there was no shared, schoolwide framework.

Students were often learning through trial and error rather than through intentional reflection and skill-building. There wasn't a common language around leadership.

That's what BeBOLD helped create.

OTA: Paint us a picture of what running the BeBOLD program looks like at KIS. Who facilitates? Who participates? When do you offer it?

Nancy: I've facilitated BeBOLD twice over the past year. The first session was invitation-only for current student leaders. The second was open to the broader student body.

Both sessions were co-facilitated by a colleague and me, with senior students helping lead discussions and activities. That peer-led component is important—it reinforces that leadership is relational and shared.

I intentionally run the program as a full-day experience rather than splitting it into shorter sessions. The extended format worked for our school and allowed for deeper connection and reflection. We include brain breaks, food (pizza and snacks!). It keeps energy high and allows students to stay engaged throughout the day.

OTA: What's one piece of advice you'd give to another school administrator planning to implement BeBOLD?

Nancy: Prioritize student ownership.

Students will be your best marketing tool. Not everyone immediately sees the value of leadership training, so creating an environment that is engaging and student-centered builds buy-in.

When students feel like the program belongs to them—not just something adults assigned—they talk about it. And that's when it grows.

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OTA: What outcomes have you seen—for students and for the school as a whole?

Nancy: The participants from both trainings shared very positive feedback and recommended continuing the program.

One student said it helped them take responsibility for themselves and the community. Another mentioned developing leadership as both a mindset and a skill set.

As the program continues to grow, I hope it will further cultivate a shared understanding of leadership built on purpose, connection, and service—reinforcing that leadership is about impact, not just a line on a college application.

Thank you for sharing your story, Nancy!

RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS

Nancy's experience with the students at the Korea International School highlights something important:

You can intentionally build leadership skills into your school culture in ways that your students will champion and help grow.

OTA's student leadership offerings are easy to implement & cost-effective.

One Trusted Adult Student Leadership Courses

Ripple Student Leadership Course

4-module video course that provides formalized training to inspire students to lead and contribute in the school community; includes Reflection and Facilitator's Guides. (\$750/one year of access, unlimited number of participants)



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BeBold Student Leadership Course

5-module video course that provides formalized training to inspire students to lead and contribute in their boarding school community; includes Reflection and Facilitator's Guides. (\$875/one year of access, unlimited number of participants)



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