



WINNER / **HECTOR BATISTA**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF NEW YORK CITY

Though Hector Batista was excited to be the first Latino leading Big Brothers Big Sisters when he arrived in 2011, he had inherited a nonprofit that was not fully aligned with its own founding mission. "The organization was caught up in its rich history, but it hadn't caught up with time."

Using a common sense approach to problem-solving, Batista created a strategic growth plan that helped BBBS enhance educational skills for the 2,700 children and their families across the city's five boroughs, and hire the right staff.

Four years after implementing his plan, Batista is seeing changes. A full 97% of BBBS kids are graduating to the next grade. Expansion of key programs, such as the education initiative, "offer academic enrichment programs including college-readiness and computer-tutoring workshops."

Batista is so committed to helping the children, 75% of whom come from single-parent households, that he even works the phones himself on a weekly basis to ask donors for higher pledges. His favorite part, however, is meeting the Bigs and Littles to hear directly from them how things are working, or not.

That was how Batista found out that the number one request Littles were asking Bigs, was for help navigating the education system. Batista responded with an educational handbook to provide resources in one place. "I'm in awe of these amazing young people who make a commitment to having an impact on a young person."



PLINIO AYALA
PRESIDENT AND CEO
 PER SCHOLAS, INC.
 FINALIST

What is your favorite part of the job?

"I often get emails from our graduates providing updates on where their careers have gone. Almost every email begins with a "thank you" for the Per Scholas experience and then continues to say that they have progressed quickly in their job and are excited about their future. These emails are what I live for at Per Scholas because I know that our impact goes beyond the graduate and will have positive change in the lives of their loved ones and the community they are a part of. We are making a huge difference."



FELIX V. MATOS RODRIGUEZ
PRESIDENT
 QUEENS COLLEGE,
 CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
 FINALIST

What professional experiences can you draw on as your most rewarding?

"Serving in the Cabinet of the Governor of Puerto Rico (2004-2008) gave me great professional growth in an area that was not entirely my expertise; it allowed me to manage complex public-policy issues. Starting your college presidency facing repeated budget cuts is not the easiest way to make a good first impression on your students, faculty and staff. However, education is the field of endless possibilities for those with unrestrained curiosity and passion for life-long learning. I know that I am contributing to making the American Dream possible for thousands of students and their families."