

Education Policy Fellowship Program

Celebrating 56 Years of Developing the Leaders We Need

The Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP), a program of the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), is a nationally recognized fellowship program that engages a diverse and collaborative community of strategic leaders to promote equitable education policy.

For over half a century, EPFP has been a vehicle for developing a deep understanding of policy issues from diverse perspectives, building leadership skills, and connecting to a lifelong, collaborative network of high-impact leaders. EPFP is the longest running national fellowship of its kind with:

- ✓ 300+ Fellows annually across 17 sites
- ✓ 9,500+ alumni in all 50 states.

At a time when there are so many different viewpoints about what it takes to educate our children, experiences like EPFP are more important than ever. EPFP enables Fellows to broaden their understanding of education equity issues through cross-sector and cross-system learning.

Evidence from national assessments confirms that EPFP Fellows are informed and skilled leaders, and a part of a network that provides long-term benefits to their career. EPFP Alumni are former U.S. Cabinet members, state chiefs, teachers and administrators of the year, deans and presidents of higher education institutions, and business and nonprofit leaders. The Fellows' employers benefit by having better informed, more skillful staff who understand policymaking, are prepared to assume greater leadership responsibilities, and are equipped to make dynamic, results-based contributions to education policy and practice.

We know that there is a great need for spaces where people in different roles, in different organizations, and of different persuasions can explore challenging education issues together. We also know that individuals "in the trenches" need opportunities to develop their leadership capacities. EPFP is the vehicle to meet that need.



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“My Fellowship has equipped me with the tools to become a change agent for education policy and practices. Attending the EPFP sessions and working with other Fellows to develop a policy project has trained me to be a skilled advocate to bring positive change to the education arena.”

Howard Jones, Jr. (PA EPFP '09-10)

“It truly is invaluable. I was able to speak with people and leaders I would have never been able to connect with otherwise, build relationships with people across the state with diverse backgrounds, and, at the Washington Policy Seminar, I had the opportunity to meet Fellows from other EPFP sites across the country and learn about policy on a national scale.”

Moryah Jackson, Independent Education Consultant (SC EPFP '10-11)

“Being an EPFP fellow is a great complement to professional development, and it gives someone an edge over another person who may be applying for the same job. EPFP certainly contributes to our leadership development in the state, and without it, it would be difficult for us to have sustained leadership or policy development”

Dr. June Atkinson, North Carolina State Superintendent and CCSSO Past-President (NC EPFP '84-85)

“EPFP has opened up important lines of communications at the local, state, and national level for thoughtful policy dialogue. The education policy reforms today [in Michigan] are an outgrowth of the forward thinking that EPFP incubated and initiated.”

Michael Flanagan, Retired Michigan State Superintendent (EPFP Sponsor)

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Who are EPFP Fellows?

Fellows are professionals at a stage where they are poised to make an impact on education. They are diverse by race and ethnicity, professional preparation and experience, role, and employing organization. Each EPFP cohort includes teachers, principals, superintendents, local and state education agency representatives, and higher education instructors and leaders, as well as individuals from community-based and business organizations, social service agencies, and other complementary sectors. Fellows are selected via individual site-based criteria.

What constitutes an EPFP learning experience?

EPFP combines regular meetings and activities specific to each state-based site program with events of national scope to provide an enriching experience for more than 300 Fellows each year. In addition, several sites participate in regional leadership forums, State Capitol Hill Days, policy projects, and all Fellows attend the Washington Policy Seminar, EPFP's national conference, in Washington, DC.

EPFP provides a unique professional development laboratory in which Fellows apply new insights and practice new skills. The program content explores three core elements of professional development – policy, leadership, and networking – which are built on a foundation of equity:

- ✓ Fellows learn about the processes and outcomes of policy making and implementation at local, national, and state levels.
- ✓ Fellows develop and expand the knowledge, skills, and practices of leaders able to effect positive change.
- ✓ Fellows develop relationships with diverse colleagues and expand their ability to collaborate with others.

What are EPFP's equity principles and practices?

We value diversity in all aspects of the Fellowship program. We know that work toward equity may take many forms, but at a minimum addresses systemic barriers to opportunities. We know that equity and equality are not synonymous. In furtherance of these values:

- ✓ We recruit to ensure diversity in fellowship participants
- ✓ We identify and address any barriers to participation by a diverse group of Fellows
- ✓ We include diverse perspectives in terms of curriculum, speakers, and programming
- ✓ We intentionally address equity in the ways we study examine and influence policy, leadership, and networking