

FROM INTENTION TO ACTION

Building Diverse, Inclusive Teams in Education
to Deepen Impact



Foreword

With this survey of diversity practices and results in education organizations, Koya Leadership Partners and Education Pioneers set out to understand what commitments to racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion in the education sector look like in practice and to provide actionable steps organizations can take to drive the conversation about diversity from intention to action.

The hard work of creating sector-wide agreement around the importance of diversity and inclusion has already been done. As our survey results show, 98 percent of participants believe that diversity is supported at their organization. About a third hold diversity as a core organizational value. However, few of the organizations surveyed have significant numbers of senior leaders of color, and very few have substantive, measurable practices in place to improve racial and ethnic diversity.

The will to create diverse and inclusive organizations is there in abundance. What we need now is to seize this moment of great opportunity and push toward real, measurable action. It is our hope that the survey findings, examples of best practices, and the recommendations collected at the end of this report will serve as a road map for education organizations that seek true progress toward increasing diversity and inclusion.

Diversity is a term that can be defined and perceived in many different ways. The authors of this report deeply believe that diversity is important in all its forms, but for the sake of this report, we are examining diversity with a racial/ethnic lens.

While most organizations and leaders today agree on the importance of diversity and inclusion, we must continually remind ourselves of *why* diversity is important. We need diversity of background, thought, and experience at all levels of every education organization in order to develop effective solutions for the challenges facing our public education system. In short, the success of all our missions depends, in part, on our ability to build high-functioning, diverse teams.

Diversity isn't just important as a value; it's a critical requirement for developing effective solutions that are relevant to the diverse populations we aim to serve.

With this survey and report, we are putting a stake in the ground and committing to specific, measurable action aimed at increasing diversity within the leadership ranks in education. We hope that all of the organizations and people in the education movement and sector will join us. The students, families, and communities we serve deserve no less.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to all of the organizations that participated in this survey; their participation was an act of bravery and a testament to a true commitment to growth and change.

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Introduction

Research shows unequivocally that diverse leadership teams produce positive results for organizations. For-profit companies with more leaders of color are better at problem solving and produce more creative and effective products and services. As a result, they perform better financially, gain a competitive edge when recruiting top talent, experience less employee turnover, and offer greater benefits for customers.

A Study by the Center of Talent Innovation found that companies with diverse leadership are:

- 68 percent more likely to embrace input from diverse teams
- 72 percent more likely to not fear challenging the status quo

These factors lead individuals in these organizations to be 50 percent more likely to take risks, generating better and more innovative results.¹

In the education sector, the case for diverse teams that include more leaders of color is equally critical. Education organizations need to tap the power of a diverse workforce in order to ensure that as a sector we are continually innovating and deepening our collective impact. At the same time, it is vital that education organizations reflect the communities they serve in order to deeply understand the concerns, needs, and challenges of diverse students, families, and communities, particularly those of color. Overall, 48 percent of students in the US are students of color,² and that percentage is larger in urban communities struggling with some of society's most difficult challenges. Without talent that reflects these communities, education organizations are not operating at optimal performance, and they may not be developing solutions that effectively address the needs of the individuals and communities they are working to serve.

WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS



**Improve
financial
performance**



**Compete
more effectively
for talent**



**Reduce
employee
turnover**



**Develop
a competitive
advantage**



**Make
better
decisions**

(1) McKinsey, 2012 (2, 3) Commongood Careers, 2010 (4) Center for Talent Innovation, 2013
(5) Kellogg School of Management, 2010

**“We will not win this noble cause if we do not change
the complexion of the people who are leading this movement.
. . . We must move past the conversation to action.”**

—Howard Fuller, Director, Institute for the Transformation of Learning at
Marquette University, speaking at the NewSchools Venture Fund Summit 2014

A Gap Between Intention and Action

Today, most professionals in the education sector agree: Diverse leadership teams bring tremendous value. However, there is much work to be done when it comes to education organizations' abilities to attract, develop, and retain diverse leaders of color.

“People in our organization care about diversity, but they don't know how to go about achieving it.”

—Director of Human Capital, national education nonprofit

Koya Leadership Partners and Education Pioneers developed *From Intention to Action: Building Diverse, Inclusive Teams in Education to Deepen Impact* to help translate these well-intentioned beliefs about the importance of diversity into actionable practices. The survey collected data from education nonprofit organizations (not including school districts) on the number of leaders of color within their organizations and on their diversity practices. The main finding is clear: **There is a gap between intention and action when it comes to diversity at the leadership level in the education sector.** The study found that the number of leaders of color dramatically decreases above the director level and that while all organizations report a commitment to diversity, this commitment is rarely bolstered by specific, measurable practices.



98% of the organizational leaders who participated in the survey think diversity is supported at their organizations . . .



but only 33% name diversity as a core value,



and only 31% have a definition of diversity.

Source: 2014 National Survey of Education Nonprofits

In this report, you will find outcomes from the *From Intention to Action* study as well as a range of potential solutions for eliminating the gap between intention and action. It is our hope that this report will help focus the diversity dialogue by revealing the actual state of diversity at the leadership level within nonprofits in the education sector and then move beyond that dialogue to specific, measurable action and sector-wide accountability. The education sector can no longer afford to just hold diversity as a theoretical value; we must translate that commitment into practice.

Methodology

Koya Leadership Partners and Education Pioneers developed a 64-question quantitative survey designed to gather hard data about diversity and related human capital practices in education organizations. To uncover both perceptions and realities, survey questions delved into the actual number of team members of color, recruiting and retention practices, employee turnover rates, and more.

One hundred leading nonprofits focused on improving educational outcomes for all students (not including public school districts) were invited to participate in the survey in early 2014. Forty-four organizations agreed to participate, tasking a human capital representative or other senior leader to complete the comprehensive online survey.

Additionally, to identify and share best practices, education organizations that have attained strong diversity results were interviewed. These best practices are summarized in “A Road Map From Intention to Action” on page 25.

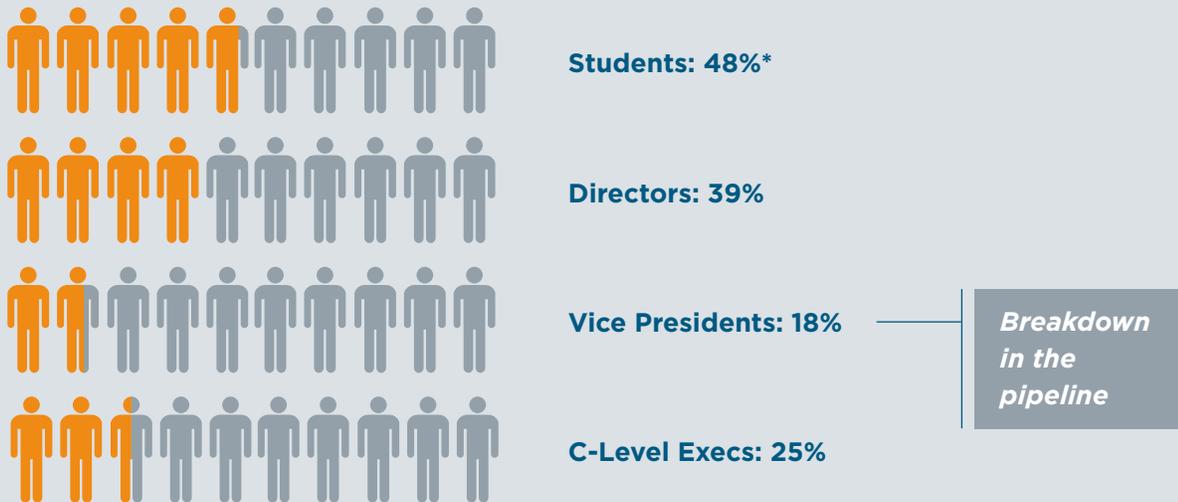
Findings

Survey data demonstrates broad support for diversity among education organizations. Ninety-eight percent of the participating leaders believe their organizations support diversity, and 96 percent believe their organizations are a supportive place for employees of color.

However, the data also shows a lack of key foundational elements in place to support diversity. Just 33 percent of organizations describe diversity as a core value, 31 percent have shared an official definition of diversity, 33 percent have assigned a diversity/inclusion leader, and 26 percent have a budget for diversity-related initiatives. The data clearly shows a gap between intention and measurable action.

As previously mentioned, students of color account for nearly half (48 percent) of the total student population in the US, but leadership in the participating organizations does not mirror the student base. At the director level, only 39 percent of leaders are people of color. At the vice president level, the number dips to 18 percent. At the CEO level, 25 percent of leaders are people of color.

STUDENTS OF COLOR IN US AND LEADERS OF COLOR IN SURVEYED EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS

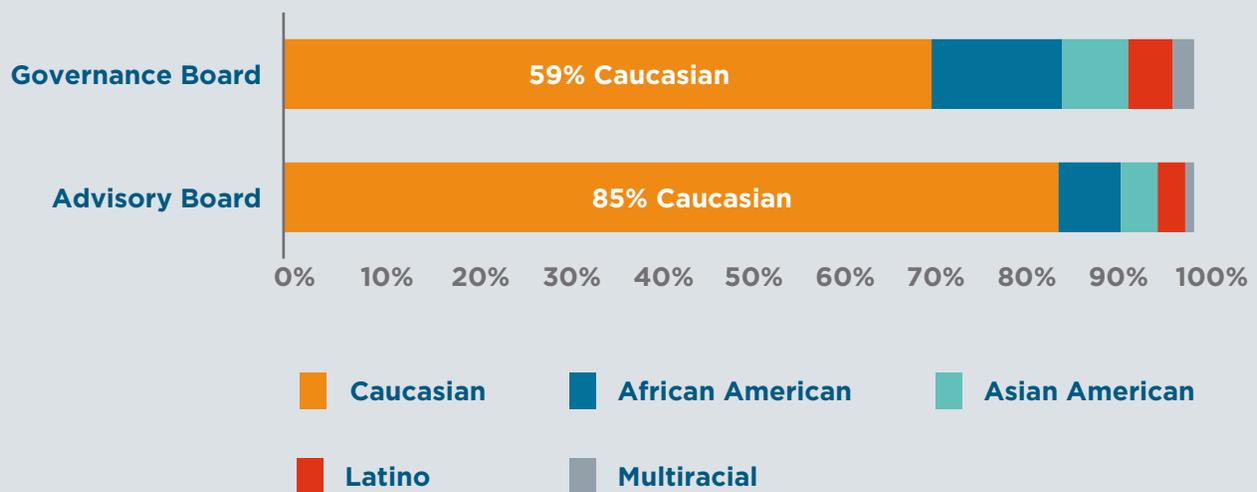


Source: 2014 National Survey of Education Nonprofits

*Source: 2014 Center for American Progress

Diversity is even less prevalent on boards of directors and advisory boards for the participating organizations. On average, African Americans represent just 12 percent of board members. Asian Americans total 6 percent, Latinos 4 percent, and multiracial members 2 percent. Even on the most diverse boards in the study, African American board members never exceed 50 percent, and Latinos peak at 17 percent. The good news is that the participating education organizations are actually faring better than the nonprofit sector generally. According to the Urban Institute, which produced a national study of nonprofit boards in 2007, 86 percent of nonprofit board members are white (non-Latino).³

RACES REPRESENTED ON SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS' GOVERNANCE AND ADVISORY BOARDS



Source: 2014 National Survey of Education Nonprofits

Closing the Gap Between Intention and Action

Four key areas of opportunity to close the gap between intention and action were identified by the survey and subsequent interviews:

- 1. Customized vision and strategy for diversity and inclusion**
- 2. Leadership and accountability**
- 3. Talent recruitment and staff development practices**
- 4. Intentional and strategic dialogue about diversity**

The few organizations that reported some success recruiting and retaining leaders of color shared three foundational elements:

- A clearly articulated vision for diversity was embedded in the organization's overall mission.
- Single-point accountability was assigned to an executive team leader for all diversity activities and goals.
- The executive director/CEO and board of directors had voiced diversity as a clear mandate and strategic priority.

In the following pages, we examine each of the four core areas of opportunity more closely and provide a snapshot of the diversity strategies and techniques that organizations are using today to achieve real, measurable results when it comes to attracting, developing, retaining, and advancing people of color.

AREA OF OPPORTUNITY 1: Customized Vision and Strategy for Diversity and Inclusion

“We haven’t really defined diversity or why it matters. If you were to ask different staff members, you would probably get different answers.”

—Director of Human Capital, national education nonprofit

Though the survey showed that the overwhelming majority of participating organizations (98 percent) reported a high commitment to diversity, very few of those committed organizations had developed and shared a definition of diversity (just 31 percent) or listed diversity as a core value (33 percent). This lack of a foundational vision for what diversity means and why it matters for each organization’s unique culture and mission is a critical opportunity gap. Without an overarching vision, it is difficult to develop and implement an effective strategic plan to increase diversity.

In fact, of the organizations surveyed, those with greater representation of people of color shared the same foundational elements. They had all:

- Defined diversity,
- Declared diversity to be a core value, and
- Dedicated resources to support the vision.

Consider these additional findings:

- Of the organizations with the most people of color on their board of directors, 50 percent had dedicated resources allocated to diversity.
- Of the organizations with the most people of color at the VP level, 62.5 percent had dedicated resources allocated to diversity and an organization-wide definition of diversity.

UTILIZATION OF STRATEGIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY BEST PRACTICES



“The [diversity] budget is spread throughout our organization.”

—Director, Talent

“Everyone is responsible for diversity.”

—COO

Source: 2014 National Survey of Education Nonprofits (Interviews 2014)

Best practice organizations engage leaders and staff from all levels to articulate why diversity enhances the organization and its mission and to develop effective culture- and goal-aligned strategies to ensure diverse teams. They also build accountability into their diversity strategy by ensuring that diversity outcomes are connected to individual job responsibilities and performance measures.

AREA OF OPPORTUNITY 2: Leadership and Accountability

The vast majority of organizations surveyed have little or no staff accountability for diversity. In fact, just 5 percent of participating organizations have an individual responsible for diversity. This lack of accountability starts at the top. Boards of directors do not hold the heads of organizations accountable for diversity outcomes, the heads of organizations do not hold the senior leaders accountable, and the senior leaders do not hold the managers accountable. **In short, diversity may be a value shared by all, but actual responsibility for diversity is owned by no one.**

The 5 percent of organizations surveyed that do have a high-level individual who is responsible for diversity (usually a chief diversity officer or a vice president of human capital) are able to develop consistent diversity goals and expectations and ensure that they are being implemented. The leader is the primary decision maker for diversity initiatives and is responsible for defining diversity, setting metrics, and tracking results. The diversity leader typically has a budget (average of \$20,000) and a small team and is charged with coaching and supporting departments and teams throughout the organization.

In addition to lacking a single person or role with accountability for diversity goals and outcomes, only 73 percent of organizations track metrics related to diversity. When measures are in place, they typically track the number of candidates of color who apply for open positions. In short, if they are tracking diversity metrics, most organizations are tracking input measures rather than output measures or results, making it difficult to determine whether the metrics being tracked are leading to desired outcomes.

Most organizations surveyed were not able to access requested data about hiring—especially turnover rates based on tenure or racial category. In some cases, organizations could not report the racial breakdown of their staff. As management guru Peter Drucker famously said, “What gets measured gets managed.” Within the participating group of organizations, diversity initiatives are rarely measured or managed.

Best practice organizations actively assign accountability for diversity to leaders and key teams, set metrics, and monitor progress regularly. The accountability for diversity begins at the top of the organization and is woven throughout every single level, and key performance indicators related to diversity are both measured and managed.

SPOTLIGHT

Relay Graduate School of Education

Relay Graduate School of Education (GSE) is a groundbreaking nonprofit school with an innovative master's degree program designed specifically to respond to today's urgent demand for effective and successful teachers and school leaders.

Activities: In 2012, Relay GSE developed a Diversity Steering Committee (DSC) led by its president, chief operating officer, and chief talent officer, as well as seven volunteers from the staff. This committee crafted a diversity statement and identified ways to live up to that statement. Specifically, DSC members led subcommittees to plan institution-wide training in culture competence, to organize discussion groups about identity, and to research and plan ways to increase the diversity of the staff.

Results: Two years later, almost all staff members participate by attending events, leading initiatives, or engaging with either the subcommittees or the DSC to drive larger efforts. As the organization doubled in size, the DSC worked closely with the talent team to routinely review and

improve outreach and recruitment practices. Despite its fast growth, the percentage of full-time staff at Relay GSE who identify as underrepresented minorities has increased from 11 percent to 19 percent, and the percentage of women in senior leadership positions at Relay GSE has increased from 30 percent to 66 percent.

“We commit to diversity, not because it is easy, but because it is the right thing to do,” says Pamela Inbasekaran, Relay GSE’s chief talent officer. “We know the process to become truly inclusive and representative starts with a reflection on where we are strong and where we have to grow. It’s this continual reflection and the dedication to improve that will eventually create the type of culture that attracts high-quality, diverse talent who want to build careers at Relay GSE for the long haul.”

AREA OF OPPORTUNITY 3:
Talent Recruitment and Staff Development Practices

Recruiting and development practices are where the rubber meets the road for diversity and inclusion. The survey showed that although the majority of participating organizations believe they have sufficient recruiting systems in place, 33 percent report having no formal practices to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of their candidate pools. Additionally,

- 34 percent of participating organizations are aware of top recruiting sources for candidates of color,
- 21 percent offer anti-bias training,
- 14 percent have a mandate for including a person of color on interview panels, and
- 12 percent have trained hiring managers to interview with diversity in mind.

UTILIZATION OF RECRUITMENT BEST PRACTICES

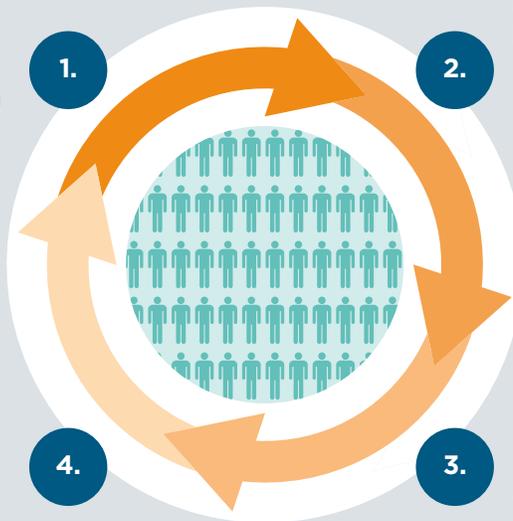


Without effective talent recruitment and staff development practices, many organizations surveyed are stuck in negative, self-fulfilling cycles that prevent them from successfully recruiting and retaining staff members of color:

On average, participating organizations experience 20 percent annual employee turnover: One in five employees leaves the organization every year.

SELF-FULFILLING CYCLE THAT PREVENTS IMPROVING STAFF DIVERSITY

Organizations lack diverse teams and have limited or ineffective diversity-recruiting practices.



Without existing diversity or a focus on diversity, organizations tend to hire staff members from racial and ethnic backgrounds similar to those of existing staff, which then perpetuates the lack of diversity.

Organizations fail to fill vacancies created by turnover with candidates of color, thereby deepening the lack of diversity.

A lack of leadership development systems specifically focused on retaining team members of color leads to turnover.

Strategic Recruiting and Selection

Most of us in the education sector are aware of the oft-cited leadership gap that looms ahead in the not-so-distant future. According to a study of the “autonomous and accountable public schools sector,” there will be a shortage of 32,000 senior and mid-level leaders in education across the 50 largest cities in the nation by 2023.⁴ This leadership gap is even more dire when diversity is taken into account. If the sector continues to rely on current internal recruiting practices, it will not only face a potential inability to fill the gap, but it will also continue to struggle with a lack of diversity far into the future.

With employee turnover rates of 20 percent, there is a near-constant need for new staff and a struggle to identify talented leaders of color. Despite these pressures, few organizations have proactively built strategic partnerships and pathways that allow the development of diverse talent pools that include a significant number of candidates of color. Yet few organizations cited this as a reason for recruiting challenges. Instead, when asked about the most significant barriers to recruiting candidates of color, three common themes emerged:

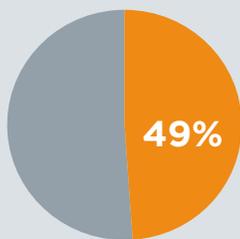
- *Candidates of color are not available in my geographic area.*
- *The candidates of color in my area are not a good fit for the jobs I am trying to fill.*
- *My organization is just not diverse enough to attract a diverse talent pool.*

Whether these perceptions are true or not, a close look shows that organizations are largely relying on ineffective recruiting practices that guarantee they will not find a diverse talent pool. Most of the organizations surveyed said they rely on networks and referrals for identifying candidates. Unfortunately, networks tend to mirror the people already in them, meaning that those who are referred are likely to be racially, ethnically, or culturally similar to those who refer them. Add the fact that studies show individuals tend to unconsciously discriminate by favoring candidates who are similar to them, and you have a recipe for continued homogeneity.⁵

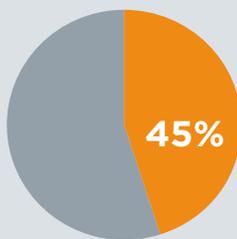
“Our best candidates come from referrals. But the referred candidates look just like the rest of us. Thus our dependence on referrals [for recruiting] has actually decreased diversity.”

—Vice President, Talent and Human Capital, national education nonprofit

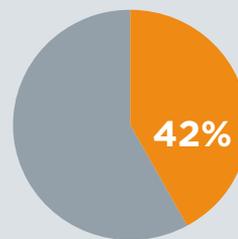
UTILIZATION OF STRATEGIC RECRUITMENT PARTNERSHIPS



**Do NOT
have partnerships with
minority professional
organizations**



**Do NOT
know top sources
of talent**



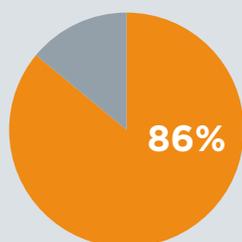
**Do NOT
have partnerships
with universities**

“We haven’t had the bandwidth to focus on partnerships.” —Human Resources Director

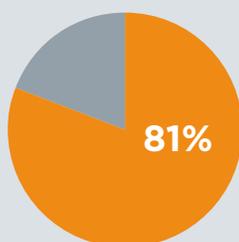
Additionally, more than half of the organizations we surveyed lack partnerships with universities or other professional minority organizations. In fact, most reported that they could not even identify the best sources for candidates of color.

Even when organizations are able to identify and attract candidates of color into their talent pipeline, their selection practices do not set these candidates up to advance successfully through the interview process. The participating organizations offer little training on overcoming biases in the interview and selection process, and they often fail to include staff members of color on interview panels. All of this indicates that if candidates of color do make it into an interview process, chances are high they will be screened out somewhere along the way.

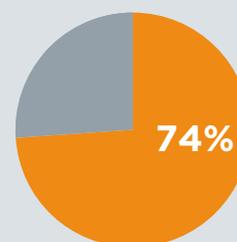
UTILIZATION OF RECRUITMENT BEST PRACTICES TO INCREASE DIVERSITY



**Do NOT
mandate a diverse
interviewer
on the panel**



**Do NOT
have diversity-specific
interview training**



**Do NOT
offer anti-bias
training**

Investment in Retention and Development

Recruiting and selection are only half the challenge. Education organizations also struggle with keeping leaders of color on board because they lack effective retention and development tools and systems. Though few surveyed organizations tracked turnover rates by race, ethnicity, or gender, overall the annual turnover rate averaged 20 percent, approximately 5 percent higher than the national average and 12 percent higher than most for-profit companies.⁶ That high turnover rate costs nonprofit organizations dearly in both productivity and dollars. The average cost of turnover is 150 percent of the departing employee's annual salary.⁷ For a sector with scarce resources, the budget implications of staff turnover can be dramatic. The cost in terms of morale and disruption is also quite high.

Survey participants reported that turnover in the first two years of employment is particularly disruptive and expensive. When a leadership team has a vacancy, the remaining staff feel pressured to pick up the work. If a new hire is then onboarded and trained but decides to leave after a short period, it stalls the organization's progress, and the staff are again burdened with more work and begin to doubt that a qualified person exists for the job at all.

To understand more about turnover rates, the survey asked respondents to report on why team members left. The top three reasons for overall turnover (voluntary and involuntary) were (1) another opportunity, (2) a lack of clarity related to career path, and (3) a desire for better work-life balance. These three reasons are inextricably intertwined. If a team member isn't sure about what the path for career growth looks like or is ready for a bigger role but sees no opportunity within the organization, he or she will naturally look for a new

SPOTLIGHT

College Track

College Track is a national college completion program that empowers students from underserved communities to graduate from college.

Activities: In 2011, College Track launched a comprehensive staff satisfaction survey and found that team members had many concerns about a perceived lack of diversity in hiring practices and in the organization. Armed with this insight, the organization launched a Cultural Competence and Diversity working group, which resulted in many new practices, including a process that enabled the organization to become more intentional about incorporating diversity into its recruiting, interviewing, and hiring

practices. New tactics included expanding posting and recruiting sources and asking a broader range of staff (including more diverse team members from different levels and sites) to participate in interviews.

Results: Thanks to an interview process that draws on a broader range of diverse staff, hiring processes have become more inclusive and collaborative. The practice also helps support greater awareness and a stronger internal culture related to diversity.

role elsewhere. When he or she finds that role and leaves the organization, the remaining team members struggle to cover more responsibilities than ever, leading to dissatisfaction with their work-life balance.

To further break down turnover data, the survey asked respondents to provide data on staff leaving in the first year of employment. The top three reasons were similar:

1. They found another opportunity outside the organization.
2. They realized the role was not meeting their expectations.
3. The organization let them go.

A lack of robust recruitment pipelines, the absence of tools for ensuring fit with the role, and a lack of retention initiatives that support employee and career growth are leading to a less diverse workforce and to poor hiring decisions across the board.

SPOTLIGHT

TNTP

TNTP works with school districts and states nationwide to ensure that poor and minority students get outstanding teachers.

TNTP believes that diversity of all kinds is a critical pillar for the success of its work. The organization also thinks it's an area where it can do better, by building a more diverse staff and a more inclusive culture to add valuable perspective and to increase its credibility, reach, and impact.

Activities: In 2012, TNTP committed itself to a concerted focus on diversity and inclusion, establishing a Diversity Leadership Council made up of staff at every level of the organization to lead its efforts. It also enlisted the help of TNTP's Diversity Recruitment Committee, a group of staff from across the organization who work to increase the number of employees who reflect all kinds of diversity, including the primarily African American and Latino communities that TNTP serves.

Members of the Diversity Recruitment Committee assist TNTP's hiring team by attending conferences and networking events, mining their own networks for referrals, and conducting cultivation calls with potential candidates. They also

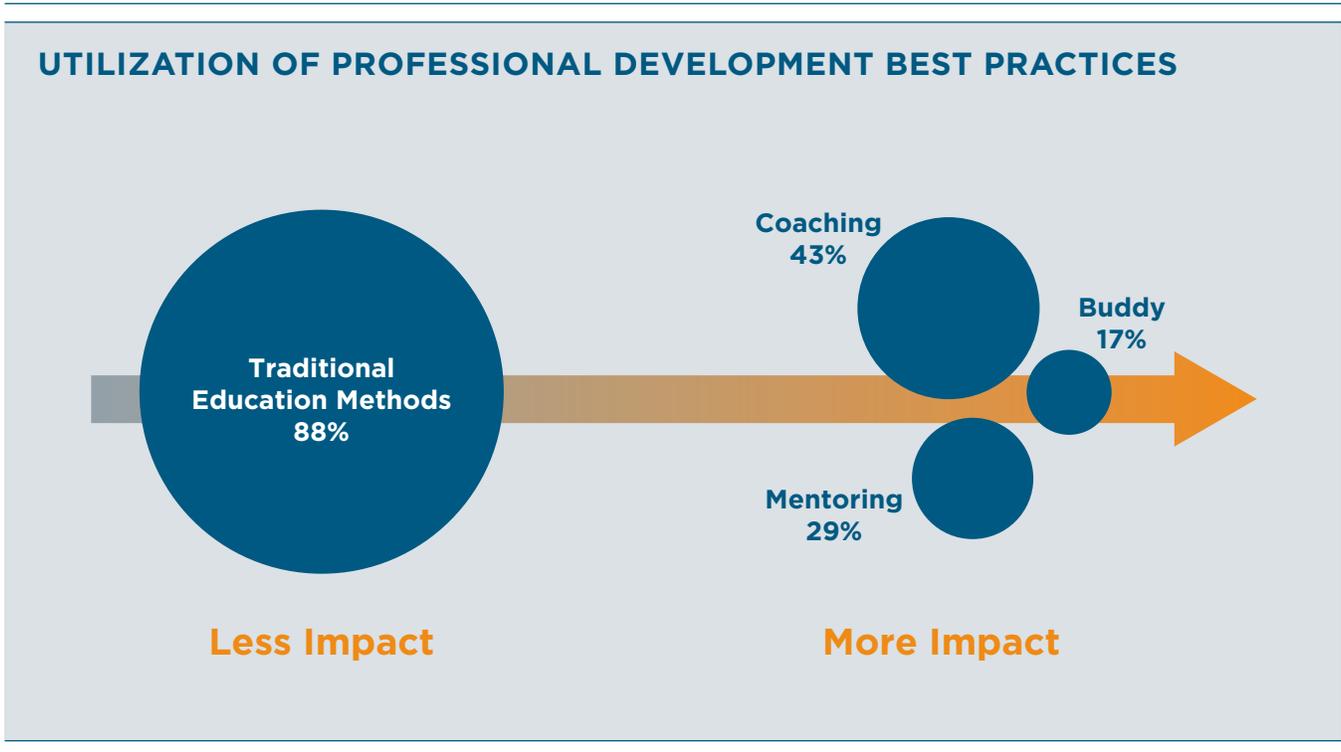
work alongside TNTP's Staff of Color Affinity Group to create connections and opportunities for growth and advancement for employees of color.

Results: TNTP acknowledges that this is a long-term, ongoing effort that is still in the early stages. Yet because of a clear mandate from leadership and organized channels for participation in diversity efforts at all levels, the organization is weaving diversity and inclusion into the fabric of its culture, as well as its recruiting practices. TNTP's hiring team has already succeeded in building a deeper pool of diverse applicants.

"It's critical that our organization reflects the communities we serve," says Kenya Bradshaw, co-chair of the Staff of Color Affinity Group. "It makes us more attractive to school districts to know that we have a deep understanding of the problems they're up against and that our teams reflect multiple perspectives, which makes our work stronger. They know we are always pushing our thinking and practice and that we will help them evolve as well."

Development is key to retention. Team members who feel they are growing and that there is a clear avenue for the acquisition of new skills and responsibilities are far more likely to stay with an organization. However, the professional development programs used to support retention and growth goals are leveraged inconsistently throughout the education sector.

Research shows that on-the-job challenges such as stretch assignments coupled with targeted mentoring and coaching are the most powerful forms of professional development. Guidelines in the human capital industry recommend that on-the-job challenges and targeted mentoring and coaching should account for 80 to 90 percent of a professional development strategy, and education (seminars, trainings, and workshops) for 10 percent.⁸ However, our survey reveals that the sample group is employing the reverse strategy, which is likely contributing to their difficulties building diverse internal pipelines and retaining high-potential employees of color.



Best practice organizations focus on recruitment and selection by consciously building strategic partnerships with sources of talent other than personal networks, such as universities, minority associations, and leadership pipelines focused on candidates of color. They also invest in training to ensure that interview processes and interviewers are aware of unconscious biases and that the process is fair and impartial. On the side of retention and development, organizations that are successfully developing and retaining leaders of color are growing talent from within by systematically identifying promising employees and offering them support through formal programs such as professional development, coaching, or a buddy system.

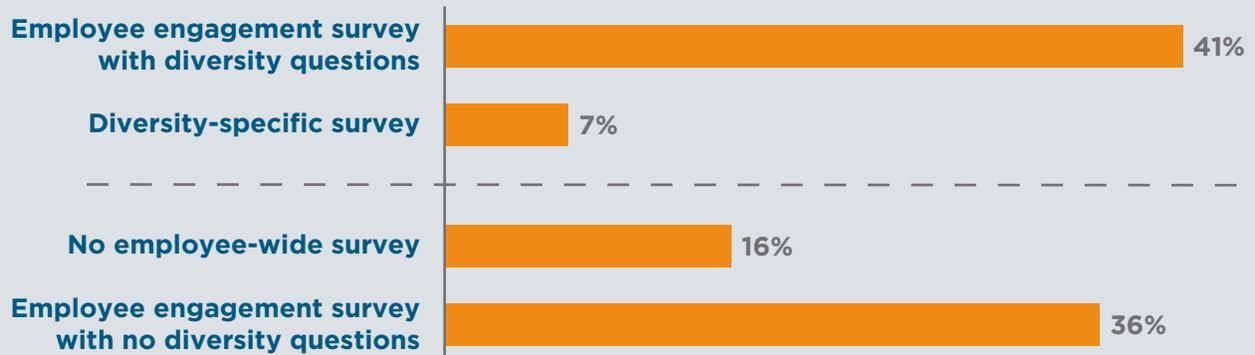
Clearly the recruitment and development gap is one of the most significant areas in which participating organizations, and the entire sector, could benefit from more intentional focus. But the good news is that there are a full range of recruitment and staff development practices—some of which are low-cost or free—that organizations can implement to start immediately creating positive outcomes. You will find actionable suggestions on page 25 of this report.

AREA OF OPPORTUNITY 4:
Intentional and Strategic Dialogue About Diversity

This report calls for a shift from discussion to action, but that does not mean that discussion should be abandoned entirely. Dialogue is a critical component of a comprehensive and successful diversity strategy. For any core value or initiative to succeed, team members at all levels of the organization need to know that it exists and is a priority, which requires having regular, meaningful discussions that are linked to specific policies and actions.

Less than 20 percent of survey participants reported holding company-wide conversations about diversity or sharing details on which diversity strategies succeeded and which failed. When discussions did occur, they happened sporadically. Furthermore, organizations have not created feedback loops for staff members to share their thoughts and ideas on diversity. Less than half of the participating organizations reported that they regularly survey their employees about diversity-related questions and topics.

UTILIZATION OF INTERNAL DIVERSITY SURVEYS



Interviews revealed that these organization-wide conversations are not happening because of rapid growth or competing organizational priorities. Several study participants admitted that conversations about diversity are unsettling or tense, and thus they have avoided them. Diversity conversations rarely make the priority list, and when they do, they often are not implemented successfully.

“Diversity conversations have been scary and uncomfortable. I don’t think that they were successful in the past because we didn’t know how to lead them in a productive way. Bringing in an outside facilitator was a tremendous help.”

—Senior Director of Talent, national education nonprofit

Best practice organizations strategically hold organization-wide conversations about diversity issues and concerns, solicit feedback and input, and communicate findings to all levels of staff. They also constantly scan for best practices inside their organization and more broadly in both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors.

SPOTLIGHT

When dialogue makes a difference

One organization’s feedback loop delivered a powerful piece of intelligence back to headquarters. This organization—a medium- to large-sized national nonprofit with locations in several states—had developed fundraising materials that featured students of color. The appeals were developed by the national office and used locally. During a local diversity dialogue, a staff member reported that some team

members considered the profiles of students disrespectful because they used language that reinforced negative stereotypes. When the national office learned of this feedback, the decision was quickly made to revise the materials and to change how similar materials were developed so that team members working locally—closest to the services—had an opportunity to give feedback during the development stage.

A Road Map from Intention to Action

The goal of this report is not just to shine a light on the state of diversity. It is also to move from our collective good intentions to action. In this section of the report, you will find a range of best practices and recommendations culled from the survey and from accompanying interviews with organizational leaders in the education sector.

Best Practices for Education Organizations

1. Customize your vision and strategy

It is not enough just to say that diversity is important or to include diversity in your core values. Every team member at every level needs to understand why diversity is important to your organization and what the diversity strategy is. Consider implementing the following best practices.

- *Weave diversity vision and priorities into your organization's mission, culture, and population.*
- *Customize your organization's diversity vision, definition, and rationale to fit the organization's unique culture and needs. The customization process is particularly helpful because it requires the leadership team and board of directors to agree on why diversity matters to your organization.*
- *Ensure that the message that diversity matters comes from the top—the board of directors and the executive leadership—and then tailor communication about the customized vision to all levels and sites.*

2. Focus on impact and metrics

Key performance indicators are critical for evaluation and impact. Organizations that track performance metrics can strategically deploy resources and continue or halt initiatives based on what the data says about their effectiveness. Most organizations in the education sector employ a range of performance indicators to measure organizational performance. Seventy three percent of the participating organizations have key performance indicators for diversity issues. However, many of those metrics are not measuring outputs, or results, but rather inputs, which are the resources an organization provides to a particular program.

- *Set a baseline. Use the Diversity Audit Checklist on page 33 to assess your organization's current diversity and inclusion practices.*
- *Identify a set of metrics based on your customized vision and strategy.*
- *Ensure that your metrics are measuring both inputs and outputs.*
- *Review your key performance indicators annually at the board of directors level and at least quarterly at the executive level.*
- *Assign accountability to an individual or individuals.*
- *Share results regularly across the organization.*

3. Focus on recruiting and selection practices

Recruiting and selection processes are areas in which almost all participating organizations reported a lack of resources and strategic vision. As daunting as it may seem to build a new recruiting and selection program, there are a number of steps organizations can take to quickly strengthen performance and outcomes in these areas.

- *Establish strategic partnerships that connect your organization with diverse talent pipelines and candidates of color.*
- *Ensure that internal recruiters and hiring managers have training and knowledge about good sources for candidates of color.*
- *Provide training for unbiased interviewing and selection processes.*
- *Ensure that interview panels are diverse and accurately reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of your organization.*

4. Invest in leadership development to retain high performers

Improvements to your organization's recruiting and selection practices will not matter if you cannot retain high-performing employees of color. Leadership development is vital to ensuring that all team members, particularly employees of color, remain engaged and advance in their careers.

- *Implement a process for identifying high-potential employees.*
- *Offer support and individualized professional development.*
- *Employ a range of formal and informal professional development tools, such as buddies, mentoring, coaching, and education opportunities.*
- *Regularly evaluate internal talent to ensure employees of color are in the leadership development pipeline.*

5. Ensure ongoing discussion

Finally, best practice organizations regularly engage in meaningful dialogue at different levels, from one-on-one talks to company-wide discussions. They do not just list diversity as a value in a brochure or on a Web site. They talk about diversity and what it means to the organization, why it is important, and what the organization is doing to achieve it. These discussions are open, honest, and multidirectional. Feedback and insights are welcomed, and there is a shared understanding that achieving diversity takes commitment and hard work from every single member of the team. Best practice organizations invest in experts to help them lead these discussions when necessary, and they accept that they will face setbacks and challenges along the way.

Conclusion

There is no silver bullet for building diverse and inclusive teams. Rather, many different strategies, techniques, and tools must be employed in concert and woven into the fabric of an organization at all levels and in all activities.

Tackling all of the challenges of building diverse teams is not easy work. It takes dedication, commitment, and perseverance in the face of setbacks. It is our hope that the survey findings and compilation of best practices in this report serve as a road map for moving beyond discussion and intention and putting into place actionable measures. This work is well worth the effort. The students and families served by education organizations deserve innovative, effective solutions that can only be developed by high-performing, diverse teams of dedicated professionals who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the communities whose needs they are striving to meet.

In the following appendix, you will find aggregate data about the participating organizations, selected questions from the survey, and an organizational audit to help you begin assessing your organization's current diversity and inclusion practices.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are incredibly grateful to the organizations that participated in this survey. Their willingness to commit their time and energy made this report possible, and we appreciate their efforts not just to improve their own performance, but also to support the entire sector.

SURVEY PARTICIPANT DATA

In which region is your headquarters located?

Northeastern US	43.6%
Midwestern US	0.0%
Southern US	5.1%
Western US	51.3%

In which region are the majority of your employees located?

Northeastern US	38.5%
Midwestern US	0.0%
Southern US	5.1%
Western US	48.7%
No one region in particular	7.7%

How many US-based employees (FTEs) does your organization have?

5-10	7.5%
11-30	12.5%
31-50	7.5%
51-100	25.0%
100+	47.5%

What is your current budget size?

< \$5M	15.8%
\$5-9M	13.2%
\$10-24M	31.6%
\$25-49M	15.8%
≥ \$50M	15.8%
Do not know	7.9%

SELECTED SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. For each of the following statements, indicate whether you agree or disagree:
 - Diversity is supported at my organization.
 - My organization is a supportive place for diverse employees.
 - Hiring managers are held accountable for enhancing diversity within their own teams.
 - All employees are held accountable for enhancing diversity within their own teams.
 - There is a perception that employees leave because of a lack of diversity, even if this isn't the stated reason.
2. Does your organization have an official definition of diversity?
3. Is diversity one of the organization's core values?
4. What is the budget for diversity and inclusion initiatives?
5. Does senior leadership support your diversity initiatives?
6. What percentage of the overall budget is spent on diversity/inclusion?
7. Do you have a diversity/inclusion department?
8. You mentioned you do not have a diversity/inclusion department. Whose job is it to focus on diversity/inclusion?
9. Is there an inclusion or diversity leader?
10. Do you have practices in place to increase diversity in your applicant pool?
11. Do you know your top three sources of diverse talent?
12. What obstacles to recruiting diverse talent have you encountered?
13. How do you know what your recruiting obstacles are?
14. Do you mandate that recruiting processes include at least one diverse interviewer?
15. Is there diversity-specific training for interviewers?
16. Is there anti-bias training for interviewers?

17. What is the percentage of diverse final-round candidates compared to the percentage of diverse offers made (e.g., 30% to 10%)?

18. How many of your governance board members are:

- Female
- African American/Black
- Caucasian
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Multiracial

19. Do you have an internal recognition program that recognizes innovative diversity efforts within your organization?

20. Do you have a buddy program?

21. Do you have a mentor program?

22. Do you have a coaching program?

23. What percentage of employees from each category was promoted last year?

- All employees
- Women
- African Americans/Blacks
- Asians/Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics/Latinos
- Multiracial employees
- Caucasians

24. For this next set of questions, please think of your organization's turnover in the last year. We will define *annual turnover* as (Number of separations during the year/Average number of employees during the year x 100) .

For each of the following, what percentage of employees turned over?

- Total organization
- Women
- African Americans/Blacks
- Asians/Pacific Islanders
- Caucasians
- Hispanics/Latinos

25. What is the annual first-year turnover rate for each of the following?

- All employees
- Women
- African Americans/Blacks
- Asians/Pacific Islanders
- Caucasians
- Hispanics/Latinos

26. What percentage of employees was managed out in each of the categories below?

- All employees
- Women
- African Americans/Blacks
- Asians/Pacific Islanders
- Caucasians
- Hispanics/Latinos

27. Do you have any partnerships with minority professional organizations?

28. Have your efforts had an impact on increasing diversity in the past year?

29. Does your organization look at metrics focused on diversity? If yes, which metrics?

30. For all of the information you have provided, which fiscal year did you use?

Organizational Audit Checklist: Diversity

LEADERSHIP

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Comments
Our organization has...				
Strategic Vision				
There is a senior management commitment in the organization to diversity and inclusiveness in the form of written policy				
There is a board member commitment to diversity and inclusiveness in the form of a written policy				
Senior-level executives are obvious sponsors of diversity policies				
Accountability				
All management levels are held accountable for implementing diversity and inclusion practices				
Bonuses are tied to diversity targets and metrics				
Our organization has completed a diversity audit across all departments within the organization				
Our organization regularly tracks % by gender, age, ethnic, racial and cultural minorities, LGBT, disabilities				
Our organization also tracks the above % across levels of the organization (entry level, management level, executive, and total workforce)				

TALENT MANAGEMENT

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Comments
Does your organization.../Our organization has...				
Recruitment and Selection				
Monitor diversity of candidate pools against overall pool of candidates				
Have specific targets to achieve representation in the overall pool				
Have specific targets to achieve representation in the finalist pools				
Mention diversity as a commitment in printed HR marketing materials				
Mention diversity on career portal on Web site				
Include diversity in recruitment events and strategy decisions				

TALENT MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Comments
Have recruiters attend affinity group conferences and sessions				
Have recruiters reach out to affinity group offices to introduce organization and inquire about opportunities to collaborate or access group members				
Advertise in publications that specifically reach out to diverse groups of candidates				
Construct job descriptions from varied expertise				
Include a diverse panel of interviewers in search process				
Target how many diverse candidates will be invited to interviews				
Advertising/posting encourages candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply via advertising/posting				
Monitor the proportional representation of diverse groups throughout the hiring process				
Use standardized set of questions for initial selection				
Conduct diversity training for recruitment staff				
Conduct interview training for staff members				
Brief recruitment/placement agencies on diversity and require them to have diversity policies				
Onboarding and Acculturation				
Establish a buddy/peer mentor for new hire to assist with navigating organizational culture				
Schedule meet and greets for new hire with diverse range of staff (gender, ethnicity, race)				
Adjust onboarding to accommodate different learning styles (visual presentations, technology-based, in-person meetings, phone calls, etc.)				
Offer balance of meeting time, reading time, processing time, and time to fill out paperwork during initial onboarding				
Hold more frequent check-ins during the first 30 days to understand experience				
Policies and Procedures				
Non-discrimination policy				
Diversity and/or inclusiveness policy				
Equal opportunity policy				
Gender equality policy				
Equal pay policy				
Flexible Working Policy				
Supplier Diversity Policy				
Clear process for handling discrimination complaints				
Process for monitoring the number of discrimination complaints and makes adjustments annually to the process				

CULTURE

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Comments
Our organization has...				
Representation				
The % of senior leadership diversity matches our organization-wide goals				
The % of board member diversity matches our organization-wide goals				
A specific staff member is tasked with diversity initiatives across the organization and reports to a member of the senior leadership team				
Our diversity staff is more than one full-time employee/more than one person is accountable for our diversity efforts				
Top management speaks regularly about diversity				
Exit interviews include questions about equal opportunities and diversity to identify biases that might lead to attrition				
Managers regularly receive updates on program with diversity efforts				
Outstanding achievements are showcased, honored by top managers				
Internal communication tools (intranet, newsletter) feature diversity activities at least four times per year				
Success and promotion rates are tracked for all groups of employees				
Communications				
Specific menu on webpage for diversity				
Specific menu within the Career/HR section of the Web site				
Specific campaign to convey diversity commitment, progress				
Participated in key external indexes such as Great Places to Work Institute survey, <i>Working Mother</i> magazine's 100 Best Companies, etc.				
Been recognized for best practices in diversity (by the media, public institution, employees, or a diversity organization)				
An annual employee survey focused on culture, diversity, and inclusiveness and includes questions around bias based on age, disability, ethnicity, and gender, LGBT, religion				
Employment Practices				
Part-time work				
Phased in and out work				
Compressed work week				
Telecommuting				
Sabbaticals				
Flexible start and end time				
Managers regularly receive updates on program with diversity efforts				
Outstanding achievements are showcased, honored by top managers				

PERFORMANCE

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Comments
Our organization has...				
Retention				
Created affinity groups				
Actively approaches a diverse range of employees to find ways to stimulate their career development				
Representation targets for diverse groups in high-potential talent pools and programs				
Line managers that are encouraged to include candidate diversity as a priority in pipeline planning				
Reflected diversity in the general core competencies the organization uses for performance evaluation				
Diversity as a specific competence we use to evaluate employees				
A 360 review process				
Diversity and inclusion as part of our corporate brand values				
Training				
Opportunities for staff to participate in external training on diversity, including certificates in diversity management				
Training for first-time managers				
Mentorship and sponsorship programs focused on diversity				
Specific training (conflict/harassment training, interview training, inclusive behavior)				
Internal communication tools (intranet, newsletter) feature diversity activities at least four times per year				

ENDNOTES

- 1 Hewlett, Sylvia Ann, Melinda Marshall, and Laura Sherbin. *Innovation, Diversity, and Market Growth*. New York: Center for Talent Innovation, 2013. Print.
- 2 Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) shows that in 2011, 48 percent of the nation's K-12 public school students were of color, while only 18 percent of their teachers were, resulting in a gap of 30 percentage points in national teacher-student diversity.
- 3 The Urban Institute also noted that in 2007, 7 percent of nonprofit board members were African American or Black, and 3.5 percent were Latino. The full report can be accessed at <http://www.urban.org/publications/411479.html>.
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- 7 Ruyle, Kim E. *Measuring and Mitigating the Cost of Employee Turnover*. Society of Human Resources Management, 17 July 2012. Web. The webcast can be accessed here: http://www.shrm.org/multimedia/webcasts/Documents/12ruyle_2.pdf.
- 8 Nayak, Preeta, and Laura Burkhauser. *Video Tutorial: 70/20/10 Leadership Development Plans*. Bridgespan, Sept. 2013. Web. July 2014. Also, Brinkerhoff, Robert O., and Stephen J. Gill. *The Learning Alliance: Systems Thinking in Human Resource Development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994. Print.

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EDUCATION PIONEERS

About Education Pioneers

Education Pioneers unleashes the potential of leaders and managers to transform education for all students. Through prestigious Fellowships and ongoing Alumni and Partner Services, the national nonprofit strengthens the ranks of talented leaders, managers and analysts in school districts, charter school organizations, education agencies, nonprofits and more to support strong teaching and learning results. Education Pioneers is building a network of 10,000 diverse leaders working at all levels across the sector by its 20th anniversary in 2023 to ensure that every student receives an outstanding education.

More information about Education Pioneers can be found at www.educationpioneers.org



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Koya Leadership Partners is a full-service talent firm focused on the non-profit sector that offers national retained search and human capital consulting services. Our guiding belief is that the right person in the right place can change the world. We are committed to our clients and to the missions that they serve. We deliver measurable results, finding exceptionally talented people who truly fit the unique culture of our client organizations.

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