

Celebrating 54 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 develops a diverse and collaborative community of strategic leaders for effective public 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:

- ✓ 320+ Fellows annually across 16 sites
- ✓ 8,500+ 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 issues through cross-sector and cross-system learning.

Evidence from national assessments confirms that EPFP Fellows become 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.

Transform. Empower. Inspire.

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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?

The EPFP learning experience is contextual, timely, and unique. In order to build cross-boundary leaders, EPFP coordinators at each site create customized experiences that respond to Fellows' interests and state contexts. Over the course of 10 months, Fellows engage in deep conversations, policy seminars, retreats, state policy forums (Hill or Statehouse Days), leadership development, policy projects, and site visits that address important topics in policy, education, and leadership.

In addition, Fellows engage in the four-day Washington Policy Seminar every spring. The Washington Policy Seminar is a capstone experience in Washington, DC, that brings all Fellows together to focus on policymaking processes through active learning (e.g., Congressional simulations, Hill visits, interactive sessions, and networking events). The Seminar offers national perspectives that further enrich Fellows' state-based experiences.

What is EPFP's vision for the future?

The designers of EPFP believed in a robust education system – one that prepares young people for college and career and as contributing members of our great democracy. For the next 50 years, developing leaders who can contribute to this everlasting purpose will remain the focus of EPFP and at the heart of the IEL's work. EPFP will continue to empower networked leaders to impact education policy through EPFP's three pillars:

- ✓ Policy – engage with broader policy perspectives and understand policymaking process
- ✓ Leadership – enhance individual and collective leadership capacity
- ✓ Networking – enrich learning and expand supportive, responsive, and professional networks

