Southern Education Foundation
Racial Equity Leadership Network | Fellowship Overview

The Opportunity & Aim

In districts all over the United States, race and class remain among the most reliable predictors of student success in school. Currently, in southern states, more than half of all the students enrolled in public school are from low-income families, with a growing number of families living in extreme poverty. The majority of public school students in the South are also children of color, rapidly changing the demographics of large and small districts. The increasing diversity and inequities students and families confront create an imperative for us to reimagine how we create a system that increases access and opportunity for all children to learn, develop, and thrive.

We think the system we need now requires a bold and significant shift in educational leadership and practice. Leaders in every corner of our nation are being called to think, engage, and act differently in the face of the complex challenges they navigate. Strengthening the will, skill, and capacity of district leaders and their teams is an important lever for advancing authentic and enduring equity-centered system change.

The Southern Education Foundation is answering this call by launching the Racial Equity Leadership Network to advance the capacity of district leaders committed to enduring equity-centered systems change as a solution to addressing racial, economic and academic disparities in districts across the South.

Fellowship Overview

The Racial Equity Leadership Network is an 18-Month Fellowship Program for Executive Leaders in districts who are committed to addressing historical disparities in their system and realizing a compelling vision of educational equity for every student.

Fellows will attend five (5) two-and-a-half-day network convenings focused on the essential levers for equity leadership and system transformation. In between network convenings, Fellows will have access to a comprehensive menu of services and technical support including on-site coaching and strategic consultation to support implementation of their strategies in their home districts.

Each cohort of the Racial Equity Leadership Network will be comprised of up to ten leaders (i.e., Superintendents, Deputy Superintendents, Chief Academic Officers, etc.) – who are making an impact on disparities in their district.

As members of the Racial Equity Leadership Network, fellows will:

1) **Experience** opportunities for renewal, inspiration, healing, and sustenance as an equity leader.
2) **Sharpen** a racial equity lens, gaining greater understanding and knowledge of the role that implicit bias, privilege, history, and structural racism play in perpetuating racial inequity in education.
3) **Test, prototype, or pilot** innovative solutions to address and make progress on a specific racial equity challenge in their respective context/school system, and improve the learning environments, experiences, and outcomes of black, brown, and low-income students in their district.
4) **Gain** a supportive equity-focused community of practice and, by extension, peer learning network that extends beyond the conclusion of the fellowship.
5) **Receive and make use of** tools, resources, and coaching support to practice a racial equity leadership approach to the work they are doing in their system.
Network Benefits

- **Time & Space**: Fellows will have a chance to step away from the daily pressures and demands of their roles to engage and reflect thoughtfully and share intellectually and practically as educational leaders.

- **Peer Networks**: Fellows will have an opportunity to share and receive lessons and support from peers who understand the complexity of the challenges leaders confront, while capitalizing on opportunities for peer learning, support and advising, and building alliances.

- **Access to Exclusive Networking & Learning Opportunities**: Fellows and their district colleagues will be invited to participate in exclusive **Racial Equity Leadership Network** events (ex. Speaker Series, Regional Development Events, Symposiums, District Learning Visits, etc.), that allow them to engage with other thought leaders, policymakers and innovators in the field of education.

- **Racial Equity-In-Action Inquiry Cycle**: Fellows will receive support identifying a challenge, designing an approach, executing a strategy, and reporting back on progress and lessons learned. Fellows will also have access to other resources that will enable effective implementation.

- **Coaching & Technical Assistance**: Fellows will work with SEF Network Faculty to co-design and customize coaching and technical assistance designed to support district teams to advance an equity agenda. Visit [https://www.southerneducation.org/what-we-do/leadership-development/reln/](https://www.southerneducation.org/what-we-do/leadership-development/reln/) for further details.

Network Convenings At-a-Glance

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- Fellowship Launch! Taking Leadership for Equity in Complex Systems
- Exploring New Approaches to Advance Educational Equity
- Building Empathy & Healing Relationships to Transform Power Across Systems
- Redesigning Structures to Interrupt Inequity & Increase Belonging
- Prototype Innovations to Address Your Equity Challenge
- Sharing Emerging Results & Lessons Learned

*Convening topics are in development and subject to change.

Eligibility

The **Racial Equity Leadership Network** is targeted at executive leaders in school districts in the South that are committed to reducing inequities in their districts and exhibit readiness to implement innovative, transformational change in their system. Special consideration may be given to candidates from states outside the South on a case-by-case basis.

Fellowship Application

Applications for the 2020 Cohort are due May 1st, 2020. The application, as well as further details regarding the **Racial Equity Leadership Network**, may be found at [www.southerneducation.org/what-we-do/leadership-development/reln/](https://www.southerneducation.org/what-we-do/leadership-development/reln/). Please forward all inquiries to Kenita Williams, Director, Leadership Development, at kwilliams@southerneducation.org.