



An Initiative of
Aspen Institute Education & Society Program
Education First

Education reform often takes on a siloed and fragmented approach, resulting in isolated policy and strategy development. For schools and districts, this means a set of initiatives and policy changes that are disconnected in their design, even as they inevitably intersect at the student and classroom levels. Imagine a future where SEA and LEA leaders have transformed how their agencies work to support a coherent policy-to-practice experience for teachers and principals.

What if you had the time and resources to address this barrier?

What is the Coherence Lab Fellowship?

As part of the Fellowship, state teams have identified a problem of practice that will allow them to explore and address challenges with coherence and integration within the SEA (across divisions) and between the SEA and LEA. Coherence Lab Fellows engage in:

In-person experiences



- Problems of Practice
- Collaborative group work
- Interactive lectures
- Site Visits

Virtual experiences



- Coaching & grants
- Relevant case studies
- Real time application

The Coherence Lab Fellowship is an experience, organized in rapid-cycle bursts of learning, practice, and reflection, that integrates **equityXdesign** and focuses on building integrated state reform strategies to improve support for educators and outcomes for students. Coherence Lab Fellows were selected through a rigorous process and comprise of teams of state, district and school leaders who are building a cohesive community to catalyze and sustain continuous improvement over time.

Why focus on coherence?

Collaborative efforts drive a cohesive strategy: Effective cross-agency integration, including routinized structures and processes, incentives, and capabilities translates to less fragmentation

Authentic engagement produces long-term returns: Engaging educators early and often can help LEAs and SEA consider motivations and interests that will support, and not hinder, implementation

Adult learning impacts implementation: Incorporating knowledge and research about change management can improve the introduction and roll out of current and new policies

Cohort details

3 state teams

The inaugural Fellowship cohort consists of up to 48 outstanding leaders and influencers from three states (up to 16 from each state)

18 months

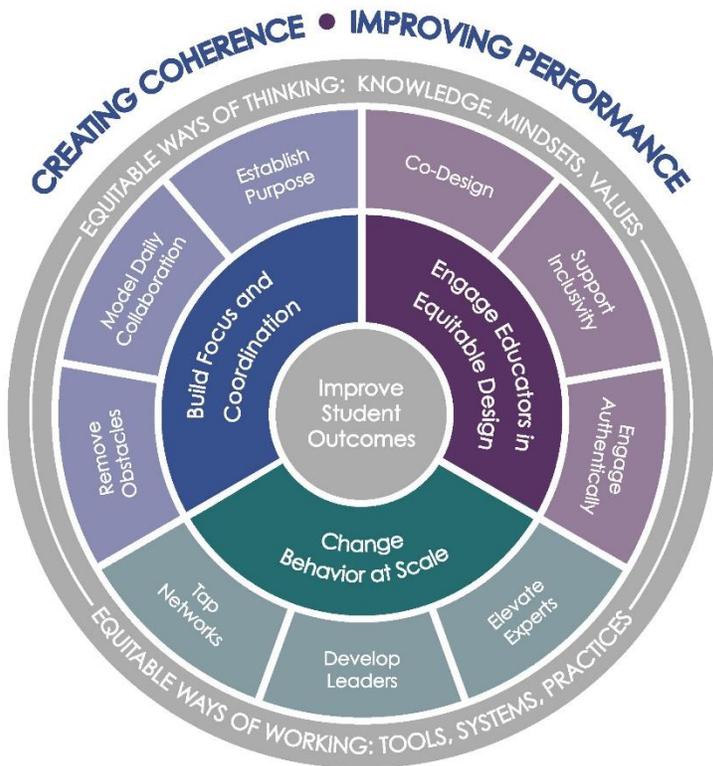
The Fellowship lasts 18 months, organized in rapid-cycle bursts of learning, application, reflection and continuous improvement

Check out our website!

[Learn more](#)

Fellowship Themes

The three guiding themes for the fellowship curriculum are directly connected to the key drivers of fragmentation. These themes will remain front and center for all fellows. They will learn together in these areas and then have opportunities to directly apply new knowledge and skills to their specific problems and context, consistently applying an equity lens as they work to address their problems of practice.



1

Build focus and coordination: A coherent system is focused and coordinated on implementing a few key priorities. The conditions (ways of thinking) and structures (ways of working) in place will either support or hinder coordination. Therefore, leaders at all levels of the system should create and encourage the conditions and structures that build a collaborative, integrated approach to reform within their own agencies and across sectors. They must also call attention to the assumptions, power structures, and institutionalized inequities that are built into the existing system.

2

Engage educators in equitable design: The degree of coherence within public education systems is manifested by educators in classrooms and schools. For this reason, system leaders must engage with and learn from teachers and principals to understand their needs, motivations and interests. This includes intentionally building empathy into the process, confronting issues of power and bias, and convening and collaborating across lines of difference. Understanding the end-user experience leads to solutions that matter to educators.

3

Change behaviors at scale: Coherent systems are adaptive systems. As fundamentally human enterprises, education organizations' power to adapt relies on the ability of people to learn and change. System leaders must be experts in the adult learning, social networking and change management to understand how to promote organizational learning and change that will shift behaviors and make improvements stick. Leading a culture of learning and change requires acknowledging historic and systemic forms of inequity to make dismantling systems of oppression an explicit goal and purpose of the work of change.

The Coherence Lab Fellowship takes place over 18 months

