



Unrealized Impact 2.0

*The Hard Truth About Where We Are
and Ways to Move Forward*

Michael Corral | Lucerito Ortiz | Xiomara Padamsee

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A Note from Xiomara Padamsee

Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Promise54



In this country, social justice organizations work year after year to solve society's most vexing and persistent challenges. However, this already complex work is made more difficult because many organizations themselves operate ineffectively or inconsistently when it comes to how they treat their people. We often find that an organization's culture, policies, and practices — both in theory and in action — actually inhibit their ability to accomplish their critical missions.

Promise54 partners with organizations to help them shift their culture and practices to create the conditions necessary for all leaders and staff to thrive and do their best work. Given our country's history of systemic **racism** and oppression, we believe that creating diverse, inclusive, equitable, and antiracist work environments is a precondition to achieving social justice. We envision, and are working toward the day when, social justice organizations achieve maximum impact because they have the right people excelling in the right roles, their teams reflect the communities they serve, their cultures are compassionate and value all people and perspectives, and identity markers no longer predict staff outcomes.

At Promise54, we strive to take a **radically human**¹ approach in all of our work. This approach means prioritizing deep, authentic, and trusting relationships with each other as well as with our colleagues in the field. It means redefining professionalism to allow natural human emotion and vulnerability into the workplace. We believe strongly in every person's innate brilliance. We believe in imperfection and in lifelong learning. We work hard — for ourselves and for our partners — to create space to heal from past pain and trauma experienced in workplaces defined by **white supremacy culture**².

In a number of ways, our radically human framework informed this project, in which we seek to understand the current state of **diversity, inclusion, and equity** (DEI) in education and enable leaders to do better. Our project intentionally incorporates the voices and experiences of staff in multiple ways — quantitative and qualitative, in broad aggregate trends, and in individual experiences. Further, we aim to acknowledge and include experiences that can't always be quantified and the experiences of populations that often fall below sample size reporting cutoffs in traditional research. Finally, we push ourselves to boldly share our own observations and experiences as Leaders of Color in the education space now working to support more than 100 organizations a year to advance this work.

On a personal level, I have a love-hate relationship with this project. Throughout my career, I've worked at and with organizations that rely on People of Color to point out the ways that the status quo of white supremacy culture fails Black and Brown people. Due to a historical lack of aggregated data on staff experiences around diversity, inclusion, and equity in the education sector (in and of itself a statement of low prioritization), we are usually forced to share our own painful experiences to agitate toward progress — and when we do, we are often met with skepticism or outright denial.

This regular occurrence of having our own lived experiences invalidated compelled my colleagues and

1 Padamsee, X. (2019). Radically human. Retrieved from <https://www.promise54.org/radically-human/>

2 Padamsee, X. (2020). We can't disrupt white supremacy and Anti-Blackness without a mirror. Retrieved from <https://www.promise54.org/we-cant-disrupt-white-supremacy-and-anti-blackness-without-a-mirror/>

me to write the original Unrealized Impact³ report in 2017, which at the time was the most comprehensive study ever completed on diversity, inclusion, and equity (DEI) in the education sector. The report demonstrated that the experiences I and others like me have so often endured are substantiated by considerable aggregate quantitative evidence. I hate that such a report was necessary, that aggregate quantitative data hadn't previously been prioritized, collected, and communicated; that the field requires this form of data to acknowledge things that Black and Brown people know to be true from our own experiences; and that the challenges exist in the first place. That said, once the report was released, I was touched and overwhelmed by the number of people who shared similar stories, who found validation and affirmation in the pages of the report, and who experienced relief and freedom in having the ability to leverage aggregate, anonymous data to drive toward change versus having to relive and expose personal pain and trauma. That's the part I love. This overwhelming response encouraged us to continue collecting this data for version two.

We continue to feel a strong sense of responsibility to share and update this data, as in the last few years the number of organizations leveraging our hallmark DEI surveys to monitor their progress has more than doubled and the number of individual respondents has increased fivefold. I firmly believe that collecting and holding this large base of data is a privilege. Further, I believe that being in the room with organizations as they grapple with their most complex people-related challenges — including substantial messiness related specifically to diversity, inclusion, equity, and **antiracism** — is a privilege. And with these privileges comes the responsibility to mine for trends, insights, and promising practices, and to share those with the field.

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I hope that this report provides a powerful call to action for organizations to engage in the work of becoming diverse, inclusive, equitable, and antiracist. I hope that the evidence we provide and the promising practices we point to will relieve at least some of the pressure that so often is placed on people with historically marginalized identities to begin or sustain this work .

If the past few years have taught me anything, it is that we must do better to take care of each other. I am disheartened that three years after Unrealized Impact, we find ourselves facing the same challenges. Yet I am energized by the opportunity to leverage an even larger data set to dig deeper into key findings and insights as to how we can move our collective work forward. We must do better to ensure that people of all identities feel — and are — safe, seen, valued, and included in this country. The strength, courage, and kindness exhibited by so many throughout the COVID-19 crisis, and the outrage, resistance, and solidarity demonstrated through Black Lives Matter protests must be sustained and carried into our organizations so that we can be better humans, build better organizations, and do better with and for the communities we serve to create a better society. It's time to do better.

Pa'lante,



3 Padamsee, X., Crowe, B., Louis, L., Messano, F., & Paperny, T. (2017). Unrealized impact: The case for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Promise54. http://www.unrealizedimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Unrealized_Impact-Final-072017.pdf



Introduction

As a country founded on the genocide of Indigenous people and the enslavement of **Black** people, racism is embedded in the DNA of the United States. For over 400 years, we have continued to replicate, expand, and perpetuate racism through our systems, institutions, practices, and interactions. As a result, People of Color continuously experience disparities in civil rights, education, economic opportunity, health, social capital, experiences, and outcomes.

As we work to publish this report, loud reminders are all around us. Black people — including George Floyd, Michael Brown, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, Tony McDade, and so many others even just last year — continue to experience state-sanctioned murders at the hands of police. By mid-June of 2020, more than 21 million Americans participated in mass Black Lives Matter protests⁴ across the country in response to these murders, making this moment of racial reckoning the largest protest movement in the country's history.⁵ And still Black people continue to experience various forms of institutionally sanctioned violence and racialized harm.⁶ All the while, Communities of Color have been grappling with myriad and disproportionate hardships wrought by COVID-19 and the related economic fallout,^{7,8,9,10,11} even as we see an expanded vaccine rollout. **AAPI** community members are being violently attacked¹² with increasing

4 Public Opinion Data on Black Lives Matter Police Reform. (2020). Retrieved from https://29aww93vfjsz-432bcn2d6lz2-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Public_Opinion_Data_BLM_CombinedCrosstabs_ALL.pdf

5 Buchanan, L., Bui, Q., & Patel, J. (2020, July 3). Black lives matter may be the largest movement in U.S. history. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>

6 McCoy, H. (2020). Black lives matter, and yes, you are racist: The parallelism of the 20th and 21st centuries. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 37(5), 463-475.

7 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). COVID-19 hospitalization and death by race/ethnicity. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html>

8 Gould, E., & Wilson, V. (2020). Black workers face two of the most lethal preexisting conditions for coronavirus — racism and economic inequality. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.epi.org/publication/black-workers-covid/>; Wilson, V. (2020). Inequities exposed: How COVID-19 widened racial inequities in education, health, and the workforce: Testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.epi.org/publication/covid-19-inequities-wilson-testimony/>; Lopez, M., Rainie, L., & Budiman, A. (2020). Financial and health impacts of COVID-19 vary widely by race and ethnicity. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/05/05/financial-and-health-impacts-of-covid-19-vary-widely-by-race-and-ethnicity/>

9 Lake, J. (2020). The pandemic has exacerbated housing instability for renters of color. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/reports/2020/10/30/492606/pandemic-exacerbated-housing-instability-renters-color/>

10 Fox, M. (2020). Coronavirus has upended school plans. It will also worsen racial and economic inequalities, experts warn. CNBC. Retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/08/12/impact-of-covid-19-on-schools-will-worsen-racial-inequity-experts-say.html>

11 LaFave, S. (2020). How school closures for COVID-19 amplify inequality. Johns Hopkins University. Retrieved from <https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/05/04/school-closures-inequality/>

12 Ruiz, N. G., Edwards, K., & Lopez, M. H. (2021). One-third of Asian Americans fear threats, physical attacks and most say violence against them is rising. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/21/one-third-of-asian-americans-fear-threats-physical-attacks-and-most-say-violence-against-them-is-rising/>

regularity. And immigrant children are still being detained at the border in inhumane conditions.^{13,14}

Ongoing and repeated instances of racial violence lay bare the fundamental truth of institutionalized racism in the United States: Public institutions fail People of Color and other historically marginalized groups. And worse, they often enact violence on them. As a result, race, more than any other identity marker in the United States, is correlated with a slew of life outcomes. On the whole, People of Color experience more adverse outcomes across educational attainment,¹⁵ housing,¹⁶ employment,¹⁷ health,¹⁸ wealth,¹⁹ incarceration,²⁰ and even life expectancy.²¹

These injustices and inequities are based in and perpetuated by white supremacy. White supremacy is the ideology that undergirds the original social construct of race and still lies at the heart of cultural, economic, and political power in the United States. White supremacy is the insidious belief, whether conscious or unconscious, that white people are simply better than People of Color,²² that they are smarter, more valuable, more capable, and better suited to lead than all others. It infects the very air we breathe and teaches us a pernicious racial hierarchy that justifies racial oppression, as well as enables those who benefit most from white supremacy to avoid discussing or engaging with its privileges and consequences. This learned silence serves only to preserve and perpetuate white supremacy generation after generation. The United States' systems and institutions were intentionally constructed to preserve

13 Coulter, K., Sabo, S., Martínez, D., Chisholm, K., Gonzalez, K., Bass Zavala, S., ... & Slack, J. (2020). A study and analysis of the treatment of Mexican unaccompanied minors by customs and border protection. *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, 8(2), 96-110.

14 Monico, C., Rotabi, K., Vissing, Y., & Lee, J. (2019). Forced child-family separations in the Southwestern U.S. border under the "zero-tolerance" policy: The adverse impact on well-being of migrant children (part 2). *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, 4(3), 180-191.

15 Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Huie, F., Wakhungu, P., Yuan, X., Nathan, A., & Hwang, Y. A. (2017). Completing college: A national view of student attainment rates by race and ethnicity — Fall 2010 cohort (Signature Report No. 12b). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Retrieved from <https://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport12-supplement-2/>

16 Solomon, D., Maxwell, C., & Castro, A. (2019). Systemic inequality: Displacement, exclusion, and segregation: How America's housing system undermines wealth building in Communities of Color. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2019/08/07/472617/systemic-inequality-displacement-exclusion-segregation/>; Matthew, D., Rodrigue, E., & Reeves, R. (2016). Time for justice: Tackling race inequalities in health and housing. Brookings Institution. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/time-for-justice-tackling-race-inequalities-in-health-and-housing/>

17 Williams, J., & Wilson, V. (2019). Black workers endure persistent racial disparities in employment outcomes. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.epi.org/publication/labor-day-2019-racial-disparities-in-employment/>; Solomon, D., Maxwell, C., & Castro, A. (2019). Systemic inequality and economic opportunity. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2019/08/07/472910/systemic-inequality-economic-opportunity/>

18 Carratala, S., & Maxwell, C. (2020). Health disparities by race and ethnicity. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2020/05/07/484742/health-disparities-race-ethnicity/>; Matthew, D., Rodrigue, E., & Reeves, R. (2016). Time for justice: Tackling race inequalities in health and housing. Brookings Institution. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/time-for-justice-tackling-race-inequalities-in-health-and-housing/>

19 Kochhar, R., & Cilluffo, A. (2017). How wealth inequality has changed in the U.S. since the great recession, by race, ethnicity, and income. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/01/how-wealth-inequality-has-changed-in-the-u-s-since-the-great-recession-by-race-ethnicity-and-income/>

20 The Sentencing Project. (2018). Report to the United Nations on racial disparities in the U.S. criminal justice system. Retrieved from <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/un-report-on-racial-disparities/>

21 Arias, E., & Xu, J. (2017). United States life tables, 2017. National Vital Statistics Reports, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr68/nvsr68_07-508.pdf

22 Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). "New racism," color-blind racism, and the future of whiteness in America. In A. W. Doane & E. Bonilla-Silva (Eds.), *White out: The continuing significance of racism* (271-84). New York: Routledge.

and perpetuate white supremacy^{23,24,25} and we see the continued legacy and impact of these systems today. The U.S. education system is one of the many mechanisms that perpetuates and reinforces white supremacy.²⁶

At a macro level, schools are sites of social reproduction wherein many white families and communities that disproportionately enjoy significant economic and social advantages due to structural racism²⁷ also receive commensurate educational advantages.²⁸ For example, school finance systems rely heavily on local property taxes, which affords the most money to the wealthiest communities and reinforces and compounds existing disparities.^{29,30} Indeed, this structure uses public policy to protect intergenerational wealth.³¹ Low-income communities and Communities of Color who have experienced generations of racist and discriminatory policies are educated in a system that exacerbates the race-based wealth and opportunity gap.³²

Daily interactions and experiences within educational systems also — both implicitly and explicitly — reinforce racial hierarchies.³³ From disproportionate discipline³⁴ and special education rates³⁵ to a lack of representation in curriculum³⁶ and teacher/leadership positions,³⁷ education systems have more so succeeded at sustaining inequities than working to dismantle them. For instance, white-centric U.S. history and Eurocentric world history curricula and textbooks have tended to uncritically center the experiences and contributions of white people, and to overlook, discount, and even disparage other people and cultures. Most obviously, many schools do an unacceptably poor job teaching about slavery

23 Fletcher Hill, J. (2017). *The sin of white supremacy: Christianity, racism, and religious diversity in America*. New York: Orbis Books.

24 Gillborn, D. (2006). Rethinking white supremacy: Who counts in “WhiteWorld.” *Ethnicities*, 6(3), 318-340.

25 Kendi, I. X. (2017). *Stamped from the beginning: The definitive history of racist ideas in America*. New York: Bold Type Books.

26 Education, I. A National Tragedy, a National Challenge (The Kennedy Report). 1969, November. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office. Retrieved from <https://narf.org/nill/resources/education/reports/kennedy/toc.html>

27 Long, H., & Van Dam, A. (2020, June 4). The black-white economic divide is as wide as it was in 1968. *Washington Post*, 4.

28 Gillborn, D. (2005). Education policy as an act of white supremacy: Whiteness, critical race theory and education reform. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20(4), 485-505.

29 Baker, B. D., & Corcoran, S. P. (2012). The stealth inequities of school funding: How state and local school finance systems perpetuate inequitable student spending. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2012/09/19/38189/the-stealth-inequities-of-school-funding/>

30 Garcia, E., & Weiss, E. (2017). Education inequalities at the school starting gate: Gaps, trends, and strategies to address them. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.epi.org/publication/education-inequalities-at-the-school-starting-gate/>

31 Oliver, M. L., & Shapiro, T. M. (2006). *Black wealth, white wealth: A new perspective on racial inequality*. New York: Routledge.

32 Hamilton, D., & Darity, W. A. (2017). The Political Economy of Education, Financial Literacy, and the Racial Wealth Gap. *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Review*, 99 (1), 59-76 First Quarter, 99, 1, 2017: 59-76.

33 Lewis, A. E. (2003). *Race in the schoolyard: Negotiating the color line in classrooms and communities*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

34 U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights. Joint “Dear Colleague” Letter. Jan. 8, 2014. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html>

35 Blanchett, W. J. (2006). Disproportionate representation of African American students in special education: Acknowledging the role of white privilege and racism. *Educational Researcher*, 35(6), 24-28.

36 Brown, K. D., & Brown, A. L. (2010). Silenced memories: An examination of the sociocultural knowledge on race and racial violence in official school curriculum. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 43(2), 139-154.

37 D’amico, D., Pawlewicz, R. J., Earley, P. M., & McGeehan, A. P. (2017). Where are all the Black teachers? Discrimination in the teacher labor market. *Harvard Educational Review*, 87(1), 26-49.

in the United States,^{38,39} and fail to even acknowledge the many thriving Black civilizations that existed millenia before the United States was established.⁴⁰ Rarely do Students of Color see themselves reflected in their books, and if they do, it is often in one-dimensional, simplistic, or tokenized portrayals.⁴¹ The relative absence of People of Color from texts in school restricts how Children of Color learn about themselves, their culture, and their history, and how they are seen within the context of white supremacy culture.

All organizations are accountable for playing a role in either perpetuating or dismantling these same inequities internally among their staff, and subsequently with the populations they serve. To disrupt white supremacy and racism, education-focused organizations themselves must interrogate and fundamentally transform not just their demographics but their culture and practices as well. Deconstructing the systemic racism embedded in the American education system will require committed and ongoing antiracism: the “active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies, practices, and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared...”⁴²

DEI and Antiracism

Throughout this report, we choose to explicitly call out antiracism as a part of diversity, inclusion, and equity (DEI) work because of Promise54’s organizational approach of disproportionately and unapologetically emphasizing race, and in an effort to support and remind others to consider doing the same. We don’t believe that an organization — or a society — can get to diversity, inclusion, and equity until and unless antiracism is continually practiced. That said, because our current survey does not include a dimension specific to antiracism, we refer to DEI alone when we talk about results or learnings deriving directly from our survey.

In the U.S., power over,⁴³ a form of power based on domination and control and built on a belief that power is a finite and scarce resource, has been enacted and institutionalized across multiple identities beyond and intersecting with race. Specifically, we have built a society based on normalization of certain identities, such as those who identify as cisgender, straight, men, able-bodied, U.S. born, and white, among others. In so doing, we have marginalized other identity groups, such as people who identify as transgender, **non-binary, LGBTQIA+**, disabled, immigrant, and People of Color, among others.

Alternatively, to create a society where all people are seen, valued, heard, and have true agency, we must center **radical humanity** and work toward shared liberation by intentionally disrupting the current status quo. Diversity, inclusion, and equity enable this disruption.

A **diverse** organization focuses explicitly on heterogeneity across multiple lines of identity, including ensuring that the communities served are represented throughout organizational hierarchies. An **inclusive** organization creates the holistic experience of belonging through trusting relationships, psychological

38 Wijeyesinghe, C. L., Griffin, P., & Love, B. (1997). Racism curriculum design: In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook (pp. 82-109). New York: Routledge.

39 Nelson, J. L., & Pang, V. O. (2006). Racism, prejudice, and the social studies curriculum. The Social Studies Curriculum: Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities, 3, 115-135.

40 Williams, C. (2019). Destruction of Black civilization: Great issues of a Race from 4500 BC to 2000 AD. Chicago, IL: Third World Press.

41 Coles, J. A. (2020). “It’s really geniuses that live in the hood”: Black urban youth curricular un/makings and centering Blackness in slavery’s afterlife. Curriculum Inquiry, 1-20.

42 NAC International Perspectives. (n.d.). Antiracism. Retrieved from <http://www.aclrc.com/antiracism>

43 Stuart, G. (2019). 4 types of power: What are power over; power with; power to and power within? [Blog post]. Sustaining Community. Retrieved from <https://sustainingcommunity.wordpress.com/2019/02/01/4-types-of-power/>

safety,⁴⁴ and the confident ability to bring the experiences and identities that matter most to us into the workplace — and, in so doing, find agency, voice, and connection. In an **equitable** organization, each individual experiences fairness, has access to the support and resources needed to enable success, and the predictive links between identities and outcomes have been broken. In addition to being the right thing to do because we all deserve to experience fairness and belonging at work, effective diversity, equity, and inclusion lead to strong business outcomes and enable stronger impact as well.⁴⁵ Diverse, inclusive and equitable organizations have higher levels of innovation and more effective decision making,⁴⁶ as well as greater staff satisfaction, engagement, productivity, retention, and outcomes.⁴⁷

Within education organizations, all three dimensions — diversity, inclusion, and equity⁴⁸ — are needed, as they work together in an integrated way to support the dismantling of oppression and the creation of equity-based systems, practices, and structures. Without racial diversity, majority-white organizations may create a harmonious and positive staff culture but typically lack the innovation, risk-taking, and problem-solving — in addition to the cultural competence — required to address vexing societal problems like educational inequity. Without inclusion, organizations may have representative voices among staff but lack the conditions where such voices are truly heard, valued, and supported, resulting in more negative staff experiences, worse solutions or outcomes, and higher rates of turnover among historically marginalized groups. Without equity, organizations risk replicating the predictive links between identity and outcomes that further entrench white supremacy power structures in their internally facing and externally facing work.

In recent years the education sector at large has acknowledged that advancing DEI is critical.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, our research finds that the diversity, inclusion, and equity of the education field has not materially shifted since our original Unrealized Impact report — or even over the past 67 years.⁵⁰ The sector remains grossly unrepresentative of the students served, and organizations continue to struggle to build and sustain inclusive cultures and equitable systems and structures.

It takes a sustained commitment, an openness to staff feedback, and an orientation toward continuous learning for organizations to improve the ways they operate and how their staff experience DEI and antiracism. Moreover, it will take many people, including leaders, board members, staff, funders, community members, and families, to create more diverse, inclusive, and equitable and antiracist organizations. In this report, we offer insights and recommendations drawing from our updated data as well as our professional experience in hopes of supporting organizational efforts to advance DEI and

44 Douyon, V., & Vinson, K. (2020). Psychological safety: What's keeping your team from taking critical risks? Promis54.org. Retrieved from <https://promise54.org/psychological-safety-whats-keeping-your-team/>

45 American Sociological Association. (2009). Diversity linked to increased sales revenue and profits, more customers. Retrieved from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/03/090331091252.htm

46 Phillips, K. W., Liljenquist, K. A., & Neale, M. A. (2009). Is the pain worth the gain? The advantages and liabilities of agreeing with socially distinct newcomers. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 35(3), 336-350. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167208328062>

47 Schwartz, R., Weinberg, J., Hagenbuch, D., & Scott, A. (2011). *The voice of nonprofit talent: Perceptions of diversity in the workplace*. Boston, MA: CommonGood Careers and Level Playing Field Institute.

48 Padamsee, X., Crowe, B., Louis, L., Messano, F., & Paperny, T. (2017). *Unrealized impact: The case for diversity, equity, and inclusion*. Promise54. Retrieved from http://www.unrealizedimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Unrealized_Impact-Final-072017.pdf

49 Theoharis, G. (2009). *The school leaders our children deserve: Seven keys to equity, social justice, and school reform*. New York: Teachers College Press.

50 Mahnken, K. (2018). How America's schools have (and haven't) changed in the 64 years since the Brown v. Board verdict — as told in 15 charts. the74million.org. Retrieved from <https://www.the74million.org/how-americas-schools-have-and-havent-changed-in-the-64-years-since-the-brown-v-board-verdict-as-told-in-15-charts/>

antiracism. Our goals for this report are to assess the state of DEI across the education field, identify and share lessons from organizations experiencing success, and support leaders to define clear and tailored paths forward to become more diverse, inclusive, and equitable and antiracist.

Project Overview

Released in 2017, “[Unrealized Impact](#)”⁵¹ was a first-of-its-kind study of diversity, inclusion, and equity across the education sector. We set out to explore the demographics of the education sector, the DEI-focused policies and practices organizations were deploying, the experiences of staff within those organizations, and what possible links might exist between DEI and student success.

In December 2016, we developed two different survey instruments — originally designed with a focus on the education sector — to gain a more complete understanding of the education and other social justice-oriented landscapes. We used the DEI Organization Profile Survey to gather information on an organization’s objectives, intentions, demographics, and policies. Meanwhile, we considered our DEI Staff Experience Survey the “truth check” because it assessed how staff actually experienced those organizations.

By February 2020 — when we pulled the data for this report — using the same two surveys, we had more than doubled the number of organizations in our data set, expanding from roughly 200 to 500 participating organizations, and we had expanded our set of individual respondents more than five times, from 5,000 to 28,000. This greatly expanded base of data, in combination with our direct and

deep experience supporting more than 100 organizations each year and our qualitative research via our [DEI In Action Case Studies](#),⁵² has positioned us to complete a more extensive analysis along further lines of inquiry.

Our larger data set also allowed us to complete analyses through a much more intersectional identity lens including differences in staff experiences along individual race and ethnicity, gender, and LGBTQIA+ identity lines. For example, we looked at the experiences of Black women and Black men, as well as People of Color who also identify as LGBTQIA+. Additionally, we analyzed correlations at the intersection

Central questions of the original 2017 “Unrealized Impact” report:

- *What are the racial and socioeconomic demographics of staff, leadership, and boards in education organizations?*
- *What are the policies and practices that education organizations employ in relation to diversity, inclusion, and equity?*
- *What are staff perceptions of diversity, inclusion, and equity in their organizations and of related practices and behaviors?*
- *What are the perceived links between organizational diversity, inclusion, and equity and student success?*

51 Padamsee, X., Crowe, B., Louis, L., Messano, F., & Paperny, T. (2017). Unrealized impact: The case for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Promise54. Retrieved from http://www.unrealizedimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Unrealized_Impact-Final-072017.pdf

52 Ortiz, L., Osagie, K., & Padamsee, X. (2019). DEI in action: A radically human approach to case studies. Retrieved from <https://casestudies.promise54.org/>

of our two survey instruments directly, connecting organizational practices and staff experiences. Finally, our more robust data set also allowed us to study longitudinal trends over time, from December 2016 to 2020.

Our goal is to present an aggregate view of DEI practices and experiences across today's education sector, and to elevate strategies that can support overall improvement in organizational DEI work. To that end, our updated research approach was framed around the following key questions:

- 1 Since 2017, have the organizations in our study become more racially/ethnically diverse?
- 2 What patterns emerge in staff perceptions and experiences of DEI when we view results by both independent and intersecting racial and ethnic, gender, or LGBTQIA+ identity lines?
- 3 Are there associations between the racial and ethnic identities of organizational leadership and the experiences of their staff?
- 4 What policies, structures, or practices are associated with more positive staff DEI experiences?
- 5 Based on these insights, what actions do we recommend?

This new research expands our collective understanding of how organizations approach DEI and what organizations can do to further their DEI journeys. Advancing DEI within education organizations is a key component of the larger goals of deconstructing white supremacy and the structural inequality it creates, and working toward shared liberation.

Methodology

We used two survey instruments as our primary source of data and analysis for this report. Our DEI Organization Profile Survey collects organization-level data on demographics, as well as diversity, inclusion, and equity policies, strategies, and structures. The survey deploys a mix of Likert scale and open-response questions, and is typically completed by one senior leader within each organization. The DEI Staff Experience Survey is our tool to collect data on individual staff perceptions and experiences with regard to diversity, inclusion, and equity at their organizations. This survey is administered to all staff at an organization, and it primarily deploys a 5-option Likert scale format along with three optional open-response questions that allow participants to add context to their overall experiences with DEI in their organization. To maintain fidelity and consistency, we have not introduced significant changes to the survey instruments since they were created in 2016-17 (see page 84 in the 2017 “Unrealized Impact” Report for further details).⁵³ The combination of data from both the DEI Organization Profile and Staff Experience Surveys allows us to confidently identify themes in how organizations across the education sector work to address diversity, inclusion, and equity, as well as how staff experience DEI at their organizations. Furthermore, our client-facing experience supporting more than 100 different organizations in their DEI and talent efforts each year adds additional texture to our analysis.

Between December 2016 and February 2020, we received nearly 500 different DEI Organization Profile Survey submissions and more than 28,000 individual DEI Staff Experience Survey responses.⁵⁴ Since our original 2017 “Unrealized Impact” study, our data set has grown to more than twice as many organizations and more than five times as many individuals. For this 2020 report, we intentionally only included responses submitted before the COVID-19 pandemic in order to minimize possible intersecting and confounding factors in our analyses.

53 Padamsee, X., Crowe, B., Louis, L., Messano, F., & Paperny, T. (2017). Unrealized impact: The case for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Promise54. Retrieved from http://www.unrealizedimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Unrealized_Impact-Final-072017.pdf

54 Specifically, our survey ran from November 2016 to February 2020. Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, we closed our survey to limit any additional burden placed on organizations during this difficult time as well as to ensure that our data are not skewed by the myriad effects of the pandemic.

	"Unrealized Impact" (2017)	"Unrealized Impact 2.0" (2021)
DEI Organization Profile Surveys		
Surveyed Dates	12/2016 - 03/2017	12/2016 - 02/2020
Reponses	213	556
Staff Experience Surveys		
Surveyed Dates	12/2016 - 03/2017	12/2016 - 02/2020
Reponses	4,912	28,069

To conduct the analyses in this updated report, we once again used three different indices — one for each of our three principal categories of diversity, inclusion, and equity — as we did in our original 2017 study. The indices are based on self-reported staff experiences of DEI across a wide range of questions. Each index is a combined quantitative measure of respondents’ answers to specific survey questions under each domain. For example, a respondent’s score on our Inclusion Index is the simple average of their level of agreement or disagreement with 13 inclusion-related statements across the survey, such as: “I can bring my ‘whole self’ to work,” and “Our culture respects individuals and values differences.” The table below describes each index and provides an example of a question used to create each index score.

Index	Description of Index	Sample Index Questions
Diversity	The Diversity Index measures how staff perceive and experience diversity within the organization. The metric is derived from a number of diversity-focused survey questions. Staff perceptions of diversity — how diversity feels and operates in the organization — provide a more nuanced assessment of organizational diversity than simply analyzing an organization’s demographic data. With this approach, it is possible for an organization that appears more diverse based on their staff profile to actually score lower than another organization with a less diverse staff profile, or vice versa.	“The organization has a diversity of socioeconomic backgrounds.” (Likert scale of 1-5, 1 strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree)
Inclusion	The Inclusion Index measures how staff perceive and experience inclusion within the organization. Multiple questions from the DEI Staff Experience Survey that assess organizational inclusion are combined into this Index. We ultimately rate an organization’s inclusivity based on the simple average of the Inclusion Index scores of all staff who participate in the survey.	“We have free and open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs.” (Likert scale of 1-5, 1 strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree)

Index	Description of Index	Sample Index Questions
Equity	The Equity Index measures how staff perceive and experience equity within the organization. Given that the majority of organizations in our survey do not track equity of outcomes (e.g., salary and promotion) by race or socioeconomic background, we measure organizational equity by combining several equity-oriented questions from the DEI Staff Experience Survey, such as: "Our organization has an explicit commitment to equity." This index is thus a measure of perception of equity, not of equity outcomes.	"Career advancement is equally accessible for all." (Likert scale of 1-5, 1 strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree)

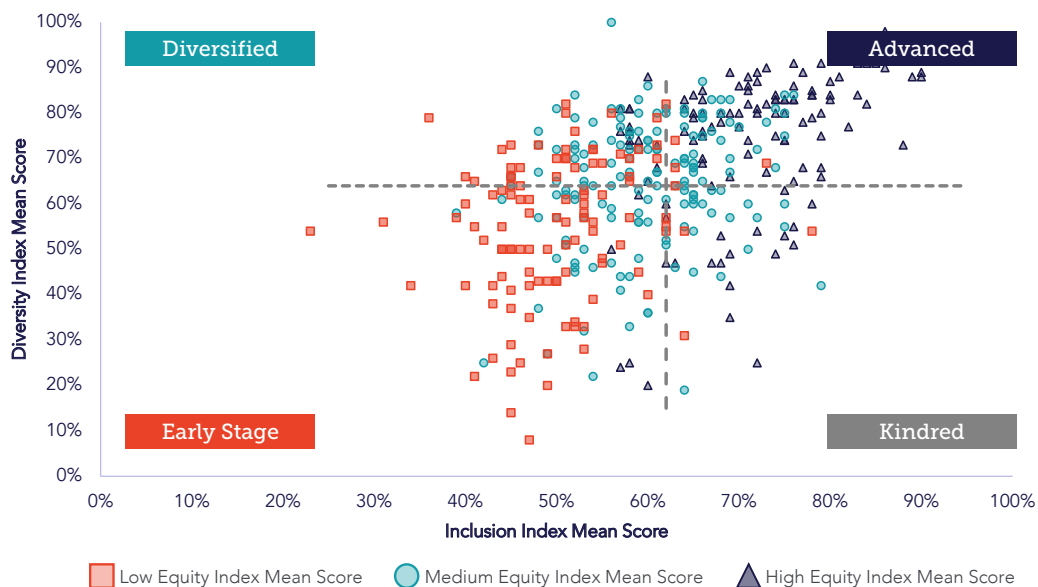
This approach allowed us to assess how each staff respondent perceived and experienced diversity, inclusion, and equity within their organization, along with the collective aggregate of the staff experience across the organization. Aggregating the data into these indices further allowed us to track and explore differences across each metric individually, as well as how these data points interact and intersect to affect staff experiences.

We consulted a 26-person panel of specialists that included a diverse set of leaders from nonprofit, school reform, public charters, traditional school systems, higher education, and policy research organizations to lend expertise during both the design of our individual survey tools and the construction of each of the three indices.

In cases where organizations administered surveys more than once, we analyzed each administration independently as a "point in time" assessment, which accounts for potential attrition within organizations and any other changes over time that may impact DEI outcomes.

At the onset of the cross-tabulated data analysis in our original "Unrealized Impact" report, we began noticing common trends among organizations that scored similarly on the three indices. Using a scatter-plot diagram to visualize where organizations landed in their DEI journeys, we discovered there were four broad groupings of organizations with similar organizational structures and staff experience outcomes. Each organization within the four groups had a striking amount of similarities to the other organizations in their group. As such, we conceptualized and created four distinct "Profiles," which allow for an efficient observation of patterns in organizational DEI practices, policies, and structures and what the staff experiences were within those practices, policies, and structures. We continue to use these Profiles as an anchor for analysis in this updated report (more about these profiles — and concrete recommendations for each — on page 57). As illustrated below, among the organizations we rated, 31% were Early Stage, 25% were Diversified, 11% were Kindred, and 33% were Advanced.

Staff Experience Profile Chart

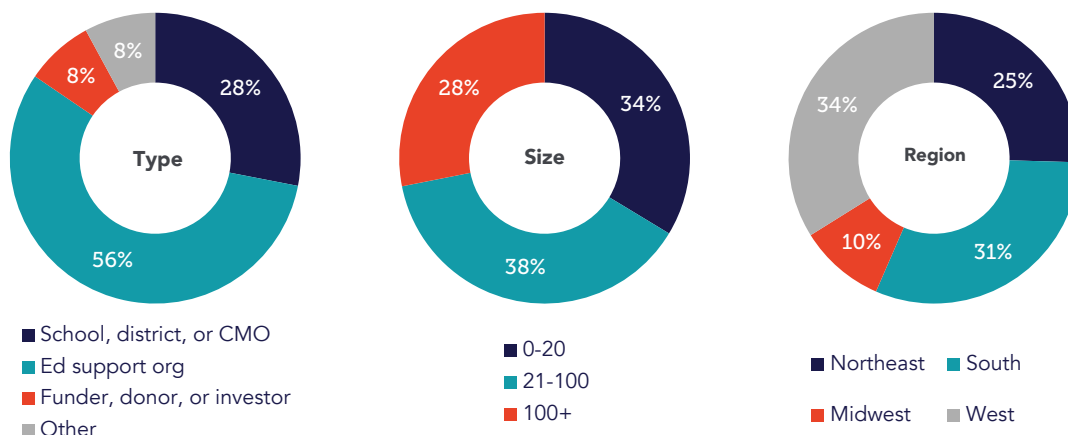


The placement of an organization into a Profile category is based on their scores on the Diversity and Inclusion Indices. The x-axis denotes the Inclusion Index, and the y-axis denotes the Diversity Index. In the chart above, an organization's Equity Index score is captured through a specific shape and color that signifies the level of perceived equity in relation to the field — low, medium, or high. Although an organization's Equity Index score does not positionally change its profile location on the scatter plot, we find strong correlations between the three indices. Organizations with higher equity scores tend to score more strongly on the Diversity and Inclusion Indices as well. Organizations that score well on both the Diversity and Inclusion Indices — those in the upper-right quadrant — also tend to have higher scores on the Equity Index. A deeper discussion of the Profiles can be found on page 57.

In addition to analyzing results and trends within each survey instrument individually, we also cross-tabulated responses from the DEI Staff Experience Surveys with responses from the DEI Organization Profile Surveys in the cases where organizations administered both at once. In total, we had 329 matched responses between DEI Organization Profile Survey administrations and DEI Staff Experience Survey administrations, with a total of 24,752 staff responses, representing 248 unique organizations. This analysis allowed us to identify associations between staff experiences and organizational structures or policies. This intersecting analysis generated a holistic view of DEI at each individual organization, as well as across organizations in our data set.

To our knowledge, at the time of this publication, our surveys have generated the most comprehensive available data on education organizations' DEI status. However, we must acknowledge that they do not constitute a fully representative sample of the education sector. For example, we know that traditional public schools and districts are underrepresented in our surveys, while charter management organizations and schools are overrepresented. Additionally, while we have a national data set, we find that the western and northeastern U.S. are overrepresented in our data, while the Midwest is underrepresented relative to the national general population. Finally, compared with national P-12 enrollment demographic ratios on race and ethnicity, the organizations in our sample disproportionately serve Students of Color. The "other" category illustrated below includes non-education organizations. While Promise54 does not exclusively serve educational organizations, this research and report intentionally focuses on education.

Distribution of Organizational Type, Size, and Geography



Moreover, our data primarily comes from organizations that are intentionally working on DEI efforts and voluntarily sign up and/or pay to administer our surveys — both factors that limit our overall population size, participant pool, and types of organizations that engage in our surveys. As such, most of our data comes from organizations that are investing in and using our tools to improve DEI at their organization. Similarly, the majority of the organizations that use our survey tools were specifically designed to combat educational inequities. Even so, we see that there is still significant work remaining to reach organizations' DEI aspirations.

We raise these points to acknowledge that our data has limitations. While not a fully representative sample of the United States' education sector, the findings in this report share tens of thousands of voices and experiences that represent hundreds of thousands more.

See Appendix B on page 80 for a more complete discussion of our methodology.



Key Insights

Below, we highlight the seven most significant key insights that surfaced through the analysis of over 100 cross-tabulations from our DEI Staff Experience Survey data.

1. Who Runs the (Education) World? Still White People That Needs to Change

Organizations working to improve DEI often focus heavily on diversity while overlooking equity and inclusion. For example, 40% of open-response comments within the DEI Staff Experience Survey identified the recruitment of racially diverse staff as the primary strength of their organization's DEI work, while only 18% reported equity as a strength, and 16% indicated inclusion as a strength.

Despite this emphasis, the overall education sector remains overwhelmingly white compared with the students we serve. Past research has already identified the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in education organizations as an increasingly urgent problem, especially as the country is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse.⁵⁵ For decades, 80% or more of all K-12 educators have been white, even as the population of Students of Color has steadily increased.⁵⁶ According to the most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 18% of adults in the education field, across all roles, are People of Color,⁵⁷ whereas slightly more than 50% of students are Students of Color in all U.S. public schools.⁵⁸

The majority of organizations in our study focus specifically on advancing educational equity within historically marginalized populations and are making intentional efforts to advance DEI. Nevertheless, in our data set, we find the same pattern of underrepresentation: 80% of the students served by the organizations in this study are Students of Color, whereas only 53% of staff are People of Color. In fact, over the last three years, our surveys indicate very little increase in diversity within the organizations in our sample.

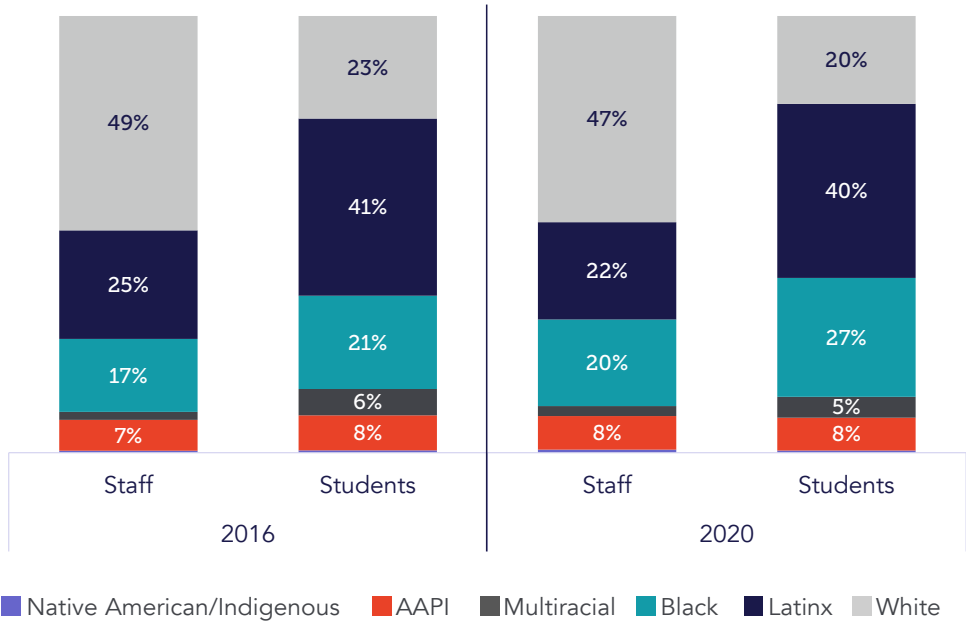
55 Census data & API identities. (2020). Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence. Retrieved from <https://www.api-gbv.org/resources/census-data-api-identities/>

56 Table 203.60. Enrollment and percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity and level of education: Fall 1998 through fall 2023. (2013). Digest of Education Statistics.. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_203.60.asp

57 Labor force statistics from the current population survey — demographics. (2021). U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm>

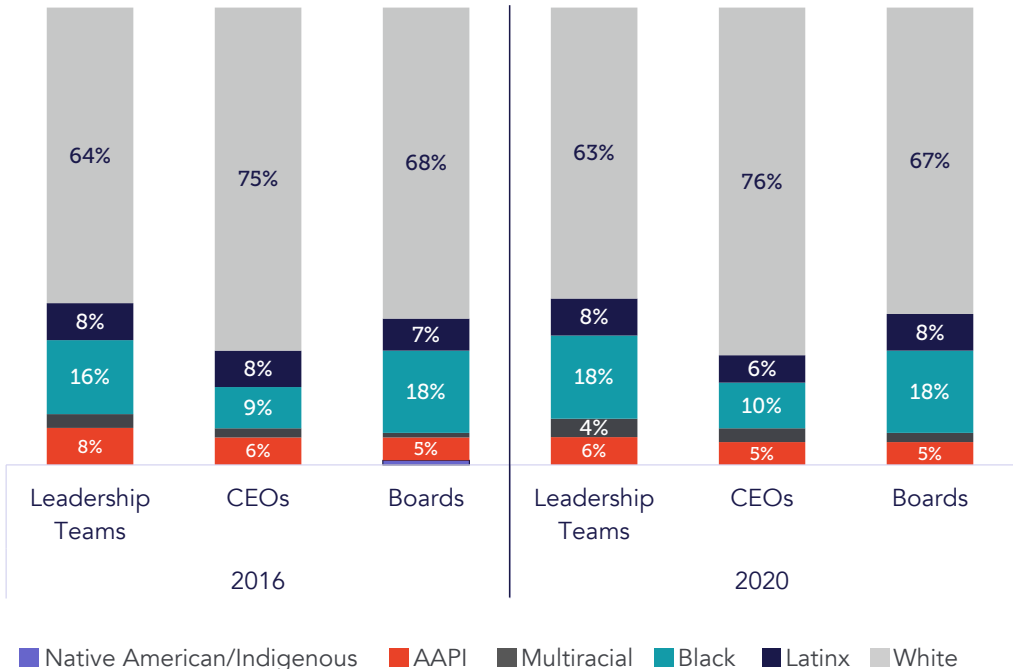
58 COE — Racial/ethnic enrollment in public schools. (n.d.). National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cge#:~:text=In%20fall%202017%2C%20of%20the,million%20were%20American%20Indian%2FAlaska>

Student Versus Staff Racial Representation Gap Virtually Unchanged: 2016 to 2020



The senior ranks of education organizations in our data set are especially dominated by white leaders. Unfortunately, the overrepresentation of white people in organizational leadership mirrors what we found in 2016-17 when we observed that 75% of CEOs, 68% of board members, and 64% of executive teams were white. As indicated in the chart below, since our data gathering and tracking has begun, we do not see clear evidence to suggest increased diversity among the leadership teams of education organizations.

Leaders of Education Organizations Still Overwhelmingly White: 2016 to 2020



This staggering disparity between the racial and ethnic makeup of students in the United States as compared to the leadership of organizations who serve them is particularly alarming when we consider the degree to which power and privilege are concentrated at the senior-most levels of an organizational hierarchy (e.g., control over pace of the work, decision rights, access to resources and information). This means that many key decisions, such as program design, curriculum content, and financial investments, are likely made through a lens of racial privilege rather than being driven and informed by the lived experiences of individuals and communities most impacted by systemic racism in this country.

The most pronounced disparity in representation is within the **Latinx** population, who comprise 40% of students in our sample but only 8% of organizational leadership. This severe underrepresentation is especially troubling given that Latinx people accounted for 52% of all U.S. population growth between 2010 and 2019.⁵⁹ Indeed, Latinx students now represent one in four students, and are projected to reach one in three students over the next five years.^{60,61,62} Latinx students are also the least likely to have a teacher of their same racial or ethnic group, and that gap in teacher representation is actually increasing.⁶³ This disparity is particularly alarming given the demonstrated benefits of student-teacher identity matching on academic achievement,⁶⁴ school discipline,⁶⁵ and long-term educational attainment.⁶⁶

Most other Communities of Color are also underrepresented. Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI people) are closest to parity: They comprise 8% of students served by organizations in our sample and 6% of organizational leadership, but this does not account for potential disparities in representation among subgroups within the broad AAPI race/identity category. See Table 2 in Appendix B for a centralized breakdown of the racial and ethnic populations among PK-12 students and the corresponding representation in organizational leadership in our sample.

While the vast majority of leaders in the education sector are white, leadership diversity does vary slightly by organization type. Looking specifically at the demographics of CEOs across the sector, school districts and charter management organizations in our sample are the most racially diverse, but only marginally, as shown in the chart below: 73% of CEOs in these organizations are white.

Meanwhile, philanthropic organizations have the least diversity at the CEO level, with 80% white CEOs. The lack of leadership diversity in education philanthropy is especially concerning given its

59 Noe-Bustamante, L., Lopez, M., & Krogstad, J. (2020). U.S. Hispanic population surpassed 60 million in 2019, but growth has slowed. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/07/u-s-hispanic-population-surpassed-60-million-in-2019-but-growth-has-slowed/>

60 Table 203.60. Enrollment and percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity and level of education: Fall 1998 through fall 2023. (2013). National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_203.60.asp

61 Foxen, P., & Mather, M. (2016). Toward a more equitable future: The trends and challenges facing America's Latino children. Retrieved from <http://publications.unidosus.org/handle/123456789/1627>

62 Calderon, B. (2015). Latinos in new spaces: Emerging trends and implications for federal education policy. Retrieved from <https://www.unidosus.org/publications/latinos-in-new-spaces-emerging-trends-and-implications-for-federal-education-policy>

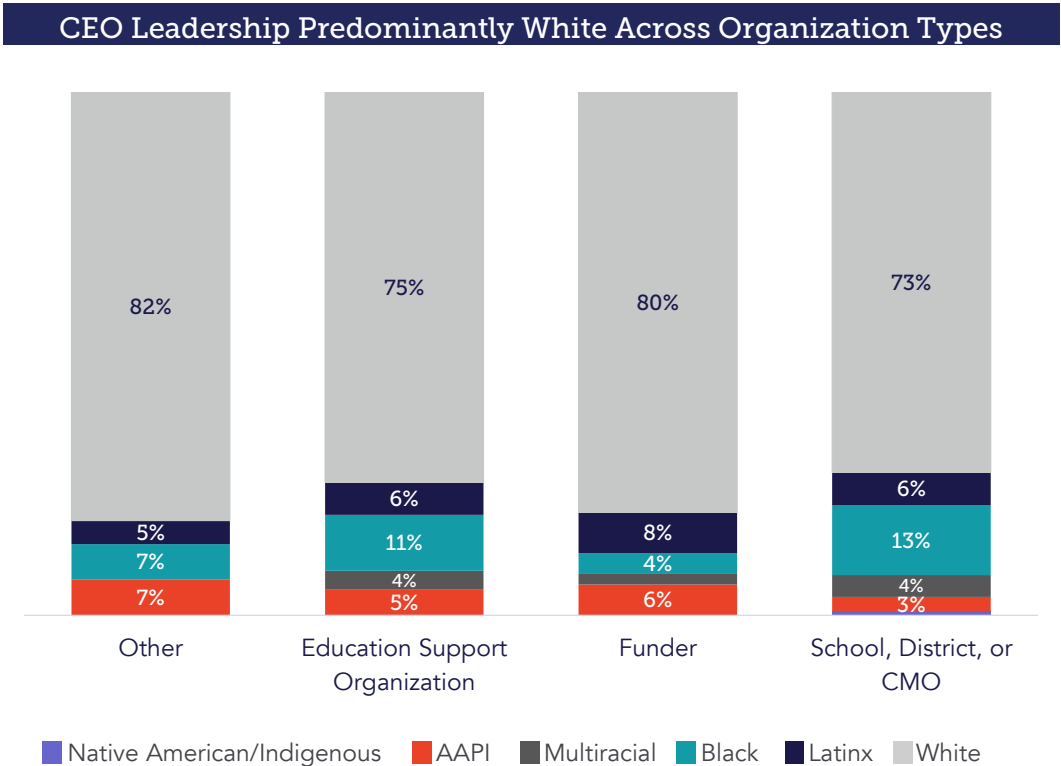
63 Shapiro, S., & Partelow, L. (2018). How to fix the large and growing Latinx teacher-student gap. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2018/02/20/445999/fix-large-growing-latinx-teacher-student-gap/>

64 Gershenson, S., Hart, C. M., Hyman, J., Lindsay, C., & Papageorge, N. W. (2018). The long-run impacts of same-race teachers (No. w25254). National Bureau of Economic Research; Dee, T. S. (2005). A teacher like me: Does race, ethnicity, or gender matter? *American Economic Review*, 95(2), 158-165.

65 Holt, S. B., & Gershenson, S. (2019). The impact of demographic representation on absences and suspensions. *Policy Studies Journal*, 47(4), 1069-1099.

66 Gershenson, S., Hart, C. M., Hyman, J., Lindsay, C., & Papageorge, N. W. (2018). The long-run impacts of same-race teachers (No. w25254). National Bureau of Economic Research.

disproportionate influence in controlling and distributing resources to other organizations. Considering these demographics, philanthropic organizations are likely exerting that influence through a lens of racial privilege. At a macro level, this dynamic risks further exacerbating the effects of existing racial wealth gaps in the U.S., where wealth disproportionately favors white Americans over any other race and ethnicity.⁶⁷



Increased diversity, especially within the ranks of senior leadership (e.g., C-suite, executive leadership) is a critically important component of transformational change. At best, the constant lack of opportunity and access for people with historically marginalized identities perpetuates inequities as organizations lack the diverse perspectives and experiences required to disrupt status quo thinking and innovate effectively. At worst, the education sector’s consistent failure to racially diversify our staffs — especially among leadership teams — is indicative of the persistent root-level white supremacist belief that white folks are more able (i.e., smarter, better problem-solvers, more qualified, etc.) to lead and to solve the most vexing social justice challenges.

“
 The transition from a white founded organization to an organization that is of and with the community is still in progress.
 ”

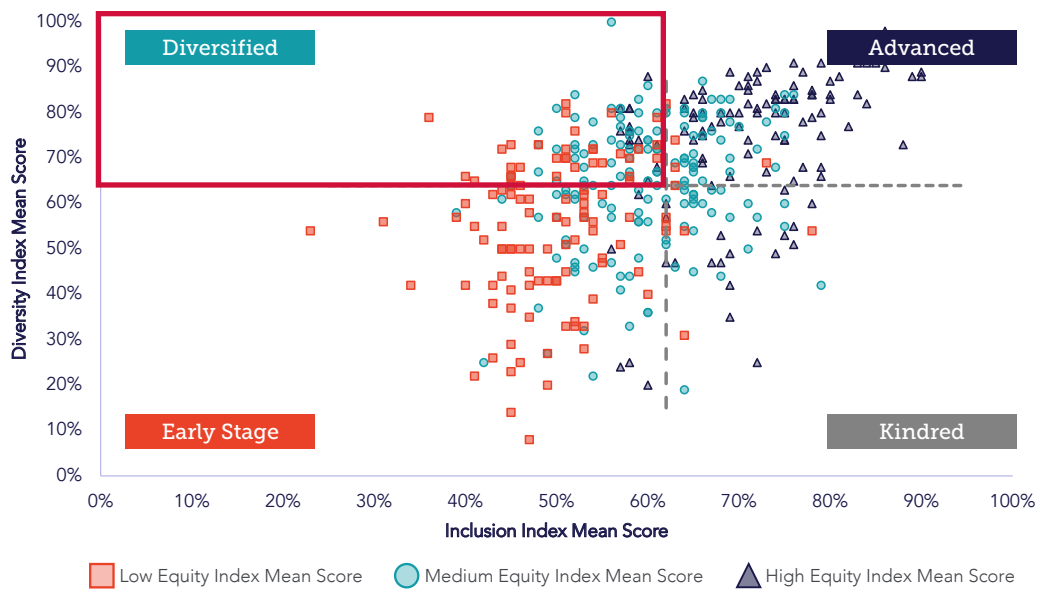
- Respondent, Organization Profile Survey, 2020

⁶⁷ McIntosh, K., Moss, E., Nunn, R., & Shambaugh, J. (2020). Examining the Black-white wealth gap. Brookings Institution. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/02/27/examining-the-black-white-wealth-gap/>

2. Diversity Without Inclusion and Equity Perpetuates Harm

While diversity is a critical aspect of advancing DEI and antiracism work in organizations, diversity alone is not sufficient for meaningful change. Perhaps this is why we find that 25% of our organizations are Diversified, meaning they experience relatively high levels of diversity in their organization yet still experience relatively low levels of inclusion and often lower equity as well.

Diversified Organizations Experience High Diversity but Low Inclusion and Often Lower Equity



Many organizations believe diversity to be the most accessible, actionable, and measurable aspect of DEI, and therefore assume it to be the best place to start. We find that organizations and leaders are often surprised at the notion that an exclusive focus on diversity is not enough to materialize meaningful DEI progress.

When organizations begin DEI efforts with an objective to racially diversify, we often see an expectation that once we diversify, inclusion and equity will automatically take root and move forward. The implicit assumption often underlying this misperception is that People of Color (regardless of position or job responsibilities around DEI work, and without screening for requisite skills or interest, or providing associated support and compensation) will design, lead, and drive the work forward.

This is not an expectation often given to white organizational leaders, even though they benefit most from white supremacy and therefore, we believe, hold the greatest responsibility to end it. Ultimately, this presumption places a disproportionate burden on People of Color to address systemic oppression. Further, by adding this burden to People of Color without consent, support, and/or compensation, organizational leaders often perpetuate identity-based harm and trauma even as they are trying to advance DEI and antiracism work. Deconstructing white supremacy is not solely the responsibility of People of Color and people with other historically marginalized identities. It is everyone's work. In particular, those with identity-based privilege and those with disproportionate positional power within organizations, who stand to benefit or gain most from the status quo, hold a disproportionate responsibility to interrupt white supremacy and other dominant power structures.

This behavior — emphasizing diversity without commensurate changes to culture, habits, decision-making, systems and structures, and ways of communicating — often results in a costly revolving door phenomenon where new staff members leave a few years after being hired, having realized the organization was not “ready to receive them.” Such organizations are often experienced by staff with historically marginalized identities as assimilationist (i.e., expecting a more diverse group of staff to align to the status quo ways of operating). Even worse, staff who hold historically marginalized identities often experience additional identity-based pain and trauma along the way.

Beyond diversifying, sustainable change will require shifts in the organizations and institutions themselves through the interruption of white supremacy culture and redressing of historical inequities. While diversity remains a critical component of overall DEI and antiracism efforts, it must come with parallel efforts to shift culture and structures, alongside demographics, to serve, support, and honor people from all backgrounds and identities.



White dominant culture is a huge barrier to inclusion. Teammates of color are often not in environments that they can bring their authentic selves since they must conform to a workplace that privileges white culture.



-Respondent, Organization Profile Survey, 2018

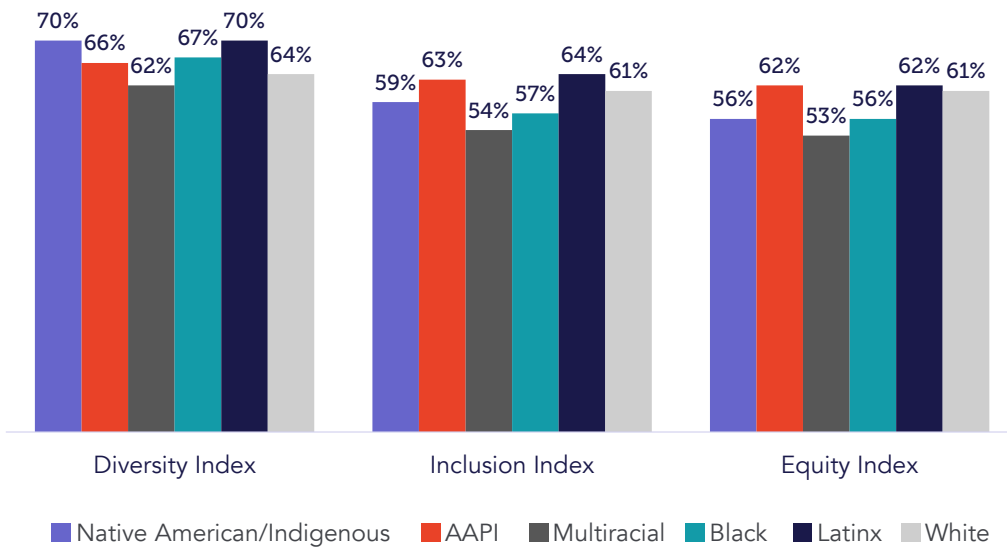
3. Disaggregate the Data: Oppression Is at Work...at Work

To explore whether and how identity impacts staff experience, we used our DEI Index scores to analyze responses across different identity groups. We also assessed differences on a variety of individual metrics, such as rates of experiencing bias and Intent to Stay.

There Are Material Gaps In Experiences Across Racial/Ethnic Identities

We began by cutting the data by race/ethnicity across all three indices. Small but consistent differences emerged linked to racial or ethnic identity. As shown in the chart below, across the field, Multiracial respondents consistently reported the lowest scores on all three of our indices. Conversely, Latinx respondents had the highest scores at the field-wide level.

DEI Index Scores Vary by Race and Ethnicity



We suspected, based on what we see in our work and cohort data analyses, that the aggregate field-wide data set was hiding larger disparities between identity groups within organizations. This led us to conduct an organization-by-organization analysis to differentiate and quantify the proportion of organizations with large disparities between identity groups. This approach indeed revealed larger disparities. In fact, we found that nearly all participating organizations had significantly different staff experiences for at least one or more identity subgroups. Additionally, we analyzed trends in the identities of — and disparities between — the subgroups with the most positive and most negative staff experiences within individual organizations.

Consider the example below. A key question we use to assess an organization’s inclusivity is the extent to which respondents agree that they can bring their “whole self” to work. As shown in the left side of the chart below, across our entire survey population, there is a 13 percentage-point gap between the group who agrees most with that statement and the group who agrees the least with that statement. White respondents were most likely to agree that they can bring their whole selves to work, while **Native American/Indigenous** and Multiracial respondents reported markedly lower rates of agreement.

Alternatively, an analysis of the within-organization disparities reveals much larger gaps, as shown on the right side of the chart below: More than half of organizations had a gap of at least 20 percentage points between their own highest-scoring and lowest-scoring subgroups. Further, over a quarter of organizations in our study had a gap of more than 30 percentage points. This means that in the majority of

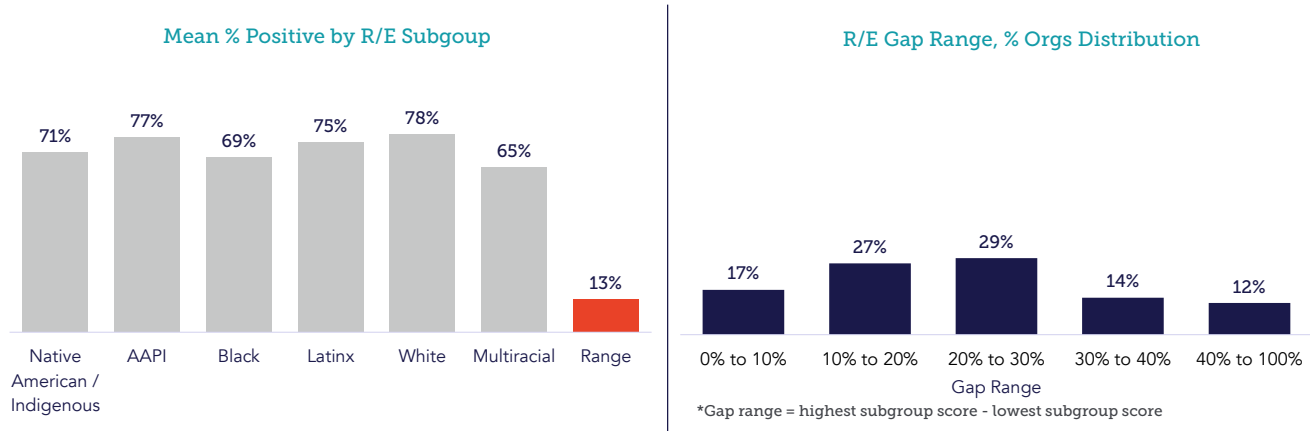
Multiracial Respondent Category

In our DEI Staff Experience Survey, we offer a “Multiple/Other” category within the race/ethnicity response options. We do this to include respondents who identify as Multiracial or another identity not otherwise listed and in alignment with similar wide-scale survey instruments used in education. As we analyzed data within this category, we found, unsurprisingly, a wide range of identities represented (including intersecting racial/ethnic identities and single racial/ethnic identities not captured through other options provided). As such, we do not make representative claims specific to Multiple/Other data at this time. We did find that a majority of respondents within this category identify as multiracial and therefore use the term multiracial throughout this report.

education organizations that participated in our survey, at least one race or ethnicity group of staff feels markedly less able to bring their whole selves to work, compared with their colleagues.

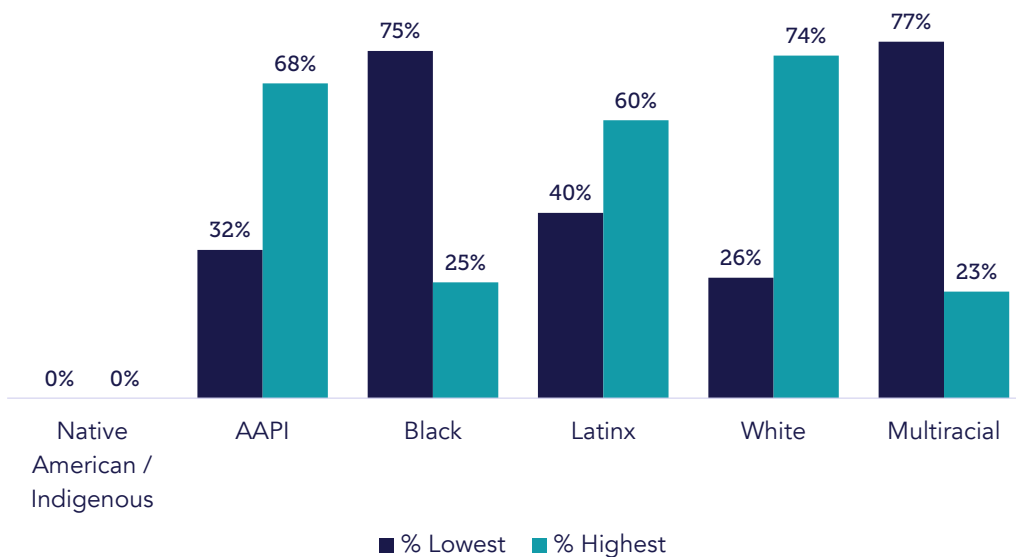
Seemingly Small Gaps in Aggregate "Whole Self" Scores Are Often Large Within Organization

Q: I can bring my "whole self" to work



Other patterns also emerged from our analysis on this question. In looking at the times when each racial/ethnic subgroup landed at either the highest or lowest end of their organization's scoring distribution, we found that white staff are far more likely to be the highest-scoring subgroups within their organizations (74%) than they are to be the lowest-scoring subgroup (26%). We see the inverse is true for Black and Multiracial staff, as they are far more likely to be the lowest-scoring subgroup at their organization (Black: 75%, Multiracial: 77%) than they are to be the highest-scoring (Black: 25%, Multiracial: 23%).

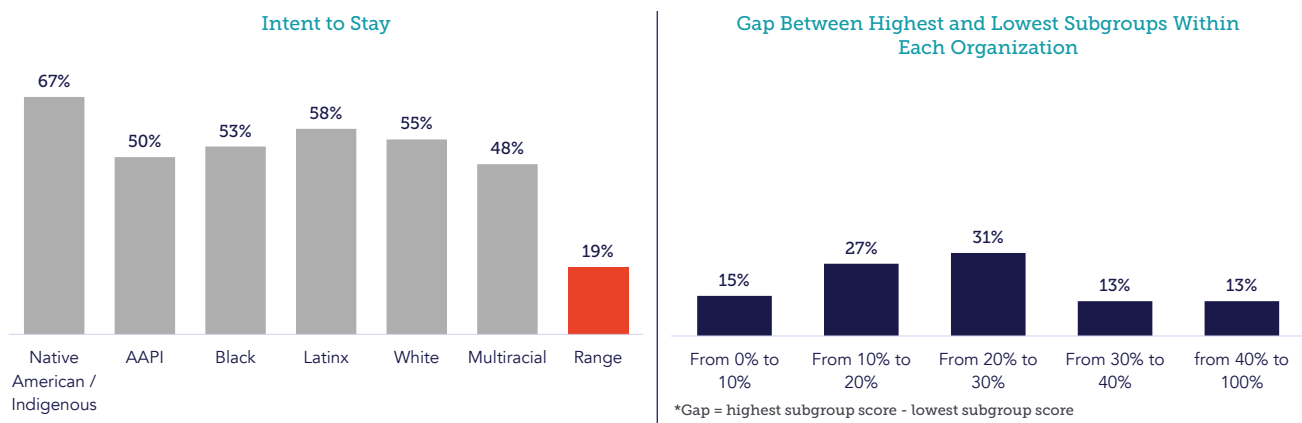
Black and Multiracial Staff Most Often Lowest-Scoring Groups on "Whole Self" Question



We observed a similar pattern where gaps within organizations exceed aggregated gaps, across multiple questions in our survey. For example, our “Intent to Stay” metric asks how much a survey participant agrees that they expect to be working at their organization three years from the time they are participating in the survey. In more than half of all organizations in our sample, the score gap between the highest- and lowest-scoring subgroups was 20 percentage points or more. About one quarter of the organizations had a gap greater than 30 percentage points.

Seemingly Small Gaps in Aggregate Intent to Stay Scores Are Often Large Within Organization

Q: I fully expect to be working in this organization three years from now



This within-organization analysis clearly demonstrates that organizations should go beyond the national aggregate population averages and examine how staff of different identities in their organization experience diversity, inclusion, and equity. Taking this more comprehensive approach — and actually responding to what the data shows — will go a long way toward improving staff experiences of DEI.

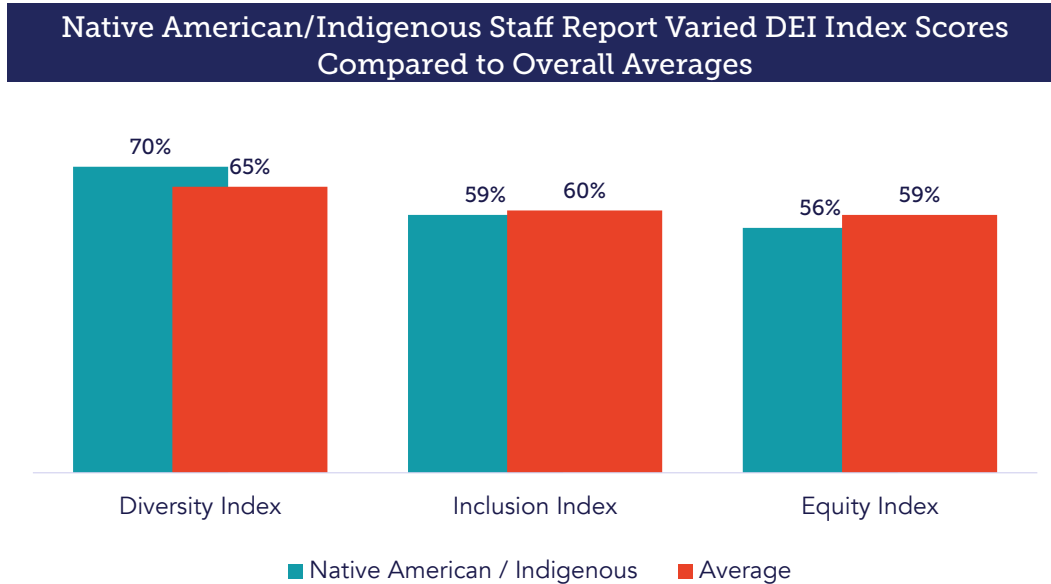
Native American/Indigenous Staff Report Mixed Experiences With Organizational DEI

In our research and work with the nonprofit and education sectors, we’ve found that the experiences and voices of Native American/Indigenous staff are often omitted in research and data because they often make up only a small percentage of the staff population. Our sample did not include enough Native American/Indigenous respondents to make representative claims within our analysis (n=84). Even so, given the historical role of educational institutions in the forced assimilation and violence against Native communities,^{68,69,70,71} we feel it is critically important to highlight these experiences in order to push against the continued marginalization of Native American/Indigenous communities.

68 Little, B. (2017). How boarding schools tried to “kill the Indian” through assimilation. History. com.
 69 Woods, A. (2020). The federal government gives native students an inadequate education, and gets away with it. Propublica.org. Retrieved from <https://www.propublica.org/article/the-federal-government-gives-native-students-an-inadequate-education-and-gets-away-with-it>
 70 Faircloth, S., & Tippeconnic, J. (2010). The dropout/graduation crisis among American Indian and Alaska Native students. The Civil Rights Project. Retrieved from <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/school-dropouts/the-dropout-graduation-crisis-among-american-indian-and-alaska-native-students-failure-to-respond-places-the-future-of-native-peoples-at-risk>
 71 Skiba, R. J., Arredondo, M. I., & Rausch, M. K. (2014). New and developing research on disparities in discipline. The Equity Project at Indiana University. Retrieved from https://indrc.indiana.edu/tools-resources/pdf-disciplineseries/disparity_newresearch_full_040414.pdf

Although we do not make representative claims due to the small number of respondents, we compared Native American/Indigenous staff experiences to the average across all racial and ethnicity identities and noted some interesting and paradoxical findings.

On the whole, Native American/Indigenous staff experiences were not considerably different from overall averages across the three indices, as indicated by the chart below.

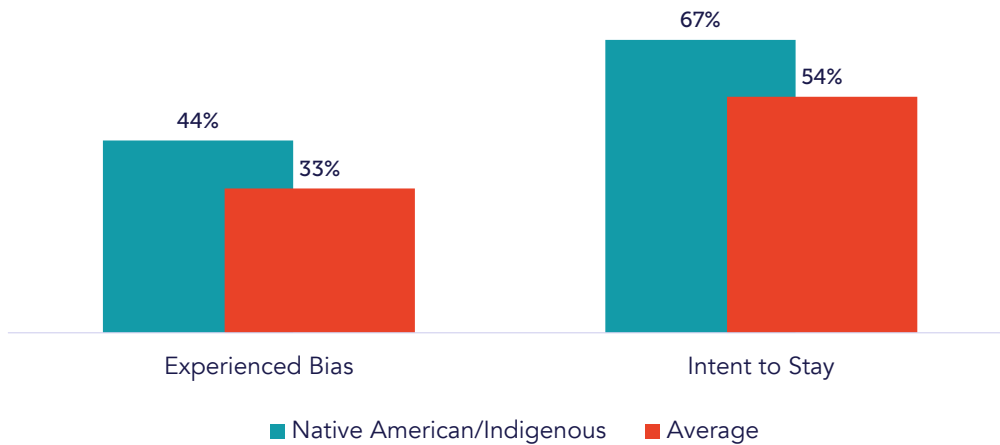


We did find, however, that Native American/Indigenous respondents are the most likely racial/ethnic group to experience bias and materially above the overall average. As illustrated in the chart below, 44% of Native American/Indigenous respondents reported experiencing bias at their organization compared with 33% of the overall average.

Despite disproportionate experiences of bias, Native Americans/Indigenous participants in our data also reported a higher Intent to Stay (i.e., 67% positive as compared to a 54% national benchmark average) as illustrated below. Additionally, when looking at Net Promoter Scores (NPS), Native American/Indigenous participants also had the exact same NPS as the overall average (NPS=8).⁷² For reference, the NPS is a one-question measure used in all industries to assess employee loyalty and product/service enthusiasm. This scale goes from -100 to +100, with a score of 0 being an average or mediocre score for an organization.

72 Reichheld, F. F. (2003). The one number you need to grow. Harvard Business Review, 81(12), 46-55.

Native American/Indigenous Staff Report Higher Experiences of Bias and Higher Intent to Stay

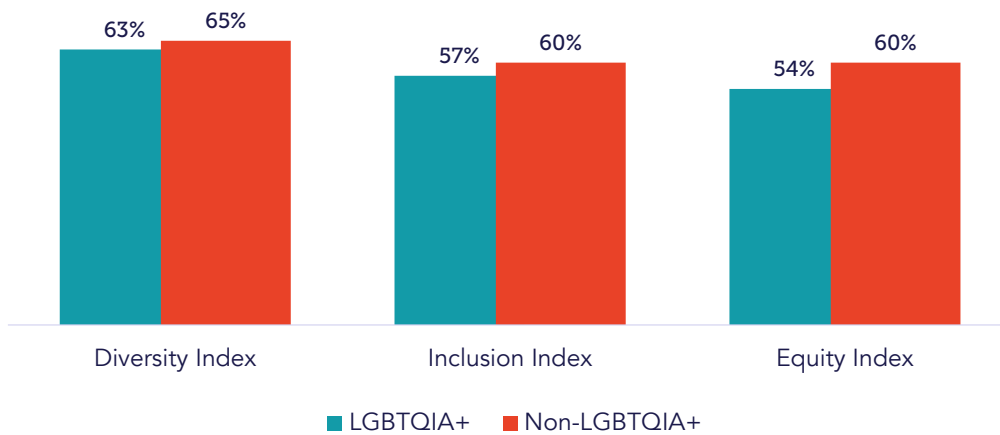


LGBTQIA+ Staff Have Less Positive DEI Experiences Than Their Colleagues

Similar to our findings related to staff experiences of racial/ethnic identity groups, while only modest gaps in LGBTQIA+ staff experiences surface at the aggregate national level, a within-organization analysis exposes considerable disparities.

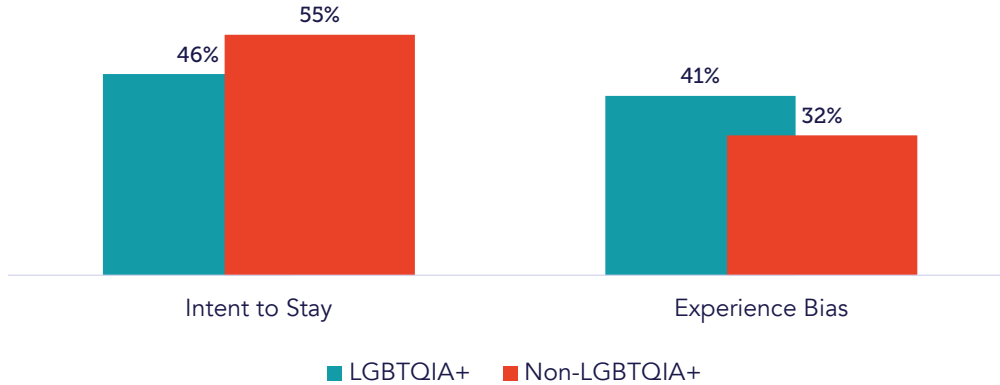
At the aggregate level, LGBTQIA+ staff report slightly less positive experiences than non-LGBTQIA+ staff across all three indices, with the largest gap being 6 percentage points on the Equity Index, as shown below.

LGBTQIA+ Staff Report Lower DEI Index Score



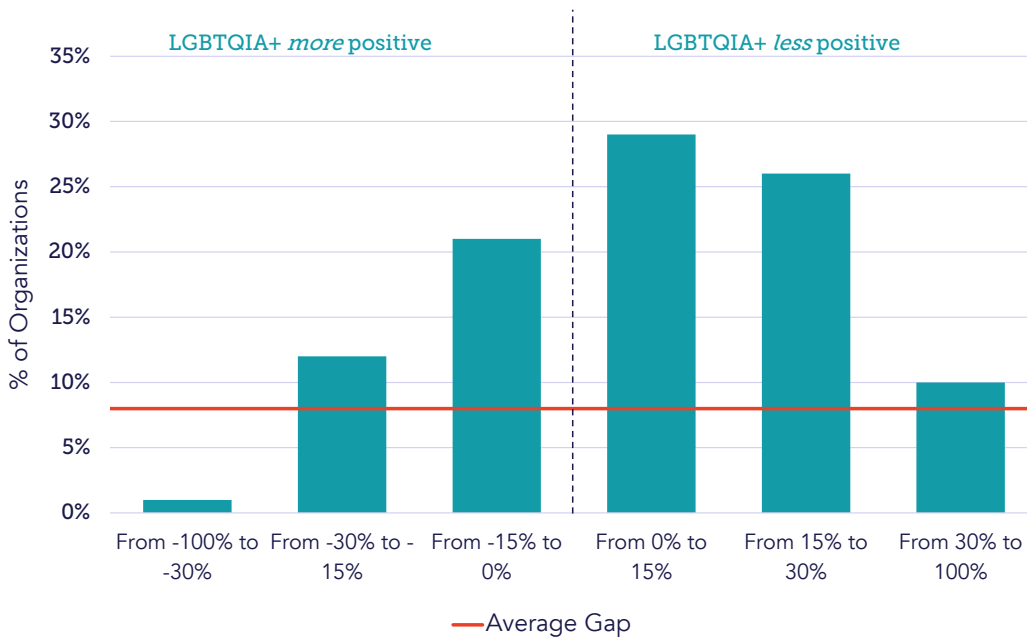
Some larger gaps emerge in relation to specific questions within these indices. As shown in the graph below, LGBTQIA+ staff are less likely than non-LGBTQIA+ staff to intend to stay at their current organization. Additionally, LGBTQIA+ staff report that they are far more likely to experience bias than their colleagues.

LGBTQIA+ Staff Report Lower Intent to Stay and Higher Experiences of Bias



However, within-organization analyses reveal substantially less positive experiences for LGBTQIA+ staff. For example, at an aggregate level, non-LGBTQIA+ staff are 8 percentage points more likely than LGBTQIA+ staff to agree that they can bring their whole self to work. Meanwhile, an examination of within-organization DEI experiences between LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ staff reveals that in about 70% of the organizations in our sample, LGBTQIA+ staff are less likely than their non-LGBTQIA+ peers to agree that they can bring their whole selves to work. Drilling down more, we found that over a third of the organizations in our sample — approximately 35% — have at least a 15 percentage-point gap on this question.

Large Gaps Between LGBTQIA+ and Straight Staff in Ability to Bring Their “Whole Self”



Note: A score of 0 would mean that there is no reported difference in experiences of bringing one’s whole self to work between LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ staff. Negative values, those on the left of the chart, are organizations in which LGBTQIA+ staff agree with the statement more than non-LGBTQIA+ identifying staff. Positive values, those on the right of the chart, are organizations in which non-LGBTQIA+ staff agree with the statement more than LGBTQIA+ staff.

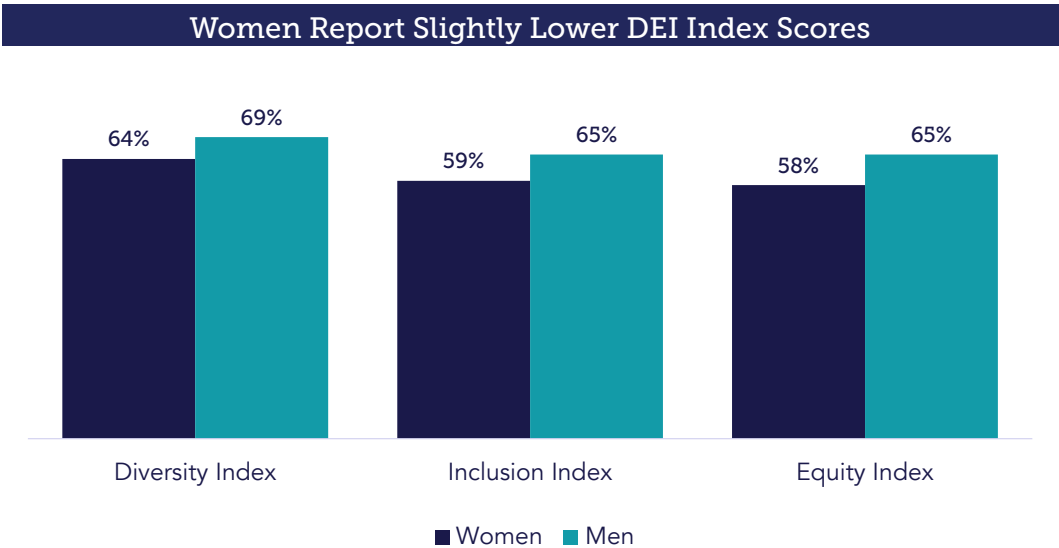
Across other survey items, we found that LGBTQIA+ staff have consistently less positive experiences in their organizations than non-LGBTQIA+ staff. For example, in 30% of organizations in our sample, LGBTQIA+ staff were at least 15 percentage points more likely to report experiencing bias. Additionally, in about a quarter of all organizations in our sample, LGBTQIA+ staff are 15 percentage points less likely to intend to stay with their organization than non-LGBTQIA+ staff.

Combined with our analysis of the same question on the basis of staff racial and ethnic identities earlier in the paper, this data makes clear that the majority of organizations struggle with inclusivity. Even among those organizations that value and are invested in DEI, most have at least one group of staff who, compared with others in their organization, are having negative experiences that can be associated with aspects of their intersecting identities.

Women Consistently Report Less Positive DEI Experiences

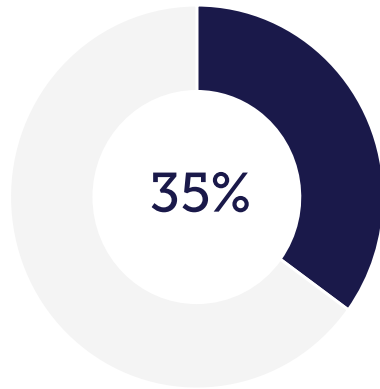
We see notable differences in staff experiences along binary gender lines. Our survey includes three gender options because we believe that a non-binary representation of gender is more inclusive and reflective of humanity. That said, we focus on results for women and men here, as the non-binary subgroup respondent size was too small (n=399) to confidently make sector-wide claims on the experiences of people in this group. Refer to the findings on page 31 for more on the results we do have for respondents who identify as non-binary.

As shown in the chart below, respondents who identify as men have slightly more positive DEI experience ratings across all three aggregate Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Indices.

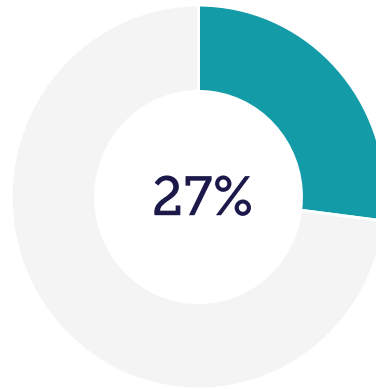


Gender differences on individual survey items within these indices show even larger score gaps. As illustrated below, women were more likely to indicate that they experienced bias than men, and women reported an NPS of 6 as compared to an NPS score of 23 for men.

Women Report Higher Experiences of Bias

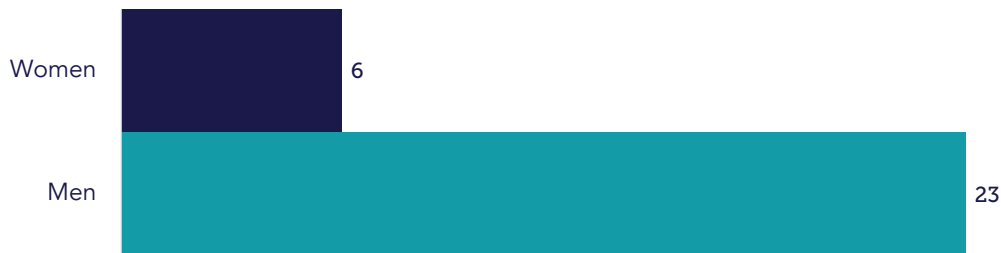


Women who report experiencing bias



Men who report experiencing bias

Women Report a Lower Net Promoter Score



Non-Binary Staff Report Less Positive Experiences Than Other Gender Identities

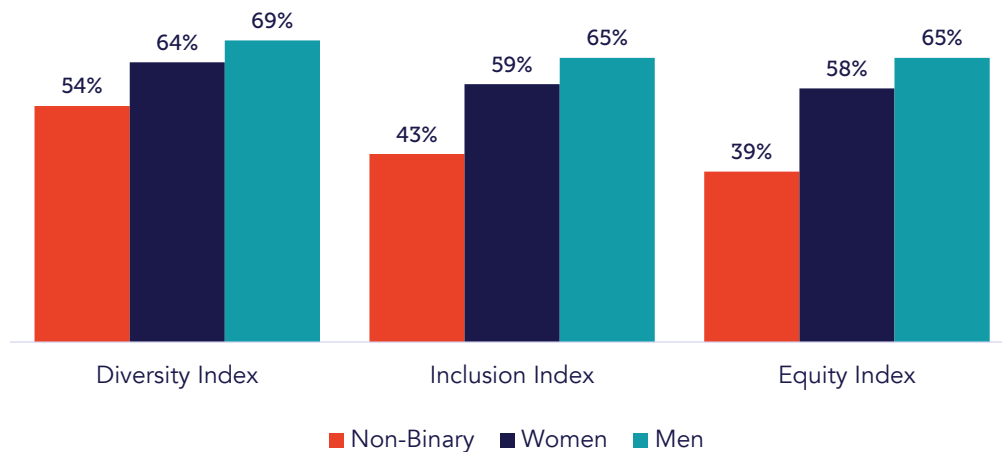
The experiences and voices of non-binary people are often overlooked in research due to small sample sizes, or their existence is outright denied.⁷³ Even though our data did not include a large enough non-binary respondent sample size to make representative claims (n=399), we nevertheless feel it is critically important to highlight non-binary staff experiences within our data set. We understand that equity will not be achieved until all identities and backgrounds are represented, valued, and treated fairly.

Our data shows that non-binary staff consistently report the least positive experiences among the three gender categories surveyed.

Non-binary staff reported less positive experiences across all three of our Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Indices, with scores at least 10 percentage points lower than women and at least 15 percentage points lower than men.

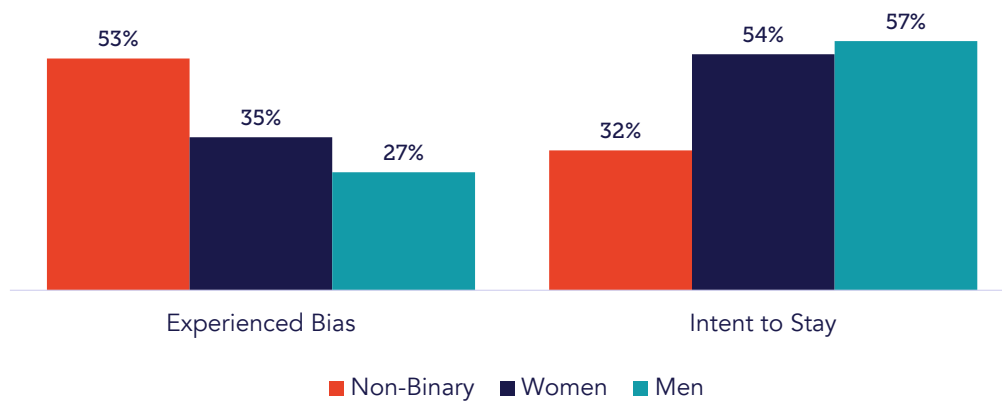
73 Snapp, S. D., Russell, S. T., Arredondo, M., & Skiba, R. (2016). A right to disclose: LGBTQ youth representation in data, science, and policy. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, 50, 135-159.

Non-Binary Staff Report Lowest DEI Index Scores



We found similar trends on individual metrics. For example, as illustrated in the chart below, non-binary staff report experiencing the most bias and the lowest Intent to Stay.

Non-Binary Staff Report Highest Experiences of Bias and Lowest Intent to Stay



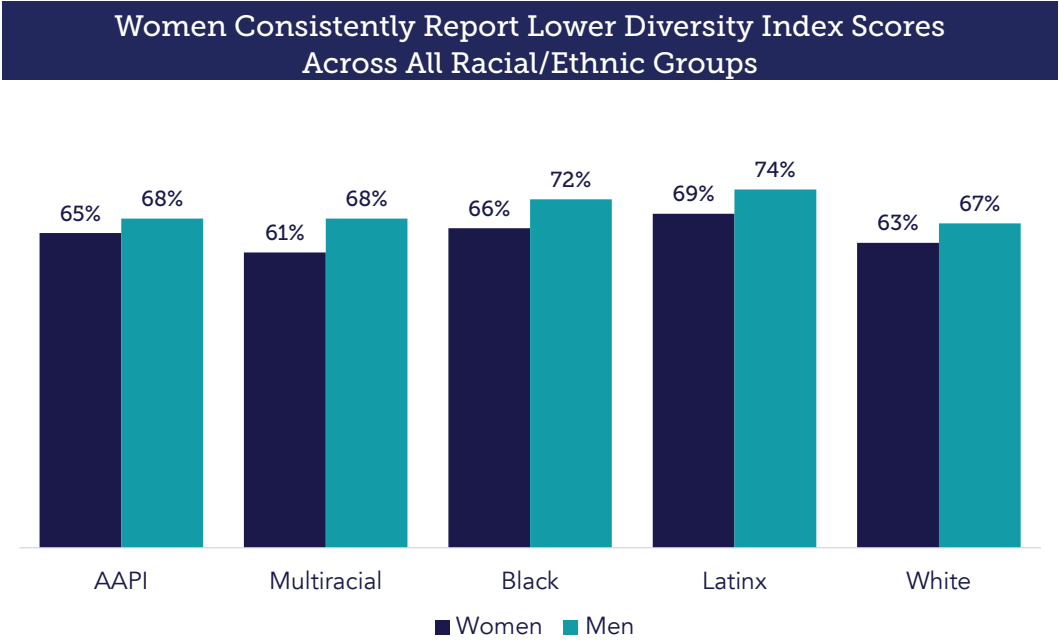
For organization leaders, paying attention to and addressing these disparities is critical to improving inclusion and equity.

4. Greater Than the Sum of Parts: Oppression Compounds

Comparing the experiences of single-identity groups, while instructive, overlooks the fact that people hold many intersecting identities. To that end, we conducted analyses of respondents' intersecting identities across all three indices (Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity) as well as in relation to experiences of bias, Net Promoter Score, and Intent to Stay at their organization.

There are, of course, many examples of intersectional identities. However, due to relatively small numbers of respondents selecting certain identity markers, we were unable to make confident claims about the staff DEI experience for certain intersecting identities, such as Native American/Indigenous staff, non-binary staff, socioeconomic background, first language spoken, and those with an immigrant background.

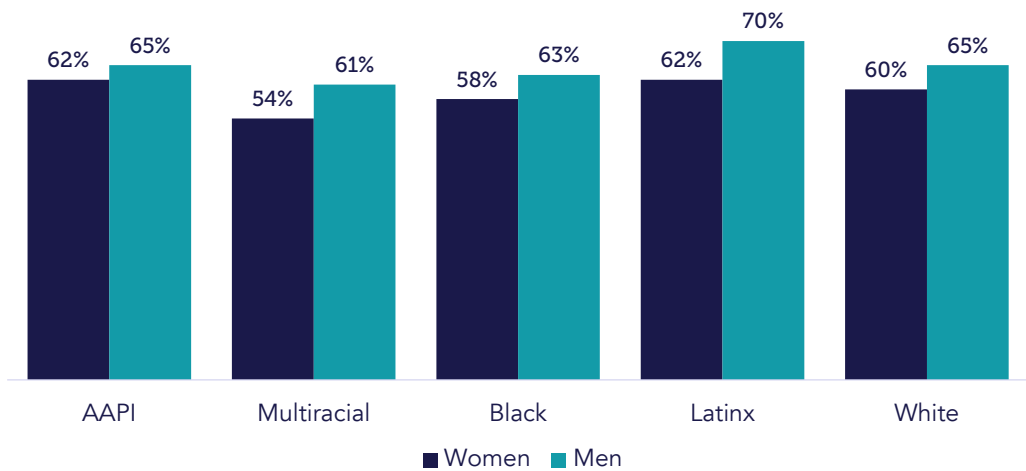
First, we unpack the intersection of binary gender identity with race and ethnicity. As we examined the three DEI Indices, women consistently, regardless of race, report less positive experiences. Among Black respondents, women had diversity index scores 6 percentage points lower than men. The next-largest gender-based gap was among Latinx respondents. Interestingly, staff that identified as white women reported among the lowest perceptions of organizational diversity.



As noted above, due to limited respondent group sizes, identities included in this analysis are limited (e.g., respondents identifying as Native American/Indigenous and non-binary are not included here (see pages 26 and 31 for more)).

On our Inclusion Index, we see even larger gender-based gaps. As shown in the chart below, the largest gender gap is among Latinx respondents, with women reporting 8 percentage points lower than men on the Inclusion Index. Multiracial and Black women reported the least positive experiences with inclusion at 54% and 58%, respectively.

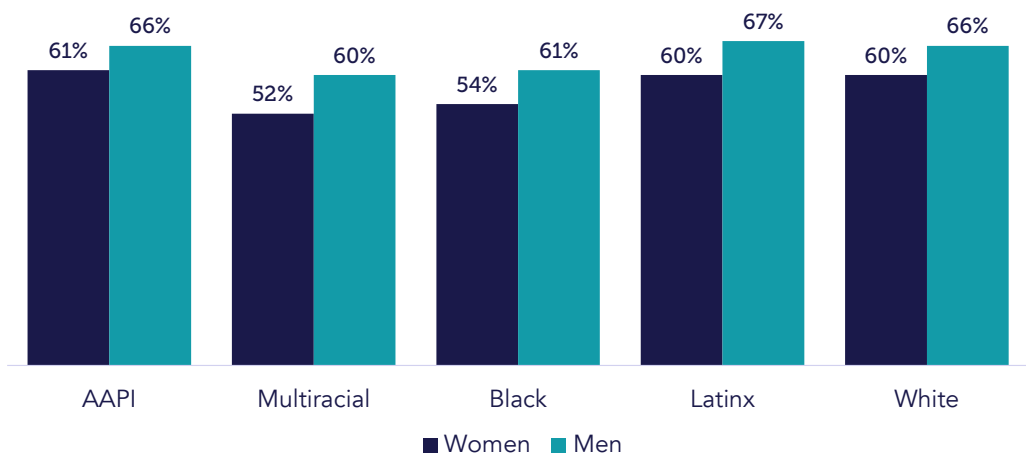
Women Consistently Report Lower Inclusion Index Scores Across All Racial/Ethnic Group



As noted above, due to limited respondent group sizes, identities included in this analysis are limited (e.g., respondents identifying as Native American/Indigenous and non-binary are not included here (see pages 26 and 31 for more)).

On average, the largest gender-based gaps were reported on our Equity Index, with an average disparity of 6 percentage points. As illustrated below, the gender-based gap among Black and Latinx respondents was 7 percentage points. As with the Inclusion Index, Black and Multiracial women reported the lowest rates of positive Equity-based experiences in their organizations.

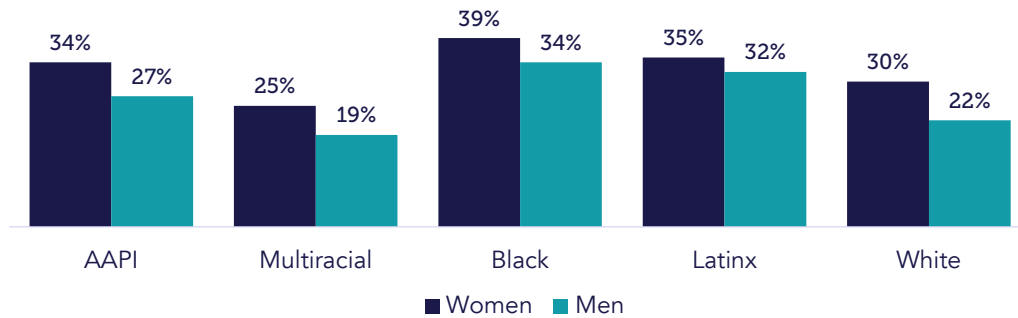
Women Consistently Report Lower Equity Inclusion Index Scores Across All Racial/Ethnic Group



As noted above, due to limited respondent group sizes, identities included in this analysis are limited (e.g., respondents identifying as Native American/Indigenous and non-binary are not included here (see pages 26 and 31 for more)).

While women, regardless of race and ethnicity, consistently report higher rates of experiencing bias than men, we see the intersecting effect that race has on these experiences. As illustrated below, the largest gender gap in experiences of bias are found between white and AAPI men and women, but the highest rates of experiencing bias were reported by Black women.

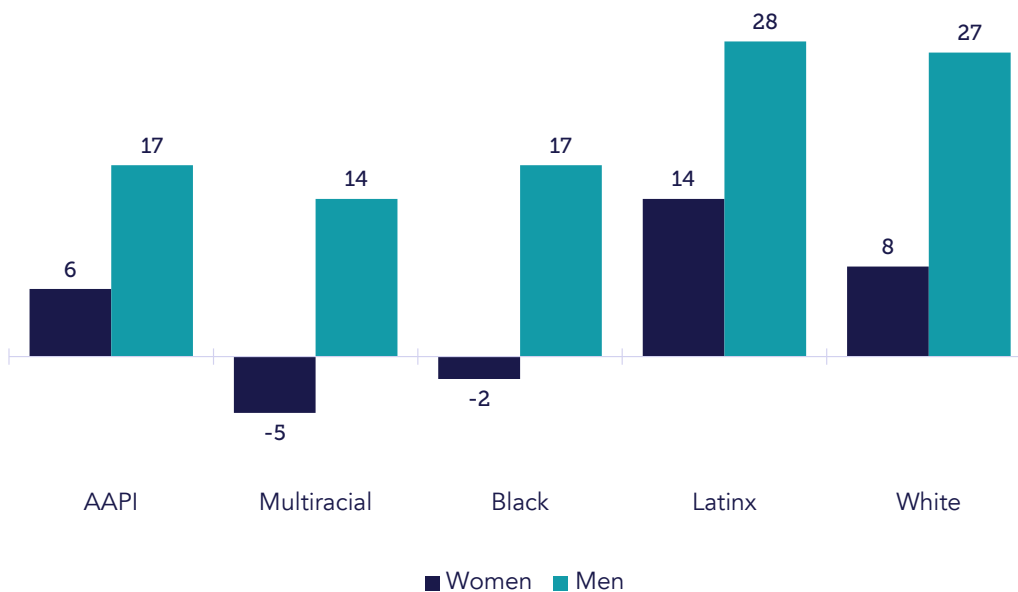
Women Consistently Report More Experiences of Bias Across All Racial/Ethnic Groups, With Notably Higher Rates Among Black Women



As noted above, due to limited respondent group sizes, identities included in this analysis are limited (e.g., respondents identifying as Native American/Indigenous and non-binary are not included here (see pages 26 and 31 for more)).

We also found substantial gaps at the intersection of respondents' gender and race/ethnicity in relation to Net Promoter Scores. As shown in the chart below, men consistently report higher NPS ratings than women across all racial groups, though the size of the scoring gaps varies by group. Black and Multiracial women are the only respondents to report a negative NPS average.

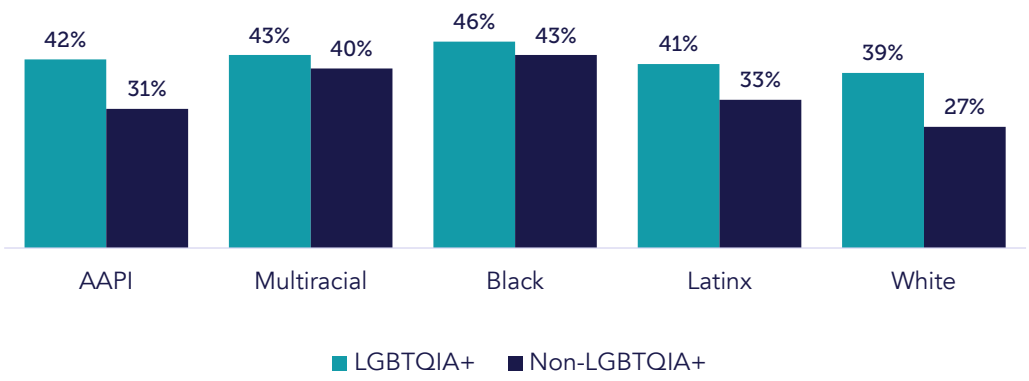
Women Consistently Report Lower Net Promoter Scores Across All Racial/Ethnic Groups, With Notably Lower Scores Among Black and Multiracial Women



As noted above, due to limited respondent group sizes, identities included in this analysis are limited (e.g., respondents identifying as Native American/Indigenous and non-binary are not included here (see pages 26 and 31 for more)).

We took a similar intersectional approach to analyze experiences by race and ethnicity alongside LGBTQIA+ identity. As shown in the graph below, while people who identify as LGBTQIA+ experience higher rates of bias across every racial and ethnic group, Black LGBTQIA+ identifying staff reported the highest rates of experiencing bias. The most significant gaps between LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ groups take place among white and AAPI staff, with a 12 and 11 percentage-point disparity, respectively.

LGBTQIA+ Staff Consistently Report More Experiences of Bias Across All Racial/Ethnic Groups, With Notably Higher Rates Among Black LGBTQIA+ Staff



As noted above, due to limited respondent group sizes, identities included in this analysis are limited (e.g., respondents identifying as Native American/Indigenous and non-binary are not included here (see pages 26 and 31 for more)).

Across measures, we see the layered and often compounding effect of intersecting identities on staff experiences. There are, of course, many more examples of intersectional identities. Based on these trends, we hypothesize that other intersecting historically marginalized identities may also experience a compounding effect.

5. 400+ Years and Counting: Anti-Blackness Persists

As we review staff experience data, a consistent pattern is clear: On nearly every measure, whether we are exploring one aspect of identity or intersecting identities, Black staff, and in particular Black women, report among the least positive experiences across DEI Indices, while also experiencing higher levels of bias.

On overall indices:

- On the Inclusion Index, Black women, alongside women who identify as Multiracial, report the lowest score of all respondents. Black men, alongside men who identify as Multiracial, have the lowest scores among all men (see chart on page 34).
- On the Equity Index, Black women, alongside women who identify as Multiracial, report the lowest scores among all staff. Black men, alongside men who identify as Multiracial, had the lowest Equity Index score among all men in the survey (see chart on page 34).

On specific DEI Index questions:

- Black respondents, alongside respondents who identify as Multiracial, have the lowest rates of agreement that they can bring their “whole self” to work (see chart on page 25).
- Black LGBTQIA+ staff experience the highest rates of bias among those who identify as LGBTQIA+ (see chart on page 36).
- Black women report the highest rate of experiencing bias at work at 39%, and Black men report the highest rate of experience bias among all male respondents (see chart on page 35).

On Net Promoter Score:

- Black women, alongside women who identify as Multiracial, report the lowest and only negative Net Promoter Scores across all identity groups analyzed (see chart on page 35).

Our data points to the fact that education organizations, even those working explicitly to advance equity and justice, have a persistent challenge around — and, in fact, may be perpetuating — anti-Blackness. While the effects of racial discrimination can be seen across all Communities of Color, this data highlights the specific and differentiated impact of anti-Blackness on the experiences of Black staff, and particularly of Black staff who carry multiple historically marginalized identities. Explicitly eradicating anti-Blackness within our organizations, policies, practices, and cultures is central to becoming diverse, inclusive, equitable, and antiracist organizations, and is at the very heart of pursuing justice.

6. No Quick Fixes: DEI Structures Are Supports, Not Solutions

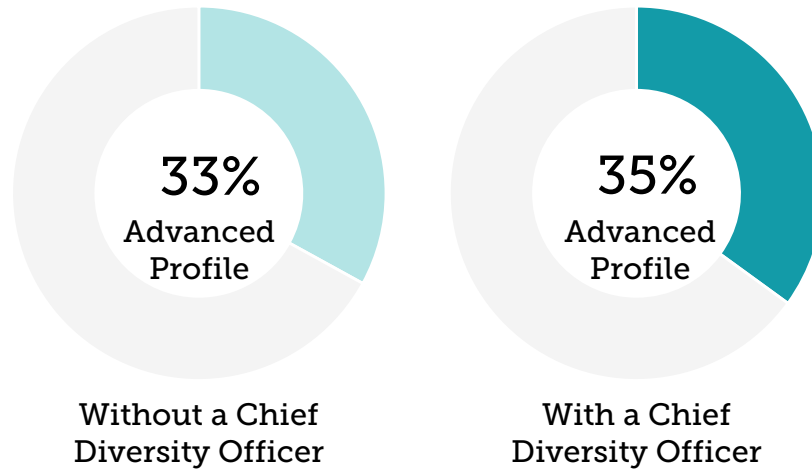
Education organizations eager to improve their diversity, inclusion, and equity often seek specific structural or policy levers to pull in order to effect meaningful change at their organizations. For example, organizations often ask whether they should invest in creating a Chief Diversity Officer position. Our answer is “it depends.” A number of key factors determine the likelihood of success: What experiences, skills, and attributes are you looking for in an ideal candidate? Who will be engaged in the hiring process and how? What are you looking to accomplish when hiring for this position, and what will this person be responsible for? How much influence, autonomy, and decision-making will this person have? What resources will this person have available to them to support advancement of the work? Is leadership invested in the creation of this position? Is the commitment to DEI and antiracism already clear and embedded throughout the organization? Will there continue to be a shared responsibility for DEI and antiracism across the organization, and how will that look or shift with the creation of this position?

In our data, we find that the hiring of a single person, or even a team, will not transform an organization’s outcomes on its own. What matters most is not *whether* you create a position to lead DEI and antiracism work but rather *how* it is implemented. When we compared organizations with a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) to those without, we found that organizations with a CDO did not consistently report more positive DEI experiences among staff. Furthermore, we found that a CDO alone does not produce a difference in staff experience of bias or their Intent to Stay at the organization.

As shown in the chart below, organizations with a CDO are only slightly more likely to find themselves in the Advanced Profile — the profile representing organizations with the highest diversity and inclusion ratings in our database. Among all organizations that have a CDO position, only 35% of them are Advanced. Of all the organizations that do not have a CDO position, 33% of them are Advanced. As we

looked at where organizations with and without CDOs showed up in other DEI Profiles, we observed no significant differences in representation.

Likelihood of Advanced Profile Placement Similar With and Without a Chief Diversity Officer

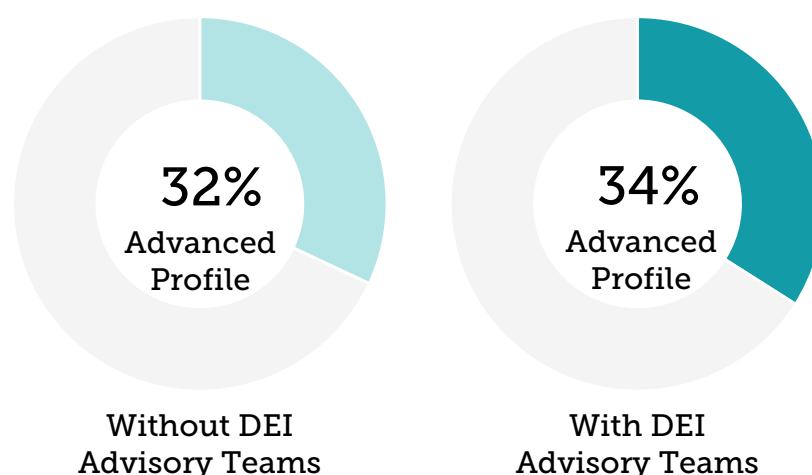


Our observations and experiences indicate that a CDO role is most successful when the structure of the role, and the person within it, adds and enforces the necessary DEI and antiracism elements throughout the organization with high levels of support and accountability.

Similarly, we are often asked how large an annual DEI budget should be. Our answer, again, is “it depends.” The optimal budget size depends on the answers to questions like: How big is your overall budget and staff size? Which specific strategies will you pursue during this budget period to address your organization’s unique aspirations and pain points (i.e., What do you plan to do with the budget?). Our data indicates that the level of an organization’s financial commitment alone does not directly correlate to strong DEI staff experiences. Among the 33 organizations with an annual budget between \$1 and \$5 million that were categorized as Advanced Profile, two-thirds spent less than \$10,000 explicitly on DEI. While these findings imply little correlation between explicit investments in DEI work and DEI outcomes, in our work we find that Advanced organizations are more likely to fully integrate DEI and antiracism into their overall operations. Therefore, these organizations are less likely to have separate funds earmarked specifically for “DEI work.” All investments — all activities across all departments, in fact — serve to advance DEI and antiracism.

Another popular structure organizations create to advance their diversity, inclusion, equity, and antiracism work is to create a dedicated advisory committee or workgroup. We’ve found that these committees can be quite effective but only under the right conditions: If they comprise an intentional cross-section of the staff with strong identity-based diversity and enough positional power to advance the work; if their members (whether volunteer or appointed) are appropriately supported, have available bandwidth, and/or are compensated for their work; if their size is large enough to distribute the work but not so large as to create substantial inefficiencies; if their charge is clear and accountability mechanisms are in place; and if they’re afforded sufficient autonomy, decision-making rights, and influence over organizational policy, processes, programs, and decisions. Based on our data, organizations with a DEI advisory committee were only slightly more likely to place in the Advanced Profile than those without one. As shown below, of all the organizations that had a DEI committee as part of their organizational structure, only 34% landed in the Advanced Profile category, as compared to 32% of organizations without a DEI committee.

Likelihood of Advanced Profile Placement Similar With and Without DEI Advisory Teams



Our takeaway from these findings is that how an organization implements any specific structure, policy, or practice matters more than which they create. In other words, context, intention, and depth matter. An organization that adopts any specific policy as a one-off strategy to address its DEI challenges, without intentional and tailored design, appropriate supports, and accountability mechanisms, is unlikely to see marked improvement in staff experiences. Our experience in this work suggests that the most comprehensive approach to DEI is not to consider any stand-alone investment by itself — whether it be financial or structural — but rather to ensure that the principles of DEI are embedded and implemented across every dimension of the organization as part of a larger strategy and cultural shift. In short, a CDO, explicit financial investments, and/or a DEI committee can absolutely be critical elements in an organization’s journey to improve DEI and antiracism. However, all DEI-improvement levers are most impactful when they are implemented as parts of a holistic plan, tailored for the organization and the moment, and responsive to staff feedback over time.

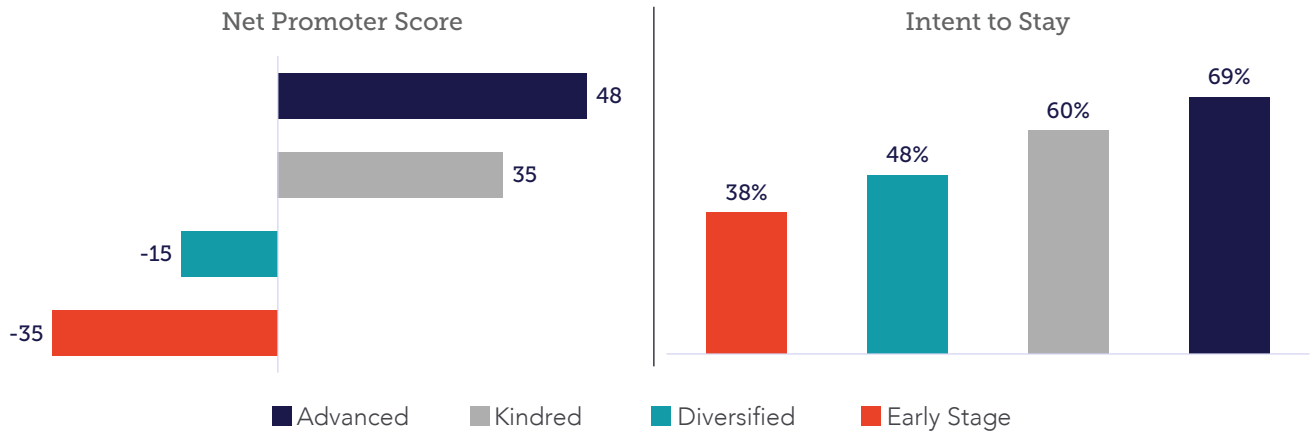
7. Stronger DEI, Stronger Organization

The organizational benefits — in any sector — of becoming diverse, inclusive, and equitable are well documented, from increased innovation to better decision-making, higher shareholder returns, better recruitment of new talent, and productivity. As we discussed earlier, within the education sector specifically, diversity, inclusion, equity, and antiracism are critical to deconstructing white supremacy culture. Further, our data points directly to greater staff satisfaction and higher likelihood of retention among education sector staff who have more positive DEI experiences within their organizations.

As shown in the graph below, staff who experience their organization as Early Stage (i.e., perceive their organization as weak on diversity and inclusion, and tend to perceive low levels of equity as well) report the poorest Net Promoter Scores and the lowest Intent to Stay out of the four quadrants. Staff who experience their organization as Diversified (i.e., perceive higher levels of diversity but low levels of inclusion, and tend to perceive low levels of equity) show slightly more positive Net Promoter and Intent to Stay scores. While staff who experience their organization as Kindred (i.e., perceive low levels of diversity but high levels of inclusion and tend to perceive high levels of equity) see much more positive Net Promoter Scores and Intent to Stay scores, they do not experience any of the organizational benefits (innovation, problem-solving, etc.) of a diversified workforce. The highest ratings show up for individuals

who experience their organization as Advanced (i.e., perceive high levels of diversity and inclusion, and tend to perceive high levels of equity as well), with the strongest Net Promoter and Intent to Stay scores.

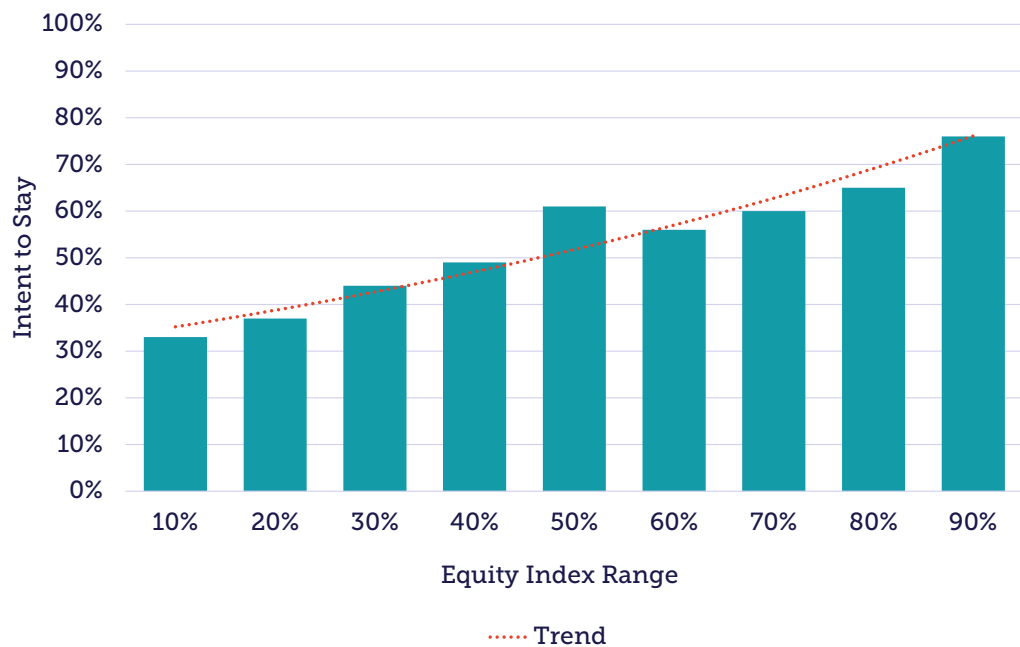
NPS and Intent to Stay Increase as Diversity and Inclusion Scores Increase



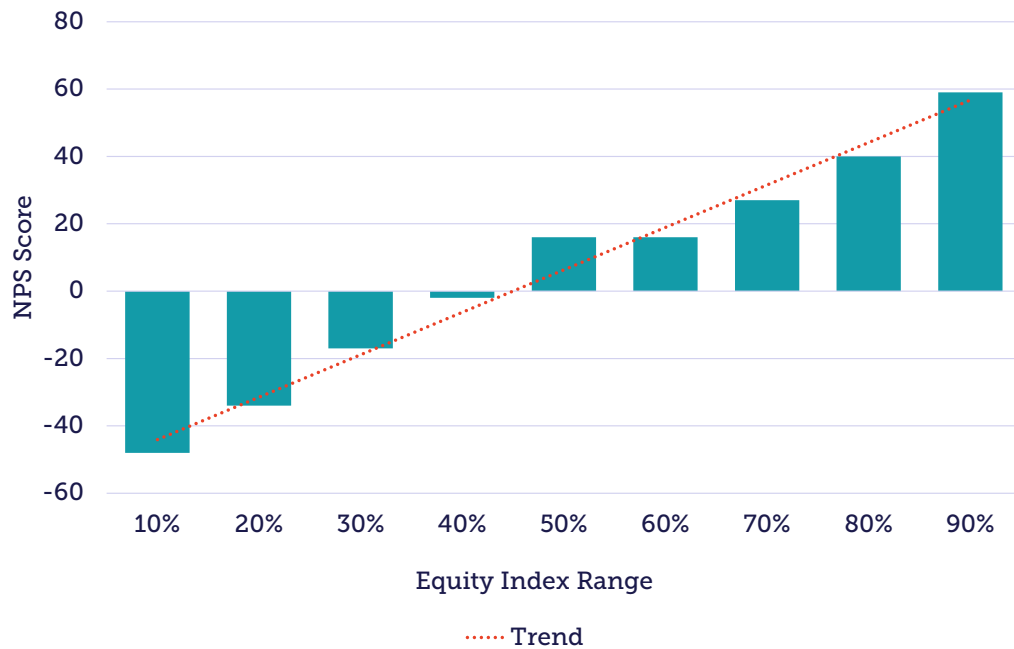
When we factor in the organizational risks and costs of overall negative staff perceptions and high turnover, this data is a compelling call to action for organizations to invest in DEI work that advances the experience of all staff, and especially of those experiencing the most pain within their organizations.

As mentioned in our methodology overview, quadrant placement is exclusively determined by staff experiences of diversity (which determines placement along the vertical axis) and inclusion (which defines placement along the horizontal axis) indices. While we tend to see stronger positive staff perceptions of equity with positive experiences of both inclusion and diversity, we wanted to test whether there was a direct correlation between the Equity Index alone and staff's Net Promoter Scores and Intent to Stay. Indeed, our analysis surfaced a direct correlation between both metrics and our Equity Index, as seen in the graphs below.

Strong Equity Index Scores Positively Correlated With Intent to Stay



Strong Equity Index Scores Positively Correlated With Net Promoter Score



As seen in our key findings, most organizations see data gaps illustrating that some identity groups are having more negative experiences than others. To reap the benefits illustrated above, organizations must avoid looking at data only according to all staff averages and instead disaggregate the data to consider the experiences of specific identity groups — or better yet, if available, each staff member’s individual experience. This drilled-down approach will help reveal trends among staff who are having the least positive experiences and enable differentiated solutions to center staff experiencing disproportionate pain.

When leaders figure out which groups are having the least positive experiences and address their DEI-related needs, organizations can optimize the overall benefits of strong DEI outcomes, including increased overall satisfaction (as measured by NPS) and greater likelihood of retention (as evidenced by Intent to Stay).

Promising Practices

Our research and experience make clear that there is no single approach, no one right strategy to improve organizational diversity, inclusion, and equity. We find that organizations most successful in advancing DEI pursue a multifaceted approach to improving inclusion and equity — in addition to increasing diversity across all levels of the organization.

That said, we wanted to examine whether there were strategies or approaches that effectively supported this holistic approach to DEI. To understand this, we focused our analysis on practices that had associations with stronger representation in the Advanced DEI Profile. This chapter provides an in-depth exploration of the four key promising practices we gleaned from this analysis.

1. Moving Past Random Acts of DEI

In our experience, it takes integrated DEI structures and actions, embedded throughout the organization's culture and work, to reach meaningful improvements on DEI outcomes. We find that organizations that integrate DEI as part of their ongoing work and understand it as a required component on a path to advancing a social justice mission reach stronger DEI outcomes. However, those organizations that instead treat DEI as a stand-alone initiative tend to find the work disjointed, siloed, under-resourced, and highly susceptible to cuts in the face of unexpected challenges. Our research supports this, as we find that organizations are 11% more likely to be Advanced if they integrate DEI into their mission/vision.

To effectively embed DEI, organizations must invest the time and attention necessary to articulate DEI beliefs and aspirations clearly, align on what is meant by key terms in use (e.g., inclusion, racial justice), and chart a path forward on DEI that is tailored to the specific organizational context.

Our original research in 2017 revealed that while close to 50% of organizations incorporated diversity, inclusion, and/or equity into their mission or vision statements, only 30% articulated what they believe to be the benefits of DEI, and fewer than 20% have defined the terms of diversity, inclusion, and equity for themselves.⁷⁴ Those numbers have not materially changed over the past three years: Now 51% of organizations incorporate DEI into their mission or vision statements, yet only 34% have articulated the benefits, and only 20% have defined the terms.

Without clear beliefs and definitions, staff within a single organization may understand diversity, inclusion, and equity in fundamentally different ways, including whether and why they matter and what constitutes

⁷⁴ Padamsee, X., Crowe, B., Louis, L., Messano, F., & Paperny, T. (2017). Unrealized impact: The case for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Promise54. Retrieved from http://www.unrealizedimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Unrealized_Impact-Final-072017.pdf

the ideal state of DEI within that organization. Without a shared understanding, staff may expect different things from their experiences or move in different directions toward “progress.” Ultimately, in our experience, this lack of alignment can undermine the organization’s ability to make meaningful and sustained progress and lead to diminished impact and inconsistent — or even at times negative staff experiences.

“ Our biggest barrier to inclusion is a compelling and shared definition of inclusion. While it may feel like a small step - a shared definition of inclusion would allow us to build shared language and therefore accountability for embodying inclusion in our everyday interactions. I believe this is exceptionally important as we consider how to better equip managers and leaders to develop their staff. ”

-Respondent, Organization Profile Survey, 2016

We see this reflected in our data, which indicates that organizations with clearly articulated beliefs around DEI are more likely to be categorized as Advanced. Among organizations with a DEI belief statement, 41% were rated as Advanced, compared with the 29% of organizations without such a statement (see footnote for example of DEI belief statements).⁷⁵ We also find that organizations that define diversity, inclusion, and equity for themselves are more likely to be Advanced, with 43% of organizations that have definitions categorized as Advanced as compared to 30% of those who don’t.

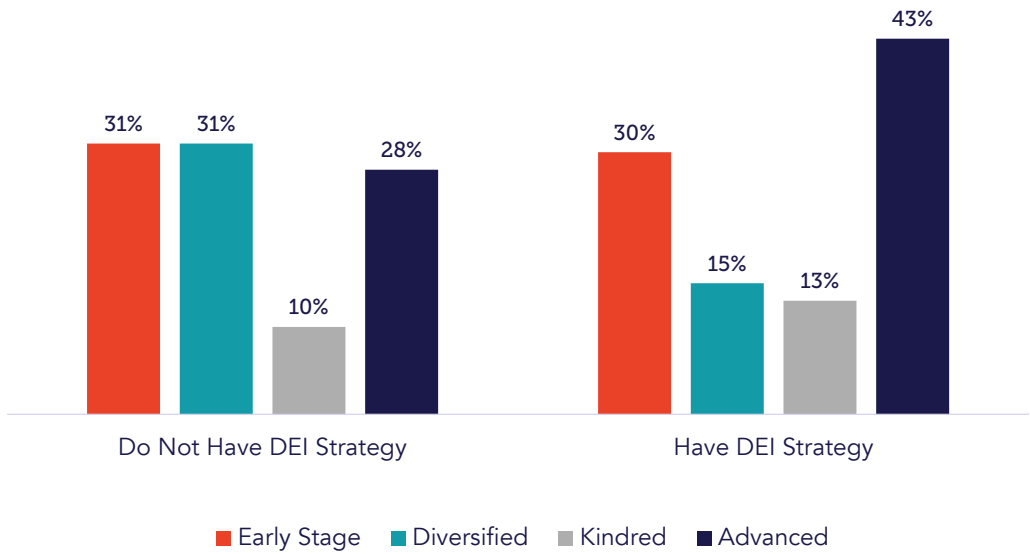
“ We don’t have a vision for what we want or need “inclusion” to look like within our organization in order to support our work. We haven’t yet done the work/invested the time and resource in creating the vision (supported by clear purpose), so therefore don’t have a target to aim for (or a mandate on which to act, or act quickly). ”

-Respondent, Organization Profile Survey, 2016

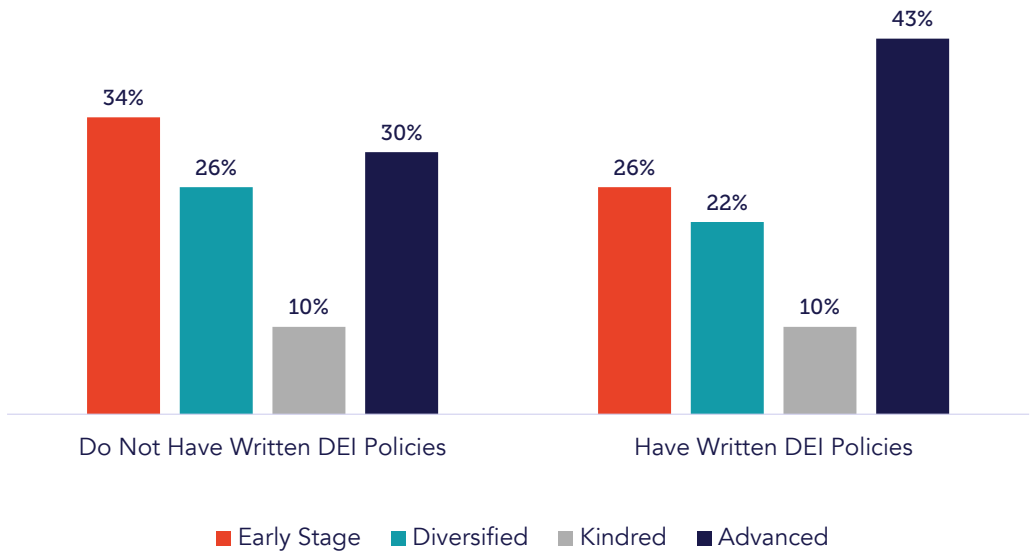
We also found that organizations with a formal DEI strategy and written policies related to DEI were more likely to land within the Advanced category. While a DEI belief statement sets an intention and direction for an organization’s DEI work, a formal DEI strategy sets the specific pathway for how an organization expects to advance its DEI work.

75 Ortiz, L., Osagie, K., & Padamsee, X. (2019). Facing difficult conversations: DEI in action at TNTP. Promise 54. Retrieved from https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5d8ac4c8e7740e9ac85f3f71/5dc4b78d3441076a0a6741ff_Facing%20Difficult%20Conversations%20TNTP%20Case%20Study.pdf

Organizations With a DEI Strategy Are More Likely to Be Advanced



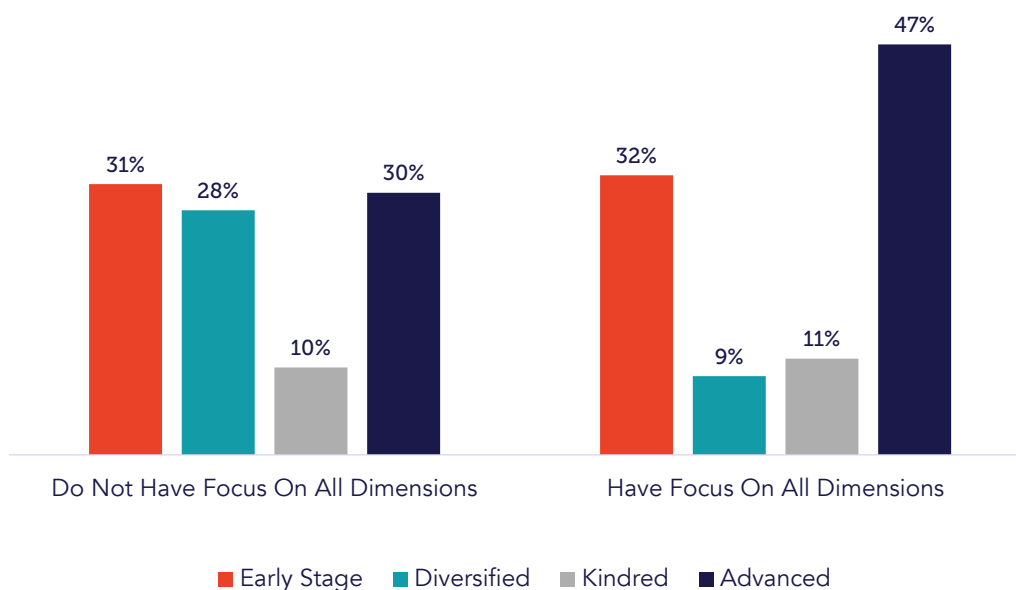
Organizations With Written DEI Policies Are More Likely to Be Advanced



As they create their plans, we often find organizations assume the most effective approach will be a sequential one: beginning with a singular focus on diversity, then moving to inclusion, then equity. However, our data illustrates that focusing on all three categories of DEI together, as opposed to just one or two, is more likely to support more positive DEI experiences. Diversity, inclusion, and equity are necessarily interconnected and mutually reinforcing.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Padamsee, X., Crowe, B., Louis, L., Messano, F., & Paperny, T. (2017, July). Unrealized impact: The case for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Promise54. Retrieved from http://www.unrealizedimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Unrealized_Impact-Final-072017.pdf

Organizations With a Primary Focus on All Three Dimensions of DEI Are More Likely to Be Advanced



In summary, our research and experience indicate that as organizations undertake DEI efforts, it is best to start with a clear set of beliefs and definitions, to create a plan and set of policies to align around the path forward, and to intentionally and strategically work on advancing diversity, inclusion, and equity in parallel.

Read More: For an inside look at one organization's journey to move past random acts of DEI, please refer to Promise54's DEI Case Study on Blue Engine: ["The Challenge of Living Out Values."](#)⁷⁷

2. Diversifying Leadership Beyond the CEO

Organizations created explicitly to advance education equity and justice comprise the majority of those surveyed in our research. And yet, despite their missions, the staff and particularly the leadership of these organizations are overwhelmingly white.

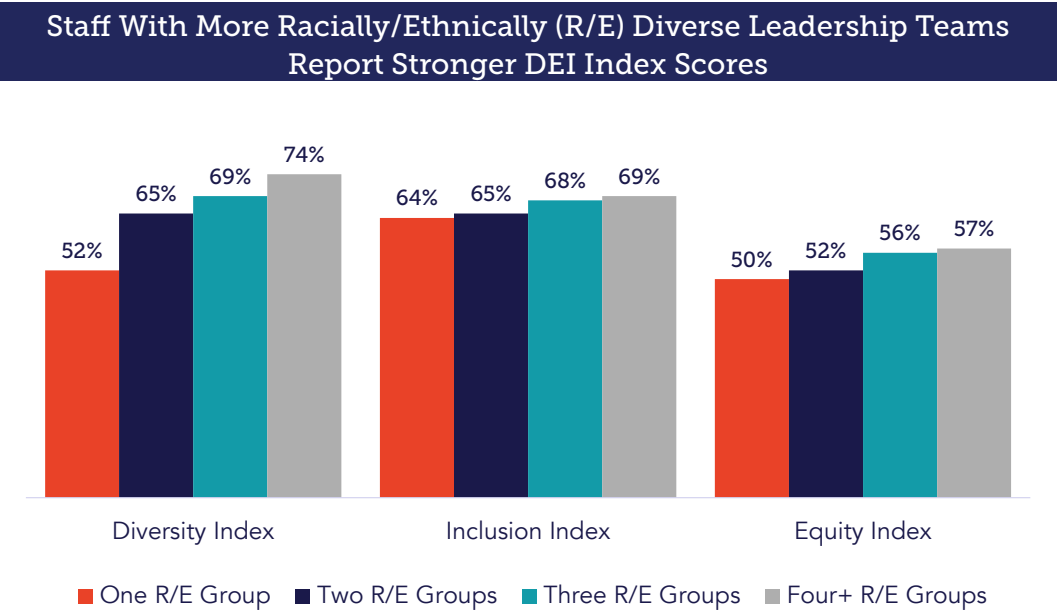
“ [Our] entire founding executive core identifies as white. And that's not going to change anytime soon – so we have to groom staff (specifically those staff who represent diversity) for advancement into the executive core. But so far this has not been very successful. ”

-Respondent, Organization Profile Survey, 2016

77 Ortiz, L., Osagie, K., & Padamsee, X.. (2019). The challenge of living out values. Promise54. Retrieved from <https://case-studies.promise54.org/blue-engine>

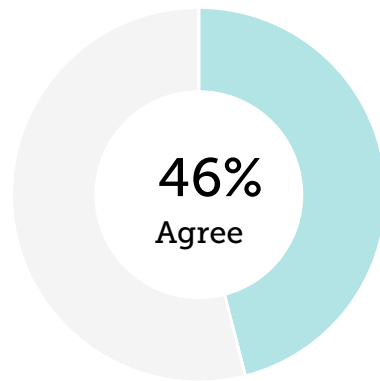
While many organizations may move exclusively to bringing in a CEO of Color as an approach to advancing DEI work, our research does not find that the specific racial identity of an organization’s CEO, as an isolated data point, is related to higher staff ratings of positive DEI experiences. Indeed, even staff who share a racial or ethnic identity with their CEO did not demonstrate marked differences in experiences compared to staff who do not share a racial or ethnic identity with their CEO. Ultimately, we found that the race/ethnicity of an organization’s CEO alone did not impact the organization’s likelihood of having stronger staff experiences around any of the DEI Indices. Our data highlights the fact that placing People of Color in top leadership positions without a support network will not automatically result in stronger DEI outcomes.

Instead, what we did find to have a meaningful correlation with DEI staff experiences was the racial/ethnic diversity present across an entire senior leadership team. As shown in the chart below, staff with more diverse leadership teams experience their overall organizational DEI to be stronger — across every dimension.

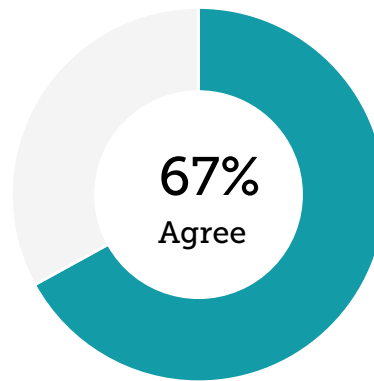


We see gaps across various DEI measures between organizations with the least racial diversity among leadership (i.e., those with only one racial/ethnic group represented) as compared to organizations with the most racial diversity among leadership (i.e., those with four or more racial/ethnic groups represented). Within the Diversity Index, the most pronounced difference was on the organization’s efforts to recruit a diverse set of new hires. As shown below, only 46% of staff at organizations with the least diverse leadership teams agreed that recruitment efforts yield a diverse group of new hires. Conversely, 67% of staff at the organizations with the most diverse leadership teams agreed that organizational recruitment leads to diverse hires — a 21 percentage-point difference. The takeaway here is that staff with more diverse leadership teams perceive their organization’s overall recruitment and selection to be more effective in generating diverse hires.

Staff With Diverse Leadership Teams Perceive More Overall Hiring Diversity



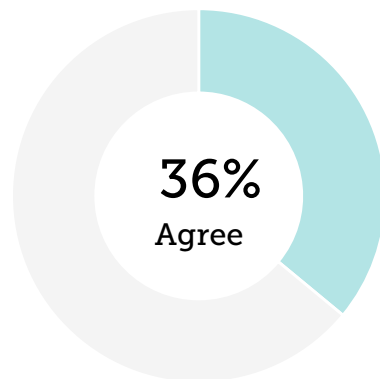
Teams with 1 R/E Group



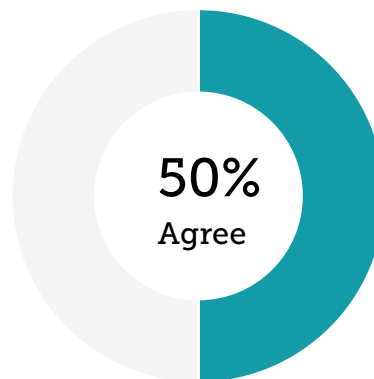
Teams with 4+ R/E Groups

Within inclusion-focused questions, only 36% of staff at organizations with the least racially/ethnically diverse leadership teams believe that their organization recognizes and eliminates exclusion, whereas 50% of staff at organizations with the most diverse leadership teams do — a 14 percentage-point difference. In our experience, many respondents encounter this question as: Is our organization “walking the walk”? This means that staff with racially/ethnically diverse leadership teams are materially more likely to believe their organizations are “walking the walk.”

Staff With Diverse Leadership Teams Are More Likely to Agree That Their Organization Recognizes and Eliminates Exclusion



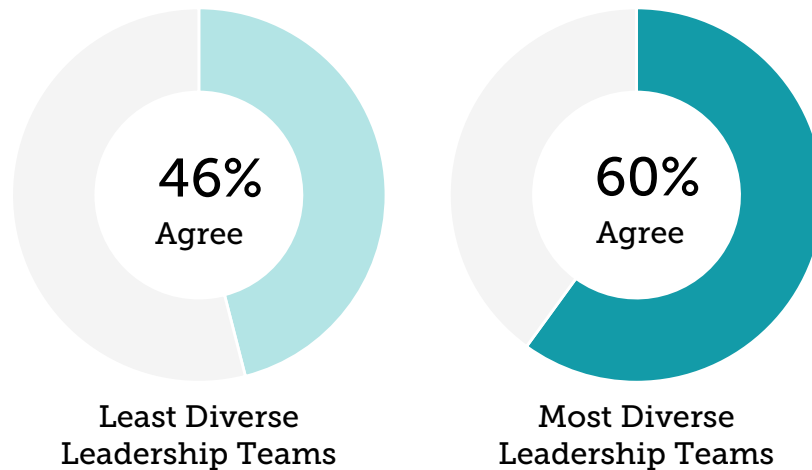
Teams with 1 R/E Group



Teams with 4+ R/E Groups

Within the equity-focused questions, only 46% of staff at organizations with the least racially/ethnically diverse leadership teams perceive a diverse group of employees advancing, whereas 60% of staff at organizations with the most diverse leadership teams do. Our interpretation is that staff with more diverse leadership teams are more likely to perceive fairness in promotion opportunities overall.

Staff With Diverse Leadership Teams Are More Likely to See a Diverse Set of Employees Advance



Our analysis makes clear that diverse leadership leads to more positive staff experiences. And, [in our experience](#), placing People of Color in top leadership positions without also instituting significant organizational and cultural change will not automatically result in stronger DEI outcomes.

Read More: For an inside look at one organization's journey to diversify their leadership team, please refer to Promise54's DEI Case Study on College Track: ["Moving Beyond Diversity to Inclusion."](#)⁷⁸

3. Sharing Power Through Meaningful Engagement

There is no quick fix or one single structure that will allow for broad and authentic engagement across an organization's staff and time. Instead, we find that organizations that approach power-sharing as a regular and consistent practice have greater success.

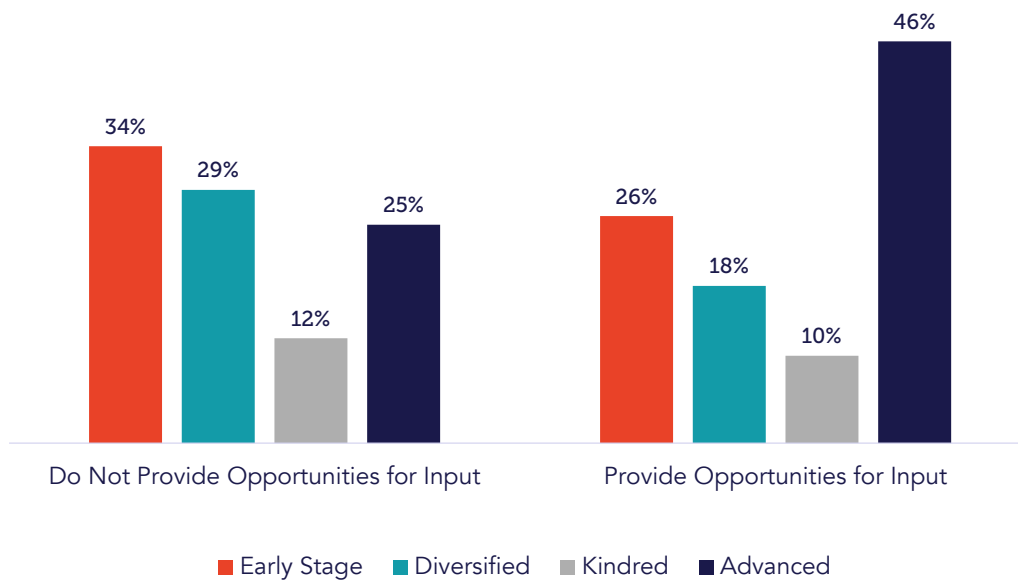
“ We use a matrixed org chart...to task decision and design processes. This means that most recommendations to leadership, and many decisions, are made by people closest to the work and not based on hierarchy or access. ”

-Respondent, Organization Profile, 2017

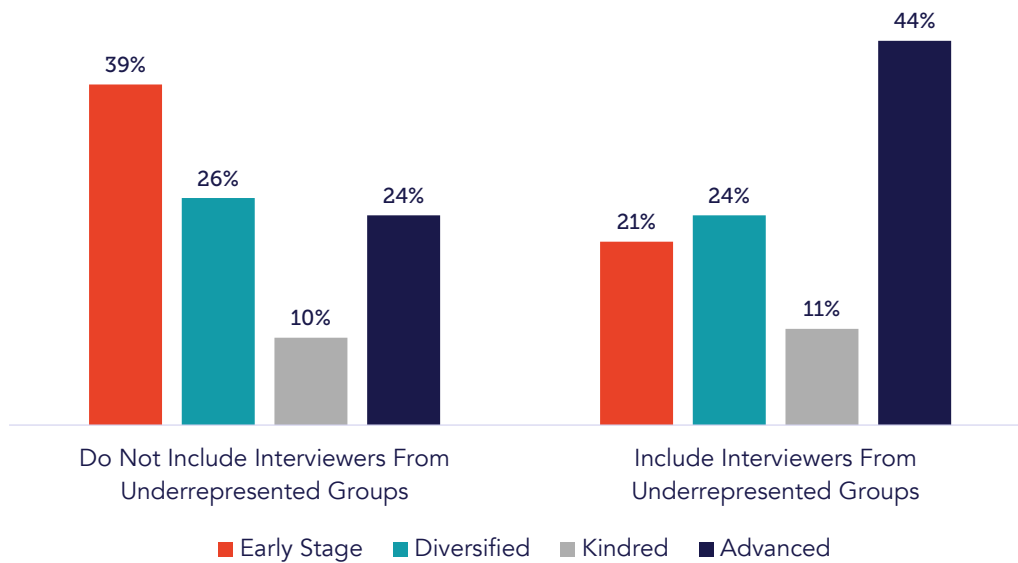
Specifically, our study data illustrates that organizations that offer frequent opportunities for staff to authentically inform decisions (especially, in our experience, decisions that impact them) are consistently more likely to land within the Advanced Profile.

78 Ortiz, L., Osagie, K., & Padamsee, X. (2019). Moving beyond diversity to inclusion. Promise 54. Retrieved from <https://case-studies.promise54.org/college-track>

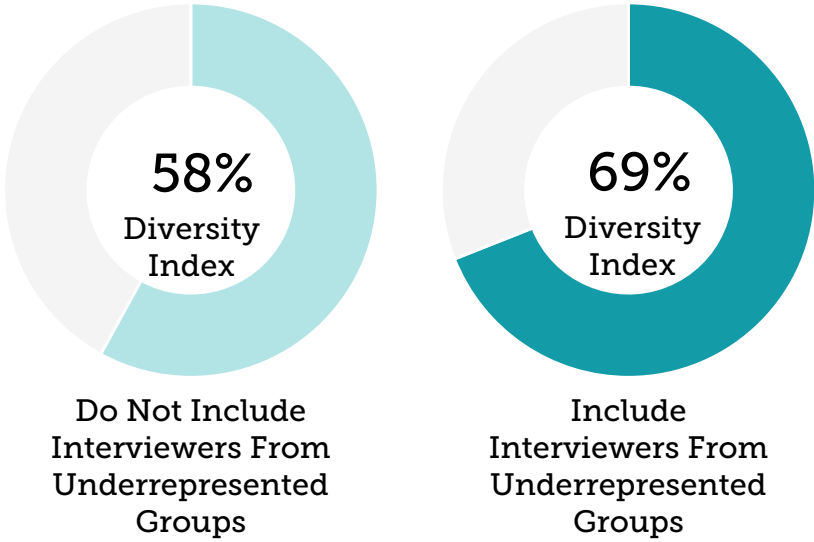
Organizations That Provide Opportunities for Diverse Input Into Decisions Are More Likely to Be Advanced



Organizations That Include Interviewers From Underrepresented Groups in Hiring Are More Likely to Be Advanced

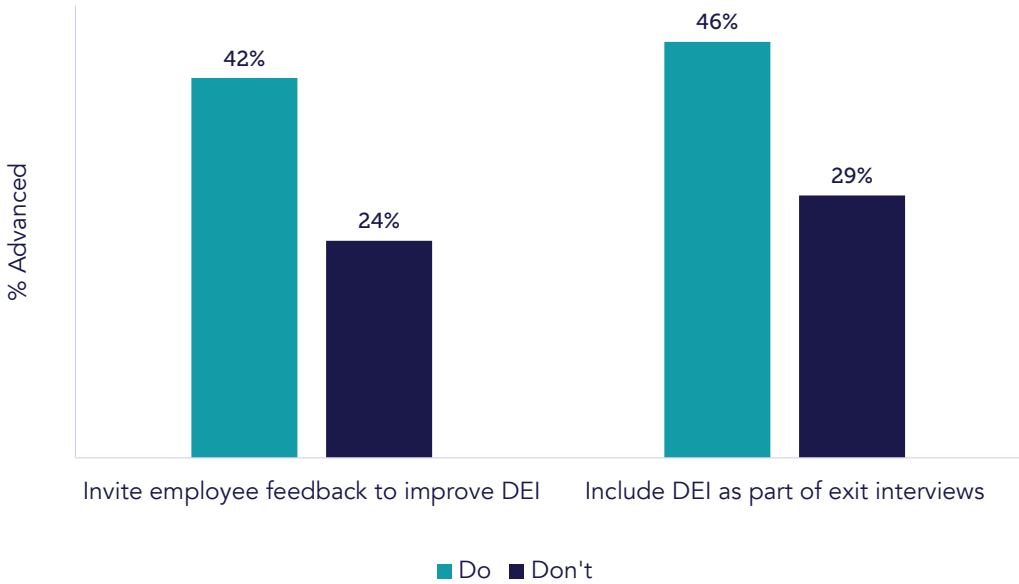


Organizations That Include Interviewers From Underrepresented Groups in Hiring Have Higher Diversity Indices



In addition, as shown below, we find that organizations that invite staff feedback (especially, in our experience, on strategies, plans, or ideas that impact them), are 18% more likely to be within the Advanced Profile.

Organizations That Invite Staff Feedback on DEI Are More Likely to Be Advanced



Our research and experience shows that authentic involvement and responsive incorporation of staff input into decisions, processes, plans, programs, and policies are associated with more positive staff experiences around DEI.

“ We have informal structures for input on decisions including staff focus groups, working groups, and level up/skip level space...We have formal leadership structures that include staff from various roles...In these structures we try to include clear decision making frameworks (MOCHA/RACI) as well as cascading communication planning.

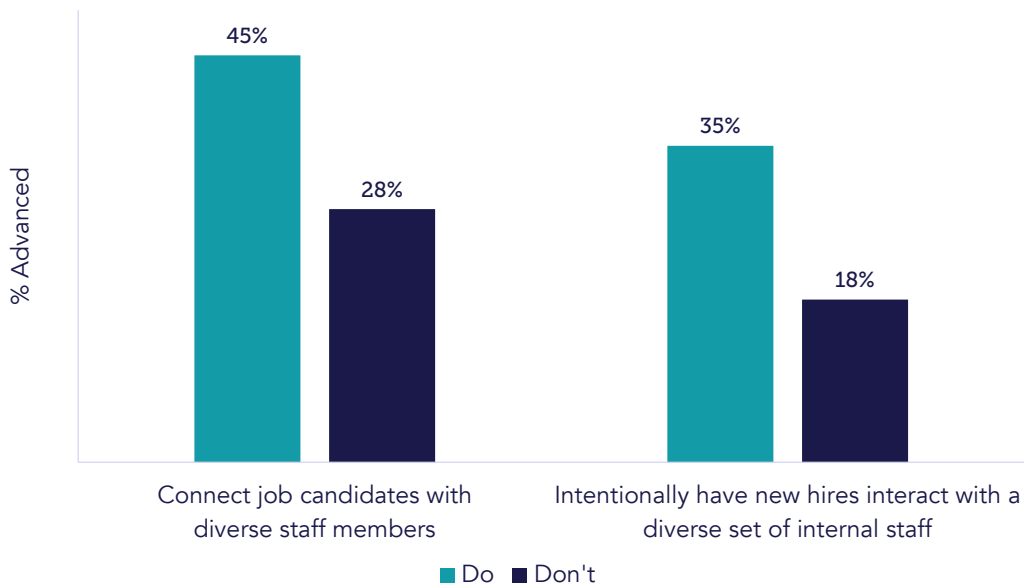
-Respondent, Organization Profile Journey, 2019

4. Moving Beyond Icebreakers to Authentic Relationships

We find organizations that intentionally develop opportunities and skills for relationship-building across the staff are more likely to see stronger DEI staff experiences.

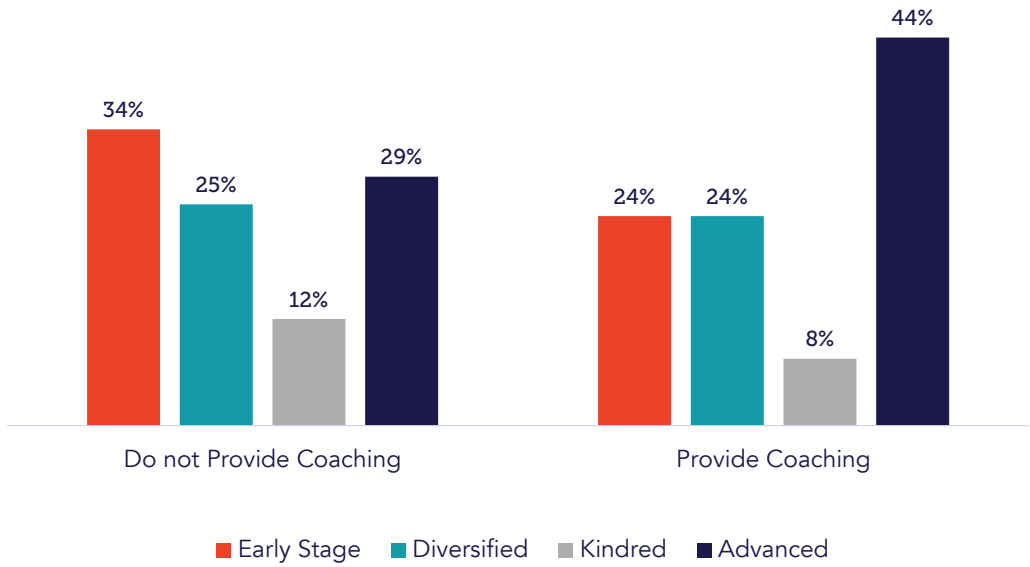
Relationship-building can begin even before staff are hired. In fact, we find that organizations that employ relationship-focused practices and leverage diversity in their selection process are more likely to be Advanced.

Organizations That Connect Candidates With a Diverse Set of Staff Are More Likely to Be Advanced

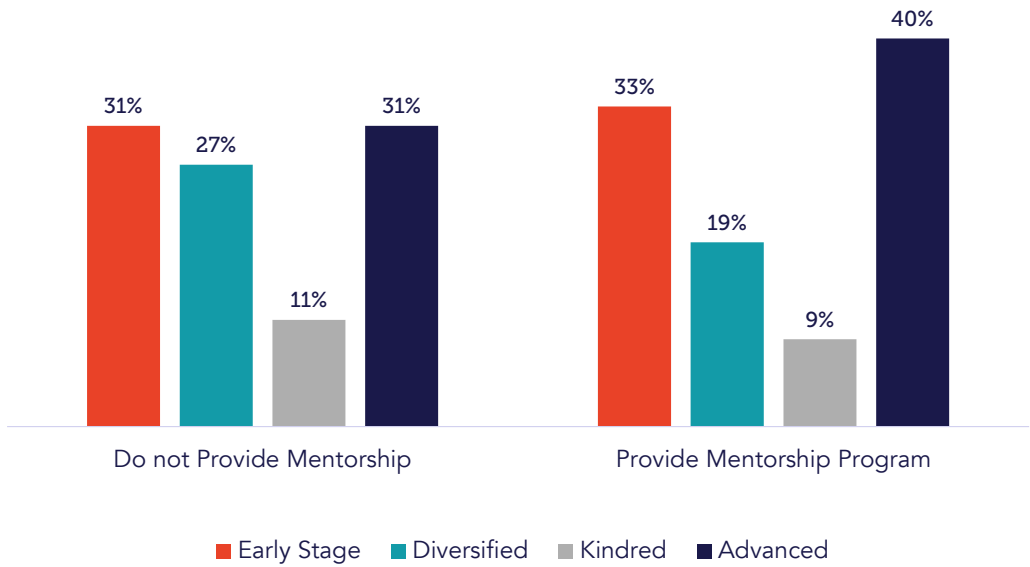


Once staff arrive, we see that organizations that offer continued opportunities for relationship-building, such as coaching and mentorship, are more likely to be Advanced as well.

Organizations That Offer Coaching Are More Likely to Be Advanced

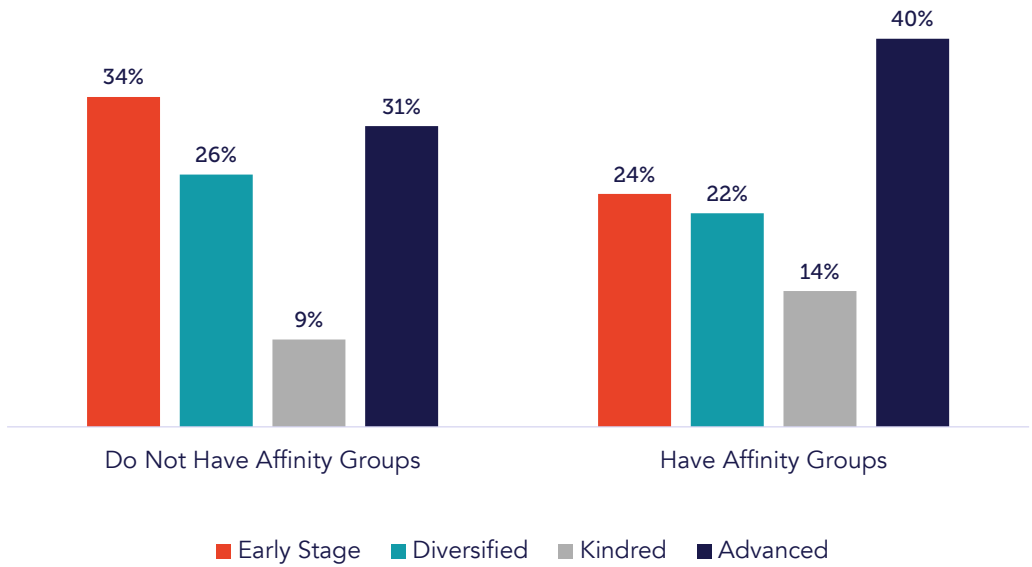


Organizations That Offer Mentorship Are More Likely to Be Advanced



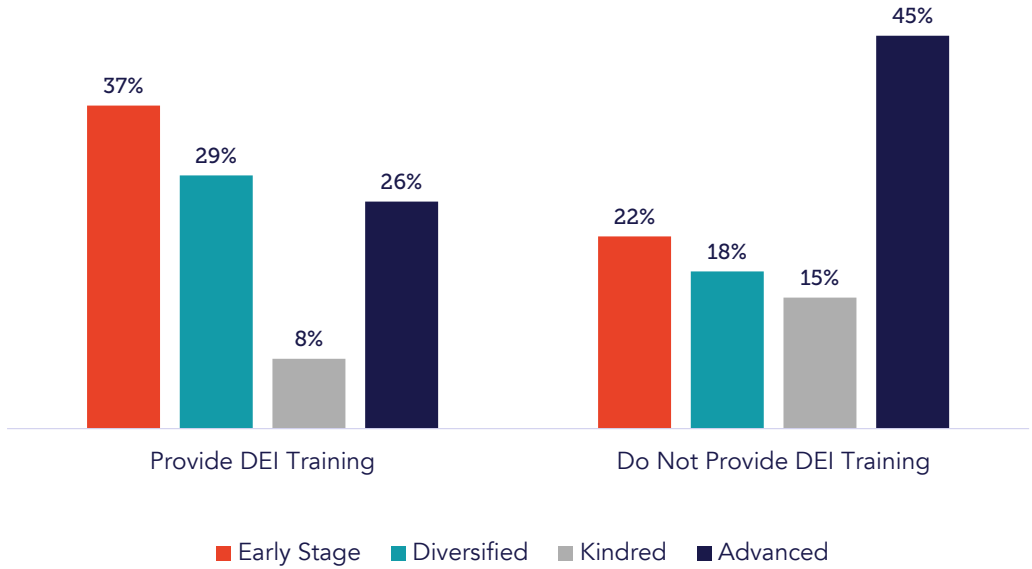
Further, organizations that provide affinity group structures — spaces intentionally designed for connection among individuals who share common identities or experiences — are associated with stronger staff DEI scores, as illustrated below. In our experience, this is because these groups can create critical space for peers to connect, be heard, and be affirmed by peers who share at least one identity.

Organizations With Affinity Groups Are More Likely to Be Advanced



Finally, organizations that provide DEI-related professional development are more likely to be Advanced, as shown below. In our work, we see these opportunities to practice trust-building, enhance psychological safety, engage in difficult conversations, and interrupt bias serve as a critical foundation to strong relationships.

Organizations That Provide DEI Training Are More Likely to Be Advanced



In summary, intentionally investing in opportunities for relationship-building and providing professional development to help staff members build critical skills to connect across lines of difference support positive experiences for staff.

5. Infusing Accountability for Things That Matter

In an effort to advance DEI, many education organizations prioritize measuring and collecting data and information across a wide variety of DEI-related strategies. For example, an organization seeking to diversify its hires may track demographic data on the number of networks from which they recruit, to the diversity of candidate pools at various stages in the hiring process.

“

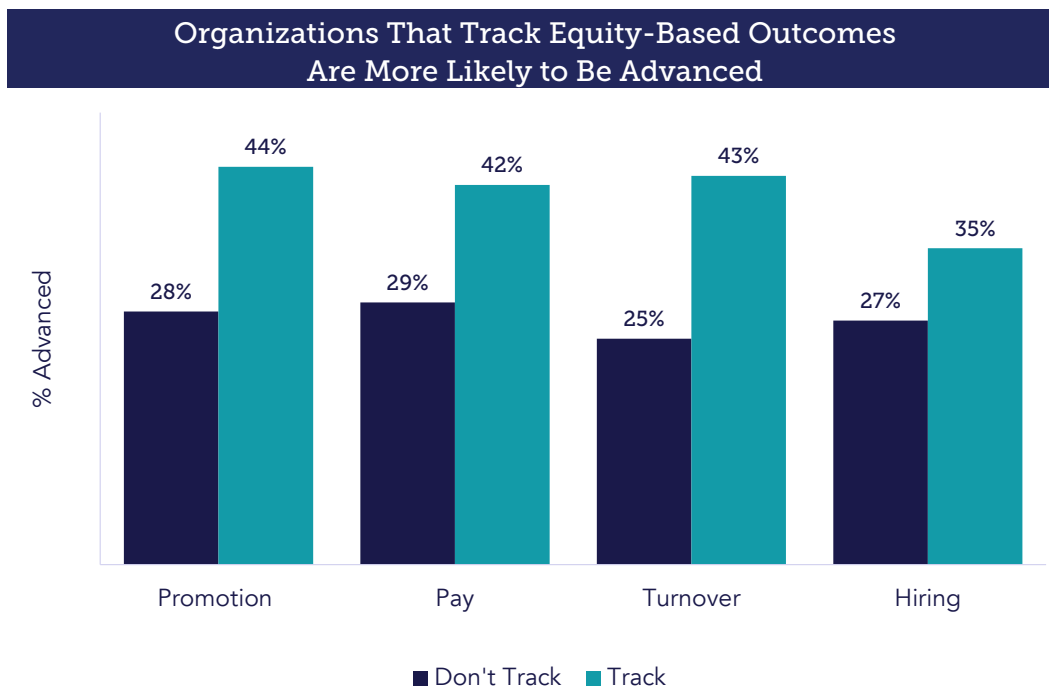
We do not have a good system for measuring these kinds of equity factors within our organization, and as a result, it is difficult to know where exactly we should be focusing our efforts.

”

-Respondent, Organization Profile, 2019

Our research indicates that organizations are more likely to see positive staff DEI experiences when they focus on equity-based outcomes of policies and processes rather than merely the inputs — and use what they learn to enhance accountability to their DEI work. In the example above, this would mean tracking the diversity of the hires that result from the recruitment and selection process.

As shown in the chart below, organizations that tracked outcome metrics such as pay, retention, promotion, and hiring rates were more likely to fall in the Advanced Profile than those that did not.



Further, as we analyzed the formal definitions of equity for organizations that participated in our DEI Organization Profile Survey, we found that some of the equity definitions emphasize outcomes, while others are more general, or only speak to equal opportunity (inputs). Among our DEI Profiles, a pattern emerged: Advanced organizations are more than twice as likely to provide outcome-focused equity statements than Diversified and Early Stage organizations.

These findings indicate that tracking equity-based outcome metrics increases the likelihood that organizations — and the individuals who make up those organizations — will follow through with necessary changes to improve DEI experiences for staff.

Read More: For an inside look at one organization’s experiences leveraging metrics and infusing accountability, please refer to Promise54’s DEI Case Study on TNTP:

[“Facing Difficult Conversations.”](#)⁷⁹

79 Ortiz, L., Osagie, K., & Padamsee, X. (2019). Facing difficult conversations. Promise 54. Retrieved from <https://casestudies.promise54.org/tntp>

Recommendations

Caution!

Before we proceed into our recommendations, a note of caution: If you have turned directly to this recommendations section hoping for technical,⁸⁰ transactional, checklist-type solutions for a set of complex, dynamic, adaptive,⁷⁶ and deeply human challenges, we urge you to pause. In our experience, this approach does not lead to transformational change and can even reinforce systemic oppression. To mitigate these risks, our recommendations for you are to:

1. Return to read the body of the report — especially the key insights and promising practices sections. Reflect on what you see there. What resonates or surprises you based on indicators within your organization and why? What data, trends, patterns, experiences might you not see or have access to today? Are you listening to and acting on the ones you do see or have access to?
2. Take time and space to consider where an instinct to take a technical over adaptive path to problem-solving may be showing up and replace it with a slower, more intentional approach. Inform your approach with deep listening to understand painful experiences shared by identity groups within your organization and root causes of inequitable outcomes within your organization. Intentionally elevate and amplify experiences of Black staff specifically, Staff of Color generally, staff with other historically marginalized identities, and staff with the least positional power. Center those experiences in your plans to drive forward progress.

People routinely ask us for the “best” DEI strategy or pathway to become a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and antiracist organization. In the previous sections, we’ve explored promising practices that can support positive staff experiences. However, even these practices depend on organizational and individual context, and work best when tailored to the organization’s unique needs, aspirations, and individual vantage points. Ultimately, organizations and individuals need to look inward to understand their own DEI journey, and where their biggest areas of opportunity lie. To that end, in this chapter we offer recommendations tailored both to organizations’ DEI Profiles and to individual vantage points that can support the discovery of the most impactful next steps.

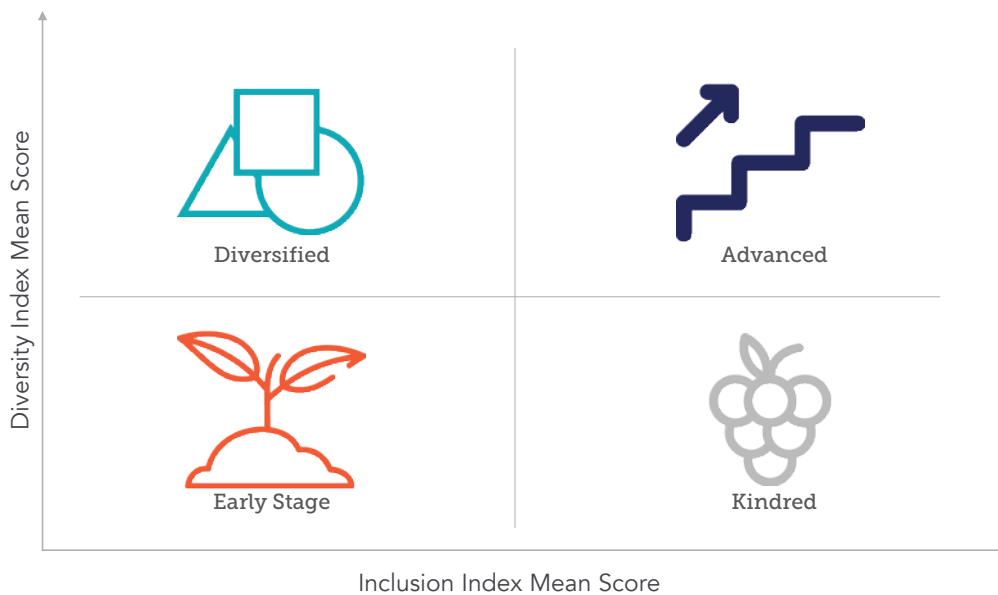
80 Heifetz, R., & Laurie, D. L. (2019). The work of leadership. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2001/12/the-work-of-leadership>

Personalizing a Path Forward Based on Your DEI Profile

Our DEI Profiles can support organizations in their efforts to reflect on and orient around their current state, and take stock of critical next steps on their journey. While internally we use this DEI Profile analysis approach to conceptualize our research and consulting work, our clients also typically find this frame useful in understanding diversity, inclusion, and equity as three interrelated but ultimately unique pillars to becoming a stronger overall organization.

Profile categories:

- **Early Stage** — Experienced as relatively low on diversity, inclusion, and equity
- **Diversified** — Experienced as relatively high on diversity but low on inclusion and equity
- **Kindred** — Experienced as relatively high on inclusion and equity but low on diversity
- **Advanced** — Experienced as relatively high on diversity, inclusion, and equity



While all the strategies below are important for every organization, what follows are suggested starting points to prompt reflection based on which DEI Profile organizations fall into. Our hope is that these differentiated recommendations serve as a starting point to support the development of a tailored approach to DEI and antiracism work.

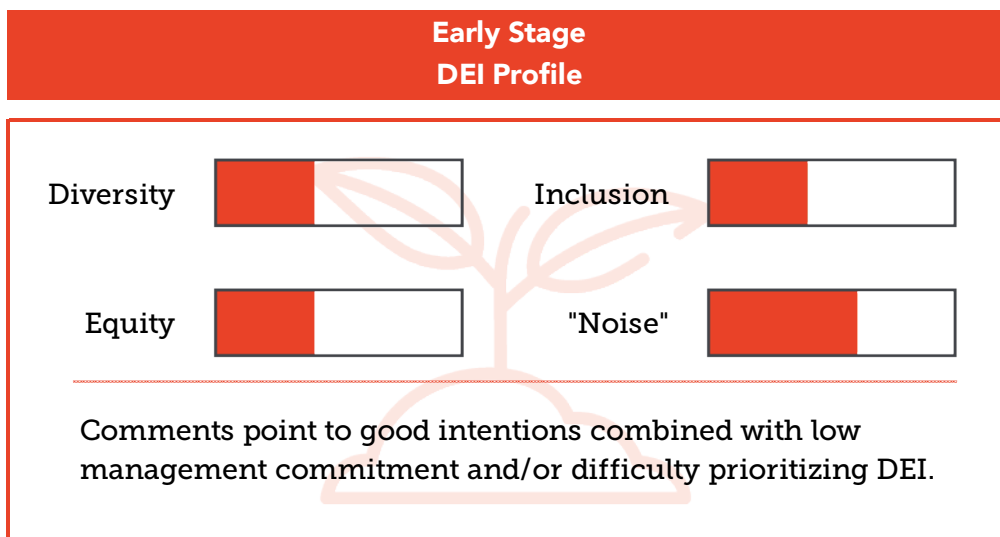
Early Stage

As illustrated in the visual below, this DEI Profile is characterized by relatively low staff perceptions of diversity, inclusion, and typically low equity. Individuals who perceive their organization as Early Stage report experiencing bias at higher rates and tend to have low Intent to Stay and Net Promoter Scores.

Further, we find from analyses of our open-ended comments that while staff within Early Stage organizations may perceive good management intentions around DEI, they also perceive inconsistent commitment to DEI, as well as challenges in maintaining focus on DEI when competing priorities intensify.

In our experience, there are medium levels of what we call “noise” within Early Stage organizations — meaning unresolved conflict, tension, or challenges among staff that are somewhat regularly heard or surfaced by broad swaths of the organization. Resistance to DEI work within Early Stage organizations often stems from a lack of clarity around what diversity, inclusion, equity, and antiracism even mean and how DEI work supports the organization’s work and mission, and/or a sense that other priorities should take precedence within the organization.

For Early Stage organizations, we recommend the following approaches to advance your DEI and antiracism journey:



1 Commit and Invest

Early Stage organizations must unapologetically commit to and communicate the importance of this work, and invest as needed to assess and enact necessary changes. One strategy to accomplish this is to clearly align on and articulate the value of DEI as it relates to the organization’s work and mission. Organizations must prepare for a multiyear, nonlinear journey full of challenges and necessary discomfort in service of shifting the status quo. Alignment around a clear, mission-critical stake in the ground related to DEI beliefs and aspirations can help support continued commitment and progress when the work gets especially challenging. Organizations must then invest and protect the resources necessary (including staff time, budget, and support) to effectively live out this commitment.

2 Define Your Terms

The terms “diversity, inclusion, equity, and antiracism” can mean different things to different people, which can result in a wide variety of expectations in relation to any of these concepts. To enable alignment, Early Stage organizations must invest the time and capacity necessary to collaboratively define what diversity, inclusion, equity, and antiracism mean within an individualized organizational context. This should include a process to surface dissent, explore complexities related to each term, and agree on a tailored set of definitions that invite involvement from across the organization. Creating a shared language will facilitate the conversations and alignment necessary to develop goals and create a plan for progress on all three dimensions of DEI.

3 Take Stock

Early Stage organizations should conduct a broad audit of organizational demographics, practices, and structures to assess the current state of DEI and antiracism. This process should include intentional efforts to surface current strengths or assets to build upon, as well as to understand staff

experiences and pain points or gaps in how people who hold various identities are experiencing the organization. It is common for Early Stage staff and leadership who are having positive experiences within the organization to be surprised to learn that others are having challenges (often connected to positional power and identity). Being uninformed about the pain that staff are enduring can be just as dangerous as knowing that there is organizational pain and doing nothing about it. Therefore it is critical to elevate and prepare to address both strengths and areas of opportunity.

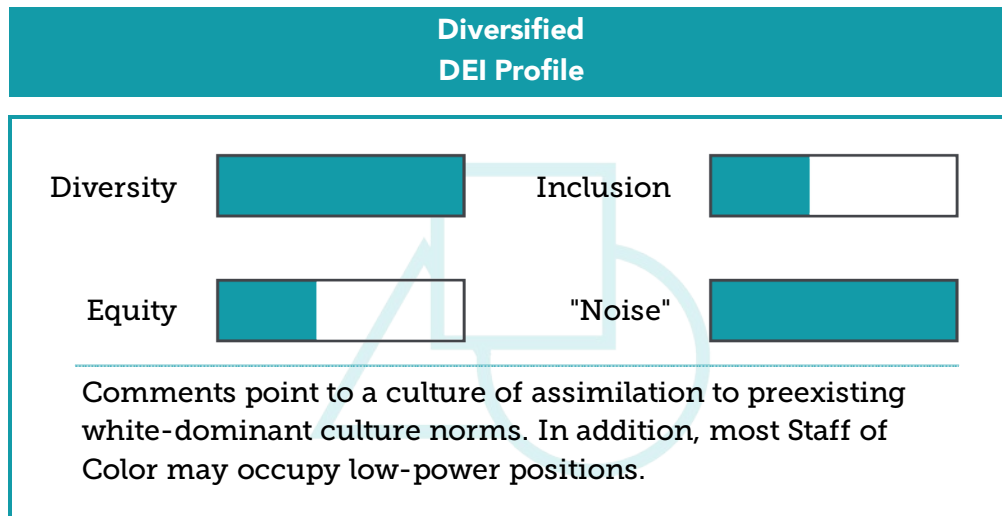
4 Plan and Prioritize

Early Stage organizations should create a high-leverage, prioritized, thoughtfully sequenced plan for progress on DEI and antiracism. We often see a tendency to take on strategies without a clear rationale or central direction, which often results in staff experiencing organizational DEI and antiracism efforts as “random acts of DEI” and ineffective overall. Instead, it is important for organizations to develop a clear plan and direction, anchored in organizational beliefs around DEI and antiracism. Additionally, we often see organizations attempt to take on too much at once and fall short of their stated intentions. To mitigate this risk, organizations must boldly prioritize DEI in order to focus efforts and resources on strategies most likely to address pain points and result in progress. When developing a plan, Early Stage organizations should avoid overemphasizing technical shifts around policies and systems without also interrogating and planning for necessary adaptive shifts in culture, behaviors, and attitudes. Further, we recommend a planning process designed to invite input and ideas from across the organization along with a high degree of transparency about which ideas ultimately made it into the plan, where, and why. Consistent, transparent communication and clear accountability mechanisms are critical to effective plan implementation. Take time periodically to assess the impact of current efforts and adjust accordingly.

Diversified

Staff at Diversified organizations perceive relatively strong diversity but low levels of inclusion and typically also equity, as illustrated below. Similar to Early Stage, we find that individuals who experience their organization as Diversified report experiencing bias at higher rates and tend to have low Net Promoter Scores and Intent to Stay.

From analyses of our open-ended comments, we find that staff within this DEI Profile, especially Staff of Color, tend to experience or even describe their organizations as assimilationist. Staff observe that while these organizations are diverse in demographics, their cultural fabric — and the systems and structures that uphold them — are anchored in white supremacy. As a result, many find that success requires decoding, learning, and adhering to these ways of operating. In short, from an inclusion and equity standpoint, these organizations were not ready to receive a more diverse workforce. Further, in our experience, there are high levels of “noise” within Diversified organizations — meaning frequent dissonance, tension, unresolved conflict, or trust breaches among staff that are often widely observed, experienced, and elevated by broad swaths of the organization. Resistance to DEI and antiracism work within Diversified organizations is often based on an assumption that staff demographics alone indicate overall progress on DEI and antiracism, and may show up as questioning the need for ongoing work, as there is already “sufficient diversity” within the organization.



For Diversified organizations, we recommend the following approaches to advance your DEI and antiracism journey:

1 Shore Up the Basics

Diversified organizations must be sure the foundational strategies as detailed above in relation to Early Stage organizations are strongly in place. Specifically, Diversified organizations must: commit to and communicate the importance of DEI and antiracism work; intentionally define beliefs, aspirations, and key terms in a way that is tailored to organizational context; take stock of strengths upon which to build and challenge areas that need to be addressed; and make a strong multiyear plan for forward progress.

2 Interrogate and Shift Culture

Diversified organizations should prioritize policies and practices focused on equity and inclusion. These organizations might begin by identifying and changing culture norms that explicitly or even implicitly inhibit staff engagement, discourage challenges to status quo cultural norms, or otherwise contribute to exclusion. For example, an organization can engage in a process to explicitly name communications norms as well as the behaviors, habits, structures, and systems that keep them in place. The organization can then examine each norm to interrogate who or what it serves or inhibits and how — as well as which — of these impacts are intended versus unintended. Finally, the organization can pilot, refine, and adopt alternative ways of communicating.

3 Develop Capacity

Diversified organizations should invest in well-thought-out and intentional training, coaching, and advising. This can equip staff with the skills and shared experiences needed to engage in often challenging and uncomfortable conversations, share feedback, build or repair trust, and interrupt inequitable practices and painful moments in real time. These organizations should develop a scope and sequence for capacity-building experiences⁸¹ that both engage all staff collectively and thoughtfully differentiates to meet varying needs. For example, in conversations about race, white staff may need space to explore racial identity formation and interrogate white privilege, while Staff of Color may need space to heal from painful past experiences, explore internalized oppression, and interrogate their own implicit biases. Indeed, even within racial/ethnic identity groups, needs and conversations will vary. Additionally, organizational leaders, people managers, and individuals with disproportionate positional power should be engaged in ways that directly address the

81 What is capacity building? (2020). National Council of Nonprofits. Retrieved from <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/what-capacity-building>

disproportionate responsibility involved in leading and modeling desired behavior shifts. In our experience, effective content includes both opportunities for “mirror”⁸²-oriented reflection, skill-building, and practice on a personal level, combined with “window”⁸³-oriented examination of the structures, systems, and culture around us.

4 Ensure Accountability

Diversified organizations should also focus on effective accountability structures. Accountability is critical to track progress and surface learnings related to DEI and antiracism efforts on both an individual and organizational level. This positions organizations to make necessary adjustments based on learnings and provides support for shared responsibility of organizational DEI and antiracism goals. For example, DEI and antiracism-infused competencies (skills believed to be most predictive of success) should be clearly articulated and linked to goal-setting, informal feedback, and formal performance management structures. As another example, organizations can intentionally examine points within key decision-making processes most susceptible to bias (e.g., hiring, promotion, resource allocation). The organization can then implement improvements (e.g., checks and balances) and continue to monitor for a shift in outcomes.

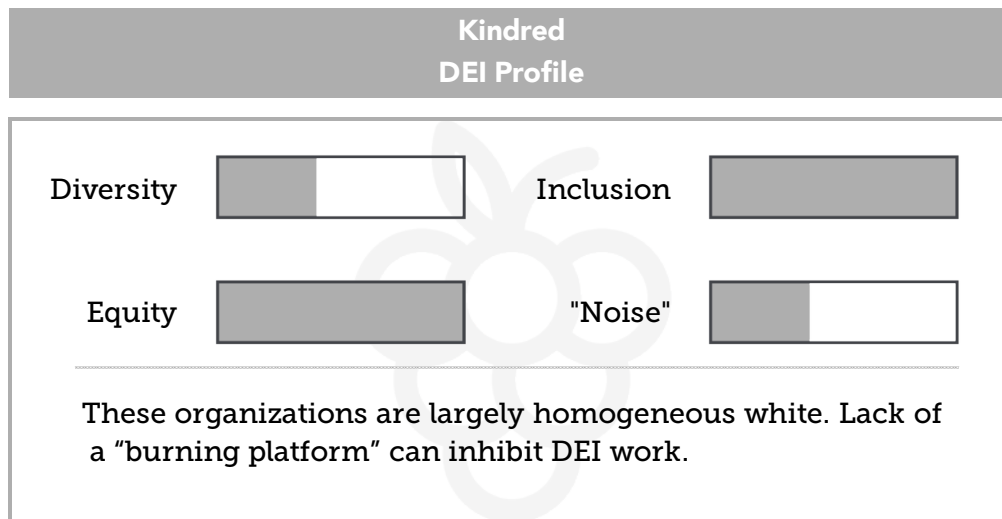
Kindred

As illustrated below, staff at Kindred organizations perceive relatively low diversity with high levels of inclusion and typically high equity as well. We find that individuals who experience their organization as Kindred experience bias at lower rates and tend to have high Net Promoter Scores and Intent to Stay. In our data, we find that these organizations are primarily homogeneously white in terms of race/ethnicity. As such, Kindred organizations do not enjoy the myriad benefits that come with a more racially/ethnically diverse staff.

We typically find the lowest levels of “noise” within Kindred organizations — meaning high levels of harmony and infrequent dissonance, discomfort, unresolved conflict, or trust breaches. As such, many Kindred organizations struggle to get DEI and antiracism work started due to the lack of an urgent burning platform that “noise” can provide. Resistance within Kindred organizations can sound like questions around the need for DEI and racial justice work if staff experiences are just fine as is, or concerns that a focus on DEI and antiracism might detract from mission impact.

82 Style, E. (1996). Curriculum as window and mirror. *Social Science Record*, 33(2), 21-28.

83 Hewlett, S. A. Marshall, M., & Sherbin, L. (2013, December). “How Diversity Can Drive Innovation.” *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2013/12/how-diversity-can-drive-innovation>



For Kindred Profile organizations, we recommend the following approaches to advancing your DEI and antiracism journey:

1 Define the Value

An important first step for Kindred Profile organizations is to align on and clearly communicate the benefits of diversity to an organization’s mission, culture, and work, and why these changes are critical and must happen now. Organization-specific beliefs about the value of DEI and antiracism may be based on a business case, a moral imperative, and/or myriad other factors. In fact, we find that organizations that cite a broad range of motivations (versus any single one) are more likely to engage in practices that accelerate progress.⁸⁴

2 Rebuild for What You Want to Be True

Kindred organizations are experienced by staff within them as inclusive and equitable. However, in our data, Kindred organizations are also majority or entirely white. Kindred organizations must intentionally interrogate for whom they want to be inclusive and equitable. Organizations that desire to be inclusive and equitable for a more diverse staff (racially and/or otherwise) will need to invest boldly in making proactive changes to culture, behavior, structures, and policies in alignment with that aspiration. For example, Kindred organizations will need to identify the underlying assumptions, values, and practices that led to, maintain, and protect existing homogeneity. Kindred organizations will need to interrogate what is gained from current homogeneity and must be honest about willingness to change in order to evolve. Kindred organizations then need to make the necessary shifts to effectively attract a more diverse workforce and, most importantly, to receive and retain it.

3 Increase Diversity

Kindred organizations should hire staff who bring new and different identities, beliefs, and experiences, but intentionally sequence this to happen after efforts to rebuild culture and practices are meaningfully underway. In particular, within our sample, we see a clear need to increase racial diversity within these organizations. This will require spotting for, surfacing, and interrupting implicit bias as it impacts recruitment and hiring. For example, organizations must watch for questions or assumptions that equate increasing diversity with sacrificing quality or merit. Such assumptions are most often based in false, white supremacy-based thinking (consciously or subconsciously) that

84 Padamsee, X., Crowe, B., Louis, L., Messano, F., & Paperny, T. (2017). Unrealized impact: The case for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Promise54. Retrieved from http://www.unrealizedimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Unrealized_Impact-Final-072017.pdf

associates high quality (capable, skilled, intelligent, polished, eloquent, strong cultural fit) with whiteness. Kindred organizations will also need to guard against a pattern where most or all People of Color are brought into the organization, but white staff continue to occupy the positions that hold the most power, agency, autonomy, decision rights, and access to resources.

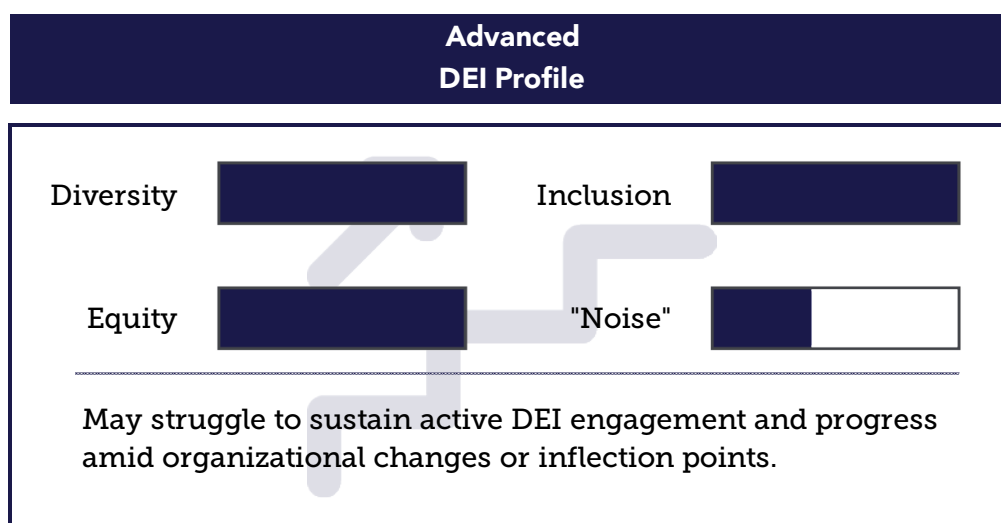
4 Prepare for Nonlinear Progress

In our experience, Kindred organizations may see a decrease in staff experiences on measures of inclusion and equity as they make progress on diversity. Specifically, “noise” (i.e., tension, unresolved conflict, and discomfort) tends to markedly increase, and staff may perceive more exclusion and less fairness before improvements are seen over the longer term. We believe this happens for two reasons. First, as the organization diversifies, the need for new ways of operating typically shifts at a faster rate than does the organizational culture. Second, while many organizations can build staff awareness and skill around spotting areas of DEI need relatively quickly, consistently implementing and sustaining improvements in these areas takes much more time. These gaps among awareness, desire for change, and the time it takes for the changes to take root can often stir frustration, anxiety, impatience, and lower morale. Organizations in this situation may feel tempted to revert to the “good old days” when harmony was high but diversity was low. However, Kindred organizations must sustain their commitment and work, despite often nonlinear progress indicators, to reach material improvements on DEI and antiracism in the long term.

Advanced

As shown below, Advanced Profile organizations have relatively high staff perceptions of staff diversity, inclusion, and equity. Individuals who experience their organization as Advanced experience low rates of bias and have high Net Promoter Scores and Intent to Stay. In our experience, “noise” tends to be relatively low within Advanced profile organizations - meaning lower levels of unresolved conflict or trust breaches and a higher level of tolerance for some dissonance and discomfort that naturally accompanies a continued focus on this work. In Advanced organizations, resistance to ongoing DEI and antiracism work can present as perceptions that the organization has done enough or that the organization’s work is complete in this area.

While Advanced organizations experience relatively high diversity, inclusion, and typically equity, it’s important to acknowledge that this success is in comparison to other organizations within our data set. In fact, the education sector (and society as a whole) has a long way to go to become diverse, inclusive, equitable, and antiracist on an absolute scale.



For Advanced organizations, we recommend the following approaches to continue your DEI and antiracism journey:

1 **Remain Diligent**

In our experience, some Advanced organizations fall into complacency, believing they have reached a final state of DEI and antiracism. In fact, DEI and antiracism work requires lifelong, intentional practice. Advanced organizations should regularly assess and reassess changing staff needs, and refine strategies and priorities, as the organization changes over time. Part of that process involves disaggregating data to scan for areas of need in a more specific way. While on average staff may experience the organization as Advanced, there are often still pockets of staff (e.g., specific identity groups, particular positions, particular geographies or teams) who experience lower levels of diversity, inclusion, and/or equity. It is critical for Advanced organizations to regularly collect and disaggregate staff experience data to discern and address concerning trends and gaps in staff experiences.

2 **Support Staff to Toggle Between Worlds**

Many Advanced organizations face the ongoing challenge of continually toggling between what may be an internal culture experienced as high on diversity, inclusion, and equity while simultaneously working externally within broader systems and a society still deeply anchored in white supremacy culture. The mental effort required to toggle in this way — sometimes on a daily or hourly basis — can be jarring and increase burden for staff, especially for those with historically marginalized identities. Adding to this drain is the immense challenge of navigating external systems and norms entrenched in white supremacy culture while simultaneously attempting to deconstruct and deprogram from these very habits and behaviors internally. As such, Advanced organizations should acknowledge and hold space for the challenge and effort this constant toggling can require. This includes supporting staff on sustainability (e.g., structures for recovery time, habits around celebration and affirmation, and extending grace to one another in daily interactions).

3 **Shift the Paradigm Toward Liberation**

All organizations working toward advancing DEI and antiracism within their work and context are still operating within larger, inherently flawed and racist systems. Advanced organizations can be particularly well positioned to push toward a new liberatory paradigm based in Radical Humanity⁸⁵ as opposed to white supremacy. Advanced organizations have an opportunity to make space for conversation and alignment around what role staff can and should play in deconstructing white supremacy culture not only within the organization but also in the organization's interactions with partners, funders, communities, and external systems. Advanced organizations should regularly step back to consider where, within their locus of control internally and externally, they can fundamentally rebuild in a new, liberatory education sector and broader society.

4 **Plan for Sustainability**

In our experience, there are two kinds of organizations that land in this profile: Organic Advanced and Learned Advanced. Organic Advanced describes organizations that were typically founded with DEI and antiracism as a key part of the organizational fabric, and therefore tend to have deeply embedded cultural habits and norms around DEI and antiracism but may never have documented their practices. Organic Advanced organizations also often have founding Leaders of Color. Alternatively, Learned Advanced organizations are those that developed into this DEI Profile through ongoing work over time, often first or primarily through the creation of formal structures and codified practices, but work to shift habits and cultures may be more nascent. In our

85 Padamsee, X. (2019). Radically human. Promise54. Retrieved from <https://www.promise54.org/radically-human/>

experience, the combination of both codified practices and deeply embedded habits best supports sustained success. As such, the distinction between these two types of Advanced organizations is particularly important in relation to sustaining strong DEI staff experiences over time.

» *Organic Advanced: Codify Your Practices*

In our work we see that Organic Advanced organizations often lack clear documented policies, practices, and accountability structures. DEI and antiracism efforts have instead relied heavily on informal mechanisms and interpersonal relationships. Without an intentional articulation of what these organizations created and the rationale for the “why” and “how,” Organic Advanced organizations are susceptible to disruption in positive staff experiences. We find that these disruptive changes and shifts often take place during times of organizational transformation (e.g., inflection points such as a founding CEO leaving the organization or a substantial growth phase). To mitigate these risks, Organic Advanced organizations should document and codify the strategies and surrounding beliefs that led to the organization’s success. This process can serve to concretize strong practices and support continued alignment on DEI and antiracism work, making Organic Advanced organizations less susceptible to disruptions in DEI and antiracism progress during inflection points.

» *Learned Advanced: Make Sure Your Culture Takes Root*

Learned Advanced organizations have typically built and leveraged formal structures and systems as an entry point toward broader cultural shifts around DEI and antiracism. For these organizations, it can be tempting to rely exclusively on such structures and systems. Long-term sustained success, however, requires DEI and antiracism to be fully embedded within cultural values and beliefs. To enable this continued shift, Learned Advanced organizations should support staff (e.g., through coaching, space for guided reflection, and employing real-time interruptions) to keep building the deeply ingrained habits and behaviors to live out DEI and antiracism beliefs in real time, every day.

Organization-level work to improve on diversity, inclusion, equity, and antiracism is hard work. The pace of progress can be slow, conversations can be challenging and uncomfortable, and the path toward transformation is most often nonlinear. Specifically, we see an emerging pattern that as organizations make progress, they often experience near-term improvements in the more easily observable parts of the work like diversity, perceived effectiveness of current DEI strategies, and management commitment. Meanwhile, many organizations experience a near-term dip in inclusion- and equity-related metrics before those increase over a longer time horizon. Our hypothesis is that as staff become more conscious of bias, oppression, and harm, they become more able to spot and name them, leading to higher reported perceptions of exclusion and inequity. This tends to happen before staff see enough interruption, restructuring, and rebuilding of the status quo — and experience the associated shifts in behaviors, habits, and mindsets — to report increased inclusion and equity.

This nonlinear slow progress combined with high “noise” as described above can lead to a temptation to return to an “easier time” before intentional investments in DEI and antiracism. In our experience, a sustained focus on adaptive, relational work with the support of technical strategies and strong accountability structures supports overall progress in DEI and antiracism through these moments and over time.

Leveraging Your Vantage Point to Drive Progress

As previously discussed, there is no exact road map or checklist that will unilaterally advance progress or address an organization’s DEI and antiracism related challenges. That said, we do believe that each of

us plays a critical role. If we each leverage our unique vantage points to drive progress within our locus of control, then together we can improve DEI and antiracism across the sector. To that end, we have developed recommendations for four audiences — organizational leaders, board members, staff, and funders — based on insights gained from our consulting work, research, and data analysis.

Organizational Leaders

Our data suggests that the identities of an individual organizational leader do not alone determine an organization's ability to achieve strong staff experiences around DEI. A highly diverse, inclusive, and equitable organization is possible no matter the identities a leader holds. Further, we believe that with disproportionate power (e.g., positional power in an organizational hierarchy) and privilege (e.g., racial privilege that white organizational leaders hold) comes disproportionate responsibility. As such, organizational leaders play a particularly important role in driving change and should focus on the following:

1 Lead Here, Too

No matter the policies, structures, or accountability measures in place, the orientation and actions of leaders often exert the most influence over the ways that staff experience the organization. Leadership in this space involves demonstrating and modeling organizational beliefs around DEI and antiracism in day-to-day work across all settings (e.g., in large-group, small-group, and one-on-one formats; with external and internal audiences; in communications, management, and decision-making practices). This means regularly demonstrating vulnerability, narrating tensions while grappling with them, inviting alternate ideas and experiences, listening deeply to understand, acting boldly and decisively, and consistently choosing courage over comfort. Organizational leaders are best equipped for this when engaged in a continued personal journey of reflection, learning, and change.⁸⁶ Leaders must interrogate their upbringing, beliefs, fears, insecurities, privileges, and underlying beliefs about who is entitled to comfort and why. By doing this, leaders are better equipped to disrupt their own implicit biases (including white supremacy culture beliefs) which — if uninterrupted — will continue to shape their thinking, communicating, decision-making, and relationship-building. This ultimately serves to protect the status quo and prevent the change we are seeking. Unless organizational leaders are at the forefront of DEI and antiracism work, it is unlikely that the rest of the organization will follow.

2 Honor Experiences, No Matter the Sample Size

Most organizational leaders want staff to experience the organization positively. This can make leaders susceptible to a pattern of seeking out or amplifying feedback that reinforces positive beliefs while minimizing critical or negative feedback. For example, organizational leaders may rationalize that critical feedback or negative experiences must only reflect a few isolated voices, or they may explain away critical feedback with unique situational context or deficit-based assumptions. This tendency can produce a cycle where People of Color and others with historically marginalized identities take risks to share difficult and vulnerable feedback, only to be met with resistance, pushback, or even no response. This creates a context where staff may become uncomfortable or afraid to express their perspectives, experiences, or ideas.⁸⁷ In turn, this can result in silencing the very voices that are illuminating and/or offering solutions to them. To mitigate this risk, leaders must provide clear avenues for input and work to strengthen organizational conditions

86 Padamsee, X. (2020). We can't disrupt white supremacy and anti-Blackness without a mirror. Promise54. Retrieved from <https://www.promise54.org/we-cant-disrupt-white-supremacy-and-anti-blackness-without-a-mirror/>

87 Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23-44.

for psychological safety,^{88,89} so that staff feel willing and able to provide input without fear of negative consequences. When critical perspectives are offered, leaders must avoid requests for “proof” or “justification,” and instead seek to understand and then center that understanding in decision-making and planning. Approach conversations with an authentic learning orientation and engage from a place of curiosity rather than from a place of authority. Leaders must acknowledge and actively seek to minimize the extra burden⁹⁰ that falls to People of Color and others with historically marginalized identities and acknowledge that — because of that very burden — a small number of data points may actually represent the current or potential experiences of many. Even if it doesn’t, however, it is incumbent on leaders to center and address the realities of those experiencing the most pain within their organization.

3 Make Necessary Investments to Enable the Work

To position DEI and antiracism work for success, leaders must cede and share power with others while also supporting them with realistic allocations of time and budget to enable success. Specifically, CEOs and executive directors should engage their leadership teams to develop buy-in and model DEI and antiracism work. Senior leaders should share power and empower others who are more proximate to the work. For example, this could look like giving full autonomy and authority to a DEI- and antiracism-focused team of staff at all levels to create an equitable recruitment and hiring process. Further, leaders must invest and protect the necessary resources to advance the work. This includes ensuring that staff throughout the organization — especially those designing and leading various aspects of DEI and antiracism work — have enough time protected to advance this work without an expectation that it will be added to already full plates. This reinforces the idea that DEI and antiracism work is critical to the organization’s success. Leaders must also invest appropriate budget dollars to properly compensate individuals involved in this work as needed, and to secure advising, training, or coaching where skills, experience, or capacity needs to be supplemented to successfully advance the work.

Board Members

Boards exist to steer organizations toward a sustainable future through strong planning, governance, fiscal management, and monitoring. Yet 67% of all board members in our sample identify racially as white. This racially privileged lens can leave boards especially susceptible to recreating the very inequities that their organizations seek to address.⁹¹ Given the amount of influence and direction that board members provide to organizations, it is critical that they engage in DEI and antiracism work fully and deeply alongside the organizations they govern. Here are some ideas on what board members can do:

1 Interrogate and Align

In order to effectively support DEI and antiracism work at their organizations, each board member must examine the ways in which their identities impact how they see the world and how the world experiences them — including owning privilege and interrogating biases. These factors influence how people lead as board members (e.g., how they think, question, communicate, build relationships, make decisions), and, left unexamined, they run the risk of perpetuating exclusion

88 Frazier, M. L., Fainshmidt, S., Klinger, R. L., Pezeshkan, A., & Vracheva, V. (2017). Psychological safety: A meta-analytic review and extension. *Personnel Psychology*, 70(1), 113-165.

89 Douyon, V., & Vinson, K. (2020). Psychological safety: What’s keeping your team from taking critical risks? Promise54. Retrieved from <https://www.promise54.org/psychological-safety-whats-keeping-your-team-from-taking-critical-risks/>

90 Lee, C., & Padamsee, X. (2020, July 14). Ring the Alarm: When the “Burden Alert” Sounds, Think Informed Consent. Retrieved March 8, 2021, from <https://www.promise54.org/ring-the-alarm-when-the-burden-alert-sounds-think-informed-consent/>

91 Theoharis, G. (2018). White privilege and educational leadership. In *Whiteucation* (pp. 52-61). Routledge.

and harm.⁸⁷ Further, the collective board should critically examine norms (with each other and in interactions with the organization) to spot and interrupt established ways of operating that perpetuate or protect inequitable outcomes and harmful practices. Board members should engage in a focused and intentional process to align with each other — and with staff — on values, beliefs, and language regarding DEI and antiracism. This work can take place through personal reflection, coaching, group discussion, and/or facilitated skill-building. Ultimately, through an ongoing process of personal and collective growth — as well as intentional alignment with staff — boards will be best positioned to support their organizations to become diverse, inclusive, equitable, and antiracist.

2 Diversify the Room

Boards should seek out, engage, and center perspectives from those whom the organization ultimately seeks to serve. Given the predominance of white board members illustrated by our data (67%), this will likely require that boards establish intentional systems and processes to engage these perspectives in major decisions and discussions. Boards should diversify on multiple levels, including establishing concrete avenues to enable individuals from the communities served to join the board itself (and not just one individual, to alleviate the risk of tokenism and burden). In addition, they should create regular, accessible opportunities for organization staff and individuals from the communities served to engage in and influence key decisions, even without board membership.

3 Enable Authentic Participation

Boards must interrogate and actively disrupt the structural and cultural practices that have produced and sustained their homogeneity in the first place. This may include interrupting both implicit and explicit norms around modes of communication, ensuring logistical accessibility (e.g., geographic location, meeting times), engaging in asset-based thinking,⁹² and ensuring that single perspectives are not assumed to be representative of entire groups). Further, board members should engage in intentional power-sharing⁹³ and center voices and experiences of the community whom the organization ultimately seeks to serve (e.g., allow community member votes to have more weight in determining decision outcomes, require at least half of the board identify as community members, hold a seat on the board for staff from all levels of the organization).

4 Find the Optimal Balance

Strong diversity, inclusion, equity, and antiracism are necessary components to maintaining a sustainable organization. They lead to more positive work culture with more staff engagement, stronger retention, and better outcomes.^{94,95,96} As the group responsible for steering organizations toward that sustainable future, boards must both support and hold organizations accountable. Support could look like approving budget investments to promote advancement of DEI and antiracism, or creating space in meeting agendas for problem-solving around DEI- and antiracism-related challenges. Examples of accountability could include reviewing DEI- and antiracism-related data, partnering with the organization to set clear and concrete metrics and performance indicators,

92 Sudsberry, M., & Kandel-Cisco, B. (2013). Transformative leadership: An asset-based approach to leadership for diverse schools and learners. *Scholarship and Professional Work – Education*, 90. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/coe_papers/90

93 London, M., Bear, J. B., Cushenbery, L., & Sherman, G. D. (2019). Leader support for gender equity: Understanding prosocial goal orientation, leadership motivation, and power sharing. *Human Resource Management Review*, 29(3), 418-427.

94 Phillips, K. W. (2014). How diversity makes us smarter. *Scientific American*, 311(4), 43-47.

95 Hunt, V., Layton, D., & Prince, S. (2015). Diversity matters. McKinsey & Company. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/business%20functions/organization/our%20insights/why%20diversity%20matters/diversity%20matters.ashx>

96 Hewlett, S. A., Marshall, M., Sherbin, L., & Gonsalves, T. (2013). Innovation, diversity and market growth. Center for Talent Innovation.

and including a review of progress toward DEI and antiracism outcomes in CEO performance evaluations. Further, boards should identify the moments or places where playing a more active, driving role in the organization's DEI and antiracism work will best enable success versus when to listen, learn, and absorb from the organization's staff. For example, if an organization is currently engaging in courageous conversations and boldly reimagining systems and structures in service of DEI and antiracism, the organization may be better served by a board willing to listen and follow. If an organization is unwilling or unsure how to move forward on its DEI and antiracism work, however, the board has an opportunity to lead and push toward action. This balance between support and accountability, leaning in and listening, will enable organizations to ensure that they clearly articulate their DEI beliefs, track the data necessary to regularly monitor how they are performing in relation to those beliefs, and establish and implement strong, tailored plans to make forward progress.

Organization Staff

Material progress on DEI and antiracism requires shifts not only to organization structures and systems but cultural shifts as well. While leaders play an important role, to get to overall organizational transformation, staff throughout the organization must work in tandem to create and actualize progress within their locus of control. In short, this work belongs to — and requires — all staff. Here are some ideas on what staff can do:

1 **Divest From White Supremacy Culture**

The culture of an organization can either be upheld or interrupted by staff. As such, it is important that each staff member interrogate their own identities, privileges, and biases, and how those impact modes of operating. Staff should determine which white supremacy culture norms they are most susceptible to upholding, as well as who those practices ultimately benefit and hold back. This self-reflective work will enable staff to engage within their sphere of influence — be it their team, peers, or direct reports — to spot, question, and interrupt practices (including their own) that enact harm. For example, staff can invite, model, and affirm vulnerability and engage in critical conversations with each other. Further, staff can leverage their voice, perspectives, knowledge, and experiences to agitate, support, and hold the organization accountable to broader organizational progress on DEI and antiracism. Collective pushes from staff can be powerful in illuminating need areas, identifying organizational priorities around DEI and antiracism, and transforming organizational culture and practices.

While identity-based pain and trauma may not be felt equally across the organization, the work to improve DEI and antiracism should be shared by all. We all hold a variety of intersecting identities that each can carry various levels of privilege (e.g., college-educated, man, able-bodied, U.S. citizen,

Undue Burden:

Staff who carry historically marginalized identities also often experience undue burden⁹⁸ around DEI and antiracism work. This often takes the form of implicit expectations to identify and “fix” DEI and antiracism challenges, or to provide representative perspectives for whole groups of people. At the same time, staff with historically marginalized identities also face greater risk and/or cost with DEI and antiracism work. For example, they may be subjected to strong pushback or retaliation, be held back from professional advancement, or experience other identity-based pain as a result of elevating challenges. Even if none of these consequences come to pass, staff with historically marginalized identities may carry fear and trauma from past experiences, resulting in added emotional load.

white) and marginalization (e.g., from a low-income background, first-generation college graduate, transgender, gender non-binary, Person of Color, LGBTQIA+) in different contexts. We believe that engagement in DEI and antiracism work should look differently depending on whether individuals engage from a place of relative privilege or systemic oppression. It is incumbent upon each individual to determine, at any given point, whether they are entering more or less from a place of privilege. Below, we offer some differentiated recommendations based on this entry point.⁹⁷

2 Lean In/Lean Out With Intention

» *From Privileged Identities: Learn and Listen (Google It)*

A critical element of privilege is alignment between an identity and what is centered as the “norm.” The resulting lack of contrast or dissonance between a privileged identity and centered norms can make it more challenging to notice the marginalization that these norms can create. As staff begin to raise their awareness around areas of institutionalized oppression, there is often a tendency to ask those with historically marginalized identities to teach those with privileged identities, which can create additional burden or harm. Instead, staff should seek to educate themselves. This can mean reading books or articles published by authors who share marginalized identities; researching terms, topics, and histories related to that identity; and connecting with other allies and co-conspirators to engage in shared learning. Should someone with a historically marginalized identity choose to share their experiences, perspectives, or knowledge, staff on the receiving end of that generosity should take an authentic learning orientation, listen, absorb, and honor the sharing with gratitude, acknowledgment, and compensation where appropriate, for the potential cost and emotional labor involved.

» *From Marginalized Identities: Recover and Draw Boundaries*

Staff with historically marginalized identities may feel pressure to lead DEI and antiracism work and/or share painful experiences or trauma as a pedagogical tool for the learning of others.⁹⁸ In some contexts (e.g., with trust, psychological safety, and an open, receptive audience), this can feel empowering and even liberating. In other contexts, however, this kind of pressure can be draining, scary, and even retraumatizing. Staff must take care to engage when and where they feel a desire to do so, and to intentionally disengage at other times for healing and recovery. It is important for staff who hold historically marginalized identities to name and honor their boundaries around time, energy, and emotional labor wherever possible to support overall well-being. Further, it is critical for staff to find opportunities to retreat (take time away whether alone, with family/friends, or with other staff who share identity-based lenses), recover (take time to rest and heal), and renew (take time to energize, reclaim boundaries, and connect with joy) so that they may reengage, if they so choose, in healthy and sustainable ways.

3 Share the Burden

» *From Privileged Identities: Leverage Privilege*

Through the lens of privileged identities, staff must seek to understand what conditions leave them most susceptible to becoming complicit by bystanding. Further, staff should examine the differences between engaging in DEI and antiracism work from a place of saviorism (a paternalistic tendency based in an assumption of superiority to want to “save” others) versus

97 Osagie, K., & Zucker, U. (2019). All of the above: The unpaid labor of people of color in DEI work. Promise54. Retrieved from <https://www.promise54.org/all-of-the-above-the-unpaid-labor-of-people-of-color-in-dei-work/>

98 Roberts, L. M., & Mayo, A. J. (2019). Toward a racially just workplace. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/cover-story/2019/11/toward-a-rationally-just-workplace>

as allies (engagement that comes with an expectation of recognition, acknowledgment, or appreciation from those who do not hold that identity-based privilege) versus as co-conspirators (those who “acknowledge that they are the architects and beneficiaries of white supremacy and, in turn, feel duty-bound to dismantle it.”)⁹⁹. Co-conspiratorship requires sharing the burden and taking action. Staff should work to lean specifically into co-conspiratorship. This can look like amplifying the voices and experiences of those with marginalized identities when they are being overlooked or miscredited (i.e., elevating key points made by people with historically marginalized identities while emphasizing credit to the person who originally shared the idea emphasizing credit)¹⁰⁰; spotting, naming, and interrupting harmful patterns or behaviors (e.g., microaggressions, processes that produce inequitable outcomes, assumptions and biases); or going out on a “vulnerability ledge” — taking a risk in sharing to support increased psychological safety.

» *From Marginalized Identities: Identify and Activate Allies*

Staff with historically marginalized identities can work to identify, engage, and activate co-conspirators¹⁰¹ as one way of leveraging support toward care and sustainability in DEI and antiracism work. Staff must first identify potential co-conspirators within their organization. This may include individuals who, from a place of privilege, take risks to raise uncomfortable questions or topics, notice and elevate trends regarding marginalization and harm, demonstrate authentic care and curiosity, and take a listening stance around the experiences of others. Staff with historically marginalized identities can actively lean on co-conspirators for emotional support and overall well-being. This can look like connecting one-on-one with staff with whom they experience trust and psychological safety; asking for a space to try on new ideas, vent, or experience emotions that may feel higher risk; or soliciting support to elevate an issue or concern. In addition, staff with historically marginalized identities can leverage co-conspirators to move first or take on situations that will require more emotional labor. This can look like inviting co-conspirators into a potentially contentious room, asking co-conspirators to speak up first to disrupt status quo ways of operating that serve to perpetuate harm, or engaging them to explain the problematic impacts of a microaggressive moment. Activating co-conspirators enables staff with historically marginalized identities to offload burden while inviting those with privilege to disrupt the status quo and rebuild together.

Funders

Foundations are the least diverse organization type in our data set, with 62% of staff identifying as white and 80% of CEOs identifying as white. Additionally, a majority of funders in our data are categorized as Early Stage organizations. This comes as no surprise, given the reality of a philanthropic sector predicated on the accumulation of immense wealth by very few, and designed to advance “top-down, closed-door, and expert-driven” practices.¹⁰² Given the history and demographics of the sector, unless funders proactively work to interrogate and interrupt existing power dynamics, they are likely to perpetuate

99 Albert, D., & Cover, L. (2019). From saviorism to co-conspiring. Promise54. Retrieved from <https://www.promise54.org/from-saviorism-to-co-conspiring/>

100 Cavalieri, S. (2019). On amplification: Extralegal acts of feminist resistance in the # MeToo era. *Wisconsin Law Review*, (2019)6, 1489-1549.

101 Osagie, K., & Zucker, U. (2019). All of the above: The unpaid labor of People of Color in DEI work. Promise54. Retrieved from <https://www.promise54.org/all-of-the-above-the-unpaid-labor-of-people-of-color-in-dei-work/>

102 Villanueva, E. (2018). *Decolonizing wealth: Indigenous wisdom to heal divides and restore balance*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

existing oppression.¹⁰³ Here are some recommendations for foundations:

1 Do the Work

Funders should work to make true internally the changes that they seek to advance externally. Effective internal DEI and antiracism can interrupt the existing mechanisms that maintain status quo inequities and gives funders a better understanding of what grantees are working through as they engage in this work. Organizations in this space should take stock of their current policies, practices, staff experiences, and demographics across levels. Then, foundations should leverage the DEI Profile-specific recommendations detailed in the section above to create their own tailored organizational plan toward progress. Finally, a word of caution: In our experience, once funders begin work to advance internal DEI and antiracism, they can feel immense pressure to achieve end goals before they feel confident holding grantees accountable to the same. In fact, there's no perfect place or arrival state when it comes to DEI and antiracism work, nor is there a perfect starting point. Funders should approach this work both internally and externally simultaneously. Meanwhile, they must offer transparency with grantees about where they are in their journey, what they're working on, and what they're struggling with — all while asking grantees to do the same.

2 Orient Around Those Most Impacted

We have often seen funders establish their theory of change, set strategy, and develop funding opportunities as the “experts” regarding what is best for the communities they seek to impact — whether intentionally or subconsciously — while lacking the lived experience or cultural understanding critical to informing effective approaches. In fact, the people most impacted by the oppression embedded within today's systems hold unique and critical expertise required to develop effective solutions. As such, funders need to orient decision-making, especially in early stages, to engage and center those they serve and support.¹⁰⁴ Specifically, funders should bring members of the communities they seek to impact (not just one individual, to alleviate burden and avoid tokenism) into the room to inform critical philanthropic strategy and design decisions (along with appropriate compensation for time and expertise). Further, funders must intentionally employ practices that create psychological safety, interrupt protection of white comfort, and mitigate the impact of hierarchy, privilege, and positional power to enable full involvement in the room.

3 Invest in Leaders From Communities Served

Funders should directly invest in leaders who come from and represent the communities served. To do this well, funders must work intentionally to spot bias in decision-making, and interrogate the ways in which current grantee recruitment and selection practices may be negatively impacting leaders with historically marginalized identities (e.g., what funders expect in a pitch, how they decide what's required, how far along the idea or organization is in their journey, or the accolades and networks the leader or organization is associated with). Further, funders must implement systems to audit and assess the distribution of their investments. Funders should carefully consider the number of grants, grant amounts, and portion of overall investments made in Leaders of Color and in leaders with other historically marginalized identities. This isn't just about equal or proportionate funding or support; rather, it's about disproportionate investment to help course-correct a longstanding inequitable system.¹⁰⁵ Funders should make longer-term investments that

103 Albert, D., & Cover, L. (2019). From saviorism to co-conspiring. Promise54. Retrieved from <https://www.promise54.org/from-saviorism-to-co-conspiring/>

104 Burton, D. O., & Barnes, B. C. (2017). Shifting philanthropy from charity to justice. Stanford Social Innovation Review. Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/shifting_philanthropy_from_charity_to_justice

105 Dorsey, C. (2020). Racial equity and philanthropy: Disparities in funding for leaders of color leave impact on the table. Bridgespan Group. Retrieved from <https://www.bridgespan.org/bridgespan/Images/articles/racial-equity-and-philanthropy/racial-equity-and-philanthropy.pdf>

give leaders runway to make impact, innovate, take risks, learn, and adjust. Additionally, through the grant period, funders must balance staying connected enough to be responsive to shifting needs while trusting that grantees will advance the work as they best see fit. In times of acute crisis, funders should identify what will advance the intention of the work versus what will complete the established plan. Additionally, funders should work to minimize bureaucratic requirements to free up organizational time and energy that can advance the work. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen bold moves from some funders, such as eliminating required deliverables and reporting requirements, shifting earmarked investments with current grantees to general operating funds, and creating funding opportunities that focus exclusively on sustainability, healing, and recovery.

4 Set and Elevate the Standards

Until the overarching field of philanthropy is fundamentally oriented around a new paradigm anchored in justice, funders have the power to either incent and enable advancement of DEI and antiracism across the field, or be complicit in the continuation of harm. To leverage existing power through grantmaking, funders can establish a clearly defined set of baseline indicators related to DEI and antiracism that they expect to see for any organization to receive investments. There is a wide range of possible initial investment criteria that foundations can establish with intentional care to avoid unintended consequences. For example, foundations could require clear statements of organizational commitments, beliefs, and intentions around DEI and antiracism, and/or foundations could require that organizations collect and track key DEI and antiracism metrics. Foundations could also require identity-based staff experience gaps to be lower than a certain level and implement requirements around racial diversity within the organizational hierarchy. Additionally, funders could name what they expect to see in terms of improvement, growth, change, or gains on DEI and antiracism in order for organizations to access continued funding over time. Further, funders could leverage their power toward progress by making investments in maintaining and growing a healthy ecosystem of available supports for organizations driving progress on DEI and antiracism. Specifically, this could look like investments in organizations that develop and deliver innovative and effective technical assistance to organizations, and/or investments in relevant research to unearth promising practices that advance DEI and antiracism across the field.



Self-Reflections & Next Steps

At Promise54, we are on our own journey to become a fully diverse, inclusive, equitable, and antiracist organization. In the spirit of transparently sharing where we are engaged in our own work, here are some of our reflections on how we can improve our DEI survey instruments, along with ownership and sincere apologies for pain caused to survey respondents who were negatively impacted by our previous versions. While some of these changes have already been implemented, we plan to implement the remainder of these improvements throughout 2022 (shared in random order). The description of changes below is not intended to be comprehensive or complete.

- **Replace coded terms with precise language**
In the process of analyzing our data, we noted a few instances in our surveys where we ask participants about “diverse staff members” and “underrepresented groups.” We are working to spot places where our own socialization around not talking about race in direct, specific, asset-based terms has resulted in the use of coded terms like these, and to replace them with more specific language, such as specifically naming Staff of Color, individual racial/ethnic groups, and other historically marginalized identity categories. Doing better requires us all to be direct, clear, and specific about what we mean.
- **Add to our race/ethnicity category descriptions for increased inclusivity**
As we make updates to our survey tool, we will be considering changes to our racial/ethnic category response options overall, including a deep exploration of potential changes in the areas below. Our current racial and ethnic group descriptions include the term Native American — but not the term Indigenous — among the options with which survey participants can indicate a racial/ethnic identity. We have come to understand that this is unnecessarily limiting and can exclude a range of Indigenous communities. In future surveys, we will add the term “Indigenous” alongside Native American. Further, our current racial and ethnic group descriptions include Latino, which can be experienced as gendered (male) and also fails to include respondents who hold a range of non-binary gender identifications. As a result, we will be expanding our description for this group to include “Latinx.” In addition, we will be exploring the opportunity to disaggregate within the AAPI racial/ethnic category to facilitate more accurate and inclusive data analysis.
- **Be consistent in our intention to capture gender identity**
In our surveys, we include various questions intended to ask about respondents’ gender identity. However, we have mistakenly offered response options for female/male/non-binary, which actually mix sex (a label assigned at birth, most often male or female) and gender identification (an identity held by the individual, as in non-binary, genderqueer, agender, gender nonconforming, woman, man). This mixing of terms can create substantial pain, especially for respondents whose sex and gender are distinct. Going forward, we will offer gender identification response options of woman/man/non-binary. We will also add a free-text field for

respondents to state their own gender identity.

- **Consider multiple identities**

In the original creation of our survey, we made an intentional decision to limit respondents to only one racial/ethnic category selection. While we knew this could be reductionist and limiting for respondents, we believed it would allow us to better distinguish between respondent groups and thereby more confidently identify patterns and insights. At this point, with a larger data set, a continued desire to acknowledge the complexity and intersectionality of identities, and more confidence in our own voice, we are committed to piloting new methods of analysis that allow us to better align with how respondents choose to identify.

- **Capture ability**

We do not currently collect information on able-bodiedness/disability of individual respondents. This likely contributes to continued or exacerbated invisibility of disabled individuals — a growing community already historically marginalized within society. In an effort to provide organizations (including our own) with the data needed to spot and interrupt ableist work environments, habits, and stigmas, in future surveys, we will collect information regarding able-bodiedness/disability to provide insight into representation and experiences among this community.

- **Add a specific focus on antiracism**

We believe that antiracism requires first seeing race, including trends and gaps along racial lines, then actively interrogating and disrupting the white supremacy-based habits and structures that protect and perpetuate those trends and gaps. Our current survey tools explore experiences around diversity, inclusion, and equity broadly, and, in alignment with our organizational values, we also currently disproportionately emphasize race (i.e., in relation to a variety of identity categories, including race). However, our existing survey tools do not include a discrete focus on antiracism. We plan to add this as an explicit dimension in our survey to enable organizations to more effectively interrogate and dismantle racism specifically.

- **Expand “LGBTQ” to “LGBTQIA+”**

Our current survey tools provide individuals the option to identify as “LGBTQ.” We recognize this acronym can be limiting for respondents who do not specifically identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. To improve our survey tool and the inclusive language within it, we will shift to the acronym LGBTQIA+ to ensure inclusion of individuals who identify as intersex and asexual, and to clarify our intention to include respondents who identify as questioning, as well as the additional range of identities within the LGBTQIA+ community that may not be captured within the boundaries of existing terms or labels.

- **Be more accurate than “Multiple/Other”**

While our surveys currently list “Multiple/Other” as a race/ethnicity category, we acknowledge that this category, perhaps more than others, intends to capture a particularly wide range of identities, rendering it especially reductionist. It neither accurately captures identity for many nor allows us to make meaningful conclusions given the range of identities within this category. Further, the term “other” by definition orients individuals against a set of “normalized” identity categories, perhaps causing painful impact for survey respondents. Moving forward, we will work to pilot a more inclusive and accurate way to capture and analyze both the experiences of Multiracial individuals, and also those who do not identify with the race/ethnicity categories provided.

We will continue to consider refinements to our survey tools over time as we hone our practice in living out our DEI beliefs. While these examples speak to improvements we have made or will be making to our

survey tools, we are also making enhancements to the reports that clients receive as a result of taking our surveys (for example, we are exploring adding intersectionality data cuts and organization-level analyses around anti-Blackness). In addition, at Promise54, we are always engaged in broader organizational work to spot and interrupt marginalizing behaviors and replace them with just, liberatory, radically human ways of being.

Appendix A: Explanation of Terms

Language is powerful; it helps to shape norms, assumptions, and context in our interactions and communication. As we evolve and learn from our own reflections, and from our work with communities and partners, we continue to evolve our language to be maximally inclusive and consistent with our core values and mission. With that in mind, we made intentional decisions about the language we used in this report and, below, we'll elaborate on our orientation and rationale for some of our choices.

We recommend that organizations work intentionally to develop definitions that are tailored to their own specific context, to examine their own language choices and the rationale for them, and to make common meaning of terms that they are using. This process can build skill and alignment to support organizations' DEI and antiracism efforts and expectations.

AAPI

Throughout this report, we use this acronym to capture a range of identities, including "all people of Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander ancestry who trace their origins to the countries, states, jurisdictions and/or the diasporic communities of these geographic regions" and including those who identify as Native Hawaiian.¹⁰⁶

Antiracism

The "active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies, practices, and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared..."¹⁰⁷ We believe that antiracism requires rigorous self-examination around our individual roles in creating, perpetuating, and upholding white supremacy. We have made an intentional choice to use one word, rather than a hyphenated "anti-racism," as we believe it better connotes the necessarily proactive nature of antiracist work, as opposed to reactive incremental change.

Black

We intentionally use the term Black instead of African American throughout this report because we recognize the important distinctions in these terms. While the term Black is inclusive of the entire African diaspora (i.e., all African-descended people), the term African American refers primarily to descendants of enslaved people in the United States.¹⁰⁸

106 Census Data & API Identities. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.api-gbv.org/resources/census-data-api-identities>

107 Anti-racism. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.aclrc.com/antiracism>

108 Segal, R. (1995). *The Black diaspora: Five centuries of the Black experience outside Africa*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Diversity

For the purposes of our wide-reaching surveys and this broadly focused report, we define diversity as the presence of different types of people (from a wide range of different identities and with different perspectives, experiences, etc.).

Equity

For the purposes of our wide-reaching surveys and this broadly focused report, we define equity as enabling uniform outcomes for all and removing the predictability of outcomes based on any specific identity marker.

Inclusion

For the purposes of our wide-reaching surveys and this broadly focused report, we define inclusion as embracing diversity by creating an environment of meaningful connection, engagement, and belonging — where people experience a deep sense of value and respect for their full humanity.

Latinx

Throughout this report, we chose to use this term because we believe it to be the most inclusive language option encompassing a wide range of people of Latin American descent or origin along with their varied ancestry and diverse racial and gender identities. While the terms Latina/o and Latin@ are inclusive in terms of both ancestry and binary gender, these terms can exclude people who identify as non-binary, non-conforming, agender, genderqueer, etc.

LGBTQIA+

Throughout this report, we use this acronym to capture a range of identities: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and the + to acknowledge the additional range of identities within the LGBTQIA+ community that may not be captured within the boundaries of existing terms or labels.¹⁰⁹

Native American/Indigenous

Throughout this report, we use this term because we believe it most specifically describes the communities we are referring to here as captured in our survey tool today: native peoples from the North American continent in addition to the more general term Indigenous, which could refer to native peoples from any land.

Non-Binary

We use this term to identify people whose gender is not accurately defined through the gender binary (man/woman).¹¹⁰ We also acknowledge that this term has many limitations and can also marginalize people that do not identify with gender in any shape or form (agender) or identify more closely with a different term from among a wide range (e.g., genderqueer, gender non-conforming).

Racism

“The marginalization and/or oppression of People of Color based on a socially constructed racial hierarchy that privileges white people”¹¹¹ and proximity to whiteness. We believe that racism can be intentional and unintentional, plays out in the form of explicit and implicit bias, and takes place on individual, organizational, and systemic levels.

109 Glossary of terms. (n.d.). Human Rights Campaign. Retrieved from <https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>

110 Non-binary inclusion. (n.d.). LGBT Foundation. Retrieved from <https://lgbt.foundation/who-we-help/trans-people/non-binary>

111 Racism. (n.d.). Anti-Defamation League. Retrieved from <https://www.adl.org/racism>

Radically Human/Radical Humanity

The concept of “radical humanity” at Promise54 originated in a blog post by CEO Xiomara Padamsee in October 2019¹¹² as an alternative to white supremacy culture. A radically human approach enables people to be whole at work — to bring the fullness of complex and intersecting identities, honor their histories, and acknowledge their pain. Radical humanity requires regular demonstrations of authenticity, vulnerability, and compassion, alongside ownership and responsibility for pains caused to others. It nurtures risk-taking and meets mistakes with grace and reflection, knowing that imperfection is a fundamental part of being human and that learning fuels growth. In a radically human environment, we prioritize trusting, authentic relationships and deep engagement. We prioritize physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs at all times, including when it is messy; we slow down and insert intentionality, planfulness, care, humor, joy, and love into our work.

White Supremacy Culture

The norms,¹¹³ values, beliefs, and subsequent ways of thinking, behaving, and decision-making valued and centered in white, western-dominant culture that uphold white supremacy and thereby continuously privilege white people and proximity to whiteness.

112 Padamsee, X. (2019). Radically Human. Promise54. Retrieved from <https://www.promise54.org/radically-human/>

113 White supremacy culture: Characteristics. (n.d.). Showing Up for Racial Justice — SURJ. Retrieved from <https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html>

Appendix B:

Detailed Methodology and Charts

This study reflects survey responses gathered between November 2016 and February 2020 from nearly 500 organizations and more than 28,000 individuals. For our first report, we offered the survey instruments to education organizations across the country at no cost (foundation sponsored) in an effort to collect our initial data set. Since that initial offering, we continue to administer the instruments, which are at times sponsored by foundations for their grantees to take at no cost and otherwise always available with an associated financial fee. We have merged these two data sets, the initial 2016-2017 data and the 2017-2020 data, as one large data set for the analysis that took place in this 2021 report. We continue to use the same two instruments, the DEI Organization Profile Survey and the Staff Experience Survey, with only minor language updates to a select few questions from 2017:

- 1 The **DEI Organization Profile** Survey collects data on organizational demographics and diversity, inclusion, and equity practices. Most often one senior leader responds to this survey on behalf of the participating organization — which could introduce some subjectivity, although the nature of the questions in this tool are not designed around personal experience. The survey comprises just over 100 questions of three types: questions related to organizational demographics, prompts for endorsing DEI practices (e.g., data tracked, policies and practices employed), and write-in responses to capture sample definitions and policy statements. Our target response time is under 30 minutes. The actual mean response time is 28 minutes. The survey is confidential but not anonymous, meaning we do not share the survey data publicly, but we do collect information on who completes the survey on behalf of their organization.
- 2 The **DEI Staff Experience Survey** collects staff perceptions of the effectiveness of diversity, inclusion, and equity efforts at the organization being studied. Our hallmark survey consists of 80 questions, most of which use a 5-point Likert scale: Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Neither agree or disagree, Somewhat disagree, and Strongly disagree. In addition, a demographics section at the end of the survey asks for optional self-identification of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, among other identity categories. Our tool also invites respondents to comment about DEI in their organizations or about the study. The target response time is under 15 minutes. The actual mean response time is 14 minutes. The survey is anonymous — meaning there is nothing in the survey that asks for personal identifying information (PII) — and individual responses are not shared with anyone other than the survey administrator.

These survey tools were developed in two stages. First, we conducted a review of eight similar survey instruments — in and out of the education sector — and examined the topics covered; survey length, style, and tone; target respondent profiles; and data types. We evaluated over 300 questions from these surveys as we built the two instruments for this study.

We then conducted an intensive collaborative design exercise involving the core “Unrealized Impact”

[research team and an advisory group](#)¹¹⁴ of approximately 30 experts that included DEI specialists, nonprofit leaders, teachers, and principals. This exercise enabled us to validate assumptions and further develop the instruments. Our design team represented a diversity of race, ethnicity, expertise, positionality, gender, and age. We leveraged this diversity combined with high-trust relationships to identify each other’s biases and note how particular audiences may relate to the data or experience the findings. In our feedback, we aimed to practice the kind of transparent, authentic, and humble communication that leads to better insights from deepened understanding across differences.

Procedures and Respondents

The population for this study includes organizations and their staff from across the United States. Our survey respondents have historically been primarily focused within the education sector, including public and private schools, school districts and charter management organizations, nonprofits (and a few for-profit companies) that provide support to the education sector, organizations that sell education-related products and services (including EdTech firms), policy and research organizations, philanthropies and investors, as well as others.

The DEI Organization Profile Survey was originally launched in November 2016 and invitations to participate were sent via email to over 1,500 organizations. In addition, links to the survey were posted in select newsletters and blogs in December 2016 and January 2017. The email distribution list of leaders within the target population of organizations was derived from a variety of sources, including directors of public school organizations, sector newsletter distribution lists, education conference attendee lists, grantee lists from our funding partners, and clients and personal contacts from project staff. The lists included a wide range of organization types and sizes from across the country. Since 2016, the survey has gained traction among other education organizations. The survey designers believed that these methods and mediums of data collection protect against implicit bias with respect to particular views or priorities on topics covered in the survey. Since this initial distribution for our original “Unrealized Impact” reports, we have continued to offer these survey instruments to organizations. For a breakdown of respondents by organization type, size, and region included within this study, please see page 17. See below for a breakdown of respondents by race/ethnicity.

[Figure 2]: Staff Survey Respondents by Race and Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Respondents	Percentage of Staff Survey
Naitve American/Indigenous	84	<1%
AAPI	1,429	5%
Black	4,385	16%
Latinx	3,592	13%
Multiracial	1,852	7%
White	12,621	45%

In our efforts to capture demographic information, we chose the race and ethnicity categories with great care and deliberation. We recognize that race is a social construct and that survey questions that ask respondents to check boxes are inherently reductionist. We selected the six categories shown below —

114 Padamsee, X., Crowe, B., Louis, L., Messano, F., & Paperny, T. (2017). Unrealized impact: The case for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Promise54. Retrieved from http://www.unrealizedimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Unrealized_Impact-Financial-072017.pdf

aligned with the National Center for Education Statistics reports and the U.S. Census Bureau — because we found them to be most consistent with what most education systems and organizations collect and therefore would have available to report:

- American Indian, Native American, or Alaska Native (e.g., Aztec, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Navajo Nation, Nome Eskimo Community)
- Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander (e.g., Asian Indian, Chamorro, Chinese, Fijian, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Marshallese, Samoan, Tongan, Vietnamese)
- Black or African American (e.g., Ethiopian, Haitian, Jamaican, Nigerian, Somalian)
- Latino or Hispanic (e.g., Colombian, Dominican, Mexican, Peruvian, Puerto Rican)
- White (e.g., Algerian, Egyptian, English, French, German, Iranian, Irish, Italian, Lebanese, Moroccan, Polish, Syrian)
- Multiple or some other race, ethnicity, or origin

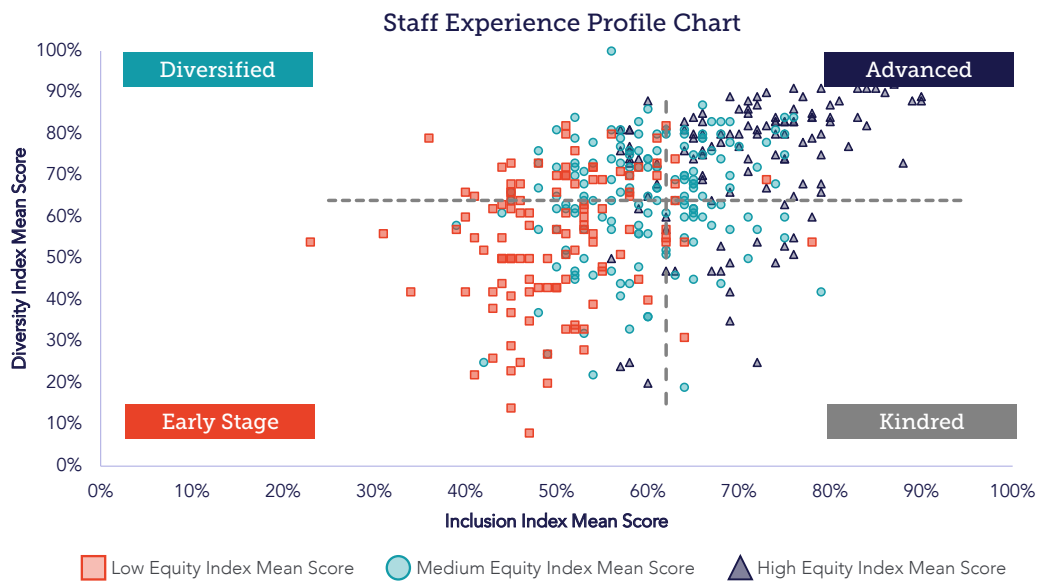
In the DEI Staff Experience Survey, before presenting the above list of racial and ethnic categories, we ask respondents to describe their racial/ethnic identity in a free-text field. The purpose of this is to allow participants the chance to provide a more specific, less reductionist description of their racial/ethnic identity as they describe it. As a part of our original “Unrealized Impact” analysis, we compared those responses to the list of categories the same respondents subsequently selected. Over 90% of the respondent-coded answers were synonymous with one of the categories. Most of the others were either a more specific variation (e.g., South Asian or Central American), or a combination of a category and other identities (e.g., white and Jewish).

Data Analysis

The majority of the DEI Organization Profile Survey responses are numeric values or Yes/No choices. As such, coding and tabulations are fairly straightforward. The DEI Staff Experience Survey questions are largely structured on a 5-point Likert scale from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree.” We derive average scores and percentage of positive aggregations in our analyses. For Net Promoter Score questions, we use the formal NPS calculation methodology.¹¹⁵ Finally, we created cross-survey tabulations to assess the relationship between reported practices on the DEI Organization Profile Survey with staff ratings on the DEI Staff Experience Survey, as well as the relationship between CEO and respondent race/ethnicity or gender.

Further, we monitor correlations between the discrete dimensions of diversity, inclusion, and equity, and examine trends among organizations in proximity to one another as is displayed in our staff experience scatterplot below. In our 2017 report, we originally placed the quadrant boundaries at the median point vertically and horizontally with respect to all organizations in the survey population to facilitate this analysis.

115 Measuring your net promoter score. (n.d.). Net Promoter System. Retrieved from <https://www.netpromotersystem.com/about/measuring-your-net-promoter-score/>



As of 2019, we have fixed the axes in order to facilitate longitudinal analysis. This allows us to assess data along consistent parameters of quadrant placement and delineation, both within and across organizations.

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Michael Corral (he/him) is: a person of faith, a follower of Christ, a question asker, the proud son of Mexican Immigrant parents, a highschool graduate, and the youngest of three. He is also a husband to the amazing mother of his beloved newborn son, Diego.

Michael's 10-plus years of education and research experience include roles as: a middle and high school math teacher in Phoenix, AZ, adjunct professor and research assistant at the University of Connecticut, Director of State Affairs at Teach For America, and Research Associate at Inflexion. Michael holds a B.S. in Business Administration from Eastern Oregon University, an M.Ed. in Educational Leadership and Administration from the American College of Education, and a Ph.D. in Learning, Leadership, and Education Policy from the University of Connecticut.



Lucerito Ortiz (she/her) is: the proud daughter of immigrant parents from Guatemala and Mexico, a first-generation college student, sister, friend, native Angeleno, data nerd, foodie, Lime Hot Cheeto connoisseur, escape room lover, and very easily distracted by dogs.

Lucerito's 10-plus years of education and data experience include roles as: Senior Manager of Data and Impact and Escalera Manager at UnidosUS, Education Pioneers Fellow at The Broad Center for the Management of School Systems, and Senior Admissions Officer at Harvard College. Lucerito holds a B.A. in Social Studies with a focus on race and education from Harvard College, and an M.Ed. in Education Policy and Management from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



Xiomara Padamsee (she/her) is: a proud Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Indian cisgender gay woman; a family-first mother and wife, daughter and sister; an enthusiastic pinata maker, former pianist, and a dedicated educator and activist.

Xiomara's 20-plus years of education and organizational effectiveness experience include roles as Founder and CEO of Promise54, Talent Advising Practice Leader and Management Team member at Bellwether Education Partners, Manager in Deloitte Consulting's Human Capital practice, and as Vice President of Staffing & Organizational Development on Teach For America's management team, where she built the organization's first national talent team. Xiomara holds a B.S. in Human Service Studies with a focus on U.S. Latino Studies from Cornell University and an M.B.A. from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

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- Constance Jones (she/her) is Chief Executive Officer at Noble Schools, and identifies as a Black woman.
- Frances Messano (she/her) is the President at NewSchools Venture Fund and identifies as a first-generation college graduate and proud daughter of a Colombian immigrant.
- Dr. Heather Harding (she/hers) is Senior Director of Education Grantmaking at the Schusterman Family Philanthropies, and identifies as a proud educator, mom, and mentor.
- Justin C. Cohen (he/him) is a Brooklyn-based community organizer and activist who identifies as an abolitionist, aspiring accomplice, and new dad.
- Laura Brewer (she/her) is a coach and doula, and identifies as a queer, prodigal southerner and Charlottesvillean.
- Melanie Perez Johnson, M.Ed., CPS, (she/her) is the Program Director for the National Indian Education Association and identifies as American Indian, Sac and Fox on her mothers side, and Mexican on her fathers side.
- Taishya Adams (she/her) is founder of the Mukuyu Collective and identifies as a Black African American woman.
- Dr. Tasleem J. Padamsee (she/her) is an Assistant Professor at the Ohio State University's College of Public Health, and identifies proudly as a Latina, Indian American, and daughter and granddaughter of immigrants.

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