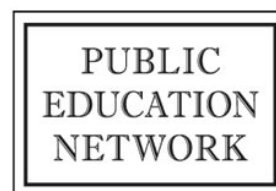


November 8, 2004

# PUBLIC EDUCATION NETWORK

## 2004 Annual Member Survey



Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

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*NOTE: The complete survey instrument is available from PEN upon request. Contact Rudy Careaga at 202-628-7460, ext. 303, or [Rcareaga@publiceducation.org](mailto:Rcareaga@publiceducation.org)*

### **Acknowledgements**

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## Introduction to the Survey

### *About PEN and LEFs*

Public Education Network (PEN) is a national organization of local education funds (LEFs) and individuals working to improve public schools and build citizen support for quality public education in low-income communities across the nation. PEN believes an active, vocal constituency is the key to ensuring that every child, in every community, benefits from a quality public education. PEN and its members are building public demand and mobilizing resources for quality public education on behalf of over 11 million children in more than 1,600 school districts in 33 states and the District of Columbia. PEN has added one new member in the Philippines. LEFs in several other countries have expressed interest in membership.

LEFs advocate for *involvement* by all segments of the public in public education, for *accountability* and achievement of high standards by all involved with public education, and for significant *improvement* in the quality of public education. In addition, LEFs generate *resources* for public education by facilitating investment from local governments, businesses, and philanthropic foundations.

### *Focus of 2004 Survey*

Each year for the past nine years, PEN has undertaken a survey of its members to chart organizational and programmatic characteristics of LEFs. In addition to providing valuable information about individual LEFs, each year's survey results provide a snapshot of members' collective work and impact. These data are used by LEF directors to inform their conversations with funders, formulate communications strategies, and support organizational decision-making. The data also provide baseline and benchmark data for deeper research on the work and impact of LEFs.

Based on recommendations from the membership, we have expanded the focus of the 2004 survey to include deeper information on LEF programs and initiatives, their context, and impact. In response to leadership and organizational development goals identified by the membership, we have paid special attention to board demographics and development activities, and professional staffing patterns and salary levels.

### *Methodology*

PEN distributed the annual survey to 83 of 88 LEFs, the number of members as of April 2004. In addition to the survey, PEN research staff consulted a variety of sources of data to gather relevant information. These included:

- IRS form 990s to collect information on total revenues, expenses, and net assets;
- National databases (for example, National Center for Education Statistics) to collect information on poverty rates (as measured by participation in free-and- reduced lunch programs) and school district size (numbers of teachers, schools, and students served); and

- LEF websites to collect programmatic and other information (for example, mission statements).
- Follow-up telephone interviews with selected LEF directors and other staff.

To date, we have achieved a 60% response rate, which we believe is considerable, given the survey's length and expanded nature (e.g., inclusion of open-ended items).

### **LEF Demographic Snapshot**

The national growth rate for LEFs is increasing. This growth arguably attests to the success of the LEF model in tackling the toughest conditions in our nations' poorest districts, and is evidence of an emerging movement.

Where They Are (see map below):

- As of October 2004, PEN has doubled its membership from 44 in 2000 to 90 LEFs, including one overseas LEF (Philippines). Domestically, LEFs are now active in 33 states and the District of Columbia.
- LEFs currently serve one-half of the country's largest urban school districts. However, the number of LEFs located in and/or serving rural areas has nearly doubled in the past 10 years: 22 percent in 2004 compared to 12 percent in 1995. The creation of LEFs in rural communities can be attributed to persistent challenges associated with poverty, and in the dramatic increase in the number of recent immigrant families settling in those areas.
- There are now five statewide LEFs, that is, a single LEF serving an entire state. These are located in Alaska, Arizona, North Carolina, Ohio, and West Virginia. Additionally, 17 LEFs have a regional reach, and at least six LEFs conduct work nationally (Galef Institute, In2Books, Public Education and Business Coalition, Mon Valley Education Consortium, Knowledge Works, and Houston A+ Challenge).
- The groundwork has been laid for statewide LEF coalitions, with 13 states having at least three LEFs each: California, Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Indiana.

Overall, PEN member LEFs serve:

- 11.5 million children nationwide (22 percent of the 53 million public school students)
- Almost 18,000 schools (19 percent of the nation's 95,000 public schools)
- More than 1,600 districts (9 percent of the total 17,000 school districts)
- Average of 57 percent of poor and minority (as measured by free-and-reduced lunch)



- High principal turnover through retirement
- Parent apathy/lack of community involvement.

Interestingly, few LEFs directly invoked NCLB legislation as a driver of their current or projected work. It can be inferred, however, from patterns and shifts observed in their programs and initiatives, that LEFs are helping their schools and communities respond to the challenges imposed by the legislation by increasing their level of effort in a particular area of existing work, or adding new work. (See “Trends and Key Outcomes” below.)

The current configuration of work clusters in the following key reform areas (with corresponding total percentages of LEF resources deployed):

Educational Leadership Development and Whole School Reform (60 percent)

- Teacher professional development
- Principals/administrators academic leadership development
- Whole school reform models development and implementation

School and Community Linkages (20 percent)

- Community assessment and communications (forums, awards and recognition, town meetings, etc.)
- Parent involvement
- School health/integrated services

Youth Development (20 percent)

- Higher education participation (scholarships and mentoring)
- Academic tutoring
- Dropout prevention
- Career development

### **Trends and Key Outcomes**

Below, we look at some of the trends that are emerging in response to contextual issues present in LEF districts and communities, and provide vignettes of selected programs and initiatives with key outcomes. Specifically, we examine: strategic consolidation of LEF work over the last five years; programmatic shifts; increases in public engagement; policy research; and educational leadership development—the network’s predominant activity supporting change in high-need public schools.

#### ***Strategic Consolidation of Work***

The consolidation of LEF programs into larger initiatives reveals a continuing shift from a

project focus to one that addresses systemic challenges in school districts across the country. In 1997, there were approximately 300 programs across 45 LEFs. In 2004, there are an estimated 300 core programs and initiatives across 88 LEFs. During this same period, total expenditures for programs have doubled. LEFs are therefore channeling dramatically higher resources into more focused and strategic interventions.

This is not surprising. Evidence of this trend can be found in specific LEFs—both large and small—across the country:

- The Boston Plan for Excellence in the Public Schools, for example, writes: “In 1995, the corporate givers who had endowed the Boston Plan in the 1980s agreed to combine the discrete grants they had established and create one funding source. The idea was to provide larger grants over a longer period of time to fewer schools so that they could address ‘whole-school’ issues of instruction and organization to raise student achievement.”
- Since 2000, the Alliance for Education in Seattle, WA has developed a unified theory of action which has helped consolidate its work into four core areas: whole school change through rigorous curriculum and high expectations; distributed leadership at the system and school levels; teacher professional development; and community involvement.
- In Fort Wayne, IN, the Allen County Education Partnership consolidated its work in 1995 under a community-wide literacy campaign “Project Reads,” designed to bring more reading materials into classrooms and help teachers develop techniques to inspire young readers.
- In Morristown, TN, HC\*EXCELL has organized its work under a major P-16 collaborative that seeks to create coherence among diverse efforts of public and private agencies addressing the needs of at-risk students and their families.

### ***Programmatic Shifts***

Most larger LEFs (with revenues of over \$4 million) are diverting resources to whole school reform at the high school level, using small schools and learning communities, as well as increased professional development, as core strategies. The trend is also apparent in smaller and medium-sized LEFs including those in Tampa, FL, Sacramento, CA, Montclair, NJ, Portland, OR, and Paterson, NJ.

Youth development is clearly on the rise in response to high dropout rates and continuing under-representation of poor and minority students in college. Most of these programs involve increasing access and opportunities for post-secondary education as well as vocational and career development. In 1997, less than 10 percent of LEF programs provided direct services to youth; today, this number has doubled. Salient programs include:

- *The Future Is Mine* is the Mon Valley Education Consortium’s (PA) initiative, reaching into high schools and middle schools to connect students to authentic career awareness experiences. It includes a student project that is student-initiated, driven and executed, and an annual Student Leadership Conference providing in-depth site explorations that are a window on the Pittsburgh region’s workforce needs and opportunities. It helps students

focus on learning how to drive their careers, from accessing appropriate academic opportunities to articulating their skills and talents.

- Achieve!Minneapolis *E-Mentoring Program* began as a pilot program in 1995 with 50 students who exchanged weekly e-mail messages and occasionally met face-to-face. During the 2003-2004 school year, 950 students were paired with 950 mentors. An extensive evaluation of the e-Mentoring program in 2003 shows encouraging results regarding positive relationship formation between mentors and students; improved students' computer usage and skills; and an increase in students' exposure to workplace skills and career choices. Teachers and students reported that many students in the e-Mentoring initiative showed improved writing skills over the course of the program.
- San Antonio Education Partnership (TX), awards scholarships that can be used at a local college or university. Scholarship amounts vary depending on the college attended and targets students attending 15 San Antonio high schools. Almost all participating students are minority and are considered economically disadvantaged. Many of them are the first in their families to graduate from high school or attend college. Single year dropout rates have gone from 14.1 percent to 2.6 percent, and the graduation rate has gone from 81 percent to 92 percent.
- LEED Sacramento *Youth Services Provider Network (YSPN)* is designed to increase the capacity of communities, organizations and individuals serving youth in the Sacramento region through research-based youth development principles. This approach has been successful in achieving positive outcomes for youth, including improved social relationships and decision-making skills, improved academic success, and greater civic participation. YSPN accomplishes its goals by providing one-day trainings, quarterly networking meetings, a comprehensive Youth Development Training Institute, and education for youth services organizations' boards of directors. In 2003, YSPN served over 365 individuals from more than 90 organizations.
- The Bridgeport Public Education Fund (CT) program—*Mentoring for Academic Achievement and College Success (MAACS)*—is currently in its 16<sup>th</sup> year. This critically important program pairs high school students with college potential with mentors from area colleges. The mentors meet with their high school students once every week, serving as role models, helping their students select and stay in challenging courses, and preparing them to think about attending college. They also assist in the college search, and the application and financial aid process. A formal evaluation has been undertaken supporting anecdotal statements that the one-on-one attention helps students to graduate from high school and attend college. The success rate for high school students who participate in MAACS at least two years is 85 percent.

There is continued support directly to teachers in the form of mini-grants, albeit at a relatively lower level—from 90 percent in 1999 to 50 percent in 2004. These mini-grant programs appear to cluster within smaller LEFs with revenues of less than \$700K, and support:

- organizational trust and relationship-building between LEFs and schools and districts.

- larger LEF initiatives (e.g., math grants to teachers to complement LEF and district collaboration to enhance mathematics achievement district-wide).
- enhanced student achievement.
- enhanced teacher performance through self-directed and/or collaborative learning.

### ***Increased Public Engagement***

Most LEFs hold town hall meetings and other public convenings to educate the public about or assess community-wide perspectives on education reform issues. For example, Wake Education Partnership (Raleigh, NC), DC Voice (Washington, DC), Charlotte Advocates for Education (NC), and Public Education Foundation (Chattanooga, TN) are among those LEFs with a longstanding tradition of conducting formal community assessments to determine public interests, concerns, and perspectives on public education reform. The Alliance for Quality Public Education (Greenville, SC), Nashville Public Education Foundation (TN), Paterson Education Fund (NJ), and Portland Schools Foundation (OR), for example, have long traditions educating the public about district issues and school board candidates during elections.

Based on our 2004 analysis of programs, we are discovering that LEFs are increasingly seeking to affect education policy directly through community-based advocacy activities that include adding or increasing the number of community forums and assessments held by the LEF; community and parent organizing; community-wide planning; public information campaigns; testifying before city councils or state legislatures, and supporting bond and tax referenda.

The following exemplify LEF efforts to increase their advocacy activities through a variety of strategies involving public engagement:

- The Pennsylvania Public Education Partnership (PAPEP) (a partnership of the Lancaster Foundation for Educational Enrichment, the Philadelphia Education Fund, and the Pittsburgh Council on Public Education, and led by the Mon Valley Education Consortium) has issued voters' guides listing candidates positions on education issues, and has worked with citizens' groups to push for positive action on early childhood education, support for struggling schools and children, and equity. Its work has resulted in the identification and dissemination of five core opportunity-to-learn standards. PAPEP has held a number of local public hearings on the No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB) to determine how the law is affecting their schools and communities. Feedback will be presented to local and state legislators and to Congress when it revisits NCLB in 2005.
- Durham Public Education Network (DPEN) (NC) Community Engagement Initiative was conceived as a community-owned process of problem-solving and collaborative action. Among its many features, this initiative includes creating a community-wide action plan to close the achievement gap; establishing a covenant for education task force; developing an asset-mapping process for child and family resources; implementing a school-by-school needs assessment process (resulting in direct action at schools) and creating an annual Durham education summit to provide a mechanism for community accountability and

feedback. DPEN reports remarkable success in developing new collaborative relationships among groups and individuals.

- The San Francisco Education Fund Efforts (CA) has expanded its public engagement efforts revolving around recruiting, retaining, and supporting public school teachers. The Fund specifically seeks to reach out to diverse groups often under-represented in education policy debate, including youth, communities of color, labor, faith-based institutions, and gay and lesbian groups. Specifically, the Fund expects to conduct surveys and focus groups of youth and parents requesting their input on what makes a quality teacher and learning environment, and expand its reach to broader community members by convening community conversations throughout the city.
- The Foundation for Orange County Public Schools (Orlando, FL) *Count Me In!* is seeking to alter the power relationships in local education by strengthening the connection between schools and the public. *Count Me In!* recruits leaders in each neighborhood to host discussions about what schools ought to be. The talks lead to a written set of principles, which can complement other ongoing efforts to improve Orange County's schools.
- Citizens for Educational Excellence (Corpus Christi, TX) *Even One Dropout Is Too Many: Forum* is a report to the community detailing 15 high-leverage community-wide strategies to begin solving Corpus Christi's student dropout problem. These recommended strategies represent the cumulative work of over 250 Corpus Christi community leaders, educators, parents, businesspeople, and students over an eight-month period, beginning in November 2003 and ending in July 2004. They report that never before had a local group of such size delved so deeply and specifically over a sustained period of time into the dropout issue.

There appears to be a growing focus on youth perspectives and youth as a stakeholder group that can be organized and mobilized. The spirit of this shift is succinctly captured by the Public Education Foundation in Chattanooga, TN, which writes: "The best barometers of classroom-level change are our students. Traditional models of student engagement fail to take readings from students. Therefore, before we can authentically assess our reform, we must reform our assessment by engaging our students."

Examples of youth engagement efforts include:

- Austin Voices for Education and Youth (TX) *Youth Mobilizers* defines the education issues that are of critical concern to students. Students collect information about these issues through interviews, surveys, and data analysis, and use the Internet, videos, written reports, and other strategies to document their work. They get others involved by organizing youth forums throughout the Austin community, and by organizing forums in which adults and young people convene to discuss the issues and take action. *Youth Mobilizers* recommends solutions from a youth perspective, and reports these findings to decision-makers throughout the city. Students also organize youth action projects to address some of the needs identified in their research.
- As part of its Carnegie-funded work on high schools, the Boston Plan for Excellence in the Public Schools (MA) is committed to encouraging students' collective voices to reduce the alienation many feel, and train student-researchers to survey classmates on school climate

issues. The final report *School Climate in Boston's High Schools: What Students Say* compiles findings from more than 1,500 student surveys in 13 non-specialized Boston high schools, outlines specific problems students face, and proposes recommendations for resolving these problems. The student-researcher project also presents a replicable model for other districts interested in increasing student engagement in school.

- The Public Education Foundation (Chattanooga, TN) organized a cohort of Student Documenters, concurrent with their high school reform initiative. Composed of one traditionally underserved student and one “at-large” student from each of 16 high schools, student documenters became advocates through summer sessions and monthly school-year meetings. Documenters, for instance, spent at least one summer day observing their high school’s transition program for incoming freshmen. All high school principals received a copy of their Documenters’ report to read alongside their faculty’s report of the same event. In some cases, the similarities were profound, and the transition effort was validated. In others, the differences were such that principals were prompted by students to ask important questions about the reform action in their building.
- DC Voice (Washington, DC) *Youth Voices Front and Center: D.C. Youth Speak Up About Their Education* report is based on seven discussion groups held with DC high schools in 2004. Questions targeted youth perspectives on skills they need for the future, and ways in which schools can become more relevant to their futures. Students also had an opportunity to express their views on their preferred learning styles and on a district-wide teacher quality framework.

To specifically address adequacy issues related to, for example, school finance equity or school facilities, LEFs such as Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska’s Children (CEEAC) and the Paterson Education Fund (NJ) have participated in litigation challenging inequitable distribution of resources. Other LEFs, such as Nashville Public Education Foundation (TN) and Charlotte Advocates for Education (NC) have helped the public understand school budgets and how these can become more equitable.

Evidence from our survey suggests that the increasing numbers of LEFs supporting or spearheading tax and bond referenda is also addressing inadequate school funding. Portland Schools Foundation (OR) has a long tradition dating back to 1996 supporting referenda resulting in billions of dollars for the schools. Public Education Foundation of Evansville, Inc. (PEF) (IN) supported a tax referendum in 2003 to raise \$7 million a year for 10 years to avoid programs cuts. PEF provided funding for educational and promotional materials to help disseminate information on why the extra funds were needed. In its next strategic plan, Berkeley Education Foundation (CA) anticipates conducting community forums to present the concept of adequacy to the public with an eye toward increasing the funding base through a special tax referendum. Other LEFs include:

- San Francisco Education Foundation (CA)
- Wake Education Partnership (NC)
- Portland Schools Foundation (OR)

- Austin Voices for Education and Youth (TX)
- Guilford County Education Network (NC)
- Durham Public Education Network (NC)

In 2003 and 2004 alone, these LEFs advocated for, supported, and/or mobilized the community to support tax and bond referenda resulting in over \$5 billion in public dollars for public education.

### ***Policy Research***

In addition to the community assessments conducted by LEFs, many LEFs conducted or sponsored research on local, state, and national policy issues. The Education Alliance (WV), the Philadelphia Education Fund (PA), Public Education and Business and Coalition (Denver, CO), Charlotte Advocates for Education (NC), Public Education Foundation (Chattanooga, TN), and DC Voice (DC) are among those LEFs with a longstanding commitment to conducting or sponsoring such research. Among newer efforts, Delmarva Education Foundation (Salisbury, MD), for example, has sponsored a rural education symposium to bring together members of the national rural education and policy research community with regional educational leadership to share what is known about rural education policy and research. The Foundation anticipates creating a center for rural education research and policy that will function as the research and development arm for the region's numerous public school systems.

The impact of these studies and corresponding policy recommendations are far-reaching. For example, The Stark Education Partnership (Canton, OH) recently released *Advancing Ohio's P-16 Agenda: Exit and Entrance Exam?*, which looks at Ohio's high stakes testing policy and its appropriateness for an evolving Ohio agenda to increase student participation in higher education and success in the workplace. In its recommendations to the Ohio Department of Education, the report suggests that the Department grant waivers in 2005 to districts to use the ACT EPAS in lieu of the Ohio Graduation test, especially in those districts that have formed Early College High Schools with partnering institutions of higher education. Various district leaders have already expressed a commitment to implementing this testing policy, which will dramatically reduce the costs associated with high stakes exit exams at the local level and increase all students' participation in higher education.

The following are but a subset of the policy studies released by LEFs in 2003 and 2004 alone:

- KnowledgeWorks Foundation (Cincinnati, OH): *Public Schools and Economic Development: What the Research Shows* reviews the existing research on the relationship between schools and economic development, and examines public schooling as an important contributor to the American economy.
- Charlotte Advocates for Education (NC): *The Role of Principal Leadership in Increasing Teacher Retention: Creating a Supportive Environment* looks at the relationship between principals and teacher retention by studying Charlotte principals, particularly those in high-needs schools that have been more successful in retaining teachers, while also increasing student

achievement.

- The Philadelphia Public Education Fund (PA), in conjunction with the research firm Research for Action (Philadelphia, PA) released *Once & For All: Placing a Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Philadelphia Classroom, What We Know and Need To Do*. This study examines Philadelphia's teacher recruitment, retention, certification and quality challenges, against national research and best practices.
- The Alliance for Quality Education (Greenville, SC) commissioned a study to evaluate the fiscal impact on Greenville County Schools of economic development incentives to gain a better understanding of the distribution of fees generated from economic development agreements.
- The Cleveland Initiative for Education (OH) in an emerging practices report *Effective School Leadership: Adopting a Systemic Approach* examines components of successful principal and teacher leadership development efforts, highlighting the successes of several urban public school districts across the country.
- Public Education and Business and Coalition (Denver, CO) co-publishes *HeadFirst* magazine with its partners, the Bighorn Center for Public Policy and the Donnell-Kay Foundation. The goal of *HeadFirst* is to bring diverse viewpoints together to foster informed and productive decisions on education policy in Colorado.
- Public School Forum of North Carolina (Raleigh): *Meeting the Education Challenge of 2003*, provides a comprehensive look at the range of challenges posed by NCLB legislation in North Carolina, and concluding with a broad set of policy recommendations.
- Voices for Education (Tucson, AZ): *Making Connections: Facing the Dropout Crisis in Arizona*, examines the alarming dropout situation in Arizona schools, the harm to the student, Arizona, and the economy, and outlines solution strategies for parents, schools, and state policymakers.

### ***Education Leadership Development***

The following LEFs are but a small sample of how LEFs have brought to bear targeted financial and professional resources in areas of the educational leadership development needs jointly identified by LEFs and their community constituents and school district leaders. Typically, these resources are provided directly from the LEF to a cluster of high-need schools through a combination of on-site professional development (for example, coaching and mentoring), teacher mini-grants, LEF-sponsored or created summer institutes, and district-wide teacher networks. In essence, these schools act as laboratories for change, and with district resources, successful initiatives are subsequently replicated or adapted throughout the entire district and influence, for example, professional development or teacher retention and recruitment policy. While many are not designated specifically as teacher retention programs, the clear benefits for teacher retention might be explored further by LEFs as a valued outcome.

The many LEF programs and initiatives that target educational leadership (both teacher and principal quality) conduct a wide range of activities to determine their effectiveness. Larger

initiatives often participate with outside evaluators and are able to generate data on student achievement. Others conduct internal evaluations of effectiveness, and most often report on the impact on teachers' professional life—professional development hours, quality of professional development, opportunities to meet with other teachers, shared accountability for results, and reduction in teacher isolation. While no direct measurement of student achievement is possible in many cases (given lack of resources or other constraints), the value of these efforts are supported in the education research literature that indicates an extremely high correlation between these indicators of teacher quality and student achievement.

Examples include:

- The Galef Institute (Los Angeles, CA) Different Ways of Knowing approach combines cognitive research in how students think and learn with tools and strategies that motivate students and help them to communicate. It also assists teachers in increasing their own effectiveness through better teaching techniques linked to students' individual needs. Services to teachers include facilitating instruction to support student inquiry and self-directed learning, teaching strategies that expert learners use in reading and writing to close the achievement gap, and integrating the visual, performing, literary, and media arts in all content areas to accelerate learning gains for all student groups, according to a UCLA external evaluation and ongoing evaluation in different sites striving to meet annual state performance accountability targets.
- The Fund for Educational Excellence's (Baltimore, MD) Achievement First whole-school reform model focuses on improving student achievement in elementary and middle schools by creating and building principal leadership, teacher competency, and system capacity through focused, results-driven and job-embedded professional development. Achievement First builds on five "essentials" for successful schools: a primary focus on literacy; principals as instructional leaders; instruction driven by standards and student work; on-site professional development to improve instructional quality, and families and community partnerships. Achievement First schools continue to realize significant increases in student achievement as measured by the Maryland State Assessment tests: from 2003 to 2004, overall middle school reading scores increased by 10.4 percent and elementary school scores by 8 percent; and by 2004, more than 50 percent of third graders in Achievement First schools scored at advanced or proficient levels in Reading, an increase of 14 percent from 2003. In a spring, 2004 survey, 100 percent of principals and 95 percent of teachers in Achievement First schools agreed that student performance in reading and writing is continuing to improve as a result of the Fund's reform efforts.
- The Public Education Foundation (Chattanooga, TN) Benwood Initiative has improved literacy and attracted high-quality teachers. The main focus of the Benwood Initiative is strong teaching. PEF-Benwood funding is used primarily to train classroom teachers in reading instruction, hire reading specialists who work with struggling readers, place a wide variety of books in all classrooms, provide coaches for new teachers, and provide leadership coaches to help principals and assistant principals guide and evaluate teachers. The percentage of third graders reading above or at grade level increased from 22.6 percent in 2001 to 35.9 percent in 2003. In both of the initiative's first two academic years, students

at the Benwood schools have shown enormous gains in reading, as measured by the state's TVAAS value-added test scores. In 2003, the Benwood schools outgained 90 percent of all elementary schools in the state.

- The San Francisco Education Fund (CA) Math and Science Collaborative (MCS) has provided teachers over the last three years with an opportunity to engage in intensive dialogue, challenge their own assumptions about teaching, and look closely at their students in order to create fundamental changes in the classroom and raise the achievement levels of their lowest-performing students. Over the course of the program, teachers visited over 20 different community sites, and discovered ways to introduce new activities to the more than 7,200 students they taught in three years. Teachers also analyzed videotapes of their teaching and worked one-on-one with a coach to increase their understanding of the relationship between teaching practice and student results. Each teacher in the MSC reported shifts in his or her thinking that translate to new strategies for teaching students in the competitive subjects of math and science.
- The Philadelphia Education Fund (PEF, PA) is the regional partner for Johns Hopkins University's Talent Development comprehensive school reform initiative for low-performing high schools. Among its core components are: year-round professional development, both in classroom and in small groups; content-specific workshops; sharing of best teaching practices; and provision of highly-trained, on-site staff, consisting of an organizational facilitator and academic coaches. Results to date include increased reading and math achievement, with a 3.6-point increase in students scoring at proficient or better in reading, and a 5-point increase in math. English and math teachers reported an increased use of active learning approaches.
- Critical Friends Groups, and their underlying principles, have been integral to Houston A+ Challenge (formerly Houston Annenberg Challenge) since it was founded in 1997. Houston A+ has offered CFG new coach training since 1998, and CFG work is embedded in all school reform initiatives and professional development services. In addition, Houston A+ provides CFG training annually for the new Teach for America corps members in Texas and national Teach for America leaders, as well as for universities through their teacher preparation programs. As a recognized National Center of Activity for CFG, Houston A+ has provided training for educators from 11 states and 29 cities. Houston A+ Challenge uses Critical Friends tools and strategies as the operating foundation for the organization. Continual learning, examination of practice and cycle of inquiry are integral pieces of all meetings. Houston A+ staff members examine each other's work, ask probing questions, and read and discuss the latest research.
- Partners in Public Education (PIPE) (Memphis, TN) has implemented *New Leaders for New Schools*, a progressive leadership development program targeted at aspiring principals. This program was implemented in Memphis in February 2004. It is on track to provide Memphis City Schools 60 new principals within a three-year period. *New Leaders for New Schools* is a dynamic new pathway to urban principalship; it centers on improving student achievement by preparing principals who are focused on meeting the needs of every child, and who are highly effective instructional leaders, managers, community leaders, and

leaders of change. *New Leaders* seeks candidates whose backgrounds are from within education as well as other professions, as long as they have had two years of teaching experience. The *New Leaders* program comprises a rigorous and intensive selection and recruitment model, selecting only 7% of its applicant pool. Key program components are a yearlong full-time residency, carefully selected, well-trained mentor principals, and on-going coaching and support for two years into the principalship.

## LEF Organizational Indicators

### LEF Financial Characteristics

Using figures from the latest IRS form 990s submitted by LEFs as of August 2004, LEFs reported:

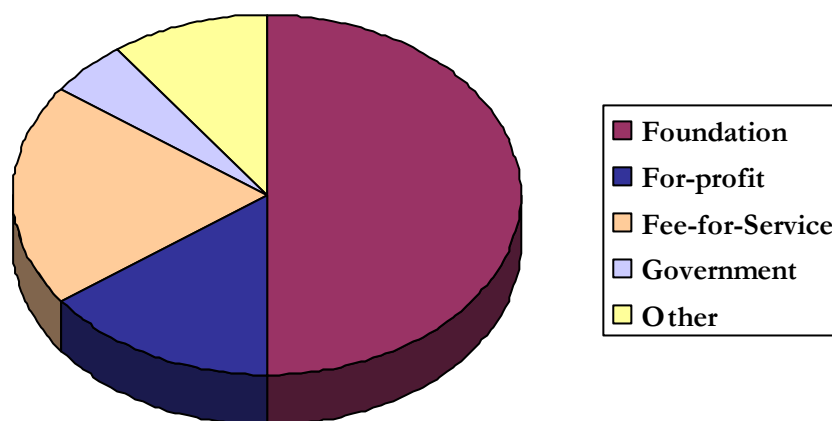
#### *Revenues and Assets*

- Over \$190 million in revenue in 2003 with median revenue of \$685,000. This represents a significant increase in just two years of almost \$100,000 from median revenue of \$593,000 in 2001.
- Net assets with a value of \$708 million. While this is more than double the value of assets reported in 2001 (at \$317 million), the dramatic increase is due largely to the addition of new members with unusually large assets.

#### *Revenue Sources*

About 50 percent of LEF revenues were from contributions made by foundations, 15 percent from corporations, 20 percent from fee-for-service programs provided by the organizations, and 10 percent from “other”, typically net investment income, and net changes in assets and income from special events, and individuals. Only 5 percent was reported from government grants.

**LEF Revenue Sources**



Nearly two-thirds of LEF funding is from private contributions and from revenues generated by programs, indicating that while revenues may fluctuate some with the economy and stock market, decreases in government support will not seriously cripple the new movement. Even the effects of a recession would be offset by LEFs' ability to tap into net assets, which have continued to grow since the 1990s.

### ***Dollar Value of Volunteer Hours***

In 2004, there were close to 100,000 volunteers employed across 88 LEFs. The total number of volunteer hours reported is estimated at 1.5 million. The estimated dollar value of volunteer time is \$17.19 per hour for 2003 (Independent Sector, 2004), or \$25 million dollars across 88 LEFs in 2004.

## **LEF Board Size, Composition and Key Activities**

### **Board Size**

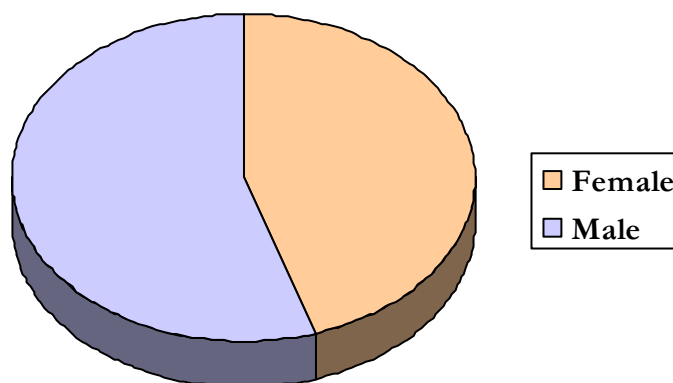
There are approximately 2300 LEF board members across 90 LEFs. The average LEF board size is 26. This is much larger than the average board size of nonprofits in general—19 according to BoardSource. Approximately 25 percent of LEFs have boards with over 31 members. Tentative evidence suggests that LEFs may be increasing their board size as a fundraising and development strategy.

### **Board Composition**

#### *Gender*

The distribution of male and female board members has changed over the past four years. For the first time, there is an almost even split between male and female board members, with 45 percent female and 55 percent male (compared to 36 percent and 64 percent in 2000). This may be attributed to a shift in the distribution of sectors represented on LEF boards, and to the gender distributions characteristic of those sectors.

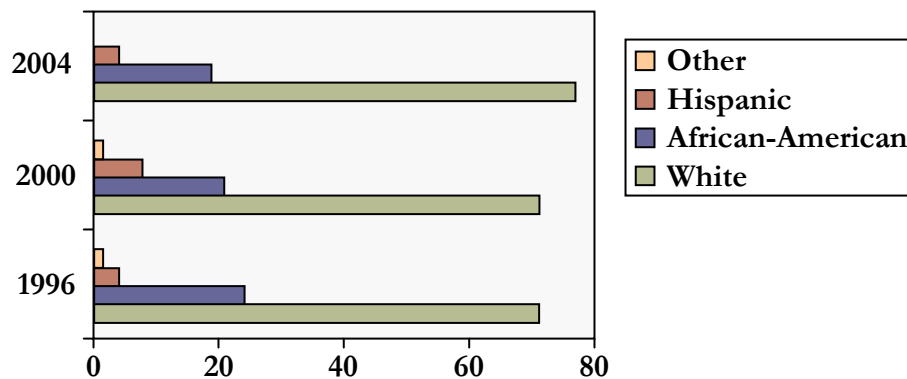
### **Board Gender Distribution**



### *Ethnicity/Race*

Minority race and ethnic composition of LEF boards has changed slightly over the past four years. From 2000 to 2004, the percentage of white members increased from 71 percent to 75 percent, the percentage of Hispanics has decreased from 8 to 5 percent, and the percentage of African-Americans has remained constant at 20 percent. While disproportionately low compared to the distribution of African Americans in LEF communities, their representation on LEF boards is significantly higher than the national average, at 9 percent. Also, for the first time, at least three LEFs report minority-majority boards—Franklin McKinley Education Foundation (San Jose, CA), San Antonio Education Partnership (San Antonio, TX), and DC Voice (DC).

**LEF Board Composition:  
Race/Ethnicity**



Among the LEF recruitment activities reported to increase the numbers of minority members on their boards are:

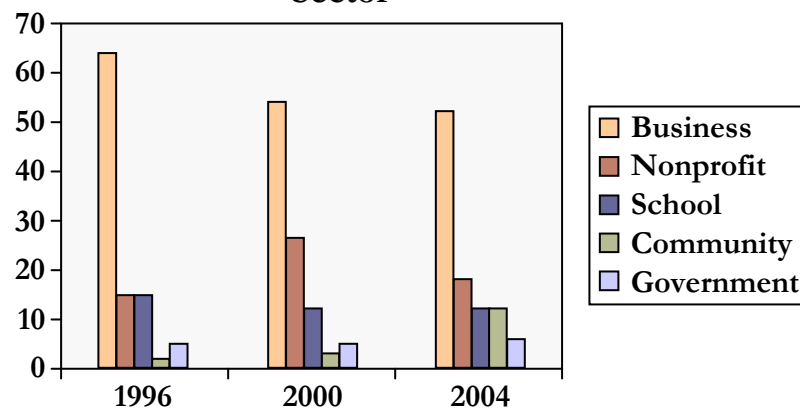
- Conducting focus groups including under-represented groups
- Existing minority members' suggestions
- One-on-one outreach by existing board members
- Cooperation with other CBOs with higher minority representation
- Collaboration with the faith community
- Collaboration with minority grassroots organizations

### *Sector*

Board sector composition has shifted significantly since 1996 (see graph on next page). There has been a steady decline in for-profit corporate representation to 52 percent, with a concurrent increase to 12 percent in members identified as community members (primarily parents and retirees). From 2000 to 2004, there was a marked decline in members identified as representatives from the nonprofit sector: from 26 percent (including both CBOs and universities) to 18 percent. We believe that the focus on high accountability within the

nonprofit sector operating environment in the the late 90s and early 2000s may have temporarily driven up the number of board members with evaluation and other academic expertise that are drawn from universities. Shifts in programming showing an increase in public engagement activities may account for the increase in community member presence on LEF boards.

### LEF Board Composition: Sector

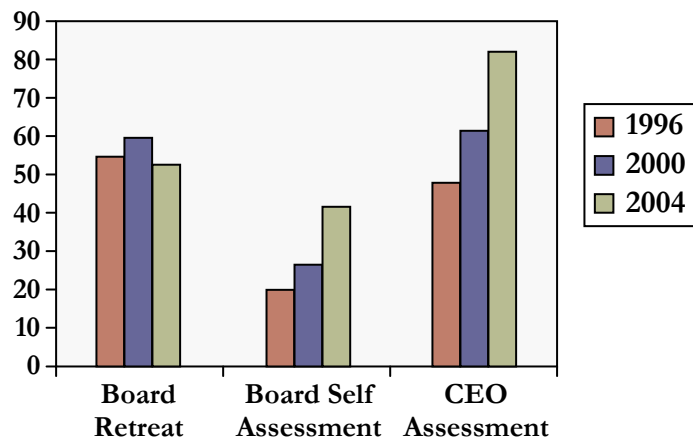


### Key LEF Board Activities

*Board Retreats, Self Assessment, and CEO Assessment*

LEF boards have made great strides since 2000 towards enhancing their effectiveness and accountability through formal opportunities to convene and reflect on their own activities and performance, as well as that of the CEO:

### Key Board Activities 1996-2004

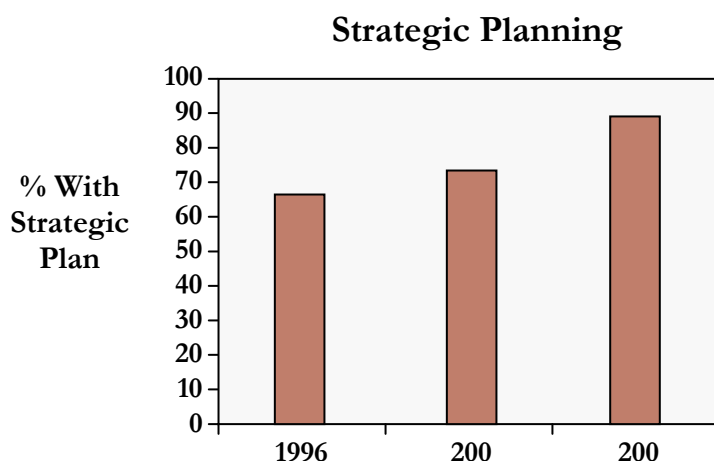


- In 2000, only 27 percent of LEF boards performed a self-assessment; today, 42 percent do so.
- In 2000, only 62 percent of LEF boards formally evaluated the CEO; today, 82 percent do so.

The number of LEF boards holding annual retreats has remained fairly constant during this time.

### *Strategic Planning*

A continuing shift from a project focus to one that addresses systemic challenges is clear from how LEF boards help to plan and organize LEFs' work. In eight years, the number of LEFs with strategic plans has gone from 68 percent to 91 percent.



### *Board Committees*

Clearly the most common standing committees are Executive, Resource Development, Finance, and Nominating. Other commonly found committees are Marketing, Fundraising, Planning, and Communications.

Common *ad hoc* committees include Special Events, Community Outreach, and Partnership Development.

## **LEF Staffing and Compensation**

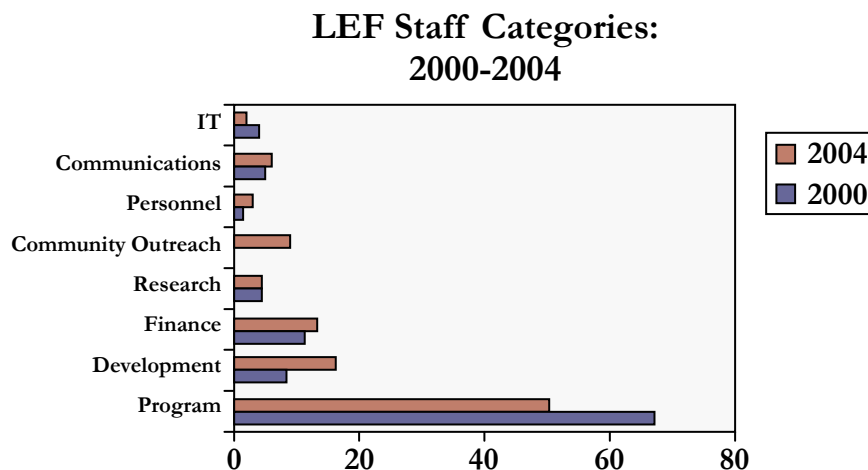
### *Staff Demographics*

There are approximately 850 paid staff members across 90 LEFs nationally. The average (10) and median (6) number of LEF staff members has remained constant since 1999. The percentage of male executive directors has increased to 25 percent, the highest ever. Racial/ethnic distribution of LEF directors has remained constant from 1996-2004, with an 80

percent white leadership. (The racial/ethnic distribution of other staff members will be surveyed in 2005.)

#### *Professional Staff Categories*

The graph below gives a snapshot of the distribution of professional categories within the Network as a whole, and shows significant shifts from 2000-2004.



From 2000-2004:

The percentage of program managers network-wide decreased from 64 percent to 50 percent, with a concurrent increase in development managers (from 8 percent to 16 percent) and an increase in community outreach managers (from under 1 percent to 9 percent). Slight increases were witnessed in the categories of communications, finance, and personnel. Information technology personnel have slightly decreased.

These data indicate a continuing trend of professional specialization within LEFs, and tentatively, a growing focus on development and public engagement activities. Of LEFs indicating their intent to hire a new paid staff member in 2005, 99 percent indicated that they plan to hire development managers.

*Staff Compensation*

Staff Category	Average Annual Salary Levels All LEFs	Average Larger Urban and/or Coastal LEFs Salary Level
Executive Director	80K	109K
Associate Director	70K	80K
Program Manager	50K	55K
Fund Development Manager	50K	60K
Finance Manager	52K	60K
Research Manager	46K	50K
Human Resources Manager	40K	40K
Community Outreach Manager	50K	56K
Communications Manager	53K	60K

**Conclusion**

The number of LEFs across the country continues to grow at an impressive rate, having doubled in only four years. This is perhaps the best evidence that the LEF model of the intermediary nonprofit organization involved in education reform is emerging as *the* model of choice for many communities wishing to assert their rights and responsibilities to ensure that the institution of public education remains viable and responsive to evolving local environments.

Through LEFs, all stakeholders have a mechanism for bringing to bear their concerns, needs and interests—as well as public and private resources—on all aspects of public schooling, from curriculum standards to instructional practices to school funding. As public education is the largest public sector institution serving the public good in tens of thousands of communities across the country, we expect that the LEF model will continue to draw interest and support from education policymakers, teachers and administrators, funders, and all sectors—business, nonprofit, government, and the public at large—with a critical stake in ensuring that all children receive a quality education.

That LEFs have financially withstood the test time is further evidence of their suitability for achieving their public functions. Today, median revenue stands at almost \$700K, with average revenues at 2.3 million. Total assets will soon hit the billion dollar mark, given current rates of increase. With roughly 85 percent of LEF revenues generated from private contributions

(foundations and businesses) and program fee-for-service, LEF revenues are resistant to decreases in government support, and can even offset the effects of an economic recession by tapping into net assets.

Programmatically, LEFs have demonstrated their flexibility and adaptability to respond to evolving local and national reform agenda. With the passing of NCLB and the challenges this legislation has imposed—especially at the high school level—many LEFs have deepened their whole school reform efforts through increased educational leadership training and other effective strategies, such as small schools and learning communities. Others have increased their direct support to the neediest students and their families through academic and vocational mentoring and tutoring, provision of college scholarships, and integrated services targeting health and nonacademic needs, which all contribute to success in school. Still others have intensified their efforts to help school authorities and other stakeholders to understand the issues at hand through sponsoring and/or conducting critical policy research.

True to their organizational missions, LEFs continue to find new ways to involve the public in reform efforts. As part of their work in school districts, many LEFs facilitate the involvement of parents and other community members—most often representatives from the business and nonprofit sectors—in designing, planning and implementing programs. Almost 100,000 volunteers served as tutors, mentors, and classroom aides, and have participated in community forums and special events, such as public information and awareness campaigns. Thousands of other community members helped to plan initiatives, participate on project advisory councils and grant selection committees. For LEFs seeking to build community capacity to influence education policy more directly, public engagement efforts have included promoting and supporting tax or bond referenda, educating the public and encouraging voter turnout during school board elections, formal assessment of community concerns and interests, and the development of community-wide plans of action for reform, among other strategies.

The findings presented in this survey raised questions that warrant further investigation. These include:

- What role can LEFs play in suburban districts that exhibit characteristics generally associated with inner city and urban settings?
- What are the successes and continued challenges associated with the diversification of LEF board composition—by race/ethnicity and/or sector?
- In what ways might LEFs diversify their revenue streams to further strengthen their financial standing?
- How are strategies to involve the public changing, and why?
- What theories of action—implicit or explicit—have guided LEFs consolidation and modification of work?

In the 2005 survey, we expect to explore these questions and others and, will respond to new questions as they emerge throughout the year.

# Public Education Network: 2004 Annual Member Survey

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