


## Our Mission:

Southern Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization supported by partners and donors committed to advancing equitable education policies and practices that elevate learning for low-income students and students of color in the southern states. We develop and disseminate research-based solutions for policymakers and grow the capacity of education leaders and influencers to create systemic change.




## Our Strategies:

### ADVOCACY & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

 The educational challenges that face historically marginalized children and their families are too great for one organization or group to tackle alone. Success requires strategic ongoing multi-sector collaboration working across various systems. For this reason, SEF engages in a range of partnerships and coalitions designed to attack the root cause of educational inequities by strengthening the capacity of advocates and policymakers. By using research-based practices,


SEF's aim is to help shape local, state, and federal policies and legislation that lead to effective systems change for Black and low-income students in the South.

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

 SEF subscribes to the belief that advancing education equity and social justice requires a constellation of bold leaders who are equipped with the perspective, understanding, confidence, and skills necessary to navigate the complex landscape of public education and the inherent challenges of racial and social inequity. Leaders serve as a critical lever for advancing authentic and enduring equity-centered systems change. Therefore, SEF offers

research-based, practitioner-informed professional learning opportunities for individuals across the continuum, from rising leaders to C-Level professionals, designed to grow their capacities to lead for racial equity and ensure deeper learning outcomes for every child, regardless of background. As a core tenet of the organization, SEF's leadership development efforts span nearly 150 years.

### RESEARCH

 In order to make the best choices for students, policymakers must be equipped with information that tells them what actually works. Through our research, SEF strives to provide the field with thoughtful analysis of key

issues and the timely dissemination of solutions that offer the greatest impact for students. We want to empower policymakers to use empirical research to support innovation and creativity in education that is just and equity-centered. SEF is committed to delivering thought leadership that keeps race and class front-and-center in the education debate as these factors continue to result in inequities in education.

## Recent Activities:

COVID-19 has shone a spotlight on and exacerbated the inequities in our education system. During this time, SEF has been more focused than ever. Our ongoing activities include:

- supporting efforts to close the digital divide
- conducting research into how school districts and leaders can support students and challenged by the digital divide
- combatting ongoing efforts to drain public education funds through vouchers and scholarships for private schools
- providing technical assistance to legislators to help them develop research-based education policies
- monitoring CARES act investments
- urging legislators to ensure the CARES Act supports public education
- connecting with district leaders and providing them with coaching on equity issues that have been amplified by the pandemic

## Initiatives:

### SOUTHERN EDUCATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (SELI)

A continuation of SEF's legacy of educating leaders in the South, the Southern Education Leadership Initiative (SELI) is an intensive, eight-week, paid summer fellowship for emerging leaders interested in advancing racial equity and improving education across the pre-kindergarten to college continuum. Placed in nonprofits, school districts, higher education institutions, or state education agencies in the South, SELI Fellows spend the summer developing as leaders, engaging with valuable stakeholders, and acquiring practical job skills through direct learning experiences. Over SELI's tenure, talented and diverse young leaders have conducted important research, policy analysis, advocacy, and organizing efforts for over 100 partner organizations. SELI alumni can be found today working as educators, policymakers, researchers, community organizers and committed civic leaders dedicated to improving the life chances of all children.

### RACIAL EQUITY LEADERSHIP NETWORK (RELN)

The Racial Equity Leadership Network is an 18-month, cohort-style fellowship program for school district leaders who are committed to addressing persistent disparities in their system and ensuring that race and class are no longer the most reliable predictors

of student success. Each cohort of the Racial Equity Leadership Network (RELN) is comprised of up to twelve (12) executive leaders from school districts in the South. Over the course of their fellowship experience, RELN Fellows attend five two- and-a-half day in-person convenings focused on essential levers for equity-centered leadership and system transformation. The fellows also receive customized coaching and technical assistance to support the planning and implementation of an action plan addressing their unique equity challenge. [SEF](#)

## Recent Publications:

### ADVANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION

*Distance Learning During COVID-19: Seven Equity Considerations for Schools and Districts*

*Investing in What Works: Community Driven Strategies for Strong Public Schools*

*SEF's Public Policy Priorities*

*Community Schools: Transforming Struggling Schools into Thriving Schools*

*School Privatization Policy Brief*

*A New Majority: Low Income Students Now a Majority in the Nation's Public Schools*

### IMPROVING POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS

*Unexpected Hurdles: Unpacking the Price Tag of College Affordability*

*Investing in the Future: Lessons on Advancing Institutional Effectiveness from HBCUs*

*Untold Barriers for Black Students in Higher Education*