

# NAVIGATING 2021

## TRENDS ACROSS THE PIE NETWORK

NOVEMBER 2021



### **Today, our country—and our education system—faces unprecedented challenges.**

More than a year into the pandemic, it has become abundantly clear that the era of uncertainty brought about by COVID-19 is ongoing as the virus evolves and continues to disrupt PreK-12 and higher education. As schools across the country have worked to return to in-person learning, we are just beginning to see fully how the disruption caused by the pandemic has impacted students.

Evidence to date suggests students are experiencing setbacks in learning and socio-emotional well-being, and that existing gaps and inequities have worsened, especially for students of color, from low-income families, and with the highest learning needs.

### **At the same time, families and communities—under intense strain—continue to engage in education in new ways and demand better learning models.**

Increased political polarization is driving deep divides and fierce fights on topics like mask mandates, vaccine requirements, quarantines, online learning, and issues of racism and racial equity in education. On top of it all, the federal government has infused massive, once-in-a-generation funding into education with little transparency or accountability to date on how those funds will be spent.

We are on the precipice of a moment that could either result in the entrenchment of existing systems and disparities or could transform power structures and decision-making around education, introduce innovation to design and implement new educational models, and enact policies that reimagine the student experience in PreK-12 and post-secondary education to expand opportunity and excellence for every student.

### **Intense advocacy is needed to leverage opportunities and meet the challenges of this moment.**

Members of the PIE Network have persisted in efforts to ensure every student, in every community, has the educational opportunities and experiences necessary to achieve a future without limits.

PIE Network has built on its strengths and adapted to facilitate strong connections, rapid transfer of information and ideas, and sharing of strategy that Network leaders can put to use on the ground to support the students, families, educators, policymakers, business leaders, civic leaders, and communities they serve. Since 2020, the PIE Network has grown by 17 percent and delivered more programming than ever before, with record-high member engagement and strong member feedback on program quality and impact.

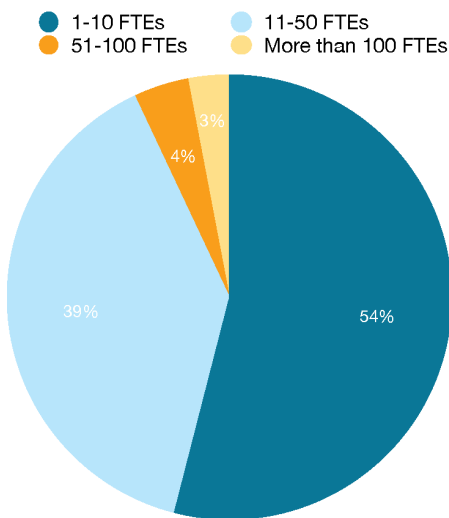
## NETWORK 2021 SUMMER SURVEY

During late summer 2021, PIE Network surveyed its members and national partners about their organizations, their recent and planned work, feedback on the Network, their challenges, and hopes for the future.

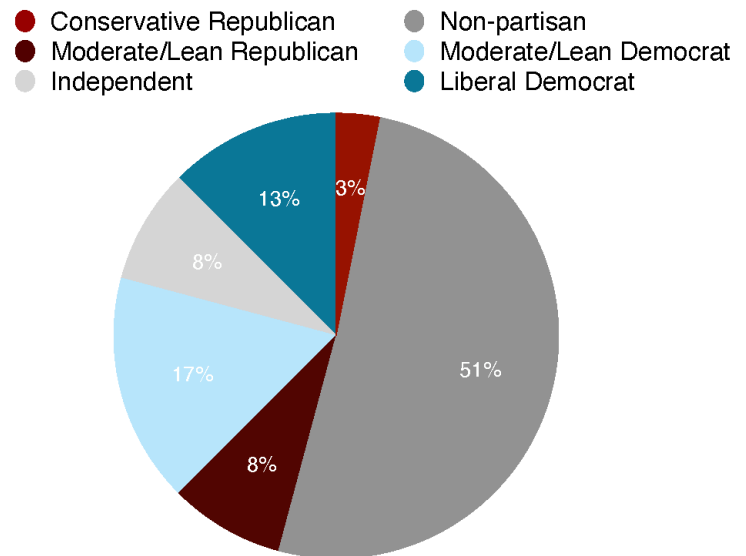


PIE Network members are **powerful and diverse champions** for students with 103 state and local advocacy organizations and 31 national partners across 33 states and D.C working to ensure **every student, in every community**, has the educational opportunities and experiences necessary to **achieve a future without limits**.

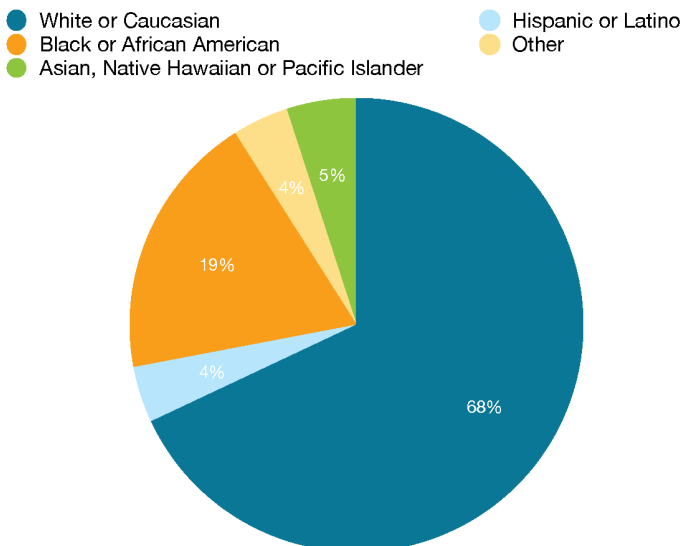
### Size of Network Teams



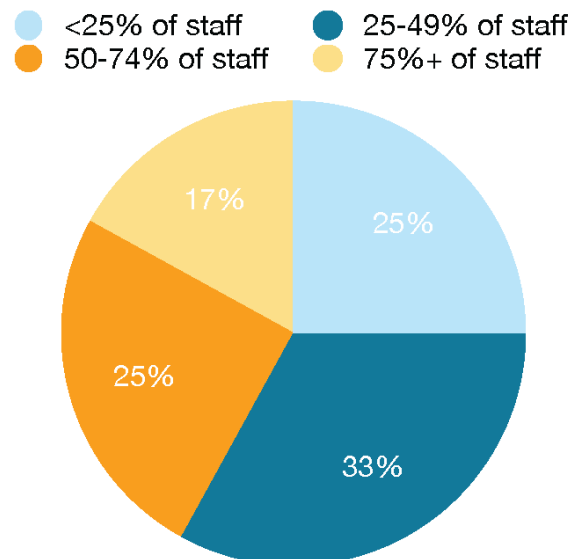
### Political Ideology



### Executive Director Race | Ethnicity



### Staff Diversity of Network Organizations





## NETWORK WINS

As the pandemic stretches into a third school year, Network members continue to work toward recovery and reinvention and report promising practices to learn from on critical areas of need.



### ADVANCES ACROSS THE NETWORK

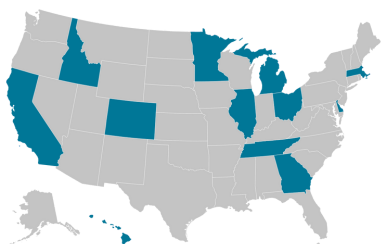
- Returning students to in-person instruction and supporting additional learning initiatives to meet unique student needs, such as high-impact tutoring to recover time lost;
- Expanding innovative learning options for families;
- Working to protect critical data on student learning progress and equity by ensuring the continuation of state assessments and the data they provide;
- Ensuring ESSER spending plans include community input and transparency to meet students' needs; and
- Expanding high-quality opportunities for students to pursue college and meaningful careers, for example through legislation that dedicates funding to experiential, career-connected learning.

Advocacy & Policy Wins in 2021	% of the Network
Pandemic Recovery Efforts	32%
Education Funding	30%
Charter Funding and Expansion	22%
College and Career Pathways	20%
Educator Diversity	13%
Early Learning	13%
Educator Preparation & Licensure	12%
Student Wellbeing	11%
Education Savings Accounts	7%

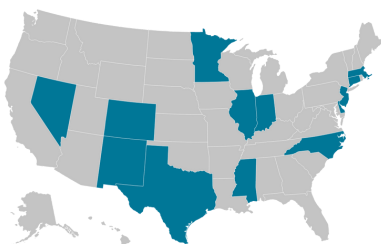
The 2021 *Eddies!* nominees provide a strong sampling of the wins and progress that Network leaders made in the last two years. Finalists shared their work at the 2021 PIE Network Summit, and you can read more about the nominees on the [PIE Network website](https://www.pie-network.org).

### ADVANCES BY POLICY PILLAR

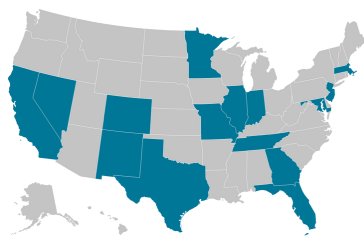
#### HIGH EXPECTATIONS



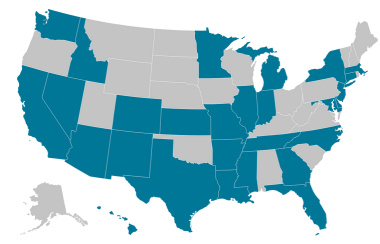
#### GREAT EDUCATORS



#### INNOVATIVE OPTIONS



#### RESPONSIVE SYSTEMS



## NETWORK PRIORITIES FOR 2022

This is a pivotal moment for education. PIE Network leaders share their priorities for the year ahead.



### PLANNING FOR THE DAYS AHEAD

When asked about their top priorities heading into 2022, over half of Network members (57%) identified education funding as a top priority including making education funding formulas more equitable, effective, and student-centered and pushing for equity and transparency in the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) funding utilization. Other top priorities include:

- Ensuring that students who chose to do so can return to in-person learning and recover missed learning opportunities through efforts such as expanding internet access and focusing on learning acceleration;
- Creating innovative college and career pathways such as advancing comprehensive education to workforce policies and providing increased flexibility to ensure that students get credit for their learning and not just the amount of time they spend in classroom seats;
- Expanding the educator pipeline focusing specifically on educator diversity;
- Advocating for inclusive and rigorous curricula and instruction and responding to "anti-CRT"-related efforts;
- Improving early literacy.

Advocacy & Policy Priorities in 2022	% of the Network
Education Funding	57%
Pandemic Recovery Efforts	33%
Curricula & Instruction	28%
College and Career Pathways	24%
Charter Funding & Expansion	23%
Educator Diversity	20%
Educator Preparation & Licensure	20%
Student Wellbeing	18%
Support for Special Populations	18%

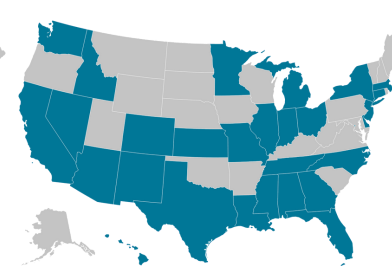
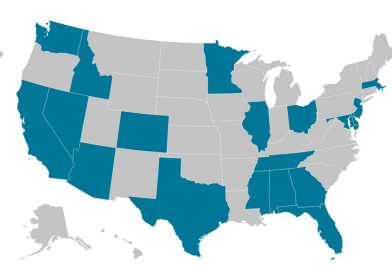
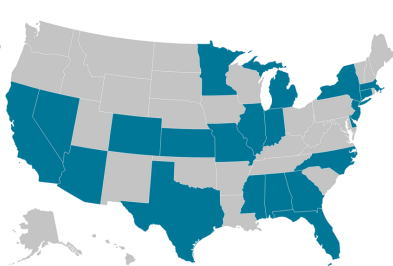
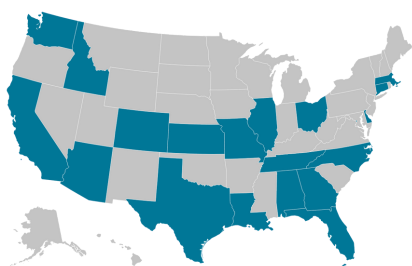
### PRIORITIES BY POLICY PILLAR

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

GREAT EDUCATORS

INNOVATIVE OPTIONS

RESPONSIVE SYSTEMS





## LANDSCAPE CHALLENGES

We asked Network leaders:  
"Looking ahead to the rest of 2021,  
what are you and your team most  
worried about externally?"



### TOP CONCERNS HEADING INTO THE YEAR AHEAD

- Students' disrupted learning due to the ongoing pandemic,
- Shifts in state and local politics that create uncertainty and require members to build new relationships and support for systemic improvements,
- Effective utilization of and transparency around the influx of federal COVID relief funding, and
- Ongoing threats to assessment and accountability systems and to charter schools.

Top External Concerns	% of the Network
Pandemic's Continued Impact on Learning	28%
Legislative and Electoral Engagement	21%
ESSER Funding Decisions	20%
Backlash Against Reform Priorities	17%
Anti-Equity and Anti-CRT Efforts	15%
Sustaining Reforms and Implementation	15%

### MEMBER REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT FROM NATIONAL PARTNERS

#### Share promising practices and policy trends.

- "As a state member, our capacity is always limited. Anything provided by national partners as a blueprint for us to utilize is welcomed. Particularly related to research or policy support."

#### Provide clear updates on federal issues.

- "We don't have the capacity to monitor federal issues. Clear calls to action on issues from national partners would be helpful. If national partners have differing opinions on pending legislation, hearing both perspectives is helpful."

#### Tools and resources to support state and local organizations.

- "Pooling together resources to support state/local members with smaller budgets. Specifically polling & messaging."

### NATIONAL PARTNER REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT FROM STATE & LOCAL MEMBERS

#### Share state and local context.

- "Furthering our awareness of what's happening in states and districts, disseminating our work to the field, connecting our state and local networks to others."

#### Collaborate on shared priorities.

- "Building active coalitions to advance work across shared interests (e.g. ensuring stakeholder input as a part of state-level ESSER plans)."

#### Amplify and give input on resources and campaigns.

- "Dissemination of resources, information-sharing-what is happening on the ground/flagging concerns/issues for national partners, opportunities for partnership between local/state and national partners."

*Looking for more information on the Network? Contact [info@pie-network.org](mailto:info@pie-network.org).*