

# NAVIGATING 2022

## TRENDS ACROSS THE PIE NETWORK

OCTOBER 2022



**It is not an exaggeration to say that we are on the precipice of a moment that can either result in the entrenchment of existing education inequities or can transform power structures and systems to truly prepare students to thrive in a rapidly changing world.**

Data make increasingly clear that the disruptions to school during the pandemic have had a devastating impact on students, especially those farthest behind. School closures, illness, student learning loss and mental health crises, and rising household costs are among the challenges straining families across the country and the world. Students of color, students from low-income families, and students with the highest learning needs have been hit the hardest. These trends—combined with the once-in-a-generation federal investments in education—require urgent attention and introduce opportunities to push for long-overdue improvements and innovation to our education systems.

**Across the PIE Network, we continue to see pockets of ingenuity, where educators, students, community and business leaders, philanthropists, and families are meeting the moment with new ways of ensuring student well-being and learning despite the obstacles at hand.**

Advocacy leaders across PIE Network continue to raise public awareness of the urgent needs and the reasons for hope by organizing, lobbying, and advocating for action to change policies and power structures so that every student, in every community gets the education they need to achieve a future without limits.

**During the summer of 2022, PIE Network surveyed its members and national partners about their organizations, their recent and planned work, feedback on the Network, and their sources of challenge and hope for the future. We heard from 76% percent of the Network (107 state and local members and national partners). Here is what we learned.**

## WHO ARE PIE NETWORK MEMBERS?

PIE Network members represent students, families, educators, business and civic leaders, and research and policy experts all working to ensure that every student, in every community, has the education opportunities and experiences needed to achieve a future without limits.

PIE Network members and partners believe policy is a critical lever for systems change, establishing expectations, and driving resources to meet needs. **Policy and advocacy is their primary focus.** While PIE Network members' priorities and strategies are unique to their communities and states, all members and partners demonstrate a commitment to upholding and advancing advocacy that drives improvements on the Network's four policy pillars.

**Today, the Network is made up of nearly 150 members across 33 states and D.C.** The vast majority of members (111 organizations) are state and local advocacy and policy organizations and the remainder (38 organizations) are national policy partners whose research and policy work is informed by and helps support local, state and national advocacy. The Network is politically diverse with a growing majority of non-partisan members and partners.

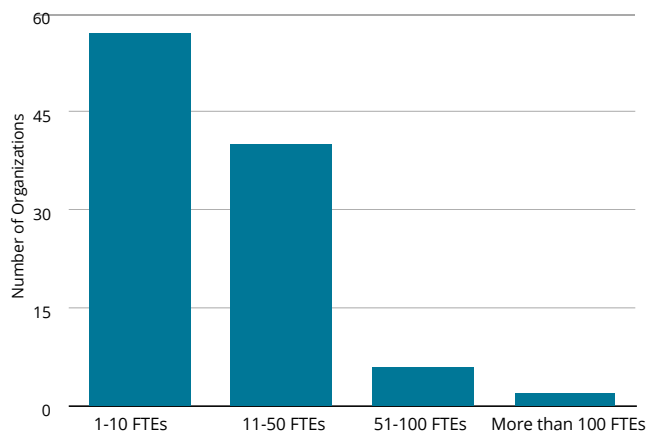
The Network's collective strength continues to grow as new members join. Since we released last year's survey results in October 2021, the Network has grown by 15% and has welcomed 7 national partners, 6 state members, and 2 local members.

**Network membership has grown by 33% in the last three years.**

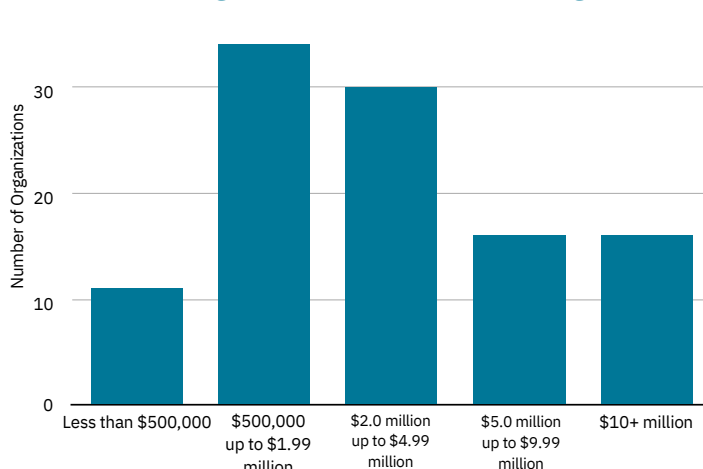


**The Network is diverse.** Nearly half of the Network (51 member organizations) are single-state organizations who are not affiliated with a national umbrella organization. More than half of Network members who completed the Summer Survey (53%) employ between one and ten full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members. **The majority of the Network's member organizations identify as non-partisan (63%),** up from 48.5% of members and partners in 2020. **The Network is geographically diverse** with member and partner organizations spread almost evenly across the country. **Network members and partners continue to diversify their leadership and teams.** In 2022, 40.3% of Network leaders were people of color, up from 28% in 2021.

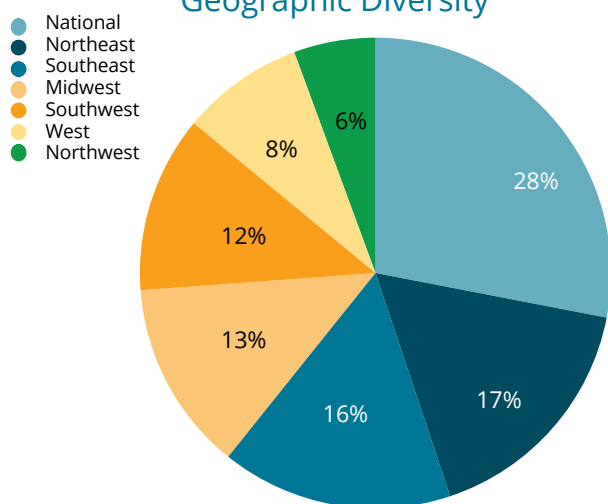
### Number of FTEs per Organization



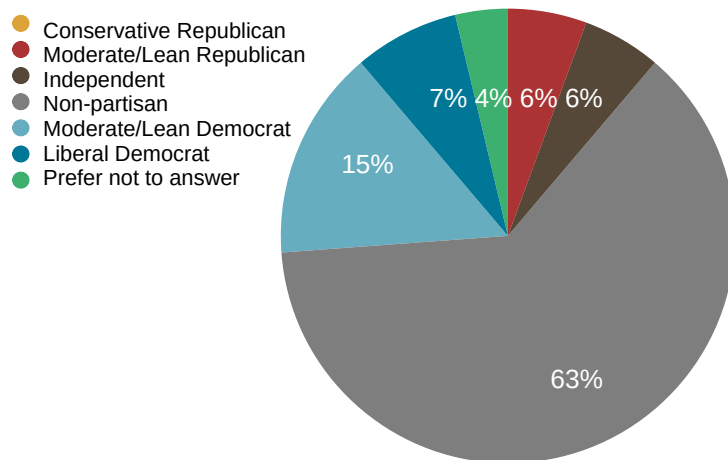
### Organization's Annual Budget



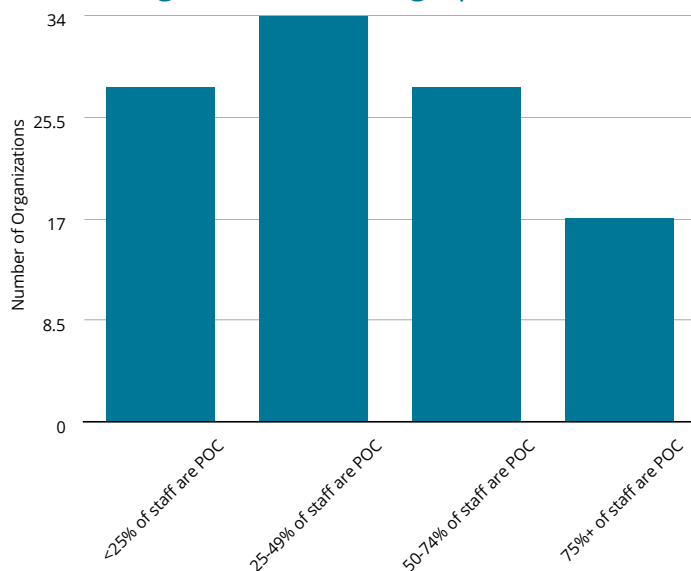
### Geographic Diversity



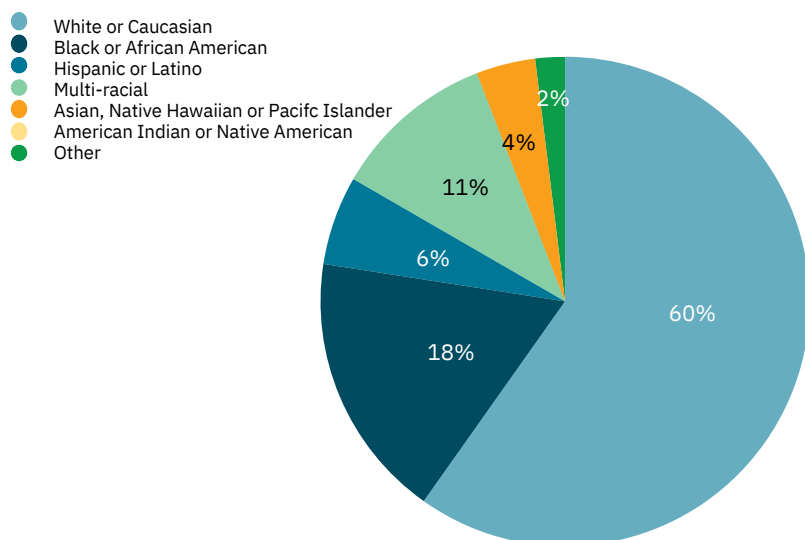
### Organization's Political Ideology



### Organization Demographic Profile



### Racial/Ethnic Identity of Network EDs





## NETWORK MEMBER WINS IN 2022

We asked members to report on wins from 2022. As the pandemic stretched into a fourth school year, Network members continued to advocate tirelessly for, and pass, big policy wins in statehouses, city halls, and more.

Accelerating student learning in the wake of COVID-19 continued to be a top priority. Overall, Network members who responded to the survey reported multiple wins this year to benefit students and the education community, including policies to:

- **Ensure every student and family has access to quality education options** that will best meet their needs by advocating for public charter school funding and expansion or supporting education savings accounts;
- **Replace outdated state education funding formulas** to ensure resources are allocated more equitably to students with the greatest learning needs and/or advocating for additional dollars for state education funding;
- **Expand student opportunities for success after high school** through comprehensive college and career pathways programs, work-based learning experiences, and partnerships with local businesses;
- **Diversify and expand the teacher workforce**, including through alternative certification pathways;
- **Create smooth transitions back to in-person learning**, and keep school communities safe while also prioritizing getting students back into the classroom;
- **Influence decisions about spending** the massive influx of federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, including by engaging students and families in these decisions, to best meet local needs and to make information about ESSER spending accessible and transparent to the public.
- **Follow the science of reading instruction** by ensuring educators get the research-proven training and instructional materials needed to teach students to read; and
- **Protect the critical collection of data on student learning progress and equity via state assessments**, ensure transparency around these results, and resume accountability systems as schools and districts work to help accelerate student learning.

Policy Pillar	Advocacy and Policy Area Wins in 2022	% of Organizations
<b>Innovative Options</b>	Charter Funding and Expansion	44%
<b>Responsive Systems</b>	Education Funding	41%
<b>Responsive Systems</b>	College and Career Pathways	33%
<b>Great Educators</b>	Educator Preparation & Licensure	29%
<b>Responsive Systems</b>	Pandemic Recovery Efforts	27%
<b>Innovative Options</b>	ESAs/Vouchers	19%
<b>Responsive Systems</b>	Support for Special Populations	18%
<b>Responsive Systems</b>	Literacy	16%
<b>High Expectations</b>	Assessments & Accountability	16%

The 2022 Eddies nominees and finalists are examples of the wide-ranging wins Network organizations achieved in the last year. More information on nominees can be found [here](#).



## NETWORK PRIORITIES FOR 2023

Looking ahead to the next legislative sessions, education funding remains the top Network priority for the second year in a row.

65% of Network leaders who responded to the survey named education funding as a priority for the coming year. As advocates and organizers look toward 2023, top priorities include:

- **Education Funding:** reimagining outdated funding models to be more equitable for all students;
- **Pandemic Recovery Efforts:** ensuring that students have access to high-quality tutoring and other innovative, individualized supports;
- **College and Career Pathways:** creating partnerships across state agencies and industry leaders to provide students with greater exposure to career pathways and opportunities for work-based learning;
- **Educator Diversity:** strengthening the teaching profession by expanding the pipeline to better support teacher candidates of color;
- **Educator Shortages:** working to ensure that all students have access to educators and school staff amidst shortages exacerbated by the pandemic;
- **Charter School Funding and Expansion:** fighting for equitable funding for charter schools and expanding access to high-quality charter schools for all students;
- **Educator Preparation and Licensure:** investing in innovative programs and supports to make the teaching profession more accessible;
- **Literacy:** giving educators the training and resources needed to prepare all students to read;
- **Student Well-Being and Mental Health:** creating sustainable resources to support students with their social-emotional well-being in the wake of the pandemic;
- **Early Learning:** streamline funding for early childhood learning providers, increasing the number of high-quality early childhood seats, and funding mixed-delivery models.

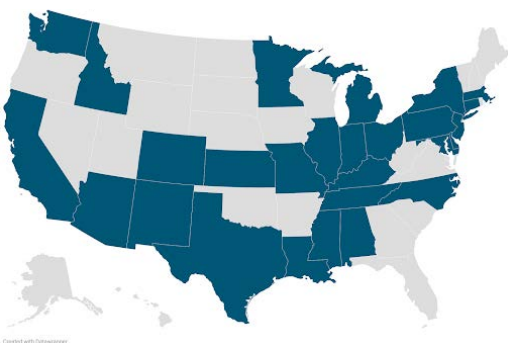


## NETWORK PRIORITIES FOR 2023

## Responsive Systems

## Education Funding

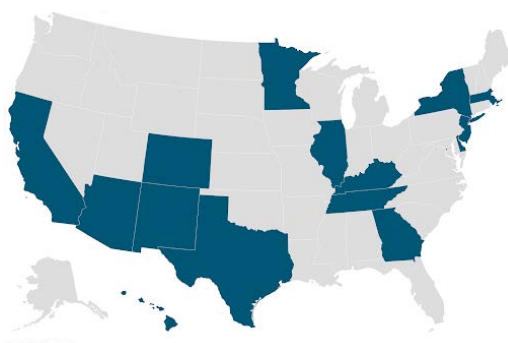
65% of Organizations



## Responsive Systems

## Pandemic Recovery Efforts

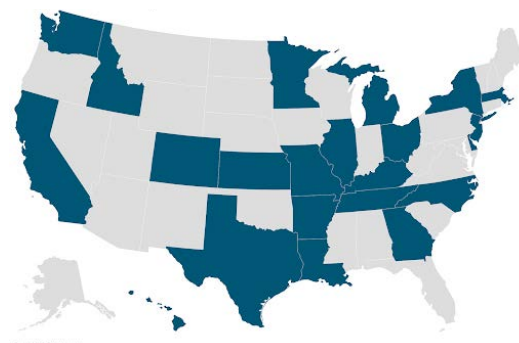
44% of Organizations



## Responsive Systems

## College and Career Pathways

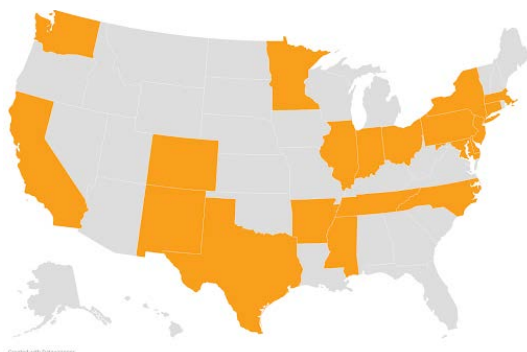
43% of Organizations



## Great Educators

## Educator Diversity

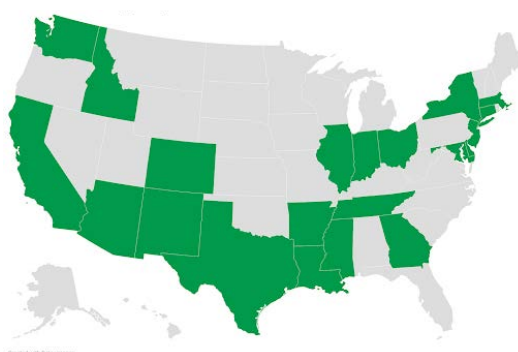
42% of Organizations



## Innovative Options

## Charter School Funding & Expansion

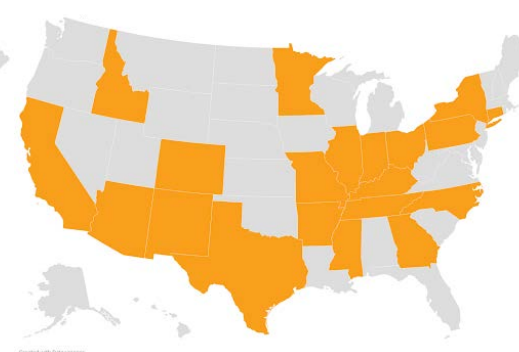
42% of Organizations



## Great Educators

## Educator Preparation & Licensure

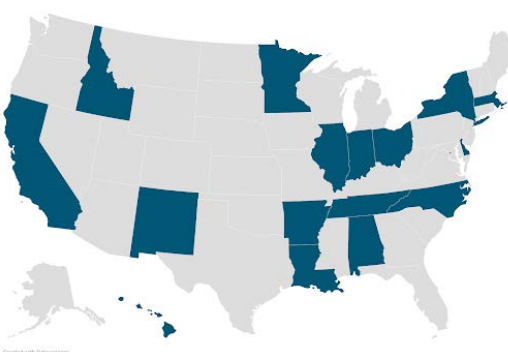
42% of Organizations



## Responsive Systems

## Literacy

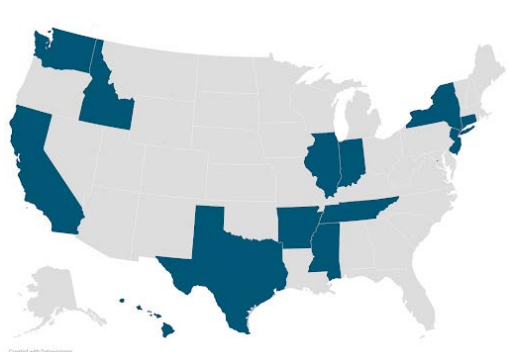
29% of Organizations



## Responsive Systems

## Student Wellbeing & Mental Health

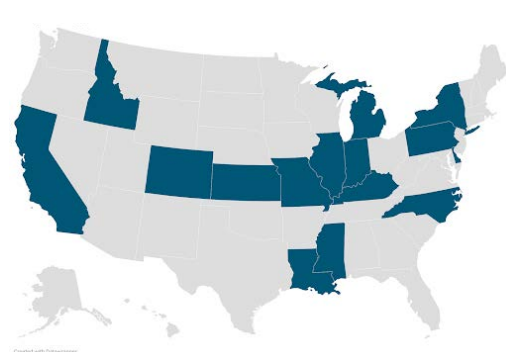
29% of Organizations



## Responsive Systems

## Early Learning

29% of Organizations



## EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES AHEAD

In interviews, we asked leaders about the top external challenges they anticipate facing in the year ahead.

Leaders' answers most often had to do with:

- **Continued hyper-polarization and partisanship** that make it increasingly difficult to work across lines of difference to build and maintain legislative support and strong coalitions;
- **Accelerating student learning and recovery** with proven interventions and new education innovations to undo the damage from decisions made during the pandemic and ongoing disruptions to student learning; and
- **Continued threats to longstanding education reform priorities**, including state assessments and charter schools.

Top External Concerns	% of Organizations
<b>Polarization &amp; Partisanship</b>	21%
<b>Pandemic's Continued Impact on Learning</b>	18%
<b>Backlash Against Reform Priorities (namely assessments and charter schools)</b>	18%
<b>Legislative &amp; Electoral Engagement</b>	17%
<b>Coalition Dynamics &amp; Stakeholder Engagement</b>	14%

"Division between right and left. Enormous right now. The contentious nature of the country is a threat to improving outcomes for kids."

"The effects of the lingering pandemic on teachers and students. A lack of innovation in school design and delivery - we're still in triage and haven't taken stock and figured out how to pivot. We also worry about teacher challenges."

"Still uncertain where things are going to shake out politically. There will be a new governor, and we're working to make good connections with the frontrunner. We've done a good job of diversifying our partners, but we still have work to do."

"Worried about coalitions and if the Venn diagram of overlap will be sustainable enough to keep the coalition bonded together. Also, local elections."



College & Career COP Site Visit  
April 2022





## NETWORK IMPACT

To better understand PIE Network's impact, we asked members to share an example of how their organization's work was influenced or supported by their participation in PIE Network in the past year.

Here is what members said about how they leveraged the Network in 2022 to achieve impact:

### BUILDING POWERFUL CONNECTIONS

- "PIE Network is the **rare place to come together** with other organizations doing similar work in a supportive place that provides concrete and authentic support. The content and topics are always timely and relevant to what we're wrestling with."
- "In a state with a sparse reform environment, **having a network of national colleagues is critical.**"
- "I cannot think of an organization more focused and passionate about empowering its members to create better policy and advocate for needed changes. We feel your dedication and **we all believe we are a collective force**, informed and fueled greatly by the Leadership, Staff, and other Members of PIE Network."
- "I appreciate the opportunity to connect with people and organizations I may not agree with politically, but who share common interests on specific issues. It is also refreshing to just be with other people who are **passionate about public education.**"

### SPREADING POLICY KNOWLEDGE AND KNOW-HOW

- "Convenings are professional grade and teach all of us the **best in class** in terms of conference organization, speakers, creative ways to engage the audience, and ensuring a significant amount of fun and team building time across all reform organizations. The constant webinars on key topics in education and workforce policy keep us on top of the best trends and state practices."
- "PIE Network has provided an amazing opportunity to connect with other leaders and learn about **what advocacy can look like.**"
- "The PIE Network organized a group consultation with 8+ experts across the country that **helped us navigate our strategy** with our own state with our eyes wide open."
- "As an org that does primarily hyperlocal policy, we need access to spaces created by PIE Network to be pushed outside our own context. We **need to see examples and best practices** and different approaches to similar challenges."
- "The convenings hosted by the PIE Network are **actionable and relevant**. The Network continues to offer me access to a number of experts and colleagues who can engage in problem-solving in real-time."

### SUPPORTING LEADERS

- "The Leadership cohort has been, hands down, the **most helpful leadership development program** I've been a part of. Connecting nationally renowned experts with my team has been possible by working with a smaller group of people, connecting with them at a personal level, and digging deep in their expertise."
- "The Leadership Institute was an exceptional experience. I do not have many places I can safely talk about the struggles of running an advocacy organization. **PIE Network makes the work more sustainable.**"
- "The content-specific learning sessions are great ways to **generate new ideas** by hearing from other work across the country. The Executives' meeting was amazing to connect with others in like roles, and I cannot say enough good about the Leadership Institute."





## SUPPORT ACROSS THE NETWORK

Local, state, and national organizations share what they need most from each other.

### REQUESTS FROM NATIONAL PARTNERS

We asked national partners where they could most use support from state or local PIE Network members to assist in their work. Their responses included:

#### Stakeholder engagement and understanding local context:

- "Much of our work focuses on elevating state-level policies and practices. It's always helpful to have access to state and local members with practical experience and knowledge on the ins and outs of implementation."

#### Collaborating on shared priorities:

- "We are eager to connect with local partners about how to improve state report cards post-pandemic, maintain the urgency around pandemic learning loss, and thinking big about the future."

#### Networking and connections:

- "Maintaining a strong network of state actors who can be a useful sounding board (and then set of advocates) for federal policy."

### REQUESTS FROM STATE AND LOCAL MEMBERS

We asked state and local members where they could most use support from national partners to assist their work. Sample responses included:

#### Sharing promising practices, research, and policy trends (including from other states or cities):

- "Sharing bills, policy ideas and models, especially when proven successful elsewhere."

#### Uplifting state and local work to the federal level:

- "Surfacing opportunities for us to weigh in, influence, and connect to issues in Congress or the Administration that might connect to or impact our state priorities would be incredibly helpful."

#### Collaborate on Shared Federal Priorities:

- "Working with national partners to protect the federal side of the work" and "creating feedback loops on federal policy."

#### Fundraising/funding support:

- "Connecting states with national funders that they are often overlooked by. There wouldn't be an expectation for grant dollars, but just knowing that those organizations have heard how we're seeing our world and hearing about the successes we're having would be meaningful."

PIE Network looks forward to supporting, connecting and catalyzing the work of advocacy leaders in the days ahead. The Network supports its members through a variety of programming, including in-person events, virtual discussions, consultancies, communities of practice and working groups, online tools and resources, 1:1 direct support, and weekly emails packed with resources.



**PIE**network  
Policy Innovators  
in Education

**To learn more about PIE Network programming,** to share your work, or request support, reach out to: Courtney Criswell, Vice President, Policy & Program at [courtney@pie-network.org](mailto:courtney@pie-network.org).

**To learn more about becoming a PIE Network member,** visit [this webpage](#) or contact Ashley Schmidt, Managing Director, Communications & Member Engagement at [ashley@pie-network.org](mailto:ashley@pie-network.org).

**To support PIE Network,** reach out to Jen Alexander, Executive Director at [jennifer@pie-network.org](mailto:jennifer@pie-network.org).

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