

2020-2023 Strategic Plan

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Executive Summary

On one hand, 2020 feels like an odd time to publish a strategic plan. In the midst of the global pandemic causing significant disruption to U.S. schools, as well as the very necessary racial reckoning facing the nation and impacting classrooms, it feels particularly challenging to commit to a new strategy while so much is in flux.

On the other hand, our work has only become more necessary as we face a shifting world. When we get to the other side of this, there will be a greater need than ever before for strong leaders and schools. To that end, we've leaned into strengthening our supports for leaders across the country. We've continued the important work we started two years ago of learning and growing as a team to make this organization more equitable, inclusive, and diverse. And we've just finished a robust strategic planning process to solidify our goals for the next three years.

In 2019-20, we worked with Safal Partners to conduct an analysis of each BES program based on key internal and external factors. This included stakeholder interviews, programmatic landscape comparisons for each BES program, and additional background research on the national education sector. This strategic planning process has helped us be thoughtful and creative about how BES can sustain its work in an ever-shifting landscape.

Executive Summary

Our plan for 2020-2023 lays out **four priorities** with goals and metrics attached to each:

Priority 1: Support public school leaders at all stages of their careers, in a variety of school models and settings. We'll support 300 leaders annually to build and sustain schools that serve 100,000 students.

Priority 2: Practice anti-racism in our work, and support leaders to practice anti-racism in their schools. We'll operate as a proactively anti-racist organization that centers equity and inclusion in our internal and external work.

Priority 3: Broaden our reach. We'll establish BES as a well-known school leadership development organization.

Priority 4: Sustain our work. We'll run an operationally efficient budget sustained by a robust and diversified base of philanthropic support and increased earned revenue.

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Executive Summary

In order to successfully achieve the goals we've set, we must focus on:

Diversity: We're working with leaders who are racially diverse, who bring a diversity of experience working with different school models and communities.

Community-Driven Schools: We're supporting leaders to effectively create and implement a unique vision that is responsive to expressed community need and demand, designed together with the community.

High-Quality Schools: We're about results, and we're defining high-quality schools as those that prioritize both academic and non-academic student success.

Public Schools: We're building and growing autonomous public schools – both charter schools and in-district schools – with a variety of school models.

Traditionally Underserved Students: We're focusing our work where opportunity and achievement gaps are widest.

As difficult as this year has been, we are excited to dive into this strategic plan, to expand our impact to more leaders, more students, and more communities.

When the current moment passes, we mustn't let up. All students deserve excellent schools. And **behind every excellent school is an excellent leader.**

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Background

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Who we are

BES is a national nonprofit organization that identifies and prepares excellent leaders to transform education in their communities.

From school founders and executive directors, to operations leaders, deans of students, and directors of curriculum and instruction, BES trains leaders to build schools, to ensure their schools excel, and to sustain their success over time.

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Where we are

In 2019, under new leadership, Building Excellent Schools rebranded as Build. Excel. Sustain. The rebrand signaled that BES was zooming out, broadening our focus to expand our impact. We're incubating new and growing public schools with a variety of models and structures of autonomy, placing renewed emphasis on making sure schools excel, and developing robust programming and supports to help schools sustain their success over time.

To make this shift, we analyzed our continuum of programming to ensure that we were offering services that met the needs of leaders and schools at every stage of their growth.



Where we are

A key part of our intentional evolution has been naming diversity, equity, inclusion, and community engagement as priorities and taking action toward incorporating these commitments into all aspects of our work, internally and with the leaders we train. Over the past two years, we have thoughtfully shifted our approach with the goal of operating as a truly anti-racist organization.

As always, BES must be responsive to the ever-changing national education landscape, with charter authorizations becoming more difficult to obtain in many states, and new avenues for leadership development work opening in others. This strategic planning process has helped us be thoughtful and creative about how BES can grow and sustain its impact.



Process

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Developing this plan

In 2019-20, we worked with Safal Partners to conduct an analysis of each BES program based on key internal and external factors. This included stakeholder interviews, programmatic landscape comparisons for each BES program, and additional landscape analysis.

We engaged a diverse group of stakeholders who represent the full ecosystem of BES partners, including current and past program participants, school leaders, funders, peer organizations, staff, and board members.



Key questions

To guide our research and the creation of our strategic plan, we asked ourselves the following key questions:

What is our theory of action?

Do each of our programs carry out the BES theory of action? If not, what changes are required for this to be true?

What leadership development services are most needed in today's education landscape?

What shifts must we make to our approach to school design in order to fulfill our vision of creating anti-racist schools?

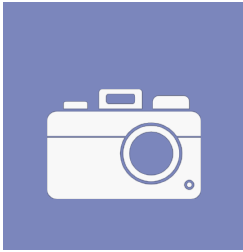
What is the best staffing and funding model so that each program carries out the theory of action in a sustainable way?

How do we measure success?



Insights

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Our work in context

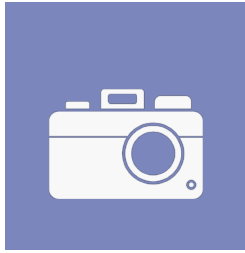
We conducted a landscape analysis and stakeholder interviews to identify where BES fits in the context of today's education landscape, and where we have the greatest opportunities to expand our impact on school leaders and the students and communities they serve.

Charter school growth has begun leveling off in some large states, while other states have just recently begun to create supports conducive to charter school growth.

- 40% of all new charter school growth from 2005 to 2016 took place in California, Texas, and Florida.
- For the top 5 states with the most charter growth in the last 10 years, all 5 now have charter caps.

Sources

Stakeholder interviews and surveys; Measuring Up to the Model, Eleventh Annual Edition (National Alliance of Public Charter Schools); The State of the Charter Sector 2019 (Bellwether Education Partners); Trends in Education Philanthropy: Benchmarking 2018-19 (Grantmakers for Education)



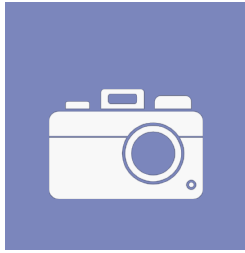
Our work in context

When stakeholders were asked what is needed in today's climate to sustain excellent schools, the most common responses were:

- More genuine community involvement and support from the community
- Prioritizing both academic and non-academic student success; being responsive to student needs
- Strong school leadership development programs and strong succession planning

Sources

Stakeholder interviews and surveys; Measuring Up to the Model, Eleventh Annual Edition (National Alliance of Public Charter Schools); The State of the Charter Sector 2019 (Bellwether Education Partners); Trends in Education Philanthropy: Benchmarking 2018-19 (Grantmakers for Education)



Our work in context

Conversations with stakeholders revealed that BES programs and services outside of the Fellowship are largely unknown, and could be leveraged more strategically to realize BES's theory of action.

- A number of stakeholders indicated that BES is still equated with the “no-excuses” school model, which BES has moved away from in recent years.

Most funders in the education space say they are committed to advancing education equity. Overall, funders are increasingly focused on solutions that do right by communities.

Sources

Stakeholder interviews and surveys; Measuring Up to the Model, Eleventh Annual Edition (National Alliance of Public Charter Schools); The State of the Charter Sector 2019 (Bellwether Education Partners); Trends in Education Philanthropy: Benchmarking 2018-19 (Grantmakers for Education)



BES Theory of Action

If BES identifies diverse groups of committed, high-capacity leaders....

...and prepares them to effectively craft, communicate, and implement a new vision...

...then leaders will be equipped to build and sustain high-quality public schools in direct response to the needs of communities that have been traditionally underserved.

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If BES identifies **diverse** groups of committed, high-capacity leaders, and prepares them to effectively craft, communicate, and implement a new vision, then leaders will be equipped to build and sustain high-quality public schools in direct response to the needs of communities that have been traditionally underserved.

We're working with leaders who are racially diverse, who bring a diversity of experience working with different school models and communities.



If BES identifies diverse groups of committed, high-capacity leaders, and prepares them to effectively craft, communicate, and implement a **new vision**, then leaders will be equipped to build and sustain high-quality public schools in direct response to the **needs of communities** that have been traditionally underserved.

Rather than prescribing a school's vision, we're supporting leaders to effectively create and implement a vision that is responsive to expressed community need and demand, designed together with the community.



If BES identifies diverse groups of committed, high-capacity leaders, and prepares them to effectively craft, communicate, and implement a new vision, then leaders will be equipped to build and sustain **high-quality** public schools in direct response to the needs of communities that have been traditionally underserved.

BES is about results. We're defining high-quality schools as those that prioritize both academic and non-academic student success.



If BES identifies diverse groups of committed, high-capacity leaders, and prepares them to effectively craft, communicate, and implement a new vision, then leaders will be equipped to build and sustain high-quality **public schools** in direct response to the needs of communities that have been traditionally underserved.

We're building and growing autonomous public schools – both charter schools and in-district schools – with a variety of school models.



If BES identifies diverse groups of committed, high-capacity leaders, and prepares them to effectively craft, communicate, and implement a new vision, then leaders will be equipped to build and sustain high-quality public schools in direct response to the needs of communities that have been **traditionally underserved**.


We're still working to close opportunity and achievement gaps where they are widest.



Priorities

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To implement our theory of action, we will invest in four priority areas over the next three years.

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PRIORITY 1



Integrate and streamline BES training programs to create a more seamless experience for school leaders throughout their careers.

By June 30, 2023, BES will support approximately 300 leaders annually to build and sustain schools that will serve 100,000 students.

PRIORITY 2



Practice anti-racism* in our work and support leaders to practice anti-racism in their schools.

By June 30, 2023, BES will operate as a proactively anti-racist organization that centers equity and inclusion in our internal operations and in our external work, partnerships, and communication.

* We have adopted the following definition of anti-racism from the *National Action Committee on the Status of Women International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity*: "Anti-racism is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably."

PRIORITY 3



Broaden our reach.

By June 30, 2023, BES will establish itself as a well-known school leadership development organization.

PRIORITY 4



Sustain our work.

By June 30, 2023, BES will run an operationally efficient budget sustained by a robust and diversified base of philanthropic support and increased earned revenue.



Goals

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We'll measure our success against specific goals and metrics tied to each of our four priorities. We'll work toward meeting these goals over the three years of our plan, beginning July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2023.

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1. Support public school leaders at all stages of their careers, in a variety of school models and settings.



Goals

1. Codify clearly defined pathways for leaders at all stages of their careers to participate in BES training.
2. Grow the number of leaders participating in our programs and services, and diversify participants in terms of the school models and settings in which they work.
3. Grow the expertise and build the capacity of our team to effectively support leaders in a variety of roles, school models, and settings.

2. Practice anti-racism in our work, and support leaders to practice anti-racism in their schools.



Goals

4. Build and retain a diverse, inclusive, thriving team.
5. Root all BES training in equity.
6. Prioritize continuous learning and evaluation of our internal and external strategies and decision-making around race equity.

3. Broaden our reach.



Goals

- 7. Build brand awareness.
- 8. Develop new partnerships and scale our presence in new cities.
- 9. Build a network of champions.

4. Sustain our work.



Goals

- 10. Strengthen and diversify BES revenue streams.
- 11. Ensure we have sustainable cost structures and pricing models for all programs and services.
- 12. Find operational efficiencies, while building and supporting a team with the capacity to achieve the objectives of our strategic plan.



Get Involved

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If you're inspired by this vision for the road ahead, let's talk about how we can work together.

You can reach us by email at partners@bes.org, on the web at bes.org, and on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook @BESleadership.

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