



Fellowship Applicant Toolkit

Tools and Tips to Navigate the Fellowship Process

[BES.ORG/FELLOWSHIP](https://bes.org/fellowship)

This BES Fellowship Applicant Toolkit is designed to support leaders who are committed to creating and sustaining excellent, equity-focused schools. Inside you will find clear guidance and practical resources to help you navigate the Fellowship application process. Whether you're early in your journey or preparing for next steps, this toolkit will help you share your leadership story, articulate your school vision, and understand what BES looks for in strong applicants.

FELLOWSHIP CANDIDATE PROFILE

WHO THRIVES IN THE BES FELLOWSHIP?

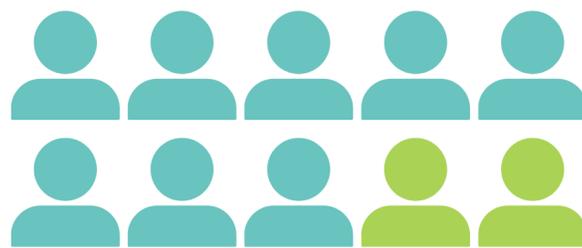
Overview

At BES, we partner with passionate, equity-focused leaders who bring deep instructional expertise and a commitment to expanding access to high-quality education. Our Fellows are experienced educators and school leaders driven to design, found, and lead excellent schools that reflect and respond to the communities they serve. Below is a snapshot of BES Fellows throughout the years.

Identity & Representation

The BES Fellowship is grounded in a commitment to equity and inclusive leadership. Each cohort is made up of individuals with diverse identities, lived experiences, and perspectives, essential to creating excellent, community-driven schools.

In the last 5 years, over 80% of BES Fellows identified as people of color.



(Data is based on Fellows selected for the 2020 - 2025 BES Fellowship Cohorts.)

Education

- Most Fellows hold a Master’s or Doctorate degree

Typical Experience

- 10+ years of instructional experience
- Have served as the Senior Leader in a school setting
- Bring 6+ years of managerial experience

What Makes a Strong BES Fellow?

- **Instructional Leaders** with a proven record of improving student achievement, especially in ELA and Math
- **Community-Rooted** individuals with strong local ties and a long-term (7+ years) commitment to serve
- **Equity-Driven Visionaries** dedicated to reimagining what’s possible for all students
- **Builders** ready to design, found, and lead high-quality, sustainable schools grounded in community needs

Connect With Us

We encourage all prospective applicants to engage with the BES Talent & Recruitment team by attending upcoming events, info sessions, or office hours. These opportunities provide valuable insights into the Fellowship and help determine if it’s the right fit for your leadership journey.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Professional Experience

- 8+ years of full-time work experience required (*10+ years strongly preferred*)
- 5+ years of experience in PreK–12 education settings
- 2+ years as an assistant principal, school leader, or equivalent role (*5+ years preferred*)
- 3+ years managing adults in a PreK–12 setting, including direct supervision and coaching of instructional staff

Instructional Leadership

- Demonstrates expertise in instructional strategy, data-driven instruction, and teacher development
- Delivers proven student outcomes through coaching, instructional leadership, and school-level impact

Connection to Community

- Resides in or has worked in the proposed region for at least 2 years (*3+ years preferred*)
- Brings deep personal or professional ties to the community they seek to serve
- Builds authentic, trust-based relationships with families and local stakeholders
- Commits to educational equity and expanding opportunity for under-resourced communities
- Sustains a long-term commitment (*7+ years*) to stay rooted in and accountable to the community

School Vision

- Aims to found and lead a high-quality, equity-centered, school that creates access and opportunity for students in under resourced communities
- Grounds school design in community voice, culturally responsive practices, and a relentless focus on student achievement and growth

CORE COMPETENCIES

The Fellowship selection process is rigorous, designed to deeply understand your leadership approach and your vision for a high-performing, community-rooted school. Beyond the minimum eligibility requirements, the process also assesses the following key leadership competencies:

DOMAIN 1: LEADERSHIP

Leadership: You have significant K–12 leadership experience and are prepared to lead a transformational school aligned with community needs. You have at least 8 years of total work experience and a minimum of 2 years of K–12 leadership experience managing other adults.

Results Driven: You have delivered meaningful results for students academically, socio-emotionally, and operationally. You set and uphold a high bar for excellence.

Effective Communicator: You communicate with clarity, presence, and conviction to build trust, inspire others, and advance your vision. You use both verbal and written communication to convey ideas clearly, tailor messages to different audiences, and demonstrate leadership presence and readiness.

DOMAIN 2: RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNITY

Community Knowledge & Investment: You have a deep and authentic connection to the community you aim to serve. You understand the local context and are committed to long-term engagement and building trust through asset-based, culturally competent relationships.

School Vision: You demonstrate a clear, compelling, and differentiated school model that is strategically aligned with the needs of the region. You understand the educational landscape and what is needed to bring your vision to life.

Inclusion: You prioritize equity by actively confronting bias, addressing systemic inequities, and designing schools and leadership practices that affirm and support all communities, particularly those historically marginalized.

DOMAIN 3: OWNERSHIP & DRIVE

Entrepreneurial Ownership: You demonstrate the mindset of someone who builds, initiates, and moves ideas forward. You have independently taken early action toward school founding and can respond to the real challenges of launching a school.

Resilience and Perseverance: You have shown determination, resilience, and the ability to stick with complex, long-term work. You persist through challenges, iterate in times of uncertainty, and remain committed to school founding even when the path is unclear.

Growth Mindset: You demonstrate humility, self-awareness, and a continuous desire to learn and grow. You value feedback and reflect on input without defensiveness, including from those with different lived experiences or positional authority.

BES FELLOWSHIP INTERVIEW GUIDANCE

Our most successful applicants come to the process prepared to speak about the following topics:

EDUCATION & CHARTER LANDSCAPE

Successfully navigating an often complex and challenging political climate and charter application process is essential for school authorization and eventual founding. Fellows must understand their local context, think entrepreneurially, and build strong relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, some of whom may hold opposing views.

Authorization Process: Strong applicants can speak to the charter application process in their region, including authorizing bodies and priorities, evaluation criteria, key dates, and important stakeholders.

Political Climate: Applicants should also understand the local charter landscape—recent board decisions, relevant news, supporters and opponents, concerns around saturation, and the broader political climate around school choice.

COMMUNITY NEED

A strong school model is rooted in a deep understanding of the community it serves. Fellows must demonstrate knowledge of the local district (s), neighborhoods, and student population, including demographics, academic outcomes, enrollment trends, and existing school models. The academic program should reflect the specific needs of the target students. BES believes excellent schools are embedded in and uplifted by their communities, drawing on local assets to support long-term success.

SCHOOL MODEL

Strong applicants propose school models rooted in anti-racism and equity. They prioritize rigorous academics, strong teacher development, and can clearly explain what makes their school model unique and why.

Key design elements are the innovative or distinctive components central to the school's success. These may include a specific academic focus, target student population, instructional approach, calendar or staffing structure, or other creative design choices. Applicants should be able to explain how their model meets an unmet need and stands out from other local options.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Our most successful applicants can speak to the student outcomes, both academic and non-academic, they are most proud of. They are able to cite specific data that illustrates their impact on student outcomes and achievement in your previous role(s). If they have not served in a K12 school-based position previously, they are able to reflect on other quantitative and qualitative outcomes that resulted from their work in a professional setting, and include data to illustrate their impact where possible.

FELLOWSHIP INTERVIEW GUIDANCE - STAR METHOD

To confidently share your story, highlight your impact, and help interviewers understand your skills in action, we recommend using the STAR Method.

The STAR Method is a structured way to answer interview questions that helps you clearly demonstrate your skills and experiences. It guides you to give concise, evidence-based responses that showcase your problem-solving abilities, leadership, and impact.



TIPS FOR STRONG STAR RESPONSES

- Keep each response brief (1-2 minutes)
- Focus on your contributions, even in team examples
- Use metrics or specific outcomes when possible
- Align your examples with the organization's values or competencies

SAMPLE STAR RESPONSE

S - Situation: When I began as Principal at Lincoln Middle School, our data showed a 20% gap in literacy proficiency between our general student population and English language learners.

T - Task: My goal was to close that gap by at least 10% within one academic year through targeted instruction and staff development

A - Action: I established a cross-functional literacy task force that included teachers, instructional coaches, and ELL specialists. Together, we reviewed student data, identified skill gaps, and designed a schoolwide literacy plan. I introduced biweekly professional learning communities focused on differentiated instruction and implemented a peer observation model to share effective strategies.

R - Results: By the end of the year, literacy proficiency among English Language learners increased by 14%, overall school proficiency rose by 8%, and teacher feedback and surveys reflected a 92% confidence rate in using data-driven instructional practices.

RECOMMENDED RESUME TEMPLATE

Name of BES Fellowship Applicant

000-000-0000 | email@gmail.com | LinkedIn.com/in/yourprofile | City, ST

EDUCATION

Doctorate of Education in [Concentration]

University Name | Year Completed

Master of Education in [Concentration]

University Name | Year Completed

Bachelor of Arts in [Major]

University Name | Year Completed

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Superintendent / Principal / School Network Leader

School/Network Name – City, ST

MM/YYYY – Present

- Drove 17% increase in ELA and 21% in Math proficiency over two years by implementing data cycles and evidence-based instructional strategies.
- Managed a \$3.2M school budget with 100% compliance and aligned resource allocation to academic and equity priorities.
- Supervised and developed a team of 35 staff, increasing teacher retention from 72% to 88% year-over-year.
- Reduced chronic absenteeism by 10% and out-of-school suspensions by 65% through implementation of restorative systems and student supports.
- Facilitated biweekly data meetings and professional development, increasing teacher effectiveness scores by 20% within one year.

Assistant Principal / Instructional Coach / Dean of Instruction

School/Network Name – City, ST

MM/YYYY – MM/YYYY

- Co-led curriculum alignment across 4 content areas, raising assessment performance by 15% across all grade levels.
- Trained and coached 18 teachers through weekly 1:1s and quarterly PD, leading to a 90% improvement rate on walkthroughs.
- Developed Tier II/III academic interventions, resulting in 30% of targeted students reaching grade level within two semesters.
- Supported ELL programming that improved language proficiency scores by 23% year-over-year.

English Language Arts Teacher

School Name – City, ST

MM/YYYY – MM/YYYY

- Taught middle school ELA with 94% of students meeting or exceeding growth targets on end-of-year benchmarks.
- Designed project-based learning units rooted in culturally relevant texts, increasing student engagement by 40% on survey data.
- Co-founded after-school writing and debate club, increasing student participation in extracurriculars by 60%.

LEADERSHIP & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2024 | **National Principal Academy Fellowship**, Relay GSE

2023 | **Harvard Certificate in School Management & Leadership**

2022 | **Leading Anti-Racist Schools**, UnboundEd

2021 | **Restorative Practices & Trauma-Informed Leadership**,