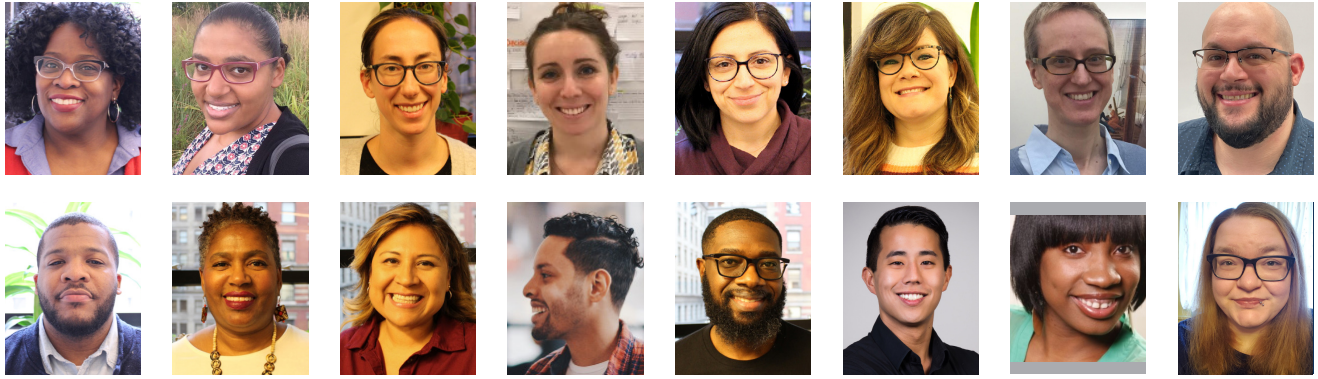




Eskolta Fellows Impact Report

2015-2022



Program Components



Leadership

Through study, sharing, and self-exploration, Fellows build their capacity to advocate for issues in their schools and lead the projects that will change their students' lives.



Community

The Fellows create a space of trust, critical dialogue, and joy to build a network of support and learning.



Criticality

The Fellowship is a call to action anchored in equity and critical conversations about race and identity.



Design

Fellows receive training in the methodology and practical tools needed for designing and implementing sustainable, equitable change in schools.

101 Fellows trained since 2015

For more information about the program and testimonials from past Fellows, visit eskolta.org/what-we-do/school-improvement-fellows/



Leadership through Community

Transforming our schools into spaces that truly welcome, celebrate, and support students—especially BIPOC students often intentionally marginalized by the system—is a collective effort.

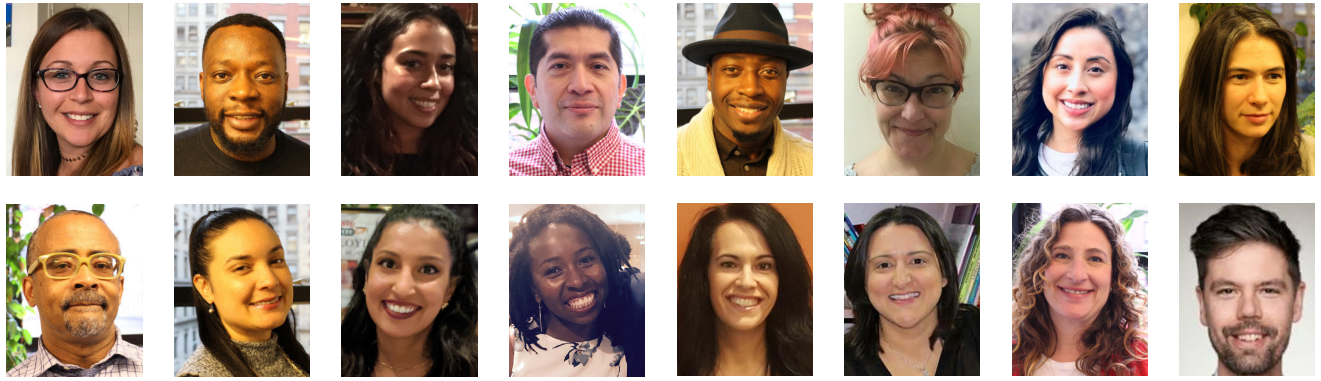
Successful change efforts are driven and maintained by the whole school community. The Eskolta Fellows Program offers talented educators the support, and tools needed to lead equitable change in their schools. Through our fellowship, teachers and counselors gain skills in facilitation, data-collection, and liberatory design while piloting a project in their schools.

The Eskolta Fellows began in 2015 with a small group of teacher leaders. The following year,

the NYC Department of Education's College Access for All (CA4A) office reached out to us to build the facilitation and coaching capacity of CA4A college counselors. From 2018-20, the programs ran simultaneously. Today, the Eskolta Fellows program supports both teacher leaders and counselors. We believe that those working directly with students, teachers, and counselors have the expertise and should be leading change efforts in their schools together. There is power in community, and the exchange of ideas between instructional and mental health/ counselor professionals is a vital part of the program's success.

"As I learned from Eskolta, we began to engage with this work by reading relevant academic literature about discipline in schools, in black and brown schools, how race and bias and our own backgrounds play a role, etc. We consulted with our restorative justice trainer on our work for feedback and created something that I think is pretty damn awesome! We shared it with students who gave feedback and input and it is all going to roll out/scale up next year. It is through my work with Eskolta and teaching me how to lead these types of initiatives, that helped me reinvigorate my staff for a cause they deemed important and was necessary to focus on."

—Alum



Leadership

Leadership is a learned skill. Fellows receive training in how to advocate, design, and pilot adult learning projects— including how to work with colleagues and get system-wide buy-in.

These new skills lead to new opportunities and many Fellows feel the program opens doors and clarifies what they'd like to do. We celebrate people who decide to move to a promoted role but believe cultivating these leadership skills is beneficial regardless of role.

"In the Fellows program, I learned how to pose questions and dilemmas to adults on a spectrum. I was able to start a more authentic conversation that was welcoming of the different places my colleagues found themselves in."

—Alum

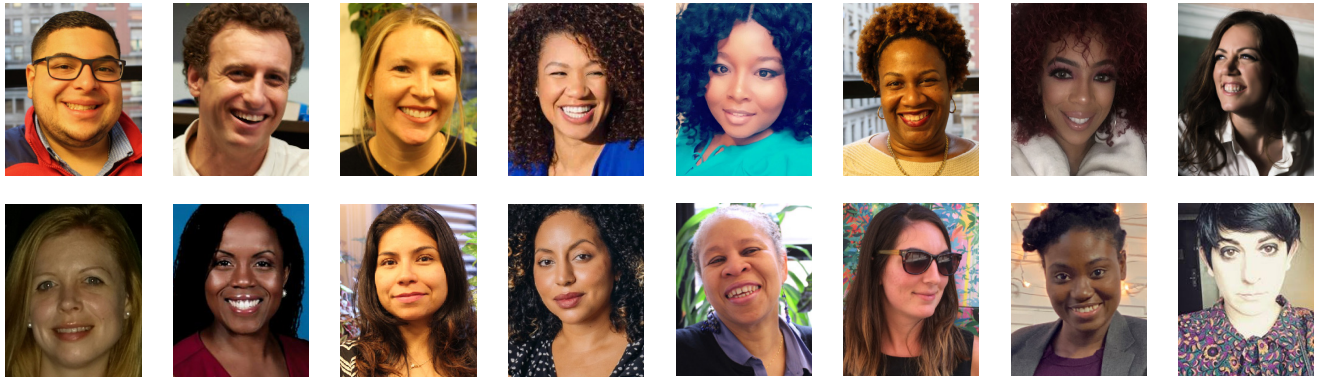
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of fellows surveyed had moved into a leadership position within schools, district, or nonprofits

Leadership Activities

We heard that 98% of respondents have taken on leadership responsibilities; for example...



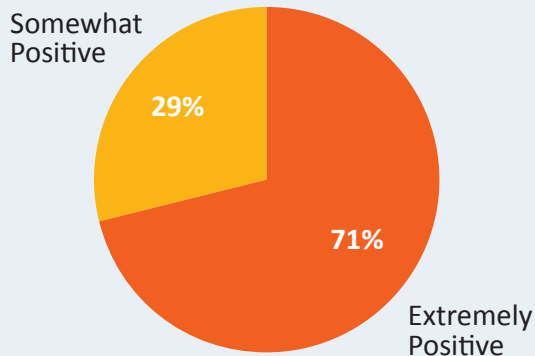


Community

Learning alongside a community of true peers is at the heart of our Fellowship.

Facilitators model a collaborative relationship that exemplifies trust, critical dialogue, creativity, and centering equity. Too often, educators work in silos in their schools. Through the Fellows, participants experience opportunities to share what they're doing, get feedback from others, and explore all the feelings that come when carrying out the work.

Perception of Being in Community with Educators From Other Schools



I was a Fellow when COVID hit and schools first closed. Our time together became safe spaces to talk about our struggles working with our students during a pandemic. Since that time I've switched schools and my role has changed but the lessons learned and relationships built with staff and other Fellows are my best memories."

—Alum

"I look forward to our Fellows meeting because I feel like it's one team where I can speak my truth and people will listen and people understand..."

—Emily, 2021–22 Fellow



Criticality

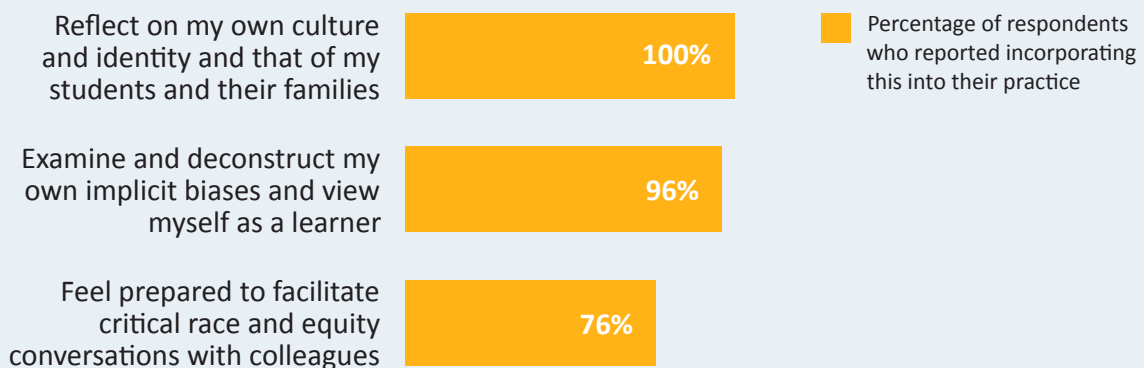
A critical mind understands the bigger picture. It thrives in context, questioning the status quo in order to navigate power and promote anti-oppression.

The Fellowship is rooted in self-reflection, exploration of equity-based frameworks, and critical conversations about race and identity. Those who complete the Fellows program report feeling prepared to have conversations about race and equity at their schools, and better equipped to serve their students.

"I have adopted more self-reflection when collaborating with colleagues. Providing the space to dismantle biases and preconceived notions creates candid and open conversation. When staff feel 'heard' they are more willing to adopt a growth mindset."

—Alum

Equity-Focused Behaviors





Design

Improving a complex ecosystem like our schools requires structure, not stabs in the dark.

Fellows learn the tools of continuous improvement and put them to use as they design, test, adapt, and measure the impact of a focus practice. This approach encourages Fellows to plan change mindfully, using data to inform adjustments and guide success.

"I really enjoyed looking at data and going directly to the students. I constantly ask for student opinions, feedback, and hold student focus groups to gather data. We have re-designed our interview/enrollment process based on their families' experiences."

—Alum

Design Activities

Draw on student voice to understand the problem from their perspective, uncover my assumptions, and get feedback from them


95%

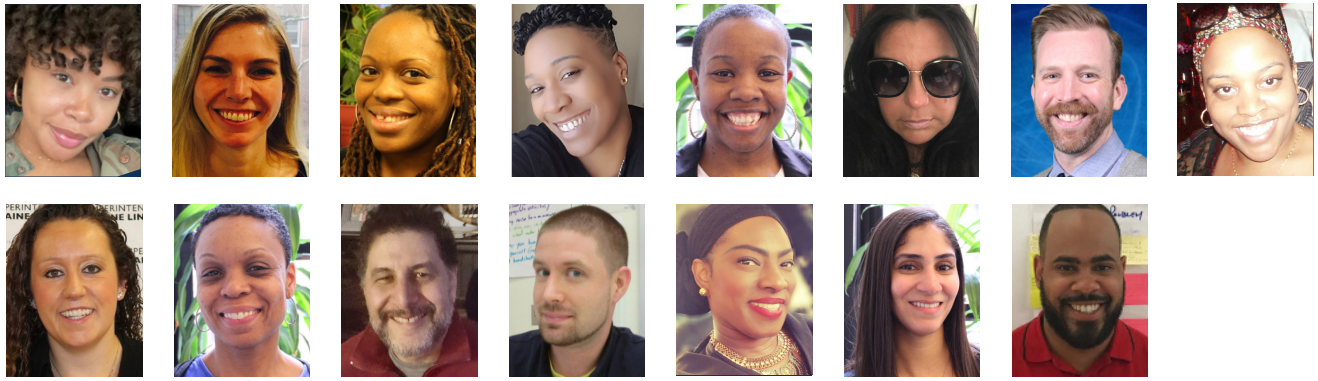
Gathering and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data through small scale measurements that can inform next steps

89%

Design activities that help teams to effectively reflect on practice

80%

 Percentage of respondents who reported incorporating this into their practice



The Future

The Fellows see great value in the program– but there is also room for improvement.

A powerful Alumni Network:

A community of educators is at the heart of our program. But we have work to do to make it stick. After leaving, almost 50% of respondents shared they never connect professionally with members of their cohort. We are building an Alumni Network to solve that gap. It will provide occasional professional development and peer learning opportunities, giving Fellows an opportunity to get a refresher on tools and provide feedback on the curriculum.

Expansion to other stakeholders:

We have heard again and again that the Fellows is a powerful educational experience. But right now it is limited to staff currently working in schools. We are working to expand the Eskolta Fellows model, building similar opportunities for everyone involved in educational improvement: from the students we serve to the district staff funding initiatives. We are in our second year of running a Youth Participatory Action Research Fellows for current transfer school students. We are also in the process of planning and piloting an Inclusive Leadership Fellowship for educational leaders. All offshoots are rooted in the same values that made the Fellows a success: community, criticality, leadership capacity, and thoughtful design.

Expansion to different cities:

We also hope to expand our reach geographically. As Eskolta expands our work to Boston and Washington, DC, we hope to expand the Fellows program to those cities as well. This year, we invited two Boston Network participants to join the virtual Fellows session. To ensure, each Fellows offshoot is responsive to the unique needs of the region, we are involving local staff members as co-facilitators, building their internal capacity to facilitate the program and our capacity to meet the needs of their regions.

Recruitment Process:

Community doesn't happen by accident, and getting it right requires outreach to the full diversity that exists in our educational system. We have made an effort to be more intentional about our recruitment process, especially in ensuring we have a mix of roles, such as counselors and teachers, tenures in the system, from up and coming to wise veterans, as well as drawing in the full range of social identities that define our schools. We know we can do this more effectively by widening our recruitment pool and efforts.

