

“YEP Voices: A Report on and by the Next Generation of Education Leaders” is the first national report from the Young Education Professionals (YEP), capturing the voice and opinions of more than 400 young education professionals from all sectors — policy, practice and research.

YEP’s mission has always been to support and connect the next generation of education leaders, from those in schools and non-profits to those in elected positions and other leadership roles. The *YEP Voices* survey, and this corresponding report, seek to amplify the perspectives, needs and general outlook of these education professionals at the beginning or mid-point of their careers.

What We Found

The “Potential Gap” Between Promising Reforms and Likelihood of Implementation

- Young education professionals believe that early education/pre-K and teacher preparation hold the most promise for impacting positive change for students and the education system.
- The three reforms with the biggest gaps between the promise they hold and the likelihood of being implemented (called the “potential gap”) were teacher preparation, school finance reform and higher education access and affordability.

Many Stops on the Career Pathway

- The majority (84.4 percent) of those surveyed have been at their current job or organization for three or less years.
- About a quarter of respondents plan to leave their organization or job within the next year, while about half see themselves staying for 1-5 years more. Only 11 percent see themselves staying at their current organization for more than five years.
- The most common answer to the question “Where do you see yourself in 10 years?” is in non-profit leadership (35.1 percent). This is the most common choice for those already working in policy and advocacy, as well as the second most common choice for those working in practice.
- The second most common response across all groups was “I don’t know,” demonstrating the uncertainty among many professionals in the early stages of their careers.

A Desire for Skills

- Young education professionals were split on the types of skills they most want or need to develop: leadership (30 percent), management (27 percent) and career development (23 percent).
- The most-desired skill was policy knowledge among those already in policy, those in the field (in practice) and those working in research.

Universal Agreement on the Value of Connecting Policy and Practice

- Nearly all respondents (99.4 percent) said it was “very or somewhat important” for those in the classroom and schools and those in policy and research to come together to discuss education reform. Not one respondent said this was “not very” or “not at all important.”
- Only 14.3 percent of those surveyed say they “very often” have opportunities “to engage with individuals working in a different part of the education sector,” although 47.3 percent reported that they do have “some” opportunities.