



The Bridges Collaborative

Six decades after *Brown v. Board of Education*, the promise of equal education for all remains elusive. The Bridges Collaborative—a new, first-of-its-kind school integration initiative powered by The Century Foundation—**aims to change that.**

Despite overwhelming evidence that integrated schools are better for all students, far too many American children still attend schools apart from their peers of different social, economic, and racial backgrounds. More than one-third of students attend schools with student bodies that are almost entirely white or nonwhite, and the federal government has failed to take an active role in promoting integration. Since the 1950s, progress has stalled and, in some cases, reversed.

The Bridges Collaborative seeks to overcome these barriers by reigniting a nationwide movement for integrated schools and diverse neighborhoods. The Collaborative will serve as a hub for practitioners from across the country. It will bring together leaders of school systems, charter schools, and fair housing advocates, and provide them the space and opportunity to learn from one another, build grassroots political support, and develop successful strategies for integration. In doing so, the Bridges Collaborative will bring us one step closer to realizing the promise of *Brown*.

During the national COVID-19 crisis, the Bridges Collaborative will:

- + Host virtual conversations and programming with practitioners, advocates, and researchers on topics of interest related to integration and relevant to our present circumstances:
 - + How should integration advocates be strategizing during COVID-19?
 - + What opportunities are there for students from different types of schools to get to know each other digitally during COVID-19 and share more about how their school experiences differ?
 - + What opportunities does the COVID-19 crisis present for reforming our educational system for the better and ensuring all students have the opportunity to attend high-quality, integrated schools?

As the national COVID-19 crisis abates and children return to physical school buildings, the Bridges Collaborative will:

- + Launch a cohort of 50 school districts, charter schools, and fair housing advocates who are involved in integration in their local contexts.
- + Feature exciting events, activities, and opportunities, such as:
 - + The opportunity to collaborate with districts, charter schools, and fair housing advocates who are committed to school integration from across the country through national and regional convenings.
 - + Access to workshops, modules, presentations, and resources from school integration experts.
 - + Financial support for travel and accommodations to national and regional convenings.
 - + Access to high-quality poll-tested messaging and communications resources for advancing school integration.
- + Host public forums that feature integration-related issues and national leaders
- + Release relevant research on racial and socio-economic integration
- + Make policy recommendations at the federal and state levels

The Collaborative will be led by Stefan Lallinger, formerly a Special Assistant to Chancellor Richard Carranza at the New York City Department of Education and a long-time teacher and principal in New Orleans, LA.

Contact

For inquiries about the Collaborative, prospective membership in the collaborative or simply to connect with the director, email Stefan Lallinger at lallinger@tcf.org.



FAQs About the Bridges Collaborative

What is the Bridges Collaborative?

The Bridges Collaborative is an initiative launched by The Century Foundation to push the national conversation on school integration by serving as a hub for practitioners from across the country who are engaged in the work of integrating schools and school systems. The Bridges Collaborative uniquely focuses on bringing practitioners from school systems, charter schools, and fair housing advocates together to advance integration.

What does the name “Bridges Collaborative” mean?

One of the great promises of integrated schools is building bridges between students, families, and educators of different racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The Bridges Collaborative also builds bridges across the district, charter, and housing sectors for the purpose of furthering the cause of school integration.

Why is there an explicit focus on including organizations from the housing community?

A great deal of school segregation stems from residential segregation, so housing policy is school policy. School integration advocates in the fields of housing and education often have conversations in isolation from one another, when in fact, there is great potential for partnership and learning across sectors. We are excited to welcome our housing partners to the Collaborative.

Why is there an explicit focus on including charter schools?

In many parts of the country, charter schools and school districts operate separately from one another and do not collaborate as much as they could, particularly on issues of school integration. We’re excited to foster collaboration across charters, districts, and housing partners. Also, there is a common misconception that charters are a primary driver of segregation. While charter schools can and should do more to integrate, a small but growing number of diverse-by-design charter schools are showing an innovative path forward on integration.

The Cohort

What is the Bridges Collaborative cohort?

The Bridges Collaborative Cohort is a group of approximately 50 organizations (district, charter, and housing) committed to school integration in their own communities from states across the country that will develop expertise in messaging and communications, collaborate on problems of practice, and strategize on how to make their schools more integrated.

Who is eligible to join the cohort? How do you join?

We plan to launch a cohort of about 50 school districts, charter networks, and fair housing advocates in the coming months. The exact timing will be heavily dependent on developments with COVID-19, as we strive to be responsive to the needs of students, families, and educators across the country. When the time comes, we will release applications and select the cohort based on the strength of the application submitted. When applications are released, we will be sure to send an email to everyone on our list and post it to our website. A good first step would be to make sure we have you on our list. You can add your name on our website: <https://tcf.org/bridges-collaborative/> or email Stefan Lallinger at lallinger@tcf.org.

How long is the cohort experience?

The Bridges Collaborative cohort will participate in a two-year arc of collaboration and support that will feature three national convenings and a series of regional convenings, as well regular opportunities for online collaboration and access to trainings and resources from The Century Foundation.

What are the benefits of membership in the cohort?

Members will have the opportunity to collaborate with leaders from districts, charter schools, and fair housing organizations from across the country who are committed to school integration; access workshops, modules, presentations, and resources from school integration experts; and learn from high-quality poll-tested messaging and communications resources for advancing school integration.

Does being a part of the cohort cost money? Is there financial support?

There is no cost for the organizations that have been accepted as cohort members. There will be some limited financial support available for travel to convenings and accommodations. More details are provided to organizations that are accepted as cohort members.

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