HOW SCHOOL-REFORM FRIENDLY ARE AMERICA'S BIG CITIES?

Survey of National Respondents

This survey is part of a study conducted by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute in collaboration with the Education Policy Studies Division at the American Enterprise Institute. The lead investigator is AEI's Rick Hess.

The purpose of the study is to answer this question:

How receptive are America's major cities to education entrepreneurs, including but not limited to operators of high-quality new schools (especially charter schools) and developers of "tools" that enhance school functioning?

The study will rate the nation's largest cities on how hospitable they are to education innovators. It will provide advice to mayors, school boards, business leaders, and others who want to make their own communities more edu-innovation friendly.

We need your insights and perspective. We're sending you this survey because you are a member of a national entrepreneurial organization in the K-12 education-reform space; we deeply appreciate your willingness to answer our questions. The survey covers three broad topics as they relate to educational innovation: reform climate, practical considerations, and district perceptions.

Your input is vital in helping us understand how these factors hinder or enhance innovation in the cities of interest. **The survey should take no longer than 15-20 minutes to complete and results will be treated as confidential. There will be no reporting of individual responses.** We'll be happy to share the final report with you upon its release (tentatively scheduled for spring 2010).

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Stafford Palmieri at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute at 202-223-5452 or spalmieri@edexcellence.net

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

NATIONAL ECOSYSTEMS SURVEY *(administered online)*

Directions: You may be unable to answer every question and you should respond "Don't know" where applicable. Please mark one response for each line. You will not be able to save your work and return to it later, so please set aside roughly 10-15 minutes to complete the survey in a single session.

Please select and respond for as many cities as you feel comfortable doing so (i.e., you have enough direct *or* indirect knowledge to warrant response). Once you've made your selections, you will respond for each of these cities throughout the survey. In some cases, you'll be asked to respond about the primary district rather than the city itself. We have indicated which district is the "primary school district" for each city next to the city's name.

Albany - City School District of Albany
Austin - Austin Independent School District
Baltimore - Baltimore City Public Schools
Boston - Boston School District
Charlotte - Charlotte-Mecklenberg Schools
Chicago - Chicago Public Schools
Columbus - Columbus City Schools
Dallas - Dallas Independent School District
Denver - Denver Public Schools
Detroit - Detroit Public Schools
El Paso - El Paso Independent School District
Fort Worth - Fort Worth Independent School District
Gary - Gary Community School Corporation
Houston - Houston Independent School District
Indianapolis - Indianapolis Public Schools
Jacksonville - Duval County Public Schools
Los Angeles - Los Angeles Unified School District
Memphis - Memphis City Schools
Milwaukee - Milwaukee Public Schools
New Orleans - Recovery School District
New York - New York City Public Schools
Newark - Newark Public Schools
Philadelphia - Philadelphia City School District
Phoenix - Mesa Public Schools
San Antonio - San Antonio Independent School District
San Diego - San Diego Unified School District
San Francisco - San Francisco Unified School District
San Jose - San Jose Unified School District
Seattle - Seattle Public Schools
Washington - District of Columbia Public Schools

Background

Which of the following best describes the sector in which you primarily work?

Charter schools 1

District schools 2

Philanthropy 3

Educator recruitment and preparation 4

Educational tools, programs, and other services (e.g., curriculum, instruction, data, etc.) 5

Other, Please specify:

I. Reform Climate

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements for each respective city?
It is easy for nontraditional providers to establish operations in this city.

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

The school district generally promotes individuals based on talent and skill, not because they have been there a long time.

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

District and state policies are conducive to hiring nontraditional educators and leaders to staff schools.

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

Leaders in this city (inside or outside the district) actively seek non-public funding (e.g. from philanthropists, venture capitalists, corporations etc.) to support innovative programs.

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

The mayor and/or other municipal leaders help nontraditional providers overcome local obstacles or district resistance (e.g., by providing resources, making phone calls on their behalf, clarifying rules).

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

How this city uses outcomes and metrics to police quality has helped rather than hindered my organization's operations.

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement for each entity?

[Entity] is willing to spend reasonable amounts of political capital to support nontraditional providers and advance potentially controversial reform ideas (e.g. performance-based pay, charter schools, distance learning, and alternative licensure).

ENTITY	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
A. The mayor	1	2	3	4	5	6
B. Other civic leaders	1	2	3	4	5	6
C. Business community	1	2	3	4	5	6
D. Philanthropic community	1	2	3	4	5	6

[Repeat for each city for which the respondent indicated familiarity]

II. Practical Considerations

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

There is a deep local talent pool of potential employees for entrepreneurs considering operations in this metro area.

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

It is relatively easy to *recruit* talent and individuals to move to this city.

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please note that these questions refer to the primary district in each respective city.

There is an entity or individual *inside* the district that helps nontraditional providers with at least one of the following: finances, facilities, and/or regulatory guidelines. *(Please answer yes, no, or don't know.)*

CITIES	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3

There is an entity or individual outside the district that helps nontraditional providers with questions about finances, facilities, and/or regulatory guidelines. *(Please answer yes, no, or don't know.)*

CITIES	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3

To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statement? Funding is readily available for nontraditional providers from the following sources: philanthropy, public dollars, private investors.
(Please indicate on a 1-6 scale whether your strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither disagree nor agree (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5), or don't know (6).)

CITIES	PHILANTHROPY	PUBLIC DOLLARS (CITY, STATE, OR FEDERAL	PRIVATE INVESTORS
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	[1-6 scale drop down menu]	[1-6 scale drop down menu]	[1-6 scale drop down menu]

III. Perceptions of the District

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please note that these questions refer to the primary district in each respective city.

a. District leaders are accessible and respond in a timely manner when dealing with nontraditional providers.

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

In my experience, it is possible to negotiate purchasing agreements and other contracts in this district in a timely and predictable manner.

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

The district is focused on pursuing philanthropic dollars that advance its strategy rather than allowing the pursuit of dollars to blur its focus.

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

The local teachers' union wields substantial political influence over district decisions.

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

In general, considerable attention is paid to quality control in this district (e.g., failing district-authorized charter schools are shut down; data are used in a feedback loop; etc.).

CITIES	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
Automatically populate list of cities/primary school districts for which respondents indicated familiarity	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please add any additional comments you may have.

Thank you for your time and cooperation. Please press "submit" below to complete the survey.