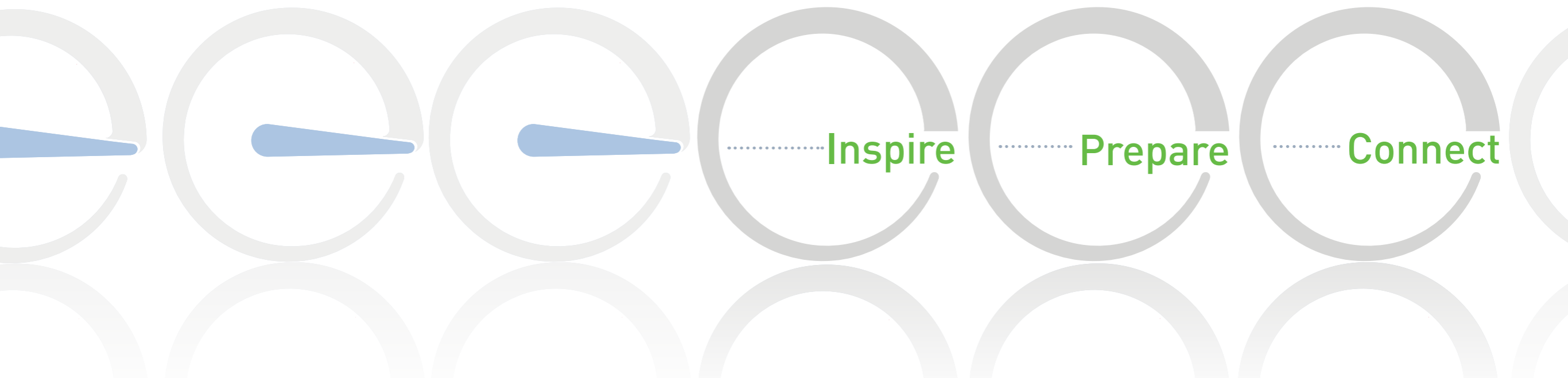


MAP *the* GAP

Confronting The Leadership Talent Gap in
The New Urban Education Ecosystem



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The
WALTON FAMILY
FOUNDATION



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INTRODUCTION

Map the Gap

The U.S. system of urban public schooling is undergoing the most significant and exciting structural transformation of the last 100 years. New models and a laser focus on results and human capital have created proof points around the country, showing us that closing the urban student achievement gap is not just a dream, but a reality. These exciting breakthroughs are being fueled by some of America’s most talented, innovative, and civically minded men and women.

This report finds that as demand for new, autonomous and innovative schools begins to snowball, there is a real threat of a leadership talent gap—and talent is the scarce resource that could define the success or failure of this hope-inspiring movement.

How exactly did we get here? By the early 1990s, after decades of failed attempts to dramatically improve the performance of struggling urban school districts, many leading educators and policymakers began to think anew—and with growing boldness—about reform.

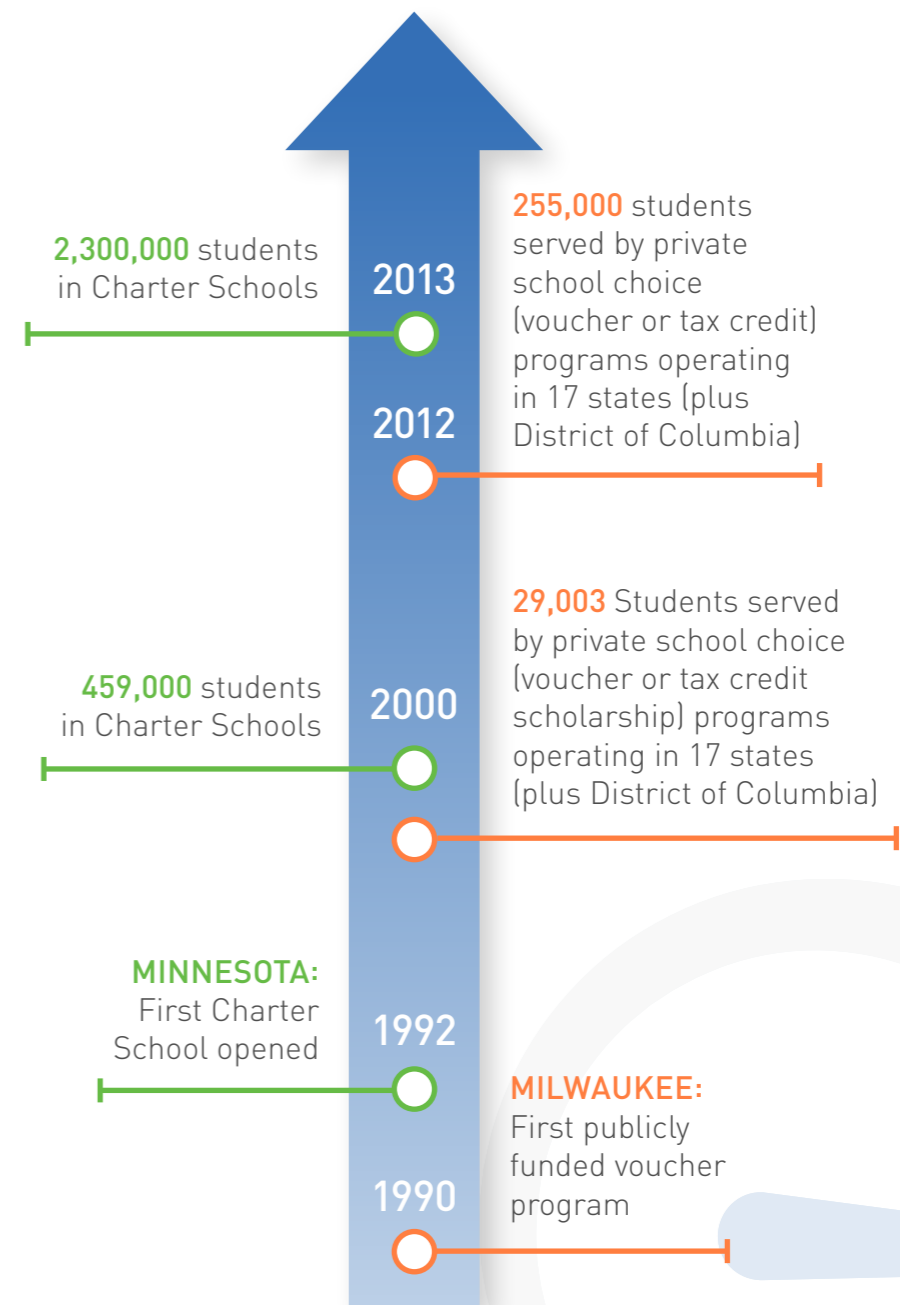
“...and talent is the scarce resource that could define the success or failure of this hope-inspiring movement.”

The energy came from a series of seemingly unrelated but interestingly concurrent events. Minnesota’s charter school law opened the door for educators and other professionals to start and operate new and different public schools independent of old rules and structures. Milwaukee’s publicly funded private school scholarship program enabled students to choose from among a wider array

of schools operated by an expansive range of organizations. Scholar Paul Hill argued in favor of “contracting” out the operation of traditional district-run schools, which would further diversify educational options and show that the district could oversee, instead of directly manage, a range of innovative, alternative programs. The emergence and proliferation of magnet schools and inter- and intra-district choice programs

Timeline of EDUCATION REFORM

“The number of charter schools nationwide has nearly **quadrupled in a just over a decade**”



KEY

FINDINGS

Schools and education organizations will need **additional capacity** and resources to adequately onboard, train, and **retain top talent**.

Talent is required at **every level** and functional area, with the **highest demand** for **business operations, executive leadership, and data roles**.

The education reform sector will need to fill **32,000 senior and mid-level** (non-instructional) talent roles by **2023**.

(based on the 50 largest US cities)

New roles require an increasingly complex set of **cross-competencies** (knowledge, skills, and attributes), yet most organizations lack sophisticated understanding of those needs.

While some **existing talent** in the sector can be trained, **organizations must look outside** to attract the volume of **skilled and experienced talent**.

across the country provided low-income families with a greater say over where their children attended school.

Though at first these reforms seemed to be only marginally related, as they grew and spread from coast to coast, it became clear that these were threads woven into a single fabric—**the creation of a new sector of urban public education defined by school choice, freedom to innovate, more autonomy for school leaders, and a focus on results through accountability**.

We anticipate that what we will refer to as the “autonomous and accountable public schools sector” will ultimately come to define the delivery of urban schooling. The future school district will be a network of different categories of schools, many, if not most, with a high degree of autonomy over their budgets, staffing, curriculum, schedules, and more, in return for high levels of accountability for student outcomes.

Chartering, which generates such schools and networks, has produced some of America’s best inner-city educational results, showing that all types of students can perform

and succeed. This growing sector, we believe, provides the clearest examples of the talent needs that will likely evolve over the next decade, as states and cities come to appreciate the benefits of public schools based on accountability, autonomy, and parental choice. (We also count in our study those traditional district schools that are providing more autonomy and accountability today as well as publicly-paid voucher programs that create slots in a growing number of private schools.)

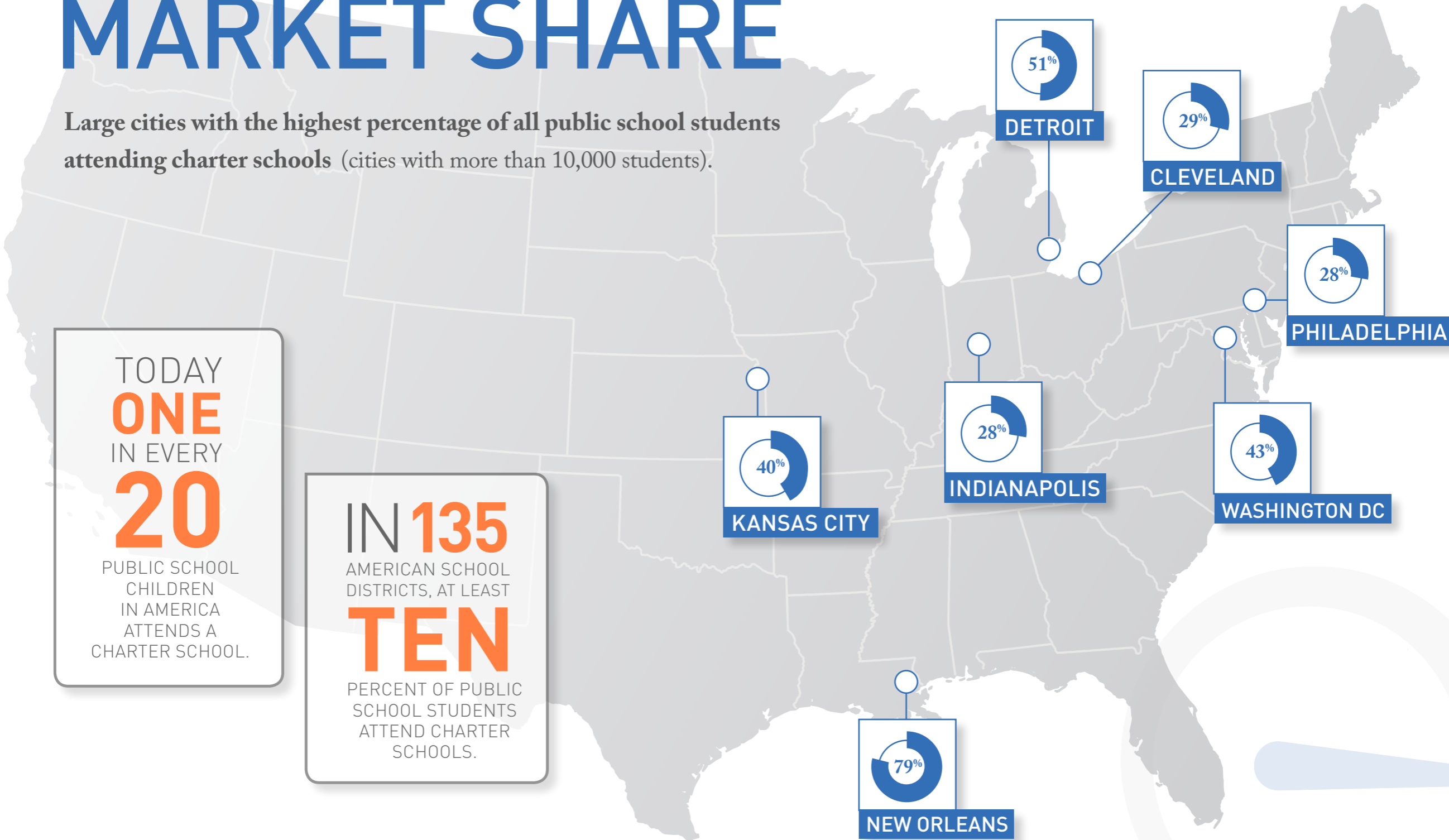
“Map The Gap” was launched to quantify the demand for talent required for senior- and mid-level (non-teaching) positions across the education reform ecosystem and raise awareness of career opportunities beyond the classroom. In doing so, we have identified the pressing need for more individuals to enter and rise in this particular side of the education field, the extraordinarily vibrant professional environments they’ll find, and the enormously positive influence they can have on the lives of disadvantaged children.

TOP CHARTER CITIES *by* MARKET SHARE

Large cities with the highest percentage of all public school students attending charter schools (cities with more than 10,000 students).

TODAY
ONE
IN EVERY
20
PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN IN AMERICA ATTENDS A CHARTER SCHOOL.

IN **135**
AMERICAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AT LEAST
TEN
PERCENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTEND CHARTER SCHOOLS.



From "A Growing Movement" National Alliance of Public Charter Schools, 2013.

MAPPING THE NEW ECOSYSTEM

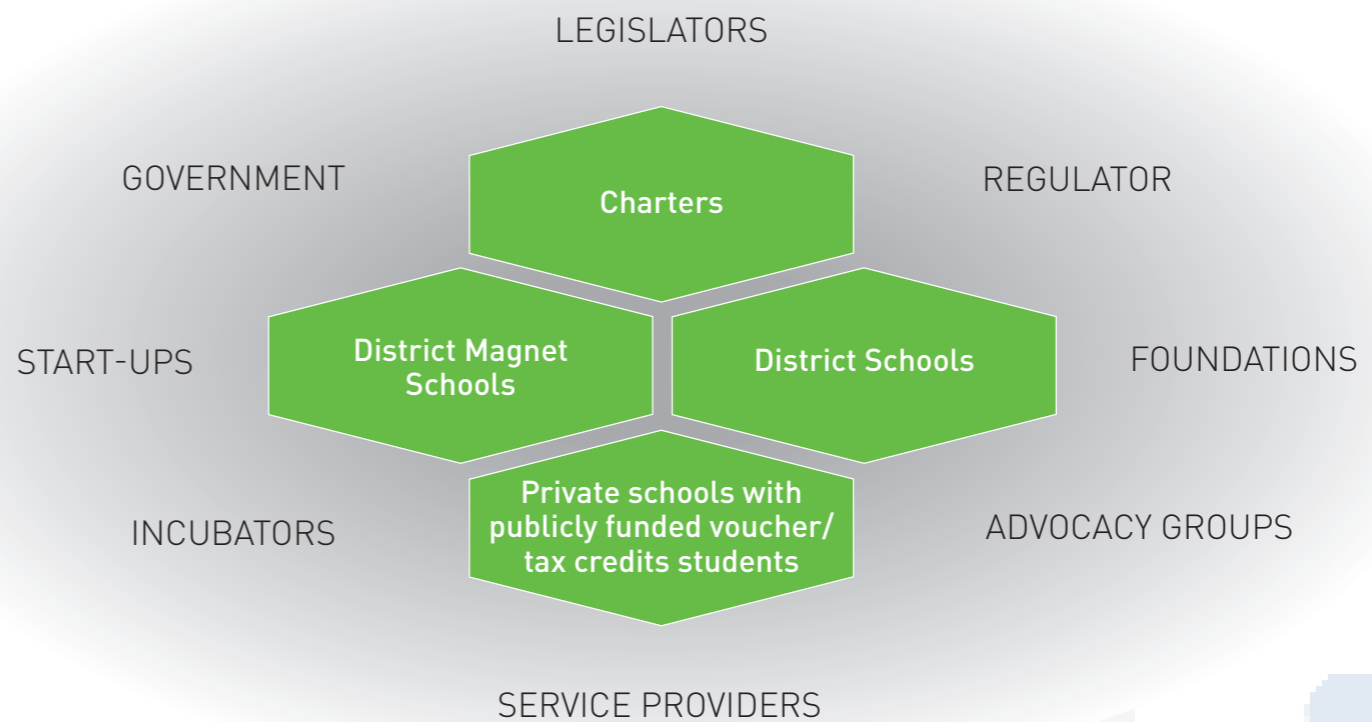
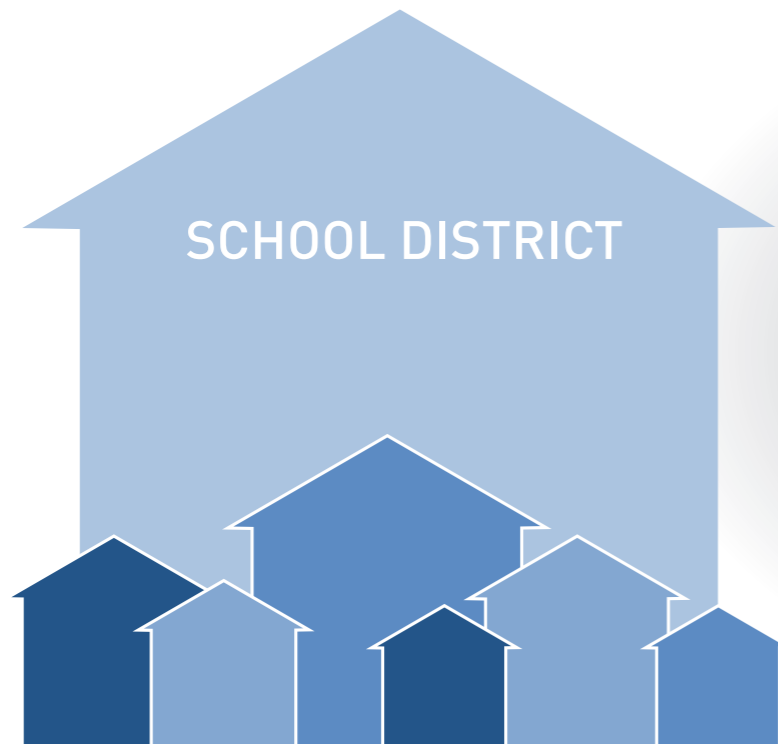
What does the new urban education ecosystem look like?

The key to understanding how the new urban school sector is evolving is to look first at the ecosystem supporting independent public schools in many cities today. When roughly 10% of students in a city attend autonomously run public schools, several types of governmental, non-profit, for profit supports spring up to serve the needs of these schools and families. At this point, school leaders have, in effect, left the “mother ship” of the traditional school district, for a largely independent management model. They are no longer part of a bureaucracy, responding up the chain to a series of supervisors.

They are startups, surrounded by an entrepreneurial set of organizations run by new leaders that have emerged to support them.

These stand alone schools, school management organizations, and the vibrant ecosystem supporting them, want and need professionals from diverse backgrounds—those who can navigate spreadsheets, manage multimillion-dollar budgets, plan for strategic growth, design effective technology approaches, start new organizations, raise money, navigate politics, and more.

From Mother Ship to Ecosystem



HOT JOB TYPES BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

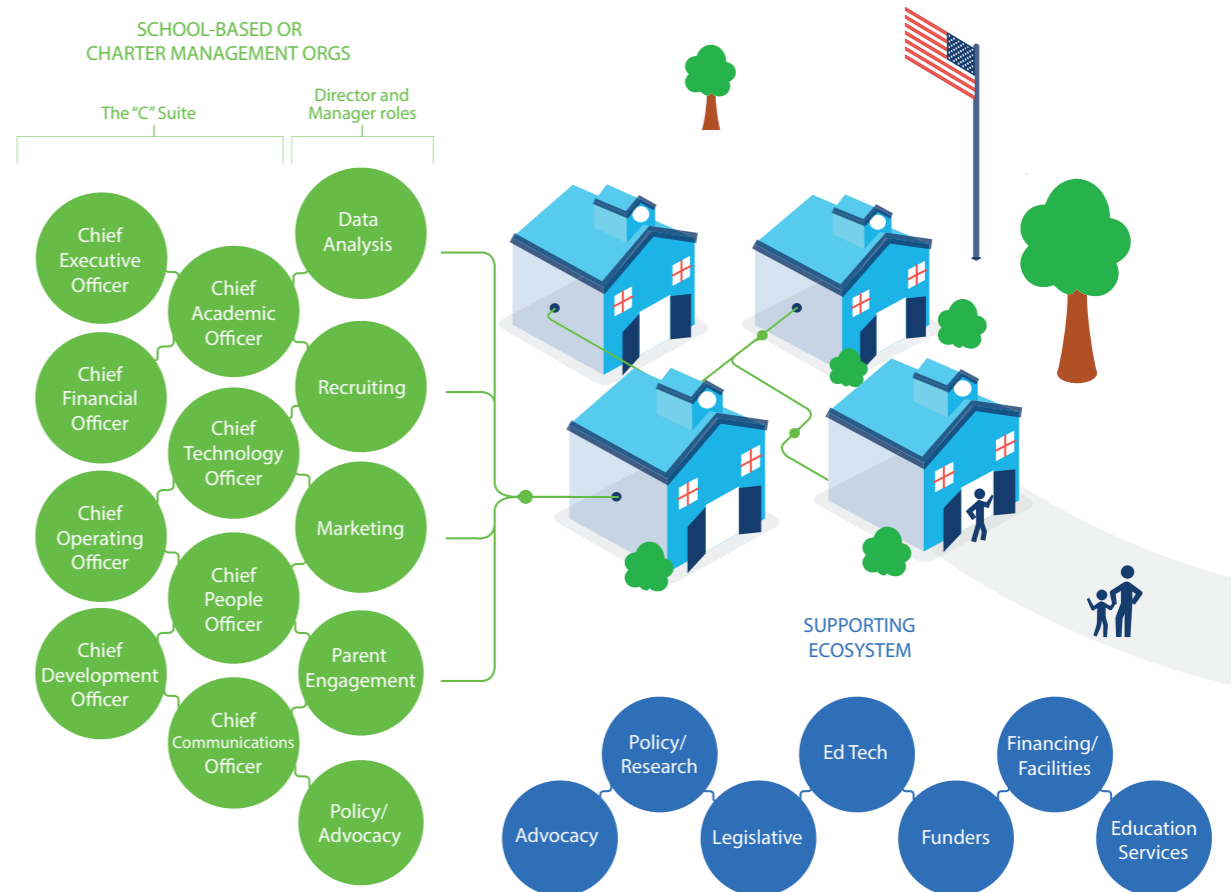
TEN YEAR PROJECTED GROWTH

ADVOCACY/OUTREACH	263%
AUTHORIZING	223%
MARKETING	223%
POLICY	255%
PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	223%
DATA /ANALYTICS	222%
DEVELOPMENT / COMMUNICATION	149%
INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING	303%
PRINCIPAL SUPPORT	142%
PRODUCT/ SERVICE MANAGEMENT	142%

The communities that have evolved in cities like Washington, DC, New Orleans, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Denver, and Boston are close-knit and supportive, as cross-functional teams work in support of a sharp focus on improving school quality for students. In many ways, they share the creative, accelerated, and opportunity-driven feel and energy which can be found in high-tech startup communities.

The organizational types range from for-profits, non-profits, start-ups, and consultancies that support teachers, administrators, facilities, curriculum, professional development, technology, school incubation, advocacy, and more. Interestingly, some of these startups have evolved to serve traditional school districts as well.

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?



This blossoming ecosystem offers a growing number of opportunities for “career-switchers” that didn’t exist a decade ago. These new roles combine purpose and meaning with the hard and soft skills that career-switchers develop in other sectors. They are high-level positions requiring experienced leaders and managers who can bring their skills to bear on the challenges facing urban schools.

Similarly, talented teachers who want to spread their wings in management or scale their personal impact now have a much broader set of opportunities, because teaching is always valued as the most core of competencies in this entire field. We do not discount the importance of pedagogy and teaching experience. Potential leaders with these profiles should be handled like gold. There just are not enough to fill the coming gap, and the increasingly complex ecosystem needs many additional senior level skill sets.

THE TALENT GAP

Where are we today, and where will we be by 2023?

The Talent Gap

By 2023 there will be a talent gap of approximately 32,000 people in mid- and senior-level roles in the urban education reform ecosystem across the 50 largest cities in the nation, assuming the autonomous and accountable school sector continues to grow at the average rate over the past ten years, 7.3% annually. That number includes state and local government and regulators who oversee specific policies and implementation related to these schools, as well as the independent support ecosystem. When we add school level teachers and principals, this gap grows to over 200,000 people.

The Talent Required

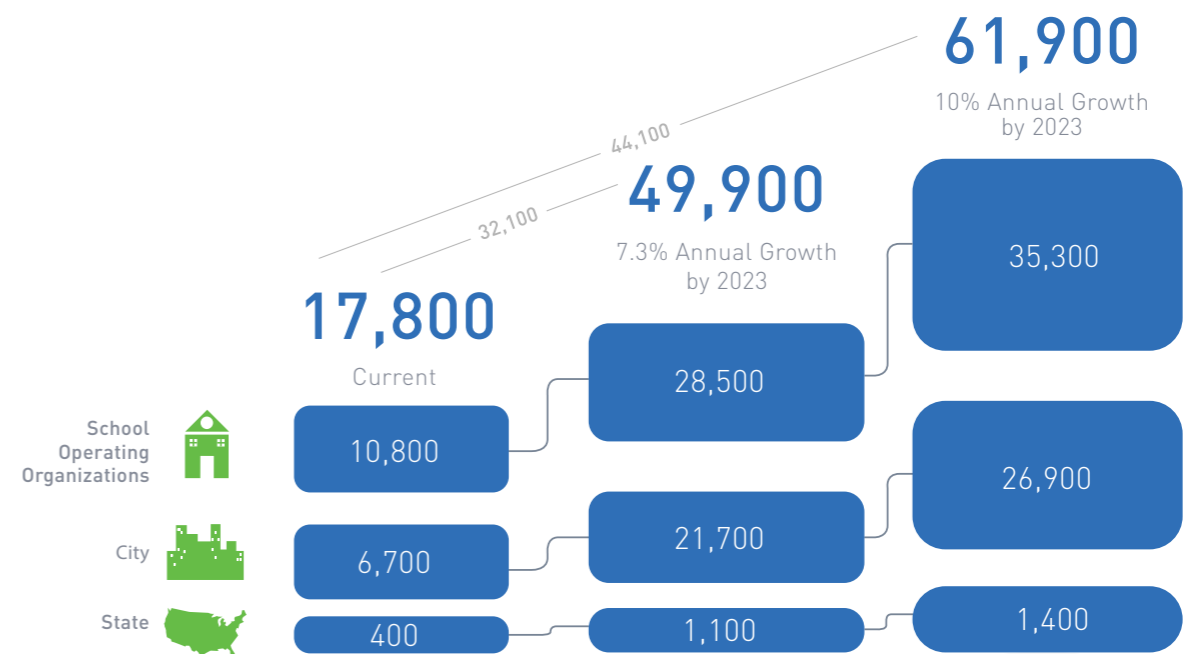
Expertise in areas such as business, finance, operations, management, human capital, product and service management, marketing, and more (in both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors) will be critical. In fact, in an average large city, which we estimate will serve approximately 40,000 students in autonomous and accountable schools in 2023, we anticipate the need for approximately 600 people—nearly 400 more individuals than currently work in existing ecosystem organizations. In a larger urban area like New York City, the number is a daunting 3,900. Of these roles, more than half will require experience in business, finance, operations, communications, and data and analytics.

This report takes perhaps a controversial stand in asserting that we should recruit our best “sector-switcher” talent for these schools that are moving beyond the mother ship. And similarly, that we should steer our in-house “rising stars” to roles where they build the competencies to grow this sector to its fullest potential. Experience has taught us that where we place talent matters enormously. Leadership and fellowship programs have demonstrated that sector-switchers in particular thrive better in more flexible, entrepreneurial education roles. *(Continued on page 10)*

Experience has taught us that where we place talent matters enormously.

HELP WANTED: 32,100 LEADERS

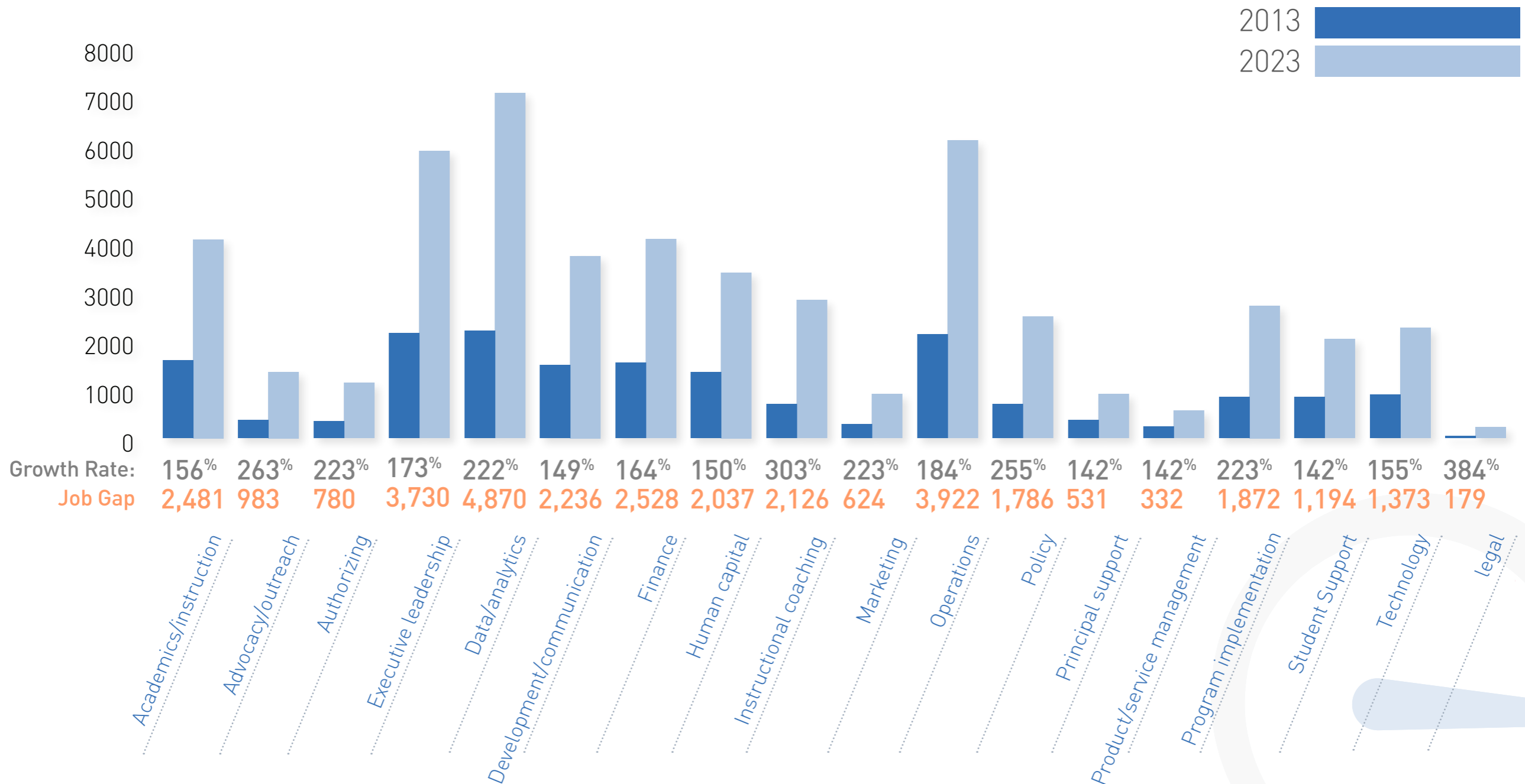
Within the next decade, at least 32,100 net new leaders and managers will be required to maintain the growth of the autonomous/accountable public school sector.



*A total of 170,000 teachers and school leaders are needed over the next ten years

TALENT GAP BY 2023

Total Jobs By Role



*Only includes “autonomous and accountable” ecosystem and school central offices, not teachers and principals.

TOUGHEST HIRING CHALLENGES:

Key talent insights from growing school management organizations

We asked four of the nation's most successful and prominent school network leaders to weigh in on the talent it takes to grow high-performing inner-city schools, and to look into the future of urban education talent. Their responses were remarkably aligned, explaining why a new push for human capital is needed, and demonstrating why this field should be so attractive to a range of professionals.

WHAT THEY SAID...

DACIA TOLL:
Achievement First

RYAN HILL:
KIPP'S TEAM

PRESTON SMITH:
Rocketship

EVAN RUDELL:
Uncommon Schools

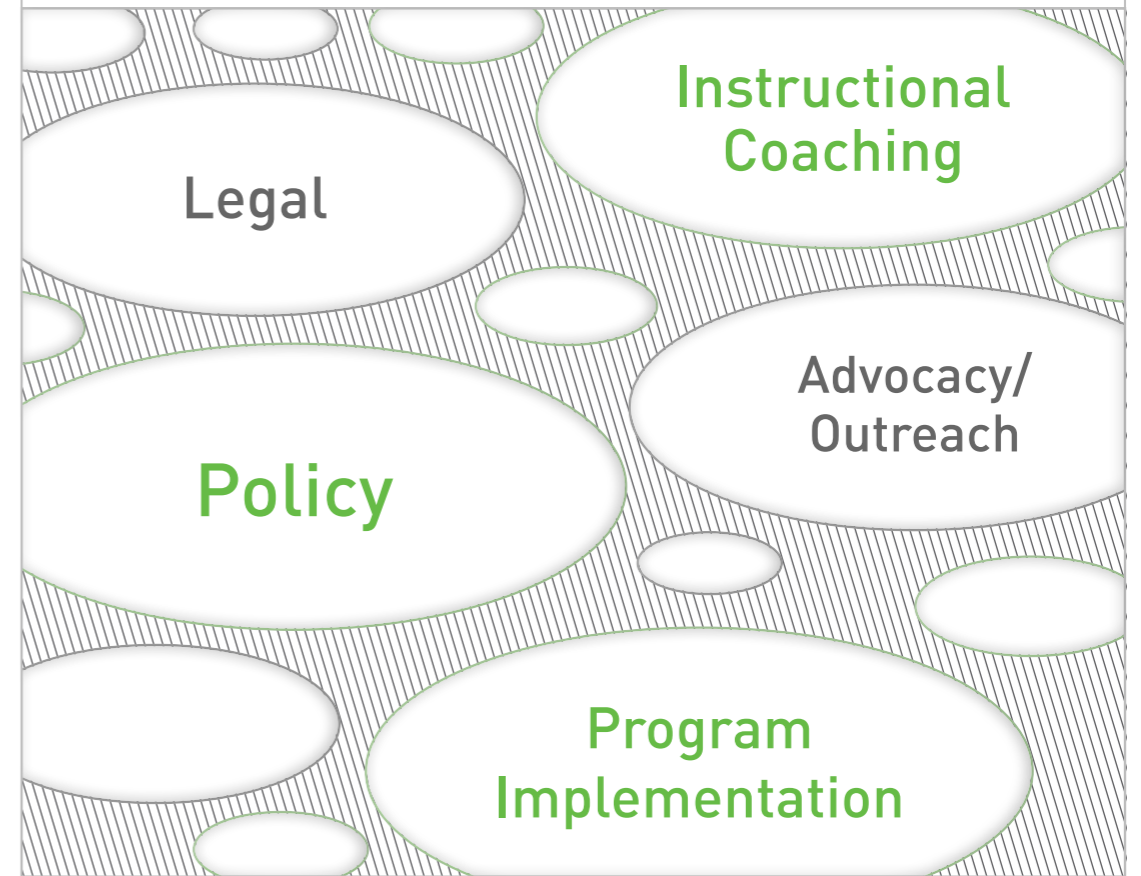
“Organizations need high-quality depth in the finance area. Things get really complex, really fast.”

“Leading organizations in the field have made the shift in mindset from managing a traditional (and transactional) human resources function to talent management and we need leaders who think that way.”

“I would probably put systems and operations at the top of the list, because the field has a limited pool of people with experience in expanding and managing complex organizations.”

“The regional superintendent role is probably the hardest and most critical to fill – people who have run high-performing schools are now able to coach and develop others to do the same challenging work.”

FIVE FAST GROWING ROLES THAT MIGHT SURPRISE YOU



“Working for an investment bank or law firm, you can do a lot of good things, but you can never know what it feels like to watch a kid who society has written off walk across a graduation stage because you were there for him.”

-Ryan Hill, Founder and Executive Director of TEAM Charter Schools

Core Competencies

One key to understanding evolving talent needs is to map the competencies required for roles in school management organizations and the broader ecosystem. We summarize the trends borne out by 40 sector leader interviews in identifying the cross-cutting soft skills that all sector professionals require if they hope to progress on a leadership track. Another trend worth noting is that roles in the C-Suite of high functioning non-profits are becoming more cross-functional as they become more complex. Wider “range of motion” is required for managers as a function of sector growth, competition, regulation, fundraising requirements, technology, and evolving management best practices.

We found that while many organizations have created general competency priority lists like this to inform their recruiting strategies, few have used these in hiring for specific positions.

Fewer still are helping employees develop these skills once they are hired. As the sector grows and learns more about what it takes to be successful, organizations would do well to map these competencies at a more detailed level to help in their evaluation of a candidate’s fit for a specific role. More attention to this area will also help an organization define what training or coaching an individual might need to build necessary competencies for desired career tracks.

SECTOR-WIDE “MUST HAVE” COMPETENCIES

We asked more than 40 leading executives of charter schools, CMOs, and the ecosystem of organizations supporting them, which competencies were essential for talent to thrive in their organizations:

1 CULTURAL FIT: A deep **passion and commitment to education** as a lever for social change, often demonstrated by a “**whatever it takes**” **mindset**.

2 STRATEGIC MINDSET: An ability to **see and articulate the big picture**, to connect the dots across disparate information sources, and maintain **focus on strategic goals** while pro-actively applying critical thinking and problem-solving skills to address implementation hurdles along the way.

3 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION: An ability to **communicate complex ideas** effectively in person and in writing

4 PRIORITIZATION: An ability to **process and assign relative value to significant volumes of work** at a rapid pace of change

5 RESULTS ORIENTATION: An ability to **set and manage to clear, actionable goals** and apply the principles of **continuous improvement** to increase impact over time.

6 INNOVATION MINDSET: An ability to **think beyond existing constraints or traditional approaches**, to re-frame problems, to rapidly **test ideas and then expand** them when they show promise and to **design creative solutions** with the end-user in mind

7 RELATIONSHIP-CENTERED: An ability to **build trusting, collaborative relationships** with a diverse set of internal and external stakeholders.

THE ROAD AHEAD: FILLING THE GAP

How do we confront this challenge?

The evolution of the new system of schools and its implications for human capital are both profound. The landscape of urban education will look very different a decade from now, and we will need more and different types of professionals to bring about and sustain this shift. We believe the four most important steps towards achieving this are the following:



Help Individuals Become “Sector Ready”

Current pipelines are not producing enough management talent. More mid and senior-level professionals must be aware of the opportunities in urban education and find help with pathways into the sector and support for retention. Individuals need to receive:

- Clear expectations for specific position responsibilities
- Training on sector-specific knowledge and skills
- Coaching on career transitions and career pathing
- For ‘sector switchers,’ we need to help individuals understand and prepare for the kinds of roles and the unique culture of the education sector
- For ‘rising stars,’ we need to provide clearer career paths and the professional development and career coaching to help navigate their careers



Help Organizations Become “Talent Ready”

Ecosystem, school and school management organizations should be very intentional about attracting diverse talent pools and providing adequate supports:

- Recruiting the right talent: Developing clear and specific competency frameworks for each position
- On-boarding new talent appropriately through relevant knowledge, culture, and skill training
- Retaining talent through career coaching, career pathing, and mentorship
- Collaborate across the sector to ensure that talent have exposure to the full range of opportunities and learning communities that exist
- Be more intentional about providing leadership development for the highest potential talent to ensure they are retained



Engage City Leadership

As cities approach a 10% autonomous public school share they should take steps to seed and promote not only the essential ecosystem to support these schools but also the thought leadership around talent. City leaders should begin working to fill the looming talent gap immediately.

Recruiting and engaging nontraditional talent and retaining and developing existing talent are essential to growing and sustaining this new sector. Without doing both intentionally, a city will deprive itself of the human capital needed for transformational change. An important question for city leaders to ask is, “Who is responsible for leading our talent acquisition, retention, and development efforts?” The answer may be different in different contexts but this duty should be explicitly owned, whether by a single intermediary organization, a coalition of groups, a set of public-sector leaders, or some combination of the above.



Treat policies and political will as key talent drivers

Talent begets more talent in a school ecosystem. For a city’s new sector to expand and grow robust, the state must have the political will to engage in and win the necessary public debates and possess the political and legislative skills needed to get its policies right. Without that, talent can’t be attracted or developed—there will be greener grass elsewhere—and talent’s return on investment will be low. A city must have numerous, vocal leaders, both in the community and in positions of public authority, and the state should have a strong charter law, smart human capital laws and regulations, supportive funding formulas, and more.

About EdFuel (edfuel.org)

EdFuel is a new organization committed to helping talent discover and maximize their potential in the rapidly evolving K-12 education sector. info@edfuel.org