

SCHOOL LEADER INSTITUTE: BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN DIVISIVE TIMES

Recent events—the 2020 presidential election, movements for justice such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo, and the politicization of traditionally nonpolitical issues—have forced educators to react hastily, at times haphazardly, to pressing questions raised by students, parents, and faculty. With the election year now behind us, and schools rebuilding their communities and norms, we believe there is an opportunity to create a more thoughtful, values-based approach for navigating divisive political and social issues.

The School Leader Institute is intended to help educators across the country create a strategic vision that supports an inclusive school climate, fosters open and authentic dialogue and deliberation amongst our diverse student bodies, and addresses the demands of parents, board members, and other stakeholders. Our hope is to provide a space in which educators can proactively identify their civic education goals so they are prepared to lead the charge for civic education in their schools and districts, and support students, teachers, and parents in these conversations.

Institute Overview

Educators will come together from across the country to explore questions such as:

- What kinds of citizens does our multicultural democracy need? How can our schools help create citizens able to engage and flourish in their communities?
- How does the current political context and cultural climate impact my school? How can my school respond to it?
- How can our teachers overcome challenges posed by partisanship, polarization, and “fake” news?
- Where are the spaces for civil discourse among our diverse students within my school? How can they be expanded or strengthened to take up the complex challenges of the day, from racial justice to sustainability, with an eye to how multiple perspectives help the conversations?
- Which stakeholders are relevant and worth engaging as my school re-establishes its values, norms, and unique school culture?
- What types of guidance and support do our diverse faculty teams need to engage students with challenging social and political issues?

Application Details

When is the Institute? Wednesday, July 28 - Friday, July 30, 2021 | 3:00–6:00pm (EST) / 12:00pm–3:00pm (PST). All sessions will be synchronous and take place on Zoom.

Who should attend? The Institute is designed for administrators, including division heads, heads of schools, academic program coordinators, deans of students, deans of faculty, and other educators who oversee strategic planning and implementation. You must commit to attending all three days of the Institute

What is the cost for the Institute? The fee to attend is \$650 per educator.

What is the application deadline? Applicants will be accepted on a rolling basis. The final application deadline is June 4. Successful candidates will be notified by June 15, 2021.

How do I apply? The application can be found on our [website](#).

About Us

Close Up Foundation: Established in 1971, Close Up is a nonprofit, nonpartisan civic education organization dedicated to helping students develop the knowledge and skills they need to become informed, active, and engaged citizens. Close Up’s resources, programs, and professional development offer a balanced and multi-partisan approach to facilitating controversial issue discussions. Each year, Close Up helps thousands of students and teachers across the nation engage in civil discourse and take informed action in their communities.

Developed and Facilitated in Partnership with:

- [Thaden School](#), Hannah Bahn, Director of Studies | Michael Maloy, Head of Upper School
- [Alice Siu](#), Associate Director at Center for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University
- [Rebecca Hong](#), Head of Institutional Equity at The Spence School

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Institute Sessions

Wednesday, July 28 – Fostering Civil Discourse & Deliberation

Through a panel discussion with a diverse set of school leaders, and Stanford's Center for Deliberative Democracy, participants will consider the contexts in which their schools exist and the challenges and opportunities for respectful civil discourse and deliberation. Participants will consider questions such as:

- Will our school set community-wide norms for political discussion?
- Will our school have expectations and guidelines for faculty and staff regarding how they engage in displays of personal politics with students and families?
- What resources will we provide teachers, students, and families?

Thursday, July 29 – Navigating Challenging Scenarios

Participants will deliberate on a series of case studies drawn from real-world challenges facing communities, schools, and classrooms. Through the deliberation, participants will clarify the goals and values of their schools. Sample scenarios may include:

- Liberal parents applaud the school for its diversity efforts, but they believe anti-racism training is making students feel ridiculed and belittled for being white. They claim that "racism now goes both ways at our school."
- Parents of conservative students raise concerns that their children are being silenced in political conversations.
- Students of color walk out to protest a lack of diversity in the curriculum and faculty. Some teachers of color choose to join the walkout. This exacerbates tension among faculty and administrators about the pace and direction of change.

Friday, July 30 – Planning for Change

Participants will work in small cohorts to develop their strategic visions and plans for the upcoming school year. We will cover topics such as:

- **Creating a skills-based approach to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion work:** How can you infuse the skills and social and emotional competencies needed to navigate and bridge differences in our diverse, multicultural world throughout your curriculum and pedagogy?
- **Building a Culture of Deliberation in School Governance:** What structures and resources promote deliberation, and what does good deliberation look like? How can we engage various stakeholders, including parents, faculty and staff, and students, in deliberative school governance? What issues and decisions should be open for deliberation, and which should be closed?
- **Educating for Democratic Discourse in an Era of Hyperpartisanship:** How do we help educators across all disciplines incorporate civic discourse and deliberative democracy skills in their teaching? How does the current media and political landscape make civic discourse difficult? How can teachers and schools address fake news, conspiracy theories, and tribalism?