

APRIL 2024

# FOUNDATIONS TODAY

→ e-Newsletter



## Message From The Board

On behalf of the NAEF Board of Directors, I want to thank our [conference speakers](#), sponsors, exhibitors, and attendees for a phenomenal experience at ImpactED'24, in Tampa.

Our speakers represented different size foundations, from across the country. Many attendees commented on the valuable educational content presented in the general sessions to the breakouts, and notwithstanding the TEDTalk sessions. We could not have provided the content without the financial support of our sponsors and exhibitors. Their investment in NAEF – *in you and your foundation* – was greatly appreciated. Be sure to utilize them as a resource. Most importantly, however, were the 223 attendees who convened in Tampa and walked away with an expanded network of colleagues and mentors. Lean on one another, email one another, and keep the conversation going. You are *not* alone! Use our [LinkedIn](#) or [Facebook](#) platforms to post a question, make a recommendation, or share a success story. The impact you make within education is worthy and important.

I would be remiss if I did not extend my personal thank you to the [NAEF Board of Directors](#), their committees, the many volunteers, and the [AMI Team](#) who worked tirelessly to create “the Tampa experience”. Let’s keep the momentum going until we meet in Knoxville, Tennessee during the last week of March 2025.

Regards,

## Upcoming Events

### [Chair Chat](#)

**May 10, 2024 |**

**12:00 - 1:00 PM | Zoom**

### [Unlocking Success](#)

**May 21, 2024 |**

**12:00 - 1:00 PM | Zoom**

### [Chair Chat](#)

**August 2, 2024 |**

**12:00 - 1:00 PM | Zoom**

### [Grow With It](#)

**September 19, 2024 |**

**4:00 - 5:00 PM | Zoom**

### [Chair Chat](#)

**November 8, 2024 |**

**12:00 - 1:00 PM | Zoom**

[View Events](#)

Peter



Peter Constantinou  
Executive Director

## ImpactED '24 Highlights



Thank you to everyone who joined us in Tampa, FL this April 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> for ImpactED '24! Highlights included keynote sessions from Paul J. Luna and Pranav Kothari, engaging breakout sessions and TED talks, and networking opportunities throughout the conference to meet education leaders nationwide! We've loved seeing your conference photos, continue tagging us with **#ImpactED24** on social media.









Thank You ImpactED '24 Sponsors!

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- [Alumni Nations](#)
- [Bloomerang](#)

## ImpactED '25 Announcement

### Exciting News!

ImpactED '25 will be held in... **Knoxville, Tennessee!** If you weren't at ImpactED '24, watch the video below to hear Knoxville mayor, Indya Kincannon, invite you to next year's conference in March 2025! Stay tuned as more details develop and be sure to follow us on social media and check your inbox for the latest announcements.



[Watch Now](#)

### The Fundraising Playbook for Public School Champions

By: [Rachel Muir, CFRE](#)



*Rachel has worked every side of the Rubik's cube that is the nonprofit sector. When she was 26 Rachel Muir launched Girlstart, a non-profit empowering girls in math, science, engineering and technology in the living room of her apartment with \$500 and a credit card. Several years later she had raised over 10 million and was featured on Oprah, CNN, and the Today show. Today Rachel delivers workshops and offers a monthly membership, League of Extraordinary Fundraisers, transforming people into confident, successful fundraisers. Learn more about Rachel at [www.rachelmuir.com](http://www.rachelmuir.com).*

Executive Directors and Development Directors at Education Foundations dedicate their careers to giving the students in their school district a first-class education.

But it's hard when they're stretched in a million different directions on the frontlines of schools with little to no resources to help!

Most come into their roles at their Education Foundation as an alum, parent, staff member, teacher, or volunteer. Very few are career fundraisers.

No two days are identical for them. On any given day they may be doing strategic planning, board development, producing an event, marketing communications, financial reporting, budget planning, and a seemingly endless amount of fundraising.

With limited to no fundraising background and even fewer resources, how can Executive Directors and Development Directors at Education Foundations fundraise quickly and easily? Here are three tips to help!

#### **Tip 1: Give Yourself a Fundraising Pep Talk**

Fundraising takes a truckload of bravery any day. Here are five fundraising mantras to print and keep on your wall or desk:

1. People want to help—it feels GOOD to give!
2. If you don't ask, people won't know you need help.

3. Helping others—which is what you're doing—is not selfish.
4. Giving combats feelings of helplessness.
5. Never assume donors won't give.

### **Tip 2: Invite Your Biggest Donors and Prospects to Invest**

The late Jerry Panas, author of *Asking* (the #1 bestselling fundraising book ever written) said “Your goal in fundraising is to get the largest gift possible, in the shortest amount of time possible, to the greatest joy of the donor.” The last part means we will treat donors with kindness, love, care, and respect, and learn a donor’s philanthropic wishes so we can fulfill them.

The first part is simple math. You don’t want a donor who could give you \$100,000 to give you \$100. Your ‘big rocks’—aka your largest donors—will fill up your fundraising glass faster than a million tiny grains of sand. You have to focus on turning the greatest profit, especially when you’re a small shop.

If you have the resources, consider investing in a standalone wealth screen of your donors—like DonorSearch—or if you’re a Bloomerang customer, use the generosity score to help you focus on your best giving prospects.

### **Tip 3: Understand the ROI of different fundraising strategies**

The fundraising strategies with the highest return on investment are monthly giving, bequest giving, and major gift fundraising (described above).

Many novice fundraisers spend the majority of their precious time on acquiring one-time donors or events, which cost 50 cents for every dollar raised.

Invest your time wisely—there’s an opportunity cost associated with your time for the things you could have chosen to pursue instead. If you’re a small shop, focus on major gifts. At a minimum, give people a reason to make their gift monthly. Just using a donation form like Bloomerang to offer monthly giving as an option is not enough. You have to incentivize donors to give monthly by telling them how much more good their gift can do. For example, “Your monthly gift will feed a hungry child for a whole year!”



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## Is Your Education Foundation Ready for a Campaign?

By: [Karin Cox, MFA](#)



*Karin has helped Kinetic clients raise hundreds of millions of dollars through customized, research-based counsel and guidance. Karin has served in senior leadership roles in nonprofit and business sectors, and is an author, frequent presenter and senior consultant.*

*Karin is the author of *Fundraising Leadership: The Essential Guide for Nonprofit Board Members Who Want to Make a Lasting Difference*. She developed the widely adopted Cox Grid, which was first presented in her “Fundraising Events” chapter in *Fundraising Practices and Principles*, the definitive fundraising text published by Jossey-Bass. Karin serves on the board of Kentucky to the World. She has a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.*

Public funding is available to support education essentials, but private philanthropy allows schools and school districts to advance innovation and excellence in their programs, activities and curriculums.

It’s clear that philanthropy helps schools, but what’s often underestimated is how beneficial giving is to donors. By using proven strategies of donor prospect identification, qualification, cultivation, solicitation and appreciation, education foundations give people an opportunity to be part of something important—elevating education for more deserving students.

Since we know a successful, major gift campaign is one of the most effective ways for a nonprofit to raise money, here’s an important question: Is your education foundation ready to undertake a campaign?

Here’s a starter checklist to help assess your campaign readiness:

***Do we have clear consensus on what funding is needed for (specific goals and outcomes) and why?***

Donors want to know how their gifts will be invested, what outcomes can be expected and whether those outcomes materialize. By starting with a comprehensive development plan, education foundations can define their clear goals and set benchmarks on the front end. Yes, it can be a time-consuming process, but it will save time and money in the long run.



Whether the goals are to support teacher training, updated technology, expanded STEM programs or other worthy goals, strategic planning is time well spent.

***Does our list of specific goals and outcomes align with the perspectives and opinions of our donor constituencies; and how well have we identified and defined those demographic groups?***

Even after you have in-house consensus, it is necessary to know how that point of view is received by individuals and organizations in the communities you serve. Their subjective opinions may not be 100% correct, but knowing what those opinions are will help you communicate more clearly and effectively. Obviously, gathering these responses from your donor constituencies, as well as the wider community, can be a challenge—administratively and emotionally—which is just one reason why enlisting an objective, third party consultant can help uncover valuable insights.

***Do we have the staff, time, resources and/or expertise to undertake a campaign?***

Realistically, the likely answer is: “Probably, not.” Few, if any, education foundations have the resources to support a full complement of full-time development staff members, including researchers, grant writers and an administrative support team. Additionally, many nonprofits “do what they do,” because it’s “the way it’s been done.” Questions like these and others: “Is there a better donor software for our purposes?”; “How can we identify new donor prospects and grant opportunities?”; “Are we using current best practices for donor recognition?” ... are rarely asked, because “We’re not sure what we should do differently, and there’s no time or money to take a chance on a change.”

Yes, change can be a little intimidating at first, but using a professional consultant exchanges the unknown for advancing your next great, educational learning curve.

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## **Steps to Having Challenging Conversations**

By: [Deanna Rolffs](#)



*Deanna Rolffs (they/them) is a strategist, facilitator, coach, systems thinker, and Process Consultant who works with executive leaders and teams at the intersection of organizational theory, leadership development, justice, and equity. Their process consulting approach focuses on organizational transformation via thriving teams, brave leadership, equitable systems, and inclusive communities.*

*Deanna served as a Senior Consultant with Design Group International since 2018, became a Senior Design Partner in 2021, and launched [L3 Catalyst Group](#) in 2023.*

## What is your relationship with holding challenging conversations?

Avoiding difficult conversations is human. Discomfort sucks, and there are a million reasons to avoid pain and the unknown.

Thoughts spin through our minds: Who knows how they'll react? What if it makes it worse? There's no way we will come to a resolution. Why are they acting so ridiculous? How can they not see the trouble they are causing?

Scenarios abound. Maybe some of these are familiar:

*You notice patterns of voices left out or minimized in your team or organization.*

*A national speaker at a recent event shared racist mindsets.*

*Team members take credit for the work that others completed.*

*A CEO is more concerned about their image outside of the organization than aligning their values to their actions within the organization.*

*A team member isn't pulling their weight, but no one is talking to them directly about it.*

What scenarios of conflict avoidance do you see around you?

Do you find yourself avoiding that difficult conversation with a colleague, boss, or friend?

### Going toward discomfort helps us grow, learn, and be better humans and leaders.

Avoidance and dishonesty are rotten fruit, especially when our mission, vision, or values state that we want to work for equity and inclusion. Just because we value equity and inclusion doesn't mean we naturally know how to engage in challenging conversations.

### Skills to hold difficult conversations thoughtfully and intentionally are critical.

How can we hold truth-telling conversations without being taught the skills required?

Relationships and trust are key. If that's not there, results can be disastrous.

If you are avoiding a conversation that you know you want to have, consider these steps:

#### 1. Start with your values.

What do you value about the person? What values do you want to be evident in this interaction? What does that look like or sound like?

*Example: I value every team member's participation. I value the things we can learn when we are brave.*

#### 2. Clarify what you see as the challenge.

**Example:** *I'm noticing that the men speak over the women in our team meetings. OR I'm noticing that when you thank team members publicly, you typically thank those with more powerful positions.*

### 3. Name the future state that you seek.

What would you like to be different relationally and situationally after the conversation? What different outcome would you like to see?

**Example:** *I'd love to be a part of a team where everyone's voice, contribution, and perspective are equally valued.*

### 4. Practice before holding the conversation.

This can be done in various ways:

- Write down your main points before the conversation.
- Run the plan by a colleague who can give you neutral and honest feedback.

**Example:** *Writing down beforehand phrases that could help if I get stuck.*

### 5. Hold curiosity about the other person's perspective.

How do they see this dynamic? Are they aware or resistant?

**Example:** *Is this a dynamic you are noticing? Can you share what is important to you regarding various perspectives on our team?*

### 6. Identify the next steps together.

Offer a step or two rooted in shared values to help you and the other person take steps together.

**Example:** *If this isn't a dynamic you have previously been aware of, would you be willing to consider a couple of next steps with me so our team can grow and everyone can experience being included and respected for their work?*

### 7. Reflect upon what you learned and what worked...or didn't.

Offer yourself patience and a chance to learn. Big challenges take time to address. What did you learn from the conversation about yourself or about the other person? What do you need to do to care for yourself if they are unwilling to listen and be open to engaging with you?

If you'd like to learn more, here are a few of my favorite sources:

- [Courageous Conversations](#) by Glen Singleton
- [Nonviolent Communication](#)
- Crucial Conversations: [10-Minute Book Summary \(YouTube\)](#)
- [Restorative Practices](#) by the Restorative Lab



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## Cultivating Your Speaking Authority

Reprinted From [Edutopia](#)

Principals routinely speak to diverse types and sizes of audiences—their staff, parent and community groups, students, media groups, fellow administrators, and others. The one-on-one conference, face-to-face with an angry parent who thinks their child has been wronged, may be the toughest. In that situation, you may choose and use words correctly, but if your appearance and demeanor don't support the delivery of your words, your communication will fail.

Through all my preparatory classes for the principalship, I don't recall ever having the opportunity to gain experience about the intricacies and nuances of speaking in various professional settings, in public and behind closed doors. However, my training for both my bachelor and master of music degrees did include preparation for speaking in front of audiences. Just like most everything else we did as aspiring musicians, we were expected to practice what we were taught and then “practice” in front of others before moving on into the professional world.

### Tips from Music Training

That type of training can be advantageous for all principals. Besides instructing about notes, rhythms, and nuances of musical expression, my music teachers taught lessons about performing in public—practical lessons and advice that I utilized every day during my service in the principalship.

We were expected to master the intricacies of etiquette and stage presence. We talked about personal grooming and proper dress for differing types of performance. Those discussions included how to style our hair, control the glare on eyeglasses, and choose colors of clothing and shoes—even the types of soles on our shoes so as not to make distracting noise onstage. Those tips were wrapped within a more important discussion about how to enter the stage while showing confidence with a smile and acknowledging the audience.

My professors were shaping a vision of what today is called “executive presence.” Executive presence comprises seven traits: composure, connection, charisma, confidence, credibility, clarity, and conciseness. You need to choose the words others will hear you say wisely and effectively. But you must also deliver those words skillfully so that people see that you are authentic, sincere, and empathetic.

For example, when you need to speak in front of a large group of parents, focus on the following tips.

### 7 Elements of Executive Presence

**Composure:** Develop the ability to control and manage your emotions. If others can see your nervousness, that—and not your words—becomes their focus. Remember the adage, never let them see you sweat. You develop composure through practice. The more

experience you can acquire, the more relaxed you will appear. Don't shy away from opportunities to speak in public.

**Connection:** Your eyes help you connect. Make sure you look at all parts of the room. Everyone needs to sense that you are speaking directly to them. Smile as much as you can, and use humor appropriately when possible.

**Charisma:** People with a magnetic personality seem to possess an ability to draw others to them. That happens because they have advanced listening skills and an ability to stay in the moment. Individuals in an audience sense that you are speaking directly to and are solely focused on them. Block anything out of your mind that might be a distraction.

**Confidence:** Confidence is visually displayed through good posture, focused eyes, and appropriate facial expressions and hand gestures that match your words. Additionally, your voice must have good pitch, volume, and pace. Use a microphone when possible, so as not to strain your voice. Dress professionally. In my training, we were taught to “*Look* first-class, *think* first-class, and *act* first-class.”

**Credibility:** Listen to people speak on television. The use of filler language such as “um,” “uh,” and “so” (fillers or verbal graffiti) is distracting and unnecessary. Likewise, there are phrases that are minimizers, such as “just,” “sort of,” and “this may not be a good idea but...” Avoid these. When you speak without “ums” and “uhs,” you will sound credible, confident, and competent. Your audiences will see the conviction behind your words.

**Clarity:** In music school, we were taught as teachers to state three points and move into the practical details of a rehearsal. If people cannot understand your choice of words, or if your delivery (audible and visual) is monotone, people will tune out. You must practice articulation to perform it.

**Conciseness:** You must learn what to say, when to say it, and how to say it. Make your point(s), clarify, restate again by uniquely emphasizing critical points, then wrap up. Remember Abraham Lincoln's success with his Gettysburg Address, compared with Edward Everett's two-hour oratory?

Principals can improve their executive presence. It requires [personal reflection, deliberate practice, and coaching](#). Then, when you step onto the stage, people will take notice—and listen.

## NAEF Members: Make Sure Your Profile Is Up To Date!

1. Go to [our website](#).
2. Enter username and password [*if you are logging in for the first time, click forgot password*].
3. Click the profile icon in the upper right corner, view profile, and edit.

## Bias Hinders Women's Progress in Education Leadership, Survey Finds

Reprinted From [K-12 Dive](#)

Widespread bias [hinders the progress of women](#) in the superintendency and other senior educational leadership roles, according to the first Insight Survey from Women Leading Ed, a national nonprofit network of women in education leadership.

Some 82% of survey respondents reported having felt external pressure to dress, speak or behave a certain way due to their gender — and those pressures are further amplified for women of color. The research released Tuesday found 55% of women of color “often” felt that pressure, compared to 36% of their White counterparts.

“It’s a reality so ingrained and accepted that it’s taken on the quality of wallpaper or background noise,” said Julia Rafal-Baer, CEO of Women Leading Ed, in a statement. “The survey results expose just how little has truly changed, despite women gaining some entry into top leadership. We are in the same spaces, but women are still required to play a different game.”

The survey of more than 110 women was conducted between November 2023 and January 2024. Among its other highlights:

- 95% of women superintendents said they believe they have to make sacrifices their male colleagues did not.
- 57% reported being passed up or overlooked for advancement opportunities that went to male colleagues.
- 53% said they had salary conversations or negotiations where they felt their gender influenced the outcome.
- Of 60% who said the strain and stress of the job lead them to consider leaving, 75% said they think about doing so daily, monthly or weekly.

Additionally, the survey found women who became principals were much more likely to be coached into elementary or middle school roles, with only 18% of

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respondents having been prepared for and offered positions as high school principals.

This further illustrates the skewed pipeline women face when aspiring to top leadership roles, the survey report's authors wrote. "High school principalships often yield more exposure to board members and community visibility — think graduation, football games, and basketball games. District-level roles are often filled from the ranks of high schools."

To address this gender gap, Women Leading Ed aims to use its network to support and empower women rising through education leadership ranks, Rafal-Baer wrote in the survey report. Rafal-Baer is also cofounder and CEO of ILO Group, an educational leadership consultancy that produces the annual [Superintendent Research Project](#), a comprehensive analysis of leadership in the nation's 500 largest school districts.

"Our commitment to fixing this issue lies in creating a clear path to leadership for individuals who possess the talent, energy, and vision to make a significant impact on children's lives," Rafal-Baer said. "This includes women, people of color, and particularly women of color."

## Call For Articles

Do you want to be featured in the next edition? We invite you to share your education foundation expertise and submit an article for [Foundations Today!](#)

Here's what we need for your article's consideration:

- The article must be timely and relevant.
- It must be 900 words or less.
- Include full name, headshot, short bio, and link if applicable (LinkedIn or website).
- [Email your article](#) in original format (accessible web link or Word).

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