

**National Partnership for Educational Access
9th Annual Conference Evaluation Summary**

On April 5-7, 2017, the National Partnership for Educational Access held its 9th annual conference. Hosted in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the conference included three keynote presentations (Stella Flores, New York University; Christopher Emdin, Columbia University Teachers College and Author, For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood and the Rest of Y’All Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education; and Paul Tough, Author, Helping Children Succeed and How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character), an alumni panel presentation, more than 40 workshops and learning exchange roundtable sessions, welcome and networking receptions, site visits, and a pre-conference workshop. The conference drew a national crowd of nearly 475 education access professionals.

A comprehensive evaluation was administered at the conference and online to gauge participant experiences. As of May 10, 2017, some 239 attendees completed the survey, representing 59 percent of those eligible to participate. Of the respondents, 61 percent were first-time conference attendees.

Satisfaction and Value:

A range of questions was presented to gauge participant satisfaction with the conference, including both the logistics and the quality/value of the conference. When asked how valuable they found the conference overall, 92.05 percent indicated they found it valuable or very valuable.

All percentages in Table 2 below reflect the value of conference offerings for all attendees for whom each item is applicable.

Table 2. Value of Conference Sessions and Offerings

How valuable did you find each of the following?				
	Not valuable	Somewhat valuable	Valuable	Very valuable
Conference overall	0.4% (1)	7.3% (19)	31.3% (82)	61.1% (160)
Range of topics covered during the conference	0% (0)	8.5% (22)	46.5% (120)	45% (116)
Time to network/exchange best practices with others	1.6% (4)	5.9% (15)	45.7% (116)	46.9% (119)
Workshop Sessions (75 minutes)	0.4% (1)	8.8% (22)	47.8% (120)	43% (108)
Learning Exchange Roundtable Sessions (45 minutes)	4.8% (8)	20.5% (34)	45.2% (75)	29.5% (49)
Pre-Conference Workshop (Wednesday)	6.1% (3)	12.2% (6)	28.6% (14)	53.1% (26)
Pre-Conference Site Visits (Wednesday)	2.9% (1)	11.4% (4)	28.6% (10)	57.1% (20)
CBO/School Partnerships Hour (Wednesday)	4.8% (3)	21% (13)	41.9% (26)	32.3% (20)
Welcome Reception (Wednesday)	4.2% (5)	18.3% (22)	39.2% (47)	38.3% (46)
10th Anniversary Celebration Reception (Thursday)	1.2% (2)	17.3% (30)	47.4% (82)	34.1% (59)
Breakfast Roundtables (Thursday)	1.5% (2)	16.1% (22)	47.4% (65)	35% (48)
Opening session featuring Alumni Panel (Thursday)	2.3% (5)	9.5% (21)	33.8% (75)	54.5% (121)
Partners Resource Session (Friday)	7.1% (8)	16.8% (19)	48.7% (55)	27.4% (31)
Connections Hour (Friday)	5% (6)	15.1% (18)	49.6% (59)	30.3% (36)
Keynote session with Stella M. Flores	2.3% (5)	18.6% (40)	35.8% (77)	43.3% (93)
Keynote session with Paul Tough	3.2% (7)	6.9% (15)	37.2% (81)	52.8% (115)
Keynote session with Christopher Emdin	0% (0)	3% (6)	14.1% (28)	82.8% (164)
Keynote speakers overall	0% (0)	4.1% (10)	33.5% (82)	62.4% (153)

Of those who attended workshop sessions, 91 percent found them valuable or very valuable. Of those who attended the keynote general sessions, 96 percent found the keynotes overall valuable or very valuable, with 97 percent noting closing keynote Christopher Emdin as valuable or very valuable and 90 percent noting Paul Tough as valuable or very valuable. Other highly valued conference offerings include time to network/exchange best practices with others (93 percent), the range of topics covered at the conference (91 percent), and the opening session with the alumni panel (88 percent valuable or very valuable). For those who attended the pre-conference site visits to Boston College or MIT and the MIT Office of Engineering Outreach Programs, some 86 percent indicated they were valuable or very valuable. The lowest percentages aligned with Learning Exchange Roundtables, the Friday Partners Resource Session, the CBO/School Partnerships Hour, and the Welcome Reception on Wednesday evening, though some 74-80 percent of attendees still found them valuable or very valuable.

When asked to specify two to three of the most valuable aspects of the conference, several respondents referenced the keynote speakers and networking opportunities, with many highlighting Christopher Emdin's remarks in particular. Many others referenced Paul Tough's presentation, as well as several other specific workshops that were highlights for many. Still others valued the opportunity to network with others doing this work, presenting a session, learning best practices and strategies from the workshop presentations, being reenergized and inspired to do this work, the feeling of camaraderie, sharing resources, the alumni panel, and the various topics covered throughout the conference offerings. Specific topics referenced include addressing race and white privilege, college persistence, building a diverse and equitable independent school campus, undocumented students, data, career readiness, identity development and spoken word, culturally relevant teaching, financial aid, and more. One respondent shared: "Workshops delved into many aspects of equity and access for young people. I was able to think beyond just the college application time frame and more so how social justice and leadership influence a youth's trajectory."

Future Conference Going:

When asked about the likelihood of attending next year's conference in New Orleans, 56 percent of respondents indicated they are very likely or likely to attend. Another 22 percent of respondents are somewhat likely to attend next year. Some 11 percent indicated they were unsure if they would attend and only 11 percent of respondents are unlikely to attend.

Qualitative Responses:

In addition to the multiple-choice questions, the survey included open-ended questions designed to capture participants' overall thoughts and impressions of the conference. In particular, two questions elicited helpful feedback when planning for next year's conference: "Do you have any speakers or topics you would like to hear at next year's conference?" and "What are two action steps you will take away from the conference that will improve your organization, school, or program practices?"

Speaker/Topic Suggestions:

Among the many speaker suggestions, some include: David Yaeger (University of Texas at Austin), Sabine Vaught (Tufts University), Brandon Busteded (Gallup Education), Howard Stevenson (University of Pennsylvania), Mahzarin R. Banaji (Harvard, Author of *Blindspot*), Nola Cabrera (ASU), Keith Brown (Mr. I'm Possible), Stacey Blakely Beard (Simmons College), Andre Robert Lee (Prep School Negro), Sara Goldrik-Rab (Temple University and Wisconsin HOPE Lab). Several former keynote speakers were requested as repeat keynotes, including Shaun Harper (University of Pennsylvania), Pedro Noguera (UCLA), and Christopher Emdin (Columbia University, For White Folks Who Teach In the Hood, Teachers College).

Among the topics suggested, some include: Black Lives Matter and how to create safe spaces for our students to express themselves, college persistence, supporting undocumented students, career readiness and professional development for students, college and career counseling best practices, improving student outcomes in high poverty neighborhoods, culturally responsive teaching, challenging white privilege, immigration and college access, racism in secondary and post-secondary school settings, creating effective program budgets, practitioner “how to” sessions on teaching various subjects (e.g. social justice, financial literacy, empathy), and access for middle-achieving students.