Bank Street College of Education
Key Message Training Toolkit
September 2024-25

Welcome to the
Key Message Training Toolkit

The Key Message Toolkit provides Bank Street leadership, Trustees, and others with information and resources for developing a personalized elevator pitch. The enclosed materials provide a framework for pulling out key concepts and messages that can be translated into your own words, allowing you to create a pitch that feels authentic to your personal voice and that can evolve over time.

The toolkit includes:

- "Developing Your Story" Training Sheet
- Key Message Tracks
- Supporting Materials:
  - Bank Street "By the Numbers" Sheet
  - An "Ask" List
  - A "FAQ" Sheet
  - Bank Street One-Pagers

Developing Your Story

"Developing Your Story" Sheet

This exercise will help you imagine a scenario in which you are talking with a potential donor, potential program partner, or key influencer about Bank Street. The steps below are designed to help you build a personalized narrative that describes your connection with Bank Street in a meaningful way. Please use the enclosed supporting materials as you run through the exercise.

Step One: Pick an audience

Who are you talking to (i.e., a potential donor you just met, an old friend with deep pockets, a government official, a professional contact, etc.)?

Step Two: Personalize your connection to Bank Street

As you consider what excites or draws you to the College's work, consider the questions below:

- Aside from serving as a Trustee, what is your most meaningful personal connection to Bank Street? Why is this connection important to you?
- Is there a specific instance or experience that inspired you to serve on the Board? How would you describe this event to someone unfamiliar with Bank Street?
- What three areas of Bank Street's work inspire you most and why?

Step Three: Pick a topic

What would you like to talk to your chosen audience about (i.e., how Bank Street works with kids, with teachers, or with school systems; a specific program or area of work, etc.)? What do you find most compelling about this work?

Step Four: Determine your "ask"

What might you try to get out of this conversation that benefits Bank Street (i.e., attendance at an upcoming Bank Street event, a meet-and-greet with Shael or program leaders, a donation, etc.)?

Step Five: Draft your elevator pitch

With your audience in mind, please reference the materials in this toolkit to conceptualize 4-5 talking points about your selected topic. End with a message that includes your "ask."

Step Six: Review and practice

Review your talking points and role-play your conversation with a partner and/or in small groups. Refine your talking points as needed.

Key Message Tracks

Core Message:

No other institution combines our depth of experience, our level of expertise, and our outsized impact in the field of education. We offer the world a template for living and a tool for change by helping students develop all facets of human intelligence—academic, social, and emotional—so they can thrive in school and in life.

- Bank Street is a leader in progressive education for children and teachers
- Bank Street educators understand how children and adults learn best. Bank Street teachers:
  - Observe and reflect on students' knowledge and behavior to provide opportunities for learning and growth
  - Meet students "where they are" to help them develop their academic, social, and emotional intelligence
  - Give students the support they need to realize their unique potential and rise to new levels of achievement
- Our approach provides students with a foundation for transforming our world in large and small ways. Bank Street students learn how to make an immediate impact and:
  - Learn to understand themselves more deeply and make meaning of the world around them
  - Build the courage and confidence to think independently
  - Become thoughtful problem solvers who work collaboratively and respectfully with others
  - Develop strong critical thinking and academic skills across all content areas, including literacy, math, and science
- For one hundred years, Bank Street educators have seen in education an opportunity to build a more just and democratic society. The work of the College includes:
  - Graduate school programs for teachers, school leaders, and other educators
  - Education and support for children from infancy through high school (Family Center, Head Start, School for Children, and Liberty LEADS)
  - Public impact programs designed to bring scalable models to schools and communities, including:
    - Partnerships with school systems, non-profits, and higher education institutions to help improve classroom instruction (Bank Street Education Center, EdPrepLab)
    - Research focused on understanding how children and adults learn best in order to help practitioners and policymakers affect meaningful change (Straus Center for Young Children & Families)
    - Policy work dedicated to improving education and outcomes for all children (Bank Street Education Center, National Center for Children in Poverty)
- Include a personal connection. For example: *The first time I saw Bank Street students speak, I was stunned by their critical thinking skills, their intellectual curiosity, and their poise and confidence. I wanted to enroll in the School for Children myself, but did something even better: I enrolled both of my children. After two decades as a Trustee, I remain in awe of the magic that happens at Bank Street College.*

Message Track A:
We are proven to train the best teachers and school leaders who know how to help students learn and flourish.

- All children deserve great teachers. To improve student learning, our country needs better trained teachers and teachers who remain in teaching longer

- Bank Street prepares teachers and leaders to lead students to new levels of achievement and make a powerful difference in students' lives. Our model for teacher preparation:

  - Combines the study of human development and learning theory with supervised fieldwork and advisement to allow aspiring teachers to translate theory into practice

  - Recognizes that children learn best from teachers who carefully observe and reflect on their students' development and behavior to build relationships that support student learning

  - Is widely considered the gold standard for teacher training

- Our approach works. A study conducted by Stanford found that, in comparison with other teachers, Bank Street graduates:

  - Feel more prepared to lead classrooms and remain in the field of education at higher rates than their peers (87% of graduates remain in education)

  - Have higher confidence in content areas than their peers—an 18% advantage in science and an over 20% advantage in English and math

  - Feel more prepared than their peers to promote students' social-emotional development and questioning and discussion skills

- All our programs work toward advancing the common good and are taught through a lens of teaching and learning as expressions of justice

- Bank Street is working to strengthen the field of educator preparation by expanding access to high-quality, clinically rich teacher and leader preparation models

  - Educator Preparation Laboratory (EdPrepLab) brings together preparation programs from across 17 states and the District of Columbia to research, model, and share the practices, structures, and policies that support equity and the deeper learning of all students

  - The Graduate School of Education develops new programs that expand access to the Bank Street model of graduate study, including our supervised fieldwork and conference group structure and the study of our signature developmental-interaction approach

    - Online programs in both teaching and leadership combine the study of human development, learning theory, and sustained clinical practice to produce well-prepared teachers and leaders

Message Track B:
We can transform lives by focusing on our youngest children.

- Bank Street believes quality child care and education should be the right of all children at birth
  - The most rapid brain development occurs within the first 1,000 days of life
  - The quality of a child's relationships and experiences during this critical period influence the development of healthy brain architecture and create the foundation for future learning and behavioral development
  - Research shows the achievement gap starts early and persists in later grades. By 18 months, children living in poverty are six months behind in language development and test scores continue to show that gaps persist through high school for students from various racial backgrounds and low-income households
- Much-needed child care reform can help close the achievement gap before it starts and strengthen families, communities, and the nation
  - We believe education is a public good and that the nation must rebuild its broken child care system by placing equity at its center
  - Most children living in poverty spend their first years of life in informal settings with caregivers who typically don't have strong supports or access to training in child development
  - The Early Childhood team in the Bank Street Education Center has developed a set of five recommendations for state and policy leaders, including a focus on child development and trauma-informed care; pay parity; strengthening systems; equipping educators through robust pre-service and in-service training; and strategies to reach all caregivers, including those in home settings
- Bank Street also conducts research to prove the efficacy of early intervention techniques, identify innovative strategies to improve the lives of children and families, and support engagement efforts to influence policy at the state and national levels
  - The Straus Center for Young Children & Families advances practice-oriented, policy-relevant, and equity-based research on early care and education
  - National Center for Children and Policy (NCCP) conducts research and makes policy recommendations to improve the economic security, healthy development, and well-being of low-income children and families

Message Track C:
We believe in teaching and learning as an expression of justice and support school systems to create equitable educational settings and meaningful change at scale.

- Education is the world's most valuable currency and high-quality education for all is a human right. Bank Street supports equity in education by helping to spread strong teaching and leadership practices

- We know systemic problems within our country contribute to inequities in learning experiences, leading to a wide gap in student outcomes and college readiness. At Bank Street, we believe:

  - All children deserve access to effective educators who understand how to create learning environments grounded in supportive, culturally responsive relationships with nurturing adults

  - Equitable school systems are grounded in learner-centered, strengths-based practices, which helps create a safe and inclusive space for all individuals and groups of people within a school community and supports positive learning outcomes for students

- The Bank Street Education Center provides a mix of unique strategic consulting and on-the-ground professional learning to school systems across the country in four key areas: culture, race, and equity; early childhood education; K-12 math education; and responsive design. For example, Bank Street has:

  - Partnered with the New York City to provide professional development and coaching for thousands of pre-K teachers and leaders

  - Launched High 5s, a game-based small-group supplemental math program developed at the University of Michigan, with 20 New York City community schools. Bank Street previously piloted High 5s and results from the project showed positive student math outcomes

  - Created a partnership with public schools in Yonkers and Brooklyn to impact math outcomes to help increase the number of Black, Latinx, and low-income students who earn a high school diploma and enroll in postsecondary education

- The Culture, Race, and Equity team in the Bank Street Education Center works with educators, community leaders, non-profit organizations, and families to create more equitable learning environments for children:

  - Personalized, community-specific partnerships help adults in educational settings embrace culturally responsive, strengths-based systems and practices and expand their knowledge of bias, race, culture, and equity

  - The center provides learning opportunities that help adults shift their behaviors to build environments where children of all backgrounds can thrive

- We support school, policy, and system leaders in navigating real world challenges to help drive equity in education through cohort-based learning:

  - The Early Childhood Policy Fellowship provides mid-career leaders from local and state government agencies with job-embedded support to help advance early education systems that center equity

  - The Principal Innovation Fellowship supports New York City public high school leaders in redesigning their schools to offer relevant career pathways and work-based learning opportunities for students

Supporting Materials

Bank Street by the Numbers

School for Children

- Serves approximately 415 students ages 3-14
- Over 60% of faculty members hold a master's degree from the Bank Street Graduate School of Education
- 6:1 student-to-teacher ratio across the school
- More than half of children are students of color
- Approximately 55% of students receive financial aid
- Graduates move on to leading high schools such as Bronx Science, Dalton, and Fieldston and colleges such as Berkeley, Columbia, and University of Michigan

Family Center

- Serves 60 families each year through the Center-Based Childcare Program
- 15 SEITs support 30 children in Manhattan and Brooklyn
- Conducts multidisciplinary preschool evaluations for 65 children
- Serves 35 children in inclusive infant-toddler playgroups

Graduate School of Education

- Serves more than 680 graduate students across 50+ master's degree programs for aspiring teachers, school leaders, museum educators, and child life caregivers
- Over half of students receive financial aid
- 97% pass rate on New York State Educating All Students certification exam (2022-23)
- According to a study conducted by Stanford, Bank Street graduates:
  - Remain in the field at high rates, with 87% continuing to work in education (vs. 57% of peers from other graduate schools)
  - Have higher confidence in content areas than their peers, with an 18% advantage in science, a 20% advantage in English, and a 23% advantage in math
  - Feel more prepared than their peers, with 83% able to promote students' social-emotional development and questioning and discussion skills (vs. 51% of peers from other graduate schools)

Community Impact

- Bank Street Head Start serves up to 68 low-income children ages 3-5
- Liberty LEADS provides support to approximately 240 students in grades 5-12
- The Bank Street Education Center has worked with over 70 partners, including school districts, city or state agencies, foundations, and non-profits across the country, serving an estimate of over 16,000 educators and over half a million children

Example Project Outcomes: Bank Street Education Center

- Through the New York City Pre-K Explore project, Bank Street supported pre-K teachers and leaders in implementing the "Building Blocks" math curriculum through cycles of coaching and professional development; these engagements resulted in the tripling of children's use of math language in pre-K classrooms with in-class coaches reporting an increase in children using math language from 27% to 72% over the course of the school year
- Through the High 5s Program, Bank Street coaches engaged pre-K and kindergarten students in developmentally meaningful math activities; these interventions resulted in closing the achievement gap between low-income children and their higher-income peers by about 40% by the third grade.
- Through the Yonkers Public Schools Network for School Improvement, Bank Street coaches engaged middle school teachers and leaders in cycles of "continuous" learning to address existing challenges in math instruction; as a result of this work, the percentage of 6th to 8th grade students in Yonkers Public School who scored as proficient (levels 3-4) on the New York State math test increased six percentage points from the prior year (compared to a two-percentage-point increase across the state of New York). Due to its success, additional funding supported the program's replication in District 17 and 18 in Brooklyn, New York.
- In 2015, the Center on Culture, Race & Equity worked with Turner Elementary School in Washington, DC to transform school experiences for African American boys. Their work with teachers and leaders in our strengths-based model led to a 90% reduction in bullying and a 74% decrease in skipping class.

"Ask" List

Below are some examples of next steps you may want to ask for at the end of your elevator pitch. Your "ask" can be tailored depending on your audience, chosen topic of discussion, or the College's needs.

- An invitation to attend a Bank Street event or act as an event host:
    - A robust schedule of in-person and virtual events is underway for the School for Children, Graduate School of Education, and Bank Street Education Center
    - Events are a great way to introduce your contacts to Bank Street
- An invitation to join you at the Bank Street Celebration:
    - The Celebration, whether virtual or in person, is one of Bank Street's premier opportunities for engagement and one of our largest drivers of revenue
    - Please support Bank Street this year by inviting contacts you believe may be interested in supporting the College to purchase tables or tickets or to attend as guests at your table
- A request to schedule a follow-up conversation with Shael, a dean, a program head, or a member of DARO to provide further information
- A request to send more information about a topic of their interest. We have developed brief and compelling summaries of most of Bank Street's priorities for your convenience. Op-eds by Shael are also compelling and available via link
- A networking request, such as "Who do you know that we should be talking to? Will you make an introduction?"

If you are interested in discussing an opportunity or the development of follow-up materials/scripts for conversations, please contact Marcela Hahn (mhahn@bankstreet.edu) or Heather Price-Wright (hpricewright@bankstreet.edu).

Frequently Asked Questions
"FAQ" Sheet

Q: Why should I donate to a private school?

A: Bank Street is more than just a private school. In addition to the Graduate School and School for Children, the work of the College spans across children's programs, including Liberty LEADS and Head Start; teacher and caregiver preparation programs in urban communities across New York City; and research and policy work dedicated to improving education for all children nationwide. Faculty and staff frequently support work across multiple divisions and our community members and alumni are deeply committed to working in collaboration to further the College's mission.

In addition, both the Graduate School and the School for Children provide financial aid to over half of their student bodies.

Q: How do you measure the impact of your work (Bank Street Education Center)?

A: We build systems into the planning and execution of each program to help benchmark our success against our contracted goals. An essential component of our engagements is to weave feedback loops and opportunities for reflection with our clients' systems for continual improvement. We draw from observational data, an assessment of learning outcomes during professional development, and other project-specific data. Our larger contracts enable us to track implementation metrics along the way, which always include classroom level outcomes. As we grow and institutionalize our approach, we will develop and refine tools to support evaluating the impact across similar projects.