



### How It Started

Three charter-school networks — KIPP, Uncommon Schools, and Achievement First — opened Relay (then called Teacher U) in 2007. The school initially partnered with New York City's Hunter College but earned its independence with the state's charter in 2011.



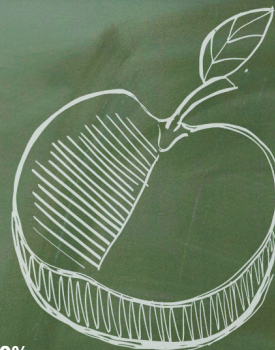
### At the Helm

Co-founder Norman Atkins, president of Relay since it opened, was co-executive director of the Robin Hood Foundation, hedge-fund manager Paul Tudor Jones's venture-philanthropy fund.



### A Teach for America Copycat?

No. Relay is an accredited institution of higher education; the 26-year-old TFA, a pioneer in alternative teacher prep, is not and cannot grant degrees. But like TFA, Relay aims to increase the pipeline of talented teachers working in urban schools and with low-income children.



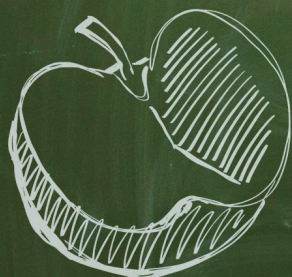
### 50%

of Relay teachers are people of color.



### Skills, Not Theory

Relay's curriculum covers such practical topics as working with families, cultural responsiveness, classroom management, designing tests, what to expect from children of certain ages, and inspiring character in students.



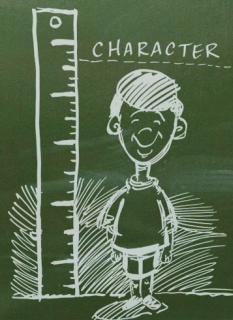
### 40%

of Relay curriculum is presented online, including more than 2,000 videos of teachers demonstrating effective techniques and instruction. Students also extensively record themselves teaching for self-evaluation and critiques by classmates and Relay faculty.



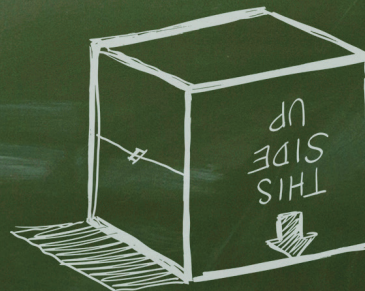
### National Push

Relay will graduate nearly 700 students this year — almost equal to its total number of alumni. It opened in New York but has added sites in Chicago, Houston, New Orleans, and Newark, with a Memphis campus coming soon. It's also begun training principals.



### Measuring Results

Relay doesn't grant a degree unless the teacher's students meet performance benchmarks — typically a year's academic and character growth in a year's time.



### Upending the System

Relay's success is contributing to mounting pressure for change in teacher education, says Frederick Hess, an education scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. "This is something that really has a chance to upend how traditional teaching preparation thinks of its work."



### Teachers as Drill Sergeants?

Critics say Relay promotes militaristic discipline and a narrow "teach to the test" instructional approach. "There is only one pedagogical strategy, and apparently it is the one that is best at raising test scores," wrote education historian Diane Ravitch in her blog. Others worry that Relay is being used to help destroy traditional teacher preparation and replace it with for-profit models.

