

Leading for Equity



Supporting California’s Equity Leaders

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California is making a major and sustained investment in our school leaders through 21CSLA—the 21st Century California School Leadership Academy. 21CSLA provides professional learning and support to equity leaders so that they may prioritize and serve students and families from historically marginalized communities.

Headquartered at the UC Berkeley School of Education, 21CSLA is led in partnership with the UCLA School of Education and Information Studies, California Subject Matter Project, and seven Regional Academies throughout the state. 21CSLA is one of many branches of the California Department of Education State System of Support.

21CSLA was launched in 2020 with more than \$40 million in grants to the State Center and Regional Academies, in partnership with the California Department of Education, State Board of Education, and California Collaborative for Educational Excellence. An additional \$7 million

was awarded in 2021 and 2022 to support the equitable rollout of California’s Universal Transitional Kindergarten initiative.

21CSLA ensures that thousands of public school leaders throughout California have access to no-cost, high-quality professional learning, which includes leadership coaching.

All of our programs focus on equity leadership with an emphasis on improving instruction and achievement outcomes for English Learners, students with disabilities, low-income students, and other historically marginalized students.

Special programming for the equitable implementation of Universal Transitional Kindergarten and certification of UTK leaders is also supported through the 21CSLA State Center.

This work is fueled and inspired by research which reveals the enormous impact principals and district leaders have in improving schools for the most marginalized students.

As Dean Tina Christie from the UCLA School of Education and Information Studies has said: **“In the face of real and difficult challenges that confront our state and nation, California’s public schools may be our most important institutions for furthering equity and opening the doors to opportunity and justice for all.”**

Please find here stories of impact from across California. We are motivated by our first three years of supporting equity leadership and inspired to double down to accelerate our impact in the next three years.

Thank you for being our partners in work that is effective, inspiring, urgent, and ultimately transformational.

Warmly,


 Dr. Rebecca Cheung
 21CSLA State Center Director



21CSLA equity statement: Leaders for equity transform education to improve access, opportunity, and inclusion for students and adults, especially those who are systemically marginalized and historically underserved, so that they can thrive.





Alameda Regional Academy

SPOTLIGHT

Leading for Justice Summit: Reflecting and Envisioning

The Alameda Regional Academy hosted its first region-wide event in summer 2022 to support leaders with equity-focused initiatives designed to serve their most marginalized students. The two-day summit with more than 80 participants provided an opportunity for leaders to reflect on their work, gauge and evaluate progress through the practices of continuous improvement, participate in relevant breakout sessions, and plan next steps.

Attendees registered as district leadership teams, special project teams, and site teams. One district attended with 20 administrators and used the summit to extend their professional learning plan. Our African American Male Leaders Network affinity group also chose to participate both as the AAMLN and with their sites. Through their participation at the summit, six leaders registered for individualized coaching in year three of the first cohort.

VOICES

“I appreciated the outstanding coordination, facilitation, organization, and framing for each day, as well as the affinity groups and diverse break-out sessions covering a range of important topics. This included the opportunity to engage in deep reflection, inquiry, and meaning-making as we reimagine schooling and design for equity.” —LEADING FOR JUSTICE SUMMIT PARTICIPANT

SUMMIT PARTICIPANT



Kern (ValCo) Regional Academy

SPOTLIGHT

Community of Practice yields shared sisterhood

Project Director Tina Macias led a highly successful series focused on gender equity for female staff and students based on the book *Leading While Female* by Trudy Arriaga, Stacie Stanley, and Delores Lindsey.

The series, which began as a Local Professional Learning attended by all genders, drew on the research of feminism, intersectionality, educational leadership, and cultural proficiency. Topics included how to understand the impact of faux narratives that foster lack of confidence among girls and women and how to utilize the “Tools of Cultural Proficiency” to examine and take on challenges. Guest speakers, including all three authors of the book, supported participants to learn from the stories of women leaders who have confronted and overcome barriers to career development, including women who were targets of implicit bias.

After twelve weeks together, the group decided to form a community of practice for female leaders. The CoP developed a strong community, self-described as “shared sisterhood,” which will become a series in Fall 2023.

VOICES

“I am incredibly stoked to be spending three days of professional development studying the convergence of improvement science and equity in our education systems. I’m waist-deep into the ‘how’ of continuous improvement and examining my personal role . . . Everything I love about what I do is in these sessions.” —21CSLA SUMMER INSTITUTE PARTICIPANT

HOUSED AT

Valley to Coast Collaborative, Los Angeles County Office of Education

COUNTIES SERVED

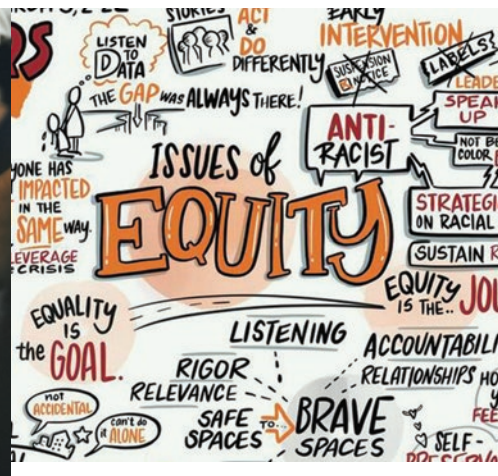
Fresno
Kern
Los Angeles
San Luis Obispo
Santa Barbara
Ventura

HOUSED AT

Leadership Programs, UC Berkeley School of Education

COUNTIES SERVED

Alameda
Contra Costa
San Francisco
San Mateo
Santa Clara
Solano





Placer/Sacramento Regional Academy

SPOTLIGHT

Leaders hone empathetic dialogue skills

“Compassionate Dialogue” with Dr. Nancy Dome (held in both Fall 2022 and Spring 2023) was one of Placer/Sacramento’s most powerful Local Professional Learning (LPL) opportunities. The series focused on building leaders’ skills to engage in empathetic dialogue and to lean into difficult conversations that support a solid foundation for change and progress. While many leaders have the desire to confront inequity and disrupt patterns that support inequitable outcomes, they lack the skills to tackle difficult conversations and confront systems and cultures that contribute to those inequities.

The LPL provided participants with a framework to engage in empathetic dialogue. Several themes arose from participation including moving beyond understanding equity to “acting in equity” for themselves as leaders, the students they serve, and their schools and communities. Participants especially appreciated the opportunity to practice real-life protocols and scenarios in a safe space.

Since the LPL was so well-received, we are working to expand it into a deeper experience in Cohort 2, with both asynchronous learning and a Community of Practice.

VOICES

“I wish the whole world could access this session. It feels like the solution to world peace!” —PARTICIPANT IN “COMPASSIONATE DIALOGUE”

HOUSED AT

Sacramento County
Office of Education

COUNTIES SERVED

- Alpine
- Amador
- Calaveras
- Colusa
- El Dorado
- Nevada
- Placer
- Sacramento
- San Joaquin
- Sierra
- Sutter
- Tuolumne
- Yolo
- Yuba



Riverside/San Diego Regional Academy

SPOTLIGHT

School teams strengthen connections

“I feel better prepared to help students thrive and offer support in meaningful ways,” says Christine Stear, fifth-grade teacher at Dunn Elementary School, who participated in a 21CSLA Community of Practice. Collaborating with Principal Mario Carranza, Stear opened lines of communication and improved working relationships at her school, which allowed for intentional conversations to drive equitable student outcomes. She says the school community is no longer “operating as islands, but as a collective group of individuals who see each other and hear each other.”

At Scholarship Prep Oceanside, Principal Valerie Douglass strives to create an anti-racist and equity-focused school community which is inclusive of all staff, not just teachers. As a result of the leadership team’s planning during 21CSLA sessions, the school is creating a structure and space for teachers to collaborate, discuss equity-focused instructional practices, and receive student input.

VOICES

“I have been an educator for 28 years in various capacities. I have received mentorship in the past, but none like my 21CSLA coach. Their passion to help me understand my leadership voice, along with the moves I can make, have been helping me know a landscape of opportunities to make a difference at my site.”
—PRINCIPAL WHO RECEIVES 1:1 COACHING

HOUSED AT

Los Angeles
Education Partnership

COUNTIES SERVED

- Imperial
- Orange
- Riverside
- San Bernardino
- San Diego





Shasta (NorCal ELC) Regional Academy

SPOTLIGHT

Transformation in name and practice

Chrysalis Charter, a K-8 School in Shasta County, reached out to our team with a problem of practice: a disproportionate number of students at their school identified for special education. Since the focus of our work is to support local school teams to learn and implement evidence-driven continuous improvement on equity-centered problems to benefit students and leaders, we worked with Chrysalis Charter over two years on leadership coaching and support to address this particular challenge and others. With our support, the Chrysalis team analyzed data and leaned into the science of reading, changed their schedule to allow for interventions, and began making data-based decisions. Subsequently, Chrysalis reduced the number of students with IEPs at the school from 18 to 11 percent of the school population of 175 students. Students receiving reading interventions dropped by nearly two-thirds over two years. And the team was able to share their success with other rural schools—spreading insights and impact. It appears Chrysalis Charter is appropriately named for transformation!

VOICES

“I really benefited from meeting staff from so many schools to share ideas and have some starting points with the issues we all face. Even my little rural school has some of the same issues as the large schools. Great to know I am not alone.”

—ADMINISTRATOR IN TRINITY COUNTY

HOUSED AT

Northern California
Educational
Leadership
Consortium,
California State
University, Chico

COUNTIES SERVED

Butte
Del Norte
Glenn
Humboldt
Lassen
Modoc
Plumas
Shasta
Siskiyou
Tehama
Trinity



Sonoma (North Bay/North Coast) Regional Academy

SPOTLIGHT

Teacher leaders engage students to solve real-world challenges

An inspirational team of 32 teacher leaders—from preschool, family child care, Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, special education, and site administration—is engaging in a year-long project-based learning experience to demonstrate how 4- and 5-year-olds are capable of thinking about real-world problems, imagining solutions, and collaborating with the community on making their ideas a reality. Participants are developing and implementing play-infused project-based learning experiences aligned with the California Preschool Learning Foundations.

Our 21CSLA Sonoma Regional Academy is supporting the Sonoma County Office of Education in leading this Universal Pre-Kindergarten Project-Based Learning Community of Practice. Through this CoP, the Proctor Terrace school team from Santa Rosa is developing a project-based curriculum unit where students are brainstorming ways to improve their playground bike path and will present ideas and solutions to their school community and district maintenance director.

VOICES

“I like getting reinforced that young TK kids are not too young to experience Project-Based Learning and that they actually grow from it emotionally.” —PROCTOR TERRACE MEMBER OF THE COP

HOUSED AT

Sonoma County
Office of Education

COUNTIES SERVED

Lake
Marin
Mendocino
Napa
Sonoma





Tulare (Mid-State) Regional Academy

SPOTLIGHT

Leaders read, reflect, and discuss to develop awareness

Our Regional Academy supported the Santa Cruz Office of Education in its Grading for Equity project, sponsored through our Equity Support Incubator.

Reenvisioning grading is an issue of equity. Inquiry into the extent to which a grade reflects mastery and how it might inadvertently reward some students and disadvantage others is essential to these conversations. How we report student learning to parents, students, and other stakeholders is equally important and is often reflective of teaching and learning practices.

With our support, the Santa Cruz Office of Education has enabled efforts at middle and high schools across the county to focus on these grading issues of equity, particularly changing grading practices that, in the past, may have caused achievement gaps among student groups. The focus has been on collaboration to improve teaching and learning, which is not easy and requires time, commitment, and courage on the part of administrators and teachers.

VOICES

“I have a much greater understanding of the history and current systems of racial inequity, and opportunities to examine some of my own bias. I am inspired to continue building self and societal awareness, and to look for opportunities to collaborate towards making positive change.” —LOCAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PARTICIPANT

LEARNING PARTICIPANT

HOUSED AT

Madera County
Superintendent of
Schools

COUNTIES SERVED

Inyo
Kings
Madera
Mariposa
Merced
Mono
Monterey
San Benito
Santa Cruz
Stanislaus
Tulare



21CSLA State Center Initiatives

INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

Preparing equity leaders for California’s UTK

21CSLA’s UTK Leadership Initiative features no-cost professional learning for leaders, which includes a “train-the-trainer” model and certification, learning modules with more than 60 hours of content, design and piloting of multiple professional learning opportunities, and evaluation and research to continually improve the effort. Since fall 2022, we’ve collaborated with 21CSLA Regional Academies throughout California to offer UTK professional learning pilots for leaders who are eager to create equity-focused Transitional Kindergarten programs in their schools.

The professional learning topics include developmentally appropriate instruction, social and emotional development, instructional practices for English Language Learners and bilingual students, universal design for learning, home/family engagement, and integration across preschool through third grade—among many other areas.

VOICES

“These sessions brought to light the necessity of collaboration with colleagues statewide. There was a lot of talent and expertise in the room and being able to lean on one-another to hone our craft in how we approach the vision of UPK and implementation of UTK was key in moving the work forward with fidelity.”

—UTK PILOT PARTICIPANT

HOUSED AT

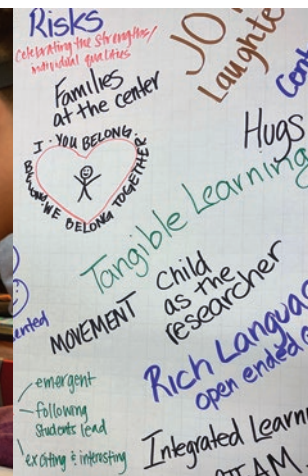
Leadership Programs,
UC Berkeley School
of Education

PARTNERS

UCLA School of
Education and
Information Studies
California Subject
Matter Project

REGIONAL ACADEMIES

Alameda
Kern
Placer/Sacramento
Riverside/San Diego
Shasta
Sonoma
Tulare



INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

UTK certificates for leaders

In collaboration with the California Department of Education, State Board of Education, California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, and Berkeley Extension, the 21CSLA State Center is building equity-centered instructional leadership for early learning. California will offer UTK to all of the state’s 4-year-olds by 2026.

The early learning training—in the form of online credit-based courses—will be for candidates who are enrolled in Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC) programs and will emphasize connections to and impacts on the preschool through third grade (P-3) continuum.

The project will feature a two-course sequence on leadership for implementing early learning that culminates in a certificate. Courses will be piloted and modified in 2022/2023 and delivered multiple times per year, beginning in 2023/2024. A continuous improvement process will be baked into the model.



VOICES

“In order to have an equity-forward approach to the implementation of Universal Transitional Kindergarten, we must innovate to deliver the content knowledge and resources that inform instructional decisions. This support will embed equity-focused training into our credential programs for administrators and ultimately help ensure the success of UTK in the state.” —21CSLA DIRECTOR REBECCA CHEUNG



INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

Inquiry: Why Now?

In this instructional leadership-focused program, educational leaders (site leaders, district leaders, and teacher leaders) are invited to explore the power and potential of inquiry-based instruction as a tool to promote and support a more equitable classroom learning environment, where students develop key practices to become critical thinkers.

An inquiry model’s focus on questions offers the first advantage: Who is learning? Who is not? Who is asking the question? How do we know? How might a change in methods impact student learning? How can educators work together to improve student learning?

Inquiry: Why Now? considers how leaders can leverage inquiry-based learning to improve access, opportunity, and inclusion for student populations who have been historically marginalized and underserved.

VOICES

“I am a new leader and going to a new school this coming fall. This program helped me solidify the umbrella of inquiry and how it impacts equity. I have not taken a deep dive like this before, so I feel more informed and empowered to share.”
—INQUIRY: WHY NOW, PARTICIPANT



INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

Research in support of practice

While providing high-level professional learning for educational leaders, we feel it is also essential to understand how leaders are learning with us so that we can continue to center equity, improve our work, and contribute to a larger knowledge base. By engaging in research, we are able to gain a synthesized overview of how different parts of 21CSLA work together, outline the purposeful processes, and make visible the impacts. At the same time, we also elevate and celebrate the hard work of education leaders in our schools by increasing our understanding of their learning and practice. This work enables us as researchers to better support practitioners. We are inclusive of all research traditions and methods, while research-practice partnership is an integral part of how 21CSLA advances equity.

To date, we've produced 13 research-practice webinars, featuring California scholars and leaders from across the state. They have discussed pressing issues for the field, including college access for incarcerated youth, Universal Transitional Kindergarten leadership, pandemic innovations, digital learning, and improvement science. We've collaborated with scholars on multi-year research projects related to transformational leadership, resiliency, actions for equity, and more.



VOICES

“I appreciated the combination of high level research and practitioner comments.” —21CSLA WEBINAR PARTICIPANT



By the Numbers

2020-2023 IMPACT

Reaching out across the state

Offerings

333

Leaders served

8300

- Coaching
- Collective Meetings and Retreats
- Communities of Practice
- Digitally Mediated Learning
- Localized Professional Learning
- Summits
- Training
- Webinars

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California State Board of Education

California Department of Education

California Collaborative for Educational Excellence

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