

Network Overview & Vision

CORE Districts is a nonprofit collaborative of nine of California's largest and most diverse urban school systems, serving nearly one million students statewide. In 2024, the CORE superintendents launched **CORE Schools**, a focused redesign network within CORE Districts dedicated to reimagining secondary education. This subgroup brings together **Oakland, Long Beach, Santa Ana, and Garden Grove Unified School Districts** to design Future-Forward Secondary Education Systems grounded in belonging, deeper learning, and equitable outcomes. **CORE Schools** operate within CORE's governance structure, enabling lessons from pilot sites to flow across all nine member districts.



Development of Pilots within Participating Districts, and potential Demonstration Sites



Each of our four participating districts is currently working toward two sets of outcomes that each have milestones across the 2025-26 school year:

- Outcome 1: The design of innovative student experiences that will be piloted in the Fall of 2026, and
- Outcome 2: Strengthened conditions for future forward secondary education systems.

Innovation pilots are anchored to four priorities - Innovation Infrastructure, Future-Ready Learning Systems, Equity Driven Design, and Human-Centered Learning Environments. Pilots are measured against eleven future-forward secondary education effectiveness characteristics to determine adaptation and modification needs, and potential for spread, scale and demonstration.



CORE Schools Network (System-Level Demonstration) – Central offices and communities engaged in Collective Transformation Design.

Key Partners & Collaborators

CORE Districts

Fresno, Garden Grove, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, and Santa Ana Unified School Districts

National Equity Project (NEP)

Leads Liberatory Design and community co-design processes centering student, family, and educator voice.

Transcend Education (TE)

Provides design coaching, model codification, and research support for school-level innovation.

Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE)

Longstanding research partner managing the CORE–PACE longitudinal data system housed at Stanford University.

Redesigned Learning Examples

Redesign Element	Current Strengths
Every Student is Known & Supported	At MetWest High in Oakland, every student is part of a four-year advisory cohort and matched with an internship mentor who knows their interests and goals. At Santiago High in Garden Grove, students meet regularly with advisors through mentorship pilots and relationship-mapping tools, ensuring no one falls through the cracks. Schools across CORE use the Developmental Relationships Survey to identify which students still lack a trusted adult, prompting immediate outreach.
Redesign Learning for Deeper Knowledge & Skills	At Sato Academy in Long Beach, students apply engineering and biomedical concepts through industry-connected projects and dual-enrollment coursework. At Círculos in Santa Ana, students lead project-based units tackling community challenges, while Fremont High students in Oakland showcase mastery through capstone exhibitions and interdisciplinary projects tied to real problems. CORE Schools are extending these practices into comprehensive sites—integrating STEM pathways in Long Beach, expanding internship programs in Oakland, and deepening portfolio-based evaluation aligned to graduation outcomes in Garden Grove.
Equitable Student-Centered Learning & Supports	CORE Schools prioritize embedding personalization and equity through systems that honor each student's story and needs. Santa Ana USD is piloting a Future Portfolio Assessment, a dynamic digital platform where students compile projects, reflections, and multimedia evidence of learning from TK–12—making growth visible to peers, families, and educators. Garden Grove USD has launched student advisories across all high schools, giving students a direct voice in shaping pathways and school experiences.
Promote Measurable Growth in Student Engagement & Learning	CORE Schools districts are embedding liberatory design practices that position students and communities as co-designers of learning. Oakland USD is expanding MetWest's advisory and exhibition model to Fremont High, where students lead conferences and reflect on their growth through grade-level defenses. The CORE–PACE data system tracks belonging, engagement, and SEL metrics alongside academic indicators, allowing teams to refine supports and measure progress.
Design Sustainable Structures to Maintain Impact Over Time	Oakland USD and Santa Ana USD are codifying flexible scheduling and competency-based progression through district policy to sustain personalized learning. Garden Grove USD and Long Beach USD are aligning staffing models, budgets, and collaboration time to maintain advisory systems and expand work-based learning pathways.

Pilot Activity Highlights

- ✓ **CORE Schools** operates as a living network of redesign, where central offices, educators, students, and communities co-design and test new systems for equitable, future-ready learning.
- ✓ The **Network Hub** - a partnership between CORE Districts, NEP, and Transcend Education - will coordinate cross-district learning, facilitate structured convenings, and guide annual learning cycles where **CORE Schools** test, refine, and share change ideas. The Hub ensures coherence between local redesign and statewide policy learning through the CORE–PACE Research Partnership.