

CREATING A CULTURE OF PUBLIC LEARNING TO SUPPORT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



Montalvin Manor K-8 in West Contra Costa Unified School District is in Richmond, California. A Title 1 school, more than 90% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Supported by long-standing partnership with Lead by Learning, Montalvin Manor K-8 has successfully achieved two foundational objectives, both established to improve student outcomes. First, the school continues to strengthen and sustain a thriving culture of Public Learning. Second, the school focuses on building ongoing teacher leadership. In 2020-21, Montalvin Manor's goal is using student-level data consistently to inform targeted small-group instruction. They continue to center inquiry and learning as the primary role of their Instructional Leadership Team to ensure they meet their students' learning needs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Montalvin Manor K-8's literacy growth percentile according to Spring 2019 data for English Language Arts is 100, making their growth the fastest in the Contra Costa school district.
- Montalvin Manor K-8 is reclassifying English Learner students at a rate that outpaces both the district and state averages.
- Spring 2019 data shows that Montalvin Manor K-8's math growth percentile was 71, another significant outcome.
- 100% of the school's teachers engage in Public Learning to help each other assess and modify teaching practices.
- In 2019-2020, 96% of teachers made documented changes in instruction based on student learning data.

MONTALVIN MANOR FOUNDATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1

Create a culture
of Public Learning
among the teachers
and leaders

2

Build and support
teacher leadership

3

Transform the ILT
into the inquiry hub
for student and adult
learning

PUBLIC LEARNING MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

COLLECTIVE GOALS, MONTHLY “PROBLEMS OF PRACTICE,” AND AN ILT THAT LEARNS TOGETHER BUILD THE CULTURE OF PUBLIC LEARNING AT MONTALVIN MANOR.

In the beginning of each year, teacher leaders facilitate a collective goal setting process with colleagues. Gathering input from individual teachers and prioritizing the goals together, they funnel their work into a single instructional goal—specific enough so they can dig in and make tangible progress, and broad enough to encompass the concerns and desired areas of growth voiced by the teachers within an safe and welcoming culture.

“When we first started this collaboration journey, our big goal was “Let’s get together.” We moved from there into, “Let’s think about what our kids need and how to work as a collective to get there.” Instead of everyone working on their own individual interests, we are all leaning on each other to work towards a shared goal for student learning.”

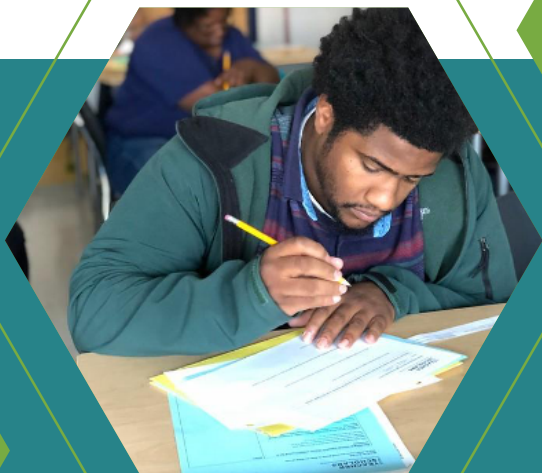
Katherine Acosta-Verprauskus, Principal
Montalvin Manor K-8

“We looked at schoolwide data and named a goal to work on as a whole school. This brought a sense of collective efficacy that propelled our cohesion as a staff and our ability to see real change in our students’ learning. We chose to focus on academic language development for our English learners one year and then on intervention the next year. Both goals felt broad enough that everyone could relate but also specific and important.”

Beth Levine, Teacher Leader
Montalvin Manor K-8

Montalvin staff meet once a month and engage in what they call, “Problem of Practice”. During these sessions, teachers and leaders use Public Learning as a structure to support a sitewide teacher practice goal of using student-level data to inform targeted small-group instruction. Every month, teachers engage in learning conversations that are grounded in student level data they bring. The data supports teachers to understand what is actually happening for their students and what they can do to better support students in relation to their teacher practice goal.

Montalvin Manor K-8’s Instructional leadership Team is becoming the inquiry and learning hub for the school. The teacher leaders and principals use the ILT to understand both adult and student learning. Through this close attention to teacher learning, they are building teacher leader capacity across all grade levels.



A new teacher at Montalvin Manor K-8 during the 2020-21 school year is embarking on collaborative inquiry for the first time with Lead by Learning. He is focusing on student engagement and is using audio data and transcripts of focal student interviews to drive instruction for his English Learner students. An English Learner himself as a child, he has become curious about how his English Learners’ engagement and participation is different depending on the instructional task. He seeks to ensure his students are building self-confidence alongside their language skills to engage across mediums.

EDUCATOR VOICES TELL THE STORY



“Lead by Learning was able to guide us through a process that may seem obvious but in practice actually isn’t. One of our values is that everyone is a learner at Montalvin – and that absolutely includes me. It’s hard to be a facilitator and a participant. Lead by Learning was able to provide high quality structure, accountability, and allowed me the opportunity to join in with my teachers and do the collaboration. Even on the craziest days, the ones where I felt like there were 100 office referrals, a line of frustrated parents, and a pop-in visit from the superintendent, I knew that collaboration on our Wednesday was going to be high quality and translate to great things for kids the next day. Perhaps most importantly, in that first year with Lead by Learning, our teacher leaders were able to cultivate the skills to plan and facilitate meetings with their colleagues.”

- Katherine Acosta-Verprauskus
Principal of Montalvin Manor K-8

IN THE WORDS OF TEACHERS...

“When we talk as teachers without data, the conversation stays on the surface, but with data the conversations are much more useful and focus us on the goal of changing practice to improve student learning.”

“I personally experienced a mindset shift as a teacher going through this process over the years...I wasn’t eager to participate in it at first - it felt really uncomfortable to bring my imperfect video of students talking and giving one word answers to the table.... It was a relief to admit that teaching and learning is inherently messy and feel like we are all supporting each other to learn as professionals. Now, four years later, I am a Teacher Leader, speaking in front of my colleagues every month about being a community of learners and sharing our data with one another. I am now the one being a cheerleader for public learning and encouraging my colleagues to try it out each month!”

IMPACTING THE SYSTEM

As Lead by Learning is supporting Montalvin Manor K-8 through creating a culture of Public Learning, our work is expanding and impacting adult learning across the system.

- Teacher Leaders are involved in our biannual Teacher Leader Network, of 60+ teacher leaders from 15+ school sites around the San Francisco Bay Area, to discuss teacher leadership and collaborative inquiry with a focus in 2020-2021 on Supportive Challenge & Building Self Awareness.
- Montalvin Manor Principal Katherine Acosta-Verprauskus is a design partner with Lead by Learning’s Elementary Principal Collaborative Inquiry Group to provide learning for all Elementary Principals in West Contra Costa Unified School District.
- Principal Katherine Acosta-Verprauskus, Assistant Principal Jessie Welcomer, and Teacher Leaders are enrolled in the Lead By Learning Certificate Program to build their leadership capacity to design and facilitate adult learning.
- Teacher Leader Beth Levine was featured in a Lead by Learning ebinar about using student learning data in fall of 2020 titled Are our students experiencing what we think they are experiencing?

TOGETHER, WE CAN RE-IMAGINE YOUR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CULTURE...

As educators and partners our focus is to support you as you move your system to a more future-oriented approach to learning, one driven by science-based knowledge about how learning happens. Engagement, belonging, deep and messy meaning making, and developing students' voices is the work that we undertake together. It begins with re-imagining educator learning.

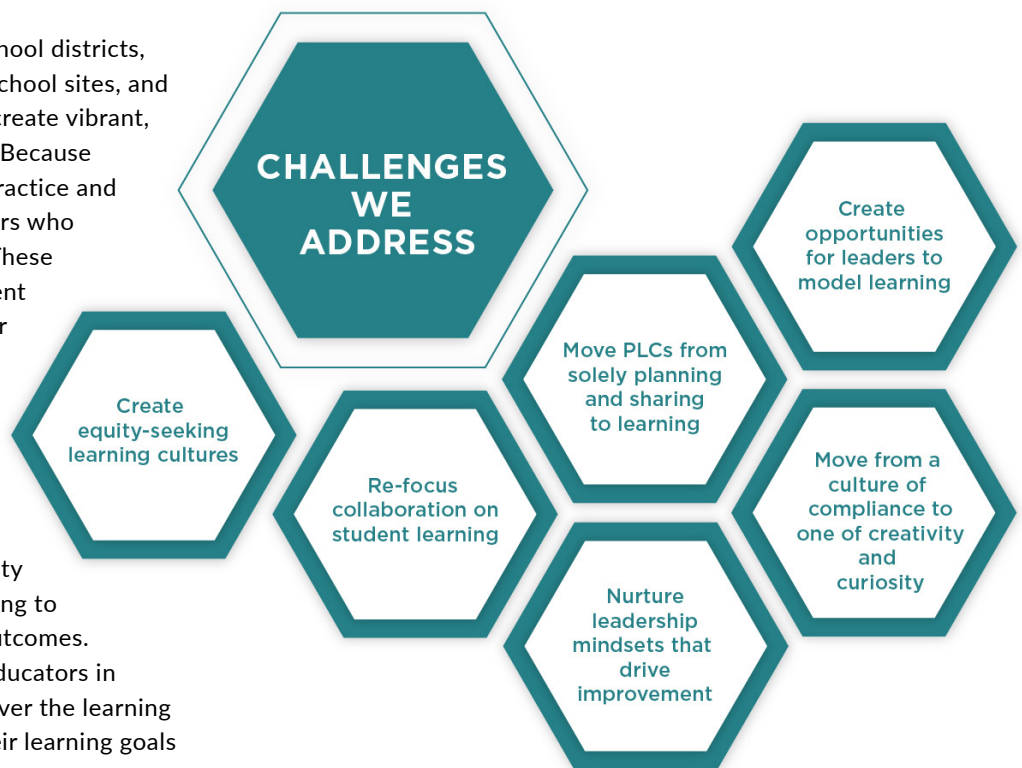
So, you might ask, "How do you do that?"

Lead by Learning offers professional learning that's foundational to educators' capacity to create and sustain a robust culture of learning and improvement at all levels of the education system. Our work is our partners' launching pad for a new, central focus on students' experiences, for lasting disruption of unjust practices, and for helping educators lead the way.

OUR WORK

We work with teams of educators in school districts, county education agencies, individual school sites, and in education-focused organizations to create vibrant, effective adult learning cultures. Why? Because educators who learn about their own practice and its impact on students become educators who lead towards a more equitable future. These are the educators that drive improvement for their students, their teams, and their schools.

Through structured facilitation, mentoring, coaching and individual and team planning, we use several techniques. These include inquiry, our flagship Public Learning process, capacity building, and deep consulting all targeting to reach our partners' goals for student outcomes. We co-create a culture that supports educators in building the skills and capacities to deliver the learning experiences students need to reach their learning goals and realize their potential.



LEARN MORE

For more information about the programs and services offered to schools, districts and county education agencies, visit our website at www.weleadbylearning.org, register for one of our many free webinars, or contact us via email at leadbylearning@mills.edu.

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