

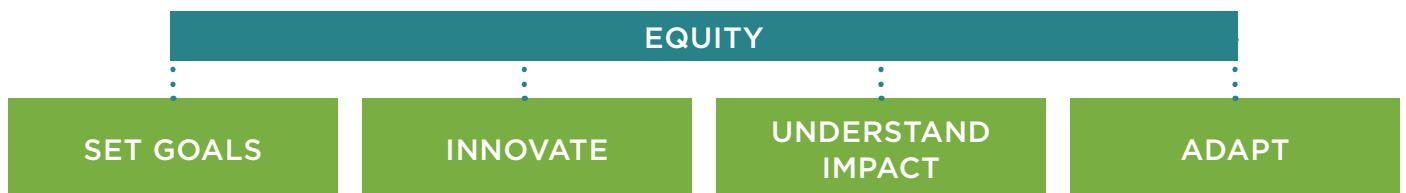
# BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY TO DRIVE IMPROVEMENT: OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT EXPANDED LEARNING DEPARTMENT



If improving outcomes for students and teachers was as easy as simply telling people what to do, the education profession would be much further along in making improvements. However, we know we can't just simply 'snap' our fingers and effect change. Schools and districts are complex, dynamic organizations. They require continuous collaboration, curiosity, and grounding in collective goals to meet the moment and center learning.

The Oakland Unified (OUSD) Expanded Learning Department works with over 100 site coordinators and agency directors to support the district's 35,000 students. OUSD's Expanded Learning Department leaders partnered with Lead by Learning to improve program quality and engage in authentic Continuous Quality Improvement.

Now the department uses Lead by Learning's collaboration process to set goals, innovate, understand impact, and adapt through the lens of equity.



But it wasn't always this way...

## COLLABORATING TO DEVELOP THE OUSD EXPANDED LEARNING FRAMEWORK FOR IMPROVEMENT

Grounded in Lead by Learning's collaborative inquiry process, OUSD's Expanded Learning team co-developed a framework to assess impact with an equity lens: Truth-Hope-Change-Curiosity-Celebration. The framework, supported by Lead by Learning's practice of Public Learning and Peter Senge's Creative Tension framework, guides leaders and staff to continuously ask:

- What is your truth? (What is happening in your programs right now?)
- What is your hope? (What is your vision for your programs?)
- What is the change you want to see?
- What are you curious about?
- What growth can you celebrate?

### THE POWER OF PUBLIC LEARNING

100 Oakland Expanded Learning site coordinators and agency directors gathered to explore the question "What do we mean by quality programs?" Tony Douangviseth, Executive Director of Youth Together, sat at the front of the room as a Public Learner, with his program manager Priscilla Parchia and a colleague from EBAYC, Frederick Mesa as supportive listeners. Tony began by sharing how he was grappling with his staff's differing notions of quality, an authentic dilemma many in the room related to.

Then Frederick and Priscilla asked questions and made observations to support Tony's learning. Frederick offered, "When I listen to you talk about these differing opinions about quality, I keep thinking 'What does the child need? We need to ask the youth: What is the quality now? What is the quality that we want?'" Priscilla followed with an appreciation of Tony, for sharing his uncertainty and for demonstrating a growth mindset.

Tony thanked his listeners for returning him to what was most important: the youth. He reflected, "I'm thinking I should be asking more questions to staff at school sites like 'What do the youth think?' and 'What are the youth saying?'" Tony's dilemma of practice surfaced a key value for the OUSD Expanded Learning group: quality programming is student-driven, and practitioners need to hear from students in order to respond to their needs.

### IMPACT ON STAFF

Community-based agency directors, after-school site coordinators, and school-day teacher liaisons report:

- Deeper understanding of vision, goals, and expectations
- Better relationships with staff
- Asking more questions and listening more to staff
- Stronger relationships and communication between school-day and after-school staff
- Sharing student data across school-day and after-school staff

### IMPACT ON STUDENTS

- Increased attendance and engagement in both school-day and after-school programs
- Increased social and emotional learning support from after-school staff
- A recent report from Oakland Fund for Children & Youth notes that:
  - ▶ Students participating in the after-school programs were less likely to be chronically absent for school-day learning.
  - ▶ 76% of school leaders noted that the Expanded Learning program supports students' academic growth.
  - ▶ 90% of school leaders agreed that the programs contribute to a positive school culture and climate.



"This new framework and our work with Lead by Learning elevated the voices of our community and staff working on the front lines. For me, these questions are about honoring the knowledge and expertise of those working most closely to students and their families. We wanted to truly take on the work of equity and empowerment and this means supporting everyone on our team to be an agent in their improvement work. Everyone is able to vision, to understand current reality, and to get curious about their learners so they can be responsive."

Martha Peña, Coordinator of Oakland Unified's Expanded Learning

# THE OUSD/LEAD BY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP. A MULTI-YEAR ENGAGEMENT. A LASTING IMPACT.

“We knew what we wanted our staff “to do,” but also knew we needed to inspire and empower them to take agency and act. We needed to experience the type of learning we wanted to provide for our staff.”

- Martha Peña, Coordinator of Oakland Unified's Expanded Learning.

## LEAD BY LEARNING WORK

### YEAR 1: INTENSIVE

- Designed and facilitated visioning retreat for leaders
- Designed and facilitated professional learning sessions with all agency directors and site coordinators
- Designed and facilitated partnership meetings between site coordinators and school-day teacher liaisons
- Facilitated monthly visioning and debrief sessions with leaders before and after each meeting, with a focus on process, outcomes, and reflecting on goals
- Introduced the practice of Public Learning to create a collaborative sense-making space that centered learning not performance
- Developed adult social and emotional learning (SEL) capacities with all the program staff

### YEAR 2: TRANSITIONING

- Designed and facilitated visioning retreat for leaders
- Co-designed and co-facilitated professional learning sessions with agency directors, site coordinators, and school-day teacher liaisons
- Integrated a diverse set of data, including youth feedback, self-assessment, and program observation to assess quality
- Facilitated monthly visioning and debrief sessions with leaders before and after each meeting, with a focus on process, outcomes, and reflecting on goals
- Refined and deepened understanding of Public Learning
- Refined adult SEL capacities with all the program staff

### YEAR 3: SUSTAINING

- Designed and facilitated visioning retreat for leaders
- Co-designed professional learning sessions with agency directors, site coordinators, and school-day teacher liaisons
- Prepared Expanded Learning team to facilitate professional learning sessions with agency directors, site coordinators, and school-day teacher liaisons
- Facilitated monthly visioning and debrief sessions with leaders before and after each meeting, with a focus on process, outcomes, and reflecting on goals
- Leadership team participation in the Lead by Learning Certificate program

# ADAPTING TO THE MOMENT

When schools shifted to remote learning OUSD's Expanded Learning team was ready to innovate. They used their Truth-Hope-Change-Curiosity-Celebration framework in order to adapt quickly and creatively.

## LEVERAGING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOL-DAY AND AFTER-SCHOOL STAFF TO SUPPORT VIRTUAL LEARNING

Fred T. Korematsu Discovery Academy school

Early in the 2020-21 school year, day-school staff faced challenges in distance learning around student engagement. The year prior, Expanded Learning staff worked hard to create partnerships by bringing their site partners with them to Lead by Learning meetings. Knowing they could rely on this collaborative partnership, they asked the question, "How can we improve student engagement?" In partnership, Expanded Learning staff helped to reach out to families and embed social and emotional learning best practices for students and teachers to boost engagement. Expanded Learning staff provided mindful minutes, breakout room support, and led warm welcomes before the school day started for students to help them feel centered before starting their academics.

## BUILDING COHERENCE IN READING INSTRUCTION

Life Academy of Health and Bioscience

During distance learning, school-day educators were uncertain about how to support all their students' reading needs at a distance. Instead of working in silos, after-school site coordinators and day-school teacher liaisons used Public Learning to partner together. The result was a joint effort to support reading across the whole day. Expanded learning staff were trained by teachers to support the distance learning reading program and provide invaluable small group intervention.



"Because of the relationship we had with day school, day school called on after school to support reaching out with families... It's not us and them, it is a collaborative effort to support the whole child."

John Fuentes, Program Manager at Bay Area Community Resources

# LEAD BY LEARNING

Understand learning. Improve teaching. Build leadership.  
*A program of Mills College School of Education*

## LEAD BY LEARNING

Lead by Learning puts learning at the heart of teaching and leading, so educators can continuously deliver on the promise of a quality education for all students. By partnering with a widening community of educators and serving as trusted advisors, we help educators design and create vibrant teacher-led learning cultures, so they evolve as learners who lead systemic improvement and most importantly give all students opportunities to learn, grow and thrive. To learn more, visit [www.weleadbylearning.org](http://www.weleadbylearning.org).