



# ROWING IN THE SAME DIRECTION: BUILDING COHERENCE AND CAPACITY ACROSS TEACHER LEADERS

## KEY ADULT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- + Increased vulnerability in sharing authentic dilemmas of practice
- + Increased discussion of ways to adapt instruction based on student data
- + Increased use of collaborative structures or protocols that ensure equity of voice
- + 92% of El Cerrito High School educators agreed or strongly agreed that their department made progress in aligning assessments



I appreciate the opportunity to get out of being “stuck in operations” and dream big in terms of improving our instruction for equity.

El Cerrito High School Department Leader

## STUDENT GROWTH DATA

On the 2023 Smarter Balance Assessments, student achievement in English increased **16.73%** from 2022. **67.74%** of 11th grade students met or exceeded the state standard in spring of 2023.

Growth occurred for all demographic groups, including the ILT’s focal group, African American students:

SCHOOL YEAR  
**2021-2022**

SCHOOL YEAR  
**2022-2023**

### ELA

*Met or exceeded standard for ELA*

**13.52%**

**39.62%**

### MATH

*Met or exceeded standard for Math*

**0.00%**

**8.16%**

# CASE STUDY: EL CERRITO HIGH SCHOOL

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM INQUIRY PARTNERSHIP 2020-2023

## ABOUT EL CERRITO HIGH SCHOOL

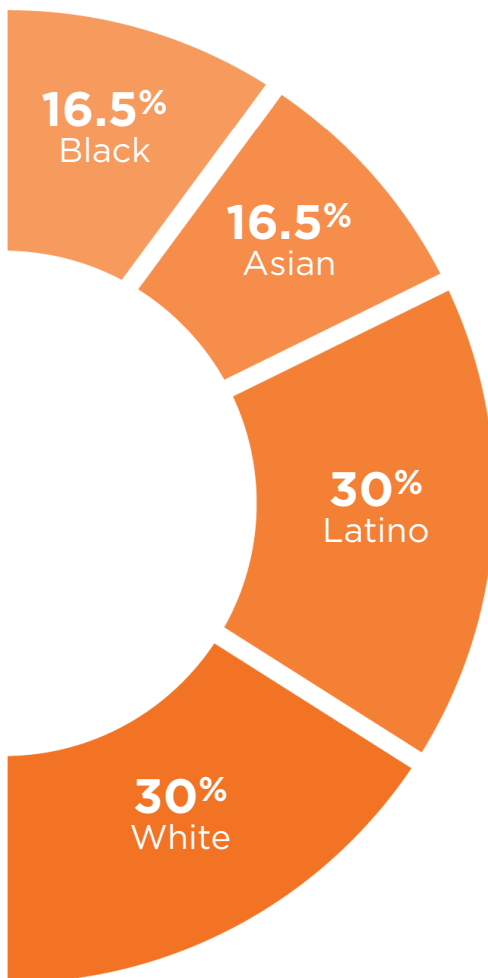
Comprehensive High School  
in West Contra Costa Unified  
School District

**1600**  
students

**89%**  
graduation  
rate

**62**  
full time  
teachers

**33%**  
free and  
reduced  
lunch



## TEACHER LEADER VOICES

### Educator Mindsets Matter: Building Self Awareness of Equity Traps

**Louise Ollano**

El Cerrito High School Math Department Leader

As a new teacher leader in the Math Department at El Cerrito High School, I had to encourage colleagues to have open discussions to create aligned assessments and review student work to begin aligning our grading policies. I soon realized that discussing these sensitive topics led to hurt feelings, defensive tones, and walls going up which made moving forward very difficult.

When I first realized this, I tended to be quiet at meetings because I didn't know how to react, what to say, or how to steer the conversation...like usual, I was just stunned. When I did question or try to discuss deficit mindset comments, the discussion usually ended up with people feeling defeated or offended.

In our second year with Lead by Learning, our Lead by Learning facilitators Nina and Malia began modeling how to Supportively Challenge each other. After some thought-partnership or share out, Nina would start asking us questions that gave us a pause to rethink our thoughts or words, and hopefully encourage us to see a different perspective. I knew I needed to bring this **Supportive Challenge framework** back into my leadership and my department.

In a department meeting, we were discussing the topics that would be assessed on the Algebra 1 final common assessment. Colleague A shared an assessment they created based on the curriculum assessments. Upon review, a few colleagues began making comments about the different ways this would be challenging for their students... and thus the deficit mindsets began flowing. Colleague B mentioned that students "don't care to do the work or come to class" and Colleague C stated that students "struggle with number sense and won't be able to do these problems." Colleague D stated that many of their kids "were going to fail this."

My heart began to race as I realized this is one of those moments to practice my Supportive Challenge skills.

[Read the full article](#)

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## TRAJECTORY

### YEAR 1

#### IDENTITY AND AGENCY

Move from school operations to instructional leadership to develop teacher leader identity and ILT community.

- + Develop shared ILT agreements and expectations
- + Establish ILT norms for looking at and discussing data
- + Establish Design Team for distributive leadership
- + Establish the practice of Public Learning

### YEAR 2

#### TRUST AND VULNERABILITY

Create the conditions for teacher leaders to identify an equity goal, unearth problems of practice related to that goal, build collective efficacy, and adapt instruction.

- + Develop an equity goal
- + Identify focal student group
- + Adopt street data collection practices
- + Integrate Lead by Learning signature practices at department meetings

### YEAR 3

#### ALIGNMENT AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Accelerate student progress, with an emphasis on disrupting predictive outcomes for historically marginalized focal groups at El Cerrito High School.

- + Align course-alike assessments and curriculum to create more equitable learning experiences for students



If you are really interested in systemic change it is not going to be done with me, the principal, alone. No way. I'm not the expert here. My teachers are. Putting them in a position where their expertise is valued is transformational.

**Patricia Crespo**  
El Cerrito High School Principal 2018-2024

## A CULTURE OF LEARNING

At monthly ILT meetings, teacher leaders rotate being the Public Learner. As the Public Learner, a teacher leader shares a dilemma or challenge they are facing as an instructional leader with their colleagues. In publicly highlighting one teacher

leader's learning, all teacher leaders develop a deeper awareness of their leadership. This collective process benefits the sharer and listeners by strengthening relationships and belonging between colleagues and increases teacher leader collective efficacy.

VIDEO LINK



CLICK OR SCAN



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INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM INQUIRY PARTNERSHIP 2020-2023

## EDUCATORS AS LEARNERS. EDUCATORS AS LEADERS.

Our approach recognizes that teachers are leaders of learning and leaders themselves. Principals and district teams can achieve even more when they work as leaders with a learning mindset. When teachers are respected and supported as scholars, learners, and agents of real change, the result is innovation and improvement. Our name, Lead by Learning, expresses that core of our work.

We put 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.

As we work side-by-side with educators who are on the front lines of school leadership, it is clear that vision, partnership, and a learning stance are key to leading during times of change. Whether you are leading a classroom, district, or nonprofit organization, our frameworks and practices support you to keep students at the heart of teaching and leading as you move forward. Based on more than 20 years of research, our work is student-centered, classroom-based, educator-led, and inquiry-driven. Together, we transform school leadership.

### FIND OUT MORE



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#### PLAYBOOK: CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR ADULT LEARNING

Learn how to build a vibrant adult learning culture in service of equity.



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#### LEAD BY LEARNING BLOG

Our blog features stories of impact directly from our partners in the field.



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#### MINDSETS & PRACTICES IN ACTION

Watch our on-demand resources to learn how our partners apply our key mindsets and practices in their work.

### CONNECT WITH US

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 [weleadbylearning.org/connect-with-us/](https://weleadbylearning.org/connect-with-us/)

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