Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP) receives $3.3M grant to provide trauma-informed leadership development to Office of Education in five Southland counties

LOS ANGELES, CA — June 4, 2020 — The California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) have selected Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP), a longstanding educational equity nonprofit, as a Regional Academy in the 21st Century California School Leadership Academy (21CSLA) program.

The three-year 3.3M grant will support LAEP’s deployment of its CORE (Cultivating Organizational Resilience & Empowerment) leadership development, coaching, and mentoring to principals and school leaders at schools in San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, Imperial and Orange counties eligible to receive differentiated assistance. The leadership academy will include a special emphasis on building capacity to support English Learner students through a partnership with Californians Together. USC Rossier Center on Education Policy, Equity, & Governance will serve as the program evaluator.

The funding comes at a critical moment for educational equity, as schools everywhere grapple with new challenges magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic and continued racial disparities in education. With this grant, LAEP will provide school leaders with the trauma-informed knowledge and distributed leadership practices necessary to create a healthy school environment through coherence-building, stakeholder engagement, and empathetic and clear communication.

Coaching specific to effective language acquisition programming for English Learners (ELs) will be conducted by Californians Together, an organization with over 20 years of experience conducting EL research and training for district teams statewide.

“In order to bring out the best in our students, we must bring out the best in our educators,” said Michele Broadnax, LAEP Chief Executive Officer. “We are thrilled to be granted this opportunity to create sustainable, systems-level transformation that includes structures to support teacher and student wellbeing and social-emotional strength.”

Founded in 1984, LAEP has a deep-rooted history of supporting education leaders through innovative approaches to school improvement, including the Humanitas interdisciplinary curriculum, the Community Schools model, and strategies based upon school system coherence. Currently, LAEP’s Community Schools model is in operation at 16 partner schools in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), including high-poverty neighborhoods of South Los Angeles, East Los Angeles, and the Northeast San Fernando Valley.

In total, the organization has operated school transformation initiatives in 36 schools across 12 districts, working with 36 principals to help them better lead the teachers and 25,000 students that they serve.
Since 2016, LAEP has framed this work through its innovative Cultivating Organizational Resilience and Empowerment (CORE) program -- which will serve as the bedrock for its 21CSLA-funded leadership development. CORE emerged out of LAEP's national work with Kaiser Permanente's Resilience in School Environment (RISE) Initiative. Spanning 20 schools across three states over a period of two years, RISE transformed policies and practices to create trauma-informed environments that positively impacted resilience among students and staff.

Through CORE, LAEP established its first virtual cohort, connecting principals and teacher leaders across the nation through a shared system to promote easy access to tools, protocols, and data. Group chats/video conferences are used to increase coach accessibility. Schools struggling to meaningfully participate within existing structures are provided additional support and the chance to address specific participation barriers.

“Using our equity lens, our goal is to promote rigorous, culturally relevant, and standards-aligned instruction that supports students' academic achievement and social-emotional wellbeing,” said Broadnax. “Now more than ever we must work to understand intersecting layers of trauma that shape school environments, and build capacity for organizational resilience using trauma-informed and distributed leadership practices.”

About Los Angeles Education Partnership

Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP) is a nonprofit organization that advances educational equity. Together with families, schools and the community, LAEP facilitates access to and opportunities for quality educational and wellness practices so that children thrive from diapers to diplomas. Founded in 1984, LAEP was the first nonprofit in Los Angeles to focus exclusively on educational equity and among those at the forefront of the educational transformation movement nationwide.