



EMBODYING EQUITY

A CALL TO ACTION

MARCH 6-7, 2026

HYATT REGENCY MISSION BAY SPA & MARINA, SAN DIEGO



LOS ANGELES
EDUCATION
PARTNERSHIP

www.laep.org
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FOREWORD

Welcome. We're so glad you've made time to be with us. This gathering was created as an experience rooted in purpose, joy, and the shared belief that equity is not just something we talk about, but something we live, practice, and embody every day. It brings together minds and hearts that believe equity is not just an idea, but a daily practice we choose again and again.



At LAEP, our work is guided by our vision: a world where empowered learning communities foster access and liberation for all. We do this work in partnership with families, schools and the community, facilitating access to and opportunities for quality educational and wellness practices so that children thrive from diapers to diplomas. These commitments drive everything we do, and they are the reason this space exists. We believe equity work must be both deeply strategic and deeply human, grounded in learning while honoring wellness, reflection, and connection.

At a time when equity work is often misunderstood, challenged, or rushed, this gathering is an intentional pause and a powerful push forward. Over the course of this experience, we invite you to learn deeply, reflect honestly, and connect authentically. We invite you to wrestle with complexity, to be strengthened by community, and to center your own wellbeing as an essential part of sustainable leadership. We hope that you leave better equipped, mentally, emotionally, and collectively, to continue the real work in our schools, systems, and communities.

Dr. Dawn Kurtz (she/her)

Thank you for answering the call. Thank you for showing up with open hearts. We are honored to gather with you.

CEO, Los Angeles Education Partnership

With gratitude,
Dawn

Welcome Beloved Community. When we convened our first conference three years ago, we set an intention of building a community worthy of the freedom dreams handed down to us. Regardless of your entry point into this community, be this your first experience with us or simply the most recent among many, please know that we are so thrilled that you are with us. Know that we see you and all your greatness, that we value you and all your humanity, and celebrate you and all that you have done and will continue to do. We are better for your presence and hope that this weekend provides boundless opportunities for joy, growth, learning, connection, and action.

The title of this conference is *Embodying Equity: A Call to Action* and it is more than a slogan; it is an invitation and a charge to lead in these trying times. Within each of us lies the spirit of equity, whether it be more realized, a work in progress, or a source of inspiration and aspiration, we are all here for a reason. Let us not miss the opportunity to acknowledge that the imprint of this current moment, the scourge of hatred and vitriol, the devaluation of our humanity, and the efforts to divide and break us down stand as a call for us to not just stand up but to step forward.

I know that we do not all spend our days in spaces that welcome our full voice and vision.

This is not such a space. Here, you are invited to question, to love, to feel, to gather, and to dream aloud. We have shaped these days with care so that you might find room to breathe, to learn, to harness strength, and to remember that you are not alone in this calling. Our hope is to center your wellbeing, to meet the moment while empowering you with choice and spaciousness, and most of all to build connection within this beloved community.

May these days renew your spirit and steady your hands. May you leave with deeper understanding and a clearer sense of the road ahead. And may you remember that this community does not end when the conference closes. It travels with you and, with your stewardship and guidance, its impact is infinite.

As always, John



John Reséndez

(he/him)

Director of CORE, LAEP
Regional Director, 21CSLA,
SoCal Region

LAND & LABOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We begin by acknowledging that the United States was built on land taken from Indigenous peoples and on the stolen labor of enslaved African people. The wealth, institutions, and systems we inherit—including our education system—are rooted in histories of colonization, genocide, enslavement, exclusion, and exploitation. Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Mexican, Central and South American communities, among many others, endured displacement, violence, and labor exploitation that continue to shape inequities today.

We gather today in what is commonly known as San Diego, on the ancestral and unceded lands of the Kumeyaay people, who have stewarded this region since time immemorial and who remain present and active in this community. We honor their enduring relationship to this land and recognize that California's development came at immense cost to Native peoples.

Acknowledgment is not an endpoint. It is an entry point.

During our time together, we invite you to reflect:

Relationship: What is my relationship to this land? How did I come to be here? What responsibilities accompany my presence?

History & Learning: Whose histories have I been taught—and whose have been silenced? What is the Indigenous history of the land where I live and work? Who are the Native nations and leaders in my community today?

Truth-Telling: How can I elevate fuller histories of land, labor, and resistance in my sphere of influence?

Forward Momentum: How can my work as an educational leader contribute to healing, redress, and the empowerment of Indigenous peoples and communities historically marginalized by systems of education?

As a community committed to equity and justice in education, we commit to moving beyond acknowledgment toward action:

- Disrupt dominant narratives and uplift Indigenous, pluralistic, and global majority knowledge.
- Teach the full and complex history of U.S. education, including its harms and its sites of resistance and brilliance.
- Engage in liberatory, identity-affirming pedagogies and shared leadership.
- Continuously reflect, repair, and realign our practices in service of equity and redress.

To learn more about the Indigenous lands you inhabit, visit native-land.ca. May this gathering deepen not only our understanding, but our responsibility.

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**This program is also available on our new website:
www.laepcore.org**



**HYATT
REGENCY**
MISSION BAY
SPA & MARINA

1441 Quince Road,
San Diego, CA 92109
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missionbyhyatt.com



**Conference Wifi
password:
"EquityNow"**

★ = spaces we'll be in

Registration, First Aid: Mission Foyer
Breakout Rooms: Mission, Bayview,
Palm

Data Lounge: Bayview Foyer
Human Library & Play Space: Regatta
Pavilion

Nursing Room: Crows Nest
Wellness Spaces: Crown Point,
Belmont, Bay II (1918)



AGENDA:

THURSDAY

This evening's program is a dedicated space for leaders who met the participation threshold through our Communities of Practice series.

ENCOUNTERING EACH OTHER: A CONVERSATION WITH DHALIA & ELIZABETH DINNER AT 6PM. PROGRAM FOLLOWS - PALM ROOM

Conversations about race are essential—and often uncomfortable, especially across racial identities. This session creates a structured yet relational space where Dhalia and Elizabeth will model ways to communicate across difference with honesty and care. Guided questions and prompts will spark dialogue and reflection, with opportunities for participants to ask their own questions and engage in real-time conversation.



ELIZABETH CLAES

(she/her)

Elizabeth is always looking for the next great conversation. She is passionate about community care,

transformative pedagogy, and supporting educational leaders. Over the course of her career, Elizabeth has been an elementary school teacher, grassroots organizer, evaluator, college professor, group facilitator, and non-profit founder and director. Elizabeth currently owns an educational consulting company, Becoming Us Collective, where she guides educators in deconstructing their internalized whiteness with the hope that those educators will build liberatory systems and structures. She holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, a master's degree in Educational Leadership from Mills College, Oakland, and is currently a PhD student in Education for Social Justice at the University of San Diego. Elizabeth is a mom of two and lives in Northern California with her husband and six cats.

DHALIA BALMIR

(she/her)

Dhalia is an experienced restorative justice practitioner, strategist and visionary leadership coach



passionate about fostering dialogue and facilitating transformative change. Dedicated to dismantling systemic barriers, promoting educational equity, and guiding individuals and organizations toward authentic growth, she is committed to building bridges through her work with educators, district leaders and community members in grades K-12. She also designs and facilitates affinity spaces for educators and leaders of color, creating restorative and culturally grounded spaces for reflection, healing, connection, and leadership development. Dhalia holds a Masters in Leadership and is currently pursuing a PhD in Education for Social Justice at the University of San Diego. She is deeply invested in advancing equitable education practices

AGENDA:

FRIDAY

5:45 PM | DINNER IN THE REGATTA PAVILION

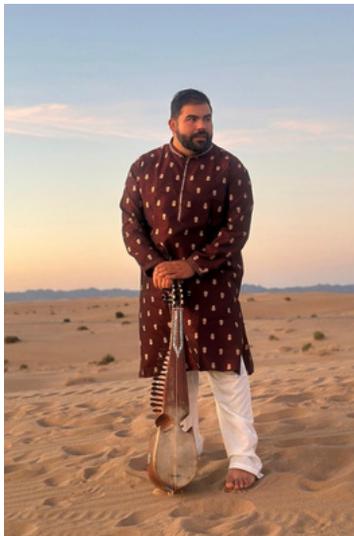
We will open the conference with a welcome from Dr. Dawn Kurtz, LAEP CEO, and John Reséndez, CORE Director, who will ground us in purpose, community, and what's ahead for the weekend.

6:45 PM | STORYTELLING & DRUM CIRCLE

This interactive session by the Sankofa Soul Collective explores three essential dimensions of Traditional West African Drumming as tools for healing and restoration: Folkloric, Neurological, and Communal. Each segment is led by a facilitator specializing in that domain, offering cultural lineage, scientific insight, and lived communal practice.

Short, guided body-percussion activities are integrated throughout the session to keep participants engaged and embodied. The experience culminates in a traditional-style drum and dance circle, held offstage in a shared circle format, where African dance teachers demonstrate traditional movements that correspond with the rhythms. Participants may choose to engage through drumming, dancing, or embodied observation.

A variety of African drums will be provided, along with bells, shakers, and other percussion instruments, inviting participants into a powerful experience of rhythm, movement, expression, and group coherence. The session offers an embodied demonstration of how rhythm and dance can support connection, accountability, and repair within communities.



AGENDA:

SATURDAY

7 - 8 AM	Breakfast - Regatta Pavilion
8 - 8:45 AM	Clarifying & Setting Your Intentions with Jeffrey Garrett - Regatta Pavilion
8:45 - 9 AM	Transition
9 - 10:15 AM	Session 1
10:15 - 10:30 AM	Transition
10:30 - 11:45 AM	Session 2
12 - 1 PM	Lunch - Banyan Lawn*
1 - 1:15 PM	Transition
1:15 - 2:45 PM	Session 3 & Conference Evaluation Survey
2:45 - 3 PM	Transition
3 - 4 PM	Wellness & Networking

*Weather permitting. Otherwise lunch will be served in the Regatta Pavilion

CHOOSE YOUR PATHWAY

This conference is designed to support leaders and educators in moving equity from aspiration to daily practice. Through aligned pathways, praxis sessions, and embodied experiences, participants will strengthen their ability to respond to real instructional, cultural, and community challenges with clarity, courage, and coherence.

Our pathways—Instructional Leadership, Culture & Systems, Reflective Leadership, Meeting the Moment, and Wellness—are intentionally interconnected. We want you to leave not just inspired, but equipped with concrete tools, shared language, and clear next steps to enact equity in your specific context.

KNOWING → **DOING** → **BEING** → **SUSTAINING**

STEP ONE:

START WITH YOUR ROLE

Classroom Educator / Specialist

Site-Based Leader (Principal, AP,
Coach, Dean)

District / County / Central Office
Leader

Equity Team Member / Teacher
Leader

Community Partner

STEP TWO:

YOUR CURRENT EQUITY NEED

What feels most urgent, right now?

Instructional access and engagement

School culture, belonging, or behavior

Adult learning, leadership,
or accountability

Family/community partnership or
sociopolitical context

Personal sustainability, regulation,
or resilience

STEP THREE:

CHOOSE YOUR
PRIMARY PATHWAY

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

For participants focused on classroom practice, MTSS, UDL, behavior, and student voice.

- UDL lesson design
- CRP–MTSS alignment
- Transformative data use
- Student voice strategies

CULTURE & SYSTEMS

For participants working on teams, structures, policies, and equity alignment.

- Equity audits
- Systems beneficiary analysis
- Values-to-practice alignment
- Productive disruption strategies

REFLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

For participants strengthening self-awareness, identity, accountability, and change leadership.

- Leadership self-audits
- Accountability partnerships
- Continuous improvement cycles
- Affinity & identity spaces

MEETING THE MOMENT

For participants responding to community needs, polarization, and real-world constraints.

- Community partnership redesign
- Bridge-building conversations
- P-3 continuum insights
- Resources for undocumented communities

COMMUNITY THROUGH WELLNESS

For participants prioritizing regulation, embodiment, healing, and sustainability.

- Breathwork & sound
- Rhythm & movement
- Human Library
- Play Space
- Drum workshop

STEP FOUR:

PLAN FOR CROSS-POLLINATION

You are encouraged to:

- Anchor in one primary pathway
- Consider a visit to at least one complementary pathway
- Use the wellness spaces as needed throughout the day.

STEP FIVE:

MAKE IT ACTIONABLE

Before the conference ends, commit to:

- One practice I will try
- One tool I will use
- One risk I am willing to take for equity.

*Equity is not just what we believe
—it is what we repeatedly choose
to do.*

**SESSION 1:
9 AM -
10:15 AM**

Representation
Rabin
Palm I
OR
Liberatory
Learning
Medina
Bayview I

**Equity
Challenges**
Garrett
Bayview II
OR
Systems
Sparks
Mission III

**Accountable
Spaces**
Fordham
Mission I
OR
Affinity Spaces
Williams
Bayview III

**Undocumented
Communities**
Ramirez &
Martinez
Mission II
OR
Community
Schools
Cascarano &
Montes | Crown
Point

**Mind & Body - Point Loma
Room**
Heart & Spirit - Belmont
Room
Massage - Bay II
Room 1918-1920
Human Library & Play
Space - Regatta Pavilion
Drum Workshop - Sunset
Terrace

**SESSION 2:
10:30 AM -
11:45 AM**

**Data | Valdes &
Portillo**
Bayview I
OR
UDL
Tchami &
Hutchinson
Bayview III

**Values | Clark
Mission III**
OR
Building Teams
Whigham
Palm I

**Continuous
Improvement**
Navarro
Bayview II
OR
Leadership
Challenges
Lara | Crown Point

**Undocumented
Communities**
Ramirez &
Martinez
Mission II
OR
Leaders Bridge
Builders | Xet Smith
& Hunter | Mission I

**Mind & Body - Point Loma
Room**
Heart & Spirit - Belmont
Room
Massage - Bay II
Room 1918-1920
Human Library & Play Space -
Regatta Pavilion
Drum Workshop - Sunset
Terrace

**SESSION 3:
1:15 PM -
2:45 PM**

Ally Action
Rabin & Students
Bayview I
OR
Praxis
Twyman
Crown Point

Attendance
Brooks
Bayview II
OR
Praxis
Navarro
Mission I

**Accountable
Spaces | Fordham**
Palm I
OR
Praxis
Kabban
Mission II

Addressing Bias
Whalen
Bayview III
OR
Praxis
Lozano
Mission III

**Mind & Body - Point Loma
Room**
Heart & Spirit - Belmont
Room
Massage - Bay II
Room 1918-1920
Human Library & Play
Space - Regatta Pavilion

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PATHWAY

SESSION 1:

9AM -
10:15AM

Fair & Square—Leveraging Text
for Representation
in the Curriculum

Mick Rabin
Palm I

Empowering Student & Community
Voice: Healing-Centered,
Culturally-Rooted, Liberation-
Oriented Teaching & Learning

Dr. Ricardo Medina
Bayview 1

SESSION 2:

10:30AM -
11:45AM

Transformative Data: Using
Strength-Based Approaches to
Tell the Whole Story of Your
School Community

Dr. Rosa Valdés &
Alejandra Portillo

Bayview I

Universal Design for Learning,
Degrees of Change to Instruction
to Provide Access & Equity
for All

Teresa Tchami &
Debra Jayne Hutchinson

Bayview III

SESSION 3:

1:15PM -
2:45PM

Commonalities & Differences: A
Bullying Intervention Module to
Celebrate and Affirm Differences!

Mick Rabin
Bayview I

Praxis Session: Turning
Learning Into Impact

Dr. Ingrid Twyman
Crown Point

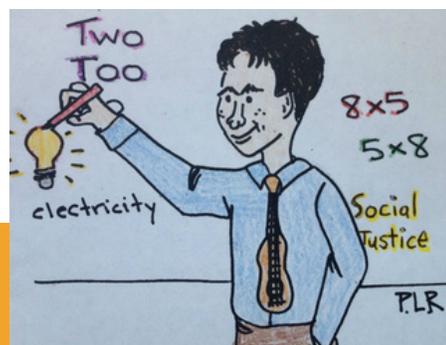
FAIR & SQUARE—LEVERAGING TEXT FOR REPRESENTATION IN THE CURRICULUM

SESSION 1 - PALM I

This workshop centers on how educators can promote justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion through literature and primary sources—even in districts that are early in, stalled, or regressive in their implementation. Educators often ask how to build advocacy, inclusion, and affirmation into daily classroom practice without adding more to their plates. Fair & Square offers a clear, intersectional methodology that builds on what staff are already doing, making every text an opportunity for representation, accessibility, and belonging for all students, especially those most vulnerable.

Originally designed to address broad issues of inclusion, safety, and affirmation for LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC youth, this approach applies across identities and demographics. Participants will engage in hands-on “make-it/take-it” practice, simulating and sharing how they would facilitate text-based conversations in their own classrooms. Educators leave with a concrete vision of what JEDI implementation looks, sounds, and feels like in everyday practice—empowering students to see themselves, connect the dots, and be affirmed for who they are all year long.

Session Eval Survey!



MICK RABIN (he/him)

Mick taught in the classroom for 21 years. Early in his career, he resigned his Eagle Scout badge in protest of exclusionary scout policies, committing instead to creating inclusive and affirming spaces for all youth. While teaching at a Title I school with limited resources and restrictive district policies, Mick learned to be resourceful and innovative.

Now in his 30th year with San Diego Unified as a project resource counselor for the Office of Youth Advocacy—and with 25 years of service on the GLSEN San Diego board—Mick has spent the past decade developing and launching programs focused on bullying prevention and bystander intervention. He has also facilitated numerous professional development sessions centered on promoting identity representation through curriculum, with a strong emphasis on supporting LGBTQIA and BIPOC communities and fostering authentic allyship among all students.

EMPOWERING STUDENT AND COMMUNITY VOICE: HEALING-CENTERED, CULTURALLY-ROOTED, LIBERATION-ORIENTED TEACHING & LEARNING

SESSION 1 - BAYVIEW I

Let's unpack, design, and deliver teaching and learning spaces that cultivate the intergenerational strengths and cultural community wealth of our students. In this workshop, we will transform deficit-rooted schooling by introducing and building knowledge on assets-based frameworks and approaches. Root into the powerful identities, stories, and lived experience of your students and empower voice and action.

Participants will: learn about and discuss asset and strengths-based frameworks and approaches; build empathy and understanding about the need for asset-based approaches; and acquire practical strategies to cultivate their students' intergenerational strengths and cultural community wealth as a means of increasing voice and collective action.

Session Eval Survey!



DR. RICARDO MEDINA (he/him)

For nearly three decades as an educator, Dr. Medina has had the opportunity to teach at the elementary, middle, high school, and university level. He has worked within numerous roles as a teacher, dean of students, resource teacher, restorative justice facilitator, program lead, and professor. Throughout the entirety of his career, he has worked to transform schooling to be one that is rooted in healing-centered, culturally-rooted, and liberation-oriented teaching and learning. Currently, Ricardo is an ethnic studies resource teacher in San Diego Unified where he works to strategically implement K-12 ethnic studies.



TRANSFORMATIVE DATA: USING STRENGTH-BASED APPROACHES TO TELL THE WHOLE STORY OF YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

SESSION 2 - BAYVIEW I



Session Eval Survey!

In education, the word “data” is often synonymous with standardized test results. While this information is useful and provides insights into the broader academic trends in our schools, it represents only one aspect of our work and omits the rich experiences of our students, families, and communities. What if we moved away from relying on standardized testing as a primary data source? What if you could use diverse data methods to tell the whole story of your school community? What if we created our own tools for measuring our success? In this session, we will learn that data goes beyond school dashboards and standardized assessments. Together, we will explore diverse, accessible data collection methods to help you gather qualitative and quantitative data about your students, families, and communities. We will also learn the key steps for implementing strength-based, reflective data-sense-making sessions with diverse teams to uncover the full story of our work. This session will help you uncover your data gifts and support your journey to developing a strength-based data culture in your educational setting.



DR. ROSA M. VALDÉS (she/her)

Rosa M. Valdés, PhD is the Director of Evaluation, Accountability, and Impact at LAEP. With over 25 years of experience in applied educational research, she has led large-scale evaluations of school- and districtwide programs focused on improving outcomes for historically underserved students. Dr. Valdés has held leadership roles at UCLA, LAUSD, and Child360, and her work centers on strength-based, equity-focused evaluation, educator development, and community empowerment.

ALEJANDRA PORTILLO (she/her)

Alejandra Portillo, M.Ed. is a bicultural, community-based researcher and Senior Evaluator at LAEP. She currently leads the evaluation efforts for LAEP’s 21st Century California School Leadership Academy (21CSLA) and specializes in making data accessible, culturally relevant, and actionable for educators, families, and community partners. As a former foster youth, Alejandra brings a deep commitment to social justice, inclusion, and systems change to her work in evaluation and research.



UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING, DEGREES OF CHANGE TO INSTRUCTION TO PROVIDE ACCESS AND EQUITY FOR ALL

SESSION 2 - BAYVIEW III



Session Eval Survey!

Embodying equity requires more than intention—it requires instructional shifts that honor how students actually learn. In this session, participants will explore Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a practical, equity-centered approach to meeting learner variability with purpose and care. Grounded in the belief that access should be based on need, participants will engage in collaborative, reflective learning and walk away with concrete tools to make immediate, “one-degree” changes to instruction. This session centers student agency, affirms diverse identities, and invites educators to see difference not as a challenge, but as a strength.

TERESA TCHAMI (she/her)



Teresa’s educational journey began with international study and teaching in Hungary and Kosovo, where she developed a deep commitment to human connection, storytelling, and cultural understanding. Her experiences living and working across Eastern Europe shaped her belief that there are no barriers to communicating care and dignity when we lead with an open heart. As an Inclusive Practices Specialist, Teresa focuses on removing social-emotional, behavioral, and academic barriers to learning, partnering with educators to center equity, humanity, and belonging in their practice.

DEBRA JAYNE HUTCHINSON

Debbi has served students and families since the 1990s, beginning her career as a primary general education teacher in Homeland and San Jacinto before earning her Education Specialist credential and transitioning to a high school setting. With experience spanning the full K-12 journey, she has worked as an Induction Mentor, instructional coach, and Inclusive Practices Specialist, supporting educators serving students with IEPs and 504 plans. Her work centers on Universal Design for Learning, learner variability, and ensuring equitable access for all students.



COMMONALITIES & DIFFERENCES: A BULLYING INTERVENTION MODULE TO CELEBRATE AND AFFIRM DIFFERENCES!

SESSION 3 - BAYVIEW I

“Commonalities and Differences” is a flexible, interactive lesson for students in grades 2-12. This workshop provides an overview and live simulation of the self-contained module, typically facilitated by a counselor, teacher, or site educator and co-constructed with the classroom or student group. Participants will explore how the lesson helps students examine bias, understand the layered nature of identity, and practice solidarity and allyship. Classroom-tested across hundreds of implementations, C&D is a developmentally appropriate, inclusive lesson that fosters connection, empathy, and belonging.

The workshop will be co-facilitated by Ally Action student leaders with experience in peer facilitation. Participants will leave with a ready-to-use lesson module that can be immediately integrated into classroom or student group settings.



Session Eval Survey!

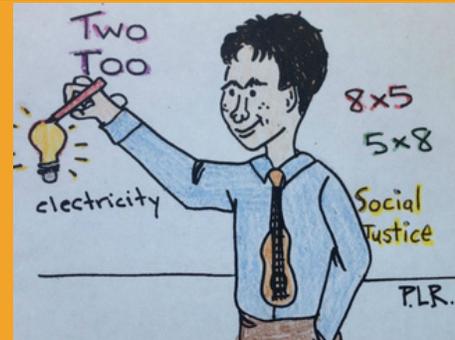
MICK RABIN, ZOOEY, MAJOR & DREW

Mick Rabin taught in the classroom for 21 years. Early in his career, he resigned his Eagle Scout badge in protest of exclusionary scout policies, committing instead to creating inclusive and affirming spaces for all youth. While teaching at a Title I school with limited resources and restrictive district policies, Mick learned to be resourceful and innovative.

Now in his 30th year with San Diego Unified as a project resource counselor for the Office of Youth Advocacy—and with 25 years of service on the GLSEN San Diego board—Mick has spent the past decade developing and launching programs focused on bullying prevention and bystander intervention. He has also facilitated numerous professional development sessions centered on promoting identity representation through curriculum, with a strong emphasis on supporting LGBTQIA and BIPOC communities and fostering authentic allyship among all students.

Zoey is a 9th grade student in SDUSD. They enjoy musical theatre both on stage and off! Zoey is a three year veteran of the Ally Action bullying prevention/bystander intervention leadership program. Zoey looks forward to continuing their education in theatre arts.

Major is a 9th grade student in SDUSD who is a strong and compassionate individual. He plays football for his school and is currently quarterback. He enjoys sports, fishing, spending time out with his friends and family and staying active.



PRAXIS SESSION: TURNING LEARNING INTO IMPACT

SESSION 3 - CROWN POINT



Session Eval Survey!

Conferences can be energizing, affirming, and full of big ideas. But too often, we leave without the time or space to turn those ideas into action. This session is designed to change that. Praxis is where learning becomes lived. It's the intentional process of integrating insight, experience, and intention into meaningful action. In this closing session, you'll pause, reflect, and translate what you've gained over the weekend into a clear, grounded plan for your practice.

You arrived with deep lived experience. Over the course of the conference, you've added new perspectives, tools, and connections. In this facilitated Praxis Session, organized along the four conference pathways, you'll work with one of LAEP's dynamic coaches to make sense of it all. Together, you'll identify what matters most, clarify the impact you want to have, and design concrete next steps you can carry back to your team and community.

Leave not just inspired, but equipped with a shared vision, practical direction, and renewed confidence in how you will move the work forward.

DR. INGRID TWYMAN (she/her/ella)

Dr. Ingrid Twyman is an instructional leader with over 25 years of experience advancing equitable teaching and learning in schools serving historically marginalized communities. Her work is grounded in asset-based, culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining pedagogies, shaped by an early awareness of educational inequity and a commitment to continuous reflection on her positionality.

Recently returned to a school-site role, Dr. Twyman serves as an Assistant Principal of Instruction and CORE Leadership Coach, where she partners with teachers and leaders to strengthen instructional coherence, support high-quality professional learning, and elevate student voice through equity-centered coaching and systems-level improvement.



CULTURE & SYSTEMS PATHWAY

SESSION 1:

9AM -

10:15AM

From Current State to Desired State: Understanding Our Root Causes of Equity Challenges

Jeffrey Garrett

Bayview II

How to Disrupt a Flawed System
- Use that chip on your shoulder that got you here!

Dr. Jordy Sparks

Room: Mission III

SESSION 2:

10:30AM -

11:45AM

From Posters to Practice: Bringing Our Values to Life

Dr. Nyree Clark

Mission III

When Systems Meet People: What Happens After the Framework Leaves the Slide Deck

Dr. Myeshia Whigman

Palm I

SESSION 3:

1:15PM -

2:45PM

Culturing Your Way Through Attendance Challenges
A Community School Approach to Understanding Who Is Missing—& Why

Ayesha Brooks

Bayview II

Praxis Session: Turning Learning Into Impact

Jose Luis Navarro IV

Mission I

FROM CURRENT STATE TO DESIRED STATE: UNDERSTANDING OUR ROOT CAUSES OF EQUITY CHALLENGES

SESSION 1 - BAYVIEW II

Building on the thinking participants will have begun in the morning general session, participants will engage in a more in-depth reflection on their/their team's equity leadership systems and practices. These reflections will inform participants' engagement in root cause analysis, which will inform strategies for addressing growth areas as an equity leader.



Session Eval Survey!



JEFFREY GARRETT (he/him)

Jeffrey is an educator, leadership coach, and consultant with over 20 years of experience supporting school and system leaders across the country. Through his consulting practice, JM Garrett Learning Group, he partners with large urban districts, CMOs, and nonprofits to strengthen leadership, improve learning experiences, and close equity gaps for historically underserved communities. Jeffrey previously served as a middle and high school teacher, principal, assistant principal, and instructional leadership coach in New York City, and spent 11 years leading principal and teacher leader development in Los Angeles. His work is grounded in the belief that meaningful school improvement requires context-specific, human-centered solutions. Jeffrey is also the co-host of the justice-centered podcast All of the Above and holds degrees from Dartmouth College and the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

HOW TO DISRUPT A FLAWED SYSTEM - USE THAT CHIP ON YOUR SHOULDER THAT GOT YOU HERE!

SESSION 1 - MISSION III

Educational systems often perpetuate inequity through long-standing practices, policies, and precedents that go unquestioned. This session invites participants to critically examine how flawed systems persist and how leaders can responsibly disrupt harm while remaining accountable to students, communities, and one another. Grounded in K-12 leadership practice, this workshop emphasizes interrogation over compliance and positions equity as an ongoing leadership practice rather than an endpoint.

Participants will be able to: identify policies, practices, and precedents that unintentionally reinforce inequity; apply an equity-centered lens to analyze systems, power, and impact; distinguish between surface-level reform and meaningful systemic disruption; strengthen leadership capacity to challenge norms and disrupt inequitable practices; and commit to ongoing equity-focused reflection and action within their leadership context

Session Eval Survey!



DR. JORDY SPARKS (he/him)

Jordy is a systems-level educational leader focused on transformation through interrogating practices, precedents, and policies, in order to cultivate more inclusive and affirming learning environments. Currently, as Executive Director of DEI in the Oceanside Unified School District, he drives systems-level change and leads district DEI efforts, social emotional learning and culturally proficient teaching and learning.

Jordy holds a B.A. from The Ohio State University and a Ed.L.D. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



FROM POSTERS TO PRACTICE: BRINGING OUR VALUES TO LIFE

SESSION 2 - MISSION III

What does it really mean to live our values beyond the posters on the wall? In this interactive workshop, participants will explore how culture and systems work together to shape powerful, dynamic teams. Through reflection, dialogue, and hands-on activities, attendees will unpack the gap between intention and implementation and learn how to make values visible through everyday adult actions. This session offers practical tools, shared language, and meaningful strategies to strengthen trust, alignment, and collective impact. You won't want to miss this opportunity to move from words to practice and from intention to transformation.

DR. NYREE D. CLARK

Nyree D. Clark, Ed.D. is the Coordinator of Equity and Access for the Colton Joint Unified School District, where she leads districtwide initiatives focused on educational equity, justice, and belonging. With over 28 years in education, Dr. Clark is committed to dismantling systemic barriers and expanding access to culturally responsive, inclusive learning experiences for all students. Her work centers on amplifying student and family voice, strengthening school-community partnerships, and supporting educators in implementing equitable practices across classrooms and systems. Grounded in her belief that equity is achieved through empathy and action, Dr. Clark designs innovative programs that promote academic excellence, identity affirmation, and opportunity. She is a passionate advocate for justice-centered leadership and works tirelessly to ensure every student is seen, heard, and empowered to thrive.



Session Eval Survey!

WHEN SYSTEMS MEET PEOPLE: WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE FRAMEWORK LEAVES THE SLIDE DECK

SESSION 2 - PALM I

This is an interactive session that explores how school transformation actually happens when systems, values, and culture are intentionally aligned. This workshop examines how a collective response to school culture and values is built through alignment, acknowledgement, and relational leadership. Participants will explore how district frameworks move from theory to practice and how misalignment shows up in adult culture, student experience, and school systems.

Grounded in real leadership practice, this session centers the 3 Ps: Presence, Partnership, and Purpose, as a practical framework for strengthening coherence, trust, and belonging across school communities.

Session Eval Survey!



DR. MYESHIA WHIGHAM (she/her)

Myeshia is a middle school principal and equity-centered leader with over 20 years of experience serving K-12 students across San Diego County. A first-generation high school and college graduate, her work is rooted in justice, belonging, and a deep belief that schools must honor the full identities and lived experiences of the students and communities they serve.

Her leadership is informed by prior district-level roles in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Student Supports, bringing a systems-minded approach to site leadership that aligns culture, instruction, and student supports. An experienced facilitator on implicit bias, restorative practices, and compassionate dialogue, Dr. Whigham is known for bridging people and systems, ensuring that values are reflected in daily practice, not just policy.



She holds a Ph.D. in Education for Social Justice from the University of San Diego and remains committed to building schools where every student feels seen, valued, and empowered to thrive.

CULTURING YOUR WAY THROUGH ATTENDANCE CHALLENGES A COMMUNITY SCHOOL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING WHO IS MISSING — AND WHY

SESSION 3 - BAYVIEW II

This presentation examines how school culture directly influences student attendance and why identifying who is missing is the critical first step toward meaningful change. *Culturing Your Way Through Attendance Challenges* explores the systemic, relational, and environmental factors that shape student engagement, with a strong emphasis on equity, belonging, and culturally responsive practices. Participants will learn how to analyze attendance patterns, uncover the root causes of chronic absenteeism, and develop strategies that foster a school environment where every student feels seen, supported, and motivated to show up. This session reframes attendance not as a compliance issue, but as a reflection of how effectively schools are meeting the needs of their most vulnerable learners

AYESHA A. BROOKS (she/her)

Ayesha A. Brooks, M.A., M.S. is an educational leader committed to advancing equity, restorative practices, and inclusive school cultures. Raised in South Central Los Angeles, her early experiences with low expectations in schools shaped her passion for creating learning environments where all students are seen, supported, and valued. A former collegiate basketball player, Ayesha earned her bachelor's degree on a basketball scholarship from the University of Hawai'i, a master's degree in educational leadership from California State University, Dominguez Hills, and a master's degree from the International Institute for Restorative Practices. She has taught and led in schools across Compton, Watts, South Central Los Angeles, and Fontana. Currently serving in Fontana Unified School District as Director of Multi-Tiered System of Supports and Coordinator for Positive School Climate and Culture, Ayesha leads systemwide efforts to strengthen culturally responsive practices, reduce exclusionary discipline, and expand comprehensive supports for students and families.



Session Eval Survey!

PRAXIS SESSION: TURNING LEARNING INTO IMPACT

SESSION 3 - MISSION I

Conferences can be energizing, affirming, and full of big ideas. But too often, we leave without the time or space to turn those ideas into action. This session is designed to change that. Praxis is where learning becomes lived. It's the intentional process of integrating insight, experience, and intention into meaningful action. In this closing session, you'll pause, reflect, and translate what you've gained over the weekend into a clear, grounded plan for your practice.

You arrived with deep lived experience. Over the course of the conference, you've added new perspectives, tools, and connections. In this facilitated Praxis Session, organized along the four conference pathways, you'll work with one of LAEP's dynamic coaches to make sense of it all. Together, you'll identify what matters most, clarify the impact you want to have, and design concrete next steps you can carry back to your team and community.

Leave not just inspired, but equipped with a shared vision, practical direction, and renewed confidence in how you will move the work forward.

JOSE LUIS NAVARRO IV (he/him)

Jose Luis is CEO at the Navarro Group. Previously, he served as a Lead Coach at LAEP and Support Coordinator, leading innovative reforms in LAUSD. Notably, he's the founding principal of the award-winning Social Justice Humanitas Academy, which won the 2015 National Community School and Teacher Powered Schools National Awards. Jose Luis holds several accolades, including National Board Certification, California Teacher of the Year, and Latino Educator of the Year. He's also an Adjunct Professor at California State University, Dominguez Hills, and he attended the Principal Leadership Institute at UCLA, where he earned a master's degree in education leadership. Prior to teaching, he worked as a Prineville Hotshot firefighter and a Peace Corps Volunteer. His dedication stems from the belief that all students deserve care and support, inspired by his own children.



Session Eval Survey!



REFLECTIVE LEADERSHIP PATHWAY

SESSION 1:

9AM -

10:15AM

**Building Accountable Spaces:
Shared Values, Collective
Responsibility, & Equity-Centered
Leadership**

Dr. Monique Fordham

Mission I

**Affinity Spaces in
Collective Practice**

Austin Williams

Bayview III

SESSION 2:

10:30AM -

11:45AM

**Leading for Equity: Do You See
Your Values in the Systems at
Your School? Reflecting as a
Continuous Improvement Practice**

Jose Luis Navarro IV

Bayview II

**Overcoming Internal Voices
of Self Doubt**

Jose Lara

Crown Point

SESSION 3:

1:15PM -

2:45PM

**Building Accountable Spaces:
Shared Values, Collective
Responsibility, & Equity-Centered
Leadership**

Dr. Monique Fordham

Palm I

**Praxis Session: Turning
Learning Into Impact**

Dr. Mark Kabban

Mission II

BUILDING ACCOUNTABLE SPACES: SHARED VALUES, COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY, AND EQUITY-CENTERED LEADERSHIP



Session Eval Survey!

SESSION 1 - MISSION I

SESSION 3 - PALM I

In education, accountability is often tied to test scores, compliance, and operational demands—frequently experienced as punitive rather than developmental. This workshop invites teacher leaders, school administrators, and district leaders to reimagine accountability as a collective practice grounded in shared values, relational trust, and a commitment to equity.

Through guided reflection, collaborative dialogue, and practical leadership strategies, participants will explore the conditions that make accountable spaces possible. The session centers on creating environments where educators feel safe to name inequitable practices, engage in courageous conversations, and develop action plans for meaningful change. Leaders will leave with concrete tools and a renewed perspective on fostering accountable, equitable spaces across classrooms, school sites, and systems.

DR. MONIQUE CHANEL FORDHAM-JACKSON

(she/her)

Dr. Fordham is an educator, scholar, and transformational leader with over 30 years of experience in public education. Rooted in the Watts/Willowbrook, Compton, and South Central Los Angeles communities, she is a product of LAUSD and Compton Unified and has been committed to youth advocacy and social justice since her early teens. Dr. Fordham-Jackson holds a PhD in Educational Management from Hampton University and has spent 23 years teaching secondary English Language Arts and 8 years leading high schools. She now focuses on coaching, developing, and mentoring educators and leaders committed to equity, liberation, and transformational change.



AFFINITY SPACES IN COLLECTIVE PRACTICE

SESSION I - BAYVIEW III

How do we create spaces where people can bring their full selves, while still learning and working across difference? This session explores the role of affinity spaces in supporting equity within diverse, heterogeneous communities. Participants will reflect on why affinity spaces matter in this moment, examine how learning about marginalized communities can be thoughtfully designed in shared spaces, and collaborate to identify practical ways to create or strengthen affinity spaces in their own work contexts. The session centers belonging, responsibility, and collective action, offering concrete tools participants can use right away.

Session Eval Survey!



AUSTIN WILLIAMS (he/him)

Austin is an educator and instructional leader with over a decade of experience advancing student achievement and supporting educator development across K-12, nonprofit, and ed-tech contexts. A former high school teacher and nonprofit director, he currently serves as Director of Teaching & Learning, where he focuses on developing students as critical thinkers with agency while equipping educators to deepen their practice and impact. A Southern California native, Austin holds a B.A. in Political Science from Morehouse College and an M.Ed. in Human Development Psychology and School Leadership. He believes inclusive and equitable leadership begins with identity work and deep, human-centered connection.

LEADING FOR EQUITY: DO YOU SEE YOUR VALUES IN THE SYSTEMS AT YOUR SCHOOL? REFLECTING AS A CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PRACTICE

SESSION 2 - BAYVIEW II

In this interactive workshop, educational leaders will explore how to operationalize their core values through systematic, equity-centered continuous improvement practices. Participants will engage in reflective activities to clarify their leadership foundation, including their beliefs, moral imperative, and vision for equitable student outcomes. Additionally, participants will learn to use a "Data with a Soul" approach that focuses on individual students rather than groups alone. Through frameworks like Restorative Justice, the Regulate-Relate-Reason model, and strategic systems-building, attendees will develop actionable plans to create sustainable structures that increase equity, build collaborative organizational capacity, and ensure all students have access to the support they need to thrive. Leaders will leave with concrete tools for fostering reflective practice, engaging their communities, and building systems that align daily actions with their deepest values for educational justice.

JOSE LUIS NAVARRO IV (he/him)

Jose Luis is CEO at the Navarro Group. Previously, he served as a Lead Coach at LAEP and Support Coordinator, leading innovative reforms in LAUSD. Notably, he's the founding principal of the award-winning Social Justice Humanitas Academy, which won the 2015 National Community School and Teacher Powered Schools National Awards. Jose Luis holds several accolades, including National Board Certification, California Teacher of the Year, and Latino Educator of the Year. He's also an Adjunct Professor at California State University, Dominguez Hills, and he attended the Principal Leadership Institute at UCLA, where he earned a master's degree in education leadership. Prior to teaching, he worked as a Prineville Hotshot firefighter and a Peace Corps Volunteer. His dedication stems from the belief that all students deserve care and support, inspired by his own children.



Session Eval Survey!



OVERCOMING INTERNAL VOICES OF SELF DOUBT

SESSION 2 - CROWN POINT

This session explores how self-doubt for leaders from historically marginalized and underserved communities is often an internalized reflection of systemic oppression rather than a personal deficit. This interactive session supports participants in building resilience, clarity, and confidence to challenge limiting narratives and lead transformational change.

Through guided individual and collective reflection, participants will examine identity, power, and internalized beliefs while developing counter-narratives rooted in purpose and agency. Leaders will collaborate across roles to share experiences, build community, and commit to a community of practice. Participants will leave with a self-reflection journal and digital resources they can immediately apply in their leadership contexts.


Session Eval Survey!



JOSE LARA

Jose is the son of Mexican immigrants and a father of three wonderful children. When he is not spending time with his family, he works as principal at Gilbert Continuation High School empowering his school community to reach their fullest potential. Using an equity-centered community schools approach, Mr. Lara is proud to serve students who have not been successful on a traditional campus. "We don't give students a second chance, we ask them to give us a second chance" is his motto.



PRAXIS SESSION: TURNING LEARNING INTO IMPACT

SESSION I - MISSION II



Session Eval Survey!

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Leave not just inspired, but equipped with a shared vision, practical direction, and renewed confidence in how you will move the work forward.

DR. MARK KABBAN

Mark is the founder of Examined Leadership Collective, a decolonized adult development practice for educators and cross-sector leaders. He designs constructivist experiences for leaders across a wide range of organizations, from MIT and Major League Soccer to numerous urban school districts and international nonprofits. Previously, Mark served as CEO of Yalla SD, an academy dedicated to U.S.-based refugee and migrant youth specializing in deeper learning and competitive soccer programs. He was also on faculty at the High Tech High Graduate School of Education, where he directed the Education Leadership Master's program.



Mark holds a master's in technology and innovation and a doctorate in education leadership from Harvard. He is currently a professor and heads institutional teaching and learning at the American College of the Mediterranean, supporting campuses in Aix-en-Provence, Barcelona, Madrid, Tangier, Florence and San Diego.

MEETING THE MOMENT PATHWAY

SESSION 1:

9AM -

10:15AM

Preparing, Protecting, and Supporting Families: Community-Centered Immigration Emergency Preparedness Plans

Francisco Ramírez Ángeles & Nathalie Martinez

Mission II

The Community Schools Way: How Any School Can Embody This Whole-Child, Equity-Centered Approach

Alessandra Cascarano & Dr. Jose Montes

Crown Point

SESSION 2:

10:30AM -

11:45AM

Preparing, Protecting, & Supporting Families: Community-Centered Immigration Emergency Preparedness Plans

Francisco Ramírez Ángeles & Nathalie Martinez

Mission II

Leaders as Bridge Builders: Elevating Latinx & Immigrant Family Voices for Community Engagement

Dr. Liza Xet Smith & Robin Hunter

Mission I

SESSION 3:

1:15PM -

2:45PM

Architects of Belonging: Embodying Equity Through Belonging-Centered School Design

Dr. Erin Whalen

Bayview III

Praxis Session: Turning Learning Into Impact

Dr. Maritza Lozano

Mission III

PREPARING, PROTECTING, AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES: COMMUNITY-CENTERED IMMIGRATION EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANS

SESSION 1 & 2 - MISSION II



Session Eval Survey!

This workshop equips educators, school staff, and family-serving professionals with practical tools to support families before, during, and after immigration enforcement actions. Participants will learn how to help families create emergency preparedness plans, understand their rights, respond in moments of crisis, and connect families to trusted community resources across San Diego County.

Participants will be able to: Support families in creating an immigration emergency family plan; Respond effectively and calmly during enforcement-related emergencies; Understand the emotional and educational impacts on children and families; Apply trauma-informed, culturally responsive practices in school and community settings; and Connect families to local legal, mental health, and community-based resources.



FRANCISCO RAMÍREZ ÁNGELES (he/him)

Francisco is a community educator, organizer, and communications professional based in North County San Diego. His work centers on empowering immigrant and working-class families through access to information, preparedness, and culturally grounded resources. Francisco brings lived experience and years of collaboration with schools and grassroots organizations to support families navigating systems of inequity with dignity and confidence.



NATHALIE MARTINEZ (she/her)

Nathalie is a community educator focused on advancing equity for families impacted by overlapping social, economic, and immigration-related challenges. Her work emphasizes culturally responsive approaches, family empowerment, and educator engagement rooted in care and ethical responsibility. Nathalie encourages educators to support families in ways that honor autonomy, lived experience, and diverse pathways to stability and well-being.

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS WAY: HOW ANY SCHOOL CAN EMBODY THIS WHOLE CHILD, EQUITY-CENTERED APPROACH

SESSION 1 - CROWN POINT



Session Eval Survey!

This interactive session invites participants to explore the Community Schools framework as more than just a strategy or designation, but as a way of being that any school can embody. Grounded in equity and collaborative leadership, the session centers storytelling, reflection, and asset mapping to help participants identify the strengths already present in their communities and consider how small, intentional shifts can create more inclusive, student-centered environments. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of how embracing the Community Schools way can support students, families, and communities in this moment and beyond.



ALESSANDRA CASCARANO (she/her)

Alessandra is a relationship-centered educator and Community Schools leader grounded in equity, belonging, and a whole-child approach. She serves as Interim Director of Community Schools at the LAEP and brings over a decade of experience as an elementary educator, teacher leader, and Community Schools Specialist supporting leaders across multiple states. Alessandra specializes in collaborative leadership, human-centered coaching, and systems that center student and family voice. She holds a B.A. in Elementary Education from Towson University and an M.Ed. in Methods of Teaching At-Promise and Diverse Learners from Goucher College.



DR. JOSE MONTES (he/him)

Jose is a career educator with over 25 years of experience supporting students and families in public education. He currently serves as Director of Community Schools in the Rialto Unified School District and has previously worked as a teacher, instructional leader, school administrator, and district director in the Los Angeles area. Jose is committed to creating caring, community-centered learning environments that advance student achievement and equitable access to opportunity. He holds degrees from the University of California, Riverside; Argosy University; and the University of Southern California.

LEADERS AS BRIDGE BUILDERS: ELEVATING LATINX AND IMMIGRANT FAMILY VOICES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SESSION 2 - MISSION I



Session Eval Survey!

Educational leaders have an opportunity transform systems through partnership with their families and communities. Leaders can begin to consider the current socio-political context and its impact on Latinx and immigrant children and families. By rethinking traditional family engagement practices, this workshop explores affirming and responsive strategies that foster meaningful family and community engagement.



DR. LIZA XET SMITH (she/her)

In this work, Liza is committed to uplifting the joyful voices of children, families, and communities. As an early childhood advocate, Indigenous researcher, and current UTK Lead for LAEP, she has dedicated her energy to highlighting the good work of her community. Liza's journey in early education began as a Head Start preschool teacher in Los Angeles and has since encompassed diverse roles, including lead teacher, supervisor, director, trainer, consultant, and advocate. In addition to centering community voices and belonging, Liza owns Corazon Education, a research and

consulting group that asks, "Best practices for whom? How do we know? How can this inform?" On her rest days, Liza enjoys camping and sitting by a fire with a good book.



ROBIN HUNTER (she/her)

Robin has 30+ years in education, with the last 23+ years focused on Early Learning. Her career has been guided by a passionate, dedicated belief in providing equitable learning opportunities that support the highest-quality learning experience for ALL learners. As a former Principal, Robin led the strategic implementation of

inclusive preschool programming and practices, which was recognized as a model for inclusion within Orange County. Currently, Robin continues to pursue equitable learning and transformative leadership practices through her work with LAEP as a UTK Facilitator and Core Coach, professional training, and ongoing reflective practice.

ARCHITECTS OF BELONGING: EMBODYING EQUITY THROUGH BELONGING-CENTERED SCHOOL DESIGN

SESSION 3 - BAYVIEW III

This interactive workshop guides educators in recognizing and addressing both personal and institutional biases, equipping them with evidence-based strategies to cultivate more equitable and inclusive learning environments. Participants will critically examine how biases influence educational systems, policies, and pedagogical approaches, deepening their understanding of the impact on student outcomes. By the conclusion, attendees will be empowered with research-backed frameworks to effectively disrupt, mitigate, and challenge bias, positioning them to lead transformative and sustainable change within their schools and broader educational communities.


Session Eval Survey!



DR. ERIN WHALEN (he/him)

Erin is the Founder of Da Vinci RISE High School and serves as Assistant Superintendent of Student Services at Da Vinci Schools in Los Angeles. His work sits at the intersection of equity, trauma-informed systems, restorative justice, and youth empowerment. Erin leads this work not only as a systems designer, but as a practitioner deeply committed to justice, healing, and reimagining what schools can be for housing insatiable, justice-involved, foster youth and others who have been historically excluded. He believes belonging is not a feeling, it's a responsibility.



PRAXIS SESSION: TURNING LEARNING INTO IMPACT

SESSION 2 - MISSION III



Session Eval Survey!

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Leave not just inspired, but equipped with a shared vision, practical direction, and renewed confidence in how you will move the work forward.

DR. MARITZA LOZANO (she/her/ella)

Maritza is a first-generation Xicana from Southeast Los Angeles and an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at California State University, Fullerton. Grounded in learning and participatory design, her scholarship examines the systemic nature of educational injustice and uses Improvement Science to help transform and reimagine educational systems. She partners with leaders, instructional teams, families, and communities to strengthen students' learning trajectories through the design of school-based learning experiences and the improvement of systems that shape learning. She has worked alongside public school communities across the United States for nearly 30 years, including more than 12 years in the Los Angeles Unified School District as a bilingual elementary school teacher, instructional literacy coach, and literacy content expert. She earned her Ph.D. in Education in the Division of Urban Schooling from the University of California, Los Angeles.



WELLNESS PATHWAY

RELEASE, RESET, RESTORE: A WELLNESS EXPERIENCE FOR EDUCATORS

This wellness experience invites educators to pause, release what they are carrying, and reconnect with what grounds them. Through guided movement, breathwork, reflection, and quiet moments of connection, participants can choose how they engage in ways that support regulation, clarity, and renewal. These are gentle, optional spaces designed to honor the complexity of educator work while offering tools to reset and return to the work with intention.

Mind & Body - Point Loma Room - Sessions 1, 2 & 3. Mindfulness space open to all throughout the day

In this room, the theme is: Regulation, grounding, and cognitive release. Visitors will settle their nervous systems and quiet mental overload.

In these 75-minute sessions, participants will practice gentle yoga, sound bath, and mindfulness.



Heart & Spirit - Belmont Room - Sessions 1, 2 & 3. Mindfulness space open to all throughout the day

In this room, the theme is: Connection, meaning, and emotional release and renewal. This room is about why the work matters and how people stay connected while remaining protected.

In these 75-minute sessions, participants will practice breathwork, journaling, group sharing and reflective exercises, and mindfulness.

Massage - Bay II Room 1918-1920 - Drop in to make your appointment throughout the day

Drumming Workshops - Sunset Terrace - Sessions 1 & 2

These drumming workshops invite participants into rhythm as a pathway to personal healing, grounding, and transformation. Rooted in traditional West African drumming and communal practice, these sessions use sound, movement, and collective synchronization to restore balance, release stress, and reconnect participants to their bodies, each other, and ancestral wisdom.



**Wellness rooms will have a Wellness Bar with drinks and snacks.
Everyone is welcome to participate, observe, or rest throughout the day.**

DR. RANIA SAEB (she/her)

Dr. Rania Saeb is an Arab American educator, school leadership professor, and equity-centered scholar with over 17 years of experience across K-12 and higher education. She holds a doctorate in Educational Leadership and currently serves as a faculty member in Educational Administration and Teacher Education, where she teaches, mentors, and supervises educators in credential and graduate leadership programs. Her work is grounded in culturally responsive pedagogy and inclusive leadership, with a focus on creating learning environments where both students and educators experience dignity and belonging.

At the heart of Rania's work is a commitment to justice shaped by her lived experience and professional practice. She is especially interested in how educators navigate moral tension, emotional labor, and systemic inequities while remaining human in their work. She believes equity work requires not only strong leadership and systems thinking, but also reflection and alignment with core values.



REEM SAEB (she/her)

Reem Saeb is an Arab American educator and Associate Professional Clinical Counselor with over 16 years of experience supporting students, families, and educators across diverse communities. Born and raised in Kuwait and of Palestinian and Lebanese heritage, Reem brings a deeply rooted commitment to equity, healing, and cross-cultural understanding to her work.

She has taught internationally in Kuwait and Lebanon, worked in intervention education in California, and currently serves as a middle school counselor in the Temecula Unified School District, where she supports students from historically marginalized communities.

HUMAN LIBRARY

Regatta Pavilion - Saturday 9 AM - 4PM

The Human Library is an interactive, relationship-centered experience that invites conference participants to “check out” a Human Story: community members who bring lived experience, professional expertise, and personal perspectives connected to equity in education. Many of our Human Books are also workshop facilitators, offering participants an opportunity to engage more deeply with the people behind the sessions. Through guided, respectful conversation, participants are encouraged to listen, ask questions, and reflect across difference, fostering empathy, understanding, and connection that moves beyond theory into lived reality.

Participants may “check out” a Human Book for a private, respectful conversation of up to 20 minutes. Each reading is followed by a short reflective piece, inviting participants to pause, process, and integrate what they have learned.

Pictured below are just a few of the Human Books who will be available to “read” during the Human Library experience.



PLAY SPACE

Regatta Pavilion - Saturday 9AM - 4PM

This wellness offering invites participants to connect through a playful experience. Creativity is a muscle that should be practiced intentionally, knowing that complex problems require creative solutions. Come play - in solo or partnerships. Materials for play include Legos, Magna-Tiles, Play-Doh, crafting/makerspace, and journaling. Stay a while, build, and tinker - see you here!



DATA LOUNGE

Bayview Foyer

What stands out to you about our collective data story?

The Data Lounge is a dedicated space for leaders to review and reflect on our collective 21CSLA data story. Join us in exploring the data contributions you have made over the last two fiscal years. Learn about the impact of our past conferences, our UTK modules, and one-on-one coaching.

Through a self-guided tour, leaders can review, reflect, and leave comments on our data sets.

The Data Lounge is a space where leaders can interpret data and contribute to the creation of our shared data story!



CONFERENCE EVALUATION SURVEY



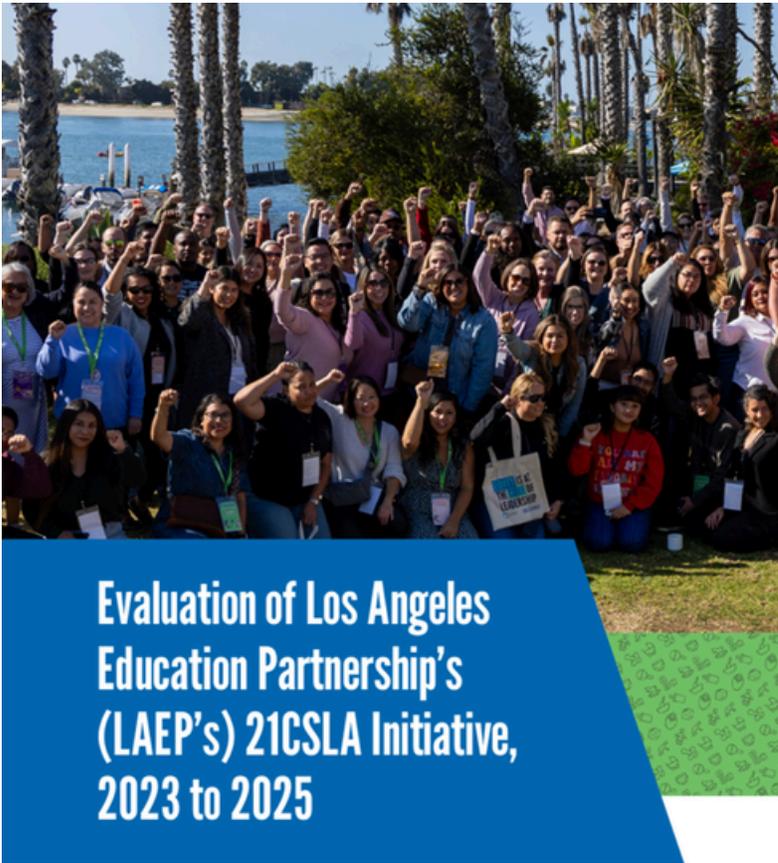
Please take a few minutes to complete the Embodying Equity Conference survey.



Your feedback helps us improve future conferences, trainings, and opportunities to advance equitable education for our communities.

OUR DATA STORY

21CSLA Cohort 2 Evaluation Report (2023–2025)



This report highlights findings from an evaluation of leadership development supports provided to 21CSLA Cohort 2 participants during their first two years.

Led by LAEP's Evaluation, Accountability, and Impact team in collaboration with the CORE team, the evaluation uses Empowerment and Utilization-Focused approaches that center community ownership, data capacity-building, and practical use of findings.

The report offers both formative insights and summative outcomes to inform continuous program improvement and leadership development.

Alejandra Portillo, M.Ed., Gisselle Diaz, M.A.,
and Rosa M. Valdés, Ph.D.
Los Angeles Education Partnership: Evaluation,
Accountability & Impact



View the Report here

THE LAEP CORE TEAM

This conference is brought to you by these amazing humans:



John Reséndez (he/him)
CORE Director



Alejandra Portillo (she/her)
Senior Evaluator



Carolene King (she/her)
Group Learning Lead



Antonio Issa Lahera (she/her)
Program Consultant



Randy Garcia (he/him)
Lead CORE Coach



Dr. Liza Xet Smith (she/her)
UTK Lead



Sierra Leffers (she/her)
**Project Coordinator &
Event Specialist**



Valerie Franco (she/her)
Social Media Coordinator



Casey Doan (she/her)
**Marketing & Communications
Consultant**

UPCOMING OFFERINGS

BIPOC & Mixed Roots Healing Space

Affinity Space facilitated by
Anthony Jackson & Dhalia Balmir

Upcoming Dates

March 21st, 10am-12pm
April 18th, 10am-12pm
May 16th, 10am-12pm
June 6, 10am-12pm



Moving Toward Us: Divesting from Whiteness

Affinity Space facilitated by Elizabeth Claes

Upcoming Dates

March 21st, 10am-12pm
April 18th, 10am-12pm
May 16th, 10am-12pm
June 6, 10am-12pm



UPCOMING OFFERINGS

You're Invited: Virtual Book Study for Educational Leaders

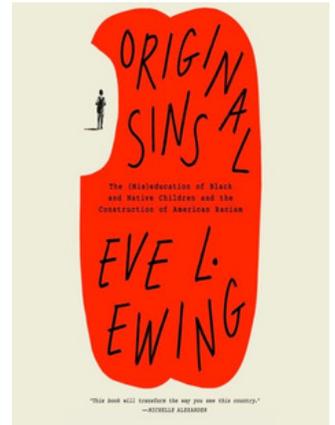
Facilitated by **Dhalia Balmir**

Join us for a virtual book study of *Original Sins: The Miseducation of Black and Native Children and the Construction of American Racism* by Eve L. Ewing.

This powerful book examines how the history of American education has shaped the experiences of Black and Native children and continues to influence our schools today. Together, we will reflect on these insights and consider what they mean for our leadership and our communities.

Upcoming Dates

March 22 | April 12 | April 26 | May 17



Join Our Virtual Book Study for Educational Leaders

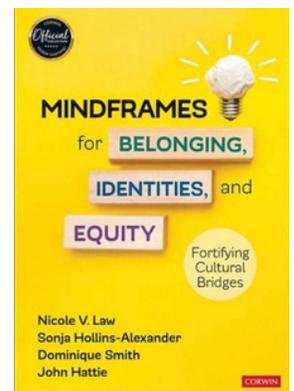
Facilitated by **Dhalia Balmir**

You are invited to a dynamic virtual book study of *Mindframes for Belonging, Identities, and Equity: Fortifying Cultural Bridges* by Nicole V. Law.

Together, we will explore practical ideas that help leaders build school communities where every student feels seen, valued, and supported. Through guided discussion and reflection, you will gain strategies you can apply right away in your school or district.

Upcoming Dates

May 31 | June 14 | June 28



UPCOMING OFFERINGS

Equitable Early Childhood Classrooms through Inclusive Practices

This two-part event is an opportunity to look at effective and equity centered inclusive practices in early childhood and to focus on actionable spaces as leaders. This is a space to learn collectively and lean into discovery. Research shows that a leader's mindset can significantly impact families and communities. What are the structures, systems, and capacities that leaders need to reimagine to create inclusive spaces?

Part 1: Thursday, June 4, 2026 - 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Part 2: Friday, June 5, 2026 - 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Use this opportunity to connect with leaders in your region and community. Join as a team! Forward to your friends and colleagues! Register here and join us.

This offering is open to all UTK-12 educational leaders in California, including mixed-delivery providers, site leaders, support staff, and district and county providers.

At 21CSLA, we aim to help leaders plan and implement programs, practices, and procedures that will create equitable outcomes and meet the needs of all students, families, and communities. We believe in offering transformative professional development at no-cost to participants.

If you have any questions, please contact LSmith@laep.org



BE SOCIAL WITH US

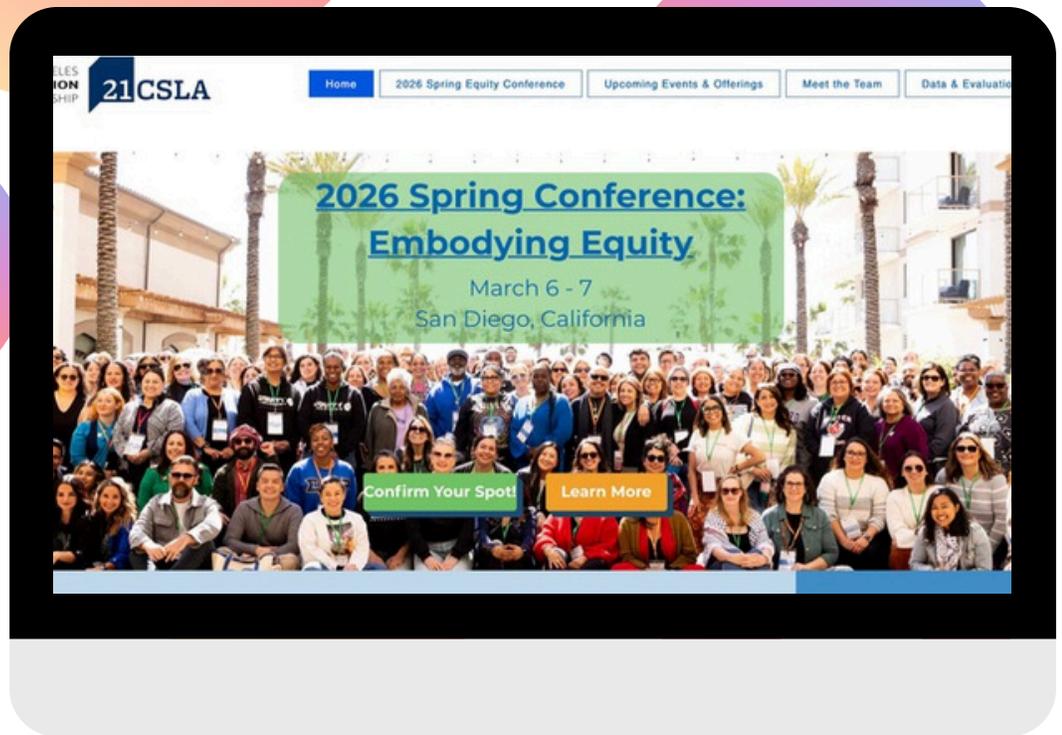
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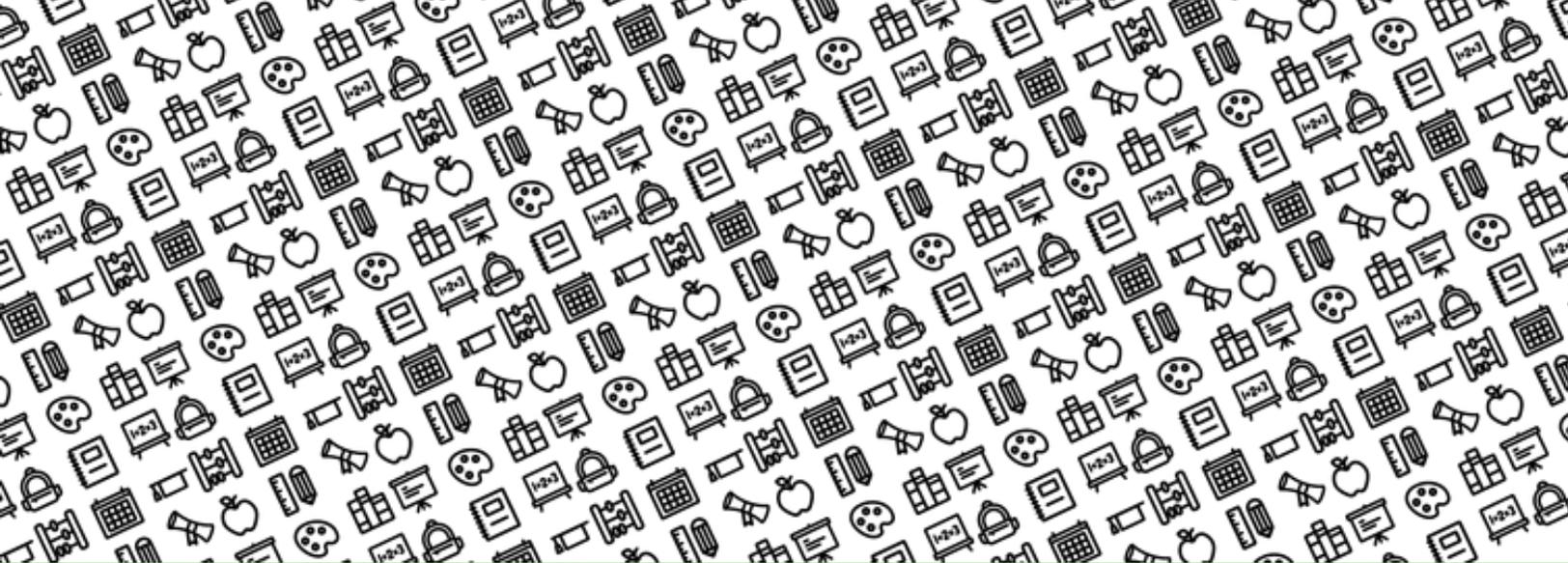
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THANK YOU



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