

# 21CSLA Leadership Coaching



**Individualized coaching is built on relational trust, aligned to the CPSEL, focused on equity-centered problems of practice using continuous improvement principles.” - 21CSLA**

Leadership coaching for equity is a foundational 21CSLA professional learning offering that focuses on “building the capacities of educational leaders to improve access, opportunity, and inclusion, for students and adults, especially those who are systemically marginalized and historically underserved, so that they thrive (21CSLA, 2024).” Through LAEP, leaders working in San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, Imperial, and Orange Counties receive 25 hours of virtual or hybrid coaching over a one-year period. To deliver intentional and effective leadership coaching, the LAEP coaching team is structured with one coaching lead, three in-house coaches, and five coaching consultants. This diverse coaching team has a wealth of experience in the field of education,

with most coaches having backgrounds as former educators, professors, site leaders, and early childhood educators. The LAEP coaches receive ongoing support and training through monthly coaching meetings, which focus on building community, leadership development, and the development of coaching skills; participation in the 21CSLA conferences; and formal professional development opportunities through the 21CSLA Coaching Clinic and cognitive coaching training.

This report highlights key evaluation findings related to LAEP’s implementation of the individualized leadership coaching for equity.

## A RELATIONAL AND HUMAN-CENTERED APPROACH TO COACHING

### The Coaching Team Centers Relationships and the Humanity of Leaders



The LAEP Coaching Team complements the coaching qualities and the 21CSLA Equity Statement through its relationship and human-centered approach to supporting leaders. In terms of centering relationships, LAEP coaches prioritize building meaningful relationships with leaders, cultivating trust, deep listening, and establishing safe spaces for leaders to “You never evaluate people to greatness. You coach them to greatness.” – Coaching Lead express their needs and areas of support. The human-centered approach to coaching focuses on coaches building empathy and curiosity towards

their practices, and moving away from evaluative practices, so that they uplift the humanity, feelings, and needs of their leaders. As the coaching lead states, "You never evaluate people to greatness. You coach them to greatness." By engaging in these approaches, LAEP coaches hold space and serve as thought partners for leaders to support them in thinking through their most pressing equity challenges.



**You never evaluate people to greatness. You coach them to greatness." - Coaching Lead**

The following 21CSLA coaching qualities as described by 21CSLA Guidance Document guide LAEP's coaching offering.

- 1 Asset-based:** Uncovers and builds on assets providing support to enhance the skills, resources and creativity a leader already possesses.
- 2 Purpose-driven:** Helps leaders clarify and lead from their purpose, values, vision, and goals.
- 3 Embodied practice:** Focuses on leaders' ways of being, beliefs, and behaviors.
- 4 Builds resilience:** Builds the emotional intelligence and resilience of leaders.
- 5 Continuous improvement:** Supports leaders to develop learning teams and a culture of continuous improvement throughout the organizations in which they lead.
- 6 Systems thinking:** Develops leaders as systems thinkers.
- 7 Lens of systemic oppression:** Builds leaders' capacity to facilitate conversations and processes to address systemic oppression and biases by developing their own self-awareness, identity, values, beliefs, and impact.
- 8 Relational trust:** Continually seeks to deepen trust and mutuality.
- 9 Use of evidence:** Uses observation and various forms of data, i.e., feedback and reflection on observations of practice, meeting agendas, strategic plans, survey results, etc., to ensure coaching goals and growth are grounded in evidence.
- 10 Goal-oriented:** Works toward concrete, measurable goals, co-created by the coach and leader, and grounded in the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL) or other locally adopted definitions of leadership or framework.

Source: These qualities were taken from the 21CSLA Guidance Document Years 2-3 - Rev. 9/1/2024

## DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF LEADERS PARTICIPATING IN LEADERSHIP COACHING

### Most leaders who engaged in the leadership coaching were female who identified as White or Hispanic/Latino.

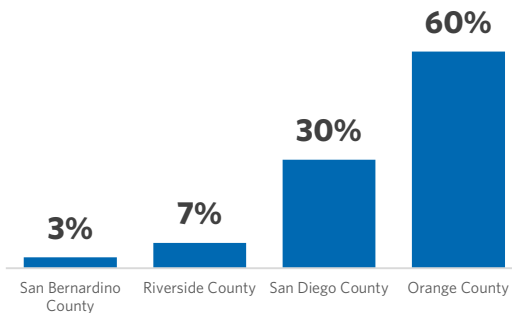
As summarized in Table 1 below, across the last two program years, most of the leaders who participated in leadership coaching were female leaders who identified as White or Hispanic/Latino. Additionally, most leaders worked in San Diego, Orange, and Riverside Counties. Program Year 2024-25 saw an increase in leaders served across two counties, with growth ranging from 3% to 15% in San Bernardino County and from 7% to 14% in Riverside County. Additionally, in 2024-25, there was a 10% increase in the leaders served. In terms of the type of leaders served, this varies by program year. For instance, in 2023-24, over half of the leaders served were site leaders, while in 2024-25, the larger proportion of leaders served were teacher leaders.

Table 1. Demographic Breakdown of Leaders Participating in Leadership Coaching

#### Program Year 2023-24

73 leaders served

*During FY 2023-2024 a large proportion of leaders participating in leadership coaching Learning were from Orange County (n=73)*



75% identified as female

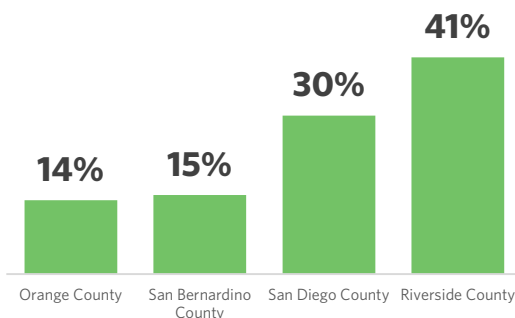
30% were Hispanic or Latino and 23% identified as White.

62% identified as site leaders, while 21% were teacher leaders.

#### Program Year 2024-25

81 leaders served

*During FY 2024-2025 a large proportion of leaders served were from Riverside and San Diego Counties (n=79)*



81% identified as female and 19% were male

36% identified as White and 28% were Hispanic or Latino

About one third (31%) were teacher leaders.

17% were site-based leaders. Equally, 17% identified as out of the classroom leaders, and district leaders

## KEY FINDINGS ABOUT LEADERSHIP COACHING

---



To assess the impact and effectiveness of the leadership coaching offering, an end of year coaching survey and the evaluation team conducted pre-and-post interviews with a small sample of leaders (17 pre-interviews and nine post interviews) who expressed interest in supporting the qualitative data collection and who completed the 25 hours of coaching. Due to modifications in the implementation of the coaching offering, the LAEP evaluation team is currently

gathering and analyzing data from leaders who began coaching in 2024-25. As a result, the data in this section primarily reflects the end-of-year survey data collected at the end of 2023-24. Figures 1 and 2 below summarize the end-of-year coaching evaluation data collected during 2023-24.

As displayed below, educational leaders felt that their coaches were exceptionally effective in creating safe spaces and in listening to their ideas and perspectives. Similarly, educational leaders reported that the LAEP coaches were exceptionally effective in listening attentively to their needs and in being available when needed. These findings highlight the intentional design that LAEP coaches undertook to build relational trust by creating safe spaces and listening deeply to the unique needs of leaders.



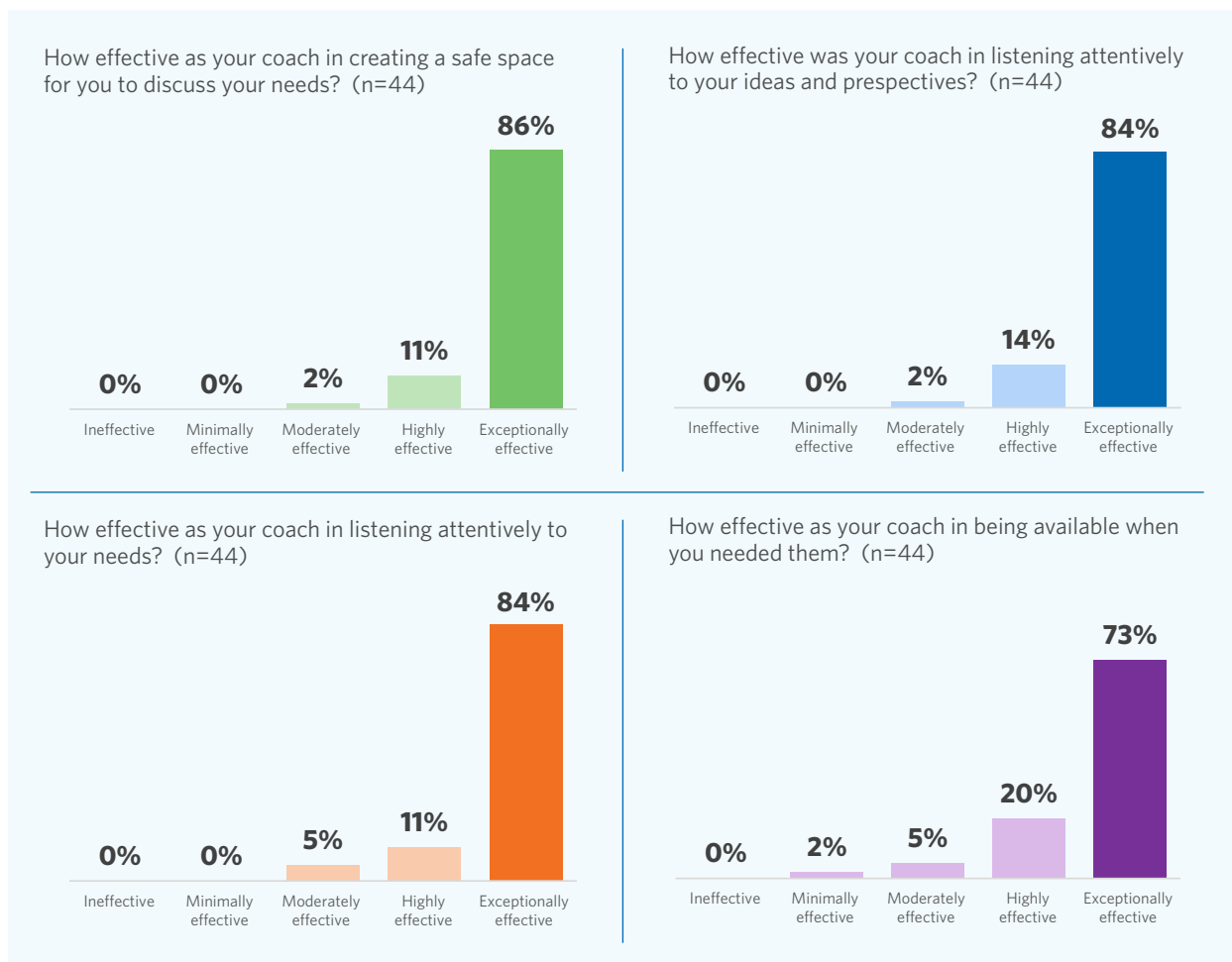


Figure 1. LAEP coaches were exceptionally effective in creating safe spaces, in deep listening, and in being available when leaders needed them.

Survey data also show that leaders benefited positively from coaching. In particular, as highlighted in the figure below, leaders agreed or strongly agreed that coaching enhanced their knowledge of leadership practices, allowed them to advance equity in their work settings, and move forward equitable practices for students of color and students from diverse backgrounds.

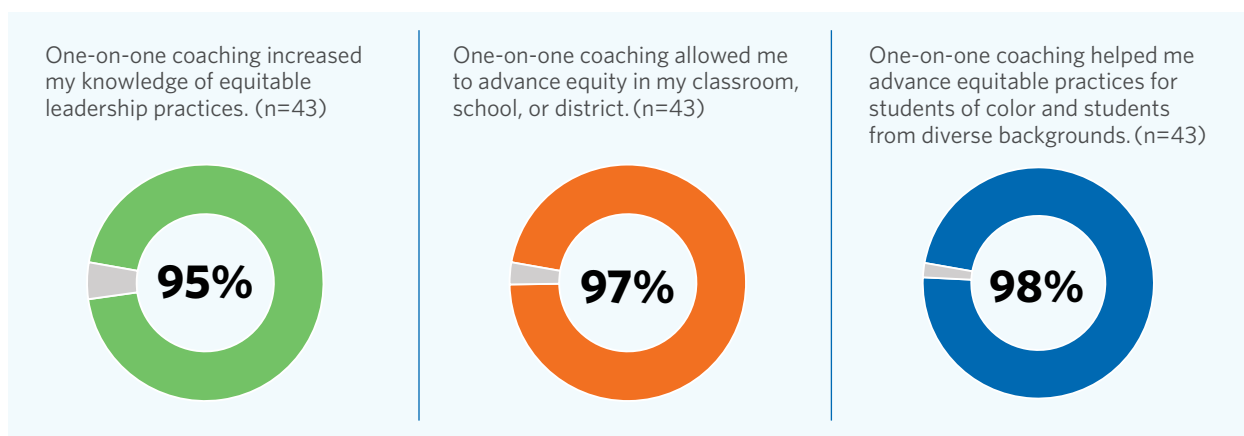


Figure 2. Leaders reported that coaching increased their knowledge of equitable leadership practices and allowed them to advance equity for students of color and students from diverse backgrounds.

## Leaders experienced key changes in wellness<sup>1</sup>, reflective practice, and leadership approaches as a result of participating in coaching.




Coaching participants were asked to describe the changes they experienced in their practice as a result of participating in one-on-one coaching. Leader responses<sup>2</sup> to the shifts in their practices fall into key domains, including wellness, reflective practice, leadership practices, and confidence. These domains and findings related to changes in practices are explained in detail below.

- **Wellness.** Leaders reported that coaching impacted their wellness practices. To get a more specific understanding of the wellness areas that the coaching offering impacted, leader responses were mapped onto the 8 Dimensions of Wellness for Educators as outlined and defined by Angel L. Montoya and Laura L. Summers. This revealed that coaching influenced occupational and emotional wellness. Montoya and Summers (2021) define occupational wellness as “the ability to contribute unique skills and formal education to personally meaningful work.” While emotional wellness relates to “awareness, acceptance, expression, and management of emotions” (Montoya & Summers, 2021). Coaching influenced occupational wellness by strengthening leaders’ ability to refine skills in time management, workload management, balanced goal setting, and allowing leaders to reconnect with their values. As one leader explained that they are “more efficient with use of my calendar and [I] don’t overcommit to activities.” Another leader explained that coaching allowed them to “[to be] more realistic with my goals, being kinder to myself and [to focus on] my own wellness.” In terms of emotional wellness, coaching provided a space for leaders to recognize, express, and process their stress and feelings to a trusted coach who was not their supervisor or evaluator. This allowed leaders to be more present and engaged with their students and work. As one leader noted, “My coach helped me with taking time for myself each day, so that I would be less stressed and more available for my students and my department.” These findings also reflect the intentional modeling of wellness and mindfulness practices during internal LAEP coaching meetings. During monthly coaching meetings, LAEP coaches practice mindfulness and breathwork, which they are then encouraged to practice with the leaders they support.
- **Self-Awareness.** Across the open-ended data, leaders shared that coaching deepened their reflection practices. Leaders expressed becoming more reflective about their decision-making processes, areas for growth, internal biases, and actions. In this regard, leaders shared the following:
  - “I have become more reflective in my practice. I feel I am more able to take action when situations arise.”*
  - “I am more reflective and aware of why I am making decisions.”*
  - “I have noticed that I have increased my reflective capacity...[I am] more reflective with my staff.”*
- **Leadership Practices.** Several leaders also reported experiencing shifts in their equitable leadership practices. For instance, leaders felt more equipped to support challenging colleagues or staff members who respond in emotionally diverse ways. Additionally, some leaders also learned how to refine their own coaching practices when supporting teachers or other colleagues. Other leaders emphasized the importance of maintaining the needs of students at the forefront while focusing on smaller improvements and ensuring that equity remains central to their leadership and work.

<sup>1</sup> The LAEP Evaluation, Accountability and Impact Department is exploring the impact of leadership coaching on leader wellness through their participation in the 21CSLA Professional Learning Lesson Study and through pre- and post-interviews with coaching participants. Findings will be summarized and presented in subsequent evaluation reports.

<sup>2</sup> Analysis is based on open-ended responses to survey items.

Table 2. Shift in Leader Practices in 2023-24

Domain	Examples of Shifts as Reported by Leaders	Leader Quotes
<b>WELLNESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Workload management</li> <li>• Realistic goal setting</li> <li>• Recentering on core values</li> </ul>	 <p><b>[Coaching allowed me to be] more realistic with my goals, being more kinder to myself and [to focus on] my own wellness."</b></p>
<b>REFLECTIVE PRACTICE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased reflection on actions, decision-making, and areas of growth</li> <li>• Self-reflective with staff</li> </ul>	 <p><b>I learned new ways to question and to be more self-reflective with my staff."</b></p>
<b>LEADERSHIP PRACTICES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen coaching capacity of leaders</li> <li>• Enhanced ability to support staff and colleagues experiencing different emotions or feelings.</li> <li>• Learned to support the capacity building of challenging colleagues</li> </ul>	 <p><b>My leadership/coaching skills have improved as a result of this work. My coach was able to share resources that I could put into practice immediately."</b></p>

### Spotlight: Integrating 21CSLA and Community Schools Coaches into the Conference Model



In 2024, during Equity Camp, the Team Learning Lead integrated the 21CSLA coaches and Transform Schools coaches into the conference model to ensure leaders received support throughout the conference experience. The inclusion of coaches into the conferences, was a cross-departmental effort for LAEP, where two coaches from Community Schools worked collaboratively with the 21CSLA coaches to support with data collection, session facilitation, story sharing, and facilitating processing spaces or “Touch Point” spaces. Educational leaders who participated in the coaching offering and attended the conference also benefited from the inclusion of the coaches. Coaching participants were able to see a familiar face, engage with their coaches in the larger context of equity work, and see their coaches as leaders of equity. As one leader noted, *“I want to be at the conference to see [my coach] and see him in the larger context of [this work]. He is a great resource and source of support for me.”* Elevating the role of coaches at the 21CSLA conferences has proven to be an effective strategy for building community across offerings, increasing leader engagement, deepening relationships with leaders, and leveraging the expertise of the coaching team by incorporating their unique set of skills and strengths into the conference model.