



# Sustaining and Building Leaders for Equity Through The 21st Century California School Leadership Academy (21CSLA)

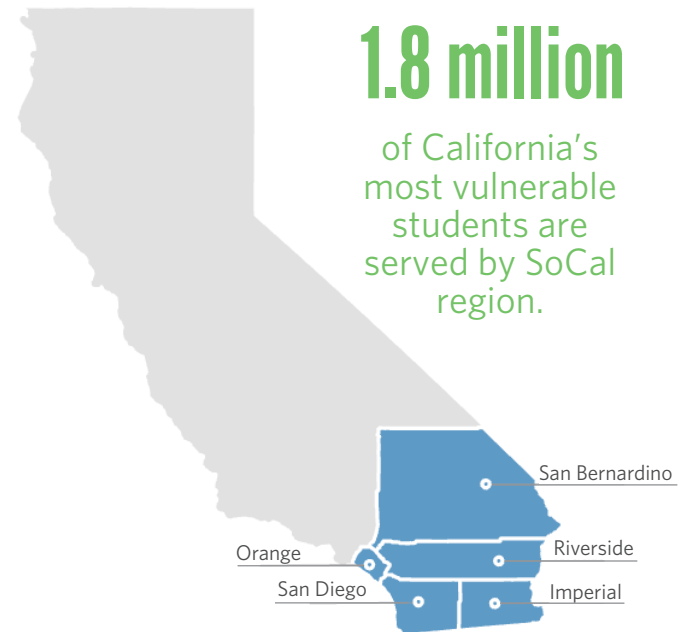
## ABOUT LOS ANGELES EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP) 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, the organization was at the forefront of the nationwide education transformation movement. Over the decades, LAEP's efforts in community schools, pilot schools, interdisciplinary curriculum, equity-focused leadership, and inquiry-based teaching have evolved into nationally recognized best practices.

## LAEP'S ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING 21CSLA

Through 21CSLA, LAEP provides high-quality professional learning opportunities at no cost to UTK-12 leaders. LAEP has served as the 21CSLA Regional Academy for the Southern California region for the past six years, as the only non-profit organization across the state to lead a region, providing high quality, equity focused leadership development across the five southern facing counties in California: Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego. We are currently in the final year of a three-year cohort and are hopeful for the opportunity to continue to offer ongoing support for educational leaders throughout Southern California.

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR REGIONAL ACADEMY



### Student Data

**Table 1.** Student Data by County

County	Total Student Enrollment	Percent of Students Receiving Reduced or Free Lunch
San Diego	476,844	53.7%
Orange	429,869	55.2%
Riverside	419,992	74.0%
San Bernardino	396,773	73.1%
Imperial	35,390	76.9%

- ▶ **Hispanic/Latino** students and **Black** students continue to need the greatest support to meet CAASPP Mathematics and English Language Arts standards.
  - Despite having the highest representation among students enrolled in each of the southernmost California counties, fewer than half of Hispanic/Latino students meet or exceed the CAASPP Mathematics and English Language Arts standards.
  - Fewer than one-third of Black students meet or exceed the CAASPP Mathematics and English Language Arts standards.
- ▶ **Imperial County** has the highest percentage of English Language Learners (37%), compared to San Diego, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties.
- ▶ Across the 5 counties, **unhoused students** represent 6% of the students enrolled, compared to 5% across the state.

## Educator Data

Table 2. Educator Data by County

County	Number of Certificated Staff	Number of Administrators
San Diego	24,337	2,420
Orange	20,336	1,766
Riverside	19,514	1,753
San Bernardino	19,153	1,752
Imperial	1,749	179



## 21CSLA Offerings

Through the 21CSLA grant, LAEP offers equity-centered professional learning to UTK-12 leaders in the five southernmost counties in California. Our approach to this work uplifts the humanity and wellness of leaders and leverages data, local leader talent, and the strengths of the regions we serve. Through a comprehensive conference model, our team implements high-quality Communities of Practice (COPs) and Localized Professional Learning (LPL). Additionally, our regional academy offers individualized coaching to support leaders through a problem of practice as well UTK Modules to support teacher leaders, site leaders, and central office leaders in implementing high-quality Universal Transitional Kindergarten across the state. In the last three program years, LAEP has implemented the following offerings:



**33** Communities of Practice

**544 leaders served**

Topics included:

- Early education CA laws
- Overcoming negative self-talk
- Using compassionate dialogue
- Liberatory leadership
- Decision-making for inclusivity
- Culturally responsive strategies
- Communities of care
- Supporting diverse students



**40** Localized Professional Learning Opportunities

**319 leaders served**

Topics included:

- Culturally responsive leadership
- Liberatory leadership
- UTK modules
- Systems change/coherence
- Unpacking bias
- Decolonizing schools
- Neurodiversity-affirming practices
- Using compassionate dialogue
- Budgeting for equity



**128** leaders served through one-on-one coaching

## IMPACT OF OUR WORK

The following section of this document highlights our impact through the lens of the legislature declarations for SB 75 Authorization.

**Declaration 1:** Skilled schools and school districts are critical for building a strong and stable workforce and for making the important shifts in practice envisioned by the local control funding formula and the Common Core Standards.

Our regional academy has served 853 leaders through over 60 offerings. Among our leaders, 124 were district leaders, 229 were site leaders, including principals and vice principals, and 204 teacher leaders. Our 21CSLA offerings support the UTK-12 leader workforce by enabling them to develop critical skills and shifts to integrate equity into their practices. Our most recent evaluation data for the last two program years shows that:



- Our COP and LPL conference model supported leaders in **deepening their understanding of equity** and **prepared them to address equity issues** in their work settings.
- Leaders reported that, as a result of their conference participation, **they had shifted their equity lens**, that they had taken more **brave and empowered action**.
- Through one-on-one coaching leaders experienced key changes in their **wellness, reflective practice** and **leadership participation**.
- 21CSLA's Universal Transitional Kindergarten offering helped leaders to 1) **shift their practices**, 2) **build awareness of new strategies** to implement in their professional settings, 3) **increase their confidence** in implementing strategies, and 4) **deepen their understandings of equity issues**.
- UTK leaders reported engaging in a range of actions to advance equity in their work, including **increasing equitable instructional practices, strengthening parent engagement activities**, sharing knowledge with **colleagues**, and strengthening partnerships.

**Declaration 2:** Strong leadership is a key predictor of pupil achievement, and highly skilled leadership is critical to successful improvement efforts for local educational agencies and schools.

Our COP and LPL conference model supports a diverse range of leaders. With our latest conference in Spring 2025 attracting 243 UTK-12 leaders, our conferences have steadily grown in attendance and enthusiasm, challenging leaders to grow within a learning community that prioritizes a sense of belonging. Fortifying leaders' critical thinking skills, equity leadership, and wellness skills, these conferences energize leaders and support student success. As described in the data below, a high percentage of attendees at our last three conferences agreed or strongly agreed that the conferences increased their understanding of equity, provided them with tools and skills to support their health and wellbeing, and helped them advance equity in their work.

In our most recent COP, Meeting the Moment: Activating Our Collective Power, leaders reported that their participation and leadership development at this offering would support student success by:

- Equipping them to center conversations with students on healing and providing concrete resources.
- Maintaining conversations with staff student centered.
- Applying diverse frameworks in academic settings, including Belonging Design Principles.
- Providing skills and diverse frameworks to focus on systems and structural changes in academic settings.

Figure 1. *Very high proportions of leaders felt the COP and LPL conferences prepared them to engage in equity work.*

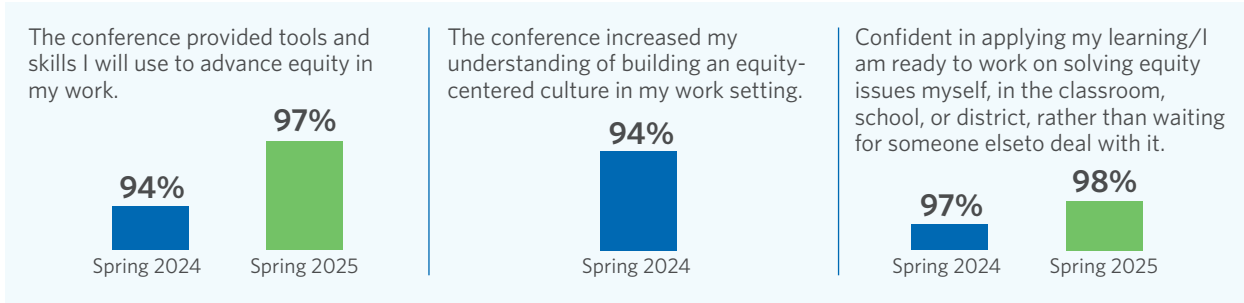
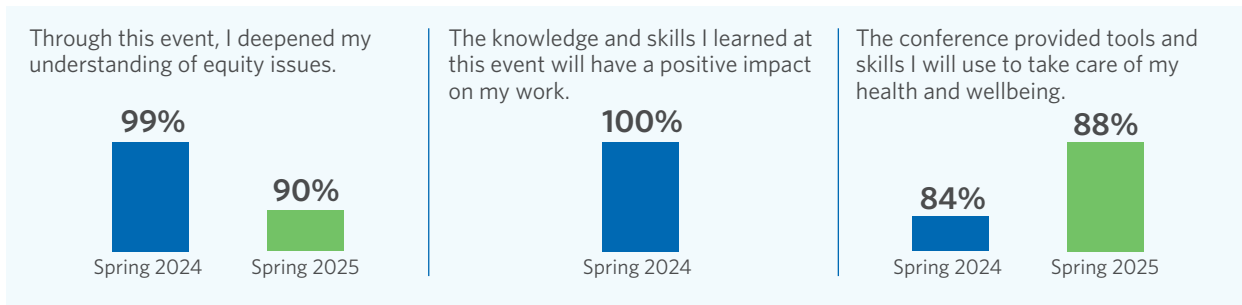


Figure 2. *Very high proportions of leaders felt the COP and LPL conferences provided them skills to deepen equity work and to sustain their wellness.*



**Declaration 3:** The roles of principals and other school leaders have evolved considerably since the California School Leadership Academy was first established more than three decades ago, with a broad range of knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to successfully support success for the diverse learners served in California public schools.

The 229 school site leaders who participated in our regional academy learned equitable strategies to effectively support the success of their diverse learners. More specifically, in our March 2025 conference, leaders reported the following:



Additionally, in our Meeting the Moment Activating Our Collective Power COP, 85% of leaders agreed or strongly agreed that the COP prepared them to serve diverse learners and families in their classrooms, schools, or districts.

**Declaration 4:** Focused investment in leadership development for principals and other school leaders will benefit pupils and staff and ultimately improve outcomes for pupils.

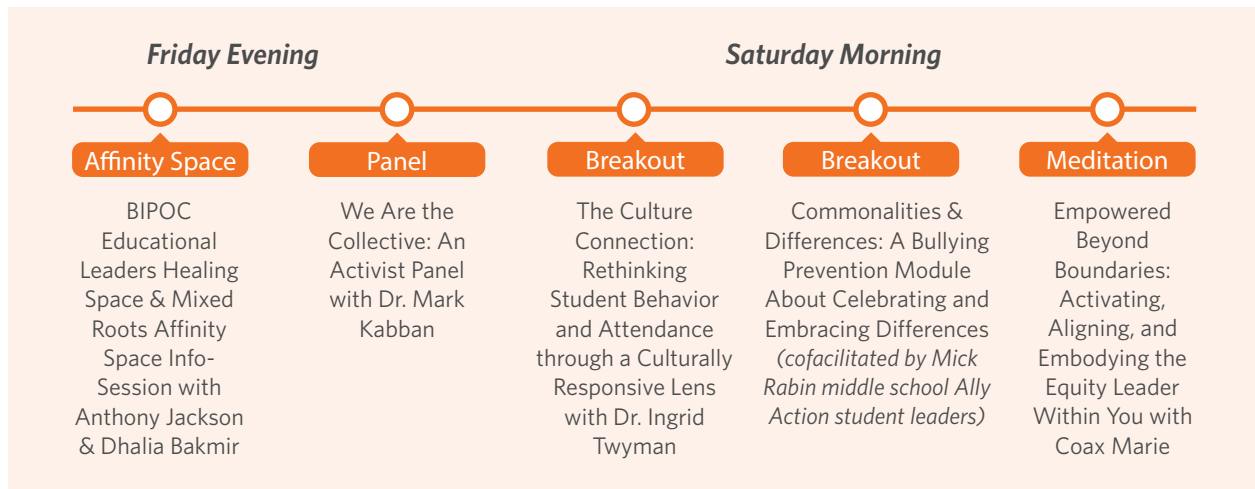
Through our variety of offerings, our regional academy supports the leadership development of **school principals, vice principals, and other site administrators, serving over 200 site leaders.** Figure 3 below provides a snapshot of the learning trajectory of a first-year principal in our March 2025 conference. A qualitative case study with a first year principal revealed that our conference model supported him in the following ways: (1) Building a network of support and feeling re-energized to engage in equity work at his school setting; (2) providing access to individualized coaching, and high-quality training in relevant education issues; and (3) supplying concrete resources to bring back to his school setting.



**I felt included and supported at the [conferences] and I want to recreate that here at my school...I felt reaffirmed and re-energized on why I am doing this [work]."**

- First year principal and case study participant

Figure 3. *The Learning Trajectory of a First Year Principal at an LAEP/21CSLA Conference*



## LEADER TESTIMONIALS

To learn more about our offerings from the perspective of educational leaders, please reach out to the 21CSLA offering participants listed below.



*I needed vulnerability. I needed someone I could talk to about what was going on in my life, so [my LAEP/21CSLA coach] was that person for me. As far as my health, my blood pressure has gone down tremendously...just having an outlet that was concerned about me [helped]. Coaching was part of the job, and it was great, but what it did with for me and just being able to manage grief and loss that was huge."*

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21CSLA offering participation:

Conferences, COPs, and Coaching



*[At the LAEP/21CSLA conference] I learned more holistic, bold strategies that I can use to help school or district leaders come together and create more culturally relevant, equitable solutions to problems their school or district is facing with consideration of the community context."*

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21CSLA offering participation:

Conferences, COPs, and Coaching