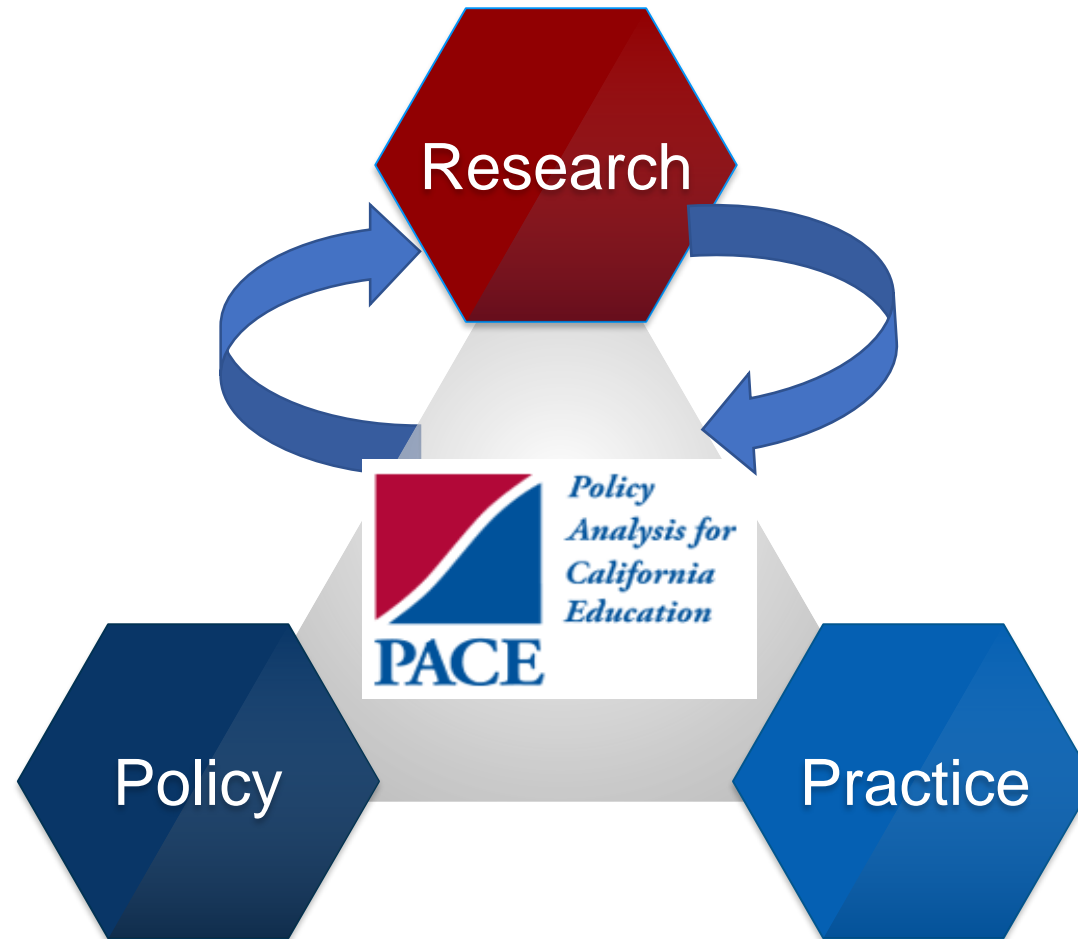


# Continuous Improvement in Districts and Schools: Lessons from the CORE Districts

October 4, 2019  
Sacramento, California

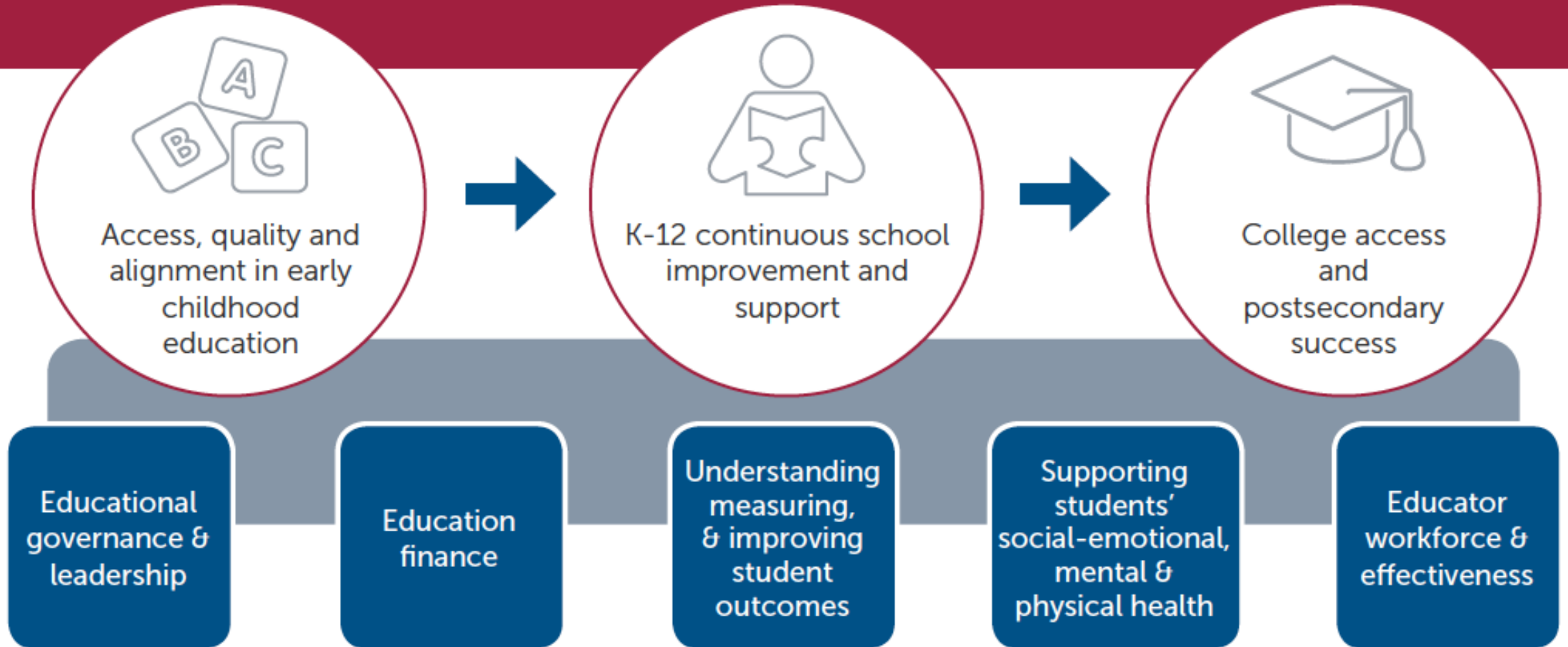


# PACE's Mission: *Advancing equity and improving education policy and practice through evidence*



# PACE's focus areas

Our goal is to produce research within all levels of California's education system, with a particular focus on alignment in systems. We focus on the following topics:





# Continuous Improvement in Districts and Schools:

## Lessons from the CORE Districts

# Alix Gallagher, PhD

- Director of Research-Practice Partnerships
- Previous Associate Director at the Center for Education Policy at SRI International.
- Holds a PhD in Educational Administration from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Began her career in education as an elementary school teacher.



# Rick Miller

- Executive Director of the CORE districts.
- Prior to joining CORE, Miller was the Deputy State Superintendent for P-16 Policy and Information Branch of the California Department of Education.
- Served as Press Secretary to Richard W. Riley, Secretary of Education in the Clinton Administration.



# Agenda

- Presentation, “Learning and Practicing Continuous Improvement”
- Q&A

# Learning and Practicing Continuous Improvement

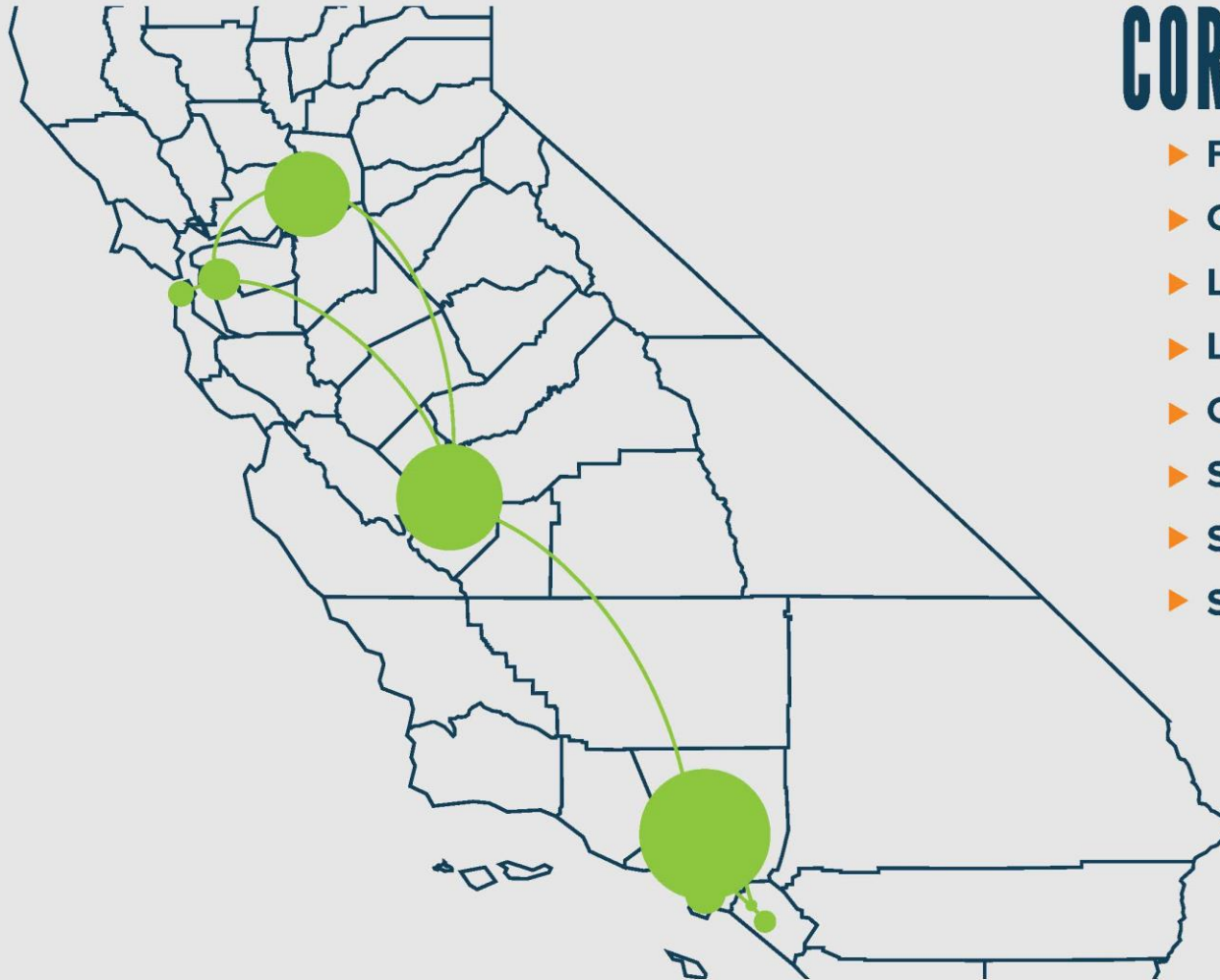
Alix Gallagher (Policy Analysis for California Education)

Rick Miller (CORE Districts)

October 4, 2019







# CORE DISTRICTS

- ▶ Fresno Unified
- ▶ Garden Grove Unified
- ▶ Los Angeles Unified
- ▶ Long Beach Unified
- ▶ Oakland Unified
- ▶ Sacramento City Unified
- ▶ San Francisco Unified
- ▶ Santa Ana Unified

# CORE's Decade of Work Explained



# What do we mean by continuous improvement?

- *Systems* produce outcomes
- Change efforts focus on key *processes*
- Progress requires continual *learning* and discovery
- *Frontline workers* are uniquely situated to learn how to get ideas to work
- As effective practices are discovered, they are *spread* throughout the organization

# Research questions

- What do we know about how to support educators in learning continuous improvement?
- What conditions support continuous improvement in districts and schools?

# Data

- Semi-structured interviews (n=116) with CORE staff, district staff, school leaders, and teachers participating on improvement teams.
- Observations of key capability-building events hosted by CORE (88 hours) as well as district and school events conducted as part of improvement work (24 hours).
- Analysis of artifacts from events and from improvement teams' work.

# Learning continuous improvement

- Taking up continuous improvement into schools is complex
- Typical professional learning offerings are insufficient
- Improvement teams need access to content expertise
- With sufficient supports, schools can use continuous improvement to improve outcomes

# Conditions: student-focused and consistent

- Build commitment to consistent goals and involve all in working towards them
- Prioritize people
- Clarify instructional purpose and build coherence
- Scaling is more than spreading—tackle resource needs and deepen learning to sustain improvements

# Conditions: Leadership

Effective leaders:

- Champion improvement work
- Distribute leadership—build a culture of teacher agency and internal accountability
- Create time for shared learning
- Make it safe to fail in service of improvement



# Conditions: structures and processes

- Structures and processes are the *container* not the *substance* of work that improves outcomes
  - Use data to identify needs
  - Provide teachers with support for improving instruction
  - Create time for shared work and learning
  - Enable information flow, leading to consistency and coherence

# CORE Improvement Community Theory of Action

## Impact and Outcomes:

- Produce improvement in mathematics outcomes
- Build capability in continuous improvement concepts and tools

## Initiatives Towards Impact and Outcomes:

- CIC convenings, district regional learning experiences, school teams coaching
- Executive leaders, principals and local facilitator cohort training courses
- Measurement strategy to understand the CIC impact

Questions?



# Upcoming PACE Events

## **The Local Impact of Unfunded Liabilities: Lessons from Sacramento and Marin County**

Friday, Nov. 8, 11:30am-1:00pm

Location: Library Galleria

## **Toward a Vision of Equity in College Access: Re-evaluating College Admissions**

Friday, Nov. 22, 10:00am-4:00pm

Location: UC Berkeley School of Law

