Bridging the Knowing-Doing Gap for Continuous Improvement:

The Case of Long Beach Unified School District

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Executive Summary

This case study in the Long Beach Unified School District is part of a broader set of reports on findings from the CORE-PACE Research Partnership's developmental evaluation in 2018-19. The research in 2018-19 focused on elevating lessons about how educators learn continuous improvement and the organizational conditions that support continuous improvement work in schools and districts. This case study examines continuous improvement work within Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), focusing on the efforts to improve student learning through an integrated system of supports driven by a clear vision for high-quality instruction. In describing the district's continuous improvement approach, our goal is to highlight examples and strategies that may be useful to leaders and organizations engaged in similar work. While some aspects of LBUSD's context differ from many districts in the state (e.g., the stability of district leadership and generally positive relationships among district leaders, the school board, and teachers' union), we believe the practices we describe in this case are replicable in most districts and would lead to improvements in organizational function. Four specific lessons about engaging in continuous improvement gained from LBUSD's work are highlighted:

1. Educators share clarity of purpose and continuously strive to build coherence across the system with the central goal of improving classroom instruction.
2. Leaders intentionally fill in the knowing-doing gap of instructional practice by creating and maintaining structures for shared learning across the system.
3. Teachers and administrators are provided with differentiated support, coaching, and opportunities to be instructional leaders. The district expects that *everyone* is or will become an instructional leader, with deep knowledge of pedagogy and the ability to facilitate both student and adult learning.
4. Leaders understand that scaling good ideas is not just about spreading effective practices, but also deepening understanding of implementation. Engaging in continuous improvement means grappling with dilemmas of time, resources, and focus.

Overall, LBUSD represents a portrait of a learning system that emphasizes improvement towards high-quality, rigorous instruction for all students through professional learning and capacity-building. Their efforts offer critical insights and reflection for other systems and leaders interested in supporting continuous improvement for both student and adult learning.

Introduction

The *CORE Districts (CORE)* is a nonprofit organization created in 2010 to foster collaboration between eight of California's largest districts[1]. In 2018-19, *CORE* provided a range of assistance to participating districts including programs to support multiple levels of district and school leaders' developing improvement capability and coaching for school-based improvement leaders and Local Improvement Teams (LIT). This case study examines continuous improvement work within one of the CORE districts, Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), focusing on its efforts to improve student learning through an integrated system of supports driven by a clear vision for high-quality instruction[2].

Serving 74,000 students in 85 public schools, LBUSD has been hailed as a large urban school system successfully engaged in systemwide improvement. A recent report by the Learning Policy Institute notes that the district consistently has African American, Latinx, and White students achieving at higher than expected levels on state assessments, outperforming students with similar backgrounds in most other California districts (Podolsky, Darling-Hammond, Doss, & Reardon, 2019). This is particularly noteworthy as these three student populations make up the large majority of the district enrollment (See Figure 1: District Demographics).

[1] This case is part of a series of four documents describing lessons learned about continuous improvement from the *CORE District's* leadership of the CORE Improvement Community during 2018-19. For more information about the history of CORE, background on continuous improvement, and the CORE Improvement Community see: https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/learning-and-practicing-continuous-improvement-lessons-core-districts

[2] The case study of LBUSD is part of a set of three purposefully selected cases, drawn from the CORE districts, which describe the practices that two districts and one school have used to improve their systems. While all three of these cases describe the work of exemplars, we do so with the belief that the central practices described could be successfully brought into many other districts and schools. The related case studies and report in no way seek to evaluate the CIC. Instead they are focused on the interactions between participating district and school systems and the learning opportunities *CORE* provided with the intent of drawing lessons that are relevant to both the CORE districts and to the broader set of leaders and policymakers interested in accelerating improvement in various contexts.

Figure 1: District student demographics[3]

Student Group	Percentage
English Learners	19.5
Foster Youth	0.5
Homeless	7.7
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	69.1
Students with Disabilities	12.5
Race/Ethnicity	
African American	12.8
American Indian	0.2
Asian	7.4
Filipinx	3.1
Latinx	56.9
Two or More Races	3.0
Pacific Islander	1.4
White	13.0

While the district's leaders will readily acknowledge that their system is still a work in progress, they have built and sustained a culture of continuous learning for both students and adults. Across the system, educators spoke about the "Long Beach Way" and how a large district manages to feel like a family. They highlight trusting relationships fostered by decades of consistent leadership and staff as a key feature that signals peoples' investment in the organization and in one another. The continuous improvement journey at LBUSD is one of deep support for student and adult learning with integrated structures and processes to support instructional growth, coaching, and leadership throughout all levels.

This report describes how LBUSD used a range of structures and processes to build collective efficacy around a shared understanding of high-quality instruction. Figure 2 lists the main structures and processes described in the report.

Figure 2: Key tools, structures, and processes to support continuous improvement

Tools, Structures, and Processes	Purpose
Understandings Continuum	Codifies vision of effective instructional practices to support implementation and reflection, articulating the goal, teacher practice, and steps.
Implementation Steering Committee	Reduces siloes within district and provides time and space to develop shared knowledge and plan for a unified approach to instruction, professional learning, and supervision
Instructional Leadership Team	Translates the vision into a reality, with principals and teacher leaders co-designing and planning professional learning at their sites

[3] Source: California School Dashboard, 2018 Report, retrieved from https://www.caschooldashboard.org/reports/19647250000000/2018

Overall, this case study highlights LBUSD as an exemplar district that has developed a learning system that emphasizes continuous improvement towards high-quality, rigorous instruction for all students through professional learning and capacity-building[4]. In describing the district's continuous improvement approach, our goal is to highlight examples and strategies that may be useful to leaders and organizations engaged in this work.

Methods

This case is based on data collected during the 2018-19 school year, consisting of: (a) interviews with 29 participants, including LBUSD district leaders (n = 9), principals (n = 6), and teachers (n = 14); (b) observations of a district-led professional development opportunity, a district-level advisory meeting, and Collaborative Inquiry Visits (CIV) at three school sites; and (c) analysis of artifacts (e.g., *Understandings Continuum,* CIV protocols, etc.). Interviews were recorded and transcribed. At the events we observed, we took observation notes and also collected agendas, event materials and artifacts of work (e.g., poster paper where participants recorded discussions).

Analysis included several rounds of content coding of interview transcripts, observation notes, and artifacts, interspersed with regular discussions among members of the research team to surface initial hypotheses and explore potential patterns in the data within and across districts. We broadly focused our initial coding on how educators described their experiences with *CORE*, their CI approach, and their perceptions of the organizational conditions that enabled or constrained their work. We drew upon the Coherence Framework developed by the Public Education Leadership Project at Harvard University[5] (n.d.) and Fullan and Quinn's (2015) Coherence Framework to create a hybrid heuristic tool to examine existing district and school conditions and their inter-relationships. Next, we used Grunow and Park's (2019) five features of CI to examine the range of approaches districts were taking to work towards their overall goals. We coded all data with these categories and then developed case-ordered descriptive matrices comparing the districts (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014). From these we developed major themes about the continuous improvement approaches across the sites.

[4] When we use the term "continuous improvement," we are referring to approaches that align with Grunow and Park's (2019) understanding that continuous improvement approaches have the following assumptions: 1) *systems* produce outcomes, 2) change efforts focus on key *processes*, 3) progress requires continuous *learning* and discovery, 4) *frontline* workers (e.g., teachers and school leaders) are uniquely situated to learn how to get ideas to work, and 5) as effective practices are discovered, they are *spread* throughout the organization. [emphasis in the original].

[5] Harvard University, Public Education Leadership Project (n.d.). *Coherence Framework.* Retrieved from https://pelp.fas.harvard.edu/book/coherence-framework

Lessons Learned

Analysis of our 2018-19 data revealed four lessons about how Long Beach Unified School District engaged in continuous improvement to build collective efficacy.

Lesson 1: Educators share clarity of purpose and continuously strive to build coherence across the system with the central goal of improving classroom instruction.

At LBUSD, clarity of instructional purpose and coherence is intrinsic to improvement work throughout the system to help everyone understand the *why* of what they are doing, especially regarding instructional practice. Developing clarity and coherence around high-quality, rigorous instruction is not an event or a statement; it is an ongoing process by which the system continuously develops, deepens, and communicates shared purpose. Classroom instruction clearly centers the work of system improvement, with culture, structures, processes, and leadership supporting a consistent understanding of quality teaching and learning.

Culture as an anchor for improving instruction. A key aspect of how LBUSD continuously refines and solidifies coherence is by educators having a shared identity and culture that anchors their improvement efforts. Professional expertise is not only valued but deliberately cultivated by the district. The current superintendent has held the position since 2002 (and is one of the longest-serving superintendents in the nation), and central office staff typically have experience in various key roles, first as teachers and principals, then as coaches, supervisors, and professional development and curriculum directors. At schools, the pattern is similar. Principals and teachers tend to have a long history within the district. Educators highlighted the critical mass of people within the system who view themselves as learners, are willing to engage in team work, and have a high sense of collective responsibility. They also cited the development of a trusting relationship between central office staff and school-level educators as a critical factor in promoting continuous improvement. Central office staff consistently mentioned the importance of building positive relationships with school site leaders so that they can have meaningful conversations and growth. School level teams also noted the emphasis on strong relationships as a foundation. When asked what enables them to focus on continuous improvement efforts, a teacher from a school shared a commonly expressed sentiment:

> *...you have to build that connection, that foundation. Because otherwise, people won't work for you. They won't want to. If you trust people, they will want to show you that they trust you by doing a good job. But if there isn't that trust or that belief of each other, then it's just kind of like, 'Ugh, I'm just going to work.'*

The positive relationships within and across the community, leadership longevity, and stability in the system are important organizational conditions that support ongoing

improvement and learning at LBUSD. Simply put, it is not just about structures and processes, but trusting relationships and mutual accountability that enables their work. They also make concerted efforts to build shared understandings about teaching and learning as I describe below.

Building understanding of the "why" behind instructional vision. LBUSD invests in efforts to articulate and build capacity to enact the vision for instructional quality across the system. The district's Implementation Steering Committee is partly responsible for developing the vision and leadership around instructional coherence. Described as an interdependent group composed of cross-functional teams, the meetings bring together K-12 curriculum and supervision staff at the central office and school levels. In the past, the district had separate elementary, middle, and high school steering committees. District leaders realized during the early stages of implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), that the rigor of the standards required different teaching than they had in the past. After the curriculum staff deepened their expertise around the new standards, they thought about how departments and people interacted to learn and grow together. District staff decided that it was vital as a system to develop new opportunities to build a shared vision around pedagogy, classroom practices, and supervision of principals. They created the Implementation Steering Committee as a structure to respond to that need. Currently, the K-12 steering committee meets monthly and deals with large issues around the field, moving in a unified K-12 approach while also differentiating for specific levels. As one administrator noted, while the committee does not completely eliminate siloes, it has helped to move a unified vision of K-12 instruction forward and has helped people resist the tendency to keep their work to themselves:

> *If you have beautiful curriculum, perfectly defined unit guides, lessons, assessments, all of it, but no use of it, that's not good. If you have great principals, but their teachers don't have resources, they don't have guidance, they don't have anything to support getting to the standard, that's not good either. It's an incredibly important group, and very interdependent, in terms of our success.*

The district has also developed tools to deepen implementation of instructional coherence. The answers to why and how about effective instructional practices are explicitly articulated and codified through the *Understandings Continuum* (See Appendix A: LBUSD Understanding's Continuum, 2018). As noted in the document, the continuum is intended to be used as reflection and planning tool, and provides an "overarching vision of what we want classroom instruction to look like in our schools" (LBUSD *Understandings Continuum*, 2018, p.1). The latest version from 2018 outlines six understandings focusing on planning for high-quality instruction, key practices for daily instruction, building collective efficacy, and promoting caring relationship with students (i.e., Understanding 1, Understanding 2, etc.).

The *Understandings Continuum* also provides a progression of implementation, reflecting a developmental approach to capacity-building. For example, Understanding 2 details three teacher practices and steps and states, "Providing all learners with cognitively demanding tasks and complex text with the goal of making meaning is essential in order for students to build conceptual understanding of content and transfer their learning to new contexts." As noted by an administrator, helping teachers to understand the "why" of instructional practice was pivotal to supporting implementation to classroom practice:

> *Yes, it's been a really humbling process, like a huge learning process for me just seeing where teachers are at once you look at a uniform way of viewing instructional practice and how the resources are organized. It's a big, for me, it was a big mover in terms of the teachers' understanding the whys, because oftentimes we forget to explain the whys, like, why is this, why are the unit maps important? Or the unit guides, like how were they organized? And I assumed that they, everyone had that knowledge, but they didn't necessarily know all of the whys. And so, when they understand kind of the purpose behind it, it makes, it really impacts their instructional practices…*

The explanation and discussion of the "why" behind instructional practices are evident and are reinforced through professional learning both at the district and within schools. As one math teacher shared:

> *I'm an end-user of math but… once I understand the whys of things that I'm teaching like that just makes me a better teacher. And our Math Department has been really good at connecting the conceptual things as opposed to just the rote things that we all learned in math. I know that circumference is pi times diameter. Well, why is it that? Who thought that up? That's relevant right now in what I'm doing and the training that I got… [to deepen my conceptual understandings of math] probably four years ago has made me a much better teacher… I'm continually connecting things back and forth fluently and with ease and it isn't an afterthought, it is part of my conversation now.*

The newest understanding, Understanding 6, focuses on teacher-student relationships and culturally-relevant instruction ("Cultivating a classroom atmosphere, where teachers deliberately balance caring relationships with high expectations and supports for student success, provides a foundation for a safe learning environment that values diversity, trust, and respectful communication.") (LBUSD *Understandings Continuum* 2018, p. 7). This new element of the continuum arose out of the district's participation in the CORE Improvement Community work that focused on reducing the math achievement gap for African American and Latinx students. As part of their participation in the improvement community, *CORE* asked districts to conduct interviews

with students about math. The executive staff interviewed exiting 12th grade African American students, including those who had been successful and those who had been unsuccessful in math courses. Students were asked about their math experiences and what they considered to be supportive conditions. From this work, district leaders homed in on the importance of "warm and demanding teachers" and further refined the teaching and learning framework for their system. The emphasis on teacher-student relationships also went hand-in-hand with the use of CORE survey data, focusing on student, parent, and teacher perceptions about the school climate and social-emotional learning. Thus, tools such as the *Understandings Continuum* are continuously refined to help elaborate and improve instructional practice.

Lesson 2: Leaders intentionally fill in the knowing-doing gap of instructional practice by creating and maintaining structures for shared learning across the system.

A key theory of action driving the district's continuous improvement is the belief that in order to grow, adults in the system need opportunities to learn together—not just individually—across the system. Consequently, finding shared learning spaces across all levels of the system to fill in the knowing-doing gap is valued and enacted through systems of learning. The implementation steering committee, mentioned earlier, provides a place that brings together traditionally siloed members of the system—both horizontally and vertically. Additionally, the district heavily invests in developing the capacity of staff to be instructional leaders of teams. Educators are no strangers to professional development trainings or team collaborations. At LBUSD these structures are integrated as part of a learning system between schools and the central office as well as across schools. District leaders consider the shared learning across roles—among principal supervisors, principals and teachers especially—as vital. As one district administrator noted:

> *...that was some very hard learning for us around the idea that if we don't learn in the same spaces together, we're not going to be able to engage in that continuous improvement work. From that learning, there's the new partnership that [we] prioritized where teachers and administrators learn in shared spaces, and curriculum work and coaching and professional development work is done in collaboration with school supervision.*

In addition to the steering committee, instructional leadership teams (ILTs) and collaborative inquiry visits (CIVs) are two major structures intended to support shared learning with and across schools. I detail what they look like below, highlighting both the ongoing successes and challenges of engaging in them.

Instructional leadership teams (ILTs). As described by members of the ILT at various schools, the function of the ILT is to connect the district's vision of quality instruction to practice at the school-site level. ILTs are typically composed of the principal and grade-level or departmental representatives from each team (e.g., grade-level chairs

for elementary grades or department chairs for secondary grades). The district brings together ILTs from each school twice a year for a full day of professional development around a focal instructional practice area, such as differentiation for English learners. The full day may include a range of activities designed to support schools in operationalizing the district's vision. In the meeting we observed, selected teams shared out practices in their schools; district leaders presented a session about research on the focal instruction area, followed by cross-school grade-level content area discussions; and concluded with each ILT engaged in action planning. The ILTs were tasked with translating the vision into a reality and designing and planning professional learning at their sites based on the larger goals and vision set the by the district. As one ILT member shared, "And I think that, to me, is what ILT is, is bridging that gap between the pedagogy of what the district wants us to deliver and then how does it actually get delivered." At schools, most ILTs meet at least once a month to engage in strategic planning for professional learning, with an emphasis on developing targeted instructional practice for improvement. Districtwide, two new areas of emphasis were on team collaboration (Understanding 5) and teacher-student relationships (Understanding 6). Additionally, schools had a focal instructional strategy and content area that they strived toward based on their academic achievement data. For example, one school focused on the strategy of gradual release of responsibility for English language arts to increase academic rigor, while another school focused on improving academic discourse for math instruction.

ILTs have evolved and continue to evolve, with an increasing emphasis on distributed leadership and adult learning. At one school, a member talked about this shift and how it took several years to understand the process. In the beginning, members were used to the principal being the primary person in charge of presenting or planning professional development. Through trial and error, teams learned to think together about pacing and support for adult learning. The ILTs also grappled with how to support teachers and other staff to implement new ideas, asking questions of themselves such as, "How do we meet to be able to plan this? How much time do teachers need?" At another school, where each member represents a grade level, members have the responsibility to "push the grade level forward." Each member presented the work of the grade level, then the team discussed how it could be accomplished. Other times, a member presented their work and then the ILT discussed the benefits and challenges of applying a practice to other grade levels. At a third school, the ILT described a gradual shift in ILT practice, mentioning that one of the successes of their team was, "It's not just five people who are doing everything… It's been really successful, and I think that's where we were lacking, is that buy-in from the staff when you presented them with things. I think that's gotten a lot better." In these cases, teachers spoke about being professionally accountable to not just students ("these are my children") but also to one another ("so that teachers will have the benefit of having better prepared students"). Throughout the district, ILTs are considered critical spaces for professional learning and instructional leadership for both teachers and principals.

Collaborative Inquiry Visits (CIVs). To spread learning among sites, schools are placed in triads, typically with similar schools. Each school in the triad annually hosts a CIV, led by the school's ILT. In addition to principals of the partner schools, ILT members and other interested teachers and principal supervisors participate. Typically, the principal and the ILT make a presentation reviewing relevant data on the school (e.g., *CORE* survey data on school climate, math or ELA achievement gap, etc.). Then the hosting school explains its theory of action and focus of instructional strategy for the year. For example, one school shared its theory of action as, "If teachers collaborate to review standards, provide targeted small group instruction, and focus increasing academic discourse, then we will increase achievement in ELA and math, closing the gender gap, and the gap for ELL, Latinx, and African American subgroups." From this theory of action and the data, the group sets specific improvement targets (e.g., increase math proficiency by 5 percent or close the gender gap in math by 7 percent). Once the visitors have had an overview of the school's data and theory of action, they received observation questions (e.g., "Look fors") or a protocol to note evidence of practice. Visitors were divided into small groups to ensure that all classrooms were observed. After the observations, the groups reconvened to debrief on what they observed, with the aim of providing feedback to the school. The whole group discussion was followed by separate debriefings for the principals that were facilitated by their district principal supervisor.

District administrators and teachers readily acknowledge that the process is still being refined to make CIVs useful and meaningful. In instances where it was deemed not very useful, educators described it as feeling like a "dog and pony show" that was stressful for teachers. In the case of one school, the principal took active steps to frame it as a learning and sharing opportunity rather than an evaluation. As one teacher at this school shared,

> *But ours is just authentic, and it's … people still get stressed just because of the nature of the beast. [The principal]'s done absolutely everything to just lower that stress level as much as possible so people really see it as what it's designed for. It's a learning opportunity, a sharing opportunity. And if she says it once, she's literally said it 100 times just in the last week: 'It's not a gotcha moment. We're not looking around to say, "Oh, gotcha. You didn't do that.,"' And in the past, it has been.*

Educators also considered specific and honest feedback to be critical to making the CIV feel meaningful and productive. When feedback was too generic, teachers and principals did not believe that the process could be used to inform their next steps. Principals also talked about having a space for themselves to gain honest feedback and different perspectives as a key part of their learning. One highlighted this as a key benefit:

> *I think for me, really, one of the biggest things is that sense of principal collaboration. After the teachers and the whole team leaves, that time*

around the table where you can really be honest and a little bit more vulnerable and say, 'I don't even know where I'm … I thought I knew where I was driving this ship, but I don't know anymore.' The different perspectives and the different feedback are really valuable, and different people bring different dynamics to that.

Overall, teachers' views of the value of hosting their CIV were mixed, suggesting that implementation of the process could still be improved. At the same time, the opportunities for teachers to observe classrooms in other schools and the focused collaboration it provides for principals suggest that CIVs create important learning value for the district.

Lesson 3: Teachers and administrators are provided with differentiated support, coaching, and opportunities to be instructional leaders. The district expects that everyone is or will become an instructional leader, with deep knowledge of pedagogy and the ability to facilitate both student and adult learning.

LBUSD is very clear and explicit about the purpose of improving the instructional core, with processes in place to differentiate support for teachers, principals, and other staff. Building collective efficacy, especially for teachers, is considered a core driver of effective instruction. There is a systemwide expectation that everyone is or will become an instructional leader, with deep knowledge of pedagogy and the ability to facilitate both student and adult learning. The district heavily invests in developing knowledge about instruction and curriculum through structured professional learning opportunities. It also intentionally invests in leadership development, especially for principals as instructional leaders. Principals and teachers mentioned the importance of leaders having the ability to support, coach, and facilitate instructional improvement. As one teacher shared:

I really feel that the principal and the district are the facilitators of developing the pedagogy within teachers. With that being said, it's also very important that the pedagogy of the principals is developed, so that way they can also scaffold in for their teachers the needs. Because if we get into, let's say, a reader's workshop mentality when somebody's been so used to using the Wonders [text] book one, book two, it can't happen overnight. That principal needs to help facilitate and develop, but then it's also the want of the teacher, wanting to grow and develop.

A principal also shared the importance of knowing the staff as learners and co-constructing the process with them:

You need to be able to know where you're starting. Who are your learners? Who's in the room? And build from them and build it together… It means that they see an issue, and they develop the solution associated with it. I

always have my own opinion, but if I ever closed my mouth, their opinions or their thought process of implementation is always 25 times better. And we're getting to a place where that's happening.

There is an overall a system of professional learning, which includes collaboration, training with coaching, and implementation support. These pieces cannot stand alone and the district has built processes and structures so that training, support, and coaching are provided throughout the system.

Collaborating through professional learning cycles. As mentioned earlier, school ILTs and grade-level/department teams are key structures that support instructional planning and learning. Principals are allowed to have four staff meetings a month, and depending on team and school readiness, teacher-driven grade meetings may occur 2-3 times a month. Teams generally meet to plan instruction and to engage in Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycles (PDSA), a tool for rapidly testing and evaluating the effectiveness of a change idea. As described by one administrator, many schools are engaged in action planning rather than a complete PDSA cycle, although they may refer to it as such. The cycle typically involves: 1) identifying an instructional goal; 2) trying out a new strategy related to the goal; 3) reflecting what they did as a team; 4) assessing the efficacy of the strategy using student data and repeating the cycle. Sometimes these cycles lasted around 8 weeks. Most often, a PDSA substituted for a school's strategic plan for the year. For instance, an administrator described an example of the process: "'We're going to raise [state test] scores by 3 percent. Based on our analysis of the data, we think we need to provide tutoring around select standards. We're going to do the tutoring. We're going to see if the kids did any better.' It's not a bad cycle. What I think is missing is, what do I need to learn as a teacher in order to make those changes and how am I going to work with my colleagues to do that?" The administrator's comment highlights how any conversation about attempts to try new changes in practice is connected not only to a continuous approach but also broader strategies for accessing new knowledge.

In a couple of the schools we visited, teams did engage in more structured PDSA cycles. One school had three PDSA cycles a year, each running for eight weeks. Teams met at least five times during each cycle. They set goals during the first meeting, planned collaborative lessons and decided how to deliver the lessons at the second meeting, and analyzed data from the lessons and discussed next steps—including whether to to keep the focus on or to move on to something new—in the third and fourth meetings. The fifth meeting was for a cross-grade level share-out with teams presenting their work to one another. As the principal highlighted, the purpose of the cycles was to enable teams to focus on one improvement strategy with opportunities to revisit it along with student work samples and data: "One grade team has been focusing on improving writing for all three cycles, because they found it powerful, and the work together was meaningful. Other grade levels have said, 'No, we're really looking at something else.'" This principal

also noted that teachers learned through fine-tuning the process. They felt that holding four back-to-back weekly meetings was too fast. They needed a meeting and then maybe a week of something else in between to give them two or more weeks to work with the students and implement strategies before coming back to team meetings.

At another school that also ran three PDSA cycles a year, the specific goals were driven by the principal and the school's student achievement data, which reflected weaknesses in math across grade levels. Schoolwide, the focus for all cycles was on increasing math rigor by centering on small group instruction and using purposeful questions (i.e., using high levels of depth of knowledge questions). Once teams had their focus strategy, they had a week to backward plan their teaching lessons for the next six to seven weeks. They then analyzed student learning based on the data they collected from assessments (e.g., performance tasks aligned to state tests) and presented their results to the faculty. The results of the testing then drove the next round of the instructional planning cycle.

Principal development as instructional leaders. At LBUSD, there are structures and systems in place to develop principals as leaders from the teacher level to central office (See Appendix B: LBUSD Leadership Development Chart). The district develops a scope and sequence for principal professional development for the year that is informed by data and feedback from principals regarding their work. Principals are directly supported by principal supervisors who view their roles as a blend of supervision and coaching. While other school districts may have similar structures, the relatively low supervisor to principal ratio in LBUSD enables staff to provide regular and targeted assistance. Supervisors may be in charge of 10-13 schools, conducting one-on-one meetings with principals, observing classroom practice, and providing personalized support. Depending on the needs of a principal and school, the frequency of interaction may vary, with struggling schools receiving more time and help. Modeling and coaching are considered a critical part of developing principal capacity. Supervisors spoke about learning *with* principals and providing support, rather than always wearing what they described as the "evaluation hat." A principal supervisor described the process:

> *So, I'm trying to get our principals to be that sideline coach, to roll up their sleeves and go ahead and demo [a] lesson. I've done a couple of lessons with principals; the two that I'm thinking in particular, I made them demo [a] math lesson. I said, 'let's do it. I can do it with you. We're planning a math lesson, but you're going to teach that lesson in front of your teachers. They need to see you teach me. Cause you've got to get some credibility with them.*

Principals we spoke to have internalized their role as instructional leaders, reflecting knowledge about quality instruction, but also understanding how to facilitate the change

and learning process for their staff. When asked about what leadership support is needed to successfully engage in continuous improvement, one principal shared:

> *I think you have to have patience. I think you have to be flexible. I think you have to be adaptable. I think you have to know when to push and when to hold people accountable, and you have to be able to differentiate. Just as we talked about differentiated instruction with the kids, we have differentiated supervision with teachers and with staff developments. All teachers are not at the same place as far as their level of proficiency in teaching. I think those are some of the things you need. I think you need a bit of humility. I don't go in thinking that I'm always the smartest person in the room and that I know everything.*

Principals also engage in action planning and ongoing monitoring of their goals with their principal supervisor. They review data and they set goals with their supervisor. There are multiple check points during the year where they have to be transparent about the success of their approaches and the challenges. In addition, there are incentives for continuous improvement as the superintendent incentivizes certain goals and provides schools with additional funds based on their improvement. As one administrator said about the district's improvement approach, "It's really beyond it being a single thing. It's a pervasive part of our culture, continuously improving."

Lesson 4: Leaders understand that scaling good ideas is not just about spreading effective practices but also deepening understanding of implementation. Engaging in continuous improvement means grappling with dilemmas of time, resources, and focus.

The district takes seriously not just how to share effective practices, but also considers how to improve quality of practice. That is, scaling good ideas is not just about spreading effective practices but also deepening understanding of implementation. There are three key beliefs that orient the LBUSD's actions towards improvement and decisions about what to scale and when.

Go slow to go fast. This mantra is often reflected in leaders paying attention to how systemwide initiatives are rolled out (e.g., a new assessment system) and taking time to pilot before scaling up.

Pay attention to noise in the system. This requires asking consistently, "What are you seeing and hearing day to day?" from all parts of the system—the classroom, parents, students, teachers' association, and other stakeholders. Leaders viewed this as a critical aspect of managing any change process. One district administrator described why this was so important:

It's letting us know where there's areas of concern, where we need to push more, where we're not pushing fast enough. One of the dangers is I get to teach myself about what we're doing. Maybe my learning is accelerated just because of circumstances, but that doesn't mean that I brought all the teachers with me. If I'm going too fast and I need to slow down and reteach just like you do in a classroom, it's that way with the system as well.

Top down and bottom up. This refers to the district's approach to balancing mandates and improvement ideas that come from the district and those that arise from the site levels. In general, the vision and broad goals are set by the district, with some flexibility for sites to develop more specific goals and actions that are aligned. Increasingly, data drives the process of determining key problems to address at schools and how they will be accomplished. The district strives for coherence of purpose around high-leverage instructional practices. For example, one high-leverage area identified is instructional differentiation. One administrator described how they approach the balance between being tightly versus loosely coupled:

So, there's a tightness around, you are going to do this, differentiation needs to happen at every site. Now, we're going to help you or we're going to see how it fits in your school, but this is something you're going to engage in and, if not yet, very soon…So, as a district, I would say the tightness is you have an action plan, everybody has an action plan. Now, the looseness would be, obviously, we're not going to tell you the exact things to do in that action plan.

This balance of tight and loose approaches is also reflected at the school sites and framed by principals. For example, at one school, the principal discussed using data to monitor progress and provided supports and guidance if needed rather than micro-managing.

If it's working, if they're doing writer's workshop and they're not doing [it] right from the beginning, I'm not going to go in and be that principal and say, 'No, you must be on unit two right from the beginning, right now, today.' No, to me, we're professional teachers and I mean if they go off the reservation and they're not getting results, for sure, I'm pulling them back.

Leaders readily acknowledged that an ongoing challenge is addressing the "knowing-doing gap." For example, in their focus on supporting English learners, district leaders noted that it is not necessarily that teachers lacked training or knowledge about effective classroom practices, but they sometimes needed to be reminded about the use of the strategies. From there, it required conversation and examination of questions such as, "Why is it not in your plans? Why is it not happening in your classrooms? What will it take for that to happen?" As one leader reflected:

> *We can put in a new class, and we can put in something, but we've got to bring the people along so that they really understand this place where we're trying to get to. Then they want to get there with you, and then they want to help along the way. But when we just roll the stuff out and try to tell them what to do, it's not going to stick.*

At the school level, leaders and teachers talked about managing resources and time—with no easy solutions. Leaders talked about the importance of providing release time away from the class, so teachers could engage in professional collaboration or learning. One leader clarified the dilemma:

> *I don't have the money to release them all the time because it is expensive. Because in order for the work to be good, they need to be released to do it. And just one lesson study and one unit a year, it's like, 'Okay, yeah, we did that,' and then it's like, 'Okay, continue that, but okay, we'll do an hour in this grade level, an hour in this grade level.' It's just not the same.*

On a related note, educators also had to wrestle with what to focus on, what to integrate, and what to filter out. Principals in particular had to figure out how they would bridge or buffer new ideas and demands from multiple sources given the needs of their schools; as one shared:

> *You have to focus and you have to give up things. That's so hard at least for our district to do, to say, to make that discerning decision that, 'Well, we have two hours. Are we going to coach and that's important, or are we going to also present this other thing?... Are we going to try and do it all and not do all of it well, or are we going to do a couple things well?' I don't know. That's just a broad strokes view. Over time, our district has become much more districtwide with our professional development focus areas that I'm aware of.*

These issues of time, resources, and focus are ongoing dilemmas and reflection points for everyone in the system. There are no easy solutions and, indeed, the goal is not to have a one-size solution or rules for each, but to grapple with them together, anchored by a shared vision and purpose. Asking these questions and reflecting together is a key process in LBUSD's continuous improvement journey.

Conclusion

LBUSD's successes did not come overnight, nor do they view themselves as a perfect system. Educators in the district will readily acknowledge they continue to face challenges, including how to better support their English learners and students with disabilities. However, their shared commitment to continuous improvement means that they are willing and able to confront these challenges. By investing in an integrated capacity-building system—with culture, structures, tools, and processes—that consistently develops instructional leadership and supports effective classroom practices, they have been able to improve student learning. As one leader eloquently stated previously, "it is not just one thing," but all the pieces and how they work together to fulfill the district's vision for instructional quality.

For other school systems interested in strengthening their capacity-building efforts, this case study suggests some key reflection questions to consider:

- Do we as a system share an understanding of high-quality instruction and instructional leadership? If so, how can we further elaborate this vision to support quality implementation? If not, how can we start the process to develop a shared vision that includes multiple stakeholders across the system?
- What elements of our system currently support the capacity of adult learners to implement the shared vision for instructional quality? What elements need strengthening? To what extent are the elements integrated versus siloed?
- To build capacity for system improvement, what differentiated supports, coaching, and professional learning are necessary?

Ultimately, the process of learning, planning, and leading together is an essential part of implementing continuous improvement. LBUSD's work suggests that leaders need to take a developmental approach to supporting all the learners in the system, paying careful attention to the needs and voices of students, teachers, and school-site administrators. Continuous improvement efforts need to be co-constructed rather than mandated if quality implementation rather than compliance is the goal.

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Author Biography

Vicki Park is Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at San Diego State University. Her work focuses on education policy implementation, organizational change, and school reform, with a guiding goal to bridge the research-to-practice and practice-to-research gap to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for diverse student populations. She earned her Ph.D. in Urban Education Policy with an emphasis on K-12 administration from the University of Southern California and her M.Ed. and teaching credentials from UCLA. Prior to earning her doctorate, she worked as an elementary and middle school teacher.

Appendix A

Understandings Continuum

LONG BEACH
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

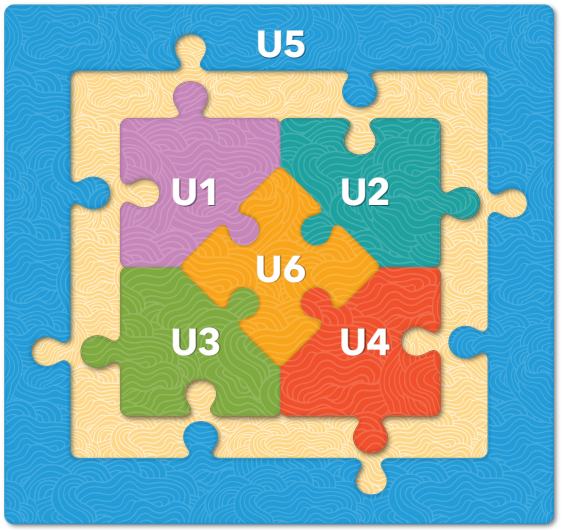
Understandings Continuum 2018

Since the transition to the Common Core Standards, the LBUSD Understandings have been used to describe effective classroom practices and elements of pedagogy desired across all LBUSD classrooms. The *Understandings Continuum* is a tool that helps further define these Understandings. While it is not a tool that captures every classroom practice in an LBUSD teacher's toolkit, it is an overarching vision of what we want classroom instruction to look like across our schools.

In their first iteration, the Understandings were presented in an evidence guide format, engaging teachers and leaders in the process of describing both continuing and new methodologies for helping students to meet the standards. As LBUSD teachers' and leaders' knowledge of high quality classroom practices and pedagogy increased, there was a need for the Understandings to evolve. The current Understandings reflect knowledge that is worth understanding: enduring, at the heart of instruction, cause reflection and promote engagement for all who interact with learning and teaching.

The 2018 *Understandings Continuum* is intended to provide teachers and leaders with a resource for planning high quality instruction, helping them to integrate key teacher practices as part of daily instruction, build collective efficacy, promote caring relationships with students and to inspire reflection throughout the instructional process. Specifically, it provides a starting point and outlines a progression of the implementation of these key practices. This *Continuum* was developed with teachers and leaders, for teachers and leaders.

Acknowledgements: Building upon prior versions, the 2018 LBUSD Understandings Continuum was developed under the direction and leadership of Dr. Jill Baker, Deputy Superintendent of Schools and Pamela Seki, Assistant Superintendent - Office of Curriculum, Instruction & Professional Development. Development teams included staff from the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development, the Deputy Superintendent's Office, Office of the Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Schools, Middle & K-8 Schools, High Schools and Research who were instrumental in ensuring that the Continuum reflects our commitment to continuous improvement anchored in research and the incorporation of the voices of our teachers, leaders and students.



What the *Continuum* is…

- a planning and reflection tool
- a tool for use across content areas
- a source for informing feedback and professional development
- a tool to engage students in thinking about themselves as learners (as age appropriate)

What the *Continuum* is not…

- a checklist
- an exhaustive list of effective instructional practice
- a tool for evaluating each Understanding in isolation
- an evaluation document

U1

A thorough understanding of standards provides a foundation for high quality differentiated instruction that results in all students meeting college and career readiness expectations through the Linked Learning approach.

Teacher Practice: Delivers standards aligned instruction

Step 1

- Aligns instruction to the grade level/course content standards
- Aligns the learning goal/intention and success criteria to the level of rigor indicated by the standards
- Supports literacy development by including reading, writing, speaking and listening with content instruction

Step 2

- Supports content using ELD Standards and Literacy Standards
- Sequences lessons to build the knowledge and skills necessary that lead to key understandings
- Facilitates learning by using essential or guiding questions and/or prompts

Step 3

- Targets a set of content standards integrated with ELD and Literacy Standards
- Establishes relevance by helping all students make connections in order to access the critical content

Teacher Practice: Differentiates instruction for ALL learners

Step 1

- Pre-assesses students to determine readiness and/or interest
- Adjusts content, process, product or affect/learning environment by allowing student choice or using flexible grouping
- Uses district-adopted and other appropriate resources for scaffolds and extensions

Step 2

- Incorporates information from various types of assessments (academic and social-emotional)
- Monitors and responds to students in the moment by providing individualized scaffolds or extensions
- Utilizes collaboratively developed strategies and resources

Step 3

- Integrates learner profile (academic and social-emotional) to provide, ongoing differentiation of content, process, product, and/or affect/learning environment
- Implements individualized supports and interventions co-developed with colleagues reflective of student needs and input

Teacher Practice: Integrates career awareness (K – 5), career exploration (6 – 8), or career preparation (9 – 12)

Step 1

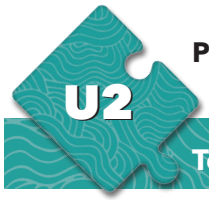
- Provides students with opportunities to apply academics to authentic real-world contexts
- Makes explicit connections across disciplines

Step 2

- Uses outside professionals and resources to enhance academic learning and ground that learning in a real-world context
- Explicitly teaches and integrates critical employability skills identified by industry (e.g., critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, innovation, adaptability)

Step 3

- Integrates standards-based, complex and extended projects, or problem-based learning (K-8) aligned to the Pathway theme (9-12)
- Uses student learning outcomes to design short-term and long-term assignments that are aligned to appropriate career fields



Providing all learners with cognitively demanding tasks and complex text with the goal of making meaning is essential in order for students to build conceptual understanding of content and transfer their learning to new contexts.

Teacher Practice: Provides cognitively demanding tasks and complex texts for all learners

Step 1

- Provides engaging, inquiry-based learning opportunities that require problem solving, reasoning and/or argumentation
- Anticipates content or processes that may cause students to struggle and provides support for a range of learners without removing the challenge

Step 2

- Provides students with opportunities to use their own reasoning, strategies and methods for engaging with texts or tasks
- Adapts tasks to provide appropriate challenge for a range of learners by using scaffolds or increasing the intellectual rigor

Step 3

- Provides inquiry-based learning opportunities that require exploration into the core ideas of a discipline or problems authentic to the real world
- Encourages students to generate questions and tasks worthy of inquiry
- Requires students to use appropriate discipline-specific methodology

Teacher Practice: Builds conceptual understanding

Step 1

- Supports and honors students' home language and prior knowledge in making connections from home and/or community to academic learning at school
- Links new content, procedures, and skills to larger, more enduring concepts
- Asks students to explain their thinking and justify their reasoning

Step 2

- Anticipates and utilizes questions, cues, and/or prompts to support students as they deepen their understanding
- Provides opportunities for students to evaluate and revise thinking at different points in the learning, including discussions about mistakes, misconceptions, and struggles

Step 3

- Engages students in the development, analysis, and evaluation of multiple pathways and solutions to address unclear problems or questions
- Provides opportunities for students to critique the reasoning and counter-arguments of others

Teacher Practice: Provides time and opportunity for students to transfer learning to new contexts

Step 1

- Selects tasks that are relevant to students and require independent application of new knowledge and skills to novel situations or new real-world contexts (not simply recognition or recall)

Step 2

- Provides on-going opportunities for students to transfer their learning between disciplines to a real-world problem

Step 3

- Requires the strategic use of academic understanding, knowledge, and skills along with good judgment, self regulation, and persistence
- Encourages students to use metacognition to analyze problems or contexts in order to select and revise solutions

U3

Orchestrating opportunities for technical and academic discourse including collaborative conversations allows students to develop a deeper understanding of content and support a point of view in varied contexts.

Teacher Practice: Creates a collaborative classroom culture where all student voices are valued

Step 1

- Provides a safe place for ALL students to share their ideas
- Establishes norms, structures and routines
- Provides engaging questions and tasks
- Engages students in team building activities

Step 2

- Groups students strategically to allow for equitable and accountable discourse
- Constructs questions and discussion prompts worthy of collaboration
- Provides appropriate linguistic support

Step 3

- Helps students value discourse as a way to learn
- Integrates student led discourse daily and authentically to support learning
- Encourages students to adjust communication to address varied contexts/audience

Teacher Practice: Provides opportunities for students to communicate ideas and support a point of view

Step 1

- Uses discourse to support standards and lesson purpose
- Builds content knowledge and prepares students for discourse
- Provides opportunities for students to share, clarify, and paraphrase ideas

Step 2

- Aligns the length and frequency of the discourse to the purpose and context of the lesson
- Provides opportunities for students to elaborate using examples, evidence, and reasoning to logically ground or strengthen complex ideas

Step 3

- Provides opportunities to critique the evidence and reasoning of others
- Provides opportunities for argumentation or discourse with multiple perspectives
- Uses available technology to enhance collaboration

Teacher Practice: Listens carefully to determine students' conceptual understanding of content

Step 1

- Checks for participation of ALL students
- Elicits evidence of application of conversational skills (e.g., turn-taking, asking for clarification, body language)
- Keeps students on topic

Step 2

- Elicits evidence of student learning of content and understanding of complex concepts and thinking skills
- Identifies and selects student responses for whole group sharing

Step 3

- Elicits evidence of multiple perspectives, points of view and connections
- Sequences responses strategically for small or whole group discussion

U4

The strategic planning and consistent use of formative assessment strategies allow teachers and students to collect evidence about where students are and to determine immediate next steps.

Teacher Practice: Clarifies and shares learning intentions and success criteria

Step 1

- Establishes clear learning intentions and success criteria
- Shares learning intentions and success criteria with students

Step 2

- Explains how learning intentions fit within the learning progression
- Refers to learning intentions and success criteria throughout the lesson

Step 3

- Discusses quality work with students
- Provides students with samples of quality work
- Co-constructs success criteria with students

Teacher Practice: Elicits evidence of student learning

Step 1

- Aligns tasks, discussions, and activities to the learning intention and success criteria
- Provides think time after posing questions to allow all students an opportunity to respond
- Uses a variety of techniques (beyond raised hands) to elicit evidence of learning throughout the lesson

Step 2

- Anticipates and prepares responses for possible student outcomes
- Elicits evidence aligned to the learning intention and success criteria
- Gathers evidence of what every student understands at strategic points during instruction

Step 3

- Asks questions that make evidence of student learning more visible
- Provides students opportunities to peer and self-assess throughout the lesson
- Uses available technology to elicit evidence of student learning in real time

Teacher Practice: Acts on evidence to move learning forward

Step 1

- Provides specific feedback related to the learning intention and success criteria
- Provides feedback during the learning
- Provides time in class to act on the feedback

Step 2

- Provides feedback that causes student thinking
- Limits corrective feedback to what students can act on
- Provides students opportunities to look at anonymous work and comment on it

Step 3

- Provides students opportunities to give feedback to one another - both positive comments and suggestions
- Provides students opportunities to self-assess using success criteria

Effective instructional teams (any team that meets regularly for the purpose of learning together to increase student achievement) embody a culture of collective efficacy leading to a focus on improving common instructional practice resulting in increased student achievement for all.

Team Practice: Establishes the conditions for collaborative learning teams

Step 1

- Establishes a collaborative compact focusing on building relationships that encourage honesty, respect, vulnerability, and trust
- Initiates collegial discussions using site data and/or relevant research
- Tests a variety of collaborative protocols and/or structures to help move the learning forward

Step 2

- Adheres to a collaborative compact while sharing student evidence, interpreting results, discussing ideas, and revising action plans with colleagues
- Engages in collegial discussion grounded in data and research to promote actionable change
- Uses adopted collaborative protocols and structures consistently

Step 3

- Advances collaborative growth by problem-solving, acknowledging conflict, appreciating members' expertise, admitting challenges, and seeking help from others
- Schedules regular opportunities for collegial discussion to reflect and move instructional practices across the school
- Adapts collaborative protocols and structures to support instructional decision-making

Team Practice: Engages in cycles of team learning (analyze data, develop shared goals, learn, implement, reflect)

Step 1

- Analyzes one form of data to create a learning goal for both students and teachers that somewhat aligns to site and/or district priorities
- Acquires new knowledge or skills tied to the learning goal, with varied levels of participation from team members
- Experiments with new knowledge and skills through planning of instruction and assessment for own classroom
- Reflects on initial attempts to incorporate new knowledge and skills to identify further learning needed to reach goals

Step 2

- Begins to use multiple forms of student data to develop learning goals for both students and teachers that align to site and district priorities
- Practices, individually and collaboratively, new knowledge and skills that are tied to learning goals, with all team members taking some part in the learning process
- Shares individual plans for instruction and assessment based on new knowledge and skills; invites support and feedback to refine new practices
- Reflects on both successful practices and/or further learning needs aligned to goals, using one or more pieces of evidence

Step 3

- Uses multiple forms of student data to analyze trends and prioritizes common learning goals for students, as well as personalized learning goals for teachers, all aligned to site and district priorities
- Implements, both individually and collaboratively, the learning of new knowledge and skills, tied directly to learning goals
- Co-constructs plans for common instruction and assessment based on implementation of acquired learnings; provides support and feedback regularly
- Monitors and adjusts implementation, using several forms of evidence, to advance to the next stage of the learning cycle or revisit previous stages, with successful practices being scaled school-wide and beyond

Team Practice: Develops a shared belief that through collective action, student outcomes will be positively influenced

Step 1

- Develops an interest in others' successes through vicarious experiences (e.g. site visits, watching video, networking, or professional reading) generating expectations of achieving similar results
- Attempts new instructional practices, building a greater sense of self-efficacy, with each incremental success
- Makes purposeful instructional decisions to ensure that all students in the individual teacher's classroom are successful
- Engages in emerging conversations with colleagues around identified goals and/or gaps in student achievement

Step 2

- Fosters a supportive team dynamic by routinely sharing instructional materials, methods, and ideas to replicate success
- Broadens the notion that collective teacher action (knowledge, skills, effort) directly impacts student achievement
- Develops and commits to instructional decisions with team(s) to support teaching and learning for all students

Step 3

- Increases interdependence around common priorities, transparency of practice, and the co-construction of curriculum as a result of continued success
- Attributes student success to collective team actions propelling the expectation that continued gains are attainable
- Embodies the belief that the collective responsibility for the success of all students lies with the team and, therefore, all members are accountable

Cultivating a classroom atmosphere, where teachers deliberately balance caring relationships with high expectations and supports for student success, provides a foundation for a safe learning environment that values diversity, trust, and respectful communication.

Foundational Belief(s) - All students and communities come with cultural and linguistic assets, and deserve to be treated with dignity, fairness, respect, and unconditional positive regard. In a warm-demanding learning environment, every student matters and needs to feel that they do. All students can learn and achieve at high levels, and we have a responsibility for their success. Confronting our own bias is important work for us to do if we are to truly set high expectations for all students.

Teacher Practice: Establishes a classroom climate of warm, caring relationships

Step 1

- Uses a process to get to know individual students, to build personal connections so students feel welcomed and included.
- Shows empathy and unconditional positive regard.
- Recognizes student growth and effort.
- Is present and approachable to students.

Step 2

- Demonstrates care and concern for students' lives outside of the classroom.
- Keeps commitments to students, maintaining appropriate confidentiality, and practicing fairness to build trust.
- Protects students' self-esteem and dignity.

Step 3

- Addresses students' needs flexibly and with sensitivity, based on the situation.
- Uses engagement strategies to make learning meaningful, and to help students connect with the teacher and each other.
- Ensures that the learning environment enhances learning and reflects student diversity.

Teacher Practice: Sets high expectations and provides necessary supports for student success

Step 1

- Communicates clearly to all students that learning is a non-negotiable expectation.
- Insists that all students participate and make attempts to engage in the learning.
- Encourages student effort and a growth mindset.
- Provides help when students are struggling.
- Informs parents/guardians when students are struggling.

Step 2

- Shares ownership of and takes personal responsibility for student outcomes.
- Remains accessible, available, and responsive to help students during and outside of class.
- Expects success from every student, and offers differentiated support to help all students achieve.
- Provides resources to parents/guardians to support their children at home.

Step 3

- Implements a variety of learning experiences to help diverse learners attain concepts.
- Provides actionable feedback and opportunities for students to revise and resubmit work to demonstrate growth toward mastery.
- Develops and implements systems of prevention, intervention, and extension to ensure that all students achieve.
- Creates opportunities for parents/guardians and/or the community to support student learning.

Teacher Practice: Creates a safe learning environment that values diversity, trust, and respectful communication

Step 1

- Acknowledges one's own cultural lens and understands its impact on instruction and student learning.
- Establishes, communicates, and implements clear and inclusive classroom norms and management system.
- Learns about the socio-cultural and linguistic assets that guide the values, beliefs, and behaviors of students, parents, and the community.
- Teaches personal coping skills, self-regulation, and self-reflection strategies to support students' emotional well-being.

Step 2

- Engages in regular peer and/or self-reflection to examine and address personal cultural bias.
- Co-constructs and implements classroom norms with students.
- Applies understanding of students' socio-cultural and linguistic assets, so as to better select instructional activities.
- Models and facilitates effective conflict resolution, self-regulation, and self-reflection skills with students.

Step 3

- Anticipates potential cultural bias in instruction and plans for student diversity.
- Revisits and revises classroom norms with students to build shared ownership and responsibility for learning environment.
- Contextualizes or connects content to students' socio-cultural and linguistic assets.
- Creates meaningful opportunities for students to self-reflect and collaboratively resolve conflicts as a learning community.

Appendix B

Leadership Development Pipeline Programs

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE PROGRAMS

Assistant Principal **Principal**

Teacher Leader → **Assistant Superintendent**

Exploring Leadership Program	Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Program	Future Administrators' Program	Continuing Future Administrators' Program	New Administrators' Program	Clear Administrative Credential Program (CACP)	Aspiring Principals' Program	New Principal Support Meetings (Year 1 & Year 2)	Principal Coaching Program	Exploring District Leadership	New Director Onboarding Program
- Current teachers (in LBUSD and outside of the district) -7 evening professional development sessions - Monthly support through site visits	- Current teachers (in LBUSD and outside of the district) - Option for Masters in Educational Leadership - Partnership with SDSU - On-line and in-person classes	- Current teachers (in LBUSD and outside of the district) - 6 full days of professional development - 5 days shadowing a current administrator -Monthly support through site visits	- Completed the Future Adminis-trators' Program -7 evening professional development sessions - Monthly support through site visits	- First-year assistant principals -6 full days of professional development - Monthly support through site visits	<u>Two Years</u> - Candidate pays total cost of program fees ($7,000) - Principal assigned as coach - Portfolio check-ins after New Admin/ Aspiring Principal meetings - Program exit meeting	- Current AP's (in LBUSD and outside of the district) - 6 full days of professional development with field assignments - 4 days of shadowing (1 per quarter) - If in CACP, same coach -Monthly support through site visits	<u>Year 1</u> -New Principal Orientation - Monthly support meetings - Formal coach <u>Year 2</u> -5 support meetings per year - Formal coach	- 34 current coaches - Current principals (year 3 and beyond) - 2 coach meetings per year (before CNET) -Assigned to coach New Principals and/or CACP candidates - Certification as coach	- Effective principals (domains and dimensions) - Evening professional development sessions focused on systems approach - Shadowing district administrators - District level leadership - Monthly PD focused on systems approach to principal supervision and central office support	- Newly promoted director(s) - Monthly support meetings - District level leadership

About

Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) is an independent, non-partisan research center led by faculty directors at Stanford University, the University of Southern California, the University of California Davis, the University of California Los Angeles, and the University of California Berkeley. PACE seeks to define and sustain a long-term strategy for comprehensive policy reform and continuous improvement in performance at all levels of California's education system, from early childhood to postsecondary education and training. PACE bridges the gap between research and policy, working with scholars from California's leading universities and with state and local policymakers to increase the impact of academic research on educational policy in California.

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- Convenes seminars and briefings that make current research accessible to policy audiences throughout California.
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- Works with local school districts and professional associations on projects aimed at supporting policy innovation, data use, and rigorous evaluation.

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