



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CORE Launches Executive Leadership Program for Improvement & Equity

A team of school leaders selected to participate in CORE Districts' Executive Leadership for Improvement & Equity (ELIE) Program is using the tools of improvement science to build equity-centered cultures within their districts.

"We're developing a community of leaders who are interrupters – rather than reproducers – of the systemic oppression and structural racism that plagues our education systems," said David Montes de Oca, Deputy Chief of Improvement for CORE Districts and 'host' of the ELIE Program.

The 15 school executives are participating in a mix of in-person learning sessions, virtual meetings and independent practice. A faculty team of CORE staff including CORE Improvement Advisor, Juli Coleman, CORE District members and outside experts, including Jaguanana Lathan of the San Diego County Office of Education, will guide the learning experience.

By the end of the year-long program, participants will co-construct how to:

- create a system of improvement and integrate it with their executive leadership roles in their organization;
- build collaboration by promoting collective goals and fostering trust among all stakeholders;
- invest time and other resources in improving outcomes and processes, and developing people to lead these efforts.

The goal of the equity-minded executive leaders is to disrupt patterns of systemic oppression and implicit bias, and create conditions that help school districts become learning organizations.

Another participant said the group is "taking time to explore the different elements of equity, and making meaning around what equity is for us as a group."

Interactive sessions include personal reflections, case studies, hands-on activities, reading discussions, opportunities to workshop authentic work artifacts, and time to plan how to bring the new learning back into their district leadership settings.

As one strategy for developing cross-race, cross-gender alliances, is the use of critical friends' groups that will hold virtual meetings each month to deepen the collective understanding of how to apply and spread the concepts, tools and skills learned in their districts.

The participants also regularly write and reflect on their work and learning.

The ELIE Program requires a significant investment of time for participants, and a willingness to struggle, learn and grow together.

ELIE will provide support to the executives as they grapple with their own equity and improvement challenges in their local contexts. This includes applying the mental models of Willingness, Humility, Curiosity, Perseverance, and Self-Discipline; all of which are critical to the role of executive leaders who wish to develop a culture of equity and improvement.

All participating districts are also members of the CORE Improvement Community, the largest education network in the nation using improvement science to close achievement gaps.

The ELIE Program curriculum includes:

- Relationship to equity: How taking a disciplined approach to improvement is good for all, and vital for students farthest from opportunity.
- Understanding & Implementing Leadership Mindsets for Improvement
- Fundamental activities of improvement science: Understanding the problem and system; focusing collective efforts; generating change ideas; testing and building evidence; spreading and scaling.
- Framework for analyzing the institutional context for improvement: capacity and capability.

As participants grow in their connections with one another and make discoveries together about what works to close the opportunity and achievement gaps for students, the program will explore becoming an ongoing cohort of learning.

The ELIE Program participants working to remove barriers to learning and improvement are:

Fresno Unified School District:

- Kim Mecum, Chief Academic Officer

Garden Grove Unified School District:

- Eimi Tomimatsu Garcia, Director, K-12 Educational Services
- Jesus Vazquez, Executive Lead

Los Angeles Unified School District:

- Derrick Chau, Senior Executive Director, P-12 Instruction
- Pedro Salcido, Director of Finance Policy
- Michael Romero, Senior Executive Director, Strategy and Innovation
- Anthony Aguilar, Director, Innovation
- Robert Whitman, Director, Special Projects

Oakland Unified School District:

- David Chambliss, Deputy Chief, Teaching & Learning
- Nicole Williams Browning, Executive Director of Instruction, Elevation Network

Santa Ana Unified School District

- Daniel Allen, Executive Director of School Renewal

Sacramento City Unified School District

- Vincent Harris, Chief, Continuous Improvement and Accountability

San Francisco Unified School District

- Jill Hoogendyk, Chief of Staff
- Ritu Khanna, Chief of Research, Planning & Assessment

CORE Districts

- Rick Miller, Executive Director
- Noah Bookman, Chief Strategy Officer