

Welcome New CORE Team Members

Join us in welcoming new improvement coaches, a program specialist and a program manager to the CORE team. Our team serves educators in the CORE Improvement Communities, connecting thousands of educators to understand the biggest challenges and most promising solutions to closing academic achievement gaps. As we gear up to launch a new Break Through Success Community focusing on 9th grade on track for socio-economically disadvantaged, African American and Latinx students, the--CORE team is ready. Below are short introductions for our newest CORE team members.



Marissa L. Kalu-Thompson, EdD, Senior Improvement Coach

Marissa is a coach for site and district improvement teams in Northern California. Most recently, Marissa served as director of talent for Leadership Public Schools where her recruitment and coaching of newly hired teachers supported the mission for students of LPS Hayward, LPS Oakland and LPS Richmond to become college and career ready community leaders. Her dissertation title, “The inner life of educational gladiators,” exemplifies her support of emotionally intelligent and culturally responsive leadership and instruction. She has 17 years of experience in professional coaching, leadership development and organizational strategic change management. Marissa lives in San Mateo.



Douglas Kriedeman, PhD, Senior Improvement Coach

Doug is a coach for site and district improvement teams in Southern California. Most recently Doug served as a high school principal in Oceanside USD, where he is credited for supporting a culture of risk and reflection and building the capabilities of teachers to use data for improvement. He has more than a decade of site and district leadership experience, purposefully creating systems where teachers empower and energize students. Doug lives in Oceanside.



Samantha Anderson, Improvement Coach

Samantha is a coach for site and district improvement teams in Southern California. Most recently Samantha served as a computer science immersion specialist with Code to the Future and as a teacher in Los Angeles USD. Her experience includes training teachers in technology and computer science, project management and instructional design to enhance rigor and equalize educational opportunities.

Samantha lives in Los Angeles.



Morgan Matthews, Program Specialist

Morgan is the program specialist for the CORE Districts. Most recently Morgan served as an education policy analyst in San Francisco USD. In San Francisco she supported district and county high school site leaders in using data, facilitating data-based discussions, and leveraging equity-centered design thinking and improvement science processes. She has four years of experience coaching school site administrators and a passion for building bridges between research, technical, and practitioner audiences. Morgan lives in Oakland.



Brandon Giles, Program Manager

Brandon is the program manager for CORE’s improvement communities and CORE capability building programs. Brandon most recently led the implementation of City Year’s Whole School Whole Child program at one of Los Angeles USD’s middle schools. Working with educators, he supervised teams of AmeriCorps members serving as tutors, mentors and role models for hundreds of students. Brandon lives in Los Angeles.

For more information about CORE’s work, visit <https://coredistricts.org/about-us/>