



**Leading  
Educators**

Potential, ignited.



# 2019 Annual Report

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We're reinventing professional development for educators, taking it out of enormous auditoriums and putting it where it belongs: in schools, in environments where educators can interact and collaborate. When we lead educators, and empower them to lead other educators, we create exponential impact across entire school systems, ensuring consistently exceptional teaching for every student in every classroom, day after day, year after year.

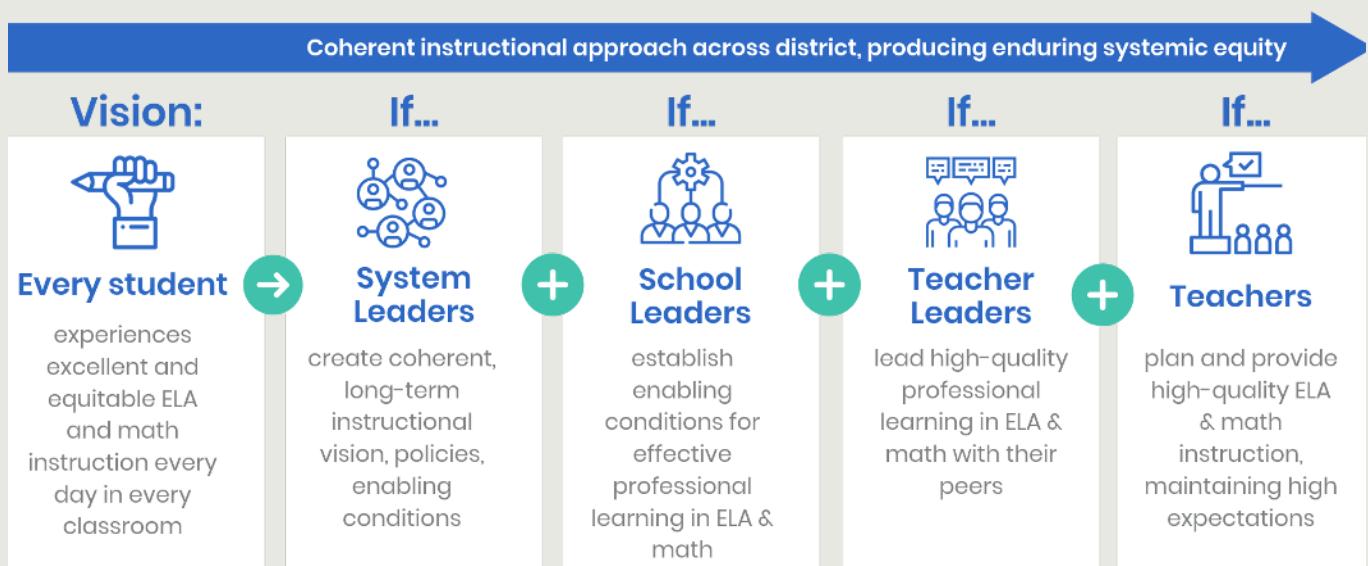
# IGNITING POTENTIAL THROUGH TEACHING

Across the country, we're seeing incredible progress as a result of more teachers having the support they need to reach every student. This past year has been a time of incredible change for us at Leading Educators amid expansions to our core support model, and we see hope in the commitments new partners are making to professional learning, strengthening teaching, and ensuring systemic equity.

This report serves as a narrative of how our efforts have evolved to meet a range of emerging needs with evidence-based strategies that last. We commit to sharing stories of success as well as learning. In this next year, we look forward to new partnership launches that will provide even greater evidence for the importance of professional learning to equity.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

Our customized support model shifts teacher professional development from traditional "sit and get" approaches to a continuous cycle of collaborative learning, practice, and feedback mapped to the content students need to learn. We design customized "content cycles" that provide a framework for breaking priority content topics into focused subtopics that build over time. Additionally, we work to ensure schools and systems have key enabling conditions in place that allow a strong instructional approach and aligned teacher learning to flourish.



"I can take you to numerous classrooms where I have seen teachers' capacity grow exponentially and that teachers are more confident in the curriculum they're teaching, they're using stronger strategies in front of children [...] I have seen a difference in schools, teachers, and students' experiences based on this work.

- Jennifer Gripado

Tulsa Public Schools Instructional Leadership Director



## PROGRAM INSIGHT: CONTENT CYCLES

Leading Educators' content cycles support teacher leaders in structuring effective content-specific professional learning for teachers within their school. Content cycles draw from research and best practices in job-embedded professional development to align collaboration with student learning and high quality instruction.

We know teachers are eager for relevant opportunities to build deep content knowledge as well as skill in using new curricular materials. Yet teachers rarely have opportunities to work with each other to craft superb lesson plans or practice the instructional techniques that help students master standards. When the planning and preparation for teaching and learning occurs in isolation, schools miss opportunities to build awareness of persistent learning trends that contribute to opportunity gaps and hinder attainment of college and career readiness.

Leading Educators partners with schools to chart an alternative way forward. Content cycles are collaborative, iterative, and focused on the defining work of planning and delivering engaging and equitable instruction. The content cycle process ensures that teachers are building essential knowledge and skills that connect directly to the demands of their curriculum and students' needs. Over the course of 9-12 weeks, teams of English language arts and math teachers participate in shared learning, planning and practice, and reviews of student learning evidence all mapped to priority standards. Each primary topic consists of three focused subtopics that follow the same 3-week cycle.

### How Do Content Cycles Work?

Unlike traditional, disconnected professional development, content cycles approach teacher development as a continuous learning process. During three-part subtopics, content cycles provide opportunities to:

#### (Shared Learning)

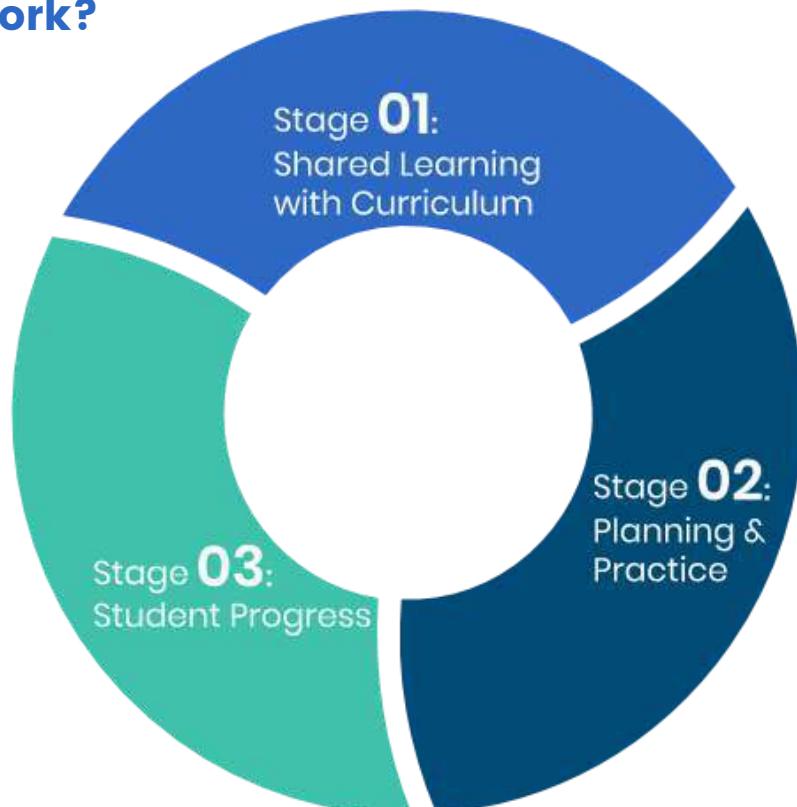
- analyze a common text
- align tasks to standards
- study standard coherence

#### (Planning & Practice)

- provide lesson feedback
- observe a lesson
- co-plan a lesson

#### (Student Progress)

- review student exit slips
- analyze a culminating task
- analyze the impact of a lesson



In my 19 years as an educator, I have seen my fair share of district-wide professional development initiatives. I'm proud to say that LEAP is far and away the best PD program I've ever seen. We care so much about our students, and LEAP has given us the tools we need to help them excel.”

- Arthur Mola

Principal at Bancroft Elementary School in Washington, D.C.



# OUR RESULTS

## DISRUPTING THE OPPORTUNITY CRISIS

Despite spending about 1,200 hours in school per year and doing what is asked of them, most students are not academically on track for college and career. Students of color and students from households with less wealth are furthest behind because they rarely have consistent access to grade appropriate and inclusive learning.

- TNTP found that of the 180 classroom hours in each core subject per school year, students spent 133 hours on assignments that were not grade appropriate.
- Compared to classrooms containing mostly students of color, classrooms with mostly white students tend to receive 1.5 times more grade-appropriate assignments and 3.6X more grade-appropriate lessons.
- Black students are 66 percent less likely than white students to be put on “gifted” tracks, even when they have comparable test scores.

### We can make excellent and equitable teaching the norm.

In the 2018–19 school year, we worked with 172 schools and 15 systems to support 645 teacher leaders and 192 school leaders, impacting 2,807 teachers and 67,387 students. Since 2008, we have worked with more than 2,000 teacher leaders across the country.

#### STUDENT OUTCOMES

Since partnering with Leading Educators to expand supports for excellent teaching, DC Public Schools has seen significant gains in ELA and Math proficiency for four consecutive years:

- +15% IN ELA
- +11.5% IN MATH



With the support of the RAND Corporation, we have been able to identify promising early results for student learning in Louisiana and Michigan.

#### TEACHER KNOWLEDGE

Instructional leaders supported by Leading Educators begin with content knowledge lower than or comparable to national benchmarks, but far surpass them after engaging in one year of learning.

- 92% of teacher leaders increased their average score across all items on a content knowledge assessment.
- Teacher leaders' agreement with inequitable beliefs decreased for 11 of 13 common beliefs assessed in one year.
- 82% of schools' average beliefs improved, suggesting greater access to high expectations.



## CONDITIONS AND CULTURE MATTER—A LOT

Shifting teaching practice at scale requires incredible alignment of key resources and priorities that support effective professional learning. These include:

- adequate time for collaboration
- diverse and distributed instructional leadership
- standards-aligned curriculum and assessments
- limited priorities

When these conditions are in place in schools, instructional culture flourishes, as do teachers and students. Using a conditions assessment framework, we monitor schools' development for each condition at each phase of the design and implementation process, and we work closely with leaders to action plan around improvement over time.

## Program Domains

To support schools in making effective instructional shifts, we design and deliver training and coaching for instructional leaders centered on four domains. Within their schools, leaders apply new knowledge to the facilitation of content cycles: weekly, 60-minute, curriculum-aligned learning and practice sessions for peer teachers.

### Equity

Equity highlights the key actions leaders should take to build an inclusive, culturally and linguistically responsive environment for both students and adults. In order to create this environment, school and district leaders with the support of teacher leaders will develop and maintain systems that focus on continuous learning around equity and using an equity lens when analyzing data, facilitating instruction, and developing systems.

### ELA & Math Content

English Language Arts Content identifies the knowledge and skills that educators need in order to develop skillful and joyful literacy for students, with attention to students' diverse backgrounds and strengths and a focus on closing within-school opportunity gaps.

Math Content describes the knowledge and skills that math teachers need most in order to develop skillful and joyful mathematical thinking and problem-solving for all students, with attention to students' diverse backgrounds, strengths, and needs.

### Learning System & Conditions

Learning Systems focuses on the structures leaders must consider to create healthy and dynamic systems for transformative professional learning. The domain has four key ideas that drive deep and continuous learning and growth: building the conditions to enable success, analyzing data, setting goals, and planning and leading professional learning aligned to goals.

### Learning Culture

Culture uses the research from Patrick Lencioni's Five Dysfunctions of a Team and Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen's Thanks for the Feedback and encapsulates the health and sustainability of district, school, and content team culture. In order to support leaders in creating inclusive learning communities, the domain focuses on three key ideas: self-awareness, community, and developing others.

## Current Partnerships

### Atlanta Public Schools

LE will provide targeted supports to math PLC leaders to prepare them to implement school-based math professional learning aligned to the Eureka curriculum at 18 schools.

- Students served SY20: 8,533, 68% Black or African American, 10% Hispanic or Latino, 2.4% Multiethnic or Multiracial
- Launched: Summer 2019

### Chicago Collaborative

The Chicago Collaborative is focused on advancing conditions in schools for effective professional learning and building the capacity of teacher leaders to be the drivers of instructional growth.

- Students served SY20: 5,978, 64% Black or African American, 28% Hispanic or Latino, >1% Multiethnic or Multiracial
- Launched: Spring 2017

### Greater Grand Rapids

The program is creating alignment around instructional priorities and goals through an equity lens in 12 schools across four districts in ELA and math from K-12, working with district, principal, and teacher leaders.

- Students served SY20: 5,335, 19% Black or African American, 41% Hispanic or Latino, 7.2% Multiethnic or Multiracial
- Launched: Summer 2017

### Oakland Unified School District

In partnership with EL Education, the program will support implementation of a high-quality curriculum and aligned professional learning support for middle school ELA teachers.

- Students served SY20: TBD
- Launched: Summer 2019

### Baltimore City Public Schools

The program will strengthen the district math team's and Academic Content Leads' support to middle school teachers around the Eureka math curriculum.

- Students served SY20: 1,635, demographics, TBD
- Launched: Summer 2019

### Detroit Public Schools CD

The program will help high school ELA teachers at up to 25 schools deepen their content knowledge as they implement a new high-quality curriculum.

- Students served SY20: 15,212, 54% Black or African American, 36% Hispanic or Latino, 1% Multiethnic or Multiracial
- Launched: Summer 2019

### Louisiana

The evolution of the cornerstone Fellowship program serves five CMOs with cohort-based professional development and instructional leadership coaching.

- Students served SY20: 4,205, 83% Black or African American, 6.7% Hispanic or Latino, 1% Multiethnic or Multiracial
- Launched: 2008

### Tulsa Public Schools

In alignment with the district's vision, the program supports 19 schools to improve instruction in ELA, math, and early childhood education, and to implement a coherent instructional system that provides the capacity of continuous improvement.

- Students served: 7,581, 24% Black or African American, 41% Hispanic or Latino, 9.8% Multiethnic or Multiracial
- Launched: Spring 2017

"I've been able to use my LEAP learning immediately with my students. As a result, they're growing more, both academically and socially. And because I have more time and support to think, reflect, and plan for my lessons, my students are getting the best teaching I've ever done."

- Rhonda Ferguson  
LEAP Leader, DC Public Schools

## PARTNERS

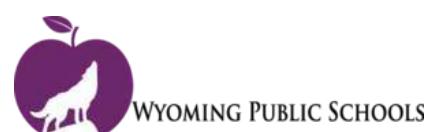


OAKLAND UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Schools, Thriving Students



COLLEGE PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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