



Partners in School Innovation Announces New Partnerships to Boost Achievement for Low-Income Students of Color in Santa Clara County and Philadelphia Public Schools

Partnerships will build educator capacity to address systemic inequities magnified by the pandemic

San Francisco – Partners in School Innovation today announced new partnerships with school districts in Santa Clara County, California and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to increase the number of Black, Latino, and low-income students who are on track for college and career success. These partnerships will create school improvement networks in areas hit hard by the pandemic, helping educators develop practices and systems that accelerate learning.

“Students of color, especially those living in poverty, are disproportionately affected by the pandemic in both medical and economic terms, which has pushed them further behind as classes have been canceled or moved online,” said **Derek Mitchell, CEO of Partners in School Innovation**. “We’re excited to partner with educators in Santa Clara County and Philadelphia to ensure that our most vulnerable students not only make up for time lost to this pandemic but are catapulted to a higher level of achievement than we thought possible.”

The partnership in Santa Clara County will operate in about ten schools in the East Side Alliance, a consortium of the East Side Union High School District and its seven feeder elementary districts.

“This network for school improvement will help us become even stronger than we were before the pandemic hit and put more traditionally underserved students, including those who’ve been particularly impacted by the pandemic, on track for college and career success,” said Roxane Fuentes, superintendent of Berryessa Union School District in San Jose, California. “We’re excited to increase the capacity of our educators with this support from Partners in School Innovation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.”

Denise Williams, Chief Programs Officer for the Silicon Valley Education Foundation, which is helping plan the network in the East Side Alliance, said, “Our foundation is honored to be a part of this network to enhance educators’ capacity to accelerate learning. For students who are furthest from access and opportunity, we want to continue building a pathway to becoming skilled 21st century learners.”

In Philadelphia, the network includes ten schools that are part of Learning Network 3 – one of 13 sub-districts within the School District of Philadelphia. “We are excited to join Partners in School Innovation in crucial work that will prepare our educators to do even more to offer some of our most vulnerable students the support they need to achieve even more than we could imagine,” said William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D., superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia.

In the first two years of the partnerships, Partners will bring together teachers and school leaders to improve middle grades math instruction. The networks will focus on a range of topics including addressing rigorous math standards outlined in the Common Core State Standards, structuring productive small-group learning, assessing students’ skills, and providing feedback that helps students

improve. The second two years of the partnership will then focus on helping educators apply those skills more broadly to bring about whole-school transformation within each network.

Today's announcement builds on Partners in School Innovation's successful implementation of its network model for school improvement, which Partners has used for a decade. Most recently, Partners began working with ten schools in the School District of Philadelphia in 2018-2019 to implement a middle grades math network that has resulted in an increase in the math achievement scores of low-income African American and Latino students in just one year. This expansion will allow Partners to build on its work in the city.

The new partnerships are part of the organization's aim to expand its networked approach to school improvement into three new areas over the next five years through a \$13.66 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's [Networks for School Improvement \(NSI\) initiative](#).

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Partners in School Innovation is a non-profit organization that promotes educational equity by helping schools and districts build their capacity in leadership, systems of professional learning, and core instruction.