



## Transformation Network: A Case Study

Partners began implementing a [Transformation Network](#) in Oak Grove School District in San Jose, California after having worked with a few schools there under our [Intensive model](#). District leaders wanted to sustain and spread the school-transformation approach that we had implemented at the Intensive sites, and they understood that a Transformation Network would build the long-term capacity of school teams to do that.

Four schools — two elementary, one K-8, and one school serving grades 7-8 — were in the network. Combined, the schools served about 1,900 students, of whom 46% were English learners and 65% were eligible for free/reduced-price meals.

Each of the four schools formed a team of 4-6 members to participate in the network's professional learning. Teams consisted of teachers, instructional coaches, and principals or assistant principals.

In addition, a team from Oak Grove's central office took part. The central office team was there for two main reasons: 1) to hear, in real time, about the challenges that schools were trying to address via the network, and 2) to help the work of the Transformation Network take root system-wide.

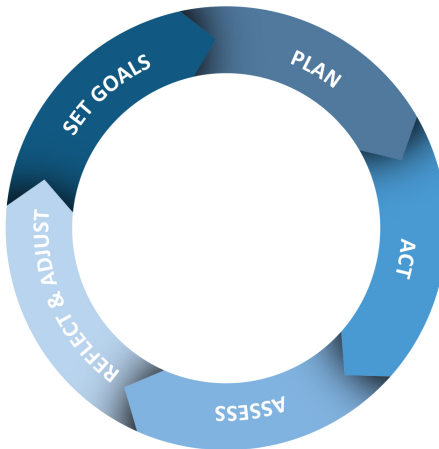
The network had two main components: 1) monthly convenings of all five teams together, and 2) follow-up coaching by Partners staff at each schoolsite. This case study focuses on how the team from one school — Davis Intermediate — experienced these two components of the Transformation Network.

### Monthly Convenings

Network convenings were explicitly designed to support participants in becoming equity-focused change agents. The sessions were grounded in Partners' Change Agent Framework, which specifies 48 practices that effective change agents are proficient in. These practices are organized into five sets of skills/mindsets:

- Transformational leadership and change management
- Adult learning theory, coaching, and facilitation strategies
- Results-oriented cycles of inquiry (see graphic below) informed by a strategic review of data
- Designing and monitoring powerful professional learning systems
- Developing and deepening critical mindsets — including equity and social justice, continuous improvement, systems thinking, and a belief in adult capacity to change and grow

## The Results-oriented Cycle of Inquiry



For Davis Intermediate, the monthly convenings created opportunities for the team members to deepen their understanding of how our society’s race, culture, class, and power dynamics play out in public education generally and at their school specifically. The network space has given them a sense of collective responsibility and agency for creating a school environment in which all students feel seen and valued.

A key feature of Transformation Networks is that participants take what they learn back to their schoolsites to effect change with and for their school community. (That is one example of being a change agent.) The Davis team used the network space to discuss ways that their school could shift policies and practices to promote educational equity, along with ways of communicating their ideas to their colleagues so that the whole school community would be excited to help bring about those shifts. Teachers from the team became leaders of professional learning communities at Davis, and these PLCs became forums for putting network learnings into action throughout the entire school. This systematic transfer of knowledge from the Transformation Network to Davis’s classrooms helped develop systems of continuous improvement that would allow the work to continue without Partners’ direct support.

### Follow-up Coaching

Leaders at Davis leveraged Partners’ follow-up coaching to maximum effect. They thought-partnered with their coach, [John Zachary](#), around the improvements they wanted to make and how to prioritize them. Davis’s leaders also thought about the changes they could make wholly on their own as opposed to ones that would require support if they were going to happen quickly. For example, Davis had set aside time for instructional coaching in the weekly schedule, but leaders would find it challenging to establish a strong coaching system in a short time frame. They turned to John for help.

John helped the school design and implement a system that would realize the full potential of the school's coaches. The impact was significant: coaches began helping teachers improve their curriculum planning, their grouping of students in different ways for different types of lessons, and their giving students greater voice in how classes were conducted. Knowing that school administrators had helped bring about this support from coaches made teachers feel better about the school leaders and made teachers want to be stronger partners in leaders' drive to improve student outcomes.

With an instructional coaching system established in the first year of the network, Davis was ready to tackle other challenges in the second year. School leaders asked for John's help refining systems for teacher-collaboration and professional development. Because our goal is always to help our partners build capacity to sustain systems that promote educational equity and continuous improvement, this work was in our wheelhouse.

John helped school leaders solicit input from teachers so they would have more ownership of these systems. This included helping the school form an instructional leadership team that is largely driven by teachers. Distributing school leadership among teachers has eased administrators' workload and made the new systems less dependent on one or two individuals. Having teachers assume a large degree of ownership for school success has also built them up as change agents.

### **Positive Outcomes**

On measures of adult and student learning, Davis showed noteworthy improvement during the two years that it participated in the Transformation Network. The school improved in the broad areas of results-oriented leadership, systems for professional learning, and core instruction, as measured by our School Transformation Reviews (STRs) conducted in 2019 and 2021. It was particularly gratifying to see that Davis had strong STR results in specific areas that indicate a school has capacity to sustain improvement on its own, after engaging with Partners.

In addition, the students at Davis showed promising growth on state tests in English language arts (ELA) and math. In ELA, the portion of students scoring in the highest performance band increased by two percentage points in just one year. Even more impressive, the growth in math was four percentage points.