

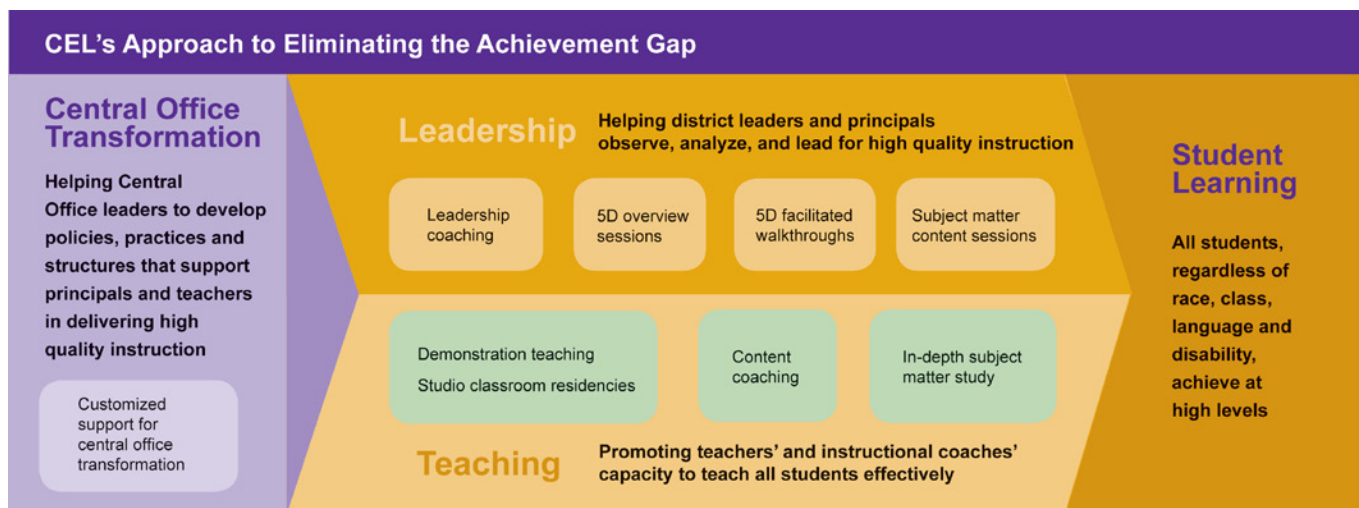
Center for Educational Leadership DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP PROSPECTUS

Closing the achievement gap by supporting instructional leaders and teachers throughout the system in providing high quality instruction for all of their students

The Center for Educational Leadership (CEL) at the University of Washington exists to eliminate the achievement gap that divides students along the lines of race, class, language and disability. We believe that the achievement gap will be eliminated only when the quality of instruction improves for all students, and that instruction will only improve at scale when instructional leaders (a) develop expertise in observing and analyzing instruction, and (b) know how to lead and guide teachers and other educators through the problem-solving and capacity-building they need in order to consistently deliver effective teaching for all of their students.

We further believe that school district central offices play a critical role in leading and supporting instructional improvement. To support instructional leadership throughout a school system, central offices must transform their functions and practices.

This prospectus outlines a professional development partnership between a school district and CEL in the service of the powerful instructional leadership that leads to higher student achievement.



THEORY OF ACTION

Though every CEL partnership is tailored to the particular context of the district(s) involved, all of our work is grounded in a consistent theory of action with three interrelated aspects:

- 1) Leadership: Helping district leaders and principals get smarter about powerful instruction.
- 2) Teaching: helping teachers and instructional coaches improve classroom practice.
- 3) Central Office Transformation: ensuring that Central Office policies, practices and structures support powerful instruction for all students. This work with central office leaders focuses their attention directly on classroom practice and principal instructional leadership.

In this work, we utilize our 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning Framework (5D), a university-researched and -developed instructional framework that calibrates and aligns the work of instructional improvement across a district. Our ultimate goal is for each district to sustain its own learning as it develops the particular skills and strategies necessary to help its full range of students to achieve at high levels.

PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

In the course of a district partnership toward these aims, Center for Educational Leadership provides the following:

LEADERSHIP:

Helping district leaders and principals get smarter about powerful instruction

Leadership Coaching

All principals and their district office supervisors in partnership districts receive *leadership coaching* from CEL's accomplished instructional leaders to increase their individual skill in guiding and supporting effective teaching for all students. Though the number of coaching days is negotiable, a minimum of four days per person is recommended, whether in dyads, triads, or one-on-one. Leadership coaching is always school- and district-embedded, carried out in the actual context of leaders' work, and helps leaders to put into action what they learn through CEL's 5D overview sessions and learning walkthroughs, described below.

5D Overview Sessions

The *5D overview sessions* are a central component of the professional development partnership. Designed to include all K-12 principals in the district as well as assistant principals, literacy coaches, key teacher leaders, and central office leaders, these sessions help participants develop a shared vision and common language for high quality instruction across all subject areas. Participants also define and refine their communication and instructional leadership strategies aimed at improving student achievement through high-quality instruction.

**LEADERSHIP
(continued):**

**Helping district
leaders and
principals
get smarter
about powerful
instruction**

5D Learning Walkthroughs

5D learning walkthroughs (sometimes called instructional rounds) sharpen leaders' ability to observe and analyze the instruction that is taking place in their classrooms. Using the 5D framework, leaders learn to observe teachers' work without judgment and then to determine next steps for teacher development based on their observations. Through this process, leaders become more skillful in differentiating support for individual teachers, groups of teachers, and their staff as a whole.

CEL typically facilitates learning walkthroughs using a cohort model within a district. Working in cohorts builds a culture of public practice while also calibrating what people consider to be high quality instruction, which furthers a common understanding of strengths and needs across a district.

Subject Matter Content Sessions

In CEL's *subject matter content sessions*, district and school leaders, instructional coaches and/or teacher leaders attend a series of one-day sessions across the school year led by experts in literacy/mathematics instruction and instructional leadership. In each session, participants learn about exemplary instructional practices in specific subject matter; watch demonstrations of strategies with adult and student groups; work on individual, team, or school-wide planning with support of CEL coaches; and share professional development tools, resources, and texts to support the work.

TEACHING:

**Helping teachers
and instructional
coaches improve
classroom practice**

In-depth Subject Matter Study

For one or more days per month, CEL works with content coaches and/or teacher leaders to deepen their understanding of the content introduced at the subject matter content sessions above and to prepare them to work with colleagues at their own sites.

Along with the subject matter focus, during these sessions coaches and teacher leaders may [also] learn how to organize, develop, and sustain study groups in their respective schools; how to interpret and use data; how to structure coaching work with teachers; how to grow and utilize lab-site classrooms within and across schools; how to work with principals to plan for, stage, and deliver professional development; and how to utilize video tapes and other resources for their own and others' learning and professional growth.

**TEACHING
(continued):**

**Helping teachers
and instructional
coaches improve
classroom practice**

Content Coaching

Content Coaching connects *in-depth subject matter study* to classroom practice. CEL Project Directors work with district leadership to determine the number of and configuration of coaching days that will achieve the greatest impact.

Depending on district needs, CEL coaches spend approximately 1-4 days a month “on the ground” in schools with school and district teacher leaders. These coaching days give teacher leaders additional opportunities to “try on” new teaching strategies they have explored in their subject matter study and to work with teachers in their classrooms—all with the support of an outside coach who models in classrooms, debriefs with teachers, co-teaches, co-plans, observes and provides feedback. *Content coaching* may focus on developing pedagogical knowledge in a particular content area (literacy or math) or in the area of coaching and professional development itself.

Demonstration Teaching and Studio Classroom Residencies

In order to develop a sense of urgency and deepen their commitment to improving student achievement every day for all students, in all classrooms, people need to see images of what is possible. Whether by watching a coach model a classroom lesson, visiting successful schools, or participating in classroom residencies with exemplary teachers, when teachers see their own students—or students like them—engaged in rigorous, standards-based work, it elevates their expectations for what they and their students can do.

To this end, CEL helps partner districts to design a plan for cultivating expertise among their teachers and demonstrating the possibilities for teaching and learning in their district. Some districts, for example, develop lab-site classrooms as places where teachers and coaches can “try on” new instructional strategies with support.

While districts are gaining the necessary expertise within their systems, CEL connects them with a network of schools and districts across the country that are engaged in similar work. CEL orchestrates a variety of opportunities to learn from the experience of others through visitations to and residencies in exemplary schools and classrooms.

CENTRAL OFFICE TRANSFORMATION

Ensuring that Central Office policies, practices and structures support powerful instruction

Leadership Retreats

The *Central Office Leadership Retreat* gives central office leaders the time and support to develop a systemic, transformative approach to instructional improvement throughout their district.

Retreat participants further flesh out and develop the district's professional development plan for principals and other instructional leaders; learn to differentiate their support for individual principals; develop their own theory of action for instructional improvement at scale; and identify the systems level policies, practices and structures that must change in order for instruction to improve.

Initially, these retreats are co-designed by the CEL Project Director and central office leaders to ensure a close match to the district's context and needs. Over time, districts take on increasing responsibility for planning and leading the retreats.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Because each partnership is unique and districts' professional development needs continually evolve with new learning, a Project Director from the Center for Educational Leadership manages each partnership, working with district leaders to develop the partnership contract and adapting the various components for the district setting. The Project Director is the main liaison between the district and CEL coaches and representatives.

As district leaders develop their own capacity, they become more adept at refining their long-term goals and problem-solving along the way. During this process, the Project Director may work with them to develop other learning opportunities such as specialized residencies in CEL's partnership schools, professional development attached to summer school for students, and/or intervisitations among partnership districts.

While CEL's partnership model is flexible regarding the actual number and content of coaching days, in our experience the districts that benefit the most from working with CEL are those who are committed to making a full investment in new learning opportunities and structures that help the system get smarter about instruction, helping teachers connect new learning to the classroom, and putting the necessary district-level policies and practices in place that will empower every student to achieve at a high level. CEL is eager to work with such districts.

