

New Leaders Proposal for San Mateo-Foster City School District

August 12, 2021

New Leaders is pleased to propose a partnership with San Mateo-Foster City School District (SMFCSD) to strengthen the skill and build capacity of leaders across your system to drive student achievement. New Leaders proposes to provide our proven leadership development services to the SMFCSD team, with a focus on the following competencies:

- Developing highly effective school and system leaders to drive rigorous data-driven instructional practices and dramatically improve student learning outcomes;
- Building leadership alignment across schools and developing the collective capacity of school-based leaders to develop systems and structures that advance instructional excellence; and
- Strengthening the transformational leadership practices of school- and system- leaders to build and implement a strategic, collaborative, instructionally-focused culture in which students and adults thrive.

Specifically, we propose to deliver comprehensive leadership development support and intensive coaching to an instructionally-focused cohort of approximately 21 school-based Principals, with a targeted focus at the middle school level. To promote cohesion and understanding, we propose simultaneously running Instructional Leadership Team Summits with ILTs across the district. To ensure initiative alignment, accelerated progress, and sustained support for this cohort and their campuses, we will deliver a four-year gradual release plan that yields both immediate impact and long-term capacity building.

In support of SMFCSD's new superintendent, we propose to begin this comprehensive partnership in August 2021, realizing the full potential of this unique opportunity to support school-level leaders through this change year by investing in building their own leadership capacity. Working together across New Leaders' leadership continuum, we will:

- Develop a shared vision for success across system leaders, principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders;
- Build a common understanding of role functions and the transformational leadership actions needed to dramatically impact instructional leadership at scale;
- Gain clarity and consensus on the data points that will propel all students to achieve at high levels; and
- Align school systems and structures to advance equity and fuel systemic change.

Introduction

For 20 years, New Leaders has worked in and with schools, districts, and states to improve school performance by developing leaders at all levels—from teacher leaders to principal supervisors—with the mindset, skills, and practice needed to drive instructional excellence at scale. We are an educational leadership organization whose mission is driven by racial equity, social justice, and an unwavering belief in the potential of every student.

Like SMFCSD, we view effective school leaders as the greatest leverage point for transforming schools and students' lives. We cultivate leaders who are not afraid to do things differently. We support our partners to identify and remove barriers to student success. Our proven leadership solutions reflect the unique strengths and needs of our partners—helping them get results for their schools and students.

An independent evaluation has shown that our approach works. In 2019, RAND Corporation released an independent, multi-year evaluation confirming New Leaders' effectiveness in improving student achievement.¹ The RAND researchers found that New Leader Principals have a positive, statistically significant impact on student's math and literacy

¹ Gates et al. (2019). Preparing school leaders for success: RAND evaluation of New Leaders' Aspiring Principals program, 2012-2017. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2812.html

performance, providing further validation and detail on the “New Leaders effect” previously reported by RAND in 2014.² In addition to student achievement, RAND found that New Leader Principals are retained in their roles at higher rates and support higher student attendance than their peers.

RAND named New Leaders the principal preparation program with the strongest evidence of positive impact. Related, district and charter leaders in the study reported that New Leaders understood their needs and responded to them accordingly, provided better value for the money, and built their capacity to identify highly qualified leaders in-house. To date, we have trained over 4,000 leaders who reach nearly half a million students in high-need communities nationwide. Our district and school leaders work with America’s highest-need students: 78 percent live in low-income households and 87 percent are children of color. Upwards of 30 percent are English Language Learners. Honoring this diversity, 64 percent of our alumni are leaders of color compared to only 20 percent nationally.

Statement of Need

San Mateo-Foster City School District’s core mission is to *educate, inspire and empower every student in every school every day to live, lead and learn with integrity and joy*. Based on an initial discovery meeting, the district is committed to building capacity and aligning around data to measure efficacy of classroom instruction (e.g., the prioritization of the Observing and Learning Together initiative). Clearly, the district’s new executive leadership team is committed to pairing the investment in systems and structures with an investment in developing the skills and competencies necessary for leaders to facilitate collective efficacy and excellence at every level. To effectively meet this challenge and live this mission, New Leaders proposes to support SMFCSD by:

- Building the instructional, change management, and systems leadership capacity of SMFCSD instructional and administrative leaders in accordance with the priorities shared by SMFCD’s new superintendent, including co-constructing successful school improvement efforts that promote principal choice (with accountability), teacher voice, and with an ultimate goal of achieving increased student voice, success, and well-being.
- Developing balanced, comprehensive leadership capacity well formed in the foundations of best practice with a distributive leadership focus on fostering relational trust and strengthening systems thinking
- Recognizing and replicating best practices across the district; enhancing success of the current focus on observing learning together
- Leveraging and facilitating data driven and evidence-based leadership practices to establish a culture of data-driven decision making and collective efficacy within and across the district;
- Strengthening capacity at the principal, assistant principal, and teacher leader levels to provide effective leadership in support of instructionally focused change initiatives.

To realize the above ambitions, New Leaders proposes to work closely with the SMFCSD leadership to identify and develop a mixed cohort of transformational principal and assistant principal leaders who have the skills and capacity to create a culture of excellence in every school, for every student. This promising instructional leadership cohort will engage leaders at various levels – principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders and coaches – in establishing and implementing a vision of instructional excellence and equity at scale. Core, foundational learnings will be designed for the full cohort to effectively establish a common language, systems and structures for cohort leaders and their campuses. Instructional leadership practices will be further personalized during small group communities of practice and individual learning/coaching exercises, yielding school leaders confident in driving significant school improvement growth.

Job-embedded and Research-based Approach

Our work is grounded in adult learning theory, and we will use data to drive impact and advance student achievement. New Leaders’ job-embedded approach to leadership development reflects the research that adults learn best when training is rooted in challenging, real-world work. We offer cohort-based learning, authentic practice, and expert coaching to equip participants with the ambitious leadership practices needed to be change agents. Our content and

² Gates et al. (2014) Preparing Principals to Raise Student Achievement: Implementation and Effects of the New Leaders Program in Ten Districts, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR507.html

program delivery allows leaders to translate theory into practice.

Two independent studies of New Leaders found that our programming for principals-in-training demonstrated positive effects on student achievement and met Tier II evidence requirements for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).³ In addition, our groundbreaking research outlined in our reports *Ambitious Leadership*⁴ and *Playmakers*⁵ affirms the power of highly effective principals and school-based teams to position their schools and students for lasting success. Our partnership will allow SMFCSD to leverage our proven content and build the capacity of school leaders to engage in ongoing cycles of improvement that lead to sustained student outcomes.

New Leaders' Transformational Leadership Framework™

New Leaders' Transformational Leadership Framework (TLF) outlines our competency-based approach to leadership development. The TLF defines five major categories (see Table 1 below) that are central to school improvement and the basis of our work with district, charter, and state partners. Aligned with Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, the TLF pulls from a wide evidence base and has been documented in New Leaders' book, *Breakthrough Principals*. All of our programming is based upon this proven school improvement content and custom shaped by each partner's unique priorities, needs, and strengths.

Table 1. Transformational Leadership Framework

Transformational Leadership Framework		
Learning and Teaching		Ensure that curriculum, instruction, and assessments are aligned to rigorous college and career readiness standards.
Talent Management		Ensure the development, efficacy, and sustainability of professional learning communities and teacher teams within the school; deliver actionable feedback and coach staff members to achieve excellence.
School Culture		Foster an intellectual and caring culture of deep learning, structured inquiry, and ongoing curiosity for all members of the school community including families; build this out through high expectations and shared accountability.
Planning and Operations		Create and sustain successful structures which support learning and culture for all members of the school community, including families; ensure that resources are always allocated in alignment with instructional priorities.
Personal Leadership		Define leadership stance and style; act with integrity in accordance with values; reflect frequently on performance and continually seek and make change for improvement.

³ Two independent studies of New Leaders found that our principal-in-training programming demonstrated positive effects on improved student achievement, student attendance, and stronger principal retention and met the ESSA Tier II (moderate evidence) criteria. (Gates, S.M., Baird, M., Doss, C.J., Hamilton, L., Opper, I.M., Master, B.K., Prado Tuma, A., Vuollo, M. & Zaber, M.A. (2019). *Preparing School Leaders for Success: Evaluation of New Leaders' Aspiring Principals Program, 2012-2017*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation; Gates, S.M., Hamilton, L.S., Martorell, P., Burkhauser, P.H., Pierson, A., Baird, M., Vuollo, M., Li, J.J., Lavery, D., Harvey, M. & Gu, K. (2014). *Preparing Principals to Raise Student Achievement: Implementation and Effects of the New Leaders Program in Ten Districts*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.)

⁴ *Ambitious Leadership: How Principals Lead Schools to College and Career Readiness*. Full text is available at <http://newleaders.org/ambitious-leadership>.

⁵ *Playmakers: How Great Principals Build and Lead Great Teams of Teachers*. Full text is available at <http://newleaders.org/playmakers>.

Focus on Equity

Equity is at the center of all our work. Our mission is to ensure high academic achievement for all children, especially students in poverty and students of color, by developing transformational school leaders and advancing the policies and practices that allow great leaders to succeed.

To that end, we have embedded a deep focus on equity in each category of the TLF. Specifically, in Learning and Teaching, we support school leaders to understand how to use data, systems of analysis, and action-planning to identify and address the needs of all students. Our goal is to ensure schools not only calibrate on effective practices for rigorous standards-based instruction but use differentiated approaches and instructional resources to accelerate the learning of all children.

Through our partnership, SMFCSD and its school leaders will also be positioned to improve their own personal leadership through examining their own biases and setting clear expectations for how teams and staff lead and teach from an equity mindset. Through culture and talent management, leaders will focus on creating an environment where their staff can explore the impact of internal bias in their practices and shift to more efficacious belief systems that allow all students to take on the rigorous learning required of college and career readiness standards. In this way, the TLF will become a vehicle for SMFCSD to create school cultures focused on increasing opportunities and access to high-quality learning for all students.

Proposed Services – Educational Services Leadership Team

Consolidated Breakthrough Leadership (Fall 2021)

To align expectations and establish district-wide systems and structures that reinforce the work and content from the Principal & Assistant Principal Pathway (see next page) and Instructional Leadership Team Summits, we propose that SMFCSD's Educational Services Department receives hands-on, cohort-based content and coaching at the onset of the partnership between SMFCSD and New Leaders. Under the belief that reopening schools safely and counteracting racism in schools is the same work and must be done together, members of the educational services department will unpack their role and their impact; build their capacity as instructional leaders to support culturally responsive practices; analyze data to support planning, decision-making, and feedback; take a coaching approach to building the capacity of principals as culturally responsive instructional leaders; and effectively plan for a better future through excellence and equity.

New Leaders proposes to deliver this program to up to 7 participants in the Educational Services Department.

Program Competencies

- Identify strengths, areas of opportunity, and next steps in leadership practices in order to ensure they are equitable, increase leadership capacity, and maximize impact
- Develop a system culture of shared mission and values in which equitable practices are at the forefront
- Establish, monitor, and refine equitable instructional and operational system-wide structures to effectively increase achievement for all students
- Develop and use systems and structures, including 4-Part Action Planning, to collect data, identify trends, and drive instructional excellence and equity
- Establish and coach a principal leadership team to scale best practices and build the capacity of others
- Establish effective communication and messaging to a diverse group of stakeholders and leverage leadership position to connect district and school leadership

Proposed Services – Principals

School year 2021-22 demands new and better for the school communities that leaders serve. Educators and leaders are planning to re-launch the new school year after unprecedented disruptions to teaching and learning and under radically

enhanced public health protection measures. As we enter the new school year, we must ensure that we build for a better future by creating equitable schools and opportunity for all students while addressing the impact of COVID-19 and responding to the national outcry for racial justice. Based on conversations with SMFCSD leadership, New Leaders proposes to deliver the following proven leadership development programs over a four-year period:

Breakthrough Leadership (Year 1)

Principals are planning to support teachers and school leaders in re-entering schools after unprecedented disruptions to teaching and learning and under radically enhanced public health protection measures. Using the Transformational Leadership Framework™, this pathway will develop directors in establishing systems and structures that support school leader development that drives sustained achievement. Under the belief that reopening schools safely and counteracting racism in schools is the same work and must be done together, principals and assistant principals will unpack their role and their impact; build their capacity as instructional leaders to support culturally responsive practice; analyze data to support planning, decision making and feedback; leverage a coaching approach to build the capacity of principals as culturally responsive instructional leaders; and effectively plan for a better future through excellence and equity. Leaders will take inventory of the academic resources, policies, hiring, grading, and behavior management practices within their systems and use data to ensure that all students benefit from SMFCSD's school improvement efforts. Most importantly, when principals see inequities, low expectations, and areas needing to be addressed whether at the individual or system level, they will have specific, concrete leadership actions they can use, and the courage to act to dismantle the structures, policies, institutions, and systems that create barriers and perpetuate inequities for students far too often marginalized in our school systems.

New Leaders proposes to deliver this program content and support to each of SMFCSD's ~21 principals.

Program Competencies

- Identify strengths, areas of opportunity, and next steps in leadership practices in order to ensure they are equitable, increase leadership capacity, and maximize impact
- Develop a system culture of shared mission and values in which equitable practices are at the forefront
- Establish, monitor, and refine equitable instructional and operational system-wide structures to effectively increase achievement for all students
- Develop and use systems and structures, including 4-Part Action Planning, to collect data, identify trends, and drive instructional excellence and equity
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Scaling Best Practices (Year 2)

In Scaling Best Practices, team leaders will focus on: 1) Strengthening and refining the system and structures they began to implement during their Year 1 programming and 2) Building the capacity of teachers across their teams to ensure that every teacher possesses the skills, supports, and mindsets that are needed in order to drive progress toward instructional excellence and equity.

The goal of Scaling Best Practices is to develop equity-focused instructional leaders who show up as champions for racial justice and establish high expectations for both students and adults as they work to improve instruction and, ultimately, student achievement. We will begin this work during the program launch by asking team leaders to look inward, reflecting

deeply on their own mindsets and biases, along with ways that they have helped to perpetuate or dismantle inequities - a process that will continue throughout the program year. We will also continually reflect on how to promote equity across the team by creating a safe space where the diverse perspectives and skills of team members are valued. In addition, team leaders will examine team practices through the lens of how they will meet the needs of **all** students - especially those in marginalized subgroups.

Program Competencies

- Use 4-Part Action Planning process to refine established systems and structures for continuous improvement in pursuit of instructional excellence and equity:
 - Analysis of the team's current state
 - Task analysis
 - Use of varied data sources to drive action planning
 - Implementation of action plans
 - Progress monitoring and course correction
- Build the capacity of team members through:
 - Professional learning, with a focus on collaborative planning and targeted coaching
 - Distributed Leadership practices that leverage the unique skills and talents of team members and help to scale best practices across classrooms, and promote equity of voice and perspective across the team
- Build their own personal leadership capacity through reflection and action planning, allowing them to function more effectively as instructional leaders and champions of racial justice

Coaching and Strategic Leadership Support (Years 3-4)

In this program, participants will experience high-level coaching, unique to each participant's context such that: 1) participants will be able to dismantle unjust and ineffective systems, and promote mindsets which support systems of equity at all levels (team, school, and system); 2) participants are positioned to advance racial equity; and 3) the work can be gradually released to leaders so that they are able to sustain the work post New Leaders programming. More specifically, participants will engage in high-impact equity-focused coaching sessions, rooted in deep, rich reflective practices guided by New Leaders Coaches, all driving towards equitably addressing issues of race and equity, enhancing their leadership practices through goal setting, executing against their action plans, shifting mindsets, and driving towards capacity building of staff and driving exponential growth for students.

Program Competencies

- Identify strengths, areas of opportunity, and next steps in one's own leadership practices to ensure they are equitable, to increase leadership capacity and maximize impact
- Use 4-Part Action Planning to diagnose, set goals, create action plans, and monitor/adjust plans in order to drive instructional excellence and equity
- Develop a strong and positive school culture of shared mission and values in which equitable practices are at the forefront
- Establish, monitor, and refine equitable instructional and operational schoolwide systems and structures to effectively increase achievement for all students

Proposed Services – Instructional Leadership Teams

(NOTE: This program runs parallel to Breakthrough Leadership-Principals).

Instructional Leadership Team Summits (Year 1: SY21-22)

As we enter the new school year, we must ensure that we build for a better future by creating equitable schools and opportunity for all students while addressing the impact of Covid-19 and responding to the national outcry for social justice. Principals cannot do this work alone; therefore, it is critical that the Instructional Leadership Team understand the role they play in the current context to support their principal in shifting the tide towards a more equitable and racially just environment for both staff and students, especially black and brown ones. The Instructional Leadership Team will

explore critical instructional leadership actions to push their thinking and leadership development to help them lead and implement new and more effective systems and structures to “do” school differently in the upcoming year, so that **everyone** benefits from what is both planned and executed. In this pathway, participants will learn how to (1) use their personal leadership skills to develop and lead a high performing team (2) effectively implement and monitor collaborative planning processes, systems, and structures to support the team in moving towards instructional excellence and equity.

Program Competencies:

- Use systems and structures to establish high-performing teams and scale best practices across the team to increase outcomes for all students.
- Use the 4-Part Action Planning process to drive instructional excellence and equity and dismantle inequitable systems
- Apply the Instructional Core with an equity lens to alter teacher practice, align content, and increase outcomes for all students
- Use systems and structures for observation and feedback to effectively increase achievement for all students.
- Use coaching and professional learning around the Instructional Core to alter teacher practice, align content, and increase outcomes for all students

Delivery Timeline

The calendars below outline the proposed timeline for New Leaders to deliver program services. The final timeline will be determined based on the scheduling needs of SMFCSD and New Leaders.

Sample Implementation Calendar, 2021 Educational Services Fall Pathway

Component	Location	Total Sessions	Session Length	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Program Orientation	Onsite/ Virtual	1	90 min		●				
Program Launch	Virtual	4	4 hours		●				
Communities of Practice	Virtual	4	4 hours			●	●	●	●
eLearning	Virtual	3	Up to 45 mins		●		●	●	
Reflective Learning Exercises	Onsite/ Virtual	2	Up to 2 hours		●				●
Leadership Walks	Onsite/ Virtual	2	4 hours	Optional					
One-on-One Coaching	Onsite/ Virtual	Varies	Up to 6 hours		●	●	●	●	●

Sample Implementation Calendar, 2022 Breakthrough Leadership

Component	Location	Total Sessions	Session Length	Fall	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
Selection Process	Onsite/ Virtual	1	Varies	●										
Program Orientation	Onsite/ Virtual	1	90 min		●									
Program Launch	Onsite/ Virtual	7	4 hours		●									
Communities of Practice	Onsite/ Virtual	6	4 hours			●	●	●		●	●		●	●
eLearning	Onsite/ Virtual	7	Up to 45 mins			●								
Reflective Learning Exercises	Onsite/ Virtual	6	Up to 2 hours				●	●		●		●	●	●
Learning Meetings	Onsite/ Virtual	2	2					●		●			●	●
One-on-One Coaching	Onsite/ Virtual	8	1 hour		●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●

Sample Implementation Calendar, 2022 Instructional Leadership Team Summits

Component	Location	Total Sessions	Session Length	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Community of Practice	Onsite/ Virtual	5	4 hours	●	●		●	●		●	
Team Coaching	Onsite/ Virtual	Varies	Up to 10 hours	●	●		●	●		●	

Program Monitoring and Communication

Over the course of each program year, New Leaders will use multiple proprietary tools to gather data to: 1) monitor, support, and ensure that participants implement what they've learned with fidelity; 2) inform program content and drive participant goals, action steps, and foci; and 3) assess program impact on participants, students, and/or schools. New Leaders will actively monitor and support ongoing fidelity of implementation and impact through the following strategies:

Implementation Data. New Leaders program staff will observe the program components that require participants to apply their new learning. Through reflective learning exercises and one-on-one coaching, participants will share evidence of ongoing implementation and receive targeted feedback from the New Leaders facilitator. These reflective conversations provide opportunities to monitor and course-correct participant progress.

Participant Surveys. New Leaders will administer regular participant surveys after each session and at the mid- and end-of-year points. New Leaders will use this year-long data to monitor program quality, participant satisfaction, and support continued program outcomes and participant growth, including their improvement in skills and knowledge, application of program content, and impact on school improvement.

Monthly Check-ins. We will host monthly check-ins with senior SMFCSD leaders to provide updates on participant progress, fidelity of implementation, and identified areas of opportunity. These collaborative conversations will inform our differentiated support for participants and provide insights toward supporting and sustaining transformational leadership practices across all schools.

Formal Step-back Meetings. New Leaders will host two formal "step-back" meetings with senior SMFCSD leaders at mid-year and end-of-year. The purpose of the step-back is to understand: 1) SMFCSD's satisfaction with the program to-date across all facets of the program; 2) participant perceptions and effect of programming on participant growth; and 3) needs for the next program year based on feedback and lessons learned.

Cost Proposal

The services described herein will be provided by New Leaders based on the cost summary detailed below.

Cost Summary for New Leaders' Emerging Leaders Program & Coaching

Ed Services Pathway \$110,000	2021-2022
Principal & AP Pathway \$207,000	22-23 (subsequent year costs to be determined and will be less than 22-23)
ILT Summit \$90,000	2022-2023

*Additional client services requested by SMFCSD and delivered by New Leaders may be subject to pricing modification. Pricing for subsequent years may be adjusted based on the client services selected by SMFCSD.

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