

District Equity Coaching

Developing leadership from the cabinet to classroom

There's no shortage of recommendations for how to achieve equity in education.

The challenge lies in successfully applying these approaches with people under the real conditions of public education today. Across the country, school districts face the challenge of addressing achievement and opportunity gaps through equity strategies and reforms, but too often these efforts yield limited results due to ineffective implementation.

National Equity Project coaching services are designed and customized to improve the quality and effectiveness of school district equity efforts. We focus on building leadership at every level of the district to create and implement innovative, **people-** and **results-oriented** strategies.

We facilitate productive discourse about equity because honest conversations about the effects of biases are necessary, not to lay blame but to find better ways to educate every child. Our experienced and expert coaches guide your teams toward significant, sustainable changes in a transformative process aimed at increasing their capacity to collaborate and focus on every student's learning.

Over 90% of Equity Coaching recipients agree that they are better able to:

- Work more effectively with colleagues and students from different racial or cultural backgrounds
- Raise and discuss issues of equity with their colleagues
- Make personal and organizational changes to address inequities.

District & School Services

- District Equity Coaching

- Principal Network Development

- Partnerships for Learning School Coaching

Central
Office
Services

School
Services

- New Teacher Induction

- Coach Program Development

- School Redesign

- Community School Planning

Institutes & Seminars

Leading for Equity
Coaching for Equity
Teaching with a Cultural Eye

Leadership at Every Level

The goal of District Equity Coaching is to improve learning and achievement for all students through:

- An authentic vision of equity and excellence
- Productive central office – school relations
- Positive school climate
- Staff stability and commitment to equity and continuous learning
- Consistent quality of instruction
- Cultural competence
- Positive school-community relations.

Since 1994, we have worked with over 100 schools in over 15 districts, improving practices and student outcomes.

Sample District Equity Coaching Scope & Sequence

Activities	Participants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Initial consultations & planning	Project Lead Team	Light Blue	Light Blue										
Listening Campaign	Identified cabinet, district & school staff, students, parents, community		Light Blue	Light Blue									
Equity Data Analysis			Light Blue	Light Blue									
Monthly Executive Coaching	Project Lead Team	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Leading for Equity Institute : Data Presentation & Equity Plan Development	Project Lead Team, Cabinet, Central Office			Light Blue									
Teaching for Equity Institute	Principals & Lead Teachers			Yellow									
Monthly Principal Professional Development Network Sessions	Principals				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Instructional Leadership Coaching	Principals & Lead Teachers				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Equity-Centered Professional Learning Community Coaching	School Teams				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Residential Leading for Equity Institute	Project Lead Team & School Teams								Light Blue				
Outcomes Review and Planning	Project Lead Team											Red	Red

“I attend many training sessions. Many are good. Few are life-changing. The National Equity Project session was one of the few. You provided me with knowledge and gave me skills in developing leaders and teams who can change the conversation and transform instruction in our schools. This was a visionary approach to training.” - **Mary Jane Burke, Marin County Superintendent of Schools**

“The Equity Coaching experience was more than I had imagined it would be! Amazing! Each of you made such a great contribution. I feel incredibly fortunate to be in this work with each of you. I look forward to all that is ahead.” - **Mike Watenpugh, Superintendent, San Rafael City Schools**

“The National Equity Project team quickly gained the confidence of our principals, district staff, and Board of Directors. They asked the ‘tough’ questions, helped us find solutions, and guided our work in aligning school structures with the interests of staff, students, and parents. Their wisdom and suggestions have given us renewed confidence as we move forward in this very challenging work.” - **Dr. Paula A. Radich, Superintendent, Newberg School District, OR**



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Principal Network Professional Development

Build instructional leaders with an equity focus

In every district, school leaders are doing extraordinary work for students and families to close opportunity and achievement gaps. To ensure consistently high-quality instruction district-wide, principals need ongoing professional development with skillful facilitators to learn with and from each other.

This year long course is fully-customized and typically features core texts in instructional leadership, video cases, and ample time for collaboration and peer-to-peer learning. Principals and other leaders learn and practice strategies to improve the quality of instruction in their schools.

Are your principals and other instructional leaders regularly talking to and learning from one another?

Is every principal in your district an effective instructional leader?

Principal Network Professional Development services convene school leaders in regular cohort meetings to build an equity-centered professional learning community. Group meetings are generally coupled with school-site coaching to support principals and other staff to successfully implement their network learning.



Session Topics May Include

- Creating a school-wide vision of high quality instruction that truly informs teacher practice.
- Building an effective Instructional Leadership Team.
- Creating equity-centered professional learning communities.
- Designing targeted, high-leverage staff professional development.
- Effective meeting facilitation.
- Practicing adaptive leadership skills.
- Observation protocols and other tools to assess teacher effectiveness.
- Strengthening relationships and trust across race and role.
- Leading your school community in bold conversations about race and culture.

New Teacher Induction

Support for teachers when they need it most

The National Equity Project provides coaching and consulting services to Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) and related support providers in districts and county offices of education to instill an equity focus within their efforts to develop and support high quality teachers in every classroom. We also provide professional development and coaching for new teachers, including those in BTSA programs.

This responsive service supplements curricula for the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP)*, the *SB 2042 Preliminary Credential Program Standards*, and the *California Teaching Performance Expectations*, with a focus on equity, adult and child learning theory, and formative assessment. All coaching and consulting is tailored to the needs of your teachers and the requirements of your district or your state.

Topics Include

- **Creating engaging and effective learning environments.**
- **Supporting the learning needs of *all* students.**
- **Building learning partnerships with students.**
- **Using formative assessment to enhance student learning.**
- **Developing a vision as a professional educator with an equity focus.**
- **Methods for coaching and mentoring new teachers.**

Teaching With A Cultural Eye

In working with new teachers directly, we offer professional development sessions through our **Teaching with a Cultural Eye (TCE)** program. TCE addresses the conceptual and socio-cultural underpinnings (race, cultural competence) of teacher performance through a focus on the teacher-student relationship within a framework of formative assessment and self-directed learning.

We also provide group training and one-on-one support in coaching and facilitation techniques, including managing group dynamics, establishing a collaborative learning community with an equity focus, and effective coaching approaches.

“Every school should go through this training. The opportunity to practice skills and reflect allowed me to internalize and own the experience ‘from the inside-out.’ I was reminded to stop and really listen to my students.”

- **Jill Lawrence, Teacher/Mentor, Gresham Middle School, Chattanooga, TN**

“Your training helped Support Providers (SPs) to address inequities in classrooms as teachers focus on curriculum, procedures and recognizing individual bias toward students, staff and parents. Your training also provided SPs with valuable tools to assist with interrupting inequitable practices.”

- **Barbara Taylor, BTSA Coordinator, San Mateo County Office of Education San Mateo CA**



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Partnerships for Learning

Student-Centered Inquiry for School Transformation

Partnerships for Learning (PFL) coaches support teachers and administrators to assess and address the student learning gaps that underlie low academic performance, and raise the overall effectiveness of classroom instruction to meet every student's needs.

Site-based Inquiry Teams receive coaching to identify and work with **focal students**, practicing formative assessment and intervention cycles with them to close learning and achievement gaps. Focal students become a lens for better understanding and addressing every student's learning needs. PFL coaches help teachers to embed formative assessment into daily classroom practice, use real-time student data to adjust instruction, and build productive learning partnerships with students that foster engagement and efficacy.



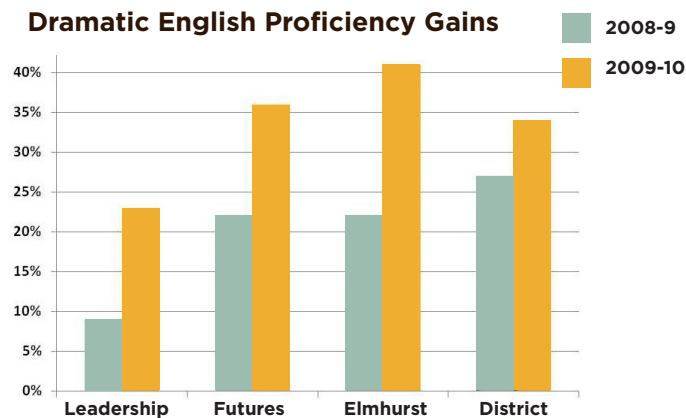
Services are customized to meet current school conditions and needs. Schools may receive coaching to strengthen professional learning communities and leadership structures before beginning PFL inquiry. More advanced teams develop strategies for scaling collaborative inquiry and formative assessment practices across their school.

Services

- **25 days of coaching.** Includes facilitation of relevant meetings, instructional coaching for Inquiry Team teachers, leadership coaching, and research and data management.
- **Expert coaches.** PFL coaches are experts in school change and instructional coaching, supporting teachers in all content areas to improve instructional planning and practice.
- **Instructional seminars** to provide needed content in literacy, learning theory, cultural competence, and other areas.
- **Participation in a network of schools** doing and sharing similar work.
- **District-wide engagements** are encouraged. Develop strategies for central office support of sustainable instructional improvement in schools across your district.
- **Fees** are based on project parameters and grant subsidies are available for qualifying schools.

Results

Dramatic English Proficiency Gains



Schools with strong implementation closed or narrowed CST ELA proficiency gaps between target groups and district averages in a single year. Target students in all 12 pilot schools in 2009-10 outperformed their peers by **13 percentage points** in targeted CST strands.



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Phase 1: **Build Culture & Inquiry Conditions**

- Develop conditions for productive collaboration around instructional improvement.
- Identify key equity challenges,
- Develop distributed instructional leadership capacity.

Phase 2: **Deep Inquiry with an Inquiry Team**

- Inquiry Team of teachers & leaders.
- Focus on accelerating the learning of 15-20 focal students.
- Develop expertise in formative assessment and instructional intervention.

Phase 3: **Going to Scale & Systems Change**

- School-wide collaborative inquiry culture & practice.
- Close gaps for more students, in more skill areas.
- Develop more strategic and distributed leadership.

Overview

Activities

- Coach works with Principal to develop/strengthen (instructional) leadership team and identify key equity challenge(s).
- Coach works with leadership team to create/strengthen equity-centered professional learning communities (teams) who work collaboratively to identify student skill gaps and improve their instruction.
- Coach facilitates as-needed professional development to build capacity in data analysis, formative assessment and collaboration protocols.

- School forms an Inquiry Team of teachers & leaders to address a key skill gap for 15-20 focal students.
- Coach provides facilitation & coaching in generating various forms of data to identify high-leverage skill gap(s).
- Team designs and implements a series of instructional interventions for focal students.
- Teachers develop Learning Partnerships with focal students to help them accelerate their own learning.
- Team takes learning from intensive inquiry work to begin informing broader systems decisions.

- Inquiry Team work continues; inquiry methodology spreads.
- School-wide equity-centered PLC's deepen their practice.
- Coach develops instructional leadership capacity across roles.
- Coach works with school leadership to strengthen decision-making structures and processes.

Outcomes

- A system of sustainable inquiry-based collaboration and professional development.
- Effective collaborative teams (PLC's).
- Alignment of teams/PLC's with instructional leadership structure.
- Increased capacity to identify, understand root causes, and begin addressing key equity challenges in the school.

- Increased teacher skill with formative assessment and fine-grained data to inform instructional planning.
- Inquiry Team instructional capacity to design and implement intervention cycles to address key skill gaps.
- By "going small" Inquiry Team develops clearer understanding of causes of gaps and potential solutions.
- Significant learning gains for focal students in key skill areas - and potentially for a wider group of students as well.

- All teachers in school practice formative assessment. Increased instructional capacity for student acceleration.
- Leadership structures & systems decision-making processes are increasingly driven by inquiry & data.
- Steady increases in student achievement school-wide. Benefits for all students, including higher performers.
- School internalizes capacity to design, lead and use various forms of inquiry regularly to address ongoing challenges.

Build school-wide conditions

then go small

to get big results

School Redesign Services

Sustained improvement through school turnaround

Since 2000, National Equity Project coaches have worked with over 1000 educators to dramatically transform their schools.

The school turnaround process can reignite the passion and pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning among educators, students, and families. We have extensive experience in supporting school turnaround, new school design, school redesign, and smaller learning communities (SLC) creation at the elementary and secondary levels.

“We got rid of the excuses and really focused on making positive changes.”

- Recent Principal Reflection

Turnaround and School Improvement Grants (SIG)

Race to the Top, School Improvement Grants (SIG), and other school turnaround or transformation efforts provide great opportunities, but great challenges as well. Demands for quick turnaround do not always take into account potential negative social and cultural effects on the school community. National Equity Project coaching supports Turnaround and SIG schools to meet federal and state requirements while empowering the school community to create the conditions for sustainable improvement.



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Coaches work with school leaders and a “design team” that can include students, parents, teachers and community members to develop, communicate, and implement their vision of a transformed school.

Services range from the technical (school design project management and master scheduling) to the leadership and cultural dimensions of school change. Once the school reopens, we offer continued coaching support for school staff in instruction, embedded professional learning, and cultural competence to ensure sustainable progress in teacher capacity and student learning.



Indicators of Success:

- Ongoing team collaboration to identify, innovate, and apply gap-closing instructional practices.
- Dramatic improvement in equitable student outcomes.
- Increased equity leadership supported by a system of ongoing, authentic professional development.
- More open adult discourse about the roles of race, class, and culture in teaching and learning.
- Increased community engagement and parental involvement.

Sample 12-Month School Redesign Coaching Timeline

Activities	Participants	Outcomes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Project Management and Technical Support	National Equity Project Lead	National Equity Project provides top-level management of School Redesign process.	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Listening Campaign	Key stakeholders: principal, school staff, students, parents, community	Interviews and focus groups with school community. Listening for hopes, fears, recommendations and roadblocks to achieving new school design.	█	█										
Facilitated Visioning Process	Key stakeholders	National Equity Project presents overview of school design process and models of student-centered schools. Get feedback and stakeholder agreement on design and approval processes.			█									
Design Team Formation	Key stakeholders	Form and charter a Design Team of 5-10 key stakeholders.			█									
School Site Visits & Best Practice Research	Design Team	Design Team visits successful school sites to experience and study a variety of possible new features, processes, and best practices.			█	█	█							
Design Team Coaching	Design Team	National Equity Project supports Design Team to construct and complete a comprehensive proposal for School Design that will meet the learning needs of every student (e.g. vision, theme, curricula, interventions, family engagement, external partners, governance, master schedule, professional learning structures, etc.).			█	█	█	█	█					
Community Engagement Forums	Key stakeholders	Design Team communicates Redesign Plan to key stakeholders to ensure alignment of goals.				█		█		█				
Design Implementation Coaching	Principal, Design Team, School Community	Design Team receives coaching to implement their Design (e.g. leadership, instructional leadership, and PLC team development; teacher support, assessment, and peer learning; embedded learning facilitation; etc.).							█	█	█	█	█	█
New School Launch	School community	New school opens; compliant with SIG/Turnaround Grant requirements as needed.												█

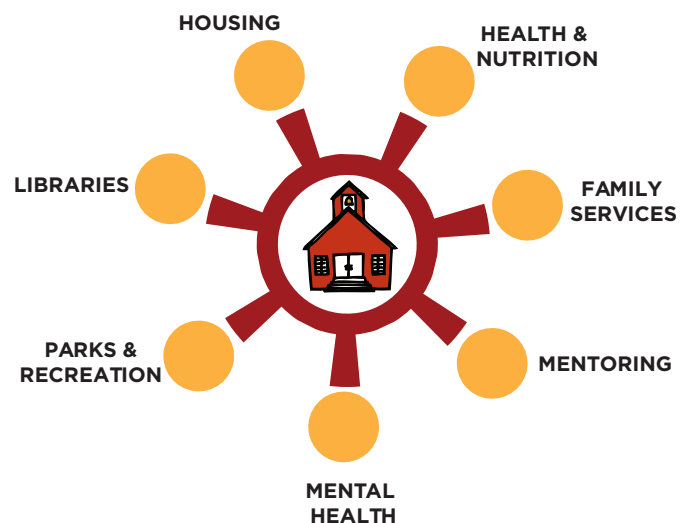
Small Schools and Smaller Learning Communities

We have supported the opening over 50 new small schools and smaller learning communities in the San Francisco Bay Area. We coach Design Teams of educators and parents to create and launch small schools committed to meeting the needs of every child, building collaborative relationships among staff, students, and families in the process. Through the small schools movement in which we played a lead role, Oakland Unified has been the most improved urban school district in California for the past six years.

Small schools aren't right for every community, but small school design features such as personalization, project-based learning, career-technical education, advisories, and interdisciplinary courses can be critical elements in school turnaround and increasing achievement. We will work with your school community to design a dramatically improved teaching and learning experience for staff, students, and families.

Community School Coaching

Schools can be a powerful lever for community empowerment. We provide technical support in planning and implementation, and coaching in the vision and strategies for developing trusting, productive, and sustainable relationships between schools, families, and community agencies. This comprehensive approach centers on the school as a **neighborhood hub of support** for children from birth through college, with wraparound services provided by well-coordinated agencies.



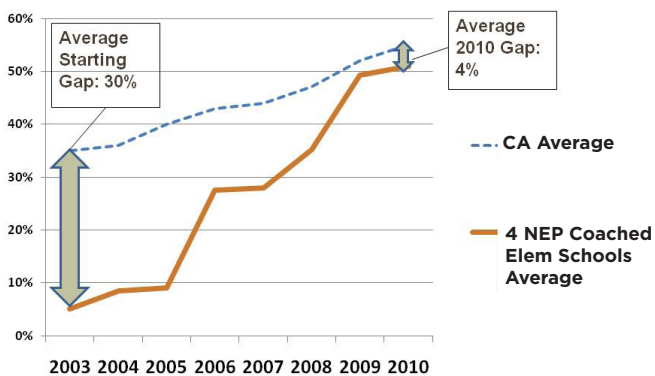
Partner Success

Partner schools and districts consistently close gaps.

School-wide Success

The National Equity Project has a track record of success with a wide variety of partner schools serving significant populations of vulnerable students. External evaluations demonstrate a strong pattern of improvement in educator effectiveness and student achievement. The schools in the following chart (Acorn Woodland, Encompass, Manzanita SEED, and Think College Now) are our longest elementary school partners; we coached the design, opening, and implementation of each school.

Elementary Literacy Gains



These four Oakland, CA elementary schools serve a student population that is over **90%** low-income, majority African American and/or Latino, and over **50%** English Language Learners. Each was launched as a new small school to replace a large low-performing school.



Kimi Kean (on right), ACORN Woodland Principal (2003-9)
Current Regional Executive Officer, Oakland Unified

Principal Testimonials

“This school would not exist if it were not for the National Equity Project. If someone tells me they want to start or redesign a school, I tell them they have to work with the Project. They helped us build a community that was the foundation of our academic success – they create the conditions for success.” **David Silver, Founding Principal (2003-10), Think College Now Elementary California Distinguished School, 2008**

“The Project is the real deal. They have helped us develop teacher leadership teams, collaboration structures and processes to build trust, shared responsibility, and higher teacher buy-in. They bring a clear understanding of who we are and who we want to be.”

**Minh-Tram Nguyen, Founding Principal
Encompass Academy**

“We didn’t see increases in student achievement until after several years, and in that time I was not always evaluated as an ‘effective’ school leader. Once the test scores started to rise, then I got positive evaluations, but I was not a different leader. What was different was that the process was bearing fruit. That takes time: to build a school community and culture, to attract and develop great people, to get all the pieces to work together in our unique context.

“What was most critical in the support we got from the National Equity Project was the big vision. It was more than ‘every child can learn,’ it was more than building a better school, it was *doing school differently*. It was thinking outside the box to create a transformative school.”

**Katherine Carter, Founding Principal, Manzanita SEED
National Title I Distinguished School, 2010**

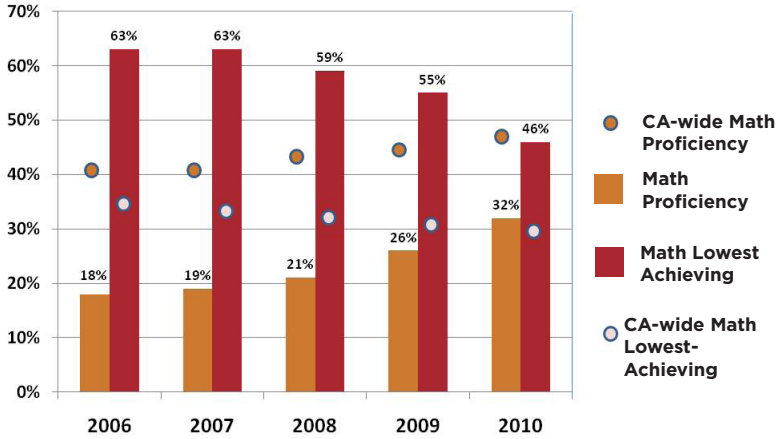
“I don’t think we’d be where we are today without the ongoing support of the Project. They have been a completely committed and vital partner from the very beginning. The Project has helped us tackle incredibly challenging issues and my Project coach has helped me personally be a more transformative leader.”

**Kimi Kean, Principal (2003-9)
ACORN Woodland Elementary**

K-12 Math & Literacy Achievement

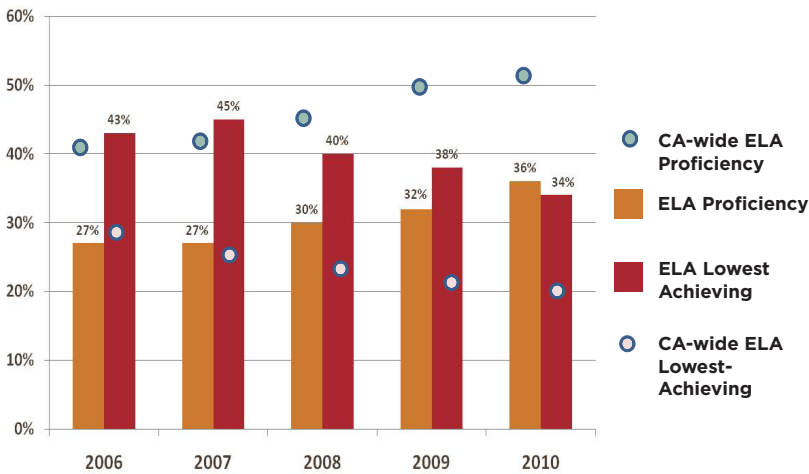
This data demonstrates the progress made over the past five years among the 24 partner schools with whom we have worked the most over the past decade.

Math Gains Among Major Partners



In 2006, the average math proficiency gap between partners and the state average was **23%**, and last year that gap had been reduced to **16%**. The gap between the portion of students who were low performing in math also shrank from **28%** to **18%**. This is despite the fact that our partner schools have significantly higher rates of students living in poverty and English Language Learners (see bottom graph).

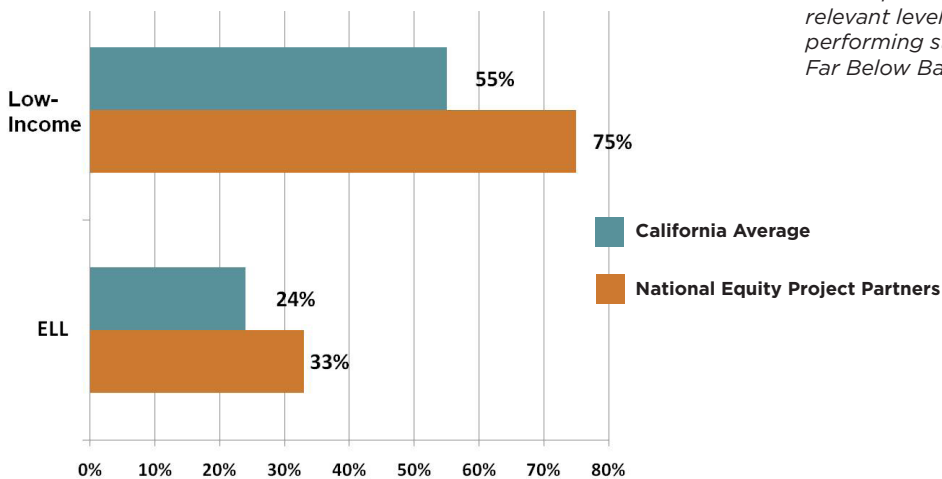
Literacy Gains Among Major Partners



These schools have improved at a pace that **matches** the state average rate, despite being some of the highest poverty schools in the most vulnerable urban communities in the state.

In 2010, these schools reversed a decades-old trend: **a greater portion of their students were meeting proficiency standards in ELA than were low-achieving.**

Low Income & ELL Achievement



Data represents proportion of students performing at relevant levels of the California Standards Test. Low-performing students are those ranked in the Below Basic and Far Below Basic levels.



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