



The California Collaborative on District Reform



Mentorship for System Improvement: Lessons from an Emerging District Partnership

Joel Knudson
American Institutes for Research



California Educational Research Association

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Examining A Mentoring Partnership

- ▶ Purpose: Examine an emerging relationship between district leaders in Garden Grove USD and Oakland USD
- ▶ How might the lessons from one high-functioning system translate to a district in a much different context?

District Context: Demographics

District Demographics, 2011-12	Garden Grove USD	Oakland USD
Total Enrollment	47,999	46,377
Latino	53%	41%
African American	1%	31%
Asian	33%	13%
White	11%	9%
Pacific Islander	1%	1%
Filipino	1%	1%
English Learners	42%	29%
Free and Reduced Price Lunch*	69%	70%

Source: Data Quest

*Data for Free and Reduced Price Lunch only available for 2010-11

District Context: Central Office

▶ Leadership Stability

▶ Garden Grove

- ▶ Current superintendent in her 14th year
- ▶ 3 superintendents over the last 39 years

▶ Oakland

- ▶ Current superintendent in his 4th year
- ▶ 8 district leaders over the last 17 years

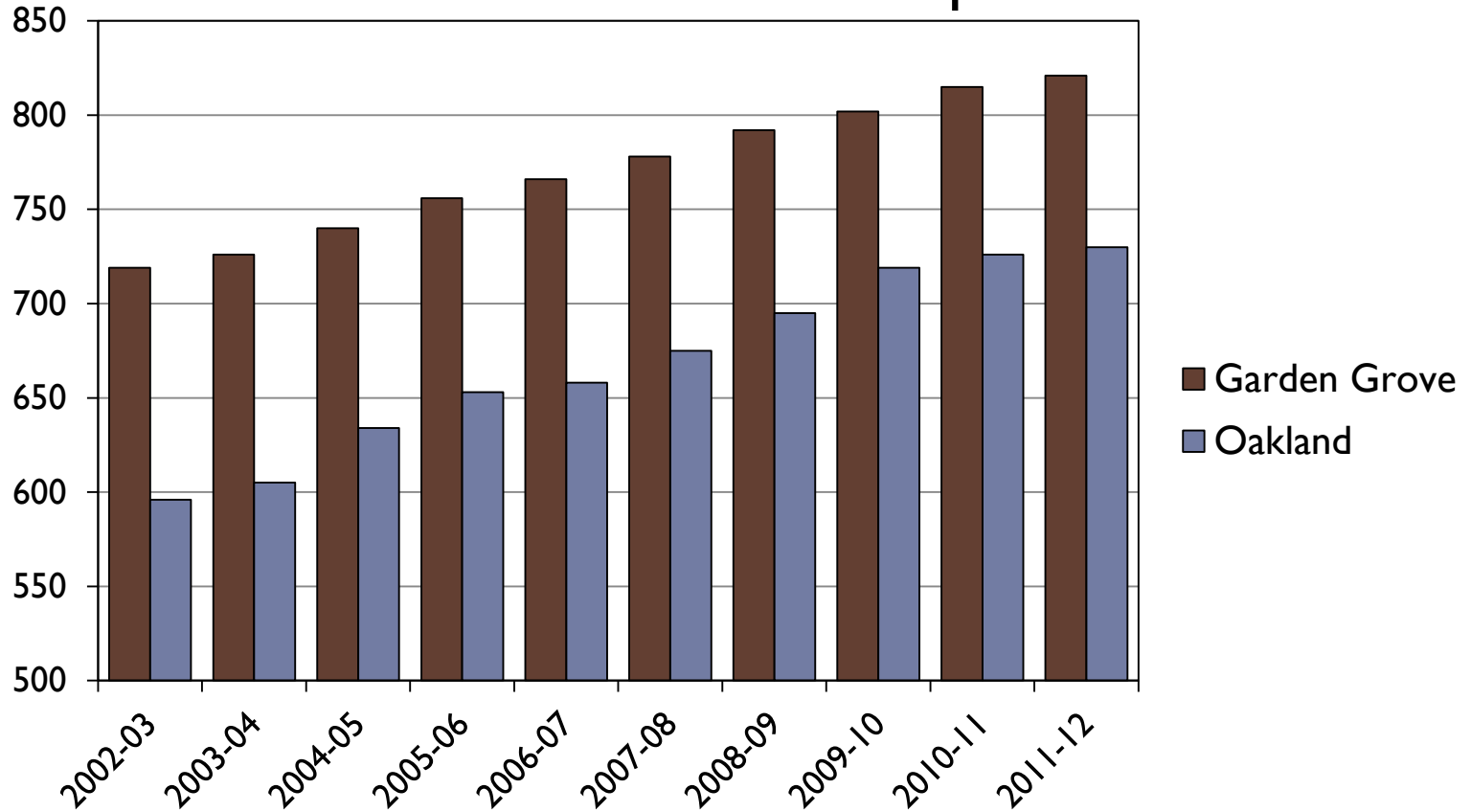
▶ Fiscal Stability

▶ Labor Relationships

▶ Centralization

District Context: Student Performance

Academic Performance Index Comparison



Source: Data Quest

Describing the Partnership

- ▶ Born of an existing professional relationship
- ▶ Focused on human capital development
 - ▶ Responsive to Garden Grove's fundamental orientation to issues of human capital
 - ▶ Motivated by Oakland's desire to transition away from a highly transactional and reactive system
- ▶ Primary connection: Garden Grove superintendent to Oakland associate superintendent for HR

Describing the Partnership

▶ Phone calls

- ▶ Introductory calls
- ▶ Ongoing communication among district leaders

▶ Site visits

- ▶ Visit from Oakland's associate superintendent of HR to Garden Grove
- ▶ Visit from Garden Grove's superintendent to Oakland
- ▶ Visits from other members of the Oakland HR team to Garden Grove anticipated

Describing the Partnership

- ▶ **Guidance from Garden Grove**
 - ▶ Think and act strategically
 - ▶ Start *somewhere*
 - ▶ Demonstrate success, then bring to scale
- ▶ **Focus on a specific problem of practice**
 - ▶ Example: staffing in Oakland's acceleration high schools
 - ▶ Example: special education

Early Lessons Learned

- ▶ **People and districts matter**
 - ▶ Garden Grove's track record of success
 - ▶ Garden Grove's commitment to the process
 - ▶ Oakland's openness to learning
- ▶ **Understanding context is important**
 - ▶ Visits to the districts
 - ▶ Focus on specific problems of practice
- ▶ **Documentation can facilitate and support the learning process**

Early Lessons Learned

- ▶ Finding time for collaboration is both critical and difficult
- ▶ Maintaining focus is both critical and difficult
- ▶ Relationships take time to develop
- ▶ Relationships evolve over time



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Contact Information:

Joel Knudson

American Institutes for Research

Email: jknudson@air.org

Website: www.cacollaborative.org

