



March 18, 2022

Dear Collaborative members and guests,

We are grateful and excited to welcome you to our first in-person meeting in more than two years when we convene in Long Beach on March 29-30. The meeting will deepen our ongoing attention to matters of educational equity, in this case through the lens of the recently adopted Excellence and Equity Board Policy in Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD). We thank Jill Baker and her team for sharing their evolving work and hosting this important set of conversations.

We have designed the meeting to create ample space to engage in substantive discussions, to rekindle relationships among longstanding Collaborative members, and to foster connections with newer members of the group.

Meeting Overview

Day 1: The meeting will begin on Tuesday morning with an opportunity to reconnect with one another and introduce ourselves to unfamiliar faces. Next, we'll dive into our substantive focus with an exploration of LBUSD's equity journey, including the process that led the board to formalize a districtwide equity and excellence policy in December 2021. This introduction will include an overview of the policy itself. It will also provide the foundation for discussion about key implementation issues in LBUSD and in other district contexts.

After lunch, we will turn our attention to building a school and district culture that is student- and equity-centered. Students can play a vital role in elevating concerns and priorities about their experiences in school settings, and in crafting solutions that can improve these experiences. As we know, however, traditional practice in K-12 education has not often fostered student empowerment in this way. In LBUSD, educators have sought to build more systematic and meaningful student roles into the work of schools. A group of school-level teams from three LBUSD high schools will join us to share insights from their path as emerging leaders and illustrate ways in which educators and students have sought to foster more collaborative relationships.

Following our dialogue with students, we will focus on the role of principals in establishing a welcoming learning environment, fostering excellence, and shepherding a collective commitment to equity within the school community. LBUSD leaders will share background on their expectations and supports for site administrators, followed by a discussion among a subset of principals about their experiences with leading for equity. Subsequent small group discussion will enable participants to reflect on what they have heard and share insights about how best to guide and support principals in this work.

To provide an opportunity for networking, collective relaxation, and continued conversation, we will resume our tradition of ending the day with a group dinner, this time at Gladstone's on the Long Beach waterfront.

Day 2: On Wednesday, we will sharpen our focus on matters of teaching and learning. Culturally responsive instructional materials and pedagogical practices can help create an environment in which all students feel welcome and are able to learn through content that resonates with their own experiences. Among the multifaceted ways in which LBUSD has pursued this kind of instructional environment, a recently initiated curriculum audit has been designed to disrupt patterns of bias and ensure fairness and inclusion. Participants will participate in an exercise designed to illustrate what the audit has entailed and the kinds of insights and questions that it has prompted.

We will finish the morning with a set of consultancies that will enable the group to consider equity-focused strategies from multiple district contexts and provide feedback on some pressing problems of practice.

After lunch, we will conclude our discussions with some reflections on future directions and role for the Collaborative itself. The educational landscape has changed dramatically since we last met in person, and we are committed to designing our work in a way that leverages the unique strengths of the Collaborative in response to the contexts in which you all work. This time of transition offers a wonderful opportunity to turn to all of you for your reflections and guidance.

Preparation and Dropbox

You should find all of the information you need for the meeting at a DropBox link you will receive via email, including a set of readings that will provide important background and context for our deliberations in Long Beach. The reading materials are also available on the Collaborative website at <https://www.cacollaborative.org/meetings/meeting46>. **On March 18, you will receive an email with the subset of priority pre-meeting readings attached. We strongly encourage you to read this subset of materials prior to the meeting.**

If you have any questions regarding the meeting logistics, please do not hesitate to contact Mary Louise at 916-286-8804 or mlbaez@air.org. If you have any other questions, please email me (jknudson@air.org) or reach out by phone or text at 650-924-0373. I look forward to seeing you all later this month!

Sincerely,



Joel Knudson
Chair, California Collaborative on District Reform
Principal Researcher, American Institutes for Research