Stanford Graduate School of Education and San Francisco Unified School District

Partnership Memo and Strategic Plan

DRAFT

2018-2020

Overview

This partnership memo describes and confirms the expectations and responsibilities of the California Education Partners, San Francisco Unified School District ("SFUSD"), and Stanford University Graduate School of Education ("Stanford") related to the partnership between SFUSD and Stanford as described in this partnership agreement during 2018-2020. It outlines the strategic plan for the partnership over the next three years and describes the Context, Work-to-date, Impact-to-date, Theory of Action for the partnership as well as the objectives, evidence and activities and roles, commitments and responsibilities of partnership members for 2018-2020.

Context

A working group of administrators and teachers at San Francisco Unified School District were setting out to redesign their elementary report card. San Francisco had recently adopted a new accountability system through its participation in the California Office of Reform in Education, or CORE, and received a waiver from the federal government to build and execute this new set of measures. Interestingly, the new accountability system included measures of students' non-cognitive outcomes related to Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

In this working group, the San Francisco administrators from the offices of Pupil Services, Research, and Assessment realized they needed to align many of their assessment tools to this new conception of SEL. For example, the elementary report card included teachers' assessments of students' social emotional development, and San Francisco administrators wanted to know if the report card elements aligned to the SEL concepts in their new accountability system that measured growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management, and social awareness.

The San Francisco administrative team decided to work with Stanford University professor Jelena Obradovic, a developmental psychologist, to explore how to align the SEL metrics on the report card. When Obradovic's and her team completed the first analyses, they found that the original SEL items on the report card all correlated with the concept of self-management. The San Francisco administrative team, with advice from Obradovic and her team, used these findings as rationale to redesign the SEL items on the report card and align those items to the four constructs in the SEL framework. They used recommendations from Obradovic and her team for which new SEL assessment items to add to the report card.

On their quest for on-going improvement, the San Francisco administrators wanted to collect evidence on whether their new SEL report card items were being used by teachers according to each of the SEL concepts it intended to measure. Again, Obradovic and her team analyzed the relationship between teachers' ratings of students on the report card, and a survey measure of SEL constructs administrated by the district. Similarly, Obradovic and her team found that teachers assessment of students' SEL attributes seem to be associated with students survey responses related to self-management rather than being representative of all four of the SEL constructs. The San Francisco administrators

then knew their re-designed SEL elements still needed to be improved, and went back to the drawing board, with Obradovic and teams as their never waiving thought partner.

The above case exemplifies how administrators engaged in research partnerships are able to use research evidence to inform key decisions. Since 2009, the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership had aimed to cultivate joint projects, which result in Stanford researchers like Professor Obradovic conducting useful, generalizable research and San Francisco administrators using the research in key decisions, in hopes of advancing better outcomes for students.

This document describes the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership's next three-year strategic plan. After laying the foundation from 2009-2012, incentivizing and stoking certain partnership elements from 2013-2017, the next three years from 2018-2020 will be about institutionalizing the most effective parts of the partnership for years to come.

Work-to-date

<u>2009-2013</u>
From 2009-2013, the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership went from a happenstance relationship between a large urban district and a neighboring university, to a strategic partnership supporting research projects advancing teacher practice, leadership practice, policy decisions, and most importantly student outcomes. In the first four years, the partnership took these steps to improve relationships, access, agreements, and operations to lay the foundation for a long-term partnership.

- **Documenting the links across the two organizations through a Partnership map.** In 2009, the Stanford Dean and SFUSD leaders realized they had a lot of joint projects, but did not understand how the work aligned to the goals of the strategic plan. The partnership Director created a map describing the projects and their connections to the goals of the districts, and each year since the first map, the partnership Director has updated that map. See Appendix A for the most recent iteration of this partnership map.
- **Convened an annual meeting and purposeful engagement around research findings:** Each year, the partnership Director organizes an annual meeting on Stanford campus where researchers and practitioners sit side-by-side to consider research findings together. Also, the partnership Director hosts additional events showcasing the research findings from the joint projects where researchers and practitioners co-present findings to their peers at Stanford and SFUSD.
- **Forming a handshake agreement**: The Dean of the Stanford University Graduate School of Education and the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of Instruction at San Francisco Unified School District, and the leaders at partnership backbone organization, California Education Partners, signed a "hand shake" agreement outlining the goals of the partnerships and the resources committed by Stanford, SFUSD, and, California Education Partners. This agreement is not an MOU, and is non-binding, but provides an opportunity for the leaders of the three organizations to review the goals and strategies supporting the partnership each year.
- **Warehousing school district data at Stanford and streamlining research agreements**: The partnership works to make it simpler for researchers and

practitioners to partner together by simplifying access to data and process for establishing agreement. For example, the Stanford and SFUSD legal departments negotiated an agreement to house an annual download of SFUSD data to Stanford. Additionally, the Stanford and SFUSD legal departments worked with the SFUSD research department to develop a template for a data use agreements between Stanford researchers and SFUSD.

- **Helping SFUSD sharpen their research agenda**: SFUSD worked to articulate specific criteria in their research proposal template that describes the criteria from which SFUSD would review and vet proposed research projects. At the annual partnership meeting each year showcasing partnership projects, the district leaders share the SFUSD guidelines for research with Stanford researchers. See Figure 1 for SFUSD's most current Guidelines for Research.

Figure 1: SFUSD's Guidelines for Research
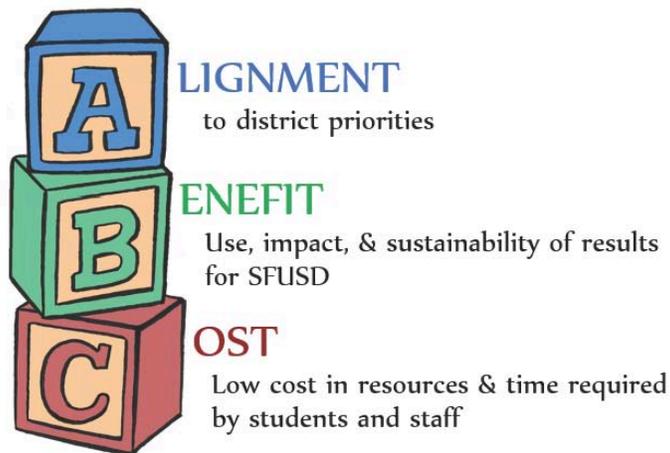
2014-2017

In these next four years, the partnership implemented a set of new strategies aimed at three objectives:

- Increase the number of Stanford researchers producing research that is more aligned and useful for SFUSD policy makers and administrators.
- Produce research in shortened timelines while integrating that research into key SFUSD decisions.
- Improve and enhance events, coordination of projects, project tracking, and knowledge management of the partnership.

To accomplish these objectives, the Stanford GSE committed to raising $1 million a year over five years to support partnership activities. The resources were used to support three new activities to achieve the above objectives:

- **Stanford Incentive Fund for Projects in San Francisco:** Stanford GSE in partnership with SFUSD created an incentive fund for projects in SFUSD aimed at incentivizing professors to work on projects aligned and useful to SFUSD administrators.

- **Doctoral students embedded in San Francisco research department:** SFUSD embedded a set of Stanford doctoral students within their research department to work on research projects within the district.
- **Hired additional personnel to support engagement:** California Education Partners hired additional personnel to support administrators in their use of the research in their decision-making through events and strategic engagements between researchers and practitioners.

Most of these steps and advancements in the partnership are detailed in Figure 2, which describes the timeline of key events for Partnership from 2009-2017.

Figure 2: Timeline of key events for the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership, 2009-2017

2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Project Map

First Annual Meeting

Hired Director | Handshake agreement between University and District abt Partnership | First data warehouse agreement

Guidelines for research

Streamlined data use agreement | | New three-year plan

Renew data warehouse agreement | Year 1 of Incentive Fund

Launch Action Research Team

New associate hired | Joined National Network of Education RPPs | Renew data warehouse agreement |

Impact of the Partnership to Date

By 2017, the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership had made these important impacts:
- 100 project reports and articles are amassed by the Partnership.
- Over 50% of the faculty at Stanford GSE were involved in some way, shape or form with the partnership
- Stanford-SFUSD research projects had become more aligned to the district's priorities
- Stanford-SFUSD research evidence was more often utilized by administrators in key decisions.

As seen in Table 1, a number of descriptive statistics about the partnership support these descriptions of the partnership's impact.

Also, see Appendix A for a map and review of all active projects between Stanford and SFUSD as of 2017-2018 school year. Also, see Appendix B for a summary of findings based on a review of findings from all completed projects between Stanford and SFUSD from 2009 to 2017.

Table 1: Descriptions of characteristics of key characteristics of the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership Projects from 2009-2013 and 2014-2017

	Key Characteristics	2009-2013	2014-2017
1	Stanford Projects aligned to San Francisco's strategic plan (ALIGN)	61% 23/38	87% 55/63
2	San Francisco Administrators demonstrate ownership over Stanford projects (BENEFIT - SUSTAINABILITY)	29% 11/38	68% 43/63
3	San Francisco Administrators Using Stanford Research in Key Decisions (BENEFIT - USE)	39% 15/38	65% 41/63
4	Stanford projects in SFUSD producing generalizable research published in peer-reviewed journals	13% 5/38	35% 22/63
5	Stanford projects associated with changes in teaching, leadership or policies (BENEFIT - IMPACT)	45% 17/38	60% 38/63
6	Stanford projects associated with changes in student outcomes (BENEFIT - IMPACT)	11% 4/38	25% 16/63

Theory of Action

During 2018-2020, Stanford-SFUSD Partnership will work to execute a theory of action to support the research practice partnership. The partnership defines a research practice partnership using Coburn, Penuel, and Geil's (2013) framework, which defines RPPs with these five characteristics:
- They are long term
- They focus on a problem of practice
- They are mutualistic
- They foster partnership through specific strategies
- They lead to original analyses

To build and execute this research practice partnership, the Partnership follows a theory of action seen in Figure 3. The theory of action executes according to this logic:
- If district leaders and researchers have supportive resources and conditions to:
  - Work together on research;
  - Engage collaboratively throughout the research process;
  - And, build a culture supportive of partnering;
- So that, researchers can produce generalizable research that district leaders find useful;
- Then, practitioners can reliably use that research in their decision-making to improve teacher practice, leadership practice, policy decisions, and ultimately student outcomes.

Figure 3: Theory of Action for the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership, 2017

Stanford-SFUSD Partnership - Theory of Action

| Inputs | Partnership Activities | Short Term Output | Long Term Output |
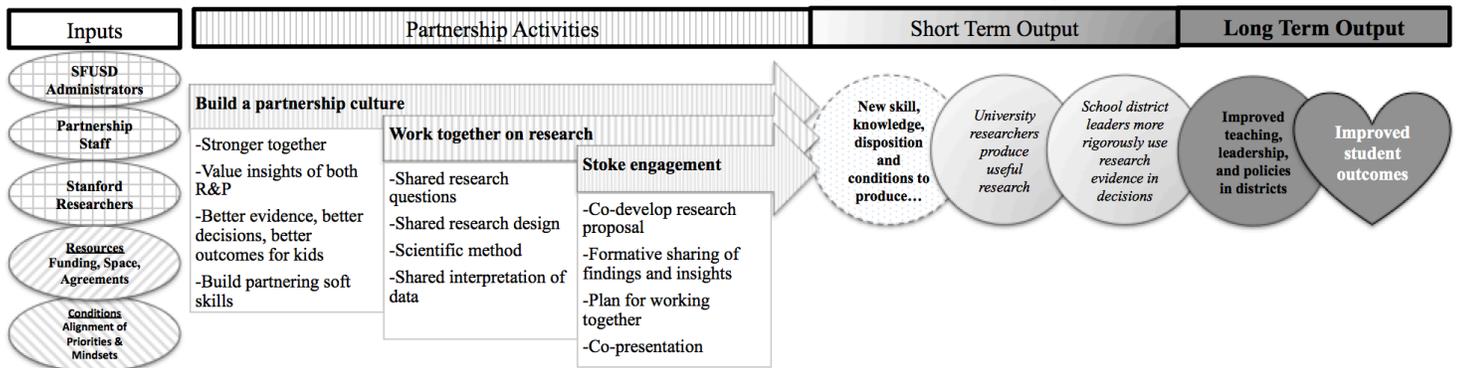
Three-Year Objectives and Strategies for 2018-2020

To realize this theory of action, the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership will aim to achieve three objectives over 2018-2020. The partnership leaders will track evidence to make sure we are achieving these objectives. Also, these objectives will be achieved with a set of strategies and activities, all outlined here:

Objective 1: Positively impact practices and policies to advance student outcomes, when SFUSD makes decisions based on Stanford research evidence.

Activities: To accomplish this objective, the partnership will execute these strategies and participate in these activities:

- Stanford and SFUSD co-present and/or write about research (e.g. at school board meetings, internal/external meetings/conferences) when explaining decisions.
- Stanford and SFUSD work together on research to tackle the largest barriers to advancing student outcomes, with an emphasis on studying approaches aimed at closing the achievement gap.
- Stanford and SFUSD work on research with other partnerships to tackle largest barriers to advancing student outcomes.

Evidence: We know we will have accomplished this objective by examining this evidence:
- Researchers and practitioners will be involved in co-developing high quality research proposals that shows inquiry, engagement and culture of partnering.
- Partnership projects will be accepted to and present at national and local conferences, with researchers and practitioners co-presenting findings (demonstrating engagement, inquiry, and partner culture)
- Partnership projects will produce research published in peer review journals, and practitioner facing publications.

- The partnership will have <u>case studies of SFUSD leaders using the research findings</u> to support their decisions with positive impacts for policy, practice and students aimed at closing the achievement gap.
- The partnership will have <u>case studies of other districts across the nation using the research findings</u> to support their decisions with positive impacts for policy, practice and students.

Objective 2: SFUSD administrators and Stanford Researchers build the will and skill for partnership research.

<u>Activities</u>: To accomplish this objective, the partnership will execute these strategies and participate in these activities:

- Stanford continues to incentivize researchers to work in partnership with SFUSD leaders on projects aligned to SFUSD needs, and develop skill & knowledge needed for producing useful research.
- SFUSD administrators' work with Stanford researchers with a continuous improvement lens while developing the skills to use the research evidence to inform their decisions.

<u>Evidence</u>: We know we will have accomplished this objective by examining this evidence:
- Each project within Stanford and SFUSD has a clear chain of logic relating to changes to teacher practice, leadership practice, policy decisions, or student outcomes, which can be told through a case study.

Objective 3: Stanford and SFUSD will develop a deeper knowledge base to bolster research-based decision-making

<u>Activities:</u> To accomplish this objective, the partnership will execute these strategies and participate in these activities:
- SFUSD improve data validity and management for research & evaluation
- SFUSD develop library of all research findings about SFUSD
- Stanford commit personnel to operations, data management for partnership research

<u>Evidence</u>: We know we will have accomplished this objective by examining this evidence:
- The SFUSD and Stanford have an improved system for data management and research project management to support the partnership, which will include:
  - An internal SFUSD library of all current and past research projects within the district
  - A internal Stanford library of all projects making data requests
  - One cleaned, validated longitudinal data set housed within Stanford of SFUSD data.

Responsibilities of each organization to support the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership

California Education Partners, SFUSD, and Stanford will contribute a set of resources to help fulfill the objectives and activities outlines in this plan. This agreement outlines the responsibilities of the California Education Partners, SFUSD, and Stanford GSE for supporting the Stanford-SFUSD partnership:

A. California Education Partners Responsibilities for the Stanford-SFUSD partnership:
– California Education Partners will provide the salary and benefits for the Partnership Director of the Stanford/SFUSD Partnership;
– California Education Partners will provide half of the funding for the annual Stanford/SFUSD partnership meeting;
– The Senior Partners of California Education Partners will meet monthly with the Director of the Stanford/SFUSD partnership.
– California Education Partners will supervise the Partnership Director position including hiring and evaluation, and will take into consideration the input from SFUSD's Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of Instruction and Stanford Graduate School of Education's Dean when making hiring and evaluation decisions.
– California Education Partners will provide a budget to support partnership events like the presentation of research at Stanford and SFUSD.

B. San Francisco Unified School District ("SFUSD") Responsibilities for the Stanford-SFUSD partnership:
– SFUSD will provide office space on the third floor of 555 Franklin Street for the Director of the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership in order to sit near the Superintendent's offices and will provide proper security access to enable the Director to come and go from that office space;
– SFUSD will provide the Director with access to photocopying, printing, intranet access and IT support;
– SFUSD will arrange a quarterly meeting between the SFUSD Superintendent and the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership Director;
– SFUSD will arrange a monthly meeting with the Deputy Superintendent of Instruction and the Stanford/SFUSD Partnership Director;
– SFUSD will arrange a weekly meeting with the Chief of Research, Planning, and Assessment Department and the Stanford/SFUSD Partnership Director;
– The Stanford/SFUSD annual partnership meeting will be attended by the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent of Instruction, and the Chief of Research, Planning, and Assessment, and district leaders and personnel working with Stanford researchers;
– Two members of the SFUSD, Deputy Superintendent of Instruction and the Chief of Research, Planning. and Assessment will work on the selection committee for the Stanford Incentive Fund.

C. Stanford University Graduate School of Education ("Stanford GSE") Responsibilities for the Stanford-SFUSD partnership:

- Stanford will provide office space within Stanford GSE for the Partnership Director, and will provide proper security access to enable the Director to come and go from that office space;
- Stanford GSE will provide access to a telephone, printing and photocopying, intranet access and IT support for the Partnership Director (if possible);
- Stanford GSE will hold a quarterly meeting between the Stanford GSE Dean and the Stanford/SFUSD Partnership Director;
- The Stanford GSE Dean and the professors/researchers involved in the Stanford/SFUSD partnership (or as many as possible) will attend the annual Stanford/SFUSD partnership meeting;
- Stanford GSE will provide half the budget for an annual partnership meeting;
- Stanford GSE will be responsible for developing the incentive fund through their internal fundraising.
- Two members of the Stanford GSE community will work on the selection committee for the incentive funds. The Stanford GSE Dean will appoint these committee members.

Evaluation of the Partnership Director

The Partnership Director will have a formal review of her performance with the California Education Partners Senior Partners on an annual basis. The job requirements for the Partnership Director are as follows:

The Director of Research Practice Partnerships assists with the overall execution of all Research Practice Partnership activities and directly manages one research practice partnership, in this case the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership, by supporting districts leaders and researchers through:

- Research inquiries related to a shared research agendas;
- Engagement and relationship building needed to support the partnership activities, and;
- Building mindsets, vision, and approaches to decision-making needed to support a partnership culture.

The Director also contributes to cross-organization work by working collaboratively with other staff to advance program and organizational goals related to Research Practice Partnership programming at California Education Partners. The Director will also be expected to spend time researching and documenting the work within the research practice partnership programs, both the leadership moves and implementation challenges, as well as examination of evidence for reflection and analysis.

Key areas of responsibility include but are not limited to:
Program Leadership – 50%
Directs the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership

- Directs the operations of the research practice partnership including:
  - Project negotiation
  - Researcher and practitioner engagement
  - Knowledge management and communications both in print and online

- o Event planning and management
  - o Researcher and practitioner relationship management
- Matches researchers and practitioners based on their interests and compatibility and helps them navigate and negotiate the initial phases of a partnership project
- Updates and coaches partnership participants through the skills, knowledge, mindset and culture needed for engaging throughout a partnership project
- Supports proposal development, review and approval process for research within the partnership, and in some cases, help leaders award funding to these proposals
- Cultivate opportunities for researchers and practitioners to co-present within their organizations and at national conferences
- Support each project within the partnership through each phase of development and execution, which could include managing parts of research projects, sub-networks of districts and/or districts departments working with researchers
- Summarizes research in briefs and tracks project development and project management using online tools like Asana, Salesforce, and Confluence
- Negotiates, maintains, and coaches the leaders of the research and practice institutions through the process of establishing institutional agreements about data and research, cultivates the partnership vision, goals and research agenda, and continuous improvement and evaluation of the partnership
- Plan, organize and execute three convenings of the partnership, which includes all communication, logistics, agenda development, materials and operations
- Plans, organizes and manages ongoing in person and virtual engagement of participants
- Identifies, collects and analyzes the impact of the research on the students and communities being served by the districts in the partnership

Organizational Leadership – 40%
Leads programmatic work at California Education Partners by:
- Supervising other partnership directors and analysts working at California Education Partners within the research practice partnership programmatic work;
- Establishing, testing, and co-authoring a paper on a guiding framework for research practice partnerships in education within the California context, and communicates that framework throughout the work;
- Developing and executing the RPP learning community within California in partnership
- Supports continuous improvement and evaluation of RPP work at Ed Partners
- Overseeing work of Stanford-Sequoia K-12 Research Collaborative and new research practice partnership evolution in 2018-2019 and launch in 2019-2020
  - o Hiring and training new Partnership Directors and Analyst

Writing for Publication – 10%
Write about process, implementation, and learning from research practice partnership work
- Document work with RPPs in journal articles and practitioner facing publications, with special attention to the guiding framework for RPPs in California

Acknowledgement of details

We acknowledge these details of the partnership between Stanford University Graduate School of Education, San Francisco Unified School District, and California Education Partners as described in the above memo. While this memo is not a binding agreement, we will make every effort to achieve the standards outlined in this memo in support of the partnership.

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