

November 2022

Dear Friend of LAEP,

In early 2020, we asked ourselves a question: Are we serving all marginalized students equitably?

As is part of LAEP's DNA, we had entered a place of reflection - this time, we had done so to recommit to our "why." We wanted to ensure we were living into equity as both a process and an outcome. After pausing to explore our equity journey thus far and to re-examine our thoughts and behaviors, we intentionally renewed our organizational commitment to racial justice and awareness.

In the spring of 2020, we deepened our own racial understanding and practice through a professional development series led by LAEP Board Member Dr. Sylvia Rousseau, an expert on diversity, urban school reform, and school leadership. Continuing this journey, staff formed an African American Think Tank, gathering resources and speakers to continue our learning and to focus the needs of Black students at the forefront of our work, both internally and with our partners.

In the summer of 2020, while LAEP's work was underway, much of America appeared to reach a racial awakening and reckoning. Many companies and organizations committed to advancing racial justice and supporting Black communities. Yet the solutions did not come easily or quickly, and many have abandoned or forgotten the cause.

LAEP has stayed the course.

In the fall of 2020 and 2021, we gathered hundreds of school leaders, early childhood administrators, systems change practitioners, families, and other community members for virtual forums to support community learning around how to foster school communities that honor the voices of Black students and staff. With the support of our African American Think Tank, we have also continued to have intentional conversations, internally and externally, to keep Black students' needs at the forefront.

As a result of our intentional and consistent effort, we have been able to improve our services for Black students and families.

For example, building on our strong Teaching & Learning foundation, last school year we created STEAM Teaching & Learning partnerships with several schools in LAUSD Local District South. An LAEP staff member works full-time on each partner campus to promote school-wide STEAM culture.

At 118th Street Elementary, the STEAM program quickly made an impact. A group of Black 5th grade boys had a history of low engagement. When the school's STEAM lab opened, these boys took to it quickly and eagerly. One day, their teacher overheard them saying they couldn't miss school the next day because it was a STEAM lab day.

That's just one story. We have seen improved engagement of this kind from students representing all races across this STEAM Teaching & Learning work. LAEP's Early Head Start team has also grown the number



A student at partner community school
University Pathways Public Service Academy



Students check out their new STEAM lab
equipment at the start of the school year

of Black families they serve by 10%. Additionally, our Community Schools and CORE teams continue to work toward building school environments that listen to, support, and nurture Black students, families, and staff as well as schools that are committed to advancing racial justice for all students.

This takes work and continuous commitment. It takes ongoing advocacy. It takes building our networks, building our knowledge and practice, building our communities. We have more work to do.

This spring, LAEP began working on a new strategic plan to guide us over the coming years. The process has included all staff, Board members, and key community members. It has also involved internal work of ensuring we, individually and collectively, are continuously learning about and committing to racial equity and liberatory practices – removing barriers for all students.

Importantly, while we commit to continuing to serve the students we currently serve, we also explicitly commit to serving more Black students and to serving Black students better. We are naming this student population in our plan. Why? Because when Black students are not explicitly acknowledged, they are often left behind. We refuse to let that happen.

Will you join us in the commitment to advance racial and educational equity?

Your gift of any amount to LAEP will support Black, Indigenous, and Latinx educators, children, and families in their education journey.

Your gift will power efforts to create equitable school environments for all children – including work to advance racial justice across the educational system.

While solving for racial and educational inequities will not happen as quickly as we would like, we must act quickly, because our children need us now. They've waited far too long already.

Your gift to LAEP provides the support our communities need right now.

Together, we can transform education for the community, with the community, from diapers to diplomas.

With deep appreciation,



Michele Broadnax, MBA
President & CEO

Los Angeles Education Partnership



An Early Head Start student participates in a learning activity

P.S. Thousands of students, educators, and families in Southern California's most at-promise zip codes turn to us for support. **Partner with LAEP and make a year-end gift to support equitable, racially just educational environments today.**

Ready to give?

Visit laep.org/support-us,
scan this code with your phone,
or return the enclosed envelope in the mail.

