UCI Orange County Educational
Advancement Network

Fall 2020

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In 2018, the UCI School of Education, in partnership with K-12 schools and with the support of private donors, established the Orange County Educational Advancement Network (OCEAN). This bold initiative places School of Education faculty and graduate students at K-12 schools and allows research topics to originate from, and reflect the needs of, the school sites. OCEAN also facilitates connections and catalyzes partnerships among K-12 schools, so that the School of Education can help address and improve common needs across the region.

The initiative is creating a national model for how a school of education can partner with local schools to support and improve education.

This year, schools across the nation underwent a seismic shift to remote instruction, and the future of K-12 education remains unclear. OCEAN has enabled the School of Education - the No. 10 public school of education in the nation - to work closely with K-12 schools to support teachers, staff, students and their families during the pandemic. Our findings, along with the measures taken to assist the community, are detailed throughout this booklet.

The School of Education's mission is to advance educational sciences and improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all individuals across the entire lifespan. Our research, community partnerships and programming are dedicated to producing innovative scholarship, addressing the needs of local schools, and inspiring future generations of educators. Through OCEAN, we are reimagining how a school of education can, and should, serve its community of K-12 schools, students, and families.

In 2019, the University of California, Irvine launched its $2 billion "Brilliant Future" campaign - the largest philanthropic and alumni engagement endeavor in the history of Orange County. Recently, the *New York Times* recognized UCI as the nation's No. 1 university doing the most to advance upward mobility. The School of Education and its innovative programs play an essential role in earning that distinction.

This booklet highlights the many ways in which OCEAN impacts the Orange County community. We invite you to support our bold vision – together we can ensure that students from all backgrounds achieve the American dream.

Sincerely,

Richard Arum
Dean and Professor
UCI School of Education

OCEAN represents a different way of doing research and making a direct impact on communities. In our partnerships, the needs of the community inform the scholarship we undertake. As a result, the research is directly relevant to the issues our partners are trying to solve, and the link between research and practice becomes tighter.

In our partnerships, we prioritize developing long-term relationships between community partners and researchers at the UCI School of Education. These relationships allow us to be nimble and shift research to fit the needs of partners as they arise, as well as broker resources to our community partners when they need them most.

I am so proud of what OCEAN has accomplished in two short years. Through the support of our private donors, we are currently funding 12 graduate student fellowships, who combined are working with 10 local schools and nonprofit organizations. Numerous research projects have emerged from these partnerships: exploring restorative justice practices, supporting young people's personal passions and civic engagement, studying the impact of strong alumni and support programs for foster youth, examining how to improve mentorship and internship programs to guide youth to career opportunities, working with local teachers to improve pedagogy, understanding the needs of bilingual students and families, supporting social-emotional learning, and developing new insights to help learners with special needs. You can learn more about the various projects we've undertaken, starting on page 14.

Our work is also beginning to gain national attention. In 2020 we will receive external funding to expand our partnership research from sources such as the Spencer Foundation, National Science Foundation, and New Schools Venture Fund. The initial investment in community-focused research is paying dividends, and I'm excited for the future of OCEAN.

We thank you for your continued support to sustain and accelerate what is a unique model of conducting partnership-based research to positively impact Orange County and beyond.

June Ahn
Faculty Director of OCEAN and Associate Professor
UCI School of Education

What is OCEAN?

OCEAN **catalyzes research-practice partnerships** (RPPs) by connecting School of Education doctoral students and faculty with K-12 public schools and community nonprofits throughout Orange County and the surrounding Southern California region. The partnerships study and co-design solutions to pressing regional challenges.

At each site, a School of Education faculty member and doctoral student work with partners to identify their greatest needs and goals, and in turn conduct research that will positively impact the local community.

Why OCEAN?

OCEAN is unique in a few ways. Targeted partnership research allows community partners to inform UCI faculty and doctoral students about what they want to focus on, making sure that research directly arises from community needs. Collaboration across the network of OCEAN partners also has potential to produce change at a systemic level. Our aspirations are to create the conditions for using research to guide improvement at both a micro and macro level.

RESEARCH PHASE

A UCI School of Education faculty member and doctoral student are assigned to each school in the OCEAN network. Working together, the partnership team identifies goals and challenges, and produces research that addresses the specific needs of the school.

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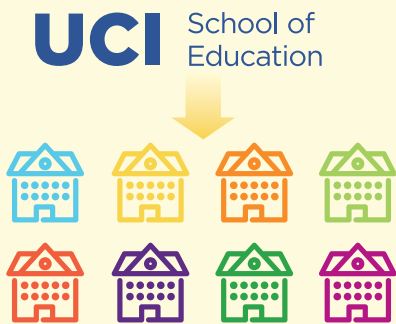
Each partnership between the UCI School of Education and a school site produces unique research. The research is data-driven and specific to the school, and its results can be acted upon immediately.

EXPLORATORY PHASE

The School of Education then brings together the schools to identify common challenges, best practices and shared goals.

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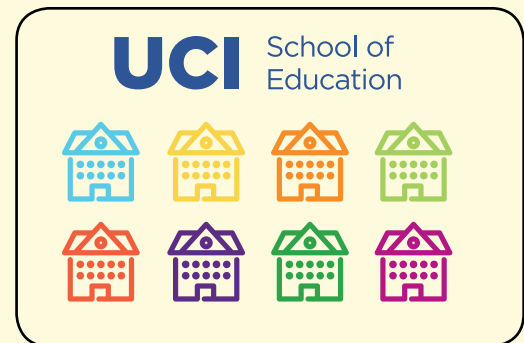
NETWORKED IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITIES

Local schools, alongside the School of Education, can then implement a measured, trackable improvement plan. This group is known as a Networked Improvement Community, or NIC. Not every school needs to participate in a given NIC project, so from a network of 12 schools, there exists thousands of possible combinations of participants and areas to focus improvement efforts.

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PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Marco Forster Middle School & Breakthrough San Juan Capistrano

Since 2018, doctoral student Jennifer Renick and Professor Stephanie Reich have worked in a three-way partnership between Marco Forster, Breakthrough SJC and the UCI School of Education. Breakthrough SJC supports local, motivated students whose backgrounds are underrepresented in higher education by providing tuition-free academic programming and guidance from middle school through college graduation. The school recruits its students from nearby Marco Forster Middle School. More than 90 percent of Breakthrough SJC students will be the first in their families to graduate from college; 94 percent are students of color; 89 percent qualify for free/reduced lunch, and English is not the primary language in 84 percent of homes.

The UCI team works with Marco Forster's Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) team to bolster efforts to improve school climate. The team developed and administered a school-wide survey that revealed disparities in the sense of belonging between groups on campus – seventh- and eighth-graders reported a lower sense of belonging than sixth-graders, and girls reported a lower sense of belonging than boys. The results of this survey are being used by the PBIS team to inform new efforts to improve school climate and support student needs.

In August 2020, the California PBIS Coalition awarded the Marco Forster PBIS team a 2020 Community Cares Acknowledgement for the team's "outstanding contribution of support and care during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and resulting disruptions to school."

At Breakthrough SJC, the partnership is designing a robust program evaluation plan to help understand the unique impact of the school's programming and how they are advancing educational equity for traditionally underserved students. This work has included various logic modeling sessions, surveying students pre-and post- about different aspects of programming to gauge change in key areas, and interviewing teaching staff about their experiences. A further analysis of Breakthrough SJC's unique summer program found that all students reported significantly higher academic self-efficacy and college knowledge by the end of the program. Additionally, eighth-grade students had a significantly higher hope for the future and self-reported help-seeking at the end of the summer, while girls had a significantly higher sense of mattering at the end of the summer. These data have been used by Breakthrough SJC staff to continue to improve and refine their summer program, in order to better serve students.

"Through my work with OCEAN, I get hands-on training on how to conduct research in partnership with schools and nonprofit organizations that I know will serve me well in my career going forward. It is incredibly rewarding to get to work with these passionate educators and see the direct impact research can have to support schools."

Jennifer Renick, UCI School of Education Doctoral Student

"Improving the educational outcomes for students from underrepresented backgrounds requires a systemic, collaborative, and timely solution and OCEAN is the vehicle to get there. This is about our community, about the lives of so many and I am excited because OCEAN is the path to a better future for countless students in Orange County and beyond. It takes a village and this is it."

Alex Serna, Executive Director, Breakthrough SJC

Rea Elementary

Doctoral student Jiwon Lee and Professor Rossella Santagata are partnering with Rea Elementary and the Orange County Department of Education on a project known as School-Wide Improvement in Mathematics (SWIM).

The partnership's overarching goals are to: support school-wide improvement efforts focused on teacher mathematics professional development and collaboration; improve mathematics teaching and learning by centering instruction on children's mathematics thinking and reasoning, and by promoting an asset-based approach; and examine processes and tools that support collaboration between educators and researchers toward meaningful improvements and more equitable outcomes for children. This past year, Lee and Santagata conducted teacher surveys and interviews and analyzed more than 150 K-2 students' work samples. The interviews were coded for strategies that students used to solve story problems and informed subsequent professional development.

The Newport-Mesa Unified School District facilitated efforts to support teachers' participation in Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) professional development. CGI is grounded in research that shows children bring intuitive and informal mathematical knowledge to the classroom, which teachers should in turn build upon. Professional development supports teachers to learn to listen, understand, and leverage children's mathematical thinking during instruction.

The pair also plans for staff sessions, co-designs and plans professional development, discusses research efforts, problem-solves various challenges, visits classrooms, and learns alongside teachers and school and district leaders. In addition, at the end of the year, surveys and interviews made visible teachers' voices and experiences and documented perceived changes in instructional vision and classroom practices. The research tools that were developed will continue to be used in future years as the work is extended through similar initiatives to other schools in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District.

"Working close with our partners has been an invaluable and rewarding experience. There is only so much I can learn about the classroom, school, and district contexts from literature - but being a participant and engaging in the learning experiences with the teachers and the district administrators has deepened my understanding of the intricacies of the day-to-day lives of teachers, the school and district contexts, and the local community."

Jiwon Lee, UCI School of Education Doctoral Student

"For the UCI School of Education team to attend our meetings and sit down with groups of teachers and learn along with them is incredibly powerful. We talk about professional development, systems, processes, data, and books. Their presence has helped build my capacity, and it's made me realize that I want my teachers to have this opportunity — to have these professional dialogues about articles and research."

Dr. Duane Cox, Principal, Rea Elementary School

In addition to improving the learning experiences of Orange County's diverse student body, OCEAN also instills in doctoral students the experience of conducting targeted research that addresses concrete, pragmatic needs. Doctoral students participating in OCEAN will be imbued with "The UCI Way" and can go on to direct and steer similar initiatives in their future careers and communities they serve.

Yenda Prado

During the 2019-20 academic year, Prado worked with TLC Public Charter School, a full-inclusion school in which students of diverse abilities, cultures, languages, and lived experiences learn together in the same classroom.

Prado - along with Professor Mark Warschauer and Jessica Tunney (Ph.D. '16), founding principal and executive director of TLC Public Charter School - are researching how to integrate technology into classrooms serving students with diverse abilities and learning support needs. Prado and Tunney are also publishing a series of blog posts that outline best practices and resources for elementary school distance learning in response to COVID-19.

In the first year of OCEAN, Prado worked with the El Sol Science & Arts Academy to obtain a general sense of how the school's dual-immersion curriculum is received by parents, how it could be improved, and if the 19-year-old charter school is achieving its goals and fulfilling its mission. Through surveys, classroom observations, and teacher and parent interviews, Prado and Professor Elizabeth Peña found a series of answers to El Sol's questions. Chief among them: bilingual students choose to speak a language in a given circumstance partly based on comfort, not just proficiency. UCI OCEAN members and El Sol are now shifting their focus to how to make students more comfortable speaking both languages - how to achieve this at El Sol, in their home, and in the community.

"Inclusive models of education are under-researched areas of study - there is not much literature on best practices for implementing a full-inclusion model or what that means for student learning, family support, or staff professional development. I hope my research will be used to start conversations; OCEAN is in an extraordinary position to have an impact in Orange County, California, and the United States - there aren't many of these networks around."

Yenda Prado, UCI School of Education Doctoral Candidate

Christopher Wegemer

Wegemer has worked with Samueli Academy since OCEAN's inception in 2018. Along with Dean Richard Arum and Samueli Executive Director Anthony Saba, Wegemer designs surveys to inform school practices and guide strategic interventions. In particular, Wegemer and the OCEAN team are examining Sameuli's alumni program and its dedication to foster youth.

Research of Samueli's Alumni Success Program aims to understand and refine novel strategies for supporting marginalized youth in college. The OCEAN partnership is conducting a longitudinal study that tracks alumni through college in order to understand the most crucial factors that contribute to students' academic achievement. Thus far, research found that Samueli Academy's services meet the diverse needs of marginalized students in ways that complement existing support programs at students' respective colleges. Future work will investigate specific functions of alumni social networks and the potential role of identity.

Serving foster youth has been a key component of Samueli Academy's mission since the school was founded. Analysis shows that foster youth at the Samueli Academy improve their academic outcomes at the same rate as other students. The OCEAN partnership will further analyze this group of individuals, including the planned addition of an on-campus dormitory that will house foster youth. The program is the first of its kind in California and will provide a template for new strategies that promote the success of youth who are most vulnerable. The School of Education is working with the Orangewood Foundation, Orange County's leading provider of foster youth services, to study the program in a way that will inform social services across the state.

"The process of establishing a research-practice partnership is complex, but it is one of the most effective ways for data to inform practice. I am committed to social justice and applied research that targets pressing issues. Going forward as a professor, I will be much more capable of partnering with schools and community members as a result of my participation in OCEAN."

Christopher Wegemer, UCI School of Education Doctoral Candidate

From left: Prado, Ahn, doctoral student Jennifer Renick, and Wegemer work to organize input from community partners at an OCEAN welcome event in April 2019.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools across the nation to transition to remote instruction. The UCI School of Education responded by working with OCEAN school sites to analyze and support school and community needs.

In the summer, School of Education graduate students conducted interviews with administrators, teachers, staff, and parents to hear their stories, and how schools are dealing with the adversity. Common themes included: proper ways to train staff to ensure quality remote learning, concerns over physical and mental well-being, ways to safely re-open schools, and worries for students and families facing financial difficulties and shifting roles and responsibilities.

In June, UCI's Office of Inclusive Excellence awarded a grant to School of Education Professors June Ahn, Rossella Santagata, and Adriana Villavicencio to document and synthesize the ways in which communities are supporting students, and provide support in areas of need through a Networked Improvement Community composed of School of Education researchers, school leaders, district leaders, and community members.

In kind, OCEAN established four working groups, focused on promoting mental health and well-being for students, working with teachers to improve pedagogy and learning, supporting Orange County principals and K-12 leadership, and supporting family learning pods.

With the support, Ahn and the family learning pods group are matching UCI undergraduates with families in need of tutoring services for K-12 students. K-12 schools in the OCEAN network are helping identify families in need, while the School of Education – and UCI CalTeach program – are training volunteer students to serve as tutors.

"We found that many parents and schools are searching for ways to provide personal attention to K-12 students as they attend virtual or hybrid schooling. We believe that equitable and community-driven approaches are vital to help each other in this critical moment – we are going to use OCEAN to model how a university can help facilitate this type of help for communities and families in need."

June Ahn, Director, OCEAN

Doctoral candidate Yenda Prado (middle) teaches Spanish to a pod of elementary school students.

OCEAN was established in 2018 due to the generous contributions of our philanthropic community. At inception, OCEAN supported six graduate student researchers at six unique school sites. As of August 2020, OCEAN is supporting more than a dozen graduate student researchers per year. By supporting OCEAN, you're helping catalyze and sustain partnerships.

A gift to OCEAN contributes to three different areas of focus: training UCI School of Education doctoral students, improving individual school sites and local nonprofits that support youth education, and generating impact for the entire Orange County community. With private support, OCEAN can train additional doctoral students, collaborate with more school sites, and improve the learning experiences and outcomes for all Orange County students and families.

"The goals for this network – developing innovations that improve pathways for underrepresented students – those are things that everyone should be happy to collaborate on, and to share and gain from one another."

William F. Podlich, Former CEO, PIMCO; UCI Trustee and OCEAN Supporter

"In the heart of culturally diverse Orange County and widely regarded for its first-generation student body, UCI is uniquely positioned to facilitate K-12 public education in cultivating human ingenuity for all students and building the next generation of diverse innovators who fuel our economy."

Sandi Jackson, Chair, Dean's Campaign Council and co-founder, Samueli Academy

"The UCI School of Education is a true partner to our schools, engaging in meaningful research and evidence-based practices that advance our understanding of teaching and learning while promoting equity and opportunity for all students. They are contributing to the fulfillment of our vision that Orange County students will lead the nation in college and career readiness and success."

Dr. Al Mijares, Orange County Superintendent of Schools

"UCI's School of Education is changing the landscape for public education in Orange County. The data-driven research of OCEAN will shape new methods of teaching and learning, and will serve as a model for the rest of the nation."

Stacey Nicholas, UCI Trustee and OCEAN Supporter

FOUNDATION SUPPORT

As a result of the two years of groundwork and contributions from private supporters, OCEAN has earned the interest of several foundations who, as of September 2020, have awarded more than $4.5 million in grant awards and contracts. A few current OCEAN projects are detailed below.

Gates Foundation

June Ahn, associate professor and director of OCEAN, is partnering with the UCI Connected Learning Lab and out-of-school organizations across the country to study how local youth develop career pathways and occupational identities. Leveraging expertise in partnership research and improvement science, Ahn will work directly with youth to develop measures for the broader field of out-of-school learning that can help organizations better track youth experiences and support their career development.

Spencer Foundation

Through a research-practice partnership grant, OCEAN will create a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) of local schools that together will work toward improving supports for foster and housing insecure youth across Orange County. A core hub of this NIC will be our partners at Samueli Academy, who are innovators in supporting the educational success of foster youth. Dean Richard Arum and June Ahn, associate professor and director of OCEAN, are co-leading the research team in this partnership.

NewSchools Venture Fund EF+Math Program

OCEAN is partnering with teachers and students in the Santa Ana Unified School District to co-design outdoor/out-of-school learning spaces to promote mathematics learning and executive function. One example of this work is "Fraction-Ball," which transforms a typical basketball court into a learning opportunity. Professors Andres Bustamante and June Ahn, along with a team of faculty in the School of Education and graduate student researchers, are leading the project.

National Science Foundation

Professors Andres Bustamante and June Ahn are partnering with the city of Santa Ana to design learning opportunities into everyday city spaces such as bus stops, grocery stores, and playgrounds. This research partnership will study how to enhance early childhood STEM learning by leveraging the rich cultural assets of local Latinx communities and neighborhood spaces.

UCI Office of Inclusive Excellence

OCEAN members are documenting and synthesizing the nuanced approaches that different communities are taking to best support students in Orange County schools. In turn, they are providing targeted support in areas of need through the creation of a Networked Improvement Community composed of UCI School of Education researchers, school leaders, district leaders, and community members. Professors June Ahn, Brandy Gatlin-Nash, Rossella Santagata, and Adriana Villavicencio are leading these efforts.

OCEAN is supported by the School of Education's world-renowned faculty. In addition to offering a wide range of expertise, faculty are trained and proficient in leading research-practice partnerships, mentoring graduate student researchers, and implementing strategic initiatives at K-12 schools.

June Ahn – Associate Professor

Dr. Ahn is director of OCEAN and associate professor at the UCI School of Education. His research interests include learning technologies, research-practice partnerships, human-computer interaction, educational technology, and data use and analytics. He has worked with Willard Intermediate and Valley High School/High School Inc., and helped facilitate Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) across all schools in OCEAN.

Richard Arum – Dean and Professor

Dr. Arum is dean of the UCI School of Education. He is currently principal investigator of *The Next Generation Undergraduate Success Measurement Project*, a state-of-the-art measurement project that is improving our understanding of the value of undergraduate educational experiences, and promoting evidence-based models of undergraduate student success. He has worked with the Samueli Academy.

Andres Bustamante – Assistant Professor

Dr. Bustamante's research focuses on early childhood STEM education. He is the recipient of multiple grants that produce innovative interventions known as "Playful Learning Landscapes," which promote learning and interaction among children and families in public spaces. He has worked with El Sol Science and Arts Academy and the Santa Ana Early Learning Initiative (SAELI).

Brandy Gatlin-Nash – Assistant Professor

Dr. Gatlin-Nash's research focuses on language, reading, writing, cultural and linguistic diversity, and measurement and assessment. In 2020, the School of Education awarded Gatlin-Nash a Faculty Mentorship Award for Inclusive Excellence, given to faculty for their mentorship and their significant impact in supporting the success of underrepresented minorities in the School's academic programs and research mission. She currently mentors OCEAN graduate students working with the GEAR UP partnership in the Center for Educational Partnerships.

Elizabeth Peña – Professor and Associate Dean of Faculty Development & Diversity

Dr. Peña focuses on developmental language disorders and dual language learners. She is principal investigator on a grant from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders that is creating an online testing procedure for identifying developmental language disorders. As associate dean of faculty development & diversity, Peña supports initiatives that build trust and community in the School of Education. She has previously worked with El Sol El Sol Science and Arts Academy.

Stephanie Reich – Associate Professor and Associate Dean, Graduate Program

Dr. Reich's research interests include child development, parenting, peer interactions, and media. This year, she received a grant from the National Institute of Child Health & Human Development to research how screen media influences children's development. She works with Marco Forster Middle School and Breakthrough SJC.

Rossella Santagata – Professor

Dr. Santagata is a founding faculty at the School of Education, and is the current director of the Center for Research in Teacher Development and Professional Practice, an innovative group that fosters collaborations among faculty, students, and practitioners on projects focused on a variety of aspects of teacher development and learning. In 2020, the School of Education awarded Santagata a Faculty Mentorship Award for Inclusive Excellence. She works with Rea Elementary.

Adriana Villavicencio – Assistant Professor

Dr. Villavicencio's research is focused on identifying both the underlying causes and potential solutions to educational inequities. For nearly a decade, she conducted research at the Research Alliance for New York City Schools at NYU — a research-practice partnership with the NYC Department of Education (DOE). She currently mentors OCEAN graduate students who are working on a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) to support foster and housing-insecure students across Orange County.

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

OCEAN has engaged in more than two dozen research projects in just two years. Working with K-12 schools across Orange County, the OCEAN network has produced tangible results in a variety of areas critical to supporting the county's diverse student population.

Adapting Project-Based Learning Strategies for Diverse Learners in a California Democracy School

OCEAN researchers explore how teachers at Katella High School adapt problem-based learning methods to promote student voice and civic engagement among all learners regardless of language or special education status.

Assessing Distance Learning in COVID-19 Times

Leaders from Marco Forster Middle School and OCEAN assessed students' experiences with distance learning.

Assessing the Impact of Remote Learning During COVID-19 on Student and Teacher Perceptions of School Climate

OCEAN and Katella High School leadership assessed the impact of remote learning on school climate using baseline data from the prior year.

Becoming a Critically Engaged Teaching Fellow

Leaders of Breakthrough SJC and OCEAN focused on understanding the ways in which Breakthrough SJC was helping develop Teaching Fellows' critical reflection.

Career Academies as a Driving Catalyst

Leaders from Valley High School and OCEAN assessed how Career Academies serve as a catalyst for college and career readiness, school attendance and job securement.

Community Education Fellows: An Initiative at UCI to Connect Student Mentors with Families and Schools

Leaders from El Sol Academy, TLC Charter School, Breakthrough SJC, and OCEAN matched families in need with UCI undergraduate students to form learning pods. The learning pods are designed to support students' social-emotional needs and facilitate small-group learning.

Concerted Cultivation of Spanish in Dual-Language Immersion Contexts

Leaders from El Sol Academy and OCEAN examined the ways teachers and parents cultivated students' Spanish language use across multiple contexts within a dual-language immersion program.

Creating a College-Going Culture

Leaders from the Center for Educational Partnerships, GEAR UP Compton, and OCEAN worked together to: reduce the need for remedial education, increase access to rigorous curricula, and ultimately create a college-going culture within the community and target schools in Compton.

Designing and Researching Playful Learning Landscapes

Leaders in the Santa Ana Unified School District and OCEAN designed playful learning landscapes that reflect community partners' goals, values, and cultural capital of the Latinx community.

Developing Measures for Supporting Foster and Housing Insecure Youth

Leaders from Samueli Academy and OCEAN are leading research in the pursuit of supporting foster and housing insecure youth.

Developing Practical Measures of Occupational Identity with, for, and by Youth

OCEAN and School of Education leaders are partnering with national youth participatory action research organizations to directly involve youth in the development of practical measures for their occupational identities.

Emphasizing Student Voice and 21st Century Skills to Promote Positive School Climate in a California Democracy School

OCEAN and Katella High School leadership used a mixed-methods approach to identify best practices and areas for growth in student-centered curriculum, civic engagement, student safety and wellbeing, and peer leadership.

Evaluating STEM-Focused School Environment

Leaders from Samueli Academy and OCEAN designed and implemented strategic school environment surveys related to Samueli Academy's STEM-focused curriculum.

First in their Families: Enrichment Program for Latinx Middle School Students

Leaders of Breakthrough SJC and OCEAN conducted an evaluation of the summer enrichment program for Latinx middle school students who would be the first in their family to attend college.

Identifying Humanizing Instruction in STEM Classrooms

Leaders from Magnolia High School, UCI CalTeach and OCEAN will identify teacher instruction practices that promote humanizing pedagogy in STEM classrooms.

Improving Learning in Reading, Math, & Social and Emotional Learning

Leaders from the Santa Ana Early Learning Initiative and OCEAN developed a community partnership of parents, caregivers, leaders, community agencies, and schools dedicated to improving early learning in reading, math, and social-emotional development for all children ages 0 to 9 in Santa Ana.

Inclusive Uses of Digital Technologies for Developmental and Linguistically Diverse Learners

Leaders from TLC Charter School and OCEAN seek to advance our understanding of how digital technologies can contribute to language and literacy development, agency, and inclusion for children with disabilities.

Leveraging Youth Participatory Action Research

Leaders of Breakthrough SJC and OCEAN utilized youth participatory action research amongst middle school students with a focus on teens' use of technology.

Playful Learning Landscapes Support Caregivers and Children

Leaders in the Santa Ana Unified School District and OCEAN explored how caregivers and their children experience PLL installations and examine the development and shifts in both caregiver-child STEM conversation and interaction, and caregiver attitudes about the importance of informal STEM learning and their beliefs about their role in facilitating STEM learning.

Promoting Best Practices for Dual-language Development

Leaders from El Sol Academy and OCEAN identify and promote best practices in the dual-language development of diverse learners.

Promoting Student-School Connectedness

Leaders from Willard Middle School and OCEAN explored student-adult connectedness through the use of restorative practices including an arts-integrated curriculum, teacher and student one-on-one mentoring, and student focus groups.

School-Wide Improvement in Mathematics

Leaders from Rea Elementary, Newport-Mesa Unified School District, Orange County Department of Education and OCEAN co-designed professional development activities for mathematics teachers by using analyzed teacher surveys and interviews.

Student-Centered, Interactive and Equitable Learning

Teachers from Orange County elementary schools and OCEAN designed learning activities in online and hybrid spaces that are student-centered, interactive, and equitable.

Supporting Families and Students During COVID-19

Leaders of Breakthrough SJC and OCEAN implemented evaluation tools and needs assessments to support families and students during COVID-19 in the areas of loneliness, depression, and material needs.

Supporting Latinx Alumni's College Persistence

Leaders from Samueli Academy and OCEAN supported the college persistence of alumni, primarily low-income, first-generation Latinx youth.

Teacher Perceptions of School Discipline

Leaders from Marco Forster Middle School and OCEAN collected teacher perceptions of school discipline to support the creation of consistent school-wide rules through the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team.

Understanding Sense of School Belonging

Leaders from Marco Forster Middle School and OCEAN assessed school climate, including the creation and distribution of a school-wide survey to better understand staff and student perceptions of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, as well as their sense of school belonging.

OCEAN is made possible thanks to the generous support of foundations, government agencies, and community friends, including:

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

National Science Foundation

NewSchools Venture Fund

Opus Foundation

Podlich Family

Sandi Jackson

Seema and Pawan Seth

Spencer Foundation

UCI Office of Inclusive Excellence

OCEAN is proud to work alongside the teachers, administrators, students and families of the following school districts and nonprofits:

Anaheim Union High School District

Breakthrough San Juan Capistrano

Capistrano Unified School District

Compton Unified School District

High School Inc.

Newport-Mesa Unified School District

Orange County Department of Education

Orange Unified School District

Santa Ana Unified School District

For more information on ways to support OCEAN, please contact Jennifer Stameson, Executive Director of Development, UCI School of Education: jastames@uci.edu