

## CENTRAL VALLEY FOUNDATION

### Lessons Learned – Data Dialogues Network

#### Data Dialogues Network

Through our work with small, rural school districts that serve large numbers of English Learners (ELs), we learned of the deep and widely-expressed need for accessible, quality data specific to EL students. As expressed by one district administrator, “An example of a data need was (to identify) why we had a high percentage of Long-Term English Learners (LTELs) who were designated ‘special education’ with a primary disability of speech. Was it really a speech issue or a *language* issue?”

To provide our district partners with better tools to support their EL students’ learning needs, CVF launched the Data Dialogues Network (DDN) in 2013 in partnership with the Center for Education Policy and Analysis (CEPA) at Stanford University, which provides data collection and analyses. Co-coordinators of the DDN are Dr. Kenji Hakuta, Emeritus Professor, Stanford Graduate School of Education, and Dr. Karen Thompson, Assistant Professor of Education, Oregon State University.

Through the DDN, CVF’s district partners receive multiple data reports that are tailored to their specifications, as well as hands-on support in analyzing the data and deploying it to classrooms to improve EL student learning and outcomes. Feedback from the districts indicates they now have “a better basis for making judgements” and are able to spot gaps in their systems, to see trends and to identify what’s needed, as reflected by the comments below.

- *Not only did the network provide data that was never before available – but it has also guided us to look at data in a different way.*
- *In some cases, the data we received was ready to take directly to site principals for action.*
- *We could spot trends for groups of students and pull up additional data on individual students for further analysis.*

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In addition to providing user-friendly data and custom reports, the “dialogues” aspect of DDN has proven to be especially powerful. Each year, CVF brings our district partners together for meetings (two have been held at Stanford), webcasts and district-to-district visits to learn and share findings, ideas and plans. The collaboration which this engenders is best summed up by a district administrator who said, “How refreshing it is to work with colleagues facing the same challenges and seeing their approach to addressing them!”