



ALearn Launches Catalyst to College Program

Designed to prepare high school students from underserved, low-income backgrounds for college admission and success in college

Sponsored through \$500,000 grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Commemorates 10th anniversary of ALearn's founding

JANUARY 19, 2017 – SANTA CLARA, CA – ALearn, a Bay Area non-profit helping students from low-income, underserved backgrounds achieve math proficiency and college readiness, today announced the launch of the Catalyst to College program, an intensive educational case management and mentoring program combining peer-to-peer support, college admissions preparation, and leadership development with a goal of getting students into college fully prepared. Catalyst to College was funded through a \$500,000 grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

The launch of Catalyst to College follows a pilot of the 4-year program at East Side Union High School District's Yerba Buena and Independence high schools, which began in August of 2016. Of the students enrolled in the pilot program, 41% are Latino, 34% Vietnamese, 12% Filipino, 7% Chinese, and 6% are Asian Indian, Cambodian or other Asian. Starting as rising sophomores and continuing through their first college semester, Catalyst to College engages and prepares high school students from low-income, underserved backgrounds for college by creating a college-going culture on their high school campuses and providing them with a peer support system in high school and through college. The program is focused on developing students' attitudes, commitment, and skills, including problem solving and accessing resources. Catalyst to College students have fun preparing for college by visiting college campuses, learning about and accessing educational support resources, engaging in cultural experiences that previously were only available to wealthier students (e.g., San Francisco's Palace of the Legion of Honor), and getting personalized support in writing college essays, and applying for college admission and financial aid.

Kathryn Hanson, PhD, Founder and CEO of ALearn, said, "We are thrilled to launch the Catalyst to College program, which will help advance our mission of attacking the achievement gap of students from low-income, underrepresented backgrounds by providing intensive college readiness support to students at critical points in their high school career and into college. We thank the David and Lucile Packard Foundation for their generous grant to make this program possible, and for their continued support to ALearn since day one. As we reflect on the past ten years since ALearn's founding, we are incredibly proud of all that we have achieved in delivering math proficiency and acceleration programs to Bay Area middle and high school students who need them most, and we look forward to building on that success by growing the organization into the next decade."



Today's grant by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation marks the third time the Packard Foundation has given a grant to ALearn. In 2008, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation made an initial \$30,000 grant, providing essential support to launch ALearn's first programs for 6th-9th grade underserved students.

Ned Barnholt, ALearn Advisor, said, "Education is the single most important thing we can do for our family, community, and our country. In Silicon Valley, there is an ongoing need for people with the right skills for the jobs of tomorrow. We have an opportunity gap – lots of children are being left behind and aren't entering into college at the rate we need. I am pleased that ALearn is addressing this need."

Chris Funk, Superintendent of East Side Union High School District, said, "The Catalyst to College program on the Yerba Buena and Independence High School campuses changes the trajectory of these students' lives by giving them skills, information and experiences that will get them into college and help them be successful there. The program also engages their family, which strengthens our community. The Catalyst to College program deepens our partnership with ALearn since 2009."

Today's announcement also commemorates the 10th anniversary of the organization's founding. Over the past decade, ALearn has served over 9,200 students in 16 school districts. ALearn's students graduate high school at a rate of 33% higher than underserved Students of Color¹, and are college ready² at 3 times the rate of their district peers³. Teachers attend ALearn's innovative Professional Development program, benefiting 5x more students in their school-year classrooms.

About ALearn

ALearn's mission is to deliver high-quality Math and College Readiness programs to low-income, underserved students, to increase their college aspirations and eligibility and to significantly raise their college-going rates. ALearn's programs help close the achievement gap through rigorous programs and through "growth mindset," the belief that success can be achieved through hard work, dedication and resilience. For more information about ALearn, please visit www.alearn.org, or follow us on Facebook, Twitter (@ALearn4KIDS), Instagram (@ALearn4KIDS), and LinkedIn.

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¹ 2014 East Side Union High School District data

² Completed all requirements to be admitted to a University of California or California State University school

³ 2014 East Side Union High School District data



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