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Staff from 11 Los Angeles-area schools trained to help students with ADHD and Adverse Childhood Experiences succeed with executive-style coaching

Los Angeles (Sept. 23, 2019): Staff from 11 schools around Westchester, Playa del Rey, Playa Vista, Marina del Rey and the surrounding communities, on Sept. 19-20 received training to help students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) succeed in school.

The staff was trained as [Edge Foundation](#) coaches, funded by the LAX Coastal Education Foundation, which financially supports programs to benefit students. The 11 schools included elementary and secondary schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District, charter and parochial schools. Teachers, counselors, administrators and support staff were trained to provide specialized one-on-one coaching to students with executive function challenges, such as the ability to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and successfully juggling multiple tasks. These challenges are often experienced because of ACEs or trauma, ADHD, and/or non-traditional learning styles. It is the first time schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District will use this program, which has succeeded with students elsewhere in the country for more than 15 years.

“Imagine a world where students feel seen, supported and are engaged to find their own answers, come up with their own solutions and improve in the areas of self-regulation, goal planning and organizing,” said Edwin Vega, an Edge Foundation coach and trainer who taught school staff in the Los Angeles area. “Now imagine in that same world, that the teachers and staff in school met each child with the skills of listening, non-directive questions and with a commitment to grow the student no matter what their circumstances. This is what and how the Edge In-School training serves staff/educators and their students.”

The schools are using a coaching program designed and administered by the non-profit Edge Foundation, which has proven that providing personalized coaching to at-risk students helps them succeed and meet their potential. The foundation was founded by Neil Peterson, who has led public transportation agencies in Seattle, Oakland and Los Angeles and was founding chief executive of Flexcar, now known as Zipcar. He started the foundation after seeing how executives benefit from coaching. The foundation was established to test whether providing this specific style of coaching could turn around students who are at risk of dropping out of school due to ACEs and executive function challenges that inhibit social and emotional learning.

“In schools throughout the country, teachers and counselors work with a significant number of youth whose poor executive function skills inhibit their social and emotional learning. They’re creative, disorganized, bright, forgetful, likely to be caught up in school disciplinary problems, and worry their parents day and night,” Peterson said. “They have trouble making good decisions and lack the skills needed to succeed in school – the ability to plan, prioritize, initiate, stay on task, focus, follow up, and adjust to change.”

In the school setting, these executive function challenges get in the way of student success. These students:

- Make bad decisions
- Are bright, but underachieve
- Work hard, but forget to turn in their homework
- Try to fit in, but are impulsive and disruptive
- Want to do their best, but don’t possess the right executive function tools
- Are struggling at school, yet know that a diploma is critical to breaking the poverty cycle
- Are chronically absent or are at risk of dropping out of school and unlikely to go to college

ACEs are common with nearly two-thirds of participants in a landmark study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente. More than one in five in the study reported three or more ACEs. The CDC also estimates that 5.2 million children in the United States have formal diagnoses of ADHD, one of the best-known barriers to social and emotional Learning. The National Health Interview Survey estimates that nearly 10 percent of school-aged children have ADHD. These numbers do not include those who are undiagnosed.

The Edge Foundation helps students succeed at school by training school personnel – teachers, para-professionals, security personnel, counselors and administrators - to provide one-on-one, weekly, 20- to 25-minute coaching to individual students.

“Edge coaches help students develop the executive function skills that allow them to make good decisions in school and in life,” Peterson said.

Edge Foundation coaches currently work in more than 30 schools in Washington State, California, New York, Washington, DC, and North Carolina.

Why are these Los Angeles-area schools using Edge Foundation coaching? Because it works. A study by Wayne State University looked at Edge Foundation coaching methods involving students from 10 universities and community colleges. The study was the largest and most comprehensive study of ADHD coaching conducted to date. The research team determined that the Edge coaching model was four times more effective than any other educational intervention in helping students improve executive functioning and related skills as measured by the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory. (LASSI; Weinstein and Palmer, 2002).

About the Edge Foundation: The Edge Foundation aims to give each student a coach so they can complete their education, realize their full potential and pursue their passion. The foundation focuses on teens and adults who are at risk of dropping out of school - non-traditional learners with executive function challenges that can come from ADHD and Adverse Childhood Experiences. Learn more at www.edgefoundation.org.

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