Stranahan Early Learning

The Lastinger Center has developed Early Learning Florida — an innovative, statewide early childhood professional development system that provides high-impact, accessible training to practitioners, directors, coaches, and trainers across Florida. Currently included in this system are the following supports for early childhood professionals: online and blended professional learning courses that incorporate individualized coaching support and Communities of Practice; coaching certification program and ongoing support; Communities of Practice facilitator certification program and ongoing support; and instructor credential program.

The goal is for Early Learning Florida to become the go-to source for all things related to early childhood professional development, serving as a one-stop hub for practitioners, directors, coaches, facilitators, instructors, and trainers. Educators will have access to an array of resources and supports that provide a personalized professional learning experience, including courses; director, coaches, and CoP facilitator courses, resources, and supports; career planning and pathways; teaching resources; workshops and clinics; and social learning networks. The Lastinger Center is obsessively focused on building out and implementing this state-of-the-art professional development system to fully realize the vision of a national professional development model for transforming the early childhood workforce.

To this end, the Lastinger Center is seeking continued support from the Stranahan Foundation to provide much-needed funding to build out one of the final, critical system components: a suite of virtual coaching courses, resources, and supports to develop and enhance the skills of early childhood coaches and educational leaders to effectively support and scaffold teachers’ practice. We know that coaches who provide teacher-centered, strengths-based support through focused, data-driven coaching conversations and the use of data displays have a significant impact on teacher practice, and most important, child outcomes. The Lastinger Center has developed a research-based, highly effective coaching model and has trained and certified more than 350 coaches cross Florida. However, the coaching training program is limited in both the number and location of those desiring to achieve certification, as almost all elements of the training pathway are currently implemented in-person.

With additional funding from the Stranahan Foundation, the Lastinger Center will be able to convert its high-impact trainings and resources into online courses, best-in-class resources and exemplars as well as technological tools that will help thousands of educational leaders build, refine, and support their coaching skills in a way that is convenient, accessible, and affordable for them. Coaches from across the state and nation will have the opportunity to virtually connect into a dynamic network of their peers, providing them with the structure and space to engage in meaningful, self-directed collaboration. They will also have the opportunity to engage in live, virtual coaching with teachers through the platform, eliminating barriers of place and time that currently exist. In addition, the Lastinger Center is developing a pipeline to curate high-quality content to feed directly back to coaches through its Coaches Network, continuously increasing the number of resources available to coaches and trainers in real time. This innovative and culturally responsive model will attract and support a diverse group of educators from across Florida and the country.