



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **SCCOE leader shares innovative school practices in new book**

**SAN JOSE, CA** – Before coming to serve as the Santa Clara County Office of Education’s Assistant Director of Alternative Education, Dr. Nicky Ramos-Beban helped lead a unique educational experiment: a charter school customized to the unique needs of its 200 students from East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park. Her experience as the first principal co-founder of East Palo Alto Academy is the subject of the new book [\*Be the Change: Reinventing School for Student Success\*](#), co-authored by Dr. Ramos-Beban and Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond.

“We wrote it for teachers interested in working at, or creating a school that’s centered around the needs of their students,” Ramos-Beban said. “It takes a whole school working together to lift complex structures like these, to fit your model to the students instead of trying to make students fit your model, we wanted to share the structures we put in place to do that.”

The book details systems and practices piloted at the Stanford University-affiliated East Palo Alto Academy that led to substantial gains in academic achievement and student engagement. They include yearly exhibition projects in core content areas; school-wide habits of mind for successful students, such as personal and social responsibility; an intensive four-year advisory program to build staff relationships with students and parents to monitor and support the academic, social and emotional needs of students; and a consensus-based method of conducting staff meeting and professional development sessions.

“I hope teachers will be excited to build programs like these at their own site,” Ramos-Beban said. “We’re learning that it’s not sufficient to simply ‘teach well.’ Schools need to be built with support structures that wrap around the students.”

Between collecting anecdotes from staff and students, writing the manuscript and editing the text, creating *Be the Change* was a five-year process. It is available in paperback and for Kindle e-readers.

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