

RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH EFFECTIVE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS POLICY & PRACTICE



CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF PRE K-18 PARTNERSHIPS
A Collaboration of:

**City Heights
Education Pilot**

**Kern County Initiative for
Teacher Recruitment**

**North County Professional
Development Federation**

**Shasta
Partnership**

**Educational Partnership
Center, UC Santa Cruz**

**Long Beach Education
Partnership**

**Santa Ana Education
Partnership**

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CALIFORNIA ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE FOR PRE K-18 PARTNERSHIPS

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Walnut Creek School Board

Alliance Principal Investigators & Staff

Kathleen C. Cohn

Associate Vice President, Academic Personnel

California State University, Long Beach

David Dowell

Vice Provost for Enrollment & Director of Strategic Planning

California State University, Long Beach

Simon Kim

Senior Director of Advising & Retention

California State University, Long Beach

Charles Lindahl

Associate Vice Chancellor Emeritus

The California State University

Coleen Maldonado

Coordinator California Alliance of PreK-18 Partnerships

California State University, Long Beach

Judy Seal

Executive Director, Long Beach Education Partnership and Long Beach

Education Foundation

Long Beach Unified School District

www.csulb.edu/projects/california-alliance

California Alliance of PreK-18 Partnerships
California Academic Partnerships Program
401 Golden Shore, 6th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
(562) 951-4780
capp@calstate.edu

Dear Colleagues,

Partnerships between schools and institutions of higher education are an effective way to boost student achievement and to close achievement gaps among groups of students. Partnerships also promote more efficient use of resources around shared institutional goals. These conclusions arose from a two-year study examining the role of school-university partnerships in supporting the achievement of California's students. The California Alliance of Pre K-18 Partnerships study was conducted in collaboration with seven active education partnerships and the Alliance Policy Board, a statewide group of experts.

Results indicated that partnerships contributed to higher test scores, improved reading levels, greater college participation rates, increased numbers of qualified teachers, and other gains. Evidence shows that partnerships helped close achievement gaps among groups of students that differ by socio-economic levels and racial-ethnic backgrounds. Participating partnerships were diverse: urban and rural, young and mature, northern and southern, with varied goals.

We are pleased to provide you with a copy of the final report and policy recommendations. A chief aim of the Alliance project was to develop policy recommendations to encourage new and strengthen existing partnerships. These recommendations have the unanimous endorsement of the Alliance Policy Board, leaders of participating partnerships, and the Advisory Board for the California Academic Partnership Program. Policy recommendations identify "responsible partners" whose leadership and cooperation are essential to implementation of these recommendations.

We know that the success of California school children is an issue of high concern to you. We invite you to read the report and join us in endorsing the recommendations. We also invite you to join us in articulating and implementing the ways that partnerships between schools and institutions of higher education can support our young people to achieve academic success.

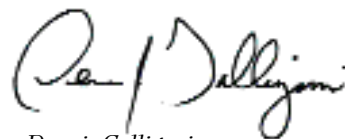
The project Web site (www.csulb.edu/projects/california-alliance) contains extensive additional information, including case studies of each of the seven participating partnerships. If you have further questions, please contact the California Academic Partnerships Program at (562) 951-4780 or capp@calstate.edu

We look forward to working with you to encourage effective partnerships in support of California's young people.

Sincerely,



Karl Pister
Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning
Alliance Policy Board Chair



Dennis Galligani
University of California, Office of the President
Alliance Policy Board Vice Chair

PARTICIPATING PARTNERSHIPS

City Heights
Education Pilot

Kern County Initiative for
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Partnership

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EFFECTIVE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Partnerships between K-12 schools and institutions of higher education are an effective way to boost student achievement and to close achievement gaps for poor and under-represented students. Partnerships also promote more efficient use of resources around shared institutional goals. These are the conclusions of a study examining the role of school-university partnerships in supporting the achievement of California's students.

The California Alliance Project spent two years examining the role of school-university partnerships in supporting the achievement of California's students. This project was carried out in collaboration with seven active education partnerships and a statewide board of experts. The chief aim of the Alliance project was to develop policy recommendations to strengthen education partnerships.

California has many examples of successful partnerships. The Alliance partnerships were selected to reflect the diversity of California's school-university partnerships: urban and rural, northern and southern, narrowly focused and comprehensive, mature and new. Despite their diversity, all were employing eight key principles of successful partnering: shared vision, effective communication, respect for differences, ongoing evaluation, adequate resources, ongoing processes to stay relevant, an appropriate organizational model, and committed leaders.

City Heights (San Diego) increased the number of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile on SAT-9 reading scores from 12 percent to 22 percent over two years. Santa Ana has more than doubled the transfer rate from Santa

Ana College to four-year institutions since 1990. Long Beach increased the percentage of fifth graders reading at grade level from 6.7 percent to 53 percent over three years. Santa Cruz increased underrepresented students' participation at the University of California, with 114 percent more enrollments from six partner high schools and 49 percent more transfers from 13 partner community colleges. North San Diego County increased the Academic Performance Index (API) of participating schools by 79 points, compared to an expected gain of 21 points. Shasta increased the percentage of high school students attending public universities by 49 percent over a four year period. Kern County reduced the number of teachers with emergency permits from 1,058 to 386 over two years.

Although partnerships may be easier to begin in good budget periods, collaborative efforts become even more important in times of scarce resources. Partnerships can be a key strategy to leverage resources, to improve efficiency, to reduce redundancy and to achieve more with less.

A chief aim of the Alliance project was to identify policy recommendations to support partnerships. Each recommendation is aimed at preparing all students for success in college and careers and closing socioeconomic and racial achievement gaps. These recommendations are directed at system and campus leaders of California's public and private higher education institutions, school district boards and superintendents, the California Department of Education, the California State Board of Education, and county boards of education. They will also be of interest to other states and to educators and scholars. Recommendations are organized under five policy goals.

**Recommendations for Policy Goal 1:
Improve Alignment Across
Educational Segments**

1. Assign joint responsibility for ensuring alignment of high school and college expectations to the respective chief executive officers of each school district, each institution of higher education, and each county office of education.
2. Create and maintain broadly representative committees for college and university teacher preparation programs, including faculty from education, arts and science disciplines, representatives from counseling programs, teachers from local public schools and faculty from local community colleges.
3. Include representatives of public schools, community colleges and the local community in policy planning for higher education admissions and placement.



**Recommendations for Policy Goal 2: Increase Incentives and
Resources for School-University Collaboration**

4. Use best practices of school-university collaboration as criteria for funding educational reforms.
5. Support K-12 teachers with opportunities to participate in pre K-18 collaboration.
6. Recognize and reward community college and university faculty and leadership for effective school-university collaboration.
7. Develop collaborative professional development for teachers, counselors and administrators that is aligned with state content standards and higher education competency expectations.

**Recommendations for Policy Goal 3: Encourage Cross-Institutional
Exchange of Faculty, Staff and Students**

8. Encourage involvement of faculty, staff and students across educational segments.
9. Encourage flexible cross-institutional use of human resources by

providing portability of benefits and, when warranted, waiving collective bargaining agreement provisions.

10. Create efficient and portable hiring and training processes for college tutors and other personnel bridging educational segments.

**Recommendations for Policy Goal 4: Effectively Use Student
Achievement Data**

11. Assign to each institution of higher education the responsibility to summarize and communicate to local schools the performance of high school graduates in their first college year.
12. Strengthen the California system for measuring the success of students as they move across educational segments.

**Recommendations for Policy Goal 5: Strengthen Accountability for
Student Attainment of Higher Education**

13. Include expectations for preparing all students for higher education in accountability systems for public schools.
14. Include expectations for collaborating with local schools into accountability systems for higher education.

Selected Achievements of Seven California Partnerships

City Heights (San Diego) increased the percentage of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile on the SAT-9 reading examination from 12 percent in 1998 to 22 percent over two years.

Santa Ana has more than doubled the transfer rate from Santa Ana College since 1990.

Long Beach increased the percentage of fifth graders reading at grade level from 6.7 percent to 53 percent based on district assessments, which are correlated to the California Standards Test over three years.

Santa Cruz increased underrepresented students' participation at the University of California, with 114 percent more enrollments from six partner high schools and 49 percent more transfers from 13 partner community colleges.

North San Diego County increased the Academic Performance Index (API) of participating schools by 79 points, compared to an expected gain of 21 points.

Kern County reduced the number of teachers with emergency permits from 1,058 to 386 over two years.

Shasta increased the percentage of graduates from partner high schools attending public universities by 49 percent over a four-year period.

INTRODUCTION

The California Alliance of Pre K-18 Partnerships spent two years examining the role of school-university partnerships in supporting academic achievement and in closing achievement gaps between racial and socioeconomic groups of California's students. The Alliance study was conducted in collaboration with seven California educational consortia and a statewide board of experts. The chief aim of the project was to develop policy recommendations to strengthen education partnerships. For purposes of this study, education partnerships were defined as sustained, collaborative relationships among elementary schools, secondary schools, districts, colleges, universities, and, in the case of comprehensive partnerships, local and regional community, social, and governmental agencies.

California has many examples of successful partnerships. The Alliance project recruited a diverse group of existing California school-university partnerships: urban and rural, northern and southern, narrowly focused and comprehensive, mature and new. The Policy Board included individuals with tremendous expertise in state education policy and partnerships. Project outcomes were developed in a collaborative, iterative manner among partnerships, staff and board members. The research team visited each site, participants met several times, and e-mail and telephone exchanges occurred. Case studies of each locality were developed. Partnership representatives identified indicators of success that they believed best measured their achievements and quantitative profiles were developed based upon public data. Case studies and current research literature were reviewed to identify evidence of "key principles" of effective partnerships. Recommendations for policy were developed based upon data collected and input from the participants.

For access to the comprehensive Alliance Final Report and case studies of the seven participating partnerships, please visit the project Web site:

www.csulb.edu/projects/california-alliance

SEVEN EFFECTIVE CALIFORNIA PARTNERSHIPS

Following are summary descriptions of the partnerships studied by this project and key lessons learned from each.

Partnerships Focused on Teacher Preparation

Two partnerships focused their efforts on a single issue – teacher preparation and professional development. The approaches of the Kern County Initiative and North San Diego County Federation are described below.



Kern County

What actions can a community take if a large number of teachers hold emergency permits?

Kern County responded to this challenge by launching an initiative designed to reduce the number of emergency permit holders. Education leaders, in partnership with the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning (CFTL), established a K-18 data-driven collaboration to address the critical teacher preparation and recruitment issues facing the region in February 2001. A two-pronged approach focused on the 1,100 teachers in Kern County schools who were not fully credentialed—15 percent of the 7,350 teacher workforce—and on the number of new teachers being prepared and recommended for credentials by the local universities.

A key to the success of the Kern County partnership is the unusual culture of trust among education leaders. The “Group of Six”—the region’s top education officials including the president of the state university, county superintendent of schools, chancellor of the community college district, and superintendents of the larger school districts—has been meeting regularly and guiding cooperative education projects for several decades. For this initiative, these education leaders established an organizational structure that includes an executive committee, steering committee, five working committees, and a blue ribbon committee of educators and community members. They also have devoted considerable personal time and political capital on the initiative.

Initiative members are designing an action plan for the county, developing a supply and demand model for projecting Kern County staffing needs, and

surveying all teachers who leave. They held a colloquium with partners and a 160-member blue ribbon committee of community and education participants. The university enlarged its teacher preparation program. High schools created “teacher academies” to encourage students to choose teaching as a career.

Another strong aspect of this partnership is the extent to which it is driven by data. Early in the project, a research team was established to provide in-depth analysis of the region’s teacher workforce. With specific, clear and measurable goals and hands-on involvement from the chief executives of the partnering institutions, producing the data to determine needs and demonstrate results was a straightforward process.

The partnership is making significant progress toward its goal of having a fully credentialed and effective teacher in every classroom in Kern County. Although this is one of the newest of the seven partnerships, it has already helped to greatly reduce the number of emergency permit holders over a two-year period.

Notable Result:

Kern County dramatically reduced the number of emergency teacher permit holders from 1,058 in 2000 to 386 in 2002.

Lessons:

- ✔ Leadership from the top is important.
- ✔ Effective communication promotes effective collaboration.
- ✔ Data must drive effective reform.

North San Diego County

How can a wide variety of districts collaboratively conduct effective professional development for teachers and administrators?

Twenty-five school districts in North San Diego County area and two in South Riverside County decided to join with the San Diego County Office of Education and California State University, San Marcos to pool resources and use individual and group expertise to maximize professional growth of teachers and administrators.

The North County Professional Development Federation began in 1993 with six districts to provide teachers with access to the best curriculum and instructional practices. Since the inception of the Federation, each partner has been involved in a variety of reform efforts within its district and the Federation. The Federation's goal is to maximize and share resources to improve curriculum and instruction through staff development, using a process of collaborative articulation, assessment, and evaluation. Collectively, participating districts can respond more effectively and efficiently to state initiatives and common needs of teachers across districts.

The Federation is governed by a Steering Committee comprised of a representative of each participating district, a representative of the State University, one from the County Office, and the Director of the Federation. A centralized calendar of professional development activities and in-service training is developed and disseminated each year.

The effectiveness of this collaboration is evident in the fact that almost all eligible districts are members. The Federation is a volunteer membership organization. Each year, member districts decide on continuing participation. When they join, they agree to pay membership fees based on the rate of \$0.90 per average daily attendance. These fees, plus annual contributions from the San Diego County Office of Education and California State University, San Marcos of approximately \$29,900 each, provide the base budget. Membership dues fund the general operating budget, or the infrastructure, as "hard" money. These funds provide a stable source of continuous funding for the Federation. Grants obtained to support specific programs augment this amount. For the 2001-2002 school year, the base budget was \$227,500. In addition, grants brought in approximately \$3 million.

The County Office annually surveys and reports on services provided by the Federation. Data are collected on the number of teachers trained, and services requested compared to services provided are reviewed. Over 75 professional development activities have been sponsored by the Federation during the last 11 years. Satisfaction of member districts is evaluated frequently. The Director meets annually with the superintendent of each member district to receive advice and ascertain the needs of the district. A database contains information on the professional development activities that teachers have utilized. Event and workshop evaluations are collected after each day of training; and outside evaluators review student achievement related to some grants.

The Federation trained 871 teachers in nine districts in the summer of 1999 on Language!—a curriculum that teaches older students to read. In the

schools employing the teachers who participated in this program, there was a gain on the Academic Performance Index (API) of 79 points as contrasted to the expected gain of 21 points.

The Federation has served as a mechanism for 27 districts, the County Office of Education and CSU San Marcos to improve instruction for over 200,000 students. The Federation has been extremely successful in securing state grant money, especially for mandated programs.

Notable Result:

Hundreds of teachers were trained in the Language! program in 1999. Schools that employed the teachers who participated in this collaborative training quadrupled the gain in Academic Performance Index (API) scores (79 points) as contrasted to the expected gain on that index (21 points).

Lessons:

- ✔ An appropriate organizational model includes all relevant parties.
- ✔ Relevance is assured by voluntary membership that is reaffirmed annually.
- ✔ Financial stability is ensured by annual membership fees.
- ✔ Grants are easier to obtain and administer when they serve many districts and there is one focal point.

Partnerships Focused on College Readiness

Two partnerships tackled the challenge of improving preparation of students for university study. The next section examines the Santa Cruz and Shasta partnerships engaged in this complex set of issues.

Santa Cruz

How can schools and colleges work with businesses and communities to increase college preparation and college participation?

In 1995, the Monterey Bay Educational Consortium, composed of the chief executive officers of the public educational institutions in Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties, was formed. The Consortium started out with several different goals but after two years focused on one specific goal: increasing college-going rates in the region. The Consortium laid the groundwork for the UC Santa Cruz Education Partnership Center (EPC) and continues as an important regional policy oversight group. Established in 1998, the EPC coordinates the outreach efforts for University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) and is the first point of contact for schools, community colleges, businesses, and community-based organizations interested in creating partnerships with UCSC. Its mission is to "increase the UC-eligible pool of students from low-income and/or traditionally non-college-going families in collaboration with our school, college, business, and community partners."

Together with its partners, the EPC serves a bridging function by building college-bound communities that improve student learning and increase college-going rates among low-income and traditionally non-college-going students. The EPC provides services to designated schools and community colleges in Monterey, San Benito, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties. It coordinates several summer programs that accept students from throughout the state. In 2000, the EPC provided direct services, including mentoring,



academic counseling, tutoring, leadership training, ACT/SAT preparation, academic enrichment, and math training to over 8,300 students.

The EPC is guided by the Chancellor's Educational Partnership Council and representatives from participating partnerships. It includes the following programs: Partnerships with Schools, the Transfer Partnerships Program, six grant-driven partnerships, Upward Bound, and the Early Academic Outreach Program.

This partnership has shifted from a program-driven model to a regional strategic data-driven model. This shift has resulted in definitions of success and identification of expected outcomes for partnerships, individual schools, categories of students, and individual students and families.

The partnership also has been able to leverage \$10 million in external resources to apply toward its mission. To support this data-driven reform, the EPC has developed an evaluation plan and created a data and planning unit.

Conducting partnership activities under the aegis of the EPC has provided the coordination support necessary to engage faculty in K-14 activities. Special efforts have also been made to ensure that programs and services remain relevant. There are regular meetings of participants in the various partnership endeavors and continuous dialogue among all parties to ensure that initiatives are needed and understood. This partnership is well-organized and subject to constant assessment of all functions.

Notable Results:

Increased the number of underrepresented students from six partner high schools by 114 percent.

Increased the number of students in the Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) eligible for admission to the University of California by 238 percent.

The number of transfers from partner community colleges increased by 16.5 percent overall and 49.3 percent for underrepresented students.

Lessons:

- ✔ A well-developed research function supports ongoing improvement.
- ✔ Open communication assists in keeping initiatives relevant.
- ✔ Sustained leadership involvement is essential.
- ✔ Data must drive effective reform.

Shasta***What actions can be taken to create a college-going culture in a remote, poor county that has low college participation rates?***

Shasta County has the unique challenges of geographic isolation, provincial attitudes, low college-going rates and a depressed economy. Shasta is one of the poorest counties in California. The median annual income is below the state average, and only 8-10 percent of adults have a bachelor's degree. Although a high percentage of area students are well prepared for college, have good test scores, meet A-G requirements and qualify for financial aid, they tend to enroll in the local community college but do not transfer to universities. Limited federally-funded college preparation (Trio) programs in the area have not been able to change that pattern.

In 2000, education leaders from Shasta Union High School District, California State University, Chico, Shasta Community College, and the University of California, Office of the President responded by establishing a partnership and securing one of 12 statewide Academic Improvement and Achievement Act (AIAA) grants. The grant provides \$330,000 per year for four years, which must be matched by that same amount from the partnership institutions.

The focus of the Shasta partnership is to create a college-going culture in Shasta County by collaborating with six partner high schools plus eighth graders and parents in all of the feeder schools. The overarching goal is to increase the number of high school graduates who apply and attend higher education institutions. Indicators of success include: (a) increased percentage of students taking SAT/ACT and improved average test scores; (b) higher percentage of students enrolling in the required courses for California public universities and higher proportion of graduates completing these required courses with grades of "C" or above; (c) increase in the number of students prepared for college (community colleges, CSU, and UC); (d) improvement in STAR test scores; and (e) a higher percentage of students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and a greater number of students earning a score of 3 or better on AP examinations.

The initiatives being pursued to achieve these goals include college test preparation classes, field trips to higher educational institutions, special sophomore counseling, "College: Making It Happen" workshops for eighth graders and their parents, online Advance Placement test preparation and additional Advance Placement courses at all six partner high schools, and a College Awareness Fair and Community Information Campaign.

Continuation of the Academic Improvement and Achievement Act (AIAA) grant requires data and budget reporting to demonstrate progress toward the stipulated success measures.

Notable Result:

Shasta increased the percentage of graduates from partner high schools attending public universities by 49 percent over a three-year partnership period.

Lessons:

- ✔ Committed program leadership is vital.
- ✔ Shared vision and goals are important.

Comprehensive Partnerships

Three of the partnerships were established to address a wide range of educational, social and economic issues in their respective communities. The following section identifies the components of these comprehensive efforts and the response of the partnerships in addressing these challenges.

Long Beach***How can an educational partnership help raise achievement for all students in a very large and diverse urban school district?***

In the early 1990s, Long Beach faced a series of arresting developments. The aerospace industry had downsized from 52,000 to 11,000 employees, the U.S. Navy closed its station and shipyard, student achievement test scores were at an all-time low, and increased gang activity and youth violence were jeopardizing public safety and the city's tourist industry. Prominent among visionary community leaders who stepped forward were the superintendent of Long Beach Unified School District, the superintendent/president of Long Beach City College and the president of California State University, Long Beach. At the urging of a prominent local businessman, they established the Long Beach Education Partnership in 1994 and launched its first initiative, Seamless Education, the same year.

Of the 78,000 students in the Long Beach district in 1994, 72 percent qualified for free and reduced-cost lunches. The racial-ethnic composition of the students was as follows: 45 percent Hispanic, 20 percent Caucasian, 18 percent African American, 12 percent Asian, 3 percent Filipino, 2 percent Pacific Islander and 1 percent other. At the same time that the education partnership was formed, economic development and public safety became the focus of other community leaders. An additional significant development was that the former superintendent/president of the community college became the city's mayor.

This collaborative's overarching mission is to prepare all students for higher education and the world of work without the need for remediation. The goals for

achieving this mission are to improve student achievement at all levels and to increase institutional efficiency through alignment of expectations, curricula, assessment of student progress, resources for students and teachers, and coordination of initiative implementation.

Each of the goals has a timeline and outcomes. For example, an objective is to improve the preparation of high school students for the California State University English Placement Test (EPT) and Entry Level Math (ELM) examination. There are annual targets for each high school. The following data are collected to determine progress: SAT 9 scores, EPT and ELM scores, high school writing examination performance, student portfolios, and the number of university freshmen needing remediation in English and math.

Research officers from all three institutions collaborate to identify success indicators for each goal and collect and analyze data. So far, the greatest success has been shown in evidence of literacy and standardized test gains among elementary children, attainment of numerical progress for middle schools, and increased enrollment of high school students in college preparation courses.

This partnership defines seamless education as alignment of academic content standards, learning methodology, and assessment from pre-school through the master's level; ensuring coherent exit and entry expectations between the educational partners; and, rethinking of both the preparation and continued professional development of public school and college teachers. The partners have reviewed course outlines, academic content standards, student assessment programs and student achievement data. Currently, the seamless approach includes language arts, English language development, history/social science, mathematics, science, special education and foreign languages.

Participants report that they have learned a considerable amount during the partnership's 10-year life. This partnership believes that it is important for all partners to mutually determine projects' outcomes and approaches. Moreover, the partnership feels that its organization represents a striking departure from the more common conceptions of outreach that frequently implies an act of generosity or altruism by universities on behalf of schools. This partnership also feels that it is essential to pay constant attention to the relevance of all activities and renew shared commitment and responsibility at each step of the process. Further, it emphasizes the importance of allowing leadership to focus on the larger goals and leave to staff the resolution of smaller issues. One of the partnership leaders said, "Relationships that are built and the commitments that are made by the individuals involved are what lead to effective strategies. In order for the partnership to work, you have to have a similar set of values or goals about student achievement. Quite simply, it's personal commitment."

Notable Results:

Substantial gains in reading at grade level for fifth graders from 6.7 percent in 1999 to 53 percent in 2002 based on district benchmark assessments, which are correlated to the California Standards Test.

Larger and more ethnically equitable numbers of high school students taking college preparation courses.

Reduced numbers of high school students needing remedial courses.

Increased number of credentialed teachers from the university.

Gains in standardized test results, albeit modest ones, especially at the elementary and middle school levels.

Lessons:

- ✔ Sustained leadership commitment is important.
- ✔ Shared vision of success for all students is important.
- ✔ Respect for differences among the partners is valuable.

City Heights (San Diego)

How can an educational partnership help revitalize an inner-city neighborhood?

The City Heights K-16 Educational Pilot partnership is a key component of the overall City Heights initiative to achieve comprehensive and holistic redevelopment of an entire community.

Located a mile from San Diego State University, City Heights is the most densely populated neighborhood in San Diego. Its 72,000 residents speak 30 languages, crime rates are double the citywide average, median household income is \$24,910 (42 percent below the city's median income), 92 percent of high school students qualify for free and reduced-cost lunches, and about 70 percent of students at the three schools speak English as a second language.

San Diego philanthropist Sol Price believes that reform can be successful only if it is holistic and designed to support families who settle in City Heights and contribute to the neighborhood's growth and development. He donated land to the community development agency and has been personally instrumental in actively leveraging the participation of the city, police department, redevelopment agency, school district, community college district and state university in this highly effective collaborative effort.

Price Charities also provided a six-year \$18 million research and development grant. Other grants and contracts total \$8 million. The university foundation purchased and remodeled a building called the San Diego State University City Heights Community Center, which houses the education pilot and other university services including reading and child psychology clinics, technology labs for parents and community members, classrooms for university courses, ROP facilities, and space for use by the City Heights Initiative. Other building projects include a police station, library, low-cost housing, recreation facilities, and commercial properties including a grocery store and restaurants.

The K-16 Educational Pilot is an integral part of the City Heights holistic approach to urban revitalization, which includes initiatives in safety, housing, community leadership, recreation and education. The primary objectives are to



significantly improve student achievement, prepare educators, other professionals, and parents to effectively serve inner-city environments, and provide solutions to community problems through an active research agenda.

This partnership also seeks to be a laboratory for achieving comprehensive systemic change. The primary partners in the educational partnership are Price Charities, one elementary, one middle, and one high school from the San Diego Unified School District, the San Diego Teachers Association, San Diego State University, and Schools in the Park, a collaborative with the Balboa Park Museums funded by Price Charities.

The participation of the university involves faculty, staff and administrators from many departments and units. The university has assumed responsibility for administering the three partner schools; the Principals report to the partnership's Executive Director, who is a university faculty member. The

partnership is designed to create community schools that not only provide for academic needs but also encompass the health and welfare services needed to ensure successful and healthy students and families. The partnership also focuses on professional development and retention of teachers throughout their careers. Pre-service and in-service programs are aligned and offered on site. Master teachers at the three schools serve as adjunct faculty of the university and supervisors for pre-service field placements for education professionals. Parents are partners in all aspects of the schools and community and provide community service in exchange for reduced rent or other services. University faculty members are involved through teaching, grants and research.

Although it has been in operation only since 1998, impact on student achievement is becoming evident. SAT 9 reading scores have risen at all three schools. The most dramatic increases have been at the elementary level, where the percentage of students scoring at the 50th percent or above on the

SAT-9 reading test rose from 12 percent in 1998 to 22 percent in 2000. The proportion of elementary school students who scored at or above the 50th percentile in mathematics increased from 17 percent to 37.7 percent. At the middle school level, the growth was more modest: 16.9 percent of middle school students were scoring at the 50th percentile or above in 1998; by 2000, that proportion rose to 23.2 percent. On the mathematics test, the proportion of middle school students scoring at the 50th percentile or better rose from 17.9 percent to 25.4 percent. The proportion of high school students scoring at the 50th percentile in reading rose slightly from 9.1 percent to 10.9 percent; the proportion of students scoring at the 50th percentile on mathematics rose from 20.4 percent to 25.9 percent. Moreover, more than 75 teachers in the three schools earned master's degrees, while 175 teachers completed on-site credential programs. Finally, 90 percent of the teachers were retained, a significantly high rate for urban schools.

Notable Results:

The schools managed by the university were among the lowest academically performing before the project began. Data indicate substantial gains in reading and math scores on the state standardized testing program, especially at the elementary and middle school levels.

San Diego almost doubled the percentage of elementary students scoring at or above the 50th percentile on the SAT-9 reading examination (from 12 percent in 1998 to 22 percent in 2000).

Student attendance data in the participating schools have shown dramatic improvements as well.

Lessons:

- ✔ A shared vision of success for all students is important.
- ✔ An appropriate organizational model which involves all relevant parties is useful.
- ✔ Sustained leadership commitment is important.

Santa Ana

How can a collaborative of secondary schools, community colleges and university educators provide all students with the rigorous curriculum and support needed to succeed in school and graduate from college?

Santa Ana has the lowest educational achievement among the nation's large cities; 60 percent of residents age 25 or older do not have a high school diploma. Community characteristics help define the challenges facing the Santa Ana partnership: Seventy-four percent of the city's residents speak Spanish, the highest proportion in the nation among large cities. Eighty-four percent speak a language other than English, the highest proportion in the nation. Santa Ana has the highest household density in California, with an average household size of 4.55 persons. Per capita income of \$11,280 is half the state average; 21.6 percent of residents live below the poverty level.

The Santa Ana partnership is the oldest of the seven collaboratives in the Alliance. This partnership originated in 1983 with the formation of the Student Teacher Educational Partnership (STEP) Council launched by

California State University, Fullerton, Santa Ana College, Santa Ana Unified School District, and University of California, Irvine. In 1991, the partnership assumed its current form when Santa Ana joined the Ford Foundation's Urban Partnership Program and became a broad collaborative with a set of action teams. Each of the teams was designed to focus on a specific aspect of the educational system that was not functioning effectively.

The goal of the collaborative is to provide all Santa Ana students with an academically rigorous curriculum and the support that they need to succeed in school, advance to college and graduate. The partnership action teams have focused on mathematics achievement, English language proficiency, preparation for college (parent leadership and involvement, SAT-test preparation, and college/financial aid application completion) and the transfer process (because of the low rate of local community college students transferring to universities). This set of well-developed initiatives has firmly linked and integrated secondary school, community college and university educators in student-centered academic and co-curricular reform efforts.

The Santa Ana Partnership has an unusually strong intersegmental team of institutional researchers. They meet as a group to define the research agenda that is pursued throughout the year. The primary purpose of the research group is to provide the capacity to have continuous high quality sources of information that assist in determining the effectiveness of current activities and in identifying future initiatives.

The Santa Ana Partnership is demonstrating a significant impact on student achievement. As a result of partnership efforts, the Santa Ana district is one of only four school districts in the state that has the academic requirements for entry to the state's public universities as its high school graduation requirements. The district is the only urban, heavily Latino, high-poverty district among the four districts. College-going rates increased during the past decade, with an average of 60 percent of Santa Ana high school graduates now going to Santa Ana College. The transfer rate of Santa Ana College students has more than doubled since 1990. The number of Latino students transferring to the University of California increased from 44th among the state's 108 community colleges in 1992 to 6th in 2001.

After more than a decade of developing and refining partnership processes, the Santa Ana partnership leaders have learned important lessons, as described in their own words, "The one extraordinary advantage of the Partnership is the deep history of connection and culture of collaboration." Utilizing a different leadership model, there has never been a director of the Partnership, and none of the leaders are funded through the partnership. Each of the partner institutions contributes the time of an executive administrator that is publicly funded to help run the partnership in its respective organization.

Partnerships are perpetually in danger of being viewed as an end in themselves rather than a strategic means to a student achievement-centered end. To avoid this significant problem, the Partnership plans with specific numerical and percentage goals for student participation and achievement as part of their collaborative conceptual framework. They look at a problem,

understand its dimensions by reviewing associated student data, consider as a partnership what academic and co-curricular strategies would impact the baseline and advance from there.

Participants found that while it is critical to deeply engage all segments in the K-16 educational system, it is not sufficient for instigating and sustaining long-term change. As a result, the partnership has endeavored to forge collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with a constellation of nonprofit and community-based organizations throughout the greater Santa Ana area.

Notable Results:

The high 65 percent college-going rate for Santa Ana Unified high school graduates speaks for itself.

Remediation rates have declined for these students, once they arrive at college.

Santa Ana has doubled the transfer rate of Santa Ana Community College to four-year institutions since 1990.

Lessons:

- ✔ A history of connection contributes to a culture of collaboration.
- ✔ A sustained leadership commitment is important.
- ✔ A shared vision of success for all students is important.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Prior research has identified elements that appear to be essential to effective partnering. The seven partnerships participating in the California Alliance research study provide further evidence and help refine our understanding of why these elements are essential. Despite the diversity among Alliance partnerships, all have incorporated these essential elements into the operations of their respective partnerships.

Shared Vision and Goals

Partnership visions respond to and resonate with local needs. Philanthropist Sol Price envisioned revitalization of the poorest and most diverse section of San Diego. His personal wealth and influence made it possible for him to initiate the vision and attract partners. But, when asked what Mr. Price's most important contribution to the partnership had been, the answer offered by the president of San Diego State University was not money or influence, but vision—the vision that a university could actually lead educational reform on a major scale—not just debate and study it.

With an ailing economy in 1994, Long Beach businessman and community leader George Murchison launched a community revitalization effort. As one element of the strategy, the city's top education leaders came together to discuss what could be done to improve education. The vision that emerged from that encounter energized the resulting partnership to aim to create a “world-class seamless education system, kinder-

garten through master's level, where all students are prepared for higher education and the world of work without the need for remediation.”

In Santa Ana, a high-poverty district educating a heavily Latino student population with 84 percent English language learners, educators envisioned high academic achievement supported by a strong partnership between schools, university, community and parents.

In Shasta, an area of rural schools that send relatively few students of any economic and cultural backgrounds to college, a vision of improved college participation energized the partnership. In Santa Cruz, educators forged a vision of improved attendance at the University of California system for low income and traditionally non-college going students. In Bakersfield, a rural area with relatively few qualified teachers, education leaders envisioned a credentialed teacher in every classroom. In North San Diego County, educators forged a vision of collaborative professional development.

What role has “standards-based reform,” for a decade the dominant reform movement in U.S. education, played in the visions of these partnerships? Long Beach created its own district standards before the state launched a standards movement, and standards have provided an organizing framework for the work of that partnership. The North San Diego County Federation enables a large number of diverse districts to deliver professional development to help teachers be able to teach to state standards. In other locales, standards play a less central role. In Bakersfield, standards help to define a “qualified” teacher. In Santa Cruz, San Diego and Santa Ana, standard-based reform serves as one of several ways to set goals for students and teachers. In some quarters, there is even skepticism about standard-based reform as a “reform de jour,” that is, rigid and not child-centered. Thus among locales in the Alliance, standard-based reform and partnerships appear to be distinct approaches to educational reform that some times, but not always, reinforce one another.

The visions of Alliance partnerships can be divided into three kinds: (a) community revitalization visions that include educational improvement; (b) systemic educational visions that aim to reform entire educational systems; and (c) focused visions that aim to strengthen a specific aspect of a local educational system. Local needs provided the catalyst for each partnership's vision, not specific funding opportunities or national educational movements. In each case, the partnership vision was the creation of local leaders who came together in a collaborative spirit, identified key local needs, forged a consensus to work on the needs, and nurtured the vision over time by regular interactions. The importance of leadership in forging a shared vision is clearly illustrated by these partnership case studies.

Effective Communication

Good communication is important to the growth and development of any relationship or partnership. It keeps the members focused on the established mission and goals and responsive to the needs of each of the partners. Partners must not only develop strong communication skills, but they must also organize themselves to foster communication, set aside time and resources for communication and ensure that the communication system is



clear and accessible to the members. All seven partnerships rely on both formal and informal communication patterns. These patterns are reflective of the organizational and governance structures established within each partnership as well as the leadership style of its key members.

All seven of the partnerships rely on regular meetings of large steering committees as a key means of communication. Shasta and Santa Ana have large boards that meet semi-annually, while their key leaders and/or executive leaders meet more frequently, at least monthly. Long Beach, Kern, San Diego North County, and Santa Cruz rely on monthly meetings of their key committees. The three larger and more comprehensive partnerships, Long Beach, San Diego City Heights and Santa Ana, have multiple levels of committees and boards that meet, oversee and develop projects and plans, and examine results. This is also true of Kern and Shasta in that each has working committees or site coor-

dinators that meet for similar reasons. All of these bodies utilize minutes of the meetings and tools such as annual reports to communicate progress.

The executive leaders of the partnerships fill a critical role in the communication system for their partnerships. The executive leaders in Santa Ana meet not only every four to six weeks, but they are also in constant contact concerning their current projects. The three Long Beach CEOs (school district, university, and city college) meet regularly and frequently talk informally. The same is true of the Kern County executive leaders, as well as the San Diego North County university, county office and district leaders.

Four of the partnerships have paid staff members whose duties include key responsibility for leading and guiding communication defined within their duties. Long Beach, Kern, San Diego North County and Santa Cruz all have at

least one such individual. City Heights, Shasta and Santa Ana rely on employees within the partnering institutions who have partnership activities within their job description to fulfill this communication leadership role. Long Beach relies on this model in addition to the partnership director.

Formal communication to the public is also important for the partnerships. Shasta has a frequent newsletter to share information with parents and other constituents within their region. City Heights, Santa Cruz and Long Beach have produced videos and other publications to tell the stories of their successes. Santa Ana has actually developed data sharing and transmission protocols to communicate among its partners and with the community. This fosters quick access and dissemination of information. All the partnerships make presentations concerning their work at public events and professional conferences.

All the partnerships have expressed the importance of the constant informal communication that permeates the daily work of their members. Consulting, collaborating and communicating across institutions have become a way of doing business, essentially a “best-practices” approach.

Respect for Differences

One of the most frequently cited barriers to partnering across education segments is the vast difference between the organizational cultures for K-12, community college and the university. Not only are these differences confusing within the education system, but they also contribute to the public’s and business communities, lack of understanding or appreciation of the challenges faced by educators.

Shasta recognized this as it planned its partnership’s proposal for funding. The partners conducted a community cultural analysis via interviews, focus groups and surveys within the partnering organizations, and with parents and the business community. Their findings led to a better understanding of their differences and a better foundation for the development of their partnership, which covers a large geographic region.

The University of California, Santa Cruz Education Partnership Center (EPC) grew out of an existing partnership. But the EPC has relied heavily on centralized strategic planning to ensure that the needs of the different partners that are spread over a large service region are met. The result is a center that is tightly integrated and well-positioned to provide regional oversight to improve college readiness and attendance for low-income and traditionally non-college attending students.

City Heights, which recognized the seriousness of the differences between the university and the school district and teacher union leadership as a whole, decided to launch a pilot partnership that was comprehensive in terms of community development but was limited in size to a very small geographic area of the service region. The City Heights partners’ holistic approach to urban revitalization is built on a concept of appreciation and understanding of differences.

The three educational institutions in Long Beach had existed in relative isolation of one another for more than 40 years before business leaders declared

this relationship as bad business and unacceptable to the city’s business and civic leaders. A “no holds barred” summit led to initial finger pointing by the three institutions, but the ultimate outcome was the formation of what has come to be a very effective, vibrant regional partnership.

Santa Ana has focused on what its educational institutions have in common to breach their differences: a homogeneous, Latino community with initially low college readiness and attendance rates. The Partnership Board includes parents and business partners as well as education partners to ensure that the differences will not detract the partners from focusing on their goals. They also rotate the role of fiscal agent among the partners to balance the load, to share the responsibility and to spread discretionary decision making among the partners, thereby ensuring the differing perspectives of the institutions are allowed to emerge.

Kern County and San Diego North County partnerships have focused on their common needs, rather than their differences: the need for more qualified teachers (Kern) and well-prepared and developed teachers (North County). The strong commitment and leadership of executives from the different levels of the educational institutions within these two regions resulted in the formation of large working and steering committees to ensure that the differing needs of the participating districts are met.

Adequate Resources

The seven partnerships can be divided into two funding types: those that are generally self-supporting with augmentation from foundations and grants; and those that are dependent on grant funding for their basic operations.

The newest partnership, Shasta, was funded through a four-year Academic Improvement and Achievement Act (AIAA) grant, which was successfully developed with the support of a planning grant. The annual award is \$330,000, with a mandated 100 percent match by the partner institutions, a requirement that the funding agency hopes will foster institutionalization of the programs after the funding ends. The partnership has garnered several other related grants but is concerned about how to sustain the partnership and its activities at the same level once the funds end. The grant coordinator is an employee of the Shasta Union High School District to provide continuity, but given the California budget crisis, the partnership realizes challenges lie ahead.

The City Heights community revitalization partnership enjoys a rich funding stream via Price Charities, which has provided \$18 million for research and development over six years. This joint venture has attracted many other sources of funding and in-kind contributions from the university and the school district. This budget is the envy of many educational partnerships. Because of the breadth of the scope of reform (housing, healthcare, economic stimulation, business development), federal and state funds have also been acquired. As a pilot project for the education component, the university has taken over operation of the three schools, provides the chief academic leader for the schools and a community education center building in which psychological services, and teacher and parent education are available.

Kern County's current focus on increasing the availability of qualified teachers is funded by the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning (CFTL); with support from the James Irvine and Stuart Foundations. Kern was selected by the CFTL because of its past collaborations, informally referred to as the Group of Six. The group of superintendents, the community college district chancellor and the CSU president have met routinely for two decades around emerging common needs. The emeriti chancellor of the Kern County Community College District is the project coordinator, and the university and school districts provide in-kind services and support.

Four of the Alliance partnerships have sustained their partnerships primarily through self-support. University of Santa Cruz Education Partnership Center (EPC) is funded by UC Santa Cruz with \$3 million in university funding. It has a full-time director and staff. The Center has garnered significant additional resources through a variety of grants; i.e., National Science Foundation (NSF), Academic Improvement and Achievement Awards (AIAA), California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP), and Gear-Up to support activities that promote the accomplishment of the Center's goals associated with college readiness and access to college for low-income and non-traditional students. In 2001-2002, the total funds from all sources totaled \$7.6 million. With significant reductions in outreach funding within the UC system, the Center is repositioning to apply for more external funding.

The San Diego North County Federation has established a general funding plan. The San Diego County Office of Education serves as the fiscal agent and contributes \$28,888 per year, as does the College of Education at CSU San Marcos. Each school district member contributes \$.90 per pupil. These combined contributions provided \$227,522 to the general fund in 2001-2002. The federation utilizes this vast partnership of 27 school districts, the county office and the university to leverage grant funds to support professional development goals. In 2001-2002, grant funds totaled \$3 million. Costs of the full-time director and a professional development center are covered through the general fund. The university provides office space for the director. Although the partnership welcomes funding grants, it relies on the general fund for all its basic expenditures.

Long Beach and Santa Ana, both comprehensive partnerships, have supported their collaborative work from the partnering institutions. They have also sought and acquired significant external funds. The partnering relationship is attractive to funders who view collaboration as an effective strategy for education reform.

Long Beach has a director who is co-funded by the three educational institutions and is housed and provided clerical support by the school district. All three institutions also contribute the time of key leaders within their organizations, who



lead and oversee partnership activities as a part of their position portfolios. Additional funding has come from the Knight and McConnell Clark Foundations, The National Faculty, NSF, Gear-Up, CAPP, CAPI, Boeing and the California Community College System, to mention a few. This partnership was launched without any external support and continued to operate on self-support during its early years. Now, its work has been institutionalized as key leaders have assumed responsibility for its success through their daily work.

The Santa Ana Education Partnership has adopted the model of identifying a key administrative leader within each institution whose job it is to guide and oversee partnership activities. This stewardship is the contribution of each of the educational organizations. Other funds have flowed into the Santa Ana community from four national and three local foundations, as well as area businesses and state and regional agencies. The partnership institutions have provided dollar-for-dollar matching funds for many of their grants and awards. The UC system has been a major contributor of outreach funds to support the college readiness and access work of the partnership. The community college's vice president for student services is the designated facilitator for the partnership board. Like Long Beach, the Santa Ana partnership is mature and has effectively institutionalized its partnering activities.

Continuous Processes to Stay Relevant

Maintaining relevance within educational partnerships is all about remaining focused on the mission and goals of the partnership. This does not mean things stay the same. Because educational issues are dynamic, partnerships must be ever cognizant of the changing demands and external pressures brought to bear on their members. Analysis of the Alliance participants reveals that their missions have remained steady, while their strategies for accomplishing their goals are adjusted as the needs of their members change.

Several of the partnerships rely on regular surveys of their constituents and even of their business partners and community. Shasta has utilized this technique to better understand the types of workforce training needs that are developing within the region. Businesses were surveyed, and a particular need for degree and certificate programs in medical technology professions emerged, a need that can be met through the community college. Training for high demand jobs now can serve as a powerful attraction for students to attend college. The San Diego North County Federation surveys its own partner districts each year to make sure its professional development and training are relevant to the needs of the partners' teacher force. Often such training must be developed in response to new national, state or local mandates. Kern County, which focuses on recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers, surveys all teachers who resign. This information is used to change policies and practices that may not be perceived as teacher friendly.

All of the partnerships use data to determine if their strategies are effectively supporting the goals of the partnership. City Heights relies on the university community to engage actively in research to provide solutions to contemporary problems in the region. Kern has the services of the Stanford Research Institute to measure the effectiveness and relevance of their work. Santa Ana uses data sharing to establish program and intervention priorities.

Linking to the business community is becoming much more prevalent among educational partnerships. City Heights, Santa Ana, Long Beach and Shasta have found this connection critical to remaining relevant and tuned into the expectations of the private sector. Price Charities, led by Sol Price, the founder of Price Club, is the major funding partner in City Heights, and economic development is a centerpiece for this local partnership. Health care, retail grocers and financial institutions lend their advice as well. The Boeing Company is a steady partner within the Long Beach Education Partnership, not only by providing funding, but also by having employees serve as consultants on planning committees for educational projects. Santa Ana involves businesses as a part of their overall mission to build leadership capacity within this growing and developing Latino community.

Long Beach and Santa Cruz rely on formal strategic planning models as a means to stay relevant. City Heights has created a rolling five-year agreement for its partnership. Each year the parties discuss their level of satisfaction with the partnership, including how well the partnership is meeting their needs. If all partners are satisfied, the agreement is extended another year. If a party decides it wants out, the other partners can plan for the withdrawal of that partner and/or the dissolution or revision of the partnership.

All partners rely heavily on either their steering or advisory committees for feedback on relevance as well as effectiveness. Santa Cruz has three different advisory groups representing different interests. Teacher unions are also influential in communicating their perspective on the relevance of the partnerships. Long Beach includes the president of the teachers' association on its steering committee and as a part of its team when participating in K-16 educational conferences such as the Education Trust Annual Conference or the California K-16 Student Success and Partnership Conference. Such critical friends as the

Education Trust also remind the partnerships of relevant activities and practices. Kern County receives technical support from WestEd as the partnership strives to keep its teacher recruitment activities up to date and effective.

An Appropriate Organizational Model

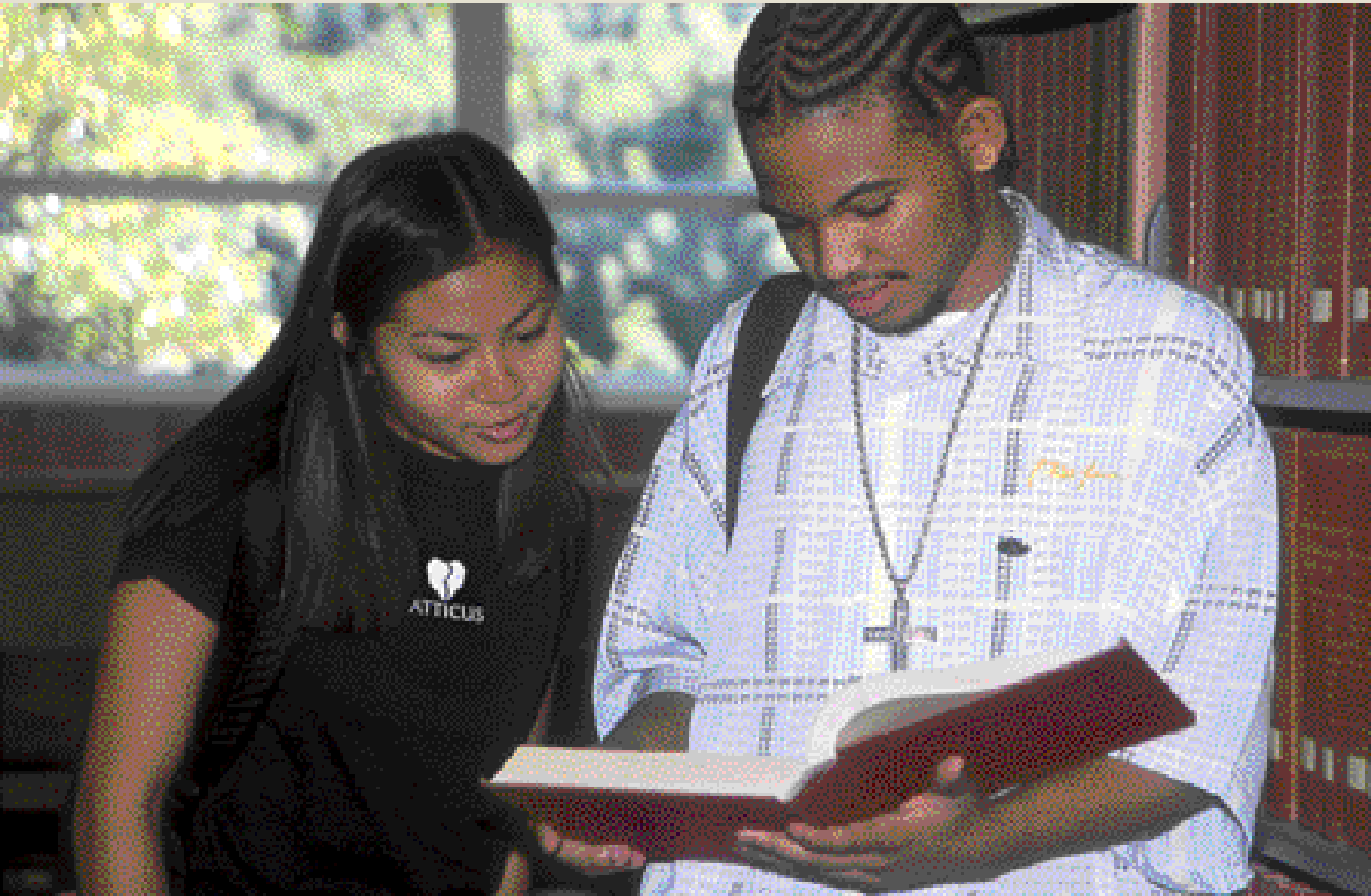
Each of the Alliance partnerships has an organizational structure that includes one or more broadly representative advisory or steering committees and a partnership coordinator or director who is responsible for managing day-to-day activities.

The City Heights advisory board consists of representatives of the funding foundation, schools and the school district, the university, parents and the teacher's union. An executive director manages the day-to-day activities. The Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center (EPC), with a full-time director and staff, is under the aegis of the Student Services Division of the University of California, Santa Cruz and is advised by three councils. One council consists of superintendents and community college presidents; a second consists of community college representatives; and a third consists of UC administrators and faculty. In Long Beach, the main leadership of the partnership comes from a "Seamless Education" committee composed of teachers, faculty and administrators from the three institutions, and co-chaired by deans from the university and community college and an assistant district superintendent. A full-time partnership coordinator reports to a school district administrator.

In Kern County, the "Group of Six" consists of the presidents of the university and community college, the county superintendent of schools and the superintendents of the three largest school districts. This body meets regularly and actively manages the work of the partnership. The project coordinator, a retired community college district chancellor, handles day-to-day operations. In Santa Ana, a partnership board includes the senior administrators from the university, community college, and school district, and meets semi-annually. A "Leadership Team" consists of representatives of more than 20 partner organizations, including students, faculty, parents and community and evaluation representatives. A vice president of student services at Santa Ana College facilitates the partnership.

The North County Federation steering committee, which meets monthly, is composed of a representative of each school district, the assistant dean from the college of education at the university, a representative of the county office of education, and the partnership director. A partnership director handles day-to-day activities. Shasta has a one-third-time project coordinator, who reports to the school district assistant superintendent, and each participating high school has a site coordinator.

Thus, all of the Alliance partnerships have created two key organizational structures. First, each has an advisory or steering committee that is representative of the institutions affected by partnership work. Santa Ana has the most broadly representative advisory board, which includes many community organizations. The breadth of membership in the advisory boards appears to depend upon the scope of the partnership activities, as might be expected. Most partnerships bring all parties together in one advisory group, but Santa Cruz maintains three different advisory groups. Second, each partnership has



a specific staff position, with dedicated time, to ensure that partnership activities are coordinated. This position may be full-time as in Long Beach, Santa Cruz and San Diego, or fractional, as in Shasta, but in each case is specifically dedicated to organizing the partnership activities.

Committed Responsible Members

The Alliance partnerships are in every case led by individuals with a great deal of commitment. That commitment is linked to the inspirational visions of the partnerships, which focus on educational success and educational equity for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, economic background or other characteristics.

The City Heights project in San Diego is led by individuals who are passionate about revitalizing an area that had been the poorest and lowest academically performing in the city. The leaders of the Santa Ana partnership are passionate about academic achievement for students in their largely Latino city. One particularly impressive aspect of the Kern County partnership is the committed, hands-on leadership from the chief executives of the participating university, community college and school districts. Because of the steady commitment of a core of local leaders, the Long Beach partner-

ship has weathered several changes of top leadership from each of the participating educational institutions and some changes in other key positions.

All of the partnerships have commitments from the very top of the participating institutions. University and community college presidents and school district superintendents and principals are active leaders in most of these partnerships. Deans, associate and assistant deans, assistant superintendents and vice principals are active workers in all of these partnerships. The Alliance partnerships are not small projects in the educational communities where they exist but are central initiatives not only endorsed by, but also actively promoted and supported by, top leadership. In some cases, chief executives are hands-on leaders of partnership activities, as in Kern County.

Continuous Evaluation

How do partnerships use data and what is the bottom line for partnerships in terms of student academic achievement? All of the partnerships that participated in the Alliance use data to measure results and improve effectiveness. All are able to provide evidence of improvement in student academic outcomes, which could reasonably be linked with partnership activities. These outcomes are measured in terms of reading and math scores, API indices, college preparation and college attendance.

In Santa Cruz, “data-driven reform” is a mantra. With a professional evaluator on staff and participation from faculty who have chosen to make the partnership a focus of their own scholarship, Santa Cruz brings strong research resources to bear. The focus of the partnership, college participation, is clearly defined and straightforward to measure. Key project objectives have focused on identifying high school students who are close to but slightly off-track for college and providing these students with the extra counseling and support to become college-eligible. These activities have resulted in improved rates of college preparation and college participation from the partner high schools.

Long Beach is broadly focused, with many projects ranging from kindergarten to college preparation to teacher training. This structure provided an unusual challenge to define and measure success. The Long Beach school district is fortunate to have a first-rate research department, providing an unusual level of analytic expertise. Chief information officers at the three institutions have collaborated to study inter-segmental issues. In addition, data are always gathered on specific major initiatives.

In Kern County, the focus on increasing the number of fully credentialed teachers provided a straightforward strategy for measuring success. Data were collected during 2001-2002 to assess the needs of the not-fully-credentialed teachers in obtaining full credentials, as well as to describe the characteristics of schools that are hard-to-staff and those that had fewer than 20 percent not-fully-credentialed teachers. Central to this was development of an instrument to survey all Kern County teachers teaching with an emergency permit, intern credential, pre-intern certificate, or waiver. As a result of their collective efforts there was a dramatic drop in the number of emergency permit teachers and a drop in the number of schools considered hard to staff over a two-year period.

As a mature and complex partnership with a broad vision, Santa Ana has multifaceted evaluation activities and results. The partnership has a remarkable track record of establishing academic and support programs, and the evidence in terms of outcomes is also impressive. With a focus on professional development, the North County Federation tracks the amount of training provided and surveys participating districts regarding satisfaction with training experiences. The North County Federation provides an exemplary instance of a partnership focused on improving infrastructure, which nevertheless makes the effort to demonstrate the impacts on student academic outcomes—the bottom line for education.

In City Heights (San Diego) many of the collaborative’s numerous programs are evaluated for effectiveness. An evaluation report was generated in February 2003, indicating annual data, grants received, hours committed to projects and numbers of students served. The City Heights Education Pilot looks at both academic and non-academic measures to determine levels of involvement and satisfaction. Non-academic measures include enhanced teacher training, improved teacher retention rates, increased professional development opportunities provided, greater community involvement in the partner schools and the number of university publications and research.

Shasta focused on measuring the numbers of students taking college preparatory and advanced placement courses, college applications, college going rates

and standardized test results. These data elements were gathered and analyzed as part of reporting for external funding.

All of the partnerships paid attention to data, but only one locale had an evaluator dedicated to the partnership work: Santa Cruz. Others routinely conduct evaluations in conjunction with specific projects and often in conformity to grant reporting requirements. The Santa Cruz arrangement may provide two significant advantages. The evaluator at Santa Cruz is involved in the vision and practice of the whole partnership, not just its specific projects. This creates the possibility of gathering data regarding the impacts of the partnership in the broadest sense—a difficult but desirable addition to evaluating the specific projects of the partnership. Second, evaluation often gets lost in the shuffle of managing education and reform on a day-to-day basis. Long Beach made an effort to engage in a sophisticated, holistic evaluation of its partnership. While successful at the time, it proved difficult to sustain that focus with the press of other activities. The Santa Cruz arrangement keeps evaluation and data on the agenda day-by-day in a way that is difficult for other partnerships.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE ALLIANCE PARTNERSHIPS?

The Alliance collaboratives provide compelling evidence of effectiveness in support of student achievement. Each of these partnerships had set specific goals for their efforts and invested their energies in different activities. We should expect to see different patterns of results across these sites and, in fact, we do. The clearest indicators of success are found in measures that are most closely related to the activities of the partnership, and these indicators are sometimes, but not always, the “standard” measures such as the state testing program and Academic Performance Indicator. Also as would be expected, the partnerships that have taken on a wide range of activities have clear results in some areas and absent or unclear results in other areas.

Despite this variability, each partnership has generated quantitative evidence that clearly demonstrates progress over time toward respective goals related to student academic success. Of course, the nature of partnerships excludes the possibility of laboratory-style research controls, and causal relationships must be suggested with caution.

However, the finding that all seven partnerships could clearly demonstrate progress toward respective academic goals is an impressive result. It is reasonable to interpret this pattern of findings as indicating that partnerships successfully support student achievement and help close achievement gaps. Thus, the bottom line for these partnerships shows impressive evidence of gains in student academic outcomes.

Case studies indicate that the following common elements of successful schools can be addressed effectively using a partnership strategy:

- ✔ A rigorous and cohesive curriculum,
- ✔ High expectations for all students,
- ✔ Student support services, and
- ✔ A collaborative school culture.

The essential elements of partnering appear to be just that—essential. All of the Alliance partnerships were employing them in one way or another. The supportive and collegial environment that partnerships foster and the resources that they bring together often make the difference in the successful implementation of school improvement efforts.

Partnerships help to enlarge the awareness of educators about where students come from and where they go. This awareness enables and empowers educators to tackle inter-segmental challenges that no single institution would address or could address as effectively. Often these are challenges that are viewed as so intractable that no one organization is inclined to tackle them alone. The 27 districts comprising the North County Federation have offered a much richer array of professional development opportunities than any district alone could have presented. Kern County was able to marshal the combined resources of the entire region to grapple with the high percentage of their teachers holding emergency permits. Without some cooperation, no one was willing to take on the college readiness problem in Shasta County, alone.

Partnerships provide the infrastructure, strategies and processes for lifting initiatives originating in one segment to a more ambitious and potentially effective level. Partnerships create additional ways to channel and direct efforts toward a common goal. They can introduce focus and provide reinforcement to large organizations that are subject to appeals from many different constituencies. At their best, partnerships can become embedded in the culture of the participating organizations and serve as powerful stimulants for comprehensive change throughout communities and regions. The Long Beach and Santa Ana partnerships demonstrate the effects that educational partnerships can have on the surrounding community. Although still in its infancy, the City Heights Education Pilot shows enormous potential for leavening the entire neighborhood in which it is located.

The bottom line for these partnerships shows impressive evidence of gains in student academic outcomes.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Evidence from the Alliance project indicates that educational partnerships are valuable strategies for helping to prepare all students for success in college and careers, and closing achievement gaps between racial and socioeconomic groups.

The Alliance project developed recommendations for policy aimed at facilitating the creation of partnerships and strengthening their collaboration in support of student achievement.

These recommendations are intended for Regents of the University of California, Trustees of the California State University and California Community Colleges, the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, the California Department of Education, the California Education Roundtable, the California State Board of Education, college and university presidents, school district superintendents, local school district boards, local community college boards, boards for county offices of educa-

tion, and others. These recommendations may also be of interest to other states and to educators and scholars.

A number of the recommendations here are echoed in those of the recent task force on revision of the California Master Plan for Education. The Master Plan recommendations call for better connections between, and among, education entities, including recommendations for common assessment instruments, alignment of curriculum, articulation agreements, shared responsibility for preparing teachers, collaborative professional development, resources to fund collaborations, flexibility within collective bargaining agreements, inter-segmental coordinating committees, and a common database for tracking student achievement.

Recommendations are organized under five policy goals having to do with alignment across educational segments, incentives for collaboration, exchanging personnel, use of data and accountability.

Policy Goal 1: Improve Alignment Across Educational Segments

1. Assign joint responsibility for ensuring alignment of K-12 and college expectations to the respective chief executive officers of each school district, each institution of higher education, and each county office of education.

Responsible Partners: University of California (UC) Regents and California State University (CSU) Trustees, California Community College Board of Governors, the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, the California Department of Education, the State Board of Education, the California Education Round Table, local community college boards, and boards for county offices of education and local school districts.

State standards provide a set of common expectations for curriculum and assessment through grade 12. A good model might be the California State University's alignment of the 11th grade California Standards test with the university's English and mathematics entry-level tests. Beginning spring of 2004, high school juniors will know, based on their performance on the standards test, if they have a need for remediation prior to enrolling in a CSU. However, to ensure that the local implementation of standards is articulated with higher education expectations, collaboration at the local level between public schools and colleges and universities is necessary. At present, there is no clear assignment of responsibility for ensuring alignment across segments.

Leadership of public and private systems of education should assign this responsibility to local college and university and school district chief executive officers (CEOs). CEOs in turn should convene and initiate local collaborative processes. Within local collaborative processes, chief academic officers of respective institutions should be responsible for creating and maintaining alignment of secondary course curricula, end-of-course examinations, high school exit examinations, and writing and mathematics skills expected of entering college and university students. Local business leadership should participate in order to facilitate alignment with business needs. Campus academic senates should participate in order to facilitate institution-wide alignment.

2. Create and maintain broadly representative committees for college and university teacher preparation programs, including faculty from education, arts and science disciplines, representatives from counseling programs, teachers from local public schools, and faculty from local community colleges.

Responsible Partners: California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, University of California Regents and California State University Trustees, California Community College Board of Governors, the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, the California Education Round Table, local community college boards.

Effective teacher training must include exposure to the realities of K-12 schools: children who come to school hungry and whose lives are filled with violence, neglect and abuse; students of diverse cultures and limited English backgrounds; schools with ill-equipped classrooms, in buildings with deferred maintenance needs.

Effective teacher training must incorporate knowledge from a broad range of academic disciplines, including arts and sciences. On a typical college or university campus, coordination among these disciplines may be minimal, resulting in a program that does not well serve future teachers.

Community colleges are an important source of a diverse workforce of future teachers. New fast-track programs require that students be enrolled in a proper array of courses from the beginning of their college years. Community colleges need to align the first two years of college education with the four-year university programs. This will benefit students by reducing time to degree and benefit the state of California by increasing the production of qualified teachers.

For these reasons, teacher preparation oversight committees should include membership reflective of K-12 schools, arts and science disciplines, and community colleges.

3. Include representatives of public schools, community colleges and the local community in policy planning for higher education admissions and placement.

Responsible Partners: University of California Regents and California State University Trustees, California Community College Board of Governors, the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, the California Education Round Table, local institutions of higher education.

Admissions and placement policies at the system and campus levels have great impacts upon the educational opportunities of public school graduates. Misalignment between universities and high schools can be traced in large measure to limited communication between the differing segments.

One example is the limited awareness in high schools regarding the nature and importance of the entry-level placement tests administered by the CSU and UC campuses. Misalignment contributes to continuing high rates of remediation in math and English.

Improved communication between segments is an important part of a strategy for improving student success. K-14 participation in university policy planning for admissions and placement will help ensure that university policies are both understood by high schools and informed by a realistic understanding of K-12 student experiences.

Policy Goal 2: Increase Incentives and Resources for School-University Collaboration

4. Use best practices of school-university collaboration as criteria for funding educational reforms.

Responsible Partners: Private, federal and state funding providers.

Educational reforms are too often undertaken by one segment in isolation from others. Since students must necessarily either come from or go to another educational segment, collaboration across educational segments should be an expected part of most educational reforms. Funders should expect that collaboration across educational segments is included in most successful proposals for educational reform.

Key principles of successful school-university collaboration identified in this document are based on current and prior research. In requesting proposals, funders should make reference to these principles. In reviewing proposals, funders should expect that applicants incorporate these principles. Funders should also support dissemination of excellent models of collaboration.

5. Support K-12 teachers with opportunities to participate in K-16 collaboration.

Responsible Partners: Local school boards and superintendents, the California State Board of Education.

Teachers face intense demands upon their time. In order to make collaboration with higher education realistic and productive, districts must adjust teacher responsibilities, hire qualified substitutes, pay travel expenses, and otherwise support and recognize participation of school staff in collaborative activities.

6. Recognize and reward community college and university faculty and administrators for effective school-university collaboration.

Responsible Partners: University of California Regents and California State University and their respective academic senates, California Community College Board of Governors, the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, the California Department of Education, the California Education Round Table, local community college boards, local school districts.

University faculty on a tenure track have strong incentives to allocate their time and energy in ways that will earn them retention, tenure and promotion. To the extent that collaboration with schools is recognized and rewarded in university settings, faculty will be encouraged to participate. A broad array of disciplines, including arts and sciences, should recognize and reward K-14 collaboration, not just education disciplines. Graduate students in preparation to

become university and college faculty should be involved in collaboration with K-12 schools in order to develop expectations that collaboration is a routine part of a university career.

University and college administrative leadership is also key. Without support of university and college administrators, K-16 collaboration is unlikely to be sustained or effective. Administrators all the way to the top of the institution should be recognized and rewarded for collaboration, not just the outreach staff and education faculty.

7. Develop collaborative professional development for teachers, counselors and administrators that is aligned with state content standards and higher education competency expectations.

Responsible Partners: Local and county school boards and superintendents, local institutions of higher education, California State Board of Education.

Districts have significant ongoing needs for professional development for teachers, counselors and administrators. Universities have significant resources and needs in these areas. Yet, rarely is there a strong collaborative relationship between local districts and universities focused on ongoing professional development. Each local district and higher educational institutions should designate personnel responsible for establishing, coordinating and maintaining collaborative local professional development programs.

Policy Goal 3: Encourage Cross-Institutional Exchange of Faculty, Staff and Students

8. Involve faculty, staff and students across educational segments.

Responsible Partners: Local institutions of higher education, local school boards and superintendents.

Partnerships are forged out of shared experiences. Educational partners should look for ways to involve faculty, staff and students in their partner organizations: college faculty teaching in high schools; high school faculty teaching at the college level; college tutors in elementary and high schools; high school students taking courses on college campuses; and administrators working side by side. These experiences are valuable to the participants, and the relationships that are created form the backbone of partnerships.

9. Encourage flexible cross-institutional use of human resources by providing portability of benefits and, when warranted, waiving collective bargaining agreement provisions.

Responsible Partners: Collective bargaining organizations, education employers and academic senates.

The California Education Code (Title 5) already contains language that encourages exchange of personnel across educational segments. However, a major barrier to collaboration is the lack of portability of benefits among retirement systems for educators who might be loaned across segments for one or more years. Teacher and faculty union representatives and retirement authorities, such as the State Teachers Retirement System and the Public Employees Retirement System, should negotiate fair and equitable

ways to make such portability easy to achieve. This will facilitate the loaning of personnel across segments and encourage sustained collaboration.

Collective bargaining agreements may contain language about working conditions, workdays or hours which presents barriers to cross-institutional sharing of human resources. Certainly, K-18 collaboration should in no way erode collective bargaining rights. However, sometimes all parties to a proposed collaboration are willing, but collective bargaining language presents an obstacle. When this occurs, districts and unions should negotiate appropriate revised language or waivers that make collaboration possible, while protecting rights of all parties.

10. Create efficient and portable hiring and training processes for college tutors and other personnel bridging educational segments.

Responsible Partners: Local school boards and superintendents, California State Board of Education, California Department of Education.



School districts are held to a high standard to provide safe and healthy learning environments for their students. Laws closely regulate the screening and selection of employees who will work with children and these laws often extend to volunteers, college aides, student teachers, and other individuals who are also college or university students. At the state level, the California Department of Education should work toward a program to certify college student tutors to work in any school district. Within local regions, school districts should work with universities, and coordinate with one another to simplify and streamline the hiring and screening processes, to qualify college students and other personnel to work in the schools.

Policy Goal 4: Effectively Use Student Achievement Data

11. Assign to each institution of higher education the responsibility to summarize and communicate to local schools the performance of high school graduates in their first college year.



Responsible Partners: University of California Regents and California State University Trustees, California Community College Board of Governors, the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, the California Department of Education, the California Education Round Table, local community college boards, local school districts.

Data are already collected that document the success of high school graduates in their first year in California's colleges and universities. However, these data are little used by public schools for improvement because of the complexity of assembling and interpreting the information.

Assigning responsibility to CSU and UC campuses for interpreting and communicating the data to public schools would add an essential personal touch that would make it much more likely that the data would be used. A local team including K-12, community college and university representatives should organize and interpret the data for dissemination in the local public schools. This collaborative approach would greatly improve the awareness and understanding of results such as the CSU Entry Level Mathematics examination, the UC Subject A examination, and performance in first-year academic courses.

12. Strengthen the California system for measuring the success of students as they move across educational segments.

Responsible Partners: Governor, State Legislature, California Department of Education.

A highly effective California educational system will require a highly useful information system that measures progress across educational segments from kindergarten to college. Such a system will be very important to meeting the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Key cross-segmental data, showing the success of students as they move from segment to segment of the educational system, are already collected in many forms: college-going rates; success of students on entry tests in mathematics and English; and success in first-year courses. Key data within K-12 include the percentage completing college preparatory requirements, the success of students in first-year middle school academic courses and first-year high school academic courses. Such data are already collected, but little used, by school sites because of slow turnaround for results and because of the complexity of assembling and interpreting the information.

Creating an effective information system for the state is a major and challenging undertaking. Hallmarks of an effective system would include validated measures aligned with state standards and with higher education expectations, seamless tracking of students from segment to segment and from school to school, quick and convenient availability of data and summary reports, widespread understanding and acceptance of measures by educators across the state, and frequent use of data by school sites and school districts for purposes of program improvement.

When fully implemented, the California Student Information System (CSIS) is intended to provide the ability to track student performance across school districts and into colleges and universities, and provide information that can be used to evaluate program effectiveness. These capabilities would be of high value; although, it is unclear how soon CSIS will be fully implemented. Any statewide information system will require a major investment in infrastructure and training at state and local levels.

Policy Goal 5: Strengthen Accountability for Student Attainment of Higher Education

13. Include expectations for preparing all students for higher education in accountability systems for public schools.

Responsible Partners: The Governor, the California Department of Education, the California Legislature.

California public schools are necessarily very focused upon the systems to which they are accountable, particularly the Academic Performance Index (API), the High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) and the Adequate Yearly Progress Report required by the No Child Left Behind Act. Unfortunately, none of these accountability systems includes any direct indicators of student preparation for higher education. An important barrier to collaboration is that schools often perceive working with universities as a distraction from the imperative to improve their standing on API and CAHSEE indicators.

The API should include indicators such as the percentage of high school students who complete college preparation coursework and the percentage of students who go on to college. California has one of the lowest rates in the nation of high school students going directly to college, and improving that rate should be a key goal for the state. Including such expectations for preparing all students for higher education in the accountability system would also provide a means for monitoring progress.

14. Include expectations for collaborating with local schools into accountability systems for higher education.

Responsible Partners: The University of California Regents, California State University Trustees, California Community College Board of Governors, and the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities.

Accountability systems for higher education should incorporate indicators of the effectiveness of local campuses in working with neighboring elementary and secondary schools. The current CSU accountability system holds local campuses responsible for reducing the number of students admitted who are in need of remediation in mathematics and English. This is a challenging expectation, but it does make clear the responsibility of each campus to be concerned about what is happening in local high schools with respect to student preparation for college. An even better model might be what was intended for the CSU California Academic Partnership Initiative (before it fell victim to budget cuts): Each campus was to have been responsible for improving performance in math and English of students from designated local high schools with whom they were funded to work.

SUMMARY

Seven California partnerships are contributing to significant improvements in student achievement. All are applying key principles of effective partnerships identified by prior research. Policy recommendations identified by the Alliance project will encourage additional localities to develop partnerships and make it easier for those partnerships to become effective.

The bottom line for partnership efforts is the same as the bottom line for all of California education: to prepare all students for success in college and careers and to close achievement gaps between racial and socioeconomic groups. The Alliance project validates that partnerships are an effective strategy for attaining these goals.