

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.