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# Educational Equity and Opportunity Through Regional Collaboration

Highlights From the 6th Annual  
K-16 Partnerships & Student Success Conference



At California State University Long Beach

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K-16 Partnerships & Student Success Conference

June 22-23, 2005  
[www.csulb.edu/projects/partnerships](http://www.csulb.edu/projects/partnerships)

Conference Highlights



## CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH

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**D**ear California Educator:

The annual California K-16 Partnerships and Student Success Conference is always a wonderful opportunity to share ways in which collaboration is making a difference in student achievement – and that was certainly true as we gathered at California State University, Long Beach to hear inspirational speakers and choose from an array of informational sessions. This year was even more exciting, however, because we launched ARCHES – the Alliance for Regional Collaboration to Heighten Educational Success.

This initiative is designed to take regional collaboration to the next level –expanding our partnership strategy throughout the state by both supporting existing collaboratives and encouraging the voluntary formation of new ones where none exist. While ARCHES is a logical outgrowth of all of our efforts, it is also a well-documented strategy that is grounded in research and powered by widespread agreement on the critical need for creating a seamless education system.

Introducing ARCHES at the sixth annual Partnerships conference was a perfect fit. Our theme this year was “Educational Equity and Opportunity through Regional Collaboration” – continuing our focus on the vital need for access, excellence, and equity for all California’s children. In addition to providing a venue for creating ARCHES, the conference offered two other strands of discussion:

- Developing and Sustaining Successful Pre-School through Graduate School Collaboration.
- Partnership Activities that Address Local Priorities.

As always, we are grateful for the support of both our sponsors and organizers (see inside back cover for list). In addition, we appreciate the many educators who took time out from their normal routine to come, share their insights, learn from others, and – hopefully – return to their posts re-invigorated to take on the challenges ahead.

For those who attended, we provide the following materials to capture the highlights of the conference. For those who were unable to join us, we hope the summaries give you insight into the opportunities that we all have to make a difference for California’s students.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda Tiggs-Taylor".

Linda Tiggs-Taylor, Conference Co-Chair  
Conference Co-Chair  
California State University, Long Beach

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Penny Edgert".

Penny Edgert  
Conference Co-Chair  
California Education Round Table  
Intersegmental Coordinating Committee

# Introduction

**Between** California's size and diversity, the challenges for education are huge – but the opportunities are even greater. Each year, the California K-16 Partnerships and Student Success Conference proves both points, again and again, bringing hundreds of educators together to discuss the progress they are making as they collaborate across education sectors to find new ways to improve student achievement.

The theme for the 2005 conference was Educational Equity and Opportunity through Regional Collaboration – a theme that echoes the conference's continuing emphasis on access, excellence and equity. Three strands were woven throughout the concurrent sessions: Developing and Sustaining Successful Pre-School through Graduate School Collaboration; Partnership Activities that Address Local Priorities; and Founding of the Alliance for Regional Collaboration to Heighten Educational Success (ARCHES).

In addition to the concurrent sessions, attendees participated in three plenary sessions:

- Keynote speaker Russlynn Ali, founding director of the Education Trust-West. She provided a call to action for collaboratives to tackle two areas that can make a difference in closing the student achievement gap: what is taught and who teaches it.

- Keynote speaker Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. He emphasized the important role of collaboration in reforming high schools and providing all students with the rigorous curriculum required in today's competitive world of both the workplace and higher education.
- A panel presentation that launched ARCHES, an initiative that is designed to bring the strategy of regional collaboration to every part of the state.

In addition, participants had the opportunity to attend several of the 40 presentations and interactive workshops provided during the concurrent sessions.

The following paper summarizes remarks by the keynote speakers and the panel presentation on ARCHES. In addition, information on how to order two recently published books on collaboration – *Inside High School Reform* and *Success by Design: Creating College-Bound Communities* – is included.



# Presentation by Russlynn Ali

*Russlynn Ali is the founding director of the Education Trust-West. Established in 2001 as the West Coast presence of the national organization, Education Trust-West is committed to closing the achievement and opportunity gaps separating low-income, African-American and Latino students from their peers. Prior to her role at Education Trust-West, Ms. Ali served as a liaison to the President of the Children's Defense Fund;*

*assistant director of policy and research at the Broad Foundation in Los Angeles; chief of staff for the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education; and deputy co-director of the Advancement Project. She has a bachelor's degree in Law and Society from American University and a law degree from Northwestern University.*

## Challenges and Choices: Raising Achievement and Closing Gaps in California

Our challenge is to stop finger-pointing about who or what is responsible and instead collaborate to do what all the research and data point out needs to be done for students of color and students from low-income families throughout the state. That is to raise their achievement level and close the gaps in student learning.

The data is clear. California's NAEP scores are significantly lower than the average scores in the nation, at both the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels. This isn't about demographics. Other large, urban states with diverse populations – Illinois, New York, Texas and Florida – all have better average scores.

In fact, California's Latino 8<sup>th</sup> graders are more than three years behind their Latino peers across the nation in reading. Our state's African American 8<sup>th</sup> graders read more than a year behind their African American counterparts in other states. Even California's white 8<sup>th</sup> graders read at a lower level than students in most other states. The state's Asian 8<sup>th</sup> graders are closer to the U.S. average, but in many states they are still more than three years behind their peers. When student's family backgrounds are controlled for, California's scores are the lowest in the nation.

So it is not our demographics alone that make our work challenging. When we look at our own state assessments, we see that too many of our students are still below basic levels of achievement. Only 24 percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient in math, with another 33 percent attaining the basic level. In English, 33 percent are proficient and 36 percent score at the basic level. The California High School Exit Exam actually tests skills that are taught at the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade level – so we are really

talking about a middle school competency test. Only 75 percent are passing in language arts and 74 percent in math.

Underneath these averages are wide gaps – between poor and non-poor students, and across the races. By race, Latino and African Americans are more than twice as likely to be far below basic on our assessments; there are the same patterns on the high school exam.

In the end, these gaps mean that poor students and students of color are years behind their peers by the time they graduate. By the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, they are about two years behind their peers. By the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, they are reading at the level of 4<sup>th</sup> graders. By the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, they are below the level of white 7<sup>th</sup> graders – and remember that those white 7<sup>th</sup> graders are reading at low levels compared to their peers across the nation. The longer they stay in school, the wider the gap grows.

### Behind from the Beginning

When do these gaps start? We know that students from professional families have larger vocabularies. At the age of 3, almost 800 words separate them from their counterparts in non-professional families; by the age of 5, the gap is 2,000 words. African American and Latino children are less likely to know their alphabet when they enter school. But when socio-economic status is controlled for, African American students have slightly stronger reading skills than white students when they enter kindergarten. This tells us that too often we conflate race and poverty. The vocabulary gap and knowing the alphabet are far more related to socio-economic status than race.

So the gap begins even before school, persists and widens throughout school, and even continues after K-12 – as seen in both high school dropout rates and college completion rates. At

California State University, Long Beach, for example, 38 percent of Latino freshmen and 29 percent of African Americans will graduate within six years – but 49 percent of whites will.

Does it have to be this way? Of course not. Low achievement is not inscribed in anyone's DNA. So what is it about our system that takes children who are a little behind and then widens the gap?

We take students who have less to begin with and then we give them less of everything at every point. Research tells us that two primary things matter the most: what students are taught and who teaches them. And that's where the P-16 alliances can make a difference.

### Schools that Are Succeeding

Let's look at two similar elementary schools in Merced County (see Chart 1). Both have similar demographics, but one clearly improved at a faster rate than the other. Students who started behind their peers were two grades above their peers at the end of a six-year period of time. Or take two high schools (see Chart 2). Many experts say that high school is too late to make a difference but, as the chart indicates, one high school is making progress at a much faster rate than the other.

We used to think that these schools were outliers – successes that could not be duplicated or sustained. But that myth is being debunked as more and more of these schools are succeeding. They are not few in number any more, although obviously they are fewer than we like to see.

In fact, there are whole districts closing the gap – like Culver City and San Gabriel. There are whole states doing so. When they first took the high school exit exam in Massachusetts, their results looked similar to ours, with big gaps separating students. But they used those results as a lever for reform. They aligned instruction, they provided the support the students needed and they got results (see Chart 3).

We need to make high-performing, high-poverty and high-minority schools the norm rather than the exception. Would more money help? Of course it would. But how much it will help depends on how wisely we spend it. And even without more money, there are schools making great gains.

### What P-16 Collaboration Can Do: What's Taught

What P-16 collaboration can do is become a serious vehicle for implementing research-based reform, especially about what we know matters most: what's taught and by whom.

High-performing schools have clear and specific goals for what students should learn in every grade level, and these are aligned to the assessments. P-16 councils can be an important voice for defining goals and aligning professional development and teacher preparation

Chart 1

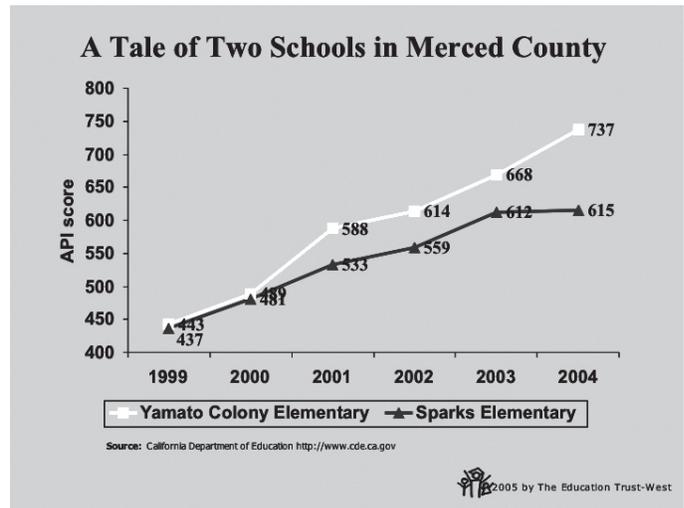


Chart 2

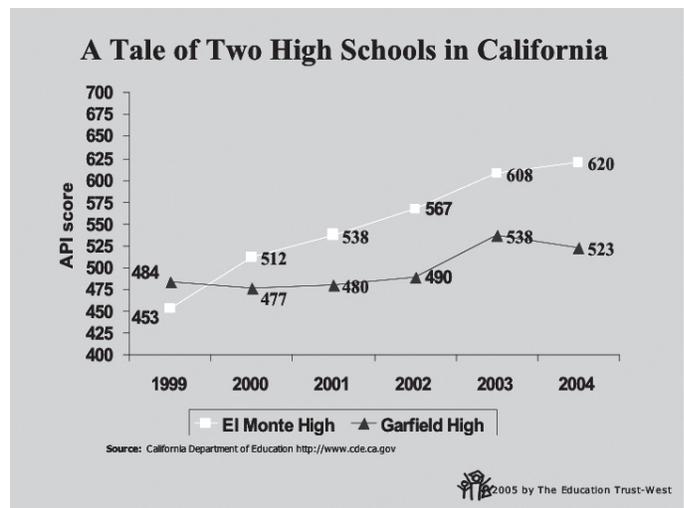
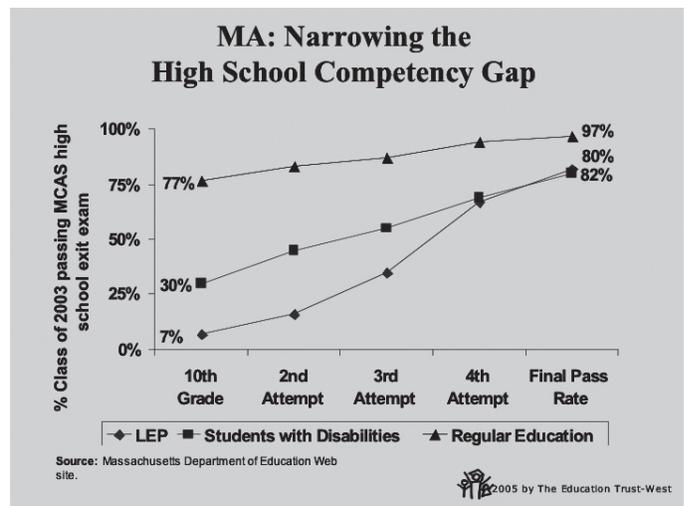


Chart 3



programs to those goals. Why is this needed? Because historically, most of the important decisions about what students learn and what kind of work is “good enough” have been left to individual teachers. As a result, we have a system that doesn’t expect very much from most students, expects much less from some types of students than from others, and leaves a lot to chance.

We can see this when we look at two 7<sup>th</sup> grade writing assignments. One asks the student to write an essay on the general psychological and intellectual changes that Anne Frank goes through over the course of her work. The other gives students the choice of writing about their best friend, a chore they hate, a car they want or their “heartthrob.”

In general, an A in the inner city is worth only a C in the suburbs. Everyone can point to lessons that map against the state standards – but what is missing is the rigor. Standards alone won’t do it; they must be infused with rigor.

When we find high-performing districts, they share some common attributes. In elementary school, they usually have a common curriculum across the schools and model lessons that teachers can use. In high school, students are enrolled in classes that would empower them to choose college after they graduate; in California, that means offering the A-G curriculum to all students.

Objections are raised by some that not all students want or need to go to college. The fact is that eight out of 10 high school students say they would like to go to college – but only four out of 10 take the curriculum that is most likely to help them get there. Even of students who are not on track to complete the A-G requirements, 71 percent say they want to go to college, while only 12 percent plan to enter the workforce or military. One-third of 11<sup>th</sup> graders who have failed at least one part of the high school exit exam say they want to go to college; only 18 percent want to go into the workforce immediately.

For students who go to college, not only is A-G required for admission but when students get there, it is the thing that will matter the most. The quality and intensity of the high school curriculum is the single biggest predictor of college success.

For students who enter the workplace, A-G prepares them with skills that the business world is looking for today. Students have to know more than their fathers did when they went into blue-collar jobs. They don’t make cars the way they used to; now you need to know hydraulics and physics. Employers are less willing to help train employees. They simply won’t hire people who don’t have the right skills; instead, they’ll go outside the country, where labor is not only cheaper but better educated.

Some have argued that it would take \$100 million more in teacher salaries alone to offer A-G across the state to all students. It’s hard to unpack those figures. But we can look at what San Jose has done in the seven years since it adopted A-G for all students. They are spending from \$15 more per student to \$180 more per student, depending on how much time and support the students need. It is not as much as some people say; we need to inform these conversations with real data from districts that are already doing this.

### **What P-16 Collaboration Can Do: Who Teaches Whom**

The other role that P-16 councils can play is to become a vehicle to improve teacher quality. What is needed most is to find a way for the best teachers to get to the students who need them the most. The research shows us that the most effective teachers have a huge impact on student achievement. The Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain estimates of teacher performance suggest that having five years of good teachers in a row could overcome the average 7<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics achievement gap.

Instead what we have today is that poor and minority students are the most likely to have underprepared teachers. Those who are failing the high school exit exam have the most underprepared teachers.

One thing we can do is reframe the conversation to make this about money. When we look at a school’s budget, 80 percent is spent on teacher salaries. Schools with fewer low-income and minority students have the better-prepared teachers – and because they typically have higher salaries, these schools have more money. One approach would be to ensure that the high-poverty schools have more money to attract better-prepared teachers.

### **Making Better Choices**

In summary, the achievement gaps come from choices that educators and policy makers make. These are choices about:

- How much to spend on whom
- What to expect of different schools and students
- Who teaches whom
- How to organize classrooms and schools

The P-16 councils can be a tool to break the cycle of low expectations, which results in less challenging courses, which means low-level assignments and instruction – which results in low test scores and causes even lower expectations. Today we take kids who have less to begin with, give them less and then wonder why they do poorly. President Bush has talked about the soft bigotry of low expectations; the truth is that there isn’t anything soft about it. And that’s the cycle that needs to be broken.

# Presentation by Jack O'Connell

*Jack O'Connell was elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 2002. Prior to his election to the statewide office, he served for two decades in the California Legislature where he represented the Central Coast in first the Assembly and then the Senate. As the elected leader of the state's K-12 education system, he has focused on accountability, rigor, and high standards for all students. He is a strong advocate of improving student achievement*

*in California high schools, as well as for smaller class sizes, improved teacher recruitment and retention, comprehensive testing, and state-of-the-art school facilities. Mr. O'Connell has a bachelor's degree in history from California State University, Fullerton, and a secondary teaching credential from California State University, Long Beach. Prior to his political career, he taught high school and served on the Santa Barbara County School Board.*

## Solution: Collaborating in Regional Partnerships

There's never been a greater need for collaboration and cooperation among all sectors of education, as well as parents, employers, labor, and community leaders – people who share the common goal of better preparing our students for an ever-more demanding and competitive global society.

Our student population in California has become vastly more complex, challenging, and costly to educate, while at the same time school funding levels have declined to eighth from the bottom in the nation. One in five students comes from a family in poverty. One in four is learning the English language. And it's an incredibly mobile population. When a Kern County superintendent invited me to be their back-to-school speaker, I was startled to learn the date was July 30 – not the end of August or the beginning of September. It isn't a year-round school, either. He explained to me that they start early because they shut down the school year when large numbers of students leave to work in the fields; otherwise schools would lose ADA funds. It's a smart approach to a problem that is created by having such a mobile student population.

So we have a challenging student population, but also an interesting and promising one – that's what drives us all to do the best that we can for them. It's difficult during times like these when we simply are not investing enough to keep up with the cost of meeting the challenges.

Not only have the costs to educate California's students greatly increased, but so have our expectations for what a public school education should provide. Not long ago it was fine to hold high expectations only for the minority of students who were college-bound. We expected that the majority of students, particularly the socio-economically disadvantaged, would follow a "general education" track that would lead to a blue-collar job, and that would be sufficient to support their families.

### Today's Students Need Rigor

Today, rapid technological advances and a global economy have largely eliminated low-skill jobs, and all students must learn to higher levels if

they are to succeed as adults. College preparation skills have become workplace preparation skills. Yet far too many of our students are graduating without the skills they need to succeed on either path. That's why I applaud last week's decision by Los Angeles Unified School District – and San Jose's leadership before that – to require A-G coursework for all students.

Why do all students need these rigorous types of courses? Because today's working world demands that type of knowledge. Today's sheet metal workers, for example, need four to five years of apprenticeship and training that includes knowledge of algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and technical reading. So we must both strengthen and expand our career technical education programs.

We will close the achievement gap by helping all students to meet higher expectations – and we must give our students options without tracking them and limiting their futures. I'm pleased that recently the State Board of Education approved standards for career technical education that describe the skills and knowledge our high school students must now have. And in just the past couple of years we have tripled – to more than 3,000 – the number of career technical education courses that now qualify as college preparatory courses. This achievement, which took hard work and collaboration between University of California, California State University, and K-12 education, means students can choose those types of courses in 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade and know that they are not closing off the option of going to college someday.

### Time for High School Reform

I made high school reform my top priority two years ago, and I'm pleased that this issue has gained national momentum because of the urgent need to do a better job preparing our students for the real world. Earlier this year, more than 4,000 people representing 54 of the state's 58 counties attended a conference on high school reform in Sacramento. President Bush is talking about high school reform; the National Governors Association is on board. But it's not an easy task to change the culture of a school

## *Inside High School Reform*

For all those involved in high school reform – teachers, teacher leaders and administrators at the school and district levels – this book from WestEd and the California Academic Partnership Program reflects the pivotal role of teachers in school reform. It also recognizes that teachers cannot succeed in a vacuum. Leadership and vision, systems and those responsible for them, partnerships, targeted professional development – all are necessary to any effort to help teachers meet their goals of making a difference for students.

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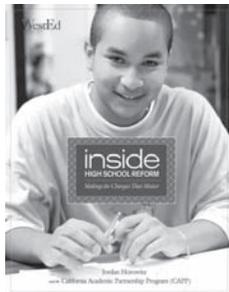
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system where “senior-itis” is typical to one that holds high standards for all students and embraces accountability. It is a multi-year process, with resistance along the way, and in California this process is ongoing.

Early on, California made the decision to focus on the elementary school level. In the years when we supported high standards with generous funding, our elementary school students made steady, significant achievement gains. Today in our elementary and middle schools, high standards for all students are part of the landscape. It is a given that curriculum, instruction, textbooks and other materials should be aligned to those high standards.

In our high schools, however, it has been tougher to make academic standards count. And it is in our high schools where achievement has lagged behind, where the achievement gaps are most pernicious, and where there’s been the most resistance to change. We need to learn from the elementary school experience.

There is good news, however. There is now broad agreement that our high schools must be made more challenging, more engaging and more connected to the real world. Educational partnerships, such as those promoted by the Intersegmental Coordinating Committee and the partnerships represented and discussed here today, are working to make those changes occur.

Historically, there has been a disconnect between the different sectors of education. However, when you step back and think about it, we all have the same job: create a learning environment that allows each student to learn to his or her maximum ability. We must work together to create a more seamless education system, one that neither tracks students to failure nor lets any child derail on the path toward achieving his

maximum potential. Helping our students successfully meet the higher standards and greater demands of today’s world will require much greater cooperation and communication among all systems of education – from preschool to primary school, from primary school to secondary school, and from secondary school to college. It will require of our entire public education system a grand and unified vision of what it means to provide a world-class education for California students.

### **Progress in Some Areas**

We’ve made some strides in this area. We’ve developed remedial guides for our middle school students, to help strengthen their academic foundation before high school. The Early Assessment Program this year for the first time gave nearly 40 percent of our 11<sup>th</sup> graders a realistic look at their readiness for college. This means they can productively use their senior year to address deficiencies so they don’t have to take remedial courses when they enter college. That could not have been done without unprecedented cooperation among the California State University, the Department of Education, State Board of Education, and our schools. This is truly a first-in-the-nation model of partnership between K-12 and higher education; in fact, CSU Chancellor Charles Reed was invited to the National Governors Association meeting to make a presentation about this initiative. It will help us increase the rigor in high school curriculum by clearly showing our high school students that it takes more than just a good grade point average to be ready for college success.

With the California P-16 Council that I’ve appointed, with successful Regional P-16 Councils, and with the hard work of the University of California, the California State University system, and many regional partnerships, we are expanding on this model of cooperation. State-wide and regionally, P-16 Councils offer the promise of bringing high schools, higher education institutions, parents, business, and labor leaders together with a goal of shaping a more seamless education system that better prepares all students for success.

One of the first charges I gave the California P-16 Council is to recommend ways of strengthening high school graduation requirements. I understand the initial resistance to adopting A-G as the default curriculum for all of our high schools. But when you look at what colleges require students to know and what the business world is looking for, there is very little difference. Working with our employers, colleges and universities, I know our high schools can create curriculum that is both more rigorous and more relevant to the real world students will face after high school.

Our goal is really very simple: prepare our students for success in school and in society. I’m encouraged by the examples of cooperation I see regionally – examples such as in San Bernardino and Monterey Bay, and the ARCHES program you’ll hear more about soon – and I hope we will all work to increase those examples of cooperation and collaboration. Our students need this to happen. I count on all of you to help make it happen. And I thank you for all that you do to help our students succeed.

# Presentation by ARCHES Panel

The following is a summary of presentations by a panel that announced the launching of the ARCHES initiative. The panel included:

- Penny Edgert, Coordinator, California Education Round Table Intersegmental Coordinating Committee
- Dave Jolly, Director, California Academic Partnership Program

- Karl Pister, former Chancellor of UC Santa Cruz and former dean of the College of Engineering, UC Berkeley

- Diane Siri, Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools

This summary is abstracted from a report that was distributed at the panel presentation; the report is entitled "Alliance for Regional Collaboration to Heighten Educational Success (ARCHES): A Vision Whose Time is Now."

## Creating the Alliance for Regional Collaboration to Heighten Educational Success (ARCHES)

Today we are launching the Alliance for Regional Collaboration to Heighten Educational Success (ARCHES). This initiative is designed to weave together former efforts to create regional partnerships, as well as link the many professionals who are already involved in collaboration through a variety of programs and projects. Additionally, ARCHES is designed to encourage the development of collaboratives in regions of the state where none exist today.

### Looking Back

An emphasis on collaborative approaches to addressing educational challenges is not new in California. In the late 1970s, the California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) established consortia of school districts and higher education institutions to prepare students for college, particularly students from communities with historically low college-going rates. In 1984, the California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP) began with the goal of developing "cooperative efforts to improve the academic quality of public secondary schools, with the objective of improving the preparation of all students for college."

These early efforts and the programmatic initiatives that followed, including the Academic Improvement and Achievement Act (AIAA), provided evidence of the effectiveness of partnerships as a strategy for achieving significant educational outcomes.

More recently, the California Education Round Table Intersegmental Coordinating Committee (ICC) and CAPP have been collaborators for the past five years in expanding the partnership strategy and fostering its growth throughout the state. The most notable example of that collaboration is their joint sponsorship and organization of the

K-16 Partnership and Student Success conference held annually since 2000 at California State University, Long Beach.

To further advance partnerships as a major strategy for educational reform, CAPP funded a two-year study of seven partnerships that varied in scope, objectives, geographic considerations, and specific activities. Fourteen policy recommendations emerged from this study (*Raising Student Achievement through Effective Education Partnerships*). This study concluded that partnerships:

- Provide an effective strategy for enhancing student achievement.
- Promote efficient and effective use of resources around shared institutional goals.

### Determining the Next Step

The evidence is clear: Partnerships are effective. But what steps are needed to develop a sustainable mechanism that promulgates educational partnerships? During 2004, CAPP and the ICC engaged in a consultative process for the purpose of developing an action plan. Interviews with about 60 Californians who have been involved at either the policy or programmatic levels of education were conducted.

Without exception, interviewees were enthusiastic about the strategy of educational partnerships. Equally unanimous from these interviews was the belief that a mandatory, or top-down, approach to developing partnerships is will not work. Rather, while partnerships should share the overarching goal of improving student achievement, each partnership should develop its own specific objectives that reflect its geography, institutional array, economic conditions, and cultural and historical context. Likewise, interviewees were clear about the

dizzying array of educational bureaucracies in the state and the need to avoid creating yet another one.

These interviews yielded a wealth of information that is summarized below:

- Recommendations contained in the California Alliance of Pre K-18 Partnerships report were well supported by the interviewees.
- A statewide network of partnerships would enhance the success in improving student achievement that has been demonstrated by existing individual collaborative efforts.
- The business community and private sector must be involved in these efforts, as well as other constituencies such as community alliances and faith-based organizations, to maximize success.
- Incentives – rather than mandates – should be the mechanism for expanding existing partnerships and developing new ones.
- Among the issues that may be most amendable to collaborative efforts are: expanding and improving the pool of qualified teachers; increasing professional development for teachers on standards-based instruction; making college preparation courses available to all students; and reducing the high school dropout rate.
- Having access to and using data to inform the direction and assess the effectiveness of partnerships was regarded as critical.
- Occasions for partnerships to share their efforts, discuss ideas, and discover common issues on which they can collaborate are needed.

In addition to the California Alliance of Pre K-18 Partnerships study and these interview results, key state level policy-makers have expressed interest in the strategy of educational partnerships. Governor Schwarzenegger, in his 2005-06 Budget Proposal, stated that he believes that “all segments need to work closer together to advance the best interests of all students and our economic future.” At the same time, Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell announced his intention to establish “a new statewide council to better coordinate and integrate education in California from preschool through college.” Further, Superintendent O’Connell expressed interest in ensuring that regional P-16 Councils are established because “[h]aving councils at the statewide and regional level will create a strong two-way communication pipeline and ensure that recommendations that come forth are applicable and relevant in the real world.”

## Launching ARCHES

The time appears propitious for CAPP and the ICC to establish a statewide network that links the existing collaborative efforts in the state and encourages the development of new ones.

The Alliance for Regional Collaboration to Heighten Educational Success (ARCHES) represents a subtle, but important, shift in emphasis from the past to gain more traction and synergy from the present array of educational partnerships in the state and to foster new ones in the future. The shift is characterized by the words in the title:

### *Alliance*

Clearly, the current educational partnerships in California are individually demonstrating effectiveness in achieving their objectives. Nevertheless, they remain largely disconnected and isolated in learning from each other. Harnessing the knowledge, experience, and strength that characterizes each partnership into a statewide network offers the potential to increase substantially the base of expertise and to develop significant synergy in the state.

### *Regional*

At its simplest, educational partnerships involve the engagement of one school with one college or university. While beneficial to the participants, their reach is limited. In a state the size of California with its myriad attendant challenges, the need exists to expand the geographic span statewide so that more schools are able to benefit from these arrangements. The prevailing wisdom, albeit uncharted, is that the state is naturally divided into approximately 30 to 40 regions that have their own unique set of educational issues that would benefit from a regional approach. The participating collaborators in each area can make determinations about how extensive each region should be based on their unique student populations, geographic characteristics, and cultural richness.

### *Collaboration*

Business, labor unions, community and faith-based organizations need to join with the public schools and higher education to ensure that students flow from one educational sector to another and into the workplace with the requisite skills for success. This joining of forces involves the commitment of human and fiscal resources; the willingness to set aside institutional or organizational imperatives; the patience to learn the culture, language, and idiosyncrasies reflected in all the collaborators; and, the trust to be candid in sharing and using data to identify issues and assess effectiveness. In this sense, collaboration is the active engagement of interested parties in the achievement of mutually agreed upon goals that benefit each entity individually and collectively.

## Heighten Educational Success

The express and primary purpose of these collaboratives is to improve the education of our students. As such, the effectiveness of each regional collaborative and ARCHES will be measured in terms of the extent to which student achievement is enhanced and the opportunity and resource gaps that lead to persistent achievement differentials are closed.

ARCHES will view the prevailing indicators of educational success, including the number of students who:

- Take and complete algebra by the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Pass the California High School Exit Examination the first time.
- Success by Design: Creating College-Bound Communities
- Complete a full college preparatory sequence of courses at a sufficient level of mastery for admissibility to public universities in the state.
- Enroll in college upon graduating from high school.
- Prepare to enter the workforce without the need for remediation in basic skills.

The activities that ARCHES will focus on are:

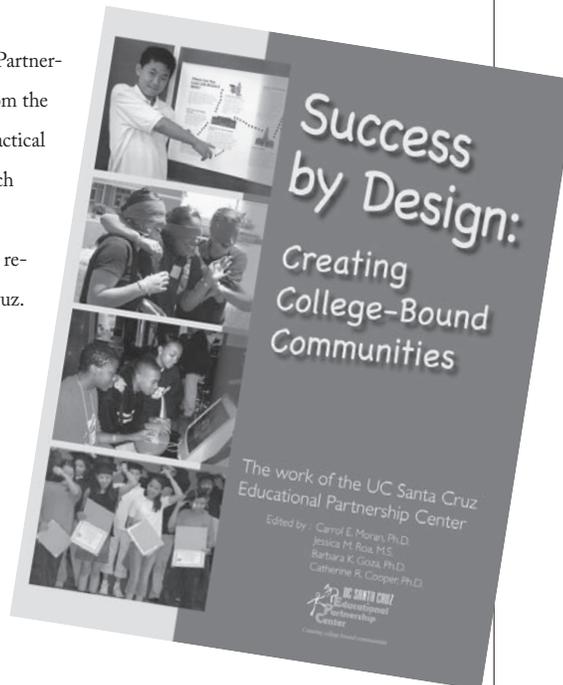
- Developing a phased plan and implementation strategy to provide each school with the opportunity to participate in a regional collaborative that is part of this statewide alliance. To meet this objective, ARCHES supports the partnership strategies of existing educational organizations, current partnerships, emerging groups, and, when appropriate, the fostering of new arrangements.
- Creating a web-based clearinghouse to share best practices, including a website, research library, materials and resources, and information on funding opportunities.
- Convening statewide and regional conferences to facilitate the sharing of information, expertise, and best practices.
- Assembling a group of facilitators who have the experience to assist entities to develop and sustain regional collaboratives.
- Seeking financial resources to develop and sustain regional collaboratives.
- Connecting prospective collaborators from various sectors of society.
- Advocating for state and federal policies that promote regional collaboration.

### *Success by Design: Creating College-Bound Communities*

This book, created by the UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center and supported by a dissemination grant from the California Academic Partnership Program, provides practical tools for building regional partnerships in which research forms the heart of the community. It takes a "how-to" approach to describing many of the programs that have resulted from partnerships implemented by UC Santa Cruz.

Copies are \$40 each. To verify availability, e-mail the Educational Partnership Center at [epc@ucsc.edu](mailto:epc@ucsc.edu) with a request for the number of copies you want. After you receive a response, mail a check for the appropriate amount made out to the Regents of the University of California to:

Educational Partnership Center  
Atten: Carrol Moran  
3004 Mission Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060



## What's Next?

By December 2005, the following activities are planned:

- Convene an Advisory Board.
- Seek relevant advice from constituencies, including members of the Round Table and participants at this conference.
- Garner information from potential participants statewide as to their needs in forming or continuing regional collaboratives.
- Solicit financial support from educational sectors, private foundations, and corporations.
- Develop a Request for Proposals to provide initial funding for approximately five new regional collaboratives.
- Support the goals and activities of Superintendent O'Connell's P-16 Council.
- Collaborate with the "California Teach" initiative to improve math and science education by encouraging more college math and science majors to become teachers.

ARCHES is a joint initiative of CAPP and the ICC – the programmatic arm of the California Education Round Table. Although functioning independently, ARCHES will be administratively connected to the ICC. The following contact information is provided for those who wish to participate, offer advice or recommendations, or need answers to questions.

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# Conclusion

From its inception, the California K-16 Partnerships and Student Success Conference has been about taking what is working in some parts of the state and spreading it as far as possible. In 2005, the conference has taken the concept of leveraging what we know even further with the introduction of the Alliance for Regional Collaboration to Heighten Educational Success.

The initiative will bring together concepts, resources, and support in a more powerful and widespread way than the Conference alone is able to. But at the center of this new effort will continue to be the formula that has worked well throughout the evolution of the state's many partnerships: flexibility and encouragement rather than mandated formulas about what must be done. This will allow each region to define its needs and target its resources in the way that makes the most sense locally, while accessing the expertise that continues to grow around the state.

This approach has also been at the heart of our annual conference, providing educators with the opportunity to learn first-hand from others' experiments and experiences. This year, as in years past, the conference focused on ways to work together to increase achievement for all students and close the persistent gaps that leave certain segments of our population behind.

California State University, Long Beach is proud of its central role in hosting this important conference each year. We look forward to continuing our support for partnerships and student success.

