



## THE ISSUE

Schools and districts are often constrained – whether by resources or expertise – by gaps in the services they can provide that help students become college and career ready. At times, constraints can silo students' experiences in ways that limit student success.

## AN APPROACH

Successful and meaningful partnerships create a pathway, or set of pathways, for students that is inclusive of both the academic and nonacademic knowledge and skills they will need to succeed after high school.<sup>1</sup> Most importantly, partnerships allow districts and schools to achieve what would otherwise be difficult for them to accomplish in isolation. For example, providing internships and helping students graduate with both a high school diploma and an Associate's degree; building staff capacity and knowledge, such as uncovering and addressing unconscious bias as well as building relationship-centered schools. Additionally, non-academic community partnerships can greatly benefit students and their families, with some providing services beyond the scope of what schools can offer, such as legal services for undocumented families. Intentional external partnerships provide students with comprehensive supports that help meet students' needs both inside and outside of the classroom.



# Developing Meaningful Partnerships with Community Based Organizations, Colleges/Universities, and Local Industry Partners

## HOW & WHERE IT'S HAPPENING

### Partnerships with Community Based Organizations

**East Side Union High School District** partners with **Californians for Justice** to help build relationship-centered schools – schools that “value student voice, invest in staff, and create spaces for relationship building”<sup>2</sup> – and help district-level and site-based faculty and staff uncover and address unconscious bias. Similarly, **Vintage High School's** Culturally Responsive Humanizing and Sustaining (CRSH) work began as a result of a relationship with the **Acosta Educational Partnership**, which focuses on cultural and community wealth trainings for educators. The expertise of these organizations, coupled with the expertise found within districts and schools, helps make possible the necessary work of building more humanizing educational experiences for students.

**Val Verde Unified School District** partners with the **Training Occupational Development Educating Communities (TODEC) Legal Center** to provide legal services for undocumented students and their families; additionally, the district partners with local tax agencies to help families file their taxes on time in order to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act applications. They also partner with the **California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)** on their Project 2-Inspire, offering families training programs on ways to support their students to navigate the educational system. Similarly, **Monrovia Unified School District's** partnership with **Parents for Quality Education (PIQE)** helps them enhance parent education and parent engagement programs at every school in the district. These relationships help create environments where families can feel empowered to advocate for the educational opportunities that will help their students graduate college and career ready.

### Partnerships with Colleges/Universities

Students and their families also benefit greatly when schools partner with local colleges and universities to offer support services along with dual-enrollment and concurrent enrollment opportunities. **Alhambra Unified School District**, for example, makes a writing center available to students thanks to their partnership with **CSU Los Angeles**, giving students a useful resource for everyday assignments and as they work on their college-entrance essays. Alhambra Unified also partners with **East Los Angeles College** to offer dual enrollment courses and an afterschool early college program, which makes it possible for students to graduate with both a high school diploma and an Associate's degree.

Similarly, the **Los Angeles Unified School District** offers concurrent enrollment with all nine community colleges within the **Los Angeles Community College District** as well as approved equivalency courses on campus during the school day. At the community college, students can take classes on Saturdays and over the summer. Having access to college courses and accruing college credit not only helps high school students academically, but it also helps alleviate financial burdens that they may face as undergraduates.

Establishing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with colleges and universities also helps students access higher education. Both **Chaffey Joint Union High School District** and **Covina Valley Unified School District** have MOUs with **University of La Verne and Azusa Pacific University**. Chaffey Joint Union also has MOUs with University of Redlands, Grand Canyon University, and California Baptist University. These MOUs make it possible for students who meet admission requirements to receive guaranteed admission, waived application fees, and an annual ten thousand dollar scholarship. Chaffey also partners with **CSU San Bernardino, California State Polytechnic University Pomona**, and **CSU Bakersfield** to provide guaranteed admission to students who meet admission requirements.

## Partnerships with Local Industry Partners

Industry partnerships help students prepare for future careers through Career Technical Education (CTE) courses, internships, and employment. **Sanger Unified School District**, for example, is able to make CTE possible by collaborating with several local industry partners, including **The Wonderful Company**. As a result of a partnership with **The Atlantic Philanthropies, Oakland Unified School District** offers students a health pathway and internships in medical fields. Similarly, **Morgan Hill Unified School District** partners with the local Chamber of Commerce to link high school seniors with employers who hire them as interns or employees.

1 Charis McGaughy and Andrea Venezia, *Supporting the Dream: High School-College Partnerships for College and Career Readiness* (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Corwin, 2015).

2 Californians for Justice, "Relationship Centered Schools," <http://caljustice.org/believeinme/>

## Guiding Questions for Advocacy

- 1 What partnerships currently exist in your district/school? What services do they provide?
- 2 What services do students and families in your community need, but are lacking? Could a local industry partner or community based organization help fill that need?
- 3 Does your district/school offer complete CTE pathways that are a-g approved?
- 4 What careers interest students in your district/school? Do you have pathways aligned with students' interests?



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