

# **The District Role in Supporting College and Career Readiness for Students**

Perspectives From Long Beach,  
Albuquerque, and Philadelphia

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Helen Duffy

Marlene Darwin

## INTRODUCTION

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Current federal policy and the broader national agenda focus on education as an integral element of a strong and competitive United States economy, and a well-educated workforce is essential to economic growth. To help build this workforce, state education agencies, local education agencies, and schools need to develop comprehensive approaches to implementing college- and career-ready expectations, rigorous instruction, transition plans, and high-quality assessments.<sup>1</sup>

In 2009, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) published *Helping Students Navigate the Path to College* (Tierney, Bailey, Constantine, Finkelstein, & Hurd, 2009), a guide that describes evidence-based practices that improve postsecondary access for high school students. To develop the Practice Guide, a panel of experts consulted research evidence identified through a comprehensive search of studies evaluating college access interventions and practices. Based on the evidence, the panel made five recommendations for implementation at the school level:

1. Offer courses and curricula that prepare students for college-level work and ensure that, by ninth grade, students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum.
2. Utilize assessment measures throughout high school so that students are aware of how prepared they are for college, and assist students in overcoming deficiencies as they are identified.
3. Surround students with adults and peers who build and support their college-going aspirations.
4. Engage and assist students in completing critical steps for college entry.
5. Increase families' financial awareness of college costs, and help students apply for financial aid.

Panel members examined the research base for practices that would increase college access specifically and did not expand their recommendations to include career readiness or other options for postsecondary training. The resulting recommendations were predicated on the belief that all students should graduate from high school ready, at a minimum, to enroll in college courses without the need for remediation at two-year institutions. The guide provides steps to carry out the panel's recommendations and focuses primarily on middle and high school practices, rather than on district-wide implementation.

Nonetheless, districts can play an important role in supporting student readiness for both college and careers. The last decade has seen increased recognition of the role districts play as leaders of school-level improvement efforts (Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, & Newton, 2010; Sykes, O'Day, & Ford, 2009). School improvement initiatives do not simply pass through district offices. Rather, recent research suggests that district offices act as initiators, interpreters and enactors of policies intended to improve learning outcomes for students (Sykes, O'Day, & Ford, 2009).

The IES Practice Guide focuses explicitly on school-level practices to ensure that students graduate ready for college. This brief, however, expands upon those recommendations by examining district-level practices that are designed to prepare students for both college and careers.

This brief focuses on three large, urban districts that have initiated district-wide systemic approaches to prepare students for postsecondary success. The snapshots of these districts provide concrete examples of ways that districts can scale up and broaden the practices recommended in the IES Practice Guide. Applying this district-wide perspective to college- and career-ready (CCR) initiatives forms a foundation for

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<sup>1</sup> The White House. (2012). Education Blueprint: An Economy Built to Last. Available at: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/cantwait/final\\_-\\_education\\_blueprint\\_-\\_an\\_economy\\_built\\_to\\_last.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/cantwait/final_-_education_blueprint_-_an_economy_built_to_last.pdf)

a more coherent and systematic approach to implementation. The three snapshots included here are of district practices during the 2011–12 school year. In presenting these snapshots, we acknowledge that districts evolve over time as priorities and needs shift and as fiscal and other resources fluctuate as a result of external economic factors.

## THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF DISTRICTS

This brief examines practices captured in the Pathways and Supports strand of the National High School Center’s *College and Career Development Organizer*, which synthesizes and organizes the field of college- and career-readiness initiatives. The *Organizer* can be found at [http://www.betterhighschools.org/CCR/documents/NHSC\\_CCRorganizer\\_2012.pdf](http://www.betterhighschools.org/CCR/documents/NHSC_CCRorganizer_2012.pdf)

The three large districts profiled in this brief are Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), Albuquerque Public Schools (APS), and the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). These districts were selected because each featured a particular effort recommended in the Practice Guide. These profiles do not present a detailed picture of the districts’ comprehensive approaches; rather, they provide an introduction to each district’s approach and then focus on a few practices that are well developed in each one. The profiles are designed to give state and local leaders a view of what might be possible and to delve more deeply into conversations about CCR practices that might be adopted in other local contexts. In fact, data on the effects these efforts might have on improving student readiness for a wide array of postsecondary options are only now beginning to emerge. It is also important to note that the districts profiled here are just three examples of the many districts across the country that are implementing or planning to implement a systemic approach to college and career readiness.

### Snapshots

#### Long Beach Unified School District

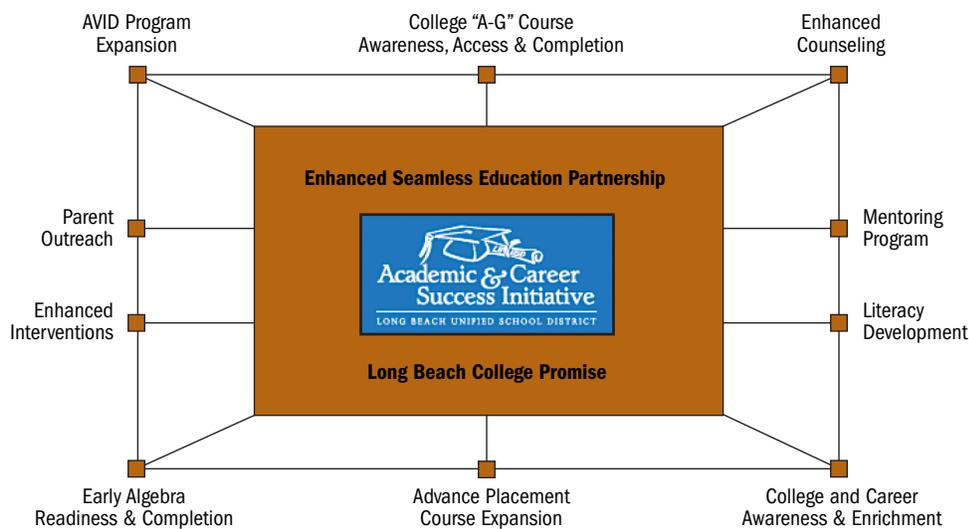
##### Exhibit 1. Long Beach Unified School District

Long Beach Unified School District: Demographics, 2011–12	
Total enrollment	83,691
Free or reduced-price lunch	70%
Latino	54%
African American	16%
White	15%
Asian	8%
Filipino	3%
Pacific Islander	2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0%
English learners	22%

Source: <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

Serving nearly 84,000 students, LBUSD is the third-largest school district in California. With its commitment to continuous improvement, the district has been widely recognized for its focused efforts to increase student achievement.<sup>2</sup> In 2007, the LBUSD school board approved the district’s Academic and Career Success for All (ACSA) Initiative, which is linked to its strategic plan. This initiative includes a number of district-wide activities. Figure 1 on this page provides a conceptual framework of the ACSA Initiative that incorporates and links together its various component activities. At the center of the figure is the district’s vision—that is, academic and career success for all LBUSD students. This vision is built upon two overarching LBUSD initiatives—the Enhanced Seamless Education Partnership and the Long Beach College Promise program. These initiatives provide a foundation for several other district-wide goals, including AVID expansion, early algebra readiness and completion, and Advanced Placement (AP) course expansion. LBUSD uses data in each of these areas to monitor its progress toward annual targets. In this brief, we provide detailed descriptions of three of these activities: the Enhanced Seamless Education Partnership, College Promise (both of which are captured in Figure 1 below), and a recently added districtwide Linked Learning Initiative. All three activities rely on partnerships that have helped not only to define the district’s initiative, but also to deliver explicit supports for student success. Below, we provide a brief description of each aspect of the framework.

**Figure 1. The ACSA Initiative**



*Enhanced Seamless Education Partnership:* This partnership was formed in the 1990s, as the Long Beach community faced a host of economic challenges. A group of community and business leaders called upon LBUSD, Long Beach Community College (LBCC), and California State University Long Beach (CSULB) to enter into a partnership that would support the district in graduating more students who are prepared for college and career. The partnership task force, comprised of district and higher education leaders, worked to align academic standards, teaching methods and preparation, and student assessments. As this P–20 partnership has evolved, it has grown to include a variety of activities that help to prepare students for a wide array of postsecondary options by establishing criteria for college admission and by educating students and their families about those admissions requirements. In addition, the collaboration has helped CSULB to better prepare its teacher and administrator credential graduates for the needs of the

<sup>2</sup> Long Beach Unified School District has been a finalist for the prestigious Broad Prize four times (in 2002, 2007, 2008, and 2009) and won the award in 2003. McKinsey & Company named Long Beach Unified one of the top 20 school systems in the world.

district. For example, many of the teaching and administrative courses at CSULB are taught by LBUSD personnel. A steering committee with representatives from all three systems meets regularly to oversee the many components of the district's Academic and Career Success Initiative.

As part of their partnership, LBUSD, LBCC, and CSULB share data, such as high school and postsecondary course grades, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion rates, postsecondary enrollment figures, and numbers of students placed in developmental English and mathematics courses, to monitor the progress of LBUSD graduates. Sharing those data has resulted in important lessons and policy changes for all three systems. For example, data analysis revealed that LBUSD students who receive As or Bs in their senior English classes are generally successful in LBCC's English I course. As a result, LBCC now places those students directly into English I without requiring a placement exam. Placing students into credit-bearing courses without the need to pass a proficiency test prevents the potential misplacement of students into developmental English classes and provides students with a more direct path to postsecondary graduation.

CSULB also provides feedback to students through the Early Assessment Program (EAP), which measures the readiness of 11th-grade students for college-level English and mathematics. The EAP was jointly developed by the California Department of Education, the State Board of Education, and the California State University. It is an augmented set of items added to the 11th-grade California state assessment tests that schools can voluntarily encourage students to take. Feedback on the assessment provides high schools with information they can use to place 12th-grade students who need additional support classes that will help accelerate their progress toward college and career readiness. While the IES Practice Guide recommends that schools utilize assessments that measure college readiness, LBUSD's Enhanced Seamless Education Partnership goes beyond data use by establishing cross-institutional collaborations that create comprehensive solutions to the challenges of preparing all students for college and careers.

*Long Beach College Promise:* In light of LBUSD's strong history of cross-institutional collaboration, the California state legislature acted in August 2011 to authorize a partnership between the LBCC district and LBUSD designed to jointly establish eligibility for college courses. The resulting legislation grants part-time or full-time admission to students who participate in the LBCC-LBUSD partnership and assigns them priority for enrollment and course registration. Known as the Long Beach College Promise, the bill authorizes the LBCC district to receive state apportionments for high school students who attend a community college in the district. The partnership provides the state education department with a pilot from which to learn about the impact that such partnerships might have on postsecondary outcomes for students and what strategies might support implementation. The outcomes of this pilot will be reported to the legislature to assess whether it is feasible to scale up the practice.

*Multiple Pathways/Linked Learning:* Working from the assumption that relevance makes rigor possible, the Linked Learning approach to instruction is grounded in practices designed to help teachers personalize instruction and engage students through career-themed pathways. Linked Learning blends academic instruction, career and technical education courses, work-based learning experiences, and student supports to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will serve them for a lifetime. Although there are pockets of successful Linked Learning pathways in schools across California, the Long Beach Linked Learning initiative is one of only a few examples of a district-wide effort to implement the approach in high schools. Supported with a grant from the James Irvine Foundation, Long Beach is working with ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career to develop pathways and curricula across the district that not only meet rigorous standards established by California's higher

education institutions (known as the A-G requirements<sup>3</sup>). The joint effort is also designed to provide students with access to real-world applications through classroom activities codeveloped with business and industry partners, job shadowing, and internships.

LBUSD's district-wide approach to Linked Learning also helps the district coordinate services and community resources. Because of their long-standing partnership with CSULB, district leaders are confident that new teachers in the district will be prepared to deliver instruction in Linked Learning contexts. CSULB has built a Linked Learning Cohort into its single-subject teacher education program and uses a model aligned to the new National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education standards to provide a Linked Learning-focused experience for prospective teachers.

Linked Learning is supported, in part, by the district's Education Business Advisory (EBA), which was established in 2009. The EBA creates partnerships with community, business, and educational institutions to provide students with access to real learning experiences. It is a forum through which the district can coordinate the resources of community stakeholders. EBA members help identify potential classroom speakers drawn from local businesses and industries, offer externships for teachers, provide feedback on student work, conduct mock interviews, and offer field trips and job shadowing opportunities.

The college and career readiness work of LBUSD points to the power of partnerships that can help eliminate barriers to seamless transitions. Cross-institutional partnerships have helped LBUSD support more students' access to postsecondary options, as well as to prepare educators to work in the district. LBUSD has also reached beyond professional educators to bring business and community leaders into the conversation, not only to support the relevance of school curricula but also to ensure smoother student transitions into the workforce. In addition, their record of success has helped district leaders to advocate for state-level policies that will remove barriers to postsecondary access. All of these activities are driving LBUSD toward its goal of the high school diploma as "a passport to a wide array of postsecondary options, rather than simply a certificate of completion."

## **Albuquerque Public Schools**

APS is a diverse urban school district covering approximately 1,230 square miles in and around Albuquerque and serving nearly one third of all New Mexico students. The district includes six surrounding communities, two pueblos, and three Land Grant areas.

Like LBUSD, APS has taken a broad, district-wide approach to increasing students' postsecondary access and has created several initiatives across the district as part of this effort. APS's overall goal is to build systems and processes that include community, universities, high schools, students, parents, and counselors working together to ensure that students graduate from high school college and career ready and that they pursue postsecondary education. Efforts to create alignment across the district include:

- Developing a comprehensive district counseling unit
- Implementing an advisory system for Grades 6–12
- Participating in the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) FAFSA Completion Project

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<sup>3</sup> The A-G requirements specify a course-taking pattern designed to ensure that students can participate in credit-bearing courses without remediation in their first year at the university. Following the A-G sequence of courses fulfills the minimum eligibility requirements for admission to the University of California and the California State University systems.

- Implementing a district-wide academic plan that includes rigorous Advanced Placement courses and dual credit opportunities
- Building partnerships with higher education, business, and service providers who can support the district's efforts

### Exhibit 2. Albuquerque Public Schools

Exhibit 2. Albuquerque Public Schools: Demographics, 2011–12	
Total enrollment	89,572
Free or reduced-price lunch	64%
Latino	66%
African American	3%
White	23%
American Indian/Alaska Native	4%
Asian	2%
Pacific Islander	2%
English learners	18%

Source: <http://www.aps.edu/about-us/district-information>

The practices implemented in APS build upon those outlined in the IES Practice Guide and expand and deepen them across the broader context and community. For example, APS's district-wide counseling unit and its participation in the ED FAFSA Completion Project engage and assist students in completing the steps for college entry and increasing families' and students' awareness of financial aid issues. Similarly, promoting a variety of community partnerships helps to surround students with adults and peers who encourage and support their college-going aspirations.

### APS Vision

Every APS student will graduate from high school with a personalized and meaningful postsecondary plan, empowered with the attitudes, skills, and knowledge to succeed and contribute in a globally competitive world.

While the district's approach includes all of the initiatives listed, this brief focuses primarily on its counseling unit and advisory system. These two efforts provide strong supports for student preparation for postsecondary education and the workforce. They also illustrate how a district can scale up the recommendations in the Practice Guide in a coordinated and coherent approach that actively engages students throughout implementation.

In the words of one APS leader, "We're trying to create a culture of college and career readiness. I don't think any of these [activities] would be completely successful on [its] own. It's the comprehensive nature of these efforts that will impact all of our students, not just a few."

*District Counseling Unit:* The guidance mission of APS states that “Through a systematic, developmentally appropriate, data-driven, PreK–12 school counseling program, all students will have equitable access to the rigorous education necessary to ensure that they are socially and academically prepared for productive careers and life roles in a diverse society.” To operationalize this mission, APS established the District Counseling Unit in 2010 and joined the College Board’s Urban School Counseling initiative. The district, under the leadership of the Supervisor of School Counseling, has followed the initiative’s districtwide Blueprint for School Counseling Transformation. The blueprint supports the district’s vision and mission as sanctioned by the APS Board of Education and the Superintendent and sets out a transformation process for the counseling unit.

The National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) also partners with APS through its Own the Turf: College and Career Readiness Counseling program. Counselors participate in a professional development program through NOSCA that equips them to address the eight components of college and career readiness counseling (as identified by NOSCA) for all students beginning in elementary school:

1. College aspirations
2. Academic planning for college and career readiness
3. Enrichment and extracurricular engagement
4. College and career exploration and selection processes
5. College and career assessments
6. College affordability planning
7. College and career admission processes
8. Transition from high school to college enrollment

APS is in the initial stages of implementing Own the Turf and has introduced a process to collect outcome data on course completion, attendance, dropout, promotion/retention, discipline, and academic proficiency rates.

*Advisory System:* As part of its district-wide effort to address NOSCA’s eight components, APS is implementing an advisory system for Grades 6–12. This advisory system includes a password-protected online blackboard site that provides lessons to help students understand what it takes to prepare for postsecondary education. Beginning in sixth grade, advisory lessons focus on setting goals, developing citizenship, adopting good study habits, thinking ahead about life after high school, and exploring learning styles and careers. Students also begin building résumés. As students progress through high school, advisory lessons cover these same areas but gradually focus more specifically on career aspirations and postsecondary planning, as well as college application and financial aid processes. There are also lesson adaptations for students with disabilities and English language learners.

### **The National Office of School Counselor Advocacy**

The College Board’s Advocacy and Policy Center established the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) in an effort to promote school counseling and highlight the key role school counselors can play in school reform efforts. NOSCA activities include train-the-trainer institutes for counselors and the Urban School Counseling Initiative. The Urban School Counseling Initiative has established a three-year learning community for two cohorts of district administrative teams from 22 of the country’s largest districts to help align their counseling programs with district goals.

In addition to the lessons, the district requires students to develop a Next Step Plan (NSP) as part of the advisory system. NSPs are considered working documents that project a plan of study and are updated annually starting in eighth grade and continuing throughout high school. Students develop their plans in

consultation with parents and academic advisors. The plans include academic, social-emotional, and postsecondary aspirations. NSPs are not binding documents; they are meant to be self-reflective and to evolve as students refine their goals and postsecondary plans.

APS has also instituted student-led parent-teacher-advisor conferences as part of the advisory system. Advisory lessons lead students through the process of preparing for these conferences, which are held at least once a year. A second conference is recommended but not required. Student-led conferences are the vehicle through which students articulate their goals to parents and school staff. These conferences provide more personalized settings and allow students and parents to engage in meaningful conversation about the students' growth and aspirations. The advisors' primary role is to help students prepare for the conferences. These conversations inform the updates to students NSPs.

The next step for APS is to refine its advisories, which in 2011–12 were in the third year of implementation. The district will focus on ensuring that all staff members share a common vision calling for all students to graduate college and career ready.

### The School District of Philadelphia

SDP is the nation's eighth largest district by enrollment and serves a racially and ethnically diverse population. Like both Long Beach and Albuquerque, Philadelphia has taken a comprehensive approach to its college and career readiness efforts. In the last three years, the district has invested in increasing the numbers of students who are prepared for college.

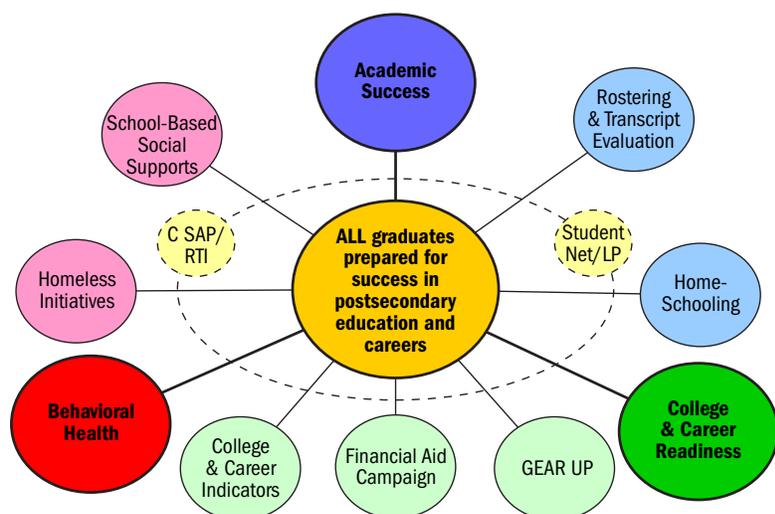
The district has implemented a number of initiatives designed to ensure that students are college and career ready as part of its strategic plan, Imagine 2014. The overarching goal of Imagine 2014 is to ensure that all students graduate prepared for success in postsecondary education and careers. To do so, the district elected to invest in the creation of counseling supports. Figure 2 illustrates the Office of Counseling and Promotion Standards conceptual framework, which includes a number of school and community-based activities designed to ensure student success beyond high school graduation. Counseling functions include behavioral and academic supports and programs that provide targeted assistance for students as they prepare for a wide range of postsecondary options.

#### Exhibit 3. The School District of Philadelphia

Exhibit 3. The School District of Philadelphia: Demographics, 2011–12	
Total enrollment	146,090
Free or reduced-price lunch	81%
Latino	19%
African American	56%
White	14%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.2%
Other	4%
English learners	8%

Source: <http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/about/#enrollment>

**Figure 2. SDP Office of Counseling and Promotion Standards: Conceptual Framework**



To operationalize the basic goal of Imagine 2014, the district participates in a variety of initiatives, including the College Board’s Urban School Counseling Initiative, the FAFSA Completion Project, the College Readiness Indicators System (CRIS), and the Strategic Data Project. In addition, SDP has implemented several district-wide practices such as Student Net—an online data portal designed to assist students in planning and monitoring their own progress—and Parent University—a program designed to support parents, strengthen families, and provide intergenerational learning opportunities across the district.

Below we provide an overview of the High School Pathways initiative and Parent University, both of which are designed to support student access to postsecondary options. In addition, we examine the district’s strategy for addressing funding issues. These practices provide examples of districtwide efforts to implement IES Practice Guide suggestions focused on ensuring that students understand their college-ready trajectory by ninth grade and that families are educated about college entrance requirements and financial aid options.

Severe fiscal deficits in recent years have forced Philadelphia to make difficult decisions regarding district-level staff reductions. In an effort to minimize the impact of those cuts, SDP leaders formed the Office of Counseling and Promotion Standards (OCPS) to align a variety of district initiatives designed to improve outcomes for students. The OCPS operates collaboratively across several SDP units that have historically functioned independent of one another, including the Office of Secondary School Reform, Division of College Readiness; the Office of Parent, Family, Community Engagement, and Faith-Based Partnerships; the Office of Teaching and Learning; and the Office of Academic Supports. Although established specifically to address unprecedented fiscal challenges, the OCPS has provided substantial educational and operational benefits as well. According to one SDP leader, “for us, it makes it easier not having to work across silos.” She added that, as a result of OCPS’s collaborative approach, district initiatives are more coherent and coordinated to better serve students.

In an effort to focus attention on the role that school counselors can play to support CCR, Philadelphia has established national and local partnerships to increase the number of students who graduate college ready. Like Albuquerque, Philadelphia participates in the Urban School Counseling Initiative sponsored by NOSCA. As a result of its participation in the NOSCA network, Philadelphia has reorganized the ways in which counseling resources are utilized. In the past, course selections for SDP students were completed by teachers called “roster chairs.” Those responsibilities have now been assigned to counselors.

In addition to adding student course selections to counselors' responsibilities, SDP has revised its counselor evaluation process to focus on a pathways approach to student guidance. In the past, principals used a teacher assessment instrument that was modified for use with counselors. SDP's new counselor evaluation tool, developed with the support of the Urban School Counseling Initiative and CRIS, includes three primary areas of counselor accountability: academic success, behavioral health, and college and career readiness (see Figure 2 above). By shifting responsibility to counselors for helping students chart pathways through high school that include these three areas, SDP helps to ensure a more coherent approach to course selection.

According to one district leader, this shift acknowledges the important role that counselors play in helping students to articulate and realize their postsecondary aspirations. Counselors have a wide array of tools at their disposal to support students, including individual learning plans (required for all students in Grades 7–12); a student information system that is accessible to all Grades 4–12 students, counselors, and parents; a case management system; an early warning indicator system for ninth-grade students who are off track for graduation; and tools that support other counselor-led activities, such as application processes, FAFSA completion, and career exploration.

*High School Pathways:* As part of its High School Pathways initiative, SDP has developed high school course continua for incoming freshmen across all district comprehensive high schools. Counselors work with students to recommend the course continuum that fits each student's needs based on 8th-grade data. The counselor-led course selection process also provides students with opportunities to strengthen their skills and increases their access to advanced courses in English and mathematics. In both English and mathematics, each grade level includes course-selection options that depend upon student needs. For example, ninth-grade students can elect to take English I, modified English I, intervention English, or honors English. The goal is to accelerate student growth so that when students reach the 11th and 12th grades, they are prepared to enroll in English, honors English, or AP Language and AP Literature. A similar course pathway is designed to lead 11th- and 12th-grade students to advanced mathematics courses such as precalculus, calculus, AP calculus, and other college-level mathematics courses.

*Parent University:* SDP's Parent University helps parents to better understand and more fully participate in their children's education. The goals of the program are to improve collaboration among schools and families, increase student achievement, create intergenerational learning, and provide targeted classes on financial aid processes, including FAFSA and postsecondary scholarships. Parent University offers classes and workshops, career training, multilingual programs, and other resources for parents. SDP houses Parent University at seven education centers, and all programs are free of charge for parents and students in the district. Parents can receive computer training in how to access their children's records. Program resources focus on helping parents keep their children on track for graduation and providing information on the Common Core State Standards.

## IMPLICATIONS

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The district practices described in this brief illustrate tangible examples of the essential role that districts can play in providing system-wide programs and supports to ensure that all students have access to college and career readiness initiatives and strategies. Each of the profiled districts, moreover, demonstrates the importance of working across traditional boundaries, whether collaborating across units in a district office, across K–12 and higher education, or across education, business, community-based organizations, and families.

Policies set at federal and state levels are important for establishing standards, but districts and schools may struggle to translate them into local practice. The IES Practice Guide outlines five recommendations that should be implemented at the school level to increase college-going rates. The foundations for these practices, however, may be set at the district level. Schools may have the desire and staff commitment to create change within their buildings, but they may lack the funding and policy support needed to follow through on their ideas. The district can provide a unified vision for student achievement, help translate college and career readiness standards for the local level, and coordinate resources that promote CCR. Districts can also promote relationship-building among their schools and their community partners.

All three of the districts profiled in this brief share a common goal of helping to move their students toward college and career readiness. They have put initiatives in place that include monitoring and support for students and families starting at the middle school level, well before high school graduation. The three districts illustrate ways in which district policies can provide the infrastructure for schools to support college- and career-ready outcomes for students.

The profiles of these three districts illustrate several key lessons that should be considered by large, diverse districts and that provide examples of how the IES Practice Guide recommendations can be applied to a district-wide approach to CCR.

1. Strong counseling units in schools can support students in a multitude of ways. The examples detailed above illustrate how counselors support students on their paths to college and careers. Districts can play an important role in the development of those counseling units in schools by readying counselors to work with students and their families. Counselors need extensive training that will enable them to build shared knowledge of appropriate academic preparation and of avenues for communicating this information to a wide variety of stakeholders.
2. Community partnerships with agencies, institutions of higher education, postsecondary training programs, and businesses can help prepare students to be college and career ready. These partnerships can offer internships, dual enrollment, and other opportunities to provide students with postsecondary experiences that will prepare them for college and careers. In addition, community partnerships help inform standards and expectations across the PK–20 system and provide supports for more seamless transitions from high school to college.
3. Students can be active participants throughout their education in exploring interests, aspirations, and options that may influence their postsecondary pathways. Counselors, students, and parents can partner to ensure that students are receiving the necessary supports to embark on these pathways after high school graduation.
4. Districts can support these efforts by developing a comprehensive approach that is aligned with student and community needs and that provides multiple options and pathways for students. The development of a vision that underlies these efforts can help a district move forward in building a coherent and comprehensive approach to engage a range of stakeholders. Stakeholders can then contribute to the development of a collective mission and participate in ways that can positively impact the economic well-being of the broader community.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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For more information on Long Beach's Linked Learning initiative, see [http://www.lbschools.net/Main\\_Offices/High\\_Schools/Linked\\_Learning/](http://www.lbschools.net/Main_Offices/High_Schools/Linked_Learning/)

For more information on Linked Learning, see [http://www.connectedcalifornia.org/linked\\_learning](http://www.connectedcalifornia.org/linked_learning)

For more information on the Albuquerque Public Schools advisory system for Grades 6–12, see [https://aps.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab\\_tab\\_group\\_id=null&url=/webapps/blackboard/execute/courseMain?course\\_id=\\_197018\\_1](https://aps.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_tab_group_id=null&url=/webapps/blackboard/execute/courseMain?course_id=_197018_1)

Information on the Albuquerque Public Schools student-led conference process can be found in the Student and Family Guides, which are available in English and Spanish, at <http://www.aps.edu/parents/student-and-family-guides>

More information on Philadelphia's College and Career Awareness resources and programs is available at <http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/c/ccawareness> and at <http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/s/oss/programs-services/csap>

To view resources provided to students and families through Philadelphia's StudentNet, see [www.philasd.org/offices/studentnet](http://www.philasd.org/offices/studentnet)

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