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COLLABORATION IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

## K-12 Districts' Existing and Desired Partnerships With Institutions of Higher Education

August, 2007

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## Executive Summary

As public schools work to prepare children for the future, partnerships with institutions of higher education (IHEs) can help to strengthen students' achievement in grades K-12. Such collaborations can provide increased opportunities for academic success and improve students' transitions from elementary levels through high school and on to higher education. Given these potential benefits, the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) and the University of California (UC) agreed to form P-20 regional alliances in order to strengthen and expand such partnerships, with one area of focus being Los Angeles County (CCSESA Region 11). As a result, the *Building Educational Success Through (BEST) Collaboration in Los Angeles County* initiative was undertaken, with the goal of improving the web of collaborations between districts and IHEs.

An initial step toward achieving this goal is to explore existing partnerships, documenting participants and the various activities in which they are engaged. The purpose of this report is to provide information about the types of partnerships that currently exist between Los Angeles County public school districts and IHEs. Districts' desired partnerships and collaborative activities are also reported in order to provide suggestions for future directions.

## Data Collection

Working together, the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) developed an online questionnaire intended to collect information about the types of collaborations in which K-12 public school districts were participating, their IHE partners, and any new or expanded partnerships they would like to have in the future. Superintendents of each eligible district first received an e-mail describing the purpose of the online questionnaire and a link to a brief introductory video by LACOE Superintendent Darline P. Robles and UCLA Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships (APEP) Co-Chair and Graduate School of Education & Information Studies (GSE&IS) Dean Aimée Dorr. The e-mail also provided a link to the online questionnaire, where superintendents and staff entered the information pertaining to their district and submitted it to LACOE, which provided final data to UCLA for analysis.

## Key Findings

About half (45) of the 87 public school districts in Los Angeles County responded to the online questionnaire. From their responses, the following findings emerged:

- ❖ All districts reported collaborating with at least one IHE partner.

- ❖ Half of these districts reported participating in one collaboration, and half reported participating in multiple collaborations.
- ❖ The majority of districts reported having only one lead IHE partner, regardless of their number of collaborations.
- ❖ Almost half of the lead IHEs identified by the districts as their collaborators were reported by them to participate in one partnership with a single district.
- ❖ Private colleges/universities and community colleges, both of which are numerous in Los Angeles County, were reported to be the lead IHEs for most districts. The one UC campus and five CSU campuses in Los Angeles County were all reported to be involved in partnerships.
- ❖ Many collaborations were reported to involve more than one type of activity.
- ❖ The most common types of collaborative activities were professional development opportunities for teachers and mentoring/tutoring for students.
- ❖ More than half of all collaborations were managed at the school, not district, level.
- ❖ Approximately half of all collaborations for which duration was reported had existed for less than two years.
- ❖ Many collaborations were funded from more than one type of source, with federal and district sources the most common.
- ❖ Of the 19 districts that provided information about their desired collaborations, leadership development for administrators and/or aspiring administrators, professional development for teachers, mentoring/tutoring for students, and creating high achieving college-going environments were the most commonly requested activities.
- ❖ Of the 16 districts that provided information about their desired IHE partners, many indicated a desire for new partners, with more than half of these districts wanting partnerships with either private colleges/universities or CSU campuses.

## Future Directions

This study reveals that a variety of partnerships between K-12 public school districts and IHEs currently exists in Los Angeles County, covering a wide span of activities. However, many IHEs were participating in only one collaboration, and several districts reported a desire to foster new and expanded collaborations with IHEs. Such desires provide a direction for the future, as partnerships can be expanded to include more activities and participants and new collaborations can be forged. Working together, districts and IHEs can collaborate to improve the academic success of elementary through high school students, helping them to achieve their goals and increasing their ability to succeed in higher education.

# K-12 Districts' Existing and Desired Partnerships With Institutions of Higher Education

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As public schools work to prepare children for the future, the opportunity to collaborate with institutions of higher education (IHEs) can provide a beneficial experience for students and educators at all levels. These partnerships provide elementary, middle, and high schools with assistance in areas such as mentoring students or offering professional development opportunities for teachers as well enable IHEs to offer valuable experiences to their own students and faculty. Importantly, such partnerships can help to strengthen students' achievement in grades K-12, providing increased opportunities for academic success and improving students' transitions from elementary levels through high school and on to higher education.

Given the potential benefits of such partnerships between districts and IHEs, Jack O'Connell, the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, convened the P-16 Council in 2005. Its purpose is to create "strategies to better coordinate, integrate, and improve education for California students from preschool through college."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) and the University of California (UC) agreed to form P-20 regional alliances to examine and improve these partnerships, with one area of focus being Los Angeles County (CCSESA Region 11). As a result, the *Building Educational Success Through (BEST) Collaboration in Los Angeles County* initiative was undertaken, which "intends to create a web of such collaborations so that they can learn from each other, avoid duplication and enhance synergy, band together when useful, and support new collaborations in their efforts to improve K-12 public schools in Los Angeles County."<sup>2</sup> More information on the *BEST* initiative, including conference reports and resource guides, is available at <http://apep-bestla.gseis.ucla.edu/>.

An initial step toward the creation and implementation of the goals of the *BEST Collaboration in LA County* initiative is the documentation of existing partnerships, including information about the participants and the types of collaborations in which they are engaged. Currently, there is limited information about the number and focus of existing partnerships in California, including those in schools in Los Angeles County. The purpose of this report is to provide information about the types of partnerships that currently exist between public school districts and IHEs in Los Angeles County. In addition, districts' desired partnerships and collaborative activities are also reported in order to provide suggestions for future partnerships which can further benefit the students of Los Angeles County.

## Data Collection

Working together, the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) developed an online questionnaire intended to collect information

*Partnerships between K-12 districts and institutions of higher education (IHEs) help strengthen student achievement.*

*LACOE and UCLA created the BEST Collaboration in LA County initiative to support a web of effective district-IHE partnerships.*

*This report provides information about partnerships between K-12 districts and IHEs in Los Angeles County.*

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1 California Department of Education. (2005). *State Schools Chief O'Connell Names Members to P-16 Council*. Retrieved June 25, 2007 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr05/yr05rel42.asp>.

2 Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships. (2007). *BEST Collaboration in LA County*. Retrieved July 5, 2007 from <http://apep-bestla.gseis.ucla.edu/>.

from districts about the types of partnerships in which they are currently participating as well as collaborations they would like to form in the future. The project has two phases. First, all K-12 public school districts and LAUSD local districts serving the general student population were asked to complete the online questionnaire. Independent, charter, special education, and continuation schools were not included in the study. This report shares the results of districts' responses regarding collaborations with IHEs and does not consider the views of the IHEs themselves. In the next phase of this information gathering project, the online questionnaire will be modified and sent to IHEs in order for them to provide similar information about their existing and desired partnerships as well as to comment on any information provided by their partnering school districts.

*An online questionnaire about existing and desired partnerships and activities was sent to all district superintendents in LA County.*

*The Online Questionnaire.* The questionnaire was first developed in 2005 through collaborative efforts by LACOE and UCLA, undergoing numerous revisions and testing cycles. People who were experienced in working with school collaborations reviewed the questionnaire and provided feedback. Two groups of superintendents piloted versions of the questionnaire, and changes were made based on their recommendations. Further details regarding the formulation of the questionnaire and data collection are available in the Technical Appendix.

The questionnaire contained three sections. The first section prompted districts to enter information about their existing collaborations: the collaboration name; whether the collaboration was primarily managed at a district or school level; participating schools; and the primary IHE for the collaboration, as well as any other participating IHEs. Districts were also presented with a list of 14 different types of activities and encouraged to note all activities that applied to each collaboration. Space was provided for districts to describe activities outside of those listed. Districts were then prompted for information regarding the duration of each activity within a collaboration (more or less than two years) as well as the source of funding (e.g., federal, state, or district).

The second and third sections of the questionnaire asked for information about desired new or expanded collaborative activities and partnerships beyond those in which districts were already participating. Once again, lists of activities and IHEs were provided, as well as space for districts to fill in any other types of activities on which they wanted to collaborate with an IHE. Districts were also prompted to rank their desired activities and IHE partners, indicating which selected activities and partners were most important to them.

*Process.* Superintendents of each eligible district first received an e-mail describing the purpose of the online questionnaire and a link to a brief introductory video by LACOE Superintendent Darline P. Robles and UCLA Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships (APEP) Co-Chair and Graduate School of Education & Information Studies (GSE&IS) Dean Aimée Dorr. The e-mail also provided a link to the online questionnaire, where users could create their own password to ensure privacy.

Districts submitted information regarding their partnerships and collaborations between November 2005 and March 2006 through the online questionnaire. Those that did not respond were sent a follow-up e-mail, and Superintendent Robles also called or provided informal reminders to superintendents of those districts. Questionnaire responses were then recorded in a PDF form that was returned to district superintendents for their review and, if necessary, revision. Revisions were returned to LACOE and any necessary corrections made in the database. Data were then provided to UCLA for analysis.

*45 of 87 districts completed the online questionnaire. All reported collaborating with at least one IHE partner.*

## **Reported Partnerships Between K-12 Districts and IHEs**

Of the 87 districts in Los Angeles County (with LAUSD divided into local districts 1-8), about half (45 districts; 51.7%) responded to the survey. All reported having partnerships with IHEs. Among these districts, 103 collaborations were listed. However, fourteen of these collaborations involved student teaching partnerships or partnerships with institutions other than IHEs, which

are not included in this report. These fourteen collaborations were dropped from further analyses, resulting in 41 districts and 89 collaborations. As districts had the option of not responding to all items on the survey, findings for each section are based on those collaborations for which relevant information was provided.

Although the number of collaborations per district ranged from one to 16, with an average of 2.2 collaborations per district (standard deviation [SD]=1.9), half of all districts (51.2%) reported participating in just one collaboration. Some districts (36.6%) had two or three collaborations, and only a few (12.2%) had four or more collaborations. Thus, it appears that there was wide variation in the number of collaborations per district, with half of the districts choosing to participate in one collaboration and half choosing to participate in two or more collaborations.

### ***How Many IHEs Were Participating in Partnerships With K-12 Districts?***

Districts provided information about their partner IHEs for 87 (of 89 total) collaborations. Many (65.9%) of the 41 districts reported having just one lead IHE partner, regardless of their number of collaborations. Some districts (22.0%) had two or three lead IHE partners, and the remaining districts (12.1%) had four or more lead IHE partners, with one having as many as 11 different lead IHE partners.

In total, 36 different IHEs were listed as lead partners for these 87 collaborations.<sup>3</sup> Half of these lead IHEs (50.0%) were each identified as a partner by only one district, with most of the remaining IHEs (41.7%) identified by two to four districts. Very few IHEs (8.3%) were identified as partners by five or more different districts.

In general, districts reported one rather than several different collaborations with each IHE with whom they had a partnership. About half the lead IHEs (47.2%) were reported to have only one collaboration, and a little less than half (41.7%), to have two to four collaborations. The remaining IHEs (11.1%) were reported to have seven or more collaborations, with one IHE having as many as 16. Most lead IHEs were the only IHEs in the partnership. Most collaborations (73.6%) involved only one IHE, and many of the remaining collaborations (23.0%) involved just two IHEs. Very few collaborations (3.4%) involved three or more IHE partners.

Thus, as reported by districts, almost half of all identified lead IHEs participated in only one collaboration with only one district. It is important to note, however, that collaborations often encompassed more than one type of activity, and thus a single collaboration may have involved multiple strategies to improve K-12 student achievement.

### ***What Types of IHEs Were Participating in Partnerships With K-12 Districts?***

Each IHE was classified as one of four types: California Community College campuses, California State University campuses (CSUs), private colleges and universities, and University of California campuses (UCs). Of the 36 different lead IHEs identified by districts, the majority of IHEs were private colleges/universities, followed by community college campuses (see Table 1). However, it is important to note that there are varying numbers of each type of IHE present in Los Angeles County, and the data reported by the districts indicated that most partnerships (83.3%) took place with an IHE located in Los Angeles County. Thus, although involved in fewer total partnerships, all CSU and UC campuses in Los Angeles County were involved in at least one partnership with a district. Most private colleges/universities in the area were also involved in partnerships, and about half of all

*Half of the districts reported participating in one collaboration; half reported participating in multiple collaborations.*

*The majority of districts reported having only one lead IHE partner, regardless of their number of collaborations.*

*Almost half of all lead IHEs ever identified by a district were identified by a single district.*

<sup>3</sup> Three districts listed multiple lead IHE partners for a single collaboration. One district listed two IHEs (one private college/university and one community college) as lead partners for its collaboration, another district listed four private colleges/universities, and a third district listed four private colleges/universities and two CSUs as lead partners for a collaboration. All of these IHEs were included in this section as lead IHEs.

*At least half of the private colleges/universities and community colleges were involved in partnerships, and they were lead IHEs for most districts. All CSU and UC campuses in LA County were involved in partnerships.*

community college campuses were reported to participate in partnerships with K-12 districts.

Some IHEs also served as secondary partners in collaborations. These IHEs were most likely to be CSU campuses (7 collaborations), community colleges (6 collaborations), and private colleges/universities (6 collaborations). They were least likely to be UC campuses (3 collaborations). As previously noted, however, different numbers of each type of IHE are present in Los Angeles County and could serve as secondary partners.

**Table 1:** Number and percent of different types of institutions of higher education (IHEs) in Los Angeles County that were identified by districts as their partners

Type of IHE	Number of IHEs Involved in Partnerships (total n=30)	Number of IHEs in LA County	Percent of IHEs Involved in Partnerships
Private College/University	12	16	75.0
Community College Campus	12	23	52.2
CSU Campus	5	5	100.0
UC Campus	1	1	100.0

*Note.* Six districts collaborated with IHEs outside of but close to Los Angeles County. These additional IHEs are of the following types: 3 private colleges/universities, 2 CSU campuses, and 1 UC campus.

***What Types of Activities Were Included in IHE and K-12 District Collaborations?***

*Many collaborations involved more than one type of activity to improve student achievement.*

Five collaborations did not provide information about the types of activities in which they were engaged and were dropped from analyses for this section, resulting in 84 collaborations reported by 39 districts. These collaborations often involved more than one type of activity, with many (59.5%) involving at least two or more types of activities.

The most common types of activities found in these collaborations were professional development opportunities for teachers and mentoring/tutoring of elementary, middle, or high school students (see Table 2). Such activities have the potential to directly impact student achievement by increasing teachers’ strategies to educate children of varying abilities and strengths and also by allowing students from IHEs to mentor and tutor younger children in positive ways, both strengthening academic performance and acting as role models. Least common activities were those involving the use of technology to enable student and teacher learning, the costs or financing of higher education, and school climate/safety. Such activities might be viewed as less directly related to student achievement and thus may have received less attention in partnerships between districts and IHEs.

**Table 2:** Number and percent of collaborations engaging in various types of activities

Activity Type	Number of Collaborations (total n=84)	Percent of Collaborations Reporting Each Type of Activity
Professional development for teachers	47	56.0
Mentoring/tutoring for students	45	53.6
Creating high achieving college-going environments in K-12 schools	32	38.1
Developing a rigorous college preparatory curriculum	27	32.1
Engagement with parents	18	21.4
Leadership development for administrators and/or aspiring administrators	17	20.2
Assistance in data analysis and evaluation	17	20.2
Recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers	16	19.0
Assistance in working with low performing schools	16	19.0
Research	13	15.5
Engagement with community-based organizations	13	15.5
Use of technology in enabling student and teacher learning	10	11.9
Costs of/financing of higher education	9	10.7
School climate/safety	6	7.1
Other <sup>4</sup>	5	6.0

*The most frequent types of collaborative activities were professional development opportunities for teachers and mentoring/tutoring for students.*

***At What Level and for How Long Have Reported Collaborations Existed?***

All 89 collaborations provided information about the management level of their collaborations. Many collaborations (59.6%) were managed at the level of individual schools, and the remaining collaborations were managed at the district level.

*More than half of all collaborations were managed at the school level.*

<sup>4</sup> Five collaborations listed activities that they defined as “Other” in addition to at least one of the 14 pre-selected activities. Of these, four collaborations listed “articulation of program sequences,” and one collaboration listed IHE funding for teachers to teach a Saturday Math Academy as well as providing a counselor to its schools.

*About half of all collaborations had existed for fewer than two years.*

Eighty-six collaborations (40 districts) provided information about whether each partnership activity had lasted fewer than two years or two or more years. It was not uncommon for different activities to have started at different times. Here, if any partnership activity had been in operation for two or more years, the partnership was considered to have existed that long. Approximately half (54.7%) of the reporting collaborations had existed for less than two years, and the remaining collaborations had existed for two or more years. Thus, it appears that districts and IHEs are continuing to create new partnerships to improve student achievement in grades K-12. Whether there is an overall increase in the number of partnerships active at any one time cannot be determined from the available data.

### ***What Are the Sources of Funding for Collaborations?***

*Many collaborations were supported by more than one type of fund source.*

Seventy-nine of the 89 collaborations (37 districts) provided information about the sources of funding for each of the activities included in the partnership. Different activities often had different fund sources. As with duration, funding sources for all collaborative activities are combined and reported as fund sources for the entire collaboration.

As reported by the districts, the average number of different types of fund sources was 2.8 (SD=1.6) per district. About half (45.6%) of the individual collaborations received funding from a single source. Most collaborations received funding from federal or district sources, followed by funding from IHEs or the state (see Table 3). Funding was least likely to be obtained through private foundations, individual schools, or grants.

**Table 3:** Number and percent of collaborations with each type of funding source

Funding Source	Number of Collaborations (total n=79)	Percent of Collaborations Reporting Each Fund Source
Federal	38	48.1
District	35	44.3
IHE	28	35.4
State	25	31.6
Private	9	11.4
Grant	9	11.4
School	7	8.9
Other <sup>5</sup>	4	5.1

*Most collaborations included activities funded by federal or district sources.*

### **Desired New or Expanded Collaborative Activities**

Nineteen districts provided information about the types of collaborative activities in which they would like to participate with IHEs in the future. On average, these districts were already participating in 1.5 collaborations (SD=1.1), slightly less than the total sample of districts, and more than half (57.9%) were participating in only one collaboration. Districts indicated that they wanted to either expand existing activities or participate in new ones, with about half (47.4%) indicating that they would like to participate in one to three new or expanded activities. Districts were slightly more likely to indicate that they wanted to participate in new activities rather than expand existing ones; 60.5% of all activities listed were not already part of an existing collaboration. However, the high

<sup>5</sup> Three collaborations provided no information on the “other” source of funding. One collaboration listed “Community Service Credit.”

rate at which districts indicated that they wanted to expand already existing activities indicates that they viewed these collaborations as worthwhile.

The activity desired by the largest number of districts was leadership development for administrators and/or aspiring administrators, followed by mentoring/tutoring for students, professional development for teachers, and creating high achieving college-going environments (see Table 4). Districts that identified these activities as desirable at all also tended to rank them as highly desirable. In general, the number of districts desiring an activity at all was well related to how desirable they found the activity. This suggests that districts viewed similar activities as important. Activities regarding school climate/safety and developing a rigorous college preparatory curriculum were desired by the smallest number of districts and were ranked the lowest by those districts desiring them at all.

**Table 4:** Number and percent of districts desiring each type of activity and average and range of priority ranking for those activities desired at all

Activity Type	Number of Districts (total n=19)	Percent of Districts Desiring Each Activity	Average Rank (Range)
Leadership development for administrators and/or aspiring administrators	11	57.9	2.7 (1-5)
Mentoring/tutoring for students	8	42.1	1.8 (1-6)
Professional development for teachers	8	42.1	2.1 (1-7)
Creating high achieving college-going environments in K-12 schools	8	42.1	3.6 (1-8)
Recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers	7	36.8	4.3 (1-9)
Assistance in data analysis and evaluation	5	26.3	3.8 (2-6)
Assistance in working with low performing schools	5	26.3	4.2 (3-6)
Research	5	26.3	4.4 (1-8)
Use of technology in enabling student and teacher learning	5	26.3	4.4 (2-7)
Engagement with community-based organizations	5	26.3	5.6 (2-12)
Engagement with parents	4	21.1	5.5 (1-11)
Costs of/financing of higher education	4	21.1	6.0 (1-10)
School climate/safety	3	15.8	8.0 (2-13)
Developing a rigorous college preparatory curriculum	2	10.5	6.5 (3-10)
Other <sup>6</sup>	1	5.3	1 (1)

*Districts wanted more assistance with leadership development for administrators and/or aspiring administrators, professional development for teachers, mentoring/tutoring for students, and creating high achieving college-going environments.*

<sup>6</sup> Entered "Curriculum alignment in CTE."

## Desired New or Expanded Partnerships With IHEs

*Many districts wanted new IHE partners, most often private colleges/universities or CSU campuses.*

Sixteen districts provided information about IHEs with which they would like to either form new partnerships or expand existing partnerships. On average, districts provided the names of 2.3 IHEs (SD=1.1). They were more likely to indicate a desire for partnerships with IHEs with which they were not already collaborating, as many (70.3%) of the designated IHEs would be new partners with the district. These desired partnerships were equally likely to involve either private colleges/universities or CSUs (32.4% each) and least likely to involve community colleges (13.5%).

One factor in districts' choice of IHE partners may have been the distance between their schools and the IHEs, as several districts included comments that proximity to an IHE made it a desirable partner. However, districts selected IHEs that were an average of 21.8 miles from their district headquarters (SD=19.2), and only some (37.8%) desired IHE partners were within 15 miles of the district office. Therefore, although proximity of an IHE to the district may be attractive, districts were also willing to collaborate with more distant IHEs, presumably because these IHEs offer opportunities that cannot be achieved with closer IHEs.

## Summary and Future Directions

This study revealed that a variety of partnerships between K-12 public school districts and IHEs currently exist in Los Angeles County. These collaborations encompass a wide variety of activities, with the most common being professional development opportunities for teachers and mentoring/tutoring for students. These activities have the potential to directly impact student achievement, and such partnerships might help K-12 students' learning and development in these important years. Furthermore, collaborations tend to involve more than one type of activity, suggesting that they are often multifaceted. They are supported by funds from various sources, most commonly either the federal or state government.

A variety of IHE partners is involved in these collaborations. The few CSU and UC campuses in Los Angeles County are all partnered with at least one district. Not all of the much more numerous private colleges/universities or community colleges are partnered. Overall, however, many more of the district-IHE collaborations in Los Angeles County are with private colleges/universities and community colleges than with CSU and UC campuses. Among all IHEs that participate in any collaboration, about half participate in just one.

The questionnaire findings indicate that K-12 districts and IHEs in Los Angeles County are currently engaged in an extensive network of collaborations. They also indicate that more work is quite possible and often desired. More than half of the reported collaborations are less than two years old, indicating that the creation of partnerships is an ongoing activity. Moreover, several districts reported a desire to foster new and expanded collaborations with IHEs. In particular, districts seek activities focusing on leadership development for administrators, professional development for teachers, mentoring/tutoring for students, and creating high achieving college-going environments, and districts seem to recognize the potential benefits for their students from partnerships with IHEs. Such desires provide a direction for the future, as partnerships can be expanded to include more activities and participants and new collaborations can be forged.

It is important to note that although half of the eligible districts responded to the online questionnaire, which is an impressive response rate for a survey, half of the districts did not. Would similar patterns have emerged if all districts had provided information about their collaborations? Two likely possibilities emerge. It is quite possible that districts that did not respond to the survey were participating in collaborations with IHEs in ways comparable to those districts that did respond, in which case the findings of this report would remain unchanged if all districts had responded to the survey. However, it is also possible that districts that did not respond to the questionnaire were not involved in collaborations and not very interested in developing them, in which case the

findings in this report overestimate the extent of collaborations in Los Angeles County as a whole. Although possible, it seems unlikely that districts that did not respond were participating in more collaborations with IHEs than those that did respond, as such a high level of interest would likely have led those districts to participate in this study. Of the two plausible expectations if all districts had responded to the questionnaire, an informal examination of some of UCLA's collaborations suggests that the first possibility is more likely. Of 13 different districts with which UCLA is known to collaborate in its Academic Preparation and Educational Partnership (APEP) programs, just one responded to the questionnaire and reported the collaboration, suggesting that many of the districts that did not complete the questionnaire would also have had ongoing collaborations to report.

Collaborations between districts and IHEs can benefit students' achievement in kindergarten through high school, offering opportunities and academic support that might not be otherwise available. They also benefit IHEs' own teaching, research, and service activities and enrich their student body with graduates of local high schools. By publicizing the types of partnerships that currently exist, districts and IHEs can choose either to join collaborations that meet their needs or to create new partnerships to fill perceived gaps. Working together, districts and IHEs can collaborate to improve the academic success of K-12 students, helping them to achieve their goals and increasing their abilities to succeed in higher education.

*In Los Angeles County, K-12 districts and IHEs are collaborating to improve student achievement. Many districts would like to do more.*

# Technical Appendix

## Goals

This study had two primary goals. First, it sought to determine the types of collaborations that currently exist between K-12 public school districts and IHEs, including information about their activities and the IHEs involved. This information is necessary in order to further develop the collaborative network of educational institutions in Los Angeles County, determining where new partnerships are needed and avoiding redundancy. Second, this study intended to provide direction for future partnerships between districts and IHEs, as districts were asked to provide information about desired new or expanded partnerships with IHEs and collaborative activities. As a second phase of the project (not included in this report), IHEs will be asked to provide information about the K-12 district partnerships in which they are currently participating, review any information provided by districts regarding existing collaborations with the IHEs, and indicate their desires for new or expanded partnerships and activities.

## Participants

Working together as partners in the *BEST Collaboration in LA County*, LACOE and UCLA first addressed which districts and IHEs to include in the full study. All K-12 public school districts serving the general student population were asked to participate in this study; private, religious, charter, special education, or continuation schools did not participate. Given its large size, Los Angeles Unified School District was represented by its 8 local districts. The total number of districts so identified was 87. Of these, 45 responded via the district superintendent and comprise the participants in the research reported here.

The second phase of the research will involve IHEs as participants. IHEs were selected for the first phase in order to ensure that all IHE participants were included in menu options in the district questionnaire. In selecting IHEs, all 23 community colleges and 16 independent, not-for-profit IHEs located in Los Angeles County were included in the list of potential partners. However, all 10 UC and 23 CSU campuses across the state were included. This was done because it was known that some campuses in northern California had active engagement with districts in Los Angeles County, motivated primarily by an interest in recruiting their students to the campus as freshmen. Yet when examining the data, it appeared that partnerships involving CSU and UC campuses were also constrained by location, as those listed by collaborating districts tended to be either in or very near Los Angeles County. Thus, the report focuses on IHEs in or very near Los Angeles County rather than across the state.

## Online Questionnaire

Both LACOE and UCLA were involved in the conceptual work for this study, formulating the items of the questionnaire and determining likely response choices. As the questionnaire was designed, input and feedback were solicited from people familiar with collaborations between districts and IHEs, and their suggestions about possible questions and responses were incorporated into the design of the questionnaire. Two different groups of superintendents piloted the questionnaire. The first group met together with the leadership and technical team to review an early version of the complete questionnaire online; the second group beta tested the online questionnaire individually in their district offices. Feedback from each group was incorporated into the next version of the questionnaire. Once complete, the questionnaire was tested by both LACOE and UCLA to ensure that online responses from the districts would be accurately and automatically entered into a database for subsequent analysis. LACOE was responsible for the technical work, including

the programming of the online questionnaire, the introductory e-mails that described the study to superintendents, and the creation of the final database. This database was then provided to UCLA, which completed the data analysis and writing of the final report.

The online questionnaire consisted of three sections that could have been completed in any order. The first section was designed to collect information about existing collaborations between districts and IHEs, and superintendents were encouraged to seek input from personnel who were familiar with various collaborations throughout the district. Users were first prompted to enter the name of the collaboration and the level at which the collaboration was managed (either district or school). Next, they were asked to list the individual schools involved in the collaboration, either selecting them from a pull-down menu or typing in the name of a school not included in the menu. Users were then asked to select the lead IHE partner from a pull-down menu of the previously mentioned IHEs. The next screen listed 14 different activities (listed in Table 2 of the report), and users were urged to check all activities that applied to the collaboration. Space was also provided to enter activity descriptions if the user selected “Other.” For each type of activity within the collaboration, users were asked to select the duration of the activity (either less than 2 years or 2 or more years) as well as the funding source. The seven different funding sources listed in Table 3 of the report were provided in a menu, and users were urged to select all that applied. In addition, space was provided to identify any other funding source. Users were next prompted for the name of any other participating IHEs in the collaboration and asked to write in the contact information for both the district and IHE people associated with the collaboration. Finally, users had the opportunity to write, in their own words, any other comments about the collaboration. Users could enter information for multiple collaborations, and at any point the information could be saved and returned to at a later period. Until the superintendent certified that questionnaire responses were complete, any response could be changed.

The second and third sections of the questionnaire prompted superintendents for information about desired new or expanded collaborative activities or IHE partners in addition to those with which they were already participating. Users were presented with the previously mentioned list of 14 activities and asked to check any in which they would like to participate in the future, as well as having the option of writing in another activity. Next, they were asked to rank each of the activities that they had chosen as desired new or expanded activities according to how much they desired it. In the third section, users were presented with the menu of IHEs and asked to select those with which they would like to collaborate in the future, in either new or expanded partnerships. As with desired activities, they were then asked to rank the IHEs they selected as well as provide comments as to why they chose each IHE.

## Process

Superintendents of each eligible district first received an e-mail describing the purpose of the online questionnaire and a link to a brief introductory video by LACOE Superintendent Darline P. Robles and UCLA Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships (APEP) Co-Chair and Graduate School of Education & Information Studies (GSE&IS) Dean Aimée Dorr. The e-mail also provided a link to the online questionnaire, where users could create their own password to ensure privacy. Superintendents were encouraged to involve people familiar with the various collaborations within the district in completing the questionnaire, and multiple people could enter information into the questionnaire using the correct log-in information. When these entries were complete, the superintendent was asked to certify that the information was final.

Districts submitted information on their partnerships and collaborations between November 2005 and March 2006 through the online questionnaire. Those that did not respond were sent a follow-up e-mail, and Superintendent Robles also called or provided informal reminders to superintendents of those districts. Data from each district’s questionnaire were summarized in a PDF form that

was returned to the districts for their review and, if necessary, revision. Only three revisions were returned to LACOE; necessary corrections were made in the database.

## Data Analysis

Data received from the districts were entered into an Excel spreadsheet by LACOE and provided to UCLA for analysis. The data were then imported into SPSS 11, and the following changes were made to the dataset:

- ❖ Eleven collaborations that focused exclusively on student teaching, as indicated either through the selection of “Other – student teaching” as an activity or through the collaboration name, were removed from the dataset.
- ❖ Three collaborations with partners other than IHEs were removed from the dataset.
- ❖ Four activities marked as “Other” but whose descriptions matched one of the 14 listed activities were re-coded as the corresponding activity.
- ❖ Three funding sources marked as “Other” but whose descriptions matched one of the seven listed funding sources were re-coded as the corresponding source.
- ❖ If no IHE partner was listed but an IHE was mentioned in the collaboration name, this IHE was entered as the lead partner. The pull-down menu of IHEs included all not-for-profit IHEs in Los Angeles County, but some districts reported collaborating with for-profit institutions and thus their names were not found in the menu. Three lead IHEs were identified based on collaboration names and added to the database.
- ❖ Eight collaborations listed no lead IHE but entered a secondary IHE partner; this IHE was entered as the lead IHE.
- ❖ If no lead IHE was entered but both a second and third IHE were listed, or if multiple IHE names were included as lead IHEs, all IHEs listed were entered as lead IHEs. Three collaborations had multiple lead IHEs.

In order to calculate the distance from the district office to the desired IHE partner, the addresses of the district office and IHE were copied from the district/IHE homepage or, if no address was provided on the homepage, from the contact page. One district did not have a website, and the district office was called and provided an address. Based on these addresses, Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com>) was used to calculate the distance between district office and IHE.

Frequencies, averages, standard deviations, and percentages were then calculated for the database using both SPSS and Excel and included in the report.

## Acknowledgements

This research was supported by UCLA P-20 Regional Partnership funds from the University of California and the resources of the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). Led by Aimée Dorr, UCLA, and Darline P. Robles, LACOE, it was made possible by contributions from many people. Superintendents and staff from 45 districts in Los Angeles County completed the questionnaire, providing the data. Several superintendents assisted in pilot testing various versions of the questionnaire. At UCLA, in addition to the two graduate researchers who are the lead authors of this report, the research benefited from the contributions of graduate student researcher Anthony Dunbar, UCLA Academic Preparation and Educational Partnership (APEP) Executive Committee members, and APEP Co-Chair, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Janina Montero. At LACOE, the Educational Technologies Network was responsible for all technical aspects of the project. Director Richard Quinones led the effort throughout. Others who contributed technical expertise include Don Molter, Rich Gibson, Khai Nguyen, and Ian Douglas. Angel Singleton and Donna Carraway provided logistical support and participant follow-up.

