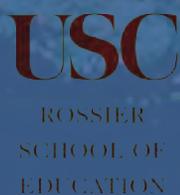

BUILDING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS THROUGH

COLLABORATION IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Engaging Parents as Partners in Creating College Going Cultures: A Resource Guide

June 2007

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CENTINELA VALLEY UNION
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Melissa Friedman MacDonald and Aimée Dorr
University of California, Los Angeles
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Ensuring college readiness and access for all students has been a longstanding concern for educators throughout Los Angeles County. Because parents influence student achievement and college going, increasing parent engagement in the college process has been one focus in regional efforts to improve college preparedness and college going. Prepared as part of the *Building Educational Success Through (BEST) Collaboration in Los Angeles County* initiative, this report is meant to serve as a resource for regional educators striving to develop and/or improve parental involvement programs aimed at creating college going cultures in their schools. More information about the *BEST Collaboration in Los Angeles County* initiative and other publications of the initiative can be found at <http://apep-bestla.gseis.ucla.edu/>.

Building upon the work of previous *BEST* conferences which have focused broadly on creating college going cultures in high schools, this report provides detailed information regarding one important aspect of such cultures: parental involvement. The content is drawn from multiple sources associated with the *BEST* initiative, particularly the April 26, 2007 *BEST* conference “Engaging Parents as Partners in Creating College Going Cultures.” Conference participants from five successful partnerships of school districts and institutions of higher education from across LA County and from the Los Angeles County Office of Education provided information about existing parent program models, effective program features and activities, and areas of concern. Two of the conference panelists provided their particular perspectives on what works and what does not work. The panel moderator, an expert on college access, summarized research evidence on what works, and *BEST* staff compiled a list of existing local parent programs (see Appendix A) and a set of recommended readings (see Appendix B). Brought together in this guide, these various resources offer a wealth of information, ideas, inspirations, and cautions to those interested in engaging parents in creating college going cultures.

Factors that Influence Parental Involvement in the College Process

Both family status (e.g., income, education, ethnicity, marital status) and school factors are related to parent involvement. In particular, parent perceptions of the school environment are critical determinants of their involvement. Parental views of teacher roles, the nature of teacher-parent communication, and parental perceptions of their degree of control over their children's success at school are all important predictors of parental engagement in general and as it relates to college preparation.

❖ Schools that understand the family characteristics of their students and provide welcoming, sensitive environments for parents are more successful in increasing parental involvement

In general, the amount of information parents receive and how comfortable they feel at school and in their communications with school staff, especially teachers, shape the extent to which parents become involved.

Implementing Parent Involvement Programs: Strategies and Activities

Build a Parent Network: Parents Listen to Other Parents

Word of mouth among parents is a powerful force that should not be underestimated when attempting to increase parental involvement in college going activities and programs. Parents value what other parents say and often listen more to their peers than to teachers, counselors, and administrators. For this reason, school staff should leverage already involved parents in the effort to build a broader parent network.

Schools can build a parent network by:

- ❖ Developing a parent peer college counseling model where parents of seniors seek out and mentor parents of incoming freshmen
- ❖ Including parents in the school leadership team and encouraging them to communicate information to other parents
- ❖ Educating parents to be advocates for parental involvement
- ❖ Teaching parents to navigate the college preparation process in high school (e.g., how to enroll their children in A-G courses, learn about and apply for financial aid, access and sign up for testing)
- ❖ Establishing mechanisms to communicate with parents in a welcoming manner, remembering that print materials such as monthly newsletters are useful and friendly personal phone calls from other parents and school staff can be especially effective
- ❖ Holding monthly social events (e.g., picnics, dinners) so that parents, students, and school staff can get together as a community
- ❖ Creating an infrastructure to support the development of college-minded parent cohorts beginning when their children are in ninth grade and offering a support system that meets regularly to discuss their children's academic experience and future plans, motivate one another, and collectively problem solve common challenges encountered in preparing their children for college

Develop a Comprehensive, Academic-Focused Parent Center

Many parent centers are social spaces instead of academic environments. Transforming parent centers from a place for socializing into a resource for college information and support is an effective mechanism for engaging parents in the college going process. In cases where there are both a parent center and a college center, there should be regular communication between the coordinators of both sites in order to provide relevant, accessible college education programs for parents.

Strategies for creating college-focused parent centers include:

- ❖ Hiring a full time parent liaison to manage the parent center, including parents in the interview process, and using Title I funds if applicable
- ❖ Creating a library for parents that includes books and other materials on topics such as learning languages, college requirements, testing, and financial aid
- ❖ Implementing effective parent retention strategies, including the following:
 - Inviting parents to fill out a raffle ticket each time they visit the center and/or participate in an event
 - Holding monthly raffles for retail gift certificates and/or trips to theme parks and sporting events (such prizes can be secured by parent liaisons who actively solicit donations from local businesses and vendors)
- ❖ Communicating information about center events and available resources via a monthly parent newsletter or bulletin that can also be posted on the school web site
- ❖ Soliciting parent input regarding the mission and goals of the parent center
- ❖ Sponsoring monthly parent meetings (see next section for specific strategies)

Create Parent Workshops at the School Site

In order to be active participants in their children's college trajectory, parents need information about how they can help and support each child in his/her college preparation process at home. Although most parents already possess a strong desire to help their children navigate the college process, many need more knowledge and skill to do so effectively.

For this reason, parent workshops held at the school site are powerful mechanisms for educating parents about college requirements and admission procedures. Presentations, literature, and worksheets are always useful. Especially effective and empowering is a workshop format in which parents carry out the processes needed to access, organize, and complete college documents. In addition, such workshops can provide meaningful opportunities for parents to network with one another.

Effective parent workshops can be developed by:

- ❖ Having parent advocates or people from the community with similar lived experiences teach the workshops because parents respond better to facilitators whom they can relate to and whom they perceive to be "like them"

- ❖ Ensuring that workshops are translated into English and Spanish (or other home language) so that all parents feel welcome to attend and participate
- ❖ Creating space in workshops for parents to share relevant testimonials, concerns, and questions
- ❖ Surveying parents for a list of workshop topics of interest to them and then planning relevant learning experiences
- ❖ Teaching parents about public schools and their history so that parents believe schools are responsible for educating their children well, feel empowered to criticize aspects of the school, and realize it is important to advocate for their children's education
- ❖ Educating parents about the entire college preparation process including necessary coursework, college forms (e.g., admissions, financial aid, testing), and the college application and admissions process (e.g., writing personal statements, acquiring letters of recommendation)
- ❖ Inviting recent high school graduates who are current college students to speak to parents about what is expected of their children in high school in order to successfully apply to and enroll in college
- ❖ Informing parents about existing college-related resources and support programs in their local communities
- ❖ Providing parents with information about funding opportunities available to their children (e.g., special scholarships, grants, loan programs)
- ❖ Holding workshops on Saturdays, in the evenings, or at other times at which working parents can participate
- ❖ Serving food at meetings
- ❖ Creating a parent leadership council that is led by parents, includes active participation from an administrator, holds meetings over a 1-3 hour period so that parents and administrators can "drop in," and allows parents to gather, hear one another's concerns, and collectively decide how to resolve the issues raised

Ensure that Parents Have Access to College Campuses

It is not enough merely to provide families with information about colleges and universities. Parents and students need to have first-hand experiences with institutions of higher education so that they can learn about and understand the academic and social culture. Parents and students need to feel comfortable on college campuses so that they can envision these academic spaces as relevant to them.

Suggestions for planning regular trips for families to visit local colleges and universities include:

- ❖ Inviting parents to accompany students on college visits to attend college classes and other activities with them or network with one another
- ❖ Holding college preparatory activities or other parent education workshops on a college campus so that parents become comfortable in these spaces
- ❖ Creating a “day in the life of a college student” program for parents in which a parent shadows a current university student for a day so that the parent can attend classes, experience residential life, and learn about the campus

Provide Parents with Relevant College Information Presented in Accessible Language

The vast majority of information about college requirements (e.g., coursework, testing), the college application process, and financial aid is presented in technical language that is not easily accessible to anyone who is not directly involved in college admissions. For this reason, much of the information that parents receive about college going is difficult to understand. School staff should make a concerted effort to provide parents with college information presented in an everyday, non-technical style and in the language that the parent speaks and reads.

Parent Involvement Programs from Other Perspectives

The suggestions presented so far reflect the perspectives expressed in small group discussions among participants in the April 2007 “Engaging Parents as Partners in Creating College Going Cultures” conference. Another perspective on the development of effective parent involvement programs comes from two experienced parent leaders, Ms. Mary Johnson and Ms. Guadalupe Torres, who created their own set of recommendations for this resource guide. In addition, Dr. Patricia McDonough, whose research focuses on creating college going cultures, provided the opportunity to include a summary of recommendations drawn from the research literature. The parent and scholar perspectives are presented below. There is a reassuring similarity in the main ideas in all three perspectives, those above and those below. There is also a useful diversity of ideas and of their expression, offering more opportunities to learn about how to create and sustain effective parent involvement in creating a college going culture.

***Drawing from Parent Leaders:
Recommendations for Promoting Parental Engagement in the College Process***

Collaborate with parents to create parent education workshops

- ❖ Build good relationships with parents by listening to their concerns and having them decide about the types of workshops that would best suit their needs
- ❖ Encourage parents to take a hands-on role in planning and implementing the workshops
- ❖ Develop workshops that not only provide information and resources, but also create a space for parents to share current and past experiences, to voice questions and concerns, and to be active and interactive with each other and any participating experts
- ❖ Hold all parent meetings in both English and Spanish
- ❖ Conduct parent meetings after school and in the evenings so that working parents can participate
- ❖ Have workshops taught by parent leaders or community members who represent parent interests and understand parent value systems, because parents respond best when they trust the facilitator and feel the he/she respects their lived experiences

Work with parents to develop a parent leadership council

- ❖ Present the need for a leadership council to parents in a parent workshop
- ❖ Conduct a survey of how parents think the council should be organized (e.g., types of positions, length of term for positions, responsibilities, meeting format and schedule) and include space for nominations for parent leaders
- ❖ Synthesize the survey results and distribute to parents
- ❖ Hold an election so that parents can vote for candidates
- ❖ Disseminate the information and collaborate with the elected leader to establish a meeting schedule and a mechanism for documenting and distributing meeting content

Include parents in school decision making, particularly budget meetings

- ❖ Give parents the opportunity to make suggestions about the school budget based on their perceptions of where the school needs improvement
- ❖ Solicit parental feedback using a questionnaire about school needs and budget allocations

Maintain full-time, college-oriented parent centers

- ❖ Keep parent centers regularly accessible to parents by having them open full time during and after the school day
- ❖ Involve parents in the hiring process for the parent center coordinator and, if possible, use Title I funds to support the coordinator
- ❖ Provide parents with a clearinghouse of college information and community resources, including books, lists of web sites, and listings of local parent organizations and social service agencies
- ❖ Partner with outside parent organizations in order to maximize the information and services available to parents

Drawing from the Research:

Lessons Learned from Studies on Parental Involvement Programs

- ❖ College access programs should take a holistic approach to parents, emphasizing the importance of self-esteem, parenting practices, communication, and empowerment
- ❖ There should be a focus on the relationship between the parents and the program to build trust and cultural sensitivity
- ❖ Parents of low-income and minority students need much knowledge about college preparation, finances, admissions, entrance examinations, and college life
- ❖ The admissions and financial aid process is unnecessarily mysterious and confusing to parents who should be encouraged to call the financial aid office and ask for an explanation of the process and/or financial aid offer
- ❖ Parents are particularly concerned about the rising college costs, loans, and the high costs of books
- ❖ African American and Latino parents are often discouraged by overburdened K-12 schools, negative press about affirmative action, and media reports on soaring college costs (the need for increased reliance on loans and the decreased availability of grants)
- ❖ Language problems and communication barriers with schools often impact parents in their attempts to motivate their children

Drawing from the Research:

Best Practices and Recommendations For College Access Programs Working with Parents

- ❖ Have parents invite new parents to increase attendance at workshops and events
- ❖ Mail flyers directly to parents with a follow-up phone call
- ❖ Provide written materials with clear college expectations and admissions requirements and in the language spoken by the parent(s)
- ❖ Attempt to provide access to college admissions officials on the high school campus
- ❖ Offer accurate financial aid and standardized testing information
- ❖ Secure resources for trips for students and parents to college campuses
- ❖ Ask questions tailored to individual student and family circumstances
- ❖ Include local parents who have succeeded in getting their child into college in the workshop planning and delivery
- ❖ Recognize that parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings collectively make up a support system
- ❖ Provide strategies for how parents can best help their students prepare for college at home
- ❖ Give parents information about how to help their students choose high school classes that are college preparatory

Conclusion

This resource guide has presented important practical information from three different sources about how to effectively engage parents as partners in the college process. Readers have encountered suggestions from conference participants who consisted of educators from across LA County, from two parent leaders, and from a researcher in college access. In addition, information about existing local parent programs and about further reading is provided in the two appendices. As a whole, this resource guide provides useful ideas and strategies for educators, researchers, and parents seeking to develop new parent involvement programs or to improve existing programs.

Appendix A

Local College-Related Parent Involvement Programs and Resources

African American Parent Community Coalition for Educational Equity, Inc. (AAP/CCEE Inc.)

AAP/CCEE Inc., a grassroots organization, was founded in 1995 by a group of parents at Westchester High School (in the Los Angeles Unified School District) who witnessed, first hand, the need for parents to be trained and empowered around educational issues. The purpose of AAP/CCEE Inc. is to identify and seek remedies for the root causes of poor student outcomes as they relate to test scores, college admissions, behavioral issues, drop out and suspension rates, and teacher performance. It is also to educate and train parents, students, educators and the community to recognize the direct relationship between race, class, academic achievement, and economics.

AAP/CCEE Inc.'s unique and highly effective parent training classes and seminars/workshops are made free of charge to parents as a result of the generosity and support of donations and grants provided to AAP/CCEE Inc. to ensure that all parents have access to this empowering curriculum and information, regardless as to their socio-economic challenges. Funding is also provided by progressive and committed school districts and community based organizations that understand the tremendous value of well-trained, involved parents.

AAP/CCEE Inc.'s City-wide Seminars/Workshops are provided, free of charge, two-three times per year. Each seminar/workshop is focused on key topics such as: The California Content Standards, Standards in Practice, The No Child Left Behind Mandates, The Importance of Choosing the Right Classes, College Entrance Requirements, Belief Systems: How Do They Affect Student Achievement, Creating A College-going Culture At Home, etc.

Further Information:

For more information on AAP/CCEE Inc. visit <http://aapccee.org> or contact Goldie Buchanan, Program Director, at 323-291-5546.

College Bound

College Bound is a grassroots, non-profit organization dedicated to serving under-represented and minority students and families in the greater Los Angeles area with college admissions. It is a group of concerned parents working together to supplement the day to day educational programs offered to children in both public and private schools. Offering a unique approach to college counseling, College Bound provides development of study and success skills, parental participation, a monthly study program and guidance in the admission and financial aid processes. College Bound's Saturday School program operates from September through May on the campuses of Pomona College and Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. The program participants, students and parents, gather together on a monthly basis to learn about the college application process and admissions requirements. While students are in their Saturday School classes, their parents are also required to attend classes taught by community leaders. These leaders share their knowledge in areas such as academic competitiveness, parental rights in public and private schools, financial planning, and conflict resolution. College Bound students in grades 4-11 participate in summer enrichment programs hosted by colleges and universities around the country. These programs expose students to the academic and social aspects of college life, while enhancing academic skills in various subject areas and fields of interest.

Further Information:

For more information visit <http://www.collegeboundca.org/about.html>. In addition, more information can be obtained by phone at 562-860-2127 or via email at info@collegeboundca.org. A complete list of College Bound program staff and their contact information can be found at <http://www.collegeboundca.org/contact.html>.

Community Asset Development Re-Defining Education (CADRE)

Community Asset Development Re-Defining Education (CADRE) is an organization of African American and Latino parents in South Los Angeles. Maisie Chin, director of CADRE, claims that traditional models of parent involvement in schools, such as volunteering in classrooms, often do not work in low-income communities. As such, CADRE is a parent led campaign with a mission to solidify and advance parent leadership to ensure that all children are rightfully educated regardless of where they live. CADRE empowers and prepares parents to visit their children's schools, ask questions, and get involved in every aspect of their student's education.

Further Information:

For more information about CADRE call 213.747.1467.

The Los Angeles Parents Union (LAPU)

The Los Angeles Parents Union (LAPU) is a parent-operated coalition dedicated to ensuring that the Los Angeles Unified School District is transformed into the best school district in the nation within the next 10 years. The mission of the Los Angeles Parents Union is to ensure that small, safe, autonomous schools exist locally in every community. This will be achieved by building a coalition of concerned parents citywide to demand the transformation of LAUSD within the next 10 years. LAPU supports utilizing the “Six Tenets of High Performing Public Schools” as a proven model for improving failing public schools.

Further Information:

For more information on LAPU visit <http://www.smallschools.org/>.

National Coalition for African American Parent Involvement in Education (NCAAPIE)

The National Coalition for African American Parent Involvement in Education (NCAAPIE) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to improve the academic achievement of African American youth. This organization also focuses on improving the quality of public schools in low-income African American communities through parental involvement, education, advocacy, community organizing, and leadership development.

The aim of NCAAPIE is to eliminate the institutional and political barriers which contribute to the achievement gap that exists between African American students and students of other races and ethnicities. Although this program targets African American students, NCAAPIE welcomes and embraces parents of ALL races and ethnicities. NCAAPIE enables African Americans and other minorities to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power, and civil rights through advocacy activities and the provision of programs and services in Los Angeles.

Further Information:

For more information about NCAAPIE and their parent resources, calendar of workshops and events, and publications visit www.ncaapie.org or email the organization at admin@ncaapie.org.

National Parent School Partnership Program (PSP): A MALDEF Program

The National Parent School Partnership Program (PSP) is a national program designed to train parents, school personnel, and community-based organizations to lead in the educational attainment of children.

MALDEF's PSP training manual and curriculum provide trainers with complete, easy to follow 16-week sessions, procedures, forms, and best practices to successfully implement and sustain the program anywhere in the country. The curriculum offers sessions that highlight: parent rights and responsibilities, structure and function of schools, the parent/teacher conference, understanding group process, principles of leadership, and the road to the university.

Further Information:

For more information on PSP visit www.maldef.org/psp/.

Parent Academy (Los Angeles County Office of Education)

Created by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), the Parent Academy provides training, resources, and information to further academic achievement, parent/child/school success, and to support parents as leaders for effective school-site parent involvement as required by No Child Left Behind. All presentations are conducted at the school site, are available in English and Spanish, and cover a wide range of topics including College for Success 1 & 2, Parents Working with Parents, Parents as First and Most Important Teachers, STAR, Standards and More, and Helping with Homework.

Further Information:

For more information and a complete list of Parent Academy presentations, contact Ignacio Rojas Jr, Program Coordinator, by phone at 562.922.6505 or 1.800.219.4000 or via email at rojas_ignacio@lacoed.edu.

Parent Curriculum Project: A Program for Parent Leadership Development

UCLA's Parent Curriculum Project (PCP) is a professional development program for parents eager to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. PCP aims to build the knowledge and leadership of parents, to increase their involvement in schools, and to create a neutral and supportive environment in which parents can reflect on education, schooling and reform. Parents develop leadership skills in communication and mediation to assist other parents in connecting with counselors and teachers so that all parents can help navigate their children through the school system.

The UCLA Outreach Parent Leadership Institute is an important component of PCP. UCLA subject-matter project consultants, EAOP advisors, and parent leaders provide parent participants with opportunity to experience learning in a student-centered classroom environment. This leadership institute enables parents to make sense of the complexities involved in preparing urban students for college. In addition to an overnight residential retreat on the UCLA campus, this thirteen week institute consists of standards-based instruction in language arts, science, social studies, and math. Parents also learn about the history of education, assessments, rubric creation, and testing. Parents have the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities, communication workshops, and college preparatory coursework. Another crucial part of the institute involves parents applying what they have learned by creating tangible plans for parent involvement at their school.

Further Information:

For more information on PCP visit <http://www.idea.gseis.ucla.edu/projects/parentproj/index.html> or contact Laila Hasan at hasan@gseis.ucla.edu.

Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)

PIQE was founded by Dr. Vahac Mardirosian and Dr. Alberto Ochoa in San Diego, California in 1987. It's now a California statewide organization that brings families, schools, community and business together as partners in the education of every child. PIQE was founded on two main principles: that every parent loves their child and wants a better future for them; and, that every child can learn and learning is a natural process.

PIQE provides the information and tools that parents, especially low-income immigrants, need to become more involved in their children's education. PIQE classes have been taught in more than 14 languages. PIQE strongly believes that parent involvement begins at home and must continue at the schools—that every child is in crisis if their parent/guardian is not engaged with them at home and in the schools. PIQE's programs are a work in progress, changing and adapting to the cultural, language and social conditions of every parent, family and community.

The Nine-Week Core Program is offered at no charge to parents and is taught by professional facilitators trained by PIQE. Parents choose to participate in either morning or evening sessions depending on their individual schedules. Classes are offered in the parents' primary language so that they can feel comfortable and confident in their interactions with the rest of the parents in their class. PIQE's nine-week program helps parents understand how they can become an integral part of their children's education. Emphasis is placed on increased interaction with the school staff. For example, parents are encouraged to talk with teachers and counselors about how their child is doing in class and the types of enrichment programs available at the school and in the community. Parents learn how to navigate the school system and better understand what classes their children must take to prepare themselves for a post-secondary education.

Further Information:

For more information on PIQE visit www.piqe.org or email David Valladolid, President and CEO, at dvalladolid@piqe.org. You can also call the PIQE Los Angeles Office at (323) 255-2575.

Parent Involvement Program (Los Angeles County Office of Education)

The vision of the Parent Involvement Program (PIP), developed by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), is to raise the awareness of the critical role that all parents play in the academic success of their children and to reinforce the importance of collaborative partnerships between schools, families, and communities. PIP seeks to build district and school capacity to increase and sustain parent involvement. As part of this program, experienced Parent Education Specialists from LACOE will facilitate trainings on a variety of topics (e.g., Homework: Looking Beyond the Work, Parent Awareness: The Key to Academic Success) developed specifically for parents. In addition, LACOE Parent Education Specialists can provide customized technical assistance in areas such as how to design a parent involvement strategic plan and timeline.

Further Information:

For more information contact any of the following LACOE Parent Education Specialists: Guadalupe Orozco at 562.922.8735, Octavio Castelo at 562.922.6836, or Nelson Lopez at 562.922.8763.

Parent U-Turn (PUT): A Subsidiary of UCLA's PCP

Parent U-Turn (PUT) is a community-based non-profit organization that focuses on increasing parent involvement in schools. This organization is located in the South Gate and Lynwood communities and aims to inform and educate parents on ways to improve students' academic achievement. Parents work in partnership with the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies in order to teach parents how to use research tools to collect and analyze relevant data about schools and communities. Findings are presented by parents to school personnel and community-based organizations. Parents also participate in workshops, role plays of classroom learning (to help them understand how learning is organized in the classroom), conferences, and also college preparatory seminars.

Mary Johnson, the President of Parent U-Turn, is currently a co-teacher in Pepperdine University's Urban Parent/Teacher Education Collaborative (UPTEC) which is a programmatic effort to include urban parents as teacher educators and mentors of pre-service teachers.

Further Information:

For more information on PUT visit <http://tcla.gseis.ucla.edu/rights/features/7/parents/index.html> or contact Mary Johnson at mjadvocate2004@yahoo.com.

Planting the Seeds of Higher Education: A Campaign to Build Knowledge Among Latino Parents (Tomás Rivera Policy Institute)

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI), in collaboration with the James Irvine Foundation and Honda, have joined together to develop *Planting the Seeds of Higher Education: A Campaign to Build Knowledge Among Latino Parents*. This exciting program is the culmination of a three-year initiative seeking to create greater public awareness about college preparation and the value of a higher education among Latino youth and parent audiences. To increase the college going rates of Latino students, TRPI has developed a set of materials “to build awareness around the education milestones, prerequisites, actions, and preparatory timeframes that are necessary to shepherd a son or daughter toward a college education.” These materials can be used to plan a “College Knowledge” parent information event at local schools.

Further Information:

For more information visit www.trpi.org or call (213) 821.5615.

The USC Neighborhood Academic Initiative – *The Family Development Institute*

When parents are more involved with their children’s education process, attitudes toward learning become more positive, school attendance is improved and overall grade point averages are higher. As a consequence, parents/guardians or advocates of scholars enrolled in the USC NAI are required to participate in the Family Development Institute, which in conjunction with the Academy’s Counseling Component, offers a variety of workshops designed to enhance and develop parenting skills, educational awareness and overall human potential of the parents.

The primary activities of the Family Development Institute are the FDI seminars, held on the USC campus on approximately sixteen Saturdays (roughly eight per semester during the C-track academic year), from 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM. Seminar topics are developed with input from parents, staff and teachers. Topics are usually clustered into general areas with three specific seminar topics under that area. Topics have included adolescent/child development, effective communication, creating a positive learning environment in the home, fostering educational success, navigating the public school system, conflict resolution, and topics specific to the parents of the seniors which center on the college application process, financial aid and the successful launching of the scholars into the college of their choice.

As per the NAI agreement, parents must commit to attending 80% of all of the FDI seminars for the child to be eligible for the NAI scholarship. There is some flexibility in that if parents are unable to make it to a meeting due to work or other obligations, they may send an advocate to represent the scholar. An advocate needs to be an adult who is involved with the child at some level – an aunt or uncle, grandparent, adult sibling, neighbor, Godparent or a friend.

Further Information:

For more information about the NAI program visit <http://www.usc.edu/ext-relations/nai/> and/or contact Kim Thomas-Barrios at thomasba@usc.edu.

Appendix B

Useful Publications About Parent Involvement in the College Process

Corwin, Z.B., & Tierney, W.G. (2007). *Getting there – and beyond: Building a culture of college-going in high schools*. Los Angeles, CA: Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis.

* For more information about this publication visit www.usc.edu/dept/chepa or call 213.740.7218.

Epstein, J. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

*This comprehensive book explains the theory, practice, and benefits of school and family partnerships, incorporating ideas and lesson plans that teachers and school officials may use to involve parents in the education of their children. It is a valuable research tool, college text, and professional handbook. This book can be ordered at www.amazon.com.

McDonough, P. (2004). *Parent involvement for improved college access*. Access Update, 9 (2), p. 6. Cleveland, OH: National College Access Network.

*For more information about this publication visit www.collegeaccess.org or contact Dr. Patricia McDonough via email at mcdonough@gseis.ucla.edu.

Robles, D., Tyra, B., Allen, J., Hansen, R., & Mejia, J. (2006). *Life after high school: Career and college information for students and their families 2006-2007*. Downey, CA: Los Angeles County Office of Education.

* For more information about this publication contact Bob Tyra, LACOE Consultant, via email at tyra_bob@lacoedu.edu.

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A special thank you goes to the two parent leaders who provided the information found on page 6 of this resource guide.

Mary Johnson is the president of a nonprofit organization, Parent U-Turn, dedicated to educating parents on real problems that exist in education. She has served as a Parent Liaison for the Lynwood School District and is also the District/Program Manager for the UCLA Parent Curriculum Project. Ms. Johnson is also the Los Angeles Unified School District Parent Collaborative Chairperson. In addition, Ms. Johnson is currently co-teaching courses in the Pepperdine Graduate School of Education. She is the mother of four children, one of whom graduated from California State University, Dominguez Hills. Her other three children are currently enrolled in college at California State University, Los Angeles and the University of Las Vegas. She recently addressed the *BEST Collaboration in LA County* Initiative as a parent panelist at the Engaging Parents as Partners in Creating College Going Cultures Conference in April 2007.

Guadalupe Torres is the current president of the University of Southern California (USC) Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI) Parent Leadership Board and also serves as the president of the USC Community Education Academy. Ms. Torres has one daughter, now a freshman at USC, who graduated from the USC NAI program and two other daughters currently in the program. She recently addressed the *BEST Collaboration in LA County* Initiative as a parent panelist at the Engaging Parents as Partners in Creating College Going Cultures Conference in April 2007.

A special thank you also to Patricia McDonough who graciously shared her expertise and scholarly work as a resource for this guide (see page 7). The information provided in the “Drawing from the Research” sections was taken from the following resource: Patricia McDonough (2004). *Parent involvement for improved college access*. Access Update, 9 (2), p. 6. Cleveland, OH: National College Access Network. Dr. McDonough received her Ph.D. from Stanford in 1992 and is currently a professor at UCLA’s Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. Professor McDonough is the recipient of the UCLA Distinguished Teaching Award and teaches graduate courses on issues regarding college access. Dr. McDonough did the first analyses of high schools’ college cultures and pioneered research on how to develop college cultures in elementary, middle, and high schools. She has published numerous articles, book chapters, and policy reports about college going and creating college going cultures for diverse student populations. Dr. McDonough is also a member and past officer of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Association for the Study of Higher Education, and the American Sociological Association.

