



## Recommendation Twelve

### Partnerships

*Across the nation, schools are defying expectations and succeeding. What makes them different? In nearly every case, a community rallied to improve its schools.<sup>1</sup>*

**Recommendation 12 — Partnerships.** Engage families, businesses, local and state agencies and organizations, higher education, and community members as partners in supporting middle grades student achievement.

Partnerships is one of the Recommendations in the Focus Area on Organizational Structures and Processes.

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#### Footnote

1 Lyric Wallwork, "Good Schools Can Happen" (Outside Source), *Parade Magazine* (August 27, 2006).

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## Partnerships to Support Middle Grades Achievement

The California Department of Education (CDE) has played a strong leadership role in developing partnership programs. For three years in a row (2004-06), the CDE received the Partnership State Award from the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) (Outside Source) at Johns Hopkins University. The NNPS cited the CDE for excellent leadership in developing family, school, and community partnership programs designed to help students succeed in school. The NNPS award committee commended the CDE's attention to helping schools form partnerships as a part of the Single Plan for Student Achievement. In 2001, California's legislature enacted a statute requiring schools to develop a Single Plan for Student Achievement to improve the academic performance of all students to the level of proficiency and to raise the schools' Academic Performance Index (API).

Partnerships were also important in the original *Taking Center Stage*.

Middle grades students, their parents, and their teachers are caught up in the daily challenges of young adolescence. Quicksilver emotions, adolescent perceptions, and behavior that tests the boundaries can be the breeding ground for misunderstanding . . . Keeping middle grades parents, students, and the community informed and involved is vital. Regular communications to the home, opportunities for parents to visit the school and participate, and public recognition of the achievements of young adolescents foster a positive climate in which standards-based education thrives.<sup>1</sup>

Partnerships recognize that education involves far more than the seven or eight hours a day that students spend in school. Family, business, community, and education partners help to provide multiple layers of support and reinforcement so that every student has a chance to succeed despite all the difficulties of hormonal changes, shifting relationships, and the increased rigor of the middle grades

The Daniels Fund for School Business Partnerships (a nonprofit foundation) has conducted research on why some school partnerships are more effective than others. The report identified seven strategies for successful partnerships:

- Ensure that student learning and achievement are the focus of every partnership.
- Develop a well-defined and well-managed program that supports school-based partnerships.
- Make strategic matches between schools and businesses that advance a school's improvement goals.
- Set clear expectations for schools and businesses.
- Provide training for school staff and business employees.
- Create a meaningful process for communicating about the program and recognizing the contributions of business partners.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate each partnership and the overall program.<sup>2</sup>



### In the Spotlight

#### **Kastner Intermediate School, Clovis Unified School District, a 2008 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage**

The teachers and staff at Kastner have forged partnerships with several stores and restaurants in the adjacent shopping center. Teachers are welcome to take students to any of the local restaurants to reward students for academic or athletic success. Many of the local stores donate items for school events, including events to celebrate staff teamwork and morale. Local organizations have donated to the school's performing arts programs and to scholarship programs for students.

Kastner has an active parent community that participates in school committees including the Parent-Teacher Council, the School Site Council, and the School Assessment and Review Team. The Parent Club puts on numerous events for the students and staff to celebrate teamwork, spirit, and achievement. Parents are encouraged to stay "in the loop" about their students' learning via the district's Parent Connect Web site where they can view grades, attendance, and service

opportunities.

The Kastner population includes 1,200 students in seventh and eighth grade. The demographic profile is 52 percent white, 23 percent Hispanic, 13 percent Asian, 5 percent African American, 3 percent other, and 1 percent Native American/Alaskan.

- [Kastner Intermediate DataQuest School Profile](#)
- [Kastner Intermediate School \(Outside Source\)](#)
- [Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: Kastner Intermediate School \(PDF; Outside Source\)](#)
- [Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage](#)

The Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage (Middle School Criteria) School Self-Study Rating Rubric says that high-performing middle schools “include families and community members in setting and supporting the school’s trajectory toward high performance. The administrators and teachers inform families and community members about the school’s goals for student success and the students’ responsibility for meeting those goals. The administrators and teachers engage all stakeholders in ongoing and reflective conversation, consensus building, and decision making about governance to promote school improvement.”

## Related Links

- [Family Involvement & Partnerships, California Department of Education.](#)
- [Self-Study Rating Rubric, California Department of Education.](#)

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Taking Center Stage*. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 2001, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> “Seven Strategies for Success” (Outside Source), Denver, Colo.: The Daniels Fund.

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## Parental, Family, and Adults-Who-Care Involvement

Parent and family involvement changes dramatically from elementary to middle school. During adolescence, young teens tend to distance themselves from authority figures as they try out new forms of independence. As a result, effective middle schools face the challenge of finding new ways to involve parents or significant adults as partners in each student's learning. The National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform developed criteria for high performance. The School Self-Study and Rating Rubric is a tool designed by the Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage program to help schools analyze their progress toward excellence based on the National Forum's criteria. It says that an effective middle school faculty "welcomes and encourages the active participation of all its families and makes sure that all its families are an integral part of the school." Under "Developmental Responsiveness," the rubric says, "Parents are welcomed at the school and consider themselves partners in their child's learning. They are offered opportunities for involvement beyond fundraising."

Educators today need to recognize the diversity of family structures when creating involvement opportunities for the adults in students' lives. Students might live with parents, guardians, other relatives, or in multifamily households. Some students may be homeless, depend on friends and classmates for shelter, or move frequently from one family situation to another. Likewise, many parents cannot participate at school because of restrictions at their job, health limitations, or other reasons. Caring school professionals make every effort not to stigmatize children whose parents cannot attend school functions. For example, when inviting students to bring their parents to school functions, educators make sure to say "parents, guardians, or other adult who cares for you." In newsletters, **Parent Night** can be renamed **Friends and Family Night** or fliers may say, "Bring an adult who cares."

A meta-analysis of 52 studies found that the academic achievement score distribution for secondary school students whose parents were highly involved in their education was substantially higher than that of counterparts whose parents were less involved. The study also found that (high) expectations had a greater impact on student educational outcomes than some of the more common aspects of parental involvement such as having household rules and parental attendance at school functions.<sup>1</sup>

Research shows that when parents or other adults take time to talk with children about learning, student achievement rises. In *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, researchers analyzed studies of high-achieving students from all backgrounds and "found that their parents encourage them, talk with them about school, help them plan for higher education, and keep them focused on learning and homework."<sup>2</sup>

The opposite is also true: Research indicates that a lack of parental involvement and interaction with children may increase children's future risk of violence.<sup>3</sup> However, other research shows that schools can help share the responsibility by working to involve families and caring adults by building on the cultural values of families and by fostering communication with them. Successful schools create an inviting environment for families and facilitate involvement by providing transportation, interpreters, and other similar services.<sup>4</sup> However, schools are not equipped and should not be expected to take over the job of parenting. Instead, partnerships between school and home can help parents and family members rise to the challenge of ensuring student achievement.

California has been a leader in advocating partnerships between families, teachers, and schools to help children succeed academically and develop as socially, physically, and emotionally healthy individuals.

The State Legislature passed the first parental involvement law in the nation in 1990 (*California Education Code (EC)* sections 11500–11506, Chapter 16, "Programs to Encourage Parental Involvement"). This law requires all local school boards to develop and adopt a parental involvement policy for their district (*EC* 11504). In addition, the law requires districts with designated categorical programs to have a parental involvement program. The California Strategic Plan for Parental Involvement in Education (1992—ERIC abstract) (Outside Source) recommends ways in which all levels of the educational system may comply with state and federal mandates for parental involvement.<sup>5</sup> In addition, State Board of Education (SBE) policy 89-01 (1994) (Outside Source) recommends that districts and schools initiate partnerships that support six effective roles for families and educators:

1. Provide learning opportunities for educators to meet their basic obligation to work effectively with families and for families to meet their basic parenting obligations.
2. Ensure systematic, two-way communication (school to home and home to school) about the school, school programs, and students' progress.
3. Provide learning opportunities for educators and families to work together so that both can fulfill a wide range of support and resource roles for students and the school.
4. Provide educators and families with strategies and techniques for connecting children and learning activities at home and in the

community with learning at school.

5. Prepare educators and families to participate actively in school decision making and to exercise their leadership and advocacy skills.
6. Provide educators and families with the skills to access community and support services that strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

*Education Code* Section 51100(a) (Outside Source) states that “. . . the parents and guardians of pupils enrolled in public schools have the right and should have the opportunity, as mutually supportive and respectful partners in the education of their children within the public schools, to be informed by the school, and to participate in the education of their children.” *Education Code* sections 51100 through 51102 (Outside Source) then provide details about at least 16 rights included in the law.

*Education Code* Section 51101 also delineates the expected roles of family members and suggests that schools can help parents learn:

"(3)The manner in which the parents and guardians of pupils may support the learning environment of their children, including, but not limited to, the following:

- (A) Monitoring attendance of their children.
- (B) Ensuring that homework is completed and turned in on a timely basis.
- (C) Participation of the children in extracurricular activities.
- (D) Monitoring and regulating the television viewed by their children.
- (E) Working with their children at home in learning activities that extend learning in the classroom.
- (F) Volunteering in their children’s classrooms, or for other activities at the school.
- (G) Participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their own child or the total school program.



## In the Spotlight

### **Alvarado Intermediate School, Rowland Unified School District, a 2004 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

Alvarado has steadily built and strengthened community alliances and business partnerships that have contributed to the success of students’ transitions. Alvarado’s weekly newsletters, schoolwide parent conferences, parent representation in almost every school venue, homework hotlines, school Web sites, and over 100 percent PTSA membership are examples of the importance placed on school, parent, and student relationships at Alvarado.

- Alvarado Intermediate DataQuest School Profile
- Alvarado Intermediate School (Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: Alvarado Intermediate School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage

*Washington Post* education writer Jay Matthews compiled seven tips for involving parents:

- Stop using educational **jargon** that parents may not understand.
- Visit parents in their own environments.
- Ask parents to teach what they know (for example, sharing information about their country or culture).
- Seek parent volunteers.
- Offer educational opportunities for parents and students.
- Get parents to observe classes.
- Provide courses for parents.<sup>6</sup>

Teachers should always follow district or board home-visitation guidelines. Some of the tips suggested above may necessitate union contract negotiations.

Since parents, guardians, and families may have a different perspective about their role, schools may find it helpful to conduct a survey

(through the telephone, mail, or personal interview) about their understanding and expectations about their role in educating their child.



## In the Spotlight

### **Castaic Middle School, Castaic Union Elementary School District, a 2003 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

The Castaic Middle School schedule provides a weekly Parents Night in the library. At that time, parents and their children can get access to resources and technology to succeed.

- [Castaic DataQuest School Profile](#)
- [Castaic Middle School \(Outside Source\)](#)
- [Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: Castaic Middle School \(PDF; Outside Source\)](#)
- [Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage](#)

In spite of the many benefits of family involvement, a survey of research studies found that “. . . while middle grades reformers often call for more parental contact with teachers and administrators, the research on the **effects** of parent involvement turns out to be ‘contradictory and inconclusive.’”<sup>7</sup>

## Related Links

- [CalEdFacts](#) is a compilation of statistics and information on a variety of issues concerning education in California, California Department of Education.
- [California State Board of Education Policy #89-01: Parent Involvement in the Education of Their Children](#), California State Board of Education.
- [Education Code Sections about parental roles](#), Document Library, TCSII.
- [Parent and family leadership, Recommendation 9—Leadership](#), TCSII.
- [Parent/Family](#), California Department of Education.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>William Jeynes, “Parental Involvement and Secondary School Student Educational Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis,” *The Evaluation Exchange* (Outside Source), Vol. X, No. 4 (Winter 2004/2005 (Outside Source), 6.

<sup>2</sup>Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp, “A New Wave of Evidence—The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement,” (PDF; Outside Source). Austin, Tex.: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002, 73.

<sup>3</sup>David P. Farrington, Early Predictors of Adolescent Aggression and Adult Violence, *Violence and Victims*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1989), 79-100.

<sup>4</sup>Chris Ferguson, Reaching Out to Diverse Families—What Can Schools Do to Foster Family-School Connections? (PDF; Outside Source) Austin, Tex.: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools (September 2005), 1.

<sup>5</sup>*Fact Book 2006* (PDF; 856KB; 137pp.). Sacramento: California Department of Education, 2006, 60.

<sup>6</sup>Jay Matthews, “Tips for a Better Parent-School Relationship” (Outside Source), *Washington Post* (October 17, 2006), A08.

<sup>7</sup>Academic Achievement in the Middle Grades: What Does the Research Tell Us? (PDF; Outside Source) Atlanta, Ga.: Southern Regional Education Board, 2003, 8.

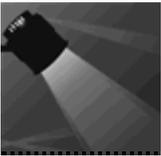
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## Homework help and academic expectations

A growing body of research has identified the advantages of involving parents and guardians in helping their children with schoolwork:

- Students' academic work and attitudes improved when family members helped them with their homework.
- The amount of time spent on at-home discussion of school activities was one of the stronger predictors of achievement.
- Family involvement in homework had a small but direct effect on achievement for eighth graders.



### In the Spotlight

#### **Gaspar De Portola Middle School, San Diego Unified School District, a 2006 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

The school staff offers a Success Camp to help parents prepare students for middle school. In addition, mass notification technology called Zangle! keeps parents informed through the school's Web site. Through the site, parents can view grades, schedules, and assignments. Students have their own link to Zangle! from the school's home page.

#### **Hilltop Middle School, Sweetwater Union High School District**

The school engages parents through six active parent groups. A free, Web-based service enables teachers to record daily assignments and homework so parents can see nightly assignments (registration required).

#### **Hollencrest Middle School, West Covina Unified School District, A 2007 Distinguished School.**

Hollencrest Middle School lists parent compacts as one of their signature practices. The parent compact is part of the registration process for new students. The goal of the compact is to inform parents and family members about the school and opportunities to participate in school events. The school's leadership team places a high priority on working collaboratively with parents to support their student through the middle school years, especially in the transition from elementary school as students prepare to move to high school.

- De Portola DataQuest School Profile
- Gaspar De Portola Middle School (Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: Gaspar De Portola Middle School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage
- Zangle! (Outside Source)
  
- Hilltop DataQuest School Profile
- Hilltop Middle School (Outside Source)
- SchoolNotes, (Outside Source)
  
- Hollencrest Middle School DataQuest Profile
- Hollencrest Middle School (Outside Source)

absences, grades, homework assignments, and messages from teachers.<sup>1</sup>



## In the Spotlight

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### **Lemon Grove Academy 7-8, Lemon Grove Elementary School District**

Sixty students participate in Lemon Grove Academy's One-to-One at School and Home Initiative, which has provided a virtual 24/7 link between teachers, students, and parents or guardians. Students in the program study and complete homework using a multimedia learning device called a tablet. The device fits in their backpacks and connects them to their school network through a cable modem installed at their house. Teachers whose students participate in the One-to-One project have seen an increased level of motivation in the students using the tablets.

- [Lemon Grove DataQuest School Profile](#)
- [Lemon Grove Academy 7-8 \(Outside Source\)](#)
- [Classroom of the Future Foundation \(Outside Source\)](#)

Schools can help parents and guardians learn to support their children's schoolwork by providing parents/guardians with access to the resources noted below.

## Related Links

- [Helping Your Child Series](#), (Outside Source), U. S. Department of Education.
- [Helping Your Child with Homework](#), (Outside Source), U. S. Department of Education.
- [Helping Your Student Get the Most Out of Homework](#), (Outside Source), National Parent Teacher Association.
- [Homework, Recommendation 2—Instruction, Assessment, and Intervention](#), TCSII.
- [National Summer Learning Association](#) (Outside Source)
- [Staying Involved: Approaches to Helping Our Middle School and High School Students Learn](#), (Outside Source), Parent Academic Resources Incorporated.
- [TIPS \(Teachers Involve Parents In Schoolwork\)](#), (Outside Source), National Network of Partnership Schools, Johns Hopkins University.

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### **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup>"Automatic Email Alerts Keep Parents Well Informed" (Outside Source) *eSchool News* and wire service reports (April 5, 2006).

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## Parent conferences

Many middle schools experience a sharp decline in participation at parent conferences as parents sense their young adolescents' discomfort with any form of parental participation—especially at school where peers might see them. In addition, divorce, poverty, homes where both parents work full-time, and language issues often discourage parents from attending conferences.

As a result, effective middle schools use the following strategies to invite participation by a parent/guardian or caring adult:

- Send fliers or letters in all family languages and offer interpreter services.
- Organize the Associated Student Body to offer child care for community service credit.
- Provide before, during, and after-school meeting options.
- Provide bus passes in cooperation with the city or regional transit system
- Offer food.
- Provide fun events (for example, ask a popular radio station to set up a mobile DJ in the parking lot or partner with a mother/child wellness clinic to offer health tips to low-income families during parent conference time.)
- Team with other regional health and community service organizations so that busy parents—particularly those who struggle with poverty—can take care of more than one appointment at one time.
- Make sure students are invited to bring guardians (privacy policies and student safety concerns mean that nonlegal guardians should not substitute during parent conferences.)
- Initiate student-led conferences.



### In the Spotlight

#### **Rio Norte Junior High School, William S. Hart Union High School District**

Teacher teams use a grade warning letter to keep parents or guardians abreast of student difficulties prior to the student conferences. The school uses a behavior letter to let parents or guardians know about behavioral issues that interfere with learning. The early warnings help to prevent parents or guardians from being taken by surprise at the conference. The early warning system also gives parents or guardians an opportunity to ask their children about the difficulties they experience so they can work as partners with the teachers in finding solutions.

- [Rio Norte DataQuest School Profile](#)
- [Rio Norte Junior High School \(Outside Source\)](#)
- [Parent Grade Warning Letter, California Department of Education](#)
- [Behavior Warning Letter to Parent Regarding Their Student, California Department of Education](#)

## Related Link

- [Accountability through student-led parent conferences, Recommendation 11—Accountability, TCSII.](#)

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## Parent and family education

Parents, guardians, and family members who are new to the middle grades often need as much help as their children in facing the rigors, testing, and social changes that accompany adolescence and the middle grades. Some topics that can be featured at Parent/Guardian/Adults-Who-Care Education Nights or in school newsletters are as follows (online resources are included):

- Developmental characteristics of young adolescents.
- What to look for in the middle grades—what young adolescents need (academically, socially, emotionally, and physically).
- What **rigor** means for the middle grades student and how parents can help their children succeed.
- Where to go if their child suffers social, emotional, or health problems (for example, during family crises such as divorce, serious illness, domestic violence, or abuse).
- How to monitor cell phone records, Internet chat buddy lists, and Web page histories to determine if students are engaging in harmful activities.
- How parents or guardians can strengthen communications with the school.
- How to foster the 40 developmental assets for adolescents (Outside Source) (Search Institute) in their families.
- How to become involved at the middle school level.
- How parents or guardians can access their student's personal data and other resources on the school's Web site.
- How to participate in a student-led conference.
- How to help students with middle grades curriculum (for example, events such as **family mathematics nights** and **family coffeehouse** nights to make learning fun while engaging and educating parents/guardians and other family members).
- How to encourage writing. (In one innovative project, the school established a **Memoir Project** that joined parents or guardians with their children in learning to write a memoir.<sup>1</sup>)



### In the Spotlight

#### **McKinleyville Middle School, McKinleyville Union Elementary School District, a 2006 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

To engage middle grades parents or guardians, the McKinleyville staff members host a variety of family fun nights. Each has a theme. For example, the school community engages in Physical Education Night and Mathematics Night to emphasize two critical components of the curriculum. In addition, the school staff uses a commercial portal focused on communication to keep parents or guardians informed.

- McKinleyville DataQuest School Profile
- McKinleyville Middle School (Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: McKinleyville Middle School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage

Many schools have discovered that electronic newsletters are cost-effective and often more engaging to parents or guardians who can sign up online and select the news and information that interest them. Because subscribers **opt in**, schools are able to build their database and meet federal anti-spam requirements at the same time.<sup>2</sup>

Parents and guardians may also need help to understand and evaluate their children's progress in school. Parents or guardians need to learn how to pay attention to areas where their child struggles and to encourage them when they make small victories. In this way, parents or guardians reward good study habits, not just good grades.

The California Department of Education's Web site provides answers to the following commonly asked questions from parents or guardians:<sup>3</sup>

1. If I disagree or am upset about something that is occurring at the school my child attends, what should I do?
2. We are moving to area XYZ and have children in elementary and middle school. What should we look for in a school?
3. What is the required course of study for middle school students?
4. What academic standards should my child be proficient in for high school and the California High School Exit Examination?
5. What are the required tests that my middle school child will need to take?
6. Who establishes the grading policy for middle school students?
7. If my child fails a class or is not proficient in certain standards, does the school have the right to retain my child or prevent him/her from attending graduation?
8. There is no graduation ceremony for eighth-grade students at my child's school. Isn't this a state policy?

## Related Links

- National Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) Coordination Center (Outside Source)
- Characteristics of Middle Grades Students (Outside Source)
- EdSource (Outside Source)
- GreatSchools (Outside Source)
- National Center for Learning Disabilities (Outside Source)

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Tara Bahrapour, Bound by Words and Much More, (Outside Source)—Memoir Class Draws Kids and Parents Closer, Easing Both into Writing, *Washington Post* (March 28, 2006), B01.

<sup>2</sup>Nora Carr, Zip Breaking News to Parents Electronically,(Outside Source), eSchool News (March 1, 2005).

<sup>3</sup>Middle Grades: Frequently Asked Questions, California Department of Education.

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## Involving language-minority parents and guardians

When considering how to involve language-minority parents or guardians, school staff members need to consider support strategies that will enable all families to attend school events. One school with a high population of immigrant families found that family involvement increased when the following factors were present:

- Meals (with parents and families)
- Personal relationships (between school personnel and family members)
- Interpreters
- Sense of belonging
- Child care (during parent or guardian conferences and meetings)
- Transportation

Staff members at the school noted that the strategies, such as instilling positive attitudes and developing personal relationships, must be schoolwide to succeed.<sup>1</sup>

Middle schools serving large populations of immigrant families often encourage parents and guardians to participate in school activities by providing educational services the adults need for themselves. For example, parents or guardians of English learners frequently lack direct access to community networks, and schools can serve as intermediaries between community resources and families who need them. Many immigrant communities tend to cluster near stores, churches, and other places where members convene. Principals and schools can use these venues to connect to the communities of the children they serve.<sup>2</sup>



### In the Spotlight

**John Glenn Middle School of International Studies, Desert Sands Unified School District, a 2004 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

The school leadership helps incoming immigrant parents understand more about the middle school experience by providing a parent orientation led by other bilingual parents.

**Ocean View Junior High School, Ocean View Elementary School District, a 2006 On the Right Track School**

The school staff members offer four parenting classes for migrant and English-speaking parents or guardians. Staff members guide parents on how to support their children's academic success by covering topics such as:

- What questions do you ask about your child's homework?
- What books should your child read?
- What homework should he/she be doing each night?
- Whom should you call with questions?

These classes are part of a strategy that helped the school's API improve significantly.

- John Glenn DataQuest School Profile
- John Glenn Middle School of International Studies (Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: John Glenn Middle School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage
  
- Ocean View DataQuest School Profile
- Ocean View Junior High School (Outside Source)

Other ways to support English learners and parents or guardians are as follows:

1. Keep library/media centers open after school so families can have access to the Internet, library collections, homework help, or online grades if they do not have computers at home.
2. Educate parents or guardians about options for involvement. In many countries, there is no PTA or equivalent organization, and there is no parent involvement at schools.
3. Meet the immigrant families in their neighborhoods. For example, during a summer learning experience, educational leaders visited the homes of Somali, Mien, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Latino families to understand how members of language-minority communities respond to policy decisions such as a school closure. Among other things, they discovered that immigrant families do not always benefit from written communications (even when notices are translated) but do welcome school personnel in their homes.<sup>3</sup>



## In the Spotlight

### **Torch Middle School, Bassett Unified School District, a 2008 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

Torch Middle School serves a school population that is 94 percent Hispanic. The school has met the statewide targets for student academic growth since 2004. One strategy staff members use to keep parents involved is a parenting class led onsite by a bilingual counselor. In addition, the school supports an active English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC) on campus.

- Torch DataQuest School Profile
- Torch Middle School (Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: Torch Middle School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage



## Information and Resources

The PALMS Website is designed to assist practitioners in their efforts to promote Latino postsecondary enrollment. The site includes a wealth of materials identified specifically for families (Outside Source), students (Outside Source), and schools/service providers (Outside Source).

The project's signature product, Tools for Latino Family Outreach: Supporting Student Success in the Middle Grades and Beyond, is field-tested, research-based, and available for free download.

## Related Links

- Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) (Outside Source)
- California State Board of Education Policy #89-01: Parent Involvement in the Education of Their Children, California State Board of Education.
- Clearinghouse for Multilingual Documents, California Department of Education.
- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) (Outside Source), U. S. Department of

Education.

- Title I, Part A Parent/Family Involvement," California Department of Education.

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<sup>1</sup>Answering the Perplexities of Parent Involvement, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development 2006 Annual Conference Issue, Volume 48, Number 6, June 2006.

<sup>2</sup>Works in Progress: A Report on Middle and High School Improvement Programs (PDF; Outside Source). Washington, D.C.: The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, American Institutes of Research, January 2005, 53.

<sup>3</sup>Betty J. Cobbs and Margery B. Ginsberg, "Learning to Listen through Home Visits with Somali, Mien, Cambodian, Vietnamese and Latino Families," *New Horizons for Learning* (January 2006).

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## Partnerships with the Community

"Too often when I talk to educators in the field, what I hear from them is that they don't have the ability to provide examples to students of how academic skills will apply in the real world . . . I propose, based on a recommendation from my P-16 Council, a statewide expansion of this type of program, so that every school district can work with business and community partners to eliminate the achievement gap and prepare every student to succeed."<sup>1</sup>

**Community** is a broad term and includes individuals, businesses, local and state agencies, school districts, county offices of education, labor organizations, nonprofit organizations, police, health organizations, firefighters, and service clubs.

Community partners offer middle school students an invitation to explore the larger community, learn about potential careers, and meet role models who will help them set goals for their futures. Community partners also offer middle grades students a chance to make a difference in their world through service-learning that combines two effective approaches to education and youth development: experiential learning and community service.

Community partnerships also enhance the core curriculum. For example, history and English essays become real when students interview people who have experienced historic events or served in unique careers or leadership positions. Both relevance and creative expression are important aspects of adolescent learning. Helping students to engage in school by combining writing exercises with a chance to learn about real people and their experiences deepens the learning experience.



### In the Spotlight

#### San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools

The San Bernardino Alliance for Education is a partnership of more than 1,200 stakeholders. Business, labor, local government, community, and faith-based organizations are joining educators in a partnership committed to creating successful students and a skilled and educated workforce. Businesses are showing classroom teachers the real-world applications of academic standards. Community members are strengthening relationships with students through mentoring, tutoring, and internships. Most important of all, this alliance recognizes that children will not meet their academic potential unless their needs for health, safety, and family security are also met.

- San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools (Outside Source)
- Alliance for Education (Outside Source)

The California School Boards Association highlights exemplary Partnerships and Collaboratives every year as a part of the Association's Golden Bell Awards. The criteria for the award specify that the program "includes collaborations between school districts, county offices of education, cities and counties to strengthen instructional supports for students or maximize resources and community support. Also includes partnerships with schools and businesses or community-based organizations."<sup>2</sup>

One way to measure the health of a school or district is to look at the support it receives from its community and its ability to prepare students for college. Through Ed-Data, educators and community partners can find the latest information on bond and parcel tax elections as well as state test results for the local schools and the district.

Many California school districts ask voters to support their schools through parcel taxes for educational programs or bond measures for construction and renovation of schools. The results of these elections are posted on the Ed-Data site.



## In the Spotlight

### **Canyon Middle School, Castro Valley Unified School District, a 2007 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

The community surrounding Canyon Middle School has consistently supported the school. For example, taxpayers passed multimillion-dollar bond measures that helped build the Performing Arts Center. Each year the community supports the student body magazine sale, as well as provide chaperones for dances and volunteers to help with the school garden.

### **Holmes International Middle School, Los Angeles Unified School District, a 2007 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

Community volunteers support Holmes Middle School in a number of ways. For example, professional musicians work with the student choirs to help them produce community performances. Through the school's performing arts program, Inside Out, students work with professional performance artists to write original works and perform them on the stage at a local university.

- Canyon DataQuest School Profile
- Canyon Middle School (Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: Canyon Middle School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage
  
- Holmes International DataQuest School Profile
- Holmes International Middle School (Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: Holmes International Middle School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage

Many before or after school programs depend upon community partners. For example, the After School Education & Safety Program provides grants to schools and districts that collaborate with community partners to provide safe and educationally enriching alternatives for children and youths during non-school hours. The federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provides funding for programs to focus on academic achievement, enrichment, and family literacy. Eligible entities include districts, cities, counties, community-based organizations and others.

## Related Links

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- After School Education & Safety Program
- Before & After School, California Department of Education.
- Before, during and after-school programs, Recommendation 2—Instruction, Assessment, and Intervention, TCSII.
- Ed-Data (Outside Source)
- Golden Bell Awards, (Outside Source), California School Boards Association.
- Nutrition and fitness, Recommendation 8—Safety, Resilience, and Health, TCSII.
- Service learning, Recommendation 4— Relevance, TCSII.

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### **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Jack O'Connell, State of Education 2006. Prepared speech. Sacramento: California Department of Education, February 7, 2006.

<sup>2</sup>Partnerships and Collaboratives, (Outside Source) Golden Bell Awards, California School Boards Association.

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## Adult mentors

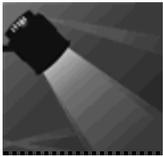
Even though American adolescents begin to withdraw from adults and develop a heavier reliance on peers at this stage of their development, they still need adult friendship, guidance, and support. Adult mentors help students set academic and personal goals, appreciate their accomplishments, and deal with the stresses of changing relationships both at home and school.

Research on the results of long-term mentor relationships found that they provide youths with the support and guidance that allow them to grow into responsible adults.<sup>1</sup>

Effective middle schools employ many different strategies to pair each student with a mentor, adviser, advocate, or other adult for the duration of the middle grades. Schools can do this through a variety of strategies, including:

- Advisory classes to help attach one teacher to a smaller number of students.
- Looping to connect teachers to students on a continual basis year to year.
- Small-group seminars with counselors on high-interest teen topics.
- Making lunch dates with the administrators and staff members to connect small groups of students with a caring adult.
- Special lunch dates to reward students for attendance improvement, high scores, or other achievements.

Community partnerships introduce more adults who can serve as mentors to the students.



### In the Spotlight

#### **Catherine L. Zane Middle School, Eureka City Unified School District**

The Zane school community includes a variety of adults as mentors, including students from both Humboldt State University and College of the Redwoods who work one-on-one with students in classroom settings and the after-school program. Zane also has Americorp members whose main assignment is to mentor ten different at-risk students who need an adult friend.

- Catherine L. Zane DataQuest School Profile
- Catherine L. Zane Middle School (Outside Source)

Researcher Dr. Emmy Werner followed all 698 infants born on the Hawaiian island of Kauai in 1955. Her research spanned 30 years, making it one of the longest longitudinal studies of its kind. Werner found that many high-risk children displayed resilience and developed into normal, thriving adults despite numerous challenges and problems during their youth. The study identified a number of protective factors in the lives of these resilient individuals. One of the most important protective factors helping children to overcome adversity included experiencing a strong bond with a nonparent caretaker (such as an aunt, babysitter, or teacher).<sup>2</sup>

## Related Links

- Mentoring, California Department of Education.
- Relevance, Recommendation 4—Relevance, TCSII.
- Resilience: A Universal Capacity (PDF; Outside Source), WestEd (2004).

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**Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Works in Progress: A Report on Middle and High School Improvement Programs, (PDF; Outside Source), Washington, D. C.: Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, January 2005, 29.

<sup>2</sup>E. E. Werner, Risk, Resilience, and Recovery: Perspectives from the Kauai Longitudinal Study, *Development and Psychopathology* (Fall 1993), 503-515.

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## Businesses

The New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce is a bipartisan gathering of education secretaries and business leaders. In a 2007 report, *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce* (PDF; Outside Source), the members emphasized the importance of preparing students with new skills for a new economy.

Strong skills in English, mathematics, technology, and science, as well as literature, history, and the arts will be essential for many; beyond this, candidates will have to be comfortable with ideas and abstractions, good at both analysis and synthesis, creative and innovative, self-disciplined and well organized, able to learn very quickly and work well as a member of a team and have the flexibility to adapt quickly to frequent changes in the labor market as the shifts in the economy become ever faster and more dramatic.<sup>1</sup>

Business partners wear many hats in schools. Traditionally, they have been active in elementary schools for motivational reasons and in high schools for career connections. However, the opportunity to influence young adolescents before they give up and drop out makes middle grades partnerships a vital role for businesses.



### In the Spotlight

#### **George A. Buljan Middle School, Roseville City Elementary School District**

The physical education department is planning how to use experts in medicine, physical therapy, endocrinology, nutrition, biochemistry, and other health-related disciplines to aid the connection between healthy lifestyles, healthy body, and healthy mind.

#### **Richard Henry Dana Middle School, Wiseburn Elementary School District, a 2006 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

Local aerospace and technology firms work closely with Dana's staff members to provide exciting enrichment opportunities to motivate students. For example, local engineers led the after-school robotics club in building an award-winning underwater robot.

#### **Sierra Preparatory Academy, Santa Ana Unified School District**

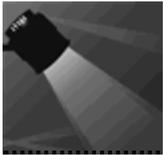
Eighty-five percent of the children at Sierra Preparatory Academy qualify for free lunches, and the typical student is present for only two-thirds of the school year. These students need incentives to stay in school. To meet that need, law firm partners reinforced the importance of striving for excellence with cash prizes for eighth graders studying algebra. Partners believed that the prize structure reflected the reality of a global economy. (Current research shows that college graduates earn 73 percent more than nongraduates do.) An awards night lets parents bask in the accomplishments of their children. Because of the success of the program, sponsors added a program in U.S. history for about 340 Sierra Intermediate students and repeated the algebra competition. Lawyers from the firm also met with students and talked about the types of jobs that college graduates could attain. Students were amazed to learn there were jobs that continue to pay wages when workers are sick. Others were surprised to learn that workers could receive three weeks of paid vacation per year. As the girl who won \$140 wrote, "I think this type of stuff encourages us to do our best."<sup>2</sup>

- [George A. Buljan DataQuest School Profile](#)
- [George A. Buljan Middle School \(Outside Source\)](#)
  
- [Richard Henry Dana DataQuest School Profile](#)
- [Richard Henry Dana Middle School \(Outside Source\)](#)
-

- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: Richard Henry Dana Middle School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage
- Sierra Preparatory Academy DataQuest School Profile
- Sierra Preparatory Academy (Outside Source)

Business partners can play some of the following roles:

- As members of advisory committees, they help the school understand community concerns about accountability and the need to prepare students for careers.
- As mentors, they introduce young adolescents to the many career options available to them and help them begin to set goals for their future.
- As schoolwide partners (in programs such as Adopt-a-School), they support school fund-raising efforts, reward students for achievement, and provide needed resources.
- As partners with teacher teams, business people help teachers infuse real-world examples into their lessons. For example, engineering firms can provide guest lecturers and demonstrations to make mathematics and science lessons more relevant to young adolescents.



## In the Spotlight

### **Aliso Viejo Middle School, Capistrano Unified School District**

Local businesses support the Associated Student Body (ASB) students with money, supplies, and expertise for student awards programs throughout the year.

### **Raytheon Corporation.**

The company developed Math Moves U, an interactive Web site that shows relevant applications of mathematics in the real world. Several middle schools use the site as a mathematics tutorial for students in the computer lab.

- Aliso Viejo DataQuest School Profile
- Aliso Viejo Middle School (Outside Source)
- Math Moves U (Outside Source)

Citizen Schools is a national education initiative that mobilizes thousands of adult volunteers to help improve student achievement through skill-building apprenticeships after school. The programs blend real-world learning projects with rigorous academic and leadership development activities, preparing students in the middle grades for success in high school, college, the workforce, and civic life.

Citizen Schools now serves 2,000 mostly disadvantaged students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades in 30 schools and seven states (California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, and Texas). Students spend approximately 400 hours a year taking part in projects, activities, and academic tutoring led by doctors, lawyers, architects, chefs, artists, and many others who try to inspire them to think about college and careers of their own.

According to an independent study (2005), the Citizen Schools model helps student achieve. The study found that participants experienced improvement in their reading and mathematics test scores and class grades. Grade-to-grade promotion, attendance rates, and performance in high school also improved.<sup>3</sup>

## Related Links

- Business Education Standards, (Outside Source), National Business Education Association.
-

Citizen Schools, (Outside Source)

- Citizen Schools Offices, (Outside Source)

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### **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce (PDF; Outside Source) (Executive Summary). Washington, D.C.: National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007, 8.

<sup>2</sup>Scott Feldman, "Cash for Grades; A Santa Ana School Trades the Green Stuff for Good Algebra Scores" (PDF; Outside Source), *Los Angeles Times* (August 15, 2006).

<sup>3</sup>L. Fabiano, L. M. Pearson, and I. J. Williams, "Putting Students on a Pathway to Academic and Social Success: Phase III Findings of the Citizen Schools Evaluation." Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates, November 2005."

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## Nonprofit organizations

An issue brief from *Public Education Network* outlined how a number of local education funds have been working to improve mathematics and science instruction in public schools. They approach the problem from a variety of angles:

- Building coalitions of educators, businesses, and community members
- Establishing networks so teachers learn from and support one another
- Training subject-matter specialists to coach teachers in a school<sup>1</sup>



### In the Spotlight

#### **Aliso Viejo Middle School, Capistrano Unified School District**

The YMCA helps the school to offer on-site before- and after-school programs.

#### **Edna Hill Middle School, Brentwood Union Elementary School District, a 2007 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

The Police Activities League's After-the-Bell program offers homework help by trained, college-age leaders.

- Aliso Viejo DataQuest School Profile
- Aliso Viejo Middle School (Outside Source)
  
- Edna Hill DataQuest School Profile
- Edna Hill Middle School (Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: Edna Hill Middle School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage

Local nonprofit agencies that frequently work as partners in local schools include the following:

- Association of University Women (Outside Source)
- Boys & Girls Clubs, (Outside Source)
- Kiwanis Club, (Outside Source)
- Medical and dental associations
- PEO (Outside Source) (philanthropic educational organization) women's groups.
- Police Activities League (PAL) (Outside Source)
- Rotary Club, (Outside Source)
- Soroptimist clubs (Outside Source)
- YMCA (Outside Source)
- YWCA (Outside Source)

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**Footnote**

<sup>1</sup>"Math and Science Reform" (PDF; Outside Source), *Local Education Fund Issue Brief*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (July 2006).

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## Government agencies

Many government agencies partner with schools to provide a variety of educational opportunities, including civic education opportunities for students and support for parent education.

Government partners include:

- Law enforcement (police, fire, sheriff, and courts)
- Social welfare agencies
- Local libraries
- Legislative offices
- City and county government offices
- Park and recreation agencies

Government partners can work with schools to strengthen academics, reduce truancy, and coordinate delivery of services for low-income families, including:

- Transportation
- Health services
- Child rearing
- Job counseling
- Citizenship services

For example, schools may collaborate with community health or welfare offices and the local Highway Patrol to offer a health fair that coincides with parent or guardian conference days.

- The Highway Patrol can check car seats for infant/toddler safety.
- Community health clinics can do wellness checks or offer flu shots.
- Interpreters can help immigrant parents or guardians with questions about services.
- Local radio stations can provide live music.
- Nearby employers can hold a job fair.
- Area restaurants can donate snacks.



### In the Spotlight

#### **Aliso Viejo Middle School, Capistrano Unified School District**

The local city council provides additional funds for the after-school homework club.

- Aliso Viejo Data Quest School Profile
- Aliso Viejo Middle School (Outside Source)

Parent Project is a partnership in Kern County that supports parents in working with their strong-willed and at-risk adolescents. The broad-based collaborative includes over 40 school districts, child and family serving agencies, Kern County's Probation, Sheriff's Department, the

Department of Human Services, local non-profits, and faith-based groups and the juvenile courts. The Parent Project collaborative has nearly 300 people trained as Parent Project Facilitators. For more information, contact Daryl G. Thiesen, Prevention Programs Coordinator, Kern County Superintendent of Schools, School-Community Partnerships Department, 1300 17th Street - University Square 5th Floor, Bakersfield, CA 93301-4533; 661-636-4757 Fax: 661-636-4329.

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## Senior centers

Grandparents and other senior citizens are another source of **parental involvement**. Research indicates that by 2020, the number of U.S. residents sixty-five or older will have increased by more than half—from 35 million today to an estimated 54 million. Active and alert seniors tend to be healthier, leading many health advocates to work with the schools to encourage seniors to help young adolescents set goals and gain the skills they need to be successful in high school, college, and careers.<sup>1</sup>

A recent study in Maryland showed that in schools where older adult volunteers worked 15 hours a week, reading scores went up, and students had fewer behavioral problems than their peers did at other schools. The adults had fewer falls, expanded their social circles, and performed better than their peers on a memory test.<sup>2</sup>

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Partnerships with Educational Institutions and Organizations

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>" Grandparents Helping in the Classroom" (Outside Source), *Christian Science Monitor.com* (March 9, 2006).

<sup>2</sup>Maria Glod, "Wisdom, Knowledge of Elders Stream Into Area Classrooms; Students, Seniors Benefit From Volunteer Programs" (Outside Source), *Washington Post.com* (February 21, 2006), B01.



## Partnerships with Educational Institutions and Organizations

In spite of competition for scarce resources, the value of partnerships with other educational institutions is evident when looking at good transition programs, regional professional development offerings, and even coursework options for students. For more about transition programs, refer to Recommendation 6—Transitions

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Nearby schools



## Nearby schools

In addition to the types of articulation agreements and staff development opportunities mentioned in other parts of TCSII, neighboring schools can support each other in a variety of ways. For example, they can pool resources to support after-school programs, share facilities for sports leagues, host friendly competitions for test score improvements or attendance, and offer combined parenting courses.



### In the Spotlight

#### **Newark Junior High School, Newark Unified School District**

In a series of Family Reading Nights, parents or guardians and their children learn reading strategies they can use at home to help with content area reading. Book fairs promoting books for independent reading have had excellent turnout from parents and guardians when babysitting for younger siblings and Spanish translation were provided. The school collaborates with a nearby high school and with area elementary schools for an annual Spotlight on Reading—an event for all grade levels that features lessons that reflect families' interests.

#### **Ocean View Junior High School, Ocean View Elementary School District, a 2006 On the Right Track School**

Fifty Ocean View students attend the nearby high school for advanced algebra. The school day was extended to make the enrichment offerings possible. Teachers supported the program because it added to their success.

#### **Richard Henry Dana Middle School, Wiseburn Elementary School District, a 2006 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

Because of a partnership with a nearby private school, Dana students can take advanced courses not offered on their campus.

#### **Rio Norte Junior High School, William S. Hart Union High School District**

Students from the nearby high school get community service credit for tutoring Rio Norte students in science and mathematics after school.

- Newark DataQuest School Profile
- Newark Junior High School (Outside Source)
  
- Ocean View DataQuest School Profile
- Ocean View Junior High School (Outside Source)
  
- Richard Henry Dana DataQuest School Profile
- Richard Henry Dana Middle School (Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: Richard Henry Dana Middle School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage
  
- Rio Norte DataQuest School Profile
- Rio Norte Junior High School (Outside Source)

## Related Links

- Recommendation 6—Transitions, TCSII.
- Recommendation 10—Professional Learning, TCSII.

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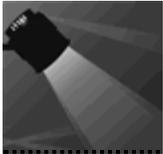
District and regional offices

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## District and regional offices

In addition to the standard service agreements between district and county offices and their local schools, some noteworthy models take collaboration to a new level.



### In the Spotlight

#### **Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office**

Do the Math is a phone-tutoring and television program funded by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office, Panama-Buena Vista Union School District, Bakersfield City School District, and local business with additional support from the Kern Union High School District. Do the Math offers mathematics instruction and tutoring aligned to the state-adopted mathematics content standards. The program is live on television 4–5 p.m. Phone help lines allow student callers to have mathematics problems solved live on television or privately over the telephone by certificated mathematics instructors. Students watching at home or in after-school programs have the opportunity to see how certificated mathematics instructors solve problems called in by viewers. Students can dial in to the **Do the Math** help lines from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Tutors are available at the same time every Tuesday and Wednesday to help students solve their mathematics problems over the telephone in English or Spanish. Students can also view the program live or review archives of past programs on the Internet.

- Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office (Outside Source)
- Do the Math (Outside Source)
- Spanish-language Do the Math (Outside Source)
- Broadcast and Telephone Math Tutoring for Grades 4-12, (Outside Source) Do the Math

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## Higher education

The California State Legislature established the CAPP-California Academic Partnership Program (Outside Source) in 1984 to develop “cooperative efforts to improve the academic quality of public secondary schools with the objective of improving the preparation of all students for college.” CAPP helps communities establish academic partnerships between secondary schools and community colleges, public or private baccalaureate degree-granting institutions, and business enterprises. The aim of the partnerships is to:

- Transform the relationships between educational institutions in ways that directly benefit students.
- Improve curriculum in subject areas required for admission to college.
- Strengthen teachers’ capacities to enable all students to learn the curriculum.
- Enhance the ability of students to benefit from these changes.
- Improve postsecondary and business partners’ understanding of these students’ unique needs.

The CAPP publication, *Raising Student Achievement through Effective Education Partnerships. Policy and Practice*, (PDF; Outside Source, 2004) provides seven examples of successful partnerships and outlines key elements that contribute to the success of those alliances. Another publication, *Getting Students Ready for College and Career* (2006) (PDF; Outside Source) was developed by the Southern Regional Education Board as a resource to help school and university partnerships.



### In the Spotlight

#### **Bernice Ayer Middle School, Capistrano Unified School District, a 2005 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

Staff members at Bernice Ayer take advantage of the services offered by the Professional Development Academy at California State University, Fullerton.

#### **Empire Union Elementary School District**

The district joined a partnership with California State University, Stanislaus, to offer educators a master’s degree with a concentration in middle grades. As a partner in offering the program, the district provides the following:

- Use of district facilities free of charge for the classes
- Staff participation in designing the courses and teaching sections of the course

#### **Holmes International Middle School, Los Angeles Unified School District, a 2007 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

Staff members work closely with professors from the local universities to develop the special education program. Professors help teachers ensure that the program reflects the most effective practices based on current research.

#### **McKinleyville Middle School, McKinleyville Union Elementary School District, a 2006 Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model School**

To help young women gain an interest and skills in mathematics and science, McKinleyville participates in Expanding Your Horizons (Outside Source)—a girls career conference on mathematics and science.

#### **Monroe Clark Middle School, San Diego Unified School District**

A nine-week course offered by the Parent Institute for Quality Education teaches parents how to help their children succeed in school and apply to college. Class topics include high school course requirements for college; financial aid; scholarships; and ways to communicate with school staff about student progress. San Diego State University has agreed to help the children of the institute’s graduates during the college application process. The program has been at Monroe Clark since November 1998. Funding for the course typically comes through the CSU partnership and private contributions. Parents take

the classes at no charge.<sup>1</sup>

- Bernice Ayer DataQuest School Profile
- Bernice Ayer Middle School (Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: Bernice Ayer Middle School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage
  
- Empire Union DataQuest District Profile
- Empire Union Elementary School District (Outside Source)
  
- Holmes International DataQuest School Profile
- Holmes International Middle School (Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: Holmes International Middle School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage
  
- McKinleyville DataQuest School Profile
- McKinleyville Middle School (Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage—Visitor's Guide: McKinleyville Middle School (PDF; Outside Source)
- Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage
- Expanding Your Horizons (Outside Source)
  
- Monroe Clark DataQuest School Profile
- Monroe Clark Middle School (Outside Source)

University partnerships are extremely helpful for schools with highly gifted students who require material significantly above grade level. The Profoundly Gifted Institute (Outside Source), provides helpful information about partnerships with universities and colleges to provide challenging material for gifted students.

Another helpful resource, College: Making it Happen (Outside Source) is a booklet designed to help teachers communicate the importance of early academic and financial planning in order for middle school children to have choices after high school graduation. The booklet was developed by the California Intersegmental Coordinating Committee (Outside Source).

The KnowHow2GO (Outside Source) campaign is a joint initiative of the American Council on Education, Lumina Foundation for Education, and the Ad Council. The campaign encourages eighth through tenth graders to prepare for college using four simple steps. The Website includes a virtual tour of KnowHow2GO University, tips and checklists for students, and materials for adults who are mentoring a college-bound student. Students and mentors can sign up for a monthly newsletter.

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<sup>1</sup>Success Stories/California, GEAR UP (Outside Source)

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## Conclusion

Research on youth development supports the importance of partnerships between schools and the community. According to the *Resilience & Youth Development Module Handbook*:

Schools alone cannot create the safety net of supports and opportunities vital to the healthy development of children and youth. Schools must work in partnership with students, families and their communities—local community-based organizations, city government, health and human service agencies, businesses, the media, and community volunteers. Through these partnerships, students must be given opportunities to do service in their communities and to form relationships with adults in these different community sectors. Community service learning and mentoring are two proven approaches for promoting healthy development and learning in students as well as for developing positive community attitudes toward children and youth.<sup>1</sup>

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Higher education

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### Footnote

<sup>1</sup>*Resilience & Youth Development Module Handbook*. Prepared by WestEd and the Healthy Kids Office. Sacramento: West Ed and the California Department of Education, 2002, p. 24.