



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UNITE-LA CELEBRATES REGIONAL \$18 MILLION COLLABORATION GRANT TO INCREASE EDUCATION EQUITY

LOS ANGELES – UNITE-LA joins more than two dozen K-16 partners today in celebrating an \$18.13 million California Department of General Services grant awarded to launch the L.A. Region K-16 Collaborative (Collaborative), a countywide effort that aims to increase equitable degree attainment, streamline educational pipelines, and address labor market demand for the L.A. region with a focus on health, computing and engineering occupations.

UNITE-LA is the convener of the Collaborative, which will also seek opportunities to leverage or attract new resources beyond this K-16 grant opportunity to pursue additional targeted pathways in early childhood and K-12 education.

“Since 2008, UNITE-LA has served as the primary convener of the L.A. Compact—a bold commitment to close the education and workforce gaps caused by systemic inequities and racism. We are proud of our long history of collaborative initiatives to advance education attainment and economic mobility for our region. This award is a tremendous opportunity to support students countywide by expanding early college credit, ensuring seamless transfer pathways, and connecting education to real-world work experiences,” said UNITE-LA President, Alysia Bell.

Postsecondary education is key to long-term career growth and economic mobility. L.A. County’s K-12 student population is majority Latinx (66%) and Black (7%), yet when they graduate from high school, they are 13 and 17 percentage points less likely to enroll in higher education than their White peers. Less than 5% of community college degrees related to health care, engineering and computer science are awarded to Latinx students – all fields that offer high-growth, living wage career opportunities.

UNITE-LA believes the onus for improving education attainment lies not on our students from historically marginalized communities, but on our systems to address these inequitable outcomes by working together to streamline and accelerate transitions between high schools, community colleges and four-year universities. Strong employer engagement will also be a central focus of this effort to ensure K-16 pathways are aligned to regional workforce needs.

The L.A. Regional Collaborative will work to advance our goals by pursuing shared objectives, including (1) expanding and enhancing dual enrollment offerings, course registrations and completions to improve pathway awareness and early college credit; (2) enhancing transfer pathways through the creation of stackable credentials, strengthening articulation between public 2-year and public 4-year institutions, and better advising to improve transfer success; (3) expanding work-based learning opportunities to improve students’ economic security, career exposure and employer-aligned skill development.

The Los Angeles Community College District, which represents nearly 200,000 students across the county, will act as fiscal agent for the Collaborative and play a key role in connecting these funds to initiatives across the partnership.

Dr. Francisco Rodriguez, Chancellor of the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), noted, “LACCD is pleased to be a member of L.A. County’s new K-16 Regional Collaborative and appreciative of the state for seeing value in the proposed work and for funding us. In joining fellow community college districts, 4-year public universities, K-12 districts, and employers, we will collectively create the conditions and capacity for meaningful change and impact in our county. Providing clear and concise pathways for students throughout their education is a key component of student success and we are prepared to scale this opportunity to all students in L.A. County.”

Over the next year, the L.A. Region K-16 Collaborative will implement a local, sub-grant award process to distribute funds across five sub-regional partnerships organized around the county’s five Cal State Universities to strengthen and expand K-16 pathways in their region.

Leaders of partner institutions join us in celebrating and initiating this work:

“As a partner in L.A. County’s new Regional K-16 Collaborative, Los Angeles Unified is excited to amplify efforts to increase students’ college and career-readiness. Students must have access to diverse postsecondary education options to cultivate important industry-specific skills, which allow scholars to thrive in our regional workforce and economy. We look forward to partnering with local community colleges and four-year universities to provide students with early exposure to careers in health care, engineering and computing and equitable opportunities to enter several high-growth professions.”

Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent
Los Angeles Unified School District

“Pomona Unified looks forward to joining our fellow L.A. County school districts and the L.A. County Office of Education in taking part in the Los Angeles K-16 Regional Collaborative. Our work in primary and secondary education, in collaboration with L.A. County’s higher education institutions and workforce partners, represents great potential for supporting our students throughout their education and propelling them to meaningful careers.”

Darren Knowles
Interim Superintendent
Pomona Unified School District

“As the President of Cal State Long Beach and leader of the CSU5, I am delighted to take part in L.A. County’s K-16 Regional Collaborative. The CSU is one of this nation’s most powerful economic drivers and imperative to the county. This effort to unite our systems will significantly augment the CSU5’s ability to support the region. To work closely with other campuses in the region is the chief mission of the CSU5, and the opportunity to scale that across K-12, higher education and the workforce will be invaluable to our students and community.”

Jane Close Conoley, Ph.D.
President
Cal State Long Beach

About UNITE-LA

Over the past 25 years, UNITE-LA has been a trusted business intermediary, dedicated to supporting the development of an effective local public education system, so that all children and youth succeed in

college, career and beyond. Through the intersection of programming, policy, and systems change efforts, UNITE-LA works to increase access to high-quality early childhood education, develop career pathways in high-growth industries, improve college access and success, and ensure workforce readiness, especially for individuals with high barriers into the workforce. Visit www.unitela.com.

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