Improving Education Through Collaboration

A Case Study of the Long Beach Seamless Education Partnership



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cross the country, cities and regions have used cross-sector collaboration by business, higher-education, P-12, and community leaders to improve education. Although regional leaders take different approaches to this challenge, the most successful communities engage all sectors and align their efforts around common goals. Together, these communities identify keys to community vitality, shape dynamic and sustainable networks, and develop systemic solutions that help enable the region to attain its economic, educational and social goals.

The best established of these efforts have made substantial gains along key education indicators. To better understand what makes these collaborations successful, and to support its members in leading similar efforts, the Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF), with generous support from GlaxoSmithKline, has undertaken a case study of one established effort—the Long Beach Seamless Education Partnership. Launched in 1994 by local civic leaders to ensure that all students would progress smoothly through the education systems and into the workforce, the Long Beach Seamless Education Partnership (the Partnership) has become a defining feature of the community and a model for the nation.

Methods

BHEF's study of the Seamless Education Partnership began with a theory of action for cross-sector efforts to increase alignment from Pre-K through graduate school (P-20) and improve educational outcomes (Figure 1).

BHEF's theory of action posits that community leaders coalesce around a shared vision that is shaped by local context and needs. Collaborative efforts are solidified through governance structures and by allocating resources to support the effort. Participants identify P-20 improvement strategies to address the academic core (curriculum and instruction), student experience (support services and co- and extra-curricular activities), and relevant policies. These strategies are specifically designed to achieve the community's desired outcomes.

From this theory of action, BHEF developed several research questions to guide its study:

- 1. How was the Seamless Education Partnership created and how has it evolved?
 - What are the goals of the Seamless Education Partnership?
 - Who are the main partners?
 - How has the Partnership been governed and sustained over time?
 - · What role has business played?
- 2. How have stakeholders reformed P-16 education in Long Beach?
 - What are the initiative's signature programs or activities?
 - How do the participants develop and execute a plan of action?
- 3. What educational outcomes have resulted from the Seamless Education Partnership?
- 4. What are the keys to success and lessons learned?

In August 2009, BHEF interviewed approximately 50 leaders from various sectors of the community—K-12 and higher education, community and faith organizations, and business—and analyzed those interviews for common themes related to the theory of action and research questions. BHEF also reviewed documents related to the Partnership. This report briefly summarizes some key findings of this analysis.

4-Year Graduation Rates

DESIRED OUTCOMES

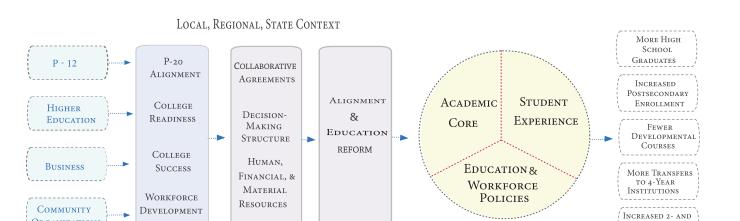


Figure 1: P-20 Networks Theory of Change

SHARED VISION

Networks

Organizations

COMMUNITY

LEADERS

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P-20 IMPROVEMENT

STRATEGIES

HISTORY OF THE SEAMLESS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

In the early 1990s, Long Beach, Calif., faced a variety of economic and demographic challenges. Several major employers, including the Navy and the aircraft industry, greatly downsized or left the city altogether. In addition, demographic shifts resulted in a significant proportion of students in the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) coming from low income backgrounds and having to learn English. These changes posed a new set of challenges for the district. As one community leader recounted, "We had a great amount of chaos within our community."

In 1992, at the urging of Mayor Ernie Kell, community leaders gathered together to chart a new course for economic growth and prosperity. With key leadership from the business community, they formed the Long Beach Economic Partnership, and commissioned a report entitled, *A Call to Action*¹. While *A Call to Action* was centered on improvements for business, it also highlighted the importance of education as a "pre-requisite to economic growth." It called on LBUSD, Long Beach City College (LBCC), and California State University at Long Beach (CSULB) to develop a Long Beach Education Partnership that would mirror the Long Beach Economic Partnership.

The Long Beach Education Partnership relied on the mayor and the leaders of LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB to drive improvement. Those leaders eagerly accepted the challenge and began working together immediately. To support this work, four local businesses each contributed \$75,000 at the outset of the initiative. A formal agreement, such as a Memmorandum of Understanding, never was developed in Long Beach because the group believed that continuous and open communication among the three institutions was essential and that it was not necessary to bind leaders to this commitment through paper.

Initially, the Long Beach Education Partnership focused on improving communication across the local K-12, community college, and four-year institutions, as well as on holding themselves accountable to the public. The group started with a few focused projects, including becoming the first school district in California to mandate school uniforms, a reform that local residents credit with reducing learning distractions and increasing attendance and test scores.

After achieving some early successes, the group formed a community task force to discuss how to ensure that more students would graduate from high school prepared for college. Their focus shifted to rigorous grade-level learning standards and alignment of curriculum and standards in postsecondary institutions. Ultimately, the group worked to "develop a world class seamless education system," and the Long Beach Education Partnership became known as the Seamless Education Partnership.

Today, the Seamless Education Partnership has grown to include countless programs and initiatives that seek to provide "world-class education from preschool to graduate school and prepare Long Beach students for successful engagement in the global knowledge economy." As Superintendent Steinhauser observed, "There are so many [collaborative] projects going on between these three institutions that I don't know all of them, King [Alexander, CSULB President] doesn't know all of them, and Eloy [Oakley, LBCC President] doesn't know all of them." A few signature programs of the Seamless Education Partnership are outlined in the text box on the following page.

¹A Call to Action. Long Beach Economic Partnership. September 1992.

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

Long Beach College Promise: In March 2008, education leaders from LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB announced and signed the Long Beach College Promise (the Promise). Under this initiative, the three education sectors promise all LBUSD students the opportunity to receive a college education. The Promise provides a variety of educational benefits and services, including:

- · Early and continued outreach for students and families
- Support for multiple college pathways
- Guaranteed college admission at CSULB for students who complete minimum college preparatory or community college transfer requirements
- Tuition-free semester at LBCC, funded by the LBCC Gateway to Greatness capital campaign.

Early Assessment Program: The California Early Assessment Program (EAP) is administered in conjunction with California's statewide standards test and includes a voluntary 11th grade assessment of students' performance on California State University placement standards. The goal of the program is to provide early feedback on potential remedial needs so that students can address those needs before they leave high school. To this end, LBUSD mandates that all eligible students take the test in their junior year. According to one LBUSD administrator, "LBUSD has a 93 percent to 94 percent participation rate, which is far higher than the state average of about 77 percent for juniors." As a way of participating in the Seamless Education Partnership, LBCC became one of the first community colleges in the state to accept the EAP as a measure of student proficiency.

Principal for a Day: Co-sponsored by the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, LBUSD, and the Long Beach Education Foundation, Principal for a Day creates relationships and partnerships between business and education. Guest principals—composed of community members—visit classes, attend faculty meetings, supervise lunch, and observe the successes and challenges of school life. After the school day, participants meet for a debriefing reception that features conversations with the leaders of LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB. The annual event, which seeks to increase business awareness of education, has sparked hundreds of long-lasting business and education relationships that extend throughout the school year and beyond.

LBUSD Academic and Career Success Initiative: This initiative is at the heart of LBUSD's efforts to increase college and career readiness. According to LBUSD informational materials, "While implementing the Long Beach College Promise and enhancing the Seamless Education Partnership are central pieces, the Academic and Career Success Initiative includes several other integrated district efforts:"

- 1. Increased Awareness and Completion of College Preparatory Curriculum
- 2. College and Career Awareness and Enrichment
- 3. Parent Outreach
- 4. Enhanced Counseling
- 5. Mentoring
- 6. Early Algebra Readiness and Completion
- 7. Literacy Development
- 8. Enhanced Interventions
- 9. Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) Program Expansion
- 10. Advanced Placement Course Expansion.

P-20 Collaboration

Although the programs described so far are essential to the Seamless Education Partnership, the true hallmark of the initiative is the deep—and seamless—collaboration across LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB. From faculty to administrators to the institutional leaders, peers at every level routinely work across institutions toward the common goal of preparing students for their next step, whether that step is transitioning from preschool to K-12, within the K-12 system, or into postsecondary education.

At the leadership level, LBUSD superintendent Chris Steinhauser, LBCC president Eloy Oakley, and CSULB president King Alexander communicate frequently and present a unified front. As Alexander said, "It is important that we all think we are part of the public school system." Oakley concurred, adding, "Chris Steinhauser's success is my success." For his part, Steinhauser called cross-institutional collaboration a part of his everyday life and explained that the three leaders do whatever is necessary to support each other. Several interviewees mentioned the positive impact of this unity, with one noting that it "sends a message to business that the Long Beach education system is committed to preparing your future workforce."

Just as the institutional leaders consider themselves part of the same education system, so do the dozens of faculty and administrators who carry out the Partnership's vision. According to one LBUSD administrator, "We work so well together that often times I forget that we don't work for the same institution." Much of this work occurs through the Seamless Education steering committee. This body of 19 faculty members and administrators from LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB sets priorities related to the Partnership's shared mission.

The steering committee oversees the Seamless Education Partnership's four initiatives:

- Preparation for College Success
- Career & Technical Education Pathways
- Counseling
- Postsecondary Success.

For each initiative, approximately 10 people representing the three education institutions are responsible for outlining strategies and identifying each institution's responsibilities for implementation.

CAL STATE LONG BEACH TEACHER PREPARATION: "SEAMLESS EDUCATION AT ITS BEST"

When the Long Beach Education Partnership began in the 1990s, Long Beach Unified School District was not the primary employer of teachers who graduated from Cal State Long Beach. In the intervening years, Cal State Long Beach and Long Beach Unified have worked together through the Seamless Education Partnership to reform the teacher preparation program so that teachers who graduate from Cal State Long Beach are better prepared to meet the district's needs. As one Cal State Long Beach administrator explained, "The College of Ed has allowed K-12 educators into their space to tell them what K-12 teachers need and what it is really like in the classroom." In addition to engaging in ongoing discussions about what teachers need, "many, many" faculty members and administrators from Long Beach Unified teach courses in Cal State Long Beach's College of Education. In return, Cal State Long Beach sends many of its student teachers to Long Beach Unified. According to one K-12 administrator, "This is seamless education at its best. I am responsible for student teachers at both ends—K-12 and Cal State Long Beach."

By all accounts, this collaboration has paid off. A Cal State Long Beach administrator observed, "As we have worked together and the district has had a lot of input into teacher preparation, they're much more eager to get the graduates of these programs." In fact, Long Beach Unified now is the largest employer of teachers who graduate from Cal State Long Beach, and one Long Beach Unified administrator reported that 19 of the 23 history teachers hired in 2008 graduated from there.

"I think we all realize that we can do wonderful things on our own, but we can do much greater things together."

As part of their work on the Seamless Education initiatives, faculty and administrators from the three institutions frequently collaborate to design and provide professional development for LBUSD faculty, arrange college visits for LBUSD students, revise K-12 and postsecondary courses, apply for grants, develop counseling and academic support programs, develop content standards, and more. All of the partners interviewed reported that their relationships truly are collaborative—characterized by mutual respect—and have deepened over time. According to one member of the steering committee from CSULB:

"One of the major advantages of this group is that we've all worked together for so long that we know each other. At the slightest need, we just pick up the phone and call the person who can help us advance the enterprise."

To the leaders and educators who participated in this study, cross-institutional collaboration is simply the best way to serve the students and the community of Long Beach. Not only do they believe that "your kids are my kids," several people also mentioned that collaborating enhances the capacity of each institution and of the entire system. As President Oakley said, "I think we all realize that we can do wonderful things on our own, but we can do much greater things together."

Despite the effort required to develop and sustain strong working relationships and coordinate efforts across three campuses, President Alexander noted that collaborating "isn't breaking our backs, and in fact it is making our jobs easier. It's helping more kids get through the system better." Several faculty and administrators from all three institutions echoed this sentiment. It is for these reasons that the spirit of collaboration in Long Beach has thrived, despite turnover among the leaders of all three education institutions and in the absence of a formal partnership agreement.

AN EXAMPLE OF K-16 ALIGNMENT IN HISTORY

One of the early successes of the Long Beach Education Partnership was the development of district standards in history. In addition to agreeing on content, administrators and faculty from LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB identified the skills that students need to succeed in college history courses, e.g., being able to differentiate between primary and secondary sources, understanding bias, and discerning between facts and opinion. LBUSD administrators then asked teachers at each grade level to identify what students should be able to do by the end of each grade, and integrated those skills into the curriculum. To help teachers address these skills, LBUSD and CSULB designed and provided professional development that was linked to the standards.

Although state standards have since supplanted the district standards, LBUSD continues to address those essential skills. In addition, educators and administrators from the three institutions still work closely together to increase teacher content knowledge, increase student achievement, and close the achievement gap in history. As an example, LBUSD students are required to write a junior thesis in American History. When the teachers are preparing to evaluate the papers, LBCC history professors talk to them about what constitutes a well-written history paper. According to a LBUSD administrator, this is but one example of "how hands-on [the collaboration] is."

In addition to increasing scores and narrowing the achievement gap in history, the collaboration has benefited faculty and administrators from LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB. As a postsecondary history professor explained: "We've built a community of scholars across the segments. We're all workers in the same vineyard. Whatever our duty station is, our common purpose is to get our students through these levels of history so they can be well educated students when they graduate from Cal State Long Beach." As a result, K-12 teachers teach with more confidence, and postsecondary professors have made greater efforts to build on students' prior knowledge.

The Role of Non-Education Partners

Although education institutions are at the heart of the Seamless Education Partnership, the Partnership also enjoys deep support from community leaders and organizations. In particular, business, media, community-based youth organizations, and faith-based organizations directly or indirectly have been involved with the Partnership since its inception. As one leader explained, "We all have the same objective: we all want to get our students through the system successfully."

"When we look at the local workforce, where is that workforce going to come from for the future? It has got to come from the local schools."

Business

With an eye toward economic development, business leaders in Long Beach provided initial critical support and guidance to forge the Seamless Education Partnership through, *A Call to Action*, and the Long Beach Economic Partnership. As the Partnership has matured, the business community has allowed educators to take the lead role. Now, businesses support the Partnership with programs and resources, including:

- participation in the Principal for a Day program
- sponsorship of individual high schools
- donations to scholarship programs
- campaign support for school board members.

Some business leaders continue to emphasize the workforce implications of a strong education system. One leader noted, "When we look at the local workforce, where is that workforce

going to come from for the future? It has got to come from the local schools." As a result, some business leaders highlighted the need to grow a more systemic workforce component of the Seamless Education Partnership, with one pointing out that, "Business isn't mentioned when people talk about Seamless Education, but that would be my ultimate goal—that Seamless Education would include that seamless transition into the workforce." LBUSD administrators indicated that they were increasing their emphasis on career readiness in response to this type of community feedback.

Media

By many accounts, the media has played a critical role in the success of the Seamless Education Partnership. Since the early 1990s, when the City of Long Beach was trying to establish a positive identity for itself, community leaders have worked with the media to publicize the community's successes. At a time when Long Beach had no media outlet of its own, community leaders tried to convince every major media outlet in nearby Los Angeles to cover the positive events associated with the Long Beach Community Partnership and the Long Beach Education Partnership.

Today, Presidents Oakley and Alexander and Superintendent Steinhauser continue to deliberately garner positive press for the Seamless Education Partnership. Their efforts involve coordination of their respective public relations departments, as well as joint public appearances. As President Oakley explained:

"The intent is to ensure that we get the message out to everybody. I think the power of us being visible together is the power of communicating a succinct message to the community: that education is the number-one priority here."

According to one of the Partnership's founders, this consistent media coverage has enabled education to "find its way into the public market," meaning that the community knows what is happening in its local education institutions. Several interviewees remarked that because of this knowledge, "The City of Long Beach loves education."

Community and Faith-Based Organizations

Like many communities, Long Beach is replete with youth-serving organizations and programs. These organizations typically have missions that are independent of the K-12 education system. However, in Long Beach, many youth -serving organizations view their role as important to the Seamless Education Partnership, even if they are not directly connected with it.

"The seamless education initiative is part of the fabric of the three institutions now. It's not just a project anymore; it's the way business is done."

A few organizations align their efforts with the work of the Partnership by filling gaps as expressed by the school district or the Seamless Education Partnership. When LBUSD mandated uniforms, for example, the Assistance League worked to ensure that all students had uniforms regardless of their ability to pay. As another example, the Department of Health and Human Services works on integrating early childhood education into the Partnership. One community leader involved in this issue noted feeling "welcomed and immediately prioritized" within the Partnership.

Additionally, the Black Minister's Alliance plays a significant liaison role between the community and the education institutions. The Alliance meets with education leaders to relay the concerns of the community (not limited to the African American community) to the education institutions. The Alliance also works with educators—including Charlie Reed, the chancellor of the California State University System—to bring key messages and programs to the community through churches.

According to several educators and community leaders, it is only natural that Long Beach's community organizations support the Seamless Education Partnership. Many community leaders graduated from LBUSD, LBCC and/or CSULB, and remained in Long Beach. As a result, there is a great sense of loyalty to public education. According to President Oakley, "They have an affinity. They want us to be successful." This loyalty creates a sense of connection to the Seamless Education Partnership, even among community organizations whose programs operate completely independently.

Measuring Success

The use of data is another source of pride among the Seamless Education partners. According to the partners, they track students along key indicators related to college readiness, enrollment, and success. At the time of the site visit, LBUSD also was working with national experts to develop valid indicators of career readiness, which is an increasingly important focus of the district's reform efforts.

As Superintendent Steinhauser explained, the partners use data from all three institutions to inform their joint efforts. For example, he pointed out that the postsecondary partners track LBUSD students through their postsecondary careers so that LBUSD knows "how many [of our graduates] are where and how many finish in four years, five years and so on." The partners also use data on postsecondary remediation to jointly develop courses that will better prepare LBUSD students for their first year of college.

LBUSD also has developed a data dashboard that identifies the key strategies related to its Academic & Career Success Initiative (e.g. AVID expansion in middle and high schools and Advanced Placement course expansion). The dashboard lists the target metrics related to those strategies and charts progress toward the targets. Table 1 identifies some of the metrics that LBUSD uses to measure college readiness and enrollment, and shows 2009 progress toward those metrics (bold items indicate that the district met its 2009 target).

As Table 1 shows, district-wide progress toward these goals was mixed in 2009. However, according to the partners, these aggregated scores do not tell the entire story. Superintendent Steinhauser explained that certain subgroups have made outstanding progress, noting that, "Three years ago Hispanic students took over as the number-one group in AP courses," and that, "African American students have made great gains but [still] are far behind their white counterparts." CSULB President

Table 1: Long Beach Unified School District College Readiness Metrics

Metric	2009 Target	2009 Actual	2013 Goal
10th Grade California High School Exit Examination Pass Rate (ELA)	80%	74%	85%
10th Grade California High School Exit Examination Pass Rate (Math)	79%	74%	85%
Complete "A-G" Requirements	42%	38%	60%
School-Wide AVID Participation	5%	5%	10%
College Admissions	74%	n/a	90%
Advanced Placement Course Enrollment	28%	28%	35%
Advanced Placement Exam Pass Rate	53%	51%	60%
SAT: Proportion Tested	41%	35%	60%
Early Assessment Program English: Proportion Tested	90%	91%	95%
Early Assessment Program Math: Proportion Tested	89%	92%	95%

Source: Long Beach Unified School District

Alexander pointed out that LBUSD has made these gains under difficult demographic and financial conditions. He said:

"Go back and tell people that Wilson High School has 5,000 students, and that's average in Long Beach. The guidance counselor-to-student ratio here is 900 to 1, when the national average is 273 to 1. People don't understand how...well they're doing with so many people, and with no money...It is amazing the job that Chris [Steinhauser] does to get so many kids ready for our institutions under the circumstances."

Indeed, according to LBUSD data, 73 percent of the graduating class of 2008 enrolled in two- or four-year postsecondary institutions. Nearly half (47 percent) of the LBUSD graduates who enrolled in college went to Long Beach City College, and 11 percent went to Long Beach State.

To help LBUSD graduates enter college without need for remediation, LBUSD has mandated the Early Assessment Program—which measures students' performance on California State University placement standards—for all high school juniors. As a result, the percentage of LBUSD students taking the Early Assessment Program (EAP) has steadily increased since 2007 (Figure 2). As more students are tested,

more are able to adjust their senior year study plans based on test results. According to Superintendent Steinhauser, fewer LBUSD graduates are requiring developmental courses in their first year of college because of these adjustments.

Beyond these quantifiable measures, various interviewees cited numerous ancillary outcomes of the Seamless Education Partnership:

- LBUSD has been a five-time finalist for the Broad Prize for Urban Education, and won the prize in 2003.
- The Partnership activities, combined with LBUSD's reform efforts, are creating a strong college-going mindset among students in the community.
- K-12 teachers have deepened their content knowledge and teach with greater confidence because of their interactions with university faculty.
- Cross-institutional collaboration around a common goal has increased the effectiveness of the three institutions.

For many, the Partnership itself is a noteworthy outcome. As one community leader explained, "The seamless education initiative is part of the fabric of the three institutions now. It's not just a project anymore; it's the way business is done."

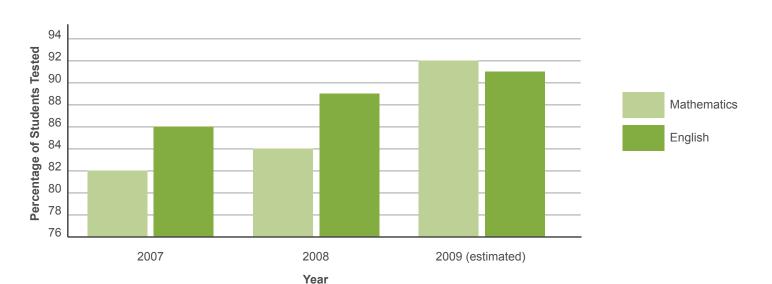


Figure 2: Percentage of Juniors Taking the EAP Test

Source: Long Beach Unified School District

Keys to Success: A Model for Others

The Seamless Education partners identified several key elements to their success. This section discusses each of those elements, and incorporates the partners' advice to stakeholders in other communities that are seeking to undertake a similar effort.

Broad-based community demand for improvement.

Long Beach has cultivated a demand for a seamless education system as a driver for economic development and community well being. The Partnership is built on a shared attitude that the students of Long Beach are everyone's students in a continuous system, and that education not only is an economic driver, but a social-justice issue with moral implications. Many of the community's leaders are products of LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB. Their deep roots in the local education system inspire them to re-invest in the institutions that served them, and to take collective ownership of the education challenges facing Long Beach.

Advice:

- Start small: Open up communications between the school district, local community colleges, and public and private universities to identify common needs. Foster early community support by better publicizing the collaborations that already are underway. (Target: Educators)
- Include all key stakeholder groups: Solicit broad-based input and support to ensure that all members of the community believe their opinion has contributed to the work. The mayor often is well positioned as a neutral party to call the community together and make education a community priority. (Targets: Business community, educators, local government.)

Strong, long-term leadership.

Long Beach's success has hinged largely on the education leaders. There has been relatively little turnover among the leaders since the Partnership began in the 1990s. The leaders who have been involved have been visionary, willing to work together, and able to see themselves as part of the same education system.

Advice:

- Open communications: Ensure that leaders, administrators, and faculty of all three institutions speak frequently and openly. This level of communication allows educators across institutions to identify common needs and to avoid potential pitfalls early in the process. (Target: Education leaders)
- Demonstrate commitment to the initiative: Attend important events and communicate the importance of the initiative to faculty and administrators. Support staff involvement in the work (e.g., by allowing the work to count toward tenure or professional development). (Target: Education leaders)
- Set strategic goals: Develop common goals and metrics to ensure a common direction over the course of the initiative. (Target: Education leaders)
- Support the superintendent: Cultivate community leaders and a school board who consider themselves "parents of the community." Set a cohesive, collaborative agenda. Work with the superintendent to ensure positive media coverage and forward progress. (Targets: School board, business, community members)

"Turnover-proof" initiatives.

In Long Beach, despite turnover of both university presidents and the LBUSD superintendent, the Seamless Education Partnership has strengthened over time. When the current leaders were hired, each was made aware of the expectations—from the community and from within each institution—for his continued involvement in the Seamless Education Partnership.

Advice:

- Ensure institutional support: Publicly recognize and support faculty members and administrators who become involved in the initiative. (Target: Education leaders)
- Cultivate broad-based community support: Create community demand for this work to help ensure that it continues regardless of leadership turnover. (Targets: Business community, educators, local government)

Media involvement.

Long Beach leaders developed relationships with the local media that have resulted in long-term coverage of this effort. This media attention has raised public awareness about the importance of college and the structures in place to support students as they work to earn postsecondary credentials.

Advice:

- Publicize success: Advertise programs that already are making gains toward the overall goal of the initiative. (Targets: Media, educators)
- Ensure that institutional leaders appear together frequently: These joint appearances convey the sense of one education system, rather than three separate institutions. (Targets: Media, education leaders, business)

The community of Long Beach has made great gains in P-16 education in the face of tremendous challenges. Most community leaders involved in the Seamless Education Partnership highlighted the collaborative nature of these education improvement efforts, and many described meaningful, long-term work across institutional boundaries. Importantly, all parties recognized room to grow, noting that Long Beach still must make great strides before seamless education becomes a reality for all students.

Acknowledgements

This report was written by BHEF Director of Research Natalie Nielsen, Ph.D., and BHEF Associate Director of Programs Kirstin McCarthy. It is a product of BHEF's College Readiness, Access and Success Initiative, chaired by the California State University System Chancellor Charles Reed and Humana, Inc. Chairman David Jones Jr.

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McCarthy joined the Business-Higher Education Forum in 2006, and has focused on the development and implementation of the College Readiness Initiative (CRI). Prior to joining BHEF she worked as an educator at international schools in both Ecuador and Thailand. McCarthy's employment history includes the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, the Institute for Higher Education Policy, and the Higher Education Information Center. McCarthy is a graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Education where she earned an M.Ed in Administration, Planning & Social Policy. She holds a bachelor's degree in English, with concentrations in Spanish and education from Bates College.

This report would not have been possible without considerable support from BHEF Director of Programs Jeanne B. Contardo, Ph.D., who joined BHEF in 2008, and is responsible for managing the organization's new and existing programs and initiatives. Dr. Contardo earned her Ph.D. in higher education policy at the University of Maryland, College Park. She has published and presented widely on the topic of access to higher education, specifically focusing on how interagency partnerships form to provide programming for at-risk groups. Dr.

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About BHEF

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