

Business and Education working together to promote a rigorous and relevant educational system that prepares high school students to gain essential skills; effectively transition from high school to post-secondary education, training and careers; and succeed in the new, global economy.

EAST COUNTY BUSINESS – EDUCATION ALLIANCE

2009-2010 REPORT

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The East County Business-Education Alliance is a nonprofit organization that brings Contra Costa County business, labor, government, community, higher education, and chambers of commerce together with the school districts of Antioch, Liberty Union, and Pittsburg to foster a strategic vision and build strategic partnerships that support and equip high school students for life, post-secondary education, training, and careers. The Alliance also works closely with the Mt. Diablo school district, which serves Bay Point.

THE GLOBAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

In today's global, technology-driven economy, the skills necessary to succeed in the workforce and in college have converged. All students must have access to a rigorous and relevant curriculum that provides them with the skills they will need to have real life choices. To succeed in the workplace *as well as* college, students must be able to meet high academic standards *and* gain essential skills. Yet, the United States is losing ground in academic achievement and school graduation rates. Approximately one-third of all California high school students today drop out of school. Experts estimate that as many as another third receive their diplomas, but are unprepared to succeed in college or the workplace and therefore unprepared to succeed in a constantly and rapidly changing world.

In addition, surveys of Contra Costa employers indicate that “soft skills” are the primary missing piece in entry-level employee preparation. The key factors in their failure to keep employment was a lack of ability to accept criticism, poor attendance, lack of punctuality, and a general lack of soft skills. A recent statewide poll revealed that more than 90 percent of ninth and tenth graders believe tying classes to their future and real-world careers would inspire them to work hard and do well in school.

OUR MISSION AND FOCUS

The Alliance is committed to expanding career-integrated academic opportunities and promoting a rigorous and relevant curriculum that prepares high school students to effectively transition from high school to **college and career**. Based on best practice studies, focus group research, and surveys of local business and education leaders, our long-term effort includes proven initiatives utilizing data-driven, outcomes-based strategies, essential skills curriculum, systems coordination, and teacher professional development to address the dropout crisis and help our schools engage and prepare students for college and the workplace.

OUR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In 2009-10, the Alliance engaged in the following strategic initiatives:

Initiative #1: Building and Strengthening Career Themed Academic Pathways

Career Themed Academic Pathways are comprehensive programs of academic and technical study organized around broad industry themes leading to a full range of postsecondary options and career success. National pathways data has shown higher CAHSEE pass rates, higher “a to g” completion rates, and higher state test scores. Through learning that is project-based and student-centered, they connect academics to real world applications and have a thematic, practical focus that inspires students to achieve.

To build and strengthen existing and emerging pathways in our region, the Alliance convenes business and education stakeholders by industry cluster to foster pathway development and goal setting, increase community engagement and support, and promote efforts toward program improvement and accountability.

In addition, we research and share best practice models and tools and provide technical assistance to build teacher teams by pathway, promote the use of quality work-based learning and project based learning strategies, and facilitate dual enrollment opportunities and other connections with post-secondary institutions. Our particular focus is on career integrated pathway programs that promote science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education connected to high wage, high demand, high growth industries.

Through our partnership with CCEP, professional development opportunities have been provided for teachers from Antioch, Deer Valley, Freedom, Pittsburg, Clayton Valley, and Mt. Diablo high schools in Project-Based Learning and in PLTW Integrated Curriculum as well as through summer science camps in Engineering, BioTech, and Environmental Sciences. We have also facilitated the ACE Mentor Program at Pittsburg and Mt. Diablo high schools, providing stipends for teachers leading the after school program.

We have assisted teacher teams by providing stipends for teachers to attend our industry pathway dinner collaboration meetings and have served on school industry advisory committees in several pathway and CTE programs in Engineering, Architecture, and Manufacturing; Health and Bio Tech; Environmental Sciences, as well as Performing Arts and Law at Mt. Diablo, Antioch, Clayton Valley, Ygnacio Valley, Deer Valley, Dozier Libbey, DeAnza, Liberty, Pittsburg, and Heritage high schools.

We have assisted several schools and school districts in Contra Costa in receiving grants this year, including Antioch, Clayton Valley, Mt. Diablo, California (Chevron), Clayton Valley and California (CPA), Dozier-Libbey (HSCB), WCCUSD and AUSD (Irvine), and Antioch high school (NAF), totaling in the millions.

Initiative #2: Business-Education Roundtable Luncheons

The Alliance did not host Business-Education Roundtable luncheons in 2009-10 due to financial constraints.

Initiative #3: Work Ready Essential Skills

The Alliance has identified the 10 Work-Ready Essential Skills most cited by employers and educators that students must have to be ready to enter the workforce and to successfully transition to college. Students who have acquired these 10 Essential Skills before graduating from high school will be better lifelong learners and able to succeed in college and in the workplace of today and tomorrow. They are skills for life.

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| <i>1. Write and speak to communicate</i> | <i>6. Be punctual and reliable</i> |
| <i>2. Read with understanding</i> | <i>7. Exercise honesty and integrity</i> |
| <i>3. Use math to analyze and solve problems</i> | <i>8. Work accurately and safely</i> |
| <i>4. Access information and use computer technology</i> | <i>9. Resolve conflicts and negotiate</i> |
| <i>5. Actively listen and take initiative</i> | <i>10. Cooperate with others and work in teams</i> |

We have assisted career tech and academic teacher teams in integrating the Work-Ready Essential Skills framework into core curriculum and incorporating skills demonstration through *portfolios* in several pathway schools, including Mt. Diablo, Antioch, Deer Valley, Alhambra, Middle College, Pinole Valley, Ygnacio Valley, Richmond, Dozier Libbey, DeAnza, Liberty, California, and Heritage.

We provided two Work-Ready Essential Skills workshops for 125 middle school students and their parents at Cool Night, included Work-Ready Essential Skills in Project Based Learning professional development training with the Buck Institute for 40 teachers, and incorporated Work-Ready Essential Skills in the John Muir summer intern program and in the Biotech, Environmental Science, Engineering and P-Tech summer camps for over 200 students and 40 teachers. We have reached over 490 middle/high school students from 18 middle/high schools, 50 parents, 105 teachers, counselors, administrators and college faculty, and 137 business and community representatives. Events broadcast on CCTV reached hundreds of additional households with the Work-Ready Essential Skills message.

In conjunction with this effort, Emerald Consulting has developed **Work-Based Learning (WBL)** model guidelines for pathways that incorporate the Work-Ready Essential Skills.

Initiative #4: County - Wide Strategies, Planning and Activities

We have focused regionally on:

- Developing the workforce pipeline to high-wage, high-skill, high-demand careers in strategic industry sectors: Health; BioTech; Environmental Sciences; and Engineering, Construction & Manufacturing.
- Focusing on student success connected to real people doing real things in the local economy.
- Bringing together K-16, business, labor and government focused on seamless system development.

We continue the collaborative work of our ECBEA Board and partner organizations - including the *LMC Business-Workforce Advisory Board*, local high school CTE and academy advisory boards, the *P-16 Academic Council*, the *CSU-East Bay Gateway Cradle to Career Education & Workforce Partnership*, the *Contra Costa Economic Partnership (CCEP)-Workforce Initiative*, the *Workforce Development Board*, and the *Contra Costa Council Workforce Education Task Force* - to leverage, coordinate and facilitate regional activities.

Working with the CCEP - Workforce Initiative, DVC, and CCCOE, the Health/Biotech Workforce Innovation project that concluded December 31, 2009, produced over 86 activities including events, meetings and tools, and engaged more than 470 teachers from 15 high schools; more than 1800 middle and high school students; and over 300 business and community members. The project leveraged a grant of \$150,000 into more than \$1,268,500 in new resources to support the activities of the grant and create capacity for continued health/biotech pathway work in Contra Costa County over the next three years.

In addition, working with the CCEP - Workforce Initiative, LMC, DVC, CSU East Bay, CCCOE, and our regional industry partners, we helped provide summer science camps to build teacher understanding of the connection between classroom learning and the workplace and increase student access to and demonstration of the essential skills to successfully compete and prosper in today's global economy.

- P-Tech Camp at Los Medanos College, June 21-25, 2010
- Engineering Camp at Diablo Valley College, June 21-25, 2010
- BioTech Camp at Cal State East Bay-Concord Campus, July 12-16; 2010
- Environmental Sciences Camp at Cal State East Bay-Concord Campus, July 26-30, 2010

ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE ALLIANCE:

Emerald Consulting serves as Executive Director/Project Consultant to the East County Business-Education Alliance and is responsible for supporting and administering the Alliance by developing and maintaining partnerships among members of the business and educational communities.

The Alliance operates under a modest budget of about \$30,000 per year, thanks to the support of the following organizations in 2009-10:

Antioch Unified School District, Liberty Union High School District, Pittsburg Unified School District
Antioch Charter Academies, Contra Costa County Office of Education, Los Medanos College
CSU East Bay-Concord, John Muir Health, Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Delta Medical Center
Contra Costa Economic Partnership, Dow Chemical Company, USS POSCO, Delta Diablo Sanitation District
NECA/IBEW Local #302, Ralph Garrow Real Estate, American Trophies, PG&E
Antioch Chamber of Commerce, Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce, Emerald Consulting

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2009-10:

AUSD Superintendent Don Gill, ECBEA Chair
Denise Porterfield, Secretary-Treasurer
Dineen Burdick, Recorder
Patty Deutsche, Dow Chemical Company
PUSD Superintendent Barbara Wilson
LUHSD Superintendent Jerry Glenn
Keith Archuleta, Emerald Consulting