

**Work Group:** PreK-12 Education  
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## Description of Activity by Goal and Objective

Based on the plan approved at the September 2008 CPSJV Board of Directors meeting, this report is formatted by priority area as opposed to delineating all the goals and objectives which are embedded in the responsibilities.

### 1. Top priorities and actions to be carried out by County Offices of Education (COE)

#### a. English Learners (EL) – led by Fresno COE

Fresno County Office of Education is providing training for the *second cohort* of districts participating in the *English Learner Superintendents Leadership Team Academy*. Participating districts are paying \$750 to participate this year. (Note that the SEED Grant has ended.)

Our work group identified *schools in the region that had made significant progress with their English Learners* and had them share their successful strategies in *three breakout sessions* at the January 13, 2009, Exemplary Practices in Education Conference held at CSU Fresno.

#### b. Post Secondary Pursuits (College and Careers) – led by Kern COE and Tulare COE

Kern County Office of Education has been working to develop *College/Career Centers in Middle Schools and development of a collaborative web-based project* focusing on college and careers for valley students. Multiple meetings have been held in January, February and March with the Kern County workgroup to develop the college/career website. A preliminary site was unveiled in February to the workgroup leads which included a critical review. As a result, the website is continuing to be scrutinized, refined, and improved. We are moving slowly on the interactive web portion as we want to make sure we have the security issues all worked out.

A meeting with the two superintendents of the pilot school districts was held in January to explain the expectations for the project. The superintendents were asked to develop criteria for the selection of a control group that would be identified at the end of the 08/09 school year to be compared with the first participants in the college/career centers in 09/10. The criteria was identified and approved in March.

Contacts have been made with California State University Bakersfield and Bakersfield College to begin the filming of the virtual campus tours. We have been able to access virtual tours of other campuses in and out of state that have already been developed and easily incorporated into our website. We will be contacting other higher education institutions throughout the valley concerning filming in the months to come.

Filming has also begun on the industry clusters with wonderful narration by local high school and college talent. Using young talent will be very attractive to students.

Kern County office of education received the check for \$25,000 from AT&T in January. As a result we have purchased various software packages that will enable the site to have a very updated feel for the students. We hope to present the website to the two pilot schools in May with the actual roll out in August. We at that time will be working with the technical staff from each of the eight county offices to identify the technical requirements for the site and any assistance that is needed. Perhaps we can present the website to the 8 county superintendents at the CCESSA meeting held in June.

Under the leadership of Randy Wallace, Tulare County Office of Education, *an assessment of career education programs in the region that address the priority industry clusters* of the Economic Development group continued this quarter.

Finally, the work group identified *exemplary schools and programs in the two areas (college-going culture and career education)*, made contacts and arrangements for *six breakout sessions* conducted by school and university staff at the January Exemplary Practices Conference.

c. PreKindergarten (PreK) – led by Merced COE

As part of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley's *Exemplary Practices in Education* regional conference held on January 13, 2009 at California State University, Fresno, a group of nearly *seventy interested persons from eight San Joaquin Valley counties met* to discuss the status of preschool planning and implementation in the valley. This imbedded preschool strand was funded by The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and was the culminating element of the Preschool Coordination and Alignment Project (PCAP). PCAP was funded to publish a written report on the status of preschool planning and implementation in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Kern counties and to use the report as a catalyst for conversation about the counties' interest in exploring a regional voice for preschool issues.

Dr. Karen Hill Scott, a premier group facilitator and well-known preschool champion, facilitated the day-long dialogue. The group reviewed the final draft of the preschool status report. More important, it discussed rationale for and explored interest in continuing a regional preschool conversation. The group consensus was that the first step was to develop a regional message a draft of which emerged at the end of the day: *8 Counties, One Voice for Today's Children and for the Future of California's Great Central Valley – Beginning Now*. Nine persons (one from each county and a representative of the California Preschool Instructional Network) were identified to continue the regional conversation and to explore next steps. Merced County agreed to facilitate the process.

The final report of the Preschool Coordination and Alignment Project is posted on our work group webpage.

**2. Top priorities and actions to be carried out by Central Valley Educational Leadership Institute (CVELI)**

Our major task this quarter was holding our regional *Exemplary Practices Conference (EPC)* for PreK-12 education, business, and community leaders on January 13, 2009. Our two key note speakers were Dr. Thelma Melendez de Santa Ana, superintendent of schools for Pomona Unified School District, and Dr. James Lanich, Executive Director of Just for the Kids California. We also involved presenters from our 9 county region who conducted over 25 breakout sessions. The purpose of the conference was to identify schools, districts and programs in our region that have positive demonstrable impact on student outcomes, and share their success strategies with others to impact schools and communities across the region. The conference was organized into 9 strands with three workshops each on our priority topics: English Learners, PreK, College-Going Culture, Career Education, Reading, Data Systems, Computer Literacy, Partnerships and Collaboration, and Teacher and Administrator Training Initiatives. *Over 300 people attended* the conference from all 9 counties. A summary of the conference content has been written and *all materials are available on the CVELI website [www.csufresno.edu/cveli](http://www.csufresno.edu/cveli)*. We plan to conduct another Exemplary Practices Conference next year focusing on student transitions into middle school, high school, college and careers, and have engaged in partnership with the State Center Consortium and Fresno County Office of Education for the undertaking. The model is also being considered for replication by Just for the Kids California and other CSU campuses.

CVELI hosted two sessions of the *Executive Leadership Center for superintendents* from 6 counties on January 14 and March 18, and held another *workshop on legal issues* for Superintendents and Boards of Trustees on February 18. The sessions were part of a series of 12 sessions planned for school leadership this year. Through our partnership with Springboard Schools, *direct coaching support* is provided to teams of educational leaders in 17 valley school districts, and professional development on closing the achievement gap and English Learners is also provided to valley districts through leadership networks in multiple locations across the region.

Progress of school districts participating in the *data systems project with Cal-PASS* to facilitate the transition between high school and higher education has been expedited by the new mandate that all schools receiving Perkins funding for career education participate in Cal-PASS. Following the model by West Hills Community College District in our region last quarter, Cal-PASS conducted several events this quarter to stimulate participation in the data system project. Regional liaisons were identified to facilitate discussions between high school and college staff regarding curricular pathways.

This quarter, we also engaged four students from the CSUF Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership to help with *research on two high priority topics*: an assessment of special services for English Learners in the region, and an investigation of effective dropout prevention strategies. The students contributed significant time into doing this research, and we look forward to their reports next quarter. We are aware of the significant need to enhance career education along with college-going options for K-12 students, and that a focus on dropout prevention strategies is important in our region.

Several activities were completed to facilitate communications and seek funding support for the efforts of the work group. Major activities this quarter were:

- √ Conference follow-up communications and meetings.
- √ An electronic newsletter issued in February.
- √ Several planning meetings and calls with key stakeholders, county superintendents Lee Andersen and Larry Powell, and Jill Tafoya with the EL Leadership Academy.
- √ Meeting with the Secretariat staff to orient the new director and associate director
- √ Participated in one legislative staffers meeting and two Work group consultants meetings.
- √ Attended the CPSJV Board meeting in March.
- √ Provided input and secured participation of three valley representatives to be on the evaluation design team for the California Emerging Technology Fund's School2Home project for middle schools.
- √ Attended a national conference on Partnerships and Higher Education at Arizona State University in February.

#### **Planned Activities by Goal and Objective (for next 3-6 months)**

- Host meetings of leaders from higher education and school districts to share current plans and assist in developing professional development programming for educational leaders in the Central Valley.
- Complete assessment of current curricula, programs and best practices in career education that support target industry clusters.
- Continue working on website development focused on students to enhance college-going culture and provide resources to help guide students to college and careers.
- Develop plans for Exemplary Practices Conference for 2010.
- Complete research projects with doctoral students related to ELL and dropout prevention.
- Pursue funding alternatives to continue the work of the work group and broad-based regional activities that support the Strategic Action Proposal of the CPSJV.

#### **Challenges/Problems/Bottlenecks/Feedback**

- Securing funding and support to continue the partnership and work group work.
- Issues with the state budget, impacts of the recession and cutbacks for school districts.

#### **If you have coordinated any outreach, please describe briefly.**

- The major outreach this quarter was in relation to the Exemplary Practices Conference, including conference brochure which was distributed widely, and website postings on both CVELI and CPSJV web pages.
- Media interactions (due to press releases sent by Secretariat's office) regarding our Exemplary Practices Conference, resulting in Fresno Bee article on January 14 and coverage by one television station on January 13.
- Work Group Consultant, Walt Buster was also a guest on the Maddy Report radio show in January.