



Special K-12 Session: Facilitator Notes, Lynne Ashbeck

Thursday, April 10, 2008

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

West Hills Community College

Lemoore

I. Expectations for Meeting

- Operate/act on a regional view...leverage our collective strengths...focus on outcomes for kids...engage a wider cross section of business leaders and other stakeholders
- Identify priorities and how to move this issue/work group forward
- Finish the agenda...on time
- Reaffirm the value of education to the SJV
- See a clear path forward
- Focus on key priorities...identify top 2 – 3 actions to move this work forward
- Gain a picture of the Valley's passion for kids
- Identify what we want to do...including system reform and best practices
- Identify specific goals (e.g. improved achievement, decrease drop-out rates, increase accountability, implement school choice)
- Want to leave feeling like we are moving forward

II. Shared Interest in this Work

- Find 'both/and' solutions that strengthen existing work and find new, 'best practices'
- Every kid will have the resources they need to learn in ways that work for them...starting where they are...and supporting them in the best life skills for their situation.
- "Good enough" is not "good enough."
- Every child will have access to quality education...regardless of their neighborhood.
- Strengthen the ability of families and neighborhoods to support kids' learning
- Create a Valley-wide, regional, integrated solution
- Leverage the influence of CPSJV...and take advantage of this 'window of opportunity' presented by the Governor's leadership and his commitment to the Valley
- Solutions that have long-range impacts...sustainable...produce quality outcomes...support the economic vitality of neighborhoods
- The status quo is unacceptable.
- Student success is key.
- "Asset-based" approach...what are the opportunities in tight budget times?

III. Principles of the Governor's Education Reform Efforts

- Focus is on achievement; identified 97 'performance improvement' districts; providing *differentiated assistance*
- English-language learners

- Data system (both student and teacher data bases)...do we even know the 'right' numbers to help define our challenges?

Challenges:

- ▶ Privacy issues/"sharing information"...expect legal challenges
- ▶ Worries about linking student achievement with teacher performance

- Local control; flexibility in the use of categorical funds; strengthen school district/city alliances; region-specific waivers

Challenges:

- ▶ Folks will always challenge where the money should go...pressure to use money for salaries vs. program

- Drop-out prevention (opportunities for city/school district alliances; Governor planning a drop-out prevention summit)
- Safe schools...safe routes to schools...safe neighborhoods for schools
- Career/tech education (CTE)
- School finance reform

Action Steps

- ✓ Lee Andersen/K-12 Work Group to draft resolution for next Partnership board meeting, to support/advocate for the Governor's reform initiatives; advocate for alignment of state/federal assessment papers; propose SJV as a pilot site for reform initiatives.

I. K-12 Work Group Priorities and how align with the Governor's Reform Efforts

Data Systems

- Currently school districts (including the community college, CSU, and UC systems) use 7 different data systems (and that doesn't include individual district systems that might be in place)...but they are not integrated...nor do they consistently provide information useful to inform action (rather, they simply collect *data*).
- There is a need for a P – 20 data system...that would allow us to do accurate assessment, early intervention, and appropriate instructional intervention.
- State and federal assessment standards are not aligned...one measures progress forward...the other measures against a 'high jump' standard with no credit for improvement.

Action Steps

- ✓ Larry Powell to draft 'white paper' on alignment of State/federal standards
- ✓ Dr. Gornick to develop plan to expand CalPASS in all eight counties
 - How can we encourage all districts to participate (rather than a mandate)?
 - How can COEs support smaller districts without the resources to implement?
 - What are budget implications of this system? \$2 – 5 million for training, technology, support

English-Language Learners

- There is a distinction between kids who are literate in their home language...and kids who are not proficient in either their 'home' language or English. The challenge is not really in teaching EL kids as there are many well-researched strategies/programs that work...the challenge is in the volume of languages in our Valley schools.
- There is also a distinction between learning English and acquiring knowledge.
- English Learners Academy has been successful.
- New opportunities to expand work with ELL to after-school programs and increased use of volunteers
- There is a distinction between cultural competency and language acquisition.
- Dual immersion instruction is really the best way for kids to learn.

Action Steps

- ✓ Expand EL Academies to 3 (\$600,000); include after-school programs in this work.
- ✓ Larry Powell/work group to draft a business plan to implement dual immersion strategies in SJV county schools; to include:
 - Launch pilot projects
 - Increase capacity of teacher training with emphasis on multicultural learners (model may be work done to increase nursing school capacity)
 - Explore "National Defense Student Loan" model for loan forgiveness
 - Engage business leaders and other stakeholders to advocate for this work
- ✓ Strengthen teaching training/coaching in ELL
- ✓ Can we advocate for 'waivers' in testing standards, etc for these kids in our Valley?

Pre-Kindergarten

- "The achievement gap starts at the door of kindergarten."
- Encourage (require?) pre-K/K attendance (if parents enroll their kids, they should attend!)
- Engage First 5 Commissions in this work
- Target funding to neighborhoods in need
- Use Head Start model to improve parent involvement
- Explore full-day kindergarten options
- Increase pre-K teacher training capacity

Action Steps

- ✓ Add Pre-K to agenda of the Partnership; expand K-12 work group to include Pre-K
- ✓ Incorporate pre-K kids into data system development
- ✓ Advocate for streamlining of pre-K funding streams; propose pilot project for SJV to realign funding mechanisms

Post-Secondary/College-going Culture/Career-Technical Education

- Business community *must* drive these changes. Community collaboratives are essential.
- Can the CART model be replicated? Can we expand the 'schools within a school' concepts (e.g. could there be an oil industry academy in a Kern County HS)?

Action Steps

- ✓ Convene the community collaboratives (e.g. RJI, Stanislaus Alliance, Tulare County, ROPs)

II. K-12 Work Group: Future Direction

Action Steps

- ✓ Draft a "Contract with San Joaquin Valley Kids – 2020"...a 10-year business plan to reform and make necessary changes in SJV education systems that address the real opportunities and challenges we face based on the following principles:
 - Built on 'best practices'...replicate what's already working
 - Includes business/private sector alliances and support
 - The status quo is not acceptable.
 - Includes alliances around *kids*...not just around schools
 - Clearly defines roles and accountabilities of all the stakeholders in school performance
 - Includes the pre-K → 20 continuum of education
 - Engages Foundations and alternate funding sources
- ✓ "Contract with San Joaquin Valley Kids – 2020" to include:
 - English language learners/"dual immersion" programs
 - Could we be a regional 'beta' site like the Manhattan Project?
 - Expand teacher training/capacity
 - Propose new ways to measure our kid's success
 - Loan forgiveness/other financial incentives
 - Pre-K
- ✓ Engage Fresno State to continue to convene 8 County superintendents
- ✓ Align this work group with Higher Ed work group
- ✓ Add business leaders and other stakeholders to the K-12 work group
- ✓ Revise work plan based on today's discussion