

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Practices with Promise:

## A COLLECTION OF WORKING SOLUTIONS FOR COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most serious problems facing California is the projected gap between our declining level of educational attainment and the increasing educational demands of the economy. Preparing more Californians for college, and getting them into and through community college and universities, is not only an ethical imperative, but an economic necessity.

Against this backdrop, California educators are implementing important solutions to improve college opportunity and success. Practices with Promise is an initiative of the Campaign for College Opportunity with partner organizations to recognize exemplary efforts that improve college access, success, affordability and efficiency. From a total of 120 submissions received, our review panel selected 15 programs to highlight the types of practices making a difference for California students. The full report provides detailed descriptions of these 15 practices as well as summaries of all practices submitted for the project.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Taken together, these Practices with Promise show that there is enormous initiative on the part of educators to improve educational outcomes. It is time for policymakers and education leaders to build upon these and other solutions in a focused, large-scale effort to improve California's future educational and economic competitiveness. Based on the findings of this project, we recommend the following steps:

1. Build strong linkages between K-12 schools, community colleges and universities.
2. Invest in strong data systems to help analyze student progress over time.
3. Make an early commitment of college and financial aid to middle school students.
4. Provide services throughout high school, especially in the senior year, focusing on math and English readiness as well as college and financial aid applications.
5. Align "end of high school" standards with "start of college" standards across the board, including in career tech, mathematics, English, and other programs.
6. Focus on intensity, rather than remediation, to help college students who need to master basic skills in math, English and other areas.
7. Create structured paths from college enrollment to completion especially in the California Community Colleges and the California State University, integrating strong instruction, student services, and financial aid services in the first year.

## FIFTEEN EXEMPLARY PRACTICES WITH PROMISE

### Accelerated College Transfer

*Submitted by West Los Angeles College*

This program addresses the educational needs of working adults, many of whom face considerable personal obligations that can hinder student success. ACT offers a structured path for university transfer or completion of specific AA degrees in two years. Over 400 students enroll in five accelerated eight week sessions each year, attending classes two weeknights per week and four Saturdays during each session. The program creates a learning community of peers and integrates student services. **ACT is a solid example of a program that helps students facing significant barriers to postsecondary education succeed in completing their goals for transfer and degree attainment.**

### California State University's Early Assessment Program (EAP)

*Submitted by the California State University*

Students who are better prepared for college are more likely to succeed in college. The EAP is a set of additional questions taken as part of the 11th grade California Standards Tests (CST). The results give over 200,000 students an early signal of their college readiness and, if necessary, advice to enroll in additional math and/or English classes that will help improve their college readiness in the 12th grade. The EAP is a large-scale, systemic effort to align K-12 and university standards, improving efficiency and student success. **The EAP is remarkable in that the California State University built upon the existing standards of the K-12 system to help students make better use of their senior year.**

### Compact for Success

*Submitted by San Diego State University; Sweetwater Union High School District*

The Compact for Success is a unique partnership between San Diego State University and Sweetwater Union High School District that guarantees admission to SDSU to all Sweetwater students who enter the district by ninth grade and who complete program requirements. The program provides Sweetwater students in grades 7 through 12 with a rigorous curriculum and support services, including college and career advising, test preparation, and applying for financial aid. The Compact has doubled the number of Sweetwater students enrolled in SDSU

and made even bigger gains in reducing remediation. **By extending an early commitment of college admission and financial aid, the Compact for Success improves preparation and access to college.**

### The Design Shop

*Submitted by Las Positas College*

The Design Shop provides real-world learning experiences for Visual Communications, Business and Marketing students. Clients contract print materials, websites, and other services at greatly reduced cost. Students gain essential professional experience working in and running a design business that mirrors a professional studio. Students rotate through occupational roles to gain experience in a variety of industry related jobs. They take a job from inception to completion, working individually with clients as well as in teams. **The Design Shop encourages student success in reaching educational and career goals through practical experiences integrated in the curriculum.**

### Digital Bridge Academy

*Submitted by Cabrillo College*

The Digital Bridge Academy (DBA) provides a transformative educational experience to help at-risk students get on the path to college success. It begins with a two week course that recommits students to their education and connects them with their classmates. Next, a one-semester cohort experience helps students examine their interpersonal skills, communication styles and past challenges with education, while taking a total of six courses that prepare them for a variety of high-demand careers. After the DBA semester, students are expected to take a full course load working toward their major. Early evidence shows strong course completion outcomes and improved grades. **DBA empowers students to master the skills necessary for success in college through intensive and focused curriculum and student services.**

### FastForward to Academic Success

*Submitted by the California OState University, Office of the Chancellor; California State University, Fresno*

FastForward to Academic Success uses online and traditional instruction and counseling to decrease remediation rates and increase retention of Latino students entering CSU, Fresno. High school seniors earn three college credits by taking a year-long online course addressing personal study plans, techniques for academic success, time and financial management, and preparation for college math and writing. Once at CSU, Fresno,

students enroll in a fall university experience class and a spring community service class, along with general education classes. Students are also required to meet with a counselor. FastForward has resulted in substantial reductions in remediation rates, with nearly all students retained to the sophomore year. **FastForward is an exemplary program improving access and retention rates for rural and Latino students.**

### **Headstart on College: Curriculum Alignment & Credit by Examination**

*Submitted by Las Positas College*

Las Positas College works closely with Regional Occupation Programs and local school districts to align curriculum and jointly develop end of course exams in high school Career Technical classes. Each year, 600 high school students earn college credit based on successful exam results. By jointly designing curriculum paths, LPC and school districts avoid duplication of resources, save time for students, and benefit employers by graduating students with relevant skills. **Headstart on College improves access and efficiency, with students earning college credit for their high school career tech classes.**

### **Increasing Access via Mentoring (I AM) Program**

*Submitted by the University of Southern California, Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis (CHEPA)*

The I AM Program provides seniors from nine high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District with one-on-one support in completing three key steps: applying to college, completing financial aid applications, and selecting a college. I AM works with high school counselors to identify both high achieving and high potential seniors from traditionally under-represented, low income, and first generation college-bound backgrounds. These students are then paired with volunteer mentors from the University of Southern California. **I AM provides an individualized program for 12th grade students that assists them in gaining access to college and financial aid.**

### **Integrated Learning Center (ILC)**

*Submitted by Las Positas College*

ILC is a multi-disciplinary academic resource center that improves retention and success of students enrolled in math, English, or ESL credit courses at Las Positas College. ILC provides arranged hours for students to work with faculty on individualized supplemental instruction and for which

students can receive credit. Students are encouraged to work on discipline specific areas of need and are taught how to use technology applicable to their courses. ILC also encourages the collaboration of faculty in improving course content and instruction. **ILC provides a strong model for providing supplemental instruction and integrating technology to improve student success and retention while also improving educational planning.**

### **Intersegmental Professional Learning Councils**

*Submitted by the California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS)*

Cal-PASS collects data from K-16 institutions to track student cohorts through their educational experiences. The data reveal that often California students either repeat the same course they passed in high school or take a course with lower skill level requirements when they enter college. Cal-PASS brings K-12 and college faculty together by subject areas to make sure the content of classes at each level of education prepares students to succeed at the next level. **Cal-PASS' Professional Learning Councils provide a strong model of using data with faculty across systems to strengthen access, success and efficiency through improved educational transitions.**

### **Math Jam: Jumpstarting Success in Prealgebra**

*Submitted by Pasadena City College*

Many students do not adequately prepare for math placement tests, put off taking required math classes, or fail basic skills math classes repeatedly. Math Jam is an intensive two week noncredit course in prealgebra intended to improve students' confidence and success in basic skills math. Math Jam integrates innovative math instruction, active counseling strategies, and structured supplemental support. Students who complete Math Jam are guaranteed a spot in an appropriate math class in the fall, can borrow free textbooks, and are required to meet with counselors and tutors. **Remarkable for its intensity, Math Jam is a solution to the critical challenge of student success in math courses.**

### **MESA**

*Submitted by the Statewide MESA Program*

The MESA program provides a rigorous, multi-faceted approach to preparing educationally disadvantaged students for college, and specifically for majors in science, computer science, engineering, and math. Academic interventions include individual academic planning, hands on math and

science classes, test prep and study skills training, peer group learning, career exploration, and parental involvement. MESA creates partnerships among key stakeholders, such as school districts, parents, teachers and industry, who together enrich the academic experience of students. **MESA provides a strong example of a program that prepares students for high demand technology fields.**

### **Modesto City Schools College Counseling Program**

*Submitted by Modesto City Schools*

Students and families in Modesto, many of them low-income and facing language barriers, were not receiving comprehensive guidance about college. In 1998, the district hired full time, trained experts at each high school to assist students and parents in navigating the college application process. The district also hosts an annual financial aid workshop in English and Spanish where parents are guided step-by-step in filing the FAFSA. Cal Grant GPA verification is submitted electronically to the California Student Aid Commission, simplifying the process for every senior in the district. The effort has led to a three-fold increase in the number of students receiving CalGrants. **This program provides a model for how a school district can improve college-going and maximize the use of state and federal financial aid.**

### **Pell Advance Project**

*Submitted by Long Beach City College*

Students who rely on financial aid often need to purchase their books before they receive a financial aid disbursement. The Financial Aid Office and Bookstore at Long Beach Community College have arranged a system to advance students credit from their Federal Pell Grant awards to purchase books and supplies prior to the disbursement of their grants. Each semester, this program helps 500 students have books in their hands the first week of class, giving them a better chance at academic success. **Pell Advance is a practical example of how to improve college affordability by making effective and creative use of Federal financial aid.**

### **University of California's Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP)**

*Submitted by the UC EAOP*

EAOP makes a concentrated effort to work with students at low-income schools to complete the UC/CSU eligibility requirements, satisfy testing requirements, choose the college right for them, and apply for college and financial aid. EAOP

employs two service models. In some schools. EAOP works directly with individual students to achieve their academic goals. In the second model, they form partnerships with whole schools and districts. EAOP provides academic enrichment, A-G advising, test preparation, and college information for students, families, and educators. **EAOP is a large-scale mature program which leverages the resources of the University of California to increase the number of college-bound students from low-income families.**

To download the full report or for more information on Practices with Promise, visit the Campaign for College Opportunity online at: [www.collegecampaign.org/practices](http://www.collegecampaign.org/practices)

#### **About the Campaign for College Opportunity:**

The Campaign for College Opportunity is a California non-profit organization solely devoted to ensuring that the next generation of college-age students has the change to go to college as promised by the Master Plan for Higher Education.

The co-founders of the Campaign are the California Business Roundtable, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and other partners. The Campaign gratefully acknowledges the many individuals, institutions, and foundations whose participation and financial contributions make our work possible.

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