



# e21 Students First

## Education for the 21st Century (e21) High School Redesign Initiative

Spring 2008

Over the past five years, the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) in partnership with LEED—Linking Education and Economic Development, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has implemented a system-wide redesign of the District's high schools. With the assistance of community members, teachers principals, and especially parents and students, we have worked to create new models for high school learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. To share the results of this effort, including accomplishments, lessons learned, and ongoing challenges, partners came together to create the "Report to the Community on the Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (e21) High School Redesign Initiative: 2002-2007 and Beyond". This Executive Summary captures some of the key elements of this Report.

We encourage you to learn more about our high school redesign accomplishments, lessons learned, and ongoing challenges and to continue to support the important efforts to prepare all of our students for success in the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Innovative districts such as ours must be rewarded with ongoing, sustainable support from the state of California, foundations, and other funding sources so that we, and similar school districts, can successfully serve as models for improving high school education in California and across the country.



## Report to the Community Highlights 2002-2007 and Beyond

The entire e21 Report to the Community is available on the SCUSD website at

[www.scusd.edu](http://www.scusd.edu)

or ordered from the SCUSD Communications Office at  
(916) 643-9040



*Success for  
Every Student  
by Name*

# e21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Increased educational options

- 42 rigorous and relevant choices are available to high school students, including 36 theme-based Small Learning Communities at the comprehensive high schools and six innovative small high schools. Only six choices were available in 2002.

## Increased graduation rate and decreased dropout rate

- The high school graduation rate increased from 76.1% in 2002-03 to 86.8% in 2005-06, despite increased graduation requirements and increased enrollment.
- The dropout rate decreased from 13% in 2002-03 to 7% in 2006-07, as reported by California Department of Education, Data Quest.

## Increased academic achievement

- The CAHSEE first-time English Language Arts pass rate increased from 68% in 2003-04 to 73% in 2006-07. The CAHSEE first-time math pass rate increased from 68% in 2003-04 to 74% in 2006-07.
- The percent of students scoring proficient and advanced on the California Standards Test in English Language Arts increased in all grades between 2004 and 2007. The percent of students scoring proficient and advanced on the California Standards Test in Algebra and Geometry also increased between 2004 and 2007. (see data charts p. 6-7)

## Increased academic rigor

- Graduation requirements for students have increased and more college preparatory courses are aligned with University of California (UC) a-g requirements. As a result, students are more prepared for college. In 2005-06, 51.9% of students completed UC qualified coursework, compared to 39.8% in 2002-03.
- The number of Advanced Placement (AP) classes increased from 1,637 in 2002-03 to 2,133 in 2005-06, including an increased number of under-represented student groups taking AP classes.

## Increased focus on college readiness

- High schools have formed “college-going cultures,” including free PSAT testing available to all 10th graders, counselors devoted to college counseling at each school, and increased concurrent enrollment with community colleges, California State University, Sacramento, and other post-secondary institutions.
- Small Learning Communities and many of the small high schools have career themes that align to a university course or major.

## Increased teacher effectiveness

- The number of courses taught by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) highly-qualified teachers is now 93%.
- Teachers and administrators have more professional learning opportunities to develop effective instruction, leadership skills, and professional learning communities.

## Increased personalization

- Personalized, caring relationships have developed among administrators, teachers, students, and parents within these smaller learning environments. Of the students surveyed, 91% agreed that at least one adult in their Small Learning Community knows their first name and 85% agreed that they have access to a counselor on campus and a good relationship with one or more teachers.

## Increased career preparation

- Business and community partnerships have increased from 175 in 2003-04 to more than 400 in 2006-07, serving more than 11,000 students.
- Internship opportunities have increased from 592 in 2003-04 to 1,745 in 2006-07.
- Career and Technical preparation classes have grown from 75 sections serving 750 students in 2002 to 125 sections serving 3,000 students in 2007.

## Increased youth voice

- Through the Youth Congress, Student Advisory Council (SAC), and increased after school activities, youth have many leadership opportunities and a voice in District-wide decision making.
- A Student Advisory Council (SAC) elected student representative sits on the Board of Education, and currently students from the SAC now co-chair four separate District-wide committees. Students also attend community meetings to ensure an authentic youth voice in many facets of District policy and informational meetings.

“My Small Learning Community, Program in America and California Explorations (PACE), always says you can make it to college. They make college an option, not a dream; essentially, they give you hope.”

Vinnie Schiro  
Sophomore  
John F. Kennedy High School

## Invest time to engage all stakeholders

- Development of goals and objectives with input from stakeholders is essential to success.
- Providing vehicles for input, understanding, and agreement for implementing new structures is critical.
- Central office administrators and site leaders need to identify key strategies for monitoring the implementation of the Seven Essential Elements.
- Youth thrive when they know adults value their opinions; they need to have a strong voice in decision making processes, and all adults need to demonstrate genuine care about the personal and academic challenges students are facing.

## Provide many opportunities to deepen teaching and learning

- Ongoing professional development of all stakeholders is imperative. The professional development content should revolve around three critical questions: (1) What do we want our students to know, understand and be able to do? (2) How will we know when each student has acquired the essential knowledge, skills and competencies? (3) What supports do we provide students to achieve mastery of the identified knowledge, skills and competencies?
- Providing time for teachers to discuss assessment data is critical. Teachers need planning time to design and implement standards-aligned classroom assessments.
- School Improvement Facilitators, Lead Teachers, and Common Planning Time are key to the successful implementation of Smaller Learning Communities.



*J.F. Kennedy High School Culinary Arts students participate in an internship at the Sheraton Hotel.*

## Understand the importance of ongoing relationship building

- School sites need to continue ongoing engagement with the communities that surround them in order to foster good relations, ensure ongoing support, and recruit and retain students.
- Parent, teacher, and community-based organizations are willing to work together once meaningful and trusting relationships are established.
- Parent and community engagement have improved but will need to be an ongoing focus. The more coordinated parent support and parent engagement activities are, the stronger and more consistent parent participation becomes.
- Business and community partners want to be involved in meaningful and relevant activities. By participating, our partners enjoy rewarding experiences and learn how education impacts their workforce needs. The partner response is generally to seek more involvement opportunities.
- Having people from business and industry in the role of Educational Entrepreneurs has paid great dividends in developing and growing partnerships.

## Prioritize internal and external communication

- Increased education of the general public and parents about small high school programs is needed to sustain small high school enrollment.
- An aggressive and comprehensive high school options marketing campaign is needed. Providing schools with the tools and flexibility to market their programs and use technology to communicate with students, teachers and parents is an ongoing objective. Parents need accurate, timely, and appealing messages in order to make informed decisions.

## Recognize the complexity and importance of facilities

- Planning for facilities is a much more complex and detailed endeavor than originally understood. Small high school facilities are planned at the beginning of the process and are now planned with as much collaboration and thoughtfulness as instructional programs.
- Quality, stable facilities are important to success. Uncertainty about location takes time away from administrators and places strain on staff, students and parents. Uncertainty erodes student enrollment.
- Funding small high schools and redesigning large comprehensives requires more dollars than the current state funding formula provides.

# RELEVANCE



Luther Burbank High School students from the Construction Technology ROP class in the Architecture and Construction Small Learning Community compete in the Design/Build Competition sponsored by The Sacramento Builder's Exchange.

## Career and Technical Education Excels

While only about one-fourth of students nationally and statewide have access to career and technical programs, at SCUSD it's virtually 100 percent. Since 2002, students enrolled in career classes grew from 750 to more than 3,000 students in 2007. An array of options with thoughtful course sequencing, increasing alignment to college entrance requirements, and a unique entrepreneur model to recruit business partners and resources has earned national recognition from the Ford Motor Company Fund, a \$30,000 grant, and assistance from a team of educational experts. Superintendent M. Magdalena Carrillo Mejia said, "In short, these classes offer students the ideal of two worlds—top notch and rigorous academic content and a very real, current application of that content through a sequenced career path."

## e21 ONGOING CHALLENGES

- Ongoing funding to sustain the many improvements, including teacher collaboration time, extra counseling services, re-structuring to build leadership capacity, and Youth Congress programs at the middle school and high school levels.
- Providing on-going effective communication with students, parents, and the community about the many high school choices available.
- Identifying funding to maintain and upgrade facilities.
- Hiring and retaining diverse, fully credentialed teachers.

**For more information about Education for the 21st Century (e21) or SCUSD high schools, contact:**

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