



# REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **San Mateo County School-To-Career Partnership Second Year Evaluation**

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This evaluation of the San Mateo County School-to-Career Partnership's year two grant activities is based primarily on a matrix of performance indicators that was developed by Dr. Eileen Warren as part of the evaluation of the first year activities of the Partnership. This performance matrix is comprehensive and incorporates many indicators of processes and activities that were identified as goals of the Partnership in the grant application. However, given this focus on processes and activities rather than easily measurable outcomes, the evaluation requires extensive documentation of the activities to assess the extent to which the Partnership is meeting the performance goals set out in the matrix. Unfortunately, the evaluation of the second year activities is hindered by a lack of documentation from the Partnership for many of the specified processes and activities. Much of the data required by the matrix were apparently not maintained at either the school, district, or Partnership level. It is recognized that the Partnership functioned with only an interim director for most of year two, and it is likely that this factor contributed heavily to the lack of coordinated documentation of activities by the various actors within the Partnership. Nevertheless, we would be remiss not to make clear that much of the data required for this evaluation was unavailable, and that in many cases the data provided was difficult to interpret, or did not appropriately address the issues specified in the evaluation matrix.

The lack of appropriate documentation makes it difficult to evaluate the program with surety. For example, existing curricula were reported to have been revised and new curricula developed based on the principle of integration between academic and technical/applied subject matter, and incorporating new, rigorous standards.. However, the specific number of integrated courses that were revised or developed was not available, and there was no information provided about the standards associated with these applied courses in San Mateo County. Similarly, articulation agreements between secondary and post-secondary institutions were reported to have been developed and executed, but copies of these agreements were not provided. Moreover, neither schools nor districts reported the number of students enrolled in college support programs, nor did they submit information about certificate programs relevant to career pathways. Further, schools reported that students received training in pre-employment competencies and completed job interview portfolios and resumes, however, only one school district provided the specific numbers of students who had achieved these outcomes. Schools also reported that several varieties of work-based learning programs and activities were developed, including paid and unpaid work experience (both related and unrelated to students' career pathways), job shadowing activities, and mentoring programs. However, the evaluation matrix requires schools and districts to document the number of students who participated in at least 20 hours of work-based learning activities, and no school or district provided this information. Finally, the matrix includes a number of staff development activities and the documentation provided to support these performance items was also inappropriate. Specifically, whereas the matrix requires sign-in sheets and minutes from various types of staff development activities, such documentation was not provided. Rather, workbooks were provided, with no information regarding the context in which they were used or substantiating that they were in fact used at all by the Partnership. In

short, if the Partnership is going to continue using the performance matrix developed by Dr. Warren, it is recommended that a more thorough and comprehensive record keeping system be developed and that documentation be catalogued in this system with references to the specific matrix items that related to the document.

While the Partnership did not perform well vis-a-vis the items in the evaluation matrix, the data collected by the Partnership using an instrument modified from the National School-to-Work Evaluation clearly shows that the Partnership made limited progress in several areas during the second year of the grant. Specifically, the information reported by school and district staff on this self-administered questionnaire indicate that the use of curriculum integration strategies increased in every school district in San Mateo County during this period, with the most frequently used strategy being the revision of technical courses to cover career-related issues. However, districts fell short with regard to using the same strategy in academic courses. This self-reported information also shows that districts increased their usage of career awareness strategies, with the most frequently used strategies being individual career counseling, use of career centers, and the integration of career development into classroom curricula. Further, each of the six career pathways offered in San Mateo County secondary schools was offered at a higher rate in year two than year one. It should be noted, however, that the most available career pathway is computer information systems, and it is available at only 63% of the county's secondary schools. Similarly, while the variety of workplace activities offered to the county's secondary school students increased, as did the number of students involved in these activities, the activity most frequently offered is workplace experience that is not related to a given student's career pathway or major. Overall, these data show progress over time and it is recommended that the Partnership continue the collection of the same information during subsequent years of the grants to assess whether this progress continues.

An evaluation of the ethnic/racial composition of the Partnership with the San Mateo County K-12 student population reveals that Hispanics, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans are substantially under-represented in its membership. As one of the goals of the Partnership is to reflect the County's diversity, representation of these three ethnic/racial groups within the Partnership will need to increase in year three of the grant.