

# Sacramento's High-Performing Schools Compact

A Partnership of the Sacramento City Unified School District and the  
Sacramento Charter Community

SEPTEMBER 2011

## Vision

Since the gold rush, Sacramento has been a city focused on discovery. The push in recent years to improve schools has been no different: A diverse community has challenged assumptions in an attempt to discover a path to excellence in public education. This compact between the Sacramento City Unified School District and the Sacramento Charter Community is a significant step forward in finding that path. It represents a caring community sharing a promise:

- That all children – those from elegant homes in leafy neighborhoods and those decidedly less privileged – attend schools at which they learn.
- That all children – regardless of race, ethnicity, income or ability – graduate from high school without educational disadvantages. They graduate ready for adult life.
- That all educators are dedicated to continuous improvement, to getting better at teaching so that children get better at learning.

The foundation for this vision is being forged through our High-Performing Schools Compact, a document that asks the community to commit to true collaboration and to the principle that all children deserve a great education. Just as children are different, schools should be different. One size does not fit all.

This Compact calls for Sacramento City Unified to become a district where high-performing schools of varying philosophies and strategies grow.

- Where facilities are utilized by a portfolio of proven providers.
- Where underserved students have travel options so that they may attend the school that best meets their needs.
- Where all schools offer specialized instruction for students with disabilities in partnership with the district.
- Where aspiring and emerging leaders from our Leadership Academy team up to learn best practices and work together to solve problems at each other's schools.
- Where charter schools are the research and development sites charged with developing programs and services that benefit all students.
- Where the district's resources are used to identify achievement gaps and incentivize partners to explore innovative solutions to those gaps.

This is the future we envision. It is our promise. And it starts today.

## **Sacramento City Unified School District**

### **Sacramento Charter Community**

# **High-Performing Schools Compact**

As educators and leaders within our communities, we agree to central values and shared beliefs about quality public education. We value the vital role that public education plays in the lives of our students, families and city. We value that public schools stand in service of our individual and collective futures. We believe in the right of every family to have access to a quality public school, District or Charter, and to have informed choice about the schools within their community. We believe in the right of all students to learn and to grow, achieve their life's goals and ambitions, have access to life's opportunities and become strong and contributing members of our adult community. We support a partnership that adds value to the broader educational system, rather than benefits one party or another. We share pride in our city and are determined to bring our collective efforts to ensure that every family has that choice and every student gets to exercise that right.

The Mission Statement of the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) proclaims that:

*Students graduate as globally competitive lifelong learners, prepared to succeed in a career and higher education institution of their choice to secure gainful employment and contribute to society.*

In the spirit of collaboration, the District and Charter Schools jointly create a Compact which acknowledges the principles of SCUSD's *Strategic Plan 2010-2014: Putting Children First*. This Compact is intended to inaugurate a new culture, one in which the District and Charter Schools support one another by taking best practices to scale and addressing significant budget challenges together. With our students' best interest at heart, we will explore promising systemic innovations and hold each other accountable for addressing low-performing schools. This new culture requires trust, mutual respect and the willingness to work together. This compact begins this new era of sharing, an era that we believe will lead to tangible results for students, families and Sacramento.

The District's Strategic Plan provides the overarching framework for how the Compact is organized. Central to meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan is the commitment to ensure that every student graduates from high school with the readiness and preparation for postsecondary education and the workplace, as well as the aspiration to develop a Sacramento Pathway to College and Careers, which would be a collaborative agreement with California State University, Sacramento, and Los Rios Community Colleges.

This Sacramento Pathway would provide students, parents, and families a roadmap that would function as a guidepost and equip them with the necessary knowledge, tools, and resources for attaining admission and completing college without participation in remedial programs. This aligned and seamless Preschool-20 initiative would serve to enhance teaching and learning and most importantly, student achievement and success.

The included agreements align with the foundational pillars of the Strategic Plan. Those pillars are:

- I. Career and College Ready Students
- II. Family and Community Engagement
- III. Organizational Transformation

Collectively, our vision is to:

- Meet the diverse needs of all students in Sacramento by developing and replicating high quality public school options, both traditional and charter, with a focused commitment to those in the highest need areas of our community. To this end the district has committed to transforming and restructuring seven low-performing schools in the last two years. Additional low-performing schools will be identified for reconstitution and transformation including the development of an RFP process to accelerate transformation.
- Increase professional collaboration and working relationships among families, educators, and staff that support the needs of our students;
- Identify and share best practices among educators;
- Maximize funding for classroom instruction as part of the commitment to improving public education for all children in Sacramento;
- Create a strong public school network that meets the educational needs of every child in the city.

## **JOINT COMMITMENTS**

In support of these shared values and shared beliefs, and in support of our common goal to educate every student within the City of Sacramento, as District and Charter, we commit to the following:

- Creating a system of school choice that includes enrollment to traditional and charter schools as options; working to serve all students within the District, including those in the highest need areas, in order to close achievement gaps; including the creation of a committee to recommend options for low performing neighborhoods; replicating and growing successful schools, with a focus in the neighborhoods of highest needs
- Creating an accountability framework for continuous improvement and transformative educational practices; creating an annual, transparent and predictable oversight process that recognizes excellence and provides an early warning system for low-performing Charter Schools; establishing a framework for fast track renewal and/or replication of successful Charter Schools and voluntary closure or non-renewal of chronically underperforming Charter Schools to be used in the 2011-2012 school year;

- Co-developing a blended technology school. Blended learning is defined as students learning at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home, and at least in part through online delivery with some elements of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace.
- Leveraging strategic partnerships to provide resources to support students and increase family supports; sharing parent engagement best practices and establishing and maintaining a welcoming school environment for parents and families; offering trainings, joint classes, courses and workshops, that will be incorporated into the District's Family Academy;
- Providing access to human capital and leadership pipelines with the intent of recruiting, training, developing, and retaining the most effective principals and teachers; establishing an annual best practices summit to accelerate student learning and close achievement gaps;
- Working together to pass a local facilities bond and/or parcel measure that benefits all children and schools in our community, including negotiating a pro rata share for district and charter schools;
- Creating a joint Oversight Committee for the Compact that resolves, without compromising the authority vested in school governing boards and charter school governing boards, disputes and ensures that all parties adhere to the agreements and spirit of the commitments. This neutral body will provide governance and will be charged with transparent oversight of shared initiatives and collaborative problem-solving. Both Sacramento City Unified School District and the Sacramento Charter Community will each have four representatives on the Oversight Committee of this organization.

## **CHARTER COMMITMENTS**

In support of our shared values and shared beliefs, and in support of our common goal to educate every student within the City of Sacramento to the greatest degree possible, the Sacramento Charter School Community commits to the following:

- Serving all students by proactively increasing outreach efforts to underrepresented groups, which may include English language learners and those students with special needs, students achieving below grade level, and/or from socio-economically disadvantaged families;
- Providing equitable access and high-quality supports for students with special needs and English language learners; ensuring all student data, including demographic, enrollment, and perceptions surveys, is accurate and accessible to the district;

- Engaging the District prior to student disenrollment to best serve the needs of all students and families; providing a documented system of student supports and interventions that have been employed prior to any student disenrollment based on behavior and academic reasons;
- Committing to expansion of District services to Charter Schools, where feasible and at cost, including custodial, special education, technology, transportation and nutrition; committing to implement and partake in District-wide community initiatives, where feasible and at cost; making available to District educators, where feasible and at cost, professional development opportunities;
- Working with the District to streamline enrollment processes and identify appropriate placement of all children. On an annual basis, the Student Recruitment and Enrollment Committee will review enrollment and disenrollment data and submit recommendations for improvement to the Oversight Committee.
- Highlighting the Compact with the District in public communications with the external community and media; informing and educating the public and community about Charter and District schools;

## **DISTRICT COMMITMENTS**

In support of our shared values and shared beliefs, and in support of our common goal to educate every student within the City of Sacramento to the greatest degree possible, the Sacramento City Unified School District commits to the following:

- Informing and educating the public and community about District and Charter Schools; including Charter Schools on the SCUSD website and in all SCUSD recruitment events and efforts;
- Making available to Charter School educators, where feasible and at cost, professional development opportunities; providing access to the professional development program that is designed to foster a culture of learning by deepening each teacher's subject matter knowledge, as well as expanding his/her pedagogical toolkit; making available to Charter School educators, where feasible and at cost, English Language Arts and Math Common Core professional development opportunities, classroom assignments/tasks, benchmark assessments, and annotated student work exemplars;
- Providing opportunities to Charter School Educators, where feasible and at cost, to participate in the SCUSD Leadership Academy that is designed to prepare aspiring principals, build capacity of novice principals, and strengthen the learning needs of veteran principals;

- Negotiate other low cost, cash-flow solutions to Charter Schools, where feasible, without jeopardizing the District's cash flow or financial health; providing options to Charter Schools to participate in bulk purchasing;
- Including Charter Schools in the process of identifying facilities in communities in which they seek to serve:
  - Offering long-term FUA agreements, co-terminus with charter agreement;
  - Locating Charter Schools where feasible near communities they seek to serve;
  - Providing reasonably-equipped facilities for Charter Schools;
  - Maximizing facilities use including co-location for District and Charter Schools;
  - Developing a set of co-location guidelines for use in the 2012-13 school year, including the incubation of new schools.

## **JOINT IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE**

In support of our shared values and shared beliefs, and in support of our common goal to educate every student within the City of Sacramento to the greatest degree possible, we jointly commit to negotiate the details of this compact. Therefore, the Sacramento City Unified School District and the Sacramento Charter School Community commit to the following implementation steps:

### **PHASE I: November 2011 – June 2012**

#### Priorities

1. Implementation Structure and Establishing Benchmarks
2. Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic Partnerships
3. Develop Critical Policy Recommendations

#### Process

- A joint Oversight Committee and four working groups with four priority areas of focus will implement the Compact in three phases.
- The four focus areas are:
  1. Human Capital/Instruction
  2. Facilities/Funding
  3. Student Recruitment/Enrollment
  4. Accountability/Continuous Improvement

- Identify participants and convene the Oversight Committee and Working Groups
- Delineate specific objectives and critical partners to involve in developing the details to support the Compact in each of the four focus areas
- Working groups convene partners and stakeholders for dialogue, issue identification, and definition of key principles guiding the agreements
- Identify costs and prioritize key issues in each focus area
- Develop a set of specific metrics against each deliverable by which Compact progress can be measured

#### Key Outcomes for the Oversight Committee

- Identify and engage internal and external stakeholders
- Develop and implement communications plan
- Create a Low Performing Neighborhoods Committee
- Develop six-month and one-year action plans with specific deliverables for each focus area
- Implement six-month action plan for each focus area

#### Early Deliverables for Focus Areas

- Human Capital/Instruction:
  - Establish shared Professional Development opportunities for both Charter and District teachers, administrators and staff.
  - Create and convene groups to develop blended learning models for consideration.
- Facilities/Funding:
  - Develop an RFP process for under-utilized facilities.
  - Draft co-location guidelines
- Student Recruitment/Enrollment:
  - Analyze student demographic information, academic data and enrollment patterns to inform the vision for a portfolio of schools.
- Accountability/Continuous Improvement :
  - Establish charter school accountability framework

### **PHASE II: June 2012 – November 2013**

#### Priorities

1. Student Recruitment/Enrollment Processes
2. Best Practice Sharing for Human Capital and Family Engagement
3. Facilities and Funding Agreements

## Process

- Convene and empower Oversight Committee and Working Groups
- Seek funding for key priorities through the Gates Foundation
- Publish progress report specifying core actions and specific impact of Compact efforts over first 12-15 months of the effort.
- Incorporate additional items into the Compact that were agreed to during Phase 1
- Develop list of additional issues for signatories to tackle, convene working groups, etc. as in Phase 1 to the extent necessary

## Key Outcomes

- Host Best Practices Summit
- Participate in Common Core planning and other professional development
- Solidify Sacramento Pathway
- Establish protocols for collaborating on disenrollment and sharing data
- Implement multi-year facility use agreements
- Convene Year I Compact review meeting and publish progress report
- Modify one-year action plan based on key learning's over Phase 1 and Phase 2

## **PHASE III: November 2013 – November 2014**

### Priorities

1. Institutionalization
2. Reflection and Refinement

### Key Outcomes

- Convene and empower Oversight Committee and Working Groups
- Implement one-year action plan for each focus area.
- Convene Year II Compact review meeting and publish progress report.
- Establish new goals and benchmarks
- Renew commitments

## **SIGNATORIES**

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**Jonathan Raymond**, Superintendent, SCUSD

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**Mary Welch**, Regional Superintendent, Aspire Public Schools

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**Gary Bowman**, Superintendent/Executive Director, California Montessori Project

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**Penny Schwinn**, Founder, Capitol Collegiate Academy

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**Judy Morales**, Business Manager, Language Academy of Sacramento

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**Norman Hernandez**, Principal, Sol Aureus College Preparatory (SAC Prep)

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**Jim Scheible**, Superintendent, St. HOPE Public Schools

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**Ed Manansala**, Director of Strategic Partnerships, St. HOPE Public Schools

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**Dennis M. Mah**, President and Superintendent , Urban Charter Schools Collective