



**Santa Barbara Unified**  
Every child, every chance, every day.

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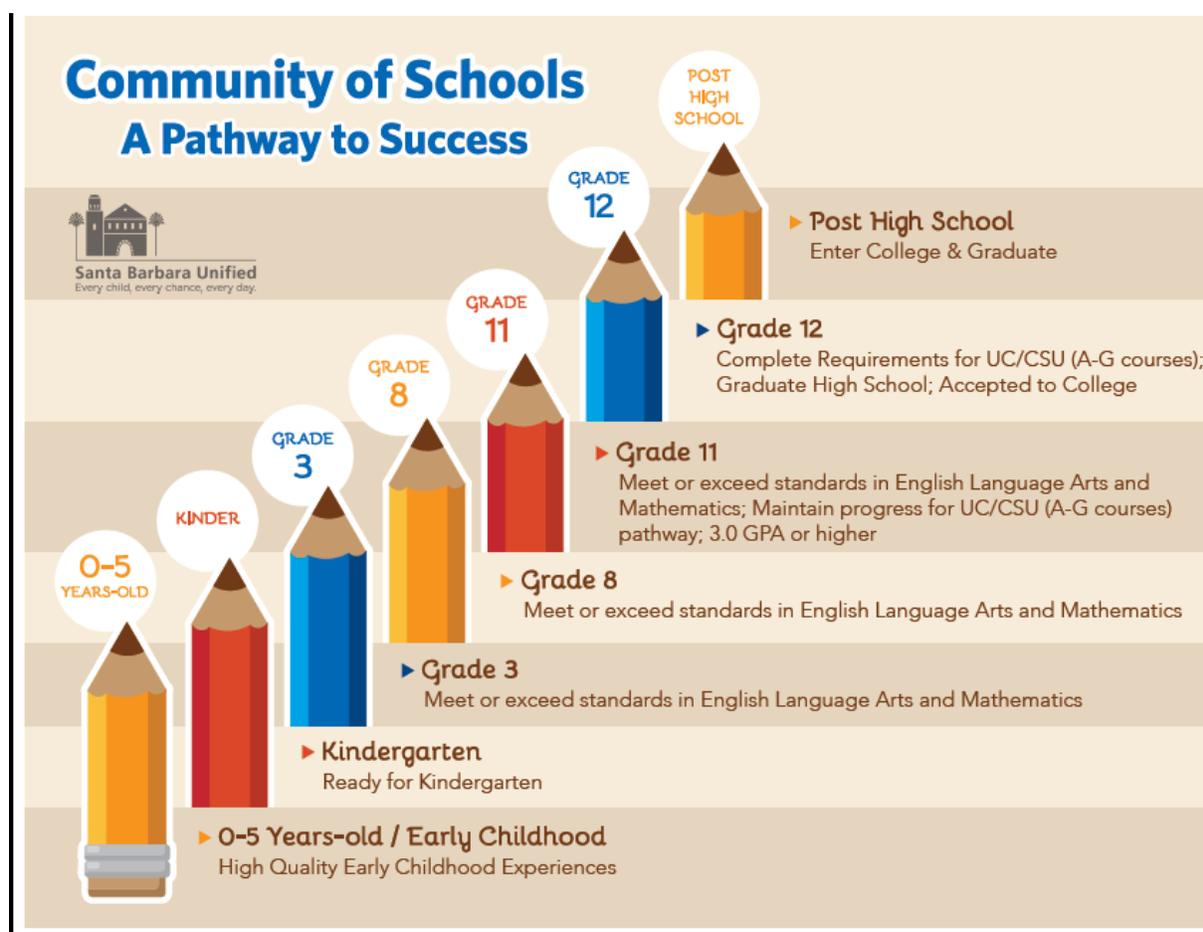
# **Community of Schools**

*A Pathway to Success*

**Santa Barbara Unified** is focused on a vision, mission, and core values to close the achievement gap and do whatever it takes to improve every child's chance at success in school and life from birth to college graduation. Through an intentional private-public partnership between the Santa Barbara Unified schools and the philanthropic sector, as well as local colleges, businesses and stakeholders serving the community—children and their families are being supported.

The aim of the Santa Barbara Unified, **Community of Schools** (the Project) is to significantly change the educational trajectory of children who have not typically been afforded opportunities that result in school readiness, by providing them with a clear pathway and support to achieving their goals. The Community of Schools aligns with the goals of the school district's strategic plan and with the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) with a greater focus on early childhood education, school readiness, family and community engagement, and college readiness. The pathway to student success identifies benchmarks and milestones to guide the Project (refer to Figure A).

**Figure A.** Community of Schools, Student Success Pathway



The Community of Schools strives to change outcomes for children by addressing the four comprehensive components of the Project plan: Early Childhood Education and Kindergarten Readiness; Parent Education, Engagement and Leadership; the Community School Model; and College Readiness. The plan incorporates continuous program improvement through evaluation and metric driven decision-making. The Community of Schools is supported through braided funding—including school district funds, partnerships with local community agencies and colleges, and private grants through Foundations and donors. **The local generosity of private funding at \$1.0 million annually, supplements key strategies and programming** to meet the goals of the Project.

## Theory of Change

If children are physically and emotionally healthy, have high quality learning experiences, are provided with clear pathways to achieve their goals, and live in communities that support school readiness—children will be successful in school, be prepared to enter the workforce, and will prosper.

## Mission

Our mission is to ensure academic success for all children living in Santa Barbara. This will be accomplished by providing the students and their families with an integrated system of services and high quality education, engaging the community, and providing access to resources for a safe and positive environment at home and in the community from birth to college.

## Vision

We envision children who are prepared to enter school ready to learn and be successful, healthy students throughout their academic journey and as adults.

## Overarching Goal

Our primary goal is to significantly increase the percentage of students from Santa Barbara Unified who enter kindergarten ready to learn and are ultimately prepared for college and a career.

## Historical Context

The Santa Barbara Unified, Community of Schools **project began its development as a community-based approach** in the Santa Barbara Westside community in 2009 and has evolved in its leadership, scope, and community engagement through seven years of staggered implementation and development of the birth to college and career pathway. Santa Barbara Unified (SBUSD) has collaborated with local agencies to implement a coordinated network for the delivery of resources for children and families from low-income backgrounds. In its earlier iteration, the Community of Schools was formerly THRIVE Westside, the Westside Project, and the Harding Early Years Program.

## Timeline:

- **In 2009-2010**, the James S. Bower Foundation funded the development of a place-based, birth to age 5 initiative —the **Harding Early Years Program (HEYP)**, which was modeled after the Harlem Children’s Zone and the local Carpinteria Children’s Project at Main. The HEYP developmental framework included four comprehensive components: high-quality learning, social-emotional competence, health and wellbeing, and family support/strengthening.

- **In 2010-2011**, the **HEYP** comprehensive components and programs were launched for implementation. The project was rebranded as the **Westside Project** to include Santa Barbara Westside neighborhood schools: **McKinley Elementary School** joined and launched the early childhood AVANCE Parent Education Program. **La Cumbre Junior High School** initiated the Westside Tutoring and Evening Program to include onsite family education, workforce development programs, and access to academic supports and resources for children from the Westside neighborhood.
- **In 2011-2012**, **San Marcos High School** joined the Project as a partner to help complete the 0-5 through grade 12 continuum. La Cumbre Junior High and San Marcos High began providing inter-school services and resources towards college readiness and launched the Program for Effective Access to College (PEAC, formerly the Posse Program). The SBUSD Westside Project joined the county-wide school readiness initiative – THRIVE and rebranded as **THRIVE Westside**.
- **In 2012-2013**, **Santa Barbara Unified launched the new strategic plan** with a greater focus on early care and education, family and community engagement, and college readiness. Based on best practice and research conducted through the Westside Project, SBUSD implemented a seamless pathway to student success with identified benchmarks and milestones from early childhood to grade 12 (refer to Figure A).
- **In 2014-2015**, SBUSD extended the Project strategies and supports to include Santa Barbara Eastside neighborhood schools and replicated best practice and greater articulation. SBUSD also launched the community based – Santa Barbara Kindergarten Readiness Network as an intentional collaboration with local early childhood providers. At this time, SBUSD also ended the partnership with THRIVE. Therefore, the THRIVE Westside project was re-branded as the “**Community of Schools**” to embrace the mission of the Project as a community of SBUSD neighborhood schools working together, as well as local schools collaborating closely with the community to support school readiness.
- **In 2016-2017**, SBUSD further expanded the Project strategies and supports to include the PEAC college readiness model at all 7 comprehensive secondary schools, as well as pilot the infant- toddler programs at SBUSD Early Education and Support. The philanthropic sector and community partners have recognized the Community of Schools and PEAC as a brand, which has also significantly increased the fundraising potential and in-kind contributions.

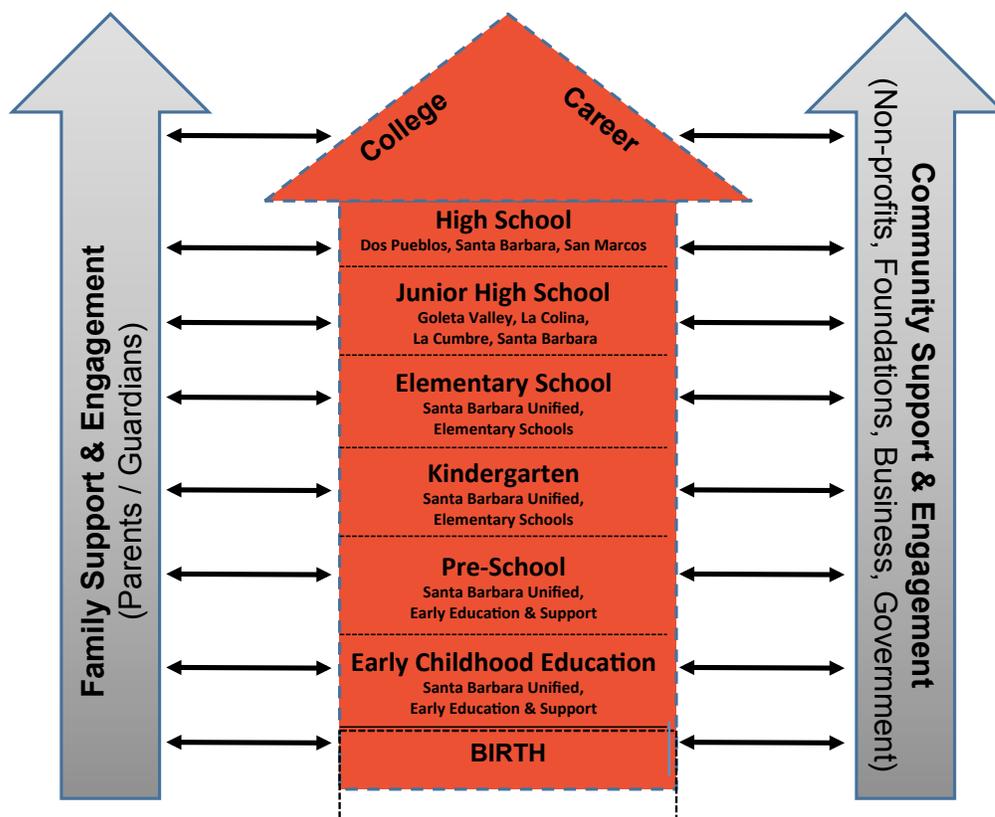
The multi-phased development of the Community of Schools plan has allowed **the Project to roll out incrementally strategies and systems necessary for the development of a birth to college and career collaborative**. The programmatic strategies that have been selected and implemented at each of the phases have developed as a comprehensive building block system across the partner schools. By concentrating on developing evidence-based programs starting at birth, parents and children are provided with a solid path from birth through school age. Needs assessment data, input from families and community, and lessons learned from the HEYP and the Westside Project have guided the development of the primary strategies. Working with these central pieces of the puzzle—**children, families, schools, and partners bring together the resources to help children enter school ready to learn and continue to thrive**.

## Community of Schools- Partnership Structure

Within the partnership pathway (Figure B), the schools align services and resources to target the different developmental needs, having always, the child and the family at the center. Key coordinated services include school-based strategies and activities aligned with health and safety programs, family support, and social services. The goal is to foster strong links across programs to smooth transitions and guarantee that programs are continuous and effective. Such endeavor can be accomplished when schools collaborate with key partners such as parents and caregivers, non-profits and community agencies, and local businesses and government—to pair education with wraparound services.

Figure B shows an illustration of the relationship between the schools, birth to 5/early childhood through grade 12 and the partnership structure with the community and key partners. The “entry into the schools” is through the early childhood focus.

**Figure B.** Community of Schools- Integrated Pathway & Partnership Structure



## Early Childhood Education and Kindergarten Readiness

Santa Barbara Unified is committed to a comprehensive system of early childhood education opportunities for children entering the school district. By enhancing early childhood instructional support services in targeted neighborhoods, we believe we can change the academic trajectory for our most at-risk students and also increase the grade-level mastery and college readiness of our entire school district. Through a strategic action plan and vital community partnerships—the elementary schools receive coordinated, inter-school services and share resources as they relate to Kindergarten Readiness. The proposed strategies and activities for the Project supplement and complement existing strategies and services at each school site. The strategies ensure articulation and coordination between early childhood teachers/staff (Pre-Kindergarten to grade 2) and utilize the SBUSD database and information system. Santa Barbara Unified has also implemented infant-toddler programs with oversight by the Office of Early Education and Support, and support through a public-private partnership. SBUSD has strengthened collaborations with local early childhood providers, community agencies, and preschool programs through the Santa Barbara Kindergarten Readiness Network launched by SBUSD in 2014.

## Family Engagement, Education & Leadership

Santa Barbara Unified has partnered with families and local parent engagement providers to develop a **pathway to parent-family success** by ensuring parents have access to parent education, engagement and leadership opportunities at their neighborhood schools. The plan is to offer parent education programming that addresses every level of a child's socio-emotional, cognitive, and academic development from pre-birth to grade 12. The goal is for children to enter school ready to learn, for student's progress to be sustained throughout their educational pathway from Kindergarten to high school graduation, and for families to stay actively engaged and serve as a strong support for their child's learning and development.

## Community School Model

The Santa Barbara Unified strategic plan supports **community schools as a strategy for integrating existing school and community resources to remove barriers to learning and ensure that more students graduate from high school ready for college and a career**. Community schools stay open after the bell rings and provide a range of services to students and their families—from afterschool programs and tutoring, to health and social services, and adult education. A wide body of research shows that this strategy improves student achievement, increases graduation rates, promotes family involvement in schools, and maximizes scarce local resources.

The **PEAC Family Resource Centers** at La Cumbre Junior High and at Franklin Elementary School provide comprehensive academic, social, and health services to the community. The Family Resource Center model is a systemic strategy that directly responds to the need for family-school-community connections as part of the efforts to help increase school achievement.

The La Cumbre Center is in year 8 of implementation and the Franklin Center is in year 4 of service to the community. Both Centers are supported through private Foundation grants, donor contributions, and in-kind services by local community agencies, colleges, and health providers.

Both schools stay open until 7:00pm and operate the Family Resource and Tutoring Centers, Monday – Friday to provide free dinner by SBUSD Food Services to youth, access to a broad range of complementary supports for children and families in the community, with the goal of fostering family engagement, providing networks of support, improving student learning, and reducing barriers to families overall success. Approximately 2,400 community members and students make use of the Center services monthly and continue to engage with Santa Barbara Unified.

## College & Career Readiness

Research shows that preparing students to enter **college ready begins earlier than high school and should be intentional**. Often times, students perform well and are high achievers in elementary and middle school—but begin to “fall through the cracks” once they transition to high school. In order to help close the achievement gap and change the trajectory of underrepresented students locally, Santa Barbara Unified is providing inter-school services to support college readiness for first generation college-bound students from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

The goal of the Santa Barbara Unified- Program for Effective Access to College (PEAC) is to increase the high school graduation and 4-year college entry rate first generation college-bound students. Although high achieving, this group of students, face serious cultural and economic barriers on the path to college. PEAC is a local program developed by the late SBUSD educator and leader- Jo Ann Caines, who emphasized the philosophy that all children deserve access and opportunity, and schools need to make those systemic changes. PEAC began as a pilot program for four years, serving La Cumbre Junior High and San Marcos High with a cohort of 30-35 students each year. In 2015, the first graduating PEAC cohort met the goal of acceptance to 4-year universities. At that time, SBUSD decided to expand the PEAC supports to all 7 secondary comprehensive schools by Fall 2016. Presently, 2018-19 enrollment in PEAC includes 1,500 students in 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade with projected growth as expansion continues through 2020.

PEAC begins with students identified in 7<sup>th</sup> grade based on benchmarks identified on the SBUSD Student Success Pathway (refer to Figure A). In order to qualify to enter PEAC in high school, by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the students must be proficient in Math, proficient in grade level English Language Arts, high grades, good citizenship and parent participation. The outcomes of PEAC are to ensure that students in 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade: maintain a 3.0 academic grade point average (GPA) or higher; are enrolled in Advanced Placement classes (AP); complete requirements for UC/CSU (A-G courses); and attend college.

The purpose of PEAC is to provide academic and social-emotional supports that will guarantee students graduate from high school and are prepared for 4-year college entry. PEAC is tied to benchmarks based on the Community of Schools, Student Success Pathway. The following shows the challenges students face and the 8 PEAC academic and social-emotional support strategies to help close the achievement gap.

### **PEAC student challenges and strategies to support students**

#### **Student Challenges**

- Lack of English language support &/or limited academic resources at home and in the community
- Low parent education levels/years of schooling
- Lack of peer support in high level classes

- Lack of tutorial support for high level classes
- Lack of academic role models

### **PEAC Strategies**

- Students receive priority scheduling into Honors and Advanced Placement classes
- Students are in PEAC cohorts of 6 – 10 for English, Math, Science
- Enrollment in AVID (Advancement through Individual Determination)
- Academic Counselor dedicated to PEAC students
- PEAC Mentors: Graduates of the high school they are serving, were enrolled in AVID, and are presently enrolled at a local college or graduated college
- Daily dedicated study space and access to tutors afterschool and in the evenings at PEAC Learning Centers located at SBUSD campuses
- PEAC Summer Institute- 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade summer bridge at each secondary school, and summer programming at SBCC for college credit
- Parent education and engagement opportunities

**PEAC has been at the forefront for the SBUSD Community of Schools initiative.** SBUSD has increased partnerships with local colleges, donors, and community agencies that have allowed for PEAC to continue evolving. In the last two years, the PEAC Summer Institute has grown to include a college bridge component 100% sponsored by SBCC and donors; 10 PEAC students annually have received full scholarships to attend the internationally sought out – LEAP Youth Leadership Summer Institute hosted at UCLA; for three consecutive years PEAC has hosted a Youth Leadership Summit for young women; in 2018 the PEAC Alumni group was launched; and a collaboration has been initiated with UCSB and local donors to develop a pathway for PEAC graduates to enter the Teacher Education Program and begin a teaching career with SBUSD.

The mission of the Santa Barbara Unified PEAC initiative continues to transform the culture at the secondary schools whereas more first generation students are being supported, engaged and attending college. Therefore, SBUSD is investing more capital and staff in ensuring that the PEAC college readiness strategies and supports are maintained in the DNA of the organization.