

## Research Brief: Recent California Teacher Organization-School District Collaboration for School and District Improvement

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Collaborations by California Teacher Organization and School Districts have often led to school and district improvement and increased public support. These partnerships, and some national ones, may provide great opportunities for others to learn about both the potential benefits and pitfalls of collaborative efforts.

Preliminary research on Teacher Organization-School District Collaboration in California yields two findings:

1. During 2011 and 2012 some 39 Teacher Organization-School District partners in California have either been involved in, or expressed interest in, collaboration.
2. Five California teacher organization-school district collaborations have been cited as national exemplars in recent reports and case studies.


Teacher Organization-School District partners have demonstrated interest or involvement by either attending one of the 2011 and 2012 Labor Management conferences or being profiled in recent reports or case studies (see Appendix 1). The conferences include:

1. [U.S. Department of Education: Advancing Student Achievement Through Labor-Management Collaboration](#), Denver, Colorado, February 15-16, 2011
2. WestEd/TURN: Labor/Management Collaboration: A Conference for California Educators, May 4-5, 2011
3. ABC FT/AFT: West Coast Labor-Management Institute, Cerritos, CA, October, 2011
4. [CalTURN Conference](#), April 25-26, 2012, Sacramento, CA
5. [U.S. Department of Education: Collaborating to Transform the Teaching Profession](#), Cincinnati, Ohio, May 23-24, 2012
6. ABC West Coast Labor Management Institute, October 24-25, 2012, Buena Park, CA
7. [CalTURN / WestEd conference](#), November 15-16, 2012, Santa Monica, CA

The California school districts and teacher organizations participating in these conferences or profiled in recent reports or case studies include (see Appendix 1):

<a href="#">ABC USD</a>	<a href="#">Green Dot Public Schools</a>	<a href="#">Palo Alto USD</a>
<a href="#">Antelope Valley Union HSD</a>	<a href="#">Horizon Charter Schools</a>	<a href="#">Pomona Unified School District</a>
<a href="#">Aromas-San Juan USD</a>	<a href="#">Jefferson Union High SD</a>	<a href="#">Poway Unified School District</a>
<a href="#">Centralia Elementary SD</a>	<a href="#">Lindsay Unified School District</a>	<a href="#">Ravenswood City SD</a>
<a href="#">Charter Oak USD</a>	<a href="#">Los Angeles USD</a>	<a href="#">Sacramento City USD</a>
<a href="#">Culver City USD</a>	<a href="#">Lucia Mar USD</a>	<a href="#">Salida Union School District</a>
<a href="#">Cupertino USD</a>	<a href="#">McFarland USD</a>	<a href="#">Salinas Union HSD</a>
<a href="#">El Rancho USD</a>	<a href="#">Merced City School District</a>	<a href="#">Santa Monica-Malibu USD</a>
<a href="#">Elk Grove USD</a>	<a href="#">Monterey Peninsula USD t</a>	<a href="#">San Francisco USD</a>
<a href="#">Escondido USD</a>	<a href="#">Morgan Hill USD</a>	<a href="#">San Juan USD</a>
<a href="#">Fresno Unified School District</a>	<a href="#">Newport-Mesa USD</a>	<a href="#">Stockton USD</a>
<a href="#">Fullerton School District</a>	<a href="#">Newhall School District</a>	<a href="#">Twin Rivers USD</a>
<a href="#">Garden Grove USD</a>	<a href="#">Oxnard Union High SD</a>	<a href="#">Tracy USD</a>

The regional breakdown of Teacher Organization-School District Collaborations in California shows similar levels of interest in most major regions of the state.

<p><b>San Francisco Bay Area</b>  <a href="#">Cupertino USD</a>  <a href="#">Jefferson Union High SD</a>  <a href="#">Morgan Hill USD</a>  <a href="#">Palo Alto USD</a>  <a href="#">Ravenswood City SD</a>  <a href="#">San Francisco USD</a></p>		<p><b>Greater Sacramento</b>  <a href="#">Elk Grove USD</a>  <a href="#">Horizon Charter Schools</a>  <a href="#">Sacramento City USD</a>  <a href="#">San Juan USD</a>  <a href="#">Twin Rivers USD</a></p>
<p><b>Central Coast</b>  <a href="#">Aromas-San Juan USD</a>  <a href="#">Lucia Mar USD</a>  <a href="#">Monterey Peninsula USD</a>  <a href="#">Oxnard Union High SD</a>  <a href="#">Salinas Union HSD</a></p>		<p><b>Central Valley</b>  <a href="#">Fresno USD</a>  <a href="#">Lindsay USD</a>  <a href="#">McFarland USD</a>  <a href="#">Merced City SD</a>  <a href="#">Salida USD</a>  <a href="#">Stockton USD</a>  <a href="#">Tracy USD</a></p>
<p><b>Los Angeles</b>  <a href="#">ABC USD</a>  <a href="#">Culver City USD</a>  <a href="#">Green Dot Public Schools</a>  <a href="#">Los Angeles USD</a>  <a href="#">Santa Monica-Malibu USD</a></p>		<p><b>Los Angeles County East</b>  <a href="#">Antelope Val. Union HSD</a>  <a href="#">Centralia Elem. SD</a>  <a href="#">Charter Oak USD</a>  <a href="#">El Rancho USD</a>  <a href="#">Newhall SD</a>  <a href="#">Pomona USD</a></p>
<p><b>Orange County</b>  <a href="#">Fullerton School District</a>  <a href="#">Garden Grove USD</a>  <a href="#">Newport-Mesa USD</a></p>		<p><b>San Diego County</b>  <a href="#">Escondido USD</a>  <a href="#">Poway USD</a></p>

Further research and networking with knowledgeable teacher organization and school district leaders will disclose additional Teacher Organization-School District Collaborations in California.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson's Transition Advisory Team included a recommendation for support of union-management collaboration in [A Blueprint for Great Schools](#) (August 9, 2011): "Launch an ongoing initiative to support union-management collaboration toward high-leverage reforms in school organization, management, and instructional innovation as well as teacher, classified staff, and administrator development, support, and evaluation." (Page 11)

Superintendent Torlakson's Task Force on Educator Excellence (September 2012) also emphasized "Strengthening Educator Effectiveness through Labor-Management Collaboration" in its report, [Greatness by Design: Supporting Outstanding Teaching to Sustain a Golden State](#), pages 76-79.

## II. Profiles of California Teacher Organization-School District Collaborations

Several of these districts and teacher organizations have been profiled in recent reports and case studies on labor management collaboration in education. These are summarized briefly below with links to additional information.

## IIA. ABC Unified

[ABC Unified School District](#) and [ABC Federation of Teachers](#)

20 miles southeast of Los Angeles, [ABC Unified School District](#) and [ABC Federation of Teachers](#) have built, since 1993, a successful labor-management partnership that has stood the test of time and the changing of both the superintendent and the teacher union president. The district of 20,500 students comprises the cities of Artesia, Cerritos, and Hawaiian Gardens as well as parts of Lakewood, Long Beach, and Norwalk.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has identified the ABC Partnership as a national exemplar and through its AFT Innovation Fund has funded the ABC Partnership to build a regular West Coast labor-management institute to teach union leaders and district administrators how to build effective partnerships.

The ABC partnership is profiled in numerous case studies, including:

- [The ABC's of Partnership: Creating a Labor-Management Partnership Focused on Student Achievement](#), ABC Innovation Fund Council, October, 2012
- [Collaborating on School Reform: Creating Union-Management Partnerships to Improve Public School Systems](#), by Saul Rubinstein, Ph.D. and John McCarthy, 2010
- [From Picket Line to Partnership: A Union, a District, and Their Thriving Schools](#), by Jennifer Dubin, American Teacher, Spring, 2009;
- [Local labor management relationships as a vehicle to advance reform: Findings from the U.S. Department of Education's labor management conference](#), by Eckert, J. (Ed.) et al, 2011, U.S. Department of Education, pages 8-11; and
- [ABC Unified Profile and Video](#), AFT, based on Beach, A. & Kaboolian, L. (2003).
- See [more profiles](#) of the ABC partnership.

## IIB. Poway and San Juan

[Poway Unified School District](#) / [Poway Federation of Teachers](#) and [San Juan Unified School District](#) / [San Juan Teachers Association](#)

Poway (San Diego County) and San Juan (near Sacramento) have both developed and have instituted Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) systems where senior teachers can support new and struggling teachers and evaluate them.

The [Poway Federation of Teachers](#) and the [San Juan Unified School District](#) are both leaders of the [California Teacher Union Reform Network](#) (CalTURN).

The Poway and San Juan partnerships are profiled in [Getting Serious About Teacher Support and Evaluation](#) by Julia Koppich and Daniel Humphrey. Also see: [Getting Serious About Teacher Evaluation](#) (Education Week Commentary, 10/12/11); and "[Framing "Our Message, Our Voice"](#)", presentation by Candy Smiley, President, Poway

Federation of Teachers, and Shannan Brown, President, San Juan Teachers Association, at the CalTURN conference, April 25-26, 2012, in Sacramento.

### **II.C. Lucia Mar Unified**

[Lucia Mar Unified School District](#) / [Lucia Mar Unified Teachers Association](#)

The 10,800-student Lucia Mar school district is located on the Central Coast between San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria, Calif. Ninety percent of students in the district are classified as low-income.

The Lucia Mar Unified Teachers Association and the District partnered in a mutual study and learning process of the [Teacher Advancement Program](#) (TAP) that enabled both parties to fully understand and meet each other's concerns. The result was a negotiated agreement that allowed the district to become the first in California to adopt TAP in seven of its schools and accept a federal \$7 million Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant that will support teacher development and advancement.

The Lucia Mar partnership is profiled in [Union-District Collaboration a Never-Ending Process](#) Education Week, November 15, 2011.

### **IID. Merced City**

[Merced City School District](#) and [Merced/Mariposa Teachers UniServ Council](#)

From the [Partnerships in Education](#) report: "In 2006, new principal Sandi Hamilton brought together the Merced City Teachers Association and the Merced City School District to refocus on reform efforts needed for students to succeed, with the strategy of "meeting students where they're at."

The school began making significant improvements when educators and the administration started collaborating and working together. They advocated for Muir Elementary to receive a seven-year grant from California's Quality Education Investment Act, which gave extra funding to lower-performing schools for staff development and other proven reforms. The school has used the funds for targeted professional development, reducing class sizes, and providing intervention assistance for kids who are struggling."

The Merced City partnership is profiled in [Partnerships in Education: How Labor-Management Collaboration Is Transforming Public Schools](#), American Rights at Work Education Fund, May 2011.

### **III.E. Green Dot Public Schools**

[Green Dot Public Schools](#) and [Asociacion de Maestros Unidos \(AMU\)](#)

Green Dot is a charter management organization (CMO) that currently operates 17 high schools and one middle school in the Los Angeles area, and one in the Bronx (NY) opened in partnership with the United Federation of Teachers in 2008.

Green Dot is unusual among CMOs in California and nationally in supporting unionization of its teaching staff. According to a [profile](#) by the USDOE, “Green Dot’s teachers and management worked with the California Teachers Association to develop a contract for its teaching staff that is aligned with the mission of Green Dot and supports a professional environment for teachers. Green Dot also worked with Randi Weingarten, now president of AFT, and the United Federation of Teachers to create the labor contract for Green Dot New York Charter School. Green Dot offers a collaborative decision-making environment, structured within clear parameters of autonomy and accountability, to support school-site staff in achieving the ambitious promise of college, leadership, and life readiness for all students.”

The Green Dot partnership is profiled at [ED.GOV profile](#); and [Local labor management relationships as a vehicle to advance reform: Findings from the U.S. Department of Education’s labor management conference](#). By Eckert, J. (Ed.) et al. (2011). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, pages 19-22. Also see the Green Dot [District Contract](#) with its CTA local, the [Asociacion de Maestros Unidos \(AMU\)](#).

### **III. Los Angeles**

[Los Angeles Unified School District](#) and the [United Teachers of Los Angeles \(UTLA\)](#)

In December 2011 the [Los Angeles Unified School District \(LAUSD\)](#) and the [United Teachers of Los Angeles \(UTLA\)](#) reached a significant agreement that may be among the most far-reaching in the U.S. The agreement barred charter school and non-district applicants for 3 years from the districts Public School Choice initiative, which puts new school buildings and under-performing schools up for bid. At the same time, the agreement established a process by which teacher and administrator teams can turn any school into a fully autonomous Local Initiative School (LIS). No other US district has gone as far in promoting local school autonomy. (See LAUSD [Local Initiative Schools \(LIS\) web section](#).)

For information on the UTLA-LAUSD local autonomy agreement, see [Text of agreement](#), [Executive summary](#), [Tentative agreement Q&A: School Stabilization and Empowerment Initiative](#), and [Statement of joint interest](#) (UTLA & LAUSD).

Also last month in December, 2012, LAUSD and UTLA reached an agreement on teacher evaluation ([agreement](#), [summary](#)).

### **III. National Exemplars of Teacher Organization-School District Collaboration**

Several national exemplars may also be of interest to California school districts and teacher organizations. Most often cited and profiled are:

- **Springfield, MA** (Springfield Collaboration for Change ([see NEA profile](#)), union leaders on SPS senior leadership team, Budget Advisory Committee, and RTTP Evaluation Subcommittee, Collaboration Schools (Turnarounds). See [District Case Study](#) by Rennie Center.

- **Baltimore, MD** (Professional Growth System -- Career Ladder, Teacher Evaluation, Compensation). See [District Case Study](#).
- **Montgomery County Public Schools, MD** (Interest-Based Bargaining, [Professional Growth Systems](#) -- PAR, PD, Common Protocol for Observation, Joint District Budget Development, [Collaborative Climate Compact](#), [Culture of Respect](#), [Compact of Respect: Make it Real](#), PLCs for every employee. . See [District Case Study](#)
- **Toledo, OH** -- 31 year-old Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program, Career Ladders, Toledo Review and Alternative Compensation System (TRACS), 21st century learning, Turnaround Schools. Key documents provided at conference do not appear to be online, though there have been several profiles and case studies of the Toledo program by third parties. Also see the [TFT's write-up of the Toledo program](#).
- **Cincinnati, OH** (Collaborative Structures for Joint Problem Solving, Teacher Evaluation System). See CPS good news channel at <http://www.iamcps.org/>. . See [District Case Study](#)
- **Rochester, NY** ([Career in Teaching Program](#))
- **Pittsburgh, PA** (2006 Reform Agenda, Pittsburgh Promise - relieves financial barriers to postsecondary education, comprehensive teacher evaluation system (RISE), [Empowering Effective Teachers Plan](#) (\$70 million Gates Foundation Empowering Effective Teachers grant, 5-year Collective Bargaining Agreement (2010)). See [District Case Study](#).
- **Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, TN** (Teacher Leadership Institute, [Effective Teaching System \(ASSET\)](#), Innovation Zone)
- **New Haven, CT** ([School Change Initiative](#), Teacher Evaluation system)
- **Douglas County, CO** (20-year old Pay for Performance initiative, [Continuous Improvement of Teacher Effectiveness](#) (CITE), Redesign of Performance Pay program, [US ED profile](#))
- **Hillsborough County, FL** (\$100 million Gates Foundation Empowering Effective Teachers grant in 2009, employee engagement, performance evaluation based on multiple measures including student learning)

An excellent review of progress made by many of the districts/unions participating in the first US DOE Conference in Denver in February, 2011, was published in May, 2012, by the WestEd School Turnaround Center: [Forward, Together: Better Schools Through Labor-Management Collaboration](#), WestEd, 2012

#### IV. Resources

Some additional reports and resources of interest from California and Massachusetts.

##### California

- [The Politics of Learning 2.0](#) , From Governance to Capacity Building, by Charles Taylor Kerchner, January 2012
- [Promoting Quality Teaching: New Approaches to Compensation and Career Pathways](#), Accomplished California Teachers (ACT)



## Massachusetts

Launched in 2012 as a result of a grant from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the [Massachusetts Education Partnership](#) seeks to improve student achievement and success through collaborative labor-management relations in school districts across the Commonwealth.

- [District Capacity Project](#) (DCP): The purpose of the DCP is to guide and support labor-management teams of superintendents, union presidents, and school committee members, teachers and administrators in collaborating
- [Toward a New Grand Bargain: Collaborative Approaches to Labor-Management Reform in Massachusetts](#), By Barry Bluestone and Thomas A. Kochan, The Boston Foundation, 2011.

## V. Research Next Steps

This preliminary research identifies interested and involved Teacher Organization-School District partners. An important next step would be to validate this information through:

- Networking with teacher organization and superintendent leaders across the state to identify additional involved Teacher Organization-School District partners.
- Holding phone conversations with identified local Teacher Organizations and School Districts to identify and validate local collaboration efforts.
- Making site visits to prospective California exemplars

Following a validation process, an Exploratory Committee for a statewide Teacher Organization-School District Learning Community, may request the following additional research:

- Short profiles of all California Teacher Organization-School District partnerships
- Case studies of exemplar California Teacher Organization-School District partnerships

**Appendix 1: Teacher Organizations and School Districts attending one of the 2011 and 2012 L conferences or mentioned in one of the reports/case studies (Updated January 2**

Chart developed by Bob Pearlman, Senior Consultant, UNITE-LA. Sources: U.S. Department of Education, WestEd, ABC Feder

District	Teachers Union	CTA, CFT	ZIP	Conf1 US ED 2011	Conf2 WestEd 2011	Conf3 ABC 2011	Conf4 CalTURN 2012	Conf5 US ED 2012
<a href="#">ABC USD</a>	<a href="#">ABC Federation of Teachers</a>	CFT	90701	X				
<a href="#">Antelope Val. Union HSD</a>	<a href="#">Antelope Valley Teachers' Assoc.</a>	CTA	93535	*				
<a href="#">Aromas-San Juan USD</a>	Aromas/San Juan Teachers. Assoc.	CTA	95045					X
<a href="#">Centralia Elementary SD</a>	<a href="#">Centralia Educators Association</a>	CTA	90620			X		
<a href="#">Charter Oak USD</a>	Charter Oak Educators Association	CTA	91724		X			
<a href="#">Culver City USD</a>	<a href="#">Culver City Federation of Teachers</a>	CFT	90232					
<a href="#">Cupertino USD</a>	<a href="#">Cupertino Education Association</a>	CTA	95014				X	
<a href="#">El Rancho USD</a>	<a href="#">El Rancho Federation of Teachers</a>	CFT	90660			X		
<a href="#">Elk Grove USD</a>	<a href="#">Elk Grove EA</a>	CTA	95758					
<a href="#">Escondido USD</a>	<a href="#">Escondido Elem. Educators Assoc.</a>	CTA	92029	X				
<a href="#">Fresno USD</a>	<a href="#">Fresno Teachers Association</a>	CTA	93721	X				
<a href="#">Fullerton School District</a>	<a href="#">Fullerton Elementary Teachers Assoc.</a>	CTA	92883			X		
<a href="#">Garden Grove USD</a>	<a href="#">Garden Grove Education Association</a>	CTA	92840		X			
<a href="#">Green Dot Public Schools</a>	<a href="#">Asociacion de Maestros Unidos (AMU)</a>	CTA	90015	X	X**		X	
<a href="#">Horizon Charter Schools</a>	Horizon Charter Educator Association	CTA	95648				X	
<a href="#">Jefferson Union High SD</a>	<a href="#">AFT Local 1481</a>	CFT	94015		X			
<a href="#">Lindsay USD</a>	Lindsay Teachers Association	CTA	93247	X				
<a href="#">Los Angeles USD</a>	<a href="#">UTLA</a>	Joint	90017		X**			
<a href="#">Lucia Mar USD</a>	<a href="#">Lucia Mar Unified Teachers Association</a>	CTA	93420	X				
<a href="#">McFarland USD</a>	McFarland Teachers Association	CTA	93250	*				
<a href="#">Merced City SD</a>	<a href="#">Merced/Mariposa Teach. UniServ Coun.</a>	CTA	95340					
<a href="#">Monterey Peninsula USD</a>	<a href="#">Monterey Bay Teachers Association</a>	CTA	93940	X				
<a href="#">Morgan Hill USD</a>	<a href="#">Morgan Hill Federation of Teachers</a>	CFT	95037			X		
<a href="#">Newhall School District</a>	Newhall Teachers Association	CTA	91355					
<a href="#">Newport-Mesa USD</a>	<a href="#">Newport-Mesa Fed. of Teach., Facebook</a>	CFT	92626			X		
<a href="#">Oxnard Union High SD</a>	<a href="#">Oxnard Fed. of Teachers &amp; School Empl.</a>	CFT	93030			X		
<a href="#">Palo Alto USD</a>	<a href="#">Palo Alto Educators Association</a>	CTA	94306				X	
<a href="#">Pomona USD</a>	<a href="#">Associated Pomona Teachers</a>	CTA	91766	X	X		X	
<a href="#">Poway USD</a>	<a href="#">Poway Federation of Teachers</a>	CFT	92128		X		X	X



District	Teachers Union	CTA, CFT	ZIP	Conf1 US ED 2011	Conf2 WestEd 2011	Conf3 ABC 2011	Conf4 CalTURN 2012	Conf5 US ED 2012
<a href="#">Ravenswood City SD</a>	<a href="#">Ravenswood TA on Facebook</a>	CTA	94303	X				
<a href="#">Sacramento City USD</a>	<a href="#">Sacramento City Teachers Association</a>	CTA	95824					X
<a href="#">Salida USD</a>	Salida Teachers Association	CTA	95368		X			
<a href="#">Salinas Union HSD</a>	<a href="#">Salinas Valley Federation of Teachers</a>	CFT	93901					
<a href="#">San Francisco USD</a>	<a href="#">United Educators of SF</a>	Joint	94102		X			
<a href="#">San Juan USD</a>	<a href="#">San Juan Teachers Association</a>	CTA	95608	X	X		X	X
<a href="#">Santa Monica-Malibu USD</a>	<a href="#">Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom TA</a>	CTA	90404				X	
<a href="#">Stockton USD</a>	<a href="#">Stockton Teachers Association</a>	CTA	95202		X		X	
<a href="#">Twin Rivers USD</a>	<a href="#">Twin Rivers United Educators (TRUE)</a>	CTA	95652	X				
<a href="#">Tracy USD</a>	<a href="#">Tracy EA</a>		95376					

\* Unions/Districts who applied for the USDOE conference but were not lottery selected

\*\* Needs validation

1. [U.S. Department of Education: Advancing Student Achievement Through Labor-Management Collaboration](#), Denver, Colorado, Fe
2. WestEd/TURN: Labor/Management Collaboration: A Conference for California Educators, May 4-5, 2011
3. ABC FT/AFT: West Coast Labor-Management Institute, Cerritos, CA, October, 2011
4. [CalTURN Conference](#), April 25-26, 2012, Sacramento, CA
5. [U.S. Department of Education: Collaborating to Transform the Teaching Profession](#), Cincinnati, Ohio, May 23-24, 2012
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