



NEWS RELEASE

Mandy Denaux
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
213.580.7532
mdenaux@lachamber.com

18 Major Los Angeles Institutions Sign Agreement to Reform Local Public Schools

*Collaborators Cite Need to Better Prepare Students for College and
the 21st Century Global Economy and Workplace*

LOS ANGELES (February 17, 2010) – Today leaders representing 18 major Los Angeles institutions from both the public and private sector signed an unprecedented agreement to reform Los Angeles public schools. The ceremony was held at Miguel Contreras Learning Complex in downtown Los Angeles in the presence of school officials, parents and other community partners.

Called the L.A. Compact, the collaborative agreement includes a number of initiatives focused on boosting high school graduation rates, better preparing students for college, and providing students more opportunities and access to meaningful jobs and careers.

Signers of the L.A. Compact include Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti; Ray Cortines, superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District; Monica Garcia, board president of Los Angeles Unified School District; Gary Toeppen, president and CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce; Elise Buik, president & CEO of the United Way of Greater Los Angeles; Judith Perez, president of the Associated Administrators of Los Angeles; Maria Elena Durazo, executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor/AFL-CIO; and the top officials from 11 colleges and universities in the Los Angeles area.

“The L.A. Compact signifies a major step forward for educational reform in Los Angeles,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell. “Many students throughout the country are simply not prepared for success in the 21st century global economy. We need to find ways to do things differently, collaborate to improve our educational system and capitalize on President Obama’s vision for our public schools.”

The L.A. Compact represents an unprecedented commitment by key Los Angeles institutions, convened by the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, to support significant directional changes that put students first and foremost. The agreement consists of goals, strategies and specific measurements that allow the community at large to track progress and success over time. The L.A. Compact addresses a number of high-profile issues, including further decentralization and more local school site control, increased accountability, leadership development at all levels, and revamping the evaluation process for district, administrator and teachers, among many other items.

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An executive summary and more information about the L.A. Compact and its signatories can be found at www.lacompact.org or by calling the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce at 213.580.7591. Additional statements from L.A. Compact signers can be found below.

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Maria Elena Durazo, Executive Secretary–Treasurer, Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO

“The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor is proud to be a part of this renewed effort to reform our local schools. As a partner in the collaborative, we’ll be working to build up that “worker parent” voice, as well as expand career-based learning and employment opportunities for our students — literally our workforce of tomorrow — wherever we can.”

Ramon Cortines, Superintendent, LAUSD

“This is an historic day for the young people of Los Angeles. The L.A. Compact has been working hard towards outlining a cohesive strategy that will help achieve the goals of graduating all students from high school giving them access and preparing them for success in college and giving them access to sustainable jobs and careers.”

Monica Garcia, Board President, LAUSD

"The L.A. Compact serves as an unprecedented collaboration on the part of the LAUSD, the City of Los Angeles, business and philanthropic communities, unions and institutions of higher learning to create opportunity for all students to receive a quality education. We have already seen some amazing efforts made in the area of advocacy and resources that have had a tremendous impact on LAUSD."

Eric Garcetti, President, Los Angeles City Council

“For our city to succeed, we need our students to succeed. An effective and thriving public school system is crucial to Los Angeles’ future.”

Judy Perez, President, Associated Administrators of Los Angeles

“We recognize that we have a tall task ahead of us, but it’s about collaboration — finding ways to work smarter, and leverage resources and dollars”.

Gene Block, Chancellor, UCLA

“The responsibility to improve our educational system lies with all of us — from the pre-K to the post-secondary level — to ensure that all of our students have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.”

Gary Toebben, President & CEO, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

“It has been our honor and privilege to serve as the convener of the L.A. Compact. As the voice of the business sector, we have a huge self interest in seeing the goals of the L.A. Compact realized. We need to do everything possible to prepare our students for the 21st century workforce and the global economy, and to create meaningful and sustainable careers for our students.”

Elise Buik, President & CEO, United Way of Greater Los Angeles

“Education — a quality education — is one of the biggest gifts we can give students so that they don’t languish in poverty but rather, have an opportunity to build and enjoy a successful life. We fully embrace the goals of the L.A. Compact, and have committed to working with all of our partners to achieve these for our students, their families and their futures.”

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa

"The L.A. Compact puts our students first. The City of Los Angeles — together with the LAUSD, the private sector, labor, and our local institutions of higher learning — is committed to transforming education so all our students are prepared for college, graduate on time, and are ready to compete in the 21st century global job market."