



Business and Education Leaders Unite to Better Prepare Students for College and Careers

*114th Partnership Launches to Spread Proven Business/Education
Collaboration Model to Communities Around the Nation*

WASHINGTON, D.C. December 7, 2011: This week, business, education and foundation leaders united to form the 114th Partnership, an organization that will better prepare our nation’s students for future success by fostering educational cultures of college and career readiness. The 114th Partnership—based on a proven business/ education model used by a top performing school system—will teach communities how to better leverage the strategies from business, the resources from foundations, and the skills and passion from educators to better prepare and inspire students to thrive in college and careers. The 114th Partnership will make this model available to communities nationwide, thanks to the support and talent of its founding corporate partners in Deloitte, Gallup, Kaiser Permanente, Pearson, Sodexo, and UnitedHealthcare. A pilot program is being developed for the San Rafael City Schools in California.

Educators, businesses and foundations across the United States often call upon the Montgomery County, Md. Public Schools (MCPS) system for its “recipe” to student achievement and college readiness. With one of the highest graduation rates in the country, the system’s alumni are well prepared to succeed in college—60 percent graduate college within six years, twice the national average. Over the last decade, the district produced these results while transitioning to a majority minority population with a greater diversity of student needs.

In addition to a strong workforce, MCPS leaders credit the school system’s strategic relationship with its local business community for accelerating its positive results. Through the Montgomery County Business Roundtable for Education (MCBRE), the system’s superintendent and senior leadership team collaborate with local business leaders toward a shared goal of graduating more students who are prepared and inspired to thrive in college and their careers. Treating educators like clients, business leaders use their skill sets to help educators define and solve their toughest challenges— often the same challenges faced in the business community.

“Rather than reaching out to our region’s businesses for dollars, we wanted their brainpower,” said Dr. Jerry D. Weast, MCPS’s recently retired superintendent who led the system for the last 12 years. “While there are many examples of businesses and school systems working together in the United States—most focus on internships, scholarships and guest speakers in the classroom. While those partnerships support students, we leveraged our business community to support the entire school system—as our trusted advisors and mentors.”

With MCBRE’s support, MCPS was the first district in nation to adopt a clear metric to measure graduation success—80 percent of students would graduate college ready by 2014, as measured by SAT, ACT and AP scores. Business and education leaders worked together to outline measureable goals and predictive analytics toward this vision—and mapped a pathway from kindergarten to college. They also collaborated to bring best practices in workforce culture and engagement into the school system—with the idea that the “best places to work” often attract and retain the best talent and become top performing organizations.

The subject of a 2009 Harvard Business School Case Study, MCBRE was profiled as a strategic and innovative business/education partnership model. When several communities expressed interest in starting

similar business/education partnerships, MCBRE launched this national program to help selected communities unite education, philanthropic and business leaders to collaborate toward college and career readiness goals.

“Our children deserve every opportunity to succeed—and our nation’s prosperity depends on it,” said 114th Partnership’s founder Jane Kubasik, who built MCBRE’s model as its previous executive director. “Today’s school systems face challenged budgets, college and career ready expectations, and more diverse student needs—now is the time to ask how we can do things differently. I believe the answer is more strategic and collegial collaboration between business and education.”

The team’s pilot program with San Rafael City Schools is through the support of the Marin Community Foundation. The 114th Partnership has teamed with the Partnership for Deliberate Excellence, recently founded by Dr. Jerry Weast, and other leading education consultants to support the school system’s college and career readiness goals. A business advisory board comprised of organizations with operations in the San Francisco area is also being built to support the school system. The 114th Partnership plans to work with three communities during its first year and up to ten communities over the first three years.

An increased focus on college and career readiness is needed in the United States. By 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates 30 million new or replacement jobs will require post-secondary education. At current rates, only 11 million of 49 million current public school students will be college ready. And many of today’s jobs also require additional training. “More than sixty percent of jobs require a least some post secondary education or training and only a third of people who don’t get beyond high school will get jobs that pay more than \$35K a year,” said Dr. Anthony Carnevale, director of Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce.

The 114th Partnership launch was marked yesterday with a panel discussion on strategic collaboration as a solution toward college and career readiness goals; the event was hosted at Gallup’s headquarters in Washington D.C. Moderated by Dr. John H. Jackson, president and CEO of the Schott Foundation for Public Education, the panel included Jane Kubasik, founder of the 114th Partnership; Dr. Jerry Weast, founder of the Partnership for Deliberate Excellence and former MCPS superintendent; Dr. Anthony Carnevale, director of Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce; Kevin Ruth, a senior vice president for UnitedHealthcare; and Bonnie Cullison, an education consultant with the NEA Foundation, member of the Maryland House of Delegates, and former leader of the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA).

The Partnership is named for the 114th meridian, the point where the Great Continental Divide starts in the United States. The organization creates a place where business, education and foundations can come together, set aside differences, and focus on bridging the ‘great divides’ in education: between college ready and not ready; between the classroom and the real world; between business and education. Because when this happens, students are better prepared and more inspired to thrive in college and in their careers. The 114th Partnership is a national program within the Montgomery County Business Roundtable for Education (MCBRE), a 501(c)(3) organization.

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For more information, please visit www.114th.org.

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