



Executive Summary

2010 Education Initiative: Destination Graduation

GOAL: The goal of **Destination Graduation** is to graduate 100% of at-risk high school seniors who are four-year college eligible with a clear career path plan.

THE NEED: Compared with others, high school dropouts are less likely to earn a living wage, volunteer, and vote. At the same time, they are more likely to be unemployed, receive welfare, contribute to high health care costs, perpetuate crimes and end up in jail. On average, each high school dropout costs the public sector \$209,000 in a lifetime, in reduced tax payments and increases in public health, crime and welfare costs¹.

Although Orange County has a comparatively low dropout rate compared to California and the United States, the 2009 Conditions of Children report shows that in 2007/08 the four year derived high school dropout rate in Orange County was 9.5%. This translates to almost 16,000 youth dropping out of high school over a four year period of time, with Hispanics accounting for the highest number of drop outs at 62%, followed by Whites at 22%. If you multiply this by the average amount of \$209,000 that each high school dropout costs the public sector in a lifetime that amounts to a steep cost of **over \$3 billion**. Additionally, among all dropouts, Hispanic and White students were the two largest groups (63% and 24% respectfully). On average, 80% of students participating in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program are Latino, first in their family to consider higher education, socioeconomically disadvantaged and receiving free and reduced lunches.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: *Destination Graduation* will be implemented in partnership with the Orange County Department of Education, AVID, Kuder, Vital Link, Road Trip Nation, and the Latino Educational Attainment Program.

AVID: The cornerstone of *Destination Graduation* is the nationally and internationally acclaimed **Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) college readiness system**. AVID is an in-school elective class program that targets students in the academic middle - B, C, and even D students - who have the desire to go to college and the willingness to work hard.

During its first year, *Destination Graduation* will work directly with **10 schools in the Anaheim, Huntington Beach, San Juan Capistrano and Santa Ana unified school districts** accessing a minimum of **1,600 academically at-risk students** enrolled in the AVID program. OCUW's initial outreach will support 59 AVID classrooms with enhanced teacher trainings, academic curriculum and career exploration opportunities with the long term goal of creating a relevant and impactful learning environment to inspire and prepare students for future success. **Our goal is to have all 1,600 at-risk AVID students graduate high school on time and be college eligible and aware of career opportunities and implement the AVID strategies throughout each school ("AVIDizing").**

¹ Levin, Henry, Clive Belfield, Peter Muennig, and Cecilia Rouse. *The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America's Children*. New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, 2007.
www.cbcse.org/media/download_gallery/Leeds_Report_Final_Jan2007.pdf

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The 10 schools chosen as partners in this effort are:

1. Cypress (Anaheim Union)
2. Katella HS (Anaheim Union)
3. Savanna HS (Anaheim Union)
4. Capistrano Valley HS (Capistrano)
5. Dana Hills HS (Capistrano)
6. Huntington Beach HS (Huntington Beach)
7. Westminster HS (Huntington Beach)
8. Godinez Fundamental HS (Santa Ana)
9. Middle College HS (Santa Ana)
10. Segerstrom HS (Santa Ana)

In addition to enhanced AVID curriculum, students and teachers will also be engaged in the following academic and career exploration programs including: the **Kuder** career awareness and exploration assessment, **Vital Link Career Exploration field trips**, and the **Road Trip Nation** curriculum. These strategies will foster education engagement – **in which students understand the connection between the classes they take and their college and career interests.**

Additional School Enhancements

- **Kuder Career Planning System**- The Kuder on-line career skill assessment and planning system allows students to identify their career interests and skills, explore their options, and plan for career success.
- **Vital Link** – This program will provide exposure to real life applications of the mathematics and science curriculum via events, field trips, and presentations that “create the link between business and education to prepare students for the successful transition to meaningful employment.” In addition, OCUW will commission unique mobile career exploration exhibits that will be brought to the 10 partner schools to be shared with AVID students and the entire student populations.
- **Roadtrip Nation Experience (RTN)** – The RTN curriculum is designed to bring relevancy and real-life experiences into the classroom through twenty-five lessons that encourage students to define their own roads in life through a series of self construction and reflection activities, including going out 'on the road' to interview leaders within their own communities.
- **Latino Educational Attainment Program** – The LEA Program addresses the important role that parents and families play in the success of the students’ academic life. Materials in four languages developed help all parents navigate the education system and advocate for their children’s educational success.



Orange County United Way

Orange County United Way
18012 Mitchell Avenue South
Irvine, CA 92614
949.660.7600
www.unitedwayoc.org