

Convening on College and Career Readiness

March 24-25, 2019



Convening on College and Career Readiness



On March 24-25, 2019, K-12 and postsecondary education leaders from across the United States gathered in Washington, D.C., to participate in a two-day convening focused on improving college and career readiness for all students. The latest in an ongoing series of meetings hosted by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and AASA, The School Superintendents Association, the convening brought together community college presidents, school district superintendents, executive leadership from both associations, and partners in the education field. Participants discussed challenges, effective strategies, pioneering initiatives, and promising practices for ensuring that all students have equitable access to opportunities and pathways that put college and career success within reach.

This meeting summary provides an overview of the conversations, recounts the presentations and information shared by convening participants, and highlights the key takeaways derived from the insightful discussions that took place throughout the meeting.





Walter G. Bumphus, president and CEO of AACC, and Dan Domenech, executive director of AASA, opened the convening by describing the progress that the education field has made in terms of increasing dialogue and collaboration between the K-12 and postsecondary systems. In the five years since AACC and AASA began holding these joint convenings, the increasing integration of K-12 schools and districts and community colleges has, in some cases, come to more closely resemble an integrated K-14 system than two separate systems with distinct priorities.

It is essential to find scalable ways to systematically support student success in school, college, and life, as well as provide equitable access to opportunities by removing barriers and addressing the diverse needs of all students.

To frame the forthcoming conversations, Bumphus and Domenech asked participants to focus on finding scalable ways to systematically support student success in school, college, and life, as well as provide equitable access to opportunities by removing barriers and addressing the diverse needs of all students.



Following these opening comments, and a round of participant introductions, Domenech offered association updates with regard to AASA's ongoing efforts and priorities. He noted that AASA is increasingly focused on a balanced approach to college and career readiness. In recent years, college readiness has been prioritized and career readiness has taken a back seat. Domenech noted that K-12 schools have an opportunity to show students and families the full spectrum of options available to them during and after high school. As part of this effort, Domenech highlighted the importance of career and technical education and enabling a cultural shift that helps the mainstream embrace it—in Europe, Domenech pointed out, two-thirds of students go into career and technical education—rather than regarding it as a less-desirable option. For AASA, this is about eliminating barriers and creating new pathways; as Domenech put it, it is vital that “we honor the plumber like we honor the Ph.D.”

Highlighting AACC's updates and priorities, Bumphus reminded participants that AACC will celebrate its 100th anniversary in April 2020. The association continues to be engaged in ongoing work to ensure that more graduates have access to educational and professional opportunities that enable them to earn a family-sustaining wage.

To this end, one of the most transformational interventions he has seen in 30 years has been AACC's Pathways Project, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Bumphus likened the model to a GPS system to chart student progress and help them follow an efficient path to college completion. Currently 200 community colleges participate in the project and there are ongoing talks to scale up to 500 institutions.

Additionally, AACC recently announced a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor to advance the Expanding Community College Apprenticeships initiative and to launch the Virtual Apprenticeship Network, a \$20 million initiative to create 16,000 new apprenticeships nationwide.

The first day of the convening also featured two inspiring presentations on how K-12 districts are partnering with local higher education institutions to reduce equity gaps, increase opportunity,

and improve graduation rates. Betsy Webb, superintendent of schools at the Bangor School Department and Lisa Larson, president of Eastern Maine Community College, provided a detailed look at how their institutions are working to provide targeted programs that lead to increased student success. They highlighted the importance of providing as much support as possible for students while also addressing barriers to access and success, an approach Webb described as building "a lot of ladders but no chutes." They also discussed providing multiple programs that serve different student needs and aspirations—including those of non-traditional students, such as formerly incarcerated individuals, adult learners, and other underserved populations—and working to reduce the need for remedial or developmental coursework.

BANGOR, MAINE:

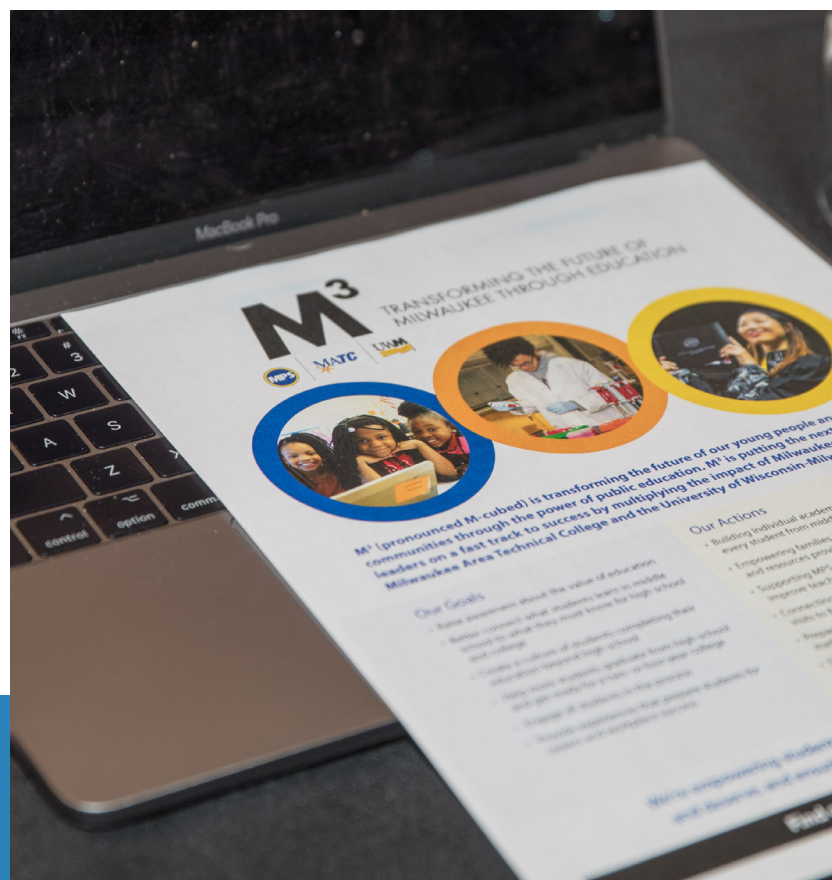
Effective Strategies for Reducing Equity Gaps

Targeting local needs and addressing place-specific challenges adds significant value. The Bangor Schools Department and Eastern Maine Community College are partnering to address critical workforce shortages and reduce the workforce skills gap, help more adults and high school graduates earn a credential of value, and to address an exodus of working-age men (25-54) from the workforce.

Providing numerous and varied pathways for student success is key. Eastern Maine Community College prioritizes pathways that engage students in high school, provide clear steps for progression, and document skill and knowledge acquisition. These include the Embark program, Bridge Year Academy, United Technologies Center pathways, math and English pathways at area high schools, a badging initiative, and a student signing day.

Providing portable and reliable documentation of student learning, through badging and by tracking smaller bundles of learning, increases students' options and improves student retention and facilitates progress along the high school-postsecondary continuum.

Subsequently, Vicki Martin, president of Milwaukee Area Technical College; Keith Posley, superintendent of Milwaukee Public Schools; and Phyllis King, vice provost of University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, discussed their M³ Initiative. In describing the success of the M³ initiative, the presenters highlighted the importance of family and community engagement to educate them about the plurality of dual enrollment and postsecondary options available to students in Milwaukee. They also highlighted the value of building robust leadership teams and structures aligned to initiative goals, and how personalized guidance (by coaches or navigators) is critical to helping students and families make the decisions about their education that best suit their needs and aspirations.



SPOTLIGHT:

M³ Initiative in Milwaukee, WI

M³ is a collaboration among Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee that was founded in 2014 with a vision to transform greater Milwaukee by increasing college retention, graduation, career success, and the strength of the local economy. The initiative began as a program at a single Milwaukee high school and has quickly scaled up to have a much broader citywide footprint. It provides a true, easily visible K-16 pathway and is now supported by internal leadership of more than 150 individuals from across the three institutions. The M³ Initiative has five interrelated goals:

1. **Raise aspirations, college readiness, and student success**
2. **Educate families about the value of postsecondary learning**
3. **Align curriculum and services from middle school to postsecondary education**
4. **Create and cultivate a culture of learning that expects continued education after high school**
5. **Engage student voices, create safe spaces, and commit to equity and inclusion**

A leadership team, with members from each institution, is assigned to each of the five goals.

Thanks to the core partnership that sustains it and its early successes, the initiative is increasingly attractive to external funders. To date, M³ has received more than \$1 million in external funding to support different aspects of its work, including expansion of the Milwaukee Parent Institute, development of a dual enrollment course, and summer math preparation programming.

The second day of the convening began with a review of the conversations from the previous day, followed by dialogue with Dr. Casey Sacks, deputy assistant secretary for community colleges at the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). Sacks described OCTAE's ongoing work, now the Perkins Act has been reauthorized, to help states rethink how they write their Perkins plans using local needs assessments to inform decisions about how to apportion funds. The conversation also highlighted new aspects of the Perkins Act—including changes to data collection, the Second Chance Pell Pilot, and the Ability to Benefit program for individuals who do not have a high school diploma to access federal financial aid—as well as updates on conversations regarding the status of reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.



AACC INITIATIVE:

Virtual Apprenticeship Network

Jennifer Worth, senior vice president for workforce and economic development at AACC, provided an in-depth account of AACC's work with the Department of Labor to launch the \$20 million Virtual Apprenticeship Network (VAN) initiative, as well as the key components of the initiative. Worth noted that the VAN initiative will reshape the conversation about apprenticeships in the U.S.—compared to international peers, the U.S. does not have a robust apprenticeship model—to transform apprenticeships into a high-value talent pipeline. The ambitious goal of the VAN initiative is to create 16,000 new registered apprenticeships. This will be accomplished by identifying and promoting effective apprenticeship models and work-based learning programs, as well as by funding 80 community colleges that demonstrate the capacity to quickly expand local partnerships to establish apprenticeships. These programs will account for 12,000 apprenticeships in three years. Additionally, the initiative will work with four prominent global companies and their local community colleges to develop need-specific programs, with each committed to training 1,000 apprentices within three years.

Partnerships for Workforce Development and Community Engagement

Following the AACC presentation on the VAN initiative, Traci Davis, superintendent of Washoe County School District, and Karin Hilgerson, president of Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), shared how their partnership is building and strengthening pathways for students to get good jobs in their Northern Nevada community. After describing some of the most salient achievement and equity gaps that the district and community college have been working to reduce, the presenters focused on the importance of providing—and educating students and families about—relevant educational opportunities spanning high school and college that enable students to benefit from the workforce opportunities in their community.

A key aspect of the partnership’s efforts has been to work with the manufacturing sector in the region to establish new apprenticeships. TMCC is a registered apprenticeship provider and has been able to expand the number of available apprenticeships in the region from 50 to 550, all while serving a very diverse group of apprentices. A wide range of companies work with TMCC to provide these

apprenticeships, and many guarantee jobs to students who have completed and documented a specified menu of competencies. Additionally, TMCC recently approved a new bachelor’s degree program in advanced manufacturing.

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PARTNERSHIP SUCCESSES

Davis and Hilgerson noted that an emphasis on project-based learning and a range of career and technical education opportunities have been essential to the success of their partnership and have enabled students to enter high-demand middle skill jobs with companies, like Tesla and Panasonic, located in the region.
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Chad Knights, provost for information and engineering technologies at Northern Virginia Community College, and Josh Labrie, SySTEMic director at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), presented an overview of Northern Virginia Community College’s STEM Outreach Program, focusing on the STEM camps and competitions that the program operates in the region. As part of a sustainable investment in regional workforce development to support the technology industry (as well as related industries), NOVA works with eight partner districts to provide STEM summer



camps for elementary, middle, and high school students. NOVA sees these camps as mutually beneficial for students, districts, and the NOVA community colleges alike. For students and families, the camps provide exploratory skill development in a low-risk and low-cost format; for districts, they provide additional learning opportunities, built-in professional development for educators, and a bridge to technical education; and, for community colleges, the camps engage the community and the school districts and offer an opportunity to showcase workforce partnerships. Additionally, the STEM competitions that NOVA facilitates help to establish the infrastructure—similar to regional athletics leagues—that enables school robotics teams to compete regularly.

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GROWING REGIONAL STEM INTEREST

NOVA infrastructure is enabling robotics competitions—and, thereby, STEM interest and activities—to grow quickly in the region. In 2010, NOVA had only eight event partners; by 2018, it had 30. This scale enables NOVA to reach more students and schools in its service area; 70 percent of competing teams in Virginia are from the NOVA service area.

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Next, participants from Kern County, California, described their collaborative efforts to expand dual enrollment and postsecondary opportunities for students in their community. Romeo Agbalog, trustee of Kern Community College District; Jean Fuller, retired California State Senator and Early College Program lead at Bakersfield College; and Aaron Resendez, superintendent of McFarland Unified School District, highlighted the challenges that students in their mostly rural communities face in accessing educational and workforce opportunities. Among the key ideas their presentation highlighted was, in the absence of a wide spectrum of opportunities, the importance of ensuring that students in their community take advantage of those opportunities they do have. In MacFarland, this manifests as a “hard rail” approach; the school district and the community college vigorously enforce an early college model.

THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Expanding Pathways and Opportunities in Kern County, CA

The “cylinder rather than funnel” approach to early college access has earned the MacFarland High School the reputation among students and families in the community as the “college high school.” Students understand that they will be pushed and supported to meet high expectations.

High expectations and the “hard rail” approach results in all students, regardless of their post-high school ambitions, earning at least a minimum number of college credits by the time they graduate high school.

Essential to this approach is an emphasis on guided pathways and providing school counselors with the necessary professional development—regarding, for example, college readiness and the FAFSA—to enable them to effectively advise students regarding their early college pathways, dual enrollment, and subsequent postsecondary options.



In closing, Walter Bumphus and Dan Domenech emphasized the value of the partnerships and programs that had been highlighted during the two days of the convening, noting that they are an important marker of the progress and collaboration taking place at the intersection of the K-12 and postsecondary systems. They reminded those gathered in the room that, when it comes to college readiness, the question is not restricted to whether or not students are ready. That question can and should be inverted to ask whether colleges are ready for students and able to support their learning needs as best they can. This is about meeting students where they are and being serious about the idea that, to educate the 60 percent of students who are not sufficiently served by our education system, it is essential that we remove as many barriers to success as we can.



Convening on College and Career Readiness

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Sunday, March 24

2:00 PM – 2:10 PM

Welcome

Walter G. Bumphus, President and CEO, AACC

Dan Domenech, Executive Director, AASA

2:10 PM – 2:20 PM

Charge for the Day

Facilitator **Kris Kurtenbach**, Founding
Partner, Collaborative Communications

2:20 PM – 2:30 PM

Introduction of Participants

2:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Association Updates

Walter G. Bumphus, President and CEO, AACC

Dan Domenech, Executive Director, AASA

3:00 PM – 3:50 PM

Reducing Equity Gaps to Improve College Readiness

Betsy Webb, Superintendent of Schools,
Bangor School Department (ME)

Lisa Larson, President, Eastern Maine
Community College (ME)

3:50 PM – 4:00 PM BREAK

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Increasing Graduation Rates through the M3 Initiative

Vicki Martin, President, Milwaukee
Area Technical College (WI)

Keith Posley, Superintendent,
Milwaukee Public Schools (WI)

Phyllis King, Vice Provost, University
of Wisconsin – Milwaukee (W)

6:30 PM

Group Dinner

Monday, March 25

7:45 AM – 8:45 AM

Breakfast

8:45 AM – 9:00 AM

Review of Day 1

Facilitator **Kris Kurtenbach** Founding
Partner, Collaborative Communications

9:00 AM – 9:40 AM

Dialogue with U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE)

Casey Sacks, Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Community Colleges (DC)

9:40 AM – 10:15 AM

The Virtual Apprenticeship Network (VAN)

Jennifer Worth, Senior Vice President for Workforce
& Economic Development, AACC (DC)

10:15 AM – 10:30 AM BREAK

10:30 AM – 11:10 AM

Pathways to Jobs in the Community

Traci Davis, Superintendent, Washoe
County School District (NV)

Karin Hilgersen, President, Truckee
Meadow Community College (NV)

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM

Developing a Pipeline from Elementary School to Career: Building the STEM workforce of the future

Chad Knights, Provost for Information & Engineering
Technologies, Northern Virginia Community College (VA)

Josh Labrie, NOVA SySTEMic Director,
Northern Virginia Community College (VA)

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM BUFFET LUNCH

1:00 PM – 1:50 PM

Expanding Dual Enrollment

Sonya Christian, President, Bakersfield College (CA)

Aaron Resendez, Superintendent,
McFarland Unified School District (CA)

1:50 PM – 2:30 PM

Closing Comments & Parting Charge

Walter G. Bumphus, President and CEO, AACC

Dan Domenech, Executive Director, AASA

Facilitator **Kris Kurtenbach**, Founding
Partner, Collaborative Communications

APPENDIX B
**Convening
Participants**

Name	Title	Institution	State
Romeo Agbalog	Trustee	Kern Community College District	CA
Sean Alford	Superintendent	Aiken County Public School	SC
Erin Berg	Community College Specialist	OCTAE	DC
Marla Bronaugh	Chief Communications & School Performance Officer	Milwaukee Public Schools	WI
Walter Bumphus	President & CEO	AACC	DC
Sonya Christian	President	Bakersfield College	CA
Traci Davis	Superintendent	Washoe County School District	NV
Dan Domenech	Executive Director	AASA	DC
Russell Dyer	Superintendent	Cleveland City School District	TN
Jean Fuller	Retired CA State Senator/ Early College Program Lead	Bakersfield College	CA
Janet Godwin	Board President	Iowa City Community School District	IA
Karin Hilgersen	President	Truckee Meadow Community College	NV
Ann Johnson	VP of Student Success	Lone Star College - Tomball	TX
Carol Kelley	Superintendent	Oak Park Elementary District 97	IL
Jennifer Kelsall	Superintendent	Ridgewood High School District 234	IL
Deborah Kerr	District Administrator	Brown Deer School District	WI
Phyllis King	Vice Provost	University of Wisconsin Milwaukee	WI
Chad Knights	Provost, Information & Engineering Technology	Northern Virginia Community College	VA
Kris Kurtenbach	Facilitator/Founding Partner	Collaborative Communications	DC
Josh Labrie	NOVA SySTEMic Director	Northern Virginia Community College	VA
Lisa Larson	President	Eastern Maine Community College	ME
Albert Lewis, Jr.	VP of Economic & Workforce Development	Bellevue College	WA
JaNice Marshall	VP, College Pathway Programs & Community College Connections	Cuyahoga Community College	OH
Vicki Martin	President	Milwaukee Area Technical College	WI
Jimmy Minichello	Director, Communications & Marketing	AASA	VA

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Participants**

Name	Title	Institution	State
Stephen Murley	Superintendent of Schools	Iowa City Community School District	IA
Richard Pettey	Sr. Advisor to the Assistant Secretary	OCTAE	DC
Keith Posley	Superintendent	Milwaukee Public Schools	WI
Ken Ray, Jr.	VP of Student Services & Enrollment Management	Hillsborough Community College	FL
Tammy Reichelt	Director of Professional Development & Student Success Strategies	AACC	DC
Aaron Resendez	Superintendent	McFarland Unified School District	CA
Casey Sacks	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Community Colleges	OCTAE	DC
Robin Utz	Branch Chief, College & Career Transitions	DATE	DC
Frances Villagran-Glover	VP of Student Services	Northern Virginia Community College	VA
Betsy Webb	Superintendent of Schools	Bangor School Department	ME
Andrew Wise	Superintendent	Olympia School District 16	IL
Jennifer Worth	SVP, Workforce & Economic Development	AACC	DC

About the Convening

The spring 2019 Convening on College and Career Readiness continued an ongoing series of meetings hosted by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and AASA, The School Superintendents Association (AASA). These meetings bring together leaders from across the country to facilitate focused dialogue about fortifying and expanding partnerships and collaboration between the secondary and postsecondary education systems that lead to improved college readiness, access, and success for all students.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS



American Association of Community Colleges

As the voice of the nation's community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) delivers educational and economic opportunity for more than 12 million diverse students in search of the American Dream. Uniquely dedicated to access and success for all students, AACC's member colleges provide an on-ramp to degree attainment, skilled careers and family-supporting wages. Located in Washington, D.C., AACC advocates for these not-for-profit, public-serving institutions to ensure they have the resources and support they need to deliver on the mission of increasing economic mobility for all.

For more information about AACC visit: www.aacc.nche.edu.



AASA, The School Superintendents Association

Founded in 1865, AASA is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders in the United States and throughout the world. AASA's mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children.

For more information about AASA, visit: www.aasa.org