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EDUCATION SERIES 2024



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Newsweek

How KCKCC is Revolutionizing Education, Community Wellness and Prosperity in Kansas City

Kansas City stands on the brink of a transformative era. Under the leadership of Dr. Greg Mosier, President of Kansas City Kansas Community College (KCKCC), a trio of groundbreaking projects are redefining the region's educational and community landscape.

The Downtown Project

 This \$71 million initiative, in collaboration with Swope Health and Community America Credit Union represents the largest economic investment in downtown KCK east of I-635 in over three decades. The project, a four-story 92,000 square-foot **KCK Community Education, Health and Wellness Center**, is poised to become a student and community hub of opportunity and growth.

Located at the corner of 7th Street and State Avenue, this center will integrate multiple public resources under one roof, making it a unique model for community development. The first floor will include KCKCC's Welcome Center, a One-Stop Shop for student services and advising, community meeting rooms, and a beautiful professional art gallery. KCKCC will have a wide range of specialized classrooms and labs on the second and third floors of the partner building as well. Also on the first floor, CommunityAmerica Credit Union will open its first community access center in Kansas, offering financial literacy and financial health management services, as well as finance, investing and small business loan educational courses.

The top floor will house a new medical clinic operated by Swope Health, offering comprehensive medical services including medical, dental, vision, and behavioral healthcare. These collective services under one roof will be transformational for the downtown urban core, serving as a dynamic community hub that addresses holistic community needs.

Elements from the historic Seventh Street Methodist Episcopal Church will also be repurposed in the new building, including the pews, stained glass, foundation stones, and red bricks from the late 1800s.

Dr. Mosier pointed out the distinctiveness of this public/private venture: *"This facility will be one of a kind,"* he said. *"There's nothing like it in the nation where a community college has partnered with other private industry, to create a holistic solution for such a socio-economically depressed area. This facility is purposefully located right in the heart of the urban core."*

With demolition of the blighted buildings on this block making way for new beginnings, the project is on track for vertical construction in the spring. The goal is to open the center by the spring 2026 semester.

Centennial Hall Student Housing Project

The fall 2022 ribbon cutting for **Centennial Hall**, the college's new state-of-the-art, 260-bed residence hall, launched KCKCC's centennial celebration. This initiative aims to directly address a critical issue: housing insecurity.



Dr. Greg Mosier

President, Kansas City Kansas Community College

Not only is Centennial Hall beautiful, it's also a game-changer in the college's landscape, providing more than just a place to sleep. With a secure roof over their heads, multiple community gathering spaces, and incredible amenities, students can focus on their studies and personal/professional development.

"Previously leasing buildings from a neighboring apartment complex, Centennial Hall was built to provide our students a better and more complete living & learning environment," said Dr. Greg Mosier.

The significance of Centennial Hall extends beyond its walls. By tackling housing insecurity, KCKCC removes a formidable barrier to education. This is especially impactful in an urban environment such as Kansas City, where housing security can be a lifeline for many aspiring students.

With this new facility, KCKCC further participates in the transformation of the community, paving the way for a more educated and equitable future.

New Leavenworth County Site

Lastly, the new **Leavenworth County Site** will represent KCKCC's proactive approach to educational leadership and community engagement.

As Wyandotte County continues to grow, with tremendous capital investment being made by business and industry on available land and building facilities, new growth will expand into Leavenworth County. KCKCC's new state-of-the-art educational site to be built in Leavenworth County is being designed to meet the burgeoning academic and technical education needs of businesses and families moving into the area.

Situated west of Wyandotte County, Leavenworth County is ideally located to serve not only the existing community but also the influx of residents and businesses expected in the coming years. Moreover, KCKCC's new site is poised to become a significant player in the region's economic and social fabric.

By providing educational resources and skill training aligned with the workforce demands of the future, this expansion will play a critical role in shaping the economic landscape of the area. It's a clear indication of KCKCC's dedication to fostering not only individual growth but also the overall success of the communities it serves.

Maximizing Returns for Students and Taxpayers

A closer look at KCKCC's investment analysis reveals a broader positive impact on student success and economic growth.

For 2022, KCKCC students who invested \$8 million in tuition, fees, supplies, and interest on student loans while forgoing \$16.4 million in wages, stand to gain significantly from their education. The cumulative present value of their increased earnings over their working lives is estimated at a staggering \$313 million.

This equates to a return of \$12.80 in higher future earnings for every dollar invested in their education, with an impressive average annual rate of return of 32.7%. From the taxpayer's perspective, the investment is equally fruitful: The \$65.7 million funding provided to KCKCC translates into \$84.1 million in added tax revenue due to students' higher lifetime earnings.

The ROI also includes increased property tax revenue and business output amounting to \$79.3 million, alongside a \$4.7 million reduction in demand for government-funded services in Kansas. In 2022 alone, Kansas' total investment in KCKCC of \$115.5 million in education returned \$764.9 million in new income, supporting 11,633 jobs in the region.

These results reflect the college's deep commitment to community empowerment and economic development. By investing in these projects, KCKCC is creating life-changing opportunities for a higher educated, socio-economically advanced, and vibrant Kansas City.



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FOR EMPLOYABILITY
Worldwide
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Reconized as a
TRANSFORMING
Institution by the
Positive Impact Rating

BUSINESS
FOR A
BETTER
WORLD

 **COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



Making an Impact with Colorado State University College of Business

Creating business for a better world

Dr. Beth Walker | College Dean, College of Business Colorado State University

In 2019, Colorado State University College of Business embarked on a transformative journey, committing to a vision that would set it apart in the world of business education. The result? Business for a Better World – a mission deeply embedded in every facet of the institution, from research to curriculum, student engagement and community partnerships.

This commitment is not just a slogan; it's a strategic plan that has redefined the college's identity. Through a funding initiative called "Budgeting for Strategic Outcomes," the college has successfully fueled ideas with funding that aligns with its vision.

Central to their achievements is the Impact MBA program, a unique and purpose-driven full-time MBA experience attracting students passionate about using business to address pressing global challenges. "This program has produced graduates who are making meaningful contributions to the workforce and to our world," says College Dean Beth Walker. "They're tackling issues such as food insecurity, climate change and much more."

The college's commitment to innovation extends to its online programs, where the use of cutting-edge technology like "Mosaic" creates a dynamic and inclusive community-oriented learning environment. With a focus on inclusion, the college has diversified its student body and often has over 90 percent of its graduates secure job offers within 90 days of completing their studies.

Facing demographic challenges, the college proactively collaborates with companies and two-year institutions to create pathways for students to see the value of a Colorado State University education. This forward-thinking approach includes the development of Innovation Allie, a living and learning concept fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, set to be completed by fall 2027.

In an arena where business schools often share similar missions, the Colorado State University College of Business stands out as a remarkably forward-thinking faculty. With programs like Impact MBA and the renowned Online MBA program, if you're looking for a business education that transcends traditional boundaries, this is a great place to begin your journey.



CK-12's Flexi—A Personal Tutor for Every Student

Debunking one-size-fits-all curricula

Dr. Beth Walker | College Dean, College of Business Colorado State University



Neeru Khosla, a molecular biologist and successful CEO, always credits her education for helping her achieve her dreams. Coming from a modest background, she has tirelessly worked for the cause of education so that every child gets the opportunity to participate in the global economy.

After heading the education committee of The Nueva School, where her four kids went, Neeru returned to Stanford University for her master's in education. With years of experience in the academic world and a passion for improving education for all, she co-founded CK-12 Foundation in 2008.

CK-12 provides high-quality math and science full curricula for K-12, a digital teacher assistant for every instructor and a digital tutor for every student. All powered by AI, all for free!

High-quality math and science full curricula for K-12

"The whole idea was to create an online portal where kids will want to learn and get feedback on how they're doing and what they need to do next," says Neeru, CEO of CK-12 Foundation.

CK-12's ground-up digital curriculum offers courses that house multimodal content, from simulations and modeling to formative assessments, flashcards and study guides. Written by CK-12's domain experts, the courses are highly engaging and promote active learning with immediate feedback.

A digital teacher assistant for every instructor

"We have to break out of standardized education and give our children skills to help humanity," Neeru says. "We need to go beyond the grade book, which only tells teachers what happened but not why it happened." To achieve this, CK-12's teacher assistant uses predictive AI to save instructors time and provide them with actionable insights.

A digital tutor for every student

CK-12's AI Tutor Flexi (Flexi.org), meanwhile, replicates almost every aspect of 1:1 human tutoring at scale—the form of equity Neeru always wanted to deliver. "Having already tutored over 1.3 million students in eight months, Flexi meets where the student is, personalizing instruction for each of them to motivate and prepare them for the success they deserve. CK-12 has served more than 265 million users worldwide and counting! Join me in creating a better tomorrow for every student!"



LAUREL SPRINGS SCHOOL

Fully accredited, online, private education for K-12

Where the world is your classroom and your passions pave your path.

"I DIDN'T FIT LAUREL SPRINGS, LAUREL SPRINGS FIT ME." 2024 Graduate



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS



Dr. Mikhail Brodsky
President
Lincoln University

At Lincoln University, our MBA program costs just \$20,000, offering an affordable but equally high-quality alternative to California's more well-known institutions. With our goal to empower future business managers, we teach them the practical skills they need to succeed. We teach business as science where money is the measure of success.



Denise LeDuc Froemming
President & CEO
CalCPA

Being involved in CalCPA means actively contributing to the evolving arena of accounting. The organization's commitment to education and forward-thinking initiatives, like the Community College to CPA program, ensure a relevant and flexible CPA pathway for everyone.



Cyndi Court
CEO
TGR Foundation

We empower young people from under-resourced communities to pursue their passions through education. Our TGR Learning Labs are safe and inspiring spaces where students can explore ideas, learn skills without fear of failure and plan their future. We're expanding into new communities and welcome partners to help more students maximize their potential.



Dr. Aileen Hawkins
President
Laurel Springs School

Our institution is known in Switzerland and the world for developing hands-on skills among students. They are not only academically trained but are really ready to work even before they graduate as they have already accumulated a lot of job experience while studying. This is something other institutions do not have.



UNLV

UNLV offers students unique environment for personal and academic growth

Nevada's leading research university proudly lists numerous accomplishments that are making a global impact.

Dr. Keith E. Whitfield | President, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Dr. Keith E. Whitfield, president of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), meant every word when he said the university is truly a special place.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has bestowed upon the university the highest national honors for both research and community engagement. This public urban research institution is also among the only two universities nationwide with several scientists involved in the NASA Mars project. UNLV provides 76 undergraduate majors and over 175 graduate degrees and certificate programs, featuring highly esteemed programs in law, engineering, hospitality and health care. Additionally, the university shows a sincere dedication to the future economic prosperity of its students.

"Our mission is to be a world-class research university that provides students with limitless opportunities while connecting with communities and the world," says Dr. Whitfield, a distinguished administrator and researcher who assumed the role of president at UNLV in August 2020. "UNLV mixes excitement with education, research and experiences. It's a wonderful combination of all of those things that makes our university a unique place."

Situated in the vibrant and entrepreneurial city of Las Vegas, UNLV ranks highly for campus ethnic diversity, as reported by U.S. News & World Report. Nearly half of its over 31,000 students are first-generation college graduates, transforming their economic prospects.

UNLV hosts Nevada's sole dental and law schools and has been recognized by the White House as a model academic institution for its cybersecurity curriculum. Demonstrating its dedication to addressing community challenges, UNLV focuses on educating more teachers and nurses. Additionally, its Department of Brain Health houses the world's only observatory for Alzheimer's drug development.

"What makes UNLV really magical is our incredible faculty that truly cares about our students," Dr. Whitfield says. "That's a piece that we've been doing really well on top of being a leading research university, and it gives our students opportunities they wouldn't get elsewhere."



COLLIN COLLEGE

Collin College provides essential skills required by businesses

Relevance, collaborations and a sense of immediacy are fueling the achievements of graduates in sought-after fields.

Dr. H. Neil Matkin | District President, Collin College

Located on 32 acres in Allen, Texas, the Collin College Technical Campus exemplifies the institution's commitment to educating students in critical fields. Offering programs in construction management, plumbing, electrical work, HVAC, automotive and welding, the campus also houses a Texas A&M Engineering Academy and the Collin College Academic Alliance. It is the fastest-growing among Collin College's 10 campuses, the iCollin Virtual Campus and centers, all dedicated to delivering practical education to nearly 60,000 students annually.

"It's an exciting time to be here," said Dr. H. Neil Matkin, Collin College district president. "If I could sum up the keys to our success in one word, it's 'relevance.' It's listening to the community and understanding their needs. Our students come out of programs with the necessary skills to fill the employment needs of the businesses and industries around us."

Propelled by a sense of immediacy, agility and deep partnership with businesses and industries, Collin College offers over 200 degrees and certificates. It also grants bachelor's degrees in four academic fields: nursing, construction management, cybersecurity and clinical operations management, with some completely accessible online. These programs were developed in consultation with advisory committees composed of business leaders dedicated to cultivating essential workforce pipelines. Awaiting approval of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, Collin College plans to launch its fifth bachelor's degree program, a Bachelor of Applied Science in Software Development, to further meet the requirements of enterprises and the community.

As it approaches its 40th anniversary milestone in 2025, Collin College anticipates expanding upon its achievements in the coming year. It initiated the Texas A&M Engineering Academy at Collin College, enabling students to pursue engineering degrees concurrently at Texas A&M University and Collin College, resulting in substantial cost savings. Additionally, a fresh Academic Alliance collaboration with Texas State University and The University of Texas at Dallas will introduce several new bachelor's and master's degree programs to the community, further enhancing affordability and accessibility.

"We have a singular focus, and it's educating students," Dr. Matkin says. "We're trying to help students develop critical skills and expose them to things that will help them make their own decisions. Through our outstanding faculty and university partnerships, we have developed a wonderful environment focused on student success."

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS



Kristina Scala
Founder and CEO
Aspen Academy



We hope to keep our middle school and elementary school students at our Greenwood Village Private School in a space of curiosity, fascination and wonder so they can identify problems and reach deep inside themselves and out to others to figure out appropriate solutions and create businesses. Our LiFE™ Program develops extraordinary leaders who know how to take good care of themselves while having the inclination and capacity to help others.



Stephen W. McCannless
Superintendent
Cleveland ISD



Our out-of-the-box approach is solving the teacher shortage puzzle. We're hiring associate and bachelor's degree holders as part of our IAT (Interim Assignment Teacher) Program. We use eGlass, a lightboard that allows a certified teacher in one class to interact with other classrooms guided by IATs. With our financial support, our IATs eventually become certified teachers.



Dr. Steve Olmos
Superintendent and
Executive Director
Visions In Education



Visions In Education has been impacting the lives of students across Northern California for nearly three decades. It offers personalized and free learning programs that students can take in the comfort and safety of their own homes. Visions complements its curricula with mental health programs, clubs and proprietary technologies to maximize the students' potential. Learn more about Visions at viedu.org.



Christa Augsburg
Director
SHL Schweizerische
Hotelfachschule
Luzern



Our institution is known in Switzerland and the world for developing hands-on skills among students. They are not only academically trained but are really ready to work even before they graduate as they have already accumulated a lot of job experience while studying. This is something other institutions do not have.

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS



Nick Davies
Head of College
Brighton College
(Singapore)



While the academic success of our pupils will always be our most important educational goal, we're also looking for opportunities to build their confidence, develop their curiosity about the world around them and discover the power of kindness. Our vision is to build a superb all-through school where children will feel supported and cared for.



Su Fen Cheong
Founder
Preschool Market



Our primary focus is to empower educators and parents with the tools and knowledge needed to create engaging, inclusive and effective learning environments for young children. We aim to bridge the gap between learning needs and available resources to foster a community of support and collaboration in early childhood education.



Tammy Murphy
Head of School
XCL World Academy



We're shaping the next now. Through the guidance of our amazing and experienced teachers, we feel we've developed a truly world-class, holistic curriculum. We try to be a beacon of light for our students as we leverage innovation, continually adapting to all the changing realities around us to make this world a better place.



Dr. Chad Weidner
Teaches Film, Media
and Rhetoric
University College
Roosevelt



We are small-scale, intensive and residential. We allow our students to build their own program from more than 200 courses in science and engineering, social science, and arts and humanities. We're continuously developing truly interesting and innovative ways to offer a curriculum that speaks to sustainability in a broad sense.



Daniels College of Business
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Daniels College of Business raises ethical leaders using hands-on education

The college is changing the world by immersing students in its experiential learning curricula.

Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver



Named after Bill Daniels, Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver aspires to carry on the cable television innovator's legacy of creating ethical business leaders. The college has accomplished this goal with flying colors using its distinct experiential learning model.

"Our vision at Daniels is to nurture business pioneers for the public good," says Lowell Valencia-Miller, assistant dean of MBA Programs at the University of Denver's Daniels College of Business. "We raise the bar in creating ethical leaders using our learning-by-doing mantra."

The college stands out with the adoption of a challenge-driven model, which goes beyond the concepts and theories learned in the classroom to their actual implementation in the boardroom. In Daniels' full-time program, students complete four challenges focused on entrepreneurship, social good, corporations and international business, which is conducted in the cohort's country of choice. Every challenge gives students the opportunity to help businesses solve real challenges that they are encountering. Business professionals choose among Daniels' four MBA offerings—full-time, part-time, executive and online—depending on where they are in the phase of their respective careers.

"If you are looking for an opportunity to learn, apply, and grow with our industry-connected faculty as your guide, then the Daniels College of Business is the place for you," Valencia-Miller says. "Many come here to learn, and a lot of them stay to be hired by the large companies in Denver's growing and vibrant entrepreneurial community."



Merced Union High School District revolutionizes public education

Boldly resolving issues to create more relevant and impactful student experiences

Alan Peterson | Superintendent, Merced Union High SD



Merced Union High School District (MUHSD) Superintendent Alan Peterson meets every year with selected high school students from the district's different campuses. He wants to know what changes they would like to see if their siblings were to go to MUHSD. The school's Board of Trustees then deliberates these suggestions before final implementation.

"We're not afraid to try new things and push the edges of public education, which needs to change in a lot of areas," says Peterson, who brought in structural changes to MUHSD when he became its superintendent in 2015. "Each of our students has distinct dreams and circumstances, and we have to react to deal with those. We've changed what we could to make education more relevant."

MUHSD boasts of its commitment to creating relevant education. It has pioneered the adoption of CTE (Career Technical Education), which gives students academic and industry skills needed by modern businesses. The school is also among the first signatories to the UC (University of California) Merced Automatic Admission Program, which prioritizes MUHSD students who would like to enroll at UC Merced. To prepare students for these initiatives, MUHSD has lengthened its class periods to seven per day from six.

"Our society changes every year, but schools are famous for being decades behind society; that just can't happen anymore," Peterson says. "High school is foundational, and it is where we hold our kids' hands and walk them through. We've come in with new requirements, goals, and outcomes to help our students overcome the barriers and challenges they face in life."



MERCED UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Redefining Readiness:
WHERE EVERY GRADUATE

is Equipped for Tomorrow's Success



About
MUHSD!

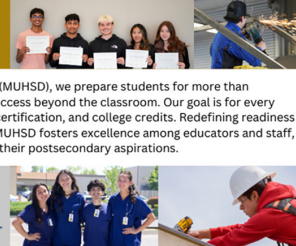
At Merced Union High School District (MUHSD), we prepare students for more than graduation; we guide them towards success beyond the classroom. Our goal is for every student to leave with a diploma, CTE certification, and college credits. Redefining readiness for the real world in Merced County, MUHSD fosters excellence among educators and staff, supporting students daily in pursuing their postsecondary aspirations.



35 Career Technical Educational Pathways



Merced College Dual Enrollment Program



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information
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Springs Charter Schools takes unconventional route to enjoyable and adaptable learning

A strong collaboration with parents, communities and colleges provides students with practical education tailored to their individual needs.

According to a report by CREDO (Center for Research on Education Outcomes) at Stanford University, charter schools are showing superior performance compared to traditional public schools, particularly in reading and math. This success can be credited to the dedication and innovative approach of institutions like Springs Charter Schools.

Founded in 2000 as a publicly funded, tuition-free school with just 17 students, Springs Charter Schools has expanded significantly. Today, it educates over 12,000 learners in seven schools across 21 locations. Parents are drawn to Springs Charter Schools for its hybrid programs including homeschooling, its authentic student relationships and numerous opportunities for real-world experiences—all reflecting an unconventional approach to education.

"Nurturing a lifelong learner requires two things," says Springs Charter Schools superintendent Dr. Kathleen Hermismeyer, who holds a PhD in curriculum and instruction from the University of the Pacific. "Firstly, the student has to be excited and curious about the world, an attitude typical schools sometimes don't encourage. Secondly, students need to learn how to learn and not just wait for the teacher to teach something to them. We want the students to really own and have agency over their own learning."



Dr. Kathleen Hermismeyer

Superintendent
Springs Charter Schools

A Homeschooling Expert

Pioneering the rise in homeschooling, Springs Charter Schools provides a fully virtual Montessori Home-school Program and hybrid options where students attend selected weekdays. This approach makes parents integral partners in guiding their children's learning at home. The programs incorporate traditional school activities like field trips, parent/student events, science fairs, traditional graduation ceremonies and prom nights.

"The five-day-a-week factory model of education is absolutely not the only way. The more flexible school environment works best for families and children, and people need to open their eyes to alternate possibilities of education," Dr. Hermismeyer says. "This is the right model and the way of the future; we believe we are the model of the future."

Springs Charter Schools' leadership in homeschooling reflects its proficiency in online learning platforms. Amid the pandemic, the school was honored with the "Above and Beyond" accolade from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools for providing the world access to its online courses and live teaching resources, which were already established prior to the health crisis.

Nurturing Genuine Relationships

With a more intimate student body compared to larger schools, Springs Charter Schools fosters a close-knit community where nearly everyone knows each child by name and understands their individual circumstances. The school also sees to it that students remain together for at least a couple of years, promoting genuine bonds among peers.

"Ours is a personalized model giving every student what they need in many facets," says Vivian Price, assistant superintendent of Springs Charter Schools. "We know their specific academic requirements but also their social and emotional needs. We really know the whole child."

The CREDO at Stanford University report also highlighted Springs Charter Schools' achievement in enhancing the academic outcomes of special student groups. This includes narrowing the achievement gap typically seen among English language learners, students with disabilities and those from minority backgrounds. This accomplishment underscores the school's deep understanding and responsiveness to the unique circumstances and needs of each student.



Vivian Price

Assistant Superintendent
Springs Charter Schools

Internships and Early College Experience

"Our mission is to make the community part of the classroom," Price says. "For us, learning happens beyond the school building walls, and so, we have students who are not only completing internships and work experiences but also enrolling in college."

Springs Charter Schools mandates that students complete a college course before graduating. This initiative aims to prepare them for the next phase of their academic journey and foster self-confidence.

After establishing its 21st center in Smyrna, Tennessee, Springs Charter Schools plans to expand further. The school is enhancing its focus on real-world education, including a campus at an airport where students gain hands-on experience in aviation. Additionally, the institution is preparing to launch a farm school in Georgia, offering a practical learning environment.

Building a Stronger Base

Springs Charter Schools aims to improve teacher status to drive school advancement. In pursuit of this goal, it has established a teacher program in partnership with the University of Massachusetts Global, a reputable online university with accreditation and consistent rankings.

"We want teachers to love their work, and so, we have committed our time and efforts to helping develop people who have a heart for teaching," says Price, who has broad experience in charter, traditional, and private schools.

"At Springs, we are focused on developing teachers who embrace our mission and vision and who believe in every student's ability to achieve at high levels," Dr. Hermismeyer says. "This is the cornerstone of personalized learning. We believe that our model, which breaks from the traditional school model, will revolutionize education."



University of Redlands prepares students for lives of meaning and impact

Students develop personally and professionally through experiential learning and unique opportunities.

Krista L. Newkirk | President, University of Redlands



From Grammy Award-winning opera singer Angel Blue to W. Richard West, Jr., the founding director of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, all University of Redlands alumni are products of a unique pedagogy. Founded in 1907, this private, nonprofit institution stands out with its immersive, personalized learning and hands-on experiences inside and outside the classroom.

"We have a strong focus on personalized education, and students come to us knowing they will be highly engaged throughout their learning journey," says Krista L. Newkirk, president of the University of Redlands. "We're giving our students practical and theoretical experience to prepare them for their next step once they graduate."

Redlands offers more than 40 undergraduate programs, including the Johnston Center for Integrative Studies, where students design their own interdisciplinary programs. The university also offers more than 30 graduate programs in business, education, geographic information systems, theology, public policy and music.

With access to more than 70 clubs and organizations, Redlands students are deeply engaged and committed to their communities. The university's 21 NCAA Division III men's and women's athletic teams are also a huge part of what makes the campus so vibrant. Redlands also offers one of the oldest travel-and-study programs in Austria and Central Europe, and the cost of programs like these is built into the student tuition.

"I think one of the most notable things about our campus is how friendly people are," says Newkirk. "We find it to be really important for those who come here to feel connected and have that sense of community."

The university has been named a Top Producer of Fulbright Students, a prestigious award granted by the U.S. Department of State. Since 2008, Redlands has celebrated 28 Fulbright student awards and was recently named one of only five master's universities in California to be named a Fulbright Hispanic-Serving Institution Leader.

Redlands has an incredibly robust community service internship program, which has received national acclaim as students annually complete more than 100,000 hours of public service in over 60 countries worldwide, positively impacting their careers and communities.

Newkirk concludes, "The transformative experience we offer to our students truly prepares them for lives filled with meaning and purpose, empowering them to make a meaningful contribution to society."



PXU completely supports students' journey to becoming future-ready

Fresh initiatives in an inclusive environment are giving them a chance to make a bigger impact in the world.

Thea Andrade | Superintendent, Phoenix Union High School District



Overseeing 24 schools with more than 26,000 students is a daunting task. However, it is a challenge that Thea Andrade, superintendent of Phoenix Union High School District (PXU), and her staff of over 3,500 professionals have been accomplishing with flying colors. From their freshman year to completing their chosen pathway, students feel a sense of belonging at the all-high-school institution that exerts every effort to equip them with 21st-century skills.

"We're a very progressive district, and we're truly proud of that," says Andrade, who has served in Arizona's public education for nearly three decades and as an administrator for over 20 years. "Our schools welcome and inspire students to go places and do things that matter. That's our promise to the community."

True enough, PXU's unconventional methods have raised student engagement and performance. Acknowledging the difficult period that freshmen undergo, the high school district established freshman houses where the same group of kids stay together for the start of their high school journey. Guided by link crews comprising seniors, the dropout rate among freshmen has declined to 1.5 percent from 6. The institution is further moving towards equity and inclusivity as it launches a dual language education program at Carl Hayden Community High School.

PXU guarantees consistency in the student's academic experience across its different schools as it prepares them to be future-ready. Its expansive career and technical education (CTE) program certifies students for high-demand fields, from aeronautics to precision manufacturing. The school district is also collaborating with universities to give seniors a taste of college life and streamline their acceptance into partner universities.

"The future is now, and if we don't maneuver and shift, our scholars will be left behind," Andrade says. "We would like every student to graduate college, career and life-ready with all the skills needed to succeed in our global economy. We'll continue building strong, robust programs that endow them with assets they can give back to the community."

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS



David Goodhew
Managing Director
Dukes Education



A good education should change your life, and empowering children to lead extraordinary lives can change the world. Our approach focuses on leadership not just of others but of self. For us, leadership is about high performance, innovation and adventure. We want our students to lead with their hearts, embracing service and cherishing humility.



Dr. Roland Faller
Dean
Whitacre College of Engineering



We truly pride ourselves in nurturing industry and job-ready graduates. If our graduates go out into the workplace, they shouldn't need additional training; they can start working right away. We're hiring the best people to prepare top students to solve the challenges of the region, the nation and the world.



Brendan Conroy
President
Mount Carmel High School



We're strong in our foundation. The values that have driven Mount Carmel High School are still in place, but despite having many amazing traditions, we're dynamic. We continue to evolve, grow and become better at educating young men whose families want more for their sons. We're preparing them to lead and make a better place for everyone.



Professor Shalini Randeria
President and Rector
Central European University



CEU's mission is based on the ideal of an open society: a society that prioritizes free inquiry, democracy, social justice and equity. Our faculty and students address some of today's biggest intellectual challenges, including bioethics and corporate responsibility, climate change and environmental security, economic inequalities and labor market transformations, and geopolitical challenges and rising authoritarianism.



Tim Flattery
Provost
College for Creative Studies



We are focused on the outcomes of our programs, how we accommodate industry demand and the excellence in which we achieve those through our curriculum. There isn't anything that we see, experience or touch that hasn't been conceptualized or designed by someone. As such, there are unbelievable opportunities that are afforded to a graduate with an art or design degree.



Anelli Harvey
Interim Head of School
International School of Los Angeles



Our core values are diversity, excellence and respect. We strongly believe that bilingualism fosters empathy and creates a worldview that we desperately need today. We nurture strong bilingual critical thinkers who can make up their minds and see issues from different perspectives. We want our students to be open-minded and caring towards others.

The Lausanne campus offers top-notch infrastructures.



EHL Hospitality Business School: How experiential learning prepares leaders across sectors

Swiss learning model blends theoretical principles with practical application.

EHL Hospitality Business School transcends traditional education by embracing a dynamic model that combines academic rigor with hands-on practice and real-world experience. This innovative approach, known as experiential learning, has become a cornerstone of EHL's pedagogy, fostering a new generation of leaders equipped with business acumen, customer service experience and human-centered leadership skills that stretch into sectors beyond hospitality.

For over 130 years, and as the first hospitality business school in the world, EHL has been a pioneer in hospitality education. In 2024, it was recognized once again as the world's leading institution for hospitality and leisure management by QS World University Rankings, marking the sixth consecutive year of this prestigious accolade. In addition, EHL Hospitality Business School is also recognized by AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) as one of the best business schools in the world.

Swiss Learning Model

EHL's success is deeply rooted in its Swiss learning model, which blends academic theory with practical application. This educational philosophy ensures that students not only understand hospitality principles but also know how to apply them in real-world settings. Dr. Achim Schmitt, dean of EHL Hospitality Business School, highlights the significance of this approach: "At EHL, we offer our students a pedagogy based on experiential learning and the teaching of both soft and hard skills. Our campus in Lausanne offers top-notch infrastructures and fully immerses our students in an environment that fosters human interactions."



A prime example of this immersive learning is EHL's on-campus Michelin-starred application restaurant, The Berceau des Sens, where students gain first-hand experience in a luxury dining environment. They serve discerning guests and learn the intricacies of high-end hospitality. "The Berceau des Sens enables our students to work during some weeks in a real luxury setting with external guests expecting a high-end fine dining experience," Schmitt explains. "This is one of many real-world experiences we offer to our students so they can truly embrace and live luxury beyond the traditional classroom environment."

Hospitality Skills for Leadership

EHL's curriculum is designed to develop both soft and hard skills to strengthen core competencies sought after by global companies across sectors. Emotional intelligence, human-centered leadership, communication and cultural agility are emphasized alongside technical competencies like economics, finance, strategy and marketing. This dual focus ensures that graduates are well-rounded professionals capable of leading diverse teams and making informed business decisions. The journey through EHL's programs begins with a preparatory year divided into two semesters, focusing on foundational knowledge in hotel and restaurant operations, followed by a six-month operational internship. This structure ensures that students build a strong practical foundation early in their education and understand the operational challenges.

Throughout their studies, EHL students engage in various hands-on activities, including compulsory internships, real-life business projects and industry conferences. These experiences are designed to reinforce classroom learning with practical application. In their final semester, students work on consulting projects for real clients, conducting research and offering recommendations that address actual business challenges. Over 600 such projects have been completed with renowned companies like Accor, Nestlé and Audemars Piguet, often leading to job offers for the students involved.

Bridging the Academic and Business Worlds

EHL's strong ties with the industry provide students with unparalleled networking opportunities. The school partners with prestigious luxury brands such as LVMH and Chopard, as well as health care institutions and consumer brands, bringing industry leaders on campus to share insights and discuss current trends. These interactions allow students to gain a deeper understanding of the industry and build valuable professional connections.

Schmitt emphasizes the importance of industry engagement: "We partner with many brands whose C-level executives frequently come on campus for their own learning and development as well as to talk to our students and faculty about the industry's trends and real challenges. This way, they do not only invest in their own careers but also provide our students with hands-on insights, connect with new talent and allow to enrich their own perspectives."

EHL's commitment to experiential learning extends to its master's and executive education programs, featuring field visits, real-world business projects and direct engagement with industry professionals. These experiences enable students to explore concrete applications in a wide variety of industries and expand their professional networks beyond the academic environment.

The innovative approach to education at EHL ensures that its graduates are not only knowledgeable but also adept at applying their skills in practical settings. This holistic education model prepares students to become leaders in the hospitality industry and beyond. As Schmitt notes, "Our curricula are designed to allow students who wish to immerse themselves in the essence of luxury, for example, to specialize through dedicated electives, where they dissect successful luxury brands' strategies and delve into the nuances of crafting unparalleled experiences."

As the business landscape and job market continue to evolve, EHL remains dedicated to nurturing talent that can meet and exceed ever-changing demands, ensuring its graduates are equipped with the skills and experiences necessary for success.



The EHL campuses foster human interactions.



Rock Hill Schools puts heart in students' holistic development

Its "Leader In Me" program serves as the foundation for bringing out the best in every child.

Dr. Tommy Schmolze | Superintendent, Rock Hill Schools



Rock Hill Schools, located just south of Charlotte, North Carolina, is committed to developing well-rounded leaders prepared for tomorrow's challenges. Dr. Tommy Schmolze, the district's superintendent, emphasizes the institution's dedication to holistic education, focusing on both academic excellence and essential life skills.

"We want to create leaders in every sense of the word," says Schmolze, who oversees three high schools, five middle schools, 14 elementary schools and additional programming, including a career technical education center, early childhood and alternative programs. "Our goal is not just about academic achievement but also about career readiness and community engagement. We help students take their inner genius and use it to the fullest of their ability."

A cornerstone of this approach is the district's "Leader in Me" program, based on Stephen Covey's book "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People." The initiative is designed to instill leadership qualities and crucial soft skills, such as being proactive, having a win-win attitude and creating synergy, in all students and adults in the district.

Innovation is another key area for Rock Hill Schools, particularly in staying ahead of technological advancements. The district was one of the first districts to provide each student with a laptop while working to offer courses to prepare students for jobs that may not even exist yet but will be in high demand soon.

Schmolze sees every adult in his organization as an educator. For him, a bus driver, custodian, receptionist or cafeteria worker has the same impact on students as the classroom teacher, principal or superintendent. Valued equally, each of these individuals can have an exponential impact on the children's development as these educators create synergy with the time they spend with students.

Looking ahead, Rock Hill Schools envisions even stronger partnerships with the community and local businesses. "We can't do it alone," says Schmolze. "Our business partners play a vital role in shaping the future workforce. We are committed to being good stewards of the resources they provide as we reshape and impact a child's life forever."



Hermiston School District: Empowering the next generation of future-ready students

Offering multiple pathways with strong emphasis on employable skills and care for community

Dr. Tricia Mooney | Superintendent, Hermiston School District



In the heart of Eastern Oregon's largest district, the Hermiston School District proudly serves approximately 5,500 K-12 students. A standout feature of this district is its exceptional career and technical education (CTE) programs, offering six distinct career areas with 11 diverse pathways.

At Hermiston School District, real-world learning is a cornerstone of the educational experience. Every year, students engage in CTE programs, choosing pathways that align with their interests and career goals. In the construction pathway, students gain practical experience by building a house, which is then sold to fund future projects. In the business pathway, students manage an on-campus coffee business, while others run a printing press company.

These hands-on opportunities not only teach valuable technical and business skills but also instill essential employability competencies. These skills empower students to care for themselves and their families and contribute positively to the community.

"We really focused on making our students career-ready," says Hermiston School District Superintendent Dr. Tricia Mooney, an educational leader with a doctorate in education. "You can't learn employability skills such as showing up for an appointment or developing working relationships unless there's an opportunity to learn them. Our kids need to be part of something bigger than themselves."

The Hermiston School District's commitment to career readiness matches its deep dedication to the community. The district collaborates closely with local organizations to provide apprenticeships and job placements, ensuring students have the tools they need to succeed.

The success of these programs is further enhanced by a passionate staff, many of whom are former Hermiston students. With a comprehensive support system that includes counselors, social workers and nurses, the district places a strong emphasis on the well-being and mental health of its students.

"We want kids to leave us ready to care for themselves and others," says Mooney, who brings nearly three decades of experience in education. "We're building a better tomorrow for everyone today."

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS



Dr. Julie Porter
Head of School
Park Century School



We champion a personalized approach to instruction for students with learning differences like dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia and ADHD. By aligning our teaching methods with their unique brain wiring and drawing on the latest research in neurodiversity, we unlock each student's potential. Our success lies in understanding how they learn and adapting our instructional methods to meet their needs. Together, we empower these creative minds to shape a brighter future for all humanity.



Dr. Robert Mendonsa
Founder and CEO
Naomi's Village



I was practicing orthopedic surgery in Dallas when we first visited Kenya in 2003. My wife Julie witnessed the plight of thousands of homeless children in the Great Rift Valley, and it broke her heart. If we help these children through their immense suffering, they can become outstanding leaders in life and an incredible gift to humanity. For more information, visit naomivillage.org.



Dr. Keith Miller
President
Greenville Technical College



We can turn on a dime as technology changes. If we're going to train people on the latest equipment, then we need to change, not on an annual basis but almost on a monthly basis. The ability to evolve as the need dictates and the entrepreneurial spirit to make change happen are two big keys to our continued success.



Renee McLamb
Head of School
Northwood Temple Academy



I'm really proud we have a strong faculty that can speak truth into our students' lives. Our dedicated instructors not only teach but also mentor, creating a supportive environment where students can thrive. We want to foster an attitude of getting better at getting better. Students should never stop learning and influencing other people's lives in a positive way.



Dr. Michelle Bernat
Head of School
Pardes Jewish Day School



We teach children *how* to think, not *what* to think, and emphasize that strong character can make a real difference in the world. For us, this is critically important. We want kids to understand how to collaborate, think through problems and solve them. We are creating future leaders who will be able to bring people together.



Rosalina Rivera
Superintendent
Delano Union School District



We're a progressive and innovative learning community where students recognize and develop their talents and give their personal best each day. Our efforts are collectively centered on one key commitment—"Promise 180: Every School Day Counts." Excellence is achieved by caring for each student and staff member individually, fostering an enthusiastic and energetic family-focused environment where students can maximize their full potential.



Promise 180 "Every School Day Counts"

Committed to Working Together for a Better Education
Through Excellence

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Neighborhood Charter Schools: Pioneering inclusive education in NYC

The K-8 public school empowers diverse learners with co-teaching models and robust support programs.

Daniel McCormick | Executive Director, Neighborhood Charter Schools

Neighborhood Charter Schools (NCS), with campuses in Harlem and the Bronx, is redefining public education through its commitment to inclusivity and academic excellence. Under the guidance of Executive Director Daniel McCormick, NCS has established a welcoming environment where every student, regardless of background or ability, has the opportunity to thrive. McCormick has 21 years of educational experience and sees NCS as a model for other organizations serving children and families.

"We believe in real inclusion. Our program is designed to support students with IEPs [Individualized Education Programs] in every classroom, and we're constantly shifting to ensure student needs are met," says McCormick. "We allow them to learn from each other and grow together in a safe, healthy and happy environment. This is our hallmark."

Welcoming children from New York City, NCS serves a diverse student body, including autistic children, those with IEPs and a growing number of multilingual learners. Its integrated co-teaching model, wherein two teachers oversee learners throughout the school day, is designed to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of each student.

Besides academic support, NCS prioritizes social and emotional development. It emphasizes social learning using the Social Thinking methodology in the classroom and social clubs run by speech-language pathologists. The program helps students communicate effectively and navigate social nuances in and out of the classroom.

NCS's holistic approach extends to its commitment to family and community engagement. It ensures that families feel safe and trust the school, knowing their children are receiving quality education in a nurturing environment.

In two years, NCS will expand its Bronx campus from K-6 to K-8, similar to what is currently offered by its Harlem site. Eventually, NCS aspires to cover the whole K-12 curriculum to ensure a continuous, supportive education.

"We're an organization that cares and believes deeply that all children can learn and succeed in school, academically and socially," says McCormick. "For families overwhelmed with the challenges of raising a child with a disability or other circumstances, we provide world-class education and do so with the empathy and nurturing that many schools do not offer."



Centralia Elementary School District advances with award-winning excellence

Empowering students and families through innovative education and holistic support

Norma E. Martinez | Superintendent, Centralia Elementary School District

At the forefront of educational excellence for nearly 150 years, Centralia Elementary School District is an award-winning institution recognized for its exceptional innovation and dedication to student success.

Serving approximately 4,000 students across eight schools, the pre-K-through-6 district has earned numerous accolades, including National Blue Ribbon Schools Awards and California Distinguished School Awards. This year's recognitions include the Readers' Choice 2024 Best Public School in North Orange County and platinum medal honors for all its schools for the PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Support) awards for fostering favorable school environments. Under Superintendent Norma E. Martinez, Centralia continues to raise the bar in education.

"Our board sets very high standards across our district with four core values spanning collaboration, student-centeredness, communication and equity," says Martinez. "All our efforts fall into supporting the whole child, pursuing higher academic achievement and making them future-ready."

One of the district's key strengths is its whole-child approach. Centralia ensures that students feel seen, supported and valued. Its schools are equipped with social workers, counselors and school climate paraprofessionals to address both social and emotional needs. Additionally, the district extends its care to families through its award-winning Neighborhood Resource Center, which provides everything from meals to laundry detergent and even hotel vouchers for evicted families.

In terms of academic excellence, Centralia is investing in teacher training and programs to help students catch up. The district is an early adopter of the science of reading and has rebalanced its afterschool program to include math intervention, especially in response to pandemic-related gaps.

College and career readiness is another core focus of Centralia. It has launched its first Student Leadership and Career Academy, where students learn from community business leaders and gain insights into soft skills and financial literacy. Meanwhile, Centralia's innovation labs, where students use cutting-edge technology and the design thinking process to solve real-world problems, earned the district a prestigious Golden Bell Awards in 2024.

"Every day reveals new challenges in education," says Martinez. "We're very responsive to our students and their families; we're a district of people who care."



Leadership and Legacy: How SSD is redefining special education success

The district's bold strategies set a new national benchmark in special education as well as career and technical training.

Dr. Michael Maclin | Superintendent, Special School District of St. Louis County (SSD)

Special School District of St. Louis County (SSD) stands out as a trailblazer in educating students with special needs. Long before such an endeavor was mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1975, SSD had already been committed to special education since its founding in 1957. Today, SSD serves over 23,000 students and collaborates with 22 partner school districts, supported by more than 5,500 dedicated staff members. Under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Michael Maclin, SSD is building on its rich history and forging a brighter future, prioritizing both special education and career and technical training to empower every student to reach their potential despite some current challenges facing the district.

Maclin became superintendent at a turbulent time for the district in January 2024, marked by leadership transitions and a significant deficit spending trajectory. At that time, the district was operating with a \$74 million deficit—a situation requiring decisive action. Within weeks, Maclin launched the "Righting the Ship" initiative, a five-year strategic plan designed to stabilize finances and refocus resources on student success.

The "Righting the Ship" initiative has already shown significant progress. Strategic decisions, including streamlining central office operations and reallocating resources, have reduced deficit spending and laid the groundwork for long-term sustainability. These actions, though difficult, reflect Maclin's unwavering focus on the district's mission.

SSD Board President Dr. Dan Cuneo, who has served the district for 24 years, expressed confidence in Maclin's leadership. "When we hired Dr. Maclin, we hit the grand slam." Maclin is the perfect individual for the job, given his extensive experience and advanced degrees. He has received numerous accolades, including the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) Excellence in Education Award conferred to him during his first six months as superintendent. A parent, Monique Williams, referred to Maclin as a true game changer.

While Maclin's leadership sets the tone, he emphasizes the collective effort that drives SSD's success. "It is truly the work of individuals within the organization every day that makes us special," says Maclin.



Meg Bamford | Head of School, Miriam School and Learning Center

We aim to support children with learning differences by giving them the tools and strategies they need to succeed both academically and in life. We create programs that nurture the whole child, and this approach sets us apart. It's really helping our students, first and foremost, as well as the people around them to understand the gifts these kids have.



Sevin Yeltekin | Dean and Frontier Professor of Business Administration, Simon Business School

We don't teach students what they would do day-to-day but how to analyze data to understand how markets work, design strategies and solve problems. We teach them foundational knowledge and skills that are timeless and position- and industry-agnostic so they can carry and apply them wherever they go.



Dr. Kara Casimiro | Superintendent, Danbury Public Schools

This is an exciting time for everyone. We're extremely focused on student learning and providing opportunities for them to meet the demands of this new economy. We're changing the landscape of post-secondary education and what success actually looks like for different students while still meeting the needs of modern local economies.



Dr. Eric Semler | Interim Head of School, Concordia International School Shanghai

We see parents as true partners in their child's education, which sets us apart from other international schools. We know they want their child to learn a great deal, but they also aspire for a joyful and nurturing place for their learner. Parents are not alone in their child's learning journey, as Concordia will be with them every step of the way.



Mike Smith | President, Teaching Channel by K12 Coalition

Teaching Channel by K12 Coalition is leading the way in providing innovative tools and resources for educators. At the heart of this mission is a dedication to improving teacher practice through integrated, high-quality online content accessible 24/7. Our goal is to support educators' growth and ultimately drive student achievement and impact. We want to be a household name, supporting every public and charter school in the country.



Caleb Hicks | Founder and CEO, SchoolAI

SchoolAI aims to bridge the gap between students, teachers, parents and school leaders through a platform that enhances student engagement, promotes personalized learning and streamlines administrative tasks. We empower teachers to reach every student effectively while allowing them to zoom out to see overall data and trends, helping to improve their classroom and school performance over time.

Learning. Personalized.

AI-powered immersive learning for students.

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Ladue School District: Shaping future leaders through vision and community

With the support of its Board of Education and other stakeholders, the district fosters student growth and local engagement for lasting success.

Dr. Jim Wipke | Superintendent, Ladue School District

Nestled just 12.7 miles west of the iconic Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Ladue School District is a shining example of educational excellence. Recently ranked 6th nationwide by the education research company Niche—up from 8th in 2024—this achievement reflects the unwavering commitment of the district's students, staff and community to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Superintendent Dr. Jim Wipke, who oversees the district comprising an early childhood center, four K-4 elementary schools, a fifth-grade center, a middle school and a high school, emphasizes the district's ongoing curriculum advancements. "We're constantly aligning our coursework with what will be expected from students when they enter the workforce and society. We want multiple opportunities awaiting them upon graduation," he states.

Wipke developed the motto "See. Serve. Connect."—a district philosophy centered on building authentic relationships with students and families.

This approach emphasizes fostering genuine connections and serving students well so they can contribute positively to the community. Home to over 4,300 students who speak approximately 65 languages, the district has created a rich learning atmosphere where students thrive academically and socially, feeling safe, respected and supported.

A significant milestone for the district was the passing of its \$126-million Future-Ready bond during the pandemic, which received the second-highest approval rating in its history. Wipke notes that this strong community support underscores the dedication to the schools and the educational opportunities they provide.

Some examples of innovative curriculum and instruction at the high school include a one-of-a-kind veterinary teaching clinic run by the comparative anatomy and physiology class; Construction Innovations, where students build tiny houses as part of a CTE course; and Catalyst, an advanced hands-on learning program in global business and entrepreneurship that presents various career paths.

Ladue students also participate in over 120 athletic and extracurricular programs. In spring 2024, student-athletes from two Class 4 State Championships in track and field, while middle and high school students ranked among the top 25 at the National Science Olympiad Tournament.

"Our students' remarkable achievement testifies to the dedication of our amazing teachers and staff, strong parent partnerships and the unwavering support of our Board of Education and community. We're committed to educating and empowering students to become passionate learners achieving their highest potential," says Wipke, who has a doctorate in education from Maryville University and over 30 years of educational experience.

The Ladue School District exemplifies excellence in education, driven by a collaborative approach that prioritizes inclusivity, innovation and student success.



Dr. Jane Fernandes | President, Antioch College

Founded by visionary Horace Mann, Antioch College has been a pioneer in education for nearly two centuries. We were the first liberal arts college to offer coeducation and equal academic opportunities to African Americans while pioneering community-work-based education. We aim to grow our enrollment, confident that our initiatives will increase interest and understanding of Antioch's unique value.



Dr. Michelle Keylon | Superintendent and CEO, Francis Tuttle Technology Center

It is important to continue learning and growing throughout one's lifetime. We have a truly strong culture centered around the success of our students, making sure they are fully supported throughout their learning process. We give them the most up-to-date knowledge so that when they move into the workforce, they are thoroughly prepared.



Michael Young | President and CEO, New York Film Academy

We're a college teaching everything related to filmmaking and entertainment fields—from acting and screenwriting to animation, game design and musical theater. The common thread is visual storytelling, and our goal is to help students find and develop their unique voices. We empower them through hands-on learning, giving them the tools to create from day one.



Dr. Nisha Patel | Superintendent, School District of Clayton

We are truly a place for everyone to grow as learners in both head and heart. The teaching and learning that happens every single day in our classrooms is something we are very proud of. Our strength lies in innovation, in the power of being stronger together and our commitment to care for one another like family.



Dr. David Gozal | Dean, Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine

We are training the next generation of hardworking, outstanding physicians, scientists and health care professionals who will work hard for their community and serve their patients with passion, dedication, integrity and the best knowledge.



Redefining Dayton Public Schools: A commitment to student success

How the institution's "5 Cs" drive innovation and progress.

Dr. David Lawrence | Superintendent, Dayton Public Schools

Dayton Public Schools, under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. David Lawrence, is on a transformative journey driven by the core principles of customer service, collaboration, culture, commitment and communication. These five guiding tenets, known as the "5 Cs," ensure that every decision made by the pre-K–12 school benefits students and the broader community.

"We believe in being student-centered, with all our actions reflecting our deep care for our learners," says Lawrence, who oversees over 13,000 students in the district's early learning center, 16 elementary schools, four middle schools and seven high schools.

Dayton Public Schools has made remarkable strides, particularly in pre-K–3 literacy, jumping from ninth to fourth place among urban districts in Ohio. Furthermore, the school invests in collaborative partnerships with organizations like Omega Child Development Center, Learn to Earn and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. These partnerships help enhance academic offerings, guarantee experiential learning and promote post-secondary education success through a dedicated College and Career Readiness Division.

Dayton Public Schools similarly emphasizes communication to connect with families and the community. It is critical that parents stay engaged and that the district keeps an open dialogue. This transparent approach strengthens the relationship between the school and the local community, ensuring that stakeholders are always aligned.

To further emphasize its customer service orientation, the district is streamlining systems to ensure students and families receive prompt and effective support. This approach guarantees that resources are accessible and issues are addressed efficiently. Its focus on fostering a positive culture within schools empowers educators to model behavior that encourages both student achievement and well-being.

"We're creating a culture of professionalism and maintaining a laser focus on our goal, which is to forge systems that will thrive long after we're gone. That's what truly sets us apart," says Lawrence, who has nearly 30 years of experience in public education and a doctorate in leadership and change.



Plato Academy Schools: Where tradition meets innovation

Celebrating 20 years of excellence in education

Amy Hayes | Chief of Schools, Plato Academy Schools

Founded in Florida in 2004, Plato Academy Schools was born out of a vision to provide students in the Tampa Bay area with an education rooted in Greek culture, heritage and language. Since its inception, the academy has grown from a single school to a network of nine K-8 charter schools across three counties, with its Tampa site offering high school.

"Our mission is to foster rigorous academics and character development, guided by the Socratic method of teaching," says Chief of Schools Amy Hayes, who has 16 years of experience in public education. "We emphasize critical thinking and the ability to question, ensuring students learn through experience."

The unique blend of tradition and forward-thinking education continues to set apart the Cognia-accredited school. Students are introduced to advanced academics from an early age. Plato Academy offers accelerated math, and by eighth grade, many students have earned several high school credits.

However, it is not just academics that make Plato Academy special. With solid support from the Plato Education Foundation, the school's commitment to Greek culture is seen in everything from language classes to authentic Greek dance and art programs.

When asked about the secret to Plato Academy's success, Hayes points to the school's dedicated staff. Many of its teachers have been with the school for over 15 years, which creates a sense of continuity and commitment.

For parents considering Plato Academy, Hayes has one message: "Be involved. A parent's active engagement in their child's education makes all the difference. It's crucial for both academic success and character development."

Moving forward, the tuition-free public school plans to explore other innovative education opportunities in the Tampa Bay area and beyond. However, as Plato Academy continues to evolve, its mission remains clear: to offer students an education that honors the past while preparing them for the future.



Matthew Hemphill | Founder and CEO, Reverse Mortgage Academy

As a seasoned expert, I've condensed a decade's worth of experience in reverse mortgages into an engaging online course. Going beyond mere theory, I teach loan officers how to communicate and confidently engage senior citizens in the reverse mortgage process.



Craig Larrabee (back row, 4th from left) and Kim Acker Lipp (back row, 2nd from right) with key stakeholders, business partners and former JMG students.

JMG: Building Maine's Future Workforce Through Partnership and Ingenuity

Equipping students with skills and opportunities to prepare them for success in education and beyond

For over 30 years, JMG Inc. (formerly Jobs for Maine's Graduates) has been at the forefront of addressing Maine's growing workforce challenges, offering equitable solutions to economically disadvantaged and underserved students. From a dropout-prevention program to a statewide leader, the organization now serves over 12,000 students annually across every county. This growth is a testament to JMG's commitment to providing the right support at the right time to help students succeed from middle school through postsecondary education and into the workforce.

"We've built something very special, and we're really excited about sharing our story," says Craig Larrabee, president and CEO of JMG. "The success of our organization is really built on being student-centered and results-driven, meeting students where they're at and developing models of direct services that help them raise their aspirations and become productive citizens."



President and CEO, JMG Inc.

JMG's journey began as a program engaging high school students who were at risk of not completing their education. Over time, the organization evolved to encompass students in middle school, high school and postsecondary institutions. Its work is no longer limited to helping students graduate but extends to ensuring they are prepared for whatever comes next, whether it is higher education or the workforce. As Maine continues to face significant demographic challenges, including an aging population and a shortage of skilled workers, JMG's mission to provide students with relevant, career-ready skills has never been more critical.

Building Workplace Competency

By combining experiential learning with competency-based education, JMG prepares students for real-world challenges, giving them a competitive edge as they enter the workforce or postsecondary pathways. JMG has over 150 programs, partnering with schools and a network of employers across the state to ensure that students are equipped with both academic knowledge and workplace competencies.

One of JMG's key innovations is developing Maine's first statewide micro-credential framework, allowing students to earn and stack qualifications that demonstrate competencies to employers. As the students earn their micro-credentials, they get a badge that can be published on social media or LinkedIn, which can be seen by colleges and employers. The program has been so successful that JMG created another nonprofit, Generation US (GenUS), to offer the initiative to partners. This past August, Digital Promise Global published a research paper about JMG's micro-credentials and design approach entitled "The Promise of Micro-credentials and Learning and Employment Record Technologies for Youth and K-12 Schools." Later this fall, JMG will be presenting its micro-credential framework at the Aurora Institute Symposium, a national conference for education innovators who are working to transform K-12 education.

"Our micro-credential framework allows high school students to show that they can persist while allowing them to have agency and choice in their learning," says JMG Executive Vice President Kimberley Acker Lipp, who has been with JMG for more than 20 years. "Highly personalized to every learner, micro-credentialing gives students an effective currency to colleges or future employers."



Executive Vice President, JMG Inc.

Partnership Driven

In addition to this practical focus, JMG's work is deeply rooted in Maine's spirit of collaboration. Since its inception, the organization has received strong nonpartisan political support. Governors, legislators, school administrators and the business community have all recognized the value of investing in Maine's youth.

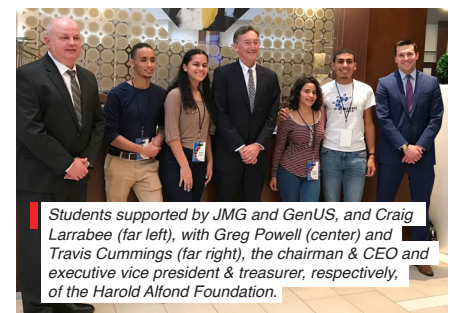
"When you think about Democrats, Republicans and Independents all coming together in a nonpartisan way, that's a story in itself in today's world," says Larrabee, who joined JMG as a classroom specialist when it began in 1993. "To have that happen in our state for over 30 years is something that is difficult to overlook. It's really about the State of Maine and its leaders understanding the importance of children for our future."

JMG's ongoing success is also tied to the support it receives from Maine-based foundations. One of its most significant supporters is the Harold Alford Foundation, which awarded JMG a \$10 million grant to expand its College Success programs. This funding has allowed JMG to provide targeted support to students across all of Maine's public university and public community college campuses.

Similarly, the MELMAC Education Foundation has been a key partner in supporting JMG's mission to make postsecondary education more accessible to all Maine students. JMG and the MELMAC Education Foundation are working with individual schools in an organic way to create change within districts to make them more student-centered and results driven.

Scaling Services and Scope

Looking forward, JMG continues to innovate. The organization is exploring partnerships and funding opportunities through GenUS that will allow it to broaden its work beyond Maine. JMG's impact extends beyond individual students. By helping them develop career-ready skills and achieve academic success, the organization is also addressing Maine's broader economic challenges. JMG plays a critical role in preparing the next generation of leaders, workers and entrepreneurs.



Students supported by JMG and GenUS, and Craig Larrabee (far left), with Greg Powell (center) and Travis Cummings (far right), the chairman & CEO and executive vice president & treasurer, respectively, of the Harold Alford Foundation.





MUSC carries the weight of a 200-year legacy.



The academic health system is educating the next generation of health care professionals and advancing cutting-edge research.

The Medical University of South Carolina Directs Future of Health Care Innovation

From transformative research to cutting-edge education, MUSC leads the way in reimagining health care for the 21st century.

 The Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) has established itself as a trailblazer in health care innovation, shaping the future of medicine through an unrelenting commitment to discovery, education and patient care. As the only comprehensive academic health system in the state, MUSC carries the weight of a 200-year legacy. Yet, it is the institution's forward-thinking approach that is driving unprecedented growth and impact, both locally and nationally.

"We're changing the future of health care through discovery and innovation," says MUSC President Dr. David Cole, a practicing physician and surgeon with over 30 years of health care experience. "We envision leading health innovation for the lives we touch, addressing effectively many of the intractable challenges in health care, from health disparities to poor access and outcomes."



At its core, MUSC's role as an academic health system sets it apart. While community health systems provide essential care, MUSC adds a crucial dimension: educating the next generation of health care professionals and advancing cutting-edge research. With six colleges, 37 degree programs, over 3,000 students and more than 900 residents and fellows—about half of all those currently training in the state—MUSC educates health care providers across every dimension.

Passion for Innovation

One of MUSC's most significant differentiators is its culture of innovation. Its research program is the largest in the state, having secured more than \$360 million in external funding last year alone.

"When we think of innovation, we want our students to find ways to use it to transform both how they learn and how they deliver health care," says Dr. Lisa Saladin, executive vice

president for academic affairs and provost of MUSC. "We want all of our students and faculty to be part of that movement."



MUSC's leadership has created a structure that promotes and facilitates new ideas, ensuring that groundbreaking research and practices move quickly from the lab to patient care. It has formalized its commitment to innovation with initiatives like the Chief Innovation Officer and Associate Provost for Education Innovation positions, faculty innovation ambassadors in each college and even a *Shark Tank*-style competition to bring new ideas to life.

This commitment has led to some remarkable outcomes. For instance, MUSC students who won South Carolina's statewide innovation competition developed a device aimed at improving survival rates for patients experiencing cardiac arrest. They found a way to channel more blood to the brain and heart instead of the extremities during a heart attack. The students have patented the invention, secured angel investors and formed a company to bring their life-saving idea to market. With 55 such startup companies launched by faculty and students and hundreds of patents already filed, the institution's innovation ecosystem is robust.

MUSC is also taking progressive steps in embracing AI to revolutionize both education and health care delivery. Since 2018, the academic health system has partnered with Clemson University on an AI hub, which supports faculty and student research. From machine learning models for heart transplants to AI-driven disease modeling for outbreak preparedness, MUSC is at the forefront of using technology to tackle complex health care challenges. These initiatives complement the university's wide array of other dynamic endeavors, including digital dentistry, precision medicine and genetic counseling.

Collaborative Spirit

MUSC's passion for discovery and innovation has spread beyond South Carolina. Recently, the university hosted a conference for about 250 faculty members, addressing the use of AI in education and setting the groundwork for a strategic plan to integrate the technology into its practices. Dr. C. Edward Watson, vice president for digital innovation at the American Association of Colleges and Universities, was so impressed by MUSC's initiatives that he requested the institution host a national conference on AI in education in 2025.

Cole also emphasizes the academic health system's goal, in collaboration with existing and future partners, to build an innovation district, a concept that mirrors innovation hubs across the country anchored by academic health systems. This initiative would attract partnerships with industry leaders, educational institutions and communities. MUSC envisions this district as a nationwide destination for cutting-edge health care research and clinical practice, further enhancing its ability to impact health outcomes through national caliber programs.

Forging Ahead

As the university celebrates its bicentennial this year, it sets its sights on a bolder strategic vision. By setting long-term goals, including improving South Carolina's health outcomes to rank within the top 20 in the nation and positioning MUSC as a top 20 academic health system, the institution is demonstrating its commitment to progress. These goals are ambitious, but they reflect the momentum MUSC has built over recent years, as well as its potential to shape the future of health care both regionally and nationally.

"We've almost quadrupled in size over the last seven years, transforming into a \$7 billion organization," notes Cole, who began his role as MUSC president in 2014. "We realized that in order to serve South Carolina effectively, we needed to expand beyond Charleston and create partnerships across the state and even farther."





By empowering the next generation of educators, UC Irvine School of Education is investing in a future that is more equitable, just and informed.

UC Irvine School of Education Champions Academic Equity and Transformation

Fostering future educators through research-practice partnerships and a commitment to social justice

In an ever-evolving educational landscape, the University of California, Irvine (UC Irvine) School of Education has emerged as a transformative force, dedicated to preparing the next generation of educators and innovators. With a bold commitment to equity, groundbreaking research and dynamic partnerships, the School of Education has secured its place among the most respected institutions in the field, ranking No. 8 among public schools of education in 2024 (and No. 17 overall) by *U.S. News & World Report*.

"This remarkable ascent in the rankings over just 10 short years reflects the collective efforts of our faculty, staff and students, united by a shared vision to reshape education and equip students for success in a globalized, data-centered and technologically driven world," says Dr. Frances Contreras, dean and professor at UC Irvine School of Education. "We continue to distinguish ourselves by prioritizing community impact, with an unwavering commitment to equity, social justice, cutting-edge research and innovative partnerships."



Proudly offering a robust curriculum spanning undergraduate to doctoral studies, UC Irvine School of Education serves as an academic home for educators at all career stages in California and beyond. Originally focused on credentialing high-quality and justice-centered teachers, the School of Education now

prepares and serves future teachers through programs like Master of Arts in Teaching, Cal-Teach and bilingual certificates in Spanish and Asian Languages, addressing the evolving needs of pedagogy from early learning to adulthood.

Bridging Research and Practice

Central to the School of Education's success is its focus on research that addresses critical issues in education. With over \$142 million in active grant funding in 2024 and a total tenure-track faculty of 37, the school stands at the forefront of educational research and innovation.

"This level of funding is an extraordinary achievement for our age and size," notes Contreras. "It amplifies our ability to tackle the most urgent educational needs and ensures that our research has a tangible, meaningful impact. By empowering the next generation of educators, we are investing in a future that is more equitable, just and informed."

The faculty at the School of Education leads cutting-edge studies that not only advance theory but also deliver real-world solutions to pressing challenges, from classroom equity to the integration of technology and AI in teaching. With over 16 active grants related to AI and education, the school is leading in this space across the P-20+ education continuum.

Contreras further emphasizes that research is only as valuable as its application: "The most effective research can be turned into curriculum and applied in real-world settings. This guiding principle drives our efforts to address education's most pressing challenges, from improving equity in classrooms to integrating new technologies into learning environments."

Innovative Partnerships: A Catalyst for Change

At the heart of UC Irvine School of Education's approach is its dedication to reimagining education through partnerships. Notable collaborations with Anaheim Union High School District and Santa Ana Unified School District led to the school's first university-assisted partnership with James Monroe Elementary School in Santa Ana. This innovative facility will integrate research directly into a K-5 dual immersion school, emphasizing language and STEM. This partnership with Monroe Elementary builds on a two-decade-long collaboration with UC Irvine's Center for Educational Partnerships, further strengthening the university-district relationship. The School of Education aims to co-design innovation, inform pedagogy and work with practitioners to improve student outcomes.

Both partnerships are part of the larger Orange County Educational Advancement Network (OCEAN), a coalition of scholars advancing education through collaborative research. These efforts reflect the school's mission to serve the region by applying research to drive innovation and transformation. Through collaboration with faculty, staff, students and community partners, the school fosters change in today's world while shaping tomorrow's leaders.

A Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, UC Irvine School of Education remains steadfast in its mission to address the challenges of the 21st century. Through pioneering research, robust community engagement and innovative programs, the school is poised to continue leading the charge in educational transformation.

"For our students, alumni, partners and the communities we impact, the message is clear: Investing in education today is investing in the future," says Contreras. "Our vision is firmly rooted in a commitment to academic excellence and social responsibility, ensuring that the school remains a leader in educational transformation for years to come."



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