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CONTACTS:
 Jessica Spitz, 916.761.6035 (*ConnectEd for LAPMP*)
 Kerry Blosten, 213.580.7548 (*Chamber for LAPMP*)

RESEARCH SHOWS ADVANTAGES OF MULTIPLE PATHWAYS IN LOS ANGELES HIGH SCHOOL REFORM

Scholars, educators and business and community leaders concur Multiple Pathways approach best meets the needs of today’s workforce with high school graduates who are “college-prepared” and “career-ready”

LOS ANGELES – A diverse coalition of distinguished scholars, educators and business and community leaders came together today at the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce to discuss research regarding a new educational approach that could better prepare Los Angeles’ youth for college, career and civic responsibility.

The 15 new studies by the UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education and Access (IDEA), and funded by The James Irvine Foundation, found that a flexible Multiple Pathways approach focused on college and career—not one or the other—has the unique potential to meet the needs of L.A.’s diverse student population and the city’s future needs for a productive workforce and engaged citizenry. The research shows that A-G plus CTE—career and technical education—could be the right formula for improving high schools in Los Angeles and across California.

“These research results can help end the tired debate about whether we should be preparing our youth for college or the workplace,” said Professor Jeannie Oakes, co-director of UCLA’s IDEA. “Multiple Pathways reforms can prepare students for both college and for the 21st century workforce.”

The three chief components of Multiple Pathways are a college preparatory academic core, a challenging career and technical core and increased opportunities for field-based learning in real-world, authentic situations. These can be offered through a variety of school structures including career academies, industry majors at large high schools, Regional Occupational Centers and thematic small schools or small learning communities.

The researchers found that Multiple Pathways reform could:

- Promote a healthy economy
- Prepare the skilled and nimble workforce required in the 21st century
- Link young people with meaningful, well-paying jobs
- Increase students’ learning
- Increase rates of high school graduation and college preparation
- Provide appropriate academic and career support to students in impoverished areas
- Better address the special needs of English learners
- Promote civic learning

During the briefing, participants discussed how thematic small learning communities (SLCs) are showing positive results for students in more than 170 schools throughout the Los Angeles

Unified School District. Small schools and SLCs provide hands-on, contextualized learning in personalized environments for young people and serve as an example of a multiple pathways approach that aims to give students more relevant and rigorous learning opportunities to ensure that they graduate college-prepared and career-ready.

“Learning comes to life for young people when they are able to personally interact with real world subject matter,” said David Rattray, president of UNITE-LA. “By partnering with one of the many SLCs within LAUSD, everyone can get involved and open a door to the future for young people who may not otherwise believe they can succeed in the world beyond high school.”

Today’s breakfast briefing was sponsored by the James Irvine Foundation and presented by the Los Angeles Partnership for Multiple Pathways (LAPMP), which includes 10 partner organizations. LAPMP promotes the belief that all students deserve a quality education that not only engages them, but also challenges and prepares them to succeed in college, careers and life. LAPMP member organizations include Alliance for a Better Community, Community Coalition, Community Development Department, ConnectEd, HOPE, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, UNITE-LA, United Way of Greater Los Angeles, Urban Education Partnership and UCLA/IDEA.

The full set of 15 Multiple Pathways research papers can be found online at www.idea.gseis.ucla.edu.

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The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit www.lachamber.org.