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CONTACTS: LBUSD, Chris Eftychiou

(562) 997-8250

LBCC, Mark Taylor

(562) 254-8816

CSULB, Rick Glody

(562) 985-5454

Impressive Gains in Student Achievement Announced Today at 5th Anniversary Celebration of The Long Beach College Promise

“A Breakthrough in Student Achievement” report released at Long Beach City College

LONG BEACH, CA – Five years ago, leaders from the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), Long Beach City College (LBCC) and California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) signed The Long Beach College Promise, committing the three institutions to providing local students with greater opportunities to complete their higher education. Today, more high school graduates are enrolling in college, and many more of those students are prepared for rigorous college-level classes.

The leaders of these three institutions unveiled the progress report, “A Breakthrough in Student Achievement,” revealing encouraging results in three key measurements of student achievement: college preparation, college access and college success. For example, the number of LBUSD graduates completing college-level (non-remedial) English at LBCC increased by 500 percent over the previous year. The number of LBUSD students completing college-level math (again, non-remedial) at LBCC jumped by 200 percent over the same period.

The College Promise also has aimed to improve college access by providing key incentives and services that include: tuition-free semesters for 4,000 students at LBCC, guaranteed admission at CSULB for local students who qualify, and college preparation, guidance and college campus visits as early as fourth grade to help elementary students understand that higher education is a dream within reach. LBCC Foundation has raised more than \$6.5 million and established an endowment to pay for the free semesters in perpetuity.

These results and more were highlighted during today’s celebration and news conference. Middle school scholarship recipients and student speakers, including a former Poly High School Rotary scholarship recipient who attended LBCC and is a current student at CSULB, shared success stories about their educational pathways and successes.

The progress report details the key steps that the three institutions have taken since 2008 to prepare more students for success in college and in high-demand, high-paying jobs. The College Promise is the legacy of the Seamless Education Partnership, which began in 1994.

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Today's report shows that the number of LBUSD students who entered CSULB as freshmen grew from 519 in fall 2008 to 743 in fall 2012 – an increase of more than 43 percent since the inception of the College Promise. Even more notable is that the increase in LBUSD students continued despite the fact that CSULB enrolled 2,000 fewer students for two consecutive years (2009-10 and 2010-11) due to cuts in state support to the CSU system.

LBCC transfer students gained admission to CSULB at a rate of 18 percent higher than applicants from other community colleges. More than half of the freshmen admitted to CSULB from LBUSD enrolled at the university, while more than three-fourths of LBCC students who were admitted to the university eventually enrolled.

Today's report from the three institutions also shows:

- Participating LBUSD graduates were placed into LBCC English and math courses based on their high school grades, rather than the traditional method of standardized assessment tests. This approach increased students' access to these non-remedial courses significantly, in turn resulting in the 500 percent increase in English course completions and the 200 percent increase in math course completions.
- Success rates for every demographic group increased with some of the largest relative gains made by Latino and African American students.
- Since 2009, about 26,000 fourth-graders have visited LBCC, and 26,000 fifth-graders have visited CSULB.
- More than 57,500 students and their parents have completed and signed the College Promise Pledge and Educational Plan.

During today's event, officials also awarded nearly 30 scholarships ranging from \$50 to \$250 to LBUSD eighth graders who have shown academic improvement.

The College Promise has become a national model for its efforts to provide Seamless Education for Long Beach students from preschool to graduate school. The partnership also aligned academic standards, teaching methods and student assessment across institutions to improve student achievement and teacher quality.

The College Promise has garnered recognition and attention by the White House and the California State Senate, and is being modeled by many other communities in California, including Fresno, the Inland Empire, Los Angeles, Sacramento and San Francisco.

View the full report on the College Promise at www.longbeachcollegepromise.org.

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Quotes from the leaders of the institutions committed to the College Promise:

- “The latest results of the College Promise show that our school district’s teachers are better at preparing students for college than many educators thought,” said LBUSD Superintendent Christopher J. Steinhauser. “We had a hunch that more of our students could successfully complete college courses, if only we gave them the chance. That hunch is now confirmed, and the College Promise is giving more students that chance.”
- “The collaborative partnership between our three institutions has provided a seamless transition for local students to be college-ready, leading to the successful completion of college-level courses and put them on the path to economic opportunity,” said LBCC Superintendent-President Eloy Ortiz Oakley. “These past five years, the College Promise has helped prepare students in our community for the opportunity for higher education beginning in fourth grade and continues every step of the way through high school, to community college and onto the university level. We look forward to helping more students succeed in higher education for years to come.”
- “The data included in the report released today on the College Promise reinforces the old adage that when people come together and make a commitment to solve a problem, things really can change things for the better,” said California State University, Long Beach President F. King Alexander. “Today’s report underscores that the efforts of our teachers, faculty and staff are paying off. We now know that more Long Beach high school graduates are better prepared to succeed in college than they were five years ago.

I’m proud the College Promise has touched the lives of more than 27,000 children and families living in our community. It inspires area youth to work hard to earn a college degree,” he added. “The College Promise is not only inspirational in nature, but it also helps students move seamlessly through an otherwise complicated education pipeline that is fraught with barriers to success.”

Quote from the College Promise student speaker who attended LBCC and is a current student at CSULB:

- "The resources and friendships I developed at LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB enabled me to make a real plan for my future," said CSULB student Dominique Vera. "I am on my way toward a double major in international business and hospitality management, heading to Germany this summer on an internship, and looking forward to one day becoming a philanthropist so that I can really help those who have less than I do."

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