



## Press Release

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### **MUSD College Preparedness Program Receives New Funding, Continues to Empower Tomorrow's Leaders**

*College Bound Today Receives \$100,000 in Non-Profit Funds while Garnering Increased Board Support*

**MONTEBELLO** – More students, now from all five Montebello Unified high schools, can participate in the District's unique five-semester college preparedness program after the Board of Education and District staff recently signed a five-year memorandum of understanding to expand College Bound Today (CBT). Coupled with a recent charitable donation in amount of \$100,000 from a family foundation based in New York, the expansion will seek to increase enrollment of new 10th-grade students by 10 percent each year for the next five years, among new actions.

"Since its inception, College Bound Today has graduated 384 high school students, with nearly 100 percent going on to college," said MUSD President David Vela. "By recognizing CBT as an official MUSD program and by providing long-term support, we are investing in a program that works to ensure that all student participants are not only accepted into college, but are also prepared when they get there."

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) calls for a declaration by the MUSD Board to recognize CBT as an official program while augmenting District support. In addition, the Board continued the full-time management position of college readiness program specialist for another five-year term and also created a full-time five-year clerical position of a senior office assistant to support the program specialist and the program as a whole.

"By providing staff specific to College Bound Today, in addition to the District's substantial pre-existing support, the Board has provided CBT leadership with the opportunity to recruit more students and mentors while seeking out additional charitable donations to enhance our program," said CBT co-founder Dan Clement. "We are tremendously grateful to the Board for their initial support years ago, and their renewed investment today as we continue to strive to make CBT a self-sustaining non-profit MUSD partner within the next five years. We are also grateful to our past donors who helped us get started, including The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, the Ahmanson Foundation, the Dwight Stewart Youth Fund and Southern California Edison."

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CBT provides its college access program without cost to students and their families, and it works with principals and personnel from all four comprehensive MUSD high schools to recruit 10th-grade students, most of whom have a GPA of at least 3.0. Many students enrolled in the program are first-generation college goers who come from low income families. This year, CBT will incorporate students at Vail High School, the District's continuation high school, into its program.

The MOU also charges CBT leaders to explore three additional projects as possible new co-ventures with MUSD: a two-week summer residential college program at Whittier College for graduating seniors; a system for tracking the post-secondary progress of CBT alumni; and an enhanced parent engagement and mentoring program. Under the terms of the MOU, CBT will undertake additional activities including providing presentations and reports to the Board over the course of each year, upgrading the CBT website and electronic communications between mentors and students, and facilitating coordination between MUSD college and guidance counselors with CBT advisors.

"This extremely comprehensive program is truly a gift for our students as it not only gets students to think of the next step in their academic career early on, it also incorporates parents, teachers, counselors and community members as mentors while tapping into local colleges as valuable resources," MUSD Superintendent of Education Susanna Contreras Smith said. "We are thrilled for the next phase of College Bound Today at MUSD."

Once enrolled, a student is assigned to a team with nine other student peers and three volunteer mentors, many of whom work as teachers, attorneys, doctors, engineers, bankers or business owners. Throughout the course of the program, students are transported to 11 Southern California colleges and universities; obtain assistance with the college and financial aid application process, which includes creating a customized list of colleges for each student and help with drafting personal statements; participate in peer learning; and receive a free, 30-hour SAT or ACT prep course as 11th-graders.

The teams meet at school sites on Saturday mornings, four times each semester throughout the school year. Many mentors are bilingual and are able communicate with parents whose English is limited. In addition, MUSD provides interpreters for all CBT parent meetings to ensure that parents have access to college-related information. Parents are also invited to attend panel discussions presented by parents of past CBT graduates, where they can learn about their students' upcoming transition as they become college students.

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**Montebello Unified School District** is a dynamic learning institution employing top-quality educators. It is the combined work of many that allows the District to continue educating more than 30,000 students every year using the 40 Developmental Assets at all of our school sites. It is through everyone's efforts – students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators – that we are achieving the District's number one goal of raising student achievement. Learn more online at [www.montebello.k12.ca.us](http://www.montebello.k12.ca.us).