

Internship Program Design for Vista Unified School District



Case Study

The Client

San Diego Workforce Partnership, San Diego, California

The Project

Internship Program Design for Vista Unified School District

The Challenge

As the local workforce development board, the San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP) recognizes the value of work-based learning opportunities, to expose students to hands-on professional experiences and future careers. The SDWP has developed a strategic plan to engage with Vista Unified School District (VUSD) to support the district's Career Pathways initiative, known as the Career Superhighway. A key component of this initiative is to promote college and career readiness by expanding VUSD's existing internship program to be more robust and accessible for students across the district's three comprehensive high schools. The SDWP asked Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) to conduct a review of the current internship program and share actionable recommendations for improvement.

The PCG Approach

PCG staff carried out an in-depth analysis of current VUSD internship program structures and processes that culminated in the Internship Program Design Recommendations Report. The purpose of the analysis was to gain a clear understanding of the VUSD Internship Program and develop informed recommendations. PCG's team reviewed current VUSD structures, staffing, student data, and written internship materials. PCG's team also spent three days conducting onsite, in-person interviews and focus groups with a variety of stakeholders, to collect feedback on the current state of the internship program and identify areas for improvement. Additional interviews were conducted over the phone following the site visits. The findings were included in the final report along with supplementary research on exemplars engaging in best practices to provide work-based learning opportunities for students.

The report offered an overview of current internship program operations and detailed strategic action steps for a proposed plan for improvement. These recommendations focused on: 1) reorganizing and redefining roles and responsibilities, 2) enhancing overall communication, 3) strengthening connections to career readiness, 4) coordinating data tracking and monitoring, and 5) leveraging virtual tools. To supplement

narratives of stakeholder roles and relationships, the report also included relational maps to visually portray the current state of the VUSD internship learning program, the proposed future state of the program, and work-based learning in the district, more broadly.

Following delivery of the Internship Program Design Recommendations Report, PCG's team facilitated action planning sessions with SDWP and VUSD leadership.

Key Deliverables From PCG Included:

- Delivery and implementation of a detailed project management plan, including written monthly status report updates and accomplishments.
- Interviews/focus groups with a total of 58 stakeholders, including Board of Education members; district leaders and staff; high school faculty and staff; principals and administrators from elementary, middle, and high schools; high school students currently participating in internships; parents of students at all grade levels; community business leaders; and staff from the San Diego County Office of Education.
- The Recommendations Report that reviewed the current state of the VUSD Internship Program and outlined areas of improvement in five (5) key growth areas. The report also included relational maps for the current state and proposed future state of VUSD's work-based learning program.
- Action planning sessions with SDWP and VUSD leaders to determine goals related to student work-based learning engagement and steps to achieve them.

Contact us to learn more.

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