Tips for Encouraging K–12 Districts and Four-Year Universities to Join Cal-PASS Plus

With many grants focused on improving pipelines between K–12 and higher education and with efforts to build more coherent pathways between two- and four-year colleges, access to data on student performance that crosses education segments is critical for designing and improving programs. Cal-PASS Plus is a data system that connects student performance information between California K-12 districts, community colleges, and four-year universities. Furthermore, with the development of the LaunchBoard—which brings together academic data, employment outcomes, and labor market information—Cal-PASS Plus also enables educators to see how their students fare once they enter post-secondary education and the workforce. This guide explains how California community college leaders and practitioners can reach out to K–12 districts and to their four-year universities to ensure that they participate in this statewide data system, thereby strengthening access to information for all involved.

What is Cal-PASS Plus?

Cal-PASS Plus is California's free, actionable system of data that connects student performance from pre-K through grade 12 to college or university. All California community colleges are automatically members of Cal-PASS Plus, whereas K-12 districts and universities participate voluntarily. Cal-PASS Plus data, coupled with that from the LaunchBoard, can be used to inform efforts to align programs and curriculum, identify scalable best practices, close the achievement gap, and ensure students' successful transitions from pre-K–12 through college and university and into the workforce.

Cal-PASS Plus is made possible through leadership and funding from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Since 2013, Cal-PASS Plus has been managed by San Joaquin Delta College and the non-profit Educational Results Partnership.

What Does Participation Mean?

Cal-PASS Plus members, under signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and data-sharing agreements, can utilize the data system to help them understand and improve student performance and success across the education pipeline. They can, for example,

- Download data for research
- Run queries on specific cohorts, course work, and student populations
- View student progress along K–16 feeder patterns, including disaggregated data on characteristics such as ethnicity and gender

Joining Cal-PASS Plus also allows education institutions to share information with each other in a safe and secure manner. Data are displayed in a way that ensures student privacy while still enabling educators to understand how well their students do, both in school and in the workplace.

Why is Participation by all Segments of Education Important for Community Colleges?

Many of the LaunchBoard dashboards, including, such as the K-14 CTE Transition Report, rely on understanding student progression from K–12 to college—student-level information that is drawn from the Cal-PASS Plus dataset. If K–12 districts and four-year partners aren't members of Cal-PASS Plus, their information can't be included in the LaunchBoard.

Furthermore, being able to share comparable information about student outcomes, as students move between K-12, community college, and university systems, can be an enormous support for such efforts as aligning curricula, supporting articulation agreements, and designing dual enrollment opportunities. For K–12 districts, seeing such outcomes as college-going rates, developmental education assessments, and degree or certificate attainment can be a powerful tool for joint action with higher education partners. Similarly, for four-year institutions, having a better understanding of students' pathways before students embark on their bachelor's degrees can yield clues on how to work with K-12 and community college partners to streamline college access and success

How Do I Find Out Whether My K–12 District And Four-Year University Partners Are In Cal-PASS Plus?

In the drop down menus of the *Pre K-12 Schools*, *Community Colleges*, and *Universities* buttons on the Cal-PASS Plus home page (www.calpassplus.org), you will find an option called *Member List*. Click on this link to search by individual district or by region, see which institutions are members, and determine which have current data in the Cal-PASS Plus system.

Who Should I Contact at K–12 Districts or Universities about Joining Cal-PASS Plus?

If the district or university is not a member of Cal-PASS Plus, a two-pronged strategy may help. First, identify someone who would be interested in accessing the kinds of data available in Cal-PASS Plus, such as someone you are working with on a grant or a project. Next, work with that person to prepare a request for the institution's leadership. In K–12 districts, such requests would usually go to the superintendent, whereas at a university it is generally the chancellor who would make such a decision.

If the district or university is a Cal-PASS Plus member but has not uploaded its data, reach out to the program contact associated with the membership. You can request information on program contacts on the Cal-PASS Plus website.

How Can I Encourage K–12 Districts To Participate In Cal-PASS Plus?

Below are answers to common questions that K–12 districts have about joining Cal-PASS Plus. In addition to having these talking points to share, you can also download a flyer that spells out the benefits of participation.

Is It Difficult for K–12 Districts to Join?

While California community college data are automatically uploaded to Cal-PASS Plus, K–12 districts need to join Cal-PASS Plus and manually upload their information each year. This process has been streamlined, so K–12 districts may need to be alerted that data uploads will require minimal effort. Here is what they need to do:

- *Join*: Districts with authorized signers can complete an online MOU using an electronic signature. Other districts should submit an online request for an MOU (https://www.calpassplus.org/CalPASS/Join.aspx). An MOU will be sent by mail for review and signature.

- *Upload*: Data can be uploaded by dragging and dropping the end-of-year Cal-PADS file that districts already submit to the California Department of Education.

How does Cal-PASS Plus Benefit K–12 Districts?

Cal-PASS Plus has built out a number of new resources that address priority K–12 issues. These resources include:

- Secure, password-protected, and FERPA-compliant student-level reports that allow K-12 educators to see which colleges their students went to, how many students were assigned to remedial coursework after enrolling in higher education, and students' success in college
- Labor market information covering projected job openings, high demand fields, and unemployment rates at the county and regional levels
- Robust datasets available for download for internal research and custom analyses
- Specialized tools, visuals, and dashboards to support conversations around such key topics as career and technical education outcomes, foster youth success, and student access to financial aid

How Can I Encourage Four-Year Universities to Participate?

This section covers similar questions that four-year universities may have about joining Cal-PASS Plus. In addition to having these talking points to share, you can also download a flyer that spells out the benefits of participation.

Is It Difficult for Universities to Join?

Four-year universities need to join Cal-PASS Plus and manually upload their information at the end of each academic year. Here is what they need to do:

- *Join*: Colleges with authorized signers can complete an online MOU using an electronic signature. Other colleges should submit an online request for an MOU (https://www.calpassplus.org/CalPASS/Join.aspx). An MOU will be sent by mail for review and signature.

- *Upload*: Data can be uploaded by filling out the [university data layout](#), which contains student, course, and award information, then selecting the files from a local hard drive and clicking "Submit Files."

What Benefits Do Universities Get?

Cal-PASS Plus can provide information on:

- Which K–12 districts and community colleges each university's students came from
- The numbers of students from individual K–12 districts who went on to attend specific California Community Colleges, California State Universities, and Universities of California
- A regional education-to-workforce pipeline that shows projected college readiness for K–12 students, community college outcomes, university outcomes, and labor market data, such as high-growth job fields
- Complete datasets for member K–12 districts and community colleges that can be used for research

Where Can I Find Out More?

Visit Cal-PASS Plus (www.calpassplus.org) for more information and to view sample data. You can request additional information about Cal-PASS Plus by contacting the Outreach Department at outreach@calpassplus.org or (916) 498-8980. For technical support, please email help@calpassplus.org or call (916) 678-0101.

Visit the LaunchBoard website (https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/Home.aspx) to get a copy of this guide or one-page flyers that can be used to recruit K–12 district and university partners.