

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Bill Schlotter

Santa Barbara, Ventura County Partner Schools to Attend UCSB-Led 'Raising Student Achievement' Conference in Camarillo

As a group, students from economically disadvantaged families and students of color traditionally have struggled to reach levels of academic success achieved by other groups.

But according to the Education Trust, a national advocacy organization dedicated to raising academic performance in the nation's schools, high student achievement in minority and low-income communities requires nothing less than equally high performance by the community's schools.

To that end, teachers, counselors and administrators from high schools, junior highs and middle schools in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties will attend "Raising Student Achievement," a conference put on by The Education Trust Thursday, May 29 from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m at the Cowan Conference Center in Camarillo.

The conference is co-sponsored by the School-University Partnerships Office of the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Santa Barbara, the Enlace y Avance Program administered by UCSB's Center for Chicano Studies, and UCSB's Early Academic Outreach office.

Tom Ostwald, director of the School-University Partnerships Office, said those attending will represent UCSB partnership schools in Santa Maria, Lompoc, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Port Hueneme, and Oxnard. And he said The Education Trust will discuss programs that have proven successful in other areas.

"They have some well-tested methodologies to help schools move kids ahead," Ostwald said.

The fundamental belief of The Education Trust is that all children can learn at high levels if they are taught at high levels. Ostwald said he and the staffs of the UCSB partnership schools believe that, too.

And all parties also believe that every school has areas in which it could better help its minority and low-income students to do better.

Topics at the seminar include dispelling the myth that such students can't do better, making school schedules more efficient, understanding barriers to student achievement, supporting school counselors' efforts to be advocates for high achievement and more.

Ostwald said the current school-university partnerships have existed for five years. This is the third in a series of conferences to help improve the performance of lower-achieving students.

"This is an opportunity for these schools to explore ways that they can reach their own goals of enticing students to do better," he said. "We know it's not going to happen in one day, but it's another step."

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