



**CENTER TO CLOSE
THE OPPORTUNITY GAP**

CSU The California State University

**** California Department of Education Awards Residency Capacity Grant to CCOG and Santa Ana USD****

The Center to Close the Opportunity Gap (CCOG) and the Santa Ana Unified School District (SAUSD) have made notable progress in their mission to close the opportunity gap in education. The California Department of Education has awarded them the School Counselor Residency Capacity Grant for their initiative, "Project PREP" (Professional Residency Experience Program).

Project PREP is a collaboration between SAUSD and California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), designed to develop a school counselor residency program. The primary goal is twofold: to provide practical training and experience to CSULB School Counseling graduate students and to tackle the shortage of school counselors within the Santa Ana Unified School District.

"We are excited to announce that the California Department of Education has recognized the significance of Project PREP in bridging the opportunity gap in education," said Dr. Caroline Lopez-Perry, Co-Director of The Center to Close the Opportunity Gap. "This grant is a testament to our steadfast commitment to collaborate with districts in preparing and recruiting their next generation of school counselors,"

This forward-thinking program will focus on the planning and development phase of the residency program, establishing a strong foundation for future grant funding opportunities. By offering aspiring school counselors invaluable hands-on experience within the SAUSD, Project PREP aims to empower the next generation of school counseling professionals who can effectively address the unique needs of students, especially those from underserved communities. "It reinforces our dedication to equipping these aspiring professionals with the necessary tools and experiences to serve students effectively and ensuring all students receive the support they need to succeed academically and beyond," said Dr. Natalie Edirmanasinghe, Assistant Professor in the school counseling program.

The Center to Close the Opportunity Gap expresses their gratitude to the California Department of Education for their support and recognition of the importance of this project.