



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

Partnering for Student Success



How Ag Prep Brings Together Schools,
Colleges, and Industry

Fall 2017

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By Thad Nodine

Thad Nodine is an education writer affiliated with Jobs for the Future, a Boston-based national nonprofit that provides technical assistance in support of The Wonderful Company's education programs.

This brief on Wonderful Agriculture Career Prep (Ag Prep) is part of a series that includes an overview of the program (College and Career Success in the Central Valley), a description of student supports (Getting Ahead at School), and two briefs on linking education and careers (Skills Mapping in the Central Valley and Job Shadowing in Agriculture). All are available at www.wonderfuleducation.org.

Salvia Convention Center



The Power of Partnerships. In 2013, after investing in education in California’s San Joaquin Valley for over 20 years, Wonderful Education, under new leadership, conceived a plan for making high school more rigorous and relevant for students.

The basic idea was to break down the walls between high school, college, and the workplace. The company’s leaders wanted to give high school students throughout the Valley a wonderful opportunity: to earn college credits and gain work skills, free of charge (including an associate degree); obtain career experience through paid internships in the Agriculture industry; and benefit from other work-based and college-prep opportunities.

The purpose? **To increase college and career success for high school graduates, reduce persistent rates of poverty and unemployment, strengthen communities, and improve workforce skills in the San Joaquin Valley.**

Five years ago, to bring the idea to fruition, Lynda Resnick and Noemi Donoso reached out to community colleges and school districts throughout the Valley, with a specific design for educational change. Resnick is Founder and Owner of The Wonderful Company, along with her husband Stewart. Donoso is Senior Vice President in charge of Wonderful Education. Wonderful’s orchards and processing facilities are based in California’s Central Valley, and the company is one of the largest agricultural businesses in the world. It grows, harvests, distributes, and markets healthy foods to people across the U.S. and around the globe.

“The Ag Prep partnership has the power to change communities across the Central Valley—and it’s replicable to other regions. By increasing the number of college graduates and creating a skilled workforce pipeline, we’re working to reduce unemployment and generate local economic growth.”

— Lynda Resnick

Founder, The Wonderful Company

Fast-forward five years, and the company's vision has been realized in a public-private partnership called Wonderful Agriculture Career Prep (Ag Prep). Ag Prep spans several communities in the Valley, bringing together seven public high schools, seven feeder middle schools, three community colleges, two campuses of the California State University (CSU), The Wonderful Company and its many brands, and other Ag-based companies. In spring 2018, the seniors who began high school as Ag Prep's inaugural freshman class will become the program's first graduates. The road to get there, both for students and for institutional partners, has been challenging and inspirational.

Regional public-private partnerships among high schools, community colleges, and industry are becoming more common in California and other states; they offer powerful opportunities to address student needs across educational systems and streamline student pathways through schools, colleges, and universities and into the workforce. Because the partnerships bring together institutions with different missions and administrative

structures, however, they can be difficult to manage and slow to realize change. The work requires active collaboration among staff and instructors who are already working full-time.

Each institution brings to the table its own culture and history, professional standards, and regulatory burdens. Participants must advance and sustain change within their own organizations despite leadership turnover. These kinds of partnerships have been likened to the confluence of multiple rivers: deeper and stronger where they merge, but also rough and difficult to navigate.

There are several characteristics that differentiate Ag Prep from most regional partnerships. One is that Ag Prep is managed by an industry partner, which is not unusual in European vocational education systems but is quite rare in the United States. Wonderful Education created the program and helped to create the curriculum based on current and future industry needs. Many school-based Ag programs in the Central Valley were created before technology became such a critical part of the industry.

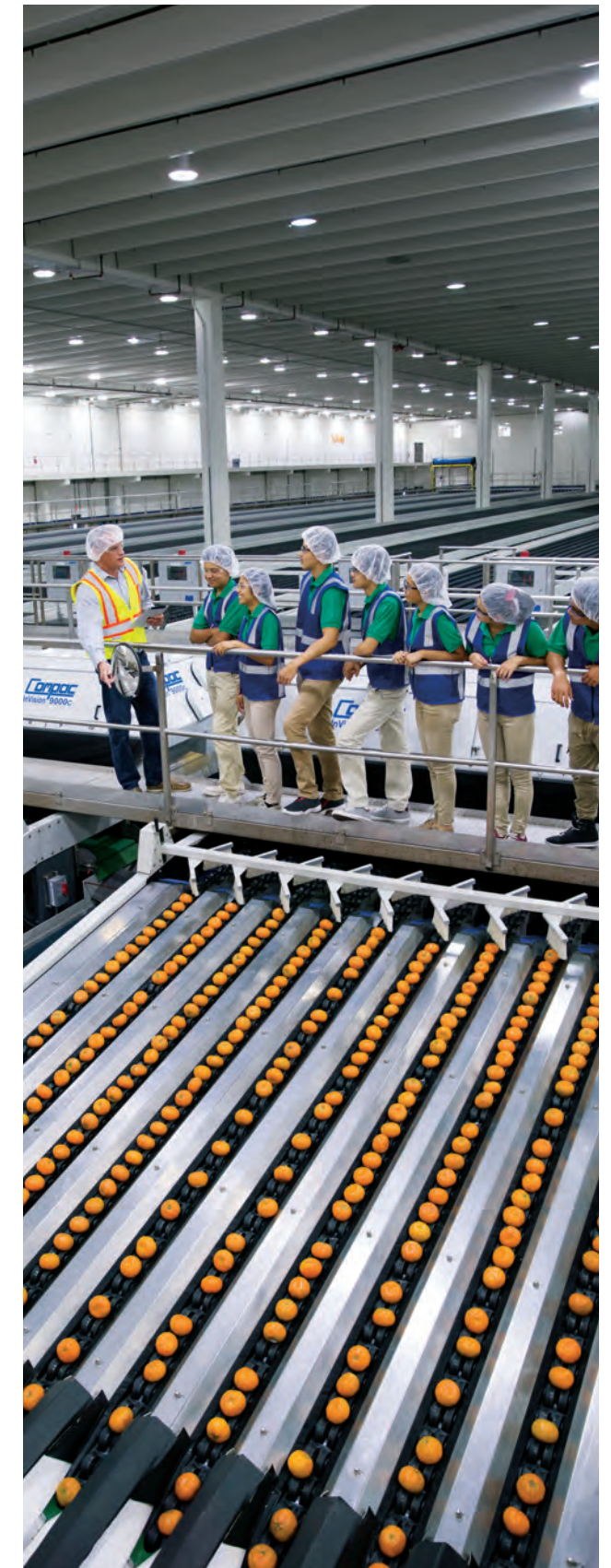
Wonderful Education also provides leadership, research, coordination, and technical support for Ag Prep, as well as networking and information-sharing. The Wonderful Company invests over \$1.6 million annually in the partnership (not including college scholarships) and offers a range of career experiences for students, including job shadows, mentorships, guaranteed paid internships for seniors who are on track to meet program requirements, and guaranteed job placement for graduates. The company's engagement is pivotal to Ag Prep's achievements.

“The Ag Prep partnership is the prime example of what industry leadership can look like in education, and it's also a prime example of what regional work involves.”

— **Christopher Cabaldon**
President, Linked Learning Alliance

A second distinguishing characteristic is Ag Prep's tight educational design, which is codified in Partnership Agreements. Each school and college has a strong role in the partnership and full authority over its facilities and students, but each partner agrees to implement the full Ag Prep model, including its goals for student performance.

This brief describes how Ag Prep was created and identifies the roles of each partner. But first, the brief shares Ag Prep's outcomes for its first cohort of students, set to graduate in 2018. These early outcomes provide a glimpse of what partnerships among high schools, colleges, and industry can achieve in advancing student opportunity and success.



Student Outcomes, 2017

During its first three years, Ag Prep grew from 190 high school students in 2014–15 to 2,170 middle and high school students in 2017–18. Participating students are from some of the lowest-income families in California. On average, Ag Prep students begin high school at the 6th or 7th grade level in math and reading. High school dropout rates in the San Joaquin Valley are above the state average, whereas college-going rates are below the average, especially for four-year degrees. Despite these demographic challenges, students in the Valley can achieve exemplary outcomes (see Ag Prep’s Inaugural Class below).

As of November 2017, 73% of Ag Prep’s inaugural class had a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or above, were on track to meet the entrance requirements for the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU), *and* were on track to earn an associate of science degree the summer after graduation. To reward and encourage this student success, Lynda and Stewart Resnick announced a new college scholarship for every graduate who meets the Ag Prep requirements with a high school GPA of 3.0 or higher. The scholarship—renewable for up to three years for a potential total of \$18,000—offers \$4,000 annually for those who attend CSU and \$6,000 annually for those who attend UC, a private four-year college, or a public four-year college out of state.

Ag Prep’s Inaugural Class

Staying the course	65% of Ag Prep’s original cohort of incoming freshmen have remained in Ag Prep into the 12th grade.
On track for college prep	93% of Ag Prep’s first graduating class are on track to complete all of the a-g courses required for entrance at UC and CSU. For comparison, less than half of the state’s high school graduates meet a-g requirements. At similar schools in the San Joaquin Valley, less than 30% do so.
On track for an associate degree in agriculture	85% are on track to earn an associate of science degree in agriculture by the summer after high school graduation. When Ag Prep launched, none of its partner high schools were offering opportunities to earn an associate degree.

Note: Data based on performance of 123 Ag Prep seniors as of November 2017.

“At the beginning, a common narrative was, ‘These kids can’t do college-level work.’ Well, we don’t hear that anymore, because these students are succeeding in college.”

— **David East**

Reef-Sunset Unified School District

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Building Partnerships

After developing the Ag Prep model, Lynda Resnick and Noemi Donoso met individually with more than a dozen community college presidents in the San Joaquin Valley. They described the concept as Ag-themed pathways in high school taught by college professors, with access to industry experts. Colleges would receive state funding for dually enrolled Ag Prep students, greater visibility at high schools in their area, and The Wonderful Company's engagement with professors on industry standards, including externships at orchards and production facilities.



In exchange, interested colleges were asked to deliver on two non-negotiables: students would *earn college credits in real time*, so they could take those credits to any state college or university in California; and college professors would teach the college courses *on the high school campus*. The two conditions proved to be non-starters for some colleges. "These conditions were our entry points for a second meeting," Donoso said. "It was disappointing how few wanted to move forward, but that saved us a lot of time up front."

"We're working to create systemic change with this partnership. We're developing a model that other schools and colleges can use, and it can be scaled at a level that works for them. We have students who haven't had any exposure to college, and now they're earning substantial college credits in high school. This is transforming how they act, not just in pursuing a college degree but also in working to lift their family out of poverty."

— Sandra Caldwell
President, Reedley College

What is Ag Prep?

Ag Prep is a partnership that brings together schools, colleges, universities, and industry in the San Joaquin Valley to create fundamental changes in how students experience school. In Ag Prep, students complete a college-prep curriculum and 60 college credits in high school, which enables them to earn an associate degree during the summer after graduation. Students also participate in one of three Ag-themed pathways: Ag Business, Ag Mechanics, or Plant Science. Graduates can transfer to a university (with half their college credits already completed) or they can go straight into a one-year job fellowship in the Agriculture industry, guaranteed by The Wonderful Company. In a region where too many students face low expectations, Ag Prep raises the bar.

In the second meeting, Wonderful Education's leaders shared a detailed Partnership Agreement with each college. The document laid out a program model that was tightly defined in two ways: **(1) services and other inputs partners would provide and (2) student outcomes they would achieve**. West Hills College had recently opened its Farm of the Future program in agriculture and technology, and its Board of Trustees was the first to sign on. Reedley College and Bakersfield College became partners as well.

Meanwhile, Wonderful Education began meeting with superintendents of promising school districts that fed into West Hills College, Reedley College, or Bakersfield

College. At their first meetings, Resnick and Donoso again asked for commitments, none of which were being provided by the high schools at the time:

- A schedule of college courses that would lead to an associate of science degree in Ag Business, Ag Mechanics, or Plant Science for all Ag Prep students, and a master schedule to accommodate 90-minute college classes,
- Mandatory summer sessions for all Ag Prep students to complete college courses, and
- Mandatory enrollment of all Ag Prep students in all a-g courses required for entry into UC or CSU.



In return, Wonderful Education offered:

- Financial support for a portion of Ag Prep services, support in applying for funding from the California Career Pathways Trust (CCPT), and funding for facility upgrades, which was not allowed with CCPT funds,
- A team to launch and manage the partnership, and
- A commitment to provide industry-aligned work-based learning experiences for Ag Prep students, including coordination of guest speakers, tours of orchards and processing plants, job shadowing, mentoring, paid internships, and more.

As with the colleges, those who accepted these conditions then engaged in a deep analysis of the Partnership Agreement. Over the past few years, about a dozen district leaders seriously explored an Ag Prep partnership. Some struggled to get buy-in from others in their district. Some were reluctant to make changes to the high school's existing Ag program, others could not get teacher buy-in for requirements like scheduling, and a few met resistance at the board level. "Having ambitious program inputs and student outcomes quantified in Partnership Agreements definitely made district stakeholders think twice before signing on," said Donoso. "But it saved everybody time and resources over the long run, because it meant that those who signed on were committed."

By the end of 2013, three school districts joined the partnership: Avenal High School partnered with West Hills College to create a career pathway in Plant Science; Wonderful College Prep Academy joined Bakersfield College in developing a career pathway in Ag Business; and Sanger High School partnered with Reedley College to create career pathways in Plant Science and Ag Mechanics.

According to superintendents and college presidents who joined, the key attraction was the opportunity for students to earn college credits and gain career experience while in high school, which was described as a "game changer" in the Valley. They were also intrigued, they said, by the potential impacts that The Wonderful Company could bring to their institutions and communities, not only in financial support but in networking, guidance on workforce issues and industry standards, and technical support.

Ag Prep received grant funding from the California Career Pathways Trust (\$9.9 million in 2014 and \$8.7

million in 2015) to expand its model to include additional public high schools (see Ag Prep Partners, 2017). The partnership also added feeder middle schools, to engage younger students in hands-on Ag projects in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math). Among postsecondary institutions, Ag Prep is reaching beyond its three community colleges to partner with local CSU campuses to create a seamless pipeline for Ag Prep graduates. Fresno State was the first university to enter an articulation agreement that guarantees admission for students who transition into the same pathway and meet local student transfer requirements. The partnership is working on expanding this agreement with other universities. On the industry side, The Wonderful Company leads the partnership, with participation from local businesses and Ag companies, and occasional consulting from Jobs for the Future, the national intermediary that led the development of early college high schools and now leads the Pathways to Prosperity State Network.

Ag Prep Partners, 2017

Agricultural Companies

The Wonderful Company and its brands:
Wonderful Halos, Wonderful Orchards,
Wonderful Pistachios & Almonds, and
POM Wonderful

California Cotton Ginners & Growers
Association

Fresno County Farm Bureau

Olam International

Western Agricultural Processors Association
(WAPA)

Middle Schools

American Union Elementary School

Mendota Junior High School

Reef-Sunset Middle School

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

Washington Academic Middle School

West Fresno Middle School

Wonderful College Prep Academy (Delano)

High Schools

Avenal High School

Mendota High School

Reedley Middle College High School

Sanger High School

Wasco Union High School

Washington Union High School

Wonderful College Prep Academy (Delano)

Community Colleges

Bakersfield College

Reedley College

West Hills College

Universities

Fresno State University

CSU Bakersfield



The Roles of Wonderful Education

Wonderful Education has been working for two decades to improve college and career opportunities for students in the Central Valley. With the creation of Ag Prep, Wonderful Education took on the stronger role of an education management organization and work-based learning intermediary. The company did this by developing a program model, reaching out to school districts and community colleges to join, facilitating a continuum of work-based learning experiences, and actively managing and expanding the partnership. **Many schools and colleges in California are working to improve student outcomes, but very few people or programs within the education systems are responsible for bridging the gaps that students encounter as they transition from high school to college, from community college to a four-year university, and from education into the workforce.**

In effect, Wonderful Education is serving that role for Ag Prep students by providing infrastructure, leadership, funding, and technical support among partnering schools, colleges, universities, and industry.

As Ag Prep has evolved, Wonderful Education has taken on a range of management roles, including updating the Partnership Agreements; facilitating regional, cross-site, and on-site meetings; developing support and training programs for teachers and staff; creating and coordinating summer boot camps and work-based learning programs for students; tracking student learning outcomes and ensuring that partners are addressing student needs promptly; and helping to identify and address cross-institutional issues, including curriculum, admissions, student supports, data analysis, logistics, and facility improvement.

“This is not just a path to something later. Students in Ag Prep earn college credits now. They can knock off two years of college while they’re in high school—and there’s a job opportunity waiting when they complete the program. This community has a high unemployment rate, so this is golden for our students, our parents, and our community.”

— Paul Lopez,

Superintendent, Mendota Unified School District

Wonderful Education Team

Wonderful Education manages Ag Prep through the following positions, all of which are funded by The Wonderful Company, with some support from grants.

Senior Vice President. Oversees the program and the partnership, including planning, networking, sustainability, and improved execution.

Director. Supports, coordinates, and trains Ag Prep Coordinators and school teams, including overseeing interdisciplinary projects and student case management.

Work-Based Learning Manager. Manages all work-based learning activities and oversees mentorships for 11th graders and paid internships for 12th graders.

Work-Based Learning Coordinator. Supports all work-based learning and coordinates industry convention participation for 9th graders and job shadowing for 10th graders.

College Coordinator. Coordinates college application, enrollment, and scholarship processes, and oversees college tours for high school and middle school students.

Middle School STEM Director. Designs, implements, and provides technical support for middle school Ag-STEM electives and overnight career camps.

The Wonderful Education team creates a dashboard for each school and cohort, provides data analytics quarterly, and produces annual reports. Each high school and college has a dedicated Ag Prep Coordinator to streamline and monitor student progress, coordinate academic support, and serve other functions to improve student success. Other positions at the schools and colleges are described under the Partnership Agreements section.

Creating and Maintaining High Standards for Student Learning

In managing Ag Prep, Wonderful Education maintains a sharp focus on student learning in all interactions with schools, colleges, and industry. Ag Prep’s changes in the school day and in the curriculum are challenging to implement, and students need substantial interventions and supports to meet their learning goals. What grounds the work is a case management system at each school, managed by the Ag Prep Coordinator at the site, that identifies early and often the students who are struggling. Staff at Wonderful Education help to monitor these student data and they initiate discussions with school staff and instructors to address students’ gaps in learning. These are productive, roll-up-your-sleeves meetings to problem-solve challenges and create proactive solutions. The discussions may lead to technical support or professional development, and can include principals or superintendents, with the focus on working together to understand student needs and support learning outcomes.



Capacity Building

In supporting the goals of Ag Prep, Wonderful Education facilitates the following capacity building and networking opportunities among Ag Prep partners:

Regional Collaborative. School district superintendents, school principals, college presidents and deans, and industry managers meet three times a year. Regional Collaborative meetings enable the partners to learn from one another, codify best practices, hold themselves accountable, make decisions and keep the partnership focused on improving outcomes for Ag Prep students.

Pathway Advisory Committees (PACs). Each of Ag Prep's three career pathways—Ag Business, Ag Mechanics, and Plant Science—has formed a PAC that meets in-person three times a year for in-depth discussions about skills development and industry alignment. The participants from industry are mid-level managers, supervisors, engineers, and directors. They are joined by high school teachers, coordinators, and principals and by college faculty, department chairs, and deans.

Team Coordinator Meetings. Each high school and community college has an Ag Prep Coordinator to facilitate and support student needs. These ten staff members meet monthly in person for data sharing, training, coordination, and problem solving within and across institutions.

Individual Coordinator Meetings. The Ag Prep Director meets weekly by phone with each high school and college Ag Prep Coordinator, and often with superintendents, principals, and deans. Meetings provide updates on student outcomes and focus on issues to be addressed.

Site Visits. The Director conducts site visits regularly to each high school, to meet with Ag Prep team members and conduct classroom or other observations, with the purpose of supporting teachers and tracking program development.

The Partnership Agreements

The Ag Prep partnership is operationalized through Partnership Agreements signed by each institution and The Wonderful Company. The Agreement identifies the essential elements of the Ag Prep model, so that schools, colleges, and business partners are clear that they are committing to a specific range of services and outcomes. The approach seeks tight control of program design and provides substantial engagement, technical support, and the tracking and sharing of student outcomes to ensure high-quality implementation. Schools have flexibility in how they offer academic supports to students, but are required to provide a specified amount of such services. If student performance lags, then discussions ensue about specific academic support options.

Education programs that are more loosely managed and that allow for substantial interpretation in execution can likely be replicated more quickly than more tightly controlled models like Ag Prep, but “the odds that the quality of the results will suffer are also higher” (Colby et al. 2005). That is to say, Ag Prep's tightly controlled model is not for all school districts or community colleges. Rather, it has attracted those with a strong vision to improve opportunities for students in the Valley

and those with the motivation and persistence to make ambitious changes to students' educational experience. According to Donoso, not every institution can implement every element of the Agreement on day one, but each element becomes an important goal and the basis for an ongoing conversation about how to achieve it.

“This agreement has been extremely helpful because it shows us the full spectrum of what can be delivered, and we work toward that.”

— **Sandra Caldwell,**
President, Reedley College

Student Learning Outcomes. The Agreement identifies more than 30 targeted outcomes, the bulk of which focus on student achievement, such as grade-level performance in math and English, completion of the a-g series of courses required for admission to UC or CSU, and completion of the full range of college courses required for the associate of science in agriculture (60 units).

Articulated Program of Study. For each high school-college partnership, the Agreement identifies the required program of study for each Ag Prep student. This includes the a-g courses required for entrance at UC and CSU, and the sequence of college courses that students will enroll in, depending on their pathway in Ag Business, Ag Mechanics, or Plant Science. These include a minimum of 9 college units for freshmen, an additional 9 units for sophomores, 15 units for juniors, 21 units for seniors, and 6 units the summer after graduation. All college credits count toward an associate degree.

“Having a detailed agreement establishes a clear vision and mutual accountability. It creates a strong frame for your partnership and for your ongoing conversations. You have to be courageous to create the vision and to make adjustments within that vision. That's really important.”

— **Matt Navo,**
Superintendent, Sanger Unified
School District



Budget and Sustainability. The Partnership Agreement specifies the shared costs that each middle school, high school, community college, and The Wonderful Company agrees to fund (see Shared Cost Models below). For example, each high school agrees to

pay for half of a dedicated Ag Prep Coordinator and The Wonderful Company pays for the other half. All coursework and textbooks are free to students. For the schools and colleges, much of the expense is recouped through per-student state funding.

Ag Prep Shared Cost Model: High School Programs, Annually		
	Amount	Share
Each high school's contribution	\$300,000	36%
Each community college's contribution, per high school	\$240,000	29%
The Wonderful Company's contribution, per high school	\$298,000	36%
Total per high school	\$838,000	100%
The Wonderful Company's contribution, across 7 schools	\$1,639,000	

Notes: All figures are approximate. Costs per high school are based on cohorts of 60 for each grade 9 to 12. Costs across 7 schools account for 4 high schools with cohorts of 60 per grade and 3 high schools with cohorts of 30 per grade. Figures do not include facility upgrades to meet industry standards, some of which The Wonderful Company pays. Percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding.

Ag Prep Shared Cost Model: Middle School Programs, Annually		
	Amount	Share
Each middle school's contribution	\$105,000	53%
The Wonderful Company's contribution, per middle school	\$93,000	47%
Total per middle school	\$198,000	100%
The Wonderful Company's contribution, across 7 schools	\$651,000	

Note: Figures are approximate and are based on a minimum of 150 participating students per school.

The Roles of Each Partner

The Partnership Agreement identifies each partner's responsibilities, including enrollment levels, service requirements, and student outcomes.

Middle schools agree to provide Ag-STEM electives for 300 7th and 8th graders annually, to spark interest in STEM careers. Schools coordinate and supervise quarterly student trips to industry sites and science centers. Instructors agree to attend 10 days of training per year. Teachers also work with an instructional coach two to four times per month. Schools agree to integrate learning-garden units into science classes.

High schools recruit a cohort of 30 or 60 freshmen annually (based on school capacity) and retain at least 90% at year end. They agree to offer the full program of study required by its selected college pathways, each of which meets all a-g requirements and includes college courses totaling 60 college credits and an associate degree. Schools agree to work with industry partners to develop and coordinate work-based learning opportunities. They ensure that their master schedules: (a) permit Ag Prep students to share core classes, (b) incorporate all required college classes, and (c) provide flexibility to accommodate off-site work-based learning.

Schools agree to provide the following academic supports:

- A dedicated coordinator to monitor student progress, coordinate academic support services, and work with students and teachers to ensure students meet all Ag Prep requirements.
- A minimum of five hours of intervention (i.e., remediation support) weekly to accelerate grade-level performance for 9th and 10th graders scoring below grade level on NWEA assessments.
- A minimum of five hours of academic support (i.e., tutoring and homework support) weekly to ensure 9th and 10th graders pass all college courses and all required college-prep courses (a-g sequence) required by UC and CSU.

- Mandatory credit-recovery support for all students who do not pass a college-prep course required by UC and CSU and/or a college course required to earn an associate degree of science in their career pathway.
- Mandatory college courses during the summer for all students.

“One of the things we’ve learned is the importance of the case management aspect of working with students, having that coordinator who identifies and addresses student needs as they come up.”

— **David East,**
Superintendent, Reef-Sunset
Unified School District

Each of the high schools agrees to dedicate three teachers to Ag Prep cohorts in 9th and 10th grades and two teachers in the 11th and 12th grades. These teachers are afforded three hours of common planning time weekly to produce and execute one interdisciplinary Ag-themed project per semester per grade. They meet at least monthly with the Ag Prep Coordinator to review student data and create individual student plans to keep students on track. The Ag Prep Coordinator and Ag Prep teachers meet with college instructors prior to and during the semester to plan interdisciplinary curricula and support students.

Community colleges host an overnight Ag Career Camp for middle school students each summer. For high school students, they facilitate course registration and other cross-system services. They offer the required college courses at the high school campuses (60 units), as per each pathway's program of study, including an associate degree within six months after high school

graduation. The faculty teaching the college courses meet with high school teachers prior to and during the semester, and collaborate with experts from The Wonderful Company to incorporate industry standards into coursework. Colleges agree to minimize the costs of textbooks; monitor the effectiveness of Ag Prep college courses; monitor the success of Ag Prep students in their classes; and provide a tutor for each college course section. Tutors serve a minimum of 10 hours weekly at the high school site. Ag Prep students can access guidance, the library, computer lab, and other student support services available to other college students.

Universities guarantee admission, with junior standing, to Ag Prep graduates who have met the requirements of the Ag Prep program and who pursue a bachelor's degree in the same pathway. They also provide a dedicated counselor for Ag Prep students who are admitted, summer sessions for incoming Ag Prep graduates and dedicated academic assistance to support degree completion.

The Wonderful Company agrees to assign an Ag Prep team at Wonderful Education to manage the partnership and coordinate technical assistance. The company agrees to pay for a portion of facility upgrades at each school district to meet industry standards for each pathway program, and to otherwise provide funding as per the budget agreement. The company agrees to coordinate (with community colleges) a summer Ag Career Camp for rising 8th graders and a unique college visit for each grade (9th to 12th). The company provides trainings for teachers and work-based learning experiences for students at agricultural companies, including STEM-related activities, guest speakers, industry conventions, job shadowing, and mentoring. The company offers paid internships for all eligible 12th grade students. Interns will earn minimum wage and work 80 hours during the summer before or after their senior year. For Ag Prep graduates who do not transfer immediately to a four-year university, The Wonderful Company guarantees employment through a one-year job fellowship, with the possibility of permanent placement based on demonstrated competencies.

“The commitments that The Wonderful Company is making to Ag Prep are very unusual in the United States. Companies in Europe take on this role frequently, but this is one of the best examples in this country of the role that industry can play in helping to connect schools, colleges, and the workforce.”

— Nancy Hoffman
Senior Advisor, Jobs for the Future

Conclusion

In its Master Plan for Higher Education of 1960, California created separate education systems at the K–12, community college, and university levels. This Ag Prep partnership presents a model for creating cohesion across the education systems and into the workforce in the San Joaquin Valley, to facilitate student transitions from middle school through high school graduation into colleges and universities, and from college into the job market.

Ag Prep's outcomes for its first graduating class—and the expansion of the program to schools, colleges, and universities in the South San Joaquin Valley—attest to the power of this partnership to transform expectations and raise student performance. Ag Prep has reached the end of its funding cycle from the California Career Pathways Trust—and all of its partners have elected to step up their own investments in order to sustain the partnership and the model. For its part, The Wonderful Company has pitched in with a dedicated team at Wonderful Education, a new college scholarship for Ag Prep graduates, and renewed resource and networking commitments. “We’re here for the long term,” said Donoso. “We’re part of these communities.”



Resources

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Jobs for the Future

Jobs for the Future works to ensure economic opportunity for all. Our innovative college and career pathway models give those struggling to succeed access to needed knowledge, skills, and credentials. We partner with education, workforce, and business leaders to understand the labor market and design systems to sustain a pipeline of skilled workers. We advocate with policymakers for state and federal policies to support this work.

The Wonderful Company

The Wonderful Company is a privately held \$4 billion international company that offers healthy, iconic brands for healthy lifestyles. Wonderful Pistachios & Almonds is the largest vertically integrated pistachio and almond grower and processor in the world. Wonderful Citrus is the largest integrated grower, packer and shipper of fresh citrus in the U.S. These operations, which are located in California's Central Valley, are also affiliated with the worldwide leader in fresh California pomegranates and various pomegranate-based products. The Wonderful Company's products can be found in the produce aisles of grocery stores nationwide under popular retail brands, including Wonderful Pistachios, Wonderful Almonds, Wonderful Halos and POM Wonderful. For more information, go to www.wonderful.com.

Wonderful Education Programs

Wonderful Education is an innovative educational program that is driving positive change in California's Central Valley. As a philanthropic extension of The Wonderful Company, Wonderful Education funds a host of college and career readiness programs to promote opportunities for young people in California's Central Valley. Wonderful Education initiatives include college and career readiness, college scholarships, school grants, summer school programs, arts education, early childhood programs, teacher development and parent engagement. Wonderful Education coordinates directly with The Wonderful Company to offer a sequence of rich work-based learning experiences for all Wonderful Agriculture Career Prep students, including paid internships.



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

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