



# Press Release

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## ***Partners in School Innovation, Applied Materials Foundation & Alum Rock Union Elementary School District Launch Effort to Improve Student Achievement***

SAN JOSE, CA - Alum Rock Union Elementary School District, Partners In School Innovation (PartnersSI) and the Applied Materials Foundation announced today the launch of their new partnership in San Jose, California to dramatically improve student learning by working with teachers, the District, and school leaders to raise student scores. Specifically, PartnersSI will work with the District to build a strong core instructional program in literacy and language, create systems and structures that foster teachers' professional learning, and strengthen results-oriented leadership. The funds provided by Applied Materials Foundation will enable PartnersSI to deliver cutting-edge assessment and leadership training methodologies to improve quality of leadership and teaching while accelerating student education.

The new partnership was formed as a unique public/private response to the commitment made by Alum Rock's superintendent and school board to boost grade level performance. This builds on a seven-year relationship between PartnersSI and the Applied Materials Foundation, which has already resulted in dramatically improved literacy and English-language proficiency rates in San Jose area elementary schools. When fully realized, the program will provide Alum Rock District with greater capabilities and capacity at a systematic level to close the academic achievement gap of its students, year after year.

"We are delighted to build upon our previous successes in San Jose and partner with the Applied Materials Foundation on this extensive opportunity to better serve the 13,000 students in our district," says Dr. Derek Mitchell, CEO of PartnersSI. "Ultimately, it is the children who will benefit from the Foundation's vision to support organizations such as ours that improve the educational pathway. And it's our commitment to work, shoulder-to-shoulder with District leadership and teachers to create and implement unique systems that will accelerate academic performance."

"The objective of the Applied Materials Foundation's Education Initiative is to ensure that all students qualify to attend California colleges and succeed in life," said Mark Walker, Executive Director of the Applied Materials Foundation. "Our focus is on improving our communities by closing the achievement gap for students from the lowest income areas and the lowest performing schools, and working directly with them to ensure success."

"The results PartnersSI has generated with other schools around the Bay Area are top-notch, and we look forward to partnering with them and the Applied Materials Foundation as we undergo our own transformation," states José L. Manzo, Alum Rock Superintendent. "We are excited to begin this collaboration that promises to build our capability to accelerate student learning by improving the quality of teaching and leadership in all of our schools. Our work together will include direct school reform support at Chavez Elementary in 2009-2010 followed by additional sites in subsequent years. Of particular note is that the objectives set forth in our partnership are aligned with our District's pledge, presented on June 5, 2009, that all students will be proficient or advanced by the year 2011."

José L. Manzo, Superintendent

Board of Trustees: • Patricia Potter, President • Gustavo González, Vice-President  
• Dolores Márquez, Clerk • Esau Ruiz Herrera, Member • Frank Chávez, Member

## **Proven Methodology**

Results across the network of Bay Area schools collaborating with PartnersSI continue to be positive. During the 2008-2009 school year, partner schools that substantially implemented the organization's Core Service Model outperformed the literacy gains on the 2009 California Standards Test in English Language Arts (CST-ELA) compared to their respective districts, similar schools around the state, and the state as a whole.

Furthermore, English learners in these schools outpaced the reading growth of their fluent English-speaking peers. These results hold great promise as PartnersSI continues to learn best practices and ensures that they are implemented consistently across all schools to achieve dramatic improvements with future student learning. Most recently, PartnersSI and the Applied Materials Foundation collaborated with San Jose Unified School District's Empire Gardens Elementary, which resulted in the school having the second highest reading gains of all the elementary schools in San Jose Unified School District during the 2008-2009 school year.

## **About Alum Rock Union Elementary School District**

The Alum Rock Union Elementary School District currently educates approximately 13,000 students in grades K through 8 at 27 schools. It is our goal to accelerate the academic achievement of students to the proficient or advanced level in English/Language Arts and Mathematics by 2011. Alum Rock schools are neighborhood schools where classrooms and schools represent the demographics of East San Jose. Parent involvement, community support, family empowerment, and health outreach services all contribute to school success. Standards-based instruction and materials, and a safe learning and teaching environment are characteristics of the District. Over the past several years, the District's Academic Performance Index (API) has increased an amazing 139 points—from 594 in 2002 to 733 in 2009. This is a phenomenal rate of increased student achievement that is attributed to the vision, leadership, teamwork, and sheer dedication of outstanding students, teachers, parents and administrators. It is our expectation that all students make plans for succeeding in high school and ponder about possible career paths and successfully complete a college degree.

## **About the Applied Materials Foundation**

The Applied Materials Foundation, a California nonprofit corporation qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, was established in 1994 by Applied Materials, Inc., the global leader in Nanomanufacturing Technology™ solutions. The Foundation's mission is to make a positive social contribution in regions where Applied Materials employees work and live through philanthropic investments in the areas of education, civic development, arts and culture, and the environment.

## **About Partners in School Innovation**

Founded in 1993, Partners In School Innovation (PartnersSI) is a service organization that enables public schools in high-poverty Bay Area communities -- serving primarily students of color and English-language learners -- to achieve educational equity through school-based reform. PartnersSI believes that the single strongest lever for increasing student achievement is to improve the quality of teaching in schools. Consequently, the organization's approach focuses on three essential elements of reform that it believes will dramatically improve the conditions in schools that contribute to improved teacher practice, and as a result, higher student achievement. These elements are: literacy, leadership, and teacher professional development. For more information: [www.partnersinschools.org](http://www.partnersinschools.org).

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