

The Oceanside Promise: A Case for Change

In Oceanside, California, like many other communities across the country, education is a priority. The Oceanside school district faces many challenges. Despite the best efforts by all concerned, nearly half of third graders are not proficient in English Language Arts and only about 38% of high school seniors are graduating college-ready.

Setting out to “fix” the education system is a complicated undertaking. Having grown up in the community, Oceanside Superintendent Duane Coleman Ph.D. understood the depth and breadth of this task. He recognized that to improve education not only would they need changes in the schools, but also focus on families and the community, as they are critical factors impacting students outside of school.

Oceanside has low socio-economic households, single parents raising children alone, deployed military, immigrant families, and many dealing with health and financial issues. All are doing the best they can to survive.

“Until you address family needs, you can’t make the school system better, said Dr. Coleman. “But if you want to change the entire community of Oceanside that’s where it begins and ends. Positive experiences in the home; negative experiences in the home – both effect the classroom.”

*Duane Coleman, Ph.D.
Oceanside Superintendent*

How to fulfill the Oceanside Promise?

Dr. Coleman spent the better part of a year as an evangelist for what is now the Oceanside Promise. He met with staff in each of twenty-three schools as well as key leaders from Oceanside government, community and business. Feedback was consistently strong and encouraging.

Yet, getting from idea to implementation is a significant challenge. How does one bring together people with differing goals to focus, organize and manage to get anything done?



A community-wide commitment, anchored by the Oceanside Unified School District, to work together providing youth (and their families) with the best-coordinated and data-driven efforts to ensure young people enter adulthood prepared to succeed.

A collaborative approach.

At the urging of several advisors Dr. Coleman called upon Parzen Civic Solutions, the go-to resource for large-scale collective impact projects in Southern California. With experience designing, leading and advising complex collaboratives for Price Philanthropies, United Way, Los Angeles Unified School District, the City of Los Angeles and others around the country, Parzen brought to Oceanside a rigorous and proven collaborative framework for managing this kind of large-scale effort.

Parzen led the Oceanside Promise team to define five guiding principles for the community-wide initiative:

1. Common goals – Community-level outcomes that lift up the entire region, its residents and organizations
2. Shared metrics – *Actionable data* to show what's working and what's not
3. Stakeholder engagement – Deep community ownership of the effort, from grass roots to civic and business leadership
4. Continuous communications – Keeping everyone fully informed and on the same page
5. Backbone support – Independent funded staff dedicated to the initiative

All about outcomes.

The Oceanside Promise has aggressive, yet attainable goals. By 2026:

- 90% of all 3rd graders will be at or exceed grade level reading proficiency
- 90% of the class of 2026 will graduate high school college and career ready

Once the foundation was set with goals, stakeholders and metrics, Parzen formed a leadership table representing business, non-profit, government, educator, philanthropic and community sectors to address key issues for Oceanside. The result: the beginning of a coordinated strategic and tactical, data-driven, campaign to build a community that would support youth and their families.

The Collective Impact framework helped us build a community movement to support youth (and their families). We use rigorous performance management and continuous improvement approaches to make sure we get the job done.

– *Oceanside Promise Website*

A path forward.

Work is now underway to achieve the strategic goals and all acknowledge that it is a long-term process where incremental change must be celebrated. There are a number of “vertical” goals that support the overarching goal where progress can also be measured. For example, readiness for kindergarten supports 3rd grade reading proficiency and 9th grade “on track to graduate” supports post-high school graduation college/career readiness. Individual teams are forming to address these contributing

“In a school district, it takes time for people to get to know you and trust you. Tad gained that trust. He is smart, easy to work with, gets things done and drives priorities to be sure we stay on track.

God put Tad in my life for a reason. Right person at the right time for the right reason.” - Duane Coleman, Ph.D., Oceanside Superintendent



About Parzen Civic Solutions

PCS is a consulting firm specializing in improving organizations, communities, neighborhoods, and local quality of life; providing the tools, guidance and leadership that empowers clients to solve complex and persistent community and organizational challenges.

Services include: initiative design/build, executive coaching, evaluation, organizational culture shift and change management processes.

Representative clients include: Price Philanthropies, StriveTogether National Network, Los Angeles Unified School District, Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles, Partnership for Los Angeles Schools and America’s Finest Charter School. **For more, please visit: www.parzencivicsolutions.com**