



Hayward Promise Neighborhood

**SUMMARY OF CALIFORNIA
PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD
NETWORK EVALUATION FINDINGS**



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Introduction

Developed in 2016, the California Promise Neighborhood Network (CPNN) is a collaboration of federally funded Promise Neighborhood (PN) grantees from diverse regions in the state of California. PNs aim to improve outcomes from cradle to career by adopting a place-based collective impact approach. PNs are community-centric and results-focused, and they strive to transform communities through partnership between families, communities, and organizations from multiple sectors within a community, such as education, government, social services, and faith-based organizations. Integration and coordination occur at the community level, and those closest to the conditions, such as community residents, service providers, and local community leaders, generate the solutions. By creating a community-level infrastructure, they can concentrate efforts on the specific systems in their community that affect children, youth, and families.

Hayward Promise Neighborhoods

Hayward Promise Neighborhoods (HPN), one of the six communities in the CPNN, serves children and families in the San Francisco Bay Area in Alameda County. HPN, a collaborative led by California State University, East Bay (CSUEB), in Hayward, California, was part of the pioneering cohort of PNs nationally and received three U.S. Department of Education grants. HPN began with a grant in the Jackson Triangle neighborhood of Hayward in 2011 and received a second grant for the South Hayward Neighborhood in 2016. HPN recently received a third 5-year federal grant to expand to a new neighborhood, Downtown Hayward.

Each PN draws on its community partners and neighborhood assets to develop and implement a set of cradle-to-career strategies to meet that community's unique needs. HPN ensures that families have access to a well-integrated pipeline of evidence-based programs, services, and supports to prepare children for college and careers. HPN focuses simultaneously on the well-being of two generations and believes that children achieve better academic and life outcomes when parents or caregivers have access to health care, education, job training, and other resources to support their well-being, family stability,

and self-sufficiency. Main partners include the city, the local school district, a health center, a community college, and a California State University campus. HPN is the only PN in California led by a public university, which helps it leverage the city's educational institutions and increase pathways to economic mobility.

CPNN Evaluation

As part of recent investments from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), CPNN commissioned an evaluation of the PN initiative across the state. The evaluation focused on understanding (1) the extent to which the place-based collective impact approach influenced changes in community or city systems and structures, (2) the impact of PNs on student and parent outcomes, and (3) the social return on investment.

The [CPNN evaluation](#) has demonstrated that California PNs provide a substantial economic benefit to taxpayers, participants, and society. Each \$1 invested in specific student and parent programs yielded a societal return of \$3.97.

HPN Evaluation Brief

This brief summarizes the HPN-specific findings from the overall network evaluation. In this brief, we explore coordinated approach that changed partnerships, the system changes, and the associated student or parent outcomes. See Appendix A for more details about the evaluation approach and data sources.

This brief is organized into two sections:

- Section 1 describes how partners coordinated and improved service delivery and spotlights two HPN student outcomes. See Appendix B for detailed student outcome findings.
- Section 2 outlines how PNs have influenced neighborhood policies and practices that indicate systems changes to support PN sustainability and enhance its impact.

Section 1:

Partner coordination to impact youth and families

The explicit coordinated implementation by partners in the PN neighborhoods, reflecting a collective impact approach (see text box for survey results), **was a new approach to partnerships in HPN**. The collective impact approach is a distinct form of collaboration that does not often occur in communities, because it involves collaborations across multiple sectors affecting different factors influencing health and well-being, because of the resources required to align partners in a “systemic approach to social impact.”^a

HPN Partner: “The partnerships and collaborations are cemented ... at the end of HPN, those relationships aren’t going to go away.”

HPN Partner: “I know that not only [are] our missions aligned on paper, but we’re really trying to achieve the same ends.”

HPN partners report that their PN reflects the four conditions of the collective impact:

- 90% of HPN partners believe that the partners have committed to a shared vision for change in their community
- 90% of HPN partners agree that data are regularly used to make improvements and adjustments to the work.
- 90% of HPN partners believe that they collaborate with each other to align their actions.
- 90% of HPN partners agree that structures and processes keep all partner organizations well informed about the PN initiative

$n = 10$





Improvement 1: Changed mindsets that enable trusting and collaborative relationships

HPN partners and backbone staff reported **increased trust and strengthened relationships among the PN partners**, even if they knew each other before the PN initiative. They reported **that these relationships would be sustained** or are being sustained even after the grant funds sunset for PN implementation.

Partners reported moving from simply knowing about one another (if anything) to believing that **their partnerships were critical to achieving the goals for their community**. This contrasts with reports that before the initiative, in certain communities, some partners might have viewed their partners as competition or been “territorial” over their clients or area of work. However, in other communities, siloing of services was more of a barrier. Partners focused on improving students’ academic outcomes explicitly mentioned the importance of all partners working together to address “root causes” that affected students’ educational success.^a

As a result of the PN initiative, HPN partners reported strengthening their relationships across different organizations and **collaborating more intentionally and contacting one another if support was needed**. Partners reported that trusting relationships allowed for coordination and collaboration, even when there was disagreement (see survey results).

HPN partner: “There’s such strength in partnership, we can uplift the community together, but the lift is much heavier for doing it alone or doing it separately.”

Collaborative and trusting relationships among HPN partners:

- 90% of HPN partners are willing to compromise with one another to accomplish the initiative’s goals.
- 90% of HPN partners are willing to engage in frank and open discussions when areas of disagreement exist.

n = 10



Improvement 2: Coordination to create a web of services to ensure that students and families would not fall through the cracks

Partners **shifted how they worked together to serve families and communities**. Partners coordinated with one another to meet families and students’ needs, even when they could not provide the services themselves.

HPN partner: “Everything is more integrated and connected, and strategically focused.”

Some partners were able to provide warm handoffs when they made referrals. **This ensured that referred families got connected to the services they needed instead of relying on families’ ability to follow up**. One partner ensured that families referred by other HPN partners would go immediately to the “top of the list” and would be “immediately” served. This PN partner said, “These PN referrals are priority for us.”

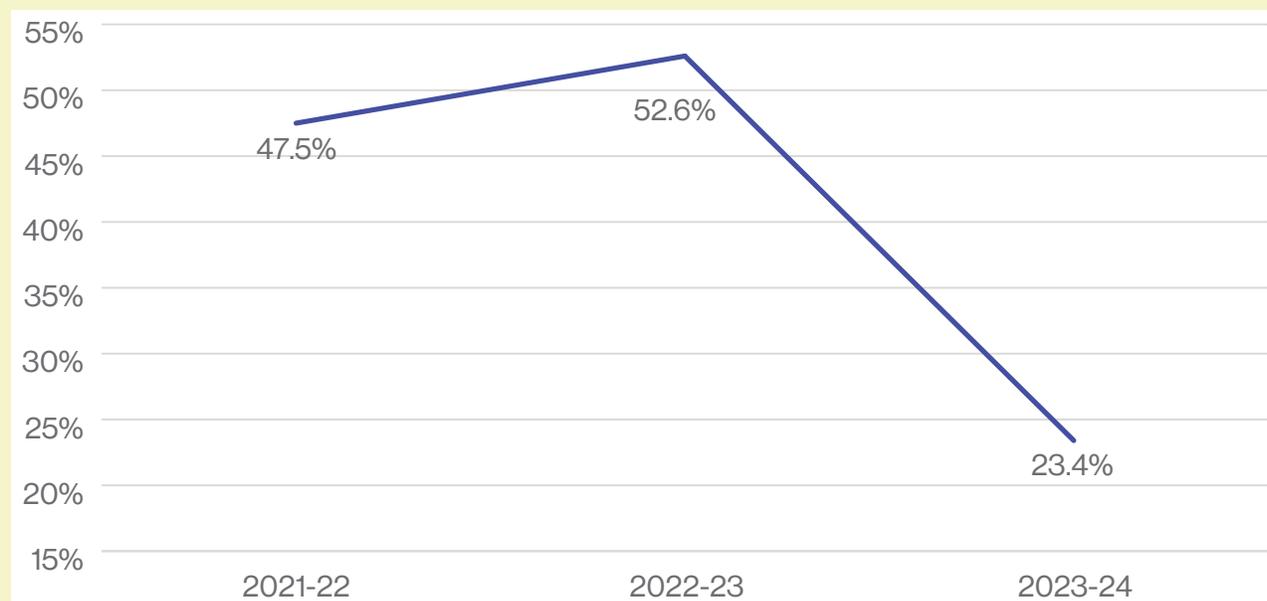
HPN partner: “All these community partners before PN would just be another place to refer my clients. Like, okay, oh, you need mental health or support, maybe you can get into this org, here’s the number, call them. ... But then at that point it’s like something they would just get lost ... they would never really probably access many of the resources that we referred them to. But since PN, everything is just so much different now. HPN has really facilitated that greatly ... it’s not this like, ‘Oh, let me just give ‘em a number and let’s hope that they’ll access the resource.’ Now I know I can actually follow through and actually have somebody to talk to make sure that they did receive the services.

Families could learn about services from one touchpoint. HPN promotores, trained and led by partner Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center, had a primary role of conducting outreach and engagement and linking families and students to services. These staff members became a “one-stop shop.” Families could access services for themselves or their children at different points of the cradle-to-career timeline without much navigation through the system. One promotora said, “Our people look for us and ask, ‘Hey, I know, you know these things if you don’t know you are connected.’ So I need to know about childcare. I need to know about special education resources. I need to know about eligibility and enrollment.”

Outcome Spotlight: Collaboration and coordination to address chronic absenteeism

Addressing chronic absenteeism has been a major focus area for HPN schools since the COVID 19 pandemic. **Rates of chronic absenteeism in HPN schools significantly decreased (24.1 percentage points) from 2021–22 to 2023–24** after experiencing a slight increase (5.1 percentage points) from 2021–22 to 2022–23 (Figure 1; See Appendix B for more details).

FIGURE 1.
Post-COVID-19 Rates of Chronic Absenteeism in HPN schools



The rate of decline within HPN schools may outpace overall trends in California. In 2021–22, the rate of chronic absenteeism among HPN schools was 17.5 percentage points higher than that of all California students (30%). **The gap between HPN schools and all California students has reduced to 3.4 percentage points in 2023–24.** The rate of chronic absenteeism for all California students in 2023–24 was 20%.

HPN partners are coordinating at multiple levels to address chronic absenteeism in all HPN schools through the implementation of a work group, community of practice, and network. Each level engages in data to track effectiveness and make recommendations for next steps.

Strategies include

- partnering with the Alameda County Office of Education to provide whole-family coordination;
- collaborating with the parks and recreation district to add after-school programming, recognizing that coordination with after-school programs is a promising strategy for improving attendance given students' interest in attending various after-school opportunities; and
- partnering with 4Cs of Alameda County to address childcare needs and parent support, especially when older students report having to support their family with after-school care for younger siblings. This partnership also allows students to access enrichment programs at school or in the community.

HPN has used a multiple-pronged approach to address factors that influence student attendance, such as offering holistic supports for both children and the whole family—including high-demand basic needs like food and diapers—to improve mental health and reduce stress. Parent engagement has also been a clear focus. Engaging parents can help identify why children are not attending school and offers an opportunity to educate and set new norms for when children should and should not come to school despite minor illness.



Improvement 3:

Seeing the whole child/whole family, which collectively allowed partners to fill gaps in services and serve them holistically.

Partners reported that the PN initiative's collaborative approach **improved their understanding of families' and students' educational and social-emotional needs across the cradle-to-career spectrum.** Continued interactions helped them see more clearly that they were all serving the same youth or families, although through different lenses depending on the needs that their organization served or different points during the cradle-to-career timeline. For some, this understanding allowed them to come to new solutions with partners or influenced how they served the community, such as knowing who to refer people to if they had needs that they themselves could not meet.

This holistic understanding often came from looking at outcome or needs assessment data, even when the data did not apply directly to their organization's work or area of focus. Just being in the room to hear about the families and the partner efforts to support families benefited all partners.

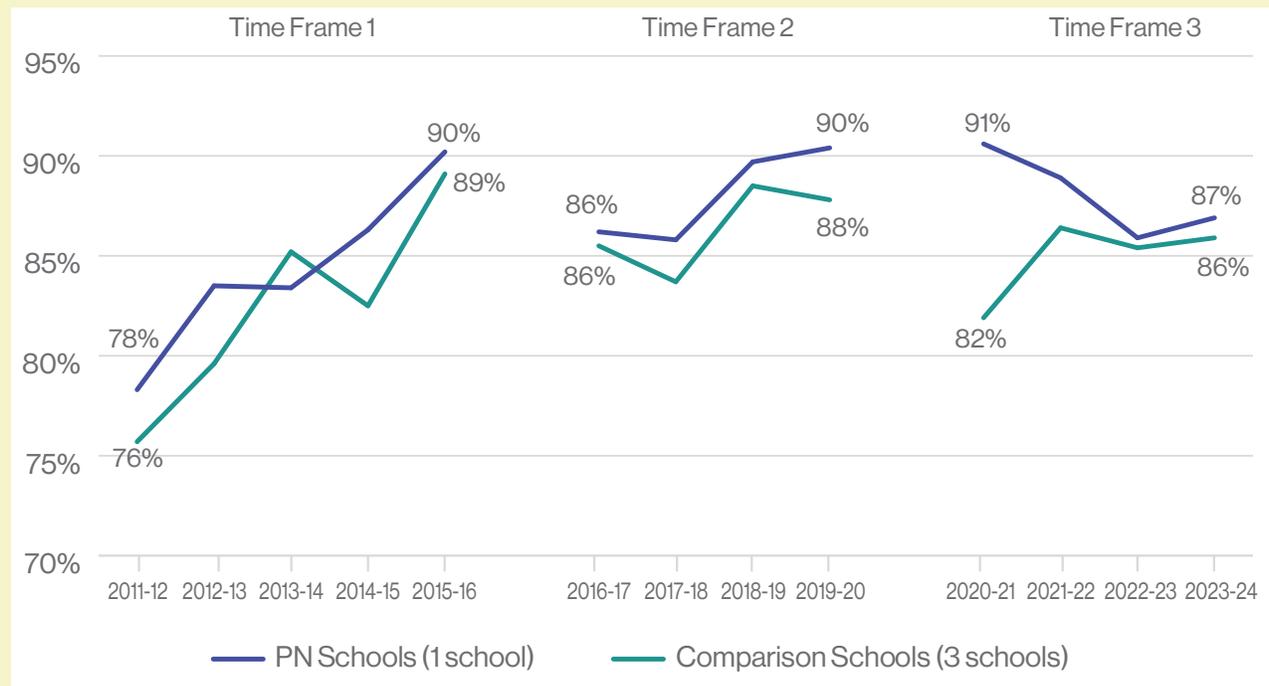
Outcome Spotlight: Partnership practices to improve high school graduation rates

PNs focus on high school graduation because it increases the likelihood of young people’s economic stability for themselves, their families, and their community.

To explore the effect of these investments in HPN, RTI examined changes in high school graduation rates (HSGRs) among HPN and non-HPN high schools across three time frames: from 2011–12 (baseline) to 2015–16 (year 4 of implementation), 2016–17 to 2019–20, and 2020–21 to 2023–24 (See Figure 2) due to changes in HSGR calculation in 2016-17 and different pre- and post-COVID-19 contexts. Comparison allows us to explore whether HSGR changes in PN high schools above what we would normally expect could be attributed to PNs.

HPN saw improvements in HSGRs in the early years of implementation (during the 4 comparison years in Time Frame 1 and during 2 of the 3 comparison years in Time Frame 2). Of the 6 comparison years where PN improvements were observed, improvements were greater than the selected comparison schools in 4 of the years (from baseline to years 2 and 4 of implementation and from 2016–17 to 2018–19 and 2019–20; see Appendix B).

FIGURE 2.
Time Frames 1–3: High School Graduation Rates



Partners associate improvements in HSGRs to an intentional, coordinated approach to serving grades 9–12. **One evidenced-based strategy noted by partners was student success coaching**, where students and families are connected with a coach navigator to develop a personalized plan with their support network for improving attendance and academics. This strategy was implemented both in the early learning and 9-12 grades, with partners noting the synergy of adopting similar evidenced-based strategies across the K-12 spectrum.

Additional strategies included credit recovery efforts designed for students to retake courses and earn credit toward their diploma, holistic services during and outside of their school day, and a college-going or future-oriented culture within PN schools. Supports developed for parents and family members meet families’ essential needs or address financial and educational challenges. A key PN belief is that when parents’ and families’ needs are met, they can be more supportive and engaged with their children.



Improvement 4: Aligned data systems and practices to support coordination

PNs reported shared practices alignment of data systems across multiple partners, such as early learning providers and schools, or between different educational institutions. These aligned practices between partners were not happening before PN. We highlight shared practices across HPN and between educational institutions.

Across HPN partners

- HPN coordinated data sharing among partners as a result of the new data-sharing agreement and system launched in 2021. The Salesforce system, managed by the backbone, allows for collaborative referrals and tracks individual-level data among all partners. This builds on the data transfer and sharing system that already existed between Hayward Unified School District (HUSD) and CSUEB.
- The Results-Based Accountability framework and other data collection and monitoring frameworks have been adopted by PN partners within their own organizations and by other city agencies. These frameworks support collaboration and coordination.

Early learning alignment. There has long been a tendency for the early learning sector to remain siloed into different types of providers, such as home-based or public providers, each often guided by different regulations. The PN's investment in early learning spurred early learning providers and school districts to come together and collaborate in new ways to improve kindergarten readiness. HPN implemented an early learning network, led by the 4Cs (Community Child Care Council) of Alameda County, which was the first opportunity for different types of early learning partners to connect and collaborate. 4Cs of Alameda County's leadership allowed for an expansion of partners at the table to include organizations who are not official contractual partners but who are part of the early learning ecosystem. Additional coordinated efforts among HPN early learning partners include the following:

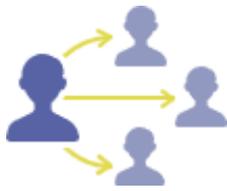
- Partner schools received professional development to implement the kindergarten readiness assessment.
- District and early learning partners collaborated to review kindergarten readiness data and enrollment patterns.
- Partners created a seamless early learning process for enrollment, such as early learning night. This provided an opportunity for parents to learn about options for early learning in the hopes of increasing enrollment.

Alignment between high school and postsecondary institutions. HPN partners include the Hayward Unified School District (HUSD); the Eden Area Regional Occupational Program (EAROP), which provides career training for high school students and postsecondary partners; Chabot College (2-year college); and CSUEB. Partners expressed prior challenges with establishing aligned policies between educational systems to facilitate postsecondary outcomes.

- Through the HPN initiative, partners were able to **align and articulate up to 25 courses to provide early college credit to HUSD students**. In the past, only a few courses were articulated. The number of dual enrollment classes increased as well. Partners have also been able to **link enrollment data systems between CSUEB and Chabot College to track enrollment and transfer rates for Hayward graduates**, improving educational outcomes.²

One partner explained the importance of HPN to system alignment: *"It's these relationships that have been fostered and encouraged through HPN that have allowed that work to happen. But the two systems wouldn't normally work, I mean, don't work well. There's ROPs across the state that can't get a community college to talk to them."*

- As of the 2024–2025 academic year, guaranteed postsecondary admission was implemented at HUSD and then quickly expanded to eight local school districts. Hayward residents advocated for this policy for many years to facilitate postsecondary success.



Improvement 5:

Leveraged partnerships to increase resources for PN and expand services beyond PN

HPN partners reported that they were able to leverage their connections with one another **to increase services to their community**, which sometimes fell outside of the PN neighborhood, but still focused on similar populations. An HPN partner also reported expanded partnerships with the school district because of their current connection with PN schools. This partner explained “We were [providing services] more at a community level prior to and when we first joined HPN. But now we have MOUs with the school district... it’s been a game changer through those partnerships and something that we were struggling to get into the school districts, and those doors are wide open now.”



Section 2:

Changing neighborhood systems to sustain and broaden impact of PN

CA PNs, including HPN, have shifted neighborhood systems to support sustainability and broaden impacts. In this section we identify three system change outcomes. City and community systems are **shifting their funding resources** toward PN initiatives or goals, **changing city or regional policies** aligned with the goals of PNs, and **shifting power to community members or families** so they have influence in the well-being of their children or the community at large. These are in addition to the system changes reported earlier, such as transformed partnerships and alignment of systems (including data systems) to improve how partners serve the youth

Systems Change 1:

Reallocation of funding to sustain PN programs or solutions

School district, city, and county agency partners have continued to fund positions or programs to sustain or scale the PN solutions. Partners noted that the grant provided “seed” money for programs and staff positions that are now being sustained or scaled because partners have witnessed the results of the PN efforts.

In HPN these include **statewide grant programs**, such as the Community Schools. Most importantly, because of statewide advocacy, the CPNN secured \$12 million in funding from CDSS for HPN and three other PNs for 3 years. Agencies or districts have also funded staff positions created because of HPN, such as coordination of services team specialists, promotores, and parent ambassadors.

Systems Change 2:

Influence of PN on local policies that sustain or scale PN approach

HPN inspired a citywide initiative that will expand the collective impact approach to serve the whole child and family which will contribute to the improvement of outcomes for the most-marginalized communities.

HPN inspired a Citywide initiative to scale PN approach: Hayward as “Education City.” Hayward became California’s first Education City in 2023 by declaration from Hayward’s Mayor, Mark Salinas, a former community engagement specialist with Promise Neighborhoods.³ This commitment from the city guides future investments and initiatives so they are driven by purposeful collaboration and coordination between educational institutions and CBOs to provide a seamless experience for families. This initiative is directly influenced by the new mayor’s connection to HPN. One partner explained, “[The City of Hayward’s] strategic plan actually outlines all the questions each of us departments have to ask and what we have to go through whenever we’re applying for any federal funding or we’re looking to have contracts for community partnerships.” As described in Hayward’s strategic plan, “The City is committed to working alongside our educational and community partners to support the academic success and future employment of Hayward’s students. The City does this by actively participating in collaborations like the Hayward Promise Neighborhoods, growing the economy, facilitating pathways for both private and public sector careers, partnering to provide education and employment services, and communicating about educational opportunities and success.”¹⁴

Systems Change 3: Community leaders wielding power to influence decisions and actions in PN communities

The PN strategy embeds community engagement and empowerment for its residents so that those most directly affected by the initiative coconstruct the PN's strategies and activities. HPN implements specific programs to enhance or provide a venue for community leaders to demonstrate their leadership and civic engagement, such as the Promotores model—an evidence-based public health model of community health outreach workers—and the Community Leadership Institute. This influence and empowerment have extended further into other community initiatives and citywide policies in ways that could shift the types of decisions affecting all who live or work in cities, and even the state of California.

- **HPN community members represent their perspectives in city, county, or community venues.** Community members involved in HPN activities now sit on the Hayward Unified School Board and Alameda County Office of Education.
- **PN parents, partners, and leaders reported greater parent advocacy or inclusion of parents' priorities in decision-making in PN schools or districts.** HPN parents reported being empowered to voice their concerns or perspectives in venues such as the District English Learner Advisory Committee meetings. One former promotore has now become an employee of the school district. PN experiences, such as participating as a promotore and learning about available services, not only led them to their current career, but were also critical in helping them advocate for educational services for their children through an Individualized Educational Program.

Parents and community members may have had these leadership or advocacy skills in their home countries, but not being proficient in English or being unaware of the systems and structures in the United States limited their engagement. In some cases, PNs gave them opportunities to apply their dedication to their community. A few promotores mentioned that their current role was part of their long journey of volunteering or supporting their community, which may have started in their home countries.

Importance of the Backbone in Supporting Partnerships and System Change

Partners emphasized the critical role their backbone organization played in coordinating partners in ways that improved how they served their community. Partners noted the importance of regular meetings, the use of data, and the connections leveraged.

HPN Partner: “I think a constant focus on the mission and the values of HPN. It permeates our formal meetings, our interactions. There’s a real focus on the whole child and whole family. And I think that extends to the partners as well. There’s a lot of care and compassion for the people that are trying to do the work. And I think part of that is their ability to respond to any problems as if we’re running into some sort of challenge or obstacle. Just the way they treat it is really, really powerful and empowering for us to be able to try to do the work.”

HPN Partner: “[Data have] definitely been a part of every implementation team meeting that I’ve been to, and it’s been very helpful in seeing what the impact is over time.”

HPN Partners agreed that the backbone plays these critical functions:

- Provides opportunities for partners to build relationships (92%).
- Supports PN partner collaboration (90%).
- Ensures alignment of activity across the overall effort (90%).
- Keeps all partner organizations well-informed about the PN initiative (90%).
- Facilitates a formal process for reviewing data and making sense of results (90%).
- Works to secure new funding or supports partner organizations seeking funding to sustain practices (90%)
- Establishes a policy and/or advocacy agenda for the PN initiative (90%)

n = 10

Another key role of a collective impact backbone is enabling sustainability of the PN initiative. To do so, the HPN backbone organization engages in fundraising, supporting other organizations to fundraise, and engaging in policy and advocacy to further the PN initiative. PN backbone staff collaborate with city agencies and are members of councils or collaboratives that are driving policy and systems changes in their region and nationally. Nationally, HPN is part of the Strive Together Network. Locally, HPN is a formal partner for the Bay Area K16 Collaborative led by Chabot-Las Positas Community College District and works with educational institutions across the nine Bay Area counties. Regionally, HPN is also steering committee member for the Northern California College Promise Coalition (NCCPC), helping promote Hayward's Education City initiative and place-based practices in the region.

Conclusion

For more than a decade, HPN has utilized a collective impact approach to provide services to students and their families—from birth to college and career. Achieving population-level change requires a systematic, coordinated effort across multiple partners and agencies to create systemic changes and transform neighborhood conditions. Our evaluation found that these systemic changes are happening in California PNs, including HPN, which is among the longest-standing PNs in the country implementing place-based strategies and sustaining impact.

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- 3 Torres, D. (2023, February 2). *Hayward—Education city* [Press release]. <https://www.csueastbay.edu/news-center/2023/02/hayward-education-city.html>
- 4 City of Hayward. (2024). *Hayward strategic roadmap*. Retrieved from <https://www.hayward-ca.gov/your-government/documents/hayward-strategic-roadmap>