



High School Transitions Impact Initiative

Education Table Meeting
Jenny Vu, Director of Education Systems Strategy | UNITE-LA
May 13, 2026



LAP3

HORIZONS 32K
STRATEGIC
PLAN

HORIZONS 32K

A Roadmap for Los Angeles Opportunity Youth

A regional approach to reduce youth disconnection from school and work in L.A. County by 32K by 2028 through prevention AND reengagement strategies.

OUR PARTNERS

LA County Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS)
LA County Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)
LA County Department of Mental Health (DMH)
LA County Department of Youth Development (DYD)
LA County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)
LA City Economic & Workforce Development Department (EWDD)
LACOE Community Schools
Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD)
Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC)
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)
LA County Office of Child Protection (OCP)
LA County Prevention & Promotion Systems Governing Committee (PPSGC)
LA City Mayor's Office
LA City Youth Development Department (YDD)
LA Unified School District (LAUSD)
Miguel Contreras Foundation
New Ways to Work (NWW)
RELAY Institute
UNITE-LA

Convened by:



L.A. OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH COLLABORATIVE

Staffed by the Alliance for Children's Rights & UNITE-LA



Photo by Allison Shelley/Complete College Photo Library

A woman with glasses is looking towards a man whose profile is visible in silhouette. He is holding a smartphone. The background is bright and out of focus.

WHO ARE OPPORTUNITY YOUTH?

Youth ages 16-24 who are not in school or working, or who are at high risk of disconnection due to their involvement in the homeless, child welfare, or justice systems.

In 2021, 143,000 young adults in L.A. County were disconnected.

IMPACT INITIATIVES



High School Transitions

Advocate for systemic changes to improve transitions to postsecondary education and career training after high school.



Earn and Learn

Expand access to apprenticeship, work-based learning and nondegree training pathways that lead to employment.

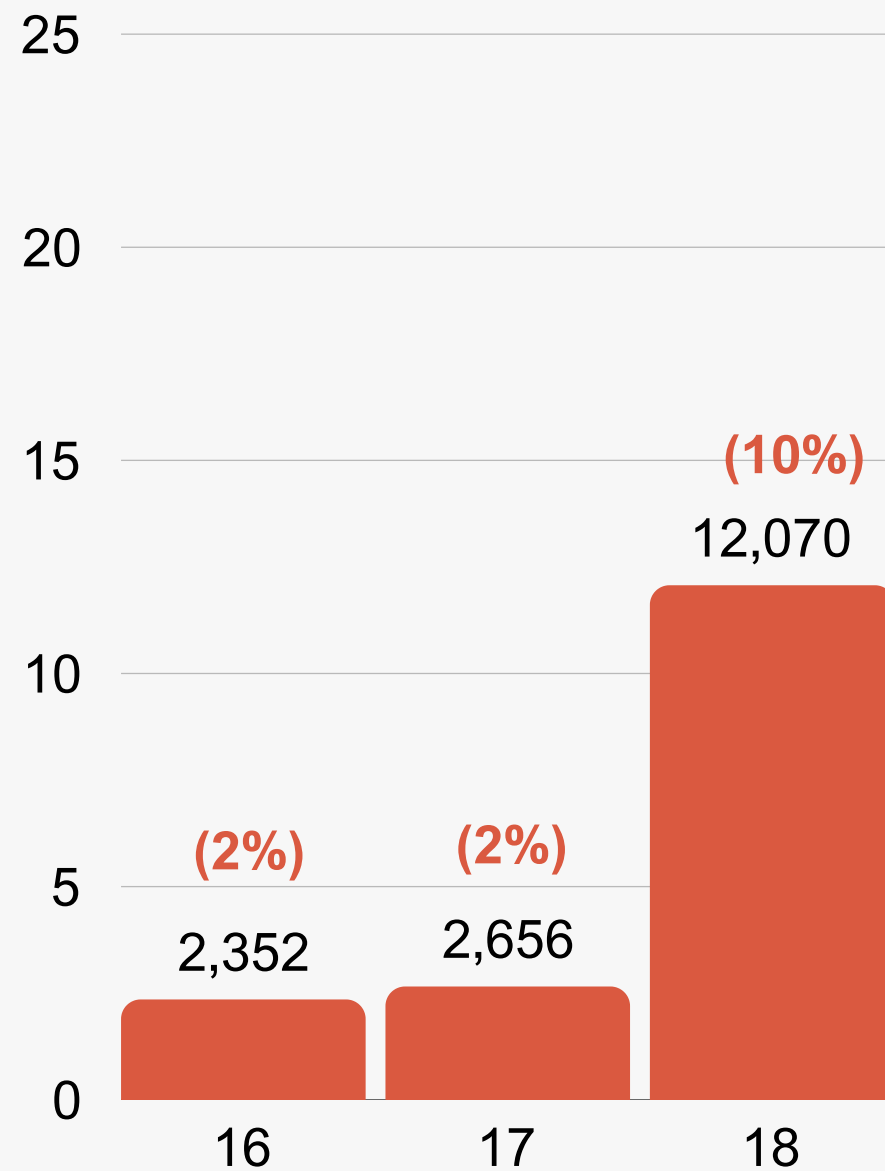


Holistic Supports

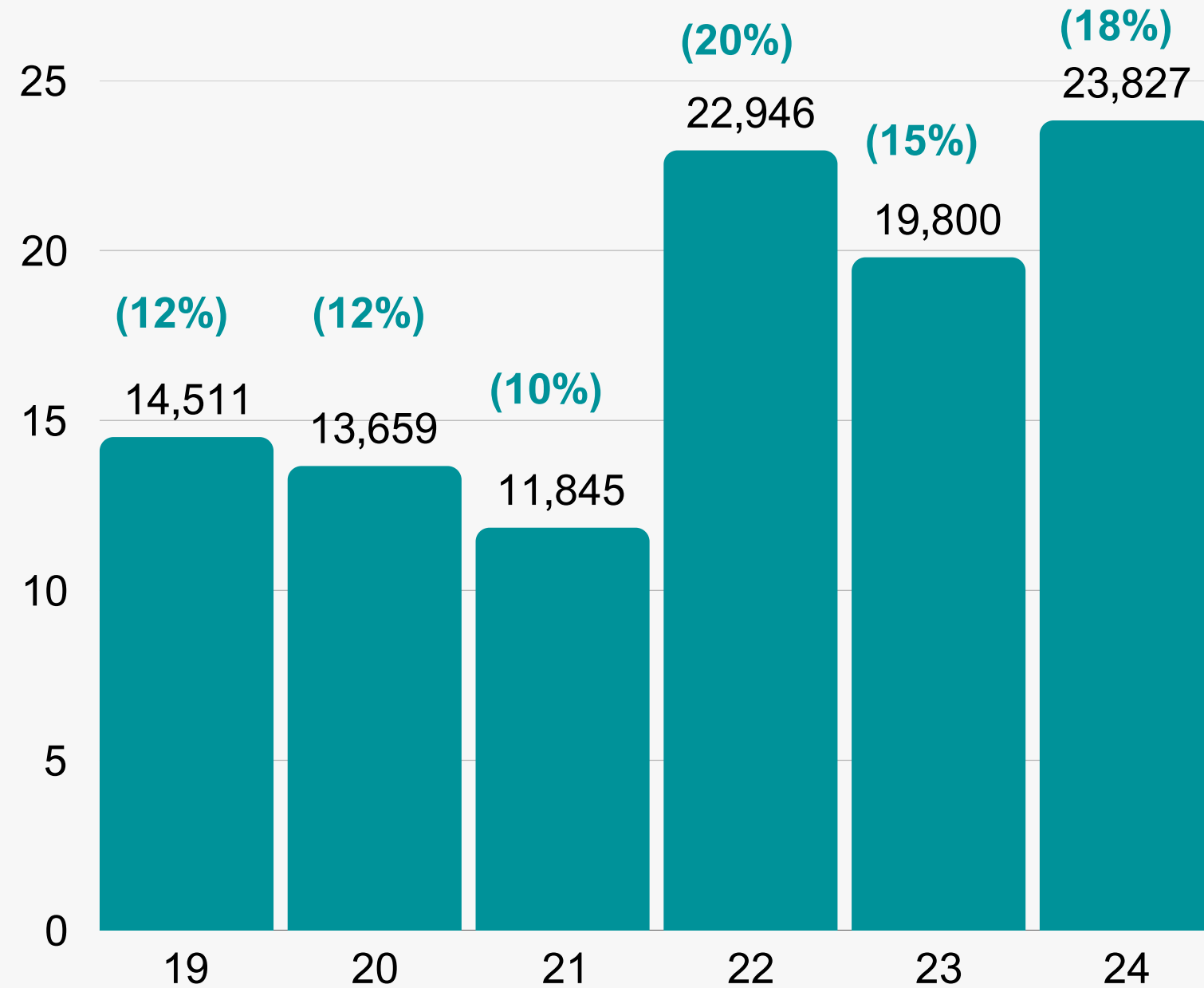
Improve coordination of holistic supports and connections to supportive adults to improve reconnection and persistence in education, training and employment.

DISCONNECTION BY AGE (LA COUNTY)

5% Disconnection
Teens (16-18)



13% Disconnection
Young Adults (19-24)

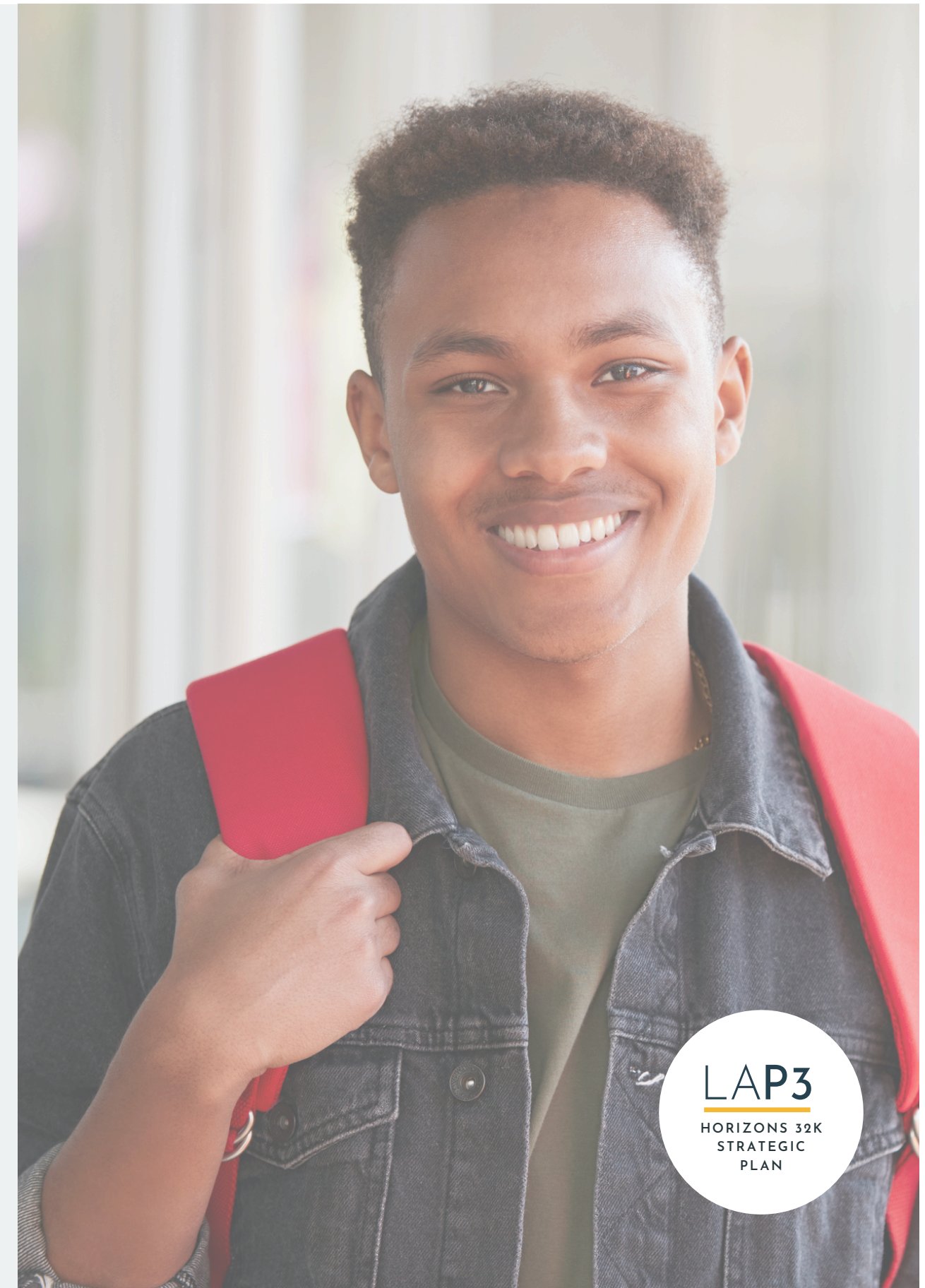


10-12% of 18- and 19-yr-olds in L.A. County are disconnected from school and work compared to only **2%** of 17-yr-olds



GOAL

Reduce youth disconnection among 18-19 year-olds in L.A. County by strengthening the transition from high school to a full range of postsecondary and workforce training options, with a priority focus on alternative education students.





DISPARATE OUTCOMES FOR LAUSD OPTIONS STUDENTS

	All HS Students	Options Students
5 Yr Grad Rate	90%	58%
CTE Completion Rate	23%	1%
Enrolled in a Career Pathway	33%	3%
Financial Aid Application	86%	45%
College Enrollment	73%	33%



WORKGROUP UPDATES

Membership

Bi-Monthly Meetings

Strategies & Opportunities

- LAUSD Options
- LAUSD Division of Adult & Career Education
- LAUSD Linked Learning/CTE
- LAUSD YouthSource Partnerships
- LACCD
- LACOE
- City of LA EWDD
- Center for Powerful Public Schools

- Launched in September
- Bi-Monthly Meetings
 - Cross-sector learning to better understand what's working, gaps and needs
 - Participation in L.A. Alt Ed Landscape Analysis
- JFF Career Navigation Convening, February 2026

- Convene a funders' brief to advance at least two key strategies.
- LAUSD Options & LAUSD DACE Partnership
- UNITE-LA's College Access Initiatives



L.A. ALT ED LEARNING AGENDA: RECOMMENDATIONS



High School Transitions



Holistic Student Supports that Remove Barriers & Enables Persistence

Students require flexible, holistic, and barrier-reducing supports that allow them to stay engaged in school, complete high school, and transition to postsecondary or workforce opportunities.



Early Identification & Coherent Referral Systems

A system that identifies student needs earlier and intervenes before students fall too far behind, supported by a coherent, stigma-free referral pipeline that ensures smooth, dignified transitions.



High Quality, Career- Connected Learning & Paid WBL Pathways

Authentic, hands-on, career-connected learning that engages students, builds purpose, and strengthens transitions to good jobs. This includes scaled access to paid work experiences, aligned employer partners, and systems that lead to actual job placement—not just exposure.



Cross-System Coordination, Alignment & Shared Accountability

Stronger alignment across K–12, higher education, adult education, and workforce systems to create coherence and continuity of support centered on transition outcomes (e.g., postsecondary, employment), rather than siloed outputs tied to individual systems.



Policy, Advocacy & Funding to Enable System Redesign

Policy alignment and new funding models that enable year-round, scalable, career-connected, and transition-focused programming for alternative education students. Current policies and funding structures are misaligned with what cross-system transition work actually requires.



Professional Development & Mindset Shifts

Consistent, high-quality, role-specific professional development and systemwide mindset shifts are needed to support the unique instructional, relational, and transition-focused demands of alternative education—and to reposition continuation schools, adult education, and occupational skills centers as high-quality first-chance pathways rather than last-resort placements.

WHAT'S NEXT



High School
Transitions



Holistic Student Supports
that Remove Barriers &
Enables Persistence



Early Identification &
Coherent Referral
Systems



High Quality, Career-
Connected Learning &
Paid WBL Pathways



Cross-System
Coordination, Alignment
& Shared Accountability



Policy, Advocacy &
Funding to Enable System
Redesign



Professional
Development & Mindset
Shifts

Convene a **funder's brief** to
share findings and
recommendations from the alt
ed landscape analysis, to
include at least **two potential
key strategies** to advance.

LAUSD Division of Adult and Career Education

Career Training Options for Opportunity Youth

Career Empowerment
Academy

Opportunity Youth
Career Readiness



dace

DREAM IT
Achieve it!



Opportunity Youth Career Readiness



Prior to AB 542

Continuation schools were required to operate 180 days per year. This compelled students to attend class five days a week for a minimum of three hours per day.

With AB 542

Authored by Assemblymember Celeste Rodriguez, it authorizes continuation high schools to offer youth workforce development programs for credit on one or two weekdays, provided students maintain at least 15 hours of weekly class attendance.



Opportunity Youth Career Readiness

AB 542 | Youth Workforce Development

Purpose

To enhance vocational training opportunities and career readiness for students in continuation programs.

Structure

Programs can be integrated into the school week, offering paid or unpaid on-the-job experience.

Partnerships

Schools must partner with adult education, community colleges, or industry recognized certification entities.

Requirements

Students must still meet the minimum attendance requirements for their regular, required coursework.



North San Fernando Valley

Building & Construction Trades

For Educational Options Programs

Overview

DACE is offering an intro to building and construction trades program for students from surrounding continuation schools. The program includes hands-on training, certification opportunities, and a \$1,000 student scholarship. The program will evolve into a Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) program.

- Program Launch Date: March 2, 2026
- Students Enrolled: 34



Ramona High School

Career Empowerment Center

For Educational Options Programs

Overview

DACE will establish and pilot the first-ever Career Empowerment Center at Ramona High School. DACE will convert underutilized classroom spaces and offer allied health programs to students from surrounding continuation schools. The program will include hands-on training, certification opportunities, and a \$1,000 student scholarship.

- Program Launch Date: April 2026
- Class: Foundations to Health Careers





FINANCIAL AID & COLLEGE ACCESS SUPPORT

- Supported 10 LAUSD continuation schools with financial aid completion efforts to meet the March 2nd priority deadline.
- With new funding to expand UNITE-LA's College Access work, we are building a more systematized college readiness and financial aid completion strategy in partnership with LAUSD Options, launching in the 2026–27 academic year.
- Expanding outreach to schools serving high populations of foster and unhoused youth to strengthen financial aid completion and college readiness support.



UNITE-LA

Education Innovation Through Collaboration



STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLMENT PIPELINE

- Initiating new partnerships with Los Angeles Community Colleges to increase financial aid completion, strengthen enrollment pipelines, and improve student persistence through high-touch outreach and advising during the critical transition from high school to college.
- Contact Jenny Vu, Director of Education Systems Strategy to learn more about partnership opportunities: jvu@unitela.com

THANK YOU!



UNITELA

Education Innovation Through Collaboration