



REPAIRING THE PIPELINE:

A LOOK AT THE GAPS IN CALIFORNIA'S HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE TRANSITION

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California's workforce is projected to need an additional one million college graduates by 2025.¹ To meet this challenge, California's college and career pipeline must serve as a true pathway to post-secondary success for all California's students. New data from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) highlight major gaps in college opportunity for the low-income students and students of color who are the majority of California's student population. Fortunately, these data also reveal high schools throughout California that are making progress in closing these opportunity gaps.

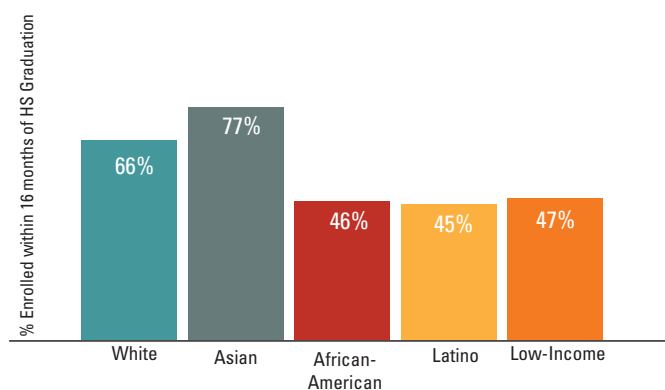
The results from these schools suggest that there is hope for repairing California's pipeline to and through higher education. In this alert, we use this newly available data to expose patterns of inequity and identify schools that are bucking state-level trends.

BREAKS IN THE PIPES

When we combined the graduation and college-going rate data, we were able to estimate college-going rates for the ninth graders from the class of 2010.² This analysis suggests that college-going rates for African-American and Latino ninth

grade students lag behind the rates of white and Asian students by 20 to more than 30 percentage points, with fewer than half of those ninth graders going to college five years later—or, shortly after their projected high school graduation date. Rates for low-income students were just as low. (See Figure 1.)

FIGURE 1: Estimated college-going rates for California's 2006 ninth graders (class of 2010)



Source: Education Trust West analysis of California Department of Education data.

These and other data reveal similarly inequitable outcomes at every transition point. For example:

Dropouts - Low-income students and students of color drop out earlier and more frequently. When compared with their white, Asian, and more advantaged peers seventh and eighth grade dropout rates are between 40 to 70 percent higher for Latino, African-American, and low-income students.³

Preparation - Only 1 out of every 6 African-American and Latino ninth graders in 2005 graduated in 2009 with the coursework necessary to be eligible for entry into the University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU) systems.⁴

Access - African-American and Latino students are less likely to attend a UC or CSU campus than their white and Asian

peers. In fact, in 2009 only 4 percent of African-American and Latino high school graduates enrolled at UC campuses compared to 12 percent of white and Asian graduates.⁵

Persistence – California’s Latino and African-American high school graduates are far more likely to start in the California Community College (CCC) system than their white or Asian peers and far less likely to earn a credential or transfer. Of those who do transfer, more move on to a for-profit and/or out-of-state university than to a UC or CSU.⁶ And in 2009, Latino and African-American students earned degrees at far lower rates in the UC and CSU systems than white or Asian students (17 percent for Latinos and 18 percent for African-Americans compared to 22 percent and 25 percent for Asian and white students, respectively.)⁷

FIXING THE PIPELINE

While the state data reveal clear inequities, the high school to college pipeline is functioning far better in some schools than others. Below, we identify top performers among high schools with large percentages of low-income students and students of color.⁸ For these schools, we compared the graduation and college-going rates for each subgroup to overall state averages, grouping each school into one of four categories. (See Figure 2.)

We used the following four categories:

- “College Pipeline” high schools are those where the student subgroup’s (African-American, Latino, or low-income) graduation and college-going rates exceeded state averages.
- “Not College Bound” high schools are those where the student subgroup exceeded the average state graduation rate but fell below the average state college-going rate.
- “College for Some” high schools are those where the student subgroup had a graduation rate below the state average but a college-going rate above the state average.
- “Broken Pipeline” high schools are those where the student subgroup’s graduation and college-going rates both lagged behind state averages.

Using this method we charted the number of schools in each category for schools serving high proportions of African-American or Latino students. (See Figures 3 and 4.)

The results are disturbing. Far too few schools with large populations of African-American, Latino, and low-income students are serving as pipelines to post-secondary education.⁹ The majority of high schools serving high percentages of low-income students and students of color lagged behind the state college-going rate, falling into the “Broken Pipeline” or “Not College Bound” categories. And only rarely did the low-income students and students of color in schools with a below-average graduation rate manage to beat the odds and exceed the average state college-going rate (the “College for Some” schools).

FIGURE 2: Four pipeline categories, based on cohort graduation and college-going rates

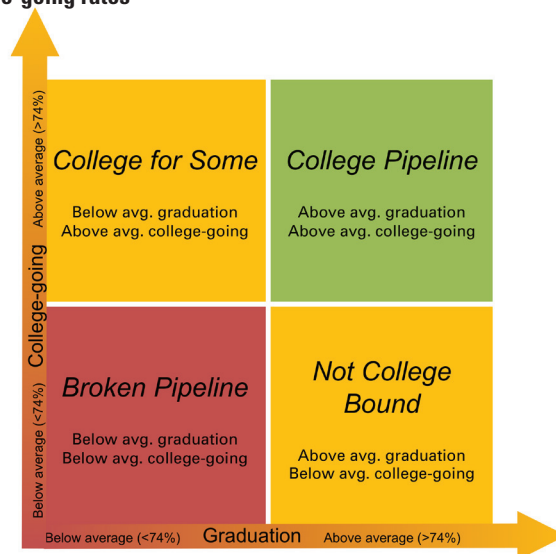


FIGURE 3: African-American graduation and college-going patterns for high schools with high proportions of African-American students N = 90

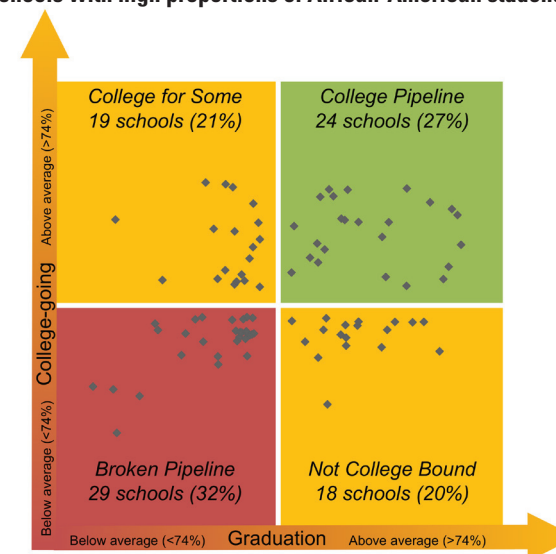
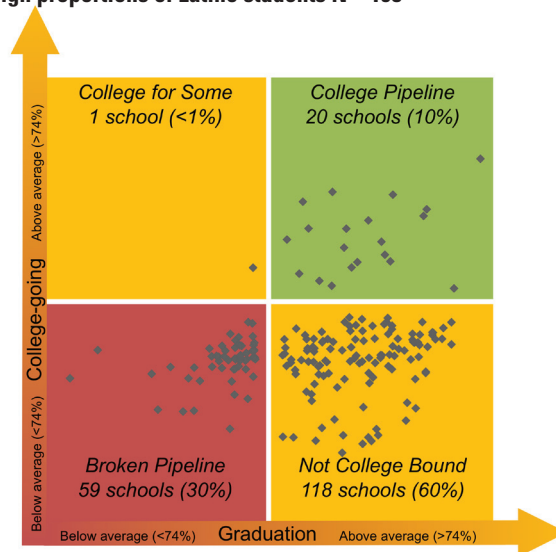


FIGURE 4: Latino graduation and college-going patterns for high schools with high proportions of Latino students N = 198



However, there are schools that are producing better results. 10 percent of schools serving high proportions of Latino students and 27 percent of schools serving high proportions of African-American students fell into the “College Pipeline” category. These schools reveal that it is possible to improve both graduation and college-going rates for these students. Of course, we can’t tell from these data how many of those students go on to community colleges or for-profit institutions rather than four-year universities. Still, we believe it is noteworthy that a number of comprehensive and nonselective schools have demonstrated “College Pipeline” results with underserved populations. In Table 1, we list some of these high schools.

TABLE 1: Schools with high percentages of African-American or Latino students

School		Cohort Graduation Rate	College-going Rate for Graduates	Estimated 9th Grade College-going
African-American Student Rates				
Schools with >15% African-American Students	Franklin High (Elk Grove Unified)	95%	84%	81%
	Rancho Cucamonga High (Chaffey Joint Union High)	92%	86%	79%
	Etiwanda High (Chaffey Joint Union High)	89%	88%	79%
Latino Student Rates				
Schools with >65% Latino Students	Calipatria High (Calipatria Unified)	93%	85%	79%
	Imperial High (Imperial Unified)	92%	86%	78%
	Southwest High (Central Union High)	89%	87%	77%

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Although California’s pipeline to post-secondary education is failing to provide equal access for low-income students and students of color, there are schools across the state demonstrating better results. In order to ensure that all of our students have access to higher education we must:

ALIGN SECTIONS OF THE PIPELINE.

- High schools should provide struggling students with additional educational supports and opportunities for credit-recovery in order to increase retention and decrease dropout rates.
- High school graduation requirements should be aligned with state college entrance criteria. Access to the UC/CSU curriculum should be expanded so that more students are eligible to attend a four-year college. It makes no sense for a student to graduate from a California high school without the option to apply to our state university system.
- At the same time, we should create incentives for California’s public universities to attract, support, retain, and graduate low-income students and students of color.

ACKNOWLEDGE SUCCESS AND LEARN FROM IT.

- High schools with superior graduation and college-going rates should be identified and publicly recognized, and their practices should be shared with other high schools.
- California should expand practices that are proven to be successful in preparing students for college, such as dual enrollment partnerships with community colleges, and college planning and counseling for all students.

ANALYZE DATA TO ASSESS QUALITY.

- California must develop stronger preschool through workforce data linkages in order to accurately assess the strength of our education pipeline.
- California should use its longitudinal data systems to calculate longitudinal college-going rates for entering ninth graders to assess the points at which students are dropping out.
- There should be further analysis of student outcomes both by institution type, and within similar institution types, and policymakers must be made aware of the patterns. Far too often, students of color and low-income students who attend community colleges and for-profit institutions fail to complete a program or transfer to a four-year school.¹⁰

Notes

1. Hans Johnson, "Educating California: Choices for the Future." (San Francisco, CA: Public Policy Institute of California, 2009).
2. College-going data were unavailable for the 2006 ninth grade cohort—those projected to be in the graduating class of 2010. We estimated the college-going rate for this cohort by multiplying their cohort graduation rate by the college-going rate for California high school graduates in the 2005 (class of 2009) ninth grade cohort.
3. Education Trust—West analysis of CDE data for 2009-2010.
4. John Rogers, Melanie Bertrand, Rhoda Freelon and Stephanie Fanelli, "Free Fall: Educational Opportunities in 2011." (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA IDEA, UC/ACCORD, 2011).
5. California Post-secondary Education Commission data. Enrollment -- First-Time Students at Public Institutions / College Going Counts. <http://www.cpec.ca.gov/OnLineData> (last visited February 3, 2012).
6. Colleen Moore, Nancy Shulock, "Divided We Fail: Improving Completion & Closing Racial Gaps in California's Community Colleges." (Sacramento, CA: IHELP, CSU Sacramento, 2010). Also see The Campaign for College Opportunity: www.collegecampaign.org
7. Colleen Moore, Jeremy Offenstein, Nancy Shulock, "Consequences of Neglect: Performance Trends in California Higher Education." (Sacramento, CA: IHELP, CSU Sacramento, 2011).
8. We focused on schools that served at least 81 percent low-income students, 65 percent Latino students, and/or 15 percent African-American students—the top quartile cut-points for each subgroup among all state public high schools.
9. Because of the large amount of overlap between the Latino and low-income populations the results for schools serving large proportions of low-income students were very similar to the results for those serving large percentages of Latino students.
10. For examples, see California Community College Student Success Taskforce recommendations at: http://www.californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/Executive/StudentSuccessTaskForce/Student_Success_Presentation_CCLC_2011-11-29.pdf, and work from Education Trust at <http://www.collegeresults.org/>

THE EDUCATION TRUST—WEST MISSION

The Education Trust—West works for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, pre-k through college. We expose opportunity and achievement gaps that separate students of color and low-income students from other youth, and we identify and advocate for the strategies that will forever close those gaps.



The Education Trust—West

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