THE MAJORITY REPORT

SUPPORTING THE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS OF LATINO STUDENTS IN CALIFORNIA

The Education Trust–West

INTRODUCTION

In 1968, thousands of Latino teenagers marched out of their high schools in a protest that would go down in history as the East Los Angeles Walkouts.

These brave students protested the unequal education they were receiving, which was marred by discrimination, corporal punishment, overcrowded classes, placement into vocational instead of college-preparatory courses, and instructional materials that disregarded their history and culture. Left with no other recourse, these students demanded dignity, respect, and access to education that prepared them for success in college and career. These students paved the way for future generations of students of all races to pursue a quality education.

Almost half a century later, educational opportunities and outcomes for California's Latino students have improved—in some cases, dramatically so. For instance, the number of Latino students completing Associate's and Bachelor's degrees in California has increased eightfold over the past three decades.

Even so, Latino students continue to face barriers in opportunity that make it harder for them to achieve college, career, and future success. These students:

- have insufficient access to early childhood education;
- attend the nation's most segregated schools;
- are often tracked away from college-preparatory coursework;
- are sometimes perceived as less academically capable than their White or Asian peers; and
- are less likely to feel connected to their school environment.

These inequities in access and opportunity lead to disparate and troubling outcomes. Latino students are more likely, for example, to leave high school without a diploma than White or Asian students. They are also less likely to have access to, and complete, the high school courses necessary to be eligible for the state's public universities; they are less likely to complete college once enrolled.

And, although California takes pride in its economic strength and industrial innovation, our state falls flat in how well it serves Latino students compared to other states. In a nationwide assessment of fourth grade reading, California's Latino students ranked fourth from the bottom; in eighth grade, they slid to next-to-last place.

These results are unacceptable.

Failing to offer a high-quality education to every California student, including the majority who are Latino, means failing to prepare the future leaders who will fuel our state's economy, strengthen our communities, and maintain our state's cultures, traditions, and values. Today, one in three workers in the California labor force are Latino, and that proportion will only increase as Latino youth age into the workforce.

> "REAL EDUCATION SHOULD CONSIST OF DRAWING THE GOODNESS AND THE BEST OUT OF OUR OWN STUDENTS."
>
> **- CESAR E. CHAVEZ**

Our state cannot afford to fail Latino students. With an increased sense of urgency for the changes our students deserve, our educational system can prepare the future scientists, artists, economists, academics, and business and government leaders that will change the world.

Our goal for *The Majority Report* is to describe what Latino students currently experience in our schools and what needs to change. This report highlights examples of community, school, and policy efforts that demonstrate what is possible, and it concludes with recommendations for state and local education leaders. We hope *The Majority Report* serves as a rallying cry for today's student leaders, educators, parents, policymakers, and community members.

WHO IS THE MAJORITY?

Latinos are the largest ethnic group in California. In 2014, the Latino population outnumbered the White population for the first time.

However, Latino students have been the largest ethnic group in our K-12 public schools for two decades. And, today, fully one out of every two California youth under 25 is Latino[1]—making it clear that the future of California will be significantly shaped by the surging Latino majority.

California's Latino youth do not share a single identity or experience. They differ enormously by race, country of origin, languages spoken, cultural traditions, immigration status, and more. A teen who identifies as Black, of Dominican descent, bilingual in Spanish and English, and third-generation American has a vastly different identity and life experience than one who identifies as Latino, recently immigrated from Mexico, and who speaks Mixteco. Yet, both these young people are Latino students in California's schools and neighborhoods. And they are bound by a collective struggle to achieve a high-quality education that prepares them for good jobs and a rich, fulfilling life.

Historically, our state and nation have treated this group of young people as a monolithic bloc, without recognizing the wide diversity of individuals within it. As a group, Latino students have been systemically denied equal opportunities in our communities and schools. When California became a state in 1850, Mexican Californians were treated as foreigners and denied access to education. Decades of segregation, political and economic oppression, and discrimination set the stage for Latino activists to significantly shape the Civil Rights Movements of the mid-20th century. Unfortunately, their stories and histories are often missing from history lessons and reflections on this era. For example, the lesser known *Mendez v. Westminster* struck down school segregation in California in 1947 and influenced the monumental *Brown v. Board of Education* case that followed seven years later. (See policy timeline on p. 6-7.) Today, our Latino youth still experience forms of discrimination, and our schools are more segregated than in 1947. Yet, Latino individuals are also recognized as a collective political and economic force that wields enormous influence on our country's future and prosperity.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

In this report, we use the United States Census definition of "Latino/a": any person of "Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin." Latino youth may be of any race, such as White, Black, or Asian, and may speak any language, such as Spanish, Portuguese, Mixteco, or English. The California Department of Education also uses this definition. We do not use the term "Hispanic," which typically refers only to individuals whose common language is Spanish.

The term "Chicano" refers only to individuals of Mexican origin. As the term came to prominence during the 1968 Chicano Student Blowouts movement, "Chicano" now has a connotation with political activism.

The term "Latinx" has recently emerged as an alternative to "Latino/a." In Spanish, all nouns have a gender, with masculine nouns ending in the suffix "-o" and feminine ones ending in -"a." By substituting the gendered suffix with an "-x", "Latinx" proponents argue that the term allows for gender neutrality. Opponents argue that "Latinx" is linguistically imperialistic, imposing American values onto the Spanish language. We do not use "Latinx" in this report because the term is still under debate and many educational organizations continue to use "Latino/a."

WHO IS THE MAJORITY?

A SIZABLE MAJORITY

LATINO STUDENTS ARE THE MAJORITY OF CALIFORNIA'S K-12 STUDENTS

1.3 MILLION Latino children under the age of 5 live in California.

3.3 MILLION Latino students attend California's K-12 public schools—more than every other state's total student population except that of Texas.

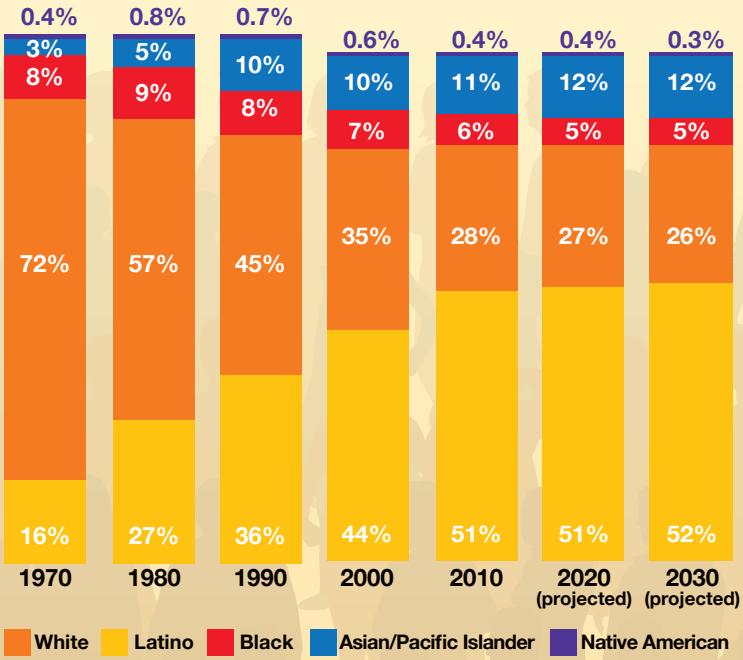
1 MILLION Latino students comprise 35 percent of California's higher education student population.

Sources: California Department of Education, 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, 2017.

A RAPIDLY GROWING MAJORITY

The Latino population was California's **fastest growing ethnic group** over the last fifty years. In 2014, the Latino population under age 20 grew to over 50 percent of the population for the first time.

LATINO YOUTH MAKE UP MORE THAN HALF OF CALIFORNIA'S POPULATION UNDER THE AGE OF 20



California Population under the Age of 20, by Ethnicity (1970 to 2030)
Source for 1970 – 2000 data is U.S. Census.
Source for 2010 – 2030 data is California Department of Finance.

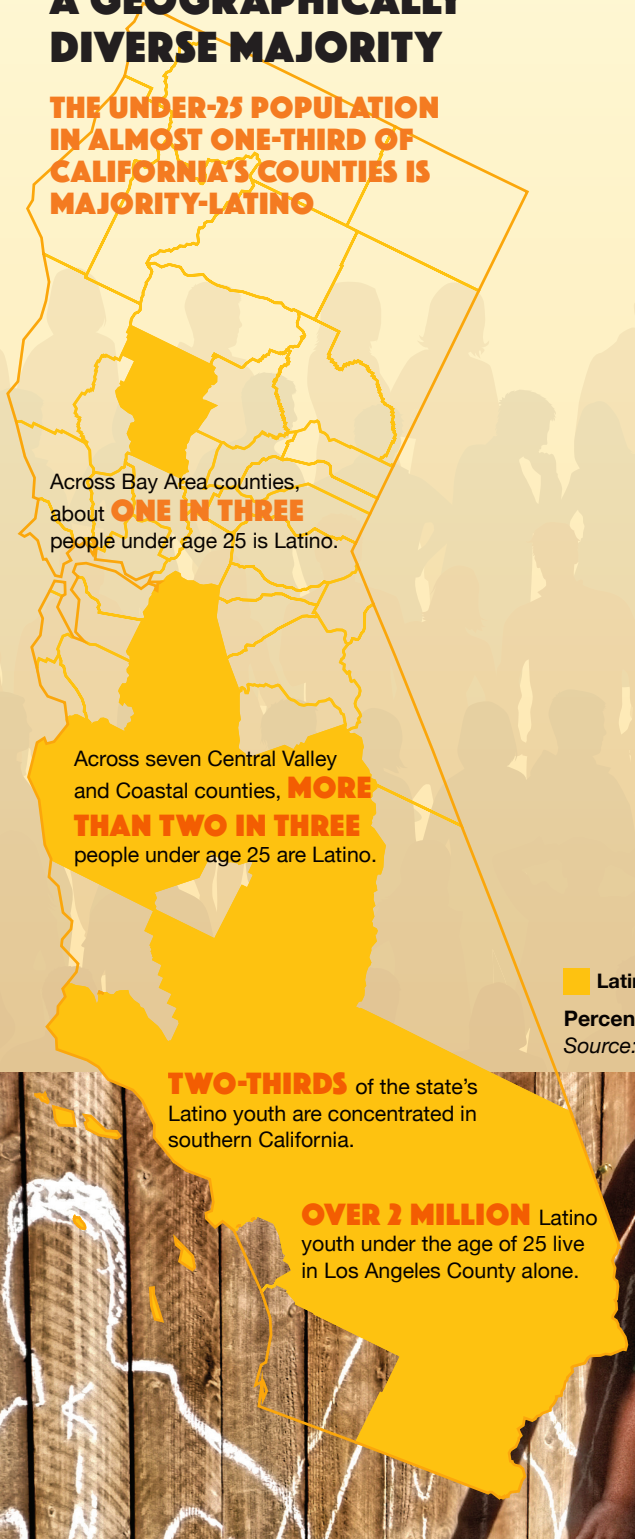
A NATIVE-BORN MAJORITY

Almost all **[95 PERCENT]** of California's Latino youth under 18 were born in the United States. These young people may be second-, third-, or a later generation. Among the five percent of Latino youth who are foreign-born, even fewer are undocumented, meaning they lack the authorization to live or work in the United States.

Source: United States Census Bureau

A GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE MAJORITY

THE UNDER-25 POPULATION IN ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF CALIFORNIA'S COUNTIES IS MAJORITY-LATINO



Latino population 50% or more

Percent of Youth under the Age of 25 Who Are Latino, by County (2015)
Source: United States Census Bureau, 2017.

A CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE MAJORITY

80 PERCENT of California's Latino children and youth are of Mexican heritage.

1 IN 5 Latino Californians descends from places other than Mexico, such as Puerto Rico, Honduras, Peru, Cuba, Brazil, and Spain.

1 IN 3 Latino Californians is Spanish-English bilingual—able to navigate and contribute to their communities in both Spanish and English.

1 IN 4 Latino Californians speaks only English.

1 IN 3 Latino K-12 students is classified as an English learner. Several thousand of these English learners speak a language other than Spanish, such as Mixteco or Portuguese. There are more Mixteco-speaking English learners than those speaking French, German, and 47 other languages.

Sources: United States Census Bureau, 2017; California Department of Education, 2017.

THE MAJORITY FACES HISTORICAL DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

1850 – California becomes a state. The state constitution views California residents with Mexican heritage as foreigners.

1863 – The California legislature legitimizes **school segregation**, withholding funds to schools that admit non-White students.

1920s – Labor shortages and federal restrictions on European and Asian immigration result in Latino immigration tripling. By 1930, Latino residents are the **state's largest non-White ethnic group**.

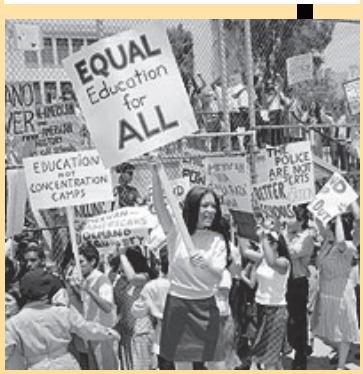
1930s – Scapegoated for the Great Depression, hundreds of thousands of Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans were deported in what became known as "**Mexican Repatriation.**"

1931 – ***Alvarez v. Lemon Grove School District*** strikes down a San Diego County district's decision to separate Mexican from White students—America's first successful school integration court decision.

1942 – The **Bracero Program** begins, allowing Mexican citizens to work temporarily in the United States. The program, created to address American agricultural labor gaps, hosts millions of Mexican workers until its termination in 1964.

1945 – After a public school refuses to admit a Mexican-American student, ***Mendez v. Westminster*** strikes down school segregation in California and influences the monumental *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1954.

1968 - Thousands of Latino students in **East Los Angeles walk out** of school to protest unequal, inadequate treatment, creating a legacy of Latino student activism.



1974 – In ***Lau v. Nichols***, Chinese-speaking students successfully argue that they are entitled to special supports in school to gain English-language proficiency. This US Supreme Court ruling applies to all non-English speaking students across the country, including those who are Latino.

1978 – ***Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*** strikes down racial quotas but upholds the consideration of race as one of many factors in public university admissions.

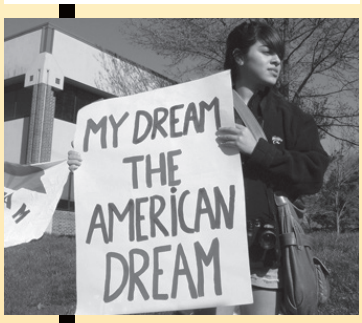
1850 1863 1920 1930 1931 1942 1945 1968 1974 1978

Since California's beginnings, federal, state, and local policies and legislation have limited educational opportunities for California's Latino students. The legacy remains to this day.

1982 – In ***Plyler v. Doe***, the U.S. Supreme Court guarantees undocumented students access to free, public K-12 education.

2001 – **AB 540** allows qualifying nonresident students, including undocumented students, to pay in-state tuition at California public colleges and universities.

2011 – Gov. Jerry Brown signs the **California DREAM Act**. This legislation gives undocumented residents access to financial aid for California public colleges and universities.



2016 – California voters pass **Proposition 58**, which overturns most provisions of Proposition 227 and reinstates bilingual education. The following year, in 2017, the state adopts an English Learner Roadmap clarifying the state's new plan to encourage bilingual instruction.

2016 – Almost immediately after the presidential election, school districts, higher education institutions, and state leaders publicly commit through **resolutions, public statements, and introduced legislation** to protect Latino, Muslim, LGBT, undocumented, and other vulnerable students and families.

1982 **1990** **2001** **2011** **2012** **2016** **2017**

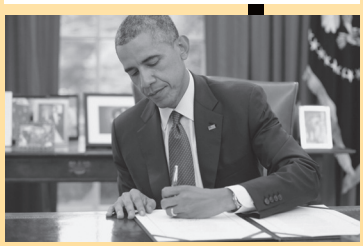
1990s - California voters pass a **series of propositions with anti-Latino overtones**.

Proposition 187 (1994), later struck down as unconstitutional, bars undocumented residents from public services such as education.

Proposition 209 (1995) prohibits the use of race in applications for public employment, education, or contracting. In combination with a previous year's decision at the University of California to prohibit the use of race in admissions, admission rates for Latino and other underrepresented students plunge at University of California, Berkeley and University of California, Los Angeles.

Proposition 227 (1998), overturned in 2016, prohibits public bilingual education without parent waivers.

2012 – The **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals** executive order exempts certain undocumented youth from deportation. As of June 2016, more than half a million youth were eligible in California.



2017 – The state of California passes a package of bills to protect undocumented immigrants, including protections for undocumented students and students from mixed-status families in the public K-12 and higher education systems.

2017 – The U.S. presidential administration rescinds the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, putting over 240,000 DACA youth in California at risk. School, district, university, and state leaders across California strongly criticize the federal decision and recommit to protecting these youth.

OUTCOMES FOR LATINO STUDENTS HAVE IMPROVED, BUT NOT FAST ENOUGH

Without a doubt, educational opportunities and outcomes have improved for Latino students in recent decades. Statewide, the high school dropout rate for Latino students has been cut in half, from a shocking 27 percent in 1994 to 13 percent in 2015. The gaps Latino students face in kindergarten readiness and fourth and eighth-grade achievement are narrowing.[2,3] And the number of Latinos completing Associate's and Bachelor's degrees in California has more than doubled in the last decade, far outpacing the rate of growth in the Latino population as a whole (see Figure 1).

Yet, even with this improvement, change is not fast enough. This increase in degrees has barely made a dent in the percentage of Latino adults with a Bachelor's degree or higher over the same period of time. (See Figure 2.) Today, among all ethnic groups, Latino adults are least likely to have a college degree.

Unless we accelerate the pace of change, our state is sending a disturbing message about the contributions, worth, and potential of Latino students. While we should rightly celebrate the progress in outcomes for Latino students stemming from educational system changes, we also have a responsibility to eradicate the barriers that still stand in their way.

THE NUMBER OF LATINO STUDENTS COMPLETING ASSOCIATE'S AND BACHELOR'S DEGREES HAS DOUBLED SINCE 2006

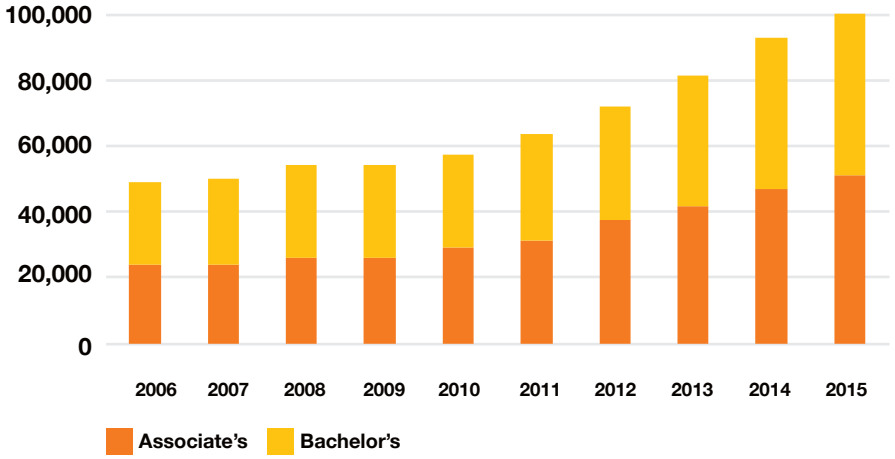


FIGURE 1. Number of Postsecondary Degrees Awarded to Latino Students in California, 2005-06 to 2014-15
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017.

DESPITE INCREASE IN AWARDED DEGREES, PERCENTAGE OF LATINO ADULTS WITH COLLEGE DEGREES REMAINS LOW

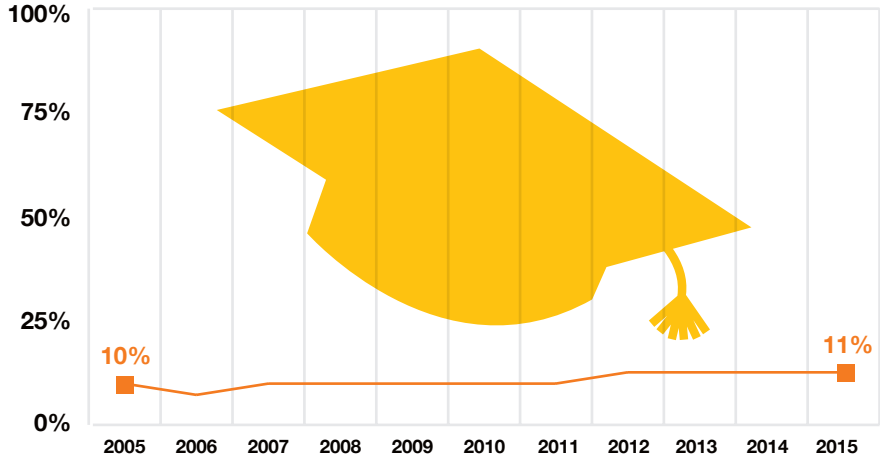


FIGURE 2. Percent of Latino Adults Age 25 and Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher in California, 2005 to 2015
Source: *United States Census Bureau, 2017.*

FROM PRESCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL, LATINO STUDENTS OVERCOME BARRIERS

Across the state, hundreds of thousands of Latino students are still denied the education they need to succeed in college, career, and beyond.

Numerous hurdles stand in their way, including insufficient access to early childhood education, low expectations in school, teacher and staff biases, less access to rigorous coursework, and lack of engaging and welcoming school environments. Students with additional needs, such as English learner, migrant, and undocumented students, face an additional set of obstacles. Below, we discuss some of these barriers and also offer some solutions.

ACCESSING RIGOROUS ACADEMICS AND BROAD CURRICULA

From their earliest years of schooling, Latino students are disadvantaged in accessing the best learning opportunities. In many communities, there are too few affordable preschool options for Latino children under the age of five.[4] And, with half of California's early childhood workforce speaking only English,[5] there are few options for preschools that provide a Spanish language-friendly environment that some Latino parents prefer.[6] As a result, Latino three- and four-year-olds are less likely to attend preschool than White, Asian, or Black children,[7] and they are more likely than those of any other background to provide home-based care for children under the age of five.[8]

And when Latino students set foot into California's K-12 system, they enter schools that are more segregated than anywhere else in the country, resulting in fewer academic opportunities.[9] For example, in Los Angeles Unified, which serves one in seven of California's Latino students, Latino and Black

DISPARITIES IN ACADEMIC OUTCOMES FOR LATINO AND OTHER UNDERSERVED STUDENTS OF COLOR BEGIN EARLY

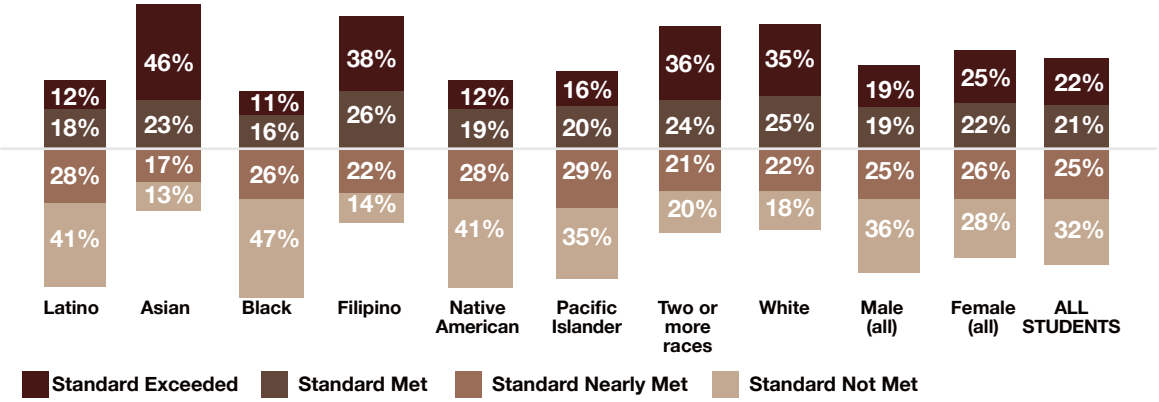


FIGURE 3. Performance on Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Grade 3 Assessment, by Ethnicity, 2016-2017
Source: California Department of Education, 2017.

students across all grades are two to three times more likely to be taught by the least effective teachers than their White and Asian peers.[10] In addition to less effective teachers, students also have less access to broad and rigorous curricula. For instance, majority-Latino middle and high schools across the state are less likely to have arts programs.[11] And high schools that are primarily Latino offer fewer A-G classes, the courses required for eligibility to the state's four-year public universities. In the schools most highly segregated with Latino students, fewer than two in three English language arts courses are A-G approved.[12] In comparison, at predominantly White schools, three in four are A-G approved. [13] And, with less access to Advanced Placement courses, Latino students comprised only 40 percent of California's AP test-takers in 2016, even though they made up more than half of the high school population.[14]

In addition to fewer opportunities to learn, Latino students encounter bias that is explicit or implicit—prejudices living within an individual's subconscious, unknown even to him or her. In one study, teachers were less likely to believe that Latino and Black students were hard-working and academically capable than their White and Asian classmates.[15] In another study, counselors held lower expectations for Latino students to succeed in challenging courses and more selective colleges.[16]

Bias has a devastating impact on students. Lower expectations, conscious or not, lead to lower academic outcomes like college enrollment.[17,18] Biased educators may unconsciously over-identify students for special education, potentially misidentifying students who struggle academically as learning disabled. [19] In contrast, they may under-identify students for gifted and talented education, with our state potentially missing out on the talents of thousands of gifted Latino students.[20] Though Latino students are half the K-12 student population in California, they represent just 39 percent of all students enrolled in GATE.[21] *(On page 17, meet Ernesto and learn about his journey navigating bias in GATE identification.)*

As a result of bias and the barriers to rigorous learning, the academic outcomes for Latino students are far too low. In 2017, less than one-third of Latino third graders met or exceeded the state's English standards. (See Figure 3.) Third-grade English is crucial for mastery of reading skills, necessary to learn any other academic content.[22,23] Unfortunately, the state assessment data does not allow us to examine differences in outcomes between Latino boys and Latina girls— even though gaps in achievement between Latino boys and Latina girls begin in these early schooling years.[24]

As students continue to middle school, the disparities are alarming. In middle school, one out of five Latino students does not pass Algebra I,[25] a prerequisite for higher-level high school math and a predictor of high school outcomes.[26] And by high school, one in five Latino students does not graduate with his or her class. Of the 12th grade students who do graduate, only a third complete A-G requirements. (See Figure 4.) Gender differences are apparent: Latina female students were 1.5 times more likely to complete the A-G sequence than Latino male students.

ONLY 3 IN 10 LATINO STUDENTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR PUBLIC UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

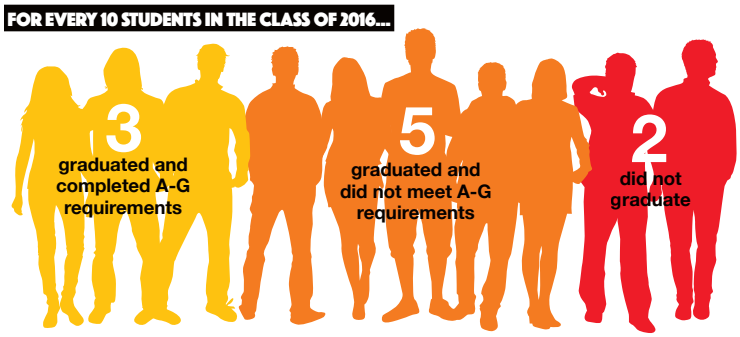


FIGURE 4. Class of 2016 Graduation and A-G Completion
Source: California Department of Education, 2017.

TURNING THE CURVE

What does it take to reverse troubling trends and ensure that California's Latino students have access to a rich array of meaningful and rigorous academic opportunities? In the "Turning the Curve" sections, we list some of the practices that research and experience tell us make a difference. For each practice, we also share examples of where that practice is being implemented in California. These districts, schools, and programs offer proof that by implementing evidence-based practices, outcomes for Latino students can improve.

TURNING THE CURVE

INCREASING ACCESS TO RIGOROUS ACADEMICS

PRACTICE	WHERE'S IT HAPPENING?
Expand access to preschool and ensure that there are enough quality programs, including bilingual options, for low-income children	Fillmore Unified offers an all-day, year-round dual language Spanish-English preschool that is free or low cost, depending on family income. Using the Sobrato Early Academic Language curriculum, bilingual preschool teachers alternate between a full day of Spanish instruction and a full day of English instruction. Teachers report that students participating in the program, 60 percent of whom are English learners, have stronger vocabulary and language skills when they enter kindergarten.
Leverage home-based care as an asset in early childhood education	Abriendo Puertas / Opening Doors, a program which began in Los Angeles but has expanded nationwide, focuses on Latino parents training each other on how to teach their children in the early years. The program has resulted in parents increasingly adopting practices that enhance their children's learning and school preparation. The Nurse-Family Partnership works across 21 counties in California to provide mothers with regular home visits from registered nurses from pregnancy through a child's second birthday. First-time mothers learn about maintaining a healthy pregnancy and providing newborn and infant care. Children whose mothers participated in the program have higher levels of cognitive development and early academic achievement.
Hold high academic expectations for all students by adopting college-preparatory pathways and supporting all students to be ready for college and careers	San Diego Unified is one of more than a dozen districts which implemented a policy that all students must complete the A-G course sequence to graduate from high school. Latino students comprised almost half of the class of 2016, which was the first to graduate under this new policy. Latino students graduated with a record-high 88 percent, far exceeding the state average.
Eliminate tracking—the practice of placing students in different levels of classes according to perceived ability	San Francisco Unified implemented a policy that places all middle-school students in the same sequence of Common Core-aligned math courses—ensuring that every ninth grader now has access to an A-G approved math course.
Provide extended learning time so that students have additional opportunities to master academic content outside of the traditional school schedule, including during the summer, before school, and after school	Elevate [Math], a non-profit initiative operating primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area, previews the coming year's math curriculum with students in an intensive, four-week summer course. For incoming eighth graders, the program has doubled Algebra I readiness.
Provide targeted interventions by identifying students' unique needs and tailoring academic supports to address those needs	To support its sizable long-term English learner (LTEL) population—students who are not making progress towards English proficiency after six years in American schools—Edendale Middle School in Alameda County provides tutors, additional teachers focused on reading intervention, and a community liaison who communicates with families on how to support their students. The school's LTELs have made one-to-two year gains on the Measures of Academic Progress benchmark assessments.
Require ongoing bias training that helps educators observe, acknowledge, and mitigate their own explicit and implicit biases	Santa Rosa City Schools provide unconscious bias trainings for teachers, other educators, and even community members. The district has a goal of sending every teacher in the district to a two-day professional development workshop at the Museum of Tolerance, a museum that chronicles the Holocaust and identifies how its lessons of oppression and bias are still relevant today. To date, about 500 of the district's 950 teachers have attended. An additional 100 parents, administrators, and support staff have also participated. Further, 500 teachers participated in another unconscious bias training from the California Teachers Association Human Rights Department. While the state now requires teachers to recognize their own biases in their credentialing expectations, the state can require such bias training for all educators to receive their certifications.

ENGAGING WITH THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Regardless of ethnic background, students succeed in environments that welcome, motivate, and engage students. Sadly, more than half of Latino students say they feel disconnected from their schools.[27] Additionally, less than half of Latino middle and high school students reported feeling a "high level" of fair treatment and feelings of general happiness and safety at school.[28] These students were reacting in part to educator bias: School staff members are more likely to identify Latino and Black students as "acting out" and refer them for disciplinary action for the very same behaviors that White students may exhibit. [29,30,31]

Moreover, Latino students feel disconnected because they have fewer opportunities to develop close relationships with other students and teachers. Latino students are also less likely than their White peers to participate in extracurricular activities in high school—due, in part, to cost, time commitment, and fewer opportunities to access music, sports, and other enrichment activities at an earlier age. Without these connections, Latino students have a higher risk of disengaging, being pushed out, and having lower academic outcomes.[32]

Students also may disengage when they cannot see a connection between themselves and what they are learning (or their learning environment). In the past, history and social science textbooks rarely acknowledged Latino contributions to history, referenced Latino individuals, or shared Latino perspectives.[33] And only five percent of children's books feature Latino characters.[34] Further, the majority of Latino students are being taught primarily by teachers who do not share their ethnic, cultural, and/or linguistic background. When Latino students—or any students of color—interact with teachers and other school personnel with similar backgrounds, their academic outcomes and attitudes about school improve. Yet, even though 54 percent of California's K-12 students are Latino, just 16 percent of all teachers share their ethnic background. In contrast, 68 percent of the state's K-12 teachers are White.[35]

Parents have challenges engaging with the school system, too. Across the country Latino parents seek to be actively involved in their children's education: One national survey found that they are more likely than White parents to attend a Parent/Teacher Association meeting and help their children with their homework.[36] But parents who want to engage with their children's schooling can face myriad challenges: They may have work conflicts, receive inadequate communications from the school, and cope with school policies that are unintentionally unwelcoming.[37]

Some within the Latino community face additional challenges. While half of adult Latinos in California are native-born, the other half are foreign-born and may not have attended school in the United States. Without firsthand experience, these parents may need additional help understanding and navigating the California educational system.[38] An additional challenge for some Latino parents is the language barrier. While most Latino adults in California are fluent in English, those who are English learners may have challenges communicating with their children's teachers, counselors, and administrators.

TURNING THE CURVE

ENGAGING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

PRACTICE	WHERE'S IT HAPPENING?
Create opportunities for students to connect and develop relationships with teachers and other students at school	The Puente Project partners with districts to support high school and community college students towards college graduation through professional development to teachers and counselors. Students develop strong relationships with each other and their Puente teacher and counselor. In the high school program, students have the same Puente teacher for English language arts and the same cohort of classmates in ninth and tenth grades. Students also have the same Puente counselor providing academic advising and engaging parents for all four years. Puente intentionally recruits a student cohort that represents a diversity of academic performance and engagement so that students can support each other in the classroom. 72 percent of Puente high school graduates complete the A-G requirements, compared to only 45 percent of all students statewide. (On p. 17, meet Sofía and learn about her experience with Puente.)
Implement restorative justice practices and other alternative forms of discipline that shift the focus from punishment to repairing harm	Richmond High School in Contra Costa County instituted a restorative justice program. The school partners with Catholic Charities of the East Bay, which received funding from the city of Richmond to provide training on restorative justice for Richmond High teachers. The program has included a conflict resolution circle and a "youth court" system, and was expanded to nine additional schools in the district.
Use culturally inclusive curriculum that honors the experiences of people of color and other marginalized populations	In Los Angeles Unified, home to nearly 470,000 Latino students, ethnic studies is now a graduation requirement. All LAUSD students, Latino or otherwise, receive a high school diploma only after gaining a foundational understanding of the experiences of Latino and other people of color. Districts that do not yet have an ethnic studies curriculum can look towards the model curriculum that the state's Instructional Quality Commission is currently developing. The state can go the next step by supporting districts in adoption of this curriculum through training and incentives.
Attract a diverse teacher workforce through teacher preparation programs, including alternative teaching pathways	Across the state, the California Mini-Corps hires about 400 bilingual college students, most of whom are Latino, to serve as tutors for migrant students during school hours and in the summer. In addition to gaining firsthand classroom experience, the tutors also receive ongoing coaching from the CMC program coordinator, a certified teacher who observes them and provides regular feedback. After completing Mini-Corps, approximately 80 percent of participating tutors go on to receive a teaching credential or permit.
Reduce barriers to family engagement with schools	Across Val Verde Unified, every traditional high school hosts a family resource center. The district also provides a bilingual family engagement center that provides everything from assistance with financial aid forms to courses on health, parenting, computer literacy, and English as a second language courses for parents. Last year, over 7,000 parents participated in events through the district family engagement center.

ADDRESSING DIVERSE NEEDS WITHIN THE PRE-K-TO-12 LATINO STUDENT POPULATION

Supporting all Latino students to succeed requires recognizing the unique, diverse needs of groups within the state's pre-K-to-12 Latino student population, and providing these students with tailored support systems that meet and celebrate them where they are. This section examines a few, but not all, of the groups within the Latino student population.

Latino students who are English learners engage in the arduous task of simultaneously mastering a second language and academic content, with no additional time to do so. The state's 1.1 million Latino English learners[39,40] often encounter ill-prepared teachers, insufficient academic support, and social, emotional, and academic isolation. Further, they are disproportionately identified for special education, with language needs often mistaken as learning disabilities.[41] And one in six of the state's English learners is a long-term English learner[42]— students who are not making sufficient progress towards English proficiency after six years in American schools. When it comes to reclassification—the process by which a district determines that a student's English is fluent enough for him or her to enter mainstream classes—students experience widely inconsistent policies and practices from district to district. In some cases, English learners are reclassified before they are ready to be successful in the mainstream. In other cases, they are reclassified too late and denied access to rigorous coursework, including college-preparatory opportunities.

Given these challenges, academic outcomes for English learners are far below their "English only" peers. Across all grades, the percentage of English learners who met or exceeded standards on the 2017 math Smarter Balanced assessment was 30 percentage points behind their English only peers. (See Figure 5.) And only 72 percent of English learners graduated with their high school class in 2015-16.

Another group with unique needs is migrant students—students whose parents leave their permanent place of residence to work elsewhere, often seasonal employment in agriculture. The 51,000 Latino migrant students in the state experience frequent, repeated moves. As a result, they may miss parts of the school year, attend multiple schools each year, and struggle to develop relationships with classmates, teachers, and school staff. With farmworkers in California living far below the poverty line, migrant students must sometimes join their parents in labor-intensive agricultural work.[43] Doing so both puts them in physical danger and limits the time they have to study and engage in extracurricular activities. As a result, across all grades, just 19 percent of migrant students met or exceeded standards in math on the Smarter Balanced assessments.[44] (See Figure 5 below.)

Lastly, while the overwhelming majority of Latinos are native-born citizens, California is home to an estimated 250,000 students with undocumented status and 750,000 students from families of "mixed-status"—where at least one family member is undocumented and another is a United States citizen. About four in five undocumented immigrants in California are Latino. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that K-12 school systems must serve all children, regardless of immigration status.[45] Even so, many families face fear and uncertainty because of their status. As a result, these students and their caregivers are less likely to participate in the school system. And, at the college level, undocumented students must find colleges and sources of financial aid that are available to them without a Social Security Number.

A subset of undocumented students, unaccompanied minors, are particularly vulnerable due to their severe lack of resources. In recent years, several thousand youth have relocated from other countries without a parent, primarily from Central America to the United States, due to extreme, intolerable violence. In addition to all the challenges that other undocumented students face, these students have often experienced significant trauma, have limited English-language skills and educational experience in their home countries, and must meet the emotional and financial challenges of living on their own.

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS AND MIGRANT STUDENTS LAG BEHIND THOSE OF OTHER STUDENTS

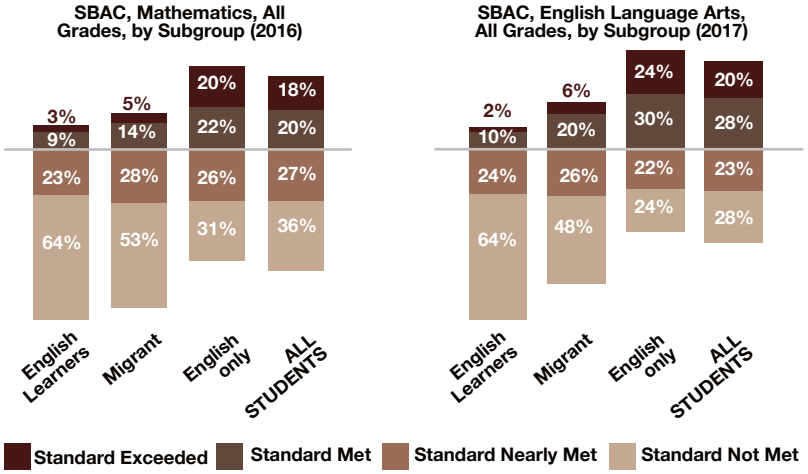


FIGURE 5. Performance on Smarter Balanced Assessments, All Grades, by Subgroup, 2016-17
Source: California Department of Education, 2017. Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

TURNING THE CURVE

ADDRESSING THE DIVERSE NEEDS WITHIN THE PRE-K-TO-12 LATINO STUDENT POPULATION

PRACTICE	WHERE'S IT HAPPENING?
Create a welcoming environment so that students feel safe and connected to campus	At Nogales High School in Los Angeles County, students script and record videos that welcome newcomer English learners in their native languages. These videos provide information about what to expect in the classroom and what resources are available at school. Newcomers also have access to a counselor specifically assigned to them, who regularly checks in and monitors their progress.
Celebrate multilingualism by recognizing the unique assets that non-English speakers bring	Almost 300 districts—more than a quarter of all districts in the state—across 52 counties award the State Seal of Biliteracy to high school graduates in recognition of bilingual, biliterate proficiency.[46] Some districts, such as those in San Mateo County, also recognize younger students on the pathway to biliteracy with awards. Though any student is eligible, English learners already fluent in another language are especially well-positioned.
Provide both designated and integrated English language instruction	In Alhambra Unified, all ninth-grade students are enrolled in an A-G approved Integrated Math I course. The district offers differentiated course sections to support their English learners, of whom one in four is Spanish-speaking. Teachers receive specialized professional development from the Orange County Department of Education to provide Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English sections for newer English learners. And at two of the district's three traditional high schools, long-term English learners often take an additional support class that "shadows" the main section.
Establish and expand bilingual education programs, where students learn academic content in two languages.	The Sobrato Early Academic Language program, currently used in 87 schools across California, serves students from preschool through third grade. The program, which includes a bilingual Spanish-English option, infuses English learner best practices into science and social science content. By third grade, SEAL students score similarly or better than similar students on tests of English language arts and math proficiency. Bilingual programs have been shown to be more effective than English immersion alone, and to increase proficiency in both English and academic content for English learners. To meet the resulting increased demand for bilingual teachers, the state can cover the costs for current teachers to receive the additional bilingual certification. Districts can build the pipeline by supporting bilingual teacher preparation academies or establishing programs that recruit bilingual teachers from the community.
Provide extended learning time for migrant students, who have less time in the classroom due to repeated moves	In Kern County, home to the one of the state's largest Latino migrant populations, the regional Migrant Education Program provides additional learning time after school, on Saturdays, during the summer, and at home. Educators receive additional professional development to serve migrant students, and access to a curriculum center with materials created specifically for these students.
Provide "wraparound" supports—social, legal, financial or other non-academic assistance	Oakland International High provides about 100 unaccompanied minors with legal, health, and socio-emotional services, along with a drop-in wellness center. A school community manager coordinates non-academic services, and a case manager connects with individual students to make sure they receive targeted support.
Publicly communicate vocal, unwavering support and protections for undocumented students and mixed-status families	Over 100 districts—about one-tenth of all of the districts in the state—have issued resolutions committing to not allow immigration officials on campus without a warrant. These resolutions follow a letter from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction urging all superintendents to declare their districts safe havens for undocumented students.

RISING ABOVE THE ODDS: STUDENT EXPERIENCES

Behind the data and the narrative in this report lie the individual experiences of millions of Latino students in California.

Here, we share the stories of three former or current Latino students who have succeeded, despite the odds. At one point or another, each of these students encountered the biases and barriers described in this report. But there was a turning point—a supportive teacher, school program, or community organization—that turned the curve and helped these students reach their full potential. Without these interventions, their academic trajectories could have been very different.

ERIKA: GETTING TO, AND THROUGH, COLLEGE

Erika was a top-notch student. She excelled in elementary school, and a teacher even approached her parents about her advancing a grade. It was no surprise when she finished middle school as the class valedictorian.

In her transition to high school, Erika joined College Track, an organization that supports students from underserved communities, starting in high school and ending with college graduation. College Track advised Erika on becoming a competitive college applicant. She enrolled in courses that challenged her academically and participated in extracurricular and volunteer activities. Erika was again valedictorian, this time of her graduating class from Castlemont High School in Oakland Unified.

> **"DON'T TAKE 'NO' FOR AN ANSWER. IF YOU DON'T HAVE SUCCESS WITH ONE WAY, TRY ANOTHER."**

Erika's focus and dedication paid off when she was admitted to UC Berkeley. "At first, I didn't realize what a big deal it was. As I learned more about Berkeley, it was an eye-opener to realize that it is the #1 public institution in the world!"

Unfortunately, admission was not enough. She now needed to pay for college. Due to her undocumented status, Erika was not eligible to apply for federal or state financial aid. The California DREAM Act, which now provides financial aid opportunities for undocumented students, would not be passed for another four years.

But Erika was persistent. She researched dozens of college scholarships. Again, her undocumented status was a hurdle. "Of 100 applications, maybe 15 of them didn't require a Social Security Number," she remembers. "Of those 15, I got maybe 10—enough to finance my first year, but nothing more." Her family rallied around her. Her parents, both of whom have worked for decades as evening-shift janitors, offered their savings. "My parents only had an elementary school education. They were so supportive, always focused on us getting a good education so we could have better jobs and life opportunities. I did not want to take away their life savings."

One day, everything changed. The Initiative for Diversity in Education and Leadership (IDEAL), an initiative of a local non-profit organization called the Level Playing Field Institute, reached out to her and other underrepresented students of color who had been admitted to UC Berkeley. IDEAL awarded her a scholarship that covered tuition, housing, and all other expenses for her entire college experience. "I didn't intend to, but I cried. It really came down to, if I got this scholarship, I could go to college, and if I didn't, I simply could not," she says.

With finances taken care of, Erika enrolled at UC Berkeley. Her IDEAL advisor was supportive when she had challenges with a course her first semester in college. "It made a world of difference to me to hear from my advisor that it was okay to drop that course and instead focus on being successful. My success the first semester set the tone for the rest of my college career." Erika got a B her first semester, but otherwise, as in high school, she was a straight-A student.

Erika wanted to give back. "People made an investment in my education, and I felt I needed to pay that investment forward." While at Berkeley, Erika applied her leadership and teaching skills to helping students like her make it. She went back to her former high school and taught a course for English learners. She volunteered with a local school to create a database of 75 scholarships for undocumented students like herself.

In May 2011, Erika walked proudly across the stage to receive her degree—with *magna cum laude* honors.

ERNESTO: GIFTED, TALENTED, AND LATINO

As a third grader in Culver City, Ernesto was performing above average academically.

His teacher noticed, and referred him to the local Gifted and Talented Education program. As he filled out the application, she advised him, "Don't write down that you speak a language other than English at home."

Ernesto was confused. Until that point, adults had told him that lying was bad, and his school typically reinforced that viewpoint. But here was a trusted adult, encouraging him to lie.

This was the first moment that Ernesto realized his bilingual Latino identity conflicted with what the school system viewed as success. Spanish is an essential part of who Ernesto is; he grew up speaking both Spanish and English, and Spanish was the only way he could communicate with his father and grandparents. But speaking Spanish at home might be viewed as an obstacle to being identified as gifted.

> **"SOMETIMES SCHOOL SYSTEMS AREN'T BUILT FOR WHO WE ARE."**

This identity conflict continued through Ernesto's school years. In an attempt to assimilate, Ernesto started to hide his identity. "I still have homework assignments from middle school where my name is written as 'Erny' instead of 'Ernesto,'" he says.

But in high school, Ernesto met Mr. Rodriguez, the student government teacher, who encouraged him to think differently about his identity. Ernesto began to embrace, rather than downplay, being Latino. He took up a leadership position in the Latinos Unidos club, which Mr. Rodriguez had founded at that high school years before. And Ernesto remained active in Latino organizations as an undergraduate, and later, graduate student.

Ernesto is now a teacher himself. As he reflects on being encouraged to lie about speaking Spanish at home, he comments, "My teacher really was just trying to help me navigate a system. Sometimes [school] systems aren't built for who we are." And that's why, as a teacher, Ernesto is dedicated to creating an environment where his students can feel successful *and* comfortable with who they are.

SOFÍA: CONNECTING TO SCHOOL BY CONNECTING TO A TEACHER

In elementary and middle school, Sofía felt disengaged. As a former English learner, she struggled, particularly with her English classes. She used to ask herself, "Why am I here?" She explains, "It doesn't feel good when your classmates are getting As and Bs, you try so hard all the time to write, and are still getting Cs and Ds."

But things changed when she entered Tennyson High School as a freshman last year. Her older brother, Santiago, encouraged her to enroll in The Puente Project program at her school. Santiago had joined Puente two years earlier, when he was a freshman, and he knew it would be beneficial and engaging for his sister.

At Sofía's high school, Puente consists of a block of two class periods, combining high school English with a Puente elective, and an afterschool club. "Puentistas" have the same teacher and classmates for the Puente block during their freshman and sophomore years. The program employs teachers and counselors whose backgrounds reflect those of the students.

> **"I'M GLAD FOR ALL THOSE RED MARKS ON MY PAPERS EARLY ON, BECAUSE I'M SO PROUD TO SEE THE IMPROVEMENT TODAY."**

Sofía's Puente teacher is Ms. Valdez, who assigned culturally relevant stories, such as Rain of Gold by Victor Villaseñor—a story about the author's own parents who were undocumented Mexican immigrants. Sofía enjoyed this novel because it reflected the experience of her own parents.

Ms. Valdez worked closely with Sofía on her writing. "We worked nonstop," Sofía says. "I would spend every day after school with her. My friends would help me and show me other ways to communicate something." Her hard work paid off: Sofía's writing improved. At the end of the year, Sofía was awarded "Most Transformed Student" in her Puente class.

Sofía knows that Ms. Valdez really cares about her. "I have her number in my phone. We all have her number in our phones! She's there for us whenever we need her."

Now a sophomore, Sofía is excited about school. She is planning to run for an officer position within the school's Puente club, even though most positions are held by juniors and seniors. And she looks forward to English class. "I want to learn more about Latino culture, learn to read texts better, expand my vocabulary."

IN COLLEGE, LATINO STUDENTS PERSEVERE THROUGH A NEW SET OF CHALLENGES

Because they encounter opportunity and achievement gaps in preschool through high school, Latino students are less likely to be prepared for college.

Troublingly, Latino young people also encounter additional challenges as they apply for college, enroll, and work toward their degrees. In this section, we discuss those barriers and identify strategies to dismantle them.

GETTING READY FOR COLLEGE

Before arriving at college, all high school students need guidance to navigate the college application process. They need trusted advice on which courses and exams to take, how to build a well-rounded application that includes both rigorous academics and extracurricular activities, how to write compelling personal statements, and how to apply for financial aid. This process is difficult for any high school student but particularly challenging for students when they cannot access proper guidance, or if their families have not had prior experience navigating the American higher education system.

The research is clear: With effective high school counselors, students are more likely to enroll in four-year colleges.[47] But Latino students face challenges accessing that effective guidance. First, California counselors are overworked, with the nation's worst student-to-counselor ratio in the country.[48]

California has just one counselor for every 645 students.[49] In addition to massive caseloads, these counselors often do not have the tools they need to advise students. For example, they rarely have data and tools that allow them to track students from high school through college enrollment and graduation. In fact, California is just one of a handful of states that does not annually match K-12 and postsecondary records through a state data system.

Then, even well-meaning counselors can be biased in their guidance to Latino students, as described in the previous section. A counselor can redirect students to lower-level, less rigorous courses even if they are ready for more advanced coursework. Similarly, a counselor can push students towards vocational schools or community colleges rather than building awareness of the range of higher education options and the financial supports that can help students get there.

The need for supportive college guidance becomes even more dire for the three in five Latinos who are "first-generation"—the first in the family to attend college.[50] In addition to the challenges that other students face navigating college applications, these students cannot benefit from the luxury of their parents' firsthand experience and may face "breakaway guilt" about leaving their families behind.[51]

These students need support not only applying for college, but also transitioning to college. Every year, thousands of students graduate from high school with every intention of starting college that fall but never actually enroll—a phenomenon known as "summer melt."[52] Often, these students struggle to navigate the red tape of financial aid forms, registration, housing applications, and other paperwork—while also juggling other personal and financial obligations.

Even if they receive proper college guidance, Latino students still must surmount the gaps in academic preparation resulting from inadequate supports during their pre-K-to-12 years, as described in the previous section. They also face additional academic obstacles once they get to college. Latino and Black students are more likely than students of other backgrounds to be required to take remedial coursework. (See Figure 6.) At community colleges, almost nine in 10 Latino students are enrolled in at least one remedial course.[53] Some of these students may have the knowledge and readiness to enter college-level coursework but are barred from doing so by placement tests and prerequisite course requirements. Remediation exacerbates the financial burden Latino college students face, requiring them to pay for classes that do not count toward graduation requirements. Luckily, the California State University and the California Community Colleges system are taking steps to remove some of these barriers. For instance, CSU recently dropped math and English language arts placement tests and will instead look at other measures to determine whether students are ready for college-level classes.

LATINO AND BLACK STUDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO ENROLL IN REMEDIAL COURSEWORK

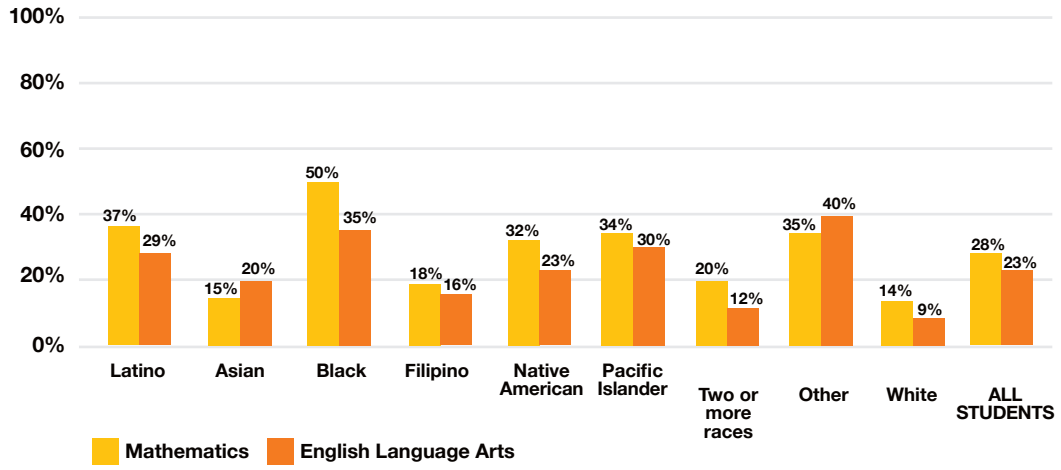


FIGURE 6. Percentage of CSU First-time 2016 Fall Freshmen Needing Remediation, by Subject and Ethnicity
Source: California State University, 2017.

TURNING THE CURVE

SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO GET TO COLLEGE

PRACTICE	WHERE'S IT HAPPENING?
Add more high school counselors focused on academics and college guidance	San Diego Unified moved professional development for all middle and high school counselors from the Pupil Support to the Academic Services team. This signaled that counseling needed to focus on academic supports as much as on socio-emotional services.
Support counselors to provide quality college-going guidance	Riverside County Office of Education created the Riverside County Education Collaborative to pilot college-going interventions with five focus districts and three higher education partners, and then scaled what works county-wide. One initiative, the School Counselor Leadership Network, brings together high school counselors to collaborate and share best practices.
Partner with non-profit organizations to supplement counselor capacity in districts and schools	College Track partners with districts in California, Colorado, and Louisiana to support individual students from the summer before ninth grade through college graduation. Participants receive tutoring, academic workshops, test prep, study groups, college tours, college advising, and a scholarship help desk to assist them with applying to college. Once in college, students receive ongoing mentoring from a College Completion Coach. *(On p. 16, read about Erika's journey to college with the support of College Track and other organizations.)*
Expand dual enrollment—giving early exposure to college by enrolling students in community college while still in high school	At Rancho Cucamonga High School in San Bernardino County, about 150 students enrolled in Chaffey College through dual enrollment. One of the school's counselors brought the application, orientation, and assessment process in-house. Two community college classes are now offered on the high school campus during the year, and an additional course offered in summer.
Expand summer bridge programs which give incoming students opportunities to take college courses in the summer between high school and college	Across University of California, California State University, and California Community College campuses, summer bridge students get a head start on coursework, campus life, and personalized access to key campus resources. Most summer bridge participants are first-generation, from disadvantaged backgrounds, and/or students of color. Summer bridge programs have been shown to increase completion at community colleges and some public universities by 10 percentage points.
Streamline remediation so that students can more quickly access credit-bearing, college-level coursework	The CSU system has publicly committed to eliminate remedial courses by 2018. CSU is replacing these courses with "co-requisites," or courses that are taken alongside a standard credit course, as support. Tennessee's higher education system demonstrated that such a policy has resulted in improved pass rates in standard courses. CSU also recently removed intermediate algebra as a requirement for non-math and science majors, recognizing that it was an unnecessary hurdle to graduation.

AFFORDING COLLEGE

One of the biggest barriers to college is affording it. For many Latino students, the cost of college tuition and living expenses is enough to discourage them from applying to certain schools, accepting admission to their top choice, or finishing school.[52] In some cases, waivers are available during the college application process. However, students and their families are still responsible for the bulk of fees for requirements, such as college entrance exams or AP score reporting. And once accepted to college, the financial burden for college—estimated at over $30,000 a year for an in-state UC student[53]—lies squarely on the shoulders of students and their families. Latino students particularly feel this burden; among all ethnic groups, they are the most likely to be low-income while in college.[54] Over half of all Latino college students nationwide receive Pell Grants, a federal grant that assists low-income students to pay for college expenses.[55] Furthermore, financial aid covers part, but often not all, of the cost of tuition, and it does not cover rent or other basic needs. Many students face food and housing insecurity while in school—and a recent study of the UC system showed that one in five UC students has gone hungry.[58]

TURNING THE CURVE

MAKING COLLEGE AFFORDABLE

PRACTICE	WHERE'S IT HAPPENING?
Reduce the financial barriers that high school students face in applying to college	At least two dozen districts pay for the SAT or ACT college entrance exams for their entire high school junior class. In its first year of doing so in 2015-16, Long Beach Unified doubled the number of students taking the SAT over the previous year. The district supplements the fee waiver with a free on-site, 38-hour SAT prep course and free PSAT tests for eighth-, ninth-, and tenth-graders. The initiative is part of the Long Beach College Promise, a partnership among the district, local colleges, and the city with a goal of giving every child the opportunity to go to college.
Reduce the financial barriers that students face attending college	In 2017, the state created the California Community Promise program, which provides one year of free tuition to all first-time, full-time community college students in California. The program builds upon the experience of community partnerships like the Los Angeles College Promise. In 2016, Los Angeles Unified, Los Angeles Community College District, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and the city of Los Angeles partnered to guarantee Los Angeles Unified high school graduates priority admission, one year of free tuition, proactive counseling, and academic and peer supports to complete the first year of college successfully at any of the nine Los Angeles community colleges. This assistance builds upon existing financial aid, such as the Board of Governors enrollment fee waiver for low-income students. Higher education institutions can increase affordability first and foremost by avoiding further tuition increases. Other ways the public university systems can reduce costs is by incentivizing students to finish their degrees more quickly. They can monitor students' progress and encourage students to take an average course load each semester, which keeps them on track to graduate in four years. The state can also expand its pilot of offering Bachelor's degrees at community colleges, and focus on increasing the number of students transferring from the less expensive community college system to the state's four-year schools.
Increase financial aid	The California DREAM Loan Program provides loans to undocumented students at the same rate of the federal Stafford loan. The state can create a similar loan program that undocumented students can use at private California colleges. State policymakers can also explore increasing financial aid opportunities, such as expanding of the Cal Grant program.
Think outside of the "tuition-is-the-only-expense" box	Fresno State's Food Security Project provides a multitude of services to meet students' food-security needs. The core of the Food Security Project is a food pantry that mimics the grocery store experience, providing a shopping basket, shelves to select items from, and a checkout stand. The Food Security Project also connects eligible students with CalFresh application assistance and provides students with immediate food needs with access to the campus dining hall for hot meals. Lastly, the program has developed an app that immediately notifies students when leftover food is available from a catered event on campus.

LATINO AND BLACK STUDENTS ARE UNDERREPRESENTED IN CALIFORNIA'S PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

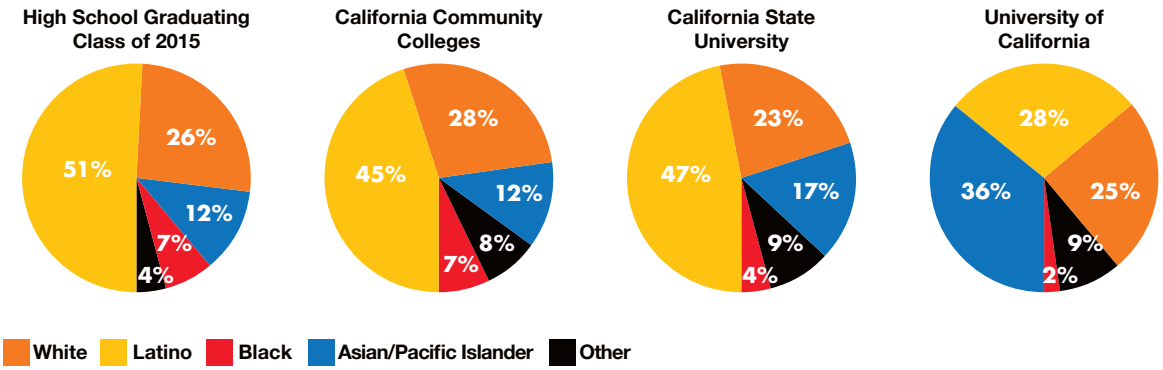


FIGURE 7. First-Time Non-International Freshman Enrollment at California Public Postsecondary Institutions, 2015, by Institution Type
Source: California Department of Education, 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, 2017.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Latino students are underrepresented at all three branches of California's public higher education system (see Figure 7). This is especially true in the UC system, where fewer than one in three students is Latino, despite Latino students comprising more than half of the high school graduating class. As selectivity of the institution increases, so does the underrepresentation. At UC Berkeley, the most selective UC campus, only 14 percent of the fall 2016 freshman class was Latino, even though Latinos represent 51 percent of California's public high school graduates.[59]

This underrepresentation is due, in part, to anti-affirmative action policies. The UC Regents vote in 1995, and the passage of Proposition 209 in 1996, prohibited our state's public universities from using race as one among many considerations to assemble a diverse class of students. In 1998, the year these policies went into effect, the admission rate for Latino and other underrepresented students at UC Berkeley plummeted by over 20 percent from the previous year. (See Figure 8.)

LATINO AND BLACK ADMISSION RATES TO UC BERKELEY'S FRESHMAN CLASS PLUMMET AFTER IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFIRMATIVE-ACTION BAN

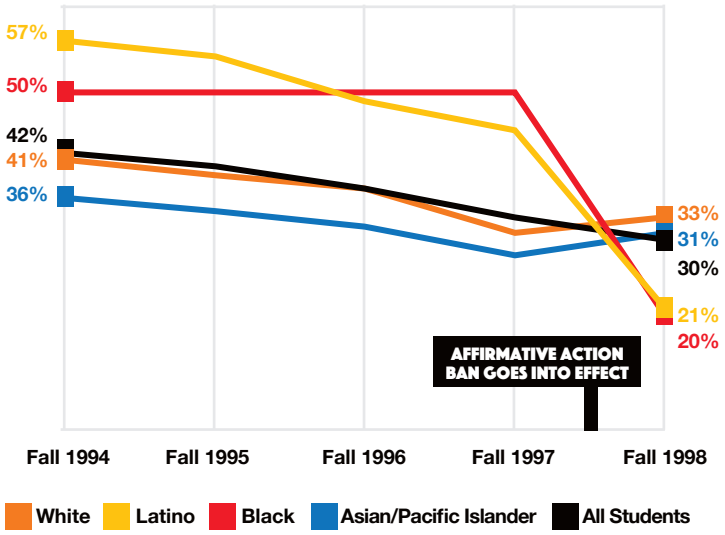


FIGURE 8. Admission Rates to UC Berkeley, by Race/Ethnicity, Fall Freshman Classes, 1994-1998
Source: Campaign for College Opportunity, 2015.

The Latino students who do attend our state's most selective public universities are, therefore, more isolated than on other campuses, and sometimes they are left feeling marginalized, stereotyped, and less welcome. In a survey of almost 8,000 Latino UC undergraduates, more than a fifth of all Latino students did not feel they were respected on campus.[60] These students have few mentors with similar backgrounds to reach out to; across California's public universities, only seven percent of instructional staff are Latino.[61] And the small percentage of Latino college students who are also undocumented may face even more isolation due to concerns about revealing their immigration status.[62] The impact of this isolation is devastating: Students who feel isolated are at increased risk of withdrawing from classes, and ultimately, college.[63]

This isolation, on top of all the aforementioned challenges, leads students to feel pushed out of college. As a result, graduation rates for Latino students are behind those of White and Asian students across the UC, CSU, and CCC systems. (See Figure 9.)

GRADUATION RATES ARE LOWER FOR LATINO AND OTHER UNDERSERVED STUDENTS OF COLOR

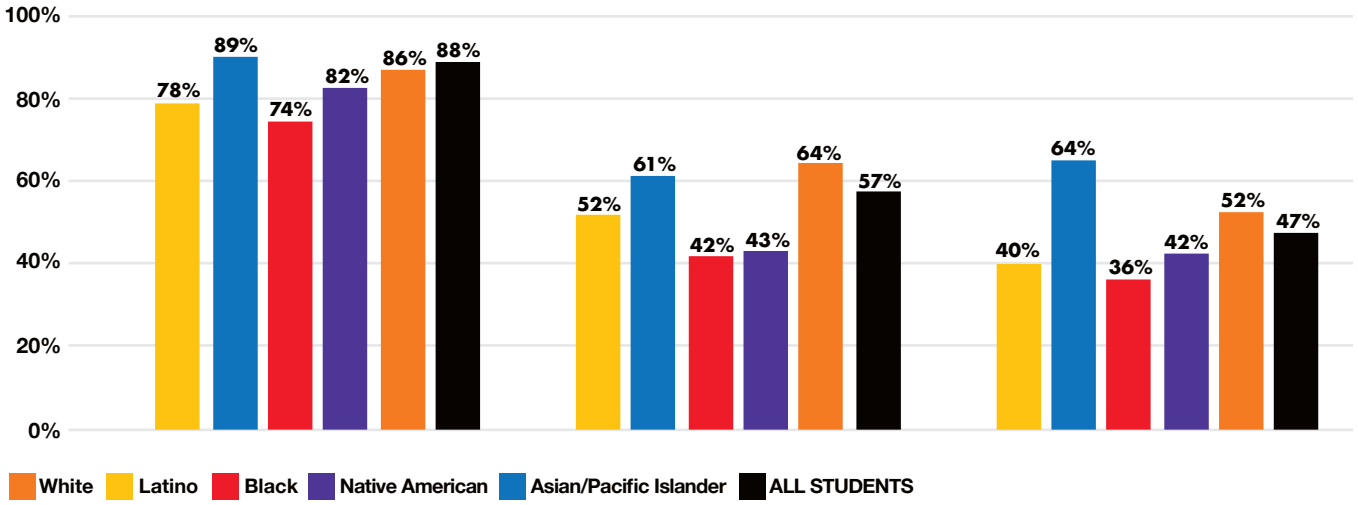


FIGURE 9. Six-Year Completion Rates for UC, CSU, and Community College Students, by Ethnicity
Sources: University of California 2016 Accountability Report, 2017; California State University Analytic Studies, 2017; California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) Scorecard, 2017. Six-year graduation rates are for freshmen entering UC and CSU in 2009 and graduating with a Bachelor's degree in 2015. Six-year degree, certificate, or transfer students are for students entering community college in 2009-10. For UC and CSU, the "Asian" category includes Pacific-Islander students; for community colleges, "Asian" excludes Filipino students.

TURNING THE CURVE

CREATING A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

PRACTICE	WHERE'S IT HAPPENING?
Reduce isolation by providing Latino students with opportunities to connect with each other and campus faculty	At UC Davis, the Center for Chicanx and Latinx Academic Student Success, or "El Centro" in Spanish, connects students with counselors and peer support groups as well as tutoring, academic workshops, and faculty advising. El Centro partners with Casa Cuauhtémoc, an on-campus residence hall that is themed around Latino students' common heritage. Students participate in social activities that celebrate Latino history and culture and an academic seminar that explores their identities while equipping them with the skills they need to succeed in college.
Continue to lead the nation in unwavering support and protections for undocumented college students and mixed-status families	The UC and CSU systems have established resource centers at every campus, connecting students with legal, financial, academic, and socio-emotional support. Further, the community college, CSU, and UC systems have been vocal in their support for undocumented students. In the days after the 2016 presidential election, the three systems issued public statements that their campuses would remain welcoming and safe for all students, regardless of immigration status. Immediately after the federal government announced that it would rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, the three systems publicly denounced the decision and reiterated that they welcome and support undocumented youth. The UC system went further, filing a lawsuit to challenge the DACA decision.
Think creatively about how to give underrepresented students of color a fair shot in admissions, given the current legal constraints	Through the Eligibility in the Local Context pathway, each UC campus prioritizes, but does not guarantee, admission for students who are in the top nine percent of their high school class. In a 2016 pilot, ELC students who also attended a low-income high school were given an additional round of review during the admissions process. In doing so, the number of admitted ELC underrepresented students of color increased by 10 percentage points over the previous year.
Repeal Proposition 209 by passing an amendment to our state's constitution	While no current state amendment is proposed, precedent exists to revise or repeal Proposition 209's provisions on affirmative action in higher education. The Senate Constitutional Amendment No. 5, of 2012, attempted to do so—but was ultimately withdrawn.
Close gaps for underrpresented students in graduation rates, by setting goals, examining data, and targeting supports	When San Diego State University identified that the institution was leaving Latino students behind, the university's president committed, in partnership with the University Senate, to improve services for them. The university found that low-income students were more likely to graduate if they lived on campus, and responded by creating financial incentives for low-income students to do so. With this and other initiatives, the graduation rate for Latino students jumped from 31 percent in 2002 to 60 percent in 2013.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As highlighted throughout this report, there are a multitude of policies and practices that can improve educational opportunities and outcomes for Latino students.

WHAT THE STATE CAN DO

- **Improve and expand the state's education data systems.** Expand transparency of K-12 data so the public more easily see performance cross-tabulated by race and gender, both on the California School Dashboard and other reports. Monitor transitions between K-12 and higher education, and also track the preparation and placement of our teacher workforce. Provide school districts with more detailed, real-time data to effectively direct resources and interventions.
- **Strengthen the state's systems of accountability and support.** Pair local control with serious efforts to hold school and district leaders accountable and provide them with the assistance they need to improve. In cases where schools are persistently failing overall or for some groups of students, take swift action to change opportunities for these students—a disproportionate number of whom are Latino.
- **Maintain a commitment to the equity proposition of the Local Control Funding Formula.** Latino students are disproportionately represented among the students who generate additional dollars under LCFF. As we approach LCFF's fifth year, we should maintain a commitment to this equity-based formula, while increasing transparency, improving the local planning process, and strengthening accountability.
- **Invest in early learning.** Expand access to free and affordable preschool, especially for low-income four-year-olds, while also maintaining support for transitional kindergarten. Invest in partnerships that support parents to be their children's first teacher. Invest in bilingual programs that leverage children's development in these early years, when they are primed for multilingualism.
- **Support English learners.** Assist schools and districts in effectively integrating English language development within the core curriculum while offering the right balance of designated ELD time. Hold schools accountable for offering English learners access to a broad curriculum. Invest in multiple pathways for new and current teachers to receive their bilingual credentials. Support and celebrate pathways to biliteracy, from preschool through high school. Standardize English learner reclassification policies and practices statewide.
- **Provide more financial support for low-income students to attend college.** Increase Cal Grant awards for community college students to support full-time enrollment, and decrease the time it takes to transfer and complete degrees. Expand state aid programs so that all full-time students can attend California's public institutions without incurring debt, after accounting for their family's ability to pay. Increase the size of Cal Grants to cover non-tuition college costs. Make Cal Grants available for the summer before freshman year so more students can take advantage of high school-to-college summer bridge programs that increase persistence among underrepresented students.
- **Continue to be a nationwide leader in support for undocumented students and mixed-status families.** Provide guidance for schools, districts, and higher education systems on exactly how the district and schools plan to handle potential encounters with law enforcement or immigration authorities. Expand available funds for the California DREAM Loan program.

WHAT DISTRICTS AND SCHOOL LEADERS CAN DO

- **Support students' readiness to learn.** Provide high-quality preschool, building strong partnerships between local early childhood education providers and the school district. Expand access to transitional kindergarten. And expand access to bilingual learning at this age, when children's cognitive development is primed for multilingualism.
- **Address educator bias and implement positive disciplinary practices.** Provide ongoing bias training to all teachers, counselors, administrators, and staff who work with students in order to create a culture of high expectations for every student. Adopt restorative justice approaches to reduce punitive disciplinary actions, and foster a culture of inclusion and support.
- **Ensure access for Latino students to rigorous coursework.** Examine gifted and talented education and college-preparatory placement policies for the influence of teacher bias and make changes to policies that have inequitable impact. Avoid tracking, create open enrollment policies, and add "shadow" classes to help struggling students succeed in AP, "A-G," and other college-preparatory courses. Align graduation requirements with A-G requirements, so that every high school graduate is eligible to apply to a UC or CSU campus.
- **Improve student engagement.** Create an environment where all educators, regardless of ethnic background, connect with students and welcome them in the classroom. Integrate culturally responsive curriculum and instruction into the core content areas in order to foster student connection to the material they are learning. Increase the diversity of the pool of educators to better reflect the backgrounds of students.
- **Improve college-going supports.** Expand access to counselors and college-going supports, particularly at higher need school sites. Ensure that counselors have the capacity and training to support students and their families as they prepare for college. Partner with organizations that provide intensive support for under-resourced students to get to college.
- **Support English learners.** Integrate English language development into core content instruction in addition to designated ELD classes. Expand bilingual programs and develop the bilingual teacher pipeline. Require and support two years of world language for high school graduation to align with A-G requirements, and develop language classes for native speakers. Provide multilingual opportunities for families to engage as partners in their children's education.
- **Support undocumented students and mixed-status families.** Provide training and implement detailed protocols for school staff on how to handle potential encounters with law enforcement or immigration authorities. Issue multilingual, accessible communications from the school board and district leadership that inform undocumented students and mixed-status families of their rights and let them know that they are welcome and supported. Protect data that may put a student or family member's immigration status at risk.

Here, we highlight the most urgent and highest-leverage recommendations for the state, districts, schools, higher education institutions, and community advocates.

WHAT HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS CAN DO

- **Create continuity from pre-K-to-12 to college.** Partner with local school districts to create information campaigns for students and their families on preparing a strong college application, seeking financial aid, and finding a higher education option that matches their needs.
- **Use data to improve student outcomes.** Consistently use data to set goals, monitor systemwide outcomes, and focus the entire campus community on student success. Use student-level data to identify students who are academically at risk and provide supports to help them succeed.
- **Improve diversity and inclusion.** Implement admissions policies that will help create a more diverse incoming class. Provide stronger support for Latino students to participate in summer bridge programs that facilitate the transition to college and the building of peer-support networks.
- **Streamline remediation.** Identify alternatives to remedial coursework, such as "co-requisites" or alternative placement strategies, to ensure students can swiftly enter credit-bearing, college-level work. Eliminate placement exams that serve as barriers to college-level coursework, replacing them with multiple measures that better identify students who need remediation. Consider whether remedial courses can be eliminated altogether.
- **Reduce students' financial burdens.** Reduce the time it takes to graduate college by tracking student progress and encouraging completion in four years. Create additional financial aid opportunities, such as a loan program for undocumented students modeled after the UC system's DREAM Loan Program. Identify creative ways to support students' basic needs, such as food and housing.
- **Support undocumented students and mixed-status families.** Provide training and implement detailed protocols for staff on how to handle potential encounters with law enforcement or immigration authorities. Provide resource centers for undocumented students and students from mixed-status families. Protect data that may put a student or family member's immigration status at risk.

WHAT COMMUNITY ADVOCATES CAN DO

- **Build local capacity around district and school data.** Examine district and school funding and student outcome data to identify patterns in access, opportunity, and achievement. Bring parents, students, educators, and community members together to ask districts and schools why those differences arise and hold them accountable to address those disparities.
- **Push for equity, accessibility, and transparency in the Local Control and Accountability Plan process.** Demand ongoing educator bias training, restorative justice programs, college-preparatory classes, ethnic studies courses, college guidance, multilingual parent engagement, and/or other services to improve educational access and outcomes for Latino students. Push for districts to more accessibly communicate budget and LCAP information.
- **Directly engage elected officials, prospective elected officials, and district and school leaders.** Engage and meet with school board members, superintendents, principals, and other key local decision-makers. Host candidate forums that emphasize educational equity, and encourage media members and outlets to ask candidates questions about educational equity.
- **Share stories to bolster advocacy efforts and shift counterproductive narratives.** Engage traditional and social media, including Spanish language media, to share Latino student, parent, and educator stories. Partner with other local organizations to share resources, contacts, and networks to build awareness and engagement in local educational justice efforts.
- **Leverage community events to build momentum for educational equity efforts.** Ask questions, provide testimony, and participate on panels in town halls and school district events to call for action on education equity issues. Hold community forums focused on educational equity. Incorporate dialogues on educational justice issues into other community events.
- **Organize educational equity networks at the local level.** Connect with fellow community leaders engaging in work that touches schools and families. Strategize innovative, sustainable ways to build momentum efficiently through resource sharing, coalition building, and collaborative community impact. Use these networks to further build momentum for existing and new initiatives.
- **Partner with districts to provide supplemental services for students and their families.** Leverage the school as a central meeting point within the community to make health, legal, socioemotional, and childcare resources and services more readily accessible to students and their families.

CONCLUSION

Half a century after the East LA Walkouts, the charge for California is clear: Accelerate change for Latino students, or risk the future of our state.

There are bright spots, however. First and foremost, educational outcomes for Latinos have improved at an astonishing pace in the past few decades. There are multitudes of promising practices highlighted in this report showing what is possible. And with the passage of the Local Control Funding Formula four years ago, our state has already made a strong public commitment to educational equity.

But California needs transformative change to truly support Latino students. It goes beyond replicating programs that work well. It requires strong leadership and a commitment to infusing these practices into the core of educational systems. It will take more than expanding access, but also acknowledging why that access wasn't available in the first place. Most of all, it will take state, county, district, and community leaders refusing to be content with an incremental chipping away at these disparities.

Our students and our state deserve our collective commitment to charting this new course. The future of California's Latino students will determine the future of California itself.

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OUR 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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