



# Broken Promises:

## **The Children Left Behind in Silicon Valley Schools**

**An Innovate Public Schools Publication**

Written by Joanne Jacobs

With Matt Hammer and Dr. Linda Murray

**May 2013**

# Foreword and Acknowledgements

Innovate Public Schools is dedicated to the mission of giving every child in the greater Silicon Valley region the chance to attend a great public school. Our organization grows out of the sense of urgency that parents feel when their children are stuck in schools with low expectations.

*Broken Promises: The Children Left Behind In Silicon Valley Schools* is our first report on student achievement in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. This report seeks to present clear data about how public schools are doing preparing children for success in college, based on a few of the measures available to the public through the California Department of Education.

Given the persistent achievement gap between ethnic and socio-economic groups, we focus on some of the most underserved groups, particularly Latino and African-American children. The data paints an alarming picture about the future for so many of these children. That's the promise that we, as a community, have broken.

With 54 school districts across the two counties, it is particularly challenging for parents and the general public to know how their schools and districts are actually doing. Where are the most successful schools? Where are the biggest problems? How does my district and my child's school stack up against the others?

A critical mission of our public school system is to prepare every student for success in college and good careers. The reality now is that our children will be entering a job market that is increasingly global and highly competitive. Our public school system is nowhere near delivering the quality of education called for by that reality.

But we can make it so. The good news is that there is an ever-growing number of great public schools here in the Valley that are bucking the trends. Those schools are proving what is possible. The question now is whether we have the political will to replicate and grow what is working. If we can create 20 great public schools in this Valley, then why not 200?

We dedicate this report to the hundreds of parent leaders involved with PACT, who have worked tirelessly in their free time for the past 13 years to create, grow, and support many of the best schools in this report. That deep love for the children inspires people to make miracles happen, to create places of hope where there was once despair. May that continue.

Finally, I need to acknowledge a few organizations and individuals who helped make this report possible. First, we are so grateful to the Walton Family Foundation for providing the seed funding to launch this new organization, as well as to the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, for its generous support. Thanks also to Ann Bowers, Lisa Sonsini, and Ken Schroeder for supporting our work.

Special thanks to Tom Zazueta and his brilliant team at Coakley Heagerty, who are the artistic, marketing, and technical juice behind this report and our website, all provided pro bono. We are also grateful to Seow Ling Ong, our data analyst, who crunched the numbers late into the evening. Thanks also to Susan Hanson, one of our thought partners and editors.

We hope this report inspires dialogue, provokes hard discussions, and leads to more urgent improvement in the quality of public education that we offer our children.

**Matt Hammer, Executive Director**

*Innovate Public Schools*

**"The good jobs that require only a high school education are gone and will not be coming back."**

**– Anthony Carnevale,  
Georgetown Center on  
Education and the Workforce**

# Key Findings

We make a promise to our kids – to everyone’s kids. Go to school, work hard and you’ll have a bright future. Anyone can go to college, we say, from the daughter of a Mexican gardener with a fifth-grade education to the son of an engineer with a Stanford PhD. Education is the golden road to opportunity.

For many students in Silicon Valley – especially Latinos, African-Americans and Pacific Islanders – that promise is not being kept. The chart below shows that thousands of children every year are falling off the college path.

## Who is Ready for College & Career in Silicon Valley?

	Algebra proficiency by 8th grade	Four year graduation & eligible for UC/CSU
Latino	22%	20%
African-American	24%	22%
Pacific Islander	26%	19%
Filipino	52%	42%
White	57%	53%
Asian	76%	71%

California will face a shortfall of 2.3 million college-educated and technically trained workers by 2025, predicts California Competes (see [californiacompetes.org](http://californiacompetes.org)). We need to prepare the rising generation to seize 21st-century opportunities – our region’s economic vitality depends on it.

This report looks at all public schools and districts in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, with special attention on the achievement of underserved ethnic groups. Here are a few of the major findings:

- We have a region-wide problem: Low percentages of college readiness for Latino, African-American, and Pacific Islander students across districts in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Individual schools buck the trends, but districts do not.
- Charter schools are over-represented among the top public schools serving Latino students. Among all schools, charters are three times more likely to be ranked in the top 10%. When we consider only schools with a Latino student population that is at least the region average of 38%, about half of the charters place in the top 10% of schools, based on Latino API for elementary schools, 8th grade algebra proficiency and UC/CSU eligibility.
- There are surprises at the top and the bottom. From the perspective of a low-income Latino family looking for good schools, one of the best places to live is now Alum Rock, where there are high quality charter schools and several of the top district-run schools in the region. On the other hand, the numbers are particularly low in places like Berryessa, San Mateo-Foster City and Sunnyvale, where only 10% of Latinos reach proficiency in algebra by 8th grade.
- Schools at the top of the list have a culture of high expectations, focused on getting every child to grade level and college-ready.

# Broken Promises

**“When I came to this country, I saw the American dream. You get an education, go to college... But now even American citizens can’t reach the American dream,” says Roberto Aguirrez, a Morgan Hill father.**

After years volunteering at his children’s school, he’s now a leader in People Acting In Community Together (PACT), which is trying to bring a charter K-8 school to Morgan Hill. If he can’t get his 5th-grade daughter into a good charter middle school – there are wait lists at all the high-performing charters – he’ll pay for private school. “You know that movie? I’m not waiting for Superman,” he says.

Aguirrez and his wife earned college degrees. They were able to help their daughter with homework when she fell behind. They could afford to hire a tutor. When teachers said their kids were doing “OK,” they could read the report card and see that wasn’t true. Most Latino parents don’t know their children are scoring Below Basic, says Aguirrez. And few have the choice of paying for private schools.

His daughter has four Latina friends who will start 6th grade reading at the second or third grade level. “They push kids from one grade to the next,” says Aguirrez. Once kids fall too far behind, they won’t catch up if they repeat the grade, and they’ll fail if they’re moved ahead, he says. “They’re not going to make it.”

Silicon Valley remains the land of opportunity – for the college educated and the technically trained. But who will seize those opportunities?

Once known as the Valley of Heart’s Delight, Silicon Valley draws talented people from around the world. In 2011, 64% of the valley’s college-educated, high-tech professionals were born outside the U.S., reports Joint Venture Silicon Valley. Nearly half of college-educated professionals in other industries were foreign born.<sup>1</sup>

Latinos, who make up nearly one-quarter of the region’s workforce, hold less than 5% of computer-related jobs, estimates the San Jose Mercury News.<sup>2</sup>

In schools in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, most Asian, white and Filipino students are on the college track. Most Latino, African-American and Pacific Islander students are not.

Latinos make up 38% of K-12 enrollment in the two counties’ public schools. African-Americans and Pacific Islanders add another 4%. That’s a lot of kids.

In the Valley, most Asian, white and Filipino students are on the college track. Most Latino, African-American and Pacific Islander students are not.

Our charts and graphs look at proficiency in elementary reading and math, who takes and who passes 8th-grade algebra and what percentage of 9th graders graduate in four years with the college prep coursework needed to pursue a bachelor's degree at University of California and California State University. We are not just looking at college eligibility for students who make it to 12th grade because too many kids – disproportionately Latino – don't get that far.

There are many ways to measure school performance. To learn more about local schools, go to Ed-Data ([ed-data.k12.ca.us](http://ed-data.k12.ca.us)), which has links to school and district reports, or GreatSchools ([greatschools.net](http://greatschools.net)). In the coming weeks, you will also be able to access information about local schools at [innovateschools.org](http://innovateschools.org).

Rocketship Mateo Sheedy

## Build a Strong Foundation

Top elementary school in the region for Latino API\*



Rocketship's first school, Mateo Sheedy, is its most dramatic success. Despite its disadvantaged student body -- most come from low-income, Spanish-speaking, Mexican immigrant families -- the school outperforms most suburban schools in California.

In the Rocketship model, students spend a quarter of the day in the learning lab, where adaptive software lets them work at their own pace. If a student needs more time to learn a skill, they can repeat the lesson. If they're ready to move ahead, they don't have to wait for everyone else.

Teachers get quick feedback on how each student is doing. Struggling students work in small groups with a tutor or teacher. With software teaching the basics, teachers have time for projects that help students use and extend their knowledge.

Teachers specialize in math and science or English and social studies. Many come from Teach for America, which means they're very smart but lack experience. The academic dean spends much of her time training and mentoring young teachers.

The school has a longer school day -- eight hours -- devoted to academics. There is no art or music. Mateo Sheedy sees itself as a college-prep elementary school.

Students need to start building "number sense" in kindergarten, says Preston Smith, CEO of Rocketship Education. Once they're fluent in their math facts and times tables, they can focus on higher-order skills.

Third grade is a critical time. Students struggle in reading because they don't have the vocabulary or the background knowledge to understand more chal-

lenging material. In math, "kids can ace the CST [California Standards Test] but not really understand how numbers work."

If students go through elementary school without really understanding why formulas work, "It's like building a house on sand. Algebra is the earthquake. If you don't have a strong foundation, it all comes down."

*\* Among schools with above region median (38%) for percent of Latino students in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties.*

Rocketship Mateo Sheedy	
<b>API:</b>	<b>924</b>
<b>Total number of students:</b>	<b>514</b>
Student Characteristics	Percent
Latino	89%
African American	3%
Asian	2%
White	3%
Pacific Islander	1%
English Language Learner	63%
Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Meal	87%
Special Education	4%
2012	%Latino Proficient and Above
English Language Arts	79%
Math	93%
Science	84%

# Slipping Off The College Track

Latinos are “slipping off the college track in elementary and middle school, signified by their inability to pass algebra in 8th grade and often in 9th,” says Mohammed Chaudhry, who runs the Silicon Valley Education Foundation.

Not every 21st-century worker needs a four-year degree, he says. But every student should have access to a college-prep curriculum and to career tech courses. “The future for a student with only a high school diploma is very limited and the future for a student without one is very grim.”

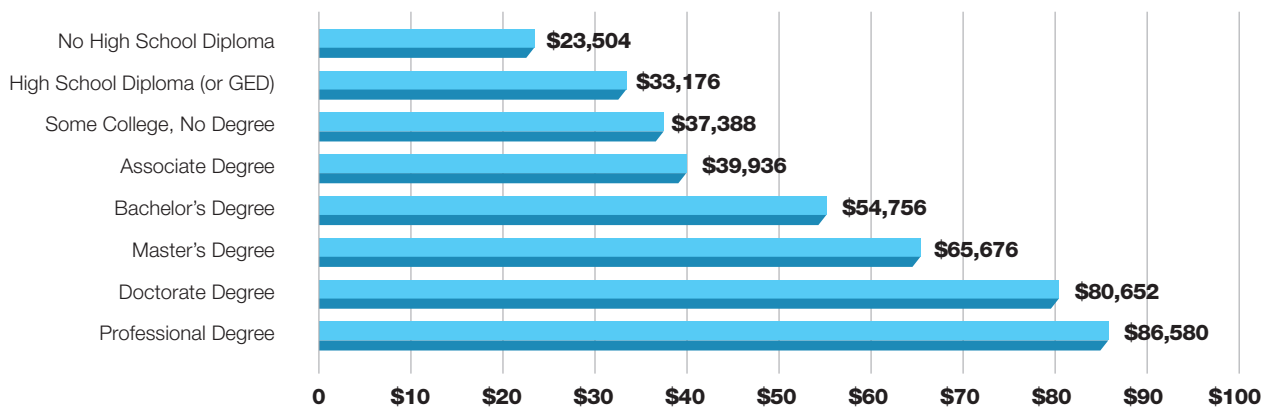
There’s a close connection between years of education and earnings (see Figure 1). Less-educated workers not only earn less, they face longer stretches of unemployment. Workers with a high school diploma or less lost 5.6 million jobs in the recession, estimates the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce.<sup>3</sup> There is no sign of recovery for less-educated workers.

It’s possible to earn a middle-class income with a one-year certificate or a two-year degree in a technical or medical field. But nearly all the high-paying credentials require good reading and math skills.<sup>4</sup>

Many Latino children are behind on the first day of kindergarten. Their parents are less likely to be educated and to speak English well. Many may not know how to help their children catch up; schools try, but often fail.

**Figure 1 Median Annual Earnings of Adults**

(Full time Workers, Age 25 and over, 2011)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.  
Last Modified Date: March 23, 2012

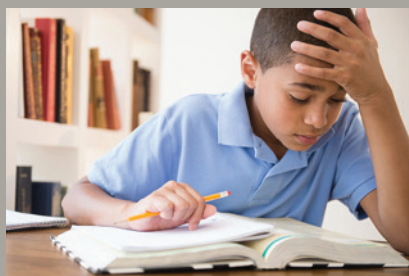
“Kids from poor families tend to have less access to reading material” and don’t always know about high-tech jobs, says M. Danielle Beaudry, who retired from a technology career to teach math at Fremont High School. To succeed in Silicon Valley, young people need reading comprehension as well as math, says Beaudry, who’s

now retired from teaching. “Problem solving is the ‘math’ skill most used in many jobs in a high-tech company – and you can’t solve problems without reading to understand the problem and research potential solutions.”

Many children seem to be doing OK in the early grades, when they’re reading simple stories and doing arithmetic by rote. In third and fourth grade, they need to read complex material and understand why  $4 \times 6 = 6 \times 4$ . Some are left behind, never to catch up.

## Renaissance Academy

# Learn To Do What’s Hard



### Second Highest Middle School in the region for Latino Algebra proficiency\*

Renaissance Academy isn’t a charter, but the innovative public middle school operates with many of the same freedoms. The school was created through a partnership between PACT and the Alum Rock School District, as were LUCHA and Adelante, two other “small, autonomous schools.”

High expectations and attention to detail are keys to the school’s success, says Vince Iwasaki, who taught algebra for the first six years and is now the academic dean. “Nobody says, ‘That’s good enough’.”

Renaissance is small, but the classes are not, averaging 32 students in a class. The school day is the same as other Alum Rock district schools,

but Renaissance has rethought the schedule. Teachers teach 80-minute blocks four days a week and get a full day to prepare lessons and work with colleagues. “We never run out of time,” says Iwasaki.

Many students don’t believe that math makes sense, he says. “They feel it’s magic.” Even students who are “proficient” on multiple-choice tests don’t know why the procedures work, Iwasaki says.

He asks: “When we’re adding two fractions, why do we need a common denominator?”

Students say: “Because the teacher said so.”

Renaissance teachers show students how to attack a math problem, breaking it into solvable chunks. Students must answer in complete sentences, showing they understand the underlying concept. Getting the right answer by “magic” isn’t good enough.

Renaissance teachers work closely together. Math concepts also are taught in science and humanities classes. “In English, we teach students how to assert a proposition and defend it with evidence,” says Iwasaki. “That’s fully translatable into math.”

All eighth graders take algebra, even if state tests show they’re “basic” or below in math. It’s important to include a mix of students, Iwasaki believes.

Students work on practice problems in class. Those who finish early coach slower students. The strong students “learn to look at problems from a different perspective,” deepening their understanding, he says. “Heterogeneity is a huge advantage for us.”

With a degree in mechanical engineering and experience as a systems analyst, Iwasaki can explain to students how math is used in the world.

When his students are in the workforce, they’ll need to understand what they’re doing and do it right, Iwasaki says. They’re learning a valuable lesson in middle school: “Learn to do what’s hard.”

*\* Among schools with above region median (38%) for percent of Latino students in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties.*

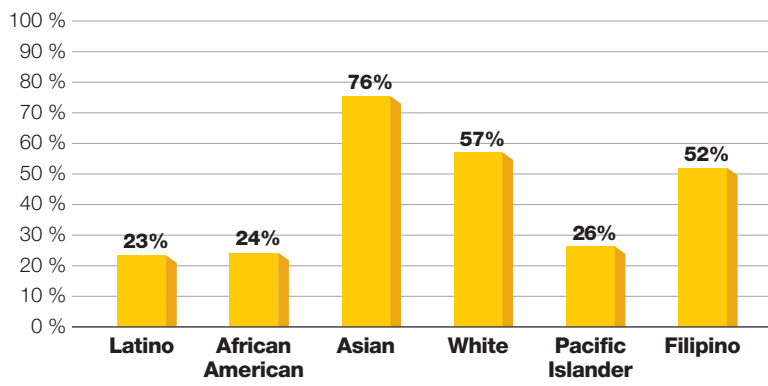
Renaissance Academy	
<b>API:</b>	<b>871</b>
<b>Total number of students:</b>	<b>288</b>
Student Characteristics	Percent
Latino	83%
African American	3%
Asian	6%
White	3%
Pacific Islander	1%
Filipino	4%
English Language Learner	11%
Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Meal	66%
Special Education	5%
2012	%Latino Proficient and Above
English Language Arts	71%
Math – Algebra 1	59%
Science	83%

# Paths Diverge in Middle School

At most middle schools, the paths diverge when some kids take pre-algebra in 7th grade and algebra in 8th, while others wait till high school to try algebra. Passing algebra in 8th grade is the first step on the track that leads to geometry in 9th grade, advanced algebra in 10th grade, pre-calculus in 11th and calculus in 12th grade. Students who aspire to a university degree in a STEM field – science, technology, engineering and math – need to be on this track.

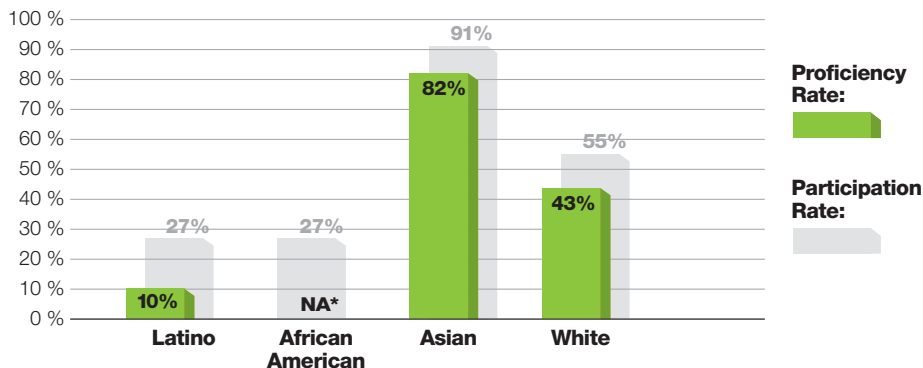
In 8th grade, most Asian and white students take algebra and pass the class, opening the possibility of 12th-grade calculus and a shot at a high-tech career. Only 22% of Latino 8th graders in the two counties score as proficient or advanced in algebra on state exams, compared to 76% of Asians and 57% of whites. (See Figure 2.)

**Figure 2 7th/8th Grade Algebra 1 Proficiency Rates**  
(Average across San Mateo and Santa Clara counties)



School districts have very different standards for deciding who gets a chance to take Algebra I. (See Appendix for chart "Who Takes Algebra By 8th grade?"). For example, Sunnyvale School District places 27% of Latino 8th graders in algebra (called the "Participation Rate"), compared to 91% of Asians and 55% of whites. While 82% of Asians and 43% of whites achieve proficiency, only 10% of Sunnyvale Latinos will start high school on the STEM university track. (See Figure 3.)

**Figure 3 7th/8th Grade Algebra 1 Participation and Proficiency Rates – Sunnyvale School District**



NA\*: Indicates that fewer than 11 students took the test and proficiency rates are not available.



Sunnyvale uses grades, test scores and teacher recommendations to determine which students are ready to take algebra. The idea behind the policy is that it's best for students to take the course just once and be successful, usually not until high school. Most Latino 8th graders in Sunnyvale take Algebra Concepts, which introduces vocabulary and skills they'll need when they tackle Algebra 1 in 9th grade.

The Sunnyvale School District doesn't track how well their graduates are doing in high school. But most attend Fremont and Homestead high schools, along with some Cupertino students. Latinos who take 9th-grade algebra at the two high schools do very poorly: Only 11% reach proficiency.

Pushing unprepared students into 8th-grade algebra doesn't work either. The San Mateo-Foster City School District places 81% of Latinos in 8th-grade algebra and posts the same 10% proficiency rate as Sunnyvale. Campbell Union lets 88% take algebra, but only 14% reach proficiency.

Leaving out districts with few Latino students, Gilroy Unified does best at getting Latino students to proficiency in algebra in 8th grade: 62% take the course and 38% score as proficient or better.

Even when students pass algebra in middle school, they may repeat it in 9th grade, according to the Noyce Foundation's *Pathways Study* in 2010. Some schools are requiring students with B's and proficient scores to repeat algebra, according to the *Held Back* report. Latinos, African-Americans and Pacific Islanders are the most likely to take the course twice.<sup>5</sup>

Disadvantaged students may find it even harder to get on the STEM university track in the future. California is shifting to Common Core standards, which return algebra to 9th grade and discourage districts from letting students take it earlier. "Placing students into an accelerated pathway too early should be avoided at all costs," the draft framework advises.

In affluent areas, however, there will be enough advanced students to offer a middle school algebra class, and educated parents in Silicon Valley are sure to demand as much "acceleration" as possible. But algebra may disappear from most California middle schools serving primarily low-income children. This could result in an even larger education gap between rich and poor.

The middle school years are critical, concludes *The Forgotten Middle*, a 2008 ACT report. "The level of academic achievement that students attain by 8th grade has a larger impact on their college and career readiness by the time they graduate high school than anything that happens academically in high school."<sup>6</sup>

"The level of academic achievement that students attain by 8th grade has a larger impact on their college and career readiness... than anything that happens academically in high school."

— ACT Report, 2008

# Weak Math Skills Are a Dream Killer

The gap widens in high school. Successful students don't just take the A-G courses required by UC and CSU. They take honors and Advanced Placement classes. But the promise of college is fading for many Latino students. They're more likely to drop out and far less likely to complete the college-prep courses that would give them a chance to attend a UC or CSU school.

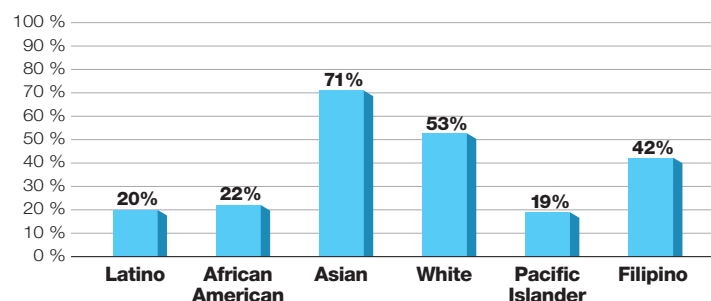
In Morgan Hill, where Roberto Aguirrez and his wife are raising their two children, only 9% of Latinos graduate from high school on time and eligible for UC and CSU admission. That's why they're fighting to bring a charter school to Morgan Hill. "Charter schools give kids a shot at college," says Aguirrez. He thinks a college degree is essential for his children and their friends.

**Figure 4 Percent of Students with 4-year Graduation and UC/CSU Eligibility**  
Districts in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties

School District	Latino	African American	Asian	White	Pacific Islander	Filipino
Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High	61%	0%	90%	75%	100%	50%
Palo Alto Unified	48%	49%	89%	78%	NA	67%
Jefferson Union High	35%	37%	66%	32%	53%	49%
South San Francisco Unified	34%	27%	77%	46%	0%	54%
Mountain View-Los Altos Union High	29%	27%	88%	75%	20%	61%
Cabrillo Unified	26%	0%	83%	62%	100%	100%
San Mateo Union High	26%	21%	78%	57%	19%	51%
Fremont Union High	22%	26%	81%	63%	25%	42%
San Jose Unified	22%	37%	72%	46%	31%	48%
Gilroy Unified	20%	38%	65%	47%	50%	46%
Sequoia Union High	20%	19%	72%	65%	17%	47%
Milpitas Unified	19%	23%	67%	36%	50%	36%
Campbell Union High	16%	24%	62%	41%	0%	15%
Santa Clara Unified	16%	26%	53%	33%	11%	48%
East Side Union High	12%	17%	55%	27%	15%	31%
Morgan Hill Unified	9%	21%	48%	26%	0%	6%

Among districts serving at least the region average of Latino children, South San Francisco Unified is at the top, with 34% of Latinos graduating on time and college eligible. But that's as good as it gets. (See Figure 4.) In Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, just 20% of Latinos and 22% of African-Americans graduate in four years with the credits to attend a UC or CSU campus, compared to 71% of Asians and 53% of whites. (See Figure 5.)

**Figure 5 Percent of students with 4-Year Graduation and UC/CSU Eligibility** (Average across San Mateo and Santa Clara counties)

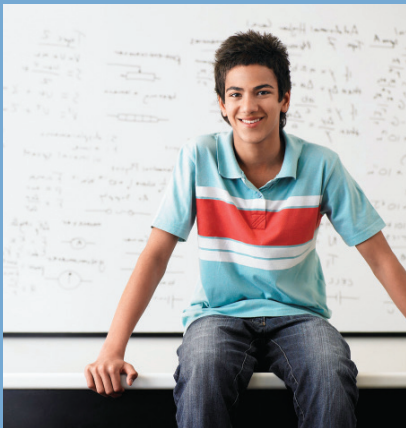


High school graduates who aren't UC/CSU eligible can go to low-cost community colleges, which offer job training and general education courses that can be the start of a bachelor's degree. Almost 75% of college-going Latinos in California and two-thirds of African-Americans enroll in community colleges. But few complete a vocational certificate or a two-year degree, much less a bachelor's degree.<sup>7</sup>

Weak math skills are a dream killer. 85% of the state's community college students aren't ready for college math, estimates the Campaign for College Opportunity. By one estimate, only 22% of students who start in remedial math will go on to take a college-level math course.<sup>8</sup>

Aspire Phoenix Academy

## An Early Start at College



**Fourth highest-performing high school in the region for % of Latino students who graduate in 4 years eligible for a state university\***

The college path is the only path at Aspire East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy. To earn a diploma, students must pass the A-G courses required by state universities, take 15 units of college courses and be accepted by a four-year college or university.

Students earn high school and college

credits in "dual enrollment" courses taught on campus by Cañada College professors. Some start college with two years of college credit, says Principal Thomas Madson.

Aspire East Palo Alto Charter School (EPACS), just down the street, houses its seventh and eighth-grade students at Phoenix, which makes it easier to ensure they're prepared for the challenges of high school.

All eighth graders take Algebra I, so they'll have a chance to take calculus as seniors. "A lot of engineering programs won't take you without calculus," says Madson.

He wants that door open, at least until 10th grade, when students start deciding on a college major. "For success at the college level, students need four years of math as a minimum. We'd prefer calculus, especially for students who want to go to the UCs or Stanford." Students who aren't aiming that high can take college statistics at Cañada.

Phoenix hopes to add computer science, perhaps sponsored by Facebook, which has moved into offices nearby. "We're surrounded in a very poor community by Google, Facebook, SanDisk," says Madson.

Despite EPAC's strong test scores, most students start Phoenix a year or two behind in reading. They know the basics, but they need to become critical readers, says Madson.

Algebra success starts in fourth grade, when students move from learning procedures to understanding concepts, says Madson.

Phoenix assesses frequently, analyzes the data and looks for lessons that need to be retaught. Every two weeks, teachers send parents a progress report.

*\* Among schools with above region median (38%) for percent of Latino students in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties.*

Aspire East Palo Alto	
<b>API:</b>	<b>779</b>
<b>Total number of students:</b>	<b>183</b>
Student Characteristics	Percent
Latino	91%
African American	7%
Asian	1%
Pacific Islander	1%
English Language Learner	18%
Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Meal	99%
Special Education	12%
2012	% of Students with 4-Year Graduation and UC/CSU Eligibility
Latino	62%
African American	25%

# Schools Bucking The Trends

It's not hopeless. Despite all the challenges, there are a growing number of schools in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties where most Latino students are reaching proficiency in reading and math, passing algebra in 8th grade and qualifying for university admission.

Across the two counties, most of the top-performing schools for Latinos are charter schools or new, small, autonomous schools in East San Jose that are part of the Alum Rock School District.

Three top schools are profiled in this report: Rocketship Mateo Sheedy, a San Jose charter; Renaissance Middle School, an autonomous Alum Rock school; and Aspire Phoenix, a charter high school in East Palo Alto.

Effective schools organize to reach their goals. They focus intensely on tracking students' progress to make sure they get help when they need it – before they lose hope.

Led by PACT, East San Jose parents have been fighting for new schools for 13 years. Alum Rock, once known for low-performing schools and political infighting, now boasts high-performing charters and new district schools such as Russo, McEntee, LUCHA, Adelante Dual Language Academy and Renaissance. Many of the other district schools have improved, too. For the first time in generations, parents have real choices in the district.

Of the 10 Latino-serving elementary schools with the highest proficiency scores, four are charter schools, led by Rocketship Mateo Sheedy in San Jose, with a 921 API. Two district schools in South San Francisco and two in Gilroy also are in the top 10. (See Figure 6.)

At KIPP Heartwood, an Alum Rock charter, an extraordinary 81% of Latinos are proficient in algebra. Four of the top five middle schools are charters or autonomous schools located in Alum Rock. Gilroy's Solorsano Middle School (48%) also makes the top five list. (See Figure 7.) All of the top middle schools make sure that most, if not all, of their 8th graders have taken algebra.

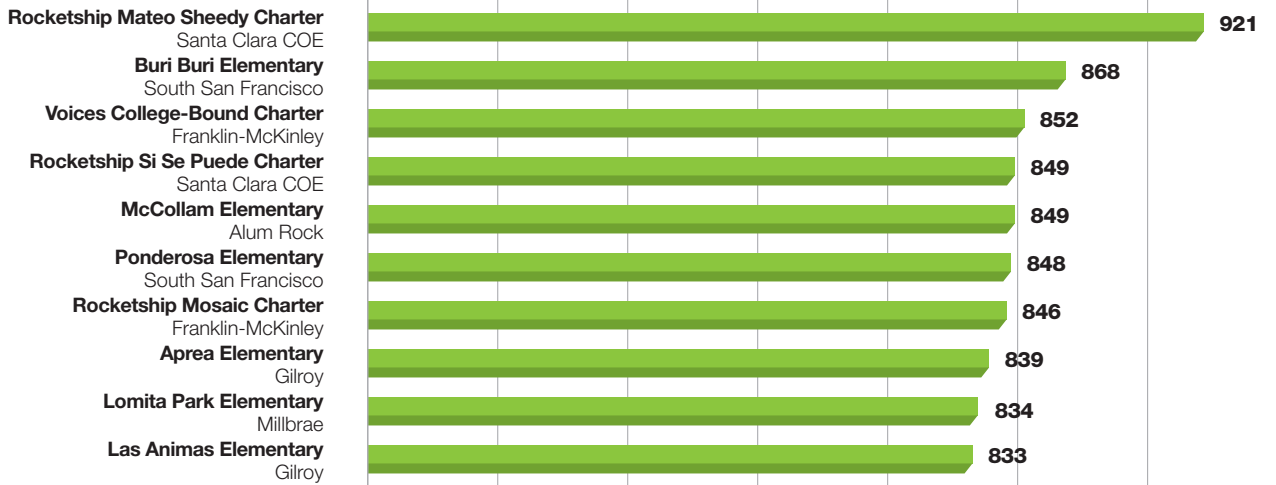
Among high schools serving at least the region average of Latino students (38%), four of the top five schools preparing Latino students for college are charters: Summit Prep (90%), KIPP San Jose Collegiate (83%), Aspire East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy (62%), and Downtown College Prep (49%). Except for Aspire Phoenix, they're all in San Jose. The one traditional school on the top five list is Jefferson High in Daly City, where 78% of the Latino students graduate in 4 years with the credits to enter a state university. (See Figure 8.)

Many of the schools that are effective for disadvantaged students are smaller schools. Students and their parents have chosen to be there. Principals have chosen teachers who want to be there. It's much easier to create a sense of community and purpose.

Many of these schools aren't enrolling the best students. ACE Charter Middle School recruits low-scoring students: Its program is designed for children who are way behind academically. Downtown College Prep has a similar philosophy.

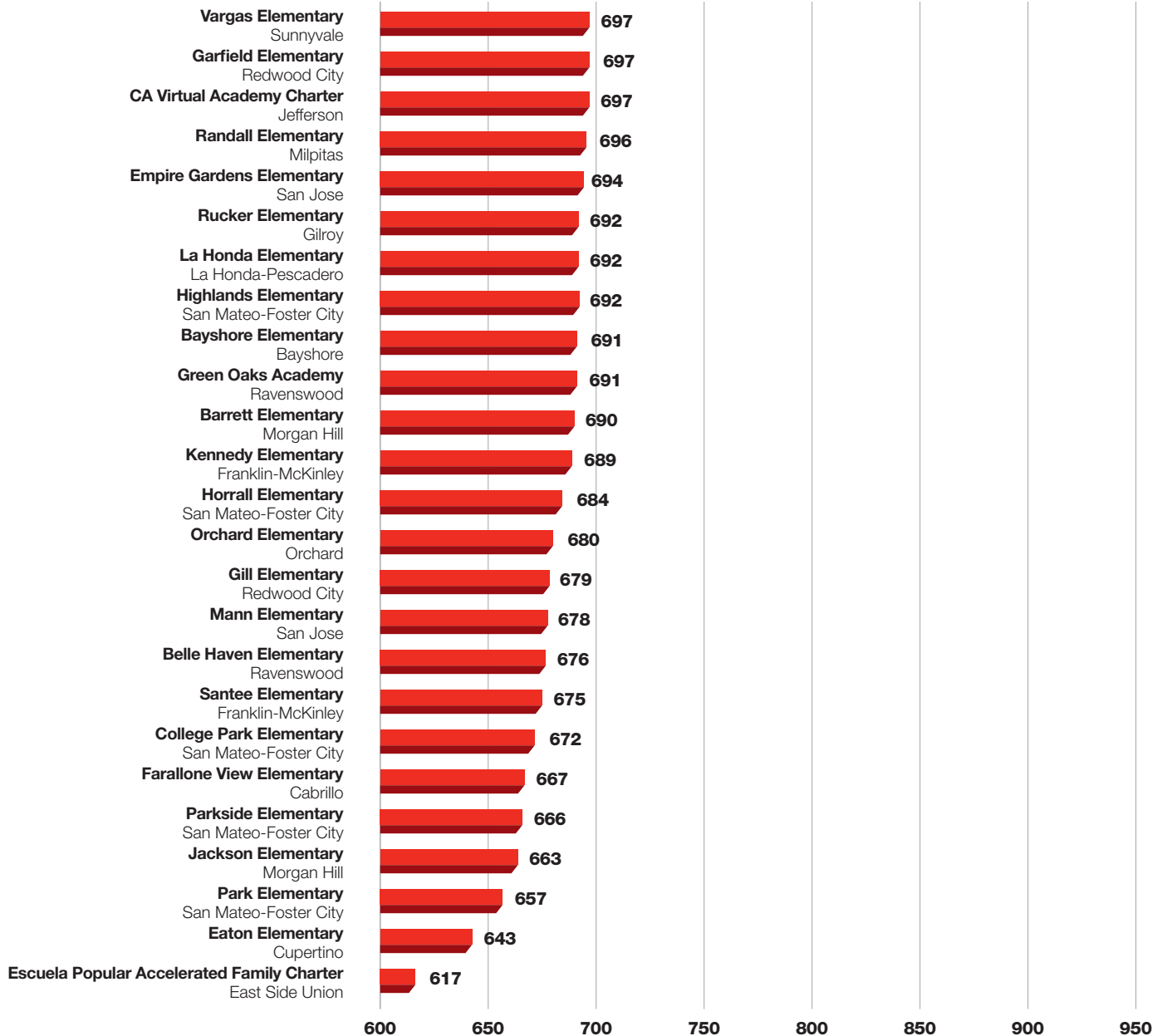
## Figure 6 Top 10 Elementary Schools\*

Latino API 2012 Santa Clara and San Mateo counties



## 25 Lowest Scoring Elementary Schools

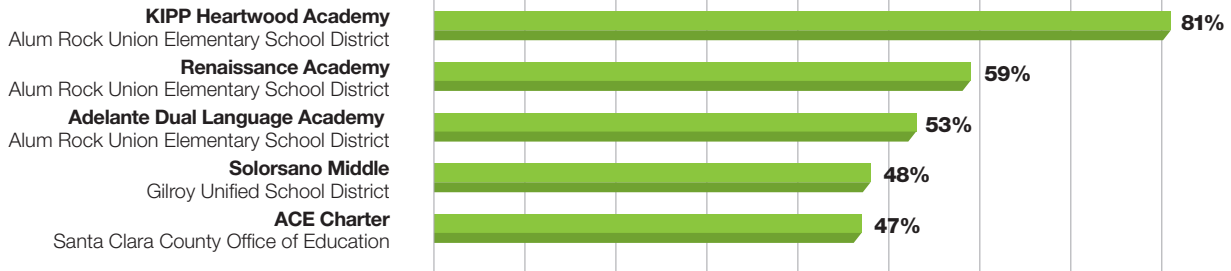
Latino API (among all schools), Santa Clara and San Mateo counties



\*Among schools with above region average (38%) for percent of Latino students in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties.

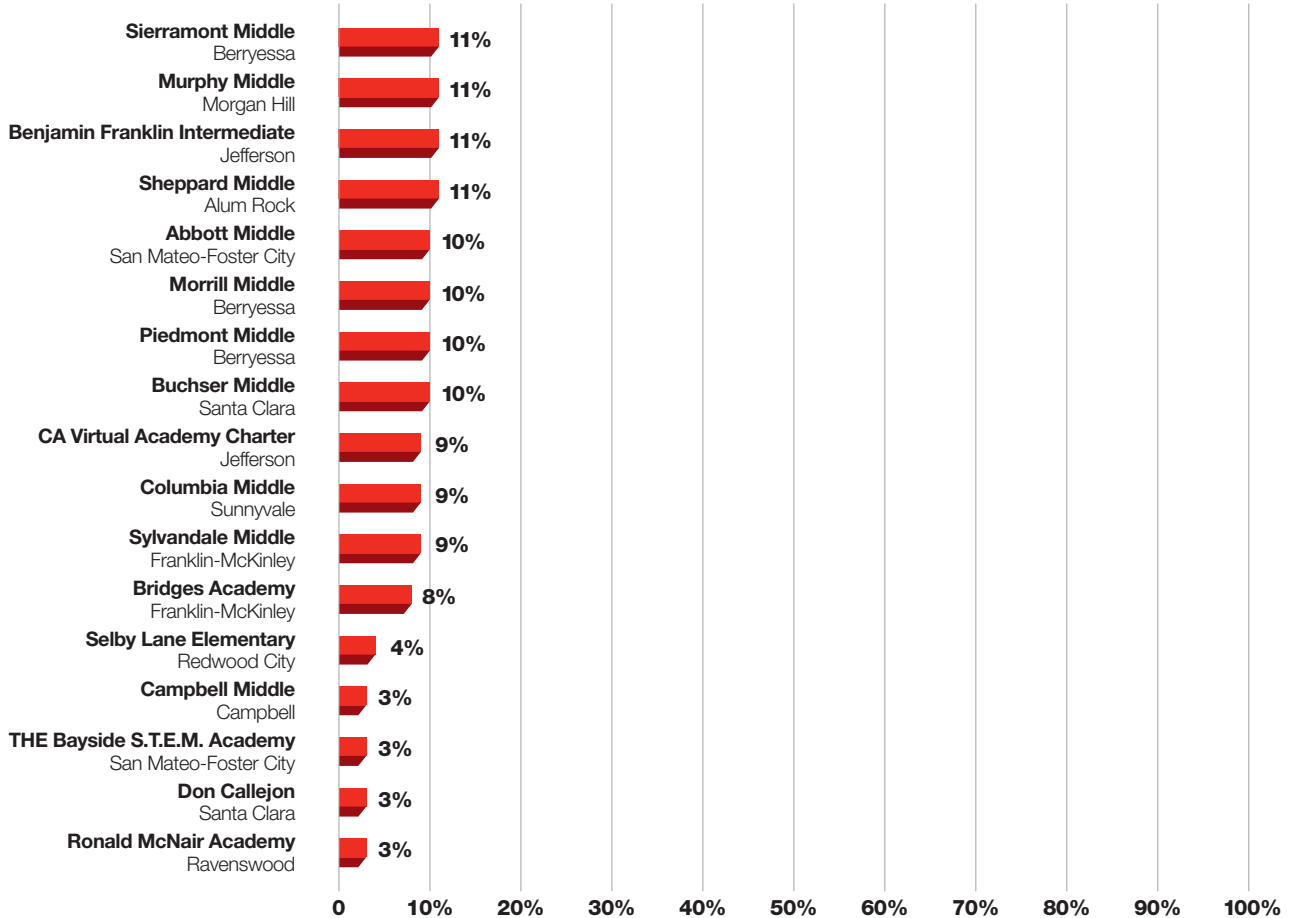
**Figure 7 Top 5 Middle Schools for Algebra Proficiency for Latinos\***

7th/8th Grade Proficiency Rates



**Lowest Scoring Middle Schools for Algebra Proficiency for Latinos**

7th/8th Grade Proficiency Rates (among all schools)



\*Among schools with above region average (38%) for percent of Latino students in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties.  
Note: Schools with fewer than 11 students taking Algebra 1 are excluded as proficiency scores are unavailable.

Expectations are very high. From kindergarten on up, these schools believe all their students can succeed in college and push their students hard. Aspire Phoenix requires students to take community college courses. Summit Prep requires at least six Advanced Placement courses.

Effective schools organize to reach their goals. All focus intensely on tracking students' progress to make sure they get help when they need it – before they lose hope.

**Figure 8 Preparing Latino students for success: Top 10 high schools for % of Latino students with 4-year graduation and UC/CSU eligibility**

School District	Latino	African American	Asian	White	Pacific Islander	Filipino
<b>Summit Preparatory Charter High (Charter)</b> Sequoia Union High School District	90%	100%	100%	95%	67%	100%
<b>KIPP San Jose Collegiate (Charter)</b> East Side Union High School District	83%	100%	94%	NA	NA	100%
<b>Jefferson High</b> Jefferson Union High School District	78%	72%	93%	75%	89%	79%
<b>Aspire East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy (Charter)</b> Sequoia Union High School District	62%	25%	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Downtown College Preparatory (Charter)</b> San Jose Unified School District	49%	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Leadership Public Schools - San Jose (Charter)</b> Santa Clara County Office of Education	46%	0%	100%	67%	NA	75%
<b>Latino College Preparatory Academy (Charter)</b> East Side Union High School District	39%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Abraham Lincoln High</b> San Jose Unified School District	38%	47%	81%	55%	100%	30%
<b>Capuchino High</b> San Mateo Union High School District	35%	24%	77%	30%	32%	49%
<b>Half Moon Bay High</b> Cabrillo Unified School District	32%	0%	83%	64%	100%	100%

\*Among schools with above region median (38%) for % of Latino students in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties.

At Summit Prep, every student is assigned a teacher mentor who serves as a college counselor, coach, family liaison and advocate. Students who struggle academically get extra help after school and during two month-long intersessions each year. Some complete a course in summer school. “Algebra 1 ends when you show competency. It doesn’t necessarily end in June,” says Summit Public Schools CEO Diane Tavenner.

There are also differences between the top schools.

Renaissance and Summit Prep believe strongly in mixing students of different achievement levels in the same class. Rocketship’s hybrid model uses technology to personalize learning: Some students zoom ahead, while others move slowly.

Many of the charter schools have a longer school day. Other successful schools use a standard school day, but have redesigned the schedule to organize time more efficiently.

At Phoenix, parents promise to spend 30 hours a year supporting their children’s education, including attending parent-teacher conferences, orientation meetings and workshops on college admissions and aid. Rocketship charters also ask parents for 30 hours a year. Still, parent pledges are the exception, not the rule.

# Latinos Have High Aspirations

88% of Hispanics said it's very important to go to college – a higher percentage than the general population.

— Pew Research Hispanic Center, 2009

Immigrant parents care about their children's futures and value education. In a Pew survey, 88% of Hispanics said it's very important to go to college. In a survey of the general population, 74% said it was an important goal.

Latino students in the class of 2012 had high aspirations,<sup>9</sup> ACT reports. Of those who took the ACT, 36% were aiming at a professional or graduate degree, 42% wanted a bachelor's degree and 6% planned to earn an associate or vocational degree.

But only 13% of Latinos who took the ACT were fully prepared to pass a college writing, algebra or biology class or read a college-level social science book. That compares to 32% of whites and 42% of Asian-Americans. Forty-four percent of Latinos were not prepared for college in any subject.

They are dreaming the American dream: You get an education, go to college, get a good job. But many lost their chance in 3rd grade, when they fell behind in reading, or in middle school, when they dropped down to the low-expectations math track.

These young people don't have the reading, writing, math and science competence to study programming, accounting or nursing at San Jose State. They're not prepared to train for a computer networking job at Foothill College.

"Americans need to understand that the good jobs that require only a high school education are gone and will not be coming back,"<sup>10</sup> writes Anthony Carnevale, Director of the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce. Postsecondary education – from a vocational certificate to a bachelor's degree – is "the gatekeeper to the middle class," a Georgetown report warns.<sup>11</sup>

Many young people are failing in conventional schools. But there are mission-driven schools that are helping students make the dream a reality – places where that promise of a quality education for all children is being kept alive.

"I feel powerless sometimes," says Aguirrez. "But I keep fighting. It's not just my kids. It's about all the kids."



# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Index of Silicon Valley 2013, [siliconvalleycf.org/sites/default/files/2013-jv-index.pdf](http://siliconvalleycf.org/sites/default/files/2013-jv-index.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Blacks, Latinos and women lose ground at Silicon Valley tech companies, San Jose Mercury News, Feb. 13, 2010, [mercurynews.com/ci\\_14383730](http://mercurynews.com/ci_14383730)

<sup>3</sup> The College Advantage: Weathering the Economic Storm, Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, Aug. 15, 2012, [ww9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/CollegeAdvantage.FullReport.081512.pdf](http://ww9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/CollegeAdvantage.FullReport.081512.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Economic Success Metrics Program, College Measures, [collegemeasures.org/esm](http://collegemeasures.org/esm)

<sup>5</sup> Held Back: Addressing Misplacement of 9th Grade Students in Bay Area School Math Classes, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area, [siliconvalleycf.org/sites/default/files/lccr\\_report\\_9th\\_grade\\_math\\_misplacement\\_2013.pdf](http://siliconvalleycf.org/sites/default/files/lccr_report_9th_grade_math_misplacement_2013.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> The Forgotten Middle: Ensuring that All Students Are on Target for College and Career Readiness before High School, ACT, 2008, [act.org/research/policymakers/reports/ForgottenMiddle.html](http://act.org/research/policymakers/reports/ForgottenMiddle.html)

<sup>7</sup> Divided We Fail, Campaign for College Opportunity, Nov. 21, 2011, [collegecampaign.org/resource-library/our-publications/divided-we-fail](http://collegecampaign.org/resource-library/our-publications/divided-we-fail)

<sup>8</sup> Improving Developmental Mathematics Education in Community Colleges, Sept. 23 to 24, 2010, National Center for Postsecondary Research, Jenna Cullinane and Uri Treisman, [postsecondaryresearch.org/conference/pdf/ncpr\\_Panel4\\_CullinaneTreismanPaper\\_Statway.pdf](http://postsecondaryresearch.org/conference/pdf/ncpr_Panel4_CullinaneTreismanPaper_Statway.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> The Condition of College and Career Readiness 2012, ACT, [act.org/newsroom/data/2012/states/pdf/Hispanic.pdf](http://act.org/newsroom/data/2012/states/pdf/Hispanic.pdf)

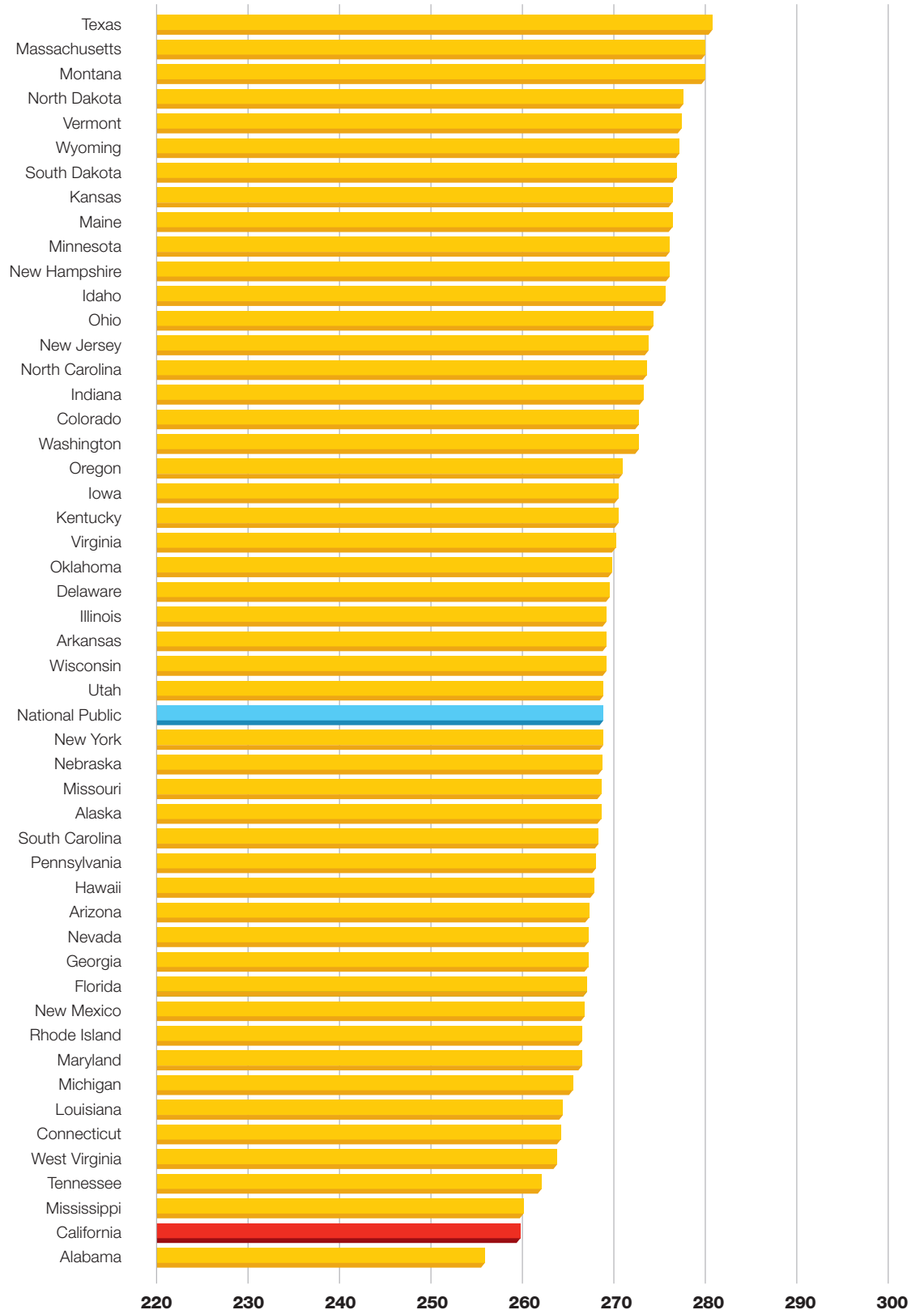
<sup>10</sup> For a Middle-Class Life, College is Crucial, Anthony P. Carnevale, New York Times, March 1, 2012, [nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/03/01/should-college-be-for-everyone/for-a-middle-class-life-college-is-crucial](http://nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/03/01/should-college-be-for-everyone/for-a-middle-class-life-college-is-crucial)

<sup>11</sup> Help Wanted, Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, June 2010, [ww9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/HelpWanted.ExecutiveSummary.pdf](http://ww9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/HelpWanted.ExecutiveSummary.pdf)

# Appendix

## National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): State Scores – LOW INCOME STUDENTS

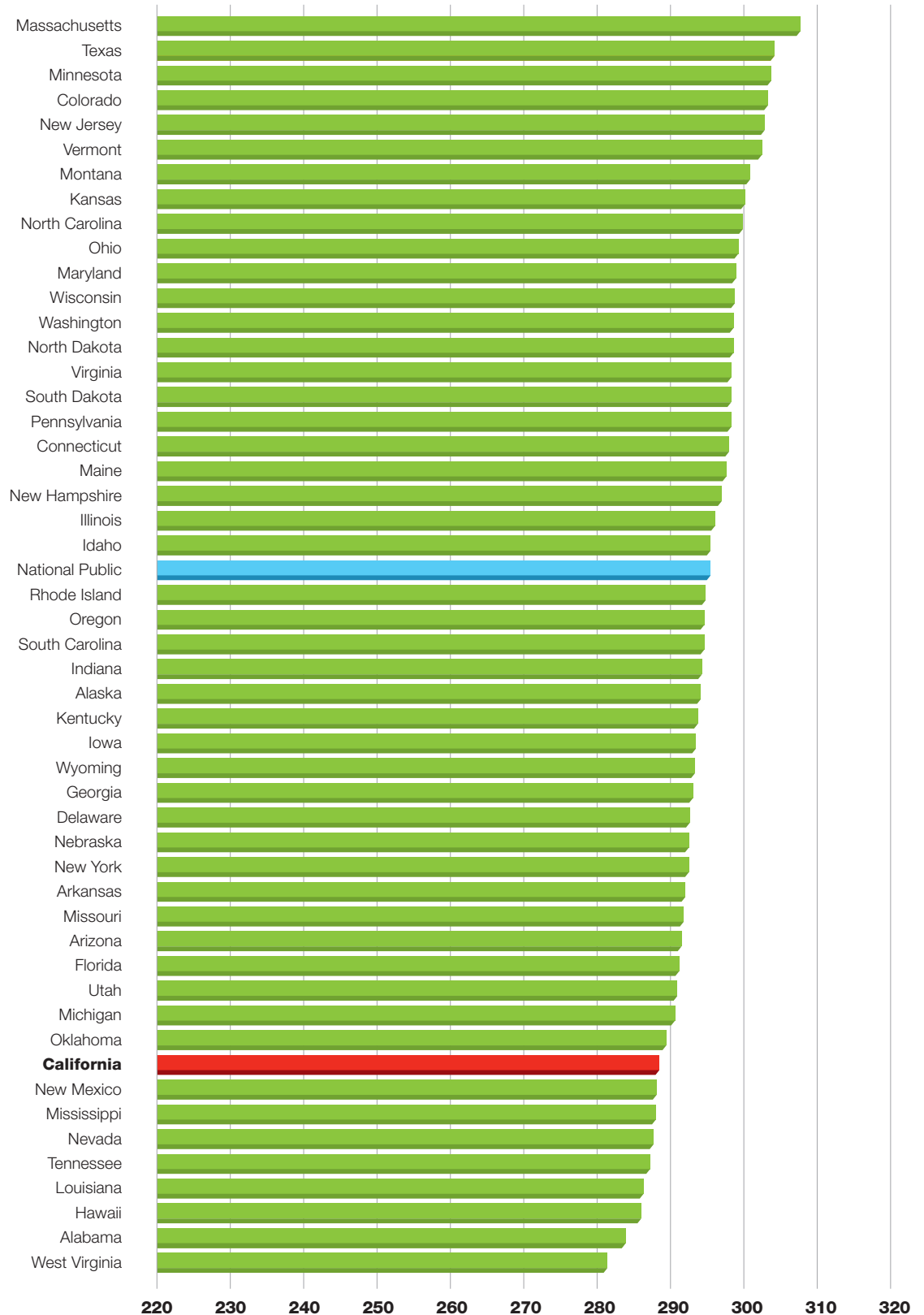
(Grade 8 – NAEP Math 2011)



Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Proficient Scale Score = 299)

## National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): State Scores – HIGHER INCOME STUDENTS

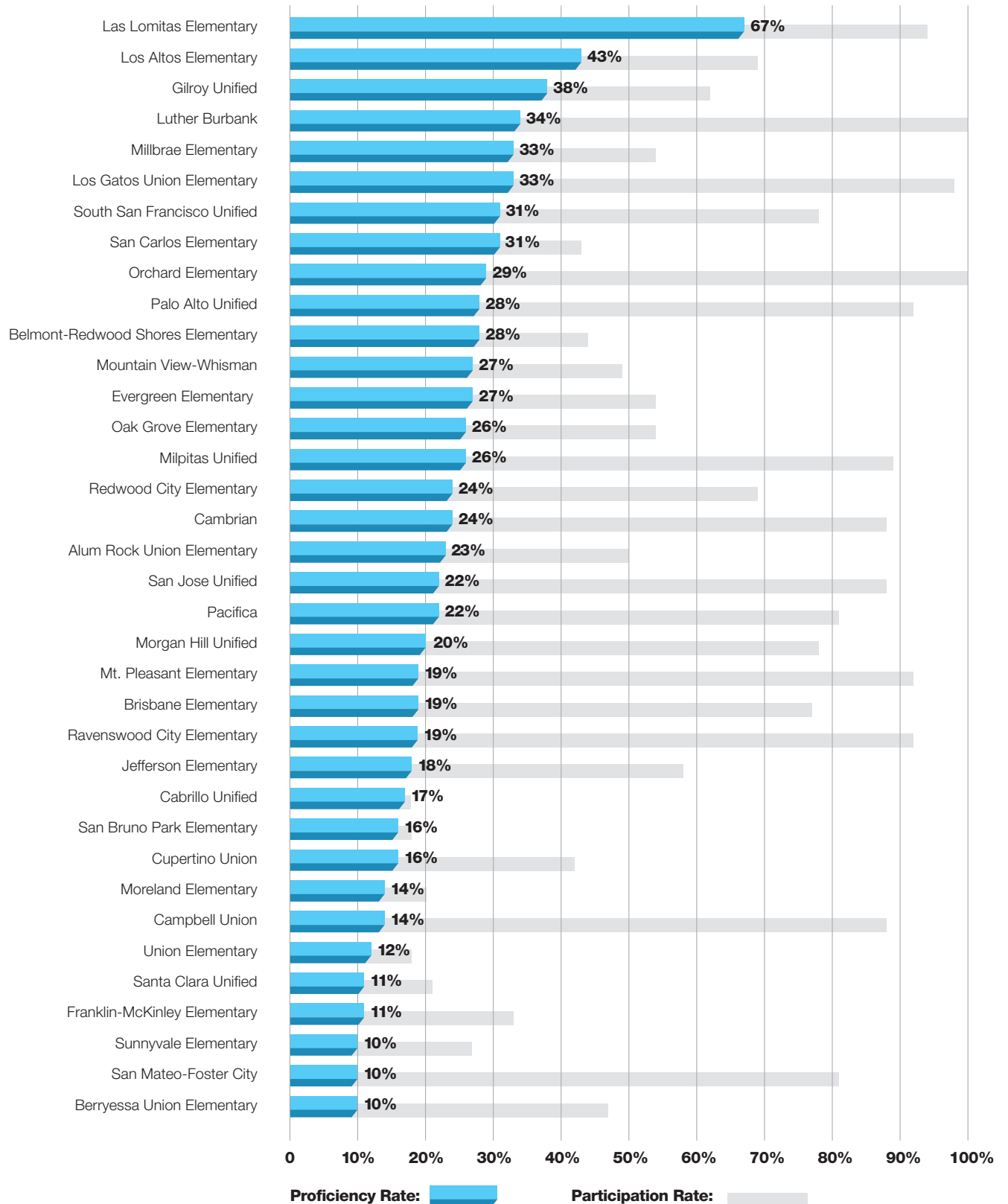
(Grade 8 – NAEP Math 2011)



Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Proficient Scale Score = 299)

## San Mateo and Santa Clara School Districts: Latino 7th/8th Grade Proficiency Rates

(Based on 2011 and 2012 CST Algebra 1)



\* Participation rates (gray bars) at these districts exceed 100% due to changes in student enrollment between reported data in October CBEDS enrollment and STAR testing dates.

## Who Takes Algebra by 8th grade?

(Algebra 1 – 7th/8th Grade Participation Rate)

School District	Latino	African American	Asian	White	Pacific Islander	Filipino
San Bruno Park Elementary	18%	20%	57%	48%	20%	56%
Union Elementary	18%	43%	68%	56%	NA	29%
Cabrillo Unified	18%	0%	60%	49%	0%	33%
Moreland Elementary	20%	32%	89%	70%	0%	51%
Santa Clara Unified	21%	27%	74%	49%	0%	59%
Sunnyvale Elementary	27%	27%	91%	55%	75%	59%
Menlo Park City Elementary	28%	20%	54%	79%	33%	NA
Portola Valley Elementary	29%	100%	100%	85%	NA	NA
Franklin-McKinley Elementary	33%	32%	88%	57%	33%	81%
Loma Prieta Joint Unified Elementary	33%	100%	100%	77%	NA	NA
Cupertino Union	42%	44%	92%	79%	36%	71%
San Carlos Elementary	43%	43%	83%	68%	0%	25%
Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary	44%	57%	100%*	97%	NA	82%
Saratoga Union Elementary	44%	NA	97%	76%	NA	100%
Berryessa Union Elementary	47%	72%	90%	71%	57%	95%
Mountain View Whisman	49%	50%	100%*	99%	100%*	88%
Alum Rock Union Elementary	50%	44%	75%	70%	83%	71%
Oak Grove Elementary	54%	56%	92%	72%	50%	82%
Evergreen Elementary	54%	55%	93%	85%	53%	79%
Millbrae Elementary	54%	0%	97%	75%	100%*	72%
Jefferson Elementary	58%	40%	78%	50%	82%	66%
Gilroy Unified	62%	70%	80%	77%	33%	63%
La Honda-Pescadero Unified	67%	NA	NA	100%	NA	NA
Redwood City Elementary	69%	42%	96%	83%	54%	93%
Los Altos Elementary	69%	100%	100%	93%	NA	33%
Brisbane Elementary	77%	0%	100%	87%	NA	75%
Morgan Hill Unified	78%	79%	95%	96%	99%	93%
South San Francisco Unified	78%	96%	100%*	100%*	100%*	100%*
Pacifica	81%	97%	100%*	87%	100%	96%
San Mateo-Foster City	81%	80%	94%	96%	90%	88%
Bayshore Elementary	88%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Cambrian	88%	100%	100%*	95%	100%	100%
Campbell Union	88%	95%	100%*	99%	100%	96%
San Jose Unified	88%	94%	70%	100%*	62%	100%*
Milpitas Unified School District	89%	93%	100%*	86%	88%	100%
Ravenswood City Elementary	92%	91%	80%	100%	91%	100%
Mt. Pleasant Elementary	92%	100%*	84%	83%	80%	78%
Palo Alto Unified	92%	78%	97%	97%	83%	100%
Las Lomas Elementary	94%	100%	70%	92%	100%	NA
Los Gatos Union Elementary	98%	100%	88%	96%	100%	100%
Hillsborough City Elementary	100%	NA	100%	91%	NA	100%
Woodside Elementary	100%	0%	100%	96%	NA	NA
Luther Burbank	100%*	NA	NA	100%	NA	100%
Orchard Elementary	100%*	60%	100%*	67%	100%	100%*

\*Participation rates at these districts exceed 100% due to changes in student enrollment between reported data in October CBEDS enrollment and STAR testing dates.

Burlingame Elementary is excluded from this chart as enrollment data by ethnicity was unavailable in 2010–2011.

# Methodology

**Data Sources:** All data were obtained from the California Department of Education ([cde.ca.gov](http://cde.ca.gov)). Relevant research files downloaded for purposes of analyses included the 2011 and 2012 Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) data, 2012 Academic Performance Index, 2011 and 2012 School Enrollment, 2012 Graduate and Cohort Outcome data, and 2012 Student Poverty – FRPM data.

The following outlines the main analyses that were conducted.

## **1. Elementary School Academic Performance Index (API)**

- a. The school-level API data was obtained from the 2012 API research files. Subgroup API, for e.g. Latino API, was also directly obtained from the research files.
- b. Exclusion criteria: Schools with fewer than 11 students contributing towards the subgroup API were excluded.

## **2. Algebra 1 7th/8th Grade Participation and Proficiency Rates**

- a. For the 8th grade cohort graduating in 2012, aggregated participation and proficiency rates for Algebra 1 were derived from the 2011 and 2012 STAR research files. Ethnic-specific grade level enrollment was also obtained from the School Enrollment files in both years.
- b. Participation is defined as the number of students who tested for Algebra 1 out of the total number of students who were enrolled at that grade level. Participation rates for both years were thus derived from the number of students who tested for Algebra 1 in 7th grade in 2011 as well as the number of students who tested for Algebra 1 in 8th grade in 2012. The combined participation rate is presented as our 7th/ 8th grade Algebra 1 participation rate.
- c. Proficiency is defined as the total number of students who tested proficient and above in both 2011 and 2012 out of the total number of 8th grade students in 2012. Using CDE's percent of students who scored proficient and above in Algebra 1, we derived the actual number of proficient students by multiplying that percent against the total number of students who tested in Algebra 1 in each of the two years. Our 7th/8th grade proficiency rate is obtained by taking the combined number of students who scored proficient and above and dividing that by the 8th grade student enrollment.
- d. Note: As participation rates by ethnicity are derived from enrollment reported in October of the same school year, they do not reflect new students enrolled after October, or students who transferred out. In some cases, participation rates may exceed 100% due to changes in student enrollment between October and STAR testing dates (usually in April or May).

## **3. 4-Year Graduation and UC/CSU Eligibility**

- a. For the 2012 graduates, two data points are used: the 9th grade cohort graduation rate and the percent of graduates who meet UC/CSU entry requirements by ethnicity.
- b. Our 4-year graduation and UC/CSU eligibility rate is derived from multiplying the cohort graduation rate by percent of graduates who meet UC/CSU eligibility. This represents the percent of ninth-graders who graduate from high school four years later, having completed the a-g course sequence, which is the entry requirement for UC/CSU.

**An Innovate Public Schools Publication**

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**May 2013**

[www.InnovateSchools.org](http://www.InnovateSchools.org)

