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College-Prep-For-All Curriculum: is It An Option for the North Bay?

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Executive Summary

> "Today, more than ever, a world-class education is a prerequisite for success. America was once the best educated nation in the world. A generation ago, we led all nations in college completion, but today, 10 countries have passed us. It is not that their students are smarter than ours. It is that these countries are being smarter about how to educate their students. And the countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow"
>
> -President Barack Obama
> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, ESEA Blueprint for Reform, Washington, D.C., 2010.

A community's health is everyone's responsibility, not just the medical professionals. To live and breathe a community needs a healthy infrastructure, including a rigorous and appropriate public education system. In March of 2010, the Obama administration presented "A Blueprint for Reform", highlighting expected changes to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. In it the President, and Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, challenge schools to better prepare students for a college education. In fact, the third of four goals in the report reads, "Implementing college- and career-ready standards and developing improved assessments aligned with those standards" (ESEA Blueprint for Reform, 2010). It is important to note that while most educational counseling programs in secondary school systems use the terminology "college and career," the term "post-secondary education" has been adopted by the U.S. Department of Education to encompass not only two year or four year colleges and universities, but also vocational schools, technical school programs, and professional certifications (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2009).

DROP-OUTS

The need for College-Prep-for-All research is further reinforced in two reports released by the National Center for Education Statistics, a division of the U.S. Department of Education.

The first report (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009) provides information on the national drop-out and completion rates of high school students up through the 2007 school year. The data show that students living in families defined by the government as low-income were approximately ten times more likely to drop-out of high school during the 2006-2007 academic year than those living in families defined as high income.

The effects of dropping-out of high school are evidenced in the workforce where the median income of individuals aged 18-65 who had not completed high school was roughly $24,000 in 2007 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). The median income of persons aged 18-65 who had completed high school, either through traditionally obtaining a diploma or passing the General Educational Development (GED) exam, was approximately $40,000 in 2007.

EARNING POWER

A second report further highlighted the connection between education levels and earning power (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). The median earnings for young adults ages 25–34 who worked full-time throughout a full year increased as education levels increased for each year surveyed between 1980 and 2006. This pattern held for male, female, White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian subgroups. For example, in 1980 young adults with a bachelor's degree or higher earned $14,600 per year more than those who did not earn a high school diploma or its equivalent. In 2000, this difference increased to $23,400 and $23,000 in 2006 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008).

LOCAL EFFECTS

The Press Democrat recently published an article describing Sonoma County's college-ready graduates (Benefield, May 4, 2010). According to the article, only 26% of the county's seniors do the minimum coursework to apply to University of California (UC) or California State Universities (CSU), which is below the state average of 35%. To some, this indicates a decrease in economic competiveness, while others contend forcing all high school students to take and pass A-G college prep courses will not result in higher success rates or reflect positively on the local economy as some students will simply drop-out under the pressure (Benefield, May 4, 2010). Local educators, such as Keller McDonald, Superintendent of West Sonoma County District, argue that success does not look the same for all students. "Should it be a goal to increase the number of students who finish? You bet. But increasing the numbers is different from having all students finish A to G" (Benefield, May 4, 2010, p. 2).

Another local educator, Sharon Liddell, Santa Rosa Superintendent, echoed the sentiment, stating, "We also want to meet the needs of students in their desire for their future in terms of whether they are going to a two-year college, four years or straight to the workforce — for all of those things, they may not desire to have those particular A-through-G courses" (Benefield, May 4, 2010, p.2). County Superintendent of Schools Carl Wong indicated that he would prefer to advocate for more rigorous course loads. "I think it is a waste of potential when students don't take everything that is available to them in high school" (Benefield, May 4, 2010, p. 2).

Mary Jane Burke, the Superintendent of Schools in Marin County, furthered the idea that post-secondary education looks different for different students. The key is preparing them to succeed in a field of their choice, expanding "the definition of 'college' beyond its traditional

meaning" (M.J. Burke, personal communication, May 6, 2010). Community support systems are also pertinent, in Burke's opinion, to ensuring the most well-rounded graduates.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

The issue seems to come down to College-Prep-For-All indicating only UC or CSU schools, or Post-Secondary-Education-For-All, which encompasses Community Colleges such as Santa Rosa Junior College or other vocational or technical schools as described by the U.S. Department of Education (2009). Despite this distinction, California has increased the number of A-G courses to 43%, a record high (Benefield, May 4, 2010). Considering the drop-out rates of high school students in the tri-county area, especially those of English Language Learners, the debate is crucial to the economic health and growth of the tri-county area. As Wong described in The Press Democrat article, "what I think we ought to be doing is remove the word 'college' out of the equation and say, 'What is a reasonable expectation in this global economy, is that every student in Sonoma County needs to take a more rigorous course of study" (Benefield, May 4, 2010, p. 4).

Despite the call for redefining what schools consider "college-ready" as "post-secondary-ready", the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) projects that the state will have "one million fewer college-educated workers than the economy will require" (Public Policy Institute of California, 2010, ¶1) by 2025. Specifically, projections suggest that 41% of jobs in the state will require at least a bachelor's degree. The report cites two central indicators of this trend, including the retirement of baby-boomers in the workforce over the next twenty years, and demographic shifts of populations with historically low rates of college attendance and completion (Public Policy Institute of California, 2010, ¶ 1). The PPIC is updating the Master

Plan, indicating new goals for UC and CSU eligibility, community college transfer rates, and the rates for college completion.

OPENING PATHWAYS IN THE NORTH BAY

The question is, how can the North Bay address these issues, bettering the health and vitality of our community, when California schools rank 46th nationally in achievement (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009)? In his 2010 State of Education Address, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O'Connell, stated, "all students can achieve to high levels and we will not rest until we are preparing all students for success in the competitive global economy" (California Department of Education, 2010). In order to achieve this goal, as a community we must discuss the opportunities and challenges in ensuring a College-Prep-For-All curriculum. Considering the drastic budget short-fall in California and the possibility of "Race to the Top" grant monies being awarded to our state, the content of this report could be a viable contribution to the research supporting California's need for assistance. Additionally, increasing the educational achievement of high school and post-secondary students would arguably lead to less demand for social services, higher income levels, and higher tax revenue generation in the tri-county community.

This report offers several conditions under which an improvement of educational achievement can occur without lowering the job status of high school graduates.

- First, we suggest a data-informed timeline for school districts in Marin, Napa and Sonoma Counties to implement support systems for students. This involves incremental increases in post-secondary readiness for graduates before the 2025 projection as posited by the PPIC.

To accomplish that goal, several mechanisms are suggested.

- One includes an overall change in school culture. This includes strong leadership to propel schools toward a new mindset rejecting the old system that "tracked" certain students toward non-college prep courses, thus ignoring their potential to attend two or four year colleges after graduation. This requires cooperation between administration, counselors and teachers. Counselors especially need to promote students' applications for colleges, supporting alternative routes to post-secondary education such as community, vocational and technical schools.
- Additionally, English Language Learners' needs have to be recognized and addressed. Considering the percentage of ELL's in the tri-county area, it is evident that schools must research best practices in getting them proficient in English and set the expectation that they have the same opportunities to attend post-secondary education as native speaking students. This approach is also represented in the need to shift school cultures.
- While much is discussed concerning the role of high school personnel, the report also recognizes the need to begin much earlier in a student's school career. Elementary and middle schools need to buy-in to the college-readiness curriculum and attitude for all students. Much of a student's identity is shaped in the early years of his or her education. For example, two local schools in the No Excuses University program, by Turnaround Schools, exemplify the benefits of raising the expectations for higher education with students, parents, and teachers starting in the elementary grades.
- The implementation of community partnerships in the form of sponsoring local programs, coordinating job shadowing experiences and mentorships for students, represents another mechanism in schools that can lead to greater success for graduates. This report highlights some programs, such as the Cristo Rey School in San Francisco, that employ

such partnerships. Through exposure to the workforce in local industries, high school students receive important on-the-job-training and credit toward graduation.

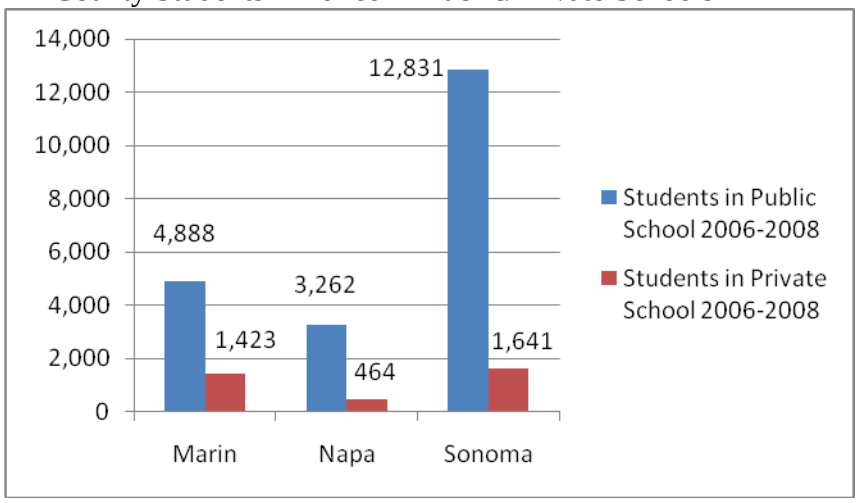
FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The report concludes with suggestions for future research. Much of the current research details the successes of high school graduates in attending and completing post-secondary education, but there exists a need for longitudinal studies tracking students from an early age, through their elementary, middle and high school experience, and on to their college attendance and careers. In comparing schools that have implemented strides toward College-Prep-For-All policies versus those that remain status quo, what possible differences develop for students and the local economy? Furthermore, how can the North Bay glean aspects of successful college- and career-ready programs for their schools? The goal is to not only increase the economic health and well-being of the community, but also that of individual students' lives.

Chapter One: Tri-County Demographics

As our economy and social innovations continue to change with an ongoing list of technological advances, the question will be whether we have the educated citizenry to follow through on implementing ever-changing advances in our economy. Looking at the overall demographics of the student populations in our tri-county schools may provide some insights into the problems we need to address and the direction we are presently headed with our educational policies.

Table 1.1
Tri-County Students Enrolled in Public/Private Schools

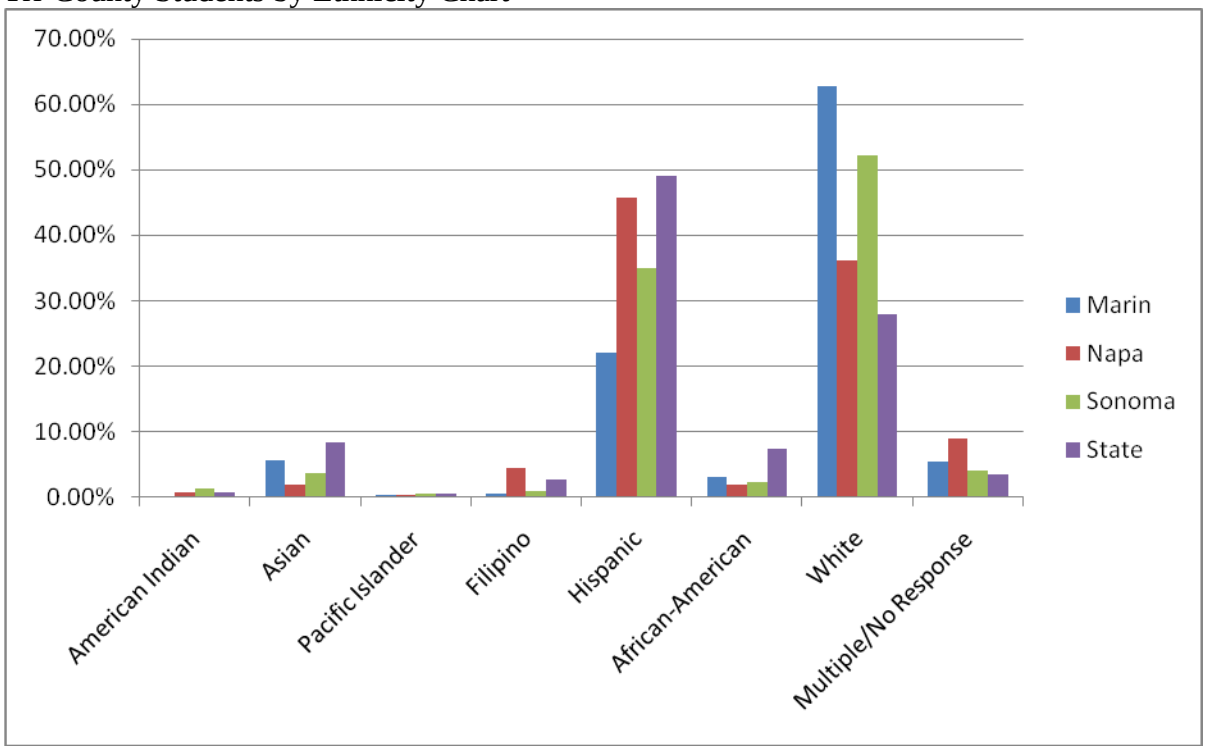


There exists a diverse student population in our tri-county area including Marin, Napa and Sonoma. According to the United States census for 2006-2008, there were 24,509 students enrolled in the three county area schools. In Marin, there were a total of 6,311 students (a county population of 246,985) 3,726 students in Napa (a county population of 132,027) and 14,472 students in Sonoma County (and a county population of 463,326) (American Factfinder, 2010).

Table 1.2
Tri-County Students by Ethnicity

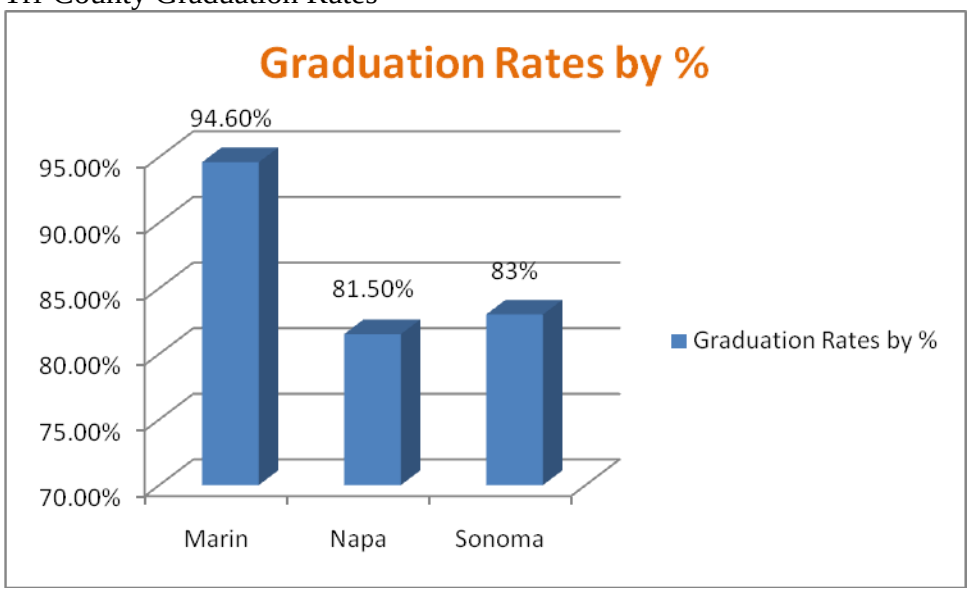
	Students by Ethnicity 2008-2009			
	Marin	**Napa**	**Sonoma**	**State**
American Indian	74	152	935	46,446
Asian	1625	362	2642	526,403
Pacific Islander	88	70	337	39,510
Filipino	187	902	573	168,112
Hispanic	6520	9318	24887	3,064,607
African-American	922	389	1658	454,780
White	18588	7346	37086	1,741,655
Multiple/No Response	1611	1831	2931	210,498

Table 1.3
Tri-County Students by Ethnicity Chart



Notably, the ethnicity demographics show the state of California having more students of Hispanic background than any of the tri-counties. Additionally, White students are more prevalent in Marin County than in the state (Education Data Partnership, County profile. 2010).

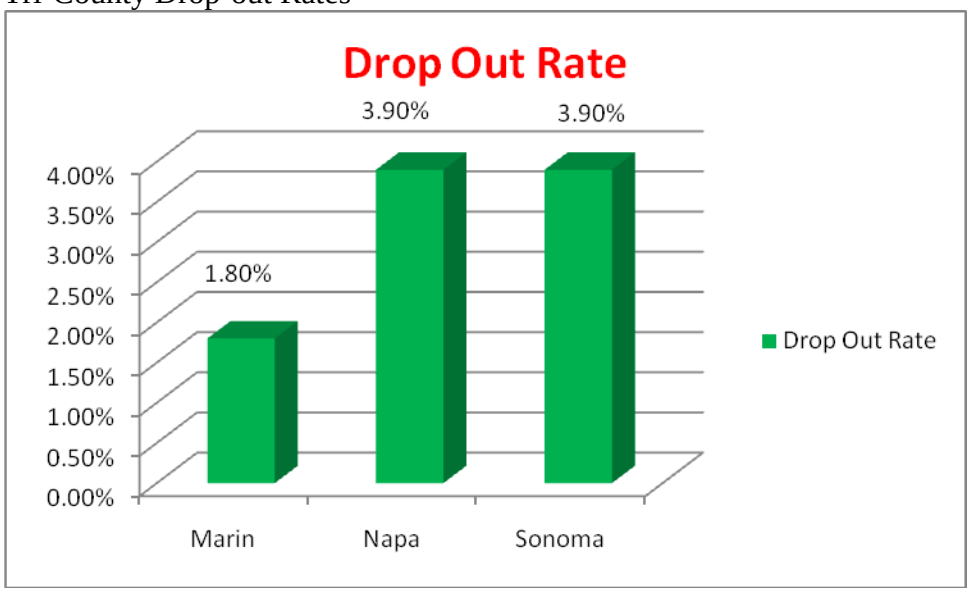
Table 1.4
Tri-County Graduation Rates



For the 2007-2008 school year, the California Department of Education has found that 94.6% or 2,030 of 2,206 high school seniors graduated in Marin County, for Napa county 81.5% or 1,213 of 1,570 students graduated from high school, and in Sonoma County the graduation rate was 83% or 4,677 out of 5,711 students (California Department of Education, 2010, *Data Quest*).

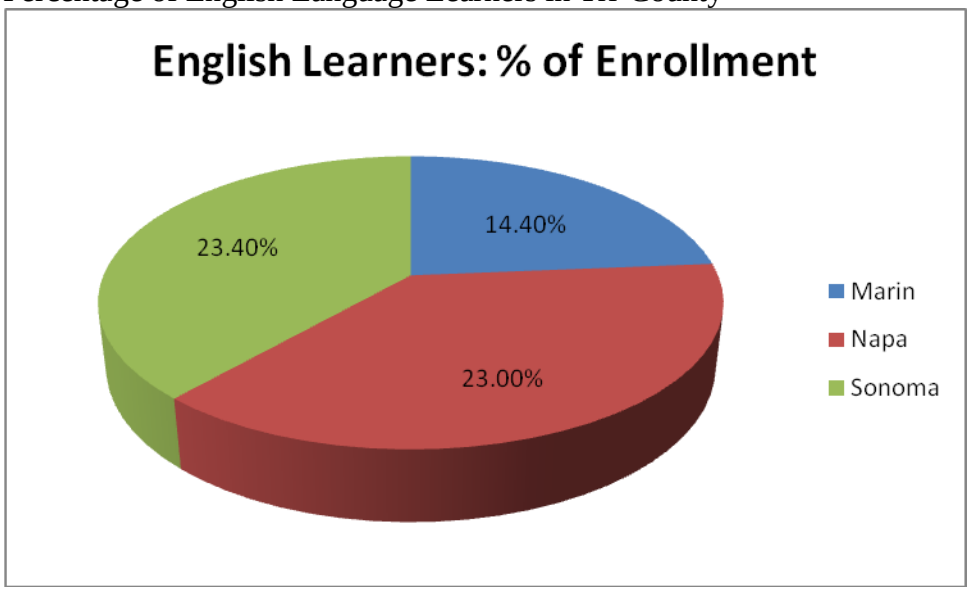
When looking at the graduation rate, it is also beneficial to view the overall drop-out rate of the schools within our tri-county area. Table 1.5 illustrates the rates in all three counties. In Marin County the drop-out rate is 1.8% or 117 students, for Napa, it is 3.9% or 275 students, and Sonoma County has the same percentage of drop-outs as Napa County, though a larger number of students at 960. This reflects the larger student population located in Sonoma County. These graduation and drop-out rates are based on the NCES definition: the number of graduates (year four) divided by the number of graduates (year four) + grade nine dropouts (year one) + grade ten dropouts (year two) + grade 11 dropouts (year three) + grade 12 dropouts (year four).

Table 1.5
Tri-County Drop-out Rates



California Department of Education, 2010, *Data Quest*

Table 1.6
Percentage of English Language Learners in Tri-County

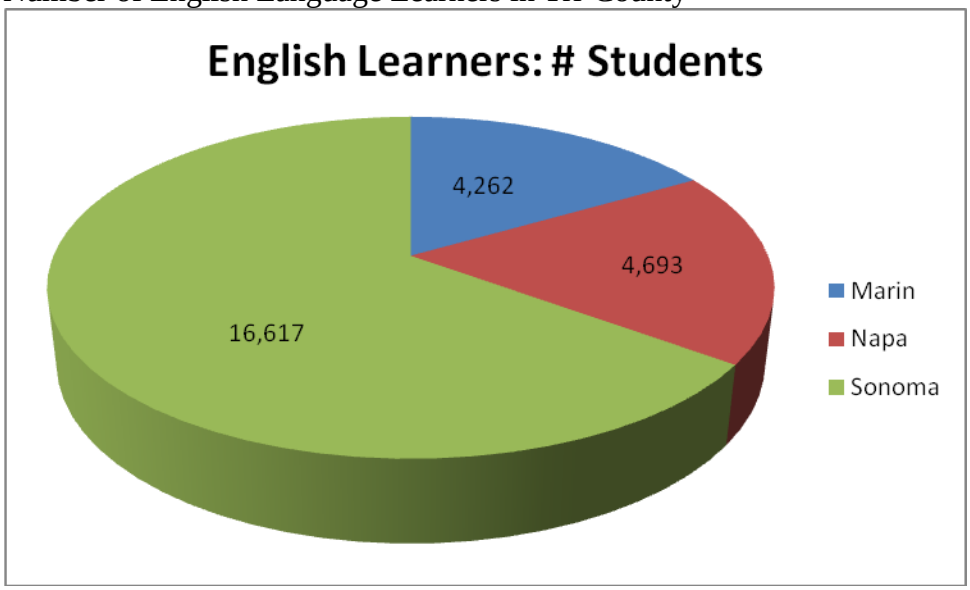


Education Data Partnership, 2010, County reports, 2008-2009

Another factor to consider in the focus on demographics of our local schools is the percentage of English Language Learners. In viewing Tables 1.6 and 1.7, the difference in percentages is essentially the same between Napa and Sonoma Counties, but the number of

students represents a large disparity. English Learners are almost one quarter of the enrollment in Napa and Sonoma Counties; while in Marin County they are only 14% of student enrollment. These are all below the state average of 24.2%. According to the California Department of Education (2008), "the percentage of Hispanic students continue to grow while the percentages of African-American and white students have declined" (¶ 2).

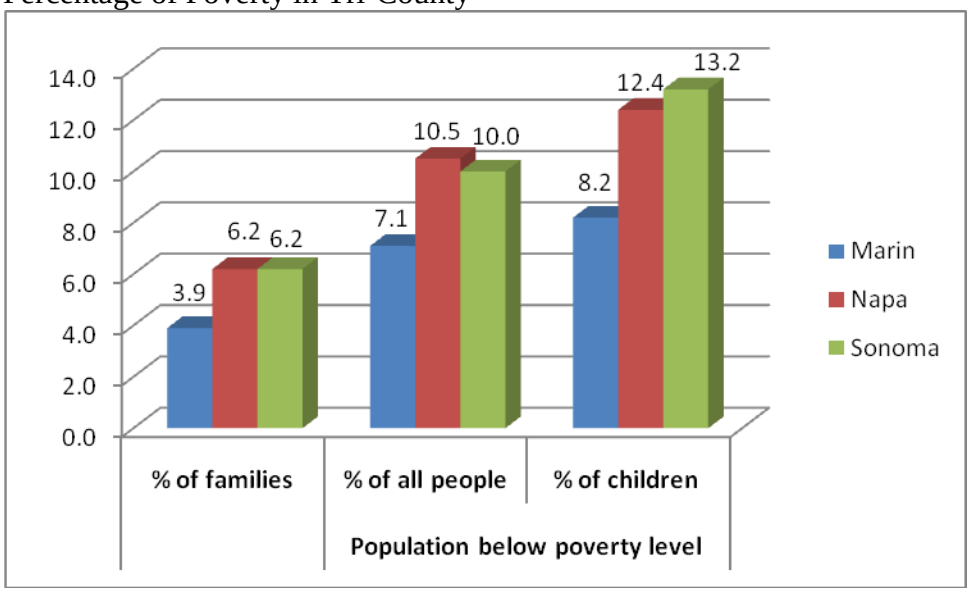
Table 1.7
Number of English Language Learners in Tri-County



Education Data Partnership, 2010, County reports, 2008-2009

In conjunction with the growing ELL population in our schools, the number of children living below the poverty level is growing with 8.2 % in Marin, 12.4 % in Napa, and 13.2% in Sonoma County. This factor needs to be considered when discussing options available to students to continue their education for college and/or career readiness.

Table 1.8
Percentage of Poverty in Tri-County



American Factfinder, 2010, Economic characteristics

A key consideration in this report is to examine the college readiness of the students in Marin, Sonoma and Napa Counties. The California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Office has compiled data as recently as 2009, and their findings indicate that both Napa and Sonoma Counties fall below the statewide average of 33.9% readiness. Marin County has one of the best rates with 56.8% of students in their graduating high school classes completing the required courses for University of California or California State University systems (A-G courses), while only 31% of Napa graduates complete the courses. 26.1% of Sonoma County graduates were deemed ready to be accepted. However, other factors may come into consideration such as enough classes for each student who would like to enroll, faculty preparedness to teach the classes, and proper funding for the classes.

Table 1.9
Percentage of Graduates Completing A-G Coursework in Tri-County

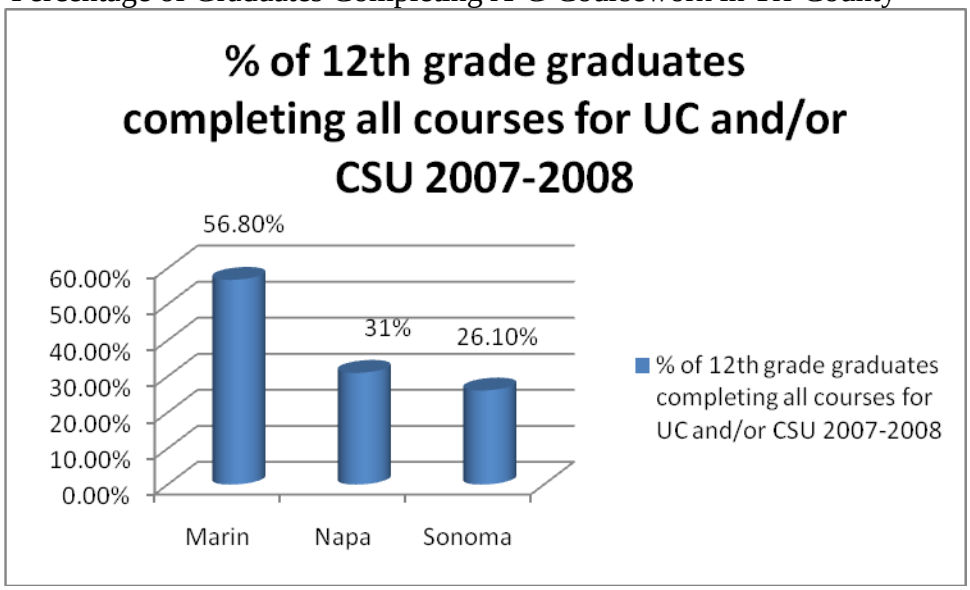
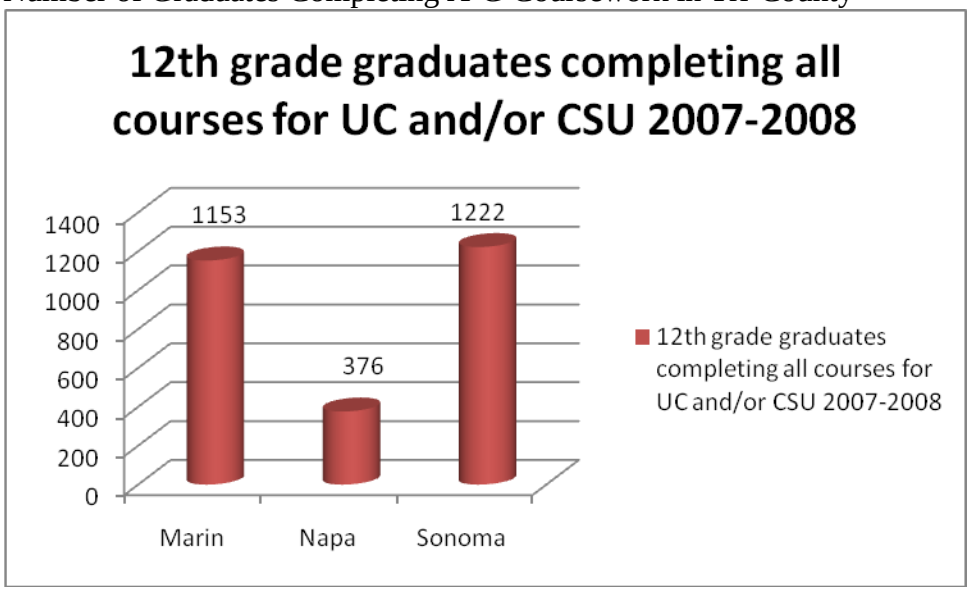


Table 1.10
Number of Graduates Completing A-G Coursework in Tri-County



Education Data Partnership, 2010, County reports, High School Accountability, 2008

The Santa Rosa Junior College Office of Institutional Research has published their 2009 Factbook. It details the 12th grade Sonoma County student college going rate including California Community Colleges and independent institutions, which found 2,683 students or 75.3% attending a community college. They also found that of the 5,198 high school graduates in

Sonoma County, 3,562 were attending college. Their analysis indicated that "twelfth grade enrollment and the number of high school graduates increased in 2008 in Sonoma County, with an 83% graduation rate (see Table 1.4). Almost 70% of Sonoma county high school graduates went to college in 2008" (Office of Institutional Research, 2009, p. C-16).

Chapter Two: Current Research

The 21st Century learner has unique needs and growing expectations. Situated in a global economy, with information, media and technology resources that are expanding daily, students must learn critical thinking and problem solving skills. In addition, students are accustomed to immediate connection with their peers and immediate access to information. They are learning to communicate, collaborate, and express their creativity and innovative ideas, often away from the school environment. Indeed, the most valuable thing educators today can teach students is how to access, evaluate and use these resources (Collins & Halverson, 2009). Arguably, the jobs teachers prepare students for today do not yet exist. Federal, State and Local governments and organizations have begun to address these modern educational concerns, and have developed a variety of programs that support students' goals of reaching for and succeeding in a college career. The following sections highlight these programs, paying special attention to school models that work as well as the challenges that exist when implementing more rigor in the classroom and College-Prep-For-All curriculum.

Government Programs: Federal Initiatives

Over the past few years, the Federal Government has increased its role in public education. In 2002, The Bush administration implemented the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), charging schools and districts to increase standardized test scores so all students reach proficiency by the 2013-2014 academic year. On March 13, 2010, the Obama administration unveiled its blueprint to revisit and revise NCLB. While the blueprint is awaiting approval, some details as summarized in Table 2.1 concerning the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

(ESEA) have emerged, including changes to the law's approach to assessment, accountability and timeframes.

Table 2.1
Side-by-Side Guide to Reauthorization to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

No Child Left Behind	ESEA Renewal Blueprint
Teachers must be "highly qualified", meaning they demonstrate subject-matter proficiency and meet state certification requirements.	States would have to come up with a definition of "effective teacher" and "highly effective teacher" based in part on student outcomes.
States set their own academic standards.	States would have to adopt college-and career-ready standards, such as those being drafted by the Common Core Standards Initiative.
Perennially struggling schools can choose from a range of improvement options, the most popular of which is a broad category called "other methods of restructuring."	Struggling schools would have a list of four very specific options for turning around low-performing schools. In nearly all cases, the school's principal would have to be removed.
The law requires all students to reach proficiency on state tests by the 2013-14 school year.	A goal would be set making all students college- and career-ready by 2020, but that isn't a hard and fast deadline.
There is no clear distinction between schools that miss achievement targets because all of their students are struggling vs. those that are having trouble with a particular subgroup of students, such as students in special education.	Schools that are persistently low-achieving would be subject to a different set of interventions that those that miss achievement targets for one or two subgroups of students.
Schools that miss achievement targets for two years in a row must let students choose another school, including a charter school. And those that miss targets for three years must offer students extensive tutoring.	Schools that don't meet achievement targets wouldn't automatically have to offer public school choice or tutoring.
Student performance is measured using "status models," which compare different cohorts of students to one another.	Student performance would be measured using "growth models," which look at individual student progress from year to year.

Schools that make strides in closing the achievement gap don't get any sort of special rewards.	Schools that make strides in closing the achievement gap would be rewarded with money and flexibility.
States primarily rely on reading and mathematics tests to gauge student progress, although states must also test their students in science in specifics grade spans.	States may choose to assess students in subjects other than reading and math, such as foreign language and history, and make those tests part of their accountability system.
Students are tested in reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high school.	Student would be tested in reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high school.
Student data are disaggregated by racial- and ethnic-minority group, as well as by special populations, such as English-Language Learners.	Student data would continue to be disaggregated by racial- and ethnic-minority group, as well as by special populations, such as English-Language Learners.

Klein, 2010, p. 22

The Race to the Top (RTTT) program is intended to encourage innovation and excellence in education through competitive grants. Achieve, Inc., a non-profit, bipartisan organization in Washington D.C., has written a guide to RTTT. This organization's goal is to work with states to reform academic standards, graduation rates and improve accountability (Achieve, Inc., 2010).

Achieve, Inc. examined RTTT and its effort to create and adopt internationally bench-marked college and career standards assessments for all 50 states, a goal which Achieve, Inc. has been working on since 1996 (Achieve, Inc., 2010). RTTT also calls for business leaders, educators, and politicians to be involved in adopting these new standards whose primary focus is getting high school students college ready not just college eligible. Achieve Inc. has been working with ACT, the College Board, the National Governors' Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers to get states involved in the Common Core State Standards Initiative through its American Diploma Project (ADP) network, beginning in 2005 (Achieve, Inc., 2009), and including 35 states.

The Gear-Up federal grant program also aims to increase College-Prep-For-All Curriculum (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, Gaining early awareness). Working through both states and partnerships, Gear-Up grantees must provide assistance to low-income students in both middle and high school settings. The early intervention component of the grant is meant to build college awareness and in turn increase the chance for college attendance and success. Gear-Up funds are then also used to provide college scholarships to low-income students.

One example of a product created through the use of Gear-Up grant funds is *The College and Career Planning Handbook for Grades 8 and 9*, which encourages students to be lifelong learners whether they choose to pursue higher education or go directly into the workforce (Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2002). Websites provide personal assessments to help students determine their interests, abilities, and values. Additionally, career clusters are presented to show students how jobs are categorized by type, and websites to research particular careers of interest. The different categories of post-secondary education listed include certificate programs, apprenticeship programs, Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, Professional, and Doctoral degree programs, as well as Armed Forces options. The guide concludes by providing information on specific courses and exams required to apply to the college or university system. Students are encouraged to acquire job skills while in high school through internships, job shadowing, volunteer work, and occupational classes.

Federal TRIO programs such as Educational Talent Search and Upward Bound established through the Title IV Higher Education Act of 1965, also identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, Office of Postsecondary Education). Educational Talent Search and Upward Bound serve and assist low-income individuals and first-generation college students to help them progress from

middle school to post baccalaureate programs. The grants do this through providing career and post-secondary education exploration activities/workshops, personal assessments, counseling, mentoring, and tutorial services for participating students.

Government Programs: Regional Initiatives

State and local agencies have also tackled the issue of College-Prep-For-All curriculum. The Early Commitment to College Program (Senate Bill 890), created in 2008 by California state policy makers, encourages middle grade students from low-income families to prepare for college, provide information about college eligibility, transcript review, and course planning and visits to at least one community college and at least one four year university during freshman or sophomore year of high school. Students are required to sign a promissory letter that they will enroll in college prep courses, fill out appropriate financial aid eligibility forms and enroll in a community college or university within 12 months after graduating high school. The California Department of Education helps facilitate the program and gathers data to measure success rates.

Education Trust-West, another state organization which began in 1990 in Washington D.C. as Education Trust, strives to reform K-12 education (Education Trust-West, 2009). The mission of Education Trust-West focuses on closing the achievement gap through high standards for every student. The organization works with education, business and community leaders to reform the education system in the effort to prepare all students for post-secondary institutions. Education Trust-West focuses on giving a college and career ready education to students from low-income and traditionally underserved communities.

School models that work

Across the country schools and districts have implemented programs to address the

concerns of preparing students for today's marketplace and college admissions. To offer some background, one recent study, through the U.S. Department of Education, applied data from an Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 to determine what steps students from the senior class of 2003-2004 took toward post-secondary enrollment (Xianglei, Wu, Tasoff & Weko, 2010). Authors examined what percentage of high school seniors who took or planned to take college entrance examinations, seniors who took or planned to take the SAT or ACT, the percentage of students who sought various sources for information on college entrance requirements, and finally the percentage of seniors who planned to continue their education after high school.

The results indicated that amongst the subgroups, 71.3% of the Hispanic/Latino populations took or planned to take college entrance examinations. 67.3% American Indian students responded the same. 73.2% English Language Learners responded that they will take or planned to take college entrance examinations. White students represented the highest subgroup at 84.1%. 84.4% of all students cited the school counselor as the main source for finding information on college entrance examinations.

Efforts to close the achievement gap, using examples of inner-city schools that are providing high quality educational opportunities to low-income, underserved urban students, are present in the book, *Sweating the small stuff: Inner-city schools and the new paternalism* (Whitman & Fordham, 2008). Authors outline a number of schools that are using college-prep curriculum to close the achievement gap and get traditionally underserved students ready for college and beyond. It outlines three major high schools across the country that strive to achieve this goal of college-prep education to urban youth.

1) Cristo Rey (CR) was founded in 1996 in Chicago, Illinois. There are currently 24 Cristo Rey schools around the country that provide a private, Catholic, college-prep education to low-

income students in urban cities. In order to fund their education, these students work five days a month in a corporate work setting where they not only earn money to pay for their education, but also learn the skills needed to be successful in various fields. The statistics of these schools show high graduation rates, high college acceptances, and higher standardized test scores than the local public schools. The CR school in San Francisco has had six Millennium Scholars from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. Several other CR schools exist in California, including one in Sacramento and another in Los Angeles. The CR Network states that 99.9% of graduates in 2008 were accepted to two or four-year colleges.

2) The SEED Foundation first began in 1998 in Washington D.C. and now has a second school in Maryland which opened in 2008. The SEED schools are boarding schools for urban youth that provide safety and security while also offering a rigorous college-prep curriculum to middle and high school students. SEED schools are free and therefore rely on a lottery to pick their students. According to the Foundation's website, 97% of SEED graduates have been accepted to college and 90% have enrolled (SEED Foundation, 2008).
3) University Park Campus School is a small public middle and high school program that works with Clark University to provide a college-prep education to students in Worchester, Massachusetts. This school program began in 1997 and works with education and community leaders to provide a quality education to get their students college ready. Most of their students are first generation students to attend college. Like Cristo Rey schools and the SEED schools, University Park School has statistically high standardized test scores at 99%. 95% of the school's graduates have attended college (University Park Campus School-Clark University, 2006).

In response to the need for college- and career-readiness, the Utah State Office of Education developed a report that delineates the categories of post-secondary education and career planning curriculum that they model in their schools. Some key points include:

1. Self Awareness: interest inventories, self-evaluation, and programs to enhance self-esteem.
2. Study/Learning Skills: exploring learning styles and planning educational activities.
3. Career Awareness/Exploration: using career choice programs, exploring job clusters [industries], attending job fairs, participating in internships and job shadowing.
4. Job Related Behaviors: writing resumes, practice interviewing, working in teams.
5. Post-secondary Opportunities: exploring educational/training options, applying for financial aid/scholarships (Lawrence, Gardner, & Utah State Office of Education, 1996).

The Small Schools Project, funded in part through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, was designed to prepare students for college, career, and citizenship in the twenty-first century (Ramsey, 2009). The project focuses on four schools in the Northwest; Cascades School District, the Olympic School District, the Forest Hills School District, and the Eastridge School District. In the four districts, the 'college-ready' goal sets a common outcome but the 'each student' goal challenges the traditional methods of achieving that outcome. Each student cannot be reached without differentiating instruction in the classroom, differentiating support for their teachers' ability to understand and challenge them, and differentiating resources for their schools so teachers have what they need to meet these goals (Ramsey, 2009, p.9).

The project's goal is to create high school environments where all students are deemed "college ready". The general outline developed for college readiness is defined as:

- College Aware: The student understands the importance of college and sees it as an option.
- College Eligible: The student takes the necessary courses for college entrance.
- College Prepared: The student graduates from high school with the skills necessary for college—no remediation required.

Each district has specific initiatives to address the outline for college readiness. The Cascades School District spends a large proportion of its professional development budget on a system-wide framework for instructional improvement and professional development in order to reach the college ready goal. The Olympic School District has conducted a "college audit" to examine how well the entire system is aligned not just with graduation requirements, but also with the larger goal of college and career readiness. The Forest Hills School Board passed a policy mandating that graduation requirements in the Forest Hills School District align with entrance requirements to four-year colleges. Finally, the Eastridge School District has committed substantial resources to bringing their schools into greater alignment with the college-and career-ready goal and is in the process of examining how their system-wide resource allocations support this mission.

Another school model working toward college- and career-readiness, The No Excuses University, is a network of elementary, middle, and junior high schools across the United States. The intent of the program is that all students, regardless of their social and academic status, can be college ready (TurnAround Schools, 2010). Before a school can join the network a team of teachers must attend a TurnAround Schools Institute. Schools promote college readiness beginning in kindergarten. Bahia Vista in San Rafael and Olive Elementary in Novato are two local schools in California that belong to this network.

10,000 Degrees (formerly the Marin Education Fund) offers guidance and resources for students interested in pursuing college after graduation. The website describes that, "All of our programs serve students from low-income households and many of our participants are the first in their family to enroll in college" (10,000 Degrees, 2010. ¶ 1). Their programs include College4Kids!, a program targeting elementary and middle school students; College Academy, a new program launched in June 2009 that offers 9th graders a four week summer program at Dominican University of California focusing on academic preparation for college; as well as College Day Tours and year long mentoring programs that help foster leadership and academic skills. 98% of students participating in the College Bound programs went to college in the fall (10,000 Degrees, 2010).

Pepe Gonzales, a former participant in the Marin Education Fund, graduate of Dominican University of California, and current principal of Venetia Valley School wrote an article for the Marin Independent Journal in 2007, summarizing the benefits of the organization. "Marin Education Fund gave me the guidance, knowledge, financial support and hope I needed to get to college" (Gonzales, 2007, ¶ 4). Gonzales' advisor assisted him in writing college admissions essays and directed him to financial resources available. In his current role as principal, Gonzales continues to work with 10,000 Degrees, touring Dominican University, visiting classrooms and speaking with advisors. "The results are amazing. When a student says, "I'm going to go to college," when he walks around campus and really sees what college will mean for him, what once was a dream becomes his future" (Gonzales, 2007, ¶ 8).

The San Rafael City Schools is another local effort. Their 2007-2012 long range plan "Roadmap to the Future," (2007) includes a section called, "College or Higher Education the Expectation". It states that;

> Students who may not see themselves as going to college still need college prep skills in literacy and math and science to compete in the workplace, having a college degree these days is like graduating from high school 30 years ago, and the schools need to do a better job of integrating college prep and vocational tracks. (San Rafael City Schools, 2007, p.14)

The first goal stated in their plan is, "Enrich, holistic, high quality education that inspires and supports all students to reach their full potential and prepares them to succeed in college, work, and a global society" (San Rafael City Schools, 2007, p.20).

This goal is supported by Priority Outcome 1 that states:

- Expand after school, individualized instruction and interventions to support students who are falling behind. Assure interventions continue to maintain college eligibility.
- Develop specific structures and strategies to support Latino students and all underrepresented groups to undertake and succeed in challenging academic classes that will prepare them for college.
- Develop and implement well-defined grade level to grade level and school to school transition programs (preparation for passage to the next level) for all students from preschool to kindergarten, elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to life, college, and work (San Rafael City Schools Roadmap to the Future, 2007, p. 22).

Electronic Portfolios

Research has also uncovered that a key element is necessary for most school models that work toward college- and career-readiness for graduates. Capturing and sharing students' experience and learning, for example in the form of a portfolio of students' work, needs to be

done in such a way that potential institutions of higher education and/or future employers are able to see evidence of the academic, social, and practical skills students have acquired.

One way to facilitate a collective showcase of a student's high school experience is through the use of electronic portfolios (Barrett, 2007). Different electronic portfolio tools, or ePortfolios, can allow for varying degrees of interactivity and personal expression. For example, ePortfolios with a low level of interactivity are ones that are produced offline and can only be published in CD-R or DVD-R formats. E-folios with a higher level of interactivity are housed on the web, either as open source or through personal email invitations, and can allow viewers to visit the sites at their choosing and/or post response comments. E-folios that allow for higher levels of personal expression are those created by individuals as a personal showcase versus those created by institutions primarily for assessment and data gathering purposes (Barrett, 2007).

The state of Minnesota provides a very successful example of an electronic portfolio program (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 2010, *eFolioMinnesota*). Through funding from the Minnesota State College and University system, every Minnesota resident is provided a free license allowing them to a create a personal electronic portfolio. This eFolioWorld software has now become available to institutions and individuals residing outside of Minnesota, both within the United States and abroad.

Students in California, either at their own cost or with licenses paid through school funds, ROP programs, grants, or donations from businesses, can create eFolioWorld portfolios (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 2010, *eFolioWorld*). The fees start at $9.00 or less per license and are renewable each year, far below the cost of most other fee-based portfolio systems. eFolioWorld portfolios allow students to showcase their achievements, highlight and

reflect upon school assignments, post video clips, and link to personal web pages. The overarching goal of these electronic portfolios is to create a professional, online presence that students can use to represent themselves to potential employers and college admissions officers. The eFolioWorld tool has built in privacy controls that allow students to decide whether to selectively invite individuals to view their electronic portfolios or to allow open source web access.

At Feather River College in Northern California, the Career Technical Education (CTE) SB70 grant is administered through a combination of California budget bill funding and the federal Carl D. Perkins Grant (California Department of Education, 2009, *Senate Bill 70*). Feather River College's CTE grant program started a pilot in the 2009-2010 school year to utilize eFolioWorld electronic portfolios for students residing in rural Plumas County. The program first helped host a county-wide College and Career Planning Fair, with a focus on encouraging students to participate in internships, job shadowing, or mentoring opportunities with local businesses. The grant staff then followed-up on the fair events by working collaboratively with Plumas County ROP and TRIO grant programs to provide laptop access and eFolioWorld licenses to the local high school students. The eFolios provide an opportunity for rural and urban students to market their skills in an on-line social networking culture (California Department of Education, 2009, *Senate Bill 70*).

Challenges to more rigor in the classroom

The California P-16 Council drafted a report determining strategies for closing California's achievement gap (California Department of Education, 2008). The report used data from California Standards Test (STAR), California Alternate Performance Assessment, and California High School Exit Examination as a measurement of achievement. The research

focuses on gaps between ethnic groups, English language populations, economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities. Information regarding major factors that inhibit learning was collected by four subcommittees through a review of literature, discussions, and school and district visits, including students' access to quality education, culture and climate of schools, expectation levels and instructional strategies proven to raise achievement. Some key findings include:

I. Data from the 2006 STAR Test indicated that only 14% of ELL's scored proficient and above in English-Language Arts and 25% in Mathematics.

II. 27% of Hispanic/Latino students scored proficient and above in English-Language Arts and 30% in Mathematics.

III. Poor alignment of state standards to college entrance examinations widens post-secondary achievement gaps with 58% of Asian populations and 40% of white students completing the A-G sequence compared to 25% of African American and 22% of Latino students completing the sequence.

Other research has found that linguistic and academic achievement rates among ELL's were significantly lower than native English speakers (Callahan, 2005). The study cites that English Language Learners, "scored an average of 1.2 standard deviations below non-LEP {ELL} populations in both the 1998 and 2002 eighth grade National Assessment of Academic Progress reading test" (Callahan, 2005, p. 306). This study's critique of the Sheltered and SDAIE model of instruction suggests that because material is gone over at a slower pace and covers less content than regular classes, ELL's are at a disadvantage when it comes to high school exit exams and college preparation. Furthermore, the researcher suggests that the over

simplification or watering down of content in sheltered classes limits the, "experiences and development" of ELL's (Callahan, 2005).

In the United States, one in five students enrolled in public schools speak a language other than English as their primary language. During the 1990's, English Language Learner enrollment in K-12 school increased 104%. Different areas of the country have experienced this demographic shift more than others due to varying social and economic factors. For example, in California more than 40% of students enrolled in the public school system speak English as a second language and only 26% are considered "English proficient" (Callahan, 2005).

Another report focused on English Language Learners' chances of meeting college preparation requirements in high school and academic support programs that help ELL's meet these requirements (Finkelstien, Huang & Fong, 2009). Researchers examined transcript data from 54 high schools in California to analyze specific course taking patterns of ELL's, thus determining their eligibility to UC or CSU systems by meeting A-G requirements. Findings included:

- Classes designed for ELL language acquisition do not contain academic content required for college, representing a significant barrier in UC or CSU eligibility.
- By the end of 9th grade many ELL's already fall behind in foundation requirements when compared to non-ELL students in areas of English and Math (39.5% vs. 9.2%).
- Only 8% of ELL's graduate high school completing required courses to be "minimally eligible" for CSU system.
- ELL's are placed in "remedial" courses and determined to be unable to participate in more rigorous coursework required for college preparation.

Additional concerns focus on standardized testing scores of ELL's (Jespen & DeAlth, 2005). This report focused on NCLB policies that require districts to advance more English Language Learners to Fluent English Proficient to raise achievement rates on standardized tests. ELL's are given standardized tests in English during their first year of high school, without being proficient in English, leading to invalid representations of students' actual academic capabilities. These low test scores classify ELL's for remedial classes. Authors conclude that most schools do not have the infrastructure or resources to complete comprehensive exiting evaluations for each ELL student.

English Language Learners show greatest achievement in earlier years/grades due in part to less emphasis on academic language. In 2003 only 39% of ELL's passed the English Language Arts section of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) compared to 82% of non-ELL students. In 2000, only 27% of ELL's completed high school in four years. Considering 26% of California students are classified as English Language Learners and over 50 different languages are spoken in California's schools, these statistics are arguably of great concern.

A report in the Education Policy Analysis Archives (2003) stresses that the achievement gap is so wide, it threatens the overall productivity and welfare of the state's education system. Authors accessed data for academic achievement from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS), and the American Institutes for Research Implementation of Prop 227. The report cites school readiness as a major reason for underachievement of ELL's because they begin school without a sufficient understanding of oral English. Using data from ECLS researchers concluded that 60% of ELL's who entered Kindergarten in Fall of 1998 did not understand English enough to be assessed. Researchers cited six conditions of inequity for ELL's in California's schools;

I. Inequitable access to appropriately trained teachers.

II. Inadequate professional development opportunities to help teachers address the instructional needs of ELL's.

III. Inequitable access to appropriate assessments to measure ELL's achievement, or gauge their learning needs, and a lack of accountability for their progress.

IV. Inadequate instructional time to accomplish learning goals.

V. Inequitable access to instructional materials and curriculum. Researchers found ELL's assigned to multiple periods of ESL or ELD classes while non-ELL students are taking college preparatory classes. In a random sample of transcripts selected from two northern California districts, 21% of ELL's were taking college preparatory courses.

VI. Inequitable access to adequate facilities. Intense segregation into schools and classrooms that place them at particularly high risk for educational failure.

A policy brief out of Princeton University highlights some further challenges to College-Preparation-for-All, highlighting the continued achievement gap between middle/upper income students (mostly Caucasian and Asian) and low-income students (mostly Latino and African American) (Haskins & Kemple, 2009). They recommend three major areas in which our government and policy-makers should focus in order to close the achievement gap: enhancing academic skills and knowledge, assisting students in selecting and paying for college, and improving accountability.

While government initiatives have addressed these concerns, as described in a previous section of this report, government sponsored programs over the past forty years (e.g. Gear-Up) have emphasized college-prep courses and outside resources like tutoring to help students get into and succeed in college. "None of the evaluations, however, produced evidence that the

programs boosted college graduation rates" (Haskins & Kemple, 2009, p.3). Additionally, according to the report, these programs did not improve other factors like better grades, higher graduation rates, or more college-prep courses.

Some schools have addressed the achievement gap through the development of more rigorous curriculum. Journal article, *U.S. High School Curriculum: Three Phases of Contemporary Research and Reform* (2009) highlights the history and current status of college-prep curriculum. In the past public high schools placed students into rigid curricular "tracks" based mostly on students' prior academic performance and future occupational and educational goals. Such tracking ensured some to graduate with college and career ready skills and others without (Lee & Ready, 2009).

During the 1990's, researchers found that students completing more advanced, college-prep curriculum learned more, regardless of income or ethnic background. In 1997 Chicago public high schools implemented a College-Prep-For-All curriculum to help close the gap between low-performing and high-performing students. Lee and Ready (2009) examined the student achievement of these schools, finding that the advanced curriculum equaled little difference in achievement. Authors claim "selection bias" of previous Chicago studies examining the program. In fact, those studies did not comprehensively consider other characteristics of students that completed the college-prep curriculum, such as motivation, access to academic support, and qualified teachers. The article indicates that the Chicago findings suggest current College-Prep-For-All does not improve results for all student populations as it was designed to do.

Other researchers have uncovered weaknesses in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). The Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) issued a report regarding the initiative to

expose all of their students to a college-preparatory science curriculum (Montgomery & Allensworth, 2010), a part of the larger college-preparatory policy. Currently 21 states require all students to take three years of science and four years of math to graduate from high school, and the Obama administration is heading down a similar path with the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) initiative (Montgomery & Allensworth, 2010, p. 1). Since the CPS initiative is at the forefront of this movement, the authors argue that their results/data are worth considering.

They found that though CPS high school students took and passed more college-prep courses, five of every six students earned a grade of C or lower, indicating that overall performance did not improve. Additionally, college-going rates of students with B averages in science declined significantly, dipping for all students when controlled for changes in student characteristics over time. "Simply exposing more students to more science may not by itself produce a single extra science major – much less the influx of new scientists envisioned nationally" (Montgomery & Allensworth, 2010, p. 1).

This trend continued across other content areas. Mazzeo (2010) reported that students were not more likely to take advanced math courses beyond Algebra II, indeed math grades declined. "While reforms like these can have important equity benefits, they are not likely to work effectively without significant and complementary efforts to build the capacity of schools and teachers to make improvements in the quality of high school instruction" (Mazzeo, 2010, p. 1). The author also found that absenteeism rose among all students and students were not more likely to attend college.

Regional business needs

The 2010 Sonoma County Workforce and Education Report comprehensively discussed the workforce and educational system together. In it Ben Stone, the Executive Director of the Sonoma County Economic Development Board states;

> The Sonoma County labor market will be demanding an increasingly skilled and educated workforce as the economy emerges from recession. While Sonoma County educational performance ranks favorably to comparable regions in metrics, educational trends show that there is still room for improvement in many areas. Narrowing the educational achievement gaps among various groups remains a pronounced challenge. (Sonoma County Economic Development Board, 2010, p. 1)

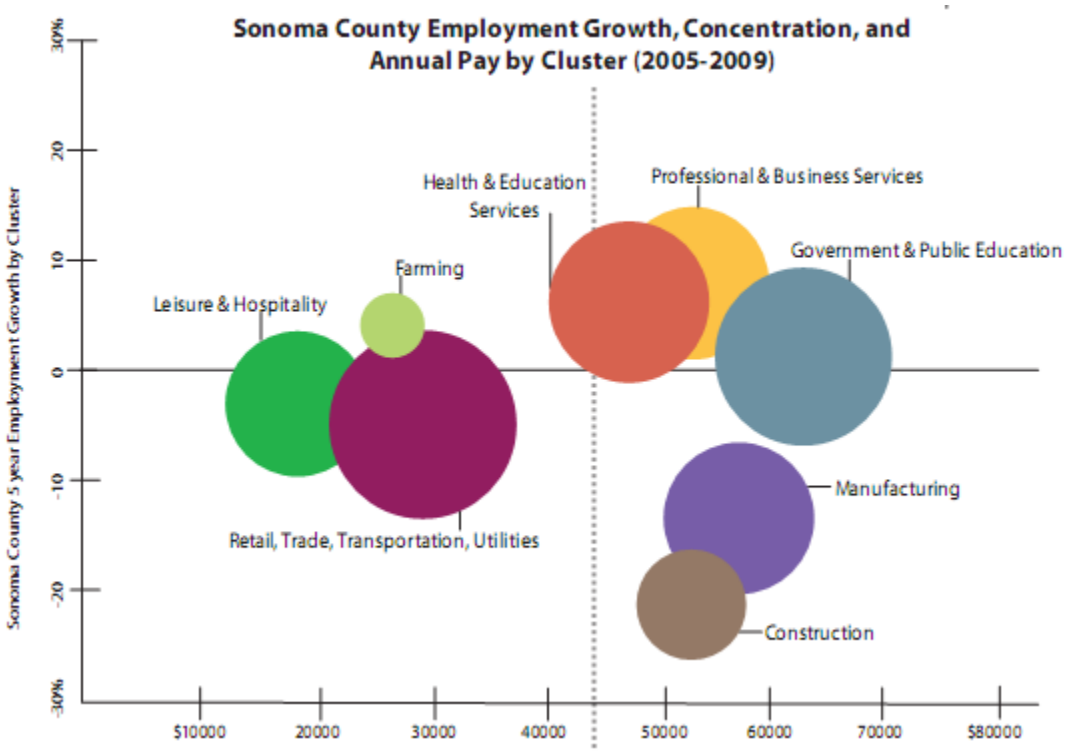
According to the same board, Sonoma County's fastest growing occupations from 2006-2016 are Network Systems & Data Communications Analysts, Computer Software Engineers, Environmental Engineering Technicians, Network and Computer Systems Administrators, Civil Engineers, Computer Systems Analysts, Paralegals and Legal Assistants, Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Personal Financial Advisors, Customer Service Representatives, Veterinary Assistants, and Registered Nurses (See Table 2.2). All of these occupations require post-secondary education (Sonoma County Economic Development Board, 2010, p.3). The number of retiring workers in the near future will also expand job opportunities. The healthcare and social assistance industry has nearly 5,000 employees nearing retirement age. Construction and Manufacturing jobs, which pay above average, have been declining in number as well as Retail, Trade, Transportation and Utilities, which provide below-average annual pay (Sonoma County Economic Development Board, 2010, p.4).

Table 2.2
Sonoma County Employment

Source: California Employment Development Dept. (www.edd.ca.gov)

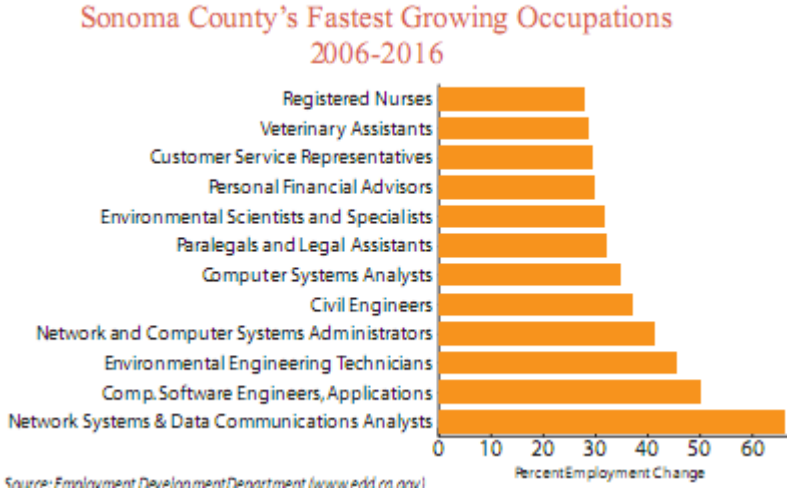
How to read the bottom chart:

Increasing number of jobs, but below-average wages	Increasing number of jobs and above-average wages
Declining number of jobs and below-average wages	Declining number of jobs, but above-average wages



Sonoma County Economic Development Board, 2010

Table 2.3
Sonoma County's Fastest Growing Occupations



Sonoma County Economic Development Board, 2010

Students who drop out of high school are significantly less likely to obtain stable employment with an income capable of sustaining the cost of living in Sonoma County. Roughly one-fourth of the students that enter the 9th grade in the Sonoma County school district will not graduate with a diploma in four years (Sonoma County Economic Development Board, 2010, p.7). Also, the report cites a decreasing percentage of students eligible for UC/CSU admission throughout the county (Sonoma County Economic Development Board, 2010, p.9). Test scores, however, have remained above the state and national averages.

Chapter Three: Interviews

Researchers interviewed several individuals to further describe the experiences with College-Prep-For-All programs, both regionally and internationally. Those included interviews with college/career advisors, the Director of Post-Secondary Services with the Cristo Rey Network, Chris Broughton, and Mary Jane Burke, Superintendent of Schools in Marin County.

College/Career Advisors

Several interviews with local and international educators indicate the importance of supportive school counselors. In interviews with Marin County college/career advisors, a common theme emerged (Gill, 2010). In order to create a "college ready" environment for all students in a given high school, a key element is providing an advising space, like a College and Career Center, that students are introduced to in the early stages of their freshman year. Early exposure allows students to see the resources available to them, and early discussions about college and financial aid are deemed absolutely necessary to planting the seed in students' minds that no matter what the economic or educational background is in their families, they do have a chance to go to college if they build that idea into their high school coursework plan.

Educational Counselor at Novato High School, Mary Grillo, described the programs in place to provide students the opportunity to pursue post-secondary education, including a School to Career Liaison who provides internships and job shadowing experiences, mentoring students on applying for college, financial aid workshops, and one on one help filling out forms and writing application essays. Grillo detailed the steps taken during each grade level at the high school.

> I also have every freshmen come into the College and Career Resource Center and introduce them to what career opportunities are available to them. I try to share with our sophomores that grades are really important and how to explore careers. Juniors and Seniors are offered to take the ASVAB career exploration program in the beginning of the year to explore their career and goals. (M. Grillo, personal communication, 2010)

Job shadowing, in Grillo's opinion, is an important facet of students' preparation for post-secondary education. It offers them a real-world perspective, or "snapshot" of potential careers and jobs. "Some students find out that this career is not the right fit for them. I am glad they find that out before they go to college" (M. Grillo, personal communication, 2010). Community partnerships help facilitate these experiences for students as they journey out of high school and into college or the workforce. More internships and job shadowing opportunities are needed to allow all high school students the chance to learn from experts in the field. According to Grillo, more funding is needed from local businesses to keep positions like the School to Career Liaison from disappearing.

International interviews of school counselors expanded upon this idea. Interviews conducted in the United Kingdom emphasized the importance of establishing and supporting viable educational counseling programs in both middle and high schools. A Careers and Higher Education Adviser in the U.K. associated with a private, international secondary school explained that because the choice to continue in school or leave formal education happens there when a student is only sixteen years old, a nationally required framework has been established to provide careers and education guidance to students starting at age fourteen (Gill, 2010). Job

descriptions for careers and higher education advisors in England follow guidelines established by the Department for Education and Skills.

According to the interviewee, advisors should be able to design, select, and provide curriculum resources, activities, and services to address the career planning and higher education needs of students (Gill, 2010). These resources should include both print and web-based material. Advisors should also work closely with colleagues and other partners in order to plan and integrate careers and higher education guidance into academic curriculum and establish tutoring networks when applicable. Particularly pertinent to this report, the interviewee sited partnerships with university, business, and community members as important aspects to promoting entry requirement information and work-related learning activities for students. Guidance should also be provided to parents and caregivers to enable them to give students information on careers. Students, in turn, need to be responsible for keeping records of guidance provided and to gain feedback on higher education and career programs (St. Clare's Oxford, 2009).

The emphasis in the U.K. on the need for partnerships between secondary schools and the business community is echoed by our own educational counselors in California. Interviews conducted with ten educational counselors in Marin County in 2008, representing both public and private high schools, revealed that each of their respective post-secondary education and career advising programs included community partnerships to provide "real-world" applications of college and career exploration activities (Gill, 2010). Students were encouraged to take personal assessments related to their own character traits, skill sets, preferred learning environments, and vocational interests. These assessments were then deemed most useful when linked to classroom/school visits from business representatives and college admission officers,

student internships, mentor-mentee projects, job shadowing opportunities, and college and career fairs such as those held annually by Dominican University.

Cristo Rey Network

As described in Chapter Two, the Cristo Rey Network, founded in 1996 in Chicago, Illinois, provides a college-prep education to low-income students in urban cities. Students work five days a month in a corporate work setting to earn money to pay for their education and learn essential job skills. The statistics of CR schools indicate high graduation rates, college acceptances, and standardized test scores.

Chris Broughton, Director of Post-Secondary Services with the Cristo Rey Network, described three reasons why the CR model is so successful for graduating students.

1) Investment in social capital – The work-study model gives students the opportunity to learn how to navigate in different environments. They learn how to develop relationships and have access to opportunities that most of their peers don't have.

2) Discipline/Structure – Students get this discipline and structure both in their work settings and in the schools. Their sponsors and teachers have high expectations, which require maturity and responsibility. These high expectations make them more ready for the challenges and rigors of college.

3) Committed Faculty and Staff – The students have personal relationships with their teachers who dedicate a lot of time to making sure students are successful. Students do not fall through the cracks and the schools provide resources to make sure students have the support they need. (C. Broughton, personal communication, May 6, 2010)

The business connection is imperative to the schools' success, in Broughton's opinion. In addition to the sponsorships that local businesses provide, some have also provided college

scholarships to students who have worked for them. Students are also hired to work during the summer months, financially assisting the students and their families. Sponsors attend school fundraisers and events, serving as advocates through personal experiences that they have with students. They are not just giving money to the school as a form of charity, but rather local businesses form personal relationships with the students that are authentic and long-lasting.

Initial findings on college-readiness of graduates are positive, indicating that 85% of the last three graduating classes have enrolled in college since graduation, with a 85% retention rate through their sophomore year. Broughton emphasized the importance of setting high standards, and procuring the needed resources to help students succeed.

In the Cristo Rey School in Portland, Oregon, Broughton recalled a young African student who came into the school as a freshman. He faced several challenges his first year, but showed a lot of improvement and success. After a year or so in Portland, the young man's mother had to move across the country. He decided to stay in Portland and lived with an older sibling. The faculty and staff of the school more or less adopted the young man and he went on to graduate. He received a large scholarship from St. Mary's College in California where he attended and graduated. He then went on to join the LaSallean Volunteers to give back to the community through volunteer work. He is now planning on attending medical school (C. Broughton, personal communication, May 6, 2010). This story represents one of many success stories for Cristo Rey students and graduates.

Broughton recognizes that many obstacles exist in implementing a College-Prep-For-All curriculum, especially in public schools subject to standardized tests, limited funding, and a tradition supporting, "the belief that all kids can't learn" (C. Broughton, personal

communication, May 6, 2010). He recommends business leaders visit a CR site to see first-hand how their program supports college-readiness for students.

Local Response to College-Prep-For-All

The current Federal push toward college- and career-readiness in "A Blueprint for Reform" has many implications for area school districts. Mary Jane Burke, the Superintendent of Schools in Marin County, responded to questions regarding College-Prep-For-All policies. She indicated that the traditional definition of college needs to be altered. "Post-high school training can take many forms. All students are not interested in traditional college experiences. Many are more oriented to interests and careers better served in training programs and/or trade schools" (M.J. Burke, personal communication, May 6, 2010). Burke recognized that students face the necessity for post-secondary education in order to enter careers in "high-wage, high-growth industries".

One concern, according to Burke, is finding the needed resources to support a College-Prep-for-All policy. "In schools where this is a goal, the impacts will be seen in a variety of curriculum options, teacher and staff buy-in and strong career orientation and counseling services" (M.J. Burke, personal communication, May 6, 2010). Burke further detailed items needed to implement a College-Prep-for-All program.

- Adequate funding—including funding for early childhood education, preschool, K-12 and post-secondary education.
- Availability of academic and career counselors at the middle and high schools with a school to career component in the earlier grades.
- Increased articulation between early childhood education, preschool, K-12 and post-secondary programs.

- Opportunities—available institutions and classes and programs in community colleges and state and private universities or other types of post-secondary training institutions.
- Support/commitment/involvement of private and corporate sectors of the economy.
- Availability of loans, grants and scholarships.
- Tax credits and tuition refunds for parents who support their children's higher education.

(M.J. Burke, personal communication, May 6, 2010)

The School to Career Partnership program in Marin County currently connects students to over 250 local businesses. It provides opportunities for students to job-shadow, work as interns, and experience career exploration. Additionally, Burke cited the Regional Occupational courses and career centers in high schools that offer information and career counseling. The Marin County School to Career Program bridges schools with resources in the community to provide support for new courses, projects and special programs.

> Business people, many of whom are also parents, work with teachers, administrators and school boards to reach all students, whatever their academic, social or economic background to inspire them to think about and plan for their future educational and career goals. (M.J. Burke, personal communication, May 6, 2010)

Chapter Four: Recommendations and Conclusion

Prior research, as well as our interviews of regional and international school and district personnel, emphasize the importance of preparing graduates for college and/or career paths, or post-secondary education. The impacts on local economies are distinct, as evidenced in statistics from the National Center for Educational Statistics (2008, 2009). While there is no one model used by all schools and programs, there are pockets of similarities that the North Bay can study and reflect upon holistically. In order to maintain the health and vitality of our local communities, this chapter details the following recommendations.

1. Creating a timeline to track progress
2. Facilitating a shift in school cultures
3. Addressing the needs of English Language Learners
4. Implementing an early intervention program
5. Forging community partnerships

Timeline

The Public Policy Institute of California produced a report offering suggested directions for California's schools. They posit that improvements in "college attendance rates, increasing transfer rates from community colleges to four-year institutions, and increasing graduation rates among four-year institutions" (Public Policy Institute of California, 2010, p.1) are necessary steps to address the skills gap projected by the year 2025.

Using their predictions as guidelines, this report suggests that schools and districts in the tri-county area employ the steps outlined in this report to increase post-secondary education attendance rates from current levels of 56%, to 61% by 2025 (Public Policy Institute of

California, 2010, p.2). This would represent an increase of 1% every three years. The PPIC also recommends an increase of transfer rates by 20% over the next 15 years. In so doing, "California could close about half of the projected education gap, adding more than 500,000 new college graduates to the state's population" (Public Policy Institute of California, 2010, p.2).

Change in School Culture

Implementing a College-Prep-For-All program in the tri-county area is more than establishing policies and procedures or applying resources. The entire school, from administrators, teachers, counselors, students, and staff, need to mentally buy-in to the program. In essence, a cultural shift needs to occur to help guide all students toward post-secondary success. The following sections highlight the suggested areas to adjust.

Counselors & Teachers

Counselors and teachers should work in tangent to assess and assist students academically through correct placement in courses, providing information on graduation alternatives such as exit exams like the GED, and intervention with students who are identified as potential drop-outs. To do this, additional educational counseling needs to be provided to ensure that all students within the academic institution are informed of future educational or career choices and what effort is required to progress toward those choices. An effective counseling program must be one of the elements in place to help reduce student drop-out rates and encourage the pursuit of higher education, especially in counties heavily populated with low-income families. Key to this goal is the cooperation of teachers with their school counselors, to not only inform counselors of students' strengths and challenges, but also to support the efforts of the counseling program in the classroom.

Due to the importance of establishing strong counseling programs in all public high schools, the state of California has established a list of requirements that need to be fulfilled in order to receive a Pupil Personnel Services Credential with a specialized focus in school counseling (State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2008). Once the requirements have been met and the credential has been obtained, a counselor is authorized to "develop, plan, implement, and evaluate a school counseling and guidance program that includes academic, career, personal, and social development" for all students (State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2008, p.1). Although the state provides a general outline of a counselor's job description, each school district clarifies its particular requirements either through job descriptions posted through human resources departments or updated mandates from county offices of education.

For example, under the auspices of the Marin County Public School System, the human resources department of San Rafael City Schools posts the duties and responsibilities of both school counselors as well as college/career center advisors (San Rafael City Schools Human Resources Department, 2008). Counselors must orient students to the academic offerings at the school, provide information about the requirements for further education, proctor mandated standardized tests, monitor student progress, aid students in obtaining financial assistance information, consult with teachers and parents about students, and work with other community agencies. College/career center advisors, who do not need to have the academic credentials required for school counseling positions, create and implement college, career, and employment skills programs targeted to the entire student body. They should provide students with college and career related resource materials, administer interest and aptitude tests, organize college and career fairs, provide information on internship opportunities, and maintain contact with the

counseling department as well as community contacts (San Rafael City Schools Human Resources Department, 2008).

Counselors and teachers should also guide students in the creation and maintenance of ePortfolios. Research has indicated the benefits of interactive electronic portfolios when students aim for post-secondary education and when searching for professional work (Barrett, 2007; California Department of Education, 2009, *Senate Bill 70;* Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 2010, *eFolioMinnesota).* These portfolios allow students to post professional information to potential employers and college application officers in an online format.

Both the interviews described in Chapter Three, and the above examples of local school counselors requirements and efforts support the idea that counseling is arguably one of the main factors in ensuring the successful graduation and career or college placement for students. Without a strong connection to a school counselor, students would not have all the necessary tools to succeed in the community. Equally, without supportive classroom teachers, students will not seek out the services of school counselors.

Leadership

A cultural shift begins with strong leadership. Administrators and teacher leaders need to model the attitudes and behaviors necessary to alter mindsets present in traditional school settings. "Effective school leaders are key to large-scale, sustainable education reform" (Fullan, 2002, p.1). Arguably, school capacity is a crucial variable in implementing instructional quality and student achievement.

Employing a College-Prep-For-All program involves not only changes in materials and curriculum, but also a shift in teachers' instructional approach. People feel threatened when facing changes that influence their self-image, and consequently their personal and professional

identity (Nias, 1989). The Teachers Network Policy Institute (2003) emphasizes the importance of teachers' active role in change. "When we can actively involve teachers in decision-making, in the governance of the schools, in making decisions about curriculum, and in learning inside and outside of their own classrooms and schools, student achievement will be enhanced" (p. 2). This is especially important during today's economic climate of budget cut-backs. Effective and supportive teachers and teacher leaders need recognition for their efforts to help students succeed and continue success after graduation.

English Language Learners' Needs.

Considering the percentage of English Language Learners in Marin, Napa and Sonoma Counties, this report highlights the challenges and needs of this population. Disparities exist between ELL's academic achievement and their native English speaking counterparts (Callahan, 2005). Schools need to deliberately and comprehensively study best practices in bridging the language barriers for this population. If ignored, the goal of 61% student attendance to post-secondary school by 2025 is in jeopardy considering nearly one quarter of enrolled students in Napa and Sonoma Counties are ELL's, and 14% in Marin County. Schools must also consider teacher placement in ELL classrooms. Oftentimes the most educated and experienced ELL teachers are not always placed with the highest need student population.

Specifically, this report recommends that ELL students obtain the academic content required for college. ELL's are currently placed in "remedial" courses, thus undermining their ability to participate in more rigorous coursework required for college preparation. Schools need the infrastructure and resources to complete comprehensive exiting evaluations for each ELL student. Additionally, ELL students require equitable access to appropriately trained teachers, including those who participate in professional development opportunities to help address the

instructional needs of ELL's. Currently, many ELL classes are segregated on campuses, putting them at particularly high risk for educational failure.

Early Intervention

The impact of students' experiences in school begins during the elementary years. Tracking, testing, and socio-economic pressures influence the trajectory of students' educational paths at an early age. Without the cooperation of elementary and middle school personnel, the College-Prep-For-All approach is arguably stifled. "Public investments in high-quality early care and education generate a higher rate of return than almost any other public investment" (Bay Area Council, 2009, p. 1). By the time students reach high school, they have already accumulated experiences leading them in different academic directions. Programs like No Excuses University Network, Gear-Up, and Achieve Inc. begin with elementary-age students, preparing them for the rigors of high school and post-secondary education. They also provide emotional support for populations of students who traditionally did not pursue the college track.

Community Partnerships

Several school models that employ College-Prep-For-All curriculum do so in partnership with local businesses and community members. The Cristo Rey Network uses this approach in preparing students for not only the professional behaviors needed in the workforce, but also the expectations of post-secondary education. Students benefit through college scholarships as well. Businesses use the opportunity to forge relationships with future employees (high school students) and develop a presence in the community. Such relationships are meant to foster long-term, authentic connections for both students and businesses.

Diane Ravitch, in her 2010 book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education*, discusses the fundamental aspects of building human capital. She extends the aspects of good education beyond just the classroom to "the home, the community and the culture . . ." (Ravitch, 2010, p. 225). She further describes the importance of the school in any community.

> Neighborhood schools are often the anchors of their communities, a steady presence that helps to cement the bonds of community among neighbors. Most are places with a history, laden with traditions and memories that help individuals resist fragmentation in their lives. Their graduates return and want to see their old classrooms; they want to see the trophy cases and the old photographs, to hear the echoes in the gymnasium and walk on the playing fields. (Ravitch, 2010, p. 227)

In this context, schools are essential to communities, and therefore are inherently connected to local businesses, religious and non-profit agencies, and the overall culture of a community.

Directions for Future Research

This report has highlighted several key features to successful College-Prep-For-All programs while also addressing the challenges to such an approach. Debate continues on the appropriateness of this policy, extending the conversation to include both two and four year colleges, as well as technical and vocational institutions. While the current economic climate suggests a need to expand the post-secondary education options to greater percentages of student populations (Public Policy Institute of California, 2010), further, longitudinal studies of such programs are necessary to gauge the success rate of graduates, and the impact on local economies in Marin, Napa and Sonoma Counties. A comparative study of College-Prep-For-All

schools to those following more traditional routes, tracking some students to post-secondary education and others straight to the workforce, would further suggest the recommended direction for school districts in the tri-county area.

In the end, a community's vitality is measured through the citizens' ability to thrive. Looking to the future, it is apparent that positions will require advanced degrees (Public Policy Institute of California, 2010). Students need to learn how to learn, in contrast with past models of preparing for a career in which individuals learned a specific set of skills and information required for their work. Advancing technologies expand the need for workers to evaluate, create, and solve problems using ever changing data sets, and information that is expanding exponentially. To compete in a growing global economy, schools need to keep up with the advancements in business, communication and technology to best serve the students and their future opportunities.

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Research Team

Dr. Edward Kujawa

Dr. Edward Kujawa earned his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. As an undergraduate at the University of Toledo he majored in mathematics and minored in science. He has served as a Dean at Dominican University of California since arriving in 2000 and currently serves as the Dean of the School of Education and Counseling Psychology.

Prior to coming to Dominican he was an administrator and professor in the School of Education at the University of San Diego for 23 years. He is a past president of the California Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and a past president of the Independent California Colleges and Universities Council for the Education of Teachers. He served as the chair of the Committee on Accreditation for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

While serving as a member of the Committee on Accreditation he facilitated the Accreditation Study Work Group for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing that led to a review and revision of the accreditation system of credential programs. He has received federal grants to support the professional preparation of teachers in literacy, mathematics, special education and physics. He has recently presented and published articles for the Society for the Advancement of Management. Dr. Kujawa served as Project Lead for the College-Prep-for-All project.

Dr. Madalienne Peters

Dr. Madalienne Peters, Full Professor in the Dominican University of California School of Education and Counseling Psychology, received her doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction

from the University of San Francisco. Her dissertation examined the impact of external factors on student standardized test scores in reading comprehension.

She has been a member of the faculty at Dominican for 35 years, serving as Director of the Master's program for ten years, and leading the education program in online teaching and learning for eight years. She has written and received two state grants and one federal grant to advance the use of technology in the public schools and in higher education. The focus of her current research is in building information literacy skills. She resides in Novato with her husband. Dr. Peters served as coordinator of graduate student participation and lead for the final multi-media report.

Ms. Suzanne Roybal

Ms. Suzanne Roybal is currently the Education Librarian at Dominican University. One of the best parts of working with the education program is the commitment of the faculty and the remarkable students who are working on their Master of Science in Education each year. Besides working with faculty and students in the education program, she teaches research, coordinates the Reference desk and oversees the Leisure collection, which is quite popular with students and faculty.

Ms. Roybal received her Master's in Library Science from San Jose State University and her bachelor's degree from the University of California at Davis. In addition to working at Dominican University, Suzanne enjoys spending time with her husband, Richard who is a teacher at Santa Rosa Middle School, and her three children and three grandchildren. Ms. Roybal served as library researcher in identifying data to support the research in the College-Prep-for-All report.

Dr. Elizabeth Truesdell

Dr. Elizabeth Truesdell, Assistant Professor in the Dominican University School of Education and Counseling Psychology, received her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Organizational Science from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 2005. Before her position at Dominican, Dr. Truesdell worked as Visiting Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo.

In her current role, she teaches in the Single Subject Credential Program and supervises student teachers in the field. Dr. Truesdell's research interests include curricular and instructional innovation and instructional leadership. She resides in Petaluma with her husband and three year old son. Dr. Truesdell served as the lead writer for the College-Prep-for-All research report.

Ms. Sarah Zykandov, ABD

Ms. Sarah Zykanov, ABD, is a native of Marin. She has been a technology and curriculum integration teacher and an elementary classroom teacher in San Francisco, Richmond and San Rafael for 18 years. She has a Master's degree in Educational Technology from Dominican University of California. She is a doctoral candidate at the University of San Francisco in the final stages of completing her dissertation. Her dissertation: *Professional Learning Communities {PCL) in Elementary Schools and How Technologies are Utilized*, explores the PLC concept as a school organizational model that encourages teacher collaborative analysis of student assessment data and planning strategies to re-teach and intervene to address the needs of all learners.

She is currently working full-time for the San Rafael City Schools as a Curriculum and Technology Specialist and as an adjunct faculty member at Dominican University, teaching

credential candidates and graduate students in the hybrid online format. She lives in San Rafael with her husband and son, who is currently a junior at Terra Linda High School. Ms. Zykanov assisted in the planning and design phase, coordinating the final multi-media report for College-Prep-for-All.

Rajinder Sky Gill

Ms. Rajinder Sky Gill completed her Master's of Science in Education: Interdisciplinary in May of 2010. The focus of her research is on high school preparation for post-secondary education. Her Master's thesis examined career-counseling practices in Marin and Plumas County, CA. She completed graduate work at Oxford University as part of her studies, and was awarded an internship in Ireland to work with Project Lucca, an organization that promotes awareness of post secondary options for children in middle and high school. Her thesis is posted on the Dominican Website: Project SEED.

Ms. Gill received the highest honor that Dominican awards a student by being selected as the graduate in education Academic Scholar for 2010. She was selected for inclusion in the College-Prep-for-All project based on her research interests in promoting access to post-secondary opportunities within the context of career planning options in the school system.

Kevin O'Brien

Mr. Kevin O'Brien is a student teacher working on a single subject teaching credential in special education. He has a passion for high school youth and the effect of educational models on student success, especially in economically disadvantaged communities. Mr. O'Brien has a BA in history from the University of Hawaii and a master's in education,

curriculum and instruction, from Dominican University of California. He was recently selected as a teaching ambassador, summer 2010, for the Teach with Africa 2010 fellowship at the LEAP School of Science and Math in Cape Town, South Africa.

Mr. O'Brien's Master's thesis examined the effectiveness of the LEAP model for underserved South African high school students, and is posted on the Dominican website: Project SEED. His thesis was also recently accepted for inclusion in the ERIC database. Mr. O'Brien was selected to participate in College-Prep-for-All because of his research interests in the history of educational change in South Africa since the political end of apartheid.

Eileen Vollert-O'Kane

Ms. Eileen Vollert-O'Kane was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area and has lived here most of her life. She received a Bachelor's of Science degree in Anthropology from Santa Clara University and a single subject teaching credential in the Social Sciences from Dominican University of California. Ms. Vollert-O'Kane is currently working on her Master of Science in Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Dominican University of California.

Ms. Vollert-O'Kane is a high school history teacher in San Francisco at Immaculate Conception Academy Cristo Rey. This is her fourth year at Immaculate Conception Academy where she teaches Modern World History and United States History courses using Facing History and Ourselves curriculum and practices. Ms. Vollert O'Kane was selected to participate in College-Prep-for-All because of her research interests in the high school curriculum as preparation for post-secondary education.