

# YOUNG MEN OF COLOR IN CALIFORNIA

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*Educational Results Partnership (ERP)  
is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization  
that uses the power of data to improve  
student achievement.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Young men of color (YMOC) face unique challenges affecting their successes in secondary school and their abilities to get to and through college and positioned for living-wage careers.<sup>i</sup> Educational Results Partnership (ERP) recently conducted a study in California, identifying opportunities and challenges along the kindergarten-through-job pipeline – specifically in the transition from high school through postsecondary education. The research focused on students' transitions from high schools to community colleges, subsequent completion of AA/AS degrees, transfers to four-year universities and baccalaureate attainment. The analysis and investigation also included a broader assessment of important transition points along the K-12 to college pipeline to identify bright spots and effective pathways for these students.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research focused on Latino, African American, Pacific Islander, and Native American males ages 16-24 who are currently enrolled in postsecondary education or who will enroll in college within 18 months of graduating high school. Other characteristics associated with the sample include low-income and English Language Learners.

This study aimed to highlight pathways and identify bright spots by focusing on schools that display improvement in the following three education segments.

For high schools, criteria were:

1. Statistically significant increase in A-G course completion
2. Statistically significant positive

## INSIGHTS

California's young men of color face both institutional and preparation barriers in our education system. The schools, school systems, colleges and universities that are most effective in creating successful pathways to and through college have many strategies in common. Among them: setting rigorous academic standards for all students, understanding and mitigating the impact of poverty and cultural needs, and collaborating between transitional segments (middle school to high school, high school to college, etc.). This research brief provides insights learned from higher performing education systems for educators and policy makers to improve educational success.

equity score in A-G course completion

3. Statistically significant increase in the four-year graduation rate
4. Statistically significant positive equity score in the four-year graduation rate

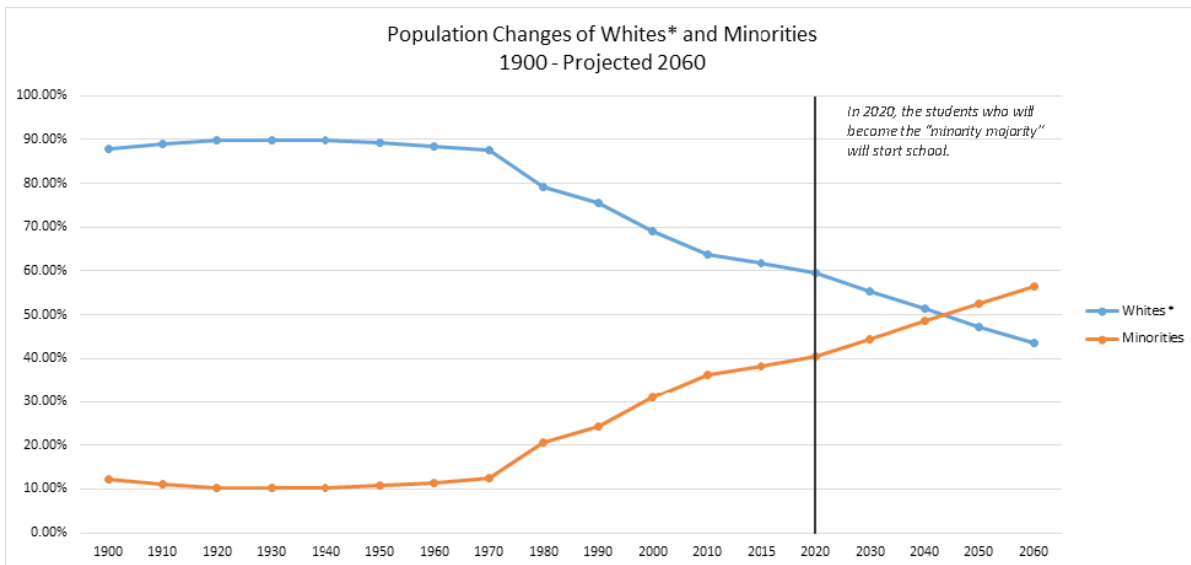
For community colleges, criteria were:

1. Statistically significant increase in the student persistence rate over three consecutive primary terms
2. Decrease in the math remediation enrollment count divided by first year student count

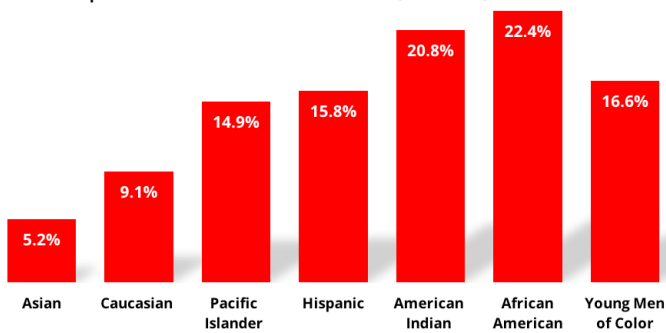
For universities, criteria were:

1. Statistically significant increase in enrollment
2. Statistically significant increase in undergraduate six-year graduation rate

*The complete methodology is found in Appendix A.*



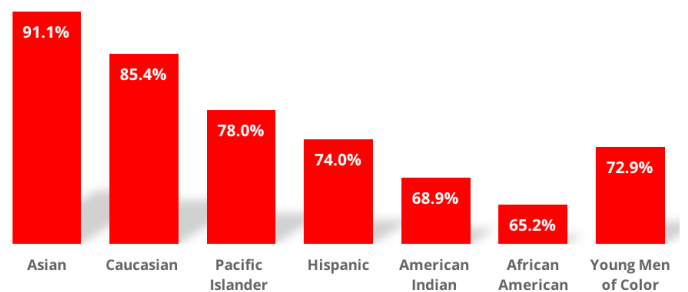
#### 2014-2015 Four-Year High School Dropout Rate in California (Males)



Source: California Department of Education

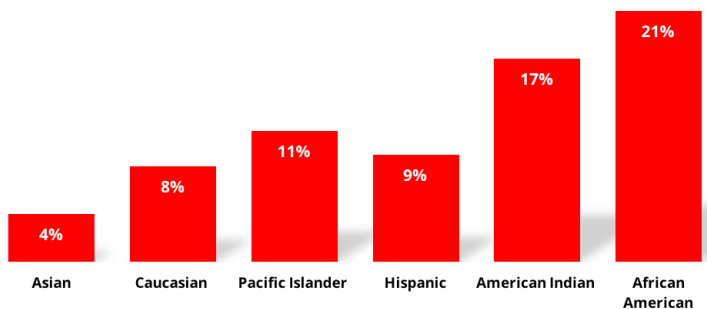
### Why This Matters

#### 2014-2015 Four-Year High School Graduation Rate in California (Males)



Source: California Department of Education Student Data Files

#### 2011-2012 Out-of-School Suspension Rate in the US (Males)



Source: U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights

## UNIQUE CHALLENGES

These young men are perhaps the most disenfranchised of any demographic group in the U.S.<sup>ii</sup> Historically, they have experienced higher poverty, higher unemployment, lower wages and lower political engagement than their counterparts.<sup>iii</sup> Yet, as evidenced by the results achieved by bright spot schools and school systems identified in this study, they have the capacity, experience and resilience to succeed and excel if given the opportunity through rigorous academic preparation, targeted support and the removal of institutional barriers that impede their progress throughout the education pipeline.

In the public education system, YMOC experience higher high school dropout

rates, lower college enrollment and lower college graduation rates. Of those who enroll in college, a disproportionate number are placed into courses three to four levels below college-level.<sup>iv</sup> Among those students, only 10-15 percent successfully complete the developmental sequence and then pass a college-level course in the subject.<sup>v</sup> These outcomes are indicative of problems in the areas of preparation, assessment, placement and support – all of which affect students’ abilities to successfully transition into and complete postsecondary education. The attrition points for these young men need to be identified and mitigated in order to improve the educational system that serves them.

## BRIGHT SPOTS OF SUCCESS

The first step of the study centered on the identification of public high schools and higher education institutions that appear to be achieving better than expected results, indicating the existence of success factors and policies that improve outcomes, particularly as they relate to students’ transitions between high school and postsecondary education.

Schools, school systems, colleges and universities from three California geographic regions (or educational pathways) that met the established criteria were selected as bright spots for further study: Bakersfield, Pomona, and San Bernardino.

HIGH SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT CRITERIA		
A-G rate and four-year graduation rate are above the county average and have improved over the past five years.		
Region	High School	School District
Bakersfield	Stockdale High School	Kern Union High School District
Bakersfield	Robert F. Kennedy High School	Delano Joint Union High District
Pomona	Bonita High School	Bonita Unified School District
San Bernardino	Rancho Cucamonga High School	Chaffey Joint Union High School District

COMMUNITY COLLEGE CRITERIA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of degree-seekers has increased.</li> <li>The percentage of students that persist three or more primary terms has increased.</li> <li>The math and remedial placement rate for first-time students has decreased annually since 2010/2011.</li> <li>The percentage of students that gain a degree/certificate, transfer or transfer-ready status has increased (Mt. San Antonio College only).</li> </ul>	
Region	College
Bakersfield	Bakersfield College
Pomona	Mt. San Antonio College
San Bernardino	Chaffey College

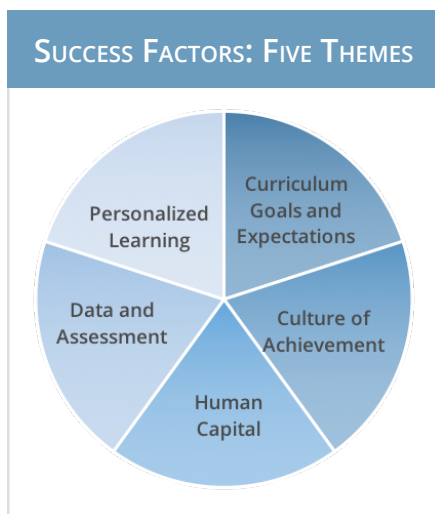
UNIVERSITY CRITERIA	
The six-year undergraduate graduation rate has increased from 2011 to 2014.	
Region	University
Pomona	California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

*Metrics associated with the above criteria are found in Appendix B.*

## DEVELOPING THE SUCCESS FACTORS FRAMEWORK

Based on the metrics used in identifying bright spot schools, school systems, colleges and universities, an online data exploration tool was developed that allows individuals to search for schools and school systems to review academic performance data and benchmark against high-performing schools and school systems within each geographic region. By using the tool to identify successful schools and opportunities for improvement, educators can connect with peers to learn about practices and strategies that are improving outcomes for students along the K-12 to college pipeline.

Based on the data findings and identified bright spots, in-person site visits were conducted in Bakersfield, Pomona and San Bernardino using structured interview protocols for both educators and administrators. This investigation produced themes and actions consistent among schools and systems achieving better results. These were organized into rubrics which comprise the Success Factors



**DEDICATED SUPPORT:**

John “Reggie” Bolton, Head Football Coach, Health and Physical Education Department Chair, Director of the African American Mentor Program at Bakersfield College

*As an African American and the first in his family to attend college, Coach Reggie Bolton understands the opportunities and advantages that a college education provides. At Bakersfield College, the African American Mentor Program (AAMP) incorporates drop-in mentoring, resiliency guidance, problem resolution, “real talk”, and most importantly, creates a rigorous environment of academic success.*

*The success of the AAMP program (Bakersfield has seen a 60 percent increase in YMOC four-year transfers and graduations from 2015 to 2016) is augmented by the personal touch that Bolton and other AAMP staff give to their students. With regular meetings, availability of staff by cell phone, and ongoing surveys assessing their thoughts, goals, motivations, and fears, AAMP participants have dedicated support to help them succeed and earn degrees. “Most young black males don’t have the skills to successfully transition from the system they grew up in to that of college and preparing for their future,” says Bolton. “It’s critical that we provide assistance in as many ways as we can, to reduce frustration and increase understanding.”*

Framework, available online at [www.edresults.org](http://www.edresults.org). Additionally, corresponding audit questions are available for educators to perform a self-evaluation and determine potential areas of focus to improve outcomes.

## FINDINGS

The following findings include practices that more specifically apply to this population, transcending effective practices for all students. These findings are organized into three themes: **Support, Structure, and Relationship Building.**

### Support

1. Supportive Environments - Students network and join cohorts of students with similar challenges, while receiving

academic support and mentoring. Campuses also provide access to “success centers”, where students can seek academic support from instructors or peer tutors, especially in math and writing. Academic support is available to assist students before they enroll in a specific course so that they are placed into a course in which they are most likely to succeed and that accelerates their time to completion. Counselors are available to monitor and advise students, particularly those that may face additional challenges.

2. Impact of Poverty - Successful leaders recognize that poverty is a barrier for many of their students. Increasingly, campuses provide food, bus passes, laundry services, and personal care items and services. Community

organizations assist students in need by purchasing books or by providing scholarships that help bridge the gap between financial aid and additional costs.

3. Mentoring Programs - Designed especially for young men of color, such programs transition students socially to college life, such as the Umoja Community and the African American Mentoring Program (AAMP).
4. Bridging the Gap to College - Bridge programs support students academically and culturally as they transition into their first term in college. These programs build a “college going mindset” and assist in mitigating academic skill gaps so that students access higher-level coursework.

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*- Reggie Bolton, Bakersfield College*

### **Structure**

1. College Readiness - In partnership with their K-12 feeder districts, many community colleges use multiple measures of college readiness (i.e., using high school success factors in addition to a placement test) to more accurately assess students’ capacity and place them into the more appropriate course-level where they are likely to succeed while also accelerating their time to completion. Several colleges offer accelerated courses for those students identified as below college-level to reduce the amount of time in developmental (remedial) courses.
2. Mandatory Academic Planning - All students have an academic plan by the beginning of the second semester or sooner. Some colleges create more structured academic pathways for students, making sure each student is taking the appropriate courses and streamlining the path to a certificate, degree or university transfer. At Bakersfield College, staff read every freshman transcript to understand each student’s performance and academic patterns rather than relying solely on test scores.
3. Dual Enrollment - High schools are expanding dual enrollment programs. These courses, taught by college faculty or qualified high school teachers either on a college campus or at the high school campus, provide students with access to college-level classes and unit attainment towards a certificate or degree while attending high school. For some students, dual enrollment also removes the barrier of being required to take developmental (remedial) courses upon entering college.
4. Community College Baccalaureate Programs - Such programs enable students to stay on a traditionally two-year campus to complete their four-year degree. Often targeted toward high-need career fields and in areas where local universities lack capacity to serve student demand, these programs offer opportunities for low-income and ethnic minority students to complete four-year degrees while minimizing the costs and life disruptions associated with transitioning to another campus.
5. Inclusive Policies - Successful schools purposefully implement policies that do not single out students by race. They are highly focused on preparing all students for college and career no matter what academic level they enter high school. All students are expected to be on a college preparation track in order to take sufficient math courses and other core academic classes to successfully transition to college. The high schools have strong support and resources from their school districts. Saturday classes are provided, tutorials are available every day and teachers are prepared to use data to identify individual needs and continuously inform and adjust instruction. Academic assistant principals have been added to look at each individual student and make sure instructional needs are met and academic growth is accomplished. In Delano Joint Union High School District where the majority of the students are Latino, all ninth graders are required to complete a Career Choices course and then take a follow-up course their junior year. Climate and success

for every student is the priority and school is like an extended family.

6. Regular Collaboration - This is a priority at the high schools as well as the community colleges. Data inform many discussions to assist with moving all teachers to a higher level of instructional effectiveness and increase student engagement. High school principals and department leaders at the community college level participate together in the collaborative sessions. Many of the newer college instructors are supported in developing a much deeper pedagogical understanding. In the Chaffey Joint Union High School District, all 10th graders are given the PSAT which provides an early assessment of students' trajectories toward college readiness. The teachers and principals review these data to make adjustments to instruction and support for students.

### ***Relationship Building***

1. A Collective Responsibility - In the high schools, all faculty are expected to build relationships with students and spend time checking on them and assisting them in any way they can.
2. Community Stakeholders - Successful schools work continuously to build strong relationships with parents, community, and business partners. Having cookouts before football games or giving parents the opportunities to track their student's grades and homework assignments daily, are just a few examples of how staff build trust and connections between

school and home. Delano Joint Union High School District Superintendent Terri Nuckols defined it best, "It is all about culture in your district and you make your culture."

3. High School and College Partnerships - Forging intentional, strong relationships between the high schools and school districts, and colleges in the area is a common practice. Conversations are consistent and are built around curriculum alignment and adjustment, preparation, effective transitions, and building important relationships with students and parents.
4. Exposure to Community College - Many community colleges regularly visit high school campuses. During these visits, representatives register and assess students, and provide them with information and encouragement to move on to the next level of education. Colleges and universities are also spending much more time with parents of high school students, particularly those of potential first generation college students, to encourage them to allow their child to leave home and attend college elsewhere.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

All of the bright spot schools, school systems, and colleges are highly strategic in their efforts to close equity gaps for young men of color, meet their cultural needs, and help them to successfully transition through the educational system to career. Effective leaders are those who

maintain a commitment to exceed standard academic expectations and educational norms. Student success is not just a goal on paper, it is built into the organizational culture - everyone believes there is no limit to their capacity for succeeding in high school, college, and beyond.

***“It is all about culture in your district and you make your culture.”***

***- Dr. Terri Nuckols, Delano Joint Union High School District***

In dealing with the unique challenges faced by this population of students, identifying and embracing cultural differences plays a large role in successfully transitioning students from one educational system to another. Developing programs that allow these students to feel heard and understood creates an environment of success. Mentoring programs in particular have a positive impact on students, especially on African American students. Students can more easily envision themselves succeeding in college when they have a mentor to serve not only as an academic model, but as a sounding board for their unique situations.

The impact of poverty is real and an important factor affecting student success. But poverty is not recognized as a determinant and successful school systems and colleges establish purposeful strategies and support systems to mitigate these real challenges.

In addition to the social and cultural factors, lack of alignment in the PreK-8 educational pipeline is often a major barrier to high school and college success, especially in math. Support for students early in their academic careers is critical for building a college-going mindset and gaining access to a rigorous academic pathway that will prepare them for college. Successful high schools have evidence of effective vertical alignment -- grade to grade -- with the PreK-8 systems. They ensure there are more purposeful and seamless handoffs of students between segments (e.g., middle school to high school, high school to college.) This not only applies to the physical transition of students, but also the transition of data, systems of support, and academic histories.

Alignment among segments also allows for continuous interventions and coordinated support which are a must in the fight to close equity gaps. Early warning systems help high schools and colleges keep students on track, ensuring the opportunity for timely intervention, if necessary.

Giving all high school students academic opportunities to be better prepared for college is critical. Broader access to college preparation course sequences, dual enrollment, early college, and summer bridge programs all contribute to more opportunities for success. There is an increasing number of organized regional collaborations between high schools and community colleges, and between universities and community colleges. Such collaborations are critical in increasing the number of students who transfer successfully from one system to another.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Build Out Systems of Data Linkages:

Young men of color have a greater chance to be successful in schools and school systems that provide intentional support academically, socially and culturally. To be successful in supporting these students, the committed work already being done and the individual success stories must be shared and observed by other schools and colleges so they can formulate a strategy to replicate success. Building strong regional systems of data linkages is a major factor in tracking outcomes and sharing information at key transition points. The YMOC Data Tool and the Success Factors Framework provide a foundation for collegial sharing which should be followed by organized interaction and collaboration among educators across the various segments.

### Accelerate Professional Development Focused on Closing Equity Gaps:

Educators need to better understand the impact that living in poverty has on their students' academic performance, social interactions, and emotional and physical health. Reaching out to students affected by poverty and developing strategies to provide necessary resources are important steps in ensuring that economic status does not determine whether a student is successful along the educational pipeline. Building relationships with

students (and parents), as well as mentoring, should be part of any strategy to improve student outcomes.

### Improve Placement Practices in College:

Of the young men of color who transition from high school to community college, most spend too much time and money because of placement into developmental (remedial) courses. By using multiple measures of assessing college readiness (such as high school GPA and successful course completion) rather than relying on a single placement test, colleges can accelerate success into the appropriate academic levels of math and English – where the student is most likely to succeed without remediation -- and mitigate semesters or years in developmental courses. Additionally, this will reduce the number of college dropouts.

Students of color are the future workforce of our country. Supporting their educational needs is not only a matter of social justice, it's an economic imperative for our nation.

### ACCESSING THE DATA TOOLS

*The framework and diagnostic tools are easily accessed by visiting [www.edresults.org/youngmenofcolor/ymoc](http://www.edresults.org/youngmenofcolor/ymoc).*

*These tools are designed to help educators explore higher performing schools and systems, as well as identify and replicate success factors for improving support of their students.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**Mt. San Antonio College:** Jim Jenkins, Irene Malmgren, Barbara McNeice-Stallard, Anabel Perez, William Scroggins, Jimmy Tamayo, Margie Whalen, Audrey Yamagata-Noji

## ENDNOTES

- i. National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2015*: See Disparities in Educational Outcomes Among Male Youth. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_tgb.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_tgb.asp).
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- iv. Stoup, G. 2015. Using Data to Identify Emergent Inequities and the Effective Practices to Address Them. Presentation to the 2015 Strengthening Student Success Conference.
- v. Stoup, G. 2015. Using Data to Identify Emergent Inequities and the Effective Practices to Address Them. Presentation to the 2015 Strengthening Student Success Conference.



## **APPENDIX A: YMOC REGIONAL PIPELINE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

There were many schools that met the criteria and exhibited outstanding progress in outcomes for young men of color, but the goal was to highlight pathways by focusing on schools that display improvement in the following three education segments:

### High School:

A bright spot high school is defined as a school that meets all of the criteria below:

1. Statistically significant increase in A-G course completion
2. Statistically significant positive equity score in A-G course completion
3. Statistically significant increase in the four-year graduation rate
4. Statistically significant positive equity score in the four-year graduation rate

A school has significant increase in a metric if the rate in the last year of available data is above the rate of the first year of available data at the 95 percent confidence level. This statistical test accounts for sample size.

Equity Score Determination: A school receives a significant positive equity score if students in the selected subgroup and school display a rate higher than the average of the county (excluding the students in the selected subgroup/school) at the 95 percent confidence level in the latest year of available data. For example, if American Indian males at Sacramento Charter High School have a 2014-2015 four-year graduation rate that is significantly higher than the average of every high school student in Sacramento County excluding those American Indian male students at Sacramento Charter High School then that subgroup/school receives a positive equity score.

### Community College:

A bright spot community college is defined as a college that meets all of the criteria below:

1. Statistically significant increase in the student persistence rate over three consecutive primary terms
2. Decrease in the math remediation enrollment count divided by first year student count

A college has significant increase in a persistence if the rate in the last year of available data is above the rate of the first year of available data at the 95 percent confidence level. This statistical test accounts for sample size.

### University (CSU and UC):

A bright spot university is defined as a university that meets both of the criteria below:

1. Statistically significant increase in enrollment
2. Statistically significant increase in undergraduate six-year graduation rate

A college has significant increase in a metric if the rate in the last year of available data is above the rate of the first year of available data at the 95 percent confidence level. This statistical test accounts for sample size. Percent of a selected subgroup graduating in STEM is used in the decision rules as well as the number of standard deviations away from the White male STEM graduation rate at the same university.

## APPENDIX B: HIGHER PERFORMING SCHOOL, SCHOOL SYSTEM AND COLLEGE METRICS FOR YMOC

### Bakersfield

A-G Improvement						
K-12	Max Year			Min Year		
	Year	A-G Rate	Cohort	Year	A-G Rate	Cohort
Robert F. Kennedy High	1415	32.7%	98	1112	24.2%	99
Stockdale High	1415	36.5%	96	0910	32.8%	122

15/16 Enrollment						
College	YMOC #	YMOC %	Hispanic #	Hispanic %	Black #	Black %
Bakersfield College	8,649	31.3%	8,085	29.3%	486	1.8%

College	Completion				Persistence			
	2009-2010		2005-2006		2009-2010		2005-2006	
Bakersfield College	665	27.4%	544	32.4%	665	74.0%	544	71.5%

### Pomona

A-G Improvement						
K-12	Max Year			Min Year		
	Year	A-G Rate	Cohort	Year	A-G Rate	Cohort
Bonita High	1415	52.2%	115	0910	21.8%	87

15/16 Enrollment						
College	YMOC #	YMOC %	Hispanic #	Hispanic %	Black #	Black %
Mt. San Antonio College	16,944	28.6%	14,743	24.9%	1,002	1.7%

College	Completion				Persistence			
	2009-2010		2005-2006		2009-2010		2005-2006	
Mt. San Antonio College	922	40.1%	873	33.2%	922	75.9%	873	71.4%

15/16 Enrollment						
College	YMOC #	YMOC %	Hispanic #	Hispanic %	Black #	Black %
Cal Poly Pomona	4,947	22.1%	4,517	20.2%	382	1.7%

Completion				
University	2014		2011	
	Cohort	6 Year Grad Rate	Cohort	6 Year Grad Rate
Cal Poly Pomona	535	43.6%	576	33.3%

**APPENDIX B: HIGHER PERFORMING SCHOOL, SCHOOL SYSTEM AND COLLEGE METRICS (CONTINUED)**

**San Bernardino**

<b>A-G Improvement</b>						
<b>K-12</b>	Max Year			Min Year		
	<b>Year</b>	<b>A-G Rate</b>	<b>Cohort</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>A-G Rate</b>	<b>Cohort</b>
Rancho Cucamonga High	1415	50.0%	228	0910	18.9%	169

<b>15/16 Enrollment</b>						
<b>College</b>	<b>YMOC #</b>	<b>YMOC %</b>	<b>Hispanic #</b>	<b>Hispanic %</b>	<b>Black #</b>	<b>Black %</b>
Chaffey College	8,041	28.4%	7,018	24.8%	992	3.5%

<b>College</b>	<b>Completion</b>				<b>Persistence</b>			
	<b>2009-2010</b>		<b>2005-2006</b>		<b>2009-2010</b>		<b>2005-2006</b>	
Chaffey College	805	36.1%	598	37.8%	805	72.7%	598	61.8%