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. 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 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.
Why This Matters

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

Source: California Department of Education

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. Historically, they have experienced higher poverty, higher unemployment, lower wages and lower political engagement than their counterparts. 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. Among those students, only 10-15 percent successfully complete the developmental sequence and then pass a college-level course in the subject. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>School District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bakersfield</td>
<td>Stockdale High School</td>
<td>Kern Union High School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakersfield</td>
<td>Robert F. Kennedy High School</td>
<td>Delano Joint Union High District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomona</td>
<td>Bonita High School</td>
<td>Bonita Unified School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>Rancho Cucamonga High School</td>
<td>Chaffey Joint Union High School District</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>College</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Bakersfield College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pomona</td>
<td>Mt. San Antonio College</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Chaffey College</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pomona</td>
<td>California State Polytechnic University, Pomona</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Framework, available online at 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

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.”

SUCCESS FACTORS: FIVE THEMES

- Personalized Learning
- Curriculum Goals and Expectations
- Data and Assessment
- Culture of Achievement
- Human Capital

Framework, available online at 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.
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.

5. 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.

6. 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

“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. It’s critical that we provide assistance in as many ways as we can, to reduce frustration and increase understanding.”

- 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.
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.

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**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

ERP would like to thank College Futures Foundation for its generous support. We are also grateful to the following individuals who contributed their insights, experiences and stories:

**Kern High School District**: Chris Dutton, Ryan Geivet, Ramon Hendrix, Brenda Lewis

**Delano Joint Union High School District**: Joaquin Alvarado, Sara Cipriano, Terri Nuckols, Adelaida Ramos, Raudel Rojas

**Bakersfield College**: Kimberly Bligh, Reggie Bolton, Lesley Bonds, Nicky Damania, Chelsea Esquibias, Janet Fulks, Keri Kennedy, Marisa Marquez, David Moton, Paula Parks, Katherine Pluta, Cynthia Quintanilla, Valerie Robinson, Cornelio Rodriguez, Manuel Rosas, Liz Rozell, Stephen Waller, Julian West

**Bonita Unified School District**: Christina Goennier, Nanette Hall

**Chaffey Joint Union High School District**: Jim Cronin, Jared Derksen, Jennifer Emshoff, Rick Gundrum, Chris Hollister, Joni Siegel, Franci Ward, Cary Willborn

**Chaffey College**: Donna Colondres, Anita Fletcher, Lonzo Harvey, Jeff Klein, Henry Shannon

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

ENDNOTES


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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Max Year</th>
<th>Min Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>K-12</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert F. Kennedy High</td>
<td>1415</td>
<td>1112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockdale High</td>
<td>1415</td>
<td>0910</td>
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### A-G Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>A-G Rate</th>
<th>A-G Rate</th>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Cohort</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert F. Kennedy High</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockdale High</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>122</td>
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### 15/16 Enrollment

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<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>YMOC #</th>
<th>YMOC %</th>
<th>Hispanic #</th>
<th>Hispanic %</th>
<th>Black #</th>
<th>Black %</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bakersfield College</td>
<td>8,649</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>8,085</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
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## Pomona

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<tbody>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonita High</td>
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<td>0910</td>
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### A-G Improvement

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<th>College</th>
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<th>A-G Rate</th>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Cohort</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bonita High</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
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<td>87</td>
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### 15/16 Enrollment

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<th>YMOC %</th>
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<th>Black #</th>
<th>Black %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mt. San Antonio College</td>
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<td>28.6%</td>
<td>14,743</td>
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<td>1,002</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
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### Completion and Persistence

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<td>Mt. San Antonio College</td>
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<td>873</td>
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## Completion

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<th>6 Year Grad Rate</th>
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<td>535</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
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**SAN BERNARDINO**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<table>
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<th>YMOC #</th>
<th>YMOC %</th>
<th>Hispanic #</th>
<th>Hispanic %</th>
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<th>Black %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chaffey College</td>
<td>805  36.1%</td>
<td>805  72.7%</td>
<td>598  37.8%</td>
<td>598  61.8%</td>
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