Partnerships for College Access and Success

Sacramento PCAS Final Report

Alexander Jefferson was an African American student at Hiram Johnson High School, and throughout his senior year, because of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), Alex didn't know if he'd be allowed to graduate from high school with the rest of his class. Alex is one of several students from Hiram Johnson High School who struggled throughout his senior year to pass the CAHSEE, only to feel even more defeated with each unsuccessful attempt. With each attempt, the chances of Alex graduating from high school, much less continuing on to college, became dimmer and dimmer. Feeling completely disillusioned by attempting to prepare, only to fail the test again and again, Alex nearly gave up hope completely. "If I don't pass this time, I'm just done. What's the point?" said Alex in March.

When asked what the main thing was that discouraged him from going to college, it wasn't the CAHSEE, it wasn't the cost associated, it wasn't any lack of support from his family, it wasn't any of the typical roadblocks that don't allow students who want to go on to college the opportunity to do so. Alex answered, "The low expectations that public schools have had of me all along, that's why I didn't want to go to college, I don't think I could handle another couple years of school, another couple years of being expected to fail, when I know I can do it." What kind of support would Alex need to help him realize his potential and pass the CAHSEE? Is it possible to counter the effects of low expectations?

Va Ngaemphome was a student in Hiram Johnson High School's Community Studies Academy. Va immigrated to the United States from Thailand when she was 5 years old. Because her parents had very little formal education in Thailand, no emphasis was placed on the value of education and the impact it could have in Va's life. Her parents' expectation was that Va would graduate high school and begin working to help support the family who had been struggling financially since her mother became very ill several years before.

A college education was never something Va thought she would be able to afford, and she certainly didn't want to burden her family with the costs of college given their financial hardships. Her family had survived for the past several years on welfare and other government assistance and the money that Va's older brother, without even a high school diploma, was able to earn in his job.

Va was motivated to get good grades throughout high school so she could participate on the basketball team and run track. She did not realize that the same competitive nature that made her stand out on the basketball court and on the track team could carry over to the classroom, making her eligible for financial aid and scholarship assistance to attend college without placing a financial burden on her family.
What could Hiram Johnson staff do to make sure students like Va receive the information and support they need to see college as a possibility?

Introduction

Many schools struggle to fully engage and inform students, parents and the community about what is needed to help young people prepare for college, and they are often faced with cultural, social and economic barriers that prevent them from meeting the needs of the youth they serve. Sometimes, systemic reform is needed for schools to create change. Change often comes about when no one expects it to happen, and innovative solutions arise in response to desperate conditions.

This report includes an overview of the PCAS initiative, analysis of the data collected, and recommendations for moving college access and success efforts to the next level. This is the story of how a belief in the importance of access to college, and strong partnerships, changed the landscape of one high school. This is the story of a school's journey to make education more accessible to parents, students and the surrounding community. It is a combination of their recognition of challenges and their willingness to embrace new ideas that allowed them to meet this challenge. It is our hope that others view this journey in the same light.

The PCAS Initiative

In response to countless stories from students like Alex and Va, the Partnerships for College Access and Success (PCAS) initiative was created by Lumina Foundation for Education to build the capacity of community partnerships and increase access to postsecondary education among underserved populations: first generation students, low-income and youth of color, and others with significant barriers to college access. The PCAS model is based on the theory that without pressure from, and the involvement of, community members and key stakeholders and organizations, barriers to postsecondary access and success will not be addressed sufficiently to meet the needs of underserved populations.

Viable partnerships are defined as ones with the capacity to link underserved youth and adults to the information (academic, career, financial), guidance, and support needed to achieve both postsecondary access and success. There are a considerable number of college access programs nation-wide as well as within the greater Sacramento area, some with documented effectiveness. When the PCAS initiative began, however, there was no systematic approach that targeted programs and services to the individuals who needed them most, nor methods for linking access programs to support programs fostering postsecondary success.

The PCAS initiative is guided by the premise that effective cooperation of influential stakeholders in partnerships and the involvement of organisations with strong roots in their communities are needed to call public attention to the low percentage of students prepared for and participating in postsecondary

education. These partners are needed to advocate for and support the coordination of programs and policies to improve the postsecondary access and success of underserved populations. Insofar as partnerships constructed through this initiative are effective, models will emerge for building similar partnerships throughout the country. The Lumina Foundation has funded 8 PCAS sites across the country, and their experiences are adding to the data bank of learning on how to increase access and success for underrepresented students (visit www.luminafoundation.org for more information).

Overview of the Sacramento PCAS Grant

The Sacramento PCAS grant consisted of two phases of funding. A Sacramento nonprofit organization, Linking Education and Economical Development (LEED), was awarded the first phase of funding for the period of August 2005 through May 2007. LEED's existing involvement with Sacramento Unified School District and the Carnegie Corporation's School for a New Society education reform effort titled e21 (Education for the 21st Century) made them a natural choice to receive the PCAS grant. Midway through the first phase of the PCAS grant, LEED experienced significant structural changes, including the resignation of the organization's CEO and a reconstitution of the board of directors, resulting in the loss of several original PCAS team members. During their tenure as coordinators of the PCAS initiative, LEED staff members, working with Hiram Johnson staff, successfully developed key partnerships, created a work plan and program materials, began to collect data to benchmark student progress, and laid a solid foundation for creating a college going culture.

The second phase of funding was awarded to the nonprofit Youth Development Network (YDN) for the period between October 2007 and August 2008. The YDN team focused on final data collection and evaluation, working with partners to develop a sustainability plan for the PCAS initiative, and creating a report for use by other sites working to increase college access and success for their students. During this phase, the YDN team planned and facilitated two convenings of the PCAS partners and conducted meetings with key stakeholders to provide information about the PCAS initiative and secure commitments to sustain the work. Additionally, a CSUS graduate student was hired to pull together existing data sources and help analyze the impact PCAS and other college access efforts at the site.

The overall goals of the PCAS initiative were to support efforts direct and manage resources to create systemic changes in the practices of school staff and administrators, and to support the development of a partnership of community and institutional experts guide and streamline work surrounding college access and success. In addition, data collection and analysis at the school site and across systems was examined, and efforts were made to establish an effective system for housing college access and success data and making it accessible school wide. This report describes how these goals were accomplished at

Hiram Johnson, and offers lessons learned and recommendations for future college access and success initiatives.

Hiram Johnson High School

"Hiram W. Johnson High School is one of five comprehensive high schools within the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) – a large, urban district that serves the most diverse student population in Sacramento County. At the time of the school's opening in 1958, Hiram Johnson served a predominately middle-income population. Since that time major changes have taken place. The school now serves a richly diverse student population with numerous socioeconomic challenges. The school's current demographics are as follows: Asian-American 26%; Hispanic or Latino 25%; White 22%; African-American 20%; American-Indian 2%; Pacific Islander 1%; and other make up 4%.

Hiram Johnson High School's diversity serves as a source of pride as evidenced by multiple, active cultural clubs, such as the Black Student Union, Mexican-American Youth Association, Spanish Club, Hmong Club, Mien Club, and the Vietnamese Club. The clubs are involved with cultural assemblies such as the Black History Month Assembly held each February and the Mexican Cultural Assembly each May. The school also serves the broader neighborhood as a community venue for a number of educational and cultural groups.

Hiram Johnson High School has a large number of at-risk and refugee students. 43% of the student population are English Language Learners and 62% of students qualify for free and reduced price meals. The community experiences difficulties with gang activity and neighborhood violence that creates occasional tension on the school campus. These factors and others account for a large number of students who are failing and behind in credits." (McCarty, 2005).

In 2001, SCUSD began a district-wide reform effort titled e21 (Education for the 21st Century), with a primary focus of dividing of the large comprehensive high schools into smaller themed learning communities. The district received an $8 million e21 grant from the Carnegie Corporation as one of seven districts nationally that were part of their Schools for a New Society initiative. They also received a $1 million Federal Small Learning Community grant that was divided between Hiram Johnson and another comprehensive high school. School Improvement Facilitators (SIF) were hired under the Carnegie grant for each comprehensive high school and teams of SIFs, administrators and teachers visited model schools across the nation in an effort to gather information regarding best practices. As a result, Hiram Johnson High School is now composed of nine small learning communities, each with a distinct career focus, serving approximately 250 students each.

These small learning communities or (SLCs) brought Hiram Johnson one step closer to the creation of a college going culture because the SLCs fostered closer relationships between teachers and students, and teachers used common planning time to discuss the needs of and counsel individual students. However, gang activity, neighborhood violence, a highly transient population, a large ELL population and low parent engagement were factors facing students that affected their academic learning. Getting through school was often more the question rather than getting to college. While information regarding college access was available, it was not coordinated or readily accessible by students and teachers. Information regarding a-g courses, college applications, financial aid, and scholarships was not disseminated in a systematic manner. The need for a systematic approach to materials and information management was evident. Student success in applying for, enrolling in, and attending college also needed to be tracked.

It was discovered that the idea of a "college culture" was beginning to emerge in three of the small learning communities: Business Information and Technology, Government and Public Administration, and the Community Studies Academy. It is important to note that at the time the PCAS initiative was launched, all three SLCs had federally funded grants to support their efforts and relationships with outside partners in the nonprofit and academic sectors. The conditions that were present at the time of PCAS's initial start were ideal for establishing a college going culture and a systematic approach to increasing college access and success.

Changing the School Culture

In 2004, Hiram Johnson High school struggled with both administrative and safety challenges that made for an unstable school environment. In an effort to address these challenges, Lynne Tafoya was hired as the Principal. The following is a description of conditions at the school when she arrived:

> "In the beginning I had to make several changes… Student records and files were inaccurate, students were not receiving the correct services or they did not have the right classifications. The school also had a lot of gang activity, and I had to lock down (the school to) address that issue before anything else could change." (Tafoya, 2008).

Despite these challenges, LEED and SCUSD began to implement the PCAS initiative in 2004 with a focus on parent engagement, staff development and coordination of outreach workers. Transcript Evaluation Services (TES) was also introduced as was a method of establishing a baseline a tracking students' progress toward completing a-g requirements. LEED staff also created a "roadmap" of the systematic and cultural changes they envisioned as a part of the PCAS initiative, which they entitled "Sacramento Theory of Change" (Appendix A).

The following reflection by an assistant principal explains the changes in attitude and leadership that became essential for implementation of PCAS activities and realization of the outcomes:

> "Was it me? Probably not, it was the people… teachers, Lynne (Tafoya). Parents in the community need to know that they are cared about. That they (parents) don't have to have a suit and tie to be taken seriously." (Mike Crosby, 2008).

By reaching out to parents and working with site staff, Principal Tafoya and Assistant Principal Crosby helped the PCAS team to open the door for creating a college going culture. Although it began slowly at first, Hiram Johnson staff and SCUSD administrators continued searching for ways to create a college going culture and improve coordination of student supports on the campus.

Several studies point to establishing a supportive school culture as the most essential element for successful educational reform. For the PCAS team, this meant implementing foundational program activities from which a college going culture could grow. The University of California, Berkeley Student Outreach Program defines a college going culture as "The environment, attitudes, and behaviors in schools and communities that support and encourage students and their families to obtain the information, tools and perspective to ensure access to and success in postsecondary education."

In order to develop a comprehensive approach to increasing college access at Hiram Johnson, he PCAS team adopted the framework of McClafferty and McDonough (2002) which identifies nine critical elements of a college going culture:

- Clear Expectations: Explicit, clearly defined goals, communicated in ways that make them part of the school culture.
- Targeted Information and Resources: Comprehensive, up-to-date college information and resources, easily accessible by all students, families and school personnel.
- Comprehensive Counseling Model: A view of counseling that makes all student interactions with counseling staff opportunities for college counseling.
- College Talk: Clear, ongoing communication among teachers, students, administrators, and families about what it takes to get to college.
- Faculty Involvement: Informed, active participation from school faculty in the creation and maintenance of a college culture
- Family Involvement: Meaningful engagement on the part of family members in the process of building a college culture.
- Testing and Curriculum: Information about and access to "gatekeeping" tests (PSAT, SAT, ACT, etc.) and courses (Advanced Placement and honors courses) for all students.

- College Partnerships: Active links in a variety of forms between the school and local colleges and universities.
- Articulation: Ongoing coordination between counselors and teachers among all schools in a feeder group.

During the initial formation of PCAS partnership, other key partnerships were developing on the Hiram Johnson campus. The partnership between Hiram Johnson and Sacramento City Councilmember Kevin McCarty's Operation College initiative proved to be instrumental in the overall success of the PCAS initiative.

Operation College and a Dedicated Post-Secondary Counselor

Operation College was enacted in 2004, and is funded through a partnership between Sacramento City Unified School District and a private donor. The cornerstone of Operation College is funding for a postsecondary college counselor position to provide coordinated college access services and information on the Hiram Johnson campus. The scope of this position is broad and comprehensive:

> "In this role, the "postsecondary counselor" at Hiram Johnson will collaborate with teams of students, counselors, faculty, outreach personnel, and parents/families to provide postsecondary planning and transition information, counseling and training to the school community. To this end, the postsecondary counselor will recruit and train a cohort of faculty, student, and parent/family advisors representative of the diverse staff and study body that will present information on college admissions and financial aid deadlines, provide application and entrance examination registration support, publicize scholarship opportunities, support the junior class in preparing for their senior year and upcoming postsecondary planning items, and participate in the collection of year-end postsecondary preparation and college-going data. The postsecondary counselor will develop and deliver a comprehensive array of direct services and activities to address postsecondary planning and transition needs of students at all grade levels." (McCarty, 2005).

In many ways, the arrival of a postsecondary counselor provided the glue to hold the PCAS partnerships together. With a person dedicated to promoting college access and focused on maintaining partnerships, PCAS partners were better able to access students and work together to coordinate their services. College access services that were previously offered within specific Small Learning Communities could now be delivered school wide. "I definitely see a need for my position. It helps to have one counselor who can focus on college outreach visits, keep track of changes in the a-g requirements and college admission requirements, and pay attention to the seniors' graduation needs," Shelia Sidqe, postsecondary counselor. In addition to serving as a conduit for providing targeted information to students and their families, the

postsecondary counselor also worked with school staff and PCAS partners to provide the following services:

- Lunchtime college application workshops with representatives from local community colleges, Sacramento State University, and University of California, Davis
- Evening college information and financial aid workshops for students and parents
- Targeted programs and classroom visits with 9th, 10h and 11th graders to discuss PSAT, SAT and ACT testing, college admissions requirements and applications, financial aid applications and scholarships, and college readiness

Partnership Development

As a result of the PCAS initiative, many important partnerships were created to increase college access and success among Hiram Johnson's students. Each partner came to view participation in PCAS as a mutually beneficial and necessary part of their individual college access and success missions. Although the composition of the partnership has changed over time, several key partners have been present at the PCAS/ Hiram Johnson school site.

- Cal-SOAP/College Horizons provides information and support with college and financial aid applications to students in the classroom and during Hiram Johnson's Family Nights. Cal-SOAP/ College Horizons also developed the Senior Survey to measure the number and types of college access services students receive.
- Sacramento City College assists students with the college application process and provides information about financial aid and student support services on the SCC campus. SCC also offers a summer bridge program to increase the success of incoming freshman.
- UC Davis and Sacramento State University's Early Academic Outreach Programs participate in college fairs and provide students with information about the college admissions process.
- Students from the Sacramento State University Ethnic Studies Department provide tutoring for preparing for the CAHSEE, and connect college-age mentors with students at Hiram Johnson.
- In addition to partially funding the postsecondary counselor position, Councilmember Kevin McCarty and his staff convene a team of researchers and community partners to collect and analyze data around college readiness and students' graduation rates.
- Sacramento City Unified School District's Community, Health and Student Support Services, particularly the Parent Support Services Department provided assistance with developing strategies for engaging parents and families.
- Students from several of Hiram Johnson's SLCs participated in programs offered by community based organizations including the Center for Fathers and Families, Friday Night Live and Asian Resources.

PCAS Strategies

Increase college awareness

The creation and dissemination of a-g college requirement posters and folders were a part of the PCAS strategy to increase awareness of college eligibility requirements among student, teachers and parents. The postsecondary counselor and PCAS partners providing services at the school site worked together to ensure that folders and college talks were given to each student. An emphasis was also placed on college awareness though the implementation of "College on the Quad Wednesdays" and monthly scholarship bulletins. "We always talk about financial aid. I keep a white board up in the classroom with a countdown for the FAFSA," Marcia McAllister, Lead BIT Teacher.

Increase Student Readiness

The postsecondary counselor and PCAS partners worked to increase awareness of college entrance tests such as ELM/EPT, and provided information about preparing for the PSAT, SAT and ACT. PCAS partners worked with the district to secure funding for all Hiram Johnson sophomores to take the PSAT, and the postsecondary counselor reviews test results with each student.

PCAS also provided funding to increase the number of field trips to college campuses. Two private college readiness counselors, Rick Sanger from The College Source and Jill Yoshikawa from Creative Marbles, also provided pro-bono services to several Hiram Johnson students.

Engage Families

Since the Hiram Johnson site consistently reported low parental involvement, increasing parent participation was a key strategy in helping families gain access to college for their children. Family Nights were designed to help parents and their children navigate through the college application and financial aid process. These events, hosted in collaboration with Operation College, were attended by several hundred parents, which represents an increase in attendance of nearly 60%. The following components were key contributors to Family Nights' success:

- Parents were called and flyers were distributed in all home languages
- Food and child care was provided at each event.
- Homework assistance was provided for all school age children
- College incentives were given away at each event
- Translation was provided in several languages (Spanish, Hmong, Russian, Mien)

"This is a great chance for me to understand what to do for my daughters," reported by a parent during a post-event survey. Another parent noted "I am glad to see the workshops being provided in other languages. Not all parents speak English."

Provide Workshops and Training

In order to support efforts to create a college going culture, PCAS partners worked together to develop and deliver the following workshops for teachers, staff and administrators:

Student Workshops

- Preparing for College is offered during Family Nights and in the classroom. The workshop informs junior and seniors about the steps involved with getting to college.
- Financial Aid is offered during Family Nights and in the classroom. The workshop provides information about completing the FAFSA, applying for scholarships and other forms of financial aid.
- Early College Awareness is offered to both parents and students during Family Nights and in the classroom. Topics include PSAT and SAT preparation, a-g requirements and transcript evaluation.

Staff Development Workshops

- College Bound Planning is offered as a professional development module for teachers and counselors. Participants receive ideas for infusing college planning into daily interactions with students.
- Creating a College Going Culture is offered as a professional development module for teachers and counselors. Topics include classroom awareness, cultural sensitivity and teacher commitment.

District Workshops

- Maximizing College Access is designed to introduce administrators and higher education representatives to the importance of data sharing in college access programs.

College Success Center

The College Success Center was an important, though short lived, component of the PCAS initiative. The College Success Center was opened in the fall of 2006 in collaboration with Sacramento State's Ethnic Studies Department. The center was created to maximize student access to college applications, college catalogs and opportunities to visit college campuses, and it housed information about trade schools, military options, and career planning. The center also offered several services to support college access and success including homework assistance, test preparation resources, college and job application workshops, and mentoring. The College Success Center coordinator maintained contact with high school graduates to gather information about their experiences as they entered postsecondary programs.

Although opening the College Success Center demonstrated a strong commitment to creating a college going culture at Hiram Johnson, the center faced several challenges and ultimately closed. While many students and staff reported that they felt it was a beneficial component of the college access services, few students and teachers actually used the center. The center was housed in a room adjacent to the library, which was not a central and accessible location on the campus. In addition, the center's hours of operation made it difficult for students to visit without missing class. Offering services before and after school may address this challenge in the future. Hiram Johnson staff are committed to to finding solutions to these challenges, and they have plans to re-open the College Success Center.

Data Collection

Since November 1, 2005 Partnerships for College Access and Success, Sacramento (PCAS) has been in the process of establishing written data-sharing agreements between its partners, Hiram Johnson High School (HJHS), Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD), Sacramento City College, The Los Rios Community College District, The University of California, Davis, Sacramento State University and the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE). As outlined previously within the PCAS grant, the establishment of Data Share Agreements (DSA) was the key to increasing communications between institutions and the creation and implementation of a shared database. These data share will agreements assist the district in tracking college entry and success and serve as a supplement to the National Clearinghouse system, which captures information for approximately 70% of the graduates from the school.

Transcript Evaluation Service (TES)

PCAS and Hiram Johnson High School have entered into a Data Share Agreement with the University of California, Hiram Johnson and SCUSD to pilot the Transcript Evaluation Service (TES), an initiative from the California Student Aid Commission, ED-FUND and the University of California. This data system provides electronic evaluations of all student transcripts in order to track progress towards completing college preparatory coursework and eligibility to the UC and/or the CSU systems, by coursework and grade point average. TES provides student-level reports, detailing grade level courses completed successfully and courses still needed to complete a 4-year college preparatory curriculum. TES student rosters are designed for use by school faculty, counselors, administrators and other service providers to increase student enrollment and access to a rigorous high school curriculum. School summary reports provide "at-a-glance" references on student progress towards the college preparatory course completion. TES is provided to PCAS and Hiram Johnson High School as an in-kind donation from the University of California. The college going counsellor at HJHS checks students for the completion of minimum college

preparatory course requirements (a-g courses) with the use of TES. All Hiram Johnson High School lead teachers, counselors, administrators, the PCAS Program Manager and college partners were trained in the use of and have access to TES student and school summaries beginning in spring 2006. (See Appendix B for a sample TES report).

Senior Survey

Each May, a Senior Survey is administered to all graduating seniors at Hiram Johnson. The survey was developed by Cal-SOAP/College Horizons, a program of the Sacramento County Office of Education. The Senior Survey collects critical data about the strategies implemented by PCAS partners and their influence on students' plan to attend college. In addition to measuring they type of college access information and support received by each student, the survey allows PCAS partners to collect self-reported information from students about college plans and financial aid received. The survey provides a student perspective about how they perceive college access services and the information provided.

National Student Clearinghouse

The National Student Clearinghouse provides the partnership with current college enrollment information for graduates from Hiram Johnson School and is updated every 30-35 days. Having access to up-to-date student enrollment data at all major colleges and universities allows comparisons with self reported data from the Senior Survey. This data set also provides the ability to track student college success and to identify colleges where students are more likely to be successful.

Sacramento City College

To further understand college success, PCAS also established a data share agreement with Sacramento City College in May 2007 to provide information about student matriculation. PCAS uses this data to report on student retention and success. Analysis of student progress through these areas gives insight into the success of supports provided for incoming freshman and how prepared students are for college level classes.

College Access and Success Profile Reporting System

The College Access and Success Profile Reporting System or CASPRS is currently under construction and is scheduled to roll out September 2008. This database is intended to centralize baseline high school information, and provide accurate and user-friendly student information to teachers, counselors, and administrators on students. The database will also integrate and store in-house information about college access and success. Currently, two small learning communities, Business Industry and Technology (BIT)

and Community Studies Academy (CSA), are piloting this data system. Full implementation of this system will offer easy access to student college success data including two years of college success data and career tracking. The program will provide both school and SLC level reports.

Data Analysis

Desired Site Outcomes

To date, data has been shared with partnership members and key stakeholders through initial finding reports and professional development efforts. The data used in this report is comprised of information that is accessible through National Student Clearinghouse, the SCUSD SASI system, Transcript Evaluation Service (TES) and information from the Senior Survey. At the time this report was published, final numbers for the 2007-2008 academic year were not yet available. Data collection focused primarily on Hiram Johnson students in two small learning communities, Business Industry and Technology (BIT) and Community Studies Academy (CSA). Other SLCs within the school served as comparison groups. Data was collected and analyzed to assess the PCAS initiative's impact on the following indicators:

Completion of a-g Requirements

Whole school numbers from TES show a slight but steady increase in completion of a-g requirements. A similar trend is reflected in the targeted SLCs.

FAFSA Completion

A slight increase in FAFSA completion occurred during the PCAS initiative. However, students in the targeted SLCs consistently show a higher FAFSA completion rate than the whole school population.

Completion of College Applications

Beginning in 2006, all seniors in the targeted SLCs were required to complete at least one college application. There is also a general increase in college applications among the whole school population. These numbers also reflect applications to vocational and technical certification programs.

Enrollment in College or Vocational Certification Programs

Compared to whole school data, students in the targeted SLCs are slightly more successful in gaining acceptance to college or vocational certification programs. College enrollment is also increasing from year to year. Nearly 50% of students enrolling in a postsecondary educational program choose to attend a community college.

First Year Completion Rate

Based on data from the National Student Clearinghouse, approximately 85% of Hiram Johnson graduates form the targeted SLCs who enrolled in a postsecondary program completed their first year. This can be attributed, in part, to strong partnerships with academic outreach and support programs at local colleges and universities.

Charts to illustrate results for some of these indicators are included in Appendix C. The Lumina Foundation's data collection rubric is included in Appendix D.

Student Success Stories: Alex & Va

Alex Jefferson

Through the efforts of PCAS, Sacramento State University students majoring in Math and English began providing one-on-one after school tutoring to students struggling to pass either portion of the CAHSEE. This opportunity gave Alex the opportunity to get individual academic support, and the chance to talk to a college student about what that experience is like.

By working with a college student as a tutor, as well as other relationships that Alex has developed with current and recent college students in the last year, Alex was able to receive valuable messages of encouragement and support. "No matter what anyone else thinks of you, it's what you can prove to yourself that you are capable of is what matters." That message motivated Alex and he was committed to passing the CAHSEE and proving everyone with low expectations of him wrong.

Alex still hasn't received his results from his final opportunity to take the CAHSEE as a senior, but feels very confident that he knows the material and that he passed. "I never walked out of the test feeling as good about it as I did this last time. I know I got it. I just do." Either way it goes, Alex has made the commitment to himself that he won't give up no matter what expectations anyone has of him, and that he will not only graduate from high school, but go on to college. Alex now has high expectations of himself, and that is what will carry him forward towards college success.

Alex said recently, "I've decided to take your word for it, you and everyone else [from PCAS] has told me that college is different and that I should give it a chance. I will, for at least for two years. I'll commit myself to that, at least, and then we'll have to see what happens."

Sacramento City College, another PCAS partner, provided Alex with assistance in completing his college application. Alex also applied to participate in City College's Extended Opportunities Programs & Services (EOPS) Summer Bridge, a four week academy designed to provide him with the support necessary to successfully make the transition from high school to college and identify his educational and career goals. Despite the low expectations that Alex felt that public schools had of him, he now has high expectations for himself as he makes this transition to college.

Va Ngaemphome

Through the efforts of the PCAS partners, Va was given the opportunity to have meaningful interactions with current college students through tutoring, mentoring and workshops facilitated by the college students. The opportunity to talk to and be mentored by current college students and recent college

graduates provided Va with a look at what was possible. She realized that if she didn't go to college, she would likely end up in a job she didn't want, one that had little security and didn't fulfil her passions of working with children and giving back to the community.

Still, given her family's financial situation, and her parents concern that she begin to work immediately after graduating high school Va began her senior year still unsure if she would be able to continue on to college, and unsure if she should try to push it. With constant support and encouragement from teachers, counselors, coaches and the Student Success Center, Va began to explore the possibility more seriously throughout the year, still knowing that she wouldn't be allowed to go away to college because of her obligation to help her family.

Va received support from all resources of the partnership: her teachers, counselor, and coaches. They all reinforced the message that affording college is possible, there is money out there, and everyone is here to support making her dream a reality. Va participated in a Cash for College workshop and completed her Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Va was unwilling to accept anything less than her best, and maintained a 3.57 GPA, making her eligible for financial aid for college through the Cal Grant and a host of scholarships.

Having already visited California State University, Sacramento the previous year, and having another opportunity during her senior year to visit the college campus again and sit in on classes brought clarity to Va that this is what she wanted and reinforced her goal of making college a reality. As a result of PCAS, Va was able to take advantage of Sacramento City College assistance in developing a college application and other college entrance assessments on-site at Hiram Johnson High School. Va also participated in the college's orientation and academic advising programs before registering for her fall classes. Va will pursue a major in child development and intends on transferring to California State University, Sacramento after completing her general education at Sacramento City College.

Sustaining the Sacramento PCAS Initiative

As part of the work to develop a sustainability plan for PCAS, YDN held two convenings during the spring and summer of 2008. The purpose of these convenings was to re-engage the partners who were originally involved in PCAS and to expand the base of interested parties. As a result of these meetings, the following commitments for ongoing support of a college access effort in Sacramento surfaced:

Site Level

- College access activities, including targeted information for students and family nights, and financial support for the postsecondary counselor will continue until funding for the Operation College initiative

ends in 2010. Hiram Johnson's principal is also committing school site funds for the postsecondary counselor position.

- The school site is also seeking ways to embed college access activities, such as writing personal statements, creating student resumes, and completing the FASFA into classroom curriculum.

- The school site will continue to hone data collection with the help of Councilmember McCarty's Operation College advisory committee, and use the data to improve college access strategies.

- In the fall, a new data input system will introduced that will allow counselors to more easily collect student data related to college access and success.

- The site is committed to re opening the College Success Center in some form to provide students with a one stop place to get college and career information and support.

District Level

- SCUSD will continue to convene the PCAS partners on an ongoing basis, and is planning to host a partner meeting at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year. The district is open to discussing issues of interest the partners bring to the table. The district will also report to the partners about efforts to train its counselors. In addition, the district will seek partners' support for hosting college fairs at the school sites.

- The district will work with partners to organize a community wide college fair for fall of 2009. The event will feature college access and success workshops for parents, students, educators and community stakeholders with a focus on fostering cross-system dialogue about ensuring young people enter adulthood with the skills they need to be successful.

- SCUSD representatives attended both PCAS partner convenings hosted by YDN, and the district has committed to two key strategies to further support college access efforts. Three counselors, including the postsecondary counselor at Hiram Johnson, will attend a summer institute and receive training to become mentors to other counselors throughout the district. The training will focus on providing tools and strategies for helping other counselors be more effective in promoting college access for all students. The district also received funding from the James Irvine Foundation to provide college access training through the College Board. Three training sessions for junior and senior high school counselors are planned.

- SCUSD staff are working to develop a job description for a position at the district responsible for coordinating and supporting college access and success efforts at the school sites, and for strengthening communication and partnerships between the district and external partners. Given current budget limitations, securing funding for this kind of position will be a challenge. However, the creation of a job description demonstrates a realization that coordinating college access services is important.

- SCUSD continues to refine its data collection system around student performance. The district currently collects information about dropout and graduation rates, college access testing, and student achievement data across the grade levels. More detailed disaggregate college access data collection, analysis and dissemination is directed by each school site for its specific needs. The district is committed to examining the data input system being developed for Hiram Johnson high school and exploring its applicability to other sites, especially the system's capacity to increase access to college success data.

Additional Partner Commitments

Area Congregations Together, a Sacramento nonprofit focused on community organizing, has gotten commitments from the two mayoral candidates to convene an educational summit or task force within six months of taking office. The task force would be asked to examine how the city can partner with schools to increase high school graduation rates and increase college access. This will provide a forum to publicize the PCAS work and identify additional partners who are willing to mobilize around college access issues. In addition, the Sacramento Ready by 21 Coalition, formed under the guidance of the Forum for Youth Investment, could provide a receptive audience and convene additional partners around the issue of promoting of college access for youth.

Lessons Learned

- Support from district leaders, school site administrators and staff, and community involvement are needed to launch a successful college access and success initiative.

- Schools need to be prepared to embrace a change in culture that supports not only academic success for all students, but also the belief that all students should have the right to be prepared for college if they choose to attend. This requires stable leadership, a culture of experimentation and collaboration, support with research and data, and access to tools and training to implement the changes necessary to create a college going culture.

- Getting students college ready does not always make them college eligible. There continues to be a gap in what schools are doing to prepare students to graduate and what colleges are expecting requiring for students to succeed. There is no common language and little opportunity for K-12 and college level cross communication on this matter. In fact, the issue often becomes contentious with one level of education wanting to blame the other level of education for the failure of students.

- Acceptance of community college and trade schools as a postsecondary option that meets the college ready definition is a relatively new concept. College access programs have traditionally focused preparing students for a 4-year college. However, as college tuition rises and state university system is called upon to serve an increasing number of students, many high school graduates are choosing to enroll in community colleges. This is also true of students who may need academic support and remediation services. Recognizing community colleges as valuable partners and including them in postsecondary access and success programs is important.

- Student and parental involvement needs to be strengthened, and cultural sensitivity in access and success programs is an important consideration.

- There is a key difference between creating a program at a school that helps students get into college, versus embedding in the educational infrastructure ways to prepare students for college (i.e. having students write college essays in English classes). Embedded activities will continue after funding for a program or initiative is spent, and are indicative of a true cultural shift. Whether this approach is feasible given the demands on teachers' time is yet to be seen.

- The importance of identifying measures of success, collecting data that helps schools and district understand how they are doing in preparing students for college, and measuring how effective high schools are in providing students with skills they need to succeed in college cannot be understated. Given the established data share agreements and the cooperation of our partners, the challenges involved in collecting data to measure the effectiveness of the Sacramento PCAS initiative were surprising.

- It is important to foster dialogue and develop consensus across the district and in the community around whether all students should be prepared for college. Despite wide spread support for making college accessible for all, some feel that all students should graduate from high school ready for work, and that not all students need to or should go to college. This is especially true when students are struggling academically just to meet high school graduation standards.

- There are cultural barriers that may limit student progression to college and other post secondary options. Many families want their students to remain close to home, or need the additional income provided by full time employment. Students are also heavily influenced by their peer groups, and are more likely to attend college if their peers are following the same path. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that students are more likely to enroll and remain in a postsecondary education program if an older sibling has done the same.

Conclusion

An analysis of the Sacramento PCAS initiative shows that creating a strong partnership and coordinating college access services at a school site does increase the number of students applying to postsecondary educational programs. Anecdotal evidence and student interviews illustrate the importance of changing student and teacher perceptions about college access. However, increasing access to information does not always guarantee college eligibility or college acceptance, nor does it guarantee success in postsecondary programs. The PCAS initiative changed a culture at one school, and that experience helped bring the importance of college access to light at the district level. However, recently released data sows that California still struggles with a high drop out rate and remediation continues to be an issue in higher education.

Exposing students to information is a good first step. However, it is the use of this information by teachers, parents and stakeholders that builds programs and pipelines to ensure students strong academic skills, exposure to support services, and greater opportunities to succeed in postsecondary educational opportunities. Further research needs to be done around the issue of "college eligible" vs. "college ready" and continued examination of cultural barriers to postsecondary education would be beneficial. There is growing momentum and interest in promoting college access and success within the Sacramento City Unified School District and in the broader community, and we believe the strong partnerships developed as a result of the Sacramento PCAS initiative provides a solid foundation for continuing and expanding these efforts to increase access to and success in postsecondary educational opportunities.

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Appendix A: Sacramento Theory of Change

PCAS Sacramento Theory of Change

Contextual & Problem Analysis

- There is a diverse immigrant population in the Sacramento region
- Cultural context is not always considered in the schools in response to the diversity
- Recent political changes include school board elections resulting in a shift of players, and a lack of focus in the educational reform agenda
- The structure of the school districts is confusing and there is considerable overlap and duplication of efforts from district to district and school to school
- The large number of school districts makes it difficult to influence policy changes
- There is a general lack of financial resources for schools – as a result, schools focus on equal resources for students
- Lack of process for measuring individual student performance
- Lack of communication between schools, the district and community members, including parents and caretakers
- There are serious issues around students dropping out and getting pushed out of the educational system

Assets:

- Several successful college programs at the school, college and community level are in place to assist underserved populations
- There is an awareness in the community and among media players about school reform and the importance of educational attainment among students
- The Chamber of Commerce is focusing on education reform as a strategy towards economic development
- Sacramento has a considerable climate of civic engagement; there are several local funding organizations interested in education funding
- The district and Sac State are working to better coordinate efforts to support students
- Local funders are focusing on education reform down to the middle school level

Challenges:

- Poor academic preparation
- Lack of English language proficiency among students
- Financial barriers
- Lack of family and community support for college attendance
- Fragmented services and too few counselors at the K–12 level
- Gangs, drugs and alcohol

Target Population

At risk students in Hiram Johnson High School. At risk students are identified as first generation, college–potential students or young adults who have dropped out or been pushed out of the educational "pipeline." This can include: incarcerated youth, foster youth, recent immigrants, English Language Learners (ELL's), students of color, and students with a low income history (such as qualifying for free lunch).

Strategic Focus

- Increase student access to post–secondary options.
- Increase student success once enrolled in post–secondary programs.
- Create a college–going culture by strengthening existing partnerships to develop a college–bound pipeline of services.

Assumptions

- There is a need to engage youth and families as part of the community engagement efforts
- It is necessary to address educators, parents and community members at all levels to reach our goals
- There is a need to share resources among schools, districts, and the community about "at risk" students and the services that are available to these students
- Schools should be focusing on equity not necessarily on equality (in terms of resource allocation)
- There is a need to work with students and provide support earlier (it is not enough to start introducing college options in high school; it is necessary to engage in these conversations in middle school)
- There is a need to tap into the technology community
- There is a need to engage teachers as key players in changing the college–going climate in Sacramento schools
- There is a need to focus on the "push–out" problem that is effecting lower achieving students
- Community college should increase their efforts that focus on first time students
- There is a need to focus on other factors that effect learning (drug, alcohol, gangs, etc.)

Program Goals

1. Increase the capacity to sustain the PCAS partnership and ensure the provision of quality college access and success programming.
2. Build on existing partnerships to ensure coordination of resources and develop a comprehensive college pipeline that involves families, educators and students.
3. Increase at risk student access by targeting such students in Hiram Johnson High School.
4. Increase student success in post–secondary programs by creating ambassador programs.

Appendix A: Sacramento Theory of Change

PCAS Sacramento Theory of Change

Program Activities

Goal 1: Grantee capacity
- Data gathering and student tracking
- Identification of community needs and partners
- Development and maintenance of partnerships
- Spearhead development and distribution of communication plan (targeted recruitment)
- Develop and implement evaluation plan
- Identify and diversify funding sources

Goal 2: Partnership development
- Work with partners to identify the educational pipeline including existing services and gaps in services
- Identify partners to fill the gaps in services
- Develop protocol of bringing in (and integrating) new members into the partnership
- Establish method of communication within partnership so that information sharing effects the activities of each partner
- Develop common goals and measures of individual organization and partnership success
- Hold regular partner convenings to assess progress and next steps (feedback loop)
- Work with partners to solicit business community for additional financial support

Goal 3: College access
- Increase the capacity of the pilot school to provide college access support
- Identify students at risk and make college an expectation by creating a peer counseling network starting in middle school
- Build on existing Small Learning Communities initiative (SLC) and the development of individualized Learning Plans (ILP) that stress college preparation and individual student support requirements.
- Build on existing connection between Community Studies Academy (SLC) and Sac State to ensure seamless connection of middle and high school students to college.
- Establish a College/Career Center in the middle and high school.
- Target school administrators, teachers, counselors and parents to create a college going environment. Focus on parent education and engagement to support their child's college preparation. Work to shift the role of school counselors to include a strong post-secondary focus.

Goal 4: College success
- Link at risk students to necessary college supports, based on students' ILP
- Reestablish college ambassadors to connect freshman with a college graduate from their high school
- Train college students to become coaches for incoming freshmen.

Intermediate Outcomes (2 years)

Goal 1:
Grantee has established leadership role and appropriate infrastructure for the PCAS initiative as indicated by:
- Developed a partnership management protocol and capacity for communication, data collection, decision-making, accountability, and conflict resolution.
- Designated staff and resources for managing and coordinating day-to-day activities of project.
- Leveraged funds to sustain pilot work.

Goal 2:
Partnership is operational and has the capacity to effect change at the community level in access and success for the target population as indicated by:
- Formalized partnership work plan (or theory of change) with defined goals and roles, and partners see these as part of their self-interest.
- A diversified membership (Lead org, CBOs, K-12, postsec institutions, etc.) with secure and sufficient resources to carry out roles.
- Data collection system is developed and piloted, with input from all partners.
- An internal system for evaluation, data collection and model refinement is implemented.
- Partnership has documented college access and success resources in the Sacramento community.

Goal 3:
Clearly developed college access pipeline exists and appropriate program supports have been implemented as indicated by:
- Existing college access program addresses the needs of the target population.
- Appropriate resources for access program are secured including funding, staff and space.
- Student selection and recruitment mechanisms are operational.
- Narrowed information gap between school staff and administration

Goal 4:
Established linkage to postsecondary institutions and collected data on target population to support student population success.
- Articulated plan to integrate college success programming into implementation activities.

Long Term Outcomes (5+ years)

Goal 1:
Grantee has the capacity to sustain the PCAS work and begin influencing local policy as indicated by:
- Increased, diversified and improved community and key constituent involvement.
- Diversified funding to ensure sustainability of the initiative.
- Established data collection systems and the use of data to inform planning and programming.
- Data-driven advocacy efforts to shift local policy and stakeholder attitudes about college access and success issues.

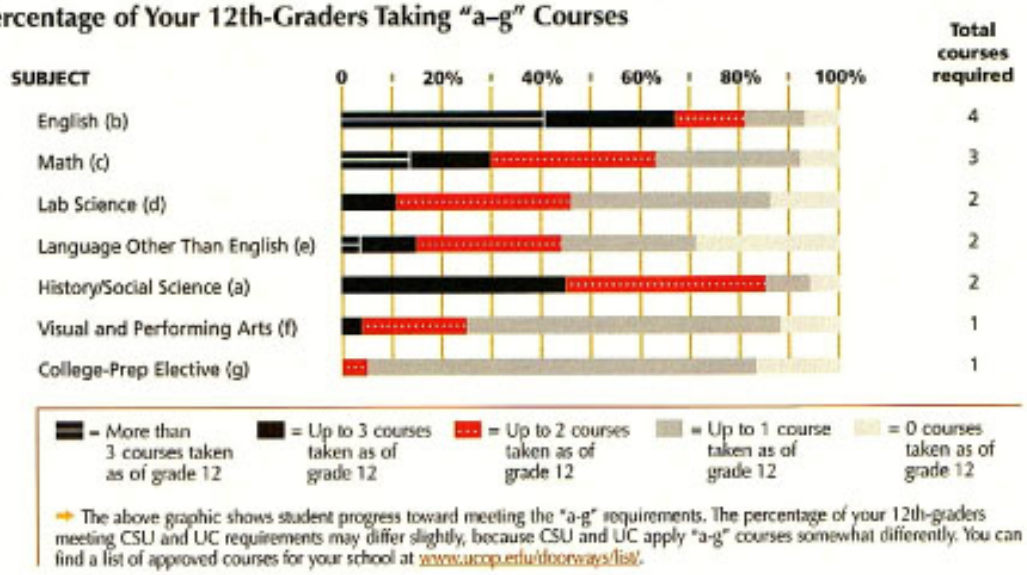
Goal 2:
Partnership is institutionalized as a vehicle towards systemic change in college access and success.
- Grantee maintains a flexible PCAS leadership role.
- Workplan is implemented and regularly revisited to allow for learning and organizational flexibility.

Goal 3:
- **Increased % of student completing FAFSA forms.**
- **Increased % of students applying to college.**
- **Increased % of students gaining college acceptance.**
- Increased capacity of pilot schools to provide access programming as indicated by:
  - Individual Learning Plans widely utilized to develop shared goals and visions and have realistic college access goals set for students.

Goal 4:
- **Increased % of students enrolling in 2 and 4 year college/certification program**
- **Increased % returned for the second term of the certification program/ 2- and 4- year college**
- **Increased % of students completing their first year**

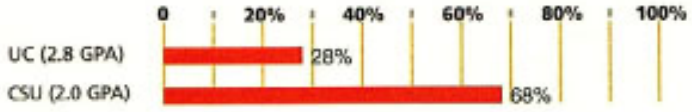
Appendix B: Hiram Johnson High School TES Report

Percentage of Your 12th-Graders Taking "a–g" Courses



→ The above graphic shows student progress toward meeting the "a-g" requirements. The percentage of your 12th-graders meeting CSU and UC requirements may differ slightly, because CSU and UC apply "a-g" courses somewhat differently. You can find a list of approved courses for your school at www.ucop.edu/doorways/list/.

Percentage of Your 12th-Graders Meeting Minimum GPA Requirements



Shows the percentage of your 12th-graders who earned the minimum GPA indicated in the "a–g" courses they had completed by the report date.

12th-Grade Benchmarks

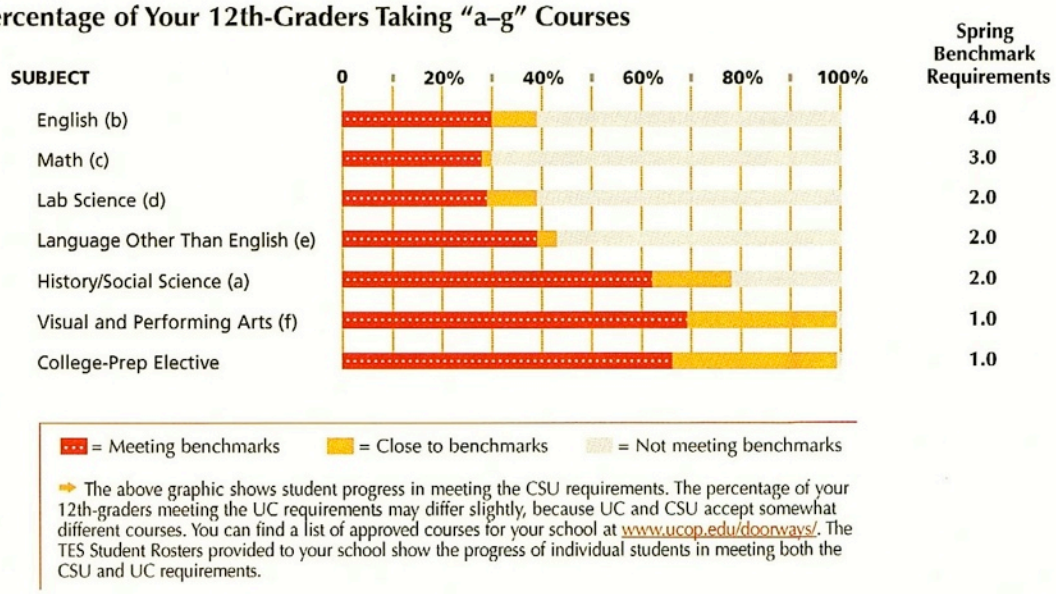
12th-graders are meeting grade-level benchmarks if they complete all 15 "a–g" courses by the end of 12th grade *and* successfully complete these courses with a C or better grade.

Percentage of your 12th-graders

The TES Student Rosters provided to your school show the progress of individual students on basic "a-g", CSU, and UC benchmarks, and can help you identify the 12th-graders—especially those "close to meeting" benchmarks—who may still be able to fulfill the necessary requirements by the end of grade 12.

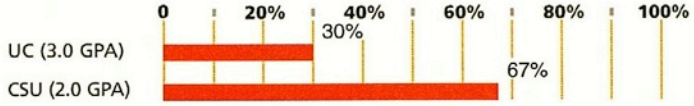
Appendix B: Hiram Johnson High School TES Report

Percentage of Your 12th-Graders Taking "a–g" Courses



➡ The above graphic shows student progress in meeting the CSU requirements. The percentage of your 12th-graders meeting the UC requirements may differ slightly, because UC and CSU accept somewhat different courses. You can find a list of approved courses for your school at www.ucop.edu/doorways/. The TES Student Rosters provided to your school show the progress of individual students in meeting both the CSU and UC requirements.

Percentage of Your 12th-Graders Meeting Minimum GPA Requirements



Shows the percentage of your 12th-graders who earned the minimum GPA indicated in the "a–g" courses they had completed by the date submitted.

12th-Grade Benchmarks

12th-graders are meeting grade-level benchmarks if they complete all 15 "a–g" courses by the end of 12th grade *and* successfully complete these courses with a C or better grade.

Percentage of your 12th-graders

The TES Student Rosters provided to your school show the progress of individual students on basic "a-g", CSU, and UC benchmarks, and can help you identify the 12th-graders—especially those "close to meeting" benchmarks—who may still be able to fulfill the necessary requirements by the end of grade 12.

Appendix C: Lumina Foundation Data Collection Rubric

Data Collection Rubric – Lumina Foundation for Education Partnerships for College Access and Success

1. Please define your PCAS target population in the space below:

The target population is students in two small learning communities (Business, Information and Technology & Community Service Academy) at Hiram Johnson High School. SLC data was not available for the 2004-2005 academic year, and some numbers for the 2007-2008 academic year had not been published at the time of this report.

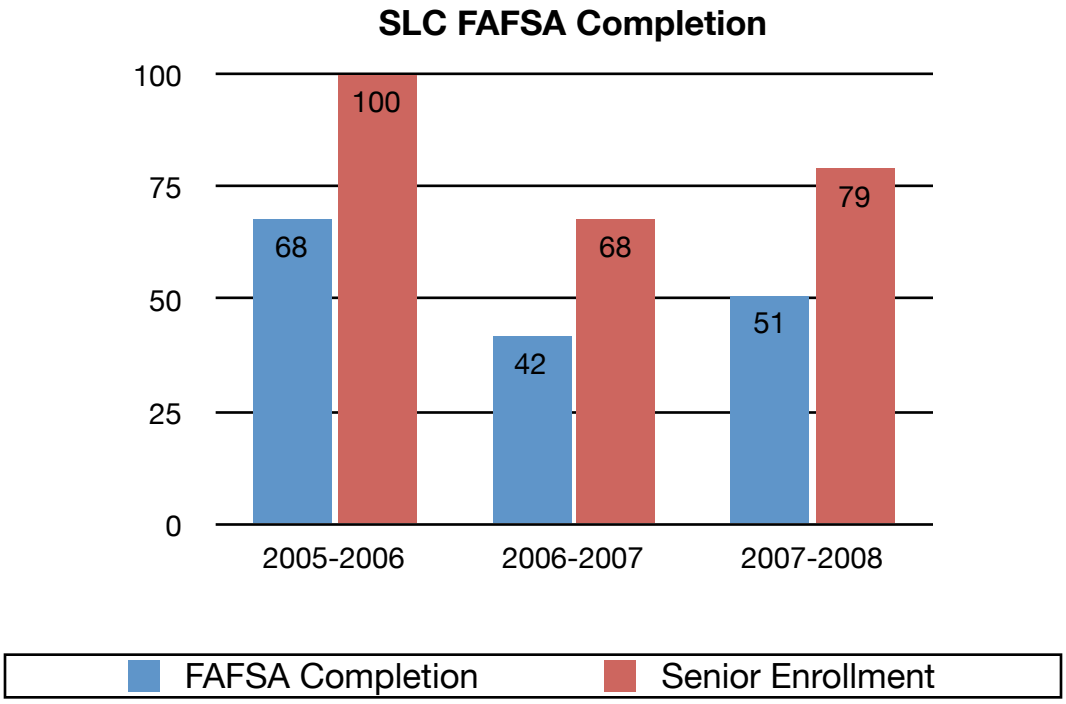
2. Students served through the PCAS initiative

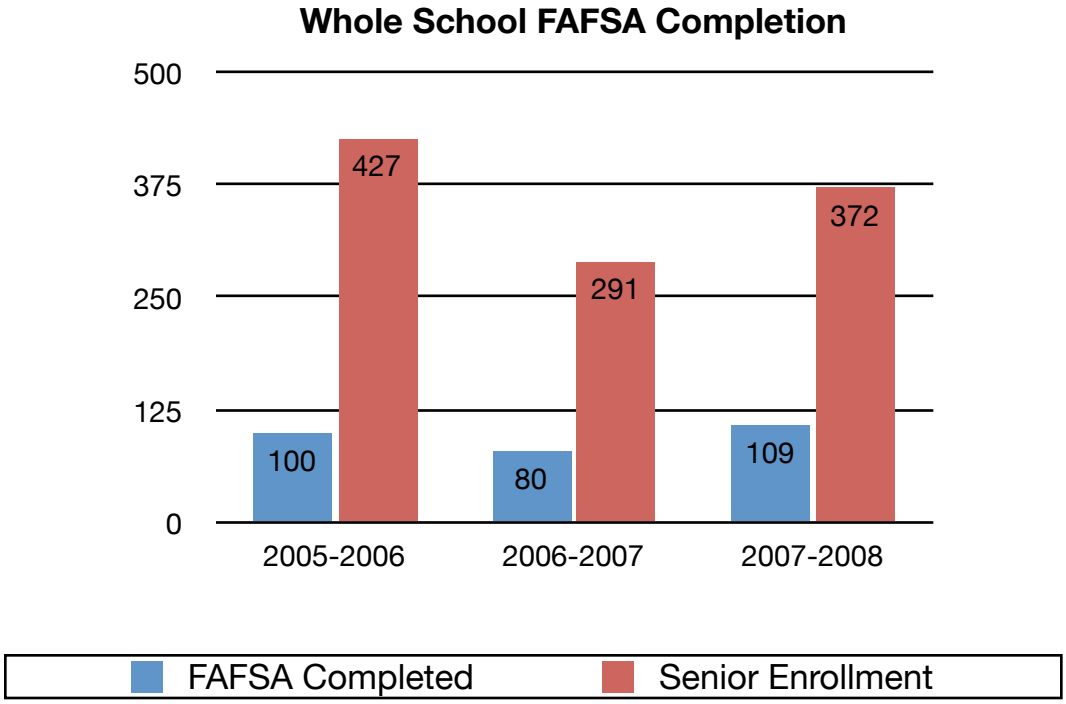
	Academic year		
Total numbers of students served through the PCAS initiative	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
2.A. Number of students receiving access services (total number of students in the targeted SLCs)	360	335	330
2.B. Number of students receiving success services	0	64	0

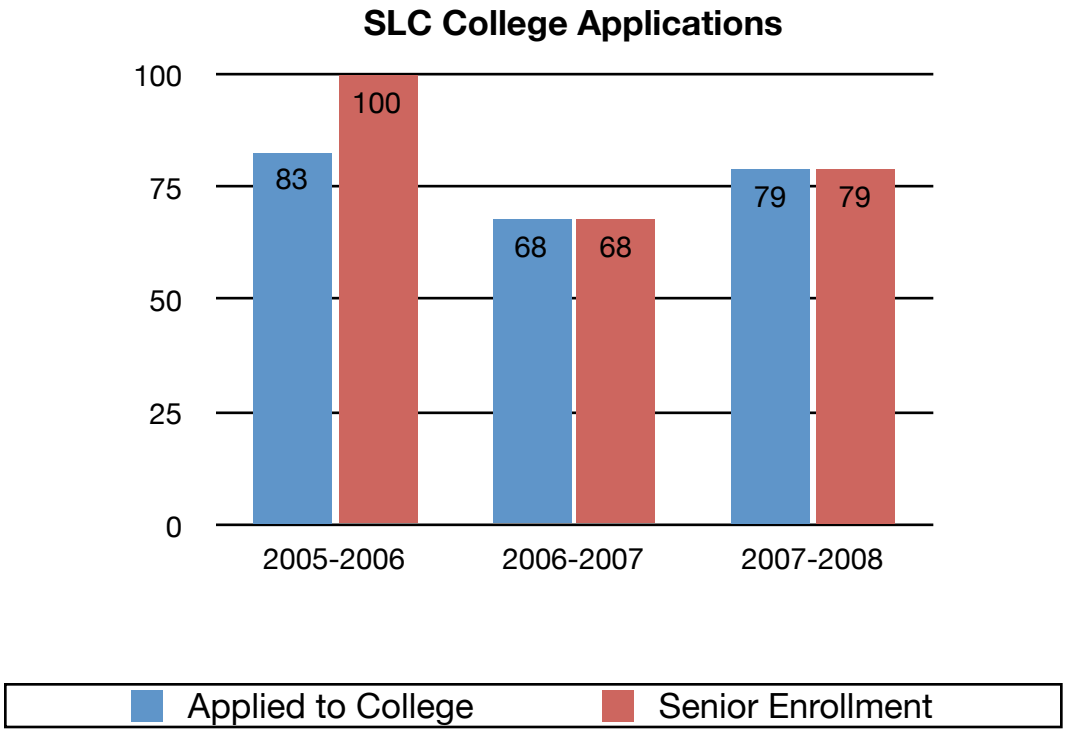
	Academic year		
Cross-site indicators	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Access			
3A. Total number of 12th graders, college-ready youth, and/or college ready adult learners in PCAS initiative	100	68	79
3B. Number of students completing FAFSA forms	68	42	51
3C. Number of students applying to college	83	68	79
3D. Number of students gaining college acceptance	71	57	Not available
Success			
3E. Number of students enrolling in 2- and 4- year college certification programs	67	57	Not available
3F. Number of students returning for second term	Not measured		
3G. Number of students completing first year	58	57	Not available

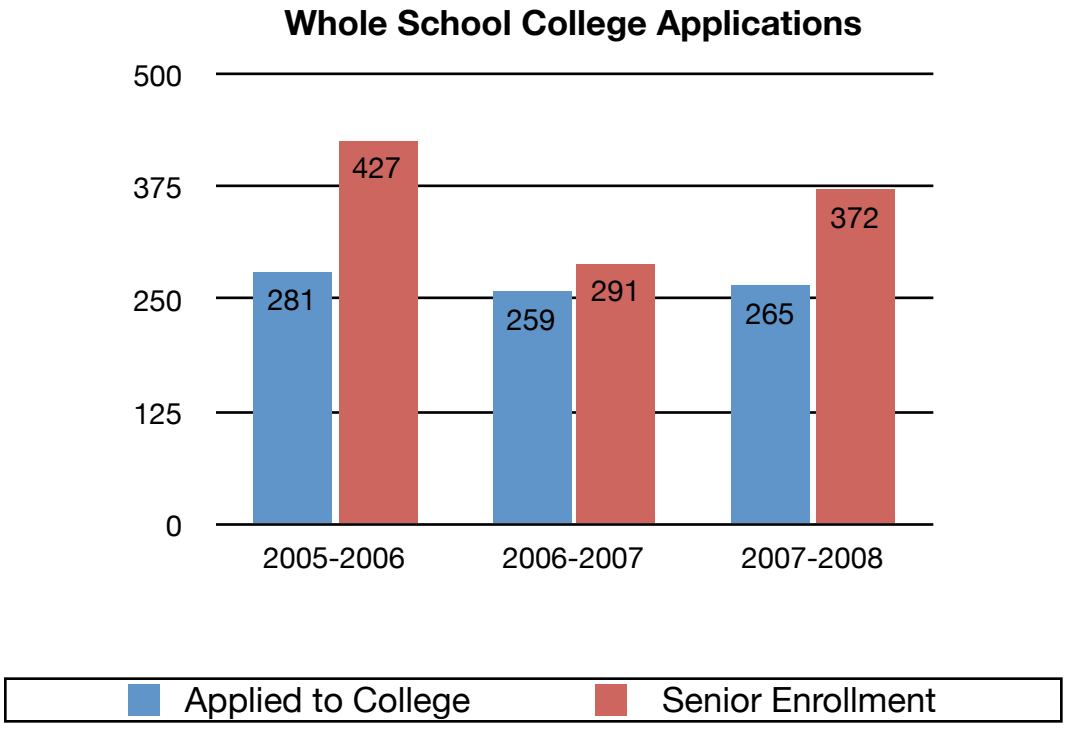
	Academic year		
Site specific indicators (from site specific evaluation plan)	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Access			
Number of students completing college preparatory graduation requirements (a-g)	15	5	19
Success			
No site specific indicators were identified			

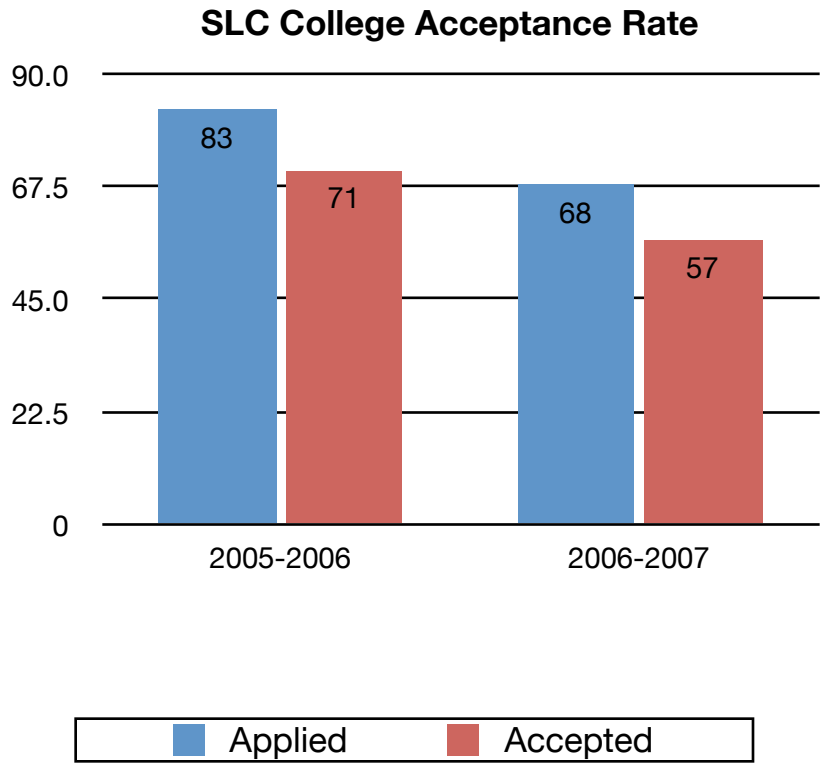
Appendix D: Sacramento PCAS Data Charts

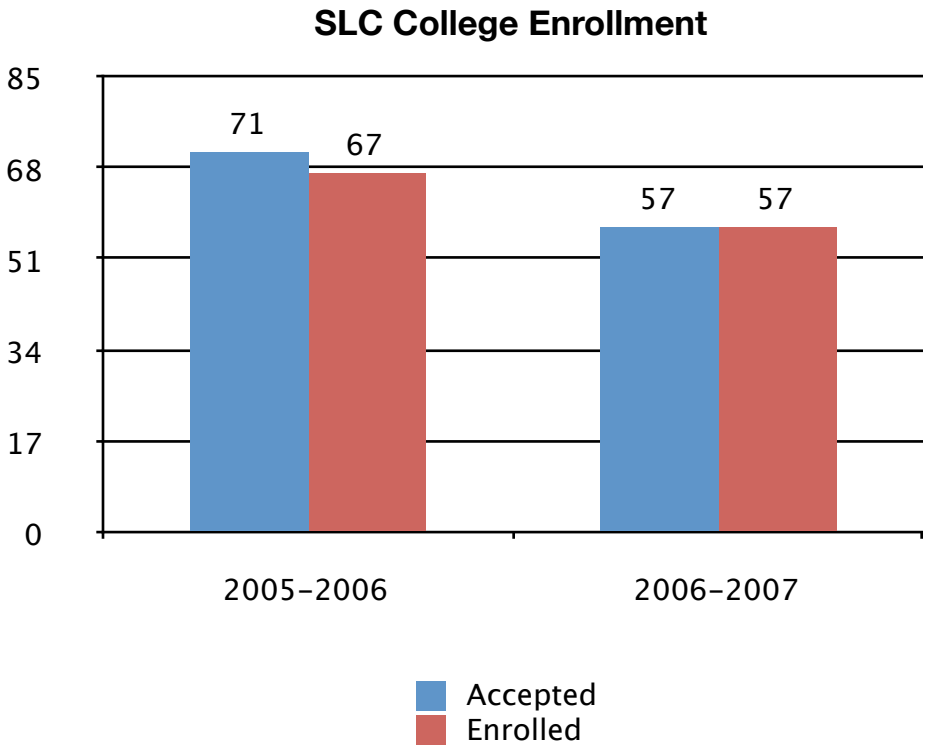


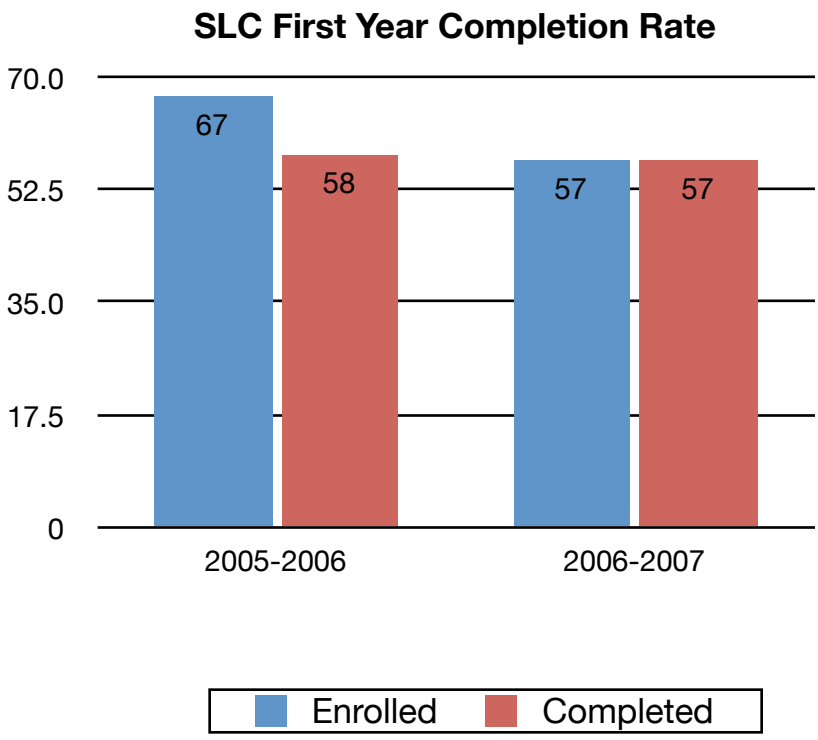



SLC College Applications
100
75
50
25
0
83
100
68
68
79
79
2005-2006
2006-2007
2007-2008
Applied to College
Senior Enrollment


Whole School College Applications
500
375
250
125
0
281
427
259
291
265
372
2005-2006
2006-2007
2007-2008
Applied to College
Senior Enrollment


SLC College Acceptance Rate
90.0
67.5
45.0
22.5
0
83
71
68
57
2005-2006
2006-2007
Applied
Accepted


SLC College Enrollment
85
68
51
34
17
0
71
67
57
57
2005-2006
2006-2007
Accepted
Enrolled


SLC First Year Completion Rate
70.0
52.5
35.0
17.5
0
67
58
57
57
2005-2006
2006-2007
Enrolled
Completed