

DRAFT

**Educational Equity in Marin
Marin Education Fund
July 2005**

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I. THE GOAL OF EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

WHAT EDUCATIONAL EQUITY LOOKS LIKE

Educational equity is achieved when all students, regardless of race/ethnicity or socio-economic status, have equal opportunity and access to pursue educational pathways. A society with educational equity would have a variety of educational attainment, but there would be no demographic patterns associated with these levels. African-Americans would be just as likely to achieve MBAs as Asians; Hispanic/Latino students would be just as likely as White students to graduate from 4-year universities. An educationally equitable society is one in which factors such as race or ethnicity are not predictors of educational attainment or success.

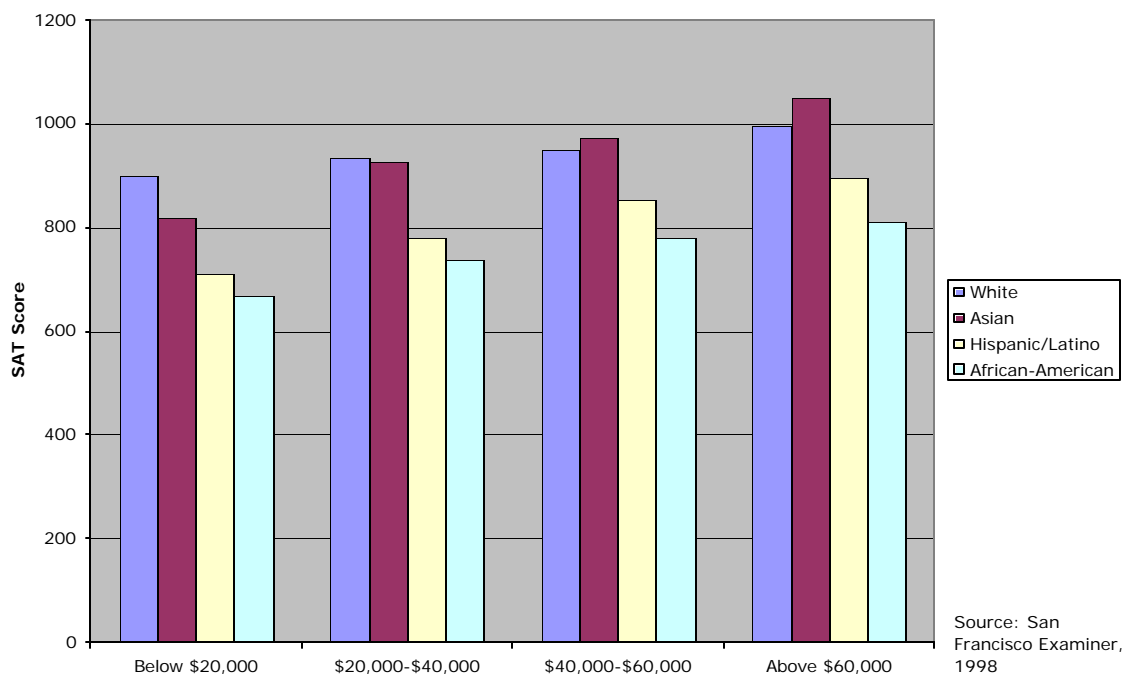
Currently, we live in a world in which background has a large influence over educational experience. Despite some strides in our country's educational system, a large achievement gap persists on indicators of educational achievement. The term achievement gap refers to the difference in academic achievement between White, Asian (specifically Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans), and economically advantaged students and their African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Southeast Asian and socio-economically disadvantaged counterparts. The achievement gap appears on every widely used measurement of academic achievement, from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to the SAT, as well as additional indicators such as high school graduation rates or college-ready course enrollments. Alarming, the achievement gap widens as children go through the school system. Nationwide, African-American children average one year behind white students in second or third grade; by twelfth grade, they have fallen to three or four years behind. The average African-American or Hispanic/Latino student graduates from high school with the math, reading, and vocabulary skills of a typical white eighth grade student¹

Though there are certainly gaps between socioeconomic strata, race/ethnicity is, in many ways, the most recalcitrant and entrenched descriptor of the achievement gap. Even when controlling for families' education backgrounds or socioeconomic status, gaps among racial/ethnic groups persist². Looking at average SAT scores reveals this gap.

¹ National Center for Education Statistics, 1995, 1998.

² C. Jencks, & M. Phillips, (Eds.) *The Black White Test Score Gap*, Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1998.

Average SAT Scores by Parental Income and Race/Ethnicity



Of families all earning under \$20,000, there is a 233-point gap between the highest performing subgroup—whites—and the lowest—African-Americans. That gap actually widens when examining children from families all earning above \$60,000, with a 240-point difference between the highest performing subgroup—Asians—and the lowest—African-Americans³. These differences in achievement cannot be attributed to poverty; even middle-class children of color lag significantly behind their white counterparts⁴.

Happily, there are pockets of success that demonstrate this gap is not inevitable. Individual schools throughout the nation are challenging this pattern and some are meeting with excellent outcomes, eliminating the achievement gap completely with their students⁵. Certain educational interventions, such as the Success For All reading program, are having some success at challenging the predictive qualities of students' backgrounds, demonstrating that all kids can learn at high levels. The challenge now is to replicate these successes across the greater population, helping all kids benefit from equal access to education.

WHY PURSUE EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

³ The San Francisco Examiner, June 1998.

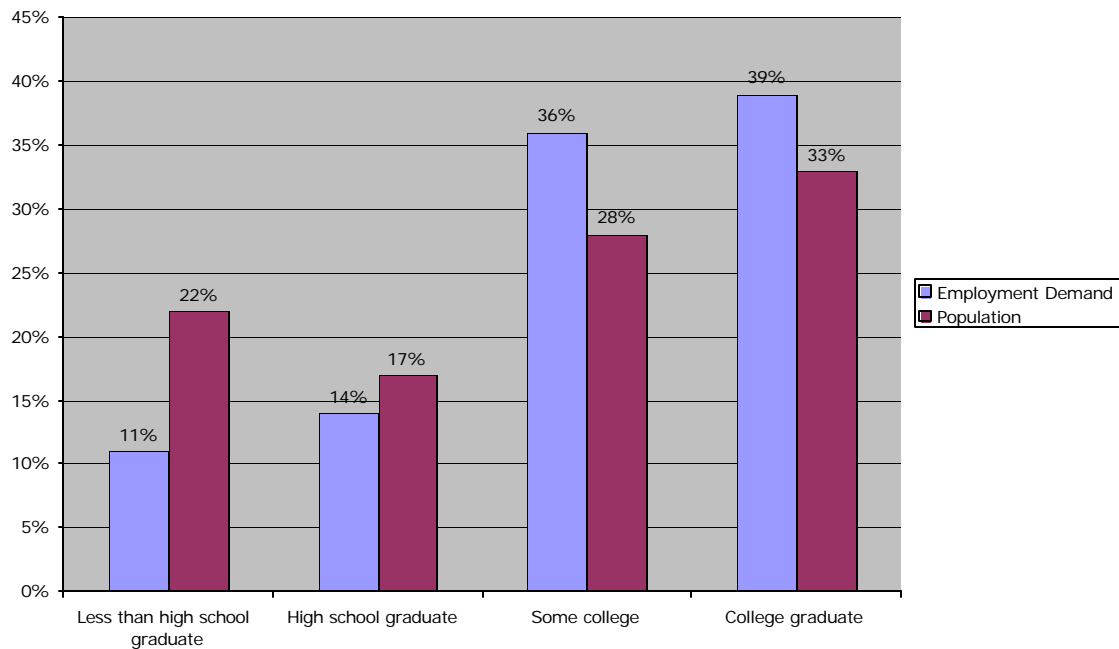
⁴ Noguera & Akom, 2000.

⁵ Carter, Samuel Casey. (2000). *No Excuses: Lessons from 21 High-Performing, High-Poverty Schools*. Washington DC: The Heritage Foundation; Ferguson, R. (1998). *Can Schools Narrow the Black-White Test Score Gap?* In C. Jencks, & M. Phillips, (Eds.) *The Black-White Test Score Gap*. Washington DC: The Brookings Institution. pp. 318-374.

There are a host of reasons—democratic, economic, legal, and moral—why educational equity is both a worthy and a necessary goal to pursue. Educational equity is at the heart of a truly healthy, participatory democracy. Not only do voices from all segments of society need to be heard for full representation, but the bar for being an educated, voting citizen keeps rising. The ability to understand the complexities of a globalized world and, therefore, the ability to be an informed participant in democracy, requires not just the ability to read, write and do basic math but higher-order, analytical thinking skills. Our nation is one of few in world attempting this ideal of a participatory democracy; it’s part of what makes our country unique and ambitious and it necessitates closing the achievement gap.

There’s also a host of economic realities behind the goal of educational equity. It’s not just a moral or philosophical vision of a utopian world; it’s about having a workforce with skills that can meet the demands of the modern economy. A high school diploma no longer means what it used to; the real value of a high school diploma has actually declined over the last 30 years.⁶ With the current shift away from manufacturing and toward service-related industries, the demand for college-educated workers is projected to grow 30% in the next 15 years.⁷

Education Projections for 2020: Employment Demand vs. Population



⁶ R. Murnane and F. Levy, *Teaching the New Basic Skills*, New York: The Free Press, 1996.

⁷ Public Policy Institute of California, “Just the Facts: California’s Future Economy”, June 2005.

There is also a direct relationship between education and income level. 90% of individuals in the top two income quartiles are high school graduates. In 1996, the average salary for a high school drop out was \$12,962, compared to an average annual income of \$20,104 for those with only a high school diploma. There is also a clear, inverse relationship between level of education and the unemployment rate, with those without a high school diploma dramatically more likely to be unable to find work than those with more schooling.

Finally, we now have a national mandate for educational equity. It's no longer a few organizations or individuals on the sidelines crying out about injustices; in 2000 the federal government passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB's stated goals are ambitious: "designed to help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers, the new law will change the culture of America's schools so that they define their success in terms of student achievement and invest in the achievement of every child"(Department of Education website). For the first time in history, the US government has established measurable goals around closing the achievement gap, measured by student performance on annual standardized testing.

NCLB's requirements have focused new attention on equity. All students are now expected to be at advanced or proficient on state standards in 12 years, with the bar rising incrementally toward 100% each year. All subgroups are being held to the same high standards, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and all racial/ethnic and socio-economic groups. The federal government has also put in place a variety of sanctions for poor performance, ranging from increased choice for parents to opt out of low-performing schools to school-takeover after repeated poor performance. Now, as never before, the education community is pursuing educational equity as not just an idealized goal but also a concrete necessity to stay afloat in the current political climate.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY IN MARIN COUNTY

Marin County is overflowing with opportunity; it presents a rare confluence of resources, skill and will. As the wealthiest county in the state of California, Marin has a unique set of resources available for its children. It also has the commitment to being the kind of community in which everyone wants to live. Marin holds itself to a high standard; it is a high-end outlier in the state and nation. What better place to achieve high-end goals than Marin County?

II. SEVEN KEY INDICATORS OF EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

What's the best way to measure educational equity? It's certainly tempting to make the lens wide. Research has shown that the pathway to higher education starts early; indicators such as prenatal care and pre-K programs all matter tremendously. Reading by 3rd grade is another key early indicator for lifelong educational success. This analysis, however, endeavors to hone in on a few key indicators at the heart of educational equity related to higher educational attainment. The hope is that by isolating some core

indicators we can also isolate some key action steps on which Marin County can move forward to promote educational equity.

With that goal in mind, we chose to focus on educational indicators beginning in 7th grade; looking at the middle and upper grades gives a stark and centralized portrait of educational opportunities and barriers. There are many ways to look at educational success, and standardized tests certainly have limitations. To address this, we have included seven indicators which look at a broad spectrum of aspects under the umbrella of educational opportunity: student mastery of state standards in English Language Arts and Math, student mastery of basic English Language Arts and Math requirements to graduate from high school, the rate at which students are dropping out of high school, the caliber of coursework which students are completing upon high school graduation, the percentage of high school graduates entering four-year colleges, and finally the percentage of the general population with a postsecondary education.

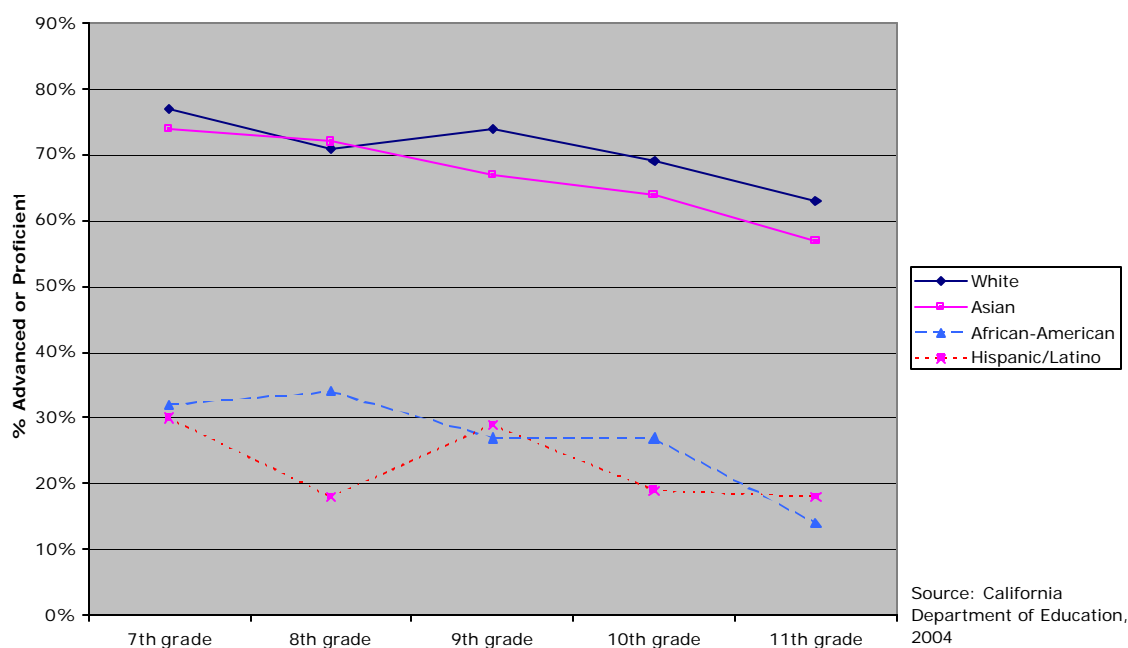
A. ACHIEVEMENT IN MIDDLE AND UPPER GRADES

1. CALIFORNIA STANDARDS TEST, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Literacy—the ability to read and write with competence and skill—is a prerequisite for all learning. The chief way in which this skill is measured for students in California is through the California Standards Test in English Language Arts. This test is given annually, in the springtime, for all students in grades 2-11. California’s standards are considered to be some of the more rigorous in the nation⁸, therefore standards-aligned assessments are similarly challenging. As was stated above, all subgroups are expected to meet benchmarks for “advanced” or “proficient”. For the year 2004, the last year for which we currently have data, the benchmark was to have all subgroups at 16.5% advanced or proficient on English Language Arts and 16.5% on Math. To analyze the gateway grades for higher education, we analyzed student performance in grades 7-11.

⁸ Quality Counts, annual EdWeek publication; Fordham Foundation’s various reports on standards, including most recent Stotsky, Sandra, “The State of State English Standards”, The Fordham Foundation, January, 2005.

Marin County California Standards English Language Arts Performance



The achievement gap on this indicator is immediately apparent, with White and Asian students in Marin County performing an average of 40 percentile points above their Hispanic/Latino and African-American counterparts. How are Marin's subgroups doing in comparison to other counties?

White students in Marin County do the best of any student subgroups in any other county in the state of California. In every middle and upper-level grade, 7-11, White students in Marin score #1. Others in the top five are some Bay Area counties – San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Mateo – and some from Southern California – Santa Barbara and Ventura. Between two-thirds to three-quarters of Marin County's White students score at advanced and proficient on English Language Arts in every middle and upper-level grade; the state average hovers around 50%. The county's consistency with this subgroup is remarkable as well; only one other county, San Francisco, is even in the top five for all of the middle and upper grades.

Asian students in Marin County also score higher than Asian students in almost every other county. In most of the upper grades, Asian students in Marin County score second, just after Ventura County. The lowest ranking this subgroup falls to is 7th, with counties such as Ventura, San Mateo and Orange performing slightly higher for 9th grade test scores. From about three-fifths to nearly three-quarters of Marin County's Asian students score at advanced and proficient on English Language arts in the middle and upper grades; the state average for these grades is mostly just above 50%.

The picture is different for African-American and Hispanic/Latino students in Marin. Significantly greater numbers of African-American and Hispanic/Latino students in other counties are outperforming Marin Counties' African-American and Hispanic/Latino students. Frequently, students in these subgroups in Marin County are in the 2nd or 3rd quartile statewide, with 20 to 30 counties achieving at higher rates.

Hispanic/Latino students in Marin County are never in the top five for the middle and upper grades on the English Language Arts standards test. In two grades Hispanic/Latino students in Marin are in the top ten counties with about 30% scoring at advanced and proficient. In the other three grades Hispanic/Latino students in Marin are in the middle, almost exactly at state average with only about one-fifth at advanced or proficient. The worst ranking is in 8th grade, with 31 out of 55 counties achieving higher scores with their Hispanic/Latino students. Counties that consistently⁹ outperform Marin include: Contra Costa, El Dorado, Humboldt, Imperial, Placer, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, Shasta, and Solano. Of these, Placer County, to the northeast of Marin, is an intriguing comparison: with more than twice as many Hispanic/Latino students, at every grade level Hispanic/Latino achievement in Placer County is higher than Hispanic/Latino achievement in Marin, with a difference of up to 11 percentage points.

African-American students in Marin County fare about as well as their Hispanic/Latino counterparts. They are never in the top five counties; for two grades African-American students in Marin are in the top ten counties, one in the top third, another right in the middle and, sadly, in 11th grade African-American students in Marin are near the bottom, 33rd out of the 40 counties with African-American students. About one-quarter to one-third of Marin's African-American students score at Advanced or Proficient on the ELA standards test in middle and upper grades, which is slightly above the state's average. The one exception is 11th grade, where Marin's African-American students are below state average, with only 14% scoring advanced or proficient. Counties that consistently outperform Marin include: Orange, Placer, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Stanislaus, Ventura, and Yolo. In Ventura County, White and Asian students score comparably to Marin's but its African-American students do significantly better in every grade, ranging from 30-40% at advanced or proficient. In 11th grade, Ventura's African-American students do more than twice as well as Marin's, with 31% at advanced or proficient instead of just 14%.

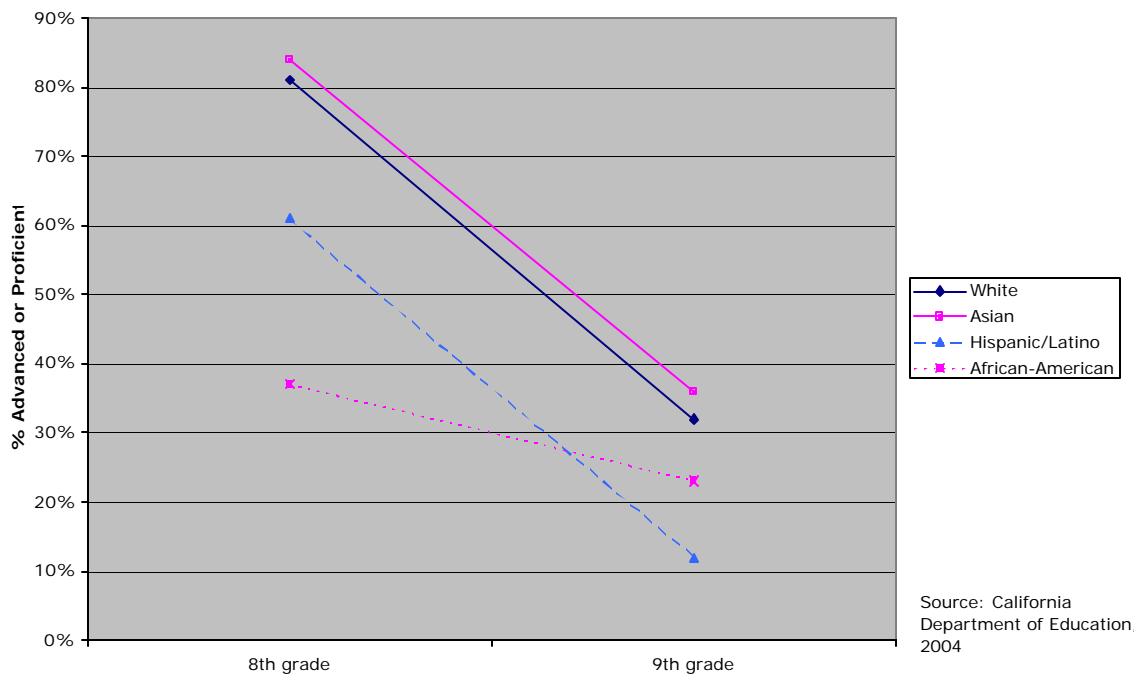
2. CALIFORNIA STANDARDS TEST, MATH

To measure math performance at the middle and upper grade levels, the California Standards Tests are statewide benchmark available for comparison. There are, however, several different subject tests. While students in grades 2-7 simply take a standardized math test, starting in grade 8 students take subject-specific exams including Algebra I and II, General Mathematics, Geometry. Research has shown that Algebra I is a gatekeeper for higher education; these findings have prompted the state of California to embed

⁹ "Consistent" is defined as higher performance than Marin County for a minimum of three out of the five grade levels studied.

Algebra I into 8th grade standards, requiring mastery of Algebra I to graduate from high school, as measured on the California High School Exit Exam. Though Algebra I is intended to be an 8th grade standard, it is frequently taken in later grades by students who are not at grade-level, which is one indicator of the achievement gap. Far greater percentages of African-American and Hispanic/Latino students take Algebra I in 9th, 10th or even 11th grade than their White and Asian counterparts. Conversely, far fewer White and Asian students take the General Mathematics standards test, which tests 6th and 7th grade math skills; by the time they reach middle grades the majority are more advanced. To capture mastery of this core math skill, we have analyzed at Algebra I test scores in grades 8 and 9. One aspect to note prior to looking at scores in separate subgroups is that passing rates are almost always higher in 8th than 9th, reflecting the fact that students taking the exam in 8th grade tend to be stronger math students, working at grade-level.

Marin County California Standards Algebra I Test Performance



In both 8th and 9th grade, White and Asian students perform better than Hispanic/Latino and African American students. In 8th grade, the high performing subgroups have about 45 percentage points more at advanced or proficient than African-Americans, and about 20 percentage points higher than Hispanic-Latinos. In 9th grade, the gap narrows to about 10-20 percentage points but achievement over all subgroups drops dramatically. How's Marin doing compared to other counties?

In 8th grade, the grade at which the state of California wants all students to be taking the Algebra I standards test, White students in Marin County do the best of any student subgroups in any other county. Out of the 728 students taking the exam, 82% scored at advanced or proficient; the next highest-scoring county is San Francisco with 71% of

students scoring at advanced and proficient. In 9th grade, one year below grade-level, less white students took the exam. Out of the 645 taking it, 32% scored at advanced or proficient. Six counties had higher passage rates, three of them with over 65 students taking the exam: Tuolumne (39%), San Francisco (38%) and Yolo (34%).

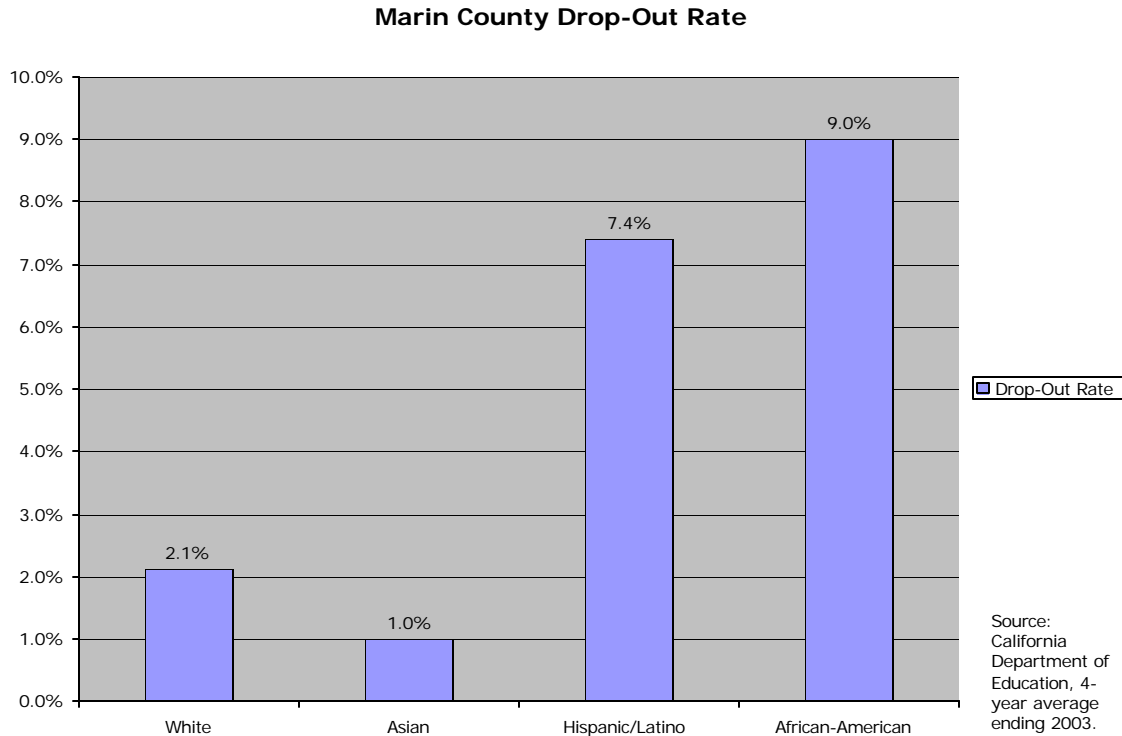
Asian students in Marin County also score higher than Asian students in almost every other county. In 8th grade, 85% of the 70 Asian students in Marin County taking the Algebra I exam score at advanced or proficient. Only one county scores higher, Santa Cruz, with just 36 Asian students taking the exam scoring one percentage point higher, 85%. In 9th grade only 50 Asian students in Marin took the Algebra I test, showing that the majority in this subgroup are at grade-level in their math coursework. 36% scored at advanced or proficient. 10 counties had higher passage rates in 9th grade, including San Mateo County (49%), Orange County (47%), and San Francisco County (46%).

African-Americans taking Algebra I in Marin rank in the top 5 for passage rates compared with counties statewide with African-American students, totaling 32. In 8th grade, 37% of the 30 African-American students in Marin taking the Algebra I exam scored at advanced or proficient. Four counties scored higher, most with less African-American students taking the exam than Marin. Orange County is the one with more students than Marin – 128 – and a higher advanced or proficient rate, 46%. In 9th grade slightly less African-American students take the exam – 26 – and the passage rate drops to 23%. Four counties outperform Marin, again only one with more students: Placer County with 24% at advanced or proficient.

The data for Hispanic/Latino students in Marin are mixed. The good news is in 8th grade this subgroup outperforms all other counties in the state; of the 42 Hispanic/Latino students taking the test, 61% score at advanced and proficient. The next-best performing counties are San Luis Obispo (53%) and Sonoma (49%). The bad news is that Marin County actually has the worst track record in terms of disproportionate enrollment of Hispanic/Latinos in 9th grade Algebra out of all California Counties. More than three times the number of Hispanic/Latino students take Algebra I in 9th grade, 134 compared to 42. While most counties in the state do have more Hispanic/Latino students taking Algebra I in 9th grade rather than 8th, none are as disproportionately enrolled in 9th (most range around one and a half times over-enrollment in 9th grade), and 9 counties have more Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in Algebra I in 8th grade than in 9th. The counties getting the majority of their Hispanic/Latino students on grade level for math are Sutter, El Dorado, San Benito, Kings, Colusa, Yolo, Ventura, Humboldt and Kern. Out of the 134 Hispanic/Latino students taking Algebra I in 9th grade, the advanced or proficient rate drops to 12% with 20 counties outperforming Marin. Counties with a larger percentage of Hispanic/Latino students scoring at advanced or proficient on the Algebra I exam in 9th grade include San Luis Obispo (27%), Yuba (25%), El Dorado (21%), Madera (21%), Stanislaus (21%), and Santa Cruz (19%).

3. DROP-OUT RATES

The dropout rate is measured by taking the number of dropouts for one year and extrapolating a four-year average from it. Dropout numbers are difficult to measure and a fierce debate is raging regarding the best way to capture these students. Particularly with increased graduation requirements, there is growing concern that youngsters are leaving the system without being recorded, silently tracking themselves out of most career opportunities. These data come from the California Department of Education; the most recent year for which they are available at the subgroup level is 2002-2003.¹⁰



There is quite a disparity in dropout rates in Marin County, partially because the drop out rate for Whites and Asians is unusually low. The low numbers make for dramatic comparisons; for example, African-Americans are nine times as likely to drop out of high school than their Asian counterparts. How are Marin County's subgroups faring compared to subgroups in other counties?

¹⁰ The 4-year derived dropout rate is an estimate of the percent of students who would drop out in a four-year period based on data collected for a single year. In October 2003, the California Department of Education (CDE) adopted the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) Dropout definition. The CDE now defines a dropout as a person who: 1) Was enrolled in grades 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12 at some time during the previous school year AND left school prior to completing the school year AND has not returned to school as of Information Day. OR 2) Did not begin attending the next grade (7, 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12) in the school to which they were assigned or in which they had pre-registered or were expected to attend by Information Day.

Marin County's drop out rate for White and Asian students is extremely low. The rate for White students is 2.1%; for Asian students it is 1.0%. These rates are far below the state averages of 7.5% and 5.5%, respectively. Most of the counties doing better than Marin on this indicator with these subgroups have very few students enrolled; none of them have more. For example, three counties have slightly lower drop out rates than Marin county for White students, but these counties combined – Glenn, Sierra and Tuolumne – still only have half of Marin county's white enrollment. Of the counties with a lower rate than 1.0% for Asian students, none have more than 135 Asian students enrolled.

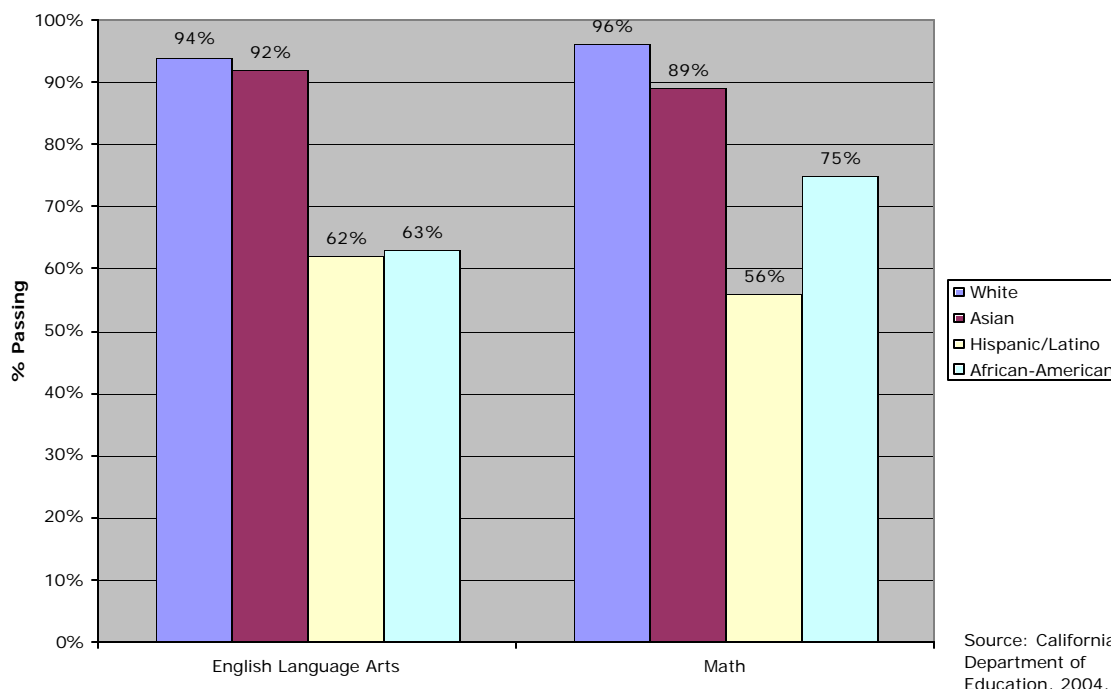
The dropout rate for African-Americans and Hispanic/Latinos in Marin is below the state average, but there is more room for improvement. The African-American dropout rate is 9.0%; statewide it is 22.0%. Still, 16 counties are doing better than Marin, including San Joaquin (4.3%), Santa Cruz (4.6%) and Santa Barbara (6.0%). The Hispanic/Latino dropout rate is 7.4%, significantly lower than the statewide rate of 17.2%. Again, however, 15 counties have a lower Hispanic/Latino dropout rate than Marin, including Colusa (3.3%), Imperial (5.8%), Napa (4.3%), San Joaquin (4.4%), Santa Cruz (2.1%) and Ventura (5.0%).

B. COLLEGE ACCESS

1. CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL EXIT EXAM

The California High School Exit Exam measures students' competency in English Language Arts and Math. It was introduced four years ago and in 2006 passing the CAHSEE will become a requirement for receiving a high school diploma. Students may take either section of the CAHSEE as frequently as they need in order to pass.

Marin County % Passing CAHSEE



The achievement gap in Marin County is once again present on this indicator. White and Asian students perform anywhere from 15 to 40 percentage points higher on the CAHSEE as their Hispanic/Latino and African-American counterparts in the county. The largest gap is in Math between White students, with 96% passing, and Hispanic/Latino students, with 56% passing. How do Marin County's subgroups compare with subgroups in other counties?

White students in Marin County have the highest passing rates out of all California counties. Ninety-four percent of White students pass the Math portion of the exam and 96% pass the English Language Arts section. The next-best performing counties are Ventura County with 92% of White students passing Math and 93% passing English Language Arts, San Mateo County with 93% passing Math and 92% passing English Language Arts, and Santa Cruz County with 91% of White students passing Math and 94% passing English Language Arts.

Asian students in Marin score in the top 10 counties for English Language Arts and top 15 for Math. Of the 132 Asian students in Marin who took the exam in 2004, 92% passed the Math portion of the exam and 89% passed English Language Arts. On the English Language Arts portion of the exam, 9 counties had a higher passage rate, 7 of these with at least 20 Asian students taking the exam. Counties performing at significantly higher than Marin on English Language Arts are Santa Cruz (96%), San Luis Obispo (96%), Ventura (93%) and El Dorado (92%). On the Math section of the CAHSEE, 14 counties had a higher passage rate, 11 of these with at least 20 Asian students taking the exam. Counties performing at significantly higher levels than Marin on the Math section are

Santa Cruz County (99%), San Luis Obispo County (98%), El Dorado County (98%), Ventura County (97%), Orange County (96%), San Mateo County (96%) and Santa Clara County (96%).

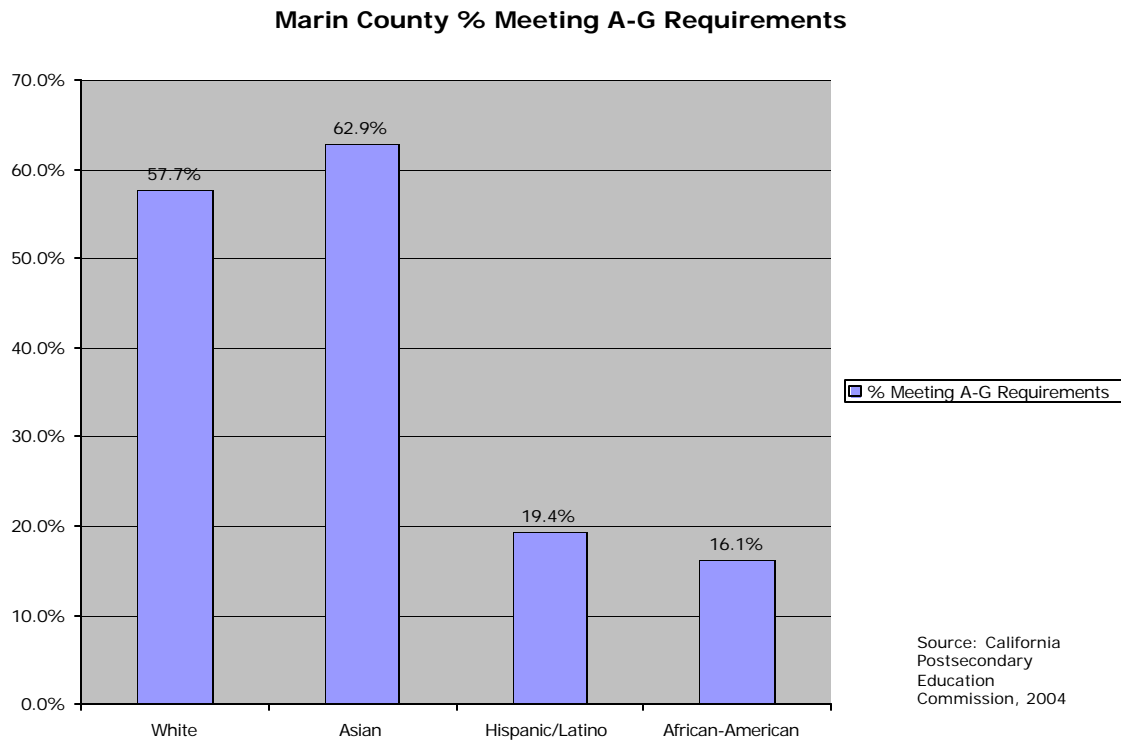
Hispanic/Latino students in Marin rank in the bottom seven counties on English Language Arts passage rates and in the bottom half for Math. Of the 303 Hispanic/Latino students who took the exam in Marin in 2004, 62% passed the Math section and 56% passed the English Language Arts section. On the Math section, 28 counties outperformed Marin. Notable comparison counties include Humboldt County (75%), Placer County (71%), El Dorado County (70%), San Luis Obispo County (69%), Sutter County (69%), Butte County (68%), Orange County (67%), Solano County (67%) and Ventura County (67%). On the English Language Arts section, 47 counties outperformed Marin; only 4 counties had lower passage rates for Hispanic/Latino students than Marin. Of these four, two have less than 50 Hispanic/Latino students taking the exam; the other two are Mendocino County (54%) and Napa County (52%). Every other county had higher passage rates for Hispanic/Latino children on English Language Arts. Notable comparison counties include: San Luis Obispo County (71%), Placer County (70%), Humboldt County (70%), Solano County (68%), El Dorado County (67%), San Benito County (66%), Shasta County (66%), Ventura County (65%), Tehama County (65%), Glenn County (65%), San Bernardino County (64%), San Diego County (64%), Sacramento County (64%), Contra Costa County (64%), Yolo County (64%), Orange County (63%), Santa Barbara County (63%), Santa Clara County (63%), Los Angeles County (62%) and Riverside County (62%).

African-American students in Marin rank in the top ten for counties in English Language Arts and in the top half for Math. Of the 81 African-American students who took the exam in Marin in 2004, 63% passed the Math section and 75% passed the English Language Arts section. On the Math section, 17 of 41 counties outperformed Marin, 16 of which had at least 20 African-American students taking the exam. Notable comparison counties include: Santa Cruz County (80%), Ventura County (72%), El Dorado County (71%), San Luis Obispo County (69%), Orange County (69%), Santa Clara County (68%), Placer County (68%), and Kings County (67%). On the English Language Arts section, 7 counties outperformed Marin, 6 of which had at least 20 African-American students taking the exam. Notable comparison counties are: Santa Cruz County (84%), Imperial County (82%), Sutter County (81%), Santa Barbara County (80%), San Luis Obispo County (78%) and Ventura County (75%).

2. COLLEGE-READY COURSEWORK COMPLETION

An important gatekeeper on the educational equity pathway is whether or not students complete high school with the coursework that enables them to move on to higher education. In California, this gatekeeper is called the “A-G requirements”, a term which refers to the college-preparatory curriculum offered at the high school level. If a student completes A-G requirements, he or she is eligible to apply to CSU or CUs throughout the state; without it, remediation is required. Recognizing the importance of this foundation for educational achievement, more high schools are moving toward attempting to make

the A-G coursework the default curriculum for all students; in the interim, inequities are immediately apparent.



Two to three times as many White and Asian students as Hispanic/Latino and African-American students in Marin graduate having completed A-G requirements. How is Marin doing in comparison to other counties on this indicator?

White students in Marin are in the top three of counties statewide. In 2004, out of the 1,434 White graduates in Marin County, 57.7% had completed UC/CSU required coursework signifying that they are college-ready. Two counties, both with less than half of the number of White graduates, did better: San Francisco (476 graduates, 61.6% met requirements) and Mono (139 graduates, 61.2% met requirements). The county’s Asian students also do well when compared with Asian students in other counties. Of the 97 graduating Asian students in 2004 in Marin, 62.9% met UC/CSU requirements. Five counties had a higher percentage (with an additional three scoring higher with less than 5 Asian students graduating). Comparable counties are: San Mateo (73.4%), Santa Cruz (70%), San Francisco (68.2%), Santa Barbara (67.6%) and Santa Clara (63.5%).

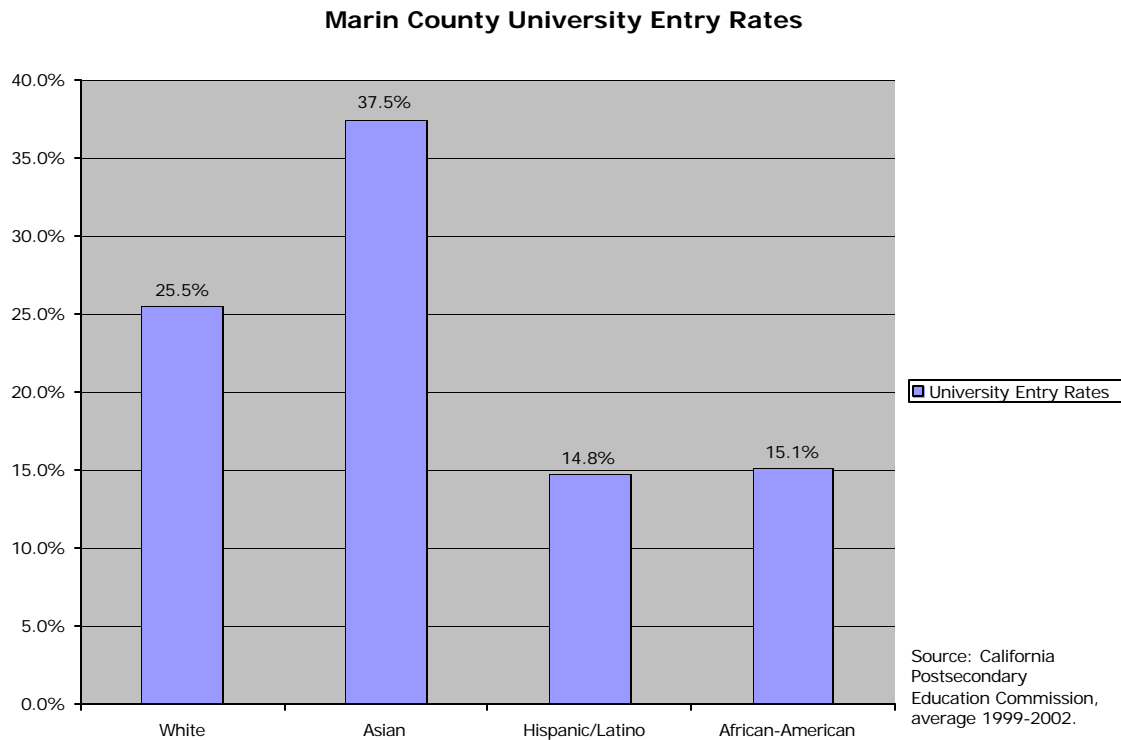
The percentage of college-ready Hispanic/Latino students in Marin is about in the middle when compared to counties statewide; 26 counties have higher rates of coursework completion. Of those with over 10 Hispanic/Latino graduates, 25 do better and 28 do worse. Of the 237 Hispanic/Latino graduates in Marin County, 19.4% graduate having met UC/CSU requirements. Counties doing significantly better than Marin include San

Francisco (34.0%), Los Angeles (26.3%), Glenn (25.7%), San Mateo (25.1%), and Alameda (24.6%).

Marin has a ways to go with its African-American students; 31 counties have higher rates of coursework completion. Of those with over 10 African-American graduates, 25 do better and 14 do worse. Of the 56 African-American graduates in 2004 in Marin, only 16.1% completed UC/CSU requirements. Counties doing significantly better include Imperial County (37.5%), Santa Barbara County (33.6%), Ventura County (32.2%), San Luis Obispo County (31.2%) and Monterey County (31.0%).

3. UNIVERSITY ENTRY RATES

As a four-year college degree becomes increasingly vital to lifelong employment opportunities and a living wage, university entry rates are a key indicator of educational equity. The following statistics were compiled by the California Postsecondary Education Commission. They reflect average percent of students entering the California State University system and the University of California system during the three-year period from 1999-2002. Only subgroups with more than 50 graduates during the three-year period are reported.



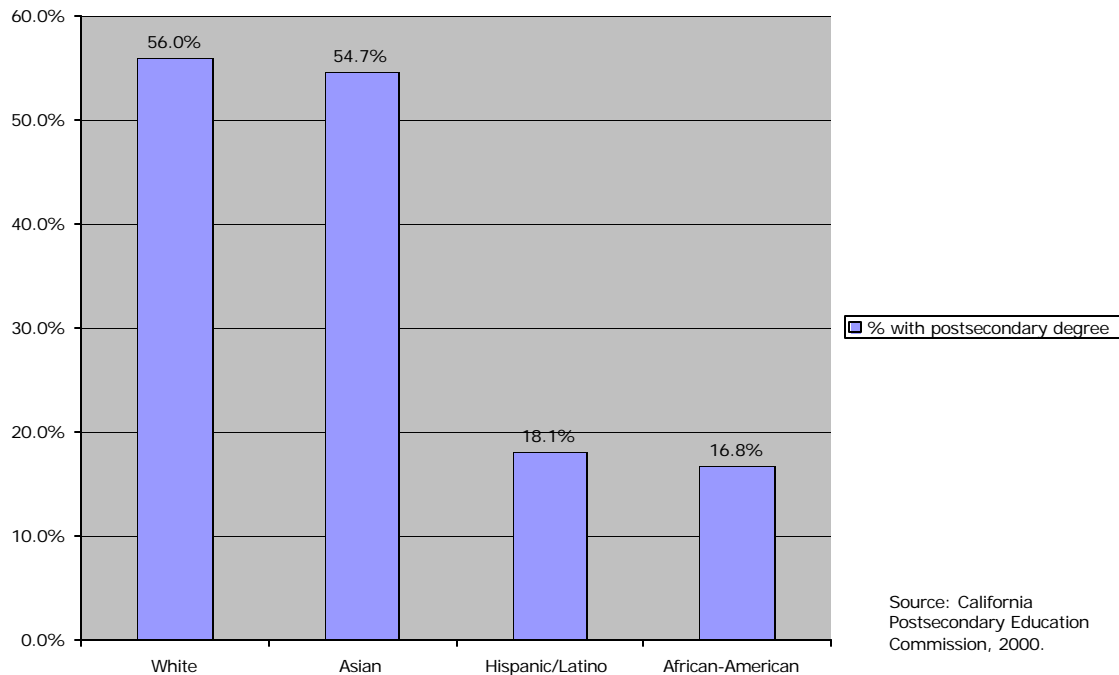
Asian students are a clear standout when looking at just Marin County’s subgroups, with an average university entry rate of 37.5%. White students average 25.5%, and Hispanic/Latino and African-American students are well behind each around 15%. How does Marin County compare with other counties across California?

On this indicator, Marin is toward the top for all subgroups when compared to counties statewide. Marin's white students do the best when compared with like-subgroups in other counties. 25.5% of Marin County's White students enter CSU or UC. Only two counties have higher rates for their White students, both within one percentage point difference: San Francisco County (26.2%) and Yolo County (26.5%). 37.5% of Marin County's Asian students enter CSU or UC. Seven out of 41 counties have higher entry rates for Asian students, including Madera (48.3%), Santa Cruz (43.0%), San Francisco (40.6%), Yolo (40.1%) and Riverside (39.5%).

University entry rates for Hispanic/Latino students in Marin are in top ten compared with Hispanic/Latino students in other counties. 14.8% of Hispanic/Latino students enter the CSU or UC system. Nine counties out of 52 have higher entry rates for Hispanic/Latino students, including Humboldt (26.2%), Glenn (21.7), Colusa (20.1%), Calaveras (19.2), Butte (17.7%), and San Francisco (17.0%). University entry rates for African-American students in Marin are second quartile for counties statewide. 15.1% of African-American students in Marin enter CSU or UC. Eight of 33 counties do better than this, including Yolo (23.4%), Santa Cruz (21.0%), Sonoma (18.4%), Madera (17.8%), San Francisco (16.8%) and Placer (16.2%).

C. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The final educational equity indicator we analyzed was the percentage of the general population with a bachelor's degree or higher. Data is from the US Census collected in 2000, and reflects educational attainment for individuals aged 25 and up. This indicator is helpful in understanding the overall educational composition of a region, and can suggest the need for more opportunities for continuing adult education.

Marin County % over 25 with postsecondary degree

Here we see Marin County's White and Asian populations have 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 times the postsecondary degree attainment of Marin's African-American and Hispanic/Latino counterparts. How do these subpopulations fare when compared with like subgroups in counties across the state?

Marin County's White population is highly educated; 56% have a postsecondary degree. Only one county, San Francisco, is higher with 63.2%. Marin's Asian population is also right at the top, with 54.7% having a postsecondary degree; only one county has both a double-digit Asian population and a higher rate of attainment: Yolo (55.3%).

The educational level for Hispanic/Latinos in Marin is also among the highest in the state; 18.1% have a postsecondary degree. Two counties have a higher educational attainment rate for Hispanic/Latinos: San Francisco (20.3%) and Mariposa (19.6%).

The general education level of African-Americans in Marin is in the 2nd quartile of counties statewide. Of the 38 counties with over 1,000 African-Americans in the total population, 12 have higher rates of educational attainment and 25 have lower rates. 16.8% of Marin's adult African-American population have a postsecondary degree or higher. Other counties with over 1,000 African-Americans in the total population and a higher educational attainment rate include Placer (39.4%), Santa Clara (29.7%), Orange (27.6%), Ventura (27.1%) and Santa Cruz (22.7%).

III. GOALS, RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

It's clear in looking at every indicator that there is an achievement gap between Whites and Asians in Marin and African-Americans and Hispanic/Latinos living in the same county. Improvement is needed in every area. Instead of becoming overwhelmed, however, the following are a few key areas on which Marin can focus. In these four areas, significant investments can operate levers to accelerate educational equity in the county. The following are essential areas for improvement to address weakest links in Marin's system.

Four areas where Marin has the greatest opportunity to grow

1. Improve African-American and Hispanic/Latino Achievement in English Language Arts.

This is a broad goal, but performance on the California Standards English Language Arts Test makes it clear that Marin has an opportunity gap that is in immediate need of being addressed. Marin County's White students are number one across all middle and upper grades and its Asian students are consistently in the top ten, but Hispanic/Latino and African-American students are around and even sometimes below average. One specific area of weakness is African-American performance on English Language Arts in the 11th grade, which is near the lowest in the state. What kinds of supports can be put in place now to help accelerate the performance in reading and writing for Hispanic/Latino and African-American students in Marin? An instrumental next step would be investigating how those counties with significantly higher performance than Marin are achieving at much higher rates with these student subgroups. There's no reason Marin County can't be number one across the board.

2. Increase Hispanic/Latino Enrollment in Algebra I in the 8th Grade.

Marin county has the worst track record in the state for over-enrolling Hispanic/Latino students in Algebra I a year behind, in 9th grade. Over three times as many Hispanic/Latino students take Algebra I in 9th rather than 8th grade. Additionally troubling, though Hispanic/Latino students taking Algebra I at grade-level score at some of the highest levels in the state, this rate reaching advanced or proficient drops to 12% in 9th grade. If Marin can get the majority of its White, Asian and African-American students enrolled in grade-level math classes, it can do the same for its Hispanic/Latino children.

3. Decrease African-American and Hispanic/Latino Drop Out Rates

Again, here is an area in which Marin County is at the very top for its White and Asian children and in the second quartile for African-American and Hispanic/Latino children. How are the 15-16 counties that are doing better than Marin, keeping more of their kids in school? The next step is looking into what these counties are doing – do they have more supports, more targeted policies? – and replicating them here in Marin. If we can be have some of the lowest drop out rates in the state for White and Asian teens, why not African-American and Hispanic/Latino? Dropping out of high school is the equivalent of a fast track to poverty; in a county where the median household income and housing prices are right at the top of the state, we simply afford a lower standard for our African-American and Hispanic/Latino high school students.

4. Increase African-American and Hispanic/Latino Completion of A-G Requirements
African-Americans in Marin are in the bottom half of the state for completing college-ready coursework. Several counties with as many or more African-American students have more than double the number of African-Americans graduating with requirements. Again, on this indicator White and Asian students are at the top. Hispanic/Latino students are also in need of improvement, though when compared statewide they are above average. Increased scaffolding and fluid tracking can ensure that all students have access college-ready curriculum. These reforms are part of a necessary re-conceptualization of high school as springboard to further education and training, helping all graduates have multiple options.

If Not Here in Marin, Where?

Marin County is a resource-rich community with the willpower and resources to make change happen. We are at an exciting crossroads, with a policy context through No Child Left Behind and an economy rapidly advancing toward college completion as a necessity propelling us toward a society that can no longer tolerate race-based achievement gaps. Why not mobilize the vast array of Marin's resources to close the gap? Marin has the parcel taxes and community-based foundations, the small class sizes and active parent involvement to provide enough support for all students to achieve at high levels. Marin also has a wealth of community-based organizations to provide external pressures and supports to the traditional educational system. With organizations such as the Canal Alliance, Crossroads, Isoji, Making Waves, Community Action Marin, School Linked Services, Marin Education Fund, the Marin Educational Task Force and Parent Services Project, Marin County can operate from a solid infrastructure to do what some others might see as impossible. Marin is in a unique position to realize the American dream, guaranteeing equality of opportunity for all children.