



The Alliance for Regional Collaboration to Heighten Educational Success (ARCHES) is a voluntary confederation of collaboratives focused on improving student outcomes and closing the achievement gap through collective action among schools, community colleges, baccalaureate-granting colleges and universities, business, and community and family-centered organizations.

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT'S LOCAL DISTRICT 2 COLLABORATIVE

History

In 2005, several education, community-based organizations, and a coalition of businesses in the San Fernando Valley became concerned about the high attrition rates among students in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Because Algebra I correlated strongly with these high attrition rates, this collective initiated the Student Improvement Through Teacher Empowerment (SITTE) initiative to improve high school graduation rates by enhancing student performance in Algebra through supporting teachers to develop innovative approaches in their classrooms.

This approach's effectiveness over an inter-session at one school led to a set of principles to guide this project into a general approach to designing interventions for students:

- Teachers need to both develop and implement interventions to improve student achievement;
- Gains in student achievement are most likely to occur from a collaborative process rather than from implementation of externally-generated programs; and,
- Combining resources can generate multiple and complementary efforts.

Members

The initial members of this collaborative include Los Angeles Unified School District-Local District 2, Project GRAD Los Angeles, California State University, Northridge, Los Angeles Mission College, and the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley. Recently, the Valley Education Collaborative and the Urban Education Partnership have joined as well.

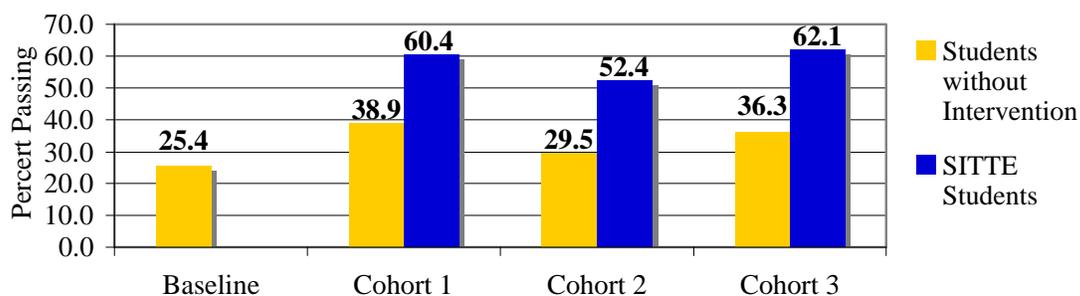
Demographics of the Region

Located in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles, with a population of two million residents, Local District 2 serves over 106,000 students. Latino students comprise 97 percent of the school population and 90 percent of students qualify for free- or reduced-lunch programs.

Impact

Beginning in 2006, this embryonic collective became an ARCHES-ENLACE grantee. In its early stage, SITTE's effectiveness was evident through comparisons presented in Display 1 with respect to the performance of high school students who had failed Algebra previously but were subject to the intervention and similar students who were not SITTE-participants.

Display 1
Pass Rates in Algebra I for Two Groups of Students Assessed as "Not Ready" for the Course

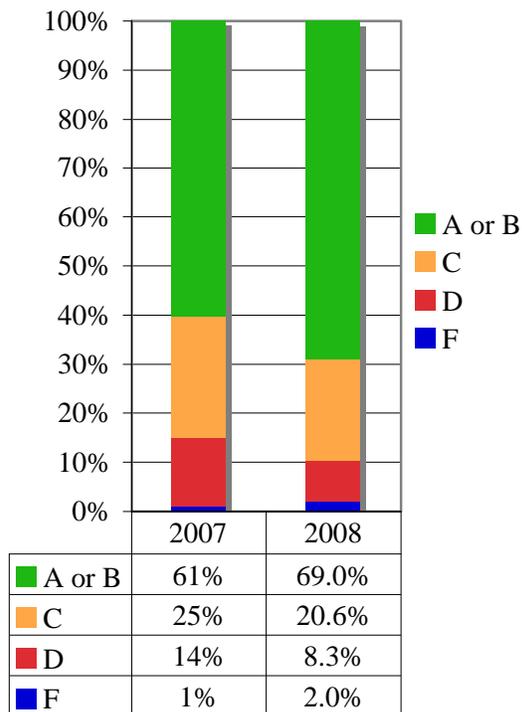


- SITTE students passed Algebra I at a rate at least 50 percent higher than did the group of non-participating students previously judged as not ready for Algebra.
- Each comparative cohort evidences the same trend suggesting that the effects of SITTE were consistent over time despite the inevitable changes in personnel and the learning histories of students measured at different times and under varying circumstances.

As SITTE matured, it became more comprehensive and innovative. At the direction of the district superintendent, the collaborative shifted its focus to support students *before* they failed Algebra. With this new focus, the collaborative initiated the Developing Resources and Engaging Activities to Motivate Students (DREAMS) Project. This summer project prepared low performing middle school students for Algebra through rigorous standards-based curriculum, relevant applications to robotics, and relationship building with teachers.

The positive outcomes continued as presented on Display 2 in terms of the grades earned in Algebra I by two cohorts of students in the year after participating DREAMS.

Display 2
Grades Earned by DREAMS Students in Algebra I in 2007



- In 2007, 99 percent of DREAMS students passed Algebra I the following semester. Of that percentage, 86 percent earned at least a C in this course.
- Last year, the performance of students surpassed that of the 2007 cohort. Almost 90 percent of the students earned at least a C in the Algebra I course.
- Although not presented in this Display, two-thirds of the students who enrolled in Geometry in the ninth grade passed that course. In that regard, these students were on the path to complete the sequence of courses required for admission to the state's public universities.

As such, the success experienced by this collaborative has gained national attention and was highlighted as an example of a successful intervention in the report of the United Way of Greater Los Angeles entitled *Seizing the Middle Ground*.

Future Initiatives

- Incorporate the summer collaborative strategy into the academic year at each participating school.
- Expand this intervention model to more schools not only in District 2 but throughout Los Angeles Unified School District.
- Institutionalize the principles developed through this collaborative into the District's instructional plan that would involve re-defining the role of district mathematics coaches to facilitate professional collaboration among teachers.