



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.

TULARE-KINGS COUNTY P-16 NETWORK FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

History

In 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger announced the formation of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley to improve the economic, social, and environmental quality of life in that region. In responding to the Governor's initiative, the Tulare County Office of Education, in conjunction with the Kings County Office of Education, formed a regional collaborative to focus on the readiness of high school students for employment and educational transition. The activities characterizing this collaborative for four years are:

- develop common student success benchmarks for all collaborative members;
- implement a data sharing and analysis process through Cal-PASS;
- design interventions and staff development in English and mathematics;
- create projects using a cohort model for articulation, dual enrollment, collegiate counseling, testing, and remedial services with partnership high schools;
- establish multiple pathways in high schools with career themes; and,
- monitor programs and services to identify barriers that limit student access.

Membership

This Network consists of four school districts, Kings and Tulare county offices of education and their supported schools, College of the Sequoias, Porterville College, California State University, Fresno, University of California, Merced, economic development and job training agencies, chambers of commerce, and community agencies.

Demographics

These counties have an agriculturally-based economy with the highest level of poverty in the San Joaquin Valley. Accompanying this income disadvantage are low college-going rates and high levels of remediation needed in basic skills. As in other parts of this Valley, Latino students comprise the predominant group among the approximately 37,000 enrollees in the secondary schools in these counties.

Impact

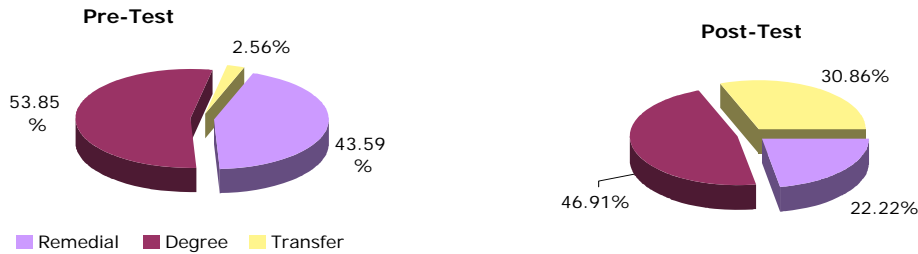
In 2006, the Tulare County Office of Education received an ARCHES-ENLACE grant based upon its analysis of existing data and the piloting of several readiness initiatives. The focus of the ARCHES grant was to enhance the preparation of students in mathematics at two transition points: Eighth Grade Algebra and Community College Mathematics Enrollment. Each of these efforts are discussed separately below, but they are, in fact, intertwined both conceptually and programmatically in the activities of this Network.

Community College Placements in Mathematics

Display 1 on the next page presents information on the change in placements at local community colleges on the basis of an intervention by this Network for 105 students. An explanatory note: the term "Degree" connotes course credits for an Associates of Arts Degree.

- After a focused intervention that included a Community College Bridge Program with associated services, 83 percent of the 105 students improved their scores on a community college mathematics test that resulted in course placements at least one level higher than before the intervention.

Display 1
Performance on College Mathematics Readiness Pre- and Post-Test



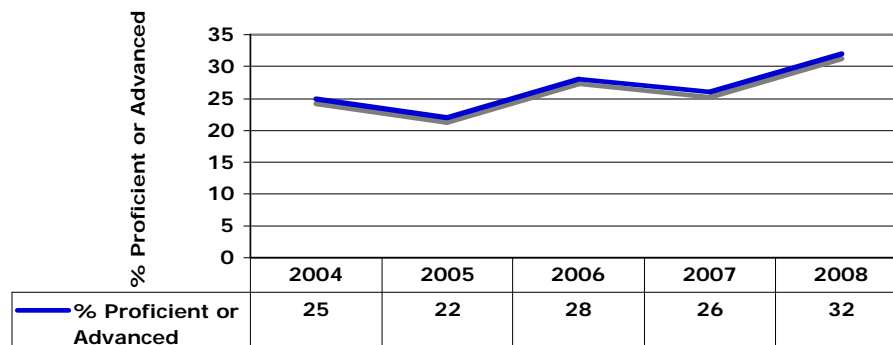
- Eighty-nine percent of Latino students improved their scores on a community college mathematics test such that their course placements were at least one level higher than before the intervention.
- The percent of participating students who were ready for transfer-level courses increased from 2.6 percent to 30.9 percent after the intervention.

Eighth Grade Algebra

Because of its effort to improve placement of high school graduates in mathematics courses at local community colleges described above, this Network began focusing on improving Algebra readiness for transitioning eighth graders. The results of an Algebra Readiness Pilot Program were positive: on a Mathematics Diagnostic Placement Test for Algebra Readiness -- a 50-question multiple choice test -- significant improvement was noted in which the mean post-test scores of 26 students was 10 points higher than their pre-test scores.

Display 2 presents trends in these two counties in the proportion of eighth graders who scored at least Proficient on California Standards Tests for the past five years. The proportion of

Display 2
Proportion of All Eighth Grade Students Scoring at the Proficient or Advanced Level on the California Standards Test in Algebra 1 in Tulare and Kings Counties



eighth graders who scored at the Proficient or Advanced levels on the Algebra portion of the California Standards Test rose from 22 percent in 2005 to 32 percent (from 1,062 to 1,744 students)

Future Initiatives

- Expand efforts to improve performance in mathematics through specific and focused interventions at the Algebra I level, especially for seventh and eighth graders, and at community college placement level.
- Analyze college preparatory course sequences within selected high schools.
- Develop and implement a communication and marketing plan for building a *college-going culture* throughout the two counties.