



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.

VENTURA COUNTY REGIONAL P-16 COUNCIL

History

In 2006, 27 leaders from education, business, parents and the community established the Ventura County Regional P-16 Council to improve education for all students -- preschool through higher education -- in Ventura County. The primary focus of this Council is to improve the college-going rate of students, particularly students from communities with historically low college enrollment. The Council developed a collaborative relationship with two high schools with the intention to create a *college-going culture* and improve student academic performance, particularly college preparatory course completion and participation in SAT examinations and the Early Assessment Program.

Membership

The Council consists of key leaders from the Ventura County Office of Education, California Lutheran University, California State University, Channel Islands, University of California Santa Barbara, Ventura Community College District, the Boys and Girls Club of Oxnard and Port Hueneme, First Five of Ventura County, 12th District Parent-Teacher Association, and the Ventura County Economic Development Association. The core Council has close ties with an expanded one consisting of diverse businesses and community organizations.

Demographics

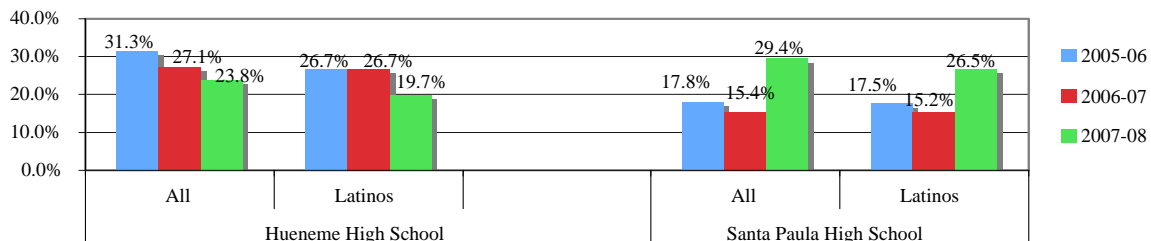
Ventura County is located on the Pacific Ocean directly north of Los Angeles. This county is both a center for technological innovation and an agricultural area. Latino residents comprise one-third of the 813,000 inhabitants and over nine percent of the population lives below the federal poverty line. Approximately one-third of the population at the two low-performing high schools that are the focus of this collaborative's activities -- Hueneme High School in Oxnard Union High District and Santa Paula High School in Santa Paula Union High District -- are Latino students.

Impact

In 2007, this Council received an ARCHES-ENLACE grant to increase student achievement and college-going rates at these two historically underserved schools by opening communications and developing a relationship based upon trust and cooperation. The Council focused on various measurable student outcomes that are presented below.

Display 1 presents the college preparatory course completion rates for students at the two high schools over a three-year period from 2005-06 to 2007-08.

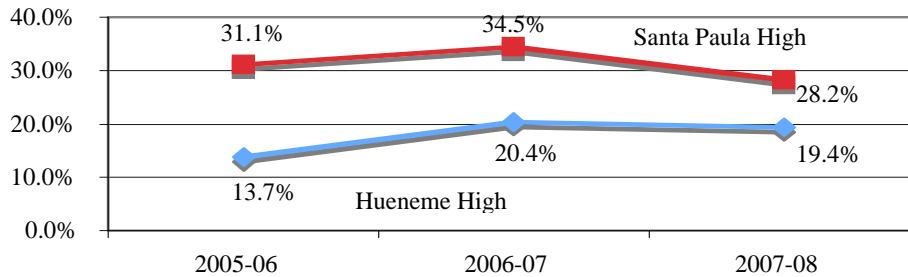
Display 1
College Preparatory Course Completion Rates at Two High Schools Over Time



While college preparatory course completion rates declined at Hueneme High School during the grant period, the rates improved at Santa Paula High. The role of student support at Santa Paula from EAOP and Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA) programs based at University of California, Santa Barbara was viewed as pivotal in this improvement.

Display 2 present a reverse trend for SAT test participation -- another student outcome measure.

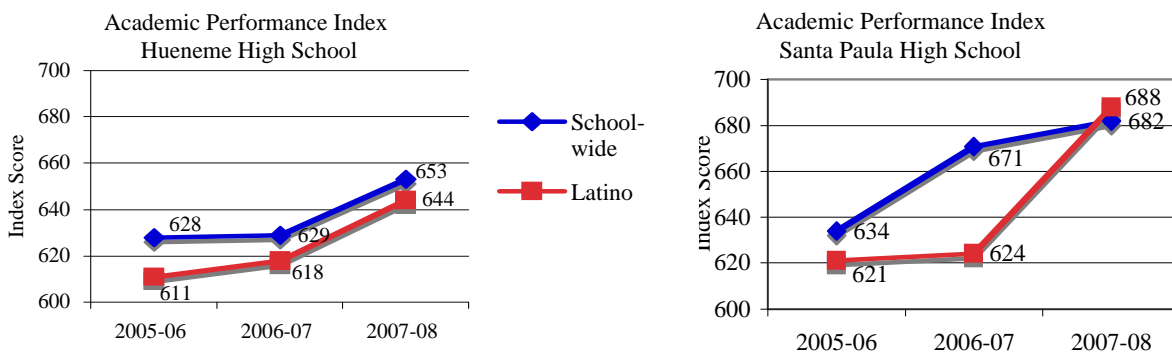
Display 2
Changes in Proportion of Students Taking SAT Tests at Two Schools Over Time



SAT participation rates improved at Hueneme High School by over 40 percent. On the other hand, a decline of nine percent occurred over the grant period at Santa Paula High School.

Display 3 shows growth in student performance on the California Standards Test.

Display 3
Change in California Standards Test Results at Two Schools Over Time



- Both test scores for the general student body and Latino students increased at both schools from 2005-06 to 2007-08.
- At Hueneme High School, the achievement gap between the overall student population and Latino students shrank from a 17-point difference to less than 10 points.
- At Santa Paula High School, the gap disappeared; in fact, Latino students scored six points higher than the general student body in 2007-08.

Future Initiatives

- Expand area activities by involving regional organizations that provide educational services and support and through an annual commitment of \$10,000 from each Core Council member.
- Implement an Engineering and Design pathway at Hueneme High School through funding from ARCHES that combines rigorous academic courses with career experiences to be assessed in terms of goals consistent with the original Council's objectives.