

## In Silicon Valley, High-achieving Schools Fail Latinos, Report Says

May 30, 2013

When it comes to preparing Latino children for college, some of the most successful school districts in the South Bay and Peninsula post the worst failure rates.

In the Sunnyvale elementary district, where 82 percent of Asian students become proficient in algebra, only 10 percent of Latino students do. The district is tied with Berryessa and San Mateo-Foster City for the lowest Latino algebra proficiency rate -- the greatest single predictor of college success -- among 54 school districts in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

The dismal figures signal an educational crisis, say authors of a report being released Wednesday, as districts fail the largest-growing demographic group. Latinos make up 38 percent of K-12 public school students in the two counties.

The fledgling advocacy group Innovate Public Schools compiled state data for the report, "Broken Promises: The Children Left Behind In Silicon Valley Schools." The numbers came as no surprise but a disappointment nonetheless to parents who have pressed for faster school improvement.

"We knew it was bad, but I never thought it was this bad," said Roberto Aguirrez, a parent leader with People Acting in Community Together, a group lobbying the Morgan Hill Unified District to approve charter schools and boost opportunities for Latino success. "We have a crisis now."

The study drew from California Department of Education data, which also showed dismal rates of Latino preparation for college. In the two counties, only 20 percent of Latinos, and 22 percent of African Americans, graduate having passed all the courses required to qualify for University of California and California State University admission. The figures are 71 percent for Asians and 53 percent for whites.

Among districts, at the bottom in Latino college preparation are Milpitas at 19 percent, Campbell and Santa Clara at 16 percent, East Side Union at 12 percent and Morgan Hill at 9 percent.

The numbers "are not acceptable," East Side Superintendent Chris Funk said. The district, he said, is working on remedying that.

"Eighty percent of Latino and African American kids aren't going to college," said Matt Hammer, executive director of Innovate, which seeks to improve public schools in the two counties. "That should be a wake-up call."

In algebra proficiency, the group's school-by-school comparison also shows schools at both ends of the achievement spectrum failing Latinos. Tied for last are Bayside STEM Academy in San Mateo, McNair Academy in the Ravenswood district, Campbell Middle and Don Callejon in Santa Clara. At

all, just 3 percent of Latinos score proficient in algebra.

## Sunnyvale

Superintendent Ben Picard said the district is committed to supporting its English-learners, Latino and other student groups. He noted that Latino scores on the state's Academic Performance Index increased 40 points in 2012.

"We're showing good gains as a district," he said.

One of the challenges in improving schools is their fragmented organization, said Joe Ross, a trustee on the San Mateo County Board of Education. For example, after completing K-8, Sunnyvale district students continue to schools run by the Fremont Union High School District -- where 22 percent of Latinos graduate eligible for UC/CSU. The Sunnyvale district doesn't track how well its graduates do in high school, according to the Innovate report.

"We have difficulty in coordination and lack of ownership for a child's entire educational career," Ross said.

But the report also highlighted successes at all levels.

The top five middle schools for Latino algebra proficiency are KIPP Heartwood charter in Alum Rock at 81 percent; Renaissance Academy at 59 percent and Adelante at 53 percent, both in Alum Rock; Solorsano Middle in Gilroy at 48 percent and ACE Charter in San Jose at 47 percent.

At Jefferson High in Daly City, 78 percent of Latino students graduate UC/CSU ready -- the highest percentage among comprehensive high schools. Other schools with high percentages of college-ready Latino grads are six charters: Summit Preparatory in Redwood City at 90 percent; KIPP San Jose Collegiate at 83 percent, Aspire East Palo Alto Phoenix at 62 percent, Downtown College Preparatory at 49 percent, Leadership Public Schools-San Jose at 46 percent and Latino College Preparatory at 39 percent.

"Any child, whether from Portola Valley or East Palo Alto," Ross said, "deserves an education to make them eligible for college."

Broken Promises: The Children Left Behind In Silicon Valley Schools, go to [www.innovateschools.org](http://www.innovateschools.org)

[http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/2013/5/30/in\\_silicon\\_valley\\_highachieving\\_schools\\_fail.htm](http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/2013/5/30/in_silicon_valley_highachieving_schools_fail.htm)