

# Collaborating for Results: Youth Graduate from High School

The Alameda County Interagency Children's Policy Council (ICPC) serves as a catalyst for working together across County systems to improve outcomes related to the health, safety and success of our children. ICPC is composed of County agency and department directors, Board of Supervisor members and other County representatives. By using elements of Collective Impact and Results Based Accountability, ICPC holds itself accountable for improving indicators that measure how well our children are doing. For more general information about ICPC, please visit [www.acgov.org/icpc](http://www.acgov.org/icpc).

## Introduction

One of the key indicators in measuring if children and youth are thriving is high school graduation rates. It is well documented that high school graduates have better employment and earning potential during their lifetime. They are also less likely to use public assistance or be involved in the criminal justice system.

## High School Success Indicator

*County's Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, number of students receiving GEDs each year in total, and the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) graduation rates*

### High School Success Work Group

ICPC staff convened County and School district staff from Oakland and Hayward to develop and prioritize the below strategies. The group recognized that, in reality, the best time to prevent students from dropping out is early in their educational career – even in Preschool and Kindergarten. Fortunately, ICPC has other Working Groups targeting those populations. The Work Group acknowledges the County's role in education is limited. However, there are many youth the County serves at ACOE and through Social Services and Probation who are among the most at risk for

not graduating from high school. There are opportunities within these County systems to help prevent youth from dropping out. In addition, the group determined focusing on the school districts with the highest need will improve overall high school graduation rates.

## Story Behind the Curve

While 80% of students in Alameda County graduate within four years, we have the lowest graduation rate of all Bay Area counties<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, **Oakland Unified School District only graduates 63% of students on time and Hayward Unified graduates 77% on time**<sup>2</sup>. While these rates have improved in recent years, they continue to lag behind other County school districts. In addition, **of all the drop outs in Alameda County – 70% are African American or Latino**<sup>3</sup>.

## Current Conditions

**20%** of Alameda County youth do not graduate from high school in 4 years

<sup>1</sup> Definition: Percentage of public high school students who graduate from high school, based on the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. The adjusted cohort graduation rate measures the percentage of students who graduate from high school with a high school diploma, GED, or special education certificate of completion. Data Source: California Dept. of Education, California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) (Oct. 2014).

<sup>2</sup> California Dept. of Education, California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) (Oct. 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Child Trends. (2014). High school dropout rates.

## **What Works to Turn the Curve**

The High School Success Work Group determined three different areas where the County could make a difference in increasing the number of students who graduate on time. The following are interventions for older youth that are based on national best practices:

**Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) Post Release Strategy:** The Transition Center at the JJC provides Oakland youth exiting the JJC with rapid re-enrollment in school and a select number of those youth receive post release Case Management services from community based organizations. Funding for this is made possible by the City of Oakland, Oakland Unite program and has shown reductions in recidivism. The Work Group proposes to expand this program to cover all youth leaving the JJC and to improve linkages between these students and the School Based Health Centers at their schools.

**8-9<sup>th</sup> Grade Transitions:** Best practices show that working with youth through transitions is one of the keys to high school success. The Work Group believes a targeted transition program that includes working with high risk 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the summer before high school and during 9<sup>th</sup> grade will decrease the likelihood they drop out. Oakland and Hayward school districts are targeted because they have the highest drop out rates. The plans include a summer bridge program; leadership opportunities working with younger youth; parent and family involvement; paid internships and stipends in the health care fields (among others) and support throughout their high school years with coaches/case managers. Academic and career planning support will also be given.

**Training and Support on Trauma Informed Care:** Another avenue for improving high school graduation rates is training school district teachers and staff in trauma informed care practices. The reasons for dropping out or not graduating on time are multifaceted. However, many youth suffer from current and past experiences that make attending school difficult. By providing teachers and staff with training in trauma informed care practices, they can better meet the needs of these students and help them in ways that will improve attendance and performance in school.

## **Next Steps:**

Developing an expansion of the services offered at the JJC Transition Center must be coordinated with the current staff and leadership at the JJC, ACOE and School Districts. In addition, it is imperative to work with the school districts to determine the best way to rapidly enroll youth back in school post release. The post release case management or coaching will be integral to the success of the program. However, who provides these services and where, must be decided on in partnership with school districts and community members. For the 8-9<sup>th</sup> grade transition program, Oakland and Hayward Unified School Districts will work closely with the County to find sustainable funding for this program. Efforts to follow the outcomes of these students over time to determine if they do in fact increase graduation rates. All of the ICPC Results are tracked using the Results Based Accountability Scorecard. Check out our website for more information - [www.acgov.org/icpc](http://www.acgov.org/icpc) and to track our results.