THE MOVEMENT CONTINUES:



THE STATE OF EQUITY AND ACCESS IN EASTSIDE PUBLIC SCHOOLS





strug•gle: (strug' el), v., to make a strenuous effort; strive

MISSION:

Since 1994, InnerCity Struggle (ICS) has organized the under-resourced residents of East Los Angeles (Eastside) to attain social justice and advance the quality of life for their communities. The mission of InnerCity Struggle is to promote safe, healthy and non-violent communities by organizing youth, families and residents in Los Angeles' Eastside to work toward economic and social justice. For 15 years, we have worked to develop one of California's and indeed the nation's most disenfranchised communities from within the community itself.

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REPORT

InnerCity Struggle has worked with youth, parents and community residents since 1994 to promote safe, healthy and non-violent communities in the Eastside of Los Angeles. We organize youth and families in Boyle Heights, unincorporated East Los Angeles, El Sereno and Lincoln Heights to work together for economic and social justice. InnerCity Struggle provides positive after-school programs for students to become involved in supporting our schools to succeed. We have empowered students to reach their family's dream of college. We have trained parents to be advocates for their own children and for improving the quality of education in our community. The work of InnerCity Struggle demonstrates that youth and parents working together are a powerful force for improving their communities and making real positive change.

InnerCity Struggle works with high school students through United Students (US) campus clubs at Theodore Roosevelt, James Garfield, Woodrow Wilson and Abraham Lincoln High Schools, including Hollenbeck Middle School. These clubs demand equitable opportunities and educational justice to ensure that all students graduate and attend college. In addition, InnerCity Struggle has a parent component called Familias Unidas (FaU) that builds the power of parents and families to fight for equitable opportunities and quality education for all children and youth. InnerCity Struggle's work is grounded in a theory of change that views real and lasting change occurring as a result of mass numbers of youth and families organizing at a grassroots level.

InnerCity Struggle's key achievements and victories resulting from organizing efforts since 2002 include:

- LAUSD Board resolution making the A-G Life Prep curriculum part of the new high school graduation requirements to ensure all high school students graduate eligible for college.
- Implementation of assemblies that inform all students about the A-G requirements needed for college eligibility and the expansion of time that counselors are available to meet with students at Garfield High School.
- The prioritization of Eastside high schools and middle schools resulting in their being awarded \$200 million in state funds to reduce class size and increase A-G course availability over the next seven years beginning in 2007.
- Systems for informing parents and students of students' progress in completing A-G courses, the hiring of three additional counselors, a policy of keeping all bathrooms open and expansion of electives to include Inter-Cultural Awareness classes at Wilson High School.
- A new elementary school, high school and adult school for East Los Angeles. Esteban E.
 Torres High School will open in fall of 2010 and will be the first high school to open in
 unincorporated East Los Angeles in over 80 years. The new school will relieve overcrowding
 at Garfield High School and allow Garfield to return to a traditional 180-day schedule for
 the first time in 18 years.

- Improved conditions to support a college-going culture at Roosevelt High School. For example, the addition of three counselors and policies to improve college-going rates.
- Elimination of the punitive tardy room policy at Garfield, Roosevelt and Wilson high schools and their replacement with an InnerCity Struggle proposed tardy policy at Garfield and Roosevelt high schools. The new pro-active policy aims to provide support services that combine prevention and intervention strategies to improve student timeliness.
- Participated in the successful defeat of statewide Proposition 6, which would have shifted
 resources and funding away from critical safety nets, specifically public education in
 California, and funneled them into the prison system. Additionally, InnerCity Struggle
 successfully helped pass LAUSD's School Bond proposal to invest \$7 billion toward school
 refurbishment of existing facilities, including continuing the construction of much needed
 new schools both important to improving educational conditions in East Los Angeles.
- ICS hosts annual week-long Educational Justice Week events at each of our high schools and middle schools engaging and educating thousands of students through workshops and lunch-time outreach on current issues in education and their community and encourage students to play a role in fighting for educational justice.
- In 2009, United Students launched a mass-based survey campaign, providing a space for students to have their voice represented in their schools. Youth leaders successfully collected 7,500 surveys from students attending all of our Eastside schools. US members analyzed the data to develop policy demands that target LAUSD.
- In 2009, InnerCity Struggle mobilized 3,000 parents, students and community members to support the implementation of Pilot Schools for the new high school in East Los Angeles: Esteban E. Torres.





I.A. INTRODUCTION

InnerCity Struggle's goals are to challenge the inequities found in the four Eastside communities of Los Angeles and to end the cycle of poverty. To address these issues, InnerCity Struggle is committed to making the idea of going to college a real possibility for thousands of mostly low-income students of color in Los Angeles. InnerCity Struggle works to develop a seamless pipeline that, with their families, supports young people from elementary to middle to high school into college. Our efforts have had significant impact on changing the culture of Eastside schools to better support students in their aspirations for graduation, college, career and success.¹

In 2007, InnerCity Struggle released A Student and Parent Vision for Educational Justice in the Eastside, a groundbreaking report based on research, proven best practices, and surveys of about 5,600 students and 400 parents. This policy report examined the conditions, problems and needs in Eastside schools, and outlined policy demands aimed at eliminating the drop-out rate and ensuring that all students are prepared for college. Key findings from that report include:

- 92.5% of students want to attend a four-year university or college.
- The Eastside's historically low graduation and college-going rates, and alarming dropout and "disappeared" rates, led us to question whether students are provided adequate opportunities for college preparation.
- Strategies to support students to remain in school and excel academically must include new
 and pro-active approaches to discipline, opportunities for career and technical education,
 meaningful and authentic parent engagement and instructional programs that increase
 personalization for students. In addition, policies must be in place that ensures class size
 reduction and an increase in resources to Eastside schools.
- In order to prepare all students for college and the 21st century workforce, all students in the Eastside must be prepared and equipped with the skills and provided the resources to successfully complete the A-G curriculum in high school.

A-G is a college preparatory curriculum, consisting of 15 required high school courses that students must successfully complete in order to attend a California State University or University of California directly out of high school (see box 1 for more information). A few years ago, InnerCity Struggle surveyed high school students on college access issues. Roosevelt High School in 2001, 71% of respondents said they had not met with their counselor to discuss what they needed in order to go to college. Similarly at Garfield High School, 48% of students were not aware of their A-G Requirements in 2003. It was clear that the understanding of and access to the A-G curriculum was one of the most urgent problems to fix in order to ensure all students are college-bound.

In 2005, InnerCity Struggle was one of the lead organizations for a citywide alliance called Communities for Educational Equity (CEE) to push the "A-G Life Prep" resolution to ensure that all students are prepared for college and the 21st century workforce. After several months of organizing thousands of students, parents and teachers, CEE won the overwhelming passage of

¹See Organized Communities, Stronger Schools, for a more in-depth discussion about the impacts of youth and parent organizing on school environments. The report, published in March 2008 by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, captures research demonstrating how youth and parent-led education organizing positively impacts school environments by increasing academic achievement.

the resolution on June 14, 2005 by the Los Angeles Board of Education. This was a historic win. Now is the time to focus even harder on ensuring ALL students are supported in their efforts to access and successfully complete the A-G curriculum on their road to college. InnerCity Struggle believes A-G access is a critical threshold to educational justice for all.

I.B. METHODS

InnerCity Struggle believes in representing the voice of the masses. Our members took it upon themselves to design a survey instrument that would garner information on critical education issues and how they are impacting a broader base of students and parents. This information is used to guide our organizing campaign work. InnerCity Struggle surveyed almost 8,000 residents in the Eastside of Los Angeles from June 2009 to January 2010. Almost 6,000 high school students were surveyed by their peers through annual Educational Justice Week² activities at each high school campus, lunch time outreach, and other school-sanctioned activities. Approximately 1,370 middle school students were surveyed at Hollenbeck Middle School, and 709 parents at school parent council meetings, churches and after-school outreach.

This data builds upon surveys administered for the 2007 policy report, where InnerCity Struggle surveyed over 6,000 residents. In combination with multiple years of research data provided by UCLA IDEA (Institute for Democracy, Education & Access), we are able to build a clear, evolving picture of education in the Eastside of Los Angeles.

There are encouraging signs of progress. In a time of significant budget cuts and economic crisis, contrary to common perception, our research demonstrates that Eastside residents' hope in public education is increasing. The overwhelming majority of students want to go to college, and there is widespread commitment and energy among families and students to engage in improving education. With the historic A-G win, we have already seen significant improvement in students' awareness of A-G requirements.

But the work is far from finished. Too many of East Los Angeles students are still not graduating high school and moving into college. This report sets a context for educational conditions set by those most directly impacted and is directly informed by their voices and focuses on policy recommendations from families and students that will be used as a starting point to seize the current momentum to ensure that educational justice is available for ALL students.

A-G REQUIREMENTS	
A.History/Social Science	
B.English 4 years	
C.Mathematics 3 years, 4 recommended	
D.Laboratory Science 2 years, 3 recommended	
E.Foreign Language 2 years of same language, 3 recommended	
F.College Prep Elective1 year	
G.Visual & Performing Arts	



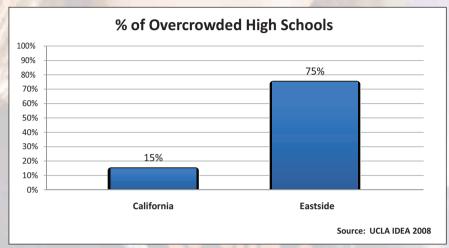
InnerCity Struggle youth members participate in 'Community-led Action Based Research' at their schools.

² Educational Justice Week is an annual week-long event organized by InnerCity Struggle to promote a college-going culture on high school campuses in the Eastside and to raise awareness on topics related to educational and social justice that reaches thousands of students. The week culminates with a College Fair during lunch that is accessible to all students.

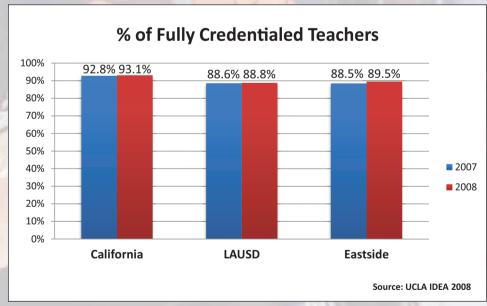


II. CONTEXT/COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Eastside high schools³ are large comprehensive schools that suffer from overcrowding and lack of adequate resources. In 2008-2009, in the four high schools that InnerCity Struggle works in – Roosevelt, Garfield, Wilson and Lincoln – the student population alone is almost 15,000.

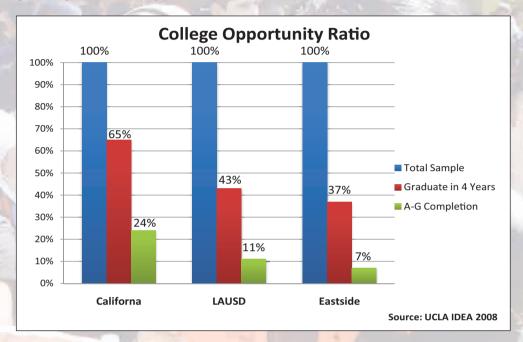


Almost 90% of teachers at Eastside high schools had full credentials in the 2008-2009 school year. This figure is comparable to the 88.8% of teachers that held full credentials in LAUSD overall in 2008-2009, but was lower than the 93.1% for California high schools statewide.



³ Currently there are two new high schools in the Eastside: one is in its first year of operation; and the other is scheduled to open in the fall 2010. We will note their progress as data is made available.

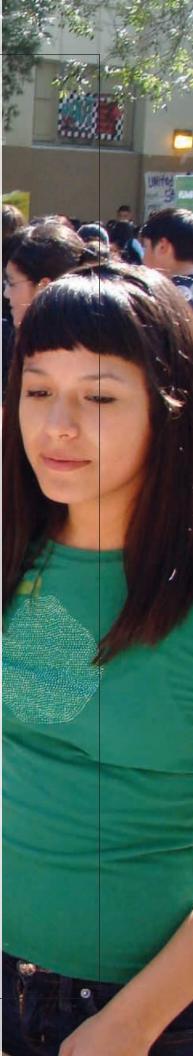
Graduation rates are alarmingly low throughout Eastside high schools. The College Opportunity Ratio (COR) reports how many students graduated in four years and how many passed the A-G college requirements in 2008, compared to each 100 students enrolled as 9th graders in 2004. For every 100 9th graders in Eastside high schools, 37 graduated four years later and 7 passed the courses required for admission to the California State University and the University of California system. Statewide, 65 ninth graders graduated four years later, and 24 completed their A-G requirements.



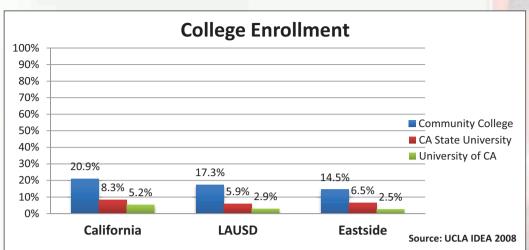
College enrollment rates in 2008 are dismal throughout LAUSD, and especially within Eastside high schools. For Garfield High School, with a student population of almost 5,000, only 17% of students from the 9th grade cohort enrolled in community college, 5% in a California State University institution, and less than 2% in a University of California institution.

The overwhelming majority of students from an early age know they want to go to college. Three-quarters of middle school students surveyed by InnerCity Struggle said they wanted to go to college after high school. Contrary to common perception, families and students have hope for the public education system and want to be engaged in improving their schools, their education, and their future prospects. In 2009-2010, 93% of high school students surveyed by InnerCity Struggle believe students should have a voice on issues that directly impact them and 95% of family members surveyed believe that schools should create an improvement plan with their participation. This is a bright spot, as it represents a significant, untapped resource to support the reform and improvement of Eastside schools.









While these are positive signs, there are also serious problems. According to UCLA IDEA's research, in 2008, all Eastside high schools graduated less than half of their students. At the School District level, the Los Angeles Unified School District is currently facing a \$1.3 billion deficit between 2009 – 2011. Additionally, Eastside neighborhoods have been hard hit due to the downward spiraling economy that heightens the problems that disproportionately burden low-income communities. This is especially grim considering how under-resourced Eastside schools have historically been; for example, the lack of sufficient A-G courses and extreme overcrowding.

Eastside high schools continue to struggle to prepare students for graduation and college. Lincoln and Garfield high schools have recently been designated as "focus schools" because they are consistently underperforming, with zero to negative growth in the Academic Performance Index (API), and less than 21% proficiency in either Math or English Language Arts.⁴ Wilson and Roosevelt high schools are designated as PI 5+ schools, and although they have improved, are still low-performing.⁵

Why is there such a disconnect between the positive signs and the reality of low graduation and college acceptance rates? This is the question that should motivate school officials to examine the systemic gaps in schools. The momentum built through the hard work of students and the people and organizations that care about them needs to be harnessed to address the root causes of educational injustice. InnerCity Struggle believes that a vibrant, healthy and well-funded public education system can empower East Los Angeles residents' to break the cycle of poverty.

While 2007's A Student and Parent Vision for Educational Justice in the Eastside took a broader look at the state of public education in East Los Angeles, this report and the policy demands our members developed builds on the groundwork started in 2007 to examine more closely the role of A-G requirements in ensuring graduation and college readiness.

⁴ Source: Letter regarding Focus Schools from Ramon C. Cortines, Superintendent of Schools, September 25, 2009.

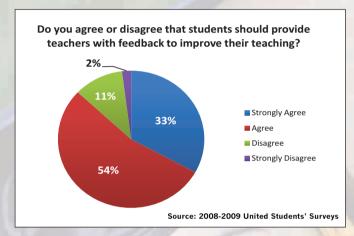
⁵ Source: http://www.lausd.net

III. ACTION AREAS

Empowering Teachers

Teachers are critical partners in academic success for students. United Students surveys show positive trends in the relationship between teachers and their students. The majority of those surveyed see teachers as engaged, encouraging, and helpful, providing interesting learning activities and working to help students improve their grades. Teachers play a significant supportive role. 84% of all high school students surveyed felt that their teachers encourage their desire to go to college.

InnerCity Struggle believes that students are the most important, and least tapped, resource for improving the education they receive. Eastside students agree; 87% believe students should provide feedback to teachers with the aim of improving their teaching. This suggests a real bright spot. Students want to participate actively in their education and educational system. If their schools capitalized on that energy and spirit, students' investment in their schools, the educational process, and their future can only grow deeper.



College Readiness

InnerCity Struggle believes a seamless and comprehensive pipeline that moves students from elementary to middle to high school to college is critical to ensuring their readiness to enter the 21st century workforce. Students agree: 75% of middle school students surveyed already know they want to attend college.

The A-G resolution is one step in ensuring college readiness, and since its passing, there is much to be encouraged by. 82% of high school students know what their A-G requirements are, a marked increase from a few years prior. As recently as 2003, almost half of Garfield High School students surveyed were not aware of the A-G requirements; in 2009 that number decreased by 34%. Teachers and counselors played the biggest role in informing students of their requirements, and parents are eager to play larger roles in supporting their children's academic goals. In addition, one of the reasons why so many Eastside students now know of the A-G requirements is that United Students members have raised awareness about this issue through their extensive outreach in classrooms and schools.

There have been signs of improvement in access as well. When asked if a request for an A-G class had been denied in the 2008-09 school year, 83% surveyed said no. Compared to 2005, when 71% of Garfield and 41% of Roosevelt High School students reported they were not able to enroll in college prep, honors or AP classes they requested, this is good news. But under the A-G resolution, NO student should be denied access to a college prep class if requested, which indicates there are still improvements that must be made.

"I want schools where A-G requirements are being offered to all 100% of students not 99% because it is sad to leave even one child behind—so that they can fulfill the 15 classes required to go to college." —FAMILIAS UNIDAS MEMBER



The persistently low graduation rates still lead us to ask, have the resources to support student achievement matched the increase in awareness to ensure college eligibility for all? There are still 18% of survey respondents who did not know about the A-G requirements. School officials must seize this opportunity to close the gap and secure 100% awareness. In addition, organizations, such as InnerCity Struggle/United Students, were cited as the third most common source of information about A-G requirements, behind only teachers and counselors and before peers and family. While organizations like InnerCity Struggle are key partners in the effort to achieve educational justice, school officials should take this data as a charge to engage family members more deeply to ensure a truly widespread, systemic and effective approach to supporting academic achievement into college.

Resources

InnerCity Struggle believes that in order to address educational inequities, we must challenge the disproportionate lack of resources within our schools. Without sufficient resources, awareness of A-G requirements does not necessarily result in being able to access those courses, complete them effectively, and stay on the college-bound track. Across Eastside high schools, the percentage of courses offered that satisfy A-G requirements hover only around 65%, according to the 2008-2009 LAUSD school report cards. Three-fourths of Eastside high schools are overcrowded. At Roosevelt, only 41% of students reported that their campus was clean, a dismal percentage similar across all four schools.

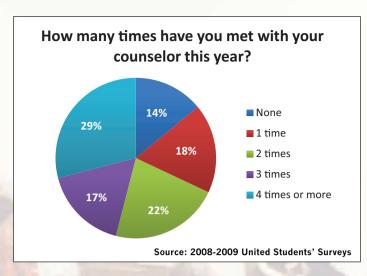
The whole environment and experience of school must be supportive, encouraging, and healthy to really ensure that all students achieve their highest potential. With the looming budget cuts and economic crisis in California, Eastside students have even fewer learning supports and wraparound services, such as tutoring, peer counseling, and health services, that are critical to their development and success. This makes access to and successful engagement of A-G courses that much more vital to college preparedness.

The vast majority of high school students (94%) feel their schools need better resources. The highest priority identified is healthy food, followed by computers, books, and air conditioning, in that order. This is not surprising given the lack of grocery stores and restaurants that provide healthy food options, where healthy food is harder to come by, and school food is a fundamental part of a students' nutrition. Healthy nutrition has been demonstrated to be conducive to a productive learning environment, and students' interest is understandable and, in fact, strategic to ensuring systemic educational excellence.

Academic Counselors

Counselors are pivotal to student success, graduation and college readiness. In LAUSD's overcrowded and under-resourced schools, access to counselors, and quality of counseling have historically suffered to students' detriment.

The majority of students (68%) met with their counselors 2 or more times by the second semester of the traditional school year when these surveys were administered. While it is positive that most students had met with their counselor more than once, it is alarming that 14%, nearly 830 students surveyed, had not met with their counselor AT ALL by this late a time in the school year. Considering that at least 262 of those students were in 11th or 12th grade, not meeting with their counselors is indicative of a breakdown in the support and guidance required for students to graduate and be prepared for college. For instance, both junior- and senior-year are important for meeting deadlines such as signing up for the SAT test and submitting scholarship applications. Missing even just one of these deadlines can be a major setback for students in completing their college eligibility. Overall, a little less than half of students surveyed felt they had enough time with their counselors when they did meet.



In addition, those meetings primarily focused on reviewing students' grades and changing their schedule. Discussing college and career options were cited the least by students among topics discussed with their counselors. This demonstrates a systemic lack in future-oriented planning and goal setting in counselor meetings that must be addressed to ensure educational excellence.

Especially at Roosevelt and Garfield high schools, where United Students has worked the longest (11 and 8 years, respectively), InnerCity Struggle sees notable improvements that must continue. Today, 66% of students feel their counselors are guiding them towards a college path. Consider the dismal numbers at Roosevelt in 2001-02, when almost three-fourths of students had never met with their counselor to discuss what they needed to do to go to college. At Garfield, 64% marked "NO" when asked the same question in 2002-03. Today, 62% of Roosevelt students and 76% of Garfield students believe their counselor is working with them to get to college.

Student Support

"Problems, even if small, can be very big for the community."
-UNITED STUDENTS MEMBER

We know that economic hardship within the home affects students' ability to succeed in school. In the current recession, Eastside families are being hit especially hard. In 2008, the estimated amount of families in poverty in East Los Angeles was 22.8%, twice as high as the statewide estimate. Unemployment stands at over 17% and over 80% of all students in Eastside high schools qualified for free or reduced lunches. Over three-fourths of high school students surveyed feel that their family's financial problems affect their ability to succeed in school.

As we look to changing school policies in order to improve education, we must keep this in consideration. InnerCity Struggle focuses on A-G as a priority because we are trying to break the cycle of poverty. A college education and higher paying jobs are systemic ways to address poverty fundamentally. Our schools need to prepare students to enter the high skilled, high paying 21st century workforce.

Our students are ready. The overwhelming majority of those surveyed felt they had the confidence to pursue and achieve their academic goals. 72% felt that they receive enough support within their schools to achieve those goals.





Yet, why aren't students graduating and going on to four-year colleges at higher rates? Why do all Eastside schools graduate less than half of their students in four years? According to the 2008-2009 LAUSD school report cards, at Garfield and Wilson high schools, less than a third of seniors plan on going to a 4-year college. This seems incongruous between the majority of our middle school survey respondents, who already stated college as a goal. Clearly, there are structural gaps in our schools that do not maximize students' desire to go to college, their confidence in pursuing that goal, and the supports they need from teachers, counselors, and families.

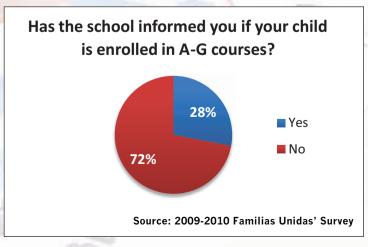


Family Engagement

"A well-informed student and a well-informed parent have power and they can use that power to work out solutions for problems." –FAMILIAS UNIDAS MEMBER

Parents want and should be involved in improving their children's schools. It is recognized that family engagement contributes to students' academic achievement. Our surveys of 709 parents in 2009 revealed important signs of real progress. Almost all surveyed (95%) felt that the school should include them in creating an improvement plan; 63% of parents of elementary school students felt they were informed about the preparation necessary for their child to be successful in high school; and 66% believe that their students are in supportive environments.

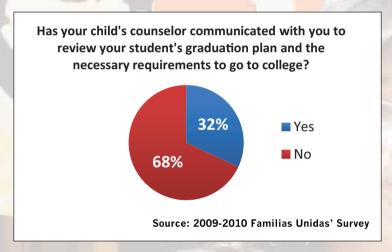
Yet, our surveys revealed that less than half of parents were informed about the A-G requirements. For parents of high school students, an alarming 72% answered "NO" when asked if the school had informed them whether their child is enrolled in A-G courses. Less than one-third of parents had met with their child's guidance counselor to discuss



graduation plans and college requirements. This explains why so few, only 90 out of 5,962 students surveyed or 1.5% total, cited "family" as the source of information about A-G requirements. This is inexcusable.

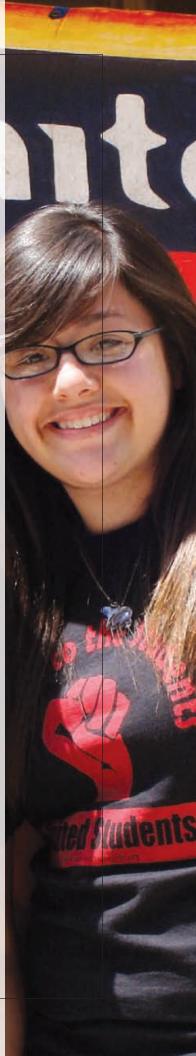
What is the reason for the discrepancy between parents' sense that they are informed, and the reality of their knowledge about their child's college preparation? It is critical for schools to engage students and families from the beginning to think proactively about the pipeline to college. Too many parents are left out of their children's academic pursuit because of lack of information, personal engagement, and accessible opportunities to work with schools to support their children.

We need to capitalize on what is working in engaging parents so far, and close the gap on the information they have on hand to support their children's success. Not engaging family members is a missed opportunity that LAUSD and Eastside Los Angeles communities cannot afford.











SUMMARY

"This work is meant for all of us—the teachers who need to teach, the parents who need to support their students in homework and working with the school, and the School District and the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools who need to provide the resources. Otherwise, a school without resources is like a refrigerator without food." —FAMILIAS UNIDAS MEMBER

Our schools are overcrowded, under-resourced and losing students before graduation in alarming numbers. Students are not yet completely aware of their A-G requirements, and do not have the access to their guidance counselors that is needed to ensure graduation and college readiness on a systematic level. Parents are not engaged to the degree that they can best support their children.

Yet our schools are also filled with the commitment, energy and aspirations of students, families, and educators focused on preparing Eastside youth for college and the 21st century workforce. InnerCity Struggle is a key partner in improving our schools, and that partnership is already helping to change the culture in schools to be more graduation and college-oriented. We must continue these efforts to improve our schools so they can meet that energy and optimism with the resources, services, and environment vital to graduation and college readiness.

IV. CALL TO ACTION

A-G access is a fundamental starting point for providing high quality public education for Los Angeles students. In order to ensure all students are prepared for college and the 21st century workforce, we must ensure a seamless, supportive pipeline that moves young people through elementary to middle to high school straight into college. Piecemeal improvements in our educational system, while important, are not sufficient to ensure educational justice for all and in the long term.

The policy demands that InnerCity Struggle proposes are based on research, surveys results of Eastside students and parents and proven best practices. The policy demands aim to eliminate the dropout rate in our schools and ensure that all students are prepared for college. Strategies to support students to remain in school and excel academically must include opportunities for career and technical education, meaningful and authentic parent engagement and instructional programs that increase personalization for students. In addition, policies must be in place that ensures class size reduction and an increase in resources to Eastside schools.

Implement policies that ensure college access for all students

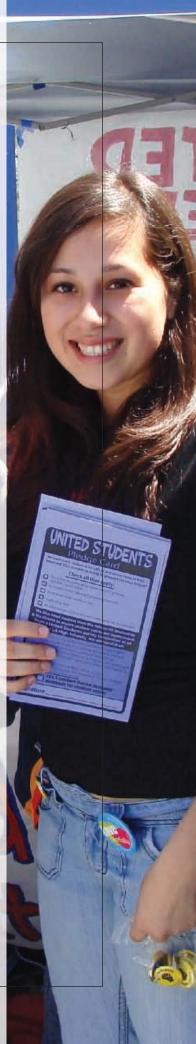
Eastside students must be prepared and equipped with the skills to successfully complete the A-G curriculum in high school.

Increase the amount of A-G courses offered in all Eastside high schools and middle schools to 75%.

- Ensure all students are enrolled in the A-G course curriculum.
- Continue to build a college-going culture among students and parents at all Eastside schools by providing information about pathways to college.
- Ensure consistent and systematic communication between students and their counselors to guarantee students are well informed about the pathway to college.
- Beginning in elementary schools, identify mechanisms to inform parents about the need for students to be prepared for the rigor of the A-G curriculum in middle school and high school.
- Institute mandatory meetings in schools (K-12) for students and parents to learn about the A-G requirements.
- Ensure that teachers are qualified to teach A-G coursework.
- Ensure there are sufficient Math and Foreign Language teachers.
- Increase access to advanced placement courses that integrate into career themed Small Schools and Pilot Schools.
- Send transcripts to students' parents and/or legal guardians to support monitoring
 of their child's eligibility for the University of CA/CA State University system.
- Increase college presentations and college recruiters on campus through more college fairs, college tours, and other mechanisms.
- Implement and expand programs that improve graduation rates and student achievement, i.e. Puente, Algebra Project, GEAR UP and AVID.
- Implement LAUSD A-G Social Science electives for Ethnic Studies.

Implement proactive steps to increase graduation rates, college-going rates, and 21st century career opportunities.

- High schools and middle schools to have Saturday Academies and summer bridge programs focused on college readiness and tools for success in middle school or high school.
- Provide professional development for all school staff aligned with higher expectations.
- Improve the rigor and relevance of vocational and technical classes in order to meet
 A-G course requirements.
- Implement aggressive intervention supports for every child who is falling behind.
- Allow Smaller Learning Communities, Small Schools and Pilot Schools autonomy over budgets.
- Require students to sign onto a pledge that they will try their best to succeed and reach out for support when needed.
- Implement an individualized evaluation of students before they enter middle school or high school to identify any academic intervention needed.
- Schools should provide summer bridge programs for students that are behind in math and writing.





Implement policies that support teacher effectiveness

- Provide opportunities for students to discuss the effectiveness of lesson plans every semester.
- Charge students to conduct teacher evaluations at the end of each semester.
- Require principals to observe teachers on a regular basis to ensure quality and rigor in teaching methodology.
- Teachers should collaborate to evaluate individual students' academic level and need.

Increase counselor positions in Middle and High Schools

- Increase the amount of counselors available at Eastside high schools and middle schools.
- Increase funding to local Eastside schools to hire additional counselors.
- Counselors ensure that students are enrolled in courses to fulfill A-G requirements.
- Counselors to inform students about the pathway to college and encourage them to become civically involved in their school and community.
- Ensure all students have an Individualized Graduation Plan (IGP) developed with the guidance of counselors and the approval of parents/guardians.
- Each school should have one Guidance Counselor for every 200 students.
- Middle schools and high schools should have a college and career counselor or other staff assigned to focus on students' post-secondary path.
- Schools should provide increased opportunities for parents to meet with counselors (including Saturday office hours) to ensure support is provided for various challenges faced by families.
- Institute systematic communication between counselors at all grade levels (from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school).

Increase comprehensive resources to Eastside schools

- School must ensure access to healthy food and clean, safe campuses.
- Increase access to updated computers, technology and relevant, high-quality learning materials.
- Provide 21st century technology for teachers and students.

Re-design our schools for equal access

A transformative K-12 reform plan is needed to re-design schools and create a system of educational access and equity for all Eastside students. The intent is that with the key elements below, students will be provided a quality education.

- Autonomy: Schools should be granted control over resources in five key areas: 1) Budget; 2) Staffing; 3) Schedule; 4) Curriculum and Assessment; and 5) Governance
- Accountability: Higher levels of accountability in exchange for increased autonomy.
 Each school will undertake a review process based on a set of common benchmarks for a high-performing school
- Small Size: Schools must be small in class size in order to facilitate students and teachers knowing one another

 Commitment to Equity: Schools will serve the unique needs of the Eastside's student population (Gifted, RSP, English Learners)

Engage families to support academic achievement

- Schools must inform all parents of schools meetings connected to important academic information and school decision-making through creative and consistent mechanisms.
- Schools should provide annual college fairs for families and workshops regarding college access for both students and parents.
- Schools should set up college tours for parents, including workshops regarding financial aid.
- Include parents as key stakeholders and partners in new initiatives.
- Develop a system for genuine information sharing, shared-decision making roles and opportunities for parents, especially in areas that impact their children's education.
- Establish a visible means of ongoing parent engagement in the schools.
- Support innovative parent centers and parent education efforts.
- Work with outside partners to inform and engage parents.
- Value parent involvement and engagement in prioritizing schools' budget.
- Increase efforts to educate elementary school parents regarding A-G classes and the IGP plan.

"There are problems but we can solve them if we work together."
-UNITED STUDENTS MEMBER









V. SOURCES, ACKNOWLEGEMENTS and SPECIAL THANKS

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