We are excited to share our findings on youth progress toward the L.A. Compact’s goals that all students (1) graduate high school, (2) have access to and are prepared for college, and (3) have pathways to sustainable jobs and careers. Charting Progress Toward L.A. Compact Goals tracks cradle-to-career student outcomes from 2009 to 2015, using available education and workforce data to promote understanding of youth preparation and success in LAUSD and L.A. County.

The impressive gains in high school graduation rates and several related measures reported here provide ample reason for optimism, and suggest that strong regional partnerships and collective impact strategies can be vital in supporting student success. Our City is rich, vibrant and full of opportunity. Yet gross inequities persist among our students and demand concerted effort on multiple fronts. We still have a long way to go to bridge the education gap, particularly for poor and minority students, who make up the vast majority of the LAUSD population. To mitigate regional inequality, the L.A. Compact has agreed on common goals and leveraged our resources to develop and implement successful strategies that prepare the next generation to thrive in our global economy. We applaud the advances to date and look forward to further progress in opening the doors of opportunity to all young Angelenos.

GOAL 1: All students graduate from high school

The four-year graduation rate in LAUSD increased 10 percentage points from 2010 to 2015, outpacing progress at the State and County levels. LAUSD’s gains were driven primarily by increases among Latino and Black students, whose graduation rates rose faster (9-10 percentage points) than those of Asian and White students (3-5 percentage points), thereby narrowing the attainment gap between these groups.

**FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE**
LAUSD, L.A. County and California, 2010-15

**FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE BY RACE/ETHNICITY**
LAUSD, 2010-2015
GOAL 1: All students graduate from high school (cont.)

Research suggests that students who are not at least moderately proficient in reading by third grade are unlikely to graduate high school (National Research Council 1998). Scores on the new, rigorous California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) standards rose, but only 56 percent of LAUSD third graders and 61 percent in the County could be considered at least moderately proficient (exceeded, met or near standards) in 2016. Racial/ethnic gaps in third grade reading were enormous, with only one in two Latino and Black students at this minimum proficiency level versus four in five Asian and White youngsters.

Eighth grade Algebra is a key benchmark for success; math courses are the ones high schoolers are most likely to fail. CAASPP math proficiency results demonstrate limited preparedness of L.A. youth. Despite gains, only one in four LAUSD eighth graders and one in three in L.A. County were proficient in math (met or exceeded standards) in 2016, with minority students performing far worse than their Asian and White peers (21 percent of Latinos, 14 percent of Blacks versus 70 percent of Asians and 52 percent of Whites).

Students with regular attendance are more likely to graduate, whereas suspended students are at increased risk of falling behind academically and dropping out. Zero-tolerance suspension policies, especially for minor misbehavior, disproportionately affect students of color. LAUSD banned suspensions for “willful defiance” in 2013, and has since embraced restorative justice and positive behavior interventions and support. The share of LAUSD students who met the 96 percent attendance goal rose substantially, and suspension-related absences plummeted. LAUSD’s 2015 suspension rate was less than half the County’s and one-fourth of California’s.
GOAL 2: All students have access to and are prepared for success in college

LAUSD 11th graders gained ground from 2015 to 2016 in readiness for college-level English, narrowing the gap with their peers in the County and State. By 2016, 54 percent of LAUSD juniors were on track for college-level English versus 58 percent in L.A. County and 59 percent statewide. Within LAUSD, Black juniors had the lowest scores and fell further behind other students from 2015 to 2016: only four in 10 were on track for college-level English, compared with five in 10 Latinos, seven in 10 Whites, and eight in 10 Asians.

Readiness for college-level math was extremely poor for LAUSD juniors, and only slightly better statewide. One in four LAUSD 11th graders and one in three statewide met or exceeded CAASPP standards of preparedness in 2016. Racial/ethnic differences were pronounced: 14 percent of Blacks and 21 percent of Latinos met or exceeded 2016 CAASPP standards versus 65 percent of Asians and 42 percent of Whites. Further, math preparedness gaps widened for Black and Latino juniors relative to their Asian and White counterparts.

Prior to 2013, LAUSD graduates posted UC/CSU eligibility rates that lagged L.A. County and California. But eligibility among LAUSD graduates took off starting in 2014, easily surpassing County and State rates. By 2015, 52 percent of LAUSD graduates had completed all coursework required for CSU or UC admission with a grade of C or better, compared to 47 percent in L.A. County and 43 percent in California. However, enrollment in four-year institutions lagged eligibility and rose very modestly. While almost two-thirds of the 2014 class enrolled in college within a year of graduating LAUSD, the bulk of graduates chose two-year schools (42 percent) over four-year colleges and universities (24 percent). College-going is most prevalent among White students (77 percent in 2014), followed by Asians (74 percent), Blacks (66 percent), and Latinos (63 percent).
We need today’s students to become tomorrow’s well-prepared and successful workforce. While we have no systematic data on career readiness, we use proxy data on youth “disconnection” (neither in school nor at work), as well as employment and unemployment.

The raw number of 16-24 year old Angelenos neither working nor studying grew substantially and hit almost 200,000 in 2013, for a disconnection rate of 14.4 percent. The continuing increase from 2010 to 2013 is contrary to the national trend, which dropped over the same period. Disconnection is particularly severe for minority youth: 17.2 percent for Latinos and 22.5 percent for Blacks, with a rate for Whites that is less than half the Black rate, at 10.5 percent.

L.A.’s teen employment trend is worrisome: employment recovered only partially post-recession to 17.4 percent by 2015—well below the 2009 rate of 19.1 percent. By contrast, 20-24 year olds’ employment rebounded after 2012, and exceeded the pre-recession rate in 2015, at 60 percent. But both young adults and teens in L.A. have more limited employment than in other large metropolitan areas.

Unemployment rates for youth increased as the recession worsened, but more than bounced back by 2015. Yet, unemployment continues to shape youth experience, especially for teens: almost three in 10 working-age Angeleno teenagers were actively and unsuccessfully pursuing paid employment. L.A. has made significant efforts to address the crisis of youth unemployment by ensuring access to early work experiences. However, much work remains to be done to create robust pathways to employment for the tens of thousands of youth and young adults seeking full participation in the region’s labor force.