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## College Pipeline Issues for Students of Color in Southern Nevada

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# College Pipeline Issues for Students of Color in Southern Nevada

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Although the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) student enrollment rates are increasing annually, the number and percentage of racial and ethnic minority students who graduate from high school and pursue postsecondary education continues to trail behind national student completion rates. Despite large numbers of racially and ethnically diverse students in Nevada's primary and secondary schools, our state's college-going population does not reflect this level of diversity, an issue characterized by educators as a "leaky pipeline" from high school to college.

## Nevada Facts & Statistics

- Hispanics/Latinos account for 41.1 percent of student primary/secondary school enrollment and are the largest racial/ethnic group in the state, followed by Whites at 35.07 percent.
- African Americans/Blacks represent 10.16 percent of Nevada's enrollment, followed by Asians at 5.51 percent and American Indian/Alaska Native at 1.1 percent.
- Of Nevada's ~21,000 high school graduates in the 2011-12 academic year, less than half enrolled in a state public institution of higher education within 16 months of graduation.
- Students of color are significantly more likely to be placed in at least one remedial math or English course compared with White and Asian students.
- Graduation rates for English language learners (ELLs) were significantly lower than for students enrolled in English mainstream courses; fewer than one-third of ELL students graduate from high school.
- 23 percent of Nevada families earn less than \$30,000 annually, and would need to commit 65 percent of that income to attend a public four-year institution.

## U.S. Facts & Statistics

- The United States is transforming into a "minority-majority" nation, with the predicted population transition occurring in 2050; in Nevada, this transition has already occurred.
- The national graduation rate is 82 percent; Nevada's is significantly lower at 70.77 percent.

- The national Adjusted Cohort Graduate Rate for public high school students for 2013-14 school year are as follows: Asian American, 93 percent; White, 85 percent; Hispanic, 76 percent; Black, 68 percent; American Indian/Alaska Native, 68 percent.
- Nationally, the percentage of enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions increased between 2008 and 2013; Nevada is one of only seven states that saw a decline during that period.
- Nevada is significantly below the national average in terms of college enrollment rates, with higher discrepancies among Black, Hispanic/Latino and Asian subpopulations.

## Recent Actions in Nevada

- The Upward Bound program, which has more than doubled postsecondary enrollment where implemented, has been adopted by the University of Nevada, Reno; University of Nevada, Las Vegas; and Nevada State College.

## Considerations for Future Actions

- Nevada, which has a percentage of students of color far greater than the national average, may consider the following mitigation measures to address the "leaky pipeline" between high school and college:
- Assess initiatives from other states, such as California, New York and Illinois, that have demonstrated progress in terms of graduation rates and college enrollment among students of color.
  - Institute a position to manage and coordinate

college readiness work across sectors at the state, agency and campus-level.

- Evaluate external funding opportunities (foundation grants, federal grants and cross-state initiatives) to augment existing state resources.
- Consider how tuition and financial aid policies either hinder or help students of color, as well as the economically disadvantaged, access higher education.

### **Statewide Benefits of Future Action**

- Given the low graduation rate among ELLs and the correlation between income and education, it is in Nevada's economic interest to improve graduation rates among this group.
- Nevada's demographic shift indicates greater numbers of students of color, whose graduation rates currently lag behind both the overall national average and their White counterparts in Nevada; addressing this issue will draw the state closer to national graduation and postsecondary enrollment averages.
- Both dependence upon government assistance programs and crime rates are inversely correlated with educational attainment; increasing graduation rates would provide both societal and economic benefits.

### **Implications of Maintaining Status Quo**

- Nevada currently lags behind the national average in virtually every educational category, and has a percentage of student of color and ELLs far higher than the national average.
- The rate of postsecondary enrollment may continue to decrease, bucking a national trend.
- Failure to intervene in a meaningful manner will exacerbate the societal and economic issues associated with below-average educational achievement among Nevada's students.

### **Introduction**

Undergraduate full-time enrollment increased in fall 2015 at almost every major public higher education institution in Nevada (Nevada System of Higher Education [NSHE], 2016a). Although the Nevada System of Higher Education student enrollment rates are increasing annually, the number and percentage of racial and ethnic mi-

nority students who graduate from high school and pursue postsecondary education continues to trail behind national student completion rates (Governing Data, 2013). The high school graduation and baccalaureate attainment rates among different racial and ethnic groups reflect substantial economic and social educational disparities. This paper focuses on the racial and ethnic composition of Nevada public schools and the disparities in high school graduation rates among different student populations. This topic is paramount to study in Nevada because more than 64 percent of the K-12 student composition self-identifies as non-White. According to Nevada Department of Education 2015 data, Hispanics/Latinos account for 41.1 percent of student enrollment and are the largest racial and ethnic group in the state, followed by Whites comprising 35.07 percent, African Americans/Blacks at 10.16 percent, Asians at 5.51 percent, and American Indian/Alaska Native with 1.1 percent enrollment (NDE, 2015). Despite these large numbers of racially and ethnically diverse students in primary and secondary schools, Nevada's college-going population does not reflect this level of diversity. This issue is frequently referred to as the "leaky pipeline" from high school to college.

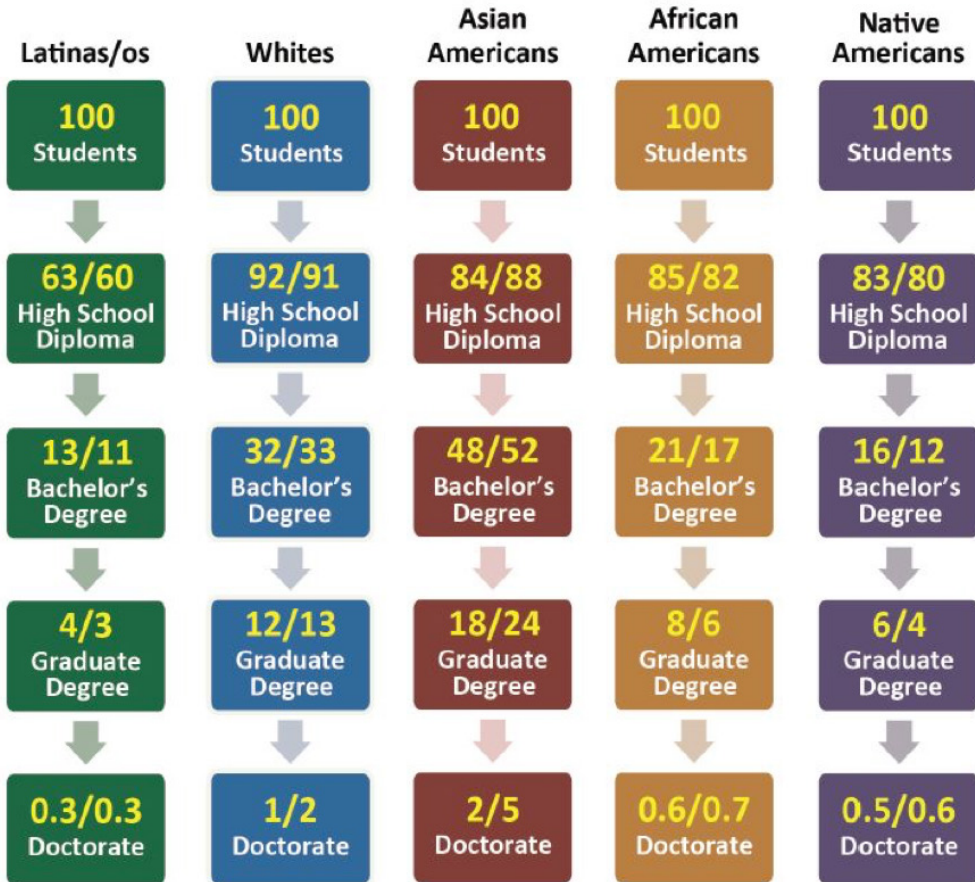
Herein are included recommendations, best practices, and empirically-driven research that focus on improving the educational pipeline from high school to college, specifically for students of color. This paper primarily concentrates on Nevada public students who identify as American Indian/Native Alaskan, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latino. In some cases, comparisons are used to illustrate disparities in the level of educational attainment among different student groups. Additionally, this report uses the terms "students of color" and "ethnic minority students" interchangeably to address the racially and ethnically diverse student populations collectively of the state and nation. These expressions are consistent with educational attainment research studies in K-12 and higher education settings, as well as federal agencies' usage of the terms (Ryan & Bauman, 2006; U.S. DOE, 2016).

In 2016, the state's high school graduation rate increased to 70.77 percent (NDE, 2016a). Although the state's graduation rates are increasing annually, they remain significantly lower than the U.S. national average of 82 percent (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). Fur-

thermore, the Nevada graduation rates vary considerably by race and ethnicity. Asian and White students are more likely to graduate from a Nevada high school than their African-American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native counterparts (NDE, 2016b; NSHE, 2014). This trend is consistent for all counties in Nevada, and nationwide, where the high school graduation and college enrollment rates are lower for students of color than their White and Asian peers (NCES, 2016; NDE, 2016a).

The graphic below (Fig. 1), created by UCLA’s Chicano Studies Research Center in 2015, shows the progression of 100 American students that start elementary school and their likelihood of completing high school and persisting to college and graduate degrees. For example, of 100 Latinos who start school, only 60 will earn their high school diploma, 11 will earn a bachelor’s degree, three will earn a graduate degree, and fewer than one will earn a doctorate. The numbers are similar for African Americans and Native Americans.

**Figure 1.** *The U.S. Education Pipeline by Race/Ethnicity and Gender*



*Note:* The first number in each column represents females; the second number, males.

*Source:* UCLA CSRC, drawn from American Community Survey Data, compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau

### **Data in Nevada and Nationwide**

For the 2011-2012 academic year, Nevada reported a total of 20,884 high school graduates (NDE, 2012). Of this number, only 49.3 percent enrolled in a state public institution of higher education within 16 months after high school graduation. This statistic suggests that fewer than half of the state's high school diploma graduates are enrolling in Nevada public colleges and universities, and the larger percentage of high school graduates are choosing not to matriculate into any of the NSHE institutions.

The rate of initial in-state college enrollment is also much lower for students of color when the data are disaggregated by different racial and ethnic categories. For example, only 41.9 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native high school graduates enrolled in any of the NSHE institutions. This rate suggests that for every 10 high school graduates who self-identify as American Indian/Alaska Native, only four students will enroll in any public in-state postsecondary institution (NDE, 2012).

Even when racial and ethnic students do enroll in Nevada public colleges and universities, data show that the majority of them have inadequate K-12 preparation to enter and succeed in college. Statewide educational pipeline issues portray an alarming picture of Nevada high school graduates. According to the 2014 Remedial Placement and Enrollment Report by NSHE, students of color are significantly more likely to be placed in at least one remedial math or English course than Asian and White students: The remedial course enrollment rates for students of color in this cohort exceed 50 percent. In some cases, more than 60 percent of African-American and Hispanic high school graduates will likely be enrolled in one or more remedial college course (NSHE, 2014). These figures indicate that even among the relatively low numbers of students of color who are graduating from high school, many are not academically prepared to handle the rigors of the learning environment associated with an undergraduate education at a college or university.

Also notable is the educational disparity in Nevada between those who are primarily native English speakers and those students who are learning and acquiring English as a second language. The Nevada Department of Education (2016b) reported that the state's graduation rates

are significantly lower for special student populations, such as English language learners (ELL) and foreign-born students. Students who are learning and acquiring English as a second language face different types of challenges and barriers in the Nevada public educational systems (National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2008; Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). In 2015, the Nevada high school graduation rates for ELLs were significantly lower than for students who were enrolled in English mainstream courses. In fact, students classified as ELLs are half as likely to graduate from high school in comparison to the state aggregate composite: 32.05 percent ELLs versus 70.77 percent state average. In other words, fewer than one-third of ELL students in Nevada graduate from high school. Foreign-born students are also significantly less likely to finish high school than U.S. native-born students. U.S. native-born students are three times more likely to graduate from high school than foreign-born students (Ryan & Bauman, 2016). Even though ELL students' backgrounds are heterogeneous and complex, data indicate that the majority of ELL and foreign students in Nevada and the United States self-identified as Hispanics and speak Spanish (Ruiz Soto et al., 2015).

### **Current National Statistics for Students of Color**

As previously stated, the pipeline metaphor is ubiquitous in educational research. Used to illustrate movement through K-12 and postsecondary levels of education, the educational pipeline represents the ideal path for students through the United States educational system, depicting them flowing smoothly through the various level of education and resulting in a representative number of high school and postsecondary graduates (Perez-Huber et al., 2006). Yet, the pipeline does not function smoothly for all populations. Closer examination of student of color populations depicts educational inequities and disparate college enrollment rates and degree attainment rates. This is important as the National Center for Educational Statistics, Institute of Educational Sciences, and U.S. Census Bureau have all noted that the United States is growing into a "minority-majority" nation, predicting a population transition in 2050. However, in the state of Nevada, this "minority-majority" is already a reality in our school systems. Currently,



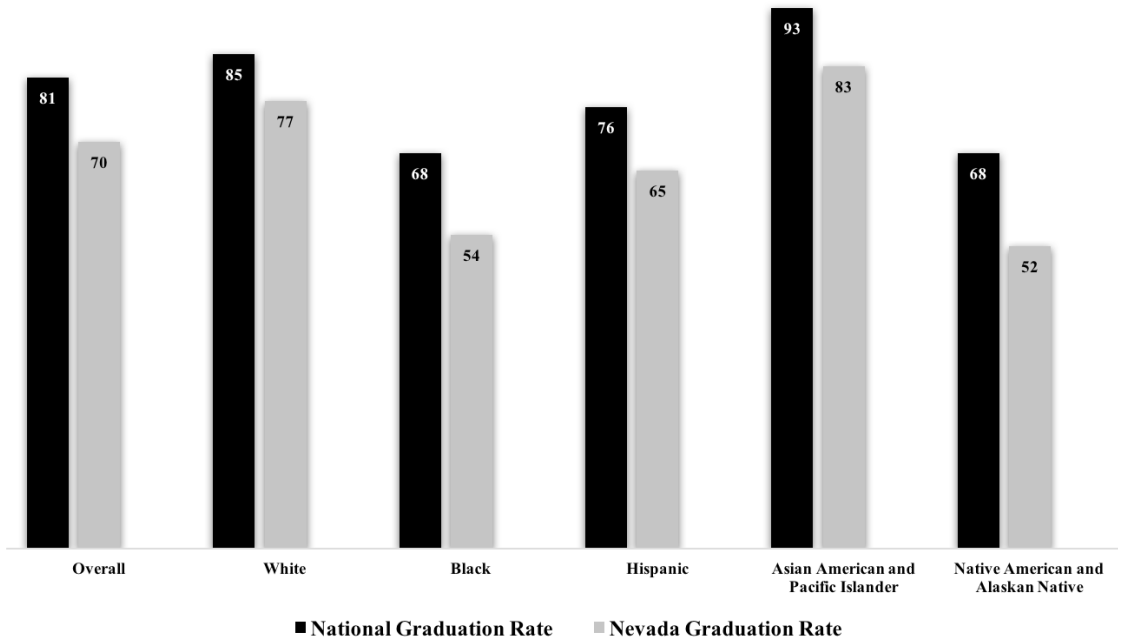
students of color already outnumber White students in the Nevada public school system. Therefore, it is essential to examine the current state of the educational pipeline for students of color.

**Secondary Education in Nevada**

Recently, the U.S. Department of Education has used adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), which utilizes detailed student-level data to determine the percentage of students who graduate within four years of beginning 9th grade for the first time (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016a). The ACGR can help determine if students of color are “trickling” out of the educational pipeline in Nevada and where those leaks are located. During the 2013-2014 school year, the United States rose to an all-time high with an 82

percent ACGR (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016a). Similarly, Nevada has seen an upward trend ACGR, increasing from 62 percent in the 2010-2011 school year to 71 percent in 2012-2013 (US Census Bureau, 2015). However, certain populations trail behind in ACGR percentages: Asian/Pacific Islander students had the highest ACGR at 89 percent, followed by White students at 87 percent, Hispanic students at 76 percent, Black students at 73 percent, and American Indian/Alaska Native students at 70 percent. However, even with the recent increase in AGCR, Nevada is one of only six states to report an AGCR under 75 percent (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016a). More specifically, Nevada lags behind the national average in all student of color AGCR categories. (See Figure 2):

**Figure 2.** Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate for public high school students by race/ethnicity (2013-14)



**Source:** National Center for Educational Statistics (2015). See table 219.46

It is important to call attention to a majority of these Nevada AGCR statistics. First, Hispanic students represent the largest overall student population in Nevada; therefore, the lower AGCR represents a significantly larger number of students not attaining high school diplomas. Second, while the AGCR of Black students is significantly lower than the national average, a more alarming fact is that Nevada also has the lowest AGCR of Black students in the nation (National Center for Educa-

tional Statistics, 2016a). Lastly, the AGCR gap of American Indian/Alaska Native students represent one of the largest disparities compared to the national average of any population (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016a). These AGCR rates of Nevada’s student of color populations show a need to better understand the educational experiences of these students as they represent ever-growing and important populations.

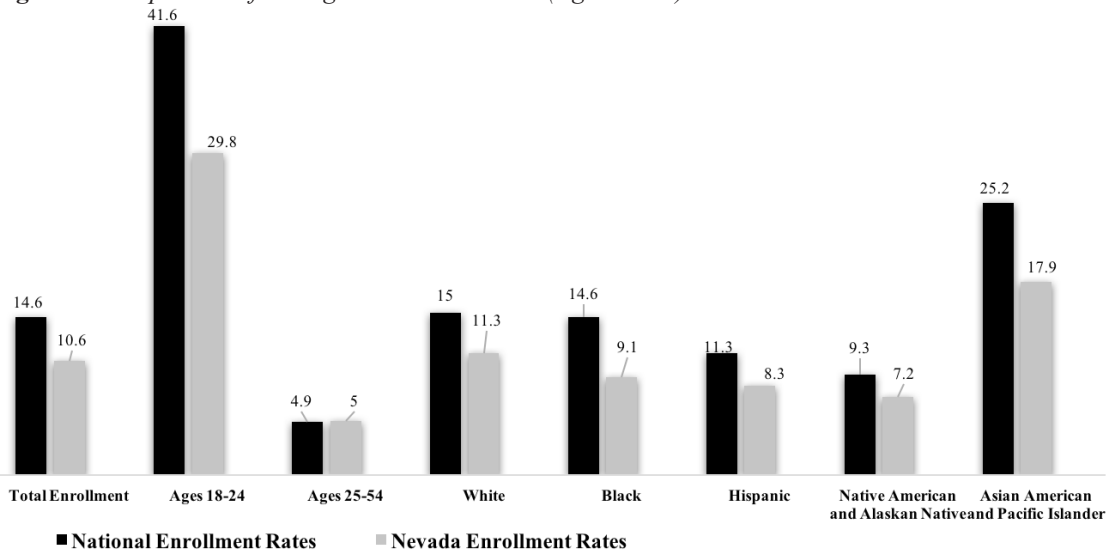
**Postsecondary Education in Nevada**

One key section of the educational pipeline is postsecondary education. With President Obama’s recent 2020 goals encouraging more college graduates, it is becoming more critical to ensure that the educational pipeline functions smoothly for students of color at Nevada institutions of higher education. Nationally, degree attainment has increased overall for all races/ethnicities; however, similar to secondary education, Nevada lags behind in degree attainment statistics. In fact, Nevada has seen a gradual decline in the percentage of the state’s working-age population (25-64) with a quality postsecondary credential (i.e. professional certificate, associate’s degree, and bachelor’s de-

gree or higher), dropping from 30.1 percent in 2008 to 29.5 in 2010 (Lumina Foundation, 2016). While this decline does not tell the whole story, further analysis of enrollment rates and degree attainment rates illustrates further “leaks” in the educational pipeline for students of color in Nevada.

Nevada is one of only seven states to see a decline in the percentage of total enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions from fall 2008 to fall 2013 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016a). At public and private, two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions, Nevada trails behind the national average within all students of color population categories in enrollment rates in 2014 (see Figure 3):

**Figure 3. Comparison of College Enrollment Rates (Ages 18-54) in 2014**



**Note:** These percentages reflect the enrollment of non-degree-holding students, ages 18-54, at public and private, two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions.

**Source:** Lumina Foundation (2016); U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey One-Year Public Use Microdata Sample.

This figure indicates that the Native American population had the lowest enrollment rate at 7.3 percent (2 percentage points below the national average), the Hispanic population was slightly higher at 8.3 (3 percentage points below the national average), then the Black population was at 9.1 percent (5.5 percentage points below the national average), and the Asian American/Pacific Islander population had the highest college enrollment rate at 17.9 percent (7.3 percentage points below the national average) (Lumina Foundation, 2016). However, low enrollment rates of students

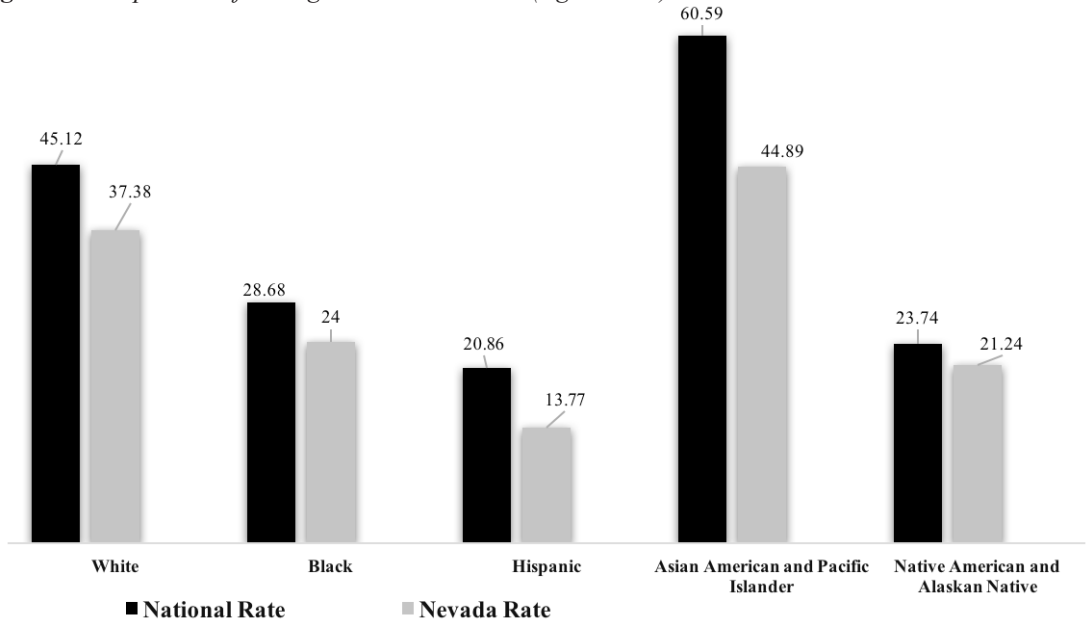
of color are not the only problems Nevada faces in the postsecondary pipeline.

While the current postsecondary pipeline seems to work for certain student populations, Nevada degree attainment data reveals achievement gaps in specific student of color populations. This is important as Nevada is seeing an increase in “post-traditional” learners such as Black, Hispanic, and Native American/Native Alaskan students. Degree attainment rates in Nevada (see Figure 4) demonstrate that a majority of student of color populations fall behind the national average and

their White peers (37.38). Hispanic students had the lowest degree attainment rate at 13.77 percent (7.09 percentage points behind the national average), Native American/Alaska Natives had a 21.24 percent degree attainment rate (2.5 percentage points behind the national average), Black students

had a 24 percent degree attainment rate (4.68 percentage points behind the national average), and while at 44.89 percent Asian American/Pacific Islander students had a higher degree attainment rate than White students, who were 15.7 percentage points behind the national average.

**Figure 4.** Comparison of College Enrollment Rates (Ages 18-54) in 2014



*Source: Lumina Foundation; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012, 2013, and 2014 American Community Survey One-Year PUMS Files.*

This section of our policy paper will explore measures for supporting students of color in the pipeline to college. Many of the measures included within this paper have exhibited some form of success when implemented throughout the United States. Nevadans should consider investing in the educational pipeline for students of color as one of their greatest opportunities and greatest privileges. Programs like the ones identified in this section can help to ensure greater educational equality for students of color.

### Education Achievement Gap Programs

**GEAR UP.** The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP) is a federally funded comprehensive intervention program created in 1999 to improve predictors of academic success and college readiness among 7th through 12th grade students as measured by PSAT and SAT scores, as well as GPA (Glennie et al., 2015; Sianjina & Phillips, 2014).

The GEAR UP program operates by developing partnerships with colleges and universities, businesses, and local governments to benefit low-income students of every race and ethnicity (Sianjina & Phillips, 2014). The United States Department of Education (DOE) Office of Civil Rights, defined GEAR UP as an alternative pre-college education program that provides disadvantaged socioeconomic and low-performing students with equal opportunity initiatives to prepare for college entrance. GEAR UP goals include: providing different grade levels of students with tutoring; mentoring; information on college preparation and financial aid; core academic preparation; and college scholarships (Sianjina & Phillips, 2014). Unlike other educational programs, all students within a grade are eligible for GEAR UP school services (Glennie et al., 2015). African-American students' program participation in the components of GEAR UP has been considered important to raising academic performance predictors of college readiness (Phillips,



2007), and Sianjina & Phillips (2014) found African-American GEAR UP participants had significantly higher grade point averages than non-participants.

**Upward Bound.** Established through the Economic Opportunity Act 1964, Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families and from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree (i.e., first-generation students). According to the Upward Bound website, "The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education." Stipulations for participation require students to have completed the 8th grade, be between the ages of 13 and 19, and have a need for academic support in order to pursue a program of postsecondary education. All students must also be either from low-income families or be potential first-generation college students. Upward Bound has been found to more than double, from 18 to 38 percent, the likelihood that students will enroll in a four-year college, and the program improves students' early college persistence as measured by total credits earned (Myers, Olsen, Seftor, Young, & Tuttle, 2004). Currently, University of Nevada, Reno, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and Nevada State College all have Upward Bound programs and are looking to expand their offerings.

**The Talent Search program** identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provides academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and continue on to and complete their postsecondary education. Talent Search also encourages persons who have not completed education programs at the secondary or postsecondary level to enter or reenter and complete postsecondary education. The goal of Talent Search is to increase the number of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds who complete high school and enroll in and complete their postsecondary education (TRIO Program, 2008). Students must also be between the ages of 11 and 27 and have completed the fifth grade. Glennie et al. (2015) found Talent Search participants were more likely to both apply for financial aid and enroll in four-year colleges, than their non-participant peers. Unlike Upward Bound, Talent Search works with students who have left secondary or postsecondary

institutions, as well as current students (Glennie et al., 2015).

**The Puente Project** is a program specifically designed to increase the number of educationally underserved students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities, earn degrees, and return to the community as leaders and mentors for future generations (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). According to its website, the Puente Project is a national award-winning program that, for more than 30 years, has improved the college-going rate of tens of thousands of California's educationally underrepresented students. The program is interdisciplinary in approach, with writing, counseling and mentoring components. The Puente Project provides a strong programmatic model that has been empirically proven to help facilitate the college pathways for underrepresented students in California (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

**High School Reform Model.** Early College High Schools (ECHS) are small schools, most often located on college campuses, designed to blur the distinction between high school and college. Serving students in Grades 9 to 12, the ECHS model is targeted at students who are underrepresented in college, including students who are low-income, the first in their family to go to college, or members of underrepresented ethnic and racial groups (Arshavsky, Edmunds, Miller, & Corritore, 2014). While taking classes toward their high school diploma, early college high school students are also earning up to two years' worth of credits toward a bachelor's degree—tuition-free (DiMaria, 2013). Since 2002, more than 270 early college schools in 28 states and the District of Columbia have launched or been redesigned. Nodine (2011) found that, nationally, about 70 percent of early college students are students of color. Sixty-one percent of ECHS students qualify for free or reduced lunch, and roughly half are the first in their family to attend college, while 43 percent are Hispanic (DiMaria, 2013). In states such as Texas, an estimated 66 percent of early college students are Hispanic, compared to a statewide average of 49 percent (Nodine, 2011).

ECHS are typically small programs, but they improve high school graduation rates and better prepare English language learners and students of color for high-skill careers (DiMaria, 2013). In the 2010-11 school year, ECHS nationwide had a median four-year graduation rate of 93 percent,

compared with 76 percent for their other respective school districts (DiMaria, 2013). In 2009, the American Institutes for Research and SRI International found that early college students nationally outperform students in their districts on exams and, nationally, 86 percent of ECHS students enroll in college directly after high school, significantly greater than the 66 percent for public schools nationwide (Nodine 2009; Nodine, 2011).

Additionally, ECHS students use their learned experiences to bypass remedial classes and go straight to advanced courses in college. The DOE has recognized successful ECHS designs as potential strategies to graduate more college career-ready students (Hoffman & Vargas, 2010). In addition to their educational benefits, educational savings from ECHS for some states could also make the schools attractive. Texas produced an estimated savings of \$6,800 per student completing an associate's degree, and \$10,500 of educational savings for students completing a bachelor's degree (Nodine, 2011). With many states reducing funding for higher education, ECHS provide a winning financial scenario for both the state and their respective students.

***Denver High School: Creating and Sustaining a College-Going Culture.*** To make their students more aware of, prepared for, and willing to pursue postsecondary education, Denver High School (DHS) in New York City utilizes smaller learning communities or "houses" to serve its student population of 9th to 12th graders. At the time of a four-year study by Knight-Diop (2000–2004), 30 percent of the 4,000 students at DHS were Black and 60 percent Hispanic. The school's leadership created six college or career-themed houses and four general learning houses, with each one representing grades 9 through 12. Each house included three staff members: a guidance counselor for academic and personal student development; a house coordinator to aid the guidance counselor with scheduling; and a family assistant for community outreach. As an institutional and interpersonal structure of care, the house structure was created to allow movement and support students' college-bound academic identities, while challenging notions of being permanently relegated to unequal educational opportunities (Knight-Diop, 2010).

The development of a learning center

where students could receive tutoring from peers or teachers, use computers, and work on SAT test prep was very important. The two primary structures that supported the center's success were the distribution of college advisement among staff and the embedded support of peers. In particular, both "close and distant peers can positively influence students' participation, engagement, achievement, and access to college resources within schools... The learning center has powerfully tapped into the power of peers as a resource in the ... process" (p. 166). Essentially, the peer support and encouragement allowed the students to engage in meaningful relationships while relieving some of the burden on the counselors. Overall, the combination of peer support and effective leadership by administrators, teachers, and counselors within a college-going school culture created institutional and interpersonal structures of care in an urban school setting (Knight-Diop, 2010).

***The Career and College Readiness (CCR) Act in Illinois*** seeks to aid student transition from secondary to postsecondary education by reducing the need for remedial coursework (Baber, 2014). The CCR Act supports intervention strategies at seven community colleges in the state of Illinois, targeting high school juniors and seniors with strong postsecondary aspirations but low standardized test scores in math and/or English. Students of color tend to rely on older siblings, relatives, and peers rather than guidance counselors and admissions officers as they develop plans for postsecondary attendance (Baber, 2014). Some of the males resisted seeking assistance academically due to an unwillingness to express vulnerability. However, African-American male students reshaped their perceptions of the educational environment when faculty or administrators created a safe space to reveal their struggles and anxiety at CCR. Although this emotional investment in African-American male students may seem simple, it is not always utilized throughout schools. Baber (2014) suggests three main areas of support made the difference: encouraging postsecondary aspirations; navigating multiple pathways to access; and persisting through stereotypes and perceived barriers. The study also found a valuable source of aspirations consistently discussed among African-American male students was peer support, specifically older male peer support. This reflects

a constant theme among males of color about the value of receiving “insider” advice from older peers, particularly African-American males who have experienced the postsecondary education process (Baber, 2014). Beyond peer support, Baber (2014) found it critical for students to be provided both the knowledge of their current skill set and an opportunity to talk with administrators/instructors about how to move beyond developmental courses. The CCR intervention also promoted postsecondary access by providing students with an opportunity to feel comfortable on a college campus. Many students experienced negative comments in academic settings from others who promoted negative stereotypes, even if they were succeeding academically (Baber, 2014).

#### *Children’s Aid Community Schools.*

Part of the strategy for success and closing the achievement gap involves reducing health care disparities. Studies show that healthy students who are not hungry or sick are better learners and that underserved communities can benefit from a system that brings health care to students where they are—in school. Research suggests that Children’s Aid Community Schools produce better student and teacher attendance, less grade retention, better test scores, and better parent involvement than similar schools (Gilroy, 2011). The Obama administration has cited Children’s Aid Society and community schools as an evidence-based reform strategy and is considering including it in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Gilroy, 2011). Since 1992, Children’s Aid has partnered with the New York City Department of Education to ensure quality education in high-risk schools. According to the website, these schools offer a comprehensive, integrated approach to education that extends the hours, services and partnerships of traditional public schools. Most Children’s Aid Society schools are open all day and well into the evening, six days per week, year-round. Results of this 25-year “experiment” found that Children’s Aid Community Schools produce better student and teacher attendance, increased grade retention, more appropriate referrals to special education services, improved test scores and higher parental involvement than similar schools.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper has provided data on the demographics of students within each school district in Nevada, and the percentages of students of color that attend colleges in Nevada. Comparisons were also drawn between state and national trends. A review of research on successful measures for supporting students of color in the pipeline to college was also presented. After summarizing each of these sections, recommendations will be provided on how to approach the pipeline issue in Nevada.

In summary, the majority of districts in the state of Nevada have 50 percent or more White students, with the exceptions of Clark County and Washoe County, which have 26 percent and 45 percent respectively. When aggregating by race and ethnicity, Clark and Washoe school districts have a minority-majority with Hispanic students accounting for 45 percent of Clark County, and nearly 40 percent of Washoe County. The shift in the state’s demographics is expected to continue. Nevada is projected to see increases of Hispanic graduates by 2 percent, Black graduates by 4 percent, and Asian graduates by 4 percent, while the number of White graduates is expected to decrease by 2 percent between 2020 and 2028 (Institute for Research on Higher Education, 2016).

In comparison to the state’s demographics, NSHE’s (2013) Diversity Report indicates that the public higher education institutes in the south enrolled minority students at a higher rate than they are represented in the region. This same report reveals that minority enrollments at public higher education institutions in the north approximated the population distributions, but UNR fell short of matching the statewide population distributions. As the gap between White and minority students narrows in the state of Nevada, there is potential for growth in minority enrollment at all public higher education institutions in the state. However, Nevada Department of Education data from the 2015-2016 school year indicate that graduation rates for American Indians/Alaskan Natives, Blacks, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, and those reporting two or more races fall behind those of their White and Asian peers. While national data (e.g., Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2016) indicate higher rates of high school completion or beyond for Whites than any other race/ethnicity, each minority group reported 81 percent or higher with a high school degree or more with the exception of Hispanic individu-

als. However, in the state of Nevada, high school graduate rates ranged from a low of 55 percent for Black students to a high of about 85 percent for Asian students. Nevada has room to improve for all students.

Earlier in this paper, successful measures for supporting students of color in the pipeline to college were presented. The following highlights the key findings discussed at length in the aforementioned section: The literature supports moving away from a deficit perspective and shifting to a more supportive institutional culture (Rodríguez & Oseguera, 2015; Tsoi-A-Fatt Bryant, 2015). In particular, school systems should examine the opportunities provided to students of color to develop college readiness (Tsoi-A-Fatt Bryant, 2015). Strayhorn (2011) found that even with a simple summer bridge program intervention, the high school GPA of low-income students of color predicted success in the first term of college. In addition to preparing students of color to be ready for college, once enrolled, institutions can provide support to facilitate success. Institutions should provide a welcoming, positive environment for all students and evaluate whether their social justice and diversity initiatives advance the campus climate (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). The interactions between faculty and students are important to creating a caring environment. Academic success has been linked with mentoring and quality relationships with faculty and staff (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Rodríguez & Oseguera, 2015). By initiating and maintaining positive relationships with students of color, institutions can reshape their institutional culture.

While the previous section summarized some of the literature on successful measures for supporting students of color in the pipeline to college, this section draws from a recent report of the collaborative efforts of postsecondary and K-12 leaders in 10 states to increase college readiness (SHEEO & NASH, 2016). Interviews with leaders in both state agencies and system offices gleaned the following recommendations for states seeking to improve college readiness:

- Engage representatives from constituencies across the pipeline together in a shared dialogue.
- Institute a position to manage college readiness work across sectors at the state, agency and campus-level.

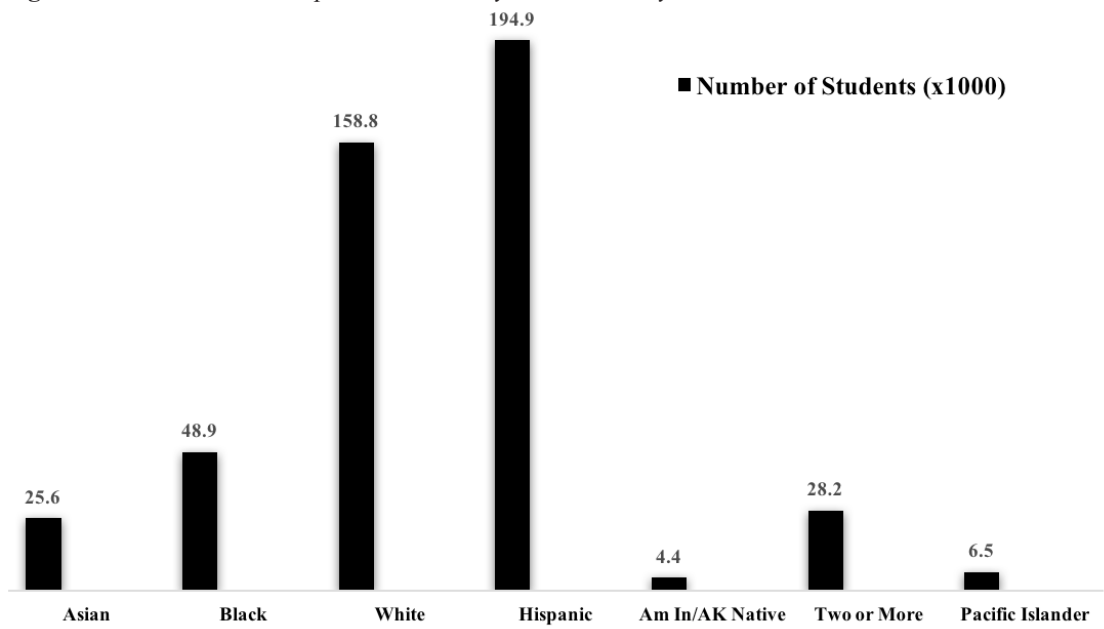
- State leaders should directly engage campus leaders and faculty, particularly those at community colleges.
- An integrative approach across sectors should be used to effectively communicate elements of college readiness.
- States may need to look to external funding (e.g. foundation grants, federal grants, and cross-state initiatives) to augment their resources.

In addition to considering these recommendations for improving college readiness, state leaders may also examine policies that impact the pipeline into college. In particular, policies around funding of higher education could be evaluated to assess the impact on students' access to an affordable education. In Nevada, 23 percent of families earn \$30,000 or less per year, and would need to commit nearly 40 percent of their income to attend one of the public two-year institutions, 65 percent to attend a public four-year institution, and 62 percent to attend a public research institution (Institute for Research on Higher Education, 2016). State leaders and system and institution leaders may consider examining how tuition and financial aid policies either hinder or help students of color as well as the economically disadvantaged to access higher education.

In conclusion, to address leaks in the pipeline of students of color into higher education in Nevada, the state should consider an integrated approach. Efforts to improve college readiness will depend on buy-in across sectors. Successful measures to support students of color should be considered for integration into K-12 through post-secondary institutions. Finally, the societal and economic benefits associated with college affordability and accessibility for students at all income levels warrants a thorough analysis.

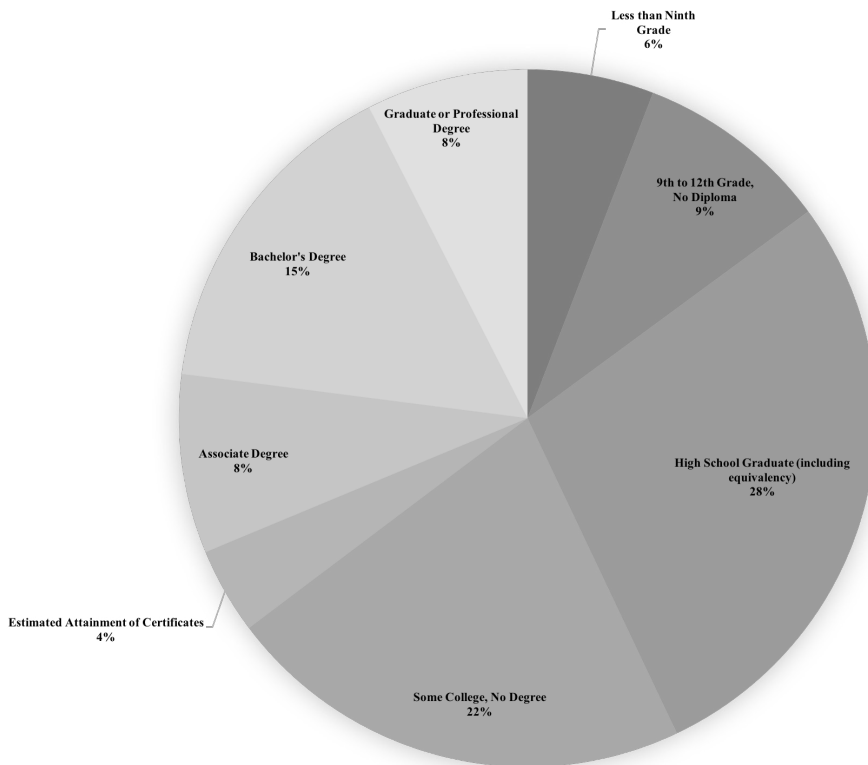
**Additional Charts/Tables**

**Figure 4. Nevada Student Population Count by Race/Ethnicity 2015-16**



Source: Nevada Department of Education

**Figure 4. Levels of Education for Nevada Residents (Ages 25-64) in 2014**



Source: Lumina Foundation (2016); U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey



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