The Santa Clara County Children’s Agenda
2015 Data Book

Every child safe, healthy, successful in learning, and successful in life
Indicators of Health and Well-Being

3 At a Glance – How Are Santa Clara County Children Faring?
4 The Santa Clara County Children’s Agenda
5 The Bill of Rights for Children and Youth
6 The Landscape for Children in Santa Clara County
8 The Importance of Family Engagement

Every Child Safe

10 Introduction and Goals
11 Food Insecurity and Hunger
13 Children Living in Safe and Stable Families
15 Safe, Stable Homes Lead to Healthier Children and Families
16 Juvenile Arrests

Every Child Healthy

20 Introduction and Goals
21 Routine Access to Health Care
23 Healthy Lifestyle
25 Early Social-Emotional Development
27 Developmental Assets

Every Child Successful in Learning

29 Introduction and Goals
30 Striving for Success in Learning
34 Keeping Students in School and Learning
36 School Readiness
39 Third Grade Reading
42 Middle School Math Proficiency

Every Child Successful in Life

44 Introduction and Goals
45 High School Graduation Rate
48 Opportunity Youth
49 Children Fluent in 2+ Languages
50 Community Values Youth

Many thanks to the Santa Clara County Office of Education for the design and printing of the 2015 Santa Clara County Data Book.
### At A Glance

**How Are Santa Clara County Children Faring?**

*Making Progress* means that a data indicator has been improving over time and/or that best practices are being implemented that should result in measurable improvement. *Losing Ground* means that the indicator is trending in the wrong direction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Results: Making Progress</th>
<th>Results: Losing Ground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Insecurity and Hunger</strong></td>
<td>• Need has grown by 40% between 2009 and 2012 with unmet need rising to 153.7 million missing meals. Preliminary data for 2013 indicates this trend is continuing.</td>
<td>• A decreasing percentage of eligible children participated in Free/Reduced Price Lunch and Summer Feeding Programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Children Living in Safe and Stable Families</strong></td>
<td>• The rate of children in foster care decreased from 4.8 per 1,000 in 2006 to 2.2 per 1,000 in 2012. It rose to 2.6 per thousand in 2014. Ethnic/racial disparities continue.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Juvenile Arrests</strong></td>
<td>• The Juvenile Arrest Rate decreased 52.4% between 2008 and 2014. Felony Juvenile Arrests decreased 53.4% during the same time period. Racial/ethnic disparities continue.</td>
<td>• Youth spending time in Juvenile Hall decreased 27.4% during this same time period.</td>
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<td><strong>Routine Access to Health Care</strong></td>
<td>• Measure A funding will help provide health insurance to all children in Santa Clara County.</td>
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<td><strong>Healthy Lifestyle</strong></td>
<td>• In 2014, the percentage of youth who achieved the aerobic fitness standard increased.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Developmental Assets</strong></td>
<td>• The percentage of 9th graders who achieved 6 out of 6 fitness standards increased.</td>
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<td><strong>School Readiness</strong></td>
<td>• In Fall 2012, more than 700 children in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties participated in a school readiness assessment utilizing the new state DRDP-SR readiness tool.</td>
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<td><strong>Third Grade Reading Proficiency</strong></td>
<td>• With the new Common Core State Standards, standardized testing will be suspended until 2015. Prior to this, STAR scores were improving, however there was no narrowing of the achievement gap.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Middle School Math Proficiency</strong></td>
<td>• A new focus on expanded learning in summer shows promise to improve third grade reading skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High School Graduation Rates with A-G Requirements</strong></td>
<td>• Students disengaging from school and dropping out decreased from 13.9% in 2010 to 11.1% in 2013.</td>
<td>• Between 2010 and 2013, the percentage of students graduating with A-G requirements has remained fairly flat.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fluent in 2+ languages</strong></td>
<td>• In 2014, 1,267 students received the Seal of Biliteracy, up from 208 students in 2012.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Values Youth</strong></td>
<td>• Percent of youth who feel valued by the community grew from 18% in 2005 to 22% in 2010.</td>
<td>• Project Cornerstone continues to grow in reach and scope and this should lead to increased developmental assets.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This traditional greeting exchanged among Maasai warriors on the distant plains of Africa reflects the high value that the extraordinary and storied tribe places on its children’s health and well-being. The warriors hope to hear in response, “All the children are well,” which means the entire tribe is thriving.

The Santa Clara County Children’s Agenda reflects a similar philosophy. When we ask how our children are faring, we know the answer is the most important measure of the health of our community. Our vision is, “Every child safe, healthy, successful in learning, successful in life.” We understand our progress towards this vision by tracking and monitoring our progress on 13 data indicators of child health and well-being.

### The work of the Children’s Agenda

- Utilizes data and research to inform decision-making, guide program improvement and drive results.
- Requires us to be accountable as individual organizations and as a community to achieving measurable change in child well-being.
- Focuses on the “opportunity gap” which can lead to poor outcomes for our low income children and children of color.
- Drives the development of integrated services, systems, and policies.
- Compels a commitment to continuous improvement even as we celebrate our accomplishments and improved results.
- Necessitates high expectations, not only for our children, youth, and families, but for ourselves as service providers, policy-makers and funders.

### There is No Silver Bullet, Only Silver Buckshot

While it would be nice to have one approach that would improve our children’s lives, this is not realistic considering the complex challenges that affect the well-being of the children in our community. The different aspects of our children’s lives are interconnected. We cannot expect improved results in learning without addressing childhood hunger or homelessness. We cannot expect youth to be ready for career and college if they live in an unsafe community or have unaddressed learning challenges.

The Children’s Agenda addresses this by recognizing that we each contribute to improved results for our children and youth. By leveraging this contribution and collaborating to solve problems, we can address child development broadly from birth to young adulthood and assure the best possible outcomes for all our children.

Through the Children’s Agenda, we commit to work together to achieve collectively what we cannot do alone.
The Bill of Rights for Children and Youth

The Bill of Rights for Children and Youth provides the foundation for the Children’s Agenda and helps our community make children and youth a top priority, even during times of political change and financial upheaval. The Bill of Rights was endorsed by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors on February 9, 2010 to ensure that leaders keep the needs of young people at the forefront of decisions about budgets and government policies. Since then, hundreds of others have signed them, including cities, school districts, community organizations and individuals. If you or your organization would like to endorse the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth go to www.kidsincommon.org.

All children and youth have a right to be safe, healthy, successful in learning, and successful in life regardless of their language, culture, race, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or developmental or physical abilities.

The Santa Clara County Bill of Rights for Children and Youth

All children and youth have a right to be safe, healthy, successful in learning, and successful in life regardless of their language, culture, race, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or developmental or physical abilities.

Santa Clara County is enriched by the diversity of its children and youth. Therefore, we resolve to support Santa Clara County children and youth so that:

- They have a healthy mind, body, and spirit that enables them to maximize their potential.
- They develop a healthy attachment to a parent, guardian or caregiver and an ongoing relationship with a caring and supportive adult.
- Their essential needs are met—nutritious food, shelter, clothing, health care, and accessible transportation.
- They have a safe and healthy environment, including homes, schools, neighborhoods, and communities.
- They have access to a 21st-century education that promotes success in life and in future careers and a love of life-long learning.
- They have training in life skills that will prepare them to live independently, be self-sufficient, and contribute to their community.
- They have employment opportunities with protections from unfair labor practices.
- They have freedom from mistreatment, abuse and neglect.
- They have a voice in matters that affect them.
- They have a sense of hope for their future.
According to the 2014 American Communities Survey, there are 442,256 children and youth under the age of 18 living in Santa Clara County. Of these:

- 34% were under the age of 6
- 29% were 6-10 years old
- 16% were 11-13 years old
- 21% were 14-17 years old

Santa Clara County is one of the most diverse counties in the nation. As can be seen here, there is not a “majority” population.¹

**Figure 1 – Ethnicity of Children in Santa Clara County 2014**

The Landscape for Children in Santa Clara County

The high cost of living in Santa Clara County creates enormous challenges as we endeavor to make every child safe, healthy, successful in learning and successful in life. Poverty and the cost of living are intertwined with a number of other factors that can put children and their families at risk.

In 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 12.8% of Santa Clara County children lived in households with income that fell below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). In 2015, the FPL for a family of three—one adult living with one preschooler and one school-age child—is $19,790. Eligibility for many public support programs is based on factoring a percentage of the FPL. For example, Federal Free School lunch eligibility is 130% of the FPL, and the Reduced Price lunch program is based on a family earning 185% of the FPL. This family will qualify for the Reduced Price Lunch program only if they earn no more than $36,612 annually.

**Figure 2 – Percent of Children Living in Poverty by Race/Ethnicity, 2012**

**Economic Self-Sufficiency in Santa Clara County**

The Insight Center for Community Economic Development has estimated that to meet basic needs without public or private assistance, this same family needs a household income of $74,251. This estimate is known as the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Standard.² The gulf between the Self-Sufficiency Standard and the Federal Poverty Level in Santa Clara County is sobering. Even more startling is that it would require this family to work more than three full-time minimum wage jobs at $10.00 per hour or $20,800 annually (the City of San Jose’s minimum wage) to come close to meeting the Self-Sufficiency Standard. Even these three minimum wage jobs would fall short at $62,400 annually. In Santa Clara County, it was estimated that 36.7% of households in 2012 earned less than the Self-Sufficiency Standard.

Children in Immigrant Families

Some interesting statistics about Santa Clara County Children:

62.4% live with one or more parent who was born in another country

24.2% of children enrolled in Santa Clara County schools are English Language learners³

The county’s foreign-born parent population includes those who are naturalized U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, temporary migrants, humanitarian migrants or unauthorized migrants. A microcosm of our nation in the future, Silicon Valley’s immigrant population is represented by five of the top six countries whose citizens come to the United States: Mexico, the Philippines, India, Vietnam and China.⁴

Nationwide, 88% of children in immigrant families are U.S. citizens. Children of immigrants account for almost all of the nation’s growth in the child population between 1990 and 2008. In 18 years, today’s children in immigrant families will be a large proportion of those working to support baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) through their retirement. They will also be one of the largest groups of new voters.⁵

Multiculturalism is the norm in Santa Clara County, and our neighborhoods, schools and workplaces are deeply influenced by the immigrant experience. In 2009, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation proposed a new model of immigrant integration for Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. The model promotes mutual benefits for immigrants and the communities where they live, allowing for newcomers to enjoy enhanced civic participation and improved mobility. The new model not only encourages immigrants to become integrated into the community, but for their new community to accept the multicultural perspective immigrants bring as valuable and enriching.⁶

The Importance of Family Engagement

Families are Critical to Success in Learning and Life

The Role of Family Engagement in Child and Youth Development

Parents and caregivers are a child’s first teachers and can continue in this role as children enter early education and elementary school by providing learning activities at home. They can also become involved in their children’s education at school by advocating for change in district policy and decision-making. Family engagement is a shared responsibility with schools and other community organizations committing to involve families in meaningful ways. Across the county, there is new recognition about the importance of family engagement. Many county initiatives, such as the School Linked Services Initiative, have included family engagement as a primary focus of collaborative work.

The Santa Clara County Early Learning Master Plan’s Family Engagement and Leadership Committee – comprising early care and education agencies, institutions of higher education and community-based organizations – has created a set of family engagement principles that can be adopted by any agency that serves children and youth. Adapted from principles developed by the Harvard Family Research Project, Parent Services Project, and the National PTA, these principles are as follows:

- **Partnership** The reciprocal relationship between families and staff is one of equality and respect, resulting in the creation of a mutually beneficial partnership. Success comes from promoting the excellence of all partners.
- **Family Strengths** Families are assets, not obstacles to overcome or work around. They are vital resources to themselves, to one another and to programs.
- **Social Support** Support is important to all families. Social support networks create connections and build relationships, promoting the overall well-being of the child, the family and the community.
- **Cultural Competence** Each family’s culture is recognized, valued, respected and reflected in practice.
- **Shared Leadership and Power** Families and staff are partners in decisions that affect children and families. Together, they create and influence policies and programs.
- **Shared Responsibility** All community members recognize that learning begins at birth and occurs in multiple settings. All take responsibility for expanding learning opportunities, community services and civic participation.
- **Child Success** Families, staff, and community members collaborate to advocate that children have access to opportunities that equitably support their success and healthy development.

Is your school or organization engaging families? Some questions to consider:

- Is family input used to help set goals for children, the classroom, the school and programs?
- Are there effective communications from school to home and from home to school?
- Are there people on staff who are able to communicate in the language of students’ families?
- Are families provided with assistance, education and opportunities to support their children’s success?
- Do materials, curriculum, services and interactions generated by the school reflect the school’s appreciation of the home language and the culture of the children and families as positive assets?
- Are parents provided with meaningful opportunities to volunteer to support the school and its programs during the school day and during times that accommodate their schedules?
- Are parents included in developing plans when children have challenging behavior?
Every Child Safe

Safety is integral to children’s healthy growth and development. Children raised in safe and stable homes are more likely to be healthy, successful in learning and successful in life. Children who face challenges in their home environment such as food insecurity, family violence and parents who have mental health or substance abuse issues are more likely to drop out of school, become engaged in the juvenile justice system and in need of government supports as adults.

Key findings from research conducted by the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) describe a relationship between low family income and family stability. The findings show higher risk factors such as depression, substance abuse and domestic violence in low income families. NCCP recommends promising strategies that include integrating family support systems, early childhood education, substance abuse prevention and mental health services.

Indicators

Food Insecurity and Hunger

Children Living in Safe and Stable Families

Juvenile Arrests

Goals

Fewer families report hunger and food insecurity and a larger percentage of eligible children are enrolled in federal food programs.

More children remain safely in their own homes or the homes of relatives. Child homelessness decreases.

Fewer youth are arrested for felony and misdemeanor offenses, there is a decrease in youth detained in “out of home placement” and a smaller percentage of youth recidivate.

The racial disparity of children in foster care and youth in juvenile detention facilities decreases.

Indicator:
Food Insecurity and Hunger

Rating:
Losing Ground

What the Data Tell Us
The demand for food assistance in Santa Clara County has outpaced our ability to provide this assistance:

- Need has grown by 40% between 2009 and 2012 with unmet need rising to 153.7 million missing meals. Preliminary data for 2013 indicates this trend is continuing.  
- Eligibility for school-based, Free/Reduced Price (FRP) meals remained stable, however:
  - Participation in FRP Lunch decreased from 79,269 in 2012 to 67,223 in 2013.
  - Participation in Summer Feeding programs decreased from 9,170 in 2012 to 9,012 in 2013.
  - Participation in FRP Breakfast increased from 31,442 in 2012 to 33,231 in 2013.
- One Bright Spot: There has been an increase in CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps), as participation grew from 63,571 participants in 2010 to 108,581 in 2013.

How we Measure Hunger and Food Insecurity
To understand hunger and food insecurity, we utilize the Hunger Index developed by Santa Clara University. This is an aggregate measure of the need for food among the most vulnerable members of our community, and provides a means of comparing need and our community’s ability to meet that need annually.

Another measure we analyze to better understand hunger is our county’s participation in federal food support programs such as CalFresh (formerly known as Food Stamps) and the FRP feeding programs. These programs play a significant role in addressing childhood hunger by providing children with healthy, nutritious meals and relieve some of the burden food expenses place on families.

Why this Indicator is Important
Food-insecurity and hunger are strongly associated with many negative outcomes for children, including:

- Maternal depression that has an impact on a young child’s social-emotional development;
- Susceptibility to illness and infection;
- Deficits in cognition, attention and behavior;
- Increased school absences, students repeating a grade, suspensions and higher rates of tardiness;
- Depressive disorders and suicidal behaviors in teenagers;
- Greater likelihood of dropping out of high school; and
- Greater rates of and obesity and health problems caused by being overweight.

The paradox is that young children living in households without enough food are more likely to be overweight. Families living on a tight budget often sacrifice healthy food for inexpensive and high-calorie/low-nutrition fare found at fast-food restaurants and convenience stores. Low-income neighborhoods also often lack grocery stores with fresh food and produce.

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Fostering Improved Results

An adequate amount of healthy food protects children from poor health and poor developmental outcomes. In a study conducted in 2012 by Children’s Health Watch, young children in families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly called Food Stamps) assistance were less likely to be overweight or at risk for developmental delays than young children in families eligible for but not receiving this form of assistance.

Called CalFresh in California, Santa Clara County has made a commitment to improve participation in this important program and has been successful by partnering with Second Harvest Food Bank’s multilingual outreach team, providing application assistance at 50 community sites from Gilroy to Palo Alto.

Other food programs such as the FRP school feeding program can also ease families’ food insecurity. These programs also represent a significant contribution to the economic well-being of the community. For example, full participation in the FRP Breakfast program would bring an additional $10.6 million to Santa Clara County’s economy. Full participation in CalFresh represents $151 million of additional economic activity in the county.

One way to increase participation in FRP feeding programs is by utilizing a new school-meals-eligibility option authorized by Congress in 2010. Instead of having individual children complete application materials, this streamlined process allows school authorities to determine the percentage of a school’s students who are already enrolled in other federal need-based programs, such as CalFresh, Medi-Cal and Head Start, or are designated as migrant students or in foster care. Any school with at least 40% of its students enrolled in one of these programs may participate in this new “directly certified” option. Schools with 62.5% of students “directly certified” will be reimbursed for 100% of their meals. For schools, this means saving countless hours of staff time by not having to process individual applications each year.14

School breakfast programs, when offered “universally,” can have a positive impact on school attendance, improved academic performance, reduced tardiness and decreased disruptive behavior. Schools that provide FRP breakfast often do so in the cafeteria and only before school begins, sometimes as early as 7 a.m. Bus schedules, parents’ work schedules and other issues make early arrival at school difficult for many students. Also, many children are embarrassed to be in the FRP breakfast program and will skip a meal rather than feel stigmatized by participating.

A powerful strategy that is having success in Los Angeles and Healdsburg is serving breakfast after the school day starts. Students eat breakfast together in their classroom while the teacher is performing administrative tasks such as taking attendance. This universal approach takes 10-15 minutes each morning and helps children start the school day well-nourished and ready to learn.

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Indicator:
Children Living in Safe and Stable Families

Rating: Losing Ground

What the Data Tell Us

• The rate of children in foster care decreased from 4.8 per 1,000 in 2006 to a low of 2.2 per 1,000 in 2012. In 2014 the rate of children in foster care increased to 2.6 per 1,000.

• On October 1, 2006 there were 2,022 children in foster care. On October 1, 2011 there were 1,028. On October 1, 2014 there were 1,393.

• In 2014, African American children were in foster care at a rate of 11.9 per 1,000 and Latino children were in at a rate of 5.0 per 1,000 in 2014. The rate of White and Asian children foster care was 1.4 and 0.4 per thousand in 2014, respectively.15

Measuring Children Living in Safe and Stable Families

This indicator is measured by utilizing data from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project which is California’s warehouse for child welfare data collected from the state’s 58 counties.

Why this is Important

Children who are victims of abuse or neglect are more likely to suffer from depression, attempt suicide, abuse alcohol and drugs and demonstrate learning and behavioral difficulties in school. They are also more likely to commit crimes, mistreat their own children and become involved in domestic violence as adults.

Recent neuroscience research reveals that traumatic experiences such as physical abuse and neglect dramatically affect the structure and chemistry of the developing brain. The biological effects of trauma could be one reason why many children in the child welfare system have behavioral and learning problems. Separation from their primary caregiver can be especially traumatic for a child under the age of six. This results in difficult decisions for social workers and others who have the responsibility to protect children who may be abused or neglected.16

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Fostering Improved Results
Over the past few years, several reforms have been implemented in Santa Clara County with the goal of decreasing child abuse and neglect as well as first entries into the foster care system. These reforms include:

**Joint Response**
Joint Response ensures that law enforcement personnel have decision-making support from social workers on the scene of law enforcement investigations that involve children.

**Differential Response**
By differentiating the level of risk among families that are under stress, community-based services can be offered to families with lower risk factors without further involvement by child welfare.

**Santa Clara County Family Wellness Court**
Utilizing a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) approach, parents and their children are given support that ensures the child’s healthy development and access to an array of services tailored to the family’s specific needs, including treatment for substance abuse.

**Title IV-E Waiver**
Santa Clara County applied for a Title IV-E waiver, granting the county greater flexibility in spending funds dedicated to child safety and well-being. Prior to the waiver, most child welfare funding was focused on children removed from their families and placed in foster care. The waiver allows the Santa Clara County Department of Family and Children’s Services to focus on family preservation. Protective factors for child and family well-being include:

- Strong social connections;
- Knowledge of parenting and child development;
- Social and emotional competence of children;
- Nurturing and attachment;
- Parental resilience and child; and
- Concrete support for parents.17
A safe and stable home is vital to children’s physical and mental health and their capacity to learn. A child who is or has been homeless has a greater likelihood of suffering from hunger as well as poor physical and mental health. They are also more than twice as likely to repeat a grade in school, be expelled or suspended.\textsuperscript{18}

Homeless youth are defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.” These children and youth tend to fall into two groups: children who experience family homelessness and those identified as “unaccompanied youth.”\textsuperscript{19}

Families that experience homelessness are most often headed by a young, single woman with limited education and are likely to have experienced domestic violence or mental health problems. Often these families become homeless due to unforeseen circumstances such as a death in the family, a lost job or an unexpected expense such as a hospital stay. In many cases families find housing and stabilize quickly, however some require more intensive assistance.

There are segments of the older youth population (unaccompanied youth) that are at greater risk of becoming homeless. These include:

- Victims of physical, verbal or sexual abuse at home
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth
- Former foster youth and youth exiting the juvenile justice system
- Pregnant or parenting youth\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
Santa Clara County Homeless Survey

Every two years, Santa Clara County participates in a comprehensive count of its homeless population, as required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This count aids Santa Clara County in its planning of programs and services, evaluation of existing efforts and allocation of future funding. This survey was conducted January 27-28, 2015. Results were not available in time for this report.

The results of the 2013 survey found:

- 520 children under the age of 18 were living in 349 homeless families.
- 1,063 homeless youth were between the ages of 18 and 24 and 203 were unaccompanied minors.
- 19% of unaccompanied children and youth reported being in school at the time of the survey. 79% reported that they would like to further their high school.
- 39% of unaccompanied children and youth reported their most common sleeping locations were outdoors, either on the streets, or in parks or encampments. Less than one third (32%) of unaccompanied homeless children and youth reported feeling very safe in their current living conditions and 33% reported trading drugs or sex for a place to sleep at night.

Another measure of child and youth homelessness is the number of students served through the McKinney-Vento Act, which protects the educational rights of homeless students. The act ensures that homeless children and youth have the right to go to school in their school of origin no matter where they live or how long they have lived there. They can remain in their school of origin the entire time they are homeless and if they find permanent housing, they can finish the school year there.

Under McKinney-Vento, children can also get preschool services, free or reduced meal services, special education, before- and after-school care and many other services. Data from the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) shows that during the 2011 school year, 1,630 children and youth were served with McKinney-Vento funds. This number increased to 3,025 in 2013 school year. This increase may be an indicator of better outreach and service delivery to homeless students, rather than a true increase in the number of homeless students.

Social Impact Research, the independent research department of Root Cause, recommends the following strategies to support homeless youth:

**For Family Homelessness:**

- **Rapid “re-housing”**
  The more quickly families are connected with permanent housing, the more quickly their lives can stabilize. Federal funding for rapid re-housing was part of the stimulus package that was introduced following the recession and was successful in reducing family homelessness.

- **Prevention strategies**
  Cash assistance, housing subsidies and other services can avert homelessness before it starts.

**For Youth Homelessness:**
(Unaccompanied minors and young adults)

- **Proactive Family Reconciliation**
  Agencies focus on family reconciliation through counseling and support services in order to improve family relationships so that youth can return home to more supportive environments.

- **Youth-centered Transitional Housing and Supportive Services**
  Helping youth experiencing long-term homelessness by providing housing, supportive services and developing life skills necessary to become independent adults.

To be successful, these approaches must be built on the principles of positive youth development. They must be flexible, relationship-focused, culturally-competent and grounded in trauma-informed care.
Indicator: Juvenile Arrests

Rating: Making progress

What the Data Tell Us

• Total juvenile arrests in Santa Clara County decreased 52.4% from 14,663 youth arrested in 2008 to 6,214 in 2014.
• Felony arrests of juveniles decreased 53.4% from 3,403 in 2008 to 1,587 in 2014.
• Detentions in Juvenile Hall decreased 27.7% from 1,998 in 2009 to 1,444 in 2014.
• Violation of Probation (VOPs) decreased 55.9% from a high of 893 in 2010 to 394 in 2012.
• Disproportionate representation of youth of color in the system remains significant.24

Measuring this Indicator

To measure this indicator, we utilized data collected by the county-appointed Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative monthly trends report.

For this report we considered overall juvenile arrest rates, felony arrests, detention rates and arrests related to VOPs. VOPs can be considered an indicator of the effectiveness of the rehabilitative approach of the probation system.

Why this Indicator is Important

Detention in the juvenile justice system is associated with poor education outcomes for youth, recidivism and eventual entry into the adult justice system. A study done by the American Academy of Pediatrics shows that youths that spend time in a juvenile detention facility are more likely to die a violent death, with a mortality rate more than four times that of the general population.25 Another study found that, “Youth who had been involved in the juvenile justice system were seven times more likely to have adult criminal records than youth with the same backgrounds and self-reported delinquency, but no juvenile court record.” It states that “the more restrictive and more intense the justice system intervention was, the greater was its negative impact.”26

While many youth will have a single arrest and never become re-engaged in the juvenile justice system, others have a very lengthy involvement with it. They often suffer lifetimes of low educational achievement and marginal attachment to the labor force. Those living in low-income areas with sub-standard housing that lack quality education and access to meaningful employment are also more likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system.27

Many of the youth in our juvenile justice system have faced significant life challenges. In 2005, nationally known justice expert Bobbie Huskey conducted an analysis of youth who were detained in Santa Clara County’s Juvenile Hall. She found:

• More than 78% reported high levels of trauma leading to post-traumatic stress.
• More than 60% admitted to Juvenile Hall (JH) in 2004 were identified as having a brain disorder as identified by the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI). The MAYSI is used upon entry into Juvenile to screen for bi-polar, attention deficit, non-verbal learning and conduct disorders.
• Youth in the county’s JH and Ranches are between three and five grades behind in their reading and math competencies.28

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Fostering Improved Results

Decreasing the juvenile arrest rate involves both decreasing the number of youth who enter the system and decreasing the number of youth who re-enter or become more deeply involved with it (either through violation of probation or by committing another crime).

The dramatic decline in the number of youth being arrested or otherwise engaged with the juvenile justice system is the result of the contributions from many different players. The work of the probation department, the courts, the District Attorney, the public defender, non-profit organizations and others has added up to significant impact for youth.

- **Direct Referral Program**
  This is an early diversion program for first-time offenders who are age 15 or younger. It provides early screening, assessment, prevention and intervention services to youth and their families. In lieu of a formal arrest (no arrest record is created), a referral is made to the Probation Dept., which in turn makes a referral to Community Solutions, Alum Rock Counseling Center or the Bill Wilson Center. Although participation in the Direct Referral Program is voluntary, many more families chose to participate than were expected.

- **Decreased use of County juvenile detention facilities.** On March 31, 2009, there were 304 youth in Juvenile Hall and 98 youth in the James Ranch and the Muriel Wright Center. On December 1, 2014 the number of youth in JH was 97, and there were only 39 youth at the James Ranch. The Muriel Wright Center has been closed for an indeterminate time due to lower numbers of detention. The decrease in the use of these facilities is a testament to the work of the courts, the probation department and many community partners committed to addressing the criminal behavior of youth in the least restrictive environment.

- **Court-Appointed Friend and Advocate (CAFA) Pilot Project**
  Modeled on the court-appointed advocate program for youth in child welfare, the CAFA program provides advocates for youth in the juvenile justice court. After receiving 32 hours of training, CAFA volunteers provide advocacy for the youth in the court setting and address the education needs of the youth.

- **Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS)**
  JAIS is a risk- and needs-assessment tool that has been shown to improve juvenile justice outcomes. It helps ensure that case plans are developed objectively and that interventions are appropriate to the young person’s risk and need.

- **Foster Care Placement and Wrap-Around Services**
  It is best practice to keep youth in their communities in the least restrictive environment, focused on reunification with their families. With this goal in mind, there has been a focus on developing more local, quality placements and increased use of “wrap-around services” that are family-centered, strength-based, needs-driven and focused on individualized case planning.

  The number of youth in foster care placement has decreased from 71 individuals in January 2011 to 32 in November 2013. In January 2011, only 11 youth were participating with their families in wrap-around services. By November 2013, this number had increased to 87.

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• **Prevention and Early Intervention Unit (PEI)**
  This program’s goal is to reduce the risk of recidivism and involvement with the juvenile justice system. It provides early intervention services to help youth develop a stronger affinity to social values, thoughts, attitudes, coping skills and the resiliency to become healthy and responsible community members. PEI services are provided prior to any formal Juvenile Justice Court action. The Welfare and Institution Code gives probation officers the ability to address these cases without bringing the matter to court. However, certain cases require a review by the District Attorney’s office.
  The Juvenile Probation Department received approximately 6,000 arrest citations in 2013, and approximately 3,700 of those were handled through the PEI unit. More than $1 million is dedicated annually for contracted community-based services that are designed to divert youth from entry into the Juvenile Justice system.
  The program best serves at-risk and low- to moderate-level delinquent youth, up to the age of 18. It addresses the youth’s needs that put them at risk for arrest through referrals for appropriate interventions at the earliest stage possible. Youth may receive a reprimand from a probation officer or be assessed and determined to require services, culminating in a 30-120 day case plan. They are provided with services which may include victim awareness or mediation, individual or family counseling and mentoring.

• **Teaching Adolescents Skills in the Community (TASC)**
  The TASC program is a weekend work program for out-of-custody youth who are wards of the court. TASC provides an immediate response to serious noncompliant behavior and/or a new legal violation which the probation officer elects to handle informally. The program utilizes brief cognitive interventions for youthful offenders that include cognitive restructuring as well as the development of problem-solving and social skills. Youth also participate in structured, supervised work in the community where they learn good work habits and enhance their practical skills.

• **Disproportionate Minority Contact and Confinement in the 95122 zip code**
  In 2012, the 95122 zip code was identified as having the highest number of juvenile arrests in the county, including the most arrests for African American and Latino youth. The “95122 Committee,” chaired by the District Attorney’s office, brings together a wide array of juvenile justice stakeholders, school administrators, and community-based organizations (CBOs) to address disproportionate minority contact and confinement within this zip code. The partnership with Overfelt High School administration (the district with the most youth from 95122) has been invaluable and has led to several innovative ideas for addressing discipline and safety issues on campus. These include implementing a no-citation policy for low-level on-campus misdemeanor offenses including possession of illicit drugs at school. Students who are caught with illicit substances but not selling them are referred to drug counseling and Overfelt’s in-school suspension program. These citations are handled informally by the school, the San Jose Police Department (SJPD) and the county probation department.
  The in-school suspension program provides academic assistance as well as life-skills building and works to keep youth engaged in school and reduce out-of-school suspensions. The Probation department is also piloting new responses to violations of probation in this zip code in order to reduce the number of youth incarcerated for violations of probation. Fresh Lifelines for Youth (FLY) is providing a law education class for students identified by the school administration as needing additional assistance to prevent further involvement with the juvenile justice system. The school administration, the police department, the District Attorney’s office, the Probation Department, the San Jose Mayor’s Gang Prevention Task Force and CBOs are working together to reduce arrests and improve outcomes for youth in the zip code.
Improving Outcomes for Dually Involved Youth (DIY)

Research has clearly established that victims of abuse and neglect are at increased risk for entering the juvenile justice system.\(^\text{31}\) One study revealed that delinquency rates for youth with at least one substantiated allegation of maltreatment were 47% higher than for youth with no abuse history.\(^\text{32}\) Another study indicated that roughly half of all youth in out-of-home placements experience at least one juvenile arrest, approximately one-third placements experience at least one detention; and one-fifth were adjudicated delinquent.\(^\text{33}\)

The increased risk of delinquency can be explained by a multitude of complex factors. Some are circumstantial. For example, common adolescent behavior that would typically be dealt with by caregivers, without the involvement of law enforcement, is quickly brought to the attention of law enforcement for youth living in a group home. Others reflect the fact that “delinquent” acts are often the manifestation of unprocessed trauma.\(^\text{34}\)

What is key to understand, however, is that this increased risk does not mean a traumatized youth will inevitably be involved with the juvenile justice system. In fact, with appropriate identification, coordination and intervention, this population can completely avoid entering the juvenile justice system, or at the very least, minimize contact with it.\(^\text{35}\)

In June 2014, the Dually Involved Youth (DIY) Unit was officially launched, comprised of two social workers, two probation officers and a youth advocate. These staff have extensive training and provide holistic, specialized services. While it is too early to have quantitative measures of the success of the DIY Unit, it is seeing promising results. One youth said this was the first time she felt the probation officer and social worker really understood and were responding to her complex history.\(^\text{36}\)

Trauma-Informed Response

Santa Clara County has been at the forefront of national efforts to move towards trauma-informed systems of care, and this work is embedded in the Dually Involved Youth Initiative. The Initiative collaborated in 2014 with the Cross Agency Services Team (CAST), developing plans that promote “trauma-informed” and culturally relevant practices across child-serving departments and agencies. CAST piloted its efforts of cross-system trauma training within the Initiative. Members of the core team worked with leading childhood trauma expert Dr. Chandra Ghosh Ippen, adapting her training to focus on dually involved youth. Several hundred participants, including judges, attorneys, system leaders and managers attended these day-long trainings. The resulting conversations have furthered thinking about how to serve these youth in a “trauma-informed” manner. This work continues in 2015, with system-wide training in TARGET (Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy) for counselors, social workers, probation officers, judges and attorneys in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. TARGET is a strengths-based approach that will provide professionals with the tools to help young people who have experienced trauma to regulate their emotional responses, manage intrusive trauma memories and develop self-efficacy. The Santa Clara County Behavioral Services Department has been instrumental in bringing this training to Santa Clara County.\(^\text{37}\)

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\(^{35}\) Ibid.


Every Child Healthy

Physical health sets the stage for healthy development in childhood and later years. Health is influenced by many factors including routine access to health care, healthy foods, exercise opportunities, and healthy environments that support social-emotional development.

Indicators

Routine Access to Health Care
Healthy Lifestyle
Early Social-Emotional Development
Developmental Assets

Goals

All children have health coverage.
More children have timely visits to the doctor and the dentist.
More children pass the state physical fitness test and are meeting the aerobic fitness standard.
The number of children receiving early developmental screening increases annually.
The percentage of youth and children reporting they are in the developmental “thriving zone” will increase.
Health disparities based on socio-economic differences will decrease.
Indicator: Routine Access to Health Care

Rating: Making progress

What the Data Tell Us

• 95.2% of Santa Clara County residents had health insurance in 2012. The county has designated funding so every child can have health insurance. 38

• In 2012, 85.9% of children had a routine check-up in the past 12 months. 88.6% of children ages 2-11 and 97.9% of ages 12-17 had a dental visit in the past year. 39

• From October 2013 to October 2014, 12,652 preschool children participated in a vision screening. The Healthier Kids Foundation followed up with 1,279 children who needed and received a full vision screening. 40

How We Measure Routine Access to Health Care

In the Children’s Agenda, we measure facilitators and barriers to health care, including the percentage of children with health and dental insurance. We also measure health care utilization, including how much time has passed since the last visit to a health care practitioner or dentist.

Why this Indicator is Important

Routine access to health care is one of many factors that influence children’s health and well-being. Lack of access has a negative impact on children, families and the community. Through routine access, families are educated about prevention measures and receive screening so that health problems can be detected and treated as they emerge.

Fostering Improved Results

In 2001, a collaborative of Santa Clara County agencies and other funding organizations established the Children’s Health Initiative (CHI), committed to the goal of enrolling all Santa Clara County children in health insurance. The initiative has two parts:

• A new insurance product, Healthy Kids, covers children ineligible for the two major state health insurance programs (Medi-Cal and Healthy Families).

• A comprehensive outreach campaign finds uninsured children and enrolls them in the public insurance program for which they are eligible.

This outreach and the simplification of bureaucratic processes have been significant in eliminating barriers that often prevent children from receiving health care. CHI enrolled more than 171,000 children in Medi-Cal, Healthy Families or Healthy Kids. With enrollment in Healthy Kids, more children are able to see a doctor and have well-child visits and there was a 50% decrease in school days missed due to illness. 41

In Fall 2012, Santa Clara County residents passed Measure A, which increased the sales tax to provide financial support for county health and welfare programs and provides an ongoing source of funding to sustain the success of the Children’s Health Initiative. As a result of Measure A, children whose families earn up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are eligible for free or subsidized health insurance. This will increase to 400% sometime in 2015.

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39. Ibid.
School Nurses

In California, until the late 1970’s, just about every school campus had a school nurse. School nurses did a lot more than merely provide a little TLC and Band-Aids when a second-grader scraped her knee on the playground. They monitored the health of the school community, made sure children were up to date on their immunizations, brought health and social service resources to the school campus and supported parents dealing with a child’s nasty cold or head lice. The Putting Healthcare Back Into Schools nurse demonstration project provided four full-time credentialed nurses to four underserved elementary and middle schools in the San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD) as well as a nurse practitioner based at the School Health Clinics of Santa Clara County. This initiative’s goals are to:

- Improve access to primary health care and prevention services for students, with an emphasis on asthma and other chronic conditions.
- Facilitate the establishment of a “medical home” for students who do not have their own pediatrician or health care provider.

The following data points demonstrate the success of this joint investment by the Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital at Stanford and the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children’s Health:

- In School Year (SY) 2008, 59% of students had hearing screenings and 69% had vision-screenings. In SY 2011, 100% of students had both hearing and vision screenings in schools with nurses.
- Parents of children in schools without a school nurse reported twice as many visits to the emergency room for asthma episodes as those with children in similar schools with a school nurse.
- Absences due to illness decreased from a mean of 3.17 days in SY 2007 to 3.03 days in SY 2009 in schools with nurses. During the same time period, absences in similar schools without nurses increased from 3.19 days in SY 2007 to 3.23 days in SY 2009.
- In schools without a nurse, there is an academic achievement gap between children without chronic health conditions and those that have chronic health conditions such as asthma. Between SY 2009 and SY 2010 this gap was reduced (and the reduction was sustained in SY 2011).
- In addition, the demonstrated successes and improvements in student screenings, referrals, follow-up, absenteeism and academic scores in the four demonstration schools have helped the San Jose Unified School District attract support and funding to hire full-time nurses at five additional schools in the district through Title A funds and individual donors.42

Revolutionizing Vision Screening

Vision screening has not changed much since 1862 when the Snellen Eye Chart was developed. That is until two years ago, when the Healthier Kids Foundation (HKF) started screening preschoolers with a photo optic scan camera that has been used in Alabama and Mississippi for the past 15 years. This tool identifies vision issues such as astigmatism and lazy eye. Last year, HKF used this tool to screen 12,652 children and made sure that children who had a problem were referred to an optometrist for a full exam and to get glasses if needed.

Vision plays an important role in learning and if a child experiences problems with visual processing, she may also experience delays in learning that interfere with her success. An estimated 15 percent of school children suffer from some sort of visual impairment. Vision needs to be screened before children start school or they will start behind. This screening technology allows many children to be screened efficiently.43

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Indicator: Healthy Lifestyle

Rating: Making progress

What the Data Tell Us

• The percentage of 9th grade students meeting the aerobic fitness standard increased from 60.3% in 2006 to 77.9% in 2014.

• Latino and White students meeting the aerobic fitness standard increased from 51.3% and 72% in 2012 to 67.1% and 81% in 2014, respectively. In 2014, 70.3% of African American and 90% Asian youth met this standard.

• The percentage of 9th grade students achieving all six fitness standards increased from 42.3% in 2013 to 43.6% in 2014.44

How we Measure Healthy Lifestyle

For the purpose of this data report, we look at California Physical Fitness Reports to understand healthy lifestyle. Annually, schools test 5th, 7th and 9th graders in six categories of physical fitness:

• Aerobic Capacity
• Body Composition (based on the Body Mass Index or BMI)
• Abdominal Strength
• Trunk Extension Strength
• Upper Body Strength
• Flexibility

Specifically, we track data on Aerobic Capacity and consider how many students achieve all six of the fitness standards.

Why this Indicator is Important

In children, good physical fitness and physical activity increases memory, concentration and energy levels that assist in learning. Almost any physical activity is sufficient as long as children are moving. Playing actively or participating in athletic or physical fitness activities during school instead of watching television or playing video games provides children with the kind of activity they need in order to be healthy.45


figure 9 – Ninth Grade Students Meeting Aerobic Fitness Standard
Fostering Improved Results

To improve fitness levels and achieve a healthy weight, children must have access to safe places to play and healthy food choices. In many communities, violence, crime and unsafe traffic makes it difficult to go out and play or take a walk. Young children living in low-income households are more likely to be overweight, in part because families who live on a tight budget often sacrifice healthy food for inexpensive and calorie-dense, nutrition-poor fare such as fast food and food from convenience stores. This is compounded in low-income neighborhoods by lack of access to grocery stores with fresh food.46

Santa Clara County Public Health Department, FIRST 5, the YMCA, Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital and several other organizations have focused many activities on helping youth have a healthier lifestyle. These include health education programs, promoting salad bars as part of school lunchtime offerings and promoting farmers’ markets in neighborhoods with poor access to healthy food.

“10 Steps to a Healthier You”

The Healthier Kids Foundation recently launched “10 Steps to a Healthier You.” This program, taught in English and Spanish, gives children and their families information that will lead to positive behavior changes. The 10 steps are:

1. Eat 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
2. Drink water instead of soda or other sweet drinks.
3. Eat fruit instead of drinking juice.
4. Choose a healthy, natural snack (fruit is best) instead of packaged snacks.
5. Children older than 2 years of age should drink low-fat (1%) or non-fat (skim) milk.
6. Eat family meals at regular times.
7. Eat three meals a day. (Breakfast is especially important!)
8. Be active/play outside at least one hour every day. (More is better!)
9. Spend less than 1-2 hours of non-homework related screen time per day. (TV/computer/video games/tablet/texting.)
10. Get enough sleep.47

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Indicator:
Early Social-Emotional Development

Rating:
Making progress

What the Data Tell Us
12,460 developmental screenings were conducted in 2014. This is an increase over the 11,600 conducted in 2013.48

How we Measure Early Social-Emotional Development
Because developmental screening has proven to be such a key strategy in identifying and providing support to children who may be getting off-track, the Children’s Agenda counts the number of developmental screenings conducted each year. As child care and education settings, community organizations, public health nurses and health care providers scale up their implementation of developmental screening tools, we can expect more children will receive services and supports that will help them stay on track in early social-emotional development.

Why This Indicator is Important
Social-emotional development involves the acquisition of skills that enable children to learn from teachers, make friends, cope with frustration and express thoughts and feelings. Important among these skills is being able to:
• Identify and understand one’s own feelings;
• Accurately read and understand the emotional states of others;
• Manage strong emotions in a constructive manner;
• Have empathy for others; and
• Establish and sustain relationships.49

For example, children with poor social-emotional skills often display difficult or disruptive behavior in day-care programs, preschool and school. Teachers may find it harder to teach these children and see them as less socially and academically competent. Consequently, teachers may provide these children with less positive feedback. Peers may reject them, resulting in the children receiving even less emotional support and fewer opportunities for learning from their classmates. Faced with rejection by both teachers and peers, children may grow to dislike school and learning, disengage from school and have poorer school outcomes.

Persistent physical aggression, high school drop-out rates, juvenile delinquency and other anti-social behaviors all are associated with early childhood behavior problems.50

**Fostering Improved Results**

If we want to help young children succeed in school, it is important that we address the significant number of children who are at risk for school difficulties because their social-emotional development is off-track. To do this, we must identify children and families with these needs as early as possible and provide effective interventions. When children receive formal screenings, developmental concerns or problems are identified earlier, this results in more effective intervention and treatment. Developmental screenings are conducted using simple, fast and accurate tools to identify children who have developmental concerns or delays.

When we fail to identify children with developmental issues, we are missing an opportunity to provide support and intervention that can improve life-long outcomes. The cost savings of these improved outcomes are estimated to be between $30,000 and $100,000 per child. For every dollar spent on early intervention there is an associated savings of $7 to society.51 This is seen as such an effective strategy that the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends health care providers to administer a standardized developmental screening tool with all children beginning at the 9-month-old visit, again nine months later and then again when the child is 24 or 30 months old.52

Developmental screening in the pediatric health care setting could be a powerful strategy for Santa Clara County. After all, most children in the county are evaluated in a health care setting on a regular basis. Kidsdata.org reports that 95.2% of children have health insurance and 85.9% had a routine health check-up within the past 12 months. If the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines were followed, nearly every child in Santa Clara County would be screened several times before they enter school.

**Developmental Screening in Santa Clara County**

In his State of the County address in early 2013, Board of Supervisors President Ken Yeager identified the “need for more universal and more frequent developmental screenings for young children during their well-child pediatric visits.” He asked that “VMC and our clinics begin to perform routine developmental screenings for all children.” Universal developmental screening in the county’s health and hospital system began in 2014 and will significantly increase the number and frequency of screenings of our children ages six months to five years old.

Since 2006, KidConnections—a partnership between FIRST 5 Santa Clara County, the Santa Clara County Mental Health Department (SCCMHD), the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) and community-based organizations—has been focused on increasing access to services and improving outcomes by strengthening the screening and referral process for young children with developmental and/or social-emotional concerns. The Santa Clara County Universal Developmental Screening in Pediatric Settings project will test whether the implementation of multi-language electronic developmental screening tools in a pediatric clinic provides an economically feasible and effective method for early identification of young children at risk of developmental and social-emotional delays. The SCCMHD’s Innovation 1 and FIRST 5’s universal developmental screening efforts are interwoven into this larger project, which will also increase the bilingual capacity of screening and include a video component to support caregivers who have limited literacy in English.

Head Start and Early Head Start also provide a developmental screening within 45 days of a child starting these programs. When a developmental issue is identified, Head Start staff will provide an intervention and will refer the child to other services if they do not see improvement after this intervention.

Parents/Caregivers who have concerns about their child’s social, emotional, behavioral and/or physical development are welcome to call 1-800-704-0900 and have their child referred for screening, assessment and intervention services at a nearby location in Santa Clara County.

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Indicator: Developmental Assets

Rating: Making progress

What the Data Tell Us

- The average number of developmental assets that youth possess grew from 18.2 in 1999 to 20.8 in 2011. This is higher than the national average of 18.6 assets. 53

- The number of students participating in Project Cornerstone school partnership programs increased by 73% from 35,809 students in 2011 to 61,975 in 2014.

How We Measure Developmental Assets

Project Cornerstone conducts a Developmental Asset Survey every 5-6 years in Santa Clara County schools. In SY 2011, over 36,000 students in more than 200 elementary, middle and high schools in 25 school districts throughout Santa Clara County were surveyed.

There is a strong correlation between the number of assets youth have to the number of youth participating in Project Cornerstone. We use the correlation as a proxy for understanding whether we are making progress in this area.

Why this Indicator is Important

Developmental assets are the positive relationships, opportunities, values and skills that young people need to grow up to be daring, caring, responsible and ambitious about their future. These assets include dimensions such as whether youth feel supported, have good boundaries, use their time constructively, possess positive values, are committed to learning, feel socially competent and have a positive identity. The Search Institute demonstrated that the more of these assets youth have, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk activities. 54

Fostering Positive Results

Project Cornerstone’s mission is to engage adults and youth to change our schools and communities into environments where all youth develop the skills for social and academic success. Each year, it provides training and consultation to thousands of adults who regularly touch young people’s lives. Through partnership with more than 200 schools, it empowers young people, parents and staff to improve school climate and create vibrant, caring communities of learners. Two important Project Cornerstone programs bring parents into the classroom to help build assets and meaningful connections with students:

- **Asset Building Champions (ABC)**
  Parents who volunteer for the ABC program read children’s books and lead classroom activities and discussions on a monthly basis. The curriculum focuses on building developmental assets in the areas of support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. It teaches students important life skills such as decision making, peaceful conflict resolution, and interpersonal skills. It covers all areas of peer abuse and gives students the skills to avoid being the target of bullying behavior from other students. ABC parents teach students how to be “UPstanders” instead of bystanders in situations of conflict. In addition to providing meaningful opportunities for parent engagement and for students to interact with caring adults, the program helps create a common language for behavioral expectations throughout the school.

- **Los Dichos de la Casa (Los Dichos)**
  This is a Spanish-language program that opens new doors for Spanish speaking parents, supporting their children’s education and development as well as that of other children in their community. Each month, Los Dichos volunteers read specially selected bilingual books in the classroom and lead activities and discussions about topics including Latino heritage, tolerance, family pride, peaceful conflict resolution and other important values. Students develop a sense of positive cultural identity, a greater sense of cultural competence and respect for one another.

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*Figure 11 – Average Number of Assets in 7th, 9th and 11th Grade, 1999 and 2011*

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>National Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th Grade</td>
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</tr>
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<td>11th Grade</td>
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Every Child Safe, Healthy, Successful in Learning, and Successful in Life
### 2011 Developmental Asset Survey – the percentage of youth at elementary, middle and high school with each developmental asset

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<th>Asset Type</th>
<th>Elementary School</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>High School</th>
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<td>84</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>81</td>
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<td>Bonding to School</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading for Pleasure</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>Equality and Social Justice</td>
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<td>59</td>
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Every Child Successful in Learning

Success in learning happens when children are in good physical and mental health, live in safe and stable families and communities and are on track developmentally. They must have educational opportunities that develop fundamental language, literacy, cognitive and social-emotional skills that are critical for lifelong learning and success. The skills that children need to grow into successful students—including capacity for reasoning, problem-solving and self-regulation—are largely developed from birth through third grade.

In Santa Clara County, there is a significant difference in student achievement between ethnic subgroups. This gap threatens the future of a large segment of students and the future well-being of our community. The factors contributing to these academic disparities are complex and will require increased learning opportunities for students from cradle to career as well as sustained support from all sectors. It is not solely our schools’ responsibility to close the achievement gap. Students, parents, civic leaders, businesses and our community at large all have a role to play in children’s success in learning.

Indicators

School Readiness
Third Grade Reading Proficiency
Middle School Math Proficiency

Goals

Increase the percentage of children who are ready for school
Increase the percentage of children who are proficient or advanced at reading in third grade
Increase the percentage of youth who are proficient in math in middle school
Eliminate the achievement gap in these three indicators

California’s State Standards for Academics

By spring of 2015, all California public school students will be assessed under the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as mandated by the California State Legislature. The CCSS describe what students should know in each subject in each grade. Defining the knowledge, concepts and skills that students acquire at each grade level helps ensure educational equity and that our system of education is integrated.

The CCSS have the following characteristics:

• An emphasis on developing literacy skills in history, science and technical subjects because college students are often required to read and analyze non-fiction materials in school and the workplace;
• A focus on applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world problems so that students will develop a level of understanding that allows them to apply mathematics to new situations;
• A focus on student collaboration;
• Developing fluency with multimedia and technology; and
• The development of strong complex reasoning, problem-solving and communication skills.

Standards and teaching strategies have been developed and are being implemented for Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy. Standards for Science called the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and English Language Development Standards (ELD) have been adopted and will be included in measures of accountability in future years.56

The English Language Development (ELD) Standards

The ELD Standards describe the key knowledge, skills, and abilities in core areas of English language development that students learning English as a new language need in order to access, engage with, and achieve in grade-level academic content areas. The ELD Standards do not merely duplicate the CCSS for English Language Arts/Literacy, or represent English Language Arts (ELA) content at lower levels of achievement or rigor. Rather, the ELD Standards are designed to provide challenging content in English language development for English Learners to gain proficiency in a range of rigorous academic English language skills. The ELD Standards are not intended to replace the California CCSS for ELA/Literacy, but instead to amplify the language knowledge, skills and abilities that are critical in order for English Learners to attain success in content areas while developing English proficiency.

English Learners must have full access to high quality English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies content, as well as other subjects, while they are progressing through the ELD continuum.

The California ELD Standards are intended to support this dual endeavor by providing fewer, clearer, and higher standards, as defined by:

1. Fewer: Those standards which are necessary and essential for development and success;
2. Clearer: A coherent body of standards that have clear links to curriculum and assessments; and
3. Higher: Correspondence with the rigorous standards in the California (CA) CCSS for ELA/Literacy, CCSS Math, Next Generation Science Standards, and history/social studies standards.  

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)

The State Board of Education approved a plan for statewide implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards as adopted in September 2013. The NGSS identifies eight guiding strategies for the implementation of the new science standards and calls for significant new investments of public and private resources to help schools make the transition over a five year period. The strategies encompass all areas of the educational system. While they provide focus to the work, they also reveal its highly integrated nature. Assessment of the NGSS is anticipated to occur in the 2018-19 school year.

The eight guiding strategies for the CA NGSS systems implementation are:

1. Facilitate high quality professional learning opportunities for educators to ensure that every student has access to teachers who are prepared to facilitate student learning to the levels of rigor and depth required by the CA NGSS.
2. Provide CA NGSS-aligned instructional resources designed to meet the diverse needs of all students.
3. Develop and transition to CA NGSS-aligned assessments that support the improvement of teaching and learning and provide information that may be used for accountability.
4. Collaborate with parents, guardians, early childhood educators and expanded learning communities to integrate the CA NGSS into programs and activities beyond the K-12 school setting.
5. Collaborate with post-secondary institutions, business communities and additional stakeholders to ensure that all students are prepared for success in career and college.
6. Seek, create, and disseminate resources to support stakeholders as the CA NGSS systems implementation moves forward.
7. Design and establish systems of effective communication regarding CA NGSS among stakeholders to continuously identify areas of need and disseminate information.
8. Build coalitions to ensure a consistent message and to sustain momentum during implementation.

California’s Local Control Funding Formula

Legislation enacted in July 2013 made major changes both to the way the state allocates funding to school districts and the way the state supports and intervenes in under-performing districts. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) anchors this legislation by sending additional funds to districts that serve high-needs students, with the goal of improving academic outcomes. The LCFF also gives local school districts more authority to make decisions about how to spend education funding, as well as holding districts accountable for achieving measurable results. It also requires them to document the proposed plan for spending the funds using the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP).

Local Control Funding Formula Accountability

The Academic Performance Index (API) has been the primary statewide accountability system for schools in California since 1991. Until now, the API has been calculated based on pupil performance on the California Standards Tests and the California High School Exit Examination. Senate Bill 1458, signed by the Governor in 2012, mandates a change to the API. Starting in 2016, no more than 60% of the API will be determined by achievement tests. Instead, the state has identified eight priority areas and recommended metrics for each:

- **Basic Services** – Ensure that teachers have the right credential for the classes they are teaching (lowering rate of “mis-assignments”), students have access to standards-aligned instructional materials and facilities are in good repair.
- **Implementation of the Common Core State Standards** – Implementation for all students including English learners
- **Student Achievement** – Including performance on standardized tests, percentage of students who are college- and career-ready, percentage of English learners who become English proficient and are reclassified as English speakers, and percentage of students who pass Advanced Placement exams with a score of 3 or higher
- **Student engagement** – Includes school attendance rates, chronic absenteeism rates, middle and high school dropout rates and high school graduation rates
- **School Climate** – Student suspension and expulsion rates and other local measures
- **Course Access** – Students have access and are able to enroll in all required areas of study
- **Other Student Outcomes** – May include performance on other exams and student performance in required areas of study

Strategies that Help Success in Learning

**School-Linked Services – The Promise of Coordinated Support Services for Children and Families**

Research has demonstrated that second only to family, school is the most important and stabilizing force in the lives of young people. However, too many children in Santa Clara County arrive at school with social and health needs that can become barriers to learning. Evidence shows that when academic and support services are coordinated around school communities, students thrive, parents are more engaged in their children’s education, families have greater access to community services and students have higher levels of academic achievement. Therefore, the Children’s Agenda focuses on developing schools as “resource hubs” that can support the health and social needs of students and their families.

Education and public sector funding entities came together in 2011 and redesigned the service delivery system to achieve better outcomes for Santa Clara County students. The goal of this School-Linked Services (SLS) initiative is to make schools a hub for services, provide coordinated service delivery with an SLS coordinator on each campus and sponsor active parent and community engagement. Initial implementation focused on twelve school districts to reach the most burdened families and reduce disparities based on race and income. In 2014, the Board of Supervisors funded an additional 10 sites, providing a full-time coordinator at each and articulation between elementary and middle schools or middle and high schools.

Through joint planning, shared service delivery and effective coordination, SLS has great promise to meet the needs of Santa Clara County children and families. It will create a seamless service continuum that eliminates redundancies and encourages integration of services between agencies, community providers and education systems. SLS will make schools a place where youth and their families can find a network of preventive services, helping all young people become healthy, responsible and successful adults.

Parental Involvement – Efforts to seek parent input and promote parental participation

Student Achievement – Including performance on standardized tests, percentage of students who are college- and career-ready, percentage of English learners who become English proficient and are reclassified as English speakers, and percentage of students who pass Advanced Placement exams with a score of 3 or higher

Student engagement – Includes school attendance rates, chronic absenteeism rates, middle and high school dropout rates and high school graduation rates

School Climate – Student suspension and expulsion rates and other local measures

Course Access – Students have access and are able to enroll in all required areas of study

Other Student Outcomes – May include performance on other exams and student performance in required areas of study
East Side Alliance
Approximately 85,000 students in East San Jose attend the East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD) and the seven elementary school districts that feed into it. This is nearly the size of the San Francisco and Oakland School districts, combined. If these eight districts were merged into one, it would be the third largest district in the state.

The East Side Alliance (ESA) leverages resources and creates alignment between the feeder districts and the high school district, ultimately enhancing student success throughout the ESA partnership. The Silicon Valley Education Foundation serves as the coordinating and facilitating agency for the ESA. In a relatively short time, many gains have already been made, including:

- **The East Side Promise**
The ESA and San José State University (SJSU) are developing specific student criteria that, if achieved, would guarantee admission to SJSU for students graduating from the ESUHSD.

- **Articulation and Alignment of the Math Course Sequence**
Incorporation of the Common Core Standards and the development of a consistent math placement protocol, ensuring that 9th graders have a smooth transition and remain on a college track as they enter high school.

- **Shared Professional Development**
Convening teachers from across the districts for professional development, supporting the use of common terminology and alignment of instruction throughout the ESA.

Social-Emotional Foundations of Learning – The SJSU Collaborative for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child (CRTWC)
Research conducted in the past twelve years reveals the critical need to give the “social-emotional” dimension of teaching and learning the same attention as pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment in our efforts to close the achievement gap in K-12 education. When students are able to persevere when the work gets tough, voice disagreement respectfully, and ask for help, they are more likely to be successful in learning. CRTWC acts on this research by focusing on embedding the social-emotional dimension of teaching and learning into initial teacher training as well as in ongoing professional development. By developing educators’ capacity to use the social-emotional lens in their teaching, there is great potential to improve student academic outcomes and eliminate the achievement gap. The work of the CRTWC is aligned with and will support the implementation of the CCSS. For example two of the “Standards for Mathematical Practices” are:

- Making sense of problems and the ability to persevere in solving them.
- Constructing viable arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others.

Helping students develop these skills in math is aligned with the social-emotional dimensions of teaching and learning. Supporting educators to do this is the foundation of the work of the CRTWC.

Inclusive Practices Expanding in Santa Clara County
The Inclusion Collaborative (IC) of Santa Clara County was jointly created in 2004 by FIRST 5 Santa Clara County, the Local Early Education Planning Council and the Santa Clara County Office of Education to support and expand access to inclusive, high-quality learning environments in the community and schools in Santa Clara County for children with disabilities or special needs. Collaborations with representatives from over 50 agencies, community organizations, professional and parent volunteers exist to bring quality services and professional development to teachers, early care educators and the community. In 2014, 69% of the children with disabilities who attended one of the inclusive preschool classrooms supported by the IC transitioned to a general education classroom for kindergarten. This results in both a less restrictive environment for the children and in lower costs for school districts.

Many schools districts in Santa Clara County are continuing to expand the implementation of inclusive practices including co-teaching models. The benefits of inclusive practices are improved outcomes in all areas, including social-emotional development and academic achievement.62

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Improving School Engagement and Decreasing Suspensions

Too often there is a tendency to punish students’ bad behavior rather than rewarding positive behavior, and this trend is evident in our school suspension rates. When children and youth are suspended from school they are not in the classroom learning. The extensive paperwork required when students are suspended robs teachers of valuable time that could be spent on teaching activities.

Harsh punishment and “zero tolerance” policies have not been effective at improving school climate or making students feel safe. Challenging behavior—rather bringing weapons or drugs to school—is the single most common reason students are removed from classes, and 20% of students account for more than 50% of all behavioral incidents.63

Studies have also shown that even one suspension triples the likelihood of a student’s involvement with the juvenile justice system within the school year. Almost 70% of youth who are excluded from school are arrested. Research also has shown that students who are suspended or expelled are at a higher risk of repeating a grade or dropping out of school.64

Suspensions carry a financial cost as well. On average, each suspension requires one and a half hours of administrative time. Calculating this time at an average cost of $60 per hour, these suspensions are costing our county’s school districts almost $900,000 dollars annually. This, plus the loss of more than $40 of ADA funding for each day a student misses school, means that suspensions cost Santa Clara County school districts at least $2 million during the 2012-13 school year.

In California, it has been shown that suspensions disproportionately affect African-American and Latino students.65 In Santa Clara County:

- 66% of all suspensions are given to Latino students, who make up only 38% of the student population.
- African American students, 2.6% of the student population, receive 7% of all suspensions.
- Socio-economically disadvantaged students, 41% of the population, receive 73% of all suspensions.

Students in special education, 9.4% of the population, received 25% of all suspensions. This is especially troubling because special education students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that is designed to address any area of the student’s education that can interfere with learning, including behavior issues. The IEP should be designed with the prevention of suspensions in mind. Federal law requires students with an IEP to receive a “Manifest Determination” which determines whether the problem behavior is related to the student’s disability, and to plan a course of intervention to decrease the unwanted behavior and avoid suspending the student.
Suspensions decreased 26.9% between SY 2011 and SY 2013. In SY 2011, there were 19,970 suspensions and 14,589 in SY 2013. Over the past few years, there has been public discussion and legislation focused on decreasing the use of suspensions and improving school engagement.

One effort to decrease suspensions has been led by the Santa Clara County Public Defender’s office. In an effort to eliminate the school to prison pipeline, the office funded education and technical support to four schools in the East Side Union High School District. The participating high schools saw a 30-40% reduction in the number of students suspended during the first semester and a reduction of 578 suspension days. The impact went beyond the four schools. District-wide there was a 30% reduction in the number of students suspended even though non-participating schools only attended an orientation session to the topic and did not receive technical support. This work is ongoing.

**Improving School Climate with Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**

Teachers and schools need a different set of tools in order to deal with challenging behavior. PBIS is a systemic approach for establishing a supportive school culture and individualized behavioral supports that are needed for schools to achieve both social and academic success for all students. PBIS, which has been proven effective and implemented in nearly 8,000 schools across the country, eliminates students’ challenging behaviors and replaces them with constructive social skills. PBIS also decreases the need for more intrusive or aversive interventions.66

The underlying theme of PBIS is that behavioral expectations should be consistent throughout the school and these expectations need to be taught in the same manner as any core curriculum subject. Rather than assuming that all students enter school with the knowledge and skills needed to function appropriately in the classroom, educators are teaching the behavioral expectations that lead to school success.

Another important aspect of PBIS is the collection of data about where and when the most problematic behaviors occur. By having this information, schools are able to identify and address problem areas in the school or at problem times during the day. For example, if there is a cluster of referrals that happen at the end of the lunch period for a specific group of students, an alternative can be developed for that time of day. A recreation room with chess and checkers and other board games can be opened for those students who are getting bored on the playground. Many schools choose to use School-wide Information System (SWIS), a web-based information system designed to help school personnel use referral data to design school-wide and individual student interventions. For more information on SWIS, please visit www.swis.org.67

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What the Data Tell Us
In 2012, the Desired Results Developmental Profile-School Readiness (DRDP-SR©) found:

- Close to 80% of students were rated by their teachers as being at or above their expectations for school readiness.
- Most parents read to their children at least three times a week, an indicator that the message about the importance of early literacy is reaching parents. 42% reported reading to their children seven days a week in 2012, up from 24% in 2005.68

How We Measure School Readiness
A developmentally appropriate and aligned school-readiness assessment can provide useful information to teachers and administrators in order to better address children’s learning and developmental needs over time. It is an essential strategy to close the readiness gap and ensure that all children thrive in their earliest years. When the same assessment tool is used county-wide, the community will see if our investments in young children are paying off. Thanks to the Partnership for School Readiness (PSR), Santa Clara County has been a leader in assessing school-readiness since 2004. Skills are surveyed across multiple areas: Self-Care and Motor Skills, Self-Regulation, Social Expression and Kindergarten Academics. These surveys demonstrated that efforts to improve readiness have been effective with significant improvement demonstrated from 2004 to 2008.

In 2012, the California Department of Education (CDE), in collaboration with the WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies and the UC Berkeley–BEAR center, released the Desired Results Developmental Profile–School Readiness (DRDP-SR©) assessment tool. The primary purpose of the DRDP-SR© is to provide kindergarten teachers with a valid, reliable measurement tool that will assist them to observe, document and reflect on their students’ progress. The DRDP-SR© is aligned with the California Preschool Learning Foundations, the California Kindergarten Content Standards and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The instrument includes 30 measures across five developmental domains, including:

- English Language Development
- Self and Social Development
- Self-regulation
- Language and Literacy Development
- Mathematical Development

In August 2013, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson, recommended the use of the DRDP-SR because it is aligned with the CCSS and “provides consistent assessment to all teachers looking at students’ progress with a common framework, thereby helping both teachers in their classrooms and informing districts in resource allocation to ensure they are meeting the needs of their students.” For more information visit www.drdpsr.org
**Why it is Important**

Children who arrive at school ready to learn are more likely to be successful in and out of the classroom. Figure 14 reflects the combined results of school readiness profiles of children from both Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties from 2004-2009 and their later school performance in third grade. The figure looks at children who entered kindergarten ready in all domains, those ready in some domains and those who were not ready in any domain.

When children entered kindergarten ready in all domains, they were much more likely to be proficient or advanced in Math and English in 3rd grade. Those who start behind in these skills were less likely to be successful in 3rd grade.

**Fostering Improved Results**

“The best way to improve the American workforce in the 21st century is to invest in early childhood education and to ensure that even the most disadvantaged children have the opportunity to succeed alongside their more advantaged peers.”

– James Heckman, Ph.D., 2000 Nobel Laureate in Economics

A growing body of research suggests high-quality early care and education can improve school readiness and later school achievement. However, the cost of high-quality preschool and the shortage of spaces in high-quality programs mean that many children do not receive the benefits of early education.

In Santa Clara County there are 5,425 three- and four-year-olds who live below the poverty level and qualify for Head Start, but only 2,234 Head Start slots. There are an estimated 12,247 children who are eligible for California State Preschool Program. (Income cannot exceed $46,896 for a family of four.) However there are only 1,764 slots.

With the cost of center-based preschool averaging over $11,000 a year in Santa Clara County, many children are not able to attend. These children enter school at a disadvantage compared to children who were able to participate in high-quality preschool. Legislative activity to expand access to high quality early learning

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Educare of California in Silicon Valley (ECSV) is scheduled to open in August 2015 in the Franklin-McKinley School District. ECSV is part of a national network of high-quality early childhood education centers in the United States. It will be a place that nurtures early learning, literacy and mathematics through full-day and year-round instruction for children age five and younger.

ECSV’s expert staff will focus on language and cognitive development as well as parent engagement so that young children will receive the critical foundations for learning that lead to greater success in school and beyond. ECSV will also serve as a leading professional development center and will train thousands of the region’s early childhood education professionals in scientifically proven best practices, which improves the quality of care and instruction beyond the walls of the center. ECSV is poised to:

- Support the ongoing work to develop and expand access to high-quality early learning opportunities;
- Provide concrete demonstrations of the impact of high-quality early learning opportunities;
- Serve as a “policy lever” to move local and state political, community and business leaders to support increasing access to these quality opportunities; and
- Demonstrate the ability of partnerships to create effective models in integrated ways.

ECSV is a multi-agency partnership that includes: FIRST 5 Santa Clara County, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, the Santa Clara County Office of Education, the East Side Union High School District, the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Health Trust, and the Franklin-McKinley School District.
Indicator:
Third Grade Reading Proficiency

Rating:
Making progress

What the Data Tell Us
• 2013 STAR test results showed overall steady improvement since 2007, with 61% receiving a “Proficient” or “Advanced” rating in Third Grade Language Arts.
• While each ethnic group demonstrates similar progress in test scores, the “achievement gap” did not narrow.
• Programs such as the Sobrato English Academic Language Program and the YMCA’s Learning and Growing During Summer have improved proficiency in third grade reading and participation in these programs is increasing.

How we Measure Third Grade Reading Proficiency
2013 was the final year of STAR testing and there will not be standardized testing until the 2015 school year. Until results from the new Smarter Balanced Assessments for Common Core are available and a baseline has been established, the CDE will not have accountability and performance data available. Until that time, we will look at growth in programs that have demonstrated results for children in early literacy.

Why It is Important
Third grade reading proficiency is considered to be a powerful indicator of later academic success. At that grade level it is expected that children will show evidence of reading comprehension and be able to read unfamiliar words through various strategies such as roots, prefixes and suffixes. Reading proficiency at this point prepares the student for fourth grade where the focus of reading instruction changes from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.”

The Pathway Mapping Initiative states, “Literacy is a prerequisite to the acquisition of new information of new ideas. Almost everything kids learn from the fourth grade on they have to learn by reading and writing. Kids who struggle with the task of reading or writing—through which they must convey what they’ve learned—are unable to show their teachers that they understand.”

**Fostering Improved Results**

Starting kindergarten with strong skills definitely helps children get on track for third grade reading. But even if children are ready when they start, it takes hard work, attentive parenting, an effective curriculum and skilled teachers to help children meet this important milestone. For some Santa Clara County students, especially low-income and Latino students, initial performance gaps at Kindergarten actually widen by 3rd grade.

Recommendations to improve 3rd grade reading include:

- Increase collaboration between the early care and elementary school systems to align learning expectations so children are ready for school and schools are ready for the children from their community;
- Improve instructional practice of teachers: Ensure that all early-care and elementary teachers have strong foundations in child development, dual-language learning and curriculum-based methods of teaching;
- Cultivate mentoring and peer-support networks among early childhood professionals and elementary teachers;
- Provide effective screening and assessment for all children from birth to age 8 that is combined with improved early interventions for children who are falling behind;
- Monitor absenteeism in Kindergarten and first grade and work with children who are “chronically absent” (absent 10% or more); and
- Expand and improve summer-learning opportunities for low-income children.

**Summer Learning Loss**

Children need meaningful learning and enrichment experiences during the summer months in order to be on track when they return to school in the fall. Without ongoing summer opportunities to reinforce and learn skills, children, especially those in low-income communities, can fall behind dramatically. Whether children have access to these opportunities may boil down to their neighborhood or family income level.

Low-income children can fall behind by nearly two years largely due to this summer learning loss. In fact, there is no difference in learning rates between low-income and higher income students during the school year.

**YMCA’s Learning and Growing During Summer**

In Summer 2014, the YMCA offered summer camp at two sites in San Jose that were focused on improving 21st Century skills and incorporating the Common Core framework into the program curriculum. The Learning and Growing During Summer program provided elementary school age students with a balance of academically rich activities as well as an enhanced focus on overall physical, social and emotional well-being. These programs included early literacy taught by credentialed teachers, field trips, 21st Century skills as well as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) activities, nutrition education and physical activities five times per week. Nearly 50% of the students were English Learners and nearly 60% were socio-economically disadvantaged. Students not only avoided summer learning loss, but made gains in literacy, math and language usage.

**The Sobrato Early Academic Language Program (SEAL)**

The Sobrato Early Academic Language model (SEAL) is a preschool through third grade model that creates the learning conditions that build language and literacy skills necessary for participation in the academic world and the world at large. SEAL is about rich, powerful language and literacy which is woven into all aspects of the school day.

SEAL promotes the development of biliteracy, affirming and supporting home language for English Learner children and families and developing high levels of proficiency in both Spanish and English. The SEAL classroom brings to life the rigor and richness called for by the Common Core Language Arts Standards and the new California English Language Development standards, as well as Next Generation Science Standards.

SEAL was piloted in three South Bay elementary schools last year and an independent external evaluation found:

- SEAL has a statistically significant impact on student growth and development in language, literacy and cognition.
- SEAL students consistently outperform demographically similar comparison groups in growth and achievement, especially in areas related to language and literacy.
- SEAL is having a significant impact on parents and literacy activities at home.

SEAL is now being implemented in California at 36 schools across seven school districts (mostly in the South Bay) and expansion will continue in the 2015-16 school year.
In February 2011, Applied Survey Research and Attendance Works collaborated to “mine” the longitudinal data from the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to get a more comprehensive look at the role that school attendance may play as an indicator of student success. Linking the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment of 640 students in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties with attendance data from kindergarten and first grade, researchers found that there was a correlation between “No Attendance Risk” and the percentage of students who are at grade level for English Language Arts and Math.78

There are many simple strategies that have been demonstrated to improve kindergarten and first grade attendance. Hedy N. Chang and Mariajose Romero outline some of these strategies in: Present, Engaged and Accounted For:

1. Monitor chronic absenteeism. Regularly calculate and report on the number of children chronically absent;
2. Prepare children for entry into school through high-quality early care and education experiences;
3. Ensure access to preventive health care, especially as children enter school;
4. Offer a high quality education that responds to diverse learning styles and needs of students;
5. Engage families of all backgrounds in their children’s education;
6. Educate parents about the importance of attendance;
7. Encourage families to help each other to attend school;
8. Offer incentives for attendance to all children; and
9. Conduct early outreach to families with poor attendance, and, as appropriate, case-management to address social, medical, economic and academic needs.79

Figure 14 shows the association between attendance and third grade English Language Arts (ELA) and math outcomes. More children are proficient or above when there is no attendance risk. Satisfactory attendance is defined as missing less than 5% of school in kindergarten and first grade. Small risk is defined as missing 5-9% of school in both years. Moderate risk is defined as missing 5-9% in one year and 10% in the other year. High risk is defined as missing 10% or more of school in both years.
What the Data Tell Us
• 2013 STAR tests show ongoing improvement in middle school math. The percentage of seventh graders who took the Algebra I CST test and scored Proficient or Advanced increased from 10.9% in 2009 to 13.9% in 2013. The percentage of 8th graders who took this test and scored Proficient or Advanced increased from 20.5% in 2009 to 36.3% in 2013.
• ALearn and other middle school math programs continue to increase their reach and demonstrate gains in math for their participating students.

How We Measure Middle School Math Proficiency
2013 was the final year of STAR testing and there will not be standardized testing until the 2015 school year. Until results from the new Smarter Balanced Assessments for Common Core are available and a baseline has been established, the CDE will not have accountability and performance data available. Until that time, we will look at growth in programs that have demonstrated results for children in middle school math skills.

Why It is Important
Mathematics is one of the most widely practiced disciplines in the world. The skills needed to understand math are key for all problem-solving. These skills help develop logical thinking, critical reasoning and analytical acuity. Math skills also are an important part of being proficient at playing music and are used in almost every line of work. Doing math helps students to analyze complicated situations and organize them into clear, logical steps. Math is the basic language of science, engineering, technology, medicine, biology and even construction. Studies show that understanding and being successful in mathematics through sixth grade is the most powerful predictor of success in algebra/college prep math. Having a poor experience with algebra is one of the major “red flags” for getting off track for graduation.

Fostering Improved Results in Middle School Math
Preschool Math is Important to Later Success
A growing body of evidence suggests that children who are proficient in early math concepts by the time they enter kindergarten will do better not only in mathematics, but in reading and language skills. They may even have higher rates of high school graduation. Children who have poor math skills often do not catch up and may lag behind their better-prepared peers through 8th grade.

Early math is not about completing timed multiplication drills or using a calculator to do complex equations. The daily routines children participate in help develop early math skills, language skills and social-emotional skills. For example, when Suzie is playing with two dolls and shares one, she realizes she only has one left. Dividing a plate of cookies so everyone gets an equal amount teaches early division skills as well as a sense of fairness and self-regulation. Playing a game together, such as Chutes ‘n Ladders, teaches counting, shapes and colors, patience, cooperation and language skills.

Foundational early math skills include:
• Number sense: The ability to count forwards and, eventually, backwards as well as the ability to see the relationships between numbers, such as adding and subtracting.
• Representation: Understanding the relationships between numbers and words – for example, collecting four pretty rocks so that “Mommy, Daddy, Sissy and me” each get one.

• Spatial Sense: Understanding shapes, size, space, position, direction and movement – for example, building with blocks and recognizing that to build a taller tower they need to use the squared side of the triangle block and not the point of the triangle.

• Measurement: Finding the length, height and weight of objects using units such as inches or pounds. For example, measuring two cups of flour to make cookies reinforces this skill.

• Estimation: The ability to make a good guess about the size of something. This is often difficult for young children and can be taught by pointing out, for example, the difference in the amount of cereal that fits in a large or small bowl.

• Patterns: The ability to see how things – numbers, shapes and images – repeat in a logical way. When children understand patterns, they are able to make predictions about what comes next. They are able to make logical connections and use reasoning skills.

In many early care settings, children do not spend much time talking about math and very little is spent teaching math concepts. However early math is a natural part of development, and a focus on children’s innate capacity to learn math should be as important as a focus on their innate capacity to learn language. Doubling the time spent—from 2% to 4%—on the intentional teaching of mathematical concepts in early care and education settings can lead to a significant increase in early math skills.

When research demonstrated that early reading strategies could support the development of early literacy, it led to changes in practice at home and in early care and education settings. Similarly, emerging research on the benefits of focusing on early mathematical skills should support the development of strategies, curricula and tools to help parents and teachers change their practice at home and in school and in early care settings.

### The New Common Core State Standards for Math

The new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for math makes a shift from memorization of specific facts or procedures and to a focus on deeper understanding of mathematical concepts and the ability of students to explain their reasoning behind problem-solving. This means significant changes in the way math is taught, particularly in the early grades.

In CCSS math classes, teachers adjust instruction based on student progress, engage students in discussion rather than lecturing, use technology to support learning, ask students to share their thinking and encourage healthy noise-students working together on math activities and discussing solutions with their classmates. The students solve real world problems, use technology and manipulatives to find solutions, are able to solve problems with differing approaches, can present their logic and reasoning, and teach other students in CCSS math classes.

### Program Highlight
#### ALearn’s Catalyst and Math Acceleration (MAP) Programs

ALearn, a local nonprofit organization, is committed to helping underrepresented students get to and succeed in college. Since 2007, ALearn’s Catalyst and Math Acceleration (MAP) programs have been building the skills, knowledge and confidence underrepresented students need to succeed in college-track classes.

The Math Acceleration Program (MAP) is an intensive 4-week summer program based on the Common Core and served 550 incoming 6th and 7th grade students in 2014. Program evaluation showed:

- 6th graders improved 21% on fractions and operations and 11% on place values.
- 7th graders improved 35% on fractions and 54% on positive and rational numbers.
- 96% percent reported they feel more confident to go to college.

The Catalyst Program is an intensive 6-week summer program and served 513 incoming 9th grade students in 2014 with the goal of improving their math skills and passing Algebra 1, Geometry or Algebra 2 before their freshman year. Program evaluation showed:

- 78% of students taking Algebra 1 passed and were eligible to advance to Geometry in their freshman year, compared to a 40-45% passing rate during the school year.
- 100% of the students from Catalyst classes in Mountain View-Los Altos graduated from high school and 77% had completed A-G requirements, making them college-ready. (Compared to 24% of Santa Clara County Latino students who graduate college-ready.)
Every Child Successful in Life

Children have the tools to be successful in life when they are safe, when they have access to health care and healthy food and when they live in communities where they can grow and play. They will be successful in life when they feel valued by the community and when they graduate from high school ready for college and career. Children have even more likelihood of being successful in life as “global citizens” if they are fluent in at least two languages.

Indicators
High School Graduation Rates with A-G Requirements
Fluent in 2+ languages
Community Values Youth

Goals
Increase the percentage of youth who graduate on time, fulfilling the A-G requirements.
Eliminate the socio-economic disparity in graduation rates and fulfillment of A-G requirements.
Increase the number of youth who take and pass the Advanced Placement Language Exam and receive the Santa Clara County Office of Education Seal of Biliteracy.
Increase the percentage of youth who report they feel valued by the community.
Indicator:
High School Graduation Ready for College/Career

Rating:
Making progress

What the Data Tells Us

- In 2013, 2,224 Santa Clara County students disengaged from school and dropped out at a rate of 11.1%. This is a decrease from 2012 when 2,433 dropped out, a rate of 12.1%.

- In 2,013, 1,542 Latino students dropped out at a rate of 20.7%. The drop-out rate in 2010 was 25.3%. During the same time period, the African American drop-out rate decreased from 17.3% to 13.1%.

- The rate of students graduating with A-G coursework—preparing them for entrance into the University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU) systems—has remained flat between 2010 and 2014. This was true for all ethnic groups.

How We Measure High School Graduation Ready for College/Career

Data for the high school graduation rate with A-G completion and the cohort drop-out rate is collected by the California Department of Education (CDE).

A dropout leaves school between 9th and 12th grade without a diploma, a GED or a special education certificate of completion, and does not remain enrolled after the end of his or her fourth year.

The CDE reports the percentage of students who graduate college-ready as a percentage of students graduating with A-G requirements (coursework required to enter into the UC or CSU systems). The CDE calculation does not look at the whole cohort (including dropouts). For the purposes of this data book, we calculate those students graduating from high school with A-G coursework as a percentage of all students in the cohort, including dropouts.

Why This Indicator is Important

Youth who leave high school prior to graduation are more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system, be homeless, have lower earnings and have higher rates of unemployment. In fact, students who do not graduate from high school earn $400,000 to $500,000 less over a working lifetime than those who graduate. Those who do not complete high school also have poorer health, higher rates of mortality, higher rates of criminal behavior and incarceration and increased dependence on public assistance.

The importance of college is clear. By 2025, two out of every five jobs will require a college degree and 63% of all jobs will require some post-secondary education. Generally speaking, college-educated adults have higher incomes, greater productivity and earn nearly $1 million more over a lifetime than those who graduate with only a high school degree.

Many local education leaders feel that in order for students to be successful in later life, it is important that they complete the A-G requirements—even if they don’t intend to go to college.

Fostering Improved Results

Graduating from high school doesn’t happen in a vacuum. Other desired results for children, such as school readiness, reading at grade level in third grade and being on track in math in eighth grade, are associated with whether or not a youth will graduate from high school. Not being on track for graduation can also be the result of several risk factors such as child abuse, substance abuse, family disorganization, health issues, teen pregnancy, poverty, homelessness or learning issues that have not been addressed. Here are some strategies to improve high school graduation rates with students ready for college and career.

Establish Early Warning Systems to Support Struggling Students

Research shows we can predict with 66% accuracy whether a student in elementary school will later get off track for graduation. Disengaging from school is a slow process for most students. If we learn to identify the students who are in need of academic or other supports early, we can ensure they get the help they need to stay in school.

Focus on School Engagement

Absenteeism, even in the early grades, is an indicator of later academic outcomes. In 2012, the Mental Health Department funded the School Engagement Improvement Project in four middle schools in Santa Clara County. In one middle school, chronic absenteeism was decreased from 60% to 15% over the course of the year. Here are some of the simple strategies they implemented:

- Teachers were assigned a student who had been absent the week before to welcome him or her back to school, discuss the reasons for the absence and help the student catch up on missed work.
- A “buddy system” was created in which students were encouraged to contact absent friends.
- Returning students were assisted in making up missed homework and tests by being provided with a specific time and place to do so.
- Mentoring was provided to those students who were most at risk of not successfully graduating from middle school.

Teach a Growth Mindset

The difference between a “Growth Mindset” and a “Fixed Mindset” is spelled out in ground-breaking work by Stanford University professor Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D. Mindsets are the beliefs that individuals hold about their most basic abilities and qualities. Students with a “fixed mindset” believe their basic skills and abilities cannot be changed. They also believe that it is talent that will make them successful and that effort is a sign of weakness rather than a part of life. Many of the students who disengage from school have a fixed mindset and do not see themselves as learners. Studies have shown that when youth are taught a “growth mindset” – the belief that their brain, abilities and talent can be developed and that learning is a continual process – they begin succeeding. Understanding the growth mindset helps students understand that learning is developmental and builds on what has already been learned. For example, a student cannot expect to do algebra if they haven’t learned how fractions work. With the growth mindset, instead of believing that they are stupid because they don’t understand a concept, they know they haven’t learned it YET.

Provide Adult Advocates and Student Supports

Adult advocates can identify academic and personal challenges and crises early and get students the support they need. Working with community and governmental organizations, schools can offer a wide range of supplemental services and intensive assistance strategies for struggling students such as school and peer counseling, mentoring, tutoring, double class periods, internships, service learning and summer and after-school programs.

Individualized Graduation Plans

Schools should develop an individualized graduation plan for each student and regularly communicate with parents about their students’ progress towards completing the plan.

Establish a Rigorous College and Work Preparatory Curriculum

Students taking a rigorous core curriculum in high school are better prepared to succeed in college and in the workforce. There must be high standards, and students need to be encouraged to complete California’s A-G standards to prepare them for college and work. Dual enrollment, early college programs and Advanced Placement (AP) programs allow high school students to earn credit toward high school and college simultaneously.

Provide Supportive Options for Struggling Students to Meet Rigorous Expectations

Because students’ learning needs and styles differ widely, options should be developed that allow all students to graduate from high school prepared for college and the workplace. This includes ninth-grade academies to support the transition to high school, “second chance” schools where students who are off track can continue earning course credit, and new school models that combine personalized learning environments with high expectations.
Creating a College-Going Culture

Kindergarten Savings Accounts – An Investment that Creates a College-Going Culture

The Kindergarten to College (K2C) children’s savings accounts program began in 2010 in San Francisco. The initiative opens a college savings account and provides an opening deposit of $50 for children entering kindergarten in the city’s public schools. Research shows that children with college savings accounts are seven times more likely to go to college than those who don’t have a college account, regardless of the specific amount of money saved. Matched savings accounts change people’s perceptions and expectations about higher education.

With this small investment, San Francisco parents understand that their children are on the path to college. K2C is an initiative of the San Francisco Mayor’s Office, Office of the Treasurer, the Department of Children, Youth, & Their Families and the San Francisco Unified School District. The micro-savings non-profit EARN and the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) are the city’s key non-profit partners. Partnerships with financial institutions, local and national nonprofits and philanthropic individuals and organizations will be critical to the initiative’s success.  

College Day

One of the big differences between students who go to college and those who don’t is whether or not their families, schools and communities communicate college-going expectations from an early age. Parents can talk with their children about going to college and establish a “college fund” for their children. Teachers can talk about their own college experience, how they got there and what was wonderful and challenging about college. Schools can have college rallies and celebrations.

College Day is an effort to create a community where every child believes, from a very early age, that he or she can go to college and begin planning for higher education. Spearheaded by the First Generation College Attainment Coalition—a collaboration of schools, city and county agencies, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities—the College Day theme is celebrated throughout the day at elementary, middle and high schools. Teachers can access lesson plans from the College Day website on a wide variety of topics including planning for college and finding financial aid.

Children, Youth, & Their Families and the San Francisco Unified School District. The micro-savings non-profit EARN and the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) are the city’s key non-profit partners. Partnerships with financial institutions, local and national nonprofits and philanthropic individuals and organizations will be critical to the initiative’s success.

College Day creates a college-going culture in Santa Clara County and helps our children and youth plan and design their path to college. When adults—parents, teachers, librarians, youth leaders and other family members—talk with children and youth about their own college experience and their expectation that the young person will go to college, they demystify college and inspire students to help design their own way to get there.  

College Day is October 9, 2015

Many schools use this event to launch a year-long conversation about going to college. Lesson plans and other resources from are available all year long. Go to www.CollegeDay.org for ideas to build a college-going culture at your school or youth program.

Building Pathways to Success in Santa Clara County

The emerging science of adolescent brain development has deepened the understanding of adolescent capabilities and behaviors. Neuroscience has made clear that the brain is not “done” by age 6 as was previously believed. Instead, the adolescent brain continues to develop, providing a window of opportunity similar to that which is open in early childhood. Adolescence is a period of “use it or lose it” in brain development. Young people’s experiences during this period play a critical role in shaping their futures as adults. They can build and practice resiliency and develop knowledge and skills that will positively serve them throughout adulthood.

–The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative

Success in life includes graduating from high school and moving on a pathway to college and career. However, many youth ages 16-24 are not working and are not in school. Across the country, there is increased recognition that there should be improved efforts to address the needs of these youth and acknowledge that they have economic and social value in our community. The term “opportunity youth” recognizes this value as well as the desire of youth themselves to succeed in education and obtain gainful employment. By bolstering their pathways to education and employment, we can provide a skilled workforce to local business and industry, strengthening our economy and community. If we don’t address the needs of these youth, too many will end up engaged in the justice system, become homeless or live in poverty.

It is estimated that each opportunity youth costs the nation $37,000 annually in lost revenue and earnings and increased social services. In Santa Clara County, there are between 11,000 and 22,000 opportunity youth. At a cost of $37,000 per youth, this lost potential costs our local economy $407-$814 million a year.

While we don’t have a complete picture of Santa Clara County opportunity youth, we can better understand our local need by considering the following statistics:

- In 2013, 2,224 students dropped out of high school. Many additional students are two years or more behind in credits towards graduation.
- 11.5% of youth ages 18-24 (approximately 18,200 youth) do not have a high school credential.
- From 2000 to 2011 there was a significant decrease in the number of youth employed:
  - 58% decrease for youth ages 14-18 years old (15,703 fewer youth employed)
  - 32% decrease for youth ages 19-21 (13,616 fewer youth employed)
  - 20% decrease for youth ages 22-24 (8,941 fewer youth employed)

Santa Clara County Opportunity Youth Partnership

The Aspen Institute’s Forum for Community Solutions demonstrates the positive impact of cross-sector collaboration on the life outcomes for opportunity youth. In July 2014, Santa Clara County was selected by the Aspen Institute as one of 21 communities nationwide to focus on improving results for these youth.

The Santa Clara County Opportunity Youth Partnership (OYP) is a collaborative with more than 35 community partners, all committed to creating engagement strategies for our county’s opportunity youth. The OYP uses a collective impact approach and recognizes that re-engaging youth is a complex issue and requires cross-sector collaboration between county and city government, community-based organizations, workforce development organizations, education, occupational training programs, businesses, and youth themselves.

To do this work we must:

- Create a movement to increase awareness about the value of opportunity youth and develop a sense of urgency about changing outcomes;
- Improve practice and build capacity so youth develop the skills that will lead to academic and career success;
- Align and integrate programs and systems so youth can get on track for academic and career success regardless of where they enter a pathway;
- Engage employers who will see the value of hiring Opportunity Youth and will offer career options for them. At the same time, the OYP needs to understand the needs of employers in order to ensure youth get the right training and skills development that will best meet employer needs.

If you are interested in becoming involved with this work, please contact Joe Herrity at jherrity@kidsincommon.org.

A High School for Opportunity Youth is Coming to Santa Clara County

In April 2014, the Santa Clara County Board of Education approved a plan to create a high school where opportunity youth without high school credentials can earn a diploma and enter a career pathway. Specialized classrooms placed throughout Santa Clara County will provide a personalized education, a flexible schedule and supports that will lead to academic success and entry into a career pathway. Internships and project-based learning will be featured components. Students will be able to work at their own pace, earn a high school diploma, and receive support for college and career readiness.

The first classroom will open in Spring 2015, and additional classrooms will be added the following year.
Indicator: Children Fluent in 2+ Languages

Rating: Making progress

What the Data Tell Us

- In June 2014, 1,247 Santa Clara County students received the Seal of Biliteracy. Only 208 students received the award in 2012.
- Today, 14 districts award the Seal of Biliteracy in 10 languages. This is an increase from 2013 when 8 districts offered the award in 8 languages.

Why This Indicator is Important

The ability to speak a language in addition to English can be a valuable asset to young people as they enter the workplace. Employees who are fluent in more than one language are able to converse with and serve customers and clients more effectively. When a person understands a second language, she usually is likely to have deeper insights into important cultural mores. In today’s global economy, being multilingual is definitely an advantage. Speaking a second language is also associated with more flexible and creative thinking.

How We Measure Children Fluent in 2+ Languages

In September 2010, the Santa Clara County Office of Education adopted the Seal of Biliteracy Award. Consisting of a certificate, a seal on the diploma, and a transcript notation, it is awarded to eligible graduating high school seniors who demonstrate that they have mastered standard English and any other language. Each year we count the number of students who receive this recognition.

In 2011, Governor Brown signed AB 815 (Brownley) which authorizes the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to issue the Seal of Biliteracy to graduating seniors. The goal of this award is to:

- Encourage students to develop and maintain biliteracy and multilingual skills;
- Recognize and honor our rich and diverse language assets;
- Promote world language instruction in our schools;
- Promote the development of language and cultural appreciation and cross-cultural understanding;
- Encourage the development of dual language immersion programs and foreign, native and heritage language programs in schools; and
- Provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills.

“Preparing all students with 21st century language and communication skills is critical for being college- and career-ready. These students will be equipped to be leaders in the areas of international trade, the global economy and public services vital to our diverse communities.”
– Jack O’Connell, Former state Superintendent of Public Instruction
Indicator: Community Values Youth

Rating: Making progress

What the Data Tell Us

- In 2011, 33% of 5th grade students, 29% of 7th grade students, 19% of 9th grade students and 22% of 11th grade students reported feeling valued by the community. This is up from 18% of all 7th-12th grade students feeling valued in 2005.²²

- Growth in feeling valued by the community is linked to Project Cornerstone’s work with youth and adults. Adults participating in Project Cornerstone have increased from 4,211 in 2011 to 6,181 in 2014.

How we Measure Community Values Youth

Project Cornerstone conducts a Developmental Asset Survey every five or six years in Santa Clara County schools. In School Year (SY) 2011, Project Cornerstone surveyed over 36,000 students in more than 200 elementary middle and high schools in 25 school districts throughout Santa Clara County. The survey measured developmental assets that young people need in order to thrive.

There is a strong correlation between the number of assets youth have to the number of youth and parents participating in Project Cornerstone. As the survey is conducted every five or six years, we use the correlation between asset development and participation in Project Cornerstone as a proxy for understanding whether we are making progress in this area.

Why this Indicator is Important

Developmental assets are the positive relationships, opportunities, values and skills that young people need to grow up to be daring, caring, responsible and ambitious about their future. These assets include dimensions such as whether youth feel supported, have good boundaries, use their time constructively, possess positive values, are committed to learning, feel socially competent and have a positive identity. The Search Institute (www.searchinstitute.org) has demonstrated that the more of these assets youth have, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk activities.

One of the most important assets is “Community Values Youth” – Do young people perceive that adults in the community value children and youth?

Fostering Improved Results

Many factors influence this perception:
How do adults treat young people?
Do youth have a voice in decisions that affect their lives?
Are there opportunities for children and youth to make the community better?

How we invest in our youth also makes a difference. Youth notice whether they have clean, safe schools and up-to-date textbooks; whether they’re treated respectfully by merchants and police officers; whether there are recreational opportunities and safe public spaces where they can meet with friends. They notice whether the community supports their activities, such as playing basketball or volunteering and whether the community supports their development of life skills. They also pay attention to how the media reflects their lives.

Simply put, youth know when their community values and invests in them. By working to ensure that youth feel valued, respected and appreciated, we can create a community where all young people are best able to thrive.
Every Child Safe, Healthy, Successful in Learning, and Successful in Life

Helping Children and Youth Feel Valued by the Community

All adults can help children and youth feel valued in the community by:

• Talking with young people about the places they feel valued and the places they don’t;
• Encouraging youth involvement in neighborhood and community organizations;
• Giving positive feedback to youth you encounter in stores and public places (for example, baristas, store clerks, sales help, etc.) when you notice they are doing a good job;
• Publicizing and celebrating the ways young people contribute to the community;
• Challenging negative stereotypes in the community;
• Displaying artwork and projects at local stores, community centers and other locations where community members are likely to see them; and
• Thanking people who work with children and youth, demonstrating that you value them too.93

For 15 years, Project Cornerstone has focused on building our youth’s developmental assets and a community that values youth by working with schools, parents, staff and youth, to create caring school communities where youth develop emotional resilience, tolerance and empathy. Staff are trained to create positive connections with youth. Beginning in preschool, parents from diverse backgrounds engage youth in monthly lessons and activities that teach social-emotional skills. Through partnership with more than 200 schools, Project Cornerstone empowers young people, parents and staff to improve school climate and create vibrant, caring communities of learners.

Figure Sources

figure 1  
Ethnicity of Children in Santa Clara County 2014  
Source: Kidsdata.org

figure 2  
Percent Children living in Poverty Santa Clara County 2012  
Source: Kidsdata.org

figure 3  
Santa Clara County Hunger Index – Millions of Meals Provided and Missing Meals  
Source: Santa Clara University

figure 4  
Santa Clara County Children Eligible and Participating in Nutrition Programs  
Source: California Food Policy Advocates

figure 5  
Children in Foster Care per 1,000 by Race/Ethnicity  
Source: California Dept. of Social Services, Child Welfare Dynamic Report System

figure 6  
Number of Santa Clara County Justice-Engaged Youth at Arrest and Decision Points  
Source: Santa Clara County Probation Department Monthly Trends Report

figure 7  
Percent Citations and Arrests by Ethnicity  
Source: Santa Clara County Probation Department Monthly Trends Report

figure 8  
Percent of Children who had a Routine Health Check-up in the last 12 Months  
Source: Kidsdata.org

figure 9  
Ninth Grade Students Meeting Aerobic Fitness Standard  
Source: California Dept. of Education (CDE) – DataQuest

figure 10  
Ninth Grade Students Achieving All Six Fitness Standards  
Source: CDE – DataQuest

figure 11  
Average Number of Assets in 7th, 9th and 11th Grade, 1999 and 2011  
Source: Project Cornerstone

figure 12  
2011 Developmental Asset Survey – The Percentage of Youth at Elementary, Middle and High School With Each Developmental Asset  
Source: Project Cornerstone

figure 13  
How Kindergarten Readiness Translates Into 3rd Grade Reading Scores  
Source: Partnership for School Readiness

figure 14  
Attendance Risk and Students who are Proficient or Advanced in Third Grade  
Source: Applied Survey Research and Attendance Works

figure 15  
Santa Clara County Cohort Drop-out Rate  
Source: CDE – DataQuest

figure 16  
Percent Santa Clara County Students who Graduate with A-G  
Source: CDE – DataQuest

figure 17  
Number of Students Receiving the Seal of Biliteracy  
Source: Santa Clara County Office of Education

figure 18  
Percent Youth who Feel Valued by the Community 2011  
Source: Project Cornerstone


Kids in Common advocates for policies, partnerships and investments that improve children’s lives in Santa Clara County. Children need a strong public voice that promotes and protects their best interests. Kids in Common is that voice and challenges leaders in our community to act on behalf of children. Our Vision: Every child safe, healthy, successful in learning, successful in life.