

SJ 2020

Compact to Eliminate The Achievement Gap

The Goal

It is the vision of the City of San José, the Santa Clara County Office of Education, school districts, charter schools, institutions of higher education, and business and nonprofit community agencies to join together to eliminate the achievement gap in San José by 2020. We know what works; strategies are already being deployed in San José that are successfully closing the achievement gap in isolated areas. We need to take these strategies to scale, city-wide. Together, we will work strategically and be accountable to each other to align our efforts to eliminate the achievement gap.

The Urgency

In San José, over 40,000 students—nearly *half* of all public school students tested—are not proficient in their grade-level skills. As a McKinsey study reports, “avoidable shortfalls in academic achievement impose heavy and often tragic consequences, via lower earnings, poorer health, and higher rates of incarceration.” The economic losses to the City of San José due to dropouts are estimated at almost \$400 million over these students’ lifetimes. The “achievement gap”—the disparity in achievement between under-performing Hispanic/Latino and African-American students on the one hand, and Caucasian and Asian students on the other—has personal, economic, and moral implications for a society committed to the ideal of equal opportunity. Do we stand by as 40,000 students fail to succeed in our schools and in our community, or do we declare that we will no longer stand for this and will instead work to fix the problem? There can be only one choice: We must focus our efforts on eliminating the achievement gap.

The Standard

This will be our standard of success: *All students will test as proficient or advanced on grade-level state assessments.*

The Commitment

The **City of San José** affirms it will align its efforts to help all students reach proficiency, including:

- Coordinating youth-focused efforts across City departments/programs
- Initiating partnerships between public schools and the City
- Developing policies that promote healthy and successful students

The **Education Community** affirms it will align its efforts to help all students reach proficiency, including:

- Establishing a culture of success by holding all students to a high standard that prepares them to meet postsecondary goals and to be successful in the 21st century workplace
- Recruiting, developing, and retaining effective teachers and leaders
- Supporting teachers and leaders in using frequent assessments to inform and drive instruction
- Aligning P-16 efforts to increase high school and college graduation rates

The **Business Community** affirms it will align its efforts to help all students reach proficiency, including:

- Engaging with education agencies to define the skills and knowledge students need to be successful in the workplace
- Sharing innovations and providing resources that help schools educate students more effectively
- Developing policies that encourage employees to be engaged in classrooms as skill-based volunteers

The **Nonprofit Community** affirms it will align its efforts to help all students reach proficiency, including:

- Partnering with schools to provide services that address the full continuum of students’ needs, making schools a center of the community
- Aligning resources and coordinating services with other organizations
- Building a culture that values education and success for all students

This will be a focused collaboration in which all partners bring best practices and resources (including networks, knowledge, and expertise) to the table. The undersigned affirm that they will reach out to parents and work together as engaged, informed, and involved partners to align resources and work strategically to help all students reach proficiency.