A close-up portrait of a man with dark hair and glasses, smiling warmly. He is wearing a dark blue collared shirt. The background is softly blurred, showing other people in a professional setting.

Charting a Course for Arizona's Economic Prosperity

THE CASE FOR ACCELERATING LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS IN ARIZONA

“ We’ve been warned time and again about the urgent need to address the educational achievement and attainment gaps of Arizona Latinos. As the largest, fastest-growing population group in the state and nation, Latino children and students are our future. It’s time to take bold and decisive action. ”

VINCE ROIG, FOUNDING CHAIRMAN, HELIOS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Helios[®]
Education Foundation

July 2016



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This brief was produced to examine the need for accelerating Latino student success in the state of Arizona. As a whole, the Latino population is the fastest-growing population in Arizona; however, at the same time Latinos are underrepresented in postsecondary attainment. In order to stay economically competitive both here in the United States as well as globally, Arizona must take giant steps to improve the academic achievement of Arizona's Latino students.



Our research draws attention to the fact that, as the economy grows, Latinos are often underrepresented in the highest-growth occupational sectors, especially those that require an associate degree or higher. Using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, we examine the growth areas in Arizona that offered wages at or above the state median. The analysis reveals that there are 162 high-growth jobs in the state's highest-growth occupational sectors. Among those high-growth jobs, Latinos are only proportionally represented in five, and, of those five, the minimum educational requirements were either a high school diploma or a postsecondary degree.

Our research also highlights Arizona's ongoing demographic shifts. For example, in 1980 Latinos accounted for roughly 16 percent of Arizona's population; in 2014 they accounted for approximately 31 percent. When compared to Whites, for example, Latinos now make up a larger proportion of the Arizona population from birth to 44 years old. At the same time, these shifts have especially been prevalent among the younger Latino population, with Latinos making up the largest demographic group in Arizona public schools (45 percent).

While data on future economic opportunities for Arizona are positive, the biggest challenge our research reveals is how well the state prepares students for college and careers. From the onset, Latino students seem to be at a disadvantage, especially to their White classmates. They are less likely to attend a high-quality preschool; less likely to be proficient in reading by 4th grade (see National Assessment of Educational Progress results);

and less likely to be college and career ready (see Arizona ACT results). The cumulative effects of these gaps in educational achievement have no doubt had an impact on Arizona's overall postsecondary attainment and, without bold action, will continue to negatively impact Arizona's economy.

Helios Education Foundation aims to improve access, equity, and achievement for all students across the birth-postsecondary education continuum, but with the state's shifting demographics, we are focused on ensuring more Arizona Latino students complete two- and four-year degrees and enter the workforce with the skills necessary to obtain high-demand, high-paying jobs. In order to achieve these goals, we have identified four broad strategies that are part of our Latino Student Success Initiative. The four strategies are:

- Strategic Investments
- Building and Reforming Systems
- Building Public and Political Will
- Collaborating and Convening

The goal of this report is to inspire a call to action among Arizona's stakeholders so that we can chart a course to prosperity by ensuring that **EVERY** student, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity or zip code, has the opportunity to receive a high-quality education that will prepare him or her for college and career.

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

INTRODUCTION

More than 200 years ago, one of our Founding Fathers, Benjamin Franklin, expressed the above sentiment. And while Franklin may not have imagined the rapid expansion and growth of the United States, there is little doubt that he believed education would be a cornerstone to the nation’s success.

Today, the state of Arizona finds itself at a critical juncture. In less than 35 years, the state’s demographic landscape has dramatically changed. In 1980, the population of the state of Arizona was 2.7 million, but, by 2014, that number jumped to nearly 7 million. Along with changes in population size, there have been accompanying changes in the racial and ethnic diversity of the state. While Arizona has long had a sizeable Latino population, researchers estimate that, by 2030, the majority of the state’s population will be made up of Latino residents (Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce 2015).

At the same time, Arizona’s workforce demand is growing, necessitating an increase in highly skilled workers, most of whom will require some level of postsecondary education. In fact, according to a state report from the Georgetown Public Policy Institute’s Center on Education and the Workforce, 68 percent of Arizona jobs will require some postsecondary education by 2020 (Carnevale 2013). More specifically, 21 percent of all Arizona jobs will require a bachelor’s degree by 2020. The question remains, however, whether our workforce will be ready for this. Will Arizona as a state ensure that the expanding Latino population is fully equipped to participate in the growing sectors of Arizona’s economy?

In this brief, we make the case for state policy leaders and other stakeholders in Arizona to do their part in increasing the success of Latino students. This brief is broken up into four parts. First, we examine workforce demand in the state and ask the question: What do Arizona’s economy and workforce demands tell us about

the need for Latino student success? Second, we more fully address the shifting demographics in the state, inspecting how current and projected populations impact the need for policy makers and stakeholders to take action. Third, we report on the extent of the student achievement gap in Arizona and its impact on the future economy. Finally, we lay out Helios Education Foundation’s strategic plan to improve Latino student success across the birth–16 education continuum.

Overall, the goal of this brief is to inspire a call to action among education leaders and economic stakeholders in Arizona to collectively chart a course for prosperity by ensuring that EVERY student, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity or zip code, has the opportunity to receive a high-quality education, is prepared for college and career, and will meet Arizona’s unique workforce demands.

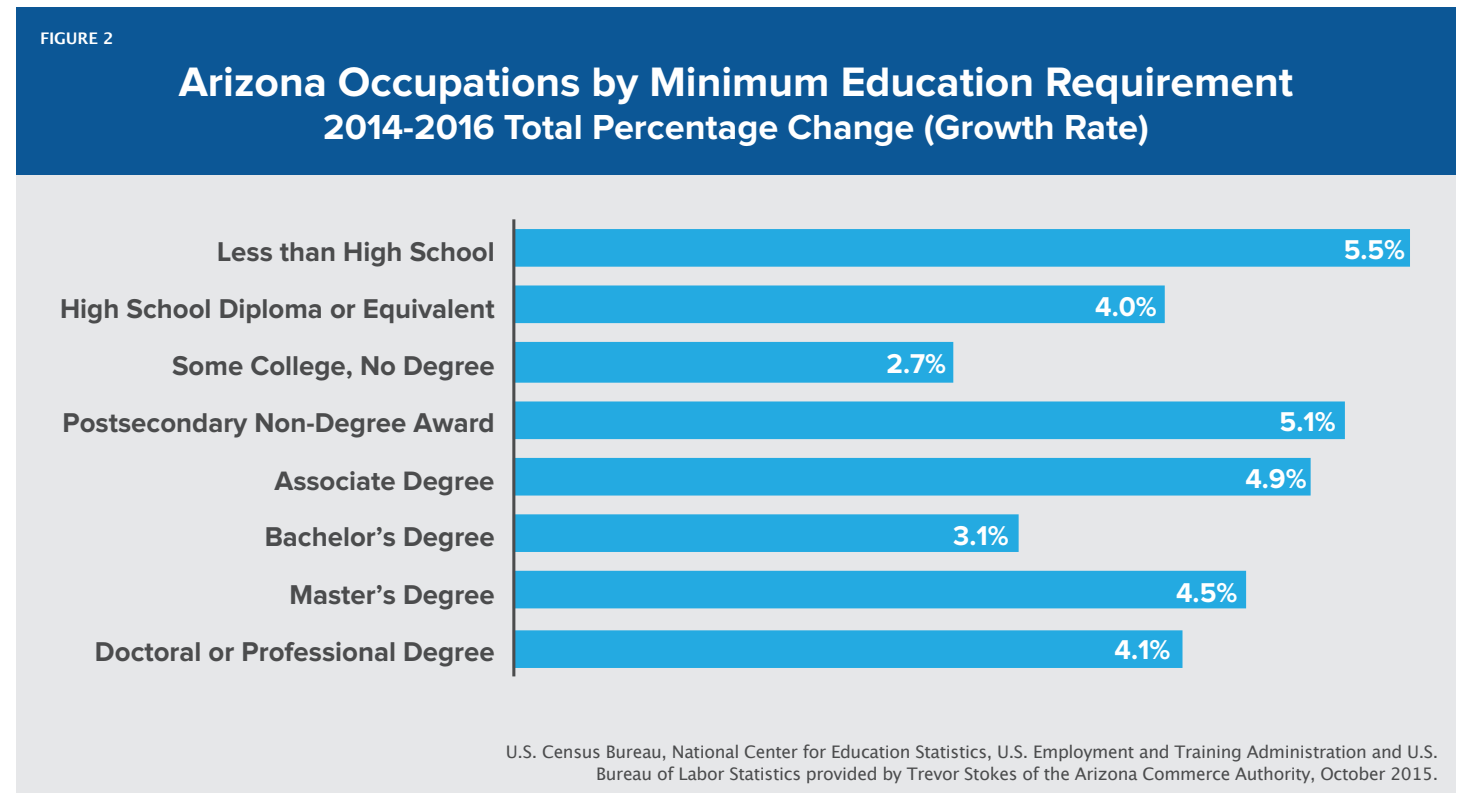
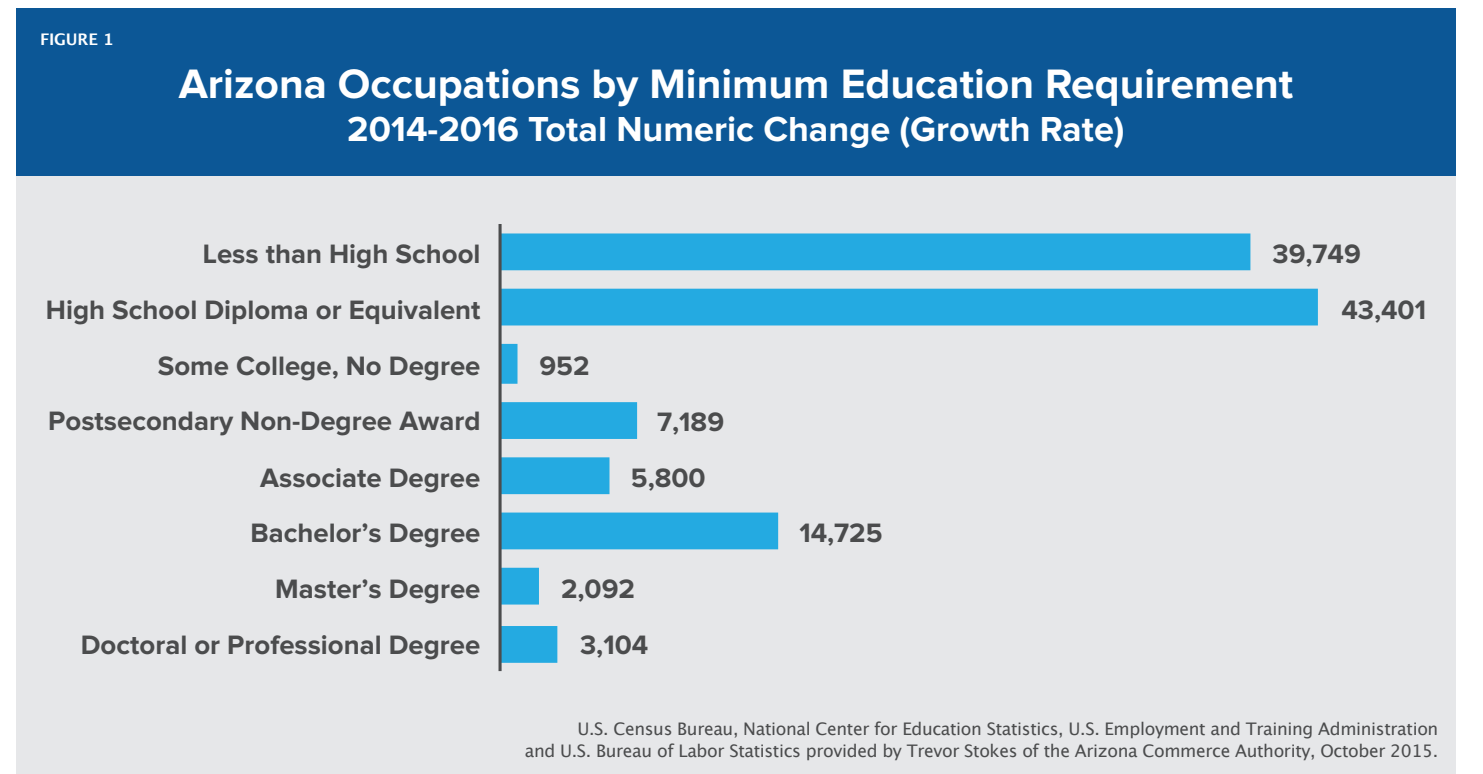
ARIZONA WORKFORCE DEMAND: WHAT DO ARIZONA’S ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE DEMANDS TELL US ABOUT THE NEED FOR LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS?

The economy in the state of Arizona is expected to grow in coming years, adding numerous new jobs across a number of fields. Positive growth will occur at all job levels, placing a higher demand on Arizona’s labor force at all levels of educational attainment.

Are Arizona students, and Latino students in particular, ready to participate in these high-growth job areas?

Looking ahead, the minimum educational needs of Arizona’s workforce are significant and growing. The Arizona Department of Administration’s Office of Employment and Population Statistics forecasts positive change and growth by 2016 in all occupations. The majority of new jobs will require at least a high school diploma, with many new jobs requiring education beyond high school. As Figure 1 shows, Arizona is expected to add 77,263 new jobs between 2014 and the end of 2016 that require at least a high school diploma.

These numbers represent a notable percentage increase in occupations requiring education beyond high school. Figure 2 shows the positive anticipated



percentage change in job growth per minimum education level that will be required between 2014 and 2016.

The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce predicts continued growth by 2020, with a 16 percent increase in all occupational areas in the state of Arizona. The highest growth rates are predicted in healthcare, the social sciences, managerial occupations and community services. Figure 3 demonstrates the total number of jobs that will be available by 2020 in these high-demand occupations. Moreover, according to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 68 percent of all jobs in Arizona will require at least some postsecondary education beyond high school (Carnevale 2013).

While the Georgetown reports are informative, they exclude a more detailed analysis of these high-growth fields in relation to their accompanying minimum education levels. Helios Education Foundation, partnering with the Arizona Commerce Authority, addressed this gap in the research and extended its implications to 2025. This research also examined the current proportion of Latino participation in these high-growth jobs. In addition, given that we were interested in jobs that provide opportunities for success, we focused our analysis on the growth areas that offered wages at or above the state median. Our findings are presented in Figure 4 (right) and described in the rest of this section.

According to the Arizona Commerce Authority¹, the five occupational categories that will experience the greatest growth by 2025 are healthcare support occupations, personal care and service occupations, business and financial occupations, healthcare practitioners and technical occupations, and computer and mathematical occupations. Within these occupational sectors, we examined specific jobs with the highest level of predicted growth rates and Latino labor participation within these jobs.

The data reveal that there are 162 high-growth jobs in Arizona's highest-growth occupational sectors. According to the 2014 U.S. Census, Latinos represent

approximately 31 percent of Arizona's population. Yet, among the 162 job fields, Latinos are proportionately represented in only five of these. In other words, Latinos represent 31 percent or greater of the workers in only five of the 162 high-growth job fields.

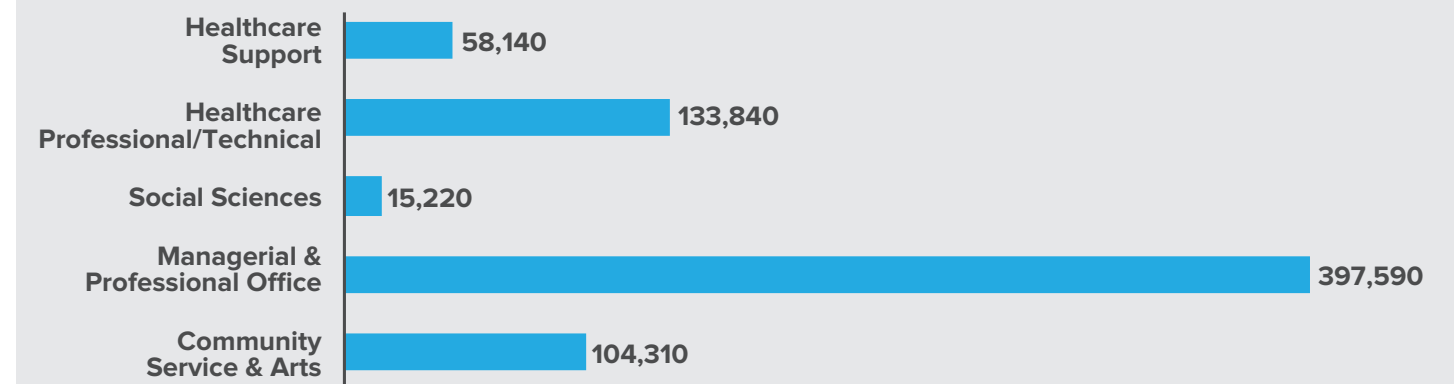
Among these five high-growth job fields in which Latinos are already well-represented, none of them requires a bachelor's degree; their minimum educational requirements are either a high school diploma or a postsecondary non-degree award. Yet, many of Arizona's high-growth job fields in which Latinos are not well represented require education beyond high school. Figure 4 shows the minimum educational requirements for these 162 high-growth job fields.

As shown in Figure 4, the majority of Arizona's high-growth jobs require education beyond a high school diploma. And, Latinos are not adequately represented among these high-growth jobs. Among occupational sectors where Latinos are proportionately represented (farming and fishing, grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations, construction and production), lower job growth is projected to 2025.

To be clear, all Arizonans need education levels beyond high school to participate in the high-growth, high-paying sectors of Arizona's labor market. Yet, this fact is markedly true among Latinos. Given Latinos' current low participation in high-growth jobs, their future educational attainment is crucial for their participation in Arizona's highest-growth jobs. At the same time, state government leaders, policy makers and the business community must ask themselves who will fill these jobs. To answer this, all stakeholders must understand the demographic shifts that have been shaping Arizona. In particular, as the next section more thoroughly discusses, stakeholders must consider the need for Latino student success given current and projected Latino populations.

FIGURE 3

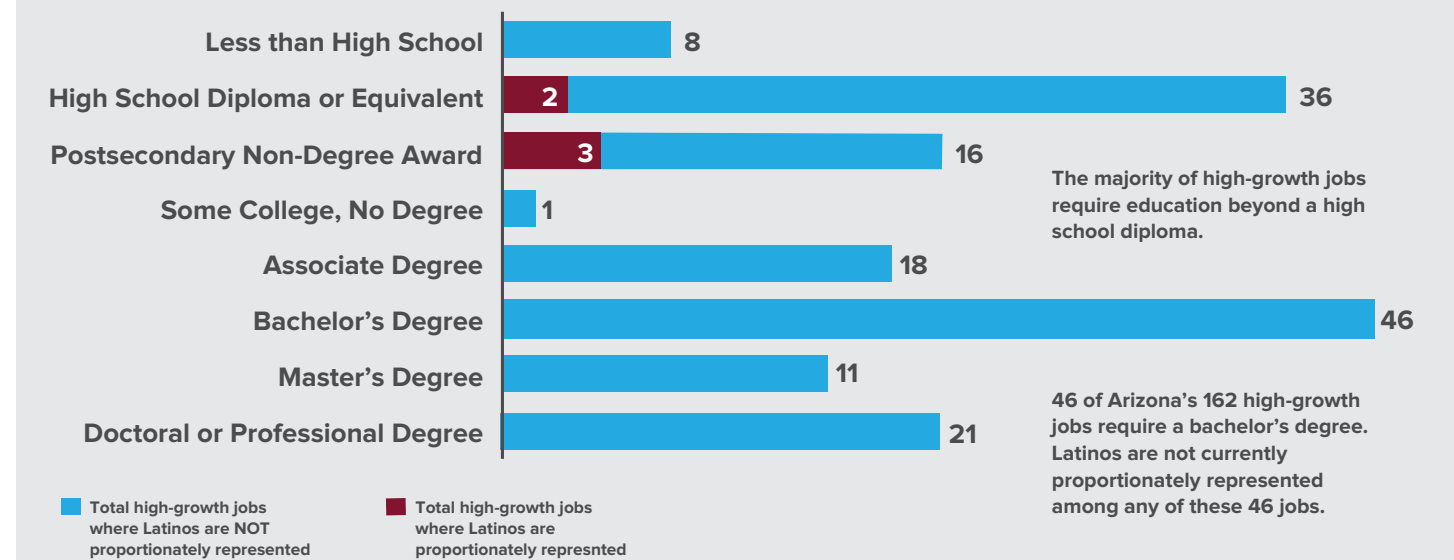
2020 Total Jobs Requiring More than a High School Diploma (Among High-Growth Occupations)



U.S. Census Bureau, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Employment and Training Administration and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provided by Trevor Stokes of the Arizona Commerce Authority, October 2015.

FIGURE 4

Minimum Educational Level Requirements Among Arizona's 162 High-Growth Jobs (Number of Jobs Shown)



U.S. Census Bureau, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Employment and Training Administration and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provided by Trevor Stokes of the Arizona Commerce Authority, October 2015.

¹Analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Employment and Training Administration and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provided by Trevor Stokes of the Arizona Commerce Authority, October 2015.

**SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS:
WHAT DO ARIZONA'S CURRENT AND PROJECTED
POPULATIONS TELL US ABOUT THE STATE'S NEED
FOR LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS?**

Given the projected growth in Arizona's economy and the need for a more highly skilled workforce, state policy makers are increasingly looking at the state population to determine how Arizona can better meet its workforce demands in order to stay competitive and successful in a globalized world. One major finding from these analyses is that the population of Arizona is quickly diversifying, with a Latino majority anticipated by as early as 2030.

Trends in shifting demographics are not new. As early as 2001, Mark Muro, Tina Valdecanas and Christina Kinnear began identifying the shifts in "Five Shoes Waiting to Drop" (Muro, Valdecanas, and Kinnear, 2001). Eleven years later, the shifts became more pronounced in Bill Hart and C.J. Eisenbarth Hagar's follow-up, "Dropped? Latino Education and Arizona's Economic Future" (Hart & Eisenbarth Hager, 2012).

Using these pieces as a framework, we expand on the shifting demographics of Arizona. Like our predecessors, we find that shifting demographics are key to understanding our economic future. Indeed, there are three key trends that highlight the urgent need for policies that support Latino student success to ensure Arizona's economic prosperity. These trends include: 1) the overall growth of the Latino population, 2) a young and developing Latino workforce and 3) a current 44 percent Latino population in Arizona public schools.



“ The Greater Phoenix region has an incredible opportunity to lead the nation in advancing the educational attainment of the Latino student population. The

success of our students and the success of our economy depends on it. ”

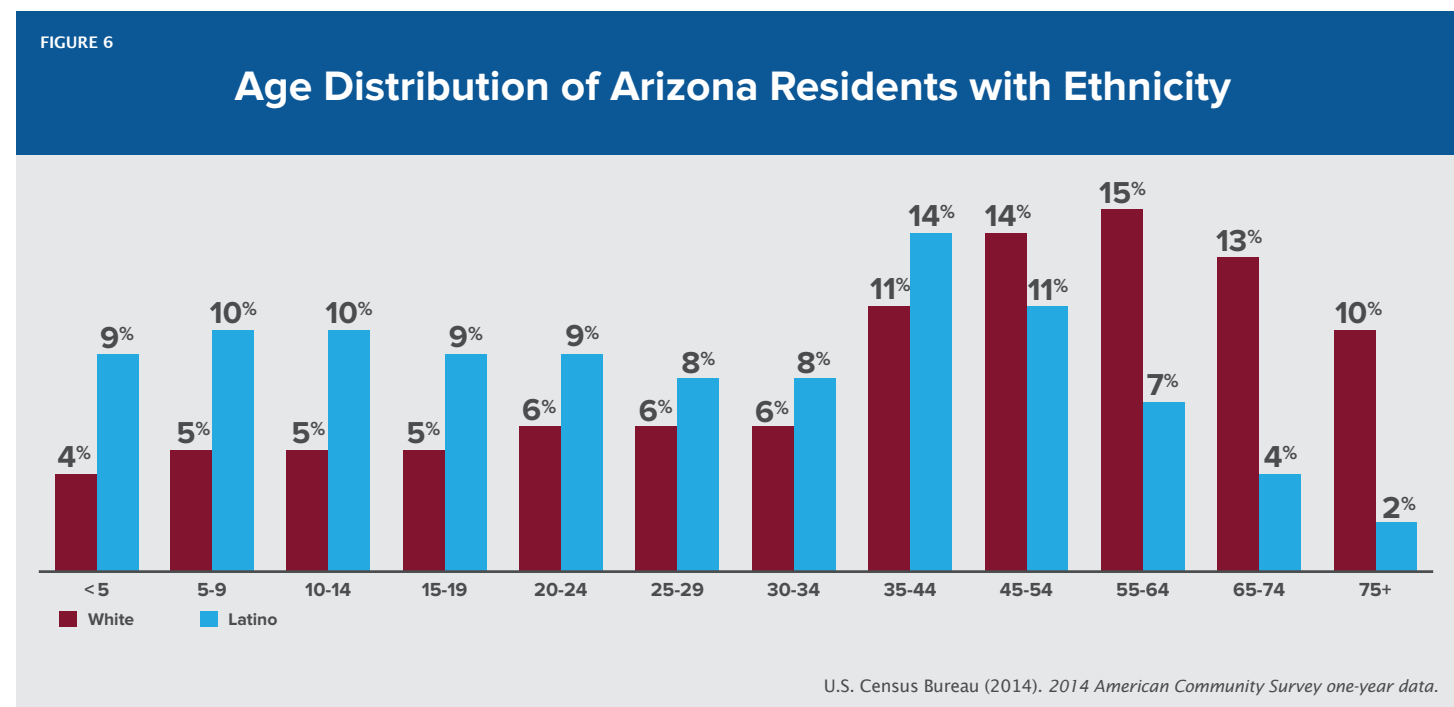
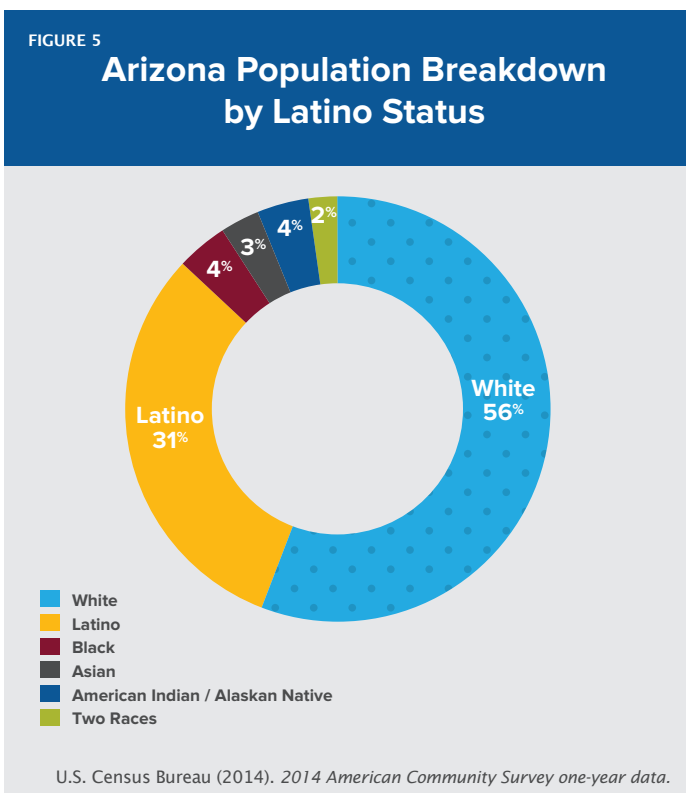
**CHRIS CAMACHO
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER PHOENIX ECONOMIC COUNCIL**

THE OVERALL GROWTH OF THE LATINO POPULATION

There is no doubt that Arizona is growing. In the last 35 years, Arizona's population has grown from less than three million (1980 Census) to nearly seven million (2014 Estimates; U.S. Census Bureau American Fact Finder 2014). And while the total population has grown for all racial and ethnic groups, it has grown at a much faster rate for Latinos. In 1980, Latinos accounted for roughly 16 percent of the population; in 2014, they accounted for approximately 31 percent. This means that approximately 2.1 million people currently residing in Arizona identify themselves as Latino.

To help put this in perspective, Figure 5 (below) shows the racial and ethnic breakdowns of Arizona's population based on the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) for 2014. Thirty-one percent of Arizonans identify as Latinos of any race or heritage, and of that number approximately 90 percent identify as Latinos of Mexican heritage.

Unsurprisingly, growth in Arizona's Latino population is expected to continue. The Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's most recent DATOS report found that by the year 2030, Latinos will be the majority population in the state (Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce 2015).



A YOUNG AND DEVELOPING LATINO WORKFORCE

While overall growth of the Latino population is evident, the more pressing issues for policy makers are found when the data is further disaggregated, revealing that age of the population is one of the most important variables.

Figure 6 (above) shows age distributions of Arizona residents by ethnicity (Latino or White). Categories range from those less than five years of age to those over 75 years of age². Figure 6 demonstrates that Arizona has two primary trends related to age and ethnicity. The first is that White residents make up a larger proportion of the older population, beginning with the 45-54 age range and increasing as the population ages. More specifically, roughly 52 percent of the White population is 45 years or older, compared with 24 percent for Latinos. In contrast, the Latino population is most heavily represented in the younger age groups, accounting for more than twice the percentage of Whites in the under 5, 5-9, and 10-14 age groups.

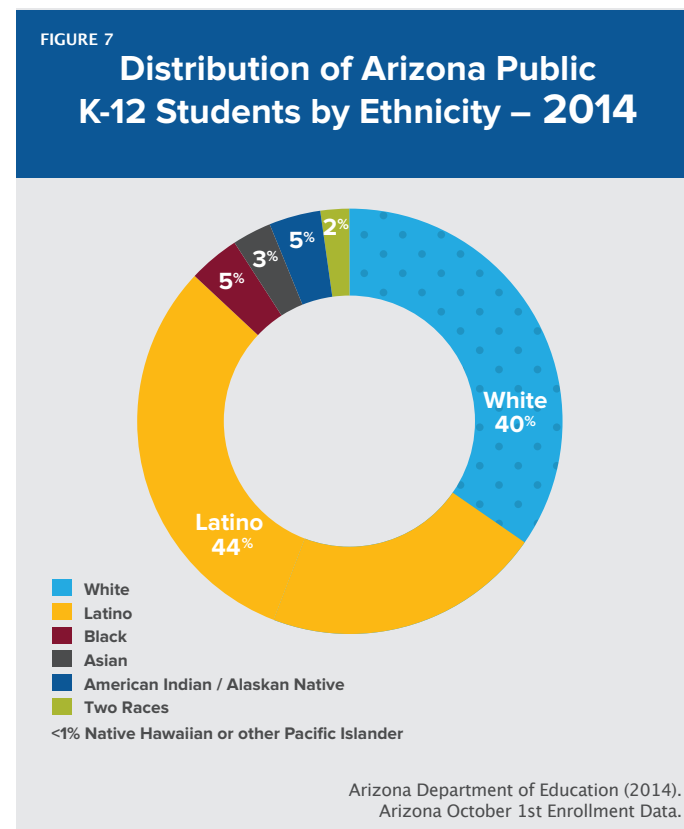
²To make this graphic more readable, we included only Latino or White. They are the largest two ethnicities in the state.

Latinos also comprise larger proportions than Whites in entry-level (15-19 years of age) and college-aged (20-24 years of age) populations. More specifically, as Figure 6 demonstrates, Latinos comprise 9 percent of both the entry-level and college-aged populations, while Whites comprise 5 percent and 6 percent, respectively. Thus, with a higher representation in younger age groups, Latinos will have the largest proportion of people entering the workforce in the foreseeable future, clearly demonstrating the importance of adequately preparing Latinos for entry into the workforce.

A MAJORITY POPULATION IN ARIZONA SCHOOLS

As Arizona's population has shifted, so has the makeup of the state's public schools. Schools that once featured a larger proportion of White students now have a majority Latino population.

Figure 7 (below) shows the percentage distribution of Arizona K-12 public schools by ethnicity for 2014 (the most recent released data on October attendance rates is from the Arizona Department of Education). Latinos make up the largest proportion of students in Arizona public schools (44 percent), followed by Whites (40 percent) and American Indians/Alaska Natives and Blacks at five percent each (Arizona Department of Education 2014). Figure 8 breaks down enrollment in public school by race/ethnicity and school type. Interestingly, while Latinos make up a significant proportion of population at all types of schools, Whites are the largest population in unified school systems.³



Regardless of school type, the data from the Arizona Department of Education clearly show that Latinos account for the largest proportion of students when disaggregated by ethnicity. These data, when presented with the data on overall shifts in population makeup and age of the Latino population, confirm that the success of Latino students is critical to the success of our schools and future workforce.

Yet, to create a highly skilled workforce that fuels a competitive economy, the state must ensure that the Arizona student population as a whole, as well as its increasing Latino population, attains the skills necessary to thrive in the 21st century. This next section explores Arizona's current gaps in educational achievement.

GAPS IN LATINO ACHIEVEMENT: WHAT DOES ARIZONA DATA ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION TELL US ABOUT THE NEED FOR POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS?

While data on future economic opportunities for Arizona are positive, the state's ability to prepare its students for college and career is troubling. Across the state's public education continuum, Arizona falls at or below national averages in proficiency or readiness in reading and mathematics in elementary, middle and high school (e.g., National Center for Education Statistics NAEP 4th and 8th grade reading and math scores, 2015). Furthermore, when disaggregated, the data show large gaps in achievement for Latino students when compared to their White classmates.

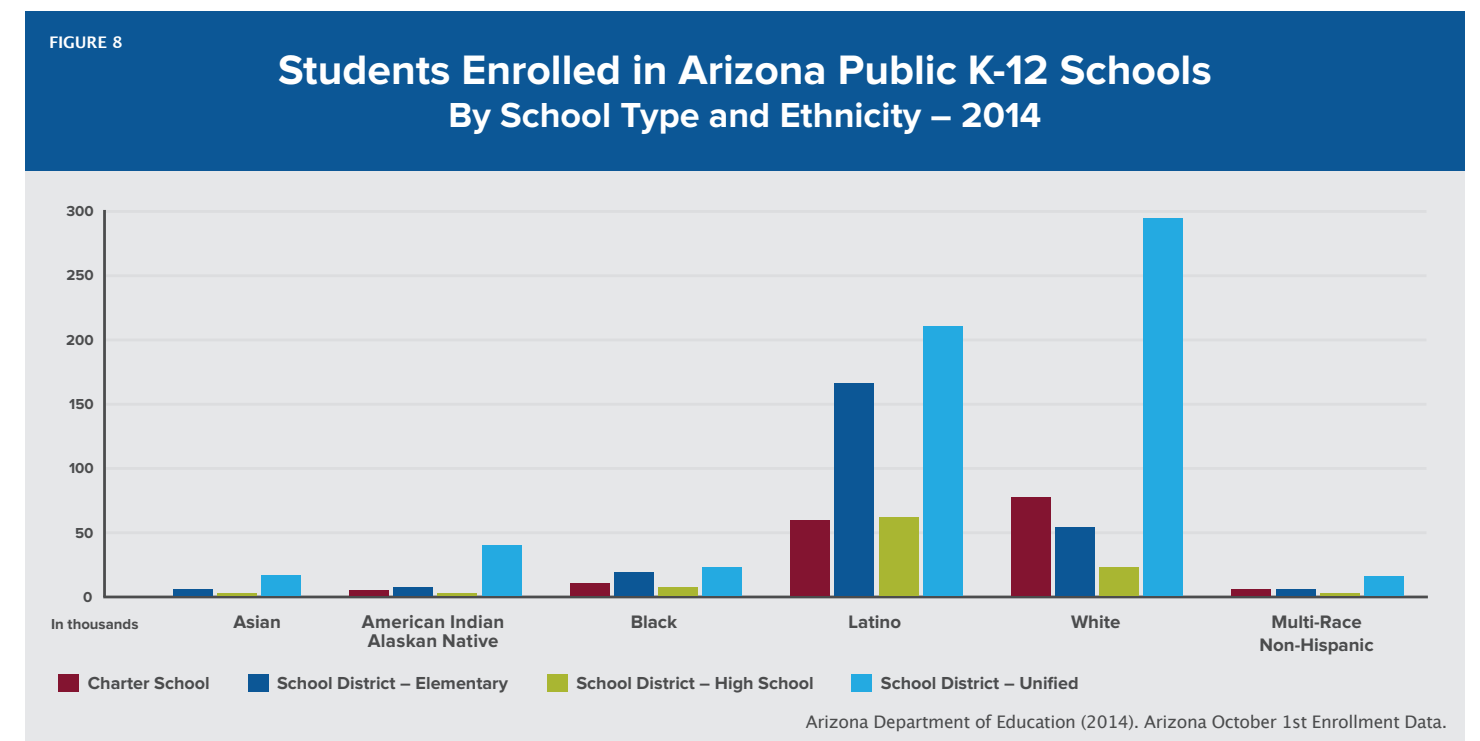
While there are a number of contextual factors that place Latinos at a disadvantage in Arizona (e.g., higher levels of poverty or a large percentage of



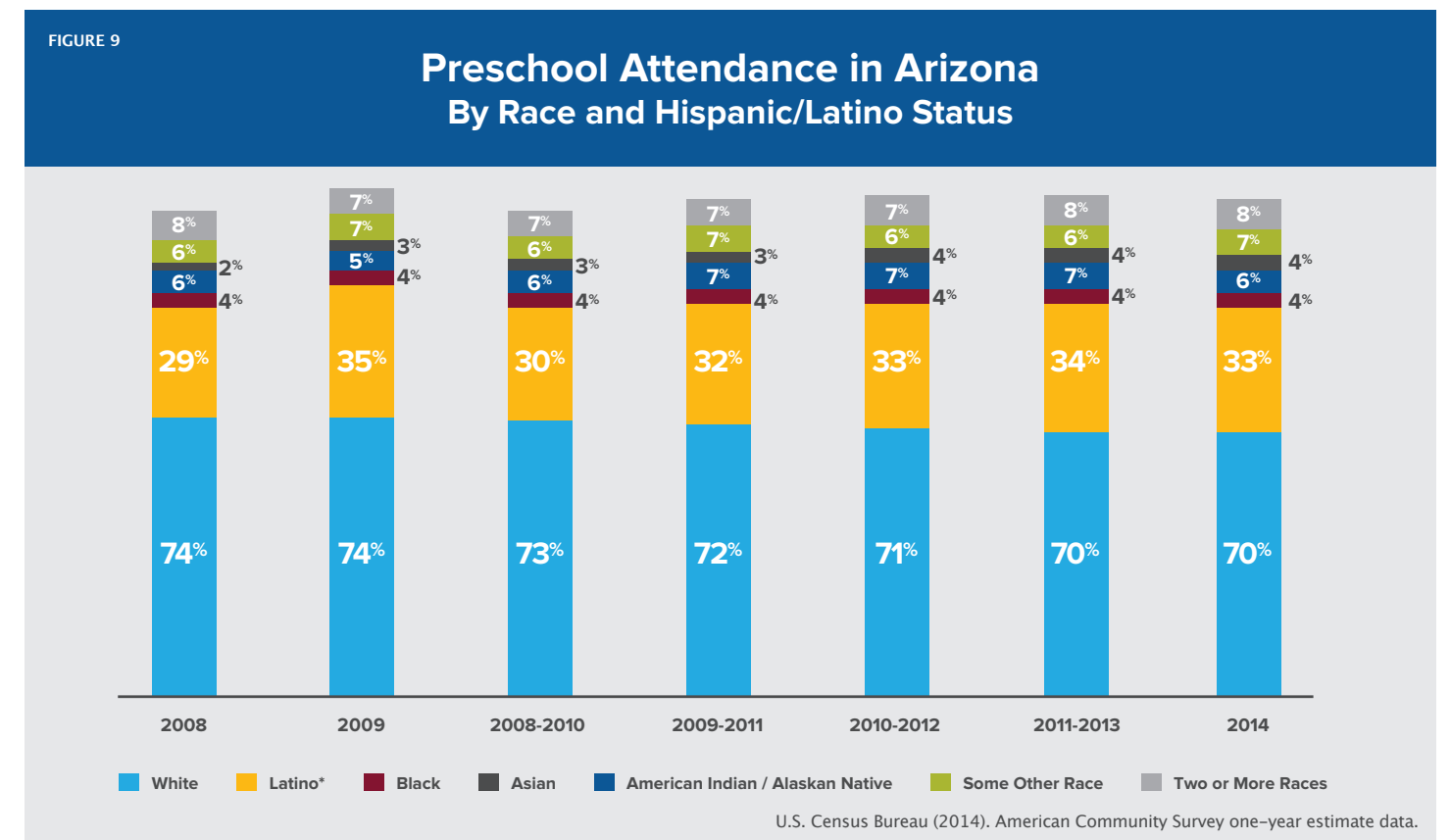
“There is no question that Latino students are the future workforce pipeline in Arizona. Currently, Latino students are 44 percent of the public K-12 system, and the percentage will only continue to grow. We must ensure they have access to a quality education that will help them become college and career ready.”

DR. MARIA HARPER-MARINICK,
CHANCELLOR, MARICOPA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

³An interesting question for further analysis would be how unification of schools impacts overall student achievement or other factors that might influence outcomes by ethnicity.



Note: Hispanic/Latino may be of any race



Note: Hispanic/Latino may be of any race, resulting in totals over 100 percent.

students learning English as a second language), one of the most important is a lack of access to high-quality preschool education. Nationally, approximately 47 percent of 3- to 4-year-olds attend preschool or nursery school compared with roughly a third (36 percent) of Arizona 3- to 4-year-olds (U.S. Census Bureau American Fact Finder 2014). Within this 36 percent, only a third of those students are Latino. Figure 9 shows preschool attendance by race/ethnicity. Among 3- to 4-year-olds attending preschool in Arizona in 2014, of whom 70 percent were White, 33 percent were Hispanic or Latino (of any race), 8 percent identified as two or more races, 7 percent identified as some other race, 6 percent were American Indian or Alaska Native, and 4 percent were Black or African American. Because access to a high-quality, early learning environment is crucial to child development, Latino underrepresentation in Arizona preschools is concerning.

By the time that Arizona students reach 4th grade, gaps in educational achievement become apparent. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests, a smaller percentage of Arizona students scored at or above proficient in 4th and 8th grade reading and 4th grade math compared to the nation as a whole. Within the Arizona population, Whites were significantly more likely to reach proficiency status than were their Latino counterparts. Figure 10 (right) shows the percentage of 4th and 8th grade NAEP test takers in Arizona who scored at or above proficiency in reading and mathematics, revealing that more than twice the percentage of White students when compared with Latinos were proficient in reading and mathematics in both 4th and 8th grade.



“The most important thing Arizona can do to secure its future is to increase the postsecondary degree attainment rate across the board, but specifically with Latino students. Without game-changing progress in educational attainment, the Morrison Institute for Public Policy at ASU projects that 62 percent of Arizonans in poverty by 2030 will be Latino while 31 percent will be White. We need innovative models designed to avert such outcomes and empower Arizona to succeed economically.”

DR. MICHAEL CROW
PRESIDENT, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

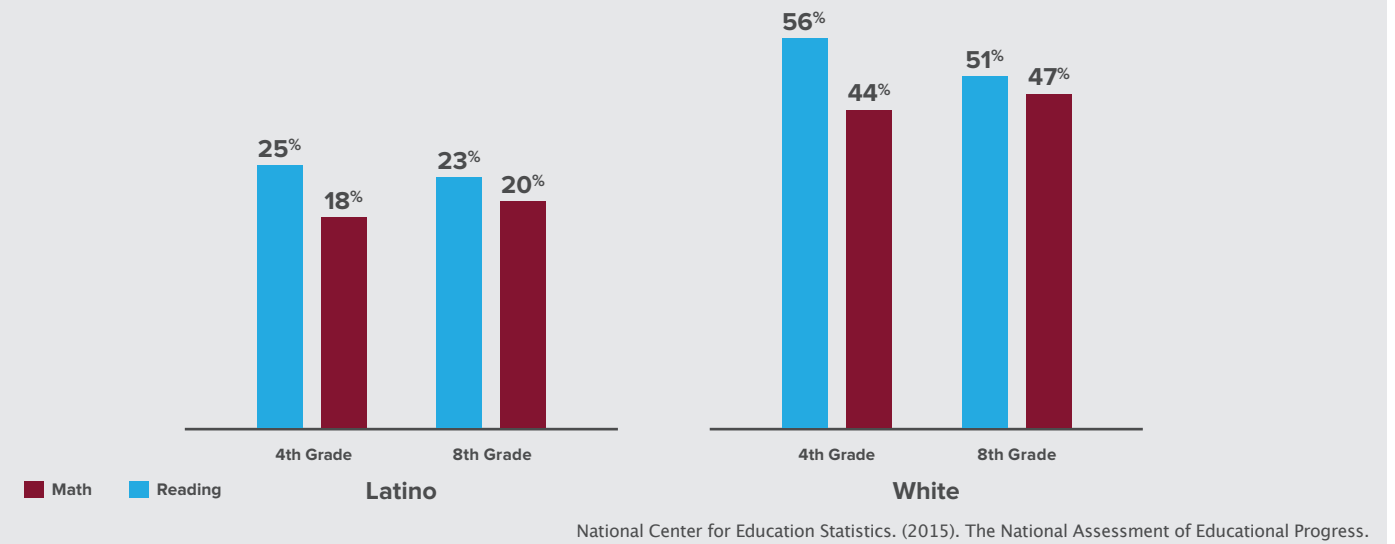
Unfortunately, the story that develops in elementary and middle school remains consistent throughout high school. For example, in 2015 more than 35,000 Arizona students sat for the ACT college entrance examination, most of whom were juniors or seniors in high school. Arizona students trailed behind national trends in college readiness as defined by ACT, Inc., with large gaps in readiness between Whites and Latinos. As Figure 12 (on page 12) shows, nearly 58 percent of White students demonstrated proficiency in reading on the ACT compared with only 23 percent for Latinos. Similarly, Figure 13 shows large gaps in college readiness for mathematics, with 56 percent of White students demonstrating proficiency in mathematics compared with only 22 percent of Latinos.

Despite the large gaps in achievement, however, the majority of Latino students graduate with a high school diploma. Figure 14 shows graduation rates for Whites, Blacks, Latinos and Native Americans in Arizona public high schools over a 10-year period (2004–2014). In 2014, the four-year graduation rate for Whites was 82 percent. Blacks followed at 71 percent, Latinos at 70 percent and Native Americans at 63 percent.

Yet, even with 70 percent of Latinos staying in school and graduating, the data clearly show that there are large gaps in student achievement for Latino students beginning as early as preschool and continuing throughout high school. As a result, Latinos enroll in postsecondary institutions at lower rates.

FIGURE 10

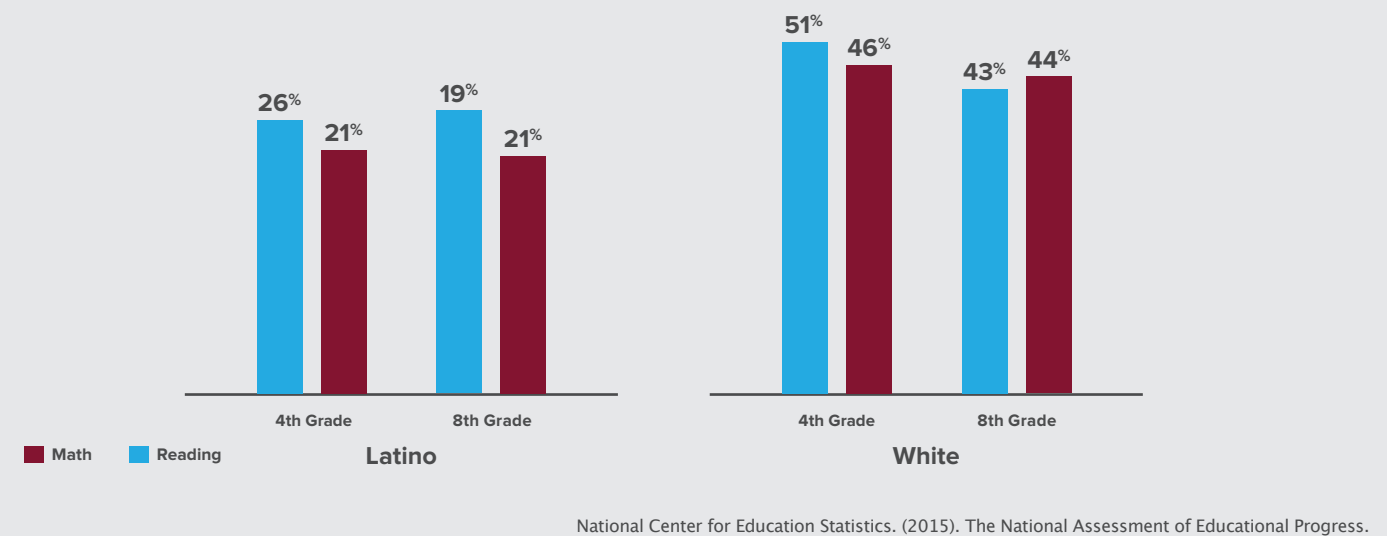
Percentage At or Above Proficient on NAEP, 2015 (Arizona)



National Center for Education Statistics. (2015). The National Assessment of Educational Progress.

FIGURE 11

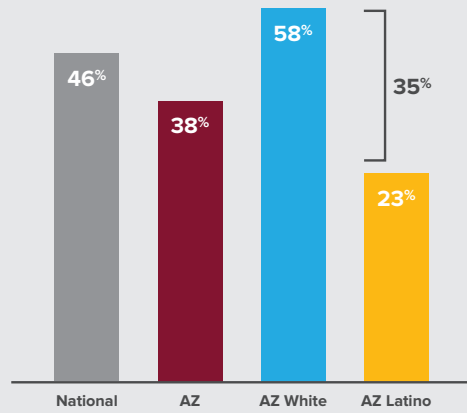
Percentage At or Above Proficient on NAEP, 2015 (Nationally)



National Center for Education Statistics. (2015). The National Assessment of Educational Progress.

FIGURE 12

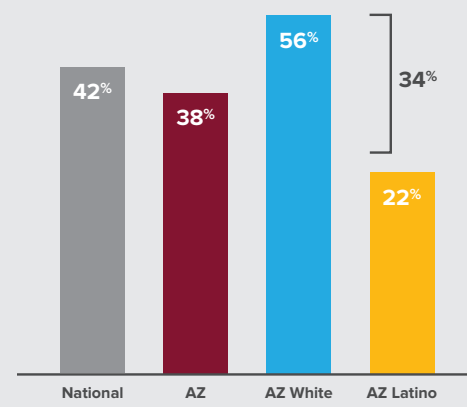
Arizona ACT Scores – 2015 Reading



American College Testing. (2015). ACT Profile Report-State: Graduating Class 2015 Arizona.

FIGURE 13

Arizona ACT Scores – 2015 Mathematics



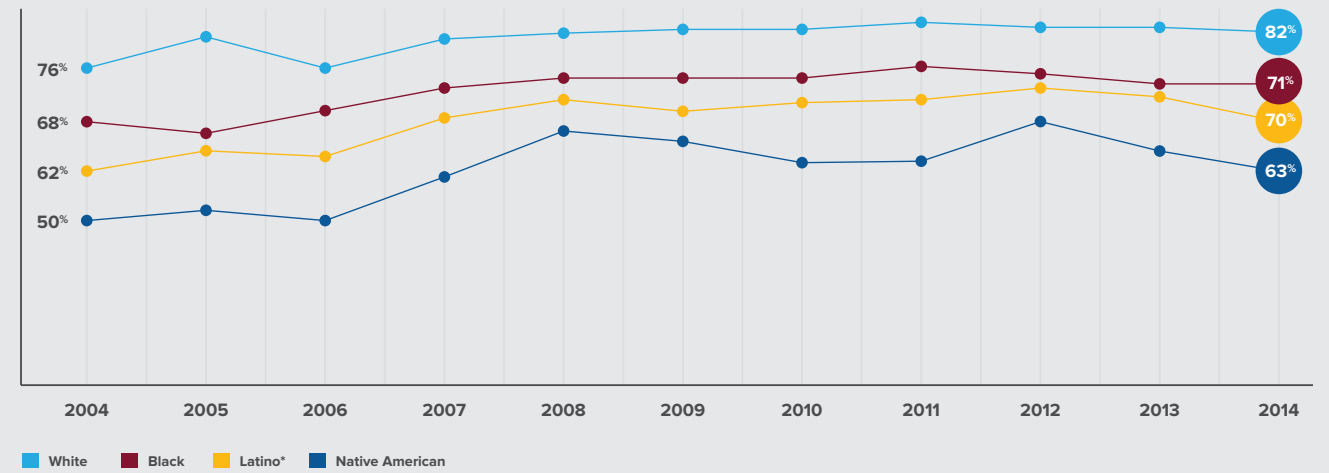
American College Testing. (2015). ACT Profile Report-State: Graduating Class 2015 Arizona.

The cumulative effects of gaps in educational achievement have limited Arizona’s overall postsecondary degree completion. Nationally, 39 percent of the population has an associate degree or higher, compared with 37 percent for the state of Arizona. The biggest reason for this discrepancy can be attributed to the large degree-completion gap for Arizona Latinos. As shown in figure 15 (right), only 19 percent of Latinos have earned an

associate degree or higher; 12 percent earned a bachelor’s degree or higher. These numbers are troubling in light of the data previously presented on shifting demographics and Arizona’s need to keep up with workforce demands. It is only through increased Latino student success at all levels of the birth-postsecondary education continuum that Arizona can meet the needs of a strong and thriving economic future.

FIGURE 14

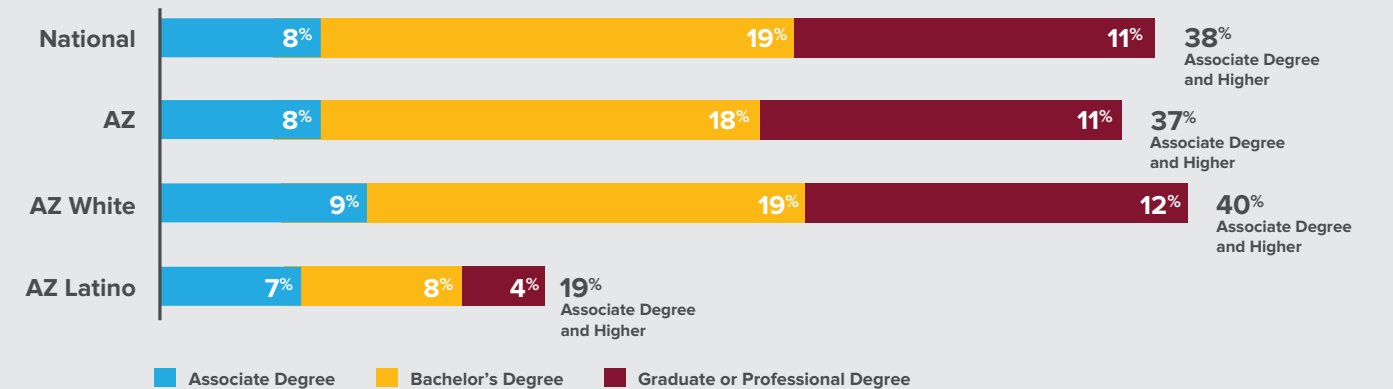
Arizona Four-Year High School Graduation Rates by Ethnicity 2004-2014



Arizona Department of Education. (2014). Cohort 2014 four-year grad rate data.

FIGURE 15

National and Arizona Attainment Rates with Arizona White and Latino Comparisons



U.S. Census Bureau (2014). PUMS one-year estimate data.

HELIOS EDUCATION FOUNDATION'S APPROACH TO IMPROVING LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS

Helios Education Foundation aims to improve Latino access, equity and achievement across the birth-postsecondary education continuum. The result of this will be more Arizona Latino students completing two- and four-year degrees and entering the workforce with the skills necessary to obtain high-demand, high-paying jobs.

In order to achieve these goals, Helios has identified four broad strategies that it is implementing across the Foundation's three impact areas of early grade success, college and career readiness and postsecondary completion. Across all strategies, instilling a college-going, college-completing

culture and prioritizing efforts in high-need, high-poverty Latino communities are recognized as integral components of change. The four strategies are described below with examples of opportunities for impact.

- 1 Strategically Invest
- 2 Build and Reform Systems
- 3 Build Public and Political Will
- 4 Collaborate and Convene



1) STRATEGICALLY INVEST

Helios Education Foundation's investments in Latino student success strategically support the alignment of high-quality early learning opportunities to K-12 educational experiences that promote college preparedness and success. In early childhood, for example, supporting partnerships among pre-K educators to align early learning environments is foundational to learning and achievement across the entire education continuum. Strategic investment at the postsecondary level includes funding and supporting opportunities to increase access and academic support that facilitate college enrollment, persistence and completion (e.g., scholarships to support degree completion).

Other opportunities for impact include geographically targeted and aligned birth-postsecondary investments; incorporating early literacy supports; rigorous middle and high school standards, assessments and academic supports; college planning; financial mentoring; and academic supports at the postsecondary level.

FOR EXAMPLE: EXCEL PROGRAM

EXCEL is a student success program developed in collaboration with the Maricopa Community Colleges District at both Estrella Mountain and Glendale Community Colleges. The \$1.5 million investment provides a unique opportunity for Latino students to receive additional support, advice and guidance as they pursue an associate degree and/or transfer successfully to a four-year university. All EXCEL students receive one-on-one attention from a supportive team that helps them accomplish their goals and connect to the right services and resources to overcome the barriers to being successful in college.

In addition, the EXCEL program has a family component in which every student in the program has an orientation with a parent or family member. The orientation program includes information on how parents can be supportive of students especially throughout their college career. The goal is to provide assistance to first-generation, Latino students as they navigate the college experience. Currently the program is serving nearly 200 students.



2) BUILD AND REFORM SYSTEMS

To increase Latino student success and reform and align Arizona's birth-postsecondary education continuum, Helios Education Foundation strives to identify and remove systemic barriers to educational equity, access and success across the education continuum. An example of system reform at the community-college level includes funding and supporting postsecondary programs that directly link the student's path of study to career opportunities.

Opportunities for impact include postsecondary pathway development; alignment across birth-postsecondary; school district effectiveness; increasing academic advising capacity; and equitable funding.

FOR EXAMPLE: READY NOW YUMA

Helios and Yuma Union High School District (YUHSD) are working to ensure every student in the district is prepared to succeed in college and career. Through the Ready Now Yuma initiative, every student participates in a high-expectations, performance-based, student-centered curriculum. Through this work, every student – regardless of past academic performance or post-high school aspirations – is challenged, supported and prepared to succeed in college and career. The ultimate goal of this program is to ensure that all 11,000 students in YUHSD will be equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the 21st century workforce. Of the 11,000 students in YUHSD, 82 percent are Latino. The Foundation has invested \$5 million in this five-year grant that is currently in the fourth year of implementation.



3) BUILD PUBLIC AND POLITICAL WILL

It is crucial for public and political leaders to be aware of Arizona's changing demographics, future workforce needs and current educational gaps between White and Latino students (e.g., high-quality preschool access, K-12 achievement, postsecondary enrollment, degree completion) and their impact on the state's economic prosperity. Helios aims to increase this awareness by promoting shared goals and rallying support around education needs, quality, access and degree completion. Additionally, building public will and buy-in of a high-expectations, college-going culture can only take place by engaging families, schools and communities.

Opportunities for impact include education policy and advocacy, media advocacy and public awareness and engagement campaigns.

FOR EXAMPLE: STAND FOR CHILDREN ARIZONA

Stand for Children works to develop grassroots leaders in support of improving education in Arizona. Through family engagement and organizing as well as policy and advocacy, Stand for Children Arizona is creating advocates who are taking a stand for a better education system in the state and mobilizing communities for educational equality. With a goal of closing the achievement gap, Stand for Children Arizona focuses their work in the Phoenix area in the Alhambra, Roosevelt and Murphy school districts – all of which have a high Latino population.

In 2010 Helios partnered with the Arizona Community Foundation to fund Stand for Children's initial work in Arizona. Since then, Helios has invested an additional \$3.4 million in the organization's work.



4) COLLABORATE AND CONVENE

To inspire change, Helios believes that leaders, advocates and educators must come together to facilitate understanding and commitment to Latino student success. Therefore, Helios strives to bring together key regional and statewide partners to problem solve, share and disseminate best practices in Latino early grade success, college and career readiness and postsecondary completion. Collaboration is also valued and supported across the education continuum at the school and district levels (e.g., encouraging early childhood and K-3 educators to emphasize emergent literacy and language acquisition and collaboratively promote the successful transition of young children).

Opportunities for impact include funding targeted research to inform leaders and practitioners and convening national and state experts for best practices in Latino degree completion.

“ Helios Education Foundation believes that education opens the door to opportunities and breaks the cycle of poverty for individuals and families. Poverty clearly delineates the “haves” and the “have-nots.” But, poverty does not determine potential. In reality, education is the great equalizer. ”

PAUL LUNA
PRESIDENT & CEO, HELIOS EDUCATION FOUNDATION



FOR EXAMPLE: ARIZONA'S ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE

In 2015, nearly 200 business and community leaders came together to discuss “Arizona’s Economic Imperative: Ensuring Latino Student Success”, an event sponsored by Helios which featured a presentation by Dr. Michael Crow, President of Arizona State University. Using a foundation of both academic achievement and demographic data, Dr. Crow built the case that Latino Student Success is not just an education issue but also an economic imperative that will require engagement and commitment from the business, education, philanthropic and other sectors of the community. The discussion shed light on the severity of Arizona’s current trajectory and called for a dramatic course correction.



ABOUT HELIOS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Helios Education Foundation is focused on creating opportunities for individuals in Arizona and Florida to succeed in postsecondary education by advancing the academic preparedness of all students and fostering a high-expectations, college-going culture. Through a decade of strategic partnership and investment, Helios has identified Early Grade Success, College and Career Readiness and Postsecondary Completion as the three most critical reform priorities in achieving our long-term goal. As an engaged foundation, embedded in communities across both states, the Foundation is contributing its expertise and financial resources to better prepare students for college and career and to compete successfully in a global economy. Since 2006, Helios has invested over \$167 million in education-related programs and initiatives in Arizona and Florida. For more information about the Foundation, visit www.helios.org.

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