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LOS ANGELES CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Impact and Opportunity for Economically Disadvantaged Students

Executive Summary

This study is the second phase of a longitudinal study that examines the achievement results of inner city Catholic school students in Los Angeles. Phase 2 continues to investigate the continuation and graduation rates for CEF supported students, and now specifically examines how Catholic schools prepare students for college through the admission requirements of the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) systems, SAT sitting rates, SAT scores, and college attendance rates. The study focuses on Catholic school students and Catholic schools supported by the Catholic Education Foundation (CEF) in the 2003-2008 academic years. These students are ethnically diverse and are among the most disadvantaged students in Los Angeles, living predominately at or near the federal poverty level in under-resourced inner city areas.

This study shows that Catholic schools better prepare economically disadvantaged students for college than comparable public schools. Students attending Catholic schools in inner city Los Angeles are completing a rigorous curriculum, outperforming their peers on nationwide standardized tests, graduating from high school in exceptional numbers, and going on to college at a very successful rate.

High School Continuation and Graduation Rates

This study replicated previous results, finding that 100% of this cohort continued from eighth to ninth grade and that 98% percent of the Catholic school students studied graduated from high school in four years, compared to the 69% graduation rate for California public school students in the same period.

UC/CSU Course Completion Rate

Ninety percent of students at CEF supported schools graduated with the courses required for admission to the UC and CSU systems completed, compared with 31% of students

at comparable Los Angeles public high schools who graduated with these courses completed.

SAT Sitting Rates

The SAT sitting rate for CEF supported students at Catholic high schools was 73%, while the sitting rate for students at comparable Los Angeles public schools was 40%.

SAT Scores

Across the verbal, math, and writing sections of the SAT, students in CEF supported schools had higher scores than students in comparable Los Angeles public schools

College Attendance Rate

The study found that 98% of this cohort of CEF supported Catholic school students continued into postsecondary education, which is 13% higher than the national average Catholic school college attendance rate. Most CEF supported students are first generation college attendees.

The extraordinary results reported in the study are being achieved as Catholic schools nationally face many challenges—declining enrollment, changing ethnic and socioeconomic demographics, and school finances—yet the national data shows that Catholic schools are able to provide a higher quality education with a lower per pupil cost. The average 2010-2011 per pupil cost for public schools was \$10,297, whereas the average cost for Catholic schools was \$6,991 per pupil.

Catholic schools are making a tremendous impact, not simply for the Catholic community but for the common good of all of society. Based on a long and rich history of extraordinary results in educating economically disadvantaged students in urban areas, Catholic schools have much to offer the Los Angeles region and the country in terms of the dialogue on educational reform.

For the full report, please visit
<http://soe.lmu.edu/cce>