

# **Envision Education**

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## **A Look at Student Success in College**

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## **Introduction**

My first year in college was one of little sleep, swamped days, and constantly working to overcome academic, financial, and personal obstacles. In a short period of time, I grew both as a person and in my academic ability. While it was a year of wonderful memories and new experiences, it also was a year of insecurity and doubt. I can recall several phone calls to my mom in which I tried to explain to her why I was failing and why I felt I could not be successful at Occidental College. To make matters worse, I seemed to be the only one in my friend group considerably struggling academically. Initially, I attributed my struggles and frustrations to attending a charter school and the structure of the support programs of my high school. I held them responsible for my lack of preparation and knowledge. I convinced myself that my experience would have been better had I attended a traditional public high school. I soon realized that it was much more complicated and in fact the high school I attended was just one of many external factors contributing to my success and/or lack of success in college. Daily conversations in and out of the classroom made it clear that I was among a diverse group of students, diversity, not in race or ethnicity, but in experience.

I began my research with the intent to study student performance among charter schools and traditional public schools. I was curious to see if attending a charter or public school differently influenced a students' performance in college. It wasn't long before I realized I was in over my head. In order to properly compare the two I would have to find 1) a charter and public school that were similar enough to be compared and 2) conduct research for longer than a few months. Additionally,

charter schools are a topic of ongoing debate in society. Some believe that charter schools are the solution to a failing public education system while others believe that the negative impacts of charter schools far outweigh the positive. My research would not have added much to the discourse surrounding charter schools. As a result, I chose to closely study the charter school district I attended, Envision Education, to better understand other students' experience. My hope is that this project sheds some light on which resources and programs equip students the best to succeed in college. I aim to highlight strengths and note areas of improvement.

### *Envision Education*

Bob Lenz, an award-winning teacher and nationally recognized school reform leader, founded Envision Education in June of 2002 with the desire to transform lives by transforming education. According to their website their mission is to *“transform the lives of students – especially those who will be the first in their family to attend college – by preparing them for success in college, in careers, and in life”*. Envision Education predominately serves first generation low-income students of color. Almost 70 percent of their students qualify for free and reduced lunch and 80 percent will be the first in their family to graduate from college (Lenz 2015). They define success by each individual student that graduates and goes to college. In other words, they measure their schools performance or success by college success. More than 90% of Envision School graduates go to college, in comparison to 40% of California high school graduates (Lenz 2015). Envision Education is nationally recognized for its *“innovations in performance assessment, its graduation portfolio system, its rigorous and integrated approach to project-*

based learning, its workplace learning internships, and its personalized learning environment that has been so successful in getting students into college”, especially those statistically not likely to go (Lenz 2015). Today, Envision Education has evolved into three high schools, a charter management organization and educational consulting division. Most of the information I was able to attain was provided directly from their data and assessment manager, Angelina Garcia, and their recently published book. I present this information fully aware that there is potential bias; I cannot confirm the accuracy and validity of the data.

Envisions Schools have a project-based curriculum and performance assessments. The following table lists some of the specific programs and assessment methods that are used throughout all three high schools.

<b>Method</b>	<b>Description</b>
Exhibition	Exhibition nights are a time for students to showcase their work to parents and the community. Students are expected to dress professionally and present their work to the public
Benchmark Portfolio	Similar to graduation portfolio, 10 <sup>th</sup> grade students defend why they are ready to move up to the upper division using their school work and self-reflection as evidence
Work Learning Experience (WLE)	Required internship Junior and Senior year of high school
Graduation Portfolio	Similar to a dissertation defense or professional presentation, students stand before a panel of their peers, teachers, and mentors to demonstrate the depth of their knowing, doing, and reflecting. They use their academic work and self-reflection as evidence. They must pass this portfolio

	defense in order to graduate
Advisory	Class in which students work closely with a teacher advisor. The advisor helps them navigate the college admissions process and provide support through a students high school career

### *History of Charter Schools*

A charter school is an independently operated public school that enrolls students based on choice instead of residential assignment. In the United States, public charter schools are publicly funded independent schools that are typically established by a community group or organization under the terms of a charter with a local or national authority. The charter excuses the school from certain state regulations. Originating in Minnesota, the first charter school was established in 2001. As of the 2012-13 school year, 42 states have passed charter school legislation. California was the second state to pass charter school legislation and now enrolls the largest number of students in charter schools (Kuh 2006). During the past 10 years charter schools have been the fastest-growing form of school choice. School choice is a term used to describe a variety of alternative options parents and students have from traditional publicly provided schools. Some other examples of school choice include neighborhood public schools, magnet schools, tuition tax credits, homeschooling, and supplemental educational services (Preston & Goldring & Berends 2012). According to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, student enrollment in public charter schools has grown by 70 percent in

the past five years and now serves more than 2.5 million children in the United States (2014).

While charter schools vary across the country, most were created with the intention of improving student achievement and as an effort to decrease achievement gaps. They often take an alternative approach (ex. project-based learning) to the curriculum taught in traditional public schools, emphasize a particular field of study (ex. the arts), or are set up to intentionally serve a specific population such as special education or at-risk students. While charter schools have become increasingly popular over the past decade, there is little concrete data to demonstrate how they operate and perform in comparison to traditional public schools. Through my research I aim to study Envision Education, a charter school district located in the Bay Area, in order to get a glimpse of what charter schools are doing to improve student achievement and ensure student success in college. Next, I will discuss arguments in support and against charter schools as well as present factors that influence student success.

## **Literature Review**

### *Arguments in Support of Charter Schools*

Some of the earliest advocates for charter school implementation include Budde (1988), Kolderie (1990), and Nathan (1997). Advocates believed and hoped that charter school laws would result in improved student achievement and student learning, improvement in traditional public schools as a response to new competition, and notable parent, teacher, and student satisfaction (Bulkley & Fisler 2002). Charter schools and school choice options were a response to rising drop out

rates and large achievement gaps in the education system. They were established with the purpose to “improve student learning” (Education Code 47601). Mark Berends links the rapid growth of charter schools predominately to the support from national leaders such as George W. Bush and Barack Obama, making it a bipartisan issue. Both leaders have emphasized charter school reform as “an option that provides significant opportunities to families and children, particularly for students of color, in low-income families, and at low achievement levels” (Berends 2015). Obama went as far as to establish his Race to the Top program, which provided \$4 billion towards education. In order to be considered for the money, states had to first remove any legal barrier to the expansion of charter schools (Ravitch 2010). Ultimately, those in support of the charter schools system believe that it can and should improve student achievement, encourage innovation through an alternative curriculum, and put competitive pressure on conventional public schools to improve.

### *Arguments against Charter Schools*

On the other end of this debate lie those in opposition of charter schools. Diane Ravitch is known for her strong and vocal critiques against charter schools. Although originally a supporter for testing and school choice, she announced to the public that she changed her mind in, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Undermine Education* (2010). In it she argues that charter school quality ranges; some are “excellent, some are dreadful, and most are somewhere in between. It is in the nature of markets that some succeed, some are



middling, and others fail” (Ravitch 2010). She believes that the intentions of charter schools are admirable and right-minded, but data suggest they are not fulfilling their original purpose of improving student outcomes. Often, school choice seems as though it is a good idea but what tends to happen is education standards are lowered as schools are given the freedom to create and decide what should be taught and how it should be taught (Ravitch 2010). In agreement, other scholars argue that charter schools increase racial segregation and create a financial burden for school districts because they utilize public funds (Ladd & Fiske, 2000). Instead of helping traditional public schools by providing healthy competition, they decrease the funding available and make it difficult for them to improve their school system.

As previously discussed, it was presumed charter schools would create healthy competition for traditional public schools and subsequently improve school performance. In order to combat this presumption, Ravitch (2010) presents important factors that should lead to improved performance. First, some charter schools select students through a lottery system and “thus attract motivated students and families”. This implies that students enrolled in charter school are motivated, possibly more so than students at traditional public schools. Second, charters enroll fewer students who would require either additional academic support or disability services. Lastly, charter schools have the right to deny students admission or remove students and send them back to their local high school. Once these advantages are taken into consideration one would expect charter schools to have overall higher performance than traditional public high schools. Surprisingly,

research has found charter schools are neither performing better or worse than traditional public schools.

### *Studies*

It is difficult to come up with a single conclusion in regards to charter school performance seeing that charter schools vary not only among states but also within states. They differ in type, size, mission, focus, curriculum, etc. The majority of well-recognized studies have used longitudinal data, meaning that researchers have tracked the same students at multiple times in their educational career. Tim Sass studied public and charter school performance in Florida and found that achievement is initially lower in charter schools but that after five years charter schools match public school performance and surpass them in reading scores (Sass 2006). Robert Bifulco and Helen Ladd studied the impact of charter schools on student achievement in North Carolina and found that students improve more in charter schools than they would have in a public school but the improvements are minimal (Bifulco and Ladd 2006). Hoxby and Murarka studied charter schools in New York and found a positive affect in student achievement (Hoxby and Murarka 2009). Additionally, Hanushek (2007) and Zimmer and Buddin (2006) conducted similar research in Texas and California but their results also varied because they were specific to the charter schools in those states. Overall, there is still not a consensus as to how charter schools affect student achievement.

In order to better understand how charter schools are performing in comparison to traditional public schools, studies have grouped charter schools by

type. Zimmer and Buddin (2006) provide a way to categorize charter schools in order to better compare and assess school performance. They identify four main categories: 1) conversions and startups and 2) classroom-based and nonclassroom-based. Conversion charter schools are schools that were originally traditional public high schools and then converted into a charter high school. Start-up charter schools are schools that were created from the ground up; they are new schools. Zimmer and Buddin (2005) found that students in classroom-based startup schools performed better, they had higher math and reading scores, than students in classroom-based conversion schools.

In addition, startup classroom-based schools are more likely to improve student performance than nonclassroom-based schools. Classroom-based conversion schools are performing about the same as the traditional public school and do not make a significant difference on student performance (Zimmer and Buddin 2005). These results attest that there cannot be a definite conclusion as to how charter schools impact student performance because while some are making a positive difference, not all of them are. Furthermore, charter schools cannot be compared to traditional public schools because research has found time and time again that there is either minimal difference or no significant difference (Zimmer and Buddin 2005, Zimmer and Buddin 2009, RAND 2003, Bifulco and Ladd 2006, Berends 2015). My research will examine a startup classroom based charter school district, Envision Education. Instead of comparing Envision Education to a traditional public school, I will examine school performance by looking at their graduates' level of success in college.

## **Part 2: Student Success**

Charter high school success or performance is predominately measured using test scores while college success or performance incorporates other factors such as GPA or retention rates. As previously discussed, charter schools vary greatly and therefore each has their own set of methods they use to measure performance. Researchers use test scores to measure performance because not only do they provide concrete quantitative data but also it is one of the few methods all charter schools have in common. Zimmer (2003), Bifulco and Ladd (2006), Hoxby and Murarka (2009) all used test scores in their studies to examine student success in charter schools.

My research will look at Envision Education graduates' experience after high school and whether their high school prepared them to succeed in college. For many years student success and student retention were used interchangeably because it was believed that students were only successful if they stayed and graduated from an institution. Today, researchers acknowledge that student success is much broader than retention. Several studies have utilized different variables to measure student success in college. These variables include but are not limited to socioeconomic status of student, involvement of parents, support of parents and family, expectations, faculty and peer interactions, involvement, first-generation status, high school experience, etc. These variables are used to better understand a student's experience in college and are a way of acknowledging that there is diversity in experience. A student's success or failure is not a consequence of one event or component but rather a result of several circumstances.

Dr.Kuh and his colleagues found that most researchers use any of the following five variables to examine student success on the college level. Those include: 1) student demographics and high school experience 2) college/university mission, size, and selectivity 3) faculty and peer interactions 4) student perceptions of the learning environment and 5) students' effort to participate and engage on campus (Kuh et al., 2011). In regards to high school experience, they present academic preparation and motivation as one of the best predictors of whether a student will graduate or not (Kuh et al., 2011). In another study, Kuh and his colleagues found that student demographic, pre-college experiences, and prior academic achievement are all predictors of GPA and that together they explain 29% of the variance in first-year grades. Furthermore, prior academic achievement (ACT and SAT scores) had the strongest influence on first-year GPA (Kuh et al., 2008). I also believe students who enter college able to adequately articulate themselves through writing and speech, accustomed to thinking critically about course material, and able to manage their time are less likely to struggle in their first year of college because they are starting off with skills that are essential to succeed in college. These are all skills usually acquired in high school, thus researchers can use high school preparation to begin to examine student success in college.

In regards to faculty and peer interactions, they found that the more student-teacher interactions take place, the better. Interactions with a teacher can influence a student's success in college because it can provide them with a mentor, role model, and/or a support system (Kuh et al., 2011). Interactions range from something as simple as discussing a grade and go as deep as discussing career and

life decisions. In regards to a students' perception of the learning environment, they found that students perform better at institutions that are committed to helping them succeed academically and thrive socially. Additionally, they note that students who are held to high expectations are more likely to "rise to the occasion". If faculty and administration intentionally work to build a curriculum and provide resources and opportunities that prompt students to participate and learn, then students seemingly put in more effort (Kuh et al., 2011). They engage more with course material and meet more frequently with teachers and take advantage of the resources available, all which result in greater student performance. Also on this topic, Tinto (2005) addresses high expectations as a condition for student success. Interestingly, he addresses labels that institutions use to describe students such as 'remedial students' as a form of expressing expectations. Teachers imply certain expectations with the language they use in conversations and ultimately students will not rise to low expectations. If little is expected of them, students do not have a reason to challenge themselves and learn what they are truly capable of.

Lastly, in regards to participation and engagement on campus, Kuh and his colleagues found that the amount of time students invest into educational activities is the best predictor of their learning and personal development (Kuh et al., 2011). This means that what students participate in and *do* influences what they learn and whether they decide to continue in college. While participation and engagement may not indicate a good GPA, it is, however, a factor in student success. For that reason, if students are participating or getting involved on their campus, they are

making meaningful connections and subsequently partially succeeding in their college career.

Similarly, Walter Allen found that determinants of success in college are influenced by students' circumstances before entering college. These conditions include but are not limited to high school preparation, socioeconomic status, and test scores. He adds that a college's characteristics and a students' experience while in college also contribute to student success (Allen 1991). His research specifically looks at the experience of African American students and found they have a tendency to transfer or drop out of white institutions because they are oftentimes academically and economically disadvantaged in comparison to their white peers. (Allen 1991). In terms of college characteristics, Allen looks at size, location, quality of faculty, and majors offered to name a few. These characteristics have been shown to have the capability to alienate students and hinder their ability to be successful in college (Allen 1991).

Since both experiences, before and throughout college, play a role in student performance, my research will examine not only Envision graduates' experience in college but also the skills they acquired in high school that allowed them to either thrive, survive, or fail in college. I will measure college success using academic standing, which encompasses whether they are on track to graduate and GPA, and engagement on campus.

### *Engagement on Campus*

Engagement on campus influences a students' experience on campus and subsequently influences a student's academic performance. Engagement encompasses involvement in clubs, work, organizations, events, etc. It includes both academic and social involvement. Vincent Tinto lists involvement on campus as a critical condition for student success (Tinto 2005). He refers to involvement in two different ways. First, involvement in the classroom, referring to students who commute and work while in college. Student attendance and participation is of great importance because it is where they can meet other students and teachers. If their involvement in the classroom is minimal then it is unlikely they will get involved elsewhere (Tinto 2005). Second, classroom involvement can lead to social involvement. The connections and relationships students make in the classroom can be the starting point in which students then join clubs or chose to participate in school wide events (Tinto 2005). Kuh, Cruce, and Shoup (2008) researched the effects of student engagement on first-year college grades and found that engagement had positive, statistically significant effects on first-year grades and increased chances of persistence from the first to second year in college. Interestingly, first generation students are less likely to live on campus, develop meaningful relationships with faculty, and become involved in campus clubs and organizations (Pike and Kuh 2005). This is important for student success because if a student is less likely to be involved on campus then they are less likely to feel a sense of belonging on campus and consequently feel less hesitant to leave or drop out of their institution.



Another aspect of student engagement on campus includes interactions with faculty: interactions in the classroom, in office hours, and around campus. Alexander Astin (1993) found that teachers and faculty are able to have a tremendous impact on a students' experience in college. In his book he states that students on campuses in which faculty have a strong presence "are more satisfied with the institution, the curriculum, and other aspects of the educational experience and are more likely to develop academically"(Astin 1993). While faculty interactions positively influence student success, the type of interaction is also significant. Anaya and Cole found that Latina/o students were less likely to interact with faculty for non-academic purposes and their data indicates that minority students' experience unsatisfactory or constrained interactions (Anaya&Cole 2001). In other words, Latina/o students mainly attended office hours for questions regarding course material and not much else. Faculty interactions that are non-academic related are important for students in college because it gives students the opportunity to form relationships and a connection to someone on campus and receive valuable advice from someone that has experienced and 'survived' college. One reason students, especially minority students, are not having these interactions because the majority of college professors are white (Anaya & Cole 2001). Student engagement on campus has an influence on student success but this correlation does not equal causation, other factors that influence student success should be taken into consideration.

### *Other Factors*

Student engagement and academic standing are factors that influence student success in college but this list is by no means exhaustive. Student success cannot be attributed to a single factor in a students' life but instead is a result of several external factors including student behavior, institutional characteristics and support, race and ethnicity, first-generation status, etc. Anaya and Cole (2001) studied student-faculty interactions and the effect on student success. Pritchard and Wilson (2003) used emotional and social factors as a means to predict student success. Walter Allen (1992) studied race, specifically looking at African American students' performance. Zajacova and Lynch (2005) studied the effect of academic self-efficacy and stress on student success. My research will contribute to the conversation by looking at whether first-generation status and race influences student success in college. I am interested in studying the experiences of students of underserved populations because they are disproportionately graduating with debt and degree completion rates are much lower (Carey 2004). I hypothesize that first generation and minority students are more likely to drop out, take time off, or leave college for external circumstances. Several studies have shown that students drop out or leave college for reasons that are out of their control such as change of major, lack of money, or family demands (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, etc 2008).

Through my research I hope to study if graduates of Envision Education are successful in college. Are they acquiring skills necessary to not only enter but also succeed in college? Which of the programs Envision has set up are most useful to students for life after high school? Do first-generation students struggle any more or

less than non first-generation students? If students decided to transfer, drop out, or not enroll in college what was their reasoning?

### **Part 3: Methodology**

To answer these research questions, I used a mixed methods approach including a survey, semi-structured interviews, and secondary data. The interviews contributed to the qualitative component and survey responses and data from the National Student Clearinghouse contributed quantitative data. To begin my research, I reviewed existing literature examining charter high school performance individually and in comparison to traditional high school performance. In addition, I reviewed literature on student success and factors that influence student success. I also looked at the data collected by the National Student Clearinghouse to assess whether Envision Education as a whole is accomplishing their goal of getting students accepted and enrolled in college.

The information I gathered through the literature review enabled me to develop a definition of college student success. For the purpose of this research I measured success by looking at academic standing (including GPA) and engagement on campus. I created a metric with three levels of success, however, I realize that students may fall somewhere in between the different levels.

#### *National Student Clearinghouse*

Before distributing and analyzing survey responses I began by looking at National Student Clearinghouse, a nonprofit organization that provides educational reporting and research services. They provide schools with longitudinal data on

student outcomes. Envision Education utilizes National Student Clearinghouse for their data collection. Some of the data I examined includes:

- Percent of students enrolled in college the fall immediately after high school by institutional type (private, public)
- Percent of students enrolled in college the fall immediately after high school by institutional level (2-year, 4-year)
- Percent of students enrolled in college the fall immediately after high school by institutional location (in-state, out-of-state)
- Freshman to Sophomore Year persistence
- Percent of students who completed a degree within 6 years

### *Surveys*

After looking at the existing data, I distributed surveys, which was my primary research method. I created the survey using *Qualtrics*, an online survey research platform, and distributed it to students who graduated from one of the three high schools of Envision Education. The questions consist of both multiple choice and free response. I distributed the survey through email, Facebook and asked students to share the survey with other graduates I might have missed. Angelina Garcia, from Envisions support office, helped by sending the survey to the students the office had contact information for. Gaby Urena, City Arts and Tech college counselor, and Gena Barsotti, Envision Academy college counselor, contributed by forwarding the survey to graduates they had contact with. I asked some of my former teachers to help in the distribution process by 1) providing emails for the students they still kept in

contact with, especially the students that were not in my class (class of 2012) and 2) asking them to send it out to students and publicize it. I relied on teachers and Envision administration to help me spread the word about the project. Using the data gathered from the surveys, I separated students into groups based on the different levels of success. I did not disclose the metric unless specifically asked so that graduates that are not in college were not discouraged or felt ashamed to participate. Some questions I asked included:

1. What year did you graduate Impact Academy of Arts and Technology?
2. What did you do after graduation?
3. Have you kept in contact with any of the teachers or staff you had while in high school?
4. What is your GPA?
5. Are you on track to graduate?
6. Did you have to take any remedial classes your first year in college?
7. List any clubs or organizations you are involved with on campus.
8. Did you participate in a summer bridge program?

(See Appendix for full survey)

### *Student Success Categories*

The three levels of success are: Thriving, Surviving, and Unsuccessful. Students categorized as 'Thriving' are students that are in good academic standing and actively involved on campus. Students categorized as 'Surviving' are students who are not in good academic standing and whose involvement on campus is minimal, if at all. Students categorized as 'Unsuccessful' are students who dropped out of college or decided on another path after graduating high school. This is not to say that students who are not enrolled at a college or decided not to continue their

education after high school are unsuccessful. For the purpose of my research I am interested in a student's experience in college and therefore they would not be considered as succeeding in college. I recognize that 'good academic standing' may vary across institution, for that reason I also asked students for their GPA, in order to better evaluate their level of success. I categorized a GPA above a 3.0 as 'Thriving', a GPA below a 3.0 as 'Surviving', and students who decided not to attend college or dropped out as 'Unsuccessful'.

### *Semi-structured interviews*

Initially I had planned to conduct student semi-structured interviews with students but survey distribution proved to be more difficult than expected. I did not receive enough responses before Winter Break was over and consequently had to decide not to conduct student interviews. The responses I had received by that time were mostly from people I knew and would therefore present a potential bias.

I only used interviews with Envision administration. I interviewed the principal of Envision Academy, City Arts and Tech, and the vice-principal of Impact Academy. I was also able to interview the Co-Founder, Chief Executive Officer, and Director of Growth of Envision Education. I audio recorded all interviews, with the permission of the subject, for note taking purposes. All interviews were transcribed.

(See Appendix for list of interview questions)

## Findings

### Envision Education

#### Graduation Statistics

	National Averages	Envision Schools
High School Grads Attending College	60%*	98%
First Generation to go to College	16%**	79%
African American College Attendance	32%***	98%
Hispanic College Attendance	25%***	99%
First Year College Persistence	60%**	87%

\*Bureau of Labor

\*\*"First in My Family," a report by Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA

\*\*\*American Council on Education, 2008

### Overview

I received 60 responses to the Qualtrics survey. There was a glitch with the survey and some students were not able to view all the questions so of those 60, only 53 had enough information to be useful to the overall data. I had respondents from the Class of 2011-2015.

Class Year	# of respondents
2011	8
2012	15
2013	6
2014	12
2015	12

Thankfully I received responses from students across all three of the high schools but the majority, 34 responses (64%), was from Impact Academy graduates. I received 10 responses (19%) from Envision Academy and 5 (9%) from City Arts and Tech (the remainder (8%) chose not to specify their high school). Seventy-seven percent (41 respondents) went straight to college after graduation and the rest either did not go to college or did something else before deciding to go to college. Figure 1 shows the overall demographics for Envision Schools in the 2013-2014 school year. Figure 2 is demographic breakdown of all the respondents. Since the demographics of the survey respondents mirrors Envisions demographics fairly accurately, I believe that the conclusions drawn from the results will be applicable and generalizable to Envision Education.

**Figure 1: Envision School’s Demographics, 2013-2014**

<b>Latino</b>	57%
<b>African American</b>	23%
<b>White</b>	7%
<b>Asian and Pacific Islander</b>	3%
<b>Other</b>	10%
<b>English Language Learners</b>	11%
<b>Free/Reduced Lunch</b>	69%
<b>First in their families to graduate from college</b>	79%

**Figure 2: Survey Respondents Demographics**

<b>Latino</b>	48%
<b>African American</b>	19%
<b>White</b>	9%
<b>Asian and Pacific Islander</b>	11%
<b>Native American</b>	2%

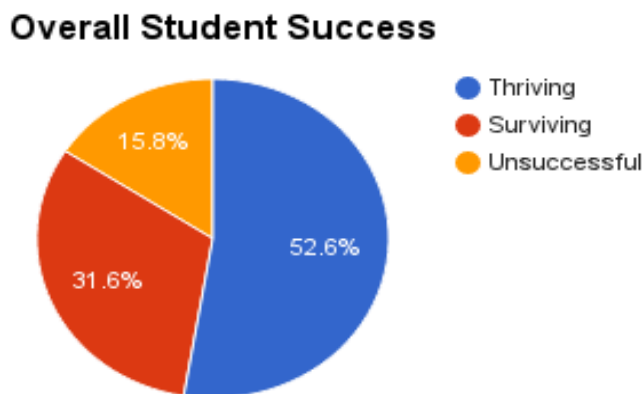


Other	12%
First in their families to graduate from college	67%

*Categories: Thriving, Surviving and Unsuccessful*

I defined good academic standing as a GPA of 3.0 and above. I had planned on including campus involvement but because only a few respondents listed their involvement in campus activities, instead of assuming no involvement I decided to look at that in the 'student engagement' section instead of calculating it in the categories. Out of 41 'went to college' student responses, only 33 reported their GPA. Figure 3 shows the category breakdown based on those that provided their GPA.

**Figure 3:**

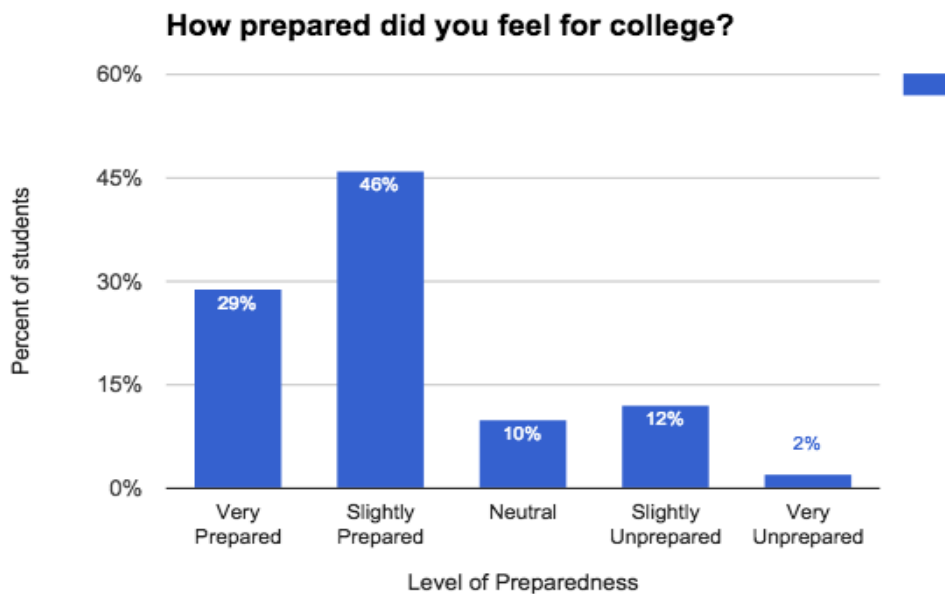


Students who are 'Thriving' have a GPA above a 3.0 and all, except two, are on track to graduate. Students who are 'Surviving' have below a 3.0 and only some (4) of them are not on track to graduate. Students who are 'Unsuccessful' decided

not to attend college or dropped out. It is important to note that while 31.6% of students are ‘Surviving’, 23% of those students have a 2.0 or below and are mostly not on track to graduate. While it may not be failing I would say it is an area of concern. Of the students who are ‘Thriving’, 15% attend a private college/university, 65% attend a public college/university, and 20% attend a community college. Out of all the respondents, all the students who attend a private college/university are ‘Thriving’. Of the students who are ‘Surviving’, 75% attend a private college/university and 25% attend a private college/university.

Figure 4 shows how students answered when asked how prepared they felt for college. Overall, most students’ felt prepared for college, either slightly or very prepared. However, 14% of students felt either slightly unprepared or very unprepared and while the number is small in comparison to those that felt prepared it should not be ignored.

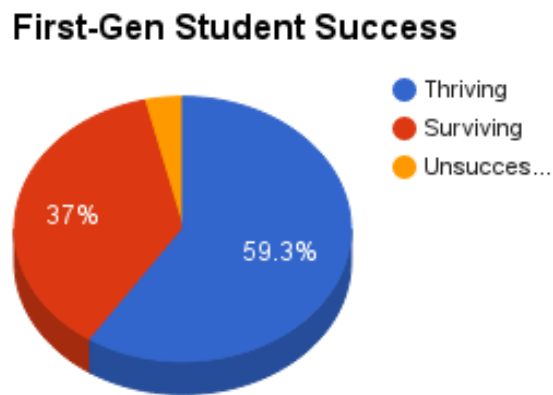
**Figure 4:**



### *First Generation*

A student is first generation if their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) have not completed a bachelor's degree. Of all the respondents, 67% were first-generation. Figure 5 looks specifically where first-generation students land in regards to success in college. More than half of first generation students are thriving in college and very few are unsuccessful. Interestingly, all the students who are attending a private college/university are not only "Thriving", but also first-generation.

**Figure 5:**

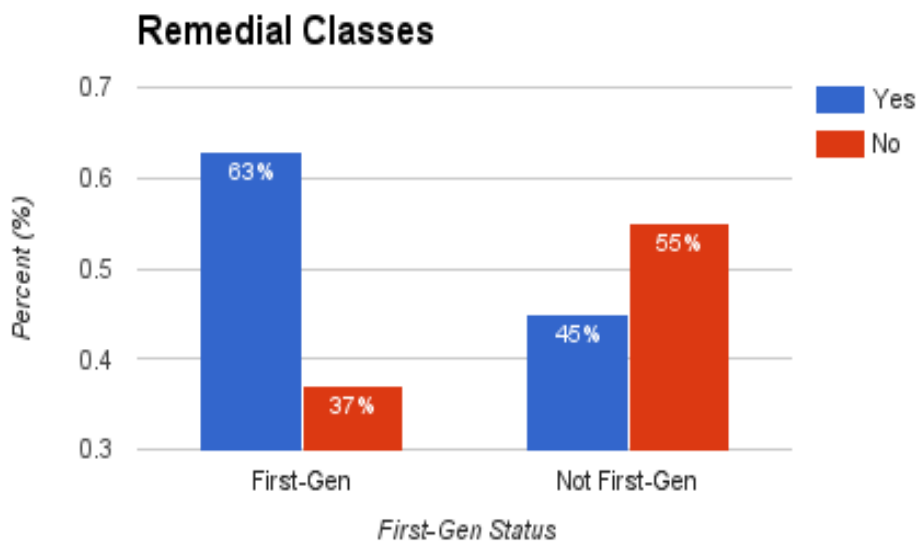


Once in college, first-gen students were more likely to have to take remedial classes. Sixty-three percent of all first-gen students had to take a remedial class at some point in their college career, compared to only 45% of non first-gen students, as seen in Figure 6. When asked how prepared they felt for college, the majority of them responded they felt very or slightly prepared (see Figure 7). First-generation students responses resembled the overall responses, which leads me to believe that first-gen status does not have much impact on level of preparedness once in college.

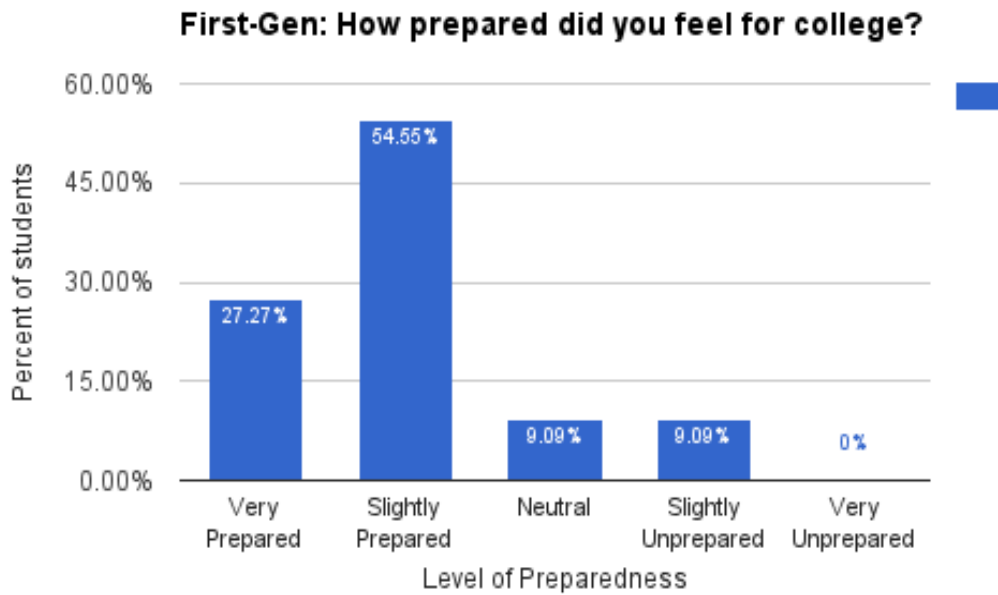
When asked how much time they spend on homework in comparison to their peers, 64% said about the same and 27% said more than their peers. Only 10% said they spend less time in comparison to 28% of non first-gen students.

In regards to family support, only 70% of first-gen students said they felt very supported when deciding to attend college while 100% of non first-gen students said they felt very supported by their families when they decided to attend college. I imagine that other family responsibilities and a parent’s lack of experience and knowledge about college contributes to the support or lack of support first generation students receive.

**Figure 6:**



**Figure 7:**

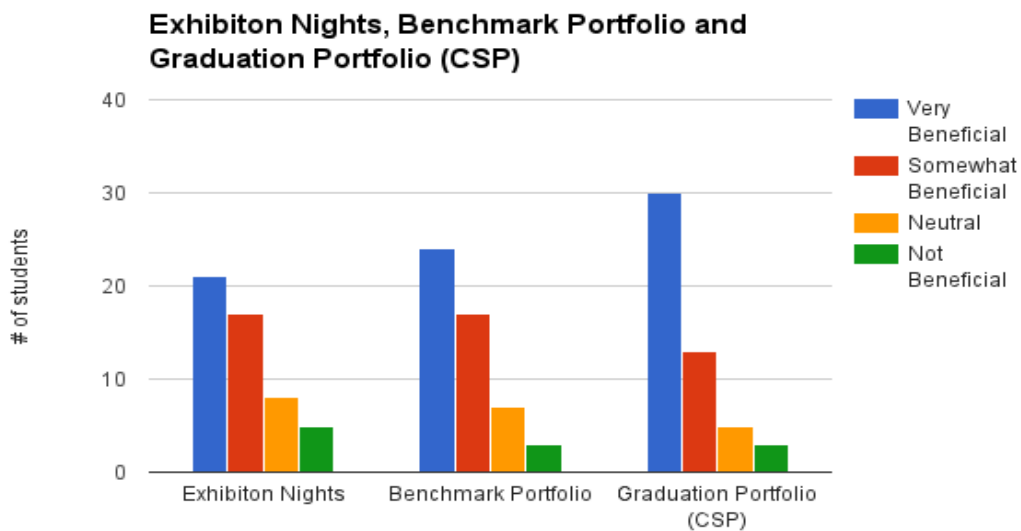


***Programs***

When students were asked what was the most useful tool, resource, or skill they gained during their time at an Envision school, almost all of them reported that the public speaking skills they gained were extremely useful in college. Leslie Moreno, Impact Academy class of 2014, says “public speaking helped a lot with going into college and being able to present anything [she] was asked to. [She] didn't realize how hard it was for some of [her] peers to actually present in front of a class because they didn't get the coaching [she] got.” Joel Key shared, “one of the big things that I hear students say feels really different from other places are the amount that they have to present, the amount that you have to work in groups, the benchmark and grad portfolio”. Aside from listing ‘public speaking’ as the most useful skill they gained through Envision, most students found Exhibition Nights,

Benchmark Portfolio, and Graduation Portfolio very beneficial (see Figure 8). Exhibition nights are a time for students to showcase their work to parents and the community. Benchmark Portfolio and Graduation Portfolio are similar; both are a time in which a student defends why they are ready to move up to the upper division or graduate using their schoolwork and self-reflection as evidence.

**Figure 8:**



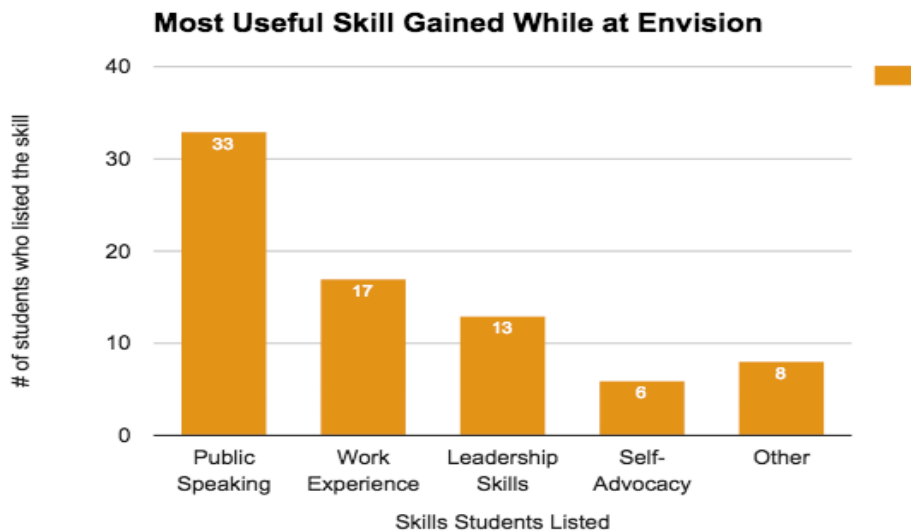
During the interviews, every Envision staff listed CSP and Benchmark Portfolio as what sets them apart from traditional public high schools and even other charter schools. Gia Truong, Chief Executive Officer for Envision Education, says Graduation Portfolio (CSP) is “saying to students that we really want you to have proficient work, even if it takes you many many revisions and that we really want you to defend, not just to the panel, but to yourself that you are ready and you belong in college”.

When asked what the best programs or resources Envision Education offers in terms of preparing students to succeed in college Kirsten Grimm, director of growth of Envision Education, said:

I feel like I had a lot of seniors who had experienced all nighters, who had already broke down crying feeling like they were a failure and had to figure out what to do when you fail and I think that that's really important, especially for students who will be first in their families to graduate from college because sometimes you can go to college and the first time you fail a test, maybe you were partying, maybe you didn't plan your time, whatever, sometimes if you don't look like the other students or you don't feel other ways that you fit in you think it's because you don't belong because you're not smart enough... so I think that it's really important that at Envision you experience that and there's a safety net right here that tells you well ok, you've already failed and realized it's ok and it wasn't because you're not smart, it just means that you need to work on this aspect or that aspect. I feel like Envision helps build the persistence and resilience

As seen in Figure 9, self-advocacy was listed several times and almost all of the students that listed it mentioned that they learned how to ask for help when they were failing, and they could seek resources and advocate for themselves when things got rough. Bob Lenz, Co-Founder of Envision Education, believes that in regards to presentations, "Knowing that you're going to have to revise towards getting things done and that set backs aren't the end, and failure is just an opportunity to learn" is engrained and critical in what Envision does to prepare students for college. Ashley Williams, Envision Class of 2012, said Envision "really taught [her] to be persistent and that [she] couldn't leave things/projects/jobs unfinished. [She] learned this through the many times [she] had to redo [her] GP and Benchmark." In regards to student's success, 67% of those who listed public speaking fall into the 'Thriving' category and 33% fall into the 'Surviving' category.

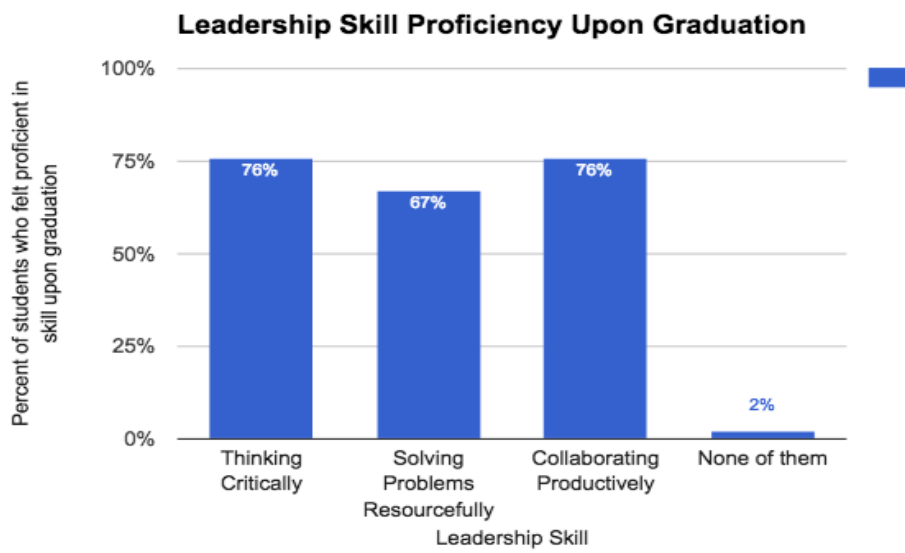
**Figure 9:**



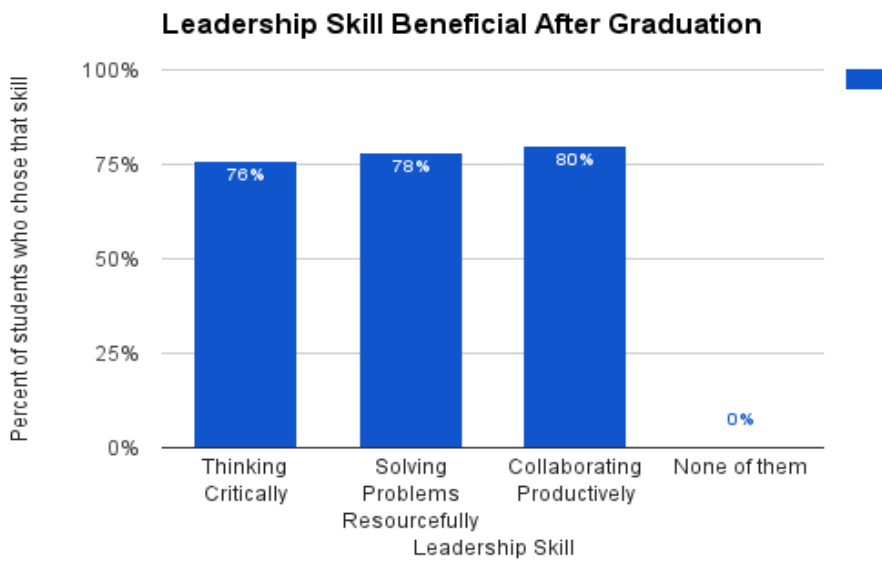
The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership Skills include Thinking Critically, Solving Problems, and Collaborating Effectively. They are repeatedly emphasized and referenced throughout high school while doing projects and reflecting on ones growth. Brianna Winn, Principal of City Arts in Tech, describes the leadership skills as “making it clear to students that success in college and life is not just based on your content knowledge, it’s based on these other habits of learning or leadership skills that you’ll need in a job or an internship or wherever you find yourself”. Students were asked to rate how they perceived their level of proficiency in each of the leadership skills upon graduation as well as how beneficial the skill was after graduation. The results are shown in Figure 10 and 11.



**Figure 10:**



**Figure 11:**



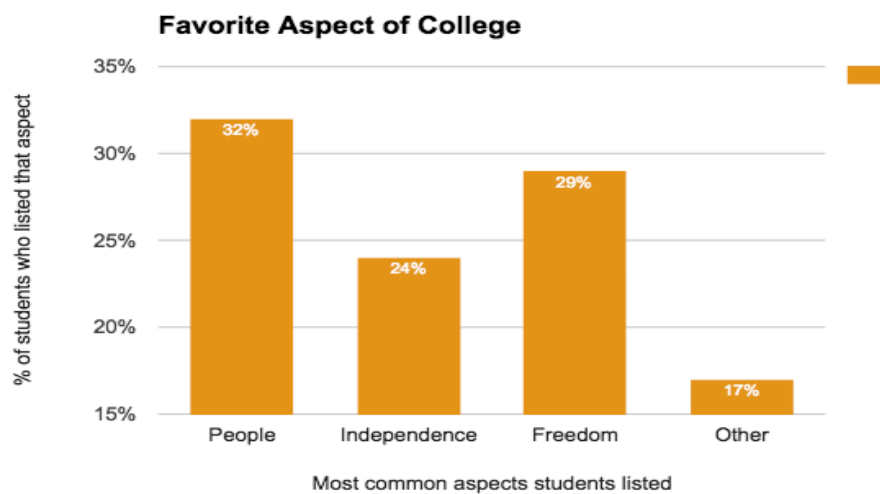
## ***Student Engagement***

When speaking about student engagement on campus I am referring to both relationships formed as well as involvement on campus. In order for a student to be considered 'engaged' on his/her campus they must be investing their time in more than just attending class. Sixty-six percent of the respondents said they have kept in contact with a teacher or staff member from their high school. While this is not a relationship on their college campus several students mentioned finding support in their high school community when they experienced difficulties in college. Joel Key, Vice-Principal of Impact Academy notes, "Advisory plays a big role in students coming to form connections to a group of other kids who may not necessarily be their friends but who they realize they can learn from. And that that, getting connected into the community, are then skills they can replicate when they get into college". None of the respondents credit advisory specifically but a student, Impact Academy Class of 2012, notes that her favorite thing about college is that "the professors are like her high school teachers, they are open to meet with their students anytime and are willing to help their students out; that made [her] feel comfortable enough to try to get to know them outside the classroom". This is one case in which a student was looking to replicate the community, with her teachers, she found in high school.

Although 71% of students who attended/are attending college report they have attended a professor's office hours, only 37% reported campus involvement through a club or organization. 61% of those students are working while attending school so time conflicts could be a potential justification for lack of involvement. Of

those working, 75% of them are working more than 15 hours a week. I am unsure what the policy is at other campuses but at Oxy, students are not allowed to work more than 15 hours a week. This is because the faculty believes a student's focus should be on their studies and other involvements and that working more than 15 hours a week will begin to interfere with that. Only 13 students reported both a college GPA and the numbers of hours they are working. Of those, 46% fall into the 'Thriving' category, 46% fall into the 'Surviving' category, and 8% into the 'Unsuccessful' category. Since there are an equal amount of 'Thriving' and 'Surviving' students working over 15 hours a week, a connection cannot be made between student success and number of hours worked. It is more than likely that time management, workload, and other factors have a greater influence. Interestingly enough, as seen in Figure 12, when students were asked to list their favorite aspect of college, 'People' was listed most frequently.

**Figure 12:**



Another possible explanation for the lack of campus involvement is the type of college/university students are attending. My data revealed that 27% of students are attending a community college and 61% are attending a public college/university. Students who attend community college are probably less likely to get involved on campus because campus culture is focused more on going to class and meeting your requirements in order to transfer out instead of fostering a community. National Student Clearinghouse does not gather data on community colleges but they do collect data on 2-year universities, which is the closest option. On average, 28% of students that graduated from an Envision school enroll in a 2-year college after graduation. More students enroll in 4-year institutions than 2-year which is good because there is a higher likelihood of college persistence.

I decided not to analyze the data specifically looking at race because almost all the survey respondents fall into some underserved population, if not race then socio-economic status or gender. Envision aims to serve underserved populations and they are; therefore the findings can be considered already generalizable to minority populations.

### **Data Limitations**

The main limitation to this study is concerning the survey respondents. While I was able to get responses from all three high schools, my data would be much stronger had I gotten more of a variety instead of predominantly from Impact Academy. This was mainly due to lack of contact information for students from other schools. Additionally, it was difficult to get responses from students that

dropped out of college or did not go to college. In part because I realized I am not in contact with many students who that is true for and also because many of them have disconnected from social media, specifically Facebook. Another limitation to this study is the absence of student interviews. Due to time constraints I was unable to have one-on-one interviews with respondents and this resulted in a less thorough understanding of a students experience once in college. For example, when I ask how prepared did you feel for college a students definition of preparedness may vary but I would only know for certain had I interviewed and probed them further.

### **Key Findings**

National Student Clearinghouse reported Envision Education had an average of 81% of their students enrolled in college within the first year after graduating high school (from 2008-2014) and 85% within the first two years. These are great results compared to the National Average of 60% of high school graduates attending college. Once in college, a little over half are 'thriving' but 23% are on the verge of failing, meaning they have below a 2.0 and are not on track to graduate. This is concerning because Graduate Schools, internships, and opportunities on campus such as study abroad all have GPA minimums above a 2.0. Also extending the number of years a student has to be in school adds financial burden.

Envision Educations mission is to prepare students, especially first-generation students, for success in college, in careers, and in life. Eighty two percent of first generation students felt prepared for college and almost 60% are 'thriving'. Overall, Envision Education is accomplishing their mission statement; they are

doing a good job of getting students enrolled and succeeding in college. But like with most things, there is room for improvement. After much thought I have come up with a few suggestions.

## **Recommendations**

### *Establish an Alumni Directory*

A simple and hopefully easy recommendation would be to create a student directory for graduates. Sixty-seven percent of students said they kept in contact with either a teacher or staff member from high school, which speaks to the connections and relationships they form throughout their time in high school. I believe that these relationships and connection to the school will result in a high student willingness to provide contact information. Since each student loses their school email after graduating they should provide a non-Envision email and a phone number they can be reached at. The easiest way to store this information would be on an Excel sheet so that one could search for students based on school, year, or first and last name. In order to attain this information a short Google survey/form can be created and sent out during advisory period in the last month of school. A directory would allow Envision schools to reach out for future alumni events as well as serve as a means of connecting current, future, and past Envision students.

### *Advisory*

During the interview process I noticed that most administrators agreed on the purpose for the various programs Envision Education has, such as Exhibition, Benchmark Portfolio, WLE, and Graduation Portfolio (CSP). There was, however,

some inconsistency as to the purpose for advisory. Some of the purposes mentioned were: to connect students and teachers, to help students navigate the college application process, and to build community with other students that may be different than them. While it is possible for Advisory to be a place for all of these things to happen, it is important for each school to determine what it's greatest need is and modify the Advisory program to meet that need. I believe that it is crucial for Envision to be in agreement on all the other programs but that just as Gia Truong, the Chief Executive Officer for Envision Education, said, Advisory is a little different in each school because "it's a reaction to the context of the school". It is possible that in trying to keep the curriculum of Advisory the same throughout all three schools it is making the program as a whole weaker. This may suggest completely restructuring Advisory.

#### *Lower Division to Upper Division Transition*

All administration agreed that the purpose of Benchmark Portfolio is to allow students to practice and get a taste of Graduation Portfolio (CSP) and to clearly differentiate between upper and lower division. It is important to ensure that the transition from 9/10<sup>th</sup> to 11/12<sup>th</sup> grade is manageable but also noticeable, making a conscious effort to eliminate any scaffolds such as outlines and roadmaps in order to push students towards independence as they discover their individual work ethic. The data demonstrate that students are graduating with important life skills but these should be balanced out with academic skills. Twenty-four percent of students reported that on average they spend more time on schoolwork than their peers. In

order for this to occur there must be a commitment and accountability among all classes and departments to work towards this goal. While the 11<sup>th</sup> grade year may be difficult as some students are adjusting and some may not be academically prepared for the change I would encourage a common goal of getting to complete academic independence by the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### *Other*

A smaller scale recommendation is to consider encouraging students to apply to private colleges and universities. While they are more expensive they usually tend to offer more financial aid and have higher 4-year graduation rates. All respondents who attended a private college or university fell into the 'Thriving' category and were on track to graduate. Oftentimes students rule out this option completely and it could be beneficial for the college counselors to present students with private schools that are a match during their one on one meetings.

My last recommendation is to increase student involvement in the Benchmark and Graduation Portfolio process. I preface this by saying that I am not fully aware of all the work that is required to successfully plan these events but a common feeling among administration is that teachers at Envision are stretched thin and hiring someone to solely focus on these programs is financially unfeasible. I remember when I was in high school I loved when a teacher would ask for my help, it made me feel trusted and as though I was doing important work. Delegating some of the tasks such as keeping track of student's proficient pieces, setting and enforcing deadlines, and even deciding which pieces should qualify as a



Benchmark/CSP artifact could give students the opportunity to step up and take ownership of this process. There could be a student per advisory or a set of students for the entire class; whichever is more beneficial and reasonable. Setting up a committee of students that would be capable of taking on these responsibilities would take some work off of teachers as well as make the overall process more student led.

## **Conclusion**

I began this research in hope to gain a better understanding of how students were doing once out of Envision Education. There is no doubt that Envision as a whole is committed to supporting their students and working towards preparing them for success in college but once students graduate, what happens after that is out of their control. I hope that the data collected helps shed some light on student performance. Ultimately success in college and life is not based solely on content knowledge and academic performance. It all boils down to how you choose to define success. Many students that may not be considered 'successful' academically are having a great experience in college and even though they may not be on track to graduate they are enjoying and making the most of their time in school.

In regard to further research, it would be useful and informative to follow up with students through either a focus group or one on one interview in order to get a fuller understanding of their experience in college and beyond. Also, doing an in-depth analysis of the curriculum to assess in which ways students can be further challenged and also how to best get students on the same academic level. I wish

there were a clear cut solution but the reality is that four years isn't very long and it is difficult to make up years of falling behind in such a short amount of time. There will always be areas of improvement and work to be done; the crucial factor is to continuously work towards improving and strengthening the programs already set in place.

Overall, this journey has been enjoyable and highly rewarding. The conversations I have had with peers and with administration have made me hopeful for the future of Envision Education. The dedication and commitment to students is evident throughout all departments. I am grateful for the consistent support and encouragement from Envision staff, I appreciate their honesty and willingness to work with me throughout this project. My wish is that this research would serve a greater purpose than entertainment and be used to improve the current programs and curriculum in place.

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## Appendix

### Research Participants

#### Administration Interviews:

1. Gia Truong
2. Bob Lenz
3. Brianna Winn
4. Joel Key
5. Kirsten Grimm
6. Laura Robell

### *Interview Script*

Hi my name is Rebeca Lopez and I am conducting a research study for my senior comprehensive project at Occidental College in Los Angeles. I am researching the experiences Impact Academy graduates have had after high school, either in college or in a profession. I am specifically looking at how prepared students felt upon graduation to continue in whatever they chose to do and if they chose to go to college, how successful they were in college. During this interview I will ask you questions regarding your experience upon graduating high school; the interview should last about one hour. If at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable or would like to stop please let me know and we can end early. You also have the right to refuse to answer any of the questions as we go along. Your name may be used in the reported data unless you specify on the consent form that you would not like to use your real name in the published work. I will record the interview for note taking purposes unless you specify on the consent form otherwise. Before we begin, do you have any questions you would like me to answer?

### *Questions for College Students:*

1. Begin by telling me about your first year in college, some of the highlights and challenges both academic and non-academic.
2. Do/did you feel like you could find support with Impact faculty if you needed it?
3. Did you find Benchmark Portfolio beneficial? Explain.
4. Did you find exhibition nights beneficial? Explain.
5. Did you find graduation portfolio beneficial? Explain.
6. Did you find the Work Learning Experience (WLE) beneficial? Explain.
7. Did you find advisory beneficial? Explain.
8. Tell me about a time you felt proud of your work.
9. What kind of learner are you? What methods and strategies are most effective in helping you learn?
10. What has been the most difficult aspect of college?

11. What is your favorite thing about college?
12. What is/was your involvement on campus? How did that come about?
13. Tell me about a time you used a skill you gained while at Impact.
14. Do you feel Impact prepared you for college? Why or why not?
15. If you had to do high school over again would you chose to attend Impact again? Why or why not?

*Questions for Non-College Students:*

1. Tell me about some of the highlights and challenges you faced during that first year.
2. Do/did you feel like you could find support with Impact faculty if you needed it?
3. Did you find Benchmark Portfolio beneficial? Explain.
4. Did you find exhibition nights beneficial? Explain.
5. Did you find graduation portfolio beneficial? Explain.
6. Did you find the Work Learning Experience (WLE) beneficial? Explain.
7. Did you find advisory beneficial? Explain.
8. Tell me about a time you felt proud of something you accomplished.
9. What kind of learner are you? What methods and strategies are most effective in helping you learn?
10. What has been the most difficult aspect of life after high school?
11. Tell me about a time you used a skill you gained while at Impact.
12. If you had to do high school over again would you chose to attend Impact again? Why or why not?

*Questions for Envision Staff:*

1. Begin by telling me about your role and responsibilities at Envision Education.
2. In what ways do you personally interact with students?
3. What sets Envision apart from public and even other charter schools?
4. What are the best programs/resources Envision Education offers in terms of preparing students to succeed in college?
5. In your own words, what is the purpose of Benchmark Portfolio?
6. In your own words, what is the purpose of exhibition nights?
7. What is the purpose of graduation portfolio?
8. What is the purpose of the Work Learning Experience (WLE)?
9. What is the purpose of advisory?
10. What is the purpose of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning skills?
11. In your opinion are these programs as beneficial and effective as they could be?
12. What is one of Envision Education's greatest accomplishments in terms of student support?

13. What has been one of Envisions greatest challenges in terms of student support?
14. What is your favorite thing about working for Envision/in your position?

### **Informed Consent Form**

#### Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Saida Lopez, a student from the Urban and Environmental Policy Department at Occidental College in Los Angeles, CA. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Please read this form and agree to the terms before continuing. This research will be used for my senior comprehensive project. The purpose of this study is to examine whether Envision Education prepared their students to not only enter but also succeed in college. I will also look at what actions Envision Education is taking to fulfill their mission statement of “transform[ing] the lives of students-especially those who will be the first in their family to attend college- by preparing them for success in college, in careers, and in life.” The results of this study will be part of a final research report and presentation in May. You will have access to both the final report and presentation. The results will be published on the Urban and Environmental Policy website and may be combined with other data at a later date.

#### Procedures

If you volunteer to be in this study you are agreeing to participate in a survey, which should only take 10-15 minutes. If you answer that you would be willing to participate in a follow up interview or focus group then I may be in contact with you in the near future.

#### Risks&Benefits

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts posed by your participation in this study other than those encountered in daily life. You will not directly benefit from your participation in the research; however, by participating in this study you will help the researcher better understand Envision Education graduates experience after high school.

#### Confidentiality

Your name may be used in the reported data. If you wish to remain confidential please specify that at the end of this form. Only Saida Lopez and Virginia Parks will have access to the data and it will be kept password protected while working with it on the computer. Once the research project is over the data will be erased from the computer and given to the faculty supervisor on an external drive. Data derived from participation in this study may be held for future use, and may be stored and re-analyzed, or otherwise combined with other data at a later date.

## Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer and may stop participating at any time. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you.

### Questions about the Research

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can contact Saida Lopez at [saidalopez@oxy.edu](mailto:saidalopez@oxy.edu) or Professor Virginia Parks at [vparks@oxy.edu](mailto:vparks@oxy.edu).

### Questions about your Rights as Research Participants

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board/Human Subjects Research Review Committee (IRB/HSRRC) Office at Occidental College in Los Angeles, CA, 90041 at (323) 259-2921 or [hsrrc@oxy.edu](mailto:hsrrc@oxy.edu).

Please read the confidentiality section before checking this box

I do not agree to have my real name used in the final published work

I am at least eighteen years of age. I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this research project and the possible risks as outlined above. I understand that I may withdraw my participation on this project at any time without prejudice or penalty of any kind. I hereby agree to participate in this research project.

Yes

No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

First and Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender

Male

Female

Other

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your race?

White/Caucasian (1)

African American (2)

Hispanic (3)

Asian (4)

Native American (5)

Pacific Islander (6)

Other (7)



Did you attend the same high school all 4 years? If not, what year did you transfer into an Envision Education high school?

- Yes
- No \_\_\_\_\_

What year did you graduate from Envision/Impact? (If you did not graduate from either of these schools leave this question blank).

What was your GPA when you graduated high school?

Which of the 21st Century Skills do you feel you were proficient in upon graduation? Check all that apply.

- Thinking Critically
- Solving Problems Resourcefully
- Collaborating Productively
- None of the them

Which of the 21st Century Skills were beneficial for life after graduation? Check all that apply.

- Thinking Critically
- Solving Problems Resourcefully
- Collaborating Productively
- None of them

How beneficial did you find:

	Very Beneficial (1)	Somewhat Beneficial (2)	Neutral (3)	Not Beneficial (4)	N/A (5)
Exhibition Nights (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Benchmark Portfolio (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work Learning Experience (WLE) (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advisory (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduation Portfolio (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Did you feel school projects were relevant and applicable to the real world?

- Yes
- No

What was the most useful tool/resource/skill you gained during your time at Impact/Envision? (ex.public speaking, resume building, internship experience, etc):

\_\_\_\_\_

What are you most grateful for, if anything, during your time at Impact/Envision?:

\_\_\_\_\_

What did you do after graduation?

- Work
- Go to college
- Take time off and then go to college
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently in college or did you already graduate?

- Currently Enrolled
- Graduated (Year) \_\_\_\_\_
- Attended college but decided not to continue

If Attended college but decide... Is Selected, Then Skip To Why did you decide not to continue?(T...If Currently Enrolled Is Selected, Then Skip To Year in College If Graduated (Year) Is Not Empty, Then Skip To Have you kept in contact with any of ...If Graduated (Year) Is Selected, Then Skip To Have you kept in contact with any of ...

Why did you decide not to continue?(The questions after this will be in regards to the time you spent in college)

If Why did you decide not to c... Is Displayed, Then Skip To Have you kept in contact with any of ...

Year in College

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Have you kept in contact with any of the teachers or staff you had in high school?

- Yes
- No

What type of college or university do/did you attend?

- Community
- Private
- Public
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Are you working? If so how many hours a week?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No

List the clubs and organizations, if any, you are involved with.

What is your GPA?

Are you on track to graduate?

- Yes
- No

Have you attended a Professor's office hours?

- Yes
- No

Answer If Have you attended a Professor's office hours? Yes Is Selected

How often do you attend Office Hours?

- Never
- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

Answer If Have you attended a Professor's office hours? Yes Is Selected

What did you go to office hours for?

- Class related questions
- Academic Advice
- Career Advice
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Did you have to take any remedial classes your first year in college?

- Yes
- No

Did you participate in a summer bridge program before starting college? (summer bridge programs are designed to provide incoming students with the academic skills necessary to be successful in their college experience)

- Yes
- No

In comparison to your peers how much time did you spend on homework your first year in college?

- More than my peers
- About the same
- Less than my peers

What has been the most difficult aspect of college?

What is your favorite thing about college?

How much family support did you have when deciding to attend college? (support here refers to your decision to attend not financial support)

- Very Supported
- Somewhat Supported
- Neutral
- Somewhat Unsupported
- Very Unsupported

How prepared did you feel for college?

- Very Prepared
- Slightly Prepared
- Neutral
- Slightly Unprepared
- Very Unprepared

Are you a first generation college student? (You are a first gen student if your parent(s)/legal guardian(s) have not completed a bachelor's degree)

- Yes
- No

Would you be willing to participate in a focus group or a one-on-one interview?

- Yes
- No

Answer If 'Would you be willing to participate in a focus group or a one-on-one interview?' Yes Is Selected

What is the best way to contact you?

- Email \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- Facebook
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

What did you do after high school graduation?

Are you working? If so how many hours a week?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Have you kept in contact with any of ...

Where are you working and what is your position?

Have you kept in contact with any of the teachers or staff you had in high school?

- Yes
- No

Are you involved in any community groups or organizations? (ex: church, sports, etc) If yes, please specify.

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No

Why did you decide not to go to college? Check all that apply.

- Money
- Did not get accepted
- Did not get accepted where I wanted to go
- Personal Reasons
- Wanted to take time off
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

What has been your favorite thing about life after high school?

What has been the most difficult thing about life after high school?

What was the most useful tool/resource/skill you gained during your time at Impact/Envision?

How prepared did you feel to for whatever you chose to do after high school?  
(Ex.Work)

- Very Prepared
- Slightly Prepared
- Neutral
- Slightly Unprepared
- Very Unprepared

Are you a first generation college student? (You are a first gen student if your parent(s)/legal guardian(s) have not completed a bachelor's degree)

- Yes
- No

Would you be willing to participate in a focus group or a one-on-one interview?

- Yes
- No

What is the best way to contact you?

- Email \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- Facebook
- Other \_\_\_\_\_