

How We Use Data



Bridge to Success uses data to inform changes in policy and practice. Grounding the work in data has enabled both San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and City College of San Francisco to implement pilot programs that have led to policy changes. By sharing data across institutions and evaluating pilot effects to alter policy and practice, Bridge to Success leaders have been able to make changes that are supported by data. This brief highlights several ways data has served as an impetus for action for Bridge to Success.

SHIFTING THE DIALOGUE

Prior to Bridge to Success, SFUSD and City College was limited to the data each individually collect. Bridge to Success partnered with Youth Data Archive (YDA) of the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities at Stanford University (Gardner Center) to serve as data experts. The archive was able to analyze and share data around the specific goal of college readiness allowing each institution to recognize the unique challenges both faced. Conversations about data built trust and shifted the dialogue from staff and leaders considering students either “SFUSD” students or “CCSF” students, to a unified “our” students. This shift and subsequent analyses brought attention to a number of issues that were previously unrecognized, and would likely have remained unrecognized had the institutions continued to work in silos.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

Using data created opportunities for partners to engage in regular discussions about the results and what they meant for practice. Before Bridge to Success, City College annually produced a High School Report that looked at the performance of students who self-identified as coming from SFUSD. The report was difficult for SFUSD staff to digest and sometimes ignored because they had no forum to come together to react to the data, discuss the findings, or ask City College more probing questions to build a shared understanding of the issues.

Because Bridge to Success keeps data at the center, there are many forums to come together and review analyses and request deeper or different further analyses. Each action team focused on different aspects of the educational system: counseling, teaching, community-based organization partners, and workforce/pathways. These spaces made it clear that the responsibility for change was not held by any one institution or program but shared by the collective group. Having forums for discussing research findings gave partners an opportunity to create a unified set of recommendations that captured a multitude of perspectives. These collective recommendations were more effective than a single individual or group.

How We Use Data (continued)

ALTERNATIVES TO PLACEMENT TESTS

For many years, as many as 93% of the approximate 1,000 SFUSD graduates attending City College each year were required to take remedial math or English courses based on their performance on City College's placement tests. In 2010 and 2011, Bridge to Success created a forum for conversation among English and math faculty at SFUSD and City College. These cross-institutional teams worked with Gardner Center to examine SFUSD students' course completion, grade point average, and school attendance, and other factors and which City College courses they placed into after taking City College's math and English placement tests. The analyses found that high school performance was a stronger predictor of success in City College math and English courses than the placement test.

These analyses led City College to approve a pilot to change the placement policy in math. In fall 2012, more than 250 SFUSD students participated in the alternative placement pilot for math. This allowed students to advance by one course if they tested into a math course that was below college level if they met 2 of 3 approved criteria. Bridge to Success plans to evaluate the success of the pilot and to support City College in implementing a similar pilot effort for English course placement in spring 2013 for students admitted fall 2013.

FRISCO DAY

Data from SFUSD's senior survey indicated that 80% of 12th graders reported in May of their senior year that they intended to go to college, yet in reality only 70% of them enrolled in college the following fall. This data meant that nearly 400 students did not follow through with their plan.

Research indicates that campus visits, connections to other incoming students, and knowing how to navigate college systems increase the likelihood students will enroll and succeed in college. Bridge to Success created a new citywide transition event for all SFUSD seniors called "FRISCO

Day" (named by students to signify FRIday Successful College Opportunities) to better prepare students to transition to college and help those seniors without a college plan explore their post-secondary options at City College. The day provides students with an opportunity to visit a college campus, meet peers going to the same college, and learn skills necessary to be successful as they start college.

Survey data shows promising results for FRISCO Day's effectiveness in providing students with new knowledge and confidence to attend college. Pre- and post- survey results from students who attended FRISCO Day in 2011 and 2012 showed that the percentage who reported that they had a lot of knowledge about financial aid rose from 15% to 36%. Students who reported having a lot of knowledge about how to register for classes at City College rose from 12% to 41%, and those who reported having a lot of confidence in succeeding in college rose from 24% to 54%.

CITY COLLEGE EARLY REGISTRATION

For years, 70% of new students dropped out of City College, in part because they were frustrated by the lack of basic math and English classes available to them. Under old registration policies, new students were the very last group to register for classes.

In 2010, through Bridge to Success, City College debuted an early registration policy as a pilot program for SFUSD students. The pilot was successful, with 98% of the 323 incoming SFUSD graduates who took advantage of early registration returning for their second semester. In 2011, City College began offering early registration to incoming SFUSD graduates who had completed all steps of its matriculation process, including counseling, placement testing, and an orientation. In 2011, 871 incoming SFUSD graduates were eligible for early registration. By 2012, all 1,021 incoming SFUSD students were given early registration dates, which allowed access math and English courses.

Bridge to Success is a partnership between the City and County of San Francisco, City College of San Francisco, San Francisco State University and the San Francisco Unified School District to double the number of youth, particularly African American and Latino youth, who achieve college credentials. This effort, invests in changing policies, practices, and partnerships to ensure that more San Francisco youth earn college degree or credential.

For more information, visit www.sfbridgetosuccess.org