

Mapping College/Career Prep Inequality Across LA

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Background

The support provided to students in their primary and secondary education can have a massive impact on the next stages of their life. Whether they're pursuing higher education, or are looking to jump directly into a career, preparation and counseling can give them valuable information on how they can achieve their goals. However, the quality and accessibility of these resources can vary greatly from institution to institution, often depending on the socio-economic status of the area. This can give more privileged individuals a massive head start coming out of high school, and further exacerbates the inequality between these neighborhoods.

Since the LA area is so diverse socio-economically, LA schools see both extremes of this inequality. Private schools like Harvard-Westlake have a near-infinite number of resources, like SAT/ACT prep, specialized curriculums, and college counseling. Meanwhile, plenty of public schools lack any form of support structure for their students, making it hard for them to be aware of their options following high school. Something as simple as SAT prep has been found to have a significant effect on SAT scores according to CollegeBoard, so this difference is significant.

Objectives

With this project, we plan to map out locations of public and private high schools in the Los Angeles area, paying special attention to the disparity in access to college and career preparation resources in lower-income neighborhoods. We hope to incorporate multiple, configurable layers in our map that allow the user to visualize which schools offer services, such as free SAT preparation and counseling for non-college programs. We anticipate our project to both highlight differences within public schools depending on neighborhood and differences between public and

private high schools. Student input will allow us to understand not only the programs offered at a given school, but also the quality.

Community methods

Our project hopes to bring further awareness to the positive correlation between higher income neighborhoods and access to quality career and college preparation resources. Through enumerating specific programs that schools lack, our project will provide actionable commentary on where future funding may be best allocated. Additionally, through our map, we will also be able to bring attention to local non-profit organizations and student groups, such as ACM's TeachLA. We anticipate that this feedback will spark increased advocacy for these schools to have more equitable opportunities of career and college planning.

User Stories

- "As a first generation college student, I didn't grow up knowing what college was and it was never something I envisioned in my future. I went to a large poorly funded public high school, so just passing my classes and staying out of trouble was an accomplishment on its own. After graduating high school, I was lost and didn't know what to do next. I started working as a barista at Starbucks and this is where I have been for the last 10 years. However, I just started taking night classes while working full-time during the day. I am excited to be learning how to become an accountant and only wish I did so 10 years earlier."
- "Ever since middle school I have worked towards getting into a good college. I started SAT and ACT prep at the high school the summer after 8th grade and only took AP's during high school. I was the president of many clubs and volunteered every other day at the local animal shelter. I didn't do these things because I was interested in them, but because they would look good on my college application, as advised by my high school counselor. And it worked. I got into every school I applied to including all the Ivy's, MIT, and CalTech. Due to the number of AP classes I have taken, I am able to skip all of my lower division math and physics classes. I am going to be interning for Google this coming summer and can't wait for all the free food."

Potential Survey Questions

1. How large was your high school?
2. Did you go to a public or private high school?
3. Did your high school have a career/counselor?
4. When did you first learn about the college application process?
5. What college preparatory opportunities did your high school offer (circle all that apply)
 - a. SAT/ACT prep
 - b. AP /Dual Enrollment/IB classes
 - c. Essay Reviewing
 - d. Talks from College administrators
6. Did your school ever have career related events? (Ex: Career Day)
7. Do you feel like your high school education prepared you for the steps after high school graduation? Why or why not?

Long-term impact

The core of the problem this project looks to solve is the information disparity created by the presence of preparatory resources in some schools, but not in others. This project will attempt to make this information public, hopefully beginning to bridge the gap between these communities.

Education inequality is a massive issue that makes upward mobility challenging. By attacking this issue and making this information public, this project can play a role in improving the circumstances of families affected by this issue, giving future generations the agency to improve their lives.

The project can be built off of to determine which of these resources are most important to offer students. Some communities will inevitably have a much harder time offering these to students, so it's important that the most important programs are developed first. By comparing the data we hope to collect with the outcomes of students in our area of interest, it may be possible to generate valid data concerning this issue.

Works Cited

- <https://www.hw.com/academics/>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/05/09/can-coaching-truly-boost-sat-scores-for-years-the-college-board-said-no-now-it-says-yes/>

[Datasetsearch.research.google.com](https://datasetsearch.research.google.com)

- General resource

https://hub.arcgis.com/datasets/3f58739a6e03438a9638652362dfe35a_0/explore?showTable=true - education levels for adults 25+ in LA

<https://geohub.lacity.org/datasets/lahub::los-angeles-private-schools/explore?showTable=true>

- Private school locations in LA (supposedly from the state should verify)

<https://data.lacounty.gov/datasets/lacounty::public-elementary-schools/explore?location=33.800844%2C-118.295000%2C8.00> - public elementary schools in LA

<https://caaspp-elpac.ets.org/>

- State test scores

<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/Geographic/DistrictBoundaries>

- Data like school district boundaries