



Bay Area Education System

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INTRODUCTION

Research Question:

What can we do in the Bay Area to make it so students from all schools have equal opportunities for future success?

Summary

Many students, even in the Bay Area, are struggling with school because they are not being given a proper education. The most important element to success is that a student is confident in his or her abilities so that they can form aspirations for the future. It is also vital that students are in an environment where they can have that confidence in their academics. I have studied students in both Palo Alto (PA) and East Palo Alto (EPA) to better understand their confidence regarding the gateway for success they are being given.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

There have been surprisingly few local research efforts to find solutions to this problem. However, much research has been conducted that shows low confidence and achievement levels in students from EPA. Innovate Today reported in 2015 that over 80% of students in the local high schools were underperforming in English and math, between 12 and 17 percent meeting the bar for both subjects in the Ravenswood school district. By comparison, 54% of students in San Mateo County are proficient in both English and math (2).



Research from Peninsula Press shows that parents are beginning to seek other alternatives after poor test results from Ravenswood. Notable complaints site lack of resources (including computers and textbooks) as the cause of underperformance (1).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The Schools



Jordan Middle School
(Palo Alto, CA)



East Side Prep
(East Palo Alto, CA)

The Plan

- Sent surveys to one 8th grade history class at each middle school
- Combined 72 student participants completed the surveys
- Responses were documented on Google Forms
- Teachers Mark Allendorf (Jordan) and Jasmine Kelly-Pierce (Eastside) had their students respond to the surveys

Survey Sample:

Education Survey

Please answer each question truthfully and to the best of your ability.

What do you like about your school and why? What do you wish you could change about it?

Long answer text

What is your favorite subject at school?

Short answer text

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you like and feel that you are good at English?

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you like and feel that you are good at math?

1 2 3 4 5

What would you like to do after high school? Do you plan on going to college first?

Long answer text

What would you like to be when you grow up? It's fine if you have no idea, just put that down.

Long answer text

In general, do you like school? Would you say that it's important to you?

Long answer text

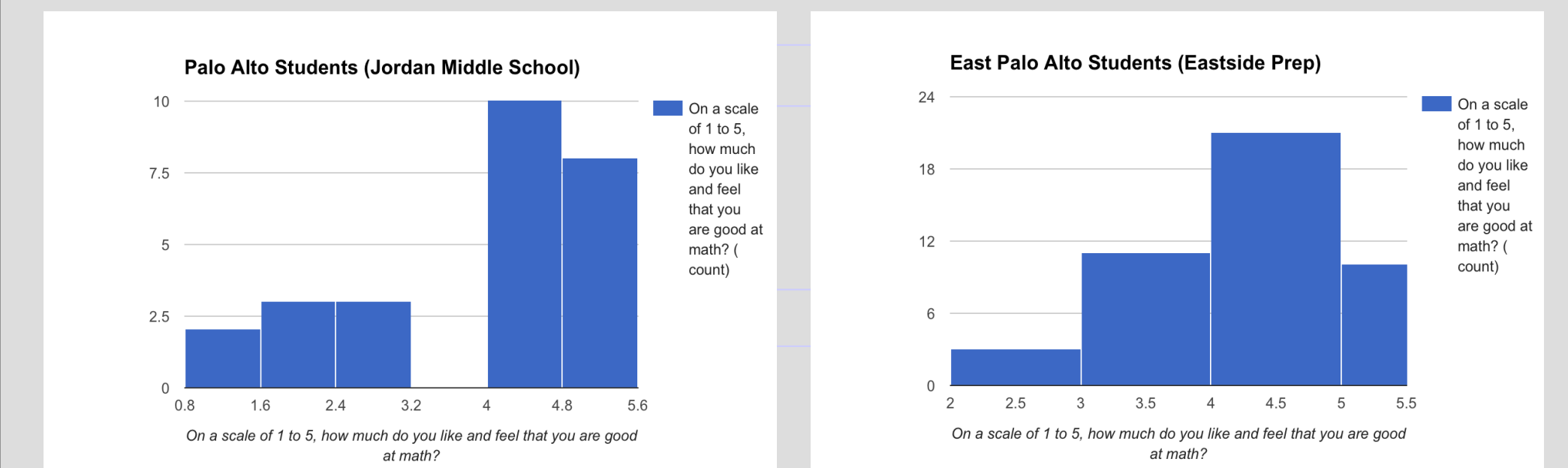
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / REFERENCES

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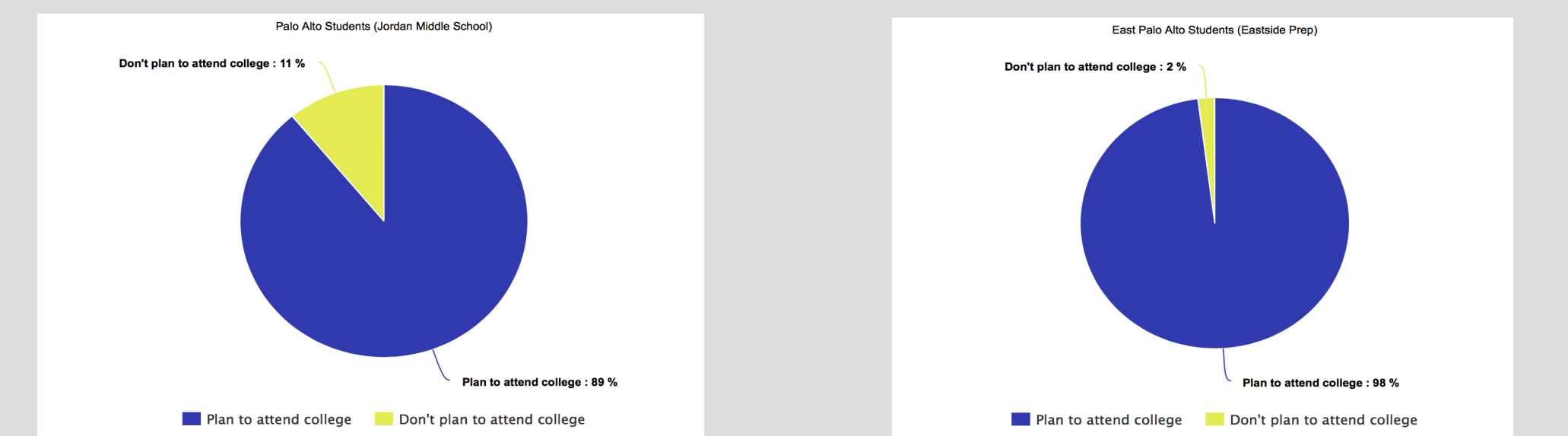
Works Cited:

1. Landgraf, Kaitlyn. "East Palo Alto Parents Seek School Alternatives after Poor Test Results." Peninsula Press. N.p., 04 Dec. 2015. Web. 13 Sept. 2016.
2. "Over 80% of East Palo Alto Students Aren't On Track in English and Math." Innovate Public Schools. N.p., 15 Jan. 2016. Web. 13 Sept. 2016.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS



It's interesting that the data did not necessarily produce results that many would expect. Confidence and commitment to education was ranked very close between students from both EPA and PA, in some cases even higher in the latter. This could be interpreted as a response to Eastside students attending a private school in EPA: they know that they are given a higher education for their area and thus are more committed to academics and their futures.



- ❖ It is important to note that Eastside Prep students are automatically given a gateway to a four-year college after they graduate from high school

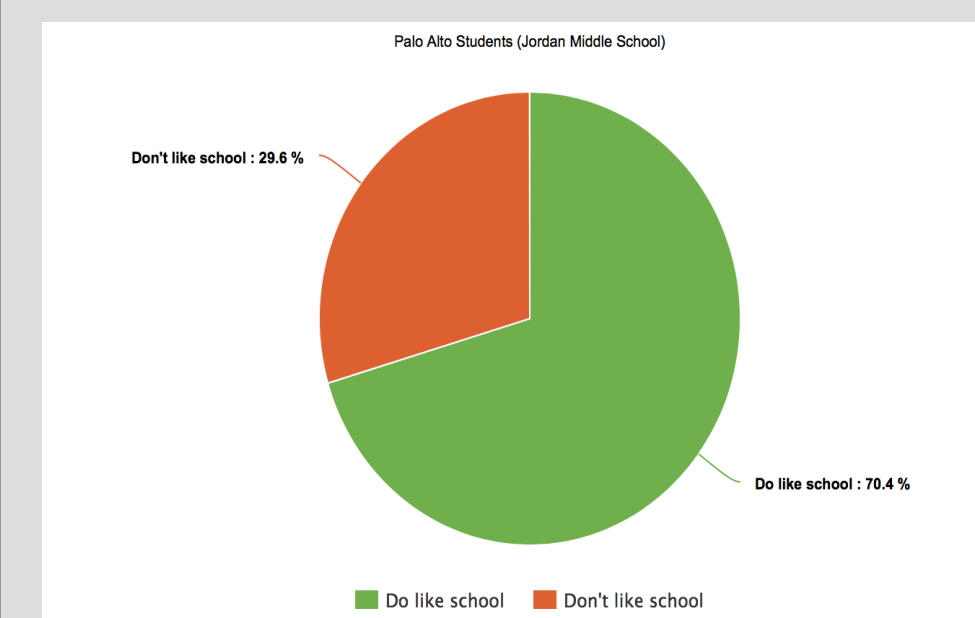
Other interesting responses:

Jordan:

"No real decision, something in engineering or computer programming."

"I like that our school is welcoming and a big community, and how many opportunities it offers. If I could change one thing about our school, it would be the start time. Teenagers need more sleep than the amount we get and starting school at 9am or later would allow us to get a healthy amount of sleep."

"School sucks but its important."



Eastside:

"Yes I would like to go to college first so then I can start with a good job while growing up, one that I would enjoy, and not just have so I can put food on the table."

"I like how my school can actually teach it's students, and is great about communicating to their students, and giving the students good resources to learn, and have teachers that try to get to every single one of their students. No changes???"

"(I want to be) an adult. Other than that I don't know. I might also want to be a pet owner."

