



BLUEPRINT FOR OPPORTUNITY: CREATING A VIABLE AND VIBRANT ANTIOCH



TRANSFORM



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1. Credential

Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO)

CCISCO is a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, interfaith federation of 25 congregations and youth organizations representing over 35,000 families across the county, most of whom are low and moderate income. Over the past year, CCISCO has worked to bring a solution to the foreclosure crisis and stop preventable foreclosures in Contra Costa County. This organizing effort has sparked a national faith-based movement to keep families in their homes and stabilize the economy. CCISCO is proud member of the PICO National Network.

TransForm

TransForm works to create world-class public transportation and walkable communities in the Bay Area and beyond. We build diverse coalitions, influence policy, and develop innovative programs to improve the lives of all people and protect the environment.

2. Background & Research

Over the past year, CCISCO leaders from Antioch have met with hundreds of residents and community leaders in Antioch to listen to their concerns and hopes for the future. CCISCO leaders organized counseling workshops in conjunction with certified housing counselors, held dozens of research meetings with city officials, banks, county supervisors and state legislators to understand how to develop real solutions to the problems facing Antioch. As part of the research presented in this report there are recommendations on how to improve and create a better future for Antioch.

In our education research, CCISCO and PICO California have been working together to ensure that all students graduate high school prepared for college and for meaningful employment. To realize this goal, they are focusing on: equitable and consistent funding for schools, equitable distribution of qualified and effective teachers, improved collection and reporting of data, and supports for diverse programs and schools to better meet the needs of all students.



"It is great to see CCISCO and the community coming together to work on a solution to the greatest civil rights issue of our time—by working together we can change our educational system."

- Superintendent Jack O'Connell -

CCISCO is partnering at the local level and at the state level with State Superintendent Jack O'Connell to work to find solutions to the education inequalities that plague Antioch and the rest of Contra Costa County.

3. Problem Statement

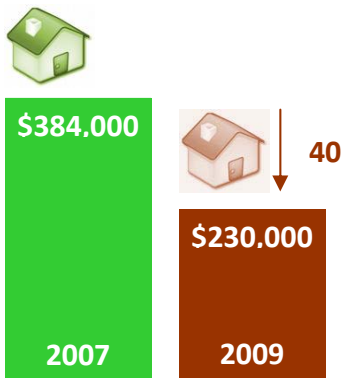
Lack of Job Opportunities for Adults and Youth

The recent economic recession has meant job losses for many of Antioch's residents. As of March 2009, the California unemployment rate has surpassed 10%. In 2007, the median income of Antioch families was 14% less than the rest of Contra Costa County, according to 2007 American Community Survey data. This means that Antioch families have less money to pay for basic necessities, such as education and health care.

Antioch workers must drive further to their jobs, as well. The average worker commutes for over 40 minutes a day to reach his or her job, which is one of the longest commutes in the country. This means that workers are spending less time with their families and more time stuck in traffic, congesting our freeways and emitting carbon dioxide emissions which contribute to poor air quality. When Antioch families have access to quality jobs within their own city, they reduce traffic on our streets and have more money in their pockets to spend on basic necessities.

Foreclosure Crisis Has Hit Antioch the Hardest

CCISCO leaders at the Holy Rosary Church in Antioch are working hard to find solutions to the foreclosure crisis, based on their own values and faith. The foreclosure rate in Antioch in 2008 was 7.7% across the city. In some neighborhoods, it is as high as 20%.



Antioch families have seen their homes decline in value by 40% -- the median home value is now below \$230,000.

In conjunction with certified housing counselors, CCISCO has provided dozens of workshops to hundreds of Antioch families facing foreclosure in order to prevent families being victimized by unscrupulous lending practices.

PICO National Network's "Recovery Express"

On Friday, March 6, 2009, PICO leaders from CCISCO in Antioch, Faith in Community (FIC) and Oakland Community Organizations (OCO) jumped on board the "Recovery Express" bus and set out on a cross country through eight cities to share their stories highlighting the pain and hardship caused by the foreclosure crisis.



Along the way, they were welcomed with prayer and blessings, as well as a renewed hope to reach Washington D.C. to carry the message that the country needs the Senate to act on foreclosure and bankruptcy reform now!

They weathered hail, rain, snow, and wind to get to Washington D.C. When they arrived to their final destination, they talked with their representatives, shared their testimonies and urged the Senate to stop preventable foreclosures.

To further underscore the importance of this critical issue, a prayer rally was held in front of the U.S. Capitol Building where 300 PICO faith leaders, including Recovery Riders, pressed for quick passage of bankruptcy reform legislation. The rally was covered by CNN, Associated Press, Reuters, CNBC, PBS, ABC, CBS and Fox, and reached an estimated 9.3 million homes. Momentum for foreclosure reform has increased dramatically.

CCISCO leaders in Antioch were instrumental in developing the idea of a cross country tour to stop at some of the hardest hit communities who have seen foreclosures overwhelm their economy, neighborhoods and way of life.

Quality Education Needs to be Improved

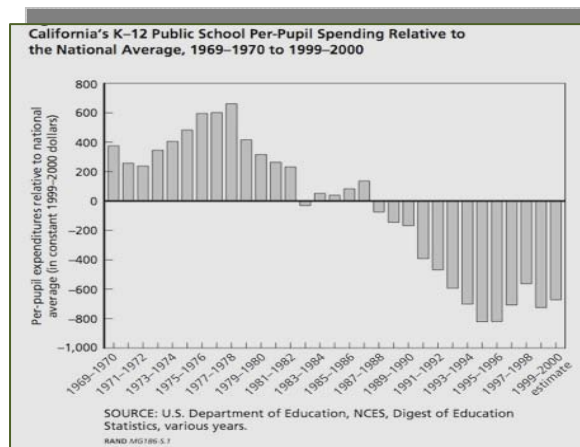
The Current State of Education in California

The state of California has a higher student to teacher ratio. During the 2003-04 school year, California had on average 6 more students than the U.S. median at the time.

	U.S. Median	CA Median
Middle Schools	15.8	23.5
High Schools	15.4	21.8

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), available at <http://nces.ed.gov/>

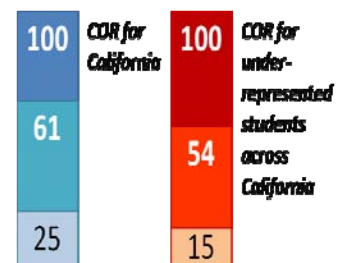
Since the late 1970s and with the passage of Proposition 13, California has gone from having one of the best funded and highest performing public school systems to having one of the worst in the country.



In order to understand the severity of the problem, one must look at the current College Opportunity Ratio (COR) to see clearly how our current educational system is broken. The college opportunity ratio shows how many students start out in 9th grade, out the initial number how many graduated and how many graduated college ready.

CCISCO leaders examined how Antioch High School compared to the state average as well as other local schools. Examining the COR of high schools across California and Contra Costa County, underscored the urgency and magnitude of the problem.

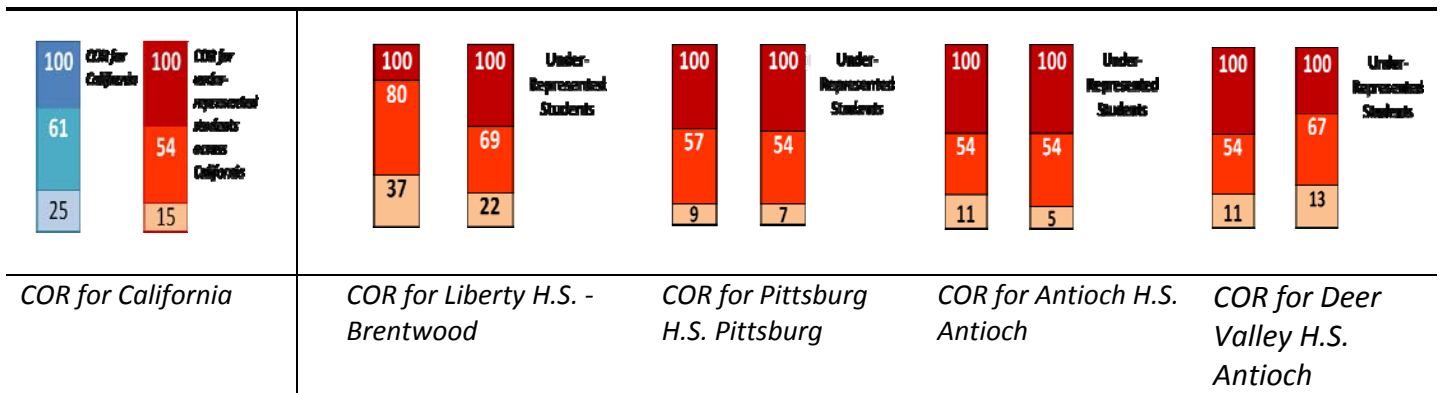
The college opportunity is presented as a ratio. For example, in 2007 the state of California had 100 students



of color (Latino, African-American, Native-American) who started 9th grade, only 54 graduated and only 15 of those who graduated were ready for college.

The problem, however, appears to be much more severe in many East Contra Costa high schools. CCISCO Leaders researched the COR for the city of Antioch and found some startling data.

Though the COR for the number of students graduating from high school were around the state average, the number of college ready graduates were significantly lower. Antioch High School had the lowest numbers among surrounding schools with a COR of 100:54:11 for all students, and a COR of 100:54:5 for underrepresented students.



Antioch High School is graduating fewer students than the state average. Among under-represented students, we meet the state average of 54% but only 5% of our under-represented students graduate college ready. College ready is defined as taking and passing the required classes to meet eligibility requirements into the CSU and UC systems.

In addition, Antioch High School had the lowest numbers as compared to local East County schools in Brentwood and Pittsburg, but especially among Deer Valley High School.

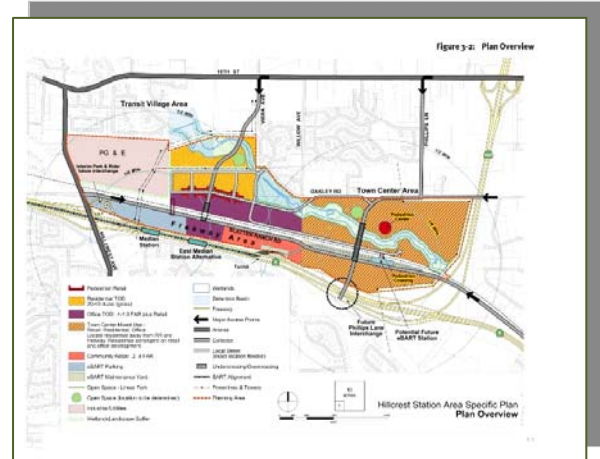
According to the Blueprint for Excellence report, more than 50% of all students in Antioch Unified School District are performing below accepted proficiency levels in both language arts and mathematics. These classes also happen are over their capacity levels. We need to identify and implement solutions that will effectively reduce class sizes, especially classes such as English and Math, these classes are the foundation for all jobs once leaving high school.

Students and teachers want to forge partnerships with the administration and school district to ensure that class sizes stay down so that students can get the kind of personalized instruction they deserve.



4. Solutions

We want to ensure the foreclosure crisis never happens again by providing permanently affordable homes for our children. Through research with TransForm, we have learned about the opportunities eBART can bring to benefit our community in the long term. We are working to impact the city's decisions on eBART now to ensure our experiences and expertise working on issues in our own community inform these important decisions about Antioch's future.



The eBART project provides an opportunity to focus new homes and jobs in healthy vibrant neighborhood within walking distance of transit.

In the eBART station, we can ensure local businesses flourish and build healthy communities by providing for low-income family needs – those who make less than \$78,000 a year. According to research by the Center for Community Innovation at UC Berkeley, homes located in walkable neighborhoods near transit are more truly affordable. On average, households with access to good transit service spend 50 percent less on transportation expenses than other households. Communities near transit are also healthier as people can get their daily exercise simply by walking to and from bus stops as well as the eBART station.

We urge the city to put strong policies in place now to ensure families of all income levels will be able to live near the future eBART station.

Recommendations:

1. 30% of homes should be affordable for low and very-low income families – those who make less than \$78,000 a year
2. 40% of affordable homes have three or more bedrooms to accommodate the multi-cultural needs of Antioch residents
3. Identify specific locations for affordable homes to ensure they are near transit and services

Create Job Opportunities for Local Residents and Youth

The development planned in for the Hillcrest station area can play an important role in bringing quality jobs to Antioch – but only if the right policies are put in place now. The plan could add as many as 2,000 new retail jobs to the city, as well as hundreds of construction jobs in building the eBART system and surrounding development.

We commend the city for including the following Master Plan Components to I-18:

“Each Master Plan submittal shall contain a Local Hire Strategy describing how the Master Plan proponents will enhance the opportunity for Antioch residents and businesses to participate in the jobs created by the implementation of the Master Plan. The City shall consider the likely effectiveness of such a strategy as part of the Master Plan review and entitlement process.”

This policy will ensure the job opportunities created in the Hillcrest station area benefit local residents. A model example of this kind of program is Richmond’s first source hiring policy, which creates goals for all employers receiving public subsidy to hire up to 30% of their workers from the local community. In creating this policy, the city also worked with local unions to ensure pathways to apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs were in place so that local workers would have the skills to be successful in these jobs.

Recommendations:

1. The City of Antioch should ensure strong community participation in developing a local hire strategy for the eBART project;
2. The City of Antioch and the Contra Costa Building and Construction Trades Council should incorporate apprenticeship programs into any project labor agreements in the eBART project; and
3. The City of Antioch should work with the community to create a local hire strategy for all jobs that receive public subsidy throughout the city, not just in eBART.

Improve Quality of Education

Antioch High School has seen class sizes grow exponentially each year. The CCISCO youth organizing committee at Antioch High School has conducted over 100 relational meetings with their peers to understand their concerns and aspirations. During those meetings, youth leaders identified reducing class size and improve the teacher to student ratio as a primary concern for improving academic achievement and the graduation rate. Students report many classes having more than forty students and have to sit on the floor for lack of space and desks.

We believe smaller class sizes will effectively increase student achievement and engagement. Smaller classes will also enable the teacher to identify the students in need, provide appropriate interventions, monitor their progress and adjust their plan accordingly.

"No football coach in his right mind would try to teach 150 players one hour per day and hope to win the game on Friday night. No, the team is limited to 40 or 50 highly motivated players, and the coach has three or four assistants to work on the many skills needed to play the game. The 'student-teacher' ratio is maybe 15:1. But the English teacher--all alone--has 150 'players' of the game of composition (not to mention literature, language, and the teaching of other matters dropped into the English curriculum by unthinking enthusiasts)."

-John C. Maxwell-

The time to act is now. There has never been a more critical moment in history to change the failing culture of our educational system. We call for collaboration between Antioch High School CCISCO youth organizing committee, high school teachers, administration and district officials to discuss proposals to reduce classroom size.

5. Conclusion

In summary, we ask the City of Antioch and the Antioch Unified School District to take the recommendations presented in this report to begin to create a viable and vibrant community for all residents of Antioch. By working together with the community we can move forward and create a better future for our city.

Works Cited:

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Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization
724 Ferry Street, Martinez, CA 94553 P: (925) 313-0206 F: (925) 313-0207
www.ccisco.org