

LATINO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY REPORT





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Latino Educational Opportunity Report 2007: California's Latino Opportunity Gap

Latinos are the fastest growing segment of California's population. Today, one of every three people in California is Latino; by 2042, the proportion will likely increase to one of every two.¹ The more than three million Latino young people in California's public schools represent 48% of all K-12 students and 42% of those in the state's high schools. These percentages will also increase dramatically. Clearly, Latinos' educational opportunities and attainment are vital to the state's economy and to the quality of public life for all Californians.²

Notably, many of California's Latino students come from homes where Spanish is the primary language and many of these students come to school with limited proficiency in English. Although most of the state's English Learners are in the elementary grades, in 2007 more than a quarter million high school students in California were designated English Learners (15%), and 83% of these students were Spanish-speaking students. To succeed in school, these students require specialized resources and support.

This report traces the progress of Latino high school students (Class of 2006) through high school and into college, using California's publicly available state data. We relate that progress to the educational resources and opportunities that California high schools provide to Latino students and to Spanish-speaking English Learners. Specifically, we report two types of analyses: the first compares Latino high school students' experiences to those of white and Asian students³; the second examines the opportunities provided in a subset of 90 California public high schools that enroll high concentrations of English Learners who speak Spanish as a first language.⁴

Some of California's Latino students achieve the highest levels of academic success, but as a group Latino students lag far behind white and Asian students on every indicator of school success—achievement, high school graduation, and college preparation. The result is that Latinos are dramatically underrepresented in California's public institutions of higher education, in high-paying jobs, and in middle-class lives.

California's Latino students also have limited access (both in absolute terms and in comparison to white and Asian students) to the resources and opportunities they need to graduate from high school ready to succeed in higher education and careers, and for significant participation in public life. English Learners are at a particular disadvantage. Schools with high concentrations of English Learners require additional and specialized resources (teacher training, professional development, instructional materials, etc.) than other California schools. Yet, California's high schools serving the highest proportion of English Learners are less likely than other California schools to have quality learning conditions in place.



Together, our analyses answer a number of important questions:

Which High Schools do California's Latino Students Attend?

- California's 743,654 Latino high school students are distributed across the state's high schools and make up 42% of all public high school enrollments.
- Although 99% of California high schools (1,078 out of 1,089) enroll Latino students, 89% of all Latino high school students are enrolled in just 16 out of 58 counties.
- 51% percent of California Latino high school students attend high-poverty schools.
- California's Latino students are more than four times as likely as white students to attend Program Improvement schools.

Do Gaps in School Resources and Opportunities Mirror California's Racial Gaps in School Success?

- Almost 260,000 Latino students (or 35%) attend overcrowded high schools. This is more than twice the proportion of white students who attend overcrowded schools.
- Latino high school students are two and one-half times more likely than white students and more than three times more likely than Asian students to experience serious shortages of qualified teachers.
- 65% of Latino students attend high schools with too few college preparatory courses for all students to enroll in a college preparatory curriculum.

Are California's Latino Students Able to Reach Their Educational Goals?

9 of 10 California public school students enter high school with plans to graduate and enroll in college. Yet, for every 100 Latino 9th graders in 2002, 54 graduated high school four years later and only 15 graduated having completed the required college preparatory coursework.

We conclude that closing the Latino "achievement gap" in California will require the state to close the Latino "opportunity gap."
However, closing these disparities should not be considered an effort made on behalf of a "minority" group in California.
Given the demography of California, the condition of Latino education is the condition of California education, generally. Closing the gaps in achievement and opportunity for Latino students will go a long way toward closing the gaps between California and most other states. All Californians stand to benefit.



Which High Schools Do California's Latino Students Attend?

We begin by considering where in the state Latino students are located. Then, we turn to the racial and socio-economic composition of the schools that Latino students attend, and to their access to high-performing schools. These are among the many factors that contribute to Latino students' educational achievement and to the disproportionately low number of students who graduate from high school and enroll in college.

Geographic Distribution of Latino Students

The map below displays the distribution of Latino high school students. 89% are concentrated in 16 of the state's 58 counties (counties that are shaded on the map). In many of these counties, Latinos are the largest group of high school students (counties that are both shaded and crosshatched on the map). Latino students also comprise the largest group of high school students in some counties with relatively small numbers of students (counties that are only crosshatched). Most of these latter counties are located in California's rural areas.



Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/



The following charts list the counties where Latino high school students are concentrated and the number of Latinos in each county. The first chart orders the counties by the numbers of Latino high school students; the second chart orders counties by the percentages of these students.

California Counties with 89% of the State's Latino High School Students (2005-2006)



COUNTY	Number of Latino Students Enrolled	Percentage of Students who are Latino
Los Angeles	271,954	56%
San Bernardino	57,782	48%
San Diego	56,950	39%
Orange	52,517	36%
Riverside	48,890	48%
Fresno	26,386	49%
Kern	23,011	49%
Santa Clara	22,155	31%
Ventura	17,950	42%
Tulare	13,555	61%
Alameda	13,338	22%
Sacramento	12,475	19%
Monterey	12,124	63%
Stanislaus	11,998	40%
San Joaquin	11,561	36%
Contra Costa	10,399	22%

California Counties With Large Concentrations of Latino High School Students (2005-2006)



COUNTY	Number of Latino Students Enrolled	Percentage of Students who are Latino
Imperial	8,326	85%
Monterey	12,124	63%
Tulare	13,555	61%
Colusa	690	58%
Los Angeles	271,954	56%
Madera	4,044	56%
Merced	8,199	53%
Kings	3,732	52%
San Benito	1,704	52%
Kern	23,011	49%
Fresno	26,386	49%
San Bernardino	57,782	48%
Riverside	48,890	48%
Santa Barbara	8,268	47%
Ventura	17,950	42%
Stanislaus	11,998	40%



Racial Composition of Latinos' Schools

California high schools are, like the state itself, extraordinarily racially diverse. Unlike most other states, only a slight majority of high schools in 2005-2006 were predominantly white and/or Asian.

	Number of California High Schools	Percent of California High Schools		
Schools with few white and Asian students	93	9%		
Schools with some white and Asian students	384	35%		
Schools that are predominantly white and Asian	612	56%		
Total	1089	100%		

Racial Composition of All California High Schools (2005-2006)

Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/

California's 743,654 Latino high school students are distributed across the state's high schools and make up 42% of the total public high school enrollment. Latino students are enrolled in 99% (1078 out of 1089) of California's high schools.

This broad distribution masks the fact that most Latinos attend schools with high concentrations of underrepresented students.⁵ Three-quarters of Latino high school students are concentrated in schools where most students are Latino, African American, or American Indian. One-quarter of Latino students attend high schools that are predominantly white and/or Asian. By contrast, nearly three-quarters of white students and nearly two-thirds of Asian students attend these high schools.

Distribution of Latino Students Across Schools with Different Racial Composition (2005-2006)

	Latino Students	White Students	Asian Students	
Schools with few white and Asian students	22%	0.6%	2%	
Schools with some white and Asian students	53%	22%	32%	
Schools that are predominantly white and Asian	25%	78%	66%	

Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/

This distribution is important because predominantly white and Asian schools tend to offer better educational resources and learning opportunities than do schools with high enrollments of African American and Latino students.⁶ Because the resources and opportunities that schools provide affect students' academic performance, it's not surprising that students in schools with large concentrations of African American and Latino students perform less well than similar students enrolled in other schools.⁷



Economic Composition of Latinos' Schools

Latinos are also more likely than any other racial group to attend schools with large concentrations of low-income students (schools where more than one-half of all students receive free and reduced price meals). 51% percent of California Latino high school students attend high-poverty schools— compared with 11% of white high school students and 25% of Asian students. This concentration is important because schools with many low-income students often lack essential resources and students of all racial groups tend to achieve less well in these schools.

	Latino Students	White Students	Asian Students
Percent of students attending high schools in which more than half of students receive free/reduced meals	51%	11%	25%

Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/



Performance Levels of Latinos' Schools

In 2006, 15% of all California high schools (162 schools) were identified by the state and federal government as low-performing and in need of serious improvement. These schools were designated as "Program Improvement" (PI) because, for at least two consecutive years, they had not demonstrated Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).⁸

These low-performing schools enrolled 19% of the state's high school students. However, as the graph below shows, Latino students are over four times more likely to attend PI schools than white students.

	Latino Students	White Students	Asian Students	
Percent of students attending high schools designated as "Program Improvement" schools	30%	7%	11%	

Enrollment in Low-Performing High Schools in 2006

Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/



Because NCLB raises the bar each year for the percentage of students who must achieve at a proficient level, more and more California schools will likely be placed in PI status over the next few years. Many California schools have increased their percentage of proficient students. However, if they do not accelerate the rates at which students are attaining proficiency, 63% of all California high schools will fail to meet NCLB proficiency goals by 2010, and 100% of all high schools will fail to meet NCLB proficiency goals by 2014. 82% of Latino students attend high schools that will not meet NCLB mathematics standards by 2010, and 100% by 2014.

in Mathematics in 2010 and 2014				
	Latino Students	White Students	Asian Students	
Percent of students attending high schools that will not meet <i>NCLB's</i> threshold for the percentage of students who should demonstrate math proficiency in 2010	82%	44%	46%	
Percent of students attending high schools that will not meet <i>NCLB's</i> threshold for the percentage of students who should demonstrate	100%	100%	100%	

Enrollment in Schools Projected As Low-Performing

Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/

math proficiency in 2014

High-Concentration EL High Schools Are Far More Likely to Be Low-Performing Schools

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Current and Projected Enrollment in Low-Performing High Schools (2005-2006)

	High-Concentration EL High Schools n=90	Other CA High Schools n=999
Designated as "Program Improvement" schools	51%	12%
Schools that will not meet <i>NCLB's</i> threshold for students who should demonstrate math proficiency in 2010	89%	61%
Schools that will not meet <i>NCLB's</i> threshold for students who should demonstrate math proficiency in 2014	100%	100%

Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/

Students in High-Concentration EL High Schools are less likely, on average, to meet NCLB goals for high performance. These schools are over four times more likely to be identified as Program Improvement schools than other California high schools.

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Do Gaps in School Resources and Opportunities Mirror California's Racial Gaps in School Success and Educational Attainment?

Most California students experience larger class sizes, fewer counselors, and fewer student support staff than their peers in most other states.⁹ These shortages are particularly burdensome for students from low-income families that do not have a history of college-going and who rely on school staff for information about college. Without qualified adults available at their schools, such students often lack information and support to navigate successfully toward graduation and college preparation.¹⁰

Previous studies have shown that California students from underrepresented racial groups are the most likely to attend schools that have low rates of college preparatory classes, low rates of teachers qualified to teach those classes, and too few counselors to guide students along a path to college preparation.¹¹ Below we explore the specific patterns for California's Latino students in the Class of 2006.

Access to Basic Educational Resources

Latino high school students are overrepresented in schools that lack basic educational opportunities, and face difficulties including overcrowding and significant shortages of qualified teachers.

Overcrowded Schools. California high schools are defined as overcrowded by the California Department of Education if they have 1.75 times as many students as recommended. Overcrowding creates an unsafe environment and makes teaching and learning more difficult. Schools may need to teach students in auditoriums, gymnasiums, storage rooms, and other areas never intended to be used for instructional purposes.¹² Schools with too little space may not be able to maintain specially equipped rooms such as science labs or libraries because these spaces need to be "flexible" for teaching multiple subjects. Overcrowding has led some California school districts to use policies such as multi-track school calendars that provide students with fewer days of instruction than are provided to other California students.

More than a quarter of all California students (27%) attend schools that are overcrowded. However, in 2005-2006, almost 260,000 Latino students (35%) attended overcrowded schools, which is more than twice the proportion of white students attending overcrowded schools.

Racial Differences in Attendance at Overcrowded High Schools 2005-2006

	Latino Students	Asian Students		
Percent of students attending overcrowded high schools	35%	17%	29%	

Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/

Composition of the second seco	10	
High-Concentration EL High Schools Are Far More Likely to Be Overcrowded		
Distribution of Overcrowded High Schools (2005-2006)		
High Concentration EL High Schools n=90 Other California High Schools n=999 Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/ Schools with a high concentration of EL students are twice as likely as other California high schools to be designated as overcrowded.		

Access to Qualified Teachers. Latino high school students in California are also more likely than white and Asian students to attend schools with critical shortages of qualified teachers.

Qualified teachers are an essential resource. Poorly qualified teachers have less content area knowledge, rely solely on lectures and other basic instructional strategies, and are often unprepared to have students engage in higher-order thinking and work. Schools in which at least 20% of the teachers lack a full credential are designated as experiencing a severe shortage of qualified teachers. These schools have a wide range of problems, including higher levels of teacher turnover and too few experienced and qualified teachers to mentor newer and less experienced teachers.¹³

10% of Latino high school students are enrolled in schools with severe shortages of qualified teachers. These students are two and one-half times as likely as white students and more than three times as likely as Asian students to experience serious shortages of qualified teachers.

	Latino Students	White Students	Asian Students	
Percent of students attending high schools with severe shortages of qualified teachers	10%	4%	3%	

Racial Differences in Access to Qualified Teachers (2005-2006)

Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/



Access to College Preparation

Latino students are more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to attend high schools that do not prepare them well for college. These schools have too few college preparatory courses, and the courses that are offered are more likely to be taught by teachers without the proper subject-matter certification.

College Preparatory Courses. The California State University and the University of California have the same basic course requirements for admission, commonly referred to as the "A-G Requirements." To be eligible to attend any public four-year university in the state, a student must take a minimum of 15 A-G courses—approximately two-thirds of their high school courses. Accordingly, to provide every student with the opportunity to satisfy these college eligibility requirements in California, high schools must ensure that at least two-thirds of their courses meet the A-G Requirements. In schools with high rates of college-going, it is common for more than three-quarters of the school's courses to satisfy the A-G requirements.

In addition, according to a widely-acclaimed U.S. department of Education study, enrolling in a rigorous high school curriculum is key to increasing students' chances of earning a bachelor's degree.¹⁵ The study also found that of all the high school courses, the highest level of mathematics taken is the most important for college success and that taking rigorous high school courses had a greater impact on African American and Latino students than on white students.

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As the graph below indicates, Latino students are less likely than their white and Asian counterparts to have access to college preparatory courses.

Racial Differences in Access to College Preparatory Coursework 2005-2006

	Latino Students	White Students	Asian Students		
Percent of students attending high schools with too few college preparatory courses for all students to enroll in a college preparatory curriculum	65%	48%	42%		

Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/

College Preparatory Courses Taught by Qualified Teachers. 19% of California's students attend high schools in which college preparatory classes are taught by teachers lacking training in the subjects they are teaching. Latino students are almost twice as likely as white and Asian students to attend such schools.

33% of California students attend high schools in which college preparatory math classes are taught by teachers lacking training in the subjects they are teaching. Latino students are more likely than white and Asian students to attend such schools.

Racial Differences in Students' Access to College Preparatory Courses Taught by Qualified Teachers 2005-2006

	Latino Students	White Students	Asian Students	
Students attending high schools with more than one-fifth of college preparatory courses taught by teachers without appropriate subject matter qualification	25%	13%	13%	
Students attending high schools with more than one-fifth of the college preparatory math classes taught by teachers without a credential to teach math	40%	24%	28%	

Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/

Access to College Preparation Within Schools. In addition to attending schools that offer too few college preparatory courses overall, Latino students are less likely to be enrolled in the advanced math and physics courses that are offered at their school. Students gain critical new knowledge in advanced math courses (including math analysis, trigonometry and calculus) and physics. In addition, enrolling and successfully completing these courses help make students competitive for college admission.



The figures below show disparities in enrollment in advanced mathematics and physics classes within schools. These are courses that students must take to complete the college preparatory course sequence. However, a longstanding and discredited tradition of academic tracking limits Latinos' access to college preparatory courses.¹⁶



School Composition and Within-School Racial Disparities in Enrollment in Advanced Mathematics and Physics Classes in California High Schools, 2005-2006





Students in High-Concentration EL High Schools Lack Access to College Preparation

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High Schools with Severe Shortages of College Preparatory Coursework (2005-2006)



Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/

Students enrolled in the High-Concentration EL High Schools have less access to the courses needed to complete the basic requirements to apply to four-year institutions of public higher education within the state.

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Students in High-Concentration EL High Schools Experience a Severe Shortage of College Preparatory teachers



Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/

37% of the High-Concentration EL Schools have a severe shortage of certified teachers to teach college preparatory courses. 44% have a severe shortage of teachers certified to teach college preparatory math. The shortage of college preparatory teachers at the other California high schools is serious, but not nearly as severe.

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Are California's Latino Students Able to Reach Their Educational Goals?

According to the latest scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), California has much to do in order to raise the achievement levels of all groups of students. Commonly referred to as the Nation's Report Card, NAEP scores represent one of the few common benchmarks that allow state-by-state comparisons of student achievement.

In 2007, the average NAEP math score for California 8th grade students was 270, placing California near the bottom, behind 43 other states and below the national average of 280. These recent NAEP results also show that California students, on average, rank near the bottom. California's white and Latino 8th graders' math scores were well below the national average, and California ranks 4th from the bottom for both groups of students, with only seven states ranking lower than California. On average, scores for Latino and African American students fall below these numbers, creating the so-called "achievement gap." For example, California Latino 8th grade students scored, on average, 24 points lower than their white counterparts and 37 points lower than Asian students.

California's overall low levels of academic achievement and its racial achievement gaps are also apparent in the state's own data. Although most students from every racial group aspire to go to college (90%),¹⁷ proportionately few meet these aspirations. For every 100 ninth graders in 2002, there were 66 graduates in the Class of 2006. Furthermore, only 25 graduated eligible to enroll in a public four-year university, and 13 actually enrolled in these universities.

Each year, some of California's Latino students are among the most successful California high school graduates and enter four-year colleges and universities. In Fall 2006, for example, 11,236 Latino students enrolled at the California State University and 4,508 enrolled at the University of California.

California's public institutions of higher education enroll more than half a million (545,796) Latino students, which accounts for 26% of all students enrolled in these institutions. More specifically, Latinos comprise 29% of community college students, 25% of California State University students, and 13% of students enrolled in the University of California system.

Nevertheless, the average Latino student fares less well than most California students as he or she proceeds through high school toward college. As the graphic on the following page depicts, for every 100 Latino 9th graders in 2002, 54 Latinos graduated four years later in 2006. Only 15 Latino graduates had taken the minimum course requirements to enter one of the state's public four-year universities and 7 enrolled in a California public four-year university in the fall of 2006.

California Class of 2006: Pathway to College



Produced by UCLA/IDEA and UC/ACCORD



Source: California Basic Education Data System, available at <u>www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/</u> California Postsecondary Education Commission, available at www.cpec.ca.gov.





Across California, Latino high school students experience severe inequalities in accessing a highquality high school education. Not only are they are more likely to be in schools that have fewer basic educational resources, such as uncrowded buildings and qualified teachers, they are also enrolled in schools that offer fewer opportunities for a high-quality college preparatory curriculum.

Today, California's high schools are both racially stratified and unequal. Although educational resources in California's public high schools are scarce for all students, Latino students are more likely to attend schools that experience greater shortages of essential resources. It is no surprise that with such disparities in high school education, Latino students are underrepresented in California's institutions of higher education.

These disparities are explained, in part, by overall problems in California's high school infrastructure. The lack of counselors, adequately trained teachers, and college preparatory curriculum statewide blocks the pathway to college for many California students, and particularly for the state's Latino students. The disparities are even more severe for students attending the 90 California schools with high concentrations of Spanish-Speaking English Language Learners. The disparities do not reflect an unwillingness to learn on the part of 743,654 young Californians; rather, they reflect systemic patterns of unequal distribution of K-12 resources and enduring problems of racial bias and inequity within our school system.

The statistics shown in this report suggest that solving this educational inequity requires a twopronged strategy—one that improves California's educational infrastructure overall and, at the same time, targets resources and support to students concentrated in the much smaller proportion of high schools that experience an even greater lack of essential educational resources.





(Endnotes)

- 1 California Department of Finance. (2007). New State Projections Show 25 Million More Californians By 2050; Hispanics To Be State's Majority Ethnic Group By 2042. Available at: http://www.dof.ca.gov.
- 2 Jeffrey Grogger and Stephen J. Trejo. (2002). *Falling Behind or Moving Up? The Intergenerational Progress of Mexican Americans*. San Francisco, CA: Public Policy Institute of California.
- 3 Note, that in this report we do not compare the outcomes and experiences of African American and Latino students. The two groups have similar records of academic performance, high school graduation, and college participation. For a detailed analysis of the opportunities of California's African American high school students, see our companion report, *African American Educational Opportunity Report, 2007*.
- 4 Specifically, in these high schools more than one third of the schools' students are classified as English Learners (EL), and more than half of the enrolled English Learners speak Spanish as a first language.
- 5 The term underrepresented groups refers to Latino, African American, and American Indian students. These students are underrepresented in the University of California system.
- 6 Oakes, Jeannie & Lipton, Martin (2004). Schools that Shock the Conscience: *Williams v. California* and the Struggle for Education on Equal Terms Fifty Years After Brown. *Symposium on Rekindling the Spirit of Brown v. Board of Education. California Law Review.*
- Rumberger, Russell W. & Willms, J. Douglas. (1992). The Impact of Racial and Ethnic Segregation on the Achievement Gap in California High Schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Vol. 14, No. 4,* 377-396; Rumberger, Russell W., & Palardy, Gregory J. (2005). Does Segregation Still Matter? The Impact of Student Composition on Academic Achievement in High School. *Teachers College Record, Vol. 107, No. 9,* 1999–2045.
- 8 NCLB requires that the state and school districts annually review the academic progress of all schools receiving federal Title I funds and to identify those schools that do not make annual progress toward 100% proficiency by 2014. Schools are identified as Program Improvement (PI) schools after two consecutive years of not making adequate yearly progress (AYP). California determines AYP for high schools by considering the following four measures: 1) The percentage of students scoring at the "proficient" or "advanced" level on the California Standards Tests for English-language arts and mathematics; 2) The percentage of students participating in those tests; 3)The graduation rate for high schools; 4) California's own accountability measurement of progress, the Academic Performance Index (API).
- 9 For details, see the companion report, California Education Opportunity Report, 2007.
- **10** McDonough, Patricia. (2004). The School to College Transition: Challenges and Prospects. *Washington, D.C.: ACE/ Center for Policy Analysis*. Available at: www.acenet.edu.
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Cover Art- Mural at Esperanza Elementary School (LAUSD) Paul Botello

Assisted by Ray Sanchez, Daniel Molina, Silvia Guadalupe Santos, Luis Fernando Mojica.

Date: 1995 Location: Esperanza School

Born and raised in East Los Angeles, Paul Botello's work can be found in the permanent collections of Armand Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA and Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA. He has been featured in both national and international exhibitions.

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