

The “P-Word”

Why we need to talk about poverty.



Our institutions are run on middle-class norms.

We may unintentionally create barriers for low-income students and families that can easily be changed.

Our community’s efforts began in 2003 with the launch of Panhandle Twenty/20, with state demographer Steve Murdock. Our area was projected to become poorer and less educated.

1

USE DATA

to build your case. Then determine best actions steps to impact largest numbers.

2

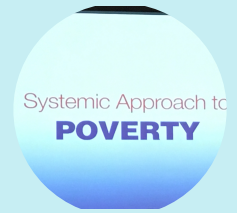
BUILD A COALITION

of key leadership and of those ‘in the trenches’.

3

CHANGE BEHAVIORS

within and between institutions. Amazing things can happen!



Poverty is a huge and growing barrier to educational attainment.



We have to understand the realities of those in poverty.

It’s not a bowl of cherries.



Simple changes can increase success.

If not you, then who? If not now, then when?

Our initial goal was to improve educational attainment...

But we realized we couldn't do that effectively without addressing the elephant in the room—poverty.

Our focus on educational attainment led to a number of significant changes, both within and among our long-standing organizations. But the harsh realities of our changing demographics forced us to address the root causes of low levels of attainment, and our biggest barrier to success was poverty.

We began with bus tours of our community, seeing the challenges our neighbors actually faced. As eyes began to open and hearts began to shift, we were able to build systems to put poverty-reduction efforts in place that would help move students and families to educational success.

“Our biggest challenge is poverty.”

-Dr. Marcelo Cavazos, 2016 TASA Superintendent of the Year



Over time, our initial efforts have grown into some amazing partnerships and new initiatives:

- Texas Panhandle P-16 Council
- No Limits No Excuses Initiative (NLNE)
- GED and ESL in pilot schools, with NLNE coaches to help the families
- Cal Farley's Community Engagement Center
- Poverty trainings for ALL! :)
- GO! What's Your Plan? Videos with Workforce Solutions. There's an app for that....
- FAFSA Scholarship Contest
- Amarillo College Poverty Reduction Efforts: Social worker, food pantry, clothing closet, Coaches & Champions mentoring, 8-week classes, intrusive counseling, even into the high schools

LITTLE ACTIONS ADD UP TO BIG CHANGE

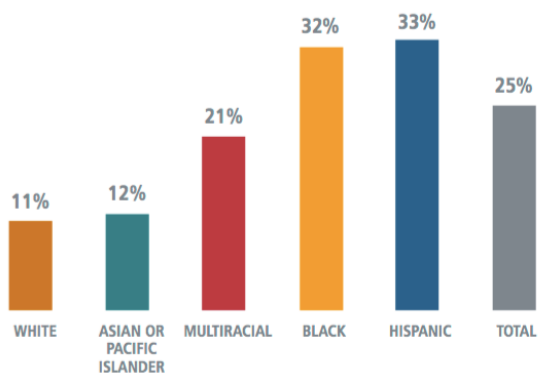
We learned about the data. Our poverty was really growing. We learned about different kinds of poverty, oral vs. print cultures, what education means to people in the crisis of poverty. We saw how we put so many barriers in the way within our institutions.

So we went to work. We are changing the culture in our community. While our focus is to increase our number of students who get a postsecondary credential, we keep the realities facing our families in mind when creating programs and policy. And it's helping.

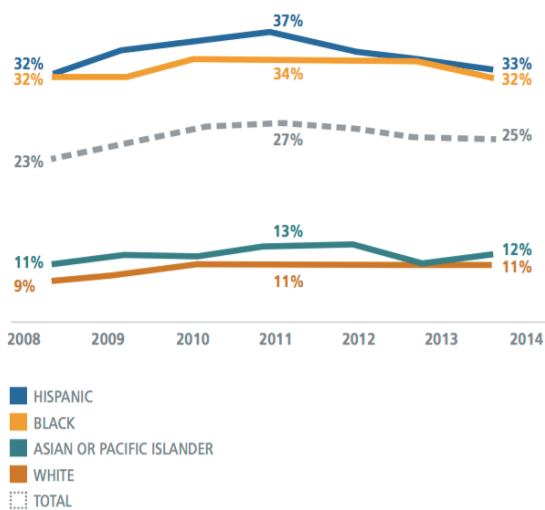


- **No Limits No Excuses**—a Collective Impact partnership focused on increasing the number of certificates and degrees in our area. Involved in all things shown below. Multiple committed community partners.
- **School-based GED and ESL** pilot programs with No Limits coaches helping family members be successful. HUNDREDS MORE LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS COMPLETE GEDS AND ENROLL IN COLLEGE.
- **No Excuses University***—22 schools in Amarillo ISD (7 more applying), Amarillo College, Opportunity School preschool, St. John Baptist Church, Discovery Center. SHIFT IN ATTITUDES AND INCREASE IN STUDENT SUCCESS. *Independent initiative but complementary.
- **Poverty Trainings for all!**—school districts, college staff, elected officials, nonprofits, churches, Sunday schools, businesses, etc. TRAINED WITH DR. DONNA BEEGLE. HOSTED 3 OPPORTUNITY CONFERENCES FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES. Connected Navigators and Neighbors (trained volunteer mentors connected with low-income families)
- **GO! What's Your Plan?** approach and app: Launches in October—students will view videos of local job options with major employees, plot pathway to these jobs, get reminders of relevant info. Multiple community meetings hosted to promote effort; partners hang What's Your Plan posters and work with employees to promote education.
- **FAFSA Scholarship Competition:** P-16 Council and No Limits No Excuses host competition among schools for highest FAFSA completion rates, and draw for scholarships. FAFSA RATES UP 10% AND MORE!
- Graphs from <http://forabettertexas.org/sotc2016/>

Children in Poverty by Race and Ethnicity, 2014¹²⁵



Child poverty (percentage), 2008-2014⁹⁴



- **Amarillo College:** Shifted to 8-week courses with pathways, dev-ed approach modified, hired first social worker, converted first floor of library to Student Success Center—food pantry, clothes closet, resource fairs, Coaches and Champions mentoring for first year students. YEAR TO YEAR RETENTION UP ALMOST DOUBLE, COMPLETION RATES UP, FULL-TIME STUDENT RATE UP, DEV ED SUCCESS UP. STATE AND NATIONAL RECOGNITION.
- **Cal Farley's Community Engagement Center:** —evolved out of the Navigator/Neighbor work. Became the go-to resource for struggling families, focused on families with children, connecting them to needed resources to help them move ahead in life. THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES CONNECTED AND SERVED.



**THINK BIG.
BE BOLD.**



**The Carlisle
Collective**

Anette Carlisle

anettecarlisle@gmail.com
thecarlislecollective.com
806.679.5432

Empowering schools and communities.