

June 2007 Educational Equity Brief

1. Career Tech in California High Schools. Governor Schwarzenegger is seeking an additional \$57 million for career technical education in the California high schools for the next fiscal year. For each of the last two years, the Governor has included an additional \$20 million for vocational education in the budget, but the newest budget represents a significant increase. In the past few years there has been increased attention and funding for vocational education after a period of focusing on “college for all.” Supporters claim that having everyone on the college track is absurd because only 20% of high school freshmen go on to four-year colleges. GetREAL (Relevance in Education and Learning), a business-labor coalition, was formed earlier this year to champion career technical education in anticipation of a lack of qualified workers for the manufacturing sector. Some educators believe that providing curriculum with more *relevance* to the real world and providing them with hands-on skills that lead to jobs will help keep students interested in school and persist until graduation. They want to see “multiple pathways” in high school that lead to options beyond getting a four-year degree.

“Governor Puts Spotlight on Career Technical Education,” by Ed Mendel, *San Diego Union Tribune*, May 6, 2007.

2. Clinton proposes universal pre-K for all 4-year-olds. 2008 presidential hopeful, Hillary Clinton, announced a plan to allocate \$10 billion in federal funding to pre-K programs for 4-year olds if elected. In order to receive the funding, states would be required to match the federal funds dollar-for-dollar and to provide pre-K free of cost to all low-income families and “limited English homes.” Nationwide, state spending on pre-K has increased by \$1 billion in the past two years, yet the programs only serve less than 20% of 4-year olds in the US.

“Hillary Clinton Proposes Pre-K Program For All 4-Year-Olds,” *Associated Press*, May 21, 2007.

3. Edwards proposes “College for Everyone” in the USA. John Edwards has proposed to replicate a rural North Carolina college access program on a national scale if elected in 2008. The privately funded program that was initiated by Edwards provides scholarship money to cover the cost of tuition, fees and books at public colleges for local high school graduates during their freshman year provided that they took a college preparatory curriculum in high school, work at least 10 hours a week while in college and “stay out of trouble.” Replicating the program on a national scale would cost \$8 billion. The program has increased the North Carolina’s high school college-going rate from 54 to 74 percent.

“‘College for Everyone’ in the USA: Edwards proposes taking his program in Green County nationwide at a cost of \$8 billion,” by Rob Christensen, *The News & Observer*, May 12, 2007.

4. Predicting a college-educated workforce deficit California. The Public Policy Institute of California is predicting a serious deficit in college-educated workers to emerge over the next two decades if the state's immigration and graduation rates remain constant. The Institute claims that the state will need 8.3 million college-educated workers in 2025 to maintain its current growth rates. If graduation and immigration rates remain constant, California will be short 3.2 million college-educated workers. The Institute cites immigration policy, the fact that foreign talent is increasingly going elsewhere and the high cost of living in California as critical causes of the college-educated workforce deficit prediction.

“Wanted: college-educated workers,” by Rachel Konrad, *Associated Press*, May 24, 2007

5. Education tax credit expansion proposed in legislature. The Universal Higher Education and Lifelong Learning Act of 2007 would expand the current higher education tax credits – the Hope Credit, Lifelong Learning Credit and the tuition tax deduction – to families with household incomes up to \$80,000 for single filers and \$160,000 to joint filer (the levels were previously \$55,000 and \$110,000 respectively). The Act also proposes a 50% refundable tax credit to low-income families as well as expanding the tuition tax benefits to college costs beyond tuition.

“Muddled Tax Picture for Higher Ed,” *Inside Higher Education*, May 23, 2007.

6. Feds move towards stricter accreditation policies. With increasing pressure to demonstrate student learning in all areas of education, the federal panel on accreditation has flexed its muscle by holding accrediting associations more accountable for student outcomes. Withdrawal of accreditation means that the schools accredited by the agency will no longer be eligible to receive federal funding. The federal panel has recommended denial of re-recognition of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges' Commission on Technical and Career Institutions, an agency that accredits about 250 colleges serving hundred of thousands of students. This step signifies a significant move towards holding schools accountable for student learning at the higher education level.

“Cranking Up the Pressure,” *Inside Higher Education*, May 31, 2007.

7. A new book was released this month that details how colleges and universities have failed to address their role as “great equalizers” and steps they can take to rectify the class divide in America: *Tearing Down the Gates: Confronting the Class Divide in American Education* by Peter Sacks.

8. Researchers estimate the cost versus benefits of increasing nationwide high school graduation rates. These researchers analyzed the lifetime public benefits that high school graduates contribute versus those without a high school diploma. Lifetime benefits include increased tax revenue, decrease in reliance on public assistance, and decrease in government spending on health and crime. Based on their analysis, they determined that each high school graduate yields a gross public benefit of \$209,000 over their lifetime. They went on to research the cost of increasing high school graduation rates by determining effective programmatic interventions. They calculated the cost per student to implement the intervention and determined the increased number of high school graduates due to the intervention. This average “cost per expected high school graduate” is \$82,000. This results in a net public economic benefit of \$127,000 per high school graduate or 2.5 times greater than the cost.

“The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of American’s Children,” by Henry Levin, Clive Belfield, Peter Muennig and Cecilia Rouse, Teachers College, Columbia University, January 2007.

9. “How Governments Can Improve Access to College.” Given all that we know about the increasing importance of a college degree, federal and state policy has been idle, and in particular, has failed to bridge not only the inequity of college access, but also the inequity in the **quality** of higher education. Indeed, “where students go to college may be just as important as whether they go to college.” Low-income students are most concentrated in the public higher education institutions that are operating with limited resources largely due to stagnant state funding. Consequently these schools spend less per student and lack the ability to attract the best professors with compensation packages on par with those offered at the private colleges and flagship public universities. Research shows that at colleges that spend less per student and have “contingent faculty” have lower graduation rates. These are the colleges where the low-income students are most concentrated, and so we see that the low-income students are attending the schools with the lowest graduation rates.

The following are examples federal and state policies that the author deems effective in increasing graduation rates for low-income students:

- Florida has common course-numbering across the two and four year public colleges, which helps students plan for and complete the transfer from a two-year to a four-year college.
- In Virginia there is current legislation that would allow community college transfer students pursuing certain fields to maintain community college tuition when they transfer to an in-state four-year institution.
- The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is working with several of our nation’s most selective private and public universities to develop programs to expand their enrollment for community college transfer students.
- The author recommends that colleges receive incentives, including monetary, for each Pell Grant recipient they graduate.

“How Governments Can Improve Access to College,” by Ronald Ehrenberg, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 6, 2007.

10. Editorial Projects in Education Research Center has developed an online tool that maps high school graduation rates and pipeline drop outs for **every** district in the country. Marin County compared to the state and nation for 2006:

| School District | HS Grad Rate | % of study body from under-rep groups | % of student body from low-income households |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Novato | 83.2% | 20.1% | 14.1% |
| San Rafael | 73.6% | 33.7% | 14.1% |
| Shoreline | 91.5% | 33.9% | 33.6% |
| Tamalpais | 91.4% | 8.6% | 2.0% |
| California | 71.0% | 54.6% | 48.4% |
| Nation | 70.0% | 36.1% | 38.7% |

The graduation rate methodology employed is the Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI).

<http://www2.edweek.org/rc/articles/2007/04/25/map.html>

11. “Opening the Door to the American Dream: Increasing Higher Education Access and Success for Immigrants,” by Wendy Erisman and Shannon Looney, *Institute for Higher Education Policy*, April 2007.

This report lays out educational attainment patterns for the immigrant population in the United States. Most data points are in reference to legal immigrants since data on undocumented immigrants is largely inaccurate.

The data in this report suggests that immigrating during the teenage years presents significant obstacles to accessing higher education. Immigrants who arrive between the ages of 13 and 19 have lower rates of educational attainment than other those who arrive during their younger years. Immigrants who arrive before the age of 13 have the highest level of education attainment among all immigrant groups and fare comparable to the native-born population. As of 2005 for immigrants ages 18-24, 62% of students who arrived between ages 13-17 had a high school diploma, and 22% were enrolled in college. For that same age group, of those who arrived before the age of 13, 81% were high school graduates and 37% were enrolled in college.

The educational attainment of immigrants also needs to be examined by country of origin. Of the 18-24 immigrant population, two-thirds are from Latin America. Only 59% of these college-age Latino immigrants are high school graduates and only 20% had attended at least some college. Their educational attainment is lower than all other immigrant populations.

Educational Attainment for Immigrants Age 18-24

| | Not a HS Grad | HS Grad | Some College | BA/BS |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------|--------------|-------|
| All Immigrants age 18-24 | 30% | 36% | 26% | 8% |

Age at Time of Immigration

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Immigrated before 13 | 19% | 39% | 34% | 8% |
| Immigrated ages 13-19 | 38% | 36% | 21% | 5% |

Region of Origin

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Asia | 9% | 29% | 43% | 20% |
| Africa | 12% | 34% | 44% | 9% |
| Europe | 11% | 31% | 43% | 15% |
| Latin America | 41% | 39% | 17% | 3% |

Barriers to higher education access and success for immigrants:

- Lack of knowledge about the American K-12 system and applying to and financing higher education. Lack of information in the parents' native language.
- Work and family responsibilities: immigrant students spent on average 15 hours more each week on family responsibilities, particularly in Latin American households.
- Limited English and the quality of ESL instruction.