



Forum Fact Sheet

Laying the Groundwork for a College-Going Culture

Preparing College-Ready High School Graduates: A Case Study of San Jose, CA

12:00 – 1:30 p.m., Monday, June 1, 2009

College and Career Ready Basics

- A 2006 ACT study concluded that **high school graduates need comparable levels of readiness in reading and mathematics to succeed in college-level courses without remediation and to enter workforce training programs ready to learn job-specific skills.** See: <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/ReadinessBrief.pdf>
- According to Jay Greene at the Manhattan Institute, academically, **only one-third of those who graduate high school are qualified to attend four-year colleges.**
- Several recent surveys of employers have reported that **young people are entering the labor market with an inadequate level of preparation**, particularly with regard to 21st Century skills such as professionalism, collaboration, and communications.

During his address to Congress in February 2009, President Obama stated "In a global economy, where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity. It is a pre-requisite." He went on to announce a goal "to ensure that every child has access to a complete and competitive education." The unprecedented increases in education funding at the federal level have provided a unique opportunity to advance an education reform agenda focused on ensuring all students are college and career ready.

This forum series entitled 'Laying the Groundwork for a College-Going Culture' will provide information on leading efforts at the state, district, and programmatic level to inform our national effort to improve education. As we consider efforts to create a college-going culture, we are attempting to encompass the goal of providing options for all young people to choose to enter all forms of postsecondary education or the workplace upon earning a high school credential. Viewing education as continuum that allows all Americans to access additional education and training is critical to ensuring our ability to emerge from the current economic downturn and compete in a global society.

At today's event presenters will detail the efforts and progress made across a 16-year commitment to increasing college readiness among **all** students in the San Jose Unified School District, where 70% of the students identify as racial/ethnic minorities. Central to creating a college-going culture in San Jose is the district's elevation of the high school graduation requirements to match entrance requirements for the University of California and California State University systems. Complimented with a strategy that students will receive the necessary supports to reach these expectations, this increase in academic rigor has not lead to an increase in the rate of high school dropout, as many expected. Instead, San Jose has closed the achievement gap for Latino students by 20%. Presenters will share the consistent leadership vision, academic programming, and the sustained investment from the business community that have contributed to these gains in San Jose.

As our country moves towards a college-going culture, we must consider the policy frameworks at the federal, state, and local level that provide educators, parents, and students with the skills and tools to be successful in this endeavor. Education reform efforts need to be comprehensive and consider all aspects of the systems from curricular alignment to assessments to professional development to data collection and analysis. Reform efforts must engage all educational systems from K-12 through postsecondary education.

A forum brief with this and more information will be posted shortly at www.aypf.org.