

The State College Completion Agenda Capitals Campaign 2011

Today we face a crisis across the educational landscape: High school completion rates are dropping. Achievement gaps persist, with significant disparities for students from low-income families and for minority students. The proportion of adults with postsecondary credentials is not keeping pace with that of other industrialized nations, and the United States is facing an alarming education deficit that threatens our global competitiveness and economic future. Formidable challenges at every level of the education system confront students who aspire to enroll and succeed in college.

Progress Toward 55% by 2025

41.6%

As of 2008, 41.6 percent of 25-to-34-year-olds had attained an associate degree or higher in the United States. Currently, no state has a population of which 55 percent of its citizens have an associate degree or higher.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2010

To tackle these issues, the College Board convened the Commission on Access, Admissions and Success in Higher Education to study the educational pipeline as a single continuum and then to identify solutions that will increase the number of students who graduate from college and are prepared to succeed in the 21st century.

The Commission established 10 interdependent recommendations to increase the proportion of 25-to-34-year-olds who hold an associate degree or higher to 55 percent by the year 2025 in order to make America the leader in educational attainment in the world. Subsequently, the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center released three important new resources: *The College Completion Agenda 2010 Progress Report* and *The College Completion Agenda State Policy Guide* in collaboration with the National Conference of State Legislatures, and a new website, completionagenda.collegeboard.org.

10 Recommendations

ONE Provide a program of voluntary preschool education, universally available to children from low-income families

TWO Improve middle and high school college counseling

THREE Implement the best research-based dropout prevention programs

FOUR Align the K–12 education system with international standards and college admission expectations

FIVE Improve teacher quality and focus on recruitment and retention

SIX Clarify and simplify the admission process

SEVEN Provide more need-based grant aid while simplifying and making financial aid processes more transparent

EIGHT Keep college affordable

NINE Dramatically increase college completion rates

TEN Provide postsecondary opportunities as an essential element of adult education programs

K–12 System Alignment with College Admission Expectations Recommendation Four

46%

As of 2009, 46 percent of states in the United States have aligned K–12 and higher education standards.

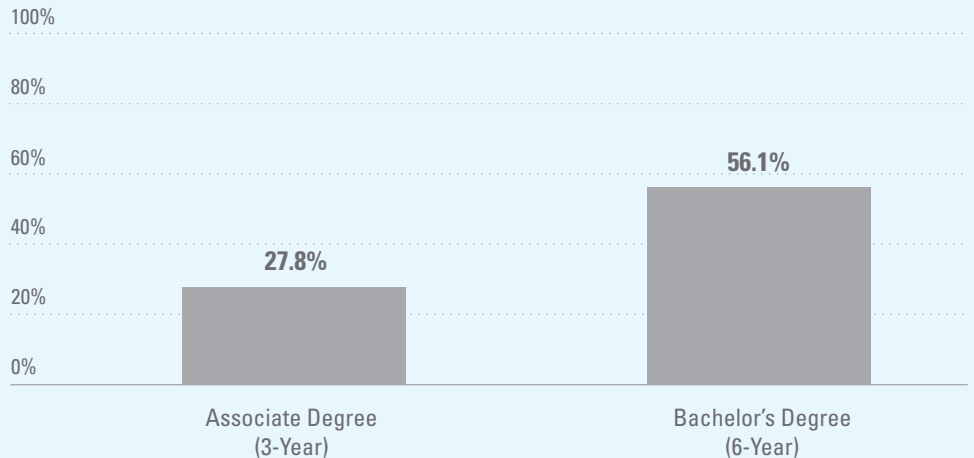
Source: Achieve Inc., 2009

Graduation Rates

Recommendation Nine

Percentage of Graduation Rates of Associate Degree– and Bachelor’s Degree–Seeking Students, 2007

Source: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2009



State Capitals Campaign

The College Board is taking *The College Completion Agenda's* and the *State Policy Guide's* 10 recommendations on the road for a yearlong multistate campaign to raise awareness and mobilize the nation around college enrollment and success.

The State Capitals Campaign brings together governors, chief state school officers, state higher education officers, state legislators, policymakers, postsecondary and K–12 leaders, businesses, community organizations and concerned citizens, contributing to a national movement to increase the proportion of Americans that hold a postsecondary credential. Events — roundtables, town hall meetings and summits — will highlight different recommendation areas, provide briefings on states' progress on key indicators, and promote effective state and institution policies and interventions throughout the education pipeline. In the next several months, the College Board will visit state capitals across the country, including Maryland, Colorado, Texas, Indiana, Florida, North Dakota, New York and California.

Improving postsecondary success for all our citizens, most urgently for low-income and minority students, is critical to our nation's economic and social health. To learn more about successful local practices that support college completion, follow the College Board's campaign across the country by visiting our website, completionagenda.collegeboard.org. We hope you will join us on our journey to help state policymakers and educators achieve the goal of 55 percent by 2025.

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