COLLEGE ACCESS FOR EVERYONE

Part 1

REMOVING EARLY BARRIERS

Foreword:

The League of Women Voters study of the California Community College system, completed in 2003, showed us how essential the community colleges are, and how inadequately funded they are for the tasks they are asked to accomplish. They are the state's biggest job-training program, preparing people to enter dozens of professions, and they are a major route out of poverty for hundreds of thousands of students. Two-thirds of the graduates of the California State University system and one-third of all University of California students begin their college education in the community colleges.

In our study, we focused on institutional and financial barriers to college access—facilities too overcrowded to accommodate all students; inadequate, unreliable budgets; overly complicated decision-making bodies; political limitations on increasing public support.

Adequate, stable funding is a problem for our entire public school system. An upcoming League report, based on our 2005 education study, will address funding constraints and other issues facing California's K-12 system.

This publication deals with the K-12 system as the necessary path of access to success in higher education and/or the workplace.

The League report, *College Access For Everyone*, and accompanying guide for parents, *Helping Our Kids Claim Their Futures*, are copyrighted as a product of the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund, 2006. Permission to reproduce one or both is freely granted to individuals, educational and non-profit organizations. To request copies of a Spanish-language version of the Parents' Guide, or for information on a short DVD to accompany the written materials, contact The League of Women Voters of California, lwvc@lwvc.org.

© League of Women Voters of California Education Fund 2006

OF CALIFORNIA EDUCATION FUND

September 2006

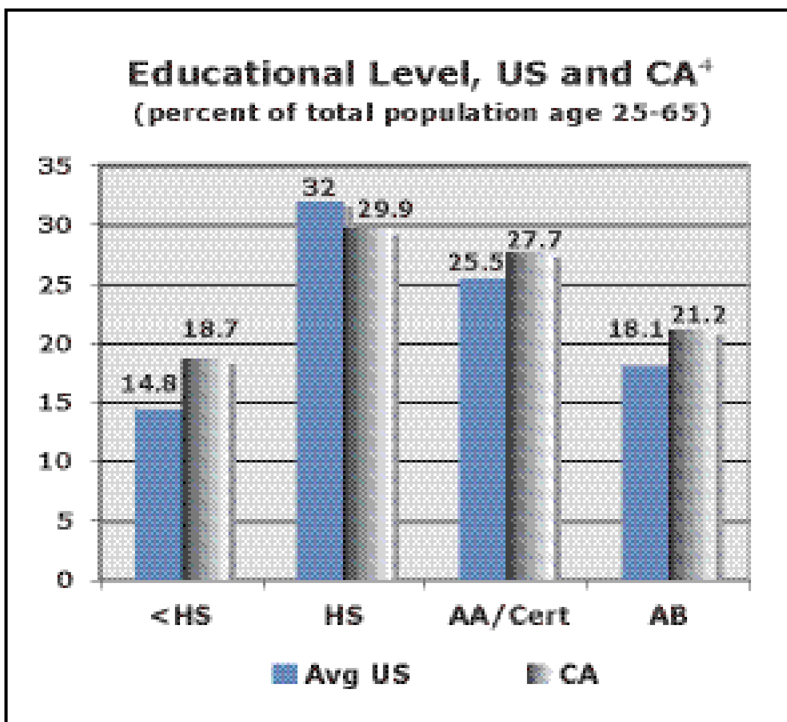
Removing Early Barriers to College Access

For many of California's children, the possibility of achieving a better life through education will remain an unfulfilled dream. Over 30 percent of all our ninth graders drop out before they graduate from high school. Even for those who gain a diploma, the "Achievement Gap"—the disparity in student achievement among different racial and ethnic groups—continues to limit opportunities beyond high school because many of those who do graduate still lack the basic skills and knowledge they will need to be successful on the job or in college.[1]

In order to prepare all our children properly, so they emerge into young adulthood as thoughtful, economically self-sufficient members of society, we will need to rethink the way we organize our educational system from the bottom up.

In years past, it was possible for people to earn a decent living and enjoy a satisfying career without too much formal education. But in the California of the future, jobs that can support a family will increasingly require knowledge beyond high school.

Factory jobs, as a share of total employment, have decreased by almost half—from 32 percent in 1959 to 17 percent in 2002—largely due to automation.[2]



Economic prosperity, especially in California, is projected to come mainly from "knowledge industries," those requiring additional academic and professional training. Even now, more than half of our available jobs require some form of higher education and/or certification beyond high school. Roughly 70 percent of all new jobs need such further training, and that percentage is expected to rise to 80 percent within the decade.

The mismatch between the increasing need for workers with high-level skills and the growing number of undereducated young adults is a problem for our entire country. It prompts the attention of governors, business leaders and others worried about our ability to maintain our place in the global economy.

For California, this mismatch poses a stark policy choice because of who we are now. Our population is younger than the national average, but growth has come largely in communities that have traditionally had lower college-going rates. In the coming years, these undereducated young adults will be the majority of new workers entering our labor force.[3]

Unless we, as a society, can equip our young people with the education they will need to succeed in the global economy of the twenty-first century, the better-paying jobs will increasingly go elsewhere. California will find itself with a severe shortage of skilled workers and a lower standard of living.

Scope of Need

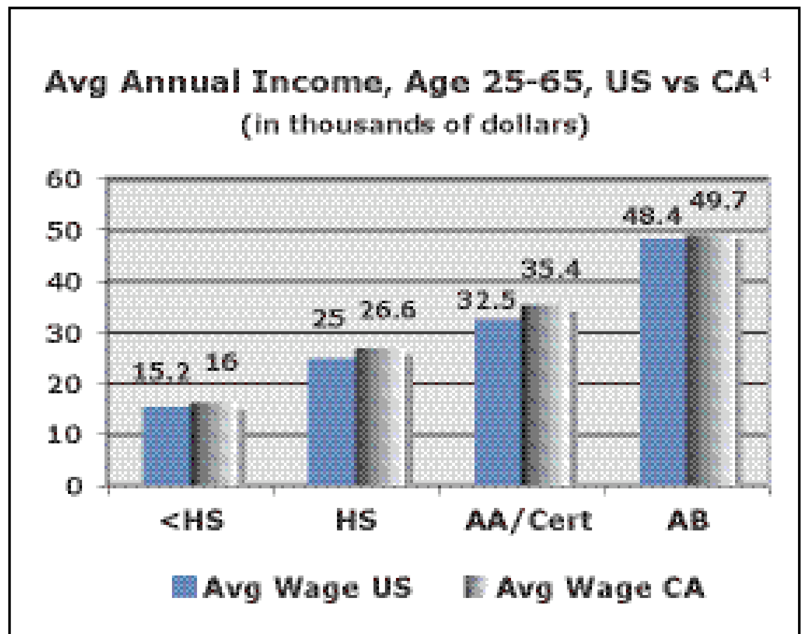
There are now about a million Californians ages 18 to 24 who have not graduated from high school. Over half of the state's Hispanic population lacks a diploma. Starting in 2006, when all students had to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in order to graduate, the young adult population without a diploma has jumped by an additional 42,000.

How will these young people establish themselves, find work, earn a living wage? For those without even a high school education, the economic prospects are bleak. *The Investment Payoff*, a March 2003 report from the Institute for Higher Education Policy,[4] provides a stark contrast between the economic experience of workers with and without post-secondary education. College graduates, on average, earn three times as much money per year and endure only one-third as much unemployment as people without high school diplomas.

The cost to the general community is equally severe. Finding enough qualified nurses and teachers to staff our hospitals and schools is already a struggle. For our state as a whole, more workers at minimum wage means greater unemployment, less money in income tax revenues to pay for state services, a higher demand for publicly funded social and health services, and a likely increase in the prison population.

The community colleges have, since their founding, been open to all—the principal gateway to economically stable and rewarding careers for people of every background. Dropouts or scholarship students, immigrants just learning English or adults returning to upgrade their workplace skills—whatever their educational goals—find new opportunities available to them at the community colleges. The system offers a wide range of courses at 109 campuses around the state that will qualify students for transfer to four-year institutions, recertify job-seekers with enhanced career skills and enrich lifelong learners wanting to try something new.

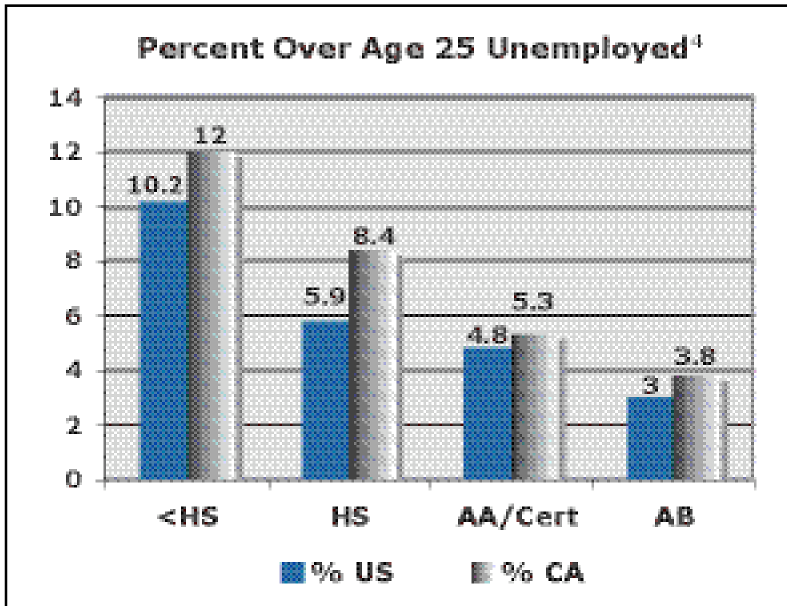
The colleges have also developed highly successful programs to help students who never finished high school and people new to this country to master skills essential to academic and economic achievement. But the colleges, and indeed the whole public post-secondary system, including the University of California and the California State University systems, will be coming under increasing stress in the next decade for a number of reasons.



Inadequate, Unstable Funding

Financially, the community colleges have long been the step-child of the state's educational systems. Even when revenues have been high, the colleges receive less per full-time enrolled student than the K-12 system. In times of shortage, the colleges have been the first to feel the pinch.

The recession of 2002–03 slashed the state's budget for all public higher education. The community colleges were unable to sustain either their programs or their student services at normal levels because they endured such deep cuts to their budgets. During that fall, some 12,000 course sections were closed, and about 175,000 fewer students enrolled because the courses they needed, at times they could come, were no longer being offered or were over-enrolled. The guidance counselors and support staff to help them were also unavailable. Counselors in some districts were working with case loads of 1,200 students.[5]



The state's economy has improved slowly since 2003, and roughly 7,000 course sections have been restored to the college schedules, but neither courses nor counselors have yet returned to their pre-2002 level. The decline in first-time enrollments has continued through 2004–05, so that by 2006 there are some 300,000 missing students.

Community colleges enroll students who need extra help because they are the first in their family to go to college. The system has always had difficulty maintaining student services when money is tight. Budgetary decision-makers tend to see these services—counseling, tutoring, financial aid, job placement—as "extras," and therefore expendable. Introductory remedial and pre-collegiate courses, which prepare students with low skills for entry to full-credit courses, have been budgeted by the state to receive only 60 percent of the funds available for regular college-level courses. The results are crowded classes, with low-paid part-time instructors, "freeway flyers" who teach in several districts or campuses with little spare time to help students after class.

State allocation formulas determine how much money each district will receive based on the total number of full-time-equivalent students (FTES). But the formulas make no distinction between the cost of offering courses like English or history, which can be taught in regular classrooms, and those like nursing or avionics or computer programming, which require low student-teacher ratios and expensive specialized equipment. So even as the state suffers through a severe nursing shortage, with two-thirds of our hospital nurses receiving Associate Degrees in Nursing (ADN) from community colleges, the colleges themselves must limit the number of students they admit to their training programs because there is only a fixed number of new student spaces available. In 2005, legislation and funding provided some more resources for nursing programs, but not enough to significantly reduce the state shortage in the near future.

Restrictions Limit Direct State and Federal Financial Support for Students

A critical question for all families of college-age students, poor and middle-class alike, is the great increase in the cost of going to college. At a time when annual tuition at private universities hovers around $30,000 a year, tuition and fees at California's public universities and community colleges are some of the best bargains around. UC's yearly tuition is $6,141, and CSU's is $3,164. Community college fees, although they rose steeply in the wake of the budget crisis, remain the lowest in the nation at $26 per credit. For the very poor, there are also state-funded fee waivers and Cal grants that enable people to attend free of charge.

But nowadays, when an elementary chemistry text can cost $100, fees are only part of a student's expenses. The College Board's *Trends in College Pricing, 2005* took an average of fees and charges across the nation to create a sample undergraduate budget including everything but lost income (the money the student might have earned if she or he had been working full-time).[6]

The national average for instructional fees for a full-time community college student (taking 15 credits a term) were estimated at $2,191 per year, far more than the $780 a California student would pay per year. But even excluding the price of instruction, costs for a year's worth of books and supplies, room and board, transportation and other expenses came to a hefty $9,501.

Just as the cost of going to college has risen across the nation, overall state support for higher education has declined. In 1980, state funding accounted for 50 percent of the public universities' budget. In 2004, it covered only 27 percent. Spending per student has dropped by about nine percent.[7]

Decline in the Value and Form of Federal Financial Aid

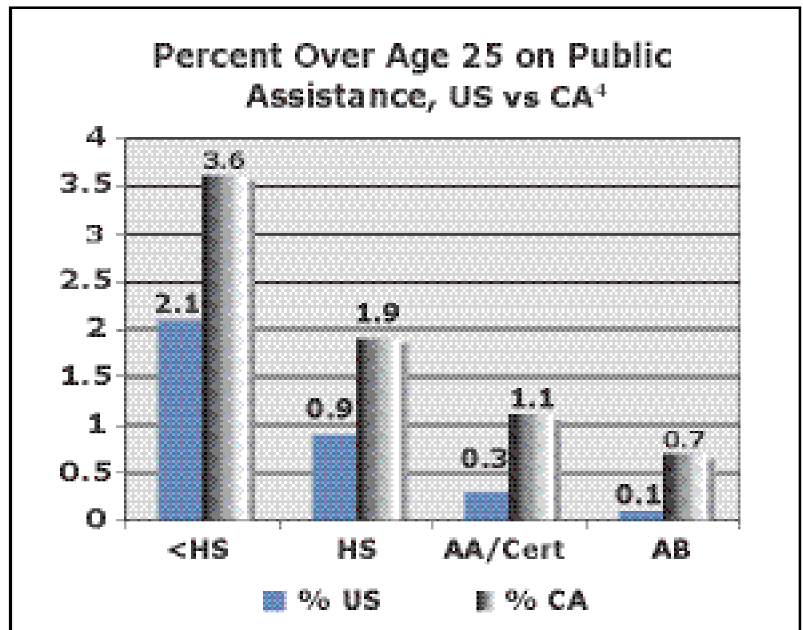
For California's poorer students, the federal system of Pell grants and student loans is an essential part of the total educational financing package. Yet the money available has not kept up with the rising cost of tuition or the increasing number of students who will need help. The College Board reports that nationwide, 5.3 million students received Pell grants in 2005, but the maximum award had remained flat for five years at $4,050. At the same time, the annual cost of attending a four-year public college—tuition, room and board (whether at home or away), books and transportation—now adds up to almost $16,000. The proportion of the average total college cost covered by the Pell grant has dropped to only 40 percent in 2004–05.

Student loans, which must be paid back in full, now comprise 56 percent of total aid, while grants, which don't have to be repaid, account for 38 percent.[7] In the 2002–03 school year, 65 percent of students who earned AB degrees owed an average $19,300 in loans.

The Higher Education Act, which sets the amount and terms of federal financial aid to college students, is up for reauthorization in 2006. Given the drain on the 2006–07 federal budget, the Congress has reduced the total amount of available aid by almost $13 billion just as the size of the student body is expected to increase. At the same time, on July 1, 2006, the interest charged on student loans rose significantly, from an average variable rate of 5.3 percent to a 6.8 percent fixed rate. The exact conditions of the Higher Education Act will not be fixed until Congress finishes work on the reauthorization in the fall of 2006.[8]

Our College-Age Population is Booming

The dollar pinch for publicly supported higher education could not have come at a worse time—just as the state's need for more workers equipped with higher level skills is expected to increase dramatically. As Baby Boomers retire, they will be succeeded in the workplace by their children, the so-called Baby Boomer II. Between now and 2015, somewhere between 500,000 and 750,000 additional young Californians will be graduating from high school, and they will be seeking further educational opportunities in record numbers. An estimated three-quarters of them will turn to community colleges.



Funding to support these added students has thus far been restricted to an enrollment growth rate of three percent, even in years when enrollment across the state exceeded six percent. A 2005 study of alternative funding scenarios, Return on Investment, points out that accommodating only the existing level of high school students going on to public higher education will shortchange California's future. To keep our state strong, we will need to extend college opportunities to a much broader percentage of students, especially among minority groups which have typically cut their education short.[9]

In addition, Proposition 13, passed in 1978, has severely reduced the amount of public money available for maintenance and new school construction over the last 35 years. After 30 years of postponed construction, the facilities to house the added students and the faculties to teach them are far too few to serve them all.

The state has, belatedly, undertaken to loosen the restrictions of Proposition 13. The passage of Proposition 39 in 2000, reduced the vote required to approve local school bonds from Prop. 13's two-thirds vote to 55 percent. Both state and local school construction bonds have begun to catch up on the backlog, but many of the new buildings will not be up and running until Baby Boomer II has peaked.

Where will the would-be students go? If we don't speed up new college construction, where will the educated replacements for our retiring Boomers come from?

Personal and Social Barriers to College Access

Numerous reasons have been cited for the low college participation rates of those who have the most to gain—the poor and the underserved. Outmoded state and school policies, dilapidated, underfunded schools, racial bias in testing or in teacher perceptions, overall poverty, student behavior, the absence of adequate financial support for students who can only attend college part-time: each of these has some truth. The figures are disturbing enough. Nationwide, only 25 percent of all high school graduates complete any college degree. Among African-Americans, only 18 percent earn a degree, and among Hispanics, only ten percent. The number of degrees and certificates awarded to California community college students per 100 undergraduates enrolled is extremely low, placing California forty-eighth among all the states.[10]

To identify obstacles students face, and to see what changes in school policies could enable more youngsters to succeed, researchers and advocates are looking more closely at what discourages so many.

Peer Pressure and Personal Connections

In many high school sub-cultures, doing well in school is definitely not cool. A report, *Acting White*, attempts to measure what the social costs are for minority students, particularly for black and Hispanic boys, who want to succeed in school.

> Whites continue to gain popularity as their grades increase. The social cost of 'acting white' is more severe for black males than for black females. It is larger for blacks in public schools, but nonexistent for blacks in private schools, "a finding that may partially explain why black kids in private schools do especially well. … Academically excellent students of all races retain their popularity at segregated and private schools."[11]

The Absence of a College-Going Culture Among Many Minority Students

A series of focus-group interviews with Hispanic high school seniors and their parents, conducted in 2000 and again in 2003, reveals a great disparity between the expectations of both Hispanic parents and their students and the educational paths that Hispanic students actually follow. Even more than other groups, the parents of Hispanic high school seniors believe that a college education is essential to getting a good job and a comfortable middle-class lifestyle. But this desire for higher education does not translate into action. Hispanic students as a group are much less likely than non-Hispanic whites or African-American students to obtain higher education degrees.[12]

Limited School-Based Help

To manage within the tight budgets of the last few years, many K-12 districts have cut all non-classroom positions to the bone. The state does not require districts to have high school counselors, so many local boards have made the position a low priority. As a result, estimates of the average high school counselor case load range from 709 students to 966 students, somewhere between two and three times the national average. California now ranks absolute last among the states in the number of students per high school counselor.[13] For children who are the first in their families to dream of college, difficulty in arranging to meet with a school counselor is often an unforeseen and impenetrable barrier to college access.

The Toll of Inadequate Counseling

Black and Latino communities, of course, include significant percentages of well-assimilated middle-class families who send their children off to college at the same rate as white families.

At the other end of the spectrum are the newly arrived immigrant families, the truly impoverished, emancipated foster children, and those whose families move too much or are too unstable for them to catch up to their age-mates.

With so few counselors in high school to encourage them, these children have little chance of learning enough to make their way to college, or indeed of staying in school long enough to earn a high school diploma. Only some of them will be able to return to school later in life to make up for lost time. For such students, the community colleges are the natural point of entry.

The third group, the "college-maybe" students, might make it through to higher education if they had access to essential college-going information early in their K-12 years. The parents of

their better-off classmates teach their children how to get ready for college, but the “maybes,” to a surprising degree, are left to their own devices.

Many parents of students in this group lack any information about college themselves. Teachers and counselors in high-poverty schools have little time to counsel individual students and often give up. With the statistics to back them up, they assume that only some of their students will graduate, much less go on to college. Their low expectations create a self-fulfilling cycle of low achievement.

Children from poor backgrounds with dreams of becoming doctors or computer programmers or engineers have no way of knowing how to proceed. They get their information and/or misinformation via the grapevine. The lucky ones find a teacher who will mentor them, or an older cousin, or the big brother of a friend, who can provide useful, accurate guidance about which courses to take, how to get financial aid, the importance of meeting application deadlines and other parts of the college access process. Others have to make their way alone. As children with limited experience, they cannot imagine the great variety of possible careers for which even a two-year program at the community college would qualify them.

The Economic and Workforce Development Program of the California community colleges has initiatives developing curricula for the jobs of the future in emerging industry sectors such as:

- Advanced transportation technology (alternative fuels)
- Digital manufacturing (nanotechnologies in manufacturing, and new telecommunications technology)
- Biotechnology
- International trade development
- Health care
- Multimedia and entertainment
- Small business development and homeland security.

Because these new fields will require people with high-level math, computer and communications skills, the old division into vocational or academic training is outmoded. People entering these and many other such career paths will need both theoretical grounding and hands-on experience to do well.

(Information about college districts offering these programs is available at the Economic and Workforce Development Web site: www.cccewd.net.)

Many high schools currently offer little information or guidance to children who can’t learn about such advanced opportunities at home. Teachers and guidance counselors themselves are often not aware of them. In a small follow-up to the original Public Agenda survey of Hispanic high school seniors and their parents, teachers’ comments offered a very different set of expectations from those of youngsters with high hopes. One teacher said:

> *When I ask, “What are you going to do when you finish school?” they say, “We’ll just get on welfare… I try to encourage my students to focus on something, whether a job after high school, or going into the military.*

Another remarked:

> *We use language they don’t understand; when we use acronyms they have no idea what we’re talking about. So they’re lost.*[14]

Children operating in an information vacuum invent rules for themselves. Many have no idea that scholarships and financial aid are available if the proper forms are submitted by a certain date. Without knowledgeable adult guidance, filling out application and loan forms by themselves is an intimidating task.

Like many other adolescents, the students think in terms of short-range plans and lack any notion of how far in advance one has to apply to college. Most do not know about, or cannot access, help that is abundantly available on the Web. Such students are attracted to jobs in the here and now. Many of them are already working, some of them as much as 20 hours a week. Even a minimum-wage job puts money in your pocket right away, while the possibilities that college opens up are only vague promises for the future.

Little Exposure to Rigorous Courses

The best indicator for success in college or the workplace is a high-school transcript that includes challenging courses. Math classes beyond Algebra II, science classes, foreign languages, advanced placement courses all require

students to develop the kind of self-discipline and study skills that prepare them well for college-level work in college or on the job.

A recent survey polled 400 employers, 300 college instructors and almost 1,500 recent high school graduates (861 in two- and four-year colleges and 626 not in college). The survey revealed that the vast majority, including over 56 percent of the young adults, wished that high school had set higher expectations for their students and offered more rigorous courses.

> *"...fewer than one-quarter of high school graduates feel that they were significantly challenged and faced high expectations in order to graduate from high school…. An overwhelming majority of graduates say that they would have worked harder if their high school demanded more of them and set higher academic standards.*[15]
>
> *Even dropouts, many of whom report that boredom is a significant cause for leaving school, say that they would have worked harder if schools had demanded more from them."*[16]

In most high-poverty high schools, however, students have few academic challenges to stretch their minds. Highly qualified teachers in math and science are scarce, honors classes are rare, and advanced placement classes even rarer. The advent of high-stakes testing at both the state and federal level, the California API rankings, the California High School Exit Exam, and the federal No Child Left Behind Act, have left teachers with few options but to "teach to the test."

The California Education Opportunity Report 2006: Roadblocks to College compares every high school in the state to the state average in five key measures of educational opportunity—access to highly qualified teachers, rigorous course offerings, the percent of the graduating class that has passed the California Exit Exam, graduation rates, and the percent of graduates who enroll in California's public higher education institutions.[17] Information about every high school can be found through links on the report's Web site, www.edopp.org, and compared to other schools in the state.

Fear of Education Debts

A critical deterrent to would-be college-goers is the lost earnings for students who attend college full-time. Especially for students who are the first in their family to seek higher education, finances are a major anxiety. People from low-income families are much more likely than middle-class students to attend part-time, or to delay entry into college, in order to accumulate some savings or add to family income. Since most financial aid now comes in the form of loans that the student must pay back, many poorer students turn away, unwilling to run up large debts to pay for unknown benefits in an indefinite future. The need for money in the present makes the repayment of large loans over time seem impossible to achieve.[18]

Students who postpone their college careers, however, complete their degrees or certificate programs at much lower rates than those who start straight from high school and attend full time. Some 80 percent of community college students work. They may urgently want advanced education, but under the present rules, many of them fear that the debt load they would have to carry would be too heavy to manage. They have a strong need for scholarships, grants and more flexible stipends rather than loans. Merely lowering interest rates or lengthening repayment schedules will not give them adequate support to attend college full time.

So what can we do about it? And how much will it take to ensure that all California's children have an equal chance to achieve?

We Can Change the Outcomes

The good news is that we know how to fix things. We already have some fine models of what success looks like and good ideas about how to prepare many more school children to benefit from them. The bad news is that it will take money, persistence, and the focused attention of everyone—from the President of the United States on down through the governors and legislators of the 50 states, captains of industry, educators, ordinary citizens, teachers, parents, and students. The massive effort necessary to ensure that higher education is a real option for all our children will require sustained, serious commitments from all of us. Nothing less than the future of our country is at stake.

And the effort has already begun. At the national level, U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spelling has instituted a high-powered Advisory Commission on the Future of Higher Education to bolster our global competitiveness by improving our education system, particularly in science and math. Federal agencies such as the Census Bureau, the Department of Labor, the Department of Education, and others now have Web sites specifically designed to provide parents and children with detailed information, in English and in Spanish, on how to identify a college, a career, a course of study, how to find and apply for federal aid. They offer libraries of information about career education.

The Internet has made available to everyone a wealth of information about programs helping children to find their own future opportunities. Some of these are among the added resources listed at the end of this report.

For details about different types of jobs the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, published every year by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, offers all kinds of information about a wide range of jobs—how much they pay, what the work is like, how much education they require. Most libraries will have a hard copy, usually in the reference section.

Businesses and local officials have come together in organizations like Achieve, the California Business Roundtable and the State Scholars Program to provide added resources and incentives to local school districts. Foundations large and small have directed their resources to finding and supporting schools serving the poor that are successful. The Education Resources Institute has helped establish College Access Centers around the country, locally run and funded service organizations that help mentor any student who walks in the door to gain "college knowledge."[19]

Research studies have documented that high schools focusing on academic achievement for all students do much better at graduating college-ready, work-ready students than schools with similar student profiles that focus only on getting students to stay in school.[20] Organizations like the Pathways to College Network and the Campaign for College Opportunity and others have formed partnerships with professional educators, foundations, and higher education institutions to get the word out.

In California, both the UC and CSU systems have begun to discuss simplified transfer procedures for students ready to move up to a four-year program.[21] The legislature is pressuring the K-12 system and the institutions of higher education to develop common standards for college preparatory courses, so that fewer students who come to college drop out before they complete their programs. State budgets for every branch of public higher education now include funds for outreach into high schools, to give more students a taste of college life.

The community colleges, in partnerships with local K-12 districts, have created programs like concurrent enrollment and Early College High Schools and Middle Schools, which bring younger students onto college campuses to take rigorous classes while they are still in secondary school. Success in these courses earns students credits toward a high school diploma and an associate (AA) degree at the same time, free of charge. Early reports about the effectiveness of these programs have been extremely positive.

Equally important are efforts to reach out to parents and their children before they even get to high school, so that they understand that school is the place in which to prepare for the rest of their lives.

The second part of this report is a guide for parents with suggestions about how to work with their children (and their children's schools) to ensure that each child has access to useful, timely information about going to college.

Under a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the League of Women Voters of Orange County undertook one such effort in the spring of 2004. The League organized a field trip for 250 mostly Latino sixth-grade children and their parents to the School of Continuing Education of North Orange Coast Community College District.

Along with activities such as touring the campus facilities and eating lunch, the youngsters were given an interest inventory to identify what they liked to do, in school or outside it. Job clusters then showed how many different careers were open to people who shared their special areas of interest. The next bout of thinking came with a list of necessary skills—what people who chose to work in any particular profession would need to know—college courses in X and Y and Z—to qualify for entry level positions in those careers. And, finally, the children received a list of high school subjects they would need to take to prepare for those college courses.

By connecting all the dots, for parents and children alike, the North Orange Community College District's counselor provided a purpose for high school. The goal of the presentations was to help children understand how college could create much more varied and rewarding career options for the future. If the children could find a personal reason to do well, to persist in the face of difficulty, and to seek help when they needed it, they could take charge of their own learning and succeed.[22]

The youngsters found the day on campus exhilarating and inspiring. Their thank-you notes were full of the pleasures of discovery:

"*My favorite part of the whole day was when you presented us the importance of going to college, and how I can go to college without worrying about the cost. I learned that I could get scholarships, how I could start earning money from right now, and much more many ways. I learned that it is really important for me to go to college… This trip has inspired me to think about what I will be when I grow up and going to college also.*

—Karen B

…My career is all set. The topics I have chosen are either graphic design or repairing bicycles. I looked at all the careers and it shocked me. When I walked into the college I said to myself, 'Wow, this is the college for me!'

—Rudy A

Thank you so much for helping learn how important college is. My dad and I really liked it… My favorite part about the whole day was being on the college campus… I look forward to one day going to college, and work really hard. We all appreciate it.

—Jonathan O

My favorite part that I enjoyed was getting that chance to actually be there. I also enjoyed it when I learned that without an education you can't get anywhere in life, so you really convinced me about going to college. I would really like to have my little brother that is in kindergarten to have the same opportunity…. I really realized that I can actually do something with my life and be proud of myself, I can do it….You encouraged me to make a difference in my life!"

—Frankie G

These thank-you notes were, in turn, inspiring to all of us, and remind us why we must continue to work diligently to bring the same opportunity to all California's children and to their parents.

Endnotes:

1 *All Students Reaching the Top*, Learning Point Associates for North Central Regional Education Laboratory, p. 4. Also, *Time Magazine*, April 17, 2006, *Special Report: Dropout Nation*, pp. 30–40.

2 Committee for Economic Development, *Cracks in the Pipeline: A Business Leader's Guide to Higher Education Reform*, 2005.

3 The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, *Policy Alert Supplement, November, 2005*, Fig. 1, *California's Working-Age Population Ages 25–64, by Race/Ethnicity.* See also Campaign for College Opportunity and the California Business Roundtable, *Keeping California's Edge: The Growing Demand for Highly Educated Workers*, April 2006.

4 The Institute for Higher Education Policy, *The Investment Payoff: A 50-State Analysis of the Public and Private Benefits of Higher Education*, March 2003.

5 Patrick Perry, Office of the Chancellor, California Community College System *Addendum to 'Changes in Enrollment of the CCCs,' Impacts of Student Fee Increase and Budget Changes on Enrollment in the California Community Colleges, Analysis of Fee Increase from $18 to $26 per unit*, December 2005, available at www.cccco.edu/divisions/tris/rp/reports.htm.

6 College Board, *Trends in College Pricing, 2005.* See also The Project on Student Debt, *Quick Facts About Student Debt*, May 2006, www.projectonstudentdebt.org.

7 State Higher Education Executive Officers, *State Higher Education Finance FY 2005*, March 2006. See also A. *Inside Higher Ed*, "Community College Conundrum," April 14, 2006; B. Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance *Report on Student Aid;* and C. College Board, *Trends in Student Aid*, 2005.

8 The Project on Student Debt, *Quick Facts About Student Debt*, April 2006, available at www.projectonstudentdebt.org. See also Stephen Burd, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, "Key Student-Aid Changes Made by Congress" July 7, 2006, and ongoing news as Congress debates the renewal of the Higher Education Act.

9 Henry Brady, Michael Hout and Jon Stiles, *Return on Investment: Educational Choices and Demographic Change in California's Future*, for the Campaign for College Opportunity, November 30, 2005.

10 EdSource, "How California Ranks: a National Perspective," November 2005, available at www.edsource.org.

11 Roland Fryer and Paul Torelli, National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 11334, *An Empirical Analysis of 'Acting White'*, January 2006.

12 John Immerwahr, *With Diploma in Hand*, for the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and Public Agenda, June 2003, figure 1, p. 1.

13 The lower estimate is from John Rogers, Veronica Terrique, Siomara Valladares, and Jeannie Oakes, UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education and Access (IDEA), *California Education Opportunity Report, 2005: Roadblocks to College*, April 2006, www.edopp.org. The higher figure is from the American School Counselors Association as reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 2006, "Candidates Seek Lighter Load for School Counselors."

14 Immerwahr, p.10.

15 *Rising to the Challenge: Are High School Graduates Prepared for College and Work?* A Study of Recent High School Graduates, College Instructors and Employers, 2005, conducted for Achieve Inc. by Peter D. Hart Research Assoc., Public Opinion Strategies.

16 John M. Bridgeland, John J. DiIulio, Jr., Karen Burke Morison, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, Civic Enterprises, March 2006.

17 See *California Education Opportunity Report 2005: Roadblocks to College*.

18 Pamela Burdman "Fear of Borrowing" in *National Crosstalk*, Spring 2006, issued by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. See also The Project on Student Debt white paper, "Addressing Student Loan Repayment Burdens," February 2006.

19 Joel H. Vargas, *College Knowledge: Addressing Information Barriers to College*, for The Education Research Institute, 2005.

20 Jordan Horowitz, *Inside High School Reform: Making the Changes that Matter*, WestEd, August 2005. See also Ed Trust West, *Gaining Traction, Gaining Ground: How Some High Schools Accelerate Learning for Struggling Students*, November 2005, and T. Williams, M. Kirst, E. Haertel, et al (2005) EdSource, *Similar Students, Different Results: Why Do Some Schools Do Better?* A large-scale survey of California elementary schools serving low-income students, Mountain View, CA: EdSource, www.edsource.org.

21 Legislative Analyst's Office, *Promoting Access to Higher Education: A Review of the State's Transfer Process*, January 2006. See also *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 24, 2005 "University of California and State's Community-College System Start Joint Project to Strengthen Two-Year Colleges."

22. The Powerpoint presentations developed by George Dooley for the students of the Patrick Henry School are available on the Web site of the North Orange County Community College District School of Continuing Education, www.sce.cc.ca.us/PatrickHenry.

Further Reading:

High School Reform

1. Legislative Analyst's Office, *Improving High School, A Strategic Approach*, May 2005
2. Brenda J. Turnbull, *Citizen Mobilization and Community Institutions*, The Public Education Network's Policy Initiatives, May 2006, for Policy Studies Associates, www.policystudies.com.
3. Andrea Venezia and Michael W. Kirst. *Educational Policy Report on Stanford Bridge Project*: "Inequitable Opportunities: How Current Education Systems and Policies Undermine the Chance for Student Persistence and Success in College," Vol 19, No 2, May 2005, 283–307.
4. Robert Blum, *School Connectedness: Improving Students' Lives*, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, 2005.
5. William G. Tierney, Zoe B. Corwin, Julia E. Colyar, editors. *Preparing for College: Nine Elements of Effective Outreach*, SUNY Series, Frontiers in Education.
6. WK Kellog Foundation, *Enlace—Strengthen the Education Pipeline for Latinos*, December 16, 2005, available at www.latinos.com/news/education/la-na-literacy.

Student Costs

1. Bob Dickeson, quoting Lumina Foundation *Focus* magazine in the *Oakland Tribune*, October 19, 2005, "Overcoming College Cost Obstacles."
2. *Inside Higher Ed*, "Price Increases Sharpest at Public Colleges," September 30, 2005.

Demographic Statistics

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
Youth Indicators 2005:
Trends in the Well-Being of American Youth;
First Generation Students in Postsecondary Education: A Look at their College Transcripts, July 2005.
A Profile of the American High School Senior in 2004: A First Look: Initial Results from the First Follow-up of the Education Longitudinal Study.
necs.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005171.

What Students Should Know

1. American Federation of Teachers, *American Educator*, Spring 2004, *It's Time to Tell the Kids: If You Don't Do Well in High School, You Won't Do Well in College (or on the Job)*, and *High School Preparation is the Best Predictor of College Graduation*.
2. Jobs for the Future: Improving Youth Transitions; Many publications. Sample titles:
   Connected Learning Communities;
   A Toolkit for Reinventing High School;
   College Credit in High School;
   Developing Pathways To and Through College for Urban Youth;
   Bridging the Divide;
   Double the Numbers;
   Early College High School Initiative;
   Redesigning High School;
   General website, www.jff.org. Click on link to *Projects* and then *Improving Youth Transitions*.

Outcomes

1. Colleen Moore and Nancy Shulock, *Variations on a Theme: Higher Education Performance in California by Region and Race*, June 2005, Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy www.csus.edu/ihe.
2. American Association of School Administrators, *The School Administrator*, "Ready for College and Career," January 2006.
3. Harvard University, The Civil Rights Project, *Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis in California*, March 24, 2005.

Community Colleges

1. Andrea Conklin Bueschel, *The Missing Link:* The Role of Community Colleges in the Transitions Between High School and Colleges, for The Bridge Project, February 2003.
2. Lumina Foundation, *Focus Magazine*, "Dreams Detoured/Community Colleges, a vital and affordable option also feel the pinch," Fall 2005.
3. *Chronicle of. Higher Education*, "Community Colleges by the Numbers," October 29, 2004, at www.chronicle.com/daily/2005/11/2005`10704n.html.

What the State Needs to Do

1. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, (AVID): *Public Education and Black Male Students,* for the Schott Foundation at www.avidonline.org.
2. The Education Trust: *The Funding Gap 2005: Low-Income and Minority Students Shortchanged by Most States*, available at www.edtrust.org.
3. Cheryl Almeida, Cassius Johnson, Adria Steinberg, *Making Good on a Promise: What Policymakers Can Do to Support the Educational Persistence of Dropouts*, Jobs for the Future, April 2006.

Programs that Succeed

1. California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP) set up by Legislature in 1984 to improve the preparation of all students for college at www.calstate.edu/capp.
2. National College Access Program Directory, at the Web site www.collegeaccess.org/accessprogramdirectory/aspx.rep_services, offers links to numerous programs helping minority, low-income and immigrant youngsters succeed in higher education.
3. Celina Torres, Amalia Marquez, *Reaching Higher Ground: Parental Outreach Programs at the Post Secondary Level*, The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute of the University of Southern California, May 2006, available at www.trpi.org/pdfs/rhg.pdf.

Surveys of Opinion

1. Peter Edelman, Harry J. Holzer, Paul Offner, *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men*, Urban Institute, 2005.
2. Public Agenda, *Reality Check 2006: How Black and Hispanic Families Rate Their Schools*, June 2006.
3. Public Agenda, *Life After High School: Young People Talk About Their Hopes and Prospects*, 2005, www.publicagenda.org.

Acknowledgements:

The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund acknowledges with gratitude the many contributions which have made this publication possible.

Helene Lecar wrote the text, Helen Haug provided the graphics, Kay Bruce, with Wanda Schaffer, of the League of Women Voters of North Orange County, organized the field trip for Patrick Henry's sixth graders. Our thanks go to all the teachers and administrators at both the school and the college district for making that trip possible. Most especially, we wish to thank George Dooley, the counselor at the North Orange County Community College District's School of Continuing Education, who developed the program presentations.

The generosity of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation enabled us not only to publish this report, but also to experiment with different ways of bringing our message to the public, including the Patrick Henry field trip.

In particular, we would like to thank Pamela Burdman, our program officer at the Foundation, whose reading of the manuscript enriched it in many ways. Helpful readers within the League were Lynn Lowry, Kay Bruce, Nancy Rogers, Doris Petersen, Julie Rajan, Robbie Davis, Trudy Schafer, and especially our editor, Kate Quick.

We also thank the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute of the University of Southern California, for permitting us to reprint their Spanish language flyer "Ir a la universidad es poder," which appears at the end of the Parents' Guide.

Jacqueline Jacobberger, President
League of Women Voters of California Education Fund