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## State News Summary: California

### California Has Slipped in Providing College Opportunities to Youth

**San Jose, CA, and Washington, D.C.** — The chances of young people in California going to college have dropped by 9% in the last decade, according to a report card on higher education released by two California-based organizations, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and the Campaign for College Opportunity (CCO).

“Even in areas where California does relatively well, such as participation in higher education, opportunities for young Californians have diminished since the early 1990s. The state’s poor performance in most areas related to college preparation and enrollment of high school graduates in college is the most significant finding of *Measuring Up 2004* for California,” according to Patrick Callan, president of the National Center. “Today’s young Californians may be the first in the modern history of the state to experience an actual decline in college opportunity.”

The report card, *Measuring Up 2004*, is issued every two years by the National Center. According to the report:

- Over the past decade, the likelihood of 9<sup>th</sup> graders enrolling in college within four years has decreased by 9% compared to the national decline of 3%. The state’s decrease is primarily due to a drop in the percentage of high school graduates going on to college.
- Net college costs for low- and middle-income students to attend community colleges represent nearly 40% of their annual family income—despite the fact that California leads the nation in the low price of its two-year colleges. For the same students at public four-year institutions, net college costs represent nearly half of their income. (Net college costs equal tuition, room, and board minus financial aid.) Although California has made some improvements in the affordability of college for students and families over the last decade, recent tuition and budgetary decisions are likely to reverse this strong performance.

- California is the top state in the percentage of working-age adults (ages 25 to 49) enrolled part-time in college-level education or training. The availability of college to large numbers of adults contributes substantially to the state's grade of "A" in college participation.

"The National Center study reinforces the fact that college opportunity for California students is in crisis and getting worse," said Eliseo Medina, executive vice president, Service Employees International Union and CCO board member. "In the past decade we've seen a decline in opportunity and in the next decade, many more students will be turned away from California's public colleges and universities. California must take action to curb this crisis now, before more students are denied the right to a higher education."

"If California youth are not able to get the higher education they seek, their ability to provide a good living for themselves and their families will be jeopardized," said Bill Hauck, president of the California Business Roundtable and CCO board member. "The impact this would have on the development of the workforce of tomorrow as well as the impact on California's economy in the long term, demands that we must work together to remedy the college access crisis before the consequences become more widespread."

*Measuring Up 2004* grades all 50 states in six overall areas of performance, based on quantitative measures. For the first time, the report card also provides information about each state's improvement over the past decade.

**California's Grades:**

Preparation:	C
Participation:	A
Affordability:	B
Completion:	C
Benefits:	A
Learning:	I

Most states received an "Incomplete" in learning because there are no comparable data that would allow for meaningful state comparisons.

*Measuring Up 2004* is available at [www.highereducation.org](http://www.highereducation.org) as a national report and as 50 state reports. The national report offers a summary of the nation's current performance and its improvement over the past decade. The state reports

provide a detailed picture of higher education in each state. The Web site also provides comparisons of states based on each performance measure.

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and the Campaign for College Opportunity collaborated on the release and dissemination of *Measuring Up 2004* in California. The National Center promotes policies that enhance Americans' opportunities to pursue and achieve a quality higher education. Established in 1998, the National Center is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. It is not associated with any institution of higher education, with any political party, or with any government agency. The Campaign for College Opportunity is a California non-profit organization solely devoted to ensuring that the next generation of college students has the chance to go to college as promised by the Master Plan for Higher Education. The co-founders of the CCO include the California Business Roundtable, MALDEF, and the Community College League of California. Following the release of *Measuring Up 2004*, CCO is organizing a statewide Listening Tour of California to learn how this problem is affecting communities across the state and to solicit ideas for solutions from educators, the business community, labor and local communities.

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