



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

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California Education Leaders Focus on College Affordability by Advancing College Promise Partnerships

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — More than 400 education leaders, including the heads of all public education systems in California, have gathered today with their partners to discuss and develop strategies to improve and expand College Promise partnerships, which offer financial, academic, and community support to eligible students throughout the state.

College Promise initiatives are part of a growing national movement to support college access and completion, especially for low- to middle-income students, creating a “college-going culture” in the communities where they exist and strengthening local economies.

“Across the nation, education, business, and government leaders from local communities and states are working together to develop College programs to enable students to start and complete a community college education without taking on mountains of debt,” said Dr. Martha J. Kanter, the Executive Director of the College Promise Campaign. “But nowhere is the pace picking up faster than in California, as local and state leaders are building and expanding free community college programs at a rapid rate. Today’s meeting is a great opportunity for California’s education leaders to discuss the most effective ways to create and enhance the state’s College Promise initiatives and to make them successful and financially sustainable.”

College affordability is a priority among all of California’s higher education institutions; the College Promise initiative affords a promising pathway to increase student success while keeping college affordable. The event features a plenary session with:

- Tom Torlakson, Superintendent, California Department of Education
- Eloy Oakley, Chancellor, California Community Colleges
- Janet Napolitano, President, University of California
- Loren Blanchard, Executive Vice Chancellor for Student and Academic, California State University
- Kristen Soares, President, Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities

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California is a national leader in the advancement of College Promise programs, with more than 50 active or announced Promise programs underway — more than any other state in the country. California’s Promise programs leverage federal funding, state aid, and the California Community Colleges Board of Governor’s Fee Waiver Program, coupled with public and private resources.

A growing body of research suggests that students who participate in these programs are more likely to enroll in college, complete more credits, and receive a degree than their non-Promise classmates. For example, at Ventura College, students participating in the community’s Promise partnership were nearly twice as likely as their non-Promise peers to enroll as full-time students. These students were also more likely to transfer to a four-year university and receive a college degree or certificate.

College Promise partnerships are much more than scholarship programs. They have the potential to be a framework for student and community success by developing an ecosystem of low- to no-cost pathways that allow students to achieve their higher education goals. In addition to funding, College Promise initiatives often provide student support structures at various stages of a student’s education. At the high school level, these supports can include field trips to college campuses, assistance to complete FAFSA and college applications, dual enrollment programs, academic and personal counseling, mentoring, and tutoring. At the college level, student support can include cohort models, summer courses and orientation programs, priority registration, guaranteed course availability, and academic counseling and tutoring.

Breakout sessions at the event will focus on key elements of successful College Promise programs such as strengthening cross-sector partnerships, including those with K–12 education, industry, local government officials, trustees, and the community at large; securing financial sustainability; aligning programs with existing academic and student support systems; and developing evaluation plans.

Teaming up to sponsor the event at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Sacramento are the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, the Community College League of California, the College Promise Campaign, the California College Promise Leadership Team, the Regional Educational Laboratory West at WestEd, and Los Rios Community College. Financial support for the event comes from REL West at WestEd, ACT, Pearson, The California Community Foundation, and the Santa Barbara City College Foundation.

California is a national leader for the advancement of College Promise programs. For more information on College Promise programs in California, please email Mary Rauner, mrauner@wested.org.

California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation, composed of 72 districts and 114 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education in English and math, and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor’s Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/CACommColleges>, or <https://twitter.com/CalCommColleges>.