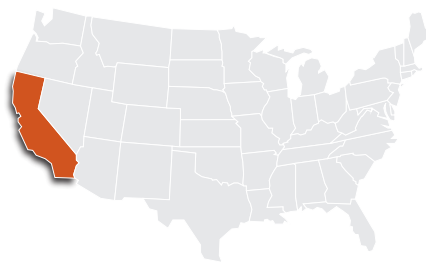


# The State of Higher Education in California

## AVERAGE WON'T DO



### Regional Profile — Central Coast

*Counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura*

California's future is directly linked to our ability to educate our residents and sustain a competitive workforce. Our community colleges and universities have provided the opportunity for millions of Californians to succeed, but our future is at risk. Industries in which California is considered a leader—technology, healthcare, agriculture, biotechnology, aerospace, and entertainment—are dependent upon an educated workforce yet, according to estimates in other studies, we are on track to be 2.3 million college degrees and certificates short of meeting the workforce demands of our economy by 2025.<sup>1</sup>

An economically and socially vibrant California requires dramatic gains in the preparation of students for college, access to an affordable college education, rates of college-going, and college completion across all regions. **The Central Coast has scattered performance on various measures of higher education: college preparation rates are only average but participation rates are the best in the state, four-year university students are more likely to earn their degrees than community college students, and adults in the Central Coast experience higher wages as a result of higher educational attainment.**

When compared to the rest of the nation, California performs no better than average in preparing and graduating students from college. Even more troubling, serious gaps across regions of the state and among racial/ethnic groups exist. This is simply unacceptable. California has never aspired to be just average. California can excel in higher education once again if, and only if, we have a plan for turning things around.

California's Current Performance	Category	Central Coast Compared to California <sup>2</sup>
worse than most states	Preparation <i>How prepared are students for college-level work?</i>	average
better than most states	Participation <i>How many students are going to college?</i>	better than the state average
average	Completion <i>How many students earn a certificate or degree?</i>	better than the state average
better than most states	Benefits <i>What are the benefits of a college degree to students and the state?</i>	better than the state average

Source: Moore, Colleen, Connie Tan, and Nancy Shulock. (2014). *Average Won't Do: Performance Trends in California Higher Education as a Foundation for Action*. Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy—California State University. Sacramento, CA.

This brief, prepared by the Campaign for College Opportunity, highlights the Central Coast regional key findings from the full report, *Average Won't Do: Performance Trends in California Higher Education as a Foundation for Action*, by the Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy, as well as findings from other sources where noted.

<sup>1</sup> California Competes. (2012). *The Road Ahead: Higher education, California's promise, and our future economy*. San Francisco, CA. Retrieved from [http://californiacompetes.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/CaCompetes\\_Report\\_Final-2.pdf](http://californiacompetes.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/CaCompetes_Report_Final-2.pdf).

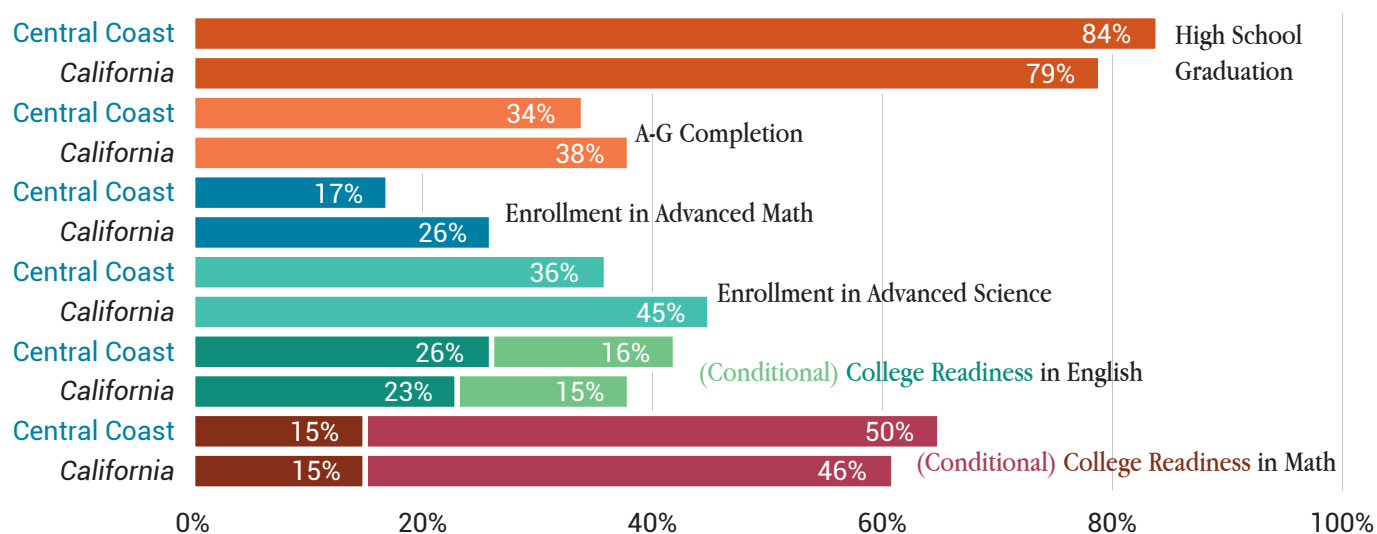
<sup>2</sup> California's performance compared to other states was prepared by IHELP while the comparison between the Central Coast to California was made by the Campaign for College Opportunity.

# PREPARATION

*Central Coast performs at about the state average*

- According to California’s Department of Education, high schools in the Central Coast graduate 84% of students within four years—the fourth highest among the 14 regions in the state.
- The share of high school graduates who complete the A-G requirements in the Central Coast (34%) is lower than the state average—only one in three high school graduates is eligible for California’s public four-year universities.
- The Central Coast ranks 12th and 7th among the 14 regions across the state for the share of high school students enrolled in advanced math and science courses, respectively—this is significantly lower than the state average.
- While the college readiness rates in the Central Coast are slightly higher than other regions in the state, 58% of high school juniors tested are still not ready for college English and just more than one-third are not ready for college math.

## College Readiness of High School Students



Sources: High school graduation rates are taken from the California Department of Education while all other data points are from *Average Won't Do*.

Notes: High school graduation rates are for the 2011-12 academic year. A-G completion is a share of 2012 high school graduates. A-G is a sequence of courses that are the minimum requirement to be eligible to attend a California State University or University of California. Enrollment in advanced math is a share of 11th-12th grade enrollment in the 2011-12 academic year. Enrollment in advanced science is a share of 11th-12th grade enrollment in the 2011-12 academic year. *The first percentage (darker color) in the (conditional) college readiness measures indicates that a student is college-ready; the second percentage (lighter color) indicates that a student is conditionally ready (see below for further information).* College and conditional college readiness in English is a share of 11th graders taking the Early Assessment Program exam in 2013. College and conditional college readiness in math is a share of 11th graders taking the Early Assessment Program exam in 2013. *Measures are drawn from different years due to availability of data.*

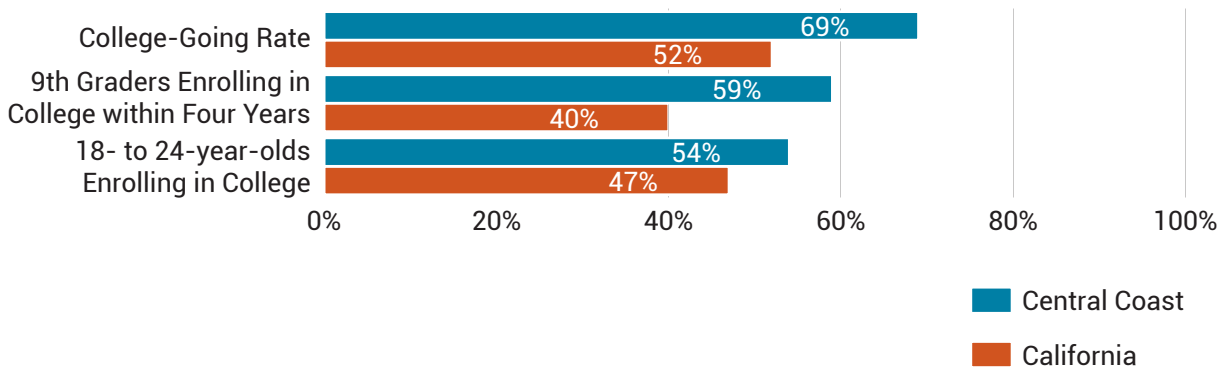
The Early Assessment Program (EAP) is a program of the California State University (CSU) system in which high school juniors have the option of completing some additional items on California Standardized Tests (CST) to determine their college readiness. Students who are determined to be college ready according to the EAP exam are allowed to enroll in college-level coursework without further assessment tests upon enrollment in the CSU. Students who are determined to be “conditionally” ready will not be required to take further assessment tests at the CSU as long as they take specified courses in their senior year or earn a specific score in the relevant subject on a national standardized test (SAC, ACT, or AP).

# PARTICIPATION

*Central Coast performs better than the state average*

- The Central Coast has the best rates of college participation in the state: more than two-thirds of Central Coast high school graduates immediately enroll in college after graduation—17 percentage points higher than the state average.
- Approximately six in ten 9th graders enroll in college within four years and 54% of 18- to 24-year olds are enrolled in college.

## College Participation, 2012

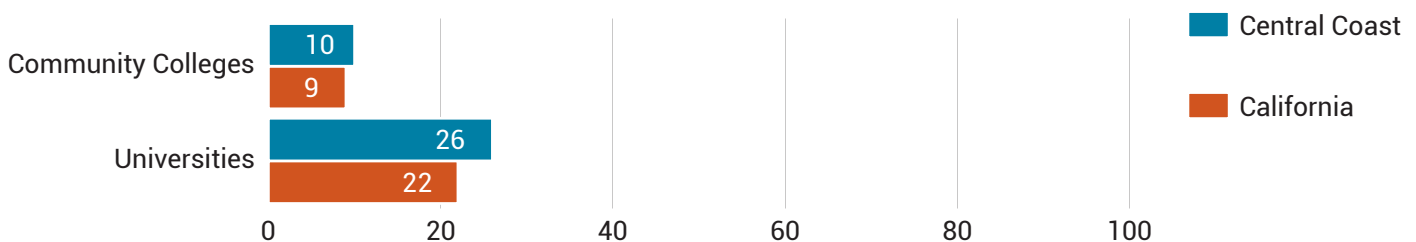


# COMPLETION

*Central Coast performs better than the state average*

- Community colleges located in the Central Coast awarded a certificate or degree to 10 out of 100 enrolled undergraduates in 2012. This is only marginally better than the state average.
- Almost 26 baccalaureate degrees are awarded for every 100 students from the Central Coast who enroll in four-year public universities. This is the second-best rate in the state.

## Certificates and Degrees Awarded per 100 Undergraduates, 2012

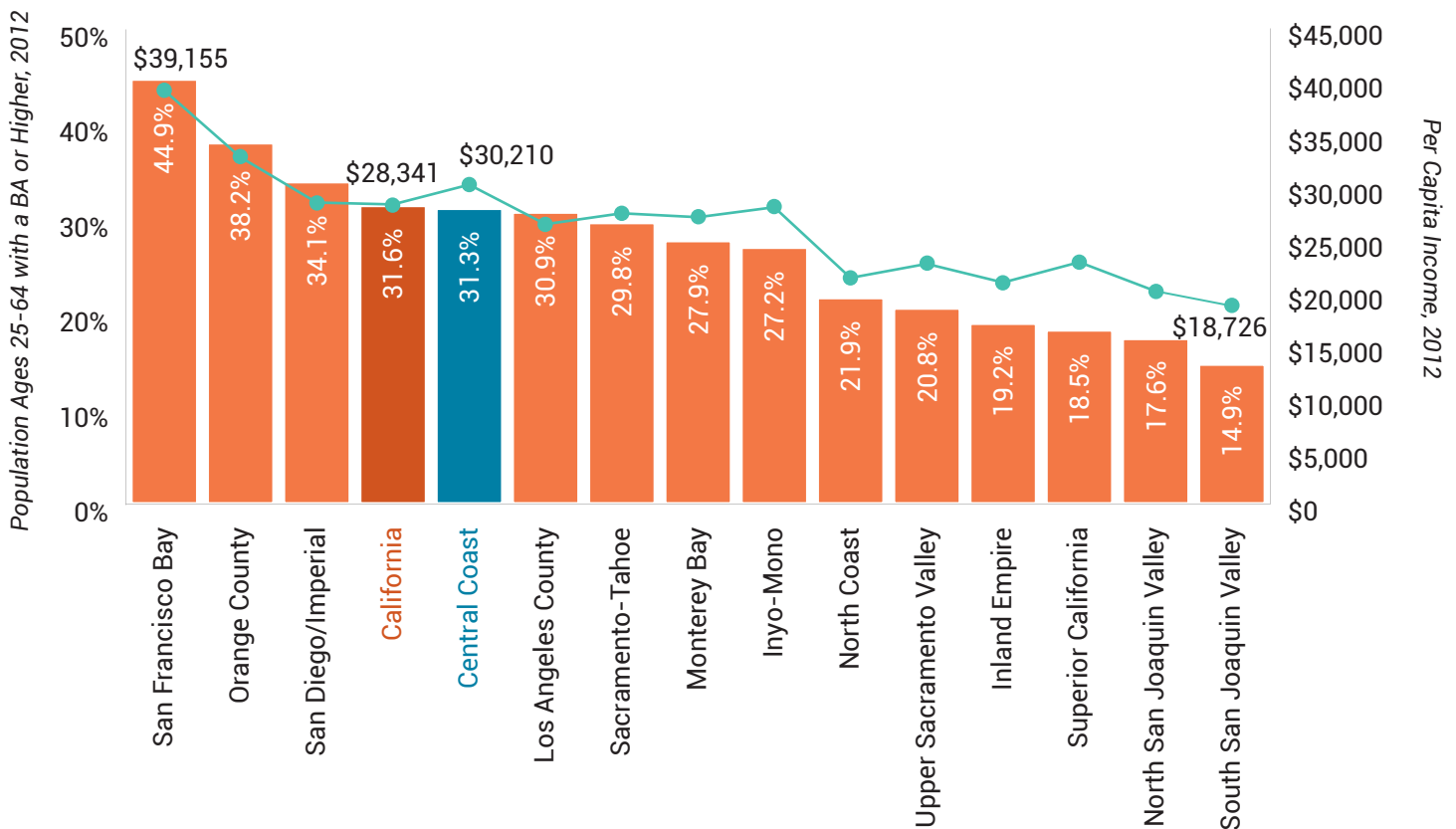


# BENEFITS

*Central Coast performs better than the state average*

- Slightly more than 31% of the working-age population in the Central Coast has a bachelor's degree or higher. This is the fourth-highest proportion in the state.
- Per capita income in the Central Coast (\$30,210) is higher than the state average of \$28,340 and the third-highest in the state.

## Educational Attainment and Per Capita Income by Region, 2012



The Central Coast baccalaureate degree attainment rate is nearly on par with the state average

# A NOTE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AFFORDABILITY AND FINANCE IN CALIFORNIA

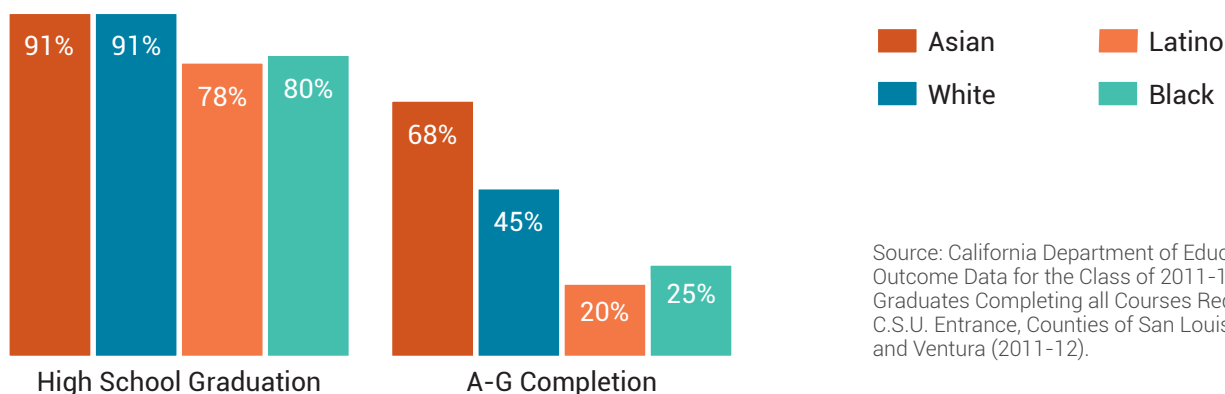
- Tuition and fee increases have been on the rise. In the last decade, UC tuition has risen at a rate of 139% and CSU tuition at a rate of 157%, in comparison to the national rate of 91%.
- California Community Colleges fees are still only 42% of the national average for two-year public colleges. But the cost of living in California is much higher compared to other states, resulting in a higher-than-average cost to community college students, and requiring a larger share of family income to pay for college.
- The number of federal student loan borrowers in California increased by 75% from 397,497 in 2003-04 to 696,349 in 2011-12 while the number of undergraduates increased by only 10% during that same period.<sup>1</sup>

## A NOTE ON RACIAL/ ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

As the Campaign reported in our *State of Higher Education in California* series,<sup>2</sup> there are significant variations and gaps among rates of college preparation, participation, and completion across racial/ethnic groups.

- Graduation rates in the Central Coast are slightly more equitable than those in other counties, but gaps still exist: high schools within the Central Coast graduate 91% of Asians and Whites, compared to 78% and 80% of Latino and Black students, respectively.
- Greater gaps are seen across A-G completion rates: only 20% of Latino and 25% of Black students complete the A-G coursework required for admission to California's four-year universities, compared to 68% of Asians and 45% of Whites.
- Across the state, Latinos and Black students are less likely to attend four-year universities, tend to enroll in community colleges when they do pursue a higher education, and have lower rates of persistence and college completion.

### High School Graduation & A-G Completion by Race/Ethnicity, 2011-12



Source: California Department of Education, Dataquest, Cohort Outcome Data for the Class of 2011-12 and 12th Grade Graduates Completing all Courses Required for U.C. and/or C.S.U. Entrance, Counties of San Louis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura (2011-12).

<sup>1</sup> Campaign for College Opportunity. (2014). *Borrowing for College*. Retrieved from <http://www.collegecampaign.org/resource-library/our-publications/>.

<sup>2</sup> Campaign for College Opportunity. (2013). *State of Higher Education in California*. Retrieved from <http://www.collegecampaign.org/resource-library/our-publications/the-state-of-higher-education-in-california/>.

# CONCLUSION

Californians with a college education experience higher than average earnings, reinforcing the enormous personal benefit of getting a college education. But California as a state, and all of us as its residents, benefit too. In fact, for every dollar invested in higher education, the state recoups \$4.50 through increased tax revenues and decreased social service costs.

California's success depends on the success of every region in state. The Central Coast has scattered performance on various measures of higher education. While students in the Central Coast enroll in college or university at the highest rates in the state, rates of college preparation are mixed with relatively good high school graduation rates and subpar A-G completion and college readiness rates. While high school graduation differences across race/ethnicity are smaller in the Central Coast than in other areas, gaps still exist, particularly with regards to A-G completion rates which differ by almost 50 percentage points between Latino and Asian students. Given the growing Latino student population, more must be done to ensure equal opportunity and preparation for all students.

California used to be the epitome of quality, affordable, and effective higher education. Now, we have become mediocre. California's students are less prepared for higher education than those in most states. And too few actually walk across a college graduation stage.

Our policymakers and college leaders have more work to do to change these trends. We need our state leaders to create, and our college leaders to implement, an actionable statewide higher education plan that addresses the shortcomings outlined above. This plan must set goals for increasing rates of college preparation, college-going, and college completion along with establishing clear targets for closing the persistent gaps in educational attainment by race/ethnicity. When the Governor and Legislature act on such a plan, students will be more successful and we will all benefit. The time for action is now.

**When the Governor and Legislature act on  
a plan for higher education, students will be  
more successful and we will all benefit**

The Campaign for

**College  
Opportunity**

*The report, Average Won't Do: Performance Trends in California Higher Education as a Foundation for Action, by the Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy (IHELP) at California State University, Sacramento was commissioned by the Campaign for College Opportunity. It examines California's performance in six higher education categories: preparation, participation, affordability, completion, benefits, and finance. This brief, prepared by the Campaign for College Opportunity, highlights some of the report's key findings for the Central Coast as well as findings from other sources where noted; the full IHELP report can be found on our website at [www.collegecampaign.org](http://www.collegecampaign.org).*

*The Campaign for College Opportunity is a California non-profit organization focused on a single mission: to ensure that the next generation of California students has the chance to attend college and succeed in order to keep our workforce and economy strong.*