



Coming to Our Senses: Education and the American Future

The College Board Commission on
Access, Admissions, and Success in Higher Education



The Joint Committee on Education
Frankfort, Kentucky
October 12, 2009

William E. Kirwan



The Crisis

- The United States is losing its status as the world leader in the educational attainment of its citizenry
 - We now rank 23rd in high school completion rates
 - We rank 10th in postsecondary completion rates
 - We have the highest college dropout rate of any industrialized nation
 - Currently, only about 40 percent of the 25-to-34 year-old cohort has a postsecondary degree
 - We're the only industrialized nation with a declining college completion rate
 - If we stay on our present course, our 40% degree rate will drop to 29% by the year 2025
- This would mean that the U.S would have gone from first to last in postsecondary completion among industrialized nations



The Commission

- Appointed by President Caperton
- 28 members; broadly representative
- K-12 officials, counselors, higher ed professionals, presidents from 2-year, 4-year, public, private colleges & universities
- Charge: What's broken in the education pipeline and how can it be fixed?



Commission's Strategy

- Study the educational pipeline
 - Pre-K to 16 (unique feature of Commission)
- Determine the source of the major “leaks”
 - Examine why so many students drop out before completion
- Drawing upon expert consultants and other studies and reports, make recommendations to achieve 55% post-secondary completion rate by 2025
- Why 55%?
 - Status of many competitor nations
 - Economic analysis of needs for a vibrant knowledge-based economy



Major Conclusions

- Educational correlates of poverty a severe obstacle
 - If the “achievement gap” between African-American & Hispanic students versus white students were eliminated, GDP in 2008 would have been \$1/2 TRILLION higher
 - Achievement gap is the economic equivalent of a “permanent recession”
- A dearth of college prep information and counseling in the middle schools
- Lack of rigor in too many high school curricula
- Lack of alignment between exit requirements in high school and entrance requirements in college
- College application and financial aid processes too confusing
- Insufficient need-based financial aid
- Failure to give sufficient priority to teacher prep programs
- Failure to study and address high rates of college attrition



Recommendations

- Make voluntary preschool available to all children from families at or below 200% of poverty level
- Make a major investment in college prep counseling at the middle school level
- Establish college prep curriculum as the default high school curriculum nationally
- Align high school exit requirements with college entrance expectations
- Simplify the college admissions and financial aid processes



Recommendations

- Simplify the college transfer process
- Make college affordable
 - College role
 - State role
 - Federal role
- Give much greater priority to teacher prep programs at our nation's colleges and universities
- Implement "best practice" strategies for college retention
- Invest in adult education programs



Outreach

- We presented the report to President Obama's transition team
- We have presented report to the major higher ed associations
- We are meeting with Congressional staff to discuss the report
- We made presentations of the report to the National Council of State Legislators (NCSL), Education Commission of the States (ECS), State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), other state policymakers
- We will continue to write op-eds and discuss our action agenda with reporters and editors



Next Steps

The next phase of the commission's work will involve three new efforts:

- Development of a **State Policy Guide** for legislators by the College Board and NCSL
- Support of Federal legislation for a **College Access and Completion Fund**
- An **Annual Report of Progress** toward the commission's recommendations and goal



Next Steps: College Board and NCSL State Policy Guide

Goal: Increase the number of Americans holding a postsecondary credential to at least 55 percent of by 2025

Commission
Work
(2006-2008)

Report Release
(12/08) &
Outreach
(ongoing)

Policy Guide
With NCSL
(Spring 2010)



College Board and NCSL State Policy Guide

Goals:

- Publish a practical policy guide for state legislators to activate and advance each recommendation in the commission's report
- Help policymakers strengthen the education pipeline

The state policy guide will be:

- Co-authored by the College Board and NCSL with an advisory committee of state legislators and commission members to assist in development
- Released in spring 2010, at the NCSL Legislative Summit



Legislative Advisory Committee

The legislative advisory committee includes legislators and staff members who are experts and champions of education from around the country.

- Rep. Rae Anne Kelsch, North Dakota
- Rep. Roy Takumi, Hawaii
- Rep. Cory Holdaway, Utah
- Rep. Rick Glazier, North Carolina
- Julie Pelegrin, Colorado
- Paula Dominguez, Rhode Island
- Frances Maestas, New Mexico
- Mark Hudson, Arkansas



College Board and NCSL State Policy Guide

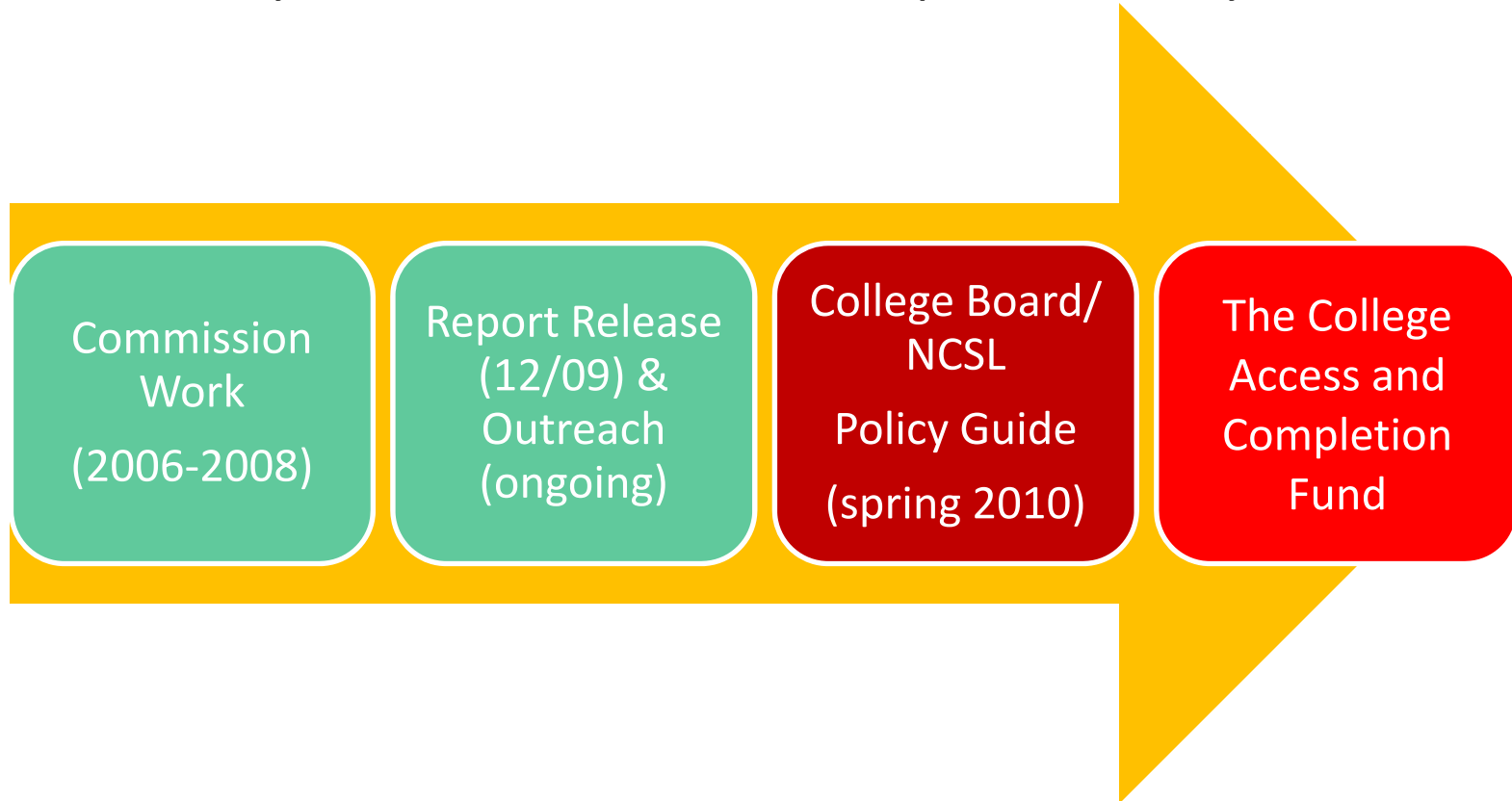
The College Board and NCSL State Policy Guide will provide:

- Existing state legislation and policies aligned to the 10 recommendations
- Examples of effective state programs
- Credible and rigorous research to support what works
- Practical action tips for policymakers to enact policy and support the recommendations
- Suggestions for states to evaluate progress and success



Next Steps: College Access and Completion Fund

Goal: Increase the number of Americans holding a postsecondary credential to at least 55 percent of by 2025





The College Access and Completion Fund

Proposal from The Coalition for College Success

Background

- President Obama made college access and completion a major priority and called for the U.S. to lead the world in its share of graduates
- The President proposed \$2.5 billion over five years to address the issue

The Coalition for College Success

- An informal coalition of individuals and organizations formed to shape and support federal legislation and funding for innovative programs to increase college completion and help more Americans earn a postsecondary degree



The College Access and Completion Fund

Proposal from The Coalition for College Success

- Guiding Principles
 - Competitive grants that foster innovation
 - Priority for
 - Statewide and regional partnerships
 - Systemic change to enhance college completion
 - Sustainable, replicable and cost effective projects
 - Commitment to accountability for measurable outcomes
- Planned with a wide array of stakeholders
- Focus on innovative policies and practices with the potential to impact the greatest number of students



The College Access and Completion Fund

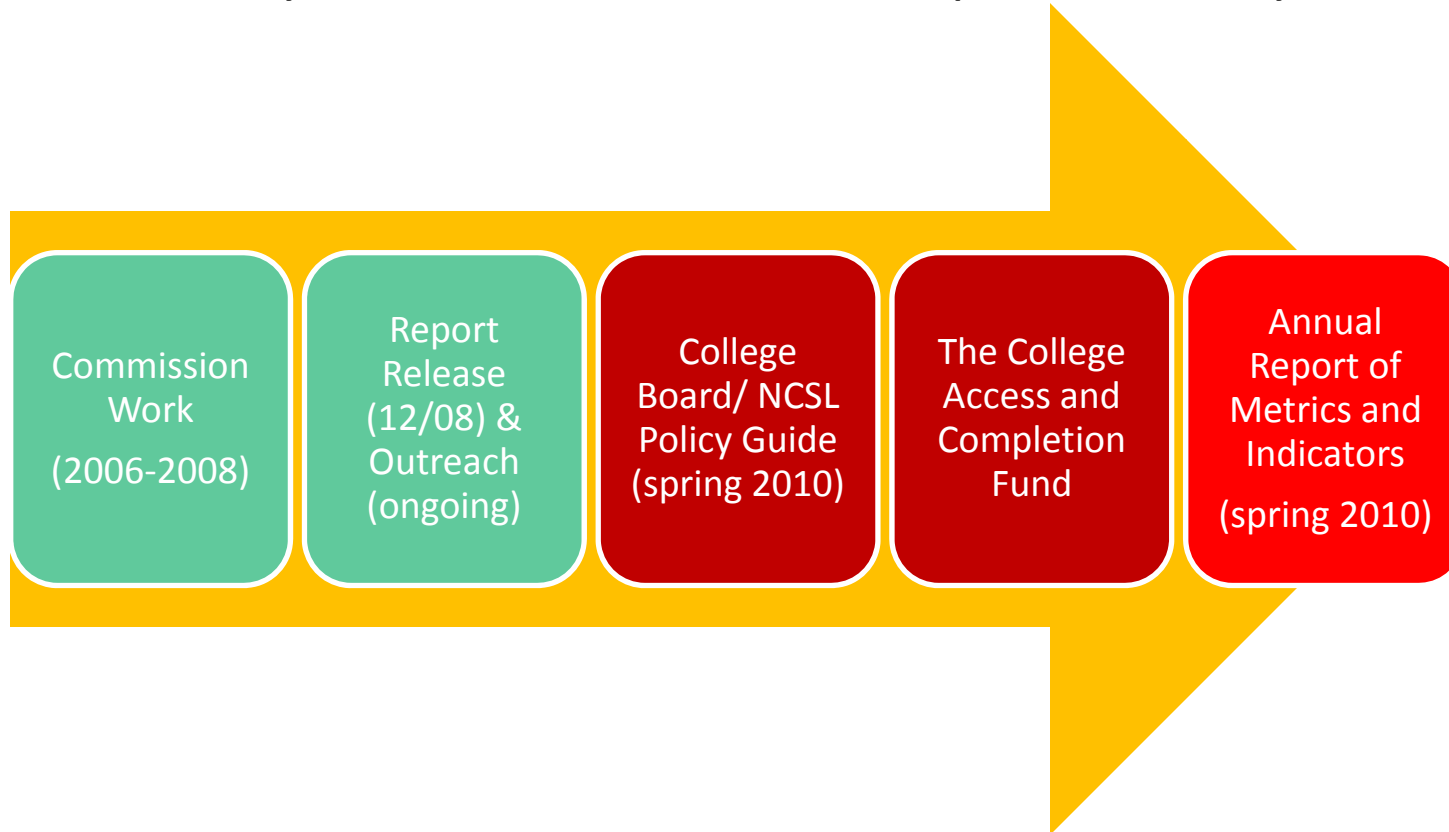
Examples of Innovative Activities

- Incentive funding to institutions for completion rather than attendance
- Efforts aimed at students to reduce barriers to completion
- Improved developmental education
- Innovative delivery mechanisms
- Multi-campus collaborations within or among states to:
 - Reach more citizens
 - Enhance completion
 - Create efficiencies



Next Steps: Annual Report of Indicators

Goal: Increase the number of Americans holding a postsecondary credential to at least 55 percent of by 2025





Annual Report of Progress Toward the Commission's Recommendations

- An advisory committee of education leaders, policy experts, economists and psychometricians oversees the development of this report
- The report will identify and benchmark indicators to measure progress towards the Commission's Goal
- Indicators will be shown on a state-by-state basis, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, wherever possible
- The report will complement the College Board and NCSL State Policy Guide
- The report will be released in Spring 2010



Final Thoughts

- We are all focused on the nation's enormous fiscal challenges
 - Vast sums of money will be invested to get the economy moving
 - These investments will not matter if we do not address the enormous educational deficit we are building in the United States.
- We have to start now if we hope to recapture our educational leadership . . .the only currency that really matters in the long run
- Our choices are clear:
 - Continue on our current path, which will lead to a only 29 percent of our young adults having a college degree; OR
 - Follow the policy directions called for in this report and recapture our global education and economic leadership