



NGA Center for
BEST PRACTICES



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

CREATING STRATEGIES
for Educational and Economic Opportunity

Contact: Carmon Cunningham
617/728-4446

NGA and JFF Release State Policy Guide *Ready for Tomorrow* Features Recommendations for Improving High School and College Graduation Rates

The National Governors Association and Jobs for the Future have released a new state policy guide. *Ready for Tomorrow: Helping All Students Achieve Secondary and Postsecondary Success* highlights ways that states can promote dramatic gains in high school and postsecondary attainment for students from all backgrounds.

The nation's high schools, colleges, and second-chance institutions leave too many young people unprepared for adult success, at an unacceptable cost to the civic, social, and economic well-being of states. As many as 30 percent of entering freshmen leave high school without a regular diploma. Income and racial gaps in college completion have not narrowed significantly in 30 years.

To reverse these trends, *Ready for Tomorrow* suggests that Governors and states develop policy frameworks with the following components.

- ◆ ***Expect improvement and measure it.*** Set goals for increasing the numbers of students who finish high school and complete a recognized postsecondary credential by age 26. Track student progress in and through K-12 and postsecondary education in one data system, and use the data in budgeting.
- ◆ ***Align, align, align.*** Establish rigorous, statewide standards for high school exit, particularly for the gateway skills of numeracy and literacy, calibrated to the requirement of credit-bearing postsecondary courses and to entry into high-skill occupations. Align K-12 and higher education accountability and finance systems to provide common incentives for postsecondary success. Assure easy transferability of credits between institutions.
- ◆ ***Create more quality learning options and target low-performing high schools.*** Promote a diverse supply of high-quality options that ease the transition to postsecondary education and give high school students greater choice among good schools. Turn troubled schools around quickly to minimize the negative effects on students. Target resources, fiscal and personnel flexibility, teacher quality initiatives, and other support to the state's lowest performing high schools.

Ready for Tomorrow is filled with promising and effective state practices. Written by Richard Kazis and Hilary Pennington of JFF and Kristin Conklin of NGA, the report will be available at www.nga.org/center and www.jff.org.