



News Release

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The College Board and National Conference of State Legislatures Launch The College Completion Agenda: State Capitals Campaign

Maryland Celebrated in First Stop of Nationwide Tour to Improve College Completion

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Today at the Maryland State House, the [College Board Advocacy & Policy Center](#), in collaboration with the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), announced a yearlong, multistate campaign to galvanize and mobilize the nation to significantly increase the proportion of Americans that hold a postsecondary degree by 2025. Hosted by Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley and College Board President Gaston Caperton, the inaugural event of the [College Completion Agenda: State Capitals Campaign](#) serves as a call to action that brings together policymakers, educators and business leaders with the common goal of improving college completion rates, especially among low-income and minority students, and returning the United States to its place as the global leader in educational attainment.

Nationally recognized as a leader for excellence in education and college completion, and with a strong P-20 approach, the state of Maryland was selected as the first stop in a nationwide tour to advance the policies and practices that drive excellence in our schools and universities and improve college success in the face of budget constraints, rising costs and expanding enrollment.

At today’s event, participants from across the state of Maryland, representing every sector of education, joined together in support of the ‘55 percent by 2025’ college completion goal. Participants engaged in a conversation about lessons learned from a state that has successfully addressed, in creative and innovative ways, some of the biggest challenges facing our education system.

The event program included distinguished speakers and a dynamic panel discussion moderated by Freeman Hrabowski III, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

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Speakers included:

- Governor Martin O'Malley
- Gaston Caperton, President, The College Board
- William 'Brit' Kirwan, Chancellor, The University System of Maryland
- Nancy S. Grasmick, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools
- Julie Bell, Education Group Director, National Conference of State Legislatures
- Edward J. Kasemeyer, Maryland State Senator
- John Bohanan, Maryland State Delegate
- Charlene Dukes, President, Prince George's Community College
- David Wilson, President, Morgan State University

"It gives me great pleasure to join Gov. O'Malley and education leaders from the great state of Maryland as we kick off the State Capitals Campaign," said College Board President Gaston Caperton. "This will be the first in a series of nationwide discussions that address the possibilities and problems with achieving our ultimate goal: 55 percent of Americans holding a postsecondary degree by 2025. Education is already the currency of the 21st-century's knowledge economy, and the United States cannot afford to go bankrupt."

"I am proud to join President Caperton in hosting the State Capitals Campaign," said Gov. Martin O'Malley. "Maryland has become a national model for quality, affordable and accessible education. Especially in these challenging economic times, it is important that we move into the new economy while ensuring that our workforce have the skills they need to succeed and our students have the tools they need to build a better future. Working together, we can continue to reform and improve our nation's education system."

"As recently as the 1980s, the United States ranked first in the world in the proportion of adults with a college degree. Today the U.S. ranks 12th among industrialized nations in college completion rates, and — given demographic and educational trends — is on track to fall to last place among industrialized nations by 2025," said Chancellor Kirwan. "We must turn this situation around. The U.S. cannot be the leader in the world in things that matter if we aren't the leader in educating our citizens. Maryland and the University System of Maryland are stepping to the forefront in addressing the college completion challenge."

"The first step in improving Maryland's college completion rate comes through providing each student with a college- and career-ready high school education," said Nancy S. Grasmick, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools. "We are taking steps to further improve our number one-ranked schools by strengthening our curriculum and

our instructional processes. Our students deserve nothing less.”

“State legislatures are leading the way in designing policies and strategies that will move their states and our nation toward dramatic improvement in our college completion rates,” said Julie Bell, education group director of NCSL. “The Maryland legislature is an outstanding example of how state legislators are working hard to design effective policies and strategies all along the P–20 education spectrum that can significantly improve our education outcomes. College completion goals cannot be obtained without their leadership, investment and involvement.”

To inform the conversation and help shape policies related to college completion, the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center referenced the following resources during the event for state policymakers and educators, including:

- Maryland specific research and data points that highlight education progress within the state, and that can be tracked through www.completionagenda.collegeboard.org, an interactive website that provides comparative and customized data by state.
 - Maryland’s public schools ranked as the nation’s #1 public school system by *Education Week* for the third consecutive year, and was first nationwide in the percentage of seniors scoring 3 or higher on at least one AP® Exam.
 - Maryland aligns high school graduation requirements with college readiness requirements to improve college success and completion rates. Maryland ranks among the top five states in the United States in the number of bachelor’s degree–seeking students graduating within six years. Maryland ranks third among the states in the number of Hispanic students graduating within six years.
 - Even in difficult economic times, Maryland froze in-state college tuition for four years in a row at public colleges and universities.
 - Maryland has invested more than \$1 billion in funding for Maryland’s four historically black institutions in the past four years. This represents an increase of 37 percent over the previous four-year period.
 - Maryland ranks among the top 10 states in the nation for college completion rates.
 - In the 2011 version of Kiplinger’s “Best Values in Public Colleges,” the University of Maryland– College Park was ranked the fifth best value, up from eighth last year. Four other Maryland schools made the list: St. Mary’s College of Maryland, Salisbury University, Towson University and University of Maryland– Baltimore County.
 - Gov. O’Malley’s strategic education policy goal includes increasing the number of children participating in Pre-K programs by 12 percent by 2010. Maryland is leading the way by building the *Maryland*

Longitudinal Data System to track progress from Pre-K through secondary and postsecondary education and into the workforce. Maryland's Pre-K program has been ranked among the top in the nation according to the National Institute for Early Education Research.

- [*The College Completion Agenda 2010 Progress Report*](#) and [*The College Completion Agenda: State Policy Guide*](#) in collaboration with the National Conference of State Legislatures. Released in July 2010, the *Progress Report* and the *State Policy Guide* chart the progress of the nation and each of the 50 states toward the common goal of significantly improving college completion by 2025. The *Progress Report* also points to areas of progress in states, yet formidable challenges remain at every level of the system for students who aspire to enroll and succeed in college.

These reports are aligned to the recommendations from the College Board's Commission on Access, Admissions and Success in Higher Education. Formed in 2008, the commission was charged with studying the education pipeline as a single continuum and identifying strategies to significantly increase the proportion of students, especially low-income and underrepresented minority students, who graduate from college and are prepared to succeed in the 21st century. The commission's report, [*Coming to Our Senses: Education and the American Future*](#), established 10 interdependent recommendations to reach a goal of ensuring that at least 55 percent of Americans hold a postsecondary degree by 2025.

The State Capitals Campaign will include a series of high profile events in 2011 — roundtables, town hall meetings and summits — that bring together policymakers, educators, community and business leaders, media, students, and concerned citizens, all with the common goal of improving college completion rates by 2025. Some of the upcoming state capital events will include visits to Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, New York, Texas and Virginia.

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The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center was established to help transform education in America. Guided by the College Board's principles of excellence and equity in education, the Center works to ensure that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond. Critical connections between policy, research and real-world practice are made to develop innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges in education today. Drawing from the experience of the College Board's active membership consisting of education professionals from more than 5,900 institutions, priorities include: College Preparation & Access, College Affordability & Financial Aid, and College Admission & Completion. For more information, visit www.advocacy.collegeboard.org.

The [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) is a bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staffs of the states, commonwealths and territories. It provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues and is an effective and respected advocate for the interests of the states in the American federal system.

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