A Regional Approach to Closing the Workforce Skills Gap

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California faces a large workforce skills gap

- California’s economy relies heavily on highly educated workers
  - By 2030, the state will need 1.1 million more college graduates—above and beyond the current pace
  - To meet the shortfall, the state must substantially improve college graduation for underrepresented groups

- Most students attend college close to home
  - Colleges must act *regionally* to improve outcomes
Three regions will play a critical role in closing the gap:

- **San Joaquin Valley**
  - Pop: 4.0 million

- **Inland Empire**
  - Pop: 4.2 million

- **Los Angeles County**
  - Pop: 9.8 million
Median income is relatively low in each region.

- Los Angeles County: $59,398
- Inland Empire: $56,860
- San Joaquin Valley: $49,551
- State: $65,211
Each region has made gains in college preparation

High school graduates with college-preparatory courses

- Los Angeles County: 40% (2005), 47% (2015)
- Inland Empire: 28% (2005), 37% (2015)
- San Joaquin Valley: 26% (2005), 34% (2015)
- Rest of state: 37% (2005), 46% (2015)
Students fall out of the higher education pipeline at critical transition points

- Enter 9th grade: 1,000
- Earn high school diploma: 823
- Attend college (including community college): 644
- Attend four-year college (freshmen or transfer): 427
- Earn bachelor’s degree: 305
- Earn bachelor’s degree from UC or CSU: 225

Number of students (statewide)
Regions face different challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Challenge in the higher education pipeline*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles County</td>
<td>Lower high school graduation rates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inland Empire</td>
<td>Lower rates of high school graduates attending two- or four-year colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Joaquin Valley</td>
<td>Lower rates of high school graduates attending four-year colleges (as freshmen or transfer)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compared to statewide
How do regions close the skills gaps?

- Four overarching strategies:
  - Improve college readiness for graduating high school students
  - Raise completion rates for students already enrolled in college
  - Increase transfer from community colleges to four-year colleges
  - Enroll more first-time freshmen
Colleges face many barriers to improving outcomes...

- Capacity constraints
  - Physical vs. funded capacity
  - Geographical variation in access to four-year colleges
- Overcrowding at CSU
- Low four-year graduation rates
- Low transfer rates at community colleges
- Persistent achievement gaps
But recent policy and program changes hold promise

- Increased state funding
- Renewed focus on improving outcomes for all students
- Satellite campuses and more involvement from local industry
- Efforts to improve student success at community colleges
  - Basic Skills Initiative
  - Associate Degrees for Transfer
  - Guided Pathways
- Our recommendations build upon these ongoing efforts
Policy recommendations

- Increase capacity at four-year universities
  - Continue efforts to boost four-year graduation rates
  - Use satellite campuses to help serve local demand

- Improve the transfer pathway
  - Focus on regional coordination and program alignment
  - Expand Associate Degrees for Transfer
Policy recommendations (cont.)

- Develop regional (not local) college promise programs
  - Grant priority enrollment to four-year colleges
  - Create regional referral pools for CSU

- Support regional data sharing and evaluation
  - Examples include Central Valley Higher Education Consortium and Growing Inland Achievement
  - State should play a role in coordinating such efforts
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Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.