

P-20 Issue Brief

Hawai'i P-20 Initiative



INCREASING THE RIGOR OF HAWAI'I'S BOE RECOGNITION DIPLOMA

In March 2008, the Hawai'i State Board of Education (BOE) will consider revising the requirements for the BOE Recognition Diploma awarded to high school graduates. The proposed Recognition Diploma would certify that the graduates have taken rigorous high school courses that prepare them for success in careers, college, and citizenship.

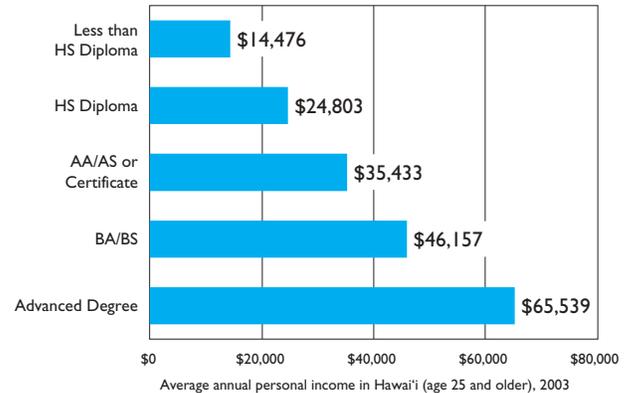
THE CHALLENGE

For many in Hawai'i, graduating with a high school diploma is a celebratory achievement that used to carry the expectation of attaining a reasonably well-paying job. In the past, a high school graduate with modest levels of skills and a solid work ethic could support a family with a job at the sugar and pineapple mills, the military bases, or the utility companies. Those days, along with the plantations, are gone.

In this century, productivity improvements and globalization have led to the elimination or outsourcing of many low-skill jobs (and an increasing number of skilled ones) from the United States, and the international marketplace is no longer dominated by the U.S. The 21st century requires education and a high level of skills and abilities for individuals to have economic security and exercise their democratic responsibilities. Alarming, new data reveal that the U.S. ranks 21st among 27 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries in high school completion rates and that the U.S. has slipped from 2nd to 14th in college graduation rates in the last decade because other countries' educational levels are rising rapidly.¹

The benefits of postsecondary education for individuals are significant. Higher levels of education are associated with higher earnings nationally² and locally (see Figure 1). College graduates are the only group whose wages, adjusted for inflation, have increased over the last 20 years.³ Employment opportunities increase significantly for those with more education, and individuals with postsecondary education have access to jobs that are growing more quickly. By 2010, nearly two-thirds of all U.S. jobs and 70 percent of new jobs will require some postsecondary education.⁴ Almost

Figure 1. Average Earnings By Education Level, Hawai'i



Source: Institute for Higher Education (2005). *The Investment Payoff: A 50 State Analysis of Public and Private Benefits of Higher Education.*

half of "Hawai'i's Hot 50 Demand Occupations" require postsecondary education and those jobs pay an average salary 230 percent higher than jobs that do not require postsecondary education (\$53,000 vs. \$23,000).⁵ Moreover, individuals with more education report better health, more civic engagement, and higher charitable giving.⁶

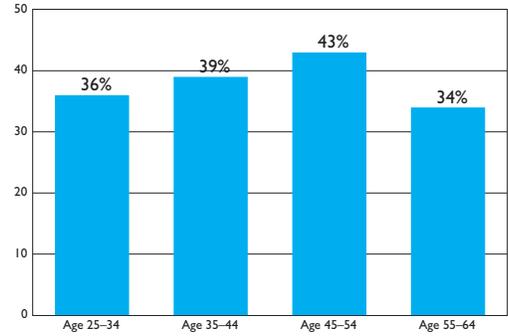
Education benefits the community as well. Studies of regional growth in the U.S. indicate that the educational level of its population is the single most important factor in determining a community's economic growth.⁷ Business and government leaders rate an educated workforce 6th among 21 factors that affect businesses' decisions about where to locate their companies.⁸

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Hawai'i is losing ground in the education of its residents. Fewer of Hawai'i's younger adults (ages 25 to 34) are earning college degrees than previous cohorts (see Figure 2)⁹. Raising Hawai'i's educational levels is an urgent concern and will require more recent high school graduates (and adults already in the workforce) to go to college and attain their educational goals.

Figure 2: College Attainment (Associate Degrees and Higher) Among Age Groups, Hawai'i



Source: Johnsrud, L. (September 2007). University of Hawai'i System Strategic Plan Update, 2008-15 (Powerpoint Presentation), Slide 10.

Hawai'i's current college going rate is lower than the nation's (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: College Going Rates of Recent High School Graduates (2004)

Hawai'i (41st in nation)	52%
U.S.	56%
Top Ten States (Average)	65%

Source: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (2006). Student Pipeline 2004.

This situation is exacerbated because many students find themselves unprepared academically and need remediation in college. Two-thirds of students interested in enrolling in English or mathematics at University of Hawai'i community colleges in fall 2005 were identified as needing remediation to enter "college level" courses.¹⁰

Employers report gaps in knowledge and skill proficiencies of adults in the workplace. In a national survey more than 60 percent of employers questioned whether a high school diploma meant that a typical student had learned even the basics, and they rated graduates' skills in grammar, spelling, writing, and basic math as only "fair" or "poor."¹¹ A recent study in Hawai'i found that most employers were dissatisfied with the preparation of employees with only a high school diploma, particularly of verbal and written skills,¹² and Hawai'i employers and apprenticeship programs report that job seekers have difficulty passing mathematics tests given as part of the employment process.

CAREER READY = COLLEGE READY

High school is the critical gateway to future opportunities for our youth. As individuals and as a community, we depend on the success of high schools to prepare youth for careers, college, and citizenship.

A number of recent studies report that the requirements of high school graduates to succeed in careers and college are converging. For example, a recent ACT study concluded that the same sets of skills and abilities that are required for success in school and for success in the workforce are fundamentally the same.¹³ The American Diploma Project found significant overlap in the expectations for students in entry-level college classes, as well as for entry-level employees to advance to well-paying jobs that include benefits.

A recent study conducted in Hawai'i reached a similar conclusion. An analysis of entry level jobs by 3Point Consulting found that:

Upon entry, one must apply basic skills, but advancement requires more complex reading and writing, logic and analysis, algebra and geometry (depending on the field), and verbal communication or presentation skills. Even where skills are not required upon entry, they are essential to advance to a living wage position without a college degree.¹⁴

Hawai'i college faculty's list of communication skills (written and verbal) essential for success in entry-level college classes matched the employers' list. The implications of the local studies and national research are clear: **all students should be encouraged and provided with the opportunity to engage in a rigorous high school curriculum to prepare for success in careers or college.**

INCREASING THE RIGOR OF THE BOE RECOGNITION DIPLOMA

In Spring 2008, the State Board of Education (BOE) will consider a proposal to increase the requirements of its Recognition Diploma (see Figure 5). The proposal specifies that students will take two credits (years) of laboratory sciences (e.g., biology, chemistry, physics), four credits of mathematics including Algebra I and II and Geometry, and expository writing to earn the Board of Education Recognition Diploma. If approved, the proposed requirements will take effect for the graduating class of 2012. Earning the proposed Recognition Diploma signals employers and colleges

that the recipients completed a rigorous high school program and have a strong academic foundation for success in careers and college.

Figure 4: Hawai'i High School Diploma Requirements for Class of 2010 and beyond

Course Requirements	High School Diploma	Board of Education Recognition Diploma (Voluntary)
English	4.0 credits including ELA 1 (1 credit) and ELA 2 (1 credit)	4.0 credits including ELA 1 (1 credit) and ELA 2 (1 credit)
Social Studies	4.0 credits including Modern History of Hawai'i (.5 credit) and Participation in a Democracy (.5 credit)	4.0 credits including Modern History of Hawai'i (.5 credit) and Participation in a Democracy (.5 credit)
Mathematics	3.0 credits	3.0 credits
Science	3.0 credits	3.0 credits
World Language/ Fine Arts/ Career and Technical Education	2.0 credits in one of the specified courses	2.0 credits in one of the specified courses
Senior Project	Not required	1.0 credit
Physical Education	1.0 credit including PE (.5 credit) and PE elective (.5 credit)	1.0 credit including PE (.5 credit) and PE elective (.5 credit)
Health	0.5 credit	0.5 credit
Personal/Transition Plan	0.5 credit	0.5 credit
Electives	6.0 credits	6.0 credits
Total	24.0 credits	25.0 credits
Other		3.0 GPA

Board Policy 4540

The proposed Recognition Diploma identifies a high school program of study that prepares students for success in careers and college. Proposed diploma revisions are based on national research and local review of the types of courses that prepare students for advancement to living wage jobs and success in college-level courses.

In adopting the proposed Recognition Diploma, Hawai'i will join 17 other states in providing students with the option to earn a rigorous diploma that recognizes the graduate's preparation for success in careers and college.

The intent of this proposal is that **all** students will strive to earn the new Recognition Diploma, more than the current rate of 33 percent of high school graduates, because of the proposed Diploma's benefits which assure students that:

- Their high school education aligns with the expectations of employers and colleges;
- They will be eligible for a State of Hawai'i B Plus Scholarship at the University of Hawai'i if they earn the Diploma with Honors (minimum 3.0 grade point average) and demonstrate financial need;¹⁵

Figure 5: Hawai'i BOE Recognition Diploma Requirements Proposed Revisions to Board Policy 4540 beginning Class of 2012

Course Requirements	High School Diploma	Board of Education Recognition Diploma (Voluntary)	Board of Education Recognition Diploma with Honors (Voluntary)
English	4.0 credits including ELA 1 (1 credit) and ELA 2 (1 credit)	4.0 credits including ELA 1 (1 credit), ELA 2 (1 credit), and Expository Writing (.5 credit)	4.0 credits including ELA 1 (1 credit), ELA 2 (1 credit), and Expository Writing (.5 credit)
Social Studies	4.0 credits including Modern History of Hawai'i (.5 credit) and Participation in a Democracy (.5 credit)	4.0 credits including Modern History of Hawai'i (.5 credit) and Participation in a Democracy (.5 credit)	4.0 credits including Modern History of Hawai'i (.5 credit) and Participation in a Democracy (.5 credit)
Mathematics	3.0 credits	4.0 credits including Alg I, Geometry, and Alg II or the equivalent	4.0 credits including Alg I, Geometry, and Alg II or the equivalent
Science	3.0 credits	3.0 credits including 2.0 credits in Chemistry, Biology, and/or Physics	3.0 credits including 2.0 credits in Chemistry, Biology, and/or Physics
World Language/ Fine Arts/ CTE	2.0 credits in one of the specified courses	2.0 credits in one of the specified courses	2.0 credits in one of the specified courses
Senior Project	Not required	1.0 credit	1.0 credit
Physical Education*	1.0 credit	1.0 credit	1.0 credit
Health	0.5 credit	0.5 credit	0.5 credit
Personal/Transition Plan	0.5 credit	0.5 credit	0.5 credit
Electives	6.0 credits	5.0 credits	5.0 credits
Total	24.0 credits	25.0 credits	25.0 credits
Other		Meet standard on Alg II End of Course Exam	3.0 GPA Meet standard on Alg II End of Course Exam;

- Their diploma aligns with criteria for federal Academic Competitiveness Grants of \$750 in the first year of college and \$1,300 in the second year of college for low-income (Pell eligible) students;¹⁶ and,
- They have a foundation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), although students interested in pursuing STEM-intensive fields should take advanced science and mathematics courses beyond those required by the proposed Recognition Diploma.

Implementing the proposed diploma and providing students with the support to earn the diploma requires creative, significant, and unprecedented partnerships. Hawai'i P-20 is identifying additional incentives, such as scholarships

and waivers from employment and college placement tests, for graduates earning the proposed Recognition Diploma. The incentives convey the importance of high school in preparing for careers and college, as well as the value of the proposed Recognition Diploma, to students and families. Partners, including GEAR UP Hawai'i, will launch a comprehensive communications effort to inform students, parents, educators, employers, and the public about the new Recognition Diploma opportunity and the significance of a more rigorous high school diploma for our youth and our state. The Department of Education and colleges will collaborate to provide teacher training needed to meet demand for more students taking rigorous high school courses, such as Geometry, Algebra II, and laboratory sciences. Hawai'i P-20 will continue to facilitate data sharing efforts between UH and DOE; resources throughout the state will need to be aligned and additional policy changes will be required to support educational improvement.

The proposed Board of Education Recognition Diploma is a significant step in strengthening Hawai'i's public education system and improving the future for all of Hawai'i. As a state, we will be challenged to provide opportunities and resources for more students to take rigorous courses in high school and to earn the proposed Recognition Diploma.

This is a challenge that we can and must meet.

Notes

- ¹ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2007). *PISA 2006: Science Competencies For Tomorrow's World: OECD Briefing Note for the United States*. Paris, France: Author.
- ² Stoops, N. (June 2004). *Educational Attainment in The United States: 2003*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.
- ³ Carnevale, A. and Desrochers, D. (2002). *The Missing Middle: Aligning Education and the Knowledge Economy*. Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, p. 6.
- ⁴ Carnevale, A. and Desrochers, D. (2002), p. 12.
- ⁵ Hawai'i Workforce Informer (November 2007). *Hawai'i's Hot 50 Jobs*. Honolulu, HI: State of Hawai'i Department of Labor & Industrial Relations.
- ⁶ Institute For Higher Education (2005). *The Investment Payoff: A 50 State Analysis of Public and Private Benefits of Higher Education*.
- ⁷ See, for example, Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland (2005). *Altered States: A Perspective on 75 Years of State Income Growth (Annual Report)*. Cleveland, OH: Author; Gottlieb, P. D. and Fogarty, M. (2003). "Educational Attainment and Metropolitan Growth." *Economic Development Quarterly*, 17(4), pp. 325-336.
- ⁸ Montague, W. (September 30, 1987). "School Rated a Key Factor in Business-Site Decisions." *Education Week*: pp. 1, 14.
- ⁹ Johnsrud, L. (September 2007). University of Hawai'i System Strategic Plan Update, 2008-15 (Powerpoint Presentation), Slide 10.
- ¹⁰ University of Hawai'i, Community colleges Strategic Planning Council (2007). 2008-15 Strategic Plan (working document).
- ¹¹ "Public Agenda: Reality Check 2002." *Education Week* 21(25), March 6, 2002, p. S8.
- ¹² 3Point Consulting (2007). *Hawai'i P20 Career Ready Study*. Honolulu, HI: Author, p. 5.
- ¹³ ACT (2006). *Ready for College, Ready for Work*. Iowa City, IA: ACT.
- ¹⁴ 3Point Consulting (2007), p. 18.
- ¹⁵ In November 2007, UH Board of Regents approved policy to align eligibility criteria for State of Hawai'i B Plus Scholarship with the proposed BOE Recognition Diploma. See University of Hawai'i Administrative Procedures Information System UH Systemwide Executive Policies. E6.206. State of Hawai'i B Plus Scholarship Program.
- ¹⁶ In 2006, 345 Hawai'i students received federal Academic Competitiveness Grants totaling \$230,317. See U.S. Department of Education (2007). *Academic Competitiveness Grant and National SMART Grant Programs*. Washington, D.C.: Author, p. 5.



ABOUT HAWAI'I P-20 INITIATIVE

Hawai'i P-20 is a statewide collaboration that is working to better integrate Hawai'i's early childhood, K-12, and higher education systems in order to provide a smoother educational pathway for students to persist to higher skills and academic success. P-20 is led by a unique partnership of the leaders of the Good Beginnings Alliance, the State of Hawai'i Department of Education, and the University of Hawai'i System.

P-20's primary goal is to dramatically increase the educational capital of the state; that is, to educate as many of Hawai'i's citizens to reach their potential and to facilitate opportunities for all of Hawai'i's citizens to contribute to their families, the community, and the state's economy. Hawai'i P-20 is grounded in the belief that all of Hawai'i's residents deserve a high quality education.

P-20 facilitates Hawai'i's participation in the American Diploma Project (ADP). ADP is a network of 30 states focused on ensuring that all high school graduates are prepared for the demands of careers, college, and citizenship. For more information: www.achieve.org.

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