



A PORTRAIT OF CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2011



EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA TODAY

Consider these facts: 100 of California's nearly 2,500 high schools account for nearly half of the state's dropouts; residents of coastal counties are two-thirds more likely to have a bachelor's degree than those of inland counties; 45 in 100 Latino adults in the Los Angeles metro area never completed high school.

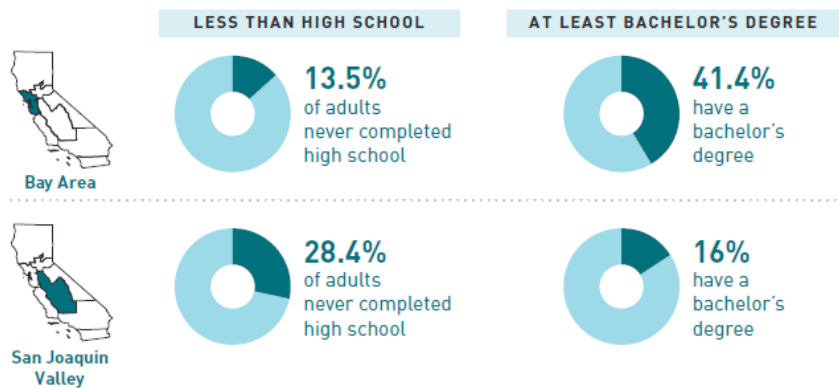
Education is one of three areas, along with health and standard of living that make up the American Human Development Index used to measure the well-being of Californians in *A Portrait of California*.

Based on the most recent available U.S. Census Bureau data on both school enrollment starting from age 3 and degree attainment of all adults age 25 and older, *A Portrait of California* explores the education attainment level of the Golden States' residents by neighborhood and county, metro area, racial/ethnic group, and for women and men.

STRIKING FINDINGS IN EDUCATION FROM A PORTRAIT OF CALIFORNIA:

- The Bay Area region, stretching from Sonoma County in the north to San Benito in the south is the leader in higher education degree attainment. San Diego and greater Sacramento are next, with Northern California and the San Joaquin Valley at the bottom of the eight regions (see figure).
- A resident of the San Joaquin Valley is only one third as likely to have graduated from college as one in the Bay Area.

FIGURE 3 High School and College Rates Vary Widely from the Bay Area to the San Joaquin Valley



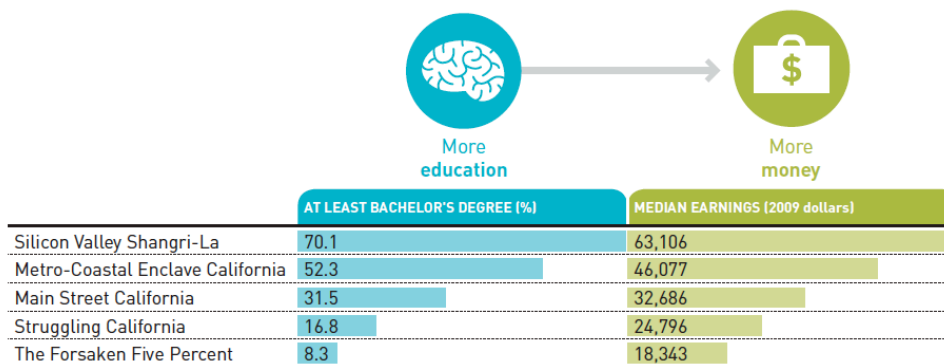
- In the San Joaquin Valley, over 28 percent of adults have not completed high school, about the level of the nation as a whole over a quarter century ago.

- California educates half of the Latinos in America, but only one in ten Latinos in California has completed college. Five in ten Asian Americans in California have finished college.
- Foreign-born African Americans are twice as likely to have at least a bachelor's degree as native-born African Americans (40 percent as compared with 20 percent).
- Conversely native-born Latinos are more than twice as likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher than foreign-born Latinos (16 percent as compared with 6 percent).

POLICY LEVERS FOR CHANGE:

Many factors fuel gaps in education in California. Despite ample investments in education that California currently makes, the benefits of existing efforts are not reaching some groups, and the personal and societal costs of this exclusion are high. Here are a few cost-effective actions to improve Californians' well-being:

TABLE 1 Education and Earnings Move Together in the Five Californias



- **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION:** A quality preschool for three- and four-year old children has been shown to be the single most effective intervention to enable all children to enter elementary school on an equal footing. California has a relatively high proportion of three- and four-year olds in center-based preschools, but those who would benefit most are least likely to be enrolled.
- **HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS:** The warning signs of dropout are widely-agreed and measurement of the problem has improved. The state must now use these data and copious research to take action, targeting the one hundred schools that produce nearly half of the state's dropouts and groups at highest risk of dropping out, particularly African American and Latino males.
- **MAKE EDUCATIONAL EQUITY A REALITY:** Those who bear the brunt of the inadequacy of educational resources are disproportionately Latino and African American schoolchildren; they are far more likely than white or Asian American children to attend low-performing schools, to endure overcrowding, and to have a shortage of courses required for admission to state universities. Though it will be difficult to solve the problem of the educational pie being too small in this hour of fiscal austerity, more must be done to ensure that it is at least sliced in more equal pieces. Decades of lawsuits have sought to bring about more funding equity among schools, but huge gaps remain.