

Working with the Nebraska P-16 Initiative to promote the **importance** of college visits

EducationQuest President Liz Koop joined Governor Heineman and P-16 Initiative leaders September 28 to launch *Go.Visit.College!*, a statewide campaign that encourages high schools and parents to coordinate campus visits for high school students. *Go.Visit.College!* is part of P-16's efforts to increase the state's college-going rate. Read more about the campaign and other P-16 efforts on pages 2-3.

EducationQuest also sponsors statewide college fairs giving students additional opportunities to meet with college representatives. See article on page 8.



This billboard advertised one of six college fairs held in Nebraska.



While Governor Heineman and NU President James B. Milliken look on, EducationQuest President Liz Koop addresses reporters during a news conference at Creighton University to promote college visits.

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



On September 28, I had the honor of announcing a new college visit campaign during statewide news conferences with Governor Heineman, University of Nebraska President J.B. Milliken, Commissioner of Education Dr. Roger Breed, and Senator Greg Adams. We all serve together on the Nebraska P-16 Initiative and realize that college visits are an important part of increasing the state's college-going rate.



The campaign, called *Go.Visit.College!*, encourages Nebraska's high schools and colleges to work together to coordinate group and individual campus visits. While we want all students to have the opportunity to participate, we're hopeful that this effort will especially focus on first-generation students who might not know how to take this first step.

Several studies across the nation indicate college visits are on the list of "must do" activities that make college more likely for students. EducationQuest's own *College Access Grants* program mirrors those studies with 91% of our high school students reporting that college visits have significant influence on them as they consider going to college. We have found that students who didn't think they would go to college often change their perception after stepping foot on a college campus. And, of course, campus visits are vital in helping students find the college that's the right fit for them.

I would like to thank Nebraska's postsecondary institutions and high schools that are going the extra mile to offer this opportunity for students. I invite high school counselors and educators to see the "Resources for High Schools" section at EducationQuest.org for campus visit resources including a list of personnel to contact at Nebraska colleges to coordinate a group visit.

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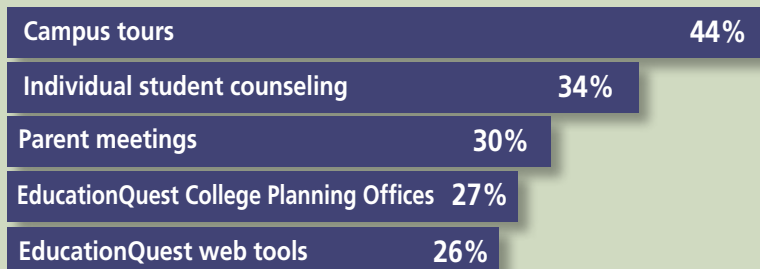
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Counselors rank campus tours as top college planning strategy

In a 2009 Nebraska P-16 Initiative survey, Nebraska high school counselors were asked to rank the effectiveness of 25 different college planning strategies. Campus tours topped the list.



Update on Nebraska P-16 Efforts

As a co-sponsor of the Nebraska P-16 Initiative, EducationQuest is proud to work with Governor Heineman and statewide education leaders on college access efforts. The following is an overview of some recent efforts.

College visit resources available for students, parents and counselors

In conjunction with P-16's *Go. Visit. College!* campaign, EducationQuest has developed the following resources to help students, parents and counselors conduct successful campus visits. They are all available at EducationQuest.org.



- A ***Go. Visit. College!*** brochure with campus visit and college selection tips was sent to high schools across the state for distribution to students and parents.
- **The High School Guided Tour** walks students and parents through the college selection process and provides an extensive list of questions to ask while on a campus visit.
- **The “Resources for High Schools” section** provides campus visit resources for high school counselors including a list of contact people at college admission offices, and tips for making campus visits meaningful for students.

Brochure will provide updates on P-16 education goals

Last August, Governor Heineman and the Nebraska P-16 Initiative announced eight education goals designed to strengthen and enhance Nebraska's education system. Since that time, leaders and committees for each goal have developed strategies and action steps aimed at accomplishing the goals.

Updates for each goal will soçle in a brochure being developed by Nebraska P-16. The brochure will be distributed to statewide education leaders. The updates will also be available on the P-16 website at <https://p16.nebraska.edu>.



Nebraska P-16 Education Goals

A complete list of the goals is available at <https://p16.nebraska.edu>.

- Adopt a college and career preparation high school core curriculum...
- Eliminate the academic achievement gap...
- Develop an effective longitudinal data system...
- Attain a high school graduation rate of 90% or higher in each Nebraska high school.
- Improve Nebraska's college-going rate to the top-10 tier nationally.
- Provide affordable access for Nebraska students...
- Improve time to degree-completion and increase college graduation rates...
- Increase substantially the number of college and university graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

SAVE
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May
12
2011

May 2011 summit will focus on college access and success

EducationQuest and the Nebraska P-16 Initiative will host a college access summit Thursday, May 12 at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln. The summit, **“Building a Culture of College Access and Success in Nebraska”** will feature discussions with Governor Heineman and business and education leaders about college access issues in Nebraska and the need for a highly-educated workforce.

College Access Grant Recipients

EducationQuest Foundation has kicked off another round of its *College Access Grants* program by selecting 14 Nebraska high schools to receive funds intended to increase the schools' college-going rates. This brings to 40 the number of high schools that have received grant funds since the program began in 2006.

The 14 high schools listed below will share \$560,000 in grant funds over the next four years. The amount each school receives is based on their enrollment.

Small schools (less than 300 students) – will receive \$5,000 a year:

- Crawford Public Schools
- Milford High School
- Pawnee City School
- Sandy Creek High School (Fairfield)
- Southern Public Schools (Wymore)
- Tekamah-Herman High School
- Wisner-Pilger High School
- Wood River High School

Intermediate schools (between 301 and 1,500 students) – will receive \$15,000 a year:

- Beatrice High School
- Omaha Northwest High School
- Plattsmouth High School
- Ralston High School
- Scottsbluff High School

Large schools (more than 1,500 students) – will receive \$25,000 a year:

- Omaha Bryan High School

The high schools will use their grants to fund college access programs and activities such as college visits, financial aid sessions, scholarship searches, career exploration, ACT and SAT testing, and completion of college applications. The grant program also encourages involvement from parents and the community to help ensure success.

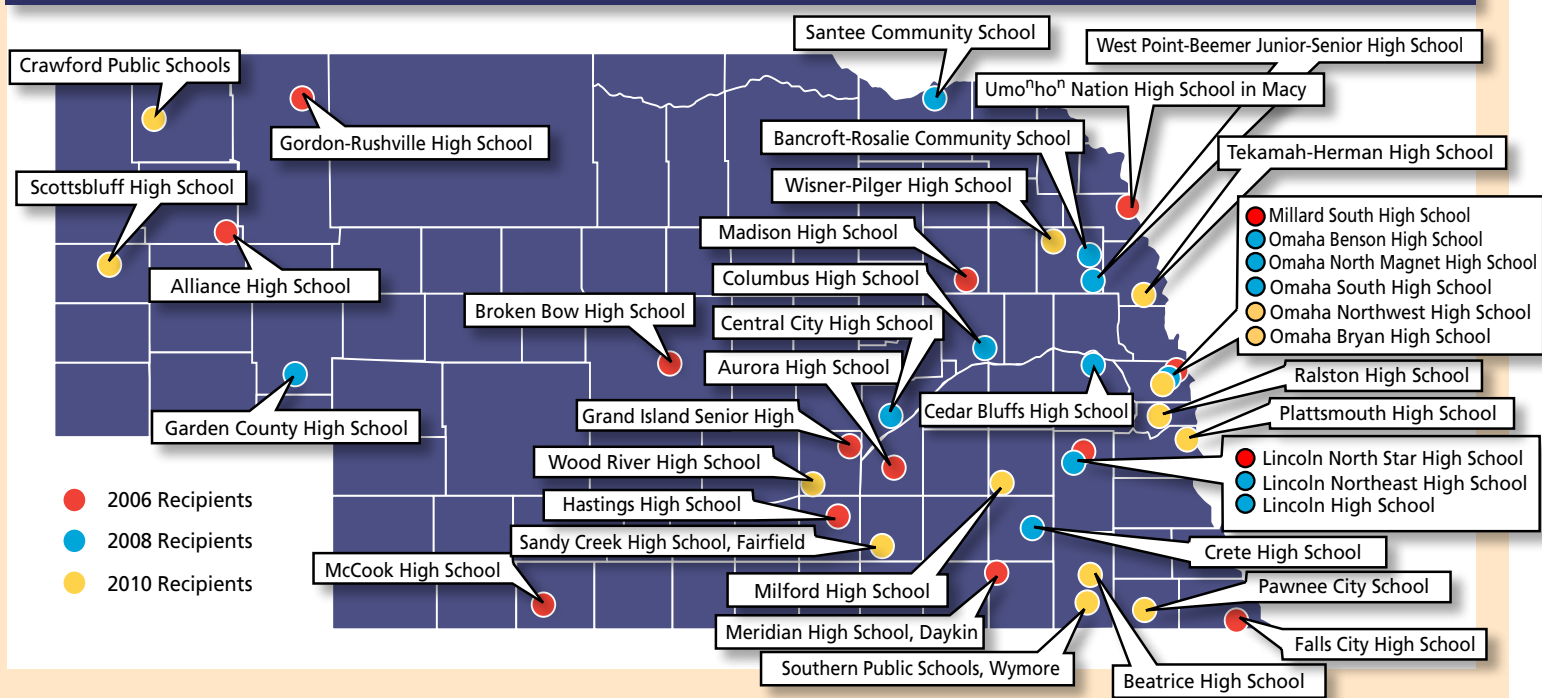
Eric Drumheller, EducationQuest Director of Grants and Scholarships, said the recipient high schools have set goals to increase their college-going rates by approximately 10 percent over the next four years. "We're pleased to help fund the tools they need to meet their goal," he said.

Drumheller said the aggregate college-going rate for these 14 schools is 62.8 percent compared to a statewide college-going rate of 67.7 percent. As this is an aggregate rate, several of the individual high schools are well below the statewide average.

Schools that received *College Access Grants* in 2006 are transitioning out of the program this year with plans to continue many of their college access activities through school and community support.

In 2012, EducationQuest will select up to 15 additional Nebraska high schools to receive College Access Grants.

High schools that have received College Access Grants



Scholarship Programs Reach Milestones

EducationQuest provides need-based scholarships to Nebraska students through two programs - the *EducationQuest Scholarship Program* and *Reaching Your Potential*. In 2010, both programs reached significant milestones.

EducationQuest Scholarship Program reaches 10,000 awards

In 1999, EducationQuest launched the *EducationQuest Scholarship Program*. This annual program provides Nebraska's nonprofit public and independent postsecondary institutions with scholarship funds for undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need. Each college selects students who will benefit from an EducationQuest scholarship.

EducationQuest disbursed \$500,000 in the program's first year. In 2010, the total award amount was \$1.25 million – and it's anticipated that the number of scholarships awarded to Nebraska students since 1999 will surpass 10,000 during the 2010-2011 academic year!

"Ten thousand scholarships is a significant milestone," said EducationQuest Executive Vice President Christine Denicola, who oversees the program. "Without those funds, Nebraska students may not have been able to begin or continue a college education."

EducationQuest staff recently conducted a study to determine the college success rate of *EducationQuest Scholarship Program* recipients. Based on a review of 400 randomly selected recipients who attended college between 1999 and 2005, 71.3 percent received a degree.

"This tells us that, the majority of recipients are not only accessing college, but are succeeding as well," Denicola added.



Kelli Nelson, a student at Western Nebraska Community College, recently received an EducationQuest scholarship.

In a letter to EducationQuest, she writes: "I am proud to be the first in my family to attend college. I will work hard to make a better life for my family and myself. My goal is to receive a journalism degree at WNCC and then move to a larger university."

Reaching Your Potential marks 100 graduates

Since developing the *Reaching Your Potential* scholarship program in 2000, EducationQuest has disbursed over \$2.2 million in renewable scholarships to 244 Nebraskans. Last spring, 13 recipients graduated from college including the 100th recipient to achieve a degree.

"We are proud to have helped over 100 students achieve a college degree through *Reaching Your Potential*," said EducationQuest President and CEO Liz Koop. "Their stories of courage, perseverance, sacrifice, and commitment inspire all of us who work with the program."

EducationQuest awards *Reaching Your Potential* scholarships twice a year to Nebraska students through applicant referrals from Nebraska community agencies and colleges. Overall, 76 percent of students who have received *Reaching Your Potential* scholarships are in college or have graduated.



Michael Sustaita was one of the 13 recipients who graduated last spring. He achieved a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

"Many factors played a role - time management, making sacrifices, being organized, and building a good support network," he said. "However, the biggest thing was believing I could do it, and picking myself up after hitting many bumps along the way."

College Access Challenge Grant

funds to benefit 8th-10th grade students

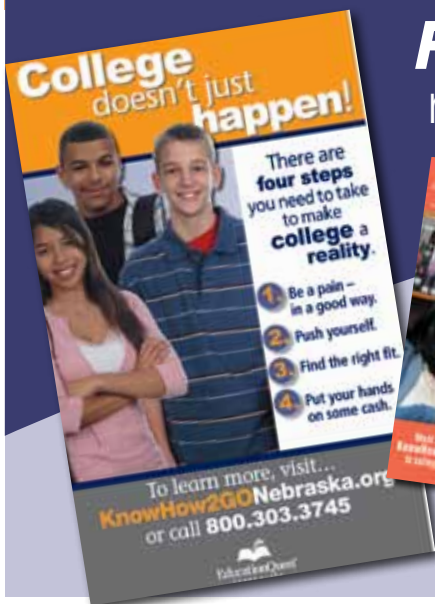
In August, EducationQuest Foundation was awarded College Access Challenge Grant funds to boost college access efforts for 8th-10th grade students, parents and counselors over the next two years.

The College Access Challenge Grant is a federal grant awarded by Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education which serves as the facilitating organization for grant recipients in Nebraska.

The grant will support the enhancement of 8th – 10th grade efforts EducationQuest started in 2007 when named sponsor of the national KnowHow2GO campaign in Nebraska. EducationQuest will use the funds to:

- form an ad hoc advisory group comprised of statewide representatives who work with 8th-10th graders
- develop college access training opportunities for guidance counselors and community agency staff
- expand the KnowHow2GONEbraska Ambassador Program in which college students present college access information to 8th-10th graders
- support a partnership with at least 10 Nebraska middle schools to implement a pilot college access program for 8th graders
- develop a college access handbook that includes college and career planning information based on the four steps of KnowHow2GO
- enhance the 8th-10th grade section of the EducationQuest website
- enhance media messages to 8th-10th grade students and parents

"This grant will allow us to help even more Nebraska 8th-10th graders get on track to college," said EducationQuest Executive Vice President Christine Denicola. "We're excited to work with partners across the state to get these efforts underway."



Free KnowHow2GO resources available



Since taking on the role of Nebraska sponsor of the national KnowHow2GO campaign in 2007, EducationQuest has developed free materials and resources that educators, agency personnel and mentors can use to help 8th – 10th graders prepare for college.

To order free materials such as publications, posters and bookmarks, see the "Resources for High Schools" section at EducationQuest.org and click on "Order College Planning Materials."

Regional partnerships spread college access

Over the past year, EducationQuest has formed KnowHow2GO partnerships in western Nebraska, South Sioux City and Lincoln to help with college access efforts in those areas. The efforts are supported with funds from Lumina Foundation for Education – a national KnowHow2GO sponsor.

- In 2009, EducationQuest joined an already existing partnership in western Nebraska made up of education and business leaders working to increase college access and economic development in that area. The partnership, known as the Panhandle P-16, is using the Lumina funds for college access efforts. Western Nebraska Community College is the lead contact for this effort.
- The northeast Nebraska partnership efforts, which started in 2010, are focused on Gateway to Learning – an alternative learning center in South Sioux City that is working to increase the number of students who go to college. The school has hired a full-time college access coach who works closely with students on career and college planning activities and counseling. South Sioux City Community Schools is the lead partner for this effort.
- In Lincoln, the Lumina grant is funding a College Access Coach at North Star High School. That person will work with low-income and first-generation students on college and career-planning activities.

In all three areas, EducationQuest is providing college access guidance along with resources and materials. Lumina Foundation for Education has provided funding in those areas as part of its efforts to develop statewide college access networks across the country.



See the “Our Partners” section at KnowHow2GONEbraska.org for a list of resources including the “KnowHow2GONEbraska Partner Playbook.” This online tool:

- provides an overview of KnowHow2GO
- explains why KnowHow2GO is important in Nebraska
- gives tips on how you can promote college to 8th-10th graders
- explains free resources you can access online or order from EducationQuest
- provides college planning activities for 8th – 10th graders
- provides a guide to coordinating a KnowHow2GO pep rally



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College Fairs sweep the state

Thousands of Nebraska students and parents had the opportunity to speak with college representatives from across the state, region and country during recent College Fairs sponsored by EducationQuest.

The College Fairs were held during September and October in Grand Island, Norfolk, Scottsbluff/Gering, South Sioux City, Lincoln, and Omaha. EducationQuest employed new ways to promote the Fairs including billboards, live radio remotes, and Facebook ads. Attendance at the fairs has increased over prior years.

