

KnowHow2Go to College
By Governor Dave Heineman
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Dear Fellow Nebraskans:

I was joined recently by several of Nebraska's education leaders to launch a new campaign aimed at helping students and their families plan and prepare for college. 'KnowHow2GO' is a national campaign that encourages students to take a few simple steps to begin planning for their college career.

It's not always enough to want to go to college. We need students to know how they're going to get there. They need a plan, and that's exactly what the KnowHow2GO campaign can help them develop. The central idea is to give Nebraska families the information they need in order to help junior high and high school students prepare for college.

This campaign is one way we are working to increase the college-going rate in Nebraska. With a high school graduation rate of 83.8 percent, Nebraska is among the top five states in the country. However, the most recent data indicates that our college-going rate is 59.7 percent. A five percent increase would give Nebraska one of the top five college attendance rates in the country.

In a society where one of the most valuable tools we can give our students is to help them pursue a college degree, it's more important than ever that students and their families have the information they need to make preparing for college easier.

The first step in the KnowHow2GO effort is to encourage students to find someone who can help guide them through the process. Whether it's a parent, a teacher or counselor or a mentor, kids need someone who can cheer them on and help them find the information they need.

Second is to make sure high school students take the right classes to meet both their high school graduation requirements and those required to get into college. We also want to encourage students to push themselves by taking rigorous classes that prepare them for the college environment.

The third step is to find the right fit by exploring colleges and programs that fit their career interests. Finally, students and their families need to take the time to find out about college funding options and develop a plan to help students pay for the college they want to attend.

In Nebraska, we're partnering with EducationQuest Foundation, a nonprofit organization that works to improve access to higher education and to encourage more families to look at planning for college as a family activity. While KnowHow2GO is a good way to help all students plan for college, it targets low income students and students who are the first in their families to attend college in particular to help them take the necessary steps in planning for college.

More information on Nebraska's KnowHow2GO campaign is available online at <http://www.KnowHow2GONEbraska.org>. There's also a link on our state Web site, available at <http://www.Nebraska.gov>.

I hope that students and parents will take the time to explore the resources available on the KnowHow2GO and EducationQuest Foundation Web sites. With information on college entrance requirements, a database of scholarships, and profiles for colleges and universities here in Nebraska and other Midwest states, these are valuable resources for students in preparing for college.

These sites also feature information for parents ranging from timelines to help parents guide

students and keep them on track when it comes to college planning, calculators to help families estimate future college costs, and information on financial aid options.

In the coming months, we will be working with school districts, mentoring programs and statewide educational organizations to help promote the campaign. It's encouraging that we have so many partners ready and willing to help our students succeed. I want to thank EducationQuest Foundation for the work they're doing to promote opportunities for Nebraska students to pursue a college education, along with all of the partners who are involved in the KnowHow2GO campaign.