

WE BELIEVE

Education Is an Investment, Not an Expense



High-quality education systems are linked to strong, viable economies. That's why an investment in education is an investment in the future economic prosperity of our communities. According to a study by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) for the Economic Analysis and Research Network¹, a network of 61 state and local economic think tanks and 25 national partners founded by the Economic Policy Institute, high-wage states are states with a well-educated workforce.

EPI found a "clear and strong correlation between the educational attainment of a state's workforce and median wages in the state." EPI's research indicates that:

- States can build a strong foundation for economic success and shared prosperity by investing in education.
- Providing expanded access to high-quality education will not only expand economic opportunities for residents, but will likely do more to strengthen the overall state economy.
- States can increase the strength of their economies and their ability to grow and attract high-wage employers by investing in education and increasing the number of well-educated workers.
- Investing in education is also good for state budgets in the long run, because workers with higher incomes contribute more through taxes over the course of their lifetimes.

For individuals, an investment in education lays the foundation for future success in a globally-competitive economy that continues to seek highly skilled employees. The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce² found that by the year 2020, four out of five of the fastest-growing occupations — healthcare professionals and technical, STEM, education and community services — will require high levels of postsecondary education (above 80 percent). The Center also found that by 2020, 65 percent of job vacancies will require some postsecondary education and training².

Helios is working with a number of partners in Arizona and Florida to prepare today's students for success in a competitive, global economy. One of our partners, College Success Arizona, is combining scholarships and mentorships to help increase college graduation rates among low-income and first-generation students. The Education Foundation of Sarasota County is using TechActive classrooms to prepare middle school students for the rigor of postsecondary education and success in the 21st century economy.

Increasing College Success in Arizona

Despite the clear benefits of achieving a postsecondary education, large numbers of full-time students who pursue education beyond high school, never achieve a degree. In Arizona, according to the Arizona Board of Regents' "2020 Vision" plan, of those students who start college, only 56 percent graduate with a bachelor's degree within six years and only 78 percent of freshmen come back for their sophomore year³.

With a mission of ensuring that every individual in Arizona and Florida achieves postsecondary education success, Helios is invested in community efforts that better prepare students along the education continuum and ensure that they have the financial resources and comprehensive support services needed to succeed.

The Foundation has a long-standing partnership with College Success Arizona, formerly Arizona College Scholarship Foundation, which awards college scholarships and provides mentorship to high-potential, Pell Grant-eligible students. Participating students are paired with mentors who provide support and encouragement as these students access and navigate the college process. On average, 70 percent of College Success Arizona scholars are first-generation students who are unfamiliar with college systems. Advisors coach these students on study habits, financial planning, time management, degree mapping and overcoming personal obstacles in their pursuit of a degree.

College Success Arizona is helping its scholars achieve their goals by gaining support across five key areas: funding, college readiness, access, mentorship and motivation. Through this work, College Success Arizona scholars are graduating at twice the rate of other similar college-going students in the state.



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The benefits of a postsecondary education not only impact the student, but his/her family and community as well. College graduates earn more over the course of their lifetimes, benefit from lower unemployment rates and offer skills needed by 21st-century employers.

TechActive Classrooms Prepare Students for Jobs of the Future

Partnerships that impact education by linking today's classrooms to tomorrow's workplace empower students to attain success in the growing, global economy. Investing in these partnerships is not only an investment in student success, but also a mechanism for ensuring the future economic viability of our communities.

Helios is working in Sarasota, Florida with the Education Foundation of Sarasota County and Sarasota Middle Schools to advance teacher training and help maximize classroom technology as part of the schools' transformation to TechActive classrooms. This project expands work started by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation in Sarasota County.

The collaborative nature of TechActive classrooms challenges students to work together to solve complex problems, test team hypotheses and engage in critical thinking. These middle school classrooms operate like a learning lab with students organized in problem-solving teams rather than rows of desks. Teachers facilitate the learning instead of talking from the front of the room, and students are active participants in their instruction.

The TechActive Classroom is a revolution in classroom design that allows students to become immersed in inquiry-based learning where they collaborate to solve complex problems. The classroom layout mirrors many modern workplaces, and it helps students connect what they are learning in school with real-world applications. The collective partners are working toward serving more than 9,500 students at Booker, Brookside, Heron Creek, Laurel Nokomis, McIntosh, Sarasota, Venice and Woodland Middle Schools.



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HELIOS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Helios Education Foundation is proud to partner with the Education Foundation of Sarasota County and local schools to ensure that our students graduate high school ready for college and career. We are dedicated to ensuring that every student in Florida and Arizona has the opportunity to succeed in postsecondary education, and we are confident that this partnership will prepare teachers to teach differently, engage students with technology and encourage students to pursue and complete a postsecondary certificate or degree.

1. Berger, Noah, & Peter Fisher (2013). A Well-Educated Workforce is Key to State Prosperity. Retrieved from <http://s2.epi.org/files/2013/A%20well-educated%20workforce%20is%20key%20to%20state%20prosperity.pdf>
2. Carenevale, A.P., Smith, N., & Stohl, J. (2013) Recovery; Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020. Retrieved from https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.FR_Web_.pdf
3. 2020 Vision: The Arizona University System Long-Term Strategic Plan 2008-2020. Retrieved from <http://facultygovernance.arizona.edu/sites/facgov/files/2020-vision.pdf>