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Contact: Heather Vega
Larson Communications
(925) 784-4608
heather@larsonpr.com

LESS THAN HALF OF U.S. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NATIONWIDE FEEL PREPARED FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER, YOUTHTRUTH FINDS

Survey finds gap between college aspirations and future preparedness

SAN FRANCISCO – Only 44.8 percent of American high school students feel ready for college and career, according to new data released today by San Francisco-based nonprofit [YouthTruth](#). This figure is in stark contrast to the 86.9 percent of students who want to earn a college degree. The student survey findings also highlight the gap in the necessary support offered by public high schools to prepare students for the workforce. Less than half of students surveyed, 45.7 percent, said that their school has helped them figure out which careers match their skills and abilities, while 48.7 percent said they received support navigating the steps needed to pursue their desired careers.

“While the vast majority of high school students want to go to college, most do not feel prepared to do so,” said YouthTruth Executive Director Jen Vorse Wilka. “At YouthTruth, we value students and their point of view as the ultimate beneficiaries in K-12 education, and our school and district partners have found candid student feedback to be truly eye-opening. At a time when more high school graduates are [enrolling in college and looking for work](#), we hope that these findings will help schools across the country recognize opportunities to better prepare students for a successful future.”

Students feel more prepared for college than career. Among the 165,000 students surveyed, 59.6 percent feel equipped to enroll in college-level classes. Similarly, 55.5 percent of students are receiving the help needed to apply for college. On the other hand, only 23 percent of students were receiving counseling about how to pay for college. For schools, this is an area where improvement could directly help students successfully select a college and complete college – since financial aid and overall cost are among the top factors considered when choosing a college, according to a [recent study by the New America Foundation](#), and since college affordability is linked to college persistence, according to a study by [MDRC](#).

Founded in 2008 as a collaboration between the [Center for Effective Philanthropy](#) and the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#), YouthTruth works with schools across the country to use student feedback as guidance for school improvements. [Stanford University's John W. Gardner Center](#) has found student perceptions to be linked to academic outcomes. Utilizing a sophisticated technology system to analyze student feedback against a large library of aggregate data, YouthTruth also consults and informs school leaders to make meaningful decisions on other hot-button issues such as school safety, teacher professional development and classroom engagement.

About YouthTruth Student Survey:

YouthTruth is a national nonprofit that harnesses student perceptions to help educators accelerate improvements in their K–12 schools and classrooms. Through validated survey instruments and tailored advisory services, YouthTruth partners with schools, districts, states and educational organizations to enhance learning for all students. Since 2008, YouthTruth has surveyed over 365,000 students in 29 states and four countries, including Russia, Thailand, and Singapore. For more information, visit www.youthtruthsurvey.org.

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