

College Readiness Is A Myth

By: Leanne Hoagland-Smith, M.S.

Today's young people are taking over 5.3 years to earn a 4-year degree. This low expectation is costing parents thousands of dollars. Part of the reason for this may now be traced to the gap between parents' beliefs about college readiness and actual reality.



In early 2006, the Public Agenda Organization (www.publicagenda.org) released a reality survey that suggested the following:

- 69% of parents believed that their high school graduating children had the skills needed to succeed in college
- 7% of parents believed that their children DID NOT have the skills

This data when compared with research from ACT (www.act.org) indicates that the majority of parents need a reality check. Only 51% of the ACT test takers met the "college readiness benchmarks in reading." The ACT data confirms what the Nation's Report Card (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>) revealed that national **reading scores for 17 year olds have not changed in 33 years** and are not even near what is demanded of today's knowledge workers.

And even if the young person graduates from college, over 50% of them will not be able to compare credit card offers, interpret a table about exercise or blood pressure or understand the arguments of newspaper editorials. (American Institutes Research – www.air.org)

The explanation for this gap is that many parents believe what they experienced in college 20 or 30 years ago is what their children will be experiencing. Given that many of these parents attended public schools, they believe that their high school education was satisfactory for college readiness and college success. With the addition of new curriculum including technology (computers), advance college placement courses and the influx of best practices research from local universities, why should parents believe that high school is not preparing their children for college success?

Only when the majority of parents change their beliefs about this college readiness myth and become more proactive in their children's education, we will begin to see dramatically improved performance both in high school and college. Until that time, **universities** will continue to **smile** as they take **millions of dollars** to the **bank** at the expense of students, parents and taxpayers.

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