



EL DORADO PROMISE

2011: WHAT A DIFFERENCE FOUR YEARS CAN MAKE

On January 22, 2007, residents of El Dorado, Arkansas learned the news that would change this community forever. A unique initiative called The El Dorado Promise would allow future graduates of El Dorado Public Schools the opportunity to earn college degrees tuition-free. Now, four years later, the goals of the El Dorado Promise remain the same – greater educational attainment, a vibrant economy, and an improved quality of life. Murphy Oil Corporation committed \$50 million to El Dorado’s greatest resource – its children.

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

780 Total Promise scholarship recipients

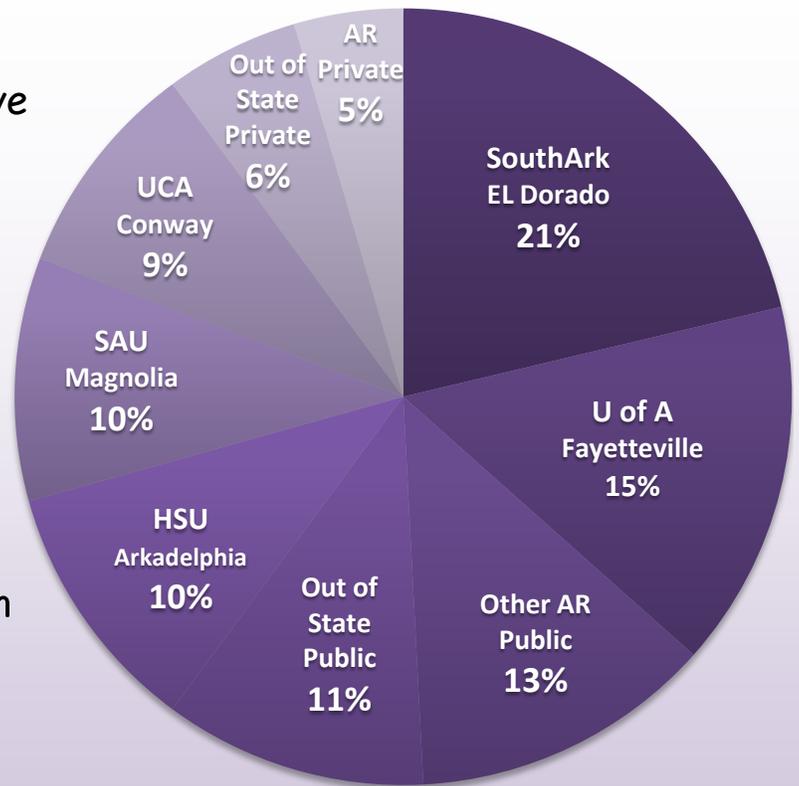
80% Eligible graduates have used the scholarship

54 Colleges in which students are currently enrolled

103 Promise students at SouthArk Community College in El Dorado Fall 2010

4,646 Total students in El Dorado School District

5% Increase in El Dorado School District enrollment since Promise began



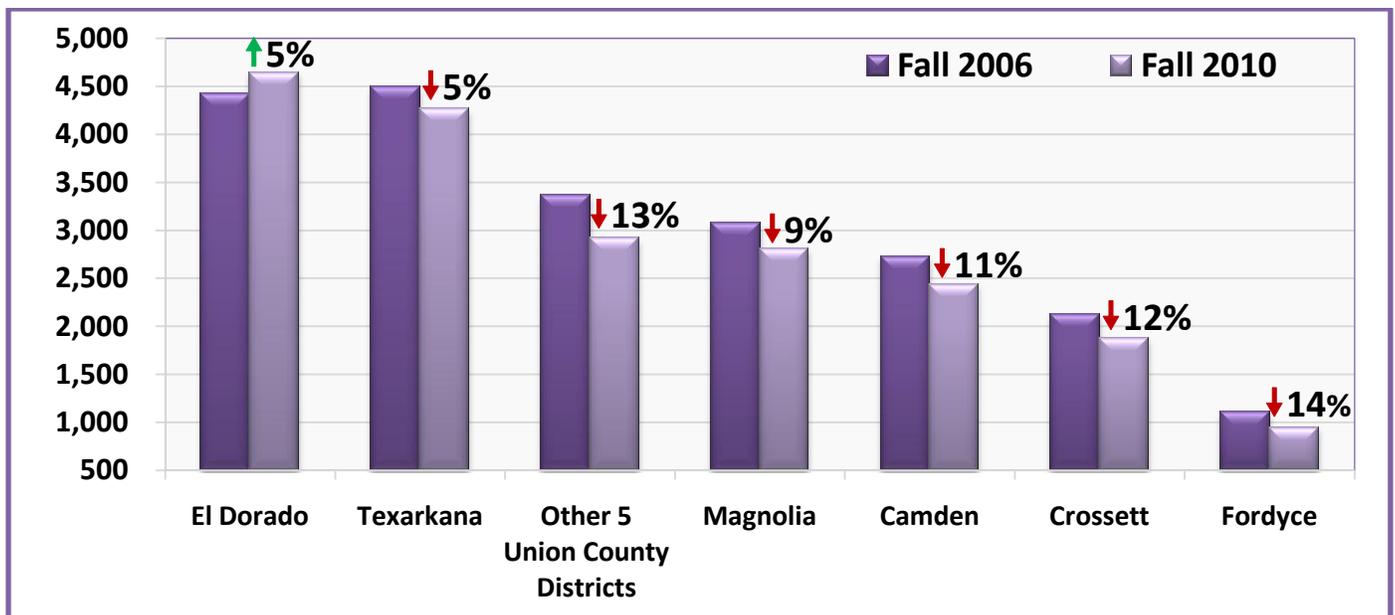
Colleges Promise Students Are Attending

IMPACT ON COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

On average, 80% of Promise-eligible graduates are enrolling in college. This exceeds both the state and national enrollment rates. In a recent survey completed by 117 Promise students currently attending college, an overwhelming 98% agreed that El Dorado High School provided a good education and prepared them well for college. According to 71% of the students, the El Dorado Promise influenced their decision to further education and career goals.

IMPACT ON EL DORADO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

For decades, El Dorado schools faced a slow, but steady decline in enrollment. El Dorado was not alone in this trend as communities throughout South Arkansas faced similar challenges due to the loss of traditional industry. Nothing short of a bold initiative, which came in the form of the Promise, could reverse this trend. The chart below illustrates the impact on enrollment.



In addition to a remarkable five percent increase in enrollment, the atmosphere within the schools changed as students, parents and teachers embraced a college-bound culture. From Kindergarten, El Dorado students are introduced to the concept of college. They are encouraged to dream big, work hard in school, and know that college can be a part of their future. More El Dorado students are going to college than ever before, and thanks to an increased focus on college readiness, more students are taking Advanced Placement classes and other rigorous courses. The prospect of an increasingly educated workforce gives economic development leaders new tools to attract businesses to the region.

For more information about the El Dorado Promise, our schools, and our community, visit these websites:

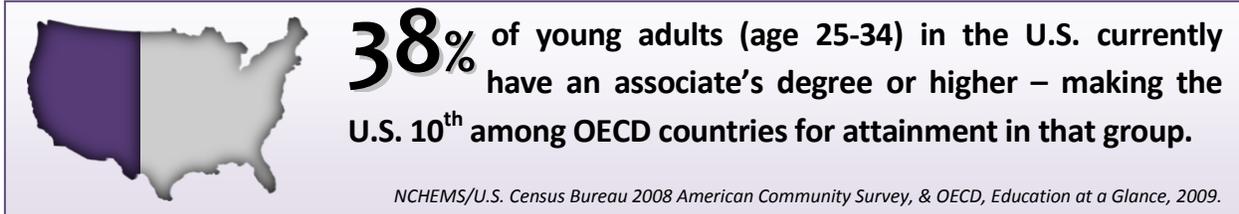
WWW.ELDORADOPROMISE.COM

WWW.ELDORADOPUBLICSCHOOLS.COM

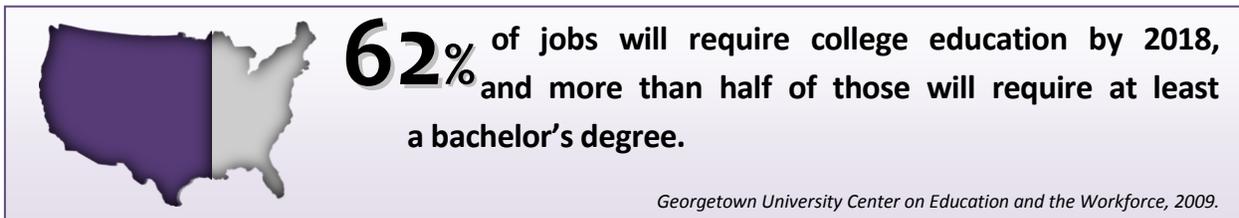
WWW.GOELDORADO.COM

FOCUS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Low educational attainment has become a defining characteristic of our nation's most economically challenged communities. While unemployment today touches all sections of the nation's workforce, the jobless rate for those who have dropped out of high school is nearly three times that of college graduates. By taking down the financial barriers to attending college, the El Dorado Promise is increasing the number of students who go on to post-secondary education.



According to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 26% of young adults (age 25-34) in Arkansas have an associate's degree or higher. Nationwide, 38% of young adults have an associate's degree or higher, making the U.S. 10th among OECD countries for attainment. By 2018, more than 60% of all new jobs will require a college education.



These statistics have stirred American government, business, and philanthropic organizations alike to evaluate what can be done to bolster the nation's economic competitiveness and to enhance its standard of living. Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe has called for doubling the number of college graduates in the state by 2025. President Obama issued a challenge for America to ensure it has the best-educated workforce in the world by 2020.

Lumina Foundation for Education – a private, independent foundation which strives to expand access and success in post-secondary education – has studied the El Dorado Promise and similar programs recently. The Foundation believes that programs such as the Promise can help to accelerate the goal of increasing the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees. Factors contributing to the success of the Promise include:

- Expanding college scholarships
- Boosting K-12 enrollment
- Raising student expectations
- Improving student achievement
- Sending more students to college
- Creating new tools for economic and community development