



# Santa Barbara County Education Office

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## **Promises of a brighter future**

*By Susan Salcido, Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools*

Thanks to the foresight and wisdom of those at Santa Barbara City College and Allan Hancock College, students countywide will have access to two respective Promise Programs, which remove financial barriers to attending college and enrich the entire community in the process.

The popularity of the college Promise Programs is evidenced by the increasing number of schools now offering them across the United States. According to a recent report, in California, the number of colleges offering a Promise Program jumped from 23 in 2016 to 47 in 2017.

While the Promise Programs are unique to each college, one thing is standard: 100 percent of the funding for these programs comes from donations made by supportive individuals and organizations. We thank those who are making this investment in our community, and who are providing deserving students with the tools they will need to contribute to our collective future. This generosity will pay dividends for the students themselves, their families, the community, and the economy.

The SBCC Promise, which began in the fall of 2016, enables all high school graduates from within SBCC's district the opportunity to attend the college full time, free of charge, for up to two years. It is one of the most ambitious of the Promise Programs in that it covers all student expenses — books, supplies, and fees — as well as tuition. This means that the SBCC Promise is making community college fully accessible to all local students who are willing to make the commitment to enroll in the fall or spring semester immediately after graduating from high school and meet the program's requirements.

The Promise Program at Allan Hancock will start in the fall of 2018. What is unique about the Hancock Promise is its iterative approach. It is structured in a way that recognizes the fact that educational aspirations must start early with students, and that continued support and encouragement before, during, and after the program is essential to sustained success.

The Hancock Promise progression starts with “Bulldog Bound,” and engages families and students in grades five through eight, challenging them to think long-term and prepare for a future that

includes higher education. This engagement intensifies in the second phase, “Path to Promise,” which is tailored for high school students.

The third phase, the Promise, provides financial aid to graduating seniors from Lompoc, the Santa Ynez Valley, and upward to Santa Maria to help make college plans a reality. It provides the opportunity for all students from within the Hancock district who complete high school to get their first year of schooling tuition-free, including lab and class fees. The fourth phase of the program, the Extended Promise, focuses on ensuring success with graduation or transfer during a student's second year at the college.

Thanks to the promises of our two community colleges, every high school graduate in Santa Barbara County now has the opportunity to pursue higher education. The Promise Programs are an innovative, structural solution to a serious financial obstacle to student success. Due to the vision and passion of leaders at our two community colleges, and the generous contributions of donors who have invested in that vision, more of our students will have a path to an unstoppable future. Every graduate from our county will have access to college. We are all deeply grateful to our local community colleges for offering this lifeline.

These promises explicitly acknowledge that our nation’s future depends on our young people obtaining the skills they need to be productive and effective contributors. The Promise Programs are a huge commitment on behalf of our community — a recognition that education matters, and that our future depends on the success of all our students. We are grateful for the promises made and promises kept.

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