



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Empowering Communities To Work Alongside Our Schools, Is Florida Next?**

*~Report Calls On Florida To Institutionalize A College Access Network Designed To Engage Future Talent Pool~*

**Tampa, FL-** The time has come for Florida to emulate the best practices of other states and institutionalize a college access network that will empower communities to work alongside our schools and increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in higher education according to a [report](#) released today by ENLACE Florida. According to their latest report, thirteen states throughout the country have begun the process of improving college readiness and access services delivered by community-based organizations by creating networks that maximize resources dedicated to such work while minimizing the duplication of services within high-need communities. This best practice in college access, according to Dr. Lorelle Espinosa, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives for the Institute for Higher Education Policy, “is appropriately grounded in states like Ohio, where education policymakers, researchers, and practitioners must work together to create successful linkages that start in pre-K education and culminate in statewide economic health.” It’s the future economic health of Florida that heightens the demand today for the development of such an infrastructure in the sunshine state. According to the report, the challenge facing Florida’s education leaders and policy makers is the fact that the student populations growing at the *fastest* rates have *lower* rates of academic achievement. “As new jobs increasingly require some form of postsecondary education, Florida will need to look beyond the walls of the classroom and into the community for help in reinforcing the academic lessons delivered by our schools,” said Braulio Colón, Associate Director for ENLACE Florida. “Most importantly, with the appropriate infrastructure in place here in Florida, our communities can also begin to fill the college preparation gap—playing a key role in preparing our youngsters socially and financially for the challenges beyond high school,” said Colón. To view the report, [click here](#) or visit [www.enlaceflorida.org](http://www.enlaceflorida.org).

*ENLACE FLORIDA is a statewide network promoting college readiness, access, and success for Latinos, African-Americans, and other underrepresented students through non-partisan research, communication, advocacy, and support.*

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