

**MEASURING UP**  
**2008**

**THE STATE REPORT CARD  
ON HIGHER EDUCATION**



**Alabama**



**THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
PUBLIC POLICY AND  
HIGHER EDUCATION**

# What Is Measuring Up?

**M**easuring Up is a series of biennial report cards that provide the general public and policymakers with information to assess and improve higher education in each state. The report cards evaluate states because they are primarily responsible for educational access and quality in the United States. This year's edition, *Measuring Up 2008*, is the fifth in the series, which began in 2000. In *Measuring Up*, "higher education" refers to all education and training beyond high school, including public and private, two- and four-year, and for-profit and nonprofit institutions.

The report card grades states in six overall performance categories:

**Preparation:** How adequately does the state prepare students for education and training beyond high school?

**Participation:** Do state residents have sufficient opportunities to enroll in education and training beyond high school?

**Affordability:** How affordable is higher education for students and their families?

**Completion:** Do students make progress toward and complete their certificates or degrees in a timely manner?

**Benefits:** What benefits does the state receive from having a highly educated population?

**Learning:** What is known about student learning as a result of education and training beyond high school?

Each state receives a letter grade in each performance category. Each grade is based on the state's performance on several indicators, or quantitative measures, in that category.

In four of the performance categories — Preparation, Participation, Completion, and Benefits — grades are calculated by comparing each state's current performance with that of the best-performing states. This comparison provides a benchmark for evaluating each state's performance within a national context and encourages each state to "measure up" to the highest-performing states. The Affordability category is the exception. In this category, the state's current performance is compared with the performance of the best states in the late 1990s, since current performance reflects a trend to "measure down" rather than "measure up." All but one state receive an "F" in Affordability. The failing grades in this category confirm the fast decline in affordable higher education for American families. Despite state and federal increases in student financial aid, the over-

all portion of income that most families must devote for higher education continues to escalate.

In *Measuring Up 2008*, state performance in higher education is assessed in three ways:

**Graded Information:** Each state's current performance is compared with that of the best-performing states, and the results are indicated by letter grades.

**Change Over Time:** Change Over Time indicators compare each state's current performance with its own previous performance in the 1990s. For each category, the state's change is determined by its improvement or decline in performance on a key indicator in that category. This information is displayed in two ways. First, states receive either an "up" or a "down" arrow in each performance area (see page 3). An "up" arrow indicates that the state has increased or remained stable on the key indicator in the category, a "down" arrow indicates that the state has declined on the key indicator in the category. Secondly, information about Change Over Time is presented graphically in greater detail on the fourth page of this report card.

**International Comparisons:** As in 2006, this year's edition of *Measuring Up* offers international comparisons that reveal how well the United States and each of the 50 states are preparing residents with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy. State performance is compared with the performance of nations that are associated with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In *Measuring Up 2008*, all states receive an "Incomplete" in Learning because there are not sufficient data to allow meaningful state-by-state comparisons. *Measuring Up 2006* provided state-specific information on Learning for nine states, but in 2008 no state collects and provides the information necessary to determine the state's "educational capital" — or the level of knowledge and skills possessed by its residents.

## A Snapshot of Grades and Change Over Time

### Preparation:

**Grades:** 6 states received an A, 18 states received a B, 21 states received a C, 5 states received a D, and no state received an F.

**Change Over Time:**\* 34 states have improved or remained stable on the key indicator and 16 states have declined on the key indicator.

### Participation:

**Grades:** 2 states received an A, 8 states received a B, 22 states received a C, 15 states received a D, and 3 states received an F.

**Change Over Time:**\* 43 states have improved or remained stable on the key indicator and 7 states have declined on the key indicator.

### Affordability:

**Grades:** 1 state received a C and 49 states received an F.

**Change Over Time:**\* 2 states have improved or remained stable on the key indicator and 48 states have declined on the key indicator.

### Completion:

**Grades:** 11 states received an A, 20 states received a B, 16 states received a C, 1 state received a D, and 2 states received an F.

**Change Over Time:**\* 48 states have improved or remained stable on the key indicator and 2 states have declined on the key indicator.

### Benefits:

**Grades:** 5 states received an A, 15 states received a B, 19 states received a C, 10 states received a D, and 1 state received an F.

**Change Over Time:**\* 50 states have improved or remained stable on the key indicator.

\*For the key indicators for Change Over Time, please see the five indicators with asterisks on page 4.



## PREPARATION

**D+**

2008 Grade



Change Over Time

Alabama's underperformance in educating its young population could limit the state's access to a competitive workforce and weaken the state's economy.

- Eighth graders perform very poorly in math, science, reading, and writing.
- High school students have improved on college entrance exams, but their scores remain low.

## PARTICIPATION

**D+**

2008 Grade



Change Over Time

College opportunities for young and working-age adults are poor.

- The likelihood of enrolling in college by age 19 is low, primarily because the state has one of the lowest high school graduation rates in the country.
- Thirty-three percent of black young adults are enrolled in college, compared with 37% of whites.

## AFFORDABILITY

**F**

2008 Grade



Change Over Time

Higher education has become less affordable for students and their families.

- Poor and working-class families must devote 51% of their income, even after aid, to pay for costs at public four-year colleges.
- Financial aid to low-income students is low. For every dollar in Pell Grant aid to students, the state spends only five cents.

## COMPLETION

**C-**

2008 Grade



Change Over Time

Alabama's performance in awarding certificates and degrees is only fair compared with other states.

- Forty-seven percent of college students complete a bachelor's degree within six years.
- Thirty-five percent of blacks graduate within six years, compared with 54% of whites.

## REPORT CARD

Preparation	D+
Participation	D+
Affordability	F
Completion	C-
Benefits	C
Learning	I

## BENEFITS

**C**

2008 Grade



Change Over Time

A small proportion of residents have a bachelor's degree, and this weakens the state economy.

- Fifteen percent of blacks have a bachelor's degree, compared with 25% of whites.
- If all racial/ethnic groups had the same educational attainment and earnings as whites, total annual personal income in the state would be about \$8 billion higher.

## LEARNING

**I**

2008 Grade

Like all states, Alabama receives an "Incomplete" in Learning because there is not sufficient data to allow meaningful state-by-state comparisons.

## WHAT DO THE ARROWS MEAN?



State has increased or remained stable on the key indicator in the category.

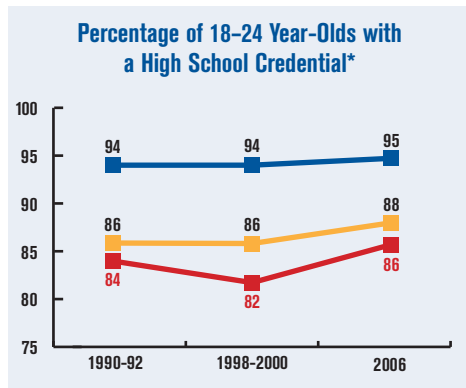


State has declined on the key indicator in the category.

This page reflects Alabama's performance and progress since the early 1990s on several key indicators.

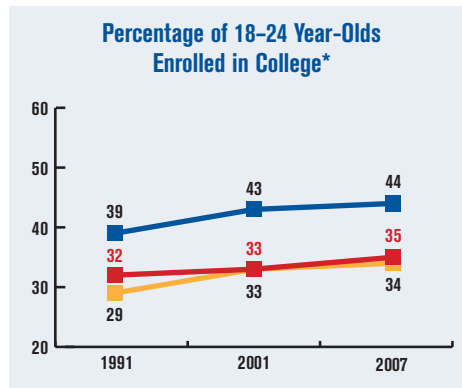
## PREPARATION

The percentage of young adults in Alabama who earn a high school diploma has increased slightly since the early 1990s. High school completion is below the U.S. average and well below the top-performing states.

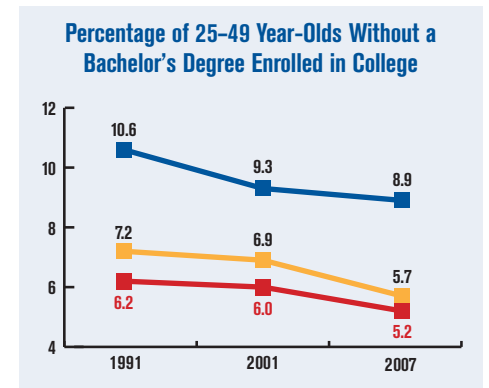


## PARTICIPATION

College enrollment of young adults in Alabama has improved since the early 1990s. The state is slightly above the national average but below the top states in the percentage of young adults enrolled.

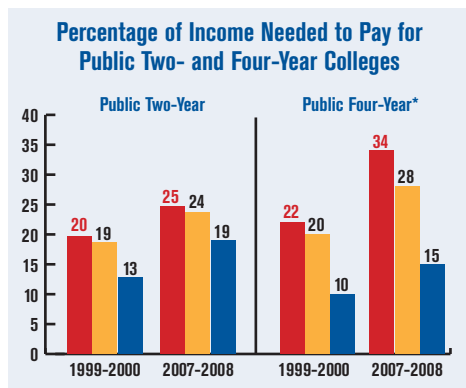


The enrollment of working-age adults, relative to the number of residents without a bachelor's degree, has declined in Alabama—as it has nationally and in the best-performing states. The percentage attending college in Alabama is slightly below the U.S. average and well below the top states.



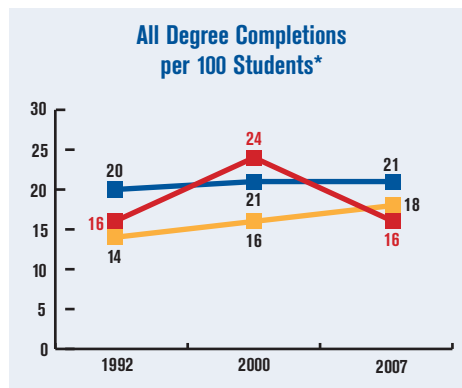
## AFFORDABILITY

The share of family income, even after financial aid, needed to pay for college has risen substantially. To attend public two- and four-year colleges in Alabama, students and families pay more than the U.S. average and more than those in the best-performing states.



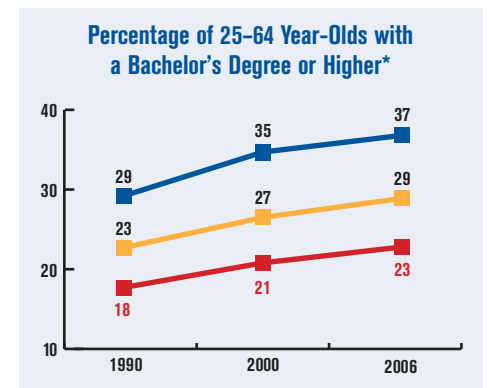
## COMPLETION

The number of undergraduate credentials and degrees awarded in Alabama, relative to the number of students enrolled, has remained stable since the early 1990s. Alabama is below the U.S. average and the top states on this measure.\*\*



## BENEFITS

The percentage of residents who have a bachelor's degree has increased in Alabama, but remains well below the U.S. average and the top states.



\*Key indicator for the category.

\*\* Completion data for 1999-2000 includes the Community College of the Air Force, which primarily serves students who reside outside Alabama.

## LEGEND:

—■— & ■ = Alabama

—■— & ■ = United States

—■— & ■ = Median of Top Five States



2008 Grade Change Over Time

Alabama's underperformance in educating its young population could limit the state's access to a competitive workforce and weaken the state's economy.

## Graded Information

### Compared with other states:

- Eighty-six percent of young adults in Alabama earn a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) diploma by age 24.
- A small proportion (29%) of 8th graders take algebra.
- Eighth graders perform very poorly on national assessments in math, science, reading, and writing, indicating that they are not well prepared to succeed in challenging high school courses. Alabama is among the lowest-performing states on all four measures.
- Low-income 8th graders score very poorly on national assessments in math. Alabama is the lowest-performing state on this measure.
- Very small proportions of 11th and 12th graders score well on Advanced Placement tests, and small proportions score well on college entrance exams.
- Eighty-two percent of secondary school students are taught by qualified teachers, which compares very well with top-performing states.

## Performance Gaps

- There is a 7% gap between whites and all minorities in the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds with a high school credential. Among the same population, 84% of blacks, the largest minority population in Alabama, have a high school credential, compared with 88% of whites.

PREPARATION	Alabama		Top States
	Early 1990s*	2008	
<b>High School Completion (25%)</b>			
18- to 24-year-olds with a high school credential	84%	86%	95%
<b>K-12 Course taking (30%)</b>			
9th to 12th graders taking at least one upper-level math course	31%	n/a**	64%
9th to 12th graders taking at least one upper-level science course	20%	n/a**	46%
8th grade students taking algebra	n/a	29%	47%
<b>K-12 Student Achievement (35%)</b>			
8th graders scoring at or above "proficient" on the national assessment exam in math	10%	18%	41%
8th graders scoring at or above "proficient" on the national assessment exam in reading	21%	21%	39%
8th graders scoring at or above "proficient" on the national assessment exam in science	18%	19%	41%
8th graders scoring at or above "proficient" on the national assessment exam in writing	17%	24%	46%
Low-income 8th graders scoring at or above "proficient" on the national assessment exam in math	2%	6%	24%
Number of scores in the top 20% nationally on SAT/ACT college entrance exam per 1,000 high school graduates	101	174	265
Number of scores that are 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement subject test per 1,000 high school juniors and seniors	39	81	237
<b>Teacher Quality (10%)</b>			
7th to 12th graders taught by teachers with a major in their subject	n/a	82%	83%

\*The indicators report data beginning in the early 1990s or the closest year for which reliable data are available. See the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2008*.

\*\*Data are not available because the state did not participate in the national survey.

## Change in Graded Measures

- Over the past decade, the percentage of low-income 8th graders performing well on national assessments in math has tripled, although the state's current performance on this measure is the lowest in the country.
- Over the past 15 years, the proportions of 11th and 12th graders performing well on college entrance exams have increased substantially, although Alabama's current performance on this measure remains poor when compared with other states.

## Other Key Facts

- Among working-age adults (ages 25 to 49) without a high school diploma, only four out of 1,000 earned a GED.
- About 23% of children under age 18 live in poverty, compared with a national rate of 18%.
- Policymakers and state residents do not have access to important information about the courses students take in high school because the state declined to participate in the national survey.

The preparation category measures how well a state's K-12 schools prepare students for education and training beyond high school. The opportunities that residents have to enroll in and benefit from higher education depend heavily on the performance of their state's K-12 educational system.



2008 Grade Change Over Time



College opportunities for young and working-age adults are poor.

## Graded Information

### Compared with other states:

- The chance of Alabama high school students enrolling in college by age 19 is fairly low, primarily because the proportion of students who graduate from high school within four years is small. The proportion of students graduating from high school within four years is among the smallest in the country.
- A very low percentage of working-age adults (ages 25 to 49) are enrolled in college-level education or training.

## Performance Gaps

- There is a 6% gap between whites and all minorities in the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college. The gap between whites and blacks is 5%.

PARTICIPATION	Alabama		Top States
	Early 1990s*	2008	
<b>Young Adults (67%)</b>			
Chance for college by age 19	37%	39%	57%
18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college	32%	35%	44%
<b>Working-Age Adults (33%)</b>			
25- to 49-year-olds enrolled in any type of postsecondary education with no bachelor's degree or higher	6.2%	5.2%	8.9%

\*The indicators report data beginning in the early 1990s or the closest year for which reliable data are available. See the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2008*.

## Other Key Facts

- Alabama's population is projected to grow by 6% from 2005 to 2025, below the national increase of 18%. During approximately the same period, the number of high school graduates is projected to increase by 5%.
- About 20% of the adult population has less than a high school diploma or its equivalent, compared with 16% nationwide.
- In Alabama, 6,745 more students are entering the state than leaving to attend college. About 11% of Alabama high school graduates who go to college attend college out of state.

The participation category addresses the opportunities for state residents to enroll in higher education. A strong grade in participation generally indicates that state residents have high individual expectations for education and that the state provides enough spaces and types of educational programs for its residents.



2008 Grade



Change Over Time

Higher education has become less affordable for students and their families.

## Graded Information

- Compared with best-performing states, families in Alabama devote a very large share of family income, even after financial aid, to attend public two- and four-year colleges and universities, which enroll 89% of college students in the state.
- Alabama's investment in need-based financial aid is very low when compared with top-performing states, and the state does not offer low-priced college opportunities.
- Undergraduate students borrowed on average \$4,684 in 2007.

## Change in Graded Measures

- Since the late 1990s, the share of family income, even after financial aid, needed to pay for college expenses at public four-year institutions has increased from 22% to 34%.

## Other Key Facts

- In Alabama, 35% of students are enrolled in community colleges and 54% in public four-year colleges and universities.

AFFORDABILITY	Alabama		Top States in Previous Years
	Previous Years*	Current Year	
<b>Family Ability to Pay (50%)</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2008</b>	
Percent of income (average of all income groups) needed to pay for college expenses minus financial aid:			
at community colleges	20%	25%	13%
at public 4-year colleges/universities	22%	34%	10%
at private 4-year colleges/universities	42%	59%	30%
<b>Strategies for Affordability (40%)</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>2008</b>	
State investment in need-based financial aid as compared to the federal investment	2%	5%	89%
At lowest-priced colleges, the share of income that the poorest families need to pay for tuition	18%	32%	7%
<b>Reliance on Loans (10%)</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2008</b>	
Average loan amount that undergraduate students borrow each year	\$2,881	\$4,684	\$2,619

\*See the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2008*.

Note: In the affordability category, the lower the figures, the better the performance for all indicators except for "State investment in need-based financial aid."

The affordability category measures whether students and families can afford to pay for higher education, given income levels, financial aid, and the types of colleges and universities in the state.

## Financial Burden to Pay for College Varies Widely by Family Income

Those who are striving to reach or stay in the middle class — the 40% of the population with the lowest incomes — earn on average \$14,892.

- If a student from such a family were to attend a community college in the state, their net cost to attend college would represent about 36% of their income annually.

Tuition, room, and board:	\$9,528
Financial aid received:	-\$4,126
Net college cost:	\$5,402
Percent of income:	36%

- If the same student were to attend a public four-year college in the state, their net cost to attend college would represent about 51% of their income annually.

Tuition, room, and board:	\$11,693
Financial aid received:	-\$4,153
Net college cost:	\$7,540
Percent of income:	51%

Note: The numbers shown for tuition, room, and board, minus financial aid may not exactly equal net college cost due to rounding.

A CLOSER LOOK AT FAMILY ABILITY TO PAY	Median Family Income	Community Colleges		Public 4-Year colleges/universities		Private Non-Profit 4-Year colleges/universities	
		Net college cost*	Percent of income needed to pay net college cost	Net college cost*	Percent of income needed to pay net college cost	Net college cost*	Percent of income needed to pay net college cost
<b>Income groups used to calculate 2008 family ability to pay</b>							
20% of the population with the lowest income	\$8,653	\$4,166	48	\$6,454	75	\$13,041	151
20% of the population with lower-middle income	\$21,130	\$7,111	34	\$8,519	40	\$13,654	65
20% of the population with middle income	\$37,229	\$8,330	22	\$10,085	27	\$15,085	41
20% of the population with upper-middle income	\$60,372	\$8,863	15	\$10,060	17	\$15,561	26
20% of the population with the highest income	\$105,650	\$9,073	9	\$10,385	10	\$16,469	16
<b>40% of the population with the lowest income</b>	<b>\$14,892</b>	<b>\$5,402</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>\$7,540</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>\$12,908</b>	<b>87</b>

\*Net college cost equals tuition, room, and board, minus financial aid.





2008 Grade Change Over Time

Alabama's performance in awarding certificates and degrees is only fair compared with other states.

## Graded Information

### Compared with other states:

- A fairly high percentage (54%) of first-year students in community colleges return for their second year.
- At four-year colleges and universities, a high percentage (73%) of freshmen return for their sophomore year.
- However, a fairly low percentage (47%) of first-time, full-time college students complete a bachelor's degree within six years of entering college.
- Only a fair proportion of students complete certificates and degrees relative to the number enrolled.
- Twenty-three postsecondary certificates and degrees were awarded for every 1,000 people in the state without a college degree.

COMPLETION	Alabama		Top States
	Early 1990s*	2008	
<b>Persistence (20%)**</b>			
1st year community college students returning their second year	50%	54%	66%
Freshmen at 4-year colleges/universities returning their sophomore year	73%	73%	82%
<b>Completion (80%)</b>			
First-time, full-time students completing a bachelor's degree within 6 years of college entrance	44%	47%	65%
Certificates, degrees, diplomas at all colleges & universities per 100 undergraduate students	16	16	21
Certificates, degrees, diplomas at all colleges & universities per 1,000 adults with no college degree	28	23	44

\*The indicators report data beginning in the early 1990s or the closest year for which reliable data are available. See the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2008*.

\*\*2008 data may not be comparable with data from previous years.

## Performance Gaps

- There is an 18% gap between whites and all minorities in college graduation rates at four-year institutions, which is one of the largest gaps in the United States. Thirty-five percent of blacks, the largest minority population in Alabama, graduate from a four-year institution within six years, compared with 54% of whites.
- Among white students, 17 degrees are awarded for every 100 students. In contrast, among all minority students, 14 degrees are awarded for every 100 students. The rate of awards for blacks, the largest minority group in Alabama, is 14 for every 100 undergraduate enrollments.

## Change in Graded Measures

- Since the early 1990s, Alabama has been among the fastest-declining states in the number of certificates and degrees completed relative to the population with no college degree.

The completion category addresses whether students continue through their educational programs and earn certificates or degrees in a timely manner. Certificates and degrees from one- and two-year programs as well as the bachelor's degree are included.



2008 Grade Change Over Time

A small proportion of residents have a bachelor's degree, and this weakens the state economy.

## Graded Information

### Compared with other states:

- A small proportion of residents have a bachelor's degree, and this substantially weakens the state economy.
- However, residents contribute substantially to the civic good, as measured by charitable giving, volunteerism, and voting.

## Performance Gaps

- There is a 9% gap between whites and minorities in the percentage of 25- to 64-year-olds with a bachelor's degree or higher. Among the same population, 15% of blacks, the largest minority population in Alabama, have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 25% of whites.
- If all racial/ethnic groups had the same educational attainment and earnings as whites, total annual personal income in the state would be about \$8 billion higher.

## Change in Graded Measures

- Since the early 1990s, the percentage of residents holding a bachelor's degree has increased by 29%, compared with an increase of 28% for the United States overall.

BENEFITS	Alabama		Top States
	Early 1990s*	2008	
<b>Educational Achievement (38%)</b>			
Adults (ages 25 to 64) with an associate's degree or higher	23%	30%	44%
Adults (ages 25 to 64) with a bachelor's degree or higher	18%	23%	37%
<b>Economic Benefits (31%)</b>			
Increase in total personal income as a result of the percentage of population with some college (including an associate's degree), but not a bachelor's degree	3%	2%	3%
Increase in total personal income as a result of the percentage of population holding a bachelor's degree	6%	7%	11%
<b>Civic Benefits (31%)</b>			
Residents voting in national elections	57%	55%	65%
Of those who itemize on federal income taxes, the percentage declaring charitable gifts	92%	90%	90%
Increase in volunteering as a result of college education	20%	17%	20%
<b>Adult Skill Levels (0%)**</b>			
Quantitative Literacy	n/a	n/a	n/a
Prose Literacy	n/a	n/a	n/a
Document Literacy	n/a	n/a	n/a

\*The indicators report data beginning in the early 1990s or the closest year for which reliable data are available. See the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2008*.

\*\*State-level estimates on these measures are not currently available except for six states participating in an oversample; NCES intends to release limited 50-state data on this 2003 survey in 2009.

## Other Key Facts

- In 2007, Alabama scored 45 on the New Economy Index, compared with a nationwide score of 62. The New Economy Index, created by the Kauffman Foundation, measures the extent to which a state is participating in knowledge-based industries. A higher score means increased participation.
- Policymakers and state residents do not have access to important information about high-level literacy skills because the state has declined to participate in the national literacy survey.

The benefits category measures the economic and societal benefits that the state receives as a result of having well-educated residents.



2008 Grade

Like all states, Alabama receives an “Incomplete” in Learning because there are not sufficient data to allow meaningful state-by-state comparisons.

*Measuring Up 2004* for the first time provided state-level results in Learning because five states (Illinois, Kentucky, Nevada, Oklahoma, and South Carolina) participated in a groundbreaking effort to pilot comparable measures in this category. The National Forum on College-Level Learning conducted this project, which was funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.<sup>1</sup> These results were also included in *Measuring Up 2006*, which for the first time reported performance measures based on licensure and graduate admissions examination scores for all 50 states.

The approach used to examine Learning employed a method similar to that of the other five performance categories in *Measuring Up*. Indicators were developed in three categories:

- 1. Literacy Levels of College-Educated Residents.** What are the abilities of the state’s college-educated population? The answer to this question constitutes the “educational capital” that the state can count on with respect to developing a twenty-first century workforce and a citizenry equipped to function effectively in civic and democratic processes.
- 2. Graduates Ready for Advanced Practice.** To what extent do colleges and universities in the state educate students to be capable of contributing to the workforce? The answer to this question depends a great deal on the extent to which graduates of the state’s colleges and universities are ready to enter a licensed profession or participate in graduate study.
- 3. Performance of College Graduates.** How effectively can the state’s college and university

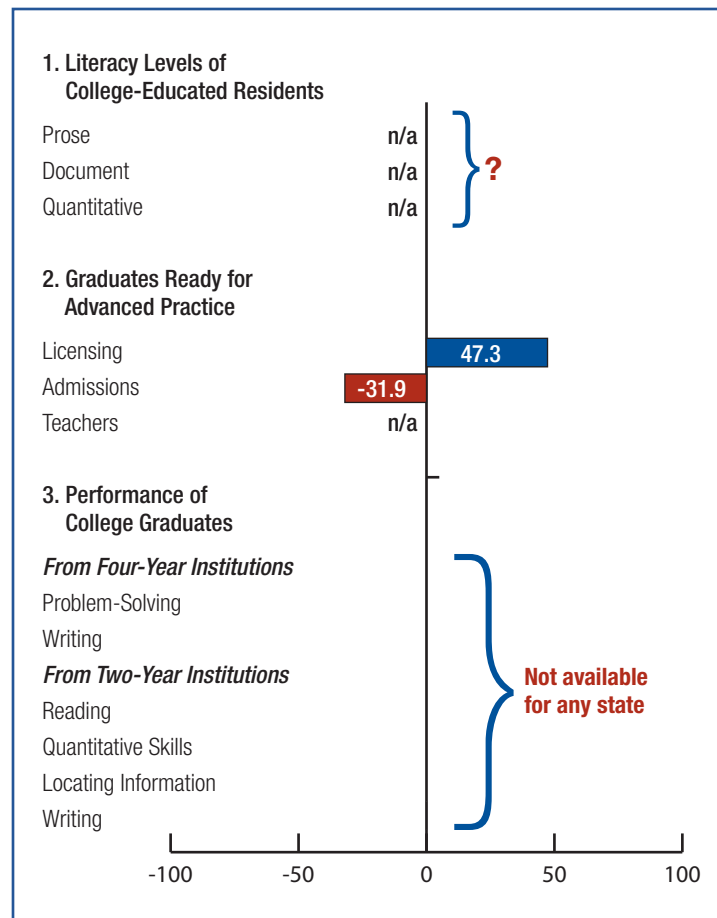
graduates communicate and solve problems? This is the bottom line with respect to performance in learning that can only be determined by common direct assessments of college graduates.

To evaluate state performance on Learning in *Measuring Up 2004*, indicator results within each of these three categories were compiled for the pilot states and compared with a common standard: the national average on each measure. Performance on the resulting group of measures created a “learning profile” for

each state that shows how many percentage points above or below this national level the values of each of the state’s indicators fall.

*Measuring Up 2008* uses the same method for portraying results in Learning, although the picture is incomplete. Results for Literacy Levels of College-Educated Residents can be calculated only for the six states (Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, and Oklahoma) that participated in the State Assessment of Adult Literacy (SAAL)-a state-level version of the

National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) conducted in 2003. Results for Graduates Ready for Advanced Practice, which are based on common licensure and graduate admissions examinations, can be calculated for all 50 states. Results for Performance of College Graduates relied upon specially administered standardized assessments given to representative samples of the state’s about-to-graduate college students for five states in 2004. These measures were reported in *Measuring Up 2004* and *Measuring Up 2006*, but have not been repeated for 2008.



## Alabama Results

Alabama’s higher-education system is very competitive in workforce preparation as reflected in professional licensure examinations. Its college graduates are 47 percentage points above the national benchmark on this measure, which places Alabama among the 10 top-performing states. Fifty-six percent more of the state’s graduates take such examinations than do graduates on average nationwide, and their pass rates match the national average. In contrast, Alabama is almost 32 percentage points below the national benchmark in preparing students for graduate study as reflected in graduate admissions examinations. Although Alabama graduates are about 15% more likely to take such examinations than are graduates on average nationwide, the proportion who earn competitive scores is more than 40% below the national average.

Alabama reports pass rates on teacher licensure examinations, but the rates it uses are not comparable to national averages.

Alabama did not participate in the SAAL, so no results on literacy are available.

1. A full report on the results of this project can be obtained from the National Center at [http://www.highereducation.org/reports/mu\\_learning/index.shtml](http://www.highereducation.org/reports/mu_learning/index.shtml)

## How Alabama Measures Up Internationally

### Participation

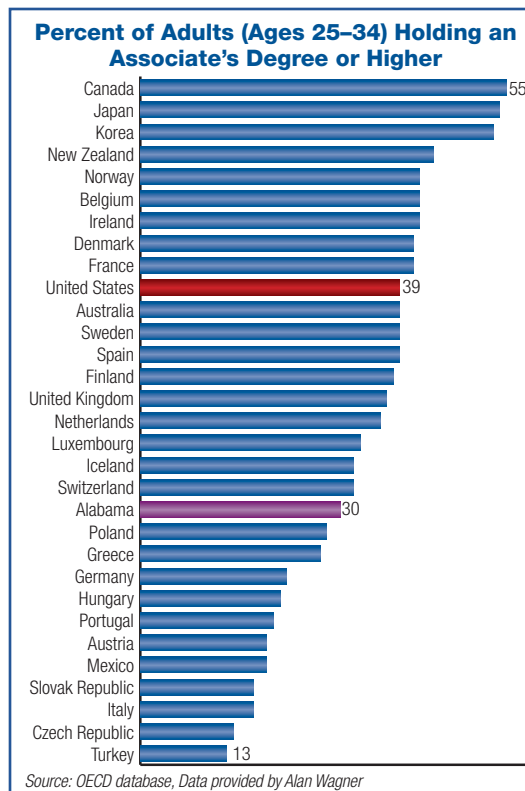
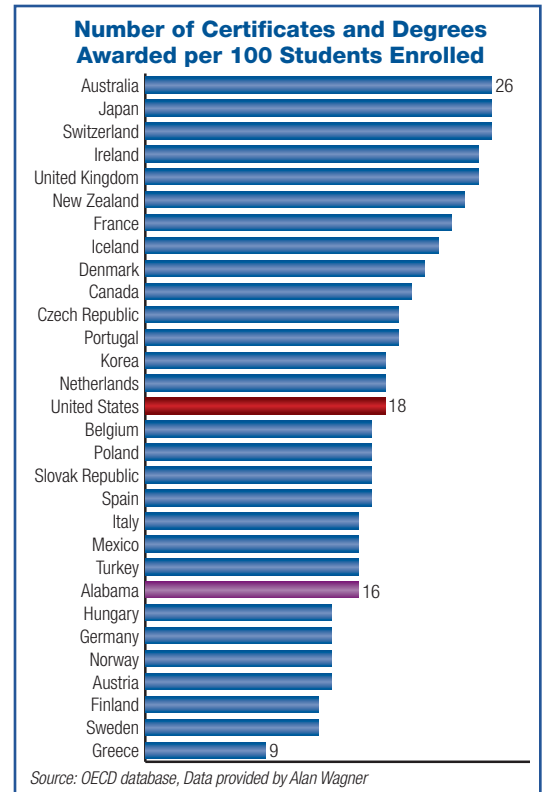
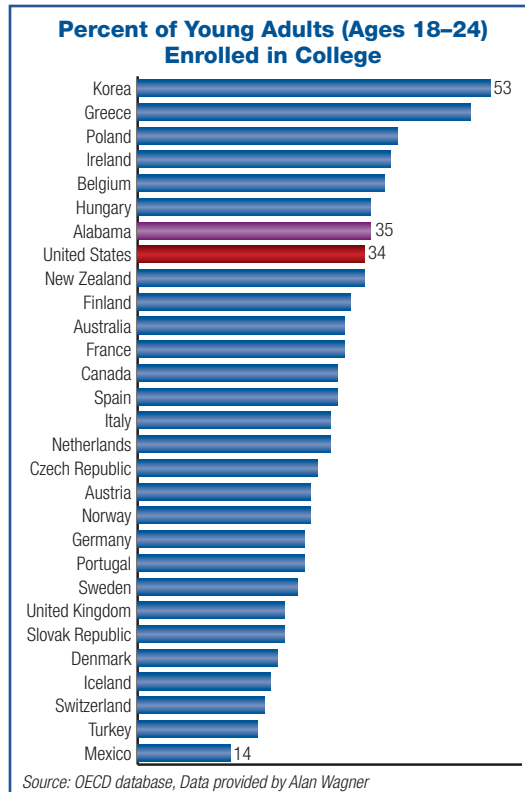
About 35% of young adults, ages 18 to 24, in Alabama are currently enrolled in college. Internationally, although Alabama's enrollment rate compares well with that of top countries, it is 18% less than the rate in Korea, the top-performing nation on this measure. Alabama is also surpassed by Greece, Poland, Ireland, and Belgium.

### Completion

When compared internationally, Alabama ranks very low in the number of certificates or degrees produced relative to the number of students enrolled. With 16 out of 100 students in Alabama completing certificates or degrees, the state's completion rate is only 61% of the rate in Australia, the top-performing nation on this measure, where 26 out of 100 students complete certificates or degrees. Alabama is also behind such low-performing countries as Italy, Mexico, and Turkey.

### Educational Level of Adult Population

When compared internationally, the proportion of younger adults, ages 25 to 34, with a college degree in Alabama is 25% less than the proportion in Canada, the top-performing nation on this measure. Alabama is also surpassed by Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark, France, Australia, Sweden, Spain, Finland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Iceland, and Switzerland.



State Context	Alabama	State Rank
Population (2007)	4,627,851	23
Gross State Product (2007, in millions)	\$165,796	25
Leading Indicators	Alabama	U.S.
Projected % change in population (2005-2025)	6%	18%
Projected % change in number of all high school graduates (2005-2022)	5%	9%
Projected budget surplus/shortfall by 2013	-11%	-6%
Median income of poorest 20% of population (2006)	\$8,653	\$11,169
Children in poverty (2006)	23%	18%
Percent of adult population with less than a high school diploma or equivalent (2006)	20%	16%
GEDs awarded to 25- to 49-year-olds with no high school diploma (2006)	4	8
New Economy Index (2007)*	45	62
Facts and Figures	Alabama	
	Number/Amount	Percent
<b>Institutions of Postsecondary Education (2007-08)</b>		
Public 4-Year	14	21%
Public 2-Year	25	37%
Private 4-Year	26	38%
Private 2-Year	3	4%
<b>Students Enrolled by Institution Type (2006)</b>		
Public 4-Year	119,822	54%
Public 2-Year	76,811	35%
Private 4-Year	23,564	11%
Private 2-Year	323	0%
<b>Students Enrolled by Level (2006)</b>		
Undergraduate	220,520	85%
Graduate	33,395	13%
Professional	4,493	2%
<b>Enrollment Status of Students (2006)</b>		
Full-time	171,142	66%
Part-time	87,266	34%
<b>Net Migration of Students (2006)</b>		
Positive numbers for net migration mean that more students are entering than leaving the state to attend college. Negative numbers reveal the reverse.	6,745	
<b>Average Tuition (2007-08)</b>		
Public 4-year institutions	\$5,028	
Public 2-year institutions	\$2,864	
Private 4-year institutions	\$14,600	
<b>State and Local Appropriations for Higher Education</b>		
Per \$1,000 of personal income, FY 2008	\$13	
Per capita, FY 2008	\$418	
% change, FY 1998-2008		98%

\* This index, created by the Kauffman Foundation, measures the extent to which a state is participating in knowledge-based industries. A higher score means increased participation.

# Questions and Answers about *Measuring Up 2008*

**Q. Who is being graded in this report card, and why?**

**A.** *Measuring Up 2008* grades states, not students or individual colleges or universities, on their performance in higher education. The states are responsible for preparing students for higher education by means of sound K-12 school systems, and they provide most of the public financial support — approximately \$77 billion in 2008 — for colleges and universities. Through their oversight of public institutions of higher education, state leaders affect the types and number of education programs available in the state. State leaders also determine the limits of financial support and often influence tuition and fees for public colleges and universities. They also establish how much state-based financial aid is available to students and their families, which affects students attending both private and public colleges and universities. In addition, state economic development policies influence the income advantage that residents receive from having some college experience or a college degree.

**Q. How are states graded?**

**A.** States receive letter grades in each performance category. Each category consists of several indicators, or quantitative measures — a total of 36 indicators in the five graded categories. Grades are calculated based on each state's current performance on these indicators, relative to the best-performing states. Grades in *Measuring Up 2008* reflect state performance for 2006 or 2007, the most recent information available.

For the sixth category, Learning, states receive an “Incomplete” because there is not sufficient information about student learning for meaningful state-by-state comparisons.

**Q. What sources of information are used to determine the grades?**

**A.** All data used to grade states in *Measuring Up 2008* were collected from reliable national sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Education. All data are the most recent public information available for state comparisons. Please see the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2008* for more information regarding data sources.

**Q. How do we measure Change Over Time?**

**A.** Change Over Time indicators compare each state's current performance with its own previous performance in the 1990s. For each category, the state's change is determined by its improvement or decline in performance on a key indicator in that category. This information is displayed in two ways. First, states receive either an “up” or a “down” arrow in each performance area (see page 3). An “up” arrow indicates that the

state has increased or remained stable on the key indicator in the category, a “down” arrow indicates that the state has declined on the key indicator in the category. Secondly, information about Change Over Time is presented graphically in greater detail on the fourth page of this report card.

**Q. What is new in *Measuring Up 2008*?**

**A.** This year the National Center replaced the data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) with the American Community Survey (ACS), also administered by the Census Bureau. The ACS has a sample size of three million households (as of 2005), and will eventually replace the long survey form of the decennial census. Because of its large sample size, it is a valuable resource for state data. This new data source affects several indicators in the preparation, participation, completion, and benefits categories. For more information on these indicators, see *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2008* at [www.highereducation.org](http://www.highereducation.org). In addition, *Measuring Up 2008* includes two new indicators, one in Completion and one in Benefits. These new indicators can be found in the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2008*.

**Q. What information is provided but not graded?**

**A.** The state report cards highlight important gaps in college opportunities for various income and ethnic groups, they identify improvements and setbacks in each state's performance over time, and they compare state performance in higher education with other countries. Each state report card also presents important contextual information, such as demographic trends, student migration data, and state funding levels for higher education.

**Q. Why does *Measuring Up 2008* include international indicators?**

**A.** As in 2006, this year's edition of *Measuring Up* provides information on key international indicators of educational performance. In the global economy, it is critical for each nation to establish and maintain a competitive edge through the ongoing, high-quality education of its population. *Measuring Up 2008* offers international comparisons that reveal how well the United States and each of the 50 states are preparing residents with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy. As with other data in the report card, each international measure is based on the most current data available. In this case, the data are from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). International comparisons are used to gauge the states' and the nation's standing relative to OECD countries on the participation and educational success of their populations. Please see the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2008* for more information regarding data sources.

# State Grades 2008

State	Preparation	Participation	Affordability	Completion	Benefits	Learning
Alabama	D+	D+	F	C-	C	I
Alaska	C+	F	F	F	C+	I
Arizona	D	A	F	B	B-	I
Arkansas	C-	D+	F	C-	D+	I
California	C+	C	C-	B-	B+	I
Colorado	A-	C+	F	B-	B+	I
Connecticut	A	C-	F	B-	A-	I
Delaware	C+	C-	F	B	C+	I
Florida	C	D	F	B+	C	I
Georgia	C+	D-	F	B-	B	I
Hawaii	C-	D	F	C	B-	I
Idaho	C	D	F	C	C-	I
Illinois	B	C	F	B+	B	I
Indiana	C	C	F	B-	D+	I
Iowa	B	A	F	A	C+	I
Kansas	B	B-	F	B	C+	I
Kentucky	C	C	F	B	D+	I
Louisiana	D-	F	F	C+	D	I
Maine	B-	C-	F	C+	C	I
Maryland	A-	C	F	B-	A	I
Massachusetts	A	B-	F	A	A	I
Michigan	C	C	F	C+	B+	I
Minnesota	B	B	F	A	B	I
Mississippi	D	D+	F	C	D	I
Missouri	C+	C	F	B	C+	I
Montana	B-	D+	F	C-	C+	I
Nebraska	B-	B	F	B+	B	I
Nevada	C	F	F	F	D	I
New Hampshire	B	C-	F	A-	B	I
New Jersey	A-	C	F	C+	A-	I
New Mexico	D-	B-	F	D+	C+	I
New York	B	D+	F	B+	B	I
North Carolina	B-	D+	F	B-	C+	I
North Dakota	B-	B+	F	A	D	I
Ohio	B-	C-	F	B-	C+	I
Oklahoma	C-	C-	F	C	D+	I
Oregon	C+	D	F	C+	B+	I
Pennsylvania	B-	C-	F	A	C	I
Rhode Island	C+	C+	F	A	B-	I
South Carolina	C+	D-	F	C+	C	I
South Dakota	B	B	F	B	D+	I
Tennessee	C	D	F	C	C	I
Texas	B	D-	F	C-	C+	I
Utah	B	B-	F	B+	B	I
Vermont	A-	C	F	A-	C+	I
Virginia	B+	C	F	B	A	I
Washington	C+	D	F	A-	B	I
West Virginia	C	C	F	C	F	I
Wisconsin	B	C+	F	A-	C	I
Wyoming	C	C	F	A	D-	I

# State Change Over Time on Key Indicators

State	Preparation	Participation	Affordability	Completion	Benefits
Alabama	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Alaska	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑
Arizona	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Arkansas	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
California	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Colorado	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑
Connecticut	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Delaware	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Florida	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Georgia	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Hawaii	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Idaho	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑
Illinois	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Indiana	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Iowa	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
Kansas	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Kentucky	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Louisiana	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Maine	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Maryland	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Massachusetts	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Michigan	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Minnesota	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Mississippi	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Missouri	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Montana	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Nebraska	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Nevada	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
New Hampshire	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
New Jersey	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
New Mexico	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
New York	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
North Carolina	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
North Dakota	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑
Ohio	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Oklahoma	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑
Oregon	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Pennsylvania	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Rhode Island	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
South Carolina	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
South Dakota	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Tennessee	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Texas	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Utah	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑
Vermont	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Virginia	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Washington	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
West Virginia	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Wisconsin	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Wyoming	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑

## Key Indicators by Category:

**Preparation:** Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds with a high school credential (1990 to 2006)

**Participation:** Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in higher education (1991 to 2007)

**Affordability:** Percentage of income (average of all income groups) needed to pay for college expenses at public four-year institutions (1999-2007)

**Completion:** All degree completions per 100 students (1992 to 2007)

**Benefits:** Percentage of 25- to 64-year-olds with a bachelor's degree or higher (1990 to 2006)



# Measuring Up 2008 Resources

To view *Measuring Up 2008* and its resources visit [www.highereducation.org](http://www.highereducation.org)

## National Picture

- **2008 Snapshot:** Performance overview on national maps
- **Improvements and Declines:** The nation's performance since the early 1990s
- **Download** the national report in PDF format

## State Reports

- **State Report Cards:** A comprehensive picture of higher education in each state
- **Download** each state's report card in PDF format

## Compare States

- **Graded Performance:** Compare state results by performance category
- **State Facts:** Compare non-graded state information
- **Index Scores** (sort/compare/map): Sort states by their rank within each category and create a national map based on individual indicator scores

## Commentary

- **Foreword**, by Governor James B. Hunt Jr., Chairman, the National Center's Board of Directors
- **The 2008 National Report Card: Modest Improvements, Persistent Disparities, Eroding Global Competitiveness** by Patrick M. Callan, President, The National Center
- **The Information Gap: Much Talk, Little Progress**, by Dennis P. Jones, President of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

- **Stuck on Student Learning**, by Peter T. Ewell, Vice President of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems
- **Facing the Nation: The Role of College Leaders in Higher Education Policy**, by David W. Breneman, University Professor and Director, University of Virginia

## News Room

- **National Press Releases**
- **State Press Releases**
- **Press Contact Information**

## About Measuring Up

- What's New in *Measuring up 2008*?
- Questions and Answers about *Measuring Up 2008*
- How We Grade States
- How We Measure Change
- *Measuring Up 2008* Database
- Technical Guide
- *Measuring Up 2008* National Advisory Group
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To view *Measuring Up 2008* individual state report cards for each of the 50 states, visit [www.highereducation.org](http://www.highereducation.org).



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