



# Education in the American South:

*Historical Context, Current State, and Future Possibilities*

May 2019

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# Introduction and background

The purpose of this deck is to shine a spotlight on education in the American South with a focus on equity and to provide an understanding of the historical, social, political, and economic context in which the education sector operates.

Any movement serious about improving education and life outcomes for underserved student groups — including low-income, minority, and rural — must engage the South.

The South is home to 56 percent of all black students in the United States. Poverty rates and free and reduced-price lunch eligibility are higher in the South than in other regions.

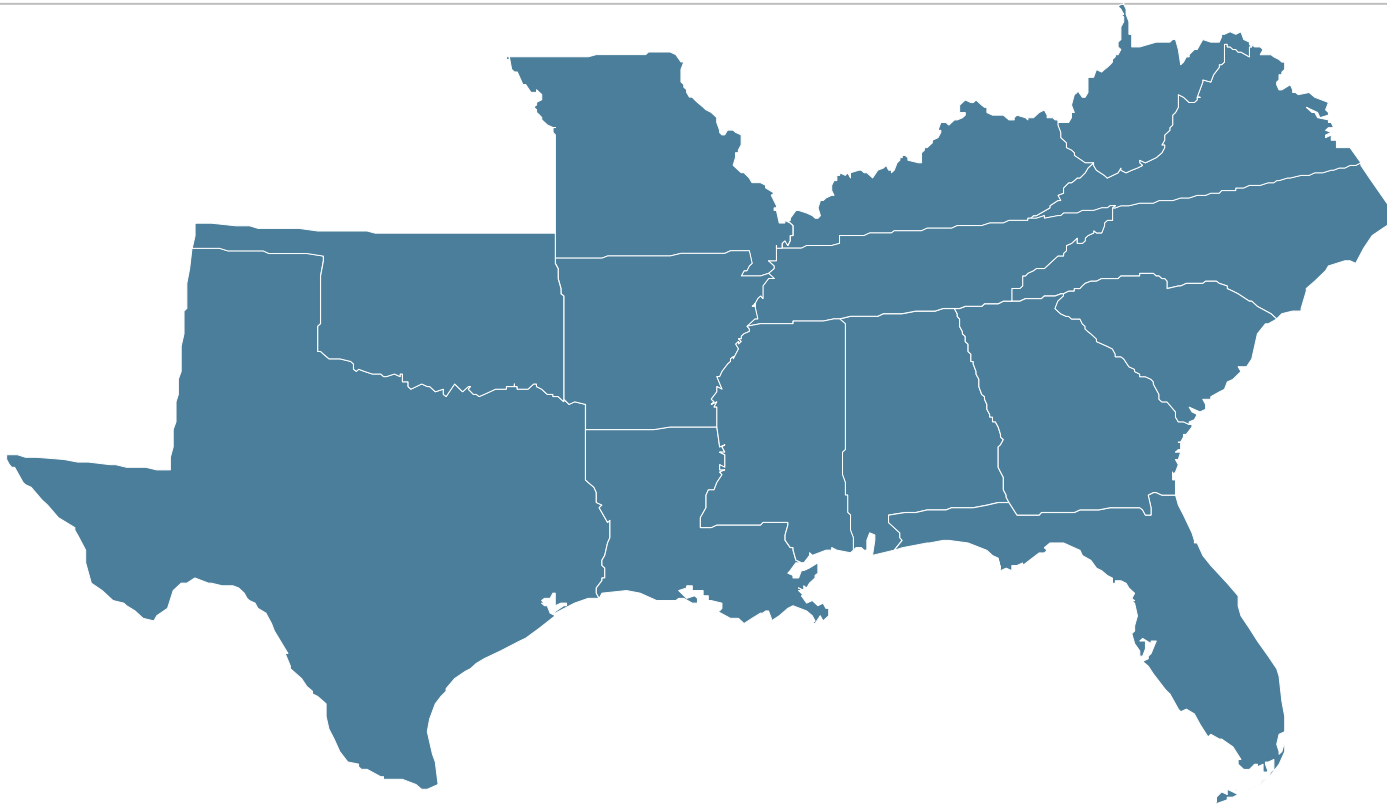
The region is also an economic powerhouse, contributing more to the U.S. economy than any other region. Yet the economic reality for many people living in the South is stark. Poverty rates are higher and incomes are lower in the South than in other regions. Southern states rank among the bottom in measures of health and well-being.

Meanwhile, with a few notable exceptions, education reform efforts in the South are spotty at best.

This deck of slides provides the latest information available on the education landscape in the South. Our goal is to inform; to spark deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in education in the American South and more work to address the needs of students in this diverse and complex region of our country.

# How are we defining the South?

Though multiple definitions of “the South” exist, our analysis focuses on 15 unique states that are bound by facets of history, geography, and culture.



Note: Unless otherwise stated, data provided for the region as a whole includes these 15 states.

# Executive summary

## Regional Trends

The South is the fastest-growing region in the country. It is home to more than half of America's black population, and significant numbers of Southerners live in rural communities. Although Southern states are major contributors to the nation's overall GDP, shifts in key industries have hit some communities hard. Southern states have higher poverty rates, lower median incomes, and lower educational attainment than other regions, and in many states, measures of well-being and economic mobility are low.

## Education Trends

More than one-third of all K-12 students live in the South, including 56 percent of all black students. The South is also home to substantial portions of the nation's ELL and migrant student populations. Per-pupil spending and teacher salaries are below the national averages in most Southern states. Math and reading proficiency rates are lower in the South compared to other regions, and while high school graduation rates are comparable to national trends, college matriculation and completion rates are low.

## Historical Context

The South's black community catalyzed the movement for free public schools for all children beginning around 1860. By 1930, the majority of black children were attending school but in formally segregated settings. School desegregation efforts began with the 1954 *Brown* decision and resulted in a decrease in the number of black children attending all or mostly black schools. However, many white students flocked to private schools to avoid attending integrated schools. As in other regions, school segregation remains a challenge in the South today.

## Education Reform in the South

The South is the birthplace of key accountability reforms over the past several decades and the emergence of statewide "recovery" districts. Public and private school choice policies are prevalent in many Southern states, and district reform efforts are beginning to take hold in some places.

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Introduction

**Regional Trends**

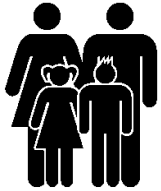
Education Trends

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# Section summary



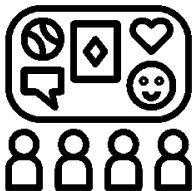
## Regional demographics

Growth in the South outpaced national growth between 2010 and 2018, especially in cities. As of 2018, 123 million people live in the South — 38 percent of the total U.S. population — including 53 percent of the nation's black population. Forty-five percent of Southerners live in rural communities.



## Economics

The Southeast contributes more to the overall U.S. economy than any other region and accounts for one-third of the nation's total economic growth. However, shifts in key industries like coal and oil have hit parts of the South particularly hard. Philanthropic giving and venture capital investment are lower in the South compared to other regions.



## Social trends

Southern states have higher poverty rates, lower median incomes, and lower educational attainment than other regions. In many states, measures of well-being and economic mobility are low.



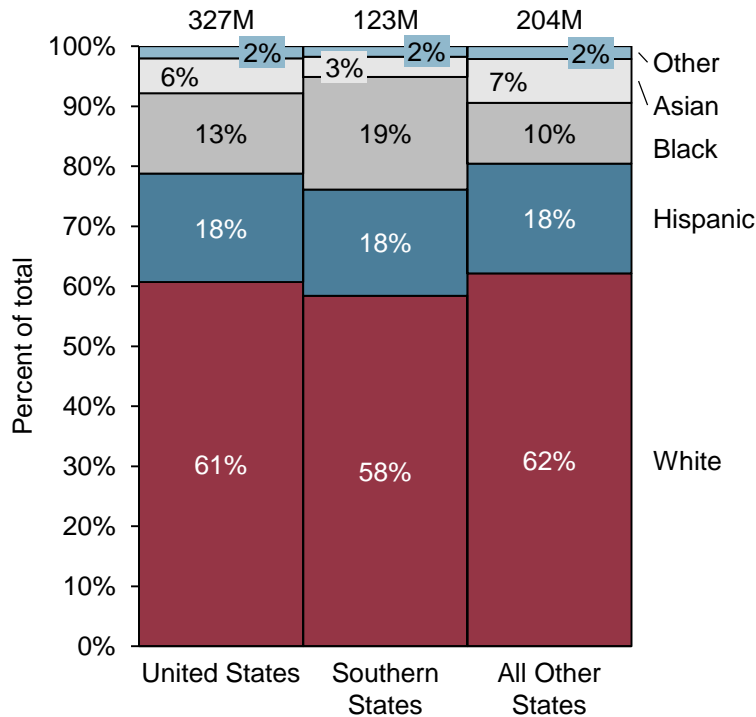
## Political trends

Southern states have shifted to the right over the past several decades. Today, the Republican Party holds control of all state legislatures and all but three governor's seats.

# More than one-third of the U.S. population lives in the South, including more than half of the nation's black population

## U.S. and Regional Demographics

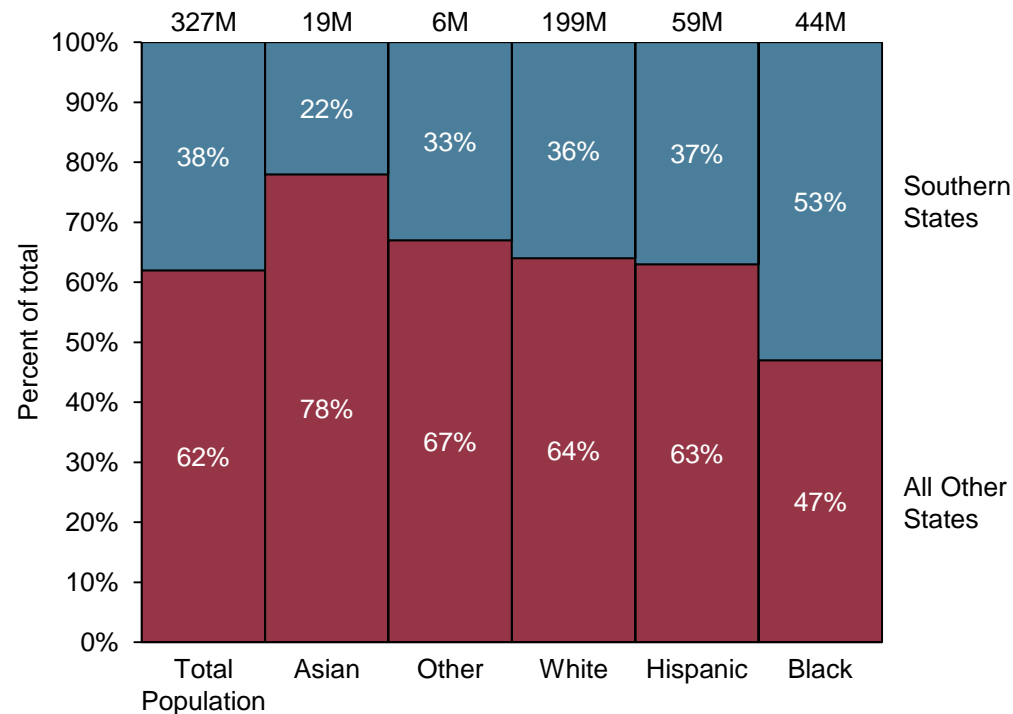
By race and region, 2018



A larger share of the South's total population is black compared to all other states and the nation as a whole

## Percent of Population Living in the South

By percent of total population and by race/ethnicity, 2018

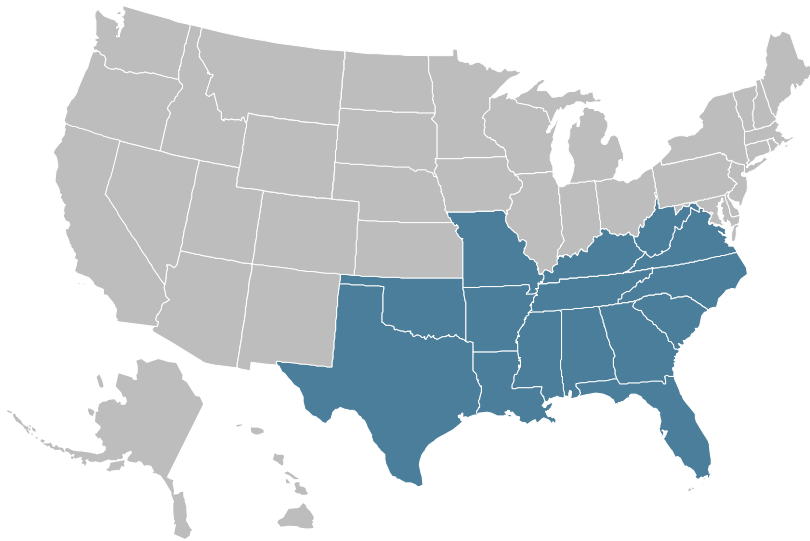


The South is home to 38 percent of all Americans, including more than half of the nation's black population but only one-fifth of its Asian population



# This 15-state region accounts for 38% of the total U.S. population and more than half of overall population growth

The region includes four of the top 10 fastest-growing states over the past decade.



	2010 Pop	▲ %	2018 Pop
<b>United States</b>	<b>281.4M</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>327.2M</b>
<b>Region</b>	<b>99.2</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>123.2</b>
Texas	20.9	<b>38%</b>	28.7
Florida	16.0	<b>33%</b>	21.3
North Carolina	8.0	<b>29%</b>	10.4
Georgia	8.2	<b>28%</b>	10.5
South Carolina	4.0	<b>27%</b>	5.1
Virginia	7.1	<b>20%</b>	8.5
Tennessee	5.7	<b>19%</b>	6.8
Oklahoma	3.5	<b>14%</b>	3.9
Arkansas	2.3	<b>13%</b>	3.0
Kentucky	4.0	<b>11%</b>	4.7
Alabama	4.4	<b>10%</b>	4.9
Missouri	5.6	<b>9%</b>	6.1
Mississippi	2.8	<b>5%</b>	3.0
Louisiana	4.5	<b>4%</b>	4.7
West Virginia	1.8	<b>0%</b>	1.8

# Six of the nation's largest cities are in the South, as are eight of the fastest-growing

Since 2010, large cities in the South have had the highest average population growth at 10%. By comparison, average growth in the West was 8%, the Midwest was 3%, and the Northeast was 2%.

## Most Populous Cities

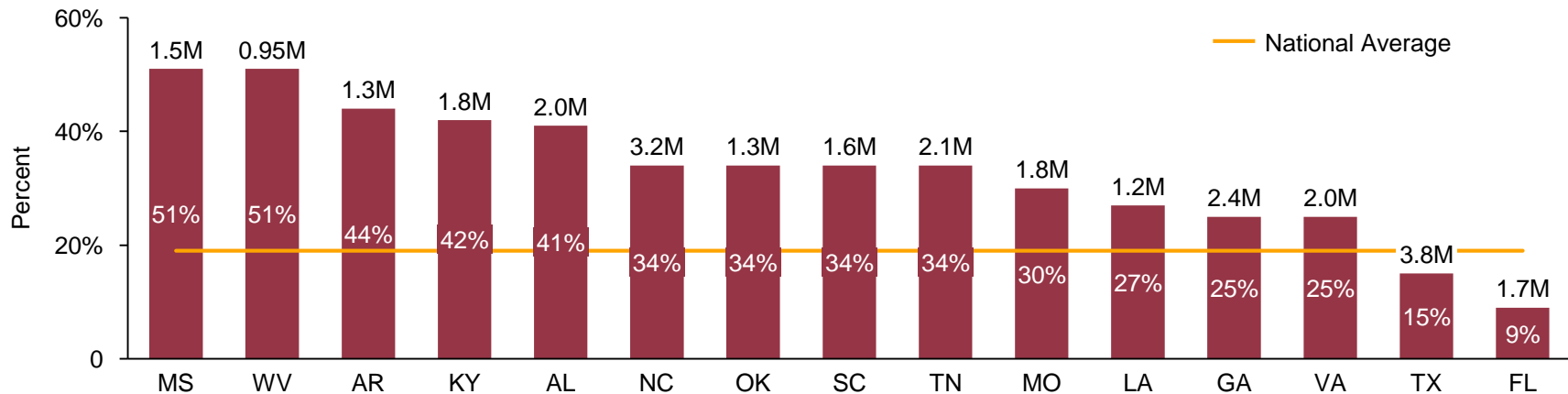
City	Population
New York City, NY	8,622,698
Los Angeles, CA	3,999,759
Chicago, IL	2,716,450
Houston, TX	2,312,717
Phoenix, AZ	1,626,078
Philadelphia, PA	1,580,863
San Antonio, TX	1,511,946
San Diego, CA	1,419,516
Dallas, TX	1,341,075
San Jose, CA	1,035,317
Austin, TX	950,715
Jacksonville, FL	892,062
San Francisco, CA	884,363
Columbus, OH	879,170
Fort Worth, TX	847,168

## Fastest-Growing Cities

City	Net Growth
San Antonio, TX	24,208
Phoenix, AZ	24,036
Dallas, TX	18,935
Fort Worth, TX	18,664
Los Angeles, CA	18,643
Seattle, WA	17,490
Charlotte, NC	15,551
Columbus, OH	15,429
Frisco, TX	13,470
Atlanta, GA	13,323
San Diego, CA	12,834
Austin, TX	12,515
Jacksonville, FL	11,169
Irvine, CA	11,068
Henderson, NV	10,534

# Yet, rurality characterizes the South — a higher percentage of people live in rural areas compared to the national average

**Percent and Absolute Number of Population Living in Rural Areas by State**  
2010



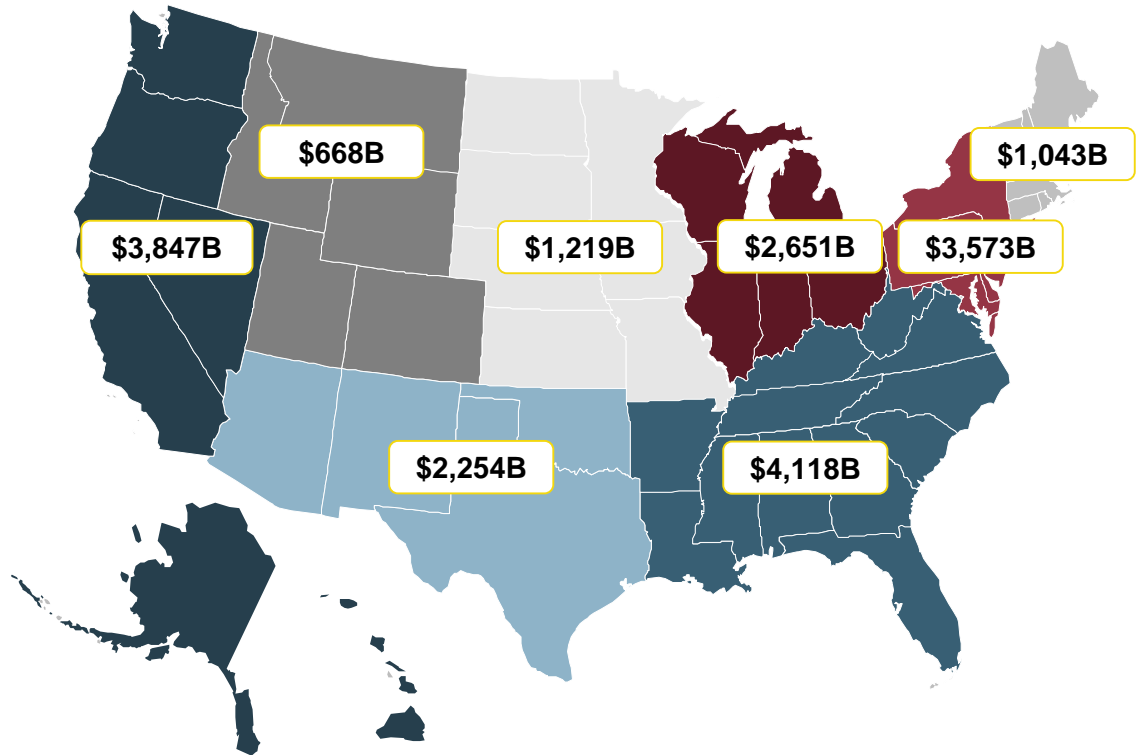
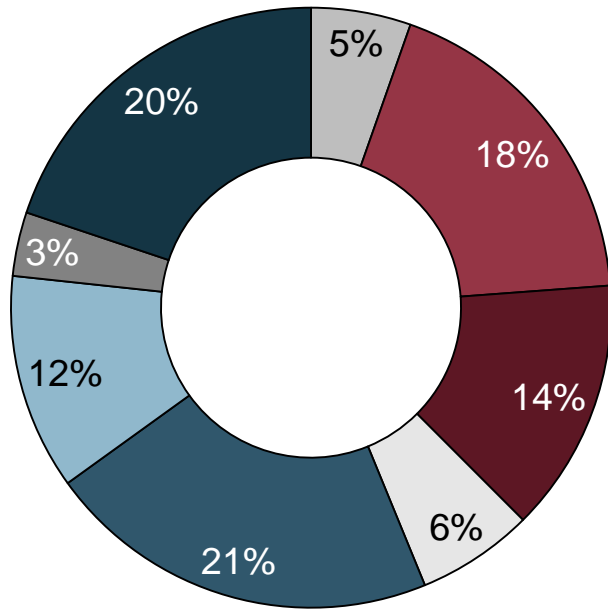
- More people live in cities in the South than any other region (68 million); however, this accounts for just over half (55 percent) of the South's 123 million people.
- Compared to urban communities, rural communities are more likely to struggle with poverty, low median incomes, high rates of unemployment, and lower educational attainment. These factors are concentrated in the South, where much of the population lives in rural areas.

Note: The Census Bureau identifies two types of urban areas: urbanized areas (UA) of 50,000 or more people and urban clusters (UC) of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people. Rural encompasses all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

# The Southeast region contributes more to the overall U.S. economy than any other region

**Regional Contributions to Total US GDP**  
2017

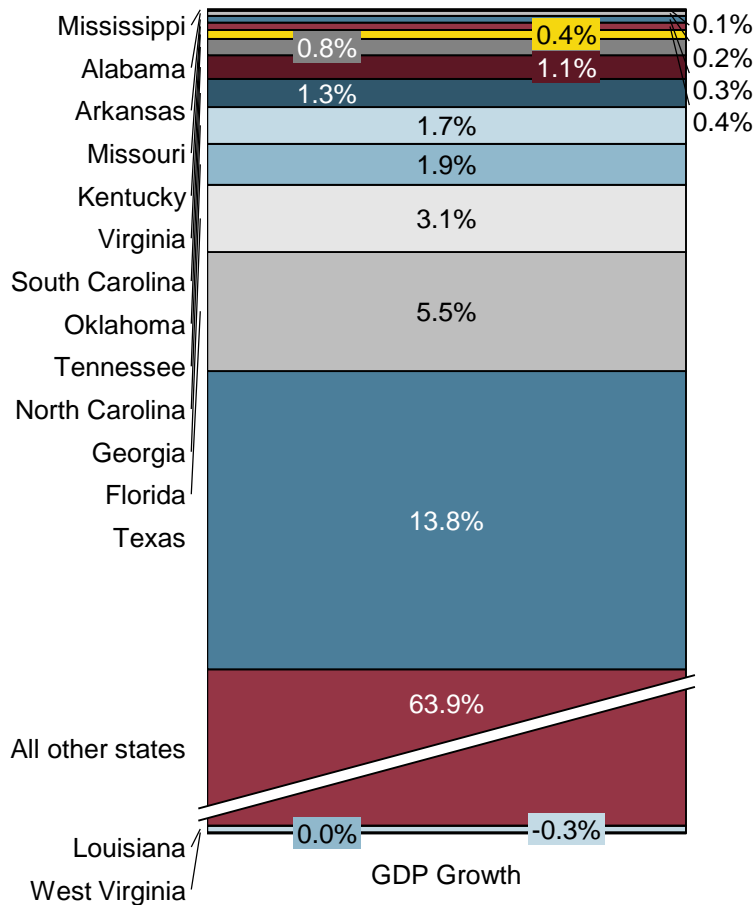


- Southeast
- Far West
- Plains
- Midwest
- Southwest
- Rocky Mountain
- Great Lakes
- New England

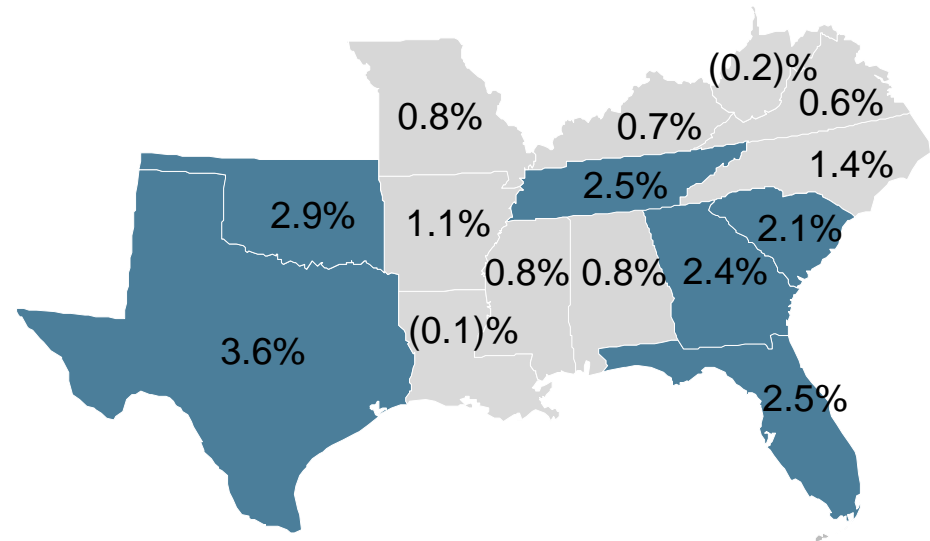
Note: These data reflect the BEA's regional definitions, which accounts for the variance from our region of focus.  
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

# The South accounts for one-third of the nation's total GDP growth — several states outpace national trends

Share of Total US GDP Growth, 2011 to 2016



Average Annual Growth Rate in Real GDP, 2011 to 2016  
United States= 2.0%

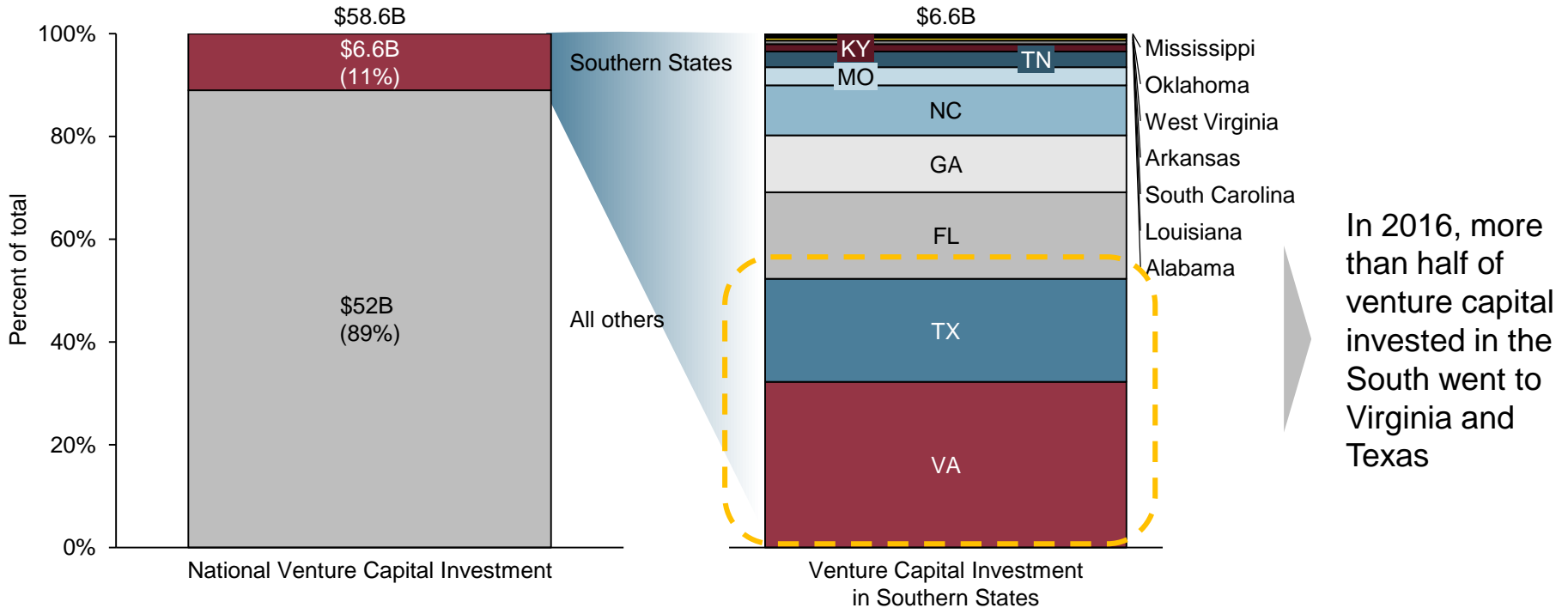


The region accounts for nearly 40 percent of net jobs created nationally in 2016.

# Yet, only \$1 of every \$10 of venture capital invested nationwide goes to Southern states

## Percentage of Venture Capital Investment

For 15 Southern states, by state, by proportion of total investment, 2016



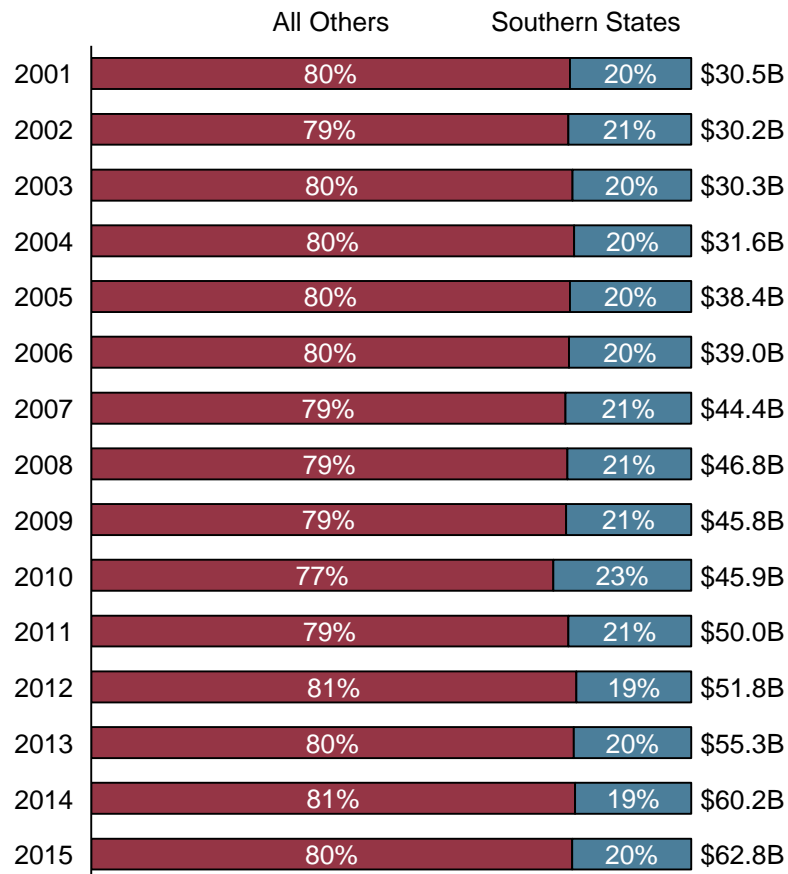
In 2016, more than half of venture capital invested in the South went to Virginia and Texas

**In 2016 the top five states for venture capital investment were:**  
 California: \$31.3B    New York: \$7.5B    Massachusetts: \$6.1B  
 Virginia: \$2.1B    Texas: \$1.3B

# And just 20 percent of national philanthropic giving occurs in the South

## Percent of Total Philanthropic Giving

By region, 2001-2015



State	2015 Giving Amount	Percent of All Giving
United States	\$62.8B	100%
South	\$12.5B	19.9%
Alabama	\$229M	0.4%
Arkansas	\$722M	1.1%
Florida	\$1.8B	2.8%
Georgia	\$1.2B	1.9%
Kentucky	\$185M	0.3%
Louisiana	\$237M	0.4%
Mississippi	\$96M	0.2%
Missouri	\$1.1B	1.8%
North Carolina	\$1.4B	2.3%
Oklahoma	\$738M	1.2%
South Carolina	\$187M	0.3%
Tennessee	\$672M	1.1%
Texas	\$3.2B	5.1%
Virginia	\$653M	1.0%
West Virginia	\$73M	0.1%

# What we heard: Large, national funders could bring much-needed resources to Southern communities

**“Most of the South gets dismissed by large funders.** Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Georgia — outside of Atlanta — all get dismissed. Funders don’t seem to be paying attention with what’s going on here. **We have all these kids in all these little communities in all these states.**” – Advocate, AR

*“There is local, place-based funding here. Different funders have different pet areas, neighborhoods, or geographies they tend to focus on. That’s not bad, but there’s a huge gap in willingness to engage in ongoing work in K-12. **What we really need is a through-line for philanthropy, and national funders could offer that.**”* – Funder, GA

*“One of the most valuable things that national funders can bring is to **help local folks trying to do good work hold a mirror up** to determine, is this good enough? Does this work? **National leadership can help raise the bar.**”* – Funder, NC

*“The big philanthropists, they have their favorite states. Tennessee and Louisiana — really Memphis and New Orleans — are favored. **There’s no one in Mississippi**, yet Mississippi is showing great progress because of strong policy and implementation. There’s been little philanthropic support. **Imagine how much faster progress could be with additional funding.** Philanthropy can do really good things.”* – Policymaker, FL

*“Without really deep pockets, [launching charter schools] is very taxing on our philanthropic sector. **There’s just not a lot of money.** Birmingham is the only place in the state where we have any kind of depth of philanthropy, but I’m very worried the money is going to run out really fast. **If we can’t find dollars outside the state, [growing our charter sector] will be a really slow journey.**”* – Funder, AL

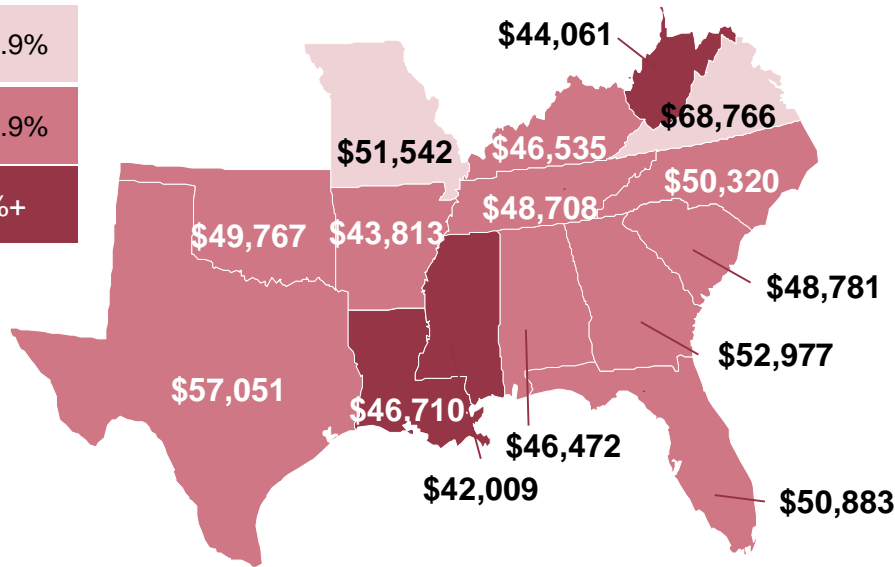
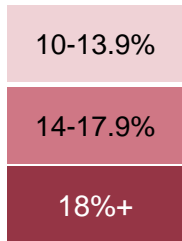


# Overall economic strength may not translate to individuals — Southern states have higher poverty rates and lower median incomes than other regions

## Percent of Persons in Poverty and Median Incomes

2013-2017

### Poverty Rate

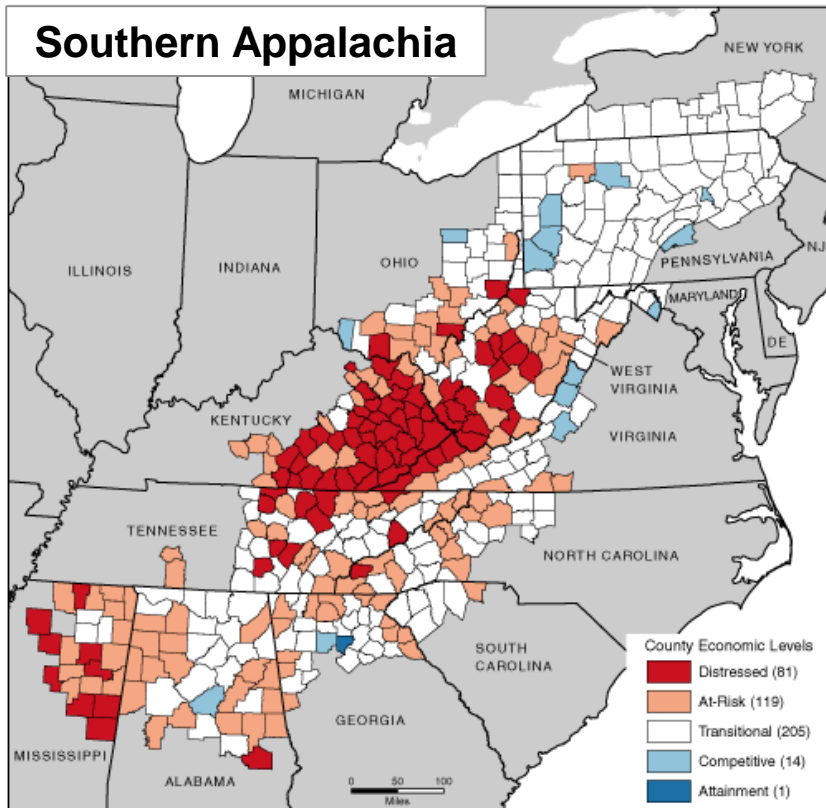


Region	Avg % Poverty	Avg Median Income
Northeast	12%	\$67,243
Midwest	12%	\$56,825
West	13%	\$60,744
South	16%	\$49,893
National	12%	\$57,652

Median incomes are lower and poverty rates are higher than national averages in all Southern states except Virginia.

# And economic distress is particularly prevalent in certain regions of the South

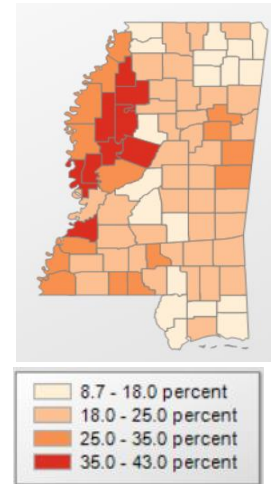
Southern Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta, the Rio Grande Valley, and eastern North Carolina experience even higher concentrations of poverty.



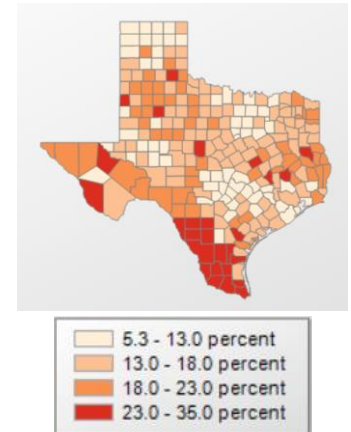
Created by the Appalachian Regional Commission, August 2018  
 Data Sources:  
 Unemployment data: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS, 2014–2016  
 Income data: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, REIS, 2016  
 Poverty data: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012–2016

Effective October 1, 2018  
 through September 30, 2019

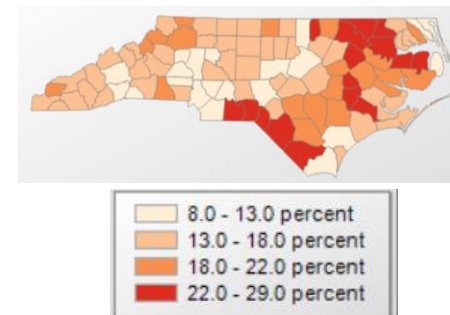
### Mississippi Delta



### Rio Grande Valley



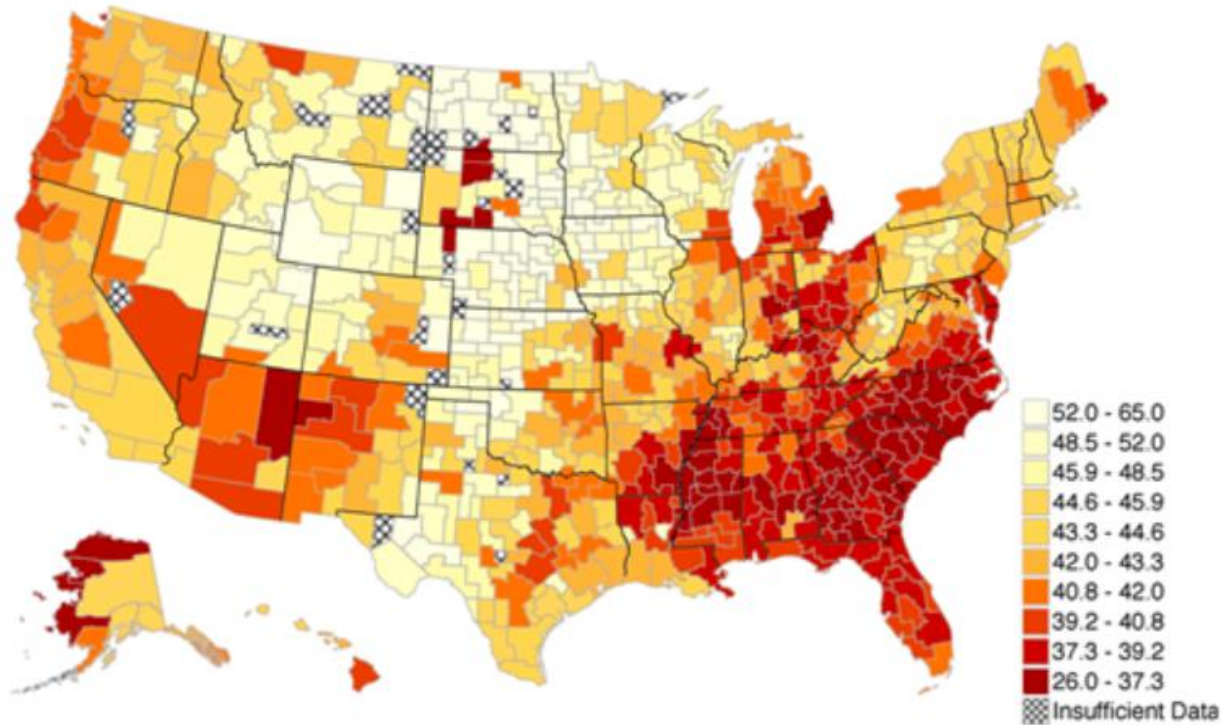
### Eastern North Carolina



# Children born into poverty in the deep South are less likely to escape poverty than in other regions

## Upward Mobility by Geography

Mean child percentile rank for parents at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile



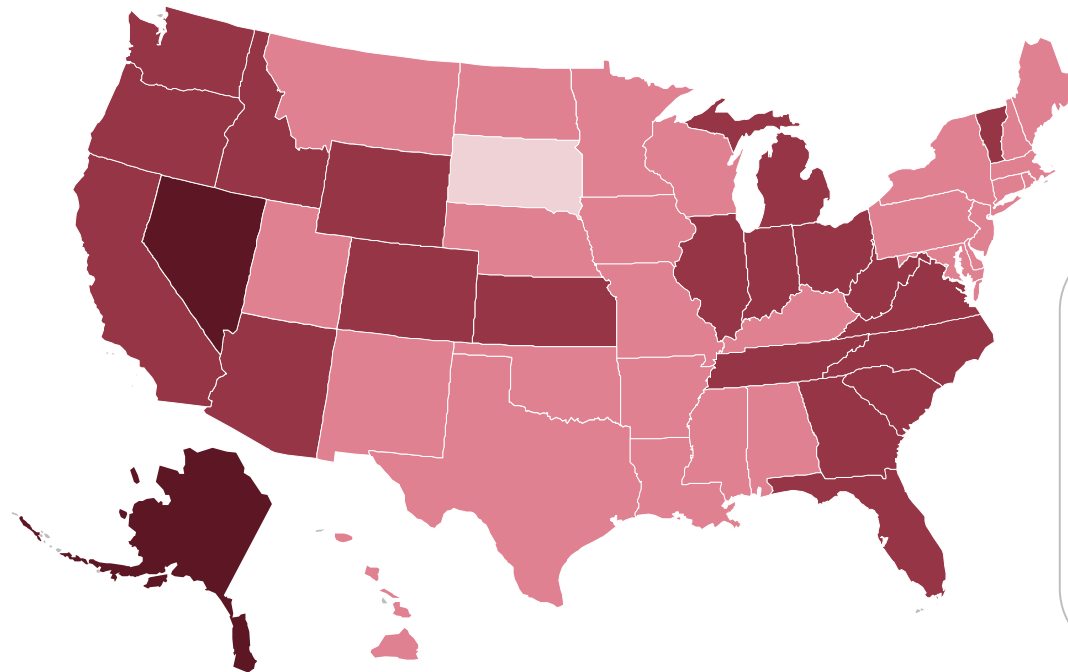
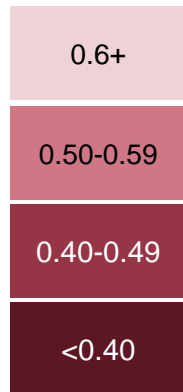
- Upward mobility compares the economic outcomes of a cohort of children to that of their parents
- In the Deep South, **poor children are more likely to grow up to be poor adults** than elsewhere in the country

# And in Southeastern states, children are less likely to grow up to earn more than their parents

## Absolute Mobility by State

Mean probability that a child born in 1980 will earn more than their parents

Probability that a child will earn more than their parents

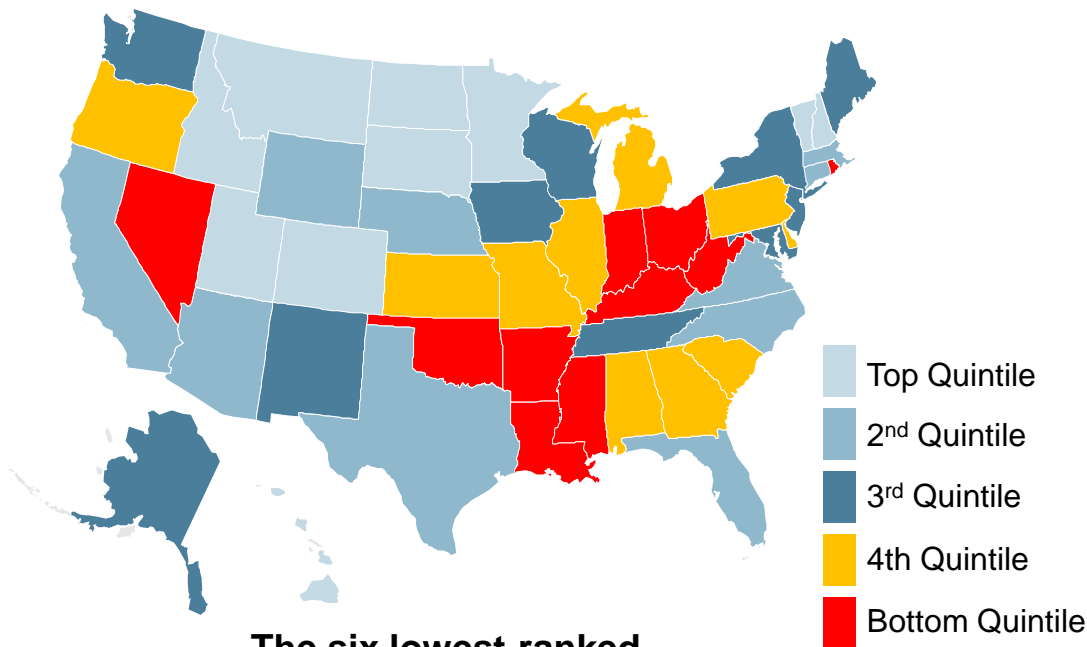


In many Southern states there is a relatively low probability that a child who was born in 1980 will make more than their parents

# Regions where people struggle economically are also plagued by low overall well-being

## Well-Being Rankings by State

2017



Southern states are characterized by a number of poor health-related outcomes:

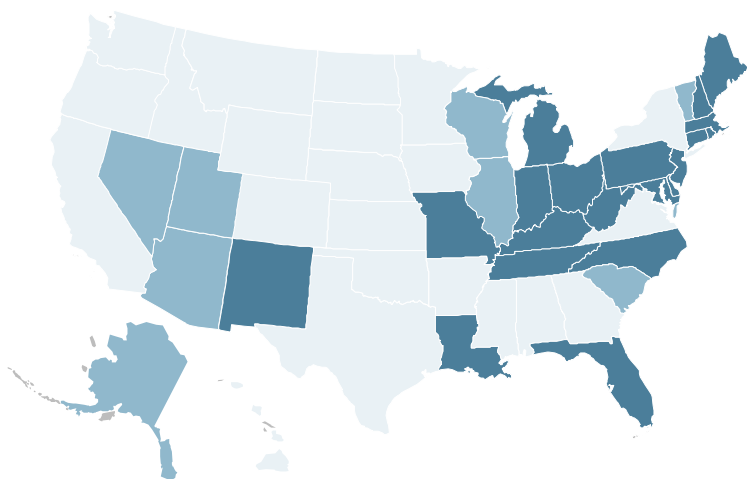
- In 11 Southern states, the **life expectancy is below the national average of 78.6**
- Eight of the 10 states nationwide with the **highest rates of adult obesity** are in the South
- Eight of the 10 states nationwide with the **highest heart disease mortality rates** are in the South

Note: The Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index is based on survey data collected in six domains: life evaluation, emotional health, work environment, physical health, healthy behavior, and basic access.

Sources: [CDC](#), [Gallup Well-Being Index](#), [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#), [National Geographic](#), [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)

# Several Southern states have higher-than-average rates of deaths by drug overdose and suicide

## Drug Overdose Death Rates, by State 2017

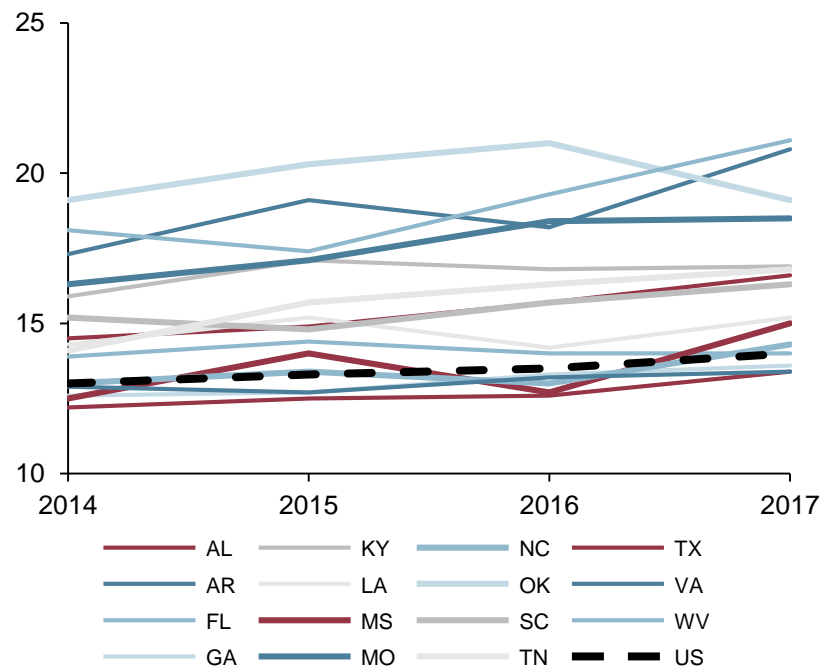


- Statistically lower than U.S. rate
- Statistically the same as U.S. rate
- Statistically higher than U.S. rate

- Seven Southern states have drug overdose rates statistically higher than the national average
- In 2017, West Virginia had the highest drug overdose death rate in the nation, at 57.8 per 100,000 people, and the highest opioid-related deaths at 43.4 per 100,000 people

## Suicide Mortality Rate by State

Age-adjusted death rates per 100,000 population, 2014-2017

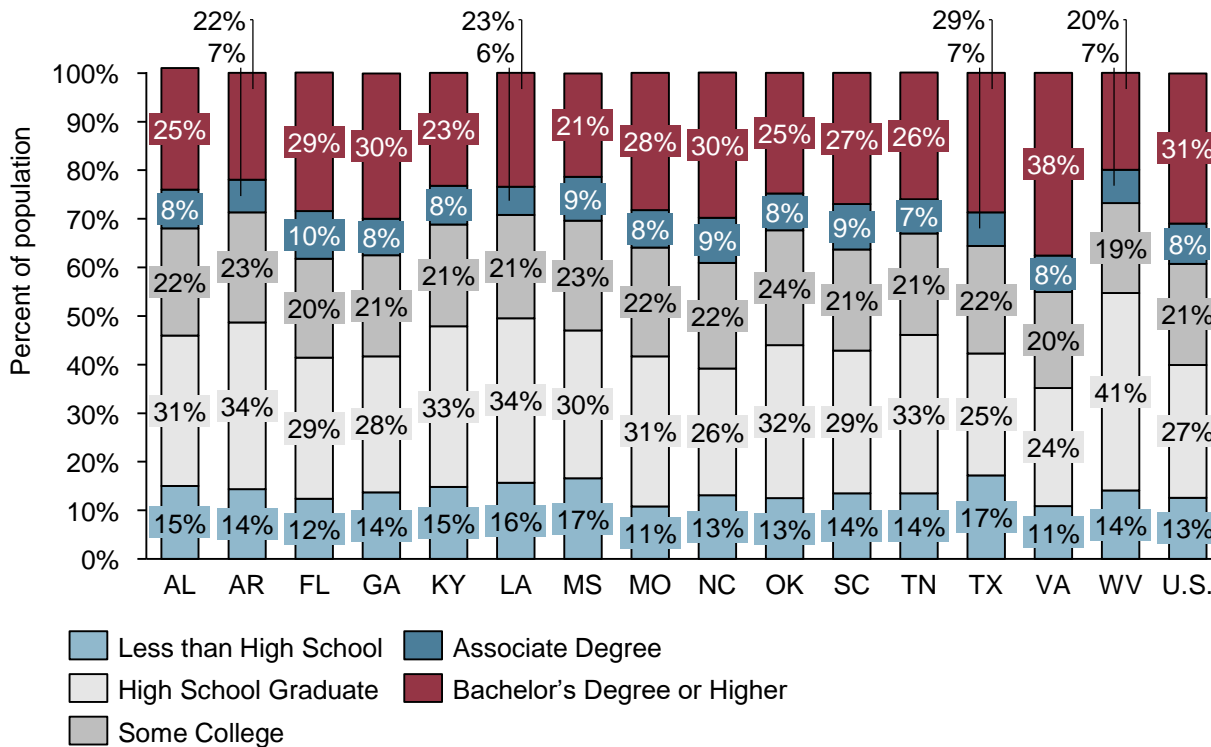


- Suicide rates have risen nationally and across the South since 2014
- In all Southern states but TX, VA, and GA, the suicide rate was above the national average in 2017

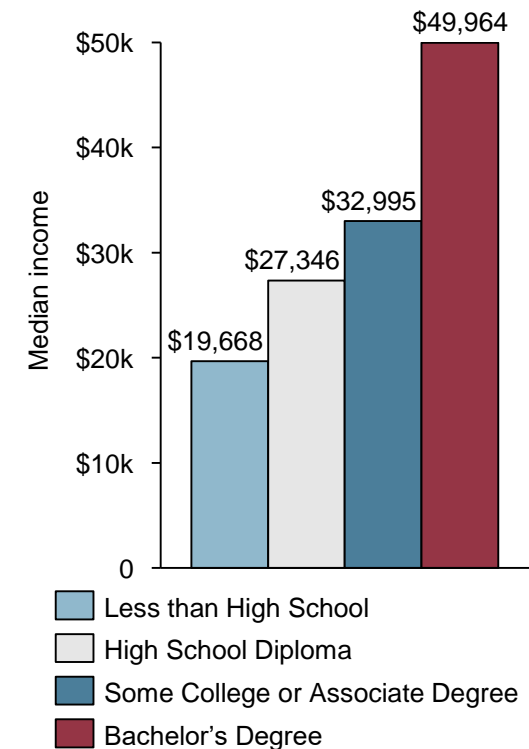
# Lower relative educational attainment is one of many factors contributing to the South's economic and well-being challenges

Earning a college degree is associated with higher potential lifetime earnings, but fewer adults in the South hold degrees

**Educational Attainment**  
2017



**Median Income by Educational Attainment**  
2013



# Even so, there is a thriving black middle class in many cities throughout the South

The South claims eight of the 10 top spots in a 2018 *Forbes* ranking of the U.S.' largest MSAs where African Americans are doing the best economically, based on measures of median income, home ownership rates, and self-employment rates

1 DC-VA-MD-WV

2 Atlanta, GA

3 Austin, TX

4 Baltimore, MD

5 Raleigh, NC

6 Charlotte, NC

7 San Antonio, TX

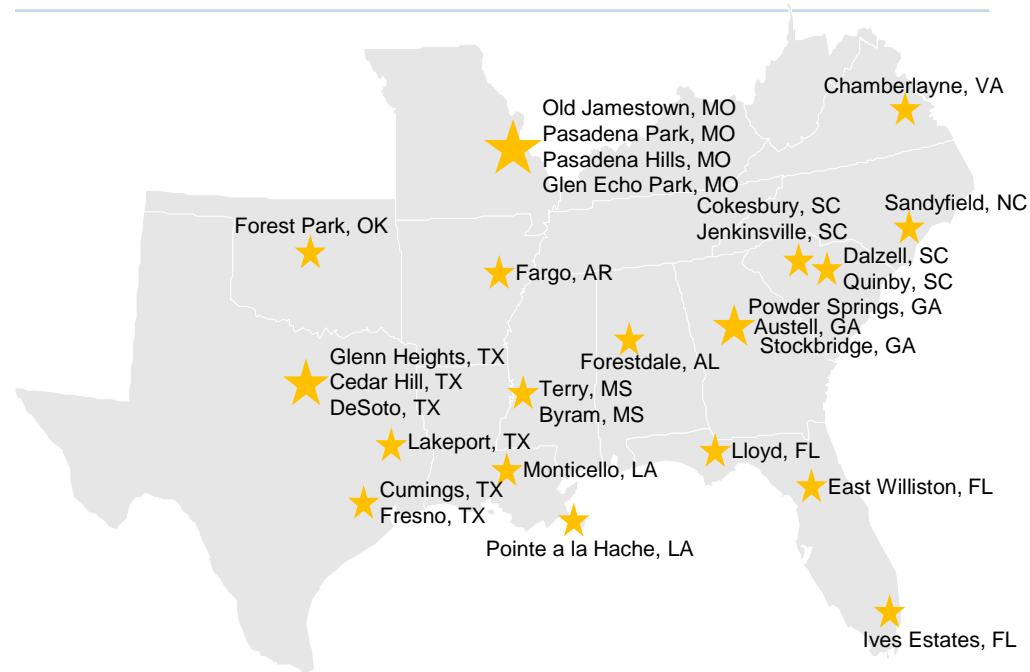
8 Houston, TX

9 Miami, FL

10 Richmond, VA

## Majority-Black Cities in the South Where Median Income for Black Families Outpaces National Median for All Races

2015



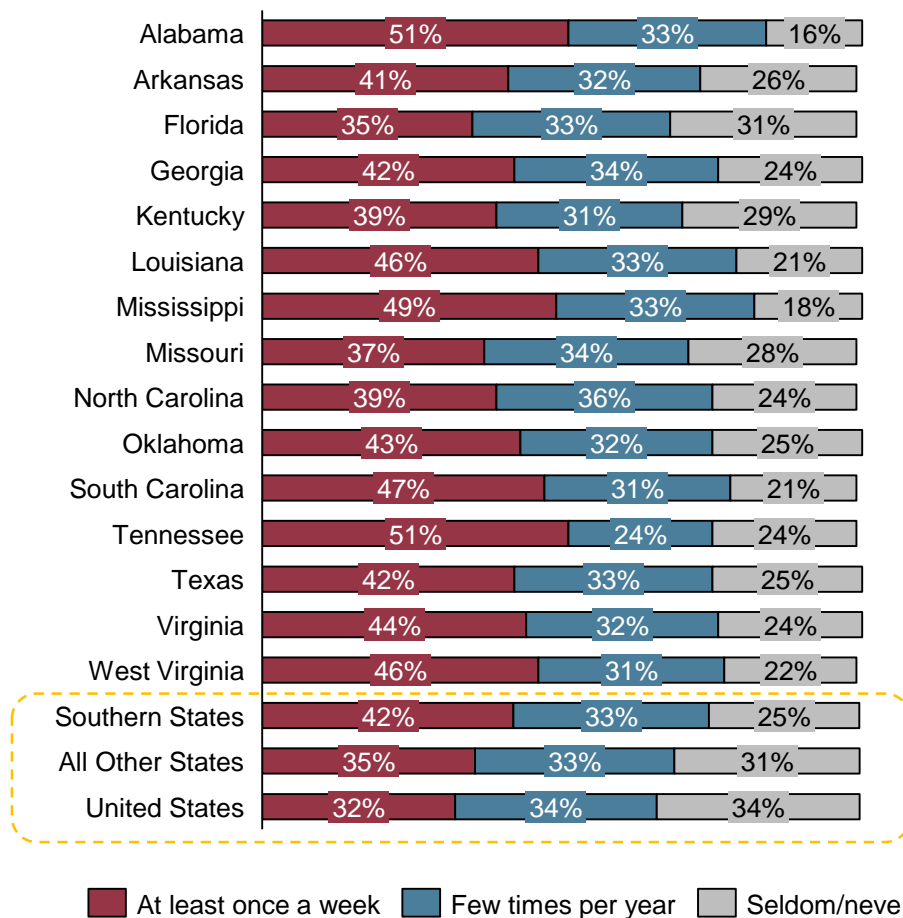
31 of the 124 majority-black cities nationwide where the median income for black families outpaces the national median are in the South.



# And there is evidence of a strong social fabric; more adults in the South report going to church at least once per week

## Attendance at Religious Services by State and Region

2014

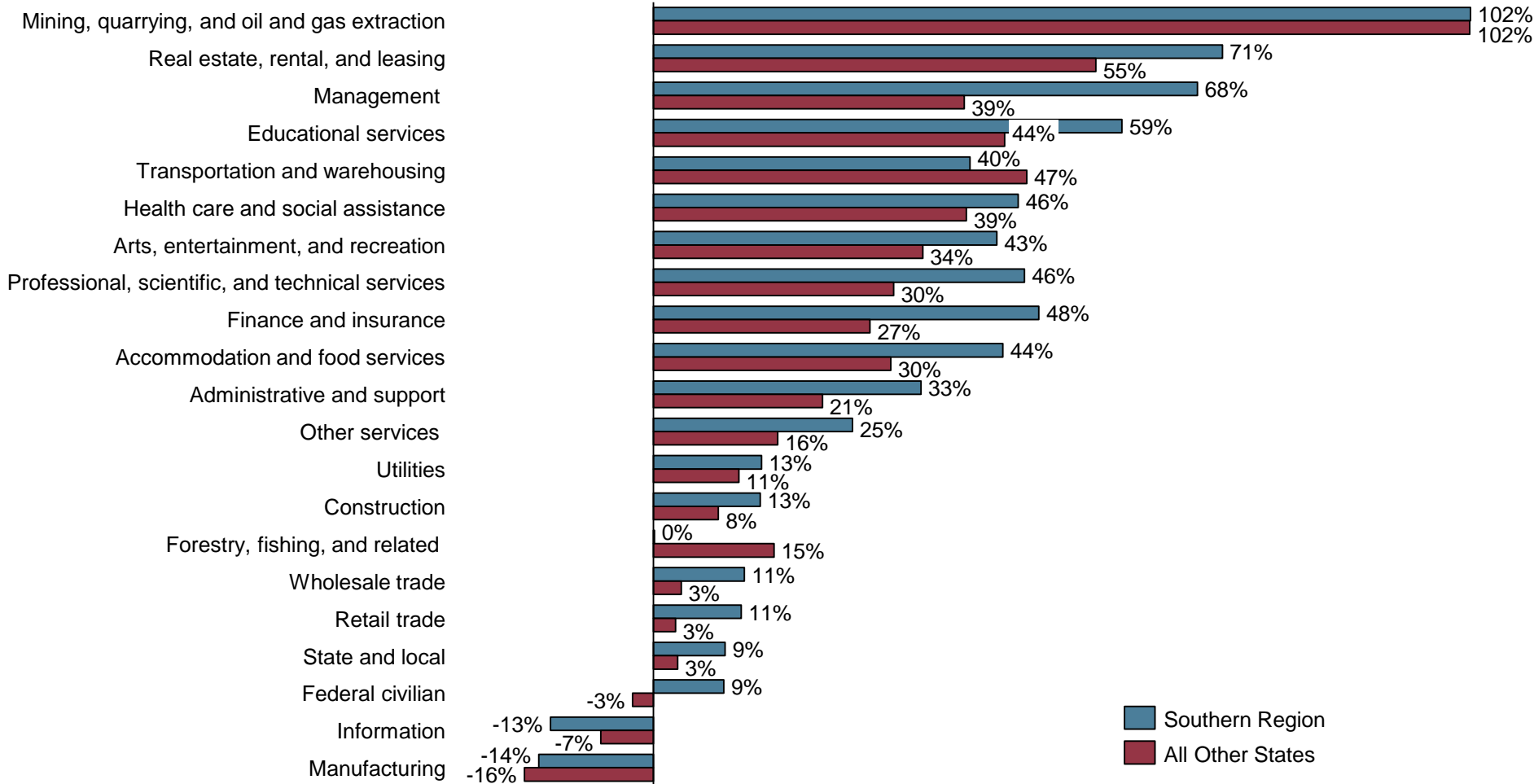


- 42 percent of adults living in the South report going to church at least once per week, compared to 35 percent of adults in other states and 32 percent of adults nationwide
- In Alabama and Tennessee, more than half of adults report attending church regularly

# Jobs growth in the South outpaces the rest of the country in most industries in recent years

## Percent Change in Employment by Industry

2002 to 2017

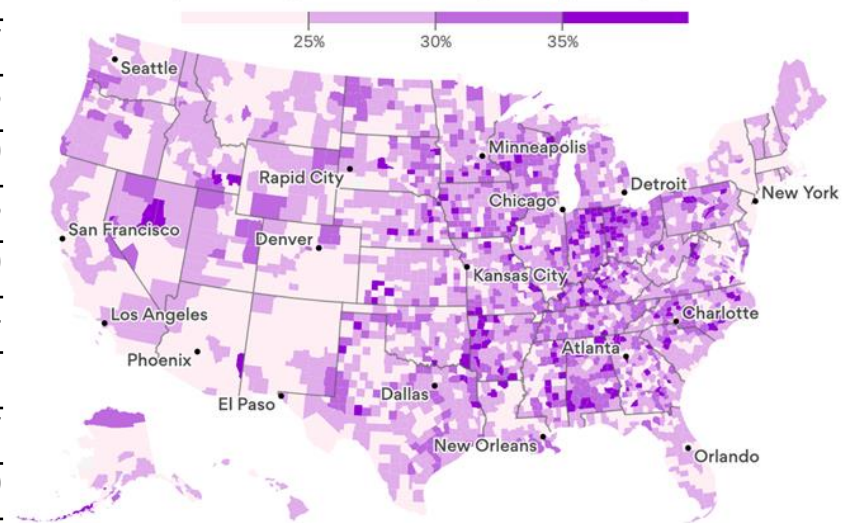


# Manufacturing provides economic opportunities for Southern communities, but automation trends pose a risk

	Manufacturing share of gross state product	Average annual compensation, manufacturing	Average annual compensation (nonfarm)
United States	11.8%	\$82,023	\$64,609
Alabama	17.4%	\$65,216	\$39,700
Florida	5.1%	\$67,089	\$40,852
Georgia	10.8%	\$68,183	\$45,598
Kentucky	18.9%	\$69,084	\$41,933
Louisiana	21.2%	\$87,212	\$41,587
Mississippi	15.8%	\$59,553	\$34,155
Missouri	13.1%	\$68,738	\$44,399
North Carolina	19.3%	\$68,975	\$43,658
South Carolina	16.8%	\$71,123	\$39,879
Tennessee	16.2%	\$69,260	\$42,804
Texas	14.0%	\$82,544	\$46,642
Virginia	8.5%	\$68,907	\$49,827
West Virginia	10.2%	\$68,016	\$39,630

Manufacturing plays a large role in the Southern economy, exceeding national trends in multiple states and providing access to high-wage jobs.

Share of jobs at highest risk of being disrupted by automation



Sources: National Association of Manufacturing, 2017  
Brookings Institution: Automation and Artificial Intelligence:  
How Machines Are Affecting Places and People

# Car manufacturing in particular has helped boost economies in certain Southern states

Over the past 30 years, lured by tax incentives and nonunion jobs, foreign automakers have built plants across the South: **Alabama** (Mercedes-Benz, Toyota, Mazda); **Georgia** (Kia); **Kentucky** (Toyota); **Mississippi** (Nissan); **South Carolina** (BMW); and **Tennessee** (Nissan, Volkswagen)

## South Carolina

- In the late 1980s and early 1990s, South Carolina's economy looked bleak: The state had lost 60K jobs in textile manufacturing, the tobacco industry was declining, and tourism took a turn after Hurricane Hugo in 1989
- In 1992 BMW announced it would build a manufacturing plant in Spartanburg County
- Today, BMW employs nearly 9K workers and has an annual economic impact of more than \$16.6B
- 36 of South Carolina's 46 counties are home to at least one automotive-related manufacturer
- BMW's presence helped bring other large manufacturers to the state including Boeing Co., Mercedes-Benz, Volvo, and Honda

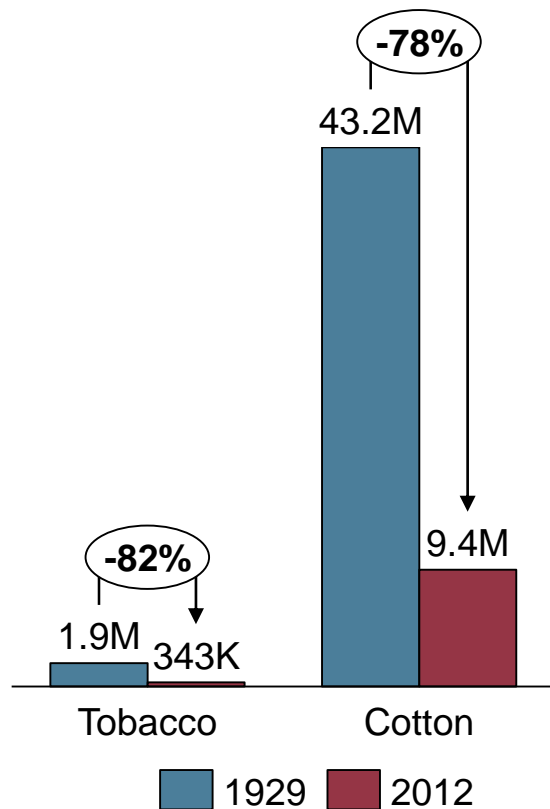
## Alabama

- In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Alabama lost 88 percent of its textile economy, or approximately 82K jobs
- Mercedes-Benz opened a manufacturing plant in Alabama in 1993
- Today, Honda, Hyundai, and Toyota all have operations in the state. Last year Toyota and Mazda announced a \$1.6 billion investment in a new production facility in Huntsville
- Over 20 years, policymakers project a \$5.6B return on investment
- Auto jobs now employ about 40K people statewide
- Alabama is now in the top three states for car manufacturing, alongside Michigan and Ohio

# But shifts in agriculture have had major impacts on local economies and employment, especially in the South

## Acres of Land Use for Tobacco and Cotton Farming Nationwide

1929 vs. 2012



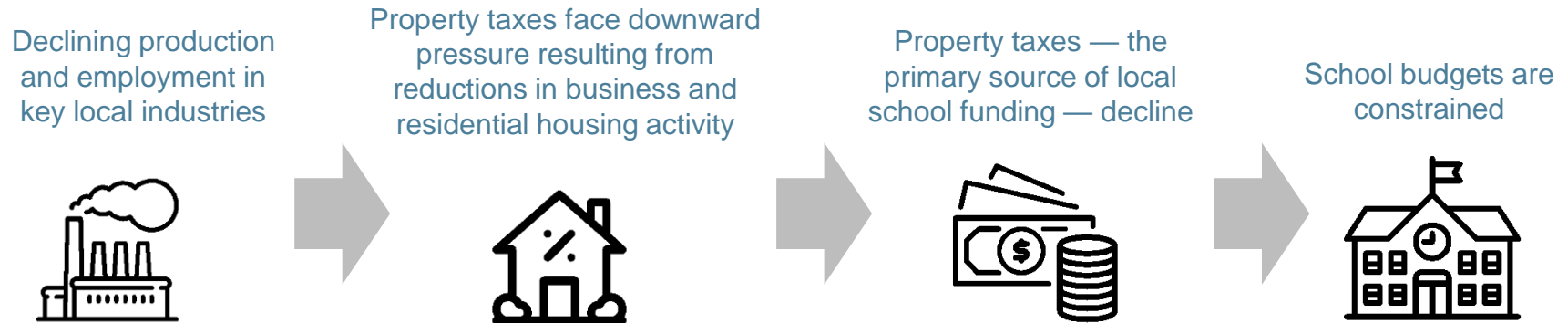
- Cultivation of cotton and tobacco has declined for several reasons, including increased efficiency through manufacturing and increased consumption of overseas products
- In 2015, NC and KY accounted for 70 percent of all tobacco cultivation nationwide
- Between 1992 and 2012, the number of people employed in the tobacco industry in NC declined 47 percent

## And declining oil prices hurt the economies of states that rely on oil and mining for significant portions of their GDP

<b>State</b>	<b>Oil &amp; gas extraction as share of state GDP, 2013</b>	<b>All other mining as share of state GDP, 2013</b>	<b>Total mining as share of state GDP, 2013</b>	<b>Employment change, Dec 2015 vs Jan 2015</b>
Louisiana	7.5%	2.6%	10.1%	-0.5%
Oklahoma	11.4%	2.9%	14.3%	-0.7%
Texas	11.6%	2.1%	13.8%	1.3%
West Virginia	2.0%	11.4%	13.4%	-1.8%
United States	1.8%	0.9%	2.7%	1.6%

# Changes in local industry directly impact both families and schools

School funding is directly impacted when communities lose a primary business or industry



## Declining coal jobs and production have created challenges for Kentucky communities

In the second quarter of 2017 coal mines cut employment by 200 jobs (3 percent); in Eastern Kentucky, employment dropped 5.3 percent

- This decline resulted in a significant decrease in unmined mineral property assessments, which has resulted in fewer tax dollars for school districts
- Property assessments were down about 14 percent while tax rates have increased 28 percent; tax collections for school districts have declined more than 20 percent in four counties
- Many counties are also losing students, and therefore more money under the state's school funding formula, as families leave coal mining communities to search for other work



# Innovative partnerships between education and industry are helping some communities adjust to a new economy



The Golden LEAF Foundation works to increase economic opportunity in North Carolina's rural and tobacco-dependent communities through a focus on economic development, workforce development, and education.



Tennessee Pathways supports alignment among K-12, postsecondary, and industry to provide students with relevant education and training to support their transition into the workforce.



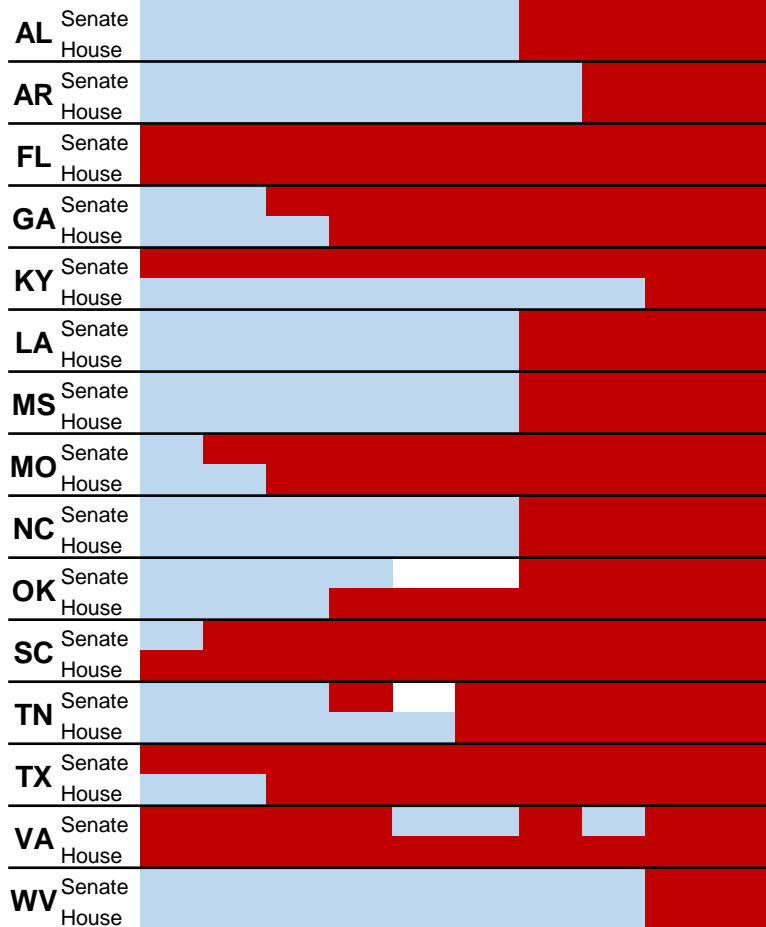
Oklahoma Works helps to facilitate employment for workers and increase the availability of highly skilled talent for business and industry. Programs include wind turbine technician training programs to support the growth of new wind technology as work in oil fields continues to decline.



# Politically, the South as a whole has shifted dramatically to the right since 2000

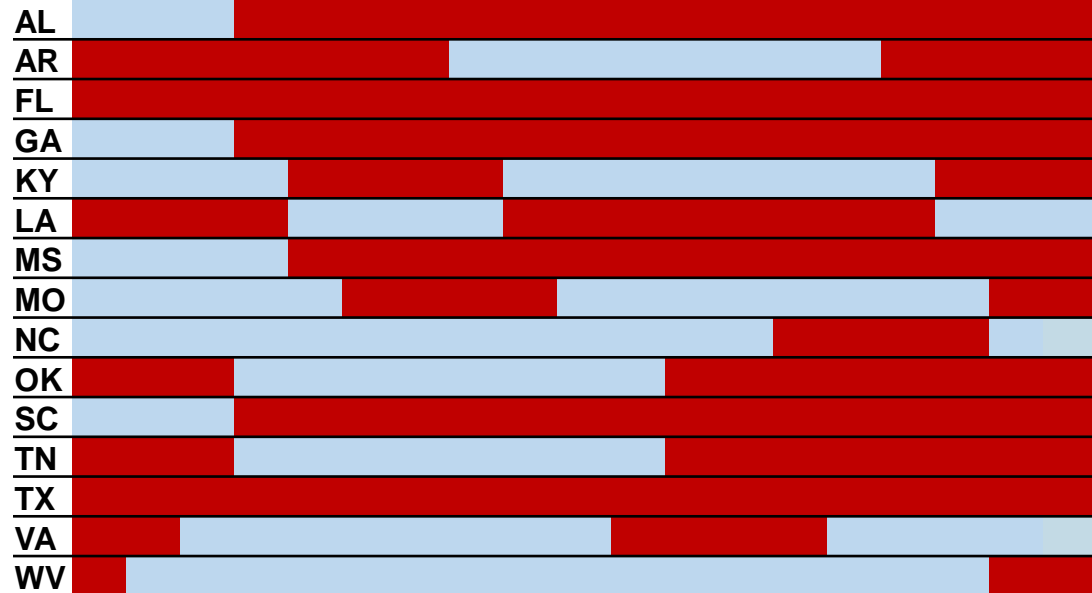
## Party of State Legislature

2000 2002 2004 2006 2008 2010 2012 2014 2016 2018



## Party of Governor

2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018

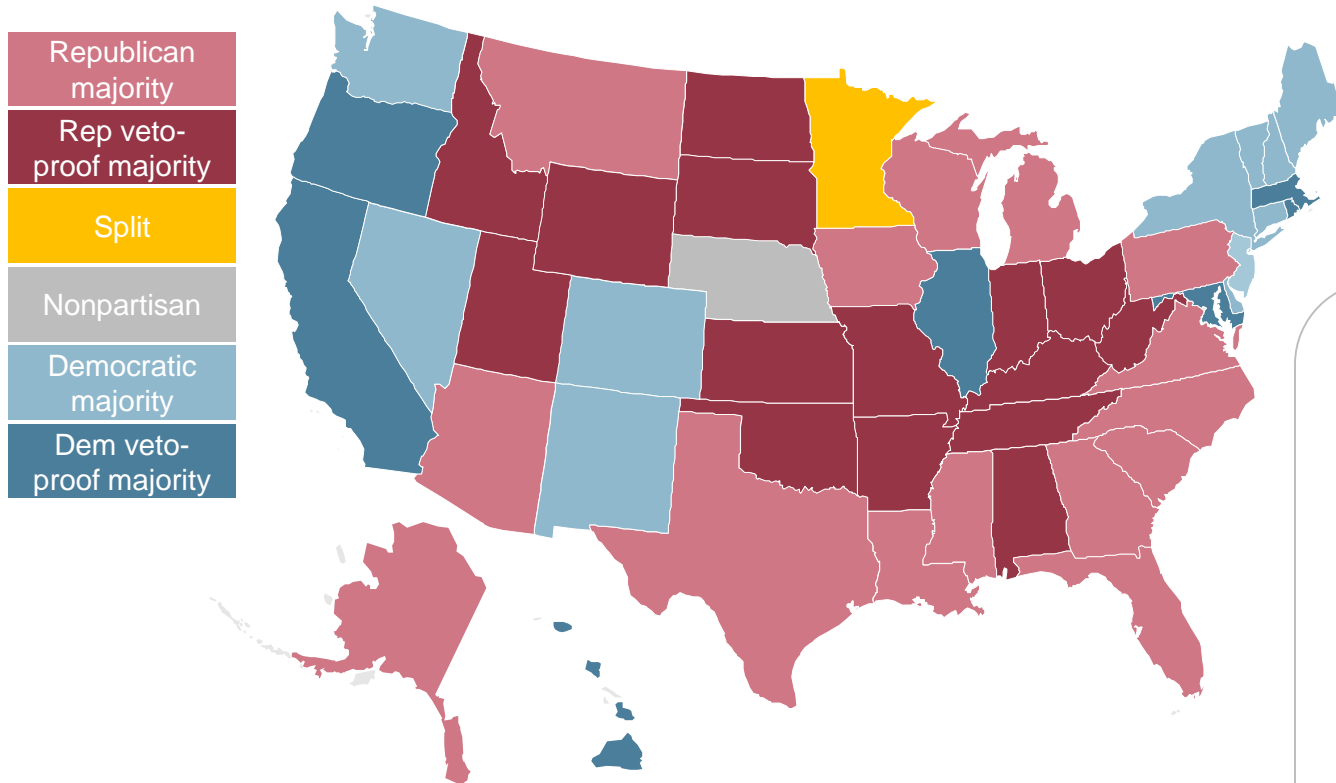


Historically Democratic states like Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and West Virginia have become Republican in recent years.

# Today, the Republican Party holds control of all state legislatures in the South

## Party Control of Legislature by State

2018



Except for Louisiana, North Carolina, and Virginia, whose current governors are Democrats, all Southern states are currently operating under a Republican trifecta — meaning that the governor, state senate, and state house are all held by Republican majorities.

Note: West Virginia's governor ran as a Democrat in 2016 but switched to the Republican Party six months into his term.

Source: [Ballotpedia](https://www.ballotpedia.org)



# Unlike other regions, teachers' unions have less political power in the South due to differences in right-to-work laws

Prior to the June 2018 Supreme Court ruling in *Janus*, the majority of Southern states were so-called “right-to-work” states. Right-to-work laws **prohibited unions from charging nonmembers collective bargaining fees**. As a result, **teachers' unions held considerably less power in the South compared to other regions**. Even so, discontent with low teacher pay and school funding led to teacher strikes in three Southern states in 2018.



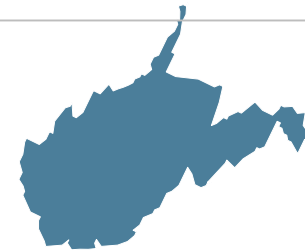
## Kentucky

In April 2018, teachers rallied in a “day of action” to protest new legislation to overhaul the state’s public pension system. Kentucky teachers declared victory when the Republican-majority legislature voted to override the Republican governor’s veto of legislation that included a \$480 million tax hike to pay for increases in spending on public education.



## Oklahoma

In April 2018, teachers staged a nine-day “walkout” to protest low pay and statewide cuts to education funding. Teachers won increased school funding and salary increases despite resistance from the Republican governor.



## West Virginia

In February 2018, teachers mounted a nine-day statewide “walkout” to protest low wages and costly health care. The strike ended in a 5 percent pay raise for teachers, but it did not guarantee controls on rising health care costs.

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Introduction

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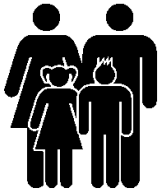
Education Trends

Historical Context

Education Reform in the South

Conclusion

# Section summary



## Student demographics

More than one-third of all K-12 students live in the South, including 56 percent of all black students nationwide; 3.5 million of these students live in rural communities. Most Southern states have higher rates of FRL-eligible students than the national average. One-third of the nation's ELL population and one-third of the nation's migrant population goes to school in the South.



## School funding trends

Per-pupil spending is lower than the national average in all Southern states but West Virginia, and most states rely more heavily on state and federal funds than the national average. Teacher salaries are also below national averages in most Southern states.



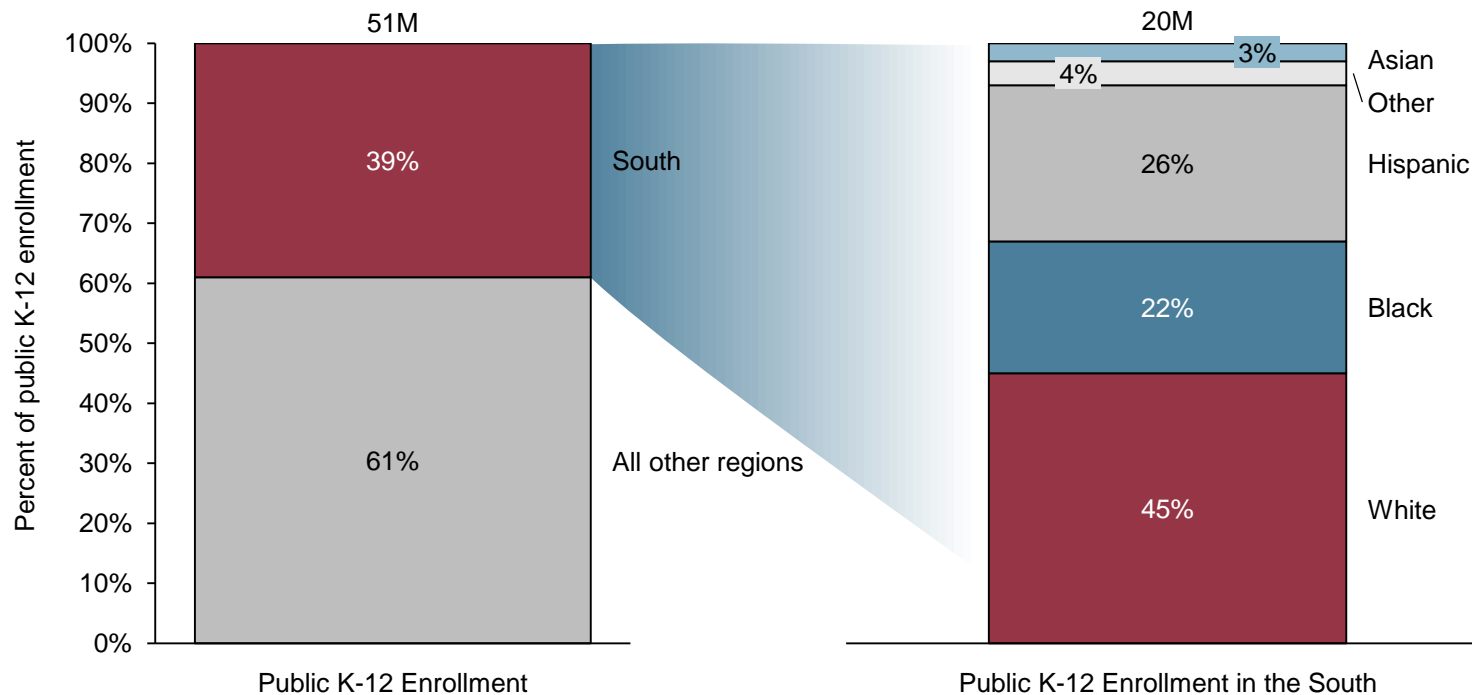
## Academic trends

Math and reading proficiency rates are lower in the South than in all other regions, and achievement gaps exist between minority students and white students across the South. High school graduation rates are comparable to national averages, but college matriculation and completion rates are low.

# The South is home to more than one-third of all public K-12 students, more than half of whom are minorities

**Proportion of Public K-12 Students by Region**  
2016-17

**Proportion of Public K-12 Students in the South by Race/Ethnicity**  
2016-17

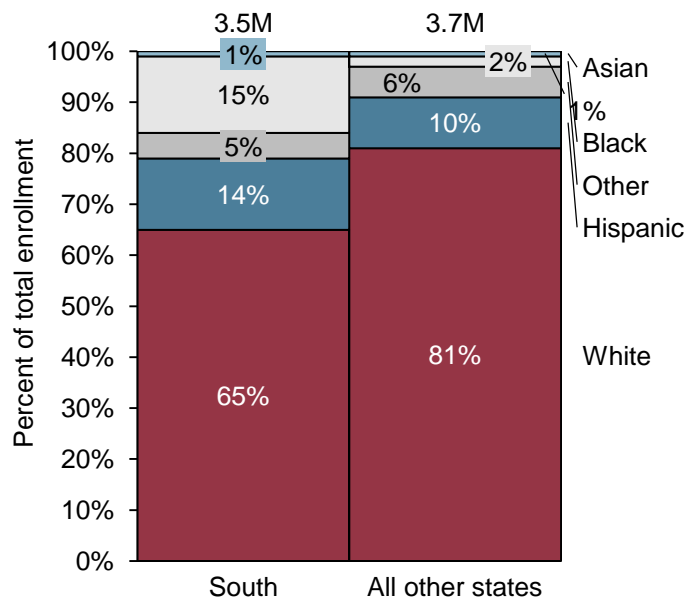


Of the more than 7.7 million black students enrolled in public K-12 schools nationwide, 4.3 million (56 percent) live in the South.

# A higher proportion of black and Hispanic students live in rural school districts in the South compared to other regions

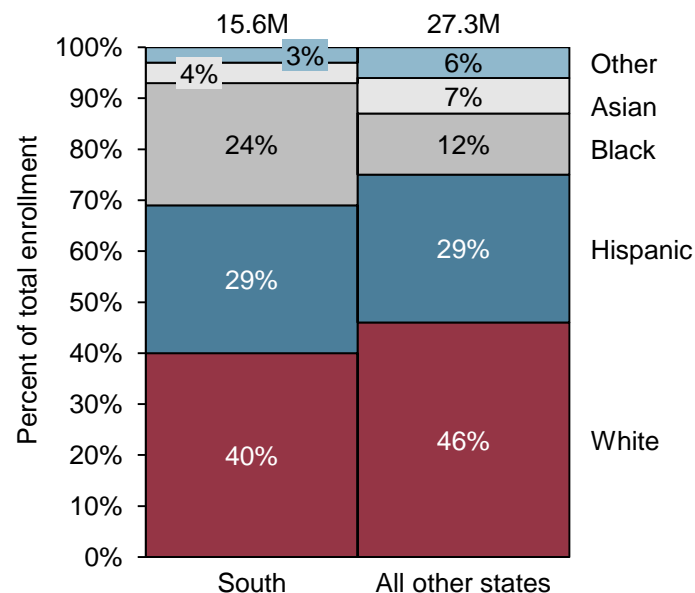
## Enrollment in Rural School Districts by Race and Region

2016-17



## Enrollment in Non-Rural School Districts by Race and Region

2016-17



- The South is home to nearly as many rural students as the rest of the country combined
- More than one-third of the enrollment in rural Southern school districts is nonwhite, compared to less than 20 percent in the rest of the country
- Non-rural districts in the South enroll a higher proportion of nonwhite students than in other regions of the country

Note: "Non-rural" includes all districts coded as city, suburb, and town.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

# What we heard: Education reform conversations don't always translate to rural communities struggling with poverty and isolation

*“Rural poverty is a unique challenge. Some of the poorest ZIP codes in the nation are in Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama’s rural communities. Education reform conversations focus on high standards and no excuses, **but when you have schools in these communities without running water, the conversation has to be different.** There are basic needs that have to be met in the **communities that are struggling with crippling poverty, lack of access to basic, fundamental services like running water, electricity, and rudimentary health care.** So the frame on education reform has to be different when talking about rural communities.”* – Policy expert, AL

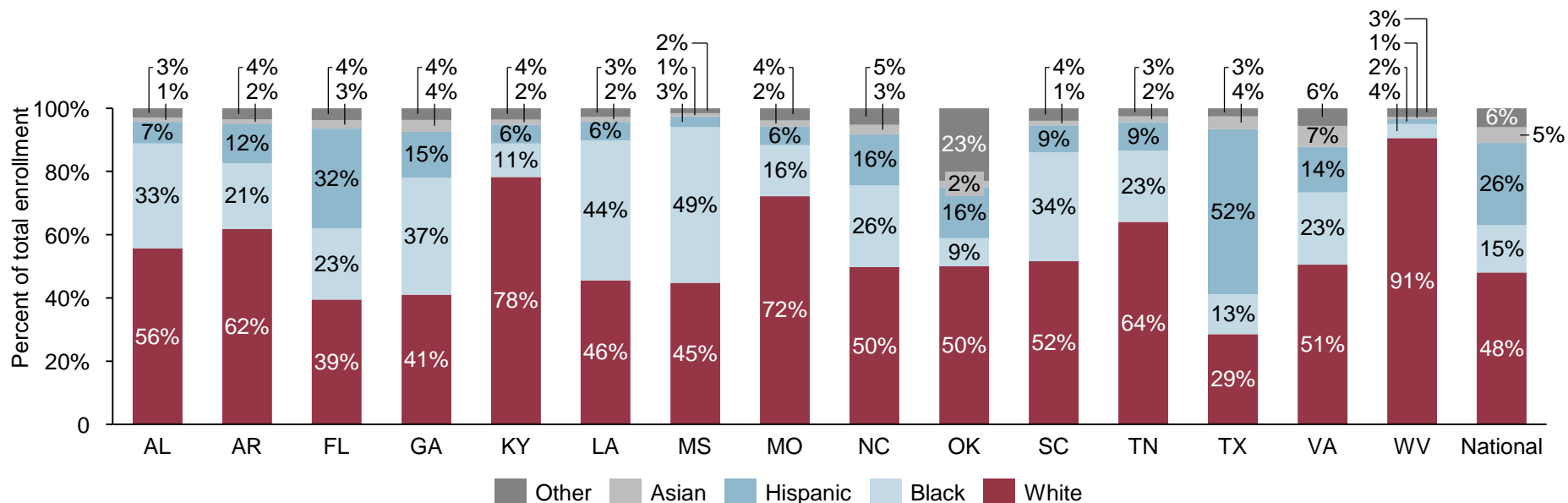
*“One of the challenges in Alabama, particularly in the Black Belt, is that it is historically agricultural and rural. **The poverty is appalling:** Families don’t have indoor plumbing. **And there are limited schooling options.** From a transportation perspective, you don’t have buses that are going 60 miles out to different districts. There aren’t many private options. **There’s a lack of basic infrastructure and access to the internet. So there’s an information gap:** How do families know what else is out there? Especially if they don’t have their basic needs met.”* – Practitioner, AL

*“There’s a real urban-rural dynamic in Southern states. You’ve got high concentrations of low-performing schools in urban areas. But people are talking about that. **If you get out to rural areas, college expectations fall off the map.** I’m not a believer that every kid needs to go to college, **but it’s a joke that low-skill trade jobs are coming back to these communities. There’s not going to be any one-stop-sign town with a cabinet maker.**”* – Advocate, TN



# Racial demographics vary significantly by state within the South

**Student Racial/Ethnic Demographics by Southern State**  
2016-17

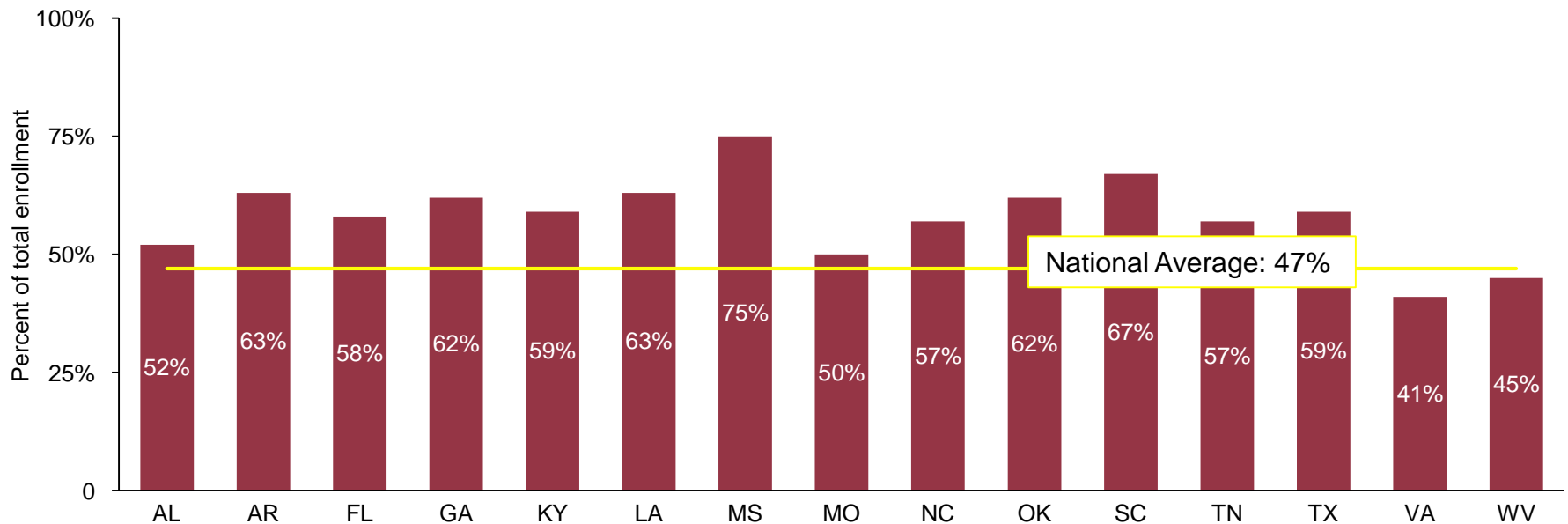


- Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia have larger populations of African Americans than the national average of 15 percent
- Florida and Texas have larger populations of Hispanics than the national average of 26 percent
- In Kentucky and West Virginia, more than three-quarters of the population is white, compared to less than half of the U.S. population overall

# In the majority of Southern states, more students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch than the national average

## Percent of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

2016-17



- All states but Virginia and West Virginia have higher proportions of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch than the national average
- In Mississippi, three out of every four students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch

# What we heard: High poverty rates challenge communities' and families' access to resources and opportunities

*“You can’t look at education outside of the context of families and communities. **Economic stability is a huge challenge** for families in Arkansas.” – Funder, AR*

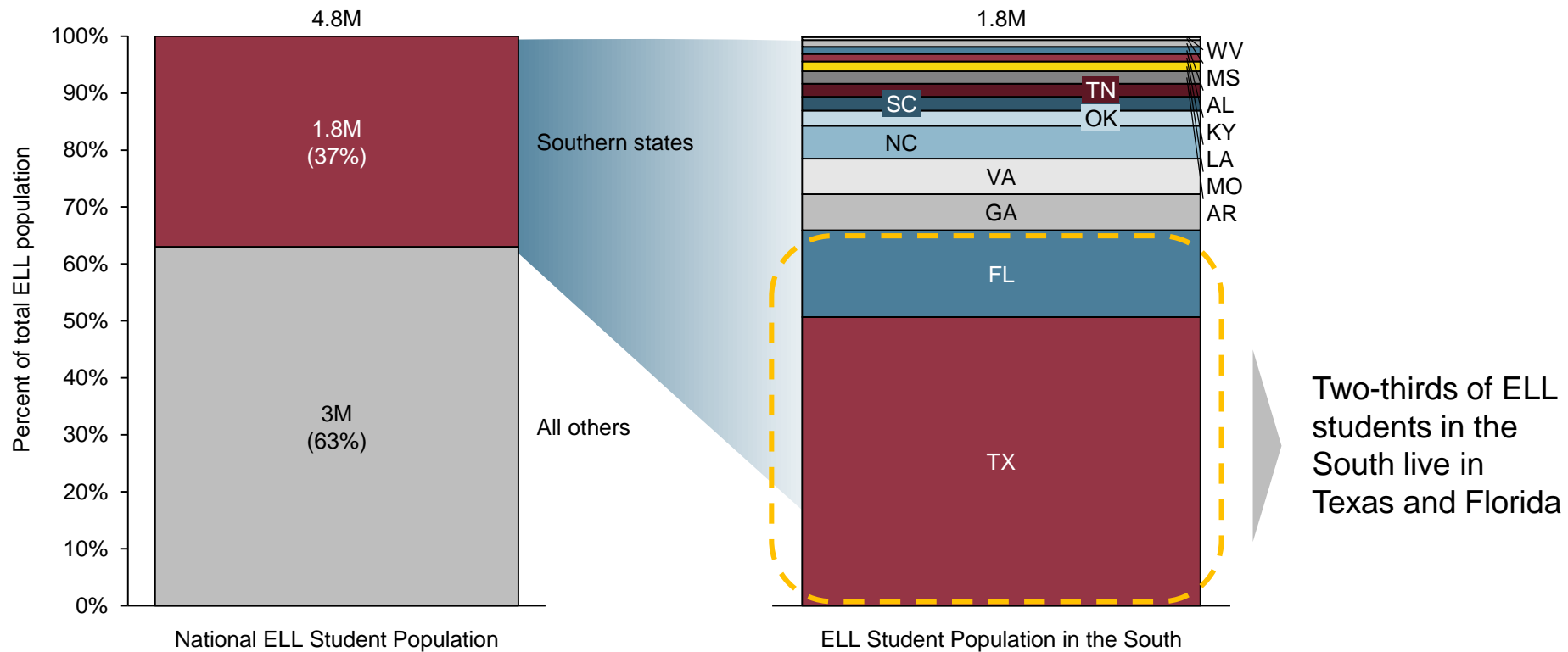
*“The biggest challenge we have in education is poverty, particularly **generational poverty that has its roots dating back to slavery**. All poverty isn’t the same, this particular kind comes with **lack of social capital, a long history of institutional racism**, and other variables that make it difficult to provide the same education opportunities.” – Advocate, MS*

*“Low-income families have the least amount of political power. That’s a double whammy for them. They have **the greatest need without ability to leverage political power to access resources**. Political systems in Florida tend to be dominated by white, middle-class school districts. Maybe a few rural areas. But on the whole, **resources in the state are allocated in ways that benefit middle-class families**. Political, economic, and historical factors shape this dynamic. But our challenge is meeting needs of all children, particularly with those with greatest need.” – Practitioner, FL*

# The South is home to more than one-third of the nation's English language learner students ...

## Percent of ELL Students by State

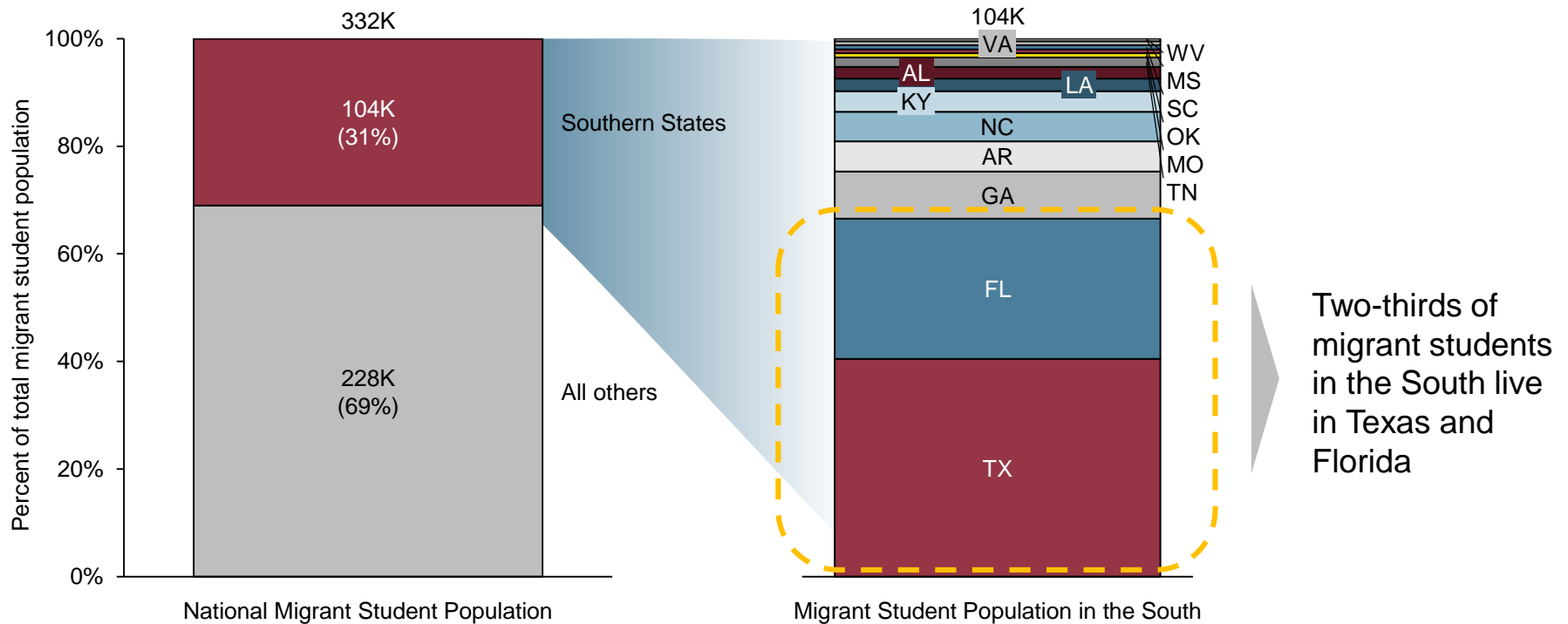
School year 2014-15



# ... and to one-third of students eligible for the federal migrant education program

## Percent of Migrant Students Eligible for Services by State

School year 2014-15



In 2016, just 29 percent of migrant students scored at or above proficient on their state's annual reading/language arts and math assessments in grades 3 through 8.

Note: Data include children ages 3-5 as well as youth not currently enrolled in school

Source: U.S. Department of Education Migrant Education Program



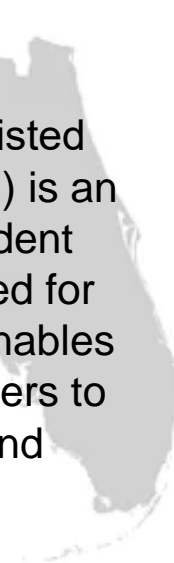
## Migrant students face many challenges, especially related to earning and transferring credits

The federal migrant education program, administered through the U.S. Department of Education, provides formula grants to states to support education programs for migratory children. These programs are meant to help ensure that migratory children who move among the states are not penalized by differences among states in curriculum, graduation requirements, or academic standards.

One of the biggest barriers migrant students face is the lack of transferable credits across states. This means that students who move midyear do not always receive credit for classes they have fully or partially completed, putting them even further behind on the path to graduation.



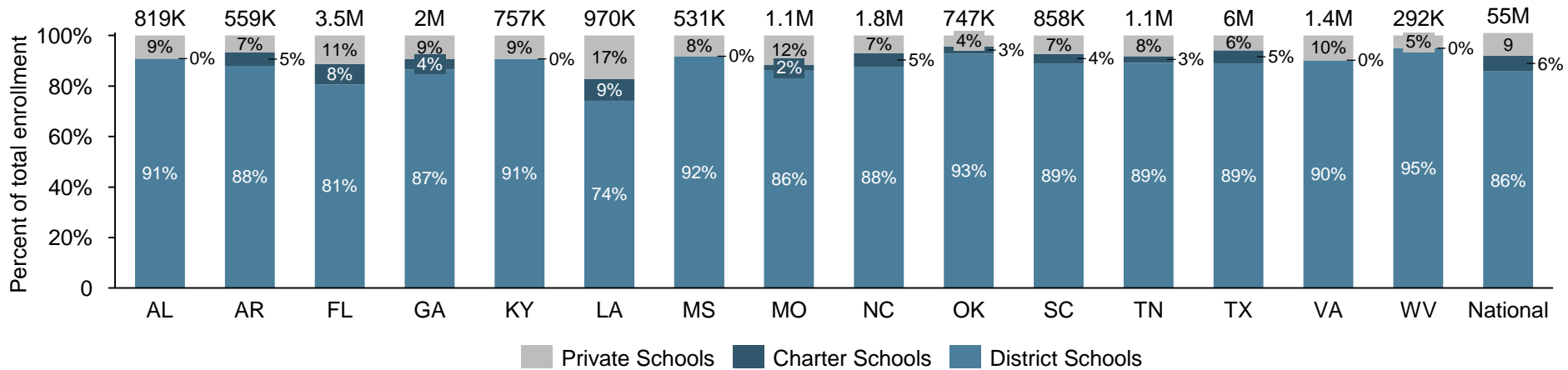
Florida's Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS) is an online, semi-independent study program designed for migrant students that enables middle and high schoolers to complete courses and recover credits.



# The South's student population attends district, charter, and private schools, though the demographics vary by sector

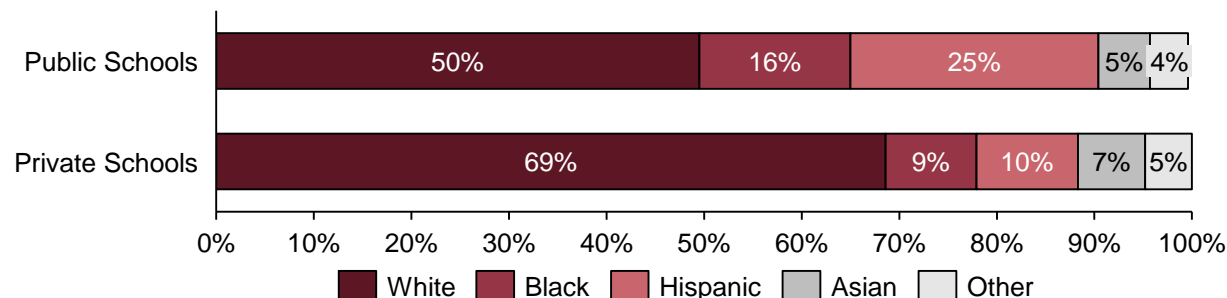
## Student Enrollment by Sector and State

2015-16



## Student Demographics by Sector

For 15 Southern states, 2015-16

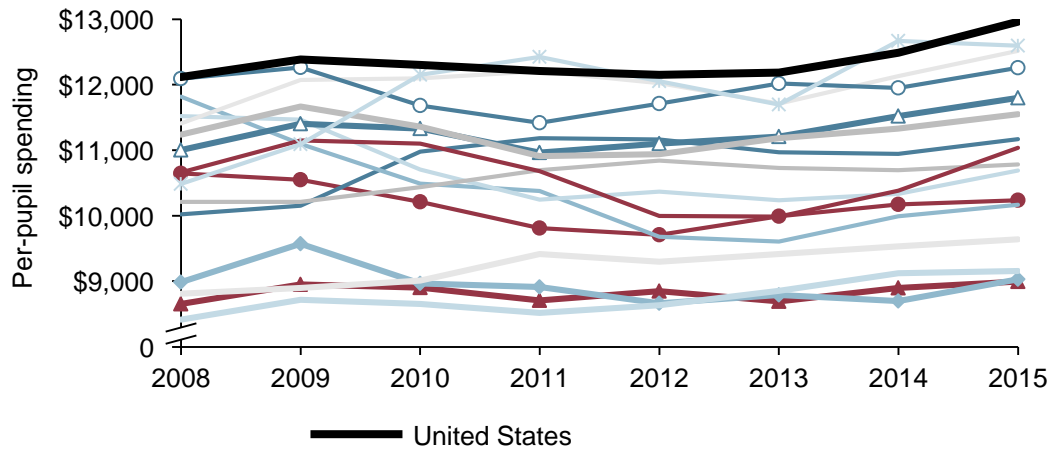


More than two-thirds of the private school population in the South is white, compared to just half of the public school population.

# Per-pupil spending in the South is below the national average and has been slow to recover to pre-Recession levels

## Trends in Per-Pupil Spending by State

2008 to 2015



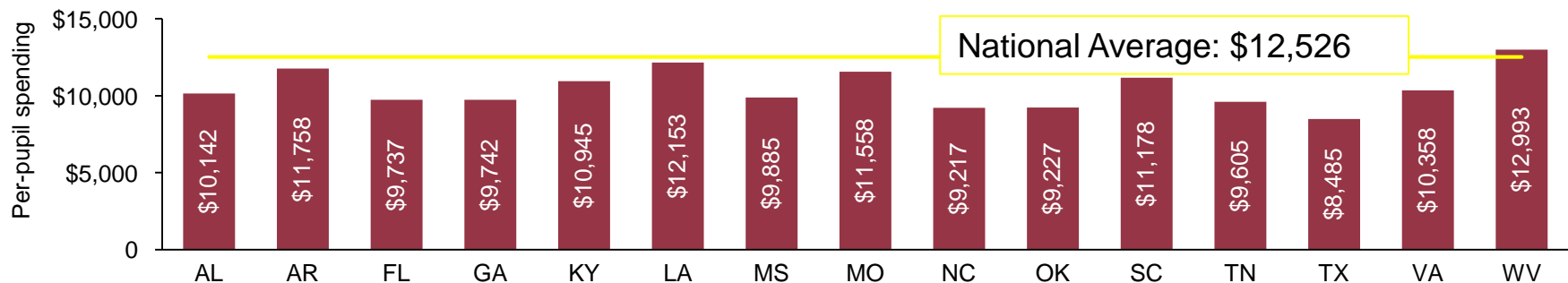
Spending trends over time reveal declines in spending through the Great Recession, reflecting national trends.

As of 2015, 10 Southern states had not yet recovered to pre-Recession per-pupil spending levels.

Spending remains 3 to 32 percent below the national average in all states but West Virginia — with seven states falling below \$10,000 per student.

## Per-Pupil Spending by State

2018

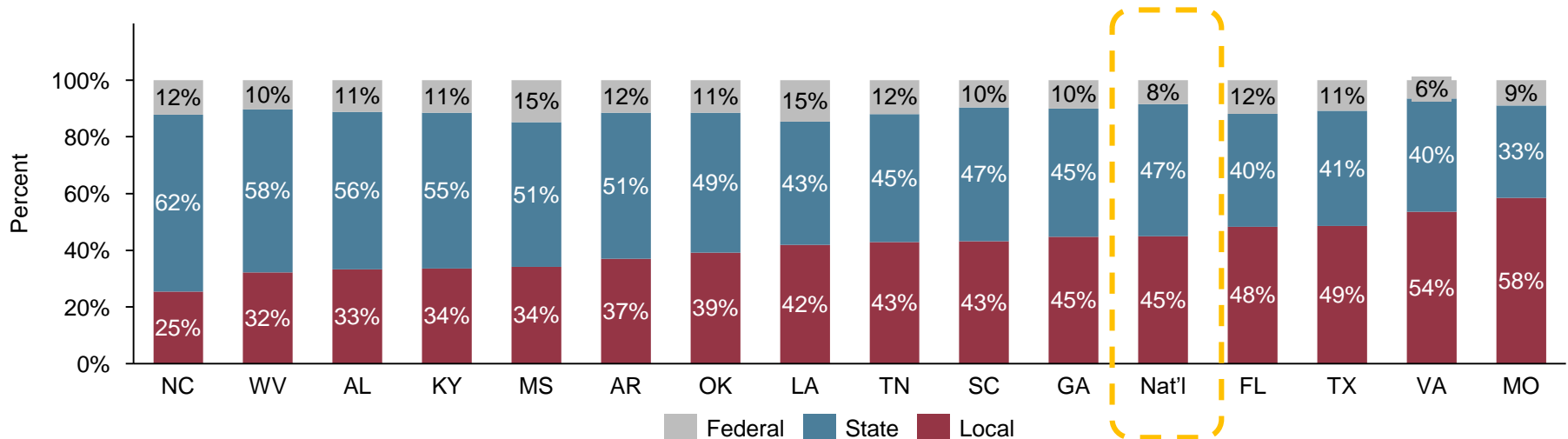




# Most Southern states rely more heavily on state and federal funding compared to the national average

## Share of Federal, State, and Local Funding Sources, by State

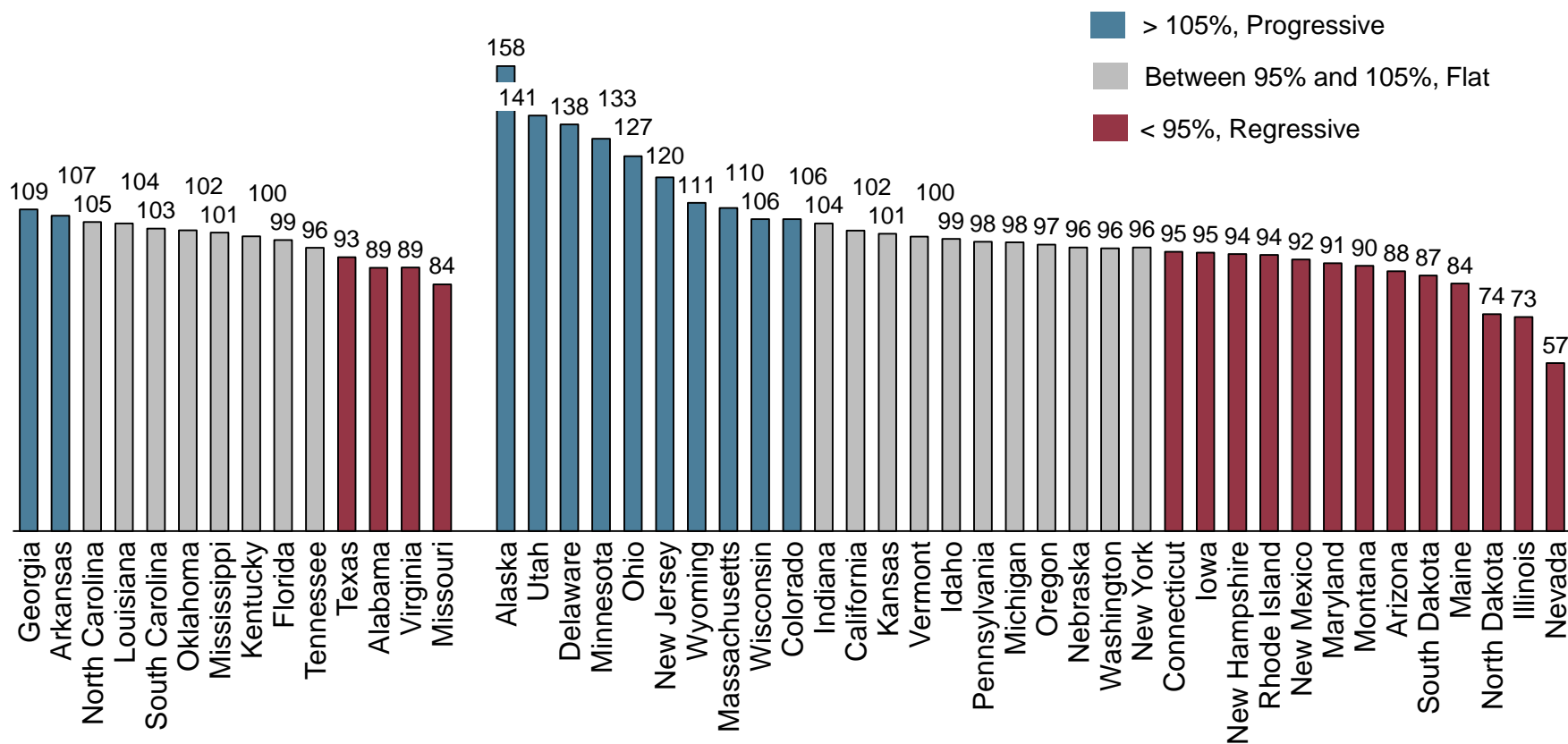
SY 2014-15



- In just five Southern states is the share of local funding equal to or greater than the national average of 45 percent
- In seven states, the share of state funding is greater than the national average of 47 percent
- Fourteen states receive more federal funding than the national average of 8 percent, with two states — MS and LA — receiving almost double the national average

# Most Southern states do not differentiate resources substantially between high-poverty and low-poverty districts

Comparison of the ratio of spending in high-poverty versus low-poverty school districts, from Bruce Baker et al., *Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.* 2015



Source: Figure reproduced from data and analysis originally published by Bruce D. Baker, Danielle Farrie, and David Sciarra, [Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card, Seventh Edition](#), February 2018.

# However, most Southern states outperform national averages in measures of funding equity by race

## Differences in Funding Between School Districts Serving Predominantly White vs. Predominantly Nonwhite Student Populations, from EdBuild, \$23 Billion

2019

Arizona	\$ (7,613)	Alabama	\$ 146
Nebraska	\$ (3,961)	Virginia	\$ 255
Oklahoma	\$ (3,618)	Ohio	\$ 394
New Jersey	\$ (3,446)	Illinois	\$ 490
Connecticut	\$ (2,931)	Maryland	\$ 501
Montana	\$ (2,711)	North Carolina	\$ 634
Washington	\$ (2,590)	Georgia	\$ 695
Rhode Island	\$ (2,450)	Mississippi	\$ 1,074
California	\$ (2,390)	Minnesota	\$ 1,077
<b>United States</b>	<b>\$ (2,226)</b>	Arkansas	\$ 1,498
New York	\$ (2,222)	Louisiana	\$ 1,774
Colorado	\$ (2,218)	Pennsylvania	\$ 1,923
Massachusetts	\$ (1,644)	South Carolina	\$ 2,128
South Dakota	\$ (1,580)	Alaska	\$ 3,077
Wisconsin	\$ (1,473)		
Kansas	\$ (1,462)		
Texas	\$ (830)		
Florida	\$ (423)		
Missouri	\$ (238)		
Michigan	\$ (181)		
Indiana	\$ (43)		
Tennessee	\$ (39)		

EdBuild's recent analysis finds that most Southern states spend relatively more in school districts serving predominantly nonwhite student populations.

Southern states' relatively flat or slightly progressive performance on funding equity measures may in part reflect the South's relatively larger school districts, which are often co-terminal with county boundaries. The larger geographic area can smooth variations in demographics and economics somewhat compared to smaller districts more typical in other regions.

# What we heard: Low funding levels pose major challenges for schools across the South

*“Resources are dramatically different in different places. In places like Mississippi and Louisiana, **the disparate level of resources that fund education in different communities is mind-boggling.**” – Advocate, GA*

*“**The way schools are funded and inequities built into that** is one of the biggest challenges in the South. Texas requires no income tax and just relies on property taxes. And the state has reduced its share of funding over time. Schools are becoming more and more dependent on local community and property taxes. Historically, **wealthier communities have been able to raise significantly more money for schools,** which has led to lawsuits regarding inequitable funding formulas. There’s a lot of resistance to increasing property taxes [at the] local level and districts struggle to pass bonds. Schools are growing. All while the state erodes its share in the formula. **Title I schools face enormous pressure in this environment.** That overarching challenge, the way schools are funded, in the way they embed inequities is top of my list [of challenges].” – Advocate, TX*

*“**The remnants of the country’s racial history exist in prominent ways in the South around education funding.** Civil rights groups have been fighting for a long time to get fair funding for low-income and students of color. Education reformers have largely stayed away from that battle and aligned right and white politically.” – National policy expert*

*“In general, **the per-student funding amount is less in the South,** driven largely by the budget prospects of the region. This poses challenges for traditional public schools of course, but also for recruiting high-quality charter management organizations into the state.” – Advocate, FL*



# In conservative Southern states, school funding and property tax relief are policy priorities that are often at odds

**The South Carolina and Texas legislatures are considering changes to their states' school funding formulas this session, while balancing the desire for additional cuts to property taxes**

## South Carolina

- Current formula in place since 1977
- In 2014, state Supreme Court found that the state failed to provide a “minimally adequate” education to poor and rural districts, and ordered an overhaul of the system. The ruling was vacated in 2017, and the old funding system remains in place
- In 2018 the state fell \$500 million short of the minimum funding set by state law — despite sending out more than \$1 billion in property tax relief

In January 2019 Governor McMaster asked the state's revenue office to create a new education funding formula to ensure more equitable distribution of dollars

## Texas

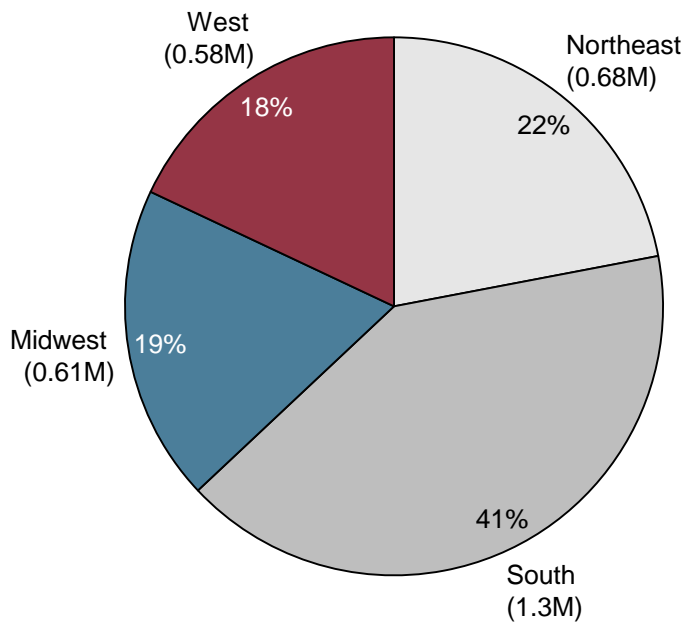
- State formula determines the total funding for each district; districts raise local tax dollars to fund, based on certain taxing parameters
- Districts unable to raise enough receive state funds; districts that raise above the amount may have excess funds sent back to the state to fund allocations to other districts
- As property values increase in many parts of the state, local shares of school funding go up while state shares go down

As of May 2019, both chambers of the Texas Legislature have passed versions of a spending bill dedicating at least \$9 billion in new funding toward improving schools and providing tax relief. The two chambers are now working to resolve differences between the two bills.

# The South employs 1.3 million teachers, or 41 percent of the national teacher workforce

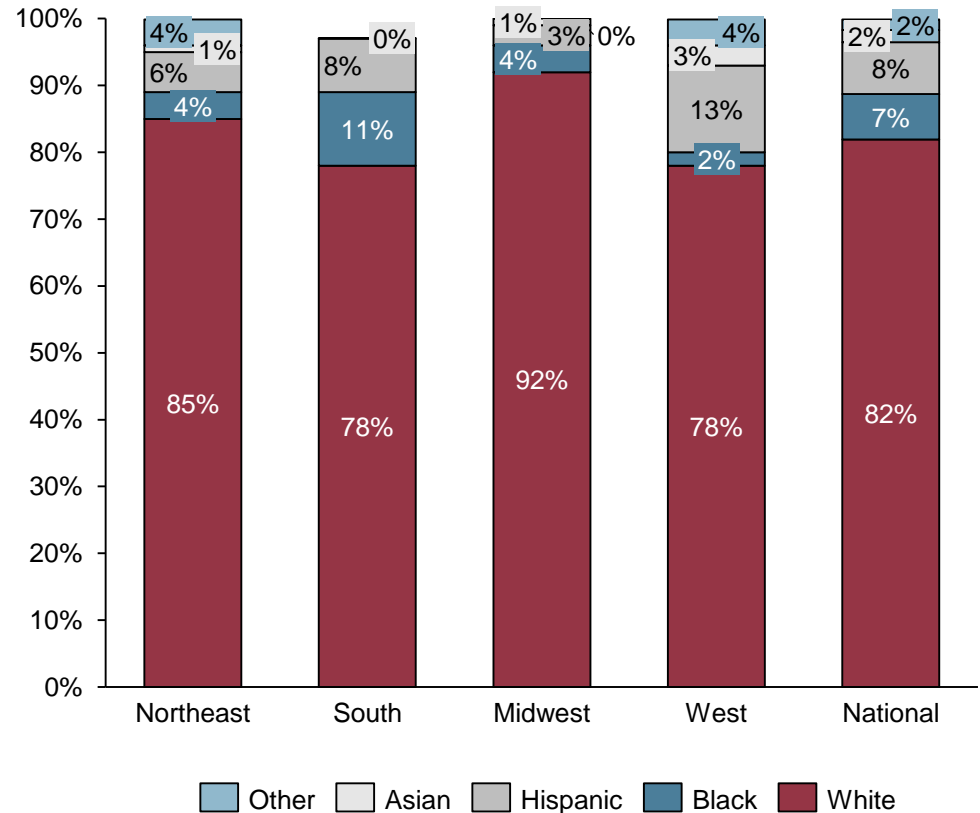
## Teacher Population by Region

2015-16



## Teacher Demographics by Region

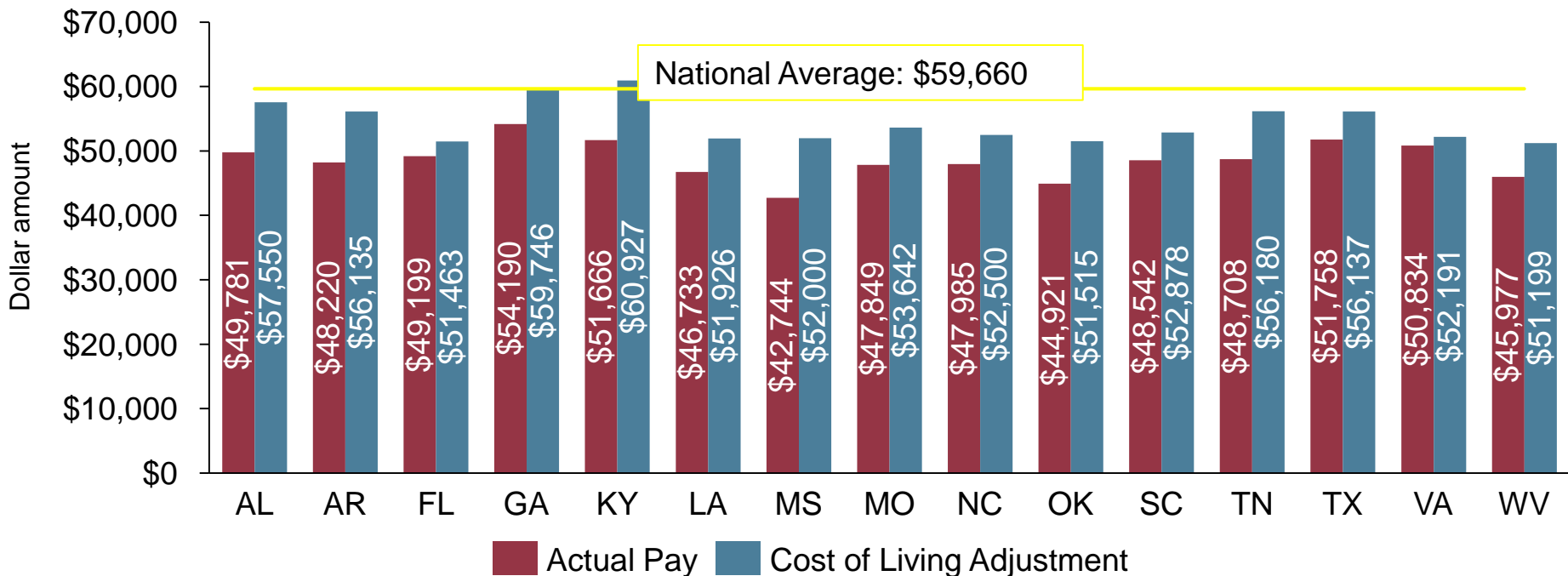
2011-12



# Across the South, teacher salaries are below national averages

## Actual Pay and Cost of Living-Adjusted Pay by State

2016



Even after adjusting for cost of living, teachers in the South are paid less than the national average teacher salary, with the exception of Georgia and Kentucky.

# What we heard: Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers and leaders is a key concern for stakeholders across the South

*“The **South has a unique human capital issue**. Mississippi has been slow to implement their charter law because they can’t keep anyone there. It’s hard to get and keep people excited about being in rural Mississippi. So **communities may have great plans, but there’s no one there to implement them**. And they don’t have resources to pay high salaries to incentivize people to come or cultural things to attract and keep people in the area.”* – Advocate, AL

*“**We’re not taking enough shots on people of color**. In education reform, we’re more conscious about diversity, equity, and inclusion, but funders don’t hedge their bets or put finances behind up-and-coming minorities. **Because of communities we’re in, we need people of color**. And we need to create a place where people want to teach. **We can’t just use TNTP, TFA, and Relay; we need to use our local schools of education to create a stable pipeline** and systematically solve for human capital issues.”* – Practitioner, LA

*“There’s a **steady need for high-quality teachers and leaders**. It’s one of the main issues. We have a different caliber of talent and a shallower pool than you may have in New York or something. It’s a circular thing. **If people come from less effective teacher prep programs or less effective school systems, even if they did well, it wouldn’t add up to someone from Massachusetts**. There’s a lot of potential, but when you think about numbers or the specialized areas and the move to our version of Common Core and the higher rigor that requires, it raises the bar for the types of teachers we need here.”* – Funder, TN





# Several Southern states are addressing issues of teacher pay during the current legislative session

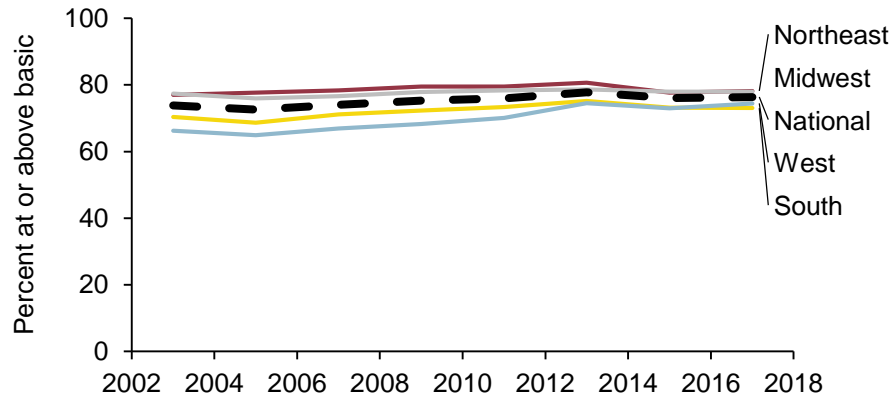
**Legislatures in several Southern states are considering raising teacher salaries among their legislative priorities this session.**

<b>State</b>	<b>Proposed and recently passed legislation</b>
Texas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In March 2019 the Texas House passed a bill to allocate an additional \$9 billion to education, including raises for teachers</li><li>• In May 2019 the Texas Senate passed a bill including a \$5k raise for all teachers and a \$127 million merit pay program</li><li>• The two chambers are currently working to negotiate differences between the two bills</li></ul>
Mississippi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The governor signed a bill in April 2019 raising teacher pay by \$1,500</li><li>• In 2014 and 2015, teachers received a \$2,500 salary bump</li></ul>
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In March 2019 the Georgia legislature passed a budget including a \$3,000 raise for teachers beginning July 1</li><li>• Other school employees, including bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and janitors, will receive a 2 percent salary increase</li></ul>
Oklahoma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The House and Senate have passed a \$1,200 across-the-board raise for public school teachers</li><li>• Prior to the 2018 teacher walkout, Governor Fallin signed a bill that raised teachers' salaries by an average of \$6,100</li></ul>

# There has been little growth in percent of students meeting basic or proficient benchmarks on NAEP reading and math; the South underperforms other regions

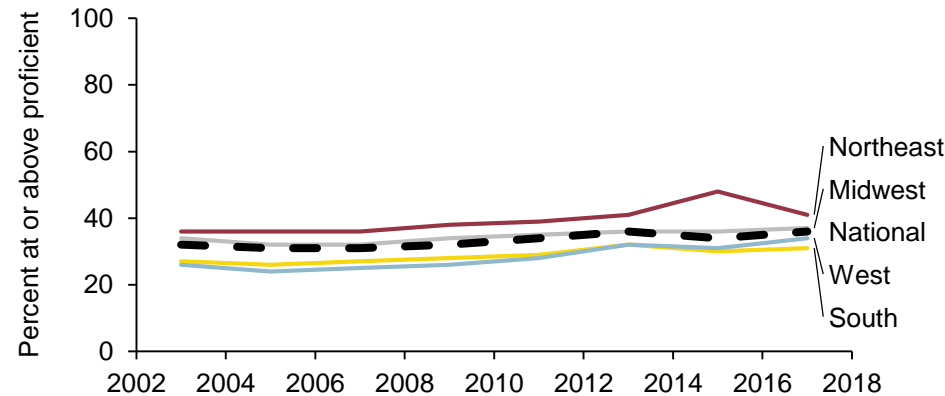
## Percent of Students at or Above Basic

Grade 8 NAEP Reading, 2003-2017



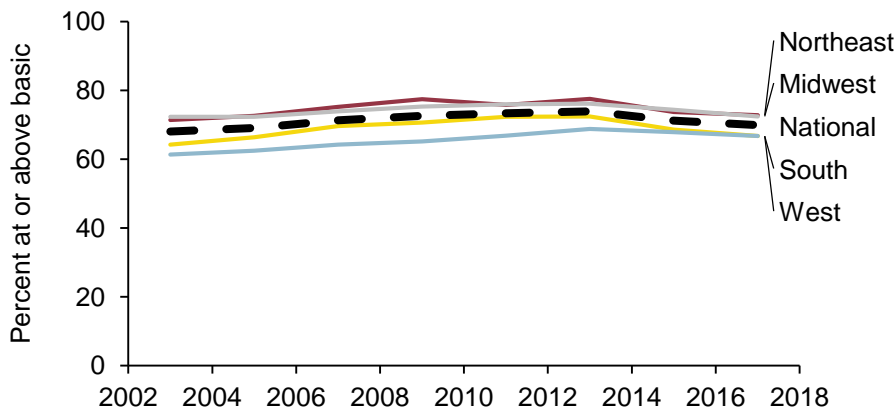
## Percent of Students at or Above Proficient

Grade 8 NAEP Reading, 2003-2017



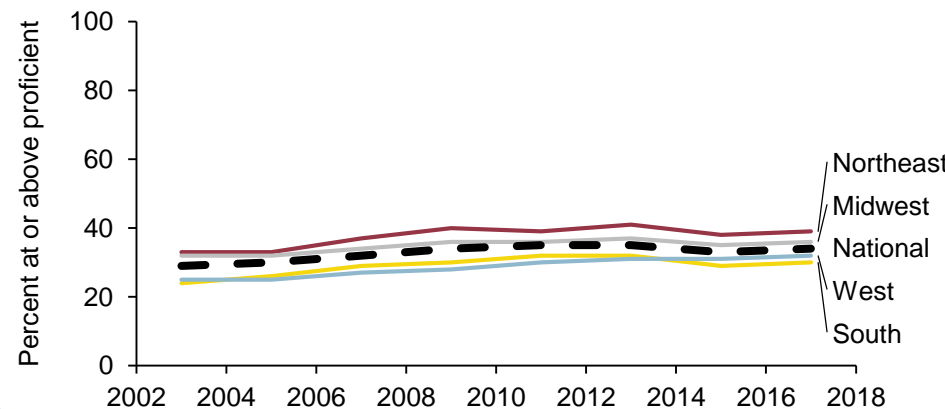
## Percent of Students at or Above Basic

Grade 8 NAEP Math, 2003-2017



## Percent of Students at or Above Proficient

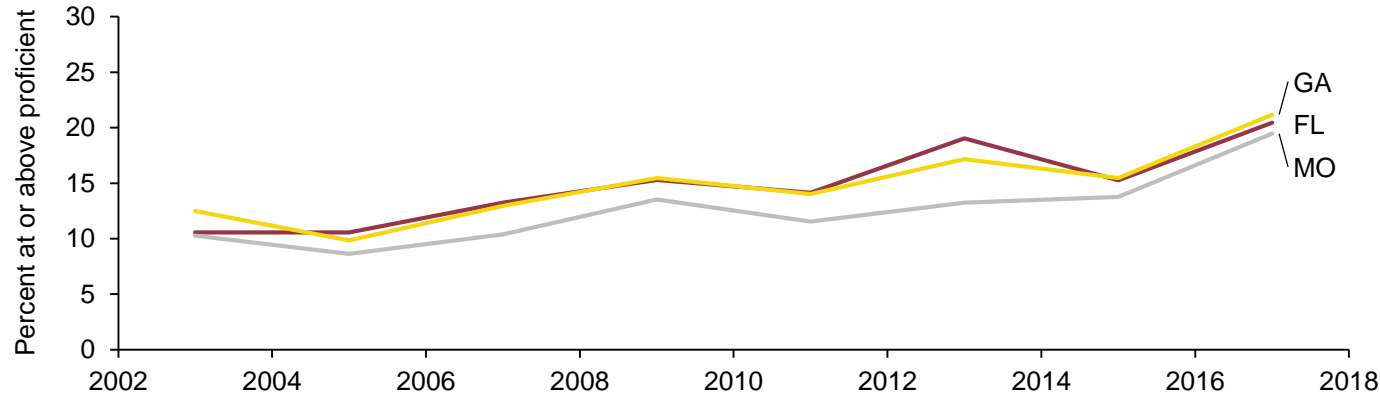
Grade 8 NAEP Math, 2003-2017



# Despite flat performance regionally, several states have seen real academic growth for black and low-income populations

## Percent of Black Students at or Above Proficient

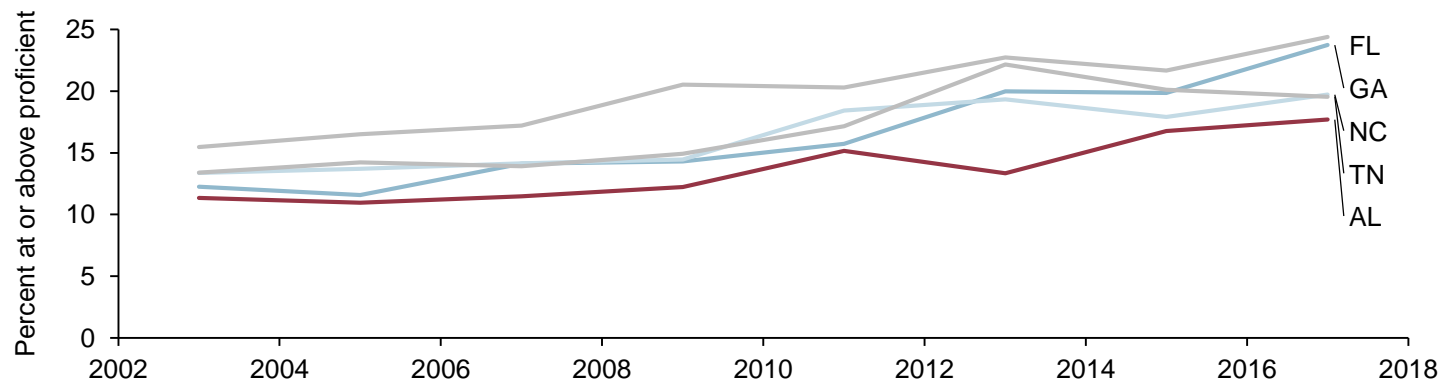
Grade 8 NAEP Reading for selected states, 2003-2017



Georgia, Florida, and Missouri have each seen a nine percentage point increase in proficiency for **black students** over the past 14 years.

## Percent of National School Lunch Program Eligible Students at or Above Proficient

Grade 8 NAEP Reading for selected states, 2003-2017

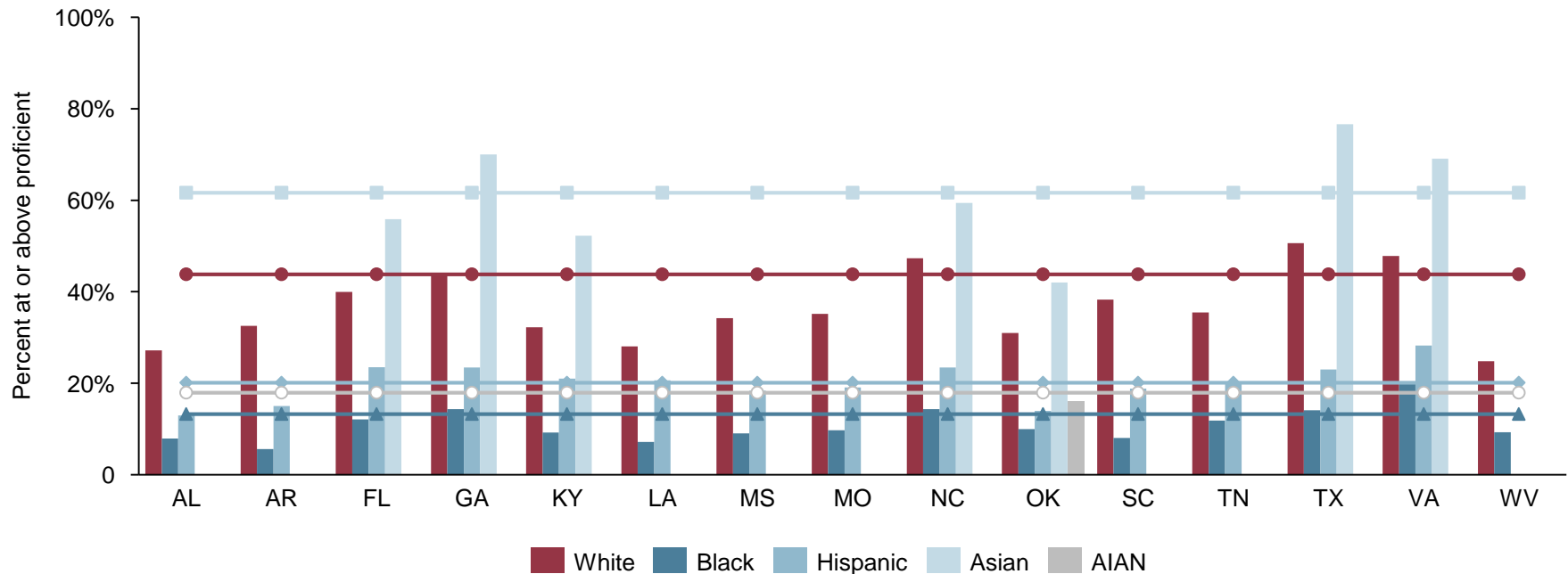


Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama have seen between 7 and 12 percentage point increases in proficiency for **FRL-eligible students** over the past 14 years.

# Like elsewhere in the country, achievement gaps between minority students and white students exist across the South

## Percent of Students at or Above Proficient

By race, grade 8 NAEP Math, 2017 (Lines indicate national average)

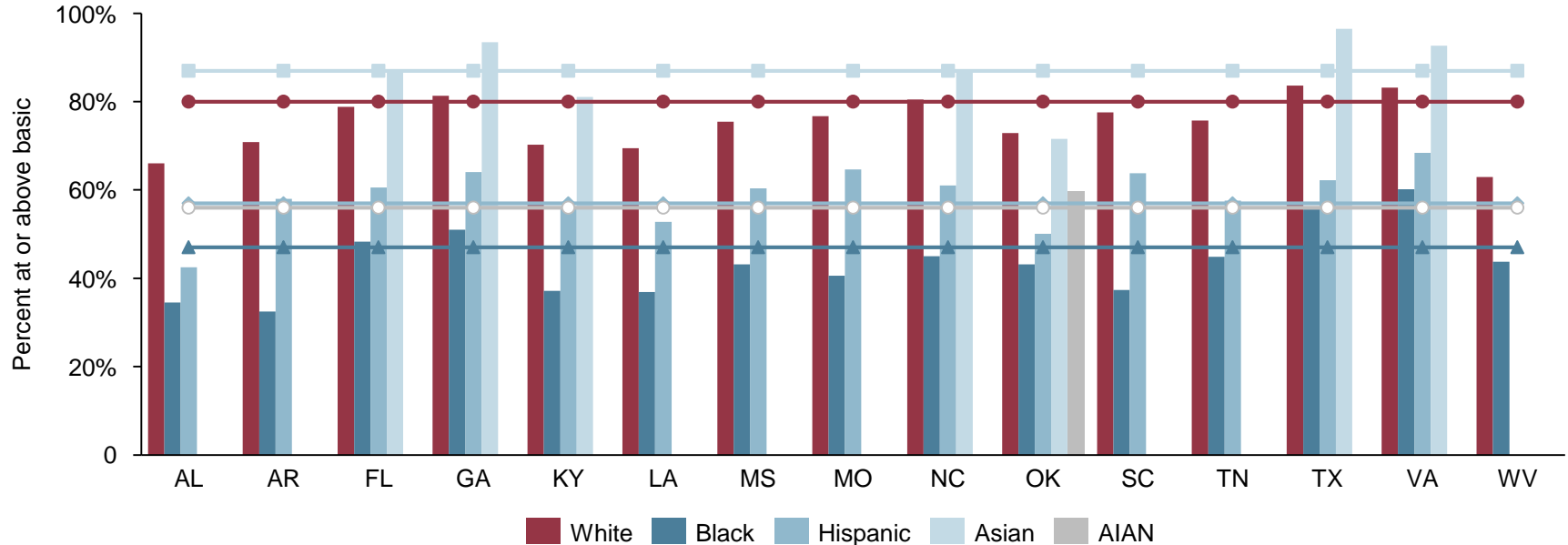


- In Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia, proficiency rates for black students are higher than the national average
- In Florida, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia, proficiency rates for Hispanic students are higher than the national average

# While more students in all subgroups reach the “basic” benchmark on NAEP, gaps persist by race

## Percent of Students at or Above Basic

By race, grade 8 NAEP Math, 2017 (Lines indicate national average)

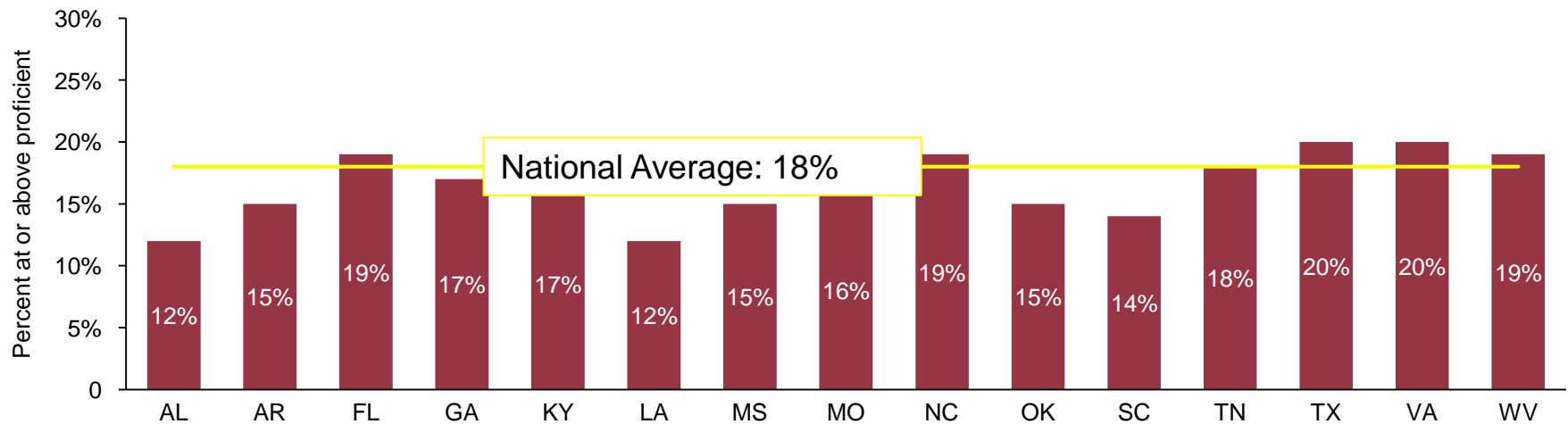


- In Florida, Georgia, Texas, and Virginia, a greater share of Black students meets the Basic benchmark than the national average.
- In Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia, a larger portion of Hispanic students meet the Basic benchmark than the national average.

# Outcomes for low-income students in the South also fall below national averages

## Percent of Students at or Above Proficient

For students eligible for the National School Lunch Program, by Southern state, Grade 8 NAEP Math, 2017

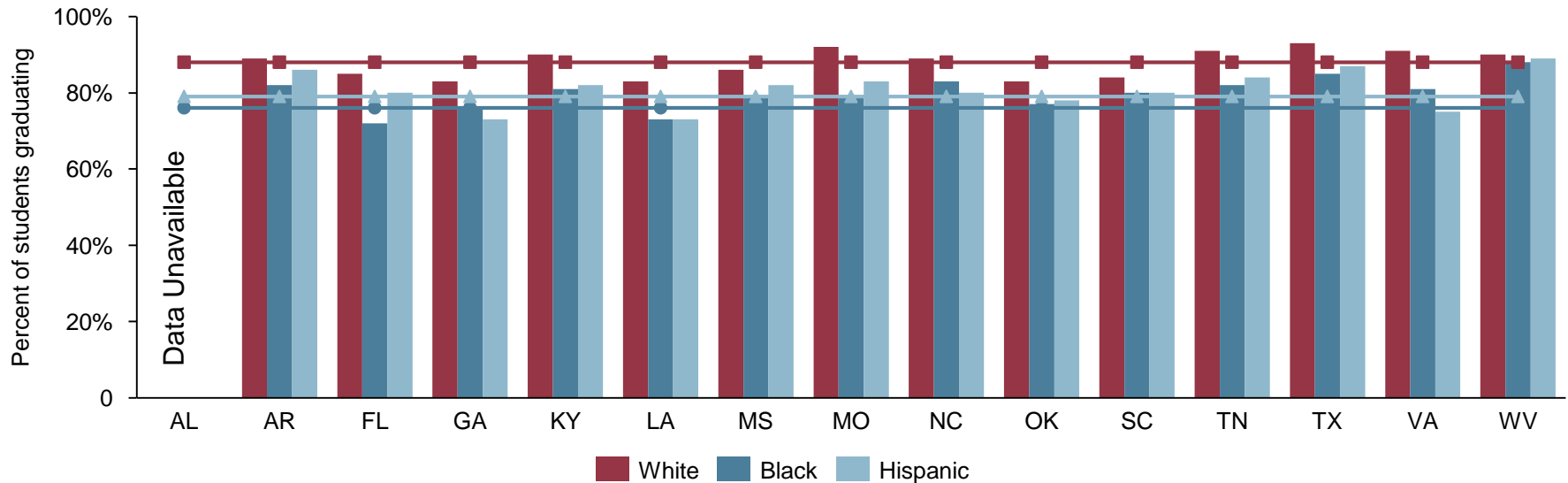


Florida, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia are the only states with higher rates of grade 8 math proficiency than the national average for students who are eligible for the national school lunch program.

# However, high school graduation rates are comparable to or higher than national averages

## Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate by State

2015-16 (Lines indicate national averages)

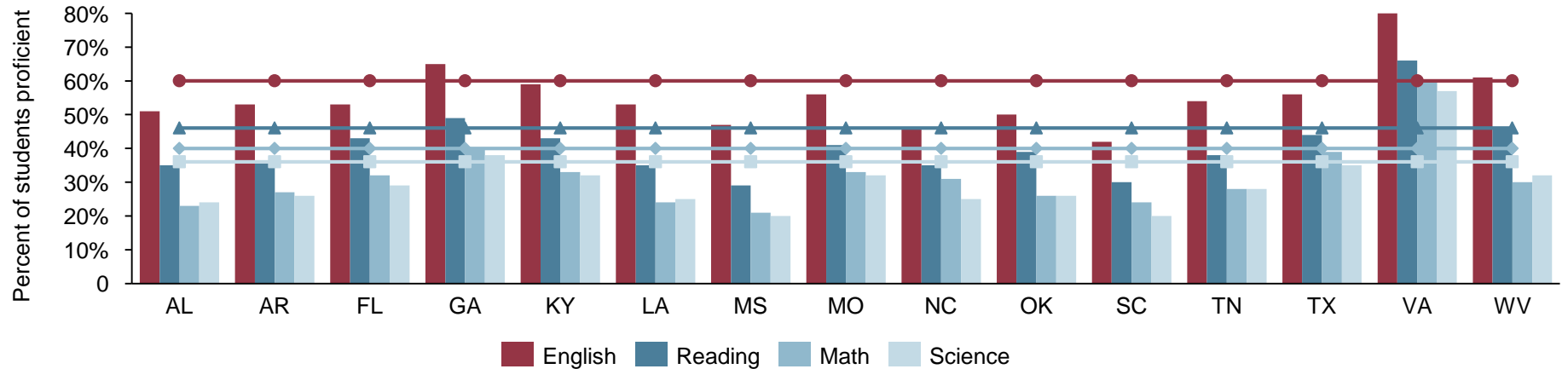


- High school graduation rates of black students are higher than the national average in Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia
- High school graduation rates of Hispanic students are higher than the national average in Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia

# Although the South falls behind college-readiness benchmarks when compared to national averages

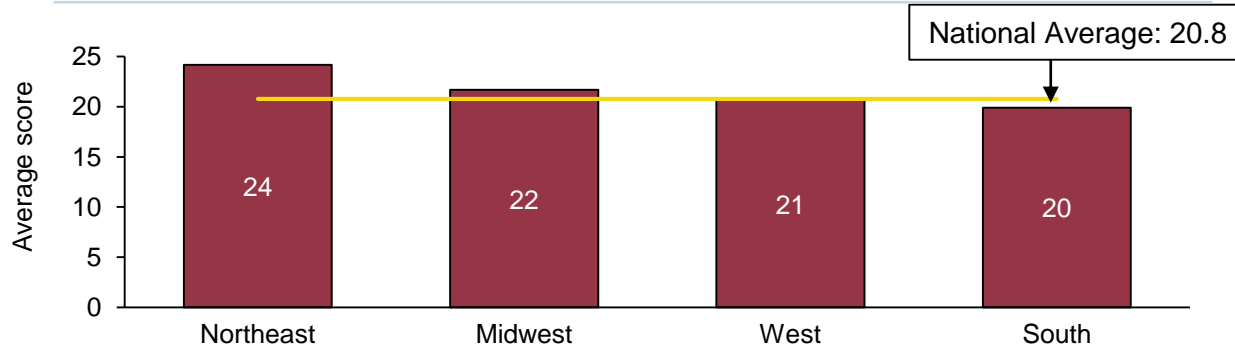
## Percent Proficient by ACT Subject-Area

By Southern state, 2017-18 (Lines indicate national averages)



## Average Composite ACT Score by Region

2017-18



- All states but Georgia and Virginia fall below national percent proficiency rates in all subjects
- The average composite ACT score of the South falls behind all regions and the national average

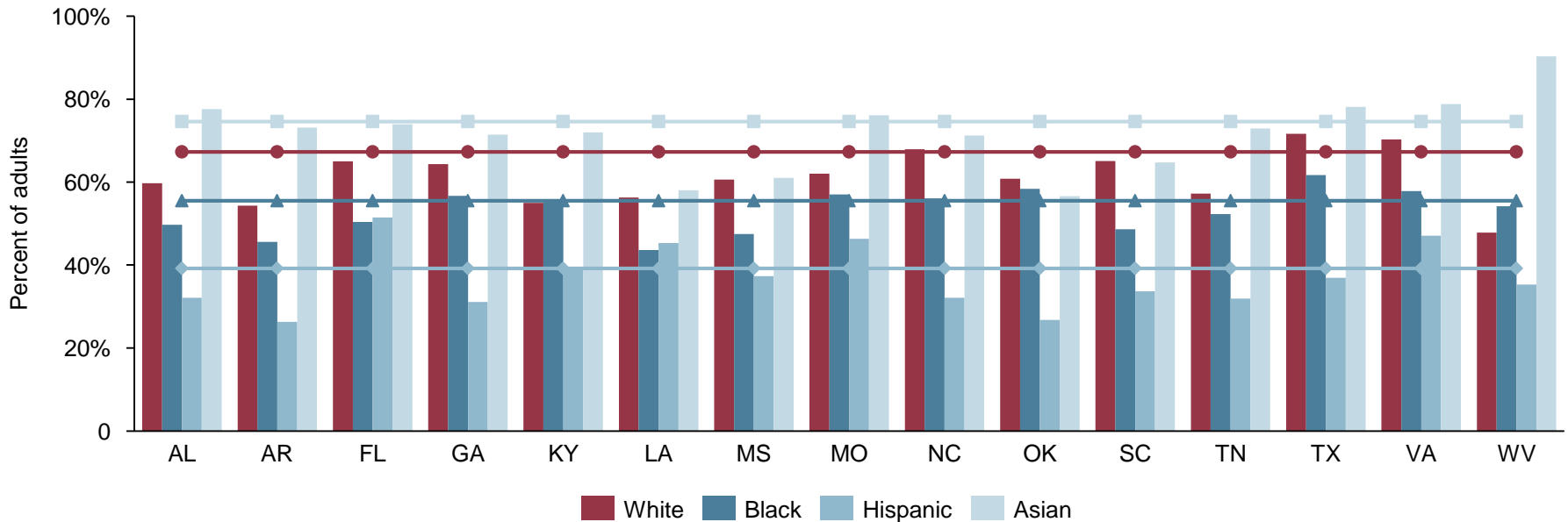
Note: The percent of graduates taking the ACT varies significantly by state, ranging from 100% in AL and KY to just 24% in VA

Source: [ACT Inc.](#), [Achieve](#)



# College matriculation rates for black and Hispanic students in the South are lower overall than national averages

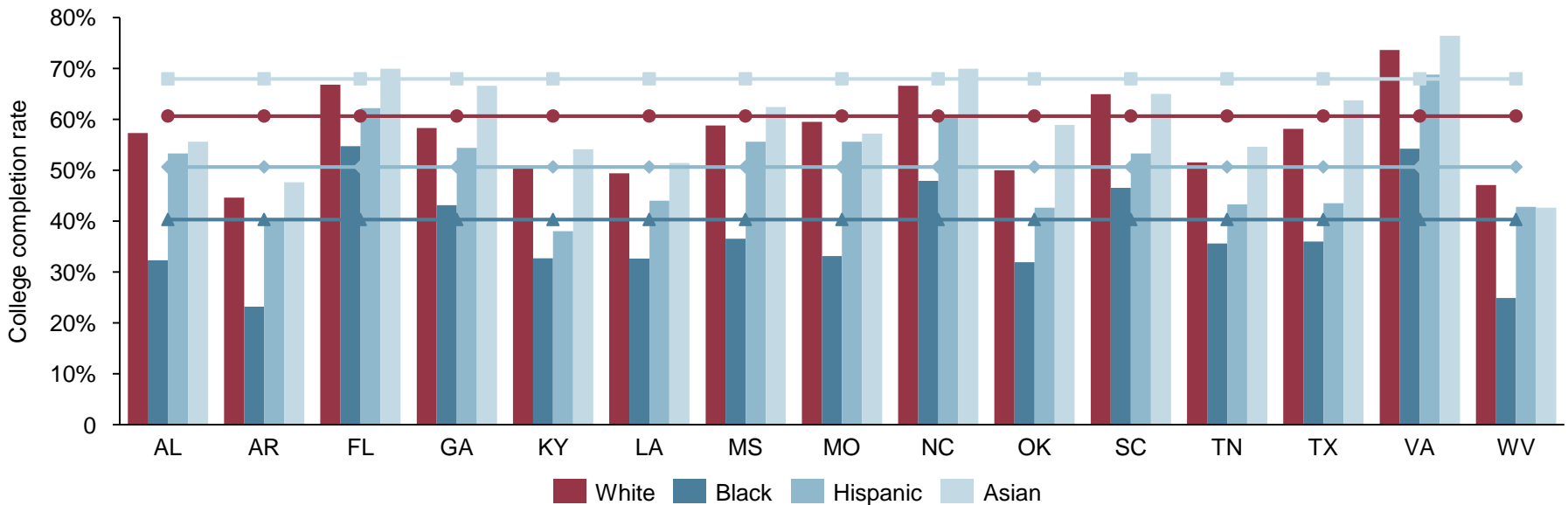
**Adults Age 25-64 With Some College or Higher**  
2013 (Lines indicate national averages)



- Georgia, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia have higher college matriculation rates than the national average for black individuals
- Florida, Louisiana, Missouri, and Virginia have higher college matriculation rates than the national average for Hispanic individuals

# As are college completion rates for black and Hispanic populations

**Bachelor's Degree 6-Year Completion Rate for 4-Year State Public Colleges**  
2013 (Lines indicate national averages)



- Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia are the only states with higher rates of college completion than the national average for black individuals
- Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia have rates of bachelor's degree attainment equal to or greater than the national average for Hispanic individuals

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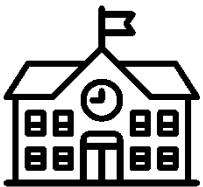
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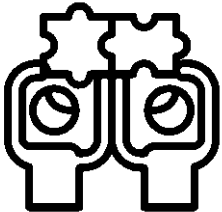
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# Historical Context — where have we been?



## School system development

The South's black community catalyzed the movement for free public schools for all children, beginning around 1860. By 1930, 60 percent of black children were attending school — and this rate was as high as 95 percent in some major cities.



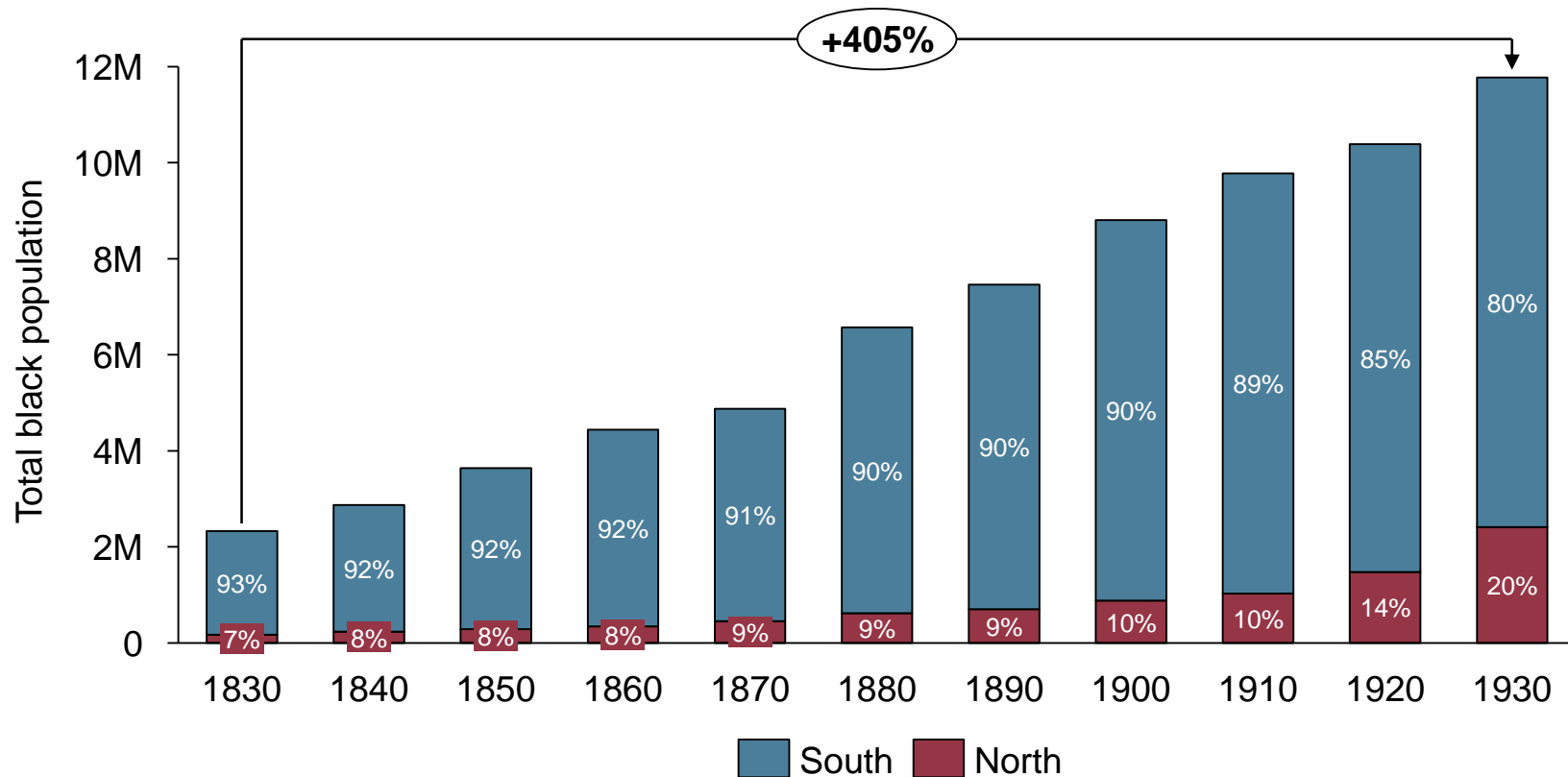
## School desegregation

The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision catalyzed school desegregation efforts, and was followed by several key Supreme Court decisions that made school desegregation more deliberate. By 1980, just 23 percent of black students in the South were enrolled in schools that were 90 to 100 percent minority, down from 78 percent in 1968. However, white students flocked to private schools during this time, causing enrollment in the private schools sector to soar. School segregation remains an issue today, with some evidence that schools are resegregating by race and class.

# The South was home to the vast majority of the black population into the mid-1900s

## Growth and Distribution of the Black Population in the U.S.

1830-1930



The South is home to 53 percent of the nation's black population today.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, [Negroes in the United States, 1920-1932](#).

# Though illegal in most slave states, black communities established schools for themselves across the South

Teaching slaves to read and write was illegal across the South, punishable by fines, prison time, and public whipping:

- In 1739, South Carolina prohibited teaching slaves to read and write
- In 1819, Missouri prohibited teaching slaves to read or write; in 1847 the state prohibited teaching all blacks — freed or enslaved — to read or write
- Between 1829 and 1834, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia all passed or strengthened anti-literacy laws



## The Earliest Schools for Black Children

Despite the laws, slaves and free blacks saw education as critical to their futures.

Secret schools existed in communities across the South throughout the early 1800s. One of the longest-running was operated in Savannah, Georgia for more than 30 years. Jane Deveaux, a free black woman, opened the school in the early 1830s to educate slaves and free blacks. Blacks in Lexington, Kentucky opened a school in 1830 that taught 30 black students and employed two teachers.

The first formally documented school for black children opened at Fort Monroe, Virginia, in September 1861.

# Several types of schools educated black children during and after the Civil War

Around 1860 blacks began to develop schools as a way to defend their freedom and advance their economic and social well-being. Three types of schools formed the foundation of the early Southern education system:

## Sabbath Schools

- Church-sponsored schools that operated primarily in evenings and on weekends
- Primarily operated by local communities with all-black teaching staffs
- 1869 estimates found 1,512 Sabbath schools employing 6,146 teachers and educating 107,109 students

## Native Schools

- Common schools founded and maintained exclusively by ex-slaves
- Estimates suggest at least 500 native schools were operating across the South by 1866

## Rosenwald Schools

- The Rosenwald school building program launched in 1914 to build schools for black children
- By 1926, Rosenwald schools enrolled nearly 2.1 million students across the South\*
- By 1935, enough elementary schools had been built through the program to accommodate the majority of black children

\*Note: These data do not include MO or WV.

Source: James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*

# There were three distinct movements for universal public education in the South

## Reconstruction Era

- Freedmen waged the first campaign for universal public education beginning around 1860
- This movement launched the idea of “free” schooling as a right in the postwar South
- By 1865, 14 states had established 575 schools employing 1,171 teachers and educating 71,779 children

## Populist Movement

- In the 1880s and 1890s, white small farmers, through the Farmers’ Alliance and Populist party, took advantage of broader social movements challenging the planter class to take control of state and local governments
- With this power they made substantial gains in public education

## Southern Education Movement

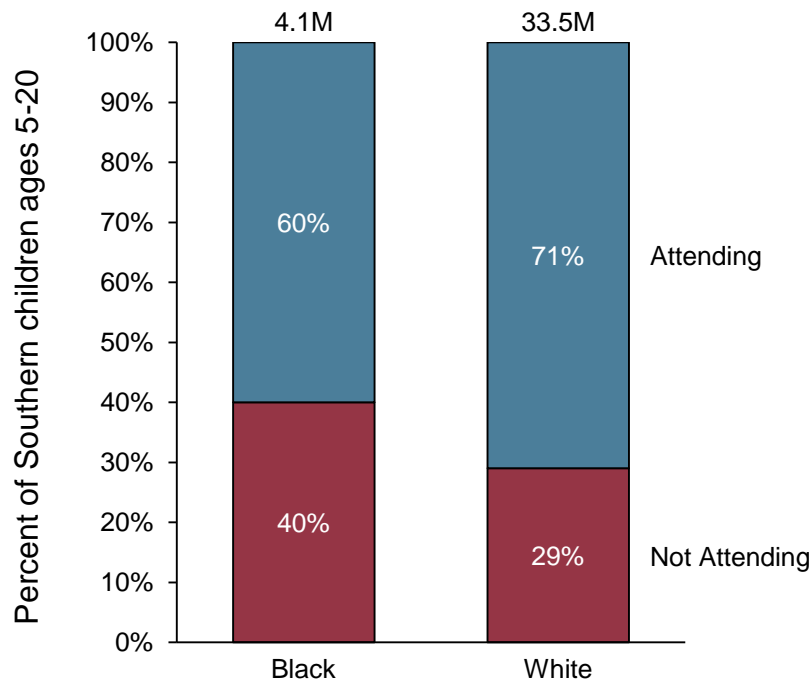
- Launched in 1899 at a conference at Capon Springs, West Virginia
- Led by white Southern education reformers and Northern philanthropists
- Focused on spreading the Hampton-Tuskegee model of industrial training as a way to improve the efficiency of workers and maintain class and race relations



# By 1930, the majority of black children were attending school

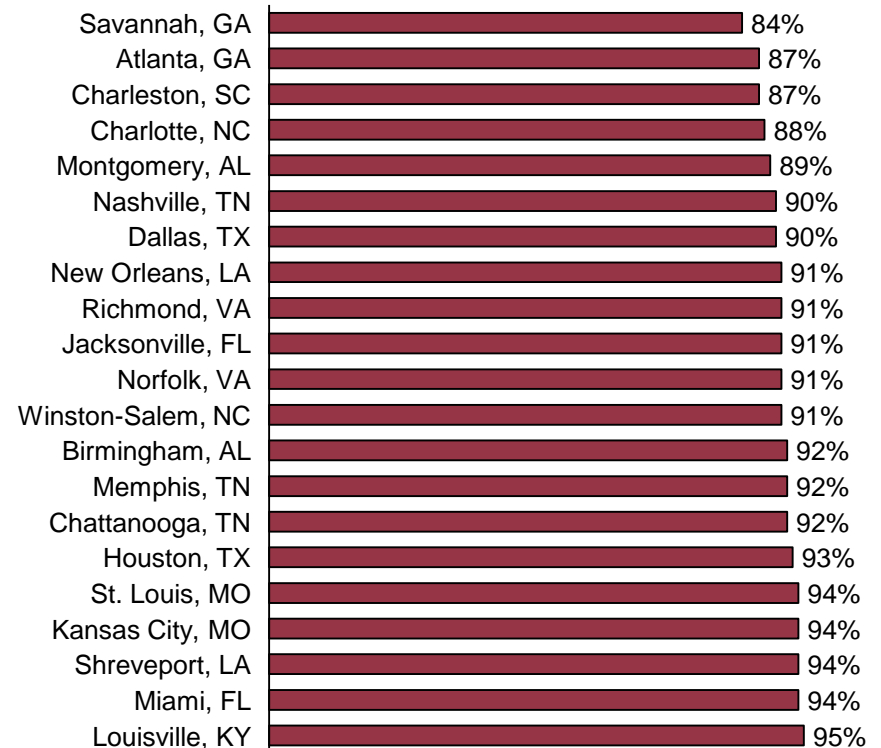
**Percent of Children Ages 5-20 in School in the South, by Race**

1930



**Percent of Black Children Ages 7-15 in School in Cities with More Than 25K Black Residents**

1930



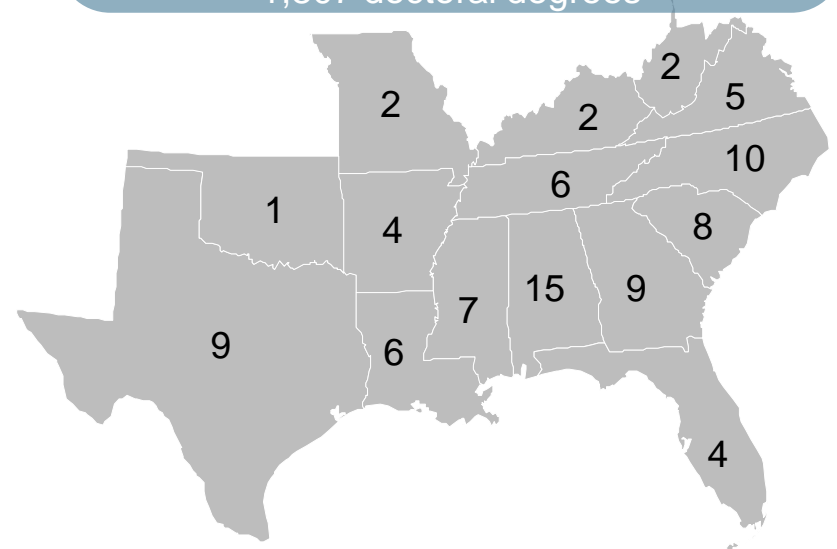
Illiteracy rates among black Southerners dropped to 16 percent by 1930, down from 95 percent in 1860.

# As far back as the 1850s, states began creating institutes of higher education to educate black students

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are schools established before 1964 with the explicit purpose of educating black students. As of 1976 there were 118 HBCUs operating in 21 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These schools continue to educate top black talent across the South today.


- Today, while black schools represent only about 3 percent of all American colleges and universities, **they produce 24 percent of black STEM grads and confer almost 35 percent of all bachelor's degrees earned by black graduates in astronomy, biology, chemistry, math, and physics**
- HBCUs have provided undergraduate training for **three-fourths of all black people holding a doctorate degree, three-fourths of all black officers in the armed forces, and four-fifths of all black federal judges**. Fifty percent of black faculty in traditionally white research universities received their bachelor's degrees at an HBCU

90 of the remaining 102 HBCUs are located in these 15 Southern states. In 2017, these schools enrolled more than 252K students and conferred 5,236 associate degrees, 27,586 bachelor's degrees, 6,513 master's degrees, and 1,807 doctoral degrees



# The Supreme Court ruled regularly on school desegregation questions following the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board* case

State and federal court cases dating to 1849 document African Americans' fight for educational equality. In the years leading up to *Brown*, higher education institutions — including law schools in Maryland, Missouri, and Oklahoma as well as the entirety of the University of Arkansas — were forced to desegregate following Supreme Court rulings.

- 
- 1954** • *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*: The U.S. Supreme Court **overruled the principle of “separate but equal”**; a year later in *Brown II*, the court **required school authorities to work toward school desegregation**
  - 1958** • *Cooper v. Aaron*: The court unanimously **rejected efforts by Arkansas’ governor and legislature to delay the Little Rock school district’s plan to desegregate** Central High School
  - 1968** • *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*: The court ruled that the county’s **“freedom of choice” plan did not meet the school board’s responsibility to desegregate the county’s schools**
  - 1971** • *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*: The court **authorized cross-district busing** of students to achieve racial integration and gave federal district courts an array of tools to desegregate schools
  - 1973** • *Keyes v. School District No 1*: The court held that a finding of segregative intent by the school board involving one portion of the district meant the **burden was on the district to prove the whole system was not affected by segregation**
  - 1977** • *Milliken v. Bradley*: The court struck down a multi-district plan that would have brought together the Detroit school system with 53 outlying districts, **ruling that school systems were not responsible for desegregation across district lines. This marked the first of the court’s retreats in desegregation efforts**

# The 1968 *Green* decision marked an important shift in how school districts approached school desegregation

1954 Early desegregation efforts largely maintained separate schools but allowed black students to transfer to white schools:

- **Pupil-placement laws:** Students initially enrolled in schools according to their race, but could transfer out on an individual basis for “nonracial” factors. These programs produced little progress and were subsequently found unconstitutional because of the initial race-based placement.
- **“Freedom-of-choice” plans:** All students could choose a school at the beginning of the year. The only basis for denying enrollment was overcrowding. These plans resulted in few black students enrolling in white schools.



1968

Green v. County School Board of New Kent County

1971

After *Green*, desegregation efforts became more **top-down, deliberate, and planned** through efforts such as:

- Cross-district busing
- Magnet programs
- Altering attendance zones
- Clustering schools

1973

1977



# Busing helped hasten the desegregation of schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg in the 1970s

## Context

In 1959 the mostly black Charlotte City Schools merged with the mostly white Mecklenburg County Schools. Though technically one district, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) maintained dual attendance areas, essentially avoiding racial integration through the 1960s.

## Court case

In 1965 the Swann family sued CMS in order for their son to attend a closer, mostly white school. In 1969 U.S. District Judge James McMillian ruled that CMS must implement “all known ways of desegregating” its schools. CMS developed a plan to use busing to do so, beginning in the 1969-70 school year. The U.S. Supreme Court unanimously upheld this ruling in 1971.

## Early success

CMS’ plan represented one of the most comprehensive desegregation efforts in the country, and became a model for many other cities. By 1980, CMS was one of the most integrated districts in the country.

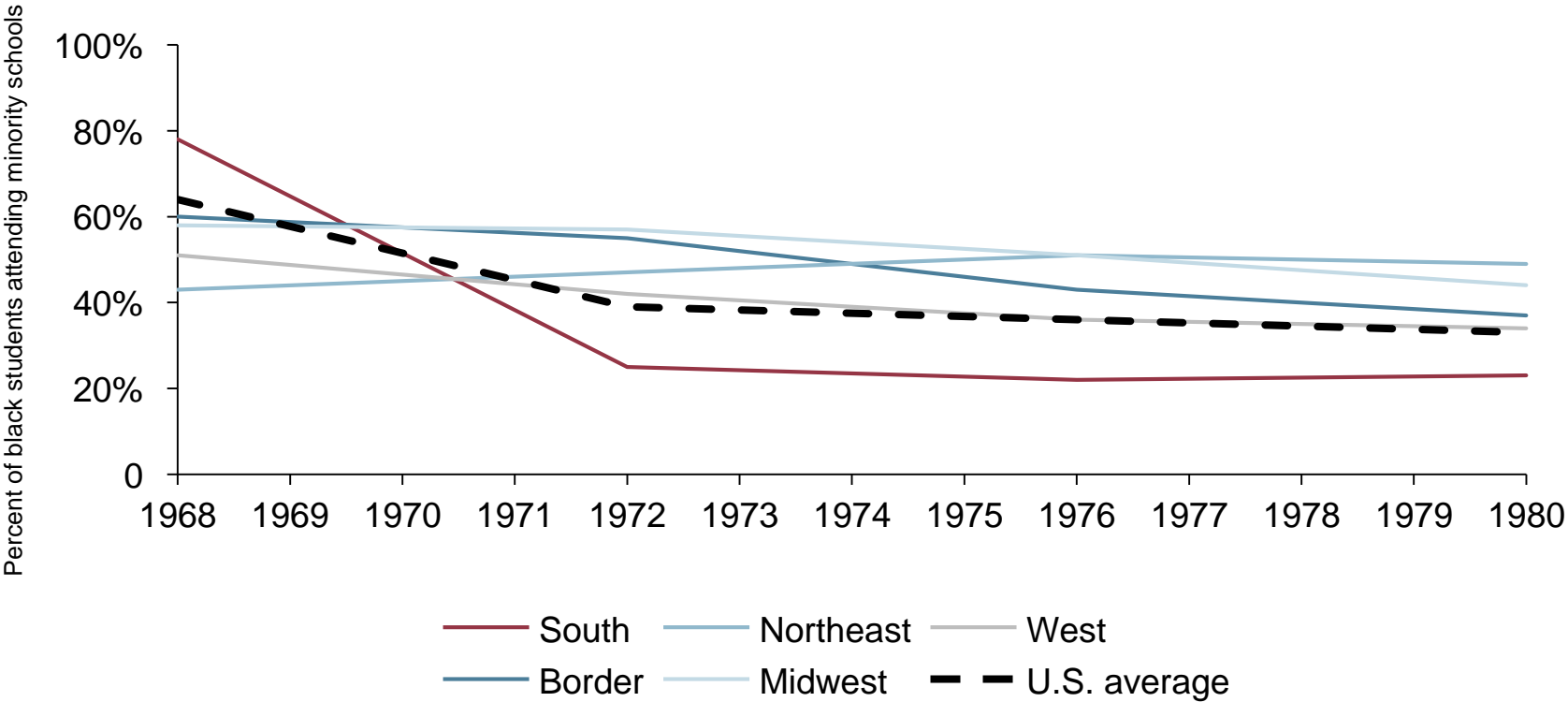
## Today

In 1999 a white family sued CMS after their child was denied admittance to a magnet program based on racial considerations. Federal district court judge Robert Potter ordered that race could no longer be considered in school assignments, ruling that CMS had eliminated “to the extent practical” its past history of desegregation. The city now operates under a “Family Choice Plan” and the schools have largely resegregated.

# Desegregation efforts resulted in a drop in the percent of black students attending mostly black schools through the 1980s

## Percent of Black Students Attending 90 to 100% Minority Schools

1965-1980



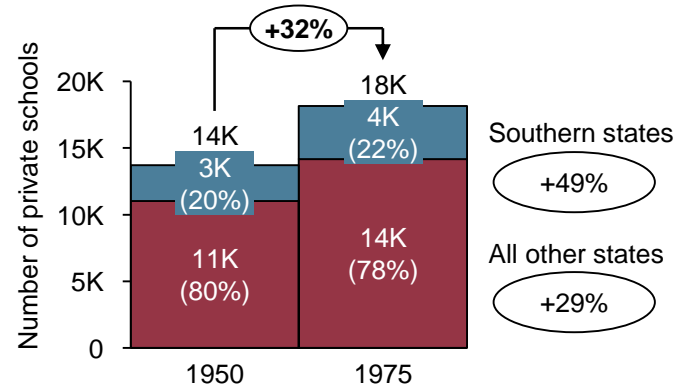
Note: "South" includes AL, AR, GA, FL, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX, and VA. "Border" includes DE, KY, MD, MO, OK, WV, and DC.

Source: [UCLA Civil Rights Project](#)

# White students in the South flocked to private schools, resulting in their growth far outpacing the rest of the nation

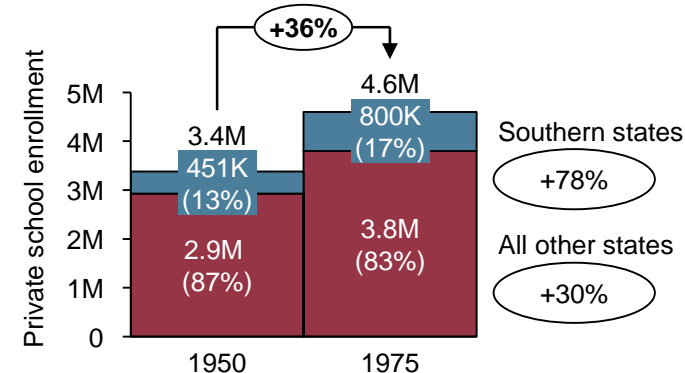
## Number of Private Schools

1950 and 1975



## Private School Enrollment

1950 and 1975



## Private School Enrollment Change by State

1950 to 1975

Location	Change (N)	% Change
US	1,219,861	36%
Region	350,134	78%
Florida	79,908	379%
Mississippi	61,000	394%
Louisiana	41,714	49%
Virginia	40,718	211%
Texas	33,760	44%
Alabama	30,810	179%
South Carolina	22,170	459%
Georgia	18,674	181%
North Carolina	17,171	219%
Tennessee	15,201	96%
Arkansas	2,927	36%
Kentucky	1,829	3%
West Virginia	473	4%
Oklahoma	-103	-1%
Missouri	-3,777	-4%

Between 1950 and 1975 more than 1,000 new private schools opened across the South to meet the demand of 350,000 more students. Nearly two-thirds of this growth in student enrollment occurred in four states: Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Virginia.

# These so-called “segregation academies” helped maintain a segregated school system — and in some communities, still do so today

**“Segregation academies” were affordable private schools that proliferated in the South following the 1954 *Brown* decision. They enrolled few, if any, black students.**

- Many of these private schools continue to operate today, and enroll very few black students. In Mississippi, for example, 35 “segregation academies” are still open, all with black student enrollment rates below 2 percent
- Their existence helps maintain two separate school systems: a primarily white private-school system and a primarily black public-school system



## What about charter schools?

As tuition-free public schools, charter schools offer choice to families. But the role they play in school segregation and integration is unclear. In some cases, charter schools may contribute to resegregation:

- A 2017 analysis found that **charter schools were overrepresented among the country’s most racially isolated schools**

On the other hand, in some highly segregated communities, charter schools **may be the only integrated school options available:**

- In 2018, University Charter School opened in Sumter County, Alabama
- The county is 76 percent black, the local district is nearly 100 percent black, and the charter school is 54 percent black, **representing the sole integrated school in the community**

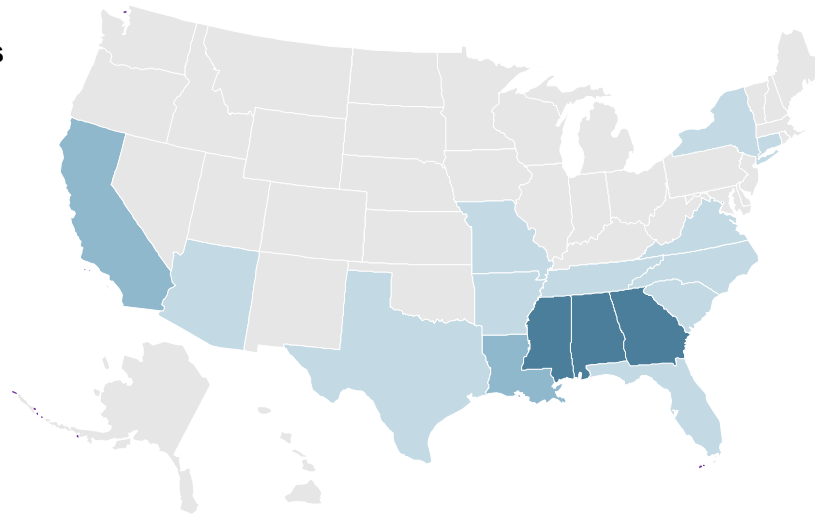
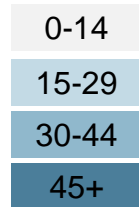


# Despite decades of desegregation efforts, school segregation remains an issue today

## Number of School Districts with Currently Open Desegregation Orders

2014

Number of districts with open orders



329 districts nationwide remain under court desegregation orders. Of those, 288 (88 percent) are in the South.

### ***The legacy of discriminatory housing policies — both explicit and implicit — continues to challenge school integration efforts***

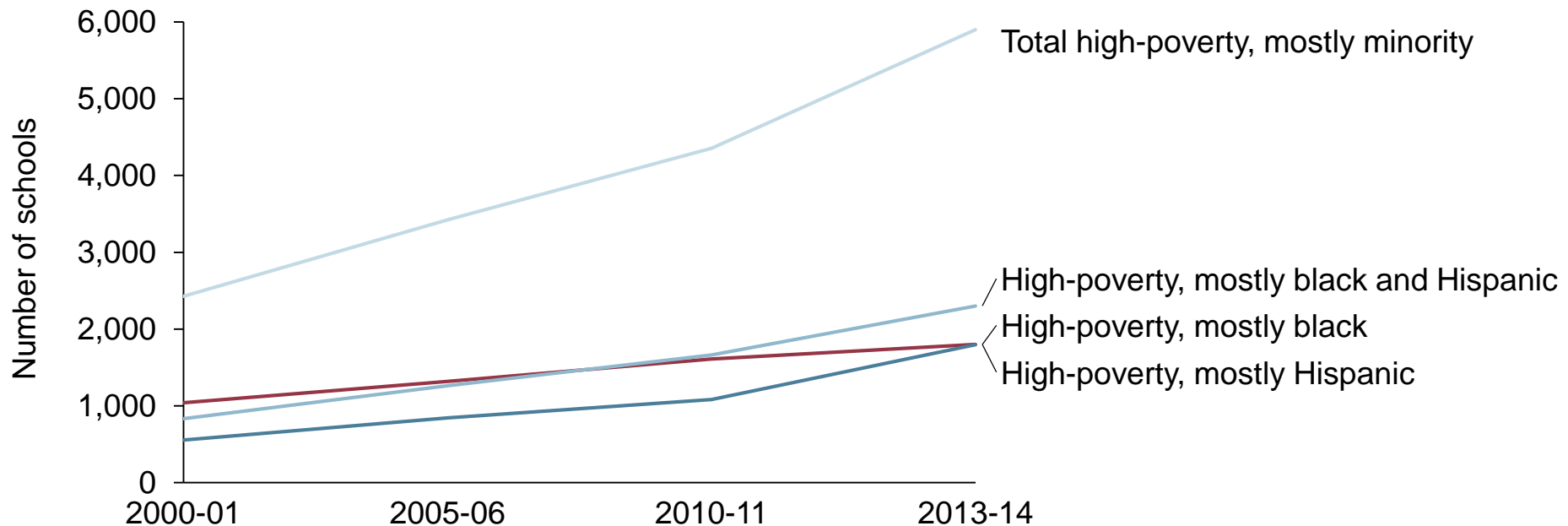
- Black and Hispanic families tend to be concentrated in inner-city neighborhoods and away from white suburban neighborhoods
- Schools and district attendance zones mirror the racial makeup of communities resulting from housing discrimination

Sources: [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#), [The Urban Institute](#), Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law*; [Pro Publica Inc.](#)

# Recent national data suggest that schools are resegregating across racial and economic lines

## Number of High-Poverty Schools Serving Primarily Black and/or Hispanic Students

School years 2000-01 to 2013-14



Between 2000 and 2014, the number of high-poverty schools serving primarily minority students more than doubled, from 2,427 in 2000 to 5,898 in 2014.

Note: Data represent schools with 90 to 100 percent poverty and 90 to 100 percent black, Hispanic, and black/Hispanic students combined.

Source: [GAO](#), 2016

# States' secession laws have enabled some communities to create new, often segregated, school districts

Thirty states have laws allowing **small neighborhoods, communities, or towns to secede from a larger school district**. In only six of these states must the state consider **racial or socioeconomic factors** in secession decisions.

Since 2000, 71 communities nationwide have attempted to secede from their school districts. **Twenty-eight of those efforts** have been in Southern states.



## Memphis, TN

White flight resulting from busing policies implemented during the 1970s created a Memphis City School District that was 90 percent nonwhite. It was surrounded by Shelby County Schools, a separate school district that was more than 50 percent white and where the median income was more than triple that of Memphis.

However, existing tax law meant that all residents of Shelby County — which included both Shelby County Schools and Memphis City Schools — paid taxes that supported both districts. In 2008, the Shelby County School Board began pursuing “special school district status,” which would have given it the authority to keep funds within its district. The move would have been disastrous for Memphis Schools. In 2011, the Memphis City School Board voted to dissolve its school district and place its schools in the control of Shelby County.

The suburbs then voted to separate themselves from the county district. At the same time, the Tennessee legislature reversed a ban on new school districts, allowing the suburbs to secede. As of the 2014-15 school year, six communities in Shelby County had created new, independent school districts. The remaining communities — including the former Memphis City School District — now form Shelby County Schools. The district lost significant funding as a result of the secessions. Today it serves a largely minority and low-income student body while the suburbs serve a wealthier and whiter student body.

# And recent Supreme Court decisions may make it easier for schools to resegregate

- **1991** • *Board of Education of Oklahoma City Public Schools v. Dowell*: The court denied a motion to reopen a school desegregation case, **finding that desegregation decrees were not meant to operate in perpetuity** and that district courts should determine whether a school district had complied with earlier decrees in good faith to the extent practicable
- **1992** • *Freeman v. Pitts*: The court held that district courts may **relinquish supervision of desegregation plans in incremental stages before full compliance has been achieved**
- **1995** • *Missouri v. Jenkins*: The court held that a plan creating a magnet program in Kansas City, Missouri and increasing teacher salaries **exceeded the scope of the district court's remedial authority**
- **2007** • *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*: The court **struck down a student-assignment plan that included the voluntary consideration of race** for allocating slots in oversubscribed high schools

These cases suggest the Supreme Court may be retreating from its staunch, race-based school desegregation efforts of previous decades.

# What we heard: Racism remains at the core of many of the South's educational inequities today

*“We have a **pretty ingrained history of racial marginalization, oppression, built into the fabric of how we built our schooling.** Alabama’s constitution still says public education is not for black children. So we’re dealing with a legacy of systematic other-ing of specific communities. So as we enter an era of undoing that and making an inclusive system of public education, we encounter that everywhere.” – Policy expert, AL*

*“In the South, **we have a culture that doesn’t serve low-income families or families of color as priority.** There’s **embedded racial and ethnic injustice.** Big chunks of the state that are the poorest and brownest don’t get attention they need.” – Advocate, TX*

*“There’s just a lack of universal understanding of how we got to the current state of education here. There’s **limited awareness of the inequities that exist and the long history of racial inequity.** We haven’t necessarily come to terms with that in the South. There’s an unwillingness to acknowledge that there may be bias built into our system or that systemic racism exists. There’s no desire to unpack that and deal with it.” – Funder, AR*

*“Right now [there are] kids not being looked at as people that we need to take care of. **There’s so much racism left over from the ’50s and ’60s that we’re still seeing today.** Kids are being overlooked simply because of their skin color.” – Advocate, AR*

*“We fail to understand our history and acknowledge the **deep role that race and racism and white supremacy still play in our education system** today. Voters of the state are facing core fundamental issues like that and coming up on the wrong side. **You can’t just address teacher accountability and choice when there are core, underlying principles at stake.**” – Funder, GA*

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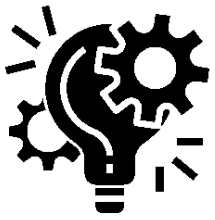
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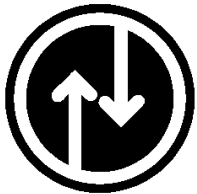
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# Education reform in the South



## Reform efforts born in the South

Many modern education reform initiatives have their roots in the South. As far back as the 1940s, Southern governors and legislators were thinking strategically about improving education in the region using data. Following the 1983 release of *A Nation at Risk*, Southern states adopted laws focused on strengthening standards and increasing accountability. More recently, governance reform efforts launched in Louisiana have taken hold in states across the nation.



## National reform efforts' prevalence in the South

Modern-day education reform initiatives, in particular charter schools, have been slower to take hold in the South, due in part to a dearth of philanthropic funding in the region. However, the charter school sector is growing slowly in large Southern cities, and Southern states collectively operate 21 private school choice programs — one-third of all such programs in operation nationwide.

# Leaders throughout the South were thinking strategically about education decades before it hit the national spotlight

Beginning in the 1940s, Southern leaders began pursuing education reform initiatives, laying the foundation for much of today's education reform movement

- **1940s** • Southern governors and legislators **created the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to improve public education** and increase the social and economic vitality of the region
- **1950s** • SREB focused primarily on higher education and began **studying the region's higher education needs and how to meet them**
- **1960s** • SREB set **long-term goals for higher education in the region**; advocated for improved coordination in higher education; launched programs to **expand and improve postsecondary opportunities for black students**
- **1970s** • President Jimmy Carter **created the U.S. Department of Education**
- **1980s** • SREB **added K-12 education to its scope** and began working with the leadership of key governors, legislators, and others, moving **member states to the forefront of national education reform and improvement**
  - Southern leaders worked with NAEP **to develop the nation's first program to test student achievement so that results could be compared across states**
  - The National Commission on Excellence in Education published ***A Nation at Risk***; **Southern states began adopting education reforms focused on standards and accountability**

Note: SREB member states include AL, AR, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, and WV.

Sources: [Southern Regional Education Board](#), U.S. Department of Education



# Southern governors and legislatures were at the forefront of education reform following *A Nation at Risk*

In 1983 the National Commission on Excellence in Education issued *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. This document described a “rising tide of mediocrity” in the nation’s schools and called for wide-scale reforms. It became one of the most significant reports in the history of American public education, **launching a movement for higher standards and greater accountability that continues today.**



**Bill Clinton,  
Arkansas**

- In 1983, launched an effort to set statewide standards; recommendations were later adopted by the state board
- Championed reform plan that included raises for teachers, new taxes to pay for them, and competency tests for new and working teachers



**James Hunt,  
North Carolina**

- In 1983, launched effort to raise graduation standards
- In 1985, supported legislation that directed the board of education to adopt a basic education plan for all students and launched a pilot teacher career development program
- In 1989 the legislature passed the School Improvement and Accountability Act charging LEAs with creating school improvement plans, including measurable goals



**Richard Riley,  
South Carolina**

- In 1984 passed the Education Improvement Act that included higher standards, more comprehensive testing, a renewed focus on basic skills, greater accountability for teachers and administrators, a program of incentive grants for districts, upgraded school facilities, and community partnerships

Sources: [Education Encyclopedia](#), [EdWeek](#), [University of Michigan](#), [Clinton Digital Library](#), [New York Times](#), [University of South Carolina](#), [North Carolina State Department of Public Education](#)

# Southern governors and legislatures were at the forefront of education reform following *A Nation at Risk* (cont'd)



## Lamar Alexander, Tennessee

- In 1984, passed the Comprehensive Education Reform Act that earmarked \$401 million in new revenue for education
- Included a career ladder for teachers and tougher standards for teacher training
- Called for districts to set performance goals and began measuring outcomes, including attendance data and dropout rates



## Bill Winter, Mississippi

- Prior to *A Nation at Risk*, in 1982, passed the Mississippi Education Reform Act
- The law included student achievement goals, improved professional development for teachers, better school management and school governance, and mandatory statewide public kindergarten and a compulsory school attendance law



## Bob Graham, Florida

- Prior to *A Nation at Risk*, in 1976, the legislature passed the Educational Accountability Act requiring school districts to establish graduation standards
- In 1983, Graham led the passage of a merit pay plan for teachers
- In 1991, the legislature passed the Education Reform and Accountability Act offering flexibility to schools that adopted new standards and assessments



## Zell Miller, Georgia

- In 1992, the Georgia legislature passed the Lottery for Education Act, creating the Georgia Lottery
- Lottery proceeds fund two education programs: tuition grants and scholarships for undergraduates and the statewide pre-k program

# Southern leaders were also instrumental in the push for improved state-level data reporting during the 1980s

The first administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) occurred in 1969. However, until the late 1980s, opposition from state officials and education associations prevented the reporting of state-level data.

- In 1984, following *A Nation at Risk*, the SREB and Southern governors began calling for more state comparisons of student achievement.
- In 1985, the National Governors Association, chaired by Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander, created a task force to make recommendations to improve education in the states.
- In 1986, eight Southern states began a three-year test of a sample of their students, using the NAEP.
- In 1987, Education Secretary William J. Bennett formed a 22-member NAEP study group, headed by Alexander. This group, known as the Alexander-James Commission, issued an influential report praising the value of NAEP but criticizing the lack of state-level information.
- In 1988, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was reauthorized and included a reorganization of NAEP that improved state-level data reporting.

**This push for improved state-level data paved the way for the development of national education goals and greater state-level accountability for meeting those goals that would characterize the next several decades of education reform.**

# The 1989 Charlottesville Education Summit furthered the push toward goal-setting and accountability in education

In September 1989, President George H.W. Bush and then-Governor Clinton **convened nearly all state governors in Charlottesville, Virginia to discuss setting national education goals.** The output of this summit was a set of six goals, known as *America 2000*:

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn
2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent
3. American students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 demonstrating competency in English, math, science, history, and geography
4. U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement
5. Every adult American will be literate
6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence

Though these goals were never signed into law, **they laid the foundation for the next decade of education reform**

- ✓ In 1990, the NGA's education task force, led by then-Arkansas Governor Clinton and South Carolina Governor Campbell, released a blueprint for meeting these goals, **which included higher standards and more testing and accountability**
- ✓ Clinton was elected president in 1992; in 1994 he signed the **Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which encompassed many of the goals established at the summit**
- ✓ The 1994 reauthorization of ESEA, known as the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), **included standards-based education reform**

# Education reform initiatives in Texas during the 1980s and 1990s laid the groundwork for national reform in the 2000s

Bipartisan education reform efforts in the 1980s and 1990s led Texas to become a national model for standards and accountability

- In 1984 Democratic Governor Mark White signed House Bill 72, which **set statewide standards and uniform testing requirements in third, sixth, and 12th grades**; created provisions to test teachers and **strengthen teacher education**; created **academic requirements for students wanting to play sports** (“No Pass, No Play”); launched a state-funded preschool program for 4-year-olds; and established a 22-student limit in elementary school classrooms
- Democratic Governor Ann Richards built on White’s education reform efforts, **revamping the state’s school finance system** in 1993 and **creating a statewide accountability system**
- **Charter schools and accountability** were key elements of Republican George W. Bush’s platform when he ran for governor in 1994
  - In 1995 Senate Bill 1 established charter schools in Texas, shifted education governance in the state by placing the state education commissioner under the authority of the governor, and created one of the country’s first statewide accountability systems, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

When Bush became president in 2001, he used **Texas’ testing and accountability reforms as the basis for the federal No Child Left Behind law**, which spread test-based accountability nationwide.

# Florida's education reform initiatives in the early 2000s led to strong school accountability and widespread choice

In 1999 the Florida legislature approved Governor Jeb Bush's A+ Accountability Plan, which included four key elements:

## Accountability

- Required students in grades 3-10 to be tested annually
- Created the A-F school grading system and attached consequences for school failure

## School Choice

- Allowed students attending persistently low-performing schools to transfer to higher-performing public schools or obtain a voucher to attend a private school\*

## Third Grade Reading

- Required that third graders meet a minimum score on the FCAT reading test to be promoted to fourth grade
- Implemented intervention services for struggling readers

## Focus on College and Career

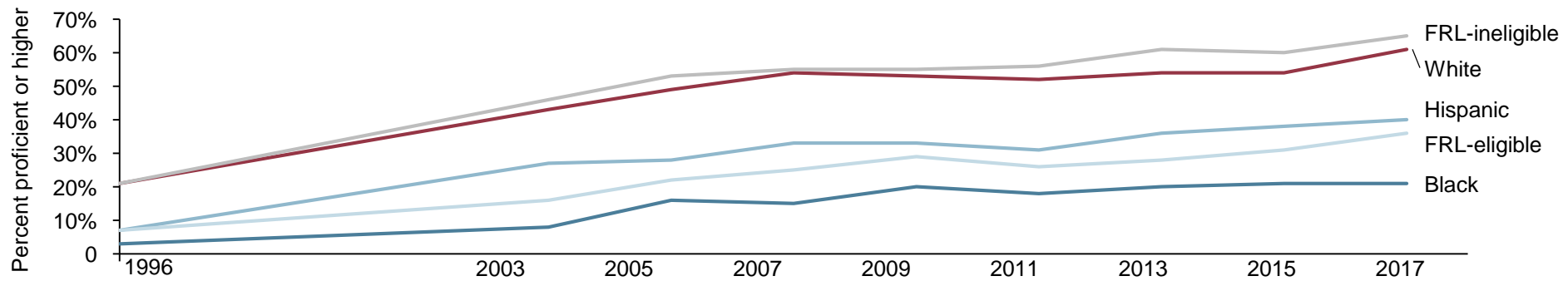
- Raised the academic level of the high school exit exam
- Provided funding for all 10th graders to take the PSAT or the PLAN
- Expanded availability of AP classes

\*Note: The private school option was ruled unconstitutional by the Florida Supreme Court in 2006; however, other voucher and tax credit programs adopted during Bush's tenure remain in place.

# Outcomes for key subgroups in Florida improved over the past 20 years, as the state's reforms have become popular nationwide

## Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Higher

For the state of Florida, NAEP Grade 4 Math, 1996-2017



Though substantial gaps still exist — particularly between white and black students and FRL-eligible and ineligible students — proficiency rates among all subgroups have risen over the past two decades.

## Florida's reforms remain widespread, both within the state and nationally:

As of the 2017-18 school year, **47 percent of Florida's 3.4 million pre-K to 12 students attend a school of choice.** This includes students attending other district schools through open enrollment policies, magnet schools, charter schools, and private schools

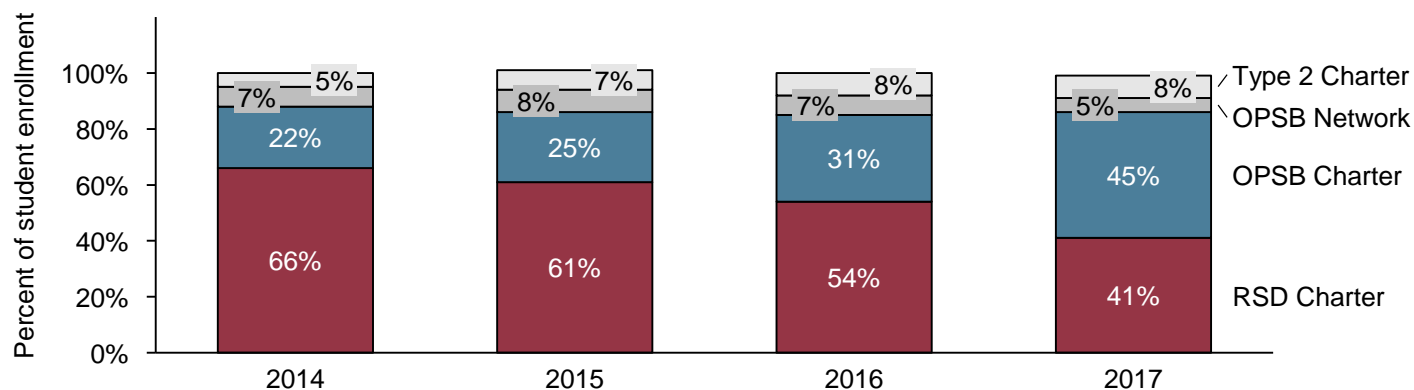
Today, **all states publish district and school report cards using varying methods for rating schools:** A-F grades, 1 to 5 stars, numerical index scores, color-coding, or various statuses/descriptors like “needs improvement” or “reward”

# Around the same time, reforms in Louisiana paved the way for new education governance models

In 2003 the Louisiana legislature created the Recovery School District (RSD), a **statewide district tasked with turning around the lowest-performing schools in the state**. Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the RSD took control of the vast majority of schools in New Orleans and contracted with charter management organizations to run many of them. The 80+ schools in New Orleans **were overseen by four entities and run by more than a dozen different charter networks**.

## Percent of Students Enrolled in New Orleans Schools by Authorizer/Overseer

School years 2014-15 to 2017-18



Note: Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, all New Orleans schools were transferred back to OPSB oversight, meaning that those authorized by the RSD came under authorizing control of the local school district. The RSD continues to oversee schools in other parts of Louisiana.



# States across the nation have followed Louisiana's lead, with varying degrees of implementation success

## Statewide Turnaround School District Efforts

*Select examples, 2010-present*

State	Description
Arkansas	In 2015 the legislature proposed creation of the Achievement School District; the legislation died later that year
Georgia	In 2016 voters rejected the creation of an Opportunity School District to take over failing schools. In 2017 the state established a Turnaround Office allowing for state intervention in persistently failing schools
Michigan	In 2011 the legislature created the Education Achievement Authority to turn around Detroit's lowest-performing schools; the EAA dissolved in 2017
Mississippi	In 2016 the legislature created the Achievement School District; as of SY 2018 the state department of education had not yet identified a superintendent to run it
Nevada	In 2015 the legislature established the Nevada Achievement School District to take over up to six low-performing schools
North Carolina	In 2016 the legislature established the Innovative School District to oversee the transfer and operation of five of the state's lowest-performing elementary schools
Tennessee	In 2010 the legislature used federal Race to the Top funds to create the Achievement School District to improve the state's bottom 5 percent of schools. It oversees 29 schools statewide
Texas	In 2013 now-Governor Greg Abbott proposed the Texas Achievement District to turn around low-performing elementary schools. It won Senate approval in 2015 but never made it into law
Virginia	In 2013 the Virginia legislature created the Opportunity Education Institute to improve schools denied accreditation by the VEA. The law was ruled unconstitutional by a circuit court in 2014

# Southern states are also attempting to create opportunities for governance reform at the local level

Under Georgia state law, locally elected school boards can opt for increased local autonomy and flexibility in exchange for increased accountability by choosing one of two designations:

- **Charter Systems:** The state exempts these districts from most state laws and rules but holds them to a performance contract. Local school boards oversee the district strategy and school-based governance teams own decisions about personnel, resource allocation, and instruction.
- **Strategic Waiver School Systems:** The state exempts these districts from specific state laws and rules but holds them to annual performance targets for each school. Schools that fail to meet performance targets after five years are subject to interventions.

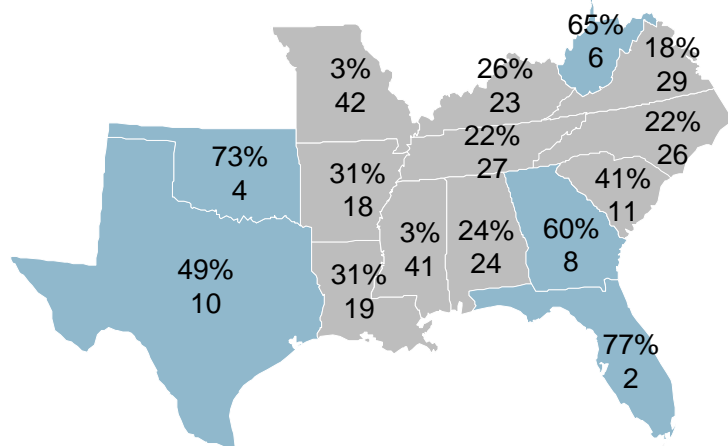
Texas has three initiatives that aim to encourage local innovation and drive improved options and outcomes:

- **System of Great Schools Network:** Districts participate in a professional learning community and receive consulting and technical assistance supported by the state.
- **Districts of Innovation:** Following a local approval process and development of an Innovation Plan, districts are exempt from state policies such as teacher certification, school schedules, and class size.
- **Transformation Zone Grants:** Transformation Zone grantees are matched with Zone Design partners that assist with needs assessment and design of a transformation approach.

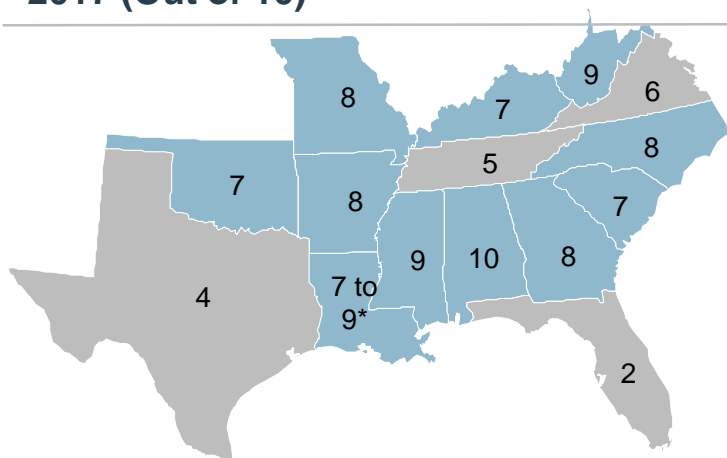
**Through these programs, state leaders are working to create space for local leaders to innovate. However, it remains to be seen whether districts use their newfound flexibility to its fullest potential.**

# Southern states are investing in reforms to improve student outcomes, starting with access to pre-K

Percent of 4-year-olds served in state pre-K programs and state rank for access, NIEER 2017



Number of NIEER (new) Quality Standards Met in 2017 (Out of 10)



Early childhood education policy must grapple with questions of both **access** and **quality** to realize the research-supported positive impact of pre-K.

- 4 Southern states are among the top 10 for access, 10 are among the top half
- 11 Southern states meet at least 7 of 10 quality standards

## NIEER IDENTIFIED 2 OF OUR FOCUS STATES AMONG ITS “SIX STATES TO WATCH”

**WEST VIRGINIA** — cited for strong coordination across education, child care, and Head Start to maximize funding and boost enrollment

**ALABAMA** — cited for rapid growth in enrollment while maintaining high standards for quality, crediting strong state leadership. AL is one of only three states to meet all 10 standards

Note: LA's 3 state programs meet 7, 8, and 9 standards respectively.  
Source: National Institute for Early Education Research, State of Preschool, 2017

# In K-12, the charter sector has been growing across the South, though in some states enrollment is still small

## Charter School Sector Statistics by State SY 2017-18

State	Year Charter Law Passed	Number of Charter Schools	Student Enrollment	Enrollment Growth Rate*
United States	N/A	7,038	3,167,800	5%
Alabama	2015	1	300	N/A
Arkansas	1995	82	28,200	3%
Florida	1996	661	302,000	7%
Georgia	1994	87	70,500	9%
Kentucky	2017	0	0	N/A
Louisiana	1995	154	67,300	35%
Mississippi	2010	3	900	80%
Missouri	1998	61	24,200	6%
North Carolina	1996	174	104,900	13%
Oklahoma	1999	34	29,200	20%
South Carolina	1996	69	34,400	6%
Tennessee	2002	112	42,900	23%
Texas	1995	774	337,100	10%
Virginia	1998	8	1,200	-2%
West Virginia	No charter law	N/A	N/A	N/A

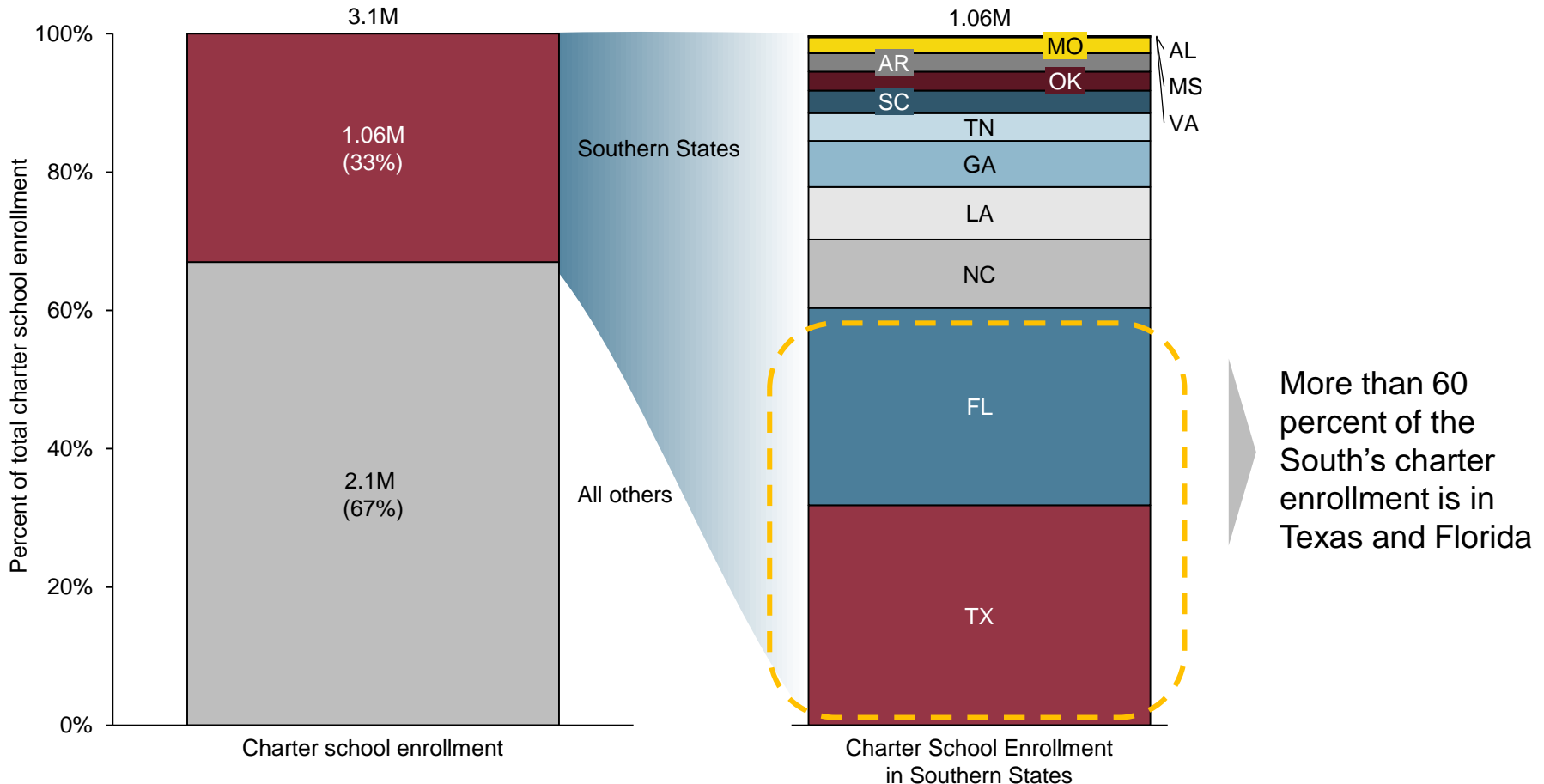
In 10 states in the South, enrollment growth outpaced the national average between SY 2016-17 and SY 2017-18. However, enrollment is still minimal in Alabama, Mississippi, and Virginia.

\*Note: Growth rate is from SY 2016-17 to SY 2017-18  
Source: [NAPCS](#)

# While 1 in 3 charter students lives in the South, 60% of those students live in just two states

## Charter School Enrollment in the South

For Southern states, by state, by proportion of total enrollment, 2017-18



More than 60 percent of the South's charter enrollment is in Texas and Florida

Note: KY passed its charter law in 2017 and had no operating charter schools during SY 2017-18. WV does not have a charter law.

Source: NAPCS 2017-18

# Southern states' charter laws have played a role in the relatively slow growth of the sector in the region

In some states, weak or problematic charter laws have contributed to the slow growth of the sector.

## New (or nonexistent) charter laws

- **Alabama:** Charter law enacted in 2015; 2 operating charter schools as of SY 2018-19
- **Kentucky:** Charter law enacted in 2017; no operating charter schools as of SY 2018-19
- **West Virginia:** No charter law as of May 2019

## Inequitable funding

- **No Southern states** earn more than 50 percent of the points possible on NAPCS' Model Law ranking for funding parity
- **Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Virginia** each earn zero points, meaning that there is a substantial funding gap between charter and district schools

## Proliferation of for-profit EMOs

- **Florida:** 41 percent of charter schools were operated by a for-profit EMO in SY 2017-18, the second-highest rate in the nation and more than triple the national average of 12 percent
  - Evidence suggests that EMO-operated schools have a negative effect on student outcomes in math and no effect on student outcomes in reading

## Weak laws

- **Virginia:** The law is the fifth-lowest ranked in the nation by NAPCS
  - Its law provides little autonomy, insufficient accountability for schools, and inequitable funding between district and charter schools

Note: NAPCS' Model Law assesses the degree to which states' charter school laws include components of their model law template

Sources: CREDO, NAPCS

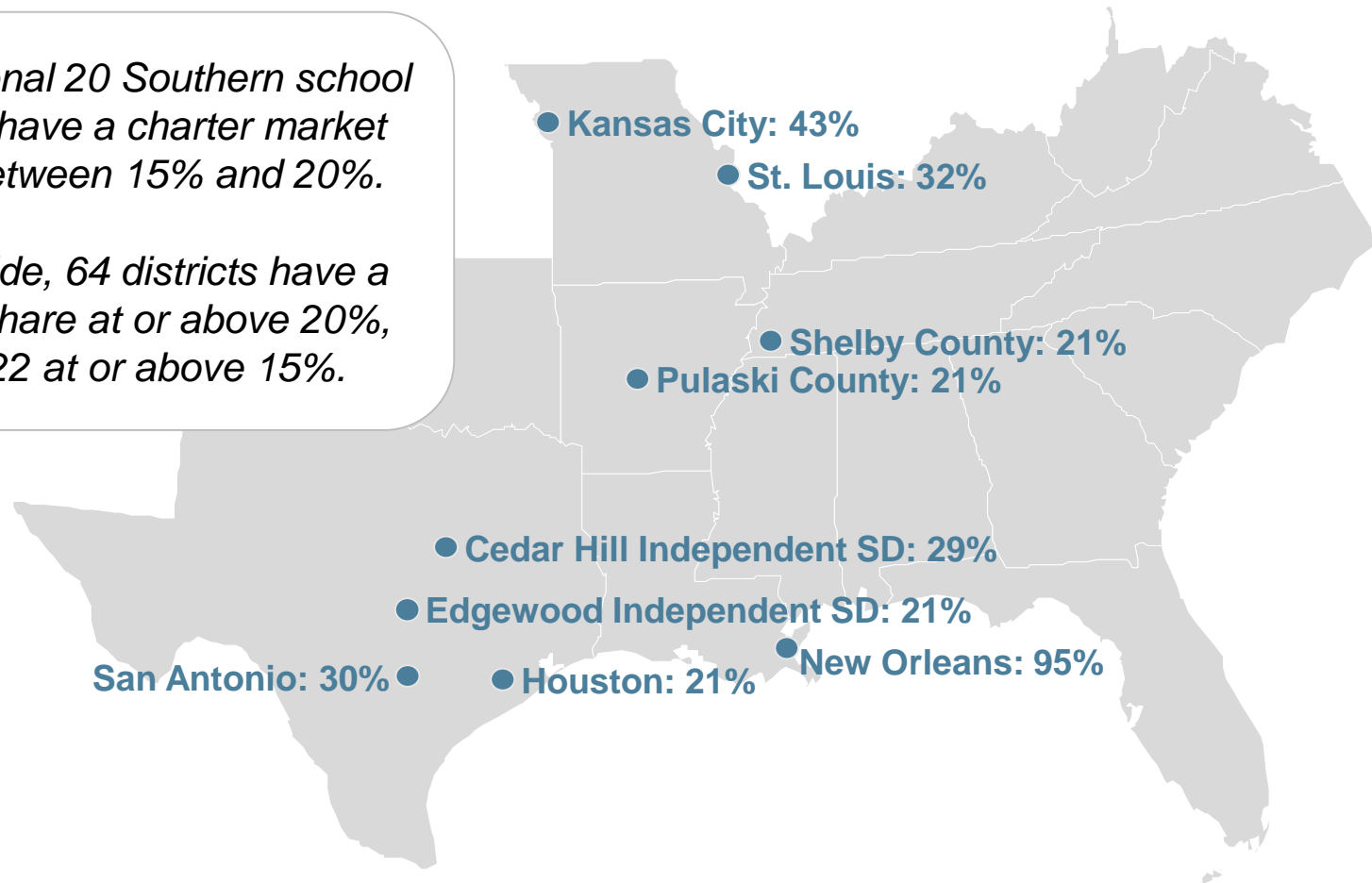
# However, charter schools have achieved significant market share in several Southern communities

## Charter School Market Share

*Southern school districts with market share at or above 20 percent in SY 2017-18*

*An additional 20 Southern school districts have a charter market share between 15% and 20%.*

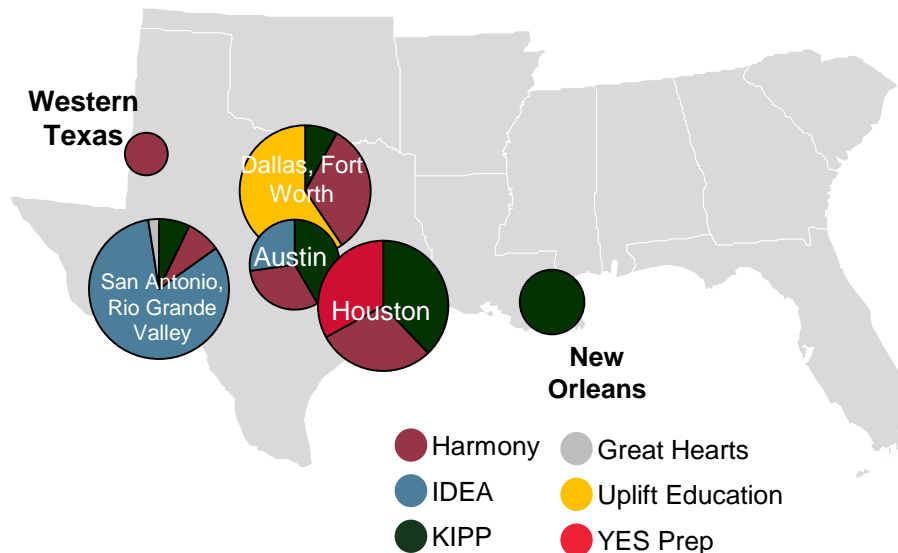
*Nationwide, 64 districts have a market share at or above 20%, and 122 at or above 15%.*



# Only New Orleans and some major cities in Texas have a large concentration of high-performing CMOs

## Concentration of High-Performing CMOs\*

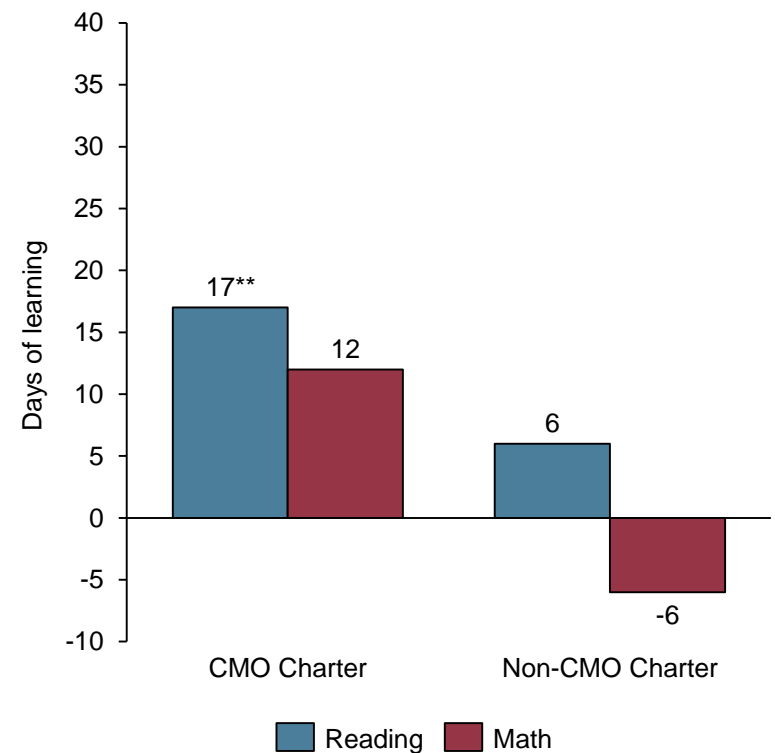
By CMO, by Southern metropolitan area, 2016-17



Texas' high-performing CMOs are primarily homegrown. YES Prep, IDEA, Uplift Education, and Harmony all originated in Texas. National CMO KIPP opened its first schools in Houston and New York City and now operates 224 schools in 20 states and DC.

## Average Student Learning Gains of CMO and Non-CMO Charter Schools

By subject, by city, measured in days of learning, compared to TPS students, 2011-14



\*\* significant at  $p \leq 0.01$

Sources: [CSGF](#), CMO Annual Reports, website data; CREDO

\*Includes all CMOs in CSGF national portfolio, KIPP, and Harmony Schools. We define high-performing CMOs as those included in the CSGF Portfolio, KIPP, and Harmony but recognize there are other high-performing CMOs outside of this list.

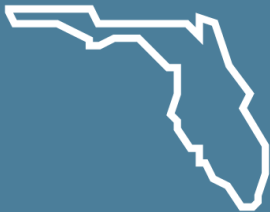


# Though charter markets vary significantly in their performance, in three jurisdictions in the South, the charter markets outperform local schools for at-risk populations



Texas

- Hispanic students in charter schools performed significantly better in reading and math than Hispanic students attending traditional public schools
- Charter students in poverty received 17 additional learning days per year than their traditional public school counterparts



Florida

- African-American students in charter schools performed better than African-American students in district-managed schools in 89 percent of the comparison group
- Similarly, Hispanic students in charter schools performed better than their Hispanic peers in district-run schools in 93 percent of the comparisons



New Orleans, LA

- Since the proliferation of charter schools following Hurricane Katrina, black and low-income students appear to have experienced larger positive effects in high school graduation and college outcomes when compared to their white peers

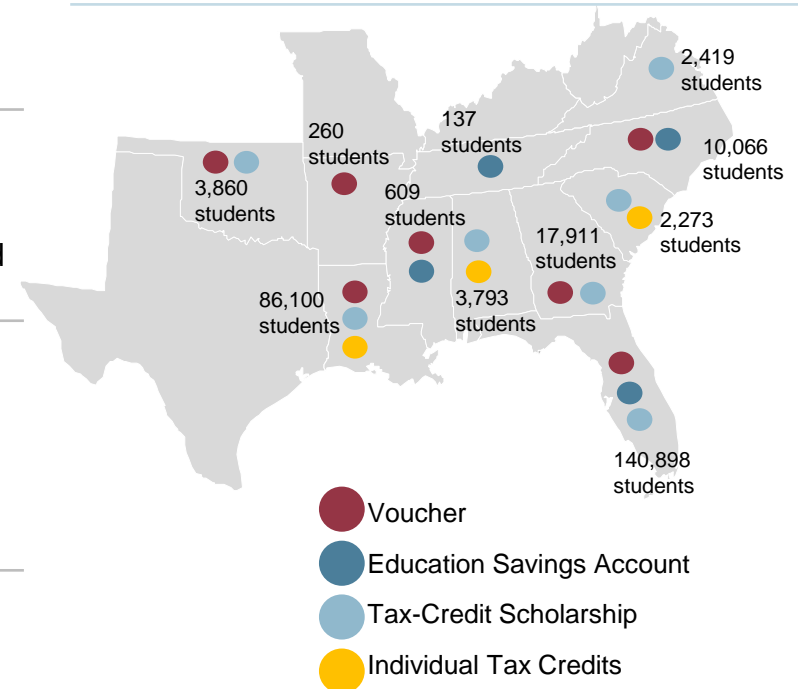
# Private school choice programs offer options to families across the South

Eleven Southern states operate 21 private school choice programs serving 270K students

Type	Description
Voucher Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow education dollars to “follow the child” to the private school of their parents’ choice through state-funded scholarships that cover tuition</li> <li>Typically targeted to students from low-income families or those with special needs</li> </ul>
Education Savings Accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create personal accounts that store a child’s state education dollars</li> <li>Parents can use these dollars to pay for school tuition fees, tutoring, or other approved expenses to customize their child’s education</li> </ul>
Tax-Credit Scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporations and individuals can make donations to nonprofit organizations that provide private school scholarships to eligible children</li> <li>In exchange, donors receive a state income tax credit</li> </ul>
Individual Tax Credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide state income tax credits to parents to help pay for a child’s educational expenses, including private school tuition</li> </ul>

## Distribution of and Enrollment in Private School Choice Programs

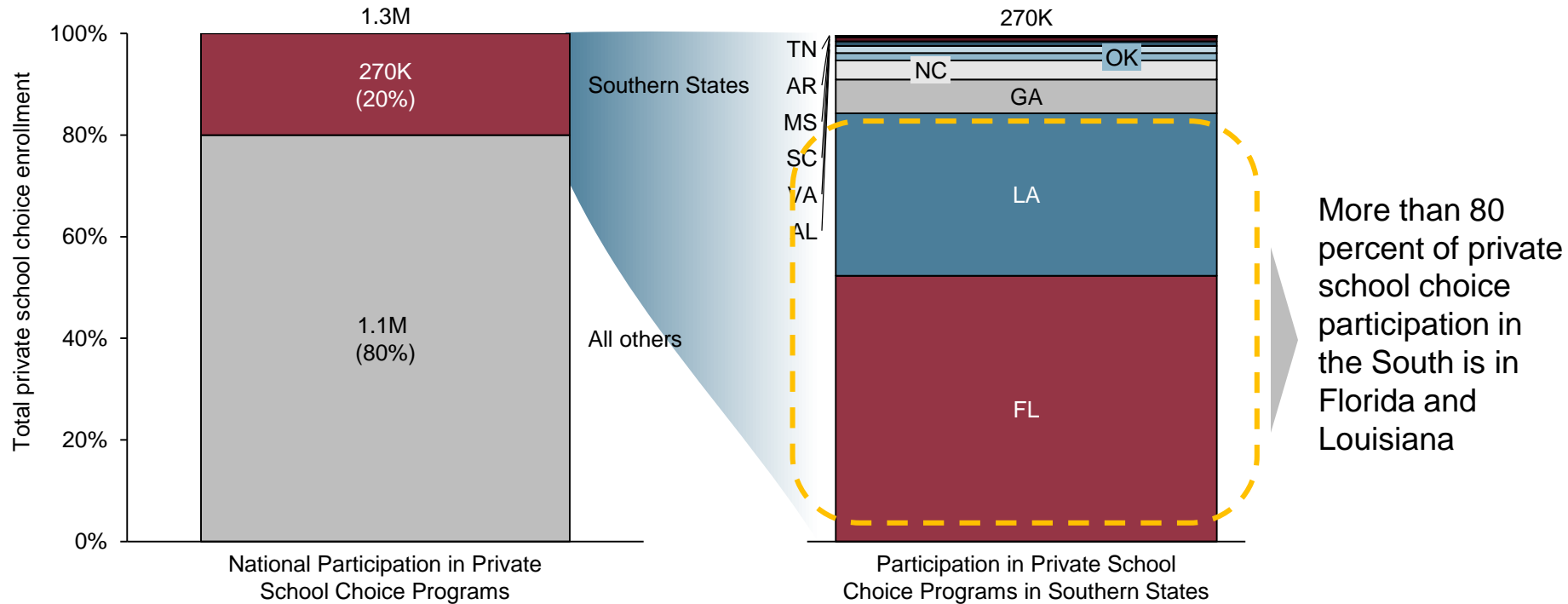
By Southern state, 2016-17



# 1 in 5 students participating in private school choice nationwide lives in the South; 80% of those live in just two states

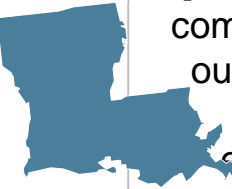
## Participation in Private School Choice Programs

For Southern states, by state, by proportion of total enrollment, 2017-18



1.6 million students are enrolled in private schools across the South, approximately 8 percent of the South's total K-12 population.


# In higher ed, desire to boost attainment and keep top talent in state spurred states to invest in scholarship and grant programs



“[TOPS] helps us redeem some of that competitive advantage we have lost to out-of-state institutions. We’ve been able to compete for students, especially the best and brightest students, with TOPS because TOPS is one of the most generous merit-based scholarships in the country.”

*University of Louisiana System President Jim Henderson, quoted in The Advocate, June 10, 2018*

- ✓ Louisiana created the first state-funded, merit-based college tuition program in the country in 1989.
- ✓ TOPS programs provide “first dollar” funding to students meeting academic eligibility requirements at Louisiana four-year, two-year, and technical programs. Award amounts are set annually.
- ✓ Recent budget cuts to TOPS and to higher education more broadly create challenges for families.



“If you want to invest in the economic future of this state and at the same time do something to help the forgotten average working family, this is it.”

*Governor Zell Miller’s call to establish the HOPE Scholarship program in the 1992 State of the State*

- ✓ Georgia was early among states to offer a comprehensive scholarship program — the HOPE Scholarship.
- ✓ The HOPE Scholarship has awarded over \$10 billion to more than 1.8 million students.
- ✓ The state now supports six scholarship and grant programs with state lottery funds.
- ✓ Advocates have cited the HOPE programs’ tendency to disproportionately support middle- and upper-income students and called on the state to add more need-based assistance.

# And several states have added 'last dollar' programs targeting low-income students and specific career fields

In addition to traditional four-year universities, Southern states are investing in career and technical education programs and pathways



ArFuture is the state's newest grant program, providing tuition and fees in qualifying certificate and associate degree programs in STEM or regionally designated high-demand fields.



Work Ready Kentucky provides last dollar funding for Kentucky students enrolled in an approved program of study leading to an industry certificate or an associate degree in a high-demand career. For 2018-19, qualifying areas include health care, advanced manufacturing, transportation/logistics, business services/IT, and construction.



Oklahoma's Promise allows low-income students to earn a full-tuition last dollar scholarship to public two-year and four-year institutions. Students whose families earn less than \$55K can apply in eighth, ninth, or 10th grade and must complete the Oklahoma's Promise curriculum and meet other program requirements.



Tennessee Promise is the nation's first statewide free community college program. This last dollar program funds any gap left between the cost of tuition and federal Pell grants and other state-funded scholarship programs and includes mentoring and community service requirements.

# Beyond scholarships, states in the South are on par with a national resurgence in career and technical education

**In 2017, states across the country carried out over 240 policy actions to better support CTE and career readiness in areas of funding, standards, data reporting and accountability, industry-recognized credentials, and industry partnerships.**

## Noteworthy efforts in the South include:

**South Carolina** established state longitudinal data systems to support the evaluation of education and workforce programs.

**Tennessee's** robust technical and academic course standards are reviewed annually by postsecondary and industry stakeholders in the aligned field and released for public comment.

**Missouri** adopted a new framework for funding CTE programs that values student performance in career centers and comprehensive high schools.

**Arkansas** adopted a Productivity Index to measure credential attainment, progression, and transfer success to identify and improve underperforming institutions.

**Georgia** increased the weight for CTE students in the state funding formula to better support the quality and increase the scale of CTE programs.

**Florida's** nationally recognized partnership between industry, community colleges, and the Florida Department of Education facilitates transferability of industry credentials from high school to associate degree level college credits.

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# Conclusion

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The South is home to 39 percent of all K-12 students, more than half of whom are minority and more than 3.5 million of whom live in rural communities.

Any education reform strategy that takes seriously changing the outcomes for low-income, minority, and rural kids must include the South.

Key education reform efforts have their roots in the South. There is an appetite across the region to ensure young people have access to opportunity.

However, there is significantly less philanthropic and advocacy activity in the South compared to other regions, and social capital may look a little different here. Education reformers serious about creating change in the region must look to authentically engage churches and other community-based institutions held in deep reverence by Southern communities.

The building blocks for change and improvement exist. We hope this deck is a starting point for that conversation.



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# Acknowledgements

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Bellwether Education Partners would like to thank the Walton Family Foundation for their support of this project.

Any errors are the responsibility of the authors alone.