

Mississippi Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MIBEST) Program

Follow-on Analysis of the Outcomes for Parenting Students and Students in Different Regions

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The Mississippi Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MIBEST) program provides pathways into college for adult education students across the state. This brief serves as a supplement to the Urban Institute's original evaluation of MIBEST (Briggs et al. 2022) with an analysis of two factors not explored in the original MIBEST report: the outcomes of student parents and the outcomes of students in different geographic regions.

About MIBEST

MIBEST is a workforce and economic development effort led by the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) and implemented with the state's 15 community colleges. MIBEST concurrently delivers short-term workforce training, career and technical education (CTE), and adult education. The program targets residents without high school credentials, individuals with low incomes, and nontraditional students. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation funded the first phase of MIBEST between 2015 and 2019, and the program continues today. 2

The Urban Institute evaluated MIBEST between January 2016 and December 2019 (Briggs et al. 2022). The evaluation found that MIBEST raised participant earnings by \$500 to \$750 per quarter beginning a year after enrollment. The program also had a return-on-investment ratio of 1.02, meaning that for every \$1.00 invested in MIBEST there was a return of \$2.02 in lifetime student earnings.

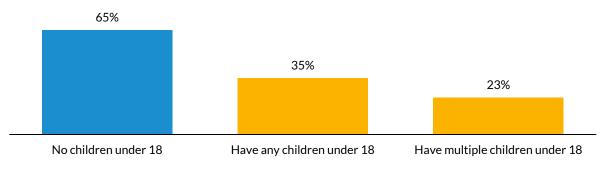
Parenting Students in MIBEST

Nearly 5.4 million postsecondary students are parents, accounting for nearly one-quarter of undergraduate students in the United States. Parenting students often interact with many more policy systems than the typical student without children (Anderson and Green 2022). Despite earning comparable, if not better, grades as their nonparenting peers, parenting students complete education at a lower rate than other students.³

The MIBEST program targets parenting students as a priority group. The MIBEST model gives students the opportunity to concurrently obtain their high school equivalency and work toward a postsecondary certificate. Shortening the amount of time in school and smoothing pathways to college could be especially beneficial for parents, who often need to balance education, work, and child care responsibilities (Spaulding et al. 2019). MIBEST also provides students with academic, employment, and personal support services, including a limited amount of child care. Some MIBEST colleges paid for child care, but most provided referrals to child care provider partners, and a few had on-campus child care centers (Briggs et al. 2022). Campus child care support may lead to higher on-time graduation and persistence rates (DeMario 2021). The Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program in Washington state, upon which MIBEST was patterned, provided students with child care supports, but the program did not track parental status, and evaluations of I-BEST have not examined how parenting students fared (Martinson et al. 2021).

Approximately one-third (35 percent) of MIBEST students were parents with at least one child under 18 (figure 1). Almost one-fourth (23 percent) of all MIBEST students had multiple children under 18. The share of MIBEST students with children is somewhat higher than the rate of students with dependent children at community colleges in the southeast region of the United States (29 percent).⁴

FIGURE 1
Student Parents in MIBEST



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Source: Analysis of data provided by the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center and the Mississippi Community College Board's MIBEST Online Reporting System.

Notes: N = 1,828. Percentages do not add to 100 because "have multiple children under 18" is a subset of "have any children under 18."

The characteristics of MIBEST student parents differed from those of students without children (see appendix table A.1):

- Black students (53 percent) made up a higher percentage of parenting students compared with nonparenting students (40 percent)
- Female students (76 percent) made up a higher percentage of parenting students compared with nonparenting students (40 percent)
- Parenting students averaged about five years older at entry than nonparenting students.
- Parenting students had a fourfold higher likelihood of being married than nonparenting students (31 percent versus 8 percent).
- Parenting and nonparenting students showed similar levels of education attainment at enrollment.
- Parenting students had higher quarterly earnings preceding their enrollment into MIBEST by as much as 62 percent in the eighth quarter before enrollment.

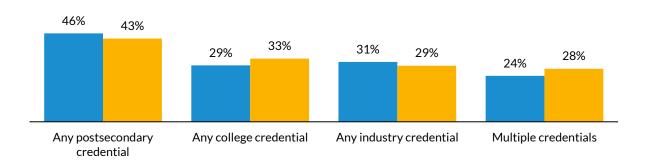
Parenting Status Differences in MIBEST Outcomes

MIBEST students with minor children had comparable education outcomes to students who did not have children under 18. They earned a similar number of credits (16.2 for parents versus 17.4 for nonparents) and were similarly likely to earn credentials (figure 2). This is notable because nationally, parenting students are 14 percentage points less likely to earn a postsecondary credential than nonparenting students who start in the same community college program. This suggests that MIBEST is helping parenting students perform as well as their nonparenting peers.

FIGURE 2

Educational Outcomes of MIBEST Students by Parenting Status

■ No children under 18 ■ Has children under 18



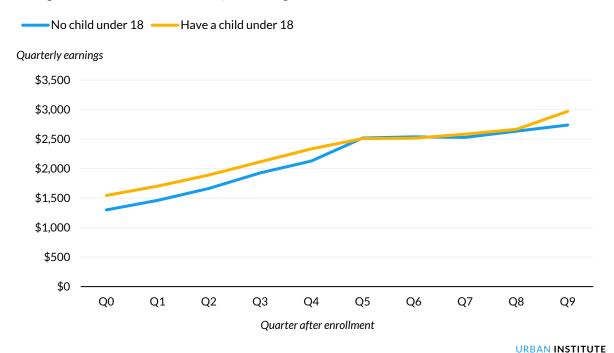
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Source: Analysis of data provided by the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center and the Mississippi Community College Board's MIBEST Online Reporting System.

Notes: No child under 18 N = 1,188; Have a child under 18 N = 640. Percentages are not additive because students may be in more than one category. Differences are not statistically significant when controlling for the characteristics in appendix table A.1. Postsecondary credentials include college and industry credentials. Students who earned multiple credentials could have earned multiple college credentials, industry credentials, or a mix of the two types.

For the first year after enrollment in MIBEST, students with children under 18 had slightly higher average earnings than students without children under 18, although these differences were not statistically significant (figure 3). For both groups, average quarterly earnings grew steadily during this period. Students with children under 18 had average earnings of \$1,545 in the quarter of MIBEST enrollment and \$2,336 in the fourth quarter after enrollment. Students without children under 18 had average earnings of \$1,300 in the quarter of MIBEST enrollment and \$2,129 in the fourth quarter after enrollment. Beginning in the fifth quarter, the earnings of the two MIBEST student groups converged and largely tracked each other.

FIGURE 3
Earnings after MIBEST Enrollment by Parenting Status

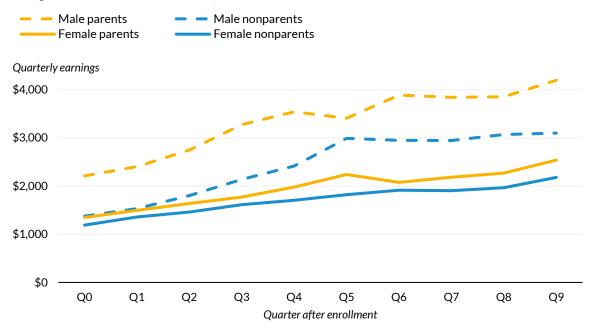


Notes: No child under $18 N = 1{,}188$; Have a child under 18 N = 640.

To determine whether the characteristics of each group of students could explain differences in quarterly earnings, we analyzed quarterly earnings outcomes while controlling for the student characteristics in appendix table A.1 (including earnings before entering MIBEST).⁶ The differences were not statistically significant, meaning MIBEST student parents are earning approximately as much after the program as nonparents, despite potentially facing more obstacles.

In the impact evaluation of MIBEST, we observed that female students had less-positive impacts than male students (Briggs et al. 2022). Women did not experience positive earnings impacts until the eighth quarter after enrollment, while men experienced positive earnings impacts beginning in the third quarter after enrollment. We explored differences in earnings within female and male genders for parents and nonparents. While male students—parents and nonparents—earned more than parenting and nonparenting female students, the differences by parenting status within each gender were not statistically significant (figure 4). We also explored differences within and across races for parenting students, as well as for Black mothers versus other groups, but the differences were not significant (not shown).

FIGURE 4
Earnings after MIBEST Enrollment by Gender and Parental Status



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Source: Analysis of data provided by the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center and the Mississippi Community College Board's MIBEST Online Reporting System.

Notes: Male parents of a child under 18 N = 155; Male nonparents N = 713; Female parents of a child under 18 N = 485; Female nonparents N = 475.

MIBEST Outcomes by Region

MIBEST students lived across the state of Mississippi, and regional factors may have influenced student demographics, the barriers they faced, and the employment opportunities available to them. The 15 MIBEST community colleges are spread across four workforce development areas within Mississippi: the Delta, Mississippi Partnership, Southcentral Mississippi Works, and the Twin Districts regions (appendix figure B.1). The MIBEST evaluation noted that logistical challenges for students could be more acute in rural areas, such as a lack of public transportation, low levels of car ownership, long distances to college campuses, and limited child care availability (Briggs et al. 2022). Colleges located in more urban areas could provide bus passes; although many students in rural areas could access gas cards, car ownership or access could be a substantial barrier. Generally, the Mississippi Delta is recognized as a particularly rural region, has a large Black population, has low household income, and has poor health conditions (e.g., US Commission on Civil Rights 2001; Graham 2008). As such, it has been a target for education, social, and economic supports (Diavua and Chalise 2021). Meanwhile, Southcentral Mississippi Works includes the state capital and largest city, Jackson, while the Twin Districts includes the casino-driven development around Biloxi. The Mississippi Partnership region has a large rural white population.

Noteworthy variations existed in the characteristics of MIBEST students by region at enrollment (appendix table A.2):

- The racial identity of MIBEST students varied substantially across regions, with the Delta region having twice the share (69 percent) of Black students compared with the Mississippi Partnership region (33 percent).
- The Mississippi Partnership region had a higher share of female students (63 percent) than the Twin Districts region (45 percent). Regional variation in the share of female MIBEST students could reflect differences in the MIBEST fields of training offered in the various regions.
- The Mississippi Partnership region had the highest share of parenting (39 percent) and married (20 percent) MIBEST students.
- The Southcentral Mississippi Works region had the highest share of students with a high school credential (15 percent). Meanwhile the Twin Districts had the highest share of MIBEST students with no high school credential (93 percent).
- Before the start of the program, MIBEST students in the Delta region had the lowest earnings of the four regions. In the eighth quarter before enrollment, those in the Delta region earned only 55 percent of what students in the Mississippi Partnership region earned, which was the highest earning region. That difference persisted in the quarter of enrollment, and those economic disparities may impact both the education and earnings outcomes of students.

Income inequalities align with differences in the racial makeup of regions—with the majority-Black Delta region also being the lowest earning among MIBEST students. That income inequality likely echoes long-standing racial disparities that are rooted in a history of racially motivated oppression in the United States, including in Mississippi. The MIBEST evaluation found that Black students had positive earnings impacts by the sixth quarter after enrollment, compared with the fourth quarter for white students (Briggs et al. 2022). Because the positive impact estimates for different races are similar, they will not close the racial earnings gaps on average.

Regional Differences in MIBEST Outcomes

Student education outcomes differed across the four MIBEST regions (table 1):

- MIBEST students in the Southcentral Mississippi Works region earned substantially more credits than MIBEST students in other regions, with an average of 29 per student compared with 12 to 14 elsewhere. However, MIBEST students in the Southcentral Mississippi Works region earned fewer postsecondary credentials than MIBEST students in other regions, suggesting students were on longer pathways or were accumulating credits that were not targeted toward a specific credential.
- Students in the Mississippi Partnership region experienced higher rates of credential attainment compared with other regions, with 72 percent of students attaining at least one postsecondary credential.

 MIBEST students in the Delta region earned fewer credits and credentials than students in other regions, including fewer industry credentials and multiple credentials.

Several reasons could explain the regional education outcomes variation. Each college implemented the MIBEST model slightly differently, including which fields of study they offered and whether the programs granted noncredit industry credentials or for-credit CTE credentials (or both).⁸ Colleges in some regions may have focused more on granting noncredit industry credentials, while others may have focused on for-credit education. Some fields of study also lead to a credential more rapidly, while others are longer or may articulate to a longer program. For example, nursing assistant pathways are typically less than two months long and have a high rate of credential attainment (Loprest and Sick 2018). The MIBEST impact evaluation found that earnings outcomes were not equal across fields of study, with the health professions field having the smallest earnings impacts (Briggs et al. 2022). Appendix table C.1 summarizes the fields of study in which MIBEST students enrolled by region.

TABLE 1
Educational Outcomes of MIBEST Students by Region

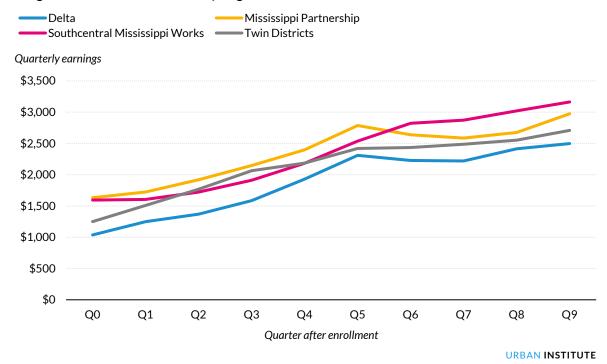
		Southcentral			
		Mississippi	Mississippi	Twin	
Characteristic	Delta	Partnership	Works	Districts	
Average number of credits earned	12.4 (-)	13.9	29.3 (+)	13.2 (-)	
Any postsecondary credential (%)	19.8 (-)	71.9 (+)	35.9 (-)	43.7	
Any college credential (%)	18.0 (-)	58.0 (+)	19.6 (-)	26.4 (+)	
Any industry credential (%)	2.8 (-)	43.3 (+)	21.8 (-)	36.3 (-)	
Multiple credentials (%)	5.1 (-)	46.8 (+)	12.0 (-)	27.1	

Source: Analysis of data provided by the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center and the Mississippi Community College Board's MIBEST Online Reporting System.

Notes: Delta N = 217; Mississippi Partnership N = 395; Southcentral Mississippi Works N = 418; Twin Districts N = 798. The (+/-) indicates whether the mean was positively or negatively statistically different from the mean of students not in that region to at least a p < 0.05 level, when controlling for the characteristics in appendix table A.2. Postsecondary credentials include college and industry credentials. Students who earned multiple credentials could have earned multiple college credentials, industry credentials, or a mix of the two types.

The average earnings of MIBEST students grew steadily in each region during the first nine quarters after enrollment (figure 5). Students in the Delta region had lower average earnings than students in the other regions, although the differences between regions were not statistically significant. The rate of increase was similar across regions, and the earnings differences reflect persisting earnings disparities at enrollment. Students in the Mississippi Partnership region had \$1,632 in quarterly earnings at enrollment, compared with \$1,594 in Southcentral Mississippi Works, \$1,250 in Twin Districts, and \$1,249 in the Delta region. Nine quarters after enrollment, quarterly earnings among students across the regions were separated by a similar amount, but students in the Southcentral Mississippi Works region earned the most (\$3,163), followed by those in the Mississippi Partnership (\$2,974), Twin Districts (\$2,708), and Delta (\$2,497) regions. Notably, MIBEST students' quarterly earnings in the Delta region were the lowest in every quarter following enrollment.

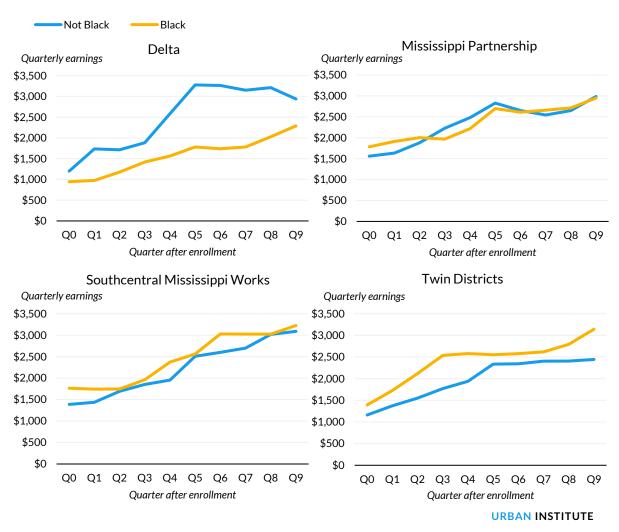
FIGURE 5
Earnings after MIBEST Enrollment by Region



Notes: N = 1,828. X = mean regional earnings are statistically different from the mean earnings of other regions in that quarter to at least the p < 0.05 level, when controlling for the characteristics in table 3.

In order to examine whether MIBEST outcomes were racially equitable within each of the four regions, we examined the regional quarterly earnings of Black students compared with other students in the ninth quarter after enrollment (figure 6). In the Southcentral Mississippi Works and the Twin Districts regions Black students started the program earning more, on average, than students who were not Black, and continued to earn more in the ninth quarter after enrollment. In the Twin Districts region, the difference was about \$700 in the ninth quarter after enrollment. In the Mississippi Partnership region, Black students earned more at intake than students who were not Black, but the gap closed by the ninth quarter with both groups earning approximately the same. Larger racial gaps existed in the Delta region, where Black students earned less at intake and continued to do so in the ninth quarter after enrollment. In three of the four MIBEST regions student earnings outcomes were racially equitable, with Black students faring the same or better than students of other races. ¹⁰

FIGURE 6
Earnings among Black Students and Students Who Are Not Black after MIBEST Enrollment, by Region



Notes: N = 1,828.

Discussion

Overall, we find that MIBEST benefited students across all parental and regional subgroups. The characteristics of MIBEST students varied across these groups, and some notable differences existed in the outcomes. In particular, we reaffirmed the finding from Briggs and colleagues (2022) that female students experienced lower earnings outcomes than male students, regardless of parenting status. We also see that earnings outcomes were racially equitable in most regions, although gaps persist in the outcomes of the Delta region.

Data Sources

We used individual-level administrative data collected across all 15 community colleges and from the state's adult education programs. Administrative data were delivered by the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (NSPARC), an organization that manages the state's longitudinal data system. NSPARC shared administrative records for MIBEST students for all semesters occurring between January 2016 and December 2019. NSPARC also matched administrative records for the state's adult education students. The Urban team used that administrative data, combined with data provided by MCCB's MIBEST Online Reporting System, to examine the outcomes of MIBEST students by subgroup.

Appendix A: Detailed Student Characteristics

TABLE A.1
Characteristics of MIBEST Students Overall and by Parenting Status

Characteristic	All MIBEST students	No child under 18	Have a child under 18
Race (%)			
Asian	0.3	0.2	0.5
Black	44.5	40.0	52.8
Hawaiian	0.1	0.1	0.0
More than one race	1.2	1.3	0.1
Native American	1.6	1.9	1.0
Other race	2.6	3.3	2.3
White	53.0	57.4	44.8
Race not reported	1.1	1.3	0.8
Hispanic ethnicity (%)	2.4	1.9	3.1
Average age at entry (years)	26.4	24.5	29.9
Female (%)	52.5	40.0	75.8
Average number of individuals in household	3.1	2.6	3.9
Married (%)	16.3	7.9	31.3
Education level at enrollment (%)			
No high school credential	89.5	89.7	89.0
High school diploma	5.3	5.6	4.8
High school equivalency	4.9	4.4	5.9
Quarterly earnings history before enrollment			
Eighth quarter before enrollment	\$1,250	\$1,020	\$1,658
Seventh quarter before enrollment	\$1,245	\$1,033	\$1,622
Sixth quarter before enrollment	\$1,194	\$1,036	\$1,474
Fifth quarter before enrollment	\$1,325	\$1,188	\$1,568
Fourth quarter before enrollment	\$1,323	\$1,142	\$1,646
Third quarter before enrollment	\$1,322	\$1,165	\$1,601
Second quarter before enrollment	\$1,221	\$1,133	\$1,377
First quarter before enrollment	\$1,381	\$1,291	\$1,542
Quarter of enrollment	\$1,388	\$1,300	\$1,545
Have any children under the age of 18 (%)	35.0	0.0	100.0
Have multiple children under the age of 18 (%)	23.0	0.0	65.6
Mississippi Workforce Development Area (%)			
Delta	11.9	11.5	12.7
Southcentral Mississippi Works	22.9	20.2	24.2
Mississippi Partnership	21.6	22.0	24.5
Twin Districts	43.7	46.4	38.6

Source: Analysis of data provided by the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center and the Mississippi Community College Board's MIBEST Online Reporting System.

Notes: All MIBEST students N = 1,828; No child under 18 N = 1,188; Have a child under 18 N = 640.

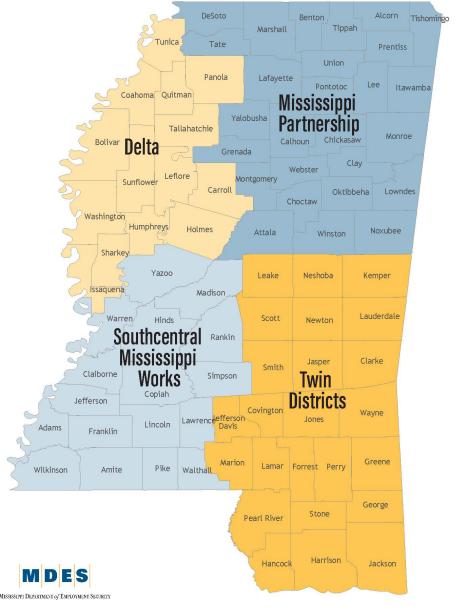
TABLE A.2
Characteristics of MIBEST Students by Region

		Southcentral		
Characteristic	Delta	Mississippi Partnership	Mississippi Works	Twin Districts
Number of students	217	395	418	798
Race (%)				
Asian	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.4
Black	66.8	32.9	55.5	38.5
Hawaiian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
More than one race	1.0	1.5	0.7	1.4
Native American	1.0	1.0	0.2	2.8
Other race	1.8	2.5	1.2	4.4
White	31.3	67.1	43.1	57.1
Race not reported	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.6
Hispanic ethnicity (%)	2.8	3.0	1.7	2.3
Average age at entry (years)	26.5	26.2	27.4	26.0
Female (%)	53.0	63.1	56.2	45.2
Average number of individuals in household	2.9	3.6	3.0	2.9
Married (%)	10.5	19.8	15.0	16.9
Education level at enrollment (%)				
No high school credential	90.8	77.6	84.2	92.8
High school diploma	5.5	8.6	3.4	4.5
High school equivalency	3.7	3.5	11.7	2.4
Have any children under the age of 18 (%)	37.3	39.2	37.6	31.0
Have multiple children under the age of 18 (%)	24.9	25.3	25.4	20.1
Quarterly earnings history before enrollment				
Eighth quarter before enrollment	\$803	\$1,454	\$1,389	\$1,190
Seventh quarter before enrollment	\$752	\$1,571	\$1,321	\$1,166
Sixth quarter before enrollment	\$714	\$1,561	\$1,258	\$1,096
Fifth quarter before enrollment	\$888	\$1,722	\$1,306	\$1,243
Fourth quarter before enrollment	\$858	\$1,534	\$1,480	\$1,257
Third quarter before enrollment	\$908	\$1,534	\$1,434	\$1,264
Second quarter before enrollment	\$864	\$1,379	\$1,308	\$1,188
First quarter before enrollment	\$1,037	\$1,582	\$1,503	\$1,307
Quarter of enrollment	\$1,037	\$1,632	\$1,594	\$1,250

Notes: Delta N = 217; Mississippi Partnership N = 395; Southcentral Mississippi Works N = 418; Twin Districts N = 798.

Appendix B: Map of Regions

FIGURE B.1
Mississippi Workforce Development Areas



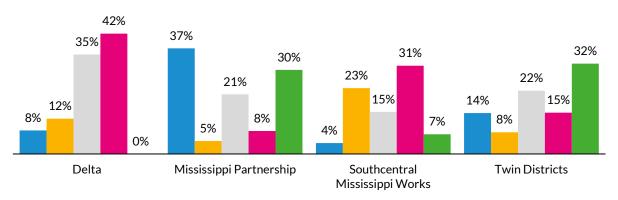
Source: Mississippi Department of Employment Security.

Appendix C: MIBEST Fields of Study by Region

FIGURE C.1

Fields of Study in which MIBEST Students Enrolled by Region

- Health professions and related clinical sciences
- Mechanic and repair technologies
- Precision production
- Business, management, marketing, and related support
- Workforce (noncredit) programs



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Source: Analysis of data provided by the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center and the Mississippi Community College Board's MIBEST Online Reporting System.

Notes: Delta N = 217; Mississippi Partnership N = 395; Southcentral Mississippi Works N = 418; Twin Districts N = 798.

Endnotes

- Students who historically considered "nontraditional" make up most community college learners today, including students from low-income backgrounds, students of color, parenting students, and first-generation college students. See "Who Are New Majority Learners?" Education Design Lab, accessed September 2023, https://eddesignlab.org/newmajoritylearners/.
- The Kellogg Foundation continues to support the MIBEST program at Hinds Community College, Mississippi Delta Community College, and Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. Other colleges may leverage other funds to carry on the program.
- These statistics come from the 2012/2017 Beginning Postsecondary Students Survey. We obtained these data from the National Center for Education Statistics' DataLab tool available at https://nces.ed.gov/datalab/.
- ⁴ This estimate is based on the authors' analysis of the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2016. We obtained these data from the National Center for Education Statistics' DataLab tool available at https://nces.ed.gov/datalab/.
- ⁵ This estimate comes from the authors' analysis of the 2012/2017 Beginning Postsecondary Students Survey using the National Center for Education Statistics' DataLab tool available at https://nces.ed.gov/datalab/. We ran a linear probability model for students at two-year public colleges that had attainment of a certificate or degree by 2017 as the dependent variable and controlled for students' age, gender, original declared field of study at first degree program, race, and ethnicity. Results were significant at p < 0.001.
- ⁶ To determine whether the earnings differences in figure 3 are statistically different from each other, we estimated a linear model predicting quarterly earnings after controlling for the student characteristics in table A.1, including quarterly earnings before entering MIBEST. We do not show the detailed results because the differences between the quarterly earnings in figure 3 were not statistically significant.
- For an overview of historical racial disparities in Jackson, Mississippi, see: "Race and the Economy in Jackson, MS: A Financial Community Forum, May 10, 2018" Hope Policy Institute, accessed September 2023, http://hopepolicy.org/manage/wp-content/uploads/5.12.19-Race-and-the-Economy-in-Jackson.pdf.
- Mississippi community colleges have separate departments or divisions that focus on noncredit workforce education and training, referred to as "workforce education." For MIBEST, colleges could implement all forcredit CTE career pathways, or a combination of CTE and workforce noncredit pathways.
- To determine whether the earnings differences in figure 5 are statistically different from each other, we estimated a linear model predicting quarterly earnings after controlling for the student characteristics in table A.1, including quarterly earnings before entering MIBEST. We do not show the detailed results because the differences between the quarterly earnings in figure 5 were not statistically significant.
- In the Delta region there were notable differences in field of study by race, which could explain some of the variation in earnings outcomes. A higher share of Black students (17 percent) studied in the mechanic and repair technology field compared to students who were not Black (4 percent). A smaller share of Black students (27 percent) studied in the precision production field compared to students who were not Black (50 percent).

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