

MEASURING UP 2008

THE STATE REPORT CARD
ON HIGHER EDUCATION



What is Measuring Up?

The purpose of a state report card is to provide the general public and policymakers with information they can use to assess and improve postsecondary education in each state. *Measuring Up 2008* is the fifth in a series of biennial report cards.

The report card grades states in six overall performance categories: **Preparation:** How adequately does the state prepare students for education and training beyond high school? **Participation:** Do state residents have sufficient opportunities to enroll in education and training beyond high school? **Affordability:** How affordable is higher education for students and their families? **Completion:** Do students make progress toward and complete their certificates or degrees in a timely manner? **Benefits:** What benefits does the state receive from having a highly educated population? **Learning:** What is known about student learning as a result of education and training beyond high school?

Grades compare the current performance of each state with the best-performing states, but do not compare with past performance. Key indicators (back page) allow states to compare current performance with past performance.



THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY AND
HIGHER EDUCATION

Alaska



PREPARATION

C+



2008 Grade Change Over Time

Alaska's fairly low performance in educating its young population could limit the state's access to a competitive workforce and weaken its economy.

- Eighth graders perform fairly poorly in math, science, and reading.
- There is a 13% gap between whites and all minorities in the percentage of young adults with a high school credential.

PARTICIPATION

F



2008 Grade Change Over Time

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

- The percentage of working-age adults enrolled in higher education has declined by 39% since the early 1990s.
- Among young adults, 11% of Alaska Natives are enrolled in college, compared with 33% of whites.

AFFORDABILITY

F



2008 Grade Change Over Time

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

- Poor and working-class families must devote 37% of their income, even after aid, to pay for costs at public four-year colleges.
- Financial aid to low-income students is low. For every dollar in Pell Grant aid to students, the state spends only six cents.

COMPLETION

F



2008 Grade Change Over Time

Despite some improvement, Alaska is one of the lowest-performing states in awarding certificates and degrees relative to the number of students enrolled.

- Twenty-two percent of college students complete a bachelor's degree within six years.
- Ten percent of Alaska Natives graduate within six years, compared with 25% of whites.

REPORT CARD

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

WHAT DO THE ARROWS MEAN?



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



State has declined on the key indicator in the category.

See back page for key indicator by category.

BENEFITS

C+



2008 Grade Change Over Time

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

- Eight percent of Alaska Natives have a bachelor's degree, compared with 32% of whites.
- If all racial/ethnic groups had the same educational attainment and earnings as whites, total annual personal income in the state would be about \$2 billion higher.

LEARNING

I

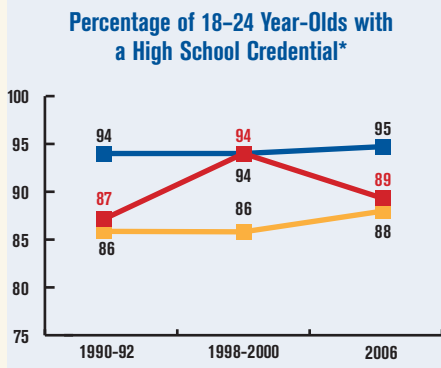
2008 Grade

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

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

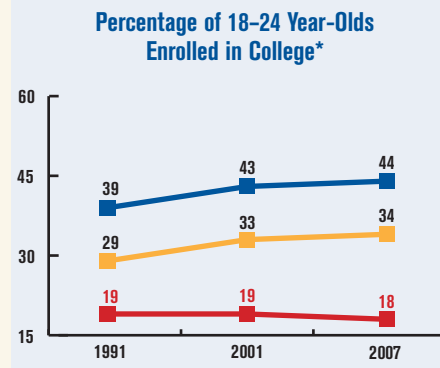
PREPARATION

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

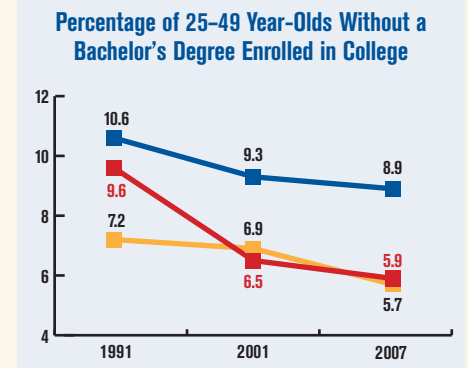


PARTICIPATION

College enrollment of young adults in Alaska has declined slightly since the early 1990s. Compared with the national average and the top states, substantially fewer young adults are enrolled in Alaska (in percentages).

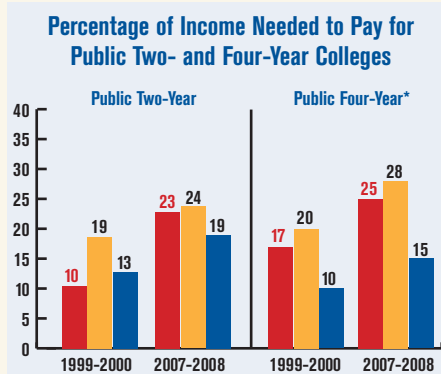


The enrollment of working-age adults, relative to the number of residents without a bachelor's degree, has declined in Alaska—as it has nationally and in the best-performing states. The percentage attending college in Alaska is slightly higher than the U.S. average but below the top states.



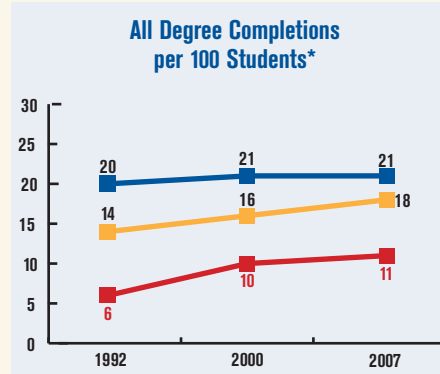
AFFORDABILITY

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



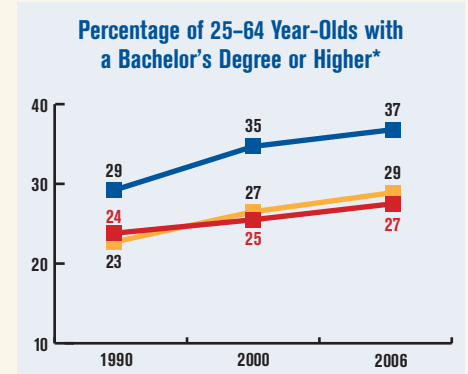
COMPLETION

The number of undergraduate credentials and degrees awarded in Alaska, relative to the number of students enrolled, has increased since the early 1990s. However, Alaska is considerably below the U.S. average and the top states on this measure.



BENEFITS

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



*Key indicator for the category.

LEGEND:

- & ■ = Alaska
- & ■ = United States
- & ■ = Median of Top Five States



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