

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

Alabama



PREPARATION

D+



2008 Grade Change Over Time

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

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

PARTICIPATION

D+



2008 Grade Change Over Time

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

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

AFFORDABILITY

F



2008 Grade Change Over Time

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

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

COMPLETION

C-



2008 Grade Change Over Time

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

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

REPORT CARD

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

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

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

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

LEARNING

I

2008 Grade

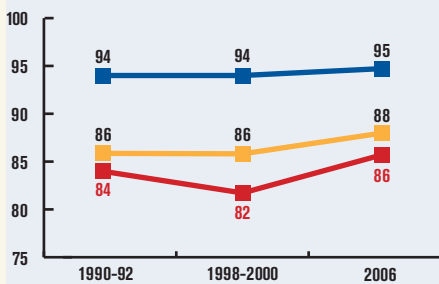
Like all states, Alabama receives an "Incomplete" in Learning because there is not sufficient data to allow meaningful state-by-state comparisons.

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

PREPARATION

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

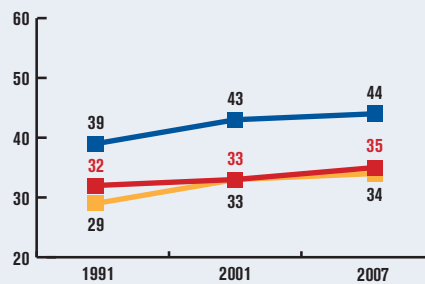
Percentage of 18-24 Year-Olds with a High School Credential*



PARTICIPATION

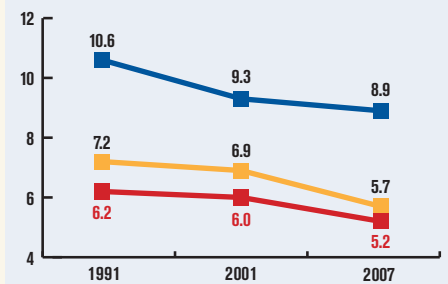
College enrollment of young adults in Alabama has improved since the early 1990s. The state is slightly above the national average but below the top states in the percentage of young adults enrolled.

Percentage of 18-24 Year-Olds Enrolled in College*



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

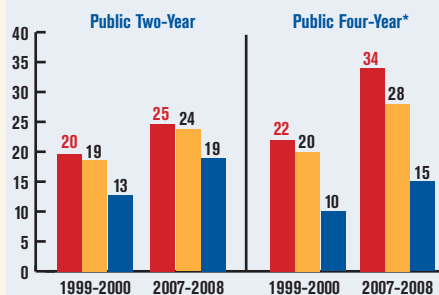
Percentage of 25-49 Year-Olds Without a Bachelor's Degree Enrolled in College



AFFORDABILITY

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

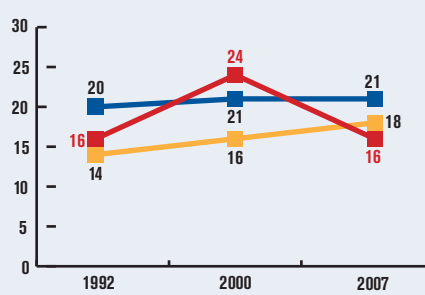
Percentage of Income Needed to Pay for Public Two- and Four-Year Colleges



COMPLETION

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

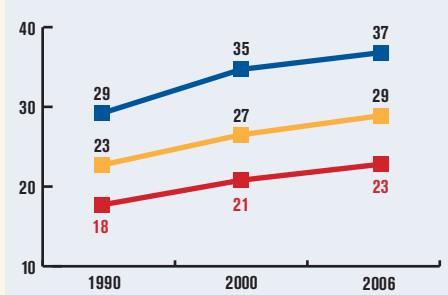
All Degree Completions per 100 Students*



BENEFITS

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

Percentage of 25-64 Year-Olds with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher*



*Key indicator for the category.

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

LEGEND:

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



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