

# 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

# Pennsylvania



## PREPARATION

**B-**



2008 Grade Change Over Time

Pennsylvania performs fairly well in preparing its young people for college, but there are large gaps by ethnicity.

- Eighth graders perform very well in math and reading, but their scores in writing are only fair.
- Eighty-four percent of blacks have a high school credential, compared with 93% of whites.

## PARTICIPATION

**C-**



2008 Grade Change Over Time

College opportunities for Pennsylvania residents are only fair.

- The likelihood of enrolling in college by age 19 is high, but a very low percentage of working-age adults (4 in 100) are enrolled in higher education.
- Thirty-two percent of black young adults are enrolled in college, compared with 45% of whites.

## AFFORDABILITY

**F**



2008 Grade Change Over Time

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

- Financial aid to low-income students is high compared with other states. For every dollar in Pell Grant aid to students, the state spends 86 cents.
- However, poor and working-class families must devote 61% of their income, even after aid, to pay for costs at public four-year colleges.

## COMPLETION

**A**



2008 Grade Change Over Time

Pennsylvania performs very well in awarding certificates and degrees.

- Sixty-five percent of college students complete a bachelor's degree within six years—a top performance on this measure.
- However, only 47% of blacks graduate within six years, compared with 66% of whites.

## REPORT CARD

Preparation	B-
Participation	C-
Affordability	F
Completion	A
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.

- Fifteen percent of blacks have a bachelor's degree, compared with 30% 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 \$11 billion higher.

## LEARNING

**I**

2008 Grade

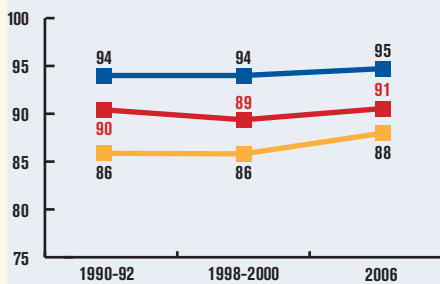
Like all states, Pennsylvania receives an "Incomplete" in Learning because there is not sufficient data to allow meaningful state-by-state comparisons.

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

## PREPARATION

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

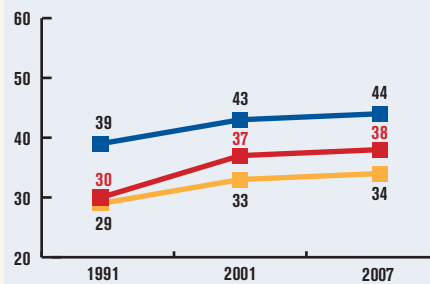
**Percentage of 18-24 Year-Olds with a High School Credential\***



## PARTICIPATION

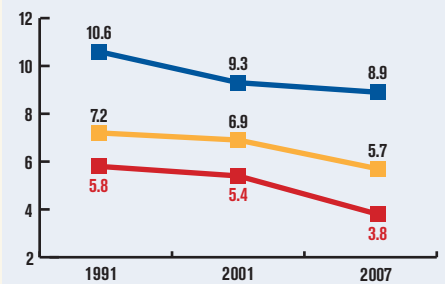
College enrollment of young adults in Pennsylvania has improved substantially since the early 1990s. The state is above the national average but below the top states in the percentage of young adults enrolled.

**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 Pennsylvania—as it has nationally and in the best-performing states. The percentage attending college in Pennsylvania is well below the U.S. average and the top states.

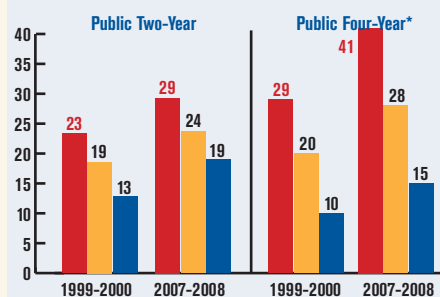
**Percentage of 25-49 Year-Olds Without a Bachelor's Degree Enrolled in College**



## 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 Pennsylvania, students and families pay more than the U.S. average and more than those in the best-performing states.

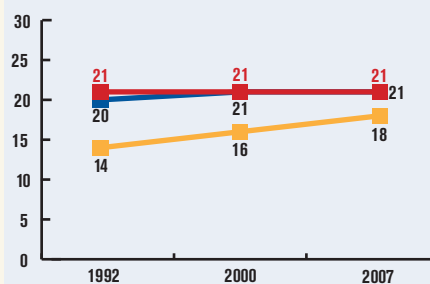
**Percentage of Income Needed to Pay for Public Two- and Four-Year Colleges**



## COMPLETION

The number of undergraduate credentials and degrees awarded in Pennsylvania, relative to the number of students enrolled, has remained stable since the early 1990s. Pennsylvania surpasses the U.S. average and performs the same as the top states on this measure.

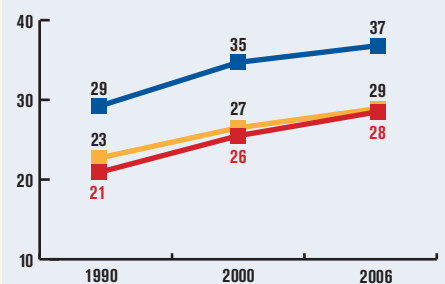
**All Degree Completions per 100 Students\***



## BENEFITS

The percentage of residents who have a bachelor's degree has increased substantially in Pennsylvania, but is about the same as the U.S. average and below the top states.

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



\*Key indicator for the category.

## LEGEND:

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



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