MEASURING UP 2004

THE STATE REPORT CARD ON HIGHER EDUCATION

COLORADO

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY AND
HIGHER EDUCATION

WHAT IS *MEASURING UP*?

This state report card is derived from *Measuring Up 2004*, the national report card for higher education. Its purpose is to provide the public and policymakers with information to assess and improve postsecondary education in each state. *Measuring Up 2004* is the third in a series of biennial report cards.

Measuring Up 2004 evaluates states on their performance in higher education because it is the states that are primarily responsible for educational access and quality in the United States. In this report card, "higher education" refers to all education and training beyond high school, including all public and private, two- and four-year, for-profit and nonprofit institutions.

The report card grades states in six overall performance categories:

- *Preparation:* How adequately are students in each state being prepared 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 and degrees in a timely manner?
- *Benefits:* What benefits does the state receive as a result of having a highly educated population?
- *Learning:* What is known about student learning as a result of education and training beyond high school?

Each state receives a grade in each performance category, and the grades are based on the state's performance on several indicators, or quantitative measures, in each category. Most states receive an "Incomplete" in learning because there are no common benchmarks that allow for state-by-state comparisons in learning. Five states, however, receive a "Plus" in learning to highlight their work in developing measures to evaluate the state's educational capital—that is, the reservoir of high-level knowledge and skills that the state's population has attained. For more information about this, see page 12 of this state report card.

In four of the performance categories—preparation, participation, completion, and benefits—grades are calculated by comparing each state's current performance to that of the best-performing states. This provides a basis for assessing and comparing each state's performance in the national context and encourages each state to "measure up" to the highest performing states.

In the affordability category, however, the nation as a whole is "measuring down." That is, even in the best-performing states, higher education has become *less* rather than *more* affordable when the costs of attending college are considered in relation to family income. As a result, grades in the affordability category are calculated by comparing each state's current results to the performance of the top states *a decade ago*. This enables policymakers to examine their state's results in relation to other states, while also encouraging improved performance over time. A glance at the table of state grades on page 15 reveals that the affordability category is the only one in which no state receives an A.

Measuring Up 2004 also compares each state's current results with its own performance a decade ago. Although this historical information is not graded, it is offered to allow states to examine their improvements and declines in performance. In gathering information for this period, information from 1992—or the closest year available—is compared with the most recently available data. All information was collected from national, reliable sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Education. (For more information about grading, data collection, and sources, please see the technical report at www.highereducation.org.)

This state report card begins by summarizing the state's performance today compared with ten years ago, and by presenting key policy questions that these results suggest for the state. Next, the state's performance in each category is described in greater detail, followed by additional contextual information.

A Snapshot of Improvement Over the Past Decade

High school graduates are, in general, better prepared for college today than their peers were a decade ago. However, most states, and the nation as a whole, have made little progress in translating these gains into improvements at the college level.

Preparation: 44 states improved on more than half of the indicators; 6 improved on some of the indicators.

Participation: 8 states improved on more than half of the indicators; 23 improved on some of the indicators; 19 declined on every indicator.

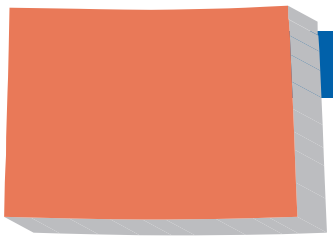
Affordability: 2 states improved on more than half of the indicators; 31 improved on some of the indicators; 17 declined on every indicator.

Completion: 37 states improved on more than half of the indicators; 9 improved on some of the indicators; 4 declined on every indicator.

Benefits: 41 states improved on more than half of the indicators; 8 improved on some of the indicators; 1 declined on every indicator.

Learning: 45 states receive an "Incomplete"; 5 states (Illinois, Kentucky, Nevada, Oklahoma, and South Carolina) receive a "Plus."

For more information about improvement, please see *Measuring Up 2004: The National Report Card on Higher Education* at www.highereducation.org.



COLORADO *A Decade Ago and Today*

Colorado has made progress in preparing students for higher education over the past decade. However, this improvement has not been matched by comparable increases in college enrollment. A decline in the percentage of students graduating from high school, combined with a decline in the likelihood of young people enrolling in college by age 19, are causes for concern given the growing numbers of high school students in the state.

Strengths

Preparation

- Colorado's 8th graders perform very well on national assessments in math and reading. Over the past decade the state has improved on this measure—more than the nationwide improvement.

- Colorado has consistently been a top performer in the proportions of students taking and scoring well on college entrance exams.

Participation

- A large percentage of working-age adults are enrolled part-time in college-level education or training. However, Colorado has lost ground on this measure over the past decade.

Completion

- A very large percentage of first-year students at four-year colleges and universities return for their second year, compared with other states.

- Over the decade, Colorado has seen an increase in the proportion of students completing certificates and degrees relative to the number enrolled. This rate of improvement has outpaced the national increase.

Benefits

- Colorado has consistently performed very well on the percentage of residents who have a bachelor's degree. However, many of these residents earned their degrees in other states.

Weaknesses

Preparation

- Colorado is one of the poorest performing states in the percentage of young people earning a high school credential.

- Low-income 8th graders perform very poorly on national assessments in math.

Participation

- Among the young adult population in Colorado, the gap in college participation between whites and minority ethnic groups has widened substantially. Young adults who are white are more than twice as likely to attend college as young adults who are from minority ethnic groups.

Improvement Over Past Decade	Preparation	Participation	Affordability	Completion	Benefits	Learning
	↑	↓	↔	↑	↔	?

Affordability

■ Net college costs for low- and middle-income students to attend public two- or four-year colleges and universities represent about a third of their annual income. These institutions enroll 85% of students in the state. (Net college costs equal tuition, room, and board minus financial aid.)

Completion

■ Over the past decade, the percentage of first-year students in community colleges returning for their second year has declined substantially—more than the national decline.

Policy Questions

■ Can Colorado increase the proportion of students who finish high school within four years?

■ The number of high school graduates in Colorado is projected to increase by 37% over the next decade. Can the state provide college opportunities for these increasing numbers of students?

■ Given Colorado's strong performance in preparing students for higher education, can the state encourage more students to participate in higher education?

■ Considering its declining performance in participation, can Colorado create a workforce ready for new knowledge-based industries?

■ Can Colorado use financial aid programs more effectively to encourage the college enrollment of students from low-income families?

■ Can Colorado close the gaps in educational achievement between whites and minority ethnic residents, and between high- and low-income residents?

■ Can colleges and universities encourage students to complete degrees and certificates in a timely manner?

■ Can Colorado increase the number of students earning bachelor's degrees or will the state continue to rely on other states and nations for an educated workforce?

2004 Grade	Improvement Over Decade
A–	↑

Over the past decade, Colorado has made improvements in preparing students to succeed in college. This year Colorado receives an A– in preparation.

Graded Information

- Colorado is among the poorest-performing states in the percentage of young adults earning a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) diploma by age 24.
- Eighth graders perform very well on national assessments in math and reading.
- Compared with their peers in other states, low-income 8th graders perform very poorly on national assessments in math.
- Fairly small proportions of 11th and 12th graders do well on Advanced Placement tests, but the state is a top performer in the proportions scoring well on college entrance exams.
- About three-quarters of secondary school students are taught by qualified teachers, which compares well with top-performing states.

Change in Graded Measures

- Over the past decade, the percentage of 8th graders performing well on national assessments in math has increased.
- Over the past few years, the percentage of 8th graders performing well on national assessments in reading has increased by 20%, in contrast to a national decline of 3% on this measure.

PREPARATION	COLORADO		Top States 2004
	A Decade Ago	2004	
High School Completion (20%)			
18- to 24-year-olds with a high school credential	88%	85%*	94%
K–12 Course Taking (35%)			
9th to 12th graders taking at least one upper-level math course	36%	n/a	59%
9th to 12th graders taking at least one upper-level science course	23%	n/a	41%
8th grade students taking algebra	n/a	n/a	35%
12th graders taking at least one upper-level math course	n/a	n/a	66%
K–12 Student Achievement (35%)			
8th graders scoring at or above "proficient" on the national assessment exam:			
in math	22%	34%	36%
in reading	30%	36%	39%
in science	32%	n/a	42%
in writing	27%	27%†	41%
Low-income 8th graders scoring at or above "proficient" on the national assessment exam in math	11%	13%	23%
Number of scores in the top 20% nationally on SAT/ACT college entrance exam per 1,000 high school graduates	182	250	227
Number of scores that are 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement subject test per 1,000 high school juniors and seniors	80	153	219
Teacher Quality (10%)			
7th to 12th graders taught by teachers with a major in their subject	61%	72%	81%

*Seventy-six percent of 18- to 24-year-olds have a regular high school diploma; 9% have a GED.
Note: Indicators in italics are new for 2004.
†Data from *Measuring Up 2002* were used because updated state information was not available.

■ Colorado has consistently performed very well on the proportions of 11th and 12th graders who do well on college entrance exams.

■ During the past decade, the proportions of 11th and 12th graders taking and scoring well on Advanced Placement exams have almost doubled.

Other Key Facts

■ The percentage of young adults who are from minority ethnic groups and who earn a high school credential has declined from 74% to 65% over the past decade. Currently, young adults from minority ethnic groups are only about two-thirds as likely as whites to earn a high school credential.

■ Among young adults, 9% receive a GED rather than a high school diploma, one of the highest percentages in the nation.

■ About 12% of children under age 18 live in poverty, compared with a national rate of 17%.

■ Policymakers and state residents do not have access to important information about the courses students take in high school, as well as 8th graders' performance in writing and science, because the state declined to participate in the national survey and assessments.

The preparation category measures how well a state's K–12 schools prepare students for education and training beyond high school. The opportunities that residents have to enroll in and benefit from higher education depend heavily on the performance of their state's K–12 educational system.

2004 Grade	Improvement Over Decade
B	↓

Colorado's generally good performance in enrolling students in higher education has declined over the past decade. This year Colorado receives a B in participation.

Graded Information

■ Compared with other states, the chance of Colorado high school students enrolling in college by age 19 is only fair, because few students graduate from high school and enroll in college.

■ However, a large percentage of working-age adults (ages 25 to 49) are enrolled part-time in college-level education or training.

Change in Graded Measures

■ Over the past decade, the percentage of working-age adults who are enrolled part-time in college-level education or training has declined by 15%, compared with a nationwide decline of 11%.

Other Key Facts

■ Among the young adult population (ages 18 to 24), the gap in college participation between whites and minority ethnic groups has widened substantially. Young adults who are white are more than twice as likely to attend college as young adults who are from minority ethnic groups.

PARTICIPATION	COLORADO		Top States 2004
	A Decade Ago	2004	
Young Adults (60%)			
Chance for college by age 19	**39%**	**37%**	**52%**
18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college	**31%**	**28%**	**40%**
Working-Age Adults (40%)			
25- to 49-year-olds enrolled part-time in any type of postsecondary education	**5.5%**	**4.7%**	**5.4%**

■ A decade ago, 29 of every 100 young adults from low-income families were enrolled in college; now 34 of 100 are.

■ The state's population is projected to grow by 16% from 2000 to 2015, faster than the national rate of 13%. During approximately the same period, the number of high school graduates is projected to increase by 37%.

■ About 11% of the adult population has less than a high school diploma or its equivalent, compared with 14% of adults nationwide.

■ In Colorado, 3,257 more students are entering the state than are leaving to attend college. About 15% of Colorado high school graduates who go to college attend college out of state.

The participation category addresses the opportunities for state residents to enroll in higher education. A strong grade in participation generally indicates that state residents have high individual expectations for education and that the state provides enough spaces and types of educational programs for its residents.

2004 Grade	Improvement Over Decade
D–	↔

Over the past decade, Colorado has made no notable improvement in providing affordable higher education opportunities. Colorado receives a D– in affordability this year.

Graded Information

- Compared with best-performing states, families in Colorado devote a fairly large share of family income, even after financial aid, to attend public two- and four-year colleges and universities, which enroll 85% of college students in the state.
- Colorado's investment in need-based financial aid is very low when compared with top-performing states, and the state does not offer low-priced college opportunities.
- Undergraduate students borrowed on average $3,495 in 2003.

Change in Graded Measures

- Over the past decade, the state has increased its investment in need-based financial aid. Nonetheless, the share of income, including financial aid, needed to pay for college is fairly large compared with other states.

Other Key Facts

- In Colorado, 35% of students are enrolled in community colleges and 50% in public four-year colleges and universities.

AFFORDABILITY	COLORADO		Top States A Decade Ago
	A Decade Ago	2004	
Family Ability to Pay (50%)			
Percent of income (average of all income groups) needed to pay for college expenses minus financial aid:			
at community colleges	20%	21%	15%
at public 4-year colleges/universities	22%	24%	16%
at private 4-year colleges/universities	62%	59%	32%
Strategies for Affordability (40%)			
State investment in need-based financial aid as compared to the federal investment	17%	41%	89%
At lowest-priced colleges, the share of income that the poorest families need to pay for tuition	13%	13%	7%
Reliance on Loans (10%)			
Average loan amount that undergraduate students borrow each year	$3,094	$3,495	$2,619

Note: In the affordability category, the lower the figures the better the performance for all indicators except for "State investment in need-based financial aid."

The affordability category measures whether students and families can afford to pay for higher education, given income levels, financial aid, and the types of colleges and universities in the state.

A CLOSER LOOK AT FAMILY ABILITY TO PAY	Average family income	Community colleges		Public 4-year colleges/universities		Private 4-year colleges/universities	
		Net college cost*	Percent of income needed to pay net college cost	Net college cost*	Percent of income needed to pay net college cost	Net college cost*	Percent of income needed to pay net college cost
Income groups used to calculate 2004 family ability to pay							
20% of the population with the lowest income	**$14,000**	**$7,137**	**51%**	**$7,945**	**57%**	**$21,023**	**150%**
20% of the population with lower-middle income	**$31,176**	**$7,554**	**24%**	**$8,385**	**27%**	**$20,417**	**65%**
20% of the population with middle income	**$50,300**	**$7,805**	**16%**	**$8,878**	**18%**	**$18,995**	**38%**
20% of the population with upper-middle income	**$75,886**	**$7,894**	**10%**	**$9,159**	**12%**	**$18,520**	**24%**
20% of the population with the highest income	**$128,000**	**$7,903**	**6%**	**$9,256**	**7%**	**$20,403**	**16%**
40% of the population with the lowest income	**$22,588**	**$7,346**	**33%**	**$8,165**	**36%**	**$20,720**	**92%**

*Net college cost equals tuition, room, and board, minus financial aid.

■ Those who are striving to reach or stay in the middle class—the 40% of the population with the lowest incomes—earn on average $22,588 each year. If a student from such a family were to attend a community college in the state, their net cost to attend college would represent about 33% of their income annually:

Tuition, room, and board:	$7,950
Financial aid received:	–$ 604
Net college cost:	$7,346
Percent of income:	33%

■ If the same student were to attend a public four-year college in the state, their net cost to attend college would represent about 36% of their income annually:

Tuition, room, and board:	$9,618
Financial aid received:	–$1,453
Net college cost:	$8,165
Percent of income:	36%

Note

The numbers shown above for tuition, room, and board minus financial aid may not exactly equal net college cost due to rounding.

2004 Grade	Improvement Over Decade
B–	↑

There has been a substantial improvement over the past decade in the proportion of Colorado's students who earn a certificate or degree in a timely manner. This year Colorado receives a B– in completion.

Graded Information

- Compared with other states, a fairly large percentage (50%) of first-year students in community colleges return for their second year.
- A very large percentage (75%) of freshmen at four-year colleges and universities return for their sophomore year.
- In addition, a large percentage of first-time, full-time college students complete a bachelor's degree within six years of enrolling in college.
- However, only a fair proportion of students complete certificates and degrees relative to the number enrolled.

Change in Graded Measures

- Over the past decade, the percentage of first-year community college students returning for their second year has decreased substantially in the state.
- However, Colorado has seen an increase in the proportion of students completing certificates and degrees relative to the number enrolled.

COMPLETION	COLORADO		Top States 2004
	A Decade Ago	2004	
Persistence (20%)			
1st year community college students returning their second year	59%	50%	63%
Freshmen at 4-year colleges/universities returning their sophomore year	73%	75%	84%
Completion (80%)			
First-time, full-time students completing a bachelor's degree within 6 years of college entrance	49%	53%	64%
Certificates, degrees, and diplomas awarded at all colleges and universities per 100 undergraduate students	13	16	21

Other Key Facts

- During the past decade, the number of Hispanic students receiving certificates and degrees has increased from 10 to 14 per 100 enrolled, narrowing the gap in performance between Hispanic and white students in the state.

The completion category addresses whether students continue through their educational programs and earn certificates or degrees in a timely manner. Certificates and degrees from one- and two-year programs as well as the bachelor's degree are included.

2004 Grade	Improvement Over Decade
A	↔

Over the past decade, Colorado has consistently realized great benefits from having a more highly educated population. This year Colorado is one of only seven states to earn an A in benefits.

Graded Information

■ Colorado is a top performer in the proportion of residents who have a bachelor's degree, and this substantially strengthens the state economy.

■ Residents contribute substantially to the civic good, as measured by charitable giving, volunteerism, and voting.

Change in Graded Measures

■ During the past decade, Colorado has consistently performed very well on the percentage of residents who have a bachelor's degree.

Other Key Facts

■ If all ethnic groups had the same educational attainment and earnings as whites, total personal income in the state would be about $2.8 billion higher, and the state would realize an estimated $967 million in additional tax revenues.

■ Whites are more than twice as likely as those from minority ethnic groups to have a bachelor's degree. This is among the widest gaps in the country on this measure.

■ In 2002, Colorado scored 84 on the New Economy Index, compared to a nationwide score of 60. The New Economy Index, developed by the Progressive Policy Institute, measures the extent to which states are participating in knowledge-based industries.

BENEFITS	COLORADO		Top States 2004
	A Decade Ago	2004	
Educational Achievement (37.5%)			
Population aged 25 to 65 with a bachelor's degree or higher	33%	37%	36%
Economic Benefits (31.25%)			
Increase in total personal income as a result of the percentage of the population holding a bachelor's degree	12%	11%	12%
Increase in total personal income as a result of the percentage of the population with some college (including an associate's degree), but not a bachelor's degree	2%	2%	3%
Civic Benefits (31.25%)			
Residents voting in national elections	60%	53%	60%
Of those who itemize on federal income taxes, the percentage declaring charitable gifts	89%	86%	92%
Increase in volunteering rate as a result of college education	n/a	18%	22%
Adult Skill Levels (0%)*			
Adults demonstrating high-level literacy skills:			
quantitative	30%	34%	33%
prose	30%	34%	33%
document	25%	29%	28%

*Adult Skill Levels for 2004 are estimated and are not used to calculate grades.
Note: Indicators in italics are new for 2004.

■ Policymakers and state residents do not have access to important information about high-level literacy skills because the state has declined to participate in the national literacy survey.

The benefits category measures the economic and societal benefits that the state receives as the result of having well educated residents.

2004 Grade

I

Like most states, Colorado received an Incomplete in learning because there are no comparable data that would allow for meaningful state-by-state comparisons in learning. The Incomplete in this category highlights a gap in our ability to measure each state's educational capital—the reservoir of high-level knowledge and skills that benefit each state.

Measuring Up 2004 gives a "Plus" in learning to five states (Illinois, Kentucky, Nevada, Oklahoma, and South Carolina) that have developed learning measures through their participation in a national demonstration project conducted by the National Forum on College-Level Learning and funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.*

Based on the results of the project, the learning category is being constructed like the other performance categories in *Measuring Up*, with indicators that are grouped in several themes, each of which is weighted (see parentheses) and reflects a particular dimension of state performance:

1. Abilities of the College-Educated Population (25%). This cluster of indicators examines the proportion of college-educated residents who achieve high levels of literacy. For the 2004 demonstration, the data used are the same as those included in the benefits category and are based on the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) for citizens aged 25 to 64, updated through the 2000 census. The NALS assessment poses real-world tasks or problems that require respondents to read and interpret texts (prose), to obtain or act on information contained in tabular or graphic displays (document), and to understand numbers or graphs and perform calculations (quantitative).

2. Institutional Contributions to Educational Capital (25%). The indicators in this area reflect the contributions to a state's stock of "educational capital" by examining the proportion of the state's college graduates (from two- and four-year institutions) ready for advanced practice. For the 2004 demonstration, the measures are based on available records for college graduates within each state who have demonstrated their readiness for advanced practice by (a) passing a national examination required to enter a licensed profession such as nursing or physical therapy, (b) earning a competitive score on a nationally recognized graduate admissions examination such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT), or (c) passing a teacher licensure examination in the state in which they graduated. These measures are presented as a proportion of total bachelor's and associate's degrees granted in the state during the time period.

Learning	Colorado
Literacy Levels of the State's Residents (25%)	
Prose	?
Document	?
Quantitative	?
Graduates Ready for Advanced Practice (25%)	
Licensures	?
Competitive admissions	?
Teacher preparation	?
Performance of College Graduates (50%)	
From four-year institutions	
Problem-solving	?
Writing	?
From two-year colleges	
Reading	?
Quantitative skills	?
Locating information	?
Writing	?

1 What are the abilities of the college-educated population?

2 To what extent do colleges and universities educate students to be capable of contributing to the workforce?

3 How well can graduates of two- and four-year colleges and universities perform complex problem-solving tasks?

Note: Measures included under the first two clusters are available nationally and can be calculated for all 50 states. Measures included in the third will require special data-collection efforts similar to those undertaken by the five demonstration project states in 2004.

3. Performance of College Graduates (50%). These indicators examine how well the graduates of the state's two- and four-year colleges and universities can perform complex tasks related to academic and real-world problem-solving situations. For the 2004 demonstration, the measures consist of two sets of assessments, the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) for four-year students and the ACT Work Keys assessment for two-year students. The CLA is an innovative examination that poses real-world tasks that a student is asked to understand and solve. For example, students could be asked to draw scientific conclusions, examine historical evidence, or develop a persuasive essay. The ACT Work Keys examines what students can do with what they know. Students might be asked to extract information from documents and instructions, or use mathematical concepts such as probability or estimation in real-world settings. The Work Keys writing assessment requires students to prepare an extended essay.

* A report on the results and lessons of the five-state demonstration project will be released in November.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION 2004 Colorado

State Context	Colorado	State Rank
Population (2003)	4,550,688	22
Gross state product (2001, in millions)	$173,772	21

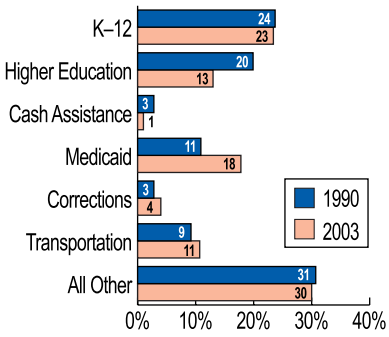
Leading Indicators	Colorado	U.S.
Projected % change in population, 2000-2015	16.0%	12.9%
Projected % change in number of all high school graduates, 2002-2017	37.1%	8.0%
Projected budget surplus/shortfall by 2010	-2.3%	-3.4%
Average income of poorest 20% of population (2002)	$14,000	$12,072
Children in poverty (2001)	12.0%	16.0%
Percent of adult population with less than a high school diploma or equivalent (2003)	11.3%	14.0%
New economy index (2002)*	84.3	60.3

Facts and Figures	Colorado	
	Number/Amount	Percent
Institutions of Postsecondary Education (2002-03)		
Public 4-year	13	
Public 2-year	15	
Private 4-year	27	
Private 2-year	21	
Students Enrolled by Institution Type (2001)		
Public 4-year	113,391	50%
Public 2-year	79,220	35%
Private 4-year	25,455	11%
Private 2-year	7,236	3%
Students Enrolled by Level (2001)		
Undergraduate	225,302	84%
Graduate	40,363	15%
Professional	3,627	1%
Enrollment Status of Students (2001)		
Full-time	148,449	55%
Part-time	120,843	45%
Net Migration of Students (2000)		
Positive numbers for net migration mean that more students are entering than leaving the state to attend college. Negative numbers reveal the reverse.	3,257	
Average Tuition (2002-03)		
Public 4-year institutions	$3,453	
Public 2-year institutions	$1,784	
Private 4-year institutions	$17,698	
State and Local Appropriations for Higher Education		
Per $1,000 of personal income, FY 2004	$4	
Per capita, FY 2004	$130	
% change, FY 1994-2004		11%

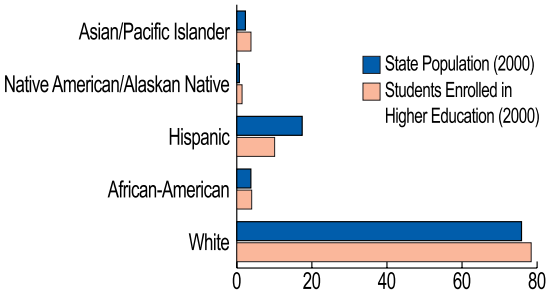
* This index, created by the Progressive Policy Institute, measures the extent to which a state is participating in knowledge-based industries. A higher score means increased participation.

Note: Percentages might not add to 100 due to rounding.

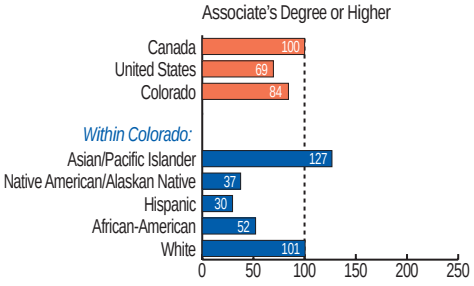
Share of State Appropriations

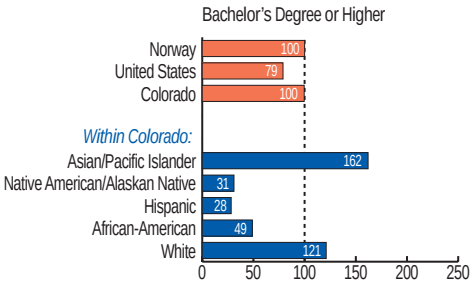


Ethnic Distribution (%)



Attainment of College Degrees in United States and Top Country, 25- to 34-year-olds (2000)





Note: These two charts compare performance in the U.S. to the performance of the top country, which receives a score of 100.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: Who is being graded in this report card, and why?

A: *Measuring Up 2004* grades states, not individual colleges or universities, on their performance in higher education. The states are responsible for preparing students for higher education through sound K–12 systems, and they provide most of the public financial support—$69 billion currently—for colleges and universities. Through their oversight of public colleges and universities, state leaders affect the kind and number of programs available in the state. They determine the limits of financial support and often influence tuition and fees for public colleges and universities. They determine how much state-based financial aid to make available to students and their families, which affects students attending private as well as public colleges and universities.

Q: How are states graded?

A: The report card grades states in six performance categories: academic preparation, participation, affordability, completion, benefits, and learning. Each category is made up of several indicators, or quantitative measures—a total of 35 in the first five categories. Grades are calculated based on each state's performance on these indicators, relative to other states. *Measuring Up 2004* draws its data from the most recent public information available. Most of the data in *Measuring Up 2004* is from 2002 and 2003.

In the affordability category, *Measuring Up 2004* reflects the major changes in tuition and financial aid that occurred in 2003. In addition, each state's performance is now calculated in relation to the performance of top states a decade ago—rather than in relation to top states' current performance, as is the case with other graded categories. This change creates a more stable basis for states to assess their performance in affordability, which is the most volatile of the graded categories.

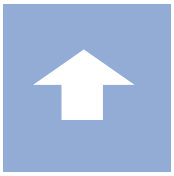
In the learning category, *Measuring Up 2004* reports information about five states (Illinois, Kentucky, Nevada, Oklahoma, and South Carolina) that participated in a pilot project on measuring learning. This report card gives these states a "Plus" for their efforts in assessing and measuring learning; however, all other states continue to receive an "Incomplete" in this category, as there is no information available to make state-by-state comparisons.

All data used to grade states in *Measuring Up 2004* were collected from national, reliable sources, including the U.S. Census and the U.S. Department of Education. All data are the most current available for state-by-state comparisons, are in the public domain, and were collected in ways that allow for effective comparisons among the states. The *Technical Guide* (available at www.highereducation.org) has information about sources used in *Measuring Up 2004*.

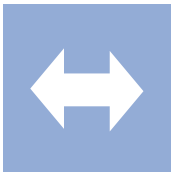
Q: What information is provided but not graded?

A: The state report cards highlight important gaps in college opportunities for various income and ethnic groups, and they identify improvements and setbacks in each state's performance over the past decade. In addition, the series of indicators measuring adult literacy skills (in the benefits category) is not being used to calculate grades in *Measuring Up 2004* because the data have not been updated in 12 years. As a temporary placeholder for these indicators, the National Center commissioned a study to estimate adult skill levels based on the 2000 Census. These estimates are provided in the charts found in the state report cards, but they are not used to calculate any grades.

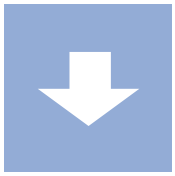
What do the arrows mean?



The state has improved on more than half of the indicators in the category.



The state has improved on some, but no more than half, of the indicators in the category.



The state has declined on every indicator in the category.

STATE GRADES

	Preparation	Participation	Affordability	Completion	Benefits
Alabama	D-	C	F	B-	C+
Alaska	B-	C	F	F	B
Arizona	D	B+	F	C+	B
Arkansas	C	C-	F	C	D+
California	C	A	B	C	A
Colorado	A-	B	D-	B-	A
Connecticut	A	A	F	B	A
Delaware	C+	C+	F	A-	A-
Florida	C	C	F	A-	B-
Georgia	C	D	F	B	B
Hawaii	C	B-	D	C	B
Idaho	C	C-	D-	C+	C
Illinois	B+	A	D	B	B-
Indiana	C	C+	D	B	C
Iowa	B+	B+	F	A	C
Kansas	B	A	F	B	B+
Kentucky	C-	B-	D-	C	B
Louisiana	F	D+	F	C	C
Maine	B	B-	F	B	B
Maryland	A-	A	F	B-	A
Massachusetts	A	A	F	A	A
Michigan	C	B+	F	C+	A-
Minnesota	B+	A	C-	B+	A
Mississippi	D+	D	F	B-	C
Missouri	B-	B	F	B	B
Montana	B+	C	F	C	C
Nebraska	B+	A	F	B	B
Nevada	D	C	F	F	C-
New Hampshire	B+	C+	F	A	A-
New Jersey	A	A-	D	B	A
New Mexico	F	A-	F	D	C+
New York	A	C+	F	B+	B
North Carolina	B	C+	D-	B	C
North Dakota	B	A-	F	B	C
Ohio	C+	C+	F	B	B-
Oklahoma	C-	C	F	C-	C+
Oregon	C	B-	F	C	B
Pennsylvania	B-	B	F	A	B
Rhode Island	C+	A	F	A	B+
South Carolina	C	C-	F	B	C
South Dakota	B	B+	F	B	C-
Tennessee	C-	C-	F	C+	C
Texas	C+	C	D	C	B-
Utah	A	C+	C	B	B
Vermont	C+	C	F	A	B-
Virginia	B+	B-	D-	B	A-
Washington	B-	C	F	A-	A-
West Virginia	C+	C-	F	C	D
Wisconsin	B+	B	D	A-	C+
Wyoming	C+	B	F	B+	D

MEASURING UP 2004 RESOURCES

To view *Measuring Up 2004* and its resources visit

www.highereducation.org

Select the *Measuring Up* icon

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- **Snapshot:** Performance overview on national maps
- **Improvement:** The nation's performance over the past decade
- **Download** the national report in PDF format

State Reports

- **State Report Cards:** A comprehensive picture of higher education in each state
- **Download** each state's report card in PDF format

Compare States

- **Graded Performance:** Compare state results by performance category
- **State Facts:** Compare non-graded state information
- **Index Scores (sort/compare/map):** Sort states by their rank within each category and create a national map based on individual indicator scores

Commentary

- **Foreword,** by James B. Hunt Jr., Chairman, and Garrey Carruthers, Vice Chairman of the National Center's Board of Directors
- **A Message** from Governor Mark R. Warner, Governor of Virginia and Chairman of the National Governors Association
- **A Ten-Year Perspective: Higher Education Stalled Despite High School Improvement,** by Patrick M. Callan, President of the National Center
- **Grading Learning: Extending the Concept**
- Special reports forthcoming

News Room

- **National Press Release**
- **State Press Releases**
- **Press Contact Information**

About *Measuring Up*

- Questions and Answers about *Measuring Up 2004*
- What is *Measuring Up*?
- How We Grade States
- How We Measure Improvement
- *Measuring Up 2004* Database
- *Technical Guide*
- "*Measuring Up 2004* and Beyond" Working Group
- Acknowledgements
- About the National Center
- Site Map

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