
MEASURING UP

2004

**THE STATE REPORT CARD
ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

OKLAHOMA



**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.



Oklahoma has made notable improvements over the past decade in preparing young people for higher education. However, the state's performance is weak in providing students with an affordable higher education, which may undermine its efforts to send clear messages to them about the importance of being prepared academically for college. Also, the goals of the state's "Brain Gain 2010" initiative will unlikely be realized if current trends continue: for example, over the past decade, Oklahoma has had a substantial decline in the percentage of working-age adults enrolling in college-level education. Also, compared with a decade ago, a smaller percentage of students finish high school within four years; of those who do, a smaller proportion enroll immediately in college.

Strengths

Preparation

■ Compared with other states, a large percentage of Oklahoma high school students enroll in upper-level math. This percentage has increased substantially over the past decade—more than the nationwide increase on this measure.

■ The percentage of young adults who are from minority ethnic groups and who have a high school credential has increased over the past decade, as has the percentage of young adults who are from low-income families and who have a high school credential.

Participation

■ Over the past decade, the percentage of low-income young adults enrolled in college has increased. However, gaps remain in the participation rates between low-income and high-income students.

Completion

■ Relative to other states, a large percentage of freshmen at four-year colleges and universities return for their sophomore year.

■ Over the past decade, Oklahoma has narrowed the gap between whites and minority ethnic groups in terms of students completing certificates and degrees. However, this gap remains large.

Benefits

■ Oklahoma has narrowed the gap over the decade between whites and minority ethnic groups in the percentage of adults holding a bachelor's degree. Nonetheless, the gap remains substantial.

Weaknesses

Preparation

■ A small percentage of 8th graders take algebra, and 8th graders perform poorly on national exams in math, science, and writing.

■ Low percentages of high school students enroll in upper-level science.

■ Small percentages of 11th and 12th graders take and score well on Advanced Placement and college entrance exams.



Participation

■ Relative to other states, the likelihood of 9th graders enrolling in college within four years is fairly low. A small proportion of students finish high school within four years and relatively few graduates go on to college immediately after high school.

■ A small percentage of working-age adults enroll in college. Oklahoma has one of the nation's largest declines on this measure over the past decade.

■ About 14% of Oklahoma adults do not have a high school diploma, making them ineligible to participate in college-level education. This fact, combined with a projected decrease in high school graduates over the coming decade, makes Oklahoma vulnerable in developing a competitive workforce.

Affordability

■ Net college costs for low- and middle-income students to attend public two- or four-year colleges represent about a third of their annual family income. These families earn on average \$17,633 annually—among the lowest in the nation for this population. (Net college costs equal tuition, room, and board minus financial aid.)

Completion

■ Compared with other states, only a fair percentage of freshmen at community colleges return for their sophomore year. This percentage has decreased over the past decade—more than the nationwide decline.

■ A small proportion of students at four-year colleges and universities earn a bachelor's degree within six years of enrolling in college.

Benefits

■ A small proportion of Oklahoma residents have a bachelor's degree.

Policy Questions

■ Can higher education improve partnerships with K–12 schools to improve student achievement and preparation for college?

■ Can the state facilitate a timely transition to college for its high school graduates?

■ Given that approximately 14% of adults do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent, can the state encourage more residents to get a General Education Development (GED) credential?

■ Can Oklahoma develop policies to increase the likelihood of success of "Brain Gain 2010"?

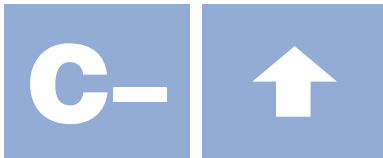
■ Can the two-year colleges be made more affordable, particularly for low- and middle-income families?

■ Can Oklahoma provide more opportunities for working-age adults to enroll in college-level education?

■ Can Oklahoma develop financial aid programs to meet the needs of qualified low-income students?

2004
Grade

Improvement
Over Decade



Despite substantial improvement over the past decade, Oklahoma continues to lag behind many other states in preparing high school students to succeed in college. This year Oklahoma receives a C– in preparation.

Graded Information

■ Compared with other states, a large proportion (49%) of high school students in Oklahoma are enrolled in upper-level math, but a fairly small proportion (28%) are enrolled in upper-level science.

■ A very small proportion (9%) of 8th graders take algebra.

■ Eighth graders perform poorly on national assessments in science and writing, and very poorly on national assessments in math.

■ Compared with their peers in other states, low-income 8th graders perform very poorly on national assessments in math.

■ Extremely small proportions of 11th and 12th graders score well on Advanced Placement tests, and small proportions score well on college entrance exams.

■ Sixty-two percent of secondary school students are taught by qualified teachers, which is only average compared with top-performing states.

Change in Graded Measures

■ Over the past decade, the proportions of high school students enrolled in upper-level math and science have increased substantially. However, Oklahoma's current performance on the science measure is fairly low compared with other states.

PREPARATION	OKLAHOMA		Top States 2004
	A Decade Ago	2004	
High School Completion (20%)			
18- to 24-year-olds with a high school credential	84%	87%*	94%
K–12 Course Taking (35%)			
9th to 12th graders taking at least one upper-level math course	35%	49%	59%
9th to 12th graders taking at least one upper-level science course	22%	28%	41%
8th grade students taking algebra	7%	9%	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	17%	20%	36%
in reading	29%	30%	39%
in science	n/a	26%	42%
in writing	25%	27%	41%
Low-income 8th graders scoring at or above “proficient” on the national assessment exam in math	n/a	10%	23%
Number of scores in the top 20% nationally on SAT/ACT college entrance exam per 1,000 high school graduates	118	139	227
Number of scores that are 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement subject test per 1,000 high school juniors and seniors	29	89	219
Teacher Quality (10%)			
7th to 12th graders taught by teachers with a major in their subject	53%	62%	81%

*Eighty-two percent of 18- to 24-year-olds have a regular high school diploma; 5% have a GED.

Note: Indicators in italics are new for 2004.

■ The proportions of 11th and 12th graders taking and scoring well on Advanced Placement exams have more than tripled over the past decade, although the state's current performance on this measure is very low relative to other states.

Other Key Facts

■ Over the past decade, the percentage of young adults who are from minority ethnic groups and who earn a high school credential has increased from 74% to 80%.

■ Over the same period, the gap in earning a high school credential has narrowed between young adults from high-income families and those from low-income families. The percentage of young adults who are from low-income families and who earn a high school credential has increased substantially, from 66% to 86%.

■ About 20% 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 12th graders taking upper-level math because the state did not report the data by grade level.

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

C



Over the past decade, Oklahoma's performance in enrolling students in higher education has declined. Oklahoma receives a C in participation this year.

Graded Information

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

■ A small 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 decrease in the percentage of working-age adults who are enrolled part-time in college-level education or training is one of the sharpest declines in the nation.

PARTICIPATION	OKLAHOMA		Top States 2004
	A Decade Ago	2004	
Young Adults (60%)			
Chance for college by age 19	39%	36%	52%
18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college	32%	29%	40%
Working-Age Adults (40%)			
25- to 49-year-olds enrolled part-time in any type of postsecondary education	4.4%	3.4%	5.4%

Other Key Facts

■ A decade ago, 15 of every 100 young adults (ages 18 to 24) from low-income families were enrolled in college; now 34 of 100 are.

■ The state's population is projected to grow by 12% from 2000 to 2015, almost identical to the national rate of 13%. During approximately the same period, the number of high school graduates is projected to decline by 1%.

■ About 14% of the adult population has less than a high school diploma or its equivalent, a rate that matches that of the nation as a whole.

■ In Oklahoma, 1,944 more students are entering the state than are leaving to attend college. About 10% of Oklahoma 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



Over the past decade, Oklahoma, like most states, has made no notable progress in providing affordable higher education opportunities. This year Oklahoma is one of many states to receive an F in affordability.

Graded Information

■ Compared with best-performing states, families in Oklahoma devote a fairly large share of family income, even after financial aid, to attend public two- and four-year colleges and universities, which enroll almost 90% of college students in the state.

■ The state's investment in need-based financial aid is very low when compared with top-performing states, and Oklahoma does not offer low-priced college opportunities.

■ Undergraduate students borrowed on average \$3,060 in 2003.

Change in Graded Measures

■ Over the past decade, the share of income needed to pay for college expenses after financial aid has increased from 15% to 20% at community colleges and from 15% to 23% at public four-year institutions.

Other Key Facts

■ In Oklahoma, 37% of students are enrolled in community colleges and 50% in public four-year colleges and universities.

AFFORDABILITY	OKLAHOMA		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	15%	20%	15%
at public 4-year colleges/universities	15%	23%	16%
at private 4-year colleges/universities	43%	56%	32%
Strategies for Affordability (40%)			
State investment in need-based financial aid as compared to the federal investment	12%	16%	89%
At lowest-priced colleges, the share of income that the poorest families need to pay for tuition	14%	16%	7%
Reliance on Loans (10%)			
Average loan amount that undergraduate students borrow each year	\$2,619	\$3,060	\$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	\$10,500	\$4,977	47%	\$5,465	52%	\$14,612	139%
20% of the population with lower-middle income	\$24,766	\$5,616	23%	\$6,192	25%	\$14,874	60%
20% of the population with middle income	\$39,010	\$6,003	15%	\$6,969	18%	\$14,897	38%
20% of the population with upper-middle income	\$60,000	\$6,123	10%	\$7,314	12%	\$14,947	25%
20% of the population with the highest income	\$101,936	\$6,129	6%	\$7,391	7%	\$15,790	15%
40% of the population with the lowest income	\$17,633	\$5,296	30%	\$5,828	33%	\$14,743	84%

*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 \$17,633 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 30% of their income annually:

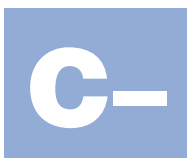
Tuition, room, and board:	\$6,181
Financial aid received:	—\$ 885
Net college cost:	\$5,296
Percent of income:	30%

■ If the same student were to attend a public four-year college in the state, their net cost to attend college would represent about 33% of their income annually:

Tuition, room, and board:	\$7,735
Financial aid received:	—\$1,907
Net college cost:	\$5,828
Percent of income:	33%

Note

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

2004
GradeImprovement
Over Decade

In Oklahoma, over the past decade, a substantially larger proportion of students earned a certificate or degree in a timely manner. Despite that progress, Oklahoma receives a C– in completion this year.

Graded Information

- Compared with other states, only a fair percentage of first-year students in community colleges return for their second year.
- However, a large percentage (71%) of freshmen at four-year colleges and universities return for their sophomore year.
- A small percentage (41%) of first-time, full-time college students complete a bachelor's degree within six years of entering college.
- 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.
- During the past few years, the state has seen an increase in the percentage of first-time, full-time college students earning their bachelor's degree within six years of enrolling in college. Nonetheless, Oklahoma's current performance on this measure remains low when compared with other states.

COMPLETION	OKLAHOMA		Top States 2004
	A Decade Ago	2004	
Persistence (20%)			
1st year community college students returning their second year	49%	46%	63%
Freshmen at 4-year colleges/universities returning their sophomore year	69%	71%	84%
Completion (80%)			
First-time, full-time students completing a bachelor's degree within 6 years of college entrance	37%	41%	64%
Certificates, degrees, and diplomas awarded at all colleges and universities per 100 undergraduate students	14	15	21

Other Key Facts

- Over the past decade, Oklahoma has made progress in narrowing the gaps between whites and all minority ethnic groups in the proportion of students completing certificates and degrees relative to the number enrolled. In particular, the number of Native American students receiving certificates and degrees has increased from 11 to 13 per 100 enrolled. Nonetheless, black students are only three-quarters as likely as whites to complete certificates and degrees.

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

C+



Over the past decade, Oklahoma has seen an increase in the benefits accruing to the state from having a more highly educated population. This year, however, Oklahoma receives only a C+ in benefits because other states performed better.

Graded Information

■ Compared with other states, a small proportion of residents have a bachelor's degree, and this substantially weakens the state economy.

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

Change in Graded Measures

■ Over the past decade, the percentage of residents voting has dropped substantially.

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 \$1.6 billion higher, and the state would realize an estimated \$566 million in additional tax revenues.

■ Oklahoma has narrowed the gap between whites and minority ethnic groups in the percentage who have a bachelor's degree. A decade ago, 10 of every 100 adults from minority ethnic groups had a bachelor's degree; now 17 of 100 do.

■ In 2002, Oklahoma scored 54 on the New Economy Index, compared to a nationwide score of 60. The New

BENEFITS	OKLAHOMA		Top States 2004
	A Decade Ago	2004	
Educational Achievement (37.5%)			
Population aged 25 to 65 with a bachelor's degree or higher	21%	24%	36%
Economic Benefits (31.25%)			
Increase in total personal income as a result of the percentage of the population holding a bachelor's degree	8%	7%	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%	3%	3%
Civic Benefits (31.25%)			
Residents voting in national elections	58%	49%	60%
Of those who itemize on federal income taxes, the percentage declaring charitable gifts	87%	88%	92%
<i>Increase in volunteering rate as a result of college education</i>	n/a	19%	22%
Adult Skill Levels (0%)*			
Adults demonstrating high-level literacy skills:			
quantitative	22%	24%	33%
prose	19%	22%	33%
document	17%	19%	28%

*Adult Skill Levels for 2004 are estimated and are not used to calculate grades.

Note: Indicators in italics are new for 2004.

Economy Index, developed by the Progressive Policy Institute, measures the extent to which states are participating in knowledge-based industries.

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

2004
Grade



Oklahoma residents perform slightly below the national average on literacy measures, reflecting moderate levels of educational attainment. Higher-than-average proportions of college graduates appear to be prepared to enter licensed technical careers, while lower-than-average proportions are prepared for traditional graduate study. College graduates demonstrate average performance in problem-solving skills but below-average performance in written communication.

In previous years, *Measuring Up* gave all states an “Incomplete” in learning because there are no common benchmarks for learning that would allow for state comparisons. *Measuring Up 2004*, for the first time, gives a “Plus” in learning to five states (Illinois, Kentucky, Nevada, Oklahoma, and South Carolina) that have developed comparable learning measures through their participation in a national project conducted by the National Forum on College-Level Learning and funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.¹

Based on the results of the project, the learning category is being constructed as the other five performance categories in *Measuring Up* have been, with indicators that are grouped in several themes:

1. Literacy levels of the state's residents:

What are the abilities of the college-educated population?

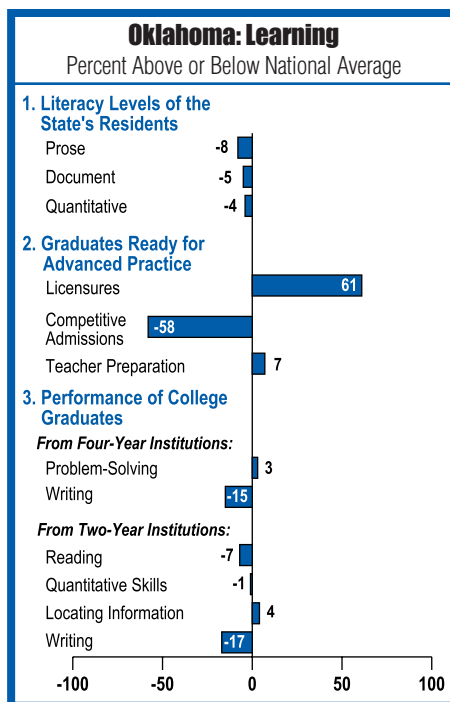
2. Graduates ready for advanced practice:

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

3. Performance of college graduates:

How effectively can college and university graduates communicate and solve problems?

In order to evaluate state performance, the values for each indicator within these themes are compared to a common standard: the national average on each



measure. Performance on the resulting group of measures creates a “learning profile” for each of the five states. Each state’s performance is reflected by how many percentage points *above* or *below* this national level its value falls (see chart). The bars to the left of the vertical line show how many percentage points below the national average the state falls; bars to the right indicate how many percentage points above this benchmark the state performs.

Oklahoma Results

Oklahoma has been active in attempting to improve the quality of higher education. However, the state faces challenges with respect to educational attainment; it is

in the bottom half of the states on this measure. Also, the state has not performed well in preparing students for college-level academic work (the state earns a C– in preparation this year). Residents’ performance on literacy measures remains somewhat below national averages (see chart).

The state’s higher education system is heavily and deliberately oriented toward workforce preparation. The readiness of graduates for advanced practice reflects this; the proportion of its graduates taking licensure exams in such fields as nursing and physical therapy are well above national averages and their pass-rates are competitive. However, the proportions of four-year graduates who take and perform at competitive levels on graduate school admissions exams are both below national averages.

Students from two- and four-year colleges perform at or just below national averages on direct measures of student learning. While Oklahoma minority students perform at lower levels than white students in the state on all these measures, their scores are about the same as their counterparts in other states.

Written communication skills appear to be a particular policy challenge for the state for all population groups. This is reflected by below-average performances on writing examinations for graduates of both two- and four-year institutions, and in prose literacy for the general population as well.

¹ A report on the results of the project will be released in November.

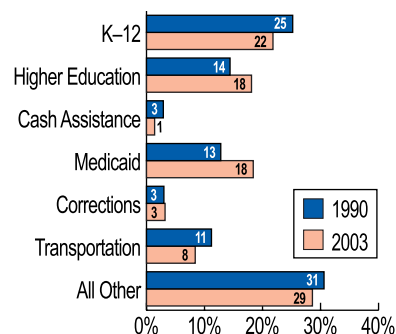
The learning results shown on this page are provided to make broad comparisons across states. But because relatively small numbers of students were tested on the exams under Performance of College Graduates, results should be treated with caution. Readers should look at the overall *pattern* of results in a state profile without making too much of the individual values for each measure.

State Context	Oklahoma	State Rank
Population (2003)	3,511,532	28
Gross state product (2001, in millions)	\$93,855	29
Leading Indicators	Oklahoma	U.S.
Projected % change in population, 2000-2015	12.3%	12.9%
Projected % change in number of all high school graduates, 2002-2017	-1.1%	8.0%
Projected budget surplus/shortfall by 2010	-1.3%	-3.4%
Average income of poorest 20% of population (2002)	\$10,500	\$12,072
Children in poverty (2001)	20.0%	16.0%
Percent of adult population with less than a high school diploma or equivalent (2003)	14.3%	14.0%
New economy index (2002)*	54.1	60.3
Facts and Figures	Oklahoma	
	Number/Amount	Percent
Institutions of Postsecondary Education (2002-03)		
Public 4-year	14	
Public 2-year	15	
Private 4-year	17	
Private 2-year	7	
Students Enrolled by Institution Type (2001)		
Public 4-year	82,382	50%
Public 2-year	60,947	37%
Private 4-year	20,426	12%
Private 2-year	1,038	1%
Students Enrolled by Level (2001)		
Undergraduate	164,793	87%
Graduate	20,488	11%
Professional	4,504	2%
Enrollment Status of Students (2001)		
Full-time	121,760	64%
Part-time	68,025	36%
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.	1,944	
Average Tuition (2002-03)		
Public 4-year institutions	\$3,204	
Public 2-year institutions	\$1,650	
Private 4-year institutions	\$12,451	
State and Local Appropriations for Higher Education		
Per \$1,000 of personal income, FY 2004	\$8	
Per capita, FY 2004	\$208	
% change, FY 1994-2004		36%

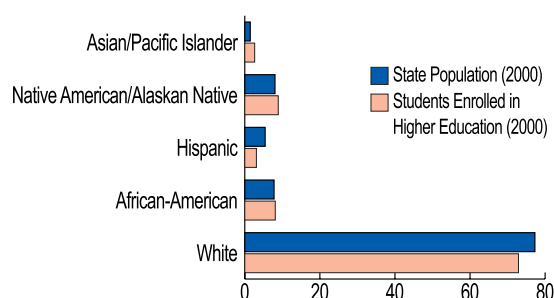
* This index, created by the Progressive Policy Institute, measures the extent to which a state is participating in knowledge-based industries. A higher score means increased participation.

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

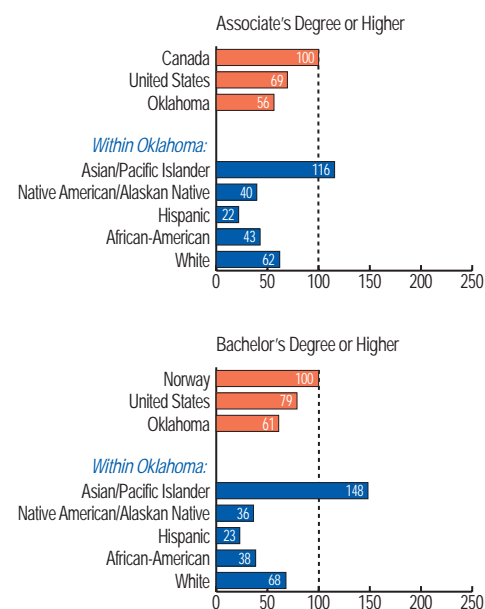
Share of State Appropriations



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.

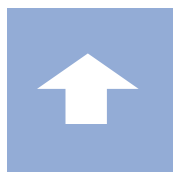
In the learning category, *Measuring Up 2004* reports information about five states (Illinois, Kentucky, Nevada, Oklahoma, and South Carolina) that participated in a pilot project on measuring learning. This report card gives these states a “Plus” for their efforts in assessing and measuring learning; 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*.

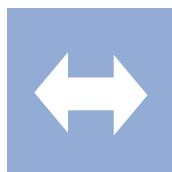
Q: What information is provided but not graded?

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.

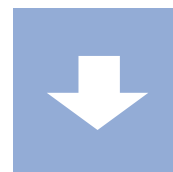
What do the arrows mean?



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

National Picture

- **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**

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- Questions and Answers about *Measuring Up 2004*
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