

Alabama's College- and Career-Ready Commitment

The Economic Imperative

Today, nearly every good job requires some postsecondary education and/or training (e.g., an associate's or bachelor's degree, certificate, or apprenticeship or significant on-the-job training). All students need to be academically prepared to compete for good jobs in the global economy.

In 1950, 60% of jobs were classified as unskilled, attainable by young people with high school diplomas or less. Today, less than 20% jobs are considered to be unskilled.ⁱ

- **81%** of U.S. jobs are middle or high skills (jobs that require some postsecondary education or training).
- **Yet only 32%** of Alabama's adults have some postsecondary degree (associate's or higher).ⁱⁱ

More education is associated with higher earnings and higher rates of employment in Alabama.ⁱⁱⁱ

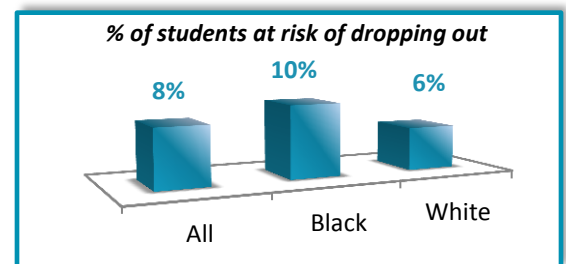
Mean Income	Education Level	Unemployment
\$8,952	HS Dropout	25%
\$24,434	HS Graduate	14%
\$27,935	Some College	10%
\$60,903	Bachelors & Above	5%

The Equity Imperative

Far too many students drop out or graduate from high school unprepared for success, closing doors and limiting their options and opportunities – in particular minority and low-income students.

Alabama's achievement gaps begin in the earliest grades and extend through college enrollment and admissions.^{iv}

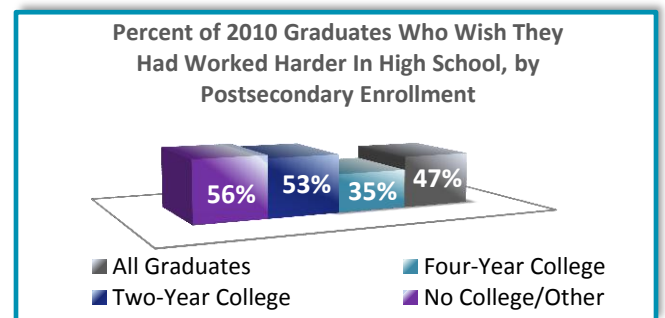
	All	White	Black	Hispanic	Low SES
4 th Grade Math Proficiency	27%	37%	9%	21%	15%
8 th Grade Reading Proficiency ^v	26%	34%	11%	16%	15%
HS Graduation Rate ^{vi}	69%	75%	60%	57%	N/A
College Completion Rate ^{vii}	47%	54%	35%	37%	N/A



The Expectations Gap

The bar has been set too low for too long, keeping students from reaching their full potential. If we want students to achieve more, we need to expect more.

- **44%** of Alabama's students in two-year colleges and **18%** of Alabama's students in four-year colleges require remediation.^{viii}
- Fewer than half (**47%**) of students who enter public colleges in Alabama earn their degrees.
- **34%** of employers deem the preparation of newly hired employees with only a high school diploma as "deficient," (and only 16% find their preparation "excellent.")^{ix}
- **49%** of employers surveyed noted they anticipate requiring higher levels of education for most jobs – and another **60%** noted more specific technical skills will be required – in the next 3-5 years.^x



All too often, students regret not working harder once they leave high school.^{xi}

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The College- and Career-Ready Agenda

Over the past five years, states have driven the college- and career-ready agenda – a policy agenda that seeks to ensure all students graduate high school, and graduate ready for their next steps.

Alabama is among the states that have made college and career readiness a priority for all students.^{xii}

- In 2009, Alabama first adopted high school standards aligned with college- and career-ready expectations.
- In 2010, Alabama adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy.
- Alabama adopted the First Choice Diploma, raising the state's high school graduation requirements to the college- and career-ready level to first impact the Class of 2013.

Alabama is one of only 24 states (including DC) with requirements at this level

- In 2009, Alabama adopted a policy requiring all 11th graders to take the ACT starting in 2012 and the WorkKeys, in 2015.

Alabama is one of only 18 states with high school tests used by higher education for placement decisions letting students know if they are ready for college-level coursework while still in high school to give them time to address any readiness gaps

- Alabama is a participating state in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), the two multi-state consortia developing CCSS-aligned assessments.
- Alabama has met four of the ten State Actions identified by the Data Quality Campaign, providing a foundation for strong and sound student-level data collection and use.

Alabama is one of 26 states with a P-20 longitudinal data system that regularly matches student-level K-12 and postsecondary data

- Alabama tracks three indicators of college and career readiness but still needs to expand its use of indicators to get a more complete picture of how their students are faring in K-12 and beyond.

College- and Career-Ready Indicator	Publicly Reported	State Set Goal	Incentive to Improve	Accountability Formula
CCR Diploma	YES			
CCR Assessment		YES		
Postsecondary Remediation	YES	YES		
Exceeding CCR				

How Alabama Can Further Advance the College- and Career-Ready Agenda

- ✓ ...Fully realize the promise of the CCSS by implementing them fully and successfully, taking into account the related curricular and policy changes.
- ✓ ...Closely monitor which students are completing the college- and career-ready curriculum, and which are opting out.
- ✓ ...Remain committed to the goals of the common assessment consortia and developing and administering a next-generation, computer-based assessment system that will measure the full range of the CCSS.
- ✓ ...Continue to make progress on the state's data collection efforts, particularly around making student data available to relevant stakeholders, such as teachers, parents and counselors.
- ✓ ...Re-examine the state's K-12 accountability system to determine how it can further reward measures of college and career readiness, in alignment with the state's standards, course requirements, and assessments.

ⁱ Carnevale, Anthony P. and Donna Desrochers (2003). *Standards for What? The Economic Roots of K-12 Reform*, Education Testing Services.

www.learndoearn.org/For-Educators/Standards-for-What.pdf

ⁱⁱ Skills to Compete <http://www.skills2compete.org>

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Census Bureau (2011). *Current Population Survey*. Figures are based on the total persons in the civilian labor force.

www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpssc/cps_table_creator.html

^{iv} Annie E. Casey Foundation. Kids Count Data Center. 2010,

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx>

^v Analysis of NAEP data downloaded from nationsreportcard.gov

^{vi} Education Week (2009). *Graduation in the United States*.

www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2012/06/07/

^{vii} NCES. *IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey*, analyzed by National Center for Management of Higher Education Systems.

^{viii} Hammons, Christopher, W. (2004). *The Cost of Remedial Education: How Much Alabama Pays When Students Fail to Learn Basic Skills*. The Alabama Policy Institute. http://alabamapolicyinstitute.org/pdf/re_study.pdf

^{ix} Corporate Voices for Working Families & Civic Enterprises (2011). *Across the Great Divide: Perspectives of CEOs and College Presidents on America's Higher Education and Skills Gap*. www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/across-the-great-divide.pdf

^x Achieve/SHRM

^{xi} College Board (2011). *One Year Out: Findings From A National Survey Among Members Of The High School Graduating Class Of 2010*.

www.collegeboard.org/OneYearOut

^{xii} Achieve (2012). *Closing the Expectations Gap 2011: 50-State Progress Report on the Alignment of High School Policies with the Demands of College and Careers*.