

# Montana'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.<sup>i</sup>

- **81%** of U.S. jobs are middle or high skills (i.e., require some postsecondary education or training).
- Yet only **40%** of Montana's adults have some postsecondary degree (associate's or higher).<sup>ii</sup>

More education is associated with higher earnings and higher rates of employment in Montana.<sup>iii</sup>

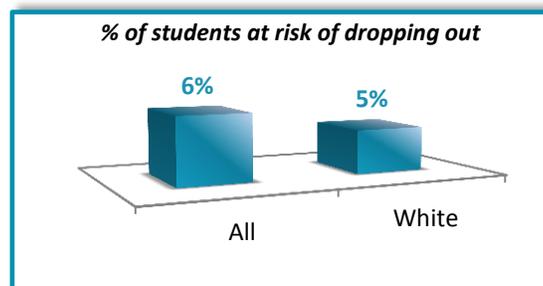
Mean Income	Education Level	Unemployment
\$10,186	HS Dropout	32%
\$25,326	HS Graduate	10%
\$28,289	Some College	9%
\$46,476	Bachelors & Above	3%

## 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.

Montana's achievement gaps begin in the earliest grades and extend through college enrollment and admissions.<sup>iv</sup>

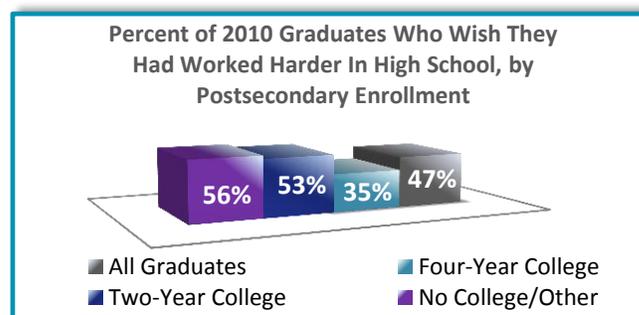
	All	White	Hispanic	Amer. Ind	Low SES
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Proficiency	45%	50%	31%	16%	31%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency <sup>v</sup>	42%	44%	27%	25%	30%
HS Graduation Rate <sup>vi</sup>	77%	80%	49%	53%	N/A
College Completion Rate <sup>vii</sup>	43%	45%	31%	29%	N/A



## 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.

- Nationally, **42%** of U.S. students in two-year colleges and **20%** of U.S. students in four-year colleges require remediation upon entry.<sup>viii</sup>
- Fewer than half (**43%**) of students who enter public colleges in Montana 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.")<sup>ix</sup>
- **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.<sup>x</sup>



All too often, students regret not working harder once they leave high school.<sup>xi</sup>

# Montana's College- and Career-Ready Commitment

## 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.

Montana is among the states that have made college and career readiness a priority for all students.<sup>xii</sup>

- Montana adopted the Common Core State Standards in November 2011.
- Montana is a Lead State Partner in the development of the Next Generation Science Standards.
- Montana is a governing state in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), a group of states working together to develop an assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards.
- Montana meets only two of the ten State Actions identified by the Data Quality Campaign, as well as seven of the Essential Elements, providing a strong foundation for student-level data collection.
- Montana collects and uses only one indicator of college and career readiness, and will need to expand its range 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				
CCR Assessment				
Postsecondary Remediation	YES			
Exceeding CCR				

## How Montana Can Further Advance the College- and Career-Ready Agenda

- ✓ ...Fully realize the promise of the Common Core State Standards by implementing them fully and successfully, taking into account the related curricular, professional development, and policy changes.
- ✓ ...Adopt college- and career-ready graduation requirements, aligned to the Common Core State Standards, to ensure all students are prepared, and eligible, for entry into college and skilled careers.
- ✓ ...Remain committed to the goals of SBAC and developing a next-generation, computer-based assessment system anchored by college- and career-ready tests in high school that will let students know if they are ready for college-level coursework and measure the full range of the Common Core State Standards.
- ✓ ...Continue to make progress on the state's data collection efforts, particularly around making 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.

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

<sup>ii</sup> [www.learnndoeearn.org/For-Educators/Standards-for-What.pdf](http://www.learnndoeearn.org/For-Educators/Standards-for-What.pdf)

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

<sup>iv</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2011). *Current Population Survey*. Figures are based on the total persons in the civilian labor force.

<sup>v</sup> [www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpssc/cps\\_table\\_creator.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpssc/cps_table_creator.html)

<sup>vi</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation. Kids Count Data Center. 2010. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx>

<sup>vii</sup> Analysis of NAEP data downloaded from [nationsreportcard.gov](http://nationsreportcard.gov)

<sup>viii</sup> Education Week (2009). *Graduation in the United States*.

<sup>ix</sup> [www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2012/06/07/](http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2012/06/07/)

<sup>x</sup> NCES. *IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey*, analyzed by National Center for Management of Higher Education Systems.

<sup>xi</sup> [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_rmc.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_rmc.asp)

<sup>xii</sup> Corporate Voices for Working Families & Civic Enterprises (2011). *Across the Great Divide: Perspectives of CEOs and College Presidents on America's Higher Education & Skills Gap*. [www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/across-the-great-divide.pdf](http://www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/across-the-great-divide.pdf)

<sup>xiii</sup> Achieve/SHRM

<sup>xiv</sup> 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](http://www.collegeboard.org/OneYearOut)

<sup>xv</sup> 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*.