

**MEASURING UP**

**2006**

**THE STATE REPORT CARD  
ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

**NEBRASKA**



**THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
PUBLIC POLICY AND  
HIGHER EDUCATION**

# WHAT IS MEASURING UP?

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The purpose of this state report card is to provide the general public and policymakers with information they can use to assess and improve postsecondary education in each state. *Measuring Up 2006* is the fourth in a series of biennial report cards.

*Measuring Up 2006* 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 does the state prepare students for education and training beyond high school?
- **Participation:** Do state residents have sufficient opportunities to enroll in education and training beyond high school?
- **Affordability:** How affordable is higher education for students and their families?
- **Completion:** Do students make progress toward and complete their certificates or degrees in a timely manner?
- **Benefits:** What benefits does the state receive from having a highly educated population?
- **Learning:** What is known about student learning as a result of education and training beyond high school?

Each state receives a letter grade in each performance category. Each grade is based on the state’s performance on several indicators, or quantitative measures, in that category.

*Measuring Up 2006* is the first edition that includes data in the Learning category for all 50 states on the extent to which colleges and universities prepare students to contribute to the workforce.

As in *Measuring Up 2004*, most states in 2006 receive an “Incomplete” in Learning due to the lack of reported information.

This year, however, nine states (Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Oklahoma, and South Carolina) receive a “Plus.” For more information on these states and the Learning category, 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 comparison provides a basis for evaluating each state’s performance within a national context and encourages each state to “measure up” to the highest-performing states.

In the Affordability category, however, the United States 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 relative to family income. As a result, state grades in the Affordability category are calculated by comparing each state’s current performance with the performance of the best states in the early 1990s. This comparison allows policymakers to examine their state’s results relative to other states, while also encouraging improved performance over time. The Affordability category is the only one in which no state receives an A—the highest grade is a C–.

*Measuring Up 2006* also compares each state’s current performance with its own performance in the early 1990s. Although this historical comparison is not graded, it is offered so that states can examine their trends in performance—both improvements and declines—over time. All data are drawn from reliable national sources. (For more information, please see the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2006* at [www.highereducation.org](http://www.highereducation.org).)

*Measuring Up 2006* is the first edition that offers international comparisons that provide essential information on how well the United States and each of the 50 states are preparing residents with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete effectively in a global economy. Every state is compared with nations associated with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

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## A Snapshot of Change Over Time

Academic preparation for college has continued to improve since the early 1990s, which is approximately when the most reliable data became available for meaningful comparisons. High school graduates are, in general, better prepared for college today than their peers were about a decade ago, as indicated by a greater proportion of high school students enrolled in a college-preparatory curriculum and scoring higher on national assessment examinations. Most states, however, and the United States as a whole, continue to show little progress in translating these gains into improvements at the college level.

**Preparation:** 45 states improved on more than half of the indicators; 5 improved on some of the indicators.

**Participation:** 8 states improved on more than half of the indicators; 28 improved on some of the indicators; 14 declined on most or all of the indicators.

**Affordability:** 1 state improved on more than half of the indicators; 32 improved on some of the indicators; 17 declined on most or all of the indicators.

**Completion:** 35 states improved on more than half of the indicators; 13 improved on some of the indicators; 2 declined on most or all of the indicators.

**Benefits:** 40 states improved on more than half of the indicators; 8 improved on some of the indicators; 2 declined on most or all of the indicators.

Nebraska compares well with most states in preparing students for and enrolling them in college. Yet even though the proportion of 9th graders enrolling in college by age 19 remains high compared with other states, the state has seen a double-digit drop in this college-going rate since the early 1990s. The proportion of 9th graders graduating from high school in four years has declined, as has the proportion of graduates going directly on to college after high school. Since the early 1990s, colleges and universities in Nebraska have become less affordable for students and their families. If these trends are not addressed, they could limit the state's access to an educated, competitive workforce and weaken its economy over time.

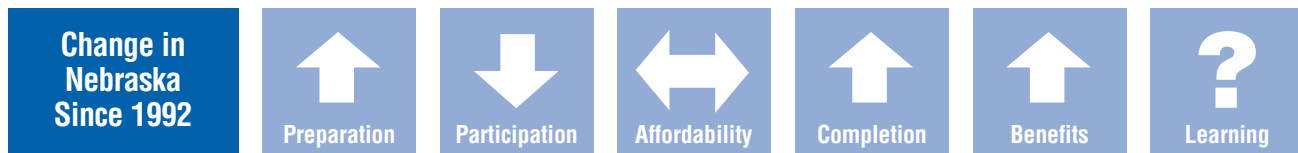
## Strengths

### Preparation

- Very large proportions of high school students in Nebraska are enrolled in upper-level math and science courses. The proportion of high school students enrolled in upper-level science has increased by 61%. Nebraska has shown some of the greatest improvement among the states on this measure.
- Eighth graders perform very well on national assessments in math and reading.
- A large proportion of high school students take and perform well on college entrance exams.
- Eighty percent of Nebraska's secondary school students are taught by teachers with an undergraduate or graduate major in the subject they are teaching.

### Participation

- Compared with other states, the chance that a 9th grader in Nebraska will enroll in college within four years remains high. However, this chance has declined over the past decade.



### 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 most or all indicators.

## Completion

■ Compared with other states, a large percentage of freshmen at community colleges return for their sophomore year. However, this percentage has decreased substantially over the past 15 years.

■ Similarly, a very high percentage of freshmen at four-year colleges and universities return for their sophomore year. Nebraska is among the top-performing states in improvement on this measure over the past 15 years.

■ A large proportion of students complete certificates and degrees relative to the number enrolled.

## Benefits

■ A gap remains between whites and non-whites in the percentage who have a bachelor's degree, even though Nebraska has narrowed this gap over the past 12 years.

## Weaknesses

### Preparation

■ Very small proportions of 11th and 12th graders take and score well on Advanced Placement tests.

■ The percentage of low-income 8th graders performing well on national assessments in math has decreased substantially. Nebraska is one of only five states to decline on this measure.

■ Among young adults (ages 18-24), non-whites are two-thirds as likely as whites to earn a high school credential.

## Participation

■ The percentage of working-age adults who are enrolled part-time in education or training beyond high school has decreased substantially—the steepest decline in the nation.

■ Among young adults (ages 18-24), a substantial gap exists between whites and non-whites in college participation. In addition, young adults from high-income families are about twice as likely as those from low-income families to attend college.

## Affordability

■ Net college costs for low- and middle-income students to attend public four-year colleges and universities represent about 41% of their annual family income. (Net college costs equal tuition, room, and board after financial aid.) This percentage has increased since 1992.

■ Nebraska makes a very low investment in need-based financial aid compared with top-performing states, even though Nebraska has increased its commitment to financially needy students since 1992.

## Completion

■ Over the past decade, the gap has widened between whites and Hispanics in the proportion of students completing certificates and degrees relative to the number enrolled. Currently, Hispanics are only two-thirds as likely as whites to complete certificates and degrees.

2006  
Grade

Change  
Over Time

**B**



*Nebraska has made progress in preparing students to succeed in college. This year Nebraska receives a B in preparation.*

## Graded Information

Compared with other states:

- Very large proportions of high school students in Nebraska are enrolled in upper-level math (61%) and upper-level science (37%).

- A fairly low proportion (24%) of 8th graders take algebra.

- Eighth graders perform very well on national assessments in math and reading, indicating that they are well prepared to succeed in challenging high school courses.

- The performance of low-income 8th graders on national assessments in math is fair.

- Very small proportions of 11th and 12th graders score well on Advanced Placement tests, but large proportions score well on college entrance exams.

- Eighty percent of secondary school students are taught by qualified teachers, which compares very well with top states.

## Change in Graded Measures

- Over the past 12 years, the proportion of high school students enrolled in upper-level math has increased substantially. The proportion of high school students enrolled in upper-level science has increased by 61%, placing Nebraska among the fastest-improving states on this measure.

PREPARATION	NEBRASKA		Top States 2006
	1992*	2006	
<b>High School Completion (20%)</b>			
18- to 24-year-olds with a high school credential	93%	90% <sup>†</sup>	94%
<b>K-12 Course Taking (35%)</b>			
9th to 12th graders taking at least one upper-level math course	39%	61%	64%
9th to 12th graders taking at least one upper-level science course	23%	37%	40%
8th grade students taking algebra	n/a	24%	35%
12th graders taking at least one upper-level math course	n/a	n/a	66%
<b>K-12 Student Achievement (35%)</b>			
8th graders scoring at or above "proficient" on the national assessment exam:			
in math	26%	35%	38%
in reading	n/a	35%	38%
in science	35%	36% <sup>‡</sup>	41%
in writing	n/a	32%	41%
Low-income 8th graders scoring at or above "proficient" on the national assessment exam in math	19%	17%	22%
Number of scores in the top 20% nationally on SAT/ACT college entrance exam per 1,000 high school graduates	167	198	237
Number of scores that are 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement subject test per 1,000 high school juniors and seniors	32	43	217
<b>Teacher Quality (10%)</b>			
7th to 12th graders taught by teachers with a major in their subject	68%	80%	81%

\*The indicators report data beginning in 1992 or the closest year for which reliable data are available. See the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2006*.

<sup>†</sup>Eighty-four percent of 18-24-year-olds have a regular high school diploma; 5% have a GED. The numbers shown for a regular high school diploma and a GED may not exactly equal the number for a high school credential due to rounding.

<sup>‡</sup>Data from *Measuring Up 2004* were used because updated state information was not available.

- The percentage of low-income 8th graders performing well on national assessments in math has decreased substantially over the past nine years. Nebraska is one of only five states to decline on this measure.
- Nebraska has consistently performed very well on the percentage of secondary school students taught by qualified teachers.

**Other Key Facts**

- Young adults from minority ethnic groups are two-thirds as likely as whites to earn a high school credential.
- About 13% of children under age 18 live in poverty, compared with a national rate of 18%.
- 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. In addition, important information about 8th graders' performance in science is not available because the state declined to participate in the national assessment.

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.

2006  
Grade

Change  
Over Time

A



*Despite a decline in performance, Nebraska continues to excel in enrolling students in higher education. This year Nebraska receives an A in participation.*

## Graded Information

Compared with other states:

- The chance of Nebraska high school students enrolling in college by age 19 is very high.
- Only a fair 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 chance of enrolling in college by age 19 has declined by 13%, compared with a national decline of 2%. The state's decrease is due to a decline in the percentage of students graduating from high school, and a drop in the percentage of high school graduates going on to college. However, Nebraska has consistently performed very well on this measure when compared with other states.
- The percentage of working-age adults who are enrolled part-time in education or training beyond high school has decreased substantially, by 32%—the steepest decline among the states on this measure.

PARTICIPATION	NEBRASKA		Top States 2006
	1992*	2006	
<b>Young Adults (60%)</b>			
Chance for college by age 19	55%	48%	53%
18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college	39%	37%	41%
<b>Working-Age Adults (40%)</b>			
25- to 49-year-olds enrolled part-time in any type of postsecondary education	5.9%	4.0%	5.1%

\*The indicators report data beginning in 1992 or the closest year for which reliable data are available. See the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2006*.

## Other Key Facts

- Among the young adult population (ages 18 to 24), the gap in college participation between whites and other ethnic groups is substantial. Currently, 40 out of 100 white young adults are enrolled in college, compared to 24 out of 100 young adults from other ethnic groups.
- Young adults (ages 18 to 24) from high-income families are about twice as likely as those from low-income families to attend college.
- The state's population is projected to grow by 3% from 2005 to 2020, well below the national rate of 14%. During approximately the same period, the number of high school graduates is projected to decline by 4%.

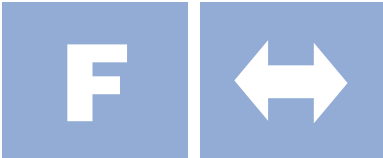
- About 9% of the adult population has less than a high school diploma or its equivalent, compared with 14% of adults nationwide.

- In Nebraska, 127 more students are entering the state than are leaving to attend college. About 17% of Nebraska 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.

2006  
Grade

Change  
Over Time



Nebraska has made no notable progress in providing affordable higher education. Nebraska receives an F in affordability this year.

## Graded Information

■ Compared with top-performing states, families in Nebraska devote a fairly large share of family income, even after financial aid, to attend public two-year colleges, and they devote a very large share of family income to attend public four-year colleges and universities in the state. These two sectors enroll 78% of Nebraska's college students.

■ Nebraska'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 \$3,447 in 2005.

## Change in Graded Measures

■ Over the past several years, the share of family income, even after financial aid, needed to pay for college expenses has increased from 15% to 21% at community colleges, and increased substantially from 17% to 27% at public four-year institutions.

■ Over the past several years, the state has increased its commitment to financially needy students. Nonetheless, the share of family income, even after financial aid, needed to pay for college is still large when compared with other states.

AFFORDABILITY	NEBRASKA		Top States In Early 1990s
	1992*	2006	
<b>Family Ability to Pay (50%)</b>			
Percent of income (average of all income groups) needed to pay for college expenses minus financial aid:			
at community colleges	15%	21%	15%
at public 4-year colleges/universities	17%	27%	16%
at private 4-year colleges/universities	39%	50%	32%
<b>Strategies for Affordability (40%)</b>			
State investment in need-based financial aid as compared to the federal investment	6%	15%	89%
At lowest-priced colleges, the share of income that the poorest families need to pay for tuition	10%	14%	7%
<b>Reliance on Loans (10%)</b>			
Average loan amount that undergraduate students borrow each year	\$2,665	\$3,447	\$2,619

\*The indicators report data beginning in 1992 or the closest year for which reliable data are available. See the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2006*.

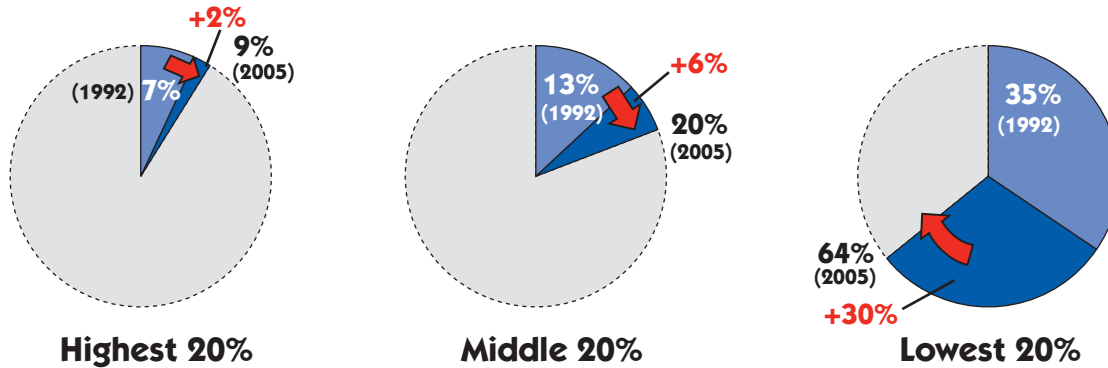
Note: In the affordability category, the lower the figures the better the performance for all indicators except for "State investment in need-based financial aid."

## Other Key Facts

■ In Nebraska, 39% of students are enrolled in community colleges and 39% in public four-year colleges and universities.

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.

**College in Nebraska Has Become Less Affordable, Particularly for Low-Income Families (1992–2005)**



Net costs to attend public 4-year colleges as a share of income for different income families.

**Financial Burden to Pay for College Varies Widely Among Different Income Families in the State**

Those who are striving to reach or stay in the middle class—the 40% of the population with the lowest incomes—earn on average \$21,804 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 31% of their income annually:

Tuition, room, and board: \$7,576  
 Financial aid received: -\$ 724  
 Net college cost: \$6,852  
 Percent of income: 31%

■ If the same student were to attend a public four-year college in the state, their net cost to attend college would represent about 41% of their income annually:

Tuition, room, and board: \$10,554  
 Financial aid received: -\$ 1,633  
 Net college cost: \$ 8,921  
 Percent of income: 41%

**Note**

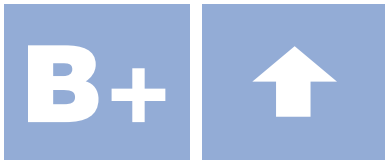
The numbers shown for tuition, room, and board minus financial aid may not exactly equal net college cost due to rounding.

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
<b>Income groups used to calculate 2006 family ability to pay</b>							
20% of the population with the lowest income	\$13,409	\$6,656	50%	\$8,627	64%	\$16,557	123%
20% of the population with lower-middle income	\$30,199	\$7,049	23%	\$9,214	31%	\$16,862	56%
20% of the population with middle income	\$50,500	\$7,389	15%	\$9,915	20%	\$17,040	34%
20% of the population with upper-middle income	\$74,104	\$7,493	10%	\$10,016	14%	\$17,110	23%
20% of the population with the highest income	\$118,062	\$7,518	6%	\$10,071	9%	\$17,424	15%
<b>40% of the population with the lowest income</b>	<b>\$21,804</b>	<b>\$6,852</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>\$8,921</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>\$16,710</b>	<b>77%</b>

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

2006  
Grade

Change  
Over Time



Nebraska has seen a substantial increase in the proportion of students earning a certificate or degree in a timely manner. This year Nebraska receives a B+ in completion.

## Graded Information

Compared with other states:

- A large percentage (55%) of first-year students in community colleges return for their second year.
- At four-year colleges and universities, the percentage of freshmen who return for their sophomore year is very large (75%).
- Among first-time, full-time college students, a large percentage (55%) complete a bachelor's degree within six years of enrolling in college.
- Also, a large proportion of students complete certificates and degrees relative to the number enrolled.

## Change in Graded Measures

- Over the past 15 years, the percentage of first-year community college students returning for their second year has decreased substantially.
- During the same period, however, Nebraska has been among the fastest-improving states in the percentage of freshmen at four-year colleges and universities returning for their sophomore year.

COMPLETION	NEBRASKA		Top States 2006
	1992*	2006	
<b>Persistence (20%)<sup>†</sup></b>			
1st year community college students returning their second year	68%	55%	62%
Freshmen at 4-year colleges/universities returning their sophomore year	69%	75%	82%
<b>Completion (80%)</b>			
First-time, full-time students completing a bachelor's degree within 6 years of college entrance	44%	55%	64%
Certificates, degrees, and diplomas awarded at all colleges and universities per 100 undergraduate students	15	17	20

\*The indicators report data beginning in 1992 or the closest year for which reliable data are available.

<sup>†</sup>2006 data may not be entirely comparable with data from previous years.

See the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2006*.

- Nebraska has also been among the fastest-improving states over the past seven years in the percentage of first-time, full-time college students earning a bachelor's degree within six years of enrolling in college.

## Other Key Facts

- Over the past decade, the gap has widened between white students and Hispanics in the proportion of students completing certificates and degrees relative to the number enrolled. Currently, Hispanic students are only two-thirds 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.

2006  
Grade

Change  
Over Time

**B**



Nebraska has made substantial gains in the benefits the state receives from having a more highly educated population. This year Nebraska earns a B in benefits.

## Graded Information

Compared with other states:

- A fairly high proportion of residents have a bachelor's degree.

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

## Change in Graded Measures

Over the past 12 years:

- The percentage of Nebraska residents who have a bachelor's degree has increased substantially.

- The percentage of residents voting has dropped substantially (by 15%).

## 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 \$637 million higher.

- Over the past 12 years, Nebraska has narrowed the gap between whites and other ethnic groups in the percentage who have a bachelor's degree, but the gap still exists. Currently, 31 out of 100 white adults have a bachelor's degree, compared to 19 out of 100 adults from other ethnic groups.

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

BENEFITS	NEBRASKA		Top States 2006
	1992*	2006	
<b>Educational Achievement (37.5%)</b>			
Population aged 25 to 65 with a bachelor's degree or higher	23%	29%	37%
<b>Economic Benefits (31.25%)</b>			
Increase in total personal income as a result of the percentage of the population holding a bachelor's degree	6%	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%	2%	3%
<b>Civic Benefits (31.25%)</b>			
Residents voting in national elections	62%	53%	64%
Of those who itemize on federal income taxes, the percentage declaring charitable gifts	91%	89%	91%
Increase in volunteering rate as a result of college education	n/a	20%	22%
<b>Adult Skill Levels (0%)*</b>			
Adults demonstrating high-level literacy skills:			
quantitative	28%	32%	33%
prose	25%	30%	33%
document	22%	27%	28%

\*The indicators report data beginning in 1992 or the closest year for which reliable data are available. See the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2006*.

†These are estimates from *Measuring Up 2004* and are not used to calculate grades. New data will be available in fall 2006.

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

- 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.

2006  
Grade



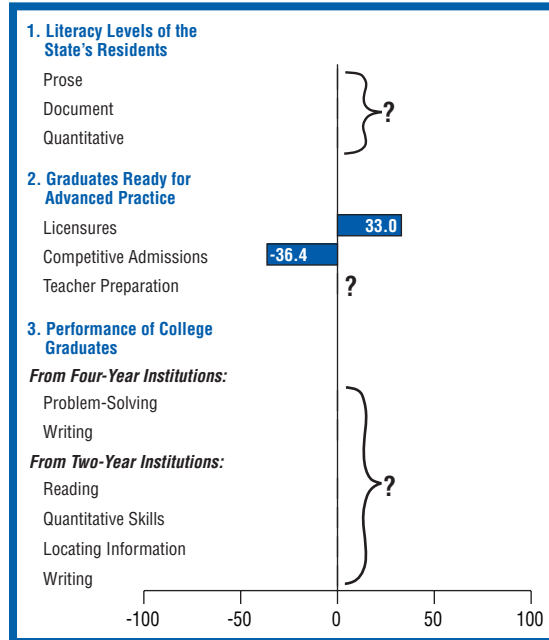
Like most states, Nebraska receives an “Incomplete” in Learning because insufficient data would not allow meaningful state-by-state comparisons. However, data are available this year to examine the readiness of college graduates—from two- and four-year institutions—for advanced practice. State results are described below.

In *Measuring Up 2006*, data are available, for the first time, for all fifty states on “Graduates Ready for Advanced Practice” indicators (see chart). In the 2004 edition of *Measuring Up*, state-level results on all Learning indicators were reported for five states (Illinois, Kentucky, Nevada, Oklahoma, and South Carolina) that participated in a pilot project directed by the National Forum on College-Level Learning and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.\* This project evaluated state performance in Learning on three topics:

**1. Literacy Levels of the State’s Residents.** These indicators answer the question, “What are the abilities of the state’s college-educated population?” The answer provides information about the level of “educational capital” the state can count on to develop a competitive 21st-century workforce and a responsible citizenry.

**2. Graduates Ready for Advanced Practice.** These indicators address the question, “To what extent do colleges and universities in the state educate students to contribute to the workforce?” These measures examine how well prepared state college and university graduates are to enter a licensed profession or participate in graduate study.

**3. Performance of College Graduates.** These indicators address the question, “How effectively can college and university graduates in the state communicate and solve problems?” The ability of college graduates to perform complex academic and real-world tasks is the “bottom line” in Learning. This can only be determined by common direct assessments of college graduate abilities.



Note: Measures under the third cluster will require special data collection efforts similar to those undertaken by the five pilot project states in 2004.

*Measuring Up 2006* employs the same methodology for Learning as used in the 2004 edition of *Measuring Up*. Overall state performance is illustrated by a bar chart for each state. In the chart, the data for each indicator are represented by a bar showing the number of percentage points the state performed above or below the national average.

The overall picture for *Measuring Up 2006* remains incomplete. While “Graduates Ready for Advanced Practice” results can be reported for all states, results for “Literacy Levels of State’s Residents” can only be calculated for five of the six states that participated in a state-level version of the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (SAAL) conducted in 2003. Results for “Performance of College Graduates”, reported in the 2004

edition of *Measuring Up*, were based on assessments administered to representative samples of college students in each of the five pilot project states. These measures were not updated for 2006.

**Nebraska Results**

Nebraska’s higher education system is competitive in work-force preparation as reflected in professional licensure examinations. The state is more than 30% above the national benchmark on this measure, placing it among the top 10 states. Almost 20% more Nebraska graduates take such examinations than is typical nationally, and their pass rate is 5% higher than the national

average. The state ranks much lower in preparing students for graduate study as reflected in graduate admissions examinations. Nebraska graduates are about 25% less likely to take such examinations, and the proportion earning competitive scores on these examinations is about 10% below the national average.

Nebraska is one of nine states that does not publicly report pass rates on teacher licensure examinations.

Nebraska did not participate in the SAAL, so no results on literacy are available.

\*More information on the National Forum on College-Level Learning can be obtained at [http://www.highereducation.org/reports/mu\\_learning/index.shtml](http://www.highereducation.org/reports/mu_learning/index.shtml).

## How Nebraska Measures Up Internationally

### Participation\*

■ About 42% of young adults, ages 18 to 24, in Nebraska are currently enrolled in college. Internationally, although Nebraska compares very well with many countries, the state's enrollment rate is only 87% of the rate in Korea, the best-performing nation on this measure. Nebraska is also surpassed by Greece.

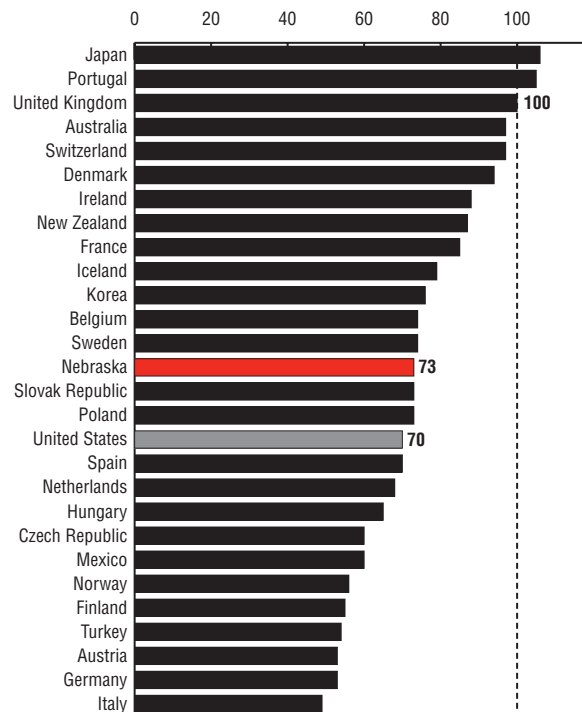
### Completion

■ When compared internationally, Nebraska is surpassed by many countries in the proportion of students who complete certificates or degrees. With 17 out of 100 students enrolled completing a degree or certificate, Nebraska's completion rate is only 73% of the rate in the United Kingdom, the top-performing country on this measure, where 24 out of 100 students complete certificates or degrees. Nebraska also lags Japan, Portugal, Australia, Switzerland, Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand, France, Iceland, Korea, Belgium, Sweden, and the Slovak Republic (see figure 1).

### Educational Level of Adult Population

■ Nebraska's younger adults, ages 25 to 34, are ahead of older adults, ages 35 to 64, in attaining a college degree. Internationally, however, the proportion of younger adults with a college degree in Nebraska is only 86% of the proportion in Japan, the top-performing nation on this measure. Nebraska is also surpassed by Canada and Korea.

**Figure 1. Total Degrees/Certificates Awarded Per 100 Students Enrolled, 2004**

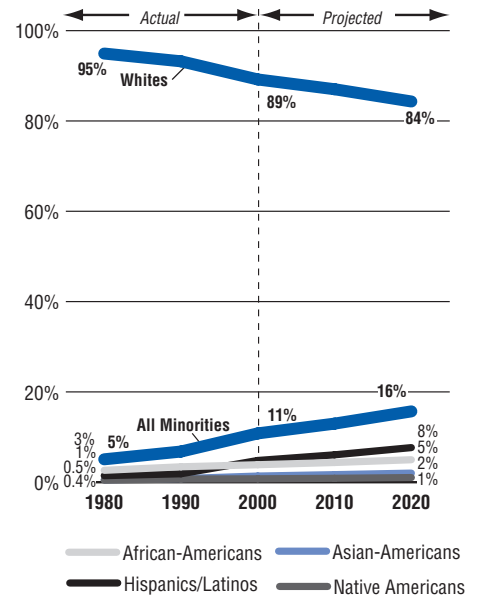


\*This measure includes both undergraduate and graduate enrollment, whereas the similar indicator in the graded category only reports undergraduate enrollment.

Note: The chart shows index scores, as measured against the top performance. The top performance, defined as the median value of the top five performers, receives a score of 100. The top performer can be a nation or a U.S. state. For more international comparison information, go to [www.highereducation.org](http://www.highereducation.org).

State Context	Nebraska	State Rank
Population (2005)	1,758,787	38
Gross state product (2004, in millions)	\$67,989	36
Leading Indicators	Nebraska	U.S.
Projected % change in population, 2005-2020	3%	14%
Projected % change in number of all high school graduates, 2002-2017	-4%	8%
Projected budget surplus/shortfall by 2013	-4%	-6%
Average income of poorest 20% of population (2004)	\$13,409	\$12,168
Children in poverty (2004)	13%	18%
Percent of adult population with less than a high school diploma or equivalent (2004)	9%	14%
New economy index (2002)*	54	60
Facts and Figures	Nebraska	
	Number/Amount	Percent
Institutions of Postsecondary Education (2004-05)		
Public 4-year	7	
Public 2-year	8	
Private 4-year	20	
Private 2-year	4	
Students Enrolled by Institution Type (2004)		
Public 4-year	40,810	39%
Public 2-year	40,643	39%
Private 4-year	21,617	21%
Private 2-year	695	1%
Students Enrolled by Level (2004)		
Undergraduate	103,765	86%
Graduate	13,670	11%
Professional	3,618	3%
Enrollment Status of Students (2004)		
Full-time	79,572	66%
Part-time	41,481	34%
Net Migration of Students (2004)		
Positive numbers for net migration mean that more students are entering than leaving the state to attend college. Negative numbers reveal the reverse.	127	
Average Tuition (2005-06)		
Public 4-year institutions	\$4,875	
Public 2-year institutions	\$1,898	
Private 4-year institutions	\$15,102	
State and Local Appropriations for Higher Education		
Per \$1,000 of personal income, FY 2006	\$9	
Per capita, FY 2006	\$308	
% change, FY 1996-2006		41%

## Working-Age Population (ages 25-64) by Race/Ethnicity, 1980-2020



## Racial and Ethnic Gaps in Educational Levels of Working-Age Population (ages 25-64), 2000

	Whites	African-Americans	Hispanics/Latinos
Less than a high school credential	6%	18%	52%
Associate's degree or higher	38%	22%	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.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### **Q: What is being graded in this report card, and why?**

**A:** *Measuring Up 2006* grades states, not individual colleges or universities, on their performance in higher education. The states are responsible for preparing students for higher education by means of sound K–12 school systems, and they provide most of the public financial support—\$72 billion currently—for colleges and universities. Through their oversight of public colleges and universities, state leaders affect the types and number of programs available in the state. State leaders also determine the limits of financial support and often influence tuition and fees for public colleges and universities. They establish how much state-based financial aid is available to students and their families, which affects students attending both private and public colleges and universities.

### **Q: How are states graded?**

**A:** *Measuring Up 2006* grades states in six performance categories: 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 the best-performing states. As in earlier editions, state data are drawn from the most recent public information available, and the grades in *Measuring Up 2006* reflect state performance in 2004 or 2005.

In the Affordability category, *Measuring Up 2006* reflects the major changes in tuition and financial aid that occurred in 2005. In addition, each state's performance is calculated relative to the performance of top states in the early 1990s—rather than relative to the current performance of top states, as is the case with other graded categories. This difference in comparison, first introduced in *Measuring Up 2004*, creates a more stable basis for states to assess their performance in Affordability, which is the most volatile of the graded categories.

*Measuring Up 2006* is the first edition that includes data in the Learning category for all 50 states on the extent to which colleges and universities prepare students to contribute to the workforce (see the “Graduates Ready for Advanced Practice” indicators). As in *Measuring Up 2004*, most states in 2006 receive an “Incomplete” in Learning due to the lack of reported information. This year, however, nine states receive a “Plus”: Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Oklahoma, and South Carolina. These nine states reported adequate data in more than

one of the indicator groups either through their participation in a pilot project, or by collecting additional state data for the state version of the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) conducted in 2003.

All data used to grade states in *Measuring Up 2006* were collected from reliable national sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Education. All data are the most current available for state comparisons, are in the public domain, and were collected in ways that allow meaningful comparisons among states. Please see the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2006* (available at [www.highereducation.org](http://www.highereducation.org)) for more information regarding data sources used in *Measuring Up 2006*.

### **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 time. Each report card also presents important contextual information, such as demographic trends, student migration data, and state funding levels for higher education. International comparisons provide new contextual information for states.

### **Q: Why does *Measuring Up 2006* include international indicators?**

**A:** *Measuring Up 2006* is the first edition to draw on international indicators, at both the state and national levels. In a global economy, it is critical for each nation to establish and maintain a competitive edge through the ongoing, high-quality education of its population. *Measuring Up 2006* provides essential information on how well the nation and each of the 50 states are preparing residents with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete effectively in the global economy. As with other data in *Measuring Up*, each international measure is based on the most current data available. In this case, the data are from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). International comparisons are used to gauge the states' and the nation's standing relative to OECD countries on the participation and educational attainment of their populations.

For more information on international comparisons, see *Measuring Up Internationally: Developing Skills and Knowledge for the Global Knowledge Economy* by Alan Wagner. For more information on available data sources, see the *Technical Guide for Measuring Up 2006* (available at [www.highereducation.org](http://www.highereducation.org)).

# STATE GRADES

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