



Accelerating the College and Career Readiness of Alabama's Students

Alabama is in the process of transitioning to new English language arts and mathematics standards that will better prepare students to be successful in college and their careers. Time, effort, and resources must be dedicated to effective implementation in order to realize the promise of these new common core state standards.

IN TODAY'S ECONOMY, ALL STUDENTS MUST GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL READY TO SUCCEED IN COLLEGE AND THEIR CAREERS

Percentage of Students Graduating from High School Class of 2007¹

	Alabama	Nation
All Students	63%	69%
White	69%	76%
Black	52%	55%
Hispanic	45%	51%
Asian	70%	79%
American Indian	71%	50%

MORE STUDENTS NEED TO BE PREPARED FOR SUCCESS BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

Percentage of ACT-Tested High School Graduates Ready For College-Level Course Work in 2010²

	Alabama	Nation
All Four Core Subjects	18%	24%
English	66%	66%
Math	31%	43%
Reading	47%	52%
Science	23%	29%

ALABAMA AND THE NATION NEED MORE COLLEGE GRADUATES

Alabama's College Graduation Rates Versus National Average³

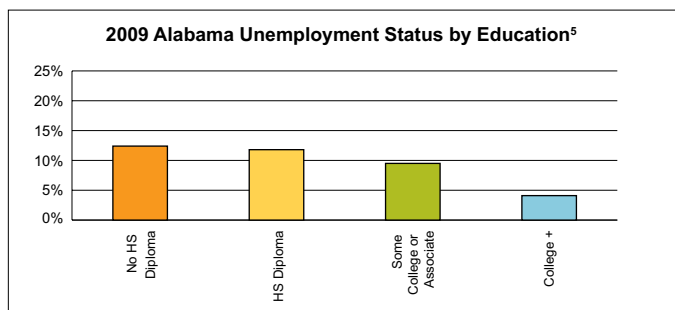
	Four-Year Institution*	National Average*	Two-Year Institution**	National Average**
All Students	46%	56%	20%	31%
White	55%	59%	20%	32%
Hispanic	40%	46%	18%	29%
Black	33%	39%	21%	26%
Asian	49%	66%	25%	33%
American Indian	38%	38%	22%	27%

*Graduation within six years of entrance (Cohort from 2002–2008)

**Graduation within three years of entrance (Cohort from 2005–2008)

Students in Alabama who began college but did not return for a second year received a cumulative **\$34.4 million** in federal grants and a cumulative **\$171.4 million** in state expenditures.⁴

HIGHER LEVELS OF COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS EQUALS HIGHER EMPLOYMENT



Bolster economic vitality: Over **24,300** students did not graduate from Alabama's high schools in 2010; the lost lifetime earnings in Alabama for that class of dropouts total **\$6.3 billion**.⁶

TO ACCELERATE COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS, ALABAMA TEACHERS SEE THE NEED FOR FEWER, CLEARER, AND BETTER STANDARDS

Impact of Improving Standards on Academic Achievement from Alabama's Teachers View⁷

	Clearer Academic Standards	Common Standards Across All States	Tougher Academic Standards	Fewer Academic Standards
Strong or Very Strong Effect	72%	62%	49%	34%
Moderate Effect	21%	28%	40%	37%
No Effect	7%	9%	11%	27%

ALABAMA DECIDED TO IMPROVE ITS STANDARDS TO SUPPORT COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS AND IS WORKING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

- Alabama was one of forty-eight states that participated in the creation of the common core state standards, which build on the best state standards and go further by internationally benchmarking and back-mapping them for grades K–12.
- As of April 2011, Alabama was one of forty-four states to have adopted the common core state standards in mathematics and English language arts.

TO HAVE A CLEAR MEASURE OF COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS, STATE ASSESSMENTS MUST ACCURATELY REFLECT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT; CURRENT TESTS DO NOT

Alabama's Eighth-Grade Proficiency as Measured by Alabama State Tests and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)⁸

	State	NAEP
Reading	75%	24%
Math	74%	20%

- The average gap nationally between state- and NAEP-reported reading scores is **41** percentage points. Alabama's gap is **51** percentage points.
- The average gap nationally between state- and NAEP-reported math scores is **32** percentage points. Alabama's gap is **54** percentage points.

ALABAMA IS ONE OF FORTY-FIVE STATES WORKING TO CREATE COMMON ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS ALIGNED TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Two groups of states have formed to develop these next-generation assessment systems, scheduled to be available during the 2014–15 school year. **Alabama is participating in Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortia and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).** For more information, visit <http://www.k12.wa.us/smarter> and <http://www.achieve.org/PARCC/>.

CONSISTENT STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS MAKE COMMON AND ECONOMIC SENSE

- Ease transition for students who move from state to state.** In 2009, about **17,561** school-aged children moved **to** Alabama from another state; about **12,224** students moved **from** Alabama to another state.⁹
- Help states realize economies of scale and improve test quality by working together.** Currently, states spend a combined **\$1.3 billion** annually to develop, publish, administer, score, and report on their own state tests.¹⁰
- Reduce the need for remediation in college.** The need for remediation among students entering Alabama's postsecondary institutions unprepared for postsecondary work cost the state nearly **\$51 million** during the 2007–08 school year.¹¹

1. Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, *Diplomas Count*, 2010.

2. ACT, "College Readiness by State," 2010.

3. Analysis of data from NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2010.

4. M. Schneider, *Finishing the First Lap: The Cost of First-Year Student Attrition in America's Four-Year Colleges and Universities* (Washington, DC: American Institute for Research, 2010).

5. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010.

6. Alliance for Excellent Education, "The High Cost of High School Dropouts," unpublished.

7. Scholastic, 2010.

8. NCES, *Nation's Report Card: Reading 2009*; NCES, *Nation's Report Card: Math 2009*; U.S. Department of Education, "EDFacts State Profiles," 2010.

9. U.S. Census Bureau, "American Community Survey," 2009.

10. Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, 2010.

11. Alliance for Excellent Education, "Saving Now and Saving Later" (Washington, DC: Author, 2011).