High School Graduation Gains Equal Economic Success
In many states and across the nation, high school graduation rates are rising and economies are seeing the benefits. Mississippi’s graduation rate increased by 0.8 percentage points from the Class of 2011 to the Class of 2012. These additional 300 graduates represent gains of as much as $65 million in increased lifetime earnings and $200,000 in annual state and local tax revenues.2

If Mississippi increased its overall graduation rate to 90 percent, the economic benefits from these 11,000 additional graduates would likely include as much as

- $109 million in increased annual earnings and $7.8 million in annual state and local tax revenues;
- $850 new jobs and a $137 million increase in the gross state product; and
- $165 million in increased home sales and $12 million in increased auto sales.3

Progress Has Been Made, But Graduation Gaps Remain
Despite Gains, Not All Students Are Graduating from High School at the Same Rates …

High School Graduation Rates by Race (Class of 2011)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nation (Avg.)</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

... and Even Fewer Are Graduating from College

Four-Year College Graduation Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M5*</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nation*</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Due to data limitations for two-year institutions, particularly as they relate to students who transfer from their first institution, two-year college graduation rates have been omitted.

*Graduation within six years of entrance (Cohort from 2005 to 2011)

Better Preparation Is Key for Success in College and a Career

Literacy Is an Underlying Problem for Many Students

School Year (SY) 2010–11 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Scores for Mississippi Eighth Graders†

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>M5</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Insufficient or no data was reported for other subgroups

... and They Also Struggle in Other Subject Areas

Percentage of ACT-Tested Graduates Ready for College-Level Course Work in 2012‡

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>All Four Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nation</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commitment Is Paying Off, But Struggling Schools Remain

About 10% of all high schools still produce 40%+ of the nation’s dropouts. In these “dropout factories,” 60% or fewer of freshmen are promoted to senior year on time. Nationally, students of color and Native students are four times more likely than their white peers to be enrolled in a dropout factory.1 Improving these schools must remain a national priority.

Mississippi High Schools

Federally Reported High Schools‡

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M5</th>
<th>(SY 2009-10)</th>
<th>(SY 2010-11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dropout Factories10

An additional 54 high schools in Mississippi had a promoting power between 60 and 70 percent in SY 2010–11.11

Nationally, the number of dropout factories decreased 12% (from 1,617 to 1,424).12 The number of all high schools decreased less than 1% from SY 2009–10 to SY 2010–11.13

States Are Strengthening Standards to Improve Preparedness

Mississippi, along with 45 states and the District of Columbia, has adopted a common, state-created set of world-class standards for college and career readiness in English language arts and math. The four remaining states have their own college- and career-ready standards.

More Accurate Measures of Student Proficiency Are Needed

Mississippi’s Eighth-Grade Proficiency as Measured by State Test vs. the Nation’s Report Card (NAEP) for SY 2011–12‡

Nationally, the average gaps between state- and NAEP-reported reading and math scores are 40 percentage points and 32 percentage points, respectively.

States Are Working to Create New and Better Assessments

Forty-two states participate in one of two consortia to develop Common Core State Standards-aligned next-generation assessments, which are scheduled to be administered during SY 2014–15. Mississippi participates in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

Excellent Teacher Training Is Critical to Increased Student Achievement

To promote higher levels of student achievement, 27 states have committed to educating and preparing better teachers and administrators through teacher licensing, program accreditation, and effective data use policies. Mississippi has not joined this coalition of states focusing on educator preparation and entry into the profession.14

Connecting Technology to Schools and Students

Having access to a broadband network—connectivity—is crucial to taking advantage of the world of technology and what it offers in the classroom. Mississippi does not have a statewide broadband network for its schools.15

The use of technology lends flexibility to schools and classrooms. Mississippi does allow additional flexibility by permitting schools to use funding for instructional materials on digital resources.16

The Next Frontier: Deepen and Personalize Learning

Today’s modern economy requires more than basic content knowledge. Leading states are building an engaging and personalized education process to achieve deeper learning outcomes of core content knowledge, creative and critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

To foster such learning, school districts like Colorado’s Adams County School District 50, and even entire states, like New Hampshire and Oregon, permit students to advance their grade level based on mastery of content rather than on amount of time spent in the classroom.

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