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. Pennsylvania’s graduation rate increased by 2.8 percentage points from the Class of 2011 to the Class of 2012. These additional 4,050 graduates represent gains of as much as $940 million in increased lifetime earnings and $3.2 million in annual state and local tax revenues. If Pennsylvania increased its overall graduation rate to 90 percent, the economic benefits from these 14,000 additional graduates would likely include as much as:

- $159 million in increased annual earnings and $11 million in annual state and local tax revenues;
- 1,400 new jobs and a $219 million increase in the gross state product; and
- $293 million in increased home sales and $17 million in increased auto sales.

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>Race</th>
<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>PA</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nation</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

…and Even Fewer Are Graduating from College

Four-Year College Graduation Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<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>PA*</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nation*</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>39%</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 Pennsylvania Eighth Graders*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</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.

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 nearly four times more likely than their white peers to be enrolled in a dropout factory. Improving these schools must remain a national priority.

Pennsylvania High Schools

Federaledly Reported High Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>602 (SY 2009–10)</th>
<th>608 (SY 2010–11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dropout Factories*</td>
<td>52 (3 yr avg. 2008-10)</td>
<td>43 (Class of 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An additional 37 high schools in Pennsylvania had a promoting power between 60 and 70 percent in SY 2010–11.

Nationally, the number of dropout factories decreased 12% (from 1,617 to 1,424). The number of all high schools decreased less than 1% from SY 2009–10 to SY 2010–11.

States Are Strengthening Standards to Improve Preparedness

Pennsylvania, 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

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

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. Pennsylvania does not participate in either of these consortia.

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. Pennsylvania has joined this coalition of states focusing on educator preparation and entry into the profession.

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. Pennsylvania does have a statewide broadband network for its schools.

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

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, invite 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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