2018 State Performance Update
Supplement to Higher Education in Focus 2017
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About this Report

This supplement to Higher Education in Focus 2017 provides the latest data on a subset of indicators relevant to the goal of improving educational attainment in Wisconsin. Performance indicators are categorized within five areas: Preparation, Participation, Affordability, Completion, and Finance. Most indicators provide the national and MHEC regional values as well as the median of the top five states in the nation as possible benchmarks.

See MHEC.ORG/RESEARCH for the full report.

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**Academic proficiency of 8th grade students by race and ethnicity.** The percentage of students in grade 8 scoring at or above proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provides a measure of whether students enter high school with foundational skills and knowledge in such areas as math, reading, and science. As indicated in Figure 1, less than half of 8th grade students in Wisconsin across all groups scored at or above the proficiency level in math, reading, and science. Proficiency in these subject areas was less common among Black and Hispanic students relative to White and Asian/Pacific Islander students.

**Figure 1: Percentage of Students in Grade 8 Scoring at or Above Proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Math, Reading, and Science by Race and Ethnicity, 2017**

![Bar chart showing percentage of students in grade 8 scoring at or above proficiency in math, reading, and science by race and ethnicity in Wisconsin, MHEC, and U.S. for the years 2015 and 2017.](chart.png)


Note: Estimates for math and reading proficiency were derived from the 2017 assessment; estimates for science proficiency were only available for 2015.

*Proficiency in math, reading, and science was more common among White and Asian/Pacific Islander students relative to Black and Hispanic students.*
Academic proficiency of 8th grade students by family income.

As indicated in Figure 2, proficiency rates for higher-income students in math, reading, and science were over double those of students from low-income families.

Figure 2: Percentage of Students in Grade 8 Scoring at or Above Proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Math, Reading, and Science by Income, 2017


Note: Estimates for math and reading proficiency were derived from the 2017 assessment; estimates for science proficiency were only available for 2015.

Proficiency rates among students from higher-income families were well above those of students from lower-income families.
**Participation**

**College enrollment by race and ethnicity.** The postsecondary enrollment of traditionally under-represented students has been a priority in states committed to promoting equal opportunity and economic growth, particularly as state populations become more racially and ethnically diverse.

Figures 3 and 4 provide a comparison of the demographic composition of state populations aged 18-24 to current postsecondary enrollment in public two- and four-year institutions, respectively.

**Figure 3: Percentage of State Population Aged 18-24 and Percentage of First-Time, Full-Time, Degree-Seeking Students Enrolled in Wisconsin Public Two-Year Institutions by Race and Ethnicity, 2016**

![Bar chart showing participation rates by race and ethnicity.](chart)


**Under-represented students tend to enroll at relatively higher rates at two-year institutions than do White students.**
The figures demonstrate that students of under-represented ethnic and racial backgrounds tend to enroll at relatively higher rates at two-year institutions than do White students. The converse holds true at public four-year institutions. For example, Figure 4 indicates that while residents aged 18-24 from under-represented racial and ethnic groups comprise 17 percent of the population in Wisconsin, only 9 percent of full-time undergraduate students (any age) at public four-year institutions are American Indian, Black, or Hispanic. In contrast, they constitute 17 percent of students at two-year institutions.

Figure 4: Percentage of State Population Aged 18-24 and Percentage of First-Time, Full-Time, Degree-Seeking Students Enrolled in Wisconsin Public Four-Year Institutions by Race and Ethnicity, 2016

Under-represented students tend to enroll at relatively lower rates at four-year institutions than do White students.

Affordability

**Ability to pay.** College affordability is measured by the percentage of family income needed to pay the net price of full-time enrollment at public two- and four-year institutions. The average net price is calculated as the total cost of attendance (tuition and fees, books, supplies, and room and board) minus the average institutional, local, state, and federal grant aid. In order to assess the degree of affordability for students of different income levels, this indicator is presented for families with median income ($74,043 for Wisconsin in 2016) and families in the lowest income quintile (median of $22,671 for Wisconsin in 2016). State policymakers can influence affordability through such means as financial aid and institutional appropriations.

Figure 5 shows that the net price of college as a percentage of median family income decreased for public two- and four-year enrollment, and the affordability of four-year enrollment places Wisconsin among the top five states in the nation.

**Figure 5. Percentage of Family Income Needed to Pay for Full-Time Enrollment at Public Two- and Four-Year Institutions: Families with Median Incomes ($74,043)**


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College affordability in Wisconsin meets or exceeds the Midwest and national benchmarks for public two- and four-year enrollment.
A comparison of Figures 5 and 6 indicates that college affordability in Wisconsin is highly contingent on family income. Families with median incomes in Wisconsin would need to allocate 20 percent of their incomes to pay for enrollment at a four-year college. In contrast, four-year college attendance for low-income students requires 43 percent of family income. However, affordability for low-income students at four-year colleges exceeds the regional and national benchmarks.

**Figure 6. Percentage of Family Income Needed to Pay for Full-Time Enrollment at Public Two- and Four-Year Institutions: Families in the Lowest Income Quintile ($22,671)**

The affordability of full-time enrollment in Wisconsin is highly contingent on family income.
Completion

Transfer-adjusted completion. Transfer-adjusted completion rates are defined by the proportion of first-time, certificate/degree-seeking students in the fall 2011 cohort who completed a certificate or degree within six years, while accounting for students who enroll part- or full-time and graduate from their first institution or elsewhere.

According to Figure 7, Wisconsin’s completion rate for part-time students who started at public two-year institutions is one of the highest in the country. However, Wisconsin’s completion rate for part-time students who started at public four-year institutions is below the regional and national benchmarks. The completion rate for part-time students who started at private four-year institutions is above the regional and national benchmarks. A comparison of Figures 7 and 8 demonstrates that completion rates are highest among students who enroll full-time.

Figure 7. Part-Time Students: Transfer-Adjusted Percentage of First-Time, Certificate/Degree-Seeking Students in the Fall 2011 Cohort who Completed a Certificate or Degree within Six Years by Starting Institution


Less than half of part-time students complete within six years.
Completion

Figure 8. Full-Time Students: Transfer-Adjusted Percentage of First-Time, Certificate/Degree-Seeking Students in the Fall 2011 Cohort who Completed a Certificate or Degree within Six Years by Starting Institution

![Bar chart showing completion rates for different institution types: Wisconsin, MHEC Average, U.S., and Top 5 States Median.]


Completion rates are highest among full-time students.
**Completion**

**Two-year college success rates.** Timely success at two-year colleges is defined by the proportion of first-time, full-time certificate/degree-seeking students in the fall 2014 cohort who transferred or completed an associate degree or certificate at a public two-year college within three years.

According to Figure 9, the success rate at public two-year colleges in Wisconsin is above the regional and national benchmarks.

**Figure 9. Percentage of First-Time, Full-Time Certificate/Degree-Seeking Students in the Fall 2014 Cohort who Completed a Certificate/Degree or Transferred within Three Years at Public Two-Year Colleges**

![Bar chart showing success rates](image)

Source. NCES IPEDS. (2017). *Graduation rate. Top 5 States (includes ties), 2016-17: SD, WY, KS, UT, MN.*

*The three-year success rate at public two-year colleges is above the regional and national benchmarks.*
Graduation rates by race and ethnicity. Graduation rates by race and ethnicity are defined by the proportion of first-time, full-time certificate/degree-seeking students in the fall 2010 cohort who transferred or completed an associate degree or certificate at a public two-year college within three years or completed a bachelor’s degree at a public four-year university within six years (without accounting for transfer to another institution).

According to Figure 10, graduation rates among under-represented students fall below the graduation rates of White students.

Figure 10. Percentage of First-Time, Full-Time, Degree/Certificate-Seeking Students from Fall 2010 Cohort who Graduated within 150% Completion Time at Wisconsin Public Two-Year and Public Four-Year Institutions by Race and Ethnicity


Under-represented students graduate at lower rates than do White students.
Funding commitment. The relative share of the cost of higher education is represented by comparing educational appropriations and net tuition revenue as a percent of total educational revenue for public postsecondary institutions, including four-year, two-year, and less-than two-year institutions. The state assumes a smaller share of the cost of enrollment compared to the student's share, as net tuition revenue constitutes a relatively larger proportion of revenue among public colleges and universities (see Figure 11).

![Figure 11. State and Local Educational Appropriations and Net Tuition Revenue as a Percentage of Total Educational Revenue for Public Postsecondary Institutions in Wisconsin (per FTE Student)](chart)

The state’s share of the cost of enrollment has decreased over time and is below the national benchmark.

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1State and local educational appropriations refer to “state and local support available for public higher education operating expenses, defined to exclude spending for research, agricultural extension, and medical education, as well as support for independent institutions or students attending them” (SHEEO, 2015, p. 11). State and local support refer to “state tax appropriations and local tax support plus additional nontax funds (e.g., lottery revenue) that support or benefit higher education, and funds appropriated to other state entities for specific higher education expenditures or benefit (e.g., employee fringe benefit disbursed by the state treasurer)” (SHEEO, p. 11).
Need-based aid. State funding for grant aid based on financial need is measured by (a) the amount of need-based grant aid per FTE student and (b) need-based aid as a percent of total grant aid allocations. The receipt of grant aid has been linked with higher rates of college enrollment and degree completion. (Other types of aid for students with financial need such as institutional grants and scholarships are not examined in this indicator.) Figure 12 shows that state need-based grant aid per FTE student in Wisconsin increased over the past decade and was above the regional benchmark in 2016-17. Wisconsin allocates 97 percent of its grant aid based on financial need, which is above the regional and national benchmarks.

Figure 12. State Need-based Grant Aid per FTE Undergraduate Student and Percent of Aid Defined as Need-Based

![Bar chart showing state need-based grant aid per FTE undergraduate student and percent of aid defined as need-based in Wisconsin, MHEC average, U.S., and top 5 states median for 2003-04 and 2016-17 academic years.]


Need-based grant aid in Wisconsin is above the regional benchmark.
Higher Education in Focus is produced on a biennial basis. The 2018 supplement supports Higher Education in Focus 2017. As MHEC prepares Higher Education in Focus 2019 feedback and ideas are welcomed on the content that will help support your state’s work.