

Kentucky Schools: Achieving the Top 20 by 2020: An Update

In 2008, the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence challenged Kentuckians to move our education system to the Top 20 among the 50 states by 2020.

Two years later, our results show some important progress and plenty of evidence that we must work harder and smarter to deliver for our children and our future.

Most of the new results are good, showing us on track to reach the Top 20 tier of states:

- Reading results are especially exciting, showing both fourth-grade and eighth-grade Kentucky students reaching the Top 20 for the first time.
- Student results are moving up quickly enough to reach the Top 20 by 2020 in fourth-grade mathematics, high school Advanced Placement credit, students starting higher education, and the rate of completing associate's degrees.
- Our commitment to support student learning also looks strong as we moved forward in teacher salaries, higher education funding and family share of college costs.

However, there are clear grounds for concern in other areas:

- We improved, but too slowly, in the levels of high school and bachelor's attainment of young Kentucky adults.
- We gained no ground in eighth-grade mathematics.
- We lost ground in preschool enrollment, bachelor's degree completion, STEM degrees and P-12 funding.

ON TRACK FOR 2020

New results show Kentucky moving up on nine indicators, either reaching the Top 20 or improving fast enough to get there by 2020. We rank:

- 9th in fourth-grade reading
- 12th in higher education funding per pupil
- 16th in eighth-grade reading
- 22nd in average teacher salaries
- 24th in family share of higher education costs
- 26th in high school graduates starting higher education
- 28th in completion of associate's degrees
- 30th in fourth-grade mathematics
- 30th in students earning AP college credit

IMPROVING, BUT SLOWLY

On two indicators, new results show gains too slow to reach the Top 20 on time. We rank:

- 33rd in high school attainment
- 42nd in bachelor's degree attainment

FLAT OR LOSING GROUND

New results show Kentucky stuck or losing ground on five indicators. We rank:

- 28th in preschool enrollment
- 34th in eighth-grade math
- 42nd in bachelor's degree completion
- 45th in science, technology, engineering and math as a share of bachelor's degrees
- 42nd in elementary and secondary funding per pupil

NO NEW DATA

Four indicators had no new data, with Kentucky still ranking:

- 9th in fourth-grade science
- 20th in fourth-grade writing
- 22nd in eighth-grade science
- 36th in eighth-grade writing

HOW CAN WE MOVE INTO THE TOP 20?

Reaching our ambitious goal for Kentucky's future will require a sustained focus on key objectives and core principles.

SENATE BILL 1

Senate Bill 1, passed unanimously in 2009, offers important steps toward reaching the Top 20 goal with its intense focus on students' readiness to succeed in higher education and good jobs. Under that legislation, Kentucky has already adopted new academic standards in language arts and mathematics. To continue this important work, we must:

- Set new standards in science, social studies and other core subjects.
- Implement new assessments and accountability procedures in 2012.
- Equip current and future educators to move all students to the high levels of performance the new standards demand.

PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN

To prepare our youngest children for school success, we must:

- Fully fund preschool services to children with disabilities and children from low-income families.
- Expand preschool eligibility for additional children from low-income families.
- Offer state-funded full-day kindergarten to all children.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING

To ensure high levels of learning for all Kentucky children, we must:

- Provide Kentucky teachers and school leaders with strong preparation and support to develop their skills, along with compensation and working conditions that allow them to excel.
- Find and implement effective strategies to turn around our small group of persistently low-performing schools.
- Preserve the SEEK formula at a level to support 177 or more days of instruction.

HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE COMPLETION

To equip every student to contribute to economic and civic growth, we must:

- Work for every single student to complete high school.
- Implement Senate Bill 1's commitment to making a high school diploma a true indicator of readiness for college and workplace success.
- Increase college completion as well as college enrollment.
- Provide sufficient need-based aid to make higher education truly accessible to every Kentucky student.
- Establish data systems that can track students' progress from preschool through college, reporting precise data on graduation rates and identifying factors that help or hinder student success at every level.

STEM LEARNING

To build science, technology, engineering, and math skills, we must:

- Apply the best available strategies to increase student engagement and performance in the STEM disciplines that are so central to economic growth.
- Increase the degrees and job credentials awarded in the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics.

ADEQUATE FUNDING

Even in the face of global economic difficulties, we must find the resources to accelerate our educational progress.

GAPS IN ACHIEVEMENT

No student's achievement should be stunted by region, poverty, ethnic background or disability. Every student's potential must be realized, strengthening our common life in the years to come.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Educational excellence requires the active engagement of Kentucky's citizens. Both educators and parents must expect great things from students and seek out the methods that make those great things possible. Citizens in every role must support schools and push for improved results, and leaders at every level must provide effective policies and sufficient resources for the work to get done.

COMMITMENT

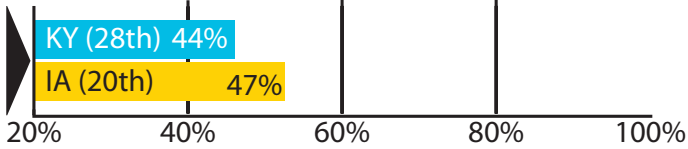
Above all, we must know that the Top 20 is within Kentucky's reach, and we must summon the commitment to move up to that level. We must be guided by the clear words of Robert F. Sexton, who told an interviewer in 2009: "We've spent the last 100 years near the bottom. Let's spend the next 100 years much closer to the top. We've shown we can do this."

Top 20 by 2020 is a project of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, an independent citizens' advocacy organization working to improve education for all Kentuckians. We welcome your thoughts and questions about this work at:

- www.prichardcommittee.org
- (859) 233-9849
- PO Box 1658, Lexington KY 40588-1658

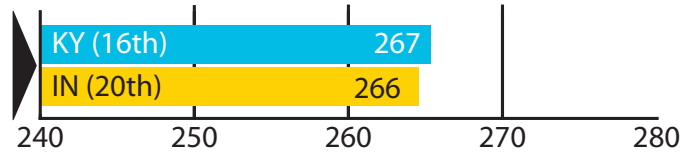
Top 20 Results for Kentucky: What Would That Look Like Today?

Preschool Enrollment of Children Ages 3 and 4



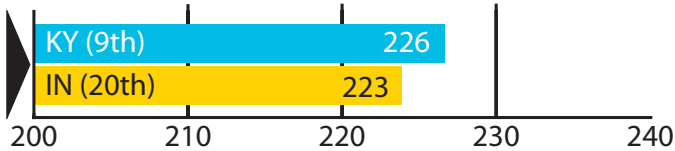
Results are three-year averages from the American Community Survey using 2006, 2007, and 2008 data for public and private school enrollment.

Eighth-Grade Reading



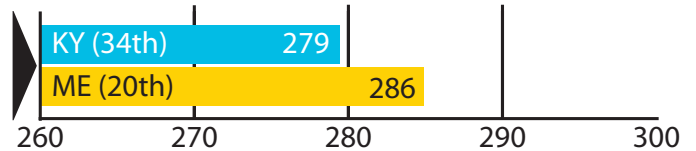
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 500 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009.

Fourth-Grade Reading



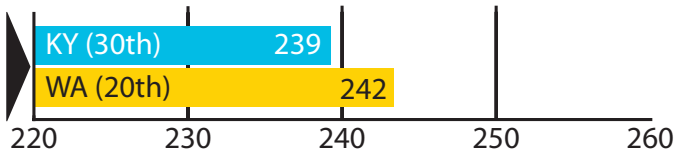
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 500 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009.

Eighth-Grade Mathematics



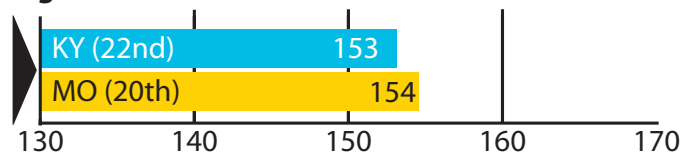
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 500 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009.

Fourth-Grade Mathematics



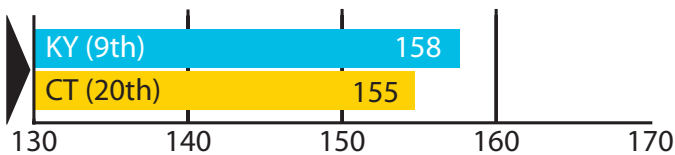
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 500 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009.

Eighth-Grade Science



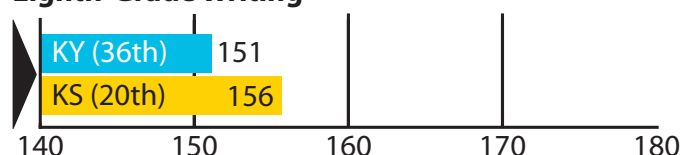
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 300 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2005.

Fourth-Grade Science



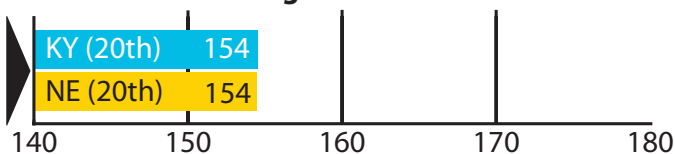
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 300 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2005.

Eighth-Grade Writing



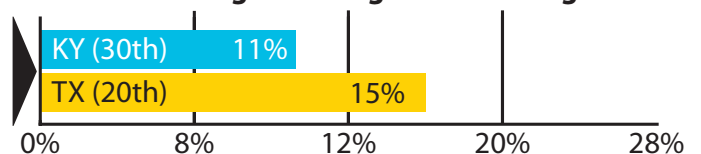
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 300 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2002.

Fourth-Grade Writing



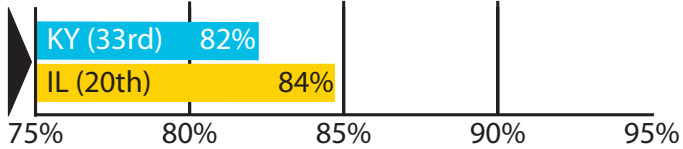
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 300 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2002.

Students Earning AP College Credit in High School



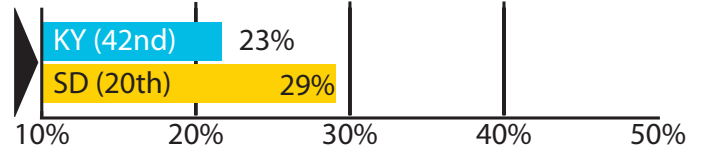
Results show the percent of students in the 2009 graduating class scoring 3 or higher (on a 1-5 scale) on at least one Advanced Placement Test.

Adults 18 to 24 with High School Diploma or Equivalent



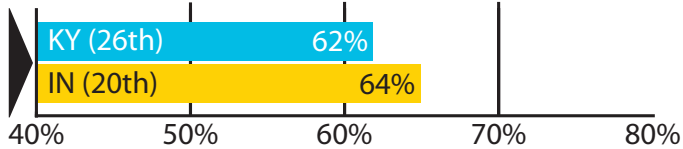
Results are three-year averages from the American Community Survey using 2006, 2007, and 2008 data.

Adults 25 to 34 with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher



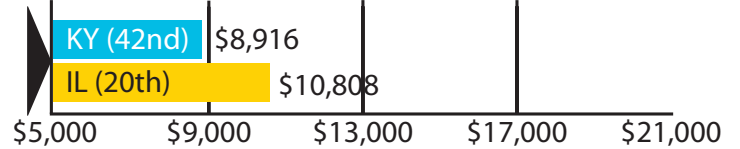
Results are three-year averages from the American Community Survey using 2006, 2007, and 2008 data.

High School Graduates Going On To College



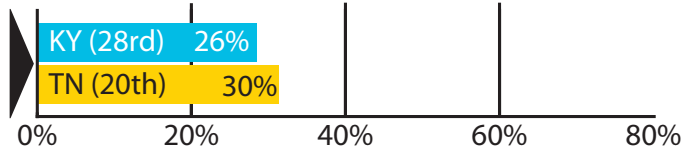
Results reflect the rate of 2005-06 high school graduates (public and private) attending degree-granting institutions reported in the Digest of Education Statistics 2008.

Per-Pupil Elementary and Secondary Funding



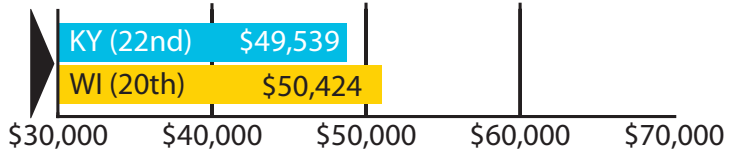
Results reflect 2007-08 state and local funding per pupil reported in Public Education Finance 2008.

Full-Time Students Completing Associate's in Three Years



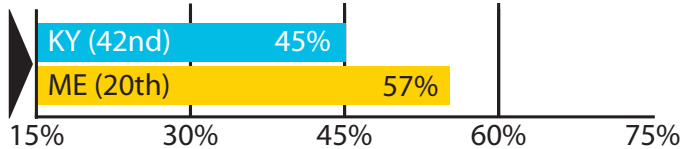
Results reflect students who enrolled full time in associate degree programs at Kentucky institutions in 2005 and graduated by 2008 reported at www.higheredinfo.org.

Average Teacher Salary



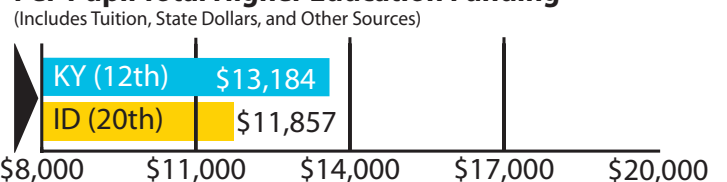
Results reflect average annual teacher salaries for 2008-09 reported in the Digest of Education Statistics 2009.

Full-Time Students Completing Bachelor's in Six Years



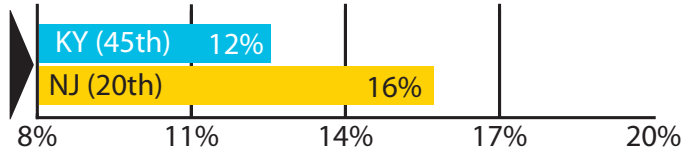
Results reflect students who enrolled full time in bachelor's degree programs at Kentucky institutions in 2002 and graduated by 2008 reported at www.higheredinfo.org.

Per-Pupil Total Higher Education Funding



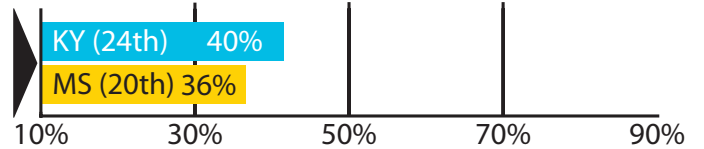
Results reflect 2008-09 total revenue per pupil in full-time equivalent enrollment in public higher education, excluding medical schools, as reported in State Higher Education Finance 2009.

Science, Tech, Engineering, Math Share of Bachelor's



Results reflect 2007-08 degrees in the natural sciences and in computer sciences and engineering reported in the Digest of Education Statistics 2009.

Share of Higher Education Funding Paid By Families



Results reflect 2008-09 net tuition divided by total revenue, excluding medical schools, as reported in State Higher Education Finance 2009.