



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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State Superintendent of Education

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Alabama
State Board
of Education

**ALABAMA’S GRADUATION RATE WITHIN ONE POINT OF
PLAN 2020 GOAL**

Governor
Robert Bentley
President

An Unprecedented 89% Grad Rate Sees More High School Graduates than Ever Before

Matthew S. Brown, J.D.
District I

Montgomery, AL – Increasing the high school graduation rate in Alabama is a primary objective of PLAN 2020, Alabama’s template for public education reform. The Alabama State Board of Education supported the ambitious goal of reaching a 90% graduation rate by the year 2020 – and the state is on course to meet that challenge.

Betty Peters
District II

The recently announced 2014-15 school year statewide graduation rate shows that 89% of high school seniors in Alabama graduated – on time. In fact, Alabama’s graduation rate has climbed steadily every year, from 72% in 2012 to 89% in 2015.

Stephanie Bell
District III

To illustrate the practical impact on students, for every one percent increase in the graduation rate, approximately 600 additional students graduate from high school. More than 10,000 students are earning their high school diploma annually than just four years ago in Alabama.

Yvette M.
Richardson, Ed.D.
District IV
President Pro Tem

Ella B. Bell
District V

Governor Robert Bentley expressed his support for the efforts made to achieve this milestone.

Cynthia McCarty, Ph.D.
District VI

“Graduating from high school is an important accomplishment for students and gives them opportunities for success in life,” Governor Robert Bentley said. “Today’s news that the Alabama graduation rate has increased to 89% is a testament to hardworking teachers, principals and other school staff who encourage and help our students meet their education goals and graduate. I commend Dr. Bice and the leadership of the State Board of Education for prioritizing this effort. I am confident that by working together, we will continue to move our state forward.”

Jeff Newman
District VII
Vice President

Mary Scott Hunter, J.D.
District VIII

Dr. Tommy Bice, State Superintendent of Education, said although he is very pleased with the increases in the graduation rate, the state must continue its efforts to make sure students are not only graduating, but graduating prepared for the workforce and/or college after high school.

Thomas R. Bice, Ed.D.
Secretary and
Executive Officer

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ALABAMA’S GRADUATION RATE WITHIN ONE POINT OF PLAN 2020 GOAL

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“These graduation numbers are a huge indicator that Alabama students and teachers are working harder, and doing so with higher academic standards than were previously used. This most recent graduating class completed most of their high school coursework under the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards; standards that are more aligned with the expectations of business and industry, as well as colleges and universities,” Bice said.

“In Alabama, graduating college and career ready means students will have the ability to move into a two or four year college setting without the need for remedial coursework, or move into the workforce prepared with the expected competencies, and in many cases, industry recognized credentials to start work on day one.”

There is no singular issue that addresses the increases in high school graduation rates, and no silver bullet fix. Bice said a variety of concerns – from identifying barriers that impede student success and individualized solutions, to greater support and encouragement at school and in the home – all factor into successful educational outcomes. Also, the benefit of a high school diploma spills over into more than just the field of education. The social impact is one that benefits all of Alabama. High schools graduates are less likely to end up on the wrong side of the criminal justice system, receive public assistance, or be unemployed.

Certain not to rest on his laurels, Bice said graduation rates are just one of many challenges public education faces today; and just one component of PLAN 2020. Increasing proficiency for all students, closing the achievement gap between subgroups, making sure teachers are well resourced and supported, and adequate funding for schools and school systems are just some of the objectives that need to be met in order to fulfill the promise of PLAN 2020.

“We have a long way to go. But we are encouraged by movement in the right direction that shows Alabama’s best days in public education are ahead,” Bice said. “It is in the best interest of our state’s education, economy and social structure to keep moving forward along the path that has been laid for public education in Alabama.”

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