



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 11, 2014

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ALABAMA'S GRADUATION RATE HITS UNPRECEDENTED HEIGHTS
Department of Education Announces 86 Percent Graduation Rate Years Ahead of Schedule

Graduation Rate Increases to 86%

PLAN 2020

Increasing the Graduation Rate



MONTGOMERY, AL – Four years ahead of the predicted schedule, the [Alabama State Department of Education](http://www.alsde.edu) announces the high school graduation rate in Alabama has risen to a new record high – 86 percent. In accordance with PLAN 2020, the state’s plan for public education reform, the state ambitiously expected to reach a graduation rate of 86 percent by 2018. One of the plan’s primary goals is to reach a graduation rate of 90 percent by the year 2020. For every one percent increase in the graduation rate, approximately 600 additional students graduate from high school. The graduation rate has increased from 72 percent in 2011, to 75 percent in 2012, to 80 percent in 2013, rounding out at 86 percent in 2014.

State Superintendent of Education Tommy Bice said the news of Alabama surpassing its previous record-breaking graduation rate of 80 percent, is further validation that teachers and students are working harder than ever.

“We are absolutely delighted to see the graduation rate making these kinds of unprecedented gains. It is the result of teachers focusing on identifying the specific needs of students, removing barriers to learning, and helping students meet their goals.”

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"Also, students are taking responsibility for their own academic success and putting in the hard work that is required to graduate from high school," Bice said. "In an era of more rigorous academic standards, greater accountability, and higher expectations of our teachers and students, Alabama educators and the students they serve continue to demonstrate what steadfast resolve and hard work garners."

Bice said increasing the graduation rate to 90 percent by the year 2020 is a goal that will not only keep youth on the path to becoming college- and career-ready, but will be an economic boon for the state as well.

A recent [report](#) commissioned by the [Business Education Alliance](#), an independent organization, showed that reaching a 90 percent graduation rate by 2020 would have an economic impact on the state of \$430 million greater that year than if the graduation rate remained at its current level.

In fact, each year Alabama sustains the 90 percent graduation rate, each class of graduates would be 5,643 larger, with 3,564 of them going into the workforce, resulting in a net addition of 1,167 more people employed. Each class graduating at 90 percent would collectively earn \$68 million more than a class graduating at the most recent graduation rate of 80 percent.

Previously, varying methods of determining graduation rates from state to state made it difficult to determine how one state compared to another. However, in 2005, the National Governors' Association (NGA), consisting of all 50 governors, signed the Graduation Counts Compact, an initiative that implemented a common formula for calculating all states' high school graduation rates based on a four-year cohort. This made it possible for states to uniformly track their rates.

Despite the trajectory Alabama's graduation rate is on, Bice said it is important to remember this is not a time to rest on past laurels. As Alabama grows in the number of students graduating, it is equally important to make sure that every single graduate not only finishes high school, but does so with a quality education that that will allow him or her to transition seamlessly into college without the need for remediation or into the workforce with a credentialed skill set.

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