

Kentucky Schools: Achieving the Top 20 by 2020

Kentucky schools have made dramatic, measurable progress since the state restructured its education system in 1990.

Now it's time to set our sights on joining the nation's Top 20 states in school performance by the year 2020. By achieving that goal, Kentucky will do what no other state has ever done – move from the bottom of national rankings to the top tier of states.

We have a strong foundation for our work to achieve this challenging goal – exciting news about progress that is sometimes overlooked as the hard work continues in schools across the Commonwealth. But it is important to celebrate these significant achievements:

It is also important to note that there have been other significant improvements in Kentucky's educational landscape that cannot be measured statistically. For example, Kentucky's education commissioner is no longer an elected official and is appointed by the state Board of Education. Nepotism has been outlawed in school hiring. School councils involve parents in making local management decisions. And Family Resource and Youth Services Centers have widespread support for their work to meet the needs of low-income students.

Despite these steps forward, Kentucky is "halfway home and a long way to go," as the spiritual says. Kentucky falls short in these ways:

Ten Steps Forward

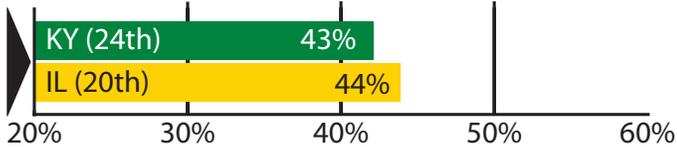
- 1 Kentucky students are ahead of the nation in science test scores and statistically tied with the nation in reading, 4th-grade writing and 8th-grade math.
- 2 From 1999 to 2006, every student group at every level improved their performance on state tests.
- 3 From 2000 to 2007, the percent of Kentucky students scoring 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement exam increased by 76%. Only seven states had a more rapid increase.
- 4 Kentucky provided free preschool for more than 21,000 children during the 2007-08 school year. Kentucky did not provide state-funded preschool before 1990.
- 5 Kentucky tied fourth in the 2008 *Technology Counts* ratings of all states. Our B+ grade put us well ahead of the national average of C+.
- 6 Undergraduate enrollment in Kentucky colleges and universities grew 40% from 1997 to 2006, led by a 106% increase in enrollment in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. Bachelor degrees awarded annually increased 28%, and associate degrees increased 53% over the period.
- 7 80% of adults 18-24 are high school graduates, compared to 70% in 1980. 22% of adults 25-34 have at least a bachelor's degree compared to 17% who had completed four years of college in 1980.
- 8 Kentucky has invested more than \$2 billion in state funds since 1990 to finance the replacement and renovation of school buildings.
- 9 The academic return on our investments in P-12 ranked 8th in the nation in 2005. The ranking analyzed reading and math results in proportion to spending and the challenges our students face.
- 10 Kentucky education ranked 34th among the 50 states in 2005 in the Education Index developed by the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, showing major improvement from a 1992 ranking of 43rd on a matching index.

Ten Continuing Challenges

- 1 Kentucky's students still score below the national average in 4th-grade math and 8th-grade writing.
- 2 Kentucky's students from low-income, African American and Latino backgrounds and those with disabilities still score substantially lower than their classmates on state and national tests.
- 3 Kentucky's Advanced Placement success rate is still much lower than the nation, with 9.7% of our students and 15.2% of students nationally scoring 3 or higher on at least one test, and the success rates are even lower for African American and Latino students.
- 4 In 2006, only 37% of schools were on track to reach Kentucky's goals for proficiency by 2014. 54% of elementary schools were on track, but only 20% of middle schools and 12% of high schools were making rapid enough progress.
- 5 Only 43% of Kentucky's 3- and 4-year-olds participate in public or private preschool.
- 6 53% of students who entered a bachelor's degree program at a public university in 2000 failed to graduate by 2006.
- 7 29% of Kentucky bachelor's degrees were in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in 2007, down from 34% in 1998.
- 8 Even after financial aid, the average Kentucky family needed 30% of its income in 2006 to cover the costs of a student attending a four-year public university program. That's up from 21% in 2000.
- 9 Kentucky public schools still receive only 80% of the national average of state and local funding per pupil.
- 10 Kentucky schools in the poorest districts receive only 83% of the state and local funding per pupil available in the districts with the most property wealth.

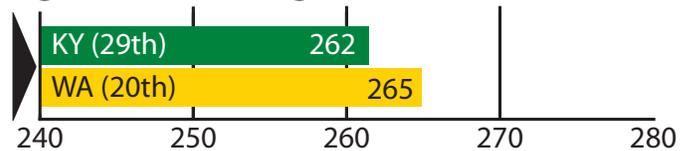
Top 20 Results for Kentucky: What Would That Look Like Today?

Preschool Enrollment of Children Ages 3 and 4



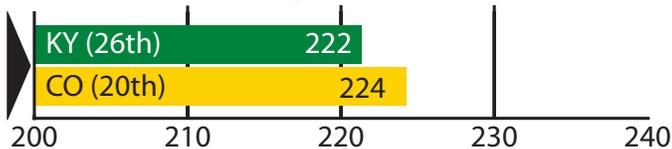
Results are three-year averages from the American Community Survey using 2004, 2005 and 2006 data for public and private preschool enrollment.

Eighth Grade Reading



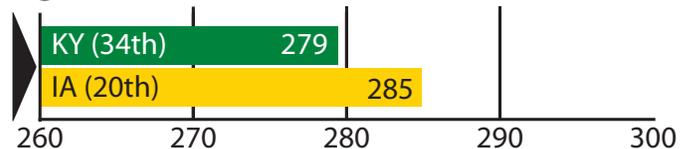
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 500 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2007.

Fourth Grade Reading



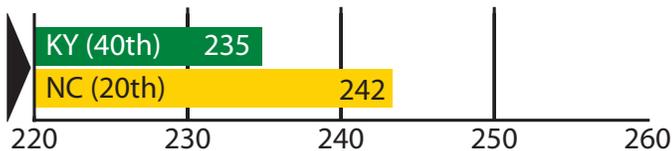
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 500 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2007.

Eighth Grade Mathematics



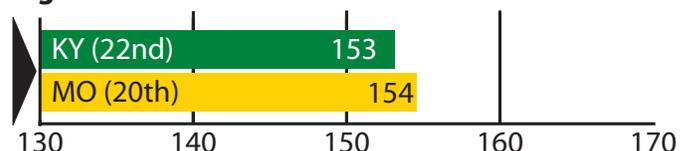
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 500 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2007.

Fourth Grade Mathematics



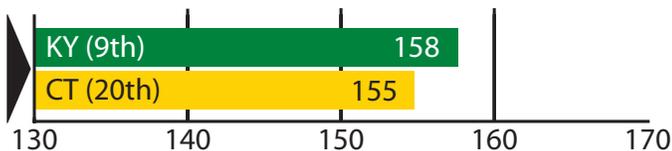
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 500 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2007.

Eighth Grade Science



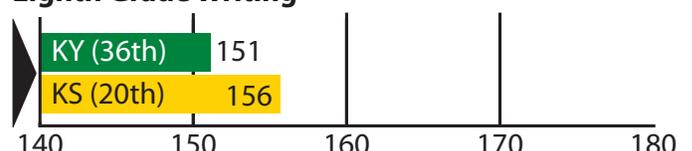
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 300 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2005.

Fourth Grade Science



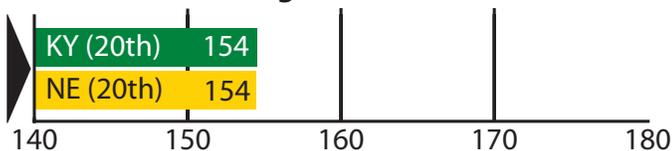
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 300 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2005.

Eighth Grade Writing



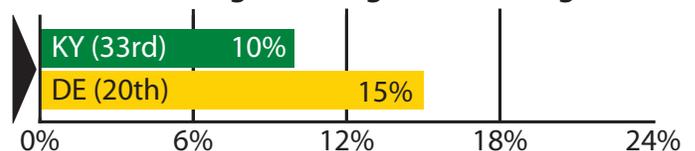
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 300 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2007.

Fourth Grade Writing



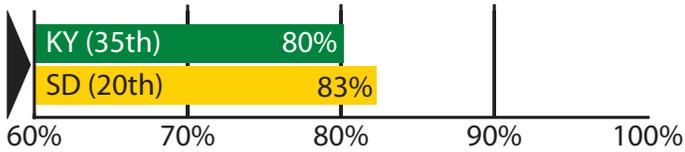
Results are average scale scores on a 0 to 300 scale on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2002.

Students Earning AP College Credit in High School



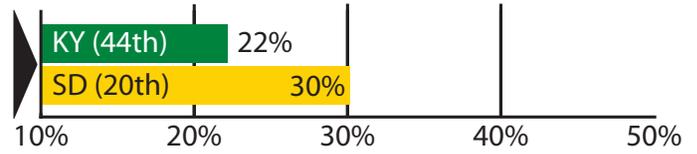
Results show the percent of students in the 2007 graduating class scoring 3 or higher (on a 1-5 scale) on at least one Advanced Placement test.

Adults 18 to 24 with High School Diploma or Equivalent



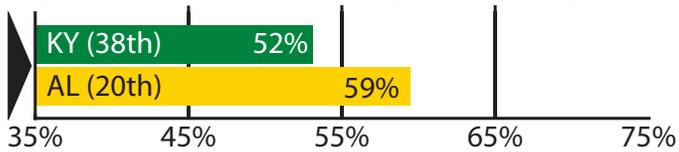
Results are three-year averages from the American Community Survey using 2004, 2005 and 2006 data.

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



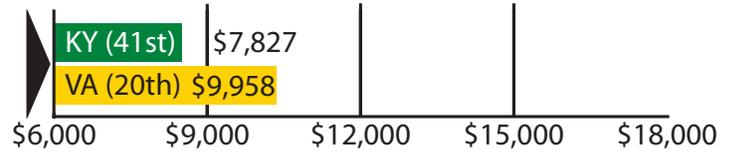
Results are three-year averages from the American Community Survey using 2004, 2005 and 2006 data.

High School Graduates Going On To College



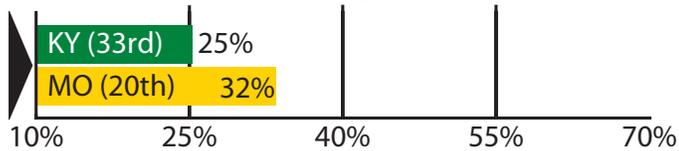
Results reflect the rate of 2003-04 high school graduates (public and private) attending degree-granting institutions reported in the Digest of Education Statistics 2007.

Per-Pupil Elementary and Secondary Funding



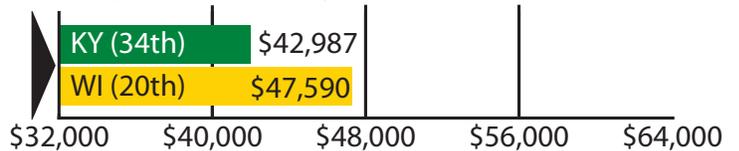
Results reflect 2005-06 state and local funding per pupil reported in Public Education Finance 2006.

Full-Time Students Completing Associate's in Three Years



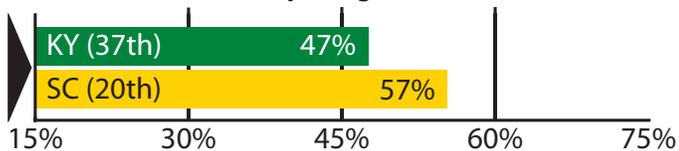
Results reflect students who enrolled full-time in associate degree programs at Kentucky institutions in 2003 and graduated by 2006 reported at www.higheredinfo.org.

Average Teacher Salary



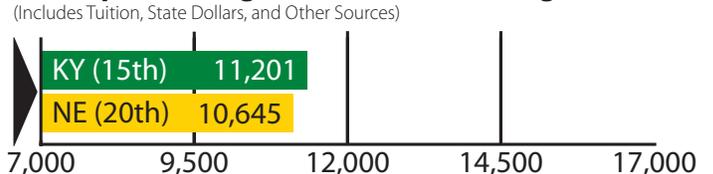
Results reflect average annual teacher salaries for 2005-06 reported in the Digest of Education Statistics 2007.

Full-Time Students Completing Bachelor's in Six Years



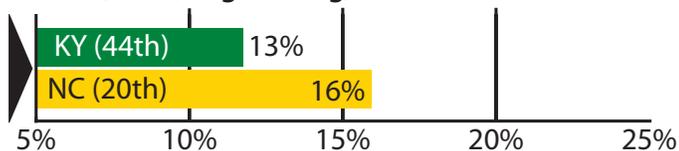
Results reflect students who enrolled full-time in bachelor's degree programs at Kentucky institutions in 2000 and graduated by 2006 reported at www.higheredinfo.org.

Per-Pupil Total Higher Education Funding



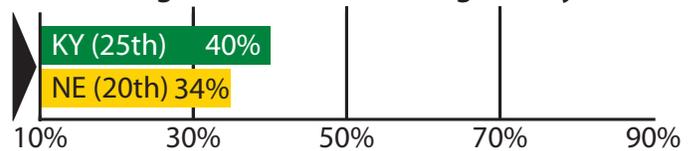
Results reflect 2005-06 total revenue per pupil in full-time equivalent enrollment in public higher education, excluding medical schools, as reported in State Higher Education Finance 2006.

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



Results reflect 2005-06 degrees in the natural sciences and in computer sciences and engineering reported in the Digest of Education Statistics 2007.

Share of Higher Education Funding Paid By Families



The results shown reflect 2005-06 net tuition per pupil in full-time equivalent enrollment in public higher education, excluding medical schools, divided by total revenue as reported in State Higher Education Finance 2006.

How Can We Get There?

Underlying the progress that Kentucky has made so far is the sustained commitment of the state's elected and policy leaders to the continuous improvement of Kentucky schools. That commitment must continue. Also critical to the success of Kentucky's efforts are:

- Adequate school funding
- Leadership
- Rigorous and strong accountability
- Community, business and parental involvement

Building on these foundational elements, reaching our Top 20 by 2020 goal requires a sustained focus on several key objectives. We must:

- Offer every child a strong preschool experience and a state-funded, full-day kindergarten.
- Provide highly qualified and well-supported teachers for every student.

- Eliminate achievement gaps based on ethnicity, income and disabilities.
- Improve our high schools to increase graduation rates, ensuring that a diploma indicates readiness for college and workplace success.
- Increase the number of students who start college and the number who graduate.
- Improve math, science and technology achievement at all levels, including university degrees in those fields.

Reaching the Top 20 requires that schools are accountable for results and have the resources to make the results happen. Those resources are made possible by the energy of informed citizens and the ongoing commitment that they share with elected and policy leaders.