

STRONGER by **DEGREES**

Building a More Competitive
Commonwealth Through
Postsecondary Education

A Strategic Agenda for
Kentucky Postsecondary
and Adult Education

2011-2014



INTRODUCTION

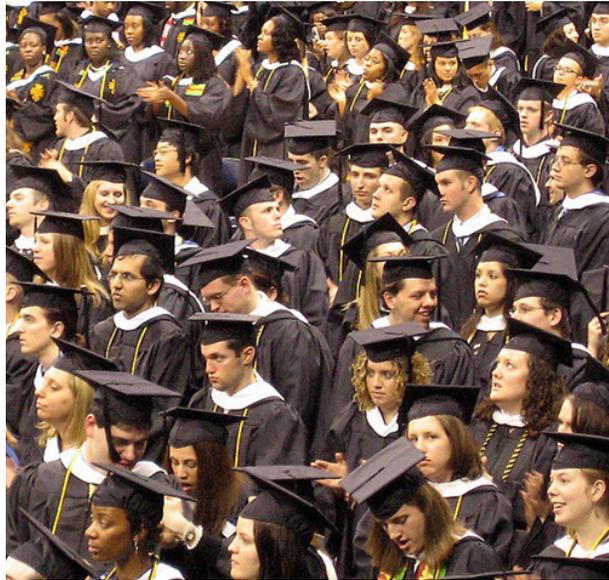
This strategic agenda calls upon Kentucky’s postsecondary and adult education system to strengthen the Commonwealth by degrees.

We believe in the transformative power of postsecondary education. Our belief rests on a simple, enduring premise—a higher level of education leads to a higher quality of life, both individually and collectively. In the world’s most enterprising and prosperous societies, postsecondary education is the engine of economic growth and the foundation of democracy.

In 1997, the *Postsecondary Education Improvement Act* (HB 1) established six goals for raising Kentucky’s standard of living to at least the national average by the year 2020. These goals challenge the system to accelerate degree production, modernize workforce education and training, improve the health and well-being of communities, and produce world-class research that creates jobs and powers a knowledge-based economy.

These goals are more important today than ever before. While Kentucky is chasing the nation’s rate of educational attainment, the United States is losing ground to international competitors. Twenty years ago, America’s young adults were the best-educated among OECD member countries. In 2008, we had fallen to tenth; now, we are tied for twelfth, behind such nations as Korea, Japan, and Canada.

Currently, only 29 percent of Kentuckians (25-64) has obtained at least an associate degree, compared to the national average of nearly 38 percent. If the next



A 2010 study by Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce predicts that by the year 2018, 54 percent of all jobs in Kentucky—over 1 million jobs—will require some level of postsecondary education or training.

generation of Kentuckians is not better educated than the one before it, over half of our workforce will be consigned to low-skill, low-wage employment, unlikely to achieve even the same standard of living as their parents.

To strengthen the Commonwealth’s position as an economic and education leader, we need both higher investments and higher expectations. It is time to expect more from our students and educational institutions, to demand results at every level, and to ensure accountability efforts are both rigorous and transparent. It is time to prepare every student, everywhere in Kentucky, not just to reach the national average, but to out-compete any worker anywhere in the world.

The challenge is enormous, but Kentucky can achieve its goals through steady, incremental progress. **This strategic agenda calls upon Kentucky’s postsecondary and adult education system to strengthen the Commonwealth by degrees.** In carrying out this agenda, Kentucky’s postsecondary and adult education system will focus on four urgent priorities—college readiness, student success, research and economic competitiveness, and efficiency and innovation— guided by a shared purpose and common beliefs.

VISION:

All Kentuckians will be prepared to succeed in a global society.

MISSION:

To prepare a highly-educated citizenry and well-trained workforce.

VALUES:

The highest standards of excellence in teaching, research, and public service.

Access for all who are committed to the pursuit of higher learning.

Cooperation, teamwork, and mutual respect that recognize the differing missions of institutions.

A culture of inclusion that provides equitable opportunities and celebrates diversity in people and thought.

A postsecondary experience that prepares individuals to be informed, competent, knowledgeable, and engaged citizens.

Prudent fiscal stewardship that employs resources effectively and efficiently.

A commitment to continuous monitoring and improvement of performance.

Creative and innovative approaches to meeting the needs of the Commonwealth.

Engagement with business, industry, and other community partners to improve economic vitality and quality of life.

Education is a public good and an investment in Kentucky's future.

COLLEGE READINESS

More high school graduates and working-age adults will be prepared for credit-bearing work.

In 2010, over half of the nation's community college students (58%) and nearly a quarter of bachelor's degree students (23%) needed at least one developmental education course when they entered college. In Kentucky, these percentages are even higher. Among

recent high school graduates, 63 percent of students entering community and technical colleges and 27 percent entering public universities required remediation in one or more subjects. Additionally, 90 percent of GED graduates were not ready for placement in credit-bearing courses.

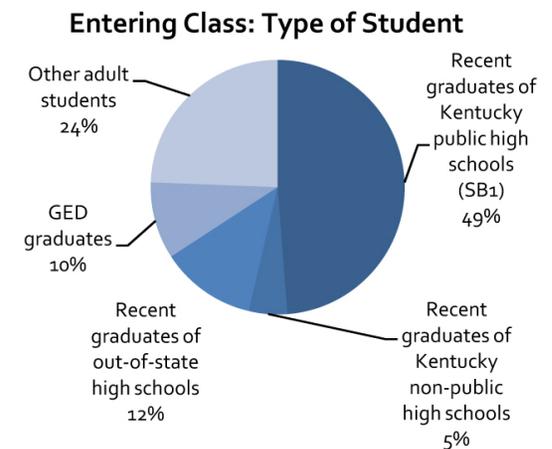
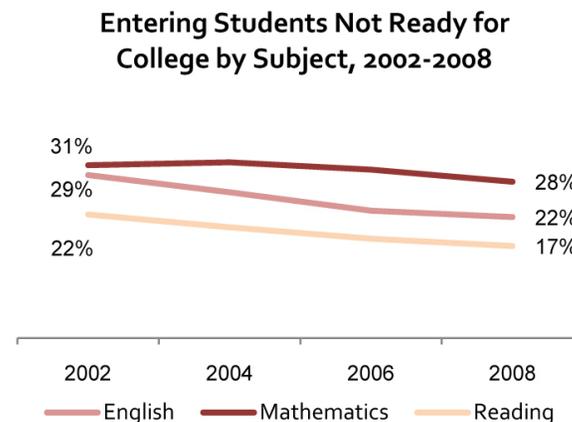
Kentucky must balance the need for postsecondary access with a stronger emphasis on student success. Students who are not academically, emotionally, or financially prepared for college face greater obstacles to degree completion. Developmental education lengthens a student's time-to-degree, increases costs, and consumes more institutional resources. Stronger academic and social supports are needed at every step along the way.

Therefore, Kentucky's postsecondary system must work hand-in-hand with K-12 and adult education providers to ensure students understand what they need to know and be able to do to succeed at the next level. Postsecondary institutions most directly affect K-12 student performance through the quality and effectiveness of the teachers they produce. Kentucky must improve the quality of educator preparation programs and provide continuous growth and professional development opportunities for classroom teachers and leaders.

Legislative Mandates

- **HB 1** states that "contributions to the quality of elementary and secondary education shall be a central responsibility of Kentucky's postsecondary institutions." Goal 1 envisions a "seamless, integrated" educational system where students advance smoothly from one level to the next.
- **SB 1** (2009) directs the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary systems to align revised K-12 academic standards with college readiness requirements and expectations. The Act declares that "schools shall expect a high level of achievement of all students."
- **The Adult Education Act** (2000) calls on the postsecondary and adult education system to "significantly elevate the level of education of the adults of the Commonwealth." This language is now part of Goal 6 of HB 1.

GRAPHS ARE SAMPLES: FOR DISPLAY ONLY



COLLEGE READINESS

Objective 1: Increase the number of college-ready students entering postsecondary institutions.

Strategies:

1. Align K-12, adult education, and postsecondary education standards, curriculum, and assessment processes and ensure Kentucky Adult Education is effectively used as a key access point for preparing adult learners for college.
2. Develop and implement the P-20 data collaborative to improve reporting systems that better inform state policy decisions.



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3. Strengthen the college-going and completion culture in Kentucky through improved outreach efforts and higher expectations for student performance.
4. Partner with K-12 providers to provide effective intervention strategies prior to postsecondary admission.

Objective 2: Increase the effectiveness of Kentucky's K-12 educators.

Strategies:

1. With EPSB and KDE, redesign the K-12 teacher preparation curriculum to reflect common core standards and to help attract, retain, and prepare highly effective teachers.
2. With EPSB and KDE, redesign professional development programs for teachers, school leaders, adult education instructors, and faculty members to reflect college and career readiness standards, provide clinical experiences, and opportunities for continued growth and improvement.
3. With EPSB, develop a systematic way to assess the effectiveness of Kentucky's teacher education programs.

KEY INDICATORS

- READINESS FOR COLLEGE
- COLLEGE-GOING RATES OF GED GRADUATES
- EXCELLENCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

STUDENT SUCCESS

More Kentuckians will complete college prepared for graduate study or a career, with the skills to be productive, engaged citizens.

While Kentucky has made dramatic improvements in postsecondary enrollment and degree production, completion rates at our colleges and universities are far too low. Only half of first-year college students (50.5 percent) graduate from a public university within six years. The four-year graduation rate is only 18 percent. Less than a quarter of associate degree-seeking students (23 percent) graduate from community or technical college within three years.

Legislative Mandates

- **Goal 6 of HB 1** deals directly with educational attainment, challenging Kentucky to “deliver educational services to citizens in quantities and of a quality comparable to the national average.”
- **Goal 4 of HB 1** requires regional universities to assure “statewide access to baccalaureate and master’s degrees of a quality at or above the national average.”
- **Goal 5 of HB 1** directs the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) to provide a pathway to bachelor’s degree attainment through “a two-year course of general studies designed for transfer.”

These average completion rates mask substantial performance gaps among various groups of students, a greater challenge as Kentucky grows more racially and culturally diverse. Only xx percent of African-American students and xx percent of Hispanic students graduate within six years, compared to xx percent of white students. Low-income students succeed at much lower rates than middle and high-income students. Students from metropolitan areas outperform students from rural, underserved areas. To reach our educational attainment goals, all of these performance gaps must be closed.

Kentucky’s future in large part depends upon helping more students advance seamlessly through the educational system and graduate in less time. But increases in degree production and completion rates, while critical, cannot be achieved at the expense of quality. Kentucky’s colleges and universities must uphold high academic standards and empower all students to meet them. Increasing customization and responsiveness to individual learners will further enhance the value of the undergraduate experience.



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STUDENT SUCCESS

Objective 1: Increase degree production and completion rates at all levels.

Strategies:

1. Provide institutional and student incentives to increase degree production and completion rates.
2. Establish common student learning outcomes across the state for general education and pre-major requirements at the 100 and 200 levels.
3. Increase the use of technology to support student transitions and success (e.g. college and career advising, transfer orientation, dual-credit, transfer centers).
4. Identify effective local and regional initiatives that reinforce the value of a postsecondary credential and increase student learning for possible expansion statewide.

Objective 2: Close achievement gaps so all students succeed at high levels.

Strategies:

1. Review and restructure state and institutional financial aid programs to maintain high-quality and affordable postsecondary education opportunities that promote college success for low-to-moderate income, part-time, transfer, and adult students.
2. Redesign statewide professional development offerings for faculty and staff members around effective “closing the gap” strategies.
3. Develop new data and information tools to better analyze, track, and implement effective “closing the gap” strategies.

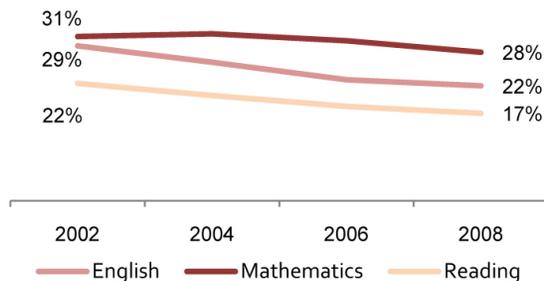
Objective 3: Increase the quality of the student experience.

Strategies:

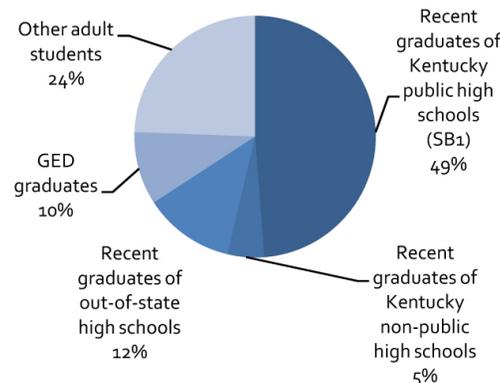
1. Promote enriching educational experiences that increase student engagement in the learning process and provide hands-on preparation for life, careers, and graduate education.
2. Promote student appreciation for diversity, cultural literacy, and international understanding.
3. Advocate for increased funding for college and university instruction to attract, retain, and develop high-quality faculty members.
4. Strengthen high-quality academic programs on every campus that enhance mission differentiation, build on program strengths, and bring greater national prominence to individual institutions.

GRAPHS ARE SAMPLES: FOR DISPLAY ONLY

Entering Students Not Ready for College by Subject, 2002-2008



Entering Class: Type of Student



KEY INDICATORS

- GRADUATION & COMPLETION RATES
- DEGREES & CREDENTIALS CONFERRED
- TRANSFERS FROM KCTCS TO 4-YEAR INSTITUTIONS
- QUALITY OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

RESEARCH & ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Kentucky will attract new research investments, produce degrees that grow the economy, and improve the educational attainment of its workforce.

Kentucky consistently trails the nation on indicators of economic competitiveness. Kentucky currently ranks:

- 45th on the New Economy Index, which measures knowledge jobs, globalization, economic dynamism, the digital economy, and technological innovation capacity.
- 45th in the number of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) degrees awarded as a share of all degrees.

- 41st on annual per capita postsecondary research and development expenditures.
- 42nd on adults 25 to 34 with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Even so, Kentucky has strengths upon which to build. The state's university research and development efforts generate knowledge and discoveries that can be commercialized to create new businesses and jobs. Postsecondary faculty and staff educate future professionals and entrepreneurs and upgrade the skills of current workers. An educated workforce attracts more educated people to the state, which in turn lures prospective employers.

Kentucky must ramp up its research and development efforts to compete effectively in the global economy. The

educational attainment level of our workforce must be improved—only half of adults (5x percent) has a high school diploma or less, while less than half (45 percent) has completed an associate degree. Degree production should be aligned with the current and projected workforce needs of the state, and more students should be encouraged to pursue STEM and other high-demand fields. At the same time, Kentucky's postsecondary institutions must engage in partnerships with community leaders to advance economic, social, cultural, and environmental progress through regional stewardship.

Legislative Mandates

- *The Kentucky Innovation Act (2000) finds that Kentucky's well-being depends on "a strong, entrepreneurial economy, characterized by knowledge, innovation, and speed" that can be promoted through research and high-technology enterprises.*
- *Goal 2 of HB 1 directs the University of Kentucky to become "a major, comprehensive research university ranked nationally in the top 20 public universities."*
- *Goal 3 of HB 1 directs the University of Louisville to become "a premier, nationally recognized metropolitan research university."*
- *Goal 5 of HB 1 directs KCTCS to "develop a workforce with the skills to meet the needs of new and existing industries" and "improve the employability of citizens."*



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RESEARCH & ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Objective 1: Increase research and development to promote innovation, jobs, and economic development.

Strategies:

1. Create a Kentucky research collaborative anchored by the two research universities and operated in partnership with the comprehensive institutions to expand and upgrade existing technology transfer centers and business incubators; leverage university expertise; increase the commercialization of research and development; and pursue research investments in high-growth or emerging areas where Kentucky has the best chance of developing global expertise.
2. Develop and implement a strategic communications plan that highlights campus-based research and development initiatives and the impact of this work on Kentucky's economic competitiveness.
3. Secure additional funding for research matching programs, such as the Endowment Match Program and EPSCoR, and explore new funding approaches to maximize research investments (e.g., faculty, facilities, equipment).

KEY INDICATORS

- EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF YOUNG ADULTS
- DEGREES CONFERRED IN STEM FIELDS
- EXTRAMURAL RESEARCH

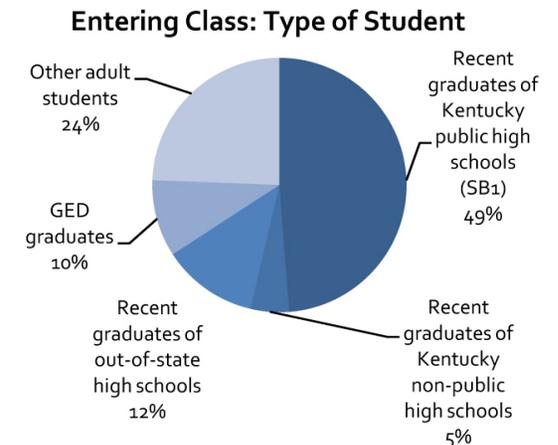
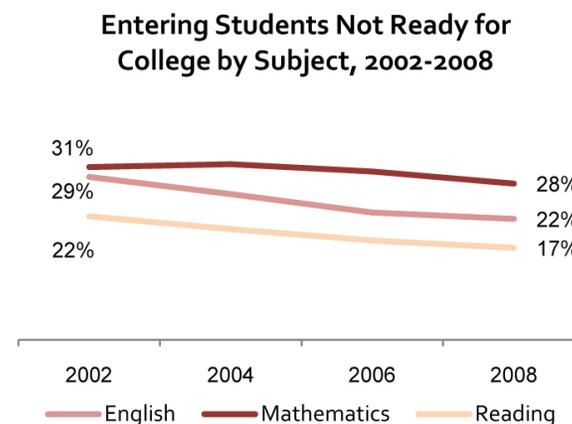
Objective 2: Increase the number of degrees and credentials in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and other high-demand fields.

Strategies:

1. Create a partnership of state agencies, schools, colleges and universities, businesses and industries, and other organizations to provide ongoing leadership, advocacy, and collaborative strategies that support Kentucky's STEM agenda.
2. Build an innovative, creative, and entrepreneurial culture within the postsecondary education community and across the Commonwealth to stimulate economic and job growth.

3. Assess whether current and projected degree production matches current and projected job openings, especially in high-demand fields and other areas linked to economic growth.
4. Develop a statewide public awareness campaign to communicate the importance of increased educational attainment.
5. Work with partners within the service region to develop a unified plan for raising the educational attainment level of every region of the Commonwealth.

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EFFICIENCY & INNOVATION

Kentucky's colleges and universities will serve more students at a high quality in an environment of constrained resources.

In the current economic recession, there is mounting pressure on colleges and universities to demonstrate they are good stewards of public funds. As state revenues shrink and public support for higher education declines, institutions must find ways to increase capacity and maintain quality while moderating tuition increases and containing costs. Meeting these challenges will demand greater creativity and flexibility than ever before.

The current fiscal environment, however difficult, does present a powerful incentive for change. Kentucky's postsecondary system must maintain an unwavering focus on its core mission, work smarter, and equip itself with the tools needed to survive and thrive in the future.

We must discover new approaches and revenue streams that improve postsecondary productivity and quality. Technology is transforming teaching and learning in powerful ways. Offering programs in multiple formats that accommodate different learning styles can make education work for more of our students and increase capacity. Additionally, the system must continue to streamline administrative operations, improve space utilization, and maximize opportunities for joint purchases and contracts.

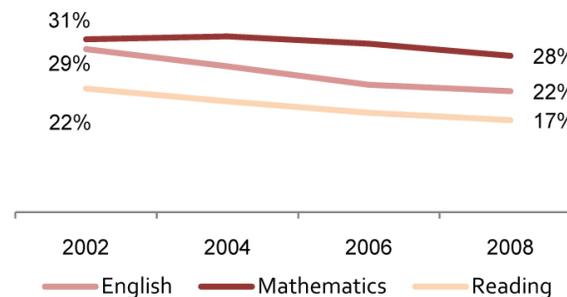
Colleges and universities that rise to the challenge deserve incentives and rewards. Kentucky must re-examine higher education funding mechanisms to ensure state investments are producing the desired results. Finally, the postsecondary system must continuously monitor progress and use data to make effective, informed decisions.

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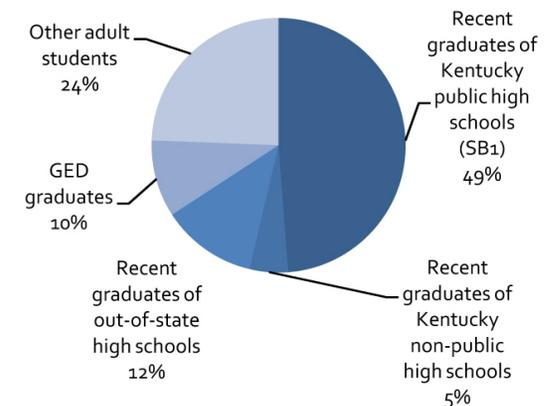
Legislative Mandates

- **HB 1 (1997)** envisions a postsecondary system with a single point of accountability to "ensure coordination of programs and efficient use of resources."
- **The Higher Education Work Group (2009)** recommended several measures to increase the postsecondary system's efficiency, productivity, and financial transparency.

Entering Students Not Ready for College by Subject, 2002-2008



Entering Class: Type of Student



EFFICIENCY & INNOVATION

Objective 1: Increase academic productivity through program innovations and more strategic use of resources.

Strategies:

1. Emphasize course redesign and alternative methods of program delivery (e.g., greater use of technology, distance education, accelerated degree pathways) to increase efficiency, better address student educational

and workforce needs, and maximize student success for both traditional and nontraditional students.

2. Promote new approaches that increase the motivation, satisfaction, skills, retention, and productivity of postsecondary faculty and staff.

3. Promote partnerships with independent colleges and universities, educational systems and other stakeholders to achieve economies of scale, eliminate duplication of programs and services, and contain costs.

Objective 2: Increase the effective use of college and university administrative resources.

Strategies:

1. Optimize administrative and business operations by exploring options for consolidating and/or outsourcing pertinent operations, as well as joint purchasing and contracts.

2. Develop capital facilities policies that promote:

- capital renewal and renovation;
- deferred maintenance;
- the leveraging of community assets;
- alternative approaches to financing new classrooms and research and laboratory space; and
- innovative uses of technology.



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KEY INDICATORS

- DEGREE PRODUCTIVITY
- EDUCATION & RELATED SPENDING PER COMPLETION