

# PRICHARD COMMITTEE

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## FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

**TOP  
20** **BY  
2020**

**2018 UPDATE**

In 2008, the Prichard Committee challenged Kentuckians to move the education system to the Top 20 among the 50 states by 2020. In the early years of that challenge, new results suggested that goal was attainable. This year's report is different, raising concern that our educational improvements seem to have hit a plateau and some have even begun to slip backward.

The first warning bell is about our youngest learners. The most recent data puts Kentucky 41st of the 50 states in preschool enrollment, with only 41 percent of our three- and four-year-olds participating in public or private preschool.

That's a decline from our ranking of 24th in the original 2008 Top 20 report.

Kentucky has also lost ground to other states recently on eighth grade reading and mathematics, and the state's rankings have slipped for higher education funding and the share of that funding that must be paid by students and their families since our 2008 report.

On many other indicators, Kentucky has seen some progress, but the results are improving too slowly to reach the ambitious Top 20 level.

That slow movement can be seen in fourth grade mathematics, AP credits earned in high school, adults with high school diplomas and bachelor degrees, bachelor's degree completion, and the percent of bachelor degree recipients who majored in science, technology, engineering, or math.

Teachers' average salaries are also improving too slowly.

Finally, there's room for pride in six ratings: Kentucky places in the top ten for high school graduation and fourth grade science and in the top 20 states in fourth grade reading, eighth grade science, high school graduates going to college, and associate degree completion.

*The following pages show both trends and data sources for all 19 indicators used to track Kentucky progress toward the top tier of states in educational achievement.*

### ON TRACK FOR 2020

- 7th in high school graduation rate
- 9th in fourth-grade science
- 17th in fourth-grade reading
- 18th in eighth-grade science
- 18th in high school graduates going to college
- 19th in two-year postsecondary graduations

### IMPROVING, BUT SLOWLY

- 26th in average teacher salary
- 28th in students earning AP college credit in high school
- 29th in fourth-grade mathematics
- 29th in adults 18 to 24 with high school diploma or equivalent
- 35th in four-year postsecondary graduations
- 38th in adults 25 to 34 with a bachelor's degree
- 38th in per-pupil funding for K-12 education
- 42nd in STEM share of bachelor's degrees

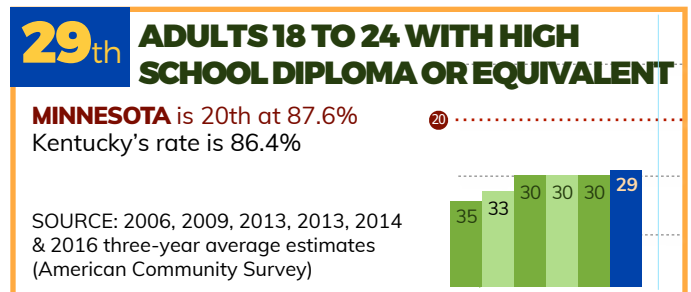
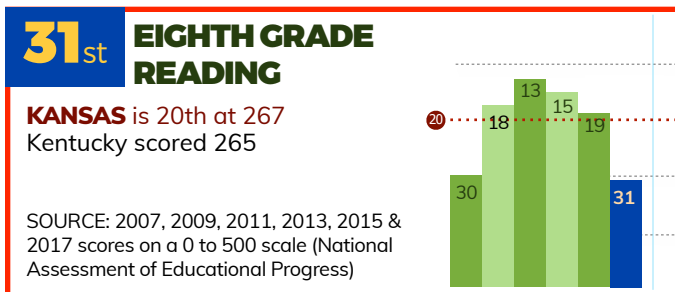
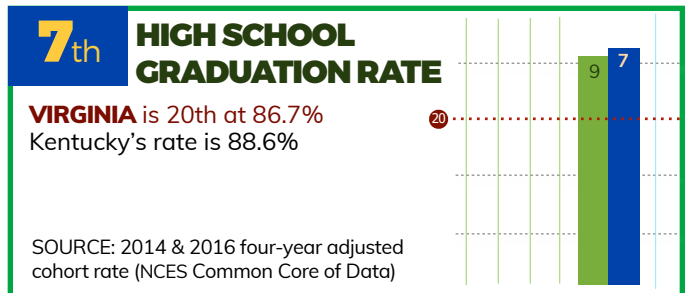
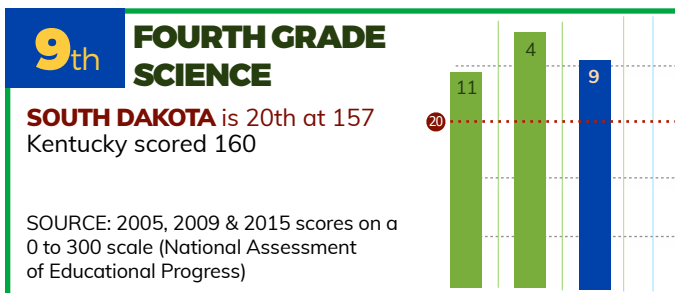
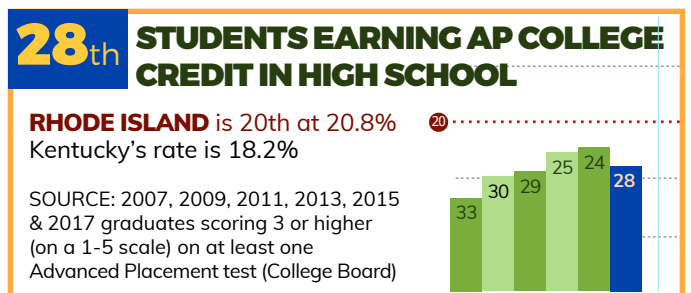
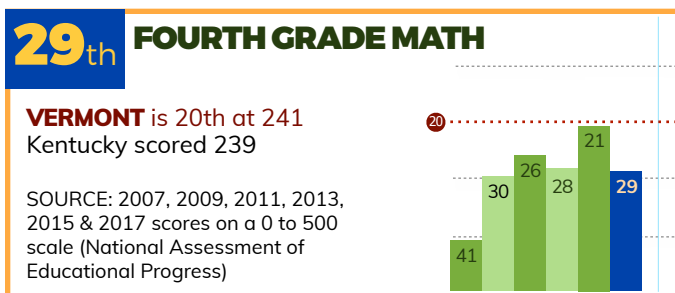
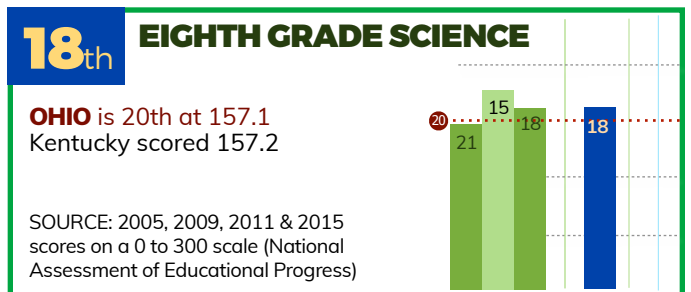
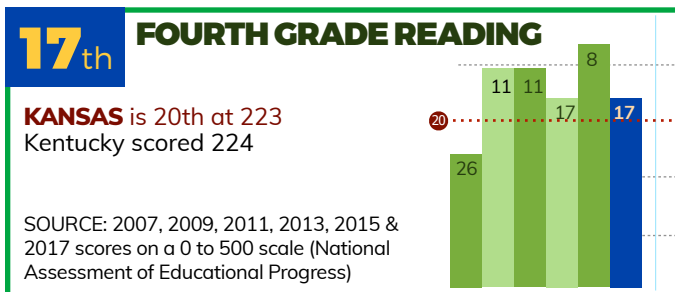
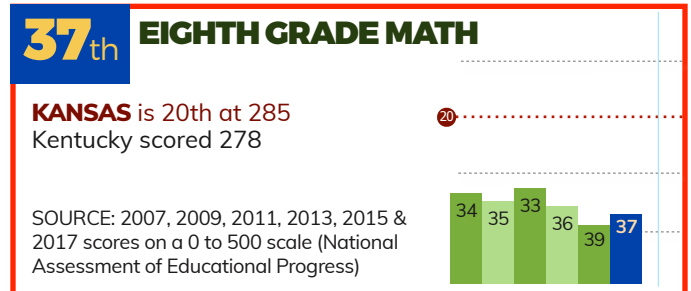
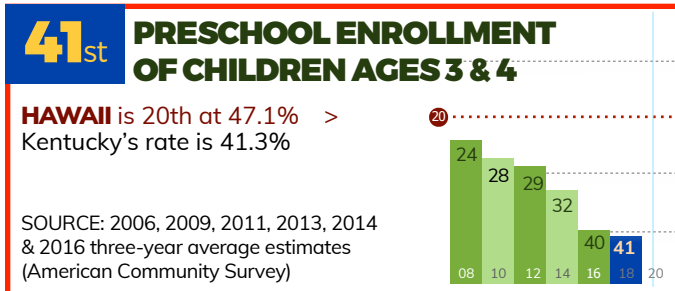
### FLAT OR LOSING GROUND

- 23rd in share of higher education funding paid by families
- 30th in per-pupil total higher education funding
- 31st in eighth-grade reading
- 37th in eighth-grade mathematics
- 41st in preschool participation

# TOP 20 BY 2020

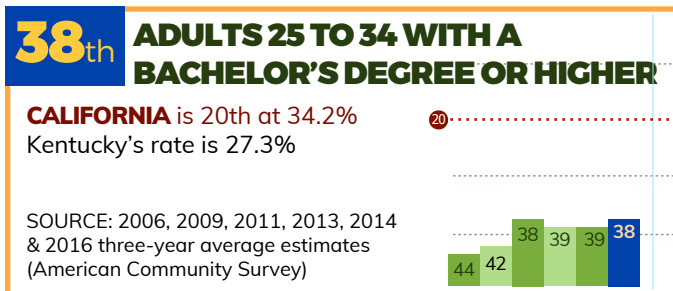
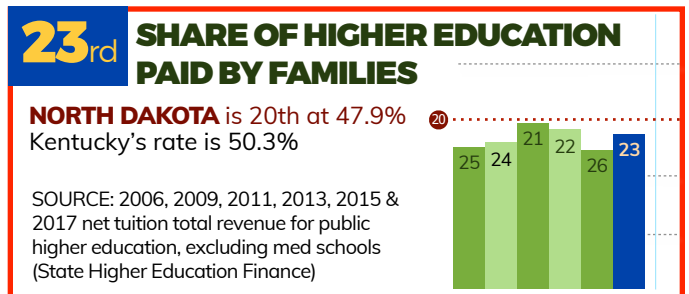
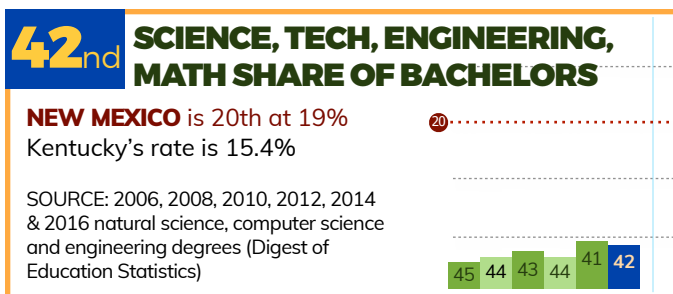
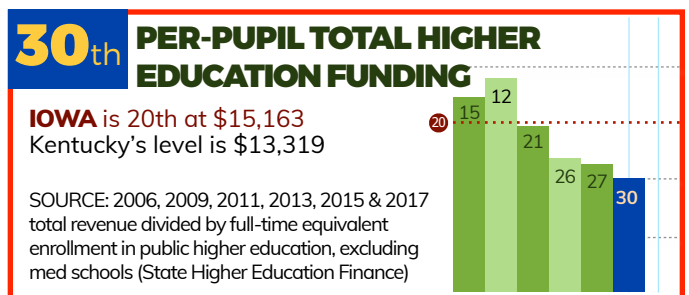
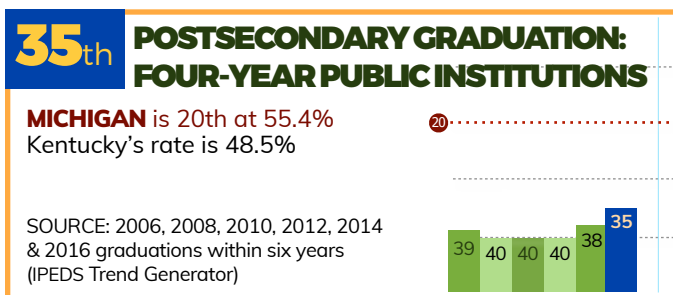
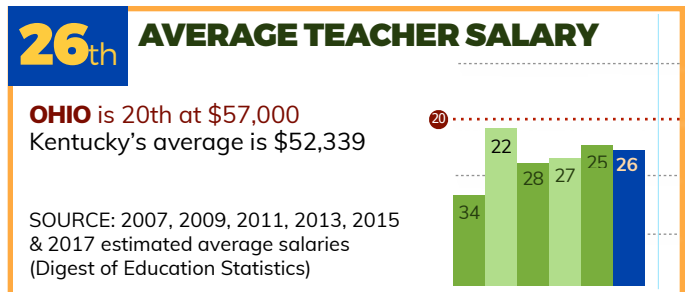
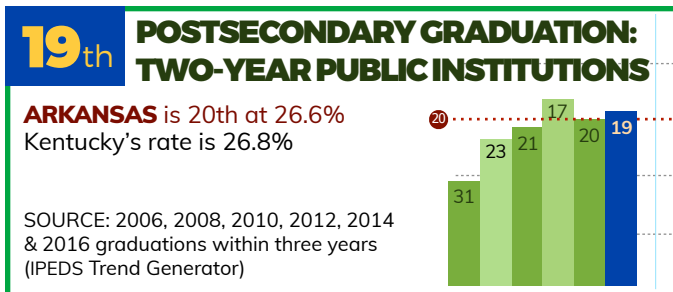
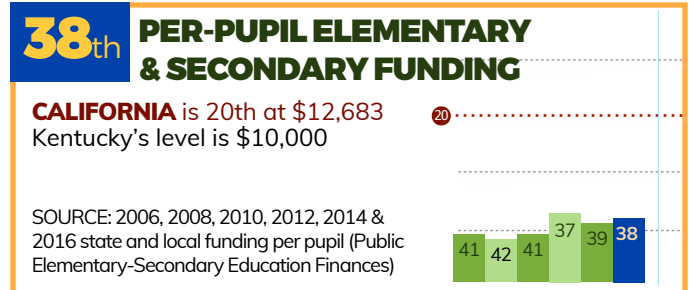
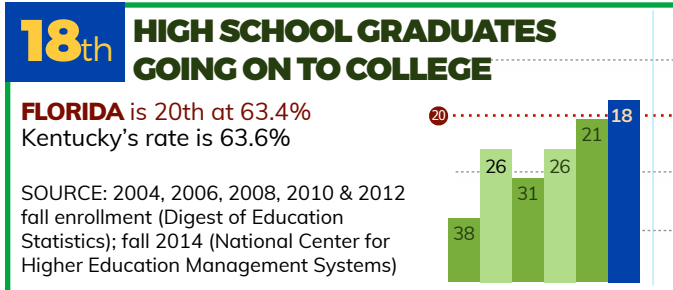
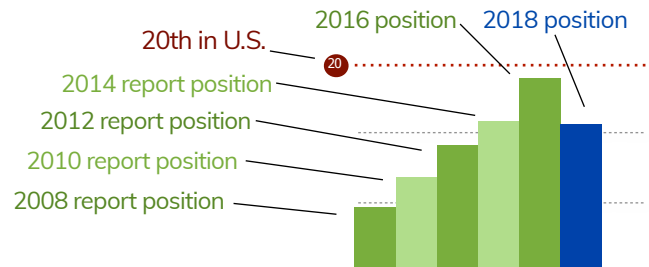
## 2018 UPDATE

Where are we today? What does our progress look like?



## READING THE CHARTS

Each category shows Kentucky's current standing among the 50 states in the most recent data, highlighted with the blue bar. The green bars show Kentucky's position in our 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016 reports. The red dot and dotted line mark the goal of reaching the Top 20. Gray dotted lines mark 10th, 30th and 40th position.



### INDICATOR UPDATE

Results for fourth- and eighth-grade writing on the NAEP exam were included in the original Top 20 report but were dropped as categories due to no updated testing. However, the exams were administered in 2017 with results expected late in 2018. As of the printing deadline for this report, the new results had not yet been published.

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# **PRIORITIES FOR KENTUCKY**

## *Building a Path to a Larger Life for All Kentuckians Through Excellent Education*

Since 1983, the Prichard Committee has worked to study priority issues, inform the public and policymakers about best practices and engage citizens, business leaders, families, students, and other stakeholders in a shared mission to move Kentucky to the top tier of all states for education excellence and equity for all children, from their earliest years through postsecondary education.

The Committee's vision for education in Kentucky focuses on four overarching priorities:

### **STRONG STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

We demand excellence through meaningful standards and robust accountability at all levels, from early childhood through postsecondary education. High expectations and transparency are critical components to Kentucky's success in education.

### **ADEQUATE FUNDING**

We advocate for efficient use of resources and equitable funding that is adequate to assure excellence in education from early childhood through postsecondary.

### **EFFECTIVE TEACHING**

We want to assure that every Kentucky student has a highly qualified, well-supported and well-trained teacher. We prioritize efforts to ensure teaching excellence and elevate the teaching profession as the key to student learning.

### **SUSTAINED AND EXPANDED ENGAGEMENT**

We engage Kentucky citizens on issues critical to success in education. Informed and empowered students, parents, community and business leaders will demand continued progress for education across the Commonwealth.

The Prichard Committee is also committed to working in targeted areas:

#### **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

High-quality environments from birth to preschool will prepare more students for strong learning in kindergarten through third grade, leading to more students proficient in reading and mathematics by the end of third grade.

#### **KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THIRD GRADE**

Each child needs a strong foundation in reading, mathematics, and well beyond to be prepared for deep work beginning in fourth grade. Increasing awareness, will, and capacity for effective early intervention, well-rounded curriculum, social-emotional learning, consistent attendance, and other areas will improve student learning in the early elementary grades.

#### **SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

Safe, inclusive, and engaging environments are critical to effective teaching and learning that results in excellent education.

#### **MEANINGFUL HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**

Kentucky diplomas should reflect opportunities and learning to prepare all students for success in work, life, and postsecondary education.

#### **TRANSITION TO POSTSECONDARY**

Practices that more fully ensure students are prepared for, have knowledge of, and are encouraged to transition to and persist in postsecondary education can lead to greater levels of postsecondary success.

#### **POSTSECONDARY AFFORDABILITY**

Financial difficulties represent a major barrier to many students in both pursuing and completing postsecondary education. Linking decisions on financial aid, tuition and institutional support can lead to more effective use of public resources and supports for students who need the most assistance in completing a high-quality credential.

#### **FIND OUT MORE!**

Learn more about the Prichard Committee, an independent citizens' advocacy organization and the Top 20 by 2020 project online at [prichardcommittee.org](http://prichardcommittee.org).

We welcome your thoughts and questions about this work at (859) 233-9849 or by e-mail at [admin@prichardcommittee.org](mailto:admin@prichardcommittee.org). Our mailing address is 271 W. Short St., Suite 202, Lexington, KY 40507.

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