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**Educate Maine Releases 2020 “Education Indicators for Maine” Report**

***Annual review of Maine’s education pipeline identifies progress and challenges***

PORTLAND, MAINE – [Educate Maine](https://www.educatemaine.org/) released its eighth “[Education Indicators for Maine](educationindicators.me)” report Thursday. The annual report is an in-depth examination of Maine’s education system following the path of Maine students from early childhood through postsecondary education. The report uses ten indicators to measure access, participation, and performance across the system. It provides data on what is working well and where investments in Maine’s education system are needed to ensure that every Maine person reaches their highest educational potential.

This year’s report is available in a new web format that allows for readily accessible data points on education in Maine, more timely updates to the indicators, and additional information on how readers can learn more and take action. Future iterations of the report will expand on what is measured as important for educational access, participation, and attainment across Maine. It is important to note that data for this report were collected pre-pandemic. They serve as a baseline for looking to future educational achievement, as well as the impact of COVID-19 on educational outcomes.

“Although the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly upended the educational system in Maine and the nation, and there will be challenges in tracking educational outcomes over the next few years, the 2020 Education Indicators data give us an important baseline for where Maine is doing well and where challenges lie in education and building the skilled workforce Maine needs,” said Educate Maine Executive Director Jason Judd, Ed.D. “There are bright spots in the 2020 Education Indicators data, and there are areas we need to improve. Overall high school performance is declining, and the disparities in students’ achievement related to economic status, race, ethnicity, and gender are widening. These challenges need to be prioritized.”

The decline in academic performance of high school students over the past several years is evidenced by achievement levels on the SAT. While reading proficiency has improved in 4th and 8th grades over the past three years, math proficiency has stayed roughly the same in these groups and proficiency in both reading and math has declined among 11th graders. Maine students in 4th and 8th grades either perform at about the same level as the national average, or slightly better. Student achievement nationally in reading and math peaked in 2013 and has yet to return to 2013 levels based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Achievement gaps are significant for economically disadvantaged students (25 points on average), who in 2019 made up 42% of Maine’s student population. They also are significant for students from a number of racial/ethnic backgrounds. For Black/African American students, gaps are small in 4th grade, yet they grow much larger by high school. Although Black and white students in Maine enroll in college at similar rates, 42% fewer Black students graduate. Among all students, girls generally achieve at higher levels than boys throughout the education pipeline. They also graduate high school at a higher rate and enroll, persist, and complete college at higher rates than their male peers.

The report found Maine has made progress at the beginning and the end of the educational pipeline: expanding full-day kindergarten and increasing the number of Mainers with postsecondary degrees or credentials of value. The cost burden of college has declined, as has the debt to income ratio. However, college cost and debt are still a challenge for Maine families, and Mainers face higher college costs and greater debt burdens than those in other New England states.

“We do not yet know the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including how it will change educational needs and goals,” added Judd. “Nevertheless, Maine schools, employers and policy makers are focused on improving these indicators, with many of us working together as part of the [MaineSpark](https://mainespark.me/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) coalition to help ensure 60% of Mainers have a postsecondary degree or credential of value by 2025. The 2020 Education Indicators report provides a solid starting point for discussions on how we all can better support Maine students from cradle to career.”

For the full report, please go to <http://educationindicators.me/>.

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***About Educate Maine:***

Educate Maine champions career readiness by increasing the educational attainment of Maine people, enabling all students to succeed in postsecondary education and in the workplace. Landmark programs include the Maine Teacher of the Year program, Education Leaders Experience, Project>Login, and FocusMaine Intern Experience. More information is available at [educatemaine.org](http://www.educatemaine.org/).