

20 | **MISSOURI**
24 | **LEGISLATORS**
RETREAT

ISSUE BRIEF
DECEMBER 9 - 10, 2024

EXPANDING ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

Expanding access to high-quality early learning experiences is essential for fostering children’s cognitive, social, and emotional development, laying the groundwork for lifelong success. [Research](#) consistently shows that children who participate in high-quality early education programs demonstrate improved academic achievement, better health outcomes, and enhanced social skills later in life. Moreover, early learning helps close achievement gaps, particularly for children from low-income families or disadvantaged backgrounds, by providing [equitable opportunities](#) for growth during this critical [developmental window](#). As evidence continues to emphasize the long-term benefits, expanding access to early education becomes a crucial strategy for promoting future success and well-being across diverse populations.

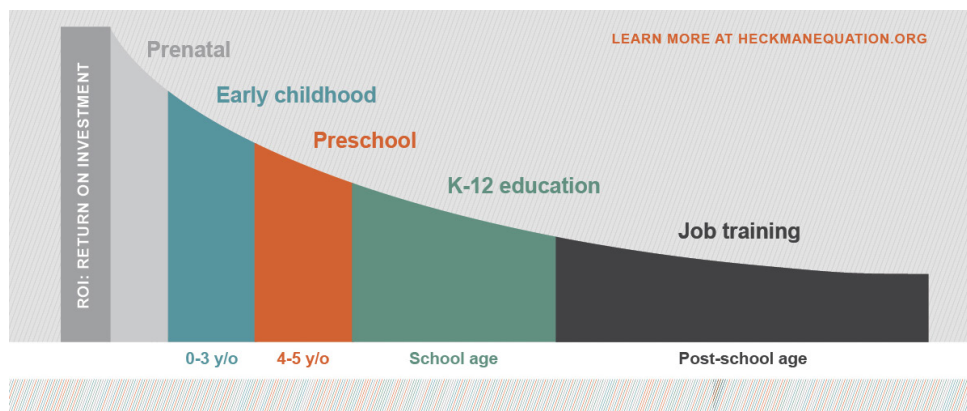
IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY

Optimal brain development during a child’s earliest years of life has a [long-term](#) impact on emotional and physical health, social skills, and cognitive and linguistic capacities. This development happens iteratively through interactions with family members and well-prepared, highly qualified early educators. With consistent exposure to nurturing, language-

rich environments with adults at home and early educators in child care and preschool settings, young children develop robust networks of neural connectivity that undergird their academic and life [success](#) for decades to come.

An [intergenerational analysis](#) of the outcomes stemming from HighScope’s [Perry Preschool Project](#), a high-quality preschool intervention, found that preschool participation improved participants’ employment, health, cognitive and social-emotional skills, and reduced criminal activity. The positive effects continued to benefit the academic and social development of participants’ children. In addition to an overall increase in the quality of life for children who receive high-quality child care, it also reduces the likelihood of students needing additional academic support during the primary years. Research has shown that every \$1 invested to provide high-quality child care yields a [return on investment](#) of \$4 to \$9 over time. [The Heckman curve](#) (Figure 1) illustrates this by examining the return on investment (ROI) in human capital development, particularly focusing on early childhood education. The curve demonstrates that investments made in the earliest years of life, especially before age five, yield the highest returns.

Figure 1: Return on Investment in Early Childhood Development



Source: [John Heckman](#)

Need for Child Care

The Heckman Curve underscores the importance of early investment in children's development by showing that the highest returns occur when resources are directed toward children before the age of five. This insight is particularly relevant to states like Missouri, where 435,238 [children](#) are under the age of five, and with 67 percent of parents in the workforce, the need for affordable, high-quality child care and preschool access is pressing. However, the availability of such resources falls short of the growing demand, creating a critical gap in early childhood support. Child Care Missouri and the American Community Survey recently published findings that indicated nearly half of Missouri's children under five live in a [child care desert](#), areas with more than three children per licensed slot. [Governor Parson](#), alongside leaders from the Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Health and Senior Services (DHSS), and Social Services (DSS) have worked to create solutions and help remedy this issue.



On May 8, 2024, Governor Parson signed [Senate Bill 727](#) into law, providing funding to early childhood programs to expand the number of children served. It also allows for the inclusion of children ages three-to-five years old who are attending public or charter schools, who also qualify for free or reduced lunch, to be included in the school's average daily attendance. This attendance data can result in more money to hire teachers and expand pre-K classrooms. This will also provide opportunities for preschoolers to be ready for kindergarten.

Other Early Childhood Initiatives

In 2019, a [Statewide Needs Assessment](#) was conducted in Missouri and found that families were unaware of the resources available to them or how to access them. The findings of the assessment helped prompt the 2021 consolidation of Missouri's key interagency early childhood programs into a single [Office of Childhood](#). In addition to this, [Early Connections](#) was created, designed to ensure coordination and collaboration between the different early childhood agencies.

State Example

Like Missouri, North Dakota has implemented legislation aimed at increasing funding for early childhood. In 2023, Gov. Doug Burgum signed [HB 1540](#), allocating over \$65 million of state funds for the North Dakota Child Care Initiative. These funds will work alongside federal dollars to strengthen quality, affordability, and availability of child care. Through this investment, North Dakota has committed to expanding the ["Best in Class" Pre-K Program](#). The Best in Class program provides grants for child care facilities who serve four year olds, committed to delivering high quality service. These programs must use a sliding scale payment feature, so the grant funding is intended to help offset the lost revenue.

Policy Considerations

- ❓ What infrastructure is needed to support public-private partnerships that could lead to expanded child care quality and capacity while addressing gaps?
- ❓ How can increases in access to high-quality child care be leveraged to support workforce development programs?
- ❓ How can policymakers elevate awareness that increased funding ensures not just greater access but higher quality as well?

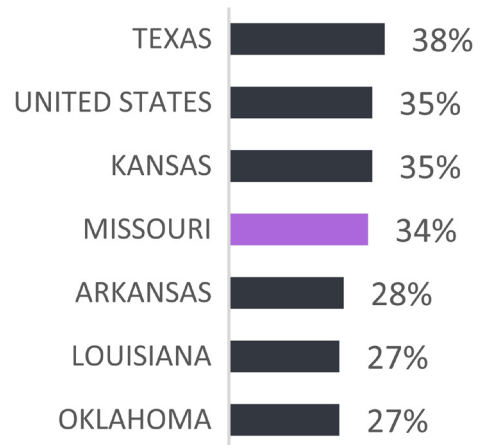
HIGH-QUALITY MATH INSTRUCTION

Mathematics proficiency serves as a benchmark to broadly measure the effectiveness of the United States' education system. Over a 20-year period from 1990 to 2009, the national [average](#) for fourth-grade and eighth-grade mathematics proficiency has trended upward. However, in 2022 only 34 percent of Missouri's fourth-graders and 24 percent of eighth-graders demonstrated [proficiency](#) in math. Early math proficiency is a [predictor](#) of future success including meaningful employment opportunities and economic independence. High-quality math instruction focusing on the development of essential math concepts and skills is critical to achieving math proficiency. Additionally, higher math proficiency has been a [strong indicator](#) of the likelihood of earning a higher wage on average as an adult. Math proficiency can also predict future academic success in math, and among students of color, those who complete more advanced math courses are [more likely](#) to enroll and stay enrolled in college.

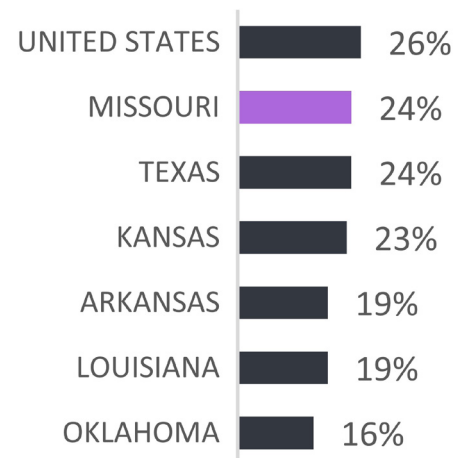
Despite efforts to improve math instruction across the country, the United States struggles to effectively teach children, [showing no progress](#) on NAEP exams in math since 2005 and a dip in performance since 2019. Missouri Math Educators convened during the 2023-2024 school year for content sessions which offered professional

Figure 2: National Math Proficiency Rates, By Region (2022)

4th Grade Math NAEP Scores



8th Grade Math NAEP Scores



Source: [National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\)](#)

development through the [Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#) (DESE). The DESE collaborated with educators to identify priority math standards to target necessary math instruction during COVID-19 pandemic recovery. The state continues to invest in supporting high-quality math instruction for all students.

Evidence-Based Math Instruction

Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) establish research-based [strategies for teachers to implement](#). There is a growing body of [research](#) combining objective evidence from cognitive psychology, education theory, and neuroscience to inform how math concepts and skills are learned. Traditional math instructional strategies often rely on rote memorization and procedural training. However, these strategies do not foster deep mathematical understanding and problem-solving skills. [Research](#) indicates that students benefit from evidence-aligned math instruction that encourages active problem-solving, conceptual discussion, and application of math in real-world contexts.

Potential Outcomes of Effective Math Instructional Strategies

Evidence-aligned math instruction that encourages active problem-solving, conceptual discussion, and application math in real-world context prepares students to be adept thinkers. A deeper understanding of mathematical procedures enables students to approach new problems from a critical and creative lens and encourages using logic and reasoning to find solutions. Additionally, real-world applications build transferable math skills, while prioritizing [active](#) engagement leading to better retention of knowledge. Missouri has the opportunity to [effectively](#) measure comprehensive learning growth by developing or utilizing assessments that span standards across multiple grade levels.

Policy Considerations

- ❓ How can Missouri expand professional development for educators to implement evidence-based practices in mathematics instruction?
- ❓ What strategies can be implemented to engage families and communities in supporting math instruction, particularly for underrepresented or disadvantaged groups?
- ❓ How can we foster collaboration among educators, researchers, and policymakers to ensure that the latest research on effective mathematics instruction informs classroom practices?

LEVERAGING DATA TO DRIVE EDUCATION DECISION-MAKING

Data is integral to school accountability and decision-making through building knowledge, reflecting on best practices in education, and assessing school needs. By analyzing data, policymakers can determine what problems exist and the best step forward to fix them. Education data is used to drive state, district, and school decisions throughout the United States for the following applications:

- **Strengths and Best Practices Across States:** Data is used to measure the effect of policies and programs, allowing policymakers to learn from best practices in different areas. Data helps assess improvements in areas such as assessment scores, teacher retention, and graduation rates.
- **School Accountability:** States are required to report data through the [Every School Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#). Schools are categorized as on-track or in need of improvement based on academic achievement and growth to keep schools accountable for student learning.
- **School Supports:** Data plays a critical role in addressing equity gaps by guiding resource allocation and funding decisions. During the

COVID-19 pandemic, demographic, funding, and teacher retention [data](#) provided insights for policymakers, helping them determine where resources were most needed and where strategic investments could have the greatest impact.

Utilizing Data in Missouri

Recently, the Missouri DESE launched the [Missouri Data Visualization Tool \(MO DVT\)](#), which creates visualizations to compare expected growth and student growth. MO DVT was created for teachers and education leaders to have greater access to and understanding of the [Missouri Growth Model](#), a model which calculates growth compared to predictions. MO DVT allows users to access three types of reports (see Table 1 below): Building, LEA, and Comparison.

State Examples

States across the country use data for [school accountability](#) to support college and career readiness, methods for innovation, assessment and curriculum development, and professional capacity.

- **Iowa:** Iowa utilizes data to design competency-based instruction, grow professional development, and develop challenging standards for career and college readiness. Additionally, data is used to determine supports needed for school improvement.

- **Kentucky:** Kentucky utilizes data to design innovative learning models and college and career readiness standards. Furthermore, Kentucky uses data to identify school successes and areas of improvement and to enable support to meet schools' needs.
- **South Carolina:** South Carolina utilizes data to develop innovative learning approaches, including career-based learning, personalized learning, and proficiency-based learning models. The state also links student performance to teacher evaluations to improve teacher efficiency.

Policy Considerations

- ❓ In what ways can data from the Missouri Data Visualization Tool enhance accountability standards and continuous improvement for local schools and districts?
- ❓ How can the state leverage data to guide the effective allocation of resources, ensuring funding and support services are distributed based on student needs and school performance?
- ❓ How can schools, districts, and the state involve parents, students, and community stakeholders in the data collection and decision-making process to ensure local needs and values are reflected in education policies?

Table 1: MO DVT Report Types

Type of Report	Description
Building	Displays academic growth in English, and Mathematics, and Biology for all buildings. Categorizes buildings as either below, on track, or exceeding.
LEA	Displays academic growth for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) for English and Mathematics. Categorizes LEAs as either below, on track, or exceeding.
Comparison	Allows users to compare growth metrics for buildings and LEAs using all End of Course (EOC) assessments. Develops a scatterplot to compare buildings and LEAs' growth with either performance, proficient or advanced, or free and reduced lunch to examine general patterns and trends.

EXPLORING APPROACHES TO CHOICE

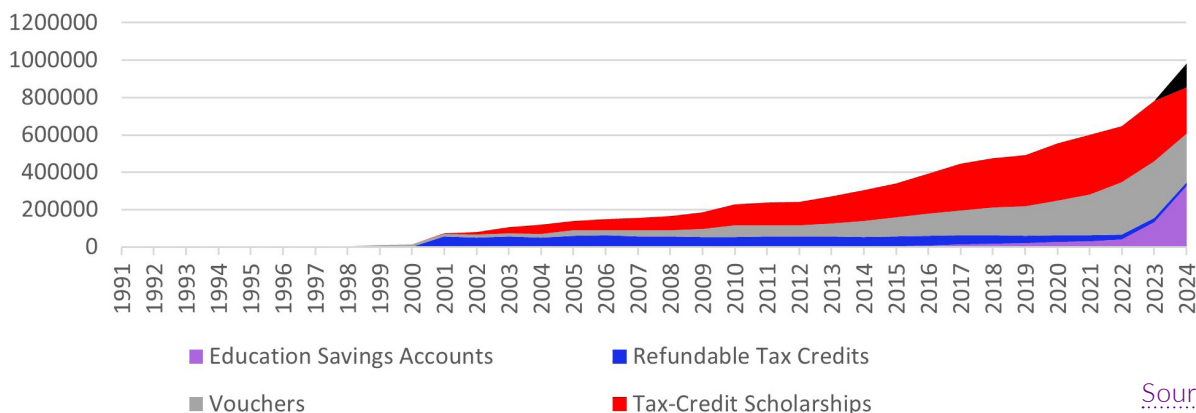
School choice encompasses public school options – such as charter schools, magnet schools, and inter- and intra-district transfers – as well as private school options, including vouchers, tax credits, and education savings accounts. On one hand, school choice offers families more voice in their children’s education. Advocates claim choice programs expand educational opportunities for new and different education models to develop and create competitive pressures to push traditional schools and districts to innovate and improve. Conversely, critics argue that some school choice options funnel students and funding from the traditional public schools that continue to serve most students. Still, others emphasize that the key question is not which entity operates schools, but rather how a community can create enough high-quality seats to serve the diverse needs of all students living in a particular community.

Private School Choice Options

Private schools are schools that are privately owned and funded. As such, they are not subject to the same rules and regulations as public schools. Private schools fall into [five categories](#) that are based on religious affiliation: Catholic, conservative Christian, affiliated religious, unaffiliated religious, and nonsectarian. In 2019, roughly [11 percent](#) Missouri’s K-12 students were enrolled in private school.

- **Vouchers:** [Voucher programs](#) are designed to provide some or all the public funding that would support a student’s schooling to families to apply towards private school. While the concept of voucher programs is not new (Maine and Vermont have voucher programs dating back to the 19th century), they have grown in popularity and are the most used private school choice mechanism. [Data](#) on the impact of voucher programs on academic performance is mixed, though there is evidence that attending a private school may improve parent or student satisfaction.
- **Education Savings Accounts:** Education savings accounts (ESAs) allow parents to withdraw their child from public or charter schools and receive [public funds to be used for expenses](#) associated with learning programs. ESAs are a relatively new private school choice option, with [Arizona](#) becoming the first state in the nation to adopt an ESA policy in 2011. ESAs act as a more flexible version of the voucher concept. The state deposits a portion of the per-pupil expenditure into a restricted-use bank account that families can use for education products and services, including private school tuition, as well as a range of educational services and tools, such as tutoring, supplies, college tuition, and other learning services and materials. Funds in ESAs also typically roll over from year to year.

Figure 3: U.S. Private Choice Participation Levels since 1991



Source

➤ The [Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program](#) (MESA) is a tax-credit-funded ESA that allows eligible parents to receive money to pay for tuition at any school they choose, as well as other educational expenses such as tutoring, educational therapies, individual classes, and extracurricular programs. To qualify, a student must be enrolled in a public school and either have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students with special needs, or from a family whose income does not exceed 300 percent of the federal free-and-reduced-price lunch income eligibility.

■ **Tax Credit Scholarships:** In some states, individuals and businesses can receive a tax break for donations to nonprofits that provide private school scholarships. The specifics surrounding tax credits vary from state to state. For instance, [Florida](#) provides a 100 percent credit to businesses that support the program while [Indiana](#) only provides a 50 percent match for donations. Eligibility for these programs also differs across states. [Montana's](#) tax credit scholarship is available to every student without qualification. On the other hand, only low-income students are [eligible](#) for Arizona's scholarship program.

■ **Individual Tax Credits and Deductions:** In 2017, the federal government expanded the 529 college savings plans that allow families to invest dollars for college tuition and related expenses in state-administered mutual funds that grow tax-free to also include elementary and secondary education. This expansion allows families to use up to \$10,000 per year in 529 funds to pay for private school tuition and related expenses. All 50 states and the District of Columbia sponsor a 529 plan, and, in some states, families can receive an additional tax credit or deduction to their individual state tax returns for approved educational expenses, such as private school tuition, books, supplies, computers, tutors, and transportation.

■ **Home Schooling:** Beginning in the late 1970s, families began opting to teach their children at home. While the number of families choosing this option had seemingly plateaued from 2012 - 2016 at three percent of students nationwide, the most [recent](#) numbers from 2022 reveal that number has climbed to [five percent](#) nationally.

➤ The Missouri DESE [does not regulate](#) or monitor home schooling in Missouri and there is no registration required with the state.

Approaches to Private School Choice Options:

Arkansas

In 2023, Arkansas passed [The Learns Act](#), a sweeping reform creating the [Arkansas Children's Educational Freedom Account Program](#)—an ESA program, which would make all (presently almost a half million) students eligible by 2025. Initial ESAs will be valued at \$6,614. The legislation also increased teacher pay and raised the Philanthropic Investment in the Arkansas Kids Scholarship Program's total tax credit cap, from \$2 million to \$6 million with a five percent automatic escalator.



Indiana

[State budget bill HB 1001](#) expanded the [Indiana Choice Scholarship Program's](#) student eligibility to near-universal by raising the income threshold from 300 percent to 400 percent of the federal free and reduced-price lunch program income limits. The legislation also eliminated the other pathways for eligibility, such as being a foster care student, being a student with special needs and being assigned to an "F"-graded public school. With this measure, student eligibility in the state increases from 77 percent to 96 percent and students receive an average voucher amount of \$5,439.

Iowa

The [Students First Act](#) was signed into law in January 2023, making state funding available to support the success of every K-12 student in Iowa. The bill established a framework and funding for education savings accounts, which may be used by eligible families to cover tuition, fees, and other qualified education expenses at accredited nonpublic schools in Iowa. The state program is contracted through [Odyssey](#) for ESA program administration, including applications, financial transactions, compliance, fraud prevention and customer service.

Policy Considerations

- ❓ How are school choice programs held accountable for student outcomes and quality of education?
- ❓ How are school choice programs funded and sustained over time?
- ❓ How do school choice programs ensure equity in access to education for all students, particularly those from low-income families or underserved communities? Will these programs exacerbate existing inequalities or help to address them?

INNOVATIVE FUNDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Public higher education institutions are funded through various sources, including federal, state, and local governments, tuition, and investment incomes from endowments.

Federal government funding for institutions of higher education (IHEs) is split into the following three categories:

- *Student Aid* – the largest of the three categories, student aid is distributed individually through loans and grants to help pay for tuition. One of the largest vehicles for student aid is the [Pell Grant](#), which helps low-income undergraduate students pay for college.
- *Research and Development* – [\\$54 billion](#) was allocated towards IHEs for research and development in 2022, accounting for over half of all IHE research and development spending. These funds are typically project specific.
- *Institutional Support* – authorized by the Higher Education Act, institutional support is allocated towards IHEs serving students of color who have been historically underrepresented in higher education. In fiscal year 2022, these grants totaled [\\$843 million](#).

State governments are also significant funders of public higher education. In fiscal year 2023, state governments provided more than [\\$112 billion](#) to support higher education. Known as a "base-plus" approach, state funding for public IHEs is typically determined based on factors like enrollment and prior-year allocations. Once total state funding is decided, the state determines how much is allocated to each IHE.

Local governments primarily use revenue to fund community colleges. The primary source of local revenue is property tax, followed by sales tax and income tax. In fiscal year 2022, local dollars represented [20 percent](#) of community college revenue in the United States.

State Funding Metrics

Several states have taken unique approaches to funding higher education, particularly in the form of performance-based funding wherein student outcomes and experiences impact the amount of funding received. A variety of metrics have been utilized to measure performance and indicate where funds should be allocated. Some [metric examples](#) include:

- *Student Success* – this metric can include measures such as degree attainment, success rate among low-income students and students of color, and retention rates.
- *Enrollment* – 10 states include a measure of enrolled students at each institution to gauge performance. These states include Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin.
- *Campus Climate* – as the least common measure, four states consider campus climate when funding IHEs, with only Rhode Island indicating it as a mandatory metric. Climate is measured by factors such as faculty diversity and campus climate surveys.
- *Workforce Development* – this metric can include measures such as students' wage earnings after graduation and the number of degrees/certificates awarded in state-defined critical needs areas. State examples include Kentucky, Louisiana, and Texas.

State Examples

Performance-based funding for IHEs has been around since the 1970s. Since 2023, approximately [36 states](#) have some form of performance-based funding with the funding allocation amount [varying from state-to-state](#). On average, the percentage of funds allocated via performance-based metrics is nearly eight percent nationally. Research on the effectiveness of performance-based funding is mixed with some indicating modest or no impact on institutional outcomes and that it has [disadvantaged minority-serving institutions](#).

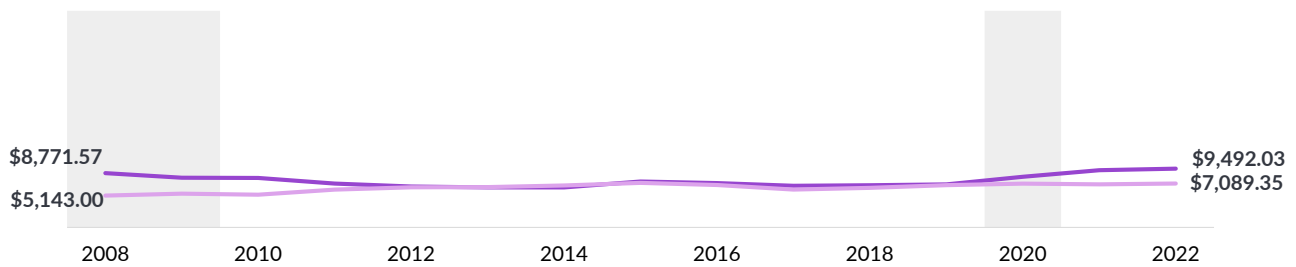
With a variety of metrics to utilize, as well as weights to those metrics, each state has a unique funding formula for their IHEs. A few state highlights:

- **Kansas:** Technical and community colleges, state universities, and Washburn University have [Performance Agreements](#) to receive new state funds which are contingent on metrics such as enrolling students in certificate programs that are in high demand by employers.
- **Oregon:** Up to 10 percent of state funding is [based on measures](#) like the number of underserved students enrolled and the number of students who earned at least 30 credits.
- **Pennsylvania:** Set aside eight percent of its state appropriation to reward schools for meeting or exceeding targets like degree completion, retention, and faculty productivity. In July 2024, the commonwealth created the [Performance-based Funding Council](#) to develop metrics for funding distribution to Penn State University, Temple University, and the University of Pittsburgh.
- **Texas:** Bases most funding on student success measures, including [the rate of credentials awarded for high-demand jobs](#).
- **Virginia:** State funded community colleges follow [outcomes-based metrics](#) such as successful completion of college-level math and English courses, student retention and progress, and completions and transfers.

Highlights from Missouri

In Missouri, higher education is the third largest general fund budget category. In fiscal year 2023, 146,201 full-time enrolled (FTE) students at Missouri public institutions were served by two revenue streams: [state and local funding and tuition revenue](#). State and local government funding totaled \$1.4 billion and tuition revenue was \$1.2 billion.

Figure 4: Percentage of State Appropriations and Tuition Per Full-Time Enrolled Student in Missouri



Date Source

Like many states, Missouri has historically utilized the base-plus funding model to determine state allocations towards IHEs. However, the Missouri General Assembly has been considering adopting a new funding model in recent years. In 2023, the General Assembly appropriated \$450,000 and directed the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development to [commission a study](#) to provide recommendations regarding higher education efficiencies and possible alterations to performance-based funding for IHEs to the Governor and General Assembly. An outcome of the [study findings](#) includes a performance-based funding component that is designed to enhance improvement in student success and operational efficiencies. There is currently legislation under consideration that provides for [a performance-based formula](#).

Policy Considerations

- ❓ To what extent do student and institutional needs factor into Missouri’s IHE funding model?
- ❓ How does the use of property tax revenue impact community colleges?
- ❓ What metrics and percentage of overall funding should Missouri consider as part of a proposed performance-based formula for IHEs?

ALIGNING HIGHER EDUCATION TO WORKFORCE NEEDS

In today’s rapidly evolving job market, the alignment of credentials and degree pathways to workforce needs is paramount for both Missourians and Missouri businesses. Credentials, ranging from degrees and certifications to badges and micro-credentials, serve as indicators of an individual’s skills and competencies. The true value of postsecondary education lies in personal development and its relevance to the labor market’s demands for a skilled and ready workforce. Research indicates that [72.. percent](#) of jobs will require additional education beyond high school by 2031, emphasizing the need for postsecondary education to meet the needs of the workforce.

Addressing the Skills Gap

Many higher education stakeholders are concerned that students lack the necessary qualifications required for today’s workforce. Gaps between student skills and industry needs lead to an increase in unfilled jobs. There are several strategies that can be utilized to increase workforce readiness in alignment with industry needs. These include:

- *Career and technical education (CTE)* – prepares high school and postsecondary students for work through instruction and hands-on training.

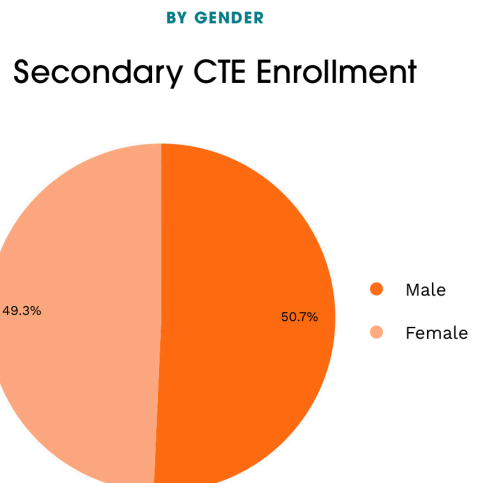
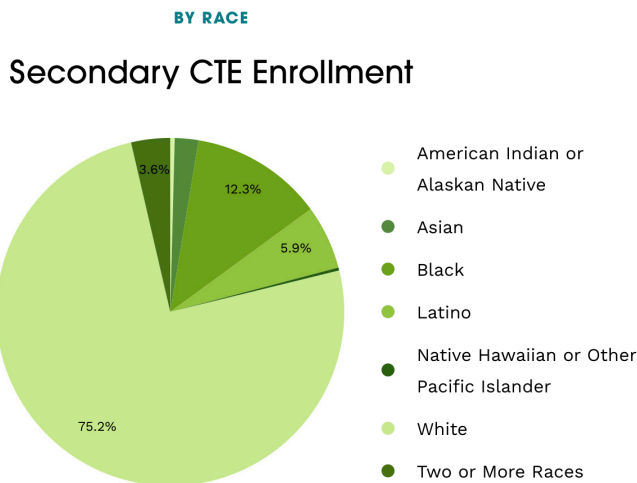
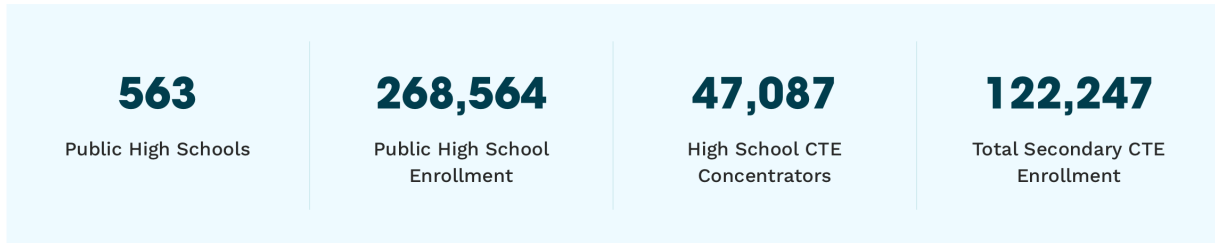
- Partnerships with employers – partners can assess curriculums and support recruitment efforts among recent graduates.
- Reevaluate offerings – alter services and instruction to more closely align with the skills required to meet workforce needs.

CTE is one strategy to improve postsecondary access and increase industry engagement. Research shows that participation in [advanced coursework](#) and [CTE](#) increases a student’s likelihood of graduating high school and attending postsecondary education. While CTE programs vary across states and districts, they are most commonly offered as work-based learning opportunities that develop workplace skills through job shadowing, mentoring, entrepreneurship, service learning, internships, job site tours, and youth apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs.

Partnerships with employers are also effective in establishing educational programs that are in tune with industry needs. In addition to funding from private partners, there are other ways that industry can forge partnerships with IHEs. One such method is establishing [company consortium advisory boards](#) with company representatives that provide ongoing input on the skills students will need to succeed in the workforce. Businesses can also assist educators by ensuring curriculums evolve alongside updates to business needs. Institutions that have adopted this model include the [University of California San Diego](#), [Oregon State University](#), and [Arizona State University](#).

Workforce needs can also be met by altering higher education offerings to prepare students to be effective workforce contributors. Offering non-traditional pathways to obtaining skills can be helpful

Figure 5: Missouri Secondary CTE Enrollment



Source

Figure 6: CTE Fast Facts for Missouri

Fast Facts

25,812

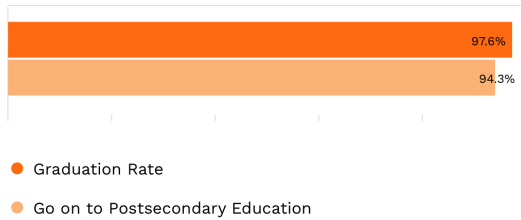
Associates Degrees & Certificates Awarded

27.9%

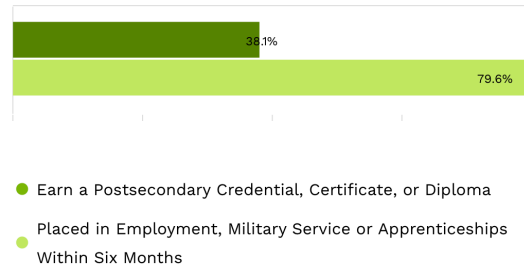
of All Degrees & Certificates Awarded Statewide



CTE Secondary Concentrators



CTE Postsecondary Concentrators



**Note: A CTE concentrator is defined as a student who earned two or more credits within a single program of study.*

[Source](#)

for students that otherwise may not be able to participate in postsecondary education. Additionally, enhancing career services to be in greater alignment with the expectations of industry leaders will help students succeed after graduation.

Increasing access to higher education is another way to meet the needs of the workforce. Wraparound services can be essential to ensuring that students are supported in obtaining postsecondary educational opportunities. Services like childcare, transportation, and health care can [improve student persistence and completion rates and lead to better post-graduation outcomes](#).

Highlights from Missouri

In Missouri, industries have already begun to work alongside IHEs to align regarding workforce needs. Missouri’s FY25 budget includes \$9.1 million allocated towards the [MoExcels Workforce Initiative](#).

This line item specifically supports a project titled [“Bridging the Manufacturing Critical Skills Gap.”](#) which allows three IHEs to work together towards modernizing the state’s manufacturing industry and developing its workforce. East Central College, Missouri University of Science and Technology, and St. Charles Community College are collaborating with a manufacturing advisory board to update curriculum based on the board’s recommendations to meet the needs of employers.

[The Missouri Innovation Campus \(MIC\) Program](#), a collaboration between the University of Central Missouri, Lee’s Summit R-7 School District, Metropolitan Community College, and more than 70 Kansas City area businesses, began in 2017 and is transforming how students obtain a bachelor’s degree while also providing career-ready skills. Starting their junior year, high school students enroll in specific college classes with anticipated

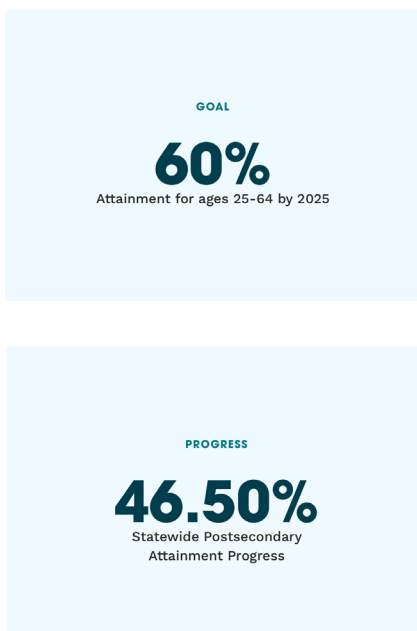
completion of an associate degree in two of the MIC programs of study or a bachelor’s degree two years post-high school graduation. Some of the programs of study offered are Design and Drafting Technology, Computer Science and Information Systems, Cybersecurity, and Business Administration in Big Data/Business Analytics.

Missouri’s Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development established the [Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant](#), a program that addresses workforce needs by providing financial aid to adult learners pursuing a certificate, degree, or industry-recognized credential in an area designated as high need. Occupations high in demand were identified using long-term occupational projections developed by the [Missouri Economic Research and Information Center](#). This program will help Missouri meet its goal of achieving 60 percent of adults having a certificate or degree by 2030.

Policy Considerations

- ❓ In what ways can policymakers facilitate or incentivize education institutions and local business to collaborate in aligning credentials to local workforce needs?
- ❓ What incentives are currently in place to encourage enrollment in CTE?
- ❓ What other programs can be established to encourage adult learners to skill up or engage in educational training such as a certificate or degree by 2030?

Figure 7: Missouri Postsecondary Attainment Goals



Source





Established in 2001, [The Hunt Institute](#) honors the legacy of James B. Hunt, Jr., the former governor of North Carolina who distinguished himself as an ardent champion of education.

The Hunt Institute brings together people and resources to inspire and inform elected officials and policymakers about key issues in education, resulting in visionary leaders who are prepared to take strategic action for greater educational outcomes and student success.

In 2016, The Hunt Institute became an independent, nonprofit entity and joined forces with Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy to pursue research, educational partnerships, and events related to improving education policy.

Learn more at www.hunt-institute.org.



4000 Centregreen Way | Suite 301 |
Cary, NC 27513 | 984-377-5200