



Monthly Themes

Each month of the #Together4PASSHE Advocacy Campaign, we will share messages and data around an important theme that helps promote the impact and value of a State System Education. Use your social networks to share these messages, data, and your own stories with state legislators.

- October 2021: **Contributions to the State**
- November 2021: **Student Affordability**
- December 2021: **Student Progression and Completion**
- January 2022: **Workforce Alignment**
- February 2022: **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**
- March 2022: **Student Access and Enrollment**
- April 2022: **Economic and Social Mobility**

March 2022: Student Access and Enrollment

Pennsylvania’s chronic “[talent gap](#)” is starving employers of the educated workforce they need to remain competitive. The talent gap can only be filled by improving the higher education achievement level of low and middle-income, underrepresented minority, and adult students.

Declining higher education enrollments worsen the state’s talent gap. Enrollment across the State System has declined 26% since 2010. We estimate about 6% of that is due to the pandemic and another 5% to fewer high school graduates. By far the largest cause is the rising price of attendance.

Significant additional investment is necessary to ensure a State System education is responsive to employers’ needs and accessible to everyone.

State System universities have historically served students of low- and middle-income families who disproportionately rely on financial aid and for whom post-secondary participation is critical to achieving upward mobility.

- 34% of undergraduate students are receiving Pell grants
- 32% of first-time, degree-seeking undergraduates are first-generation college students
- 20% of enrollment is comprised of underrepresented minority students
- 70% of undergraduate students are of families with income less than \$110,000

Tuition increases and enrollment declines are negatively correlated to Pennsylvania’s level of public higher education funding.

- The General Assembly’s investment in the State System is down \$252 million from 2000-01 in inflation-adjusted dollars.
- The average net price of attending a State System university rose more than 50% in the past decade amid lagging state funding.
- The financial burden borne by students for their State System education was 66% in 2020, up from 47% in 1994.
- Pennsylvania ranks 46th of 50 states in terms of public 4-year educational appropriation per student Full-Time Equivalent.
- Tuition increases have had a larger impact on low- and middle-income students, as evidenced by steeper enrollment declines for those students than for higher-income students.

The State System is hard at work, delivering on its promise to Pennsylvania’s employers as an engine of workforce development.

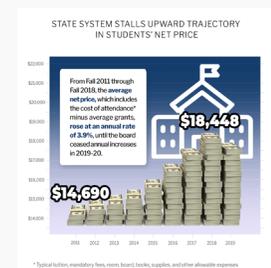
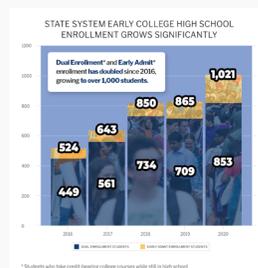
- State System universities conferred in 2020-21 nearly 24,000 degrees and certificates in high-demand areas like STEM, health, business, and education. (See [December Monthly Theme: Student Progression and Completion](#))

- Dual Enrollment and Early Admit enrollment has doubled since 2016, growing to over 1,000 students. After high school graduation, over 30% of dual enrolled high school students matriculate to a System university and over 35% of early admit students persist at a System university.
- Online enrollments have increased by 18% from 2015-16 to 2019-20. In 2020-21, as a result of the pandemic, over 90% of State System students enrolled in an online course.
- Enrollment in short-term certificate programs (less than 2 years) and nondegree credit-bearing courses has increased by 27% since fall of 2016.
- Degree-seeking students pursuing certificates in conjunction with their degrees has risen since fall of 2016 by over 70%, to over 880 students.
- Fall 2020 and 2021 adult learner enrollments are, proportionately, the highest in State System history, better than the national picture.

Becoming more affordable and helping students achieve their educational goals and dreams has been at the center of everything the State System has done since it began its transformational journey.

- The average amount of institutional aid awarded per student by State System universities has increased 43% since 2017-18.
- Since 2019-20, the average net price has decreased 0.5% while it increased nearly 5% over the prior three years.
- By freezing tuition for three consecutive years, the State System has forgone approximately \$63 million in tuition and fee revenue.
- The System’s universities have trimmed nearly \$173 million from their operating budgets since 2018, adding to the \$400 million in savings achieved in the previous 14 years.
- The Board of Governors approved a Fiscal Year 2022-23 budget request that, if fully funded by the General Assembly, would enable the Board to freeze tuition for a fourth consecutive year. And universities could increase institutional aid by at least 30%, enrollment by at least 8%, and credential production by more than 1,100.

March 2022 Poster Graphics



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