

**Strategic Issues:**

- In 2000, the state higher education board approved a measure that would require all students at public colleges to purchase laptops for their postsecondary education. Low-income students would be provided financial assistance to meet the requirement.
- Massachusetts was the only state in the nation that had more private institution students than public institution students.
- The state created a program that made attending community colleges nearly free for students of low-income families making \$36,000 or lower. The cost of the program was estimated at \$8 million.

**Summary**

- *Exemplary Access:* The high school graduation and college enrollment rates in Massachusetts exceeded the national average through out the decade. In addition, college enrollment rates improved in comparison to the national averages during the decade, rising from five percentage points above the national average in 1992 to 12 percentage points above the national average in 2000.
- *System Issues:* The percentages of residents attending private colleges were substantially higher than the nation averages (34 percentage points higher in 1998 and 2000). Improvement in state need-based grants during the decade facilitated the improvement in college enrollment rates. The average need-based grant award was below the national average at the start of the decade and above the national average in 2000 (by \$76). Contrary to national trends, public sector tuition charges fell in relation to the national average during the decade but remained above average.
- *Opportunities:* Massachusetts could improve financial access for low-income students by raising need-based grants to the recommended equity standard. If the state had adequately coordinated tuition and need-based grants during the 1990s, an estimated additional 13,000 resident students would have graduated from high school and an addition 48,000 would have enrolled in college.

**Access Indicators***High School Graduation Rates* (Table 21.1)

Throughout the decade, the public high school graduation rates decreased from 79% in 1992 to 75% in 2000. However despite this decrease, Massachusetts out-performs the national average in this category. In 2000, the state graduation rate was eight percentage points higher than the national average, a relationship that it maintained throughout the decade.

*College Enrollment Rates* (Table 21.1)

Despite the dropping high school graduation rates, college enrollment rates increased throughout the decade from 59% in 1992 to 69% in 2000. Due to the increases in the enrollment rates, the deviation between the state rate and national average grew from five percentage points in 1992 to 12 percentage points in 2000.

## State Demographics

### *State Demographics* (Table 21.2)

Although the state poverty rates fluctuated throughout the decade, it generally remained near 10%. The state poverty rate remained slightly less than one percentage point below the national average in 2000. African-Americans were the largest minority group in the state at 7% of the population in 2000, followed closely by Hispanics at 6%. The percentage of Massachusetts residents with bachelor's degrees or higher also increased throughout the decade. In 1992, 30% of residents had at least a four-year degree; but by 2000, this proportion increased to 33% where it was nearly eight percentage points higher than the national average.

## Financial Indicators

### *System Composition* (Table 21.3)

Unlike many states in the nation, 60% of state students rely on private institutions to acquire a postsecondary education. Public four-year institutions are a distant second at 25% while the remaining 15% attend public two-year institution. Although these percentages fluctuated throughout the decade, there were no trends.

### *Financial Capacity* (Table 21.4)

State tax rates fluctuated around 7% throughout the decade. With compared with the tax rates of other states, Massachusetts residents pay slightly more than the nation average. The state increased its expenditures to K-12 education per student throughout the decade. In 1992, the state spent \$4,383 per student on K-12 education, and this amount increased to \$5,851 in 2000. Due in part to these increases, the state went from under-funding K-12 education by \$145 when compared to other states to exceeding the national average by \$1,658 in 2000.

### *Educational Revenue* (Table 21.5)

Public institutions also received increasingly larger appropriations from local and state governments throughout the decade. In 1992, state and local governments appropriated \$4,910 to public institutions, and this amount increased to \$8,439 in 2000. Due in part to these increases, the state went from under-funding public institutions by \$1,448 when compared to other states to exceeding the national average by nearly \$950 in 2000.

### *Tuition and Fees* (Table 21.6)

Unlike other states, the tuition and fees in Massachusetts decreased since 1994 yet remained above the national average. In 1992, public institutions charged students \$3,920, and this amount decreased to \$3,118 in 2000. Because of these decreases, the deviation between the state tuition charges and the national average decreased throughout the decade. In 1992, tuition and fees in Massachusetts were \$1,558 above the national average, but this deviation was reduced to \$390 by 2000.

### *Need-based Grants* (Table 21.6)

Although experiencing some slight fluctuation, Massachusetts increased its funding of need-based grants across the decade. In 1992, students received an average of \$256 in need-based aid, but this amount increased to \$442 in 2000. Massachusetts funded their grants \$76 per student higher than the national average in 2000.

*Non-need Based Grants* (Table 21.6)

From 1992 to 1998, non-need based grants in Massachusetts were essentially non-existent. However in 2000, students received an average of \$11 in non-need based grants, well short of the national average.

**Projections**

*Coordinated System of Grants* (Table 21.7)

Had Massachusetts increased its need-based grant aid, given tuition charges, 1,300 more students would have graduated from high school, a two percentage point increase. Of high school graduates, 4,800 more students would have attended postsecondary institutions in the state.

*Federal Grant Program Prospectus* (Table 21.7)

In addition, had the federal government provided incentives for Massachusetts to provide adequate grant aid, equaling one-quarter of the tuition on top of current state aid, 2,200 more high school students would have graduated, a three percentage point increase. An additional 8,000 high school graduates would have enrolled in postsecondary institutions, an 11 percentage point increase from the current college continuation rate.