

**Strategic Issues:**

- In 1992, the Supreme Court ruling on *United States v. Fordice* decided that segregation still exists in the public system in its policies and procedures.
- The state sought to reach a settlement for the 1975 desegregation case throughout the 1990s, however efforts were all for naught. With the latest settlement, the plaintiffs opposed the limitations that were imposed on the Historically Black Colleges and Universities in terms of admission standards and the implementation of new first-rate programs.

**Summary**

- *Critical Challenge:* Mississippi's high school graduation rates were substantially below the national rates (by 11 percentage points in 2000). The state's enrollment rates for high school graduates were slightly above that national average (by three percentage points in 1998 and seven percentage points in 2000).
- *System Issues:* Historically Mississippi was a low tuition low grant state. It had lower average incomes and higher than average enrollment in public two-year colleges throughout the decade. In 2000 the state made a substantial new investment in non-need (merit) grants, a form of aid associated with reductions in graduation rates (see also full report and Georgia review).
- *Opportunity:* Had Mississippi maintained an investment in need-based grants in the 1990s equaling the recommended equity standard, an estimated additional 7,000 student would have graduated from high school and 20,000 resident students would have had the opportunity to enroll as freshmen.

**Access Indicators***High School Graduation Rates* (Table 24.1)

The public high school graduation rate in Mississippi decreased throughout the decade from 62% in 1992 to 56% in 2000. When compared to the rest of the country, the state graduation rates fell well below the national average. In 1992, the state performed nine percentage points lower than the national average, but with the declining graduation rate, the state performed 11 percentage points below average in 2000.

*College Enrollment Rates* (Table 24.1)

The college enrollment rates fluctuated substantially throughout the decade. In 1992, 62% of high school graduates attended postsecondary institutions in the state, and the number increased to nearly 69% in 1994. However the percentage dropped to 64% in 1996 and further to 60% in 1998. By 2000, the number of secondary students continuing in postsecondary education increased once again to 63%. When compared to the rest of the country, Mississippi outperformed the U.S. average throughout the decade. The state reached its performance peak in this comparison when it exceeded the national average by 12 percentage points in 1994. By 2000, the state rate still exceeded the national average, but only by seven percentage points.

## State Demographics

### *State Demographics* (Table 24.2)

State poverty rates declined across the decade. The rate decreased from 25% in 1992 to 20% in 1994, but in 1996, it increased to 21%. But for the remaining four years, it resumed its decline to 13% in 2000. Although the state poverty rates exceeded the national average, the deviation declined over time. In 1992, the rate fell 11 percentage points below the national average, but by 2000, the deviation shrunk to two percentage points. African-Americans were by far the largest minority group within the state, comprising 37% of the population in 2000. Other Minorities, which include Asian-American and Native Americans, constitute 1% of the population, followed closely by Hispanics at nearly one percent. The percentage of state residents with a bachelor's degree or higher increased slightly throughout the decade. In 1992, 16% of state residents possessed at least a four-year degree, and by 2000, this percentage increased to 19%. When compared to other states in the nation, the state under-performs the national average. In 2000, the percentage of bachelor's degreed students fell six percentage points lower than the national average.

## Financial Indicators

### *System Composition* (Table 24.3)

A large number of Mississippi students, fluctuating between 48 and 49%, chose public four-year institutions to acquire their postsecondary education while the percentage of those who attended public two-year institutions increased from 39% to 43% of students. In 1992, 11% of state students attended private institutions; by 2000, the number of private institution students shrunk to 10%, well below the national average.

### *Financial Capacity* (Table 24.4)

State tax rates decreased from 9% in 1994 to 8.0% in 2000, and despite this decrease, they still remained higher than the national average throughout the decade. In 1992, the state had a tax rate that was one percentage point higher than the national average, and by 1998, the deviation had increased to two percentage points. By 2000, the deviation returned to its 1992 level at one percentage point higher than the national average. Mississippi increased its expenditures per student on K-12 education throughout the decade. In 1992, the state appropriated \$2,337 per student for K-12 education, and by 2000, this amount increased to \$3,061. Despite the modest increases, Mississippi remains well below the national average for K-12 education funding although it has closed this gap somewhat. At the dawn of the decade, the state fell \$2,190 short of average expenditures, but due to increased funding, Mississippi managed to reduce the deviation to \$1,133 by 2000.

### *Educational Revenue* (Table 24.5)

With the exception of 1996 where the appropriations shrunk, state and local governmental funding for public institutions increased throughout the decade. In 1992, state and local agencies provided \$5,425 per student to public institutions; and by 1994, this amount significantly increased to \$7,179. In 1998 and 2000, state and local appropriations increased to a final amount of \$7,880 per FTE. Because of these increases, the state pulled itself from falling nearly \$1,000 short of the national average in 1992 to exceeding it by a few hundred dollars for the remaining years of the decade.

*Tuition and Fees* (Table 24.6)

Although tuition and fees decreased from \$2,071 in 1992 to \$1,915 in 1996, the decline ended in 1998 when it increased to \$2,022. Despite the fluctuations tuition and fees were on par with 1992 at the end of the decade. Mississippi students still pay less on average than their counterparts nationally. As of 2000, state tuition and fees were \$675 lower than the national average.

*Need-based Grants* (Table 24.6)

Need-based grants from the state were minimal throughout the decade, staying below \$20 per student. When compared to the national average, the state grants fell well short. As of 2000, the state grant was \$351 lower than the national average.

*Non-need Based Grants* (Table 24.6)

After being virtually non-existent from 1992 to 1998 at the amount of \$1 per student, the average non-need based grant increased in 2000 to \$184, raising it above the national average by \$70.

## **Projections**

*Coordinated System of Grants* (Table 24.7)

Had Mississippi increased its need-based grant aid, given tuition charges, 700 more students would have graduated from high school, a two percentage point increase. Of the state high school graduates, 2,000 more students would have attended postsecondary institutions in the state.

*Federal Grant Program Prospectus* (Table 24.7)

In addition, had the federal government provided incentives for Mississippi to provide adequate grant aid, equaling one-quarter of the tuition on top of current state aid, 700 more high school students would have graduated, a two percentage point increase. Additionally, 2,100 more high school graduates would have enrolled in postsecondary institutions, a six percentage point increase from the current college continuation rate.