

August 2025

Educational Attainment of Public High School Graduates



Prepared by Mississippi State University's NSPARC

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ABOUT MISSISSIPPI'S SLDS

Mississippi's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) is one of the most comprehensive systems in the country and includes administrative records from more than 25 education, workforce, and human service agencies in the state. The SLDS allows for the alignment of multiple sources of de-identified administrative data over time to evaluate educational or workforce strategies in terms of real outcomes, such as entrance into employment, wages, and skill gains.

PREPARED BY MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY'S NSPARC

The National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center (NSPARC) at Mississippi State University is a nationally recognized research center that supports data-driven decision-making across workforce development, education, economic development, and public policy. With over two decades of experience, NSPARC specializes in integrating and analyzing data from multiple sources to address complex challenges faced by state agencies, policymakers, educational institutions, and private-sector partners.

NSPARC's interdisciplinary team—including experts in sociology, economics, computer engineering, and public policy, along with professionals in data analytics and machine learning—produces research that is practical, actionable, and impactful. The center's collaborative approach and cross-domain expertise enable it to generate insights that help stakeholders design and implement solutions with real-world relevance.

To learn more, contact NSPARC at nsparc@nsparc.msstate.edu or 662-325-9242.

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REQUEST

The SLDS Governing Board requested a longitudinal analysis of postsecondary education attainment and workforce outcomes for Mississippi's public high school graduates.

The following levels of postsecondary education attainment are requested:

- No college enrollment.
- Some college, no credential.
- Community college credential (degree or certificate).
- Bachelor's degree.
- Graduate or professional degree.

The 2013 through 2023 public high school graduating classes are included in the analysis. The level of postsecondary education attainment, employment status in Mississippi, and median earnings for each graduating class are evaluated in 2024.

METHODOLOGY

A cohort-based design is used to determine enrollment in postsecondary education and the highest degree attained for the 2013 through 2023 high school graduating classes.

Employment and median earnings outcomes are provided for the following levels of postsecondary education: (1) no college enrollment, (2) some college, no credential, (3) community college credential (degree or certificate), (4) bachelor's degree, (5) graduate or professional degree.

High school graduates who were still enrolled in a postsecondary institution in the 2023-2024 academic year were not included in this analysis.

DATA

Data for this analysis came from Mississippi's State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), which includes administrative records from more than 25 state agencies. Data from the following SLDS data contributors were used:

Mississippi Department of Education – Data from Mississippi's public schools are contributed to the SLDS by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). These data include information on enrollment, school, grade, course, and graduation.

National Student Clearinghouse – Data on postsecondary enrollment and graduation nationwide come from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) and are provided to the SLDS by MDE. NSC data include information on public high school graduates’ enrollment status in all Mississippi public and private postsecondary institutions and out-of-state public and private postsecondary institutions.

Mississippi Community Colleges – Data on Mississippi’s community college students are contributed to the SLDS by the state’s 15 community colleges and the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB). These data include information on enrollment, county of residence, academic major, and graduation.

Mississippi Public Universities – Data on Mississippi’s 4-year public university students are contributed to the SLDS by the state’s eight public universities and the Institutions for Higher Learning (IHL). These data include information on enrollment, county of residence, academic major, and graduation.

Mississippi Department of Employment Security – Employer wage records are contributed to the SLDS by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES). These data are collected from Mississippi employers that participate in the state’s covered employment system, and include information on quarterly earnings, company of employment, industry of employment, and county location of employer.

MEASURES

Mississippi Public High School Graduates – The number of high school graduates who obtained a traditional diploma from the Mississippi public K-12 system between academic year 2012-2013 and 2022-2023.

High School Graduates with No College Enrollment – The number and percent of high school graduates who did not enroll in a community college or university by the end of academic year 2023-2024.

High School Graduates with Some College, no Credential – The number and percent of high school graduates who enrolled in but did not earn a degree or certificate from a community college or university and were not enrolled in a postsecondary institution by the end of academic year 2023-2024.

High School Graduates Earning a Community College Credential (Degree or Certificate) – The number and percent of high school graduates who earned a community college degree or certificate as their highest degree as of academic year 2023-2024 and were not enrolled in a postsecondary institution in academic year 2023-2024.

High School Graduates Earning a Bachelor’s Degree – The number and percent of high school graduates who earned a bachelor’s degree as their highest degree as of academic year 2023-2024 and were not enrolled in a postsecondary institution in academic year 2023-2024.

High School Graduates Earning a Graduate or Professional Degree – The number and percent of high school graduates who earned a graduate or professional degree as their highest degree as of academic year 2023-2024 and were not enrolled in a postsecondary institution in academic year 2023-2024.

Employment – The number and percent of high school graduates who were employed by a Mississippi covered employer in fiscal year 2024.

Median Annual Earnings – The median annualized earnings of high school graduates employed by Mississippi covered employers in fiscal year 2024.

DATA SUPPRESSION

In accordance with SLDS Rules and Regulations, numeric values less than 10 were suppressed along with the accompanying percentages. These suppressed values were replaced with the “<10” symbol, and the accompanying percent was replaced with the “---” symbol. Additionally, information calculated using MDE data is suppressed if the percentage is either less than 5 percent or greater than 95 percent. Suppressed percentages are replaced with the “<5.0” and “>95.0” symbols, respectively, and the accompanying numeric values are replaced with the “---” symbol.

RESULTS

TABLE 1. EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO DID NOT ENROLL IN COLLEGE BY 2024

Cohort	Number of High School Graduates	No College by 2024		Employed in MS in 2024		
		N	%	N	%	Median Annualized Earnings
2013	26,487	3,521	13.3	1,754	49.8	\$35,136
2014	26,321	3,705	14.1	1,921	51.8	\$34,308
2015	27,802	4,289	15.4	2,239	52.2	\$31,652
2016	28,505	4,564	16.0	2,571	56.3	\$31,249
2017	28,497	4,985	17.5	2,848	57.1	\$30,032
2018	29,249	5,529	18.9	3,195	57.8	\$28,493
2019	28,866	6,278	21.7	3,652	58.2	\$27,666
2020	29,537	7,981	27.0	4,930	61.8	\$24,563
2021	28,539	8,587	30.1	5,573	64.9	\$22,830
2022	28,994	8,970	30.9	5,877	65.5	\$20,451
2023	28,364	9,623	33.9	6,683	69.4	\$15,722
Total	311,161	68,032	21.9	41,243	60.6	\$24,721

TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO ENROLLED IN COLLEGE BUT DID NOT EARN A CREDENTIAL BY 2024

Cohort	Number of High School Graduates	Some College, No Credential by 2024 ¹		Employed in MS in 2024		
		N	%	N	%	Median Annualized Earnings
2013	26,487	9,971	37.6	5,619	56.4	\$32,529
2014	26,321	9,683	36.8	5,480	56.6	\$31,475
2015	27,802	9,969	35.9	5,896	59.1	\$30,468
2016	28,505	9,811	34.4	6,061	61.8	\$29,437
2017	28,497	9,609	33.7	6,080	63.3	\$28,153
2018	29,249	9,331	31.9	6,166	66.1	\$27,012
2019	28,866	8,616	29.8	5,935	68.9	\$25,017
2020	29,537	8,092	27.4	5,764	71.2	\$23,814
2021	28,539	6,002	21.0	4,411	73.5	\$21,160
2022	28,994	4,019	13.9	2,918	72.6	\$18,239
2023	28,364	---	<5.0	---	---	---
Total	311,161	85,458	27.5	54,367	63.6	\$27,143

¹Includes public high school graduates who enrolled in a college or university but did not graduate by 2024 and were not enrolled in 2024.

TABLE 3. EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO EARNED A COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEGREE/ CERTIFICATE AS THEIR HIGHEST DEGREE BY 2024

Cohort	Number of High School Graduates	Earned a Community College Credential by 2024 ¹		Employed in MS in 2024		
		N	%	N	%	Median Annualized Earnings
2013	26,487	4,510	17.0	2,927	64.9	\$42,975
2014	26,321	4,429	16.8	2,905	65.6	\$40,144
2015	27,802	4,439	16.0	2,931	66.0	\$39,988
2016	28,505	4,256	14.9	2,929	68.8	\$39,275
2017	28,497	4,085	14.3	2,891	70.8	\$37,897
2018	29,249	4,147	14.2	3,042	73.4	\$36,220
2019	28,866	3,555	12.3	2,660	74.8	\$34,371
2020	29,537	2,465	8.3	1,880	76.3	\$32,443
2021	28,539	1,578	5.5	1,219	77.2	\$29,436
2022	28,994	---	<5.0	---	---	---
2023	28,364	<10	---	---	---	---
Total	311,161	33,700	10.8	23,583	70.0	\$37,488

¹Includes public high school graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution, graduated with a community college degree/certificate as their highest degree by 2024, and were not enrolled in 2024.

TABLE 4. EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO EARNED A BACHELOR'S DEGREE AS THEIR HIGHEST DEGREE BY 2024

Cohort	Number of High School Graduates	Earned bachelor's degree by 2024 ¹		Employed in MS in 2024		
		N	%	N	%	Median Annualized Earnings
2013	26,487	5,572	21.0	2,851	51.2	\$48,687
2014	26,321	5,507	20.9	2,833	51.4	\$47,880
2015	27,802	4,947	17.8	2,621	53.0	\$45,839
2016	28,505	4,556	16.0	2,567	56.3	\$45,930
2017	28,497	4,268	15.0	2,538	59.5	\$44,009
2018	29,249	3,643	12.5	2,264	62.1	\$43,000
2019	28,866	2,068	7.2	1,311	63.4	\$38,762
2020	29,537	---	<5.0	---	---	---
2021	28,539	---	<5.0	---	---	---
2022	28,994	<10	---	---	---	---
2023	28,364	<10	---	---	---	---
Total	311,161	30,717	9.9	17,089	55.6	\$45,397

¹Includes public high school graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution, graduated with a university bachelor's degree as their highest degree by 2024, and were not enrolled in 2024.

TABLE 5. EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO EARNED A GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL DEGREE AS THEIR HIGHEST DEGREE BY 2024

Cohort	Number of High School Graduates	Earned a Graduate/Professional Degree by 2024 ¹		Employed in MS in 2024		
		N	%	N	%	Median Annualized Earnings
2013	26,487	1,555	5.9	778	50.0	\$54,539
2014	26,321	1,382	5.3	727	52.6	\$52,560
2015	27,802	---	<5.0	---	---	---
2016	28,505	---	<5.0	---	---	---
2017	28,497	---	<5.0	---	---	---
2018	29,249	---	<5.0	---	---	---
2019	28,866	---	<5.0	---	---	---
2020	29,537	<10	---	---	---	---
2021	28,539	<10	---	---	---	---
2022	28,994	<10	---	---	---	---
2023	28,364	<10	---	---	---	---
Total	311,161	---	<5.0	---	---	---

¹Includes public high school graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution, graduated with a graduate/professional degree as their highest degree by 2024, and were not enrolled in 2024.



SLDS

**Statewide Longitudinal
Data System**

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