

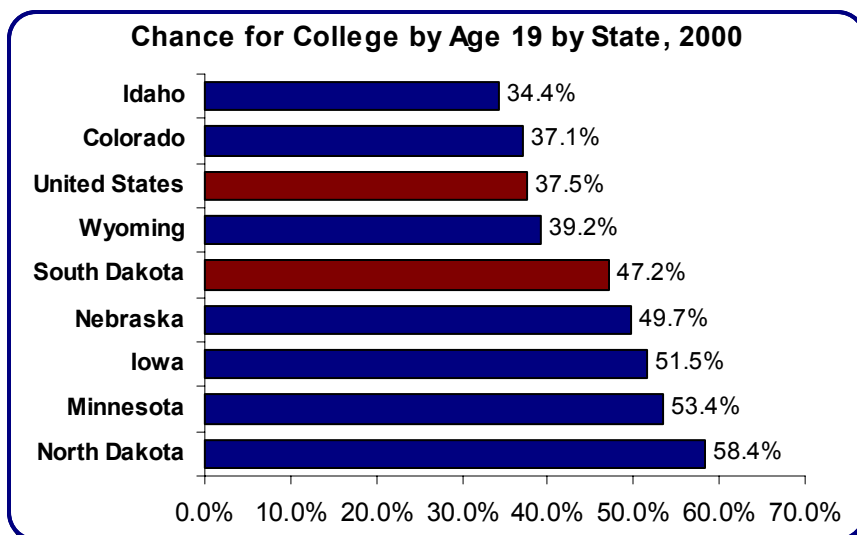
**Synopsis:** *More than 47 percent of the South Dakota students who graduated from high school in 2000 were enrolled in college that fall. South Dakota's college participation rate ranks it 9<sup>th</sup> among all states; that is, 47.2 percent of South Dakota's 19 year olds were enrolled in college somewhere in the U.S. immediately after high school graduation in 2000, compared to 37.5 percent of 19 year olds nationwide.*

To determine “college participation rates,” researchers look at two factors: the rate of students graduating from high school, and those who go on to enroll in college. The research publication, *Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY*, defines the college participation rate (in South Dakota, 47.2 percent) as the “product of the high school graduation rate (73.8 percent) times the college continuation rate (64 percent) at which high school graduates enroll in college the fall following high school graduation” (September 2002, p. 1).

## What are the chances that a 19 year old will be enrolled in college?

An indicator referred to as “chance for college by age 19” is simply the product of the public high school graduation rate and the college continuation rate for each year. This indicator, the college participation rate, is a good reference point for policymakers to consider when talking about a state's higher educational opportunity.

Policymakers may ask: Can the state's high school graduation rate be improved? Is there a problem in getting high school graduates into college? Why? And, what can the state do to improve these outcomes?

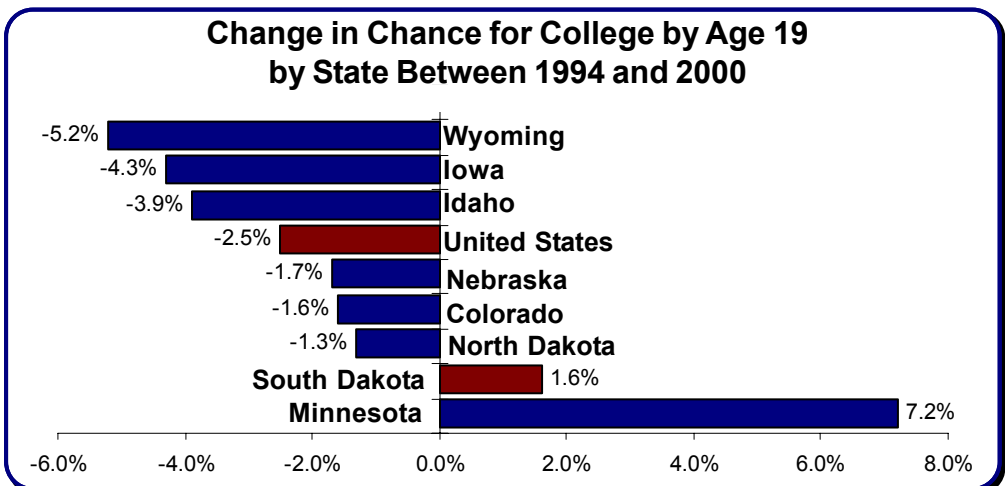


Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity, September 2002

North Dakota leads the nation in students' chance for college by age 19 at 58.4 percent. Besides North Dakota and South Dakota, other states with a better than 45 percent college participation rate are Minnesota, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania.

South Dakota's college participation rate of 47.2 percent in 2000 bucks a nationwide trend of declining college participation. Nationally, the participation rate peaked at 40 percent in 1994, and slowly declined to 37.5 percent by 2000.

South Dakota improved on its “chance for college by age 19” between 1994-2000 by 1.6 percentage points, while the nation as a whole declined in college participation by 2.5 percent.

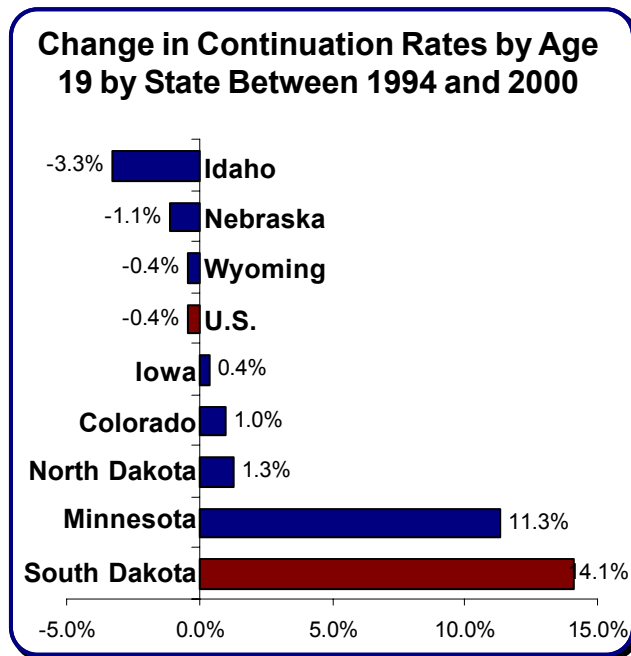
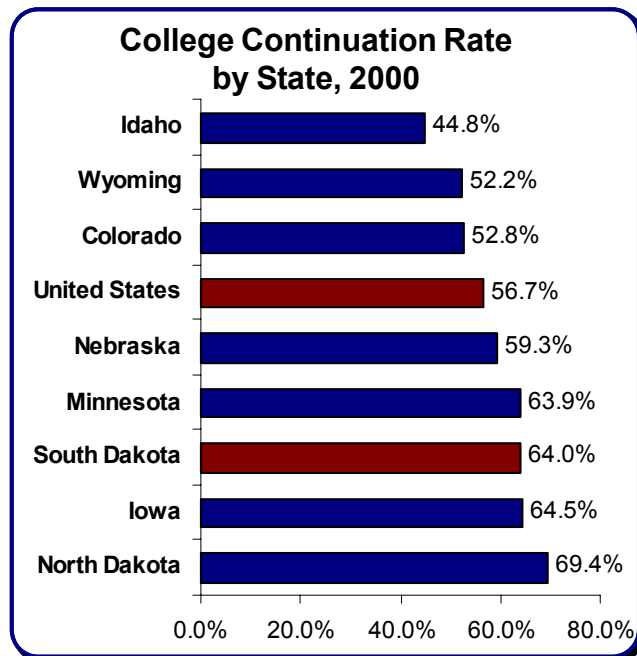


Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity, September 2002

The college participation rate is determined by factoring in both the public high school graduation rate and the college continuation rate.

### College Continuation Rate

South Dakota’s college continuation rate—those who graduate from high school in a state and enroll somewhere in college the following fall—is relatively high. The state’s rate of 64 percent in 2000 is 8<sup>th</sup> best in the country and considerably better than the 56.7 percent national average. In fact, South Dakota had the 2<sup>nd</sup> best improvement in college continuation rates between 1994-2000. Its rate improved by slightly more than 14 percent, while the national average was a negative .4 percent.



Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity, September 2002