

In the fall of 2015, we introduced the [Opportunity Washington Scorecard](#) – a 50-state ranking of performance on three priorities vital to fostering a culture of opportunity and prosperity: **Achieve** (education quality and outcomes), **Connect** (transportation reliability and efficiency), and **Employ** (economic vitality). Data is compiled from reliable, independent sources and updated quarterly ([see methodology](#)). **Our goal is to make Washington a top 10 state overall and in each category.**

In the latest Scorecard update, Washington has fallen four spots overall as compared to the fall of 2015, now ranking 28th among the 50 states with an Opportunity Score of 68. It's important to remember changes in rankings are dynamic. Washington can fall behind, even with improved performance, if other states demonstrate greater progress.

### Washington State Ranking Among All States

	October 2015	January 2016
Overall Opportunity Score Ranking	24	28
Achieve	18	21
Connect	38	38
Employ	23	26

## ACHIEVE: Washington State Performance

With each Scorecard update, we will take a deep dive into one of the three priority categories. This quarter, we spotlight the Achieve metrics and share new survey data assessing what Washingtonians believe is important to improving performance.

### ACHIEVE: Data Updates for Washington

Metric	WA State Ranking	Performance
4th grade reading	14	Based on average <a href="#">scale score of 226</a> on 2015 NAEP test; <a href="#">40% of students scored</a> proficient or better
8th grade math	10	Based on average <a href="#">scale score of 287</a> on 2015 NAEP test; <a href="#">39% of students score</a> proficient or better
High School Graduation	38	<a href="#">78% of Washington's Class of 2014</a> graduated on time
STEM Bachelor's Degrees	31	Washington <a href="#">produced 89 STEM</a> bachelor's degrees per 1,000 residents in 2013

With this new data, Washington's Achieve ranking falls to 21. Our state improved in 4th grade reading and high school graduation, declined in 8th grade math, and maintained its position in STEM degree production. Connecticut, Montana, and Wyoming moved ahead of Washington on the Achieve metrics. Our decline in relative performance is cause for concerns.

## Washingtonians Weigh In On Education Performance

According to a recent survey,\* 94 percent of Washingtonians believe it is very important or important to raise the high school graduation rate, which is currently 78 percent. Survey respondents were clear they don't want to do it by lowering standards. Rather, a significant majority (85 percent) want to see a rise in student achievement. And, two-thirds of respondents think it's important to have test-based requirements to ensure students master basic high school level skills before graduation.

**94%**  
of Washingtonians believe it is very important or important to raise the high school graduation rate

**73%**

of those surveyed agree it is important that students have the option of attending public charter schools

Given the Washington Supreme Court ruling declaring the state's charter schools unconstitutional, we wanted to learn how Washingtonians view this educational alternative. Nearly three-quarters of those surveyed agree it is important that students have the option of attending public charter schools.

Washingtonians recognize that a good education doesn't end with high school. By 2020, 70 percent of the jobs in our state will require postsecondary education. While a majority of survey respondents recognized the importance of additional training, we have work to do to ensure Washingtonians are prepared for the future.

In many respects, Washington is a national leader in innovation, with an economy that marks significant advancement in manufacturing, agriculture, retail, and technology. Maintaining that position requires improvement in education performance.

\* Online survey of 500 Washingtonians conducted by Survey Monkey in Dec. 2015.