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College attendance

declining in Minnesota

About 55 percent of Minnesota high school graduates went on to college in 1995, a percentage that has been declining since 1986.

Participation in post-secondary education within the state declined from 47 percent in 1986 to 40 percent in 1995, according to a January report to the Legislature by the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office.

An additional 13 to 15 percent of Minnesota students attended colleges and universities outside the state.

Among students of color, the participation rate declined from about 40 percent in 1986 to about 33 percent in 1995.

Reasons for the declining rate include the steadily increasing cost of college and also the availability of jobs in a stable economy. Some people choose to work rather than attend school.

The figures are derived by dividing the number of high school graduates enrolled in Minnesota colleges and universities in the fall by the total number of Minnesota high school graduates in the spring of that same year.

In fiscal year 1996, 63,084 students received state grants to attend college. Most came from families with incomes below \$30,000. But 187 students with family incomes of \$70,000 or more also received state grants.

-- Nancy Livingston, staff writer



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