

## Grads needing remedial classes: 48 percent

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Most Eufaula High students attend college after graduating high school.

The school's percentage exceeded the state average in 2009 and 2010 - the last two years in which data is available. Approximately three out of every five EHS graduates attend college.

But not all the news regarding recent graduates is as good.

According to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, nearly half of all Eufaula High kids entering college require remedial classes because they cannot do college-level work.

In 2010, 48 percent of EHS students needed at least one remedial course in either math or English. The state average is 34 percent.

Eufaula's average mirrors much of the Wiregrass. In 2010, approximately 49 percent of Dothan High graduates required remedial classes. So did 46 percent of Carroll-Ozark graduates.

The percentages were even higher for Abbeville (63 percent), Russell County (59 percent) and Barbour County (52 percent).

"It's a national issue," said Eufaula High principal Steve Hawkins. "Obviously it's disappointing."

State officials state that remedial classes cost Alabama students millions of dollars annually. Students who take remedial classes do not receive college credit for those courses and also have a higher college dropout rate.

Dr. Alan Miller, the director of student services for Eufaula City Schools, said the high number of students taking remedial classes correlates with the number of kids graduating high school.

More Alabama children are graduating high school – partly because the state now offers easier avenues toward meeting graduation requirements. Miller said a higher graduation rate helps schools meet Adequate Yearly Progress standards.

### BY THE NUMBERS

"In college" denotes the percentage of 2010 high school graduates who attended college. "Remedial" denotes the percentage of college students taking remedial classes.

School	In College	Remedial
Eufaula	58.4	48.1
Barbour County	47.9	52.2
Dothan	51.9	48.8
Northview	60.9	43.7
Charles Henderson	64.2	41.9
Carroll-Ozark	49.7	46.2
Abbeville	57.1	62.5
Pike County	51.0	44.0
Bullock County	37.2	57.1
Russell County	32.5	58.8
Opelika	54.9	38.9
Enterprise	56.2	23.3
Auburn	64.4	16.5
Alabama	55.8	34.3

Source: Alabama Commission on Higher Education

But some of the graduates took easier courses in high school and thus are not ready for college classes. Many of them chose “the path of least resistance,” Hawkins adds.

Hawkins said many students won't take honors or AP classes because those classes are considered to be harder. He referenced this year's valedictorian speech by Broderick Turner, when Turner questioned why there were so few students graduating with honors.

"Broderick made that point in his valedictory address." Hawkins said. “Everything counts.”

Hawkins and Miller both cited the importance of a rigorous curriculum in helping prepare students for college. They say students that take honors or AP classes are less likely to need remedial classes.

Hawkins mentioned the importance during Thursday's inaugural "Freshman Festival".

"It's hard to get kids to understand that (college recruiters) may see a 'B' or 'C' on an honors level course more favorably than an 'A' in a general level course," he said.

EMS weighs honors and AP courses differently than general courses. A "B" in an AP course is just as good as an "A" in a general level course when it comes to the grade point average.

EHS officials, also use graduation exam data to work with students in weakness areas. The school already offers a literature basics class for those who need it, and is also determining ways to offer similar classes in math and history.

Hawkins said the system is also adding a reading interventionist who can provide one-on-one assistance.

Miller said student management data helps officials identify potential problem areas.

He said that many of the larger colleges such as Alabama and Auburn send reports to school systems letting them know how their former students are doing.

"They're very responsive," he said.