

Montgomery Advertiser

Editorial

TOO MANY GRADUATES TAKE REMEDIAL COURSES

Remediation costly

Of the 425 graduates of Montgomery County's four non-magnet public high schools who attended an Alabama college in 2010, almost half had to take either a remedial math or a remedial English course.

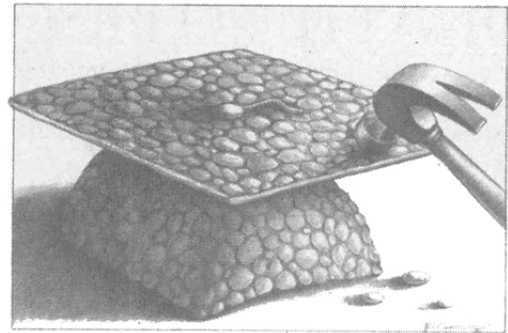
Almost 15 percent of graduates from those four schools had to take *both* a remedial English and a remedial math course.

But it isn't just the Montgomery County schools that are seeing a high percentage of their graduates needing remediation upon entering college. This is a statewide problem that affects the majority of the schools districts. In fact, experts say that the need for remediation is a serious problem in many states.

In Alabama, more than 34 percent of 2010 high school graduates who attended a state public four-year or two-year college needed at least one remedial course, and many of them needed two.

The data come from a report maintained by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education on the remediation of Alabama public high school students who attend a public college in the state.

The nonprofit Alliance for Excellent Education told the *Birmingham News* that such remediation costs the state's economy about \$80 million in direct costs and lost earnings.



REMEDIAL COURSES

Below is a list showing the percentage of 2010 graduates of tri-county public high schools who attended a public college in Alabama who had to take at least one remedial course.

HIGH SCHOOL.....	PERCENTAGE
Booker T. Washington	29.7%
Brewbaker Tech.....	20.4%
Carver	52.8%
Jefferson Davis	46.7%
Lanier	51.3%
Lee.....	44.8%
LAMP.....	0%
Autaugaville	72.7%
Billingsley.....	27.7%
Marbury	30.3%
Prattville.....	24.5%
Elmore County.....	25.4%
Holtville.....	46.9%
Stanhope-Elmore.....	34.6%
Wetumpka	45%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

To see the actual number of graduates for these and other high schools around the state, go to mongomeryadvertiser.com, click on Opinion, and then click on Read It for Yourself.

In Montgomery County, more than 37 percent of public high school graduates attending a public college in the state required remediation. That ranged from a low of zero graduates of Loveless Academic Magnet Program High to almost 53 percent of graduates at Carver High School. Except for LAMP, none of the county's high schools did particularly well.

(See accompanying chart for the percentages for all tricounty high schools. For more information on these schools and other high schools throughout Alabama, go to montgomeryadvertiser.com, click on Opinion, then click on Read It for Yourself.)

In Autauga County, about 26.9 percent of graduates attending a public state college needed remediation. That ranged from more than 72 percent at Autaugaville School to about 25 percent at Prattville High.

The Elmore County public school system had more than 38 percent of its graduates attending a state public college who had to take at least one remedial course. That ranged from a low at Elmore County High of 25 percent to a high of 47 percent at Holtville High.

Some caveats about this data. First, for some schools the percentages reflect very low actual numbers of graduates. Second, the data do not reflect graduates who go out of state or to private in-state colleges. And ACHE does not track private high school graduates. (It should, because there may be many private high schools in the state with high percentages of graduates who require remediation as well.)

Still, those are not pretty numbers. What is even more troubling is that these are high school graduates who are going on to attend college.

So what does that say about the preparation of those students who do not go to college?

That's scary. If so many college students from Alabama high schools require remediation, it is very likely that many students who go directly into the job market are ill prepared as well.

Alabama has been making tremendous progress in improving academic performance in recent years, but such data suggest just how much the state has left to do.