



EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2014

Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators is the authoritative source for accurate and relevant information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances, and performance of the education systems in the 34 OECD member countries, as well as a number of G20 and partner countries.

United States

While a large proportion of adults in the United States have university-level education...

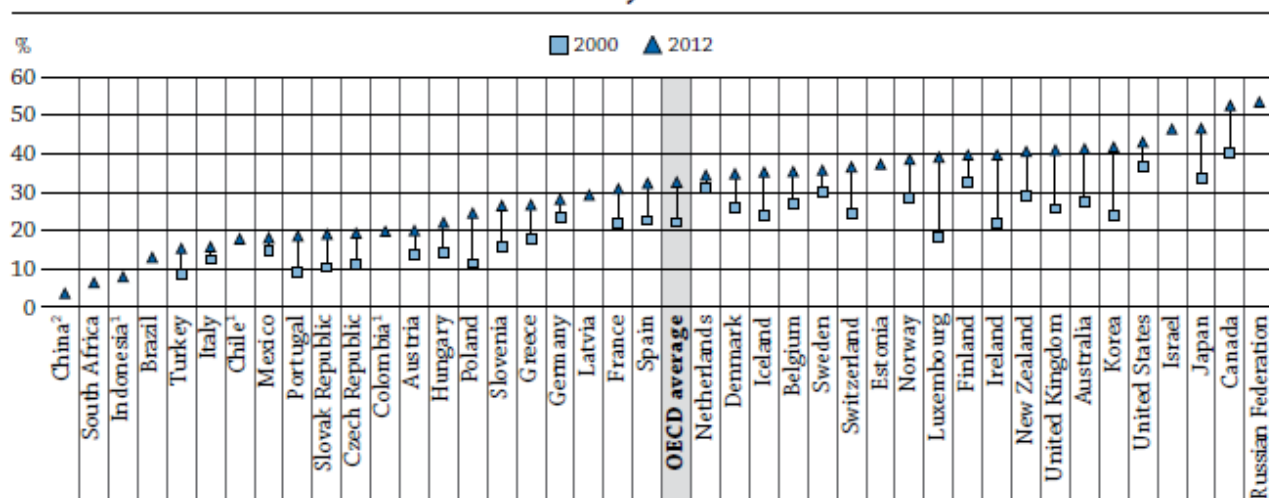
In 2012, 43% of 25-64 year-olds in the United States had attained a tertiary education – the fifth largest proportion after Canada (53%), Israel (46%), Japan (47%) and the Russian Federation (53%), and higher than the OECD average of 32% (Table A1.3a).

...the tertiary attainment rate is increasing much faster in many other countries.

In 2000, only Canada had a larger proportion of tertiary-educated adults: 40% compared to 36% in the United States (the OECD average at the time was 22%). Across OECD countries, tertiary attainment rates have increased by 11 percentage points since 2000, and by as much as 21 percentage points in Luxembourg and by 18 percentage points in Ireland (Chart A1.1). By comparison, the U.S. tertiary attainment rate increased by 7 percentage points during the period (Table A1.4a).

This evolution is most clearly seen when comparing tertiary attainment rates between younger and older generations. For example, 44% of 25-34 year-olds in the United States have a university-level degree (the OECD average is 39%) while the proportion of tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds is larger in 11 other countries, with Korea having the highest proportion at 66%. Meanwhile, 42% of 55-64 year-olds in the United States have a university-level education (the OECD average is 24%), and only Canada (44%), Israel (47%) and the Russian Federation (49%) show higher tertiary attainment levels among this age group (Table A1.3a).

Chart A1.1. Percentage of tertiary-educated adults in 2000 and 2012
25-64 year-olds



1. Year of reference 2011.

2. Year of reference 2010.

Countries are ranked in ascending order of the percentage of 25-64 year-olds who have attained tertiary education in 2012 (or latest available year).

Source: OECD. Table A1.4a. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm).

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The direct costs of higher education in the United States are the highest among all OECD countries.

Across OECD countries, men invest about USD 50 000 to earn a tertiary degree, and women invest roughly USD 40 000. In the United States, average investment exceeds USD 100 000 when direct and indirect costs are taken into account. Japan and the Netherlands are the only other countries where the average investment exceeds USD 100 000, but the bulk of the total cost consists of foregone earnings. In the United States, direct costs, such as tuition fees, are by far the highest across OECD countries. A man pursuing higher education invests about USD 61 000 in direct costs and USD 45 000 in foregone earnings; for a woman, the direct cost is the same, but the foregone earnings are a bit higher at USD 48 000. The OECD averages are around USD 11 000 (direct costs) and USD 40 000 (foregone earnings) (Tables 7.3a and 7.3b).

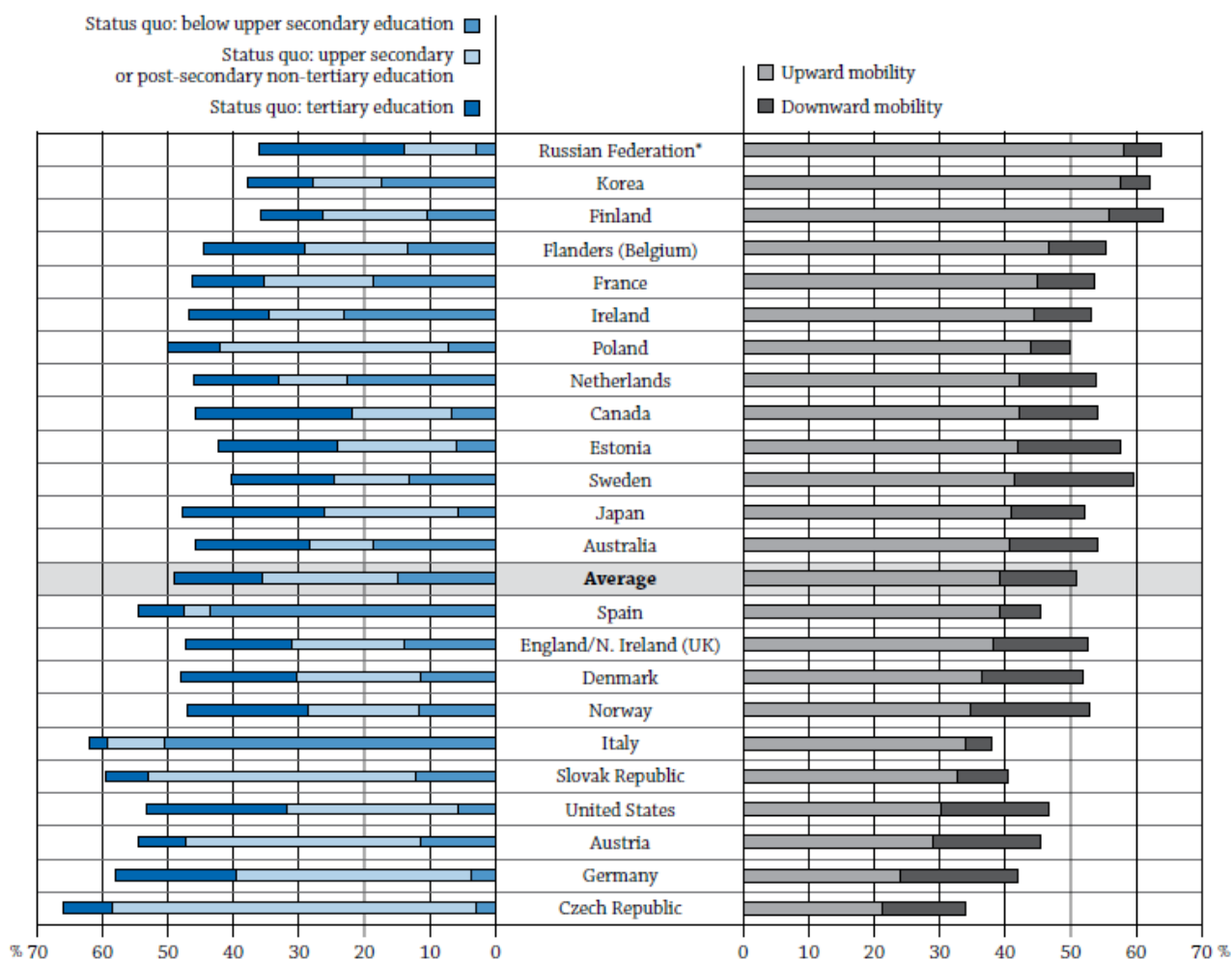
A relatively small proportion of adults in the United States attains a higher level of education than their parents.

The increase in tertiary attainment rates across countries shows that there has been an expansion of access to this level of education. However, across OECD countries, on average, 49% of adults who are no longer students have attained the same level of education as their parents. In the United States, this share is slightly larger at 53% (Table A4.4).

Chart A4.3 shows that in the United States, 30% of 25-64 year-old non-students have attained a higher level of education than their parents (upward mobility); only Austria, the Czech Republic and Germany show a smaller percentage. By contrast, in Finland, Korea and the Russia Federation, 55% or more of adults who are no longer students have attained a higher level of education than their parents.

Chart A4.3. Absolute educational mobility (2012)

Percentage of 25-64 year-old non-students whose educational attainment is higher than (upward mobility), lower than (downward mobility) or the same as (status quo) that of their parents



* See note on data for the Russian Federation at the end of this Country Note.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the proportion of adults with upward mobility with respect to the education attainment of their parents.

Source: OECD, Table A4.4. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm).

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Parents' educational attainment has a strong impact on their children's level of education. For example, across OECD countries, only 20% of non-student adults whose parents do not have an upper secondary education attain a tertiary degree; in the United States, only 13% of these adults attain a tertiary degree. (Some 12% of parents in the United States do not have an upper secondary education, compared with 19% of parents across OECD countries). Meanwhile, 36% of non-student adults whose parents completed upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education pursue higher levels of education, which is on par with the OECD average (Tables A4.1a and A4.2).

The unemployment rate has dropped across all levels of educational attainment.

As in most countries, unemployment rate rose in the United States during the recent economic crisis; but 2012 data show a considerable drop in unemployment, not just among all adults, but across all levels of educational attainment. Among adults with tertiary education, the unemployment rate fell from 5.3% in 2010 to 4.6% in 2012 (compared with the OECD averages of 4.7% and 5.0%,

respectively); among those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, the rate fell from 11.2% in 2010 to 9.1% in 2012 (compared with the OECD averages of 7.6% and 7.8%, respectively); and among those with below upper secondary education, the rate fell from 16.8% in 2010 to 14.3% in 2012 (the OECD averages are 12.5% and 13.6%, respectively) (Table A5.4a).

The proportion of young adults neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) has shrunk since the worst years of the economic crisis...

During the recession in 2009, almost 17% of 15-29 year-olds in the United States were neither employed nor in education or training (NEET). By 2012, the proportion had decreased by almost two percentage points to be on par with the OECD average, at 15%, but still larger than in countries such as Austria, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, where less than 10% of 15-29 year-olds were NEET (Table C5.3d, available on line).

...but higher educational attainment doesn't completely eliminate the risk of being NEET.

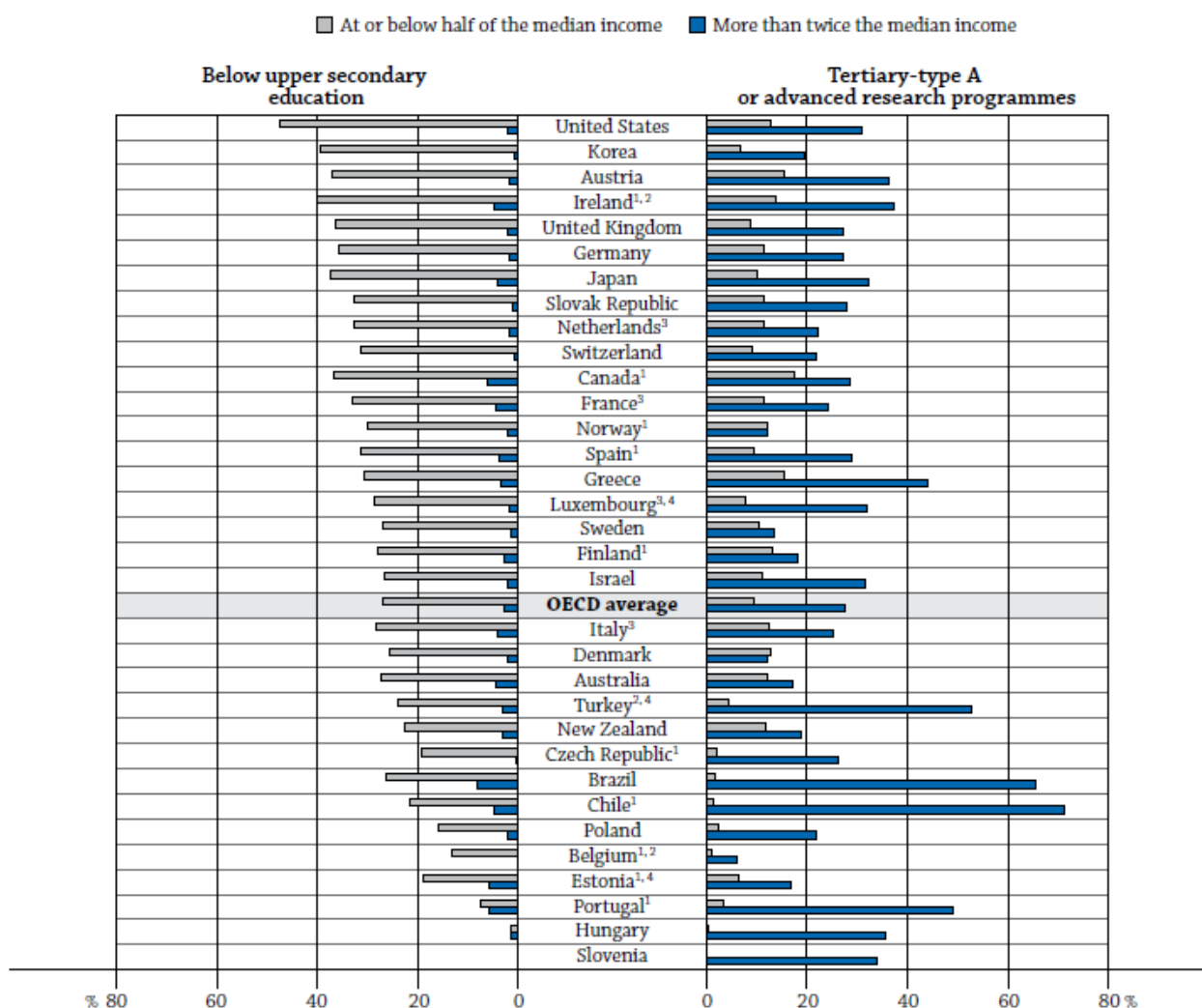
While the proportion of young adults in the United States who are NEET is much smaller among those with tertiary education (11%), it is surprising that 15-29 year-olds without an upper secondary qualification actually fare better than those with an upper secondary degree. Some 19% of young adults in the United States with an upper secondary education are neither employed nor in education or training (the OECD average is 16%) compared with 13% of young adults who have not attained an upper secondary education (the OECD average is 15%) (Table C5.3d, available on line).

The United States shows one of the largest differences in earnings related to educational attainment.

In all countries, individuals with below upper secondary education usually face large earnings disadvantages. Chart A6.3 shows that, on average, over 27% of adults with only this level of education earn less than half the national median; in the United States, 48% of this group do – the largest proportion of all countries with available data. Among U.S. adults who have completed a university-level education or an advanced research programme, 31% earn more than twice the median (the OECD average is 28%) (Table A6.4).

However, while those with a university degree reap significant financial gains, the earning premium for tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds with income from employment has been on the decline in the United States. In 2005, the earning premium was 86% compared to 74% in 2012. Among OECD countries, there was an increase over the same period from 54% to 59% (Table A6.2a).

Chart A6.3. Differences in relative earnings of workers, by educational attainment (2012)
25-64 year-olds with income from employment



1. Year of reference 2011.

2. Earnings net of income tax.

3. Year of reference 2010.

4. Data refer to all tertiary education.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the difference in proportion of 25-64 year-olds at or below half the median and the proportion of the population earning more than twice the median, at below upper secondary education.

Source: OECD, Table A6.4, available on line. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm).

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Strong numeracy skills are highly rewarded in the United States.

Adults in the United States with only upper secondary education but who have strong numeracy skills, scoring at level 4 or above on a 5 level scale, as measured by the Survey of Adult Skills¹, earn an average of USD 5 200 – almost 70% more per month than the OECD average of USD 3 600 (Table A6.6a(N), available on line). However, only 10% of U.S. adults score at the highest levels of numeracy, a smaller proportion than the OECD average (13%) and smaller than in countries such as Finland, Japan

¹ The Survey of Adult Skills is a product of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).

and Sweden, where 20% of adults score at the highest levels of numeracy (Table A1.7a(N), available on line).

Spending on education decreased slightly over the past year, but both public and private expenditure remains relatively high.

Among the 33 countries with available data for the 2008-11 period, the United States was one of six countries to cut, in real terms, public expenditure on educational institutions: Estonia (by 10%), Hungary (by 12%), Iceland (by 11%), Italy (by 11%), the Russian Federation (by 5%) and the United States (by 3%) (Table B2.5). This translated into a decrease in expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (the decrease in expenditure was larger than the decrease in GDP, or GDP increased at the same time). Nonetheless, the United States spent 6.9% of its GDP on all levels of education combined in 2011, considerably higher than the OECD average of 6.1% (Table B2.1).

Public and private expenditure on educational institutions in the United States, as a percentage of GDP, is on par with the OECD average at primary, secondary, and post-secondary non-tertiary levels of education: 3.4% of expenditure comes from public sources and 0.3% comes from private sources. The United States devotes lower-than-average public expenditure to tertiary education (0.9% of GDP compared with the OECD average of 1.1%) and higher-than-average private expenditure (1.8% of GDP compared with the OECD average of 0.5%) (Table B2.3).

The United States spends more on tertiary education than any other country: USD 26 021 per student per year. Only Canada, Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland also spend more than USD 20 000 per student per year, while the OECD average is USD 13 958. Across all levels of education combined, the United States spends USD 15 345 per student per year – the second highest annual expenditure per student after Switzerland (USD 16 090) and well above the OECD average of USD 9 487 (Table B1.1a).

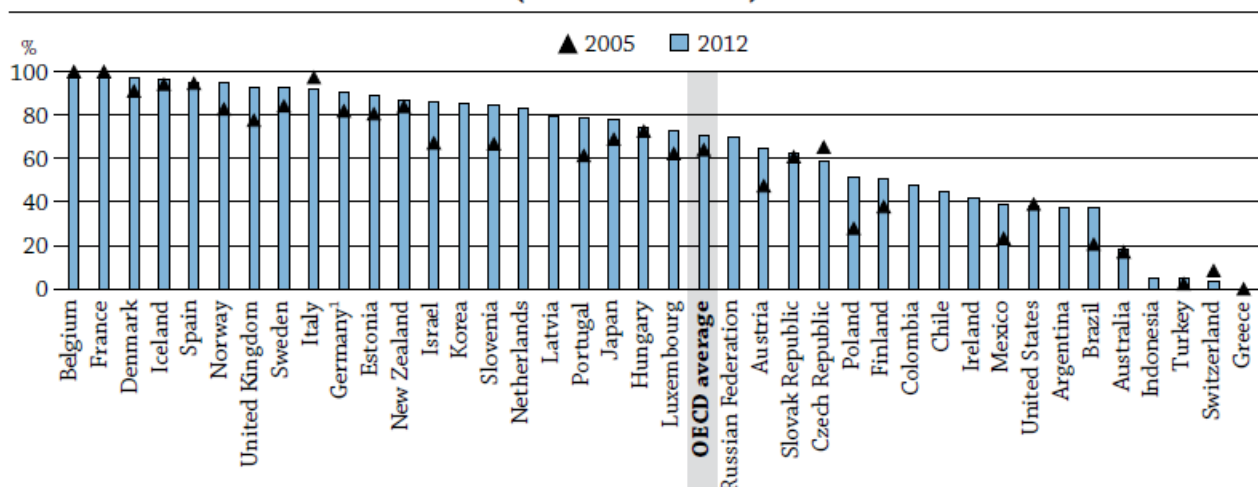
Investment in early childhood education is relatively high...

Early childhood education plays a key role in children's cognitive and emotional development and can mitigate social inequalities and promote better student outcomes later on. The United States has shown its interest in increasing access to, and improving the quality of, early childhood education. It ranks 5th among OECD countries in expenditure per student (USD 10 010) at this level of education; only Australia (USD 10 734), Denmark (USD 14 148), Luxembourg (USD 25 074) and New Zealand (USD 11 088) spend more, while the OECD average is USD 7 428 (Table B1.1a). Expenditure on pre-primary education for children aged 3 and older, as a percentage of GDP, is 0.47% in the United States, which is slightly less than the OECD average of 0.6%. Lower-than-average public funding (0.33% of GDP, compared with the OECD average of 0.51%) and higher-than-average private funding (0.14% of GDP, compared with the OECD average of 0.08%) is devoted to pre-primary education (Table B2.3).

...but enrolment rates for 3- and 4-year-olds continue to be considerably lower than average.

On average across OECD countries, 70% of 3-year-olds were enrolled in early childhood education in 2012, while in the United States, only 38% were enrolled. This figure has remained somewhat static over the years, as the rate in 2005 was 39%, while the OECD average that year was 64% (Chart C2.1).

Chart C2.1. Enrolment rates at age 3 in early childhood education (2005 and 2012)



1. Year of reference 2006 instead of 2005.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the enrolment rates of 3 year-olds in 2012.

Source: OECD. Table C2.1. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm).

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In the United States, children tend to enter early childhood education at age 4. Only 66% of 4-year-olds were enrolled in 2012 (the OECD average was 84%), which is a slight decrease from 68% in 2005, when the OECD average was 79% (Table C2.1). In France and the Netherlands, all 4-year-olds were enrolled in 2012, while enrolments were much lower in Colombia (33%), Indonesia (25%), Switzerland (40%) and Turkey (19%).

Teachers work long hours and spend more time in front of their classes...

In 2012, primary and lower secondary school teachers in the United States spent more than 1 000 hours teaching in the classroom, compared with 782 hours (primary) and 694 hours (lower secondary) among OECD countries. In the United States, teachers spend more time teaching than their peers in any other country, for which there is available data, except for Chile in lower secondary school (Table D4.2).

...but their salary is not competitive and has not increased over time.

Compared with other tertiary-educated workers, the salaries of lower secondary teachers in the United States remain well below the OECD average: these teachers earn only 68% of the salary of an average tertiary-educated worker in another field (the OECD average is 88%). In Canada, Finland, Germany and New Zealand, lower secondary school teachers earn about the same as other tertiary-educated worker (Table D3.2) and in Korea and Spain, lower secondary school teachers even earn at least 30% more than similarly educated workers.

Between 2005 and 2012, the salaries of primary school teachers remained quite stable; on average across OECD countries with available data for all reference years, salaries increased only by 1% during this period. In the United States, however, primary school teachers' salaries shrank by three percentage points during the same period. (Table D3.5).

Other findings

- **While it is still the global leader in the international education market, the United States' share of international students continues to fall.** In 2000, the United States attracted 23% of international students and the United Kingdom attracted the second largest share (11%). In 2012, the U.S. share fell to 16%, while that of the United Kingdom increased slightly to 12%. Australia, France and Germany attracted 6% of international students in 2012, Canada 5%, and Austria, Belgium, China, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, South Africa and Switzerland each host less than 4% of international students (Table C4.7, available on line).
- **While first-time graduation rates at the upper secondary level have increased, they remain slightly below the OECD average.** Since 2000, the first-time graduation rate at the upper secondary level in the United States has increased by 9 percentage points: in 2012, the rate was 79%, compared to the OECD average of 84% (Table A2.2a).
- **The tertiary attainment rate among adult women in the United States is much higher than the OECD average.** Some 45% of adult women earn a tertiary degree –11 percentage points higher than the OECD average. This average is on par with that of Australia, Estonia, Finland, Japan and New Zealand and is surpassed only by that of Canada, Israel and the Russian Federation, where more than 50% of adult women have earned a tertiary degree (Table A1.3b, available on line).

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Note regarding data from Israel

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and are under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Note regarding data from the Russian Federation in the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)

Readers should note that the sample for the Russian Federation does not include the population of the Moscow municipal area. The data published, therefore, do not represent the entire resident population aged 16-65 in Russia but rather the population of Russia *excluding* the population residing in the Moscow municipal area. More detailed information regarding the data from the Russian Federation as well as that of other countries can be found in the *Technical Report of the Survey of Adult Skills* (OECD, forthcoming).

For more information on *Education at a Glance 2014* and to access the full set of Indicators, visit www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm

Questions can be directed to:

Andreas Schleicher
Director for Education and Skills
Email: Andreas.Schleicher@oecd.org
Telephone: +33 6 07 38 54 64

Country Note Authors:

Rose Bolognini & Kelly Makowiecki
Email: Kelly.Makowiecki@oecd.org

Key Facts for United States in Education at a Glance 2014

Table	Indicator	United States		OECD average		Rank among OECD countries and partner countries*
Educational Access and Output						
	Enrolment rates	2012	2005	2012	2005	
C2.1	3-year-olds (in early childhood education)	38%	39%	70%	64%	31 of 38
	4-year-olds (in early childhood and primary education)	66%	68%	84%	79%	31 of 39
C1.1a	5-14 year-olds (all levels)	97%		98%		30 of 44
	Percentage of population that has only attained below upper secondary education	2012	2000	2012	2000	
A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	11%	13%	24%	34%	30 of 35
	Percentage of the population whose highest level of attainment is upper secondary education	2012	2000	2012	2000	
A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	46%	51%	44%	44%	13 of 36
	Percentage of population that has attained tertiary education	2012	2000	2012	2000	
A1.3a A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	43%	36%	33%	22%	5 of 36
	25-34 year-olds	44%	38%	40%	26%	12 of 36
	55-64 year-olds	42%	30%	25%	15%	4 of 36
	Entry rates into tertiary education	2012	2000	2012	2000	
C3.1b	Youth expected to enter tertiary-type A programmes before turning 25	53%	m	48%	m	12 of 35
	Graduation rates	2012	2000	2012	2000	
A2.2a	Percentage of today's young people expected to complete upper secondary education in their lifetime	79%	70%	84%	76%	23 of 30
A3.2a	Percentage of today's young people expected to complete university education (tertiary-type A) in their lifetime	39%	34%	38%	28%	18 of 27
Economic and Labour Market Outcomes						
	Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds - Men and Women	2012	2008	2012	2008	
A5.4a	Below upper secondary	14%	10%	14%	9%	11 of 35
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	9%	5%	8%	5%	10 of 36
	Tertiary	5%	2%	5%	3%	15 of 36
	Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds - Women	2012	2008	2012	2008	
A5.4c (Web)	Below upper secondary	15%	8%	13%	9%	10 of 35
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	8%	5%	9%	6%	14 of 35
	Tertiary	4%	2%	5%	4%	18 of 35
	Average earnings advantage for 25-64 year-olds with tertiary education**	2012 or latest year available		2012 or latest year available		
A6.1a A6.1b (Web)	Men and women	174		159		8 of 33
	Men	180		164		9 of 33
	Women	177		162		7 of 34
	Average earnings penalty for 25-64 year-olds who have not attained upper secondary education**	2012 or latest year available		2012 or latest year available		
A6.1a A6.1b (Web)	Men and women	63		78		32 of 33
	Men	60		78		32 of 33
	Women	62		75		31 of 33
	Percentage of 15-29 year-olds neither employed nor in education or training, by highest level of education	2012	2008	2012	2008	
C5.3d (Web)	Below upper secondary	13%	13%	15%	14%	21 of 36
	Upper secondary	19%	18%	16%	14%	12 of 35
	Tertiary	11%	9%	13%	11%	23 of 36

Key Facts for United States in Education at a Glance 2014

Table	Indicator	United States		OECD average		Rank among OECD countries and partner countries*
Financial Investment in Education						
	Annual expenditure per student (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)	2011		2011		
B1.1a	Pre-primary education	10010		7428		5 of 36
	Primary education	10958		8296		4 of 38
	Secondary education	12731		9280		5 of 38
	Tertiary education	26021		13958		1 of 36
	Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP	2011	2000	2011	2000	
B2.2	Percentage of GDP	7%	6%	6%	5%	9 of 37
	Total public expenditure on education	2011	2000	2011	2000	
B4.2	As a percentage of total public expenditure	14%	14%	13%	13%	13 of 34
	Share of private expenditure on educational institutions	2011		2011		
B3.1	Pre-primary education	30%		19%		5 of 32
B3.1	Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education	8%		9%		20 of 34
B3.1	Tertiary education	65%		31%		5 of 34
B3.1	All levels of education	32%		16%		4 of 33
Schools and Teachers						
	Ratio of students to teaching staff	2012		2012		
D2.2	Pre-primary education	12		14		20 of 31
	Primary education	15		15		20 of 37
	Secondary education	15		13		9 of 37
	Number of hours of teaching time per year (for teachers in public institutions)	2012	2000	2012	2000	
D4.2	Pre-primary education	1131		1001		9 of 32
	Primary education	1131	1080	782	780	2 of 37
	Lower secondary education	1085	1080	694	697	3 of 37
	Upper secondary education	1076	1080	655	628	3 of 37
	Index of change in statutory teachers' salaries for teachers with 15 years of experience/minimum training (2005 = 100)	2012	2008	2012	2008	
D3.5	Primary school teachers	97	100	103	103	20 of 30
	Lower secondary school teachers	98	98	102	103	18 of 29
	Upper secondary school teachers	104	106	101	103	11 of 29
	Ratio of teachers' salaries to earnings for full-time, full-year adult workers with tertiary education	2012		2012		
D3.2	Pre-primary school teachers	0.65		0.80		22 of 29
	Primary school teachers	0.67		0.85		27 of 32
	Lower secondary school teachers	0.68		0.88		27 of 32
	Upper secondary school teachers	0.70		0.92		27 of 32
New data from the Survey of Adult Skills				United States		Average of countries with available data
	Students in tertiary education... (20-34 year-olds)			2012		2012
A4.1a	...whose parents have not attained upper secondary education			8%		9%
	...whose parents have an upper secondary education			34%		37%
	...whose parents have a tertiary education degree			58%		55%
	Adults in formal and non-formal education			2012		2012
C6.1(L)	25-64 year-olds			59%		51%

* Countries are ranked in descending order of values.

** Compared to people with upper secondary education; upper secondary = 100.

The Survey of Adult Skills is a product of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

m': data is not available. 'n': magnitude is either negligible or zero. 'c': there are too few observations to provide reliable estimates.