



## EDUCATION

# Florida ranks No. 1 in higher education, survey says. But K-12 still lags.

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To those who knock Florida's higher education system: Think again.

U.S. News & World Report has once again ranked Florida as the best state in the nation for higher education. The 2018 rankings weigh several factors: the time it takes students to complete two and four-year higher education programs, the cost of tuition and fees, and the burden of debt for college graduates.

Florida ranked No. 1 on the 2017 list, too.

On Wednesday, Gov. Rick Scott responded.

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“It is great news that Florida has again ranked first in the nation for higher education. Over the past seven years, we have made major investments in our higher education system and challenged colleges and universities to become more affordable while fully preparing students to be ready for a great job upon graduation,” Scott said in a statement released by his office.

“A leading higher education system helps strengthen our state as the best place for families, students and job creators to succeed. We will continue to work together to hold the line on tuition and support our state colleges and universities so families and students can continue to achieve their dreams in Florida,” the governor said.

While state legislators have invested more in Florida’s big universities, they’ve also cut funds for the 28 state colleges— colleges like Miami Dade College and Broward College — that serve students who are most in need. Last year, state lawmakers cut \$25 million from the budget for the 28 schools. At the same time, they gave an extra \$232 million to the big universities like the University of Florida.

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## **FLORIDA RANKED NO. 40 AMONG K-12 SCHOOLS ON U.S. NEWS LIST.**

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While Florida’s combined scores put it on top, the state didn’t rank at the top in any of the individual categories. Florida scored best in the categories of two-year college graduation rate and tuition and fees, ranking No. 2 in both categories. South Dakota was No. 1 in two-year college graduation rate. Wyoming was No. 1 in tuition and fees.

The state’s lowest score was a 30th place finish in educational attainment. Massachusetts scored No. 1 in that category as well as No. 1 among K-12 schools on another U.S. News Best States list.

In overall education rankings, taking into consideration K-12, where Florida ranked No. 40, and the top higher education mark, Florida ranked No. 7 among the states.

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