

FORUM FOR WORLD EDUCATION

Education in Transition: Challenges and Global Perspectives

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March 31st, 2026

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THE FORUM FOR WORLD EDUCATION



- A global non-profit headquartered in New York
- Connecting business leaders, educators, and policymakers
- Advancing education for the future workforce and society

WHAT WE DO

Education as Diplomacy

Building trust, mutual understanding, and global cooperation through education.

- Build trust and international cooperation
- Promote cross-cultural dialogue

Business Advancing Education

Connecting business and education to prepare talent for a changing economy.

- Bridge boardrooms and classrooms
- Align education with workforce needs

GLOBAL REACH & IMPACT

- Forums and conferences in Paris, Bangkok, Hong Kong, and New York
- Leaders and participants from over 40 countries
- • Partnerships with organizations such as OECD and ETS



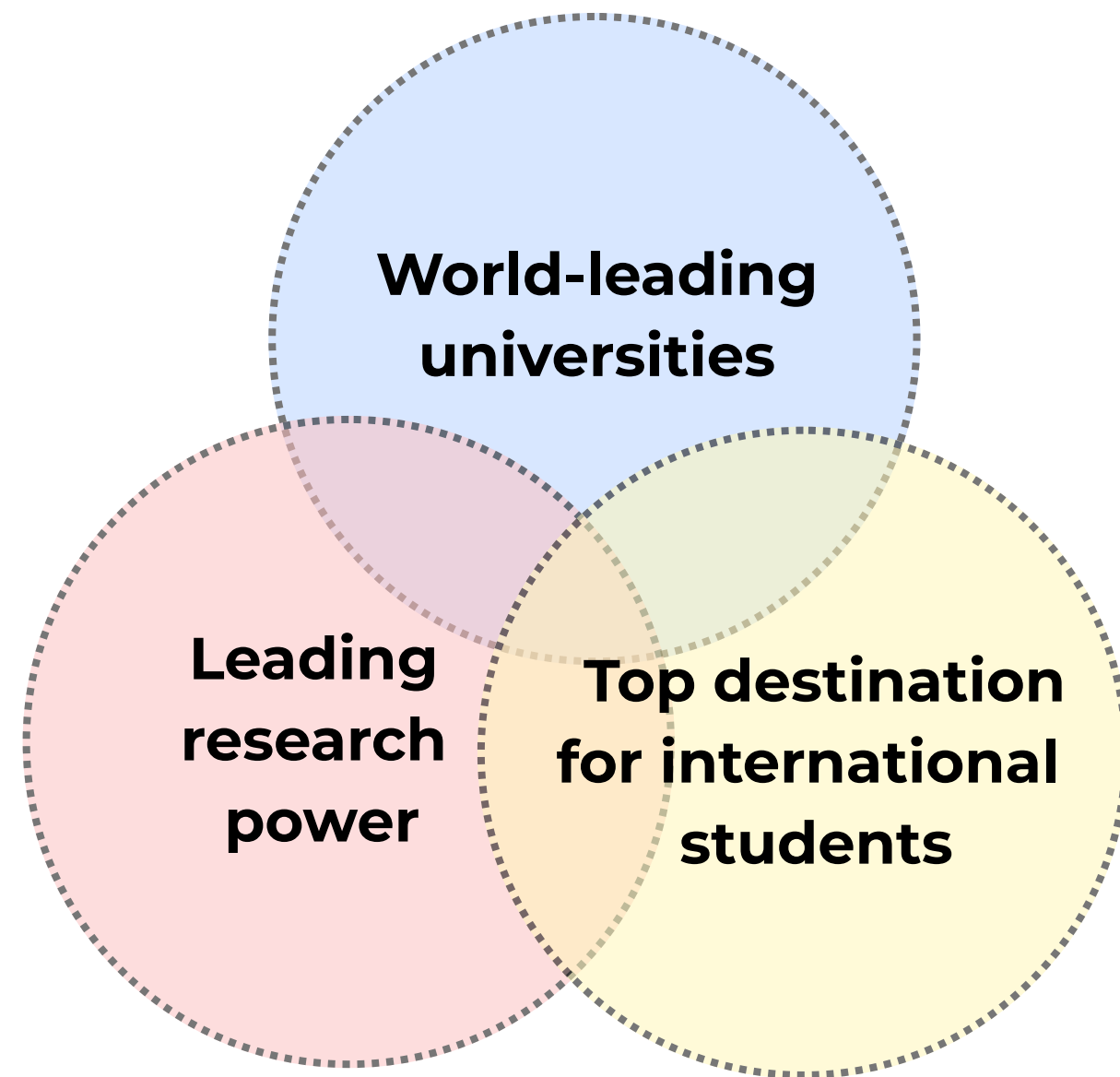
WHY IT MATTERS

- Education shapes the future workforce
- It supports economic growth and social progress
- It strengthens global understanding and cooperation

A CHANGING WORLD

- Technology is transforming society
- Workforce demands are shifting
- Education systems must adapt

AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION: A GLOBAL LEADER



WHAT MADE IT SUCCESSFUL

Strong foundations + powerful institutions

Foundational ideas

- Separation of government and schools
- Close ties between education and society
- Equal opportunity in education

Institutional strengths

- Academic freedom
- Strong research and innovation
- Significant financial support
- Globalization of education

EMERGING CHALLENGES

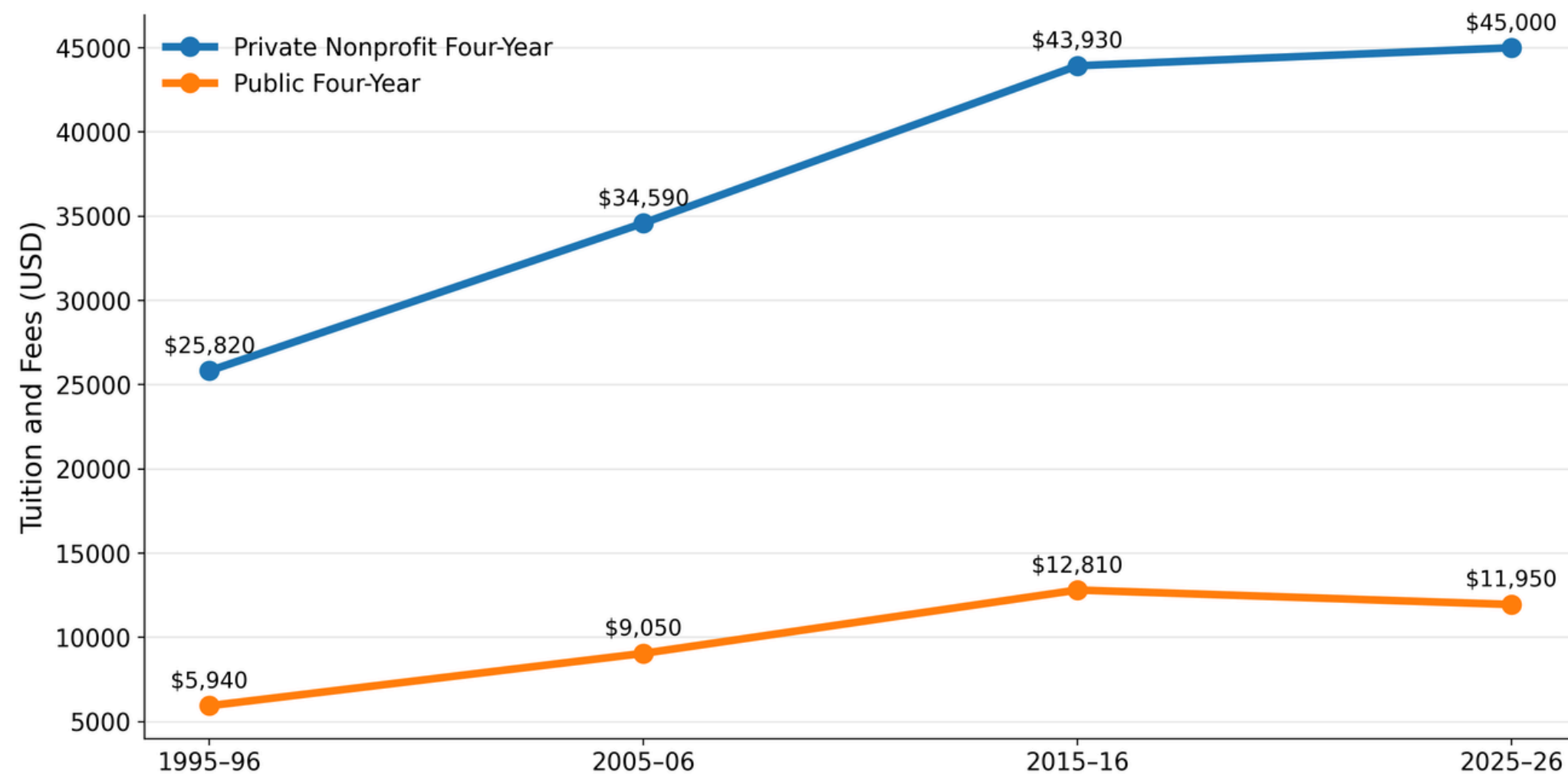
**American higher education remains globally influential,
but it is facing growing structural challenges**

- Rising tuition and affordability concerns
- Inequality in access and opportunity
- Student mental health challenges
- Demographic change and shifting student needs
- A widening gap between education and employability
- Pressure on STEM capacity and talent development

RISING COSTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

College is becoming increasingly unaffordable

Average Published Tuition and Fees
(Inflation-Adjusted, 2025 Dollars)



Source: College Board Table CP-2 (values provided by user).

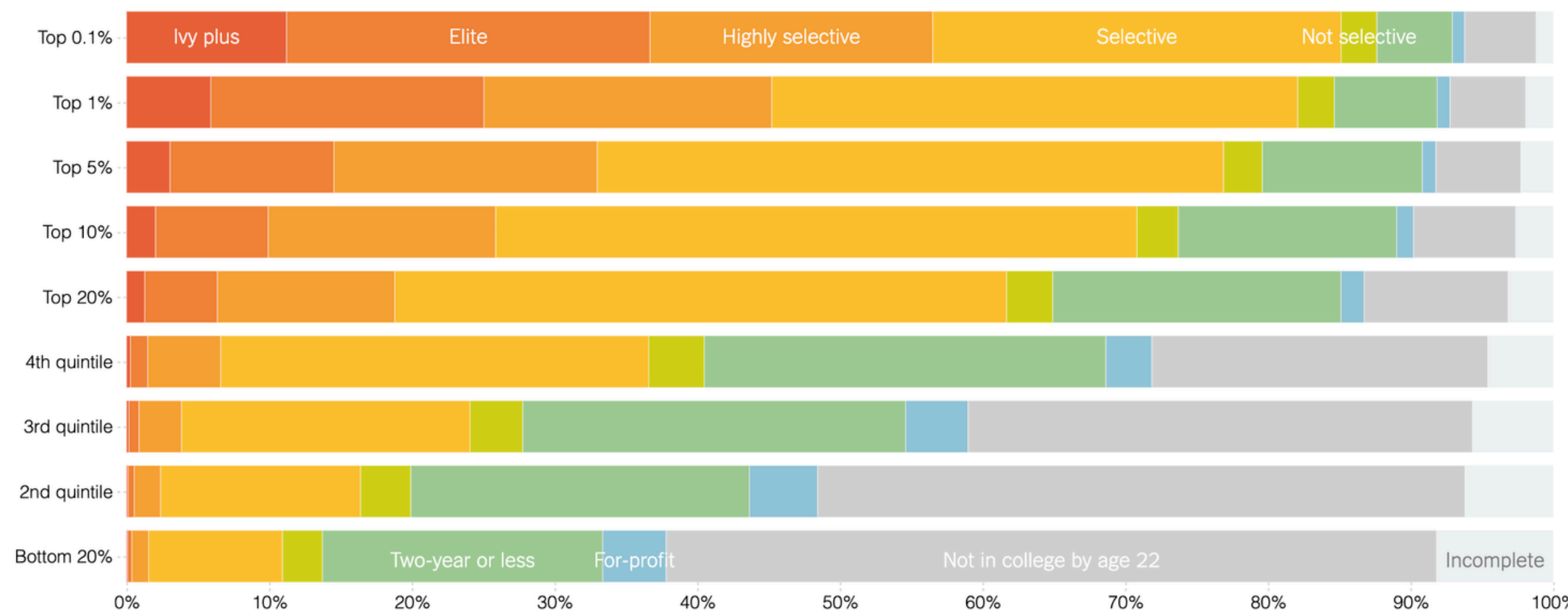
- \$25K → \$45K (private)
- ~2x increase in 30 years
- Tuition has steadily increased over time
- Affordability has become a major concern

INEQUALITY IN ACCESS

Elite colleges are dominated by students from wealthy families

Top 1% > Bottom 60%

At 38 elite colleges in America, more students came from the top 1% of the income scale than from the entire bottom 60%.



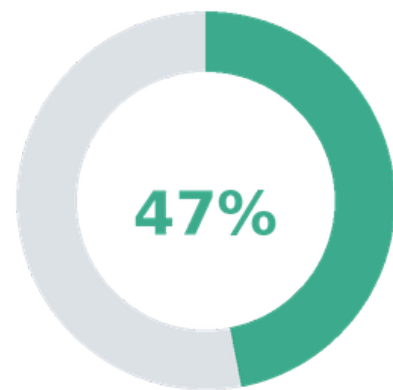
1 in 4 (top 1%) → elite colleges VS **<0.5% (bottom 20%) → elite colleges**

Source: The New York Times interactive (2017), based on Opportunity Insights / Equality of Opportunity Project mobility data.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is directly impacting student success and academic outcomes

Students screening positive for depression or anxiety



In the past 4 weeks, emotional or mental difficulties affected academic performance.



23% None
32% 1 - 2 days
24% 3 - 5 days
21% 6 or more days

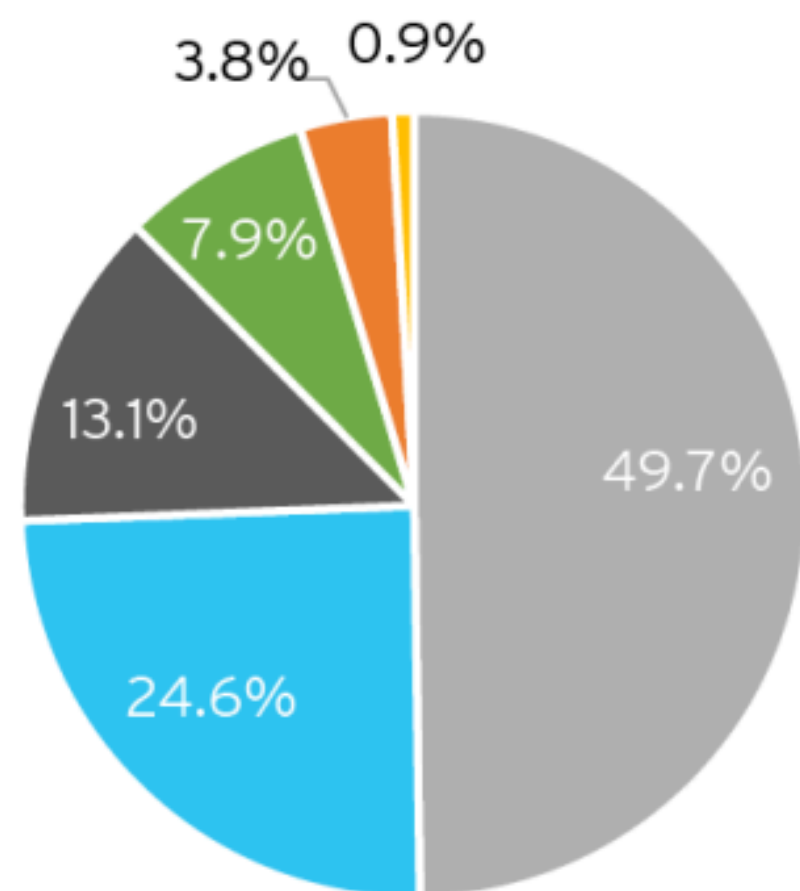
77% of students reported some academic impairment

Source: Healthy Minds Network, 2023–24 National Data Report

DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES

Changing population structure in the United States

Racial profile of U.S. population, 2045



- Younger generations are more diverse than ever
- Students differ in background, language, and support systems
- Educational outcomes remain uneven across communities

68.5% vs. 58.3%

Children under 18 are significantly more diverse than adults

No single group > 50%

The U.S. child population is already “no-majority”

25.7%

Roughly 1 in 4 U.S. children are Hispanic

White* Hispanic Black* Asian* Multiracial* Other*

* Non-Hispanic members of race

Source: William H. Frey, analysis of U.S. Census population projections, Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, 2018.

THE GLOBAL SKILLS GAP

Education ≠ Employability

- **74% of employers** worldwide report **difficulty** finding skilled workers (ManpowerGroup, 2024)
- **Only 30% of college graduates find jobs** related to their field (Forbes, 2025)
- **Nearly 50% of graduates** feel **unprepared** for real-world work (Forbes, 2025)

STEM CHALLENGES

The U.S. remains a global leader in STEM, but its long-term pipeline faces growing pressure.

WEAKER FOUNDATIONS

U.S. students ranked in the **bottom third** in mathematics among 18 advanced economies

Average math scores declined by **27 points**, from **515 (2019) to 488 (2023)**

UNEVEN COMPLETION

Among students who initially declared STEM majors, only **55%** completed a **STEM degree**.

29% completed **no degree** at all.

RISING PRESSURE

In 2023, STEM workers numbered **36 million**, or **25%** of the **U.S. workforce**.

STEM employment **grew 26%** from 2013 to 2023, compared with 9% for non-STEM fields.

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Looking Beyond One System

- These challenges are not unique to the United States
- Different countries have developed different approaches
- There is much to learn from global experience

SWITZERLAND: A GLOBAL BENCHMARK IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

230+
Professions

2/3
Students
in VET

3%
Youth
Unemployment

- A strong dual system combining education and work
- Apprenticeships integrated with industry
- Strong emphasis on practical skills and employability
- A highly skilled, job-ready workforce

Sources:

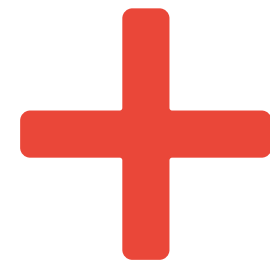
State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI, 2023);
OECD Education at a Glance 2023; OECD Labour Force Statistics 2023.

APPRENTICESHIPS: BRIDGING EDUCATION AND WORK



Education

Gain workplace-relevant skills in the field of your choice through on-the-job learning



Paid Job

Earn as you learn with a guaranteed wage increase as you develop new skills



Credentials

Receive an industry-recognized and nationally-portable credential

CASE STUDIES

Sergio Ermotti

“Think big, but always plan carefully and focus on the job at hand. If you get distracted by what might come next, you can lose sight of what matters most.”

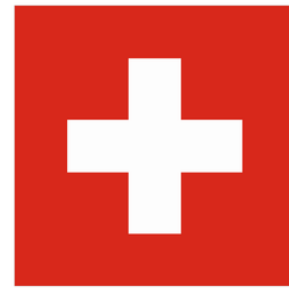
— Sergio P. Ermotti, Chairman, UBS Group



Othmar Ammann

**— Bridging Nations
through Skill and Vision**





U.S.–SWISS PARTNERSHIP ON APPRENTICESHIPS



Year	Key Focus	Signatories
2015	Joint Declaration of Intent – foundation for cooperation in vocational education.	Obama Administration × Schneider-Amman
2018	First MOU – expanding partnership on apprenticeships and technical education.	Trump Administration × Schneider-Amman
2021	Second MOU – inclusivity, equity, and U.S. apprenticeship expansion.	Biden Administration × Parmelin
2024	Third MOU (2024–2027) – innovation, workforce mobility, and talent exchange.	Biden Administration × Parmelin

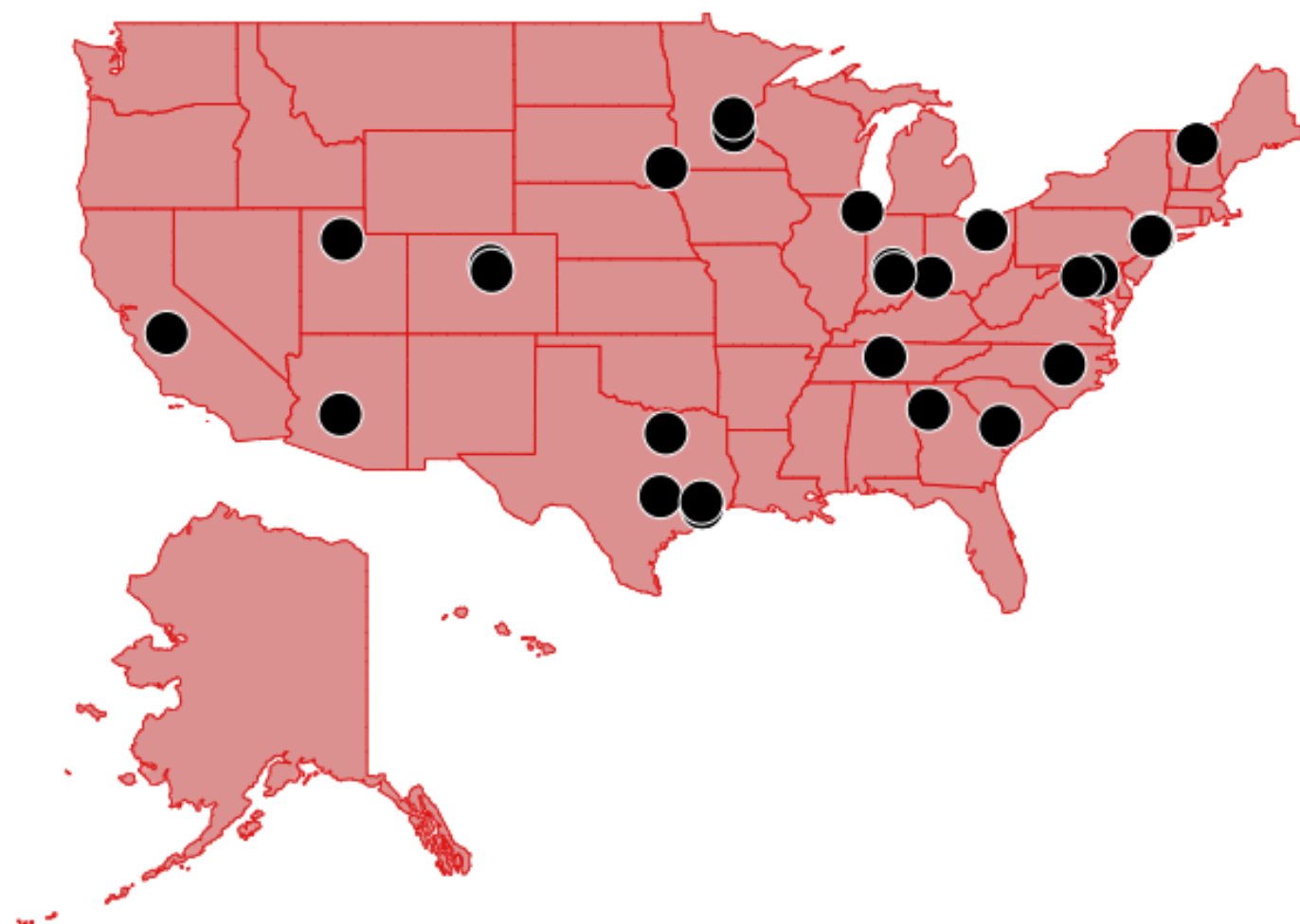
Sources: Embassy of Switzerland in the United States (FDFA, 2024)



SWISS INVESTMENT & WORKFORCE IMPACT IN THE U.S.

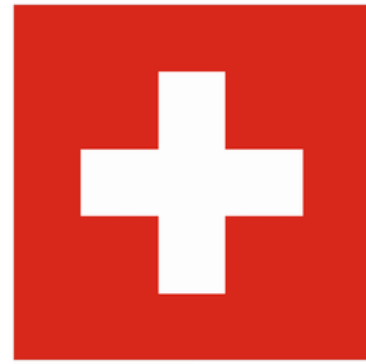


Swiss companies in the U.S. offering
apprenticeship programs:



- **Swiss** companies invest **over \$350 billion** in the **United States**
- Support **~400,000 jobs**, especially in manufacturing and R&D
- Demonstrates how **education, skills, and economic growth** are deeply connected

Source: Embassy of Switzerland in the U.S. (FDFA, 2024);
Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce; U.S. BEA (2023)



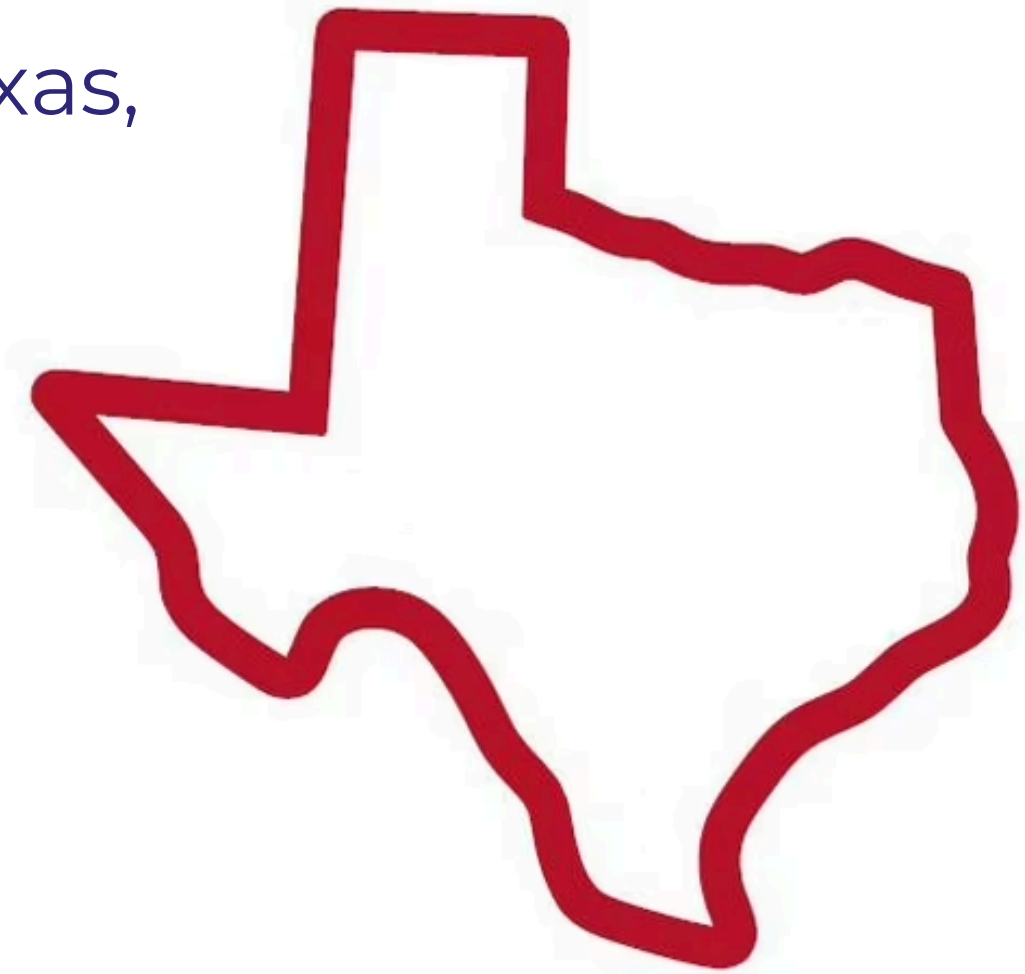
TEXAS ADAPTS THE SWISS APPRENTICESHIP MODEL



In 2016, Governor Greg Abbott launched apprenticeship programs with Swiss firms in Texas, inspired by Switzerland's dual education model.

Key Principles for Success:

- **Adapt locally, not transplant.**
- **Engage employers.**
- **Ensure equity.**
- **Create pathways.**



Source: Texas Governor's Office (2016); Go Big in Texas Economic Report;

CHINA: STEM AND ENGINEERING CAPACITY

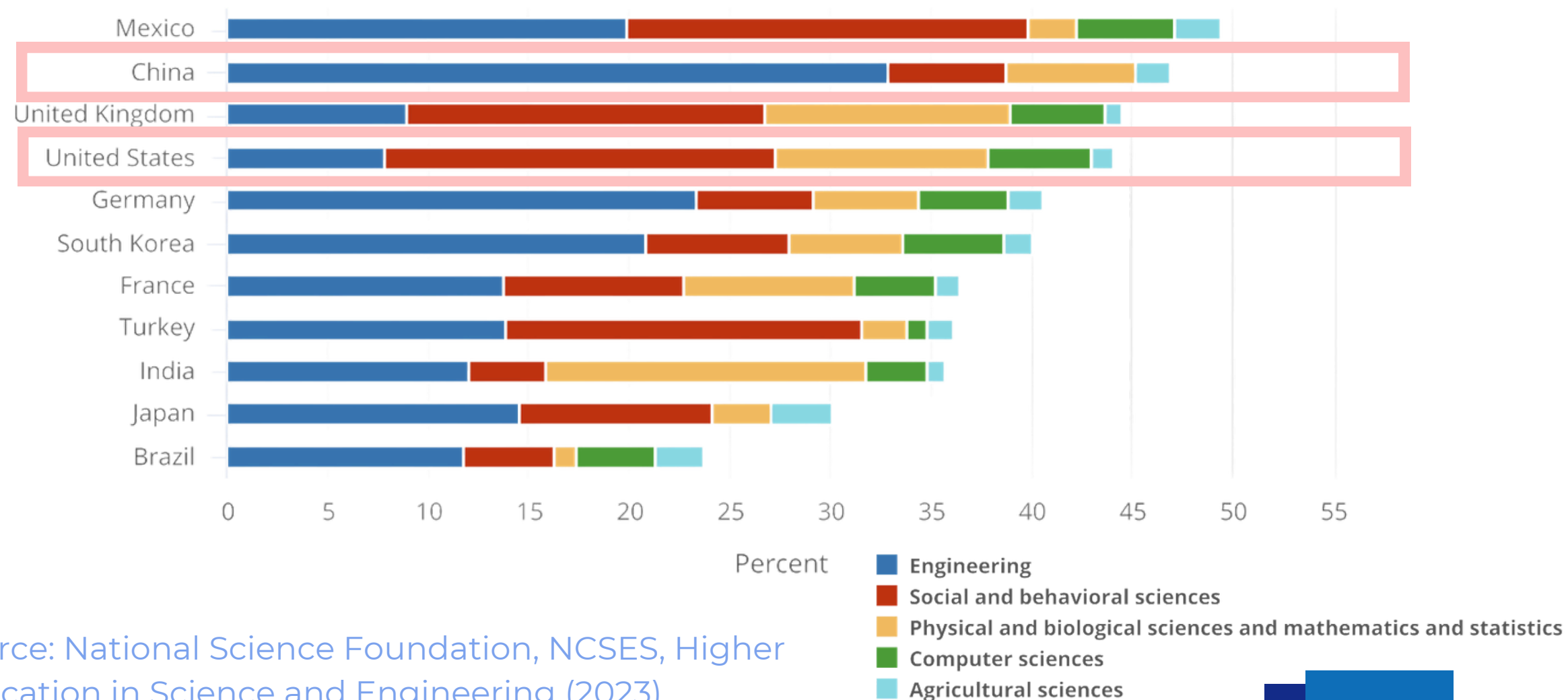
China places strong emphasis on STEM education, large-scale engineering talent development, and close links between skills and industrial growth.

2,000,000 VS **900,000**

China awarded **2.0 million** science and engineering first university degrees; the U.S. awarded **900,000**.

33% VS **8%**

Engineering accounted for **33%** of all first university degrees in China, compared with **8%** in the United States.



Source: National Science Foundation, NCSES, Higher Education in Science and Engineering (2023).

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING: THE ROLE OF TALENT

Why Apple manufactures in China

- High concentration of engineers and technicians
- Advanced precision manufacturing capability
- Efficient and integrated supply chain networks
- Advantage driven by skill, scale, and infrastructure

In Guangdong Province alone **over 500,000** technical school graduates enter the electronics industry each year

The reason Apple makes iPhones in China is not because of cheap labor — it's because of skill.

The number of tooling engineers and precision engineers in China — we could fill multiple football fields with them. In the United States, you could probably fill a room.

— Tim Cook

CHINA: STEM FOUNDATIONS

Strong performance in mathematics education

Shanghai consistently ranks among the top in PISA (OECD) mathematics assessments

UK's Long-Term Maths Reform: Learning from Shanghai

Investment & Long-Term Commitment

- £41M national investment in Maths Mastery
- England–Shanghai exchange launched in 2014
- 700+ teachers in sustained collaboration
- 8,000+ schools adopting mastery teaching
- Nationwide professional training and reform effort

Outcome (System-Level Impact)

- Mastery-based teaching scaled nationally
- Stronger pedagogical consistency across schools
- Greater focus on concept-driven mathematics learning
- Long-term shifts in curriculum and teaching practice

Data source: UK Department for Education (2016),
South Asian method of teaching maths to be rolled out in schools

MOVING FORWARD: THE ROLE OF FWE

- Convene leaders across education, business, and policy
- Promote education as diplomacy and international cooperation
- Connect global ideas with local action
- Help systems learn from one another while respecting local context

The future of education depends on our ability to learn, adapt, and work together.

Thank You

Forum for World Education

<https://www.fweforum.org/>