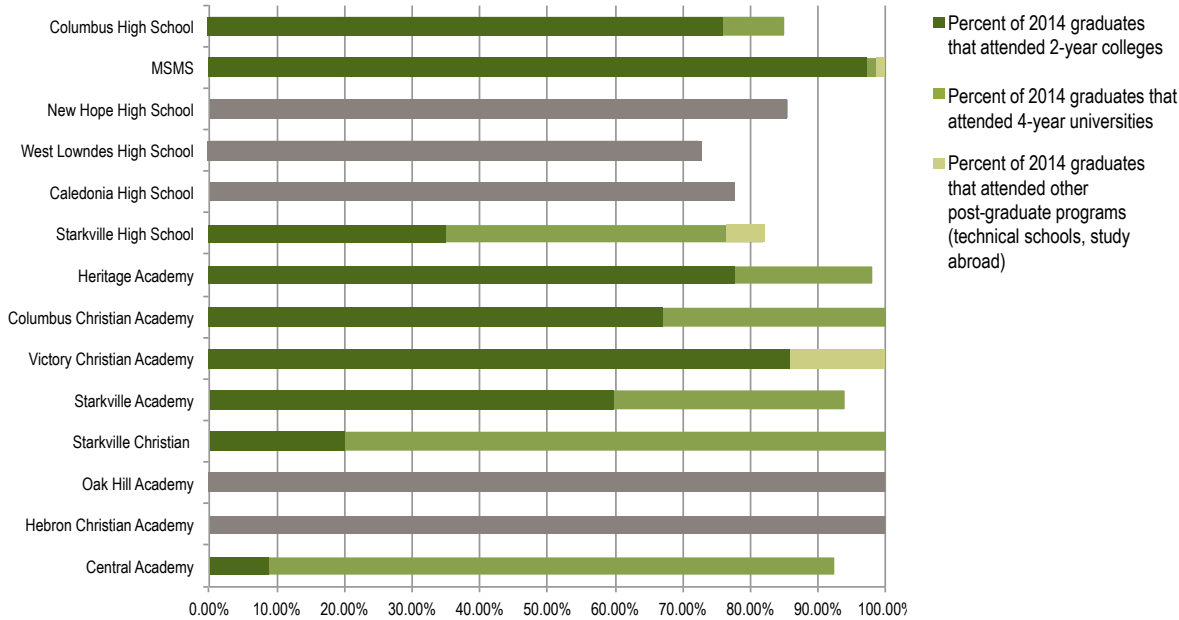


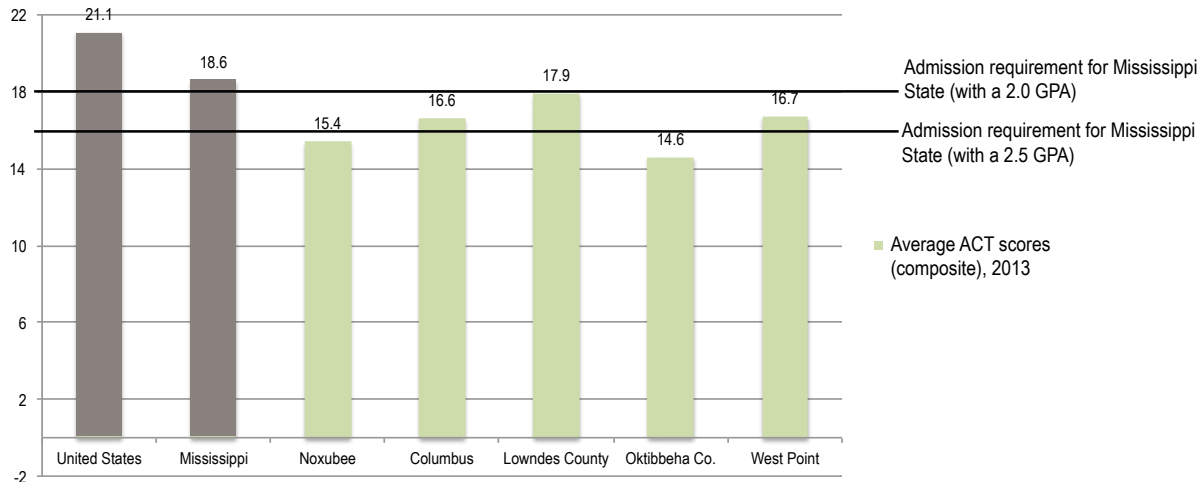
What do Golden Triangle high school students do once they graduate high school?

Do they go to college or immediately enter the workforce? The Dispatch contacted each local high school to find out what students from 2013-2014 classes did. Before you dive in, consider this: The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics states 2.9 million people graduated from U.S. high schools last year. Of those, 2 million, or 68 percent, went to college. Of those, 397,000 went to 4-year colleges, while 347,000 went to 2-year colleges.



*East Oktibbeha High School, West Oktibbeha High School, Noxubee County High School, and West Point High School did not respond to multiple Dispatch requests.

Local counties score lower on ACT than state and national averages



Putting yourself through college: the problem and a solution

In **1979**, a year of tuition equated to **182 hours** of minimum wage work

In **2013**, a year of tuition equated to **991 hours** of minimum wage work

That's **5.4x** the number of hours

Statistics from a study conducted by Randal Olson, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Pennsylvania

One school's program improves enrollment

East Mississippi Community College started offering a **tuition guarantee program** to Clay county students in October 2008. In April 2009 it was extended to students in Lowndes, Oktibbeha, Noxubee, Kemper or Lauderdale county.

If students maintain a 2.0 GPA and take 15 hours or more per semester, **their tuition is paid for**, as long as they have applied for all the federal and scholarship aid they are eligible for.

This program helped it become the **fastest growing community college** in the state by 2010, according to EMCC President Rick Young.