National Student Clearinghouse℠
Research Center™

HIGH SCHOOL
BENCHMARKS

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National College Progression Rates

High School Benchmarks 2022 - National College Progression Rates

Contents

Immediate College Enrollment After High School *(graduating class of 2021)*

Fall 2021 immediate college enrollment rates for 2021 high school graduates in approximately 8,700 high schools nationwide declined by 0.9 to 2.2 percentage points, depending on high school income and minority level characteristics. These widespread decreases came in a year when enrollment rates were widely expected to recover from the sharp declines of the prior year (4 to 10 percentage point drops; see 2021 report). Instead, the results indicate a continued pandemic effect on immediate postsecondary enrollment for high school graduates. Immediate fall enrollment decreased at schools regardless of income and poverty level. Enrollment decreased in suburban and urban schools by nearly two percentage points but increased slightly in rural schools (+0.6 pp).

Gaps in immediate enrollment by school income level prevailed from last year: Graduates of higher-income schools were more likely to enroll immediately than those of low-income schools (64% vs. 49%). An even wider gap is present between students at high-poverty schools and low-poverty schools (46% vs. 72%). The gap in the rate of immediate fall enrollment at low-minority schools and high-minority schools persisted (64% vs. 51%).

First-Year Persistence *(graduating class of 2019)*

Persistence rates for students graduating from higher-income schools continue to be much higher than persistence rates for students from low-income schools (86% vs 76%).

Completion within Six Years of High School Graduation *(graduating class of 2015)*

Completion rates were much higher for students from higher-income schools versus low-income schools (52% vs 30.0%). Similarly, completions rates were much higher for students from low-poverty schools versus high-poverty schools (61% vs. 25%).

Cross-examining minority level shows that for 2021 graduates, income level had a greater effect on immediate college enrollment than minority level. There was a 21-percentage-point gap in completion rate by income level, while keeping minority status unchanged (53% for low-minority, high income vs. 32% for low-minority, low-income).

STEM Degree Completion *(graduating class of 2015)*

The minority and income level of students in a school were strongly associated with STEM degree completion. Eighteen percent of students from higher-income schools completed STEM degrees within six years of high school graduation compared to only nine percent of students from low-income schools. Similarly, 18 percent of students from low-minority high schools completed a STEM degree within six years compared to 11 percent of students from high-minority schools. Moreover, even within the STEM category, graduates of low-income and high-minority high schools had larger shares of Psychology and Social Science majors, and smaller shares of Engineering majors, than graduates of low-minority and higher-income schools.

Introduction

This tenth annual High School Benchmarks Report provides updated data on high school graduates' college access, persistence, and completion outcomes. This report was designed with several features particularly tailored to secondary education practitioners and policymakers. First, results presented in this report update our last years' findings on high school graduates' enrollment in a college or university, persistence from first to second year, and eventual completion of a postsecondary degree. As a result, these metrics provide relevant benchmarks that secondary education practitioners can use to evaluate and monitor progress in assisting students to make the transition from high school to college. Second, these outcomes were disaggregated by several high school characteristics, which include income level, minority enrollment, and locale. This was done to ensure that the postsecondary outcomes provided can be relevant to the specific needs and characteristics of different types of high schools. Finally, in addition to providing the updated benchmarking figures for high schools, the enrollment, persistence, and completion data are more complete than other data sources because it covers all postsecondary enrollments. Specifically, National Student Clearinghouse data captures all patterns of enrollment and completion, regardless of which postsecondary institution students attend (e.g., out of state, private, public, or for-profit institutions) and regardless of transfers.

Immediate college enrollment rates of high school graduates at the national level are available through the Condition of Education published by NCES annually.[1] Thousands of high schools and districts also have access to timely reports on college access, persistence, and completion rates of their graduates through the StudentTracker® service of the National Student Clearinghouse. This report enables those schools to compare their students' outcomes to those of other schools with similar characteristics, and that also use the StudentTracker service. Using the results reported here, high schools and districts can place their own StudentTracker results into context with college access, persistence, and completion rates for schools with similar student populations in similar locales across the country.

The report provides college enrollment, persistence, and completion outcomes for public non-charter, public charter, and private high school graduates. It is important to note that the sample sizes for charter and private high schools are smaller than those of the public non-charter schools. Therefore, the results for charter and private schools are subject to higher variance and uncertainty than the results for public non-charter schools. For this reason, we do not recommend comparing these categories or using the results to draw conclusions about the differences between the school types. For students from public non-charter high schools, all outcomes are reported in nine categories. These categories, which are defined by the aggregate characteristics of each high school, are as follows:

- Low-income schools
  - High-poverty
- Higher-income schools
  - Low-poverty
- Low-minority schools
- High-minority schools
- Urban schools
- Suburban schools
- Rural schools

For the purpose of this report:

- Low-income schools are defined as schools where at least 50 percent of the students are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch.
- High-minority schools are defined as schools where at least 40 percent of the students are black or Hispanic.
- The NCES urban-centric locale code defines locale. Schools with a code from 11 to 13 are defined as urban. Schools with a code from 21 to 23 are defined as suburban. And those with a code from 31 to 43, covering both town and rural areas, are defined as rural.
- For schools in low-income and higher-income categories, we also have outcomes for graduates from a subset of low-income schools defined as high-poverty schools (schools where at least 75 percent of the student population is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) and a subset of higher-income schools as low-poverty (schools where less than 25 percent of the student population is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch). Selected outcomes for high-and-low-poverty schools are highlighted in the main part of the report. All outcomes can be found in Appendix B.

A complete explanation of definitions can be found in Appendix A. The tables and figures present:

- Total college-going rate, including:
  - Enrollment in the first fall after high school graduation
  - Enrollment at any time in the first year after high school graduation
  - Enrollment at any time in the first two years after high school graduation
- Persistence from first to second year of college. This is the number of students who remained enrolled for their second year of college as a percent of the number of students who enrolled in during the first year after high school graduation. It includes students who may have transferred or re-enrolled at a different institution from the one where they started.
- Six-year college completion rates, both overall and in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields expressed as the percentage of high

school graduates who complete a degree at any college within six years of high school graduation.
- Top five categories of majors at immediate college enrollment and at completion by high school type
- College enrollment rates are calculated for the high school graduating classes of 2021 and 2020 looking at first fall outcomes, the first-year outcome calculated for the classes of 2020 and 2019, and the first two years' outcomes calculated for the classes of 2019 and 2018. The persistence rates were calculated for the high school graduating class of 2019. The six-year college completion rates were calculated for the high school graduating class of 2015. Results are also broken down by the type of college attended: Public and private institutions, two- and four-year institutions, as well as in-state and out-of-state institutions.

Important Note on the Data

The data for this report were drawn from a voluntary sample made up of all high schools participating in the StudentTracker for High Schools service (STHS) administered by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). This is not a nationally representative sample of schools or of high school graduates. Compared to all U.S. high schools, participating STHS schools have greater representation among schools with more minority enrollments and more urban locales.

Table 1 describes the distribution of enrolled high school students in the class of 2021 and 2015 in comparison to national numbers derived from NCES by the different school characteristics. As the table demonstrates, the sample used in this report underrepresents rural enrollments and over-represents urban and suburban enrollments. The data also slightly over-represent high-minority and under-represent low-minority. In terms of the distribution across higher and low-income schools, however, the data coverage from this report aligns with the national data.

This is a descriptive study. Causal inferences should not be made based on these results. The data on which this report is based do not comprise a nationally representative sample of schools or of high school graduates. Yet, it is a large and broad sample, covering over one million students per year, a total of about six million students from public and private high schools for the five high school graduating classes, or about 40 percent of all U.S. high school graduates in each year. It includes data from all 50 states and the majority of the 100 largest districts in the U.S (for more detailed information about the sample, see Appendix A). In addition to providing reasonable benchmarks for each category of schools and districts using StudentTracker reports, we believe it also significantly contributes to discussions among practitioners and policymakers at the school, district, state, and national levels about equitable access to and completion in postsecondary education.

The data on college enrollment for this report, and for the STHS reports that the participating high schools receive, are drawn from the National Student Clearinghouse's unique, longitudinal data that cover 97 percent of the postsecondary enrollment across the nation as of fall 2020.

Table 1. Comparison of Samples in High School Benchmark Report with the National High School Population

School Characteristics	Enrolled Students (HS Class of 2021)			Enrolled Students (HS Class of 2015)		
	NSC N=1,728,516	National* N=3,226,902	Difference	NSC N=1,898,398	National* N=3,110,176	Difference
Low-Income Schools	33.2%	33.1%	0.1%	36.8%	38.9%	-2.2%
Higher-Income Schools	66.8%	66.9%	-0.1%	63.2%	61.1%	2.2%
High-Minority Schools	42.4%	40.1%	2.3%	38.0%	36.7%	1.2%
Low-Minority Schools	57.6%	59.9%	-2.3%	62.0%	63.3%	-1.2%
Urban Schools	31.2%	27.4%	3.8%	29.7%	27.0%	2.7%
Suburban Schools	45.7%	40.8%	4.9%	46.3%	41.4%	5.0%
Rural Schools	23.1%	31.9%	-8.8%	24.0%	31.7%	-7.7%
High-Poverty Schools	15.3%	14.3%	1.0%	13.5%	12.8%	0.7%
Low-Poverty Schools	22.8%	20.0%	2.7%	29.4%	25.2%	4.2%

*National numbers were obtained from the NCES, Elementary and Secondary Information System.

SECTION 1: NATIONAL RESULTS

This section below describes the results on three measures of college attendance (immediate fall enrollment, enrollment within a year from high school completion, and gap year enrollment) and two measures of college success (persistence and graduation) for high schools that serve different student populations.

1. Enrollment

1) Immediate College Enrollment After High School *(high school graduating class of 2021 entering college in fall 2021)*

Immediate college enrollment is one of the many important measures that high schools use to assess their impact on student academic success. Figure A shows the rates of enrollment in the first fall after high school graduation for the class of 2021 by different school characteristics. Income was strongly associated with immediate college enrollment. Students from higher-income schools were more likely than students from low-income schools to enroll immediately (64% and 49%, respectively). The gap was even larger between graduates of high-poverty schools (where at least 75% of the student population was eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch, or FRPL) and low-poverty schools (where less than 25% was eligible). The immediate enrollment rates in high- and low-poverty schools differed by 26-percentage points (46% and 72%, respectively).

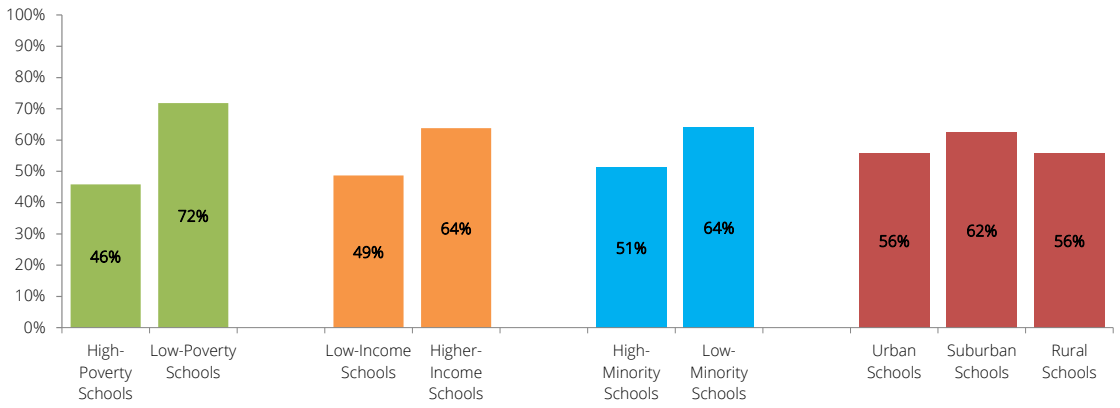
The school minority level was also strongly indicative of immediate college enrollment. Students from low-minority high schools were more likely to enroll immediately than those from high schools with higher minority populations (64% and 51%, respectively). Gaps in enrollment rates by school location were less pronounced, with students from suburban schools (62%) more likely to immediately enroll than those from urban or rural schools (both 56%).

High school characteristics were also associated with enrollment in higher education across state lines. Enrollments at out-of-state institutions were higher for students from higher-income and low-minority high schools. Seventeen percent of the college-going graduates from higher-income schools enrolled at out-of-state institutions, compared to just six percent of those from low-income high schools. Eighteen percent of graduates from low-minority high schools enrolled in an out-of-state institution, compared to just seven percent of graduates from high-minority high schools (see Appendix B, Table 1).

The 2021 High School Benchmarks Report identified large pandemic-related declines in immediate fall enrollment for 2020 high school graduates. The further declines for 2021 graduates, in the current results (up to 2.2 pp decline in 2021, depending on high school characteristics, see Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2) show that instead of returning to more normal college-going rates, or even remaining stable at a lower rate, the pandemic's impact continued to grow worse in the second year.

Figure A. College Enrollment Rates in the First Fall after High School Graduation, Class of 2021, Public Non-Charter Schools

This figure is based on data shown in Appendix B, Table 1.



2) Enrollment within a Year of High School Completion *(high school graduating class of 2020 entering college by fall 2021)*

Similar patterns of enrollment by high school characteristics appear when the metric is expanded to include students who delay their enrollment until the spring and summer terms (enrollment in the first year) or the following year (enrollment in the first two years; see Appendix B, Tables 2-6). Across all groups of students defined by high school characteristics, enrollment rates increased markedly when we included the first two years after graduation, compared to the first fall. Students attending two-year institutions drove most of the increases.

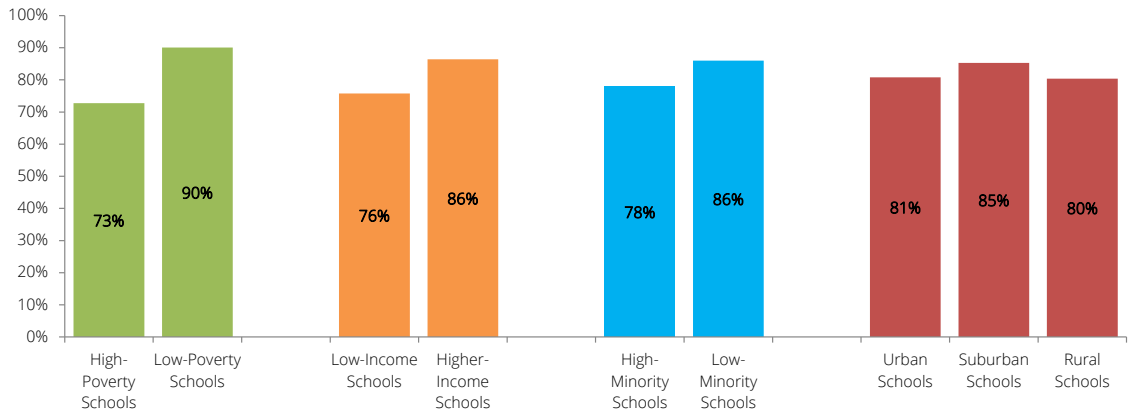
2. First-Year Persistence

Figure B presents persistence rates from the first to second year of college for the high school graduating class of 2019, disaggregated by high school characteristics. Persistence rate is the percentage of students who returned to college (anywhere) at any time in the second year out of all students from a given high school graduating class who enrolled at any time in the first year. Persistence rates for students from high schools categories presented in Figure B range from 76 to 86 percent. College-bound students from higher-income high schools show the highest persistence rate (86%), in contrast to graduates from low-income high schools, who return for their second year of college at the lowest rate across all groups (76%). Students from low-minority high schools had higher rates of persistence (86%) than those from high-minority high schools (78%). Students from suburban high schools (85%) persist at greater rates than those from urban (81%) and rural (80%) high schools.

Regardless of high school type, persistence rates among students who enrolled in private colleges and universities were higher than those in public institutions. These differences were all between 6 to 10 percentage points. Persistence rates for all students were also higher in four-year institutions than in two-year institutions and at out-of-state institutions than in-state institutions (see Appendix B, Table 7).

Figure B. Persistence Rates from First to Second Year of College, Class of 2019, Public Non-Charter Schools

This figure is based on data shown in Appendix B, Table 7.



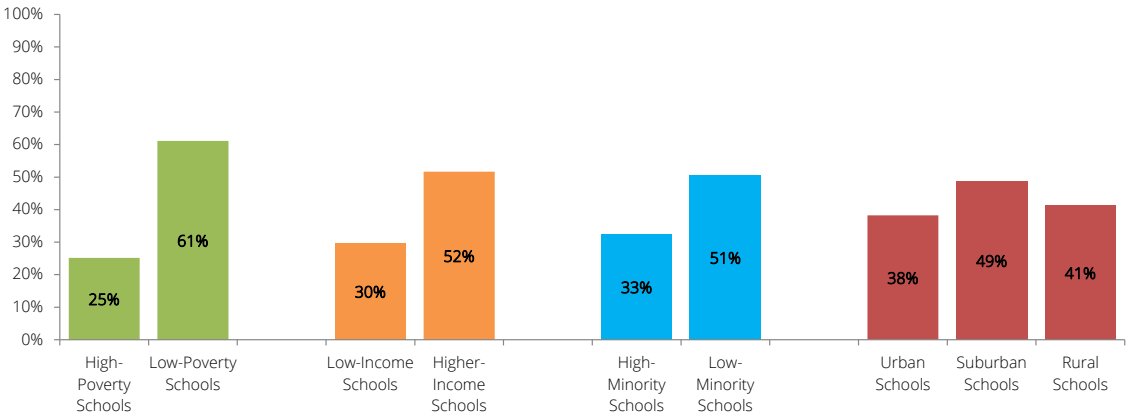
3. Completion within Six Years of High School Graduation

The differences among students from different types of high schools are most pronounced in the rates of college completion. Figure C presents the rates of college completion as a percentage of all students in the high school graduating class, not just those who enrolled in college. Gaps are largest by school income level. Fifty-two percent of all students from higher-income high schools in the class of 2015 completed a college degree within six years of their graduation compared to 30 percent from low-income schools. As was the case in immediate college enrollment rates, the attainment gap is even larger among graduates of high- and low-poverty schools. Only 25 percent of graduates from high-poverty high schools completed college within six years of finishing high school, compared to 61 percent from low-poverty high schools.

The relationship between college completion rates and the minority level of the school was also strong. Fifty-one percent of students from low-minority high schools completed a college degree within six years, compared to 33 percent from high-minority schools. There were also gaps in completion by locality: 38 percent of students from urban schools completed a degree within six years of graduation compared to 41 percent from rural schools and 49 percent from suburban schools.

Figure C.
College Completion Rates Six Years after High School Graduation, Class of 2015, Public Non-Charter Schools

This figure is based on data shown in Appendix B, Table 8.



4. Enrollment and Completion Rates by School Minority and Income Levels

Figures D and E show postsecondary enrollment in the first fall after high school graduation (class of 2021) and completion rates (class of 2015) by school minority and income levels combined. The results show that for 2021 graduates, high-minority, low-income high schools had the lowest rate of immediate college enrollment (48%), a gap of 18 percentage points from the highest rate (66%), observed for students from low-minority, higher-income schools.

More nuanced differences emerged in six-year college completion rates. Graduates from high-minority, low-income high schools had the lowest completion rate (29%), a gap of 24 percentage points from the highest rate (53%), observed for low-minority, higher-income high schools (Figure E).

Further, the completion differences between higher- and low-income levels, within each minority level, were substantially larger than the completion differences between high and low-minority levels, within income. For example, in Figure E, the difference in completion rate by income levels while keeping the minority status unchanged (e.g., within low-minority schools, 53 percent completion rate for higher-income schools versus 32 percent for low-income schools) is substantially larger than the gap in completion rate by minority levels while keeping the income level constant (e.g., within higher-income schools, low-minority schools' 53 percent completion rate versus high-minority schools' 43 percent completion rate).

Figure D.
College Enrollment Rates in the First Fall after High School Graduation Across Income and Minority Levels, Class of 2021, Public Non-Charter Schools

This figure is based on data shown in Appendix B, Table 11.

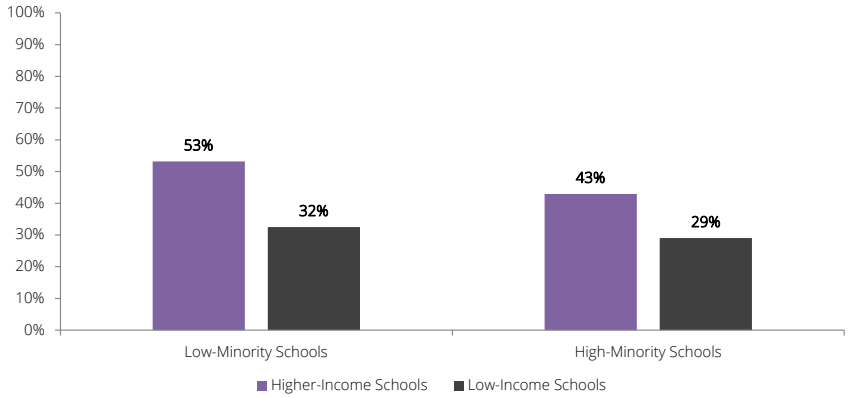
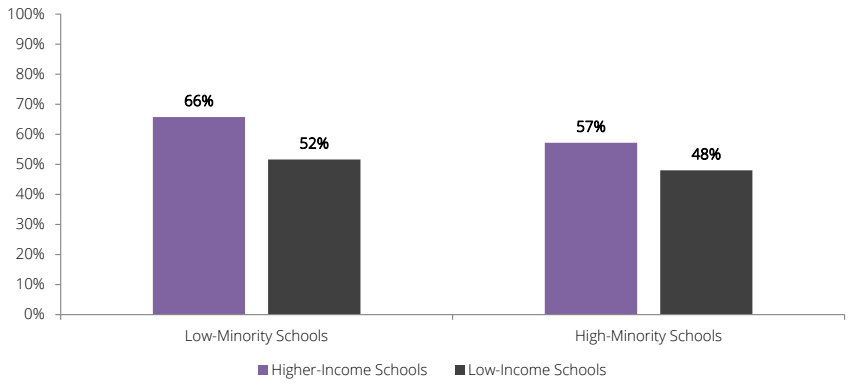


Figure E.
College Completion Rates Six Years after High School Graduation Across Income and Minority Levels, Class of 2015, Public Non-Charter Schools

This figure is based on data shown in Appendix B, Table 12.



5. Top Categories of Majors at Immediate College Enrollment and Completion

These analyses examine patterns of majors at immediate college enrollment and completion for those who enrolled in or completed a degree from two-year or four-year schools separately. The results of these analyses are presented in Appendix B. It is important to note that the high school graduating classes used to compare majors at immediate college enrollment versus majors at completion were not the same. Specifically, the high school class of 2021 was used to examine majors at enrollment whereas the high school class of 2015 was used to examine majors at completion.

When examining the most common categories of majors for graduates of low-income and higher-income high schools, the results showed that overall, there were only small changes in the most common types of majors declared at first enrollment in two-year institutions and the most common major fields students graduated with from two-year institutions. The most common majors at both first enrollment and completion were in the categories of liberal arts and sciences, general studies and humanities followed by categories of health professions and business. For students from higher-income high schools who attended two-year institutions, health professions majors were less common at enrollment than in low-income schools, but equal upon completion.

In the four-year sector, the most common majors declared at initial college enrollment, regardless of whether the student graduated from a higher-income or low-income high school, were in the liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities categories. The most common majors at completion, however, were in the business, management, marketing, and related support categories.

6. STEM Completion

Figure F presents the rates at which graduates from different types of high schools in the Class of 2015 completed a STEM degree within six years of high school graduation. The minority and income level of students in a school were strongly associated with STEM degree completion. Eighteen percent of students from higher-income schools, but only nine percent of students from low-income schools, completed STEM degrees within six years of high school graduation. Similarly, 18 percent of students from low-minority high schools completed a STEM degree within six years, compared to 11 percent of students from high-minority schools. The relationship between high school location and STEM degree completion was less pronounced. Seventeen percent of students from suburban high schools completed STEM degrees, compared to 12 percent of students from rural and 14 percent from urban high schools. The largest disparity was found among high- and low-poverty high schools where there was a 15-percentage-point completion rate gap across six years (23% and 8%, respectively).

Figure F presents the number of students attaining degrees as a percentage of the number that graduated high school. The definition of STEM used in this analysis is based on a listing of six-digit CIP codes used by the National Science Foundation and includes social sciences and psychology (for a complete list, see Appendix A).

Figure F. College Completion Rates Six Years after High School Graduation, STEM Field of Study, Class of 2015, Public Non-Charter Schools

This figure is based on data shown in Appendix B, Table 9.

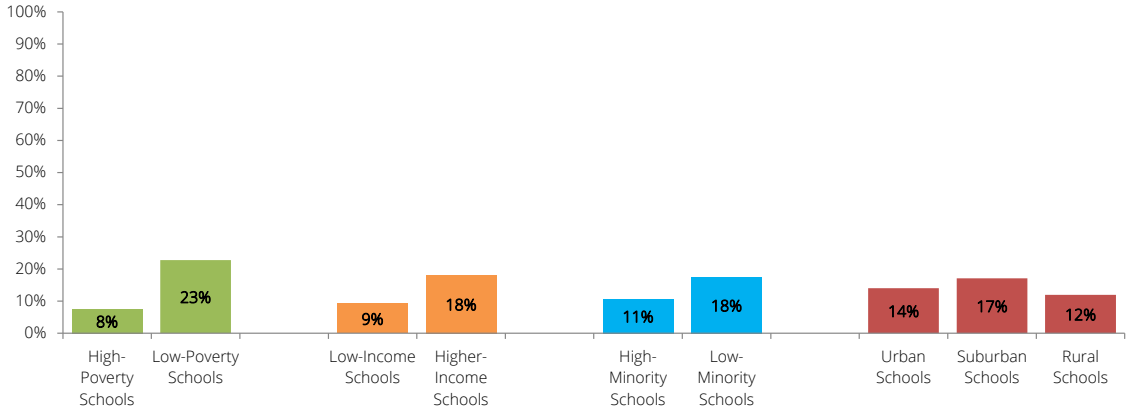
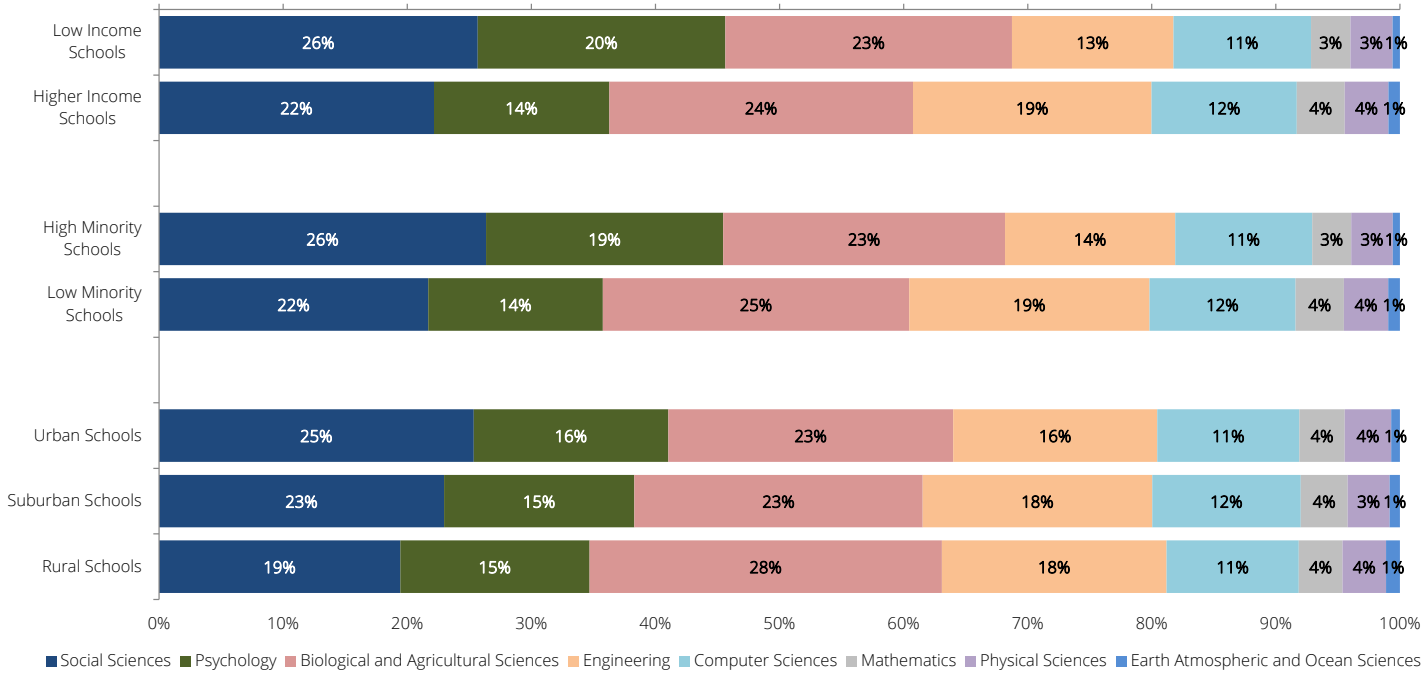


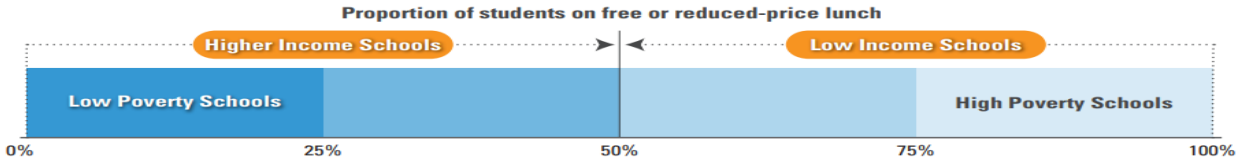
Figure G shows STEM degree completion by field of study and reveals further patterns of disparities among students from different types of high schools. Higher shares of STEM degrees for students from both low-income (46%) and high-minority (45%) high schools are awarded in either psychology or the social sciences, compared to 36 percent for higher-income and from low-minority schools. STEM completers from higher-income and from low-minority schools, in contrast, earned higher shares of degrees in Engineering (19% vs. 12% and 13% for high minority and low income, respectively).

Figure G. Distribution of Fields of Study among STEM Completers, Class of 2015, Public Non-Charter Schools



This figure is based on data shown in Appendix B, Table 10.

SECTION 2: RESULTS BY HIGH SCHOOL TYPE (FOR USE BY INDIVIDUAL HIGH SCHOOLS)



Guidance on How to Interpret the Outcomes in this Section

This section provides detailed results for schools in low-income and higher-income categories as well as in high-poverty and low-poverty categories. Section 2 is intended for use by individual high schools as benchmarks against which to compare their own results. Outcomes are provided in two different ways: student-weighted totals and school percentile distributions. Tables with student-weighted totals are designed to enable individual schools and districts to compare their StudentTracker results directly to the national benchmarks. Totals are calculated by computing the mean among all schools within the category, weighted by the size of each school's graduating class. By placing their own results into the context of these aggregate totals, practitioners can better understand the meaning of their students' college access and persistence outcomes. Tables with school percentile distributions are designed to enable individual schools and districts to identify the approximate percentile rank of their students' college-going rate. These distributions are calculated by ranking schools on outcome without considering school size or number of graduates. Thus, if a school's college-going rate is the same as the rate at the 75th percentile, the school is said to have a college-going rate equal to or higher than that of 75 percent of all StudentTracker schools in that category.

Results Tables & Figures

APPENDIX A. METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

This report contains college enrollment, persistence, and completion outcomes of high school graduating students. The results presented in the report center on the following outcomes:

1) College enrollment in the
   - first fall after high school graduation
   - first year after high school graduation
   - first two years after high school graduation
2) Persistence from the first to the second year of college.
3) College completion within six years after high school graduation.

The outcomes are presented by type of college attended, including public and private institutions, two-year and four-year institutions, and in-state and out-of-state institutions. These characteristics are defined by IPEDS Institutional Characteristics data as of 2020-21. In-state designations are defined relative to the state in which the high school is located, not the residency of individual students.

The high school dataset used for this report is based on a voluntary sample and is not a nationally representative sample of schools or of high school graduates. High school diploma data are submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse (the Clearinghouse) by schools and districts that participate in the StudentTracker for High Schools (STHS) service. In general, the participating schools tend to have greater representation among schools with lower-income, higher minority enrollments, and urban locales.

This report is based on the data submitted to the Clearinghouse on graduating classes of 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021. Table A1 below shows the number of participating high schools and high school graduates included in this report compared to the total number of US high schools and high school graduates. All types of high schools, including both public and private schools, participate in the Clearinghouse STHS service.

Table A1. Number of public, non-charter high schools and public, non-charter high school graduates included in the report

Academic year[1]	No. of participating high schools	Percent of all US public high schools[2]	Percent of US grade 12 enrollment represented[3]	Total N (No. of graduates in participating high schools)
2014-2015	8,763	52%	61%	1,778,639
2017-2018	9,768	57%	68%	2,085,124
2018-2019	9,752	57%	67%	2,089,997
2019-2020	9,820	57%	67%	2,066,399
2020-2021	7,843	46%	54%	1,629,820

Table A2. Number of public, charter high schools and public, charter high school graduates included in the report

Academic year[1]	No. of participating high schools	Percent of all US public high schools[2]	Percent of US grade 12 enrollment represented[3]	Total N (No. of graduates in participating high schools)
2014-2015	900	44%	48%	62,094
2017-2018	1,310	57%	59%	97,743
2018-2019	1,241	52%	51%	89,213
2019-2020	1,208	52%	51%	90,069
2020-2021	768	32%	36%	66,907

Table A3. Number of private high schools and private high school graduates included in the report

Academic year[1]	Number of participating high schools	Percent of all US private high schools[2]	Percent of US grade 12 enrollment represented[3]	Total N (No. of graduates in participating high schools)
2014-2015	372	7%	21%	48,597
2017-2018	347	6%	18%	43,634
2018-2019	328	6%	18%	42,882
2019-2020	276	5%	15%	32,930
2020-2021	153	3%	8%	17,741

[1]Academic year is defined as the period between September 1-August 31.
[2] The total number of schools used in the denominator of this calculation was obtained from NCES' Elementary and Secondary Information System (ELSi). The private school information is available from the Private School Survey, which is collected every two years through 2019-20. The number of private schools for intermediate years are estimates, equal to the number from the prior available year.
[3] The numbers used in both the denominator and numerator of this calculation were obtained from NCES' Elementary and Secondary Information System (ELSi). Grade 12 enrollment information is available from the Private School Survey, which is collected every two years through 2019-20. The numbers for intermediate years are estimates, equal to the numbers from the prior available year.

Definitions of Public, Non-Charter High School Categories

We used the Common Core of Data (CCD) to construct the sampling frame of schools. The CCD is the Department of Education's primary database on public elementary and secondary education in the United States. From the CCD, we created a sample frame that contains all regular public schools with a 12th grade.

To enable public, non-charter high schools to compare their own outcomes with those of similar high schools, the outcomes in this report are presented based on school-level characteristics: low-income and higher-income; high-minority and low-minority; and urban, suburban, or rural. Membership in these categories for each academic year is based on CCD data for the corresponding year.

Low-income schools are defined as schools where at least 50% of the entire student population (not just graduating seniors) is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Minority schools are defined as those schools where at least 40% of the students are Black or Hispanic. Locale is defined by the NCES urban-centric locale code. Schools with a code from 11 to 13 are defined as urban. Schools with a code from 21 to 23 are defined as suburban. And those with a code 31 to 43, covering both town and rural areas, are defined as rural.

Combinations of these characteristics results in seven groups of high schools. Thus, the outcomes are presented for the following categories of high schools:

- Low-income schools
- Higher-income schools
- Low-minority schools
- High-minority schools
- Urban schools
- Suburban schools
- Rural schools

Table A4. Number of public, non-charter high schools and public, non-charter high school graduates included in the report by category of high schools

Group	Academic year	Number of participating high schools	Percent of US grade 12 enrollment represented	Number of states represented	Total N (No. of graduates in sample)
Low-income Schools	2014-2015	3,362	58%	47	632,432
	2017-2018	3,792	67%	45	772,300
	2018-2019	3,780	68%	45	778,060
	2019-2020	3,840	67%	46	780,252
	2020-2021	2,643	54%	39	533,814
Higher-income Schools	2014-2015	5,401	63%	50	1,146,207
	2017-2018	5,976	68%	51	1,312,824
	2018-2019	5,972	67%	51	1,311,937
	2019-2020	5,980	67%	51	1,286,147
	2020-2021	5,200	54%	49	1,096,006
High-minority Schools	2014-2015	2,626	63%	39	659,982
	2017-2018	3,035	72%	42	852,333
	2018-2019	3,077	72%	43	876,130
	2019-2020	3,153	72%	47	888,253
	2020-2021	2,474	57%	43	678,008
Low-minority Schools	2014-2015	6,137	60%	50	1,118,657
	2017-2018	6,733	65%	51	1,232,791
	2018-2019	6,675	65%	51	1,213,867
	2019-2020	6,667	64%	51	1,178,146
	2020-2021	5,369	52%	50	951,812
Urban Schools	2014-2015	1,927	67%	49	509,406
	2017-2018	2,139	73%	50	601,043
	2018-2019	2,140	74%	50	611,021
	2019-2020	2,174	74%	50	618,949
	2020-2021	1,829	61%	49	500,713
Suburban Schools	2014-2015	2,654	68%	48	836,756
	2017-2018	2,928	76%	48	970,720
	2018-2019	2,923	76%	48	968,895
	2019-2020	2,879	75%	48	933,513
	2020-2021	2,368	60%	47	754,304
Rural Schools	2014-2015	4,182	46%	49	432,477
	2017-2018	4,701	52%	49	513,361
	2018-2019	4,689	52%	49	510,081
	2019-2020	4,767	52%	49	513,937
	2020-2021	3,646	39%	48	374,803

The numbers used in both the denominator and numerator of this calculation were obtained from NCES' Elementary and Secondary Information System (ELSi). The denominator is the number of grade 12 enrollments for all schools in a particular category of high schools. The numerator is the number of grade 12 enrollments for participating public high schools in the category. Grade 12 enrollment information is available from the Common Core of Data through 2020-21.

In addition to our standard results for schools in low-income and higher-income categories, the report also presents postsecondary outcomes for graduates from a subset of low-income schools defined as high-poverty schools and a subset of higher-income schools defined as low-poverty schools. High-poverty schools are defined as those where at least 75% of the student population is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Low-poverty schools are defined as those where less than 25% of the student population is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Table A5. Number of public, non-charter high schools and public, non-charter high school graduates in high-poverty and low-poverty schools included in the report by category

Group	Academic year	Number of participating high schools	Percent of US grade 12 enrollment represented	Number of states represented	Total N (No. of graduates in sample)
High-poverty Schools	2014-2015	1,325	64%	43	230,788
	2017-2018	1,580	71%	41	296,900
	2018-2019	1,557	71%	40	300,675
	2019-2020	1,661	72%	38	316,988
	2020-2021	1,275	57%	35	249,490
Low-poverty Schools	2014-2015	2,011	71%	49	539,783
	2017-2018	1,926	74%	46	542,194
	2018-2019	1,928	73%	46	536,988
	2019-2020	1,884	72%	45	524,344
	2020-2021	1,479	61%	38	385,391

The numbers used in both the denominator and numerator of this calculation were obtained from NCES' Elementary and Secondary Information System (ELSi). The denominator is the number of grade 12 enrollments for all schools in a particular category of high schools. The numerator is the number of grade 12 enrollments for participating public high schools in the category. Grade 12 enrollment information is available from the Common Core of Data through 2020-21.

Postsecondary Data

College enrollment, persistence, and completion outcomes are determined by matching the graduate files received from high schools each year, to the postsecondary enrollment data held by the National Student Clearinghouse. The National Student Clearinghouse is a unique and trusted source for higher education enrollment and degree verification. Currently, Clearinghouse data include 3,600 postsecondary institutions and 97 percent of U.S. postsecondary enrollments (for detailed coverage of postsecondary enrollments see Appendix C). Because the database is comprised of student-level data, researchers can use it to link concurrent as well as consecutive enrollments of individual students at multiple institutions — a capability that distinguishes the Clearinghouse data from national databases built with institution-level data.

To preserve comparability to the reports that schools and districts receive on their graduates' college access, persistence, and completion rates through the Clearinghouse's StudentTracker service, results have not been adjusted to account for a student's outcome not being captured due to noncoverage by Clearinghouse data.

Definitions of Outcomes

College enrollment in the first fall after high school graduation: Percentage of high school students who enrolled in a two- or four- year postsecondary institution in the fall semester immediately following graduation. The fall semester immediately following graduation is defined as any enrollment that occurs between August 15 and October 31.

College enrollment in the first year after high school graduation: Percentage of high school students who enrolled in a two- or four-year postsecondary institution in the academic year immediately following graduation. The first year after high school includes any enrollment that occurs between August 15 of the graduation year and August 14 of the following year.

College enrollment in the first two years after high school graduation: Percentage of high school students who enrolled in a two- or four-year postsecondary institution in the first two years following graduation. The first two years after high school includes any enrollment that occurs between August 15 of the graduation year and August 14 of the second year.

Persistence from first to second year of college: Percentage of students enrolled in the first year after high school graduation who remained enrolled in postsecondary education in the second year. This is the percentage of students who re-enrolled at any postsecondary institution, not necessarily the same one they started in. Thus, it is different from the typical measure of retention at the same institution.

College completion within six years after high school graduation: Percentage of high school students who attained a degree in a two- or four-year postsecondary institution in the six academic years immediately following graduation. Only associate's, bachelor's, and advanced degrees are counted in these rates. Certificates are not included.

STEM College Completions

Analysis is based on degree records that were awarded to students within six years of high school graduation. Only associate's, bachelor's, and advanced degrees are considered. Certificates are not included. The field of study, whenever reported by the postsecondary institution, is mapped to the NCES' Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. NCES classifies instructional programs by a six-digit CIP code at the most granular level and organizes them into CIP families by their two-digit prefix.

The definition of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) used in this analysis is based on a listing of six-digit CIP codes used by the National Science Foundation, and it includes the following disciplines:

- Biological and Agricultural Sciences
- Computer Sciences
- Earth, Atmospheric, and Ocean Sciences
- Engineering
- Mathematics
- Physical Sciences
- Psychology
- Social Sciences

If a student is awarded more than one degree and at least one of them is in a STEM discipline, the earliest STEM degree is considered for this analysis.

Appendix B. Full Result Tables

Appendix C. Postsecondary Coverage Tables