

EIGHTH GRADE MATH

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

MESA: A platform for underrepresented students

MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science and Achievement) Washington aims to prepare underrepresented students for higher education and careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

When established in 1984, MESA served about 20 students. Today, the program supports more than 800 Black, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander, and female students. Over 92% of MESA graduates attend colleges and universities, earning degrees in engineering and science at a rate nearly five times greater than the national average.

MESA is working with Graduate Tacoma's STEAM Learning Network to improve eighth-grade math achievement and to ensure students finish middle school "algebra-ready." MESA provides enrichment programs, including Summer Bridge, a hands-on high-school algebra preparation program. Additionally, MESA projects such as robotic prosthetic arms, computer app coding, and others are offered to enhance and increase the engagement and math skills of eighth graders.



10%

The consistent algebra and geometry achievement gap eighth grade boys have experienced over the past two years when compared with girls.

KEY FINDINGS

Strong Gains for Hispanics and Students in Poverty

The 2015-16 data reveals 69% of eighth graders are passing algebra or geometry with a C or better as an average over two semesters, with gains across almost all demographic groups. That's promising news for all as we watch the numbers inch up from last year's new baseline, which was the first year this indicator was measured in this way.

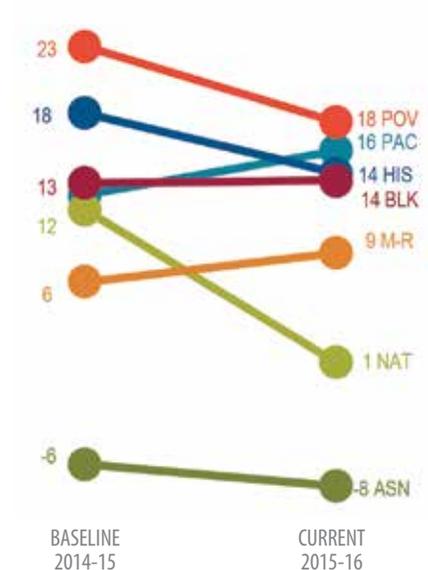
For some demographic groups, the numbers are even more encouraging. Native American students saw a 13-point gain since baseline and Hispanic students moved ahead seven points in the past year. Also promising: Although there is a significant gap here between students in poverty and those not in poverty, that gap has closed by five points in one year.

Students who successfully complete algebra 1 in eighth grade can take more college prep classes, more high-school math and science classes, and are more likely to choose to attend college. An added benefit is that they achieve one of Washington state's graduation requirements before they even enter high school.



CLOSING GAPS – EIGHTH GRADE MATH

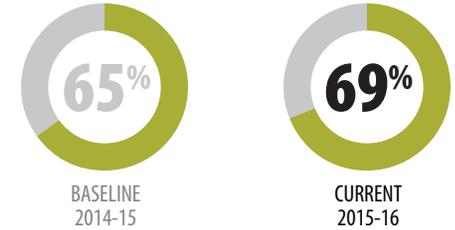
Gaps as % difference – Students of color: White students. Poverty: Non-poverty.



Source: Tacoma Public School District

DATA DIVE

↑ EIGHTH GRADE MATH PASSING ALGEBRA OR GEOMETRY



AIMING HIGHER GOAL: Increase the percentage of eighth graders who pass algebra or geometry with a C or better.

% BY POVERTY, RACE, & ETHNICITY

