

SPOTLIGHT

Act Six Boosts College Persistence

About 35% of first generation low-income students entering college complete their degree within six years. But Act Six scholars more than double that percentage. The program sets students up for success beginning in high school, through the critical summer period before freshman enrollment, and throughout college.

Act Six seeks out, selects, and trains a multicultural cohort of emerging student leaders who are awarded full-ride scholarships from partner colleges. Although the scholarship helps immensely, the program's unique support is what ensures student success.

"We have an Inward-Out model," explains Tacoma Site Director Taylor Tibbs. In weekly group sessions for seven months, students first learn to understand themselves and then to draw strength from and give support to the fellow cohort members who will attend the same school. They also learn what to expect in college – culturally, academically, and personally.

"We take a lot of time learning who each student is and how to support them," continues Tibbs. "And they connect with what's inspirational in their own story, their own true drive and true purpose. They can call on that strength to face any challenge or setback."

And they know someone has their back: "We cultivate a feeling of home throughout the training and that feeling goes to school with the students."



COLLEGE AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS COLLEGE COMPLETION

KEY FINDINGS

Rates Flat, Gaps Wide

This indicator requires community-wide attention. Our Graduate Tacoma partnership goal calls for a 50% increase in college enrollment and completion for the TPS Class of 2020, so we're looking ahead to post-secondary degrees attained within six years, by 2026. Just over one-third (35%) of the TPS Class of 2011 went on to complete a 2- or 4-year degree within six years, down slightly from 37% in 2010.

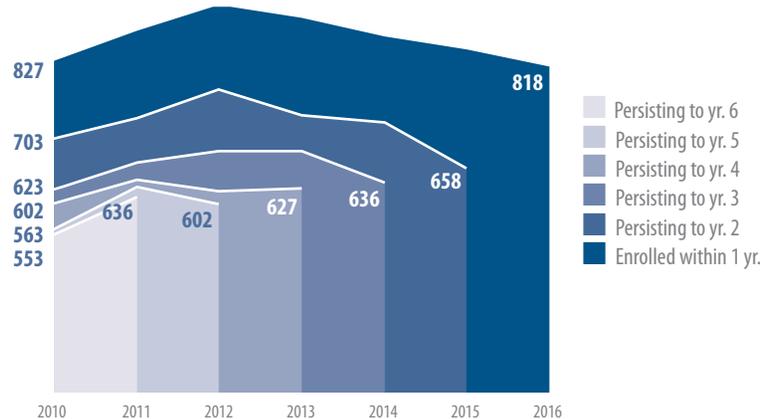
We've moved to National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data as a new and more consistently available data source, which changes our baseline to the Class of 2010 (instead of Class of 2005). The NSC data is in line with Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) trends reported in years past.

We see college persistence (either attainment of a degree or continued enrollment in a postsecondary institution) as an early indicator for long-term success. Among students who enroll in a 2- or 4-year program within one year of graduating TPS, the proportion of those who persist to their second year is declining, from 85% (in 2010) to 78% (in 2015). This is a clear warning and an opportunity for action before we see resulting declines in 6-year graduation.

The graph below shows college persistence from two to six years. We can see clearly here that if students are going to leave college, they are more likely to do so within the first two years. To most meaningfully impact college completion rates, community and higher education partners will need to redouble efforts and focus strategies during this critical time.

PERSISTENCE TRENDS BY COHORT (NSC)

Post-secondary persistence among students enrolling in college within 1 year of TPS graduation, by high school graduating class

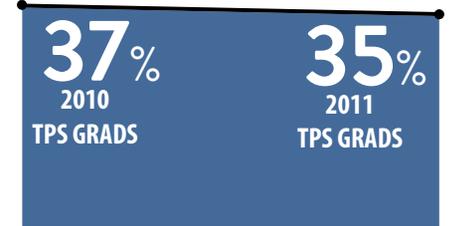


Data Source: NSC via TPS with support from Degrees of Change

DATA TRENDS

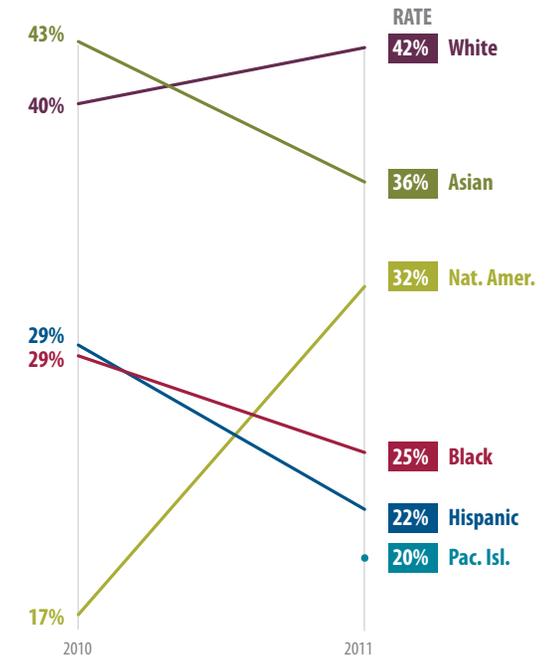
BASELINE TO CURRENT

Certificate, 2- or 4-year degree completion within 6 years of H.S. graduation



AIMING HIGHER GOAL: Increase by 50% the percentage of TPS high-school graduates who complete a 2- or 4-year college degree or technical certificate by the Class of 2020.

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKOUT



Note: Disaggregation for Multi-racial students is not possible until the Class of 2013; for students in poverty until 2012; and for Pacific Islander students until 2011.