

## MENTORING FOR SUCCESS

“Big Brothers Big Sisters provides stable, caring adult mentors for children and youth living with adversity, starting them on a path to resilience and success. Over time, these relationships balance out the effects of hardship, giving children a way to thrive despite the challenges they face.

Last year, Big Brothers Big Sisters served 195 kids in Tacoma and Pierce County. While no two children are alike, here are a few factors that affect our kids:

- 84% are eligible for free or reduced lunch.
- 23% have been homeless in the last five years.
- 26% have a loved one in the criminal justice system.

Our mentoring programs make a real difference. The Tacoma-Pierce County Big Brothers Big Sisters has a waitlist of more than 300 youth and families who are seeking the support of a mentor. After 12 months, a relationship with a caring, consistent adult has a significant positive effect on a young person’s behavior and well-being. In 2018, among the kids we serve:

- 89% said they felt more accepted by their peers.
- 96% grew more confident in their abilities at school.
- 96% reported an aversion to risky behavior like physical violence and substance abuse.

Outcomes like these are what Big Brothers Big Sisters is all about. If a youth succeeds in these areas, he or she can succeed in life.”

*Diana Comfort (back row) is the Managing Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound.*



# HIGH SCHOOL NINTH GRADE ACHIEVEMENT

Ninth grade is an especially important milestone for a student. Following the most difficult age and transition time in a young person’s education, students are now joining their larger graduating class cohort, expectations and measurement are reaching a new level of scrutiny, and college and career paths are emerging. Some students immediately thrive in this new setting. Others struggle to bounce back from the storyline of middle school where — as we saw with eighth grade math — the racial gap is growing and poverty gap is among the highest of all indicators, despite a strong start in sixth grade achievement.

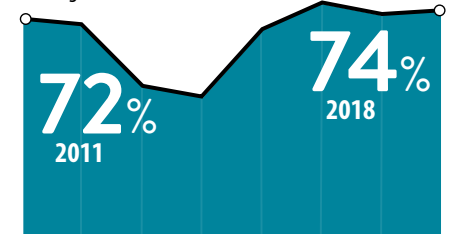
Ninth grade achievement tracks the percentage of students passing all or all but one class. This year’s data shows freshmen students made just slight gains, consistent with rates in eighth grade, as seen on [page 17](#). The poverty gap has closed over the last two years but remains at a high 16 percent. Similarly, while achievement has improved for Asian, White, and Multi-Racial students, results have worsened for other groups — particularly for Black and Pacific Islander students.

Our ability to close gaps and continue to increase the rate of students graduating high school depends in large part on our success reaching students in the ninth grade. It’s when students begin to accumulate graduation requirements or fall behind — and sometimes give up on school and drop out. This elevates the importance of out of school providers and mentorship programs, like Big Brothers Big Sisters featured on the left, who can build on gains made in school.

## DATA TRENDS

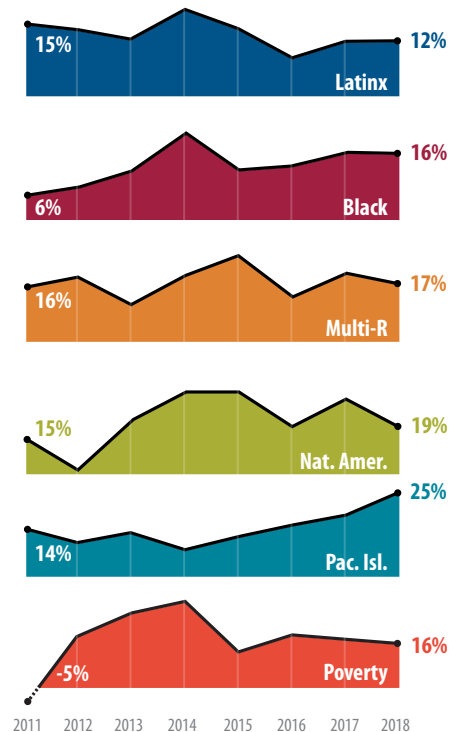
### BASELINE TO CURRENT

Passing all or all but one class

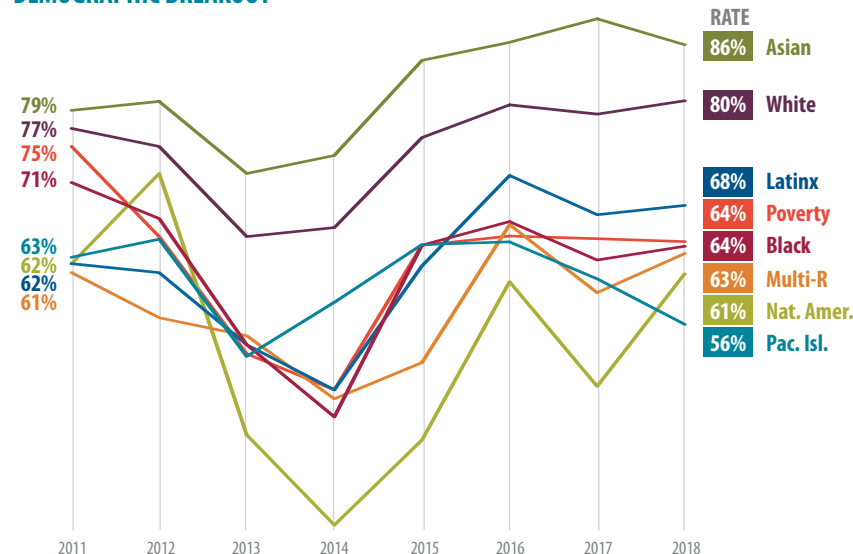


**AIMING HIGHER GOAL:** Increase the percentage of ninth graders who pass all or all but one of their classes.

**MULTI-YEAR GAPS** Represents the increase or decrease in the achievement gap between students of color and White students and between students in poverty and those not in poverty, baseline to current.



## DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKOUT



Data Source: TPS raw files

Note: TPS, OSPI, and Graduate Tacoma all use slightly different metrics for 9th grade achievement and are therefore difficult to compare.

Notes: Asian students historically always perform above White students. Gap measures don't perfectly match demographics due to rounding to the nearest percent.