

READY TO RISE

“*Ready to Rise* is a leadership opportunity for students to join a cohort of high school graduates who will be attending the same college as them. Students transitioning into college are often not prepared to handle the social dynamics of this new environment. Time management, dorm life, and encountering new personalities can feel overwhelming.

With *Ready to Rise*, students come together through a series of community retreats to meet other college-going students from Tacoma and around the state. We provide leadership and college preparation training in the summer where participants learn about the potential challenges they will face and resources available to them. It’s a chance for students to explore their own sense of identity and plans for their future while building a support network.

Additionally, each college has a peer mentor, usually a second-year student who has been through the program. Once on campus, there are monthly meetings and trainings where students can learn together.

We’ve seen that if students don’t identify with their campus, they won’t succeed. With *Ready to Rise*, we help them see how personal relationships and connections will support them. With activities like rafting and hiking, students can bond and face obstacles together, so they’re better prepared for the challenges ahead.

In the first year of *Ready to Rise*, we had just 30 students and grew to 60 the following year. Our goal this year is to engage 90 Tacoma area students who will be attending one of our partner colleges. We’ve added cohorts in Yakima, Clark County, and Vancouver to our partner schools which include UWT, TCC, WSU, and Western and Central Washington Universities.”



Lori Parrish is the Tacoma Site Director of *Ready to Rise*, a program hosted by *Degrees of Change*.

COLLEGE AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS COLLEGE COMPLETION

In the same way that we are seeing declines in college enrollment, fewer of the students who do enroll are making it all the way to college graduation. Our vision for a Tacoma where every child succeeds in school, career, and life cannot be lost after the 12th grade.

In previous years, we reported the percentage of Tacoma Public School graduates from a given graduating year who went on to complete college. However, because the number of graduates is larger than the number of students who enroll in college, this was not a meaningful representation of students persisting and completing. For this year’s report, we are instead taking a look at the rate of students completing college among all who enrolled within one year of high school graduation.

Fewer Students Crossing the Finish Line

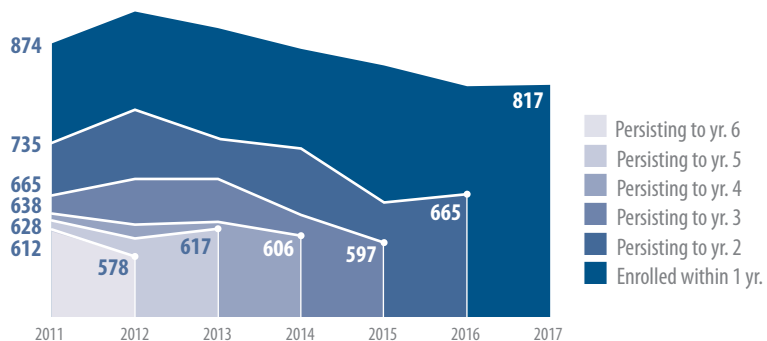
With more concise reporting, we are seeing a concerning 4 percent decline in completion from students who enrolled in 2010 to those who enrolled in 2012. Meanwhile, gaps are persistent over the few years we are able to measure effectively, including a 14 percent gap between students in poverty and their more affluent peers in 2012 (the first graduating class where we can match NSC data on poverty).

Our community-built goal to increase the completion rate by 50 percent by the Class of 2020 seems to be getting farther away, and yet we have only a few years left to make the change we set out to make. Key to improving completion is improving the persistence rate across a student’s college years. The graph below indicates that the first two years are crucial times for students facing difficulties and that the rate of drop-off decreases in later years. This is true across racial and economic groups.

As we look to the year ahead, we must consider ways to expand our efforts to support students in those first two years of college. *Ready to Rise*, featured on the left, is one example of how trained peer mentors are meeting students where they are.

PERSISTENCE TRENDS BY COHORT (NSC)

Postsecondary persistence among students enrolling in college within one year of TPS graduation, by high school graduating class.

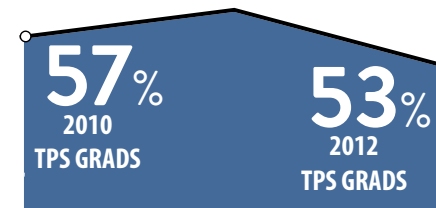


The above graph looks at college persistence by a student’s graduating year. For instance, in 2011, 612 of 874 originally enrolled students persisted to year six. This is higher than the earlier NSC persistence graph because it includes students who have yet to graduate.

DATA TRENDS

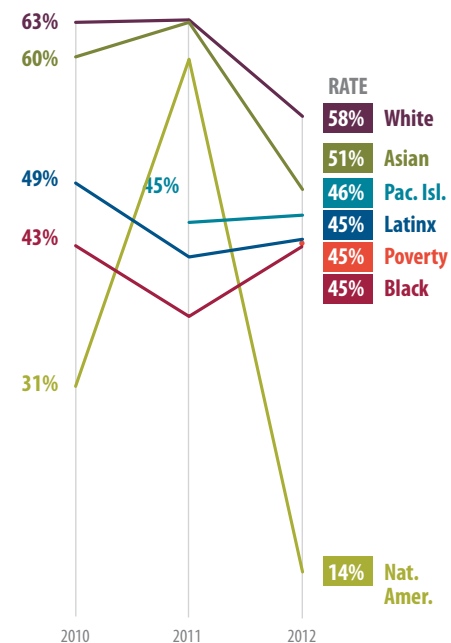
BASELINE TO CURRENT

Certificate, two- or four-year degree completion within six years of H.S. graduation (among all who enrolled in college or technical school)



AIMING HIGHER GOAL: Increase by 50 percent the percentage of TPS high school graduates who complete a two- or four-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.

Data Source: National Student Clearinghouse via TPS, with support from *Degrees of Change*.