

THE ISSUE

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Are Your High School Constituents Successful in College?

How many high school graduates in your legislative district go on to college? Of those that go to college, how many are successful? The answer to these and other questions can be found in the report, *Making the Transition from High School to College in Ohio, 2003*, released by the Board of Regents in May 2004. The report focuses on the preparedness and success of recent high school graduates who go on to college.

One of the key findings of the report is that students who take a rigorous curriculum in high school are more successful in college. These students need much less remediation than other less prepared students, have higher college GPA's and are more likely to return to college in the second year.

The Transition Report is a product of a K-16 partnership between the Board of Regents and the state Department of Education. This year's report is divided into two sections. There is a statewide section that shows enrollment patterns, college preparation levels and success measures at the state,

district type, and college levels. In a second section, results are made available at the district, high school, and college levels. The report is widely disseminated, with electronic copies sent to the superintendents of all Ohio school districts. It is also available to the general public on the Regents' website at <http://www.regents.state.oh.us/perfrpt/2003HSindex.html>.

Notable Findings, Questions and Answers

In 2002, 59% of Ohio's 120,393 high school graduates—70,885 students—enrolled in college immediately after earning their high school diploma. Despite this strong college participation rate, college readiness varies widely, as a significant number of students enter college unprepared to succeed.

1. What is the connection between high school course-taking and college success?

Exhibit A clearly illustrates the importance of taking a rigorous curriculum in high school.

Every measure of college success is better for students who take more rigorous courses while in high school.

- ◆ Students with the highest level of preparation had the highest level of retention (92%) and lowest college remediation rates (14%), and had an average grade point average of 3.0 in their first college term.
- ◆ Students who took only the minimum college preparatory had lower retention (86%) and significantly higher rates of remediation (32%).
- ◆ Students who took less than the minimum core had even lower retention (78%) and much higher remediation rates (52%).

2. How well did high school prepare students for college?

- ◆ Preparation levels of Ohio's recent high school graduates attending in-state colleges vary widely. At the high end, 25% of freshmen come to college with a comprehensive high school course-taking background that includes four years of English, math and social studies, and three courses in science that include biology, chemistry and physics.
- ◆ Seventy percent of freshmen took at least the minimum college preparatory curriculum in high school that included four years of English, and three courses in math, science and social studies.
- ◆ Some students get an early jump on the college experience, with 16% taking an Advanced Placement exam and 6% taking a college course while in high school.

Exhibit A: The likelihood of college success is better for students who take a more rigorous high school curriculum.

Type of High School Curriculum	Average ACT Exam Score	Average First Term College GPA	Average College Retention Rate	Average College Remediation Rate
Complete Core (4 years of English, math, & social studies; + 3 courses in biology, chemistry and/or physics)	24	3.0	92%	14%
Minimum Core (4 years of English and 3 courses in math, science & social studies)	22	2.8	86%	32%
Less than Minimum Core	19	2.5	78%	52%

* AN ACADEMIC CORE CURRICULUM IS DEFINED AS FOUR YEARS OF ENGLISH, AND THREE YEARS EACH OF MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL.

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3. How well do students do when they get to college?

A high proportion of first-year students are not completely ready for college: 39% of these students enrolled in a remedial course in their first year of college.

4. What are Ohio's first-time college participation levels?

◆ The majority of high school graduates in Ohio go straight to college from high school. In 2002, an estimated 59% of Ohio's 120,393 high school graduates attended college somewhere in the U.S. in autumn 2002. Both the number and participation rate of recent high school graduates have risen from 1996 to 2002. (See Exhibit B.)

◆ Older students who wait at least one year after high school to attend college are an important part of the college participation picture. About 30% of first-year students from Ohio did not enroll immediately following high school in 2002.

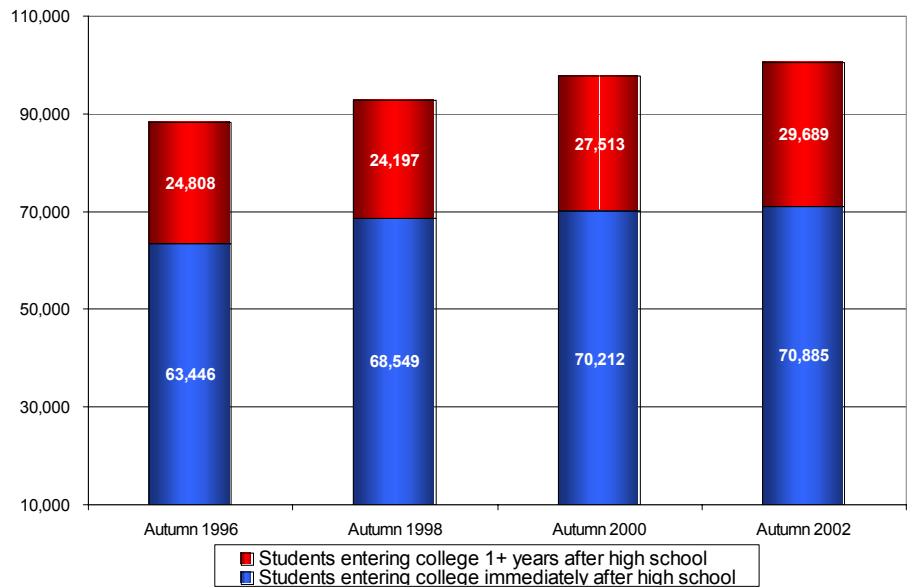
◆ If the future is anything like the past, a significant number of the estimated 50,000 high school graduates in 2002 who did not go to college in fall 2002 will eventually enroll. If 25,000 students eventually enroll, the college participation rate could be as high as 80%.

5. Do Ohio's first-year students stay in the state to attend college?

◆ About 85% of recent Ohio high school graduates attending college choose to study in Ohio. These rates have been stable since 1996. The percentage of older students staying in Ohio has declined from 94% in 1996 to 90% in 2002.

◆ In autumn 2002, roughly 11,000 recent Ohio high

Exhibit B: Number of Ohio High School Graduates Enrolled as First-Time College Freshman Anywhere in the U.S.



school graduates attended college outside of the state (see Exhibit C).

6. What types of institutions do students attend?

◆ Attendance choices vary widely among students. Younger students are more likely to attend four-year colleges and older students are more likely to attend two-year colleges.

◆ Eighty percent of younger freshman attend four-year schools and 20% attend two-year schools.

◆ Of the group attending four-year campuses, 66% attend public schools and 34% attend private schools.

◆ Of the group going to two-year schools, the overwhelming majority go to Ohio public institutions (12,593 out of 14,358).

◆ Thirty percent of older first-year students attend four-year schools and 70% attend two-year schools.

Bridging K-12 and Higher Education

The Transition Report provides useful information to help inform the decisions of state and local policy-makers, as well as high school teachers, guidance counselors, parents and—most importantly—students. The report clearly outlines the strong positive correlation between the type of high school coursework taken and how well students perform in college. This should serve as a compelling incentive for high school students to aim high when deciding what high school courses to take.

The report also highlights the need for an effective relationship between primary/secondary and higher education. The importance of this relationship was acknowledged by the Governor's Commission on Higher Education & the Economy, which recommended that the K-12 and higher education communities work together to develop strategies for increasing the number of Ohioans with math and science knowledge, skills and degrees.

Exhibit C: Top Twenty States for Ohio High School Graduates Attending College Out-of-State

State	Freshman from Ohio
Pennsylvania	1,854
Indiana	1,565
Kentucky	1,433
New York	589
Michigan	530
West Virginia	492
Illinois	441
Tennessee	441
North Carolina	354
Florida	315
Virginia	291
South Carolina	278
Massachusetts	258
Missouri	246
Washington D.C.	209
Georgia	167
Colorado	155
California	153
Wisconsin	133
Maryland	114

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