

Issue Brief

COLLEGE ACCESS FOR ALL

Prepared by
Kent Pekel
Evelyn Belton-Kocher

October 22, 2004

SPPS OFFICE OF R&D ISSUE BRIEF:
COLLEGE ACCESS FOR ALL
IN THE SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THE ISSUE

Creating *systemic support for the transition to higher education* for all Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) students that prepares and motivates them to enroll in and graduate from a 2- or 4-year institution of higher education.

THE NEED

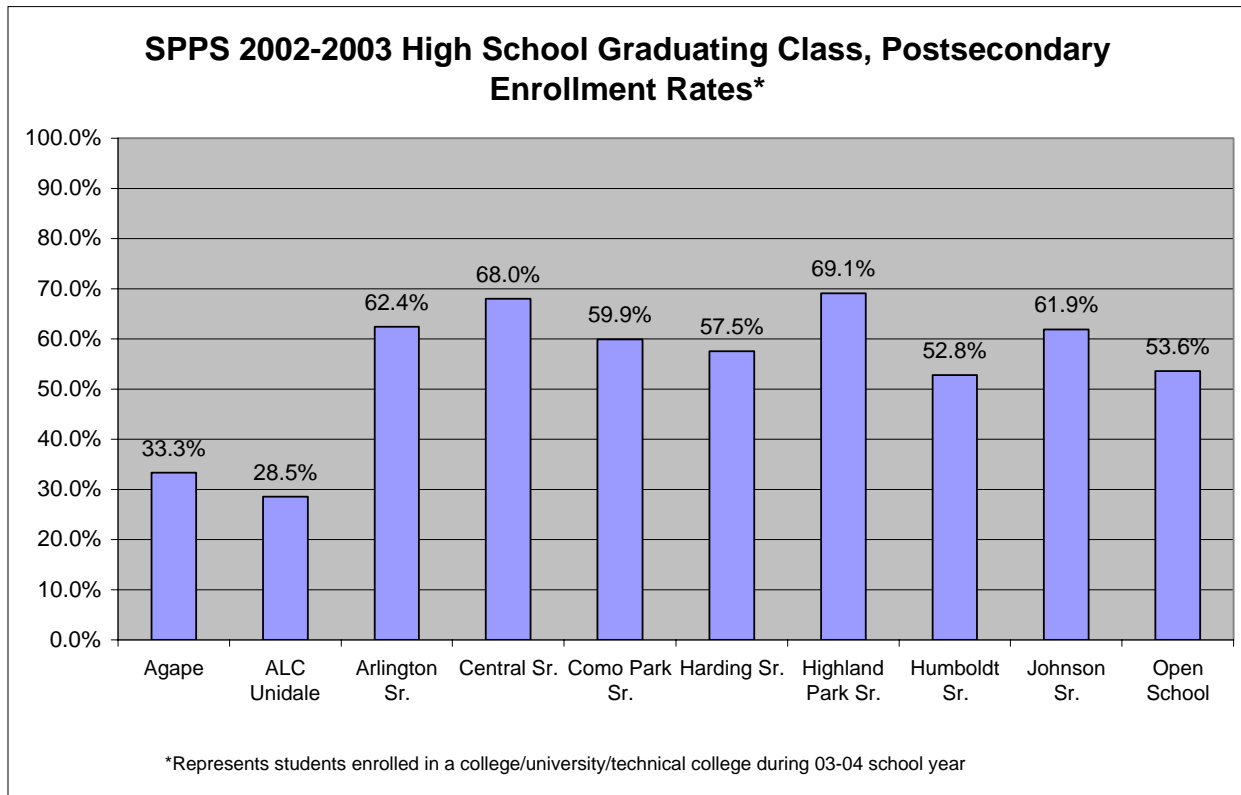
As we have left behind the Industrial Age and entered the high-skill, hyper-competitive Information Age, earning a 2- or 4-year college degree is more important for all Saint Paul students than ever before. To cite just one measure of this importance, recent federal research projects a college graduate will earn approximately \$900,000 more (75%) than a high school graduate over the course of his or her career.

Many students in the Saint Paul Public Schools today are aware of the benefits of higher education and are working toward that goal. Among the SPPS graduating class of 2003, 58% were enrolled in an institution of higher education in the fall of 2004. That is an encouraging figure given that more than two-thirds of Saint Paul Public School students live in poverty, and many of them face additional educational challenges, such as speaking a language other than English at home.

But despite this promising beginning, the schools and community of Saint Paul can do better. Many graduates of Saint Paul high schools who would benefit from a 2- or 4-year college degree never enroll in an institution of higher education, or do so many years after graduating from high school. Still further, those students who do not earn a high school diploma never have the opportunity to consider college.

The state of Minnesota can also do better in helping all students transition to and succeed in college. A recent study of enrollment in higher education found Minnesota to be a national leader in the percentage of students who enroll in and complete college (Minnesota Higher Education Services Office, <http://www.mheso.state.mn.us>, 2002). The same study also found, however, that the number of students of color in Minnesota who enroll in an institution of higher education has *declined* over the past decade.

SAINT PAUL HIGH SCHOOLS AND HIGHER ED ENROLLMENT TODAY



THE CHALLENGE FOR TOMORROW

Analysis conducted in all Saint Paul high schools during the spring of 2003 showed that while many promising efforts to connect students to higher education exist across the school district, those efforts do not touch the lives of *all* students, and for those students they do touch, they are generally not reinforced over time. In order to prepare all students to succeed in the Information Age, our schools and our district must begin to make enrollment in and graduation from an institution of higher education a core part of our educational vision and mission. It is clear that *without* such an effort on the part of our schools, many of our students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds will never earn the higher degree that is a basic requirement for economic and social success in the United States today.

Although the goal of the College Access for All initiative in Saint Paul would be to provide every student with systemic support for the transition to higher education, all students in a participating junior/middle or high school would not necessarily engage in the same activities. Within each school, the support provided to each student would depend upon his or her needs and aspirations. The menu of supports offered within each school might include:

- Classroom activities that help students understand the importance of college
- Campus visits
- Relationships with college-educated mentors
- Advising students on and encouraging them to take the classes needed for higher education
- College entrance test preparation

- Financial aid counseling
- Individual student scholarships

It is important to note that while the primary purpose of these and other activities would be to prepare students for the transition to higher education, the experience of highly successful urban high schools across the country suggests that an emphasis on higher education can also enhance students' commitment to learning while they are in high school. Enrollment in a 2- or 4-year college is a positive goal that provides at least a partial answer to the question that high school teachers encounter almost daily: "Why are we studying this?"

THE GROUNDWORK THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN LAID:

It is important to note that seeking to prepare all students for higher education represents a major change in the history of American public education. Until approximately the 1970s, an American worker could support a family with only a high school degree, and American schools successfully helped increasing numbers of students achieve that goal. At that time, it made sense for high schools to provide college counseling and support for only a segment of their student populations.

While preparing all students for the transition to higher education is a radical departure from the educational model of the Industrial Age, it is an incremental and logical next step for schools in Saint Paul today. Over the past five years, our school district has embraced the challenge of preparing all students to succeed in the Information Age. At the elementary level, major reforms in curriculum, instruction and school organization have generated continuous improvement in reading and mathematics. As those elementary students move on to the secondary grades, they are ready for the rigorous coursework that will prepare them to succeed at 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education.

In addition, the district's Blueprint for Better High Schools initiative has advanced a new "3 R's" of high school education in Saint Paul — Rigor, Relevance and Relationships — that are directly aligned with the goal of college access for all. Led by site-based Blueprint design teams with district-wide coordination and support from external funders, each Saint Paul high school has adopted or is in the process of creating:

- *Small learning communities* within which students pursue a focused program of study and develop close relationships with groups of peers and teachers
- *Advisory structures* to help students make informed choices about life in high school and beyond
- *A mandatory Six Year Plan* that asks all students to develop an academic roadmap for four years of high school and at least two years of higher education or high-skill employment after graduation
- *New graduation standards* that require all students to take four years of English, three years of math and science and other courses necessary for enrollment in higher education
- *Programs to increase the participation of students from underrepresented groups in accelerated coursework*, such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes

THE ROAD AHEAD

During the first half of the 2004-2005 school year, the Saint Paul Public Schools is partnering with the Citizen's League to research effective strategies for helping all students make the transition to higher education. Informed by this vision, during the spring of 2005, Saint Paul Schools Superintendent Patricia Harvey and members of her senior leadership team will engage site councils and staff at all junior/middle and high schools in conversation about implementing Saint Paul's program of College Access for All in their buildings. School district staff will work to provide schools that choose to include College Access for All in their 2005-2006 Schoolwide Continuous Improvement Plans (SCIP) with financial and organizational support. Over time, the Superintendent's hope and intention is to expand participation in the program to ensure that every Saint Paul student chooses and is prepared to enroll in and graduate from an institution of higher education following their education in the Saint Paul Public Schools.

SAINT PAUL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CLASS OF 2008 AND BEYOND

Approved: 12/8/03

State Requirements	SPPS Minimum Requirements	Notes
Language Arts: 8 credits	Language Arts: 8 credits	No state requirements for specific coursework within language arts
Math: 6 credits	Math: 6 credits	Math credits must encompass algebra, geometry, and algebra II, including data analysis, statistics and probability.
Science: 6 credits	Science: 6 credits	Two science credits must be Biology.
Social Studies: 7 credits	Social Studies: 7 credits	Saint Paul courses must cover state standards in U.S. History, Geography, Government and Citizenship, World History, and Economics.
Arts: 2 credits	Arts: 2 credits	Arts credits can be in visual arts, music, theater, dance, media arts or a combination.
Health & Wellness: No requirement	Health & Wellness: 1 credit	SPPS minimum requirement.
Fitness & PE: No requirement	Fitness & PE: 1 credit	SPPS minimum requirement.
Family & Consumer Science, Industrial Tech, or Business: No requirement	Family & Consumer Science, Industrial Tech, or Business: 1 credit	SPPS minimum requirement. Students choose 1 credit from among these three areas.
World Language: No requirement	World Language: District recommends completion of Level 3 at minimum	SPPS strongly recommends that all students complete credits encompassing at least Level 3 skills. Required for graduation with Honors or High Honors.
Electives: Total number of required elective credits in SPPS depends on local program schedule	4-period quarter programs: 24 elective credits 5-period trimester programs: 20 elective credits 6-period semester programs: 8-11 elective credits	Total elective credits vary according to local SPPS high school schedules, but are uniform among schools that share common schedules. All meet or exceed state elective requirements.
Education Plan: No requirement	Six Year Plan	Incorporated into the 9-12 program for all SPPS students, these individual education plans must encompass high school and at least two years of post-secondary planning.
Tests: Basic Standards Tests in Reading, Writing, and Math	Tests: Basic Standards Tests in Reading, Writing, and Math	To graduate, all students must pass the state's Basic Standards Tests in reading, math, and writing.

DETAILED SUMMARY OF ENROLLMENT IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS CLASS OF 2003

- Through participation in a national pilot project, actual higher education enrollment data on Saint Paul Public Schools graduates is available for the Class of 2003. In future years, the progress of that class through institutions of higher education will continue to be tracked, as will the enrollment of future graduating classes.
- The post secondary/college enrollment rate of all 2003 SPPS graduates is 58.4%, a total of 1216 students.
- The highest post secondary/college enrollment rate of any one SPPS high school is 69%.
- SPPS graduates tend to enroll in colleges located within the state of Minnesota. The University of Minnesota Twin Cities has the highest enrollment rate of SPPS graduates (231) among all post secondary institutions. Century Community and Technical College has the highest enrollment rate (191) of SPSS graduates among two year institutions.
- The demographic distribution of graduates enrolled in a post secondary institution mirrors the demographic distribution of the 2003 graduating class. Any differences between the two groups (graduates vs. college enrollees) are modest or even negligible. Female students, Caucasian students, and students who do not qualify for ELL services, Special Education services, or free or reduced lunch outnumber their counterparts in both college enrollment and high school graduation rates.
- Females constitute 59% and males 41% of the group of 2003 SPPS graduates that subsequently enroll in a post secondary institution. These percentages differ slightly from the proportion of males and females in the 2003 graduating class (58% female, 43% male). The pattern of higher female graduation and college enrollment rates is consistent across all racial ethnic groups.
- Caucasian students represent 39.3% of all SPPS graduates and 41.9% of all graduates enrolling in a post secondary institution.
- Asian American students constitute the second largest group (33%) with equal percentages in both post secondary enrollment and high school graduation.
- The percentage of American Indian (.7%), Hispanic American (4.4%), and African American (19.4%) students enrolling in a post secondary institution shows a slight decline when compared to high school graduation rates (1.0, 5.4, 21% respectively). However, in all cases these rates are significantly lower than the rates for Caucasian and Asian American students.
- There is a slight decline in the post secondary enrollment rates of students not receiving free or reduced lunch (54.2%) when compared to their proportion of the 2003 graduating class (57.3%).

Table 1
St. Paul Public Schools, Graduating Class of 2003
Postsecondary Enrollment Rates

	Percent Enrolled in a Postsecondary Institution	Number Enrolled in a Postsecondary Institution
Agape	33.3%	5
ALC Unidale	28.5%	71
Arlington Sr.	62.4%	151
Central Sr.	68.0%	283
Como Park Sr.	59.9%	160
Harding Sr.	57.5%	172
Highland Park Sr.	69.1%	172
Humboldt Sr.	52.8%	57
Johnson Sr.	61.9%	130
Open School	53.6%	15
District Total	58.4%	1216

Table 2
St. Paul Public Schools, Graduating Class of 2003
Enrollment Numbers by Postsecondary Institution

	Number
1. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA-TWIN CITIES	231
2. CENTURY COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE	191
3. ST PAUL COLLEGE	91
4. INVER HILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE	64
5. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA-DULUTH UNDERGRAD	51
6. UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - RIVER FALLS	38
7. COLLEGE OF ST CATHERINE AT ST PAUL	36
8. MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY - MANKATO	33
9. MINNEAPOLIS COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE	30
10. UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MADISON	25
11. GLOBE COLLEGE	22
12. METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY	18
13. UNIVERSITY OF ST THOMAS	18
14. HAMLINE UNIVERSITY	17
15. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA - MORRIS	16
16. ST CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY	12
16. ST JOHNS UNIVERSITY	12
16. ST OLAF COLLEGE	12
17. CARLETON COLLEGE	11
17. GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE	11
17. WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY	11
18. NORMANDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	10

Table 3
St. Paul Public Schools, Graduating Class of 2003
Post Secondary Enrollment Rates by Ethnic Status and Gender

		Female	Male	Total Enrolled by Ethnic Status
American Indian	Count	3	5	8
	% of Total	0.4%	0.5%	1.0%
Asian American	Count	235	161	396
	% of Total	19.3%	13.3%	32.6%
Hispanic American	Count	30	24	54
	% of Total	2.5%	2.0%	4.4%
African American	Count	142	94	236
	% of Total	11.7%	7.7%	19.4%
Caucasian	Count	311	210	521
	% of Total	25.6%	17.3%	42.9%
Total Enrolled by Gender	Count	721	494	1215
	% of Total	59.3%	40.7%	100.0%

Table 4
St. Paul Public Schools, Graduating Class of 2003
Post Secondary Enrollment Rates by ELL Status

	Graduates in College	2003 Graduates
Not ELL	70.95%	70.88%
ELL	29.05%	29.12%

Table 5
St. Paul Public Schools, Graduating Class of 2003
Post Secondary Enrollment Rates by Special Education Status

	Graduates in College	2003 Graduates
Not Special Ed.	98.3%	97.8%
Special Ed.	1.7%	2.2%

Table 6
St. Paul Public Schools, Graduating Class of 2003
Post Secondary Enrollment Rates by Free/Reduced Lunch status

	Graduates in College	2003 Graduates
Not Free/Reduced Lunch	54.2%	57.3%
Free/Reduced Lunch	45.8%	42.7%