

College Preparation and Access

DEFINITION

College preparation and access is the percentage of Rhode Island high school seniors who graduate and go on to college (i.e., enroll in a two-year or four-year college) immediately or within six months of graduation.

SIGNIFICANCE

By 2020, 71% of jobs in Rhode Island will require post-secondary education.¹ Between 2012 and 2016 in Rhode Island, adults with high school diplomas were almost three times more likely to be unemployed as those with bachelor's degrees or higher.² During that same period, the median annual income for adults with high school diplomas was \$31,658, compared to \$52,030 for adults with bachelor's degrees.³

Many students, especially low-income students, face barriers to college enrollment and success, such as insufficient academic preparation, difficulty navigating the application and financial aid processes, and the high cost of college. States can help address these barriers and improve college access by ensuring that all students have access to advanced coursework, including Advanced Placement (AP) courses and dual and concurrent enrollment; take college entrance exams; complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); get adequate counseling to enroll in college and access financial

aid; and target financial aid strategically to students with greatest needs.⁴

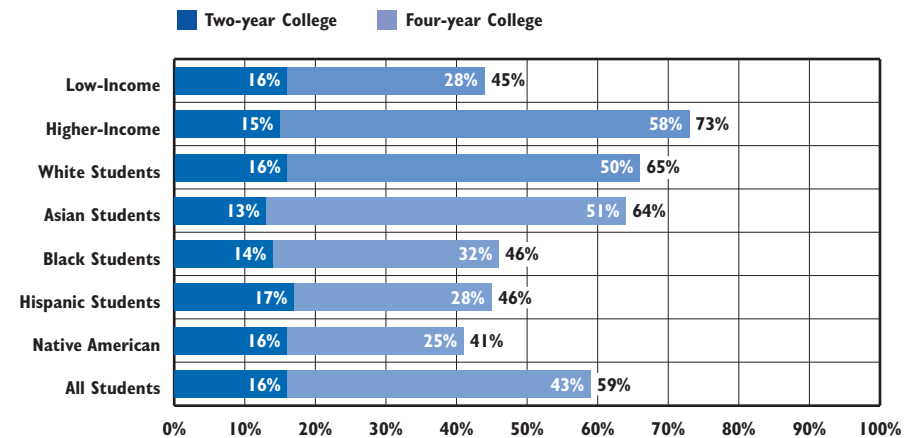
Students who participate in AP courses are likely to attend and succeed in college.⁵ In 2017, 5,542 Rhode Island public school students took an AP course, 34% more than in 2013.⁶

Rhode Island covers the cost for all high school students to take the SAT during the school day in eleventh grade as a key strategy to increase college access. In 2017, 79% of 11th graders completed the SAT. Students who have Evidence-Based Reading and Writing scores of 480 or higher and Math scores of 530 or higher are considered college and career ready.^{7,8,9}

Seniors who have completed a FAFSA by May and been accepted to a four-year college are 50% more likely to enroll than students who have not completed their FAFSA.¹⁰ Across Rhode Island, FAFSA completion rates range from a low of 40-44% to a high of 80% or greater.¹¹

Rhode Island's state *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* plan includes a proposed Post-Secondary Success Indicator that will initially measure the percentage of students that graduate with a career and technical education industry-approved credential, college credits through dual or concurrent enrollment, and/or successful completion of AP tests. Starting with the graduating Class of 2021, the Post-Secondary Success Indicator will be further expanded to include the Seal of Biliteracy and the Pathway Endorsement.¹²

Immediate College Enrollment by Family Income, Race, Ethnicity, and Type of College, Class of 2016, Rhode Island



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2016. Percentages may not sum exactly due to rounding.

◆ Fifty-nine percent of Rhode Island students who graduated from high school in the Class of 2016 immediately enrolled in college. However, there are large gaps in college access, particularly four-year college enrollment, between low- and higher-income students as well as by race and ethnicity. Among Rhode Island students who graduated from high school in 2016, 28% of low-income students immediately enrolled in a four-year college, compared to 58% of higher-income students.¹³

◆ Low-income and first-generation college students are more likely to go to college when they attend high schools with strong college-going cultures, in which teachers and school staff encourage students to attend college, set high expectations, make sure that students are academically prepared, and support students through the application and financial aid processes.¹⁴

◆ For states, improving college access will require improvements at all points in the early education to college education system, including increasing access to high-quality preschool, implementing research-driven dropout prevention programs, improving the quality of the K-12 education system, and aligning it with college and career expectations, simplifying the college admission process, and making college affordable.¹⁵

Table 54.

College Preparation and Access, Rhode Island

SCHOOL DISTRICT	4-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE, 2017	% OF MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PLANNING TO ATTEND COLLEGE, 2017	% OF STUDENTS WHO FILLED OUT THE FAFSA, 2017	AVERAGE SAT SCALE SCORE IN EVIDENCE-BASED READING AND WRITING, 2017	AVERAGE SAT SCALE SCORE IN MATH 2017	# OF GRADE 11 STUDENTS TAKING THE SAT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY, 2017	% OF GRADE 11 STUDENTS TAKING THE SAT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY, 2017
Barrington	96%	92%	70-74%	601	600	282	96%
Bristol Warren	90%	88%	50-54%	544	523	183	80%
Burrillville	88%	85%	70-74%	502	509	156	85%
Central Falls	78%	79%	50-54%	399	398	112	64%
Chariho	90%	86%	60-64%	527	515	214	87%
Coventry	90%	86%	60-64%	507	494	324	85%
Cranston	86%	89%	65-69%	491	484	644	84%
Cumberland	87%	88%	65-69%	517	508	234	87%
East Greenwich	97%	95%	75-79%	586	586	176	93%
East Providence	82%	85%	55-59%	478	464	314	85%
Exeter-West Greenwich	90%	90%	60-64%	542	546	100	80%
Foster-Glocester	93%	88%	50-54%	519	519	151	93%
Johnston	78%	87%	50-54%	497	484	159	78%
Lincoln	89%	89%	60-64%	528	530	164	87%
Middletown	91%	87%	55-59%	522	520	108	85%
Narragansett	94%	90%	65-69%	532	516	95	79%
Newport	80%	83%	65-69%	490	486	128	77%
North Kingstown	90%	90%	65-69%	560	544	310	92%
North Providence	91%	89%	55-59%	490	478	211	91%
North Smithfield	91%	88%	65-69%	544	542	94	92%
Pawtucket	82%	83%	55-59%	434	430	347	76%
Portsmouth	96%	93%	70-74%	558	540	196	97%
Providence	75%	85%	60-64%	444	444	1,229	78%
Scituate	97%	86%	65-69%	544	528	102	89%
Smithfield	91%	92%	65-69%	534	530	153	94%
South Kingstown	94%	89%	70-74%	549	553	194	89%
Tiverton	84%	86%	55-59%	517	498	117	81%
Warwick	86%	85%	50-54%	501	483	485	78%
West Warwick	84%	85%	45-49%	485	479	191	82%
Westerly	87%	83%	55-59%	526	512	146	76%
Woonsocket	67%	82%	50-54%	479	477	158	48%
<i>Beacon Charter High School for the Arts</i>	91%	84%	60-64%	505	460	47	80%
<i>Blackstone Academy</i>	88%	90%	>=80%	543	554	64	83%
<i>Paul Cuffee Charter School</i>	97%	89%	75-79%	433	436	51	89%
<i>The Greene School</i>	98%	86%	70-74%	502	477	48	100%
<i>Highlander Charter School</i>	80%	88%	60-64%^	411	409	33	92%
<i>RI Nurses Institute Middle College</i>	NA	93%	40-44%^	430	419	27	73%
<i>Sheila "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy</i>	19%	71%	40-59%^	404	378	16	16%
<i>Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts</i>	96%	78%	>=80%^	429	409	27	100%
<i>Village Green Virtual Public Charter School</i>	99%	92%	70-74%^	453	439	35	95%
<i>William M. Davies Jr. Career & Technical High School</i>	81%	81%	45-49%	467	464	181	95%
<i>DCYF Schools</i>	14%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	7%
<i>Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center</i>	90%	87%	70-74%	448	421	204	87%
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	75%	84%	NA	NA	NA	1,846	73%
<i>Remainder of State</i>	89%	88%	NA	NA	NA	5,634	86%
<i>Rhode Island</i>	84%	87%	NA	498	490	8,281	79%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

The high school graduation rate is the number of students who graduate in four years or fewer divided by the total number of students who started 9th grade in 2013-2014, adjusted for transfers in and transfers out. Data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education.

% of middle and high school students planning to attend college is from the 2016-2017 administration of *Survey Works!*, based on responses to the question, "What do you think you will do after you finish high school?" and includes students who responded that they planned to go to a community college, two-year college, or four-year college. Data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education.

% of 12th graders who filled out the FAFSA is from U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid. (2017). *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) estimated completion rates by public school district.* Retrieved March 1, 2018, from studentaid.ed.gov.

^The U.S. Department of Education did not report FAFSA completion rates for these school districts. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT calculated estimated completion rates by dividing the number of FAFSA forms completed as reported in Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) submissions by high school (through June 2017) into the number of grade 12 students reported by RIDE on October 1, 2016 for that school. The estimate for Sheila "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy is based on a range of possible estimates calculated by combining submissions for the school's two campuses.

Average SAT scale scores in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and in Math as well as the # and % of grade 11 students taking the SAT are from RIDE. Average SAT Scale Scores are for grade 11 students taking the SAT during the school day.

NA indicates that data are not available either because data were not collected or reported or because the number of students was too small to report. New Shoreham and Rhode Island School for the Deaf are not reported because data reported would reflect fewer than 10 students. These students are included in the remainder of state and state totals as appropriate.

Only districts and schools with 2017 graduates are included in this table.

Little Compton students attend high school in Portsmouth, and Jamestown students can choose to attend high school in Narragansett or North Kingstown.

(Sources and References are continued on page 189)