



BRIDGE TO COMPLETION 2020

Understanding the College Access and
Success Ecosystem for Metro Nashville
Public Schools Students

REFLECTIONS

Since 2018, we have partnered with the Tennessee College Access and Success Network to present findings and recommendations around Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) students' college matriculation and completion. In our previous reports, we identified specific actions to close college access and success gaps among students of different races and ethnicities and improve the college-going rates for all MNPS students.

This year, we again examine MNPS students' college-going and completion experiences while also investigating the underlying root causes for why disparities in academic preparation and affordability exist.

We are certainly pleased to see that more MNPS students are earning a degree from a postsecondary institution. However, the 26% of MNPS graduates earning a degree is well below the national average of 40%. And increased college access and success gaps among students of color and white students are a significant concern.

Ultimately Nashville and the state of Tennessee must decide if we truly believe that all students benefit from and should have access to a postsecondary credential. That means examining and dismantling the inequities baked into our K-12 systems that prevent low-income students and students of color from accessing rigorous college-preparatory coursework, excellent teachers in every classroom, and supportive school-based adults to guide them in their college-going journey.

As I write this, Nashville is still recovering from a deadly tornado that ravaged the city and is now battling the global coronavirus pandemic. Yet despite the destruction and suffering, we have seen amazing actions of empathy, support, and love among neighbors and strangers. Our city has proven time and time again that it can come together and bolster those in need at times of crisis. I look forward to the day when that level of empathy and support is extended to all MNPS students in their postsecondary journeys.



Katie Cour
President and CEO
Nashville Public Education Foundation

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are deeply grateful to Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) staff for the many hours of interviews and data gathering they provided for this report, without which it would not exist. So many different professionals were extremely generous with their time and information for this project. It takes great courage to give an outside entity your data and let them reflect it back to you.

We hope this report helps illuminate how hard MNPS employees work every day to create greater success for Nashville's public school students. This report builds on the work in two previous Bridge to Completion reports that would not have been possible without the dozens of professionals across K-12, higher education, community organizations, local government, business, and philanthropy who lent their expertise. In particular, we offer a special thank-you to our data expert, Jennifer McFerron, who provided numerous insights throughout the project.

We are deeply grateful to multiple people in both leadership and direct service positions at the following schools and organizations who generously gave their time to be interviewed for this report:

Conexión Américas

GEAR UP Nashville

Martha O'Bryan Center

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools Central Office

Metro Nashville Public High Schools

Metro Nashville Public Middle Schools

Nashville State Community College

Oasis Center

If readers are interested in viewing any of the Bridge to Completion reports online, they can do so at nashvillepef.org/advocating-for-change/.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Tennessee College Access and Success Network (TCASN) is a nationally recognized, statewide nonprofit organization whose mission is to increase the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary credential and foster a culture of college-going across the state. TCASN's team has decades of collective expertise that span state government, federal college access programs, urban and rural initiatives, curriculum design, and the nonprofit sector. The Nashville Public Education Foundation funded this research and partnered with TCASN to create this report. Learn more at www.tncollegeaccess.org and www.nashvillepef.org.



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NOTE TO READER

For the purposes of this report, the term “college” refers to any formal training after high school, including technical certification, associate degree, and bachelor’s degree programs. The phrase “college-going” refers to college enrollment, usually college enrollment immediately following high school graduation.

We know of no other city that has such an extensive report on college-going. If one exists, it has not been publicly shared. When ascertaining how Nashville compares to other communities, the reader should remember the information presented in this report contains data that other communities may not have the ability to access.

While this report includes data for all MNPS high schools, it focuses primarily on what is happening at Nashville’s zoned high schools and charter schools. Due to the school-specific nature of many interventions, high school profiles for most of the high schools in the district are included at the end of this report. Whenever district data is presented, it is inclusive of all high schools in Metro Nashville including four high schools we did not profile due to their unique structure and/or population served: Metro Nashville Virtual School and the three Simon Academies located at Hickory Hollow, Old Cockrill, and Opry Mills. Because of this report’s focus on college access and success, only high schools that have had at least one graduating class as of May 2018 are included.

In preparing the report, we had access to multiple data sources including data from the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE), Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), Nashville State Community College (NSCC), the U.S Department of Education (USDOE), and MNPS. Additionally, a number of community-based organizations graciously shared their data.

As is often the case in education, data is not perfect; however, our observations across the multiple data sources are consistent with not only one another but also national trends.

Data on college enrollment is from the TDOE, which is publicly available in the department’s Report Cards, and from the National Student Clearinghouse. Using these two sources together paints a richer picture of college-going than using either in isolation. The two data sources track information slightly differently but overall have close results and show similar trends.

This report highlights issues of poverty and college affordability facing MNPS graduates. For this report, we use the term low-income to refer to economic disadvantage, which mirrors language used in college access and success research. For K-12 schools, the term more commonly used is economically disadvantaged.

It is important to note that recent policy changes have affected how many students are considered economically disadvantaged. Currently, 51% of MNPS students are considered economically disadvantaged.¹ In 2015-16, the definition of economically disadvantaged changed in accordance with state law. Previously, Tennessee used eligibility for the National School Lunch Program as an indicator; now the state uses direct certification of benefits to define economic disadvantage. Prior to the change, 75% of MNPS students were considered economically disadvantaged. For the purposes of this report, when we report on high school students being low-income, we use a 1.6 multiplier to the TDOE’s reported data. We found this most closely aligns with other measures of income status, including Estimated Family Contribution on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Pell grant eligibility, both considered standard markers of income status in higher education.

The role and use of data in both K-12 and higher education has been an increasing focus; however, these two systems still lack a common language, as in the example with low-income and economically disadvantaged above. Our hope is that this report weaves disparate data sources together to tell the most complete story about how Nashville’s youth are moving from high school to college and beyond.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In previous Bridge to Completion reports, we worked to establish baseline college access and success data for MNPS graduates, first for the district overall in the 2018 report and then disaggregated by race and ethnicity in the 2019 report. In the 2019 report, we supplemented our findings by conducting qualitative research around students' access to early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) to begin to understand the disparities we were seeing in the data. For this report, we expanded our qualitative research to explore the conditions in our schools and city that support or inhibit college access and success for our students.



As in our prior reports, we answer the following questions:

Are students enrolling in college?

Where did they enroll?

Once enrolled in college, did
students persist from year to year?

Did students complete a degree?

How does the pipeline to a degree
look different for MNPS graduates
of different races and ethnicities?

OUR FINDINGS

Despite the fact that fewer students took steps toward college enrollment and ultimately enrolled in college after high school graduation, the 2020 Bridge to Completion has some bright spots. Namely, the percent of students who experienced “summer melt” – who took steps to enroll in college but ultimately did not enroll – decreased to an all-time low. And the total percent of MNPS graduates earning a college degree within six years rose to a high of 26%.

Yet we also observed the second consecutive year of declining college enrollment and persistence, and enrollment has now fallen back to the level it was prior to the implementation of TN Promise in 2015. The drops in enrollment are most significantly felt by students of color, low-income students, and students from schools with high concentrations of poverty – some schools having double-digit declines. These disparities should be of significant concern as it means the college-going gap is growing wider. If perpetuated, we will not be able to maintain the college completion increase we saw this year.

While we are encouraged by the 2% increase in MNPS graduates earning a college degree, our research suggests that the conditions that allowed this to occur are not uniformly present across district schools. In our qualitative research to investigate why the disparities exist, we found:

Poverty and trauma force the triage of basic needs to be prioritized above college-going culture in many MNPS schools.

Maintaining a consistent, stable network of adults in a school is essential to high school students' postsecondary aspirations and success.

Academic preparation and college affordability remain barriers to college completion and the two are intrinsically linked.

MNPS graduates are attending a broader set of colleges than ever before, a sign that district and community investments in college counseling may be helping more students select “right fit” schools.

BY THE NUMBERS



COLLEGE COMPLETION
RATES INCREASED FROM

24% TO 26%

with a 1 percentage point increase in both four-year and two-year college completion for the class of 2013.



COLLEGE-GOING RATES
DECLINED FOR SECOND
YEAR IN A ROW.

The current MNPS college-going rate for the class of 2018 is

56.9%

This is down 4% from the previous year.



COLLEGE-GOING RATES
DECLINED BACK TO 2014
LEVELS.

These levels precede the statewide initiative known as Drive to 55 and the implementation of the TN Promise scholarship.

STUDENTS OF COLOR WERE
DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED
BY THE DECLINE:

Asian Students: **-4%**

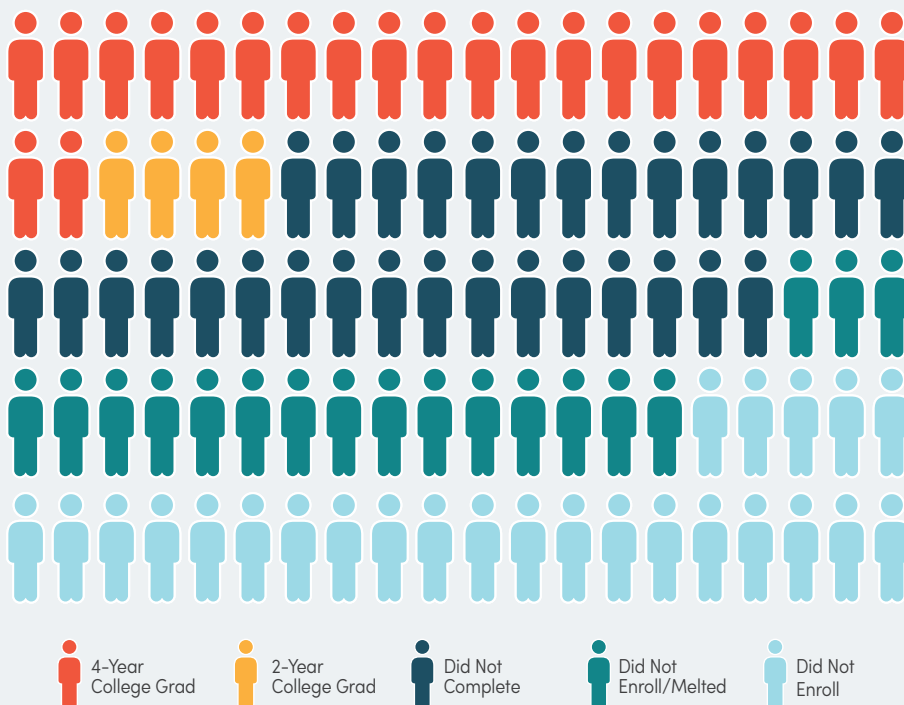
Black or African American Students: **-5%**

Latinx or Hispanic Students: **-4%**

White Students: **-0.2%**

Using current enrollment and persistence data, Figure 1 provides a visualization for the class of 2018 if we do not change the trajectory.

Figure 1: **College Access and Completion**



26%
OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES HAVE EARNED A DEGREE IN 6 YEARS

22%
OF MNPS GRADUATES EARNED DEGREES AT FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

4%
OF MNPS GRADUATES EARNED DEGREES AT TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

(This includes students who have dropped out or transferred.)

As we have seen in previous reports, MNPS students who attend four-year institutions continue to successfully persist, with 85% of students persisting to the second year.

College persistence rates at two-year institutions further declined from 55% to 50% and continue to lag behind rates of similar schools. However, this data does not reflect new Nashville State Community College initiatives and reforms implemented in 2019 and should serve as baseline data.

BLACK AND LATINX STUDENTS LAG SIGNIFICANTLY BEHIND WHITE AND ASIAN PEERS ON COLLEGE COMPLETION, AND THE GAP HAS GROWN:

15%
COLLEGE COMPLETION GAP BETWEEN WHITE STUDENTS AND BLACK STUDENTS

18%
COLLEGE COMPLETION GAP BETWEEN WHITE STUDENTS AND LATINX STUDENTS

Despite similar rates of college persistence,
LATINX STUDENTS ENROLL IN COLLEGE AT RATES
30%
BELOW WHITE AND ASIAN PEERS

Rates of college enrollment, persistence, and degree completion
FOR BLACK STUDENTS ARE LOWER
THAN RATES OF WHITE AND ASIAN PEERS

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Eliminate economic barriers for low-income students and students of color.

- The state of Tennessee should reform TN Promise.
- The state of Tennessee should establish tuition equity for undocumented students.
- The Mayor's Office, Nashville State Community College, and community partners should sustain, evaluate, and build on the early successes of NashvilleGRAD.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Address systemic inequities that inhibit low-income and students of color from graduating ready to pursue postsecondary opportunities.

- MNPS should prioritize and incentivize stable networks of adults in high-needs schools.
- MNPS should build systems and structures that provide equitable access to advanced course offerings and early postsecondary opportunities and employ automatic enrollment in advanced courses beginning in middle school to encourage a diversity of students to participate.
- The Mayor's Office should assess how existing city structures, programs, and systems perpetuate inequities that prevent low-income students and students of color from accessing postsecondary opportunities.
- MNPS and the Mayor's Office should adopt and operationalize college completion as a metric of success for the city.



College Access and Completion:

Data for Graduates
of MNPS

College Access and Success for MNPS Graduates: A Year Later

Despite the fact that fewer students took steps toward college enrollment and ultimately enrolled in college after high school graduation, the 2020 Bridge to Completion has several bright spots. Namely, **the percent of students who experienced “summer melt” – who took steps to enroll in college but ultimately did not enroll – decreased to an all-time low.** And the total percent of MNPS graduates earning a college degree within six years rose to a high of 26%.

Figure 2: **MNPS Bridge to Completion Data Compared from 2018-2020**ⁱⁱ

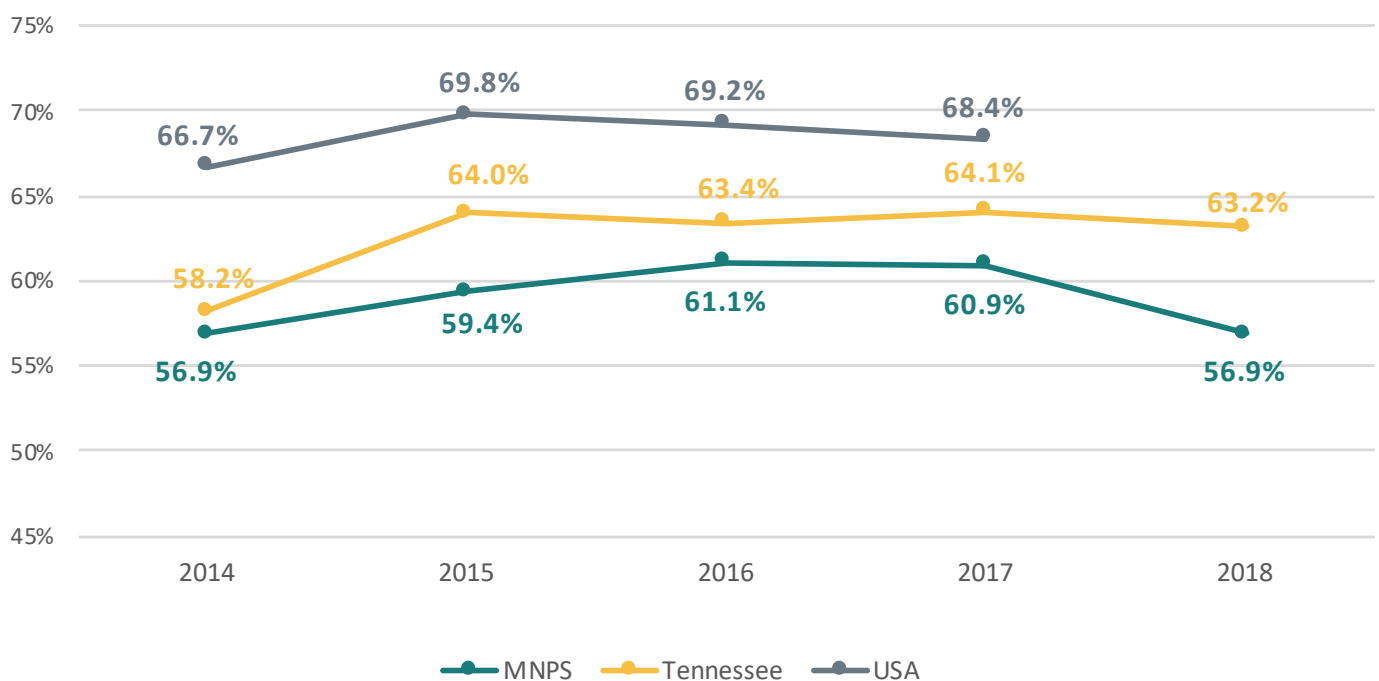
	2018	2019	2020
High school seniors taking steps toward college enrollment	80%	80%	75%
Estimated summer melt for high school students who had taken steps toward college enrollment but did not ultimately enroll	18.8%	19.1%	18.1%
High school graduates enrolling in college in the fall after graduation	61.2%	60.9%	56.9%
College students persisting to second year	74%	73%	73%
College students earning a degree within six years	25%	24%	26%



COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

College enrollment significantly declined (-4 percentage points) for MNPS graduates of the class of 2018 (Figure 3).ⁱⁱⁱ **This is the second consecutive year of declining enrollment, and enrollment has now fallen back to levels prior to the implementation of the TN Promise program in 2015.**^{iv} While declining enrollment mirrors both state and national trends, a 4% decline is a serious concern. Based on the size of the 2018 graduating class, an estimated 194 fewer students enrolled in college for the class of 2018, compared to the previous year of 2017.^v

Figure 3: **MNPS, Tennessee, and National College Enrollment: (2014–2018)**



College Enrollment by High School

Stark differences exist in postsecondary enrollment by high school, with some high schools matriculating almost every graduate to postsecondary, while others matriculate fewer than half. When comparing the class of 2018 and 2017 data sets, we see year-to-year swings in college enrollment at some high schools (Figure 4), with a few being particularly significant.^{vi} **Seven high schools had declines in college enrollment greater than the district average and three high schools had severe drops of greater than 10 percent: Stratford (-10.5 percent), Antioch (-14.2 percent), and Maplewood (-14.5 percent).** These double-digit declines mirror the decline we saw in 2017 for Whites Creek High School, which fell over 16 percentage points from the previous year, only climbing back 1% this year.^{vii} Year-to-year swings of a few percentage points are common. Even high schools with high college enrollment rates are subject to swings. However, it should be of great concern that many of the high schools with drops in enrollment already had college-going rates below the state average and are serving our highest-need student populations.



Figure 4: **2018 College Enrollment by High School**

High School	2018 College Enrollment	Gain/Loss
Martin Luther King Jr.	92.9%	-0.7%
Hume-Fogg	89.7%	-1.5%
Nashville Big Picture* **	84.0%	2.7%
Middle College*	81.1%	0.2%
LEAD Academy*	80.9%	3.4%
KIPP*	80.0%	NA
East Nashville	78.8%	4.1%
Nashville School of the Arts	78.4%	5.9%
Hillsboro	74.9%	-4.1%
UNITED STATES (2017)	68.4%	-0.8%
Hillwood	65.9%	-0.3%
TENNESSEE	63.2%	-0.9%
McGavock	62.7%	3.5%
MNPS (district)	56.9%	-4.0%
John Overton	54.0%	-6.5%
Cane Ridge	52.0%	-9.0%
Pearl-Cohn	51.1%	8.1%
Stratford	49.1%	-10.5%
Antioch	47.5%	-14.2%
Whites Creek	45.1%	1.6%
Glenclyff	41.7%	-2.4%
Hunters Lane	37.9%	-4.2%
Maplewood	35.4%	-14.8%

* Graduating classes <50 students

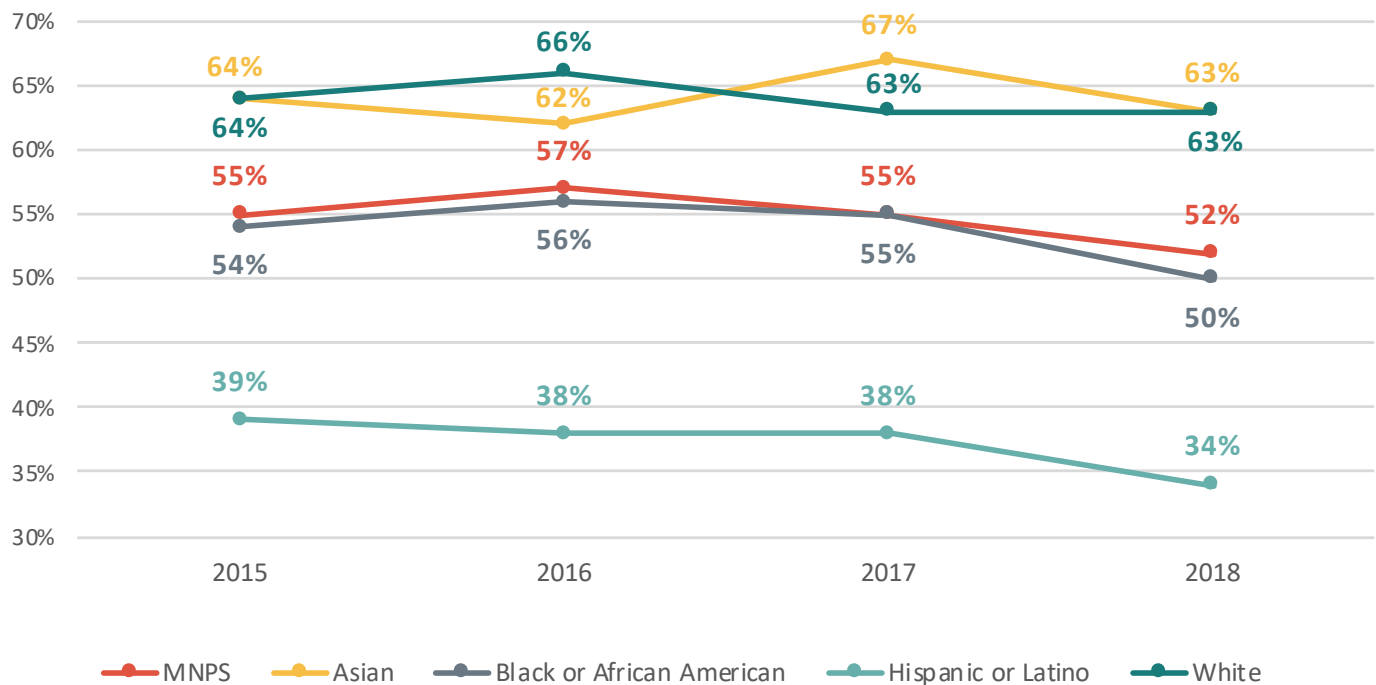
** Data for Nashville Big Picture High School not reported by TDOE, so NSC data is included.

College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity

Within the district's 4% decline in college enrollment, students of color were disproportionately affected. Declines in enrollment occurred in the following categories: African American (-5%), Hispanic (-4%), and Asian American (-4%). These disparities should be of significant concern as it means the college-going gap is growing wider.

Students of color make up roughly 70% of the MNPS student population. While data by race and ethnicity are critical in illuminating equity gaps, the data has limitations for a district as diverse as MNPS. Nashville is a city with a large international community with more than 120 languages spoken that are mapped against seven federal race and ethnicity categories. In particular, the city is home to a large Middle Eastern community, including the largest Kurdish community in the United States.^{viii} This group is likely identifying as white when selecting a race or ethnicity from the federal categories depicted in Figure 5.^{ix} In addition, black students from Middle Eastern and North African countries are categorized with African Americans, yet we know the experience of these students in our schools is uniquely different from that of African American students.

Figure 5: **College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity 2015–2018**



Black and Latinx students lag behind their Asian and white peers when it comes to college enrollment, with the gap being far greater for Latinx students (-29%). This gap is especially concerning given the growth in Hispanic enrollment in the district over the last several years. Black or African American students make up the largest racial or ethnic group for the class of 2018 and therefore most closely align to the district's overall rate, but college enrollment rates for black students are lower than those of white and Asian students (-13%). Closing these gaps in enrollment by race and ethnicity is critical for MNPS and for Nashville more broadly.

College Enrollment by Institution Type

The list of top colleges attended by MNPS graduates has changed significantly from years past (Figure 6).

NASHVILLE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (NSCC)

continues to be the top destination for MNPS graduates but enrolled 65 fewer students than the previous year. Where previously one in four MNPS college-goers attended NSCC, it is now one in five.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY (MTSU)

continues to be the top destination for undergraduate enrollment and grew by 9%. The University of Tennessee–Knoxville (UTK) replaces Tennessee State University as the second undergraduate destination.

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY (TSU) enrolled far fewer MNPS students, falling from third to fifth as a top destination. Eighty-three fewer students enrolled at TSU in 2018 than the previous year, a drop of 36.7%. We explore this issue in greater detail later in the report.

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE–CHATTANOOGA (UTC)

enrolled slightly fewer MNPS students, being overtaken by Austin Peay State University (APSU) and Belmont University.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS made the top 10 for the first time since we started this report.

It appears that a greater proportion of students are choosing institutions outside the top 10 list, which could indicate a greater degree of college counseling and diversity of college options.

Figure 6: **Top 10 Institutions Attended by MNPS College-goers**

	2018 RANKINGS	# ATTENDING	% ATTENDING
1	Nashville State CC	540	21%
2	MTSU	351	13%
3	Volunteer State CC	179	7%
4	UT Knoxville	160	6%
5	TSU	143	5%
6	Austin Peay	100	4%
7	Belmont	84	3%
8	UT Chattanooga	83	3%
9	Lipscomb	70	3%
10	University of Memphis	70	3%
	Other	840	32%

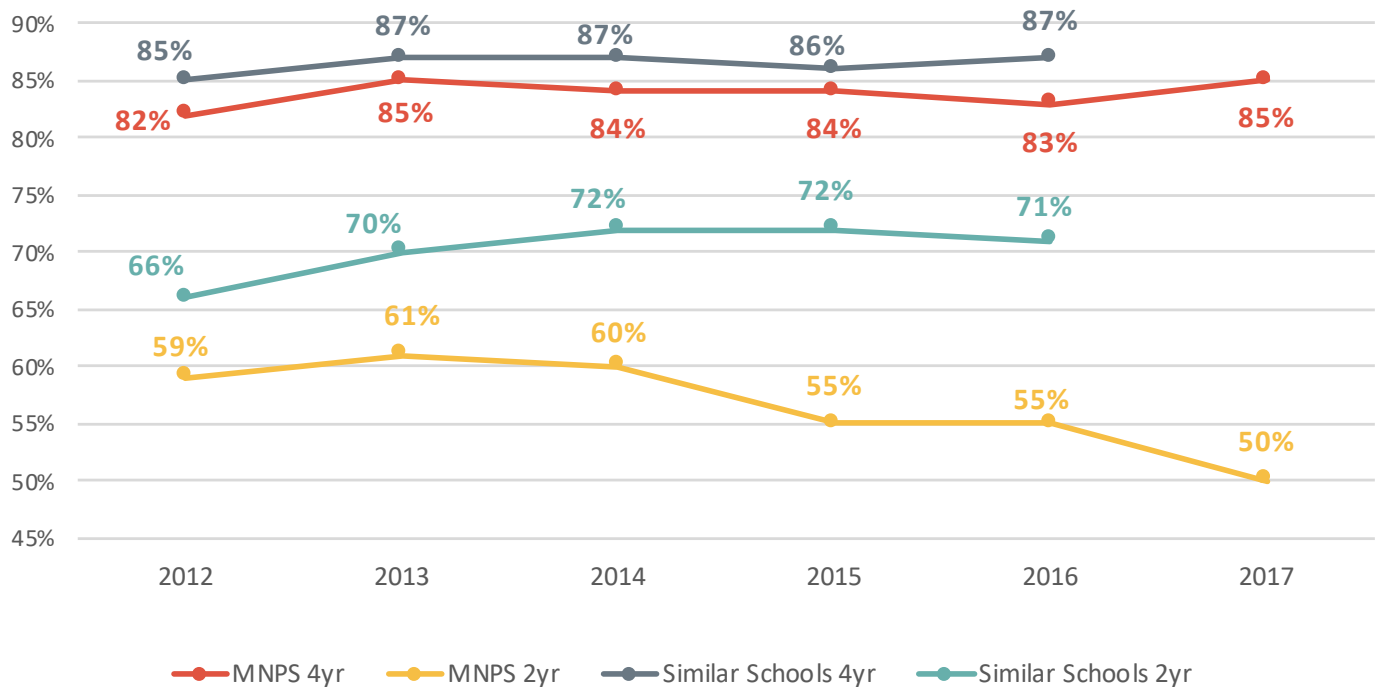
	2017 RANKINGS	# ATTENDING	% ATTENDING
1	Nashville State CC	605	23%
2	MTSU	320	12%
3	TSU	226	8%
4	Volunteer State CC	197	7%
5	UT Knoxville	151	6%
6	UT Chattanooga	106	4%
7	Austin Peay	93	3%
8	Trevecca	78	3%
9	Belmont	73	3%
10	Lipscomb	63	2%
	Other	775	29%

	2016 RANKINGS	# ATTENDING	% ATTENDING
1	Nashville State CC	674	25%
2	MTSU	314	12%
3	TSU	240	9%
4	Volunteer State CC	216	8%
5	UT Knoxville	161	6%
6	Austin Peay	96	4%
7	UT Chattanooga	83	3%
8	Belmont	78	3%
9	Trevecca	65	2%
10	Lipscomb	60	2%
	Other	698	26%

COLLEGE PERSISTENCE

Persistence rates, the percent of college students returning for their second year, at four-year colleges rose by 2%. However, persistence dropped by 5% at two-year institutions with only 50% of students enrolling for their second year (Figure 7).

Figure 7: **College Persistence Rates for MNPS and Similar Schools by Institution Type (2012-2017)**^x



College Persistence by Race and Ethnicity

White and Asian students continue to have high rates of persistence. **Latinx students persist at rates similar to white peers, although rates of initial college enrollment are much lower. Black students are not persisting at rates comparable to peers.** (Figure 8).

Figure 8: **First to Second Year Persistence by Race and Ethnicity (2017)**^{xi}

Student Group	Persistence Rate (rounded)	Difference from MNPS Average
MNPS	73%	n/a
Asian	90%	+ 17 pp
African American/Black	65%	- 8 pp
Hispanic/Latinx	77%	+ 4 pp
White	79%	+ 6 pp

COLLEGE COMPLETION

Nationally, college completion of a graduating high school class is 40%. National Student Clearinghouse data calculates college completion using a six-year time period. For this reason, the most recent completion rate accessible is for the class of 2013. **College completion for the class of 2013 rose from 24% to 26% over the previous year.**^{xii} Of the class of 2013, 22% of high school graduates earned degrees at four-year colleges and 4% earned degrees from two-year colleges in this six-year period. Both four-year and two-year degree completion rose by 1%, driven by an increase in completers from the following high schools: Antioch (+8%), Pearl-Cohn (+5%), Hillsboro (+4%), John Overton (+3%), and Whites Creek (+3%).

College Completion by Race and Ethnicity

Completion rates by race and ethnicity still have stubborn gaps, and white MNPS graduates are twice as likely to complete a degree as Hispanic MNPS graduates (Figure 9).^{xiii}

Figure 9: Degree Completion by Race or Ethnicity (Class of 2013)

Student Group	Completion Rate (rounded)	Difference from MNPS Average
MNPS	26%	n/a
Asian	42%	+ 16 pp
African American/Black	21%	- 5 pp
Hispanic/Latinx	18%	- 8 pp
White	36%	+ 10 pp

Understanding the College Access and Success Ecosystem

for MNPS Students



Over three years and three reports, TCASN has interviewed hundreds of Nashville's education, higher-education, and nonprofit professionals to understand college-going and completion trends for MNPS graduates. For this report, in an effort to create a community view of the experiences of MNPS students, we interviewed education and nonprofit professionals serving students at six MNPS zoned high schools. These high schools were selected as representative of the high school student population of MNPS and included some high schools where members of the current GEAR UP Nashville cohort will attend. Nashville State Community College personnel were also included in our interviews as one in five MNPS graduates matriculates there.

Building on our desire to understand the disparate college success outcomes of our low-income students and students of color, this year's report focuses on college-enrollment patterns between high schools, causes for ongoing struggles in persistence, and potential solutions to improve success.

FINDING 1: Poverty and trauma force the triage of basic needs to be prioritized above college-going culture in many MNPS schools.

As it is a compulsory institution, the challenges of a school can often mirror the struggles of a community. Poverty and trauma are two drivers that stress and strain schools. We see this reflected in multiple measures, such as academic performance, attendance, discipline, etc. College-going is not immune to the stress.

The recent drop in college-going rates is concentrated in high schools where poverty and trauma are most prominent, and students of color are disproportionately affected. The education professionals and nonprofit organizations providing support in these schools are stretched simply educating students and helping them survive their current social conditions. Basic needs are triaged first, as they should be, taking priority over college-going needs. It is more important that a student

students at a more affluent school observed, “There is this weird mixture of white kids, including wealthy white kids who don’t want to go to private school, poor kids, and students of color. And it works. There are a lot of resources, and there is a college-going mentality among all the students.” Indicative of the school’s college culture is an established college center in the library for visiting college admissions counselors. Students fill out a form with the school’s librarian so that they can leave class to meet with the admissions counselor. When asked for an average number of colleges that visit during the admissions season, we were told at least four per week. Additionally, we learned that staff carefully filter visit requests, aware of for-profit institutions that aim to take advantage of students.

The recent drop in college-going rates is concentrated in high schools where poverty and trauma are most prominent, and students of color are disproportionately affected.

Yet simply having socioeconomic diversity does not solve for inequity. A high school’s having socioeconomic diversity does not prevent college-going disparities among white college-goers and students of color, or between higher-income students and lower-income students. But when the basic needs of students do not overwhelm teachers and staff, school leadership

is not experiencing hunger or homelessness than it is to be concerned if they have filled out their financial aid forms. Where the needs overwhelm the staff, the opportunity for the educational system to act as a postsecondary pathway are constrained – and, for too many, cut off.

is more likely to have the time to think, reflect, and solve inequities, if they so choose. At one school, school leadership is taking active measures to address inequities in the low number of African American students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) classes. They noticed the issue, prioritized it, and are working to mitigate the inequity.

Poverty and trauma are not limited to certain schools; they exist to varying degrees in every school in the district. However, the experiences and opportunities for low-income MNPS students are vastly different depending on whether or not the high school student population has a balanced socioeconomic student body. Interviews revealed, and national research confirms, that schools with more socioeconomic diversity have more equitable access to resources for low-income students – including highly qualified teachers, counselors, and a diverse array of course options.^{xiv} As one nonprofit professional serving low-income

This type of opportunity and attention is not available to all students across the district. At a school with a low-income student population of 100%, only six colleges had visited all year, and for-profit colleges are a constant presence. Additionally, options for more advanced academics that help with college admissions, such as AP and dual-enrollment classes, are highly limited. Early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) lean heavily toward entry-level industry certifications, such as ServSafe certifications that prepare students for entry-level work in the food service industry. **While industry certifications**

are a positive postsecondary option and can even be used to help students pay and work their way through undergraduate college, the limited availability of early postsecondary opportunities creates a predetermined path for low-income students – often into employment opportunities with low salaries.

We have witnessed college-going success in schools with high percentages of low-income students. We now have evidence from some of the very schools seeing significant declines in college-going rates proving that a focus on college culture, coupled with high academic expectations and supports, does in fact increase college

enrollment and completion rates. Yet the district has been unable to leverage the investments made or embed the belief and best practices deeply enough to sustain long-term success. For example, Stratford High School, as highlighted in our 2018 Bridge to Completion report, saw a 19 percentage point increase in college-going rates between 2014 and 2016.^{xv} The school had a surge of investments from a federal GEAR UP grant, the Scarlett Family Foundation, and others. Unfortunately, the increase was short-lived, as Stratford's college-going rate has fallen nearly 19% over the past two years.



FINDING 2: Maintaining a consistent, stable network of adults in a school is essential to high school students' post-secondary aspirations and success.

Early findings from The Nashville Longitudinal Study of Youth Safety and Well-being, conducted by Vanderbilt University, Nashville's Office of the Mayor, MNPS, and Oasis Center, identified the need for youth to be connected to an adult: "Starting in fifth grade and continuing through high school, the data show that students become less and less likely to say they have a positive relationship with an adult outside their home or school."^{xvi} Even before the longitudinal study's early findings had been released, our research was pushing to a similar conclusion. From our research, the need isn't just one adult but rather a connection to a stable network of adults that made the difference for a student's postsecondary opportunities.

Schools with concentrated poverty, frequently deemed our "hard-to-staff" schools, are often staffed with a combination of a few seasoned professionals and an ever-churning group of new faces rotating in and out every year. **This constant churn of staff creates instability for the system and a fragile network of adults for the students. Just one teacher or one counselor leaving a position can completely dismantle a student's adult network.**

Additionally, high-poverty schools are disproportionately affected by long-term teacher vacancies in their buildings. Long-term vacancies are present at all tiers but are particularly acute in high school. When conducting our research in late fall, some schools were still experiencing vacancies of up to 10 teachers. Such long-term vacancies can affect college access and completion in a multitude of ways. Obviously, teacher vacancies have a negative impact on academic preparation, affecting both students who are academically prepared and students with the most academic need. If a student is in a classroom with a teacher vacancy, the student will be taught by a substitute teacher who is provided with a packet of material. The material is handed out to the student, and the student is expected to complete the material with little to no instruction from the substitute. Certified

teachers, school principals, and assistant principals are covering these classrooms, where possible, in addition to their own duties. As one educator stated, "People are being spread way too thin and doing things above and beyond what they should be doing."

Students who are motivated to academically improve in these situations seek out whatever instruction they can.

From our research, the need isn't just one adult but rather a connection to a stable network of adults that made the difference for a student's postsecondary opportunities.

Some students even enroll in a program known as SAILS (Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support), an online course designed to address students in need of remedial math education who scored below a 19 on the math section of the ACT.^{xvii} Students take the course so they will not have to take remedial math when they enter college. Students who very well may be academically capable to do more advanced work are now using an online instruction system designed for remedial learners because it is seen as the "best option of instruction" available to them. In other words, SAILS is being used by students for something it was never intended to be used for because there is no other good option.

With little to no instruction, students neither fail nor succeed. Grading protocols are highly subjective and dependent upon what could only be described professional interpretation at best. The grade then becomes part of the student's academic transcript and can be extremely problematic for college admissions. The best predictor of future college success is a student's academic transcript.^{xviii} College admissions officers are looking at a combination of the student's coursework and grade-point average to provide insight on the student's



potential for success. If the transcript becomes corrupted due to inaccuracy, the grades are no longer a reflection of a student's ability. Students may be admitted into a college that is not a good academic fit, or placed into college courses where they are unprepared for the rigors of the college-level coursework.

Many supplemental programs within MNPS try to create a network of adults and provide equitable access to resources for students. Examples include GEAR UP Nashville, Oasis Center's College Connection program, Martha O'Bryan's academic student unions, Conexión Américas' Escalera program, and ProjectLIT. Yet the impact of programs like these varies from school to school, being highly dependent on school leadership and whether or not there is a strong network of experienced teachers and staff. Shifting leadership and staff can lead to shifting priorities from one year to the next. Additionally, resistance and "turf battles" are more common where leadership shifts and requires supportive nonprofit organizations to constantly rebuild trust and relationships with new staff. For example, new and inexperienced counselors will replace an experienced counselor, and an organization might find itself cut off from providing services, "back to square one,"

The student who makes it to college has "gradual and continuous" experiences building on one another from an "ever-expanding network of adults," each bringing "additional knowledge and skills ... to build the path to college." These adults "accomplish the same four things – impart hope, build confidence, communicate the importance of education, and bring potential students and colleges together."

– Arthur Levine and Jana Niddifer,
Beating the Odds: How the Poor Get to College

and needing to re-establish relationships in order to continue serving students. As one educator pointed out after a leadership change, "The overall college-going environment has changed. It was really customary to hear the names of students who were accepted to a college over the PA. That no longer happens. The college access coach position went away to become a high school graduation coach – all the focus became on credit recovery and making sure students were graduating. College-going just wasn't a priority anymore."

The need for a strong network of adults does not diminish upon college enrollment. While self-advocacy skills are crucial to lifelong success and should be gained prior or in the transition to college, entering freshmen still need advice and counseling. Many college students, and especially low-income and first-generation students, who were fortunate enough to have a strong network of adult support in high school often feel isolated as their network disappears, and they are left alone to navigate an alien environment on

campus. Removed from their mentors, advisors, and role models, and facing difficult decisions, many opt to take the path of least resistance and no longer continue their education.

We heard echoes from the 2018 Bridge to Completion Report of how many low-income college students, the majority of whom we know are commuters, are navigating life experiences earlier than peers who reside on campus at four-year institutions and continue to face challenges with food insecurity, reliable housing, and access to reliable transportation. These barriers can seem overwhelming to students and cause them to give in to a narrative that they don't belong on a campus. Having a supportive network of adults can help students

understand they do belong and that the pressures and adversities they face are normal.

Middle Tennessee State University and Nashville State Community College, two institutions that enroll high percentages of MNPS graduates, have made strategic moves to better serve first-generation, low-income students. Nashville State Community College recently launched Nashville GRAD and opened a Student Success Center (Figure 12), while Middle Tennessee State University created "MT One Stop." Connected to the student union, MT One Stop meets student enrollment needs – financial aid, registration, tuition, billing, and transcripts – in one location.

FINDING 3: Academic preparation and college affordability remain barriers to college completion, and the two are intrinsically linked.

Many MNPS high school students work 30–40 hours a week while going to high school full time in an effort to support basic family needs. As one nonprofit professional stated, "Students have a lot of responsibilities put on them that they aren't ready for, and this holds them back from pursuing any postsecondary goals." Because many students need jobs, staff often promote early postsecondary opportunity (EPSO) certifications that can assist them in landing entry-level employment as opposed to college credit. While this may meet a short-term need, additional study is required to determine if this practice limits students' access to EPSOs that maximize early college credit.

Work and family responsibilities continue into college. As the recent study *Balancing Work and Learning: Implications for Low-income Students* – from Georgetown University – highlighted, college students working over 15 hours a week are more likely to have a C average or lower, while students working 15 hours or less are more likely to have a B average.^{xx} Between work and school commitments, students often grow weary of the struggle, stopping out of college because, as one nonprofit completion partner stated, "Making money

Additionally, many low-income MNPS graduates at two-year institutions are enrolled in learning support or remedial courses because their ACT test scores reflect they are unprepared for college-level work.

and having income becomes a better option than trying to do both [college and work]."

Additionally, many low-income MNPS graduates at two-year institutions are enrolled in learning support or remedial courses because their ACT test scores reflect they are unprepared for college-level work. These students enter their college careers already academically behind and are then unable to dedicate the necessary time to their classes due to work commitments. **Further exacerbating the situation, credit hours earned in remedial classes do not satisfy any graduation requirement, expending valuable financial aid and prolonging time to a degree.**

Even when schools manage to provide both the academic preparation and the opportunities

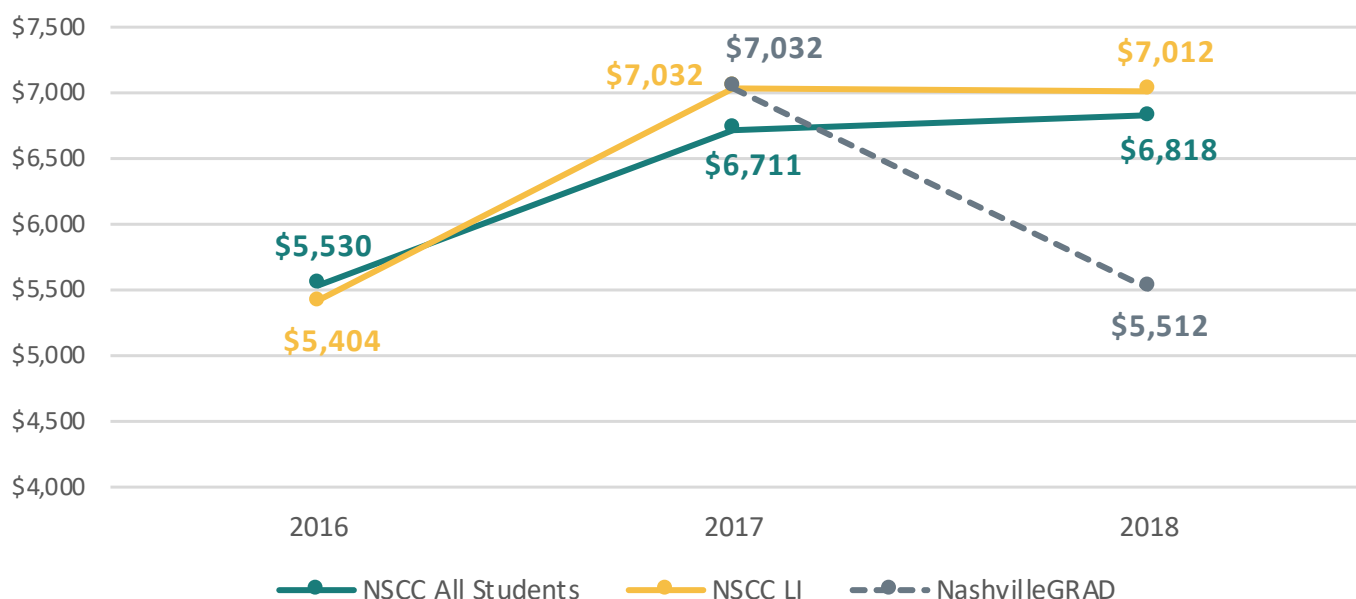
designed to prepare students for the next steps in the postsecondary pathway, the college access barriers that are embedded in higher-education policy remain. Students may not attend for various reasons, but the most likely reason given in our interviews is that students are simply being priced out. **In our interviews, “college affordability” and “tuition equity for undocumented students” continue to be the most common responses we heard for low college-going rates at particular schools.**

As we have stated in prior reports, the issues of affordability affecting low-income community college students, which make up 75% of MNPS graduates at community colleges, are not tuition and fees. Their affordability challenges are different.^{xxi} Organizations such as The Education Trust, the Institute for Higher Education Policy, and others have identified that the design of programs such as TN Promise “use a ‘last-dollar’ model, meaning that they cover tuition only after other aid has been applied. Students from low-income families attending community colleges can typically afford tuition with help from the Pell grant, so they don’t benefit from statewide free college programs

designed to cover only the cost of tuition. However, these students still cannot afford college because they struggle with non-tuition costs, such as books, housing, and transportation.” As mentioned earlier in this report, programs like NashvilleGRAD help offset non-tuition costs, resulting in an estimated savings of \$1,500 for low-income students at NSCC in 2018. Figure 10 reflects the net price cost for NSCC students and low-income students along with an estimate of the net price cost for low-income NashvilleGRAD students in 2018.^{xxii}

Ultimately these two critical factors – academic preparation and college affordability – are intrinsically linked. **Academically underprepared students will struggle in college whether or not they can afford it, and students who cannot afford college will not complete a degree no matter how academically prepared they are. The issue is confounded of course when students both are academically unprepared and struggle with college affordability, which is unfortunately a significant percentage of MNPS students.**

Figure 10: **Nashville State Community College Net Price Cost**





FINDING 4: MNPS graduates are attending a broader set of colleges than ever before, a sign that district and community investments in college counseling may be helping more students select “right fit” colleges.

Our research identified that fewer MNPS students chose local colleges, instead expanding enrollment to regional public universities and a variety of other colleges outside the traditional top 10-attended institutions. Additionally, MNPS students appeared to expand their choice of community colleges. The share of community college enrollment remained the same as the previous year (34%), even though enrollment at both NSCC and VSCC, the two local community colleges, declined.

Our research identified that fewer MNPS students chose local colleges, instead expanding enrollment to regional public universities and a variety of other colleges outside the traditional top 10-attended institutions. Additionally, MNPS students appeared to expand their choice of community colleges.

We view this expanding diversity of colleges attended by MNPS students as very positive. **We attribute it to improved college counseling from both school counselors and community-based college access**

programs. Students are being exposed to a wider array of college options, and it is a likely reason that persistence at undergraduate institutions, which is already high, is on the rise. **When students find the college where they belong – the right college fit academically, socially, and financially – they persist at higher rates.**^{xxiii}

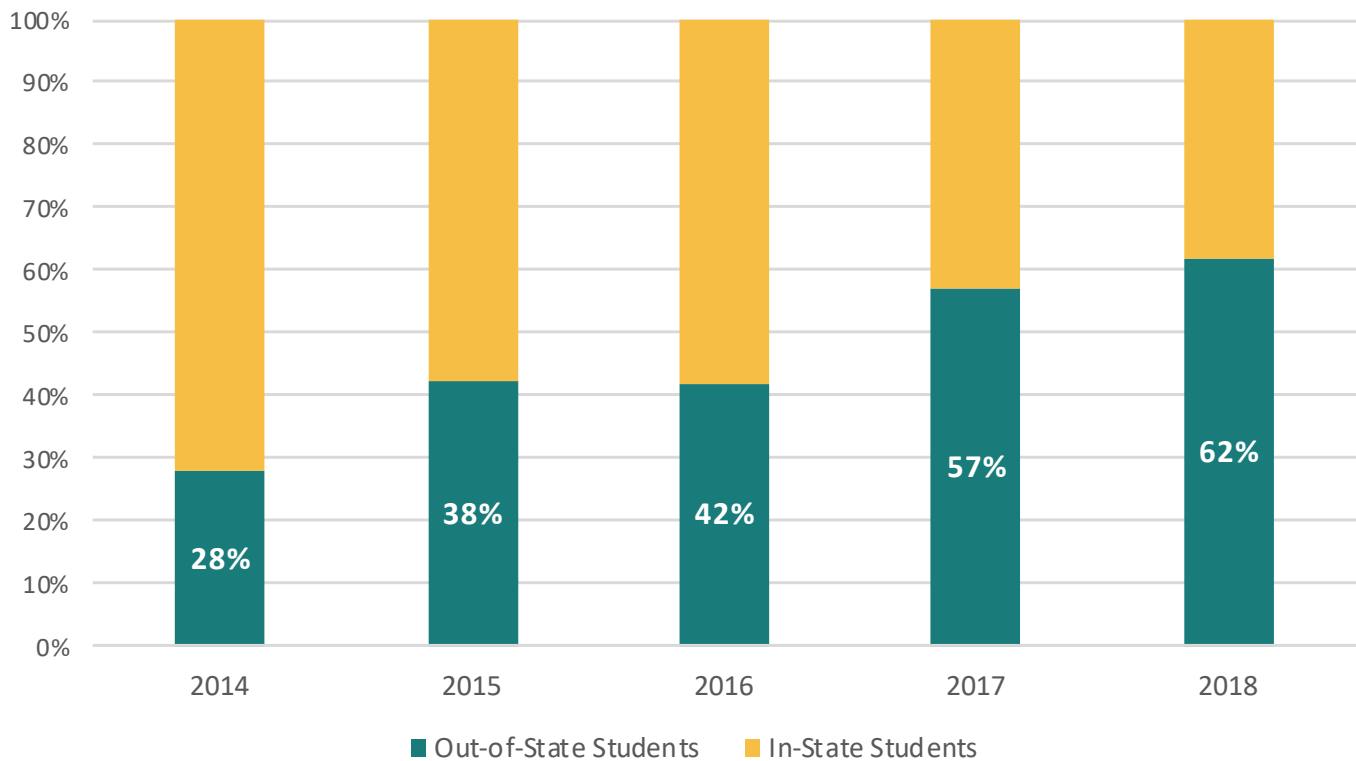
Interestingly, 83 (36.7%) fewer MNPS students enrolled at TSU in 2018 than in 2017, a significant change. TSU occupies a unique position in the higher-education landscape as the only public historically black college or university (HBCU) in the state, and the only public undergraduate university in Nashville. We present two possibilities for why local enrollment decline may have occurred; but we recommend further study into possibilities that may have to do with student life, underfunding, and resources.^{xxiv}

1. TSU may be experiencing decreases in enrollment due to the changing nature of competition for students among HBCUs.^{xxv} TSU’s proportion of first-time undergraduates has shifted dramatically in the

last five years, which shows a larger proportion of students from out of state (Figure 11). Whereas five years ago only 28% of first-time degree-seeking undergraduates were from out of state, 62% were from out of state in the fall 2018 term. As TSU competes with more national HBCU institutions, it is possible that local enrollment will negatively feel the effect.^{xxvi}

2. Beginning in 2016, under then new President Glenda Glover's leadership, TSU increased its admissions standards and became more selective.^{xxvii} We applauded this decision and continue to support it. However, by becoming more selective, it may be possible that fewer MNPS graduates meet academic eligibility requirements for the institution, resulting in lower numbers both applying and enrolling.

Figure 11: **TSU Out-of-State Students: First-Time Degree-Seeking Students Fall 2014–2018**













NASHVILLE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

A Student-Centered Approach

One of the most surprising findings from the 2018 Bridge to Completion was that 25% of MNPS graduates were matriculating to Nashville State Community College and only 4% of those students were graduating with a degree within six years. That same year, Nashville State Community College hired a new president, Dr. Shanna Jackson, who brought a “student-centered approach” to the institution by prioritizing student persistence and completion through an intentional reorganization and investment in student supports.^{xxxvii} Her vision for student success has reenergized and reengaged partners in an unprecedented way, with numerous members of the Nashville corporate and nonprofit communities investing resources and expertise to support NSCC students as they navigate basic needs, academic support, and college affordability (Figure 12).^{xxxix}

This “student-centered approach” has propelled NSCC forward in fulfilling the recommendations of the 2018 Bridge to Completion report, which noted that urgent action was needed to expand campus-based resources, decrease barriers to support services, and link supports to a broader vision of success for all students. By prioritizing student-centered reforms, Dr. Jackson is creating an environment of aligned systems that value, welcome, and support students as they work to achieve their postsecondary aspirations.

REFORM	DESCRIPTION	FOCUS OF REFORM
Nashville GRAD	Participating students receive targeted financial assistance (beyond tuition and fees) and intensive academic supports, such as tailored academic advising and bimonthly advisor communication.	  
Student Success Center at White Bridge Road Campus	Targeting all first-time, full-time students, but accessible to all, the Student Success Center is a one-stop shop where students can access advisement, academic counseling, registration, financial aid assistance, transportation resources, financial empowerment counseling, and social service coordination.	 
Redesign of the First-Year Experience	In an effort to better engage students, first-year orientation has been newly redesigned and now includes career development activities.	
Campus Cupboard	Addressing food insecurity among students, Campus Cupboard provides nonperishable food and personal care items for students.	
Better Together Formal Partnership Between MNPS and NSCC	Campus leadership regularly meets with MNPS leadership to deepen relationships and ease the transition from high school to college and career.	 
NSCC Foundation Assistance for Other Needs	The NSCC Foundation provides support that eligible students can use for emergencies, child care, transportation, and textbook assistance.	



Program addresses college affordability



Program addresses academic preparation



Program addresses students' basic needs

Recommendations

Recommendations To Improve College Access and Success for MNPS Students

We have a lofty goal for Nashville to match the national average for college completion (40%) by 2025. But to do this, we must eliminate barriers in policy and practice that are preventing too many of our students from accessing and attaining college degrees.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Eliminate economic barriers for low-income students and students of color.

The state of Tennessee should reform TN Promise.

We believe that all low-income students should be benefiting from the \$300 million of state lottery funds in the TN Promise endowment that generates scholarship dollars. In its current design, students from the poorest families do not benefit – at all.

The decline in MNPS college enrollment back to pre-Promise implementation levels and the 10% decline in community college persistence for MNPS students over the same period point to continuing affordability impediments for low-income, first-generation students that we have outlined in this and prior year reports. Newer state promise programs such as Virginia's are designed to go beyond tuition and provide \$1,000 "basic needs" grants, while Oregon uses a "middle-dollar" approach, providing both last-dollar coverage as well as \$1,000 to help with cost-of-living expenses for low-income students.^{xxx} In other words, newer state programs build in a "floor," so that all students benefit. Tennessee should explore these types of solutions.

Reforming TN Promise to be more inclusive of low-income students will also help address issues of

inequity identified by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission in its own 2019 Tennessee Promise Annual Report. The report identifies African American and Hispanic students as being "underrepresented among TN Promise students."^{xxxix}

Communities such as Nashville and Knoxville have recognized and responded with scholarship solutions to address this inequity. Nashville's "Nashville GRAD" program provides supports for basic needs and is funded by Metro Nashville and area businesses. The "Knox Promise" program is funded by a \$6.2 million gift from the Haslam Family Foundation and provides basic needs to students attending Pellissippi State Community College.^{xxxii} While we applaud these excellent solutions, and they provide insight into potential public-private partnerships, their financial reach to all low-income students is limited.

Inevitably, the cost of college tuition will continue to rise. As this happens, the TN Promise scholarship will continue to increase for middle- and upper-income families. However, students from low-income families will feel the full brunt of tuition increases as the rising tuition slowly erodes the value of their Pell grant. Funds that were once available for other college costs, which

will also continue to rise, will be consumed to cover the tuition. The result will be an increased net price. In all fairness, low-income students deserve as much financial support as any other student.

The state of Tennessee should establish tuition equity for undocumented students.

As we've stated in each previous report, tuition equity for undocumented students would dramatically increase the district's college-going rate. "While these students cannot be denied admission to postsecondary institutions based on their documentation status, undocumented students are ineligible for federal and state financial aid, including federal student loans, and are charged as international or out-of-state students by public institutions in Tennessee."^{xxxiii} Seventeen states now provide in-state tuition, and California, Delaware, Maryland, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington also provide promise dollars for undocumented students.^{xxxiv} The annual cost of attending a community college such as NSCC is over \$16,500 alone, an impossible hurdle for most students.^{xxxv}

The Mayor's Office, NSCC, and community partners should sustain, evaluate, and build on the early successes of Nashville GRAD.

Students from low-income families attending community colleges do not benefit from last-dollar free college programs designed to cover only the cost of tuition. Nashville GRAD provides both funding for basic needs and additional student support services designed to improve persistence and completion. The program is administered by the Nashville State Community College Foundation and is funded by Metro Nashville and local corporations.^{xxxvi}

While still in its infancy, Nashville GRAD has already celebrated several successes, providing an opportunity to evaluate the program and further strengthen its reach and effectiveness. Did the program lead to increased enrollment? Did the academic counseling lead to increased academic performance? Are participating students retained at higher rates than their peers? Outcomes should be shared with all stakeholders, and any necessary modifications could be made prior to the 2020–2021 academic year.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Address systemic inequities that inhibit low-income and students of color from graduating ready to pursue postsecondary opportunities.

MNPS should prioritize and incentivize stable networks of adults in high-needs schools.

The best strategy for improving the postsecondary opportunities for MNPS students lies in building and sustaining strong adult networks with strategies targeting the population of students who do not attend college currently – low-income students, students of color, and first-generation students. This begins with providing all students equitable access to resources. Teacher vacancies and staff retention, particularly for high-needs schools, take priority. There isn't an initiative, program, or policy that will sustain with a weak infrastructure.

MNPS should build systems and structures that provide equitable access to advanced course offerings and early postsecondary opportunities and employ automatic enrollment in advanced courses beginning in middle school to encourage a diversity of students to participate.

As noted in the 2019 Bridge to Completion report, the offering of advanced academic courses and early postsecondary opportunities is not equally distributed among MNPS high schools.^{xxxvii} Students across MNPS should have the opportunity to receive similar levels of



academic opportunity and preparation, regardless of which school they attend.

Additionally, as recommended in the 2019 Bridge to Completion report, each EPSO offered in MNPS should have a clear, standardized articulation process to postsecondary. The current system remains difficult for students to navigate and can cause students to miss opportunities to lower the cost of postsecondary aspirations.

The Mayor's Office should assess how existing city structures, programs, and systems perpetuate inequities that prevent low-income students and students of color from accessing postsecondary opportunities.

As stated in previous reports, **community infrastructure issues such as housing and transportation play a key role in the success of college access and completion.** For example, as opposed to a 10-minute car ride, it takes 76 minutes to travel from Cane Ridge High School to NSCC Southeast Campus at Hickory Hollow using public transit. College completion should always play a role in strategic decision-making, and the Mayor's Office is in a unique position to focus on college success for our students and all of Nashville's residents.

MNPS and the Mayor's Office should adopt and operationalize college completion as a metric of success for the city.

MNPS should create an Office of College Success.

The Office of College Success would reside in the district's central office and create accountability around college-going and completion. Working to create coherence among a variety of departments, programs, and initiatives, this office would spearhead efforts to stabilize postsecondary preparation services and create a postsecondary counseling trajectory beginning in middle school. The office would also be responsible for tracking and reporting on college access and success and communicating the district's college-going strategy.

The mayor should adopt a college completion goal for the city of Nashville.

Similar to other citywide initiatives like Louisville, Ky.'s 55,000 Degrees, the goal should "create and support a culture of college-going and completion, use the business community's unique points of leverage to accelerate attainment, help prepare students for college and career success, make postsecondary education accessible and affordable, and increase educational persistence, performance, and progress," for current residents.^{xxxviii}

MNPS High School Profiles

Antioch High School

1,934
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

38.9%

Economically Disadvantaged

62%
ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

19.6%
English Learners

36.4%

Black or African American

36.5%
Hispanic or Latinx

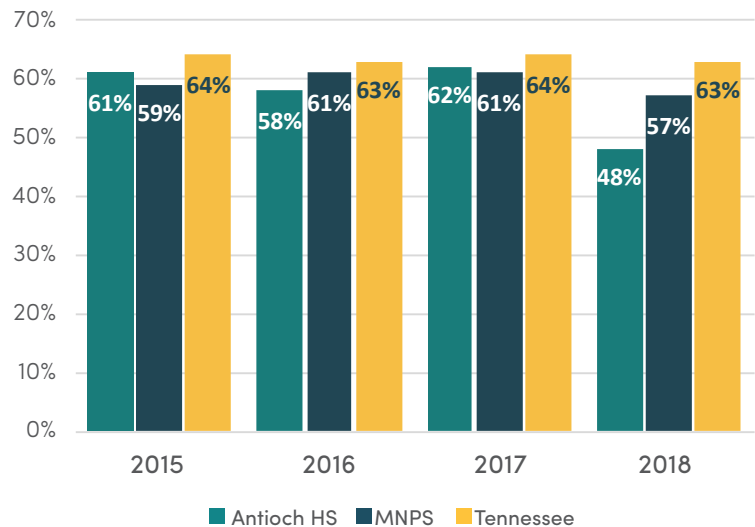
17.7

Average ACT Composite

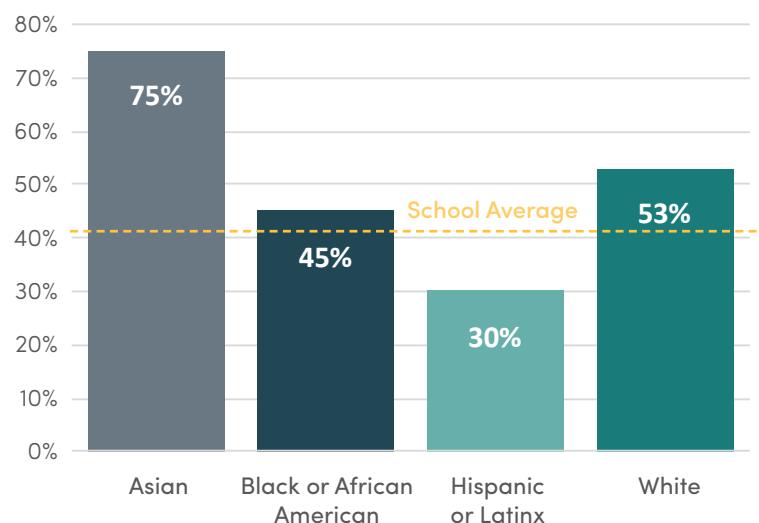
28%

College Completion Rate

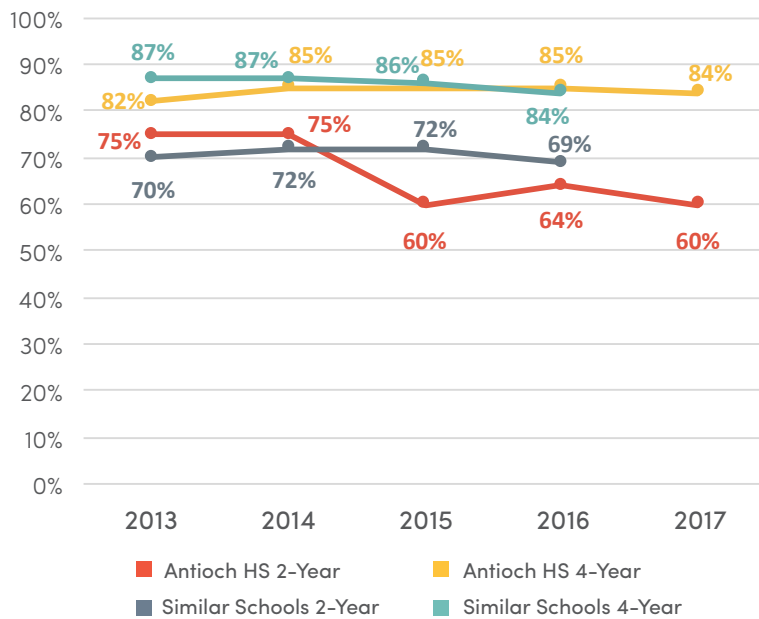
College-Going Rate Over Time



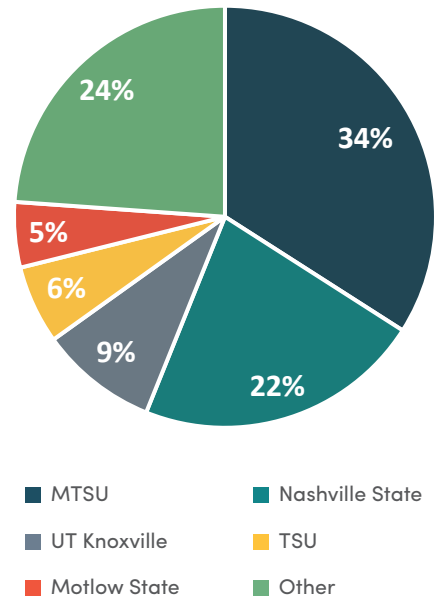
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



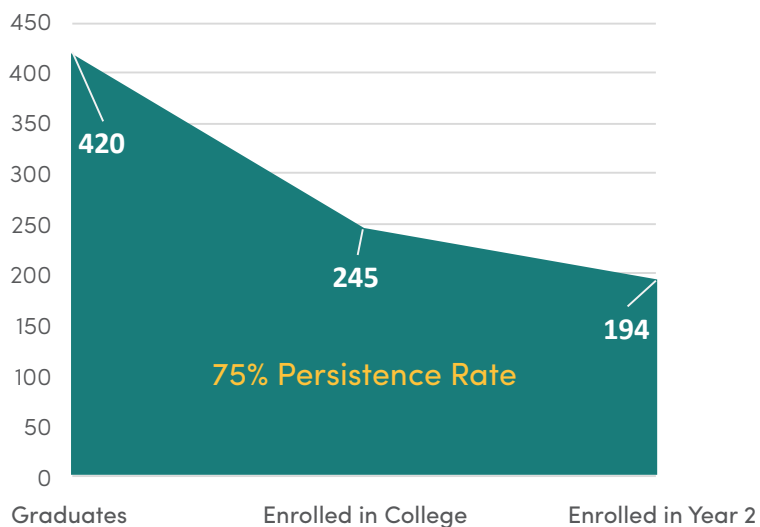
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. MTSU (72)
 2. Nashville State (48)
 3. UT Knoxville (20)
 4. TSU (13)
 5. Motlow State (10)
 6. Lipscomb (8)
 7. Austin Peay (6)
 8. Trevecca (6)
 9. UT Chattanooga (4)
 10. Western Kentucky (4)
- Other (23)

Cane Ridge High School

1,727
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

36.5%

Economically Disadvantaged

58%
ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

19.6%
English Learners

39.3%

Black or African American

34.2%

Hispanic or Latinx

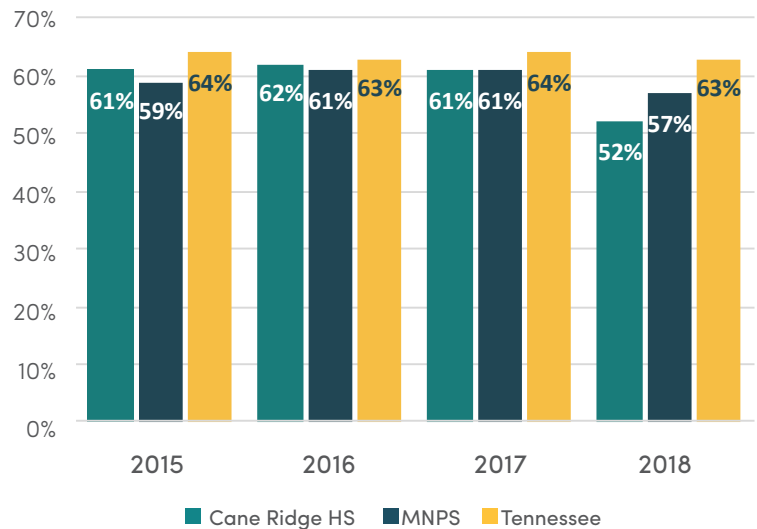
17.4

Average ACT Composite

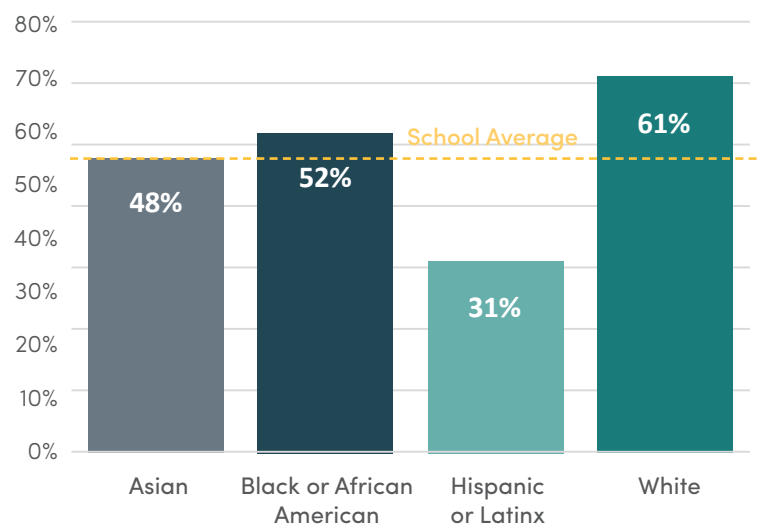
22%

College Completion Rate

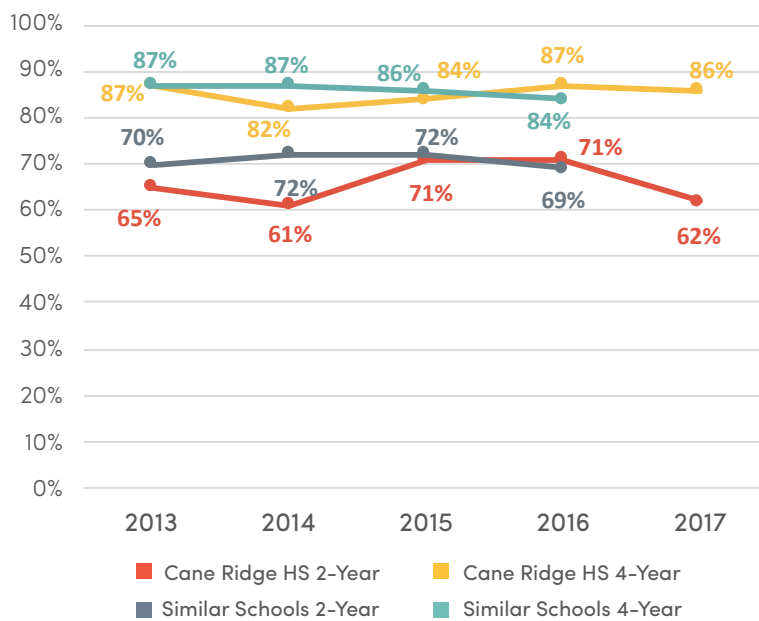
College-Going Rate Over Time



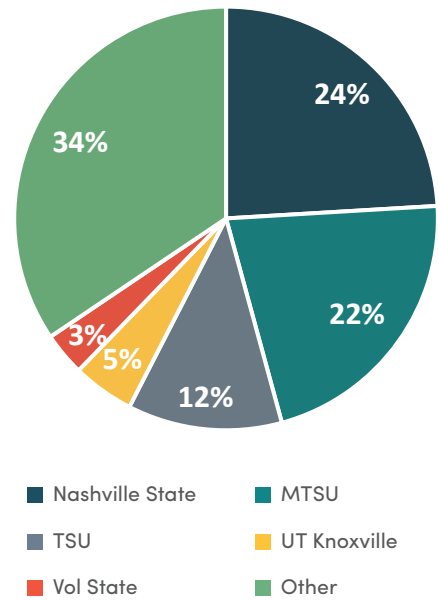
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



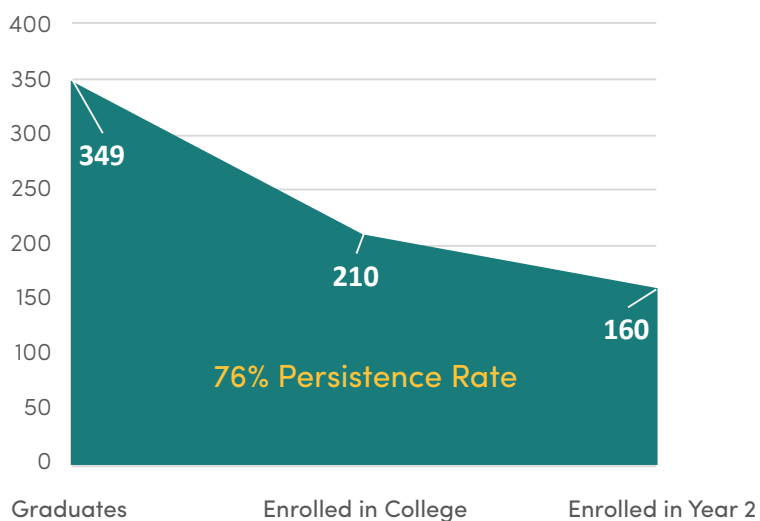
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Nashville State (51)
 2. MTSU (46)
 3. TSU (25)
 4. UT Knoxville (10)
 5. Vol State (7)
 6. Western Kentucky (7)
 7. Austin Peay (6)
 8. Memphis (6)
 9. Cumberland (4)
 10. Motlow (4)
- Other (46)

East Nashville High School

710
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

38.6%
Economically Disadvantaged

62%
ESTIMATED
Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

0.1%
English Learners

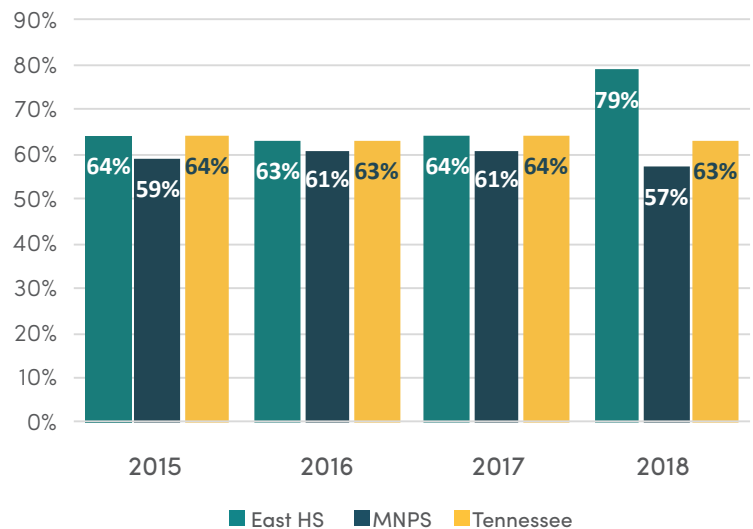
92%
Black or African American

2.4%
Hispanic or Latinx

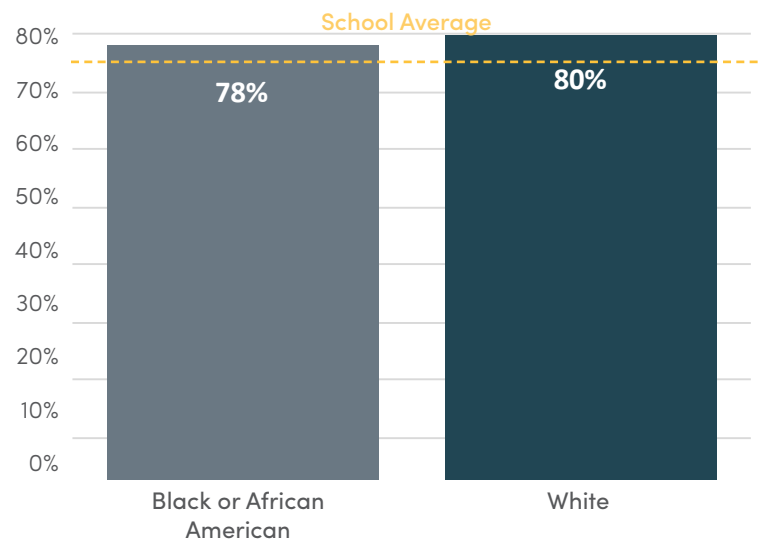
18.3
Average ACT Composite

31%
College Completion Rate

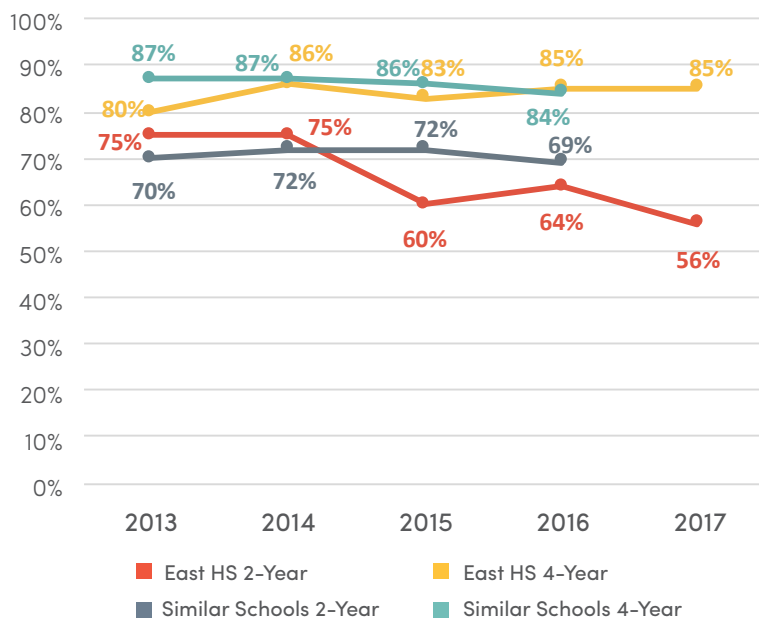
College-Going Rate Over Time



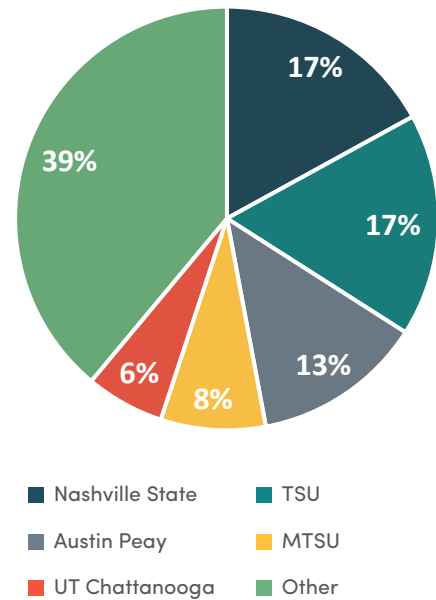
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



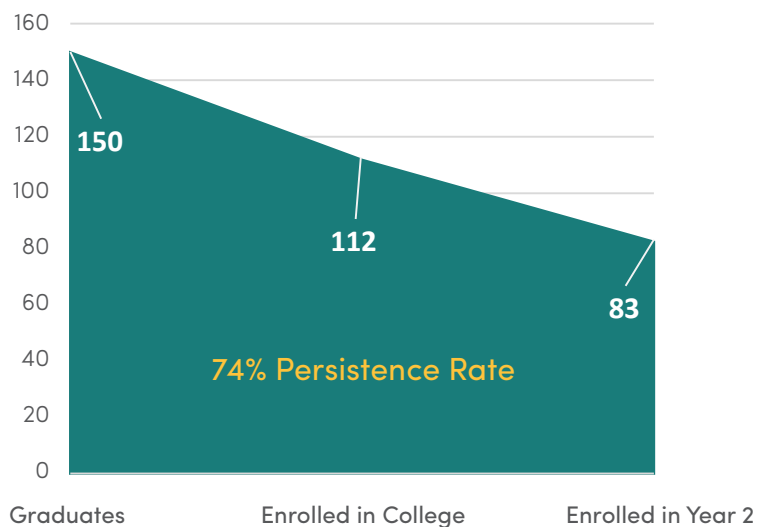
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Nashville State (21)
 2. TSU (21)
 3. Austin Peay (17)
 4. MTSU (10)
 5. UT Chattanooga (8)
 6. Vol State (6)
 7. Fisk (5)
 8. Memphis (5)
 9. UT Knoxville (5)
 10. Western Kentucky (5)
- Other (23)

Glenclyff High School

1,162

STUDENTS

(2018-19 School Year)

46.4%

Economically Disadvantaged

74%

ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

35.5%

English Learners

21.9%

Black or African American

53.9%

Hispanic or Latinx

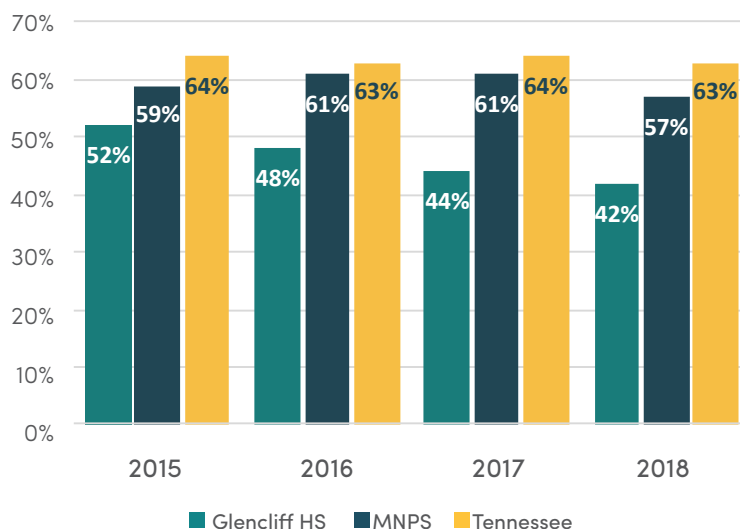
16.8

Average ACT Composite

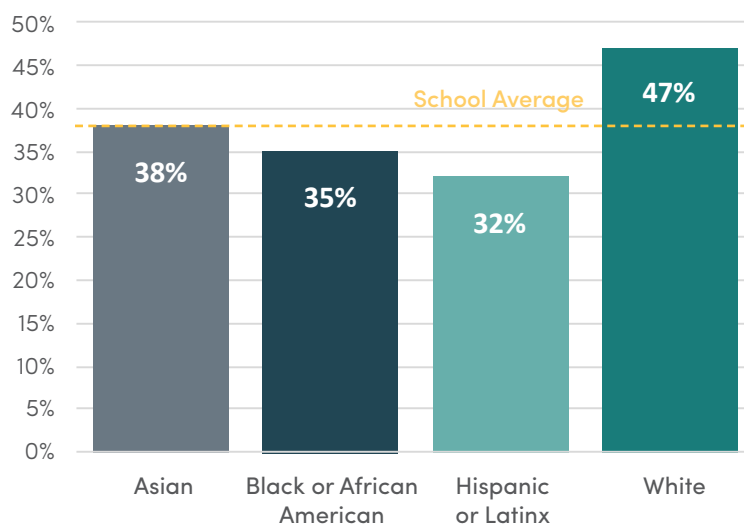
20%

College Completion Rate

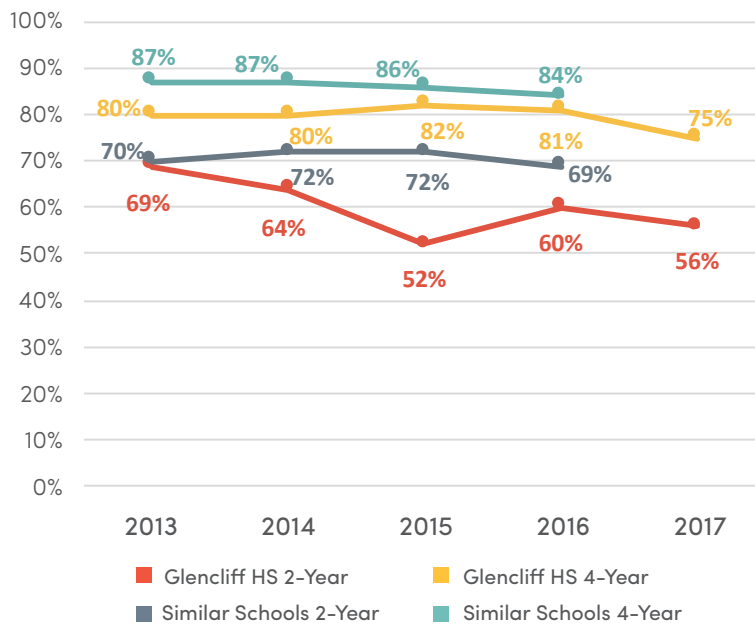
College-Going Rate Over Time



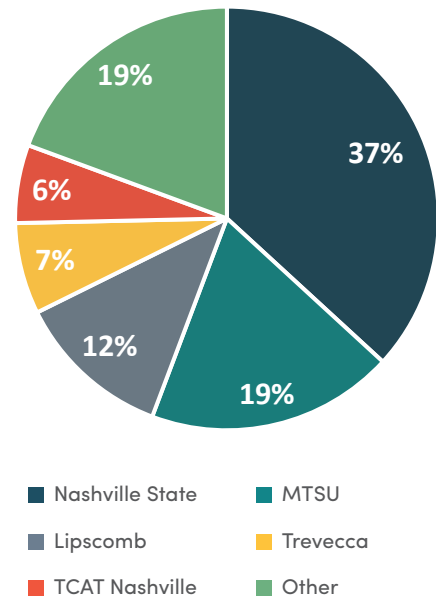
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



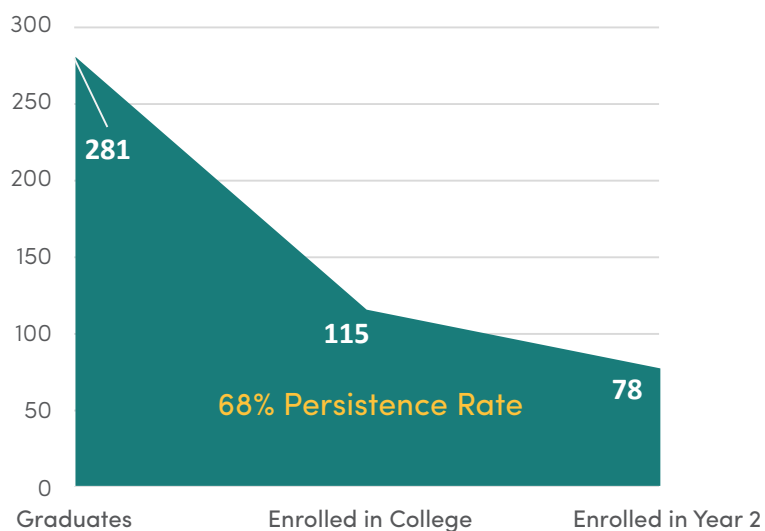
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Nashville State (42)
 2. MTSU (21)
 3. Lipscomb (13)
 4. Trevecca (8)
 5. TCAT Nashville (7)
 6. TSU (5)
 7. Cumberland (2)
 8. Tennessee Tech (2)
 9. UT Knoxville (2)
 10. Austin Peay (1)
- Other (10)

Hillsboro High School

1,211
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

28.7%

Economically Disadvantaged

46%
ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

1.4%

English Learners

52.2%

Black or African American

6.1%

Hispanic or Latinx

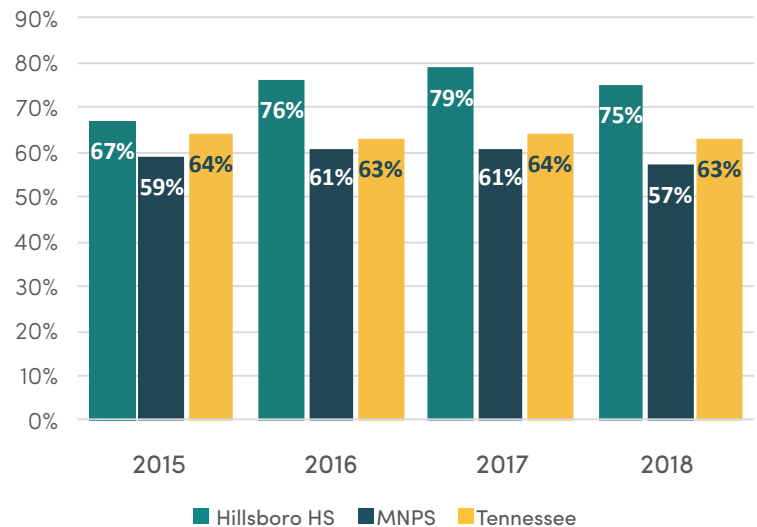
20.7

Average ACT Composite

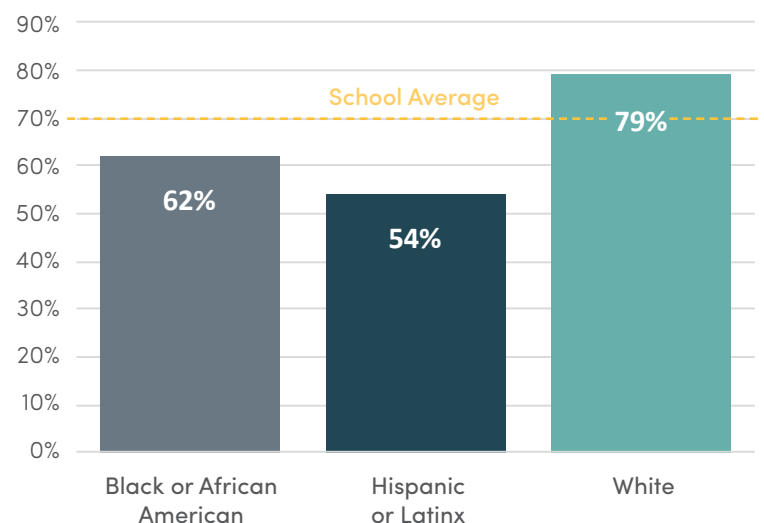
38%

College Completion Rate

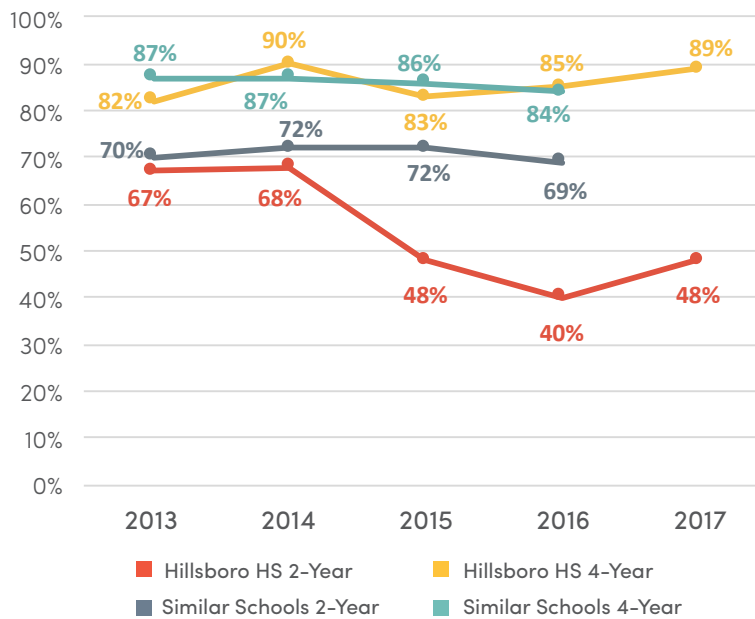
College-Going Rate Over Time



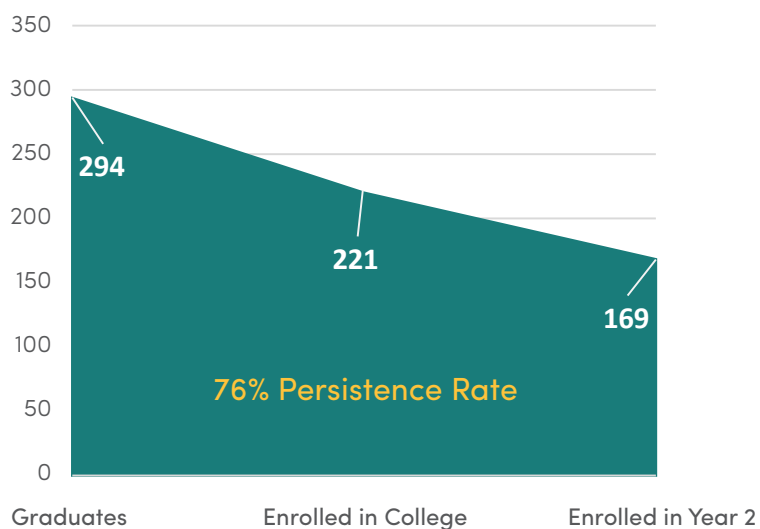
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



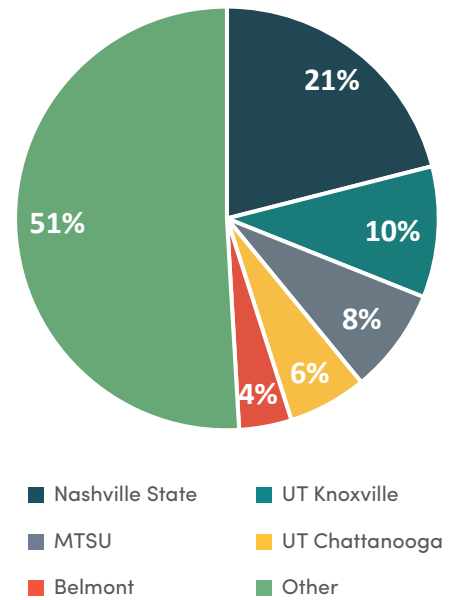
First to Second Year College Persistence



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



1. Nashville State (37)
 2. UT Knoxville (18)
 3. MTSU (15)
 4. UT Chattanooga (10)
 5. Belmont (8)
 6. TSU (7)
 7. Columbia State (5)
 8. Cumberland (4)
 9. Pace University (4)
 10. Tennessee Tech (4)
- Other (67)

Hillwood High School

1,105
STUDENTS

(2018-19 School Year)

35.9%

Economically Disadvantaged

57%

ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

8.9%

English Learners

33.8%

Black or African American

16.1%

Hispanic or Latinx

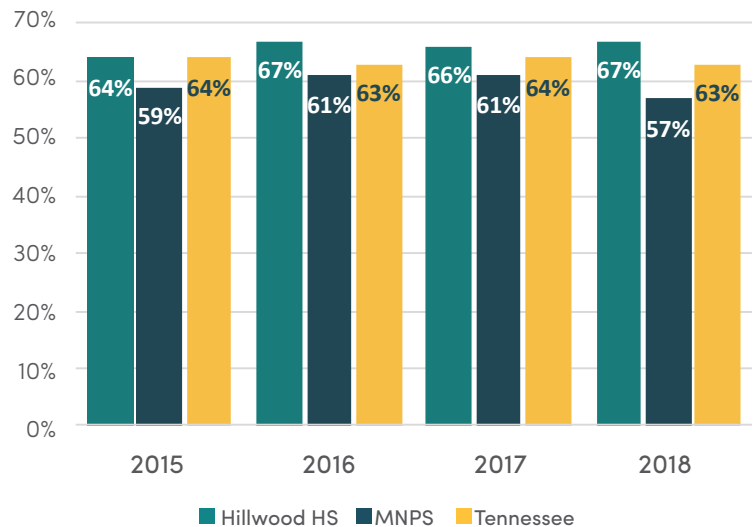
19.7

Average ACT Composite

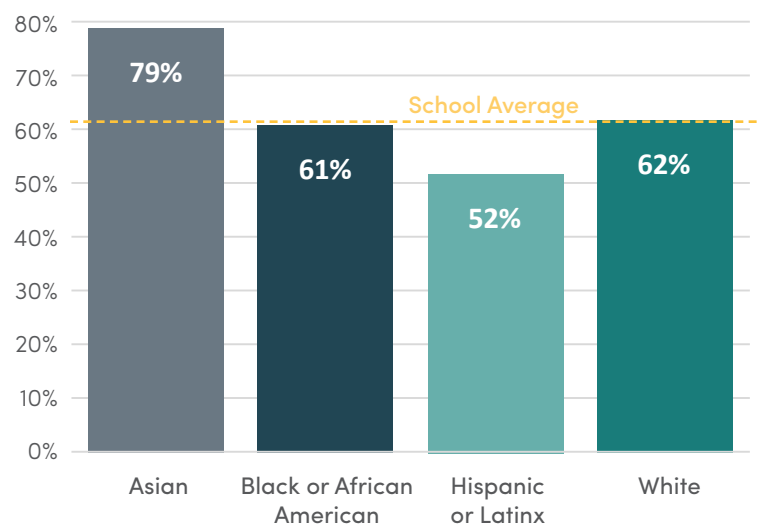
23%

College Completion Rate

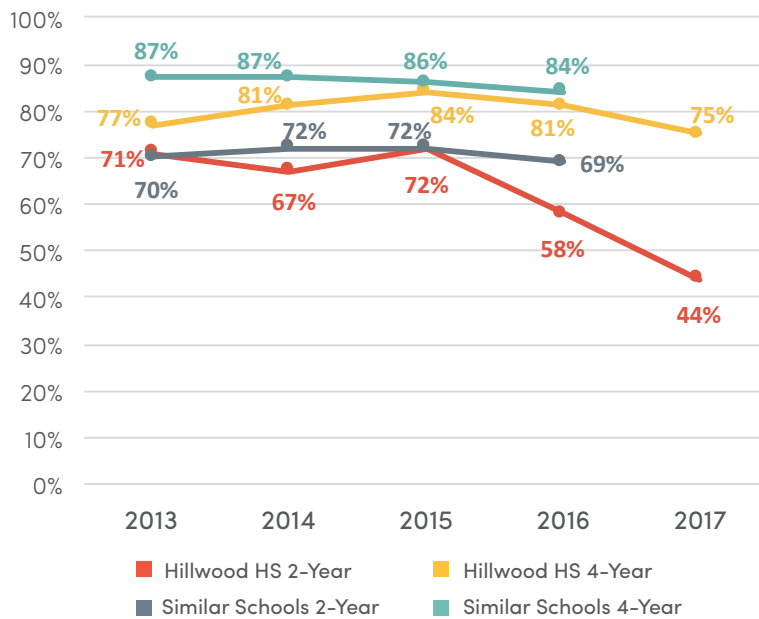
College-Going Rate Over Time



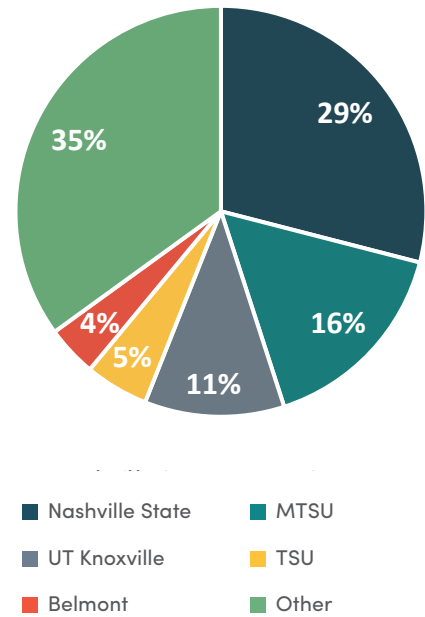
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



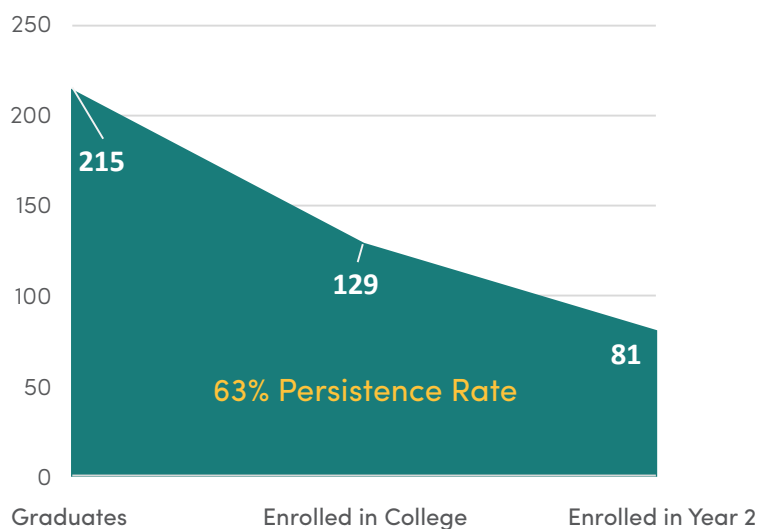
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Nashville State (41)
 2. MTSU (23)
 3. UT Knoxville (16)
 4. TSU (7)
 5. Belmont (6)
 6. Austin Peay (5)
 7. Lipscomb (5)
 8. UT Chattanooga (4)
 9. Watkins (3)
 10. Western Kentucky (3)
- Other (30)

Hume-Fogg High School

903
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

7.3%

Economically Disadvantaged

12%
ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

0%

English Learners

23.7%

Black or African American

6.6%

Hispanic or Latinx

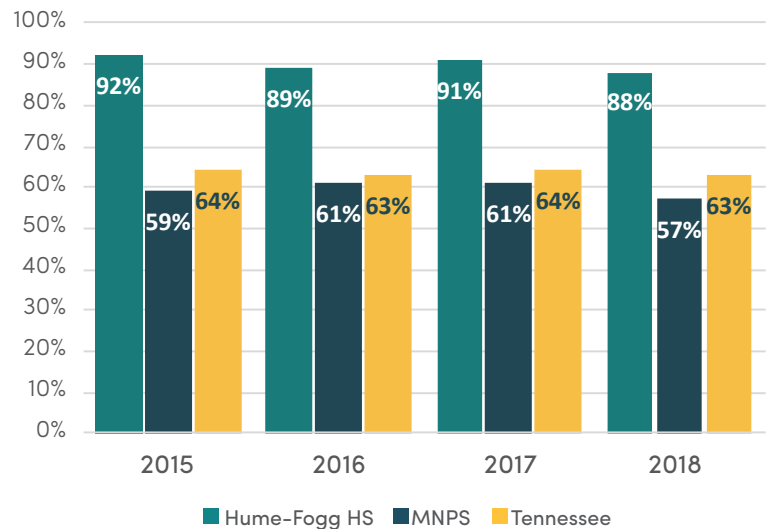
28.5

Average ACT Composite

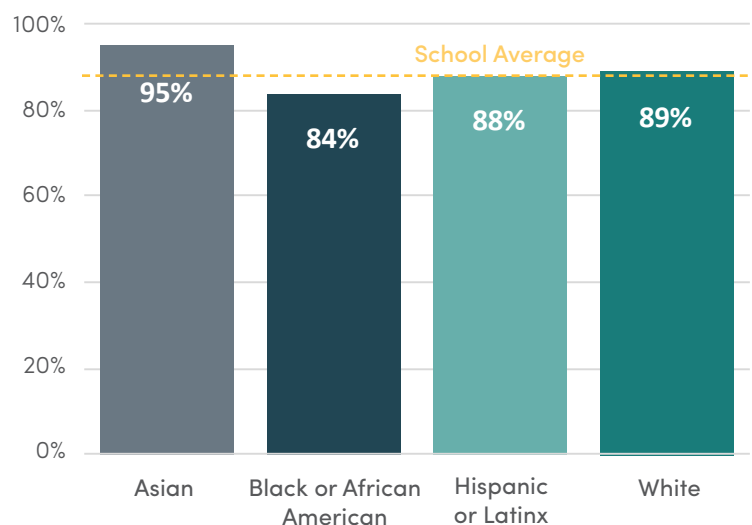
77%

College Completion Rate

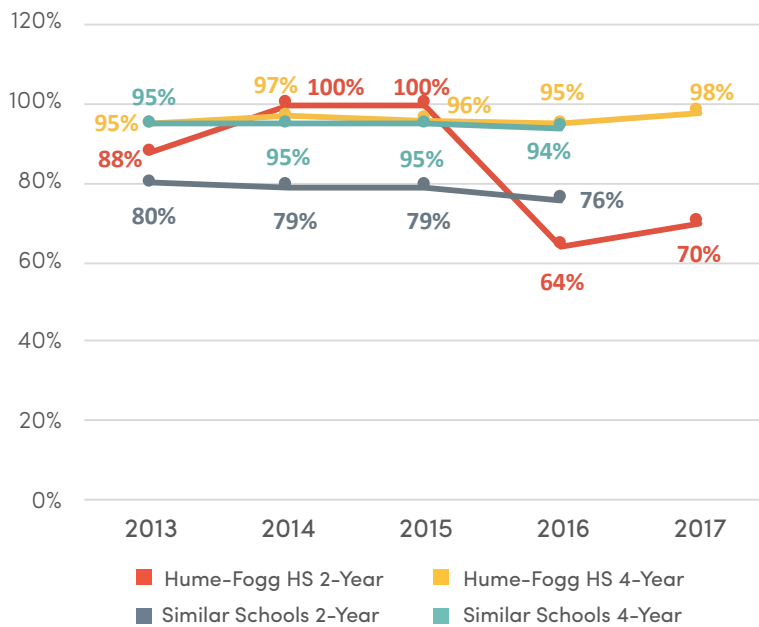
College-Going Rate Over Time



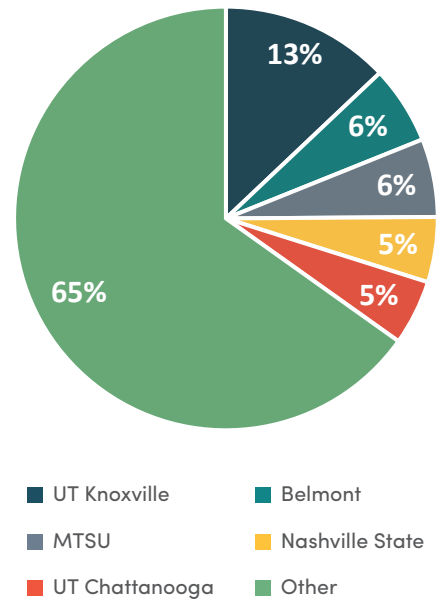
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



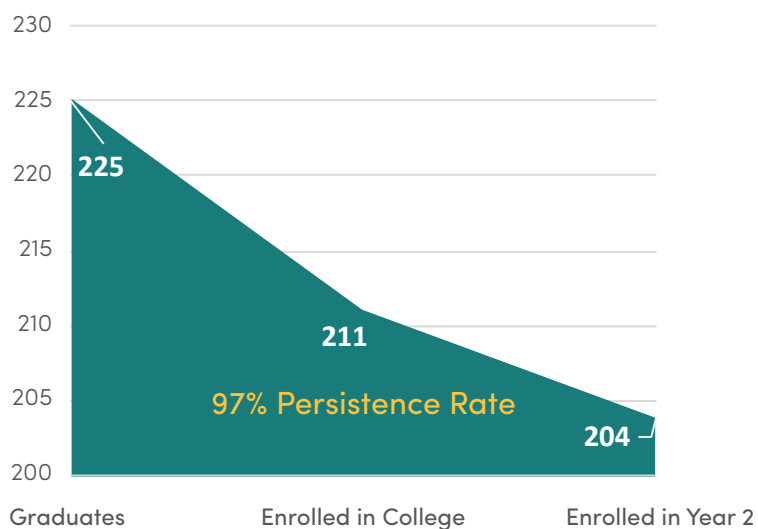
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. UT Knoxville (24)
 2. Belmont (11)
 3. MTSU (11)
 4. Nashville State (10)
 5. UT Chattanooga (10)
 6. Memphis (8)
 7. Rhodes (7)
 8. Tennessee Tech (7)
 9. ETSU (5)
 10. Lipscomb (5)
- Other (93)

Hunters Lane High School

1,325
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

52.4%

Economically Disadvantaged

84%
ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

17.5%
English Learners

46.3%

Black or African American

36.5%
Hispanic or Latinx

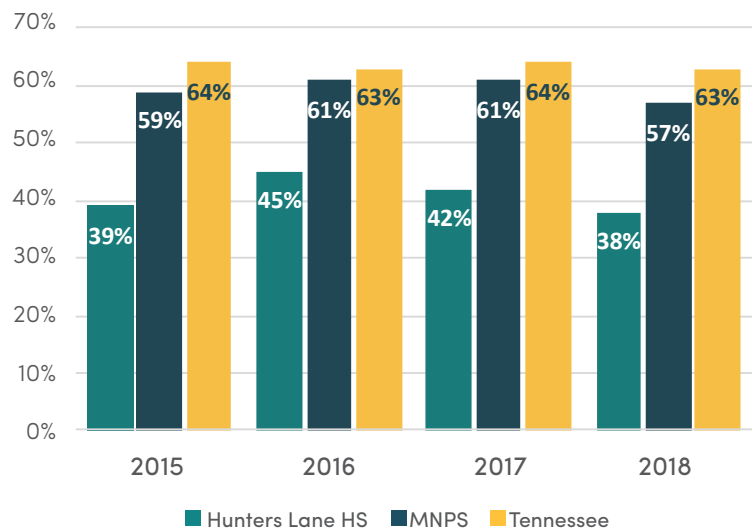
16.2

Average ACT Composite

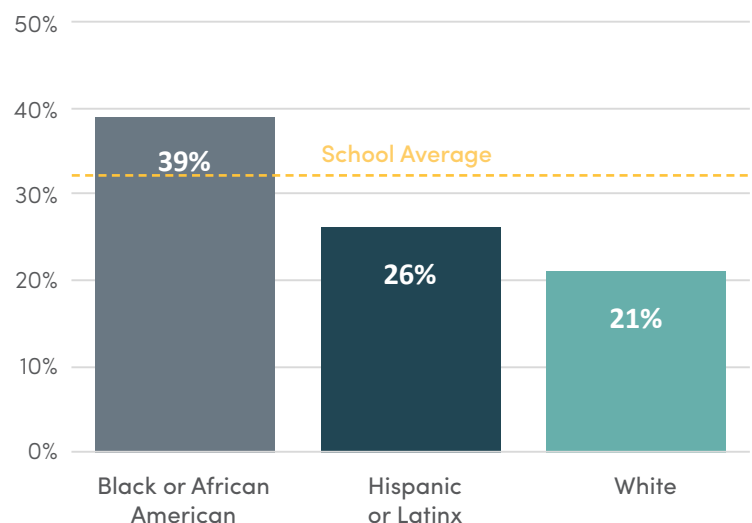
14%

College Completion Rate

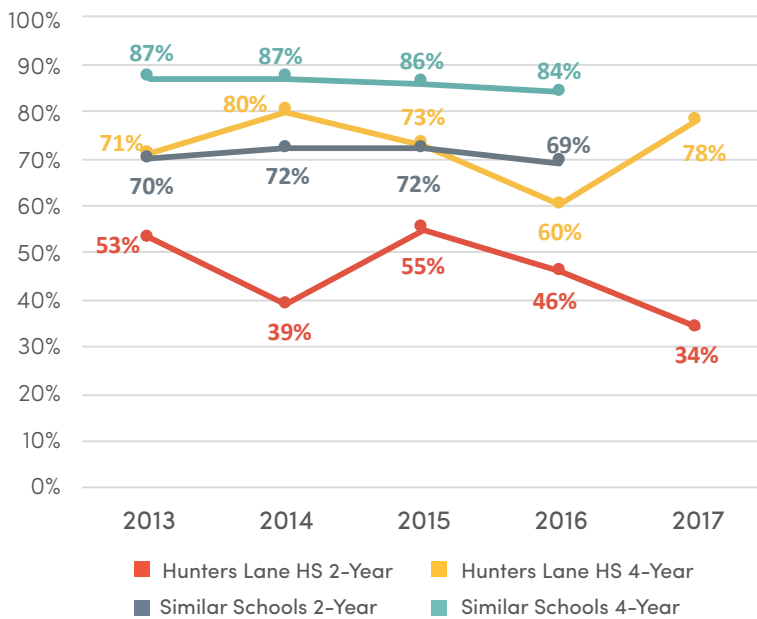
College-Going Rate Over Time



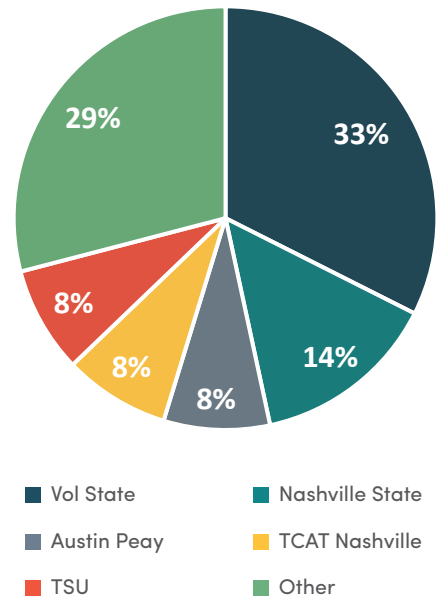
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



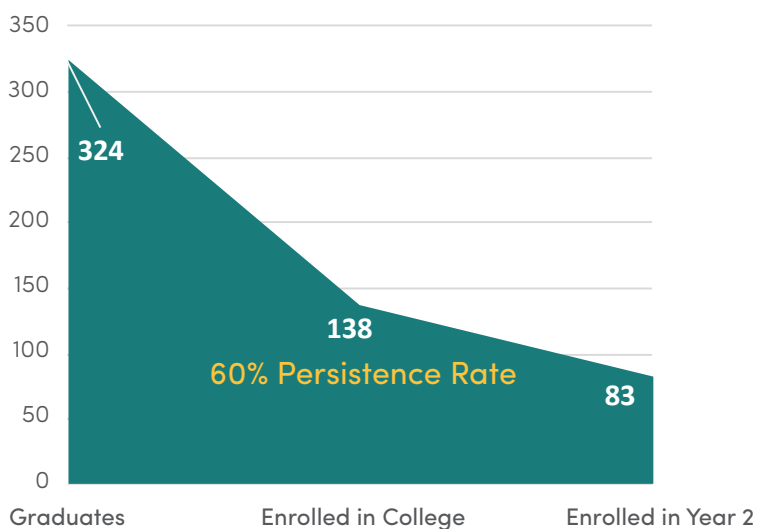
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Vol State (46)
 2. Nashville State (20)
 3. Austin Peay (12)
 4. TCAT Nashville (12)
 5. TSU (11)
 6. MTSU (9)
 7. Lane (6)
 8. Colorado State (4)
 9. Trevecca (3)
 10. UT Martin (3)
- Other (17)

John Overton High School

1,945
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

38.8%

Economically Disadvantaged

62%
ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

25.8%

English Learners

19.6%

Black or African American

38.6%

Hispanic or Latinx

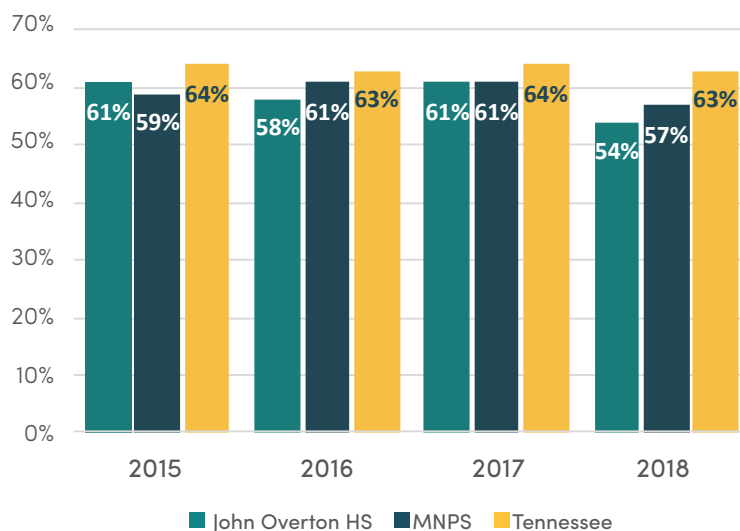
18.3

Average ACT Composite

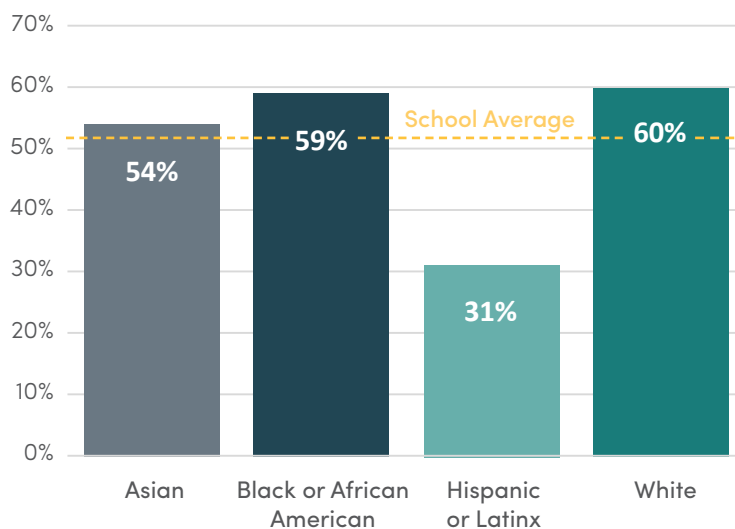
30%

College Completion Rate

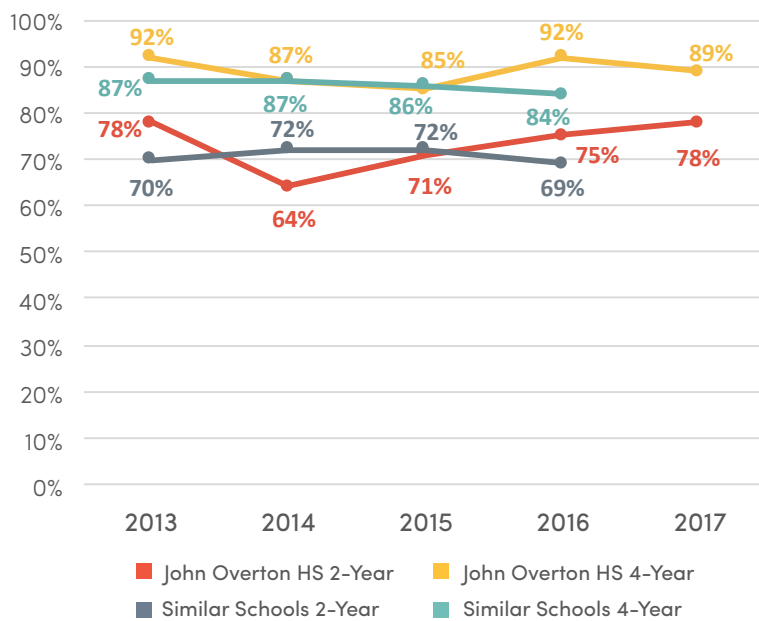
College-Going Rate Over Time



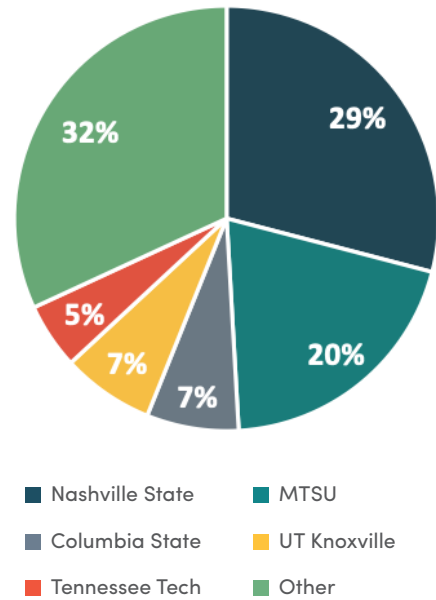
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



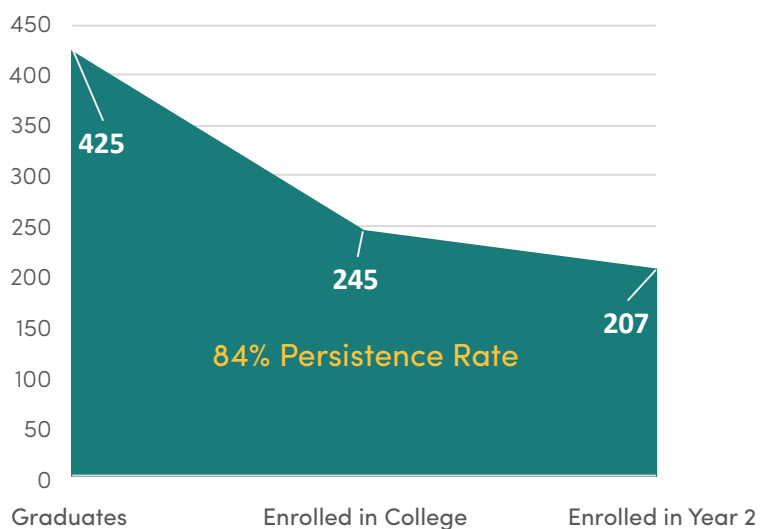
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Nashville State (71)
 2. MTSU (48)
 3. Columbia State (18)
 4. UT Knoxville (16)
 5. Tennessee Tech (12)
 6. Trevecca (9)
 7. Lipscomb (8)
 8. UT Chattanooga (7)
 9. TCAT Nashville (6)
 10. TSU (5)
- Other (47)

KIPP Nashville High School

387
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

50.1%
Economically Disadvantaged

80%
ESTIMATED
Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

7%
English Learners

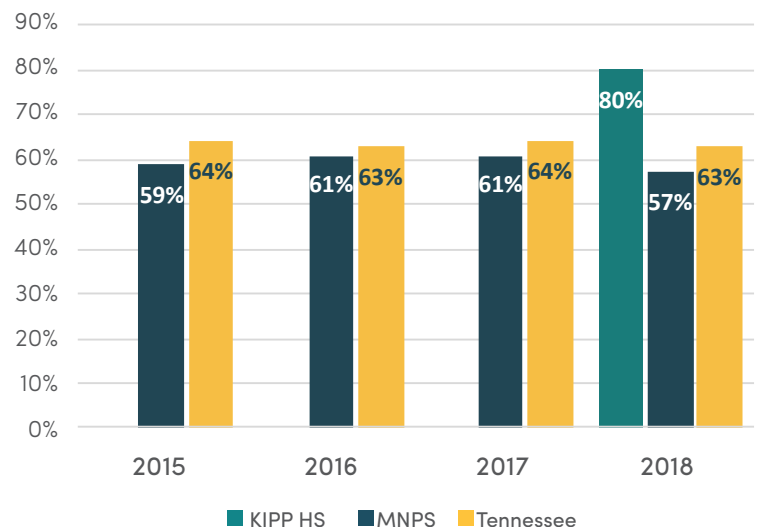
67.4%
Black or African American

27.9%
Hispanic or Latinx

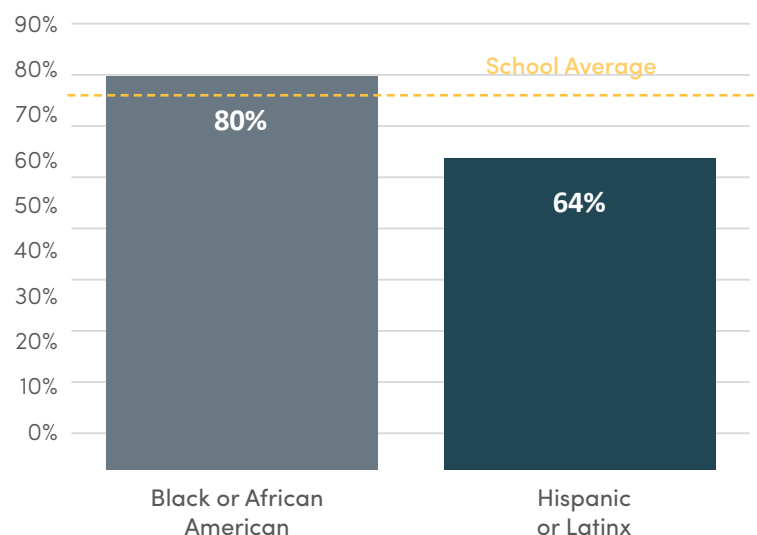
22.3
Average ACT Composite

N/A
College Completion Rate

College-Going Rate Over Time



Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



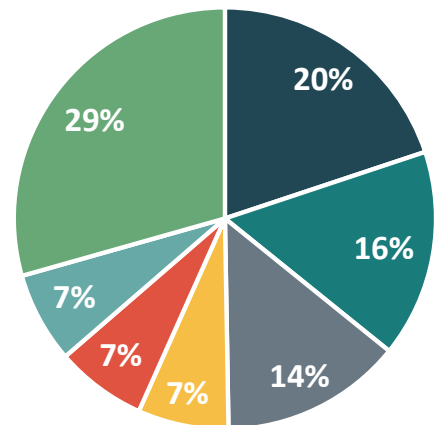
First to Second Year College Persistence

No graduates in 2017 from KIPP
to measure persistence.

Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence

No graduates in 2017 from KIPP
to measure persistence.

Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



■ MTSU	■ UT Knoxville
■ East Mississippi Community College	■ Berea College
■ Fisk	■ Tennessee Tech
■ Other	

1. MTSU (9)
2. UT Knoxville (7)
3. East Mississippi Comm. College (6)
4. Berea College (3)
5. Fisk (3)
6. Tennessee Tech (3)
7. Vanderbilt (2)
8. Austin Peay (1)
9. Cumberland (1)
10. Duke (1)
- Other (8)

LEAD Academy High School

445
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

49%

Economically Disadvantaged

78%
ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

18.9%
English Learners

44.5%

Black or African American

42.2%
Hispanic or Latinx

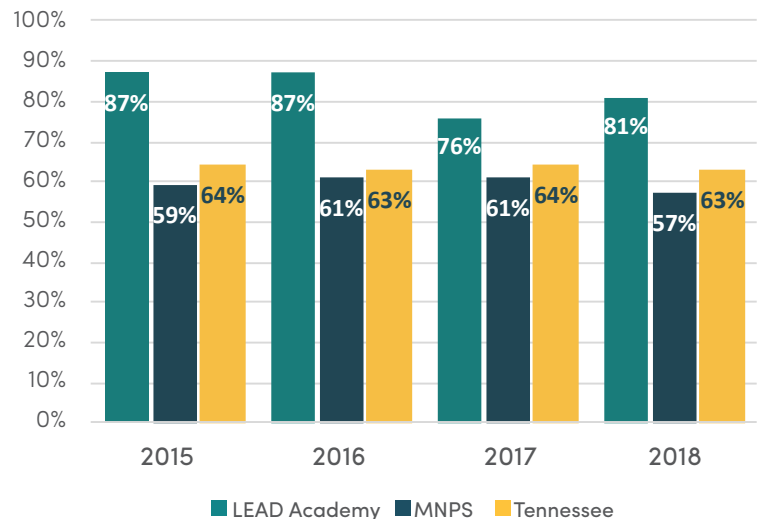
18.7

Average ACT Composite

N/A

College Completion Rate

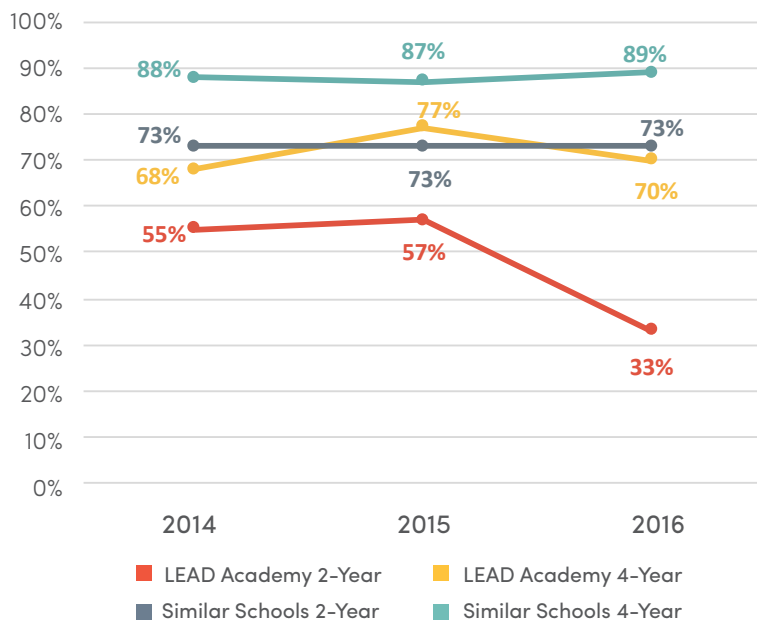
College-Going Rate Over Time



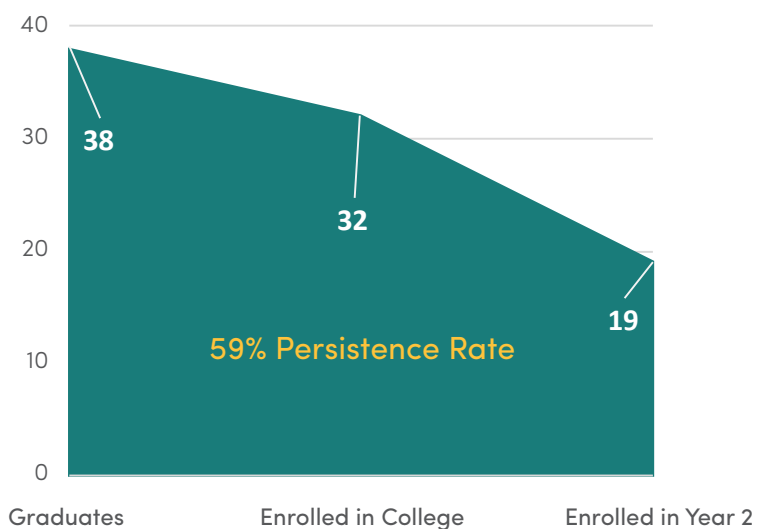
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity

LEAD Academy college enrollment data by race and ethnicity did not include multiple categories; racial and ethnic group data was suppressed due to low student counts.

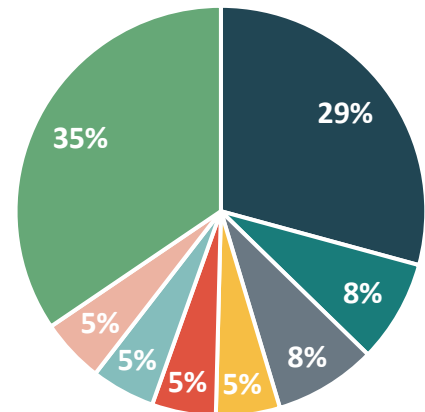
First to Second Year College Persistence



Class of 2016 College Enrollment and Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



- Nashville State
- MTSU
- UT Knoxville
- Austin Peay
- Belmont
- Cumberland
- Lipscomb
- Other

1. Nashville State (11)
 2. MTSU (3)
 3. UT Knoxville (3)
 4. Austin Peay (2)
 5. Belmont (2)
 6. Cumberland (2)
 7. Lipscomb (2)
 8. Alabama A&M (1)
 9. Centre College (1)
 10. Clark Atlanta (1)
- Other (10)

Maplewood High School

765
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

65%
Economically Disadvantaged

104%
ESTIMATED
Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

14.6%
English Learners

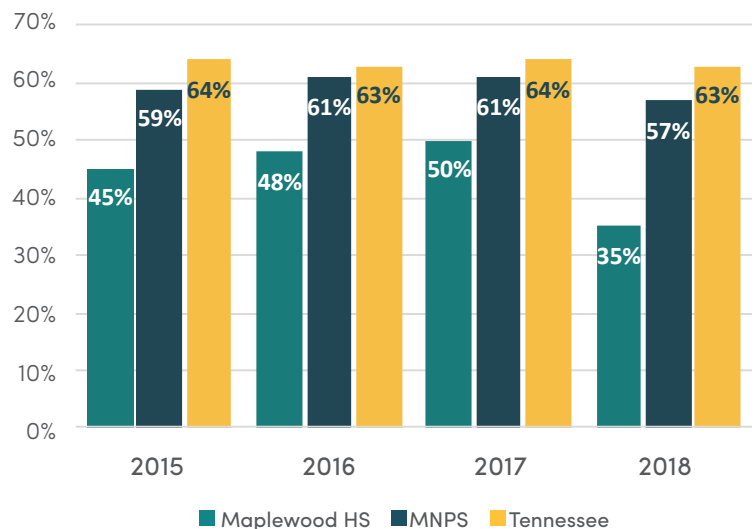
73.1%
Black or African American

18.2%
Hispanic or Latinx

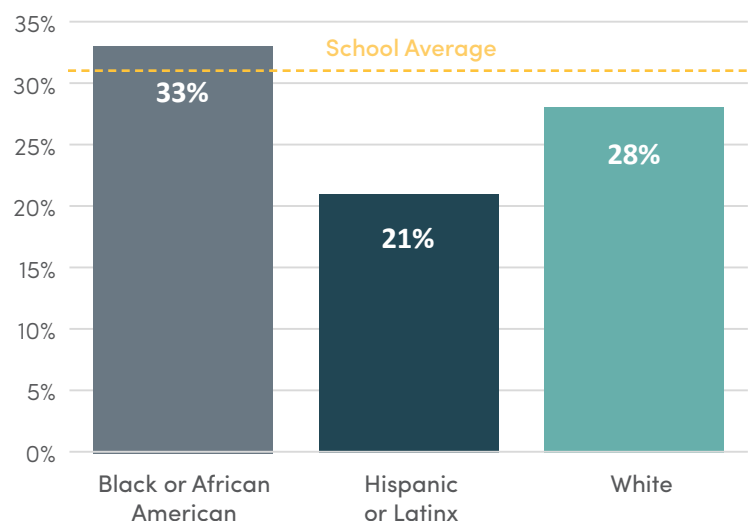
15.6
Average ACT Composite

8%
College Completion Rate

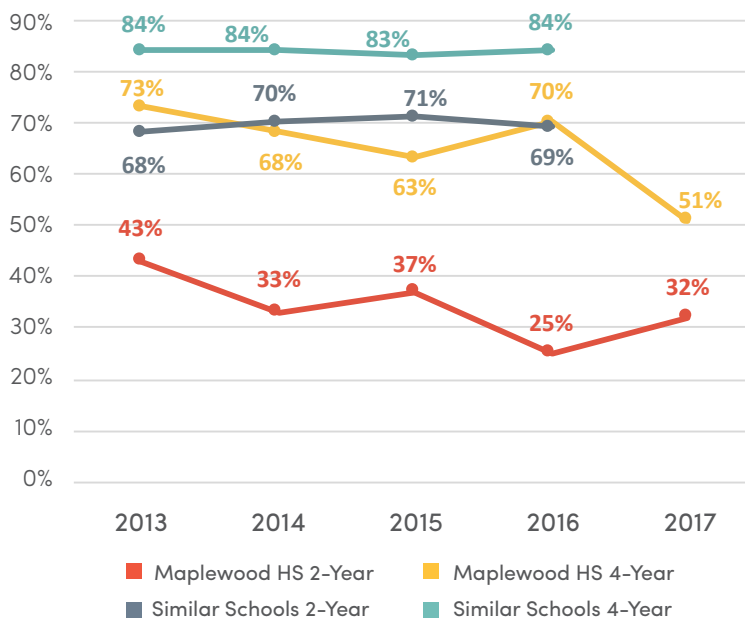
College-Going Rate Over Time



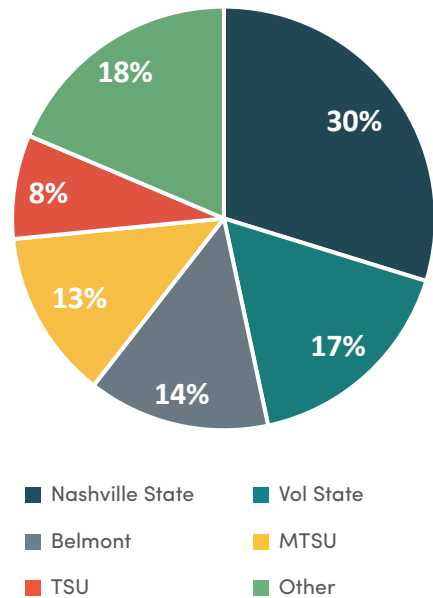
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



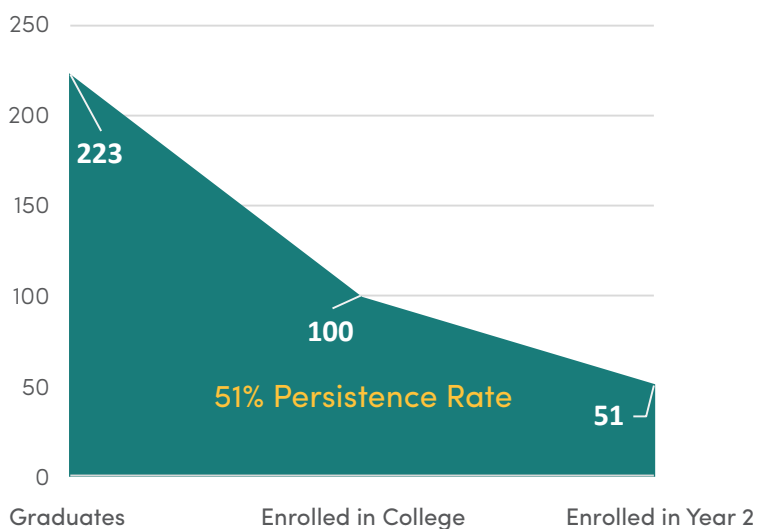
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Nashville State (19)
 2. Vol State (11)
 3. Belmont (9)
 4. MTSU (8)
 5. TSU (5)
 6. Austin Peay (2)
 7. Roane State (2)
 8. Bethel (1)
 9. Chattanooga State (1)
 10. ETSU (1)
- Other (5)

Martin Luther King Jr. High School

1,269
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

12.3%

Economically Disadvantaged

20%
ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

0%

English Learners

42.2%

Black or African American

6.9%

Hispanic or Latinx

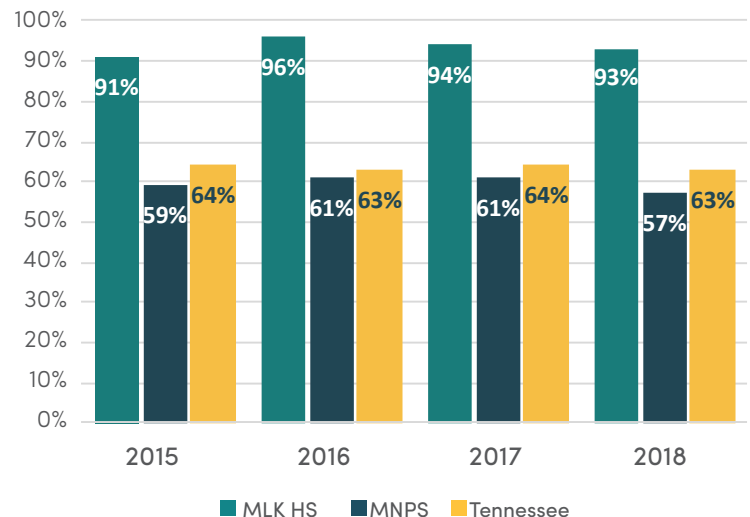
27.4

Average ACT Composite

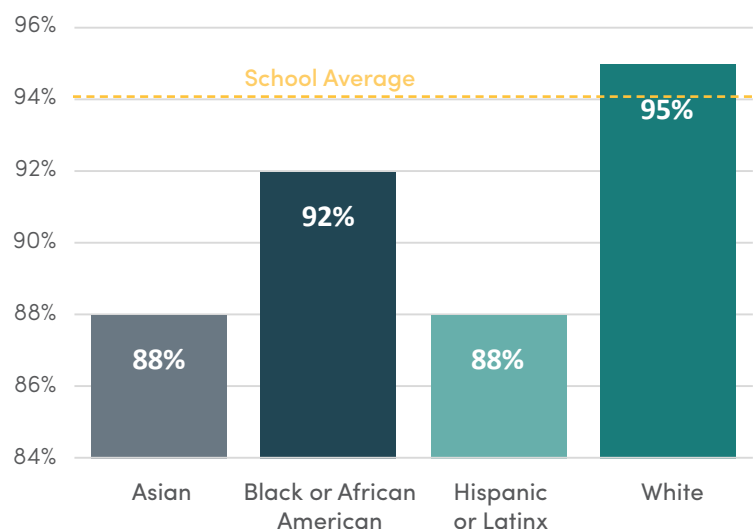
75%

College Completion Rate

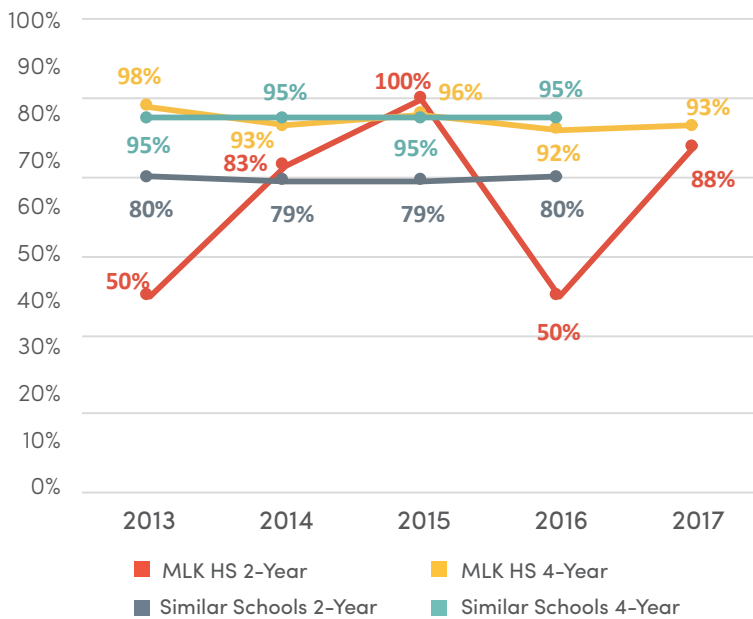
College-Going Rate Over Time



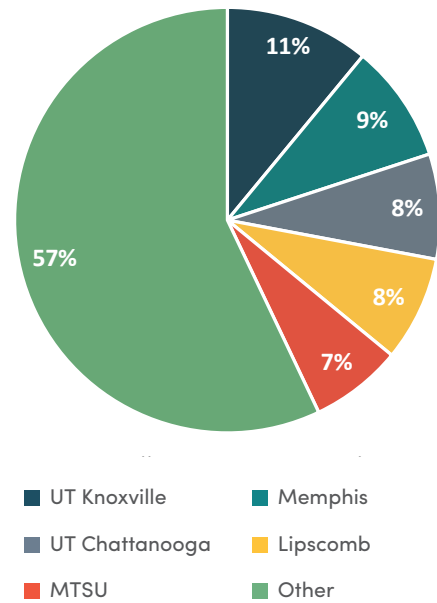
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



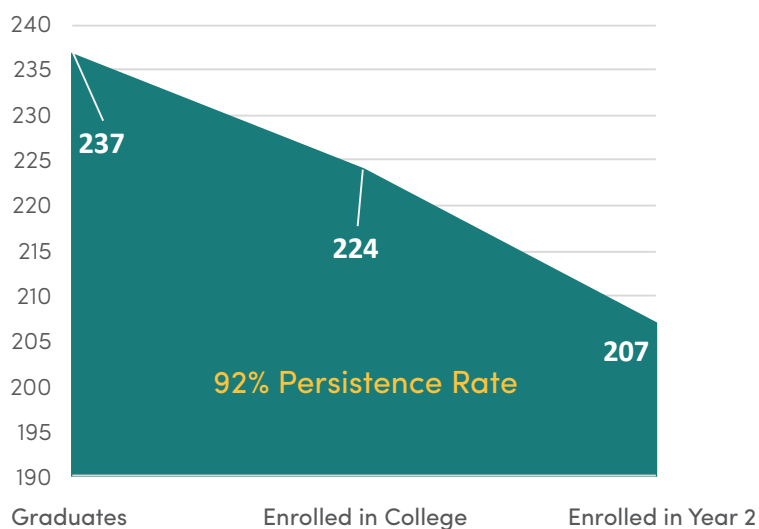
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. UT Knoxville (25)
 2. Memphis (21)
 3. UT Chattanooga (18)
 4. Lipscomb (17)
 5. MTSU (15)
 6. TSU (14)
 7. Tennessee Tech (13)
 8. Belmont (9)
 9. Vanderbilt (9)
 10. Trevecca (6)
- Other (77)

McGavock High School

2,295
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

40.7%

Economically Disadvantaged

65%
ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

5.9%

English Learners

40.2%

Black or African American

17.9%

Hispanic or Latinx

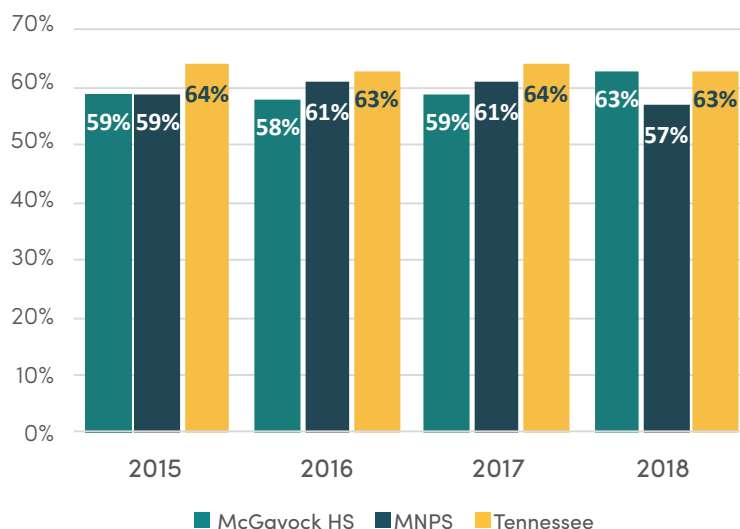
19.3

Average ACT Composite

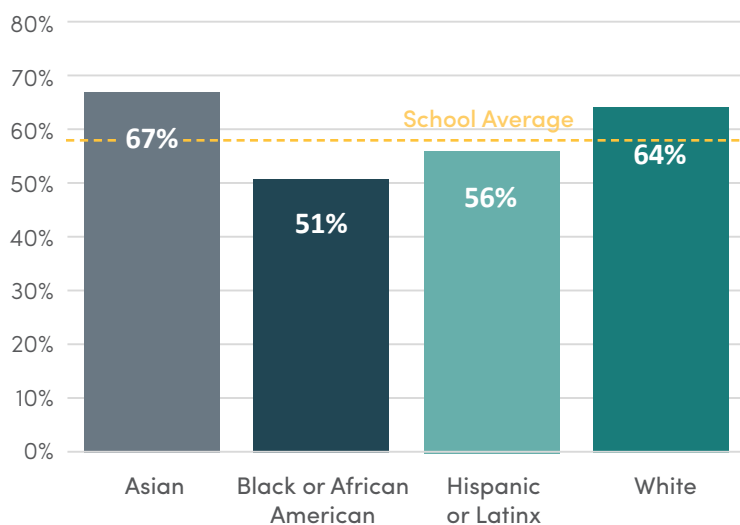
20%

College Completion Rate

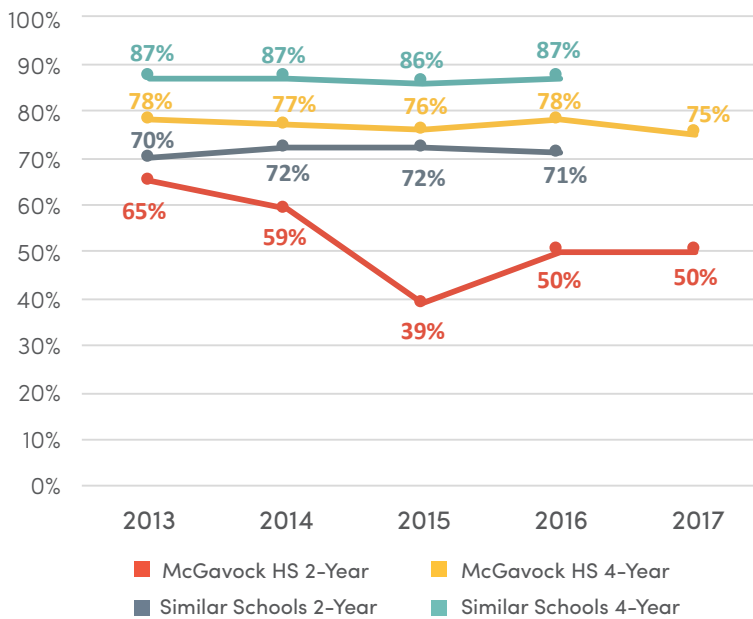
College-Going Rate Over Time



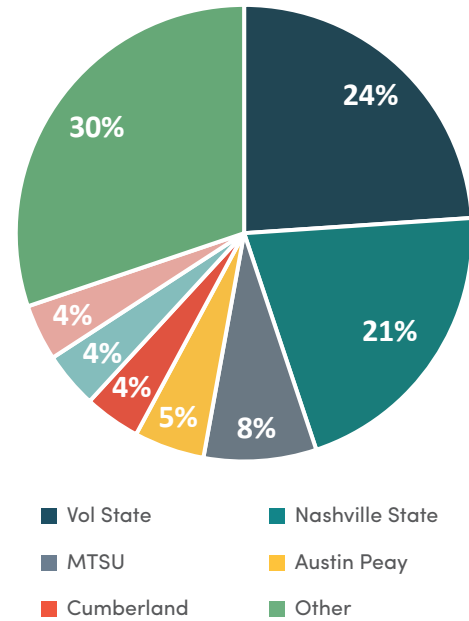
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



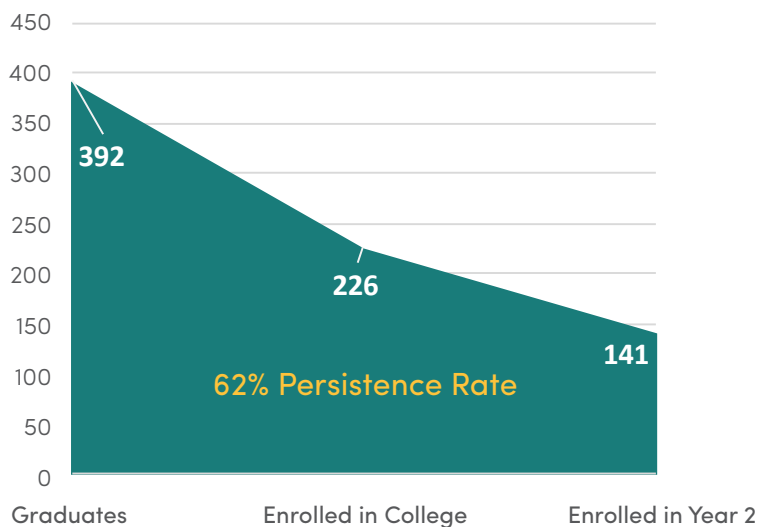
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Vol State (63)
 2. Nashville State (54)
 3. MTSU (20)
 4. Austin Peay (12)
 5. Cumberland (11)
 6. Tennessee Tech (11)
 7. Western Kentucky (11)
 8. UT Knoxville (8)
 9. ETSU (7)
 10. Lipscomb (7)
- Other (57)

Middle College High School

129
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

22.5%
Economically Disadvantaged

36%
ESTIMATED
Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

2.3%
English Learners

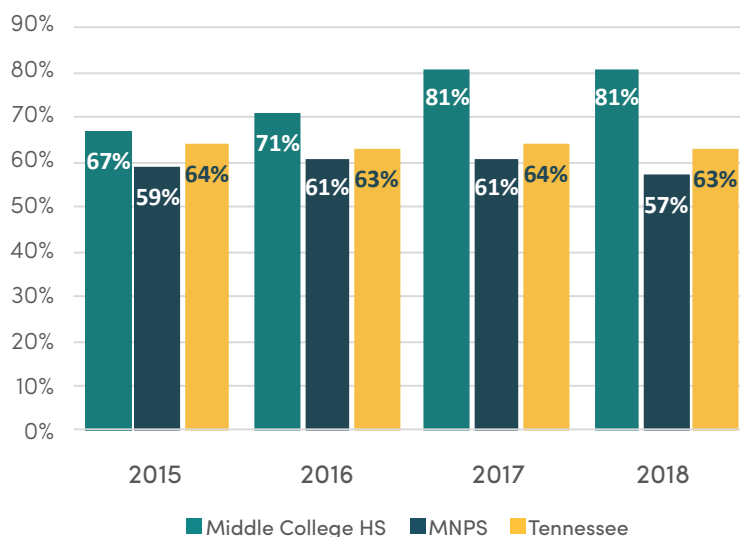
36.4%
Black or African American

36.5%
Hispanic or Latinx

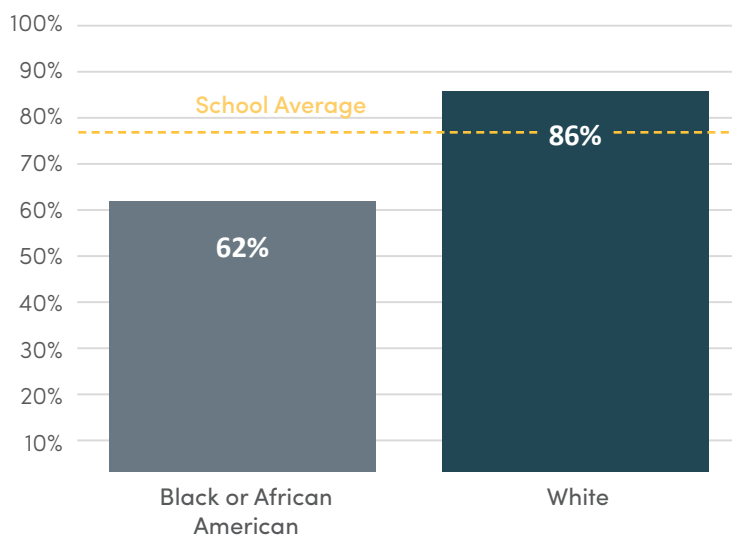
21.8
Average ACT Composite

47%
College Completion Rate

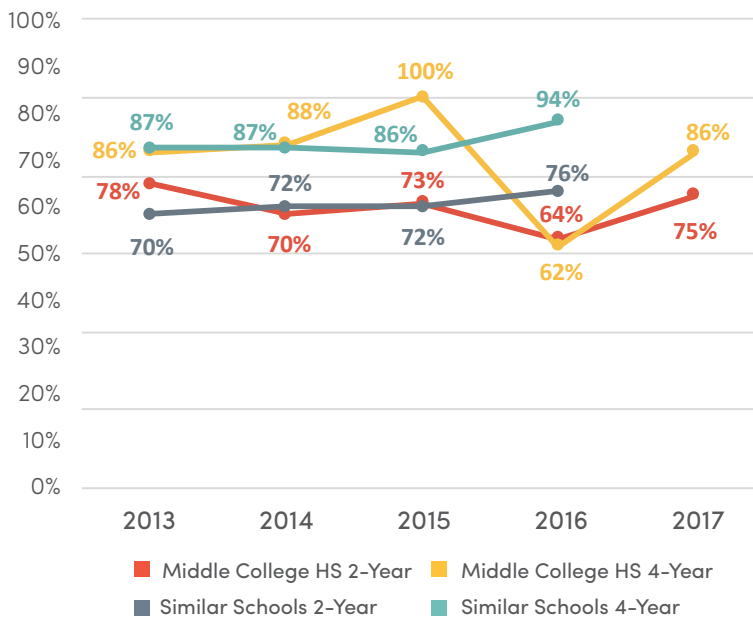
College-Going Rate Over Time



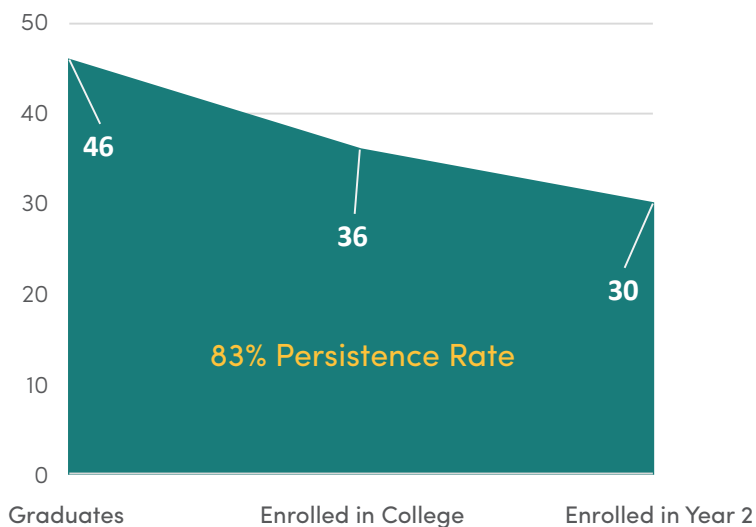
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



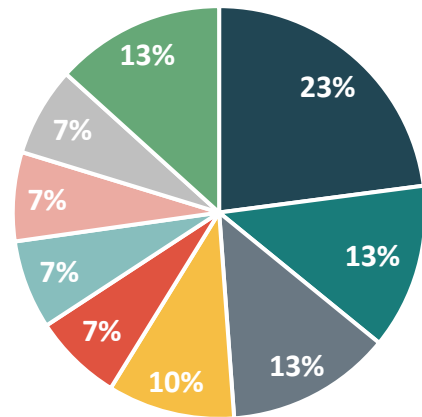
First to Second Year College Persistence



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



- Nashville State
- MTSU
- Trevecca
- UT Knoxville
- Belmont
- Fisk
- UT Chattanooga
- Vol State
- Other

1. Nashville State (7)
 2. MTSU (4)
 3. Trevecca (4)
 4. UT Knoxville (3)
 5. Belmont (2)
 6. Fisk (2)
 7. UT Chattanooga (2)
 8. Vol State (2)
 9. Florida International (1)
 10. Motlow State (1)
- Other (2)

Nashville Big Picture High School

129
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

39.5%
Economically Disadvantaged

63%
ESTIMATED
Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

1.6%
English Learners

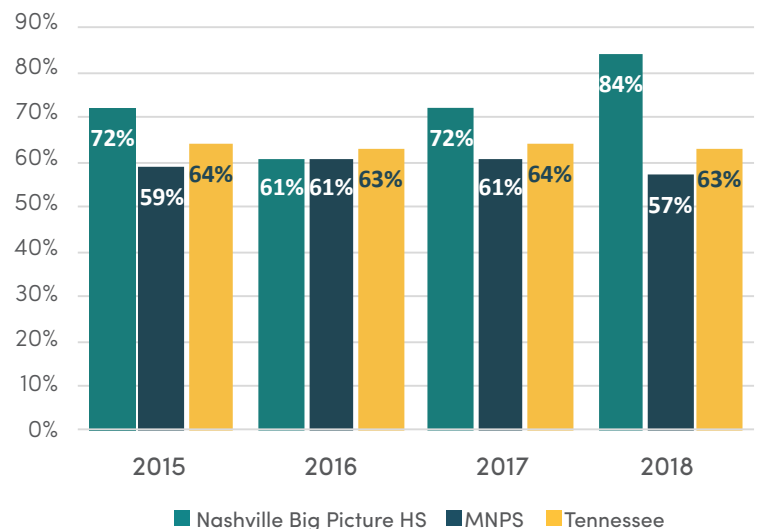
65.1%
Black or African American

12.1%
Hispanic or Latinx

N/A
Average ACT Composite

8%
College Completion Rate

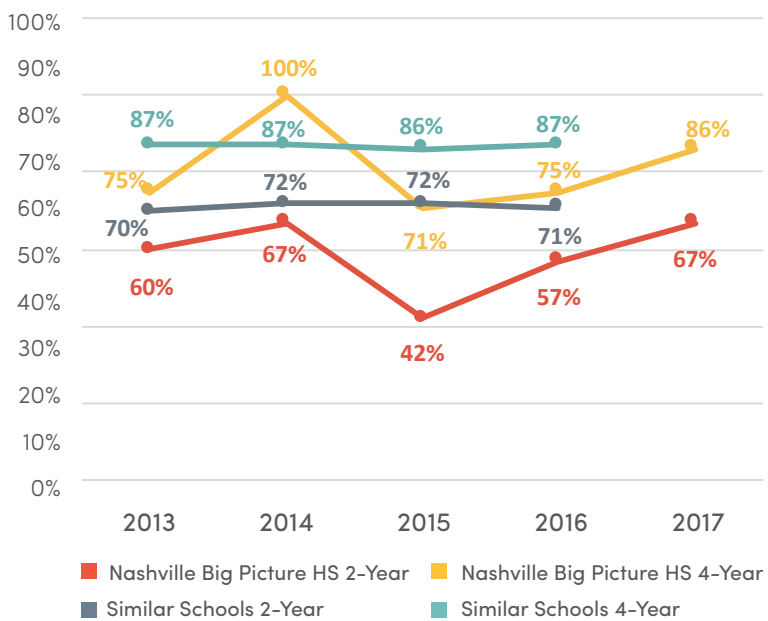
College-Going Rate Over Time



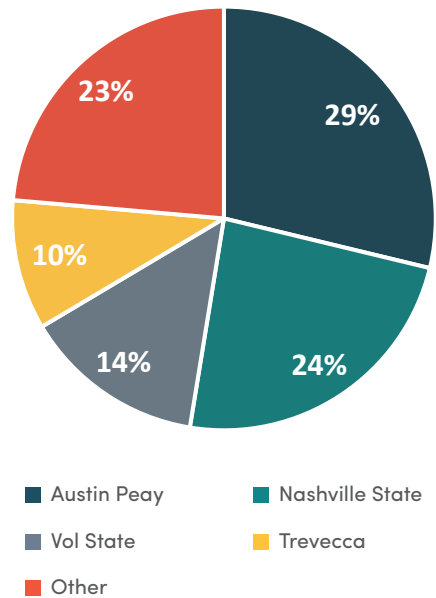
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity

Nashville Big Picture college enrollment data by race and ethnicity did not include multiple categories; racial and ethnic group data was suppressed due to low student counts.

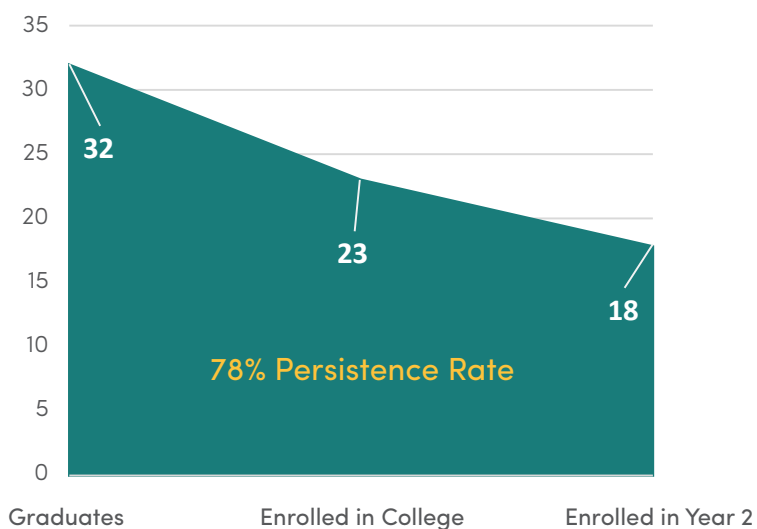
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Austin Peay (6)
2. Nashville State (5)
3. Vol State (3)
4. Trevecca (2)
5. Lipscomb (1)
6. Spelman (1)
7. TCAT-Nashville (1)
8. TSU (1)
9. Univ. of Pittsburgh (1)
10. N/A

Nashville School of the Arts

554
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

17.7%
Economically Disadvantaged

28%
ESTIMATED
Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

0.4%
English Learners

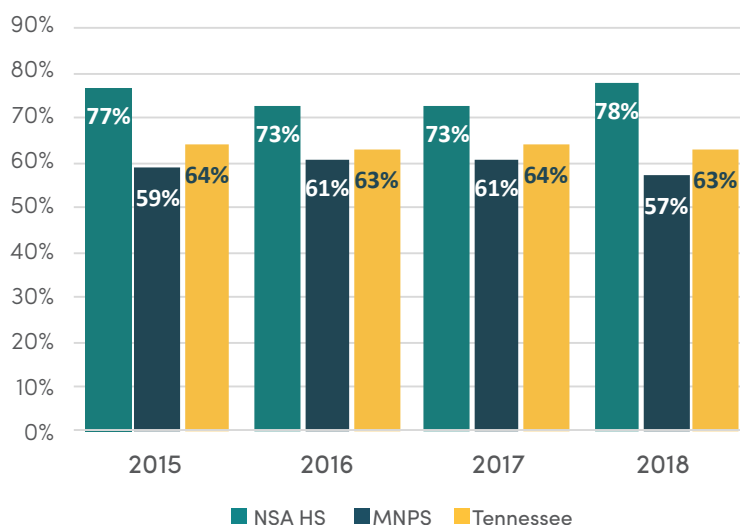
36.5%
Black or African American

8.5%
Hispanic or Latinx

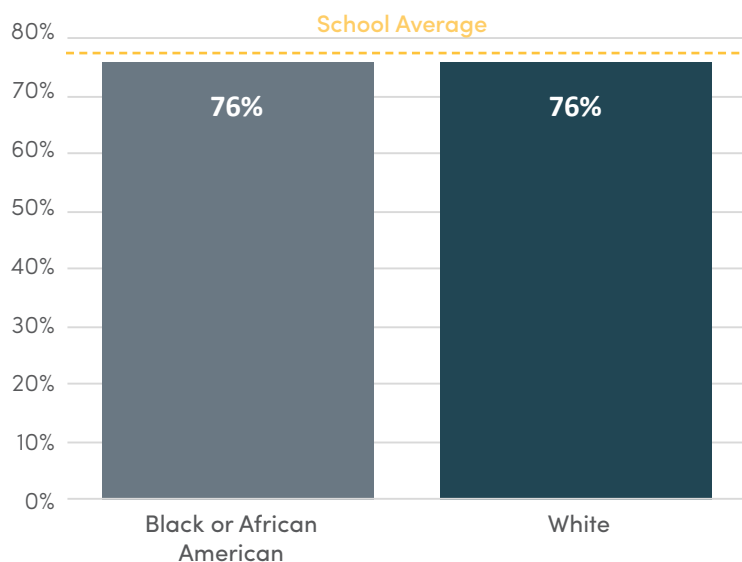
21.1
Average ACT Composite

40%
College Completion Rate

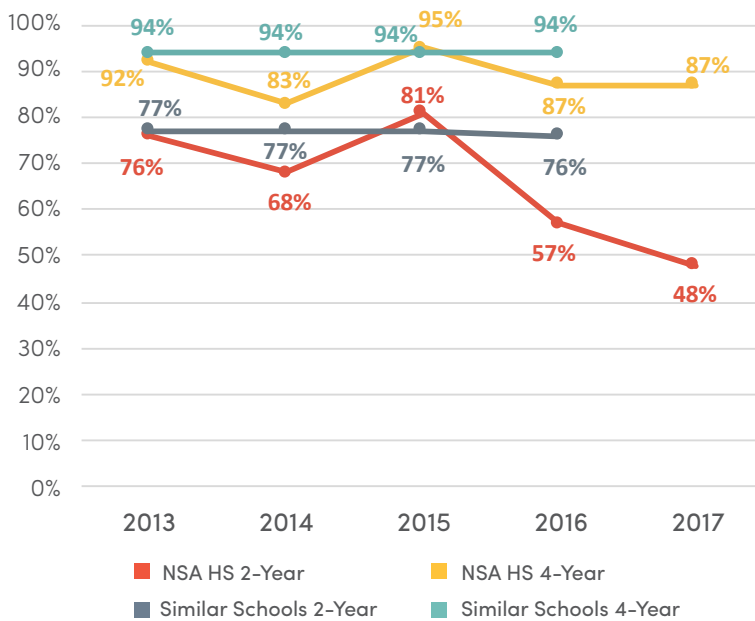
College-Going Rate Over Time



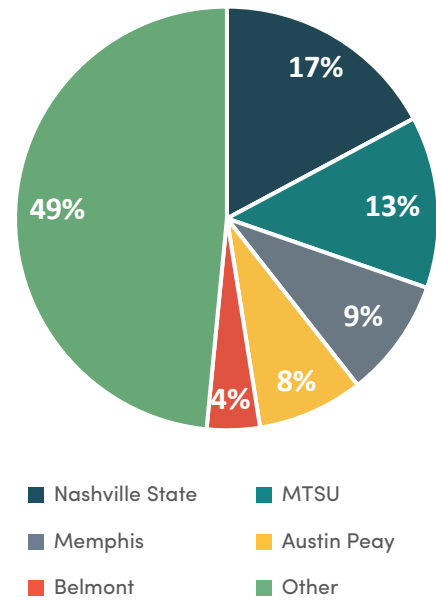
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



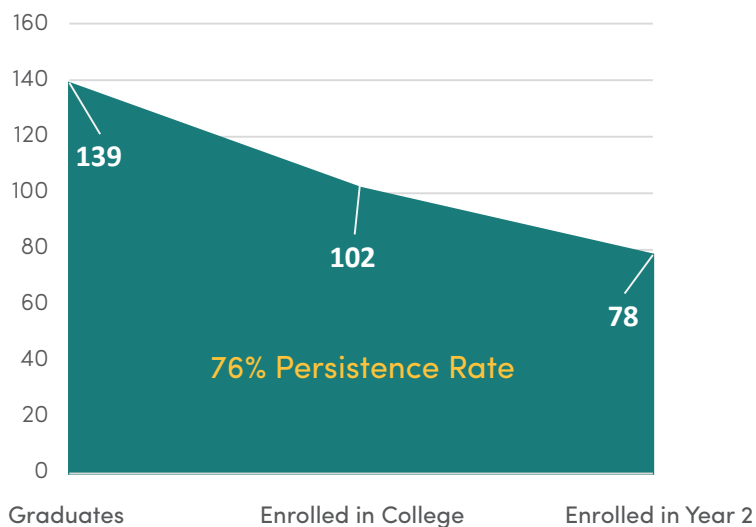
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Nashville State (17)
 2. MTSU (13)
 3. Memphis (9)
 4. Austin Peay (8)
 5. Belmont (4)
 6. Clark Atlanta (3)
 7. TSU (3)
 8. Sewanee (3)
 9. UT Chattanooga (3)
 10. Academy of Art (2)
- Other (33)

Pearl-Cohn High School

593
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

73%

Economically Disadvantaged

117%
ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

2.2%

English Learners

94%

Black or African American

3.5%

Hispanic or Latinx

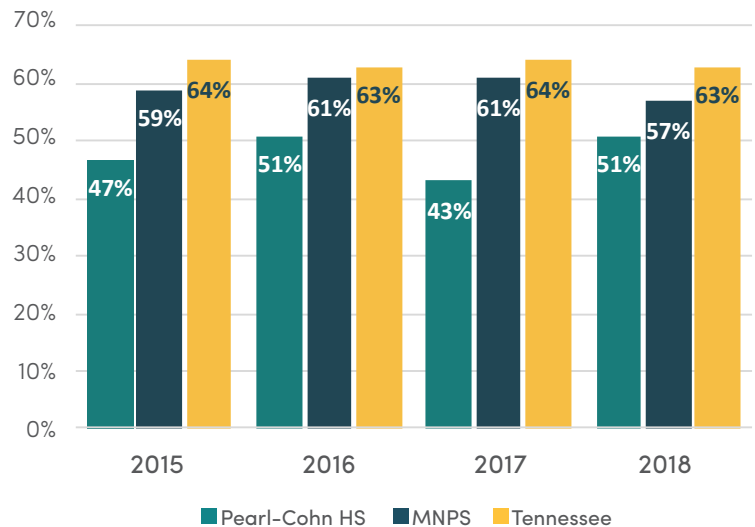
15.6

Average ACT Composite

14%

College Completion Rate

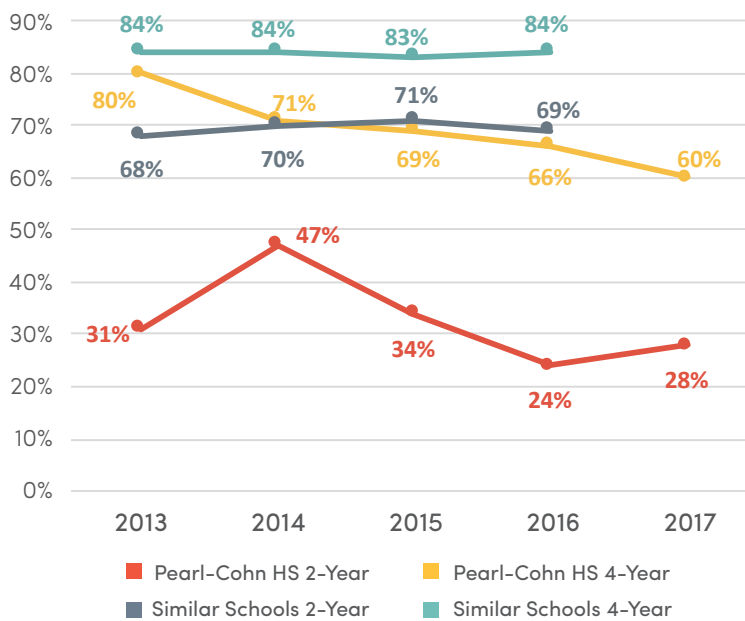
College-Going Rate Over Time



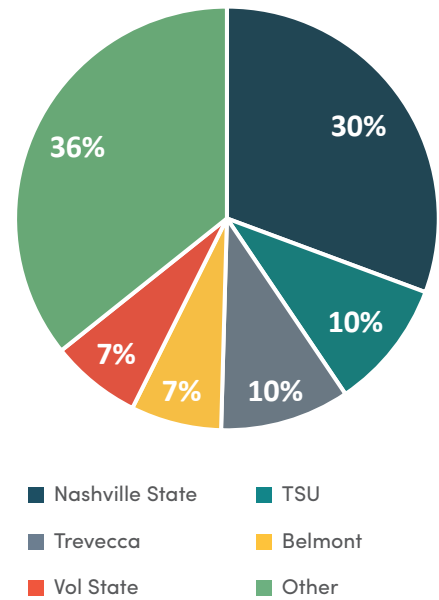
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity

Pearl-Cohn college enrollment data by race and ethnicity did not include multiple categories; racial and ethnic group data was suppressed due to low student counts.

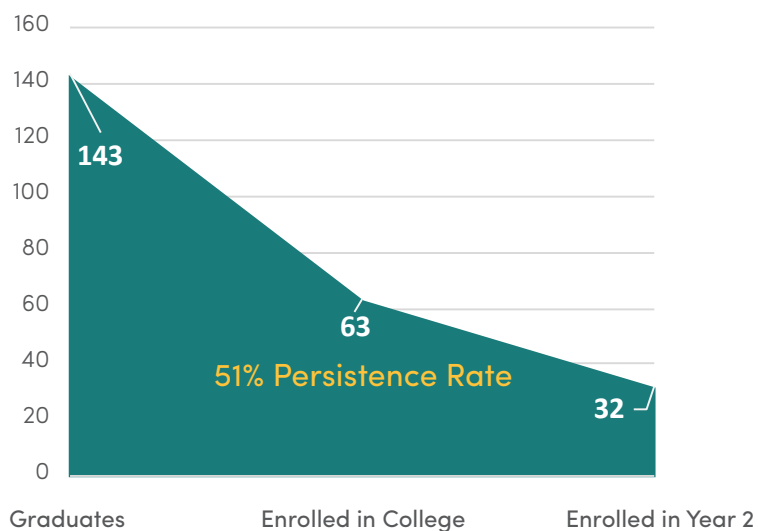
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Nashville State (22)
 2. TSU (7)
 3. Trevecca (7)
 4. Belmont (5)
 5. Vol State (5)
 6. MTSU (4)
 7. Austin Peay (3)
 8. TCAT Nashville (3)
 9. Western Kentucky (3)
 10. Memphis (2)
- Other (11)

Stratford High School

1,006
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

66.4%

Economically Disadvantaged

106%
ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

8.3%

English Learners

71.2%

Black or African American

8.3%

Hispanic or Latinx

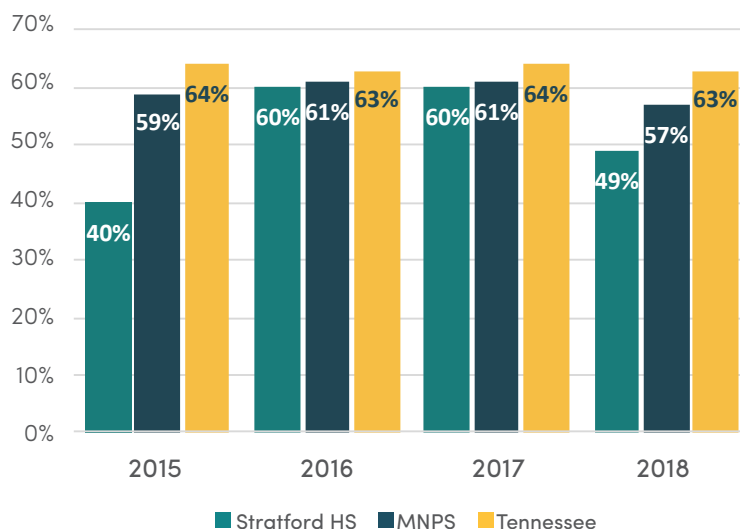
16.2

Average ACT Composite

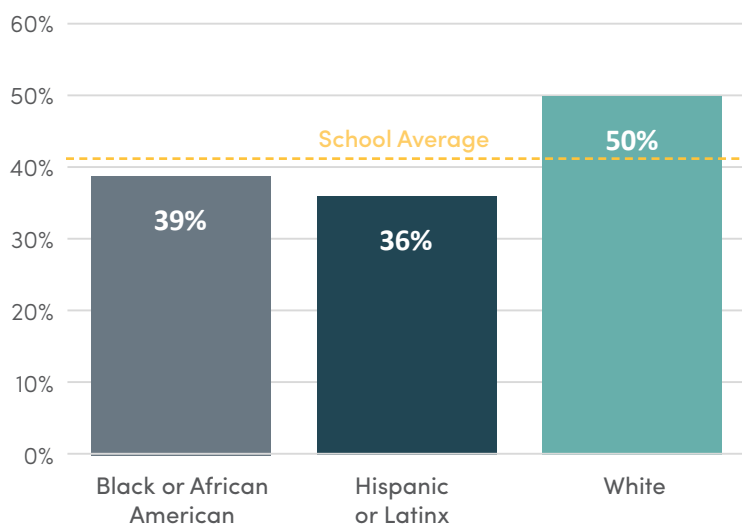
13%

College Completion Rate

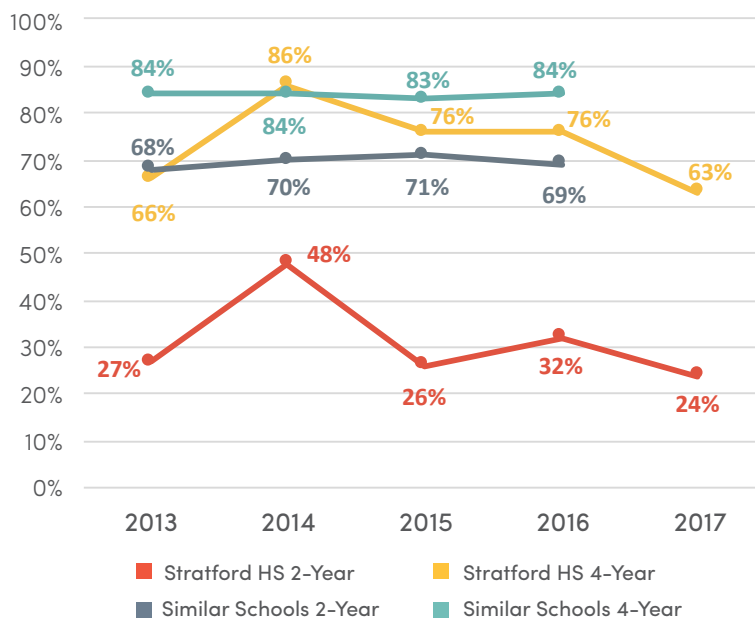
College-Going Rate Over Time



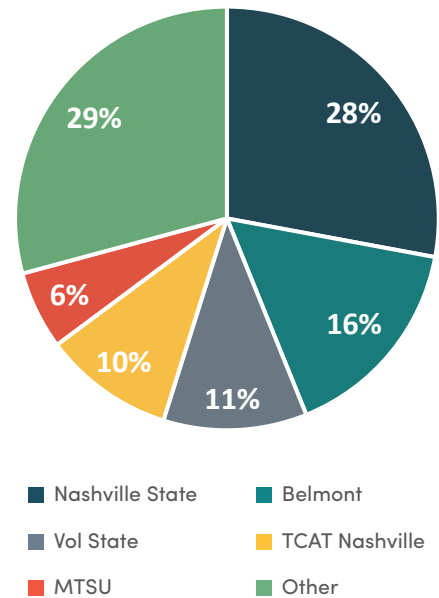
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



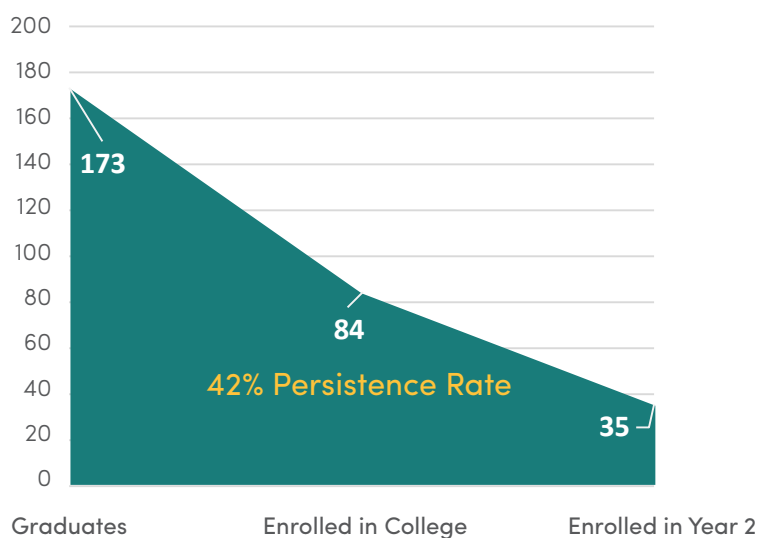
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Nashville State (23)
 2. Belmont (13)
 3. Vol State (9)
 4. TCAT Nashville (8)
 5. MTSU (5)
 6. Austin Peay (4)
 7. TSU (3)
 8. Cleveland State (2)
 9. Cumberland (2)
 10. Alabama A&M (1)
- Other (12)

Whites Creek High School

651
STUDENTS
(2018-19 School Year)

59%

Economically Disadvantaged

94%
ESTIMATED

Students Eligible for Free
and Reduced Lunch

2.5%

English Learners

82.5%

Black or African American

4.6%

Hispanic or Latinx

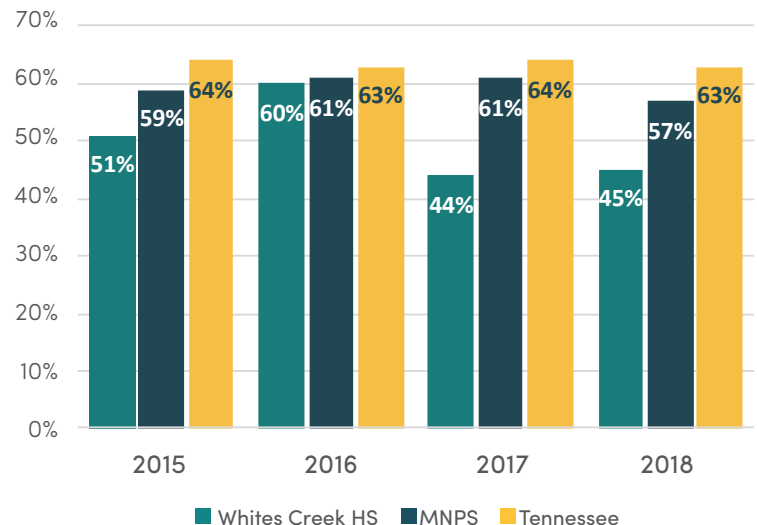
16

Average ACT Composite

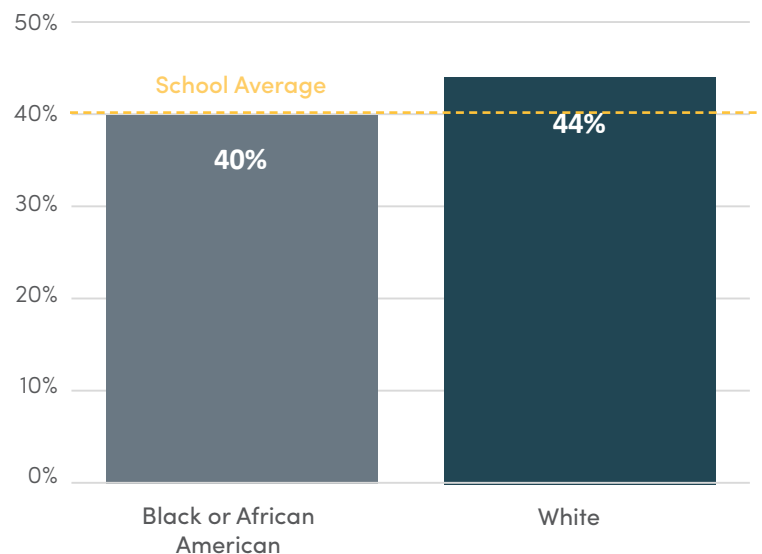
14%

College Completion Rate

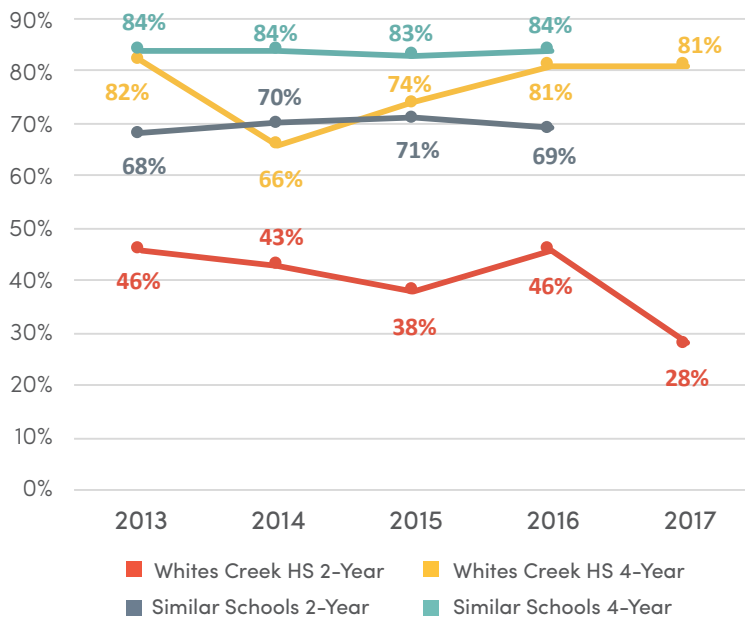
College-Going Rate Over Time



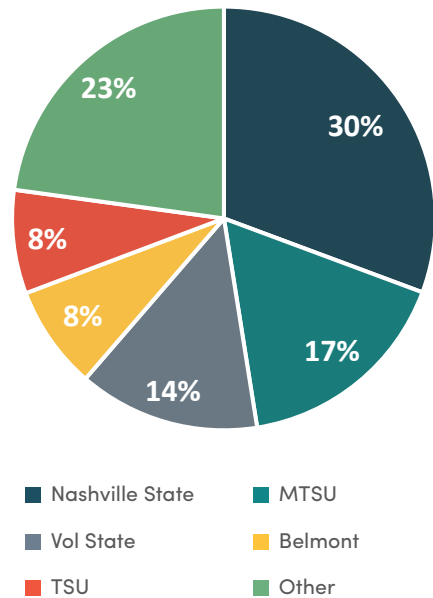
Class of 2018 College Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



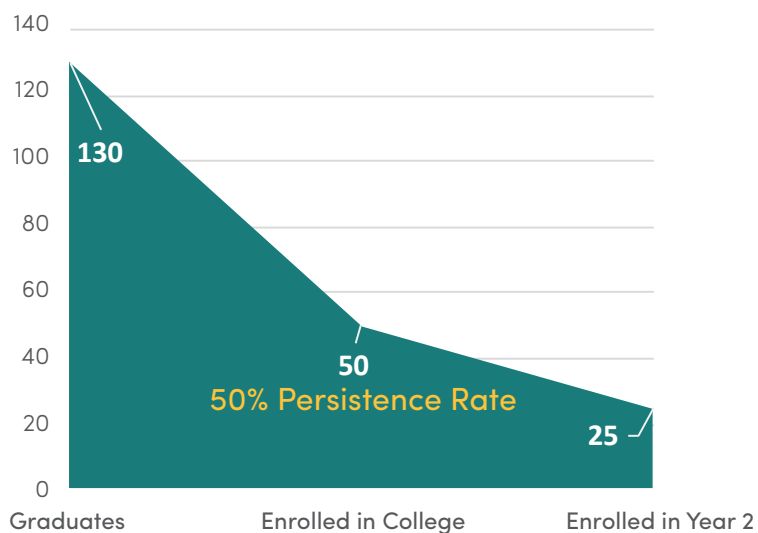
First to Second Year College Persistence



Top Colleges by Class of 2018 Enrollment



Class of 2017 College Enrollment and Persistence



1. Nashville State (20)
 2. MTSU (11)
 3. Vol State (9)
 4. Belmont (5)
 5. TSU (5)
 6. Alabama A&M (2)
 7. Austin Peay (2)
 8. TCAT Nashville (2)
 9. Memphis (2)
 10. ETSU (1)
- Other (6)

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Scarlett Family Foundation, Key Insights of MNPS, 2020, <https://www.scarlettfoundation.org/what-we-are-learning/metro-nashville-school-board-district-profiles-good-data-empowers-parents-advocates-and-local-leaders/>

ⁱⁱ Information on students taking steps toward college enrollment based on Tennessee Promise data showing between proportion of students applying for Tennessee Promise by county for high school classes 2015–2018 (2019 Tennessee Promise Annual Report, THEC). Information on immediate college enrollment from TDOE Report Card. Information on persistence to second year and degree within six years from NSC provided by MNPS.

ⁱⁱⁱ College-going rate for MNPS and Tennessee from TDOE Report Card Data. College-going rate for United States from National Center for Education Statistics, data for class of 2018 not yet available.

^{iv} Drive to 55 legislation was passed in 2014. The first cohort of students to benefit from Drive to 55 and TN Promise was the class of 2015.

^v National Student Clearinghouse Data count of graduating seniors for the class of 2018 reports 4,487 graduates. 4% of the graduates equals 193.88.

^{vi} Data from TDOE Report Card. Data on Nashville Big Picture not provided due to small number of students.

^{vii} 2019 Nashville Bridge to Completion Report, TCASN, p. 13

^{viii} Harper, J. (2013) "Nashville's New Nickname: Little Kurdistan." The Washington Times. February 23, 2013.

^{ix} Data on college enrollment by race and ethnicity from NSC provided by MNPS.

^x Data on persistence by institution type for MNPS from NSC data provided by MNPS. Data on persistence by institution type for similar schools uses data from NSC High School Benchmarks reports 2013–2019. Similar schools used are low-income high schools nationally, which have 50% or more students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

^{xi} Data on college persistence by race and ethnicity from NSC provided by MNPS.

^{xii} Six-year completion rate data from NSC provided by MNPS.

^{xiii} Six-year completion rate data from NSC provided by MNPS.

^{xiv} M. M. Chiu and L. Khoo, "Effects of Resources, Inequality, and Privilege Bias on Achievement: Country, School, and Student Level Analyses," *American Educational Research Journal* 42, no. 4 (2005): 575–603, <http://aer.sagepub.com/content/42/4/575.abstract>; S. W. Raudenbush, R. P. Fotiu, and Y. F. Cheong, "Inequality of Access to Educational Resources: A National Report Card for Eighth-Grade Math," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 20 (1998): 253–67, <http://www.ssicentral.com/hlm/techdocs/EEPA98.pdf>; G. Orfield and C. Lee, "Why Segregation Matters: Poverty and Educational Inequality," The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, January 2005, <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/why-segregation-matters-poverty-and-educational-inequality/orfield-why-segregation-matters-2005.pdf>; Mark Schneider, "Do School Facilities Affect Academic Outcomes?" National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, November 2002, <http://www.ncef.org/pubs/outcomes.pdf>; A. S. Wells, B. Baldrige, J. Duran, R. Lofton, A. Roda, M. Warner, T. White, and C. Grzesikowski, "Why Boundaries Matter: A Study of Five Separate and Unequal Long Island School Districts," The Center for Understanding Race and Education (CURE), Teachers College, Columbia University, July 2009, <http://www.policyarchive.org/handle/10207/95995>; M. Kalmijn and G. Kraaykamp, "Race, Cultural Capital, and Schooling: An Analysis of Trends in the United States," *Sociology of Education* 69 (1996): 22–34, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2112721?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents; J. Prager, D. Longshore, and M. Seeman, *School Desegregation Research: New Directions in Situational Analysis* (New York, NY: Plenum Press, 1986), https://www.springer.com/us/book/9780306421518?token=gbgen&wt_mc=GoogleBooks.GoogleBooks.3.EN; P. DiMaggio, "Cultural Capital and School Success: The Impact of Status Culture Participation on the Grades of U.S. High School Students," *American Sociological Review* 47, no. 2 (April 1982): 189–201, https://campus.fsu.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/academic/social_sciences/sociology/Reading%20Lists/Stratification%20%28Gender%2C%20Race%2C%20and%20Class%29%20Copies%20of%20Articles%20from%202009/DiMaggio-ASR-1982.pdf.

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3. Rucker Johnson, "Long-Run Impacts of School Desegregation and School Quality on Adult Attainments," NBER Working Paper (Revised August 2015), https://gsppi.berkeley.edu/~ruckerj/johnson_schooldesegregation_NBERw16664.pdf.

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^{xvi} Nation, Maury et.al, Nashville Longitudinal Study of Youth Safety and Well-being, Vanderbilt University, December 2019, <https://news.vanderbilt.edu/2019/12/19/vanderbilts-mnps-youth-safety-and-well-being-study-releases-early-findings/nlsys/>

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