



Nashville Public Education FOUNDATION

What we do: This Project

Advocating for Change	●
Promoting Excellence & Innovation	
Supporting MNPS	
Convening Stakeholders	●

What We Did:

Starting in 2018, NPEF and the Tennessee College Access and Success Network (TCASN) have collaborated to produce reports analyzing MNPS graduate data to identify the top issues facing students and recommend strategies for improvement. The report is the first to bring together multiple data sources from the National Student Clearinghouse and the Tennessee Department of Education. It analyzes data each step of the way on students' postsecondary pathway: 1) college-going intentions, such as registering for the ACT or taking AP classes; 2) enrollment in a 2- or 4-year institution; 3) persistence, meaning the student has returned for their second year of college; and 4) completion, measured by the student attaining their 2- or 4-year degree within either 3 or 6 years respectively. The report also examines a particularly important metric known as summer melt, which is the drop off of students who enrolled in the spring but did not attend college in the fall.

Bridge to Completion analyzes a comprehensive data set that:

- Bridges multiple data sets spanning K-12 and higher education
- Includes stakeholder perspectives across the ecosystem including philanthropy, business, community organizations, and local government
- Contains multi-level analysis of both district and individual high schools

The report contextualizes data through:

- Apples-to-apples comparisons to similar schools and other large, urban districts as well as national data
- A focus on where growth is occurring rather than absolute performance
- A high-level look at the effects of policies and funding on postsecondary outcomes

Bridge to Completion

What it is:

To support the city's goal of significantly increasing Nashville's college completion rate, the Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) produces the annual **Bridge to Completion report**, analyzing Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) high school graduate data to identify barriers to success and make recommendations for improvements.

By examining MNPS students' college-going and completion experiences and investigating the underlying root causes for a disparity in academic preparation and affordability, the annual report reveals insights and offers specific recommendations to lessen the success gap for students across the board.

The annual report uses this data to highlight key findings and identify trends in college intentions, enrollment, persistence, and completion. These findings help prioritize the most urgent issues facing Nashville's public school graduates and help build understanding of the barriers that many students face in postsecondary success. This analysis informs a set of recommendations to help improve college-going in Nashville and help build a community-wide web of supports for students, families, educators, schools, and other organizations and stakeholders invested in improving Nashville's rate of college-going.

The report also includes college-going profiles for each MNPS high school, analyzing data for recent graduates on the college-going rate over time, college-going broken down by student demographics, top colleges attended by the high school's graduates, and recent college enrollment and persistence. These profiles provide a helpful look at how students at each MNPS high school are experiencing postsecondary, and how not only the school but the community can support students' postsecondary success.

NPEF is grateful for the partnership of TCASN for the creation of this annual report, as well as for MNPS' willingness to collaborate and share crucial data.



Bridge to Completion

The Impact:



Helping to catalyze over \$30 million invested in college going strategies, including an \$11 million GEAR-UP grant and a \$7 million JPMorgan Chase grant



The creation of a College Champions advisory group that informs the college-going strategy and aligns partner supports to community goals



The launch of NashvilleGRAD, an initiative spearheaded by the Mayor's office that provides funds for students at Nashville State to cover non-tuition-related expenses. The program was born out of a recommendation from a Bridge to Completion report



The creation of another NPEF initiative, Nashville Goes to College, an online tool serving as a college-going resource connecting students, families, educators, and other organizations to help students realize their postsecondary aspirations



Increased community awareness, engagement, and action regarding Nashville's college-going data and the barriers to postsecondary attainment, as well as the urgent need to address these issues



Why it Matters:

Some progress has been made in developing the infrastructure to support college access and success for MNPS graduates, with significant investments at each stage of the college completion process and a more coordinated ecosystem than ever before. However, we know that every MNPS student does not yet have access to the supports they need to achieve their postsecondary aspirations.

Currently, about a quarter of MNPS over 80,000 students are completing a two or four-year college program, while we know that 60% of available jobs moving forward will require such a degree. While we have seen gains in recent college-going rates, our research suggests that the conditions that allow students to develop a college-going identity and the conditions that nurture and support those aspirations are not uniformly present across all district schools. This is especially true at schools serving high percentages of low-income students and students of color. While there is no single policy or practice that will ensure all students will choose to pursue a postsecondary degree, we can create a web of solutions that help students develop their postsecondary aspirations, prepare them academically to succeed, and support them through the process. Bridge to Completion provides the data that can move those policies and practices from idea to implementation.