IN BRIEF

A POLICY BRIEF OF THE JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND

JACKSONVILLE Public Education Fund

CONTENTS

How many Duval County Public Schools students graduate from high school ready for college and the workforce? This is an important question that lays the foundation for efforts to improve public education in Jacksonville.

In this issue, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund takes an in-depth look at what it means to be college and career ready, and what Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) is doing to promote postsecondary readiness for all its students. We found that readiness is measured in many ways, but a number of compelling statistics identify critical areas of reform needed to create a strategic and supportive college access pipeline for all students in DCPS.

TO GRADUATION AND BEYOND:
College & career readiness in Duval County

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Technological advances over the last few decades have revolutionized the way we live, work and interact at an unprecedented pace. As a result, the landscape of our economy has also experienced a rapid shift in the demand for highly-skilled workers possessing at least some advanced or specialized education beyond high school. In Northeast Florida alone, a recent study by the Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. (JCCI) reported that seven out of the top ten fastest growing fields in the Jacksonville metropolitan area right now require at least some postsecondary education of qualified applicants.[1]

> **Postsecondary readiness rates have risen over the past few years, however too many graduates are not prepared for college success.**

In this issue, we take a closer look at what it means to be college and career ready, and what Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) is doing to promote postsecondary readiness for all its students. We found a number of compelling statistics and critical areas of reform needed to create a strategic and supportive college access pipeline for all students in DCPS and beyond.

The good news is that postsecondary readiness rates of DCPS graduates have steadily risen over the past few years, thanks in large part to higher curriculum standards and acceleration programs put in place to promote college readiness by DCPS. However there still remains a large number of students not making it to graduation, and too many graduates not prepared for college success. At Florida State College of Jacksonville alone, nearly 60% of enrolling DCPS graduates require some form of academic remediation prior to beginning work toward their degree.[2]

We found that students who fall behind in their course credits during the first year of high school are at an extremely elevated risk for not graduating on time, and that African-American students in the district are disproportionately scoring below state college readiness benchmarks on the SAT.

At the community level, we found that there is no unified set of definitions, expectations or information shared across institutions about what it means to be college and career ready. There is also no comprehensive system for tracking student outcomes from K-12 through postsecondary using one commonly defined set of goals and standards.

Our recommendations include the use of a single, streamlined student progress monitoring system within the district to better identify students at risk of falling behind early, dedicated and staffed college access resource centers at every high school, and a community-wide college access coalition to get all entities currently working on this issue on the same page in a coordinated effort to increase the education level of all students in Jacksonville.

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS IN DUVAL COUNTY

WHY IS THE ISSUE OF COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS IMPORTANT?

- *Growing global demand for skilled workers, but America is underproducing college graduates*
- *Increase in college-ready high school graduates would contribute millions to the local economy*
- *Deeper pool of skilled workers would attract better jobs and more innovation*

How ready our public high school graduates are to succeed in college and the workforce is not just important for those students and their families. It is also vital to the overall well-being of our economy as a whole. Nationwide, the unemployment rate for students without a high school degree is twice as high as it is for graduates with at least an associate degree, and almost three times higher than it is for workers with a bachelor's degree. This is not a trend that is likely to reverse in the future.[3]

> *To become a globally competitive marketplace we need to have a better understanding of what being "college and career ready" means and where our students stand in relation to that goal today.*

A recent Georgetown University study on workforce education and the economy concluded that America has been underproducing college-educated workers for decades with respect to the rising demand for specialized skills and abilities and the global competition for workers. As the study authors put it, "the growing demand for technical sophistication has been coupled with a reduced need, often as the result of automation, for unskilled labor. As an outcome of these technological changes, there has been a persistent and ongoing demand for more postsecondary education and training."[4]

In Jacksonville, the impact of this change in the global economic marketplace has been particularly acute. Over the past five years, the largest employment sector of Northeast Florida's economy has been the service industry (jobs such as restaurant workers, healthcare workers, and administrative support positions), the sector typically comprised of the lowest wage positions.[5] These types of jobs typically come with limited pay and benefits, limited room for growth for most employees, and, in turn, severely limit the amount of disposable income and job creation returned to the economy by its workers. Without a deeper pool of postsecondary educated candidates in the local workforce, Jacksonville will continue to struggle in attracting higher paying jobs to the area and changing this trend.

A significant increase in the number of postsecondary educated workers in the area would have positive ripple effects in the local economy for everyone. According to recent projections, about 6,800 students dropped out from the class of 2011 in Northeast Florida (including Duval County students and surrounding

counties). If only 30% of those drop outs had graduated and gone on to earn a postsecondary degree, the projected impact to the local economy would have been:[6]

- **$37 million** in additional earnings over those students' lifetimes
- **$36 million** in additional annual spending
- **$125 million** in additional home sales by the midpoint of the students' career
- **$3 million** in additional annual vehicle sales
- **350 new jobs** created locally

Clearly, accelerating the transformation of Jacksonville's labor force to one that offers a deeper pool of highly-skilled workers and innovators to attract higher-level jobs in a globally competitive marketplace is of critical importance. Before we can make that happen here, we need to have a better understanding of just what being "college and career ready" means and where our students stand today in relation to that goal.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE COLLEGE AND CAREER READY?

- *Understanding the path to graduation in Duval County*
- *Basic standardized test requirements for graduation and college entrance*
- *Benchmarks for postsecondary readiness*

To understand the graduation and postsecondary readiness rates of DCPS in proper context, it is first necessary to understand what is required of students to graduate in the district. The core curriculum requirements that students must meet between 9th and 12th grade in order to graduate with a standard diploma include:

- 4 credits in English/Language Arts
- 4 credits in Mathematics (including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II)
- 4 credits in Science (including Biology and either Chemistry or Physics)
- 3 credits in Social Studies (including World History, American History, U.S. Government and Economics)
- 2 credits in Foreign Language
- 1 credit in Career Education or the Arts
- 1 credit in Physical Education
- 5 additional Elective credits

For students enrolled in accelerated or specialized progression plans or with specifically granted exceptions, there may be some variations to these requirements.[7] But for a general understanding of the path to graduation for most students in DCPS, the 24-credit curriculum laid out above provides the core framework of requirements that students must meet.

In addition to the coursework requirements, there are also basic standardized test requirements that must be met for graduation as well. For students up through 2011, the basic testing requirement for graduation has been passing the 10th grade FCAT or, alternatively, achieving a concordant score on the **ACT** or **SAT**.[8]

For students aspiring to continue their education beyond high school, there are also additional **postsecondary readiness**

TABLE 1

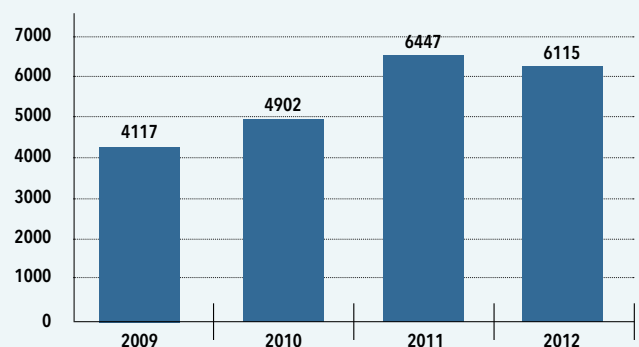| Test (Subsection)	Min. HS graduation (as FCAT alt.)	Min. Postsecondary Readiness	Min. State University System Admission
ACT (Reading)	18	18	19
ACT (English)	---	17	18
ACT (Math)	15	19	19
SAT (Critical Reading)	420	440	460
SAT (Math)	340	440	460

A recent increased focus on student participation in accelerated coursework at the state level over the past few years has led to a significant jump in the numbers of students taking some form of accelerated placement tests and courses in DCPS over the past few years. From 2007 to 2011, the number of students passing AP, IB, or AICE exams district-wide has risen by over 53%, from just over 5,000 students to nearly 7,800.[10] It is important to note, however, that some of this increase in the raw numbers of students passing may also simply be due to the fact that more students are actually taking these exams. According to state reports, while the raw numbers of students taking and passing AP exams specifically has risen over the past few years, the actual rates of students passing the exams has remained proportionately about the same, around 25%.[11]

Many of the courses in these programs are dual enrollment courses, which means students are earning credit towards high school graduation and a college degree or career certificate at the same time. The number of students enrolled in dual enrollment courses through FSCJ has grown by nearly 60% in the past two years (from 1,573 students in 2009 to 3,829 in 2011) to become the largest dual enrollment program in the state.[12]

benchmarks to be met. Postsecondary readiness benchmarks typically involve meeting higher achievement levels on the ACT, SAT or other accepted college placement test than the minimum that would be required for high school graduation. **Table 1** shows the differences in test score benchmarks between what is required to graduate versus what is required to also be considered postsecondary ready by Florida's state definition.

Now that we have a better idea about the path to graduation in DCPS and what it takes above and beyond that to be considered postsecondary ready, we want to take a closer look next at what Duval County is doing to promote meeting these standards among its graduates.

WHAT IS DUVAL COUNTY DOING TO PROMOTE COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS?

- *DCPS has raised curriculum standards beyond state requirements*
- *An increase in student participation and performance in acceleration programs*
- *More career academies and technical programs*

HIGH CURRICULUM STANDARDS

One major step DCPS has taken to promote postsecondary readiness among its graduates is to hold all students to higher curriculum standards than the minimum required by state law. As a result, the DCPS graduation curriculum outlined on the previous page has, for the past several years, been more rigorous than what has been required in many other counties. Course requirements such as Biology, Algebra II and Chemistry or Physics, which only recently became mandatory for all students entering high school throughout Florida in 2011, were instituted as mandatory requirements in Duval County as early as 2007.

DCPS also requires an additional Science credit and two Foreign Language credits above and beyond what are mandated by state law. From a coursework perspective, Duval County's graduation requirements are more aligned with the minimum admission requirements of the State University System[9] than with the minimum state high school requirements, indicating a concerted and laudable focus on postsecondary readiness within the district.

EXPANSION OF ACCELERATION PROGRAMS

DCPS also offers a number of high school acceleration programs designed to allow students to begin taking college-level coursework in high school, many of which can count directly as credits towards their degree in college. Every high school in DCPS offers at least one acceleration program option, including **Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)** programs at four schools, **Early College** programs at four schools, **International Baccalaureate (IB)** diploma programs at six schools, and **Advanced Placement (AP) Honors** programs at ten schools.

TOTAL CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT IN DCPS, 2009-2012   **FIG 1**

Source: Duval County Public Schools

FOCUS ON WORKFORCE READINESS

Career and Technical Education programs (CTE), including **career academies**, are specialized programs of study and elective offerings designed to provide students with practical, career oriented skills to prepare them for both the workforce and more rigorous postsecondary education in their chosen field of study.

The programs offered through the DCPS CTE and career academy programs are varied and cover, at least somewhere, each of the 16 nationally recognized **career clusters**. **Figure 1** shows the increase in CTE course enrollment as programs have been expanded over the past few years, with nearly 2,000 more students enrolled in CTE courses in 2012 than in 2009.

The top clusters for student enrollment in DCPS in 2011-2012 were health science (982 students), information technology (936 students), business management and administration (920 students) and hospitality and tourism (742 students).[13]

For some CTE and career academy students, following through on a specialized program of study can result in an industry certification that can be taken directly into the workplace, or

can give them a head start as they pursue further postsecondary training in their field. The number of students who earn industrial certifications by the time they graduate is relatively small but increasing – from 113 industry certifications earned by students in the district in 2009 to 272 in 2011.[14]

HOW ARE THESE EFFORTS WORKING?

- *Early indicators of on-time graduation*
- *Significant disparities among demographic subgroups*
- *Average postsecondary readiness scores are below requirements at top state universities*

There are at least two important ways that this question needs to be considered. First, how is the district doing in getting students to graduation on time and meeting postsecondary readiness standards? And, second, what is happening with those students after they leave high school?

For the first question we followed a cohort of DCPS students over four years to see what lessons we could learn about who is graduating college and career ready. For the second question, we pulled together information from a variety of postsecondary outcome tracking sources to try to get a more complete understanding of college-going success rates for students after they graduate from DCPS.

*graduated on time and those who did not. In the columns of **Table 2**, we can see how the demographic breakdowns of the different outcome groups in the spring of 2011 compare with the original composition of the total sample.*

Females, white students, and students not receiving free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) all comprise a higher portion of the On-time Graduates group than they did in the entering sample. Males, African-American students, and students receiving free or reduced-price lunch are all overrepresented in the Remaining in District group relative to their proportions in the whole group. Looking down the last column, we see similarly that African-American students and students receiving free or reduced-price lunch are also overrepresented in the Confirmed Dropout or Permanent Withdrawal group.

We also looked at a number of academic and behavioral progress benchmarks across each group to see if they might provide additional insight about what indicators may be associated with increased risk for not graduating on time. One clear indicator that stood out is the number of total credits earned by the end of a student's first year in high school.

In Duval County's 24-credit base curriculum, an entering 9th grader should theoretically complete six credits by the end of their first year to be mathematically on-track for finishing in four years. We found that those students who did successfully graduate within four years

CLASS OF 2011

We began with a cohort of 9,509 students entering 9th grade across duval county in the fall of 2007[15] and followed them across the next four years to learn more about their progress towards graduation and their postsecondary readiness status by the time they were projected to graduate on time from high school. The entering cohort of 9th graders was predominantly African-American and White, evenly divided between males and females, 37% free or reduced-price lunch eligible, and only a little over 4% English language learners. Nearly 90% of incoming 9th graders in this cohort were on the Academic (or "standard") progression plan, with less than 3% of students each in any other specialized or accelerated progression options.

	ENTERING 9TH GRADE COHORT	ON-TIME GRADUATES	REMAINING IN DISTRICT	CONFIRMED DROPOUT/ PERM. WITHDRAWAL
Gender				
Female	50.1%	54.8%	39.2%	49.9%
Male	49.9%	45.2%	60.8%	50.1%
Ethnicity				
Asian	3.9%	5.3%	2.3%	2.1%
African-American	45.3%	40.3%	59.8%	58.7%
Hispanic	6.1%	5.6%	5.9%	4.9%
White	41.1%	44.9%	28.1%	31.9%
Multiracial/N.A./Other	3.7%	3.8%	3.9%	2.5%
Free/Reduced Lunch Status				
Receives free/reduced price lunch	37.2%	28.7%	52.5%	51.4%

TABLE 2

All relationships between variable and outcome status were statistically significant.

ON-TIME GRADUATION

The first thing we looked at was whether there were any identifiable pattern differences between those students who

STUDENTS IN GROUP...	WERE...	MORE LIKELY TO...
Male	1.36 x	**NOT** graduate on-time than female students
African-American	1.74 x	**NOT** graduate on-time than non-African-American students
White	1.18 x	**GRADUATE** on-time than non-White students
Receiving free/reduced price lunch (FRL)	2.0 x	**NOT** graduate on-time than non-FRL students
English language learners (ELL)	1.67 x	**NOT** graduate on-time than non-ELL students
1st year off-track (<6 credits)	3.88 x	**NOT** graduate on-time than 1st year on-track students

TABLE 3

Source: Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville Public Education Fund
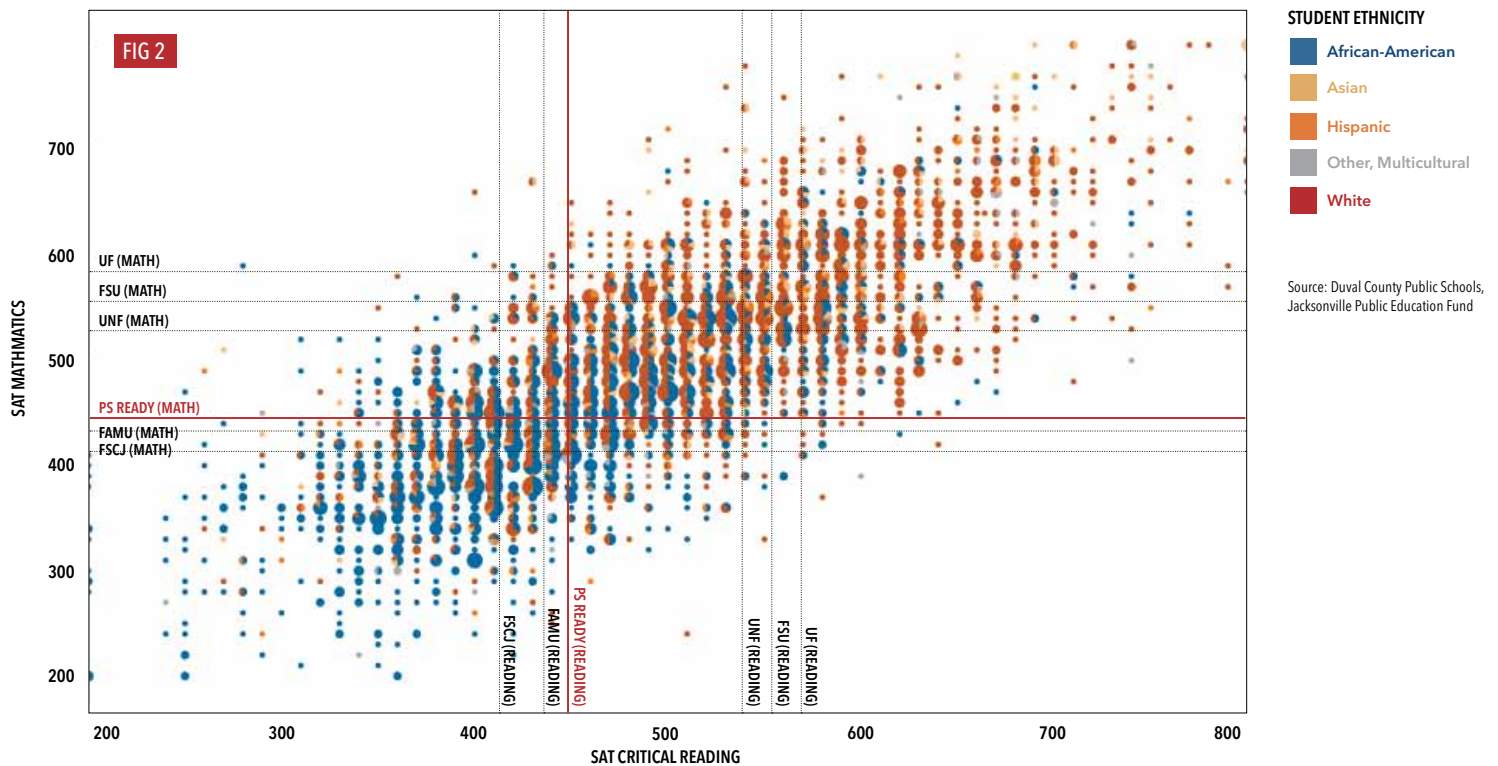
We see with stark emphasis how quickly the expected standards move up for the more competitive universities, and how much further away acceptance to those schools is for students scoring just at or around the state-determined minimum readiness threshold.

of entering high school actually averaged nearly eight credits in their first year, putting themselves well ahead of the pace. Of the groups that either remained in the district at the end of four years or dropped out somewhere along the way, many fell behind the pace on their credits within their first year and never caught up.

To think about it another way, in **Table 3**, we looked at the relative risk of not graduating for students in each group versus students not in that group. If an indicator made no difference in the likelihood of a student graduating on time or not, the relative risk would be 1 (indicating that, all else being equal, a student in that group is just as likely to graduate on time as any other student).

Clearly, being behind the pace in in credits by the end of the first year of high school was far and away the indicator that put students at the most elevated risk of not graduating on time. Students in this sample who had completed fewer than six credits by the end of their first year were nearly four times as likely to not graduate on time or at all than those who successfully completed at least six credits. This finding is also consistent with national research which has similarly identified staying on pace or ahead of pace in course credits during the first year of high school as one of the most significant predictors of on-time graduation available.[16]
In addition, African-American students, students qualifying for free or

reduced-price lunch (FRL) and English language learners (ELL) were all between one to two times more likely to not graduate on time than non-African American, non-FRL, or non-ELL students, respectively.

POSTSECONDARY READINESS

Of those students who did graduate on time, we also looked at whether patterns of meeting college readiness benchmarks varied among different subgroups of graduates.

In **Figure 2**, we see a plot of SAT performance scores among 2011 DCPS on-time graduates by race. The solid red reference lines shown indicate the minimum college-ready SAT score thresholds set by the state of Florida to indicate whether a student requires remediation at the postsecondary level.[17] The results for white students (red marks) were fairly evenly dispersed across the spectrum of possible scores. However there appears to be a disproportionate concentration of African-American student scores (blue marks) in the lower left region of the figure, below and around the college-readiness threshold cutoffs.

We found similar, though less pronounced, patterns when looking at students' scores by free and reduced price lunch status, with students receiving free or reduced price lunch tending to score lower than those who did not.

Because the state minimum college-readiness thresholds for high school graduates are not necessarily aligned with the minimum acceptance standards for all colleges and universities, we also added in the dotted reference lines indicating the average SAT scores of the 25th percentile of last year's incoming freshmen class for each of the top five universities that DCPS graduates tend to enroll in each year.[18]

When looking at student performance with reference to these lines, we see with much starker emphasis how quickly the expected standards move up for the more competitive universities, and how much farther away acceptance at those

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EBONY JOHNSON

FROM PREPARATION TO COLLEGE READINESS

As a rising junior at Raines High School, Ebony Johnson was determined to go to college, but she was often unsure how to prepare. Johnson attended Saturday school, looking to gain additional skills, but it turned out to be mostly remediation. She began to pick up dictionaries and read them, hoping the increase in her vocabulary would help.

She signed up to take the SAT and ACT. Yet where some students take hours of practice tests and study sessions for the college entrance exams, Johnson had little preparation beyond reading the booklet that came with the registration packets. And when it came to applying to college and signing up for financial aid, Johnson was at a loss. No one in her family had ever attended a university, so their guidance wasn't part of the equation.

"I just didn't know what I should be doing," she said. If not for the Hicks Prep Club and the Jacksonville Commitment, Johnson might not be on track to graduate this spring with honors from University of North Florida with a bachelor's degree in sociology and criminal justice.

Johnson was selected to be part of the first class of scholars selected by the Jacksonville Commitment, a partnership among Duval County Public Schools, the City of Jacksonville and the city's four colleges and universities that funds scholarships and college counselors for students in need. As part of the first class of Commitment Scholars, Johnson had moved on to UNF before the advisors went into the schools. Such counsel would have made a big difference.

Instead of reading a dictionary, Johnson could have been directed to SAT prep classes, advised on the best classes to take to get into college and paired with a mentor who could take her on campus visits or coach her on her application essays — all best practices recommended by the National College Access Network (NCAN) for programs that work to improve postsecondary success for students.

The lynchpin in Johnson's success was the Hicks Prep Club, a college preparation program for students whose families take

"Knowing I would have a way to pay for college kept me going," she said. "If kids are taught early on that they have possibilities, it makes a difference."

part in public housing. Hicks Prep helped her fill out financial aid forms and college applications, a complex task for which she had no other guidance. And when she was younger, the promise of a college scholarship kept Johnson on track. According to NCAN, developing college aspirations before high school begins has a strong effect on whether a student will attend college.
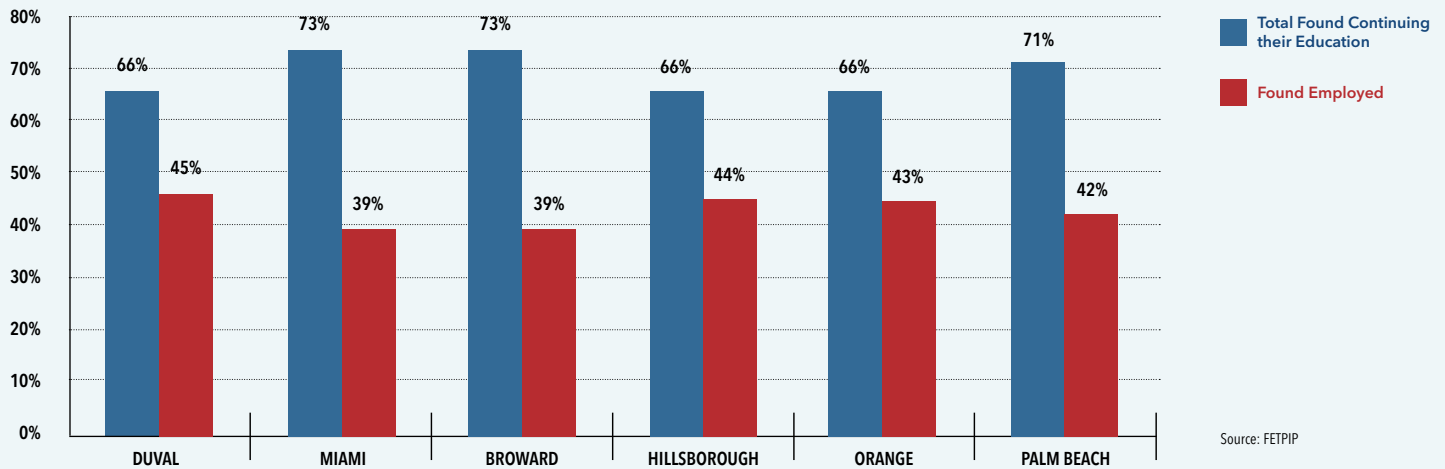
"Knowing I would have a way to pay for college kept me going," she said. "If kids are taught early on that they have possibilities, it makes a difference." A bright student who is now researching the college readiness of Jacksonville Commitment scholars with a professor, Johnson believes her academic preparation was uneven. In addition to more guidance on college access, Johnson believes firmly that ensuring that all schools provide equal access to high quality instruction would make the biggest difference in college readiness among the students she now mentors.

Academically, the lasting impact of her high school Advanced Placement English teacher prepared Johnson to get A's on her college essays. "Mr. Bailey still grades my papers, in my mind at least," she said. "He would always tell us, 'You are going to write for me as if I was a college professor.' If we had to write it 30 times, he would make you do that." Despite scoring a 4 out of 5 on AP English Composition, Johnson struggled to build study skills and she felt her knowledge of history was lacking. "I felt like I had to try harder," she said. "There were skills other people had that I didn't have."

Best practice recommendations from NCAN show that programs must follow high school students to mentor, monitor and support them while they are enrolled in college. For Johnson, that support took the form of a computer purchased for her by Hicks Prep — a college necessity that would otherwise have been out of reach.

CLASS OF 2009 STUDENT OUTCOME COMPARISONS

Legend:
- Total Found Continuing their Education
- Found Employed

District	Total Found Continuing their Education	Found Employed
DUVAL	66%	45%
MIAMI	73%	39%
BROWARD	73%	39%
HILLSBOROUGH	66%	44%
ORANGE	66%	43%
PALM BEACH	71%	42%

Source: FETPIP

schools is for students scoring just at or around the state-determined minimum readiness threshold.

BEYOND GRADUATION

- *Sources of information are fractured and there are no agreed upon standards for postsecondary success*
- *More DCPS students are enrolling in college after graduation*
- *Two-thirds of DCPS graduates attending college go to FSCJ or UNF*

From the district data we now have a better sense of some of the important issues that need to be addressed in getting students to graduate high school on-time and college ready. Connecting that with actual postsecondary outcomes in the years to follow is much more complicated. Information about postsecondary enrollment or employment status of students after high school is often incomplete or monitored by multiple different agencies in different ways and for different purposes. As a result, there is no commonly agreed-upon standard as to what the definitive measures of postsecondary success are, nor is there any single source of information that can address all the issues alone.
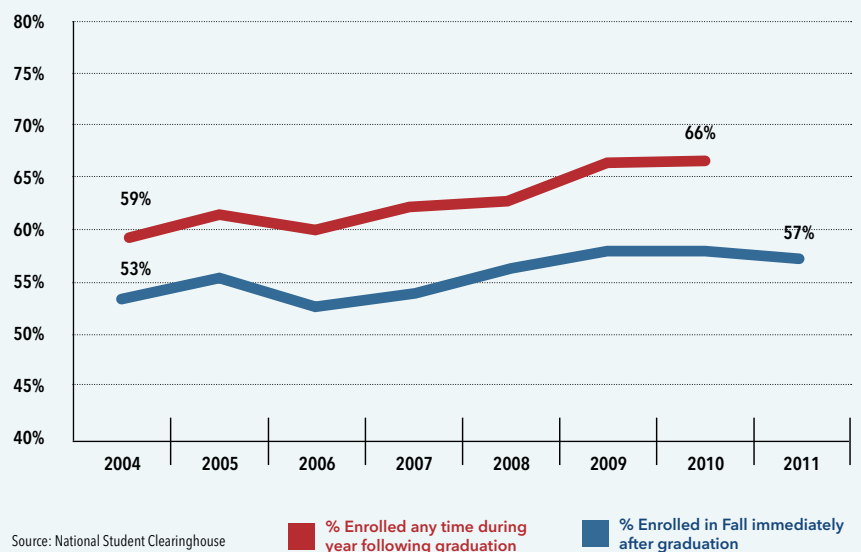
Over the next few sections, we look at measures of postsecondary outcomes for DCPS students from a number of different sources to begin piecing together a more comprehensive understanding of what actually happens to DCPS students after they graduate.

FETPIP DATA : COMPARING OUTCOMES STATEWIDE

Data provided by the Florida Education & Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) is one of the most commonly used sources of information for evaluating student postsecondary education and employment outcomes within the state. FETPIP data is useful for comparing results and trends between different districts in Florida, as well as for comparing results for specific schools to district and statewide averages. Two important

NSC ENROLLMENT TRENDS FOR DCPS GRADUATES, 2004-2011

Source: National Student Clearinghouse

Legend:
- % Enrolled any time during year following graduation
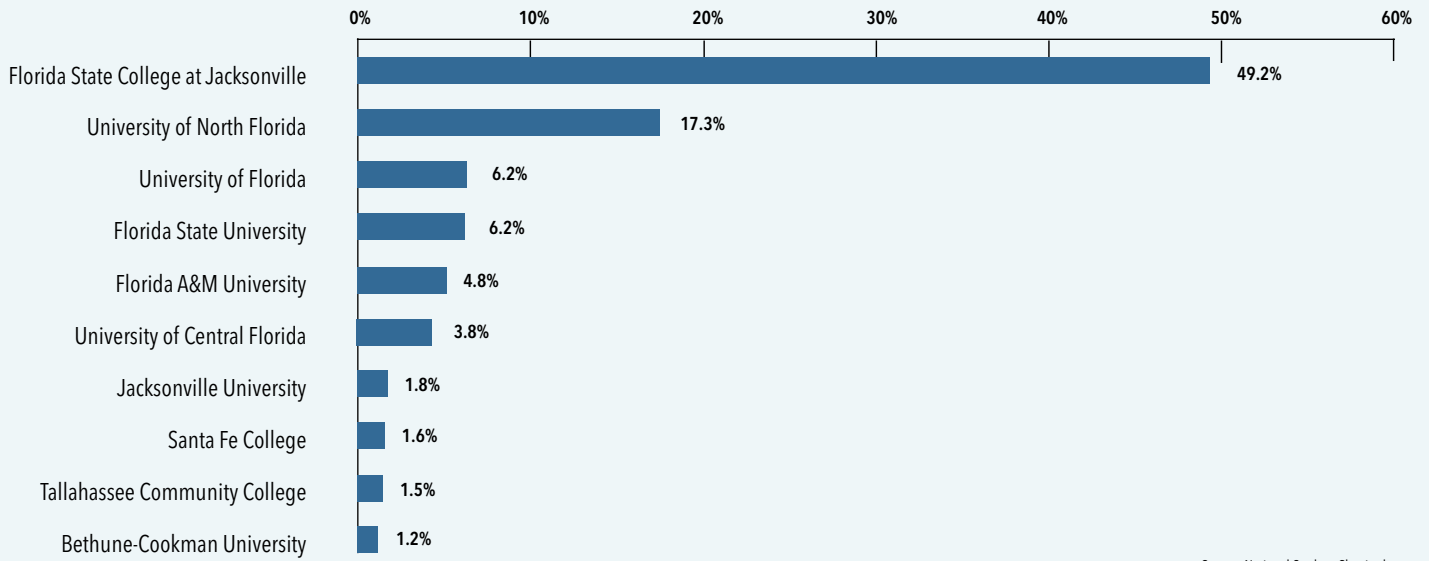- % Enrolled in Fall immediately after graduation

limitations to keep in mind when using FETPIP data are, first, that it does not include students at certain private, proprietary, or otherwise non-participating institutions or students not employed through a reporting agency that participates in FETPIP; and second, that there is a two-year lag in the most recently available FETPIP data so it may not reflect the impact of more recent policy or program changes.

The benefit of looking at FETPIP data is that it is still the best publically available source for comparing postsecondary student outcomes between schools or districts within the state.

In **Figure 3**, we see some FETPIP outcomes for Duval County's class of 2009 compared to the same graduates from the five other largest districts in Florida. By this data, Duval County performed evenly with Hillsborough and Orange counties with about 66% of graduates from the class of 2009 currently found continuing some level of postsecondary education, and about 4-6% below the rates for Miami, Broward and Palm Beach counties.

TOP 10 ENROLLMENT INSTITUTIONS FOR DCPS GRADUATES, 2004-2011

Institution	Percentage
Florida State College at Jacksonville	49.2%
University of North Florida	17.3%
University of Florida	6.2%
Florida State University	6.2%
Florida A&M University	4.8%
University of Central Florida	3.8%
Jacksonville University	1.8%
Santa Fe College	1.6%
Tallahassee Community College	1.5%
Bethune-Cookman University	1.2%

Source: National Student Clearinghouse

NSC DATA: TRACKING STUDENTS NATIONWIDE

The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) is a non-profit organization established to serve as a central collection and reporting agency for the student enrollment, progress and graduation status records of its participating member institutions, including over 3,300 public and private higher education institutions throughout the country.

In addition to being more current than FETPIP data, NSC data is much more specific in tracking breakdowns of students' college enrollment and success indicators, including: where students are enrolled, how many students persist in their studies each year after entering college; exactly when along the way students enrolled, dropped out, returned or graduated with a degree; and how these rates compare between each graduating class over the past several years.

> *There is no commonly agreed-upon standard as to what the definitive measures of postsecondary success are, nor is there any single source of information that can address all the issues alone.*

In **Figure 4**, we see that the percentage of DCPS graduates enrolled in college immediately by the fall of their first year after high school (blue line) has increased some, though not very much, over the past several years. We see a more pronounced growth in the percentage of graduates enrolled anytime during the year following high school (red line), suggesting perhaps an increase in the number of students who didn't realize how important having some type of postsecondary education was to their job prospects until after they graduated and spent some time in the job market for the first time.

READINESS OF DCPS GRADUATES ENTERING FSCJ IN 2009

41.1% College-Ready

58.9% Required Remediation
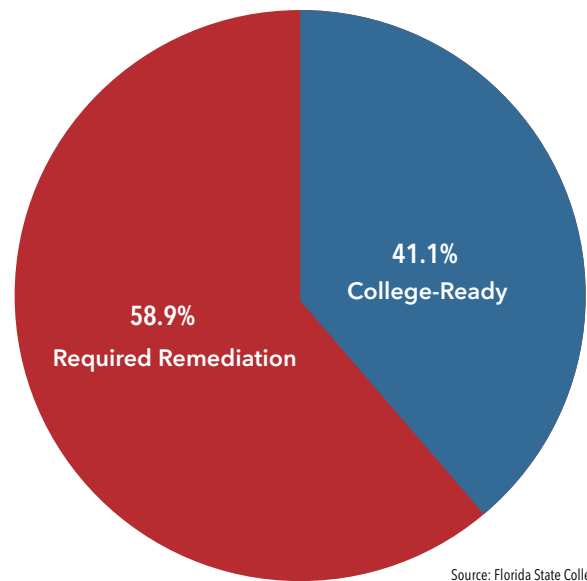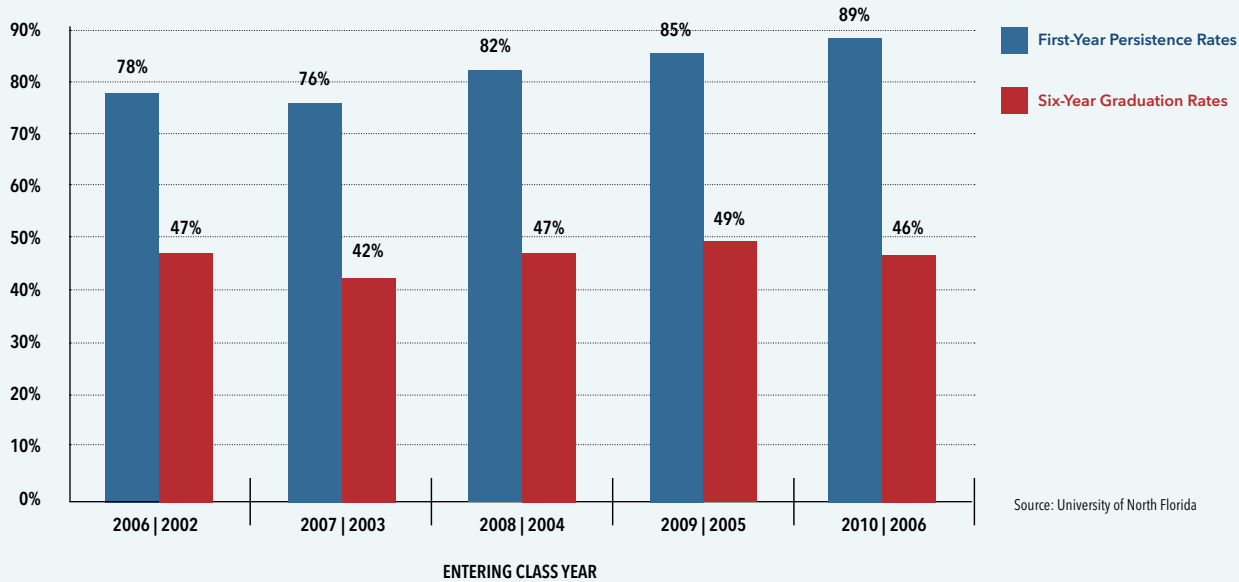
Source: Florida State College at Jacksocnville

In **Figure 5**, we see the top 10 postsecondary institutions at which DCPS graduates between 2004 and 2011 enrolled in following their graduation. Between Florida State College at Jacksonville (49%) and University of North Florida (17%), about two-thirds of DCPS graduates who go on to college enroll in these two local institutions. Knowing this allows us to take a closer look at how college-ready DCPS graduates are by the standards of those universities where they are most likely to enroll.

FSCJ DATA : COSTS OF REMEDIATION

Because FSCJ and UNF are by far the top two institutions in terms of the numbers of students from DCPS enrolling after high school, we took a closer look at how successfully prepared they were for meeting the specific expectations at each. However, these two schools are different in many ways, so criteria for what it means to be "ready" to succeed at each school can be very different.

PERSISTENCE AND GRADUATION RATES FOR PAST FIVE COHORTS OF DCPS GRADUATES AT UNF FIG 7

Bar chart. Legend: First-Year Persistence Rates (blue); Six-Year Graduation Rates (red).

Entering Class Year	First-Year Persistence Rate	Six-Year Graduation Rate
2006 | 2002	78%	47%
2007 | 2003	76%	42%
2008 | 2004	82%	47%
2009 | 2005	85%	49%
2010 | 2006	89%	46%

ENTERING CLASS YEAR

Source: University of North Florida

At FSCJ, we were interested in college readiness as measured by the percent of students from DCPS who required any form of remediation prior to being able to begin coursework towards their degree. The overall remediation rates can be somewhat misleading in discussions about public K-12 reform because they also include adult first-time and returning learners who we would not expect to represent an accurate reflection of a recent public school preparation.

> *UNF found that SAT score and high school grade point average (GPA) to be the two most predictive incoming readiness indicators of likely college success for students—more so than FCAT scores or AP coursework participation.*

In **Figure 6**, we isolated the remediation rates for only those students who enrolled at FSCJ for the first time, directly out of DCPS, in the fall of 2009. Here we see that of those students, 58.9% of them required some sort of remediation before being ready to enroll in credit-bearing coursework. Only 41.1% arrived "college-ready"— or with no need for any remediation. For the nearly 60% of students requiring remediation, the average amount of remediation required was 5.9 credit hours in Reading, Math or Writing just to get their basic skills up to minimum college level. At $85.16 per credit hour (in 2009), that means that these students on average had to spend over $500 in tuition or student loans before even earning one college-level credit towards their degree.[19]

Beginning in 2011 a new state law required schools to test all students for postsecondary readiness before they reach 12th grade and, if necessary, to provide any remediation coursework they may need before they graduate.[20] On the positive side, this has already helped to save some students the cost of paying for that remediation when they get to college. However there are also serious concerns about the impact of adding an extra layer of testing requirements on students and coursework option costs to the district's budget at a time they can hardly afford it. A promising pilot partnership with FSCJ to provide the remediation at some DCPS high schools has helped ease at least part of this burden in the early stages of implementation.

UNF DATA : KEYS TO PERSISTENCE AND SUCCESS

Because of a comparatively more selective application process than FSCJ and other open-access state colleges, UNF tends to deal less with academic remediation needs for its incoming students and more with other readiness and adjustment factors. Two major benchmarks that UNF tracks to measure student success are first-year persistence rates (the percent of students who return after their first year to continue working towards their degree), and six-year graduation rates.

In **Figure 7**, we see the persistence and graduation rates for the past five cohorts of students entering UNF from DCPS. The percent of students from DCPS persisting with their postsecondary education beyond their first year has increased significantly at UNF since 2007, up to as high as 89% of first year students continuing in 2011. The six-year college graduation rate for DCPS students at UNF, however, has remained relatively unchanged over the past five years and highlights an area for important exploration. What is still causing students to lose their way between returning for their second year and actually completing their degree?

In their own studies, UNF found SAT score and high school grade point average (GPA) to be the two most predictive incoming readiness indicators of likely college success for their students – more so than FCAT scores or AP coursework participation.[21]

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS

Increased Monitoring and Support for High School Transition: Implement a single, streamlined, district-wide student progress monitoring system. The system should include indicators to help teachers and administrators identify students early who are at risk for falling behind and provide appropriate intervention and support before they do.

Models of high quality student monitoring systems exist in a number of cities around the country, such as the Graduation Tracker developed by Boston's Plan for Excellence in the Public Schools. For more information about how systems like this are already working in other districts, visit **www.JaxPEF.org**.
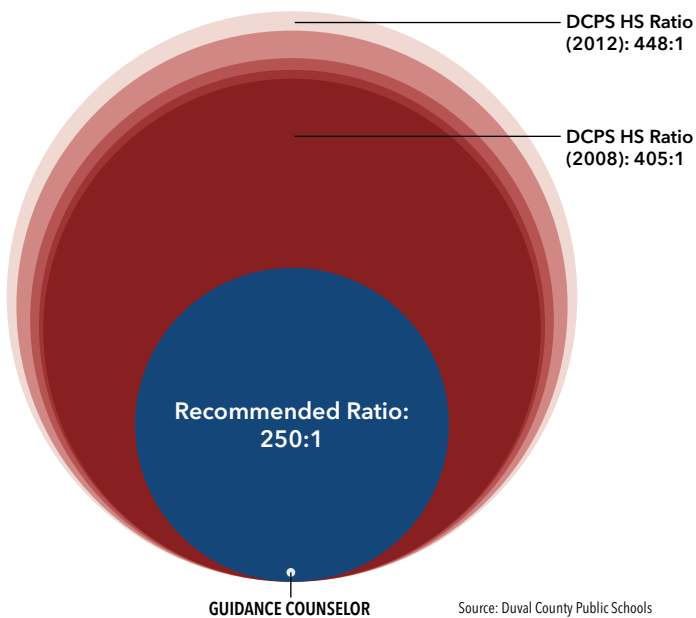
Dedicated College Access Centers and Support Staff at All High Schools: As seen in Figure 8, student caseloads for district guidance councelors have grown increasingly unmanageable over the past several years. Working with community partners to place dedicated college access resource centers and staff at every high school would help to alleviate at least some of the limitations on college counseling time for students arising from this. Enlisting community partners to help create and operate these centers allows the staff to remain independent from other school-based responsibilities (such as administering or managing standardized tests) to remain completely focused on postsecondary planning and support for students.

One example of this type of successful partnership already working at some of the district's most high needs high schools is The Jacksonville Commitment. For more information about best practices and how The Jacksonville Commitment and other successful school-based college access partnerships work, visit **www.JaxPEF.org**.

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Alignment of expectations, standards, goals and information: Create a community-wide college access coalition involving the school district, local universities, business leaders, policy makers and advocacy organizations to identify a common set of goals, definitions, and information systems to be shared across the group.

This coalition should become the core driver of a unified effort toward creating a college-going culture and attracting high-quality jobs to Jacksonville.

Examples of community-wide college access monitoring collaborations have been appearing in cities all around the country recently, including particularly strong models in Chicago and Miami. For more information on these community-wide collaborative college access models, along with additional online content, resources and information on what you can do to get involved or continue the conversation, please visit us at **www.JaxPEF.org**.

AVERAGE STUDENT TO GUIDANCE COUNSELOR RATIOS IN DCPS HIGH SCHOOLS (2008-2012)

FIG 8

DCPS HS Ratio (2012): 448:1

DCPS HS Ratio (2008): 405:1

Recommended Ratio: 250:1

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Source: Duval County Public Schools

We recomend a streamlined, district-wide student progress monitoring system that includes indicators to help teachers and administrators identify students early who are at risk for falling behind and provide appropriate intervention and support before they do.

[1] Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. (2011). *Recession, Recovery and Beyond.* Jacksonville, FL. (http://goo.gl/BL64Q)

[2] Florida State College at Jacksonville, Student Analytics and Research. Reported as of 02/12

[3] U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2010). *Employment projections.* (http://goo.gl/ScLrb)

[4] Center on Education and the Workforce. (2011). *The Undereducated America.* Georgetown University, Washington, DC. (http://goo.gl/I2Ojc)

[5] Worksource. (2011). *Connecting workers to jobs: Worksource Comprehensive 2-year plan 2011-2012.* (http://goo.gl/xwJwH)

[6] Alliance for Excellent Education. *Economic Impact Report for Jacksonville MSA.* Projections as of 02/2012.

[7] For definitions and more information on different DCPS progression plan options, go to (http://goo.gl/FByY8)

[8] Beginning in 2011, testing requirements for mathematics performance changed as specific End of Course exams replaced the Mathematics FCAT for high school students.

[9] State University System Admissions (http://goo.gl/L4L8i)

[10] Duval County Public Schools Strategic Plan End of Year Data Dashboard (http://goo.gl/XvJVM)

[11] FL Department of Education, ACT/SAT/AP Data (http://goo.gl/Crk2o)

[12] FL Department of Education, Dual Enrollment Trending Upward in the Florida College System (http://goo.gl/jRmi6)

[13] DCPS Career and Technical Education. Reported as of 02/12

[14] Ibid.

[15] For the purpose of this study, students with certain primary exceptionalities, including students identified with serious or profound mental handicaps, traumatic brain injury or Autism spectrum disorder, and students in dedicated centers such as exceptional student centers and juvenile justice schools were removed from the sample prior to analysis.

[16] Allensworth, E.M. & Easton, J. Q. (2005). *The on-track indicator as a predictor of high school graduation.* Consortium on Chicago School Research. University of Chicago. (http://goo.gl/nZsSZ)

[17] The SAT is one of three postsecondary placement tests that may be used to determine postsecondary readiness in Florida., along with the ACT and P.E.R.T.. Some students in this cohort may have taken one of the alternate exams and not be represented here.

[18] National Student Clearinghouse. (2011). *StudentTracker for High Schools Aggregate Report.* Prepared for Duval County School Districts.

[19] Florida State College at Jacksonville, Student Analytics and Research. Reported as of 03/12

[20] MyFloridaHouse.gov. (2011). CS/CS/HB 1255, Engrossed 2 (http://goo.gl/VttlI)

[21] University of North Florida, Office of Institutional Research. Reported as of 01/12

ACT: The ACT (no acronym) is a standardized test for high school achievement and college admissions produced by ACT, Inc. The ACT measures knowledge through multiple-choice response items in four content areas, English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning, with an additional (optional) Writing assessment also available.

Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE): AICE is an internationally recognized, pre-university curriculum and examination system, sponsored by the University of Cambridge International Examinations.

Advanced Placement (AP): AP courses allow students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. Based on their performance on rigorous AP Exams, students can earn credit, advanced placement, or both, for college.

Career academies: Career academies are defined by the state Department of Education as "small, personalized learning communities within a high school that select a subset of students and teachers for a two-, three-, or four-year span to focus on a college-prep curriculum with a career theme, incorporating partnerships with employers, the community, and higher education."

Career clusters: The National Career Clusters Framework is a nationally recognized framework for organizing and delivering quality CTE programs of study using 16 larger career clusters to logically group more than 79 career pathways programs by common industry areas.

Early College: The Early College Program blends high school and college courses to enable students to earn a high school diploma and an Associate degree with minimal financial cost. In grades 11 and 12, Early College students are enrolled full-time at FSCJ. The Early College Program provides students greater access to higher education and promotes student achievement at the high school and postsecondary levels.

International Baccalaureate (IB): The IB Diploma Program is an internationally recognized pre-university course of study, designed to help students develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world.

Postsecondary readiness: Generally refers to the degree to which students are prepared to meet the academic demands of ongoing education at a college, university, or technical training institution after high school without need for remediation. Sometimes also used to refer to the emotional, procedural or financial readiness of students to successfully continue their education beyond high school. This term is often used interchangeably with the terms "college readiness" or "college and career readiness".

Relative risk: Simple calculation used to estimate the risk of an outcome (in this case, graduating from high school on-time or not) relative to being in a certain group. Relative risk is a ratio of the probability of the outcome occurring in the target group being considered versus students not in that group.

Remediation: Term used to refer to remedial education for students considered academically underprepared for higher education. Students who enter college without the necessary reading, writing or math skills to compete with their college peers must complete a certain amount of remediation coursework or testing before enrolling in college-level credit coursework towards their degree.

SAT: The SAT (no acronym) is a standardized test for high school achievement and college admissions produced by the College Board. The SAT measures knowledge in three content areas, Critical Reading, Mathematics, and Writing.

The Jacksonville Public Education Fund is an independent Local Education Fund dedicated to improving the quality of education so that all students graduate from Duval County Public Schools career and college-ready. Our three areas of work include high-quality research on best practices and student achievement, community mobilization to elicit civic voice and action, and advocacy to improve policies and practices. JPEF works to build collaborative partnerships with key education stakeholders throughout the Jacksonville community, across geographic, racial and political lines.

JPEF is also a member of the Public Education Network, a national organization of Local Education Funds, through which it is able to leverage national best practices and funding sources to support reform efforts in Duval County.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 904-356-7757 OR VISIT WWW.JAXPEF.ORG.

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