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## The State of K-12 Education: Focus on Equity, Some Trends from Greater Portland Pulse

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## THE STATE OF K-12 EDUCATION: FOCUS ON EQUITY

### Some Trends from Greater Portland Pulse

Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies  
[www.portlandpulse.org](http://www.portlandpulse.org)

#### Introduction

*“When you include more people in your education system, when you include more people in your job training system, when you exclude more people from the criminal justice system, and make sure that you are not criminalizing young people, you wind up creating a base for economic success.”*

Manuel Pastor, interviewed by Angela Glover Blackwell,  
<http://vimeo.com/24877724>. Uploaded June 9, 2011.

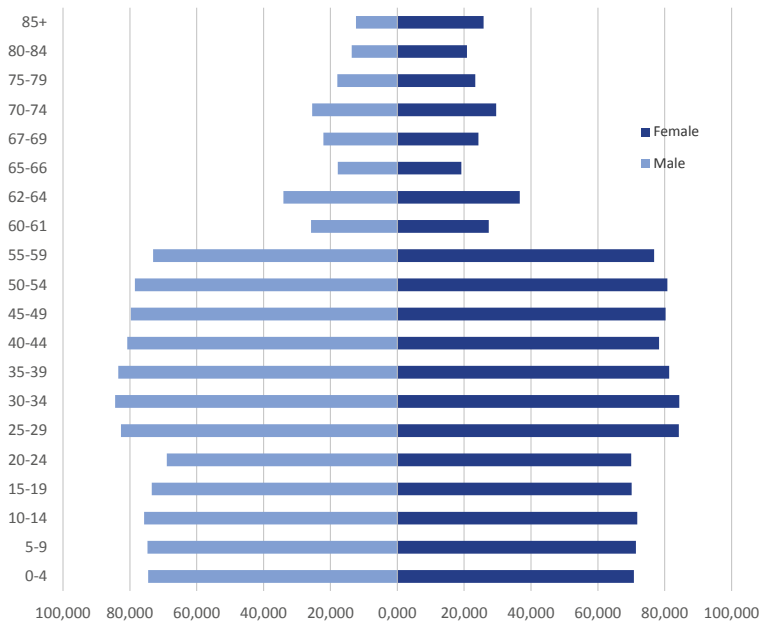
In 2011, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 253, which affirms a landmark goal for educational attainment. The goal, called the 40-40-20, states that by 2025, 40% of adult Oregonians will have an associate’s degree or a meaningful postsecondary certificate, and 40% will hold a bachelor’s or advanced degree. The remaining 20% will graduate from high school ready for work.

Currently, educational attainment stands far below that goal. In the Portland region, 35% of adults hold a bachelor’s degree, about 9% hold an associate’s degree, and 26% have attended college but do not have a degree. Furthermore, while we aspire to a 100% high school graduation rate, almost 9% of our adults have not graduated from high school. Among people of color, educational attainment is much lower. As our region becomes more diverse, meeting the 40-40-20 goal and achieving greater economic justice will require significant progress toward closing the achievement gap.

Evidence of the achievement gap emerges in the third grade, where white children meet state standards at rates that far exceed children of color, and boys begin to fall behind girls in reading. These differences intensify as children age, and the 4-year cohort graduation rates demonstrate that boys and children of color are much less successful in graduating on time than are white students and girls.

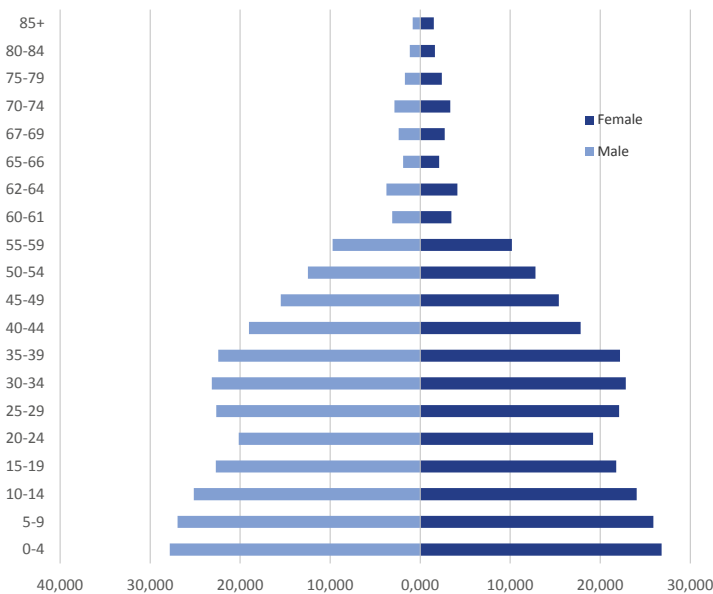
The socioeconomic context of families has an important impact on student achievement, as does their health. Children of color are more likely to be born at low birth weight, which can affect their health and well-being throughout their lives. Poverty has risen in Multnomah County, with the sharpest increases for people of color. Poverty sometimes leads to homelessness, and homeless children have a difficult time attending and performing well in school. Finally, some schools face significant populations of children who do not speak English at home, challenging our schools to meet achievement goals and to engage parents in their children’s education.

### Population distribution by age and sex, Portland MSA, 2010



Source: US Census, Table P12

### Population distribution, non-white population, by age and sex,



Source: US Census, Table P121

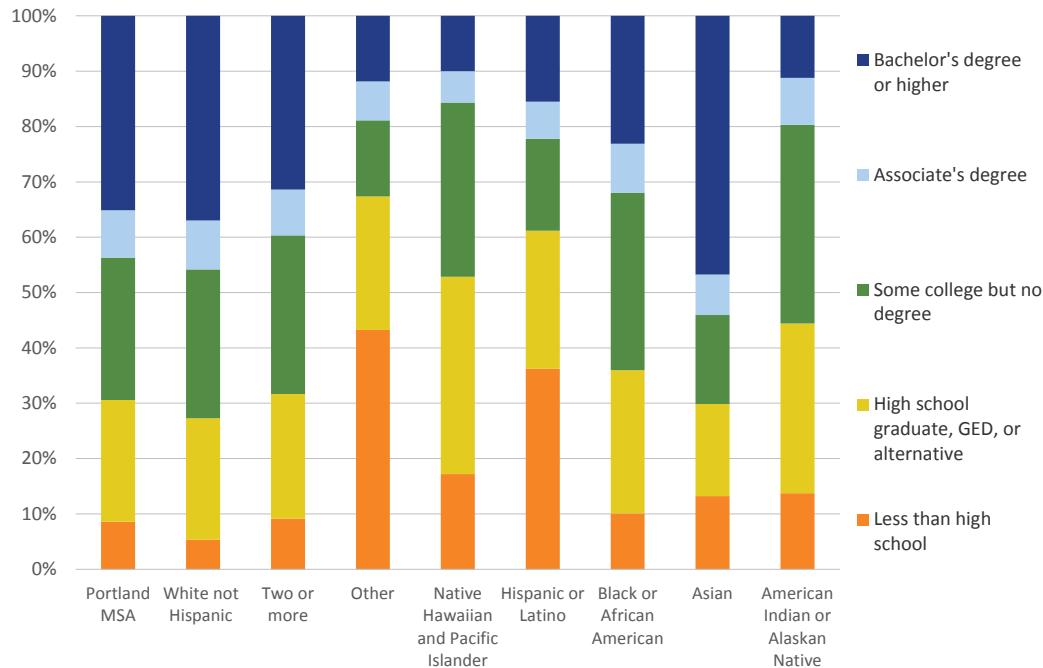
#### Why is this important?

The age structure of a population can have important policy implications as it affects demands for schools, health care, recreation, entertainment, and shopping. It also affects taxable income and the supply of labor.

#### Trends:

In the Portland MSA, the non-white population is younger than the population as a whole. While 6% of the overall population is age 0 to 4, 10% of the non-white population is that young. As these children age, they will increase the diversity of our schools.

**Educational attainment for the population 25 years and over, by race (alone) and Hispanic origin, Portland MSA, 2012 one-year estimate**



Source: US Census, American Community Survey, Table B15002B-1  
 Note: These data are subject to sampling error which is not shown on this chart. Error information is available at portlandpulse.org

**Why is this important?**

Numerous individual, home, and community factors combine to support (or inhibit) individuals' academic progress.<sup>1</sup> Factors beyond the quality of the local education system directly and indirectly affect a region's average educational attainment. For example, economic conditions affect employment opportunities and, in turn, the rate of in- and out-migration of workers with different levels of education. The average educational attainment of a population summarizes the net impact of all of these factors and reflects a region's success at developing a well-prepared workforce and an educated population. Educational attainment is correlated with an individual's income, health, and the financial security of his or her family.<sup>2</sup> Children living in neighborhoods with a higher percentage of adults with college degrees have higher expectations for their own education and work prospects.<sup>3</sup>

**Trends:**

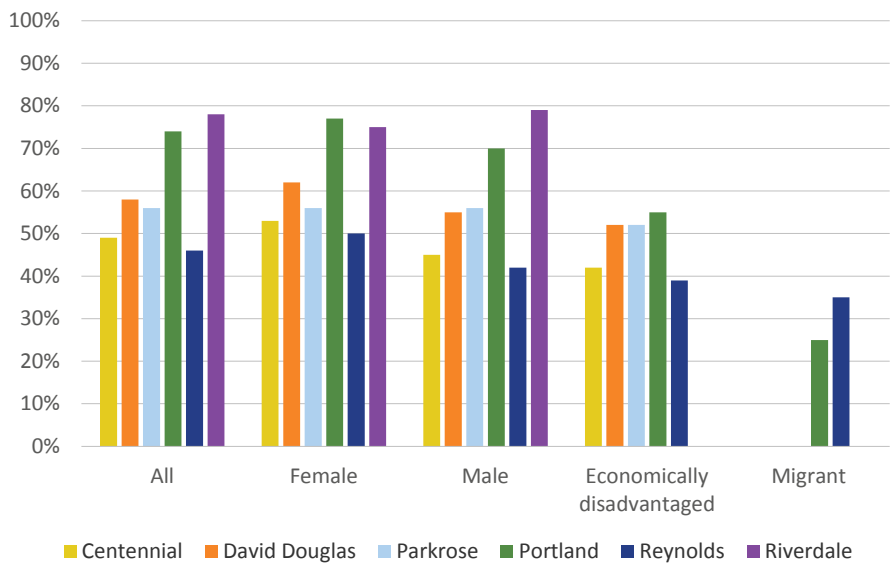
Across our region, disparities exist in the educational attainment of adults among racial and ethnic groups. While 35% of the adult population has at least a bachelor's degree, this is true among only 23% of African American adults, 15% of Latino adults, and 11% of Native American adults. While almost 9% of the adult population has not graduated from high school, 36% of Latinos, 10% of African Americans, and 14% of Native Americans have not graduated from high school.

1 S. Christenson, T. Rounds, and D. Gorney, "Family Factors and Student Achievement: An Avenue to Increase Student's Success," *School Psychology Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1992): 178.

2 J. Day and E. Newburger, "The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-life Earnings," US Census Bureau (2002), <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/p23-210.pdf>.

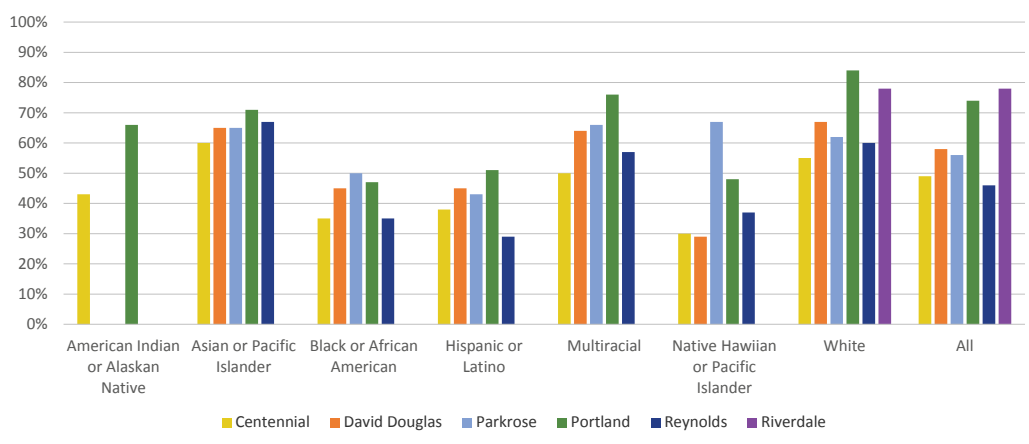
3 G. Orfield and C. Lee, "Brown at 50: King's Dream or Plessy's Nightmare?" Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University (2004).

**Percentage of third grade students who meet or exceed reading assessment standards, by school district, City of Portland, 2012-2013**



Source: Oregon Department of Education

**Percentage of third grade students who meet or exceed reading assessment standards, by race (alone) and Hispanic origin, by school district, City of Portland, 2012-2013 school year**



Source: Oregon Department of Education

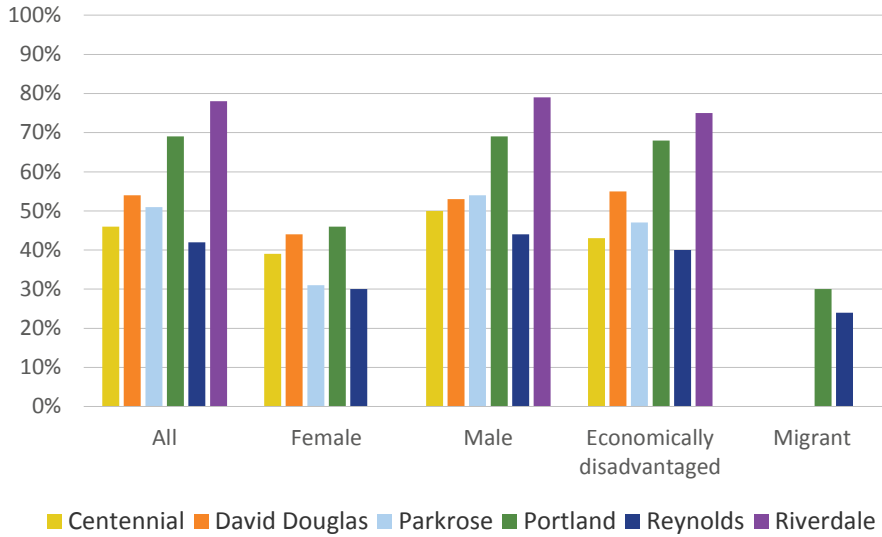
**Why is this important?**

In Oregon, students take their first standardized statewide achievement tests in third grade. Student achievement on these tests reflects the successes of early programs (pre K-3) and foreshadows the future success of the child and the challenges the system will face as each cohort progresses. Family income and health strongly influence a child’s academic success which influences their health and prosperity later in life.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, a child’s level of access to medical care and physical and emotional health affect their ability to attend, pay attention, and learn in school.<sup>2</sup>

1 Selcuk Sirin, “Socioeconomic Status and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analytic Review of Research,” Review of Educational Research 75, no. 3 (2005): 417-453.

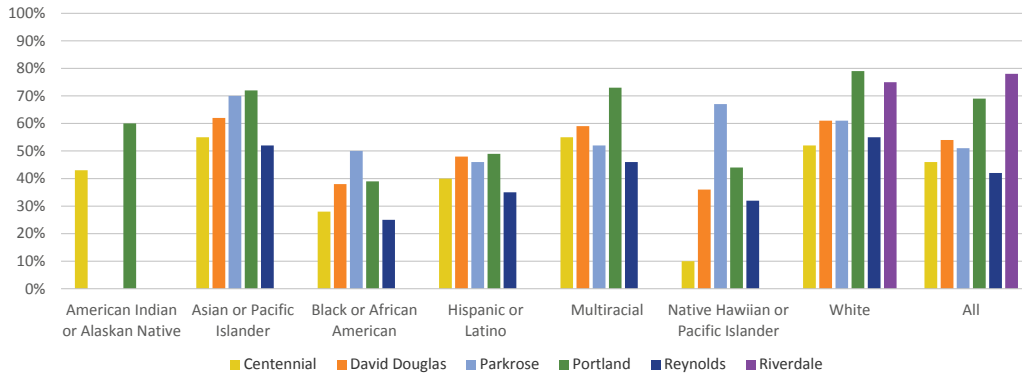
2 Carol Costante, “Healthy Learners: The Link between Health and Student Achievement,” American School Board Journal (2002).

**Percentage of third grade students who meet or exceed math assessment standards, by school district, City of Portland, 2012-2013 school year**



Source: Oregon Department of Education

**Percentage of third grade students who meet or exceed math assessment standards, by race (alone) and Hispanic origin, by school district, City of Portland, 2012-2013 school year**

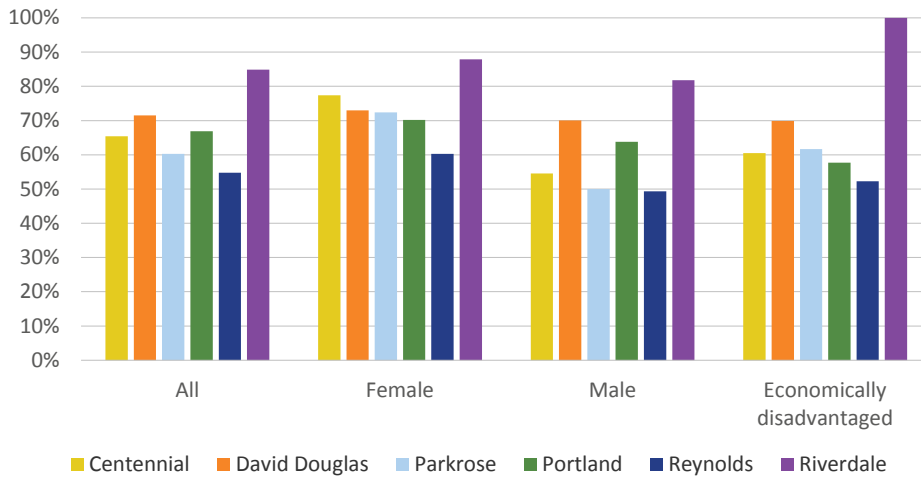


Source: Oregon Department of Education

**Trends:**

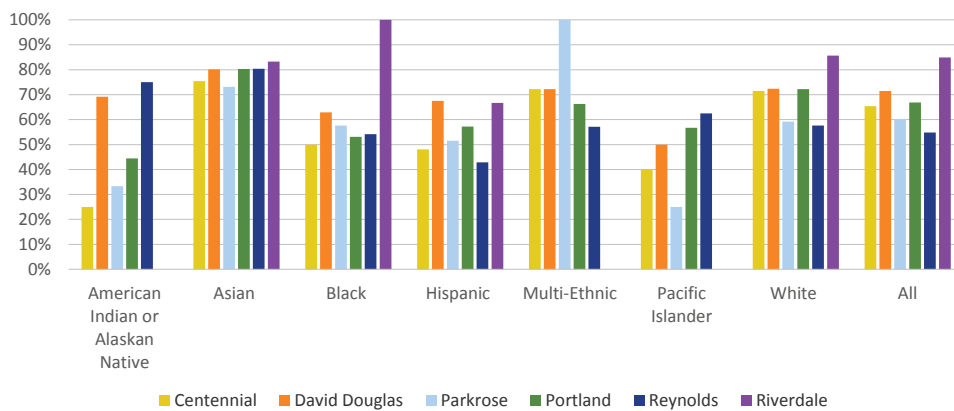
Differences in student achievement emerge as early as grade 3. Across most of Portland's districts, children of color, economically disadvantaged, and migrant students meet standards less often for reading and math. Boys at grade 3 meet standards less often than girls for reading, but more often for math.

**Four-year cohort graduation rates, by school district, City of Portland, 2012-2013 school year**



Source: Oregon Department of Education

**Four-year cohort graduation rates, by race (alone) and Hispanic origin, by school district, City of Portland, 2012-2013 school year**



Source: Oregon Department of Education

**Note:** The graduation rate calculation begins by establishing a cohort of entering 9th graders, allowing the cohort to change over the next four years as students enter or leave in order to determine the percentage of students in the adjusted cohort who earn a regular high school diploma within four years.

**Why is this important?**

High school graduates have higher lifetime earning capabilities than their less educated peers.<sup>1</sup> Studies suggest that each additional year of high school is correlated with 10-14% higher lifetime earnings. In addition to lost earnings, high school dropouts impose societal costs, estimated to be in the billions of dollars in lost revenues, welfare programs, unemployment programs, underemployment, and crime prevention and prosecution.<sup>2</sup> High school completion is strongly correlated with civic participation later in life, especially voting.<sup>3</sup>

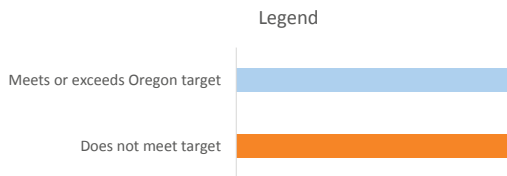
1 P. Oreopoulos, "Do dropouts drop out too soon? Wealth, health, and happiness from compulsory schooling," *Journal of Public Economics* 91, no. 11 (2007): 2213-2229.

2 S. Christenson and M. Thurlow, "School dropouts: Prevention considerations, interventions, and challenges," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 13, no. 1 (2004): 36-39.

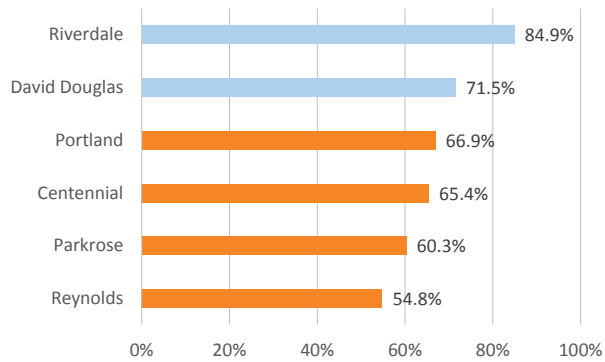
3 K. Milligan, E. Moretti, and P. Oreopoulos, "Does education improve citizenship? Evidence from the United States and the United Kingdom," *Journal of Public Economics* 88, no. 9 (2004): 1667-1695.

### Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO)

The Oregon Department of Education has set a target of 100% high school graduation in 2024-2025. To meet that goal, they have established graduation targets for the percentage of students to graduate each year. Targets are based on rates from previous years and vary across racial and ethnic groups.

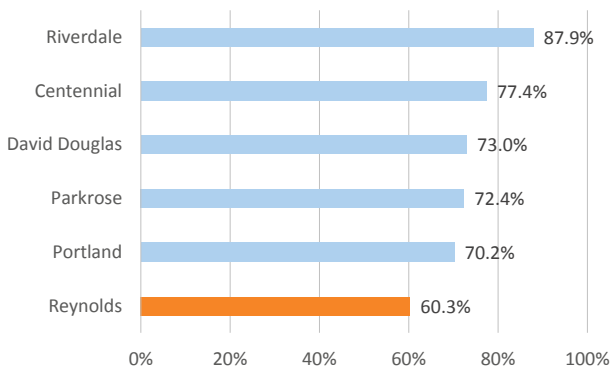


### Overall 4-year cohort graduation rate, City of Portland, (meets/doesn't meet) Oregon State 2012-2013 graduation targets (68.4%)



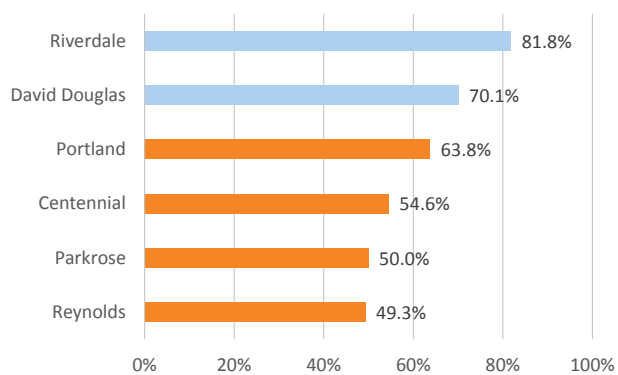
Source: Oregon Department of Education

### Female 4-year cohort graduation rate, City of Portland, (meets/doesn't meet) Oregon State 2012-2013 graduation targets (68.4%)



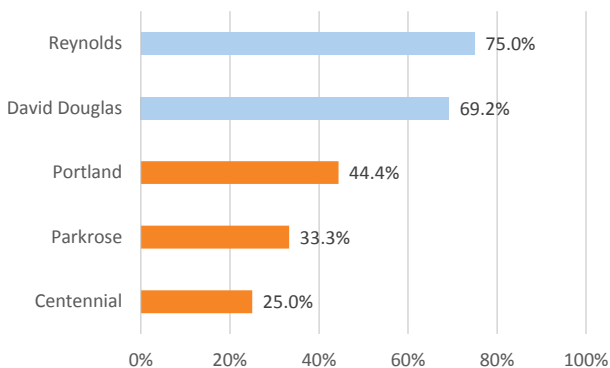
Source: Oregon Department of Education

### Male 4-year cohort graduation rate, City of Portland, (meets/doesn't meet) Oregon State 2012-2013 graduation targets (68.4%)



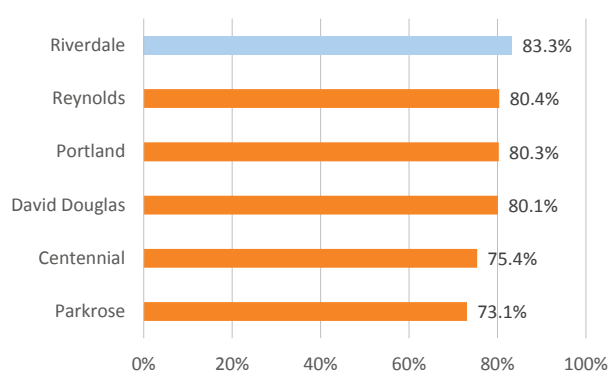
Source: Oregon Department of Education

### American Indian or Alaskan Native 4-year cohort graduation rate, City of Portland, (meets/doesn't meet) Oregon State 2012-2013 graduation targets (50.8%)



Source: Oregon Department of Education

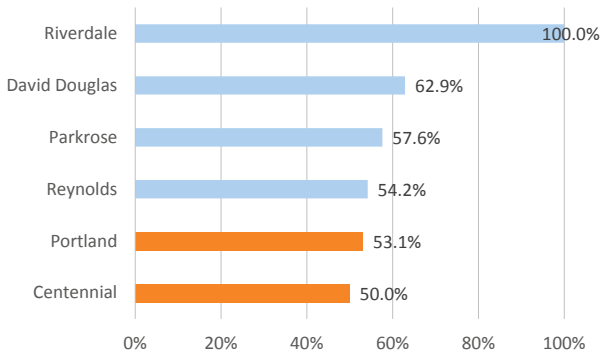
### Asian 4-year cohort graduation rate, City of Portland, (meets/doesn't meet) Oregon State 2012-2013 graduation targets (80.7%)



Source: Oregon Department of Education

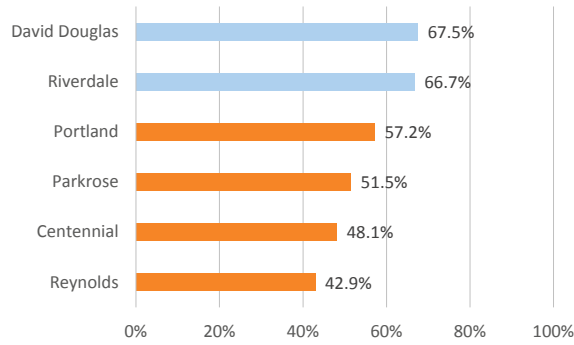


**Black or African American 4-year cohort graduation rate, City of Portland, (meets/doesn't meet) Oregon State 2012-2013 graduation targets (53.3%)**



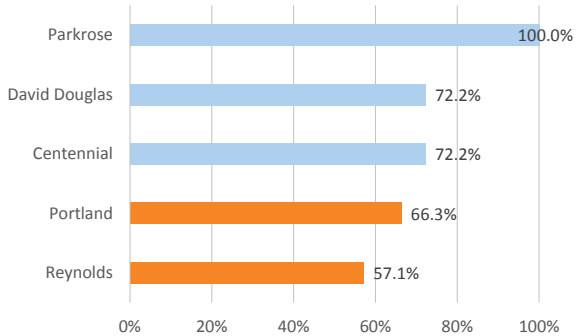
Source: Oregon Department of Education

**Hispanic or Latino 4-year cohort graduation rate, City of Portland, (meets/doesn't meet) Oregon 2012-2013 graduation targets (59.5%)**



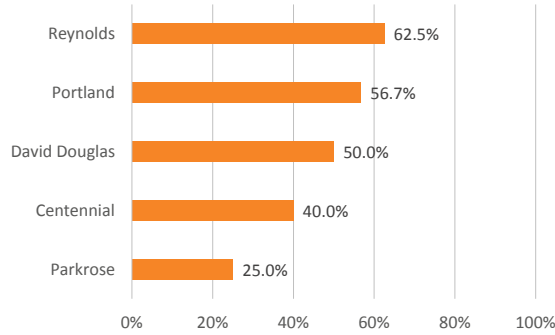
Source: Oregon Department of Education

**Multi-racial 4-year cohort graduation rate, City of Portland, (meets/doesn't meet) Oregon 2012-2013 graduation targets (61.9%)**



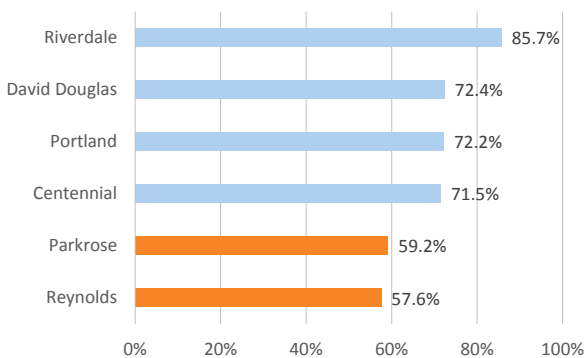
Source: Oregon Department of Education

**Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 4-year cohort graduation rate, City of Portland, (meets/doesn't meet) Oregon 2012-2013 graduation targets (66.2%)**



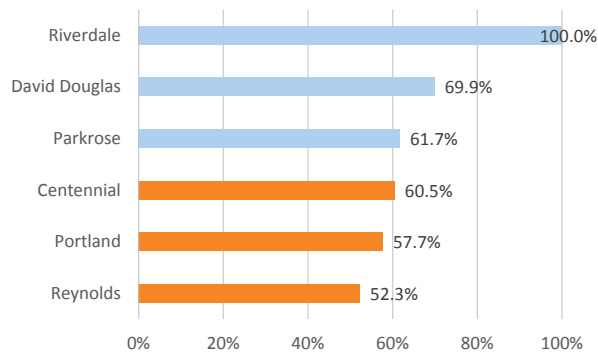
Source: Oregon Department of Education

**White 4-year cohort graduation rate, City of Portland, (meets/doesn't meet) Oregon 2012-2013 graduation targets (71.2%)**



Source: Oregon Department of Education

**Economically disadvantaged 4-year cohort graduation rate, City of Portland, (meets/doesn't meet) Oregon 2012-2013 graduation targets (61.1%)**

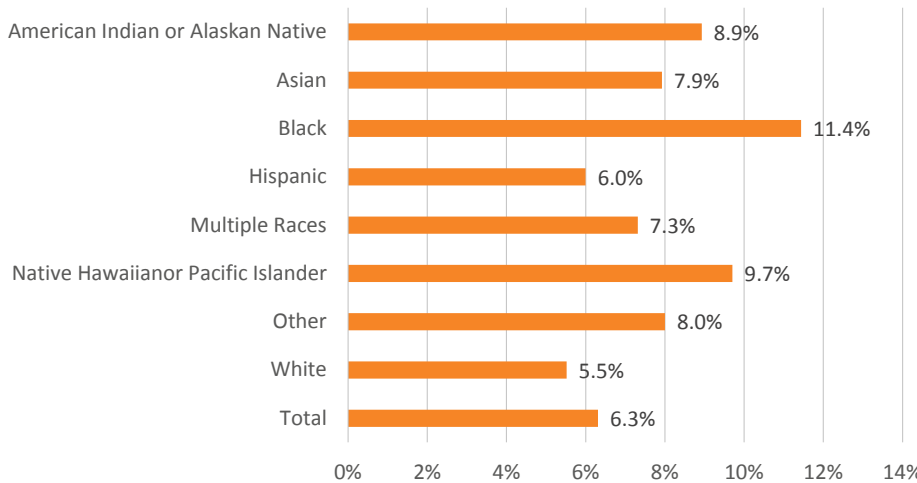


Source: Oregon Department of Education

**Trends:**

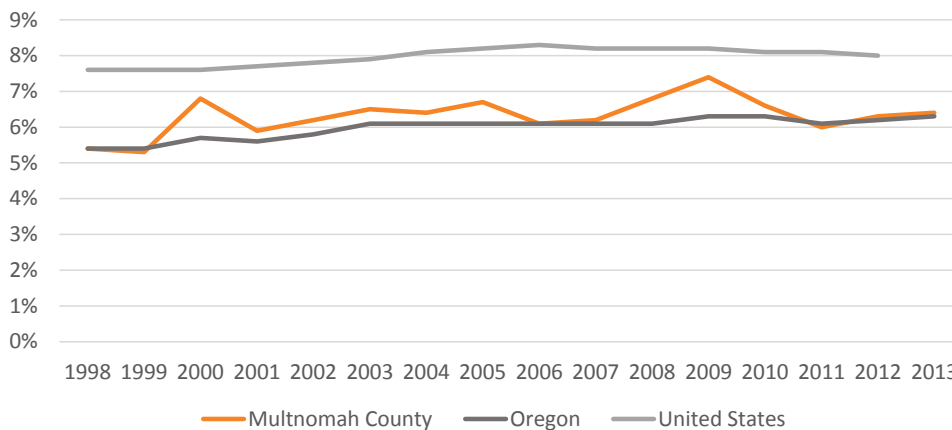
The 4-year cohort graduation rates for all students among Portland's districts ranges from 85% for Riverdale to 55% for Reynolds. The difference in graduation rates between white children and children of color is, in some districts, as high as 20 percentage points or more, depending on the ethnic group. Four year cohort graduation rates for boys are as low as 50% in some districts—over 20 percentage points lower than girls in some cases. Economically disadvantaged students are less likely to graduate in all cases. For many racial and ethnic groups, some Portland districts are not meeting Oregon targets

**Percentage of babies with low birth weight (less than 2,500 grams) per 1,000 live births, by race and Hispanic origin, Multnomah County, 2010-2012**



Source: Oregon Health Authority

**Percentage of babies with low birth weight (less than 2,500 grams) per 1,000 live births, Multnomah County, 1998-2013**



Source: Oregon Health Authority

### Why is this important?

Babies with low birth weights face increased risk of infection, impaired development, developmental delays, and infant death.<sup>1</sup> They are more likely to suffer from long-term disabilities, including cerebral palsy and blindness. Low birth weight can be influenced by a number of factors, including maternal and fetal health. Women who use tobacco, illegal and some prescription drugs, have poor nutrition or consume alcohol while pregnant are at increased risk of giving birth to low weight babies.<sup>2</sup>

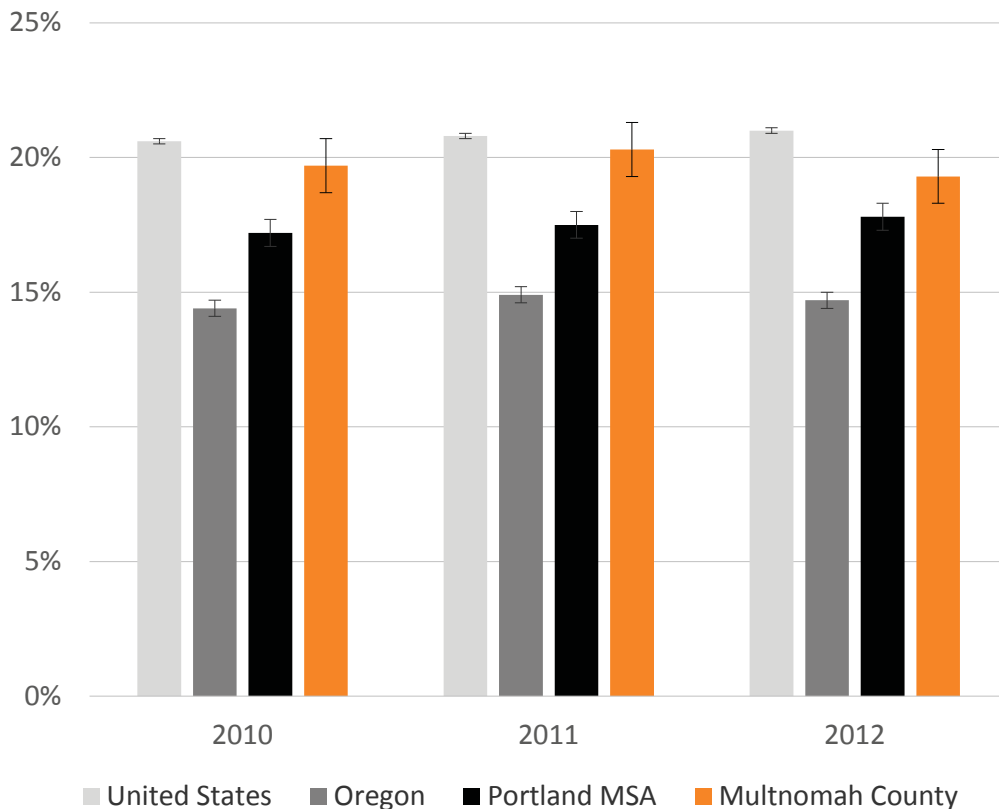
### Trends:

The rate of low birth weight babies in Multnomah County is lower than that of the United States. It has risen overall since 1998, when it was 5.4% to 6.4% in 2013. However, several racial and ethnic groups have significantly higher rates of low birth weight babies—11.4% for African American babies and 8.9% for Native American babies.

<sup>1</sup> Michael Msall and Michelle Tremont, "Measuring Functional Outcomes after Prematurity: Developmental Impact of very Low Birth Weight and Extremely Low Birth Weight Status on Childhood Disability," *Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews* 8, no. 4 (2002): 258-272.

<sup>2</sup> Christine Demont-Heinrich, "Risk of Very Low Birth Weight Based on Perinatal Periods of Risk," *Public Health Nursing* 31, no. 3 (2014): 234.

**Percentage of people age five and over who speak a language other than English at home, Multnomah County, 2010-2012 one-year estimates**



Source: US Census, American Community Survey, Table S1601

Note: Error bars are used to indicate the error, or uncertainty, in a reported measurement.

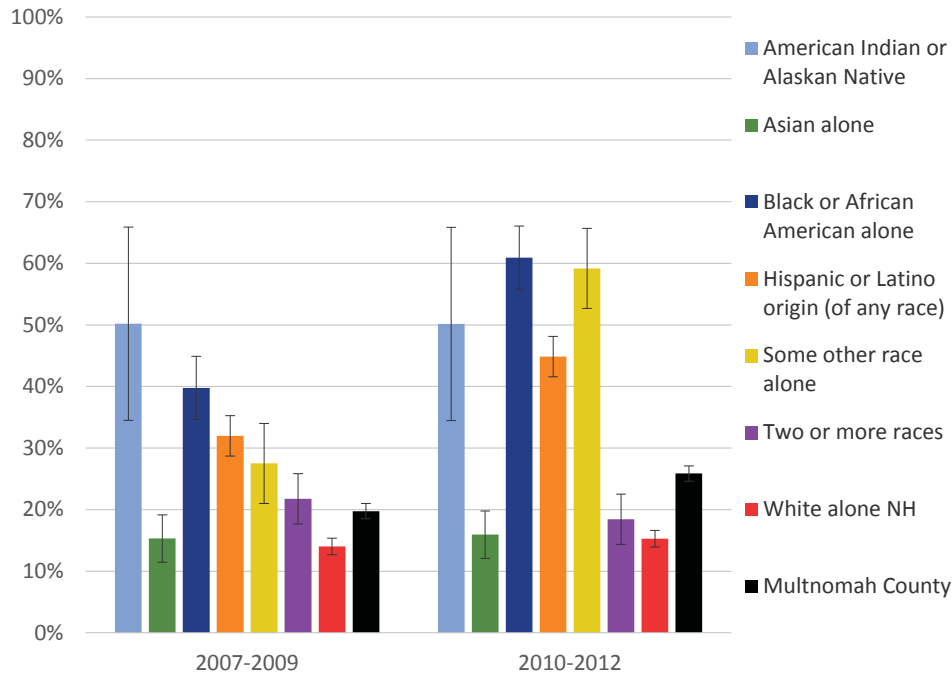
**Why is this important?**

Our region is growing increasingly diverse and attracting populations from all over the nation and world. Knowledge of linguistic diversity helps institutions and service agencies better understand local communities. Service organizations, institutions, and businesses need to be aware of the changing demographics in order to provide services that are culturally relevant and do not leave immigrants or non-native English speakers in a disadvantaged position due to barriers in communication or other cultural differences. Policies, programs, and outreach strategies can be developed to reach non-English speaking residents.

**Trends:**

Within the Portland MSA, about 18% of people age five and above speak a language other than English at home. Within Multnomah County the percentage is higher—about 19% in 2012—and has varied slightly over the past three years.

### Percentage of children in poverty, Multnomah County, 2007-2009 and 2010-2012 three-year estimates



Source: US Census, American Community Survey, Table B17001  
 Note: Error bars are used to indicate the error, or uncertainty, in a reported measurement.

#### Why is this important?

Child poverty is a strong indicator of a family’s economic conditions and negatively affects educational outcomes, health, and the future earning potential of our region’s children.<sup>1</sup> Children who live in poverty are much more likely to experience marginalization from society than are their wealthier peers, whether due to unemployment, incarceration, low educational attainment, or early childbearing. They are at a higher risk of being violent and for experiencing health problems as adults. Poverty has a strong impact on children’s long term achievement, which impacts economic mobility.<sup>2</sup> Populations with higher rates of child poverty bear a disproportionate share of this burden.<sup>3</sup> Concentrated neighborhood poverty can affect educational attainment and future earnings. High school graduates are less likely to get a job after school if they are from a neighborhood with high poverty. Students enrolled in schools with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to attend college, further increasing the likelihood that these children will earn self-sufficiency wages as adults and be able to contribute to the prosperity of our region.<sup>4</sup>

#### Trends:

Over 1 in 4 children in Multnomah County live in families with incomes less than the federal poverty level. The rate of children living in poverty has risen from 19.8% to 25.9% over the past five years. During this same time, the rate has risen sharply for African Americans, resulting in over 60% of African American children living in poverty. The rate of poverty among Latino children rose to 44.9%, while the poverty rate among Native American children stayed steady at 50.2%.

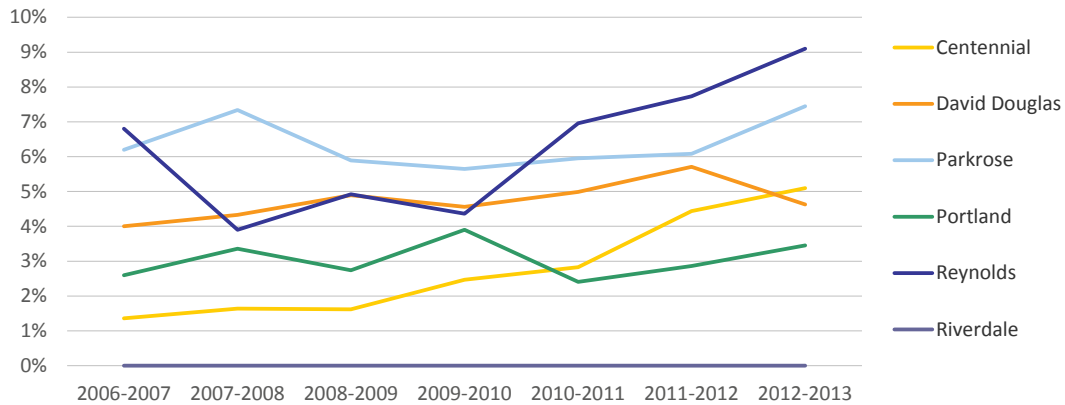
1 J. Brooks-Gunn, and G. Duncan, “The Effects of Poverty on Children,” *The Future of Children* 7, no. 2 (1997): 55-71.

2 M. Corcoran, “Rags to Rags: Poverty and Mobility in the United States,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 21 (1995): 237-267.

3 L. Anderson, C. Shinn, M. Fullilove, S. Scrimshaw, J. Fielding, J. Normand, and V. Carande-Kulis, “The Effectiveness of Early Childhood Development Programs: A Systematic Review,” *The American Journal of Preventative Medicine* 24, no. 3S (2003): 31-45.

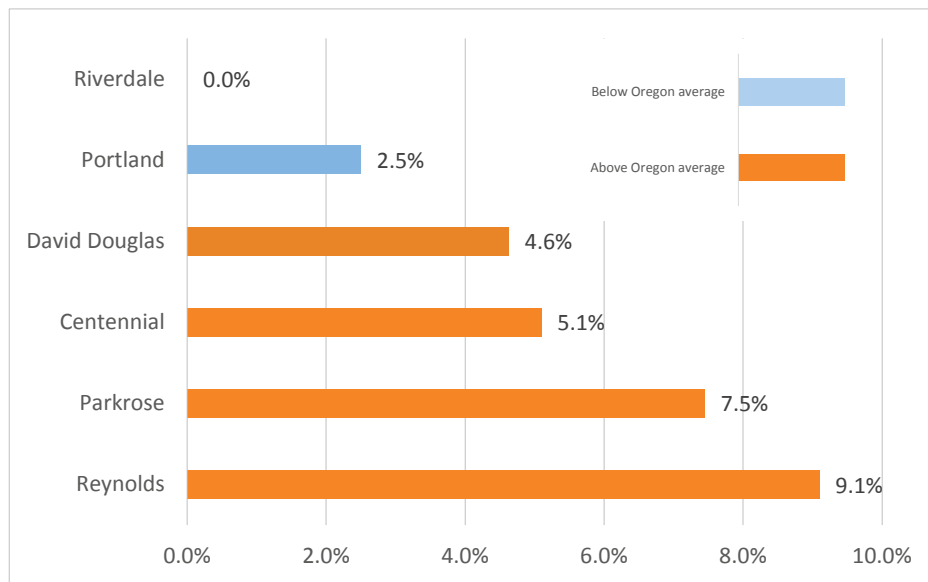
4 G. Orfield and C. Lee, “Brown at 50: King’s dream or Plessy’s nightmare?” Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University (2004).

**Percentage of students experiencing homelessness, by school district, City of Portland, 2006-2007 to 2012-2013 school years**



Source: Oregon Department of Education

**Percentage of students experiencing homelessness, by school district, City of Portland, (above/below) Oregon average (3.3%), 2012-2013 school year**



Source: Oregon Department of Education

**Why is this important?**

Stable housing and supportive services can increase a person’s potential for education and employment.<sup>1</sup> Homeless youth and adults have a harder time obtaining quality education, finding employment, accessing healthy food, and finding safe places to live. Youth experiencing homelessness face many challenges to their academic success, between 25 and 35% of homeless youth report that they had to repeat a grade.<sup>2</sup>

**Trends:**

Five of the six school districts in the Portland have a higher percentage of homeless students than the statewide average. Reynolds has the highest rate, and it has risen sharply from 4.4% in 2009-2010 to 9.1% in 2013.

1 Sheila Crowley, “The Affordable Housing Crisis: Residential Mobility of Poor Families and School Mobility of Poor Children,” The Journal of Negro Education 72, no. 1 (2003): 22-38.

2 R. Clark, and M. Robertson, “Surviving for the Moment: A Report on Homeless Youth in San Francisco,” Berkeley Alcohol Research Group (1996).