



Doc H's Blog

Kentucky Education Commissioner
Terry Holliday



November 15, 2013

High School Feedback Reports

This week, the annual High School Feedback Reports were released for the graduating class of 2010. Kentucky has been recognized nationally for these excellent reports. I wanted to send a “tip of the hat” to Charles McGrew and his team at the Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics for a job well done. This is a great resource and I encourage all of our districts and schools to analyze the data and use it to strengthen their programs.

I did a quick review and found several interesting points.

- 60% of graduates enrolled in postsecondary – about 27,000 graduates
- 43% of these students enrolled in 4 year public, 38% enrolled in 2 year, 13% enrolled in independent, and 9% enrolled out-of-state schools.

Students who achieve college-ready status are more successful in college.

	College-Ready Students	Non College-Ready Students
GPA	2.8	2.1
First year credit hours earned	25	17
Return for 2 nd year of college	91%	74%

Obviously, our focus on college readiness will pay huge dividends for students’ college success.

As a follow-up to the reports, Charles sent out the following information that I wanted to share with you.

The Center just released new 2013 High School Feedback Reports and we need your help getting the word out. Our supporters have always been critical to helping us get these kinds of data into the hands of people who need them. Please forward this to anyone else you think would be interested. If you are part of an organization, please send it to your membership and e-mail lists and feel free to include it in any newsletters or other publications. You can find all of the reports at this link:

<http://kcews.ky.gov/HSFeedbackReports.aspx>

Kentucky is known for providing college going data to its high schools and districts but this report is special. For the first time we break through the idea that getting people to enroll in college is enough and delve into how well they actually do when they get there. College enrollment is an important step but they also need to earn passing grades and complete enough college hours so they are progressing toward a degree or other credential. For the first time we are able to show some of these metrics.

Key Findings

There was a minor decrease in the college-going rate for the 2010-11 high school class but the actual number who graduated and enrolled in college increased. More than 60 percent of our 2010-11 public high school graduates attended some form of higher education in 2011-12. Considering that Kentucky is a state where only one out of every five adults aged 25 and older has a bachelor's degree or higher the fact that three out of five of our high school graduates go to college is an impressive accomplishment but it is only the first step. We want students to be successful after they get there. We followed the previous class into their first year of college and reported back on their GPAs, how many hours they earn, and whether or not they returned for their second year. The majority who attended college for their first year did return for a second year but only 15 percent completed a full year of college level credit (30 or more hours) meaning that 85% were no longer on track to complete their degree or credential "on time."

Adding in the performance information helps to illustrate how important it is for students to be ready for college-level work. The average first year college GPA for students who weren't assessed as ready for college-level coursework was just above passing (2.01). Those same students earned less than half of a year of college level credit (14.4 credit hours) during that first year.

One of the more interesting and I think potentially useful sets of information for schools is the comparison between high school and college grades on page 5 of the report. In addition to general GPA comparisons, we were able to provide a comparison of math, English, and science grades during these graduates' senior year of high school and their first year of college. This is a rough indicator of alignment between high school and college expectations and we think it will allow schools to dig deeper into questions about how well students are prepared for the expectations of college. This is one of our first efforts to not just indicate that there may be a problem if the college going rates were too low but to also provide some basic information about where to start looking for areas to improve.

This is a considerable amount of data in each of the reports. We already have technical notes on the webpage for this report but we are in the process of developing some additional instructional materials to help people understand and use the information. We are always looking for opportunities to better inform people about the information we generate. If you have a meeting or retreat or other opportunity where we could talk to your organization we would appreciate that opportunity.

Our goal is never to just create the data and reports – it's to make sure the information is used to help improve our education, training, and workforce programs in Kentucky. Please contact me with any questions or let us know if you would like us to meet with you or any of the groups you represent.

Terry Holliday, Ph.D.
Education Commissioner