

Prepared for the next step:

Differences in opportunities for PPS high school students

For students in grades 9-12, the Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) offers four neighborhood high schools, three of which have magnet programs; two neighborhood 6-12 schools, and three magnet 6-12 schools with specialized programming. On the face of it, this looks like a system that caters to students' individual interests and offers choice. But when we look more closely at which students benefit, we also see a system that shuts some groups of students out. Here, we report on the effects of magnet school requirements, unequal access to rigorous courses, and differences in which students are preparing for college.

Magnet 6-12 enrollment

Obama, Sci-Tech, and CAPA 6-12 schools all require students to meet entrance requirements and to maintain certain behavior and academic standards in order to remain in the school (visit pghschools.org/Page/4951 for more information). This selection process leads to lower than average rates of lower income students and students with disabilities and higher than average graduation rates, compared to most neighborhood schools (see table). Magnet schools can transfer out students who don't maintain the standards. And transferred students aren't counted as part of the school's "cohort" (the group of 9th through 12th

graders who are considered when the state determines a school's graduation rate). By comparison, a student who doesn't graduate because of failing grades at a neighborhood school *does* have an adverse effect on that school's graduation rate.

In Pittsburgh, as well as across the United States, high concentrations of students living in poverty are highly correlated with lower student achievement and other negative outcomes.* In Pittsburgh's 6-12 schools, magnet requirements appear to be concentrating students living in poverty in a few schools.

School	2017 9th grade enrollment	2019-20 12th grade enrollment	Percent increase (+)/decrease (-) in 9th-12th grade enrollment	2019-20 Low-income students	2019-20 Students with IEPs excluding "gifted"	2019 Graduation rate
CAPA 6-12	136	128	-6%	25%	5%	98%
Obama 6-12	165	114	-31%	51%	11%	97%
Sci-Tech 6-12	94	79	-16%	39%	10%	97%
Allderdice 9-12	398	322	-19%	37%	11%	87%
Brashear 9-12	341	291	-15%	67%	19%	78%
Carrick 9-12	238	118	-50%	68%	30%	78%
Milliones 6-12	76	56	-26%	89%	30%	71%
Perry 9-12	143	67	-53%	77%	29%	78%
Westinghouse 6-12	133	97	-27%	84%	32%	75%

bright spots: The Imagine PPS process recognizes a need for significant rethinking of current models for Milliones, Perry, and Westinghouse. Read more about the student and teacher driven vision for Perry High School on page 12 of this report.

Access to more rigorous courses

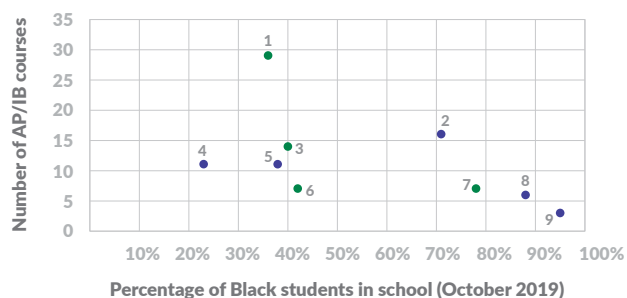
The chart shows the number of AP and IB (International Baccalaureate) courses by Black student enrollment. As Black enrollment grows, the number of rigorous courses drops.

Post-secondary success

One measure of students' college preparation is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Ninety percent of high school seniors who complete FAFSA attend college directly from high school, compared to just 55 percent of those who don't complete the FAFSA. In Pittsburgh, we see unequal rates of FAFSA completion school by school, and corresponding unequal rates of college entrance and completion. For example, this year, an estimated 84% of CAPA students completed the FAFSA, compared to an estimated 24% of Milliones students. CAPA students from the class of 2013 completed college within six years at a rate of 60%, compared to a rate of 7% for the same class at Milliones.

1	Allderdice	6	Carrick
2	Obama 6-12	7	Perry
3	Brashear	8	Milliones 6-12
4	CAPA 6-12	9	Westinghouse 6-12
5	Sci-Tech 6-12		

Number of AP/IB courses by Black student enrollment



* Reardon, S.F., Weathers, E.S., Fahle, E.M., Jang, H., & Kalogrides, D. (2019). "Is Separate Still Unequal? New Evidence on School Segregation and Racial Academic Achievement Gaps" (CEPA Working Paper No.19-06). Retrieved from Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis: <http://cepa.stanford.edu/wp19-06>.