

A Goal Monitoring Conversation

PPS 12th Grade Cohort Graduation Rate

Status Update



Dr. Wayne N. Walters & Leadership Team
April 8, 2025



Goal 2– 12th Grade Cohort Graduation Rate

Why?

12th grade graduation rates are a public measure of a school district's ability to fulfill its core mission in a timely manner with accountability. Ensuring positive student outcomes is the goal of our school system, and graduation rates serve as a key indicator of our success.

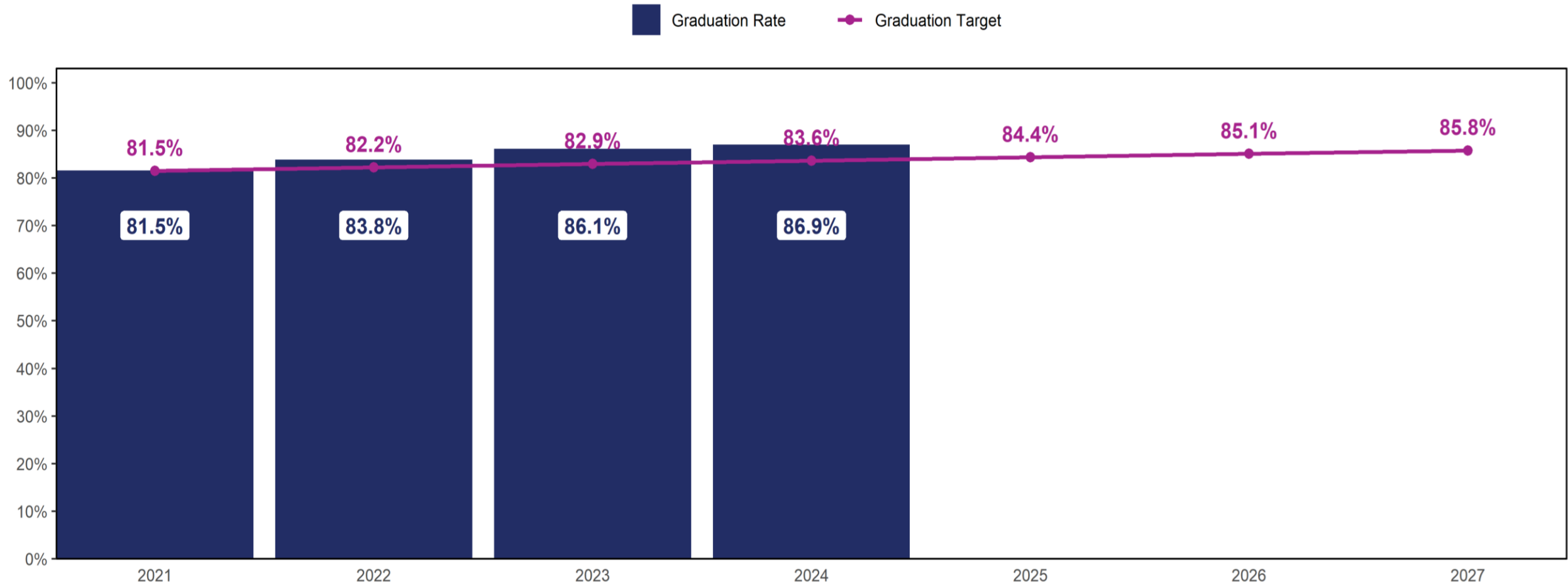
What?

By the end of the 24-25 school year, 84.4% of 12th Grade Students will graduate. At the end of the 20-21 school year, 81.5% of 12th Grade Students graduated, establishing the baseline for our 5-year goal of achieving a 85.8% graduation rate for 12th Grade Students by 2027.

How?

12th Grade Cohort Graduation Rate (By Year) Including 2024

Goal: By the end of the 2026-27 school year, 85.77% of 12th grade students will graduate. At the end of the 2020-21 school year, 81.50% of 12th grade students graduated.

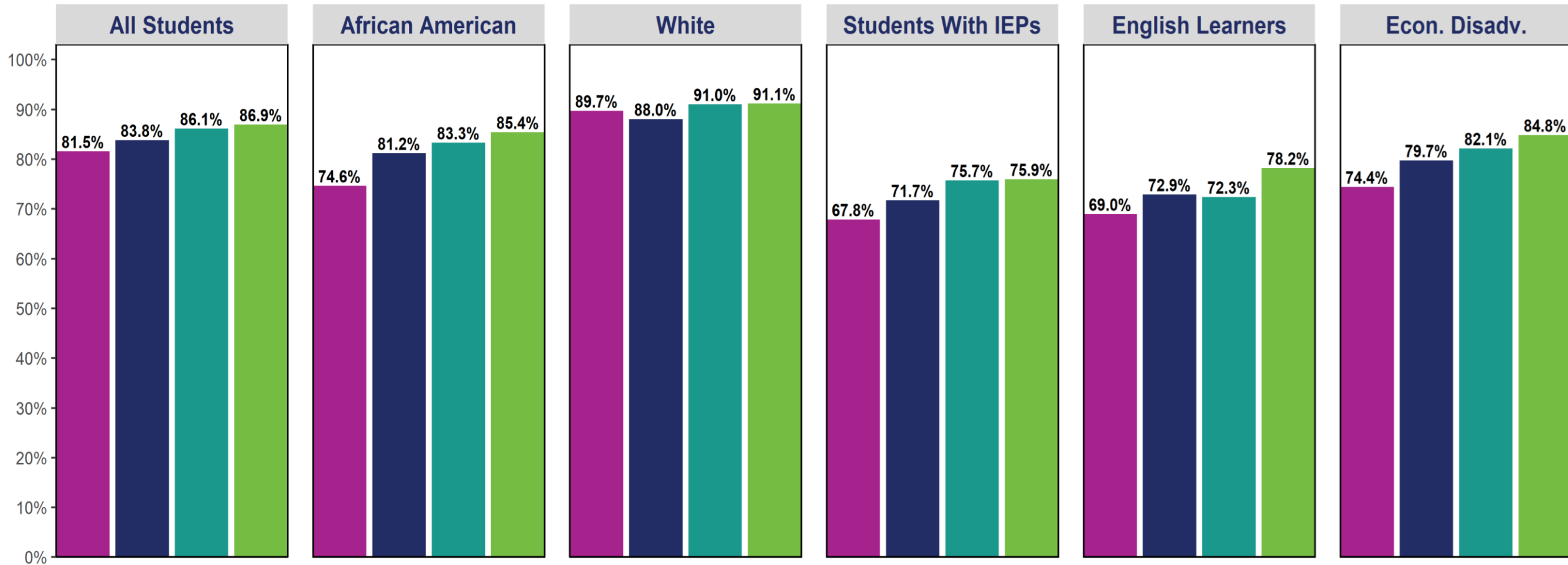


Data Source: PIMS Graduation Cohort Files

12th Grade Cohort Graduation Cohort Rate (By Subgroups) Including 2024

All Students, African American, White, IEP, ELL, and Econ. Disadv. Students

2021 2022 2023 2024



Data Source: PIMS Graduation Cohort Files

Graduation Supports

Promise Coaches: Provide mentorship, career exploration, and post-secondary planning support. Located at Carrick, Millionnes, Perry, and Westinghouse to assist students who need additional guidance.

Increased School Counseling Investments: Expanded counseling services to align closer to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommended student-to-counselor ratio, ensuring more individualized student support.

New Initiative: *Counselor Connect*

- **Graduation Progress and Status:** Tracks students' academic standing, credits earned, and remaining coursework.
- **Real-Time Academic Insights:** Monitors grades, attendance, and key academic indicators for early intervention.
- **Identification of Barriers to Graduation:** Allows counselors to document and address personal, social, or economic challenges impacting student success.
- **Family Engagement:** Auto-generates personalized progress reports for parents/guardians, enhancing communication and support.





Counselor Connect



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New Meeting

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Past Meetings

Days Present	Days Absent	Attendance Rate	Cumulative GPA
125	2	98.43	3.86
Cumulative GPA Last Update	Weighted GPA	Weighted GPA Last Update	Satisfy Act 158
3/19/25 11:26	3.92	3/19/25 11:26	Yes
Algebra Keystone Status	Biology Keystone Status	Literature Keystone Status	
Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	
Reviewed Transcript	Total Credits Earned	Total Credits Needed	Grade Based on Grad Track
	⬆️⬆️	⬆️⬆️	Find items ▾
Barriers To Graduation	Is the Student on Track?	Classes Still Needed	
Find items ▾	Find items ▾		

Summary of Guidance & Support (Academic, Career, and Social/Emotional)

Submit Form

Graduation Tracker (By School)

School	Total Number of 12th Grade Students (including those at SAC right now)	Number of 12th Grade Students On Track to Graduate (Based on Credits Alone - Not Act 158)	Number of 12th Grade Students NOT on Track to Graduate (Based on Credits Alone - Not Act 158)	# of 12th Grade Students Currently Enrolled at SAC
Pittsburgh Allderdice	357	311	42	9
Pittsburgh Brashear	200	166	34	4
Pittsburgh CAPA	116	112	4	0
Pittsburgh Carrick	116	95	21	9
Pittsburgh Clayton	0	0	0	0
Pittsburgh Perry	94	89	5	10
Pittsburgh Obama	82	69	8	5
Pittsburgh OCA	4	2	2	0
Pittsburgh Online Academy	16	14	1	0
Pittsburgh SAC (2025)	57	31	26	57
Pittsburgh Sci-Tech	96	95	1	1
Pittsburgh UPrep	59	31	28	1
Pittsburgh Westinghouse	70	52	6	14

84% of seniors are projected to be "on track to graduate" as of 04.01.2025

Act 158 - Pathways to Graduation (Monitoring Tool #2)

Students have the option to demonstrate **postsecondary preparedness** through one of four additional pathways that more fully illustrate college, career, and community readiness.

Keystone Exams continue as the statewide assessment Pennsylvania uses to comply with accountability requirements set forth in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). However, there are options for students who can demonstrate proficiency in another way.

Five pathways exist for meeting state high school graduation requirements:

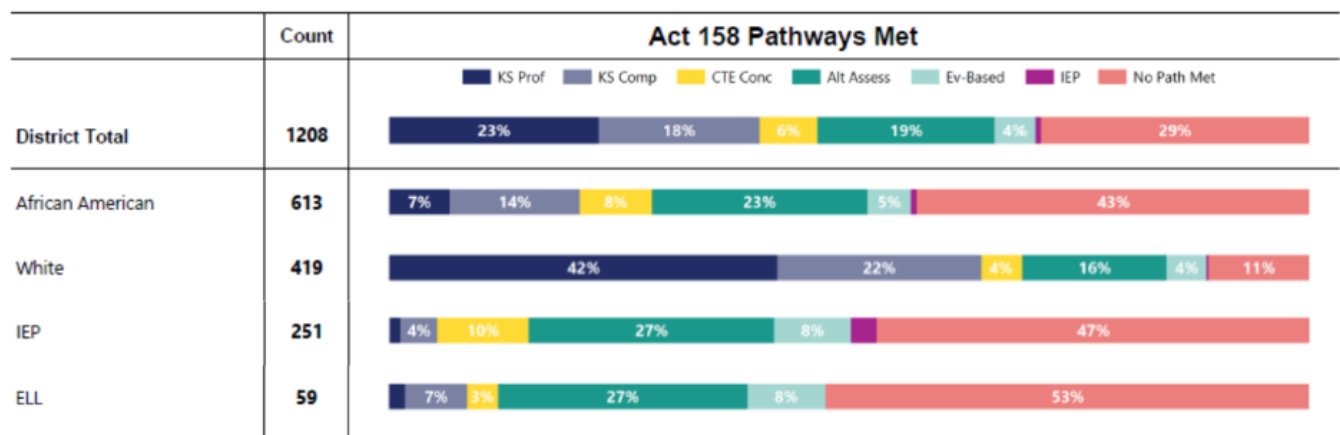
- ☐ **Keystone Proficiency**
- ☐ **Keystone Composite**
- ☐ **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Concentrator**
- ☐ **Alternative Assessment**
- ☐ **Evidence-Based**

More information regarding Act 158 can be found at education.pa.gov.

Pittsburgh Public Schools administration, school counselors, transition counselors, teachers, and other staff **work closely with all students** to review and help the students who must decide which pathway is best for them to meet this statewide high school graduation requirement.

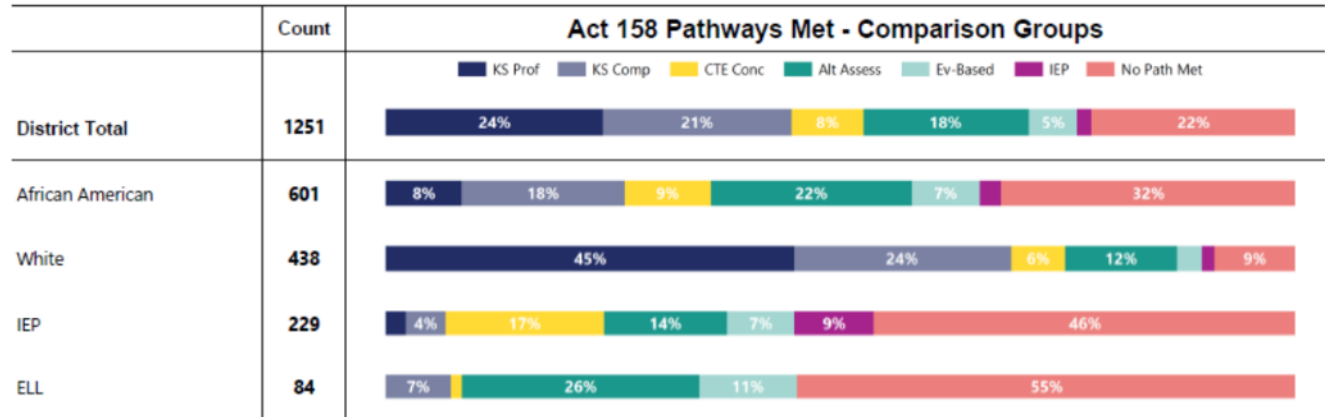
Act 158 Monitoring as of April (By Subgroup) Yearly Comparison

Act 158 Pathways Met as of April 2024
April 1 2024



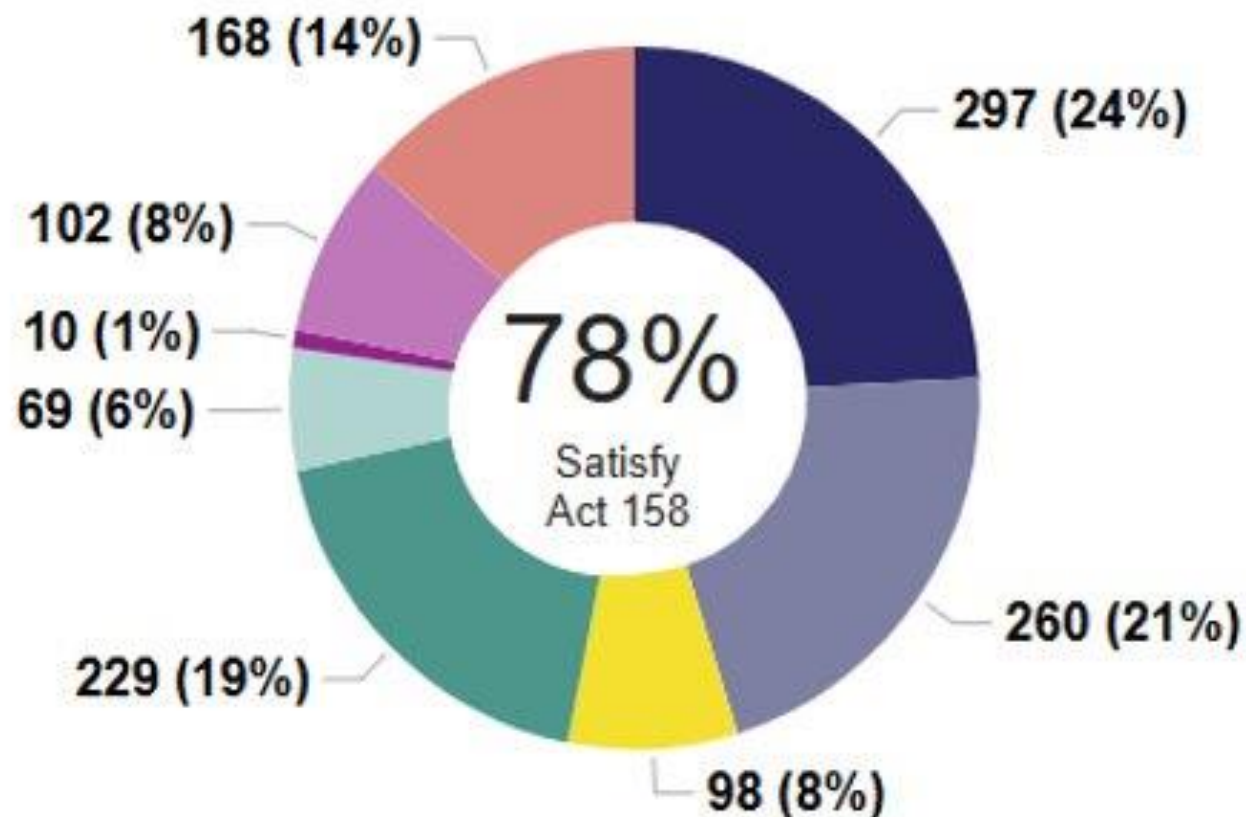
★ **Superintendent’s Highlight:** As of April 1, 2025, 78% of students have met the ACT 158 graduation requirement, compared to 71% on April 1, 2024—an increase of 7% from last year at this time.

Act 158 Pathways Met as of April 2025
April 1 2025



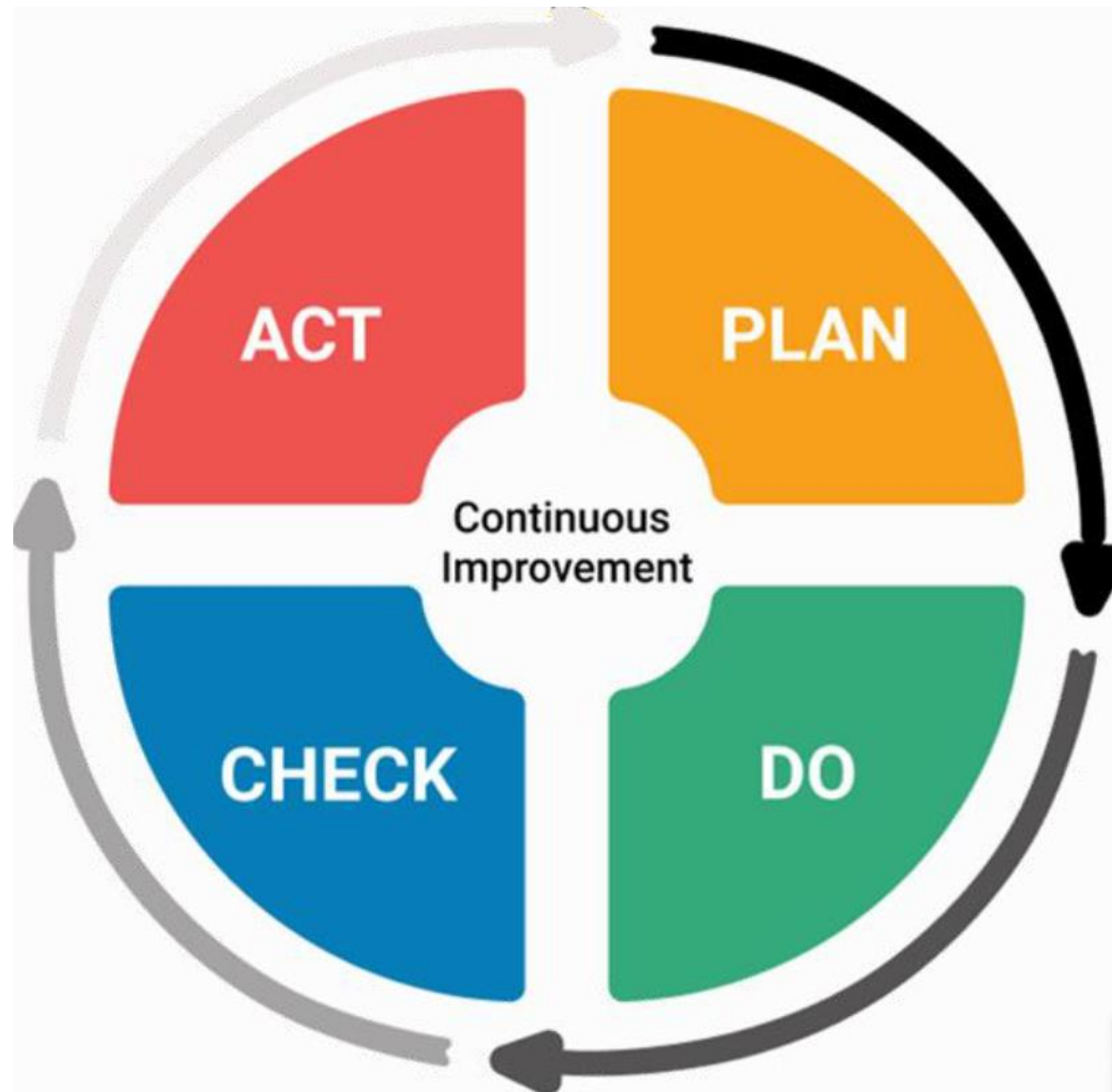
Act 158 Reported Data as of April 1, 2025

Data current as of 4/1/2025



Pathway	
Keystone Proficiency	297
Keystone Composite	260
CTE Concentrator	98
Alternative Assessment	229
Evidence-Based	69
IEP Goals	10
Waiver	0
No Pathway Met (IEP)	102
No Pathway Met	168
Total	1233

Strategy and Plan



Strategies

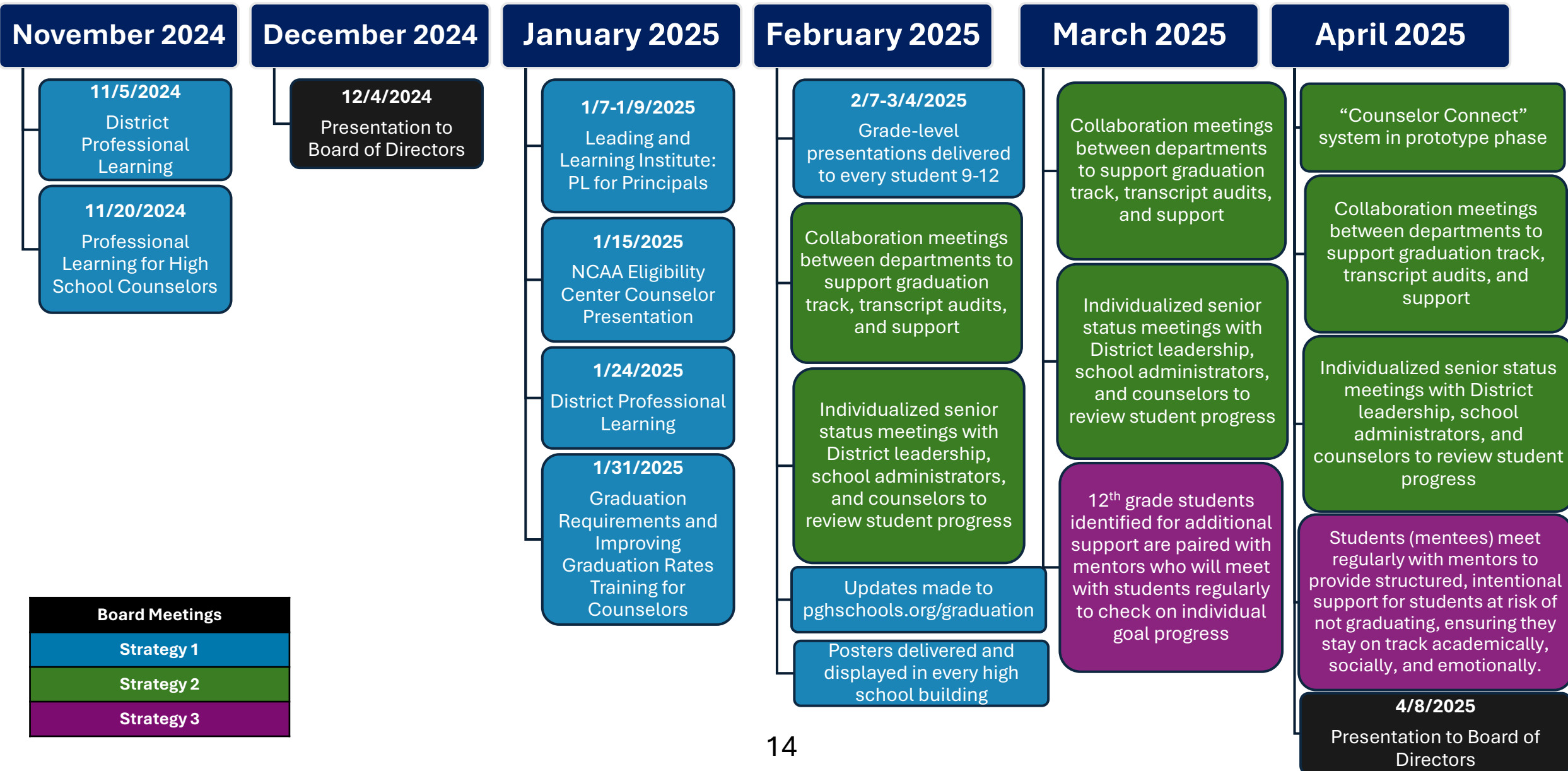
**Graduation
Mentorship**

**Standardized
Communication and
Engagement**



**Structured
Documentation
Process**

Implementation Timeline



Strategy 1 – Standardized Communication and Engagement



To increase graduation rates across PPS, we will implement a comprehensive, district-wide strategy focused on standardized communication and engagement. This approach will ensure that all students, families, and staff members have clear, consistent, and accessible information about graduation requirements, available supports, and pathways to success.

Key Components of the Strategy:

Clear and Consistent Messaging: Develop standardized communication materials—including infographics, presentations, and multilingual guides—that outline graduation requirements, credit tracking, and postsecondary planning. These materials will be distributed via the District website, counselor meetings, and family engagement events.

Proactive Student and Family Engagement: Launch structured check-ins at key transition points (9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade) to ensure students and families are aware of credit progress, intervention opportunities, and individualized support plans.

Data-Driven Monitoring and Intervention: Implement real-time tracking tools for counselors and administrators to identify students at risk of falling behind. Establish structured intervention plans that include credit recovery options, mentoring, and targeted academic supports to keep students on track.

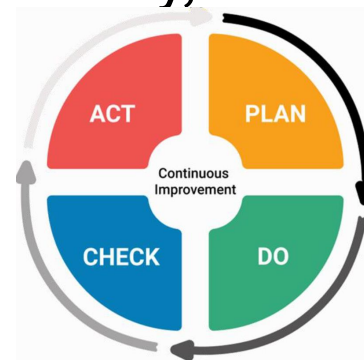
Rationale:

Current data indicates disparities in graduation rates across student groups. This may be in part due to inconsistent awareness of credit requirements, intervention opportunities, and available supports. By standardizing communication, strengthening engagement efforts, and leveraging data-driven interventions, we will create a clearer path to graduation for all students. This strategy will ensure that students, families, and educators have the tools and knowledge necessary to support academic success, ultimately improving graduation rates district-wide.



Strategy #1: (Do)

- The Communications Team has developed graduation-focused marketing materials, now placed in every high school, to ensure students are consistently reminded of key milestones and requirements. These materials include multilingual infographics, guides, and presentations distributed via our high schools, counselor meetings, family engagement events and District website. Additionally, structured check-ins have been implemented at the 12th-grade level to initially provide students and families with updates on credit progress and intervention opportunities. Counselors have begun utilizing real-time tracking tools to monitor student progress, enabling early intervention through credit recovery, mentoring, and academic support programs.





"Credit Where Credit is Due"	"The Graduation Game Plan"	"Transcript Treasure Hunt"	"Stayin' Alive in High School"	"Pathway Power Moves"	"Diploma Dash"
\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200
\$ 400	\$ 400	\$ 400	\$ 400	\$ 400	\$ 400
\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ 600
\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ 800
\$ 1000	\$ 1000	\$ 1000	\$ 1000	\$ 1000	\$ 1000

www.pghschools.org/graduation



Strategy 1 – Standardized Communication and Engagement



Strategy #1: (Check) Challenges

Ensuring that all students and families consistently receive accurate, timely, and accessible graduation information has presented some challenges:

- While marketing materials and presentations were distributed and delivered across all high schools, ensuring every absent student received the information required additional follow-up in some buildings.
- The development of a structured tracking system for student-counselor engagements is still in progress, requiring further refinement to ensure it effectively supports both students and families.
- Family engagement remains an area for improvement, as not all families actively review or respond to digital or mailed communication regarding their child's graduation progress.

Strategy #1: (Act) Next Steps

- Schools have each implemented a follow-up process to ensure that all students who missed class assemblies or presentations receive graduation requirement information in a timely manner.
- The IT Team is finalizing the tracking system for counselor-student meetings.
- Family engagement strategies will be strengthened through more proactive communication efforts, including multilingual outreach and online recordings or sessions.
- District administrator along with school administrators will collaborate with counselors to monitor student outreach efforts and ensure all students receive the necessary guidance to stay on track for graduation.

Strategy 2 – Structured Documentation Process

To improve graduation rates across PPS, we will utilize a structured documentation process that ensures accurate, real-time tracking of student progress. Given the mobility of students within our district, where many transfer between schools throughout their academic journey, a standardized record-keeping system is essential. This strategy will create a seamless transition for students by ensuring that key information—such as credit completion, intervention plans, and graduation requirements—moves with them. By maintaining consistency across our high schools, we can more effectively identify students at risk, provide timely interventions, and support their successful path to graduation.

Key Components of the Strategy:

Graduation Tracker: All PPS high schools now utilize Graduation Tracker to support student success. Counselors and principals are expected to use this feature for every student in grades 9–12.

- Quick Assessment: Counselors can instantly determine where students stand academically.
- Class Planning: Identifies which courses a student still needs.
- Enhanced Transparency: Facilitates clear, individualized conversations between students and counselors.
- Collaborative Monitoring: Enables access to student progress by all relevant staff, not just counselors.
- Support for Transfers: Ensures transfer students can easily track their progress across PPS schools.

Graduation Progress Audits: Conduct regular audits of student records at key milestones (end of 9th, 10th, and 11th grade) to verify credit completion, identify gaps, and proactively address potential barriers to graduation. Counselors will use this data to provide personalized guidance and intervention plans.

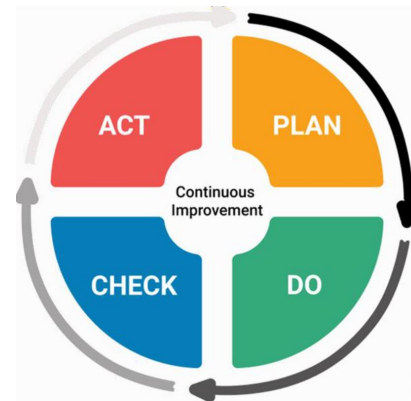
Rationale:

Inconsistent documentation and tracking processes have led to missed opportunities for timely interventions, contributing to graduation rate disparities. A structured documentation process will create a clear and consistent system for monitoring progress, identifying students in need of support, and ensuring every student receives the guidance and resources necessary to stay on track. By streamlining record-keeping and using data proactively, this strategy will enhance student success, increase on-time graduation rates, and provide equitable access to necessary academic resources.

Strategy 2 – Structured Documentation Process

Strategy #2: (Do)

- Since the presentation of this strategy, significant steps have been taken to make improvements to our Power BI system, merging Graduation Tracker and Act 158 updates into one Dashboard. All school counselors and transition counselors are now required to utilize the Graduation Tracker feature in eSchoolPlus for every student in grades 9–12 and provide updates. To support this, the IT and Student Support Services teams have hosted multiple professional learning sessions and office hours from September 2024 to present, ensuring counselors are equipped with the necessary skills to effectively use the tool and provide targeted support to students.



Strategy 2 – Structured Documentation Process

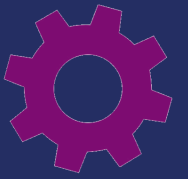
Strategy #2: (Check)

- Despite the progress, challenges have emerged in ensuring consistent use of the Graduation Tracker across all schools. While counselors are utilizing the tool, some have encountered difficulties in fully adopting the system, either due to technical issues or insufficient familiarity with certain features. Although the professional learning sessions have been helpful, some schools require additional support to ensure full engagement with the tool. Some schools are still in the process of standardizing their documentation practices, which impacts the consistency of tracking and intervention efforts.

Strategy #2: (Act)

- To address these challenges, the district has created and launched Counselor Connect and will continue providing professional learning sessions for counselors, with a focus on optimizing the use of Graduation Tracker and addressing any technical barriers. Once the communication log system is finalized, we will conduct additional training for counselors, student services staff, and school leaders to ensure proper implementation and consistent use. This will include ensuring that counselors are effectively documenting their interactions with students and families to support personalized intervention plans.
- The data from the Graduation Tracker will be used to provide regular updates to school leadership, helping to identify areas that require additional support. We will also leverage the combined data from the Graduation Tracker and the Act 158 Dashboard to provide tailored interventions for students and ensure that all schools have the tools and resources necessary to help students stay on track for graduation. Additionally, we will monitor the effectiveness of the communication log system and make necessary adjustments based on feedback from counselors and school leaders to improve its functionality and usability.

Strategy 3 – Graduation Mentorship



To improve graduation rates across PPS, students in danger of not graduating will be paired with dedicated mentors who provide guidance, accountability, and support. This strategy will help students navigate academic, social, and personal challenges that may impact their ability to graduate on time.

Key Components of the Strategy:

Targeted Mentorship Pairings: Identify students who would benefit most from mentorship based on attendance, academic performance, and other early warning indicators. Pair them with trained mentors—including school staff and community partners—who can provide consistent, one-on-one support.

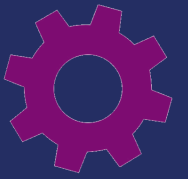
- Certain student populations, including African American students, students with IEPs, and English Language Learners, may require additional, targeted support to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities that promote academic success. By recognizing and addressing their unique needs, we can provide tailored interventions that help all students reach their full potential.

Structured Check-Ins and Goal Setting: A guide and form has been created for mentors with or without an education background to assist their students. The form will be shared with the student's counselor immediately following each mentoring session. This promotes a cohesive support system for each mentee.

Rationale:

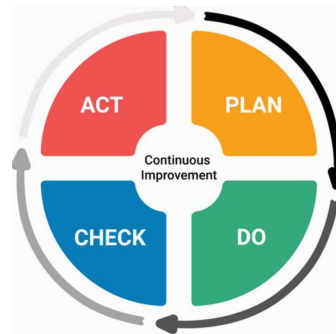
Many students, particularly those from historically underserved backgrounds, may face unique challenges and may need more individualized support from a caring adult. By implementing a structured mentorship program, we will create a reliable support system that fosters motivation, engagement, and resilience. This strategy ensures that every student has a trusted advocate invested in their success, ultimately leading to higher graduation rates and improved postsecondary readiness.

Strategy 3 – Graduation Mentorship



Strategy #3: (Do)

- Since the introduction of this strategy, high school administrators have developed a mentoring implementation plan specifically targeting struggling seniors, with a focus on historically underserved student populations. A comprehensive mentoring guide and form have been created to help mentors, whether or not they have an educational background, effectively assist their students. After each mentoring session, the form is shared with the student's counselor to ensure consistent follow-up and a cohesive support system.
- In addition, the Communications Team has updated the District's graduation requirements webpage to keep families informed about their student's progress toward graduation. Families have received progress updates from the schools, and efforts have been made to ensure ELL families receive translated materials and additional support. To further increase awareness of graduation requirements and success strategies, the district is exploring various communication channels, including social media, PeachJar, and email blasts.

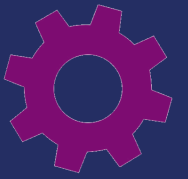


Senior Mentoring Information (By School)

School	Number of 12th Grade Students Identified for Mentoring (How many are African American, how many have an IEP, how many are English Language Learners?)	Number of Students Identified for Mentoring Who Have Met with a Mentor at Least Once
Pittsburgh Allderdice	31 (19 AA, 2 IEP, 1 ELL)	2 / 31 (all others have regular check-ins with their counselor)
Pittsburgh Brashear	34 (17 AA, 11 IEP, 5 ELL)	34 / 34
Pittsburgh CAPA	5 (1 AA, 0 IEP, 0 ELL)	2 / 5
Pittsburgh Carrick	23 (17 AA, 1 IEP, 0 ELL)	23 / 23
Pittsburgh Clayton	0 (0 AA, 0 IEP, 0 ELL)	0 / 0
Pittsburgh Perry	10 (9 AA, 0 IEP, 0 ELL)	10 / 10
Pittsburgh Obama	41 (40 AA, 4 IEP, 2 ELL)	41 / 41
Pittsburgh OCA	4 (4 AA, 4 IEP)	4 / 4
Pittsburgh Online Academy	16	All 16 seniors will meet with a mentor beginning the week of April 21st
Pittsburgh SAC (2025)	57 (55 AA, 5 IEP, 0 ELL)	57 / 57
Pittsburgh Sci-Tech	0 (0 AA, 0 IEP, 0 ELL)	0 / 0
Pittsburgh UPrep	28 (23 AA, 9 IEP, 0 ELL)	5 / 28
Pittsburgh Westinghouse	51 (38 AA, 12 IEP, 1 ELL)	51 / 51

* As of
04.01.2025

Strategy 3 – Graduation Mentorship



Strategy #3: (Check) Challenges

- One of the primary challenges faced by this strategy is ensuring that students who are at risk of not graduating can fully engage with their mentors. Many 12th-grade students face unique challenges that impact their attendance, such as work or family obligations, which often prevent them from meeting with their mentors. When students are absent, they miss critical interventions and support, which jeopardizes their ability to stay on track for graduation. This attendance issue has proven to be a significant barrier to the success of the mentoring program.

Strategy #3: (Act) Next Steps

- Currently, there are 218 students who are not on track to graduate, 178 of those students are not on track to graduate based on credit completion alone, while 40 of those students are not on track based on Act 158 requirement completion. Based on feedback from principals during the March LLI (Leadership Learning Institute) meeting, a decision was made to shift from a group celebration model to individual acknowledgements for these students. This adjustment was made to accommodate factors such as student availability, the importance of building rapport with the mentor or teacher delivering incentives, and the potential embarrassment students may feel if their at-risk status is made public.
- Principals will now reach out to the Office of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement with their incentive numbers. To date, several community organizations and partners, including the Pittsburgh Penguins, Pittsburgh Center for Arts and Media, Macedonia FACE, Carnegie Mellon University, and the Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh, have generously donated incentives to support these individual acknowledgements. Moving forward, the district will continue to monitor attendance and mentor engagement, adjust the support system as necessary, and collaborate with community partners to provide additional incentives and recognition for students who are on the path to graduation.



LET'S
HAVE
A
Conversation