

The Dallas ISD On-Track Indicator, 2015-16

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At-a-Glance

A high school diploma is rapidly becoming the minimum qualification for most occupations in the American economy. Consequently, addressing graduation and dropout rates has taken on greater urgency in school districts across the country. The first year of high school is increasingly recognized as a transition period that may be “make-or-break” for many students in terms of eventual high school success and graduation.

The Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) developed an On-Track indicator in 1999 to gauge whether students in their first year of high school were making enough progress to have a reasonable expectation of graduating in four years. Unlike other indicators, it provides information about progress and performance from a relatively early point in a student’s high school career.

Dallas ISD developed its own On-Track indicator in 2007-08. From 2009-10 through 2011-12, the Dallas On-Track Indicator was incorporated into the Principal Appraisal System.

Like the Chicago indicator, the Dallas indicator combines two factors: the number of credits earned during freshman year and the number of semester Fs in core subjects. A student is considered to be On-Track at the end of ninth grade if he or she has met both of the following criteria:

- The student has accumulated five full course credits, and
- The student has no more than one semester F (that is, one-half of a full credit) in a core subject (English, math, science, or social studies).

Methodology

The model was developed using data for students entering high school for the first time in 2003-04. The cohort consisted of 8,008 first-time, regular education ninth graders who were enrolled for the full school year. The cohort was 35% African American, 58% Hispanic, and 16% LEP.

Analyses were conducted in June, 2008, to construct a baseline measure districtwide. The analysis was repeated annually in subsequent years. Only non-special-education grade nine students who were enrolled in the same school for both fall and spring semesters were included. Results were calculated only

for schools receiving an accountability rating; alternative schools were excluded from the analyses.

In 2010-11, On-Track documentation was improved, as registrars at all high schools provided prior grade level information for students entering ninth grade from outside the district. In 2011-12, new state testing requirements necessitated identification of all first-time ninth grade students, and this information was made available through the Chancery student data system.

Results

Figure 1 shows freshman On-Track percentages for all district high schools, for all schools other than magnets (i.e., comprehensive and Early College high schools), and for magnets only, for the 2008-09 through 2015-16 school years. The overall On-Track rate for 2016, 76.1%, was higher than in the previous seven years for which rates were calculated. The On-Track rate for magnet schools improved markedly over the 2015 rate, and the rate for non-magnet high schools improved as well.

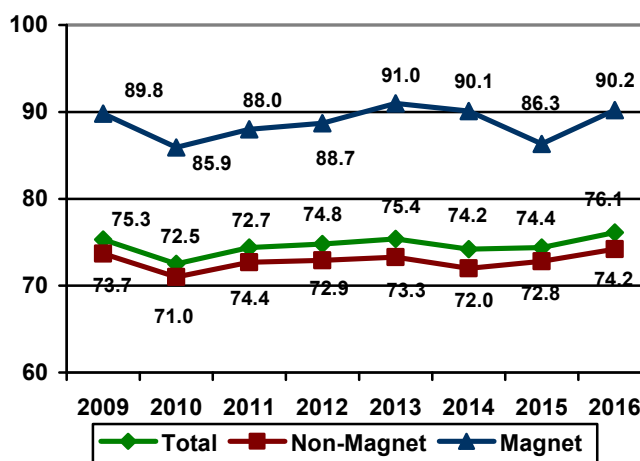


Figure 1. Percent of first-time ninth grade students On-Track, 2009 through 2016

Figure 2 shows On-Track percentages by student ethnicity. In 2016, the districtwide On-Track rate of African American students was 72.8%; Hispanic students, 75.8%; and White students, 92.0%.

Historically, the On-Track rate of all ethnic subgroups fell in 2010, although the rates of African American and White students fell more sharply than that of

Hispanic students. The On-Track rate of White students has increased gradually since 2010. African American students' rate has remained within a range of about 73 to 75 percent, and Hispanic students' rate within a similar range of 73 to 76 percent.

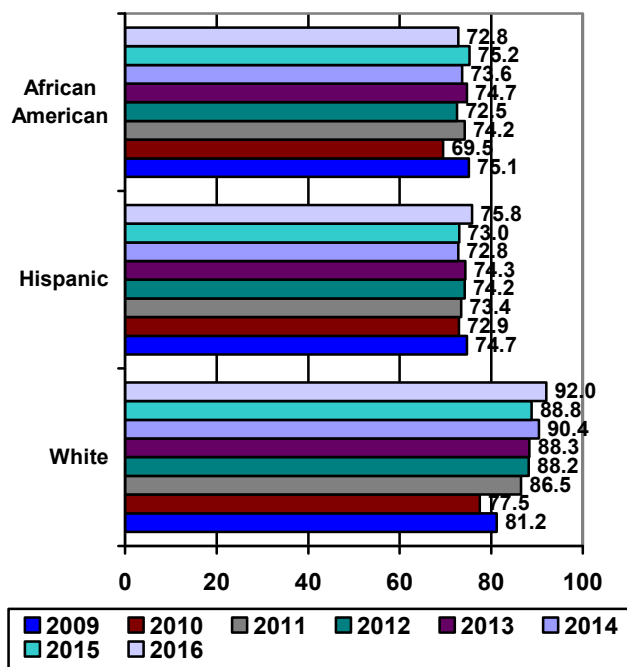


Figure 2. Percent of first time ninth-grade students On-Track by ethnicity, 2009-2016

Table 1 shows On-Track percentages by school and school group for the 2013-14 through 2015-16 school years, and the percentage point change over the three-year period.

As a group, non-magnet (comprehensive and Early College) high schools had an On-Track rate in 2016 of 74.2%. In 2009, the first year in which the indicator was used, all non-magnet high schools had On-Track percentages of 60% or more. In 2016, only one school (North Dallas) fell below 60%, but six more fell below 70%. Conversely, Lassiter Early College had an On-Track rates of 100%, and Gilliam and Garza Early Colleges of 95.6% and 95.5%, respectively. Over the period from 2014 through 2016, four schools had On-Track increases of 10 percentage points or more; these were Bryan Adams, Molina, Spruce, and White. Only one comprehensive high school, North Dallas, has a decrease of more than 10 percentage points.

Magnet high school On-Track rates remained essentially flat, going from 90.1% in 2014 to 90.2% in 2016, with a small decrease in 2015. The largest increase in the On-Track rate was at the Townview Education and Social Services Magnet (27.2%), followed by Townview Health Professions (7.8%). The largest decreases were at Obama Male Leadership Academy (-10.0%), Washington Arts Magnet (-9.0%), and Smith New Tech (-8.3%).

Table 1
Freshman On-Track Rate by School, 2014-2016

School	Percent On-Track			
	2014	2015	2016	Change
Comprehensive High Schools				
B. Adams	66.2	65.2	76.5	10.3
Adamson	73.3	70.0	74.9	1.6
Carter	81.0	66.5	73.6	-7.4
Conrad	69.8	67.9	72.4	2.6
Hillcrest	73.9	77.3	67.0	-6.9
IDEA	NA	NA	83.8	NA
Jefferson	79.3	67.4	70.6	-8.7
Kimball	81.2	75.2	75.2	-6.0
Lincoln	73.3	82.5	72.3	-1.0
Madison	76.2	84.3	82.5	6.3
Molina	57.9	67.2	77.2	19.3
North Dallas	68.8	57.6	57.1	-11.7
Pinkston	58.5	82.2	67.9	9.4
Roosevelt	53.0	61.2	60.0	7.0
Samuell	87.9	86.1	81.4	-6.5
Seagoville	74.3	80.1	69.4	-4.9
Skyline	76.0	75.3	73.3	-2.7
S. Oak Cliff	63.6	69.9	63.7	0.1
Spruce	58.2	65.6	76.9	18.7
Sunset	71.8	80.8	72.8	1.0
White	66.3	64.1	77.7	11.4
Wilmer-Hutchins	70.9	76.6	69.3	-1.6
Wilson	74.0	77.2	79.7	5.7
Early College High Schools				
Garza Early College	100.0	100.0	95.5	-4.5
Gilliam Collegiate Academy	86.2	69.8	95.6	-4.4
Lassiter Early College	96.5	98.3	100.0	4.5
Comprehensive/ECHS Total	72.0	72.8	74.2	2.2
Magnet High Schools				
Arts Magnet	95.1	89.0	86.1	-9.0
Obama HS	89.2	76.3	79.2	-10.0
Rangel HS	100.0	100.0	98.7	-1.3
Smith New Tech	88.5	84.4	80.2	-8.3
Townview Business	84.3	71.5	85.2	0.9
Townview ESSM	65.8	81.3	93.0	27.2
Townview Health	89.4	92.4	97.2	7.8
Townview Law	92.8	81.1	88.2	-4.6
Townview SEM	91.2	93.3	99.1	7.9
Townview TAG	100.0	98.5	98.5	-1.5
Magnet Total	90.1	86.3	90.2	0.1

Note. On-Track rates below 60% are highlighted in red, and those above 60% but below 70% are highlighted in orange.

Recommendations

District On-Track rates have varied little since 2010, despite considerable year-to-year variability at individual campuses. Progress of recent freshman cohorts should be analyzed to determine whether new requirements for diploma endorsements and End-Of-Course testing performance should be incorporated into the On-Track measure, as well as to examine the reasons for large annual fluctuations at specific high schools.

For more information, contact Program Evaluation at 972-925-6457.