

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) developed its own On-Track indicator in 2007-08. Like the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) indicator,¹ the Dallas ISD indicator combines two factors. A student is considered to be On Track at the end of ninth grade if he or she has 1) accumulated five full course credits and 2) no more than one semester F (that is, one-half of a full credit) in a core subject (English, mathematics, science, or social studies).

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the ninth grade On-Track rates for the district and individual high school campuses. Specifically, this evaluation reports (1) On-Track rates by school type, (2) On-Track rates by ethnicity, and (3) On-Track rates by school.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. The district also modified the school calendar from a six-week schedule to a nine-week schedule. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The district also continued to implement the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as state and local COVID safety protocols.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the On-Track rates of first-time ninth-grade students in 2020-21?

Methodology

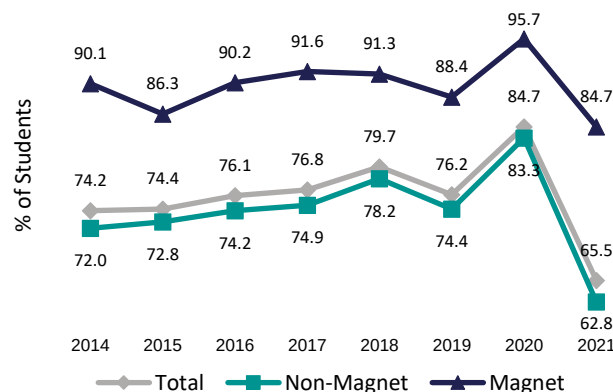
Student characteristics were extracted from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)

district data files, and course performance data were extracted from the district course data files. Only non-special education grade nine students who were enrolled in the same school for the fall semester were included.

Results

Overall, the 2020-21 district end-of-year On-Track rate (65.5%) was notably lower than the end-of-year On-Track rates for 2019-20 (84.7%, see Figure 1). End-of-year On-Track rates for magnet schools were markedly higher than those of non-magnet schools for all examined school years, resulting in a *gap* between the two groups. While the *gap* decreased from 2013-14 (18.1 percentage points) to 2019-20 (12.4 percentage points), it increased markedly in 2020-21 (21.9 percentage points).

Figure 1: On-Track End-of-Year Rates of First-Time Ninth-Grade Students by School Type, 2013-14 to 2020-21



Source: District course files dated 06/18/14 (2013-14), 06/25/15 (2014-15), 06/23/16 (2015-16), 06/20/17 (2016-17), 07/11/18 (2017-18), 08/14/19 (2018-19), 07/30/20 (2019-20), and 07/21/21 (2020-21) for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/28/13 (2013-14), 10/31/14 (2014-15), 10/30/15 (2015-16), 10/31/16 (2016-17), 10/30/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), 10/31/19 (2019-20), and 10/30/20 (2020-21).

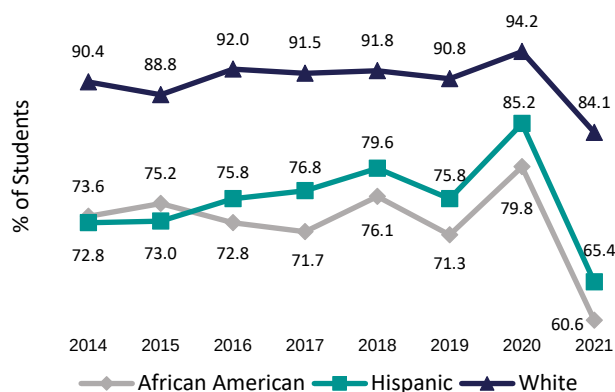
In 2020-21, the districtwide end-of-year On-Track rate of African American students (60.6%) was lower than Hispanic students (65.4%) and White students (84.1%, see Figure 2). Since 2013-14, end-of-year On-Track rates for White students have been higher than those of African American students and Hispanic students, resulting in a gap between the student groups. The gap widened between African American students and White students from 2014-15 (13.6

¹ The 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.

percentage points) to 2016-17 (19.8 percentage points) but decreased markedly in 2017-18 (15.7 percentage points) and increased again in 2018-19 (19.5 percentage points). In 2019-20, the gap between the African American students and White students decreased to 14.4 percentage points but increased noticeably to 23.5 percentage points in 2020-21. The gap narrowed between Hispanic students and White students from 2015-16 (16.2 percentage points) to 2017-18 (12.2 percentage points) but increased in 2018-19 (15.0 percentage points). In 2019-20, the gap between the Hispanic students and White students decreased to 9.0 percentage points but more than doubled to 18.7 percentage points in 2020-21.

Figure 2: On-Track End-of-Year Rates of First-Time Ninth-Grade Students by Ethnicity, 2013-14 to 2020-21



Source: District course files dated 06/18/14 (2013-14), 06/25/15 (2014-15), 06/23/16 (2015-16), 06/20/17 (2016-17), 07/11/18 (2017-18), 08/14/19 (2018-19), 07/30/20 (2019-20), and 07/21/21 (2020-21) for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/28/13 (2013-14), 10/31/14 (2014-15), 10/30/15 (2015-16), 10/31/16 (2016-17), 10/30/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), 10/31/19 (2019-20), and 10/30/20 (2020-21).

Overall, magnet high schools (84.7%) had a higher percentage of end-of-year On-Track students compared to non-magnet high schools (62.8%, see Table 1). In 2020-21, three out of 28 (10.7%) non-magnet high schools had end-of-year rates at or above 80 percent, which was a decrease from 2020 ($n = 20$). Eighteen non-magnet high schools had end-of-year On-Track rates below 70 percent, with eight of those schools falling below 60 percent. Seven out of ten (70.0%) magnet high schools had end-of-year rates exceeding 80 percent, which was a decrease from 2019-20 ($n = 10$).

Overall, from 2018-19 to 2020-21, magnet high schools' end-of-year On-Track rates decreased slightly by 3.7 percentage points, while non-magnet high schools and the district decreased markedly in end-of-year On-Track rates (11.6 percentage points and 10.7 percentage points, respectively). From 2018-19 to 2020-21, 24 out of 28 (85.7%) non-magnet high schools had decreases in end-of-year On-Track rates (ranging from 3.4 percentage points to 31.6 percentage points). Eight out of ten (80.0%) magnet high schools had decreases in end-of-year

On-Track rates (ranging from 0.4 percentage points to 13.4 percentage points).

Table 1: Freshman End-of-Year On-Track Rates by School, 2018-19 to 2020-21

	Percent On-Track			2-yr
	2019	2020	2021	Δ
Non-Magnet High Schools				
B. Adams	79.8	81.3	80.3	0.5
Adamson	72.6	90.7	66.8	-5.8
Carter	72.5	70.6	50.9	-21.6
CityLab	86.2	94.0	67.7	-18.5
Conrad	79.6	88.3	63.5	-16.1
Garza Early College	98.2	99.2	83.6	-14.6
Gilliam Collegiate Academy	91.1	92.1	75.0	-16.1
Hillcrest	78.1	90.0	61.6	-16.5
IDEA	77.8	87.7	70.9	-6.9
Jefferson	77.3	84.6	67.4	-9.9
Kimball	75.9	74.8	46.9	-29.0
Lassiter Early College	94.2	92.6	94.6	0.4
Lincoln	65.4	67.3	54.5	-10.9
Madison	88.2	85.1	56.6	-31.6
Molina	76.1	86.9	71.0	-5.1
North Dallas	64.5	83.1	60.7	-3.8
North Lake	-	100.0	69.8	NA
Pinkston	77.6	76.6	70.0	-7.6
Roosevelt	58.2	75.3	46.0	-12.2
Samuell	67.6	88.6	46.0	-21.6
Seagoville	65.3	78.8	43.1	-22.2
Skyline	72.7	81.4	61.7	-11.0
South Oak Cliff	74.0	79.5	69.8	-4.2
Spruce	58.6	67.3	34.5	-24.1
Sunset	69.3	89.1	73.3	4.0
White	73.8	82.5	70.4	-3.4
Wilmer-Hutchins	73.8	82.9	70.3	-3.5
Wilson	86.8	92.2	66.7	-20.1
Non-Magnet Total	74.4	83.3	62.8	-11.6
Magnet High Schools				
Obama	97.7	100.0	94.4	-3.3
Rangel	100.0	98.8	92.4	-7.6
New Tech	33.3	88.5	77.3	44.0
Townview Business	83.8	93.5	87.9	4.1
Townview ESSM	74.2	91.8	65.9	-8.3
Townview Health	95.1	98.1	90.5	-4.6
Townview Law	82.7	95.8	74.6	-8.1
Townview SEM	100.0	97.4	86.6	-13.4
Townview TAG	97.3	99.2	88.3	-9.0
Washington Arts	84.5	94.6	84.1	-0.4
Magnet Total	88.4	95.7	84.7	-3.7
District Total	76.2	84.7	65.5	-10.7

Source: District course files dated 08/14/19 (2018-19), 07/30/20 (2019-20), and 07/21/21 (2020-21) for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/26/18 (2018-19), 10/31/19 (2019-20) and 10/30/20 (2020-21).

Note: ESSM = Education and Social Science Magnet. SEM = Science and Engineering Magnet. TAG = Talented and Gifted. - = No data available. NA = Unable to calculate. Schools with 2020-21 end-of-year On-Track rates below 70 percent are highlighted in gray. 2-yr Δ = Difference change in On-Track percentage from 2018-19 to 2020-21. All differences shown in percentage points.

What were the longitudinal trends and 4-year graduation rates of first-time ninth-grade students identified as On-Track?

Methodology

Student leaver records were extracted from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) district data files and merged with On-Track data files for 2011-12 through 2017-18. Four-year graduation rates were calculated for first-time ninth-grade cohort students identified as On-Track and Not On-Track after excluding students who left the district (e.g. moved, became home schooled, enrolled in a private school, were incarcerated, or deceased).

Results

Overall, the Classes of 2015 to 2020 had a larger proportion of first-time ninth-grade students identified as On-Track (ranging from 78.2% to 81.8%) compared to Not On-Track (ranging from 18.2% to 21.8%, see Table 2). For the Classes of 2015 to 2020, first-time ninth-grade students identified as On-Track had higher 4-year graduation rates than first-time ninth-grade students identified as Not On-Track. Results indicate that a large portion of On-Track students (86.9% to 89.8%) had graduated high school in four years, while only about half (50.7% to 59.5%) of Not On-Track students had graduated high school in four years.

Table 2: Graduation Rates by On-Track Status: Class of 2015 to Class of 2020

Class of	Class Total		Graduated in 4-years	
	N	%	n	%
On-Track				
2015	5,711	78.5	4,995	87.5
2016	6,165	79.4	5,359	86.9
2017	5,818	78.2	5,132	88.2
2018	6,217	79.0	5,503	88.5
2019	6,433	80.9	5,779	89.8
2020*	6,403	81.8	5,690	88.9
Not On-Track				
2015	1,561	21.5	929	59.5
2016	1,595	20.6	859	53.9
2017	1,623	21.8	925	57.0
2018	1,655	21.0	928	56.1
2019	1,515	19.1	823	54.3
2020*	1,421	18.2	720	50.7

Source: District course files dated 06/18/14 (2013-14), 06/25/15 (2014-15), 06/23/16 (2015-16), and 06/20/17 (2016-17) for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/28/13 (2013-14), 10/31/14 (2014-15), 10/30/15 (2015-16), and 10/31/16 (2016-17). Student leaver records file dated 08/15/21.

Note: * = Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional student data tracking may have been disrupted and data for the Class of 2020 should be viewed with caution.

RECOMMENDATION

Track and analyze student support services provided to first-time ninth-grade students identified as Not On-Track. Longitudinal analyses of graduation rates indicate that only half of first-time ninth-grade students identified as Not On-track will graduate high school in four years. Identification and tracking of student support services received by Not On-Track students can be examined to determine which support services may be more efficacious.

Investigate what additional student supports were being provided at campuses who had increases in On-Track rates. Based on two-year trends, only three comprehensive schools (Bryan Adams, Lassiter Early College, and Sunset) and one magnet school (Townview Business) had increases in the percentage of On-Track students while all other high schools had decreases in the percentage of On-track students. District leaders should investigate what additional student supports may have been provided at these schools that keep a higher percentage of students On-Track.

REFERENCES

- Featherston, L. (2019). *2018-19 Dallas ISD On-Track Indicator*. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.
- Featherston, L. (2020). *2019-20 Dallas ISD On-Track Indicator*. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

EA21-153-4

Larry Featherston, Ph.D., Manager II

©2021 Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD)

Mail a written request for permission to use or reproduce any part of this document to:

Dallas ISD Department of Evaluation and Assessment; H. B. Bell School Support Center; 2909 Buckner Blvd.; Box10; Dallas, TX 75228

An electronic version of this report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888.

For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.