



THE ROAD MAP TO COLLEGE: TAKING MATH MATTERS

FACT SHEET

The Road Map Project is a community-wide effort aimed at driving major improvements in education in South Seattle and South King County. The goal of the project is to double the number of students who are on track to graduate from college or earn a career credential by 2020 and to close achievement gaps. The project works across seven districts.

The “Taking Math Matters” study was done by The BERC Group, an independent consulting firm, for the Road Map Project in an effort to examine the relationship between the math courses students take in high school and their post-secondary success. The study looked at high school transcripts from more than 6,000 students who graduated in 2010 from schools in the Road Map Project’s region.

This is a very important report because our region needs to figure out how to reduce the percentage of recent high school graduates taking remedial math classes. If a student can start off in a college-level class, his or her chances of making it through increase a lot. This research points to some very practical steps that can help students and schools accelerate progress in this area.

You can read the full report and an executive summary on the Road Map Project’s website:
www.roadmapproject.org.

MAJOR FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

Taking 8th grade algebra can put students on the path to college success

The first step toward college success occurs before high school even starts – in 8th grade algebra class.

- Students who took algebra in middle school were 1.5 times as likely to directly enroll in college after high school and significantly more likely to stay in college, compared to students of the same race, gender and GPA who did not take algebra in middle school.

Students should keep taking math throughout high school

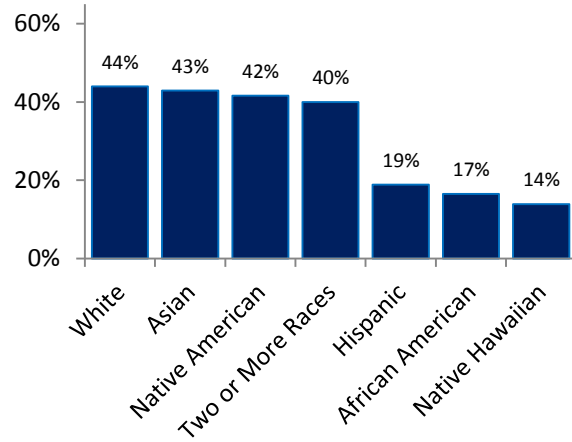
Each additional high school math class was associated with increased chances of attending college directly after high school, attending a four-year college and staying in college past the first year.

Inequality: Disparities in 8th grade algebra

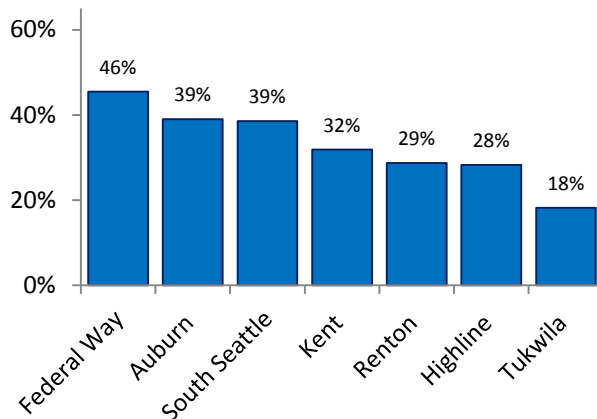
This research revealed evidence of very significant racial disparities in the levels of math courses taken by different groups of students.

- White and Asian American students were significantly more likely to take algebra in middle school, compared to Hispanic, African American and Native Hawaiian students. The pattern continued into high school, where Asian American students on average took higher levels of math than any other group of students.
- Prior research shows that students who complete rigorous math courses in high school are more likely to attend college; the difference is especially great for low-income students.

Percent of students completing algebra or higher in middle school by race



Percent of students completing algebra or higher in middle school by district



Findings varied by district

- High school graduates in Federal Way, Auburn and South Seattle were much more likely to have completed algebra by 8th grade than students in other districts.