

Kentucky college-going rates increase to highest level recorded

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FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 28, 2011) – More than 63 percent of Kentucky’s public high school Class of 2010 has enrolled in college - the highest percentage on record, the Kentucky P-20 Data Collaborative announced last week. The P-20 Data Collaborative used a more comprehensive set of data to calculate the rates, which revealed that of the more than 43,000 public high school graduates in 2010, 63.1 percent enrolled in some form of higher education.

The Kentucky High School Feedback Report includes individual reports for 228 public high schools in the state and is based on 2010-2011 college enrollment data, not surveys of students. Reports are not provided for alternative programs, but students from those schools are included in the district-level figures.

“The overall rates appear to show improvements statewide in college-going, which is excellent news. Reports like these illustrate the importance of our education agencies working together as a collaborative to provide actionable information back to schools allowing teachers and administrators to make improvements which will better prepare our future generations to be successful in college,” said Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Secretary Joseph U. Meyer.

The project was developed by the P-20 Data Collaborative and the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA). The P-20 Data Collaborative is a joint effort by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB), and the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet to create a system that securely links data together from early childhood, K-12, postsecondary, teacher licensure and preparation and other sources that allows the state to develop a broader understanding about the educational process as a seamless system.

In addition to including information about each of Kentucky’s public high schools, the report includes comparable data about school districts, the proportion from each school that went to college and the types of schools they are attending, ACT scores and information by race and family income. It has data from 43,711 students in the Class of 2010. The reports will come out annually and provide feedback a year after each class graduates.

“This report represents the most complete picture of college-going information from Kentucky’s public high schools that we have ever had access to. With more than 60 percent of our graduates going to college, this is a good indication that more of our graduates are seeking postsecondary credentials than ever before,” said Charles McGrew, executive director of the Kentucky P-20 Data Collaborative.

The 63.1 percent rate is not comparable to previous college-going rates which included private high schools, but McGrew estimated the current rate represents a significant increase over the last rate for public schools. Because the data sets are different from prior years, report administrators advised against comparing the rates directly to earlier percentages of college enrollment.

According to the report, of the 2010 graduates currently enrolled in college, about 92 percent are enrolled at in-state colleges or universities. The highest numbers are at the University of Kentucky (2,638) and Western Kentucky University (2,391). Of the 8 percent enrolled in out-of-state schools, Indiana University Southeast had the highest number enrolled at 145.

The statewide college-going rate for African-Americans in the Class of 2010 is nearly 53 percent. This is the first time that Kentucky has been able to break out college-going information based on race so there is no previous data to compare with this rate.

Among the high school data in the report, Paintsville Independent High School had the highest college-going rate at 97.7 percent and Model Lab in Madison County had the second highest at 95.65. Five high schools had a 90 percent or higher college-going rate, while five had a rate of less than 40 percent.

This also is the first report of its kind in Kentucky to produce information on income such as the number of students who were identified as eligible for the free or reduced-priced meal program (44.3 percent of the college-going population) and students classified as special education who went on to college (20.9 percent).

The P-20 Data Collaborative created the reports with input from a focus group that represented schools, districts, school board members and parents who helped identify information that was needed.

“This information is vital to improving alignment between Kentucky’s high schools and postsecondary institutions and to the overall success of our students,” said McGrew. “The reports are publicly available so parents, educators, school board members, officials and others can see how their local schools and districts compare across the state. The next set of reports will focus on these students’ postsecondary success to ensure that they are not only entering college but progressing towards a degree or credential.”

Kentucky is a national leader in collecting and analyzing information about students. A recent article in Education Week stated “Kentucky is at the forefront of collecting and sharing P-20 data, information that spans preschool through graduate study. Since the 1990s, it had been tracking the performance of students over time.”

The Kentucky P-20 Data Collaborative is administratively located in the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet and is chaired by Sec. Meyer.

To view the report, including individual high school and district information, go to kentuckyp20.ky.gov/DataReports.aspx.