

DATA WALK SUMMARY

Preparing Pinellas Students for the Future: College and Career Readiness Insights

Indicators of High School Success and Associated Factors

Hosted by LEAP Tampa Bay and the Pinellas Education Foundation

Supported by the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg

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May 2, 2019

Preparing Pinellas Students for the Future: College & Career Readiness Insights Report



In December 2017, a group of Pinellas County community leaders and stakeholders met to discuss the use of data to improve Pinellas student success and ensure more students achieve an education beyond high school and successfully launch a career. This group produced an initial indicator report released in July 2018 on “The State of Postsecondary Access and Attainment in Pinellas County” and engaged the community in feedback on that report in August 2018. The work continues with the release of the recent “Preparing Pinellas Students for the Future: College & Career Readiness Insights” report in May 2019. Once again, the partners have engaged the community to obtain their thoughts and reactions, and involve them in the conversation and work to improve educational attainment in Pinellas county.

The Data Walk Event

In an effort to engage the larger Pinellas County community in the student success conversation and to plan for the work ahead, LEAP Tampa Bay College Access Network hosted an event, “Walking and Talking about Preparing Pinellas County Students for the Future” on May 2, 2019. This event had three main objectives:

1. Inform attendees of the current status of Pinellas County Public Schools’ students’ college and career preparations and readiness.
2. Gather community input on college and career readiness data and seek feedback on additional relevant data needed (i.e. reactions, what is important, what is missing, what are the issues to be further discussed).
3. Engage attendees in the work of LEAP Tampa Bay and its partners to continue supporting Tampa Bay students.

The data walk is a method of interacting with the data through which participants make sense of and react to the information together. Data in the Preparing Pinellas Students for the Future Report were featured at stations around the convening space of the St. Petersburg College Collaborative Labs. Attendees reviewed and reacted to the data in teams based on the following guiding questions:

- ✓ What stands out? What are the data telling us about education in our community?
- ✓ What more do you want to know? What additional context do you need?

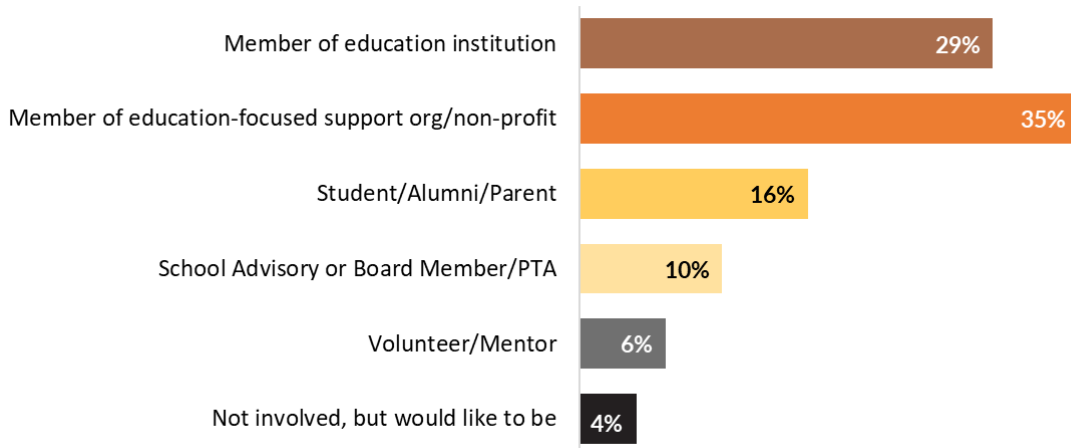
After the data walk, attendees reconvened with different colleagues in their original table groups and further explored the data and their reactions using additional guiding questions:

- ✓ Did the data change your understanding of college and career readiness?
- ✓ What do the data reveal about our community strengths? What does it reveal about opportunities for improvement?
- ✓ What are the two or three areas requiring the most intentional focus to improve overall college and career readiness in Pinellas County?
- ✓ How can the community best impact the outcomes?

Data Walk Attendees

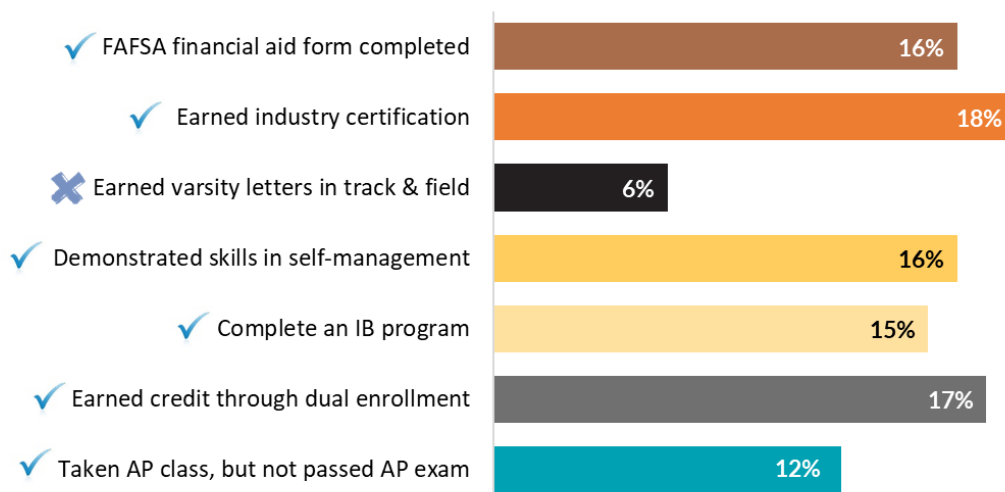
Approximately 50 community members representing various sectors of the community participated in the data walk. Attendees were asked to identify themselves as belonging to various community segments (including multiple segments if applicable). Ninety-six percent of the attendees currently have some level of involvement in education – with being a member of an education focused support organization or non-profit being the most common form of involvement at 35% of attendees.

How are you involved in education in Pinellas County?



Attendees were then asked to respond to a question related to their awareness of what constitutes an indicator of college & career readiness. Afterwards, the correct answers were identified – all options were indicators with the exception of participation in track and field (black band below). The exercise indicated a good initial level of awareness as to college and career readiness.

Which of these are related to college & career readiness?

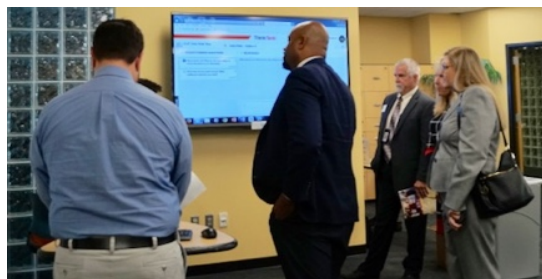


Key Community Takeaways

The interactive format of the data walk with multiple opportunities to react to the data as well as the technology of St. Petersburg College's Collaborative Labs allowed the collection of considerable input from community participants. A real-time record was captured by Collaborative Labs staff which was used in developing the summary below.

1. A high school diploma alone is not enough to be college and career ready

Participants learned why students need more than a diploma to launch a successful career; in fact, the LEAP network's goal is to have more than 60% of adults holding a degree or postsecondary credential by 2025. As the report details, currently nearly 60% of employers report that high schools are not preparing students for college or careers. Nationally less than half of students who started in any type of college or university in fall 2010 completed a degree or certificate within six years which indicates a lack of adequate preparedness for post-secondary success.



Participants shared that they appreciated learning about what constitutes college and career readiness beyond a diploma and what strategies are being used in Pinellas County. They explored the utilization of various college preparatory coursework offered (e.g. Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, International Baccalaureate (IB) programming and the Advanced International Certificate of Education or AICE program) as well as certifications and various types of career academies.

2. There are numerous pathways to college and career readiness

College prep coursework is an important component, but not the only pathway to college and career readiness. For this report, college and career ready is defined as a high school student who – in addition to receiving a standard diploma – earns an industry certification and/or completes college prep coursework such as Advanced Placement classes, dual enrollment classes, the IB program, or the AICE program. Due to some confusion during the data walk, this has been clarified in the [full report](#) which is available for download.



The state of Florida Dept. of Education says that *“students are considered college and career ready when they have the knowledge, skills, and academic preparation needed to enroll and succeed in introductory college credit-bearing courses within an associate or baccalaureate degree program without the need for remediation. These same attributes and levels of achievement are needed for entry into and success in postsecondary workforce education or directly into a job that offers gainful employment and career advancement.”* The FDOE goes further and clarifies the student must *“demonstrate mastery of the Florida Postsecondary Readiness*

Competencies in English and mathematics.”

When evaluating schools, the FDOE calculates College and Career Acceleration based on such factors as graduates who earned at least a passing score on Advanced Placement, IB or AICE examination, passed a dual enrollment course, or obtained a CAPE industry or CAPE acceleration industry certification. While

definitions vary, the basic academic components of college and career preparedness are consistent. There are, however, non-academic skills and abilities (e.g. completing the FASFA Form, participating in College Match, “grit”, etc.) which also contribute to readiness and which are currently not part of any definitions (and in some cases, not tracked or reported). This is an area attendees suggested may be worth further exploration.

3. It is important to keep an eye on equity when looking at college and career readiness

Data was presented disaggregated based on gender, race, and ethnicity. It was noted that for overall improvements it is important that every sub-group’s performance be improved. Participants reflected on the fact that in overall indicators of college and career prep as well as college prep work males were



lagging behind females, but at about the same levels in certifications. This reflects a national trend of females outperforming males in many indicators of academic success. For each indicator of preparedness blacks were lagging the district average and their peers of different races; blacks were only slightly behind other groups with performance in certification completion. This again reflects a national trend and was a point of discussion amongst attendees. Hispanic students performed at the district average for completion of college prep coursework and were only slightly below the average in certification completion.

The data were also presented by zip code. When participants evaluated the geographic dispersion of college and career readiness there were areas of high success as well as areas of low performance and concern. The zip codes showing low performance interestingly had similar access to advanced coursework and certifications as higher performing areas, but seemed to coincide with areas of higher poverty.

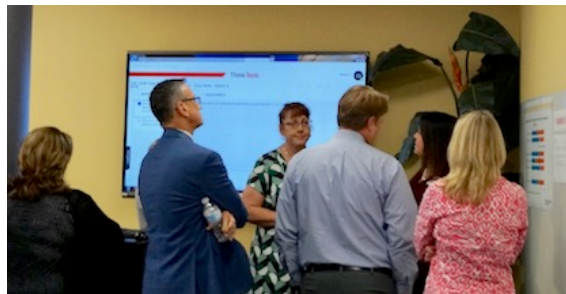
Participant agreed that there is work to be done in helping to improve the performance of groups which are lagging the district averages – as well as work to increase the district averages.

4. The Pinellas County School District is focusing on college and career readiness; how can the community support this?

Participants noted that over the three years of the study there has been a steady growth in the

- ✓ percentage of students with at least one indicator of college and career readiness
- ✓ the number of students participating in college prep coursework
- ✓ the number of students participating in an academy
- ✓ the number of students earning a career certification
- ✓ and the total number of certifications awarded.

The attendees complimented the forward movement, obvious focus, and positive results the district has shown. Participants also reflected that they were not satisfied that in 2018 75% of students graduated without an industry certification and 34% without any indicator of college and career readiness. They shared



a desire to help build on the current successes in order to eliminate the group of students who graduate with neither college prep coursework nor certifications.

Conclusion

The data walk event was an effective method to capture community input on the issues impacting student preparedness for future success in Pinellas County. Attendees were asked to share a word or phrase of what surprised them which generated the word cloud to the right. Through the data walk, attendees gained greater awareness of the current landscape, reflected on what is going well and what could be improved. The feedback will allow stakeholders to use the community's input to further the conversation to inform strategic planning, identify priority areas, keep the community engaged, and foster greater cross-sector collaboration.



You Can Help Move the Needle!

During the closing of the data walk, participants shared how they wanted to get involved by volunteering their time with students via mentoring, share their time at an organization supporting college and career readiness and getting their organization involved with LEAP Tampa Bay.

If you'd like to get involved, LEAP Tampa Bay and its partners share these ideas on how you can be part of moving the needle:

- ✓ Mentor a student
- ✓ Donate scholarships
- ✓ Volunteer as a high school college & career advisor
- ✓ Serve on a high school career advisory board
- ✓ Volunteer to help students & families with financial aid process
- ✓ Offer to have LEAP Tampa Bay and/or one of its partners discuss its work to your organization's leadership
- ✓ Tell LEAP what your organization is doing to support students moving toward a college credential

To further connect with LEAP Tampa Bay College Access Network, simply reach out to Chuck Tiernan, Director, at (813) 609-4856 or ctiernan@cftampabay.org.

Contact the Pinellas Education Foundation at info@pinellaseducation.org.