Achievers and Comparison High School Study

Year 1 Report

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Fouts & Associates, L.L.C.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a supplement to the Achievers High Schools Initiative evaluation, we identified a group of similar high schools in enrollment, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status for comparison purposes on several student outcomes. We collected and analyzed course guides, master schedules, graduation requirements, transcripts, lists of graduates, and SAT/ACT scores from both the Achievers and comparison high schools to answer three questions. The findings are listed below.

1. **What are the course offerings, student course taking patterns, college eligibility rates, and graduation rates at Achievers high schools compared to similar non-grantee schools?**

   - In 2001, only a very small percentage (2% and 3%) of the English courses offered by the two groups of high schools fell into the Below Standard category. By 2005, both the Achievers and comparison high schools had stopped offering any Below Standard courses.

   - Apart from one Achievers high school that requires the majority of their students to experience an honors level course, there is little noticeable difference between the English course offerings of the Achievers and the comparison schools.

   - From 2001 through 2005, both Achievers and comparison high schools decreased the percentage of Below Standard math courses and increased the percentage of Standard courses. However, the Achievers high schools did not make significantly more improvements in math offerings than did the comparison schools.

   - From 2001 through 2005, the percentage level of foreign language courses remained relatively unchanged for both groups.

   - For the class of 2008 compared to the class of 2005, Achievers school districts adopted more increases in the number of credits required in the core classes than did the comparison schools.

   - Of the 2005 high school graduates, 40.7% of the graduates from the Achievers high schools and 39.1% of the graduates from the comparison high schools took the requisite courses for admission to a Washington 4-year college. The overall graduation rate pattern among ethnic groups is similar for the Achievers and comparison high schools.

   - The “estimated cohort graduation rates” has fluctuated over the last three years, and in 2004, the most recent year with available data, that graduation rate at the Achievers high schools dropped below the comparison high schools graduation rate by approximately 4%.
In summary, the data show that both Achievers and comparison schools are increasing academic rigor through changes in course offerings. Currently, the data show that course-taking patterns at the Achievers and comparison high schools are similar, and the majority of students graduating from these schools are not taking the necessary course requirements for admission to a 4-year college or university. There are substantial differences by gender and ethnic group, but the overall pattern is similar for the Achievers and comparison high schools. The key finding may be that Achievers schools have gone beyond changing course offerings to altering district graduation requirements for the class of 2008. With these changes, the differences in course offerings may become more pronounced, and Achievers students may soon increase their college eligibility rates due to these increased credit requirements.

2. **What are the SAT/ACT test taking rates and resulting scores at Achievers high schools compared to similar non-grantee schools?**

   • The data indicate that more students take the SAT and ACT at the Achievers high schools, but the resulting scores are somewhat lower than at the comparison high schools. The lower scores are not surprising because as more students are encouraged to take the tests, those students usually include the less academically strong students.

3. **What are the college attendance, persistence, and graduation rates at Achievers high schools compared to similar non-grantee schools?**

   • In 2000, there was a small difference between the percentage of college direct graduates of the Achievers and the comparison schools (45.2% to 50%). Over the five-year period, the percentage of graduates from the comparison schools remained relatively stable, while the Achievers percentage of college direct increased to 50%.

   • When these data are disaggregated by student ethnicity, the comparison schools’ percentages of college direct remained relatively constant over the five years. The Achievers high schools’ percentages of college direct in 2004 showed marked increases from the baseline year of 2000 for African-American and Native American students.

   • Since the baseline year of 2000, the Achievers high schools have seen a slightly larger increase of graduates attending 4-year colleges than have the comparison schools (6.8% to 3.7%) and a slightly larger decrease of graduates attending 2-year colleges than have the comparison schools (6.4% to 2.8%).

   • The college persistence rates were almost identical for the Achievers and comparison high schools’ college direct students over for the graduates of 2000 through 2004.
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INTRODUCTION

As a supplement to the Achievers High Schools Initiative evaluation, we identified a group of similar high schools in enrollment, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status for comparison purposes on several student outcomes. We collected and analyzed course guides, master schedules, graduation requirements, transcripts, lists of graduates, and SAT/ACT scores from both the Achievers and comparison high schools to answer the following questions.

1. What are the course offerings, student course taking patterns, college eligibility rates, and graduation rates at Achievers high schools compared to similar non-grantee schools?
2. What are the SAT/ACT test taking rates and resulting scores at Achievers high schools compared to similar non-grantee schools?
3. What are the college attendance, persistence, and graduation rates scores at Achievers high schools compared to similar non-grantee schools?

Participating Schools

We used the OSPI Side-by-Side Comparison Utility using 2003 demographic information and 2004 WASL scores to identify a group of 86 schools that were similar to the Achievers schools in enrollment, ethnicity, percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch, and academic achievement. We consulted with Gates Foundation personnel to select 16 comparison schools from this larger group. These 16 schools were invited to participate in the study, which required the submission of all necessary data. Personnel at 15 of the 16 schools agreed to participate. After consulting with foundation personnel, we selected an alternate school that met the selection criteria in three of the four categories. The Achievers and comparison high schools are listed in Table 1. Table 2 contains the characteristics of the Achievers schools and the comparison group. Each of the comparison schools also are categorized as Gates Foundation District grant schools, Department of Education – Small Learning Communities (DOE – SLC) grant schools, and non-reform schools. Three of the comparison schools are categorized as Gates Foundation District and DOE – SLC grant schools.
### Table 1
**Participating Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievers High Schools</th>
<th>Comparison High Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.C. Davis High School</td>
<td>Bremerton High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleveland High School</td>
<td>Evergreen High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clover Park High School</td>
<td>Fort Vancouver High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foster High School</td>
<td>Franklin High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harry S. Truman High School</td>
<td>Franklin-Pierce High School</td>
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<td>Henry Foss High School</td>
<td>Highline High School</td>
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<td>Kent-Meridian High School</td>
<td>Hudson’s Bay High School</td>
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<td>Kittitas High School</td>
<td>Mt. Rainier High School</td>
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<td>Lincoln High School</td>
<td>Omak High School</td>
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<td>Mabton High School</td>
<td>Rainier Beach High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mariner High School</td>
<td>Renaissance High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Tahoma High School</td>
<td>Rogers High School</td>
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<td>Stevenson High School</td>
<td>Sultan High School</td>
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<td>Tonasket High School</td>
<td>Tyee High School</td>
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<td>West Valley High School</td>
<td>Washington High School</td>
</tr>
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<td>Yelm High School</td>
<td>West Seattle High School</td>
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### Table 2
**Characteristics of Achievers and Comparison High Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievers High Schools</th>
<th>Comparison High Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free/Reduced Lunch (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-white (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composite WASL</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Grantees (4 schools)</th>
<th>DOE-SLC Grantees (9 schools)</th>
<th>Non-Reform Schools (6 schools)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>1264</td>
<td>1444</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free/Reduced Lunch (%)</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>47.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-white (%)</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>45.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composite WASL</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Data Sources

We collected a variety of school and student outcome data pertinent to each of the research questions. The outcomes and relevant data sources are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Outcomes and Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Offering Patterns</td>
<td>2001, 2003, 2005</td>
<td>Course catalogs, master schedules, and section summary sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Taking Patterns</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Student transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Eligibility</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Student transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduation Rates</td>
<td>2002-2004</td>
<td>OSPI calculated cohort rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT/ACT test taking rates and resulting scores</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Student transcript and record analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College attendance, persistence, and graduation rates</td>
<td>2000 – 2004</td>
<td>National Student Clearinghouse</td>
</tr>
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</table>
RESULTS

Evaluation Question 1: What are the course offerings, student course taking patterns, college eligibility rates, and graduation rates at Achievers high schools compared to similar non-grantee schools?

Course Offering Patterns

We gathered and analyzed master schedules, course catalogs, and section summary sheets from 15 of the 16 high schools in each group to determine the changes in course offerings yearly from the 2000 - 2001 to the 2004 - 2005 school years. One high school from each group, Harry S. Truman and Renaissance, was excluded from these analyses because of their non-traditional schedules and course offerings.

Our analyses included 38 master schedules for Achievers schools and 35 from the comparison schools. We tallied courses in English, math, and world languages. For the English and math courses, we placed them into three levels of rigor:

Below Standard—courses designated as remedial or below grade level
Standard—courses identified as at grade level
Honors and Advanced—courses designated as honors courses, courses taken beyond college entrance requirements, or Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate classes.

For the world languages courses we simply tallied whether the courses were 1st Level (1st year) or 2nd Level or Beyond. The review excluded courses from special education, English Language Learners, English as a Second Language, LAP, Running Start, and independent study courses.

The English course offering patterns from 2001 through 2005 are shown in Figure 1. In 2001, only a very small percentage (2% and 3%) of the English courses offered by the two groups of high schools fell into the Below Standard category. By 2005, both the Achievers and comparison high school had stopped offering any Below Standard courses. By 2005, the Achievers had slightly decreased the percentage of standard courses offered from 78% to 75%, while increasing the percentage of honors and advanced course offered from 19% to 25%. However, this aggregate increase primarily reflects the efforts of one school requiring the majority of their students to experience an honors level course. Thus, apart from this one school and across the initiative, there is little noticeable difference between the English course offerings of the Achievers and the comparison schools. Similarly, when the comparison schools are grouped by type, no noticeable pattern favoring the Achievers high schools is evident (see Figure 2).
Results

Figure 1. English Course Offering Patterns

Figure 2. English Course Offering Patterns by Sub-Group
Results

The math course offering patterns from 2001 through 2005 are shown in Figure 3. In 2001, a much larger percentage of the course offerings in math (20% and 23%) were categorized as Below Standard than with the English courses. By 2005, these percentages were reduced considerably for both groups with a corresponding increase in the percentage of courses categorized as Standard. While both groups decreased the percentage of Below Standard courses and increased the percentage of Standard courses, the Achievers high schools did not make significantly more improvements than did the comparison schools. Similarly, when the comparison schools are grouped by type, no noticeable pattern favoring the Achievers high schools is evident (see Figure 4).

![Figure 3. Math Course Offering Patterns](image-url)
The world languages course offering patterns from 2001 through 2005 are shown in Figure 5. From 2001 through 2005, the percentage of courses remained relatively unchanged for both groups, and the yearly fluctuations do not show a clear pattern, perhaps due to enrollment fluctuations at various grade levels. When the comparison schools are grouped by type, no noticeable pattern favoring the Achievers high schools is evident (see Figure 6).
Results

Figure 5. World Language Offering Patterns

Figure 6. World Language Course Offering Patterns by Sub-Group
Changes in course offerings can also result from changes in graduation requirements. To determine this, we reviewed district graduation requirements for the class of 2005 and 2008 at the Achievers and comparison high schools. Results show the Achievers school districts adopted more increases in the number of credits required in the core classes than did the comparison schools (see Figure 7). The increase was most notable in math where seven Achievers districts set the number of credits required to three. Although none of the schools set graduation requirements at the level for college admission (advanced algebra with trigonometry), many of the schools will no longer accept below standard courses for meeting graduation requirements. There are some nuances, however. For instance, two districts increased math credit requirements from two to three credits, but allow students after successful completion of the WASL, to request a waiver of the third year of math. Although these overall findings correspond with the changes evident in the math course offering analysis, the goal for increasing rigor in math may be a reaction to statewide testing rather than preparing students for college.

Figure 7. District Graduation Requirements

In summary, this review shows that both Achievers and comparison schools are increasing academic rigor through changes in course offerings. Increasing rigor in math and English is predictable given the pressure for students to perform well on state assessments. The key finding may be that Achievers schools have gone beyond changing course offerings to altering district graduation requirements. Many of these changes go into effect for the class of 2008. With these changes, the differences in course offerings may become more pronounced, and Achievers students may soon increase their college eligibility rates due to these increased credit requirements.
Course Taking Patterns and College Eligibility

Transcripts for all graduating students in the 2004 – 2005 school year from the 16 Achievers high schools \((n = 2718)\) and the 16 comparison high schools \((n = 3066)\) were obtained, along with course catalogues describing the schools’ classes. A trained team of three researchers, three college admissions specialists, and one school counselor analyzed the transcripts to determine if the courses taken met the Washington State 4-year college and university admission standards. Although there was some variation among colleges, the general requirements include:

- 4 years of English, which must include three years of literature
- 3 years of mathematics, which much include an introduction to trigonometry. Usually advanced algebra or integrated mathematics III satisfied this requirement
- 3 years of social studies
- 2 years of science, which must include at least one laboratory science class
- 2 years of foreign language with a grade of a C or better in the second year
- 1 year of fine arts (some colleges)

The results of the various analyses are shown in Figures 8 - 13.

Of the 2005 high school graduates, 40.7% of the graduates from the Achievers high schools and 39.1% of the graduates from the comparison high schools took the requisite courses for admission to a Washington 4-year college (Figure 8). This shows that a majority of students graduating from these schools cannot be admitted to college because of course deficiencies. It also shows that the graduation requirements at these schools, while meeting the state’s minimum requirements for a high school diploma, are not aligned with colleges’ admission expectations. When we grouped the comparison schools by type, there were also no notable differences between the Achievers and types of comparison schools (Figure 9).
Figure 8. Percent of Graduates Meeting High School Course Requirements for Admissions to a Washington 4-year College

Figure 9. Percent of Graduates Meeting High School Course Requirements for Admission to a Washington 4-year College by Sub-Group
The data also show that a higher percentage of females than males met the course requirements for admission to college at both the Achievers high schools (43.5% and 37.3%, respectively) and the comparison high schools (43.9% and 33.5%, respectively) (Figure 10). There are large differences in the course-taking patterns among the ethnic groups (Figure 11). Although there is some variation among the groups, the overall pattern is similar for the Achievers and comparison high schools. At both the Achievers and comparison high schools, students who took the more rigorous college preparation courses prior to graduation had higher grade point averages than those students who did not take the more rigorous courses (Figure 12). This finding is the same for both the Achievers and comparison high schools. Finally, students at both the Achievers and comparison high schools who failed to meet college admission requirements were most likely to lack the advanced math and/or foreign language requisites (Figure 13).

Figure 10. Percent of Males and Females Meeting High School Course Requirements
Results

Figure 11. Percent of Ethnic Groups Meeting High School Course Requirements

Figure 12. Grade Point Averages of Students Who Met and Did Not Meet High School Course Requirements
Overall, these data show that course-taking patterns at the Achievers and comparison high schools are similar, and the majority of students graduating from these schools are not taking the necessary course requirements for admission to a 4-year college or university. There are substantial differences by gender and ethnic group, but the overall pattern is similar for the Achievers and comparison high schools. Students from both the Achievers and comparison high schools were most likely to lack the advanced math and/or foreign language requirements, and this is likely because graduation requirements for 2005 graduates did not align with college entrance requirements in these academic areas.

**High School Graduation Rates**

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for Washington State calculates an “estimated cohort graduation rate” for a given graduation class based on the P-210 form submitted annually by the districts. This calculated rate is based on only those students who begin in the fall of a given year with an expected graduation date of four years later and accounts for transfers and other factors. For example, students enrolled in the fall of 1998 would have an expected “on-time” graduation date of 2002. The methodology is appropriate for AYP of NCLB. OSPI has only calculated these rates since 2002. The estimated cohort graduation rates for 2002 through 2004 for the Achievers and comparison high schools and sub-groups are shown in Figures 14 and 15. Graduation rates fluctuated over the years, and in 2004, that graduation rate at the
Achievers high schools was below the comparison high schools graduation rate. Subgroup analyses show that in 2004, graduation rates for both Gates District Grantees and DOE-SLC grantees were greater than the Achievers high schools.

Achievers and Comparison High Schools Graduation Rates

Figure 14. Achievers and Comparison High Schools Graduation Rates
Results

Graduation Rates by Sub-Group

![Graduation Rates by Sub-Group](image)

**Figure 15. Graduation Rates by Sub-Group**

**Evaluation Question #2: What are the SAT/ACT test taking rates and resulting scores at Achievers high schools compared to similar non-grantee schools?**

Figures 16 and 17 show the percentage of 2005 graduating seniors taking the ACT and SAT from the Achievers and comparison schools. The resulting mean SAT and ACT scores for the Achievers and comparison schools and the sub-groups are presented in Figures 18 through 21. These results indicate that more students take the SAT and ACT at the Achievers high schools, but the resulting scores are lower than at the comparison high schools and sub-groups.

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1 These data are from 15 Achievers high schools and 13 Comparison high schools. One district with four schools did not submit SAT and ACT data. Since these schools represent the majority of the Gates District Grantees, we were not able to run analyses for that sub-group.
Figure 16. Percent of 2005 Graduates Taking the ACT and SAT

Figure 17. Percent of 2005 Graduates Taking the SAT and ACT by Sub-Group
Results

**Figure 18. Achievers and Comparisons 2005 Graduates Mean SAT Scores**

**Figure 19. 2005 Graduates Mean SAT Scores by Sub-Group**

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Results

Figure 20. Achievers and Comparison 2005 High School Graduates Mean ACT Scores

Figure 21. 2005 Graduates Mean ACT Score by Sub-Group
Evaluation Question #3: What are the college attendance, persistence, and graduation rate scores at Achievers high schools compared to similar non-grantee schools?

College enrollment, persistence, and graduation data were obtained for the graduating classes of 2000 through 2004 from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) for all Achievers high schools as part of the on-going yearly evaluation activities. We obtained the same NSC data for the 16 comparison high schools. We submitted the lists of the names, birth dates, year of graduation, and high school attended, among other data, to NSC to be matched with the college reported enrollments from 2000 through 2005. We then compiled and analyzed these yearly enrollment records to determine college enrollment and persistence for the Achievers and comparison high school graduates. The Achievers evaluation plan uses five-year college graduation rates based on NSC data. Those rates are not yet available for the graduating class of 2001 and will be included in next year’s comparison study report.

In some instances, the high schools had adequate high school graduation records going back to 2000. Other schools had record bases only going back two or three years. The data for 2000 is from 13 Achievers high schools and 14 comparison high schools. The data for 2001 is from 15 Achievers high schools and 16 comparison high schools. The data for 2002 is from 15 Achievers high schools and 16 comparison high schools. The data for 2003 and 2004 are from all 16 Achievers and comparison high schools.

We defined “college direct” students as high school graduates who attended either a two- or 4-year college any time in the academic year immediately following their high school graduation. The aggregated college enrollment rates for the graduates of the Achievers and comparison high schools for 2000 through 2004 are presented in Figure 22. In 2000, the baseline year prior to the awarding of the first Achievers scholarships, there was a small difference between the percentage of college direct graduates of the Achievers and the comparison schools (45.2% to 50%). Over the five-year period, the percentage of graduates from the comparison schools remained relatively stable, while the Achievers percentage of college direct increased to 50%. When these data are disaggregated by student ethnicity, the comparison schools’ percentages of college direct remained relatively constant over the five years. The Achievers high schools’ percentages of college direct in 2004 showed marked increases from the baseline year of 2000 for African-American (12.5%) and Native American (47.7%) students.

The aggregated percentages of college direct Achievers and comparison high school graduates attending 2- and 4-year colleges from 2000 to 2004 are presented in Figures 23 and 24. These data show an increase of the number of graduates attending 4-year colleges and a decrease of the number of graduates attending 2-year colleges. (Note: The combined percentages for a given year may total more than 100% because of dual enrollments of some students.) Since the baseline year of 2000 before the awarding of the first Achievers scholarships, the Achievers high schools have seen a slightly larger increase of graduates attending 4-year colleges than have the comparison schools (6.8%
to 3.7%) and a slightly larger decrease of graduates attending 2-year colleges than have the comparison schools (6.4% to 2.8%).

The college persistence rates of the college direct Achievers and comparison high school graduates in 2000 are presented in Figure 25. We defined “persisting in college” for college direct students as being enrolled anytime in a given year following high school graduation or having received a 4-year college degree. Approximately 45.2% of the Achievers graduates were enrolled in college in the 2000-2001 academic year, the first year after graduation (college direct rate), and 50% of the comparison high school graduates were enrolled that same year. In the second year after graduation, 36.8% of the Achievers high school graduates were still enrolled in college, or about 81% of those who had started college the previous year. For the comparison high school graduates in the second year after graduation, 41.8% of the students were still enrolled in college, or about 83.6% of those who had started college the previous year. The nearly parallel lines in Figure 25 show that over the next three years, the college persistence rates were almost identical for the Achievers and comparison high schools’ college direct students.

Figure 22. 2000-2004 Graduates of Achievers and Comparison High Schools—College Direct
Figure 23. Percentage of 2000-2004 Graduates of Achievers and Comparison High Schools Attending 2-Year Colleges

Figure 24. Percentage of 2000-2004 Graduates of Achievers and Comparison High Schools Attending 4-Year Colleges
Figure 25. College Persistence Rates of the 2000 Graduates of Achievers and Comparison High Schools.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As a supplement to the Achievers High Schools Initiative evaluation, we identified a group of similar high schools in enrollment, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status for comparison purposes on several student outcomes. We collected and analyzed course guides, master schedules, graduation requirements, transcripts, lists of graduates, and SAT/ACT scores, from both the Achievers and comparison high schools to answer three questions. The findings are listed below.

1. **What are the course offerings, student course taking patterns, college eligibility rates, and graduation rates at Achievers high schools compared to similar non-grantee schools?**

   - In 2001, only a very small percentage (2% and 3%) of the English courses offered by the two groups of high schools fell into the Below Standard category. By 2005, both the Achievers and comparison high schools had stopped offering any Below Standard courses.

   - Apart from one Achievers high school that requires the majority of their students to experience an honors level course, there is little noticeable difference between the English course offerings of the Achievers and the comparison schools.

   - From 2001 through 2005, both Achievers and comparison high schools decreased the percentage of Below Standard math courses and increased the percentage of Standard courses. However, the Achievers high schools did not make significantly more improvements in math offerings than did the comparison schools.

   - From 2001 through 2005, the percentage level of foreign language courses remained relatively unchanged for both groups.

   - For the class of 2008 compared to the class of 2005, Achievers school districts adopted more increases in the number of credits required in the core classes than did the comparison schools.

   - Of the 2005 high school graduates, 40.7% of the graduates from the Achievers high schools and 39.1% of the graduates from the comparison high schools took the requisite courses for admission to a Washington 4-year college. The overall graduation rate pattern among ethnic groups is similar for the Achievers and comparison high schools.

   - The “estimated cohort graduation rates” has fluctuated over the last three years, and in 2004, the most recent year with available data, that graduation
rate at the Achievers high schools dropped below the comparison high schools graduation rate by approximately 4%.

In summary, the data show that both Achievers and comparison schools are increasing academic rigor through changes in course offerings. Currently, the data show that course-taking patterns at the Achievers and comparison high schools are similar, and the majority of students graduating from these schools are not taking the necessary course requirements for admission to a 4-year college or university. There are substantial differences by gender and ethnic group, but the overall pattern is similar for the Achievers and comparison high schools. The key finding may be that Achievers schools have gone beyond changing course offerings to altering district graduation requirements for the class of 2008. With these changes, the differences in course offerings may become more pronounced, and Achievers students may soon increase their college eligibility rates due to these increased credit requirements.

2. **What are the SAT/ACT test taking rates and resulting scores at Achievers high schools compared to similar non-grantee schools?**

- The data indicate that more students take the SAT and ACT at the Achievers high schools, but the resulting scores are somewhat lower than at the comparison high schools and sub-groups. The lower scores are not surprising because as more students are encouraged to take the tests, those students usually include the less academically strong students.

3. **What are the college attendance, persistence, and graduation rates at Achievers high schools compared to similar non-grantee schools?**

- In 2000, there was a small difference between the percentage of college direct graduates of the Achievers and the comparison schools (45.2% to 50%). Over the five-year period, the percentage of graduates from the comparison schools remained relatively stable, while the Achievers percentage of college direct increased to 50%.

- When these data are disaggregated by student ethnicity, the comparison schools’ percentages of college direct remained relatively constant over the five years. The Achievers high schools’ percentages of college direct in 2004 showed marked increases from the baseline year of 2000 for African-American and Native American students.

- Since the baseline year of 2000, the Achievers high schools have seen a slightly larger increase of graduates attending 4-year colleges than have the comparison schools (6.8% to 3.7%) and a slightly larger decrease of graduates attending 2-year colleges than have the comparison schools (6.4% to 2.8%).
Summary and Conclusions

• The college persistence rates were almost identical for the Achievers and comparison high schools’ college direct students over for the graduates of 2000 through 2004.