

April 2016

INTRODUCTION

At the National Partnership for Educational Access (NPEA) 2015 conference in Philadelphia, NPEA launched the NPEA Data Counts project, which was the result of a yearlong collaborative research and implementation initiative funded by The Esther A. & Joseph Klingenstein Fund. This initiative brought a team of NPEA members, leaders, and researchers together to develop and pilot test a set of ten indicators deemed to be the most important markers of progress and success for organizations serving underrepresented students. NPEA also developed a set of specific definitions for each of the data points – 23 in all – that were necessary in order to report our findings in aggregate across programs. Finally, we designed a Data Collection Tool to be used by members to report information to NPEA. Through this ongoing data collection process, we will encourage consistent data collection across our network so we can begin to explore and demonstrate collective impact.

During the fall of 2015, organizational members were invited to complete the 2015 NPEA Data Collection Tool. A total of 68 of 104 (65%) eligible NPEA organizational members participated, with three members each reporting on two programs within their organization (for a total of 71 programs reporting).

With data from these organizations (also referred to as “programs” in this summary), we conducted analyses guided by three general questions:

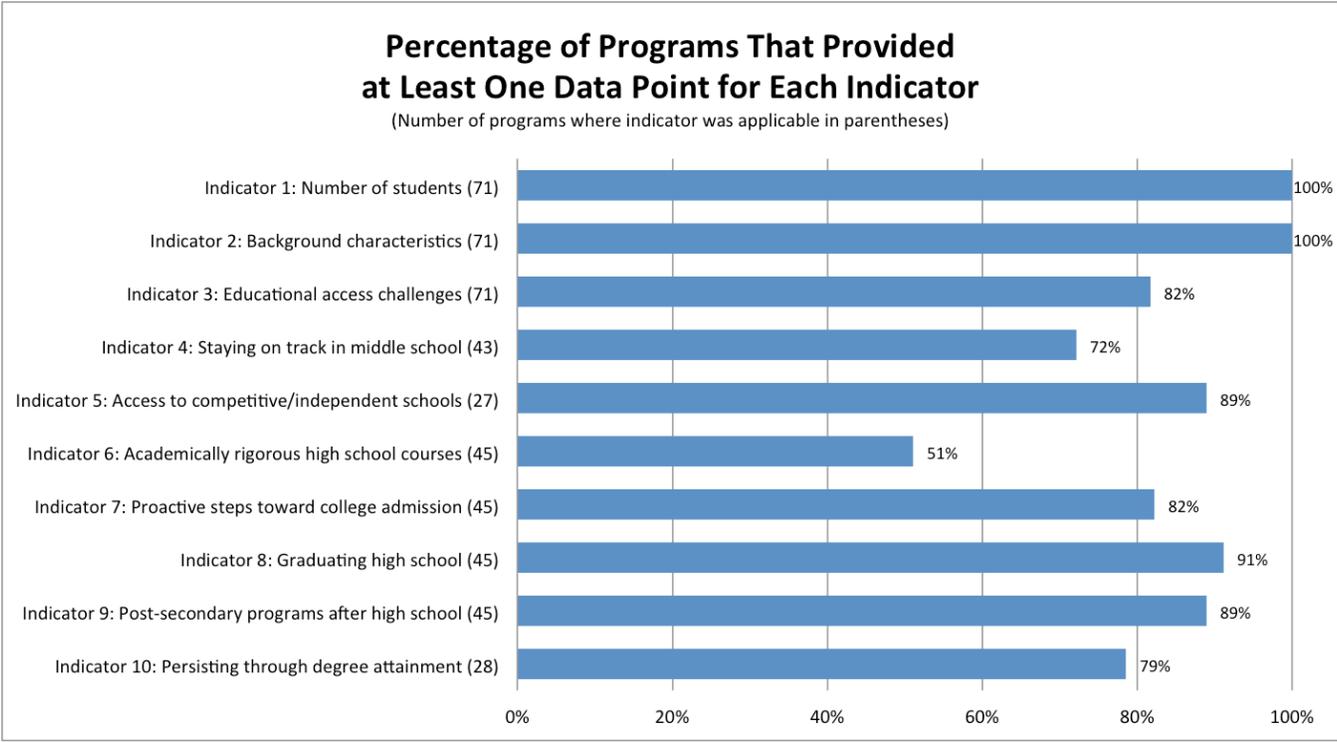
- 1) Which indicators are already collected by NPEA members, and which are less common?
- 2) What do the aggregate results from the data reported show?
- 3) What can NPEA do in the future to continue to build and improve upon the NPEA Data Counts foundation?

A year later, at the 2016 annual NPEA conference, we are pleased to share this Summary of Initial Findings. Each of the indicators is discussed in the sections that follow.

COMMON INDICATORS AND AREAS FOR GROWTH

The first inquiry – namely, which indicators are commonly collected and which are not – is important because we asked organizations to report on data collected *prior* to the release of the NPEA Data Counts indicator list and definitions. As such, the first round of NPEA Data Counts provides an opportunity to assess the level of data collection already conducted among members – a baseline of sorts – that NPEA can use to determine the level of support programs may need in order to continue to build their data collection and management capacity.

We found considerable variation among respondents, with some indicators being reported by most organizations, while others were less common. The chart that follows illustrates the percentage of programs that provided information on at least one data point for each indicator applicable to their program (e.g., if a program only worked with high school students, then indicator 5 would not be applicable to their program).



The variation presented in this chart has implications for what NPEA can do in the future to encourage additional data collection in areas where information is limited, such as staying on track in middle school and engaging in academically rigorous courses in high school. It also points to places where collective data reporting is likely to be straightforward in the future, because it suggests that the majority of programs are already collecting the information in a manner that will allow for consistent reporting going forward.

FINDINGS IN AGGREGATE

The aggregate results reported here highlight what we learned from this first round of data collection. The section is organized into the three main categories of indicators – demographics, before high school, and high school and beyond – and presents the data elements that compose each of the ten indicators.

DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS: WHO NPEA MEMBERS SERVE

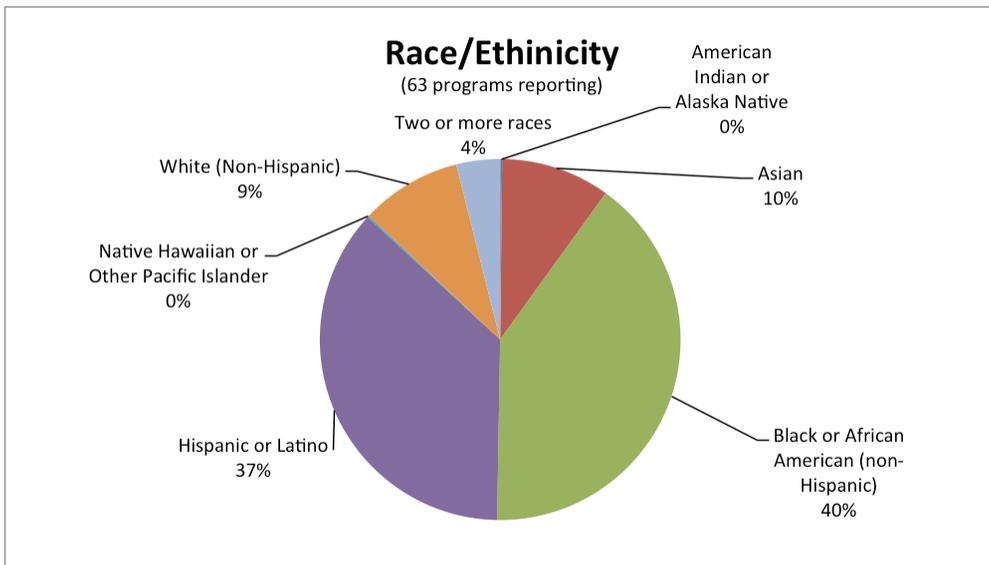
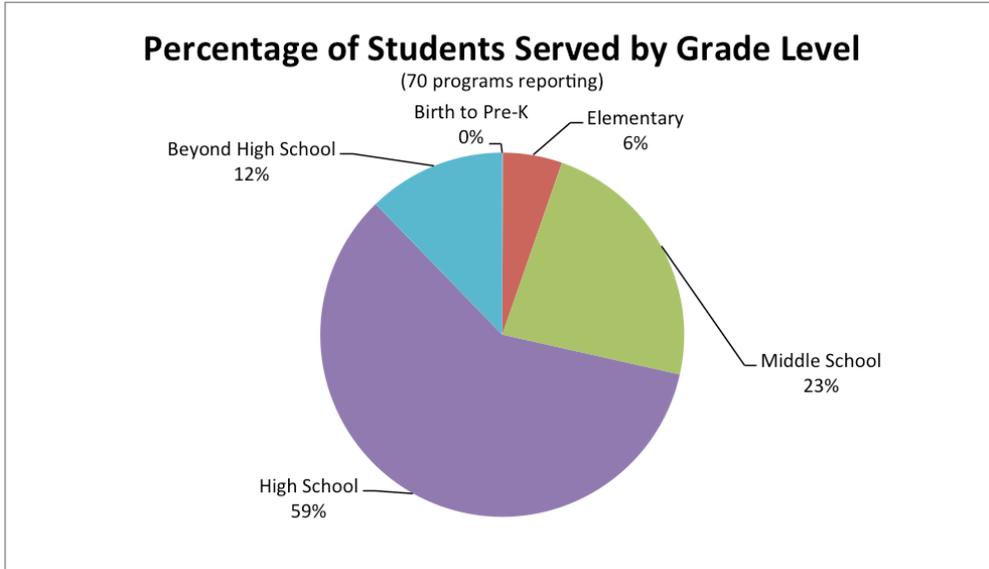
This category indicates the numbers of students served among NPEA’s reporting programs, as well as the demographic or background characteristics and family circumstances of the students served.

INDICATORS 1 AND 2: NUMBERS SERVED AND BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

Every program reported the number of students served and at least one of the three background characteristics (grade level, gender, and race). Most (90%) provided data on all four data elements.

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Among those reporting, 104,411 students were served by these 71 programs over a 12-month period last year. Of those, 59% were in high school, 23% were in middle school, and 12% had already finished high school. A much smaller percentage (just 6%) of students were in elementary school or younger. The programs reporting also served more female than male students, 58% compared to 42%. Overall, the programs reached a diverse student population. Black or African American students comprised 40% of the students served, 37% were Hispanic or Latino, 10% were Asian, and 9% were white.



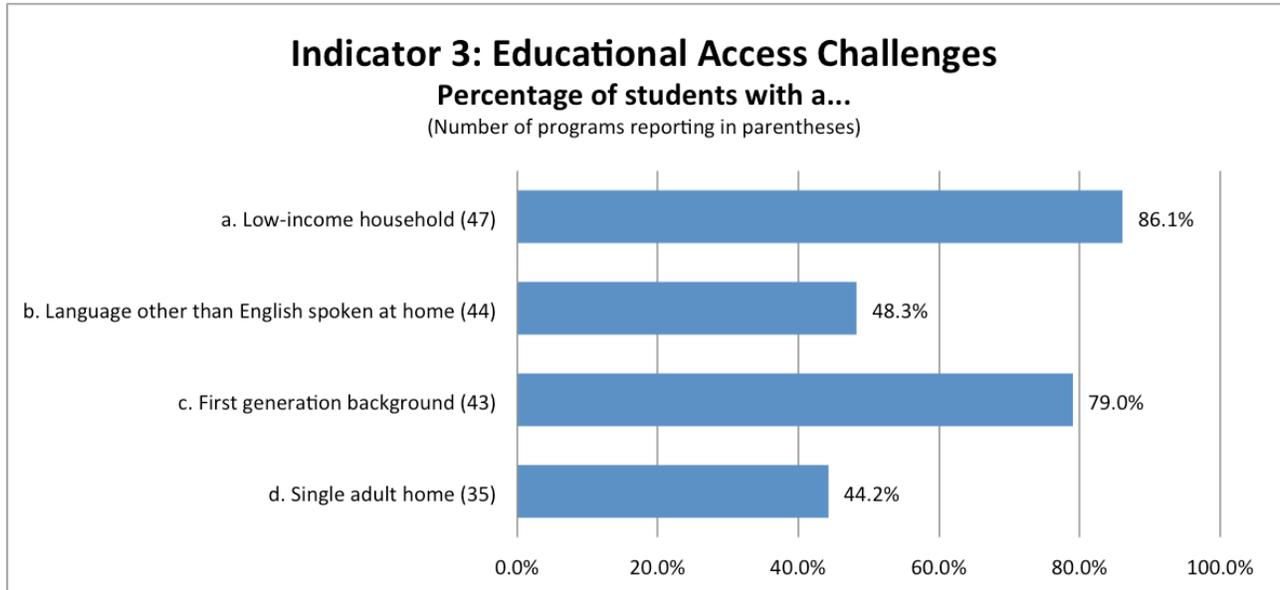
INDICATOR 3: EDUCATIONAL ACCESS CHALLENGES

A smaller percentage of the programs reported data on the educational access challenges, with just over 60% providing information about income, language spoken at home, or whether students were first generation. Only half of the programs reported information about students in families with a single head of household. While a

little less than a third of respondents collected data on all four data points, most (82%) collected information on at least one of these.

Among those who collect data on this indicator, the majority of students are from low-income families (86%) and would be first generation college students should they enroll after high school (79%). A little under half speak a language other than English at home (48%) and are from a single-adult household (44%).

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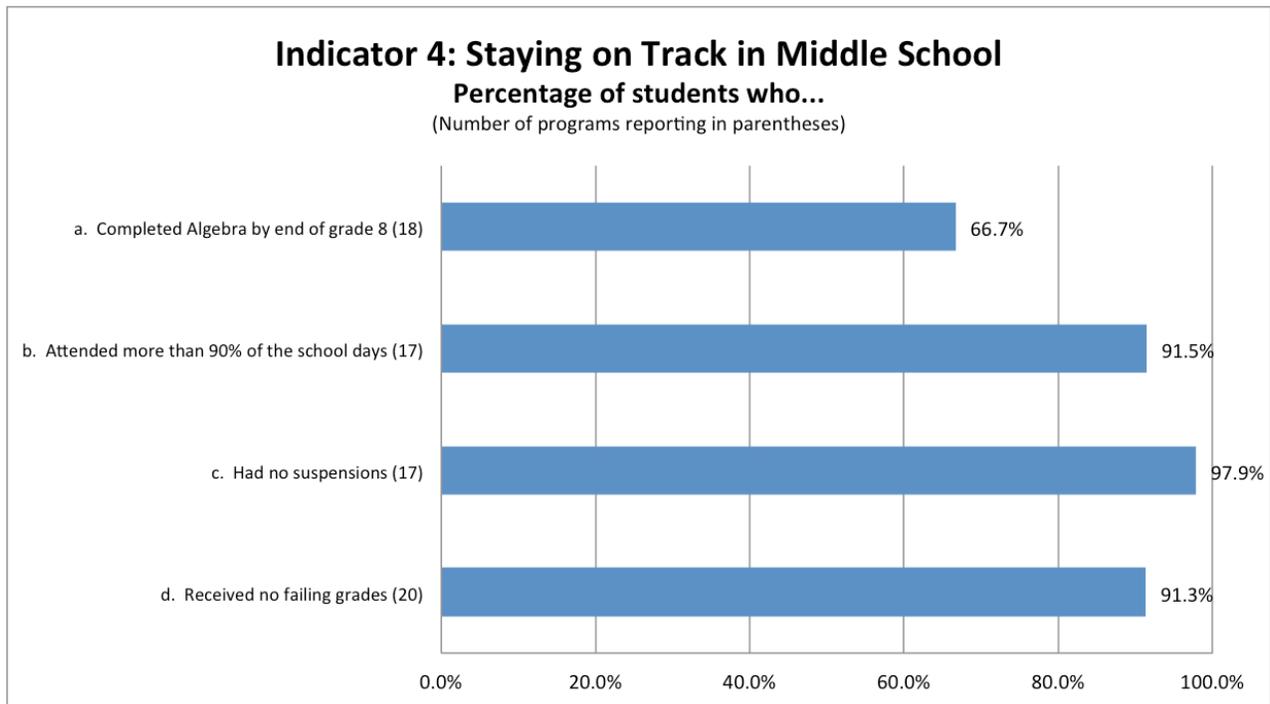
PROGRESS INDICATORS: BEFORE HIGH SCHOOL

These indicators concern the data that programs collect on students during middle school. These indicators are associated with keeping younger students on a path toward a high school experience that will position them well for college entry and success.

INDICATOR 4: STAYING ON TRACK IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Of the 71 programs, 60% (43 programs) report serving students in grades 6-8 during the 2014-15 school year. Among these programs, less than half collect data on all four data points, but 72% collected at least one of the data points.

More than 90% of students for whom data are reported are “on track” for three of the middle school indicators: school attendance over 90 percent, no suspensions, and receiving no failing grades. We found that two-thirds of the 8th graders had completed algebra.



INDICATOR 5. GAINING ACCESS TO COMPETITIVE/INDEPENDENT SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Among reporting programs, 27 include a “placement” component, meaning they work with students to gain admissions into an independent school or a competitive/exam school. Twenty-four (24) of these provided data on their students and results.

Together, these programs worked with 3,032 students to gain acceptance into a school with an admissions process. Among those, 48% of students were accepted into an independent or competitive exam school. Most (85%) subsequently enrolled, while 9% did not enroll due to a lack of financial aid, and the rest did not enroll for other reasons.

PROGRESS INDICATORS: HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND

Indicators in this section focus on what happens to students during and after high school, including enrollment in college and post-secondary degree attainment.

INDICATOR 6. ENGAGING IN ACADEMICALLY RIGOROUS COURSES DURING HIGH SCHOOL

Forty (40) percent of the programs that worked with high school seniors during the 2014-15 school year (18 of 45) reported data on both elements that comprise Indicator 6. Among those who provided data, we found that by the time students left high school:

- Almost all (93%) had taken a higher level math course (20 programs reporting); and
- Just over half (52%) sat for an AP exam (21 programs reporting).

INDICATOR 7: TAKING PROACTIVE STEPS TOWARD COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

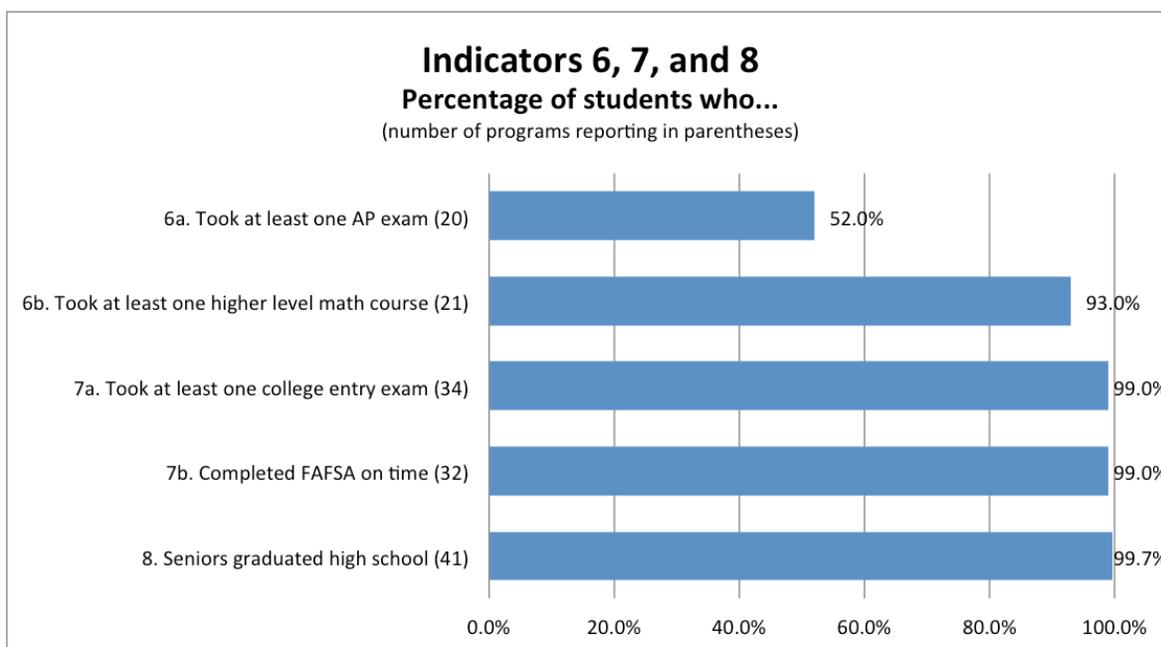
Eighty-two (82) percent of programs serving seniors reported on one of the data points under this indicator of taking proactive steps toward college entrance, including taking a college entry exam (71% reporting) and completing the FAFSA (77% reporting). We found that almost every senior was progressing through these steps, with programs reporting that over 99% of their students completed the FAFSA, took a college entry exam, and applied to at least one post-secondary program.

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INDICATOR 8: GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL

Programs reported an on-time graduation rate for seniors of 99.7% and a cohort graduation rate of 97.9%.

While most (91%) of programs were able to report graduation rates for seniors they worked with in the 2014-15 school year, only 27 programs had this data for students they worked with as freshmen. The results for both were quite similar, with an on-time graduation rate for seniors reported to be 99.7% and a cohort graduation rate of 97.9%.

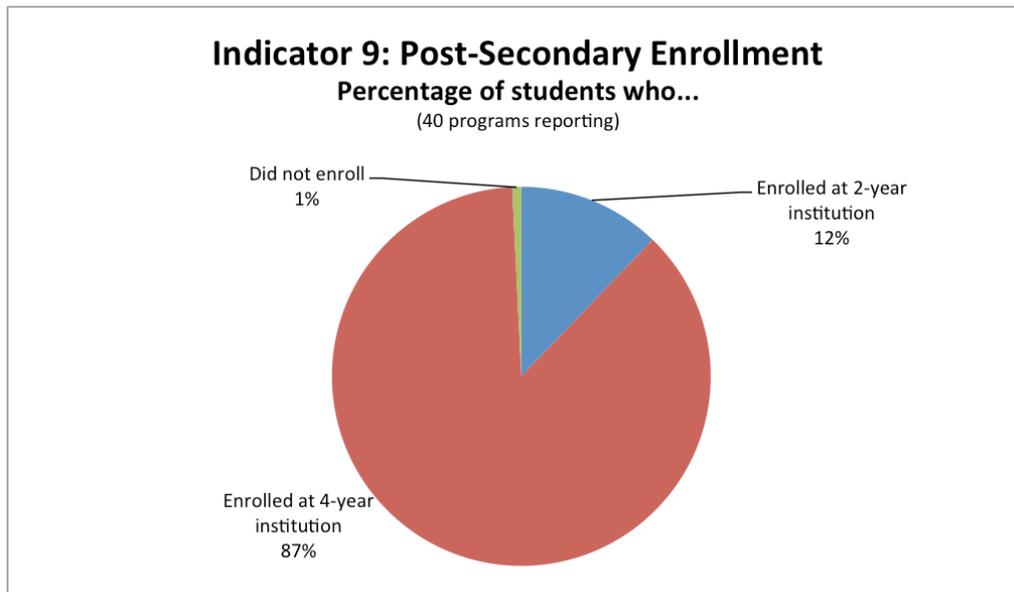


INDICATOR 9: ENROLLING IN A POST-SECONDARY PROGRAM IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Among programs serving high school seniors, almost every student was accepted into a post-secondary program and most also enrolled right away.

Among those who were accepted into any post-secondary program, 87% enrolled in a four-year program and 12% enrolled in a two-year program during the fall semester after graduation.

We also learned that 51% of those who enrolled in a 4-year program did so at selective institutions, as defined by the Barron's List as "Most Competitive," "Highly Competitive," or "Very Competitive."

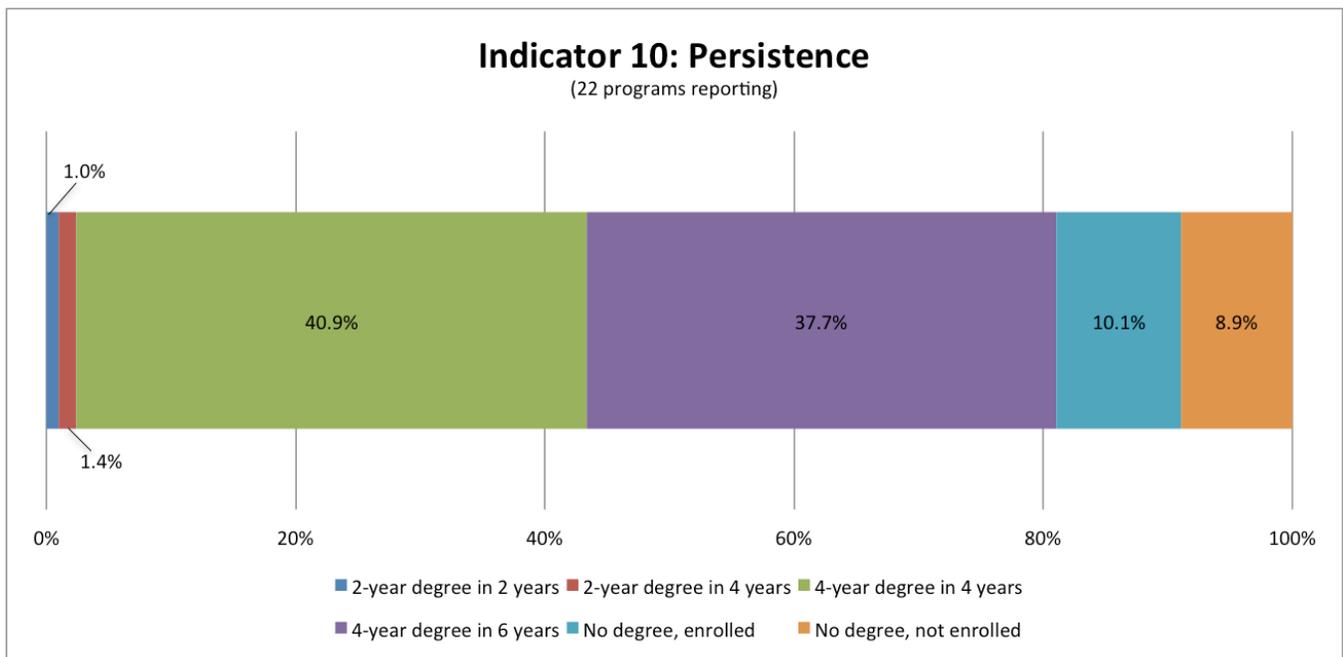


INDICATOR 10: PERSISTING THROUGH DEGREE ATTAINMENT

The final indicator concerns post-secondary persistence. For this data element, programs were asked to look backwards and report on the students who worked with them as seniors in high school six years ago (the 2008-2009 school year). This was a demanding requirement, as programs were often reviewing data they maintained for program participants for a considerable amount of time. Out of the 71 programs, 28 indicated that they worked with seniors six years ago. Of those, 22 programs reported the persistence on 1,124 students whose current educational status was known (status was reported as "missing" for only 88 students).

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The data show that 79% of the students had earned a 4-year degree within four (41%) or six (38%) years, and another 10% were currently enrolled in school. Just 2% had earned a two-year degree, and the remaining 9% had not earned any degree, nor were they currently enrolled in a post-secondary program.



CONSIDERATIONS GOING FORWARD

The NPEA Data Counts list of indicators is a “living document” that will evolve to reflect the realities of program implementation and emerging best practices in the field. By participating in the first round of data collection, the 71 programs are already making a significant contribution to the conversation. Some respondents told us that simply by being asked the questions with definitions on hand, they were made aware of areas where their data lined up easily, and where it did not. The experience has led some organizations to rethink their intake and other data collection forms. Others are considering altering the definitions they are using so they can better align with the NPEA Data Counts critical indicators in coming years. A large number of our respondents also requested copies of their completed 2015 Data Collection Tools, as they found it immensely valuable to have all of their reported data on-hand in one place with clear, often federally-defined terms.

The leadership of NPEA is deeply grateful to the members who participated in NPEA Data Counts. The thoughtful questions and thorough responses highlighted areas where we need to adjust the tool and fine-tune definitions so the next round is easier, both for participants and for NPEA, as we explore ways we can use the data to further our collective interests. Future work will include developing a related Data Collection Tool for our school members so we can better understand the work schools are doing with underrepresented students. The more we work with the indicators and data collection processes collaboratively with members, the closer we will get to establishing a robust source of data, collection tools, and best practices for our programs and schools. As we move forward, we are eager to continue to hear your feedback and to support and share best practices.

For more information about NPEA Data Counts and to learn how to get involved, please contact Karin Elliott, Executive Director, at kelliott@tsf.org or (617) 423-6300 x284; Carrie Tate, Assistant Director, at ctate@tsf.org or x228; or Zeva Levine, Member Services Associate, at zlevine@tsf.org or x263.

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