

# Where Are They Now?

## *2019 Life After High School Study Results*

### *Oregon GEAR UP (May 2019)*



*LaPine High School alumni at Pacific University*

This Brief was prepared by Metis Associates on behalf of Oregon GEAR UP.

**Oregon GEAR UP's** goal is to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary programs. Oregon GEAR UP works with select middle and high schools over seven years to create a college-going culture by providing funding and technical assistance, professional development for educators, and summer opportunities for students.

**Metis Associates**, a national research and consulting firm, brings 40 years of expertise in evaluation, information management, and grant development to its work for organizations committed to making a meaningful difference in the lives of children, families, and communities.

Our mission is to support public and private organizations in achieving results for the children, adults, families, and communities they serve. We work closely with clients to strengthen capacity to achieve their missions, make data-informed decisions, and improve services.

## BACKGROUND

Oregon ranks 49<sup>th</sup> among the states in high school graduation rates, and 32<sup>nd</sup> in postsecondary education attainment.<sup>1</sup> By 2020, 70% of all jobs in the state are expected to require some type of education or training after high school<sup>2</sup>, but only 37% of adults hold a postsecondary degree.<sup>3</sup> Rural Oregon, especially, faces a number of challenges—including declining local economies, geographic isolation, under-resourced schools, and high poverty—that can deeply affect children's educational aspirations, pathways, opportunities, and success.

Seeking to better understand the experiences of rural students after they graduate from high school and what influences their post-high school plans and decisions, Oregon GEAR UP retained the services of Metis Associates to conduct two **Life After High School studies in rural communities across the state**, one with 2017 graduates and one with 2018 graduates. Inspired by a similar study conducted in Idaho by the University of Idaho<sup>4</sup>, we surveyed youth six months after they graduated from high school and conducted in-depth follow-up phone interviews with a sample of these students.

## METHODOLOGY

From January through April of 2019, Metis administered the Life After High School survey in 20 of the 21 high schools that receive GEAR UP services through a grant from the US Department of Education to Oregon State University. The survey was administered via email and texts using the Mozeo platform. GEAR UP coordinators in many schools also distributed the survey via email and social media. A total of 614 youth who graduated in 2018 completed the survey, representing a 52% response rate. Survey respondents were offered a \$10 Amazon gift card after submitting their confidential surveys. Metis researchers also conducted in-depth phone interviews with three youth, who received a \$50 stipend for their participation.

## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- ❖ The most important considerations when the youth are deciding what to do after high school are: having a career or job they love, making money, and expanding their horizons.
- ❖ Most of the high school graduates who did not continue on to postsecondary education feel they need to work, they can't afford it, and/or they need a break from school. Yet, almost three-quarters of them reported they are likely to enroll in postsecondary education in the near future.
- ❖ Graduates who enroll in postsecondary education do so because they want to get a better job, make more money, get prepared for a specific career, and/or learn new things that interest them.
- ❖ Parents and teachers are the two most influential groups of people, when youth were deciding what to do after high school, thus highlighting the importance of engaging parents and teachers as part of schools' college and career readiness efforts.
- ❖ Consistent with national trends, youth who are female, white, higher achieving, and/or who have at least one parent with a college degree were more likely than their peers to enroll in postsecondary education.
- ❖ The top three challenges for students enrolled in postsecondary education are: managing school deadlines and responsibilities, balancing academic and social life, and keeping up their grades. First-generation college students are struggling with many more issues than their peers.
- ❖ Most graduates feel their high schools were helpful in preparing for life after high school, particularly those enrolled in postsecondary education.
  - ✓ Among students enrolled in college, the most helpful supports they received in high school were: information about financial aid and scholarships, dual credit courses, and core academic classes.
  - ✓ Among those who did not go on, the most helpful supports were: work readiness activities, other classes (electives, online learning), and mentoring or support from school staff.
- ❖ Youth not enrolled in college would have liked more classes or information on practical life skills (e.g., budgeting, banking, and taxes), opportunities for career exploration, and positive encouragement and reinforcement. College students would have liked to have had more dual credit courses, college trips, assistance with college and financial aid applications, and information on what to expect in college.

All of these and other topics are explored in more detail in the following sections.



Alumni Panel at LaPine High School

*I am really enjoying the independence that I have [in college]. That's something that I wasn't really expecting.*

*I've had plenty of support from my friends, family and career advisors that have made my college experience excellent. Emotional and financial support along with career advice has been essential to my personal and professional growth.*

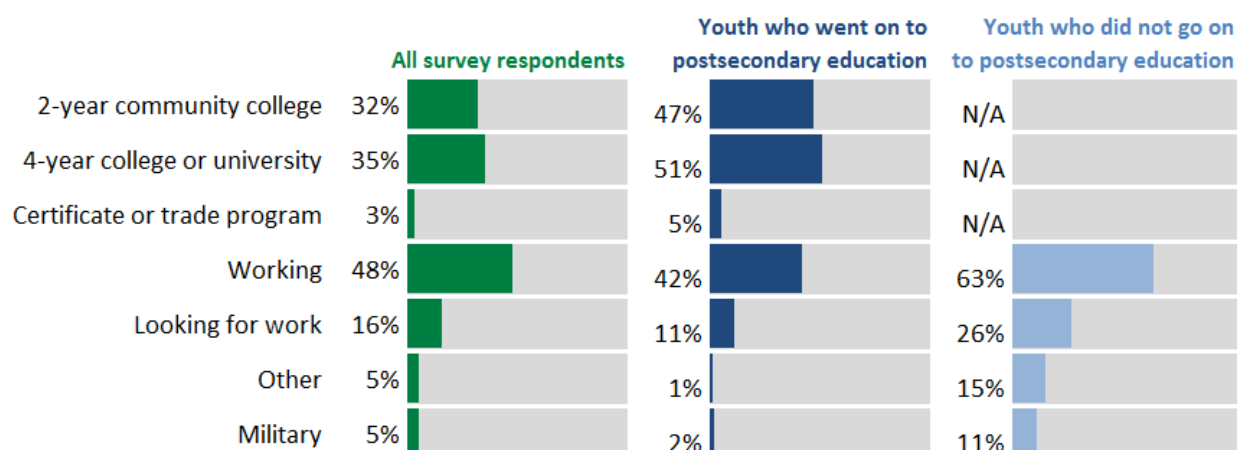
*I liked that [my high school] was so small, and close-knit. All of the teachers and staff there, I could really tell, cared about the students and how well they did. [Now] being here at a big university, I'm around a lot of people who attended bigger high schools, and they didn't have the connections that I got to have with my teachers and staff.*

GEAR UP High School Graduates

## WHAT ARE YOUTH DOING SIX MONTHS AFTER GRADUATING?

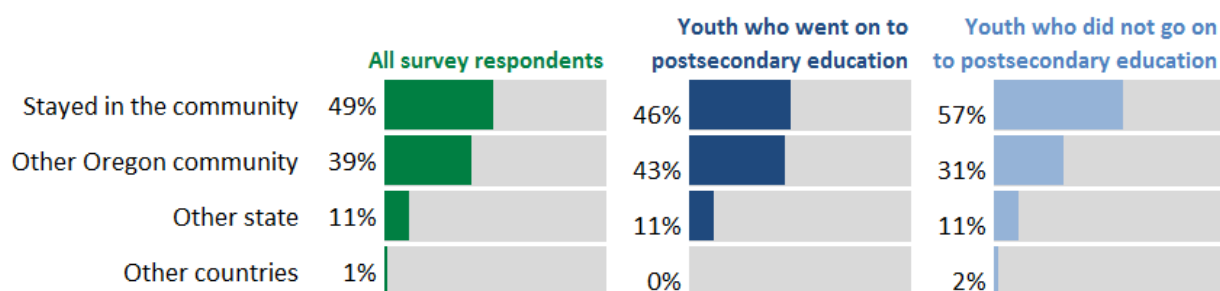
At the time they took the survey (about six months after graduating from high school), **most youth (70%) were enrolled in some form of postsecondary education<sup>1</sup>**, including 2-year community colleges (32%), 4-year colleges or universities (35%), or certificate/trade programs (3%). Over half of the youth were also either working (48%) or looking for work (16%).

- ❖ Almost all students who went on to postsecondary education were enrolled in 2-year or 4-year institutions; 42% of them were working at the same time.
- ❖ Almost two-thirds (63%) of the youth who did not continue on to postsecondary education were working, while slightly over a quarter (26%) of them were looking for work. A small number of youth were pursuing other plans, such as volunteering locally, taking online courses, taking care of their children or family members, and working on college applications.



**Six months after they graduated, almost half of the youth were still residing in their same small, rural towns where they attended high school (49%);** another 39% had moved to another Oregon community. A much smaller proportion had moved to another state (11%)—with the most common states being California, Washington, Idaho, Hawaii and Texas—and 1% (or 4 youth) had moved to another country.

- ❖ Those who went on to postsecondary education were more likely to have moved to other Oregon communities to be near the colleges they were attending, including Eugene, Corvallis, and Portland.

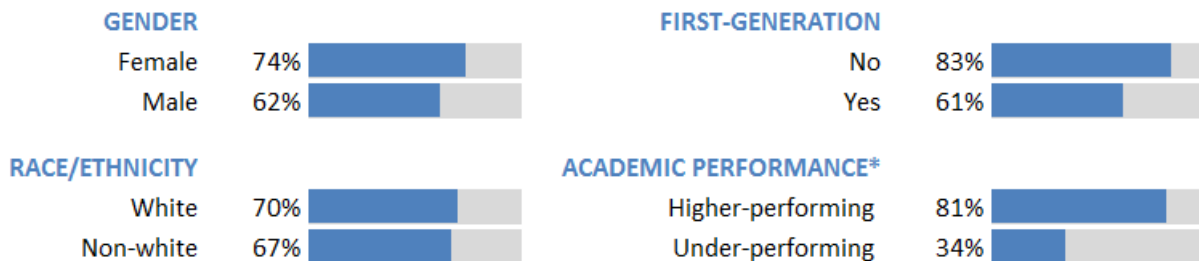


<sup>1</sup> This was considerably higher than the 44% fall college enrollment rate based on the National Student Clearinghouse data, therefore suggesting that college students were overrepresented in the study sample.

## WHO IS LIKELY TO PURSUE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION?

Youth who are female, white, higher achieving, and/or who have at least one parent who has completed college were more likely than their peers to enroll in postsecondary education. For example, higher-performing youth (see definition at the bottom of the graph) were 2.4 times more likely than their peers to enroll in postsecondary education (81% enrollment rate compared to 34%). First-generation youth were less likely to enroll than youth who have at least one parent with a college degree (61% compared to 83%, respectively).

### Enrollment Rate in Postsecondary Education

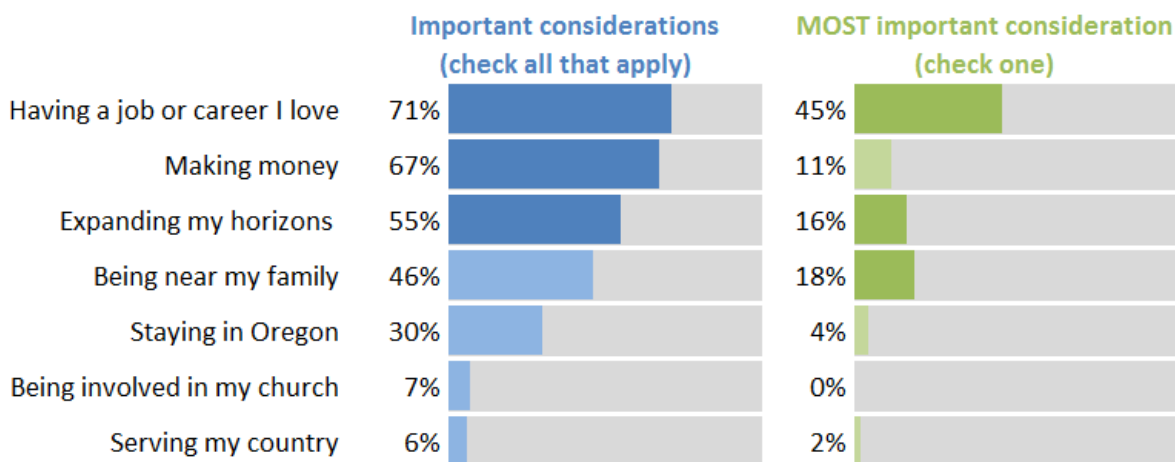


\*Based on self-reported grades in high school. Higher-performing students reported "Mostly As, As & Bs, Mostly Bs; lower-performing reported Bs and Cs, mostly Cs, or Ds or lower.

## YOUTH'S DECISIONS AROUND LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

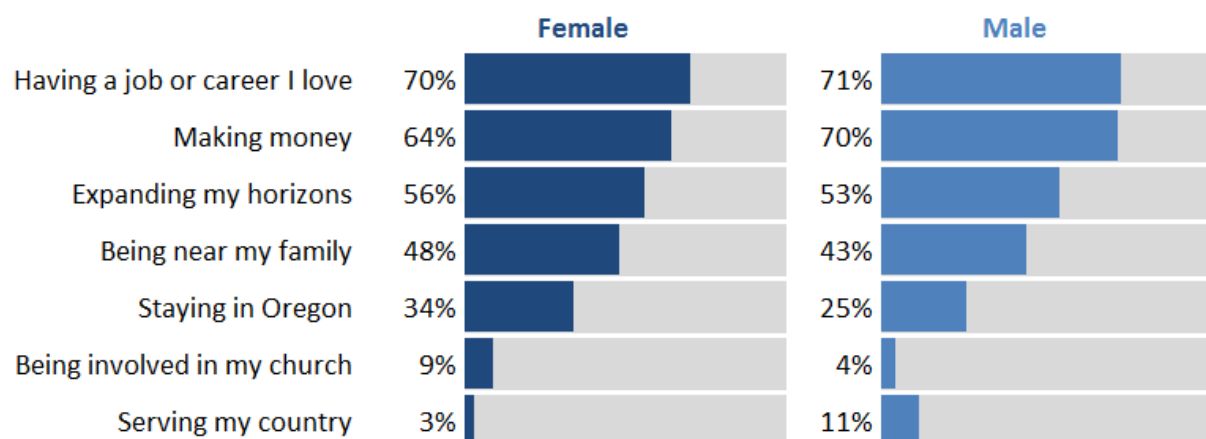
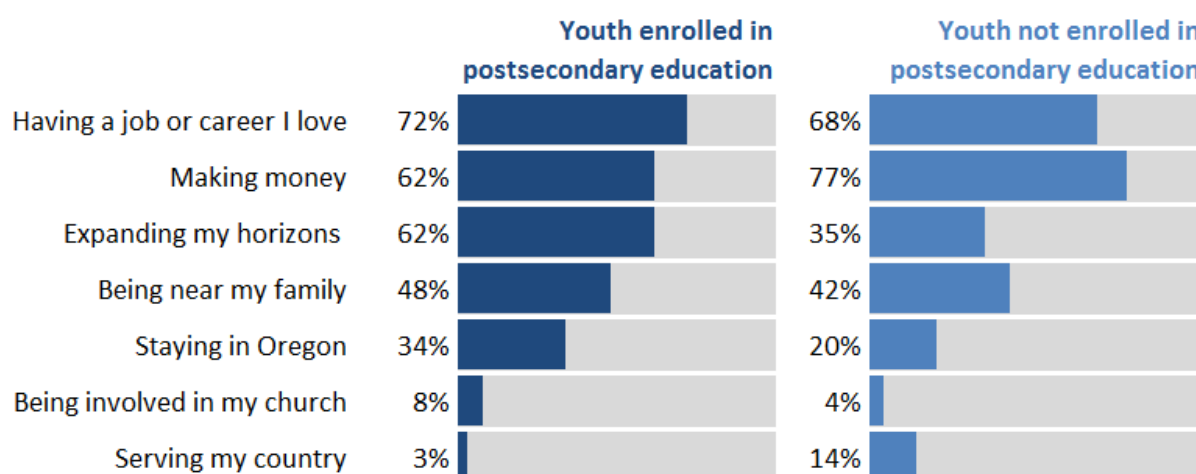
### WHAT MOTIVATES YOUTH WHEN THINKING OF LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?

*Having a job or career they love* is the most prevalent motivator for youth when they think about what they want for their life after high school, as noted by 71% of survey respondents. Other important factors were: *making money* (67%), *expanding their horizons* (55%), *being near their family* (46%) and *staying in Oregon* (30%). Interestingly, when asked to report the MOST important one, only 11% of youth selected *making money*.



❖ **In contrast with the prior year's study, the gender differences in graduates' motivation were small.**

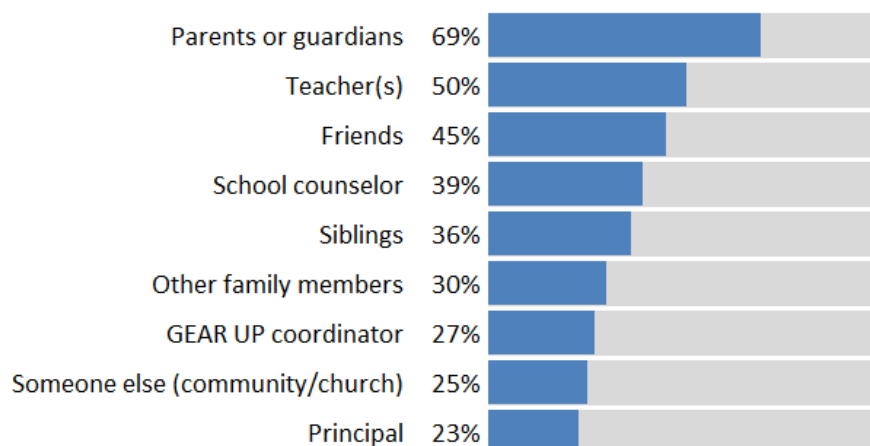
Female students, for example, were somewhat more motivated than male students by considerations such as *being near family* (48% compared to 43%) and *staying in Oregon* (34% compared to 25%), whereas male students were more likely to report that *making money* (70% compared to 64%) and/or *serving their country* (11% compared to 3%) are important to them.

❖ **Youth who went on to postsecondary education were motivated—in part—by different considerations than those who didn't.** For example, youth who went on for more education were more likely to report that *expanding their horizons* (62% compared to 35%) and *staying in Oregon* (34% compared to 20%) was important to them. In contrast, students who did not go on were more likely to say that *making money* (77% compared to 62%) or *serving their country* (14% compared to 3%) are important to them.

## WHO IS MOST INFLUENTIAL?

According to surveyed youth, their parents or guardians—closely followed by teachers—were the most influential groups when deciding what to do after high school. This highlights the importance of engaging parents and teachers early on, as part of schools' college and career readiness efforts. Furthermore, more than a third of youth also identified their friends, school counselor, and siblings as influential.

**Most influential people**  
(% youth rating each as "influential" or "very influential")



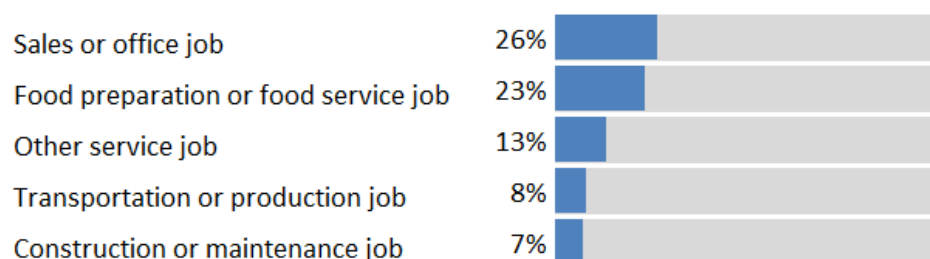
## EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH WHO DID NOT CONTINUE ON TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

### WHAT ARE YOUTH DOING?

As noted earlier, 30% of respondents were not enrolled in postsecondary education at the time they took the survey.

- ❖ Almost two-thirds (63%) of these youth were working and over a quarter (26%) were looking for work or between jobs. Of those working, most (69%) were working fewer than 35 hours a week.
- ❖ Most youth were working in: sales or office jobs (26%), food preparation or food service jobs (23%), or other service jobs such as cleaning, landscaping, and caregiving (13%).

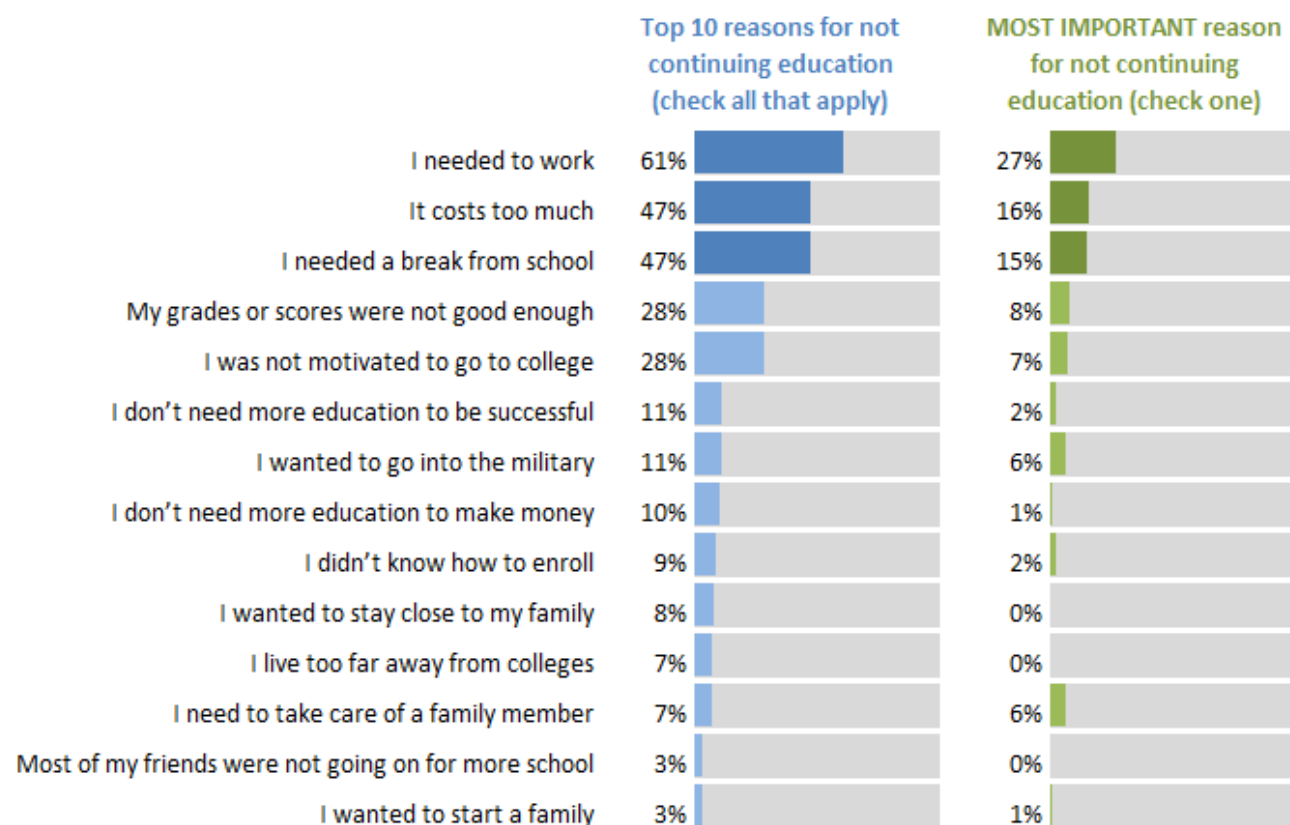
**Top jobs among youth not enrolled in postsecondary education**





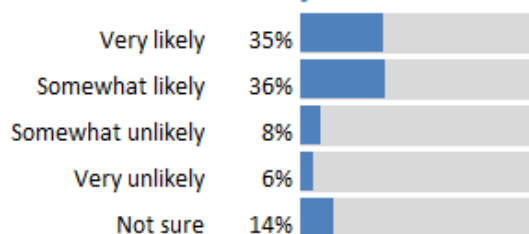
## WHY DID YOUTH DECIDE NOT TO ENROLL IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION?

**Students provided multiple reasons why they had postponed or decided not to enroll in postsecondary education.** When asked to select the most important reason, students indicated: they needed to work (27%), it costs too much (16%), they needed a break from school (15%), their grades were not good enough (8%), they were unmotivated (7%), they wanted to go into the military (6%), and they needed to take care of a family member (6%), among others.

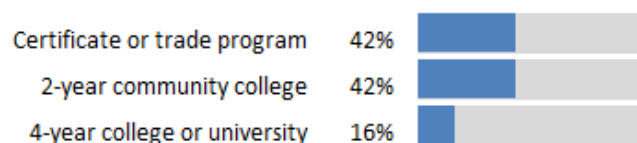


Yet, most youth reported they were *somewhat likely* (36%) or *very likely* (35%) to enroll in the future, most probably in certificate/trade programs (42%) or 2-year community colleges (42%).

### How likely are you to enroll in postsecondary education in the future?



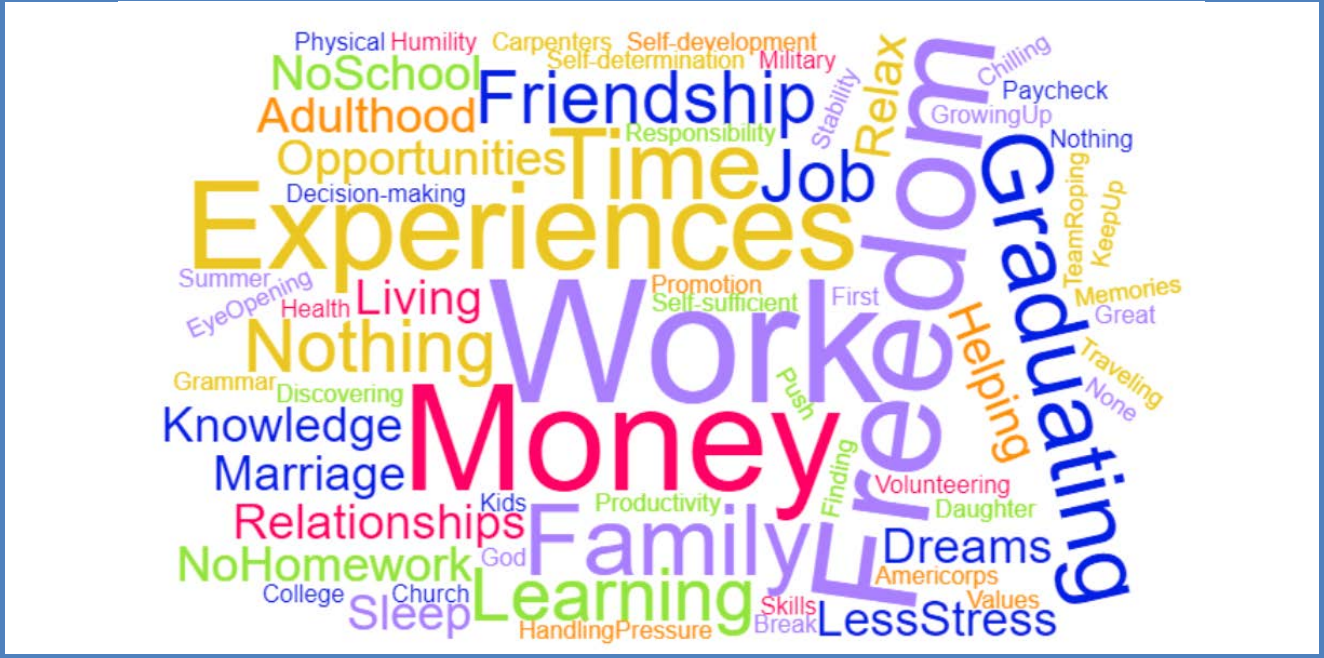
### Which are you more likely to enroll in?



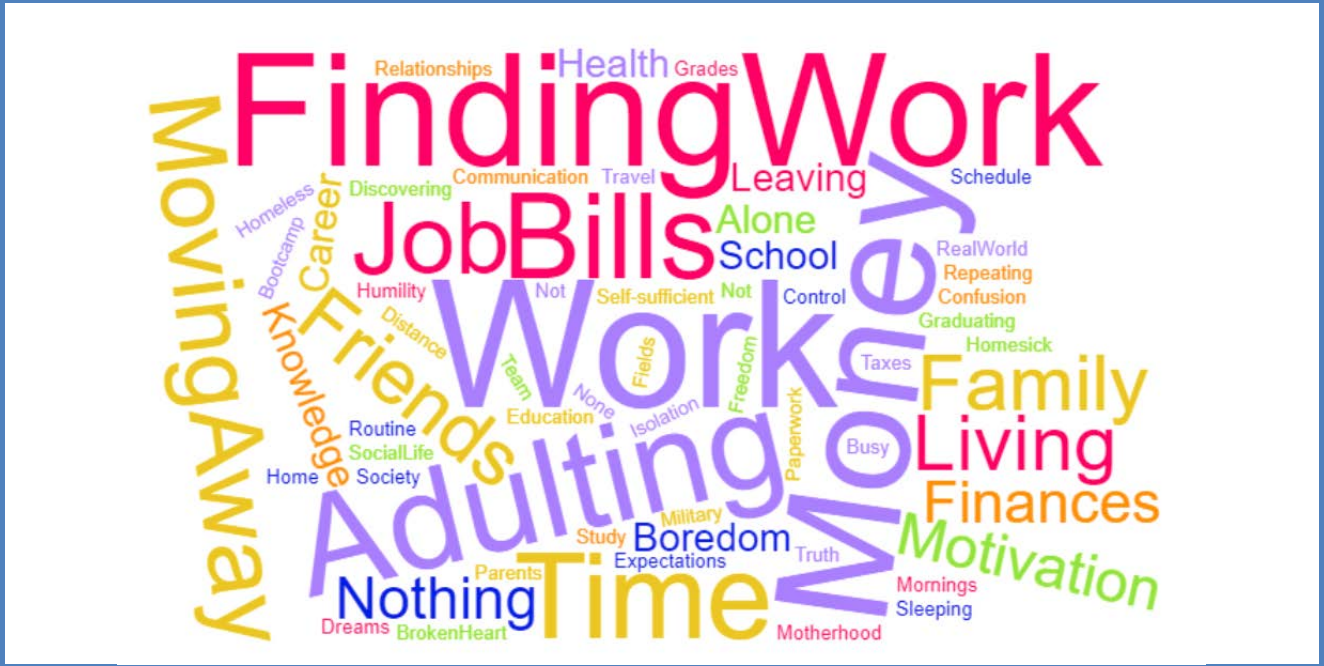
## WHAT IS MOST REWARDING/CHALLENGING ABOUT LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?

**Youth who did not continue on to postsecondary education were asked to describe in one or two words the most rewarding and the most challenging aspects of their life after high school.** As shown below, the most rewarding aspects were: working, making money, freedom, experiences, and graduating. Youth reported to struggle most with working, finding work, money, and adulting.

### MOST REWARDING ASPECTS (YOUTH NOT ENROLLED IN PSE)



### MOST CHALLENGING ASPECTS (YOUTH NOT ENROLLED IN PSE)





### TESS'S STORY

Tess faced many challenges growing up, including living with different family members, attending different schools, and having a child in her sophomore year of high school. Although she struggled with *“making sure to stay on top of my classes,” “attendance,”* and *“childcare when you’re in high school,”* she was able to graduate from high school—*“one of my biggest accomplishments”*—thanks to the support of her sister and the teacher of her school’s teen parenting class. Tess graduated knowing there were many different paths that she could take to pursue college and a career, and felt confident she knew what steps she needed to get there.

Wanting to attend beauty school, but, unfortunately, not receiving any of the scholarships she had applied for, Tess decided to follow a different path. She told herself, *“I can better myself as a parent, and I can put myself more into my jobs that I have now, and work up in the chain of careers.”* Tess works full time as a caregiver to teenagers with special needs. Her schedule allows her to spend time with her daughter and she has moved into a house with her partner, both of which have brought her a lot of happiness. While she finds the schedule of paying bills and maintaining her car to be challenging, and wishes she had been taught more about how to file taxes, she appreciates the freedom of her life after high school. She is working on applying to jobs to be able to work closer to home, and has learned that she doesn’t want to ultimately pursue caregiving as her career.

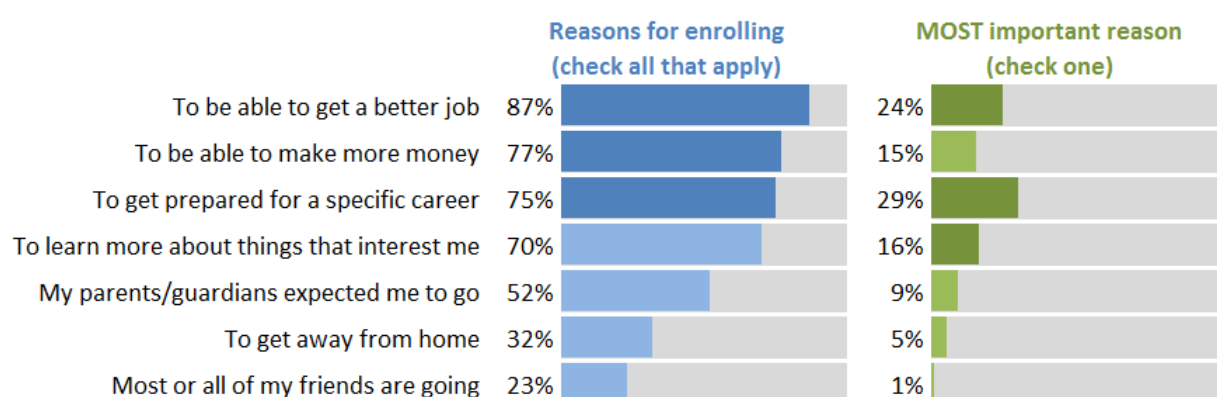
Tess does plan to eventually apply and attend college: *“I do see it in my future, just not right now, [because] I’m not [yet] set in my path.”* Once she decides on what job or career path is right for her, she feels confident she has the resources and support to take the next steps. Tess shared: *“I would probably go to [our local community college], or I would actually go back to [my] high school and talk to [my GEAR UP coordinator], because she does really good with helping to make sure you understand everything, and how to go about it.”*

## EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH WHO WENT ON TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Seven out of every ten youth who completed the survey were enrolled in some form of postsecondary education, including 4-year colleges or universities (35%), 2-year community colleges (32%), and trade/certificate/technical programs (3%).

### WHY DID YOUTH ENROLL IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION?

In addition to asking students about what motivates them when thinking of life after high school, youth who enrolled in postsecondary education were asked to identify the most important reason for enrolling. These were *getting prepared for a specific career*, *being able to get a better job*, *learning more about things that interest them*, and *being able to make more money*. Interestingly, although 77% said one of the reasons they enrolled was to make more money, only 15% thought making money was the most important reason.



- ❖ **There were some differences by gender in students' stated reasons for pursuing postsecondary education.** Females were more likely than males to be motivated by *getting prepared for a specific career* (80% compared to 69%) and *to get away from home* (33% compared to 29%), whereas males were more likely to be motivated because their *parents/guardians expected them to go* (55% compared to 49%) and because *most or all of their friends were going* (27% compared to 20%).
- ❖ **There were also differences by first-generation status.** First-generation students were somewhat more likely than their peers to be motivated by *being able to get a better job* (90% compared to 83%) or *being able to make more money* (79% compared to 75%); and less motivated because their *parents/guardians expected them to go* (48% compared to 58% of their peers), *most or all of their friends were going* (20% compared to 27%), or *to learn more about things that interest them* (68% compared to 74%).

### HOW ARE YOUTH DOING IN COLLEGE?

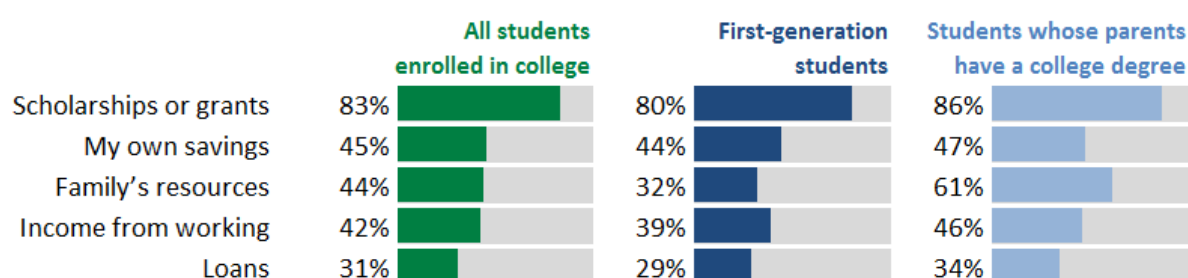
When asked about their grades in college, most students reported earning "mostly As" (23%) or "As and Bs" (44%). Smaller percentages reported earning "mostly Bs" (13%), "Bs and Cs" (10%) or "mostly Cs" and below (6%). Although most students were doing well academically, most students were taking or needed to take remedial courses in math (59%) and in writing (54%) at the time they responded to the survey. Almost all students (95%) indicated they were planning to re-enroll for the following semester.

## HOW ARE YOUTH PAYING FOR COLLEGE?

The large majority (87%) of enrolled youth completed the FAFSA or ORSAA while in high school. Non-white students and first-generation students were somewhat less likely to have completed the FAFSA or ORSAA. **When asked about the resources they use to pay for college, most youth said they were paying through scholarships or grants.** To a much lesser extent students also reported using their own savings, their family's resources, income from working, and loans.

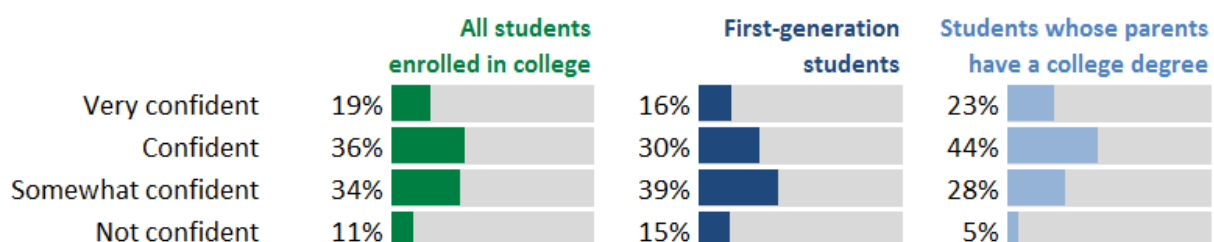
- ❖ **There were notable differences between first-generation students and their peers in how they are paying for college.** First-generation students were less likely to use any of the listed resources to pay for college, including family resources (32% compared to 61%), scholarships or grants (80% compared to 86%), and income from working (39% compared to 46%).

### *Which of the following are you using to help you pay for college?*



- ❖ **Two-year college students were less likely than 4-year college students to use any of the listed resources to pay for college,** including loans (13% compared to 47%) and their family's resources (33% compared to 53%). Two-year college students were also somewhat less likely to use their savings (41% compared to 49%), scholarships and grants (79% compared to 85%), and income from working (40% compared to 43%).
- ❖ **Over half (55%) of the students reported feeling confident or very confident they can continue to afford college.** However, first-generation students were much less confident they will be able to continue paying for college (only 46% said they were *confident* or *very confident*, compared to 67% of students who have at least one parent with a college degree).

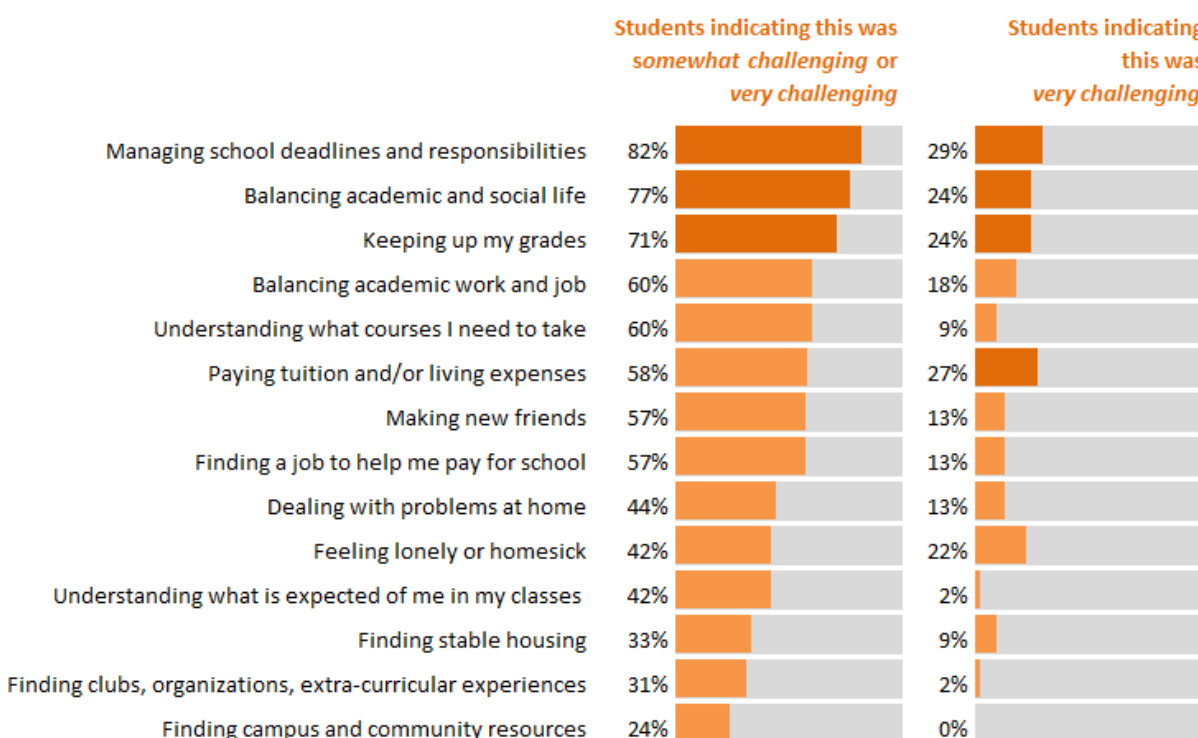
### *How confident are you that you can continue to afford college?*



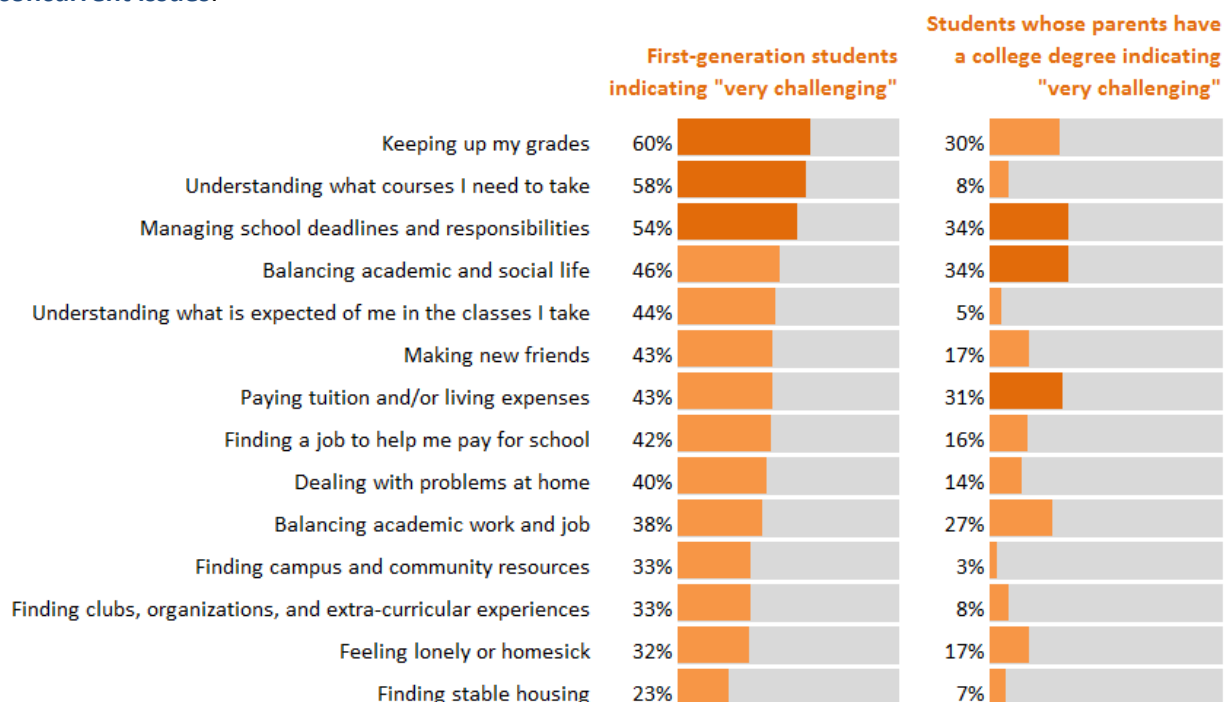
## WHAT ARE FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS STRUGGLING WITH?

College-enrolled youth were asked to identify the extent to which they felt that some challenges common to first-year students applied to them. The **most common challenges** (that most students identified as being *very* or *somewhat challenging*) were: managing school deadlines and responsibilities, balancing academic and social life, keeping up their grades, balancing academic work and their jobs, and understanding what courses to take.

- ❖ The **most challenging aspects** (described by students as *very challenging*) were: managing school deadlines and responsibilities, paying tuition and/or living expenses, balancing academic and social life, and keeping up their grades.



- ❖ **First-generation students are struggling much more than their peers with numerous and often concurrent issues.**



- ❖ When asked about the **additional supports they need** in order to be successful in college, the most common responses were: financial (more financial support, good paying job, and information on scholarships, loans, and financial aid); coach/mentor/counselor/advisor; encouragement and emotional support; more friends; counseling/therapy; and academic supports, such as tutoring, study habits and time management.

#### WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO YOU TO IMPROVE YOUR OVERALL COLLEGE EXPERIENCE? (REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES)

*"Mentors" and "Success Coaches" that would actually check up on you and help you. Whenever I need help with college things I call my high school counselor because she is a lot more help to me than my current college "mentor" and "success coach".*

*Any kind of support is helpful, support from my parents, other peers, my professors, and my student advisor. Walking into college I felt like professors just went to teach their class and that was it. I was wrong, there's many professors that want you to succeed and they can be a huge support!*

*A counselor who has been through the same things and has life experience to point me in the right direction of what I need to do to make it in the world.*

*A more stable financial backing that doesn't fluctuate as much and is reliable on paying what isn't covered in scholarships.*

*Access to more scholarships, because paying for tuition has been hard.*

*Finding students I can become close with who have the same interests as me and being able to work together.*

*Employment support, finding a job that will work well with my schedule and getting enough hours.*

*Being encouraged to finally get out of my comfort zone and make more friends.*

*More guidance from administration on finding apartments and more communication about school resources.*

*Explaining more what types of classes you need for the type of career that you want. Knowing what would be more beneficial if you are transferring to a larger college.*

*Learning how I learn best and study habits that help me retain information.*

*I would like to go back and tell myself at the very beginning [of college] how great it is to just talk with your professors. It's intimidating when you're in a lecture hall with 300-plus people in it, and you have a doctor in their field standing down there, talking to you about all of this information. I kind of neglected to think that they're there to help you learn just as much as the teachers I had before are.*



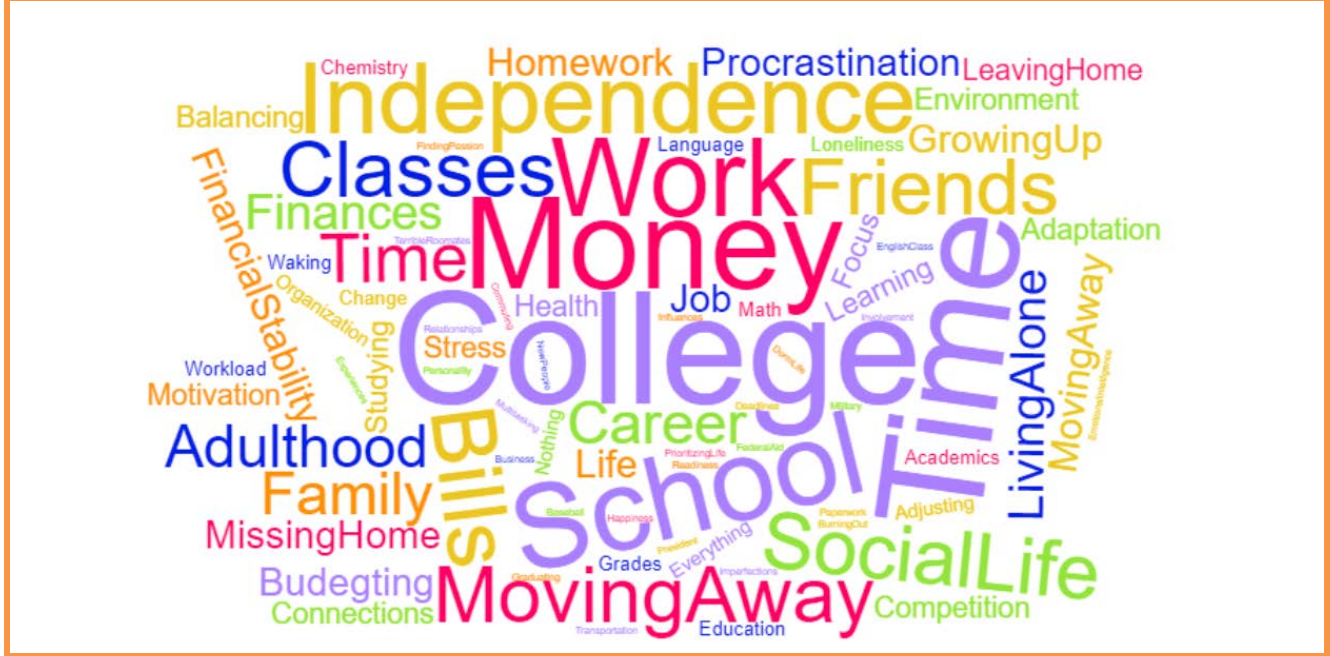
## WHAT IS MOST REWARDING/CHALLENGING ABOUT LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?

College-enrolled youth were also asked to describe in one or two words the most rewarding and the most challenging aspects of their life after high school. As shown below, college was singled out as both the most rewarding and the most challenging aspect of life after high school. Other rewarding aspects included: experiences, freedom, friendships, work, education, and learning. Other challenges included: time, money, work, independence, social life, and moving away, among others.

### MOST REWARDING ASPECTS (YOUTH ENROLLED IN PSE)



### MOST CHALLENGING ASPECTS (YOUTH ENROLLED IN PSE)



### MARIANA'S STORY

Now finishing her freshman year at a large 4-year university outside of Oregon, Mariana *"was the first one in my family to immediately attend any kind of postsecondary education."* Starting in middle school, she always expected she would go on to college. At the beginning of her senior year, she overcame a period of stress about the multitude of options and paths to college that she could potentially take with the help and support of her mentor—her agriculture teacher, who was also her Future Farmers of America (FFA) advisor. Based on her experience in FFA, in his courses, and from entering speech and debate contests, she decided she wanted to pursue a major in agricultural communication, and began to apply to schools that offered it: *"I applied to a lot of out-of-state schools, just because the Oregon schools didn't have a major area that I was interested in. And also, I was kind of excited to get out of my comfort zone. I figured it was easier to not get scared and move back home if I were farther away."*

Mariana has faced challenges, particularly at the beginning of her first semester, when she had to register for her courses without being able to attend the in-person registration on campus, and didn't have guidance to know which courses were required for her major. She also took time to adjust to knowing what was expected of her in her classes, especially the importance of attending all her classes, even when there wasn't a strict attendance policy. She and her family also faced emotional and financial challenges when her grandmother became ill and her mother had to quit her job to care for her full-time.

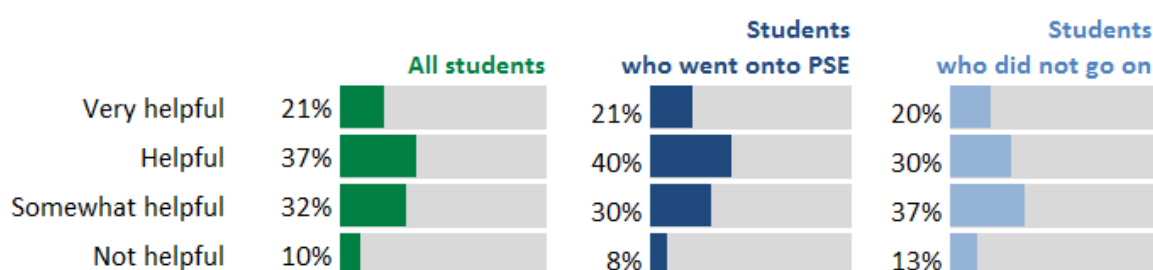
As time has gone on, Mariana has learned more about how to navigate college. She has relied on her advisor and the resources available to her on campus, such as the student employment center and a bank through the university, which have helped. However, she still faces financial stresses: *"I grew up fairly close or below the poverty line. My mom always encouraged me to dream big, but when it comes down to it, I really can't afford what I'm doing right now. I'm going mostly off of loans. I have a few scholarships out. I'm just kind of in the hopes that this will all pay off in the end, which I still think it will. But it's kind of intimidating, taking out all of that money, when I've never really been familiar with any kind of financial planning or anything like that, because I haven't really had to be."*

Overall, Mariana is enjoying her time as a student, is working as a campus tour guide and in one of the on-campus markets, has joined a sorority, and is taking 17 credits. And she continues to be excited by her major, and feels like *"it's doing a really great job of helping me prepare. Looking on [into] my sophomore and junior years, there's a lot of internship opportunities that are available to me, through my university."*

## FEEDBACK ON HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

Most surveyed youth (58%) think their school has been *helpful* or *very helpful* in preparing them for life after high school. Youth who were enrolled in postsecondary education were more likely than their peers to think their school was helpful (61% compared to 50%).

*How helpful was your school in preparing you for life after high school?*

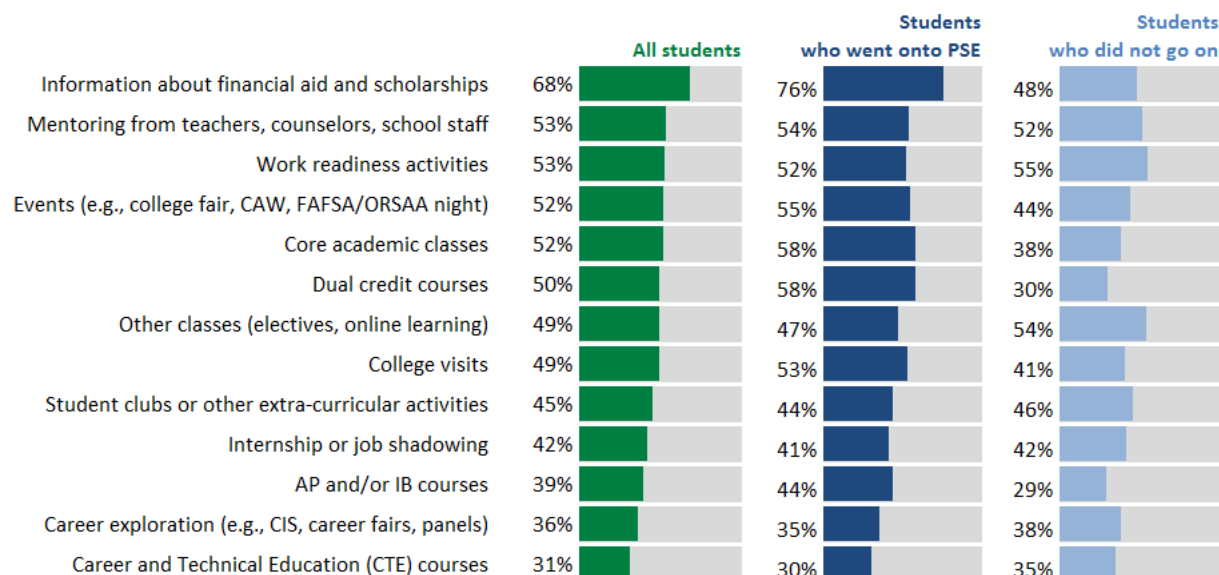


## WHAT HIGH SCHOOL SUPPORTS WERE MOST HELPFUL?

The most important supports youth received while in high school were: information about financial aid and scholarships, work readiness activities, and dual credit courses.

- ❖ The top five high school supports for **students who enrolled in postsecondary education** were: information about financial aid, dual credit courses, core academic classes, events such as college fairs and college/FAFSA nights, and mentoring from teachers, counselors and school staff.
- ❖ For **students who did not pursue postsecondary education**, the following were the top five important supports: work readiness activities, other classes (electives, online learning), mentoring or support from school staff, information about financial aid and scholarships, and student clubs and other extra-curricular activities.

*Which of the following high school supports were most important to you?  
(% respondents saying "important" or "very important")*



### KAITLYN'S STORY

Kaitlyn was encouraged by her guidance counselor to find and use job shadowing to figure out what she wanted to do after high school, and it turned out to be pivotal advice: *"I did a job shadow with my friend's mom who is a loan officer and has her own business; I did a job shadow at the hospital with my aunt who's a nurse; and I did a ride-along with a police officer as well. I decided that the business would be the best decision for me, because [I liked it the most]."* Kaitlyn received the Oregon Promise and the Pell grants, as well as other scholarships, and is now studying for her 2-year degree in Business Administration at the local community college. She is also working full-time as a caregiver.

Apart from the advice from her guidance counselor, another critical support for Kaitlyn during her time in high school was strong personal relationships with her teachers and other staff. After tragically losing her mom when she was 14, Kaitlyn's teachers did *"whatever they could to help me fill out my applications, my scholarships, to write my essays. They helped me really with everything."*

Kaitlyn would have liked to have had opportunities to hear directly from college students while she was in high school. She learned from advisors, but felt that there was something different and necessary about learning from a student's perspective. Now that she's in college, she would be willing to do a visit at her own high school: *"I would actually enjoy that—mentoring and showing students, 'Hey, this is what I did wrong, and this is what you should do, so you don't make my mistake.'"*

### WHAT ELSE COULD HIGH SCHOOLS DO TO SUPPORT STUDENTS?

Youth were asked to reflect on additional supports they would have liked in high school to help them prepare for life after high school.

The most common suggestions among **students who were enrolled in postsecondary education** were:

- More counselors and one-on-one support
- Life skill classes and "real world" advice
- What to expect in college (e.g., success tips, struggles in the first year, how to balance academic and work life, how to cope with anxiety and stress)
- Learn about scholarships and financial aid earlier in high school
- Organization, time management, and study habits
- More college visits and college/career fairs, more information about out-of-state colleges
- More challenging classes, including dual credit courses, and higher expectations

Among **youth who were not enrolled in postsecondary education**, the most common suggestions were:

- More mentors, counselors, and advisors
- Life skills classes (including budgeting, taxes, renting apartments, leasing cars, etc.)
- More CTE and hands-on courses
- More career awareness activities
- More job readiness classes
- More support and encouragement
- New/different ways to motivate students
- More focus on trade/certification programs
- More assistance with college applications and financial aid/scholarships

**Youth were asked to indicate what type of advice they would give to themselves starting off in high school.**

The most common advice included: don't procrastinate, study harder, get good grades, take advantage of all the opportunities (internships, job shadows, dual credit and AP courses, extra-curricular activities), volunteer, ask questions, ask for help, believe in yourself, make connections, try new things, apply for scholarships and financial aid, be positive, have fun, start planning for your future earlier, don't worry about what others think of you, and focus on your goals.

**IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO YOURSELF AS A 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADER THAT WOULD HAVE HELPED YOU SUCCEED IN HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE SAID?  
(REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES)**

*Ask questions. No matter what you think others think, half of the time they have the same question.*

*Keep on exploring, you will succeed and you will fail. You need to learn from your failure and enjoy your successes. Lastly, push yourself beyond what you think you can!*

*Develop a plan from sophomore year. Don't wait until senior year to decide your life.*

*Don't be afraid to learn new things and try new experiences, everything you experience in high school is something you can use in life.*

*Don't fall behind, stay focused, stay motivated and don't let others decide your future. Set goals, short, near and far future. Stay out of trouble and do everything you can sooner rather than later and take any and EVERY opportunity to better your future, whether it's just extra credit for class or taking extra classes for college and such. Hang out with a crowd with the same goals as you and work with a group and help each other reach your goals. And have self discipline and SAVE MONEY!! [The] More you save now and start a budget, the more you will thank yourself later.*

*Don't skip classes, don't get mixed up in the wrong people, your grades do matter, and on top of it all try and find the fun in everything.*

*Do not procrastinate! Start exploring options early and decide what you may be interested in when you graduate. Find a college that you can afford and search for and apply for as many scholarships as you can so you aren't stressed about that area while in school.*

*Do what makes you happy and if you don't know what makes you happy don't stress because it'll eventually come to you.*

*I would have told myself that if you show you care about something and put forth the effort that most teachers will do the most possible to help you. Most teachers at [school] truly do care and I wish I would have noticed that before my senior year.*

*Volunteer as much as you can, get out of your comfort zone and join all the clubs you can, visit colleges, look at scholarships. But most important get involved!!*

*You can do anything you set your mind to. No matter what some people in your life tell you, no matter who those people are, there is always a way to get what you want in life. Take your life into your own hands and be the person YOU want to be, not who others want you to be. Just be yourself and don't forget that you have the power to do whatever it is you aspire to do.*



## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Odum, J., West, R. (2016). *Poverty and Opportunity in the States: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*. State of the States Report 2015. Center for American Progress.

<sup>2</sup> Carnevale (2013). *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce

<sup>3</sup> American Community Survey (2014). Retrieved from:  
[http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community\\_facts.xhtml](http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml)

<sup>4</sup> *Idaho's Life Choices of High School Seniors*. Prepared by the University of Idaho. The report can be accessed at: <https://www.uidaho.edu/president/direct-reports/mcclure-center/publications/life-after-high-school>

## ABOUT METIS ASSOCIATES



Metis Associates is a national research and consulting firm headquartered in New York City, bringing over 40 years of experience in evaluation, information management, and grant development to its work with a wide range of organizations committed to making a meaningful difference in the lives of children, families, and communities.

Our mission is to support public and private organizations in achieving results for the children, adults, families and the communities they serve. All of our interactions with clients, as well as all of our products and services, are driven by this goal of empowering clients. We help clients to identify and build on their strengths and expand their capacity with our knowledge, skills and technical expertise.



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