

COLLEGE ACCESS: A NEW YORK STORY

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High School Graduation Rates in New York

Americans are regularly told that their schools are failing. Regrettably, recent reports remind New Yorkers that their schools are no exception to this trend.

For example, Achieve—a national organization that tracks student achievement—reports that almost half of New York high school students don't graduate from high school in four years. Few 9th graders

progress through the pipeline to college graduation (Figure 1).

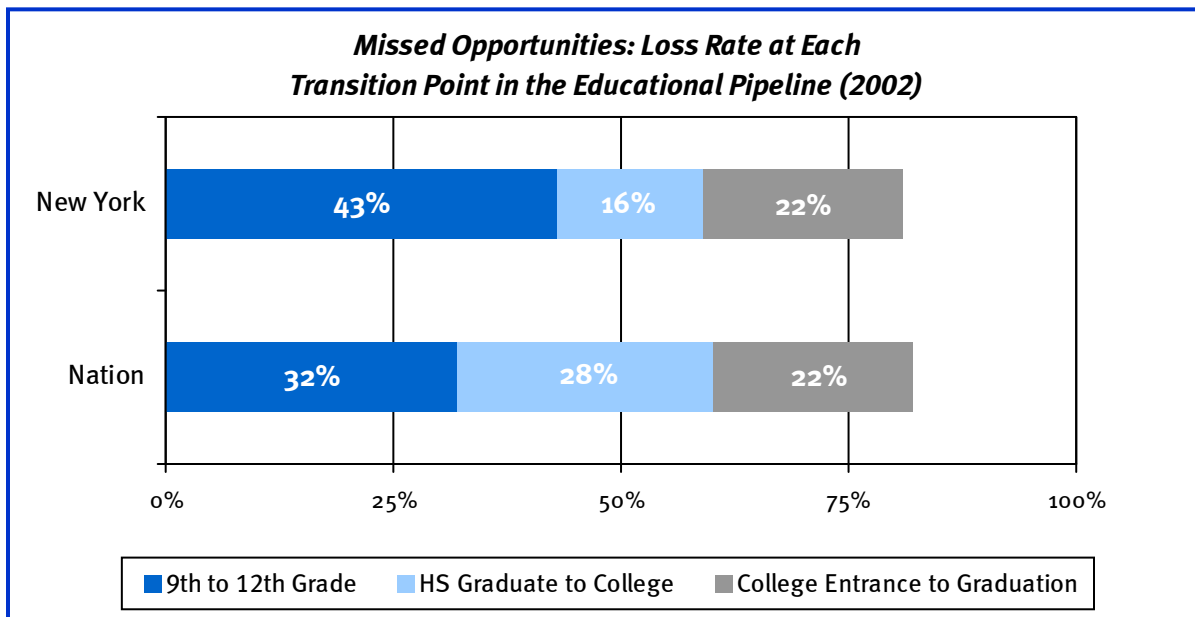
Furthermore, a look at attainment of black and Hispanic children in New York reveals even more troubling trends. The Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities in New York State reports that, in New York, “only one-third of black (37%) and Hispanic (33%) youth are earning high school

diplomas.”¹ And the American Council on Education reminds us that fewer than one in ten black and Hispanic students in the U.S. earn a college degree.

Although rates are improving across the state, Woodrow Wilson Early College High Schools address these graduation challenges with accelerated results.

Early College has given Manhattan Hunter and STAR graduates not just any future, but a future of their choosing.

Figure 1.



Source: Achieve, Inc. Achieve Data Profile: New York, April 2006.

Success Stories: Woodrow Wilson New York City Early Colleges

Students graduating from Woodrow Wilson Early College High Schools in New York City—*Manhattan Hunter Science High School* (Manhattan Hunter) and *Science, Technology and Research* (STAR) High School—have done remarkably well. Virtually all of the students have

Manhattan Hunter and STAR are not gifted and talented high schools. Most of the students at these schools are from low-income families. At STAR, more than 80% are black and 10% are Hispanic. At Manhattan Hunter, 35% are Hispanic, 25% are Asian/Pacific Islander, 21% are black, and 13% are white. The student

Hunter and STAR students complete a demanding high school course of study that is designed to prepare them to take and successfully complete college courses while still in high school. Unlike accelerated programs and exam schools that stress individualism and competition in a

Hunter and STAR partner, respectively, with two CUNY institutions: Hunter and Brooklyn Colleges. College faculty help create curricula, engage in teachers' professional development, and teach college courses to their high school students. The partnerships among

“Taking classes with college students showed me how different college is from high school. I found new ways to understand the material the professors taught in class. I also started to become closer with many of my classmates because we all studied together and assisted each other.”

**—Jian Wang,
Manhattan Hunter
Class of 2007**

graduated from high school in four years. Even more impressive, students plan to enroll in four-year colleges at rates that far surpass their peers: 31 percentage points higher than similar schools in the city (Figure 2).²

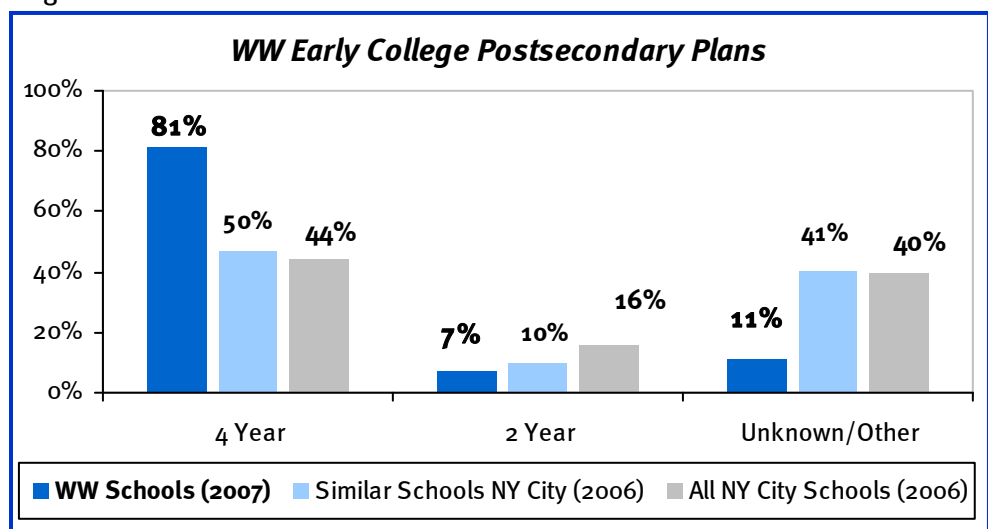
bodies are populated with average “run-of-the-mill” high school students, who, in many cases, have not performed up to their capabilities. But at both schools, instead of slowing down the curriculum to help students, study is accelerated. Manhattan

high-stress environment, these schools intentionally developed a school community that builds competence, confidence, and personal efficacy for each student.

To accomplish these goals, Manhattan

administrators, faculty and teachers create a college-going culture and provide high school students with access to campus resources, facilities, faculty, and courses.

Figure 2.



Comparison Data Source: New York City Public Schools. 2005-06 Annual School Report Supplement. May 2007. Available at <http://schools.nyc.gov/daa/SchoolReports>.

New Choices, New Opportunities

Students graduating from New York’s WW Early Colleges are attractive to a wide range of colleges. Students from STAR and Manhattan Hunter were admitted to many SUNY and CUNY campuses; small liberal arts colleges, including Franklin & Marshall and Grinnell; research universities like Carnegie Mellon, Penn State, and Michigan; and Ivy League schools such as Columbia, Cornell, and Dartmouth.

Most Early College High School students received offers of admission to more than one college. And many earned scholarships so they could select a college regardless of financial considerations. The graduating classes of 2007 at Manhattan Hunter and STAR included a Gates Millennium Scholarship and two Posse Foundation Scholarships as well as New York

Times, Horatio Alger, North Fork Foundation, and Nara Bank partial scholarships for New York students. The colleges themselves also provided full and partial scholarships to WW Early College graduates (see Table A, at right, for a partial list). These outcomes suggest that Early College has given Manhattan Hunter and STAR graduates not just any future, but a future of *their* choosing.

**Table A:
College Scholarships**

FULL TUITION AWARDS
Columbia University
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Dartmouth College
Grinnell College
Hunter College
Johns Hopkins University
SUNY Binghamton
SUNY Buffalo
Syracuse University
PARTIAL AWARDS
D’Youville College
Johnson & Wales University
New York Institute of Technology
New York University
Ohio Wesleyan
Polytechnic University
Quinnipiac College
St. John’s University
Trinity University (D.C.)

“I really appreciate the Brooklyn College [Early College] program, not only because of its academic offerings, but because of what it taught me about my own work ethic. The Brooklyn College program taught me more of what it takes to be successful in college.”
—Kadian Campbell, STAR Class of 2007

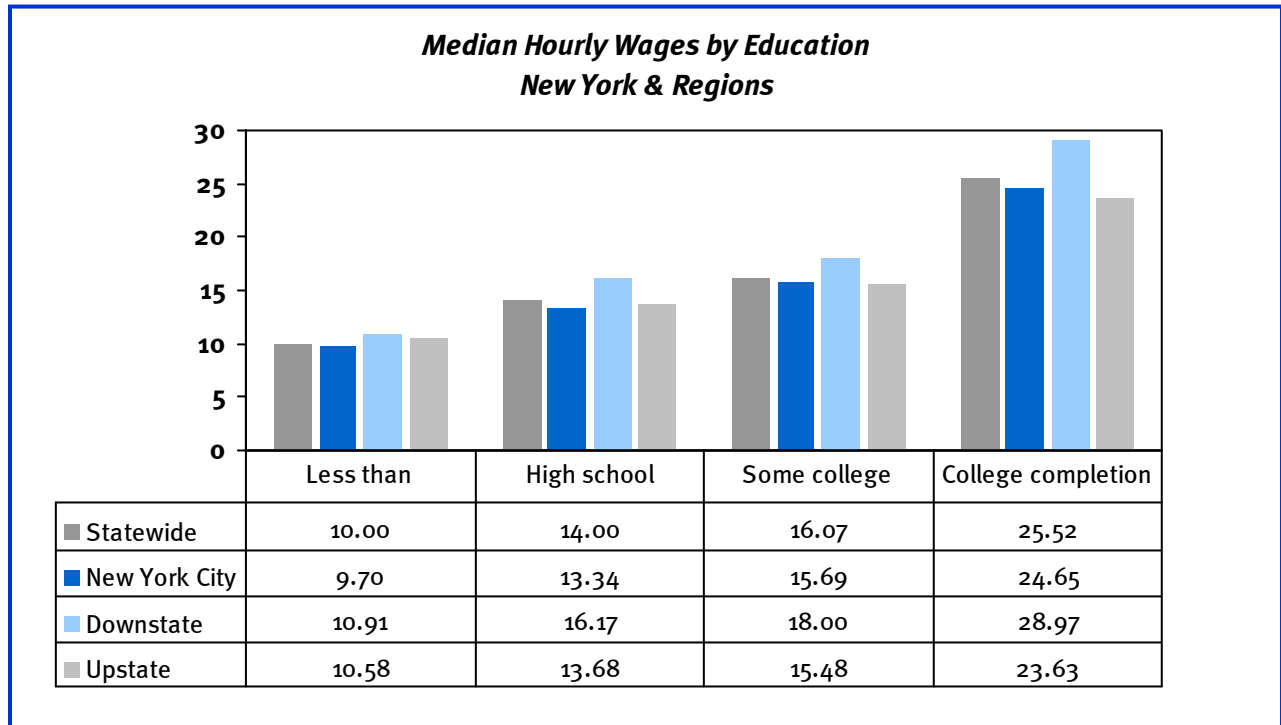
Enhanced Lives and Livelihoods

Attending and completing college improves the lives and livelihoods of young people. Education level greatly impacts an individual’s income. Data from the Fiscal Policy Institute³ shows that students in New York who complete or even attend college for some time earn significantly more than students who do not graduate from high school (Figure 3, next page). Earning

power varies somewhat by region; however, hourly wages for students who complete a four-year college degree are twice that of those who do not graduate from high school. It is reasonable to infer from these facts that students who participate in Early College and earn any college credits during high school have already increased their earning power and employment opportunities.

College brings not only economic benefits but also academic benefits as well as personal growth from enrichment opportunities and social networks.⁴ These benefits are usually more abundant on four-year college campuses. However, whether Manhattan Hunter and STAR students attend a two or four-year college, college will open numerous pathways and life opportunities for them.

Figure 3.



Source: Fiscal Policy Institute (New York, NY), June 2007. Statistical report.

Notes

1. Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities. *Solutions for New York's Future*, p. 12.
2. The New York State Education Department defines groups of similar schools as schools that have similar resources and serve similar students. See http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/reportcard/2006/similar-schools/SG37_2006.pdf
3. In this Fiscal Policy Institute data set "college completion or higher" means at least a bachelor's degree and "some college" means as little as one semester.
4. Pascarella, E. & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How College Affects Students*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Woodrow Wilson's Early College Initiative supports bridge-building between institutions of higher education and secondary schools, so that more and better-prepared students from underrepresented and underserved populations graduate from college ready for high academic achievement. The Woodrow Wilson approach relies on four emphases:

- Engaging universities in fulfilling their civic missions;
- Connecting and networking university faculty and high school teachers;
- Creating systems and structures to sustain Early College High Schools; and
- Identifying and shaping policies that support Early College High Schools.

Through both institutional innovation and the professional development of teachers, the Woodrow Wilson Early College initiative aims to make academic excellence the standard for all students, and to enable students to complete their degrees in more timely and cost-effective ways.

For more than sixty years, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation has identified and cultivated America's best minds for its most essential professions. Through its fellowship programs it seeks to address the nation's most urgent leadership needs, champion academic excellence, expand educational opportunity, and develop human and intellectual potential among historically disadvantaged populations.