OMAHA Public Schools

RESEARCH DIVISION

Class of 2022 Graduate Follow-Up

Class of 2022 Graduate Follow-Up Report

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INTRODUCTION

The mission of Omaha Public Schools states, "Every Student. Every Day. Prepared for Success." Every year the district follows up with OPS graduates to gauge their adjustment to life after high school. Specifically, students are contacted and asked questions regarding their long-term goals, transition into the workforce, enrollment in post-secondary education, and factors influencing these decisions.

Some of the information collected in the report is required by Nebraska State Law; however, additional data is gathered because of its value to families, staff members, and other interested agencies. The *2022 Follow-up of High School Graduates* is the 68th such study administered by OPS.

Study Procedures

All students who graduated from Omaha Public Schools in 2022 and started their high school careers in 2018-19, a total of 2,730, were included in this study. In the spring semester of their graduating year, students provided the Research Division with their email address and phone number, as well as phone numbers of friends or family with whom they were close. The district contacted these individuals to obtain updated student information when records on file were no longer valid.

Approximately five to six months after graduation, the OPS Research Division emailed students a survey regarding their current life experiences and activities. A total of 309 graduates completed the survey online. The remaining students were contacted by phone to complete the survey, resulting in an additional 1,533 respondents. In total, post-graduation data was collected from 1,842 (67.5%) graduates. Typically, OPS achieves a higher response rate, however, limits imposed on survey callers' weekly hours significantly impacted the number of surveys completed. The Research Division used the survey software created by Qualtrics to collect the graduate follow-up data.

The goal of this report is to clearly present data and illustrate findings related to graduates' post high school activities and outcomes. The Research Division can be contacted to clarify information contained in the report. Requests for additional information regarding the study can be made to the Division of Research, Omaha Public Schools, 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, Nebraska, 68131-2024. Please direct emails to Teresa Eske at teresa.eske@ops.org.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 2022 GRADUATES

The OPS Research Division attempted to contact all 2,730 2022 graduates who began their high school careers in 2018-19 and achieved a completed survey from 1,842 graduates resulting in an 67.5% contact rate. Additionally, contact rates ranging from 55.9% to 75.1% were achieved across all seven OPS high schools. The demographic make-up of the contacted 2022 graduates was nearly identical to the 2022 graduating class as a whole.

Table 1 further illustrates the demographic similarity between the 2022 graduates and those

Table 1. Demographic Comparison of the 2022 Graduating Class and Those Who Were Contacted

	2022 Graduates	Contacted 2022 Graduates
Female/Male Ratio	54%/46%	55%/45%
Free/Reduced Lunch	61%	59%
English Learners	7%	6%
Former English Learners	25%	25%
Special Education	8%	8%
African American	23%	24%
Asian	7%	7%
American Indian & Pacific Islander	1%	1%
Hispanic	38%	37%
Multi-Racial	5%	5%
White	26%	26%

who completed their Graduate Follow Up survey. The contacted graduates were representative with respect to gender, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, special education status, and racial composition.

Figure 1. The Number and Ethnicity of the Contacted 2022 Graduates from Each School
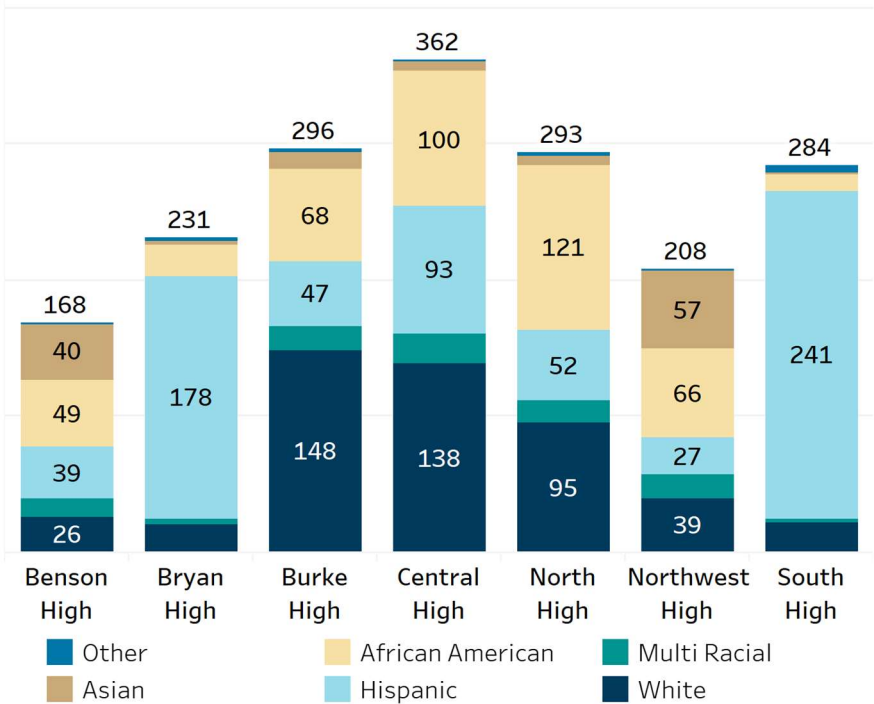
The representative nature of the contacted graduates extended to the varied racial composition of graduates across the OPS high schools. Figure 1 (to the left) illustrates the number of contacted graduates from each OPS high school as well as the number of graduates from each racial/ethnic group. South and Bryan High Schools had the largest number of Hispanic graduates while Burke and Central had the largest number of White graduates. North and Central had the largest number of African American graduates. Benson and Northwest had the largest number of Asian graduates.

The "Other" racial/ethnic group includes Native American and Pacific Islander graduates.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ATTENDANCE

At the district level, 60% of the contacted 2022 graduates were attending some type of post-secondary education either full or part time. Nationally, 62% of 2021 high school graduates were pursuing post-secondary education the fall after they graduated (The Center for Education Statistics, 2023). As can be seen in Figure 2, post-secondary enrollment varied significantly across OPS high schools with Central and Burke achieving the highest percentage at 67%. Bryan and Northwest had the lowest percentage of graduates attending post-secondary education (54% and 52% respectively).

At the district level, the percentage of graduates enrolling in some type of post-secondary education increased by several percentage points when compared to the 2021 graduates. As can be seen in Figure

Figure 2. Post-Secondary Educational Attendance of the 2022 Graduates from Each High School

3, the percentage of OPS graduates who attended post-secondary education has fluctuated between 57% and 63% over the past five years. The increase in post-secondary attendance between 2021 and 2022 is due to an increase in full-time attendance and a decrease in not attending.

Figure 3. Five Years of Post-Secondary Attendance
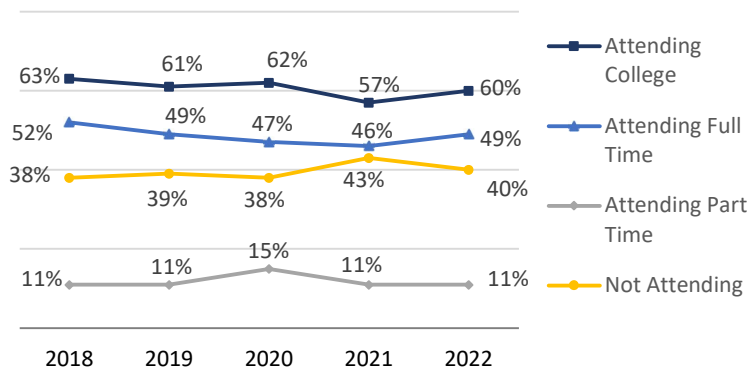
Demographic Influences on Post-Secondary Attendance

Several demographic characteristics appear to influence the likelihood of OPS graduates attending full or part time post-secondary education. Figure 4 (next page) illustrates that post-secondary attendance differed for 2022 graduates from different racial backgrounds, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, and employment status. Asian graduates were the most likely to have enrolled in post-secondary education (69%), followed closely by White and Multi-Racial graduates (67%). Graduates who were eligible for free/reduced price lunch were far less likely to attend post-secondary education when compared to their more affluent counterparts (55% vs. 66%). Graduates who were English Learners (ELs) were least likely to attend post-secondary education (53%); however, *former* ELs attended post-secondary education at a higher rate (64%) than non-ELs (59%). Only 34% of the graduates working full time were attending post-secondary education, whereas 74% of graduates employed part time and 75% of unemployed graduates were doing so.

Figure 4. Post-Secondary Educational Attendance for Various Demographic Groups

Legend: ■ Attending Full-Time ■ Attending Part-Time ☐ Not Attending

Race/Ethnicity

Group	Attending Full-Time	Attending Part-Time	Not Attending
African American	46%, 199	12%, 50	43%, 185
Asian	62%, 79	7%, 9	31%, 39
Hispanic	43%, 284	12%, 81	45%, 302
Multi Racial	55%, 52	12%, 11	34%, 32
White	58%, 283	8%, 41	33%, 160
Other	13%, 2	19%, 3	69%, 11

Free/Reduced Price Lunch Status

Group	Attending Full-Time	Attending Part-Time	Not Attending
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	45%, 489	10%, 112	44%, 475
Full Price Lunch	55%, 410	11%, 83	34%, 254

English Learner (EL) Status

Group	Attending Full-Time	Attending Part-Time	Not Attending
English Learner (EL)	43%, 46	10%, 11	47%, 50
Exited EL	52%, 231	12%, 52	37%, 165
Not EL	49%, 622	10%, 132	41%, 514

Employment Status

Group	Attending Full-Time	Attending Part-Time	Not Attending
Employed Full-Time	20%, 135	14%, 94	65%, 433
Employed Part-Time	63%, 437	11%, 79	26%, 177
Unemployed	70%, 327		25%, 119

Type of Programs and Post-Secondary Institutions Attended by the 2022 Graduates

At the district level, 65% of the graduates attending post-secondary education were participating in a four-year program and 35% were participating in a two-year (or less) program. Nationally, 69% of 2021 graduates attending post-secondary education were attending four-year programs and 31% were attending two-year programs (The Center for Education Statistics, 2023). As shown in Figure 5, the proportion of graduates participating in four- and two-year programs differed considerably across OPS high schools. Burke High School had the highest percentage of graduates attending four-year programs (74%), followed closely by Northwest High School (71%). Benson and South High Schools had the highest percentage of graduates attending two-year programs (49% and 43%, respectively).

Figure 5. Length of Post-Secondary Programs Attended by 2022 Graduates from Each School

Legend: ■ 4-Year Program ■ 2-Year Program (or less)

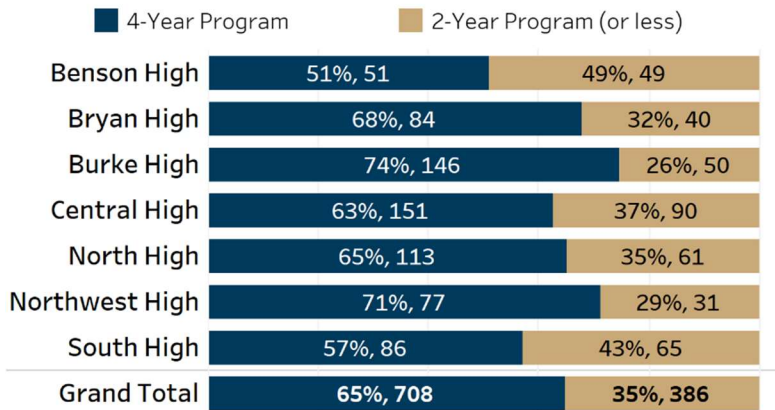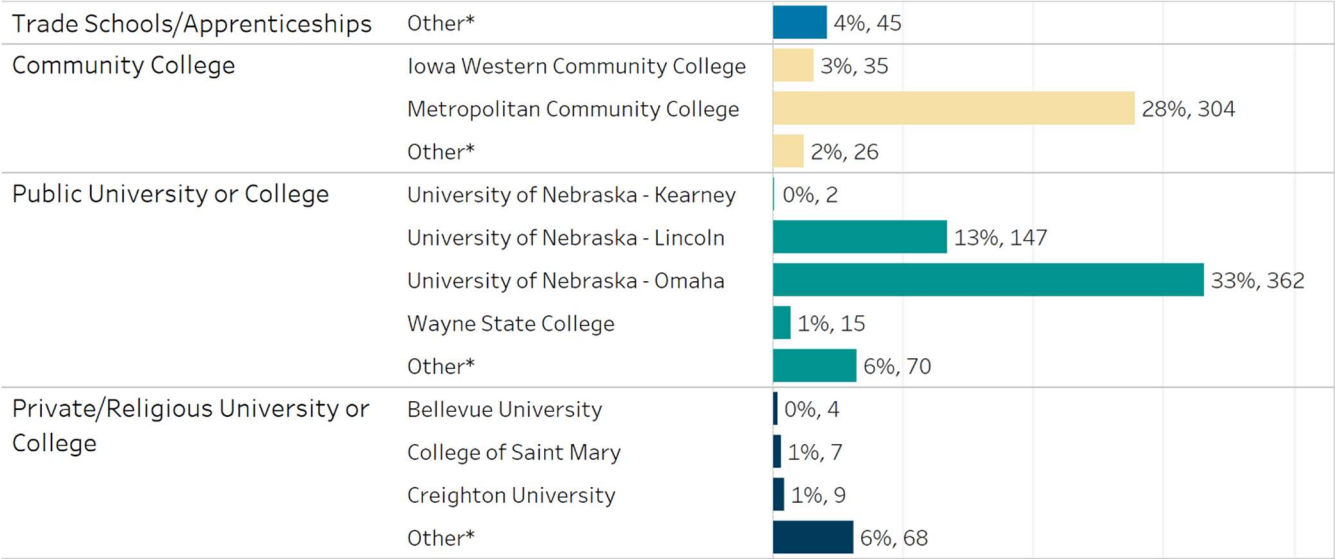| School	4-Year Program	2-Year Program (or less)
Benson High	51%, 51	49%, 49
Bryan High	68%, 84	32%, 40
Burke High	74%, 146	26%, 50
Central High	63%, 151	37%, 90
North High	65%, 113	35%, 61
Northwest High	71%, 77	29%, 31
South High	57%, 86	43%, 65
Grand Total	65%, 708	35%, 386

Figure 6 illustrates 1/3 (33%) of the 2022 graduates participating in post-secondary education attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Metropolitan Community College was the second most frequently attended school (28%). The University of Nebraska system, as a whole, served 46% of OPS graduates attending post-secondary education.
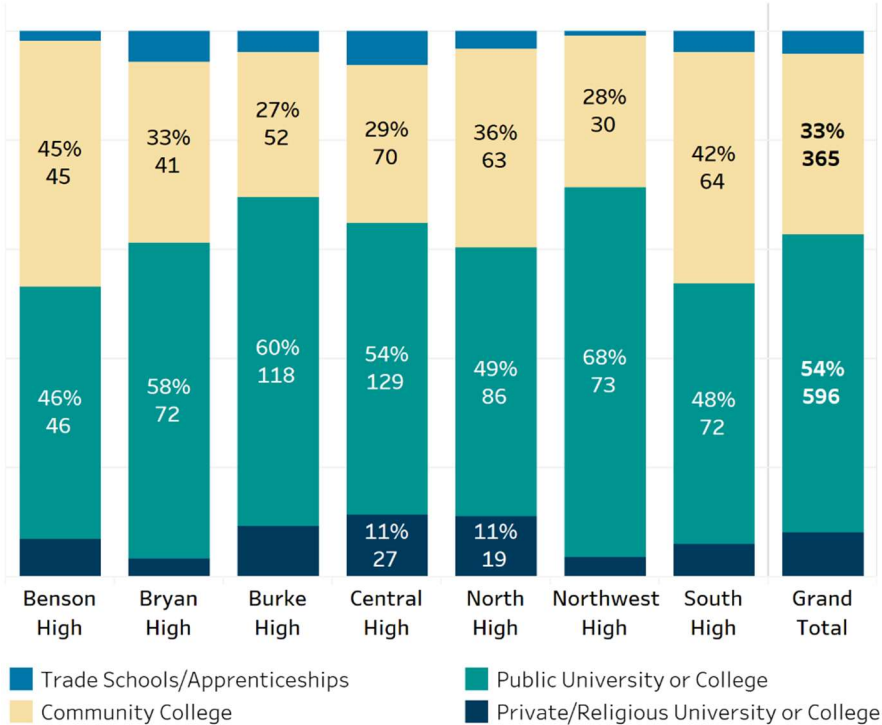
Figure 6. Post-Secondary Institutions Attended by 2022 Graduates

Category	Institution	Percentage, Count
Trade Schools/Apprenticeships	Other*	4%, 45
Community College	Iowa Western Community College	3%, 35
	Metropolitan Community College	28%, 304
	Other*	2%, 26
Public University or College	University of Nebraska - Kearney	0%, 2
	University of Nebraska - Lincoln	13%, 147
	University of Nebraska - Omaha	33%, 362
	Wayne State College	1%, 15
	Other*	6%, 70
Private/Religious University or College	Bellevue University	0%, 4
	College of Saint Mary	1%, 7
	Creighton University	1%, 9
	Other*	6%, 68

Other post-secondary schools attended by OPS graduates included a multitude of educational institutions located across the country (see Figure 10).

Many graduates (59%) attending post-secondary education attended a public college or university. Community colleges were also a popular choice (33%). Private colleges and universities (8%) and trade schools and apprenticeships (4%) served fewer graduates. The types of post-secondary educational institutions attended by graduates differed significantly across high schools (see Figure 7). Central and North High Schools had the highest proportion of college-going graduates attending private colleges or universities and Burke and Northwest High Schools had the largest proportion of graduates attending public colleges or universities. Graduates from Benson and South High Schools had the largest proportion of graduates attending community colleges.

Figure 7. Types of Post-Secondary Institutions Attended by 2022 Graduates from Each High School

Benson High: 45% 45, 46% 46
Bryan High: 33% 41, 58% 72
Burke High: 27% 52, 60% 118
Central High: 29% 70, 54% 129, 11% 27
North High: 36% 63, 49% 86, 11% 19
Northwest High: 28% 30, 68% 73
South High: 42% 64, 48% 72
Grand Total: 33% 365, 54% 596

Legend:
- Trade Schools/Apprenticeships
- Community College
- Public University or College
- Private/Religious University or College

Given the differing costs of the various types of post-secondary educational institutions it comes as no surprise that college-going graduates who were eligible for free/reduced price lunch were less likely to attend private colleges or universities and more likely to attend community colleges than their more affluent counterparts (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Post-Secondary Institution Type and Lunch Status

	Free/Reduced Price Lunch	Full Price Lunch
Public University or College	55%, 330	54%, 266
Community College	36%, 214	31%, 151

Legend:
- Trade Schools/Apprenticeships
- Public University or College
- Community College
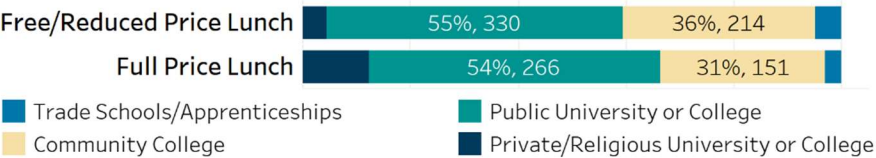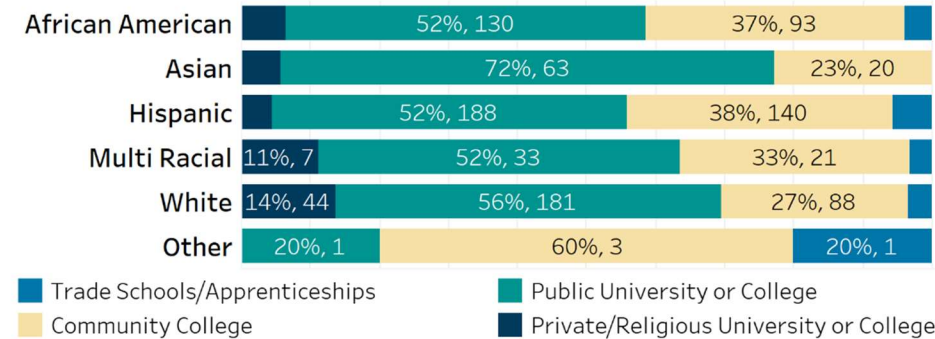- Private/Religious University or College

Figure 9 illustrates the variability found in the type of post-secondary schools attended by college-going graduates from different racial/ethnic backgrounds. With the exception of the Other category, graduates from all racial/ethnic backgrounds were more likely to attend a public college or university than any other type of school; however, the proportion of graduates doing so differed considerably for some groups. For example, 72% of Asian college attendees attended a public college or university, whereas 56% of White college attendees, and 52% of African

Figure 9. Post-Secondary Institution Type and Race/Ethnicity

	Private/Religious	Public University or College	Community College
African American		52%, 130	37%, 93
Asian		72%, 63	23%, 20
Hispanic		52%, 188	38%, 140
Multi Racial	11%, 7	52%, 33	33%, 21
White	14%, 44	56%, 181	27%, 88
Other	20%, 1	60%, 3	20%, 1

Legend:
- Trade Schools/Apprenticeships
- Public University or College
- Community College
- Private/Religious University or College

American, Hispanic,, and Multi-Racial attendees, did so. White college attendees were the most likely to attend a private or religious college or university (14%), followed by Multi-Racial college attendees (11%). African American, Hispanic, and Other college attendees were the most likely to attend a community college (37%, 38%, and 60% respectively).

As shown in Figure 10, the 2022 OPS graduates pursuing post-secondary education attended institutions all across the United States. The vast majority of college-going graduates, however, remained relatively close to home and attended post-secondary education in Nebraska or the neighboring state of Iowa.

Figure 10. Number of 2022 Graduates Attending College in Each U.S. State

Legend:
- 1 to 9
- 10 to 49
- 50 to 99
- 100 or More

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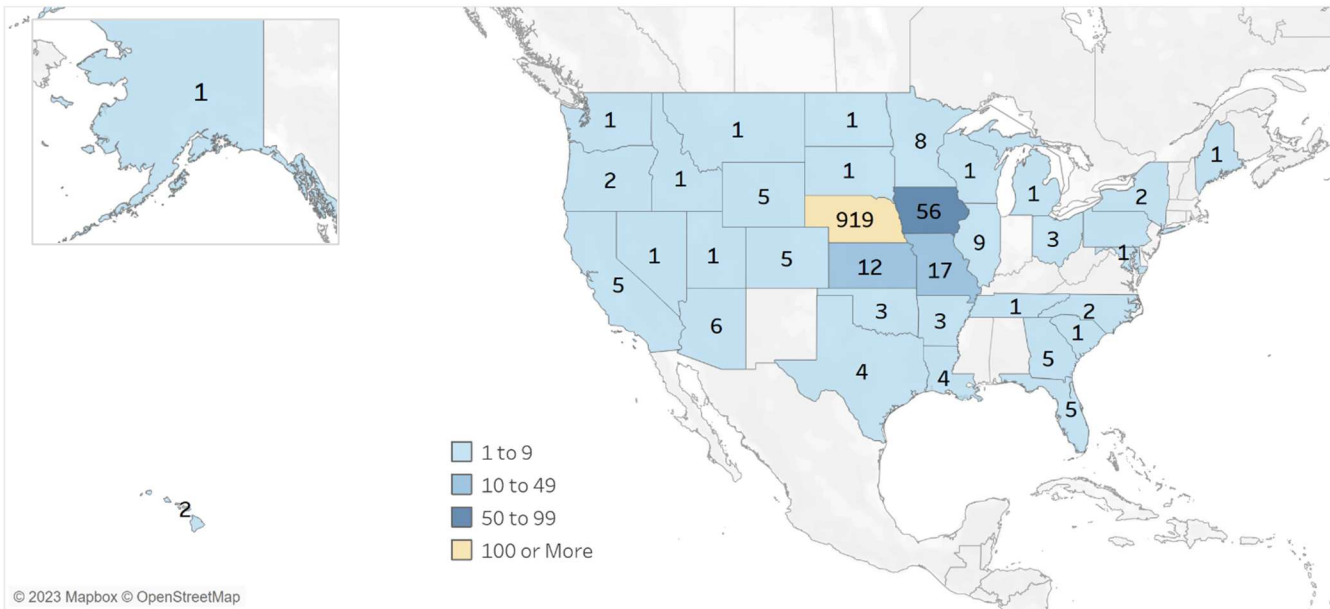
Financial Support and the Decision to Attend or Not Attend Post-Secondary Education

The 2022 graduates who attended post-secondary education either full or part time utilized multiple types of funding sources to pay for their education (see Table 2). Overall, scholarships were the most frequently utilized funding source; 66% of graduates attending college earned a scholarship to help pay for college. The second most common funding

Table 2. 2022 Graduates' Sources of Financial Support for Post-Secondary Education: Socioeconomic Differences

	All Attending College	Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	Full Pay
Grants	43%	58%	25%
Scholarships	66%	65%	66%
Loans	18%	14%	23%
Personal earnings/savings	39%	34%	47%
Family/friends	38%	29%	48%
Employer assistance	1%	1%	2%
Other	1%	0%	1%

source used by graduates was grants; however, students who were eligible for free/reduced price lunch while in high school were much more likely to utilize grants (58%) than graduates who were not eligible (25%). Graduates who were eligible for free/reduced price lunch were much less likely than their more affluent counterparts to utilize loans, personal earnings/savings, and help from family or friends (14% vs. 23%, 34% vs. 47%. and 29% vs. 48% respectively).

Graduates who were attending post-secondary education either full or part time noted several factors influenced their decisions to attend post-secondary education (see Table 3). The most common factor was that graduates were pursuing a career that required a degree. This factor was most influential for both graduates

Table 3. Factors Influencing 2022 Graduates' Decisions to Attend Post-Secondary Education: Socioeconomic Differences

	All Attending College	Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	Full Pay
Pursuing a career that requires a degree	70%	74%	66%
Need to improve job skills/qualifications	63%	67%	58%
Parents/guardians wanted you to attend college	59%	63%	53%
The availability of financial resources	59%	66%	49%
Believe college is the only means to a better job	23%	26%	20%
Other	2%	1%	3%

who were and were not eligible for free/reduced price lunch. The need to improve job qualifications and parents' desire for graduates to attend college were also significant factors for graduates from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Graduates who were eligible for free/reduced price lunch were more likely than those who were not eligible to identify the availability of financial resources as an influential factor in their decision to attend college.

Graduates who made the decision to not attend post-secondary education right after high school were also asked about factors that influenced their decision (see Table 4). The top two most frequent answers to this question, for graduates of both socioeconomic backgrounds, were the need to take a break from school and the inability to find enough college funding. Graduates who were eligible for free or reduced price lunch while in high school were more likely than those who were not eligible to identify the inability to find college funding (34% Vs. 28%) and low grades or test scores (27% Vs. 20%) as factors affecting their college attendance decision.

Table 4. Factors Influencing Graduates' Decision to Not Attend Post-Secondary Education: Socioeconomic Differences

	All Not Attending College	Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	Full Pay
Want to take a break from school	67%	68%	64%
Career doesn't require a degree	8%	7%	11%
Unable to obtain enough funds	32%	34%	28%
Grades/test scores too low	25%	27%	20%
Family related issues or demands	17%	18%	14%
Do not think school is worth it (effort, money, time, etc.)	9%	8%	9%
Do not like school	8%	8%	9%
COVID-19 pandemic	21%	22%	18%
Other Influences	15%	14%	17%

Of the 729 graduates who were not attending some type of post-secondary education when they were contacted, 87% planned to attend college in the future. Though 29% of these graduates were undecided as to when they would attend college, 48% planned to do so within the following year.

Differences Between Graduates Who Were and Were Not Attending Post-Secondary Education

All 2022 graduates were asked whether their parents/guardians attended college and whether they obtained some type of degree. Forty-six percent (46%) of graduates reported their parents/guardians attended college and 80% of these parents earned some type of degree. Graduates whose parents earned a degree were more likely to attend some type of post-secondary education.
- 55% of graduates whose parents did not attend college were attending some type of post-secondary education
- 47% of graduates whose parents attended college but did not earn a degree were attending some type of post-secondary education
- 72% of graduates whose parents attended college and earned a degree were attending some type of post-secondary education

In addition to parents'/guardians' degree attainment, graduates who were and were not attending post-secondary education differed in several other ways. Table 5 illustrates that graduates who were not attending post-secondary education were more likely to live with their parents, relatives, or friends, and live with someone else at no cost to the graduate. These differences in housing are largely due to the higher percentage of graduates who are attending post-secondary education living in dormitories and paying for their housing through scholarships or student loans.

Table 5. Additional Differences Between 2022 Graduates Attending and Not Attending Post-Secondary Education

The Graduate …	All Graduates	Attending College	Not Attending College
Is married	1%	1%	1%
Has at least one dependent	3%	2%	3%
Lives with parents/guardians	64%	55%	78%
Lives with friends, relatives, or alone	13%	9%	19%
Lives in group housing (e.g. dorms)	22%	35%	3%
Lives with someone at no cost to the graduate	52%	46%	60%
Pays own rent or dorm fee (e.g., Loans)	43%	48%	35%
Has Rent paid by someone other than the graduate	5%	5%	4%

EMPLOYMENT OF THE 2022 GRADUATES

The majority (74%) of the 2022 graduates were employed in some capacity at the time they were contacted for their follow-up; 35% full time, 38% part time, and 1% were in the armed forces. Twenty-six percent (26%) of graduates were not employed when contacted; 10% were looking for employment and 16% were not looking.

The employment status of graduates varied across OPS high schools; however, this variability was not nearly as great as the variability in post-secondary educational attendance (see Figure 11).

The employment status of OPS graduates has remained relatively steady over the past five years, though some fluctuation has occurred (see Figure 12). The percentage of graduates who were employed full time increased over the past years, jumping five percentage points in 2020 and continuing to rise to 35% for the 2022 graduates. Following the five percentage point decrease in 2020, part time employment increased

Figure 11. Employment Status of the 2022 Graduates from Each High School

slightly for the 2021 and 2022 graduates. The percentages of graduates who were unemployed (both looking and not looking for work) have fluctuated slightly over the years but decreased for the 2022 graduates due to a five percentage point drop in the number of graduates not looking for employment.
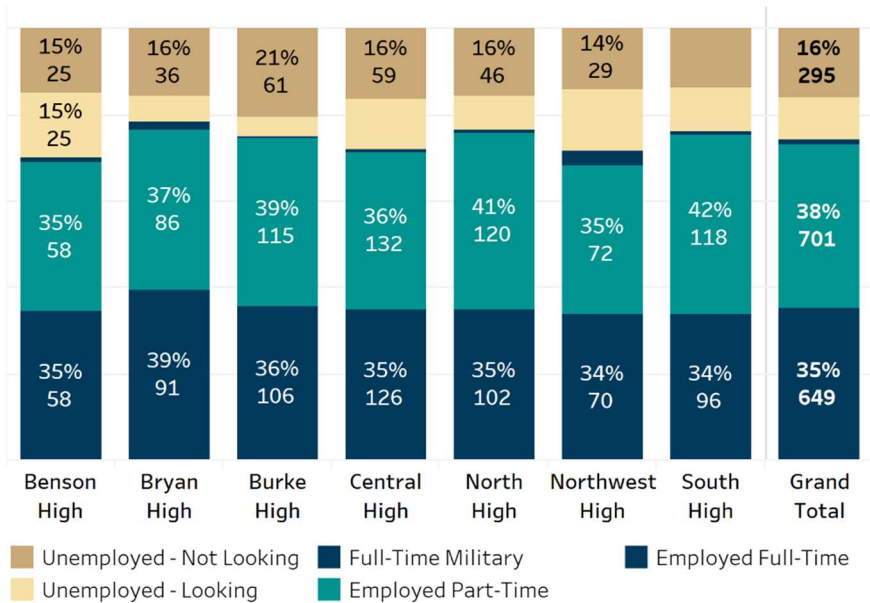
Figure 12. Five Years of Graduates' Employment

Variability in Employment Status Across Demographic Groups

Figure 14 illustrates the employment status of the 2022 graduates varied considerably across differing racial, socioeconomic, English language proficiency, and post-secondary educational attendance groups. Asian graduates were the ethnic group least likely to be working full time. Asian graduates were also most likely to be

As illustrated in Figure 13, the vast majority of graduates who were employed were earning $10 or more per hour. Graduates working full time were much more likely than those working part time to earn $15 or more per hour.

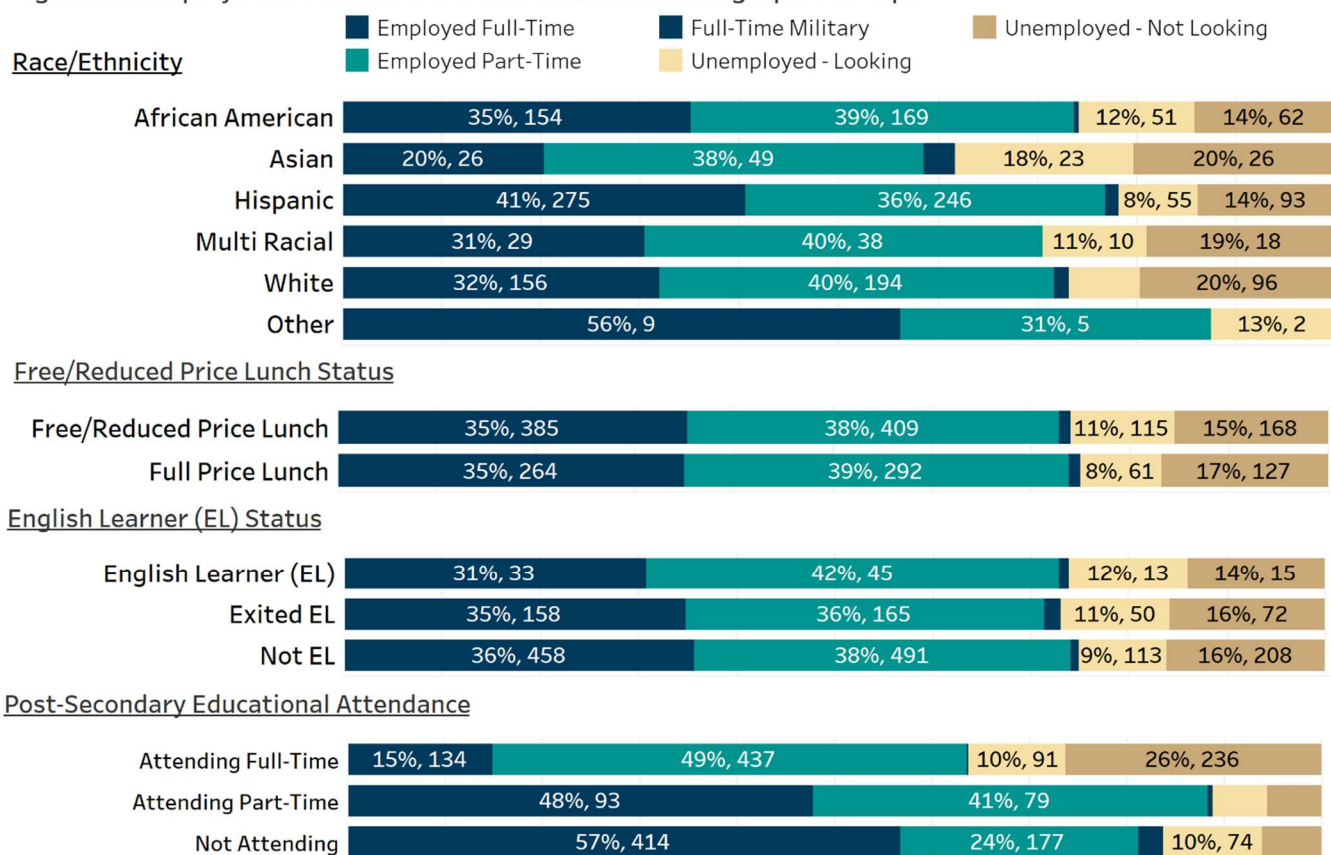Figure 13. Hourly Wage for Graduates Working Full and Part-Time

unemployed. With the exception of the Other ethnic group, Hispanic graduates were the ethnic group most likely to be working full time, followed by African American graduates. Though the proportion of graduates who were unemployed varied widely across ethnic groups, one half or more of the unemployed graduates within each group were not looking for employment (with the exception of the Other group). Unlike previous years, the employment status of graduates who were and were not eligible for free/reduced price lunch while in high school was nearly identical. The percentage of graduates who were working was similar for those who were ELs, former ELs, and non-ELs; however, EL graduates were least likely to be working full time.

Figure 14. Employment Status for Various Graduate Demographic Groups

Legend: Employed Full-Time, Full-Time Military, Unemployed - Not Looking, Employed Part-Time, Unemployed - Looking

Race/Ethnicity

Group	Employed Full-Time	Employed Part-Time	Unemployed - Looking	Unemployed - Not Looking
African American	35%, 154	39%, 169	12%, 51	14%, 62
Asian	20%, 26	38%, 49	18%, 23	20%, 26
Hispanic	41%, 275	36%, 246	8%, 55	14%, 93
Multi Racial	31%, 29	40%, 38	11%, 10	19%, 18
White	32%, 156	40%, 194		20%, 96
Other	56%, 9	31%, 5	13%, 2	

Free/Reduced Price Lunch Status

Group	Employed Full-Time	Employed Part-Time	Unemployed - Looking	Unemployed - Not Looking
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	35%, 385	38%, 409	11%, 115	15%, 168
Full Price Lunch	35%, 264	39%, 292	8%, 61	17%, 127

English Learner (EL) Status

Group	Employed Full-Time	Employed Part-Time	Unemployed - Looking	Unemployed - Not Looking
English Learner (EL)	31%, 33	42%, 45	12%, 13	14%, 15
Exited EL	35%, 158	36%, 165	11%, 50	16%, 72
Not EL	36%, 458	38%, 491	9%, 113	16%, 208

Post-Secondary Educational Attendance

Group	Employed Full-Time	Employed Part-Time	Unemployed - Looking	Unemployed - Not Looking
Attending Full-Time	15%, 134	49%, 437	10%, 91	26%, 236
Attending Part-Time	48%, 93	41%, 79		
Not Attending	57%, 414	24%, 177	10%, 74	

Finally, employment status differed significantly for graduates depending on whether or not they were attending post-secondary education. Graduates who were attending post-secondary education full time were significantly less likely to be working full time and if unemployed, significantly more likely to not be looking for employment. Graduates who were not attending post-secondary education were most likely to be working full time and if unemployed, more likely to be looking for a job. Graduates who were attending post-secondary education part time were more likely than those not attending, to be working either full or part time.

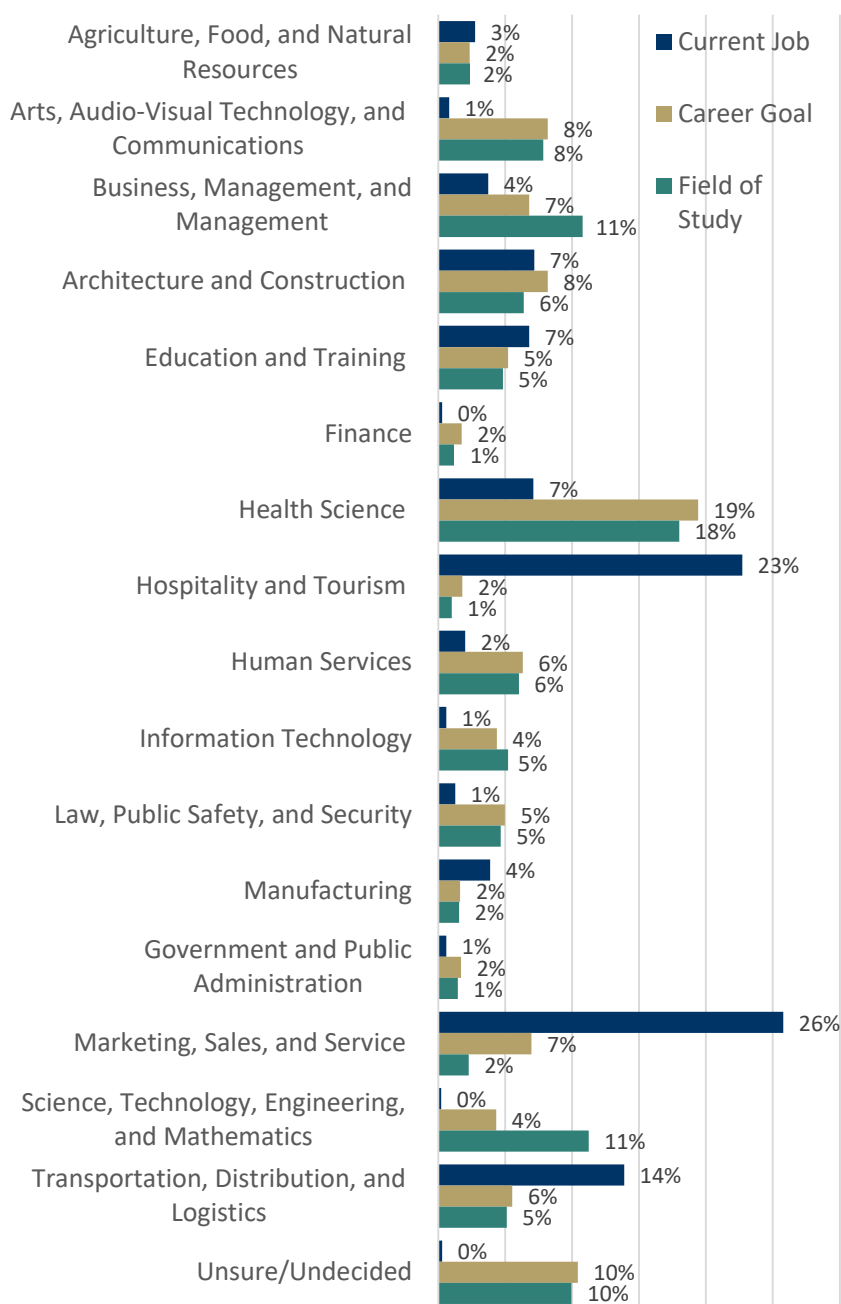**Current Jobs, Career Goals, and Fields of Study**

Many of the jobs held by the 2022 graduates tended to be entry level or low skill jobs. Many working graduates are also attending post-secondary education and likely require the flexibility offered by these types of jobs.

Figure 15 illustrates the 2022 graduates who were working when contacted held jobs in every career field; however, the majority (62%) of jobs held by graduates fell into only three career fields.
- 26% of working graduates held jobs in the Marketing, Sales, and Service career field. This field includes jobs such as cashiers, supermarket clerks, telemarketing, and retail sales.

- 23%of working graduates held jobs in the Hospitality and Tourism career field. This field includes jobs such as cooks, wait staff, host/hostesses, and hotel/motel front desk and housekeeping staff.
- 14% of working graduates held jobs in the Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics. This field includes jobs such as delivery services and package handling, warehouse workers, auto mechanics and collision repair, carwash attendants, and auto detailing.

Figure 15. Current Jobs, Career Goals, and Fields of Study of the 2022 Graduates

Field	Current Job	Career Goal	Field of Study
Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources	3%	2%	2%
Arts, Audio-Visual Technology, and Communications	1%	8%	8%
Business, Management, and Management	4%	7%	11%
Architecture and Construction	7%	8%	6%
Education and Training	7%	5%	5%
Finance	0%	2%	1%
Health Science	7%	19%	18%
Hospitality and Tourism	23%	2%	1%
Human Services	2%	6%	6%
Information Technology	1%	4%	5%
Law, Public Safety, and Security	1%	5%	5%
Manufacturing	4%	2%	2%
Government and Public Administration	1%	2%	1%
Marketing, Sales, and Service	26%	7%	2%
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics	0%	4%	11%
Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics	14%	6%	5%
Unsure/Undecided	0%	10%	10%

The current jobs and the career goals of the 2022 graduates were very similar to those of past graduating classes. Health Sciences was the most popular field for graduates' career goals, followed by Arts, Audio-Visual Technology, and Communication, and Architecture and Construction. Though most graduates (81%) were not working in their chosen career field, overall, there was a relatively close alignment between the graduates' career goals and the fields of study (i.e., college majors) in which they were participating. Seventy-two percent (72%) of college-going graduates reported a field of study/major that matched their career goal field. When compared to the 2021 graduates, the 2022 graduates were less likely to be undecided regarding their career goals (10% Vs. 22%) as well as their fields of study/majors if attending college (10% Vs. 14%).
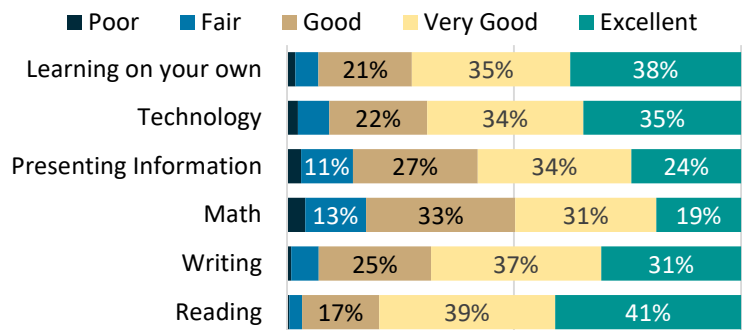
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE GRADUATES

Graduates were asked to rate themselves on several skills/abilities related to their experiences at OPS as well as several features of their OPS education. They were also asked to give suggestions on what OPS could have done to better prepare them for life after high school. Their responses are summarized below.

Graduates' Ratings of Their Skills and Abilities

Graduates rated their skills/abilities using a 5-point scale ranging from poor to excellent. Overall, graduates were more likely to rate their skill/abilities favorably; graduates did not rate their skills/abilities as poor or fair very often (see Figure 16). Out of the six skills/abilities addressed in the survey, graduates were most confident regarding their reading skill, technology skill, and ability to learn on their own. At least 69% of the graduates rated their skills/abilities in these three areas as very good or excellent. Graduates were least confident regarding their skills in mathematics and presenting information. Over 14% of graduates rated their skills/abilities in these two areas as poor or fair.

Fgure 16. 2022 Graduates' Ratings of Their Skills

The Quality of Graduates' Experience in OPS

Overall, graduates rated the three features of their educational experience, course rigor, college and career preparation, and life skills training relatively favorably (see Figure 17). The 2022 graduates were most satisfied with OPS's efforts focused on college and career preparation. Over half (57%) of the graduates rated this feature as very good or excellent. Graduates were least satisfied with OPS's availability of life skills training. Though well over a third of the graduates rated this feature as very good or excellent, 27% of the graduates rated it as poor or fair.

Figure 17. 2022 Graduates' Rating of Features of Their Education
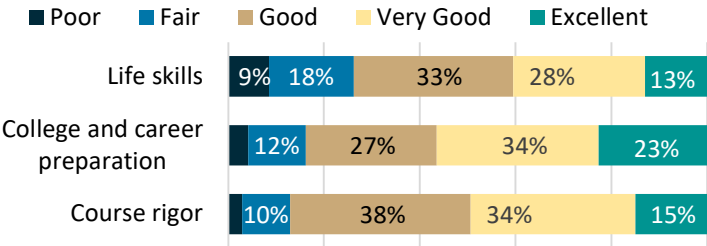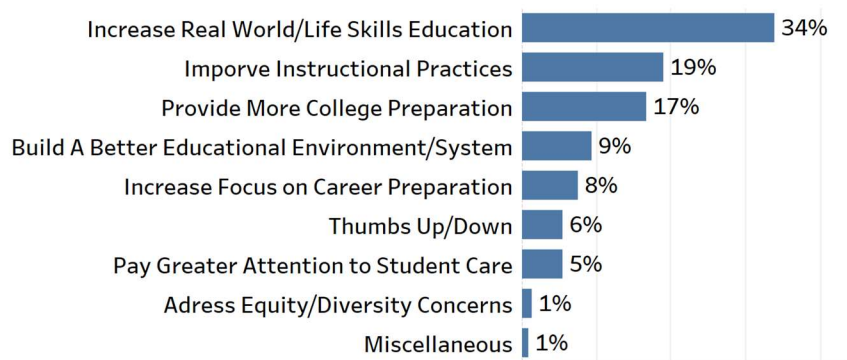

Suggestions on What OPS Can Do Better

The final question of the follow up survey asked graduates to suggest anything Omaha Public Schools could have done to better prepare the graduates. Sixty-two percent (62%) of surveys were completed without the graduate leaving a suggestion. Suggestions were left by 695 graduates and were organized into topical categories. Figure 18 illustrates the percentage of suggestions that fell into each of the categories that emerged.

Thirty-four percent (34%) of graduates suggested a need to increase real world education. Graduates said they needed more "life skills training" particularly when it came to financial concerns (e.g., budgeting, banking, buying a house, taking out loans, doing taxes, paying bills, maintaining good credit, etc.). Graduates often mentioned their Personal Finance class and that it was insufficient and should be offered as a yearlong class

and/or earlier in high school. Other life skills mentioned by graduates were finding a job, getting an apartment, and cooking. Many comments were general or non-specific in nature or included multiple financial and non-financial topics.

Nineteen percent (19%) of comments suggested a need to improve instructional practices. The largest proportion of these comments (40%) focused on more engaging teacher-student interactions. Graduates suggested more one-on-one, personalized student-centered time with teachers. They also felt some teachers needed to have a more positive attitude toward students, focus on fairness and motivating/encouraging students, and have more patience. Suggestions regarding instructional strategies were the second most frequently mentioned topic (22%) and included the need to use diverse instructional strategies, more (or less) homework, more hands on instruction, and more tutoring options. Seventeen percent (17%) of instructional practices comments specifically asked for more rigorous coursework (i.e., more AP and/or honors) and greater emphasis on meeting deadlines. Another 17% of comments focused on teaching specific skills such as time management, study skills, writing, mathematics, and public speaking. Finally, a few comments (4%) suggested using the same grading scale used at the collegiate level.

Figure 18. What OPS Can Do To Better Prepare Graduates

Increase Real World/Life Skills Education	34%
Imporve Instructional Practices	19%
Provide More College Preparation	17%
Build A Better Educational Environment/System	9%
Increase Focus on Career Preparation	8%
Thumbs Up/Down	6%
Pay Greater Attention to Student Care	5%
Adress Equity/Diversity Concerns	1%
Miscellaneous	1%

Seventeen percent (17%) of graduates' comments suggested more preparation for college. Over a quarter (26%) of college preparation comments suggested more opportunities for college advisement and exploration. Graduates suggested more time with counselors, more visits to and from colleges, and starting college conversations much earlier in high school. Twenty percent (20%) of college preparation comments focused on setting realistic expectations regarding college attendance (e.g., time management, academic readiness, financial realities, how college "works"). Eighteen percent (18%) of college prep comments focused on more help with financial aspects (e.g., student loans, scholarships, FAFSA application). Fifteen percent (15%) described academic concerns such as a lack of rigorous coursework or the need for more ACT or SAT preparation. Additional assistance with college applications and, to a lesser extent, scholarship applications, accounted for 7% of college preparation comments. The remaining 15% of comments included multiple college preparation topics such as greater encouragement and guidance earlier in high school and how to sign up for classes.

Nine percent (9%) of graduates' comments suggested a need to build a better educational environment or system. More than half (52%) of these comments suggested more opportunities related to courses. Graduates suggested greater access to rigorous coursework (e.g., International Baccalaureate), dual credit opportunities for general education courses, and additional course content such as basic engineering, technical coding, music, and language courses. Graduates also mentioned course availability at *all* schools and greater freedom to choose a more customized path through high school. Fifteen percent (15%) of educational environment comments focused on the need for greater safety and more effective student disciplinary practices. Fourteen percent (14%) suggested changes such as smaller class sizes, more teachers, academies at all schools, and ending the magnet school programs. Another 14% of educational environment comments suggested more motivated, experienced, and fair teachers and school and district administration, who have care and respect for students. The final 5% of educational environment comments suggested teachers deserve greater pay, support, and respect from the district, community, and students.

Another 8% of graduates' comments suggested more career preparation. Over a third (38%) of these comments focused on career advice, counseling, and exploration. Graduates suggested counselors spend more time with students exposing them to more and varied careers earlier in high school. Some wished counselors were more knowledgeable about specific career areas such as the Arts and the educational requirements for specific jobs/careers. Nearly a third (30%) of career preparation comments suggested greater emphasis on careers that do not require a college degree or require trade or technical school attendance rather than colleges or universities. Twenty-three (23%) percent of career preparation comments suggested a need for more career related courses focused on students' interests or majors as well as more internship opportunities. The remaining 9% of these comments were more general in nature and included resume writing and job skills.

A few comments (6%) were more wholistic, thumbs up or down types of comments. Most of these comments (90%) fell into the thumbs up category.

Five percent (5%) of graduates' comments suggested a need to pay greater attention to care and support for students. The largest number (29%) of these comments centered on OPS's response to COVID-19. Graduates felt staff should have checked on students and provided a smoother transition from remote to in-person learning. Some felt the teachers disengaged and that remote learning was pointless and lead to feeling their education was disrupted. Twenty-six percent (26%) of student care comments noted a need for counselors to reach out to students, communicate more, and assist with the transition to college. Another 26% were more generalized in nature but continued to reiterate the need for staff to reach out to students and focus on their individual needs. The remaining 7% of student care comments mentioned the need to address and get help for mental health issues, suggesting the need for counseling services and support.

One percent (1%) of graduates' comments suggested OPS address concerns regarding equity and diversity. Increasing inclusivity, such as encouraging females to participate in STEM, including LGBTQ issues in Human Growth and Development curriculum, and implementing the Native and Indigenous Center Education program at all schools, was important. Additionally, several comments focused on improving the experience of Special Education students by greater teacher patience, better management of IEP's, and more accommodations for students with ADD.

Finally, the miscellaneous category accounted for 1% of comments and consisted of several topics such as more after school and extracurricular activities such as tutoring, sports, and clubs, better lunch options, and more reliable bus transportation.

APPENDIX A

2022 Graduate Follow-Up Survey Items

1. Is the student unable to complete the survey?
o   Yes - Please state the reason (1) _____
o   No (2)
If the graduate is unable to complete the survey (1), Skip to the end of the survey.

2.   Which of the following best describes your present employment situation?
o   Employed Full-Time (1)
o   Employed Part-Time (2)
o   Full-Time Member of the Armed Forces (3)
o   Unemployed - Seeking Employment (4)
o   Unemployed - NOT Looking For Employment (5)
If (3) Is Selected Then Skip To Q7
If (4) Is Selected, Then Skip To Q7
If (5) Is Selected, Then Skip To Q7

3. What job are you currently performing?   If you have multiple jobs, please list your primary position.
   _____

4. What field is your job in? If you are unsure of the field, please select the final option.
o   (Select from the 16 Career Clusters) (1-16)
o   Undecided (17)

5. In total, how many hours do you typically work each week? (Including all jobs.)
o   5 or fewer (1)
o   6 (2)
o   7 (3)
o   …
o   55 or greater (51)

6. What is your average hourly wage? (Including tips)
o $5 or less (1)
o $6 (2)
o $7 (3)
o   …
o $35 or greater (31)

7. What is your general career goal? In other words, what job would you like to pursue for your career?
   _____

8. What field do you intend to work in? If you are unsure, please select the last option.
o   (Select from the 16 Career Clusters) (1-16)
o   Undecided (17)

9. Following graduation from high school (as of the Fall semester of 2017), have you participated in any educational or training classes or activities? If so, do/did you attend full or part time?
o   No (1)
o   Full-time 12 semester hrs, 15 quarter hrs, or 6 semester hrs for Graduate Students (2)
o   Part-time (3)
If No (1) Is Selected, Then Skip To Q20

10. What is the name of the school you attend(ed)?
o   University of Nebraska - Omaha (1)
o   University of Nebraska - Lincoln (2)
o   University of Nebraska - Kearney (3)
o   Metropolitan Community College (4)
o   Iowa Western Community College (5)
o   Creighton University (6)
o   Wayne State College (7)
o   College of Saint Mary (8)
o   Bellevue University (9)
o   Other (10)
If Other (10) Is Not Selected, Then Skip To Q15

11. Please type the full name of the school you attend.
_____

12. What state is the school in?
_____

13. In what city is the school located?
_____

14. Which of the following categories best describes your present school? The first three options typically represent institutions with 4-year degree programs, while the last three tend to offer degrees or accreditation in two years or less.

o   Public University or College (1)
o   Religiously Affiliated University or College (2)
o   Private University or College (3)
o   Community College (4)
o   Technical, Career, or Trade School (5)
o   Other (seminars, workshops, apprenticeships, etc.) (6)

15. Which of the following best describes your educational program?

o   4-Year Program (1)
o   2-Year Program (2)
o   Military Training (3)
o   Apprenticeship (4)
o   1-Year Program (5)
o   Online Classes (6)
o   Other (Please describe your program) (7) _____

16. Which of the following categories is your field of study (major) in? If you are unsure which field it falls under, please type your major in the final option.

o   (Select from the 16 Career Clusters) (1-16)
o   Undecided (17)
o   Other (Please enter your major in the space below): (18) _____

17. Are you taking or planning to take remedial or co-requisite college courses? Please select all that apply. If you do not plan to take either type of course, please proceed to the next question.

	Very Good	Excellent
Remedial Courses (1)	○	○
Co-requisite Courses (2)	○	○

> **Remedial Courses:** Generally courses that have course numbers starting with a zero or numbers less than 100 are considered developmental courses, or courses that prepare students for college-level courses. While these courses will not count toward your degree credit requirements, they are great "refresher" courses to help improve your math and writing skills (and increase the likelihood of success) when you do take regular college courses.

> **Co-requisite Courses:** Co-requisite courses provide supplemental academic instruction to students scoring just below college-ready cut scores. Unlike remedial courses, students earn credits toward their degree by completing co-requisite courses.

18. Which of the following factors influenced your decision to attend college? (Choose all that apply to you.)

- The need to improve job skills/qualifications (1)
- Pursuing a career that requires a degree (6)
- The availability of financial resources (2)
- Parents/guardians wanted you to attend college (3)
- The belief that college was the only means to a better job (4)
- Other (5) _____

19. What is/was your source of financial support? (Pick all that apply to you.)

- Financial aid grants (1)
- Loans (2)
- Personal earnings/savings (3)
- Family/friends (4)
- Scholarships (5)
- Employer assistance (6)
- Other (7) _____

Display Only if No (1) Is Selected in Q9

20. Which of the following factors influenced your decision to not attend college, or to leave school after one semester? (Choose all that apply to you.)

- Want to take a break from school (3)
- Career doesn't require a degree (5))
- Unable to obtain enough funding (scholarships, loans) to pay for tuition (2)
- Grades/test scores too low (6)
- Family related issues or demands (5)
- Do not think school is worth it (time, effort, money, etc.) (9)
- Do not like school (8)
- Other (7)

Display Only if No (1) Is Selected in Q9

21. Do you plan to attend college in the future?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No (2) Is Selected, Then Skip To Q23

22. When do you plan to attend college?

o Within the next 6 months (1)
o 6 months to 1 year from now (2)
o 1 to 2 years from now (3)
o 2 or more years from now (4)
o Undecided (5)

23. Did either of your parents (or guardian) attend college?

o Yes (1)
o No (2)
If No (2) Is Selected, Then Skip To Q27

24. Did either of your parents or guardian complete any type of college degree?

o Yes (1)
o No (2)

25. Are you married?

o Yes (1)
o No (2)

26. Do you share housing with other people? If so, who do you live with?

o Alone (1)
o Group Housing (dormitories, Greek housing, etc.) (2)
o Parent(s) / Guardians(s) (3)
o Other Relative(s) (4)
o Friend(s) (5)

27. How do you pay for housing?

o Another person allows me to stay with them, free of charge (1)
o Another person pays my rents (2)
o I pay rent (including taking loans for campus housing) (3)
o I own my house/condo/etc. (4)**28.**

o **Do you have any dependents/children? If so, how many?**
o None (1)
o 1 (2)
o 2 (3)
o 3 (4)
o More than 3 (5)

29. As a result of your experience in Omaha Public Schools, how would you rate your ability/skill level in the following areas?
There are five options, from lowest to highest: poor, fair, good, very good, and excellent.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Reading	○	○	○	○	○
Writing	○	○	○	○	○
Mathematics	○	○	○	○	○
Presenting Information	○	○	○	○	○
Technology	○	○	○	○	○
Learning on your own	○	○	○	○	○

30. Please rate the quality of the following features related to your education at Omaha Public Schools on a scale from 1 - 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Course Rigor	○	○	○	○	○
College and Career Prep	○	○	○	○	○
Life Skills Training	○	○	○	○	○

> ➢ **Course rigor** (e.g., high standards, comparable to college-level difficulty, challenging homework, advanced courses available) (1)
> ➢ **College and career preparation opportunities** (e.g., study skill development, opportunities to explore education/career path, assistance with applications to college, scholarships, FAFSA, etc.) (2)
> ➢ **Life skills training availability** (e.g., resume writing, budgeting and financial planning, writing checks, preparing taxes, etc.) (3)

31. Is there anything you think Omaha Public Schools could have done to better prepare you?

_____

APPENDIX B

OCCUPATIONAL CODE SHEET
16 CAREER CLUSTERS

1. **Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources**
   - Landscapers, Gardeners, Lawn Care Workers, Grounds Crew
   - Veterinarians, Veterinary Assistants, Plant or Animal Scientists
   - Geologists, Mining Engineers, Mining Machine Operators
   - Forest Harvesting and Protection, Fish and Game Wardens, Rangers, Natural Resource Managers
   - Farmers and Ranchers, Butchers and Meat Cutters, Agricultural Products Inspectors, Animal Handlers, Groomers, and Trainers, Pest Control, Recycling Specialist

2. **Arts, Audio-Visual Technology, and Communications**
   - Actors, Dancers, Musicians, Models, Producers, Directors, Writers
   - Photographers, Designers (Interior and Fashion), Artists, Radio/TV Production
   - Typesetters, Lithographic Production, Printing Press Operators, Bindery Workers, Photographic Process Workers
   - Audio and Video Systems Technicians, Special Effects Technicians
   - Telecommunications Technicians, Equipment, Cable, and Line Installers/Repairers
   - Newscasters, Reporters, Editors, Broadcast Technicians

3. **Business, Management, and Administration**
   - Executives, Department Managers, Managers and Assistant Managers of Restaurants, Hotels, Supermarkets, and Retail Stores, Entrepreneurs/Business Owners
   - Accountants, Tax Preparers, Bookkeepers, Auditors, Bill Collectors, Billing Clerks
   - Employment Interviewers, Personnel and Payroll Clerks, Human Resource Managers, Compensation and Benefits Administrators
   - Data Entry Persons, Database Managers, Data Processors
   - File Clerks, Office Managers, Secretaries, Receptionists, Stenographers

4. **Architecture and Construction**
   - Plumbers, Carpenters, Electricians, Roofers, Brick Layers, Concrete Masons, Iron Workers, Drywall Installers and Finishers, Architects, Draftsmen, Painters, Construction Engineers
   - Home Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Installation and Repair, Solar Technician
   - Surveyors, Earth Moving Equipment and Crane Operators, Road and Highway Builders

5. **Education and Training**
   - Teachers, Coaches, Trainers, Aerobics or Religious Instructors, Lecturers, Professors, Librarians, Tutors, Library Assistants, Priest/Preachers/Missionaries
   - Child Care, Nanny, Teachers' Aides
   - School Administrators, Deans, Supervisors, Educational Researchers
   - Counselors, Developmental and School Psychologists, Speech Pathologists
   - Foreign Language Interpreter
   - College Recruiter

6. **Finance**
   - Stock and Investment Brokers, Real Estate Managers
   - Financial Managers, Financial Planners
   - Insurance Agents, Insurance Adjusters, Actuaries
   - Bank Tellers, Bank Officers, Loan Officers, Debt Collectors

7. **Health Science**
   - Pharmacist, Paramedic, Physician, Surgical Technologist, Dentists, Optometrists, Psychologist/Psychiatrists, Radiologists, Sports Medicine Specialists
   - Registered Nurse, Physical Therapist, Dental and Medical Assistants, Nursing/Psychiatric Aides, Licensed Practicing Nurse, Nurse Practitioners, Dental Hygienist, Chiropractor
   - Hospital Building and Grounds Maintenance, Hospital Equipment Maintenance
   - Public Health Administrators, Nurse Educators, Medical Records Technicians

8. **Hospitality and Tourism**
   - Cooks, Waiters, Bartenders, Hosts/Hostesses, Food Preparers, Food Safety and Sanitation Inspectors
   - Lifeguards, Athletes, Sports Officials, Amusement Park Attendants, Gaming and Recreational Operators
   - Ticket Agents, Travel Agents, Tour Directors, Convention Services, Movie Theater Workers, Hotel Reservation Personnel
   - Household (House Keeping) Workers, Baggage Attendants, Front Desk Attendants
   - Janitorial

9. **Human Services**
   - Barbers, Cosmetologists, Nail Technician, Massage Therapist
   - Social Service Workers, Geriatric Service Workers, Community Service Organizers, Consumer Credit Counseling, Peace Corp Worker
   - Career Counseling, Family Counseling, Dietitians, Nutritionists
   - Mortician, Coroner
   - Homemaker

10. **Information Technology**
    - Webmaster, Web Designer
    - Data Analysts, Database Specialists, Help Desk Technicians
    - Computer Analyst, Computer Programmers, Software Engineers and Designers
    - Computer Support Technicians, Network Engineers and Administrators

11. **Law, Public Safety, and Security**
    - Fire Fighters, Fire Chiefs, Fire Inspectors and Investigators, Dispatchers
    - Criminal Justice Professionals, Corrections Officers, Police, Guards, Detectives, Special Agents, Bailiffs, Forensic Experts, Search & Rescue Technicians
    - Lawyers, Legal Assistants, Paralegal Personnel, Judges

12. **Manufacturing**
    - Dental and Eyeglass Technicians, Jewelers, Musical Instrument Makers and Repairers, Precision Assemblers, Blacksmith
    - Electronics (including Computer) Repair/Installation, Vending Machine Repairers
    - Furniture Makers, Upholsterers, Shoe/Leather Production, Apparel/Textile Production, Factory Line Workers, Plastics Production, Machine Operators, Industrial Engineers, Forklift Operator, Mail Inserting Machine Operator
    - Industrial Inspectors, Tool and Die Workers, Welders, Commercial/Industrial Equipment Repair and Installation, Sheet Metal Workers, Production Managers, Foremen

13. **Government and Public Administration**
    - Individuals working in regulatory services (Utilities, Communications, Water)
    - Tax Collectors and Assessors, Defense Services
    - Legislators, Legislative Aides, Governmental Leaders, Foreign Language Interpreters, Economists
    - Occupational Safety Technicians, Pollution Control Technicians, Energy Management, Garbage/Sanitary Engineers

14. **Marketing, Sales, and Service**
    - Advertising Agents, Marketing Research, Public Relations Writers
    - Warehouse Managers, Shipping and Receiving Clerks, Route Sales Persons
    - E Commerce, Sales Supervisors, Wholesale Distributors, Small Business Entrepreneurs
    - Real Estate Sales, Appraisers, Miscellaneous Retail and Wholesale Sales, Sale of Products and Services, Pharmaceutical Sales, Telemarketing, Supermarket Clerks, Cashiers

15. **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics**
    - Environmental Engineers, Water Treatment Operators
    - Laboratory Researchers, Biologist, Chemist, Physicist, Meteorologist, Sociologist
    - Civil, Electrical, and Mechanical Engineers, Petroleum and Rocket Specialists, Mathematicians, Statisticians

16. **Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics**
    - Flight Attendants, Bus, Truck, or Taxi Drivers, Rail Transportation, Pilots, Moving Van Drivers, Dispatchers, Air Traffic Controllers
    - Urban Planners, Transportation Regulators
    - Transportation Safety Analysts, Emergency Services Jobs
    - Automobile, Motorcycle, and Aircraft Mechanics, Autobody Technicians, Car Washers
    - Warehouse Operations Managers, Shipping and Receiving Clerks, Packers and Handlers, Postal Clerks, Mail Carriers, Dock Workers, Stockers

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