



Follow-Up of the 2023 Omaha Public Schools Graduates

Contents

Executive Summary/Key Findings	2
Introduction	3
Characteristics of the 2023 Graduates.....	4
Post-Secondary Educational Attendance	5
Demographic Influences on Post-Secondary Attendance	5
Type of Programs and Post-Secondary Institutions Attended by the 2023 Graduates	6
Financial Support and the Decision to Attend or Not Attend Post-Secondary Education.....	9
Comparisons of Graduates Who Were and Were Not Attending Post-Secondary Education...	10
Employment of the 2023 Graduates	11
Variability in Employment Status Across Demographic Groups.....	12
Current Jobs, Career Goals, and Fields of Study.....	13
Additional Questions for the Graduates	14
Graduates’ Ratings of Their Skills and Abilities.....	14
The Quality of Graduates’ Experience in OPS	14
Suggestions on What OPS Can Do Better	14
References.....	17
Appendix A: 2023 Graduate Follow-Up Survey	18
Appendix B: Occupational Code Sheet – 16 Career Clusters.....	23

Executive Summary/Key Findings

The following statements highlight the key findings of the Follow-Up of the 2023 Graduates of Omaha Public Schools. Much greater detail regarding the post high school activities and outcomes for this graduating class can be found throughout this report.

- A majority (62%) of the 2023 OPS graduates were attending post-secondary education when contacted to complete their Graduate Follow-Up. This is a 2 percentage point increase over the previous year's graduates.
- Post-Secondary attendance rates varied across OPS high schools; Burke and Central High Schools had the highest post-secondary attendance rate.
- Demographic characteristics appear to influence post-secondary attendance rates; Asian and White graduates, graduates who were not eligible for educational benefits, and exited EL graduates were more likely to attend post-secondary education.
- The majority of graduates attending college were participating in four-year programs and the vast majority of college-going graduates were attending public universities or community colleges.
- The most often attended post-secondary institutions for the 2023 OPS graduates were the University of Nebraska at Omaha and Metropolitan Community College.
- Though OPS graduates attended post-secondary institutions all across the United States, the vast majority attended within Nebraska.
- The most common ways graduates reported paying for college was with scholarships and grants. How graduates paid for college varied somewhat based on their socio-economic status.
- The most common reason graduates gave to attend college was that they were pursuing a career that required them to do so. The most common reason graduates gave to not attend college was that they needed a break from school.
- Though most OPS graduates were working when they completed their follow-up, a greater proportion were working part time rather than full time.
- Employment status varied somewhat among different demographic groups; African American and Hispanic graduates were more likely than other graduates to be working full time. Socio-economically disadvantaged and EL graduates were also more likely to be working full time.
- Graduates who were not attending college were also more likely to be working full time.
- Most working graduates held jobs in the hospitality and tourism, marketing/sales and service, and transportation and logistics industries.
- When considering graduates' career goals, the most popular field by far was health sciences, followed by architecture and construction and arts, audio-visual, and communications.
- When asked about what OPS could have done to better prepare graduates for their future graduates suggested more life skills and real-world education, especially financial topics, more college preparation, greater course rigor, and more focus on individualized student support.

Introduction

The mission of Omaha Public Schools (OPS) 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 *Follow-Up of the 2023 Omaha Public School Graduates* is the 69th such study administered by OPS.

Study Procedures

A total of 2,707 students who started their high school careers in 2019-20 and graduated from Omaha Public Schools in 2023, 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.

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 273 graduates completed the survey online. The remaining students were contacted by phone to complete the survey, resulting in an additional 1,759 respondents. The district used the additional family and friends’ contact information obtained from graduates when records on file were no longer valid. In total, post-graduation data was collected from 2,032 (75.1%) graduates. The Research Division used the survey software created by Qualtrics to collect the graduate follow-up data.

Characteristics of the 2023 Graduates

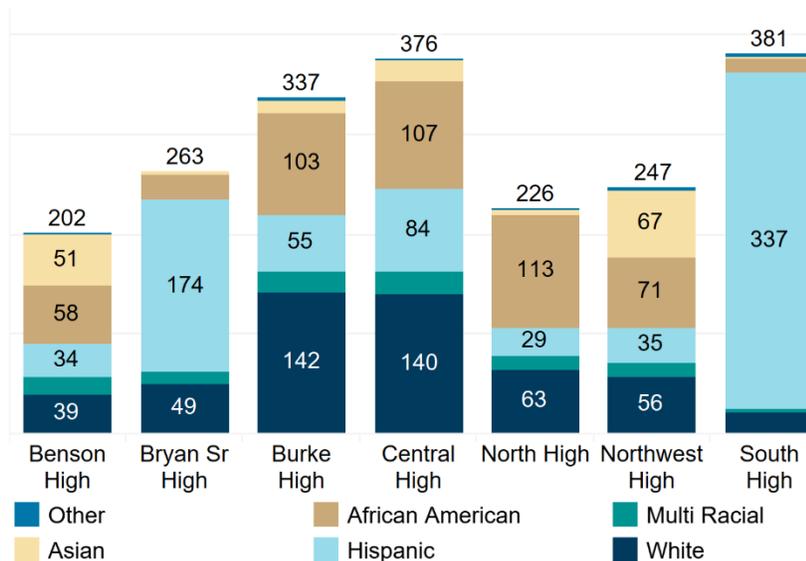
The OPS Research Division attempted to contact all 2,707 2023 graduates who began their high school careers in 2019-20 and collected follow-up data from 2,032 graduates resulting in an 75.1% contact rate. Additionally, contact rates ranging from 72.3% to 81.2% were achieved across all seven OPS high schools. The demographic make-up of the contacted 2023 graduates was nearly identical to the 2023 graduating class as a whole.

Table 1: Demographic Comparison of the 2023 Graduating Class and Those Who Were Contacted

	2023 Graduates	Contacted 2023 Graduates
Female/Male Ratio	53%/47%	52%/48%
Eligible for Educational Benefits	62%	63%
English Learners	7%	8%
Former English Learners	25%	27%
Special Education	13%	12%
African American	24%	24%
Asian	7%	8%
American Indian & Pacific Islander	1%	1%
Hispanic	36%	37%
Multi-Racial	5%	5%
White	27%	25%

Table 1 illustrates the demographic similarity between the 2023 graduates and those 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 2023 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 contacted 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, Central, and Burke 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. The figures and tables throughout the remainder of this report reflect the numbers and percentages of contacted graduates.

and Northwest had the largest number of Asian graduates. The “Other” racial/ethnic group includes Native American and Pacific Islander graduates. The figures and tables throughout the remainder of this report reflect the numbers and percentages of contacted graduates.

Post-Secondary Educational Attendance

At the district level, 62% of the contacted 2023 graduates were attending some type of post-secondary education either full or part time. Nationally, 62% of 2022 high school graduates were pursuing post-secondary education the fall after they graduated (The Center for Education Statistics, 2024). As can be seen in Figure 2, post-secondary enrollment varied significantly across OPS high schools with Central achieving the highest percentage at 70%. Bryan and Northwest had the lowest percentage of graduates attending post-secondary education (56%).

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 2022 graduates. As can be seen in Figure 3, the percentage of OPS graduates who attended post-secondary education has fluctuated between 57% and 62% over the past five years. The increase in post-secondary attendance between 2022 and 2023 is due to a slight increase in both full- and part-time attendance.

Figure 2: Post-Secondary Educational Attendance of the 2023 Graduates from Each High School

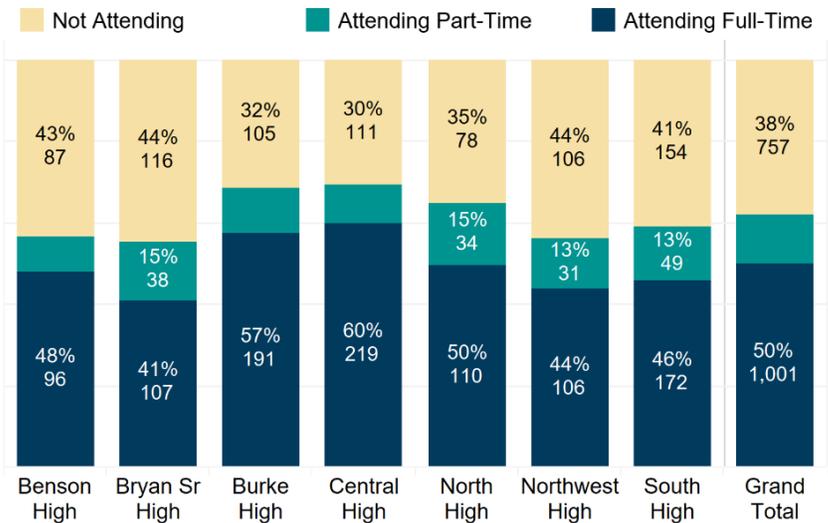
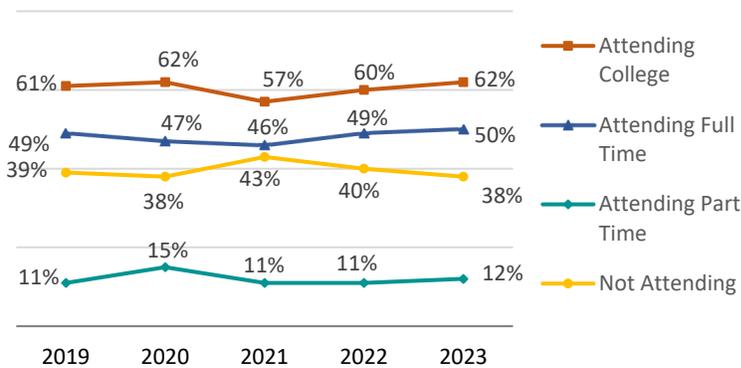


Figure 3. Five Years of Post-Secondary Attendance

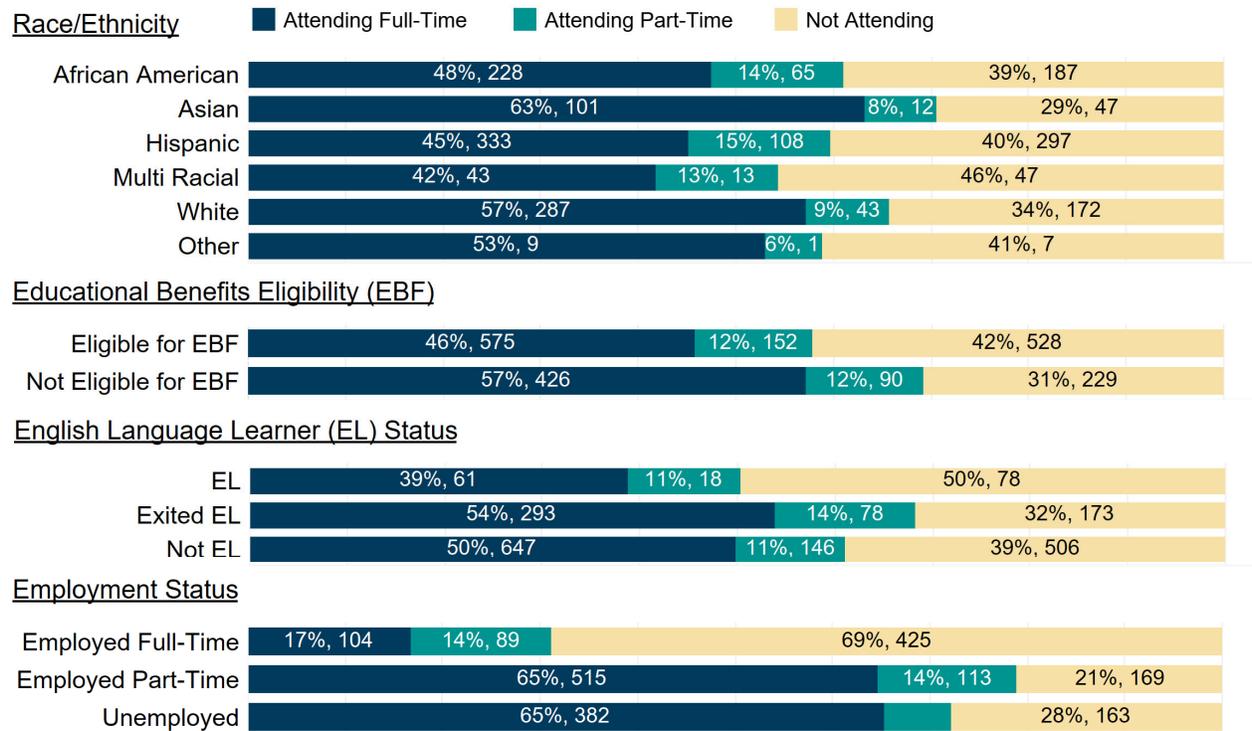


Demographic Influences on Post-Secondary Attendance

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 2023 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 (73%), followed by White graduates (66%). Graduates who were eligible for educational benefits were far less likely to attend post-secondary education when compared to their more affluent counterparts (58% vs. 69%). Graduates who were English Learners (ELs) were least likely to attend post-secondary education (50%); however, *exited* ELs attended post-secondary education at a higher rate (68%) than graduates who were not ELs (61%). Only 31% of the graduates working full time were attending post-secondary education, whereas 79% of graduates employed part time and 72% of unemployed graduates were doing so.

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



Type of Programs and Post-Secondary Institutions Attended by the 2023 Graduates

At the district level, 63% of the graduates attending post-secondary education were participating in a four-year program and 37% were participating in a two-year (or less) program. Nationally, 73% of 2021 graduates attending post-secondary education were attending four-year programs and 27% were attending two-year programs (The Center for Education Statistics, 2024). 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 (71%), followed closely by Central High School (70%). Bryan Sr. and Northwest High Schools had the highest percentage of graduates attending two-year programs (49% and 44%, respectively).

Figure 5: Length of Post-Secondary Programs Attended by the 2023 Graduates from Each High School

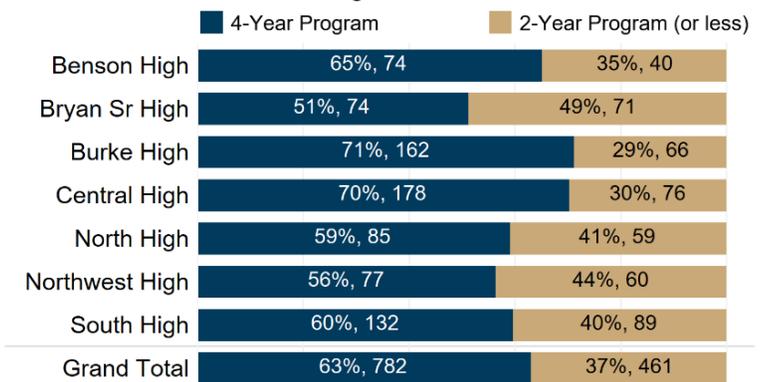
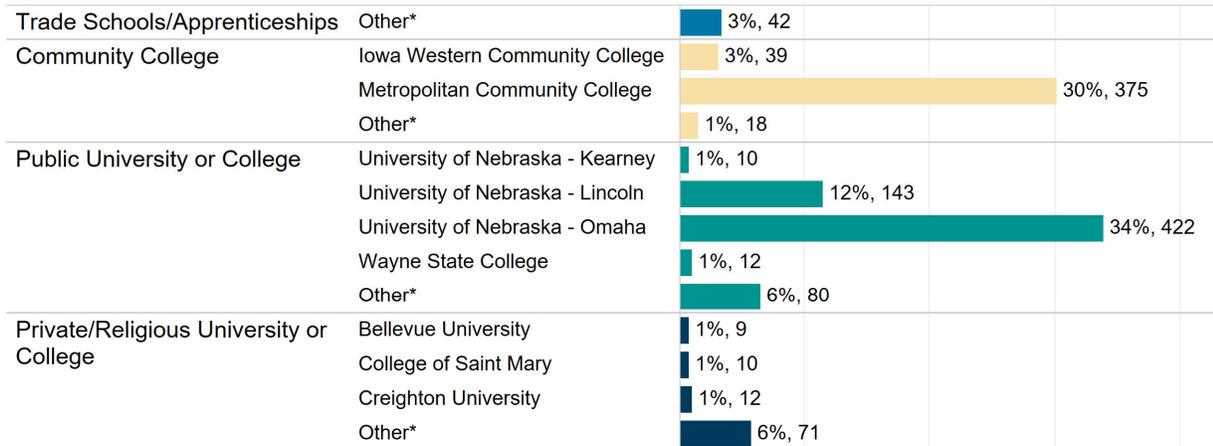


Figure 6 illustrates over 1/3 (34%) of the 2023 graduates participating in post-secondary education attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Metropolitan Community College was the second most frequently attended school (30%). The University of Nebraska system, as a whole, served 47% of OPS graduates attending post-secondary education.

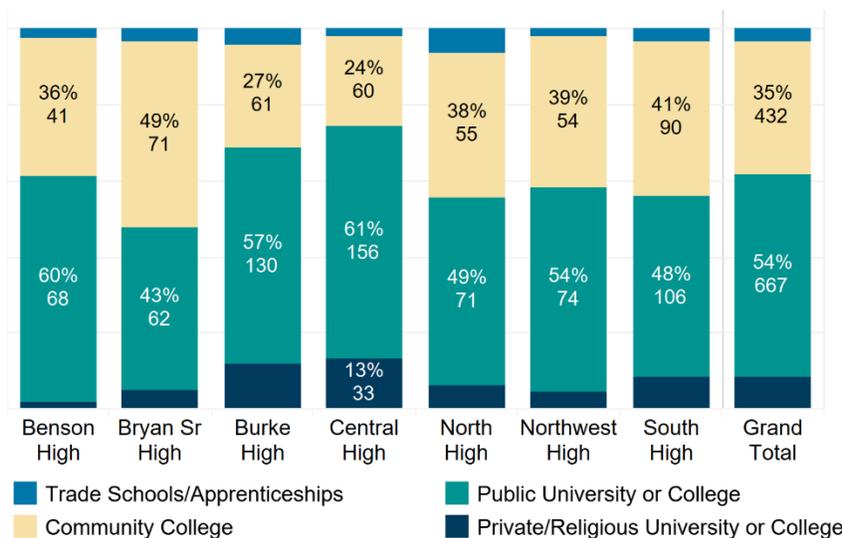
Figure 6: Post Secondary Institutions Attended by 2023 Graduates



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

Many graduates (54%) attending post-secondary education attended a public college or university. Community colleges were also a popular choice (35%). Private colleges and

Figure 7: Type of Post-Secondary Institution Attended by the 2023 Graduates from Each High School



universities (9%) and trade schools and apprenticeships (3%) served fewer graduates. The types of post-secondary educational institutions attended by graduates differed significantly across high schools (see Figure 7). Central High School had the highest proportion of college-going graduates attending private colleges or universities (13%) and Central and Benson High Schools had the largest proportion of graduates attending public colleges or universities (61% and 60% respectively). Graduates from Bryan Sr. and South High

Schools had the largest proportion of graduates attending community colleges (49% and 41% respectively).

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 educational benefits 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 Educational Benefits Eligibility

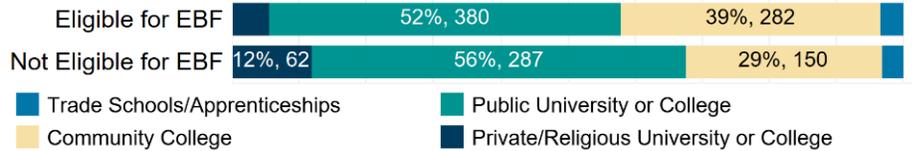
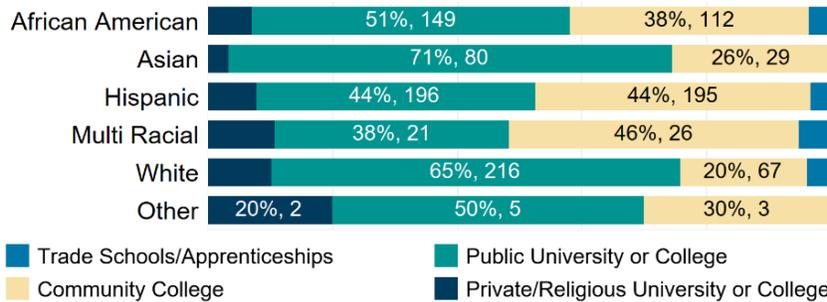


Figure 9 illustrates the variability found in the type of post-secondary schools attended by college-going graduates from different racial/ethnic backgrounds.

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

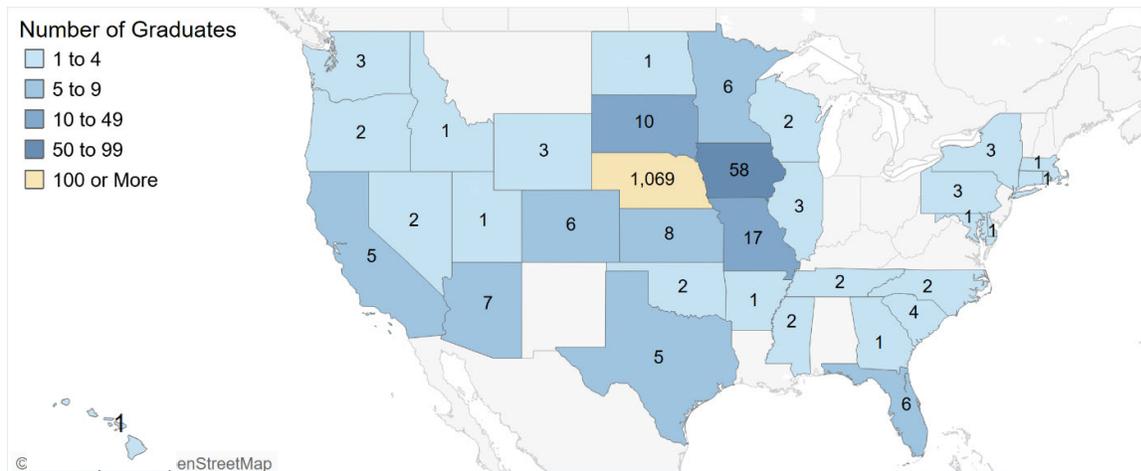


With the exception of Hispanic and Multi Racial graduates, graduates from all racial/ethnic backgrounds were more likely to attend a public college or university than any other type of school; however, the proportion of graduates doing so differed considerably for some groups. For example, 71% of Asian college attendees attended a public college or university, whereas 65% of

White college attendees, and 51% of African American attendees, did so. With the exception of the Other category, Multi Racial college attendees were the most likely to attend a private or religious college or university (11%), followed by White college attendees (10%). Multi Racial and Hispanic college attendees were the most likely to attend a community college (46% and 44% respectively).

As shown in Figure 10, the 2023 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 2023 Graduates Attending College in Each U.S. State



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

The 2023 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 (64%). The second most common funding source was grants; however, graduates who were eligible for educational benefits while in high school were much more likely to utilize grants than graduates who were not eligible. Graduates who were eligible for educational benefits were much less likely than their more affluent counterparts to utilize loans, personal earnings/savings, and help from family or friends.

Table 2. Sources of Financial Support for Post-Secondary Education

	All Attending College	Eligible for Educational Benefits	Not Eligible for Educational Benefits
Grants	43%	54%	28%
Scholarships	64%	65%	63%
Loans	14%	10%	20%
Personal earnings/savings	33%	27%	41%
Family/friends	30%	19%	46%
Employer assistance	1%	1%	3%
Other	2%	1%	2%

Post-secondary attendees noted several factors that influenced their decisions to further their education (see Table 3). The most common factor for both graduates who were and were not eligible for educational benefits was that graduates were pursuing a career that required a degree. 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 educational benefits were more likely than those who were not eligible to identify the availability of financial resources as an influential factor.

Table 3. Factors Influencing the Decision to Attend Post-Secondary Education

	All Attending College	Eligible for Educational Benefits	Not Eligible for Educational Benefits
Pursuing a career that requires a degree	78%	78%	77%
Need to improve job skills/qualifications	68%	68%	68%
Parents/guardians wanted you to attend college	65%	65%	64%
The availability of financial resources	65%	71%	57%
Believe college is the only means to a better job	30%	33%	28%
Other	5%	4%	5%

Graduates who were not attend post-secondary education right after high school were asked about factors that influenced their decision (see Table 4). The most influential factor for graduates of both socioeconomic backgrounds was the need to take a break from school. Graduates who were eligible for educational benefits while in high school were more likely to identify the inability to find college funding and family related issues or demands as factors affecting their college attendance decision. Of the 757 graduates who were not attending post-secondary education, 84% planned to attend college in the future. Though 27% did not know when they would attend college, 41% planned to do so within the following year.

Table 4. Factors Influencing the Decision to Not Attend Post-Secondary Education

	All Not Attending College	Eligible for Educational Benefits	Not Eligible for Educational Benefits
Want to take a break from school	74%	76%	70%
Career doesn't require a degree	10%	10%	10%
Unable to obtain enough funds	30%	32%	26%
Grades/test scores too low	32%	33%	29%
Family related issues or demands	16%	18%	12%
Do not think school is worth it (effort, money, time, etc.)	11%	11%	12%
Do not like school	9%	9%	10%
COVID-19 pandemic	23%	24%	21%
Other Influences	12%	10%	17%

Comparisons of Graduates Who Were and Were Not Attending Post-Secondary Education

All 2023 graduates were asked whether their parents/guardians attended college and whether they obtained some type of degree. Forty-three percent (43%) of graduates reported their parents/guardians attended college and 77% 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.

- 53% of graduates whose parents attended college but did not earn a degree were attending post-secondary education, whereas, 69% of graduates whose parents attended college and earned a degree were attending post-secondary education.
- 60% of graduates whose parents did not attend college were attending 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 slightly more likely to have dependents and more likely to live with their parents, relatives, or friends. 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 2023 Graduates Attending and Not Attending Post-Secondary Education

The Graduate ...	All Graduates	Attending College	Not Attending College
Is married	1%	0%	1%
Has at least one dependent	3%	2%	5%
Lives with parents/guardians	68%	60%	80%
Lives with friends, relatives, or alone	10%	7%	16%
Lives in group housing (e.g. dorms)	22%	33%	3%
Lives with someone at no cost to the graduate	43%	42%	45%
Pays own rent or dorm fee (e.g., Loans)	52%	53%	50%
Has rent paid by someone other than the graduate	4%	4%	3%

Employment of the 2023 Graduates

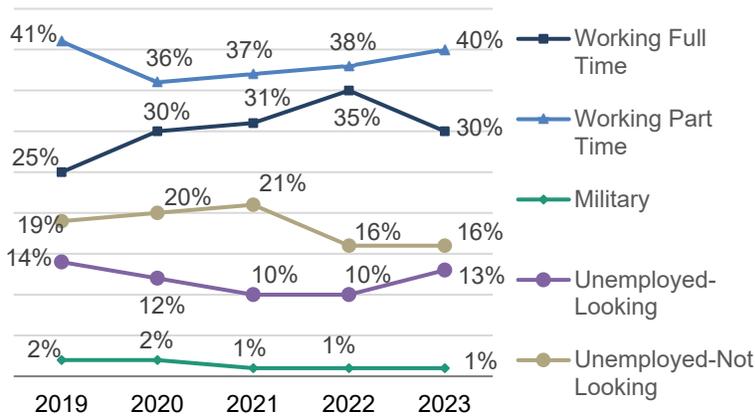
The majority (71%) of the 2023 graduates were employed in some capacity at the time they were contacted for their follow-up; 30% full time, 40% part time, and 1% were in the armed forces.

Twenty-nine percent (29%) of graduates were not employed when contacted; 13% were looking for employment and 16% were not looking. The employment status of graduates varied across OPS high schools, with Bryan and South High Schools having the highest percentage of graduates working full time (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 had been increasing over the past few years,

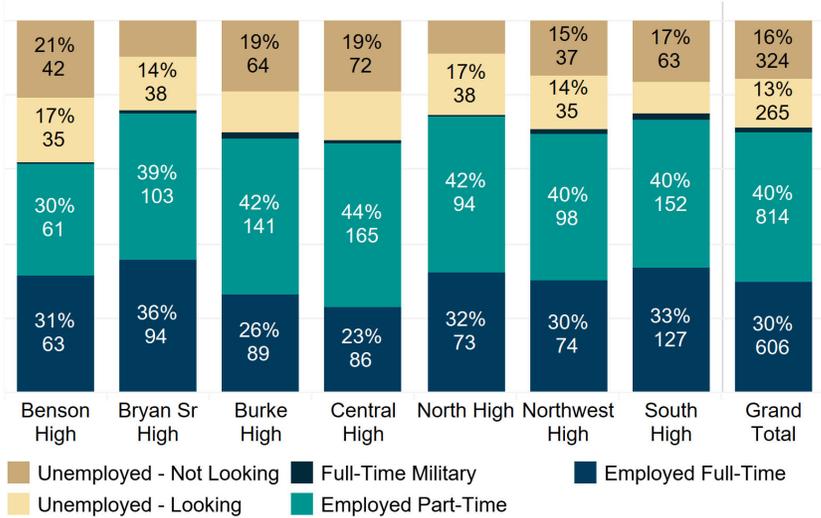
but dropped five percentage points for the 2023 graduates. Following a five percentage point decrease in 2020, part time employment increased steadily for the 2021, 2022, and 2023

Figure 12. Five Years of Employment



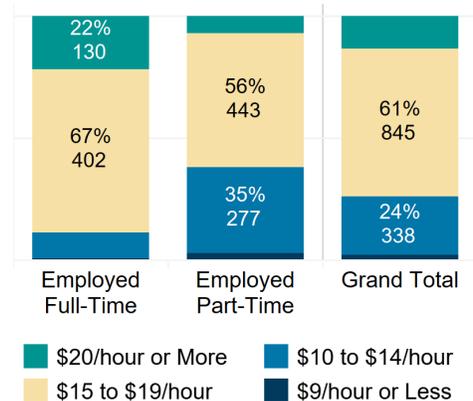
of unemployed graduates looking for employment. As illustrated in Figure 13, the vast majority of graduates who were employed were earning \$10 or more per hour. Graduates working full time were much more likely than those working part time to earn \$15 or more per hour.

Figure 11: Employment Status of the 2023 Graduates from Each High School



graduates. The percentage of graduates who were unemployed (both looking and not looking for work) fluctuated slightly over the years but increased for the 2023 graduates due to a three percentage point rise in the number

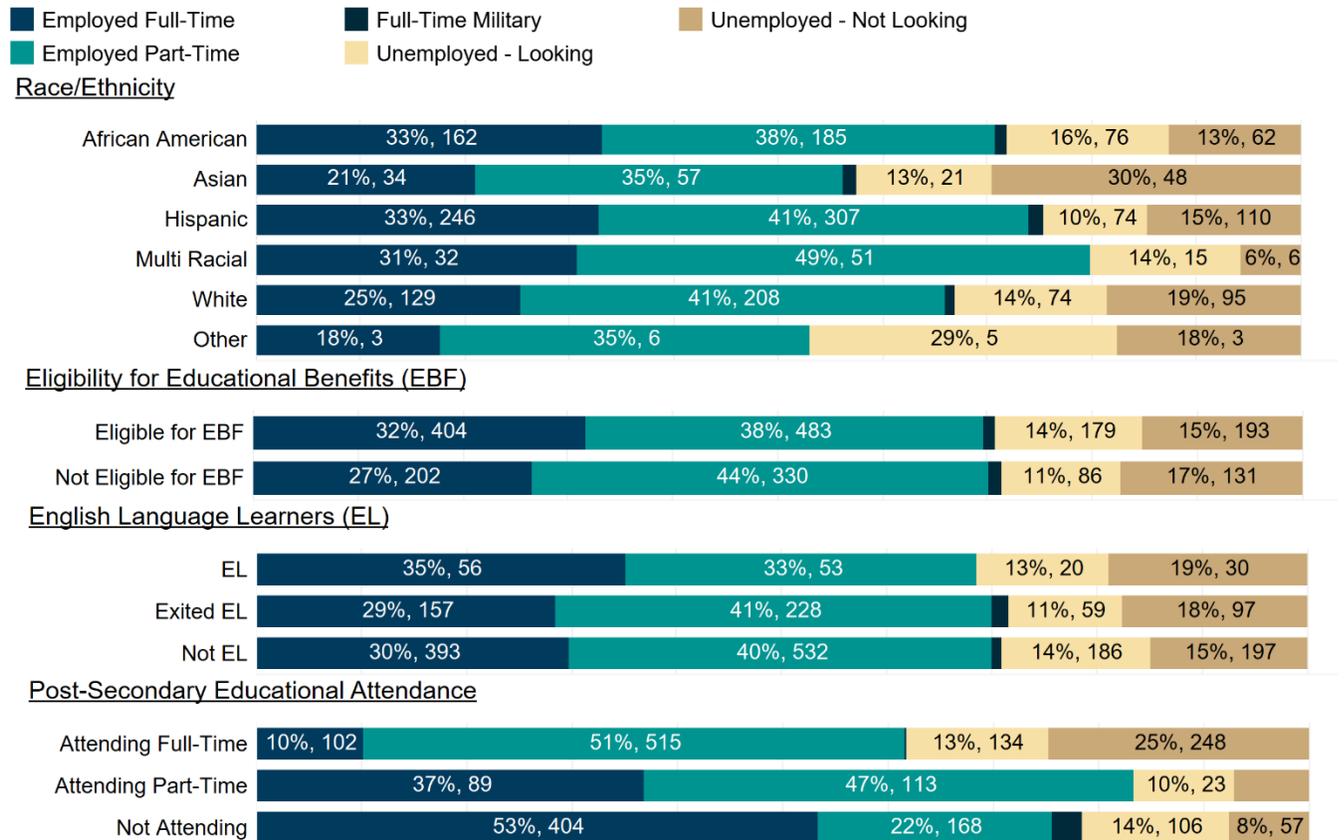
Figure 13: Hourly Wage for Graduates Working Full or Part-Time



Variability in Employment Status Across Demographic Groups

Figure 14 illustrates the employment status of the 2023 graduates varied considerably across differing racial, socioeconomic, English language proficiency, and post-secondary educational attendance groups. Asian graduates and graduates from the Other ethnic group were least likely to be working full time and most likely to be unemployed. Hispanic and African American graduates were most likely to be working full time, followed by Multi Racial graduates. The proportion of graduates who were unemployed varied widely across ethnic groups. Additionally, more than one half of the unemployed Asian, Hispanic, and White graduates were not looking for employment. Unlike previous years, the employment status of graduates who were and were not eligible for educational benefits while in high school was relatively similar. The percentage of graduates who were working was similar for those who were ELs, exited ELs, and graduates who were not ELs; however, EL graduates were somewhat more likely to be working full time.

Figure 14: Employment Status for Various Graduate Demographic Groups



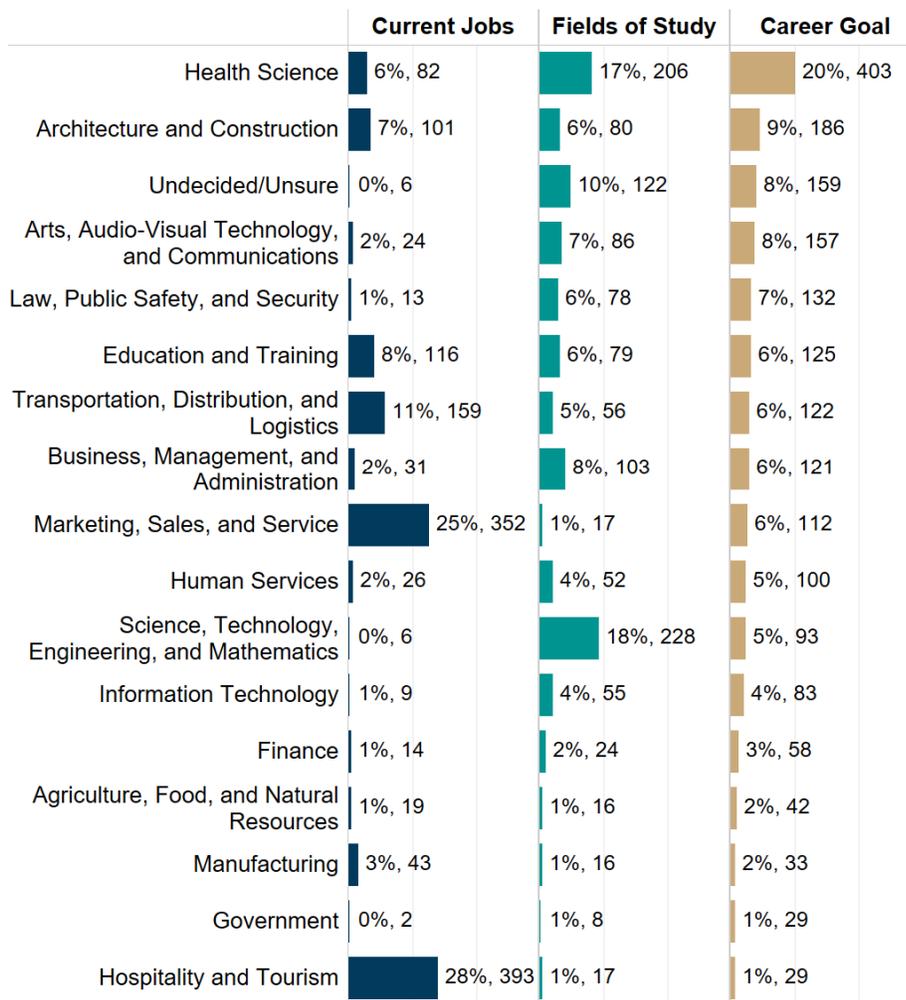
Finally, employment status differed significantly for graduates depending on whether or not they were attending post-secondary education. Graduates who were attending post-secondary education full time were significantly less likely to be working full time and if unemployed, significantly more likely 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 2023 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 2023 graduates who were working when contacted held jobs in every career field; however, the majority (64%) of jobs held by graduates fell into only three career fields.

- 28% 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.
- 20% 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.
- 11% 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, Fields of Study, and Career Goals of the 2023 OPS Graduates



The current jobs and the career goals of the 2023 graduates were very similar to those of past graduating classes. Health Sciences was the most popular field for graduates' career goals, followed by Architecture and Construction which was followed by Arts, Audio-Visual Technology, and Communications. Though most graduates (80%) 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. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of college-going graduates reported a field of study/major that matched their career goal field.

When compared to the 2022 graduates, the 2023 graduates were less likely to be undecided regarding their career goals (8% Vs. 10%) and equally as likely to be undecided regarding their fields of study/majors if attending college (10% Vs. 10%).

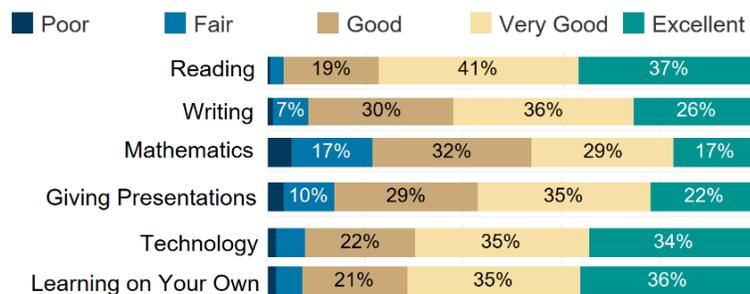
Additional Questions for the Graduates

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

Figure 16: 2023 Graduates' Ratings of Their Skills



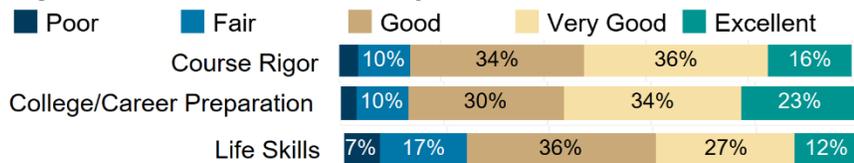
skills/abilities as poor or fair very often (see Figure 16). Out of the six skills/abilities addressed in the survey, graduates were most confident regarding their reading skill, ability to learn on their own, and technology skill,. At least 69% of the graduates rated their skills/abilities in these 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.

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).

Figure 17: 2023 Graduates' Ratings of Educational Features



The 2023 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, 24% of the graduates rated it as poor or fair.

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. The majority of surveys (64%) were completed without the graduate leaving a suggestion. Suggestions were left by 732 graduates and were organized into topical categories or themes. These themes are described below.

Graduates' comments indicated that Omaha Public Schools could improve in several key areas to better prepare students for life after high school. The top themes emerging from the comments included providing more real-world life skills and financial training, enhancing college preparation and awareness, improving curriculum and instructional practices, and delivering more individualized support and attention for students. Overall, graduates are requesting that the school district take a more comprehensive and personalized approach to preparing students for the transition to adulthood, beyond just focusing on academics.

Provide Real-World Life Skills and Financial Training

Graduates suggested that Omaha Public Schools provide more real-world training and education on practical, adult life skills beyond just academics. Financial training, including classes on topics like taxes, loans, credit, and budgeting, were of particular focus for the graduates. Regarding real-world life skills and financial training:

- Graduates wanted more classes and training on personal finance topics like taxes, loans, credit, and budgeting to better prepare them for life after high school.
- Graduates felt the current personal finance class was not comprehensive or informative enough and should be taught throughout all 4 years of high school, not just in a single semester.
- Graduates suggested classes and training on practical life skills to prepare them for the realities of life outside of school like time management, resume writing, job search, and other "adulting" skills.

Examples of graduates' feedback

"More real life financial info - budgeting, income taxes, credit, etc."

"More courses on day to day living regarding living on your own without parents, and possibly talk about different situations like paying bills, making decisions on job offers, etc."

"More classes that teaches you to be independent verses focusing on college only. Classes like home economics, real life examples, etc."

Enhance College Preparation and Awareness

Graduates suggested Omaha Public Schools provide more information, resources, and preparation for the transition to college, including earlier college planning, help with applications and financial aid, and exposure to the academic rigor of college. Regarding college preparation and awareness:

- Graduates wanted more college preparation, including information on the academic expectations, workload, and overall experience of college.
- Graduates also suggested earlier college planning, starting as early as freshman or sophomore year, to help students prepare.
- Graduates requested more support with the practical aspects of college, such as applications, financial aid, and the transition from high school.

Examples of graduates' feedback

"More information about college/more opportunities for students to ask questions regarding college."

"Explaining more about real life situations and what to expect in college."

"Prepare you for learning things on your own, not just having to study definitions and concepts but actually having to apply the information to a situation (this has been all of my college exams) having comprehensive finals"

Improve Curriculum and Instructional Practices

Graduates provided feedback on the curriculum, teaching methods, and overall academic rigor at Omaha Public Schools, requesting more challenging coursework, higher standards, and better teaching practices. Regarding curriculum and instruction:

- Graduates suggested Omaha Public Schools raise the academic standards and difficulty of the curriculum to better prepare students for college level work.
- Graduates offered feedback that the current grading scale and passing requirements are too lenient and do not adequately prepare students.
- Graduates requested improvements in teaching methods, including more engaging instruction and better attitudes/behaviors from teachers.

Examples of graduates' feedback

"Make the grading scale more difficult, maybe change it to percentages to coincide with college grading, also make D's not passing"

"More hands on learning vs being on the ipad most of the time."

"Teachers need to have better behaviors regarding their attitude toward the students"

Increase Individualized student Support and Attention

Graduates suggested Omaha Public Schools provide more individualized support, attention, and resources for students, including one-on-one time with teachers and counselors, targeted academic help, and personalized guidance. Regarding individualized support and attention:

- Graduates suggested more individualized attention and support from teachers and counselors, including one-on-one time to address their specific needs and concerns.
- Graduates stated the current approach to education is too impersonal, with teachers and staff not paying enough attention to individual students.
- Graduates suggested that Omaha Public Schools take a more personalized approach and avoid generalizing all students as the same.

Examples of graduates' feedback

"Pay attention to the students more, more focus should be spent on the student & what may be going in their lives versus just throwing paperwork at them and not paying attention to them."

"Focus on one student's problem and don't put that student in the same category as all other students. Stop generalizing that all students are the same."

"I wished faculty would've made it easier to approach them when I had a situation I needed help with, I wish they would make students feel more comfortable coming to them."

References

Irwin, V., Wang, K., Jung, J., Kessler, E., Tezil, T., Alhassani, S., Filbey, A., Dilig, R., and Bullock Mann, F. (2024). *Report on the Condition of Education 2024* (NCES 2024-144). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved 10/21/2024 from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2024144>.

Appendix A: 2023 Graduate Follow-Up Survey

Q1 Which of the following best describes your present employment situation?

- Employed Full-Time
- Employed Part-Time
- Full-Time Member of the Armed Forces
- Unemployed - Seeking Employment
- Unemployed - Not Looking For Employment

If Full-Time Member of the Armed Forces or either Unemployment options were chosen the survey skipped to question

Q2 What job are you currently performing? *If you have multiple jobs, please list your primary position.*

Q3 What field is your job in? *If you are unsure of the field, please select the final option*

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Arts, Audio-Visual Technology, and Communications
- Business, Management, and Administration
- Architecture and Construction
- Education and Training
- Finance
- Health Science
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, and Security
- Manufacturing
- Government and Public Administration
- Marketing, Sales, and Service
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
- Undecided

Q4 In total, how many hours do you typically work each week? (Including all jobs.)

- 5 or fewer
- 6
- 7
- ...
- 55 or greater

Q5 What is your average hourly wage? (Including tips)

- \$9/hour or less
- \$10 to \$14/hour
- \$15 to \$19/hour
- \$20/hour or more

Q6 What is your general career goal? In other words, what job would you like to pursue for your career?

Q7 What field do you intend to work in? *If you are unsure, please select the last option.*

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Arts, Audio-Visual Technology, and Communications
- Business, Management, and Administration
- Architecture and Construction
- Education and Training
- Finance
- Health Science
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, and Security
- Manufacturing
- Government and Public Administration
- Marketing, Sales, and Service
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
- Undecided

Q8 Following graduation from high school, have you participated in any educational or training classes or activities? If so, have you attended full or part-time?

- No
- Part-time
- Full-time At least 12 semester hrs, 15 quarter hrs, or 6 semester hrs for graduate students

If “No” was chosen, the survey skipped to question 18.

Q9 What state is the school in? _____

Q10 What is the name of the school you attend(ed)?

- University of Nebraska - Omaha
- University of Nebraska - Lincoln
- University of Nebraska - Kearney
- Metropolitan Community College
- Iowa Western Community College
- Creighton University
- Wayne State College
- College of Saint Mary
- Bellevue University
- Other

If any option other than “Other” was chosen, the survey skipped to question 14.

Q11 Please type the full name of the school you attend. _____

Q12 In what city is the school located? _____

Q13 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.*

- Public University or College
- Private University or College
- Religiously Affiliated University or College
- Community College
- Technical, Career, or Trade School
- Other (seminars, workshops, apprenticeships, etc.)

Q14 Which of the following best describes your educational program?

- 4-Year Program
- 2-Year Program
- Military Training
- Apprenticeship
- 1-Year Program
- Online Classes
- Other (Please describe) _____

Q15 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.*

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources | <input type="radio"/> Information Technology |
| <input type="radio"/> Arts, Audio-Visual Technology, and Communications | <input type="radio"/> Law, Public Safety, and Security |
| <input type="radio"/> Business, Management, and Administration | <input type="radio"/> Manufacturing |
| <input type="radio"/> Architecture and Construction | <input type="radio"/> Government and Public Administration |
| <input type="radio"/> Education and Training | <input type="radio"/> Marketing, Sales, and Service |
| <input type="radio"/> Finance | <input type="radio"/> Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics |
| <input type="radio"/> Health Science | <input type="radio"/> Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics |
| <input type="radio"/> Hospitality and Tourism | <input type="radio"/> Undecided |
| <input type="radio"/> Human Services | |

Q16 Which of the following factors influenced your decision to attend college?

(Choose all that apply to you.)

- Need to improve job skills/qualifications
- Pursuing a career that requires a degree
- Parents/guardians wanted you to attend college
- Believe college is the only means to a better job
- The availability of financial resources
- Other _____

Q17 What is/was your source of financial support?

(Pick all that apply to you.)

- Grants
- Scholarships
- Loans
- Personal earnings/savings
- Family/friends
- Employer assistance
- Other _____

If the respondent indicated they were not attending any type of post-secondary education the survey displayed questions 18 through 20.

Q18 Which of the following factors influenced your decision to not attend or leave college?
(Choose all that apply to you.)

- Want to take a break from school
- Career doesn't require a degree
- Unable to obtain enough funding (scholarships, grants, loans) to pay for tuition
- Grades/test scores too low
- Family related issues or demands
- Do not think school is worth it (money, effort, time, etc.)
- Do not like school
- COVID-19
- Other _____

Q19 Do you plan to attend college in the future?

- Yes
- No

If "No" was chosen the survey skipped to question 21.

Q20 When do you plan to attend college?

- Within the next 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year from now
- 1 to 2 years from now
- 2 or more years from now
- Undecided

Q21 Did any of your parents/guardians attend college?

- Yes
- No

If "No" was chosen the survey skipped to question

Q22 Did any of your parents/guardians earn a college degree?

- Yes
- No

Q23 Are you married?

- Yes
- No

Q24 Do you share housing with other people? If so, who do you live with?

- Alone
- Group housing (dormitories, Greek housing, etc.)
- Parent(s) / Guardian(s)
- Other Relative(s)
- Friend(s)

Q25 How do you finance housing?

- Another person allows me to stay with them, free of charge.
- Another person pays my rent.
- I pay rent (includes taking loans for campus housing).
- I own my house/condo/etc.

Q26 Do you have any dependents/children? If so, how many?

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3
- More than 3

Q27 Please rate your ability level in the following areas, as a result of your experience at OPS.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Reading	<input type="radio"/>				
Writing (e.g., reports)	<input type="radio"/>				
Mathematics	<input type="radio"/>				
Presenting Information	<input type="radio"/>				
Technology	<input type="radio"/>				
Learning on your own	<input type="radio"/>				

Q28 Please rate the quality of the following features related to your education at OPS.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Course rigor (e.g., high standards, comparable to college-level difficulty, challenging homework, advanced courses available)	<input type="radio"/>				
College and career preparation opportunities (e.g., study skill development, opportunities to explore education/career path, assistance with applications to college, scholarships, FAFSA, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				
Life skills training availability (e.g., resume writing, budgeting and financial planning, writing checks, preparing taxes, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				

Q29 Is there anything you suggest that 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