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All In! Annual Data Report 2020

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Executive Summary

All In! is a public/private coalition with a goal-oriented agenda to be achieved by 2025, targeting graduates of the Hartford Public Schools. Our two major goals are as follows:

- Increase the post-secondary enrollment rate from 61% to 70%;
- Increase the post-secondary completion rate from 24% to 50%.

At the time of the coalition's founding in 2016, these goals also included an increase in the high school graduation rate. Ultimately, the Steering Committee elected not to continue pursuing this goal.

This report presents an overview of performance against the two major goals by graduates of Hartford Public Schools. It also includes Action Team evaluation results. Our primary findings are:

1. Overall, post-secondary enrollment for Hartford students remain stable, with increases in 2016 and 2017 not indicating any larger positive trend.
2. Hartford students continue to move away from enrolling in 2-year institutions and towards 4-year institutions; for the first time, data shows more than two-thirds of the students who are enrolling at all are enrolling at 4-year schools.
3. The Summer Transition Program has had mixed results but encouraging enough that it is continuing in 2020.
4. Postsecondary persistence and completion rates hold steady. The data on these indicators does not yet reflect cohorts which the coalition has intervened with.
5. Our goal for postsecondary enrollment seems reachable, with a necessary 1-2 percentage point improvement per year between now and 2025. Our goal for postsecondary completion requires a much steeper climb, and is highly unlikely to be reached on schedule.
6. Across postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion, disparities by race/ethnicity, special education status, English learner status, and economic disadvantage are getting neither better nor worse. The coalition has so far taken no action targeted directly at any single demographic group to address these disparities.

Background

All In!

All In! is a coalition of public, corporate, and nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving key outcomes for Hartford Public School students. The Steering Committee includes Capital Community College, Capital Workforce Partners, the Hartford Consortium for Higher Education, the Hartford Promise, Hartford Public Schools (HPS), Manchester Community College, the Office of the Mayor of Hartford, ReadyCT, the Travelers Foundation, and the United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut. Achieve Hartford serves as the backbone organization.

All In! is working to meet two major goals by 2025:

- Increase the post-secondary enrollment rate from 61% to 70%;
- Increase the 6-year post-secondary completion rate from 24% to 50%.

This report is intended to give an update on progress against these goals since the last report.

Data

All of the data used in this report comes from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) unless otherwise specified. This represents a change from our earliest reports, where there was data mixed in from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). This is partly a result of having cut our high school graduation goal (where all the data came from CSDE), and partly a result of simplifying reporting on our postsecondary goals. Additionally, the NSC regularly updates their data for improved accuracy. As a result of both of these factors, some of the data in this report does not exactly match earlier reports.

Definitions

The following definitions hold for the remainder of this report. Unless otherwise noted, this is how these terms will be used.

- *Post-secondary enrollment rate* is defined as the percentage of the high school graduation cohort who enrolled in any post-secondary institution within one year of high school graduation.
- *Post-secondary retention rate* is defined as the percentage of students meeting the “post-secondary enrollment rate” definition who returned for their second year of post-secondary education.
- *Post-secondary completion rate* is defined as the percentage of the high school graduation cohort who completed a degree at any 4-year or 2-year postsecondary institution.

Other terms may be defined in the text as necessary.

Post-Secondary Enrollment

Across every figure in this section, the enrollment rates for the class of 2019 only cover students who enrolled in the fall. Spring enrollment historically represents an increase in 4-6 percentage points over fall enrollment. Thus, while the decrease to 56% for 2019 looks large (Figure 1), it will most likely be revised to 60-62% once spring 2020 is available—which is right in line with recent years. Unfortunately, this would still mean that rates had not improved.

It is unclear what led to the unusually high enrollment for the Hartford classes of 2016 and 2017 (Figure 1). Looking at the other graphs in this section (Figures 2-5) which disaggregate by various factors, you can see that the increase occurred almost equally across subgroups.

The only case in which this is not true is when comparing in-state versus out-of-state institutions (Figure 2), and there we find a possible answer to the mystery: the increased enrollment seems entirely attributable to increased enrollment in those years at out-of-state schools. We have not been able to determine why or how this happened; it did not continue with the class of 2018 and based on currently available data we do not expect it for the class of 2019 either, so it appears to be an anomaly.

Updating our enrollment rates by institutional level (4-year vs. 2-year schools) shows the continuation of an important

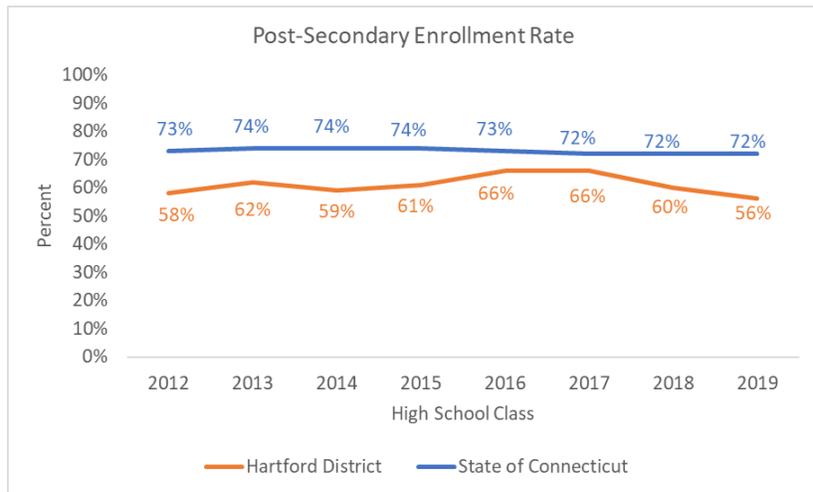


Figure 1.

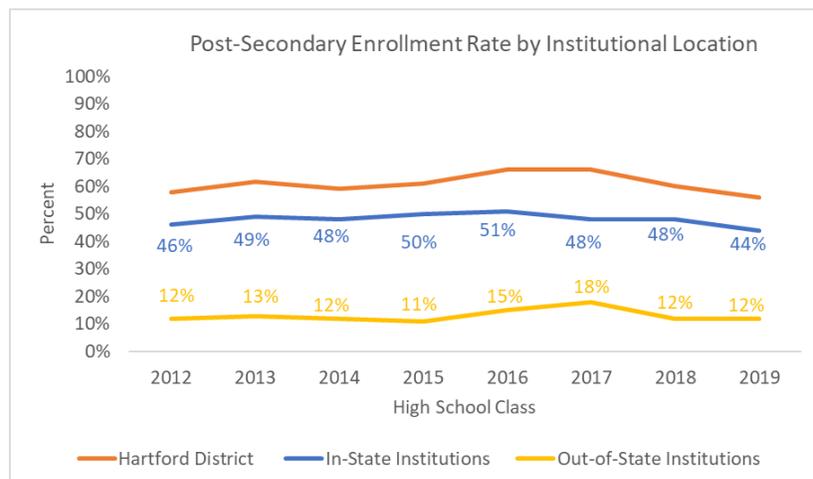


Figure 2.

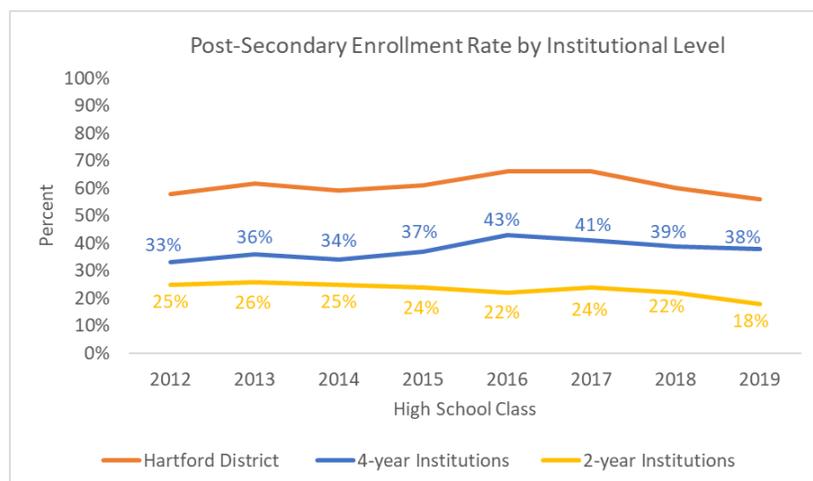


Figure 3.

trend. Since 2011, students have slowly but steadily shifted in favor of attending 4-year institutions, even as overall enrollment remained similar (Figure 3). While we support students attending whatever program is most appropriate for their goals and preparation levels, this is positive as retention and completion rates are substantially higher for students at 4-year schools.

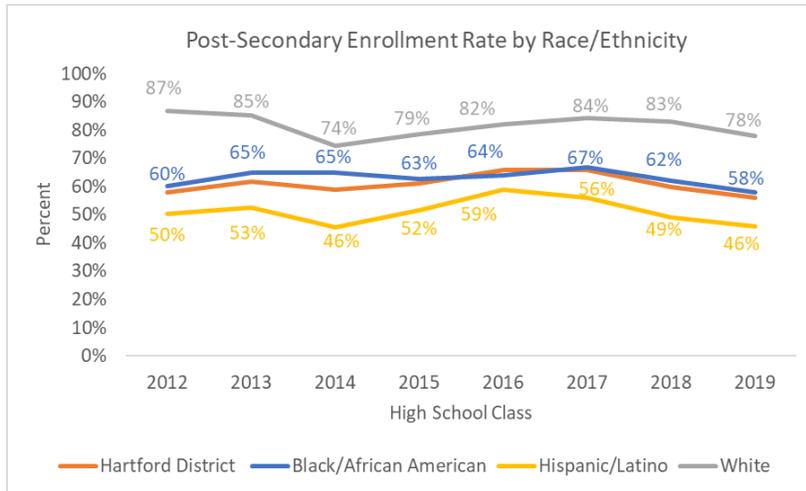


Figure 5.

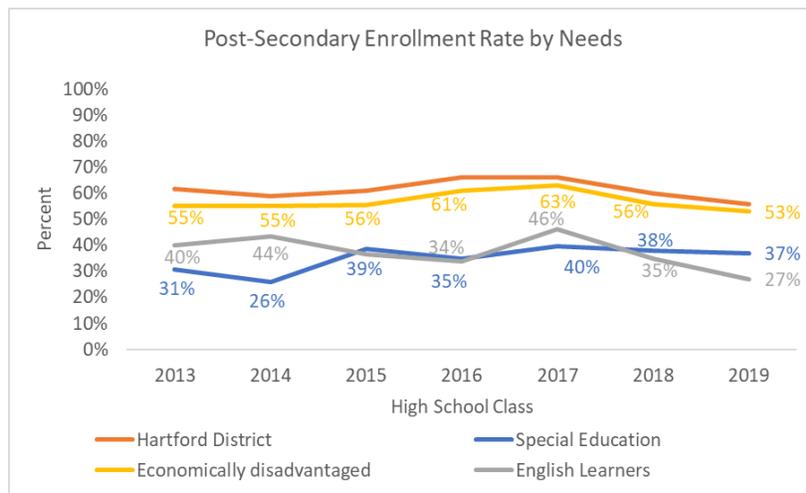


Figure 4.

Figure 4 covers the data as broken down by race/ethnicity. Again, the seemingly-low numbers for the class of 2019 reflect fall enrollment only, and will likely be revised upward by a few points in the future. As in prior years, the demographic breakdowns give us reason to be especially concerned about the outcomes for Hispanic/Latino students. These students continue to have the lowest enrollment rate by a wide margin.

Figure 5 covers various need categories. This graph makes the trends seem more chaotic than they actually are. The ups and downs are mostly the result of each disaggregated group being small enough in number to make small numerical changes highly visible. This is especially noticeable for special education students and English language learners. Each of these two groups is comprised of only around 50 college-enrolled students per graduating cohort, meaning a shift of just 5 students would represent a 10% change.

Action Team: Summer Transition Program

The Summer Transition Program aims to increase the enrollment rate by hiring college students as Outreach Specialists to spend the summer helping new graduates through the enrollment process. In the summers of 2017-2019, these Outreach Specialists were hired and supervised by the Hartford Consortium for Higher Education (HCHE). Over these three summers their training was provided jointly by varying combinations of HCHE staff, Achieve Hartford staff, and college staff.

The program has now run for three summers, using a mixture of methods and achieving similarly mixed results. For the first two years, students were nominated for the program by their school counselors, based on the individual counselors' determinations of which students truly intended to attend college, yet were still at risk of not attending in the fall. In summer 2019, we received lists of prospective students

Year	2017	2018	2019
# students in cohort	127	163	185
# students engaged	80	121*	
# students enrolled	66	49	70
% engaged	63%	74%*	
% enrolled	52%	30%	38%
% enrolled from graduating class	62%	56%	56%

Figure 6. *Engagement data incomplete due to collection issues.

from participating colleges and used the recommendations of school counselors as a filter in an attempt to better target among that group.

Figure 6 shows outcomes for the program and the graduating cohorts in general. Here, unlike the previous section of this report, we are measuring the enrollment

only in the fall semester following high school graduation; as you can see, it appears to be about four percentage points lower than the rate for the full year.

When half of the 2017 cohort enrolled, we were surprised—for a supposedly high-risk group, that's hardly lower than the district's overall results. We temporarily believed, after seeing the 2017 enrollment bump for the district, that the program had been responsible. Given what we now know about the district's anomalously high enrollment for the 2017 cohort, it seems to be the other way around.

In the second and third year, we recruited larger cohorts and engaged with a larger percentage of them (at least in 2018; see note beneath Figure 6). The enrollment rate for students targeted in these two years was substantially lower than in 2017. With the data available to us, we cannot say why with any certainty. However, we suspect two major factors: first, that the anomalously high enrollment district-wide in 2017 inflated our results in 2017; and second, that in recruiting a larger cohort in later years, our net increasingly targeted students who did not seriously intend to enroll in the first place.

Post-Secondary Persistence

While the coalition has not defined a specific goal for persistence, data on this measure is presented here because it is often cited as one of the largest stumbling blocks to post-secondary completion and is thus a good leading indicator of post-secondary completion. Because this data necessarily lags by a couple of years, the most recent data available for this metric is for the class of 2017.

As one would expect given the other data presented above, there is a large gap between Hartford and Connecticut at large (Figure 7), though not quite as large as the gaps for other indicators.

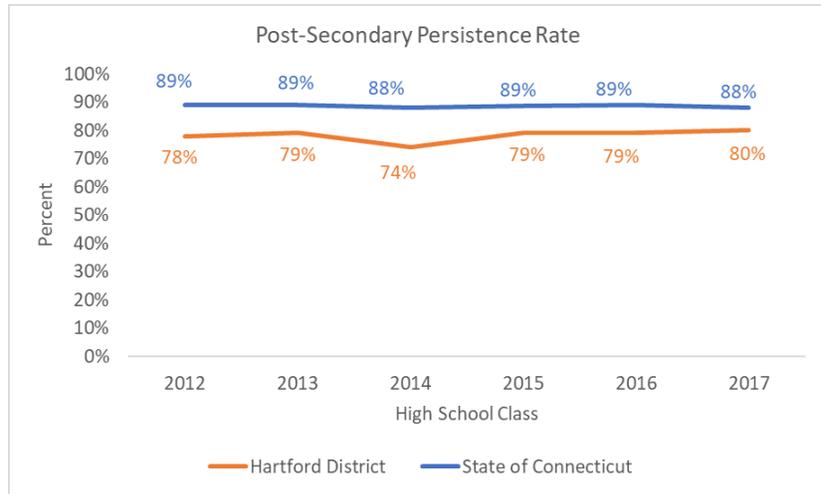


Figure 7.

Disaggregating the data by student race/ethnicity (Figure 8) reveals similar patterns to the ones seen above in enrollment: Black/African-American students are closely in line with the district averages; white students are consistently above it, though by inconsistent amounts; and Hispanic/Latino students, are just below the district average. This makes sense, as there are comparatively few white students in the district, so their data should not have much effect on the average. The gap between Hispanic/Latino and their Black/African-American peers varies from year to year and does not seem to be following any particular pattern over the years included in this data.

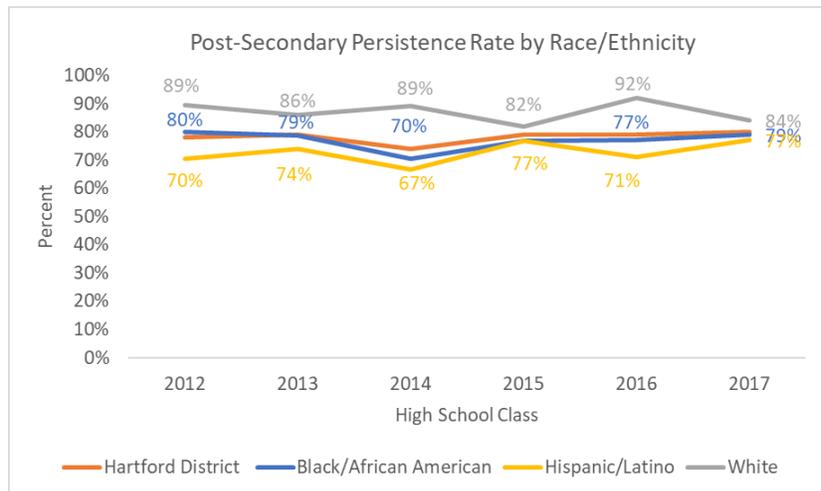


Figure 8.

Checking the disaggregated results by need categories does not reveal any surprises, nor contain any particularly illuminating trends. Special education students and English learners both have results which

fluctuate a lot, and as with the enrollment data, this is due to very small numbers amplifying any small changes.

A comparison of students attending 4-year and 2-year institutions shows that students at 4-year schools are consistently persisting at rates just under 90%, which is very good news, especially since this is where about two-thirds of college-going Hartford students enroll. Students at 2-year institutions are not faring as well, and their

results are a bit more inconsistent. In both cases, the persistence rates for Hartford students lags behind the statewide rates by only a few percentage points.

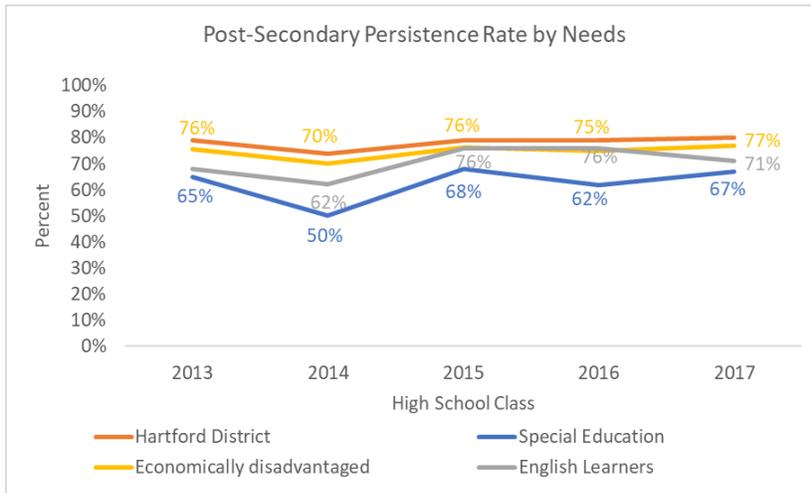


Figure 9.

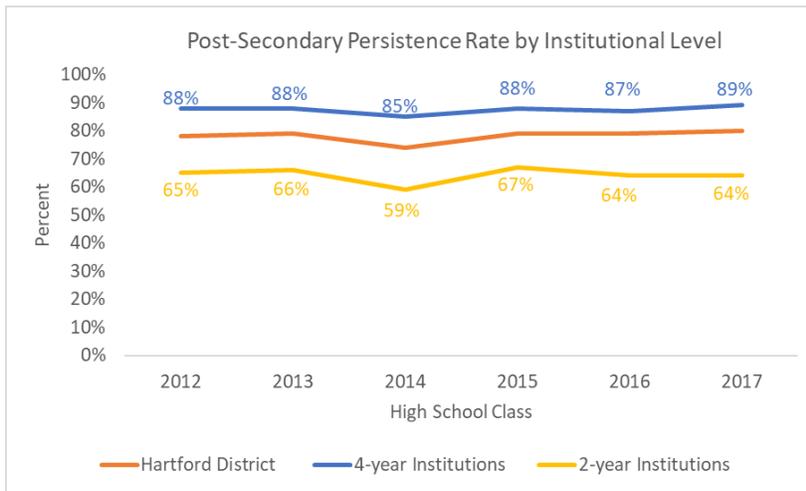


Figure 10.

Post-Secondary Completion

Once again, this data does not in any way reflect on the activities of this coalition. In fact, this outcome is not something we will be able to definitively take credit for improving for a few years, still. It seems probable that the first cohort whose post-secondary completion rate will be affected by this coalition is the class of 2017, unless students currently enrolled in college from earlier cohorts are targeted for some

kind of intervention. We will not be able to see the six-year completion rate of the class of 2017 until late 2023, though we should be able to see their four-year completion rate by late 2021.

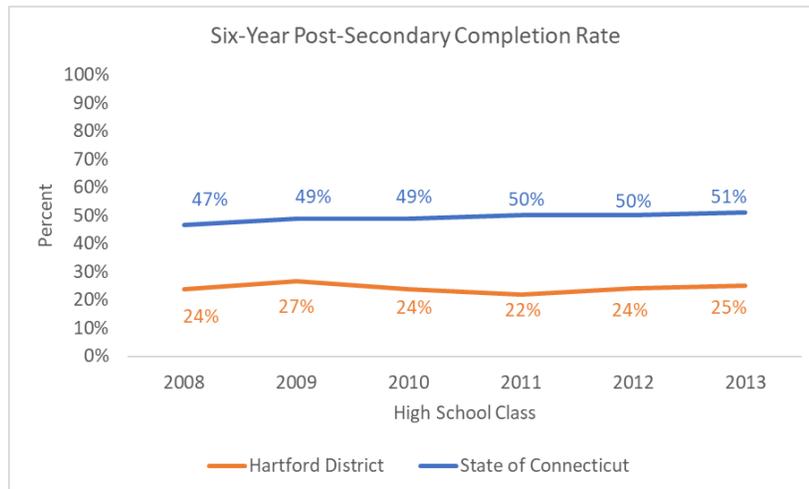


Figure 11.

As you can see in Figure 11, the trend is basically flat, with the exception of the class of 2009. While this is discouraging, it should at least simplify our analysis of what, if any, impact the coalition has had once cohorts we've intervened with start graduating.

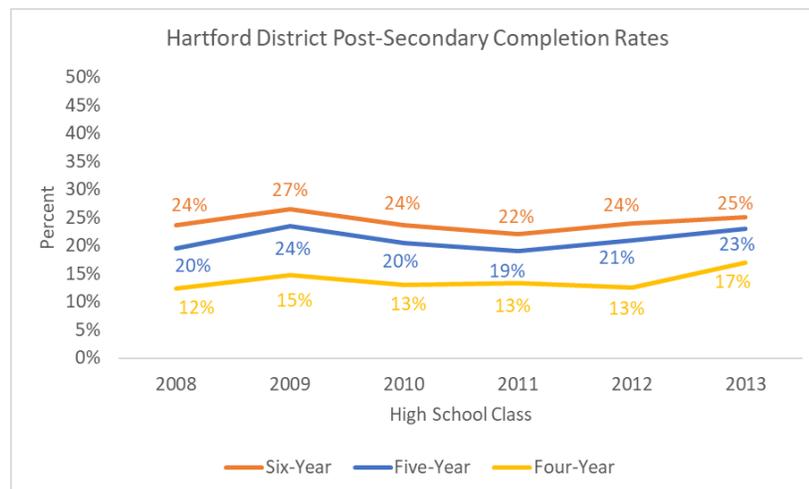


Figure 12.

The four- and five-year graduation rates are strong leading indicators of the six-year graduation rate, and so are included in Figure 13.

Interestingly, when the class of 2013 achieved a higher four-year rate than their predecessors, the six-year rate did not improve in the same way. One possible reason for this is the gradual shift of Hartford students into 4-year institutions, which as noted earlier in this report may lead to higher completion rates all on its own.

Reaching Our Goals

Our goals are ambitious. While progress is unlikely to take place in a linear fashion, it is revealing to give a rough idea of what kind of linear progress would be required to reach our goals.

Necessary Yearly Progress to Reach Goals													
Class of	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'24	'25
Enrollment	62%	59%	61%	66%	66%	60%	60%	62%	63%	65%	67%	68%	70%
Completion	25%	29%	33%	38%	42%	46%	50%						

Figure 13.

Here in Figure 13 we have the current data in yellow (including a projected 60% enrollment for the class of 2019) and the 2025 goals in green. The white cells contain projected necessary rates of progress for each goal to be met. The rate of progress for post-secondary enrollment (Table 1) does not seem particularly steep, at only one or two additional percentage points per year.

The rate of progress needed to reach the goal on post-secondary completion is another story. The simple fact is that the only way to meet this goal by 2025 is for the class of 2019 to achieve it, and they have already graduated high school and begun college. Our initial attempt at a program to serve first-year college students was launched in the fall 2019 semester and went quite poorly, targeting only 32 students and ultimately reaching only a handful. It is clear that this goal will not be reached on time unless post-2013 cohorts have been gradually achieving higher degree completion rates already. Unfortunately, we have no data which supports this belief.

Regardless, we will be making strong efforts towards both of these objectives by continuing the work of the Summer Transition Program, launching a College Persistence Program targeting >100 first-year students in 2020, and seeking deeper partnerships with both of the community colleges which are part of this coalition.