



RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE

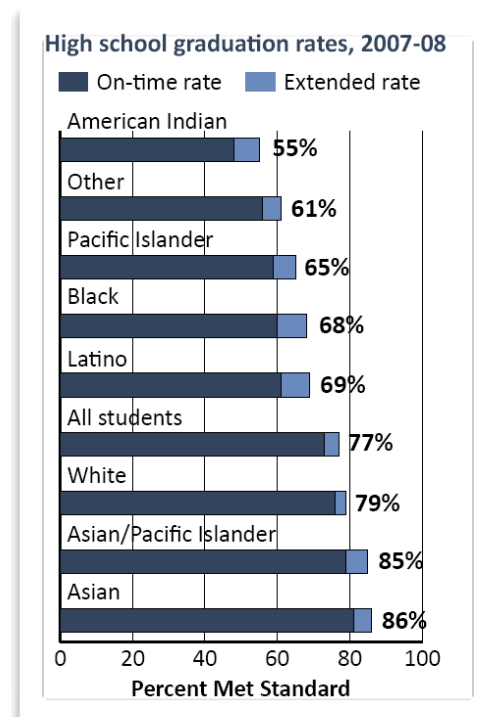
Racial Equity in Education

Why we lead with youth and families

The Roundtable chose to lead with education as a strategic step forward to achieve success on the Roundtable’s mission to “work to eliminate race-based inequity in our community and promote race and social justice across Seattle/King County institutions.”

Education provides clear indicators of racial inequities on variety of institutional and structural levels. Youth of color have experienced poor outcomes relative to their white counterparts historically and these deep disparities persist today. Researchers have offered a number of explanations, mostly focused on individual decisions. While behavior is an important contributor to the outcomes that individuals experience *we know that there are larger, structural factors that contribute to the racial disparities between youth of color and their white counterparts that deserve systematic and sustained attention.*

We can look at racial inequity in graduation rates, incidences of discipline, pathways from high school to vocational training, college, and universities, and grade point averages, to name a few. We can also look at other institutional factors such as ratio of teachers of color to students of color, ratio of less experienced and qualified teachers to students of color, or access to teaching materials. On a structural level we need to look at transforming practices around funding schools that serve to deepen racial inequities to practices that promote racial equity.

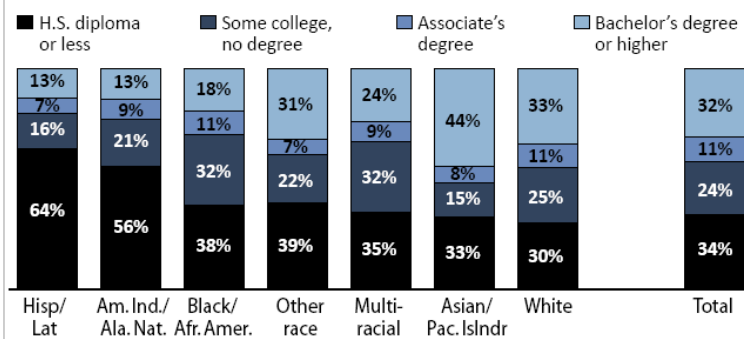


Why track high school graduation as a measure?

Graduation rates can be used as one indicator of how well we are doing at addressing persistent racial disparities between people of color and whites. The correlation of race and well-being in American remains powerful. This provides one traceable indicator of well-being for youth of color and their white counterparts. We know students of color drop out at a greater rate than white students.

Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity, ages 25-64, 2007

Asian/Pacific Islander students have the highest levels of college attainment, while Hispanic/Latino and American Indian/Alaska Native students have the lowest.



Source: 2007 American Community Survey, cited in *Population Demographics Affecting Washington Higher Education*, Randy Spaulding, Ph.D., Director of Academic Affairs, Higher Education Coordinating Board

For almost all young people, dropping out of high school is not a sudden act, but a gradual process of disengagement; dropping out of high school is dangerous...

Drop outs are much more likely than their peers who graduate to be unemployed, live in

poverty, receive public assistance, in prison, on death row, unhealthy, divorced and/or single parents with children who drop out from high school too.

According to new U.S. Census data, a bachelor's degree earns an average of \$51,554, a high school diploma earns \$28,645, and a high school dropout earns \$19,169

We have the opportunity to target institutional and structural racism and how it plays a part in this outcome so that we achieve racial equity.

Key Actions

- Promoting a statewide agenda on racial equity in education.
- Proposing policy to eliminate racial inequity in school discipline rates.
- Adopting the use of a Racial Equity Toolkit to conduct review of organizational programs and policies for all members of the Roundtable.
- Promoting community accountability and engagement.