



Destination 2025 Monthly: January 2021

Prepared by the Department of Research & Performance Management

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Key Findings

- In middle schools, honors course offerings varied with school size. Larger schools were more likely to offer 11 or more honors courses than small or mid-size schools.
- Similarly, high school enrollment was strongly and positively correlated with the number of advanced course offerings (Pearson correlation coefficient = .79).
- Asian students had by far the highest rate of Advanced Placement (AP) participation followed by White students and then by Multiracial, Latinx, and African American students, respectively.
- Most AP exams taken by Asian and White students scored at least a 3 (the “passing” score). Although most AP exams taken by Latinx and African American students fell below that threshold, they improved over the past three years by 8 and 5 percentage points, respectively.
- Direct-certified (DC) students’ AP exam pass rates increased by 5 percentage points last year, though they still trailed their non-DC counterparts by a substantial margin.
- Students at District-managed schools outperformed their charter-attending counterparts on AP exams by very wide margins: 21, 15, and 18 percentage points among African American, Latinx, and DC students, respectively. Indeed, underperformance among charter students accounted for a large portion of the racial/ethnic and economic performance gaps noted above.
- There has been a 55.9% increase since 2017–18 and a 40.3% increase since 2018–19 in the percentage of 9th through 12th grade students attending Hollis F. Price and Middle College high schools and the 11th through 12th grade students attending all other schools participating in Dual Enrollment (DE) and Statewide Dual Credit (SDC).
- According to their performance on the ACT, SCS graduates were more prepared for college in English and reading than in science and math.
- The percentage of graduates with an ACT composite of 21 or above has declined by 3–4 percentage points over the past four years.
- There has been a 9 percentage-point increase in the number of graduating students earning professional certifications and a substantial increase in the number of certifications these students earned between 2018 and 2020.

Overview

January’s key performance indicators (KPIs) are aligned to Destination 2025 priorities 2 and 4. The KPIs under Priority 2 covered in this report are: 7 – Advanced Placement (AP) course participation rates and scores by subgroup; 8 – Dual Enrollment (DE) participation; 10 – percentage of students meeting ACT college-readiness benchmarks; and 11 – number and percentage of students who graduated with professional certifications in 2020. The KPI covered under Priority 4 is 4 – advanced course options available by school.

Note that the analyses presented in this report reflect both charter and District-managed schools, unless specified otherwise.

Advanced Course Options Available by School

Shelby County Schools (SCS) offers its students several options for advanced courses. Both Dual Enrollment (DE) and statewide Dual Credit (SDC) afford students the opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school. DE courses are early college courses taught on the college campus, the technology center, or at the high school by a college professor or a secondary teacher who is

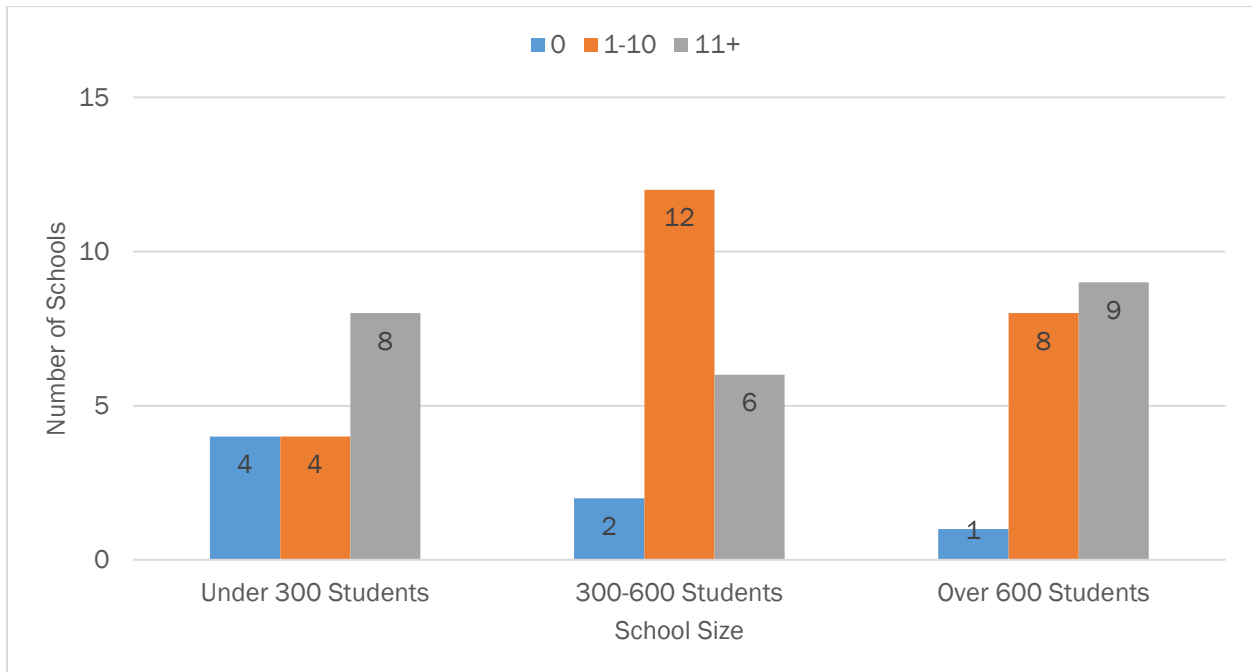


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credentialed under SACS as an adjunct professor. Conversely, SDC classes are taught by trained high-school teachers. Other options include Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB)¹ courses. In the middle grades, the honors program is the only option available.

Several factors affect schools' ability to offer advanced courses: student interest and ability to handle the increased rigor of advanced coursework, and the availability of teachers with the required subject-area knowledge and teaching skills. Additionally, school size is a major determinant of advanced course availability. Smaller schools are often unable to offer multiple sections of many courses (a regular section and an advanced section) because there are not enough students or teachers who meet the requirements. Figures 1 and 2 show the number of advanced course offerings by school size for middle and high schools, respectively. The relationship between school size and advanced course offerings is clear.

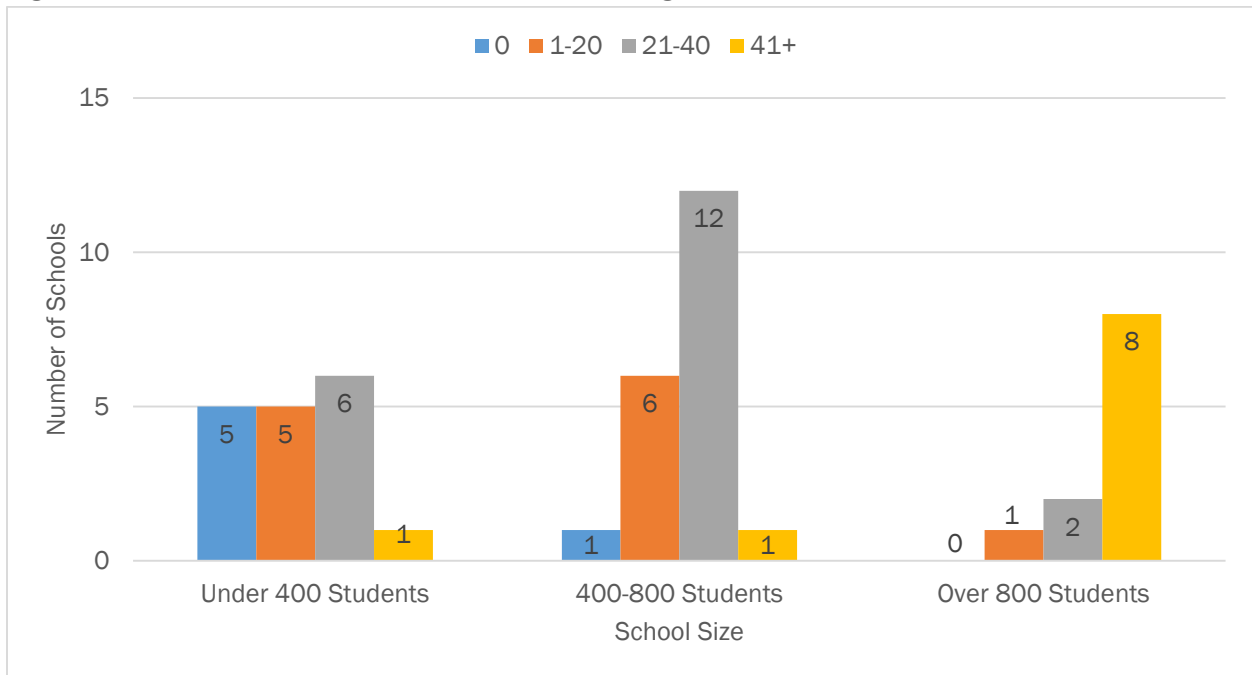
Figure 1. Number of Honors Courses Offered in Middle Schools 2020-21



¹ SCS also offers CLUE and APEX courses, designed for students identified as intellectually gifted, but these programs are outside the purview of this report.



Figure 2. Number of Advanced Courses Offered in High Schools 2020–21



Of the District’s 54 middle schools, Colonial School offers the highest number of honors courses (38). Forty-three percent (23) of middle schools offer 11 or more honors courses; 44% (24) offer 1–10 honors courses. Thirteen percent (7) of middle schools do not offer any honors courses. Five of these are charters, and 2 are District-Managed alternative schools. However, it is important to note that some charter schools use their own student schedule platforms and may offer honors courses that are not reported centrally to the District.

Note that in tables 1 and 2, the number of courses offered refers to the number of unique advanced courses that are available at a given school, not the number of times/sections the same course is offered for different groups of students. This analysis is meant to convey how many different types of courses an individual student could access at each school. For example, a high school may offer Algebra I Honors five times a day to different sections of students, but that course would only be counted as one course offering that a single student would consider taking. Table 1 presents a list of honors courses at each middle school. School names in **bold font** are charters and those listed in *ALL CAPS AND ITALICS* are alternative and adult high schools.



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Table 1. Number of Honors Courses Offered in Middle Schools 2020-21

Honors Courses →	0	1-10	11+
School	Honors		School Size
A. Maceo Walker Middle		12	844
Airways Achievement Academy MS	0		20
American Way Middle		8	722
Barret's Chapel School		4	586
Believe Memphis Academy Charter School		4	372
Bellevue Middle		18	126
Chickasaw Middle		1	1080
City University School Girls Preparatory	0		755
Colonial Middle		38	527
Cordova Middle		16	393
Craigmont Middle		13	286
Cummings School		12	367
Dexter Middle		1	331
Douglass School		14	812
E.E. Jeter School		2	20
Freedom Prep Academy Brownlee		2	456
Geeter School		1	724
Georgian Hills Middle		12	818
Germantown Middle		15	668
Gordon Achievement Academy MS	0		81
Grandview Heights Middle School		4	61
Hamilton School		1	1144
Havenview Middle		16	696
Hickory Ridge Middle		8	324
Highland Oaks Middle		4	257
Ida B. Wells Academy		1	369
J. P. Freeman School		17	239
Kaleidoscope School of Memphis	0		253
Kate Bond Middle School		15	478
Kingsbury Middle		2	63
KIPP Memphis Academy Middle		4	300
KIPP Memphis Collegiate Middle School		2	335
Lowrance School		6	558
Maxine Smith STEAM Academy		20	535
Memphis Academy of Health Sciences		2	326
Memphis Academy of Science & Engineering - M.S.		8	458
Memphis Business Academy		16	294
Memphis Business Academy Hickory Hill Middle School	0		493
Memphis Grizzlies Preparatory Charter School		1	744
Memphis Rise Academy - M.S.		4	861



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Honors Courses →	0	1-10	11+
School	Honors		School Size
Mt. Pisgah Middle		12	151
Oakhaven Middle		12	162
Power Center Academy		2	1224
Power Center Academy Middle - Southeast	0		328
Raleigh-Egypt Middle		12	493
Ridgeway Middle		15	744
Riverview School		12	241
Sherwood Middle		1	861
Snowden School		15	607
Treadwell Middle School		12	634
University Middle School		13	151
Veritas College Preparatory	0		162
White Station Middle		22	1224
Woodstock Middle School		2	328

Table 2 presents the advanced course offerings among the District’s 48 high schools. White Station provides the most at 153. Twenty-one percent of the schools (10) offer 41 or more advanced courses, 42% (20) offer 21-40 courses, and 25% (12) offer 1–20. Thirteen percent (6) of the schools offer no advanced courses, 5 were District-Managed alternative schools and 1 was an adult high school. Note that schools offering both middle and high-school grade levels are included in this list.

Table 2. Number of Advanced Courses Offered in High Schools 2020–21

Advanced Courses →	0				1-20	21-40	41+
School	AP	Honors	DE	DC	IB	Total Advanced Courses	Enrollment
Adolescent Parenting Program	0	0	0	0	0	0	24
B. T. Washington High	1	16	3	4	0	24	494
Bolton High	3	15	3	2	8	31	733
Central High	18	74	16	3	0	111	1391
City University	0	3	0	0	0	3	254
City University School of Independence	0	2	0	0	0	2	14
Compass Community School Midtown	0	13	0	0	0	13	265
Cordova High School	12	46	9	4	0	71	2224
Craigmont High	1	22	8	2	0	33	762
Crosstown High School	6	26	1	0	0	33	397
Douglass High	1	23	3	3	0	30	677
East High	9	61	8	1	0	79	543
Freedom Prep Academy Flagship	3	7	0	0	0	10	825
G.W. Carver College & Career Academy	0	0	0	0	0	0	151



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Advanced Courses →				0	1-20	21-40	41+
School	AP	Honors	DE	DC	IB	Total Advanced Courses	Enrollment
Germantown High	8	41	4	4	31	87	1969
Hamilton High	2	17	3	5	0	27	715
Hollis F. Price Middle College	0	15	14	0	0	29	109
Hope Academy	0	0	0	0	0	0	55
Kingsbury High	8	20	2	2	0	32	1332
KIPP Memphis Collegiate High	6	0	0	0	0	6	486
Kirby High	3	20	8	7	0	38	801
Manassas High	2	7	1	4	0	13	416
Melrose High	2	19	6	2	0	29	738
Memphis Academy of Health Sciences High	0	9	2	0	0	11	372
Memphis Academy of Science & Engineering - H.S.	5	17	0	0	0	22	343
Memphis Business Academy High	6	22	0	0	0	28	565
Memphis Rise Academy - H.S.	9	28	0	0	0	37	441
Memphis School of Excellence	4	14	0	0	0	18	634
Memphis Virtual School	4	26	0	0	0	30	67
Middle College High	7	37	18	2	0	64	329
Mitchell High	1	9	6	4	0	20	434
Newcomer International Center	0	0	0	0	0	0	30
Northeast Prep Academy	0	0	0	0	0	0	90
Northwest Prep Academy	0	0	3	0	0	3	98
Oakhaven High	1	16	1	4	0	22	391
Overton High	10	55	6	5	0	76	1335
Power Center Academy High	4	23	1	0	0	28	650
Raleigh-Egypt High	2	17	5	5	0	29	712
Ridgeway High	3	41	4	2	18	68	909
Sheffield High	1	9	3	4	0	17	565
Southwind High	5	45	15	3	0	68	1494
The Excel Center	0	0	0	0	0	0	403
The Soulsville Charter School	0	13	0	0	0	13	632
Trezevant High	1	13	5	3	0	22	550
Westwood High	1	14	4	5	0	24	359
White Station High	34	102	14	3	0	151	1979
Whitehaven High	10	52	5	4	0	71	1571
Wooddale High	1	21	4	5	0	31	682

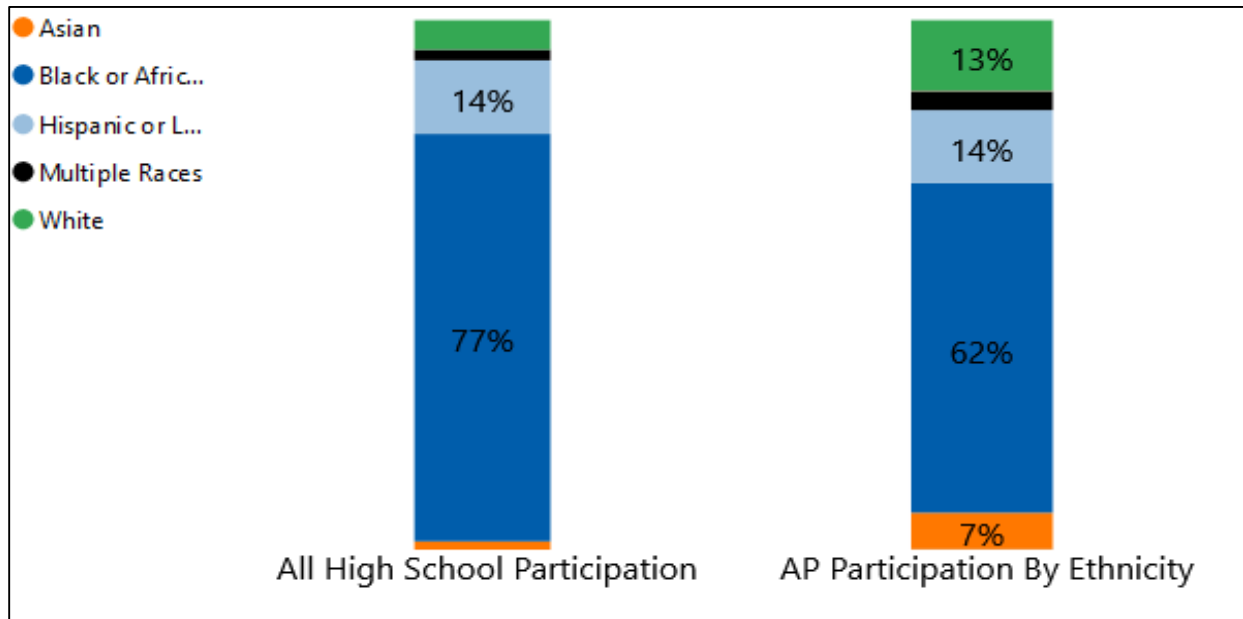


Advanced Placement Participation by Subgroup

One method of enhancing college-readiness is through rigorous college-preparatory coursework, such as Advanced Placement (AP). Students can begin taking AP courses as early as ninth grade, though the bulk of AP courses are taken in 11th and 12th grade. Increasing AP participation among disadvantaged groups can help close achievement gaps, as well as gaps in different groups' college-readiness, college enrollment, and college success.

Figure 3 displays the 2019–20 racial/ethnic breakdown of AP participants compared to all students in grades 9–12. White and Asian students were overrepresented in AP courses, while African American students were underrepresented. Latinx students, on the other hand, were at parity. (Students with racial/ethnic designations not listed in the chart legend were excluded, because they constituted less than one percent of both AP participants and high-schoolers in general.)

Figure 3. 2019–20 Racial/Ethnic Composition of AP Participants Compared to All 9th–12th Graders

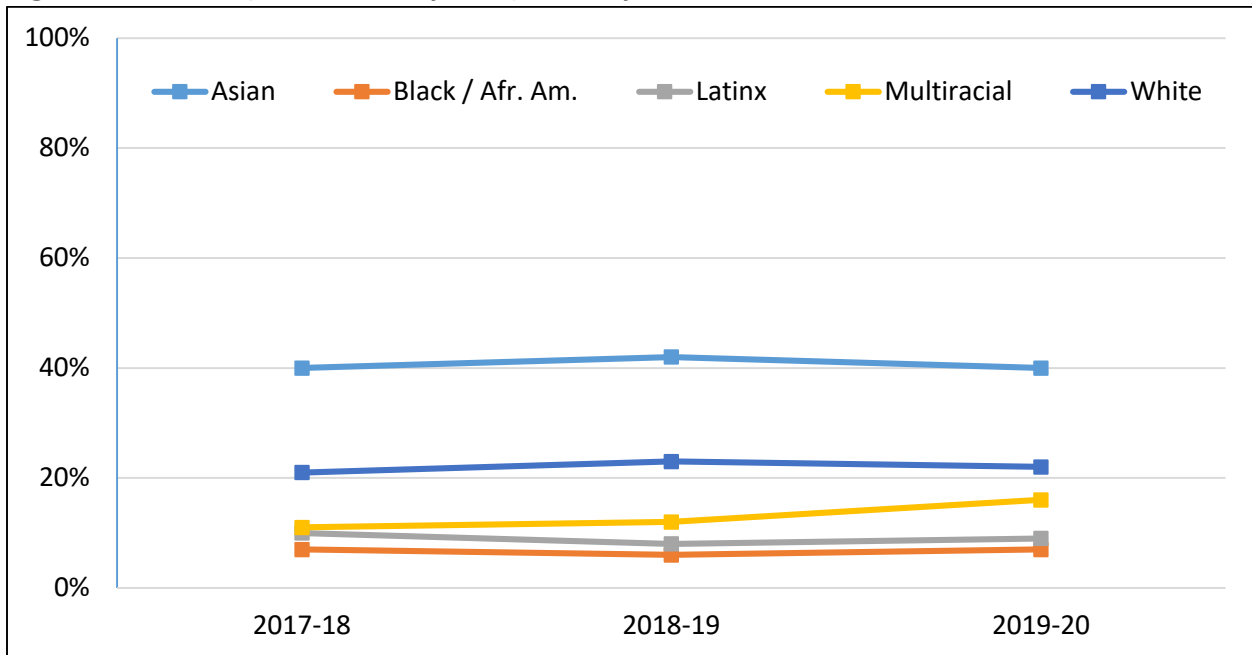


AP participants are defined as any 9th–12th graders enrolled in at least one AP course in 2019–20.

While Figure 3 gives a good overview of the racial/ethnic composition of AP participants, it is important to look also at AP participation rates *within* each racial/ethnic group to get a real sense of the equitability of AP participation. Thus, Figure 4 presents this information for the past three years and year-to-date for the current school year. As Figure 4 reveals, Asian students have had by far the highest rate of AP participation, followed by White students, and trailed by Multiracial, Latinx, and African American students, respectively.



Figure 4. AP Participation Rates by Race/Ethnicity



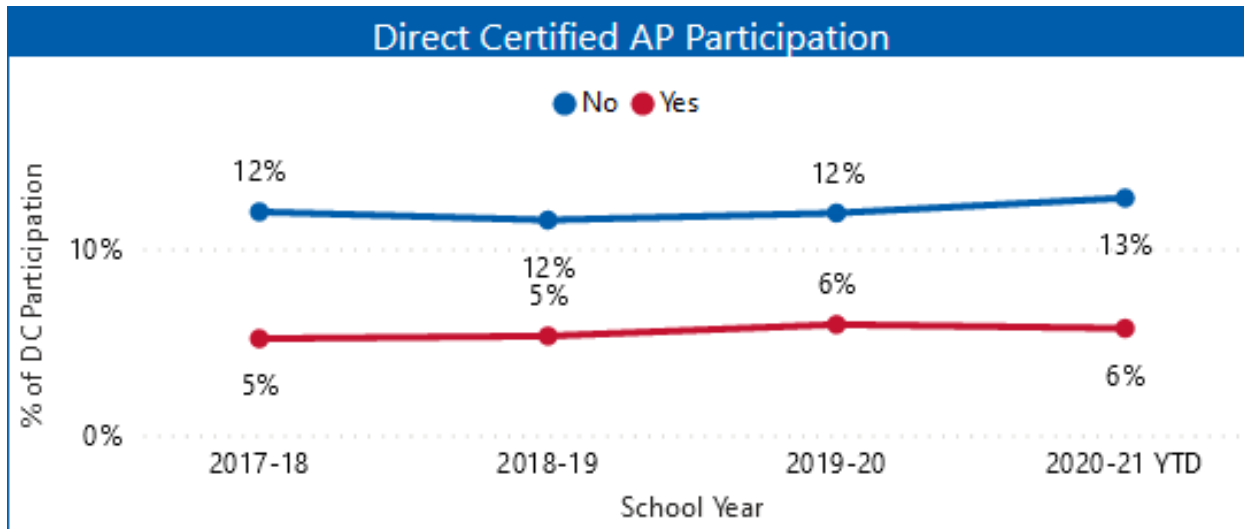
Ethnicity	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Asian	40%	42%	40%
Black or African American	7%	6%	7%
Hispanic or Latino	10%	8%	9%
Multiple Races	11%	12%	16%
White	21%	23%	22%
Overall	9%	8%	9%

For each year, AP participation rates reflect the percentage of 9th–12th graders enrolled in at least one AP course.

Figure 5 presents AP participation by economic status from 2017–18 through the current school year. As shown, direct-certified (DC) students have lower AP participation than non-DC students. The two groups’ participation rates, and thus the gap between them, have remained relatively stable over time.



Figure 5. AP Participation by Economic Status



Subgroup Performance on Advanced Placement Exams

While participation in AP courses is a very valuable way to prepare for college, performance on AP exams determines whether students can get college credit for their AP participation. A score of 3 or higher (on a scale of 1 to 5) on an AP exam is the minimum score required to obtain college credit at most postsecondary institutions. Figure 6 presents the percentage of AP exams with scores of 3 or higher, by race/ethnicity for the past three years. As shown in the figure, most AP exams taken by Asian and White students scored at least a 3. Although most AP exams taken by Latinx and African American students fell below that threshold, they improved over the past three years by 8 and 5 percentage points, respectively, thus serving to narrow the performance gap.

The performance gap seen in Figure 6 was driven in part by a disparity in AP exam performance between students in charter and District-managed schools. Figure 7 displays the 2019–20 AP exam performance of African American and Latinx students in charter versus District-managed schools. (There were not enough students in the other racial/ethnic categories attending charter schools to allow for meaningful comparison.) Both African American and Latinx students in District-managed schools outperformed their counterparts in charter schools by wide margins.

As for economic status, Figure 8 presents DC and non-DC students' AP exam performance over the past four years. The percentage of DC students scoring a 3 or higher increased by 5 percentage points last year, though DC students still trailed their non-DC counterparts by a substantial margin.

However, breaking down DC/non-DC AP exam performance by school sector (i.e., charter versus District-managed) reveals some interesting results, as shown in Figure 9. Last year, both DC and non-DC students attending District-managed schools performed much better on their AP exams than did their counterparts at charter schools. One striking finding is that DC students at District-managed schools far outperformed non-DC students at charter schools.

One reason for this disparity between school sectors may be that the AP participation rate at charter schools (19%) was quite a bit higher than at District-managed schools (7%). If charter schools prioritize giving more students exposure to AP instead of limiting participation to just those with the



most robust prerequisites, the performance gap may be (at least partly) an artifact of differences between the two sectors' approaches to structuring AP participation.

Figure 6. Percentage of AP Exams with 3+ Score, by Race/Ethnicity

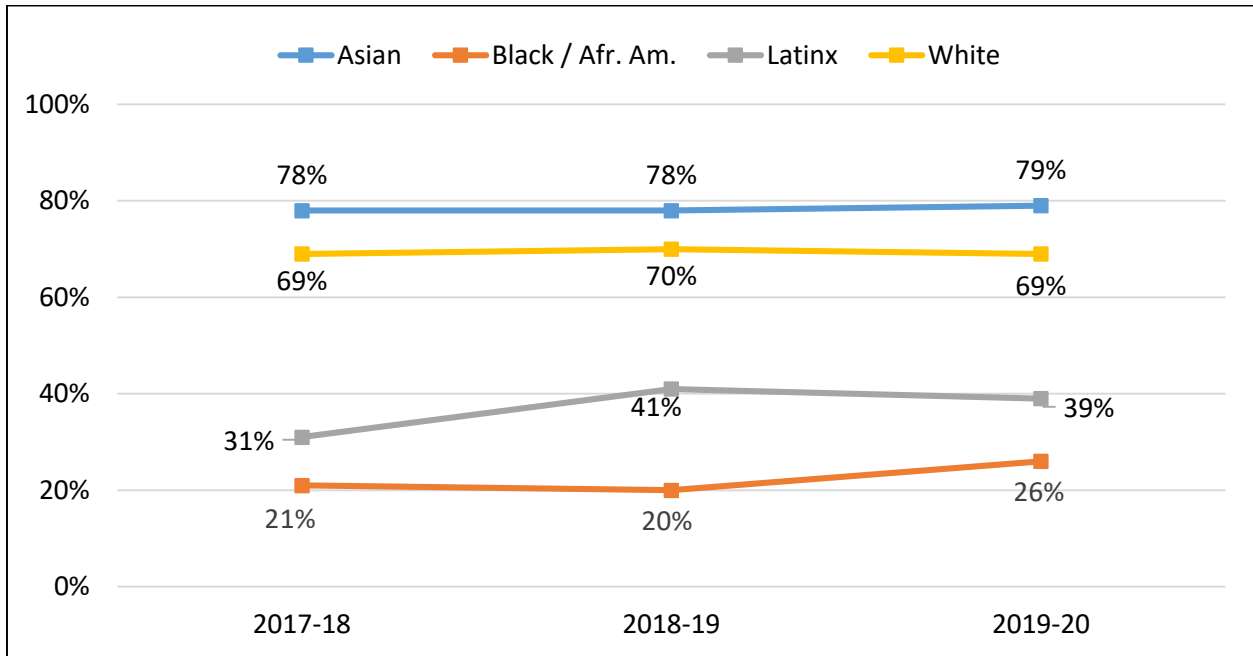
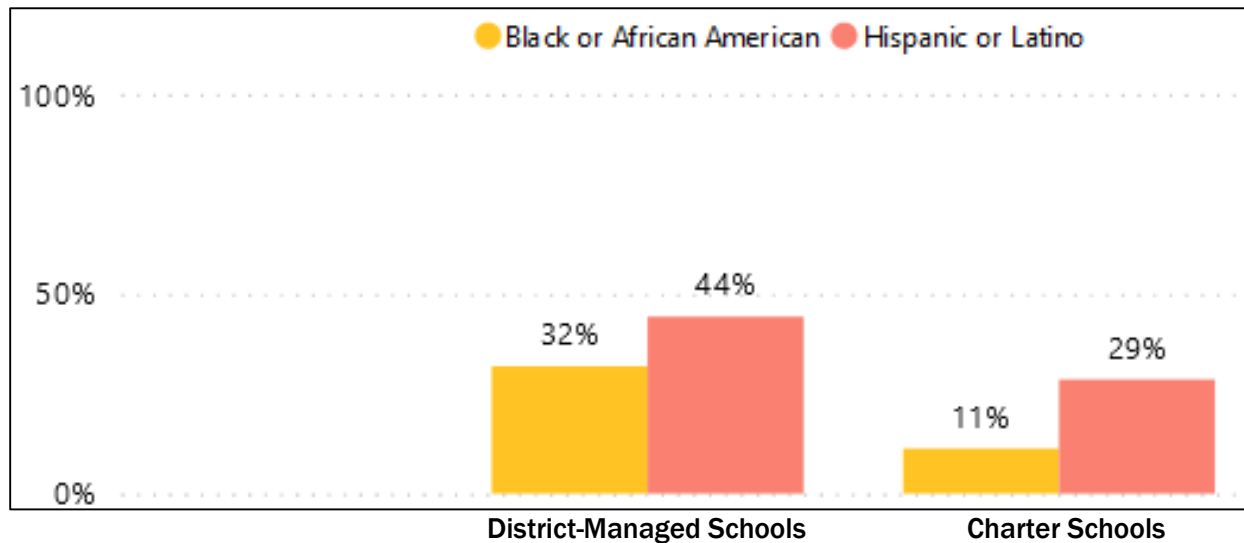


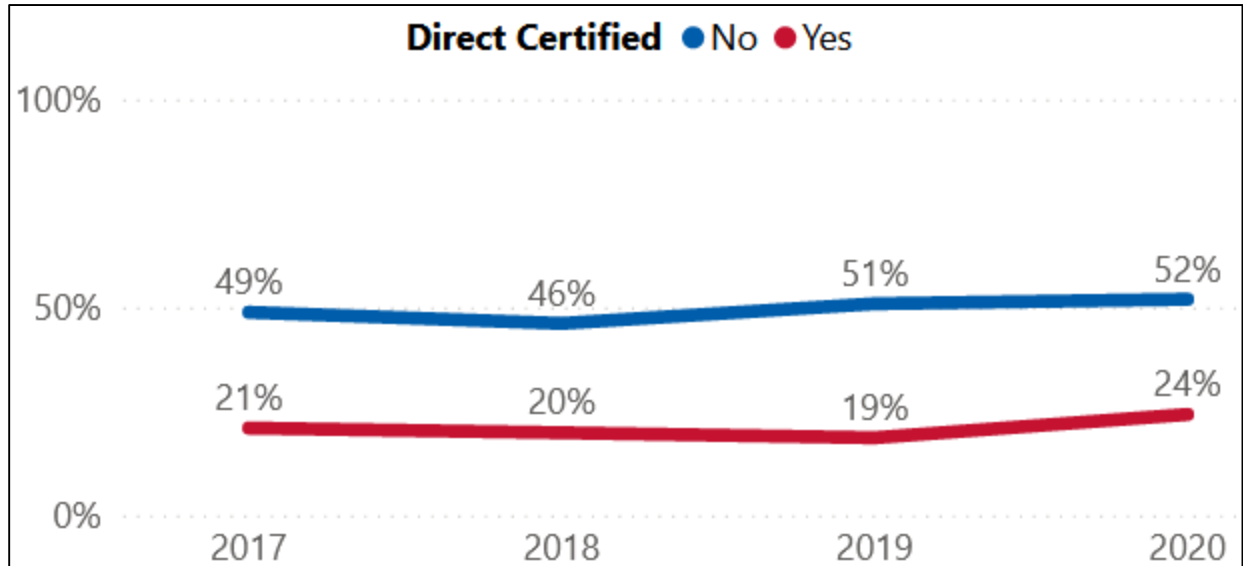
Figure 7. Percentage of 2019–20 AP Exams with 3+ Score, by Race/Ethnicity



Charters → # of AP exams taken: African American=434, Latinx=133
District-managed → # of AP exams taken: African American=1,073, Latinx=280

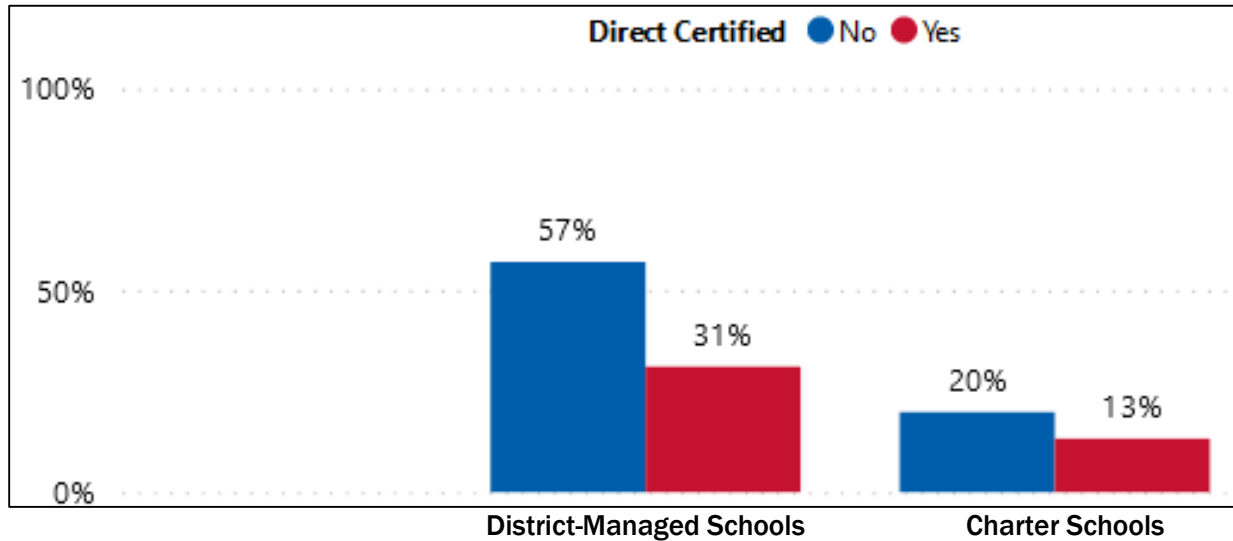


Figure 8. Percentage of AP Exams with 3+ Score, by Economic Status



Number of AP exams taken in 2020: DC=651, non-DC=2,578

Figure 9. Percentage of 2019–20 AP Exams with 3+ Score, by Economic Status



Charters → # of AP exams taken: DC=249, non-DC=358

District-managed → # of AP exams taken: DC=402, non-DC=2,214



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Dual-Enrollment (DE) and Statewide Dual Credit (SDC) Participation

Shelby County Schools (SCS) has DE partnerships with seven local postsecondary institutions:

- Bethel University
- Christian Brothers University,
- LeMoyne Owen College
- Southwest Tennessee Community College
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology
- University of Memphis
- William Moore College of Technology (Moore Tech)

Students participating in SCS's DE program earn high school credit as well as college credit at one of the above partnership institutions. Students participating in SDC who pass the course challenge exam earn credit that can be applied to any public postsecondary institution in Tennessee. The intended benefits of DE and SDC include the following:

- Reduce the financial burden of paying for college,
- Shorten the time required to complete an undergraduate degree,
- Provide a wider range of course offerings for high-school students,
- Improve general academic preparedness for college,
- Create a "college mentality" versus "high-school mentality",
- Instill the desire and ambition to attend college in students who might not have previously seen college as a viable option (as is often the case with economically disadvantaged students and students from non-college-educated families),
- Create a seamless transition from high school to college,
- Eliminate the duplication of courses taken in high school and college, and
- Provide access to college resources, facilities, libraries, etc.

SCS employs two DE Advisors to administer its program. They liaise with the District's college partners, the staff at participating high schools, and current and potential program participants. They educate high-school staff and students about the benefits of DE and SDC and how to navigate the process. This includes eligibility requirements, funding parameters, course offerings, required paperwork, and deadlines. They also speak with potential students about the differences between high-school and college expectations to give them a better understanding of what participating in the program will entail.

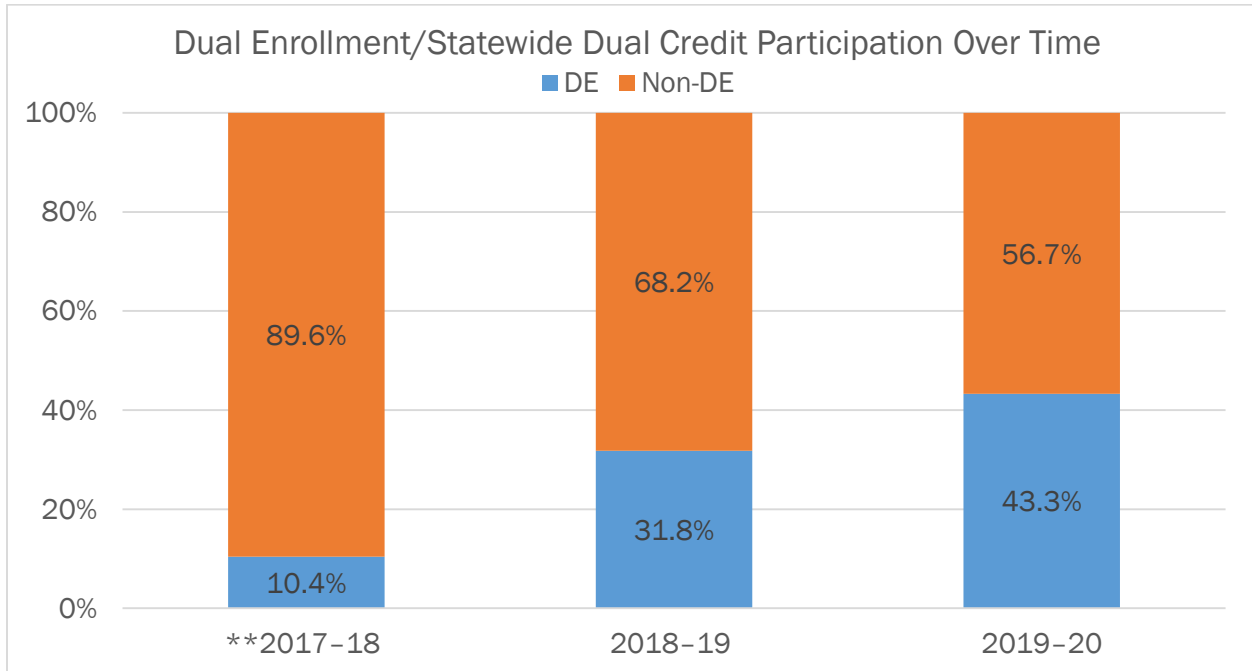
Although all eligible² high school students can participate in the program, DE and SDC is primarily aimed at 11th and 12th grade students, with the exception of two schools: Middle College High School and Hollis F. Price. Unlike other schools, Middle College High offers ninth- and tenth-grade students funding to participate in the program. At Hollis F. Price, DE participation is a requirement for all students. Consequently, Figure 10 reflects 11th and 12th grade student participation, as well as 9th and 10th grade participation in the aforementioned schools. Participation in the program has risen substantially over the past three years.

² Students are eligible to participate if they meet the agreed-upon acceptance requirements established between their high school and the participating college. These can include earning a minimum course grade, GPA, and/or ACT score.



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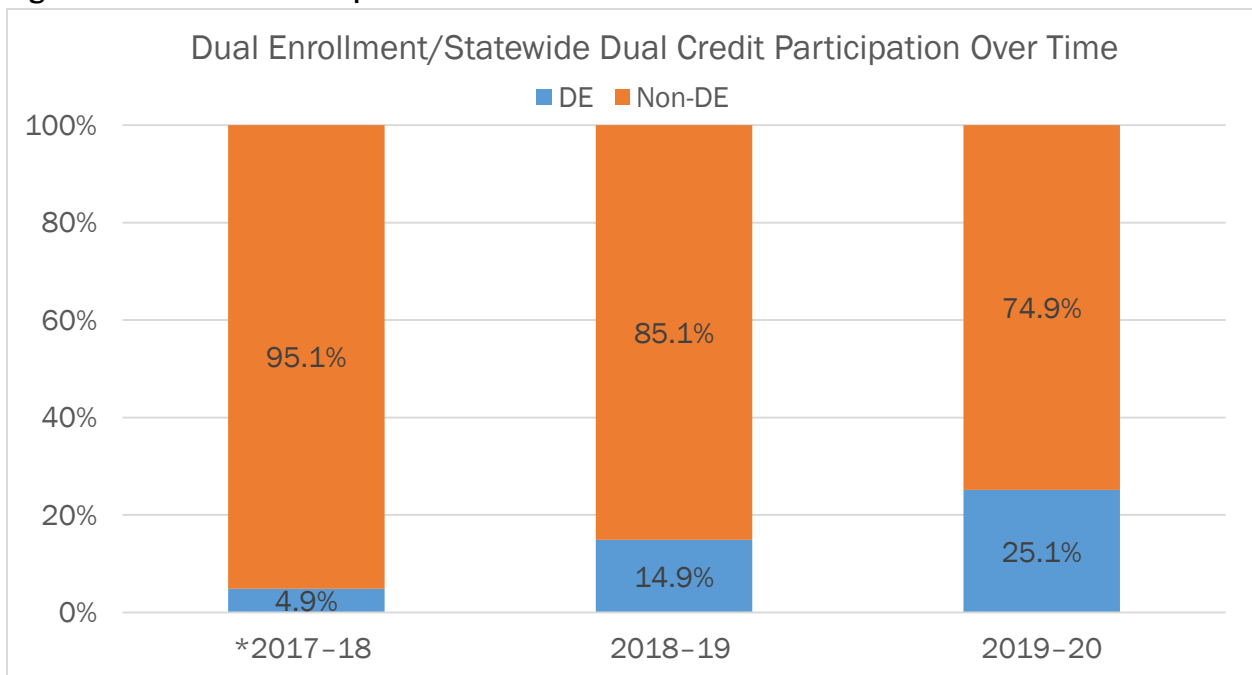
Figure 10. DE and SDC Participation: 11th–12th + Hollis F. Price & Middle College High 9th–12th Grade



** The SAILS curriculum was modified in 2017–18 resulting in a decline in SAILS students qualifying for DE Statistics in the second semester. Two hundred fifty-five students transitioned from SAILS to DE in 2016–17, but only 105 students made the transition in 2017–18.

Figure 11 provides a more comprehensive view of DE and SDC by presenting the percentage of all eligible high school students participating in the program.

Figure 11. DE & SDC Participation: All 9th–12th Grade



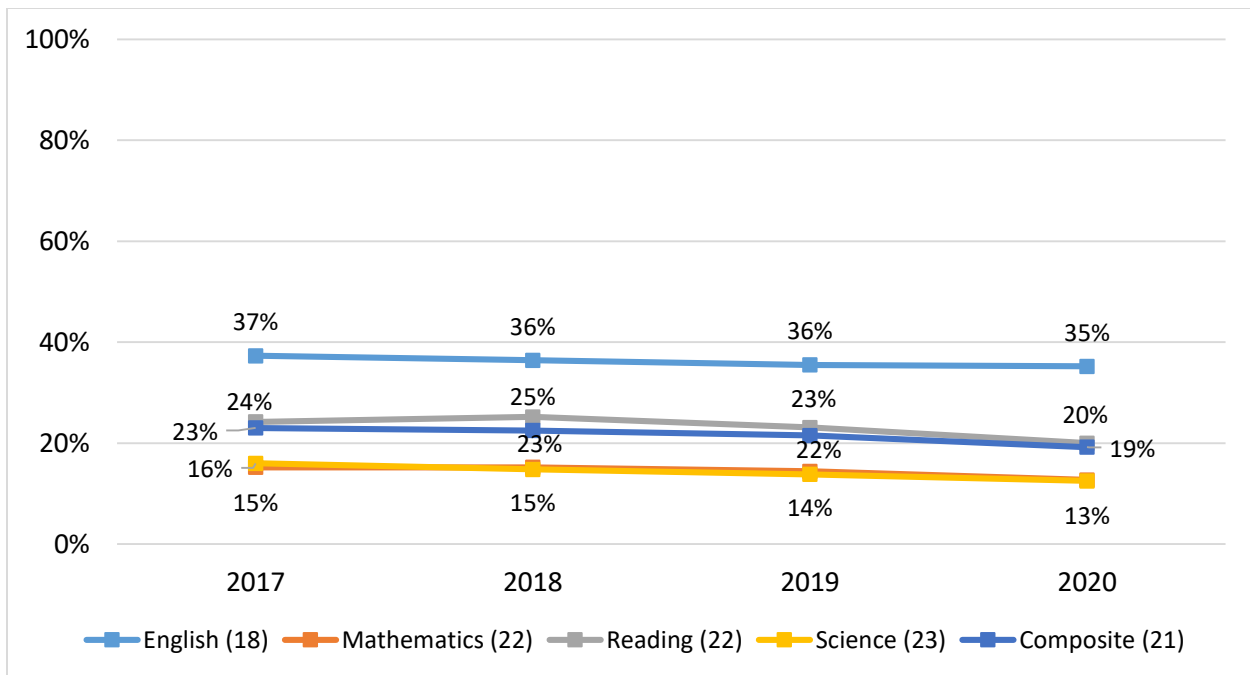


College-Readiness

ACT, Inc. conducts research examining the relationship between high-school students' performance on the ACT subject tests and their subsequent performance in various college courses. Using this information, ACT, Inc. formulates college-readiness benchmarks for each ACT subject-area test. Every year, SCS administers the ACT to all 11th-graders, and many students retake the test at least once by the time they graduate.

The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) calculates and tracks the ACT performance of on-time graduates for accountability purposes, using each student's highest score earned. Figure 12 presents the ACT performance of the District's on-time graduates for the past four graduating cohorts. The highest college-readiness rate was in English, then reading, followed by very low readiness levels in science and math. TDOE designates students who score an ACT composite of 21 or higher as *on track*. By this definition, 19% of the class of 2020 were on track, down 3–4 percentage points from the previous three cohorts.

Figure 12. Percentage of On-Time Graduates Meeting ACT College-Readiness Benchmarks



Each subject's college-readiness threshold is indicated in parentheses above.



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In over half of the District’s high schools, fewer than 15% of on-time graduates met the state’s definition of on track (ACT composite of 21 or higher), as shown in Table 3.

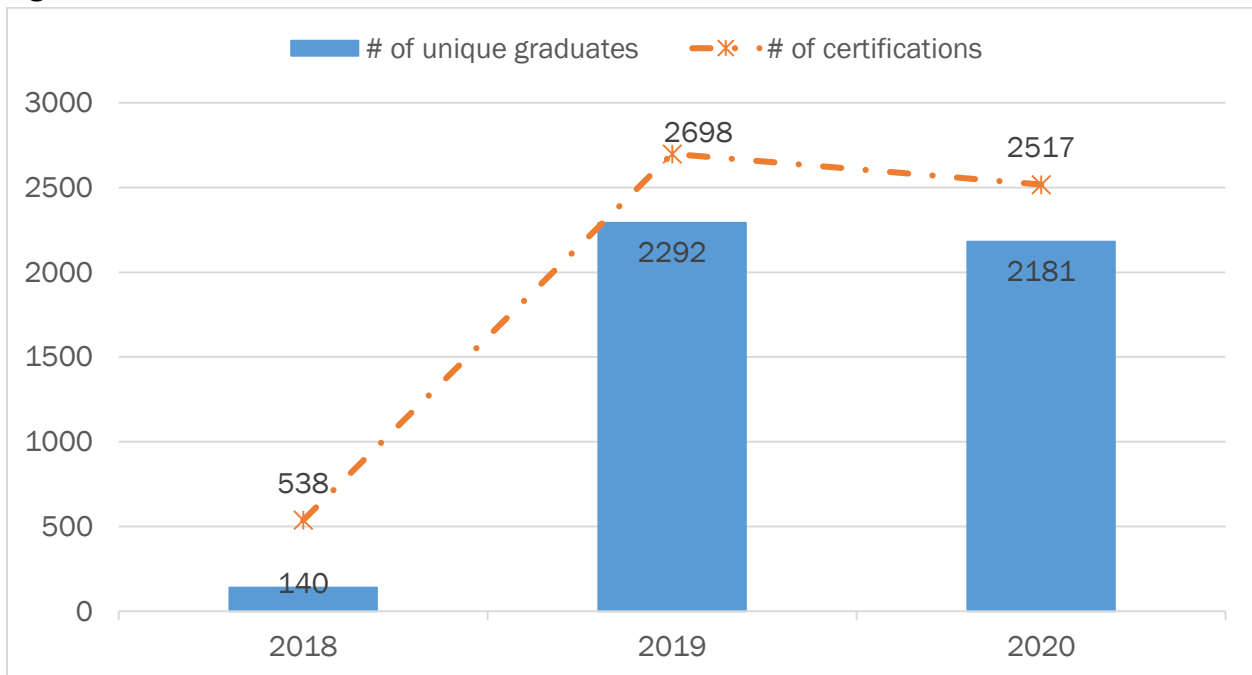
Table 3. Percentage of 2020 On-Time Graduates with an ACT Composite Score of 21+

Percentage of 2020 On-Time Graduates with ACT Composite of 21+	Number of High Schools	Average Number of Advanced Courses Offered
0 – 5%	10	22
>5 – 15%	13	32
>15 – 30%	11	33
>30 – 45%	3	76
61%	Middle College High	64
63%	White Station High	153

Students Graduating with Professional Certifications

Figure 13 shows that there has been a substantial increase the number of graduating students who earned professional certifications as well as the number of certifications earned since 2018.

Figure 13. Number of Students with Certifications & Number of Certifications





District Strategies

Office of Optional Schools & Advanced Academics

- Continue to expand Advanced Academics in all high schools with individualized Advanced Academics Plans to increase access to advanced courses (Honors, Pre-AP, SDC, DE, AP and/or IB) with fidelity districtwide. This includes ensuring that each high school offers a variety of advanced courses with an emphasis on increasing AP courses.
- Continue to provide professional development and specialized training to support theme-based program teachers, SDC teachers, and Honors/Pre-AP/AP/IB teachers in providing high-quality learning experiences for students.
- Utilize Naviance data to recommend additional advanced course offerings based on multiple student data points and course demand.
- Continue to partner with college and university stakeholders to increase access for more students into Dual Enrollment classes. This may include modifying some admission requirements to increase access for certain courses.

Office of College & Career Technical Education

- Maximize strategic Enrichment opportunities for grades 6-12.
- Increase professional development opportunities for current CTE teachers.
- Recruit and Retain teachers in Big Six high-wage, high-demand occupations.
- Provide a rigorous curriculum and resources for CTE Courses.
- Facilitate highly functional content specific CTE PLCs.
- Supplement classroom instruction with experiences provided by Industry Professionals and Postsecondary Partners.
- Provide stipends for hard to staff Big Six high-wage, high-demand vacancies.

Office of Equity

- Build a track to create and monitor increased advanced courses at the middle school level (physical science, Algebra I) with a specific focus on road mapping how to get to college for black boys and their families.
- Provide PSAT for all 8th graders to create 4 year plans in collaboration with the feeder HS with parents to course correct and plan for the path of choice for AP in classes with a focus on Black males.
- Monitor the District's revised grading policy to ensure consistent implementation. Work with teachers and schools to ensure grades reflect what students have learned as grades are the gate keeper for advanced coursework
- The Office of Equity will develop a set of systems and processes for ILDs to assist principals during each grading period to identify at-risk students and create intervention steps as GPA is a greater predictor of college success than ACT scores.

Office of Schools & Leadership

- Use Naviance platform in middle school to identify students to begin advanced coursework and begin creating a coursework track that would ensure placement, access, and path towards more AP courses. Ensure that feeder patterns communicate, so that course offerings will align to the needs of students and middle schools offer high-quality honors courses.
- Provide ongoing support to students and teachers for all advanced coursework in addition to AP classes, such as virtual planning across the district and monthly tutoring support to



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increase student success in advanced courses. Add virtual AP course opportunities for students at other schools that do not offer certain courses.

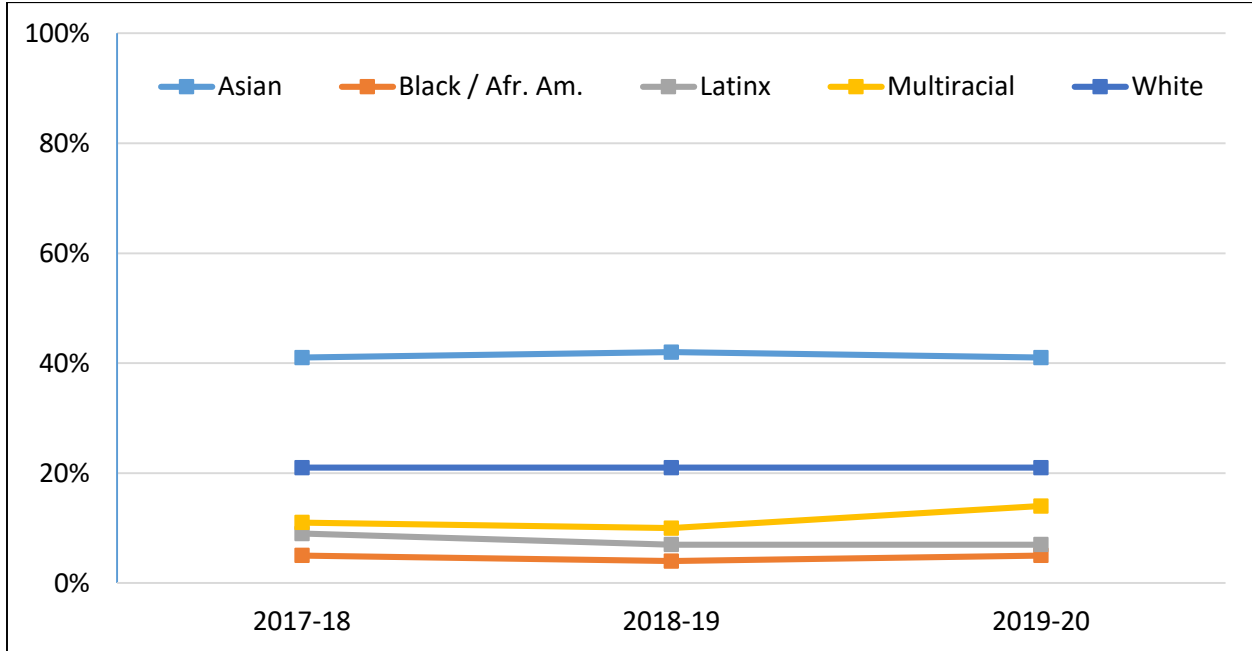
- Provide ILD support to schools to expand advanced course plans and ensure fidelity of assessments used to identify prospective students to participate in advanced courses.
- Create consistent communication of the importance of the ACT starting in elementary school. Begin looking at College Board standards to align coursework starting in primary grades. Ensure that the time frame for courses and standards taught align closer to when students take the ACT.
- Increase use of PSAT and Khan Academy as preparation resources for students.



Appendix

Advanced Placement (AP) participation rates by race/ethnicity for just the District-managed schools look very similar to the overall District rates when charter schools are included (see Figure A1).

Figure A1. AP Participation Rates by Race/Ethnicity for District-Managed Schools Only



Ethnicity	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Asian	41%	42%	41%
Black or African American	5%	4%	5%
Hispanic or Latino	9%	7%	7%
Multiple Races	11%	10%	14%
White	21%	21%	21%
Overall	7%	6%	7%

For each year, AP participation rates reflect the percentage of 9th–12th graders enrolled in at least one AP course.