



CONNECTING YOUTH TO OPPORTUNITY

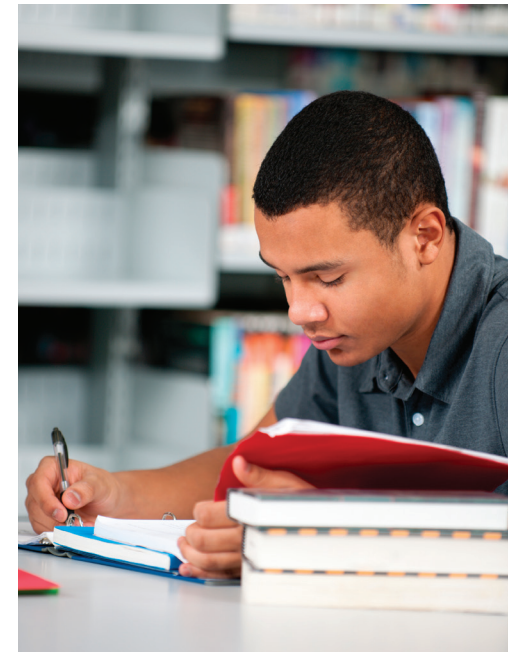
*creating college and career ready
young people in prince george's county*

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

THE *problem*

There are approximately 7,000 young people between the ages of 16-24 in Prince George's County with no high school diploma or job. These disconnected youth are part of a community facing increased high school dropout rates and low high school graduation rates.¹ Once students leave high school, they are unemployed or underemployed, not enrolled in postsecondary institutions, or are enrolled but do not complete a postsecondary degree. As a result, employers cannot find skilled workers to fill necessary positions.

As we challenge our students to consider the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?," we also need to equip them with ideas that inspire and resources that support them throughout their academic journey. Philanthropists, parents, businesses, school leaders, policy makers, and students themselves are all accountable for the educational opportunities that will lead the youth of Prince George's County to lifetime success.



4 THE *causes*

Students in Prince George's County have difficulty staying in and graduating from high school. Those who do graduate from high school might go on to college or find employment, but many face unemployment or have trouble completing their college education. There are many reasons for these difficulties, including:

ACADEMIC FACTORS

Students perform poorly on mandatory assessments in core subjects like reading, math, science, and social studies. In addition, a significant amount of students deemed "proficient" or "above" on these assessments struggle with basic skills deficiencies in reading, writing, math, and digital literacy. In the 2009-2010 academic year, 1,718 Maryland high school graduates enrolled at PGCC. Based on low scores on the ACCUPLACER placement test, 84.5% of these students were required to enroll in developmental education courses. The high need for remediation has an impact on persistence, as many students never make it through the developmental pipeline for reasons of time, cost, and morale. Therefore, academic "success" meaning graduation is not consistently aligned with college and career readiness.

INTERRUPTIONS IN EDUCATION

Students suffer academically due to interruptions in their education, including:

- **Exclusionary discipline** – In-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion are all punishments aimed at removing students from the academic environment. Sometimes these discipline referrals escalate to juvenile arrests, leading to what some call the "school-to-prison pipeline." The Maryland State Board of Education has recently adopted new regulations designed to keep students in school and continue on track towards graduation while strengthening school safety. Local school systems are being required to adopt policies that reduce long-term out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, and use such actions only when a student engages in extreme disruptive behavior or poses a threat to themselves and others.²
- **Student Mobility** – Students entering and/or exiting a school or school system for various reasons (ie. family move, homelessness, health, etc.) often lose valuable records and data about their academic performance in the process. They must frequently repeat courses at a new school or district, which prevents them from receiving the full benefits of their education. During the 2011-2012 school year, 2% of Prince George's County Public School students were homeless. This represents just over 2,500 students.

- **Late Start** – Families do not enroll their children in early childhood programs until the mandatory age of enrollment, which is five years of age. A late start in education means that students are more likely to spend the rest of their academic careers performing below grade-level in reading and math, and at a higher risk for developmental and behavioral difficulties.
- **Young Parents** – Teenage mothers and fathers find the dual task of raising a child and completing their own education overwhelming. Many times these young parents put their education on hold or drop out of school altogether to care for their child and look for employment.

INADEQUATE ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION

Students across Prince George's County do not receive a consistent quality education from one school to the next. Inconsistent program offerings, varying staff structures, and different facilities are all factors that can contribute to uneven student performance results.

OUTSIDE-OF-SCHOOL SUPPORTS

Even when students are successful academically, they often lack supports outside of school to offset factors that affect other areas of their life, like poverty, language barriers, abuse and neglect, or other difficult circumstances. Also referred to as wrap around services, outside-of-school supports are services or programs that provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home. There are programs that exist, however, their reach to students in the county is limited. The Hillside Work Scholarship Connection is an agency that provides long-term, one-on-one mentoring relationships, academic counseling and tutoring, life skill development, college preparation services and job training. Sadly, this program can only currently serve 210 students in 5 High schools out of the 28 schools in the county.

LACK OF MULTIPLE CAREER PATHWAYS

There is a missing link between school and career. Education exists in a “vacuum” and students view the skills they learn in school as separate from the skills they will need and use in their careers. Additionally, students are not aware of their professional opportunities beyond school because businesses have historically played a small to non-existent part of the educational process. Some pathways exist for students to explore career options, like dual enrollment programs, career academies, summer youth employment, and employment programs, but these opportunities are currently too limited for the needs of the students in Prince George’s County.

HIGH YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The highest unemployment rate in the County is at 27.1% among youth age 21 and under: a daunting statistic for young people who must enter a labor market that has tightened over recent years and must compete with older, more skilled workers even for entry level jobs.

MISSING MOTIVATION

Many students in Prince George’s County are the first in their family to attend college. Some are the first in their family to graduate from high school. To accomplish this is no small task; to achieve the next goal requires motivation, planning and guidance. According to a 2001 study by the National Center for Educational Statistic, only 54% of students whose parents had completed high school continued on to college. Of students whose parents did not have a high school diploma, only 36% of students continued on to college.³

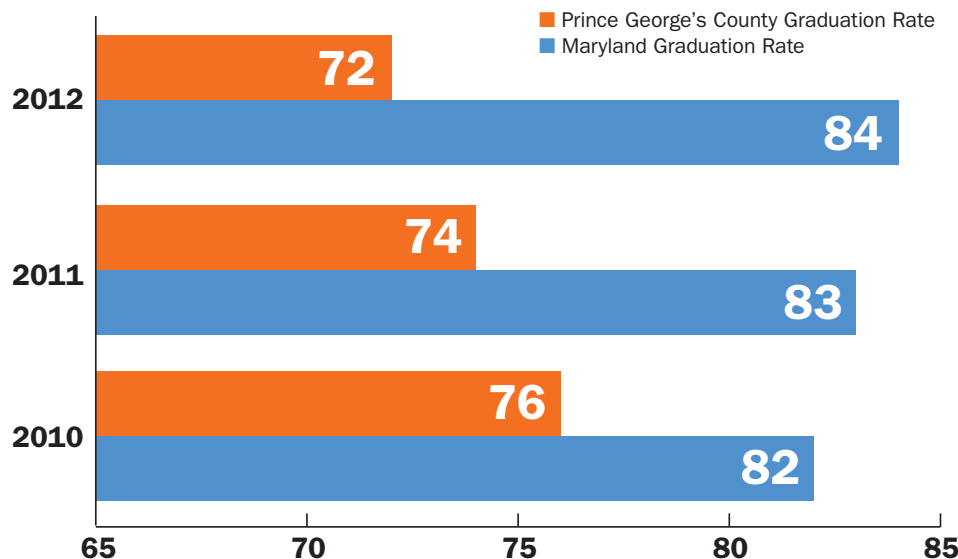
6 THE *data*

GRADUATION RATES

The graduation rate is defined as the number of students enrolled in high school who graduate within four years. When this number is high, it means more students who enter as freshmen are successful and graduate at the end of four years.

- Across the United States, this rate was 76% in 2010. Meaning that out of all students who entered high school in 2006, 76% of them graduated in 2010.⁴
- In Maryland, the graduation rate in 2010 was slightly higher at 82%. In 2011, Maryland's graduation rate was 82.8%, and in 2012 it was 83.5%⁵
- Of the last few years, Prince Georges County saw its highest graduation rate in 2010 with 76% of students attaining a high school diploma. The graduation rate for the class of 2011 was 74%; for the class of 2012, the graduation rate dropped to 73% and subsequently increased back to 74% with the class of 2013.⁶

GRADUATION RATE



DROPOUT RATES

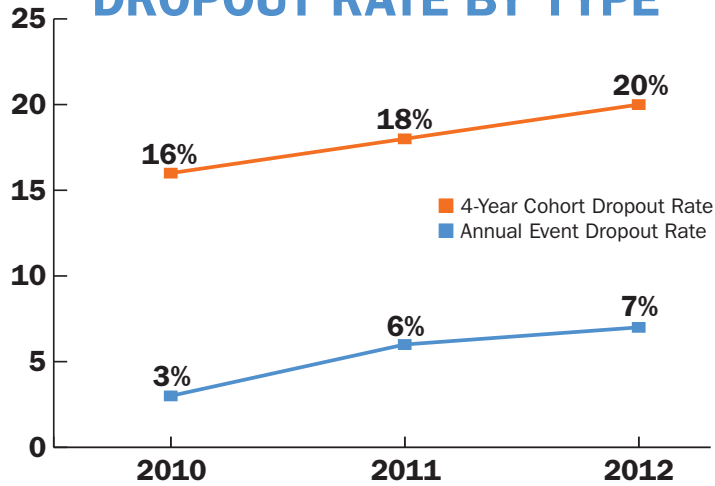
Similar to the graduation rate, the dropout rate is a measure of how many students enter high school but do not graduate. A low number is important because that means few students have left school without a diploma.

The number of students to drop out of school are measured the following ways:

- “Status Dropout Rate” refers to the percentage of the general adult population who is over the age of 16 and does not hold a high school diploma.
- “Event Dropout Rate” refers to the number and percentage of students who drop out of school during a given school year.
- Cohort Dropout Rate” refers to the percentage of students who do not finish within a four-year timespan. In other words, they do not graduate high school with the same cohort of peers they entered with.

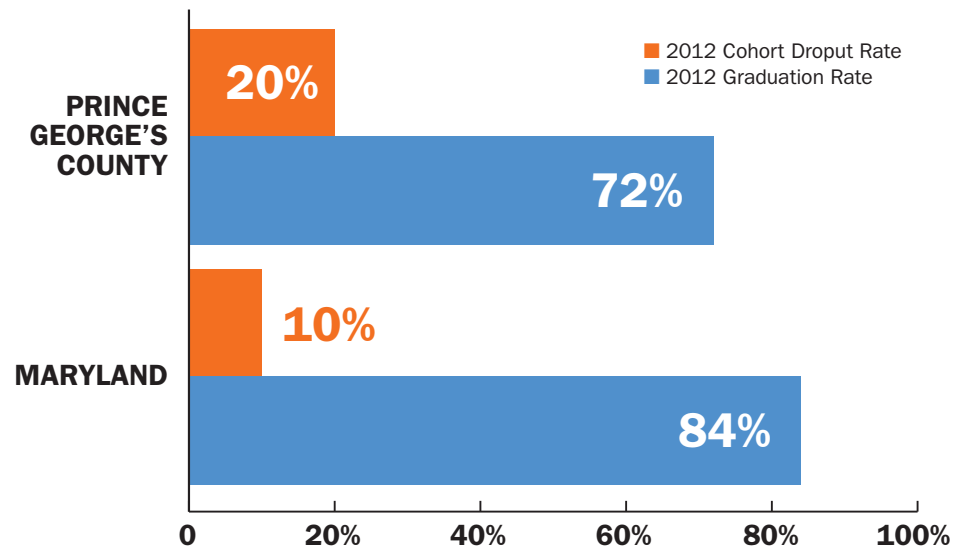
The table on the next page compares the state and county graduation rates in 2012 with the four-year cohort dropout rates in 2012 (the percentage of students who entered in 2008 but did not graduate).

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY DROPOUT RATE BY TYPE



Data Source: 2013 Maryland State Report Card, "Dropout Rates"

2012 GRADUATION AND COHORT DROPOUT RATES



Data Source: United States National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data, Table 4 and 2013 Maryland Report Card, 2010 School Year Data.

did you know...

80%
of PGC Public Schools 2012 graduates plan on attending college



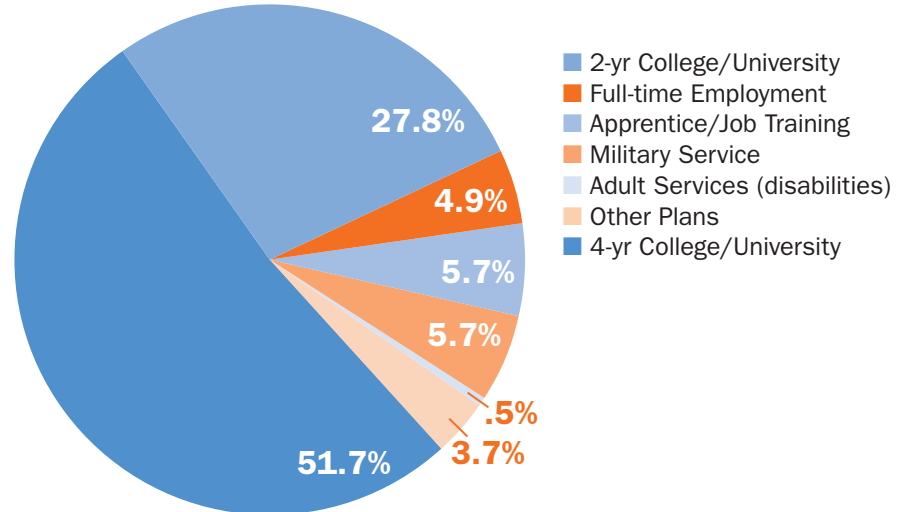
COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

College enrollment refers to the number of adults with a high school diploma who enroll in college. High enrollment numbers, though promising, do not tell the whole story because *enrollment* in college does not equal *completion*.

- Between 2000 and 2010, college (2-year or 4-year) enrollment increased by 37% from 15.3 million to 21 million.⁷ By fall of 2021 college enrollment nationwide is expected to set new records. The Nation Center for Educational Statistics projects a rise of enrollment by 11% of students under 25 years of age.⁸

- Of the students who graduated high school in Maryland in 2012, 83.7% entered a 2-year or 4-year postsecondary institution.⁹
 - 50.3% of these students entered 4-year institutions
 - 33.52% entered 2-year institutions
 - Of students who enrolled in a postsecondary institution, 67.7% stayed within the state of Maryland.
- 80% of all 2012 graduating seniors in Prince George’s County Public Schools planned to enter college – 52% planned to enter a 4-year college; 28% planned to enter a 2-year college.¹⁰

2012 PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS POST GRADUATION PLANS



COLLEGE REMEDIATION

Gaining admission to college is an incredible accomplishment, but ensuring that our students are prepared for this is only half the battle. In the 2009-2010 academic year, 70.2% of Prince George's high school graduates required post-secondary remediation – up from 64.3% in 2008-2009 and 59.6% in 2007-2008. This includes students enrolled at both 2- and 4-year institutions. Prince George's high school graduates rank second only to those from Baltimore City in their need for college-level remediation. The statewide average is 56.9%. Students must know how to succeed once they are in college. Often students report academic difficulty or financial hardship as the reason for leaving college before they have earned a degree.

Students who enter college without the necessary skills to be successful often end up in developmental education (i.e. remedial classes). Developmental education is comprised of courses needed to bridge the gap between the skills students leave high school with and those they need to be prepared for college-level coursework. Since universities do not give credit for these courses and view them as pre-requisites for credit bearing classes, students take much longer to

finish a degree program. The added time often leads to financial hardship and causes the student to leave their degree incomplete. In particular, it causes students to use up their limited semesters of Pell grants (lifetime limit of 12). In 2011, 59% of the fall 2005 cohort to enter 4-year institutions completed their degrees in 6 years.¹¹

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 32.6% of students in their first year of undergraduate studies self-reported participation in remedial course work. When taking a closer look at this data by institution type, it shows that 39.8% of students in 2-year public universities self reported taking remedial classes, and 25.1% self reported in public 4-year public universities.¹²

COLLEGE ATTAINMENT

College Attainment refers to the number of adults who have completed their college education (2-year or 4-year) and who hold a degree (associates or bachelors). The data is reported separately for college *enrollment* and *attainment* because many students who start college do not finish.

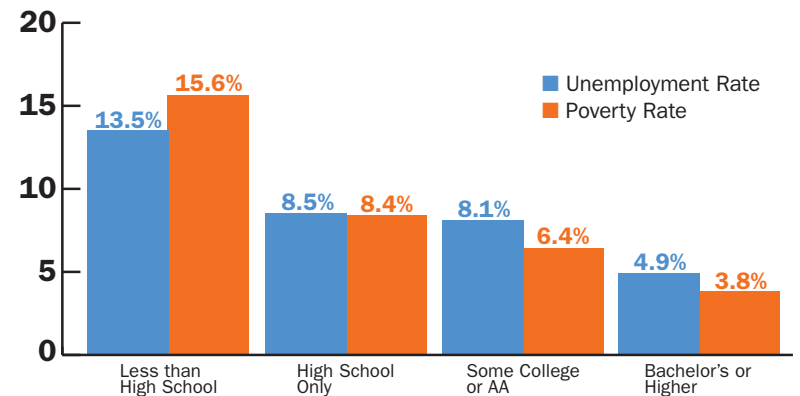
- It is estimated that the national attainment rate in 2011 was 38.7% for all adults age 25-64 who held a college degree (2-year or 4-year).¹³
- In Maryland, 45.4% of adults held a college degree in 2011.
- In Prince George's County, 37.33% of adults over the age of 25 held either a 2-year or 4-year postsecondary degree in 2010.¹⁴
- Prince George's Community College is a core provider of post-secondary education and training within the county. Of the students who enrolled in 2007, only 25.1% of those degree seeking students graduated or transferred to 4-year institutions within 4 years. This is significantly lower than the state wide average for community colleges which is 35.8%.¹⁵

EMPLOYMENT

There is an important link between education and employment. Students who graduate high school are more likely to find employment and earn higher wages. For adults who hold a college degree, the average employment rate and salary increase even further.

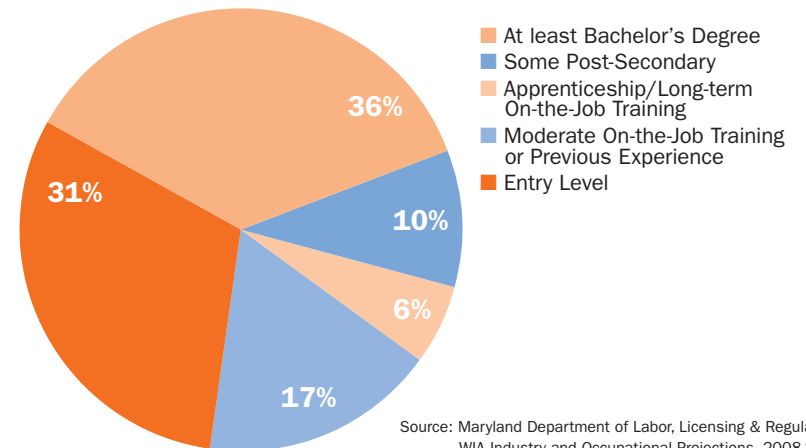
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 76% of 25-year olds with a high school diploma, but no college education, were employed in October of 2012. That number increases to 81% for 25-year olds who hold a high school diploma and at least some college education.
- In Maryland, it is projected that 37% of job openings by 2020 will be “middle-skill” – requiring at least a high school diploma but not a bachelor’s degree.¹⁶
- The latest county level projections from the Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulation estimate that Prince Georges County will see job growth of 10% - or about 32,000 jobs over the next decade. The majority of those new jobs will require the employee to have some post-secondary education. In particular, 36% of the new jobs will require at least a bachelor’s degree.¹⁷
- There is a high unemployment rate in Prince George’s’ County which affects the youth and adults with low educational attainment most significantly. Youth with little experience or training are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. At the same time, more than 60,000 county residents lack a high school credential. With a large number of the projected jobs coming to the county needing at least some post-secondary education it is becoming more important for there to be services for residents to improve their education in order to be competitive with these new jobs.¹⁸

UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY RESIDENTS 25+



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2011

2012 PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS POST GRADUATION PLANS



Source: Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulation, WIA Industry and Occupational Projections, 2008-2018

ADDITIONAL *factors*

THE “TESTING CULTURE”

Beginning in the 1980's, policy makers became concerned that students in the United States were not achieving to their full potential. Alarmed at low graduation rates, high dropout rates, and poor test scores, policy makers, researchers, advocates and leaders in the field of education called for reforms that would change the way public schooling was done. The most notable changes came in the areas of standards. A uniform curriculum was introduced to be taught in every school district, and state. This added a level of accountability for leaders to know how well students were learning. Today all public school students are tested in grades 3 – 8 in reading, math and science. Additionally, students are tested in social studies during middle school and high school. This data is used to make adjustments at the school level in teacher assignments as well as funding decisions at the state and Federal levels. Many policy makers believe testing yields accountability and produces better student outcomes; however many teachers and parents have become opposed to testing, citing interruptions in learning time as their chief complaint.

COMMON CORE

The Common Core State Standards initiative is a state led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School officers, to establish a set of goals and expectations for what students should understand and be able to do in grades K-12 to prepare for success in college and the work place. The standards create consistent learning goals for all student regardless of where they live, so students stay on track when moving from one state to another.

In 2010, The Maryland State Board of Education unanimously voted on implementing the College and Career Ready Standards which incorporates Common Core State Standards. Maryland became one of the first states to adopt these new standards in Reading, English Language Arts, and Mathematics. The Common Core State Standards is set to be implemented statewide by the end of the 2013-2014 academic year.¹⁴

Common Core State Standards are related to the real world with a focus on the knowledge and skills a student will need to succeed in life after high school in either post-secondary education or the globally competitive workforce.

These new standards have made shifts in the way English/Language Arts and Mathematics are taught. The following lists are ways these subjects have changed.

Shifts in English/Language Arts

- Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational tests in addition to literature.
- Reading and writing grounding in evidence from the text.
- Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary.

Shifts in Mathematics

- Focus on 2-3 topics intensely in each grade.
- Concepts logically connected from one grade to the next and linked to other major topics within the grade.
- Fluency with arithmetic, application of knowledge to real world situations, and deep understanding of mathematical concepts.²⁰

To see the impact the Common Core is having on students, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers has developed a computer based assessment tool to measure higher order skills such as critical thinking, communications, and problem solving.²¹ This assessment should be fully implemented throughout the state by the 2014-2015 academic year.

12 *CALL to action*

invest in the right solutions

Given the statistics and information surrounding high school graduation rates and dropout rates, as well as the perspective of student motivational factors, Prince George's County must ensure that all students graduate from high school with the basic skills they need to succeed in college and careers. Prince George's County must have the following in place to achieve 100% college and career readiness:

- **Essential Standards.** Adopt education standards that prepare all students for the rigors of college or career training programs. The Common Core State Standards is the first step but now policymakers and practitioners must continue this process by aligning all aspects of their system to college and career readiness.
- **Common Expectations.** Align college and career readiness standards to a rigorous core curriculum for all high school students that are bound for college or work.
- **Clear Performance Standards.** Define performance standards so that students, parents, and teacher know how well students must perform academically to have a reasonable chance of success at college or on the job.
- **Rigorous Curriculum.** Ensure students take the right kinds of courses so they are ready for credit-bearing college courses without remediation.

- **Early Monitoring and Intervention.** Monitor student progress closely so that deficiencies in foundation skills can be identified and remediated early, in upper elementary and middle school. In addition, age-appropriate career assessment, exploration, and planning activities that encourage students to consider and focus on personally relevant career options should be a part of this process so that students can plan their high school coursework accordingly.

Prince George's County Public Schools needs support from philanthropists, parents, businesses, school leaders, policy makers, and community members to advocate for the policies and practices needed to increase college and career readiness and help sustain and scale up outstanding models utilizing successful practices that are increasing the number of students who graduate high school prepared for success in college, career and life. The following lists outstanding models operating in the County:

IN-SCHOOL ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

All students in Prince George's County should be successful in school, college, and in career; but all students do not enter school with the same set of resources to meet these goals. Many students require additional academic supports, while others can enjoy extra academic challenges. Additionally, teachers and school staff benefit from professional development opportunities that help them adapt to the demands of a diverse population and rigorous curriculum. The following schools/programs work as part of or in partnership with

the Prince George's County Public Schools to provide academic enrichment for students. They target students who are falling behind in their coursework, or students who may benefit from extra scholastic challenges.

- **Central High School**
Central High School (CHS) is a comprehensive high school serving majority low-income, African American students in Prince George's County. CHS is recognized as an International Baccalaureate, World School and French Immersion School. Respect, Responsibility and Integrity are the school's basic tenets that support positive behavior and reinforces a culture of success. Central High School offers 20 academic and extracurricular programs to ensure all students excel toward post-secondary opportunities. A sample of the programs offered include: Advancement Via Individual Determination, Credit Recovery / Credit Recovery Program, Graphic Arts and Media Career Academy and Advanced Placement. The CHS graduating class of 2013 achieved the distinction of raising 3.3 million dollars in college scholarship funds. This cohort group of 200 students ranked number six in the county with regards to scholarship funding. For more information, visit [Central High School](#).
- **Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection**
Founded in 1987, Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection is an affiliate of Hillside Family of Agencies. HW-SC identifies promising middle and high school students at risk of dropping

out and provides them with academic support, mentoring, skills training and the opportunity for part-time work. Students are paired with a professional youth advocate through graduation and up to two years post-high school. Full-time, school-based youth advocates serve as mentors and role models, working with students to address their individual needs and the obstacles impeding their success. Services include targeted academic supports, such as tutoring, test preparation, college readiness, academic skill building, year-round academic enrichment and after-school programming. In 2013, Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection was named to the Catalogue of Philanthropy of Greater Washington and the Social Impact Exchange S&I 100, an index of top-performing U.S. nonprofits that are poised for growth. For more information, visit [Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection](#).

- **National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF)**

NCTAF provides hand-on learning experiences to students in Prince George's County Public Schools through their "Learning Studios" program. Located in Bowie, Gwynn Park, Central, and Duval High Schools as well as Walker Middle School. NCTAF teams work with researchers and personnel from NASA to deliver deeper learning experiences for students based in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) field.

OUTSIDE SUPPORTS

Whether academic, behavioral, or physical, students need additional supports outside of school to help them succeed. Challenges like family circumstances and peer pressure often pull students from school and cause them to prioritize other things ahead of education and not complete school. Non-profit programs in Prince George's County are well-equipped to offer supports to students and families in this area.

- **Maryland Multicultural Youth Center (MMYC)** provides a continuum of services to help youth become happy and productive young adults. MMYC engages youth and their families through three centers, each with a specific focus: Silver Spring (Youth Empowerment and Academic Readiness), Langley Park (Youth Empowerment and Success), and Riverdale (Center for Educational Partnership).
- **Mentoring to Manhood** The mission of Mentoring to Manhood is to connect successful men with males ages 12-18 in Prince George's County so that they will develop strong character, communication skills, and academic excellence. Founded in 2005, M2M has helped mentor over 400 young men in Prince George's County.

- **Take Charge Juvenile Diversion Program**

The Take Charge Program is a nationally known and locally based juvenile diversion program in Forestville, Maryland. Take Charge provides accountability, counseling and behavior management services to youth and their parents in Prince George's County.

COLLEGE ACCESS

Many students have benefitted from an exceptional education in Prince George's County, but do not know where to go next, or how to get there. Students and parents will benefit from increased knowledge of and ease of access to postsecondary opportunities, including college entrance and career pathways. Programs that focus on providing access opportunities offer practical guidance to students and their families, along with long-term supports through middle school, high school, and beyond.

- **College Summit**

Is the largest nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of low-income youth by connecting them to college and career opportunities. College Summit uses peer leadership, custom curricula, student performance data and technology to help students get to and through college.

- **First Generation College Bound**

In 1990, Joseph Fisher was inspired by his experiences and observations in Laurel, Maryland to do something to help students gain access to college. First Generation College Bound goes against the traditional model of college preparation. Over twenty years later, Joe Fisher and First Generation have helped 1,200 students go to college, seen 440 graduate from college, and are still helping 300 who are currently enrolled in college. The program oversees a homework club with up to 60 students, a middle school program with 90 students, and a high school program with 150 students. First Generation has relationships with five high schools and three middle schools.

CAREER READINESS

Businesses, non-profits, and philanthropists play an important role in promoting college and career readiness among students. Direct and indirect involvement with students and schools through partnerships, apprenticeships, and mentorship programs can plant a seed for possible lifelong opportunities. Students should feel confident that there are organizations offering multiple options to help students achieve their college and career goals. The following programs work as part of or in partnership with the Prince George's County Public Schools to prepare students to enter careers.

- **Academy of Health Sciences at Prince George's Community College**

As Maryland's first Middle College High School, the Academy of Health Sciences at Prince George's Community College (PGCC) is a four-year program combining high school and college credits through a dual enrollment program. Focused in the field of health sciences, students will be prepared to enter a clinical program at PGCC, or transfer to a four-year college or university. The program is a partnership between the Prince George's County Public Schools and Prince George's Community College, and students receive academic and extracurricular services through both programs.

- **Parkdale Student-Run Bank**

Students at Parkdale High School participate in the Capital One Student Banking Program. The program provides students with an opportunity to learn about the fundamentals of banking and business, as well as take part in mentoring partnerships. The full-service bank is provided by Capital One and run by Parkdale High School students.

- **Fairmount Heights High School IT Program**

The IT Program at Fairmount Heights is a four-year program designed to prepare students to become career and college ready. Students can take classes like Computer Repair and Operating Systems; Systems and Network Engineering; and Mobile Programming. The program even offers students the opportunity to receive professional IT certifications, as well as the potential to become a Microsoft Systems Engineer.²²

Students experience the most academic and career success when they are given the resources and support to create a real world environment where they can make important decisions. These various schools, programs and organizations in Prince George's County facilitate opportunities for students to gain and apply knowledge in a practical way leading to success in the classroom and ultimately a career field.

conclusion

With over 7,000 disconnected youth in Prince George's County who do not hold a high school diploma and are unemployed, the task of educating our youth has never been more critical. It requires the investment of time, talent, and resources from philanthropists, businesses, school leaders, policy makers, parents, community members and students. By investing resources, time and effort into these areas, a large impact can be made in Prince George's County. Sustaining strong pathways that reconnect youth to opportunities will help them gain and apply knowledge in a practical way leading to success in the classroom and ultimately a career that leads to economic security.

ENDnotes

- 1 Brookings Institution, “Disconnected Youth”, 2013.
- 2 Maryland State Department of Education
- 3 National Center for Education Statistics, “Students Whose Parents Did Not Go to College”, 2001.
- 4 United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics
- 5 Maryland State Report Card, “Graduation Rate”, 2010.
- 6 Maryland State Report Card, “Prince George’s County Graduation Rate”, 2009-2013.
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- 8 United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics
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- 14 Lumina Foundation, “A Stronger Nation through Higher Education”.
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- 17 Job Opportunities Task Force Special Report “Obstacles & Opportunities: The workforce development landscape in Prince George’s County, Maryland”, 2013.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Maryland State Department of Education, “Maryland’s College and Career-Ready Standards”
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- 22 Prince George’s County Public Schools News Release, “New Information Technology Program Launches at Fairmont Heights High School”, 2011.



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