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Hawaii News

# College readiness improves in isles

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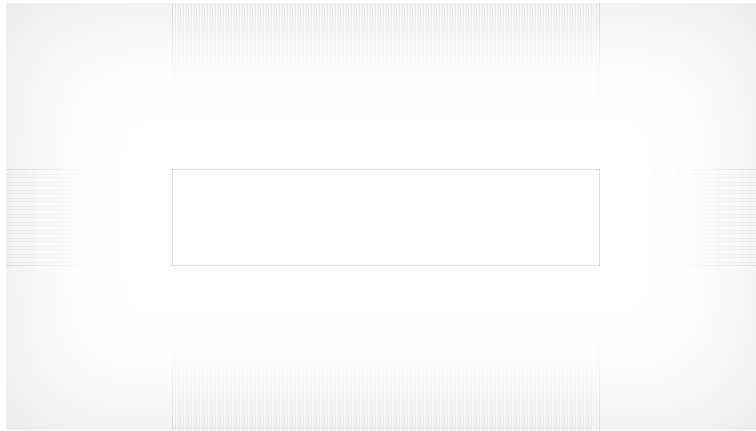
Al Carganilla, principal of Farrington High, said his school has been promoting the benefits of a college education through dual-credit programs and "College Wednesdays," when faculty and staff sport their college alma mater T-shirts.

While the number of Hawaii public school students enrolling in college after high school continued to hover near three-fifths of last year's graduating class, education officials say they're encouraged that new data show students are better prepared for the rigor of college coursework.

Figures in the annual College and Career Readiness Indicators report, released today

by Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education, show fewer isle graduates overall required so-called remedial courses in math and English once they got to college.

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### 2016 Hawaii public school graduates

*(previous years graduates in double parentheses)*

- >> 55% enrolled in a two- or four-year college ((56%)).
- >> 35% enrolled at a UH campus ((36%)).
- >> Of those enrolling at a UH campus, 48% enrolled in college-level English ((43%)).
- >> Of those enrolling at a UH campus, 34% enrolled in college-level math ((30%)).
- >> 89% took the ACT college entrance exam ((87%)).
- >> 39% tested college-ready in English ((38%)).
- >> 23% tested college-ready in reading ((24%)).
- >> 23% tested college-ready in math ((21%)).
- >> 33% took at least one Advanced Placement exam ((30%)); 15% scored a 3 or higher on an exam (qualifying for college credit) ((13%)).
- >> 14% participated in a dual-credit college course in high school ((10%)).

*Source: Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education*

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"We're continuing to see a positive trend in terms of the degree to which students from our public schools are prepared for college and careers," said Stephen Schatz, executive director of Hawaii P-20. "There's a lot within that statement, but that's what

this report attempts to measure and reflect.”

Beyond capturing the college-going rate for public school graduates, the report shows more students are taking and passing Advanced Placement courses, and more students are earning college credit during high school. The report also includes college persistence rates — reflecting students who continue their college studies for a second year — and the number of students who perform at college level on the ACT college-entrance exam.

Among the 11,003 students statewide who completed high school in 2016, 55 percent enrolled at a two- or four-year college that fall, with 35 percent of students enrolling at a University of Hawaii campus, according to the report. Although the overall college-going rate dipped slightly — it was 56 percent the previous two years — the number of students enrolling at a four-year university nudged up by a percentage point to 32 percent.

The Department of Education’s newly revised [strategic plan](#) sets the goal of reaching a 62 percent college-going rate by 2020. By comparison, nationally, 68 percent of students who graduated in 2014 immediately enrolled in college, according to the most recent [data](#) available.

At the campus level, the high schools posting the highest college-going rates for the class of 2016 were Halau Ku Mana Public Charter School, where 12 out of 13 graduates enrolled in college (92 percent); University Laboratory School (88 percent); Kalani (82 percent); Kaiser and Roosevelt (75 percent); and Mililani (72 percent).

The University of Hawaii at Manoa proved to be a popular choice among last year’s graduates, with 899 students enrolling at the university in the fall. UH’s remaining nine campuses rounded out the top 10 college picks, followed by the University of Nevada Las Vegas, Chaminade University, Hawaii Pacific University and Northern Arizona University.

Of those students who enrolled at a UH campus, 48 percent were able to enroll in college-level English courses — up from 43 percent for the previous graduating class, according to the Hawaii P-20 report. Students who were flagged as below college level in English dropped to 19 percent from 25 percent.

### **‘College-going culture’**

In mathematics, 34 percent of last year’s high school graduates at a UH campus were able to take 100-level courses upon entering college, up from 30 percent for the class of 2015. The percentage of students identified as below college level in math decreased to 23 percent from 28 percent.

At the campus level, high schools with the highest rates of students enrolling in college-level English at UH campuses were Baldwin (64 percent), Kapolei (58 percent), Mililani and Maui (57 percent). In math the top performers were Honoka’a High and Intermediate, with 61 percent of graduates admitted to 100-level math courses,

Lahainaluna (50 percent) and Kalani (48 percent).

Schools Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi credited the DOE's efforts to raise academic expectations, including, for example, adoption of the Common Core, a rigorous set of national standards aimed at spelling out what students should know at each grade level in order to graduate college- and career-ready.

"More high school graduates entering into college- level courses immediately after high school demonstrates that the changes we've initiated from Hawaii Common Core to early-college programs and the collaboration with the University of Hawaii are paying off for our students and community," Matayoshi said in a statement.

Several school principals say creating a "college-going culture" on their campuses has helped spark more interest and determination from students and families to pursue a college education. One of the biggest boosts has come from offering so-called dual-credit college courses on campus, a program in at least 20 schools that allows students to earn college credit toward a future degree through various UH campuses while satisfying high school diploma requirements — for free.

"We're getting the college-going culture going here in Hilo," said Hilo High Principal Robert Dircks, whose school has seen dual-credit participation increase to 24 percent of last year's graduates from 10 percent the year before. The school also saw a 31-point improvement in the number of students enrolling in college-level math.

"We would like to dominate the entire Hilo (community) if we could and get everybody to come to college," Dircks said. "Slowly but surely we're doing that. We're getting our students to understand the importance of a post-high-school education."

Radford Principal James Sunday also credited a culture of college-going on his campus, along with intense academic counseling and dual-credit offerings, for the school's college enrollment rate improving to 62 percent from 57 percent.

He said family involvement is also key, as many parents aren't familiar with the college application process.

"Until they have the correct information, they might think their kid is not academically sound enough to go to college," Sunday said. "As a community we've been pushing these kids, saying, 'You can go to a four-year school.'"

Al Carganilla, principal of Farrington High, said his school has been promoting the benefits of a college education through dual-credit programs and "College Wednesdays," when faculty and staff sport their college alma mater T-shirts. The school saw improvements in the number of students prepared for college-level courses.

"For us it's truly a culture change, knowing that if you don't think about college, now you're sort of outside the majority," Carganilla said. "The mindset is really not if you're going to go to college, but when you go to college. ... For us it's not out of reach for our

kids. It's an expectation."

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