Education Indicators

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YoungStar and Parent Aware — Indicator 1

The COMPASS NOW 2015 Education Indicators are ranked in chronological order, and not by order of importance.

BACKGROUND

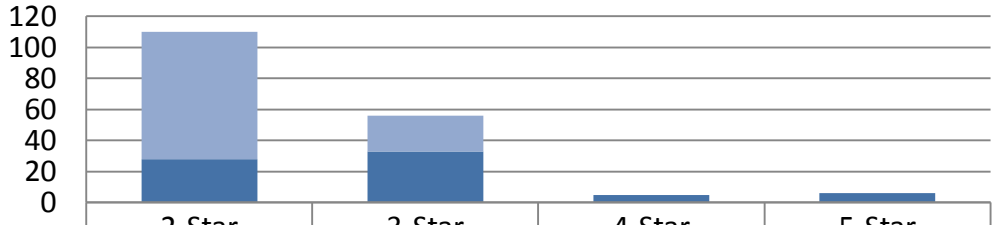
YoungStar

YoungStar is a program of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families created to improve the quality of child care for the state's children. YoungStar evaluates and rates the quality of care given by child care providers, helps parents choose the best child care for their kids, supports providers with tools and training to deliver high-quality early care, and sets a consistent standard for child care quality[1]. YoungStar-rated child care programs go through a 40-point evaluation process, which is specific to each program's size and structure. For example, a day camp caring for 50 children participates in a different evaluation process than a family child care program caring for three children. The total number of points a program earns determines how many stars it receives.

YoungStar awards up to five stars for the highest quality of care, based on four key categories:

- The Provider's Education & Training
- The Learning Environment & Curriculum
- The Program's Business & Professional Practices
- The Child's Health & Well-Being

Number of 2014 YoungStar Locations in Wisconsin Counties



	2-Star	3-Star	4-Star	5-Star
Family/In-Home	82	23	0	0
Center/Group	28	33	5	6

Source: Wisconsin Department of Children and Family Providers: YoungStar

- There were no 1-star rated YoungStar Center/Group Providers within the 4-Counties at the time data was collected.
- In total, 12 of the Centers/Groups and 47 of the Family Providers/In-Home did not participate.
- 2 Center/Group Providers and 1 Family Provider/In-Home participated but were not yet rated at time data was collected.

Revised on 10/8/2015

- There were no 1-, 4-, or 5-star rated YoungStar Family Providers/In-Home within the 4-Counties at the time data was collected.
- Data collected in October of 2014.

Parent Aware

The Minnesota Department of Human Services leads Parent Aware in coordination with the Minnesota Office of Early Learning. Parent Aware wants all Minnesota children to be ready for kindergarten. They provide free, research-based tools and resources that help parents ask important questions and make informed choices about high quality early learning opportunities[2]. Parent Aware Ratings are based on demonstrated use of practices that best prepare children for kindergarten. Each Rating level builds on the next, helping families easily identify how far a program has progressed in adopting these practices.

At each level, quality indicators are measured in four key areas:

- Physical Health and Well-being
- Teaching and Relationships
- Assessment of Child Progress
- Teacher Training and Education

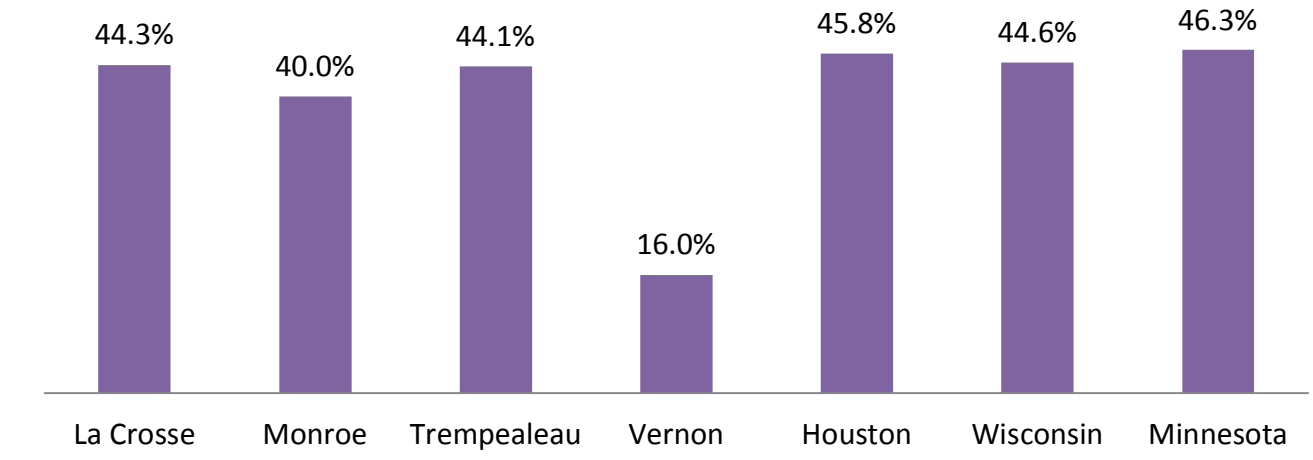
In 2014, there are six public schools and three Head Start locations in Houston County that received a 4-star rating from Parent Aware.

Early Childhood Education Indicator 2

BACKGROUND

Participation in high-quality, early childhood education programs before age 5 can have positive effects on children's cognitive, language, and social development. Evaluations of pre-kindergarten programs revealed that children exposed to high-quality early education were less likely to drop out of school, repeat grades, or need special education[3]. Today, 100% of school districts in La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties offer public pre-school education. The structure of the pre-school programs varies throughout the region, with most districts offering half-day schedules 4-5 days a week and a few districts offering full-day schedule 2-3 days a week.

There is no data available that would allow comparison between the number of children who are eligible for a four-year-old kindergarten (4K) program and those who actually enroll in 4K. However, looking at the Kindergarten enrollment numbers for one academic year and the number of children enrolled in 4K during the previous year, we may be able to gather some insights. For example, according to the Minnesota Department of Education, there were 65,710 students enrolled in Kindergarten during the 2013-2014 school year. During that same year there were 14,556 children enrolled in Pre-kindergarten/early childhood education. Making the assumption that the number of students enrolling in Kindergarten would not change substantially year to year, it can be approximated that only about 22% of eligible children in Minnesota participated in early education opportunities that year.



Reading Comprehension **Indicator 3**

Source: US Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey

BACKGROUND

Academic progress depends largely on understanding, analyzing, and applying information gathered through reading. To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students should be challenged to read literature and other materials that reflect and stimulate their interests and intellectual abilities. A lack of strong reading comprehension skills affects a student's success in school. The goal of reading programs is for all students to read and comprehend material at grade-level or above.

The Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE) are state mandated-tests given to students in grades 4, 8, and 10 each fall in science, and social studies.

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) are state tests that help school districts measure student progress toward Minnesota's academic standards and meet the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Reading and mathematics tests are given to students in grades 3-8, 10 and 11.

Smarter Balance Assessment

In 2010, Wisconsin elected to join the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, one of the two national consortia that were formed to help establish a series of "next generation assessments" to measure students' career and college readiness. This state-led consortium

working to develop next-generation assessments that accurately measures student progress toward college and career-readiness[4].

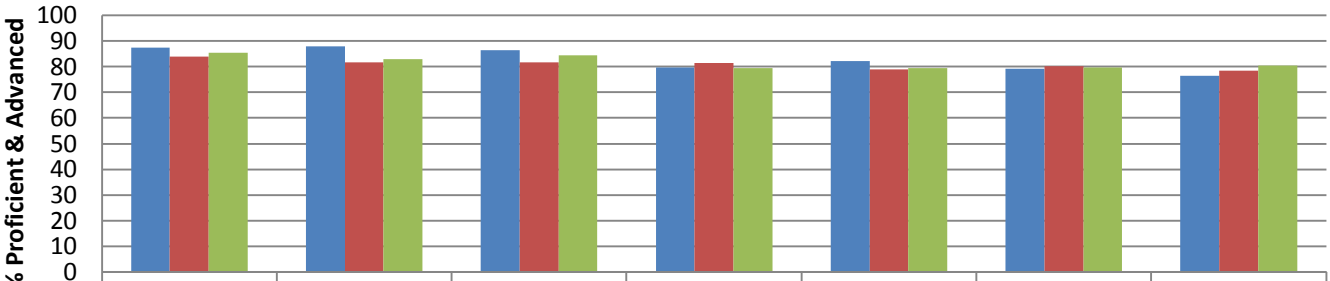
The summative assessment is administered during the last eight weeks of the school year (measuring students' cumulative progress from the past school year). This assessment is administered in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics for grades 3-8. The summative assessment[4]:

- Accurately describes both student achievement and growth of student learning as part of program evaluation and school, district, and state accountability systems
- Provides valid, reliable, and fair measures of students' progress toward, and attainment of, the knowledge and skills required to be college- and career-ready
- Capitalizes on the strengths of computer-adaptive testing—efficient and precise measurement across the full range of achievement, and quick turnaround of results[4]

Reading Proficiency and Success

Students who score at the proficient or advanced level for reading during third grade are more likely to graduate high school, attend and graduate college, and be successful in the workforce. In general, strong reading skills lead to higher educational achievement[5]. Between 1996 and 1997, 26,000 students from a Midwest public school were assessed and it was found that being a proficient reader in third grade was: positively related to students' grade point average in 9th grade, inversely related to the number of courses students would fail, and was an overall predictor of whether a student would stay in school or drop out[6]. In addition, a longitudinal study looked at 4,000 Americans born between the years of 1979 and 1989 to see if there was a relationship between reading proficiency and staying in school. This study found that 96% of the students who scored "proficient" or above during their third grade reading proficiency test graduated high school. Moreover, nearly 1 in 4 of the non-proficient readers failed to earn a high school diploma[6].

4th Grade Reading Results

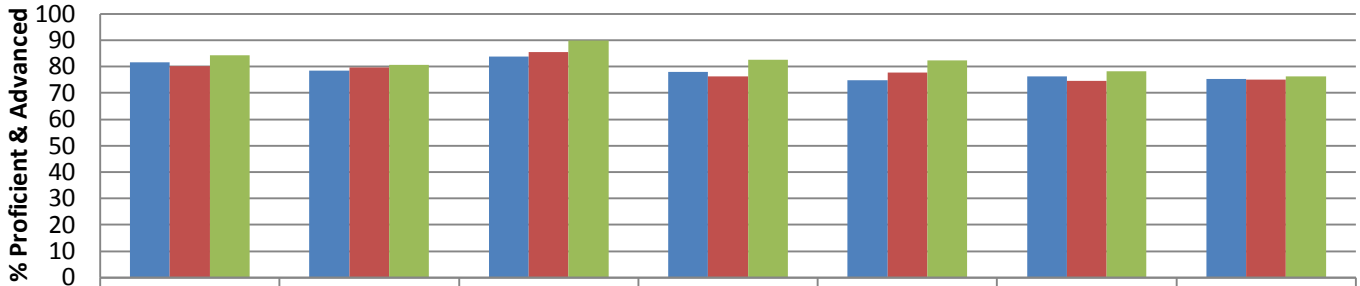


	La Crosse	Vernon	Monroe	Trempealeau	Houston	WI State	MN State
2010	87.5	87.9	86.3	79.6	82.1	79.2	76.5
2011	83.9	81.6	81.7	81.3	79	80.1	78.5
2012	85.3	83	84.5	79.3	79.5	79.7	80.4

Sources: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Minnesota COMPASS, Minnesota Department of Education

- Percent of 3rd graders who scored at or above proficient for reading on the MCA-II test (Minnesota) and the WSAS test

10th Grade Reading Results



	La Crosse	Vernon	Monroe	Trempealeau	Houston	WI State	MN State
2010	81.6	78.5	83.7	78	74.9	76.3	75.4
2011	80.2	79.7	85.5	76.4	77.7	74.7	75.1
2012	84.3	80.6	89.8	82.6	82.3	78.2	76.4

Sources: www.greatschools.org; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Report Card

- Percent of 10th graders who scored at or above proficient on the MCA-II test of reading (Minnesota) and percent of 10th graders who scored at or above proficient on the WSAS test of reading (Wisconsin)
- New standards in reading were implemented in 2013 for the state of Minnesota. Comparisons from 2012 to 2013 should not be made.

Revised on 10/8/2015

Reading Deficiencies and Broader Social Consequences

There are many links between reading deficiencies and broader social consequences. For example, people living in poor households and high-poverty neighborhoods are more likely to experience disparities among racial groups in term of literacy skills, which are necessary for an individual to be able to understand information that is out of context[7]. Moreover, low achievement in reading impacts an individual's future earning potential[7]. In fact, there is a positive correlation between poverty, failure to read proficiently, and failure to graduate from high school. Similarly, in the United States in 2011, 82% of fourth-graders from low-income families and 84% of low-income students who attended high-poverty schools failed to reach the "proficient" level in reading[7].

Rates of Attendance — Indicator 4

BACKGROUND

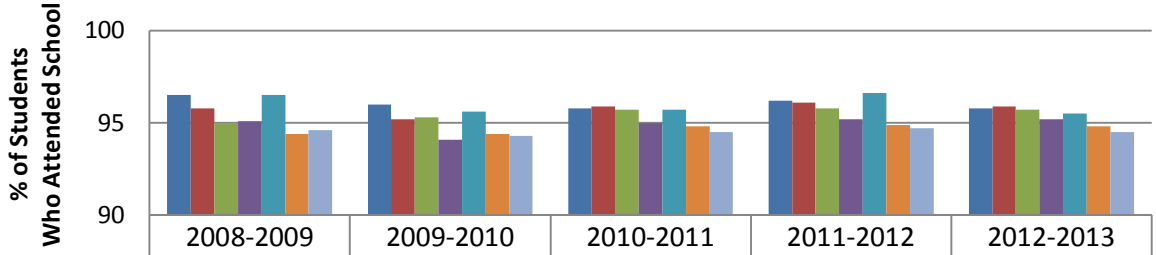
Students who regularly attend classes are more likely to stay on track in terms of submission of assignments and timely completion of examinations. Some other benefits of daily attendance include:

- Higher academic performance in first grade
- Decreased achievement gaps in the elementary, middle, and high school levels
- Development of responsible patterns of behavior

In addition, there is a strong relationship between sixth-grade attendance and the percentage of students graduating on time or within a year of their expected high school graduation[8].

La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties had attendance rates equal to or higher than Wisconsin during all five academic years between 2009-2014. Trempealeau County had lower rates of attendance when compared to the state average for every year, with the exception of the 2011-2012 academic year.

Attendance Rates: All Grades



	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
La Crosse	96.5	96	95.8	96.2	95.8
Vernon	95.8	95.2	95.9	96.1	95.9
Monroe	95	95.3	95.7	95.8	95.7
Trempealeau	95.1	94.1	95	95.2	95.2
Houston	96.5	95.6	95.7	96.6	95.5
WI State	94.4	94.4	94.8	94.9	94.8
MN State	94.6	94.3	94.5	94.7	94.5

Sources: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Minnesota Department of Education

- This data is a reflection of the calculated averages of the attendance rates of the school districts within each county. To see a list of school districts within each county, see Appendix.
- Note: School districts may vary in strictness and thoroughness when reporting absenteeism and attendance.
- Attendance Rate: Sum of actual attendance days as a percentage of the sum of possible attendance days. Sums include all students enrolled at any time during the school term. For a student group, school, or district, the attendance rate is the percentage of students in the group, school, or district in attendance on a typical school day.

Youth Activities — Indicator 5

BACKGROUND

An "extra-curricular" activity may be defined as an activity connected to school but not falling within the scope of a regular curriculum. Students may also participate in activities that are not at all affiliated with school (i.e., Girl or Boy Scouts, service or hobby clubs, music lessons). Moreover, some schools now offer opportunities during the school day that may or may not offer school credit for participating in this activity. Because of this broad range of definitions, measuring the actual youth participation rates for extra-curricular activities can be challenging.

Traditionally, extra-curricular activities were thought to be primarily athletic activities such as football, basketball, and spirit squad. However, there are now countless ways in which students can participate in extra-curricular activities. Volunteerism, religious-based activities, professional development, theater, photography clubs, debate team, student council, band, and chorus are some additional opportunities students may participate in. With this dramatic

increase in the types of activities students can participate in, as well as where, when, and how they participate, defining and quantifying the number of students who participate in extra-curricular activities is quite difficult.

Benefits of Participating in Youth Activities

Some of the benefits of physical activities for youth include[9:]

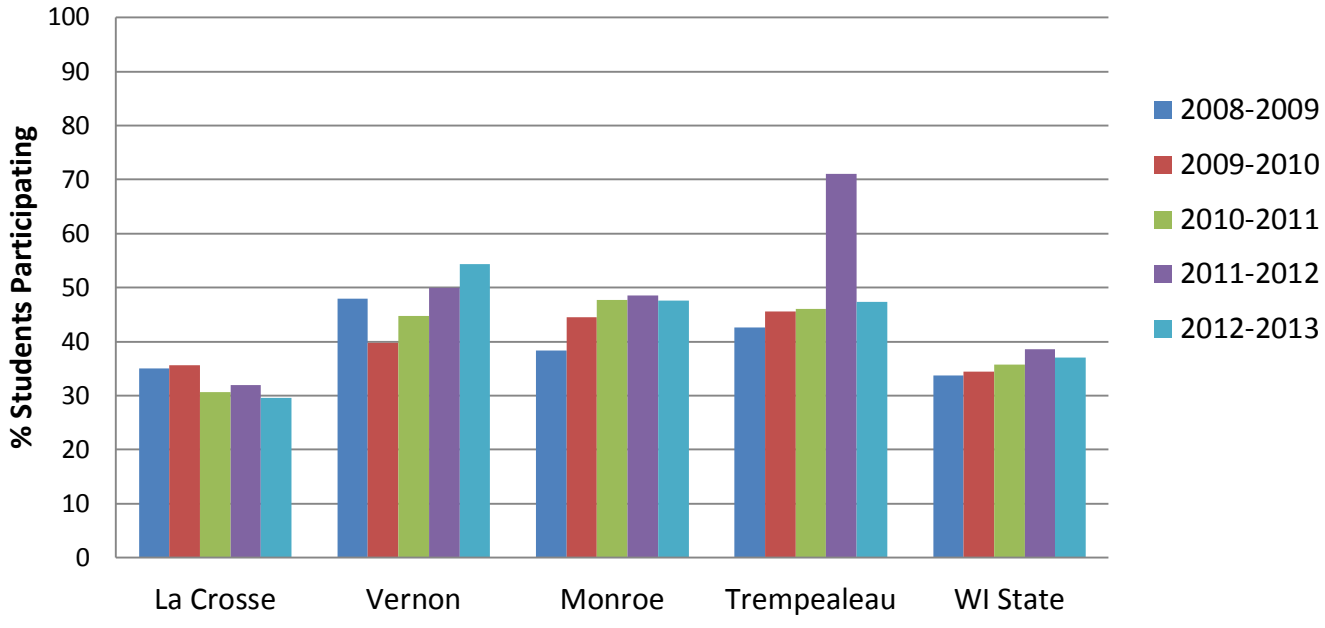
- Build and maintain healthy bones and muscles[9]
- Reduce the risk of developing obesity and chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and colon cancer[9]
- Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety and promotes psychological well-being[9]
- May help improve students' academic performance, including[9]
    - Academic achievement and grades
    - Academic behavior, such as time on task
    - Factors that influence academic achievement, such as concentration and attentiveness in the classroom.

Some of the benefits of both physical and non-physical activities for youth include:

- Fewer unexcused absences[10]
- Less likelihood of dropping out of school[10]
- Higher G.P.A.[10]
- More likelihood of earning a bachelor's degree or higher[10]
- Reduced behavior problems[10]
- Higher self-respect, self-esteem, and self-confidence[10]
- Positive attitude towards school[10]
- Larger and more diverse social network[10]

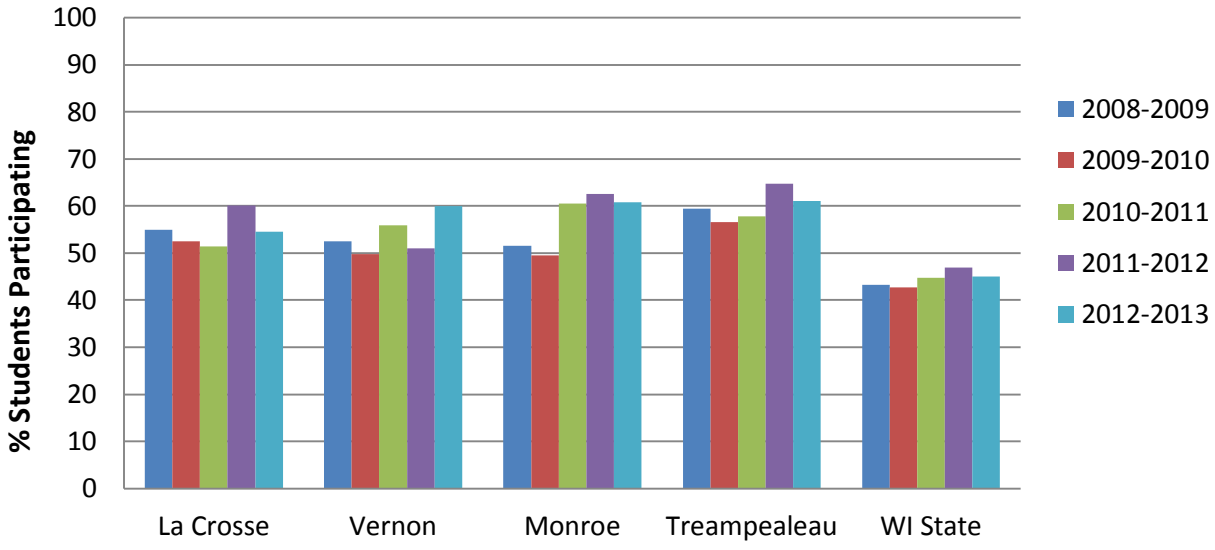
The following graphs reflect the participation in extra-curricular activities between 2008 and 2013. These extra-curricular participation rates reflect participation throughout the entire academic year, whereas enrollment counts were taken in the fall of that school year. For this reason, participation rates (participants divided by enrollees) should be considered estimates.

Participation in Academic Extra-Curricular Activities



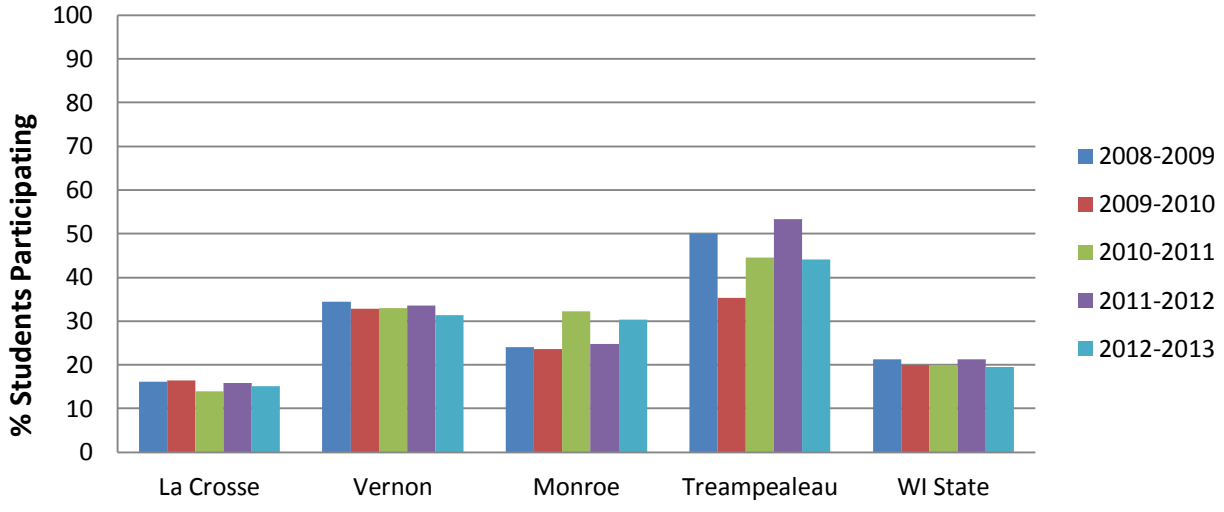
Source: Wisconsin Department of Instruction

Participation in Athletic Extra-Curricular Activities



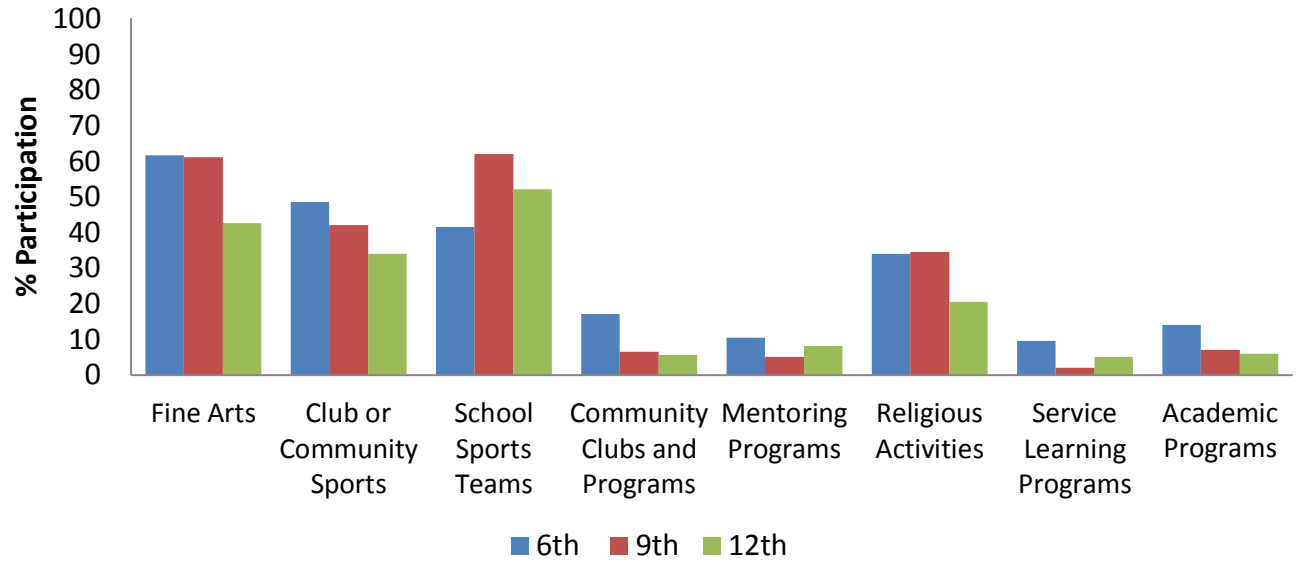
Source: Wisconsin Department of Instruction

Participation in Music Extra-Curricular Activities



Source: Wisconsin Department of Instruction

Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities, Houston County



Sources: Minnesota Department of Education, 2010 Minnesota Student Survey

American College Test (ACT) Indicator 6

BACKGROUND

The American College Test (ACT) is designed to assess educational development and the ability to complete college level work. ACT test scores are one of the primary measures of college readiness and is an entrance requirement for many colleges and universities. The ACT test consists of four subject areas and a timed writing test. The 215 question, multiple-choice test covers: English, mathematics, reading, science, and an optional writing section. The ACT is typically taken by college bound students in their junior or senior years. The Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), an alternative test that is reason-based instead of content-based, may be required by some private colleges.

Each portion of the ACT test has a maximum score of 36. The composite score is the weighted average of the four (or five) subject-specific scores. In 2014, less than one-tenth of 1% of all students who took the ACT scored a perfect 36. Typically, students who take a rigorous college preparatory curriculum will score better on the ACT. Composite score averages are influenced by the percentage of students who opt to take the test-the greater the percentage, the lower the composite average. Students are allowed to retake the ACT with only the most recent score being recorded.

The ACT is not required for admission to two-year Minnesota and Wisconsin technical colleges; however, there is often an assessment process to go through as part of the application process. For example, Western Technical College in La Crosse, Wisconsin, requires the COMPASS placement examination. COMPASS is an untimed, computerized assessment that allows

Western staff to evaluate the skills of students for placement purposes. It is a computer-adaptive test, meaning that the difficulty of the questions varies based on previous answers. COMPASS offers short tests in reading, writing, and math and is designed for individuals with little or no computer skills. Upon competition, the testee meets with an advisor to discuss the results[11].

Minnesota ranks highest in the Nation for ACT scores while Wisconsin ranks second[12]. The average ACT score for the state of Minnesota for 2014 was 23, and the average score for Wisconsin was 22.2[12].

AVERAGE ACT SCORES					
	2009	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
La Crosse	22.2	22.1	22.6	22.8	22.5
Monroe	21.7	21.6	22.4	21.6	21.6
Trempealeau	22	21.6	21.8	21.7	21.8
Vernon	21.4	20.1	21.7	22.2	22
WI State	22.3	22.1	22.2	22.1	22.2
Houston	23.2	23.6	22.8	22.2	22
MN State	22.7	22.9	22.9	22.8	23
National	21.1	21	21.1	21.1	20.9

Sources: Wisconsin Department of Instruction, Minnesota Department of Education

Changes to ACT Examination

Beginning in 2015, those taking the ACT examination will have the option of completing the exam online. The traditional paper-and-pencil version of the ACT exam will continue to be available to schools that do not have the capability to administer the digital version. The new digital version of the exam will be offered only in schools that administer the ACT on a school day as part of their state, district or school assessment programs[11].

ACT will also offer schools a separate constructed-response battery of questions as an option to supplement the traditional multiple-choice sections of the standard ACT. Constructed-response

questions require students to enter their own answer, rather than selecting the best answer from several given choices. The optional constructed-response questions will allow schools to better align their reporting with the Common Core State Standards.

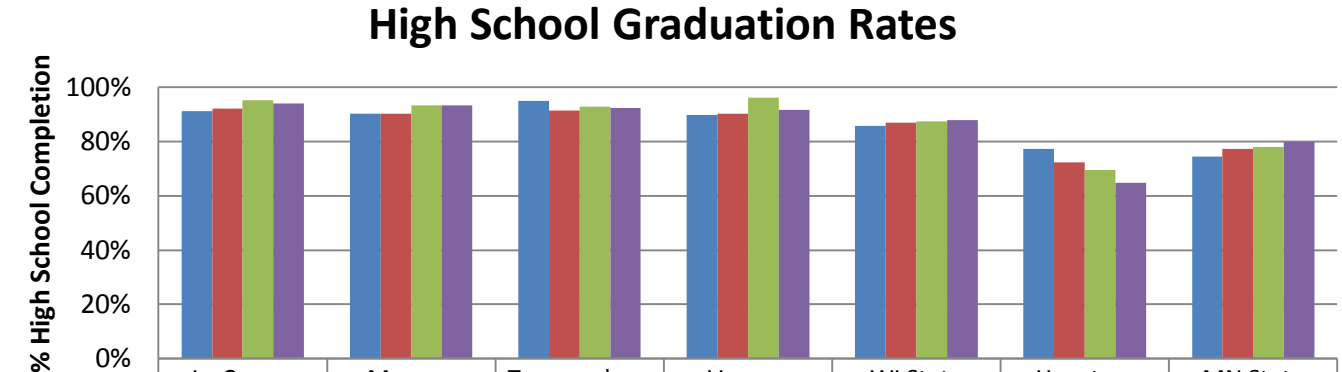
The content of the test will not change—the ACT will remain a curriculum-based achievement exam. The exam will still be scored on the 1 to 36 scoring scale.

High School Graduation — Indicator 7

BACKGROUND

An array of factors have been associated with low high school graduation rate, including high rates of absenteeism, low levels of school commitment, low parental education, work or family responsibilities, problematic or deviant behavior, moving to a new school in the 9th grade, and attending a school with lower achievement scores[13].

The Wisconsin data compares the percentage of students who complete high school with their adjusted cohort and earn a credential. A cohort is a distinct group of students who enter 9th grade together. The Minnesota graduation rate is a four-year, on-time graduation rate based on a cohort of first time 9th grade students plus transfers into the cohort within the four year period minus transfers out of the cohort within the four year period. The 4-year rate is the percentage of students who complete within 4 years or less.



	La Crosse	Monroe	Trempealeau	Vernon	WI State	Houston	MN State
2009-2010	91.3%	90.3%	95.1%	89.8%	85.7%	77.2%	74.5%
2010-2011	92.2%	90.3%	91.5%	90.2%	87.0%	72.3%	77.2%
2011-2012	95.3%	93.3%	93.0%	96.1%	87.5%	69.5%	77.9%
2012-2013	94.1%	93.3%	92.4%	91.8%	88.0%	64.7%	79.8%

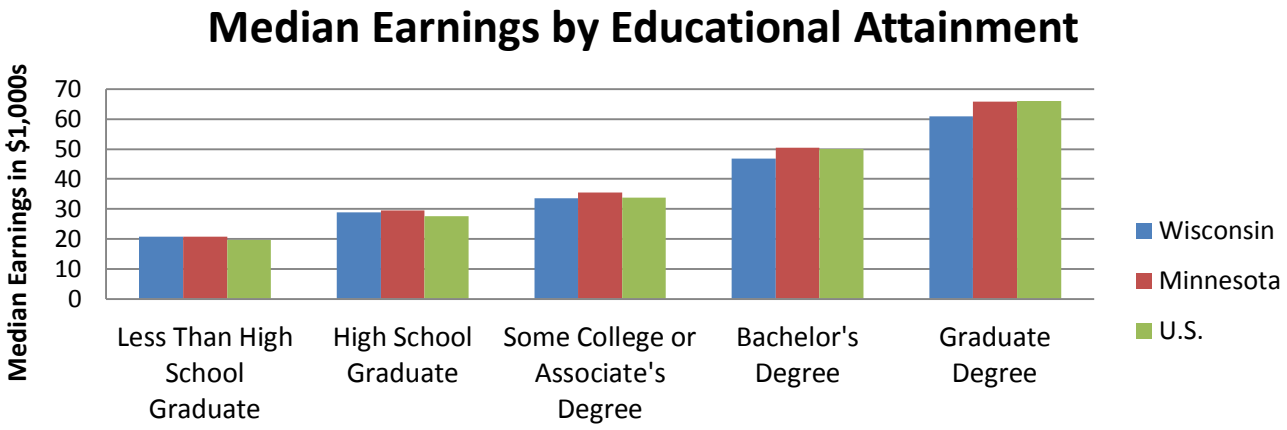
Source: Wisconsin Department of Instruction; Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Report Card

- County graduation rates were calculated by averaging the completion rates of the school districts within each county. See Indicator Appendix for a specific list of school districts included in the data for each County.

A student who completes high school is more likely to gain the basic skills and credentials required to function in a complex society and technology-dependent labor force than those who do not graduate. The completion of high school is generally required for accessing post-secondary education and is a minimum requirement for most jobs. A high school diploma is more likely to lead to greater incomes and occupational status, and young adults with low education and skill levels are more likely to live in poverty and to rely on government assistance[13].

High School Graduation and Earning Potential

There is a direct, positive correlation between education level and earning potential. In 2012, the national median earnings for adults with a bachelor's degree was $46,900, while the median was $30,000 for those with high school credential and $22,900 for those without a high school credential. Additionally, in 2012 the median earnings for young adults with a master's degree or higher was $59,600, some 27% more than the median for a bachelor's degree[14].



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Summer Melt

Summer "melt" occurs when college-intending students have completed key college-going steps (i.e. being accepted to college and applying for financial aid) and have concretely signaled their intention to enroll in college, but do not begin college the semester after their high school graduation.

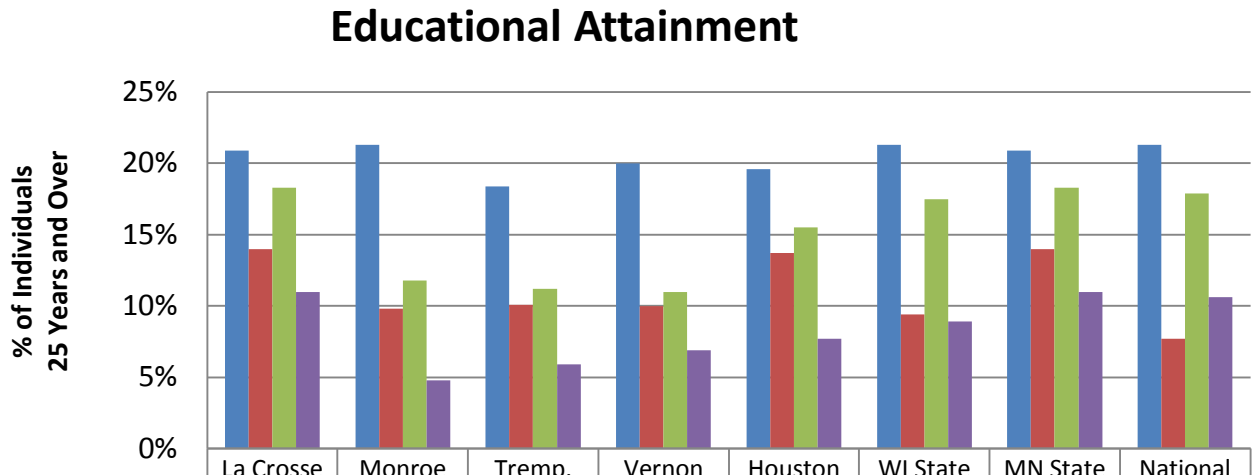
Summer melt is a prevalent issue for education and workforce leaders because large numbers of students are failing to bridge that gap between institutions, thereby reducing their chances of success. However, certain interventions, such as text messaging and summer mentoring programs, can have a significant impact on alleviating the summer melt phenomenon and increasing college enrollment rates at a relatively low cost to the institution. Nationally, this issue occurs in 10-40% of college-bound students[15]. Some of the barriers to enrollment include difficulty interpreting award letters and tuition bills, unanticipated costs (e.g. health insurance) that affect students' college-going decisions, difficulty completing paperwork, and lack of access to professional guidance[16].

Post-Secondary Education — Indicator 8

BACKGROUND

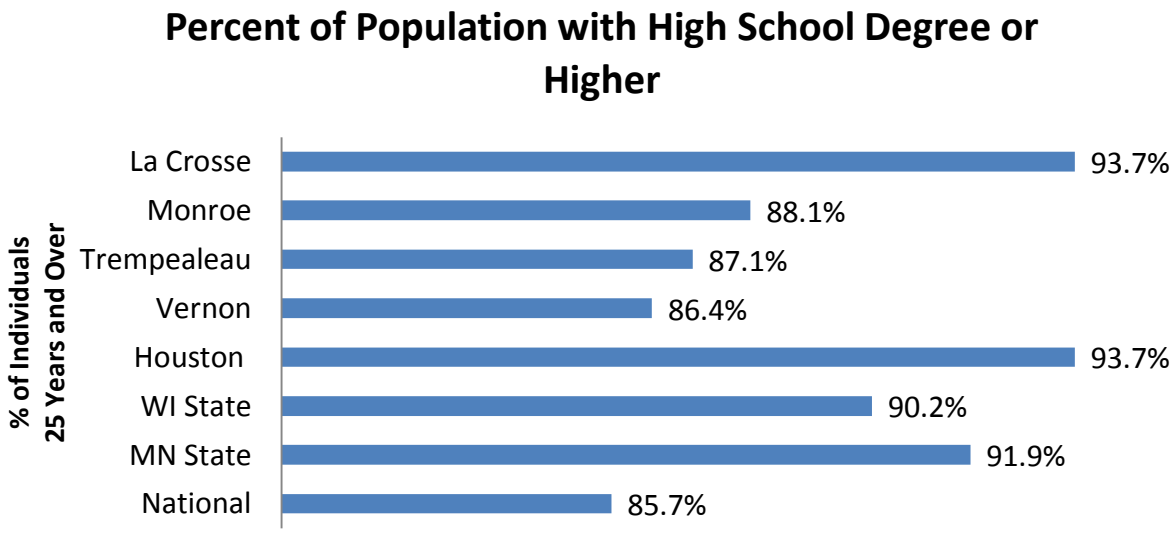
The variety of benefits available to those earning a college degree is motivating an increasing number of people who pursue higher education. In fact, between 2001 and 2011, enrollment at degree-granting institutions increased by 32%, from 15.9 million to 21.0 million[17].

The percentage of people who have completed post-secondary education can be a good indicator of how secure a population is in terms of its socioeconomic status and its population's opportunities for growth. There is a correlation between higher levels of education and higher earnings for all racial/ethnical groups and for both men and women[30]. Higher earnings of educated workers generate higher tax payments at the local, state, and federal levels, and consistent productive employment reduces dependence on public income-transfer programs, such as welfare and social security[18].



	La Crosse	Monroe	Tremp.	Vernon	Houston	WI State	MN State	National
Some College, No Degree	20.9%	21.3%	18.4%	20.0%	19.6%	21.3%	20.9%	21.3%
Associate's	14.0%	9.8%	10.1%	10.0%	13.7%	9.4%	14.0%	7.7%
Bachelor's	18.3%	11.8%	11.2%	11.0%	15.5%	17.5%	18.3%	17.9%
Graduate	11.0%	4.8%	5.9%	6.9%	7.7%	8.9%	11.0%	10.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2008-2012)

Post-Secondary Education and the Labor Force

In 2012, about 73% of adults ages 25–34 with a bachelor's or higher degree in the labor force had year-round, full-time jobs, compared with 65% of those with an associate's degree, 59% of those with some college education, 60 % of high school completers, and 49% of those without a high school diploma or its equivalent[17]. In 2013, a smaller percentage of adults ages 25-34 with a bachelor's degree or higher were unemployed than were their peers with lower levels of education[17]. Ultimately, education level drives the economy and overall employment rates. In particular, rural counties face the repercussions of this relationship because rural educational attainment lags behind that of urban areas for the working-age population[18]. According to the Department of Commerce, in the year 2000, an urban resident was 10-15 times more likely to attend college than a rural resident[18].

COMPASS NOW 2015 Education Indicator Sources

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COMPASS NOW 2015 Education Indicators:

Appendix

List of School Districts by County

La Crosse County

- Bangor School District
- Holmen School District
- La Crosse School District
- Onalaska School District
- West Salem School District

Trempealeau County

- Arcadia School District
- Blair-Taylor School District
- Eleva-Strum School District
- Galesville-Ettrick-Trempealeau School District
- Independence School District
- Osseo-Fairchild School District
- Whitehall School District

Monroe County

- Cashton School District
- Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton School District
- Sparta School District
- Tomah School District

Vernon County

- De Soto School District
- Hillsboro School District
- Kickapoo School District
- La Farge School District
- Viroqua School District
- Westby School District

Houston County

- Caledonia Public School District

- Houston Public School District
- La Crescent-Hokah School District
- Spring Grove School District