

# Education & Skill Development



**Melissa** grew up in Northeast Portland and graduated from Madison High School a few years back. She recently was laid off from her job in a construction company office and has been struggling to find another job in the tough economy. Some of the local businesses in her neighborhood have closed; others are struggling. Melissa would like to go back to school and get trained in a new skill for a new job, but she doesn't know what to study because it's not clear what kind of jobs will be available. She's gotten a few shifts at a local fast food restaurant, but she worries about not being able to make rent next month. <http://www.pcc.edu/career/>

- graduation rates
- school facilities
- knowledge-based economy
- multi-purpose community centers
- family-wage jobs
- mix of educational institutions
- recreational spaces
- training and skills

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

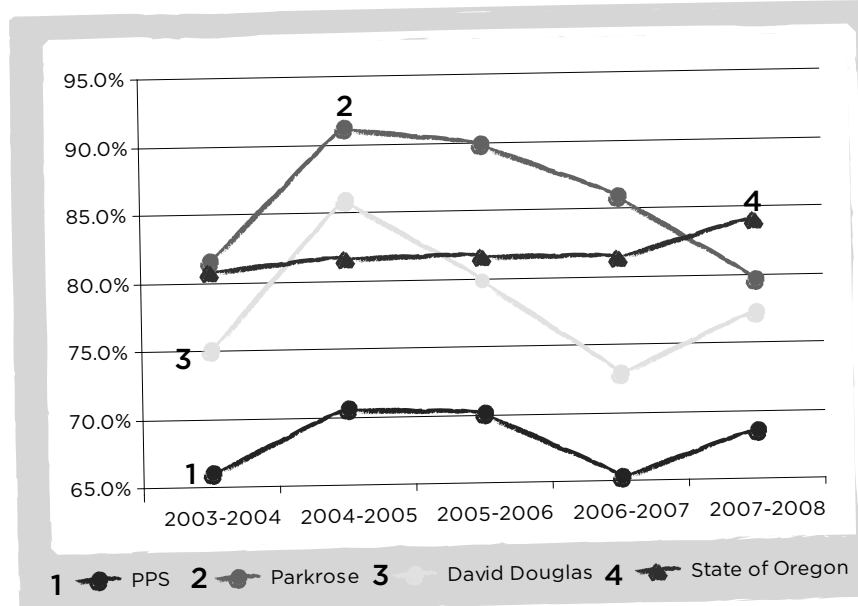
**In an economy that is increasingly fueled by knowledge, opportunities for higher education or other specialized training are essential to respond to economic changes and attract family wage jobs to the city.**

Portland is fortunate to have a strong mix of educational institutions at the community college, university, specialty and trade school levels.

**How well students are prepared at an early age and in high school predicts the likelihood of finding satisfying, stable jobs that pay well.**

Schools are often neighborhood anchors. School facilities provide space for community events, both in school buildings and yards and in adjacent city parks. While schools are not funded or operated by the City directly, ensuring that school facilities contribute to urban livability is an issue that can be addressed throughout the planning process.

**High School Graduation for Portland School Districts and the State of Oregon, 2003-2008**



## HOW ARE WE DOING?

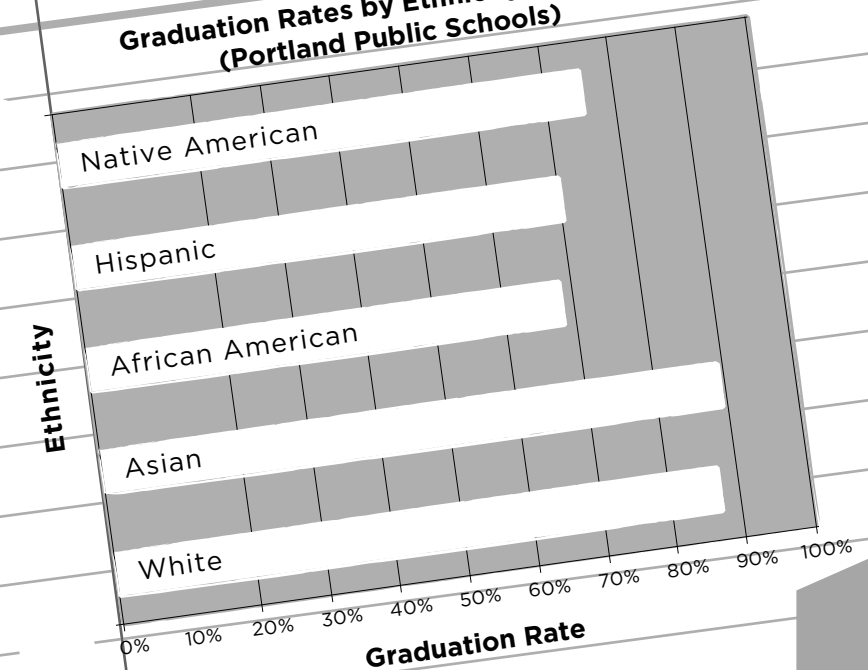
### High School Graduation Rate

High school graduation rates in the state and in most Portland high schools are improving. Graduation rates at Portland Public Schools improved by three percent between 2007 and 2008. However, we still have a long way to go to raise the graduation rate and make sure all students graduate on time.

Although the graduation rate at Portland Public Schools is on the rise, the graduation rate for African American, Native American and Hispanic students is still not equal to that of Asian American or white students. Schools, community members and local governments need to work together to close the educational achievement gap.

Closing the achievement gap needs to start early. Portland Public Schools recently set benchmarks for student achievement starting at the first grade. By the first grade, students should be ready to read and by the third grade, they should be reading to learn. By middle school, students should write well and understand algebra. By the end of high school, students should be ready for work and college.

**Graduation Rates by Ethnicity and Race (Portland Public Schools)**





**Third Grade Achievement**

By the end of third grade, students should exceed the benchmark on the state reading test and should be reading to learn.

**Status:** 42% of students exceed the benchmark.

**Target:** In 2009, the percentage of students exceeding the benchmark will increase by 5 points to 47%.

*Source: Portland Public Schools. All data is for the 2008-2009 school year.*

**Middle School Achievement**

In the seventh grade, students should meet the benchmark on the state writing test.

**Status:** 55% of students meet benchmark.

**Target:** In 2009, the percentage of students meeting the seventh grade writing benchmark will increase by 5 points to 60%.

*Source: Portland Public Schools. All data is for the 2008-2009 school year.*

**How Educated is Our Workforce?**

- 15% Graduate or professional degree
- 24% Bachelors degree
- 7% Associates degree
- 23% Some college, no degree
- 22% High school diploma or equivalency
- 10% Less than high school diploma (without basic education)

*(Figures do not equal to 100% due to rounding)  
Source: American Community Survey, 2007*

Thirty-nine percent of adult Portlanders (age 25 and above) have a bachelor's degree or above, compared to 33 percent of the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) as a whole. Among the 50 largest MSAs in the country, Portland ranks 15th in the percentage of residents with a bachelors degree or higher.

**Career Training Enrollment (at Portland Community College)**

Career Tech	
2007-08	2008-09
19,584	21,816

Continuing Education	
2007-08	2008-09
12,255	12,828

*Source: <http://www.pcc.edu/ir/Factbook/2008-09/annual/swrcwhd200809.pdf>*

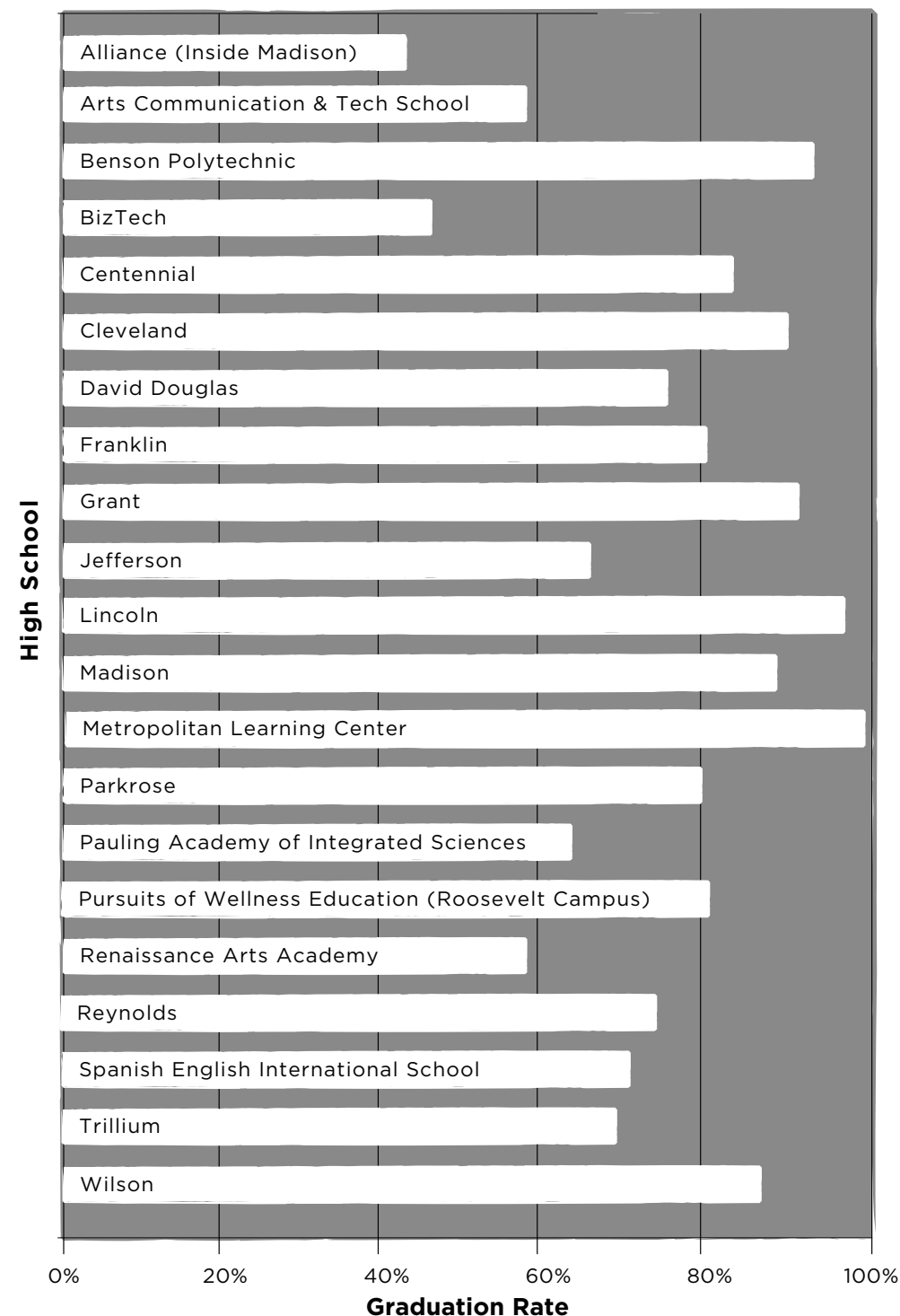
**Read more...**

**Portland Plan Reports**  
Public Schools • Urban Form

**Related Reports and Projects**  
Cully-Concordia Community Assessment and Action Plan • East Portland Action Plan • Portland Schools Foundation's Ninth Grade Counts • Chalkboard Project's 2008-09 Education Report to the Community

*Links to all listed reports and projects are provided at the end of this handbook.*

**High School Graduation Rate (2007-08)**



*Graduation rates in this chart, and the chart provided on the previous page are calculated by the traditional method = Number of Regular Diplomas (Number of Regular Diplomas + the Number of Dropouts for Grades 9-12 for the Year). The total number of dropouts from grades 9-12 in the year in question is used as a proxy for the dropout rate of the graduating class. GED recipients are not counted as dropouts. GED recipients are not high school completers because they do not complete high school. As defined by Oregon law, they are also not dropouts.*

**Consider...**

- 1 What can we do to improve graduation rates?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 2 Should the City of Portland lead the charge with the State of Oregon on creating adequate funding for building new school facilities that serve multiple purposes in the local neighborhoods and community?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 3 What can we do to strengthen the role of schools in the community?  
Should the City of Portland and local school districts partner more to provide community services at school facilities and educational opportunities at City facilities?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 4 Should schools be a magnet for neighborhood groups and individuals to participate in activities in and around the school?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 5 As school districts upgrade aging buildings, what should the prioritize? Ensuring warm and dry buildings? Modernizing technology and classrooms? Improving accessibility and security? Improving energy efficiency?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 6 Looking forward 25 years, what new skills do you think you might need?  
.....  
.....  
.....

