ACTION AREA:

Education & Skill Development

• graduation rates
• school facilities
• knowledge-based economy
• multi-purpose community centers
• family-wage centers
• 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.

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

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.xerox.com/lawyers/

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.
What can we do to improve skill development?

In the seventh grade, students should meet the benchmark.

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.

High School Graduation Rate (2007-08)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alliance (Inside Madison)</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Communication &amp; Tech School</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benson Polytechnic</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BizTech</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centennial</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Douglas</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Learning Center</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkrose</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauling Academy of Integrated Sciences</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursuits of Wellness Education (Roosevelt Campus)</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renaissance Arts Academy</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reynolds</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish English International School</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trillium</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduation rates on this and the following pages are calculated by the traditional method = Number of Regular Diplomas received in the school year, divided by the number of students enrolled in the school in the fall of the school year times 100.

High School Graduation Rate (2007-08)

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 100% due to rounding.


Thirty-nine percent of adult Portladers (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 bachelor’s 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/PPFactbook2008-09/index/ swrcwhd200809.pdf

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 priorities be? 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?

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.

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