

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Education
Glenbrook School District 225

FROM: Ann LePage & David Boyle
College Coordinators, GBS and GBN

RE: Post-High School Follow-up

DATE: May 2, 2011

Introduction

Through the District Comprehensive Planning Process initiated in November 2005, a post-graduate study was cited as a need in several different areas. The purpose of this report is to establish a base that provides information regarding our students' transition to college along with state and national comparative statistics. The report includes statistics from the National Student Clearinghouse and other data sources as well as qualitative information from a post-graduation survey administered by the schools through Naviance.

Comparative Statistics

High School Graduation Rates

Glenbrook High School Graduation Rates Average:	99.9% ¹
Illinois High School Graduation Rate Average:	75.82% ²
United States Average:	70.06% ²

College Enrollment Rates

Glenbrook High School Average:	97-98%
Illinois Average:	57.4% ²
United States Average:	63.3% ²

College Retention Rates (College Freshmen returning their second year)

Glenbrook High School Average:	95% ³
Illinois Average:	71.7% ²
United States Average:	74.7% ²

¹ 2010 Glenbrook School Report Card

² The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

³ National Student Clearinghouse Report

National Student Clearinghouse

The Clearinghouse is a non-profit organization comprising more than 3,300 colleges and universities that enroll over 92% of all postsecondary students. These institutions continuously update our [Clearinghouse] database of more than 93 million college student records (National Student Clearinghouse, www.studentclearinghouse.org).

For the last two years the district has obtained post-high school data from the National Student Clearinghouse through a feature called *Student Tracker* that provides data to high schools regarding their graduates as they progress through college. Initial Clearinghouse data obtained by the District was incomplete, but has become more complete in capturing our students as they progress through college.

Limitations of National Student Clearinghouse Data

Not all colleges participate in providing data to the Clearinghouse – 92% of U.S. colleges report data to the Clearinghouse. For example, Indiana University only became a Clearinghouse reporting school last year. Even for Clearinghouse-reporting institutions, we have found that some of the data is incomplete as students we have verified as attending a university may not be included in the *Student Tracker* data. Students are linked to their high school by name, birth date and high school ACT code. If any of these data are incomplete or inaccurate within the high school or college databases, the student will not be linked back to the high school. In addition, if students have placed a FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) block on their information or if a university has privacy blocks on particular information for a student, the student may not be reported to the high school through the *Student Tracker* system. The Clearinghouse does not provide national, state or local comparative data.

Although there are limitations to the data, the Clearinghouse provides a sample size of students ranging from roughly 86% - 89% of our graduates that is more than adequate in looking at statistical trends. Information gleaned from Clearinghouse data will ultimately provide enough general information regarding students' college retention and graduation rates to contribute to our understanding of the success of Glenbrook students at post-secondary institutions. As cited below by the American Council on Education, a national database does not currently exist that accounts for all students.

Research of College Graduation Rates

College graduation rates have become a recent focus of state and national policymakers in holding universities accountable for students' success. A recent paper from the American Council on Education, Center for Policy Analysis, cited the following regarding college graduation data:

American Council on Education, Center for Policy Analysis

- *Graduation rate data are a relatively new phenomenon: The first year these data were collected by the Department of Education was 1996.*

- *Although none of the existing national databases can provide a graduation rate that accounts for all students, all the databases do provide valuable information that contributes to our understanding of student success.*
- *Much of the policy conversation on graduation rates has focused on undergraduate education. Very little is known about the graduation rates of graduate students.*
- *Alternative measures, such as a ratio of degrees awarded to total enrollment, are frequently used to evaluate institutional success.*
- *Most conversations on six-year graduation rates do not include a discussion of the percentage of students still enrolled. It is important to consider the share of students still on track to graduate after the six-year point.*

National Student Clearinghouse

<http://research.studentclearinghouse.org/timetodegree.html>

Postsecondary research tells us that it takes an average of 55 to 57 months — from first-time enrollment to graduation — to complete a bachelor's degree without stopping out (Tuma and Geis 1995; NCES 2003). On average, it takes students who begin at a two-year institution and graduate from a four-year institution a year and a half longer to graduate (NCES 2003). Furthermore, according to Peter and Carroll (2005), there is a direct and positive relationship between time to degree and multiple institution attendance: students who attend three institutions take 11 years to graduate and students who attend four institutions 14 years to graduate.

As the Clearinghouse data become more complete, it is our belief that it will show Glenbrook students finish college at a much higher rate and in less time than the national averages. Because a national database that accounts for all students does not currently exist, we would not have the capability to account for all students. However, the Clearinghouse sample size would provide sufficient insight regarding our students' college completion rates.

Naviance Post-Graduation Survey

For the last several years, the web-based program, Naviance, has become an invaluable resource for Glenbrook students, parents and staff. Naviance helps our students navigate the college process and provides data in context regarding admission decisions, college representative contact information, a calendar of college representative visits, career information and planning, email functions, survey distribution and much more.

Survey of 2010 Graduates

Q: Overall, how would you describe your academic preparation for College?

N=277 (ten students selected more than one response)

Excellent	47.6%
Good	46.8%
Average	8.7%
Fair	.3%
Poor	.3%

To put this into context, an Associated Press survey (April 19, 2011), reported that only 56% of young people say their [high] school did a good or excellent job at preparing them for further education.

Qualitative Responses

Q: What was the best aspect of attending GBS/GBN for you?

- I was most surprised at the huge gap of academic and financial differences I noticed among myself and other students. I realized how truly privileged and fortunate I am to have attended a high school that prepared me so well for college. I also learned to be more grateful towards my parents for how much they have supported me.
- The amount of honors and AP classes really prepared me for college level classes. The regular level also prepared me very well.
- We were well prepared not only in our academic aspects, but I also got leadership skills from GB that I now use in my classes.
- I was surprised how easy it was.
- While GB offered outstanding academic instruction, the attribute unique to GB was the activities that the school had to offer, with hundreds of clubs and activities to choose from.
- The labs and resources we had in our classrooms at GB were phenomenal, I think that I could take my gen ed classes at GB and get a better education than I am getting here.
- College teachers simply don't care as much about you as high school teachers do.
- I thought the classes were going to be extremely difficult in college, but I'm finding out that they aren't as hard as they seemed to be. I was also very surprised at how prepared I was for my classes because of GB. There are some students in my English class who don't know what an outline is for a paper... that really shocked me!
- I was most surprised at how well GB had prepared me for college. Swarthmore says that most students must get accustomed to not being the top of the class anymore,

but I feel that GB has prepared me incredibly well to the extent where I am not as overwhelmed as others are.

- I wanted to get out of GB so badly, but once getting to college I noticed really just how lucky I was to go to GB. No one has a high school like ours, and I never thought I would want to come back and live in X. After being in college for a month, I can see my life in X after college, no town is similar to it.

Q: What surprised you most about your transition from high school to college?

General themes derived from responses:

- Amount of freedom
- Amount of free time
- How well prepared they felt
- Amount of independence
- Amount of reading
- Structure of earning grades (just different)

Conclusions/Next Steps

Glenbrook students attend college at higher rates than their counterparts both statewide and nationally. More importantly, our students' retention rates from the first year to the second year of college exceed that of their peers. Retention rates coupled with the qualitative survey of our students through Naviance support the premise that Glenbrook students are academically well prepared for college. Our students leave our high schools "college ready."

The schools will continue to gather and reflect upon data from the National Student Clearinghouse *Student Tracker* system on an annual basis. Information regarding not only retention rates, but college graduation rates for Glenbrook students will become more complete over time. Because a national database that accounts for all students does not currently exist, we would not have the capability to account for all students. However, Clearinghouse sample size would provide sufficient insight regarding our students' college success. College Counselors will continue their use of Naviance in conducting follow-up surveys of our graduates in the future. This data will be used as the schools review their work with students and families in the college planning process and obtain feedback regarding the academic program offered at each high school.