

Data in Action: High School to Postsecondary Transitions

Quincy High School
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Overview

- Focus groups took place in Quincy, WA at Quincy High School
- QSD Facts:
 - Enrollment: 2,896 students
 - Demographics: 87.9 Latinx & 10.9% White
 - English Language Learners (ELL):41.6%
 - Low Income: 84.7%
- Two Focus groups of 8 students each. Students same from a variety of backgrounds and academic preparation including those in AVID, dual credit enrollment, mainstream coursework, and ELL courses. All students identified as Latinx (Hispanic, Mexican-American, Latino)
- Students also presented a wide range of postsecondary aspirations from those who said they wanted to pursue a straight to work trajectory to those who had already been accepted to and planned to attend a four year university, and everything in between.
- Research connects to ongoing research from Personal Statement Project, H2P, Gates Roundtable, and Gates Limitless Partnership work.

Findings: Key Themes

- Family Support
- Supportive Programs @ QHS
- Peer Support for Postsecondary
- Courses of Rigor
- Supporting Transitions

Family Support

Strength

Students named their families, especially their older siblings, as rich resources of information and motivation in their postsecondary journeys.

“My brother [was] in AVID so I can say it straight...I have to follow in his footsteps. And I have to go to college later on.”

“For me, it was my older sister, she had encouraged me to pursue my education and see what I can explore in high school.”

Opportunity for Growth

Students shared that their parents were supportive, but that money and knowledge around college-going created barriers.

“They [parents] don’t really understand...about the process for me for college. So, I have a lingering thought like, I don’t know if I have to earn all that money myself, or if I would really have the support, or how much of the support...I feel almost scared to talk to anybody and they come back [and] try to push me away from it [college].”

Supportive Programs @ QHS

Strength

Students shared that AVID, dual credit courses (especially those in honors ELA and CTE Computer Science), and two specific teachers were reliable areas of strong advising support.

“I am in a couple of dual credit classes so I’m earning college credit while still getting my high school credit, which I am very grateful for. And I am taking AP Computer Science, where I got to get more passionate about computer science...I am glad I had the opportunity.”

Opportunity for Growth

Help is siloed. Students felt that while there was good support in some classes, that students who were not in specific programs did not receive the help they needed. They also note that the pandemic impacted them.

“...I’ve notice that [attending college and career fairs] in school [is] through teachers, and if you don’t have that teacher, you don’t have the opportunity to go.”

Peer Support for Postsecondary

Strength

Focus groups and some courses, like AVID and CTE, helped build community.

“I am not glad to hear about how everybody’s struggling, (but it’s helpful to know) I am not alone.”

“I learned that we all have the same worries” (as a result of the focus group)”

Opportunity for Growth

Students used networks outside of classes to get support.

“I don’t have AVID, so I don’t really hear much about scholarships. I didn’t even know that scholarships should be applied for during the summer...I only knew because one of my friends..helped me..”

Courses of Rigor

Strength and Opportunity for Growth

Students stated that they found more relevance and value in their dual credit coursework, even though the work was more challenging, time consuming, and with stricter deadlines.

“In the college classes, they ask us to be more responsible and organized. In the regular classes they are easier and more open to let you turn things in after due dates. In college classes, it is what it is and that it that.”

“I prefer my College in the High School courses over my regular courses ...because sometimes the work feels like busy work. In regular classes.”

Supporting Transitions

Strength and Opportunity for Growth

Students stated that they got good general support, but felt lost when it came to immediate next steps, or if they needed more detailed information.

“In my classes it’s like, they only told me to go to college, but they haven’t told me how to get financial aid.”

“...help stops at applying..”

“What do I do next? How to apply and how do I get my roommate? And can we actually pay for it, so I actually have a place to live?”

Ideas from Students to Improve Postsecondary Support @ QHS

- Study tables for support- Having coaches mentor their athletes and share opportunities
- Posting resources more often (social media, in announcements, Remind app, etc.)
- All classroom teachers actively engaged and focuses on providing secondary support
- Postsecondary focused parent meetings
- Bulletin board of scholarship opportunities outside of counseling office
- Peer support in classes, and in conversations like the one they experienced in the focus group where they were able to talk openly about fears, ask questions, and share resources.
- One on one postsecondary counseling for all students throughout their high school career

Implications and Next Steps

- Increase access to AVID. There is room to expand, but recruiting process needs to be improved.
- Working with SIG as a part of our Limitless Grant partnership with Big Bend Community College to develop family workshops around postsecondary support for families and students
- Improving Advisory course to include targeted postsecondary support at needs of each grade within the classes and through postsecondary seminars.
- Continue to focus on improving interventions and tier one instruction, as well as adding more dual credit and CTE opportunities.

Resources

- [College Knowledge Lessons](#)
- [College and Career Training Guide \(English\)](#)
- [College and Career Training Guide \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Eligibility Chart for the Washington College Grant](#)
- [High School to Postsecondary Data Tool Kit](#)
- [QSD Postsecondary Storydoc](#)