

ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Class of 2015

Executive Summary

The 1,166 2015 graduates of the three comprehensive high schools were surveyed during the '15-'16 school year using the TRACE Follow-Up system. Graduates were classified with regard to gender, ethnic/racial group, and GPA and a stratified sample of 443 was selected for the survey. Responses were obtained from 75%. Though the response level was somewhat lower than desired, respondents were demographically highly representative of the entire Class so that the data described below are accurate estimates of the status and opinions of all 2015 graduates (Tables 1-5).

Thirty-five percent of the graduates are employed either full- or part-time, predominantly by retail/wholesale (32%), restaurant and service industry (each 14%), and college (13%) organizations. Of the working graduates, 26% have sales/cashier jobs, 14% have child-care/recreation positions, 13% have restaurant-related jobs, and 11% each have office occupations and unskilled labor jobs. The primary job category for male and for female employees is retail sales (28% and 25%, respectively). Nine percent of the working graduates reported that their jobs were related to training they had in high school (Tables 6, 15-17).

Three-quarters of the employed graduates (75%) are generally satisfied with their jobs though specific indices of job satisfaction vary: 66% find their jobs interesting, 63% feel their advancement opportunities are good, 75% are satisfied with their earnings, and 30% replied that their jobs are related to their ultimate career objectives. The latter result is consistent with the findings that 83% of the working graduates have part-time positions and 85% are also continuing their education either full- or part-time; in most such instances employment is based on economic rather than career-related considerations (Tables 6, 18-22).

The large majority of graduates (84%) are continuing their education either full- or part-time, most (73%) within Washington. The majority of continuing education graduates (71%) are attending four-year institutions and an additional 23% are enrolled in community colleges; most of the CC students (71%) intend to transfer to a four-year school. More than two-thirds of the continuing-education graduates (71%) have decided on a major subject of concentration: 17% are majoring in engineering/computer, 13% in business administration, and 12% are majoring in the biological sciences. A few graduates (2%) have completed programs of study since graduating the Issaquah School District (Tables 6-14).

Graduates reported that the most useful high school subject areas for their current major activity, whether school or work, were Math (56%), English and Science (each 42%), followed by Social Studies (27%), Computer Science (16%), and Foreign Language, Art/Music, and Health (each 11%) (Tables 41-43). In-depth assessments of individual subject areas are contained in Tables 23-39. Nearly a third of the graduates (30%) now wish they had taken other courses while in high school, the most frequently mentioned being classes in science (24%), social studies (14%), and in non-specific AP classes (11%) (Table 40).

The occupational aspirations of the graduates while in high school were varied, with the most prevalent being careers in the health field (20%), in the physical sciences (18%), and business (5%). Four-of-ten graduates (38%) had not decided on a career objective while in high school. As might be expected, graduates have made decisions and had changes of mind since graduation: 24% now opt for careers in the physical sciences, 20% in the health field, 6% in business, and 5% each in the creative fields and in the legal area. Forty percent of the graduates who had *not* decided on a career area while in high school have since done so and, of those who had, 21% have changed their minds (Tables 44-46).

Three-quarters of the graduates (77%) participated in extra-curricular activities at some time during their high school career. The majority of participants, ranging from 60% to 94% for the various activities, reported they consider their involvement to have been worthwhile (Table 51).

Graduates report varying degrees of preparedness in everyday skill and knowledge areas at the time they completed high school: 83% felt somewhat or very prepared in reading, 80% reported being somewhat or very prepared in writing, 67% were prepared in numeric computational skills, 90% felt prepared in using proper spoken English, 79% responded that they were prepared in using research and study skills, 58% were prepared in job-seeking skills, 68% felt they could evaluate national and world problems and issues, 79% were knowledgeable about avoiding drug and alcohol abuse, 77% were prepared in human relations skills, 63% felt prepared as informed consumers, 84% were knowledgeable about sex and health issues, and 65% felt prepared to speak before groups (Tables 52-63).

Half the graduates (54%) felt their counselor had helped them with class selection and plans of study for their high school careers, 25% felt they had been helped with career exploration and planning, 48% felt helped with applications for college or jobs, 29% were helped by counselors in locating sources for financial aid and scholarships, and 28% had been helped with personal problems and issues. Varying numbers of graduates, ranging from 20% to 37% for these five areas, had not requested help from their counselors. However, a large number of graduates (85%) now report that they could have used more assistance, particularly with career exploration (51%), with financial aid (49%), and with application preparation (40%) (Tables 64-69).

The large majority of graduates (84%) felt their teachers were effective instructors and a majority (78%) indicated that teachers were interested in and helped students when asked. However, relatively fewer graduates thought that most of their classes were extremely or very demanding when it came to homework assignments (62%), discipline/behavior requirements (27%), the quality of work required of students (62%), and the required amount of classroom work and participation (42%) (Tables 70-71, 47-50).

A few graduates (12%) disagreed with the statement that school personnel were *not* prejudiced and treated all students equally. A large majority (80%) felt that their high school encouraged learning and more than half (60%) reported that high school had been a pleasant and rewarding experience (Tables 72-74).

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