



Indiana's Twenty-first Century Scholars Program: *Years of Impact*

History and Overview

In 1990, Indiana policymakers created a program to help raise the educational aspirations and attainment of low and moderate income Hoosier families. Administered through the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana, the Twenty-First Century Scholars Program aims to ensure that all Indiana families can afford a college education for their children. By Indiana code (IC 20-12-70), the program was established to:

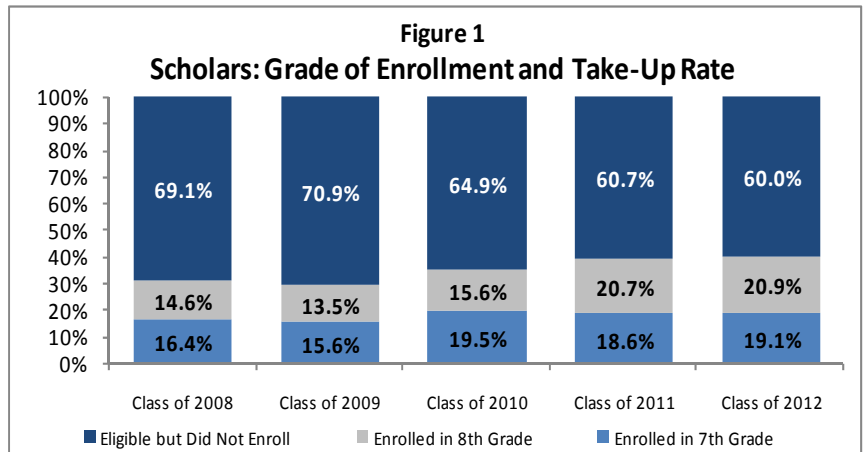
- Reduce the number of students who withdrew from high school before graduation
- Increase the number of students prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation
- Increase the number of students entering institutions of higher learning
- Reduce the financial burden for students and their families to attend college
- Decrease drug and alcohol abuse by encouraging higher educational pursuits
- Improve the overall quality of life for many Indiana residents

Eligible middle school students (based on free and reduced lunch enrollment) can sign up to become a Twenty-First Century

Scholar. In 2008-09, 6th grade students were eligible for the first time to sign up for the program, along with 7th and 8th grade students. Along with their application, students must fulfill a pledge of good citizenship, which includes a promise to achieve a high school diploma with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale; not use illegal drugs or alcohol, or commit a crime; apply for admission to an eligible Indiana college, university or proprietary school as a high school senior; and apply for state financial aid on

time. Indiana is making headway in increasing the number of eligible students who sign up for the Twenty-first Century Scholars program. Members of the high school classes of 2011 and 2012 signed up in increasing proportions. This is especially meaningful as the number of students estimated to be eligible for free and reduced lunch also went up during this period.

Following completion of the pledge, students are guaranteed a grant to cover the cost of four years of college tuition at any public college or university in Indiana. If the student elects to attend an Indiana independent or private institution, the state will award an amount comparable to that of a public institution. If the student attends an Indiana participating proprietary school, the state will award a tuition scholarship equal to that of Ivy Tech Community College.



Upon admittance to the Twenty-First Century Scholars program, students and their parents are instantly linked with a network of support sites that encourage and support the student and family through high school, and assist with the college admission and financial aid application process. Through the 14 regional Scholar support sites, students and parents have access to a variety of workshops, campus visits and other ongoing assistance.



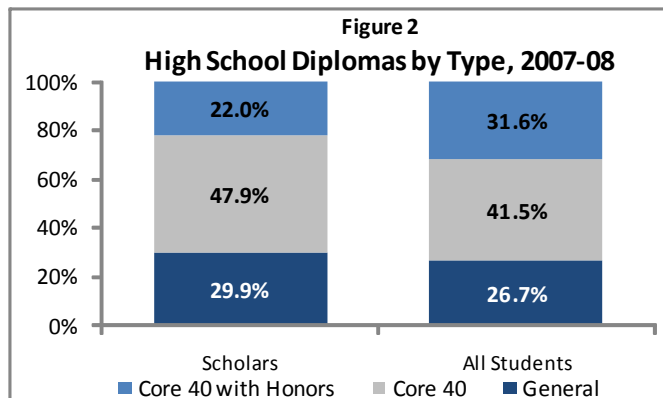
Participating public, private and proprietary colleges and universities are required to provide mentoring programs to support the academic and social needs of Twenty-first Century Scholars. In general, these mentoring and support programs range from cursory to robust with predictable results. The more engaging support sites provide financial aid assistance, tutoring, mentoring and social events for Scholars.

Indiana's Core 40

During the mid-1990s, Indiana business leaders, K-12 educators and higher education faculty came together to establish a high school curriculum that would ensure students were ready for the next step after graduation, whether it be college or the workplace. Students who earn a Core 40 or Core 40 with Honors high school diploma are much more likely to be college-ready than students who do not.

Although Core 40 is not a requirement of the Scholars Program, participants have been encouraged to earn the Core 40 diploma to lay the foundation for college success. Students who entered high school in 2007, the class of 2011, will be the first class for which the Core 40 diploma is required. Also, in 2011, the Core 40 will become the minimum admission standard for all Indiana public four-year institutions of higher education.

Scholars are more likely than students overall to earn a Core 40 diploma, though they are not as likely to earn a Core 40 with Honors diploma.



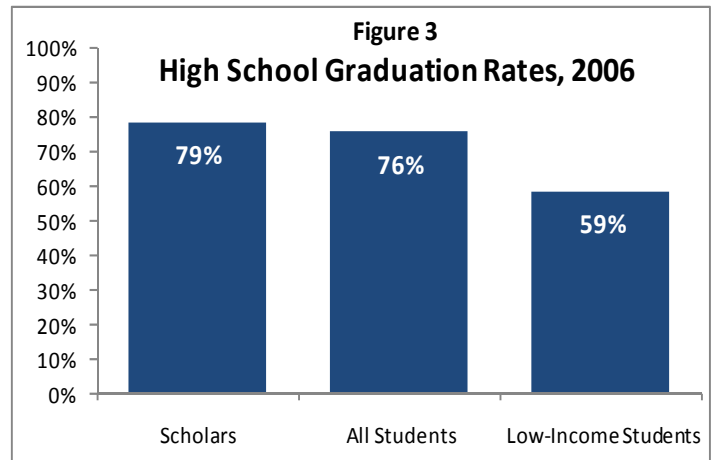
Scholars Graduate from High School at Higher Rates

The Twenty-first Century Scholars Program was primarily designed as a high school completion initiative to get students who

are at risk of dropping out of high school to graduate, and hopefully to attend college.

Consistently, low-income students, classified by eligibility for free and reduced price lunch, graduate from high school at a much lower rate than students who come from higher-income families. Low-income students are about 30% less likely than higher-income students to graduate from high school. Minority students are also much less likely to graduate from high school than white students.

The unique combination of an “early promise” that requires students to study hard, stay in school, and stay out of trouble, and the encouragement for Scholars to earn Core 40 diplomas, may contribute to the fact that Scholars graduate from high school at a rate greater than low-income students, and all students.



Scholars are More Likely to Attend College

Over the last 20 years, Indiana has made significant strides in the number of students going directly on to college after high school. In 1986, only 33% of high school graduates attended college the following fall. In 2006, that figure was 63.4%, above the national average.

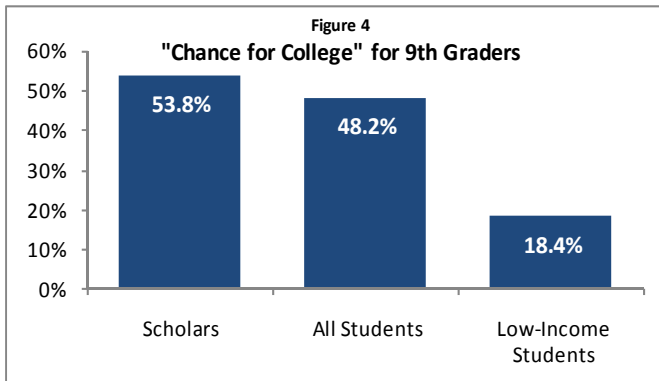
However, high school graduation rates have not significantly improved over that time, and by some measures, rates have declined. This has a negative impact on college participation and economic development efforts.

Students’ “chance for college” calculates both the high school graduation rate and college entry rate. This metric reflects the percentage of high school 9th graders who actually make it to college. A little more than 48% of Indiana’s 9th graders make it to college,



indicating that there is still much work left to be done in improving the pathway to college.

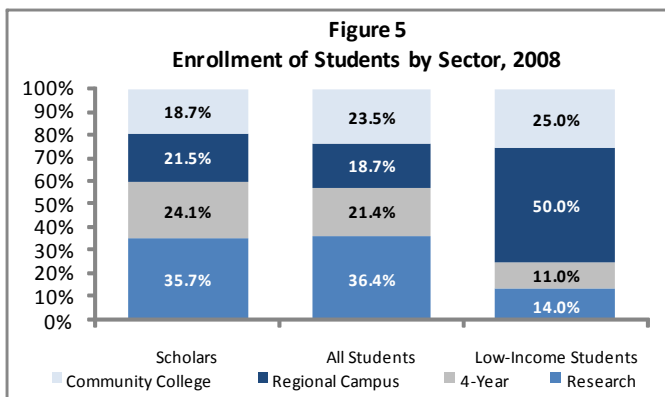
Because Scholars are more likely to graduate from high school, and they are more likely to go to college, their “chance for college” is higher than both average Hoosier students and low-income students.



Program elements, like the high school support services, additional supports once a student reaches college, and generous financial assistance, contribute to Scholar success. The distinguishing trademark of the program—a free college degree—cannot be understated as a significant motivating factor.

Where Scholars Go to College

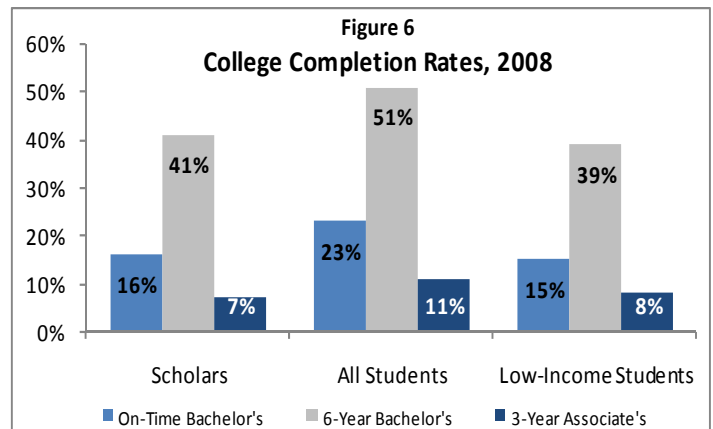
In addition to making an impact on the rates at which students complete high school and enter college, the program also influences where students choose to enroll in college. Scholars are much more likely than other low-income students, and roughly as likely as all students, to attend a Research Campus (IU-Bloomington, Purdue-West Lafayette, or IUPUI). This is an indication that the Scholars program does successfully remove financial barriers for students, and may inspire students to study harder in high school.



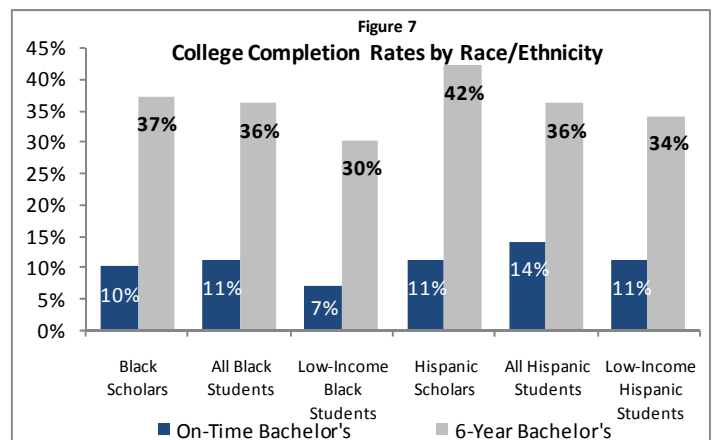
College Completion

College completion has risen to the top of the national agenda, with a call from President Obama for the U.S. to regain its leadership in degree attainment. With a faltering economy and fewer jobs available for uneducated workers, it has never been more important for students to start college, and to finish.

Twenty-first Century Scholars are more likely to graduate from college than other low-income students, as defined by Pell Grant eligibility. However, Scholars lag behind all Hoosier students at Indiana’s public colleges, who completed a Bachelor’s degree in six years at a rate of 51% in 2008, and an Associate’s degree at Ivy Tech Community College at a rate of 11%.



The Twenty-first Century Scholars Program also appears to have a positive impact for minority students at four-year institutions. Hispanic Scholars in particular have much higher completion rates than their peers. However, graduation rates for minorities, Scholar or otherwise, are still much lower than the state average for all students. Community college completion rates for minority Scholars are not included due to very small cohort groups.





While Scholars do not meet the completion average of all students anywhere except IUPUI, Scholars do come closer to meeting that average at residential campuses than at commuter campuses.

Table 1: College Completion Rates by Residential Campus			
	Scholars	All Students	Low-Income
IU-Bloomington	56.0%	67.2%	54.7%
PU-West Lafayette	70.6%	72.4%	65.3%
BSU	52.7%	60.25	49.4%
ISU	39.1%	41.1%	36.3%
USI	20.5%	34.6%	26.4%
IUPUI	31.3%	31.0%	22.0%

Several of Indiana’s colleges and universities have developed innovative wrap-around programs that help Scholars both financially and in making the transition into college.

- Indiana University-Bloomington: The 21st Century Scholarship Covenant provides students with a financial award to meet all remaining financial need.
- IUPUI: The 21st Century Scholar Grant is designed to help students meet all remaining financial need.
- Purdue University-West Lafayette: The Purdue Promise provides a grant package to meet remaining financial need, and provides Scholars with additional support services, like a course on how to succeed in college, learning community opportunities, and mentoring from upper-level Purdue students, faculty and staff.
- University of Southern Indiana: The 21st Century Scholar Textbook Award helps students who persist beyond the first year of college to meet the costs of textbooks.

Characteristics of Twenty-first Century Scholars

- **60.3% are first-generation college students (compared to 43.6% from all FAFSA filers).**
- **54.5% are from single-parent families (compared to 30.2% from all FAFSA filers).**
- **Come from families with an average family income of \$25,842, compared with an average family income of \$62,178 for all FAFSA filers.**



Characteristics of Twenty-first Century Scholars

Ethnicity or Race	Count	% of Total	% of Indiana's Population
American Indian or Alaska Native	2,555	1%	0.2%
Black or African American	50,593	21%	8.6%
Multiracial	2,115	1%	1.6%
Hispanic or Latino (Duplicated)	19,141	8%	4.7%
White	143,627	60%	83.7%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	332	0.1%	0%
Unknown, Other	21,903	9.1%	1.2%
Total (excl. duplicates)	240,266	100%	100%

Cohort	Enrolled	Affirmed	Admitted to College	% of Enrolled Who are Admitted to College
1995	5,715	2,562	1,800	31.5%
1996	6,317	2,835	2,442	38.7%
1997	5,004	2,608	2,232	44.6%
1998	4,237	2,638	2,301	54.3%
1999	4,748	2,999	2,605	54.9%
2000	5,744	3,395	2,911	50.7%
2001	7,336	3,930	3,321	45.3%
2002	7,717	3,990	3,448	44.7%
2003	7,595	3,732	3,622	47.7%
2004	6,726	3,788	2,999	44.6%
2005	7,270	4,792	3,113	42.9%
2006	6,909	4,564	3,159	45.7%
2007	10,489	5,578	3,873	36.9%
2008	8,863	5,978	4,074	46.0%
2009	9,468	6,390	Not available yet	NA



In Summary

Indiana's Twenty-first Century Scholars Program is a national model for what states can do to help low-income students succeed in high school and improve college access. The successes outlined in this policy brief continue to make the case for this important program. It is clear that high expectations, the promise of college opportunity, and no-cost tuition can do much to increase college access and success for at-risk students.

It cannot be forgotten, however, that while the Scholars program provides substantial financial assistance for tuition, the situation of the recipients may not change—many are still poor, come from single-parent households, and are often the first person in the family to attend college. It is through the work of the Scholars support sites, families and on-campus programs that these students can work past and through situations that may otherwise deter them from reaching the final goal—a college degree.

While data in this brief suggests that Scholars can overcome many of the barriers associated with their situations, by no means does it indicate that the Program cannot be improved. Areas for future improvement will certainly include encouraging more Scholars to graduate from high school with an Honors diploma, and encouraging and enabling more Scholars to graduate from college. There is still much work to be done to ensure that every student in Indiana, Twenty-first Century Scholar or not, can graduate high school, go to college, and earn a college degree.

End Notes

Figure 1—Scholars: Grade of Enrollment at Take-Up Rate: Source—State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana, Scholar enrollment grades by cohort. Eligible population is based on average of percent qualifying for free- and reduced-price lunch for all students.

Figure 2—High School Diplomas by Type: Source—Indiana Department of Education and State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana. Reflects diplomas earned during 2007-08 academic year.

Figure 3—High School Graduation Rates, 2006: Source—Indiana Department of Education and State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana. Reflects graduation rates for 2005-06 academic year. This is the latest year available due to data availability.

Figure 4—"Chance for College" for 9th Graders—Source: Indiana Department of Education and State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana for high school graduation rates. State Student Assistance Commission for Scholar College Entry Rates. NCHEMS for All Student College Entry Rate. Thomas Mortenson (www.postsecondary.org) for Low-Income Student College Entry Rate.

Figure 5—Enrollment of Students by Sector, 2008: Source—Indiana Commission for Higher Education Student Information System. Reflects college enrollment for first-time, full-time students.

Figure 6—College Completion Rates, 2008: Source—Indiana Commission for Higher Education Student Information System. Reflects completion of students who entered public college Fall 2001. Associate's degree completion rates include only Ivy Tech Community College. They do not include Vincennes University due to errors in data reporting.

Figure 7—College Completion Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2008—Indiana Commission for Higher Education Student Information System. Reflects completion of students who entered public college Fall 2001.

Table 1—College Completion Rates by Residential Campus—Indiana Commission for Higher Education Student Information System. Reflects completion of students who entered public college Fall 2001.

Table 2—Characteristics of Twenty-first Century Scholars—State Student Assistance Commission, reflects total Scholars currently enrolled in program.