

# SDCCD Trends Update

## The Persistence of San Diego Unified 1998 High School Graduates in the San Diego Community Colleges



*The Fall to Spring Persistence  
Rates of San Diego Unified  
High School Diploma  
Graduates at San Diego City,  
Mesa, and Miramar Colleges*



# Research Questions

*What are the Persistence Rates of High School Graduates from SDUSD High Schools from Fall, 1998 to Spring, 1999? Does this rate vary by high school?*

## Background

In a review of accountability and performance indicators from colleges around the nation, persistence was often included as an indicator of student success and institutional effectiveness <sup>1</sup>. A persisting student makes better progress in school, and often shows greater dedication to completing a degree, certificate, or transferring. Enhanced progress by the persisting student is rooted in student development theory as noted by Alexander W. Astin, a renowned scholar in higher education, student assessment, and outcomes. According to Astin's theory of Student Involvement, the greater the amount of physical and psychological energy a student puts into college, the greater the success of that student <sup>2</sup>. Astin suggests that time spent on campus, developing peer relationships, developing relations with faculty, and term-to-term attendance results in enhanced student outcomes. Thus persistence, particularly for recent high school graduates is of particular importance as a predictor of success. This edition of SDCCD Research Trends will examine the persistence rates of June 1998 high school graduates who were first time college students and determine if the persistence rate varies by high school of origin.

## Method

### *Determining Persistence*

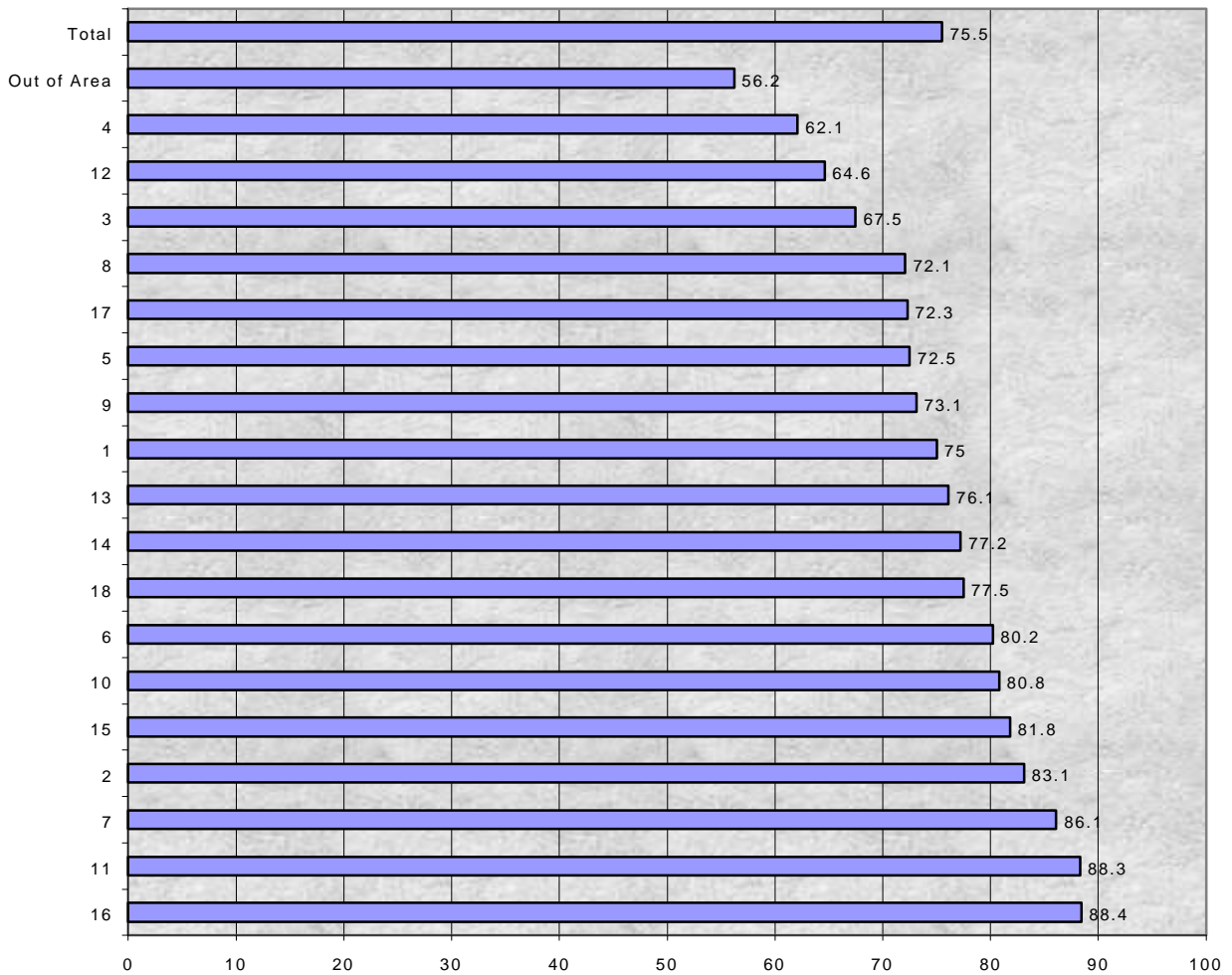
The data provided in this report were drawn from SDCCD student enrollment and performance data for June 1998 San Diego Unified School District diploma graduates. Participants included all June 1998 high school graduates who enrolled in the Fall 1998 term at one of the three colleges of the SDCCD. To compute a persistence rate, an incoming Fall 1998 student had to have re-enrolled in the Spring 1999 term. These rates were computed and described for the major feeder SDUSD high schools of the SDCCD colleges.

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<sup>1</sup> Joint Commission on Accountability Reporting (1996) A need answered: Accountability reporting conventions for higher education. A joint project conducted by AACCC, NASLUGC and AAISC.

<sup>2</sup> Astin, A.W. (1985). Achieving educational excellence: A critical assessment of priorities and practices in higher education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

**Persistence by SDUSD High Schools  
Fall 1998 - Spring 1999**



**Findings: Persistence Rates**

- On average, about three-quarters of June 1998 high school graduates enrolled in the Fall 1998 term persisted into the Spring 1999 term.
- The chart shows that there is wide variation in the persistence rates of students from the various SDCCD Feeder High Schools.
- The highest persistence rates were approximately 88% for three high schools, and the lowest rate was approximately 58% for Out of Area high schools.

## Implications

As described in a recent edition of SDCCD Trends, understanding the incoming communication and computation skills of incoming freshmen is integral to the planning process in the SDCCD colleges. The recent focus on outcomes as exemplified by the Partnerships for Excellence (PFE) initiatives provides a renewed importance on the incoming skills of increasing numbers of our new students. Rates of persistence and retention are also important indicators related to eventual student success. The higher the persistence and retention rates of students, the more likely it will be that the student will graduate, earn a certificate, or transfer. Persistence can also be viewed as not only a measure of the effectiveness of the community college, but also appears to be related to the prior educational background and preparation of the student. The variation among feeder high schools on this accountability indicator suggests that educational planners, faculty, and policymakers may want to continue to focus attention on the student dispositional, situational, and demographic characteristics that contribute to student retention and persistence.

The next edition of SDCCD Research Trends will focus on the variation in placement rates in the curriculum by high school of origin.