

ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES 2015 OUTCOMES REPORT



OUR VISION

Arizona's community colleges, through a collaborative effort with education, business and community partners, will significantly increase the number of Arizonans who achieve their postsecondary education and training goals, complete a degree or certificate, and/or transfer to a university.

GOALS

COMPLETION, RETENTION, ACCESS

COMPLETION

Degree/Certificate Completion	2-3
Percent of Transfers with AGEC and/or Degree	4-5
Percent of Occupational Learners Earning Credentials	6-7
Percent of Learners Achieving a Successful Outcome	8-9

RETENTION

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ACCESS

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ACHIEVING OUR GOALS

“Strong economies are characterized by an abundance of well-paying jobs; and overwhelmingly, well-paying jobs are held by individuals who have knowledge and skills obtained through education beyond high school.”¹

By improving retention and completion rates, and by safeguarding access for all learners, Arizona’s community colleges will help to generate a more robust economy, support a growing workforce, and create better opportunities for future generations of Arizonans.

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, Arizona's community colleges embarked upon a long-term Strategic Vision to significantly increase the number of Arizonans who achieve their postsecondary education and training goals, complete a degree or certificate, and/or transfer to a university.

In order to measure progress toward the three major goals outlined in the Strategic Vision, the colleges have implemented a rigorous self-assessment and accountability process centered around the annual collection and distribution of data related to 30 key indicators.

Statewide data pertaining to these 30 indicators can be found in the 2015 Strategic Vision Student Progress and Outcomes Report, and online at www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org/outcomes2015. This document complements the larger report, and for 7 core metrics illustrates how each of Arizona's 10 community college districts compares to the others and to statewide averages. An appendix provides comparison data for all 30 indicators.

It is important to note that Arizona's community colleges differ substantially in terms of the populations served, education and training goals of learners, and institutional priorities (such as transfer or workforce preparation).

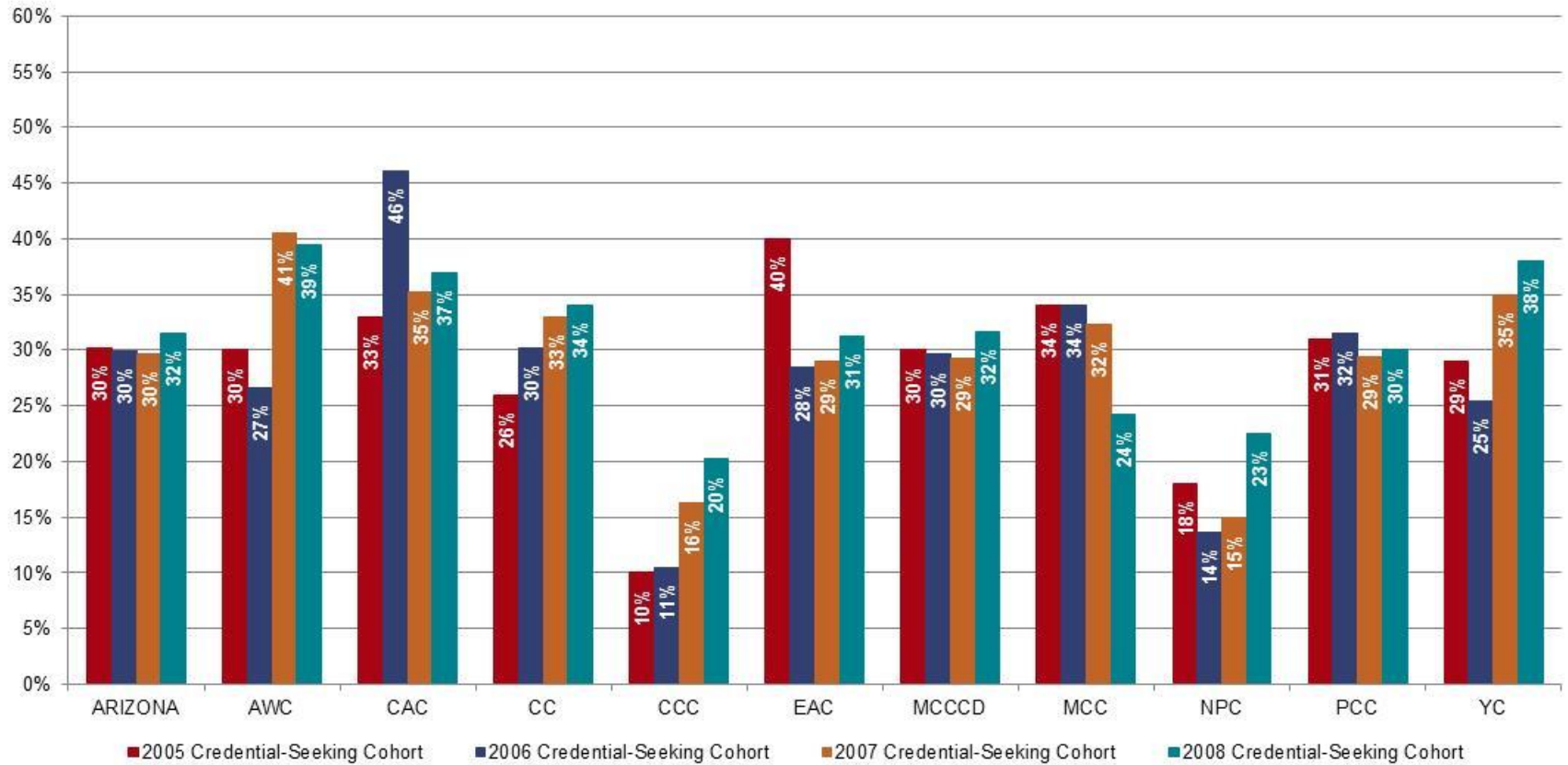
Comparing student progress and outcomes across districts can be an extremely useful precursor to the sharing of best practices and successful program models across the state. **However, each district must be assessed in light of its unique characteristics, goals, and priorities, and most importantly, by its ability to demonstrate incremental improvements in student access, retention, and completion over time.**

As 2015 represents the fourth full year of Strategic Vision data collection, the outcomes presented in this document can be compared to those from previous years, and trends in student progress and outcomes are starting to emerge. These trends will enable Arizona's community colleges to set reasonable benchmarks for attainment related to core metrics. However, many external forces (such as the state of Arizona's economy, the actions of other public institutions of higher education, and the availability of funding for community colleges) also affect these trends, making long-term projections difficult.

¹NCHEMS. (2007). *The Emerging Policy Triangle: Economic Development, Workforce Development, and Education*. Boulder, CO: Author.

COMPLETION

DEGREE/CERTIFICATE COMPLETION



The figure on page 2 and those appearing elsewhere in this document illustrate student progress and outcomes for Arizona Western College (AWC), Central Arizona College (CAC), Cochise College (CC), Coconino Community College (CCC), Eastern Arizona College (EAC), the ten colleges and two skills centers in the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), Mohave Community College (MCC), Northland Pioneer College (NPC), Pima Community College (PCC), and Yavapai College (YC).

After six years, 32 percent of the statewide 2008 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed a degree or certificate. Graduation rates vary substantially among Arizona’s 10 community college districts and relate, in large part, to the percentage of learners at each district who transfer to a four-year university and/or gain employment prior to earning a degree or certificate.

The statewide rate—as well as the most recent graduation rates at 9 out of 10 of Arizona’s community college districts—are equal to or higher than a comparative national rate (23 percent)² as the national number is not limited to credential-seekers. However, because AACC’s Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) initiative is beginning to track and analyze completion among credential-seeking sub-cohorts, more accurate national comparisons should be available in future years.

Credential-seeking cohorts are defined as full- and part-time learners who earned at least 12 credit hours by the end of their second year. Tracking a credential-seeking cohort aligns Arizona’s data collection and accountability strategies with those of national community college initiatives such as the VFA. Furthermore, analysis of graduation rates within this cohort provides a more accurate gauge of community college student success, as it takes into account learners’ diverse education and training goals.

“Where physical capital drives industrial economies, human capital drives economies of the information age.”

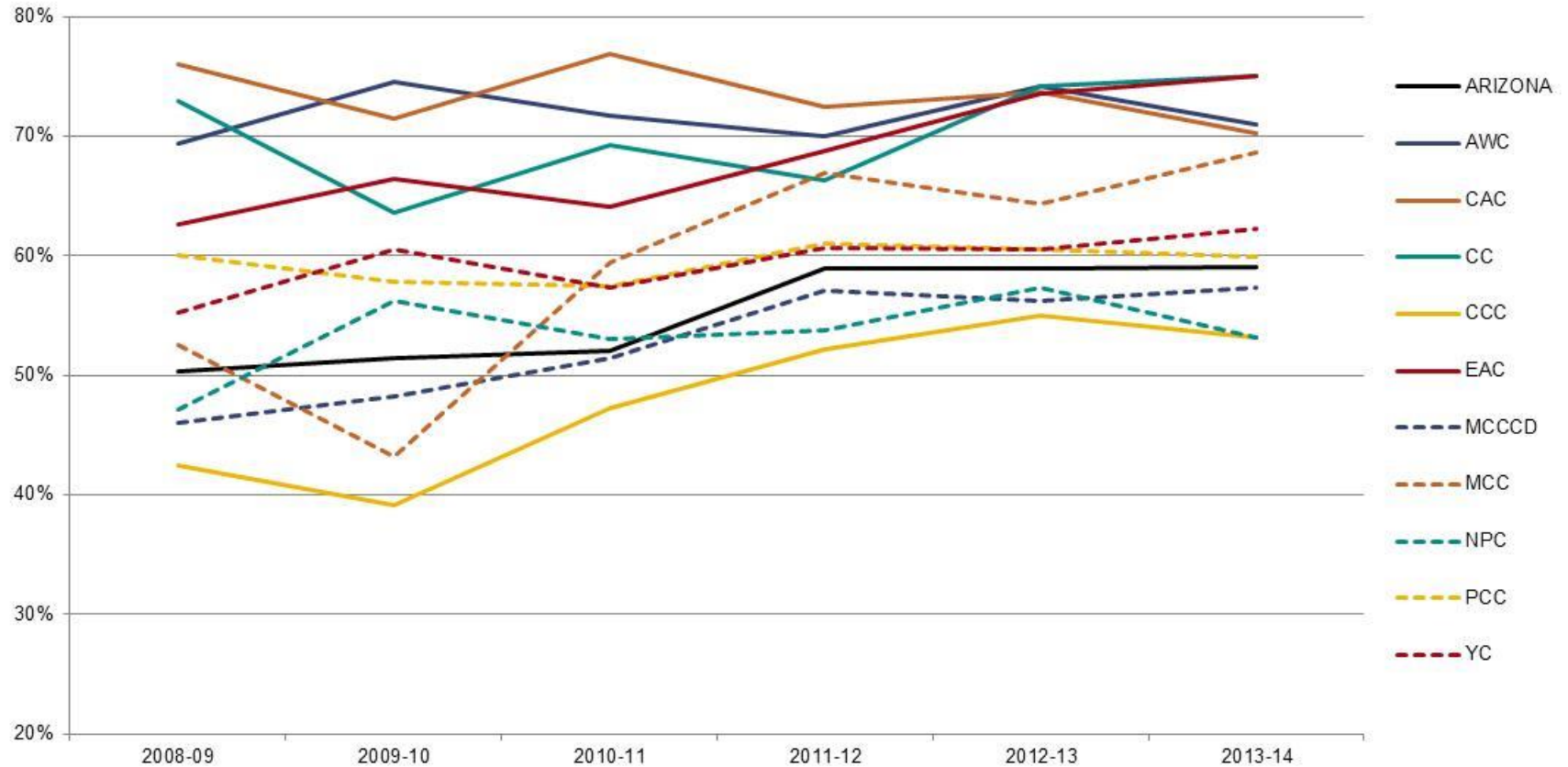
Arizona ranks 5th in the nation in annual credentials and degrees awarded at two-year colleges.³

²U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, DC: Author.

³NCHEMS. (2007). *The emerging policy triangle: Economic development, workforce development, and education*. Boulder, CO: Author.

COMPLETION

PERCENT OF TRANSFERS WITH AGECD AND/OR DEGREE



Students who complete a common general education core and/or a degree prior to transfer are better prepared for upper-division work and earn bachelor's degrees in less time and with fewer excess credits—both of which lead to cost savings for students and states.⁴

The figure on page 4 depicts the percentage of each district's transfer students between 2008-09 and 2013-14 who completed the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) and/or a degree prior to transferring.

Arizona's tribal, public community colleges, and universities have agreed upon a common structure for the AGEC in order to ensure the comparability and seamless transfer of general education credits across institutions. The AGEC is comprised of 35-37 credit hours of coursework that, upon completion, will transfer to all tribal or public community colleges, as well as the three state universities, and meet lower division, general education requirements.

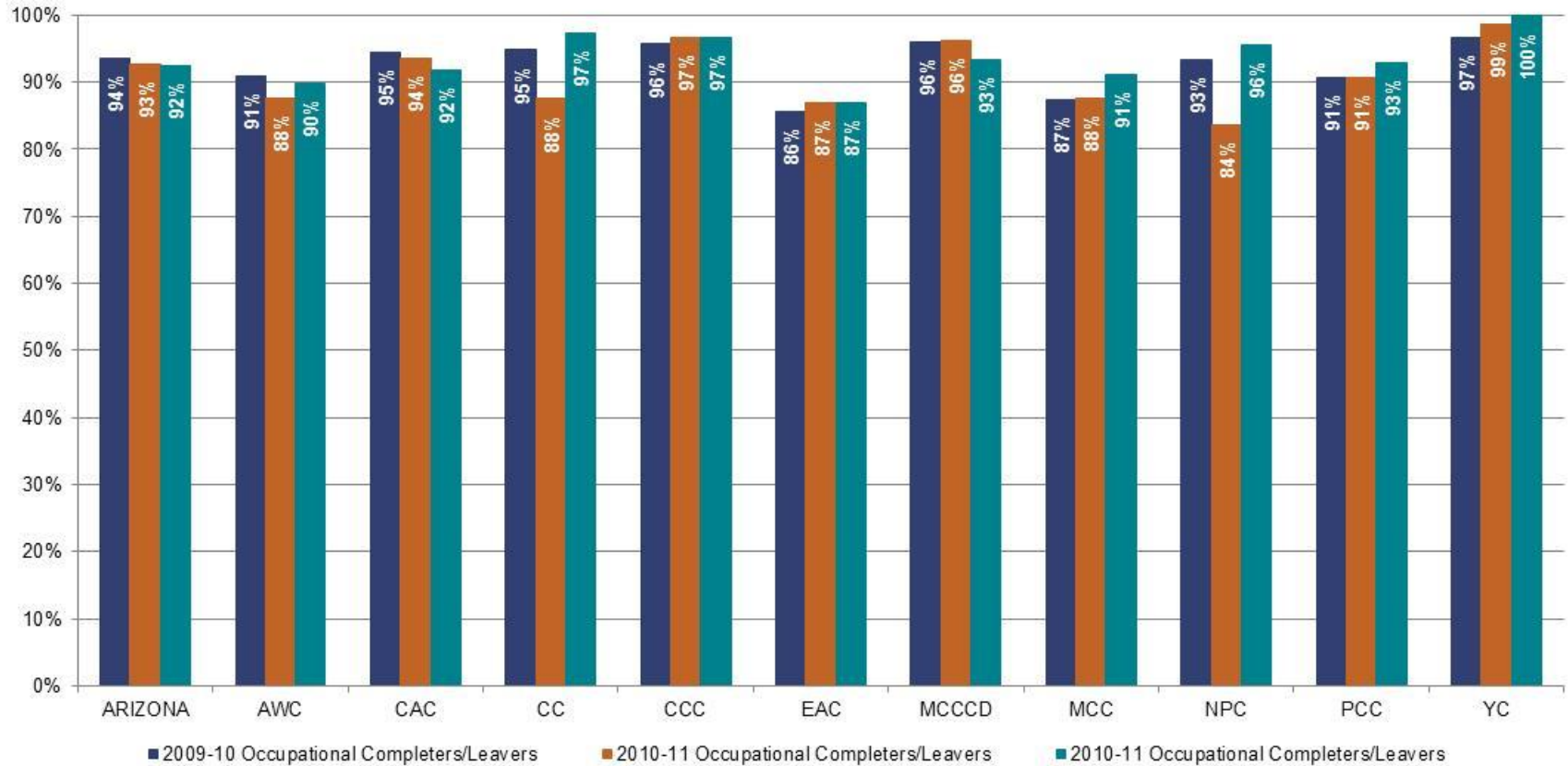
Although most community college students take courses included in the AGEC, some transfer prior to completing the full curriculum. While these "early transfers" are still viewed as successful completers, research shows clear cost savings—for both students and the state—when transfers complete a common general education core (such as the AGEC) and/or a degree prior to attending a university.⁴

In order to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the transfer process in Arizona, the state's community colleges are making a concerted effort to raise the proportion (currently 59 percent, statewide) of in-state transfers who earn an AGEC and/or degree prior to transfer.

⁴Kisker, C. B., & Wagoner, R. L. (2013). *Implementing transfer associate degrees: Perspectives from the states*. New directions for community colleges, no. 160. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

COMPLETION

PERCENT OF OCCUPATIONAL LEARNERS EARNING CREDENTIALS



The figure on page 6 depicts the percent of learners in each district's 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12 Occupational Completers/Leavers Cohorts who took and passed a technical skill or end-of-program assessment aligned with industry-recognized standards up to one year after college exit. Statewide, 92 percent of the 2011-12 cohort passed the assessment and/or earned an industry-recognized credential (degree, certificate, or award of licensure). This level of performance exceeds the 2011-12 national average of 83 percent.⁵

Every single one of Arizona's 10 community college districts boasted rates higher than the national average, with some colleges showing near-perfect credentialing rates. Clearly, Arizona's community colleges provide excellent occupational training and preparation for industry-aligned assessments.

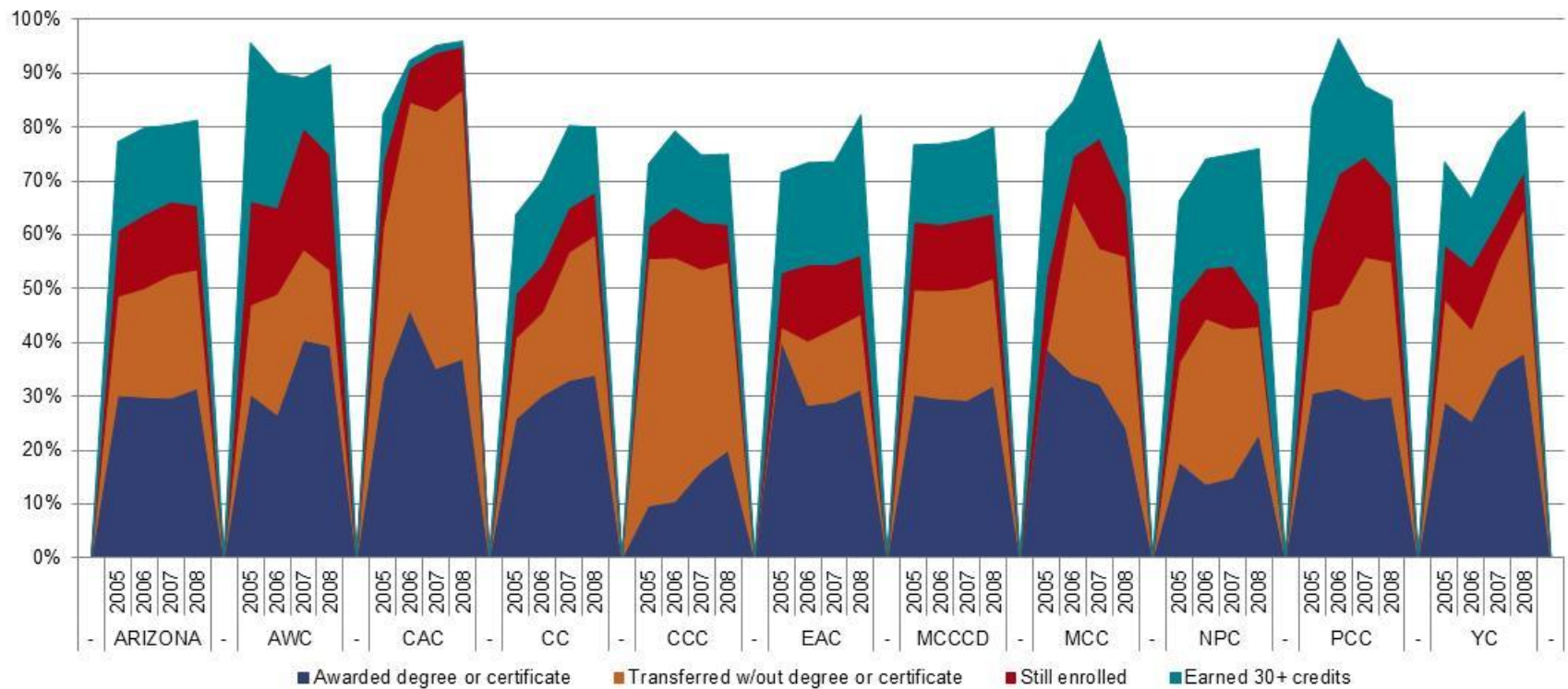
Examples of occupational programs leading to industry-recognized credentials include, among others, aviation technology, building and construction, dental hygiene, education, emergency medical technician, fashion, fire science, nursing, solar technologies, and veterinary technologies.

Arizona's community colleges collaborate with state and local workforce development agencies, local businesses, and Joint Technical Education Districts (JTEDS) to design and provide occupational and contract training programs that prepare learners for immediate employment in high-demand areas.

⁵Perkins Collaborative Resource Network. (2014). *Core indicator report :1P1 technical skill attainment, 2011-12*. Washington, DC: Author.

COMPLETION

PERCENT OF LEARNERS ACHIEVING A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME



Aggregate outcomes measures provide “an improved way to report undergraduate student progress and completion by including a greater proportion of students as well as tracking students who enroll in multiple higher education institutions. Usual measures of student progress and completion, including government-led efforts, usually underreport student achievement because they do not account for an increasingly mobile student population.”⁶

The figure on page 8 depicts the percent of learners in each district’s 2005-2008 Credential-Seeking Cohorts achieving a successful outcome after 6 years, defined as earning a degree or certificate, transferring to another two- or four-year college or university, continued enrollment, and/or earning at least 30 credits before leaving the institution.

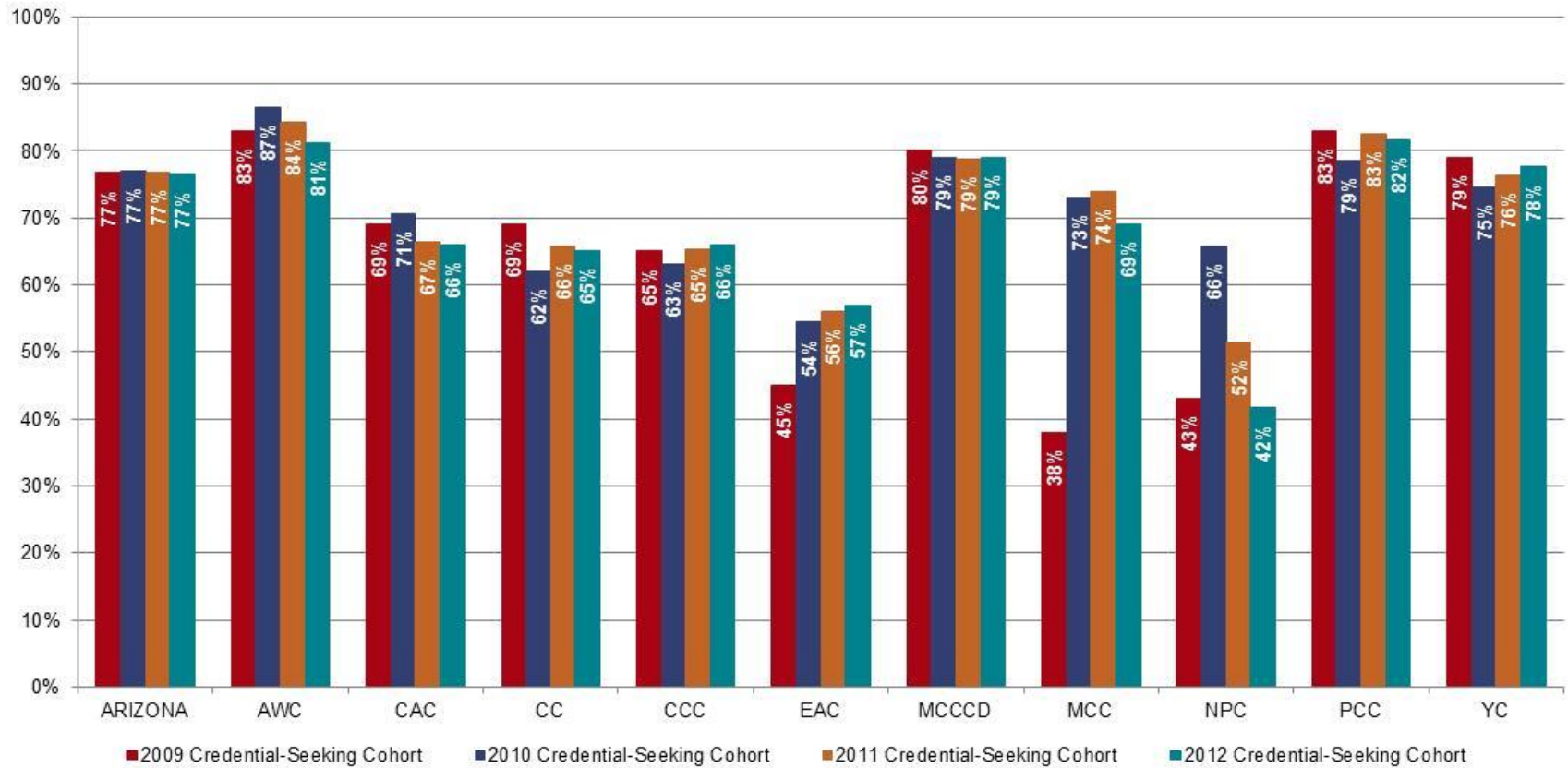
Statewide, 81 percent of the 2008 Credential-Seeking Cohort achieved a successful outcome within six years, up from 77 percent for the 2005 cohort.

This definition of a successful community college outcome is aligned with both the VFA initiative and the national Student Achievement Measure (SAM) project. The latter was endorsed by six national associations (AACC, AASCU, ACE, AAU, APLGU, and NAICU) in summer 2013. Both VFA and SAM recognize that learners enter community colleges with diverse education and training goals, often attend part-time and for more than 6 years, and frequently earn credits from more than one institution en route to the university or to a degree or certificate.

⁶Student Achievement Measure (SAM). (2014). *Why is SAM important?* Washington, DC: Author.

RETENTION

FALL-TO-FALL RETENTION



The figure on page 10 depicts fall-to-fall retention rates among the 2009-2012 Credential-Seeking Cohorts for each of Arizona's 10 community college districts.

Statewide, 77 percent of learners in all four Credential-Seeking Cohorts (excluding those who successfully transferred and/or earned a degree or certificate) persisted at their district to the following fall.

The statewide rate—as well as the most recent retention rates at 9 of Arizona's 10 community college districts—are somewhat higher than a comparative national rate (53 percent),⁷ as the national number is not limited to credential-seekers. However, because the VFA is beginning to track and analyze retention among credential-seeking cohorts, more accurate national comparisons should be available in future years.

Credential-seeking cohorts are defined as full- and part-time learners who earned at least 12 credit hours by the end of their second year. Tracking a credential-seeking cohort aligns Arizona's data collection and accountability strategies with those of national community college initiatives such as the VFA. Furthermore, analysis of retention outcomes within this cohort provides a more accurate gauge of community college student persistence, as it takes into account learners' diverse education and training goals.

First-year retention has a direct, straight-line correlation with six-year graduation rates.⁸ If students do not stay in college, they will not graduate from college.

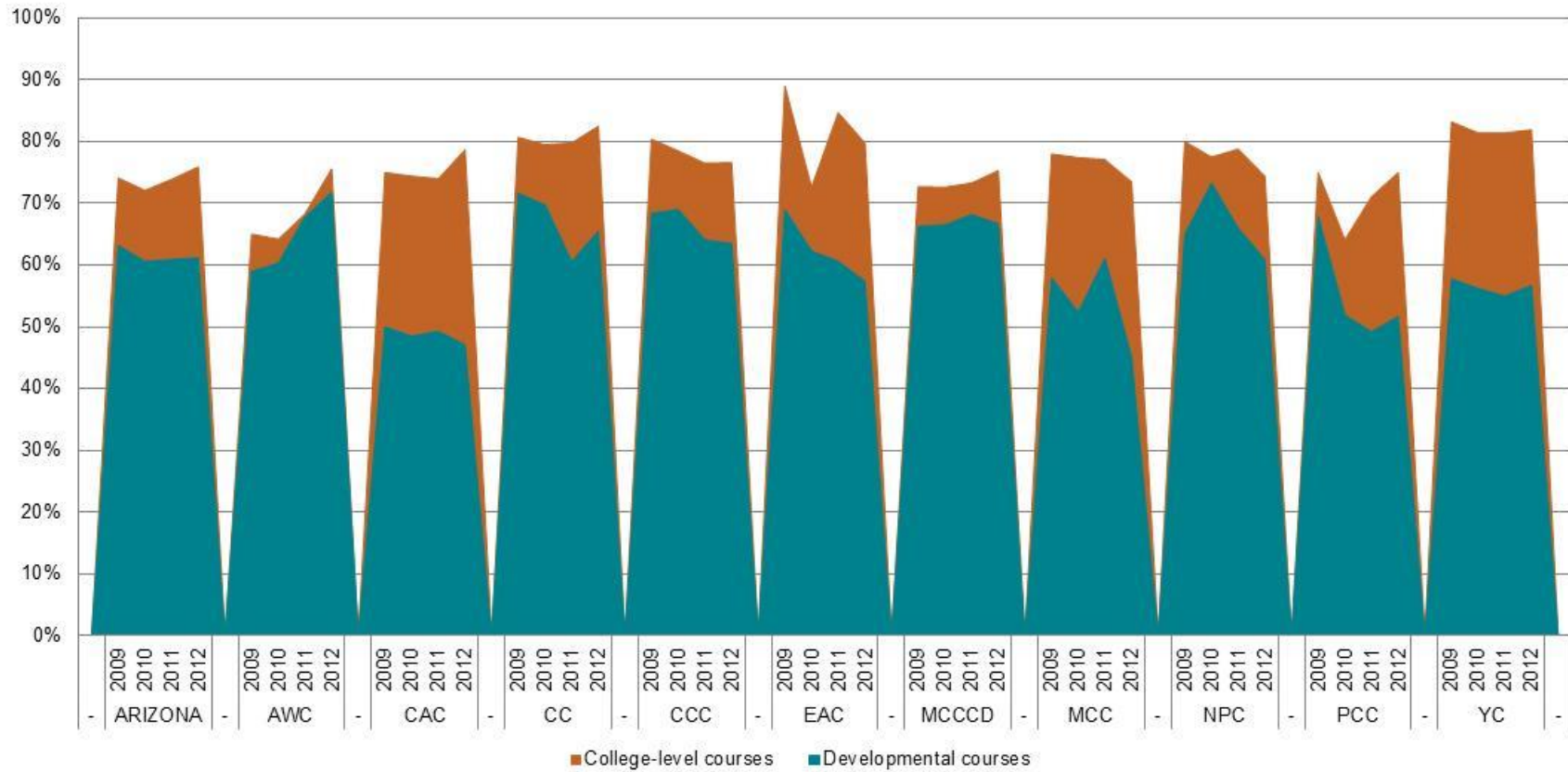
Arizona's community colleges have adopted mandatory orientations, advisement, placement, and/or student success courses to ensure that learners start strong and have personalized academic plans to keep them on track toward their academic or occupational goals.

⁷NCHEMS. (2010). *Retention rates—First-time college freshmen returning their second year* (two-year public institutions). Boulder, CO: Author.

⁸Florida State University Student Success Team. (2013). *Practical steps to improving retention and graduation rates*. Tallahassee, FL: Author.

RETENTION

COURSE SUCCESS



The figure on page 12 depicts developmental and college-level course success rates among the 2009-2012 New Student Cohorts for each of Arizona's 10 community college districts.

Over two years, 61 percent of student credit hours attempted in developmental courses by the statewide 2012 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass), as were 76 percent of student credit hours attempted in college-level courses.

These rates show some variability from year to year, which is likely a reflection of the interplay between a greater number of learners passing courses and a more robust economy, which may be luring students out of the classroom and into the workplace.

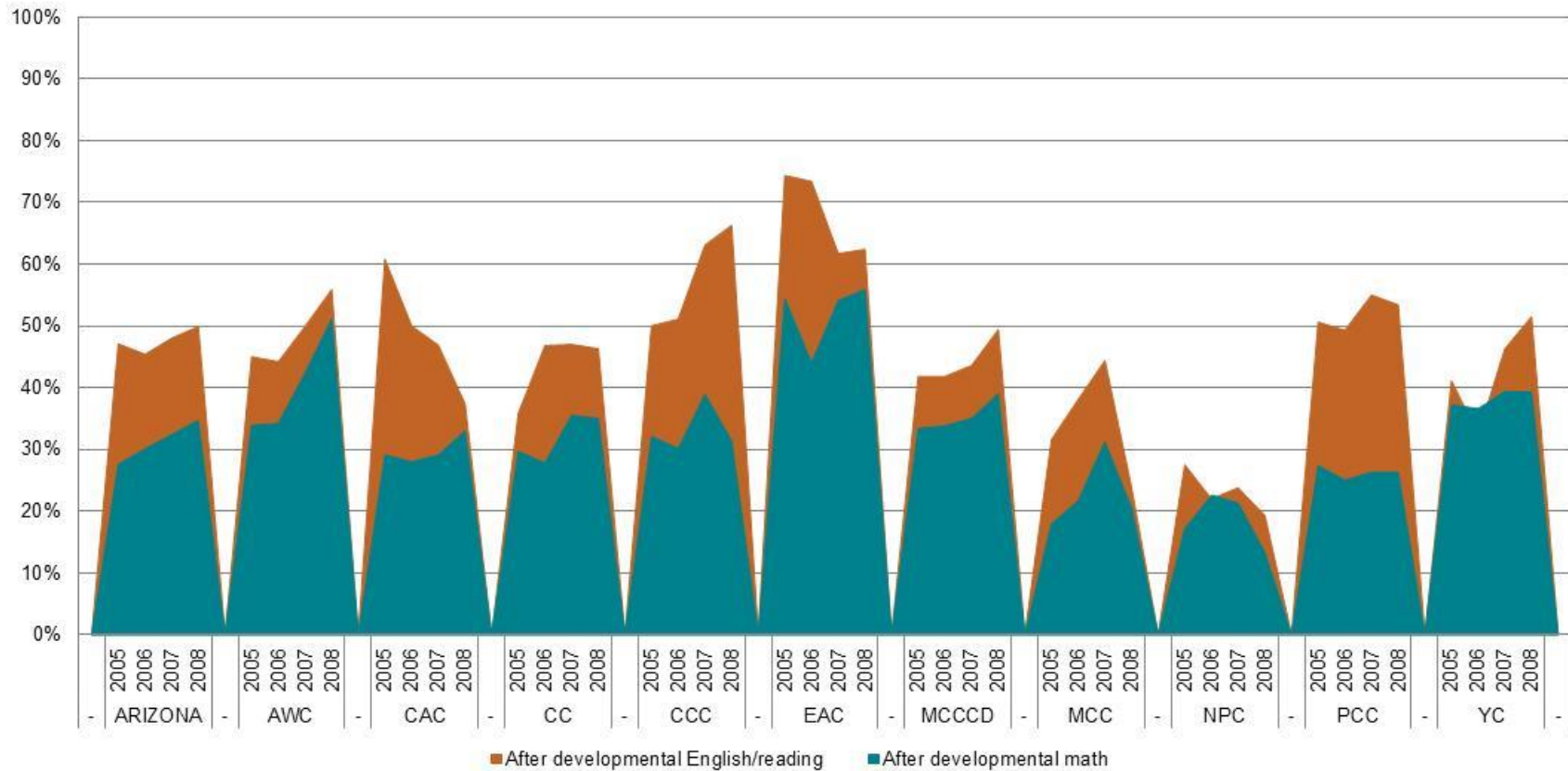
Although national course success rates are not yet available, these indicators are aligned with those included in the VFA initiative, which will allow for comparisons with national norms in years to come.

Course success rates are an important barometer of a college's ability to retain students throughout a term and assist them in making progress toward their educational or training goal.

Arizona's community colleges have implemented numerous academic monitoring and "intrusive" advising services to identify and assist at-risk students.

ACCESS

SUCCESS AFTER REMEDIATION



States will need to pay attention to “reentry” students—those who dropped out of high school and those who never completed a college credential. “It is this group of students who need higher levels of skills if the states and the country are to remain economically competitive.”⁹

Arizona leads the nation in enrollment of learners age 25-49 as a percentage of adults with a high school diploma but no college. Successful remediation programs allow Arizona to retrain its existing workforce and build a more vibrant economy.

The figure on page 14 depicts the percentage of developmental math and English/reading learners in each district’s 2005-2008 New Student Cohorts who successfully completed a college-level course in math (35 percent, statewide) or English (50 percent, statewide) within six years.

While true comparisons with national norms will not be possible until the VFA begins publishing national data for these and other indicators, a study conducted by scholars at Columbia University’s Community College Research Center¹⁰ showed that 20 percent of community college students referred to developmental math—and 37 percent of community college students referred to developmental English/reading—completed a college-level course in the corresponding subject area within three years. These national success after remediation rates are somewhat lower than Arizona’s rates, but are likely comparable, as the national study was limited to three years.

⁹NCHEMS. (2007). *The emerging policy triangle: Economic development, workforce development, and education*. Boulder, CO: Author.

¹⁰Bailey, T., Jeong, D. W., & Cho, S. W. (2010). Referral, enrollment, and completion in developmental education sequences in community colleges. *Economics of Education Review*, 29, 255-270.

APPENDIX: ACCESS INDICATORS

2015 STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES DATA (BY DISTRICT)

Access Indicators	Statewide Comparison	National Comparison	AWC	CAC	CC	CCC	EAC	MCCCD	MCC	NPC	PCC	YC
1. 2013-14 full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enrollment	128,085	-	5,451	4,354	7,475	2,092	3,550	78,454	2,919	1,825	17,963	4,002
2a. Enrollment of underserved populations (underserved minorities)	40%	40% ¹¹	69%	44%	51%	35%	32%	38%	24%	46%	50%	16%
2b. Enrollment of underserved populations (age 25+)	41%	40% ¹¹	32%	45%	46%	33%	53%	39%	46%	39%	42%	63%
2c. Enrollment of underserved populations (Pell recipients)	33%	38% ¹¹	56%	47%	34%	27%	19%	32%	47%	29%	31%	32%
3. Percent of 2013-14 credit hours earned via alternative delivery methods and/or at alternative times or places	63%	-	65%	62%	86%	49%	19%	64%	60%	69%	61%	55%
4. Community college-going rate	37%	26% ¹²	25%	31%	31%	18%	22%	33%	33%	11%	43%	26%
5. Overall college-going rate	58% ¹³	66% ¹²	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Success after developmental math rate	35%	20% ¹⁴	51%	33%	35%	31%	56%	39%	21%	13%	26%	39%
7. Success after developmental English/reading rate	50%	37% ¹⁴	56%	37%	46%	66%	62%	49%	24%	19%	53%	52%
8. Cost of attendance as a percentage of Arizona (or county) median household income	16%	-	22%	10%	11%	18%	17%	15%	29%	27%	6%	18%

¹¹U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, DC: Author.

¹²U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2014). *College enrollment and work activity of 2013 high school graduates*. Washington, DC: Author.

¹³Postsecondary Education Opportunity. (2013). *Chance for college by age 19 by state, 1986 - 2012*. Oskaloosa, IA: The Mortenson Seminar on Public Policy Analysis and Opportunity for Postsecondary Education.

¹⁴Bailey, T., Jeong, D. W., & Cho, S. W. (2010). Referral, enrollment, and completion in developmental education sequences in community colleges. *Economics of Education Review*, 29, 155-270.

APPENDIX: RETENTION INDICATORS

2015 STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES DATA (BY DISTRICT, CONT.)

Retention Indicators	Statewide Comparison	National Comparison	AWC	CAC	CC	CCC	EAC	MCCCD	MCC	NPC	PCC	YC
9. Developmental course success rate	61%	VFA	72%	47%	65%	64%	57%	67%	45%	61%	52%	57%
10. College-level course success rate	76%	VFA	76%	79%	82%	77%	80%	75%	73%	74%	75%	82%
11a. Percent of first college-level credit hours successfully completed (English Comp. I)	73%	71% ¹⁵	70%	60%	76%	74%	61%	75%	72%	75%	62%	69%
11b. Percent of first college-level credit hours successfully completed (English Comp. II)	75%	69% ¹⁵	74%	59%	79%	72%	67%	75%	83%	82%	70%	75%
11c. Percent of first college-level credit hours successfully completed (Speech)	78%	78% ¹⁵	85%	72%	88%	88%	81%	78%	83%	0%	71%	67%
11d. Percent of first college-level credit hours successfully completed (College Algebra)	62%	62% ¹⁵	59%	38%	57%	0%	70%	63%	68%	91%	49%	77%
12a. Percent of full-time learners completing 42 credits by the end of the second academic year	45%	VFA	45%	38%	49%	43%	48%	46%	35%	44%	38%	41%
12b. Percent of part-time learners completing 24 credits by the end of the second academic year	51%	VFA	63%	51%	48%	60%	46%	51%	52%	42%	49%	52%
13. Fall-to-next-term retention rate	90%	VFA	97%	91%	91%	92%	79%	90%	90%	73%	93%	95%
14. Fall-to-fall retention rate	77%	53% ¹⁶	81%	66%	65%	66%	57%	79%	69%	42%	82%	78%

¹⁵National Community College Benchmark Project. (2014). *Report of national aggregate data*. Overland Park, KS: Author.

¹⁶NCHEMS. (2010). *Retention rates—First-time college freshmen returning their second year (two-year public institutions)*. Boulder, CO: Author.

APPENDIX: COMPLETION INDICATORS

2015 STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES DATA (BY DISTRICT, CONT.)

Completion Indicators	Statewide Comparison	National Comparison	AWC	CAC	CC	CCC	EAC	MCCCD	MCC	NPC	PCC	YC
15. Percent of learners achieving stated education or training goal	-	-	This indicator is in development. It will be incorporated into the Strategic Vision once enough time has passed to link intention to completion data.									
16. Number of degrees and certificates awarded in 2013-14	42,206	-	2,103	892	2,241	287	1,290	26,860	825	586	5,654	1,468
17. Graduation (degree/certificate completion) rate	32%	23% ¹⁷	39%	37%	34%	20%	31%	32%	24%	23%	30%	38%
18. Percent of learners who complete an AGECE within six years	19%	-	23%	8%	19%	16%	17%	20%	8%	7%	21%	26%
19. Number of in-state university transfers in 2013-14	10,507	-	379	259	268	222	172	7,458	166	77	1,682	281
20. Percent of 2013-14 transfers with an AGECE and/or degree at time of transfer	59%	-	71%	70%	75%	53%	75%	57%	69%	53%	60%	62%
21. In-state university transfer rate (2007-08 cohort)	28%	-	25%	22%	19%	29%	16%	29%	15%	15%	31%	23%
22. Overall transfer rate (2008-09 cohort)	31%	25% ¹⁸	24%	34%	33%	35%	30%	30%	32%	19%	38%	45%
23. Percent of learners achieving a successful outcome	81%	VFA	92%	96%	80%	75%	82%	79%	79%	75%	85%	83%

¹⁷U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, DC: Author.

¹⁸ Center for the Study of Community Colleges. (2002). *National transfer rates are up! Results of the 2001 Transfer Assembly Project*. Los Angeles: Author.

APPENDIX: COMPLETION INDICATORS

2015 STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES DATA (BY DISTRICT, CONT.)

Completion Indicators (Cont.)	Statewide Comparison	National Comparison	AWC	CAC	CC	CCC	EAC	MCCCD	MCC	NPC	PCC	YC
24. Percent of 2010-11 full-time transfers to Arizona public universities who earn a bachelor's degree in four years	68%	-	72%	56%	58%	63%	69%	69%	50%	56%	69%	67%
25. Percent of all 2010-11 transfers who earn a bachelor's degree in four years	42%	60% ¹⁹	35%	47%	28%	51%	86%	46%	46%	5%	53%	48%
26. Percent of occupational program completers earning an industry-recognized credential within one year	92%	83% ²⁰	90%	92%	97%	97%	87%	93%	91%	96%	93%	100%
27. Percent of occupational program completers either employed with a livable wage or enrolled in further education	-	-	This indicator is in development. It will be incorporated into the Strategic Vision pending a statewide agreement for sharing wage data.									
28. Percent of ABE/GED learners who enter employment	73%	57% ²¹	77%	75%	75%	75%	-	64%	100%	44%	84%	78%
29. Percent of ABE/GED completers enrolled in postsecondary education or training	32%	65% ²¹	26%	47%	29%	80%	-	30%	37%	76%	22%	58%
30a. Percent of adults in Arizona (or county) with some college or an associate degree	34%	29% ²²	32%	37%	39%	34%	37%	33%	37%	36%	35%	40%
30b. Percent of adults in Arizona (or county) with a bachelor's or higher degree	27%	29% ²²	14%	18%	23%	31%	14%	30%	12%	14%	30%	24%

¹⁹National Student Clearinghouse. (2012). *Snapshot report: Transfer outcomes (four years after transfer)*. Herndon, VA: Author.

²⁰Perkins Collaborative Resource Network. (2014). *Core indicator report :1P1 technical skill attainment , 2011-12*. Washington, DC: Author.

²¹U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (2015). *Core follow-up outcomes measures, 2013-2014*. Washington, DC: Author.

²²U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2015). *Educational attainment: 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Washington, DC: Author.

