

Needs Analysis for Education in Passaic County

The Problem with New Jersey Education

There are many polarizing perspectives on the educational system within the New Jersey school system. More specifically within Passaic County, there are problems many students face within an educational standpoint, as well as through mental, physical, and emotional complications that can arise. These problems can affect how current Passaic County High School students view themselves, as well as how they believe their educational career will pan out. The problems that occur in these students can consist of:

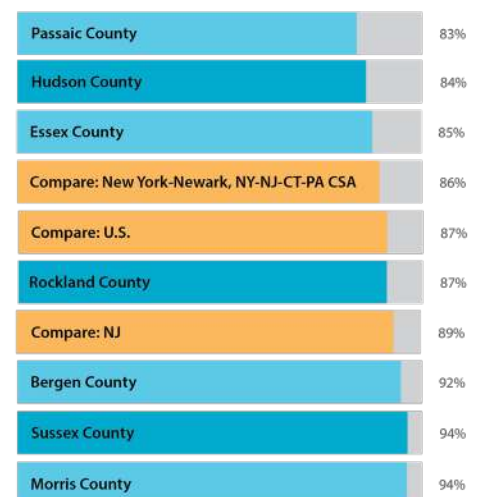
- Low self-esteem in one's own intelligence¹
- Not being able to grasp academic lessons in high school²
- Uncertainty if finishing high school is worth it in the end²
- Uncertainty if higher education (college/graduate school, etc) is right for them, or that they do not have the financial or emotional support and resources to attend higher education²
- Concern that they do not possess the skills needed to maintain a job³
- Skepticism of how students see themselves in a job setting³

These problems affect the way that students learn and think of themselves in an academic setting. Because of this, high school graduation rates can dip extraordinarily and cause students much trauma currently and in the future. Consequently, it is clear that the education system, more specifically the students, need support to better guide them to a better learning.

The Facts of the School System

The facts surrounding the for student educational support in the Passaic County School District can be drawn from the percentages found about the Passaic County School District in relation to the rest of New Jersey. Using 2017 American Community Survey data, collected through TownCharts, and taken of people 25 or older from each school district, the amount of students from Passaic County that have obtained at least a High School Education (Figure 1) report 83%, which although still relatively high, is just behind with Hudson County as the lowest of all the counties in New Jersey.⁴ Likewise, this is lower than both the United States (87%) and New Jersey (89%) high school completion averages overall.⁴ In the town of Paterson alone, the 2009 graduation rate was at a low 45%, which jumped to 88% in the 2016/2017 school year.⁴

Figure 1: Passaic County, NJ - High School Education



Likewise, bachelor's degree completion (Figure 2) in Passaic County holds the smallest percentage completed, sitting at 27%.⁴ This is lower than the New Jersey percentage at 38% and the only New Jersey County lower than the United States percentage at 30%.⁴

Figure 2: Passaic County, NJ - Bachelors Degree or Greater

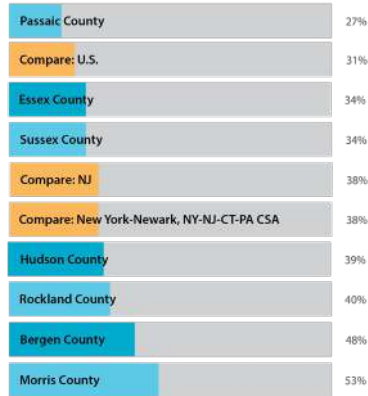
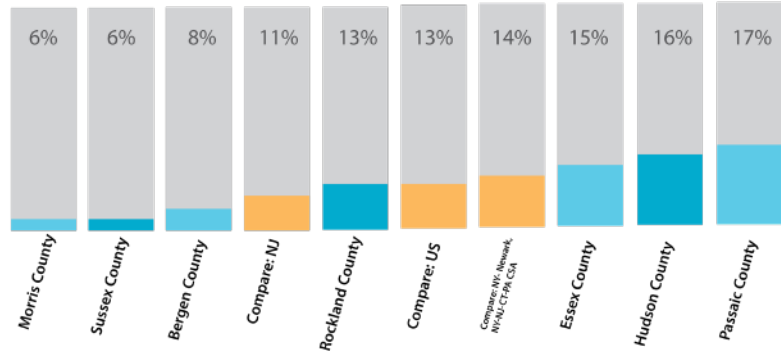


Figure 3: Passaic County, NJ - School Dropout Rate



Comparatively, the high school dropout rates for Passaic County are the highest at 18% (Figure 3), which is higher than both New Jersey dropout rates (11%), as well as United States dropout rates (13%).⁴

The Need for Educational Help

Due to the statistics of completing high school, as well as various problems students face, there is a great need for better educational support in the education system of not only Passaic County, but also the United States as a whole. Not being able to obtain proper education through high school and college is severely limiting to one's own future, and can have a negative impact on their lives. Each student should have at least the opportunity to apply themselves to obtaining an education, regardless of financial, emotional, mental, or physical troubles. Inability to obtain a high school education can lead to:

- Higher unemployment rates⁶
- Economic hardships⁶
- Depression and anxiety later in life⁶
- Less pay⁶
- Greater chance for incarceration:
 - National Dropout Prevention Center/Network claims high school dropouts make up as much as 82 percent of the prison population in the U.S⁶

The ability to Passaic County students to finish high school and possibly pursue a college degree is a necessity that needs to be mended through both internal and external support.

What We Can Do

In order to prevent students from not continuing their education, sup-



port needs to come from multiple sides, which can originate from inspirational teachers, supportive families and friends, and encouraging communities. Unfortunately, many students do not necessarily have the same opportunities and support systems that are necessary for completing school. Thus, Embrace Relief's GradPlus program embodies what is needed to provide these less fortunate students with the support and care they need to complete their schooling. Such support can consist of:

Tutoring

- With competent tutors, including existing teachers, who can facilitate each student's own progression level, Passaic County students will be able to have extra help in their school subjects and better understand what they are learning. This will also help students be better motivated to complete high school, as they are more confident in their abilities.

Mentoring

- With proper mentoring from volunteers in the school and community, students will be able to better determine what their future might hold.
- Similar to college advisors, mentors will be able to gauge each student's interests and help them find out what their skills are, if they can harness them at college, and how they can apply their interests and skills in the job market.

Access to internships, scholarships, and skills workshops

- With the ability to apply to local internships and workshops, students will be able to gain experience and harness their skills so they are better equipped for college and future jobs.
- Access to college and community scholarships, students that might not have the financial means to pay for college will be able to have the opportunity to attend.

Access to qualified guidance counselors

- The ability to meet regularly with competent guidance counselors with real investments in the student's well-being, will allow students to gain insight into what path is best for them, and what they need to succeed in their careers.

Through these various actions through the school and community, Passaic County students will be able to have the support they need to graduate high school and move onto higher education and better employment opportunities. Since there is a need for education reform in the United States in general, small actions, such as having proper tutors and mentors, can have a great affect on confidence, motivation, and competence for current students to finish high school and move on to college and better jobs.

¹ "The Education Crisis: Being in School Is Not the Same as Learning." World Bank. January 22, 2019. Accessed June 03, 2019. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2019/01/22/pass-or-fail-how-can-the-world-do-its-homework>.

² Klein, Rebecca. "This Is Why 12 Percent Of High School Graduates Don't Go To College". HuffPost. December 06, 2017. Accessed June 03, 2019. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/why-students-dont-go-to-college_n_5901124.

³ "The Education Crisis: Being in School Is Not the Same as Learning." World Bank. January 22, 2019. Accessed June 03, 2019. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2019/01/22/pass-or-fail-how-can-the-world-do-its-homework>.

⁴ "Passaic County, New Jersey Education Data". TownCharts. Accessed May 31, 2019. <http://www.towncharts.com/New-Jersey/Education/Passaic-County-NJ-Education-data.html>

⁵ Rahman, Jayhed. "Paterson high school graduation rate soars to 88 percent". Paterson Times. February 17, 2018. Accessed May 31, 2019. <http://paterson-times.com/2018/02/17/paterson-high-school-graduation-rate-soars-to-88-percent/>

⁶ Jones, Jess. "The Effects of Not Graduating High School": the classroom. August 08, 2019. Accessed May 31, 2019. <https://www.theclassroom.com/effects-not-graduating-high-school-2463.html>

