

Demographic and Academic Characteristics Associated with College Readiness and Early College Success in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

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Why this study?

The goal of this study was to support educators in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) to understand students' high school academic preparation characteristics, identify what percentage of students demonstrate college readiness and early college success, and learn how students' demographic and academic preparation characteristics related to their college readiness and early college success. Understanding this information could inform policies and practices that promote college readiness and success.

College Readiness and Early College Success

In this study, college readiness and early college success was defined as achieving all three of the following indicators at the College of the Marshall Islands: placing into only credit-bearing math and English courses, earning all credits attempted during the first year, and persisting to a second year.

About the study:

- Data provided by the RMI Ministry of Education and the College of the Marshall Islands included cumulative high school grade point average (GPA) and Marshall Islands Standards Assessment Test scores.
- The sample included students who graduated from any of the five RMI public high schools between spring 2015–17 and enrolled at the College of the Marshall Islands.
- The study examined the relationship between student demographic and academic preparation characteristics and college readiness and early college success.



Key Takeaways

Fifty-seven percent of students met at least one indicator of success.



5% placed into only credit-bearing English and math courses in their first year.¹



19% earned all credits attempted in their first year of college.



53% persisted into a second year of college.



3% met all three indicators of college readiness and early college success.²

¹ Since a small number of students placed into only credit-bearing English and math courses in their first year, the study was not able to examine relationships between student demographic and academic preparation characteristics and this variable.

² Since a small number of students met all three indicators of college readiness and early college success, the study was not able to examine relationships between student demographic and academic preparation characteristics and this variable.

Study Highlights



Graduates from one high school were more likely than graduates of other high schools to earn all credits attempted in their first year at the College of the Marshall Islands.



Students with a higher high school GPA were more likely to earn all credits attempted in their first year of college.



Students with a higher high school GPA were more likely to persist to a second year of college.



Many students persisted to a second year even if they didn't place into credit-bearing courses or earn all attempted credits in their first year of college.



Male students were more likely than female students to persist to a second year.

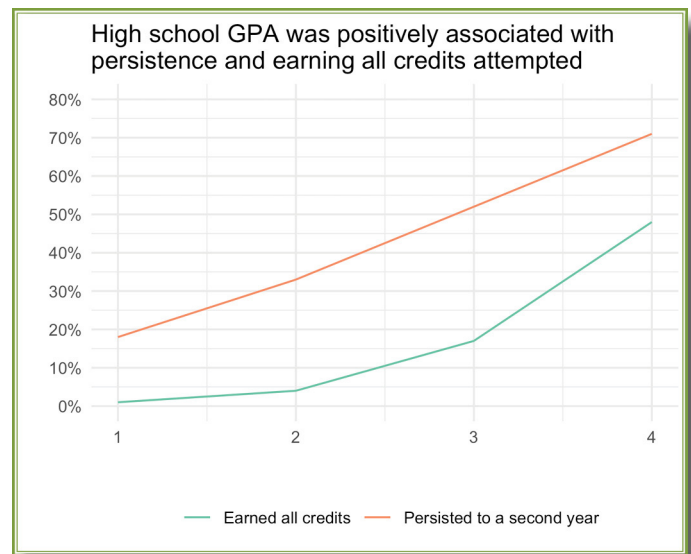
Reflection Questions for High School and College Educators and Policymakers in the RMI

What **targeted academic supports** can be provided to high school students who are not performing well? Because lower high school GPA was associated with decreased college success, monitoring high school students' GPAs might help educators identify students at risk of being unprepared for college coursework and consider how to provide them with supports.

What **additional supports might students need** in college to help them earn all attempted credits and persist to a second year? What current supports exist?

What might be the reason for differences in college readiness and early college success based on **student characteristics such as gender or high school attended**? Reviewing the curricula, courses, resources, and student supports available across high schools in the RMI might reveal factors that positively affect student success. Educators might also consider community factors that might influence female students' persistence in college, such as family expectations or caregiver roles and the supports available at the college for female students.

What **systemic changes at both the high school- and college-levels** could help students better transition to college? Even though all students in the study met the requirements to graduate high school, only 5 percent of students were placed in both credit-bearing math and English courses in college. If students continue to be placed into only credit-bearing courses at a low rate, stakeholders could consider reviewing the placement system and the alignment between high school and college curricula.



RMI



To access the published REL study, visit: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2021072.pdf

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