

Differences in Earnings Six Years after Graduation by High School Type

Rachel E. Durham & Faith Connolly

April 2018

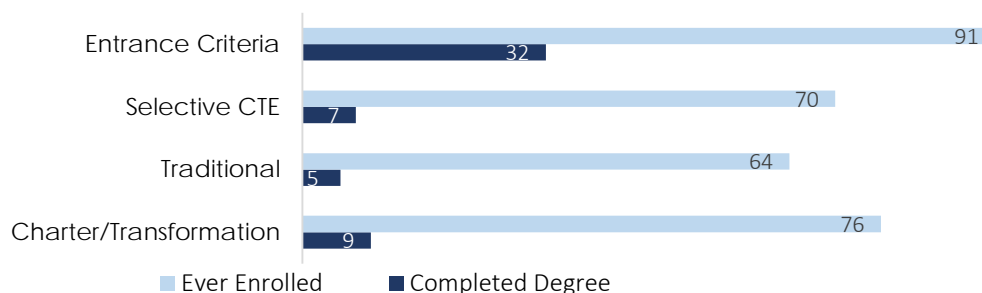
This brief is the fifth in BERC’s [Launching into Adulthood series](#), which examines the trajectories of Baltimore graduates over six years. BERC established a partnership with Baltimore’s Promise and the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS), which has made it possible to examine both college and earnings outcomes among Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) graduates.

In this brief we examine patterns of college enrollment, degree completion, earnings and making a livable wage by the type of high school from which students earned their diploma. As in each of these briefs, we chose graduates in 2009 to examine outcomes six years later.

High School Choice. Baltimore has four primary high school types. Entrance criteria schools have highly selective admission requirements. Selective Career and Technology Education (CTE) high schools also have admission requirements but they are somewhat less selective than entrance criteria schools. Finally, students may choose charter and transformation schools that provide unique or specialized options, or traditional high schools emphasizing specific academic or career programs (e.g., financial, health fields). [Click for more information about City Schools high schools.](#)

Enrollment and Degree Completion by High School Type

Figure 1. Percent of graduates who ever enrolled and completed either an associate’s or bachelor’s degree within six years, by high school type (class of 2009).



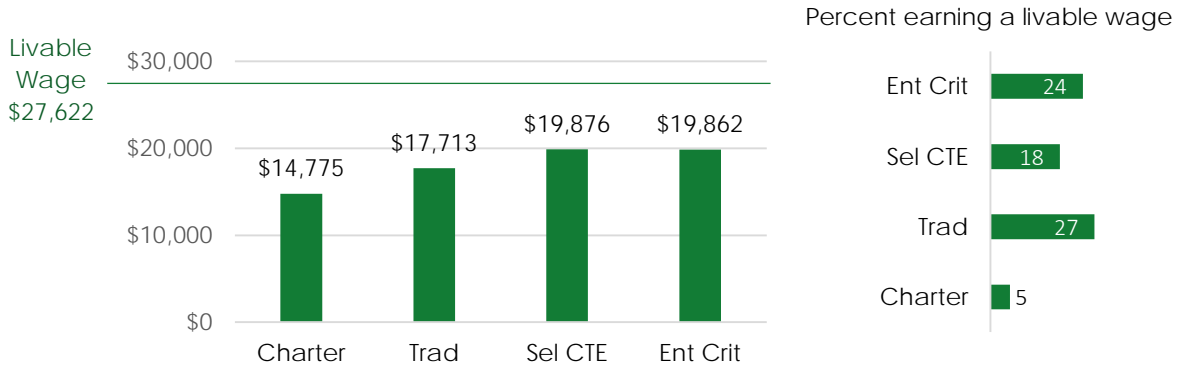
Entrance criteria high schools had the highest percentage of graduates ever enrolling and completing a degree within six years. Higher shares completing degrees is likely influenced by students’ having been sorted on entry; entrance criteria schools consistently see higher college enrollment rates at 4-year colleges, where City Schools graduates have had higher degree completion rates.ⁱ (See Figure 1.)

Earnings for Degree Completers

Graduates of both entrance criteria and selective CTE high schools who had completed a college degree were earning more in that sixth year, with a median annual income of approximately \$19,900, than those who graduated from a traditional or charter/transformation school (See Figure 2, left-hand panel.) The median annual income for degree holders from traditional high schools was \$17,713. For graduates of charter and transformation high schools, the median annual income for college graduates was \$14,775.

Livable Wages. For those with a college degree, 24% of entrance criteria and 18% of selective CTE graduates were earning a [livable wage](#) in their sixth year post-high school. Among degree holders from traditional high schools, 27% earned a livable wage. Approximately 5% of degree-holders who graduated from charter or transformation high schools were earning a livable wage. (see Figure 2, right-hand panel.)

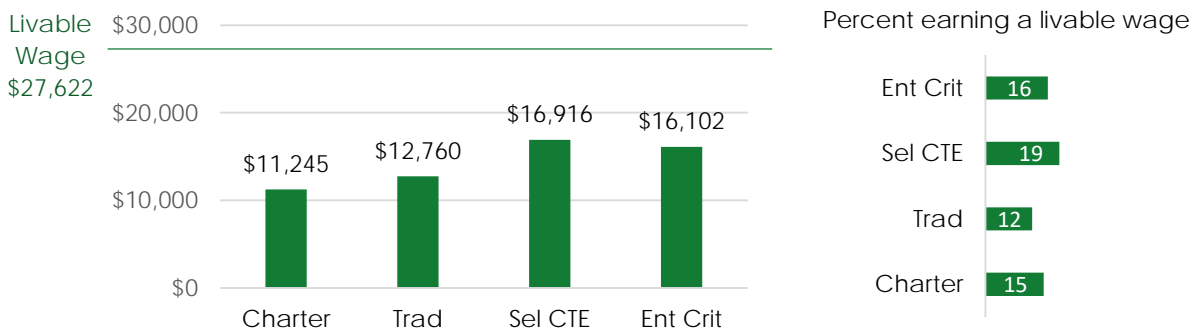
Figure 2. Median annual earnings and the percent earning a livable wage six years after graduation for degree completers, by high school type (class of 2009).



Earnings for Young Adults with No College Experience

Of those who never enrolled in college, graduates of selective CTE schools earned the highest median income with \$16,916 in year six. The next highest was for graduates of entrance criteria high schools at \$16,102. The median annual income for graduates of traditional high schools with no college was \$12,760. For charter and transformation high school graduates with no college experience, median income was \$11,245. (See Figure 3, left-hand panel).

Figure 3. Median annual earnings and the percent earning a livable wage six years after graduation for those with no college experience, by high school type (class of 2009).



Among graduates who never enrolled in college, selective CTE graduates were the most likely to earn a livable wage (19%), followed by graduates of entrance criteria high schools (16%), graduates of charter and transformation schools (15%), and finally graduates of traditional high schools (12%). (See Figure 3, right-hand panel).

Conclusions

The high school sorting process is related to students' later enrollment in college and earnings. Regardless of high school attended, however, median annual income six years after high school was higher for graduates who completed a college degree than for those who had no college experience. Future research might identify specific practices in entrance criteria schools that relate to college enrollment and persistence, as well as show graduates of selective CTE high schools are leveraging skills they gained in those programs in the workforce.

For details about the data source and methodology see [Launching into Adulthood Methodology brief](#).

We are grateful for support from Baltimore's Promise, which allowed BERC to complete this research.