Results of the Senior Exit Survey, 2014-15

1.   What is the purpose of this report?

This report examines the results of the Senior Exit Survey, which is administered annually to all graduating high school students, pursuant to state requirements. The Senior Exit Survey in its fifth administration replaces the Graduate Exit Interview. The purpose of this study is fourfold: (a) examine seniors' attitudes toward high school, (b) explore seniors' postsecondary plans, (c) investigate seniors' chosen fields of study and the credentials they plan to attempt, and (d) ascertained their immediate employment expectations.

2.   Which populations were targeted for this survey?

All twelfth grade students enrolled in traditional and charter high schools within the District were included in the state-mandated survey of post-secondary plans, except those enrolled in special education centers, the educational alternative outreach program, the juvenile justice center, and centers for special instruction. Students who indicated they were eligible to receive a diploma or certificate of completion were asked additional questions concerning their post-secondary plans.

3.   How were the data for this report collected and analyzed?

Data to conduct this analysis were obtained from responses to the Senior Exit Survey, an online survey administered through Survey Gold 8.0. The survey was accessed through links provided on the Districts' main Web page and on the Student Portal between March 30 and June 4, 2015. Selected open-ended "other" responses were assigned into categories. The analysis of the survey data was otherwise limited to descriptive statistics.

4.   To what extent did students respond to the survey?

Overall, 83.2 percent of targeted seniors (n=20,969) responded to the survey, representing 91.97% of the students (n=19,279) who attended the traditional schools and 50.4% of the students (n=1,690) who attended the charter schools. This high rate of return indicates that the results obtained may be generalized to all high school seniors in the M-DCPS.

- Traditional-school response rates ranged from a low of 0.0% to a high of 100.0% and averaged 84.1%.
- Charter-school response rates ranged from a low of 0.7% to a high of 100.0% and averaged 46.2%.

5.   What were seniors' perceptions of high school?

Seniors were asked to provide an overall rating of their high school and select from a list, the most and least helpful aspects of their high-school education. Students' overall ratings of high school and their impressions of how well their school prepared them for life after high school are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Overall Ratings of High School

Rating	n	%
Excellent	5,349	26.0
Good	8,203	39.9
Neutral	4,052	19.7
Fair	1,753	8.5
Poor	1,216	5.9
Total	20,573	100.0

Note. Students who indicated they were unable to rate their school (n=396) were excluded

- Over 65.0% of seniors gave their high school an overall rating of good or excellent.
- Only 14.4% of seniors gave their high school an overall rating of poor or fair.

Table 2. Most and Least Helpful Aspects of Preparation for Life After High School

Most Helpful			Most Lacking		
Aspect	n	%	Aspect	n	%
College information	9,032	49.8	Life skills training	9,018	63.0
Personal Growth	8,166	45.0	Financial literacy training	7,412	51.7
College Assistance Program	6,805	37.5	Communication	4,925	34.4
Advanced coursework	6,747	37.2	Effective instruction	3,718	26.0
After school activities	6,461	35.6	Support services	3,291	23.0
Counseling	6,182	34.1	Challenging coursework	2,602	18.2
Academic assistance/tutoring	5,460	30.1	Elective coursework	2,518	17.6
Sports/Recreation	5,252	29.0	Other	212	1.5
Variety of coursework	4,344	23.9	Total [b]	14,325	100.0
Other	256	1.4			
Total	18,139	100.0			

Note. Percentages are based on multiple responses and may total to greater than 100.
[a]Excludes responses of "No opinion" and "Nothing" (n=2,830). [b]Excludes responses of "No opinion" (n=3,654) and "None needed" (n=2,990).

- Aspects of high school most often cited as the most helpful, were college information, 49.8%, and personal growth, 45.0%. Also cited as most helpful by over one-third of respondents, were the College Assistance Program, advanced coursework, after school activities and sports/recreation, counseling, and academic assistance/tutoring.
- Aspects of high school most often cited as most lacking, were life-skills training, 63.0%, and financial literacy training, 51.7%.

6. What type of career information/assistance did seniors request?

Table 3 lists the number and percent of seniors that requested each of the following types of assistance/guidance.

Table 3. Career information/assistance requested

Career Information	n	%
Financial aid	12,477	64.8
College admissions	11,690	60.7
College programs/majors	10,005	52.0
Career track/industry certificate programs and/or majors	5,410	28.1
Resume assistance	2,959	15.4
Interest/aptitude/abilities test	2,752	14.3
Entrepreneurship	2,664	13.8
Job placement (s)/referral (s)	2,459	12.8
Computer assisted career guidance	2,033	10.6
Military service	1,973	10.2
Vocational/technical/adult education programs	1,915	9.9
Other	218	1.1
Total	19,255	100.0

Note. Excludes respondents who selected "none" (n=1,714).

- Financial aid, college admissions, and college program/majors information was requested by 64.8%, 60.7%, and 52.0% of seniors, respectively.
- Career track/industry certificate program/majors information was requested by more than one-quarter of seniors.

7. What were seniors' state-categorized postsecondary plans?

Table 4 lists the number and percent of seniors that reported each of the following postsecondary plans, using categorizes provided by the State.

Table 4. Institution Seniors Report Planning to Enter Upon Finishing High School

Institution	n	%
Florida private junior college	94	0.4
Florida private college or university	1,115	5.3
Florida public community college	7,448	35.5
Florida public college or university	8,420	40.2
Florida technical, trade, or other institution	419	2.0
Out of state community college	178	0.8
Out of state college or university	1,723	8.2
Out of state technical, trade, or other institution	87	0.4
The military	797	3.8
None of the above[a]	635	3.0
Not applicable[b]	53	0.3
Total	20,969	100.0

[a]Eligible to receive a Standard Diploma, Special Diploma, Certificate of Completion, or Special Certificate of Completion, but did not select any of the above choices. [b]Not eligible to receive a Standard Diploma, Special Diploma, Certificate of Completion, or Special Certificate of Completion.

- Over 90% of seniors reported planning to attend college, with over 80% planning to attend in-state, as indicated by the post-secondary plan selected from the categories provided by the State.
  - 40.2% of seniors reporting planning to attend a public college or university in Florida.
  - 35.5% of seniors reported planning to attend a public community college in Florida.
- The majority of students not planning to attend college, as indicated by the post-secondary plan selected from the categories provided by the State, reported planning to either enlist in the military, 3.8% of respondents, or attend vocation school, 2.4% of respondents.

The categories provided by the State may not accurately reflect seniors' actual choices due to the fact that many institutions historically recognized as community colleges currently offer bachelor degrees in certain fields of study. Therefore, a series of questions was locally developed to better understand seniors' post-secondary plans.

8.   What do seniors plan to do upon competing high school?

This locally developed question was posed to ascertain whether or not seniors would be furthering their education upon finishing high school. Students who selected "Not applicable" (e.g., not eligible to receive a diploma, see Table 4, previous page) were excluded.

- 95.7% of seniors reported planning to further their education (n=20,014).
- 2.7 of seniors reported planning to first enter the military (n=556).
- 1.7% of seniors reported not planning to further their education (n=346).

All of the results that follow pertain to the groups of seniors identified above, as opposed to the categories developed by the State.

9.   What institutions do seniors plan to attend?

Table 5 lists number and percent of seniors that reported planning to attend each of the following institutions by degree-granting authority, and the pace at which they plan to attend them.

Table 5. Institution of Attendance/Status

Name	n	%
(Awards Bachelor or higher degree)		
Miami Dade College	9,387	47.1
Florida International University	3,003	15.1
University of Florida	675	3.4
Florida State University	586	2.9
University of Central Florida	430	2.2
Broward College	401	2.0
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU)	353	1.8
University of Miami[a]	319	1.6
Florida Atlantic University	219	1.1
Dade Medical College[a]	182	0.9
Bethune-Cookman University[a]	168	0.8
Santa Fe College	167	0.8
University of South Florida	158	0.8
Barry University[a]	148	0.7
Tallahassee Community College	126	0.6

(*table continues*)

Table 5, continued

Name	n	%
Art Institutes (all locations) [a]	118	0.6
Florida Memorial University[a]	101	0.5
American University[ab]	91	0.5
Valencia Community College	77	0.4
Johnson and Wales University[a]	70	0.4
Saint Thomas University[a]	61	0.3
Full Sail University[a]	55	0.3
Florida Career College[a]	50	0.3
Boston University[ab]	47	0.2
Keiser University[a]	47	0.2
New York University[ab]	46	0.2
University of California[b]	45	0.2
City College[a]	32	0.2
Florida Institute of Technology	32	0.2
New World School of the Arts	32	0.2
Stetson University[a]	31	0.2
Pennsylvania State University[b]	30	0.1
Florida National College[a]	29	0.1
University of West Florida	29	0.1
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University[a]	27	0.1
Miami International University of Art and Design[a]	26	0.1
Concordia University[ab]	23	0.1
Boston College[ab]	22	0.1
Clark Atlanta University[ab]	22	0.1
Cornell University[ab]	22	0.1
Harvard University[ab]	22	0.1
ITT Technical Institute[a]	22	0.1
(Does not award Bachelor or higher degree)		
Robert Morgan Educational Center	65	0.3
George T. Baker Aviation	61	0.3
Beauty Schools of America[a]	60	0.3
Miami Lakes Educational Center	57	0.3
Police Academy	26	0.1
Universal Technical Institute[a]	22	0.1
Other	2,080	10.4
Total[c]	19,927	100.0
Full Time	13,974	69.8
Part Time	3,851	19.2
Unsure	2,189	10.9
Total	20,014	100.0

Note. Institutions are public unless otherwise marked; cells with fewer than 22 students are included in "Other."
[a]Private non-profit/for profit institution. [b]Out-of-state institution. [c]Students who indicated they had not chosen an institution (n=87) are excluded.

- Of those seniors who reported planning to further their education, nearly half reported planning to attend Miami-Dade College, while around 15% reported planning to attend Florida International University.
- Of those seniors who reported planning to further their education, nearly 70% reported planning to do so on a full-time basis, while nearly 20% reported planning to do so part-time; around 10% reported being unsure at what pace they would be doing so.

10. What fields of study do seniors plan to pursue?

Table 6 lists the number and percent of seniors who reported planning to pursue each of the listed fields of study.

Table 6. Seniors' Planned Fields of Study

Field	n	%
Nursing	1,918	9.7
Biology & Biological Sciences	1,288	6.5
Engineering	1,286	6.5
Criminal Justice & Criminology	1,249	6.3
Computer Science & Information Systems, Technology	842	4.3
Management & Business Administration	799	4.0
Psychology	780	3.9
Accounting	691	3.5
Health Care, Health Education & Health Science	684	3.5
Physical Therapy	470	2.4
Finance	366	1.8
Education	344	1.7
Marketing	329	1.7
Medical Technology & Radiology	319	1.6
Animal & Veterinary Science	303	1.5
Music & Musical Theater	298	1.5
Architecture	289	1.5
Film, Media, & Television Studies	286	1.4
Dentistry	261	1.3
Justice & Legal Studies	251	1.3
Art & Art History	246	1.2
Law Enforcement & Security	244	1.2
Pharmacy & Pharmacology	243	1.2
Athletic Training	233	1.2
Hospitality and Tourism	232	1.2
Aviation	208	1.1
Political Science & Politics	200	1.0
Journalism & Mass Communications	190	1.0
Economics	185	0.9
Graphic Design	178	0.9

(*table continues*)

Table 6, continued

Field	n	%
Biochemistry	176	0.9
Computer Technology & Drafting	176	0.9
Design & Media Arts	166	0.8
Fire Protection, Administration & Technology	158	0.8
Forensic Science	157	0.8
Cosmetology	129	0.7
International Relations	128	0.6
English & Literature	127	0.6
Social Work	120	0.6
Visual & Performing Arts	119	0.6
Zoology	102	0.5
Advertising	99	0.5
Public Relations	95	0.5
Dental Hygiene	93	0.5
Mathematics	92	0.5
Broadcast & Electronic Communication Arts	91	0.5
Neuroscience	89	0.4
Theater & Theater Arts	88	0.4
Marine Sciences & Fisheries	79	0.4
Repair, Maintenance, Servicing	77	0.4
History	70	0.3
Other	2,157	10.9
Total	19,800	100.0

Note. Seniors who indicated "unknown" or "undecided" for choice of major (n=214) were excluded.

- Almost 10% of seniors who reported planning on furthering their education, reported planning to study Nursing.
- Engineering, Biology/Biological Science, and Criminal Justice/Criminology, were each reported as planned fields of study by over 6% of seniors.
- A total of 4.3% of seniors who reported planning to further their education, reported planning to study Computer and Information Sciences.

11. What credentials do seniors plan to earn?

Survey items were provided to determine which degrees seniors plan to earn as well as the industry certifications they planned to acquire

Degrees: Table 7 lists for each initial degree (associate, bachelor, master, and advanced), the number and percent of seniors planning to finish their studies at the bachelor, master, and advanced degree levels.

Table 7. Degrees Seniors Plan to Earn

Lowest	Highest								Total
	Associate		Bachelor		Master[a]		Advanced[b]		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	Number
Associate	1,520	17.6	1,649	19.1	3,354	38.9	2,102	24.4	8,625
Bachelor	--	--	3,748	62.8	1,471	24.6	753	12.6	5,972
Master[a]	--	--	--	--	3,306	90.9	330	9.1	3,636
Advanced[b]	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,355	--	1,355
Total	1,520	7.8	5,397	27.6	8,131	41.5	4,540	23.2	19,588

Note. Some seniors who indicate they first expect to receive an Associate degree may have begun their study at an institution that grants the Bachelor degree in their field of study. Students who were undecided, chose "None," or meaningless responses (n=395) and students who indicated they would only pursue a certificate (n=31) were excluded.

[a]Includes Specialist degree. [b]Includes all doctorates, law, and other degrees beyond Specialist.

- Over 90% of the seniors who reported planning to further their education, planned to pursue a Bachelor or higher degree; with the largest group, 41.5%, planning to earn a Master degree; and 23.2% planning to pursue an Advanced degree.
- Nearly 40% of the seniors who planned to earn a Bachelor as their initial degree, planned to ultimately earn a Master or Advanced degree.

Industry Certifications provide evidence of mastery in a particular discipline, and are earned beginning in high school. Seniors were asked which, if any, additional certifications they planned to earn while furthering their postsecondary education. Table 8 lists the number and percent of seniors who reported planning to earn each of the following industry certifications.

Table 8. Industry Certifications Seniors Plan to Earn

Industry Certification	n	%
Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA)	2,694	13.5
Computer Operating Systems (e.g., Windows, Apple, Linux)	2,139	10.7
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	1,571	7.7
Web Design/Publishing	1,460	7.3
Computer Aided Design (e.g., AutoCAD)	1,171	5.8
Networking/Network Administration	1,117	5.6
Pharmacy Technician	1,094	5.5
Culinary Arts/Management	1,006	5.0
Automotive Technician	996	5.0
Veterinary Assistant (CVA)	761	3.8
Front Desk Supervisor	682	3.4
EKG Technician (CET)	675	3.4
Bookkeeping	501	2.5
Food Protection Manager (ServSafe)	480	2.4
Other	287	1.4
Total	12,587	100.0

Note. Students who indicated they would not be earning industry certifications (n=7,427) are excluded.

- The industry certifications that the greatest percentage of seniors, who reported planning to further their education, planned to acquire was Medical Administrative Assistant, 13.5%, followed by Computer Operating Systems, 10.7%.
- Certification as an Emergency Medical Technician and/or a Web Designer/Publisher was a planned acquisition by over 7% of seniors who reported planning to further their education.

12. How do seniors plan to fund their education?

Seniors were presented with survey items that asked where and from whom they learned about financial aid, examine how they applied for it, and the type and nature of the scholarships/ grants that they expected to be awarded.

Financial Aid: Table 9 lists the number and percent of seniors that reported discussing financial aid in each location and from the groups/individuals that follow.

Table 9. Where Seniors Who Planned to Further their Education Learned about Financial Aid

Place (s)	n	%	Person(s)	n	%
Classroom presentation	13,140	73.7	College Assistance Program (CAP) advisor	10,661	59.8
Media Center presentation	6,320	35.4	School counselor	9,885	55.4
Connect-EDU	2,267	12.7	Teacher(s), school personnel	8,342	46.8
Other	1,840	10.3	Parent(s) or guardian(s)	6,085	34.1
Total	17,831	100.0	Other	467	2.6
			Total	17,831	100.0

Note. Because seniors may have selected more than one response option, percentages may exceed 100. Excludes students who indicated they were not provided with information about financial aid (n=2,183).

- Numerous write in responses were provided for place (e.g., home, work, neighborhood, Internet/Web site/search engine, and school meetings in various locations) and person (e.g., family members, friends, and themselves).
- Nearly three-quarters of seniors who reported planning to further their education heard about financial aid at a classroom presentation, while half as many received that information in a media center.
- More than half of seniors, 59.8%, who reported planning to further their education heard about financial aid from their College Assistance Program advisor, while 55.4% heard about financial aid from the school counselor.

Grants/Private aid: Table 10 lists the number and percent of seniors responding (Yes, No, or Don't know) when asked whether or not they expected to receive aid, by their Free Application for Federal and State Financial Aid (FAFSA) completion status, organized by source of aid (Federal Pell Grants or Private Sources).

Table 10. Expectation of Receiving Pell Grants and Private Aid by FAFSA Completion Status

Expected Receipt	FAFSA[a] Completed					Total	
	Yes		No				
	n	%	n	%		n	%
Federal Pell Grant							
Yes	4,924	90.6	509	9.4		5,433	27.1
No	4,008	63.1	2,346	36.9		6,354	31.7
Don't know	5,279	64.2	2,948	35.8		8,227	41.1
Total	14,211	71.0	5,803	29.0		20,014	100.0
Private Sources							
Yes	4,611	76.9	1,385	23.1		5,996	30.0
No	3,661	68.4	1,695	31.6		5,356	26.8
Don't know	5,939	68.6	2,723	31.4		8,662	43.3
Total	14,211	71.0	5,803	29.0		20,014	100.0

[a]Free Application for Federal and State Financial Aid

- A total of 27.1% of seniors expected to receive Pell Grants to offset the cost of their education, 31.7% did not, and 41.1% didn't know.
- A total of 30.0% of seniors expected to receive aid from Private Sources to offset the cost of their education, 26.8% did not, and 43.3% didn't know.
- The percentage of seniors who completed the FASA was much higher than the percentage of seniors who did not, regardless of seniors' expectations of receiving aid.

Scholarships/Scholarship Grants: Table 11 lists the number and percent of seniors who reported receiving Merit Scholarships and/or Scholarship Grants.

Table 11. Merit Scholarships and Scholarship Grants

Name	n	%
Merit		
Bright Futures	6,364	31.8
National Merit	1,886	9.4
National Achievement	1,549	7.7
Gates Millennium	640	3.2
Other	154	0.8
Total	20,014	100.0
Scholarship Grants[a]		
Jose Marti	1,995	10.0
First Generation Matching	1,891	9.4
Access to Better Learning and Education	1,199	6.0
Mary McLeod Bethune	631	3.2
Other	124	0.6
Total	20,014	100.0

[a]Awarded based on merit and financial need

- The merit scholarships awarded to the highest percentage of seniors were Bright Futures, 31.8%, followed by National Merit, 9.4%, and National Achievement, 7.7%.
- The scholarship grants awarded to the highest percentage of seniors were José Marti, 10.0%, followed by First Generation Matching, 9.4%.

13. In which branch of the armed services did seniors plan to enlist?

The branch of the armed services that seniors indicated that they would be joining upon completing high school are listed in Table 12.

Table 12. Branches of the Military

Branch	n	%
Army	149	26.8
Marines	129	23.2
Air Force	110	19.8
Navy	100	17.8
Coast Guard	41	7.4
National Guard	14	2.5
Merchant Marines	11	2.0
Other	3	0.2
Total	556	100.0

- Around half of seniors who reported planning to join the military, planned to join either the Army or the Marines, with similar percentages choosing each branch, followed by those planning to join the Air Force or Navy.

14. What were the principal reasons seniors gave for not furthering their education upon completing high school?

Table 14 separately lists the number and percentage of respondents who selected each of the choices that follow for seniors who indicated they would and would not be enlisting in the military, with responses sorted in descending order according to the number of seniors who indicated they would be entering the military.

Table 14. Reasons Seniors Gave for not Furthering their Education Upon Completing High School

	Enlist in Military			
	Yes		No	
Reason	n	%	n	%
Prefer military training	224	40.3	1	0.3
Further education at same time	140	25.2	18	5.2
Plan to make some money first	55	9.9	39	11.3
Don't feel academically ready	30	5.4	45	13
Too expensive	23	4.1	19	5.5
Not interested	22	4	62	17.9
Family obligations	21	3.8	13	3.8
Don't need it for what I want to do	16	2.9	64	18.5
Defer till later	10	1.8	1	0.3
Applied but was not accepted	6	1.1	2	0.6
Prefer to work only	5	0.9	55	15.9
Unsure what to study	0	0	10	2.9
Illness/disability	0	0	7	2
Other	4	0.7	10	2.9
Total	556	100.0	346	100.0

- Of those seniors planning to enlist in the military, 40.3% indicated that they chose service over education because of a preference for military training.
- One-quarter of seniors planning to enlist in the military, reported planning to further their education while serving.
- About 5% of responding seniors cited expense as the primary reason they would not be attending college.
- Of those seniors not planning to enter the military, "Not interested," and "Don't need it for what I want to do" were each cited by as reasons by about 18% of respondents. "Don't feel academically ready" was given as a reason by 13% of respondents, while about 16% of respondents indicated planning to first enter the workforce.

15. To what extent did seniors plan to work after completing high school?

Seniors were queried about the extent they planned to work upon completing high school, and whether or not they knew the place where they would be working. Table 14 compares the responses of students who were identified as college-bound; vocational, certificate, career -bound; and students who planned to immediately enter the workforce.

Table 15. Seniors' Plans for Work after High School by Group

Response	Education		Military		Other	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Hours						
0	5,802	29.0	102	18.3	138	39.9
1-4	296	1.5	9	1.6	9	2.6
5-19	4,159	20.8	43	7.7	37	10.7
20-39	7,555	37.7	179	32.2	70	20.2
40 or more	2,202	11.0	223	40.1	92	26.6
Total	20,014	100.0	556	100.0	346	100.0
Place						
Not planning to work	5,802	29.0	102	18.3	138	39.9
Yes	5,936	29.7	297	53.4	113	32.7
No	8,276	41.4	157	28.2	95	27.5
Total	20,014	100.0	556	100.0	346	100.0

- Nearly 40% of seniors who reported planning to further their education also reported planning to work 20-39 hours per week, somewhat more than seniors who reported other plans.
- Except for seniors who planned to enlist in the military, the percentage of respondents who reported planning to work part-time was greater than the percentage of respondents who reported planning to work full-time, regardless of whether or not they were planned to further their education.
- Except for seniors who planned to enlist in the military, most students who wanted to work, did not know where they would be doing so.

16. What are the principal conclusions of this report?

This report presented the results of the fifth annual administration of the Senior Exit Survey, which examined seniors' attitudes toward high school, explored seniors' postsecondary plans, investigated seniors' chosen fields of study and the credentials they plan to attempt, and ascertained their immediate employment expectations. Over 80% of graduating seniors completed the survey, of which

more than 90% reported planning to further their education upon completing high school. While most students gave their high schools high marks and rated college information/advanced course offerings as helpful in preparing them for life after graduation, many students also found their high school experience lacked training in life skills and financial literacy. The vast majority of seniors reported planning to attend a college in Florida. Nursing was the single most popular field of study chosen by seniors who reported planning to further their education. Most students reported planning on working after high school whether or not they also planned to continue their education. Despite intending to be employed, less than half of seniors who reported planning to work knew where they would do so.