



2008 Epiphany School Graduate Report

Overview

The Epiphany Graduate Support office seeks to offer all Epiphany graduates substantive support during their formative years of independence, as they tackle high school, college and their first employment opportunities. Currently the job is manned by Will Brown and Lino Sanchez, who work 50-60 hours per week, guiding, advising and challenging 150 former students.

Epiphany graduated its first 8th grade class in June of 2001. The oldest graduates are now twenty-two years old or older. If they have not repeated a year or taken time off, they are currently seniors in college and will be eligible to serve as interns in the fall of 2009.

The school community is proud that so many of its graduates are either in college or work ready by the time they finish high school. The numbers are especially noteworthy when Epiphany students are compared to their peers who did not have the benefit of an Epiphany education. Nonetheless, graduates have also suffered their share of both mistakes and setbacks. Their experiences have pointed to many improvements the school can make, and has made, in terms of preparation and high school placement

Laying the Groundwork

It is incredibly clear to us that Epiphany must build the foundations of graduate support while students still attend Epiphany. Furthermore, while it is true that the number of graduates will continue to expand, we believe that the focus and energy of the graduate support office should be geared towards our high school students. It is unrealistic to believe that a 23 year old graduate, who is working full time and living with her husband and baby is going to use the graduate support office with the same need and intensity of purpose as a freshman adjusting to the demands of high school or a senior attempting to finance college. We have seen it demonstrated again and again that students with whom we build a relationship as high schoolers use us most effectively as access to opportunities as young adults.



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Lino Sanchez and Will Brown have spent the majority of their time during the last year in three ways: working directly with graduates, pursuing the meaningful summer initiative, and collecting information about the graduates.

Direct Service

Every day numerous Epiphany graduates appear, or call on the phone with a demonstrable, definite need. Roughly 10 graduates come every day between the hours of 4:00- 7:15PM seeking a place to do school work or to use Epiphany's gym. Others come for help in planning their next step or for help with a school-related problem. Many are simply in search of a friendly ear or a shoulder to lean on. Weekly tasks include:

- Connecting students with different organizations
- Helping students throughout their high school years by monitoring homework, receiving grades and working with parents
- Enrolling those who do not graduate high school in GED programs
- Writing recommendations for jobs and scholarships
- Advising our graduates on resume writing, job searches, and placement.
- Visiting graduates at their schools and meeting with their advisors
- Aiding graduates in apartment searches or referring them to shelters, medical services, counseling

Last week, Lino took a student who attended but did not graduate from Epiphany to the Madison to enroll in their vocational program, counseled an Epiphany graduate in her senior year of college who is pregnant, and helped a student with multiple job applications. Last week, Will Brown went to the MATCH school to check in on four graduates who go to school there, ran a high school placement workshop for our current eighth graders and their parents, and worked towards arranging a college financial night for our graduates in the 12th grade.

Many of our students obviously lack the family structure, supportive advocacy, and disciplinary interventions available to their middle class peers. The graduate support office seeks to provide all three of these aspects, thereby continu-



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ing the Epiphany model of working to overcome obstacles that can hinder students' academic success.

Meaningful Summer Initiative

Last year the graduate support office identified high school summers as a huge hole in the Epiphany experience. Our graduates went from having a middle school experience filled with field trips, academic enrichment, boat trips, and living at Groton to spending summers sitting at home watching television. We decided that this was a crucial place we needed to put our energy. Lino and Will worked hard to locate jobs and assist our graduates in applying and following through with them.

If you look at our summer statistics, astonishing numbers of graduates were placed in meaningful summer opportunities, that ranged from: working as counselors in Epiphany programs, to participating in wilderness expeditions and leadership opportunities out of state, to serving as tour guides of historic Boston, to pursuing valuable internships. We believe we can continue to grow the meaningful summer initiative in three ways.

- 1) We can plant the idea with our students early (during their middle school years) that it is important and life-changing to fill your summer with valuable experiences. We will have assemblies dedicated to returning graduates making presentations on their experiences.
- 2) We can continue to grow, organize, and document our relationships with other schools, agencies, and businesses that afford our students amazing summer opportunities.
- 3) We can build a bank of employment and internship opportunities for our college-age students, and, since we will have formally laid the groundwork during their high school years, we will have a group of students ready to take advantage of such opportunities.



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Table 1: Epiphany Graduates Participating in Meaningful Summer Activities

Graduating Year	Graduates in Meaningful Summer Activities	Total Graduates
2001	18	21
2002	13	17
2003	14	20
2004	18	19
2005	16	18
2006	16	17
2007	14	17
2008	20	21
Total (86%)	129	150

Epiphany collaborated with the following agencies and schools to allow our graduates wonderful summer opportunities.

- **Deer Hill Expeditions** enhance students' appreciation of the natural world and native cultures. Through wilderness expeditions combined with community service projects, students learn individual skills living in the wilderness, participate in group service projects, promote stewardship of the Earth and interact with native cultures.
- **The Food Project** brings together a group of diverse youth, from suburban and urban areas, who partner with adults to build a sustainable food system. This community works to produce healthy food for the city and suburbs, serve their communities, learn leadership skills and inspire and support others to promote change in their communities.



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- **MY TOWN (Multicultural Tour of What's Now)** uses the process of sharing local history to empower youth and build appreciation of urban neighborhoods. This youth development program trains young people, who study the history of their families, neighborhood and city, to build their skills in creating and leading historical walking tours and making presentations to different community groups.
- **Project RISE** targets students from Boston neighborhoods between ages of 8-16, who will benefit from building their academic skills in structured classes. Courses offered are both challenging and reinforcing in core academics, cultural history and study skills. Program also involves extra-curricular activities including cultural programs, sports, arts and field trips
- **St. Stephens's B-SAFE (Bishop's Summer Academic and Fun Enrichment)** offers four sites of day camp, with an academic component, for economically disadvantaged children from Boston, including one located at Epiphany. While our incoming 5th and 6th graders attend the program, dozens of our graduates serve as counselors in the program.
- **Bird Street Youth Summer Jobs Programs** offers several programs for younger teens (13-14) in Arts & Entrepreneurship and Dance Entrepreneurship. Students develop their skills in the specific arts program as well as entrepreneurial skills for promoting or selling their products or marketing their performances. Older students (15-17) have other opportunities to gain skills providing administrative support or as junior counselors.
- **Algebra Camp Reach Out** is sponsored by Tufts University and Mission Hill School to support students in learning math, using creative approaches to work on algebra skills. Program includes recreational activities in the afternoons.
- **Summer Search** is a national leadership development program that identifies economically disadvantaged high school students who show potential



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for resiliency, altruism and performance. Program provides on-going support through year round mentoring, life-changing summer experiences and travel, college advising and a strong support network.

- **INROADS** is the premier organization for developing and placing talented minority youth in business and industry and preparing them for corporate and community leadership.

Tracking and Information Collecting

The Epiphany School Graduate Support Report of 2008 represents a major effort to collect information on graduates to help determine the long-term impact of the Epiphany experience. The following data is an updated snapshot of statistics currently available. Preparing for this report means working to directly contact all 150 graduates, many of whom move, change phone numbers, and alter college or career plans multiple times in a given year. Collecting these statistics represents a massive time challenge for Lino and Will. It is important that the board understand and think it is important that this work continues. At any given time there are some 80 odd graduates with whom Lino and Will are in constant touch. But this means that there are another 70 graduates with whom they have to work very hard to get in touch. The statistics below represent the experiences of our graduates.

Question #1: What percent of Epiphany graduates go on to high school, and specifically, which schools do they attend?

First and foremost, it must be mentioned that **100% of 8th graders who graduated from Epiphany have enrolled in and started high school**. Epiphany students go on to a variety of high schools. The high school placement team works hard to encourage students to apply to schools that will fit their strengths and needs. Epiphany graduates attend private, Catholic, public charter/pilot, and exam schools as well as public schools outside of Boston, in some cases. Figure 1 shows the break down of where Epiphany graduates go to school.



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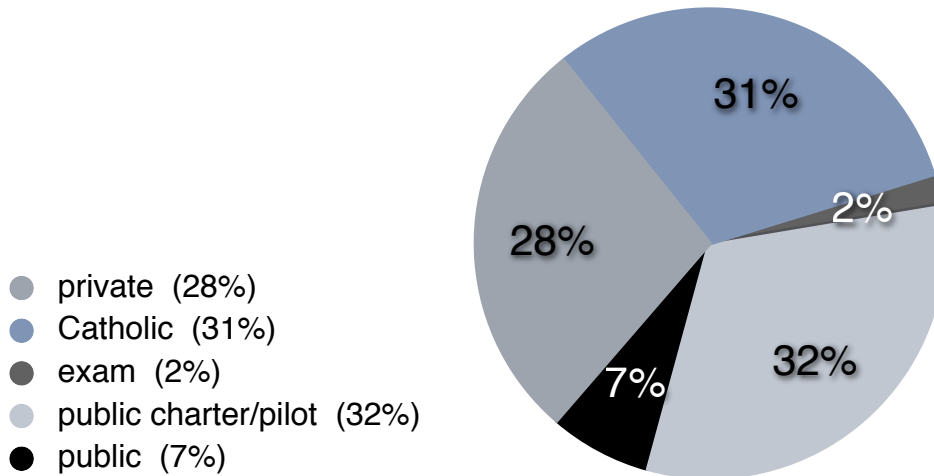


Figure 1: Percent of Epiphany Graduates Who Attend Private, Catholic, Exam, and Public Charter Schools and Public Schools Outside of Boston

High School Placement for Epiphany's Class of 2008:

Ammar Abdur-Rahman

MATCH Charter High School

Kelvin Andrade

Newman School

Kevin Baptista

Boston College High School

Claudine Charles

MATCH Charter High School

Jade Clark

City on a Hill Charter High School

Julian Correafranco

Buckingham, Browne, & Nichols School

Sabrina Correia

Miss Hall's School (boarding)

Kiara Desamours

Trinity Catholic High School

Juanita Ellison-Moss

City on a Hill Charter High School



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Shacoya Elmore

Codman Academy Charter High School

Jermaine Gillespie

North Cambridge Catholic

Delilah Goncalves

Woodward School

Tajuana Jones

MATCH Charter High School

Jandira Lobo

City on a Hill Charter High School

Dhanikkua Lopez

Trinity Catholic High School

Gabriela Modesto

Braintree High

Bacari Ruff

Community Charter School of Cambridge

Michael Medina

Matignon High School, Cambridge

Ruedeana Silas-Poyer

Norfolk County Agricultural High School

Zoanna Thomas

Elizabeth Seton Academy

Tayon Watson

MATCH Charter High School

Question #2: What percent of our graduates graduate from high school?

77 of our graduates are old enough to have graduated from high school. Four students from the class of 2004 have stayed back and are currently on track to graduate. Of the remaining 73 graduates in the first 4 graduating classes, 63 students (86%) graduated from high school (59 completed the graduation requirements of their respective school and 4 earned a GED). The only somewhat comparable statistic we could find for Boston Public Schools was a study done on a cohort of students entering the 9th grade in 2003. Four years later, 59.1% of the students had graduated from high school and only 55% of the African American students in the study had graduated. It is important to note that the statistic for Epiphany refers to the percent of students graduating 8th grade who also graduate



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high school, while the BPS statistic refers to the percentage of students entering the 9th grade who graduate high school. Including the Boston Public School students who graduate 8th grade but do not enroll in high school would lower the BPS statistics. We can also compare the Epiphany statistic to the findings of the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS: 88). 76.5 % of the low income students in the study had graduated from high school or earned a GED by the year 2000, 12 years after graduating from 8th grade.

Table 2: Percent of Students Who Graduate High School

Group	Percentage of Students Who Graduated H.S. or Earned a GED
Epiphany ¹	86%
Boston Public Schools ²	59.1%

1 Epiphany graduates who graduate from high school

2 The Boston Public School 9th graders who graduate from high school

Question #3: What percent of our graduates are in college?

In analyzing the data for this section, we looked only at the 73 students from our first three graduating classes who are old enough to be in college. 42 of those 73 students (58%) are actually in college. We once again had difficulty finding a comparable statistic for Boston Public Schools. The closest we could come was a document stating that 46% of BPS graduates plan to go to college upon graduating high school. It is important to note a few major problems with this statistic. First, our number is the percent of 8th grade graduates who go on to college. Their number is the percent of their 12th grade graduates who plan to go to college. Thus, their number is, in fact, 46% of 59.1% (27.2%), since only 59.1% matriculate to the 12th grade. 58% as compared to 27% is a number we can be proud of. Secondly, they do not have statistics as to whether or where graduates enrolled, but only that they were planning to go. Each of our students is actually in college. Furthermore, the same study cited that 49% of graduates were listed as “information not avail-



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able.” As these numbers point out, just as crucial as whether students get into college is whether they actually graduate from college.

More significantly, the Bridgespan Group conducted a study of 4.2 million students in order to determine rates of college enrollment and found that 33% of the 2.1 million low income students went to college, with 21% of enrolling students graduating. Again, 58% as compared to 33% is a number we can be proud of. Finally, the NELS study mentioned in the previous question found that 44.8% of the low income students had some postsecondary education but no degree, 6% of students had a bachelor’s degree, and 0.4% had a masters degree or higher, meaning that 51.2% of the students enrolled in college.

Of the Class of 2004’s 15 high school graduates, 14 are currently enrolled in college (93%). Their college acceptances, with current enrollment in bold, are below:

Table 3: Class of 2004 College Acceptances

Name	College Acceptances (Enrollment in Bold)
Albano, Jocelyn	Newbury College
Barrett, Tristan	University of Bridgeport and Ben Franklin Institute
Bawoh, Fatimah	Pine Manor
Ferguson, Haakim	Anne Maria
Gonzalez, Yasellis	Dominican College
Grannum, Monique	Lynchburg (VA) College and Ohio Wesleyan
Joazard, Steeve	UMass Boston , Salem State, and Newbury College
Laurence, Jermal	Newbury College
Penn, Fatima	Curry College and UMass Boston



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Name	College Acceptances (Enrollment in Bold)
Pontes, Samira	Lesley College and Manhattanville
Smith, Dontashia	University of Phoenix
Taylor, Jonathan	Mount Ida
Tejeda, Jeffrey	Suffolk University , Merrimack College, College of Mount St. Vincent
Wilson, Johnny	Brandeis University

Question #4: How many of Epiphany's graduates are employed full-time?

Eighteen of our graduates now work full time. While it is disappointing to see graduates leave college, or choose not to attend, we are also cognizant that many young adults continue to pursue academic accreditation on a part time basis. The reality is that even with all the scholarship help, college is an incredibly expensive pursuit for low income students. Furthermore, we also want to recognize that a number of our graduates are pursuing wonderful alternatives to college. For example, one graduate who left college is in a police cadet training program. Obviously, working as a policeman allows him a life-long career wherein he can serve society and support a family. Similarly we have graduates serving as case managers at the Department of Youth Services, as builders with construction firms, as buyers for clothing stores. Each of these is a valuable enterprise. When we look at the numbers - 39 in college, 18 working full time, 2 in the military, 2 working part time, we see that 62 of our 73 graduates are either school or work ready. This is 86%. Of the remaining 11, 3 are in prison, 3 are doing nothing and 6 are lost (They may well be working). Obviously, Epiphany's goal is to have 100% of its graduates either school or work ready. When we forecast the numbers going forward, it seems clear that we can build above 86%



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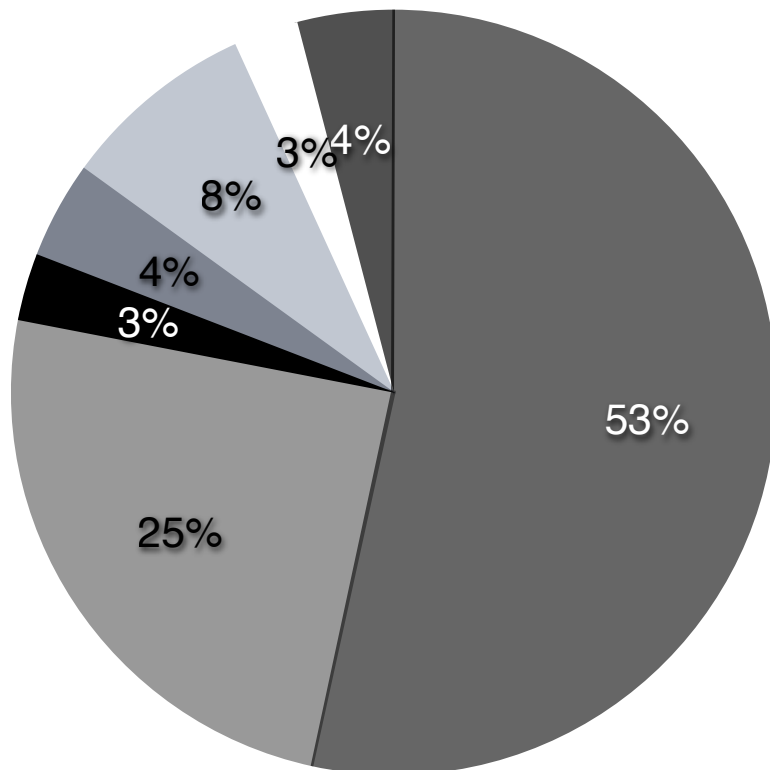


Figure 2: Percent of Epiphany Graduates Currently In Higher Levels of Education and Pursuing Other Endeavors

- Attending College (55%)
- Working Full-Time (25%)
- Working Part-Time (2%)
- Unemployed (4%)
- Unknown (No Longer In Touch) (8%)
- Military (2%)
- In Prison (4%)

Question #5: With what percent of our graduates are we currently in touch?

In the Graduate Support Office, we define being “in touch” with a student as being in contact with them one time in the last year. We are currently in touch with 96% of our graduates. We have lost contact with only 6 of the 150 Epiphany graduates (4% of all graduates).



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Question #6: How many of Epiphany's female graduates have become pregnant?

The current statistic we have from The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy is that 3 out of 10 women in the United States are pregnant before they turn 20. African American, low income women have the highest pregnancy rate other than low income Hispanic women. “Compared to teens from higher income families, poor and low-income teens are somewhat more likely to be sexually active and somewhat less likely to use contraceptives or to use contraception successfully. Poor and low-income adolescents make up 38 percent of all women ages 15 to 19; yet, they account for 73 percent of all pregnancies in that age group.”

Of our 70 female graduates, two became pregnant before they were 20 – one at 15 and one at 18. We are therefore well below the average teenage birth rate. However, in the past five months, 6 of our female graduates have become pregnant. They are all over 20 and in fact three of them are 23. We could find little data on pregnancy in the early twenties because culturally it is considered an appropriate time to start a family. The average age in the United States when women have their first baby is 25. This number is distorted by the fact that more women in their 40s are having babies than ever before, and this fact is pulling the average higher. We also know that: “nearly 60 percent of teens who become mothers are living in poverty at the time of the birth”, that people who bear children are far less likely to get married than they were even ten years ago, and that women who become pregnant as teenagers are far less likely to finish college than their non-child bearing peers.

Questions We Wish We Had Asked

What percent of our students who are working full time are in jobs with real advancement opportunities?

Of our students who went to trade school, hair cutting, construction, how many of them feel true job satisfaction?