

As AVID/TOPS celebrates its fifth class, most of first four still enrolled

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For the 94 Madison high school seniors that were celebrated Thursday night as members of the AVID/TOPS program's

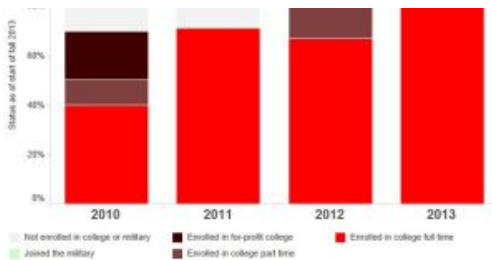
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Most students from the first four graduating classes of Madison's AVID/TOPS program for the academic middle were still enrolled in some level of college as of the fall of 2013.

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Class of 2014, college is calling.

Whether all of them ultimately enroll in a four-year degree track or take a different path, however, is what program officials will be watching in the next few months.

"It's that period of time between graduation and fall classes beginning that becomes the really critical window, making sure they actually are enrolled in college," said Nichelle Nichols, the chief academic officer for the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County.

The Boys & Girls Club partners with the Madison

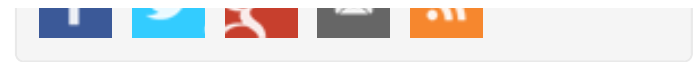
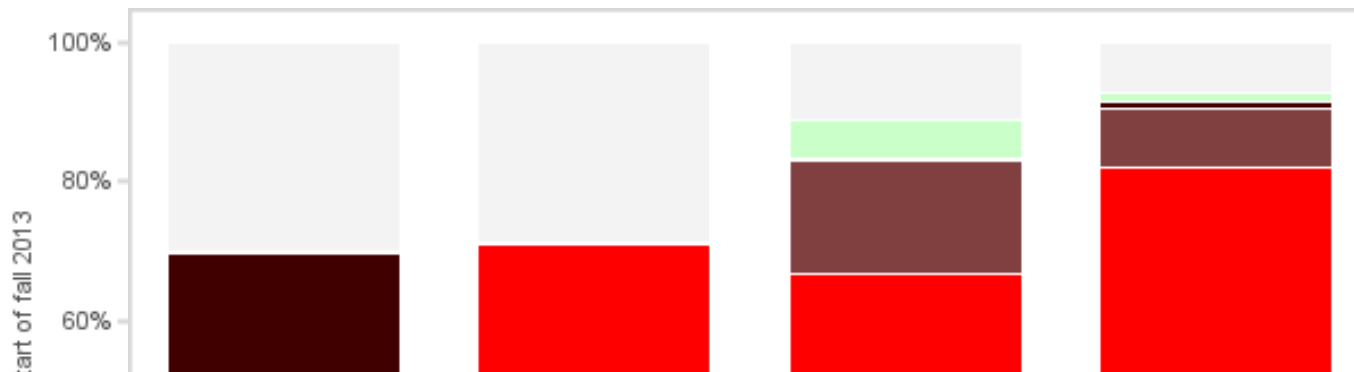
Metropolitan School District on the **AVID/TOPS** program, which tries to get students from the academic middle on track for college.

The program started in Madison in the fall of 2008 and had its first graduating seniors in 2010, so there's no data yet on what percentage of participants attain a four-year college degree.

But the chart below shows the outcome for members of the first four graduating classes as of the start of the 2013-14 school year.

Following AVID/TOPS participants

Here are what graduates of Madison's AVID/TOPS program were doing academically as of fall 2013.



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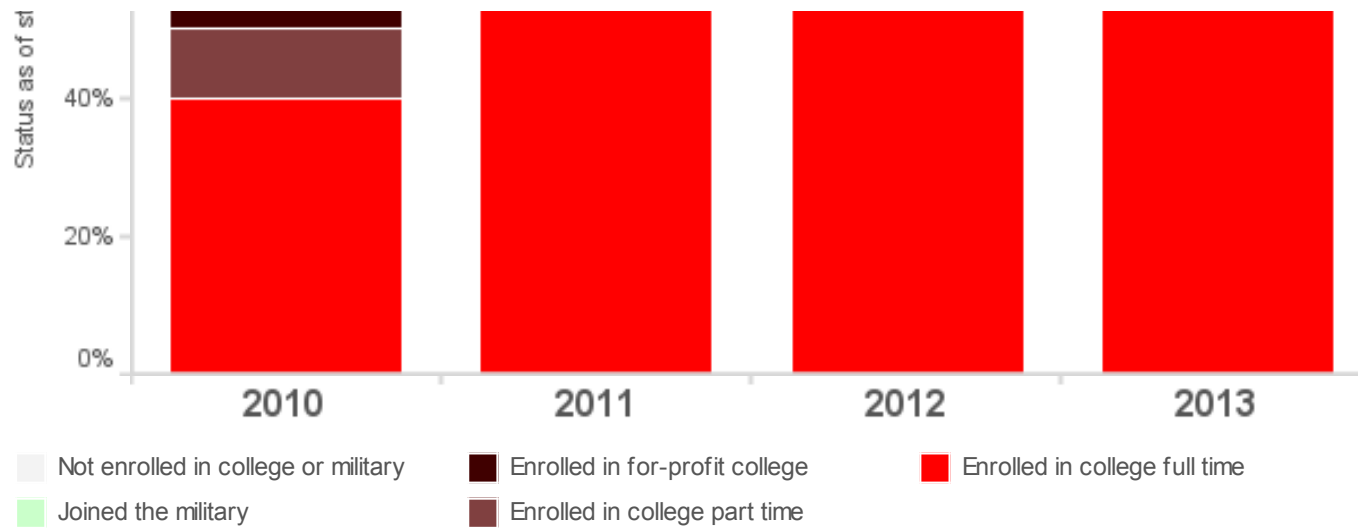
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Source: Boys & Girls Club of Dane County via WISCAPE (<http://www.bgcdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2012-13-WISCAPE-Final-Report.pdf>)

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Of 84 students that completed the program a year ago, 77 (92 percent) started some level of college studies in the fall.

Looking back at the 10 members of the Class of 2010, seven were still in college in the fall of 2013.

Nichols said students who participate in the electives get continuing support after they start in college to encourage them on their road to a degree.

The **AVID/TOPS partnership** started at Madison East in 2008, combining the national **Advancement Via Individual Determination** college-readiness system in MMSD with the Teens of Promise program supported by the **Boys & Girls Club of Dane County**.

AVID works during the school day with students with grade point averages between 2.0 and 3.5

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who come from low-income backgrounds or from groups historically underrepresented in postsecondary education.

The TOPS program adds out-of-school support through a full-time student coordinator, career exploration opportunities and scholarships.

A **study by UW-Madison researchers last year** showed AVID/TOPS students **performed better academically than their peers**.

Of the 94 members of this year's graduating class, 66 percent are from low-income families, 84 percent are students of color and 74 percent would be the first member of their family to attend college.

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