Trenton Education Profile
559 words

Trenton has its own school district headed by Interim Superintendent Lucy Feria. Her motto is” “Children come first; los niños son primero,” indicating the prominence of Spanish speakers in the school district.

The School district had 11,035 students in the 2015-2016 school year, from full-day preschool to an alternative high school. There are 13 elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools in the district. The majority of students in Trenton schools self-report as black (52.41%), followed by Hispanics (45.17%). The remaining 2.42% of students are mostly white, with smaller numbers of Asian, Native, and multiracial children. Fully 84.56% of students are eligible for free lunch, and another 5.17% are eligible for a reduced lunch rate, such that nearly 9 in 10 students (89.73%) of students are eligible for free or reduced lunches. Not surprisingly, Trenton is classified with District Factor Group A, indicating the most financially vulnerable communities.

Trenton has overall very low four-year graduation rates. In 2015, this rate was 60.63%, although this varied considerably by high school, with alternative Daylight-Twilight having a graduation rate of 29.10%, compared with TCHS at 79.66% and TCHS-West at 83.67%. In the past four years, graduation rates at all three schools appear to be increasing, but are still below the state average of 89.7%. At the largest high school (TCHS), graduation rates are lowest among African Americans (79%), followed by Hispanics (83%). Economically disadvantaged students were also less likely to graduate (81%).

In 2014-15, Trenton reported 356 dropouts. Most of these were black (56.74%); there does not seem to be a major difference by gender among black dropouts- 103 black men dropped out, in comparison with 99 black women. In contrast, among the 148 Hispanic dropouts (41.73% of the total),men were more likely to drop out (89 men, compared to 59 women). Dropouts peaked in 10th grade (74, or 20.79%) followed by 11th and then 12th grades (66 and 63, or 18.54 and 17.70%, respectively). 42 students dropped out iin 9th grade (11.80% of dropouts). Even so, 111 students or 31.18% of dropouts occur in before the 9th grade. Presumably, most of these students receive schooling elsewhere.

Trenton Central high School in 2014-15 had a student population of 1554 students, with slightly more women than men (804 and 750). Enrollment has dropped nearly a quarter since 2012-13. The majority of TCHS students are black (52.7%) followed by Hispanics (45.0%) and Whites (1.9%). The majority of students are economically disadvantaged (86.0%). Most speak primarily English in their homes (91.3%), followed by Spanish (7.6%). Nearly 1 in 5 (19%) have a classified disability.

Students at TCHS underperform academically when compared to their peers. Only 19% of students met or exceed language arts/literacy expectations in the PARCC exam, placing it in the 15th percentile statewide. The percentage of students was extremely low for meeting or exceeding math expectations (4%).

Only 65% TCHS students take the SAT, well below the statewide target of 80%. Only 32 students were enrolled in AP courses, so it’s not too surprising that only 9% of TCHS students took AP tests, and of these, only 17% scored 3 or higher. Only 3% of students who took the SAT scored 1550 or above. In fact, the school composite score was only 1146 (of 1800). Scores were lower than peer and state averages in critical reading, math, and writing.