

# Youth Disconnection in Region 2



APRIL 2010

# Presentation Questions

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- *How do we define disconnection and what share of Region 2's youth are disconnected?*
- *What are the characteristics of the region's disconnected youth?*
- *How has the region fared on dropouts, graduates, and college-going? And can the characteristics of students tell us anything about what lies ahead?*

# The Big Picture

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- The region was home to about **127,000** youth aged 16-24 circa 2007.
- That translates into roughly **14,000** per single-year cohort, although the distribution of population is **U-shaped**; lower in the late teens and early 20s when some youth leave the region for college.
- The traditional definition of disconnection includes youth who are **not in school** and **not employed**.
- **14,000** (11%) of the region's youths meet this definition.

# Problems With the Traditional Definition of Disconnection

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Each year, the Census Bureau sets poverty thresholds (the **Federal Poverty Level** or **FPL**) that vary by family size and composition.

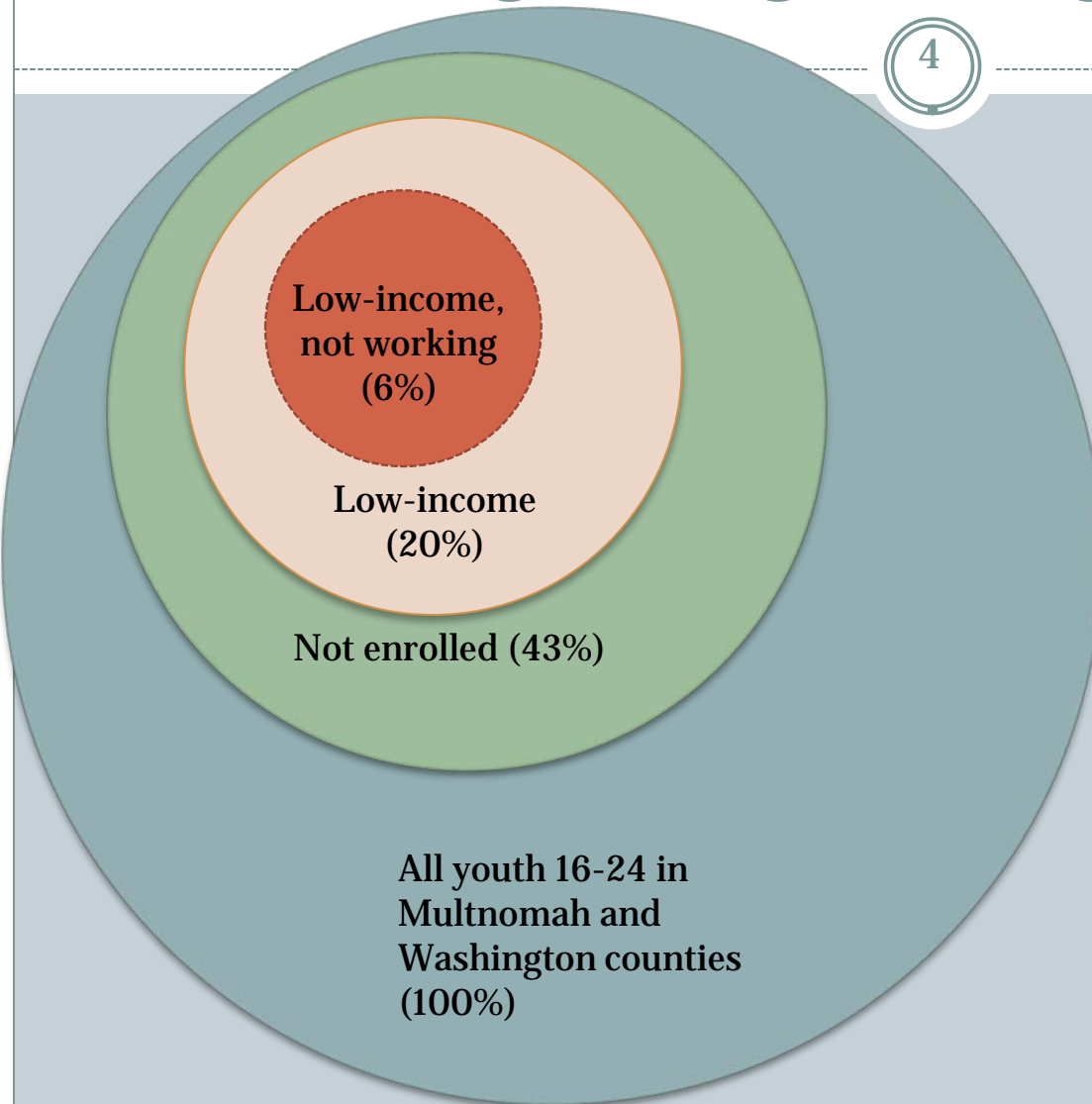
Each threshold is a “...*statistical yardstick, not a complete description of what people and families need to live.*” Many social assistance programs phase out by twice (**200%**) the FPL.

- The traditional definition of disconnection **includes** almost **6,000 non-workers** residing in household’s with income **above 200% FPL**.
- And it **misses 18,000 workers** in households with income **below 200% FPL**.

In 2009 for a family of	100% FPL	200% FPL
One	\$11,201	\$22,401
Two	\$14,051	\$28,102
Three	\$17,163	\$34,326
Four	\$22,025	\$44,050

# Categorizing the Region's Youth

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- **127,000** youth aged 16-24.
- **54,000 (43%)** are not enrolled in school.
- **26,000 (20%)** are not in school and live below 200% of FPL.
- And **8,000 (6%)** are not enrolled in school, not working, and live below 200% FPL.

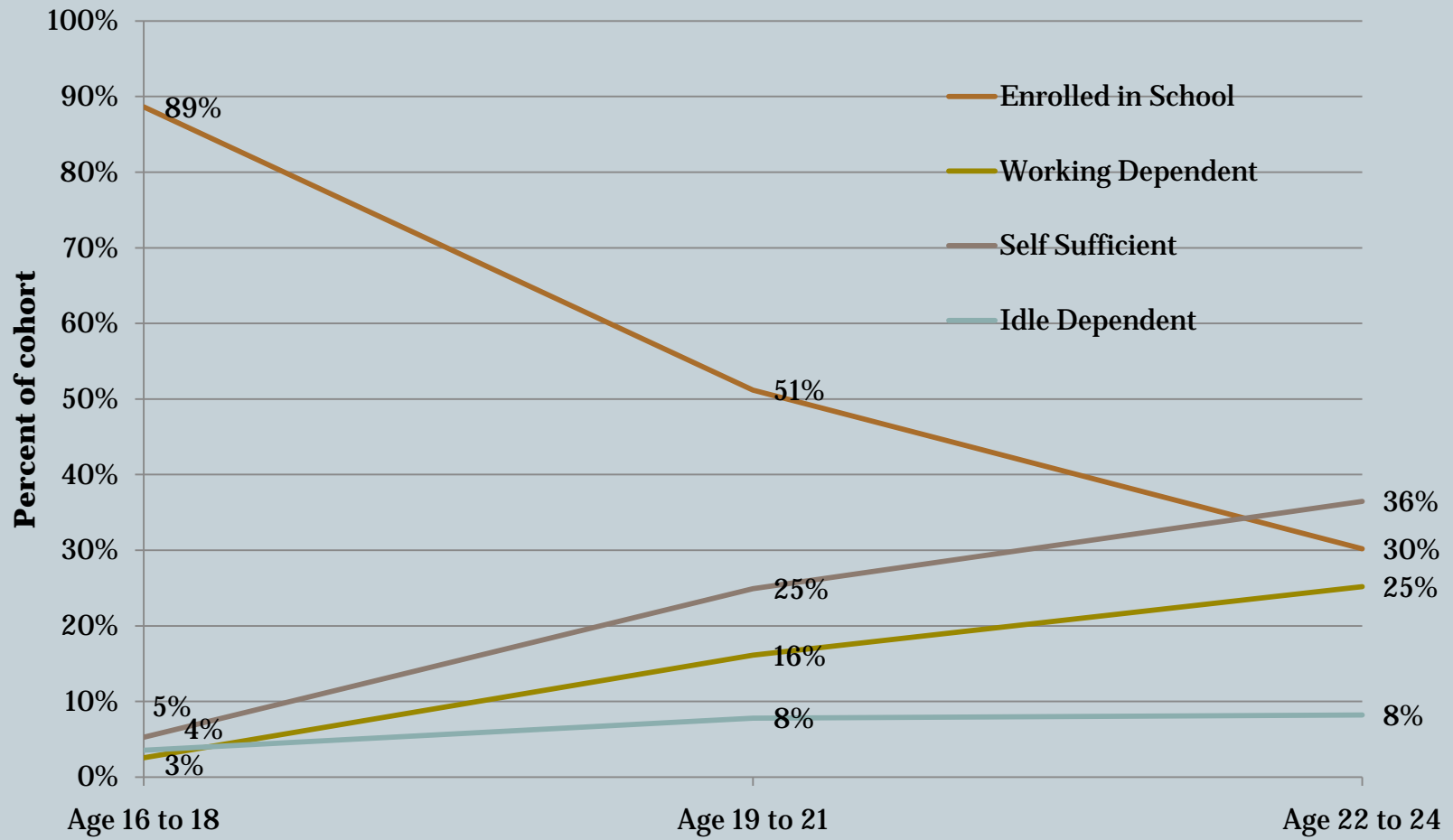
# Refined categories would better target the policy response

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- **Enrolled:** All youth enrolled in school.
- **Self-sufficient:** All youth currently residing in households with incomes above 200% FPL.
- **Working poor.** All youth who are working, in households with incomes below 200% FPL, and likely dependent on government subsidies.
- **Idle poor.** All youth who are neither enrolled nor working and in households with incomes below 200% FPL.

# As youth age, working dependents grow to 25%, and idle dependents level off at 8%

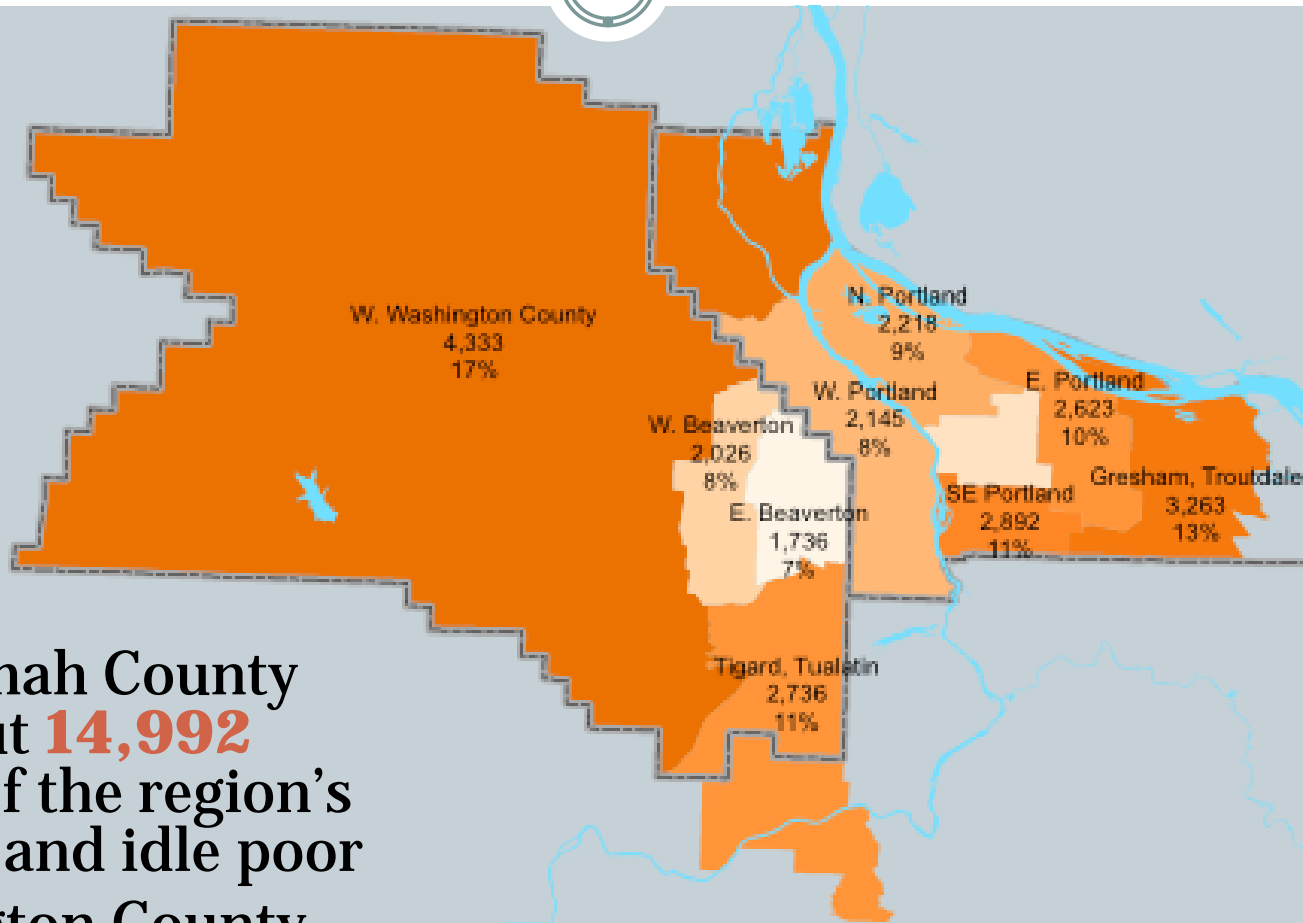
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Source: ECONorthwest analysis of 2006-2008 American Community Survey.

# Where do working and idle poor youths live?

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- Multnomah County has about **14,992 (58%)** of the region's working and idle poor
- Washington County has **10,831 (42%)**

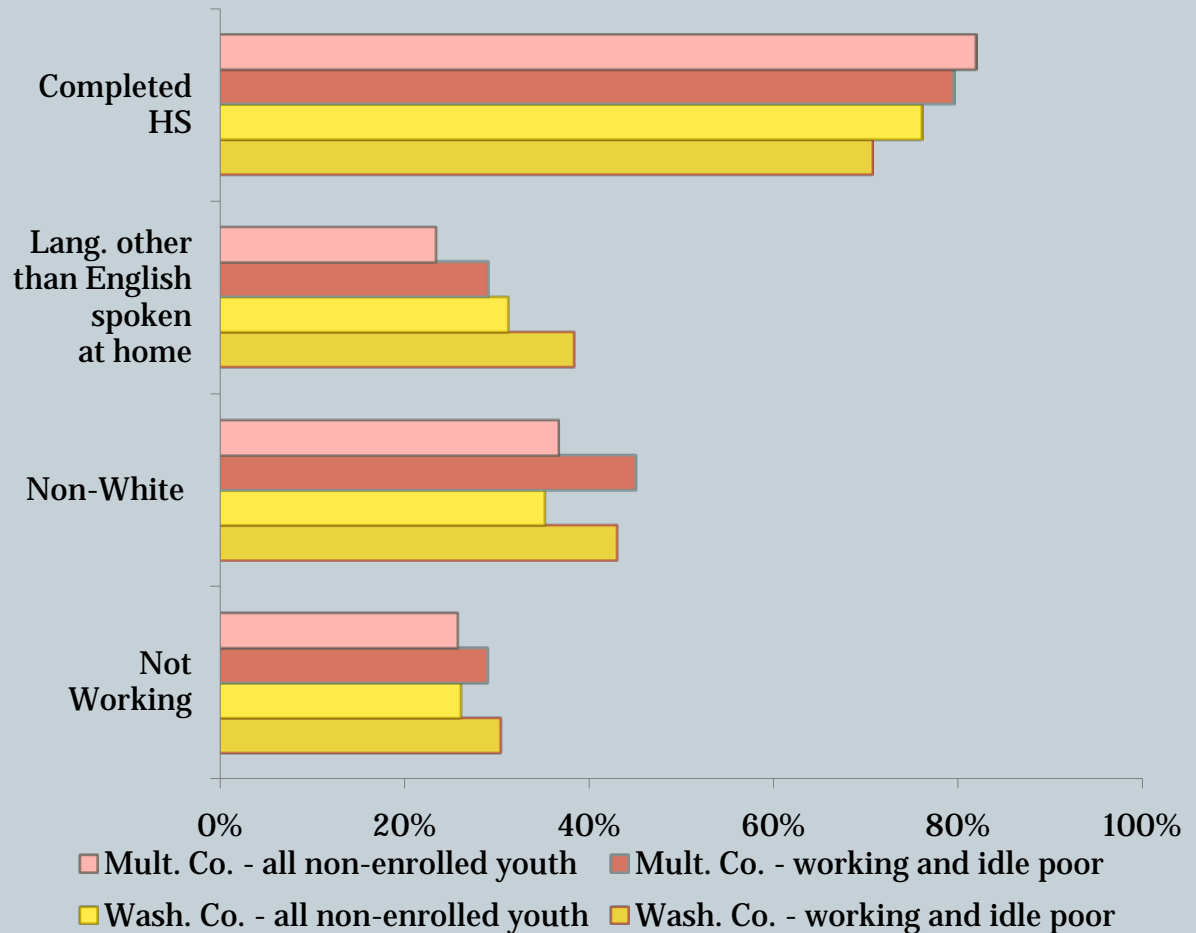


# Who are the Working and Idle Poor?

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**14,992 Working & Idle Poor in Multnomah County (20% of all youth)**

**10,831 Working & Idle Poor in Washington County (19% of all youth)**

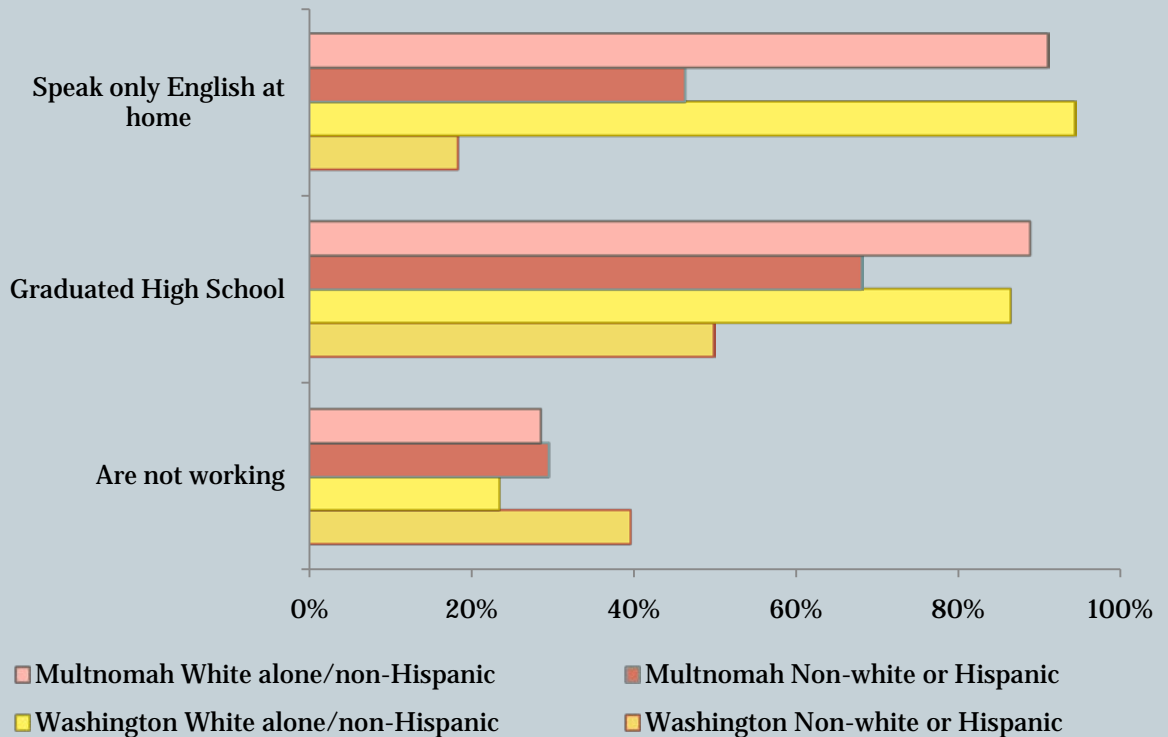


# Who are the Working and Idle Poor?

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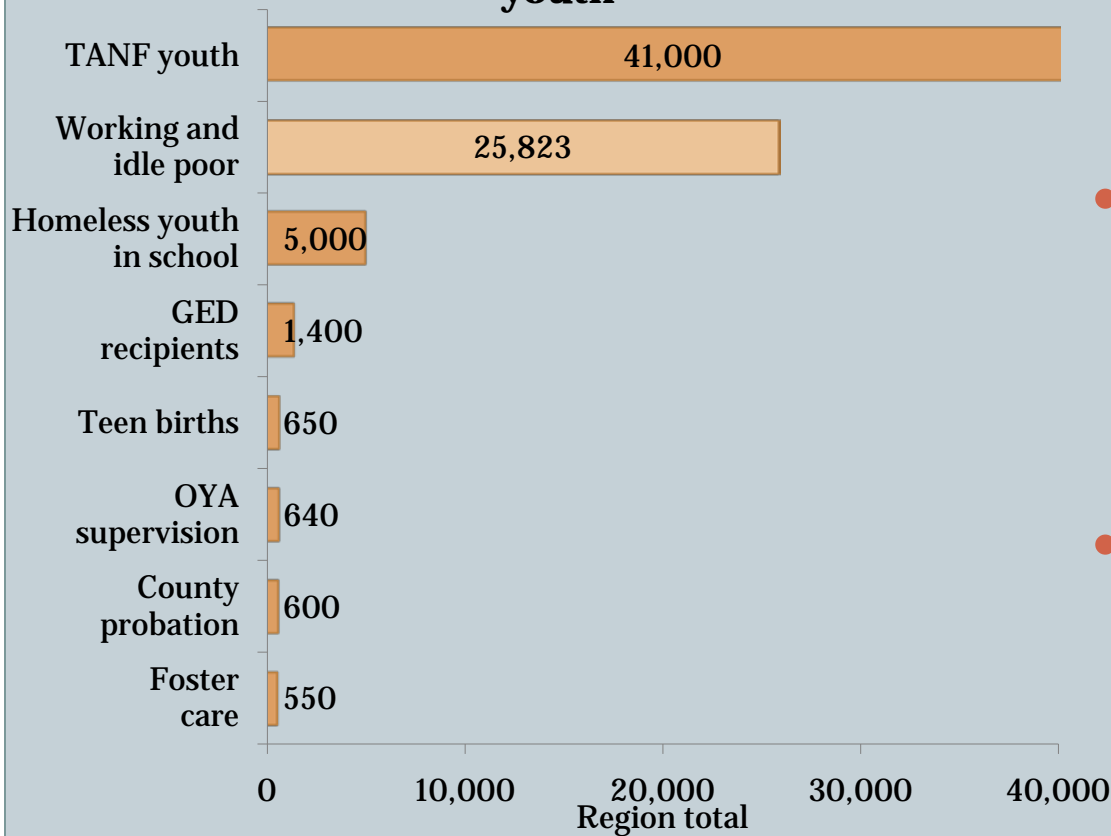
**10,831 Working  
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# Beyond enrollment: Other indicators of youth at risk

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## Regional profile of at-risk and disconnected youth



- The region has many youths with risk factors for disconnection.
- But, other than TANF, no single program connects with a significant share of these youths.
- Stronger connections across programs would help better identify and target services for these at-risk youth.

# Tracking individuals is difficult

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- Tracking individuals across programs and systems is difficult and complicates identifying individual risk factors across multiple programs.
  - Program data systems **often do not “talk” to each other.**
  - There is **no common reference ID** to readily track individuals across systems.
  - Schools typically track only what is **required by the State.** Even these data are not always readily available.

The K-12 and higher education systems have made progress in recent years, but more needs to be done.

# Exploring the Origins of Dependent Youth

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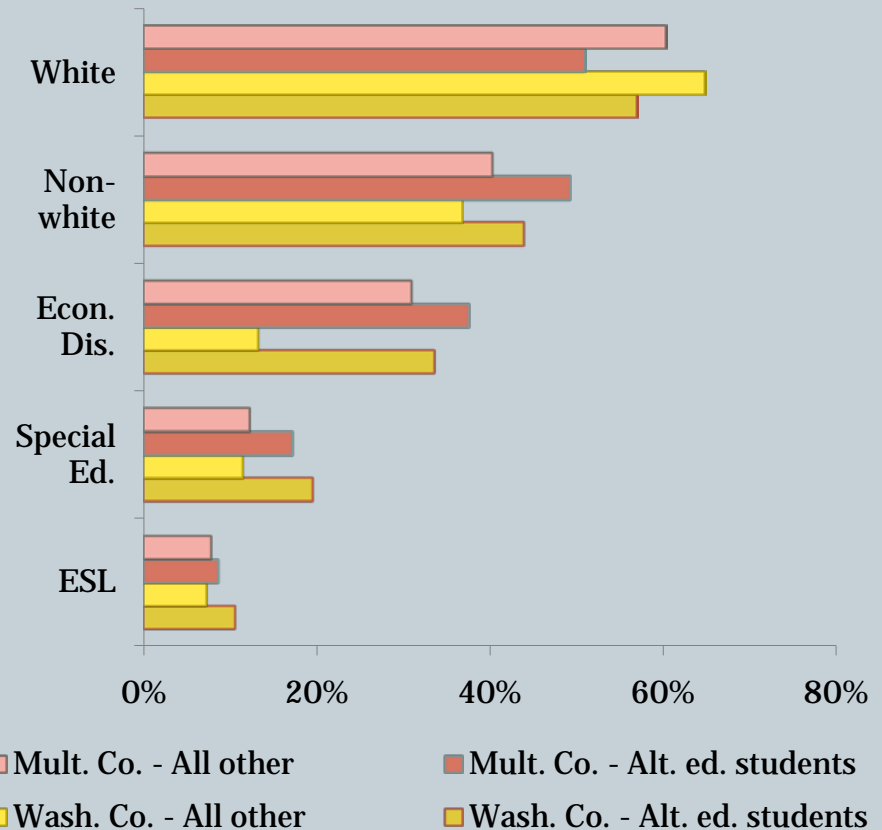
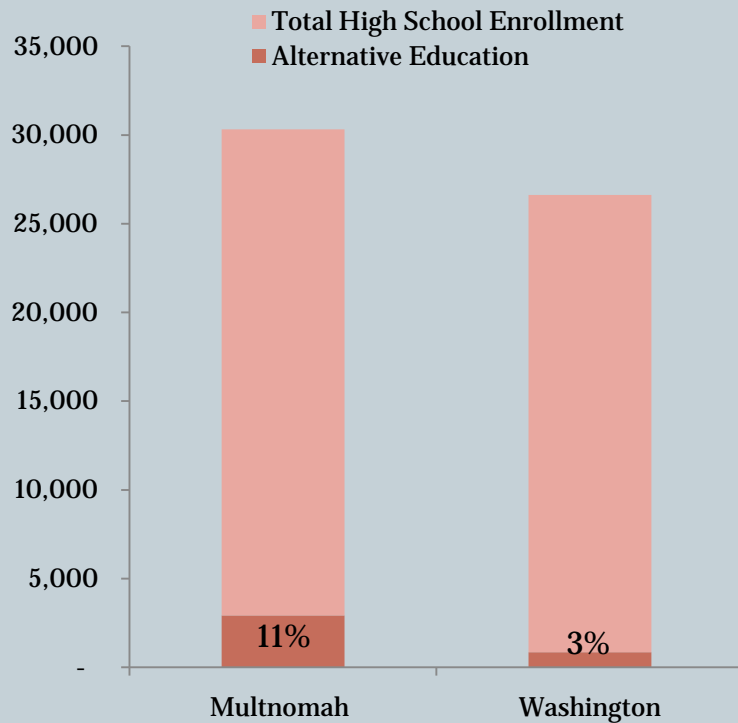
- About **35%** of Multnomah County's 9<sup>th</sup> graders, and **22%** of Washington County's will not graduate on time (within four years of entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade). The average for the region is **29%**.
- About **15%** of Multnomah 9<sup>th</sup> graders, and **6%** of Washington County's will formally withdraw from school within four years (**11%** for the region).
- By the time individuals reach their 20s, about **11%** of the region's residents report not having a **high school diploma** or **GED**.

# 2008-09 High School Enrollment Overview

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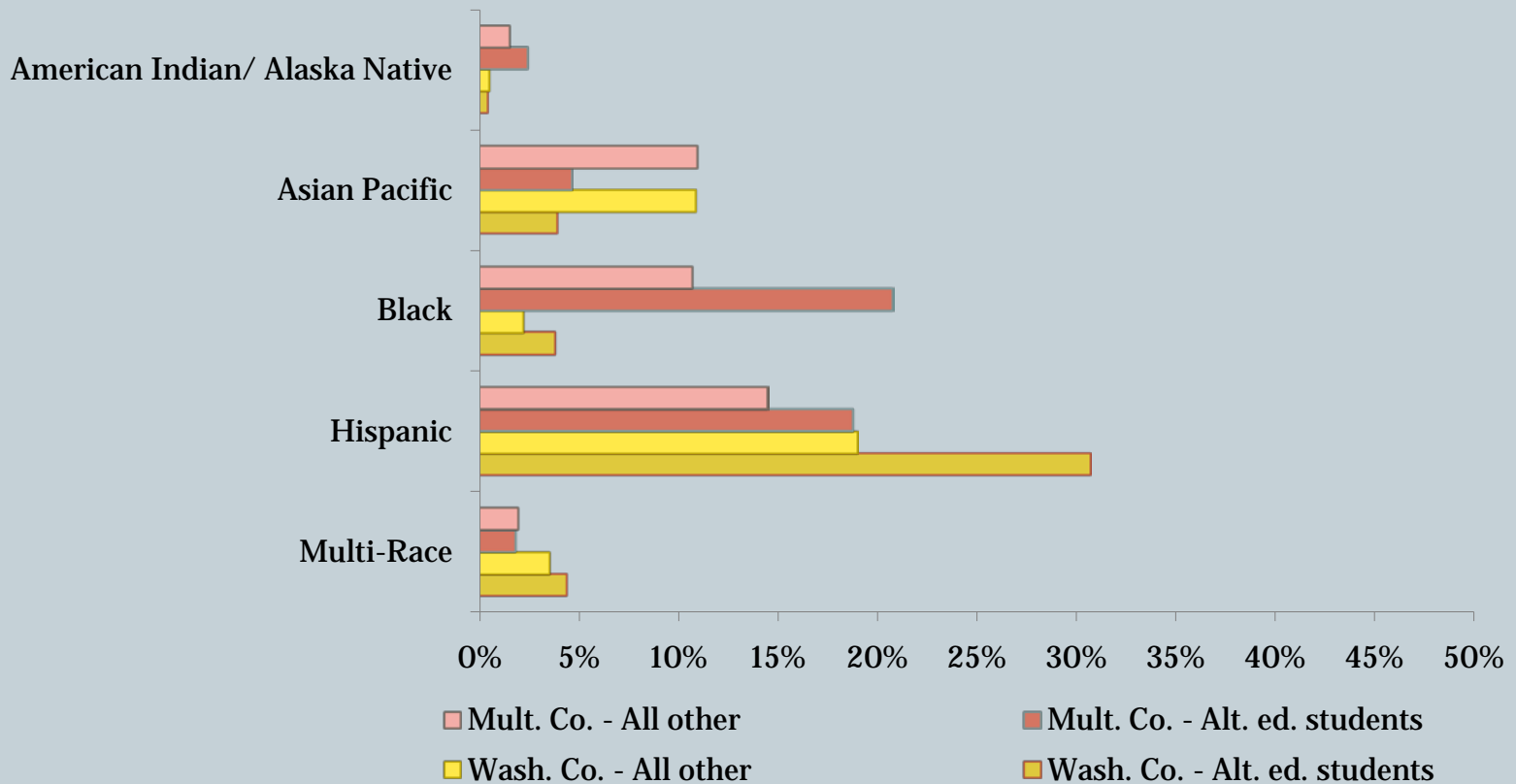
**7% of the region's enrolled students attended alternative school**

**The characteristics of alt. ed. students differ from those of the general population.**



# Youth enrolled in Alternative Education, by race and percentage of total in County program

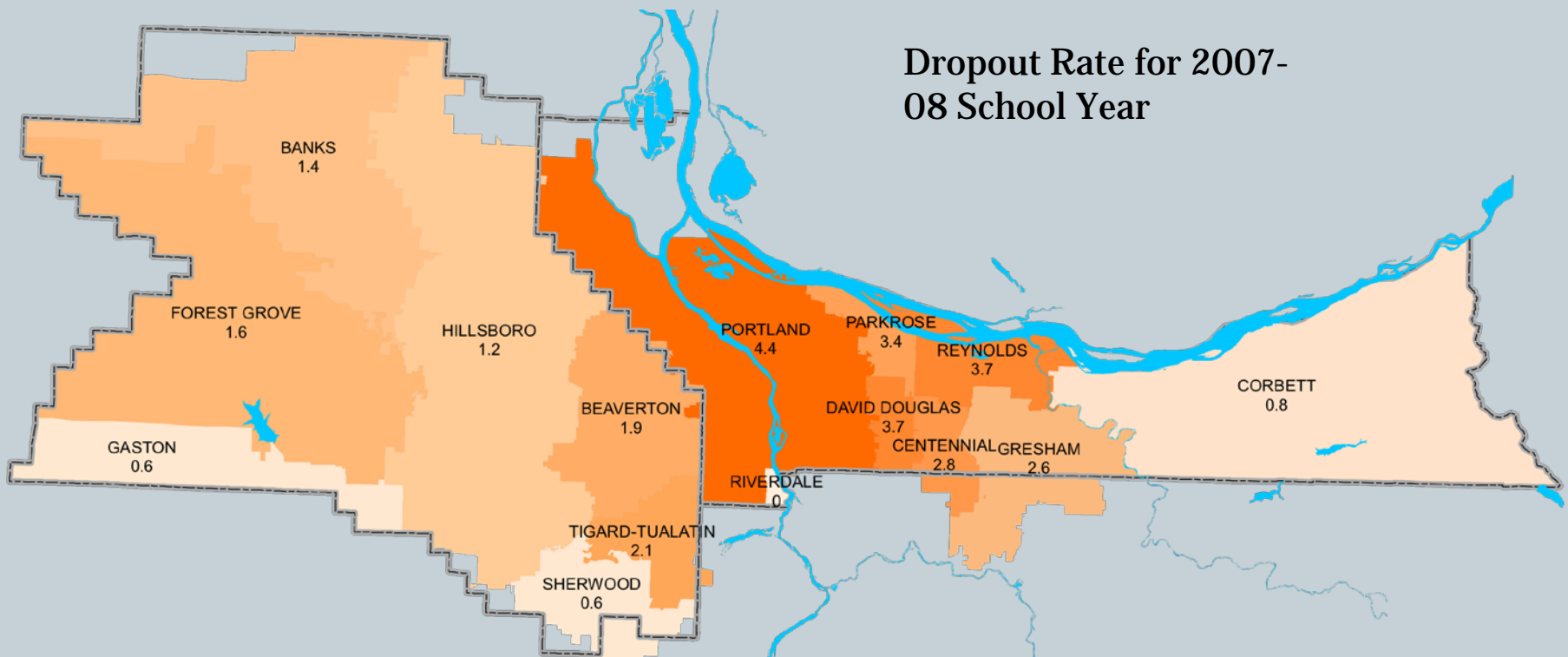
Youth enrolled in alternative education, by race and % of total in County program



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data.

# High School Dropouts by District

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Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data.



# High School Completion by demographic

**53% of ESL students in Multnomah County will not graduate on time**

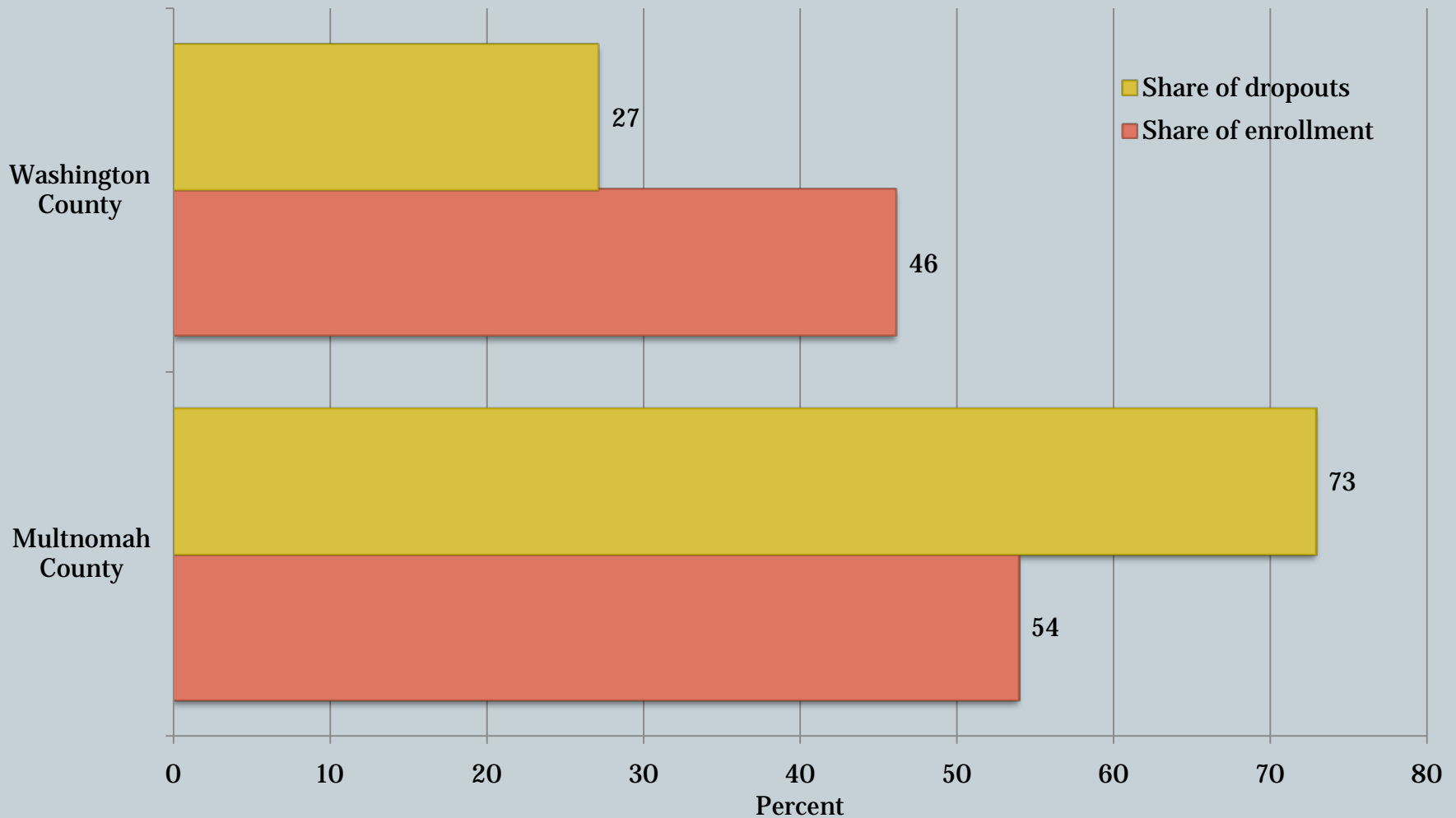
**Students most likely to drop out identify themselves as Hispanic or American Indian/Alaska Native**

Enrollment/Denominator	Multnomah		Washington	
	Drop Out Rate	Graduation Rate	Drop Out Rate	Graduation Rate
All students	3.8	78.5	1.7	90.0
Female	3.3	81.4	1.6	91.1
White	3.1	82.7	1.1	93.2
Non-White	4.8	71.3	2.9	83.2
Enrolled in ESL	8.3	47.4	4.7	66.3
Economically Disadvantaged	4.2	72.1	3.2	75.0
Special education	4.1	62.2	2.1	81.4

	Multnomah		Washington	
	Drop Out Rate	Graduation Rate	Drop Out Rate	Graduation Rate
White	3.1	82.7	1.1	93.2
African American	4.5	70.7	3.2	86.1
American Indian /Alaska Native	5.9	67.8	4.0	76.3
Asian/Pacific	2.5	87.1	0.8	94.0
Hispanic	6.7	59.1	3.6	75.5
Other	4.4	72.2	2.7	84.2

# With enrollments split almost evenly, Multnomah County schools still generate 2/3rds of the dropouts

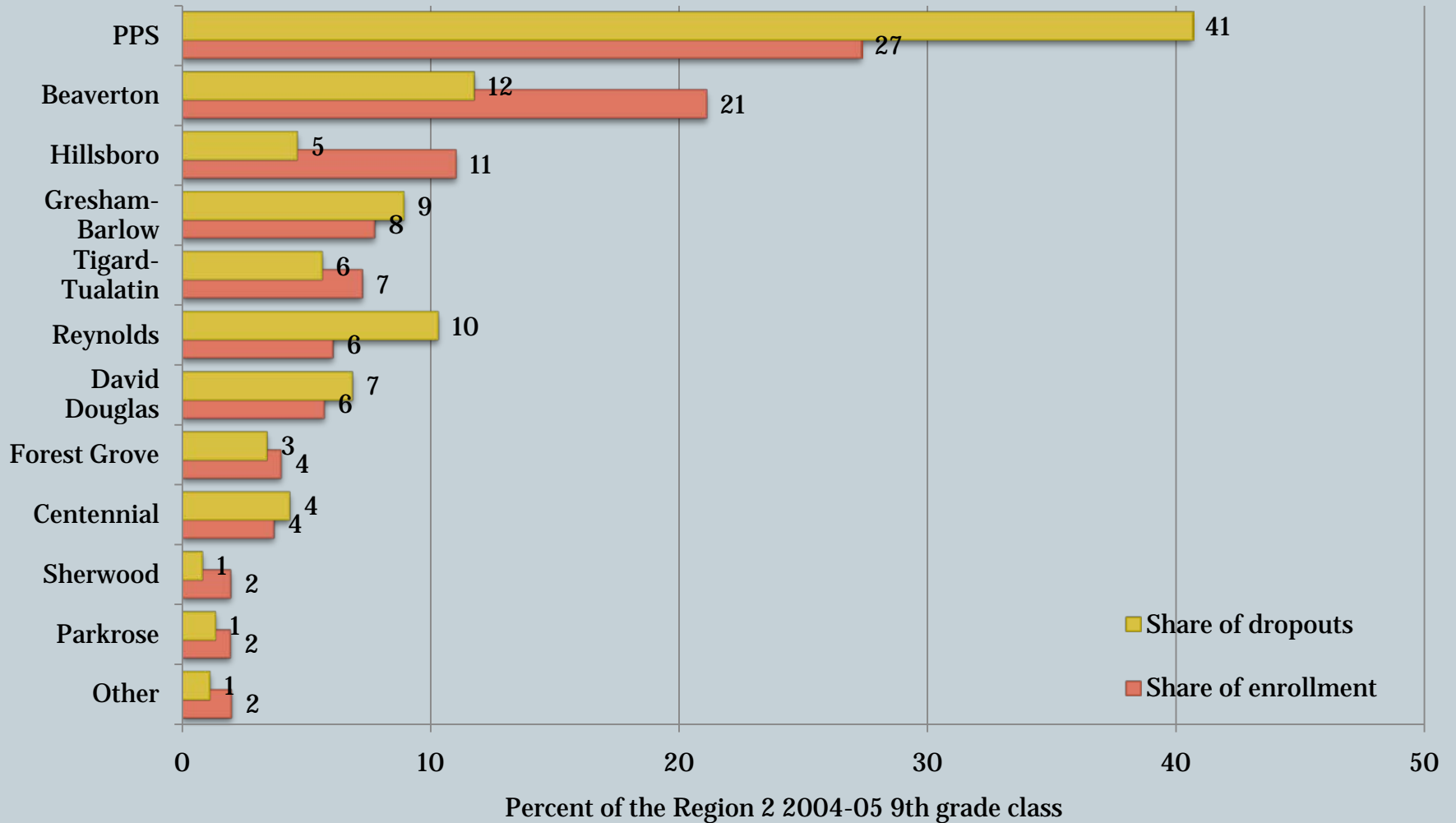
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Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data.

# A district's share of the region's dropouts is often disproportionate to share of enrollment

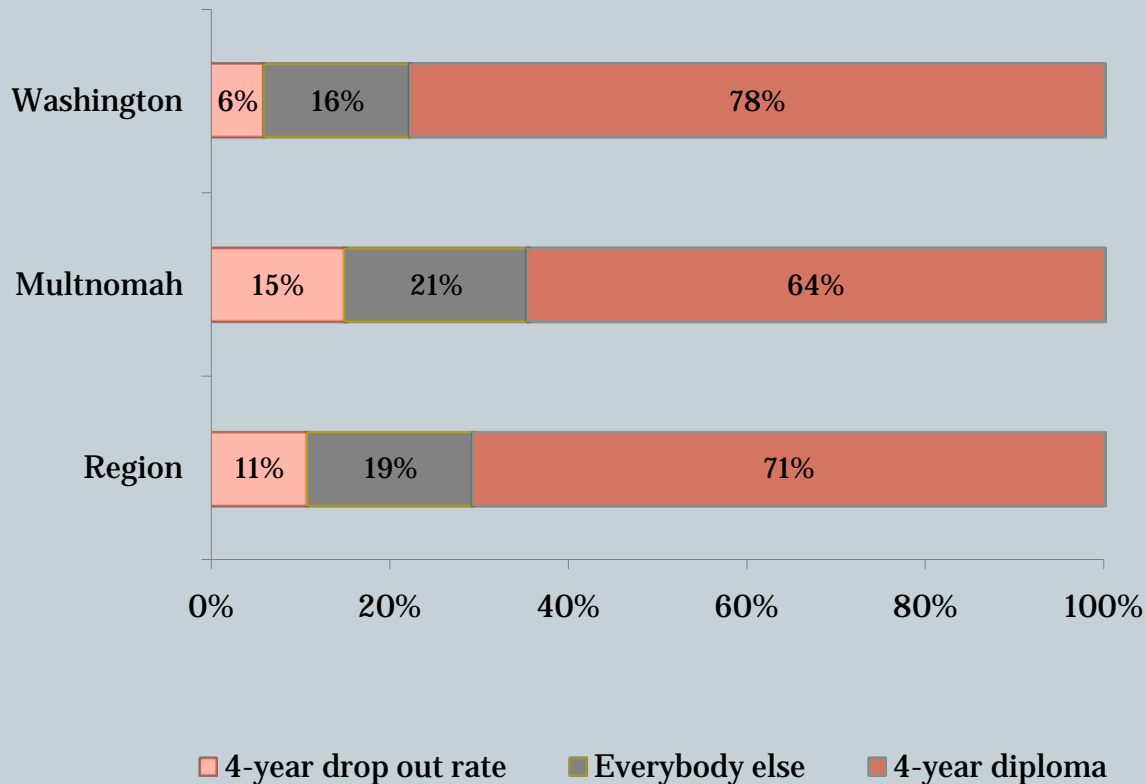
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Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data.

# Cohort Snapshot: High school completion varies by region

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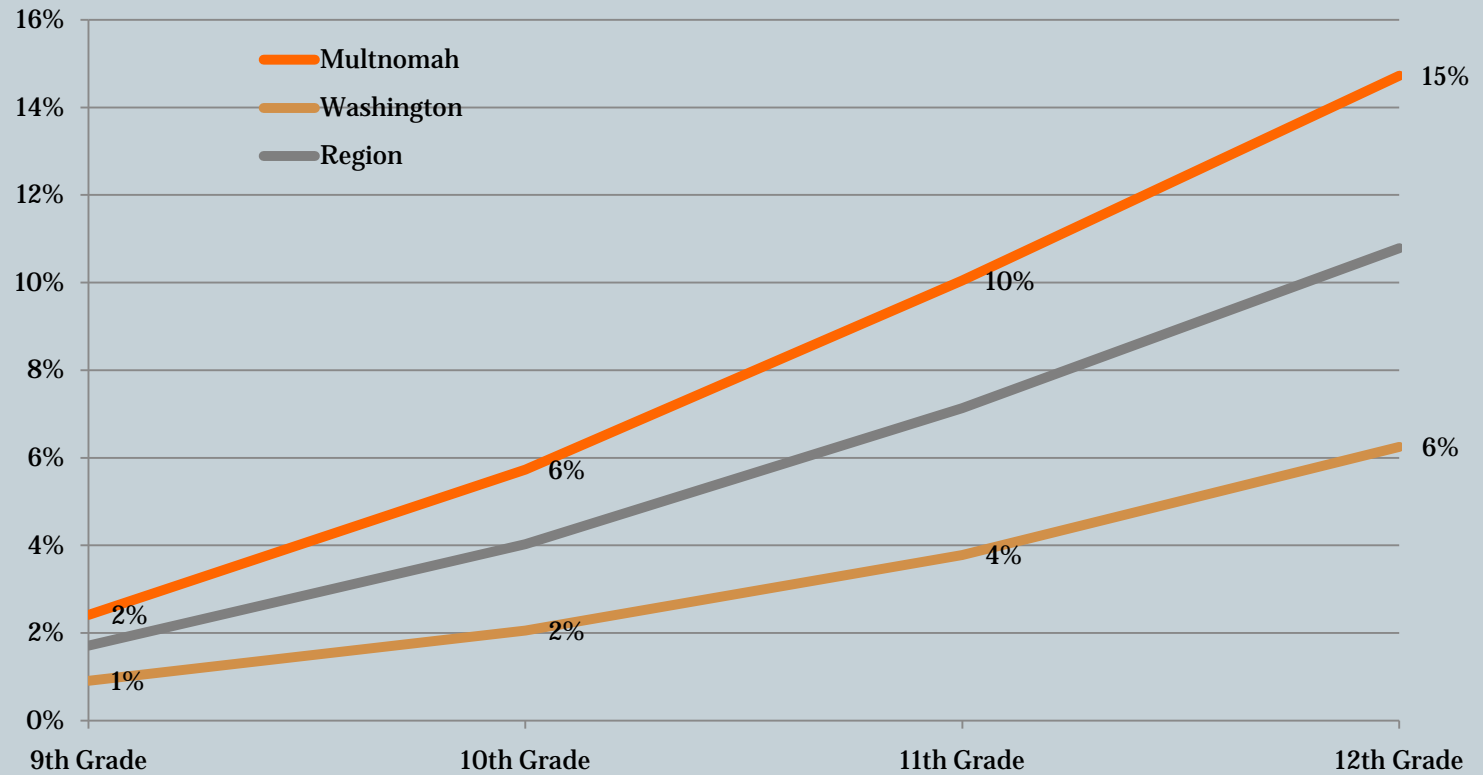


- In Washington County,
  - **4,460 (78%)** received their diploma in four years.
  - **345 (6%)** dropped out of school before graduating
- In Multnomah County,
  - **4,275 (64%)** received their high school diploma in four years
  - **994 (15%)** dropped out of school before graduating

# The dropout rate accelerates over time



## Cumulative dropout rate by grade and county

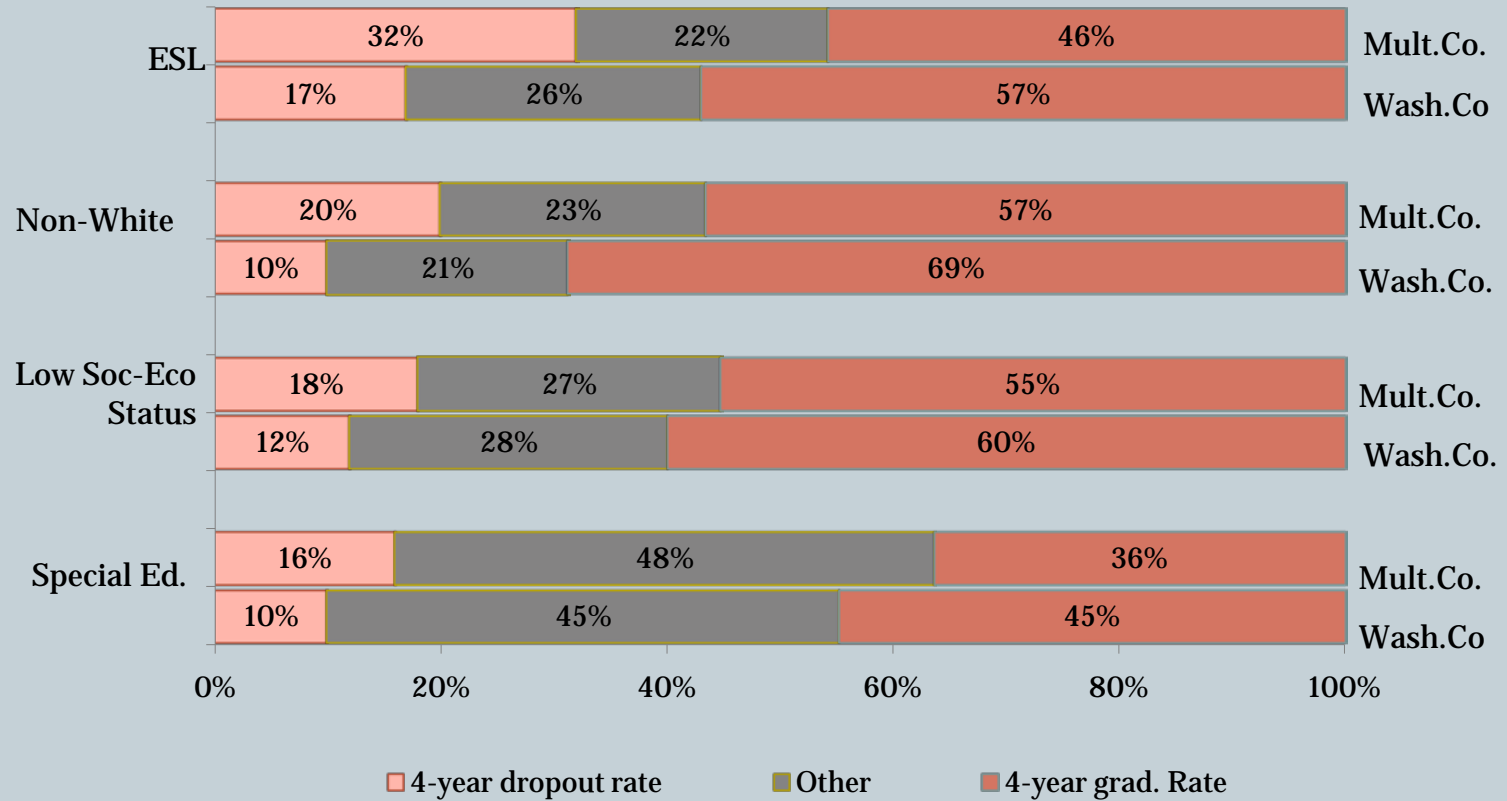


Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data.

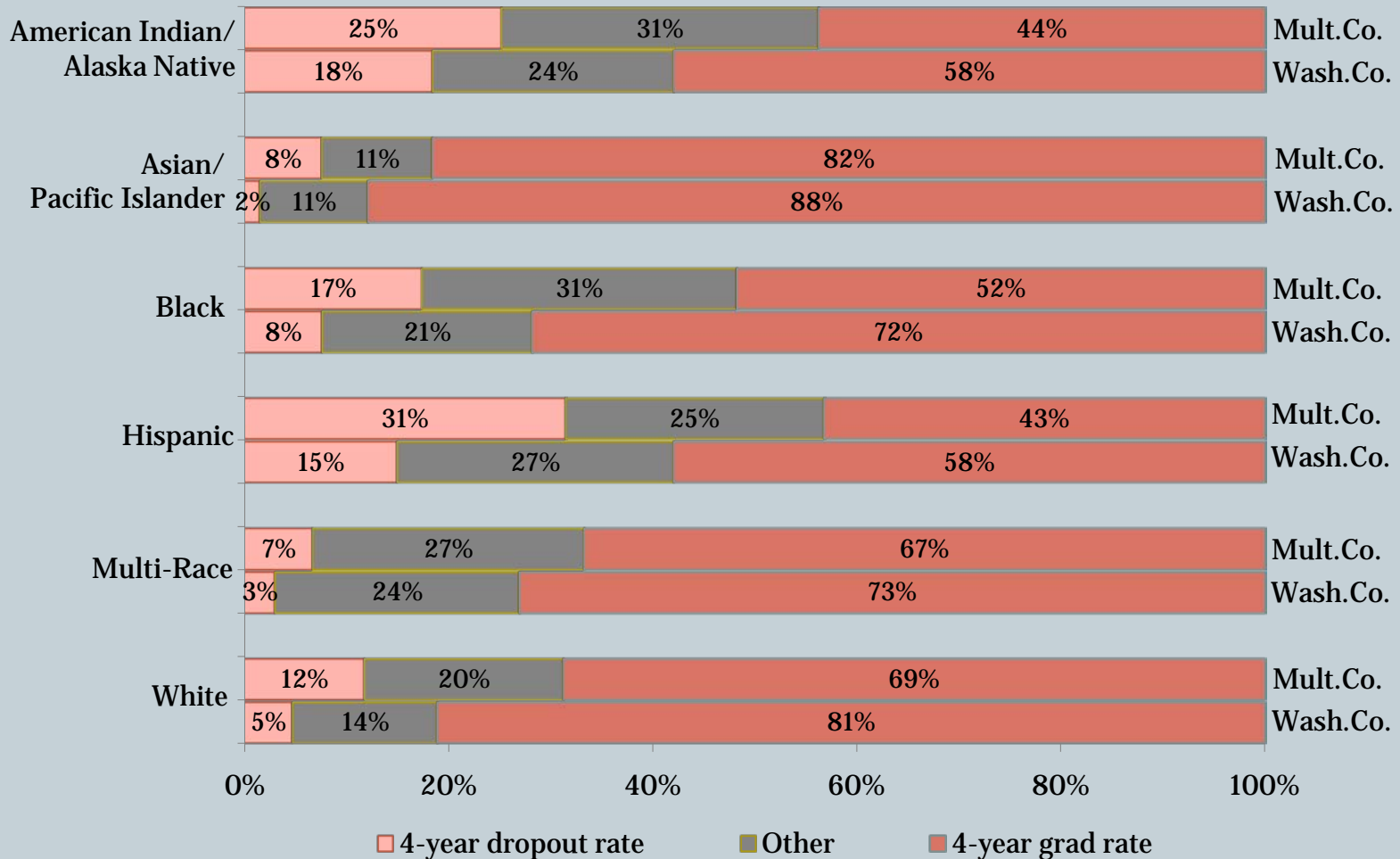
# Cohort Snapshot: High school completion varies by student demographic

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## Class of 2008 Graduation Status



# High School Completion By Characteristic



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data.

# Vulnerable populations increase with the incoming class

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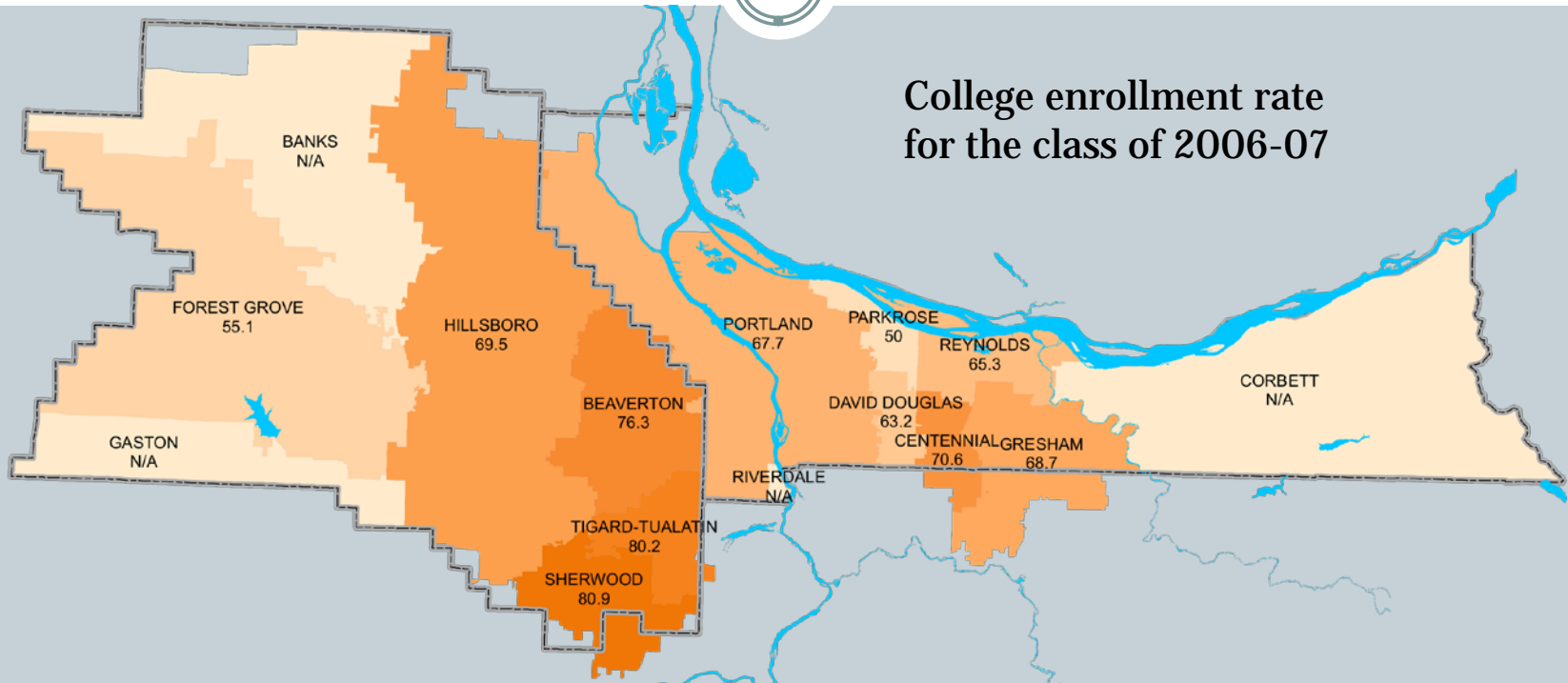
Characteristics in 9th grade	Class of 2008		Class of 2008	Class of 2012
	Mult. Co.	Wash. Co.	Region	Region
ESL	10%	9%	9%	<b>9%</b>
Special education	10%	8%	9%	<b>12%</b>
Low socio- economic status	47%	28%	38%	<b>42%</b>
White	65%	72%	69%	<b>63%</b>
Non-White	35%	28%	31%	<b>44%</b>

- Graduation and dropout rates vary considerably across different populations.
- Compared to the class of 2007-08, the 9<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled are more likely to belong to groups with higher dropout rates.
- These differences have important implications for policymakers.



# Post-secondary Enrollment

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- **73%** of Washington County high school students enroll in college soon after high school. For Multnomah county, just over **65%** enroll.
- Students enrolled in ESL have the lowest rate of college enrollment (**31%**).
- Males (**65%**) are less likely to enroll in college than females (**73%**).
- **44%** of students receiving special education services enrolled in college.
- **Half** of the region's economically disadvantaged students enroll in college.
- White students were **10 percentage points** more likely to continue their education than non-white students.

# So, what does it all mean?

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- The standard definition of youth disconnection misses many individuals that the workforce development system seeks to serve (**e.g., the working poor**) and includes many youth that may not require special services.
- Youth satisfying a more refined definition—**i.e., not enrolled with income <200% FPL**—comprise a diverse population (**workers, the disabled, the able but idle**) that presents a variety of training and education challenges.
- The region does not convert a measurable share of youth from dropout to diploma status: **11%** of individuals in their 20s report not having completed high school, **nearly identical** to the region's four-year dropout rate.
- The characteristics of recent 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohorts suggest **increasing challenges** for policymakers seeking to confronting youth dropout and disconnection.

# Acknowledgements

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**Worksystems, Inc. commissioned ECONWest to conduct this study.**

**Collaborating partners included Mayor Sam Adams' Office and the Portland Schools Foundation.**