

Brain Drain in Maryland: Exploring Student Movement from High School to Postsecondary Education and the Workforce

What do the MLDS data show?

Maryland public high school graduates who enrolled in college¹ *out-of-state*² were less likely to be employed in Maryland³ following college than similar high school graduates who enrolled *in-state* for college. The loss of those high school graduates from the Maryland workforce is described as “brain drain.”

80% Of students who enrolled in *in-state* four-year colleges had post-college employment in Maryland

57% Of students who enrolled in *out-of-state* four-year colleges had post-college employment in Maryland.

Why is this important?

Maryland invests significant funds to educate students in its public schools. One return on that investment is the availability of qualified workers who can fill jobs in critical workforce sectors. Losing students to other states may diminish Maryland’s pool of qualified workers. Further, this study indicates that the students lost to “brain drain” tended to be higher achieving students.⁴

Contextual Information

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics⁵, in 2014 Maryland reported a net loss of 8,890 high school graduates attending four-year degree-granting public institutions, which is the fifth largest net loss among the states.

A 2015 study⁶ using LinkedIn alumni profiles found that 58% of four-year college attendees had relocated to a different metropolitan area than that of their college.

Notes

¹ Students included in this study graduated from a Maryland public high school in 2009, enrolled in a four-year college in 2010, and were no longer enrolled in 2016 (graduated or exited without a degree). This results in a population of 29% of the total public high school graduating class of 2009.

² Nearly half (48%) of the high school graduates who enrolled in a four-year college enrolled in an out-of-state college.

³ Employment in Maryland is determined by the existence of an Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage record. A wage record is present for all workers in jobs for which their employer must participate in filing quarterly UI records. The federal government (including the military), certain non-profit and religious organizations, and private contractors (self-employed individuals) do not participate in quarterly UI filing.

⁴ Of the out-of-state college attendees, those that return to Maryland to work tended to have less positive high school academic indicators (such as test scores and GPA) than those who did not join the Maryland workforce.

⁵ [Digest of Education Statistics 2015](#), see Table 309.30.

⁶ [What colleges do for local economies: A direct measure based on consumption](#)

Next Steps

The MLDS Center is planning on exploring various aspects of this topic. One area for further research is whether specific factors, such as the type of college a student leaves the state to attend (i.e. public or private) or the distance of the school attended has any impact on the likelihood of the students' return to the Maryland workforce. The Center will also look at whether "brain gain" exists among college students from out-of-state who attend college in Maryland and then stay in Maryland for work.

Learn more about this topic by reviewing the MLDS Center research report: [Brain Drain in Maryland: Exploring Student Movement from High School to Postsecondary Education and the Workforce.](#)