



Evaluation Matters

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Results of the Senior Exit Survey, 2020

1. What is the purpose of this report?

This report examines the results of the Senior Exit Survey, which is administered annually to all graduating high school students. The fivefold purpose of the survey is to explore (a) senior's postsecondary plans, (b) the credentials they plan to acquire, (c) the institutions they plan to attend, (d) the fields of study they choose to pursue, and (e) their impressions of senior year during the shutdown of schools.

2. Which populations were targeted for this survey?

All twelfth-grade students enrolled in traditional and charter high schools within the district were targeted to receive the survey, except for those enrolled in special education centers, the educational alternative outreach program, the juvenile justice center, and centers for special instruction.

3. How were the data for this report collected and analyzed?

Data to conduct this analysis were obtained from responses to the Senior Exit Survey, which was administered online via Survey Gold 8.0. The survey was accessed through links provided on the district's main Web page and on the Student Portal between May 1 and June 2, 2020. It may be noted that the administration window for the survey fell within the period of time when schools were closed due to COVID-19, and students were engaged in distance learning via a variety of instructional programs and interaction with teachers via communication applications, such as Teams and Zoom.

Students were generally asked to choose from among prespecified choices presented in a series of drop-down lists. Those who selected "other" were provided with the opportunity to provide open-ended responses, which were then manually assigned into categories. The analysis of the survey data was limited to descriptive statistics. An open-ended item was also provided to allow students to share their experiences during the school closure; the students responses were analyzed using text analysis software Services. Seniors' eligibility to receive a diploma, certificate of completion, or General Education Diploma was determined from the withdrawal code recorded on the district's data warehouse as of July 3, 2020.

4. To what extent did students respond to the survey?

Overall, 80.0% (n=20,080) of the targeted seniors responded to the survey, representing 88.1% of the seniors (n=18,370) who attended traditional schools, and 40.3% of the seniors (n=1,710) who attended charter schools. This rate of return indicates that the results obtained may be generalized to all high school seniors in the M-DCPS; however, it may not fully represent students who failed to engage remotely during distance learning.

5. How did the high school completion status of seniors who responded to the survey differ from that of seniors who did not participate?

Table 1. Comparison of Respondents' and Non-Respondents' High School Completion Status

High School Completion Status	Total Number	Respondents		Non- Respondents	
		n	%	n	%
Eligible to receive a Standard, Special or General Equivalency Diploma	23,679	19,764	98.4	3,915	78.1
Not eligible to receive a diploma or General Equivalency Diploma	1,413	316	1.6	1,097	21.9
Total	25,092	20,080	100.0	5,012	100.0

Note. Seniors' eligibility to receive a diploma or certificate of completion was determined from the withdrawal code recorded on the district's data warehouse as of July, 3 2020.

- Of the seniors who completed the survey, based on their withdrawal code, 98.4% (n=19,764) were eligible to receive a diploma, Certificate of Completion, or General Equivalency Diploma based on their withdrawal code. Only 1.6% (n=316) were not eligible to complete high school.
- Of the seniors who did not complete the survey, 78.1% (n=3,915) were eligible to receive a diploma, Certificate of Completion, or General Equivalency Diploma based on their withdrawal code; while 21.9% (n=1,097) were not eligible to complete high school.

6. What do responding seniors plan to do upon competing high school?

Survey items asked seniors to indicate what they planned to do once they completed college. Table 1 lists the number and percent of diploma-eligible responding seniors who reported each of prespecified pathways.

Table 1. Senior's Postsecondary Plans

Postsecondary Plan	n	%
Responding Seniors		
Enter the workforce, and/or take unspecified coursework	150	0.8
Enter full-time active military service	592	3.0
Earn a certificate or license, but not a degree	905	4.6
Earn an Associate's degree	1,629	8.2
Earn an Associate's degree; and then a Bachelor's, or more advanced degree	6,643	33.6
Earn a Bachelor's, or more advanced degree	7,407	37.5
Haven't decided, unsure, or don't know	2,252	11.4
None of the above	186	1.0
Total	19,764	100.0

- 83.9% (n=16,584) of the diploma-eligible responding seniors planned to further their education by attending a postsecondary educational institution in pursuit of a certificate/license or a degree.
 - 71.1% of the diploma-eligible responding seniors planned to further their education by earning a Bachelor's or higher degree; 37.5% directly and 33.6% by first earning an Associate's degree.
 - 8.2% of the responding seniors eligible to receive a diploma planned to further their education by earning an Associate degree, while 4.6% planned to earn a certificate/license.

- 3.0% (n=592) planned to enter full-time active military service; and 0.8% (n=150) planned to enter the workforce and/or take unspecified coursework.

7. What institutions do seniors plan to attend?

Table 2 separately lists the number and percent of seniors planning to attend selected postsecondary institutions, institutions are grouped by those granting the Bachelor's or higher degree and those that do not.

- Of the responding seniors eligible to receive a diploma who planned to further their education, 92.9% (n=15,743) planned to attend a postsecondary institution that awarded a Bachelor's or more advanced degree, while 3.8% (n=637) planned to attend a postsecondary institution that did not award a Bachelor or more advanced degree.
- Of the responding seniors eligible to receive a diploma who planned to further their education, 44.5% (n=7,387) planned to attend Miami-Dade College, while 17.9% (n=2,963) planned to attend Florida International University.

Table 2. Postsecondary Institutions

Institution	n	%
Awards Bachelor's or more advanced degree		
MIAMI DADE COLLEGE	7,387	44.5
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY	2,963	17.9
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA	599	3.6
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY	447	2.7
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA	413	2.5
BROWARD COLLEGE	288	1.7
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI ^a	260	1.6
BARRY UNIVERSITY ^a	224	1.4
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY	189	1.1
SAINT THOMAS UNIVERSITY ^a	143	0.9
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY ^a	137	0.8
FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY	133	0.8
BETHUNE-COOKMAN UNIVERSITY ^a	96	0.6
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA	87	0.5
VALENCIA COLLEGE	83	0.5
FLORIDA MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY ^a	82	0.5
SANTA FE COLLEGE	82	0.5
DADE MEDICAL COLLEGE ^a	79	0.5
JOHNSON & WALES UNIVERSITY ^{ab}	68	0.4
FULL SAIL UNIVERSITY ^a	49	0.3
FLORIDA NATIONAL COLLEGE ^a	43	0.3
FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY	42	0.3
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY ^{ab}	39	0.2
KEISER UNIVERSITY ^a	39	0.2
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY ^{ab}	37	0.2
ART INSTITUTES ^{ab}	35	0.2
ADVANCED SOFTWARE ANALYSIS ^{ab}	34	0.2
ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY ^b	32	0.2
NEW WORLD SCHOOL OF THE ARTS	32	0.2

(table continues)

Table 2. Postsecondary Institutions, continued

Institution	n	%
Awards Bachelor's or more advanced degree, continued		
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY ^b	31	0.2
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA	30	0.2
EDWARD WATERS COLLEGE ^a	29	0.2
FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ^a	28	0.2
BOSTON UNIVERSITY ^{ab}	26	0.2
COLLEGE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA	24	0.1
DUKE UNIVERSITY ^{ab}	24	0.1
HARVARD UNIVERSITY ^{ab}	23	0.1
LYNN UNIVERSITY ^a	23	0.1
AIR FORCE ACADEMY COLORADO SPRINGS ^b	22	0.1
COLUMBIA COLLEGE ^{ab}	22	0.1
EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTIC ^a	21	0.1
CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY ^{ab}	20	0.1
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY ^{ab}	20	0.1
ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY ^b	19	0.1
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY ^b	19	0.1
SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY ^a	19	0.1
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA ^b	18	0.1
PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY ^b	17	0.1
RINGLING COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN ^a	17	0.1
INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF INDIANA ^b	16	0.1
SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN ^{ab}	16	0.1
Does not award a Bachelor's or more advanced degree		
TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	91	0.5
GEORGE T. BAKER AVIATION	87	0.5
MIAMI LAKES TECHNICAL EDUCATIONAL CENTER	52	0.3
LYNDESEY HOPKINS TECHICAL EDUCATION CENTER	46	0.3
BEAUTY SCHOOLS OF AMERICA ^a	43	0.3
ROBERT MORGAN EDUCATIONAL CENTER	43	0.3
UNIVERSAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE ^{ab}	39	0.2
FLORIDA CAREER COLLEGE ^a	29	0.2
FLORIDA TECHNICAL COLLEGE ^a	24	0.1
POLICE ACADEMY	23	0.1
CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO ^b	22	0.1
HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE	17	0.1
MIAMI-DADE SCHOOLS ADULT	13	0.1
FIREFIGHTING ACADEMY	12	0.1
SHERIDAN TECHNICAL CENTER	12	0.1
OTHER (SPECIFIED)	1,267	7.7
UNSPECIFIED, UNDECIDED, UNCLASSIFIABLE	138	0.8
TOTAL	16,548	100.0

Note. Institutions are public and in Florida unless otherwise marked. Other includes all colleges selected by fewer than 16 students in total.

^a Private non-profit/for profit institution. ^b Out-of-state institution.

8. What fields of study do seniors plan to pursue?

Fields of study as used in this evaluation are defined as the major area of concentration of a postsecondary certificate, license, or degree. Table 3 lists the number and percent of seniors who plan to pursue the following majors.

- Among the responding seniors eligible to receive a diploma who planned to further their education, the most popular field of study was Business, Management, Accounting, Finance, and Support Services, planned by 11.4%; followed by Nursing, planned by 7.1% and Biology, Biochemistry, Biological, and Biomedical Sciences planned by 6.8%.
- Among the responding seniors eligible to receive a diploma who planned to further their education, Engineering, Engineering Technology and Related fields; Criminal Justice, Criminology, and Forensic Science; and Psychology, Cognitive Science and Neuroscience each were chosen by around 5%.

Table 3. Postsecondary Fields of Study

Field of Study	n	%
Business, Management, Accounting, Finance and Support Services	2,257	11.4
Nursing	1,410	7.1
Biology, Biochemistry, Biological and Biomedical Sciences	1,352	6.8
Criminal Justice, Criminology, and Forensic Science	1,019	5.2
Engineering, Engineering Technologies and Related Fields	982	5.0
Psychology, Cognitive Science and Neuroscience	895	4.5
Visual Arts, Performing/Theater Arts, Fine Arts, Graphic Design and Related Fields	796	4.0
Computer Science, Information Systems, Network and Support Services	738	3.7
Medicine, Medical Technology, Radiology and Related Services	605	3.1
Health Professions and Related Programs	601	3.0
Advertising, Marketing, and Public Relations	381	1.9
Law, Legal Professions and Related Fields	336	1.7
Animal Health and Veterinary Science	326	1.6
Education	296	1.5
Dentistry, Dental Hygiene and Related Services	284	1.4
Architecture and Related Services	278	1.4
Journalism, Communication, Communication Technology/Technicians, Film, Broadcasting, Mass Media, Television and Support Services	275	1.4
Sports and Athletic Training	271	1.4
Political Science, Politics and Public Administration	231	1.2
Fire Protection, Administration/Technology, Emergency Medical Technology, Paramedics and Related Fields	208	1.1
Culinary Services, Cosmetology, Hairstyling, Personal and Related Services	207	1.0
Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Support Services	205	1.0
Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians	184	0.9
Aviation, Avionics and Aerospace Technology	181	0.9
Economics	141	0.7
Computer Technology, Drafting, and Support Services	126	0.6
Law Enforcement, Security and Homeland Security and Related Fields	126	0.6
Hospitality and Tourism	123	0.6
Anatomy and Physiology	119	0.6
Apparel Design, Fashion, and Merchandising	119	0.6
Pharmacy and Pharmacology	112	0.6
Physical Sciences, Chemistry and Related Fields	101	0.5
Social Work	101	0.5

(table continues)

Table 3. Postsecondary Fields of Study, continued

Field of Study, continued	n	%
English, English Literature, and Letters	90	0.5
Exercise Science, Physiology	84	0.4
Marine Science and Fisheries	81	0.4
Construction Trades	61	0.3
History	61	0.3
Agriculture, Agriculture Operations, and Related Sciences	59	0.3
Dietetics and Nutrition	47	0.2
Mental Health and Counseling	45	0.2
Mathematics and Statistics	41	0.2
Social Sciences	40	0.2
Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics	33	0.2
Human Services	33	0.2
Liberal Arts and Sciences Studies and Humanities	33	0.2
Natural Resources and Conservation	31	0.2
Science Technologies/Technicians	29	0.1
Computer/Video Game Development/Design, Digital/Graphic Design, and Animation	27	0.1
Conservation and Wildlife	27	0.1
Foreign/International Affairs/Relations	23	0.1
Other (specified)	137	0.8
Unspecified, undecided, and unclassifiable	216	1.3
Total	16,548	100.0

Note. “Other” includes all fields of study selected by fewer than 23 seniors.

9. How did students’ experience their senior year?

The Senior Exit Survey provided respondents with the option of recording their impressions of their senior year during the mandatory shutdown of schools. A total of 44.0% of responding seniors (n=8,855) availed themselves of that opportunity by providing comments which addressed multiple topics. Text analysis software, WordStat8 by Provalis Research, used information theory to identify keywords and phrases, then used two statistical procedures, cluster analysis and factor analysis, to identify categories and group them into factors. As a result of this process, 38 categories were collapsed into 9 themes which were then grouped according to the area they focused on:

- **Instructional Continuity Plan:** Platforms, Portal Attendance, Distance Learning
- **Personal Impact of the Pandemic:** Corona Virus, Social Distancing, Mental/Physical Health
- **Graduation:** Ceremony, Celebration
- **District/School**

Finally, the themes were manually classified as to whether the sentiment was generally positive, negative, or neutral. Table 4 presents the themes, along with the total number of comments addressing the topic and the numbers of “Positive,” “Neutral,” and “Negative” comments, along with a representative example of each type of comment.

Table 4. Summary of Seniors' Comments Regarding the School Closure

Theme	Description	Positive Example	Negative Example
INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY PLAN			
PLATFORMS	Student and teacher interactions. Accessing homework and assignments. Scheduling and functionality.	My school has found various efficient modes of communication in order to stay in contact and also provide a learning environment.	Also, communication with teachers [was] confusing since most of them would have you go to different places to get your work
PORTAL ATTENDANCE	The process of recording attendance and the accuracy of the system	the county has put a lot of effort to make sure that students are able to get their attendance and education despite the circumstances.	The current attendance feature has given many students absences [despite] doing work and just forgetting to sign in.
DISTANCE LEARNING	Student's overall perception of the distance learning experience.	Distance learning [has] been fine, I haven't had any problems with the learning the material because teachers have been so helpful.	Distance learning has been a waste of time and unneeded stress, i can't learn off of a computer ... i need to be in a classroom setting...
PERSONAL IMPACT OF PANDEMIC			
CORONA VIRUS	The effect of coronavirus on schoolwork and family.	Although my senior year has been cut short by coronavirus. I choose to be optimistic and I have decided to take this time being spent on home to further plan my future out more carefully while completing my online work assigned by my teachers.	Coronavirus has brought a downfall to my grades. I can't learn if I'm not in a school environment because I get unmotivated and my household is not a quiet environment. This virus tremendously [affected] my grades.
SOCIAL DISTANCING	The effect of social distancing and/or distance learning on schoolwork.	As schools were closed social distance learning helped give me time on catching up on any assignments that I had.	Due to social distancing, I have not enjoyed life and have not learned anything. I feel like I will be attending college unprepared.
MENTAL/PHYSICAL HEALTH	The effect of the shutdown on health and the pros and cons of the tradeoffs of the District's policies.	Senior activities [are being cancelled] because we are in the middle of a pandemic. Everything that needs to be done to protect our health and ensure our safety is being done, and for that I thank you.	I'm not getting the proper education. I've lost motivation to excel in my schoolwork and my mental health has hit an all-time low

(table continues)

Table 4. Summary of Seniors' Comments Regarding the School Closure, Continued

Theme	Description	Example	Example
GRADUATION			
CEREMONY	Walking the stage and getting a diploma.	Hopefully Every Senior Get A Chance to walk across the stage [this year] because we deserve it.	That one really hit deep for me because I won't be walking on and off that stage with my diploma in hand with my close friends and fellow classmates with my family watching me proudly.
CELEBRATION	Prom, Grad Bash, and other events	We all wanted to go to Grad Bash and prom, but unfortunately school was cancelled, so yeah its being hard but we got through it together.	The fact we won't even experience a prom, grad bash, and not even an actual graduation is just pathetic . . . but since it wasn't your senior year none of you Administrators actually cared enough to do something.
DISTRICT & SCHOOL			
	Attitude toward school experience and district response to the pandemic. Testimonials.	Miami-Dade [you're] doing great with all the precautions. Saving a lot of people to have a long lasting life. Thanks for the services that your bringing to the people.	In my opinion, the way the Miami-Dade school district has handled this situation was very poorly planned and felt like a last minute decision. The teachers along with the students were not properly trained on how to use the system . . .

- **Instructional Continuity Plan** – Comprised of three themes (Platforms, Portal Attendance, and Distance Learning) and accounting for the greatest number of comments, this focus area mainly concerned the specific implementation and functionality of the remote learning experience.
 - **Platforms:** 66.7% of the seniors’ comments regarding the instructional platforms were negative. They reported difficulties using multiple platforms and the need for training in how to access and use. Positive comments about platform use cited success with Edmodo and interactions with teachers on Zoom and Edmodo.
 - **Portal Attendance:** 90% of the seniors’ comments were negative with regard to taking attendance via the portal, noting the inconvenience and having parents called to report non-attendance when students had been actively engaged in distance learning. Students in dual enrollment noted not being able to log on.
 - **Distance Learning:** 67.7 % of the seniors’ responses involving the distance learning experience were negative. Some students viewed distance learning as a positive experience, given the circumstances, and noted that teachers and counselors did a great job. However most said distance learning was difficult because teachers assigned too much work, with little collaboration between subject areas. One student noted that “Distance learning minimizes motivation while maximizing stress.”
- **Personal Impact of the Pandemic** – Comprised of three themes (Coronavirus, Social Distancing, and Mental/Physical Health), this focus area mainly concerned students’ personal experiences with the pandemic. Specific emphasis was placed on how isolation impacted their education and their wellbeing.
 - **Coronavirus:** 85% of the students’ comments were negative, many of which suggested that the seniors felt “cheated” by the Coronavirus pandemic, and that their futures were at risk. This category spanned issues of health, fourth quarter grades, and dealing with issues at home. The Coronavirus was reported to have had a large impact on families in general. Students stated that there was too much going on at home to learn effectively and that students had to work and/or take care of younger siblings and help them with Zoom. Some families had even lost their homes during this period. On the positive side, some felt that the experience had made them stronger, more independent and allowed them to practice time management strategies. One student summarized the impact that the Coronavirus had on his life as this. “I felt optimistic . . . there’s nothing I can’t conquer.”
 - **Social Distancing:** 59.38 % of the senior’s comments on social distancing were negative, with many students reporting both negative and positive aspects. Of the seniors who stated that social distance was entirely a negative experience, many used descriptors such as terrible, isolating, and emotionally difficult. Those who felt social distancing had both negative and positive aspects stated that although it was difficult, teachers made it bearable by being easily accessible through emails and other school apps. Students reported being less distracted and able to focus on their grades and understand more of what they were doing
 - **Mental/Physical Health:** 80% of the seniors’ comments regarding mental and physical health issues were negative. Students felt that not being able to see their teachers and other students had taken a toll on their mental health, and many cited increased stress. Another issue noted throughout many of the students’ comments was that more mental health support was needed, including conversations about mental health with advocates, school counselors, or from individuals with mental illness who had survived the disease. Many

students believed that offering support groups, a “mental health convention”, and other resources for student connections would have made a big difference in helping students feel less isolated during these times. Most, if not all, of the comments that were related to students’ physical health stated that students preferred online learning until it was safe. Students did indicate that interactions with their teachers online helped in this area.

- **Graduation** – Comprised of two themes (Ceremony and Celebration), this focus area mainly concerned the students’ reactions to the rite of passage represented by the experience of “commencement.”
 - **Ceremony:** Unsurprisingly, 91% of the seniors’ comments regarding the lack of a graduation ceremony were negative. Seniors overwhelmingly said they wanted to walk across the stage to receive their diploma at the end of their senior year. Overall, seniors just regretted not being able to share the moment of graduation with their classmates and family members.
 - **Celebration:** The celebration theme focused on the many other events normally associated with the senior year: Grad Bash, signing yearbooks, prom, senior dinners, and other events; 80.6% of the senior’s comments regarding this theme were also negative. Respondents reported feeling a collective sadness, waiting for prom and graduation, all their lives. Some focused on the financial aspect, wanting refunds for the expenditures they had made. Students who provided positive comments noted the Zoom graduation ceremony, and that some schools had given them graduation lawn signs. One student wrote, “Sometimes we can’t have what we want, so we have to make the best out of the situation. It’s the attitude that counts. Admire the work of the teachers helping us to graduate. . . .”
- **District and School** – A stand-alone construct mainly concerned seniors’ attitudes toward the school district. It concerned both the District’s response to the crisis and more broadly, the totality of their educational experience.
 - Unlike every other theme, the majority (52.7%) of the seniors’ responses regarding the District and their school were positive. Seniors who mentioned individual schools in their response tended to thank teachers by name and stated that their teachers pushed them to understand that they were working toward a career during this time. Individual schools were credited with having done an excellent job, keeping everyone informed through updates, and pushing students to do their best. Regarding the District, seniors stated that M-DCPS tried to do everything they could to give everyone devices and that distance learning was productive in many respects and put safety first.

10. What are the principal conclusions of this report?

This report presented the results of the 2020 administration of the Senior Exit Survey, which explored the seniors’ postsecondary plans; the certificate, licenses, or degrees they plan to acquire; the institutions they plan to attend; and the fields of study they choose to pursue. A total of 80% of seniors completed the survey, of which 98.4% were eligible to graduate. Of those students, 83.9% plan to acquire a certificate, license, or degree, with over 71.1% plan to earn a Bachelor’s or higher degree, either directly or after first earning an Associate’s degree. Most seniors pursuing a certificate, license, or degree, plan to attend an institution in Florida. Among the responding seniors eligible to receive a diploma, Business Management Accounting/Finance was the most popular choice of major, followed by Nursing and Biological Sciences.

Seniors' comments regarding their experiences during the closure of school due to the coronavirus were documented and reflected their regret at missing out on all the things normally associated with their senior year. Their responses touched on the distance learning experience, the mental and physical toll they experienced personally, as well as the emotional and financial difficulty of missing out on the traditional celebrations. On a positive note, they also acknowledged the support of their schools and teachers throughout their educational journey, and during this most recent challenging time.