Circle School Graduates in 2015
College Attendance, Academic Degrees, and Occupations
INTRODUCTION

From families spanning the income spectrum, we find that Circle School graduates excel in traditional ways such as college attendance and academic degrees. We are pleased to present those findings here.

The Circle School proposes that the most important purposes of primary and secondary schooling are about launching children to personal fulfillment and engagement in society. With these aims in mind, The Circle School’s program is built on children’s immersion in self-direction and community. The social value and natural appeal of traditional academic pursuits tend to emerge and flourish when adults are not forceful or frantic in pressing academic study on children. The great variety of human intelligences also flourishes in children, extending beyond academics and narrow curriculum into many domains of human achievement and possibility.

We would rather measure and be judged by our graduates’ self-actualization, life satisfaction, achievement in self-chosen domains, and productive engagement in culture, community, society, and technology. Alas, it’s easier to measure college attendance, academic degrees, and income. And alas, if we measure what we’d like to, there are few accepted standards or averages to compare.

The Circle School was founded in 1984, licensed by Pennsylvania’s Department of Education for a few dozen students, pre-school through 8th grade. In 1998 the school added high school grades 9 through 12. Enrollment is currently about 70 students.

As of June 2015 the school has graduated 78 students from high school, the oldest of whom are 35 years old. This study reports on those graduates: their college attendance, degrees earned, and occupations.

Data are drawn from an online survey, personal communications with graduates, review of graduates’ social media and other online presence, data from a 2008 study of graduates, school records, and (when unable to communicate directly with graduates) communications with graduates’ family and friends.

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July 2015

On the cover: Depiction of Circle School graduates’ job categories, occupations, and avocations. Size indicates frequency of occurrence.
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Appendix A: Circle School Graduates in 78 Blurbs
**Economically democratic**

**Household Income Profile: Region vs The Circle School**

- The income profile of Circle School families matches that of the school’s service area.¹
- The school achieves its aim to be financially available to most families.

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¹ School profile drawn from 324 Circle School financial aid applications processed by Flowers & Flowers CPA. Regional profile drawn from US Census Bureau household income data by ZIP/ZCTA code for the area within a 30-minute drive of the school, from *Enrollment Dynamics & Student Demographics*, The Circle School (2008).
Unusual among private schools

Household Income Profile: The Circle School vs U.S. Private Schools

- Private schools generally serve higher-income families.
- Families with income over $100,000 make up 28% of private school families nationwide,\(^2\) compared with 10% of Circle School families.\(^3\)
- The Circle School demonstrates feasibility of affordable democratic education.


\(^3\) School profile drawn from 324 Circle School financial aid applications processed by Flowers & Flowers CPA.
Young alumni

Current Age of Circle School Graduates

- The Circle School’s oldest graduates are 35 years old.
- The school was founded in 1984 and added high school grades in 1998.
Beating the averages

College Attendance by Household Income

- Circle School graduates attend college at rates greater than national averages.\(^5\)

\(^4\) Circle School data represent individual family incomes in each graduate’s final year at The Circle School.

**High college attendance**

**College Attendance by Years at The Circle School**

- The longer you stay, the more likely you’ll go.
- 91% attended college, among those who attended The Circle School 8+ years.
- 84% attended college after 4 years or more at The Circle School.\(^6\)
- For comparison: 60% of 18- to 34-year-old Americans have attended college\(^7\), and 59% of Americans 25 years old and up.\(^8\)

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\(^6\) Ignores unknowns. If you assume all unknowns did not attend college, the figure is 78%.


\(^8\) US Census Bureau, Community Population Survey 2014, *Table 2, Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Over, by Selected Characteristics*. Same download as above.
Circle School graduates 25 years and over hold more Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctoral degrees than Americans 25 years and over. ¹⁰

Overall, 53 to 62% of Circle School graduates 25 years and over hold at least one degree, compared with 42% of Americans 25 years and over. ¹¹

Chart includes only degrees actually conferred. 21% of Circle School graduates are currently primarily occupied as students pursuing degrees that are NOT counted here, including two more PhD candidates.

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9 If you ignore the 7 unknowns, Circle School figures are slightly higher in every category: 10% Associate’s, 33% Bachelor’s, 10% Master’s, 8% Doctoral or Professional.

¹⁰ US Census Bureau, Community Population Survey 2014, Table 1, Educational Attainment of the Population 18 Years and Over, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin. Downloaded July 23, 2015, from http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/education/data/cps/2014/tables.html

¹¹ US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 2014, Table 2, Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Over, by Selected Characteristics. Downloaded July 27, 2015 from same URL as above. Circle School figure is 62% if you ignore the unknowns, or 53% if you assume none of the unknowns have any degrees.
94% of graduates are employed or in school (or both), 4% are full-time parents, and 2% are unemployed or out of the labor pool.

At 13%, the rate of self-employment is greater than American self-employment (estimated variously from 6.6% to 10.2%).
From school to entrepreneurship

Employment Status by Age, Graduates who attended 4+ years

- The number in school decreases with age.
- Self-employment increases with age, and is remarkably high in the two oldest groups.
- High self-employment has always been apparent among Circle School families, around 25% in the most recent school year.
With and without college degree

Job Category

With college degree

- Science & Technology: 33%
- Medical: 15%
- Community & Social Work: 7%
- Government & Public Affairs: 11%
- Government & Public Affairs: 11%
- Arts & Entertainment: 8%
- Education & Childcare: 11%
- Hospitality & Retail: 4%

Represents all 27 graduates with college degree, whose occupation is known.

No college degree

- Student: 20%
- Hospitality & Retail: 22%
- Other Skilled Labor: 8%
- Arts & Entertainment: 8%
- Manufacturing & Distribution: 19%
- Education & Childcare: 6%
- Sports & Recreation: 6%

Represents all 37 graduates not known to have a college degree, whose occupation is known.
Even without a degree

Occupations & Categories, Graduates with No College Degree

Includes all 37 graduates not known to have a college degree, whose occupation is known. Size indicates frequency.

- Individual occupations:
  
  Apprentice Lab Technician
  Arcade Operator
  Auto Mechanic & Ecodesign Consultant
  Biohacking & Cryptography
  Bouncer
  Chef
  Cook
  Cook
  Dishwasher
  DIY Audio Equipment Kit Assembler
  Full-time Mom
  Full-time Mom
  Full-time Mom
  Home Childcare Provider
  Job Corps Training
  Martial Arts Studio Owner
  Model & Dancer
  Nanny
  Organic Farm Intern

  Painter
  Restaurant Hostess
  Retail Clerk
  Student
  Student
  Student
  Student
  Student
  Tabletop Game Designer
  Trucking Company Dispatcher
  Unemployed
  Utility Person (Kitchen)
  Video Camera Operator
  Warehouse Manager
  Warehouse Packer
  Warehouse Packer
  Warehouse Packer
With degree

Occupations & Categories, Graduates with College Degrees

Includes all 27 graduates known to have a college degree, whose occupation is known. Size indicates frequency.

- Individual occupations:
  - Budget Analyst
  - Business Manager
  - Communications Coordinator
  - Community Youth Organizer
  - Computer Technician
  - Consultant (IT/Management)
  - Data Analyst
  - Engineer
  - ESL Teacher
  - Graphic Artist
  - Licensed Social Worker
  - Nurse
  - Nurse
  - Nurse
  - PhD Candidate
  - PhD Candidate
  - Photo Editor
  - Physician
  - Programmer
  - Project Manager
  - Restaurant Manager
  - Scientist
  - Software Engineer
  - Student
  - Student
  - Student
  - Web Developer & Programmer
### Colleges Attended By Circle School Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allegheny College</td>
<td>Harcum College</td>
<td>Slippery Rock University</td>
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<tr>
<td>American University</td>
<td>Harrisburg Area Community College</td>
<td>Temple University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arizona State University</td>
<td>Harvard University Extension School</td>
<td>Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Babson College</td>
<td>Indiana University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Thomas Edison State College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bard College</td>
<td>Institute for Social Ecology</td>
<td>Tidewater Community College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bennington College</td>
<td>International Language Institute</td>
<td>Union Theological Seminary</td>
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<td>Brown University</td>
<td>Lebanon Valley College</td>
<td>Universität Heidelberg</td>
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<td>Bucknell University</td>
<td>Marlboro College</td>
<td>University of Colorado</td>
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<td>Central Pennsylvania College</td>
<td>McDaniel College</td>
<td>University of Maryland University College</td>
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<td>Community College of Vermont</td>
<td>Millersville University</td>
<td>University of North Dakota</td>
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<td>Culinary Institute of America</td>
<td>Montgomery College</td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>Old Dominion University</td>
<td>University of Pittsburgh</td>
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<td>Duke University</td>
<td>Pennsylvania State University</td>
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<td>Prescott College</td>
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<td>Edmonds Community College</td>
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<td>University of Virginia</td>
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<td>Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Saint John's College</td>
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<td>Sarah Lawrence College</td>
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### Other Colleges To Which Circle School Graduates Have Been Admitted

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<td>Drexel University</td>
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<td>George Washington University</td>
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<td>Goucher College</td>
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<td>Harvard Divinity School</td>
<td>University of Arizona</td>
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<td>Johns Hopkins University</td>
<td>Wilson College</td>
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12 Includes all post-secondary degree programs