

OUR MISSION

Changing lives through the power of work

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The MERS Goodwill Excel Centers continue to transform lives across Missouri. While our 2023-2024 annual report demonstrates our impact statewide, each student we serve has a unique story and we are privileged as Excel staff members to be part of their journey.



Dr. Robyn Wiens
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Our Excel Centers educate adults, 21 years and older. They come to us ready for another chance at earning their high school diploma, often finding us by word-of-mouth from a friend—often a past graduate—or a relative.

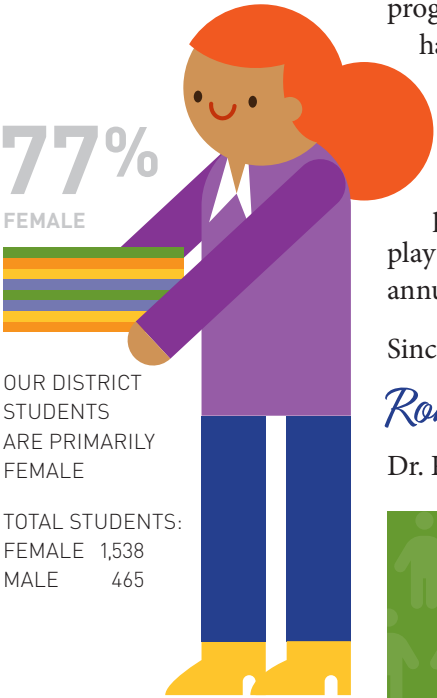
We are an accredited, in-person learning program that offers a traditional diploma, not a GED. All our students are assigned a Life Coach, who guides their path through Missouri’s graduation requirements and addresses barriers impacting their school experience. We also have College and Career Readiness Specialists who help students prepare their runway toward further education or success in the labor market. Our students have opportunities to earn dual college credit and/or Industry Recognized Credentials (IRCs). In addition, we have daycares at all our campuses so parents can attend classes, both day and evening, with peace of mind. We are proud to be able to provide this life-changing program and support system free of charge to our students.

This report provides some in-depth information regarding our annual outcomes and our progress. At the time of publication, we were preparing for our winter round of graduations.

We love to tell people about the transformative work we do in our schools. Our Student Ambassadors enjoy giving tours to visitors and sharing their personal experiences with our program. Our School Directors’ compassion and relentless support for ensuring our students have the opportunity to cross the stage and receive their diplomas is infectious. Please let us know if you’d like to schedule a campus visit to learn more.

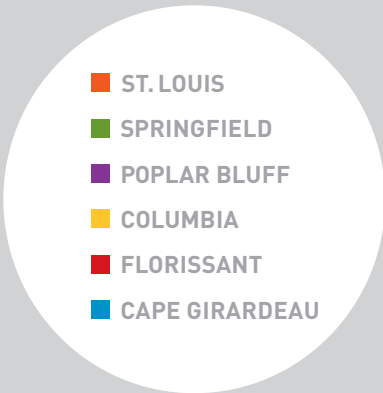
Lastly, we appreciate the support from our Board of Directors, our Missouri legislators, our community partners, and all our key stakeholders. With their collective efforts, our program celebrated its 6th birthday this year. We are eager to share how our Excel Centers play a role in MERS Goodwill’s Circle of Hope. Thanks for taking the time to read about our annual outcomes.

Sincerely,
Robyn Wiens
Dr. Robyn Wiens



TOTAL EXCEL CENTER GRADUATES THROUGH 2023-2024



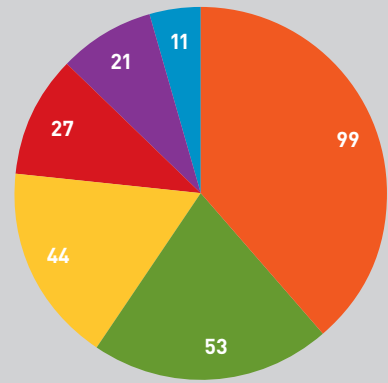


AVERAGE STUDENT AGE

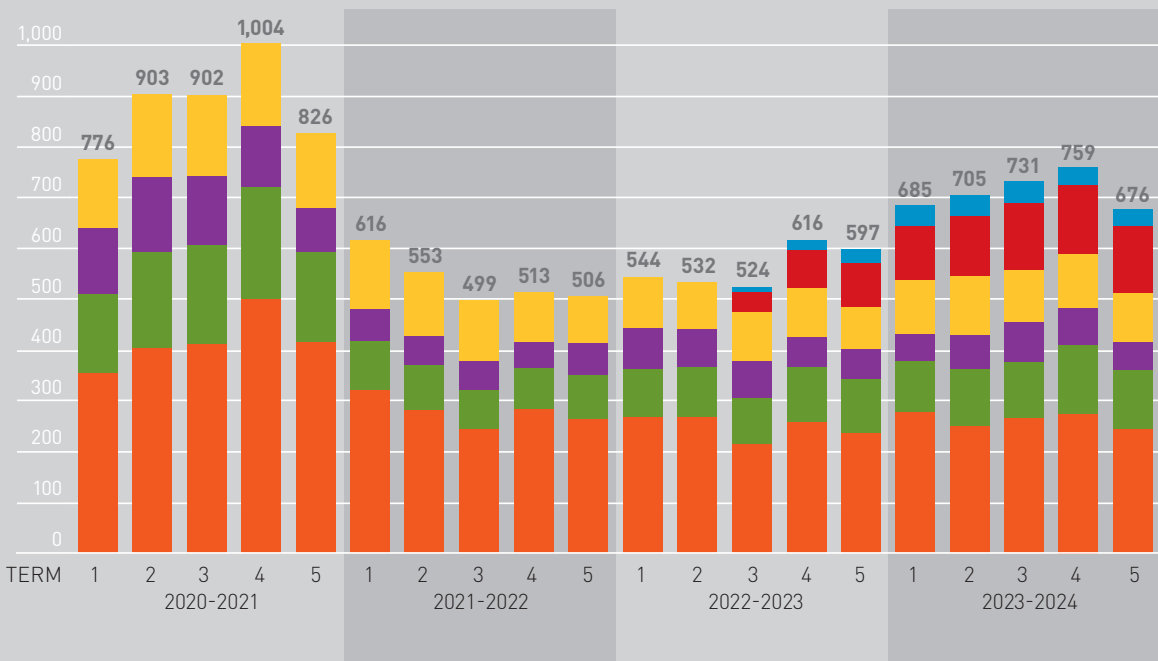
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TOTAL GRADUATES 2023-2024
255 STUDENTS, BY SCHOOL

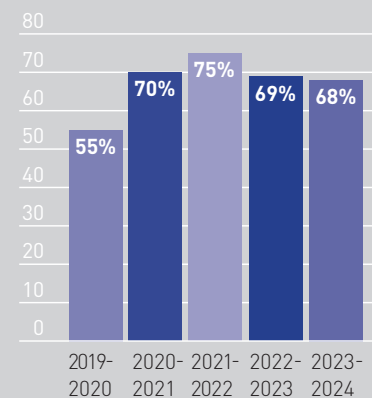


ENROLLED BY TERM AND SCHOOL
NUMBER OF STUDENTS



STUDENT PERSISTENCE RATE THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR
PERCENT OF STUDENTS

Our goal is for 75% of students who haven't yet graduated, to continue their education from term to term.



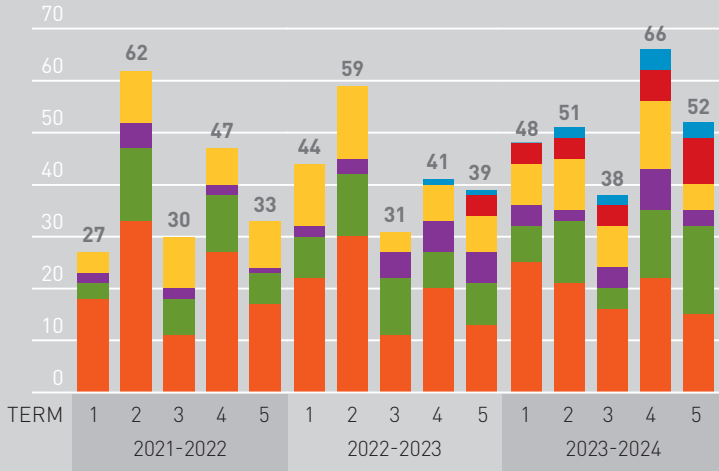
The Goodwill Excel Centers are a different model.

We meet with prospective students, age 21 and older, and discuss their barriers, work schedules, family responsibilities, past high school credits, career goals, and college aspirations. We look at high school transcripts to determine how many of the 24 credits required by Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) they have completed. We administer reading, math, writing, and vocational interest tests to determine the student's current skills and we develop a plan to help the student complete their degree. Classes

are taught by Missouri Certified Teachers, are typically classroom based, and students can sign up for as few as one class or as many as six classes per term. We are a year-round school with five terms of approximately eight weeks each. Classes are available in the morning, afternoon, and evening so that adults can attend school around their work and family responsibilities. We know that child care is one of the major barriers to completing school so we provide free childcare on site for children up to 12 years old.

GRADUATES BY TERM AND SCHOOL

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

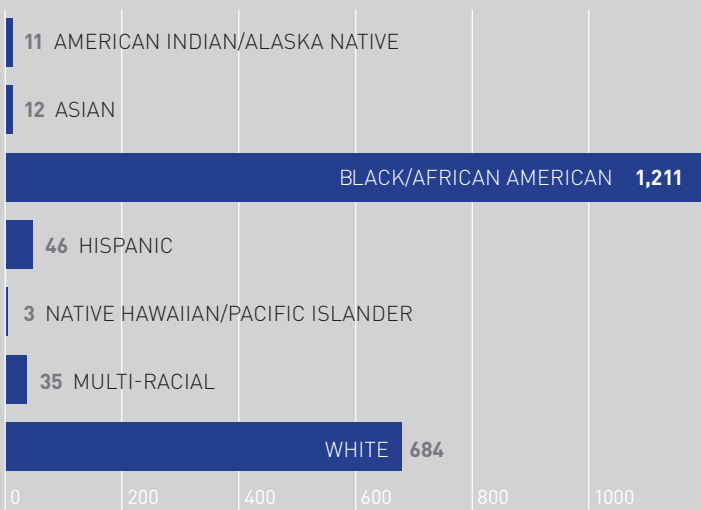


- ST. LOUIS
- SPRINGFIELD
- POPLAR BLUFF
- COLUMBIA
- FLORISSANT
- CAPE GIRARDEAU



STUDENT-REPORTED RACE

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN DISTRICT



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

“I’m not the same person I was five years ago,” says student Alex Tate. Alex enrolled at the St. Louis Excel Center in 2019, more than 10 years after leaving high school at age 16 to care for her ailing father. She enrolled with only two of the 24 required credits in Missouri. Now she is set to graduate in December 2024 with her high school diploma and an industry recognized certification (IRC).

“I tried a lot of other programs, but none of them were for me,” Alex explains. While studying at the Excel Center, she built strong relationships with her teachers as she managed her own mental health challenges. “There were days when just getting out of bed, brushing my teeth, and changing my clothes was an accomplishment,” Alex says. “My teachers never made me feel bad when I couldn’t make it to class. They kept encouraging me; they told me it was important for me to succeed.”



And succeed, she did.

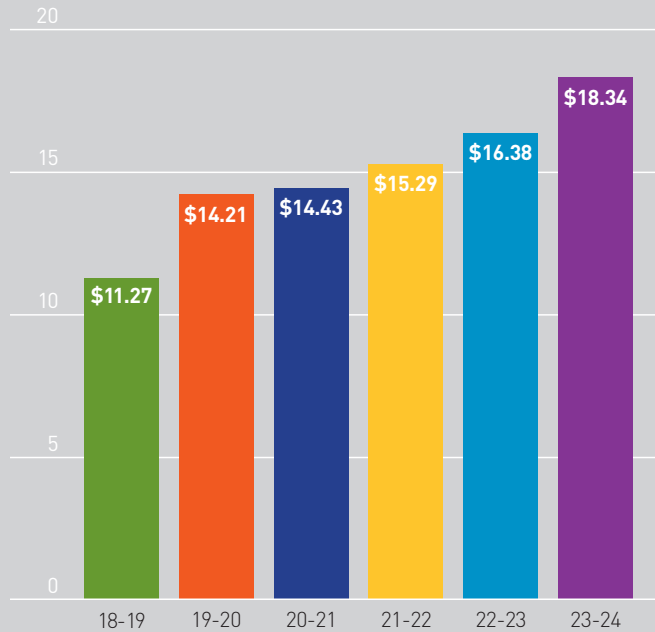
Alex found the physical education class intriguing and started exercising after school with a teacher and some classmates. “I realized that I felt better when I worked out; and when I felt better physically, I felt better about myself. My self esteem improved,” says Alex.

Alex also enrolled in an industry recognized credential (IRC) to learn how to be a veterinary assistant, bringing her one step closer to fulfilling her dream of opening a doggie daycare. “I loved learning about the animals; it was the best attendance I’ve ever had in a program,” Alex shares.

Her advice to other adults considering the Excel Center? “Take a step of faith and believe in yourself. This program is not a race. It’s all up to you. You’re doing this for you.”

WAGE HOURLY RATE

The average hourly wage of our graduates within six months after graduation increased to \$18.34. The average hourly wage of our graduates is 49% higher than Missouri's current minimum wage of \$12.30.



Students are able to earn high school credit by

completing Industry Recognized Credentials (IRC) such as Microsoft Office, phlebotomy, medical assistant, pharmacy technician, CDL-A, etc. We also offer some dual credit courses that yield both high school and college credit. Our goal is for students to graduate with their high school degree, an IRC, college credits, and be ready for work or continued education in college.



St. Louis Excel Center

1727 Locust St.
St. Louis, MO 63103
(314) 241-3464

Springfield Excel Center

1514 S. Glenstone Ave.
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 862-5005

Poplar Bluff Excel Center

2233 N. Westwood Blvd.
Poplar Bluff, MO 63901
(573) 686-6004

Columbia Excel Center

101 N. 4th St.
Columbia, MO 65201
(573) 499-1220

Florissant Excel Center

3180 N. Hwy 67
Florissant, MO 63033
(314) 967-2005

Cape Girardeau Excel Center

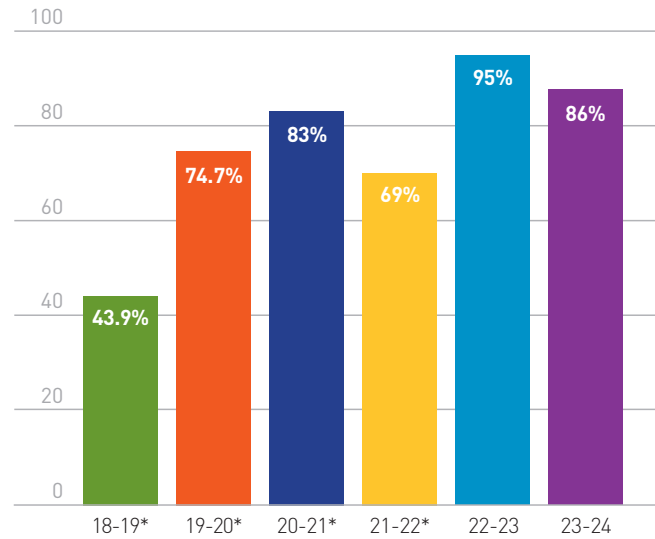
2106 William Street
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703
(573) 271-5220



"Accounting Successor Center"

EMPLOYMENT, COLLEGE AND OTHER CERTIFICATIONS PERCENT OF GRADUATES

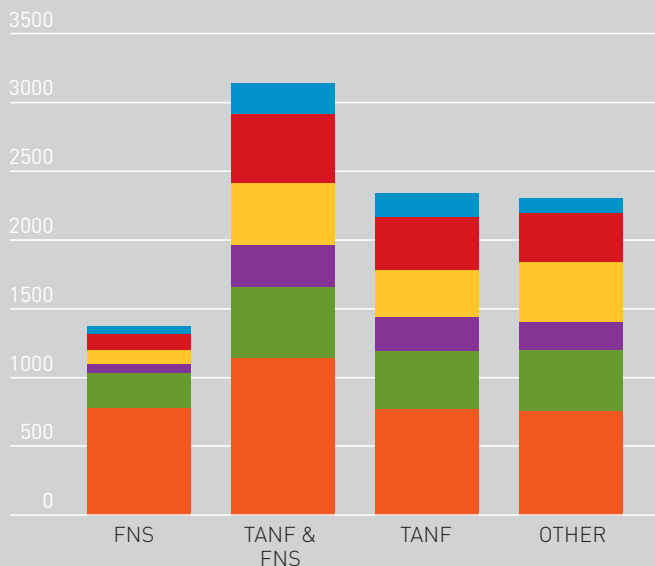
86% of our graduates were employed or enrolled in college or other certification programs within six months after graduation. 72% were employed and 79% were enrolled in college or other certification programs. Our goal is to provide opportunities that lead to success in the labor market.



* Employment only

FUNDING ELIGIBILITY NUMBER OF STUDENTS

58% of our students were eligible for either TANF funding, federal food & nutrition subsidies, or both, indicating they are well below the Federal Poverty Level.



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