



# LIFE of Learning

*“Excellence” for the Fox Cities is defined as:*

Citizens of all ages continue to learn at all stages of life:

- Youth and children view school positively and develop their skills and unique talents to prepare them for viable careers and a lifetime of learning
- Adults (young and returning) seeking new skills or qualifications can obtain affordable higher education leading to improved career development
- Adults have the opportunity to enroll in personal enrichment programs and other lifelong learning activities that are plentiful, affordable, and satisfying

# LIFE of Learning

<b>Adult Learning</b>	Percent of population with high school degrees Citizen and leader perceptions of opportunities in community Utilization of Fox Valley Literacy Coalition services Utilization of Valley Packaging Industries services
<b>Higher Education</b>	Citizen and leader perceptions of higher education opportunities Enrollment at local institutions Average annual costs to attend University of Wisconsin school
<b>K-12 Education Profile</b>	Enrollment in public, private, charter, and home schools Habitual truancy Student teacher ratio Expenditures per pupil
<b>Education for All Students</b>	Eligibility for free or reduced lunch program Head Start enrollment and waiting list Availability of preschool Academic performance of economically disadvantaged students
<b>Perceptions of Education</b>	Citizen perceptions of education system Leader perceptions of education system
<b>Student Success</b>	Student graduation rate Third graders reading at proficient or advanced levels Math, science, and reading test scores, 4th and 10th ACT scores Post graduation plans

***For more information on learning and education:***

Fox Valley Literacy Coalition, Inc., [www.focol.org/literacy/](http://www.focol.org/literacy/)  
Valley Packaging Industries, [www.vpind.com](http://www.vpind.com)  
Fox Valley Technical College, [www.fvtc.org](http://www.fvtc.org)  
Lawrence University, [www.lawrence.edu](http://www.lawrence.edu)  
University of Wisconsin—Oshkosh, [www.uwosh.edu](http://www.uwosh.edu)  
University of Wisconsin—Fox Valley, <http://www.uwfoxvalley.uwc.edu>  
Demographic and enrollment statistics, public and private K-12 education, <http://dpi.wi.gov/lbstat/pubdata2.html>  
Student academic performance, <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/sig/dm-acadachmt.html>  
National information on educational assessment, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/criteria.asp>  
Wisconsin Taxpayer's Alliance, <http://www.wistax.org/facts/2005.xls>

Selected additional information for each section of the 2006 LIFE Report can be found in Appendices at our website: <http://www.foxcitieslifestudy.org>

# Adult Learning

## Data Highlights

LIFE of Self-Sufficiency, "Support Services" contains information about other learning and skill development programs for adults.

- Figure 1** About 9 out of 10 Fox Cities residents had completed high school in both 2002 and 2004, higher than Wisconsin and the US. In 2004, 23% of Fox Cities residents had completed college (24% Wisconsin, 27% US).
- Figure 2** The Fox Valley Literacy Coalition, Inc. provided education services to 511 persons in 2005, the majority of whom speak English as a second language (ESL). Between January and March, 2006, the Coalition enrolled 54 new students. The agency reports a waiting list of 70 persons, 50 of whom are seeking ESL services; the remainder are seeking Adult Basic Education. Program managers report an increasing demand for literacy services among native English speakers.
- Figure 3** Valley Packaging Industries, Inc. collaborates with the Fox Valley Literacy Coalition to offer the Employment and Literacy program for anyone for whom language is a barrier to employment or inclusion in the community. The program experienced a reduction in staff when funds were not available for a job placement position in 2005, resulting in reduced caseload. The agency also provides support for people who have little experience working in this country to learn basic workplace literacy. Of the 46 clients they assisted in 2005, 100% maintained their jobs.
- Citizens view adult education favorably: 73% of citizens rated the Fox Cities above average in providing opportunities for adults to get an education (the question did not define whether adult education referred to higher education or other types of training).

Figure 1

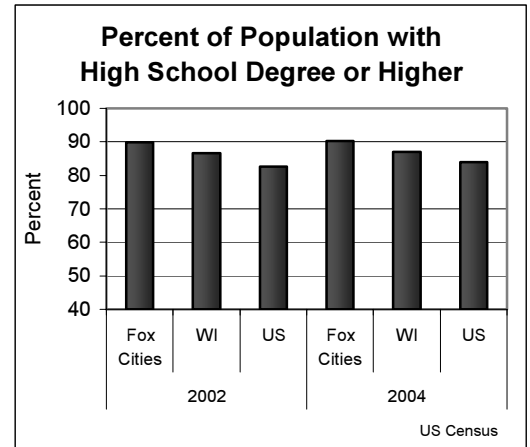


Figure 2

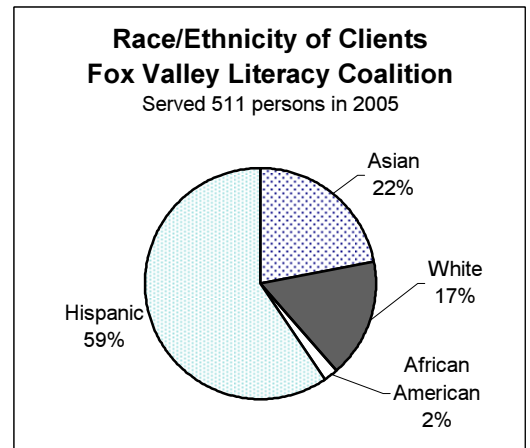


Figure 3

	2004	2005
Training clients	98	67
Obtained employment	63%	44%
Employment support clients	72	46
Preserved job	100%	100%

*92% of leaders rated the opportunities for continuing education for adults good or excellent.*

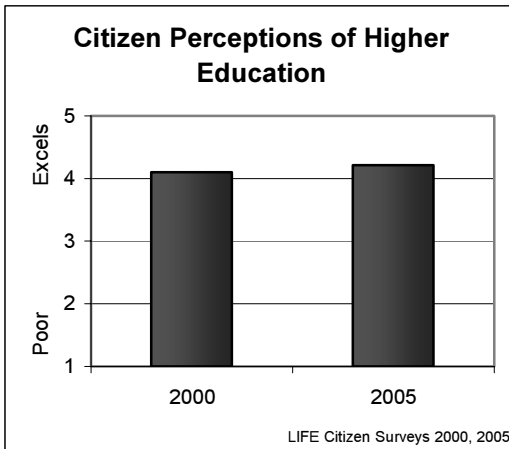
## Progress and Concerns

The high school completion rate locally compares favorably to Wisconsin and United States averages. Leaders and citizens viewed the opportunities for adult education highly.

One of the dominant themes across focus groups was the need for education and support for adults, including those that have been "downsized" and need new skills or others who seek to obtain or advance employment. The programs described above focus on literacy and employment skills. In another section we describe two similar programs (LIFE of Self-Sufficiency). While one of these programs is being expanded with state funding (CAP Services), the other three show that there is more demand than they can currently meet. One program has a waiting list and another experienced a cutback due to insufficient funding.

# Higher Education

Figure 1



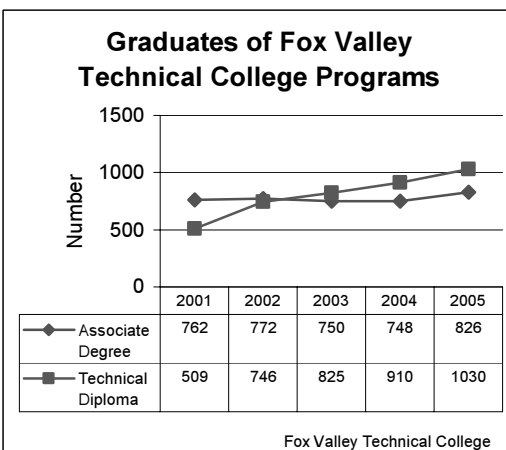
## Data Highlights

- **Figure 1** The overall quality of technical schools and colleges in the Fox Cities was rated highly in 2005: on a five point scale, the average rating was 4.2 (compared to 4.1 in 2001).
- **Figure 2** The four local institutions offering post-secondary education in the Fox Cities enroll close to 22,000 students. There are 18 colleges and universities within an hour's drive of the area (Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce & Industry).
- **Figure 3** Technical diplomas awarded by Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) rose by 102% between 2001 and 2005 while associate degrees grew by 8%. Full time equivalent students increased by nearly 1,000 during that time, reaching almost 5,900 students. FVTC reports that 14 of its program areas have reached full capacity, and several other programs report more demand for enrollment than can be met currently (five are health care programs).
- Between 1994-2004, the average cost of attending a college within the University of Wisconsin (UW) system increased 55% to \$12,724 while the average amount of need-based financial aid grew 24% (to \$6,026). In the UW system, the percent of freshmen from families in the two lowest income brackets dropped from 39% to 32% while the percent of freshmen from the top two income brackets grew from 38% to 44% (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 2/18/06).

Figure 2

College	Type	2005 Approximate Enrollment
Fox Valley Technical College	Vocational education	7,100
Lawrence University	4-year private; Conservatory of Music	1,600
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh	4-year public	9,600 undergraduates 1,400 graduates
University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley	2-year public	1,719

Figure 3



## Progress and Concerns

Residents have highly favorable opinions of higher education in the Fox Cities. Fox Valley Technical College ranks among the top post-secondary vocational education institutions in the United States (Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce & Industry). University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley now collaborates with Bachelor's degree-awarding University of Wisconsin campuses to allow students to complete a Bachelor's degree on its Fox Valley campus. These institutions increasingly team up with local business to develop programs that will meet the needs of local employers.

The increasing cost of higher education, especially for 4 year degrees, has become more of a barrier to people with lower incomes. While quality higher education options exist locally, many young professionals in our focus group said that they plan to obtain advanced degrees by taking courses online or re-locating to enroll in graduate programs.

*97% of leaders rated higher education opportunities good or excellent in the Fox Cities area.*

# K-12 Education Profile

## Data Highlights

- Figure 1** Enrollment in Fox Cities area public school districts grew by 5% between the 1999-00 and 2004-05 school years, with some districts declining and others increasing enrollments significantly.
- Figure 2** In 2004-05, for the Fox Cities overall, 87.7% of students were white compared to 90.8% in 1999-00. In 2004-05, 18.7% of students were from low income families (185% of poverty) compared to 11% in 2001. Finally, in 2004-05, 12.1% of high school students had a disability (learning, emotional, cognitive, or other disabilities requiring special education) compared to 12.5% in 2002-03.
- Figure 3** In 2004-05, expenditures per pupil had risen 10% since 2001-02 to \$7,984 in 2004-05. Statewide, school districts spent an average of \$8,734 (+13%).
- In 2004-05, 7,700 students enrolled in private schools in the Fox Cities area, a decline of about 1,000 students (-12%) in the past five years (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WI DPI)).
- In 2004-05, 1,228 children attended charter schools in the area. 713 children received home schooling, up from 676 in 1999-00. About 400 students were enrolled in virtual school programs (WI DPI).
- Freedom, Kaukauna, Kimberly, Little Chute, and Menasha school districts offer 4-year old kindergarten for a combined total 855 children enrolled in 2004-05 (WI DPI).
- In 2003-04, 3.2% of Fox Cities area students were habitually truant compared to 9.4% of students statewide (2004-05 data not available). Habitual truancy is defined as having five or more unexcused absences from school per semester (WI DPI).
- In 2003-04, the student-teacher ratio in the Fox Cities was 15.0 to 1 compared to 14.7 to 1 in Wisconsin (WI DPI).
- 60% of residents believed the Fox Cities was above average at investing needed resources to ensure quality education in the future (LIFE Citizen Survey 2005).

## Progress and Concerns

According to survey and focus group feedback, Fox Cities area residents feel strongly that the education system (both public and private) is excellent. Local districts spend less on education than the state average and this spending, while increasing, has grown at a slower rate than statewide. The number of students from families with low incomes attending public schools in the Fox Cities has increased significantly since the 2001 LIFE Study.

Figure 1

Enrollment in Public K-12 Fox Cities School Districts			
	1999-00	2004-05	% change
Appleton	14,651	15,060	3%
Freedom	1,505	1,541	2%
Hortonville	2,541	3,133	23%
Kaukauna	3,632	3,784	4%
Kimberly	2,975	3,908	31%
Little Chute	1,409	1,550	10%
Menasha	3,655	3,620	-1%
Neenah	6,585	6,296	-4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,953</b>	<b>38,892</b>	<b>5%</b>

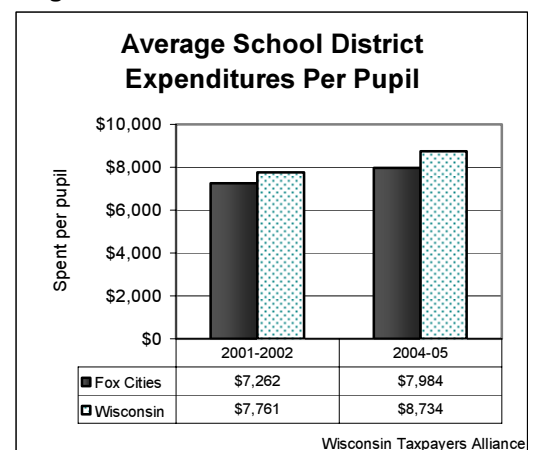
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Figure 2

Student Demographic Information, '04-05			
	% white	% low income	% disabled (HS)
Appleton	81.5	23.8	12.8
Freedom	93.1	11.2	13.1
Hortonville	95.5	8.9	11.8
Kaukauna	93.7	15.9	13.6
Kimberly	94.9	6.2	9.3
Little Chute	92.0	14.6	8.4
Menasha	81.6	32.1	12.8
Neenah	92.0	16.0	11.6
<b>Fox Cities weighted average</b>	<b>87.7</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>12.1</b>

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Figure 3



Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance

*In 2005, 67% of citizens rated the quality of public schools above average, compared to 58% in 2000.*

# Education for All Students

Figure 1

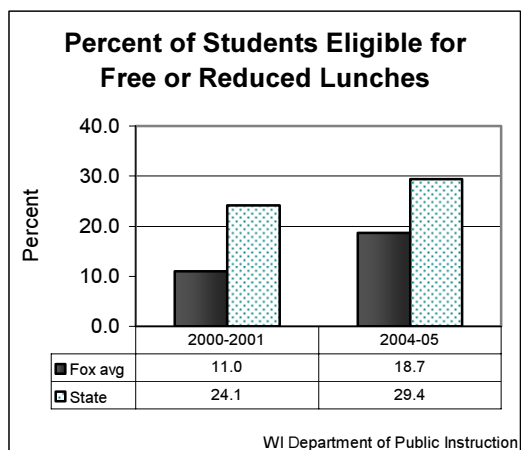


Figure 2

	Currently Enrolled	Eligible on waiting list
Appleton	195	31
Neenah	34	13
Menasha	34	12
Kaukauna	34	4
Stephensville	16	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>60</b>

Head Start, 2006

Figure 3

	2001		2005	
	Programs	# served	Programs	# served
Calumet	3	53	4	68
Outagamie	15	483	19	587
Winnebago	n/a	n/a	18	511

Child Care Resource & Referral

Figure 4

	Reading		Math	
	Low income	Avg-high income	Low income	Avg-high income
Appleton	68%	90%	58%	84%
Menasha	68%	84%	53%	83%
Neenah	75%	93%	48%	85%

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

*In Appleton, 68% of low income 4th graders achieved proficiency in reading compared to 90% of their peers with higher incomes.*

## Data Highlights

- Figure 1** The proportion of public school students in the Fox Cities eligible for free or reduced lunch rose from 11% to 18.7% between 2000-01 and 2004-05 (Wisconsin's rate was 29.4% in 2004-05). To be eligible, a student's family must have income at or below 185% of the federal poverty line (for a family of four, the 2006 poverty line is \$19,350).
- Figure 2** The Head Start program currently enrolls 313 children in the Fox Cities area (2006) with sixty eligible children on the waiting list (to be eligible, a family income must be at or below 100% of poverty). Program managers estimate that there are another 100 children who recently applied whose family incomes fell just above poverty, making them ineligible for Head Start. Some parents of enrolled children participate in the Even Start program to develop their own skills. This program faces the threat of reduced federal funding.
- Figure 3** Almost 1,200 young children are enrolled in preschool programs in Calumet, Outagamie, and Winnebago Counties combined. In Calumet and Outagamie Counties, the number of children served rose by 22% between 2001 and 2005.
- Figure 4** In Appleton, Menasha, and Neenah in 2004-05, low income fourth graders scored much lower on both reading and math assessments than their peers who are from middle and upper income families. Other school districts in the Fox Valley area were not included due to the small sample size of low income students. This gap in achievement widens as one examines test scores at both 8th and 10th grade levels.

## Progress and Concerns

Approximately 2,000 children are enrolled in early education programs in the three counties (combined preschool and 4 year kindergarten enrollment). A strong Head Start program provides early education along with supportive services for parents with extremely low incomes.

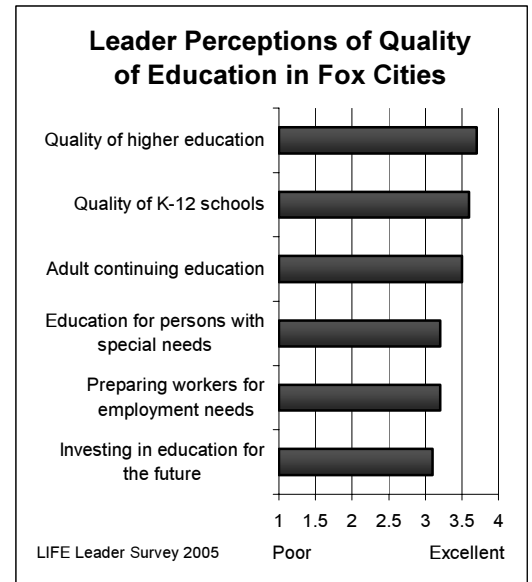
Yet, there are limited early education opportunities for families with low incomes, a growing segment of the local school population. These children show weaker academic performance than their peers in elementary school and then fall farther and farther behind academically as they grow up. In two of our focus groups, parents of young children noted the challenge they experienced in locating affordable, acceptable-quality pre-school programs. Two large public school districts do not offer kindergarten programs for four year olds.

# Perceptions of Education

## Data Highlights

- Figure 1** Leaders rated the quality of existing higher education, public and private K-12 schools, and adult continuing education in the Fox Cities area as excellent: their responses surpassed 3.5 on a 4 point scale (where 4 is excellent). Leaders scored the remaining items in the “good” range: educating people with special needs, preparing workers for the local economy, and investing in education for the future.
- Figure 2** In 2005, citizens viewed the area’s education system even more favorably than they did in 2000. Asked to respond to various topics related to the local education system, citizens scored most aspects of the education system 4 out of 5 possible. 70% of citizens rated the area good or excellent at meeting educational needs of their own families. 60% rated the area good or excellent at investing needed resources to ensure a quality education system in the future.

Figure 1

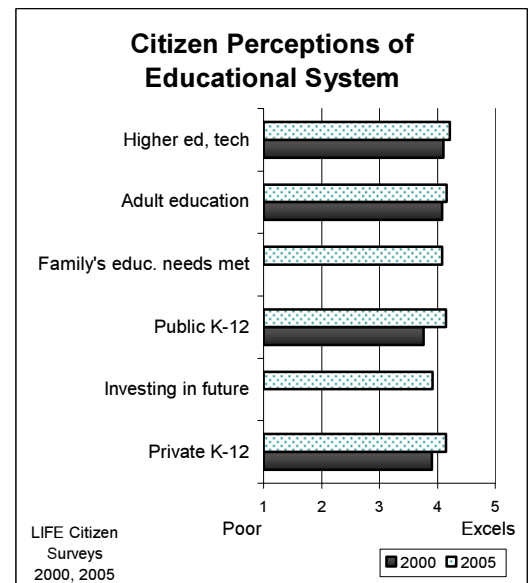


## Progress and Concerns

When asked to describe the strengths of the Fox Cities area, participants in most focus groups listed the area’s education system. Youth, when asked about their experiences at schools, held mostly favorable opinions about the quality, safety, and opportunities for involvement at their schools.

Participants in a number of different focus groups expressed concerns about whether current educational approaches match up with future local workforce needs. For example, there is a clear projected demand for health care workers yet it is unclear whether a sufficient number of young people are “in the pipeline,” i.e. enrolled in science curriculum and courses to help them progress into science-related careers. The same holds true for higher-skilled manufacturing jobs. Participants in several focus groups urged a closer connection between employers, schools, and young people themselves as they consider career options.

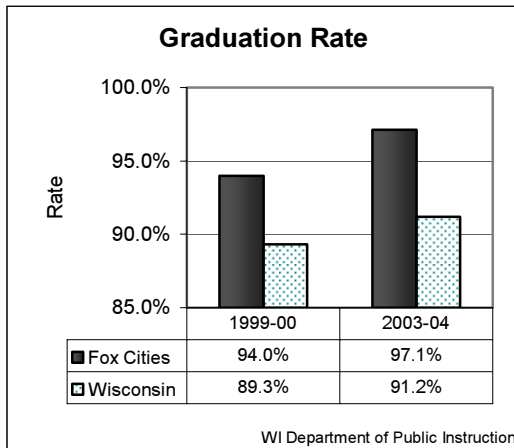
Figure 2



*84% of residents and 94% of leaders rated the Fox Cities good or excellent on providing effective education overall.*

# Student Success

Figure 1



## Data Highlights

Truancy is described in "K-12 Education Profile."

- Figure 1** The graduation rate for the Fox Cities surpassed 97% in 2003-04, up from 94% in 1999-00 and exceeding Wisconsin's overall graduation rate of 91.2%.
- Figure 2** The percent of third graders reading at proficient or advanced levels improved from 73.7% to 90.5% between the 1999-00 and 2004-05 school years. The percent of third graders that were proficient at reading increased by at least 10 percentage points in every school district in the Fox Cities area over that time.
- Figure 3** Achievement test scores in math and reading have risen at all three grade levels (except for 8th grade math, which dropped by 1%) and, in every case, exceed the average test scores of Wisconsin students (WI DPI).
- In 1999-00, 59% of Fox Cities high school students took the ACT college entrance exam (average score, 22.7). In 2003-04, 57% took the ACT (average score, 22.8), compared to 57% of Wisconsin students that took the ACT (average 22.2) (WI DPI). Nationally, the average ACT score was 20.9 in 2004 (ACT.org).
- In 2002-03, 56% of Fox Cities students planned to attend college or university after graduating, 22% intended to enroll in a vocational training program, 14% had unspecified plans, and 8% fell into other more specific categories (WI DPI).

Figure 2

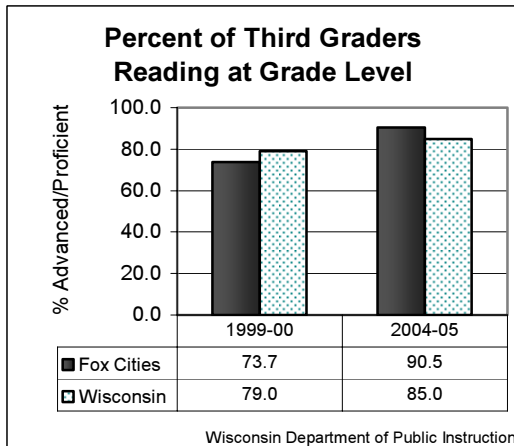


Figure 3

Percent of Students at Proficient or Advanced Levels			
Reading		2002	2004
4th	Fox Cities	87%	88%
	Wisconsin	81%	82%
8th	Fox Cities	87%	88%
	Wisconsin	83%	85%
10th	Fox Cities	74%	77%
	Wisconsin	71%	74%
Math			
4th	Fox Cities	79%	81%
	Wisconsin	71%	72%
8th	Fox Cities	81%	80%
	Wisconsin	73%	73%
10th	Fox Cities	72%	77%
	Wisconsin	69%	72%

## Progress and Concerns

High school students graduate at a higher rate in the Fox Cities than in Wisconsin overall, and over half of graduates plan to attend college. Results of comprehensive assessments done by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction show increasing test scores in Fox Cities area schools. Most elementary school children read at a proficient level.

The percent of students achieving proficient test scores declines as youth get older, and in general, math scores are lower than reading scores. On a previous page, "Education for All Students," we show that fewer children from families with low incomes achieve academic proficiency than from families with middle to high incomes. In our work/employment focus group, participants emphasized the importance of math and science skills for the area workforce.

*77% of 10th graders in the Fox Cities were advanced or proficient in math in 2004-05.*