



WCPSS High School Graduation Rates 4-Year and 5-Year Cohort Rates 2011-12

Author: Roger Regan, PhD

Summary

The WCPSS *four-year* cohort graduation rate declined slightly to 80.6% in 2011-12 from 80.9% in the previous year. At the same time, the *five-year* rate rose substantially from 81.6% to 84.4%. Both the four- and five-year rates, as well as rates for selected student subgroups, are used in state and federal accountability reporting. The 2.8 percentage point increase in the five-year cohort rate is similar to the 2.7 percentage point gain in the 2010-11 four-year cohort rate; both rates reflect the cohort of students who entered 9th grade in 2007-08. This year’s four-year cohort of students started 9th grade in 2008-09.

Disaggregated four-year graduation rates for most racial and ethnic groups stayed nearly the same or declined slightly in 2011-12, but the rate for African-American students rose from 67.9% to 69.6%. The other bright spot was the continued rise in the rate for economically disadvantaged students (ED), which increased from 63.0% to 65.1%. Since 2008-09, the four-year cohort graduation rate for African-American students has risen each year for a total increase of 6.2 percentage points, and the rate for economically disadvantaged students has also been rising for a total increase of 10.9 percentage points. The gains for these subgroups are most notable when compared to the change in the four-year rates for all students over the same time period; the overall rate increased in three of the four years for an overall increase of just 2.2 percentage points since 2008-09.

Four-year cohort graduation rates at the 24 WCPSS high schools with graduating classes ranged from 66.4% to 94.7% in 2011-12. Rates increased at almost half the schools and declined at the others. Seventeen high schools, or 71%, had rates over 80%.

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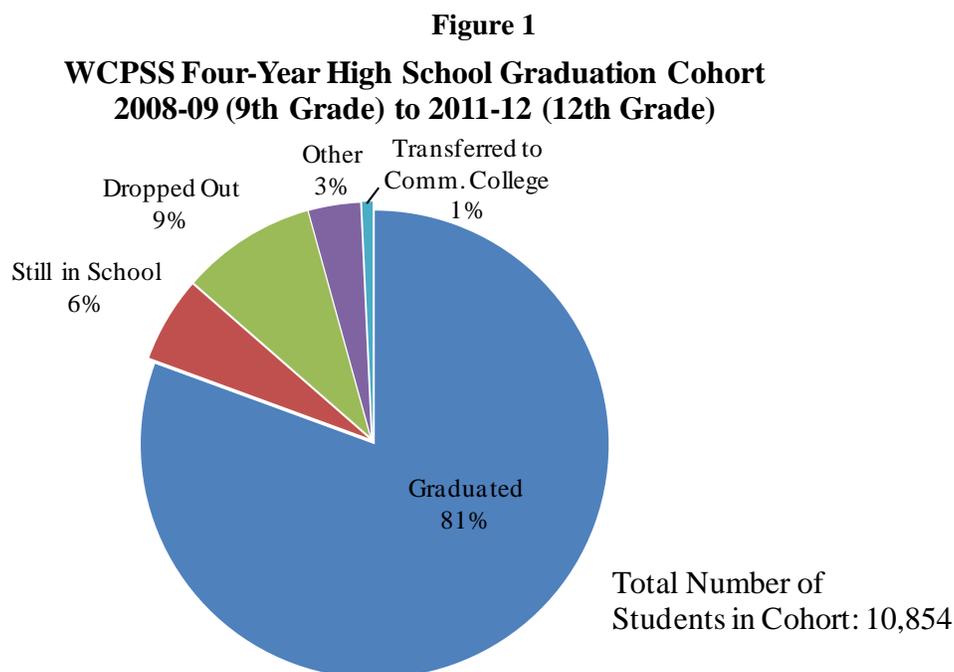
In contrast to WCPSS, the four-year graduation rate for the state of North Carolina and six comparison North Carolina public school districts increased in 2011-12. WCPSS's graduation rates for the subgroups of Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, ED, and students with limited English proficiency (LEP) continue to trail the rates at the state level and other large NC districts.

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate: Definition and Calculation

The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires public school districts and high schools to report a four-year graduation rate. The 2011-12 four-year cohort graduation rate is defined as the percentage of students who entered the 9th grade *for the first time* during the 2008-09 school year and who earned a diploma by June of 2012. Students who transfer into a school on grade level are added to that school's cohort, and those who transfer out are removed. Students who are initially in a school cohort and transfer off grade level from one WCPSS school to another WCPSS school are in the district cohort graduation rate calculation but are not included in any school rate. These students are removed from both the sending school's and the receiving school's cohort, but they stay in the district cohort. Students who earn a certificate of completion and those who earn a GED are in the cohort but are not counted as graduates.

Profile of 2011-12 four-year Cohort

The WCPSS high school cohort that entered the 9th grade for the first time during the 2008-09 school year consisted of 10,854 students. As shown in figure 1, 80.6% of these students (8,748) earned a diploma and graduated by June of 2012. Another 5.8% of the cohort was still in school at the end of the 2011-12 school year. 0.7% of the cohort left high school and indicated that they had transferred to a community college. Approximately 9.3% of the students in the cohort dropped out of high school sometime during the four-year period. Of the remaining 3.6% of students, 201 left school for unknown reasons, 124 transferred to another school in the district, and 40 were withdrawn due to suspension or because of illness.



Disaggregated Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates

Figure 2 shows four-year cohort graduation rates over five years by gender, race/ethnicity, and other subgroups. Rates for both male and female students declined slightly in 2011-12 (by .3 percent). Female students continued to graduate at a higher rate than male students, and the gap between the two groups remained at 7.9 percentage points.

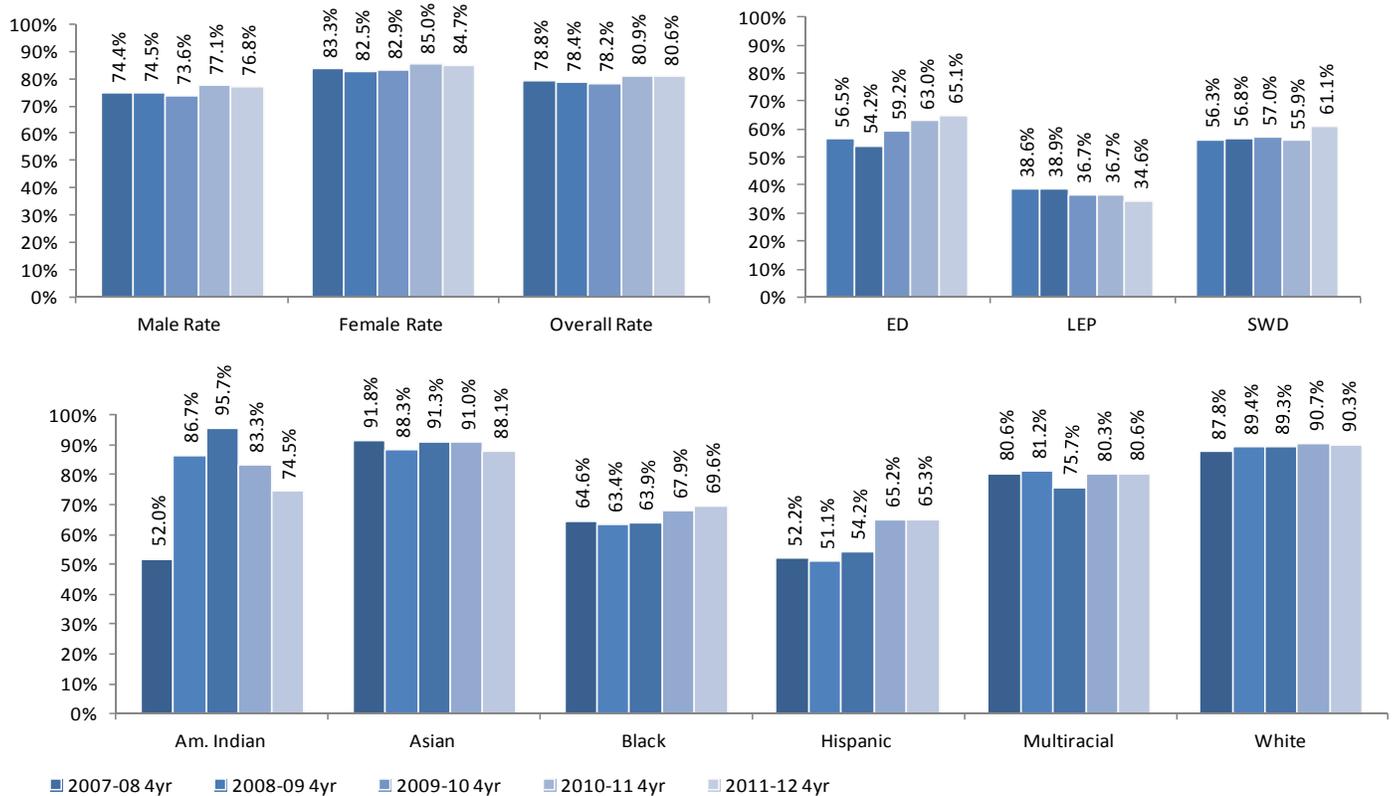
Graduation rates rose for economically disadvantaged (ED) students and students with disabilities (SWD) in 2011-12. The rate for ED students rose from 63.0% to 65.1%, while the rate for SWD students rose from 55.9% to 61.1%. The rate for students with limited English proficiency declined from 36.7% to 34.6%. The graduation rate for ED students has been on an upward trend over the past four years, rising 10.9 percentage points since 2008-09. The rate for SWD students was relatively flat before this year's increase, while the rate for LEP students has declined by 4.0 percentage points since 2007-08.

Graduation rates rose for Black/African American students, from 67.9% in 2010-11 to 69.6% in 2011-12. Rates also rose modestly for Multiracial and Hispanic/Latino students, but dropped slightly for White students. The graduation rate for Asian students fell from 91.0% to 88.1%. The graduation rate for American Indian students showed the largest decline, but because of the relatively small size of the group, the rate varies greatly from year to year. Over the past five years, the graduation rate has risen the most for Hispanic/Latino students (up 13.1 percentage points since 2007-08), followed by Black/African American students (up 5.0 points). The rates

for Asian students, Multiracial students, and White students have been fairly stable over the same time period.

Figure 2

WCPS High School Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Selected Student Subgroups Over Five Years

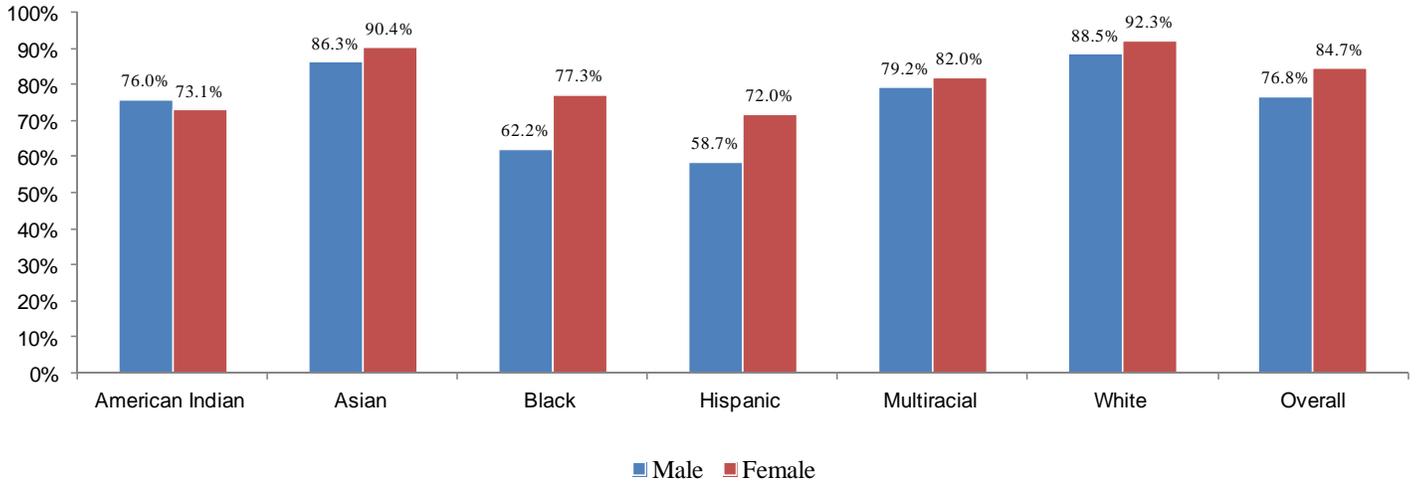


Graduation Rates by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Figure 3 shows 2011-12 graduation rates by gender and race/ethnicity. For every racial and ethnic subgroup, with the exception of American Indian students, females graduated at a higher rate than males. The group with the highest graduation rate was White females (92.3%), while the group with the lowest rate was Hispanic/Latino males (58.7%). The group with the largest gender gap in graduation rates was between Black/African American female and male students (15.1 percentage points). The overall gap between male and female students of all races stayed the same in 2011-12 as in the previous year at 7.9 percentage points. This graduation gender gap has been persistent over the past five years (see Figure 2).

Figure 3

**WCPSS Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates
by Gender and Race/Ethnicity, 2011-12**



Comparison with North Carolina and Other Large NC School Districts

Figure 4 shows trends in four-year cohort graduation rates for the state of North Carolina, WCPSS, and six selected NC public school districts. In contrast to WCPSS, the graduation rates for NC and these six districts increased in 2011-12. The rate for North Carolina rose 2.5 percentage points from 77.9% to 80.4%. Over the past five years, the state rate has risen 10.1 percentage points. Similarly, rates in the six selected districts have been on a steady upward trend since 2007-08, while the rate in WCPSS was flat for three years (2008-2010) before rising in 2010-11.

Figure 4

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates for WCPSS, North Carolina, and Selected NC School Districts Over Five Years

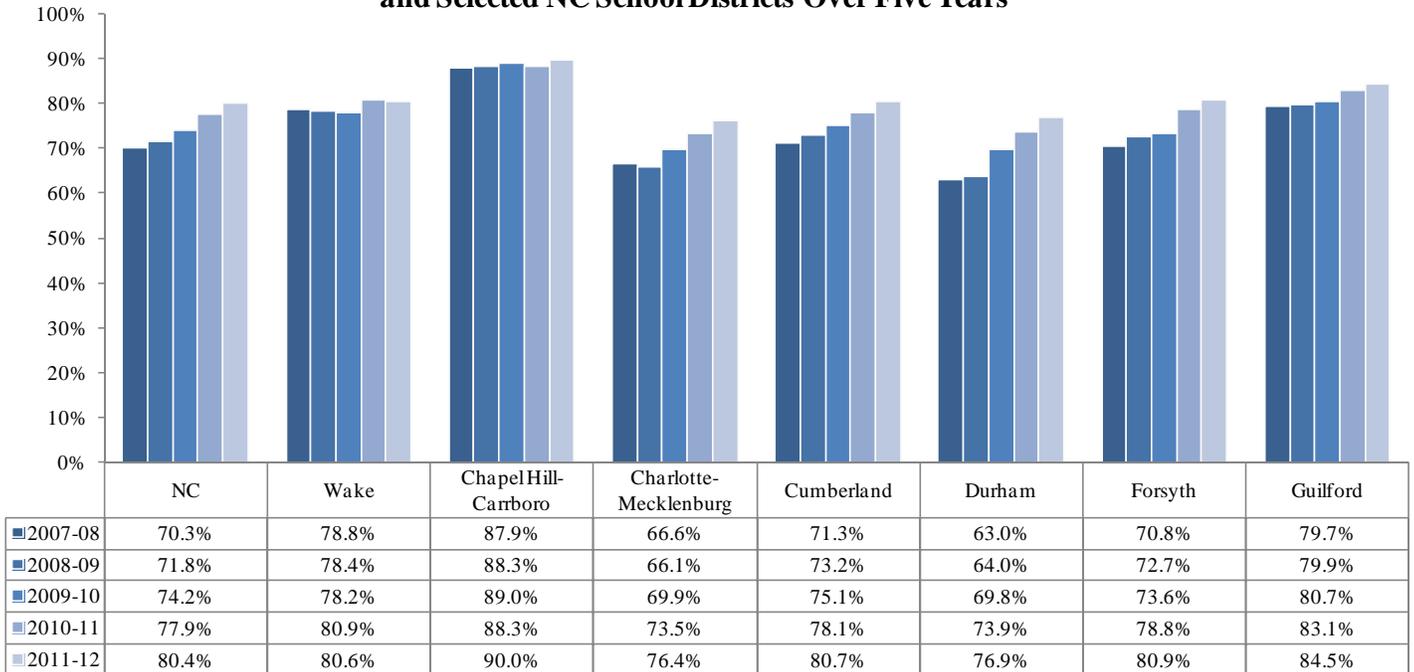


Figure 5 shows graduation rates for the state and selected NC public school districts by race/ethnicity for 2011-12. In most cases, White and Asian students had the highest graduation rates, while Hispanic/Latino students generally had the lowest rates. WCPSS had rates above the state and also above most of the comparison districts for Asian and White students. However, WCPSS’s graduation rate for Black/African American students was below the state and the lowest of all the comparison districts. The rate for Hispanic/Latino students was also substantially below the state rate, but it was comparable to rates in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Forsyth, and was higher than Durham.

Figure 5

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by School District and Race/Ethnicity 2011-12

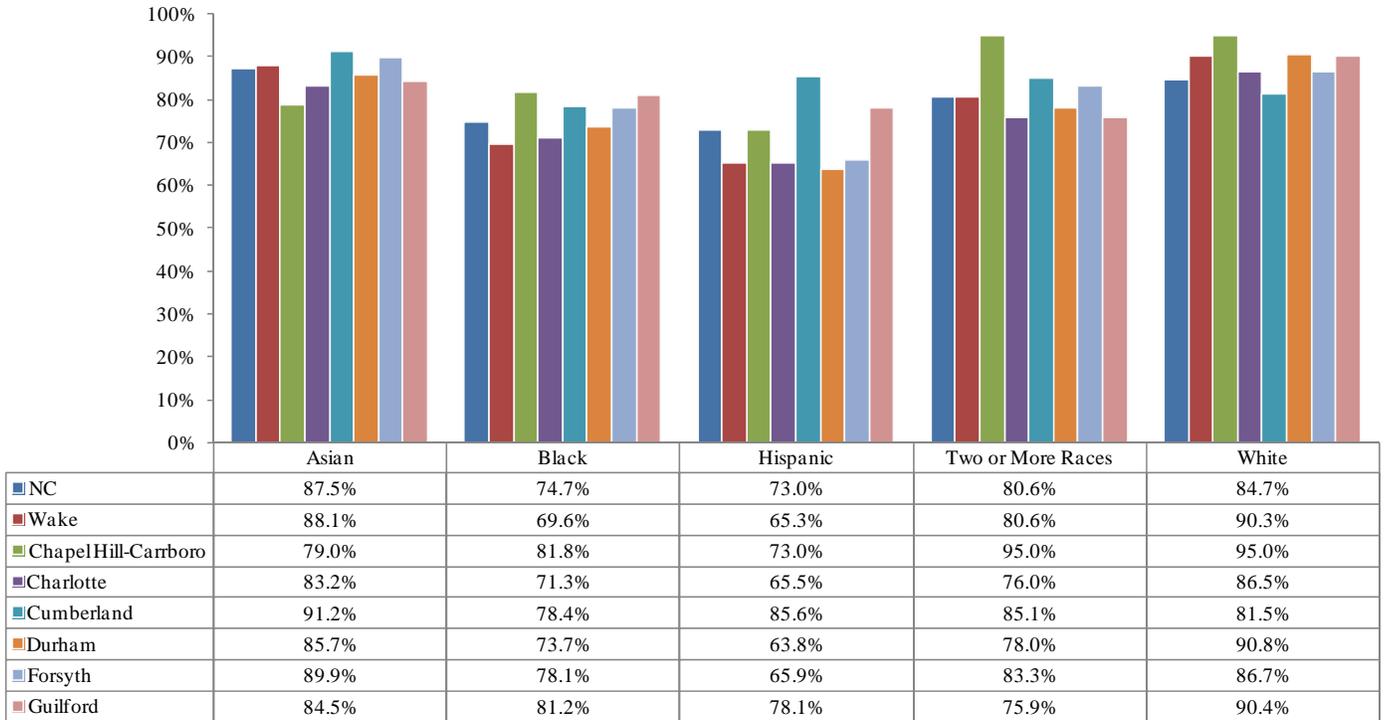
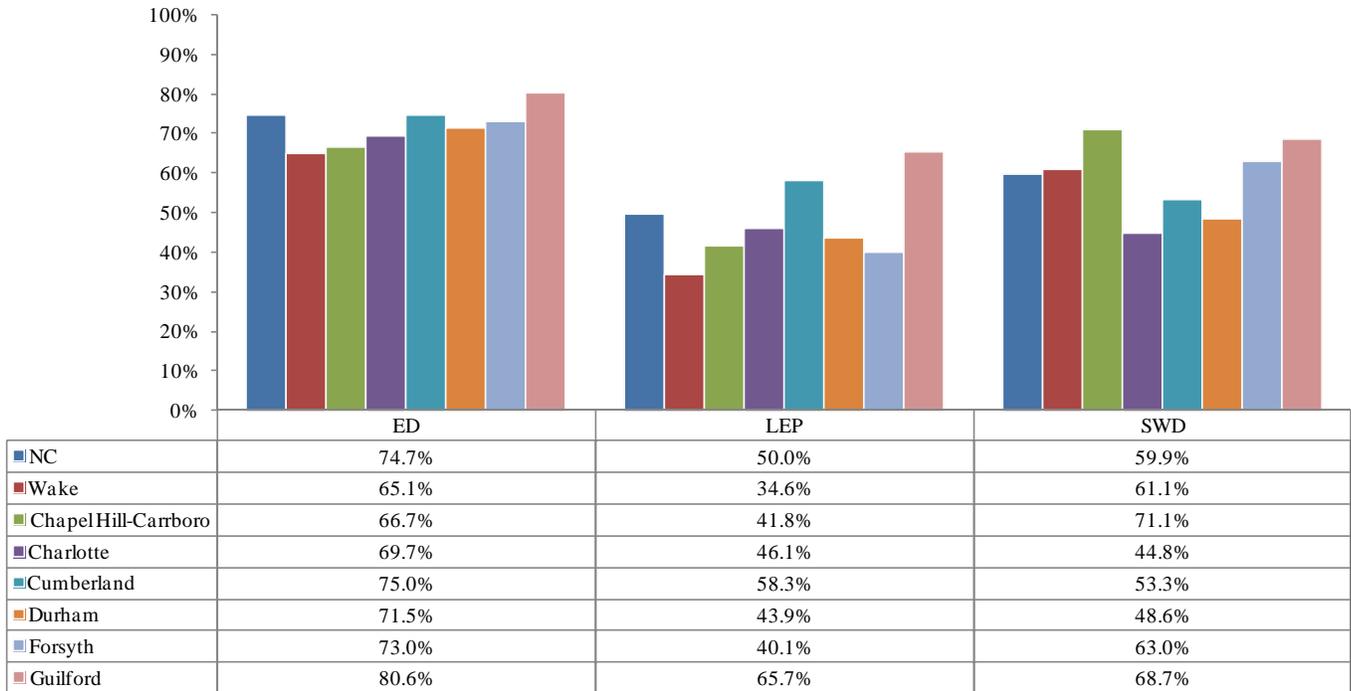


Figure 6 shows graduation rates in these same districts for ED students, LEP students, and SWD students. At the state level and most of the districts, LEP students had comparably low graduation rates. WCPSS’s 2011-12 rates for ED and LEP students were substantially below the state rate and the lowest of all the comparison districts. WCPSS’s graduation rate for SWD students was slightly higher than the state rate, and higher than three of the six comparison districts.

Figure 6

**Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates
by School District and Student Risk Factors 2011-12**



Note: ED: economically disadvantaged, LEP: limited English proficient, SWD: students with disabilities

WCPSS High School Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates

Table 1 shows four-year cohort graduation rates for all comprehensive WCPSS high schools with students graduating over the past five years. In 2011-12, rates ranged from 66.4% at East Wake High School for the Arts to 94.7% at Green Hope and Panther Creek high schools. The rates for 11 of 24 high schools increased in 2011-12 and declined for the other 13 schools. Seventeen high schools, or 71%, had rates over 80%. Looking at trends over five years, there are few clear patterns. Most high schools have had fairly stable rates that have risen or fallen only slightly over time, with small increases often followed in later years by slight decreases.

Table 1

WCPSS High School Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates Over Five Years

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
NC	70.2	71.7	74.2	77.9	80.4
WCPSS	78.8	78.4	78.2	80.9	80.6
Apex	90.1	90.2	91.2	90.8	91.2
Athens Drive	79.0	75.8	78.1	85.1	81.2
Broughton	77.7	80.2	83.7	85.8	82.5
Cary	85.3	78.5	80.9	83.0	86.7
East Wake Health	96.3	84.0	85.3	80.5	81.7
East Wake Technology	78.6	80.7	77.8	69.2	68.9
East Wake Arts	85.7	85.2	75.6	69.2	66.4
East Wake Engineering	89.6	84.8	88.4	80.2	79.6
Enloe	86.3	85.5	84.2	85.0	81.8
Fuquay-Varina	76.1	83.0	80.7	83.3	84.7
Garner	74.7	71.8	72.6	75.0	70.0
Green Hope	92.6	94.0	92.6	95.2	94.7
Holly Springs		90.6	82.1	85.8	88.5
Knightdale	77.4	73.8	73.7	76.4	79.6
Leesville	84.4	87.5	86.4	85.2	82.0
Middle Creek	84.8	80.4	83.3	85.7	86.0
Millbrook	76.2	72.6	76.8	81.8	81.3
Panther Creek		96.6	92.8	93.4	94.7
Phillips		74.4	79.3	81.3	75.0
Sanderson	77.5	76.7	75.0	77.5	78.6
Southeast Raleigh	85.9	80.9	82.6	76.4	81.5
Wake Early College				98.2	93.8
Wake Forest	83.8	86.7	89.1	85.7	87.8
Wakefield	84.0	85.0	83.4	87.4	85.5

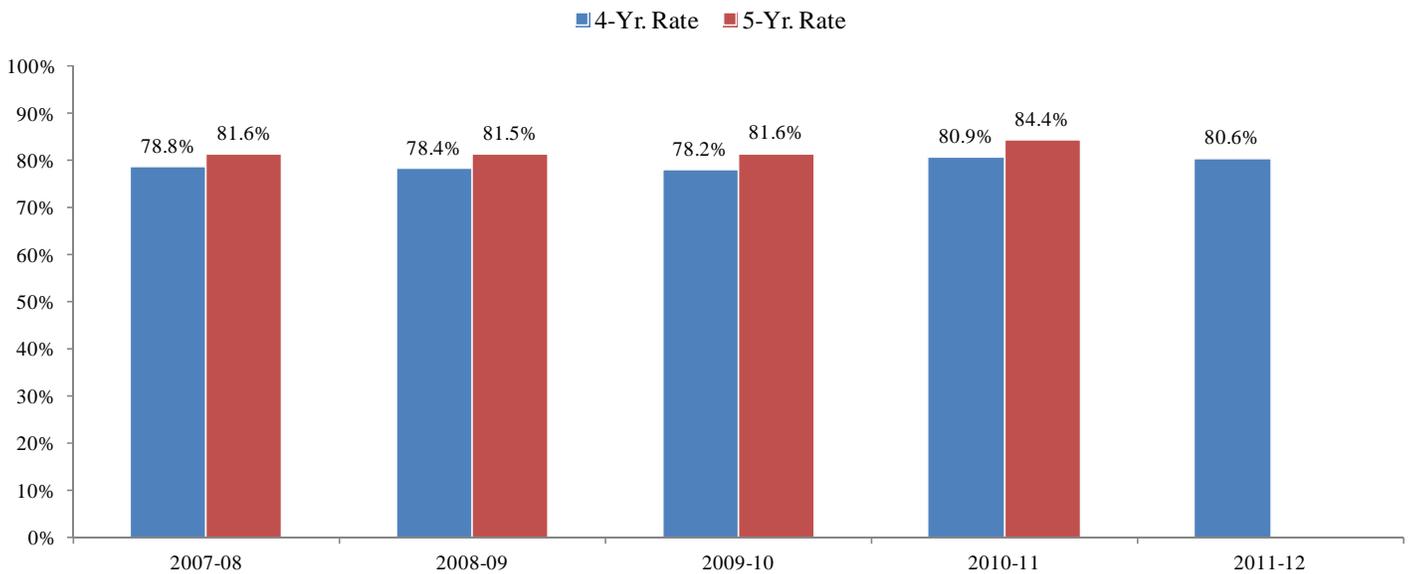
Note: Schools with blank values had no four-year graduation cohort in that school year.

Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates

The 2011-12 five-year cohort graduation rate has the same denominator as the 2010-11 four-year rate (the number of students who entered the 9th grade during the 2007-08 school year), but the numerator is larger because it includes students from the cohort who took an additional year to graduate. As Figure 7 shows, graduation rates in WCPSS increase by about three percentage points when students who graduate in five years are included in the rate. The cohort that started 9th grade in 2007-08 had a four-year graduation rate of 80.9% in 2010-11; this same cohort had a five-year rate of 84.4% in 2011-12. In addition to the 8,439 students who graduated in four years, another 360 students from this cohort graduated in five years. The five-year rate for the cohort that started 9th grade in 2008-09 will depend on how many more students earn a diploma by June of 2013. This group includes SWD students for whom a five-year graduation plan is part of their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Figure 7

WCPSS Four- and Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates Over Five Years



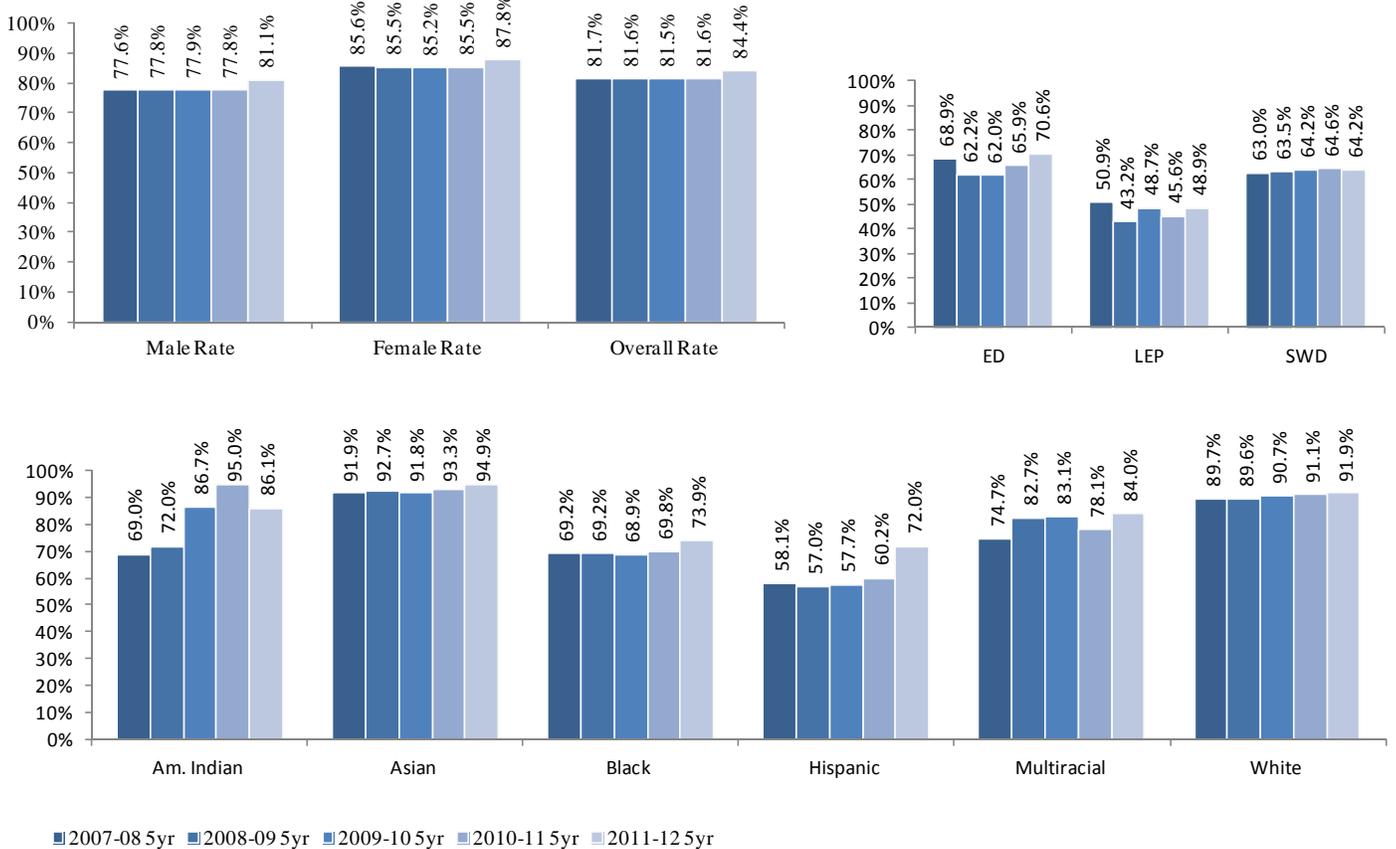
Note: Years represent the four-year graduation year for the cohort. For example, the 2007-08 cohort started 9th grade in 2004-05, so their four-year graduation year was 2007-08 (78.8%) while their five year graduation year was 2008-09 (81.6%).

Figure 8 shows trends in WCPSS’s five-year cohort graduation rates over the past five years. For the first time in five years, the overall rate increased significantly in 2011-12, rising 2.8 percentage points from 81.6 % to 84.4%. The rate for male students rose 3.3 percentage points, while the rate for female students rose 2.3 points. B y student risk factor, the largest gain was made by ED students, whose rate rose 4.7 percentage points, from 65.9% in 2010-11 to 70.6% in

2011-12. The five-year rate rose for all racial and ethnic groups, with the exception of American Indian students. The largest gain was made by Hispanic/Latino students, whose rate increased almost 12 percentage points from 60.2% to 72%, followed by Multiracial students (up 5.9 points) and Black/African American students (up 4.1 points).

Figure 8

WCPSS High School Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Selected Student Subgroups Over Five Years



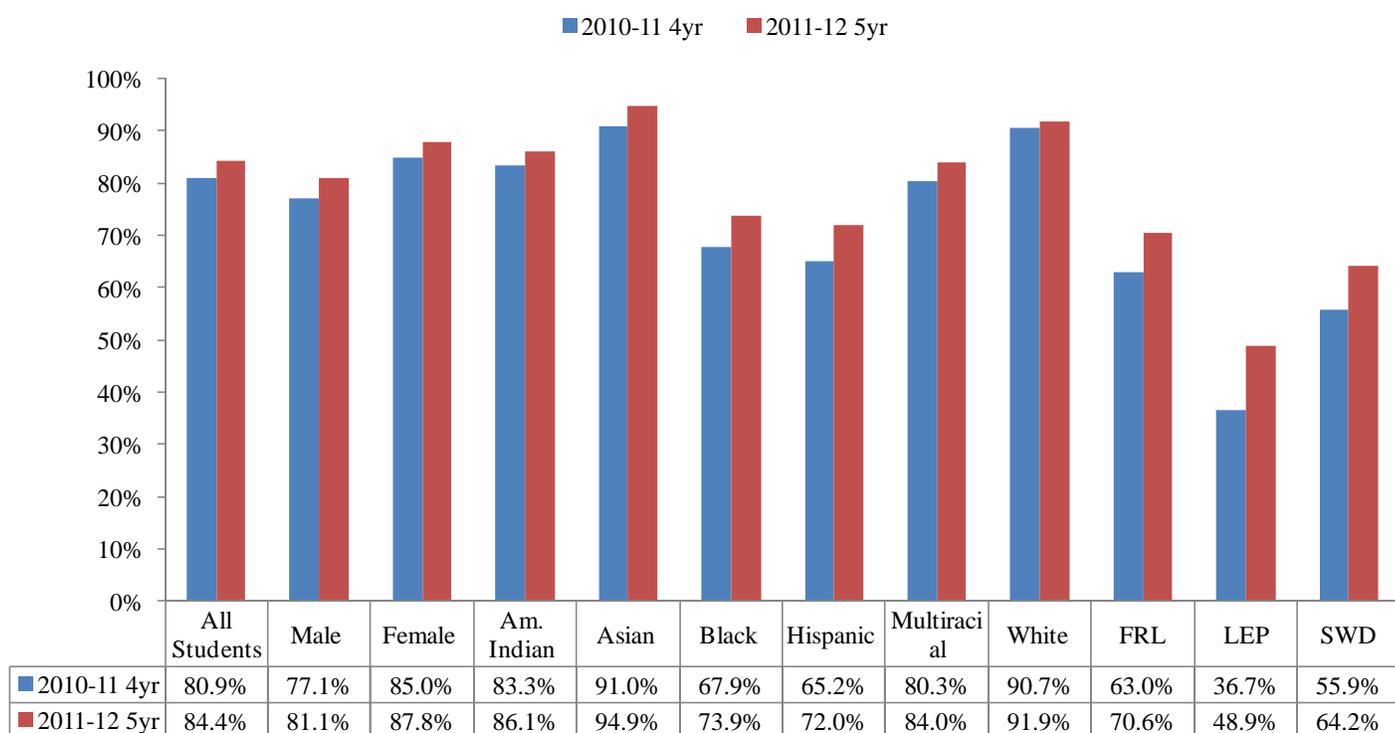
Five-year graduation rates for various subgroups exhibit the same overall pattern as the 4-year rates; however, graduation rates increase more for some subgroups than others. In other words, a higher percentage of students in some subgroups take an additional year to graduate; therefore, the five-year graduation rate for these subgroups is significantly higher than their four-year rates.

Figure 9 shows that for the 2011-12 five-year cohort (students who entered 9th grade in 2007-08), students with risk factors had the largest gains in their graduation rates compared to their 4-year rates. The graduation rate for LEP students rose 12.2 percentage points, the rate for SWD

students rose 8.3 points, and the rate for ED students rose 7.6 points. Among racial subgroups, Hispanic/Latino students improved their graduation rate by 6.8 percentage points, while the rate for Black/African American students rose 6.0 points. The smallest differences in 4-year and 5-year rates for the same cohort were for White students at a difference of 1.2 points, followed by female students and American Indian students, each with a difference of 2.8 points.

Figure 9

**Four- and Five-Year Graduation Rates by Student Subgroup
for the Cohort of Students who entered 9th grade in 2007-08**



WCPSS High School Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates

Table 2 shows five-year cohort graduation rates for all comprehensive WCPSS high schools over the past five years. In 2011-12, rates ranged from 72.6% at East Wake High School for the Arts to 98.2% at Wake Early College. The average rate for all high schools was 86.1%. The rates for 16 of 24 high schools increased in 2011-12 and declined for 7 schools, while one school had no change as this was its first five-year cohort. Twenty-one high schools, or 88%, had rates over 80%. Similar to four-year cohort graduation rates, there are few clear longitudinal patterns among WCPSS high schools. Most high schools have had fairly stable rates that have risen or

fallen slightly each year. Some schools have seen a steady decline in rates, while others experienced more significant increases or declines in 2011-12.

Table 2**WCPSS High School Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates Over Five Years**

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
NC	71.8%	72.9%	74.7%	77.7%	81.1%
WCPSS	81.7%	81.6%	81.5%	81.6%	84.4%
Apex	90.7%	91.6%	92.2%	92.8%	91.0%
Athens Drive	84.9%	81.9%	80.3%	80.6%	88.4%
Broughton	87.3%	81.6%	82.2%	86.5%	87.3%
Cary	81.6%	86.5%	81.4%	85.1%	85.7%
East Wake Health	90.2%	96.3%	85.0%	87.3%	87.4%
East Wake Technology		85.7%	87.7%	84.0%	75.8%
East Wake Arts		90.0%	88.6%	80.5%	72.6%
East Wake Engineering		93.8%	87.9%	92.8%	83.5%
Enloe	89.4%	89.4%	88.4%	85.1%	86.7%
Fuquay-Varina	79.5%	80.0%	84.9%	84.0%	86.0%
Garner	75.8%	77.8%	77.4%	74.7%	77.4%
Green Hope	94.4%	94.0%	94.3%	93.4%	95.4%
Holly Springs			92.2%	84.1%	88.6%
Knightdale	87.5%	81.9%	76.5%	77.5%	80.7%
Leesville	89.4%	88.6%	90.2%	89.2%	89.0%
Middle Creek	92.1%	85.9%	82.6%	85.2%	88.1%
Millbrook	80.2%	79.4%	75.7%	79.3%	83.5%
Panther Creek			97.7%	93.6%	95.0%
Phillips	45.0%	65.6%	79.1%	79.3%	83.3%
Sanderson	80.5%	79.5%	79.6%	79.5%	82.6%
Southeast Raleigh	88.2%	87.0%	84.8%	86.7%	80.7%
Wake Early College					98.2%
Wake Forest-Rolesville	86.0%	85.2%	87.3%	89.8%	88.9%
Wakefield	86.6%	86.4%	88.5%	86.3%	91.0%

Note: Schools with blank values had no five-year graduation cohort in that school year.