



Graduation Matters:

Improving Accountability for High School Graduation

By Daria Hall

Almost one million students who start ninth grade each year will not earn a diploma four years later. That's one of every four students.¹ For African American and Latino students, it's closer to one in three.²

These figures represent an incalculable loss of talent and carry profound civic and economic consequences. For years, however, they were hidden from public view by state reporting systems that dramatically undercounted dropouts.³

Only in the last two years has the problem of overstating graduation rates received widespread attention. And after much public criticism from independent researchers and a clamor in the press for more honest reporting of the data, state practice has begun to change. Some states are now reporting the more accurate graduation rate agreed to in the 2005 National Governors Association "Graduation Counts Compact on State High School Graduation Data," and many others have committed to doing so soon.⁴


But reporting honest graduation-rate data and doing something about the problem are two different things. There has been almost no attention to the fact that states have set woefully

low goals for improving their graduation rates – and that current federal policy lets them get away with it.

An analysis of accountability for high school graduation rates under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) reveals two major problems:

1. State goals for raising graduation rates are far too low to spur needed improvement;
2. Gaps between student groups are allowed to persist by an accountability system that looks only at average graduation rates.

The high school diploma is the bare minimum credential necessary to have a fighting chance at successful participation in the workforce or civil society. Yet current high school accountability policies represent a stunning indifference to whether young people actually earn this critical credential. To spur improvement, we need accurate data. But we also need to set ambitious graduation-rate goals for all groups of students, measure whether schools are meeting them, and provide strategic supports to struggling students and schools.



Two States: Some Sobering Lessons in Data Quality

Texas has been a leader in developing a statewide education data system with unique identifiers that follow students through their school careers.⁽ⁱ⁾ This has also allowed the state to be a leader in asking important questions about school and student success. According to the National Governors Association (NGA), Texas has been calculating and using NGA's Graduation Counts Compact graduation rate since 1996.⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

However, the graduation rate Texas reports is significantly higher than the best available external estimate calculated by independent researchers. The state reports an 84 percent graduation rate for the class of 2005, while researchers at the U.S. Department of Education put the figure at 74 percent.⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ The reason for this discrepancy? State calculations are plagued with data quality problems.

Of the students in the state's 2005 graduation cohort, 12,655—nearly 4 percent—were coded in the system as “data errors” and removed from the calculation altogether. And despite the state's ability to track individual students, 20,067 of 195,042 students—roughly ten percent—who were reported to have transferred between Texas school districts in 2004-05 could not actually be verified as transfers. Texas does not require that districts track students who withdraw with intent to enroll elsewhere to confirm that they do re-enroll; instead, these students are simply counted as transfers.^(iv) Such data errors and unverified transfers undermine the integrity of Texas's graduation-rate calculations.^(v)

Indiana offers further evidence of the need to keep pressure on state graduation-rate accuracy. According to the NGA, the state began reporting the Compact rate in 2006.

But data from Indianapolis give cause for concern. The state reported a 52 percent graduation rate for the district for 2005-06, but at the same time said that 33 percent more students graduated from 12th grade that year than were actually enrolled: 969 12th-graders and 1,281 graduates.^(vi) While some students surely transferred into Indianapolis during their 12th grade, it's improbable that transfer-in figures were so high. The Indianapolis school community cannot allow such dubious data to go unexplained—or unchallenged.

Evidence from Texas and Indiana makes clear that advocates, the media, and the public in general must remain vigilant in assessing the quality of publicly-reported graduation rates, and that states need to establish clear procedures for assuring the accuracy of their data.

(i) For more information see The Data Quality Campaign, 2006 Survey of State Longitudinal Data Systems, online at <http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/>

(ii) National Governors Association, “Implementing Graduation Counts: State Progress to Date,” 2006.

(iii) See Appendix A for more information on state-reported graduation rates, along with the best available external estimates.

(iv) Texas Education Agency, “Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2004-05,” July 2006.

(v) For additional information on Texas's graduation-rate calculations, see Daniel Losen, Gary Orfield, and Robert Balfanz, “Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis in Texas,” The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, October 2006.

(vi) For graduation-rate data see <http://www.doe.state.in.us/htmls/gradrate.html> For enrollment figures see <http://www.doe.state.in.us/asap/data.html>

Graduation-Rate Accountability under NCLB

Under NCLB's accountability provisions, known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), schools must demonstrate progress in educating all students to state standards in reading and math. High schools must also meet goals set by their states for graduation rates.⁵

Taken together, these proficiency and graduation-rate goals are meant to ensure that schools do the hard but critical work of bringing all students to grade level in the core academic subjects of reading and math as well as seeing that all students leave high school with a diploma in hand. The inclusion of reading and math proficiency rates in the AYP calculation is essential to ensuring that students possess at least basic literacy and numeracy skills. The inclusion of graduation rates is essential to ensure that rising test scores aren't the result of lower-performing students leaving high school before they graduate.

Improving academic achievement and improving graduation rates are equally-important imperatives for our nation's high schools. It is critical that schools not be deemed to be making adequate progress unless they are meeting both goals.

But while the AYP provisions of No Child Left Behind include explicit procedures by which states set targets for increasing reading and math proficiency rates, the law left states with unfettered discretion in setting their graduation-rate goals and improvement targets. An analysis of these state-set goals and improvement targets shows that

Table 1: State Graduation-Rate Goals and Improvement Targets for the Class of 2006

	Graduation-Rate Goal for the Class of 2006	Annual Improvement Target
Alabama	90.00%	Any progress
Alaska	55.58%	Any progress
Arizona	71.00%	1 percentage point
Arkansas	One standard deviation below the mean	Any progress
California*	82.90%	0.1 percentage point over 1 year or 0.2 percentage points over 2 years
Colorado*	57.40%	Na
Connecticut	70.00%	Any progress
Delaware*	79.50%	Equal or exceed previous year's graduation rate
District of Columbia	District average	1 percentage point if below district average; less than 2 percentage point decline over 2 years if above district average
Florida	85.00%	1%
Georgia	60.00%	Any progress
Hawaii*	75.00%	Na
Idaho	90.00%	Any progress
Illinois*	72.00%	Na
Indiana	95.00% over 2 years	Any progress over 2-year period
Iowa	95.00%	Any progress
Kansas	75.00%	Any progress
Kentucky*	80.00%	Any progress
Louisiana	To be determined	0.1%
Maine*	64.00%	Na
Maryland*	83.24%	one tenth of 1%
Massachusetts	55.00%	Na
Michigan*	85.00%	10% reduction in difference between actual rate and goal over 2 years
Minnesota	80.00%	Any progress
Mississippi	72.00%	Any progress
Missouri	85.00%	Any progress
Montana	80.00%	Any progress
Nebraska	83.97%	Any progress
Nevada	50.00%	Any progress
New Hampshire	75.00%	Any progress
New Jersey	Na	Na
New Mexico	90.00%	Current year rate equals or exceeds previous year's rate or rate averaged over 3 years equals or exceeds previous year's rate
New York	55.00%	1 percentage point
North Carolina	90.00%	0.1 percentage point
North Dakota	73.09%	Na
Ohio	73.60% for current year or for 2 year average	Any progress
Oklahoma	67.80%	Any progress
Oregon	68.10% for current year or for 2 year weighted average	Na
Pennsylvania	80.00%	Any progress
Rhode Island*	75.30%	Na
South Carolina	88.30%	Current year rate equals or exceeds previous year's rate or rate averaged over 3 years equals or exceeds previous year's rate
South Dakota	80.00%	Any progress
Tennessee	90.00% for current year, most recent 2 years' worth of data, or 3 year rolling average	Any progress
Texas	70.00%	Any progress
Utah	85.70%	Any progress
Vermont	72.00%	Na
Virginia	57.00%	Any progress
Washington	68.00%	2 percentage points
West Virginia	80.00%	Any progress
Wisconsin	90% of state average	Any progress
Wyoming	80.00%	Any progress

Na = Improvement targets not specified in State Accountability Workbooks

* These ten states have set graduation-rate goals that increase over time. For example, Delaware's graduation-rate goal increases by 1.5 percentage points annually.

Source: State Consolidated Accountability Workbooks posted on the U.S. Department of Education website as of June 2007. Additional data collected from the individual state education department websites, as of July 2007.

most of them have used this discretion in ways that undercut the aim of improving graduation rates for all groups of students.

Table 1 shows the graduation-rate goals and improvement targets set by each state for the graduating class of 2006. There's a wide range: from Nevada, which has so little faith in its students and schools that its goal is a mere 50 percent graduation rate, to Indiana and Iowa, states that have 95 percent graduation-rate goals. But even the most ambitious graduation goals are rendered all but irrelevant by low state-set improvement targets. Schools meeting these improvement targets are deemed to be making adequate progress, even if they don't meet the actual goal. Three states have actually defined "improvement" as not losing ground from the year before. Others have set improvement targets as low as one-tenth of one percent. And 28 states have said that *any progress at all* from the previous year is sufficient.

Take a high school with a 60 percent graduation rate. In South Carolina, that school is considered to be doing fine, so long as it didn't have a higher graduation rate the year before. In Wisconsin, it's considered to be doing fine if it improved at all – even to just 60.01 percent. And in California, the rate is expected to improve to 61 percent – over the next 10 years.

It's important also to understand that once schools meet their state's graduation-rate goal, these improvement targets, low as they are, no longer apply. So in Georgia – with its 60 percent goal – a high school with a 70 percent rate is never expected to make any progress. Indeed, it can fall from 70 percent in one year to 61 percent the next with no consequence – and no expectation of improvement, ever.

These too-low goals and all-but-meaningless improvement targets serve as an alarming indicator of an unwillingness to address the critical needs of our high schools and their

students. With graduation rates so low, we need targets that provoke action on behalf of students, not ones that condone the status quo.

Is Significant Improvement Really Possible?

New data from New York City indicate that, even in the most challenging of environments, significant – and rapid – improvement is possible. Table 2 shows that graduation rates in the city's high schools increased by six percentage points between 2004 and 2006.⁶

Table 2: New York City 4-Year Graduation Rates

	Class of 2004	Class of 2005	Class of 2006	Trend from '04 to '06
Overall	44%	47%	50%	+6
African American	37%	41%	43%	+6
Asian	62%	65%	68%	+6
Latino	35%	39%	41%	+6
White	63%	64%	67%	+4

Source: Overall data from the New York City Department of Education, available online at http://schools.nyc.gov/daa/reports/Highlights_SED%20Release_2002_Cohort.pdf. Group data provided by New York City Department of Education, Division of Assessment and Accountability, July 2007.

While the district's graduation rates are still far too low, these gains translate into diplomas in the hands of many more students: over 3,000 more African American and Latino students received their diploma in 2006 than would have if New York's graduation rate had not improved.⁷

Educators in New York City have achieved far more improvement in their graduation rate than is currently expected by their state leaders or those in any other state. Rather than being seen as an exception, this kind of improvement must be seen as the rule – as evidence of what we can, and should, expect of systems and schools nationwide.

Accountability for All Groups of Students

Educators and school leaders who have been successful in improving results as well as narrowing the gaps that separate low-income students and students of color from their peers will tell you that the only way to accomplish this is to set explicit goals for all groups of students – goals that not only expect lower-performing students to improve at the same rate as their peers, but expect them to catch up.⁸

Unfortunately, the wisdom of these committed educators has not been translated into federal graduation-rate accountability policy. Under NCLB, the low goals and improvement targets the states have set are only required to be applied to overall averages, not to different groups of students. Most states have been content with looking only at averages, but Massachusetts – a recognized leader in setting and holding schools and students accountable for meeting high standards – has once again set itself apart by holding schools accountable for the graduation rates of all groups of students when making AYP determinations.⁹

Massachusetts began following outcomes for individual students who were first-time

ninth graders in 2002-03, and those who transferred into the cohort over time. These students made up the “2006 cohort,” as they would be expected to graduate high school at the end of the 2005-06 school year. In February 2007, the state issued a comprehensive report of what happened to those nearly 75,000 students after four years: 80 percent of them received a standard diploma by the end of the 2005-06 school year. However, as can be seen in Table 3, graduation rates for African American, Latino, and low-income students were far below the state average, while dropout rates and the rates at which these students remained in school beyond four years were far above the state average.¹⁰

The NCLB accountability graduation-rate goal that Massachusetts set for the class of 2006 was 55 percent, one of the lowest of the state-set goals.¹¹ As more data become available, the state has said it plans to revisit its goals for subsequent years.¹² This will provide an important opportunity for the state’s leaders to set much higher expectations for districts, high schools, and young people themselves. However, even with this low goal, Massachusetts is taking responsibility for significant numbers of low-income students and students of color by applying its goal to all groups of students, not just the overall average.

Table 3: Outcomes for Massachusetts 2002-03 First-Time 9th Graders Four Years Later[†]

	Number	Percentage of Students in 2006 Cohort Who				
		Graduated	Dropped Out	Still in School	Received GED	Non-Grad Completers*
Overall	74,380	79.9%	11.7%	6.4%	0.8%	1.0%
African American	6,646	64.4%	18.0%	13.5%	1.1%	2.5%
Latino	8,393	56.9%	26.5%	12.0%	1.2%	3.0%
White	55,074	85.1%	8.9%	4.6%	0.7%	0.5%
Low-Income	24,305	62.3%	22.0%	12.0%	1.2%	2.1%

[†] Plus transfers in, minus transfers out.

* Massachusetts defines ‘non-grad completers’ as 1) students who earned a certificate of attainment, 2) students who met local graduation requirements but the district does not offer certificates of attainment, and 3) students with special needs who reached the maximum age (22) but did not graduate.

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, Cohort 2006 Graduation Rates- State Results, available online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/06state.html>

New school-level data from Massachusetts show that in 2006, 37 high schools in the state had an overall graduation rate of at least 55 percent but had at least one student group (representing major racial and ethnic groups, low-income students, students with disabilities, or English language learners) performing below that bar. As is clear in Table 4, many students attend such schools. For example, 16 percent of Latino students in the 2006 cohort attended one of the 11 high schools with an overall graduation rate above 55 percent but a Latino graduation rate lower than that.¹³

With only a goal for the overall graduation rate, these schools would slip below the radar. But Massachusetts has asked them to step up and take responsibility for improving group performance. Because of that decision, attention will be called to these students, which is the first step toward getting them the support they need.

Many states, however, cannot even account for the outcomes of different groups of students, let alone implement accountability for improving their outcomes. According to the most recent data submitted by the states to the U.S. Department of Education, just half of the states reported graduation rates for students from major racial/ethnic groups, low-income students, students with disabilities, and English language learners for class of 2005.¹⁴ Table 5 lists those states that did not report for at least one of those groups. (See Appendix A for a full list of state-reported graduation-rate data for the class of 2005.)

Calculating and reporting honest graduation rates for all groups of

Table 4: Number and Demographic Profile of Massachusetts High Schools with Average Graduation Rates of at Least 55% but Subgroup Graduation Rates Below 55% in 2006. (Subgroup size of 40 or more)

	Number of schools with overall grad rate \geq 55% AND subgroup grad rate $<$ 55%	Number of 2006 cohort members in these schools	Percentage of all 2006 cohort members statewide in these schools
African American	4	266	4%
Latino	11	1,308	16%
White	0	0	0%
Low-Income	17	2,491	10%

Example for reading this table: In 2005-06, 17 schools had an overall graduation rate greater than or equal to 55% but a graduation rate for low-income students (for groups comprising at least 40 students) that was less than 55%. The 2,491 low-income 2006 cohort members in these 17 schools represented 10% of all low-income 2006 cohort members in the state.

Source: Education Trust analysis of school-level data from the Massachusetts Department of Education, <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/gradrates.aspx>.

students are the necessary first steps in designing accountability systems that our schools and students need. Throughout the debate on NCLB, there is near-universal consensus that disaggregating student achievement data has made a positive contribution by focusing on equity and the achievement of all students. This same equity focus is badly needed on graduation rates if we are going to close the huge graduation gaps between groups.

Lessons for Graduation-Rate Accountability

There is a clear role for national policy to address these problems. Congress needs to ensure that student graduation rates matter just as much as student achievement when evaluating school performance; both are essential indicators of whether high schools are achieving their mission. Doing well on one and not the other cannot be considered adequate – we need more young people graduating from high school *and* we need to ensure they have the foundational knowledge and skills that will allow them to pursue their goals. Congress should reject recent proposals to make graduation rates count less than they do under current law.

Table 5: States That Did Not Report Graduation Rates For The Class of 2005 For At Least One Student Group*

	Race/Ethnicity	Low Income	Students with Disabilities	English Language Learners
Alabama	X	X	X	X
California		X		X
Connecticut		X	X	X
District of Columbia		X	X	X
Idaho	X	X	X	X
Iowa		X	X	X
Kentucky	X	X	X	X
Louisiana	X	X	X	X
Maine		X	X	X
Massachusetts	X	X	X	X
Michigan	X	X	X	X
Mississippi	X	X	X	X
Montana		X	X	X
Nebraska		X	X	X
Nevada		X	X	X
New Hampshire		X	X	X
New Jersey		X	X	X
New Mexico		X		
Oklahoma		X	X	X
Rhode Island		X	X	X
Tennessee		X	X	X
Utah		X	X	X
Vermont	X	X	X	X
Virginia		X	X	X
Wisconsin		X		X

* These figures reflect state reporting to the U.S. Department of Education in December 2006, the most recent source of comprehensive state graduation-rate data available. Some states, such as Massachusetts and Mississippi, have subsequently made additional graduation-rate data available in their own public reporting.

Source: Consolidated State Performance Reports for 2005-06 submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in December 2006.

The data above also point to some important ways to improve federal policy. First, we need to account for how well schools are serving all groups of students. And we need to set real improvement goals, which states have so far declined to do. Indeed, despite the critique that federal lawmakers weren't respectful enough of the states' role in setting improvement goals in other parts of the law, states did not prove themselves to be conscientious actors when given that latitude with regard to graduation. Most used their discretion to declare that not falling backward was sufficient.

The pending reauthorization of No Child Left Behind provides federal policymakers with an opportunity not only to craft

meaningful graduation-rate accountability, but also to provide high schools with greater resources and support to meet ambitious improvement targets. A greater share of the federal investment should be targeted to high schools, which would have the salutary effect of applying accountability to more high schools.¹⁵ But Congress should also target its investments to improve their effectiveness. Resources should be provided to improve curriculum and assessment in high schools, to better direct funds and interventions toward the lowest performing schools, and to ensure that high-poverty and high-minority schools get their fair share of our best teachers.¹⁶

There are also clear lessons for state policymakers, both about the problems with – and possibilities for improving – graduation-rate accountability. Every state should:

- ◆ Calculate an accurate graduation rate based on the percentage of first-time ninth graders who earn a standard diploma four years later;
- ◆ Use this accurate information when holding schools accountable for making progress;
- ◆ Set ambitious goals and aggressive improvement targets for meeting those goals;
- ◆ Hold schools accountable for improving the graduation rates of all groups of students.

Accurate data and meaningful accountability should be the bases of comprehensive systems for providing help to struggling schools and districts. States must work to identify potential dropouts, build capacity for support and intervention through state and local education agencies as well as through external partners, and develop a proactive agenda for creating new schools where persistent failure has endured for years.

Conclusion

Good policy alone cannot solve our high school problems. But bad policy – policy that papers over problems, sanctions low goals, and ignores achievement gaps – makes it much less likely that we will muster the required resolve and resources.

Ironically, America led the world in high school graduation at a time when attaining a diploma was less critical to social and economic mobility. The lead we built through early adoption of universal secondary education has evaporated, and many other countries both graduate more of their young people and boast greater social and economic mobility. According to the most recent data, the U.S. ranks 17th in high school graduation in the developed world, behind countries such as Germany, France, even Hungary.¹⁷ And we trail France, Germany, Denmark, and a host of other European nations in economic mobility.¹⁸ We can reverse these trends, but it will take hard work and the concerted efforts of policymakers, educators, and communities.

Improving graduation rates for all groups of students won't happen overnight, but it will never happen if it is not even a goal we are working toward.

Endnotes

¹ National Center for Education Statistics, "Public Elementary and Secondary School Student Enrollment, High School Completions, and Staff from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2005-06," June 2007, Table 4.

² Editorial Projects in Education, "Diplomas Count: Ready for What? Preparing Students for College, Careers, and Life After High School," June 2007.

³ For more on inaccuracies in state high school graduation-rate reporting, see The Education Trust, "Getting Honest About Grad Rates: How States Play the Numbers and Students Lose," June 2005; and Editorial Projects in Education, "Diplomas Count: An Essential Guide to Graduation Policy and Rates," June 2006.

⁴ For more information on the Graduation Counts Compact, see National Governors Association, "Graduation Counts: A Report of the National Governors Association Task Force on State High School Graduation Data," 2005, and "Implementing Graduation Counts: State Progress to Date," 2006.

⁵ For more on Adequate Yearly Progress, see The Education Trust, "The ABCs of AYP," Summer 2004.

⁶ More information about New York City's graduation rate is available online here: http://schools.nyc.gov/News/2006-2007/20070521_grad_rate.htm

⁷ Education Trust analysis of data provided by New York City Department of Education, Division of Assessment and Accountability, July 2007.

⁸ Profiles of schools that have successfully raised achievement and narrowed achievement gaps are available in Karin Chenoweth, *It's Being Done: Academic Success in Unexpected Schools*, Harvard Education Press, 2007.

⁹ For information on subgroup graduation-rate accountability in Massachusetts, see the Massachusetts Consolidated Accountability Workbook posted on the U.S. Department of Education website. For information on Massachusetts's academic

standards, see National Center for Education Statistics, "Mapping 2005 State Proficiency Standards Onto the NAEP Scales," June 7, 2007. For information on academic achievement in Massachusetts, see The Education Trust, "Education Watch State NAEP Tables," Fall 2006.

¹⁰ Information on Massachusetts's graduation rate is available online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/>

¹¹ This goal was set by the Massachusetts Board of Education in February 2007. More information is available online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/bib/07/0227.html>

¹² Email correspondence with Kenneth Klau, Massachusetts Department of Education Office of NCLB Accountability, July 13, 2007.

¹³ Analysis based on schools with subgroup cohorts of at least 40 students, the minimum n-size Massachusetts has set for NCLB achievement accountability purposes according to the Massachusetts Consolidated Accountability Workbook posted on the U.S. Department of Education website.

¹⁴ Data are from the Consolidated State Performance Reports for 2005-06 submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in December, 2006.

¹⁵ Only those schools that receive funding under Title I of NCLB are subject to the law's accountability provisions.

¹⁶ A full set of recommendations for NCLB reauthorization are available from The Education Trust online at <http://www.2edtrust.org/EdTrust/Press+Room/NCLB+Recommendations.htm>

¹⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, "Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators," 2006, Table A1.2.

¹⁸ Tom Hertz, "Understanding Mobility in America," The Center for American Progress, 2006.

Appendix A: Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate and State-Reported Graduation Rates for the Class of 2005

This table presents the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate—the best-available external estimate of state 4-year graduation rates*—along with the most recent graduation-rate data reported by the states to the U.S. Department of Education for the class of 2005.

	Avg Freshman Grad Rate, Calculated by the US Dept of Ed	State-Reported Graduation Rates								
		Overall	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Af. Am.	Am. Indian	Latino	White	Low- Income	Students with Disabilities	Limited English Proficient
Alabama	65.90%	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Alaska	64.10%	61.40%	59.90%	47.30%	43.20%	51.10%	70.90%	47.60%	39.10%	36.60%
Arizona**	84.70%	75.00%	86.00%	72.00%	59.00%	64.00%	83.00%	75.00%	61.00%	59.00%
Arkansas	75.70%	81.30%	87.70%	75.90%	76.80%	73.00%	83.30%	84.10%	85.90%	79.00%
California	74.60%	85.00%	93.20%	73.70%	81.00%	79.10%	91.20%	Na	61.20%	Na
Colorado	76.70%	80.10%	86.10%	74.00%	62.60%	63.70%	85.50%	81.60%	76.50%	79.70%
Connecticut	80.90%	91.20%	94.10%	87.30%	87.70%	82.40%	93.30%	Na	Na	Na
Delaware	73.10%	83.70%	92.60%	77.30%	86.70%	67.30%	87.80%	73.00%	71.50%	71.30%
District of Columbia	68.80%	69.90%	78.50%	70.70%	Na	45.20%	84.60%	Na	Na	Na
Florida	64.60%	69.00%	81.20%	52.90%	68.90%	62.10%	78.30%	54.30%	36.80%	47.20%
Georgia	61.70%	69.40%	80.40%	61.90%	72.40%	55.30%	75.00%	60.10%	29.40%	37.70%
Hawaii	75.10%	79.60%	80.00%	74.30%	78.90%	72.40%	78.40%	74.10%	71.60%	71.50%
Idaho	81.00%	86.60%	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Illinois	79.40%	87.40%	93.40%	77.70%	86.00%	76.00%	92.20%	75.80%	76.10%	62.80%
Indiana	73.20%	89.90%	95.20%	86.00%	79.90%	82.90%	90.70%	83.90%	84.80%	89.80%
Iowa	86.60%	90.70%	90.90%	76.50%	77.00%	74.10%	92.00%	Na	Na	Na
Kansas	79.20%	90.20%	91.30%	83.10%	81.50%	79.00%	92.10%	83.90%	87.20%	76.60%
Kentucky	75.90%	82.80%	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Louisiana	63.90%	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Maine	78.60%	87.22%	88.20%	85.60%	78.60%	78.00%	86.20%	Na	Na	Na
Maryland	79.30%	84.80%	94.60%	78.20%	82.10%	82.30%	88.60%	81.60%	77.60%	91.70%
Massachusetts	78.70%	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Michigan	73.00%	87.70%	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Minnesota	85.90%	90.10%	86.50%	67.30%	70.50%	60.00%	93.60%	79.60%	82.10%	67.80%
Mississippi	63.30%	85.00%	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Missouri	80.60%	85.80%	94.50%	77.10%	83.50%	81.50%	87.50%	79.70%	83.50%	82.30%
Montana	81.50%	84.80%	90.80%	76.90%	63.60%	81.10%	87.30%	Na	Na	Na
Nebraska	87.80%	88.00%	90.00%	63.00%	59.00%	67.00%	91.00%	Na	Na	Na
Nevada	55.80%	64.90%	73.70%	49.70%	55.50%	50.70%	72.80%	Na	Na	Na
New Hampshire	80.10%	86.60%	89.90%	78.10%	81.30%	77.80%	86.90%	Na	Na	Na
New Jersey	85.10%	91.30%	98.80%	83.90%	64.30%	83.20%	95.00%	Na	Na	Na
New Mexico	65.40%	85.00%	90.00%	83.00%	76.00%	84.00%	90.00%	Na	73.00%	76.00%
New York	65.30%	77.00%	80.00%	60.00%	65.00%	57.00%	86.00%	64.00%	49.00%	44.00%
North Carolina	72.60%	95.00%	95.00%	93.10%	95.00%	91.80%	95.00%	94.00%	91.60%	86.70%
North Dakota	86.30%	86.70%	78.30%	75.00%	63.30%	81.40%	89.00%	78.00%	85.70%	66.70%
Ohio	80.20%	86.20%	92.50%	68.40%	74.00%	74.10%	89.80%	79.70%	83.90%	77.30%
Oklahoma	76.90%	82.40%	90.60%	76.20%	86.30%	70.20%	86.40%	Na	Na	Na

State-Reported Graduation Rates (continued)

	Avg Freshman Grad Rate, Calculated by the US Dept of Ed	Overall	Asian/Pacific Islander	Af. Am.	Am. Indian	Latino	White	Low-Income	Students with Disabilities	Limited English Proficient
Oregon	74.20%	81.70%	90.30%	69.40%	72.70%	63.90%	85.10%	82.60%	61.90%	59.30%
Pennsylvania	82.50%	87.60%	90.40%	74.20%	86.40%	68.20%	91.20%	79.00%	81.30%	72.00%
Rhode Island	78.40%	85.00%	81.00%	78.70%	72.40%	73.70%	87.80%	Na	Na	Na
South Carolina	60.10%	77.10%	83.80%	68.70%	67.60%	67.40%	83.20%	64.90%	35.10%	51.60%
South Dakota	82.30%	89.10%	81.10%	74.40%	66.30%	58.20%	91.70%	82.80%	81.70%	63.60%
Tennessee	68.50%	77.90%	84.10%	64.70%	68.20%	67.40%	82.60%	Na	Na	Na
Texas	74.00%	84.00%	92.70%	81.70%	84.30%	77.40%	89.50%	77.40%	74.80%	61.20%
Utah	84.40%	82.10%	79.20%	68.20%	63.50%	63.20%	84.80%	Na	Na	Na
Vermont	86.50%	87.20%	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Virginia	79.60%	79.50%	89.20%	70.10%	81.00%	68.10%	83.00%	Na	Na	Na
Washington	75.00%	79.30%	85.20%	68.40%	60.60%	67.40%	82.10%	72.10%	73.10%	75.20%
West Virginia	77.30%	84.30%	92.20%	81.20%	63.60%	88.50%	84.30%	78.00%	75.20%	87.80%
Wisconsin	86.70%	88.80%	88.50%	62.90%	70.40%	72.40%	92.60%	Na	80.60%	Na
Wyoming	76.70%	81.50%	90.30%	64.90%	51.30%	68.50%	83.40%	61.40%	48.20%	55.10%

* A U.S. Department of Education analysis found that, of all the commonly-used graduation-rate estimates, the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR), calculated by the National Center for Education Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education, is the closest approximation of true cohort graduation rates. For more information, see National Center for Education Statistics, "User's Guide to Computing High School Graduation Rates, Volume 2: Technical Report: Technical Evaluations of Proxy Indicators," August 2006.

** Arizona reported graduation rates for the class of 2006.

Source for Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate Data: National Center for Education Statistics, "Public Elementary and Secondary School Student Enrollment, High School Completions, and Staff from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2005-06," June 2007. The U.S. Department of Education does not disaggregate the AFGR by student race/ethnicity, income status, disability status, or English language proficiency.

Source for State-Reported Data: Consolidated State Performance Reports for 2005-06 submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in December 2006.

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ABOUT THE EDUCATION TRUST



The Education Trust, Inc. was created to promote high academic achievement for all students, at all levels – pre-kindergarten through college. While we know that all schools and colleges could better serve their students, our work focuses on the schools and colleges most often left behind in plans to improve education: those serving African American, Latino, Native American and low-income students.

The Education Trust works side by side with policymakers, parents, education professionals, community and business leaders – in cities and towns across the country – who are trying to transform their schools and colleges into institutions that genuinely serve all students. We also bring lessons learned in local communities back to Washington to help inform national policy debates.

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