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Graduation and Dropout Statistics Annual Report

April 2015

Authorizing legislation: [RCW 28A.175.010](#)

(<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.175&full=true#28A.175.010>)

Assessment and Student Information

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Executive Summary

Graduation and dropout rates are important indicators of the status of K–12 education in Washington state. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) prepares an annual graduation and dropout report that includes information for all students as well as the sub-categories of students represented within the Washington state report card.

Graduation rates are calculated using the “adjusted cohort rate” methodology. Students are placed in a group — or cohort — based on the year they enter ninth grade for the first time. The calculation adjusts for students who transfer into a Washington public high school for the first time and join a cohort. Students are removed from the cohort if they transfer out of public school in Washington.

The adjusted cohort method tracks individual students over time and does not rely on estimates. It generally aligns with what most people think of as a graduation rate: Among a group of students who started high school together, what percent graduated in four (or five) years?

This methodology is mandated by the U.S. Department of Education. Results are produced for both four-year and five-year cohorts of students.

Washington’s four-year graduation rate is 77.2 percent for students who entered ninth grade for the first time in 2010–11. We commonly call this the Class of 2014. The rate is an increase of 1.2 percent from the Class of 2013, which had a four-year graduation rate of 76.0 percent.

The five-year graduation rate, for students who entered ninth grade for the first time in 2009–10, is 79.9 percent. This is an increase from the previous year; the five-year rate for 2013 was 78.8 percent.

Following are Washington’s current four- and five-year graduation rates, listed by student group:

Student group	4-year	5-year
American Indian	53.7%	58.0%
Asian	86.5%	87.6%
Pacific Islander	64.6%	67.5%
Black	67.8%	71.4%
Hispanic	67.3%	70.8%
White	80.5%	82.8%
Two or More Races	75.5%	80.0%
Special Education	55.7%	62.8%
Limited English	53.7%	59.6%
Low Income	66.4%	69.7%
Migrant	63.6%	67.1%
504 Plan	74.8%	79.8%
Homeless	46.1%	51.9%
Foster Care	41.5%	42.5%
Female	81.0%	83.1%
Male	73.6%	76.7%

Introduction

Purpose

Under the guidelines of state law, RCW 28A.175.010, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required to report annually on the educational progress of public school students in grades 7–12. Federal guidelines provided by the U.S. Department of Education, issued under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), require all states to determine adjusted cohort graduation results for students. To meet the state and federal reporting requirements, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction prepares an annual report summarizing the annual enrollment activity of students in school grades 7–12 and adjusted cohort results for students.

Definitions

Adjusted Cohort: A group of students identified as beginning ninth grade in a specified year. Students are included in the cohort based on when they first enter ninth grade, regardless of their expected graduation year. The cohort of entering ninth graders is “adjusted” for transfers in and out of high school through the next four and five years.

Dropout: A student who leaves school for any reason, except death, before completing school with a regular diploma or transferring to another school with a known exit reason. A student is considered a dropout regardless of when dropping out occurs (i.e., during or between regular school terms). A student who leaves during the year but returns during the reporting period is not considered a dropout.

Graduate: A student who earns a high school diploma, a high school diploma with modifications allowed under a student’s Individualized Education Plan, or an associate degree from a community or technical college.

For information about data collection, calculations, and verification, please see the 2011–12 report which details the graduation formulas.

Graduation Rates

Results for Adjusted 4-Year Cohort

The adjusted four-year cohort graduation rate is calculated using the group of students identified as entering ninth grade for the first time in 2010–11 and who are reported as graduates by the end of 2013–14.

Table 1: Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (4-year)

Student Group	<i>Received High School Diploma</i>	<i>Graduated w/ Associates Degree</i>	Total All Graduates	Adjusted Cohort	Adjusted 4-Year Cohort Rate
All Students	60,327	353	60,680	78,556	77.2%
Amer. Indian	699	1	700	1,303	53.7%
Asian	5,176	22	5,198	6,008	86.5%
Pacific Islander	428	0	428	663	64.6%
Black	2,548	3	2,551	3,762	67.8%
Hispanic	9,105	28	9,133	13,572	67.3%
White	39,176	282	39,458	48,990	80.5%
Two or More Races	3,195	17	3,212	4,255	75.5%
Special Education	5,094	3	5,097	9,152	55.7%
Limited English	2,326	6	2,332	4,343	53.7%
Low Income	26,107	109	26,216	39,507	66.4%
Migrant	1,273	3	1,276	2,005	63.6%
504 Plan	2,762	5	2,767	3,701	74.8%
Homeless	1,380	1	1,381	2,998	46.1%
Foster Care	306	2	308	742	41.5%
Female	30,948	240	31,188	38,481	81.0%
Male	29,379	113	29,492	40,075	73.6%

Of the 60,680 students reported as graduates in the four-year cohort, 475 students were reported as graduating in less than four years¹.

¹Students who graduate prior to February of the fourth year are defined as graduating in less than four years.

Results for Adjusted 5-Year Cohort

The adjusted five-year cohort graduation rate is calculated using the group of students identified as entering ninth grade for the first time in 2009–10 and who are reported as graduates by the end of 2013–14. The table below shows the adjusted cohort five-year rate as well as the four-year rate for the same cohort. The difference between the two columns represents the percentage of the cohort who graduated in their fifth year of high school.

Table 2: Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (5-year)

Student Group	<i>Received High School Diploma</i>	<i>Graduated w/ Associates Degree</i>	Total All Graduates	Adjusted Cohort	Adjusted 5-Year Cohort Rate	(2013) Adjusted 4-Year Cohort Rate
All Students	63,765	318	64,083	80,224	79.9%	76.0%
Amer. Indian	762	4	766	1,321	58.0%	52.5%
Asian	5,243	15	5,258	6,001	87.6%	84.1%
Pacific Islander	416	0	416	616	67.5%	62.3%
Black	2,734	9	2,743	3,842	71.4%	65.4%
Hispanic	9,615	22	9,637	13,621	70.8%	65.6%
White	41,689	255	41,944	50,666	82.8%	79.4%
Two or More Races	3,306	13	3,319	4,148	80.0%	76.2%
Special Education	5,657	0	5,657	9,009	62.8%	54.4%
Limited English	2,682	0	2,682	4,497	59.6%	50.4%
Low Income	27,530	107	27,637	39,661	69.7%	64.6%
Migrant	1,520	1	1,521	2,266	67.1%	62.3%
504 Plan	2,686	6	2,692	3,374	79.8%	75.1%
Homeless	2,262	2	2,264	4,364	51.9%	45.1%
Foster Care	338	0	338	795	42.5%	36.6%
Female	32,626	227	32,853	39,531	83.1%	79.9%
Male	31,139	91	31,230	40,693	76.7%	72.3%

Of the 64,083 students reported as graduates in the five-year cohort, 3,339 students were reported as graduating in the fifth year of the cohort.

Dropout Rates

Results for Adjusted 4-Year Cohort

Students identified as entering ninth grade for the first time in 2010–11 and who are reported as dropouts within the four-year timeframe are reported in the year in which they dropped out.

Table 3: Adjusted Cohort Dropouts (4-year)

Student Group	Dropouts Year 1	Dropouts Year 2	Dropouts Year 3	Dropouts Year 4	Total Dropouts	Adjusted 4-Year Cohort Dropout Rate
All Students	610	1,104	2,288	5,668	9,670	12.3%
Amer. Indian	22	48	100	177	347	26.6%
Asian	37	52	74	199	362	6.0%
Pacific Islander	10	12	26	78	126	19.0%
Black	48	61	121	339	569	15.1%
Hispanic	153	275	559	1,412	2,399	17.7%
White	317	603	1,249	3,129	5,298	10.8%
Two or More Races	23	53	159	331	566	13.3%
Special Education	69	177	411	1,005	1,662	18.2%
Limited English	97	130	218	577	1,022	23.5%
Low Income	339	785	1,735	4,345	7,204	18.2%
Migrant	14	45	101	239	399	19.9%
504 Plan	19	24	104	293	440	11.9%
Homeless	24	73	185	661	943	31.5%
Foster Care	7	21	78	146	252	34.0%
Female	284	501	948	2,311	4,044	10.5%
Male	326	603	1,340	3,357	5,626	14.0%

Results for Adjusted 5-Year Cohort

Students identified as entering ninth grade for the first time in 2009–10 and who are reported as dropouts within the five-year timeframe are reported in the year in which they dropped out.

Table 4: Adjusted Cohort Dropouts (5-year)

Student Group	Dropouts Year 1	Dropouts Year 2	Dropouts Year 3	Dropouts Year 4	Dropouts Year 5	Total Dropouts	Adjusted 5-Year Cohort Dropout Rate
All Students	639	1,098	2,335	4,911	4,002	12,985	16.2%
Amer. Indian	24	42	86	182	125	459	34.7%
Asian	47	66	71	200	157	541	9.0%
Pacific Islander	8	6	25	68	61	168	27.3%
Black	47	74	129	320	263	833	21.7%
Hispanic	206	263	557	1,140	1,044	3,210	23.6%
White	285	598	1,345	2,748	2,108	7,084	14.0%
Two or More Races	19	45	122	253	243	682	16.4%
Special Education	50	135	370	809	765	2,129	23.6%
Limited English	121	145	235	490	424	1,415	31.5%
Low Income	363	749	1,780	3,563	3,204	9,659	24.4%
Migrant	37	48	111	213	195	604	26.7%
504 Plan	4	23	74	219	189	509	15.1%
Homeless	45	91	295	615	656	1,702	39.0%
Foster Care	11	21	72	145	103	352	44.3%
Female	303	513	1,010	2,015	1,591	5,432	13.7%
Male	336	585	1,325	2,896	2,411	7,553	18.6%

Results for Annual Dropouts Grades 7–12

The table below represents students who were enrolled in grades 7–12 during the 2013–14 school year and whose final status after that year was dropout. Note that the annual dropout data below is based on students’ reported grade levels and not on graduation cohorts since those are not established until students enter ninth grade for the first time. This dropout rate is an annual snapshot for the 2013–14 school year for all students, rather than a look over multiple years for a specific group of students. Students reported in grades 7–12 with an expected year of graduation of 2014 or later, are included in this dropout rate.

Table 5: Annual Dropout Rates

Student Group	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
All Students	1.5%	2.0%	2.6%	3.3%	4.6%	7.7%
Amer. Indian	3.1%	4.0%	6.1%	8.6%	11.8%	16.4%
Asian	1.1%	1.4%	1.7%	1.4%	1.8%	3.7%
Pacific Islander	3.1%	3.8%	5.9%	6.2%	8.2%	10.8%
Black	3.3%	4.2%	4.2%	5.1%	5.5%	9.9%
Hispanic	1.6%	2.2%	3.4%	4.6%	6.2%	11.7%
White	1.3%	1.7%	2.2%	2.8%	4.1%	6.8%
Two or More Races	1.8%	1.9%	2.9%	3.6%	5.5%	8.1%
Special Education	1.6%	2.1%	2.9%	4.5%	6.0%	10.9%
Limited English	1.6%	2.4%	4.5%	6.1%	8.2%	16.2%
Low Income	1.8%	2.4%	3.7%	4.8%	6.4%	11.2%
Migrant	2.2%	2.7%	4.7%	5.3%	7.5%	13.0%
504 Plan	1.0%	1.4%	1.7%	2.6%	3.0%	5.6%
Homeless	4.8%	7.3%	7.6%	10.7%	13.5%	23.3%
Foster Care	4.5%	7.1%	10.5%	10.9%	12.9%	21.5%
Female	1.5%	2.0%	2.5%	3.0%	4.1%	6.4%
Male	1.5%	1.9%	2.7%	3.6%	5.1%	9.0%

Table 6 shows the number of students associated with each dropout reason, by grade. It also shows the percent of dropouts overall with that given reason code. The most common categories associated with dropouts are unknown and unconfirmed transfers.

Table 6: Annual Dropouts - Reasons for Dropping Out

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total Dropouts	Percent of Total
Attended School 4 Years, Did Not Graduate	0	1	2	2	29	683	717	4.2%
Lacked Progress or Poor Grades	4	4	155	204	33	432	1,102	6.4%
School Not for Me, Chose to Stay Home	42	66	115	203	316	488	1,230	7.2%
Married, Family Support, or Child Related	1	0	3	11	18	26	59	0.3%
Offered Training or Chose to Work	0	0	20	25	44	126	215	1.3%
Dropped for Other or Unknown Reason	624	815	1,111	1,407	1,976	2,851	8,784	51.3%
Left to Take GED	0	0	20	54	126	193	393	2.3%
Expelled or Suspended	13	39	70	53	54	54	283	1.7%
Drug or Alcohol Related	2	2	4	8	6	13	35	0.2%
Unconfirmed Transfer	532	650	719	761	871	757	4,290	25.1%
Total	1,218	1,577	2,219	2,728	3,743	5,623	17,108	

Conclusion

At the direction of the U.S. Department of Education, Washington uses the adjusted cohort graduation calculation to track a single cohort of students over four or five years. This report summarizes the graduation rates following the 2013–14 school year.

The adjusted cohort method yields a 77.2 percent four-year graduation rate for the Class of 2014, students who first began ninth grade in 2010–11. This is slightly higher than the Class of 2013. An additional 3.9 percent of students in the Class of 2013 graduated during their fifth-year of high school (2013–14) for a total five-year rate of 79.9 percent. The cumulative dropout rate, after four years, for students entering ninth grade in 2010–11 was 12.3 percent.

APPENDICES

Appendices A through G are available as electronic files under *Graduation and Dropout Statistics* at <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin>.

- Appendix A: State Level (2014 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year and 5-Year)
- Appendix B: County Level (2014 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year)
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Appendix H: Estimated Benefits from Changes in Washington State’s High School Graduation Rate

This appendix was prepared by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Estimate prepared February 2015.

The 2010 Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to “calculate an annual estimate of the savings resulting from any change compared to the prior school year in the extended graduation rate.”²

To produce this estimate, the Institute uses its economic model that assesses benefits and costs of public policies and outcomes. Monetary estimates are calculated for three perspectives: 1) benefits that accrue solely to high school graduates, 2) benefits received by taxpayers from having other people graduate from high school, and 3) any other measurable (non-graduate and non-taxpayer) monetary benefits. For technical details about the Institute model, visit <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/TechnicalManual/WsippBenefitCostTechnicalManual.pdf>.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) calculates a five-year high school graduation rate, which includes students who take more than four years to graduate. In the 2012–13 school year, this graduation rate was 78.8 percent; in 2013–14, the rate was 79.9 percent, an increase of 1.1 percentage points, representing 866 additional graduates (see Exhibit 1).

² RCW 28A.175.010 (8)

Change in the Five-Year High School Graduation Rate in Washington State, 2012–13 to 2013–14

	Five-Year Graduation Rate	Students in Cohort	Graduates (Rate * Cohort)
Actual Graduates (2013–14 rate)	79.9%	80,224	64,083
Hypothetical Graduates (based on the 2012–13 rate)	78.8%	80,224	63,217
<i>Difference</i>	<i>+1.1%</i>		<i>+866</i>

Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Using the Institute’s benefit-cost model, we estimate that the per-student monetary benefit associated with graduating from high school is \$552,408 (see Exhibit 2).³ The benefits accrue over an individual’s lifetime and the dollar amount is in net present value terms, in 2013 dollars.⁴

The Value of Graduation from High School Per-Student Estimated Benefits, Lifetime, Net Present Value, 2013 Dollars

	Benefits to graduates	Benefits to taxpayers	Other beneficiaries	Total benefits
	\$274,254	\$157,032	\$121,122	\$552,408
Components of the benefits				
Higher earnings	\$279,027	\$119,014	\$147,275	\$545,316
Lower crime	\$0	\$534	\$1,403	\$1,937
Health care costs	(\$4,773)	\$37,484	(\$27,556)	\$5,155

Source: Washington State Institute for Public Policy Benefit-Cost Model.

Totals may not add due to rounding.

About half of the benefits go to the graduates themselves in the form of increased earnings, for which they pay taxes (represented as benefits to taxpayers). Graduating from high school is also associated with less crime. Additionally, individuals who graduate from high school are more likely to use private health care services but less likely to use publicly funded health care services. For the 866 additional graduates in 2013–14, the total estimated monetary benefit projected is \$478.7 million.⁵

³ This estimate is higher than the Institute’s 2013 estimate of the monetary benefits from graduating from high school. We have updated our estimates of labor market earnings and “spillover” economic growth (beyond an individual’s labor market earnings) associated with increased education in a society.

⁴ To calculate net present value, we use a .035 discount rate.

⁵ 866 x \$552,408 = \$478,654,903

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