

High School Graduation Rate

DEFINITION

High school graduation rate is the percentage of students who graduate from high school within four years of entering, calculated by dividing the number of students who graduate in four years or fewer by the total number of first-time entering ninth graders (adjusted for transfers in and transfers out during the four years).

SIGNIFICANCE

High school graduation is the minimum requisite for college and most employment. In Rhode Island, adults without high school diplomas are more likely to be unemployed and have lower median incomes than adults with high school degrees.^{1,2} In 2015, 12% of Rhode Island children lived in households headed by a non-high school graduate, lower than the national average of 14%.³

Children who attend high-quality preschool programs and read at grade level in elementary school are more likely to graduate from high school than their peers.⁴ Early warning and intervention systems use early predictors of dropping out, such as poor attendance, behavior problems, and course failure in math and reading, to identify students who are off-track, so academic supports can be put in place to help students get “on track” for graduation.⁵ Supports during the transition from middle to high school have been found to be particularly

important to preventing dropping out.^{6,7}

Adopting student-centered learning practices at the high school level can increase achievement and engagement for students from a variety of backgrounds. These practices encourage deeper engagement with school by personalizing learning to a student’s interests, allowing students to take ownership over their work and continue learning outside of the classroom, and pacing learning to match the student’s mastery of the content.⁸

In order to graduate, Rhode Island students up through the Class of 2020 must demonstrate proficiency in English language arts, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology and complete at least 20 courses and two performance-based assessments. Students in the Class of 2021 and later must complete one performance-based assessment and can earn Council designations, including a Commissioner’s Seal, Seal of Biliteracy, and Pathway Endorsements.^{9,10}

High School Graduation Rates	
	2014-2015
RI	83%
US	83%
National Rank*	29th
New England Rank**	6th

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Table 1*. Retrieved February 17, 2017, from www.nces.ed.gov

Rhode Island Four-Year High School Graduation and Dropout Rates, by Student Subgroup, Class of 2016

	COHORT SIZE	DROPOUT RATE	% COMPLETED GED	% OF STUDENTS STILL IN SCHOOL	FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
Female Students	5,347	6%	1%	4%	88%
Male Students	5,437	10%	2%	5%	83%
English Language Learners	734	17%	<1%	6%	77%
Students With Disabilities	1,676	18%	2%	17%	63%
Students Without Disabilities	9,108	7%	1%	3%	89%
Low-Income Students	5,700	13%	2%	7%	79%
Higher-Income Students	5,084	4%	1%	2%	93%
White Students	6,779	6%	2%	4%	88%
Asian Students	310	3%	1%	4%	92%
Black Students	936	10%	1%	8%	81%
Hispanic Students	2,390	13%	1%	6%	79%
Native American	85	13%	1%	8%	78%
ALL STUDENTS	10,784	8%	2%	5%	85%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2016. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

- ◆ The Rhode Island four-year graduation rate for the Class of 2016 was 85%, up from 70% for the Class of 2007 (the first class for which the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) began calculating graduation rates using a cohort formula).¹¹
- ◆ Poverty is associated with the likelihood of dropping out.¹² Students in Rhode Island’s four core cities (15% drop out rate), where child poverty is the highest, are three times more likely to drop out of high school than students in the remainder of the state (5% drop out rate).¹³

Rhode Island Five- and Six-Year High School Graduation Rates

- ◆ Rhode Island calculates five- and six-year graduation rates to recognize that graduation is an accomplishment regardless of the time it takes. Of the 11,324 Rhode Island students who enrolled in ninth grade in 2010, 9,151 (80.8%) graduated in four years in 2014, 424 (3.7%) graduated in five years in 2015, and 55 (<1%) graduated in six years in 2016.¹⁴
- ◆ Of the 424 students who graduated in five years in 2015, 179 (42%) were students with disabilities. Of the 55 students who graduated in six years in 2016, 31 (56%) were students with disabilities.¹⁵

High School Graduation Rate

Table 54.

High School Graduation Rates, Rhode Island, Class of 2016

SCHOOL DISTRICT	FOUR-YEAR COHORT RATES				
	# OF STUDENTS IN COHORT	DROPOUT RATE	% COMPLETED GED	% STILL IN SCHOOL	FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
Barrington	210	1%	<1%	3%	95%
Bristol Warren	235	3%	3%	4%	90%
Burrillville	180	12%	2%	4%	82%
Central Falls	181	19%	0%	9%	72%
Chariho	282	8%	1%	2%	88%
Coventry	374	3%	2%	3%	93%
Cranston	801	3%	2%	6%	88%
Cumberland	327	3%	1%	4%	92%
East Greenwich	200	1%	1%	3%	96%
East Providence	405	10%	1%	3%	86%
Exeter-West Greenwich	137	1%	1%	3%	94%
Foster-Glocester	184	7%	1%	3%	90%
Johnston	249	4%	2%	5%	89%
Lincoln	250	4%	1%	2%	93%
Middletown	152	7%	3%	4%	86%
Narragansett	98	5%	1%	5%	89%
Newport	163	12%	2%	1%	85%
North Kingstown	354	5%	2%	6%	87%
North Providence	271	3%	3%	1%	93%
North Smithfield	134	4%	1%	0%	94%
Pawtucket	525	10%	1%	5%	85%
Portsmouth	240	10%	<1%	2%	88%
Providence	1,659	14%	1%	6%	79%
Scituate	129	3%	0%	3%	94%
Smithfield	196	5%	1%	1%	93%
South Kingstown	293	7%	1%	4%	88%
Tiverton	151	7%	1%	5%	87%
Warwick	706	6%	3%	4%	87%
West Warwick	252	10%	2%	2%	87%
Westerly	208	3%	0%	7%	90%
Woonsocket	395	21%	2%	7%	70%
<i>Beacon Charter High School for the Arts</i>	57	4%	0%	0%	96%
<i>Blackstone Academy</i>	40	0%	0%	0%	100%
<i>Paul Cuffee Charter School</i>	65	9%	0%	3%	88%
<i>The Greene School</i>	33	3%	0%	3%	94%
<i>Sheila "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy</i>	64	50%	2%	44%	5%
<i>Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts</i>	25	0%	4%	0%	96%
<i>Village Green Virtual Public Charter School</i>	54	13%	0%	7%	80%
<i>William M. Davies Jr. Career & Technical High School</i>	183	5%	1%	0%	95%
<i>DCYF Schools</i>	55	53%	33%	7%	7%
<i>Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center</i>	194	6%	1%	1%	92%
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	2,760	15%	1%	6%	78%
<i>Remainder of State</i>	7,191	5%	2%	4%	89%
<i>Rhode Island</i>	10,784	8%	2%	5%	85%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2016.

The 2016 four-year cohort graduation rate is the number of students who graduate in four years or fewer divided by the total number of students in the cohort. The cohort is calculated as the number of first-time entering ninth graders in 2012-2013 adjusted for transfers in and transfers out during the course of the four years. The cohort dropout rate is calculated the same way as the graduation rate, but the numerator is the number of students who drop out or whose status is unknown at the end of four years. Separate rates are calculated for the percentage of students who are retained in high school and therefore are taking more than four years to graduate and for the percentage of students who received their GED within four years instead of graduating with a traditional diploma.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

Students from Little Compton attend high school in Portsmouth, and students from Jamestown attend high school in North Kingstown. DCYF includes students attending DCYF alternative schools.

Rhode Island Nurses Institute Middle College is not reported because these students generally complete their course of study in more than four years. New Shoreham and Rhode Island School for the Deaf are not reported because there are fewer than 10 students in these cohorts. These students are included in the state total.

References

- ¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2015. Table S2301.
- ² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2015. Table B20004.
- ³ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
- ^{4,7,12} Shore, R. & Shore, B. (2009). *KIDS COUNT indicator brief: Reducing the high school dropout rate*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- ^{5,6} DePaoli, J. L., Balfanz, R., & Bridgeland, J. (2016). *Building a grad nation: Progress and challenge in raising high school graduation rates*. Retrieved February 17, 2017, from www.americaspromise.org

(continued on page 189)