

# High School Graduation Rate

## DEFINITION

High school graduation rate is the number of 2003 graduates divided by the estimated size of the twelfth grade class had no one dropped out.

## SIGNIFICANCE

High school graduation is the minimum requisite for college and most employment. The path to high school graduation begins early; research indicates that children who attend quality preschool programs are more likely to graduate from high school.<sup>1</sup>

Several factors contribute to a student's decision to leave school. Repeating one or more grades, ongoing patterns of absenteeism, suspensions, poor grades, and poor achievement on tests are linked to dropping out. Youth who move are more likely to drop out than those with stable housing.<sup>2</sup> Student achievement and graduation rates can be improved when schools have high expectations for all students; effective and up-to-date curricula and teaching methods; prepared and sufficiently supported teachers; strong home/school linkages; adequate accountability systems; and effective and equitable allocation of resources.<sup>3</sup>

Students can benefit from access to a broad range of community supports that address academic issues, health problems, inadequate nutrition,

neighborhood and family violence, and other factors that can disrupt school performance.<sup>4</sup> Nationally, low-income students are three times more likely to drop out than middle-income students.<sup>5</sup>

Youth who drop out of school are more likely to rely on public assistance as adults.<sup>6</sup> In 2001, over half of the people over 25 who did not have a high school diploma or GED reported no earnings during that year.<sup>7</sup> Also in 2001, adults without a high school diploma who found employment earned a median income of \$11,864 compared to \$19,900 for people with a high school degree or equivalent.<sup>8</sup>

Female dropouts are much more likely than male dropouts of the same racial or ethnic group to live in poverty.<sup>9</sup> Young women who drop out of school are more likely to have children at younger ages and more likely to be single parents than high school graduates.<sup>10</sup>

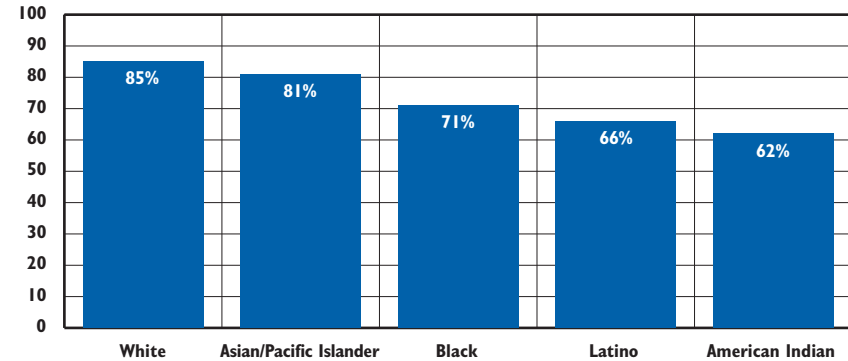
Percent of Teens Who are High School Dropouts, Ages 16-19		
	1990	2000
RI	11%	10%
US	10%	9%
National Rank*	30th	
New England Rank**	6th	

\*1st is best; 50th is worst

\*\*1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK: State Profiles of Child Well-Being 2003. (2003). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

High School Graduation Rates, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island 2003



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

◆ In 2003 in Rhode Island, 85% of White students, 81% of Asian/Pacific Islander students, 71% of Black students, 66% of Latino students and 62% of American Indian students graduated from high school.<sup>11</sup>

◆ In Rhode Island and nationwide, Hispanic students have a lower high school graduation rate than non-Hispanic White students and non-Hispanic Black students.<sup>12</sup>

## High School Graduation Rates for Children with Disabilities

◆ In Rhode Island, the high school dropout rate in 2002-2003 for students with disabilities was 26%.<sup>13</sup>

◆ Nationwide, more than 50% of students with emotional disturbances dropped out of school in 2000-2001, while 25% or less of students with other types of disabilities dropped out.<sup>14</sup>

◆ Nationwide, 11% of students with disabilities who graduated from high school received an alternative credential.<sup>15</sup>

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Table 35.

## High School Graduation Rate, Rhode Island, 2003

SCHOOL DISTRICT	COMMUNITY CONTEXT						2003 GRADUATION RATE
	% CHILDREN IN POVERTY	% ADULTS COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL	NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED	% LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY	% MINORITY ENROLLMENT	% OF STUDENTS TAKING THE SAT	
Barrington	4%	92%	3,356	<1%	4%	90%	93%
Bistol-Warren	12%	NA	3,824	4%	4%	62%	76%
Burrillville	5%	80%	2,682	<1%	2%	60%	87%
Central Falls	37%	49%	3,651	29%	78%	37%	67%
Chariho	6%	NA	3,861	<1%	3%	61%	89%
Coventry	8%	83%	5,850	<1%	4%	48%	90%
Cranston	8%	79%	11,269	4%	17%	57%	84%
Cumberland	3%	81%	5,411	2%	7%	58%	93%
East Greenwich	5%	93%	2,444	1%	5%	90%	94%
East Providence	9%	71%	6,442	5%	19%	52%	70%
Exeter-W. Greenwich	5%	NA	2,183	<1%	4%	60%	90%
Foster	6%	88%	385	0%	4%	NA	NA
Foster-Glocester	4%	NA	1,693	0%	1%	63%	91%
Glocester	8%	87%	771	0%	3%	NA	NA
Jamestown	3%	93%	568	2%	4%	NA	NA
Johnston	9%	78%	3,311	1%	6%	55%	82%
Lincoln	6%	82%	3,706	1%	7%	68%	94%
Little Compton	1%	91%	343	0%	0%	NA	NA
Middletown	9%	91%	2,838	2%	14%	68%	96%
Narragansett	10%	91%	1,736	1%	6%	73%	94%
New Shoreham	11%	95%	140	2%	7%	100%	86%
Newport	24%	87%	2,915	4%	40%	67%	80%
North Kingstown	11%	92%	4,647	1%	5%	67%	91%
North Providence	9%	77%	3,445	2%	16%	52%	86%
North Smithfield	2%	82%	1,875	0%	3%	77%	93%
Pawtucket	21%	66%	9,888	11%	49%	43%	67%
Portsmouth	3%	91%	2,995	<1%	4%	72%	94%
Providence	37%	66%	27,711	19%	85%	69%	66%
Scituate	4%	87%	1,782	0%	3%	72%	98%
Smithfield	4%	85%	2,703	<1%	2%	69%	88%
South Kingstown	6%	91%	4,238	1%	12%	79%	86%
Tiverton	3%	80%	2,231	0%	2%	84%	84%
Warwick	8%	85%	12,085	1%	6%	60%	88%
West Warwick	18%	76%	3,822	2%	12%	56%	74%
Westerly	11%	82%	3,692	2%	8%	53%	88%
Woonsocket	27%	64%	6,839	6%	38%	48%	70%
Core Cities	30%	NA	54,826	15%	65%	58%	68%
Remainder of State	7%	NA	102,506	2%	8%	63%	87%
Rhode Island	15%	78%	157,332	6%	28%	62%	81%

### Note to Table

Because of a change in methodology, High School Graduation rates in this Factbook cannot be compared with previous Factbooks. The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has changed its method for calculating graduation rates to conform with the National Center for Education Statistics definition.

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

% children in poverty is from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Small Area Income and Population Estimates, Children Ages 5-17, 1999. % of adults completing high school or higher is from Census 2000. All other data are from the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2002-2003 school year.

The denominator for the indicator is the sum of 2003 graduates plus the number of grade 9 dropouts in 1999-00 plus the number of grade 10 dropouts in 2000-01 plus grade 11 dropouts in 2001-02 plus grade 12 dropouts in 2002-03.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

See Methodology page 133.

### References

- <sup>1,2,4</sup> Shore, R. (July 2003). *Reducing the High School Dropout Rate*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- <sup>3</sup> *Years of Promise: A Comprehensive Learning Strategy for America's Children*. (1996) New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- <sup>5,10,12</sup> Kaufman, P. et al. (November 2001). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000*. (NCES 2002-114). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics.
- <sup>6</sup> Brown, B. (August 2001). *Teens, Jobs, and Welfare: Implications for Social Policy*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 2002. Table PINC-03.
- <sup>8</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 2002. Table 8.
- <sup>9</sup> Phillips, L. (1998). *The Girls Report: What We Know and Need to Know About Growing Up Female*. New York, NY: National Council for Research on Women.
- <sup>11</sup> Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2003.
- <sup>13</sup> *Improving Outcomes for Children with Special Needs*. (November 2003). Providence, RI: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT.
- <sup>14,15</sup> *Special Education. Federal Actions Can Assist States in Improving Postsecondary Outcomes for Youth*. (GAO-03-773). (July 2003). Washington, DC: United States General Accounting Office.