

Public High School Four-Year On-Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates: School Years 2010–11 and 2011–12

First Look

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APRIL 2014

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April 2014

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Suggested Citation

Stetser, M., and Stillwell, R. (2014). *Public High School Four-Year On-Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates: School Years 2010–11 and 2011–12. First Look* (NCES 2014-391). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved [date] from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

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Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank all of the Consolidated State Performance Report, Common Core of Data, and *EDFacts* Coordinators for the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the other jurisdictions that reported these data. The Department of Education is grateful for these Coordinators' efforts and for the support of the state education agency or the jurisdictional agency in which they work.

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Introduction

This National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) First Look report introduces new data for two separate measures of 4-year on-time graduation rates as well as event dropout rates for school year (SY) 2010–11 and SY 2011–12. Specifically this report provides the following:

- Four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR)¹ data reported by state or jurisdiction and, for the first time, a national estimated 4-year cohort graduation rate;
- Averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR) data by state or jurisdiction and a national estimated AFGR; and
- High school event dropout rate data by state or jurisdiction and a national estimated event dropout rate.

Both the AFGR and ACGR are 4-year on-time graduation rates that provide measures of the percent of students that successfully complete high school in 4 years with a regular high school diploma.² Event dropout rates provide a measure of the percentage of students who drop out in a single year. The tables in this report present descriptive information for the United States and for individual states and jurisdictions. The findings chosen for this report provide only a few examples of how the graduation and dropout data may be used. Compared to other measures of graduation rates, the ACGR is considered the most accurate measure available for reporting on-time graduation rates (Seastrom et al. 2006b). A 4-year ACGR is defined as the number of students who graduate in 4 years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for that graduating class. The term “adjusted cohort” means the students who enter grade 9 plus any students who transfer into the cohort in grades 9–12 minus any students who are removed from the cohort because they transferred out, moved out of the country, or were deceased (34 C.F.R. § 200.19). For a more detailed discussion of how ACGR is calculated for a specific school year, see appendix B.

The AFGR is a proxy indicator for a cohort rate such as ACGR that utilizes aggregated counts of students by grade and the overall diploma count, as opposed to individual student-level data, to estimate an on-time graduation rate. The AFGR estimate is not as accurate as the ACGR; however, the AFGR can be estimated annually as far back as the 1960s using comparable aggregate data.

Both graduation rates represent the percentage of students who successfully complete high school in 4 years with a regular high school diploma. They do not represent the percentage of all of students who earn a high school credential. This distinction is important because a number of student groups are 1) not considered dropouts and 2) not considered *on-time* completers. For example

- Some students may have been held back one or more grades in high school but do, in the end, successfully receive a regular high school diploma.
- Many students complete high school with an alternative credential. Sometimes a student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) may receive alternative credentials indicating the

¹ The ACGR is referred to in regulations, which amended 34 C.F.R. §200.19 as the Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate.

² Under 34 C.F.R. §200.19(b)(1)(iv), a “regular high school diploma” means the standard high school diploma awarded to students in a state that is fully aligned with the state’s academic content standards and does not include a high school equivalency credential, certificate of attendance, or any alternative award. The term “regular high school diploma” also includes a “higher diploma” that is awarded to students who complete requirements above and beyond what is required for a regular diploma.

completion of their IEP and high school experience. Other students may leave high school having successfully achieved a high school equivalency diploma or other alternative credential.

- Other students, who are dually enrolled in both high school and postsecondary school, take more than 4 years to graduate due to the increased requirements. These students often receive both a regular high school diploma and an associate's degree upon completion.

Because the definition of on-time graduation considered in this report is based on a 4-year high school experience resulting in the receipt of a regular high school diploma, the students described in the preceding bullets, while counted within the cohort or enrollment base, are neither dropouts, nor on-time completers.

The 4-year on-time graduation rates presented in this report should not be confused with related rates intended to study different topics. For example, NCES also publishes completion rates calculated from household survey data collected by the Census Bureau. Completion rates indicate the percentage of the population, typically in a specified age range, holding high school credentials in general. They are not sensitive to how long a person might have taken to earn the credential, or to where the credential was earned. Some completion rates also include those earning alternative credentials that represent high school equivalency. Many students counted as “completers” for the calculation of a completion rate might not qualify as on-time graduates in the ACGR or AFGR. Additionally, the inverse of the ACGR or AFGR should not be confused with a dropout rate. Counts of students who have not graduated on time with a regular high school diploma do include dropouts, but also include those who will earn a regular diploma in more than 4 years and those who have or will earn alternative credentials. It is for this reason that NCES also calculates and reports on measures in addition to high school completion, such as the event dropout rate included in this report.

The high school event dropout rate indicates the proportion of students who were enrolled at some time during the school year and were expected to be enrolled in grades 9–12 in the following school year but were not enrolled by October 1 of the following school year. Students who have graduated, transferred to another school, died, moved to another country, or who are out of school due to illness are not considered dropouts. The event dropout rate is not comparable to other dropout rates released by the Department or elsewhere. Status dropout rates, for example, measure the percentage of a population that did not complete high school (e.g., *some* percentage of young adults aged 18–24 dropped out of high school).

The calculated totals in this report, identified as “United States” totals in tabulations and “national” estimates in text, include data for only the 50 states and the District of Columbia and exclude data for other jurisdictions.

This First Look provides users with an opportunity to access SY 2010–11 provisional data that have been fully reviewed and edited, and SY 2011–12 preliminary data that have been subjected to a limited data review and editing.³ Neither set of data have been available publicly prior to the release of this report. The data used in this report were collected as part of the U.S. Department of Education's *EDFacts* Initiative. NCES uses these data to report, analyze, and disseminate statistical data that

³ NCES has begun implementing a data release methodology based upon three stages of data review: Preliminary, Provisional, and Final. Preliminary release data may only include data initially reported by a state education agency (SEA), which has undergone cursory review and minimal editing. Preliminary data may be less complete due to late reporting or data quality concerns. Provisional release data have undergone a complete review and been subjected to NCES data quality control procedures. The preliminary SY 2011–12 data in this report will undergo further review and a revised provisional file will be released later in 2014. Additionally, NCES expects to release final SY 2010–11 data that include any final updates reported by SEAs prior to the closing of the SY 2010–11 data collection.

describe public elementary/secondary education. SEAs submit aggregate counts of students used to calculate the dropout and graduation rates or actual rates (in the case of reporting the ACGR). The rates included in this report have been reported in whole number percentages or percentage point ranges to prevent any potential disclosure of individual student data.

More detailed explanations of the definitions and methodology used to calculate these rates can be found in Appendix A: Collection Methodology and Sources of Error and Appendix B: Detailed Methodology for Calculation of Four-Year On-Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates.

Selected Findings

- For SY 2010–11, the estimated national⁴ 4-year ACGR for public high school students was 79 percent (table 1), and for SY 2011–12 it was 80 percent (table 2). This indicates that nearly 4 out of 5 students receive a regular high school diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade for the first time.
- For SY 2010–11, American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic students had 4-year ACGRs below the national average at 65, 67, and 71 percent, respectively.⁵ White students and Asian/Pacific Islander students had ACGRs above the national average at 84 and 87 percent, respectively. Economically disadvantaged students, students with limited English proficiency, and students with disabilities all had ACGR rates below the national average for all students at 70, 57, and 59 percent, respectively (table 1).
- For SY 2011–12 American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic students had a 4-year ACGR below the national average at 67, 69, and 73 percent, respectively. White students and Asian/Pacific Islander students had 4-year ACGRs above the national average at 86 and 88 percent, respectively. Economically disadvantaged students, students with limited English proficiency, and students with disabilities all had 4-year ACGR rates below the national average for all students at 72, 59, and 61 percent, respectively (table 2).
- The national AFGR (a less precise estimate of an on-time graduation rate than the ACGR) tracked slightly above the ACGR estimates with a SY 2010–11 rate of 80 percent and a SY 2011–12 rate of 81 percent (tables 3 and 4). Like the ACGR, AFGR estimates for American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic students were lower than the national average while White and Asian/Pacific Islander rates were higher in both SY 2010–11 and SY 2011–12.
- In both SY 2010–11 and SY 2011–12, the AFGR for female students exceeded the graduation rate for male students by 7 percentage points. That is, 84 percent for females vs. 77 percent for males in SY 2010–11 and 85 percent for females vs. 78 percent for males in SY 2011–12 (tables 3 and 4).⁶
- The public high school event dropout rate for the United States remained constant at 3.3 percent for both SY 2010–11 and SY 2011–12 (table 5). In SY 2010–11, twenty-four states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands had an event dropout rate that exceeded the national dropout rate. Twenty-four states and Puerto Rico had an event dropout rate that was below the national dropout rate. In SY 2011–12, twenty states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands had an event dropout rate that exceeded the national dropout rate. Thirty states and Puerto Rico had an event dropout rate that was below the national dropout rate.

⁴ Estimates referenced as “national” include only the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. For the purpose of comparison, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are compared to the “national” dropout rate in bullet six but were not included in the calculation of that rate.

⁵ Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian includes Alaska Native. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified.

⁶ The ACGR is not collected by gender in the Consolidated State Performance Report.

References and Related Data Files

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Tables

Table 1. Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity and selected demographics for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and other jurisdictions: School year 2010–11

State	Percent of students								
	Total	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White	Economically disadvantaged	Limited English proficiency	Students with disabilities
United States¹	79	65	87	71	67	84	70	57	59
Alabama	72	80	77	66	63	78	62	36	30
Alaska	68	51	74	62	63	75	56	41	40
Arizona	78	62	87	72	74	85	73	25	67
Arkansas	81	85	75	77	73	84	75	76	75
California	76	68	89	70	63	85	70	60	59
Colorado	74	52	81	60	65	81	62	53	53
Connecticut	83	72	92	64	71	89	63	59	62
Delaware	78	77	90	71	73	82	71	65	56
District of Columbia	59	<>	<>	55	58	85	58	53	39
Florida	71	70	86	70	59	76	60	53	44
Georgia	67	68	79	58	60	76	59	32	30
Hawaii	80	60	81	79	77	78	75	60	59
Idaho ²	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Illinois	84	78	92	77	74	89	75	68	66
Indiana	86	76	88	81	75	88	79	73	65
Iowa	88	79	88	75	73	90	78	70	70
Kansas	83	72	88	73	72	86	73	70	73
Kentucky ²	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Louisiana	71	71	83	70	64	77	64	43	29
Maine	84	82	90	87	77	84	73	78	66
Maryland	83	74	93	72	76	89	74	54	57
Massachusetts	83	76	88	62	71	89	70	56	66
Michigan	74	62	85	63	57	80	63	61	52
Minnesota	77	42	72	51	49	84	58	52	56
Mississippi	75	71	90	79	69	82	70	54	32
Missouri	81	78	87	75	67	86	75	62	69
Montana	82	63	88	78	81	85	71	57	69
Nebraska	86	64	83	74	70	90	78	52	70
Nevada	62	52	74	53	43	71	53	29	23
New Hampshire	86	78	87	73	73	87	72	73	69
New Jersey	83	87	93	73	69	90	71	68	73
New Mexico	63	56	77	59	60	73	56	56	47
New York	77	64	86	63	64	86	69	46	48
North Carolina	78	70	87	69	71	83	71	48	57
North Dakota	86	62	88	76	74	90	76	61	67
Ohio	80	71	88	66	59	85	65	53	67
Oklahoma ²	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Oregon	68	52	78	58	54	70	61	52	42
Pennsylvania	83	77	88	65	65	88	71	63	71
Rhode Island	77	66	75	67	67	82	66	68	58

See notes at end of table.

Table 1. Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity and selected demographics for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and other jurisdictions: School year 2010–11—
Continued

State	Percent of students								
	Total	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White	Economically disadvantaged	Limited English proficiency	Students with disabilities
South Carolina	74	67	84	69	70	77	67	62	39
South Dakota	83	47	84	67	67	89	67	60	64
Tennessee	86	88	91	79	78	89	80	71	67
Texas	86	87	95	82	81	92	84	58	77
Utah	76	57	70	57	61	80	65	45	59
Vermont	87	≥80	93	84	84	88	77	82	69
Virginia	82	82	96	71	73	86	70	55	47
Washington	76	57	81	63	65	79	66	51	56
West Virginia	78	<>	88	81	73	78	69	84	60
Wisconsin	87	75	89	72	64	91	74	66	67
Wyoming	80	51	87	74	58	82	66	62	57
Bureau of Indian Education and Puerto Rico									
Bureau of Indian Education	61	61	†	†	†	†	61	51	56
Puerto Rico ³	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

— Not available.

† Not applicable. No students reported for this category in the cohort.

<> Data were suppressed to protect the confidentiality of individual student data.

≥ Greater than or equal to. The estimate has been top coded to protect the confidentiality of individual student data.

¹The United States 4-year ACGR was estimated using both the reported 4-year ACGR data from 47 states and the District of Columbia and using imputed data for Idaho, Kentucky, and Oklahoma. The Bureau of Indian Education and Puerto Rico were not included in the United States 4-year ACGR estimate.

²The Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education approved a timeline extension for these states to begin reporting 4-year ACGR data, resulting in the 4-year ACGR not being available for these states in SY 2010–11.

³The Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education approved an exception for Puerto Rico to report 3-year ACGR data instead of 4-year ACGR data for SY 2010–11.

NOTE: Reported rates are presented rounded to the whole percentage point where the related population size is greater than 300. Estimates have been top coded to protect the confidentiality of individual student data. Top coding is a process where rates at or above a specific level are reported in a range, rather than a precise percentage, to protect the privacy of individuals represented either within the reported rate or its inverse. Based on the population size, top coded estimates are presented as being greater than or equal to a certain percent. For example, a rate of 94 percent may be presented as "≥90" percent for one population and "≥80" percent for another, dependent on total population size. Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian includes Alaska Native. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "NCES Common Core of Data State Dropout and Graduation Rate Data file," School Year 2010–11, Provisional Version 1a.

Table 2. Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity and selected demographics for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and other jurisdictions: School year 2011–12

State	Percent of students								
	Total	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White	Economically disadvantaged	Limited English proficiency	Students with disabilities
United States¹	80	67	88	73	69	86	72	59	61
Alabama	75	84	85	69	67	81	66	36	54
Alaska	70	54	76	70	61	76	59	47	46
Arizona	76	63	84	70	71	84	71	24	65
Arkansas	84	78	84	78	78	87	79	77	79
California	78	72	90	73	66	86	73	62	61
Colorado	75	58	82	62	66	82	61	53	54
Connecticut	85	84	92	69	73	91	71	63	64
Delaware	80	71	93	74	74	83	72	71	57
District of Columbia	59	<>	74	54	58	86	70	52	44
Florida	75	70	89	73	64	80	65	57	48
Georgia	70	67	82	60	62	78	61	44	35
Hawaii	82	65	84	76	76	79	80	56	74
Idaho ²	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Illinois	82	79	93	76	68	89	73	66	69
Indiana	86	78	89	80	73	89	85	78	71
Iowa	89	73	89	77	74	91	80	74	73
Kansas	85	78	86	77	75	88	76	74	77
Kentucky ²	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Louisiana	72	73	85	70	65	78	66	49	33
Maine	85	72	89	80	72	86	76	74	70
Maryland	84	79	93	73	77	90	75	55	57
Massachusetts	85	70	89	66	73	90	72	61	69
Michigan	76	66	87	64	60	82	64	63	54
Minnesota	78	45	74	53	51	84	59	51	56
Mississippi	75	71	90	79	69	82	70	54	32
Missouri	86	87	90	80	73	89	79	67	73
Montana	84	63	92	79	79	87	73	53	81
Nebraska	88	67	83	78	74	91	80	64	72
Nevada	63	54	74	54	48	72	58	23	24
New Hampshire	86	73	86	74	76	87	73	68	70
New Jersey	86	84	95	77	75	93	75	73	74
New Mexico	70	65	84	68	69	77	65	66	56
New York	77	63	86	63	63	87	68	44	48
North Carolina	80	74	87	73	75	85	75	50	60
North Dakota	87	63	86	73	76	90	74	68	68
Ohio	81	65	90	68	61	86	68	62	68
Oklahoma ²	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Oregon	68	51	79	60	53	71	61	49	38
Pennsylvania	84	74	89	68	68	89	74	64	70
Rhode Island	77	58	79	67	67	82	66	69	59

See notes at end of table.

Table 2. Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity and selected demographics for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and other jurisdictions: School year 2011–12—Continued

State	Percent of students								
	Total	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White	Economically disadvantaged	Limited English proficiency	Students with disabilities
South Carolina	75	71	85	69	71	78	68	64	40
South Dakota	83	47	84	67	67	89	67	60	64
Tennessee	87	88	91	80	79	91	82	72	73
Texas	88	87	94	84	84	93	85	59	77
Utah	80	64	78	66	64	83	70	51	64
Vermont	88	≥80	94	86	72	88	77	75	71
Virginia	83	81	90	73	75	88	72	55	49
Washington	77	59	82	67	67	80	66	54	58
West Virginia	79	67	94	79	74	80	72	83	60
Wisconsin	88	77	89	74	64	92	75	66	69
Wyoming	79	50	86	67	66	82	65	56	59
Bureau of Indian Education and Puerto Rico									
Bureau of Indian Education	53	53	†	†	†	†	53	56	48
Puerto Rico ³	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

— Not available. Data were not reported and have not been imputed.

† Not applicable. No students reported in the cohort.

<> Data were suppressed to protect the confidentiality of individual student data.

≥ Greater than or equal to. The estimate has been top coded to protect the confidentiality of individual student data.

¹The United States 4-year ACGR was estimated using both the reported 4-year ACGR data from 47 states and the District of Columbia and using imputed data for Idaho, Kentucky, and Oklahoma. The Bureau of Indian Education and Puerto Rico were not included in the United States 4-year ACGR estimate.

²The Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education approved a timeline extension for these states to begin reporting 4-year ACGR data, resulting in the 4-year ACGR not being available for these states in SY 2011–12.

³The Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education approved an exception for Puerto Rico to report 3-year ACGR data instead of 4-year ACGR data for SY 2011–12.

NOTE: Reported rates are presented rounded to the whole percentage point where the related population size is greater than 300. Estimates have been top coded to protect the confidentiality of individual student data. Top coding is a process where rates at or above a specific level are reported in a range, rather than a precise percentage, to protect the privacy of individuals represented either within the reported rate or its inverse. Based on the population size, top coded estimates are presented as being greater than or equal to a certain percent. For example, a rate of 94 percent may be presented as "≥90" percent for one population and "≥80" percent for another, dependent on total population size. Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian includes Alaska Native. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "NCES Common Core of Data State Dropout and Graduation Rate Data file," School Year 2011–12, Preliminary Version 1a.

Table 3. Public high school averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR), by gender and race/ethnicity for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and other jurisdictions: School year 2010–11

State	Percent of students							
	Total	Female	Male	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White
United States	80	84	77	68	93	75	67	84
Alabama	76	80	73	87	87	73	70	80
Alaska	78	83	76	57	99	80	70	83
Arizona	79	82	76	66	94	74	80	83
Arkansas	77	80	74	77	98	79	70	78
California	80	85	77	75	95	75	67	87
Colorado	82	85	79	57	84	75	69	84
Connecticut	85	88	82	≥98	98	71	73	89
Delaware	76	81	72	≥90	94	73	69	79
District of Columbia	61	65	56	<>	<>	65	59	97
Florida	72	78	70	94	92	75	63	75
Georgia	70	76	67	≥98	93	66	63	74
Hawaii	74	76	71	48	73	56	80	53
Idaho	83	86	80	75	93	77	67	83
Illinois	80	84	80	97	97	74	63	87
Indiana	80	86	78	87	≥99	83	67	82
Iowa	89	92	87	61	87	89	66	89
Kansas	87	91	84	61	93	84	69	87
Kentucky	81	85	79	63	≥99	89	76	82
Louisiana	71	77	65	66	98	90	64	76
Maine	86	87	84	89	94	≥98	78	85
Maryland	84	89	79	76	96	85	75	86
Massachusetts	85	89	84	68	97	68	77	89
Michigan	75	80	71	59	92	51	57	80
Minnesota	89	91	87	49	90	73	70	93
Mississippi	69	74	63	55	93	68	65	72
Missouri	85	88	82	88	98	88	73	86
Montana	84	85	83	62	87	93	91	86
Nebraska	90	93	87	58	97	88	58	91
Nevada	59	64	54	40	68	50	40	64
New Hampshire	87	89	84	79	≥98	87	78	86
New Jersey ¹	87	89	84	≥98	97	78	73	91
New Mexico	71	75	67	66	81	70	60	73
New York	78	81	75	64	94	63	64	88
North Carolina	77	82	74	71	84	74	68	81
North Dakota	90	92	88	62	≥95	78	≥98	93
Ohio	82	87	82	83	97	79	61	87
Oklahoma	80	83	77	74	≥99	74	67	82
Oregon	78	85	77	62	82	80	65	78
Pennsylvania	86	89	83	75	≥99	73	70	90
Rhode Island	77	82	72	56	70	70	66	79
South Carolina	69	75	64	61	79	70	62	73
South Dakota	82	84	79	43	≥95	81	79	86
Tennessee	81	85	78	≥98	97	74	75	83

See notes at end of table.

Table 3. Public high school averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR), by gender and race/ethnicity for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and other jurisdictions: School year 2010–11—Continued

State	Percent of students							
	Total	Female	Male	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White
Texas	81	84	79	≥99	95	80	71	83
Utah	78	81	76	56	81	62	65	81
Vermont	93	95	91	76	≥98	≥95	≥98	91
Virginia	83	89	80	87	99	91	70	84
Washington	79	84	77	42	81	78	58	80
West Virginia	78	80	76	55	97	81	74	78
Wisconsin	92	95	90	70	≥99	83	67	95
Wyoming	80	83	78	47	86	82	53	81
Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), Bureau of Indian Education, and other jurisdictions								
Bureau of Indian Education	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
American Samoa	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
DoDEA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Guam	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Northern Marianas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerto Rico	62	68	55	<>	<>	61	<>	≥80
Virgin Islands	68	78	58	<>	<>	77	66	68

— Not available. Data were not reported and have not been imputed.

<> Data were suppressed to protect the confidentiality of individual student data.

≥ Greater than or equal to. The estimate has been top coded to protect the confidentiality of individual student data.

¹ Data are imputed. New Jersey did not report graduate data by gender.

NOTE: Reported rates are presented rounded to the whole percentage point where the related population size is greater than 300. Estimates have been top coded to protect the confidentiality of individual student data. Top coding is a process where rates at or above a specific level are reported in a range, rather than a precise percentage, to protect the privacy of individuals represented either within the reported rate or its inverse. Based on the population size, top coded estimates are presented as being greater than or equal to a certain percent. For example, a rate of 94 percent may be presented as “≥90” percent for one population and “≥80” percent for another, dependent on total population size. United States total includes data from the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian includes Alaska Native. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), “NCES Common Core of Data State Dropout and Graduation Rate Data file,” School Year 2010–11, Provisional Version 1a.

Table 4. Public high school averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR), by gender and race/ethnicity, for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and other jurisdictions: School year 2011–12

State	Percent of students							
	Total	Female	Male	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White
United States	81	85	78	68	93	76	68	85
Alabama	75	79	72	87	89	67	68	80
Alaska	79	82	78	62	98	84	75	83
Arizona	77	81	73	67	89	72	73	82
Arkansas	78	81	75	69	84	80	72	79
California	82	86	78	77	96	77	70	88
Colorado	82	86	79	57	87	76	65	84
Connecticut	86	89	83	≥98	95	74	73	90
Delaware	77	82	72	89	96	70	69	81
District of Columbia	71	80	62	<>	<>	59	70	98
Florida	75	82	73	94	94	78	66	77
Georgia	70	75	66	86	90	64	62	76
Hawaii	78	81	75	65	76	68	77	56
Idaho	84	86	82	67	96	83	78	83
Illinois	82	85	83	91	98	79	64	89
Indiana	80	87	78	80	≥99	83	63	82
Iowa	89	92	87	59	91	88	64	90
Kansas	89	92	86	64	92	87	70	89
Kentucky	82	86	80	72	≥99	89	78	82
Louisiana	72	78	66	68	98	87	65	76
Maine	87	88	86	60	≥98	97	83	86
Maryland	84	89	81	70	96	85	74	87
Massachusetts	86	89	85	70	98	69	82	90
Michigan	77	82	74	66	92	51	60	83
Minnesota	88	91	86	48	92	70	66	92
Mississippi	68	74	61	44	85	68	63	72
Missouri	86	89	83	98	98	92	73	87
Montana	86	88	84	62	87	96	65	87
Nebraska	93	95	91	68	97	93	65	93
Nevada	60	65	55	37	71	50	41	64
New Hampshire	87	90	84	65	≥99	86	74	87
New Jersey ¹	87	89	84	59	≥99	78	74	91
New Mexico	74	78	71	71	90	73	68	76
New York	78	79	76	68	94	65	65	85
North Carolina	79	83	76	74	88	78	68	82
North Dakota	91	93	89	62	≥95	82	≥98	93
Ohio	84	89	84	75	97	82	64	89
Oklahoma	79	82	76	72	≥99	78	66	80
Oregon	78	85	77	58	87	78	65	78
Pennsylvania	88	91	86	79	≥99	76	75	92

See notes at end of table.

Table 4. Public high school averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR), by gender and race/ethnicity, for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and other jurisdictions: School year 2011–12—Continued

State	Percent of students								
	Total	Female	Male	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White	
Rhode Island	76	80	72	52	74	72	66	76	
South Carolina	72	78	67	53	83	72	64	76	
South Dakota	83	85	82	42	≥98	77	77	88	
Tennessee	83	86	81	94	94	‡	76	86	
Texas ¹	82	85	80	97	94	80	73	84	
Utah	78	80	76	58	87	65	60	80	
Vermont	93	95	91	≥90	≥98	≥95	≥98	91	
Virginia	84	90	81	82	96	92	71	85	
Washington	79	85	77	41	81	79	57	80	
West Virginia	80	82	78	69	≥98	81	76	80	
Wisconsin	92	94	90	76	97	85	63	96	
Wyoming	80	82	78	44	79	77	58	82	
Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), Bureau of Indian Education, and other jurisdictions									
Bureau of Indian Education	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
American Samoa	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
DoDEA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Guam	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Northern Marianas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Puerto Rico	62	67	57	<>	<>	62	<>	≥90	
Virgin Islands	72	81	63	<>	<>	76	70	<>	

— Not available. Data were not reported and have not been imputed.

‡ Data were suppressed because the reported data did not meet NCES standards.

<> Data were suppressed to protect the confidentiality of individual student data.

≥ Greater than or equal to. The estimate has been top coded to protect the confidentiality of individual student data.

¹ Data are imputed. New Jersey did not report graduate data by gender. Texas did not report any graduate data.

NOTE: Reported rates are presented rounded to the whole percentage point where the related population size is greater than 300. Estimates have been top coded to protect the confidentiality of individual student data. Top coding is a process where rates at or above a specific level are reported in a range, rather than a precise percentage, to protect the privacy of individuals represented either within the reported rate or its inverse. Based on the population size, top coded estimates are presented as being greater than or equal to a certain percent. For example, a rate of 94 percent may be presented as “≥90” percent for one population and “≥80” percent for another, dependent on total population size. United States total includes only the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian includes Alaska Native. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), “NCES Common Core of Data State Dropout and Graduation Rate Data file,” School Year 2011–12, Preliminary Version 1a.

Table 5. Public high school event dropout rate for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and other jurisdictions: School years 2010–11 and 2011–12

State	Percent of high school students	
	2010–11	2011–12
United States	3.3	3.3
Alabama	1.4	1.4 ¹
Alaska	6.9	7.0
Arizona	5.0	5.9
Arkansas	3.5	3.2
California	4.2	4.0
Colorado	5.1	4.9
Connecticut	1.9	2.1
Delaware	3.6	3.5
District of Columbia	6.1	5.8
Florida	2.1	2.1
Georgia	3.9	3.9
Hawaii	5.1	4.7
Idaho	1.6	1.9
Illinois	2.9	2.4
Indiana	1.8	2.1
Iowa	3.4	3.2
Kansas	2.3	2.1
Kentucky	2.5	2.5
Louisiana	3.9	5.7
Maine	3.5	3.2
Maryland	3.3	3.8
Massachusetts	2.7	2.5
Michigan	7.2	6.9
Minnesota	1.8	1.9
Mississippi	3.2	3.2
Missouri	3.4	2.9
Montana	4.3	4.1
Nebraska	2.1	2.2
Nevada	4.1	3.9
New Hampshire	1.3	1.3
New Jersey	1.4	1.4
New Mexico	6.6	6.4
New York	3.6	3.8
North Carolina	3.9	3.1
North Dakota	3.3	3.0
Ohio	4.4	4.6

See notes at end of table.

Table 5. Public high school event dropout rate for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and other jurisdictions: School years 2010–11 and 2011–12—Continued

State	Percent of high school students	
	2010–11	2011–12
Oklahoma	2.5	2.5
Oregon	3.2	3.4
Pennsylvania	2.2	2.8
Rhode Island	5.2	4.2
South Carolina	2.8	2.5
South Dakota	2.6	3.1
Tennessee	3.6	3.7
Texas	2.4	2.5
Utah	1.5	1.5 ¹
Vermont	2.5	2.5
Virginia	2.3	1.9
Washington	4.0	3.8
West Virginia	3.4	2.7
Wisconsin	2.0	1.9
Wyoming	5.4	4.3
Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), Bureau of Indian Education, and other jurisdictions		
Bureau of Indian Education	—	—
American Samoa	—	—
DoDEA	—	—
Guam	—	—
Northern Marianas	—	—
Puerto Rico	1.2	1.8
Virgin Islands	5.1	3.8

— Not available. Data were not reported and have not been imputed.

¹ Data were imputed from prior year reported data.

NOTE: Reported rates are presented rounded to the one decimal place to protect against the disclosure of individually identifiable information. United States total includes only the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "NCES Common Core of Data State Dropout and Graduation Rate Data file," School Year 2010–11, Provisional Version 1a and School Year 2011–12, Preliminary Version 1a.

Appendix A: Collection Methodology and Sources of Error

EDFacts Collection System

EDFacts is a U.S. Department of Education initiative to centralize and coordinate the administrative data reported by state education agencies (SEAs) to the Department of Education for elementary and secondary public education. Program offices within the Department sponsor specific portions of the data reported in *EDFacts* to meet information requirements and support program monitoring and policy development. The purpose of *EDFacts* is to

- place the use of robust, timely performance data at the core of decision and policymaking in education;
- reduce state and district data burden and streamline data practices;
- improve state data capabilities by providing resources and technical assistance; and
- provide data for planning, policy, and management at the federal, state, and local levels.

EDFacts provides the collection and processing systems that allow SEAs to report data annually for multiple elementary/secondary programs, such as the Common Core of Data and the Consolidated State Performance Report, through a series of data files that fall into different reporting schedules throughout each year. SEAs reported all the data elements used in this report for the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR), and the event dropout rate through the *EDFacts* Submission System.

For more information on the *EDFacts* initiative, please visit the public website at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts>.

Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR)

The CSPR collection is stewarded and monitored by the Department's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). The CSPR is the required annual reporting tool for each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) as authorized under Section 9303 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended.

Part I of the CSPR collects information required for the Annual State Report to the Secretary of Education, as described in section 1111(h)(4) of ESEA and data required under Homeless Collection (added in fiscal year 2005–06). Examples of data in Part I include: participation and performance on state assessments, participation and performance of English learners in language programs, highly qualified teachers, and homeless students served.

Part II of the CSPR collects information related to state activities and outcomes of specific ESEA programs needed for the programs' Government Performance and Results Act indicators or other assessment and reporting requirements. OESE uses these data in conjunction with data collected in Part I to monitor states' progress in implementing ESEA and to identify technical assistance needs and program management and policy needs. Examples of data in Part II include: participation in Title I Part A, migrant students served, neglected or delinquent students served, adjusted cohort graduation rates, and lists of identified schools.

The CSPR is considered OESE's official report on state-level data for the specific programs included for a given school year. Figures published in this report may differ from those in related CSPRs for a

given state. State CSPR reports include data submitted as of the final CSPR deadline. SEAs may update data beyond the CSPR deadline, and data in this report may reflect those updates. For more information about the CSPR, please e-mail questions to CSPR@ed.gov.

The Common Core of Data (CCD) Program

The CCD is a program of the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Administrative Data Division, which is part of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. CCD was established as part of the Cooperative Education Statistics System in section 157 of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, part C. Each school year the CCD program collects fiscal and nonfiscal administrative data about all public schools, public local education agencies (LEAs), and SEAs in the United States. The State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education includes the data elements used to calculate the AFGRs and the event dropout rates in this report and is one of six annual surveys that comprise the CCD. The other five surveys are the Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey, the Local Education Agency Universe Survey, the National Public Education Finance Survey, the School District Finance Survey, and the Teacher Compensation Survey.

The objectives of the CCD are twofold: first, to provide an official listing of public elementary and secondary schools and LEAs in the nation, which can be used to select samples for other NCES surveys. And second, to provide basic information and descriptive statistics on public elementary and secondary schools and schooling in general that are comparable among states.

SEAs report CCD nonfiscal survey elements as part of the annual *EDFacts* collection. SEAs report CCD fiscal data through separate surveys that are conducted in collaboration with the U.S. Census Bureau. CCD contains three categories of information: general descriptive information on schools and school districts, data on students and staff, and fiscal data on revenue and expenditures for public education. CCD publishes statistical information annually by school year for approximately 100,000 public elementary and secondary schools, approximately 18,000 local education agencies (including independent charter districts, supervisory unions, and regional education service agencies) in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), BIE, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.

Data Collection and Review

This report and the accompanying data files provide both ACGRs and AFGRs. For the ACGR data, SEAs track a cohort of high school students over 4 years and then submit to *EDFacts* aggregated counts of students remaining in that cohort at the end of 4 years, the counts of students from that cohort who received a diploma at the end of the fourth school year, and the calculated ACGRs from these counts. For the components used to calculate AFGRs, SEAs submit to *EDFacts* each school year the October 1 membership counts and aggregate counts of the total number of students who graduated at the end of that school year. Both OESE and NCES run a series of validation checks against the reported data. Both NCES and OESE check reported data for internal, cross-level, and cross-year consistency. State coordinators are asked to review any identified anomalies and either update the reported data or explain the anomaly within a stipulated time period. In most cases states were able to correct or explain their data. SEAs are asked to respond to these edits and provide either data revisions or explanations for the identified anomalies.

Because data collected in the CSPR are used for program administration, OESE does not alter the data reported by SEAs as part of the CSPR. Data errors and anomalies must be resolved by the state. In

some instances, OESE has not published state-submitted data due to data quality concerns. In cases where data are missing or suppressed, NCES worked with OESE to impute these data to improve the accuracy of national estimates and to make such estimates nationally representative.

NCES uses statistical editing procedures to identify inconsistencies or anomalies in reported values for CCD that are used to compute the AFGR. Critical data errors include cases where the counts at a lower-level of aggregation exceed counts at higher levels of aggregation, cases where a graduate count exceeds the enrolled population count by more than 5 percent, or cases where the current year data vary widely from data reported in prior years. One method for identifying inconsistencies involves looking at the consistency of the data for an individual institution over a 5-year period and comparing the mean variation across prior estimates to the variation between those prior data and data collected in the current year. NCES provides the results of these edit checks to SEAs and requests that SEAs verify and explain the flagged inconsistencies. Or if the SEA finds that the submitted data have errors, NCES asks that the SEA resubmit corrected data. If the data for an individual institution (school, LEA, or state) are flagged as failing several “critical” data checks and the state is unable to provide a detailed explanation of the anomaly, then the data, as reported to *EDFacts*, are not reported to the public. NCES does, on occasion, alter the data reported by SEAs for CCD. NCES adjusts, suppresses, and/or imputes the data in question to correct for internal and cross-level consistency. Unexplained violations of this check at the school or LEA level result in the suppression of the identified data point. Violations at the state-level can result in the suppression and imputation replacement of the identified data point. Specific information about the imputation methods applied can be found later in this appendix under the heading “Imputation Methodology.”

In some instances the reported SEA totals are less than the aggregates from the LEA or school level. In such cases where the SEA could not explain or correct this inconsistency, NCES applied a “raking” procedure to the LEA and/or school-level data to ensure that the sum of the school or LEA data is consistent with the state-level data. This “raking” process identifies the percentage of students at the school and/or LEA level that exceeds the state level and removes that percentage from each school and/or LEA. The raking algorithm uses a statistical rounding technique to carry forward any resulting remainders throughout the raking process in order to maintain whole number counts of students. This process results in slight changes to individual school/LEA records in an attempt to make the aggregate values more statistically consistent.

The *EDFacts* collection system accepted blank responses in SY 2010–11 and SY 2011–12 and did not require that states distinguish among missing, not applicable, and “zero” values. NCES used statistical editing procedures to change blank responses to missing, not applicable, or zero using information available from SEAs or from prior year reporting. However, it is possible that some blank responses may have been categorized incorrectly. For example, the number of graduates for a specific race group may have been categorized as missing when the actual count was zero.

Response and Nonresponse

ACGR. For both SY 2010–11 and SY 2011–12, forty-seven states, the District of Columbia, and BIE reported 4-year ACGRs. Idaho, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Puerto Rico have approved timeline extension requests to delay reporting of the ACGR. Kentucky and Oklahoma will first report the ACGR on SY 2012–13. Idaho will first report the ACGR on SY 2013–14. These systems were granted extensions in order to provide time for their internal data systems to mature to the point when they would have the requisite data to calculate the ACGR components and rate. Puerto Rico reported a 3-

year rate for SY 2011–12 and will continue to report a 3-year rate since Puerto Rico’s high school structure does not allow for reporting a 4-year rate. The estimated national ACGR includes reported data from 47 states and the District of Columbia and imputed data for Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Idaho. Detailed information on these imputations is provided later in this document in the section marked “Imputation Methodology.” Although DoDEA, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are included in the collection for the CCD, these jurisdictions were not included in the collection of ACGR data for SY 2010–11 and SY 2011–12. Texas did not report the ACGR components or rate for SY 2011–12 by the CSPR reporting deadline but did successfully submit their data in time for inclusion in this report.

CCD Graduate Data. SEAs from 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands reported graduate counts in *EDFacts* for SY 2010–11. BIE, DoDEA, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands did not report any graduate counts to *EDFacts* for SY 2010–11. New Jersey did not report graduate counts disaggregated by gender for SY 2010–11. In order to produce a national estimated AFGR data by gender for SY 2010–11, NCES imputed the graduate counts disaggregated by gender for New Jersey.

SEAs from 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands reported in *EDFacts* for SY 2011–12. Texas, DoDEA, BIE, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands did not report any graduation data for SY 2011–12. New Jersey did not report graduate counts disaggregated by gender for SY 2010–11. In order to produce a national estimated AFGR data for SY 2011–12, NCES imputed the graduate counts for Texas and the graduate counts disaggregated by gender for New Jersey.

CCD Dropout Data. SEAs from 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands reported dropout counts in *EDFacts* for SY 2010–11. BIE, DoDEA, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands did not report dropout data to *EDFacts* for SY 2010–11.

SEAs from 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands reported dropout counts in *EDFacts* for SY 2011–12. Utah, Alabama, BIE, DoDEA, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands did not report any dropout data to *EDFacts* for SY 2011–12. In order to produce a national estimated event dropout rate for SY 2011–12, NCES imputed dropout data for Utah and Alabama.

NCES makes every effort to work with SEAs to allow them opportunities to submit, correct, and/or explain data before imputation procedures are used in place of reported data. NCES only imputed missing data that were necessary to produce United States totals from the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data for the other nonrespondent jurisdictions that are not included in the United States level estimates were not imputed and are shown as missing in the report tables. Detailed information on the imputation methodology is provided below.

Imputation Methodology

Several imputations procedures, each based on the specific circumstances of the missing/suppressed data item, are employed.

Method 1: Carrying forward prior year rates

If a school system was unable to report data for the current year but had been able to report the data for a proceeding year, the rates for the previous year were applied to the current year data to estimate the

missing item. The rates were carried forward by the lowest level of disaggregation and totals were derived from the imputed disaggregates.

- Missing Diploma Counts (numerator for the AFGR): Ratio of prior year diplomas to 12th-grade membership applied to current year grade 12 membership.
- Missing Cohort Graduates (numerator for the ACGR): Ratio of prior year cohort graduates to total graduates applied to current year total graduates.
- Missing Cohort Student Count (denominator for the ACGR): Ratio of prior year cohort student count to averaged freshman count (denominator for the AFGR) applied to current year average freshman count.

Method 2: Apply average state ratio to missing SEA

If an SEA did not report a component to the ACGR but did report the corresponding component used to calculate the AFGR, NCES computed a ratio of the ACGR to AFGR components from the SEAs that did report both these components. Then, for each state with a missing ACGR component, NCES applied that ratio to the AFGR component to derive the imputed value for the missing ACGR component. The ratios were derived at the lowest level of disaggregation, and totals were derived from the imputed disaggregates.

- Missing Cohort Graduates (numerator for the ACGR): Average (weighted) ratio of cohort graduates to total graduates across reporting states applied to total graduates in the target state.
- Missing Cohort Student Count (denominator for the ACGR): Average (weighted) ratio of the cohort student count to the averaged freshman count (denominator for the AFGR) across reporting states applied to averaged freshman count in the target state.
- Missing Cohort Rate Components by Disability, English Language Learner, and Poverty Status: Average (weighted) ratio of the overall ACGR components to the disaggregate subgroups across reporting states applied to either reported or imputed overall ACGR for target state.

Method 3: Carrying back current year rates

If a school system was unable to report data for the prior year but was able to report the data for the current year, the rates for the current year were applied to the prior year data to estimate the missing item. The rates were carried back by the lowest level of disaggregation and totals were derived from the imputed disaggregates.

- Missing Cohort Graduates (numerator for the ACGR): Ratio of current year cohort graduates to total graduates applied to prior year total graduates.
- Missing Cohort Student Count (denominator for the ACGR): Ratio of current year cohort student count to averaged freshman count (denominator for the AFGR) applied to prior year averaged freshman count.

Variability of Data Quality

SEAs and LEAs vary widely in how they collect and manage student data and in the degree of rigor applied to verifying the accuracy of graduation and dropout data at all levels. Because of this, the

graduation and dropout data reported by SEAs may have varying levels of quality. Those states that collect dropout or graduation data through student-level records systems are better able to verify students' enrollment and graduation status than are those agencies that collect aggregate data from schools and districts in more traditional formats. Additionally, some SEAs take a more active role in cleaning and processing these data, while others rely more heavily on their LEAs to clean these data points.

Appendix B: Detailed Methodology for Calculation of Four-Year On-Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates

The Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR)

Starting with the school year (SY) 2011–12 collection, the ACGR has been and will continue to be included as a required component of each state’s Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR).¹ The ACGR is calculated based on the number of students who graduate in 4 years or less with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. In order to calculate and report the 4-year ACGR states must follow the progress of each individual 9–12 grade student over time and maintain documentation of students who enter or leave schools or districts within their state. From the beginning of ninth grade (or the earliest high school grade) students who are entering that grade for the first time form a cohort that is “adjusted” by adding any students who subsequently transfer into the cohort from another state and subtracting any students who subsequently transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die.

The following formula provides an example of how the 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate would be calculated for the cohort entering 9th grade for the first time in SY 2008–09 and graduating by the end of SY 2011–12:

$$\frac{\text{Number of cohort members who earned a regular high school diploma by the end of SY 2011–12}}{\text{Number of first-time 9th-graders in fall 2008 (starting cohort) plus students who transferred in, minus students who transferred out, emigrated, or died during school years 2008–09, 2009–10, 2010–11, and 2011–12}}$$

State education agencies (SEAs) report ACGR data for each school, LEA, and for the state total cohort rate. The methodology of the ACGR, as it was designed, allows for the movement or transfer of students from one school to another, while only counting each student once. A student may change schools and thus exit their prior school's cohort and enter their new school's cohort, but stay in the same district and state cohort. Similarly, a student who changes districts within a state will move to the new school and district for the ACGR, but will stay in the states cohort. In order to subtract or transfer a student out of a cohort, the school or LEA must have official written documentation that the student enrolled in another school or in an educational program that culminates in the award of a regular high school diploma.

Unless specified, the ACGR data in this report and the associated data files reflect the data as reported by each SEA. The ACGRs required under the current Title I regulations are more comparable across states than were graduation rates submitted by SEAs under prior regulations. However, there has been some variation in the way that individual states have interpreted and understood the methodology specified in the statute. Examples of ways the calculated ACGR may vary among states include

¹ Under the Title I regulations, states also may calculate and use in accountability determinations an extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (e.g., a 5-year rate) to take into account students who graduate with a regular high school diploma in more than 4 years (see 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b)(1)(v)). If a state uses an extended-year graduation rate in accountability determinations, it must calculate and report that rate separately from, and in addition to, the 4-year rate.

- how students are identified for inclusion in certain subgroups;
- how the beginning of the cohort is defined;
- whether summer school students are included; and
- the criteria of what constitutes a diploma that meet the regulatory definition of a regular high school diploma.²

SEAs report the ACGR disaggregated by major reporting groups. The specific groups vary across states depending on the relative size of certain disaggregation populations of interest and the subgroups they have been approved to report as part of their CSPR Accountability Workbooks. For the purpose of this report, data have been aggregated to five race/ethnicity subgroups: American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; Asian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic; Hispanic; Black, non-Hispanic; and White, non-Hispanic. Additional levels of disaggregation may be presented in other reports and/or data files associated with the ACGR.

Detailed information on the ACGR can be found in the Department’s 2008 High School Graduation Rate Non-Regulatory Guidance: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/hsgrguidance.pdf>.

Detailed information on the guidance provided to SEA coordinators for submitting data relating to the ACGR can be found in the *EDFacts* file specifications 150 and 151. Links to both file specification documents can be found on the *EDFacts* File Specification website:

- SY 2010–11: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/sy-10-11-xml.html>
- SY 2011–12: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/sy-11-12-nonxml.html>

The Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR)

The AFGR provides an estimate of the percentage of high school students who graduate within 4 years of first starting 9th grade. The rate uses aggregate student enrollment data to estimate the size of an incoming freshman class and counts of the number of diplomas awarded 4 years later. The incoming freshman class size is estimated by summing the enrollment in 8th grade in year one, 9th grade for the next year, and 10th grade for the year after, and then dividing by three. The averaging has a smoothing effect that helps compensate for prior year retentions in the 8th-, 9th-, and 10th-grade enrollment counts. Although not as accurate as a 4-year graduation rate computed from a cohort of students using student record data like the ACGR, the AFGR can be computed with widely available cross-sectional data. Based on a technical review and analysis of several 4-year graduation rates, the AFGR was selected as the most accurate indicator, excepting only the ACGR, from a number of alternative estimates that can be calculated using available cross-sectional data (Seastrom et al. 2006a, 2006b).

The following formula provides an example of how the AFGR would be calculated for the graduating class of 2011:³

² Under 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b)(1)(iv) a regular high school diploma is defined as “the standard high school diploma that is awarded to students in the State and that is fully aligned with the State’s academic content standards or a higher diploma and does not include a high school equivalency credential, certificate of attendance, or any alternative award.”

³ Eighth-, 9th-, and 10th-grade enrollment was adjusted to include a prorated number of ungraded students using the ratio of the specified grade enrollment to the total graded enrollment. The same ratio was used to prorate ungraded students for the disaggregated enrollment counts (race/ethnicity and gender).

Number of regular high school diplomas awarded in SY 2010–11

The number of 8th-graders enrolled in the fall 2006 plus
the number of 9th-graders enrolled in the fall 2007 plus
the number of 10th-graders enrolled in the fall of 2008)
divided by 3

The AFGR was intended to address a lack of regular information about timeliness of graduating from public high schools. Precise measures of how long it takes for a student to graduate high school require data sources that follow the progress of each individual student over time. Until recently, most states lacked data systems that captured individual public-school student-level data over time. The AFGR was developed to utilize data that were available across the 50 states on a regular basis to provide a general and comparable measure of the percentage of public high school students who graduate with a regular high school diploma within 4 years of first entering 9th grade. The AFGR is useful for longitudinal analysis of graduation rates since the data used to generate the AFGR are available going back in time to at least the 1960s.

The levels of disaggregation for the AFGR components are complicated by the different years for which data are necessary in the computation of the rate. Prior to the SY 2008–09 collection, enrollment and graduation data were collected disaggregated by 5 major racial/ethnic groups: American Indian/Alaska Natives, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, Blacks, and Whites. The reporting of Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders disaggregated from Asian/Pacific Islander students and the separate reporting of students of more than one race was phased in for SY 2008–09. For SY 2008–09 seven states reported students disaggregated into the seven race/ethnicity categories. For SY 2009–10 eight additional states reported at that level of disaggregation. By SY 2010–11 all states were required to report by the seven race/ethnicity categories rather than the traditional five.⁴ Because the SY 2010–11 AFGR calculations require data going back to SY 2006–07 it is only possible to calculate it by the collapsed five race/ethnicity categories. Thereby, these five categories are the only levels of disaggregation available in this report and in the associated data files.

Detailed information on the guidance provided to SEA coordinators for submitting data relating to the AFGR can be found in the *EDFacts* file specifications. Links to both file specification documents can be found on the *EDFacts* File Specification website:

- 8th-grade enrollment for SY 2006–07 was collected under file specification 052:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/sy-06-07-nonxml.html>
- 9th-grade enrollment for SY 2007–08 was collected under file specification 052:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/sy-07-08-nonxml.html>
- 10th-grade enrollment for SY 2008–09 was collected under file specification 052:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/sy-08-09-nonxml.html>
- Diploma data for SY 2010–11 was collected under file specification 040:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/sy-10-11-nonxml.html>

⁴ For more information on this change, please refer to the October 19, 2007 Federal Register notice, Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education, located at <http://www2.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2007-4/101907c.html>.

Differential Definitions for “Regular High School Diploma Recipient”

State and local policies can affect the numbers of regular high school diploma recipients (REGDIP) reported. There are differences in what a regular high school diploma represents across states. *EDFacts* file specifications for both annual and cohort REGDIP define a regular diploma as the high school completion credential awarded to students who meet or exceed coursework and performance standards set by the state or other approving authority. While this language provides a definition of common intent, the requirements required to earn a high school diploma varies among states. States therefore have differing requirements for REGDIP in terms of required attendance, coursework requirements (Carnegie Units), and exit exams.

High School Event Dropout Rate

In calculating the event dropout rate, high school dropouts for a given school year include students who were

- enrolled in school at some time during the school year;
- expected to be in membership the following school year; and
- not enrolled in grades 9–12 in by October 1 of the following year.

Dropouts *do not* include students who were

- reported as a dropout in the year before;
- among students who graduated high school by completing the state graduation requirements, receiving a high school equivalency credential without dropping out of school, or completing a state or district-approved educational program;
- confirmed as having transferred to another public school district, private school, or state or district-approved educational program;
- temporarily absent due to suspension or illness; or
- deceased.

The high school event dropout rate is the number of dropouts divided by the number of students enrolled in grades 9–12 at the beginning of that school year. In cases where LEAs or SEAs report students and dropouts in an ungraded category, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) prorates ungraded students and dropouts into grades in order to calculate an aggregated dropout rate for 9th- through 12th-grade students.

Not all states follow a fall-to-fall school year. The Common Core of Data (CCD) dropout count is based on an October–September school year in which a student’s dropout status is determined at the beginning of the year. Some states follow a July–June calendar in which a student’s dropout status is determined at the end of the school year. Dropout rates in states that follow an alternative reporting calendar are comparable with rates for states that follow the October–September calendar (Winglee et al. 2000) and are included in the CCD data files.

The CCD definition attributes dropouts to the grade and school year for which they do not meet their obligation. Students who complete 1 school year but fail to enroll in the next school year are counted as dropouts from the school year and grade for which they failed to return. For example, a student

completing 10th grade in SY 2008–09 who does not enroll the next year would be reported as an 11th-grade dropout for SY 2009–10.

Students who leave high school to enroll in high school equivalency preparation programs are reported as dropouts, unless the district tracks these students and reports as dropouts those who fail to complete the program. If a high school equivalency program is an accepted high school credential in the state's Data Usage and Availability, students who have received a high school equivalency by October 1 are not considered dropouts, regardless of where they prepared for the test.

These data are released to the public and to IES Restricted-Use Data Licensees. Public release files can be obtained through

- the CCD website (ACGR and AFGR data);
- the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) website (ACGR state-level data); and
- the DATA.GOV initiative (ACGR school- and LEA-level data).

Public release data include graduation and dropout rates by race/ethnicity and other demographic characteristics at the school district, and state levels.

For more information on the information available on the public-use data files, please visit the CCD data file download page at <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/ccddata.asp>, the OESE data tool at <http://eddataexpress.ed.gov>, and the government-wide DATA.GOV initiative at: <http://www.data.gov/>.

To learn more about restricted use data files or how to apply for an IES Restricted Use Data License, visit the Restricted Use Data License page at: <http://nces.ed.gov/statprog/instruct.asp> or contact the IES Restricted Use Data License Office at: IESData.Security@ed.gov.

Ensuring Confidentiality of Individual Student Data

The Department of Education is legally required to protect the confidentiality of data that could be used to identify individual students. Legal requirements for protecting the data are detailed in the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). FERPA requires that these data be protected to ensure they cannot be used to identify the attributes of any individual student. Beyond the natural barriers to precise identification, including differential time frames and net transfer effects, additional disclosure mitigation methods have been applied to these data to ensure confidentiality.

Beginning with the SY 2010–11 graduation and dropout data, NCES' public release files will only include rates or ranges of rates. Explicit counts of graduates and dropouts will only be available on the restricted-use files for each of the state, LEA, and school levels. The Department of Education's Disclosure Review Board has established a set of mandatory procedures for these data to protect the confidentiality of individual student data. The procedures establish rate floors (minimums) and ceilings (maximums) based on the size of the population being examined. Small populations require more protection at the top and bottom of the distribution than do large populations to achieve the same level of confidentiality protection. For the public-use, LEA-level files, rate ranges within the distribution have also been established. These ranges are based on the same methodology as the floors and ceilings established for SEA-level data. Making the floors, ceilings, and ranges dynamic based on population size allows these rates to be published at a maximum level of precision allowable for a specific measured population.

NCES makes restricted-use data files available to researchers through IES Restricted-Use Data Licenses. Restricted use data files of administrative data have not undergone data coarsening. Licensees with access to these restricted use data must sign an agreement to ensure that any data disseminated outside of the authorized research team are protected using the Department of Education approved disclosure avoidance methodology for the licensed data set to ensure the confidentiality of individual student data. Any public releases of these data, including presentation materials, journal articles, website postings, etc. must be reviewed by IES to ensure that the Department of Education's approved disclosure avoidance methodology has been employed prior to release. The researchers and the sponsoring organizations are held accountable for any and all failures to comply with the strict requirements agreed to within the IES Restricted Use Data License agreement. Data confidentiality violations by IES Restricted Use Data Licensees are subject to Class E felony charges, with a fine up to \$250,000 and/or a prison term up to 5 years.