

# Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate Completion and Dropout Report

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

In 2011-12, Texas ranked second out of 50 states and the District of Columbia on the newest measure of on-time graduation from public high schools: the percentage of public high school students who graduate with a regular high school diploma four years after starting ninth grade plus the number of students who transfer into the cohort minus those who transfer out. That year, Texas tied with three other states – Nebraska, Vermont and Wisconsin – with an adjusted on-time cohort graduation rate of 88 percent compared to the national average of 80 percent.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, released the 2010-11 and 2011-12 adjusted cohort graduation rates (ACGR) in April 2014 along with the averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR). According to NCES, the ACGR is more accurate than the AFGR. The ACGR takes into consideration the number of students who transfer in and out of the cohort, thus defining the term “adjusted cohort” for this latest measure of high school graduation.

Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, this measure will become a required component of each state’s Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR). Data for this measure were drawn from counts of enrollment by grade and graduates in the Common Core of Data (CCD) State Non-fiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education. In order to calculate the rate, aggregate student enrollment data are used to estimate the size of the incoming freshman class and aggregate counts of the number of diplomas awarded four years later.

## Methods

The 47 states and the District of Columbia reported counts of high school graduates in 2011-12 (see table on next page for rates by state and rank orders by state). The states of Idaho, Kentucky and Oklahoma did not provide ACGR data.

The adjusted cohort rate is calculated by dividing the number of cohort members who earn a regular high school diploma by the end of the school year by the number of first-time ninth grade students in the fall of their freshman year plus students who transferred in, minus students who transferred out, emigrated or died during the four-year school enrollment period. The result of the calculation is expressed as a percent.

## Major Findings

Major findings of the latest NCES study on the adjusted cohort graduation rate include the following (also see the tables on Pages 33-34).

- In the 2011-12 school year, about four out of five students in the United States graduated from high school on time – within four years of after starting high school as a freshman in grade 9 and adjusting for cohort transfers and removals.
- The adjusted cohort graduation rate in the United States was 80 percent in 2011-12, and ranged from a low of 59 percent in the District of Columbia to a high of 89 percent in Iowa.
- Twenty-seven of the reporting 47 states had rates equal to or higher than the national average of 80 percent – Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin. In 2011-12, Texas tied for second among the 47 reporting states and the District of Columbia with a rate of 88 percent.
- Twenty of the 47 reporting states and the District of Columbia had rates lower than the overall average of 80 percent – Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missis-

- issippi, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.
- In the United States in 2011-12, American Indian/Alaska Native students, Black students and Hispanic students had an averaged freshman graduation rate below the national average. American Indian/Alaska Native students had an ACGR of 67 percent, Black students had an ACGR of 69 percent, and Hispanic students had an ACGR of 73 percent. White students had a rate of 86 percent, while Asian/Pacific Islander students had a rate of 88 percent.
  - For special population groups for the nation as a whole, **economically disadvantaged** students had an ACGR of 72 percent, **limited-English-proficient** students had an ACGR of 59 percent, and **students with disabilities** had an ACGR of 61 percent. Each of these groups had a rate below the national average.

- In the state of Texas, **economically disadvantaged** students had an ACGR of 85 percent compared to the national average of 72 percent. **Limited-English-proficient** students in Texas had an ACGR of 59 percent matching the national average. **Students with disabilities** in Texas had an ACGR of 77 percent compared to the national average of 61 percent.

Nationally and in Texas about four out of five students who enter a freshman class graduated with a regular diploma within four years as measured by the adjusted cohort graduation rate. In the United States, most minority group students and students in special populations had an on-time graduation rate below the national average.

In Texas, the pattern for minority group students and special population students mirrored the nation with the ACGR falling below the state average. When comparing state

averages to the national averages, minority group students exceeded the national average. The state averages for economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities exceeded the national averages for these groups. The state average for limited-English-proficient students matched the national average. Disparities in on-time graduation rates as estimated by adjusted cohort graduation calculations are observable for minority group students and students in special populations. These observations suggest continued monitoring of this new measure and that steps be taken at the state and national levels to address issues surrounding dropout and graduation in our public schools.

### Resources

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education. *Public High School Four-Year On-Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates: School Years 2010-11 and 2011-12, First Look* (April 2014).

## 2011-12 Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) by Race-Ethnicity

State	Total		American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White
	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
<b>United States</b>	80		67	88	73	69	86
Alabama	75	37	84	85	69	67	81
Alaska	70	43	54	76	70	61	76
Arizona	76	35	63	84	70	71	84
Arkansas	84	16	78	84	78	78	87
California	78	30	72	90	73	66	86
Colorado	75	37	58	82	62	66	82
Connecticut	85	12	84	92	69	73	91
Delaware	80	25	71	93	74	74	83
District of Columbia	59	48	<	74	54	58	86
Florida	75	37	70	89	73	64	80
Georgia	70	43	67	82	60	62	78
Hawaii	82	22	65	84	76	76	79
Idaho	NA		—	—	—	—	—
Illinois	82	22	79	93	76	68	89
Indiana	86	8	78	89	80	73	89
Iowa	89	1	73	89	77	74	91
Kansas	85	12	78	86	77	75	88
Kentucky	NA		—	—	—	—	—
Louisiana	72	42	73	85	70	65	78
Maine	85	12	72	89	80	72	86
Maryland	84	16	79	93	73	77	90
Massachusetts	85	12	70	89	66	73	90
Michigan	76	35	66	87	64	60	82
Minnesota	78	30	45	74	53	51	84
Mississippi	75	37	71	90	79	69	82
Missouri	86	8	87	90	80	73	89
Montana	84	16	63	92	79	79	87
Nebraska	88	2	67	83	78	74	91
Nevada	63	47	54	74	54	48	72
New Hampshire	86	8	73	86	74	76	87
New Jersey	86	8	84	95	77	75	93
New Mexico	70	43	65	84	68	69	77
New York	77	32	63	86	63	63	87
North Carolina	80	25	74	87	73	75	85
North Dakota	87	6	63	86	73	76	90
Ohio	81	24	65	90	68	61	86
Oklahoma	NA		—	—	—	—	—
Oregon	68	46	51	79	60	53	71
Pennsylvania	84	16	74	89	68	68	89
Rhode Island	77	32	58	79	67	67	82
South Carolina	75	37	71	85	69	71	78
South Dakota	83	20	47	84	67	67	89
Tennessee	87	6	88	91	80	79	91
<b>Texas</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>93</b>
Utah	80	25	64	78	66	64	83
Vermont	88	2	‡80	94	86	72	88
Virginia	83	21	81	90	73	75	88
Washington	77	32	59	82	67	67	80
West Virginia	79	28	67	94	79	74	80
Wisconsin	88	2	77	89	74	64	92
Wyoming	79	29	50	86	67	66	82

— Not available. < Data were suppressed. ‡ Greater than or equal.

Source: Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education, *Public High School Four-Year On-Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates: School Years 2010–11 and 2011–12, First Look* (April 2014).

## 2011-12 Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) by Special Population Group

State	Total		Economically Disadvantaged	Limited English Proficiency	Students with Disabilities
	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rate	Rate
<b>United States</b>	<b>80</b>		<b>72</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>61</b>
Alabama	75	37	66	36	54
Alaska	70	43	59	47	46
Arizona	76	35	71	24	65
Arkansas	84	16	79	77	79
California	78	30	73	62	61
Colorado	75	37	61	53	54
Connecticut	85	12	71	63	64
Delaware	80	25	72	71	57
District of Columbia	59	48	70	52	44
Florida	75	37	65	57	48
Georgia	70	43	61	44	35
Hawaii	82	22	80	56	74
Idaho	—	—	—	—	—
Illinois	82	22	73	66	69
Indiana	86	8	85	78	71
Iowa	89	1	80	74	73
Kansas	85	12	76	74	77
Kentucky	—	—	—	—	—
Louisiana	72	42	66	49	33
Maine	85	12	76	74	70
Maryland	84	16	75	55	57
Massachusetts	85	12	72	61	69
Michigan	76	35	64	63	54
Minnesota	78	30	59	51	56
Mississippi	75	37	70	54	32
Missouri	86	8	79	67	73
Montana	84	16	73	53	81
Nebraska	88	2	80	64	72
Nevada	63	47	58	23	24
New Hampshire	86	8	73	68	70
New Jersey	86	8	75	73	74
New Mexico	70	43	65	66	56
New York	77	32	68	44	48
North Carolina	80	25	75	50	60
North Dakota	87	6	74	68	68
Ohio	81	24	68	62	68
Oklahoma	—	—	—	—	—
Oregon	68	46	61	49	38
Pennsylvania	84	16	74	64	70
Rhode Island	77	32	66	69	59
South Carolina	75	37	68	64	40
South Dakota	83	20	67	60	64
Tennessee	87	6	82	72	73
<b>Texas</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>77</b>
Utah	80	25	70	51	64
Vermont	88	2	77	75	71
Virginia	83	21	72	55	49
Washington	77	32	66	54	58
West Virginia	79	28	72	83	60
Wisconsin	88	2	75	66	69
Wyoming	79	29	65	56	59

— Not available.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education, *Public High School Four-Year On-Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates: School Years 2010–11 and 2011–12, First Look* (April 2014).