

# 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 incomes than adults with high school degrees.<sup>1,2</sup> In 2022, 8% of Rhode Island children lived in households headed by a non-high school graduate, slightly lower than the national average of 11%.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup> 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 at risk, so supports can be put in place to help students get “on track” for graduation.<sup>5</sup>

Adopting student-centered learning practices at the high school level can

increase achievement and engagement for all students. These practices encourage deeper engagement by personalizing learning, allowing students to take ownership over their work, and pacing learning to match the student’s mastery of the content.<sup>6</sup> Providing students with high-quality postsecondary and workforce engagement opportunities can also increase high school graduation rates and college and career readiness.<sup>7</sup>

In order to graduate, Rhode Island students must demonstrate proficiency in English language arts, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology, complete at least 20 courses, and complete one performance-based assessment. Students can earn Council designations, including a Seal of Biliteracy, Commissioner’s Seal, and Pathway Endorsements. In 2022, Rhode Island adopted new graduation requirements which will require students beginning with the Class of 2024 to demonstrate proficiency in financial literacy and beginning with the Class of 2028 to also demonstrate proficiency in world languages, lab sciences, college preparation coursework, civics, and computer science.<sup>8,9</sup>

## Rhode Island Four-Year High School Graduation and Dropout Rates, by Student Subgroup, Class of 2023

	COHORT SIZE	DROPOUT RATE	% COMPLETED GED	% OF STUDENTS STILL IN SCHOOL	FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
Female Students	5,407	6%	1%	5%	87%
Male Students	5,642	10%	1%	8%	81%
Multilingual Learners	1,286	18%	<1%	12%	69%
Students Receiving Special Education Services	1,737	11%	2%	21%	66%
Students Not Receiving Special Education Services	9,324	7%	1%	4%	88%
Low-Income Students	5,913	12%	2%	10%	77%
Higher-Income Students	5,148	3%	1%	3%	93%
Students in Foster Care	111	25%	2%	22%	51%
Homeless Students	248	16%	3%	16%	65%
Native American Students	139	18%	1%	6%	74%
Asian Students	291	3%	0%	5%	92%
Black Students	1,007	8%	1%	9%	82%
Hispanic Students	3,172	11%	1%	10%	77%
White Students	6,000	6%	1%	4%	88%
<b>ALL STUDENTS</b>	<b>11,061</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>84%</b>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2023. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Data for Asian students is not disaggregated by ethnic group. National research shows large academic disparities across Asian ethnic groups.

★ The Rhode Island four-year graduation rate for the Class of 2023 was 84%, up from 80% for the Class of 2013. The lowest graduation rates were among Multilingual Learners, students receiving special education services, students in foster care, students experiencing homelessness, low-income students, and Hispanic and Native American students.<sup>10,11</sup>

## 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 11,173 Rhode Island students who enrolled in ninth grade in the Fall of 2017, 9,385 (84%) graduated in four years in 2021, 223 (2%) graduated in five years in 2022, and 112 (1%) graduated in six years in 2023. Of the 223 students who graduated in five years in 2022, 126 (56%) were students receiving special education services and 47 (21%) were Multilingual Learners.<sup>12</sup>

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Table 54.

## High School Graduation Rates, Rhode Island, Class of 2023

SCHOOL DISTRICT	FOUR-YEAR COHORT RATES				
	# OF STUDENTS IN COHORT	DROPOUT RATE	% COMPLETED GED	% STILL IN SCHOOL	FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
Barrington	285	2%	<1%	2%	96%
Bristol Warren	230	4%	1%	5%	90%
Burrillville	163	8%	2%	2%	87%
Central Falls	247	23%	1%	11%	65%
Charlho	244	1%	1%	3%	94%
Coventry	349	12%	2%	4%	82%
Cranston	898	6%	<1%	7%	87%
Cumberland	376	3%	1%	7%	89%
East Greenwich	191	1%	0%	3%	96%
East Providence	396	8%	<1%	10%	83%
Exeter-West Greenwich	108	1%	2%	6%	91%
Foster-Glocester	232	3%	3%	2%	92%
Johnston	193	7%	5%	2%	86%
Lincoln	246	7%	3%	4%	86%
Middletown	139	8%	1%	2%	89%
Narragansett	122	3%	2%	1%	94%
Newport	182	13%	2%	7%	77%
North Kingstown	353	6%	4%	3%	88%
North Providence	284	7%	1%	3%	89%
North Smithfield	109	6%	1%	6%	88%
Pawtucket	541	18%	1%	9%	72%
Portsmouth	203	2%	<1%	1%	96%
Providence	1,802	12%	<1%	11%	77%
Scituate	99	2%	0%	1%	97%
Smithfield	213	3%	1%	2%	93%
South Kingstown	224	5%	<1%	4%	91%
Tiverton	124	0%	1%	2%	98%
Warwick	613	6%	2%	7%	85%
West Warwick	242	7%	2%	9%	82%
Westerly	179	4%	4%	6%	86%
Woonsocket	430	16%	2%	16%	66%
<i>Beacon Charter School</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>73%</i>
<i>Blackstone Academy</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>96%</i>
<i>Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>99%</i>
<i>Chavette Charter School</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>89%</i>
<i>Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>
<i>Highlander Charter School</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>80%</i>
<i>Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center</i>	<i>211</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>96%</i>
<i>Paul Cuffee Charter School</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>83%</i>
<i>RI Nurses Institute Middle College</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>76%</i>
<i>Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>24%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>34%</i>
<i>The Greene School</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>98%</i>
<i>Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>96%</i>
<i>Village Green Virtual Public Charter School</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>98%</i>
<i>William M. Davies Jr. Career and Technical School</i>	<i>207</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>89%</i>
<i>YouthBuild</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>32%</i>
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	<i>3,020</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>74%</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>8,041</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>88%</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>11,061</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>84%</i>

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2023.

The 2023 four-year cohort graduation rate is the number of students who graduate in four years or less divided by the total number of students in the cohort. The cohort is calculated as the number of first-time entering ninth graders in 2019-2020 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.

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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

YouthBuild is the YouthBuild Preparatory Academy.

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

Rhode Island School for the Deaf and New Shoreham are not reported because there are fewer than 10 students in this cohort. These students are included in the state total.

### References

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022. Table S2301.
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022. Table S2001
- <sup>3</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
- <sup>4</sup> Fiester, L. (2013). *Early warning confirmed: a research update on third-grade reading*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- <sup>5</sup> DePaoli, J. L., Balfanz, R., Bridgeland, J., Atwell, M., & Ingram, E. S. (2017). *Building a grad nation: Progress and challenge in raising high school graduation rates*.

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