

# 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.<sup>1</sup> 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>2,3</sup> In 2024, 9% of Rhode Island children lived in households headed by a non-high school graduate, lower than the national average of 11%.<sup>4</sup>

Student, family, and school level factors impact students' likelihood of graduating high school. A child's gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and disability and multilingual learner status impact graduation and dropout rates. Fewer males, LGBTQ+ students, Black and Latino students, Multilingual Learners, and students receiving special education services graduate from high school than their counterparts.<sup>1,5,6</sup> Family factors including income and parental involvement can also impact graduation rates. Fewer low-

income students and more students with involved parents graduate high school.<sup>1,7</sup>

Individual and family factors lead to inequitable opportunities in school.<sup>6</sup> Children who have access to and attend high-quality preschool programs and those who can read proficiently by third grade are more likely to graduate high school.<sup>8,9</sup> Children with behavior issues, who have poor attendance, and who fail core courses are much less likely to graduate from high school.<sup>5</sup> Supporting students' transition to ninth grade, adopting systems to identify struggling students (e.g., multi-tiered systems of support; early warning systems), increasing engagement through student-centered learning, and providing postsecondary and workforce experience opportunities can improve high school graduation rates.<sup>10,11</sup>

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.<sup>12</sup> Students can also earn Council designations including a Seal of Biliteracy, Commissioner's Seal, and Pathway Endorsements.<sup>13</sup> Starting with the Class of 2024, students must be financially literate and beginning with the Class of 2028 students must demonstrate proficiency in world languages, lab sciences, college preparation coursework, civics, and computer science.<sup>12</sup>



## Rhode Island Four-Year High School Graduation and Dropout Rates, by Student Subgroup, Class of 2025

	COHORT SIZE	DROPOUT RATE	% COMPLETED GED	% OF STUDENTS STILL IN SCHOOL	FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
Female Students	5,421	6%	1%	5%	88%
Male Students	5,924	9%	1%	7%	83%
Multilingual Learners	1,744	17%	0%	11%	72%
Students Receiving Special Education Services	1,817	11%	2%	19%	68%
Students Not Receiving Special Education Services	9,540	7%	1%	4%	89%
Low-Income Students	7,041	10%	1%	8%	81%
Higher-Income Students	4,316	4%	1%	2%	93%
Students in Foster Care	198	20%	3%	28%	49%
Students Experiencing Homelessness	294	17%	2%	14%	66%
American Indian or Alaska Native Students	84	15%	1%	7%	76%
Asian Students	333	2%	<1%	5%	92%
Black Students	1,106	7%	1%	9%	84%
Hispanic Students	3,603	11%	1%	9%	80%
White Students	5,642	5%	1%	4%	89%
<b>ALL STUDENTS</b>	<b>11,357</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>86%</b>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2025. 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 2025 was 86%, three percentage points higher than the Class of 2015. The lowest graduation rates were among students in foster care, students experiencing homelessness, students receiving special education services, Multilingual Learners, low-income students, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic students.<sup>14,15</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 11,014 Rhode Island students who enrolled in ninth grade in the Fall of 2019, (85%) graduated in four years in 2023, 221 (2%) graduated in five years in 2024, and 28 (<1%) graduated in six years in 2025. Of the 221 students who graduated in five years in 2024, 87 (39%) were students receiving special education services and 52 (23%) were Multilingual Learners.<sup>16</sup>

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Table 52.

## High School Graduation Rates, Rhode Island, Class of 2025

SCHOOL DISTRICT	FOUR-YEAR COHORT RATES				
	# OF STUDENTS IN COHORT	DROPOUT RATE	% COMPLETED GED	% STILL IN SCHOOL	FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
Barrington	309	<1%	1%	3%	96%
Bristol Warren	207	7%	0%	5%	88%
Burrillville	150	2%	1%	1%	95%
Central Falls	264	27%	2%	8%	63%
Chariho	250	2%	2%	2%	95%
Coventry	320	3%	3%	5%	89%
Cranston	915	6%	1%	6%	88%
Cumberland	389	6%	2%	5%	87%
East Greenwich	180	2%	1%	2%	95%
East Providence	419	8%	<1%	5%	86%
Exeter-West Greenwich	96	2%	2%	0%	96%
Foster-Glocester	244	3%	1%	1%	95%
Johnston	188	2%	2%	3%	93%
Lincoln	254	7%	2%	3%	88%
Middletown	148	5%	1%	4%	90%
Narragansett	106	1%	0%	3%	96%
New Shoreham	10	0%	0%	10%	90%
Newport	179	22%	2%	3%	74%
North Kingstown	344	1%	3%	5%	91%
North Providence	284	4%	2%	5%	89%
North Smithfield	143	8%	2%	1%	89%
Pawtucket	571	14%	<1%	11%	74%
Portsmouth	185	2%	1%	1%	97%
Providence	1,875	11%	1%	11%	77%
Scituate	103	4%	0%	1%	95%
Smithfield	212	4%	<1%	3%	92%
South Kingstown	175	6%	0%	1%	94%
Tiverton	146	7%	1%	4%	88%
Warwick	584	6%	1%	4%	89%
West Warwick	277	8%	2%	8%	83%
Westerly	167	7%	2%	4%	87%
Woonsocket	416	11%	1%	9%	80%
<i>Achievement First Rhode Island</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>93%</i>
<i>Beacon Charter School</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>83%</i>
<i>Blackstone Academy</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>94%</i>
<i>Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>84%</i>
<i>Charette Charter School</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>98%</i>
<i>Paul Cuffee Charter School</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>91%</i>
<i>William M. Davies Jr. Career and Technical School</i>	<i>221</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>91%</i>
<i>The Greene School</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>89%</i>
<i>Highlander Charter School</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>80%</i>
<i>Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center</i>	<i>230</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>97%</i>
<i>Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>41%</i>
<i>RI Nurses Institute Middle College</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>78%</i>
<i>Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Village Green Virtual Public Charter School</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>95%</i>
<i>YouthBuild Preparatory Academy</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>53%</i>	<i>28%</i>
<i>Five Core Cities</i>	<i>3,305</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>76%</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>6,805</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>90%</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>11,357</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>86%</i>

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2025.

The 2025 four-year cohort graduation rate is the number of students who graduate in four years or fewer, divided by the total number of students in the cohort. The cohort is calculated as the number of first-time entering ninth graders in the 2021-2022 school year, 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.

Five core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

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

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

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## Source of Data for Table/Methodology for Chronic Absence, Middle School and High School

\*Fewer than 10 students are in this category. Actual numbers are not shown to protect student confidentiality. These numbers are still counted in district totals and in the five core cities, remainder of the state, and state total.

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## Source of Data for Table/Methodology for Suspensions

State-operated includes Wm. M. Davies Jr. Career-Technical High School, Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center, Sheila "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy, and Rhode Island School for the Deaf.

Collaboratives include Urban Collaborative (UCAP) and YouthBuild Preparatory Academy.

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