State and District Patterns

About 70 percent of all students in the nation graduate from high school with a regular diploma, according to 2002-03 data from the EPE Research Center. Large disparities are found across racial and ethnic groups, with about half of American Indian and black students graduating, compared with more than three-quarters of whites and Asians.

	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES, 2002-03							
	All Students	Male	Female	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White
Alabama	60.7	55.4	66.2	74.9	‡	44.5	50.3	66.0
Alaska	63.6	59.8	66.2	42.8	73.6	‡	51.4	68.9
Arizona	70.0	66.1	72.9	44.7	83.5	60.3	65.9	74.8
Arkansas	71.8	68.7	75.6	66.6	‡	‡	64.3	74.8
California	71.0	66.3	73.7	44.9	81.3	60.1	55.7	76.8
Colorado	72.5	68.6	76.3	‡	76.6	53.8	54.9	78.3
Connecticut	79.3	76.6	81.7	25.7	‡	51.8	60.9	85.3
Delaware	60.7	55.6	65.9	‡	‡	43.2	48.1	67.0
District of Columbia	58.9	51.1	64.2	†	‡	41.1	58.1	84.0
Florida	57.5	52.8	62.6	‡	79.5	54.0	42.1	64.7
Georgia	56.3	51.4	61.7	22.6	75.3	39.5	45.9	63.1
Hawaii	63.7	60.5	67.3	‡	64.5	55.3	57.1	63.2
Idaho	77.8	72.2	80.2	‡	‡	‡	‡	74.0
Illinois	76.3	70.1	77.1	29.8	87.3	57.0	52.1	81.0
Indiana	73.0	68.8	75.4	30.2	‡	52.3	48.5	75.4
Iowa	82.5	79.0	82.8	‡	66.5	57.9	47.4	84.2
Kansas	75.0	70.1	74.3	42.0	67.9	41.2	55.1	78.1
Kentucky	69.7	65.0	73.5	‡	79.5	63.7	54.1	70.7
Louisiana	60.6	54.1	67.5	53.6	70.3	58.7	53.3	66.4
Maine	74.0	71.2	73.3	‡	30.2	‡	‡	73.1
Maryland	74.4	69.5	79.4	‡	91.1	69.1	62.1	80.8
Massachusetts	72.1	67.8	75.7	29.8	66.3	41.2	53.0	78.5
Michigan	66.4	62.7	69.2	23.1	67.3	35.0	31.6	74.7
Minnesota	79.0	76.2	81.5	‡	‡	‡	43.6	83.1
Mississippi	60.8	53.6	67.7	36.3	‡	29.8	56.5	64.6
Missouri	74.7	71.6	77.6	44.9	‡	‡	55.1	77.4
Montana	75.8	73.5	77.0	44.8	‡	56.6	43.1	79.0
Nebraska	77.8	73.6	79.6	‡	‡	44.7	39.1	82.9
Nevada	55.9	52.9	59.9	53.3	72.1	41.6	46.7	62.5
New Hampshire	77.7	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
New Jersey	84.5	81.3	85.2	‡	88.7	69.0	66.1	86.9
New Mexico	56.7	53.5	60.0	49.5	‡	53.4	44.7	66.0
New York	62.5	58.4	65.2	38.9	63.0	33.4	37.2	75.6
North Carolina	66.2	61.8	69.7	45.4	77.6	52.9	57.7	71.3
North Dakota	83.1	81.3	84.5	‡	‡	28.1	‡	84.8
Ohio	76.5	73.0	79.1	34.6	‡	‡	50.7	80.5
Oklahoma	71.0	69.4	74.1	62.8	74.2	53.0	55.9	73.1
Oregon	69.0	†	†	37.3	68.1	55.1	25.0	70.9
Pennsylvania	79.1	†	†	37.7	73.9	49.0	57.7	83.2
Rhode Island	72.3	67.9	74.7	‡	55.4	54.5	60.6	75.4
South Carolina	52.5	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
South Dakota	74.5	71.5	74.3	28.6	‡	‡	‡	78.8
Tennessee	62.2	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Texas	66.8	62.8	71.0	‡	83.1	57.8	59.9	75.0
Utah	76.7	77.9	80.9	‡	71.2	55.5	60.6	81.7
Vermont	81.2	†	†	‡	59.5	‡	‡	81.0
Virginia	74.9	70.7	78.8	63.1	‡	‡	64.1	77.8
Washington	68.2	65.1	73.5	40.7	72.9	52.7	47.8	71.5
West Virginia	72.8	69.9	76.5	57.2	‡	‡	65.3	73.1
Wisconsin	80.6	76.7	82.3	40.1	75.0	49.1	44.3	85.4
Wyoming	74.0	69.8	75.5	‡	60.4	55.0	67.0	75.9
U.S.	**69.6**	**65.2**	**72.7**	**47.4**	**77.0**	**55.6**	**51.6**	**76.2**

†Value not calculated because necessary data field(s) not reported in CCD or because of very small group size.
‡Value not reported because of insufficient data for reliable estimate.

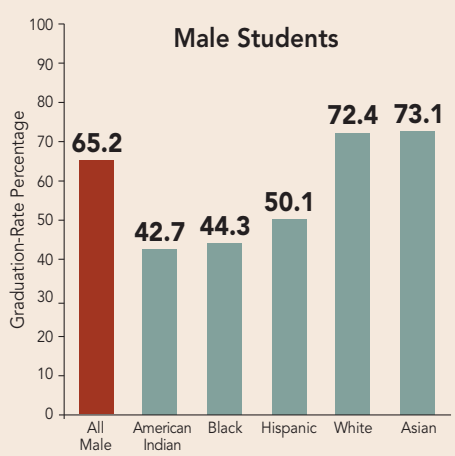
SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2006

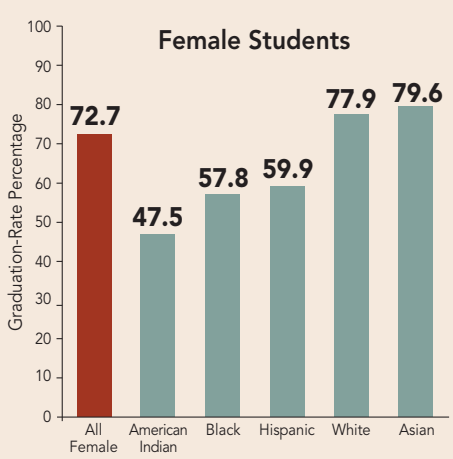
LOWEST TO HIGHEST GRADUATION RATES IN THE NATION'S 50 LARGEST DISTRICTS

Rate	District	Size Rank
21.7	Detroit	11
38.5	Baltimore City, Md.	30
38.9	New York City	1
43.1	Milwaukee	28
43.8	Cleveland	44
44.2	Los Angeles	2
45.3	Miami-Dade County, Fla.	4
46.3	Dallas	13
46.5	Pinellas County, Fla.	22
46.8	Denver	43
48.5	Memphis, Tenn.	21
48.7	Broward County, Fla.	5
48.9	Fort Worth, Texas	36
48.9	Houston	7
50.4	Nashville-Davidson County, Tenn.	50
52.0	Albuquerque, N.M.	32
52.2	Chicago	3
53.7	Orleans Parish, La.	48
53.8	Duval County, Fla.	19
54.6	Clark County, Nev.	6
54.8	DeKalb County, Ga.	27
55.1	Austin, Texas	37
55.2	Palm Beach County, Fla.	12
55.5	Philadelphia	8
56.0	Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C.	23
56.2	Orange County, Fla.	15
60.1	Polk County, Fla.	34
62.2	Jefferson County, Ky.	31
63.0	San Diego	16
63.1	Fresno, Calif.	35
63.7	Hawaii (statewide district)	9
66.5	Virginia Beach, Va.	38
67.3	Prince George's County, Md.	18
68.1	Long Beach, Calif.	29
68.4	Gwinnett County, Ga.	20
68.6	Brevard County, Fla.	42
69.3	Fulton County, Ga.	45
70.0	Hillsborough County, Fla.	10
70.2	Anne Arundel County, Md.	40
70.4	Cobb County, Ga.	26
72.2	Granite, Utah	46
75.3	Mesa, Ariz.	39
75.8	Northside, Texas	49
77.0	Jefferson County, Colo.	33
80.2	Jordan, Utah	41
81.3	Cypress-Fairbanks, Texas	47
81.5	Montgomery County, Md.	17
81.9	Baltimore County, Md.	24
82.2	Wake County, N.C.	25
82.5	Fairfax County, Va.	14

Gender Gap in Graduation Rates Universal

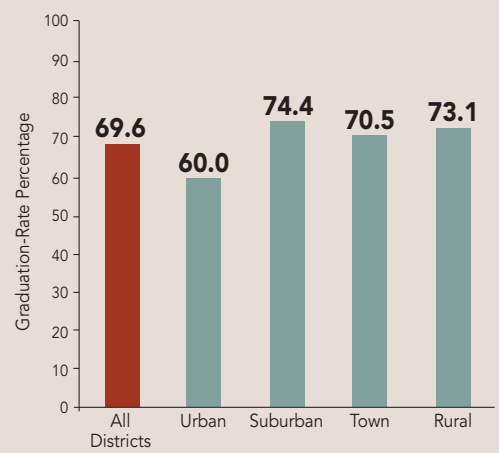
Male students are consistently less likely than females to graduate from high school with a diploma. Nationally, the gender gap in graduation across all groups stands at 8 percentage points. Further, females earn diplomas at higher rates within every racial and ethnic group examined, with the largest disparity (almost 14 percentage points) found among black students. Gender gaps are also found in every state with available data, with the female advantage ranging from 2 to 14 percentage points (in Maine and Mississippi, respectively).



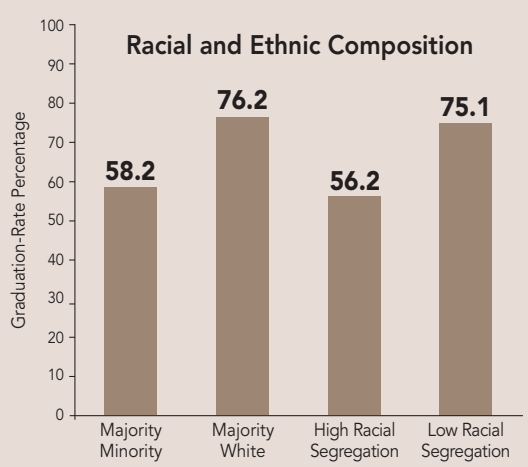


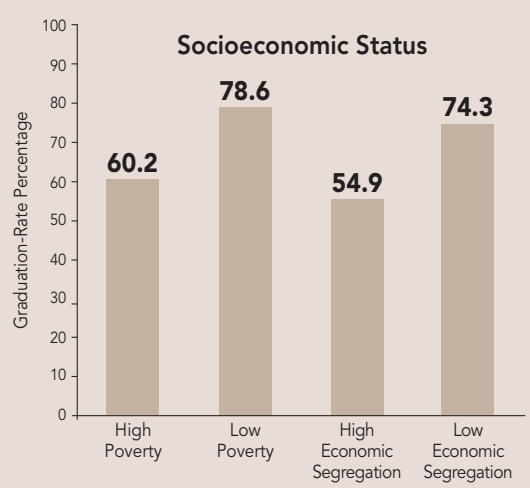
Graduation Rates Depend On District Context

Graduation rates differ substantially depending on the characteristics of the communities in which students attend school. Sixty percent of all students in urban districts graduate from high school, a rate 10 percentage points lower than the national average and approaching 15 percentage points lower than the suburban average.



The racial and socioeconomic makeup of districts is strongly related to graduation rates. Districts where most students are members of racial or ethnic minorities have graduation rates almost 20 percentage points lower than majority-white districts. A gap of nearly 20 percentage points is found between districts with high and low levels of racial segregation. Similar patterns emerge when we examine poverty levels.





NOTE: Poverty is measured as the percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. High-poverty districts are those where the poverty level exceeds the national average of 38.7 percent.

Racial segregation is measured by an indicator that reflects the extent to which members of racial and ethnic minority groups attend school in isolation from their white, non-Hispanic peers. In a district with a high level of racial segregation, minority children are twice as likely to attend school with other minority students than with whites. Levels of economic segregation are measured in a similar manner, using eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch as a proxy for poverty.

Information about district characteristics was obtained from the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data.

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2006