

North Carolina

School to College

Can State P-16 Councils
Ease the Transition?

A Special Supplement to *Education Week's*

DIPLOMAS COUNT

2008

With Support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



About *Diplomas Count*

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center is engaged in a four-year project to study high school graduation and related issues pertaining to late-secondary schooling and the transition to postsecondary education and employment. As part of this work, Editorial Projects in Education publishes a special edition of *Education Week* devoted to critical issues facing efforts to improve the nation's high schools.

The 2008 installment of the annual *Diplomas Count* report explores the rapid growth of state-level P-16 councils. By bringing together key representatives from all levels of education, state government, business, and the community, the councils seek to better align educational institutions from preschool through postsecondary. High on the agenda for many of these groups are efforts to create a more seamless schooling continuum that prepares high school students for life, work, and further education. The report provides in-depth analysis of the evolution and activities of P-16 councils, case studies of three states' experiences with such councils, and commentaries from four leading experts in the field.

Another centerpiece of Editorial Projects in Education's Graduation Project is the EPE Research Center's comprehensive analysis of public high school graduation rates, using its Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI) method. *Diplomas Count 2008* provides updated graduation-rate findings for the class of 2005, the most recent year available. Results are reported for the United States as a whole, the states, and the nation's 50 largest school systems. For the first time, this year's edition of *Diplomas Count* also includes graduation rates by U.S. congressional district in an attempt to inform the lawmakers crafting the policies that shape the nation's public schools.

In addition to the print edition of the report, online-only features of *Diplomas Count* include state-specific policy reports and state-by-state indicators accessible through the Education Counts database (www.edcounts.org). EdWeek Maps, a Web-based geographical tool, also allows users to create interactive maps and download a special report for any school district in the country, which includes comparisons to state and national statistics (online at maps.edweek.org).

Editorial Projects in Education Research Center

June 2008

About Editorial Projects in Education

Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization based in Bethesda, Md. Its primary mission is to help raise the level of awareness and understanding among professionals and the public of important issues in American education. EPE covers local, state, national, and international news and issues from preschool through the 12th grade. Editorial Projects in Education Inc. publishes *Education Week*, America's newspaper of record for precollegiate education, *Teacher Magazine*, edweek.org, and the Top School Jobs employment resource. It also produces periodic special reports on issues ranging from technology to textbooks, as well as books of special interest to educators.

The **EPE Research Center** conducts annual policy surveys, collects data, and performs analyses that appear in the *Quality Counts*, *Technology Counts*, and *Diplomas Count* annual reports. The center also produces independent research reports and contributes original data and analysis to special coverage in *Education Week*, *Teacher Magazine*, and edweek.org.

STATE PROFILE 2004-05

Graduation Profile for the Class of 2005

Graduation Rate by Student Group

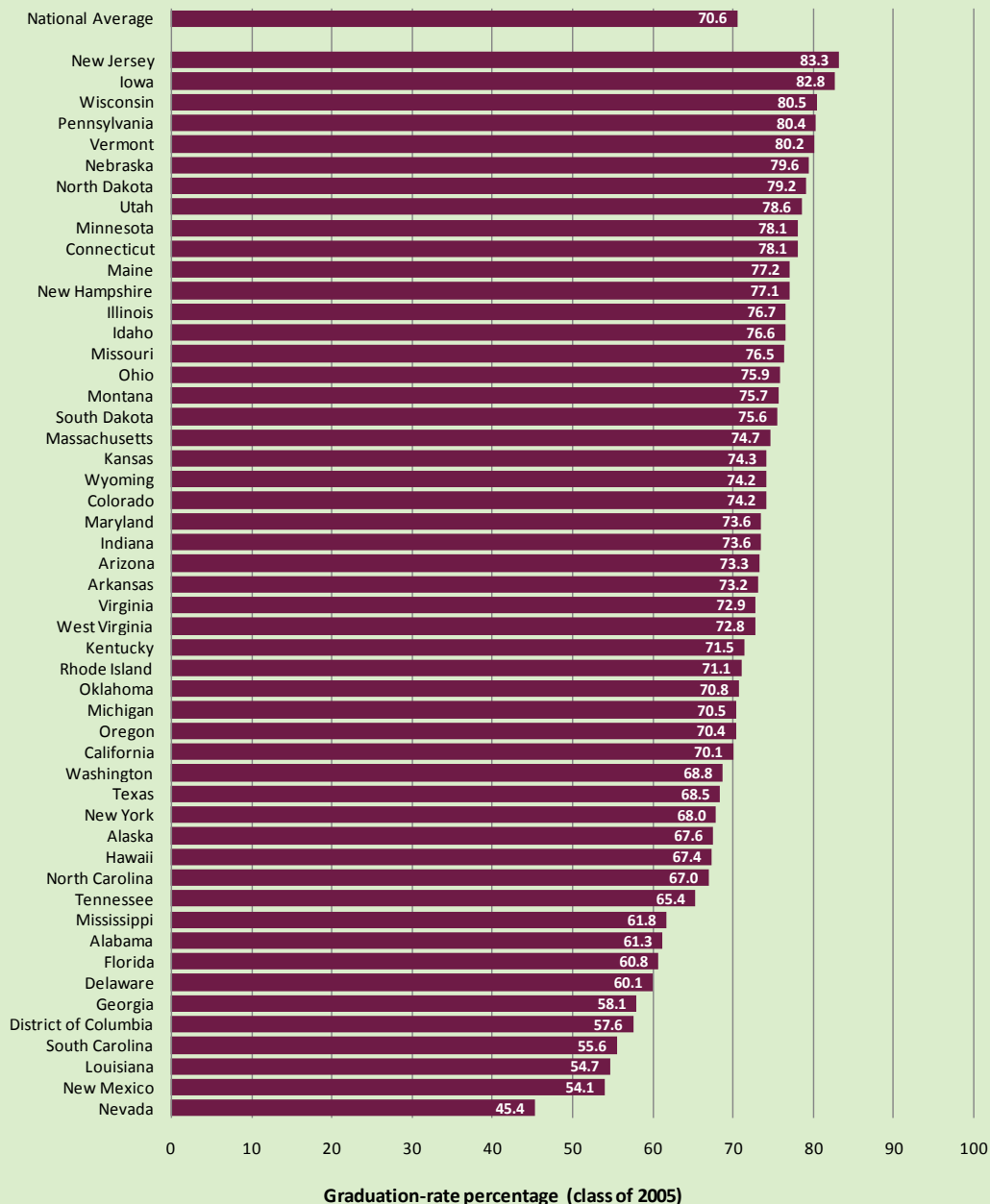
	North Carolina State Average	National Average
All Students	(%) 67.0	(%) 70.6
By Gender		
Male	61.3	67.8
Female	73.3	75.3
By Race and Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaska Native	47.0	50.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	78.5	81.3
Hispanic	53.7	57.8
Black (not Hispanic)	58.4	55.3
White (not Hispanic)	72.7	77.6
By Gender and Race and Ethnicity		
Male		
American Indian/Alaska Native	38.5	45.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	73.3	77.5
Hispanic	46.7	52.0
Black (not Hispanic)	49.5	48.2
White (not Hispanic)	68.6	74.3
Female		
American Indian/Alaska Native	52.8	52.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	79.3	82.8
Hispanic	59.0	62.7
Black (not Hispanic)	67.8	61.3
White (not Hispanic)	76.9	79.8

† Value not calculated because necessary data field(s) not reported in the Common Core of Data, the U.S. Department of Education database used for this analysis.

‡ Value not reported because of insufficient data for reliable estimate.

Graduation in the United States

About 71 percent of all public school students in the nation graduated from high school with a regular diploma in the class of 2005. Thirty-eight percentage points separate the graduation rates in the best-performing and worst-performing states. More than eight in 10 students graduate in Iowa, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin. But that proportion drops to fewer than six in 10 in the District of Columbia, Georgia, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, and South Carolina. Results reported in *Diplomas Count 2008* show that between 2001 and 2005 the nation's graduation rate increased by 2.6 percentage points, signaling slow but steady progress.



How Does the EPE Research Center Calculate Graduation Rates?

The Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI)

The Editorial Projects in Education Research Center uses the **Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI)** method to calculate graduation rates. The CPI represents graduating from high school as a process rather than a single event. Specifically, it captures the four key steps a student must take in order to graduate: three grade-to-grade promotions (9 to 10, 10 to 11, and 11 to 12) and ultimately earning a diploma (grade 12 to graduation).

The depiction below illustrates the CPI formula for calculating graduation rates. The class of 2004-05, the most recent year of data available, is used as an example.

$$\text{CPI} = \frac{\text{10th graders, fall 2005}}{\text{9th graders, fall 2004}} \times \frac{\text{11th graders, fall 2005}}{\text{10th graders, fall 2004}} \times \frac{\text{12th graders, fall 2005}}{\text{11th graders, fall 2004}} \times \frac{\text{Diploma recipients, spring 2005}}{\text{12th graders, fall 2004}}$$

By multiplying grade-specific promotion ratios together, the CPI estimates the likelihood that a 9th grader will complete high school on time with a regular diploma, given the schooling conditions prevailing during a particular school year. The CPI counts only students receiving standard high school diplomas as graduates, following the definition of a graduate established by the No Child Left Behind Act.

We can use a simplified example to further demonstrate how the center calculates the CPI. Let us suppose that a particular school district currently has 100 students enrolled in each grade from 9 through 12. We will also assume that 5 percent of students currently in grades 9, 10, and 11 will drop out of school this year and that 5 percent of seniors will fail to earn a diploma at the end of the year. So, for example, we would count 100 9th graders at our starting point but only 95 10th graders the following fall.

$$\text{CPI} = \frac{95}{100} \times \frac{95}{100} \times \frac{95}{100} \times \frac{95}{100} = .815$$

Carrying out the calculation (shown above), we arrive at a graduation rate of 81.5 percent for this district. Given conditions in this hypothetical district (an effective 5 percent annual attrition rate for students at each grade level), only about 82 out of every 100 9th graders would be expected to finish high school with a diploma.

The CPI can be calculated for public school districts that have students enrolled in the secondary grades (9 through 12). State and national statistics are generated by aggregating the district-level data upward.

Notes on the Methodology

The EPE Research Center calculates graduation rates using data from the Common Core of Data (CCD), an annual census of public schools and school districts in the United States conducted by the U.S. Department of Education. Detailed methodological descriptions of the CCD can be found in technical documentation published by the National Center for Education Statistics (available online at nces.ed.gov/ccd). For the 2004-05 school year, diploma counts for Alabama were not reported to the CCD. The EPE Research Center obtained those data from the state education agency.

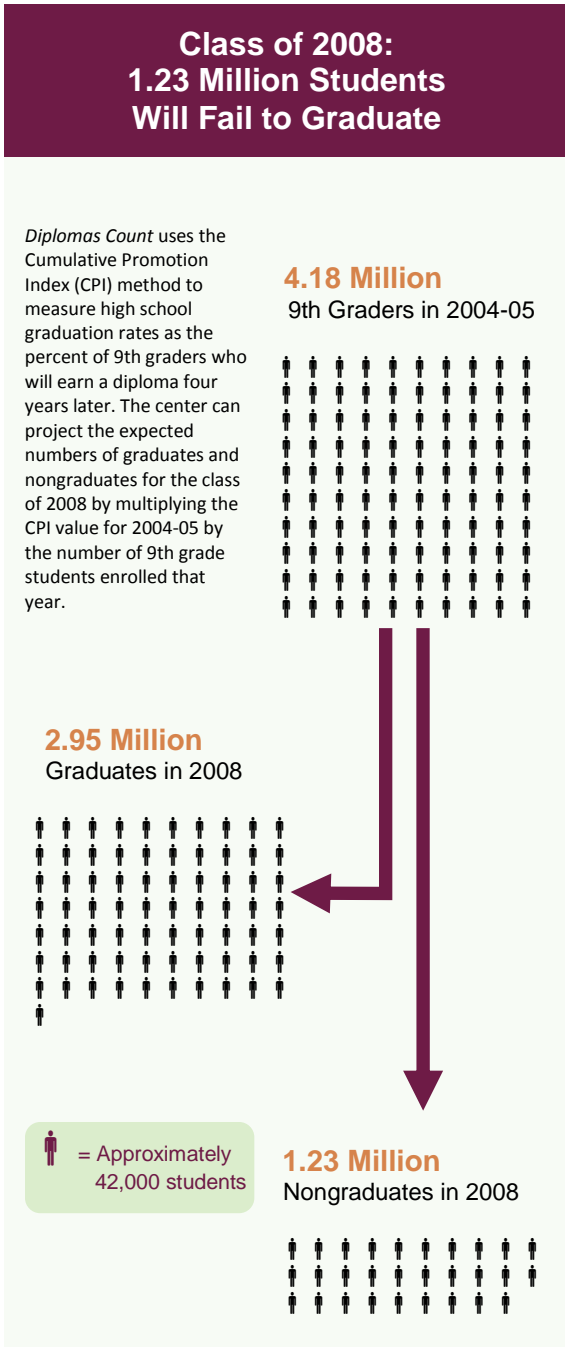
The center's goal is to provide a direct measure of the graduation rate for each of the roughly 11,000 school districts in the nation that enroll high school students. It was possible to do this for districts serving the vast majority (96 percent) of all public school students nationwide. But in a small number of cases—for example, if a particular piece of information needed to calculate the CPI indicator was missing—the center could not directly compute the graduation rate.

To avoid the unintentional disclosure of information about individual students, the EPE Research Center does not report results for very small demographic subgroups, those with fewer than five students in a given category. Additional procedures are employed to ensure that results are only reported in situations where sufficient data are available for a reliable calculation.

North Carolina — State Highlights 2008

U.S. Public High Schools Losing 6,829 Students Per Day

Nearly 1.23 million members of the public high school class of 2008 will fail to graduate with a diploma. That amounts to a loss of 6,829 students from the U.S. graduation pipeline per day. With 900 students falling through the high school pipeline daily, California—the country's most populous state and the largest source of leakage from the graduation pipeline—accounts for one out of every eight nongraduates in the nation.



	9th graders 2004-2005	Projected outcomes 2007-08		Total students lost each school day
		Graduates	Nongraduates	
Alabama	64,505	39,520	24,985	139
Alaska	11,934	8,069	3,865	21
Arizona	74,445	54,593	19,852	110
Arkansas	38,225	27,965	10,260	57
California	540,669	378,751	161,918	900
Colorado	64,383	47,743	16,640	92
Connecticut	44,634	34,870	9,764	54
Delaware	10,706	6,435	4,271	24
District of Columbia	4,570	2,633	1,937	11
Florida	248,943	151,444	97,499	542
Georgia	141,984	82,474	59,510	331
Hawaii	16,971	11,435	5,536	31
Idaho	21,217	16,263	4,954	28
Illinois	176,606	135,538	41,068	228
Indiana	86,901	63,981	22,920	127
Iowa	40,876	33,843	7,033	39
Kansas	39,054	29,011	10,043	56
Kentucky	56,661	40,501	16,160	90
Louisiana	58,589	32,069	26,520	147
Maine	16,759	12,945	3,814	21
Maryland	81,270	59,780	21,490	119
Massachusetts	64,321	48,023	16,298	91
Michigan	153,729	108,424	45,305	252
Minnesota	68,889	53,784	15,105	84
Mississippi	40,118	24,796	15,322	85
Missouri	78,089	59,752	18,337	102
Montana	13,147	9,956	3,191	18
Nebraska	25,129	19,998	5,131	29
Nevada	36,056	16,369	19,687	109
New Hampshire	18,564	14,320	4,244	24
New Jersey	110,862	92,388	18,474	103
New Mexico	30,134	16,297	13,837	77
New York	261,936	178,031	83,905	466
North Carolina	125,375	84,013	41,362	230
North Dakota	8,524	6,753	1,771	10
Ohio	157,212	119,355	37,857	210
Oklahoma	49,977	35,366	14,611	81
Oregon	45,612	32,126	13,486	75
Pennsylvania	156,169	125,591	30,578	170
Rhode Island	12,722	9,047	3,675	20
South Carolina	64,175	35,697	28,478	158
South Dakota	10,311	7,800	2,511	14
Tennessee	80,890	52,908	27,982	155
Texas	374,403	256,312	118,091	656
Utah	37,352	29,367	7,985	44
Vermont	8,528	6,839	1,689	9
Virginia	107,753	78,558	29,195	162
Washington	89,781	61,780	28,001	156
West Virginia	24,033	17,503	6,530	36
Wisconsin	76,042	61,178	14,864	83
Wyoming	7,219	5,358	1,861	10
U.S.	4,176,954	2,947,677	1,229,277	6,829

The Policy Context

High School Graduation and the No Child Left Behind Act

The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), enacted in 2002, holds states and the schools under their jurisdictions accountable for student performance. The NCLB law defines the high school graduation rate as the “percentage of students, measured from the beginning of high school, who graduate from high school with a regular diploma (not including an alternative degree that is not fully aligned with the State’s academic standards, such as a certificate or a GED) in the standard number of years.”

Federal regulations have allow states substantial flexibility over the specifics of graduation accountability. However, in April of this year, the U.S. Department of Education announced proposed changes to the Title I regulations governing the methods states can use to calculate graduation rates under the No Child Left Behind Act as well as the ways in which those rates factor into accountability decisions under the federal law. Prompting those changes, in part, were widespread concerns over both the lack of uniformity in calculation methods across the states and the accuracy of the state-reported statistics.

State Policy Overview — Accountability

	North Carolina	National Overview
Calculating Graduation Rates *		
Formula used by the state to calculate graduation rates for the federal No Child Left Behind Act (class of 2008)	Cohort rate	32 states use a leaver rate
Graduation Rate Performance Goals for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)		
Target for 2007-08	80%	76% in average state
Final target for 2013-14	80%	82% in average state
Minimum annual improvement required if not meeting performance target	0.1% improvement	29 states allow any amount of improvement to make AYP

*A Key to NCLB Graduation-Rate Formulas

Cohort rate: Percent of students from an entering 9th grade cohort who graduate with a standard diploma within four years. Method can account for transfers and students retained in grade. Student data may be tracked on a statewide or local basis. (17 states)

Leaver rate: Percent of students leaving high school with a standard high school diploma, expressed as a proportion of all those documented leaving with a diploma or other completion credential or as a dropout. This method is sometimes referred to as a departure-classification index. (32 states)

Persistence rate: Percent of students who remain in school from grade 9 through grade 12. Rate is calculated using information on (1) the percent of students not dropping out at specific grade levels; or (2) the percent of students estimated to be promoted from grade to grade. This method does not measure high school completion. (1 state)

Composite rate: Proportion of students estimated to remain in high school until grade 12 and receive a diploma. The rate for a given year is calculated by multiplying (1) the rate of persistence between grades 9 and 12; and (2) the percent of completers who receive a diploma rather than another credential. (1 state)

North Carolina — State Highlights 2008

Changes Afoot

In April of this year, the U.S. Department of Education proposed changing the Title I regulations governing the methods states can use to calculate graduation rates under the No Child Left Behind Act as well as the ways in which those rates factor into accountability decisions under the federal law. Those changes were prompted in part by concerns about the lack of uniformity and accuracy of state-reported statistics. In all but one instance, the states' officially reported rates for the class of 2005 are higher than those computed by the EPE Research Center using the Cumulative Promotion Index. These discrepancies stem primarily from the states' formulas. A review of state accountability plans shows that most states use a leaver-rate calculation, a method that tends to produce inflated results because it relies heavily on undercounted dropout data.

	State-reported graduation rate class of 2005	Percentage-point difference State reported rate minus CPI rate (class of 2005)	State calculation method for NCLB class of 2008
New Mexico	85.0%*	30.9	Cohort rate†
North Carolina	95.0*	28.0	Cohort rate
Delaware	83.7	23.6	Leaver rate
Mississippi	85.0*	23.2	Cohort rate
South Carolina	77.1*	21.5	Cohort rate
Nevada	64.9	19.5	Leaver rate
Michigan	87.7*	17.2	Cohort rate†
Indiana	89.9*	16.3	Cohort rate
Kansas	90.2	15.9	Leaver rate
Texas	84.0	15.5	Cohort rate
California	85.0	14.9	Leaver rate
Rhode Island	85.0	13.9	Leaver rate
South Dakota	89.1	13.5	Leaver rate
Connecticut	91.2	13.1	Leaver rate
Tennessee	77.9	12.5	Leaver rate
District of Columbia	69.9	12.3	Leaver rate
Hawaii	79.6	12.2	Cohort rate
Minnesota	90.1	12.0	Leaver rate
Oklahoma	82.4	11.6	Leaver rate
West Virginia	84.3	11.5	Leaver rate
Kentucky	82.8	11.3	Leaver rate
Georgia	69.4	11.3	Leaver rate
Oregon	81.7	11.3	Leaver rate
Maryland	84.8	11.2	Leaver rate
Illinois	87.4	10.7	Cohort rate
Washington	79.3	10.5	Cohort rate
Ohio	86.2	10.3	Leaver rate
Maine	87.2	10.0	Leaver rate
Idaho	86.6	10.0	Leaver rate
New Hampshire	86.6	9.5	Composite rate
Missouri	85.8	9.3	Leaver rate
Montana	84.8	9.1	Leaver rate
New York	77.0	9.0	Cohort rate
Nebraska	88.0	8.4	Leaver rate
Wisconsin	88.8	8.3	Leaver rate
Florida	69.0	8.2	Cohort rate
Arkansas	81.3	8.1	Persistence rate
New Jersey	91.3*	8.0	Leaver rate
Iowa	90.7	7.9	Leaver rate
North Dakota	86.7	7.5	Leaver rate
Wyoming	81.5	7.3	Leaver rate
Pennsylvania	87.6	7.2	Leaver rate
Vermont	87.2*	7.0	Cohort rate
Virginia	79.5	6.6	Leaver rate
Colorado	80.1	5.9	Cohort rate
Utah	82.1	3.5	Leaver rate
Arizona	75.0	1.7	Cohort rate
Alaska	61.4	-6.2	Leaver rate
Alabama	—		Leaver rate
Louisiana	—		Cohort rate†
Massachusetts	—		Cohort rate†

NOTE: State-reported graduation rates for the class of 2005 were submitted to the U.S. Department of Education by the states in their Consolidated State Performance Reports under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act.

* State used a different method to calculate graduation rates for the class of 2005 than it will use for the class of 2008.

† State plans to start implementing a cohort rate for the class of 2008.

Graduation Requirements for the Class of 2008

Graduation Policies

This table describes state policies related to high school graduation, including the types of credentials available and requirements for receiving a standard diploma.

	North Carolina	Nation
High School Completion Credentials		Number of states nationwide
Standard diploma options offered by state	standard	48 states offer a single standard diploma
Advanced recognition offered for exceeding standard requirements	Yes	24
Alternative credentials offered for not meeting all standard requirements	Yes	27
Course Credits Required to Earn a Standard Diploma		Number of credits required by average state
Mathematics	4.0	2.8
English/language arts	4.0	3.9
Science	3.0	2.5
History/social studies	3.0	2.8
Other credits	6.0	8.3
Total Credits Required:	20.0	20.6
Exit Exam Required to Earn a Diploma		Number of states nationwide
Exit exam required – Students must pass a statewide assessment or exam to earn a standard high school diploma (class of 2008)	Yes	23
Subjects tested (English, Mathematics, Science, History, Technology)	EMT	9 states test in EMSH
10th grade standards – Exam based on standards for 10th grade or higher	No	19
State finances remediation for students failing exit exams	Yes	14
Appeals process or alternative route offered to students to earn a standard diploma without passing required exit exam	Yes	20

– Indicates no statewide policy in specified area. Requirements may be set at the local level.

Defining Readiness – College & Work

Readiness Policies (2007-08)

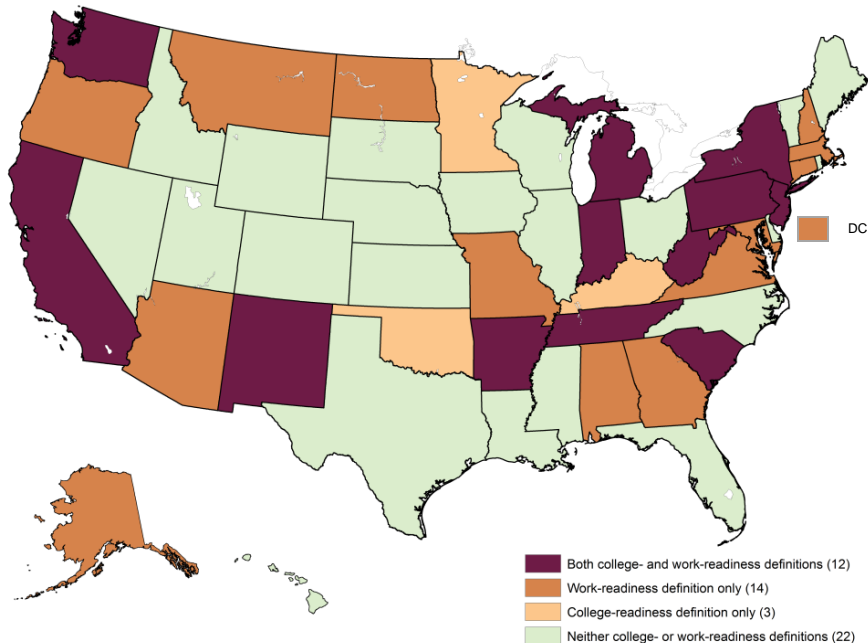
This table describes state policies related to college and work readiness.

	North Carolina	Nation
College Readiness		
		Number of states nationwide
State has defined college readiness	in progress	15
How college readiness is defined Approaches to defining readiness include: courses, skills, standards, and tests	—	—
Work Readiness		
State has defined work readiness	in progress	26
How work readiness is defined Approaches to defining readiness include: courses, skills, standards, and tests	—	—
Distinct Definitions		
K-12 college-readiness and work-readiness definitions are different Definitions of college and work readiness are distinct	—	6

A National Perspective

The EPE Research Center has examined state efforts to define college and work readiness within the K-12 education system and identified four major approaches commonly used: courses, skills, standards, and tests.

This map shows that 28 states and the District of Columbia have completed definitions of either college or work readiness and another 22 states have either not addressed or not finalized readiness definitions in either area.



NOTES AND SOURCES

Diplomas Count 2008

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center is engaged in a four-year project to study high school graduation and related issues pertaining to late-secondary schooling and the transition to postsecondary education and employment.

The third annual report from this project, *Diplomas Count 2008: School to College: Can State P-16 Councils Ease the Transition?*, explores the rapid growth of state-level P-16 councils. By bringing together key representatives from all levels of education, state government, business, and the community, the councils seek to better align educational institutions from preschool through postsecondary. High on the agenda for many of these groups are efforts to create a more seamless schooling continuum that prepares high school students for life, work, and further education.

Diplomas Count also provides an updated analysis of graduation rates for the United States as a whole, states, congressional districts, and the nation's 50 largest school systems.

Visit *Diplomas Count* at www.edweek.org/go/dc08.

State Policy Indicators

The policy indicators examined in this report include information collected by the EPE Research Center, as well as data obtained from other organizations. Definitions and sources for specific indicators are described below.

Graduation Rate Accountability Policies

EPE Research Center analysis of state accountability workbooks approved by the

U.S. Department of Education (as of May 2008) and supplemental state documentation.

Formula used to calculate graduation rates for NCLB: Graduation-rate formula described in state accountability workbooks for use in NCLB accountability.

Graduation-rate target for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), 2007-08: Graduation rate that schools and school districts are expected to achieve to make AYP for the 2007-08 school year.

Final graduation-rate target for Adequate Yearly Progress, 2013-14: Graduation rate that schools and school districts are expected to achieve to make AYP for the 2013-14 school year.

Minimum annual improvement required if not meeting target: Minimum amount of annual improvement that schools and school districts that do not reach graduation-rate targets are expected to achieve to make AYP.

Graduation Requirements

High school completion credentials: Indicators provide information on state-recognized completion credentials and other forms of recognition. EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2007.

Credits to earn a standard diploma: Course requirements are expressed in Carnegie units unless otherwise specified. One Carnegie unit is equivalent to one year of coursework. Credits reflect the minimum course requirements (overall and by subject) mandated by the state for a standard high school diploma. Education Commission of the States, Standard High School Graduation Requirements (50 state), 2007.

State Exit Exams

Information on state exit exams required for the class of 2008 was obtained from the EPE

Research Center annual state policy survey, 2007.

Exit exam required: State requires students to pass exit exam or one or more end-of-course exams to graduate.

Subjects tested: Academic subject areas covered on state exit exam.

Exam based on standards for 10th grade or higher: State has exit exam(s) aligned to state 10th grade standards or higher in at least one academic subject. This includes exams that cover standards from the 9th to 11th grades, or end-of-course exams for courses that are typically taken in the 10th grade or above.

Financing for remediation: State provides at least partial financial support for remediation of students who fail exit exams.

Appeals process or alternative route: State allows students to appeal after failing an exit exam or has an alternative route that students can take to earn a standard diploma.

Defining Readiness

College- and work-readiness definitions: State has formal expectations for what students will need to know and be able to do in order to be admitted to the state's two-year and/or four-year institutions and enroll in credit-bearing courses or to be prepared for the workplace. State approaches have been classified into the following categories: courses, skills, standards, and tests. Some states' definitions may include elements that do not fall into the categories established for this analysis. EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2007.

Distinct definitions of readiness: K-12 education system has different definitions of college readiness and work readiness. EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2007 ■

Diplomas Count 2008

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Can State P-16 Councils Ease the Transition?

This new report, produced with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, explores the rapid growth of state-level P-16 councils. By bringing together key representatives from all levels of education, state government, business, and the community, the councils seek to better align educational institutions from preschool through postsecondary. High on the agenda for many of these groups are efforts to create a more seamless schooling continuum that prepares high school students for life, work, and further education.

Highlights from this year's report include:

In-Depth Investigation An examination of the evolution and efforts of P-16 councils, with case studies of three states' experiences and insightful commentaries from four leading experts in the field.

Updated Graduation-Rate Analysis The EPE Research Center presents a new, comprehensive analysis of public high school graduation rates, using its Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI) method. Results are available for the U.S. as a whole, the states, and the nation's 50 largest school systems.

Congressional District Graduation Rates For the first time, this year's edition of *Diplomas Count* also includes graduation rates for U.S. congressional districts to inform lawmakers crafting the policies that shape the nation's public schools. Explore our interactive map online.



Online Extras

State Graduation Briefs Individualized reports featuring state-specific findings from *Diplomas Count*.

EdWeek Maps Go to maps.edweek.org to create maps and explore graduation data for every school district and high school in the nation.

Live Online Chats Join leading national authorities and experts from Education Week and the EPE Research Center.

Visit *Diplomas Count* online at:

www.edweek.org/go/dc08