Graduation in the United States

Progress on Graduation Rate Stalls

Slightly fewer than 69 percent of all public school students in the nation graduated from high school with a regular diploma in the class of 2007, representing a small decline from the previous year. Graduation rates also dropped in the majority of states. This finding signals the continuation of an emerging trend noted in last year’s report, which found the first notable annual decline in graduation in more than a decade.

When viewed over the longer term, graduation improved by 3.1 percentage points from 1997 to 2007, although progress made earlier in this period has eroded somewhat during the past several years. All racial and ethnic groups have seen improvements in the past decade, with the largest gains found among black and white students. However, large racial gaps persist nationwide, with a 30-percentage-point gap dividing Asian-American and Native American students, the groups with the highest and lowest graduation rates, respectively.

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