



Christie Administration Announces Increase in New Jersey's High School Graduation Rate

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New Jersey's high school graduation rate continued to increase in 2013, rising from 86.5 percent in 2012 to 87.5 percent in 2013.

This is the third year the state is using a federally mandated methodology for calculating the graduation rate. The federal methodology is designed to provide a more complete accounting of graduation rates by tracking cohorts of students over four years, starting from the time they enter the ninth grade.

"High school graduation is a journey that takes more than a decade for an individual student, and at each point in that journey our teachers and principals are working hard to launch those students forward," said Commissioner Chris Cerf. "Today, we celebrate those accomplishments and congratulate our students and educators."

"We are grateful for all of the hard work among local school officials to maintain and submit high quality, student-level data," said Arcelio Aponte, President of the State Board of Education. "The effort at the local level benefits individual students, and it helps us more accurately mark the progress of all students throughout the state."

In 2011, which was the first year of the federally mandated reporting method, the reported graduation rate was 83.3 percent. However, state Department of Education officials believe the substantial one-year increase from 2011 to 2012 (from 83.3 percent to 86.5 percent) was largely due to better tracking and reporting of student-level data by districts in the second year of the program.

This year, the Department continued to work closely with districts to ensure accurate information is being provided. The Department's outreach this year included holding 42 webinars to train local school staff on how to properly record and input figures; direct support to districts that had not properly provided data; contacting any district with a one-year change in the graduation rate of more than 5 percent; contacting districts with large numbers of unverified transfers; and allowing all districts to challenge the figures.

New Jersey has made inroads toward narrowing the achievement gap, although significant disparities still remain. A summary of graduation rates by student subgroups is as follows:

- 76.4% of African American students graduated in 2013, an increase from 74.6% in 2012.
- 78.6% of Hispanic students graduated in 2013, an increase from 76.7% in 2012.
- 93.1% of white students graduated in 2013, an increase from 92.6% in 2012.
- 95.9% of Asian students graduated in 2013, an increase from 95.3% in 2012.
- 77.1% of economically disadvantaged students graduated in 2013, an increase from 75.3% in 2012.
- 70.5% of Limited English Proficient (LEPs) students graduated in 2013, a decrease from 73.1% in 2012.
- 75.9% of students with disabilities graduated in 2013, an increase from 74.5% in 2012.

The Department also calculated the five-year graduation rate for students that began high school in 2008. While the four year graduation rate last year was 86.5 percent, the graduation rate for students who continued on for a fifth year was 88.8 percent.

Information on the graduation rate can be found online at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/data/grate/2013/>.