

Impact of Raising Graduation Requirements on Graduation Rates Synthesis of Selected Studies Reviewed by CDE Staff

Virginia

After Virginia instituted new end-of-course graduation tests, they found that the percentage of students passing these tests went from 40 percent to 80 percent in the first five years, with no increase in the dropout rate.

Source: Achieve website www.achieve.org, citing 2008 study conducted by Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, "Public High School Graduation and College Readiness Rates in the U.S. 1991-2002" (2008) http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_08.htm.

California

A 2010 study was conducted on 4 large California public school districts to estimate the effect of failing a high school exit exam in 10th grade on subsequent student achievement, course taking, persistence in high school, and graduation. The analyses show no evidence of any significant or sizeable effect of failing the exam on high school course-taking, achievement, persistence, or graduation for students with test scores near the exit exam passing score.

Source: Sean F. Reardon, Stanford, "Effects of Failing a High School Exit Exam on Course-Taking, Achievement, Persistence and Graduation" (2010) <http://cepa.stanford.edu/content/effects-failing-high-school-exit-exam-course%E2%80%90taking-achievement-persistence-and-graduation>

Indiana

Indiana introduced the rigorous Core 40 curriculum and related end-of-course assessments, effective for the Class of 2011. Over the last 10 years, the program has been optional, and shown impressive results.

The number of students voluntarily selecting the Core 40 or academic honors diploma option has grown substantially – with the largest increases in Core 40 completers among African American and multiracial students, and significant gains among Hispanic students. In the Class of 2006, 67% of Indiana graduates completed the Academic Honors or Core 40 diploma. The state has risen from 34th (in 1992) to 10th (in 2002) nationally in the number of high school graduates enrolled in college the following fall. Sixty-four percent of Core 40 graduates who are first-time full-time students earn four-year degree at a selective Indiana university within six years, as opposed to 47% of their peers who held a general high school diploma.

Source: Jennifer Dounay, ECS, [Dispelling Myths about the Negative Effects of Raising High School Graduation Requirements](http://www.ecs.org/html/IssueSection.asp?issueid=108&subissueid=145&ssID=0&s=Selected+Research+%26+Readings) (2008) <http://www.ecs.org/html/IssueSection.asp?issueid=108&subissueid=145&ssID=0&s=Selected+Research+%26+Readings>

Texas

After also established honors diplomas based on a rigorous college-prep curricula and encouraging more students to take those courses, Texas found that the number of students enrolling in these courses climbed, while the graduation rate held steady and, in some cases, improved.

Source: Achieve website www.achieve.org, citing 2008 study conducted by Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, "Public High School Graduation and College Readiness Rates in the U.S. 1991-2002" (2008) http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_08.htm.