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News Release

Statewide Graduation Rate Increases; Districts Closing the Graduation Rate Gap

The Colorado graduation rate for the class of 2007 increased to 75 percent, according to data released today by the Colorado Department of Education. By comparison, the statewide graduation rate was 74.1 percent for the class of 2006.

There were 60,847 students in the membership base of the 2006-2007 graduating class—students who could have graduated from this cohort. Of these students, 45,628 graduated.

The total number of graduates in 2006-2007 statewide was a 0.9 percent improvement, about 550 more graduates.

“This is an encouraging increase in the number of students reaching the goal of graduation,” said Commissioner of Education Dwight Jones. “But as a state, we have major work ahead, particularly in closing the large gaps that exist based on race and income. Teachers, principals and parents should feel good about the upward trend, but at the same time we need to redouble our efforts to ensure that every student sees a high school diploma as valuable to their future education or career and that every student is given the maximum opportunity to succeed.”

The graduation rate formula begins with each school and district’s entering ninth-grade class. This cohort of students is tracked and adjusted for verified transfers in and out of the district through the end of the 12th grade year to determine the final membership base for the graduating class. The graduation rate is calculated by dividing the

number of students who receive a diploma by the adjusted membership base.

Legislation approved in 2005 changed the way the statewide graduation rate is calculated. Changes were made in the way the state counts students who leave a Colorado school district to pursue a GED (General Educational Development) certificate and to the process of verifying transfers out of a district.

Previously, students bound for a GED program were treated as transfers and were removed from both the numerator and denominator of the graduation rate calculation. Under the new formula, students who opt for a GED program remain in the "membership base" (or graduation rate denominator) and thereby reduce the graduation rate for their graduating class. Students who receive a GED certificate from a district-run GED program will, as before, be counted as completers but will reduce the graduation rate for their graduating class.

Racial/Ethnic Groups

Among ethnic groups, the graduation rate was 58.9 percent for Native American students; 83.5 percent for Asian students; 65.4 percent for black students; 57.1 percent for Hispanic students; and 82 percent for white students.

While the gap in the graduation rate between white and black students decreased from the 2005-2006 numbers, from 18.1 percent to 16.6 percent, the gap between white and Hispanic students increased from 24.1 percent in 2005-2006 to 24.9 percent in 2006-2007.

Among racial groups, black students posted the largest percentage gain from 2006 to 2007. Their graduation rate increased from 62.7 to 65.4 percent.

Several districts showed progress in closing the racial/ethnic graduation gap. Durango School District 9-R narrowed the white-Hispanic graduation gap by 20 percentage points over the last three years. Additionally, the graduation rate for both white and Hispanic students increased each of those years. The graduation rate for Hispanic students increased from 39.7 percent in 2005 to 66 percent in 2007.

After increasing in 2006, the white-Hispanic graduation gap at Monte Vista School District C-8 decreased sharply in 2007. Both white and

Hispanic graduation rates increased over a two-year period. Hispanic graduation rates moved from a 51.6 percent graduation rate in 2005 to a 60 percent graduation rate in 2007. The graduation rates for white students increased from 66.7 percent to 71.6 percent in the same time period.

In Cherry Creek Schools, 12.7 percent of the students in the class of 2007 were black. The graduation rate for black students in Cherry Creek increased each of the past two years—83.9 percent in 2005, 84.2 percent in 2006, and 85.6 percent in 2007. During this same period, Colorado's black student graduation rate declined by over 8.5 percentage points. The graduation rate for black students in Cherry Creek in 2007 exceeded the state average for black students by over 30 percentage points.

In Fountain-Fort Carson School District 8, where black students comprised 17 percent of the class of 2007, black students graduated at a higher rate than their white peers in each of the last three years. The graduation rate for black students in District 8 has exceeded the state average for black students by over 23 percentage points in each of the last two years.

Male/Female

Statewide, the female student graduation rate for 2006-2007 school year was 78.6 percent, and the male graduation rate was 71.5 percent. This gender gap has been fairly consistent for the last 10 years.

Dropout Rate

The 2006-2007 annual dropout rate was 4.4 percent, improved slightly from 4.5 percent in 2005-2006. The dropout rate reflects the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 7-12 who leave school during a single school year. It is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by a membership base, which includes all students who were in membership any time during the year.

Completer Rate

The completer rate dropped to 79.8 percent. Last year the completer rate stood at 80.5 percent. Completers are all graduates plus those students who are not considered graduates but who receive a certificate, a designation of high school completion or a GED certificate.

Mobility Rate and Mobility Incidence Rate

The 2006-2007 school year marked the first year CDE collected and reported information on student mobility. The Student Mobility Rate is an unduplicated count of how many individual students moved into or out of the school or district during the year. The Mobility Incidence Rate is a duplicated count of the total number of movements into or out of the school or district during the year. The statewide average Student Mobility Rate for 2006-2007 was 26.3 percent. The statewide average Mobility Incidence Rate for 2006-2007 was 28.3 percent.

More information:

Colorado Graduation, Completion and Dropout Rates:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_stats.htm

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