

# Florida's High School Cohort 2019-20 Graduation Rate

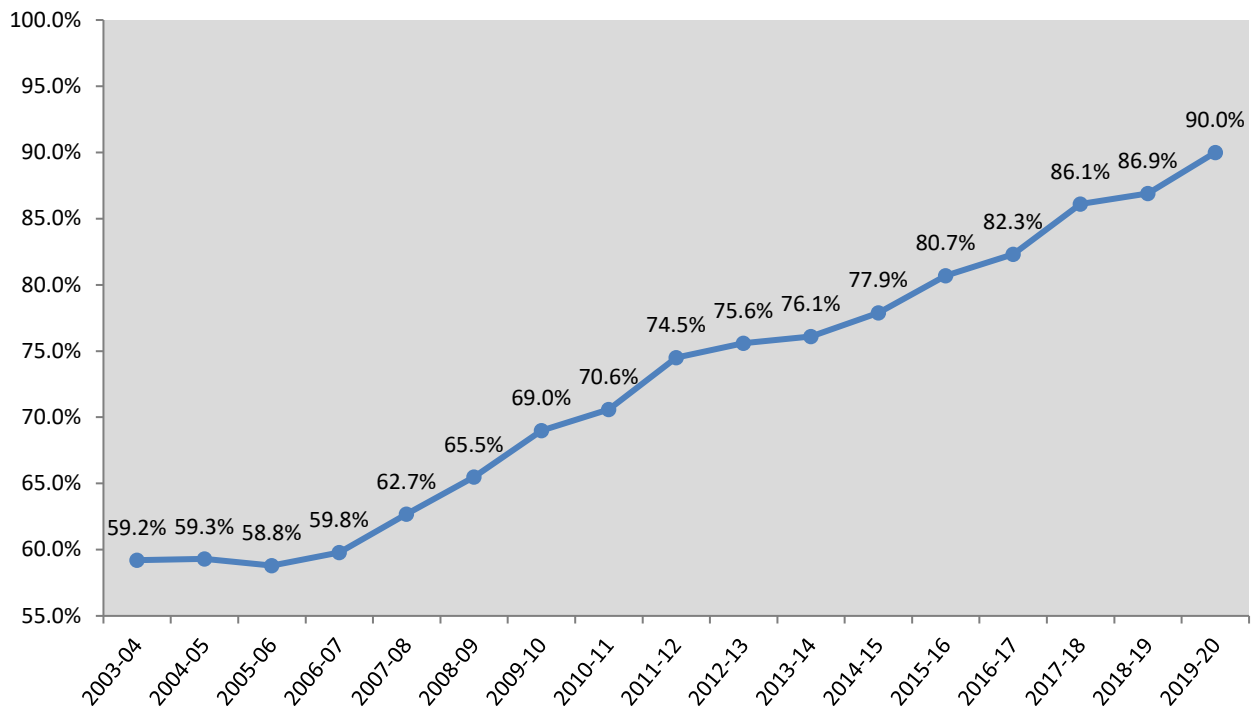
January 2021

## Florida's Graduation Rate

Florida's high school graduation rate increased by 3.1 percentage points over the last year and has increased significantly during the past sixteen years. The rate rose from 59.2 percent in 2003-04 to 90.0 percent in 2019-20, which is a 30.8 percentage-point increase. Figure 1 below shows the trend in graduation rates from 2003-04 through 2019-20. When comparing the 2019-20 graduation rate to prior years, it is important to note that pursuant to [Florida Department of Education Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-1](#), students in the 2019-20 graduating class were exempt from statewide, standardized assessment requirements stipulated in s. 1003.4282, F.S. Approximately 7.1% of the 2019-20 graduating class graduated with this exemption.

Federal regulations require each state to calculate a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, which includes standard diplomas but excludes GEDs, both regular and adult, and special diplomas. The U.S. Department of Education (USED) adopted this calculation method in an effort to develop uniform, accurate, and comparable graduation rates across all states. The USED required states to begin calculating the adjusted cohort graduation rate in 2010-11. This graduation rate is currently used in Florida's school accountability system in the school grades calculation.

**Figure 1: Florida's Graduation Rates, 2003-04 through 2019-20**



Florida's graduation rate is a cohort graduation rate. A cohort is defined as a group of students on the same schedule to graduate. The graduation rate measures the percentage of students who graduate within four years of their first enrollment in ninth grade. Subsequent to their enrollment in ninth grade, students who transfer out or pass away are removed from the calculation. Entering transfer students are included in the graduation rate for the class with which they are scheduled to graduate, based on their grade level when they enroll in the public school system. District-level graduation rates are provided in Table 3. School-level graduation rates are available online at

<http://fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/students.stml>.

In the calculation, stringent guidelines are prescribed for not only the definition of a graduate, but also for the definition of a transfer. Students who transfer to adult education programs or are placed in jails/Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facilities remain with their Florida public high schools' cohorts.

## How Does Florida's Graduation Rate Compare with Other States' Rates?

- The most recent graduation rates released on all states by USED are the 2017-18 federal graduation rates available at [https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR\\_RE\\_and\\_characteristics\\_2017-18.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR_RE_and_characteristics_2017-18.asp). Florida's federal graduation rate in 2017-18 was ranked Florida #26 in the nation (tied with North Carolina).<sup>1</sup>
- However, subsequent to the 2017-18 release, Florida has increased its graduation rate by almost four percentage points.
- Although the federal uniform graduation rate is calculated the same way by each state, states have different requirements for receiving a standard diploma, which means that the rates are not directly comparable from state to state.
- Florida's standard diploma is a rigorous credential for which standards and testing requirements have periodically increased. Because states have different criteria for awarding a standard diploma, comparing rates among states is problematic.

## Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

Florida's graduation rates vary by race/ethnicity, but more than half have increased their graduation rates. The subgroups with the largest percentage point increases over 2018-19 include American Indian or Alaska Native students (6.6 percentage points), and Black or African American students (5.1 percentage points).

**Table 1: Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2015-16 through 2019-20**

Year	White	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Two or More Races	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Total
2015-16	85.1%	72.3%	79.5%	91.9%	76.5%	82.7%	84.7%	80.7%
2016-17	86.2%	74.8%	81.3%	93.2%	80.0%	83.1%	87.2%	82.3%
2017-18	89.0%	80.9%	85.1%	95.8%	80.1%	87.0%	89.2%	86.1%
2018-19	90.2%	81.5%	85.9%	95.6%	77.5%	88.2%	86.7%	86.9%
2019-20	91.7%	86.6%	89.5%	98.0%	84.1%	90.5%	90.5%	90.0%

<sup>1</sup> The graduation rate reported by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) may vary slightly from the rate reported by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) because the rate reported by FDOE accounts for students who attended schools that have closed during the 4-year tracking period, whereas the rate reported to NCES does not. In 2017-18, this represented a 0.2% difference (86.1% reported by FDOE vs. 86.3% reported by NCES).

**Table 2: Graduation Rates by Gender within Race/Ethnicity, 2015-16 through 2019-20**

Year	White Female	White Male	Black or African American Female	Black or African American Male	Hispanic/Latino Female	Hispanic/Latino Male	Asian Female	Asian Male
2015-16	88.3%	82.0%	77.7%	67.0%	83.2%	75.8%	93.2%	90.6%
2016-17	89.4%	83.1%	80.3%	69.4%	84.9%	77.8%	94.9%	91.4%
2017-18	91.4%	86.7%	86.1%	75.7%	88.4%	81.9%	96.6%	95.0%
2018-19	92.6%	87.9%	86.1%	77.0%	88.9%	82.9%	96.9%	94.4%
2019-20	94.1%	89.4%	90.7%	82.5%	92.5%	86.6%	98.7%	97.3%

**Table 2 Continued: Graduation Rates by Gender within Race/Ethnicity, 2015-16 through 2019-20**

Year	American Indian or Alaska Native Female	American Indian or Alaska Native Male	Two or More Races Female	Two or More Races Male	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Female	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Male	Total Female	Total Male
2015-16	79.8%	73.4%	86.2%	78.9%	89.7%	78.8%	84.5%	77.0%
2016-17	82.3%	77.6%	86.1%	79.8%	88.5%	85.6%	86.0%	78.6%
2017-18	85.7%	74.9%	88.7%	85.2%	89.9%	88.1%	89.3%	82.9%
2018-19	83.5%	72.5%	90.7%	85.4%	91.0%	82.6%	90.0%	83.9%
2019-20	88.2%	80.0%	92.9%	87.9%	92.6%	88.4%	92.9%	87.1%

**Table 3: Graduation Rates by District, 2015-16 through 2019-20**

District	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
FLORIDA	80.7%	82.3%	86.1%	86.9%	90.0%
01 Alachua	78.4%	82.7%	88.0%	88.5%	90.4%
02 Baker	79.4%	81.0%	75.5%	78.8%	84.5%
03 Bay	81.0%	78.0%	81.1%	82.5%	88.5%
04 Bradford	83.7%	78.9%	89.0%	87.7%	88.2%
05 Brevard	87.5%	85.9%	88.1%	88.3%	90.3%
06 Broward	78.7%	81.0%	84.3%	86.2%	89.4%
07 Calhoun	82.9%	80.9%	86.9%	87.9%	89.9%
08 Charlotte	77.4%	81.0%	87.6%	86.4%	90.4%
09 Citrus	79.0%	78.9%	84.1%	86.0%	87.1%
10 Clay	84.7%	88.4%	91.1%	91.9%	93.4%
11 Collier	86.7%	88.2%	91.9%	91.9%	92.2%
12 Columbia	75.0%	70.7%	88.4%	92.4%	95.4%
13 Miami-Dade	80.4%	80.7%	85.4%	85.6%	89.6%
14 DeSoto	61.6%	63.8%	60.9%	71.3%	84.6%
15 Dixie	96.1%	89.5%	96.9%	90.6%	89.8%
16 Duval	78.8%	80.8%	85.1%	86.5%	90.2%
17 Escambia	76.1%	79.5%	80.7%	84.8%	86.5%
18 Flagler	80.4%	81.1%	88.0%	88.7%	92.3%
19 Franklin	72.6%	74.6%	77.3%	70.6%	73.1%
20 Gadsden	68.4%	50.0%	66.1%	60.4%	77.1%
21 Gilchrist	97.7%	93.4%	87.3%	89.4%	90.1%

District	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
FLORIDA	80.7%	82.3%	86.1%	86.9%	90.0%
22 Glades	78.3%	81.5%	93.4%	91.4%	89.6%
23 Gulf	81.5%	84.7%	82.1%	83.6%	85.3%
24 Hamilton	83.0%	67.0%	73.5%	73.1%	87.0%
25 Hardee	67.3%	72.1%	80.2%	81.2%	91.4%
26 Hendry	78.1%	84.4%	83.8%	83.7%	90.4%
27 Hernando	81.1%	82.6%	87.6%	88.4%	91.7%
28 Highlands	68.1%	71.6%	77.2%	81.2%	83.3%
29 Hillsborough	79.1%	82.9%	85.8%	86.2%	88.8%
30 Holmes	72.4%	68.7%	77.1%	85.5%	93.4%
31 Indian River	87.2%	87.1%	92.0%	88.5%	93.4%
32 Jackson	72.6%	71.8%	79.2%	84.7%	91.0%
33 Jefferson	70.0%	53.7%	73.4%	62.7%	85.4%
34 Lafayette	93.2%	88.2%	97.4%	98.8%	97.7%
35 Lake	78.1%	77.8%	84.1%	86.8%	91.2%
36 Lee	77.8%	78.7%	82.8%	83.7%	88.5%
37 Leon	92.3%	88.6%	93.0%	92.4%	94.4%
38 Levy	81.4%	79.7%	87.0%	88.1%	89.6%
39 Liberty	75.0%	81.9%	77.0%	84.2%	87.2%
40 Madison	80.1%	76.7%	81.3%	82.5%	87.2%
41 Manatee	83.5%	81.1%	85.4%	83.2%	85.8%
42 Marion	81.8%	78.5%	81.8%	83.8%	87.1%
43 Martin	88.7%	83.9%	87.9%	87.4%	90.2%
44 Monroe	77.9%	79.2%	86.4%	86.0%	92.0%
45 Nassau	91.4%	90.9%	92.8%	92.3%	91.6%
46 Okaloosa	84.4%	86.2%	88.1%	87.9%	90.0%
47 Okeechobee	70.5%	71.7%	76.9%	75.8%	84.2%
48 Orange	81.3%	84.7%	88.9%	88.4%	90.4%
49 Osceola	82.0%	86.3%	89.3%	90.0%	90.7%
50 Palm Beach	82.3%	85.0%	87.2%	87.1%	90.2%
51 Pasco	79.1%	81.4%	86.7%	88.3%	89.9%
52 Pinellas	80.1%	82.9%	86.0%	88.4%	91.5%
53 Polk	71.8%	75.4%	80.4%	81.2%	86.5%
54 Putnam	63.6%	72.2%	84.8%	86.3%	90.1%
55 St. Johns	91.2%	90.9%	93.3%	94.3%	94.8%
56 St. Lucie	86.8%	90.1%	91.8%	90.4%	93.2%
57 Santa Rosa	85.7%	86.4%	88.7%	88.9%	90.3%
58 Sarasota	85.4%	85.7%	89.8%	89.4%	92.5%
59 Seminole	88.3%	88.6%	91.7%	92.8%	94.5%
60 Sumter	84.6%	85.3%	87.8%	87.2%	88.0%
61 Suwannee	89.6%	90.5%	96.2%	93.7%	91.3%
62 Taylor	70.7%	70.3%	87.7%	83.9%	92.8%
63 Union	72.4%	81.0%	84.1%	84.4%	79.6%
64 Volusia	76.0%	76.6%	78.7%	84.5%	87.7%
65 Wakulla	86.9%	86.7%	90.1%	91.6%	93.8%
66 Walton	77.3%	82.2%	86.8%	88.9%	91.5%
67 Washington	76.3%	77.8%	80.2%	80.5%	89.6%
68 Deaf/Blind	47.1%	48.3%	69.7%	84.1%	90.6%
71 FL Virtual	66.6%	67.3%	81.4%	87.7%	95.4%
72 FAU Lab School	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
73 FSU Lab School	98.6%	98.7%	96.6%	99.3%	96.4%
74 FAMU Lab School	94.9%	89.3%	94.3%	89.7%	100.0%
75 UF Lab School	96.4%	98.2%	99.1%	98.1%	97.3%

**Notes:**

Source: 2019-20 Florida Department of Education (FDOE) cohort graduation data as of January 2021.

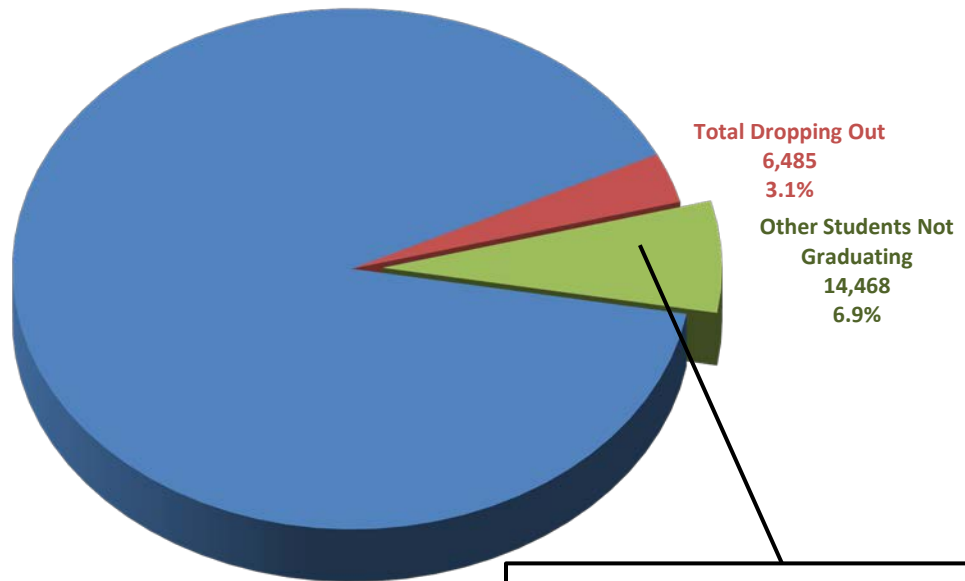
## Withdrawal Status of All Students in the Graduation Cohort

Florida’s graduation rate is 90 percent, but that does not mean that 10 percent of students in the cohort are dropouts. Students in a cohort can be classified as graduates, dropouts, and nongraduates. Nongraduates include students who have been retained and are still in school, attending adult education, received certificates of completion, or received GED-based diplomas. Florida’s 2017 Legislature amended section 1008.34, Florida Statutes, so that high school students who transfer to a private school with which the school district has a contractual relationship are included in the 4-year adjusted graduation rate cohort of the last public high school they attended. These students are included in the percentage of nongraduates. Pursuant to [Florida Department of Education Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-1](#), students in the 2019-20 graduating class were exempt from statewide, standardized assessment requirements stipulated in s. 1003.4282, F.S., and are included in the percentage of graduates.

In Florida’s 2019-20 cohort, 3.1 percent of the students dropped out and 6.9 percent are still enrolled in school, attending adult education, earned a certificate of completion, earned a special diploma, earned a GED-based diploma, or withdrew to a contracted private school. Figure 2 illustrates the proportions of students in the 2019-20 cohort who graduated, dropped out, or did not graduate.

**Figure 2: 2019-20 Cohort Outcomes by Withdrawal Categories**

**Standard Diploma Graduates**  
188,088  
90.0%



Special Diplomas: 6 (0.003%)  
 GED-based Diplomas: 583 (0.3%)  
 Certificates of Completion: 233 (0.1%)  
 Still Enrolled: 8,867 (4.2%)  
 Adult Education: 4,689 (2.2%)  
 Withdrawn to Contracted Private School: 90 (0.043%)

**Note:** Nongraduates include students who are still enrolled in school, attending adult education, earned a certificate of completion, earned a special diploma, earned a GED-based diploma, or withdrew to a contracted private school.



Florida Department of Education  
Richard Corcoran, Commissioner

For questions regarding Florida's High School Cohort Graduation Rate, contact:

Florida Department of Education  
Division of Accountability, Research, and Measurement  
Bureau of Accountability Reporting

850-245-0411

[accountability@fldoe.org](mailto:accountability@fldoe.org)