

# Graduation and Dropout Statistics

**For Washington's Counties, Districts, and Schools  
School Year 2002-03**



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State Superintendent of  
Public Instruction

**September 2004**

# **Graduation and Dropout Statistics for Washington's Counties, Districts, and Schools**

**School Year 2002–03**

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## **Abbreviations**

AYP	adequate yearly progress
GED	General Educational Development credential
IEP	individualized education program
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
OSPI	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

## **Acknowledgements**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*In school year 2002–03, about 7 percent of all high school students (those in grades 9–12) dropped out of school. Males dropped out at a higher rate than females, and more than 10 percent of all Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students dropped out of a high school grade during that year. Of the students who began Grade 9 in the fall of 1999 and were expected to graduate in 2003, an estimated 24 percent dropped out and did not receive a diploma. About 66 percent of this cohort of students graduated “on-time” and 10 percent were still enrolled in school at the end of Grade 12. Asian/Pacific Islander and White students had the highest graduation rates (71% and 70%) while less than half of the American Indian, Black, and Hispanic students had graduated at the end of the four-year period. Compared to the previous year, fewer students dropped out in all groups but more students did not finish in four years, so the on-time graduation rate remained the same.*

The consequences of not graduating from high school have become increasingly serious for both individuals and society as a whole. As a result, obtaining accurate information about high school graduation and dropout rates is more important. New state and federal accountability systems now require more detailed graduation and dropout data. The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires states to report disaggregated “on-time” graduation data for nine groups of students: the five major racial/ethnic groups, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, students from economically disadvantaged families, and all students combined. Under certain conditions, the rate for these groups helps determine if a high school makes Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for federal accountability purposes.

School districts report the enrollment status of their Grade 9–12 students to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). These students fall into three broad enrollment categories: (1) *graduates*, those who complete their education with a high school or adult diploma; (2) *dropouts*, those who dropped out of school for any reason, finished their schooling with any credential other than a regular diploma such as a General Educational Development (GED) credential, or left school and have an “unknown” status; and (3) students who are *continuing* their schooling. This report provides information on these students using enrollment data for the 2002–03 school year.

The percentage of students in each category can be calculated in different ways, so making comparisons across schools, districts, and states and from one year to another should be done with caution. Moreover, the graduation results provided in this document should be considered estimates. While the quality of the data provided by districts to OSPI continues to improve, few districts have data systems that can provide information about students in the group or “cohort” who were expected to graduate in 2003 but who dropped out in previous years. In addition, some districts now realize the enrollment information provided for some students is incorrect. Hence, a new method was used this year to estimate the level of dropouts that occurred for the cohort of students who began Grade 9 in the fall of 1999. This method uses dropout data from the most recent year to estimate the dropout rates for this cohort of students in previous years. The results are consistent with those found by researchers who use other methods.

This report provides two types of results at the state, county, district, and school levels: (1) annual dropout rates for the 2002–03 school year, and (2) estimated graduation, dropout, and continuing rates for the cohort of students who were expected to graduate in 2003.

## **Dropout Rates**

A total of 21,390 students dropped out of school statewide in Grades 9–12 during the 2002–03 school year. This represents 6.7 percent of all students enrolled during the school year in Grades 9–12 and is one percentage point lower than the 2001–02 dropout rate (7.7%).

- The annual dropout rate was lowest in Grade 10 (5.9%) and highest in Grade 12 (8.1%).
- Asian/Pacific Islanders had the lowest annual dropout rate (4.9%) while American Indians had the highest annual dropout rate (14.6%). Blacks and Hispanics had annual dropout rates above 10 percent.
- Males dropped out at a higher rate (7.4%) than females (5.9 %).
- The cumulative (4-year) dropout rate for those expected to graduate in 2003 was 24 percent, which was less than the cumulative dropout rate of 28 percent recorded in 2001–02.

Of the students who dropped out in Grade 12, the largest percentage (39%) had an unknown enrollment status and therefore were categorized as dropouts. (Some may have dropped out, received a GED, or graduated elsewhere.) Nearly 16 percent left school after attending four years of high school.

## **Cohort Graduation Rates**

Of the students who were expected to graduate in 2003, an estimated 66 percent graduated “on-time” (i.e., in a four-year period) with a regular diploma. This is the same rate as those who were expected to graduate in 2002. Another 10 percent were still enrolled and continuing their education beyond the four years, a higher percentage than in 2002. The remaining 24.3 percent of the cohort dropped out of school.

- Asian/Pacific Islander had the highest cohort graduation rate (71.0%), with White students graduating at a slightly lower rate (69.7%).
- American Indian students had the lowest rate (41.8%). Black and Hispanic students as well as those in special education and with limited English proficiency had graduation rates below 50 percent.
- Females graduated on time at a higher rate (69.8 %) than males (61.9%).

High schools with at least 30 students must have a cohort graduation rate of at least 66 percent to meet federal and state goals.<sup>1</sup> Of the 495 schools that had Grade 12 students and at least 30 students in the high school grades, 56 percent had an on-time graduation rate that met the goal. The other 44 percent had an on-time graduation rate below 66 percent. Schools that have the lowest graduation rates were usually alternative schools or those serving small numbers of students with special needs.

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<sup>1</sup> This percentage was considered the state average for the cohort of students that was expected to graduate in 2002 and was made the goal for accountability purposes. If a school has a rate below 66 percent, it can make “adequate yearly progress” if the rate is a least one percentage point above the previous year’s rate.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Information about high school graduation and dropout rates has become increasingly important with the advent of new state and federal accountability systems. In addition, the consequences of not graduating from school have become increasingly serious for both individuals and society as a whole. Students who drop out are less likely to be employed and will earn less over their working life, and trends toward a higher skilled labor force will make it even harder for dropouts to find good jobs. A General Educational Development (GED) credential, pursued by many dropouts, does not adequately prepare them for well-paying jobs or for accessing higher education. Dropouts tend to experience higher rates of early pregnancy and substance abuse and they often require more social services of various types. Young people who are imprisoned are likely to be school dropouts.<sup>2</sup> Earning a high school diploma is now the norm: less than 7 percent of the adults age 25 or older had a high school diploma 100 years ago, but by 2000 more than 84 percent had completed high school or its equivalent by that age.<sup>3</sup>

State law (RCW 28A.174.010) requires school districts to account for the educational progress of each of its students in Grades 9–12. This reporting requirement makes it necessary for OSPI to collect a record for each student in Grades 9–12. Each year districts provide information on these students to OSPI on Form P-210, which includes data on the number of students who dropped out, completed school via graduation and other means (i.e., an individualized education program or IEP diploma, an adult diploma, or a GED credential), transferred out of a school, and the reasons why students dropped out. The reporting period for the P-210 for school year 2002–03 is defined as the first day of school in the fall of 2002 to the day before the first day of school in the fall of 2003. Districts were to report their data to OSPI by October 15, 2003. In the future, enrollment information will be collected on all students as part of a new core student record system. A total of 246 districts reported having 669 schools serving students in at least one high school grade in school year 2002–03.

The data reported on Form P-210 is used for federal accountability purposes as well. In order to prevent schools from achieving better test results by having low performing students leave school, the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) requires the use of graduation rates when determining if a high school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).<sup>4</sup> This law defines the graduation rate as the percentage of students who graduate in “the standard number of years” (i.e., “on-time”) with a regular diploma;<sup>5</sup> students who complete their education with a GED are

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<sup>2</sup> For more information about the nature of the dropout problem and how it can be addressed, see *Helping Students Finish School: Why Students Drop Out and How to Help Them Graduate*, published by OSPI in December 2003. It can be accessed and downloaded at <http://www.k12.wa.us/research/default.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> This statistic includes students who graduate from private schools or complete with a GED credential. NCLB applies only to public schools and implicitly requires graduation with a regular diploma by age 18.

<sup>4</sup> The rates is based on the cohort of students who enroll in Grades 9–12. The number of students that drop out of school prior to entering Grade 9 is unknown at this time.

<sup>5</sup> In June 2004 the U.S. Department of Education accepted OSPI’s revised AYP policy that considers students with disabilities who finish their education in the number of years designated in their IEP as on-time graduates. There are very few of these students in the state.



to be considered dropouts. NCLB also requires the reporting of disaggregated data for nine groups of students: the five major racial/ethnic groups, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, students from low-income families, and all students combined. If a group in a high school does not make AYP because of its test results, the group can still make AYP if the group has reduced the percentage of students not meeting standard by at least 10 percent from the previous year and the group has a graduation rate that meets the required AYP target (this concept is known as “safe harbor” in NCLB).<sup>6</sup>

Rates can be calculated in various ways, so it is important to consider the methods and definitions used when analyzing rates and making comparisons across schools, districts, and states and from one year to another. For example, the federal government requires states to report an annual (also called “event”) dropout rate, which is the percentage of students who dropped out of school in one year without completing an approved high school program. The annual high school dropout rate for Grades 9–12 is based on the total number of dropouts and total enrollments across these four grades. In contrast, a cohort dropout rate is based on the percentage of students who began Grade 9 in a given year but dropped out of school before receiving a regular diploma. The cohort graduation rate can be calculated in a similar manner.

Some types of results that have been reported in previous years are no longer reported because they cause confusion and provide an inaccurate picture of what is happening in the school system.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, this year’s “on-time” graduation results are not comparable with the results provided in OSPI’s June 2003 report for the Class of 2002 because the methodology was changed to provide more accurate results (see below). However, the updated on-time graduation rates shown on the OSPI Report Card for school year 2001–02 are comparable to the on-time rates shown in this document.

## **Definitions**

Students fall into three broad enrollment categories: (1) *dropouts*, students who drop out of school for any reason, finish their schooling without a regular diploma, or whose status is “unknown” because they are no longer enrolled but are not confirmed transfers or dropouts; (2) students who are *continuing* their schooling; and (3) *graduates*, students who graduate with a regular high school or adult diploma.<sup>8</sup> A fourth group—students who transfer to another school—are removed from all calculations to avoid counting the same student more than once.

The specific definitions used in Form P-210 and in this report conform to the federal government definitions and are as follows:

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<sup>6</sup> The state has set a goal for schools and districts to have an “on-time” graduation rate of at least 66 percent in order to make AYP. If the rate is below 66 percent but is at least one percentage point above the previous year, AYP has been made. The state’s Academic Achievement and Accountability (A+) Commission adopted the same goals for high schools but will review them this year. In 2014 the goal is 85 percent. For more information about the state’s plan to meet the federal NCLB requirements, see the OSPI Web site at <http://www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/default.asp>.

<sup>7</sup> The federal government asks each state to calculate and report annual rates using the number of students enrolled in October of the school year (based on Form P-105) as the denominator, even though more students may be served during the year. Results using this method are not reported in this document. Instead, results using the total number of students served during the year are provided.

<sup>8</sup> This year, students who complete with an IEP diploma are considered graduates. This has been our practice except when reporting results last year (for school year 2001–02). There were only 92 of these students statewide.

**Dropout** A dropout is a student who leaves school for any reason, except death, before completing school with a regular diploma and does not transfer to another school. A student is considered a dropout regardless of when dropping out occurs (i.e., during or between regular school terms). A student who leaves during the year but returns during the reporting period (including summer program) is not a dropout. Students who receive a GED certificate are also categorized as dropouts. If a student leaves the district without indicating he or she is dropping out, and the district is not contacted by another school requesting student records (an unconfirmed transfer), the student has an “unknown” enrollment status and is considered a dropout.

As of the 1998–99 P-210 collection, districts were required to report students that drop out or leave with an unknown status until (1) they return, (2) a request for student records is requested, or (3) until their class graduates. However, most districts do not have data systems that allow this type of reporting to occur. As a result, cohort rates provided in the past are not accurate because they did not include students in the cohort who dropped out in Grades 9–11.

**Continuing** Students are considered to be continuing their education in the school if they are not assigned an exit code (i.e., a graduate or other type of completer, a transfer, a dropout, an unknown, or deceased).

**Graduate** A student is considered to be a graduate if he or she received a high school diploma or an adult diploma from a community college program during the reporting period (including a summer program).

**Class of 2003** A student who was expected to graduate in 2003 is in the cohort of students of the Class of 2003. The graduation year is assigned at the beginning of Grade 9 (in this case, in the Fall of 1999) and is set as four years later. The year is assigned upon entry when a student transfers into a school. This graduation year is not to be changed unless an error was made during the initial assignment of the graduation year. Students who transfer into the district after Grade 9 may be assigned a grade and graduating class based on the district policy (usually according to the level of credits earned or chronological age). Students with disabilities may be given a graduation year beyond four years if the IEP plan says it will take more than four years. The graduation year can be changed for these students until they become age 16.

## **Methodology**

The data used to generate the results in this report come from Form P-210 (see Appendix D).<sup>9</sup> This student-level report is to be submitted to OSPI in the fall of each year and provide the status of Grade 9–12 students in the previous school year. OSPI analyzed the student records for completeness and asked districts to resubmit data if errors were identified. Further analyses were conducted after the records were submitted to identify any data anomalies that could signal additional problems. For example, some districts reported having no students with a disability or in a particular grade. If problems were found, districts were asked to provide corrected data.

The graduation and dropout rates were based on the final P-210 records.<sup>10</sup> Students coded as transfers (i.e., those that leave and that have records requested by another school) were removed

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<sup>9</sup> P-210 instructions are found at <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/pubdocs/P210/200203P210RptingManual.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> A total of 246 districts reported having 672 schools serving students in at least one high school grade.

from all calculations to avoid counting the student more than once. Students who become “home-based” are considered transfers. Totals for institutions and unaffiliated or autonomous buildings are included in the state and county totals but not in district totals. Students who exited or were age 21 prior to August 15, 2002 were not included in the calculations because they exited prior to the 2002–03 school year. A student who graduated and was coded as being in any grade other than Grade 12 was considered to be in Grade 12. This credits the graduation in the year it occurred and relieves the district from reporting exited students in later years. Students who completed their education with an IEP diploma were considered graduates; students who completed with a GED certificate were considered dropouts, as required by NCLB.

The quality of the P-210 data provided by districts to OSPI continues to improve. Although districts were instructed to list students in the Class of 2003 who had dropped out in previous years, very few districts have the ability to report these students. Thus, a new method was used this year to estimate the level of dropouts that occurred for the cohort in previous years.<sup>11</sup> This method uses current year dropout data as a proxy for the cohort dropout rates in previous years. The assumption is that the current year’s dropout rates are the same as those that occurred in the previous years when students in the cohort were in those grades. The results generated using this method are consistent with those found by other researchers who have used different methods to estimate cohort graduation rates.

This new method has several advantages over the previously used method and those used by other researchers. First, it provides much more accurate results than those reported in the past—dropouts in Grades 9–11 are now considered in the calculation. Second, it relies on the most recent data, which are the most accurate. Third, it relieves districts from carrying students in their data systems when students are no longer enrolled, and it does not require access or changes to student records from previous years. Fourth, the number of students served in the cohort does not need to be known because the calculation uses only rates. Thus, knowing the number of students starting Grade 9 and the number of students who transfer in and add to the cohort is not required, and no adjustments need to be made to account for changes in enrollment over time.<sup>12</sup> Finally, it relies on fewer data and codes, so it is less susceptible to error and is easier for schools and districts to compute the graduation rate.

The specific formulas used to calculate the rates are as follows:

$$\text{Dropout Rate} = \frac{\text{number of students with a dropout, unknown, GED completer code}}{\text{total number of students served (minus transfers out)}}$$

$$\text{Cohort Graduation Rate} = 100 * (1 - \text{grade 9 dropout rate}) * (1 - \text{grade 10 dropout rate}) * (1 - \text{grade 11 dropout rate}) * (1 - \text{grade 12 dropout rate} - \text{grade 12 continuing rate})$$

In other words, each cohort begins with 100 percent, then is reduced by the level of dropouts in each grade over time. Students who are still enrolled at the end of Grade 12 (continuing Grade 12 students) are then factored into the formula, leaving the remaining students as those who

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<sup>11</sup> Results posted on the OSPI Report Card for 2001-02 reflect the new methodology and are comparable to the results reported for 2002-03. However, the on-time graduation rates shown for the Class of 2002 in the June 2003 OSPI report use the previous methodology and are not considered accurate.

<sup>12</sup> Some methodologies require Census data to adjust for changes in enrollment over time. However, these data are not available at the school level and are quickly outdated at the district level.

graduated on time. For example, if 10 percent of the Grade 9 students dropped out, the cohort begins Grade 10 with 90 percent of the cohort. If another 10 percent of the cohort drops out in Grade 10, the cohort begins Grade 11 with 81 students (10% of 90 is 9). This process continues until the remaining students are those that graduated at the end of Grade 12. This becomes the cohort graduation rate.

The graduation results reported in this document should be considered estimates. OSPI made its best efforts to gather the most accurate information possible in compiling this report. However, in addition to the possible inaccuracies based on changes in data collection requirements that necessitated making assumptions about the dropout and graduation rates for previous years, some districts have found errors in the information provided for some of their students. Rates that are extremely high or low may also reflect inaccurate reporting. Nevertheless, this year's results are the most accurate provided to date because of the additional quality controls that were put in place at the state level. As more scrutiny is given to the rates and greater care is given to coding students' enrollment status, the results published in the future will become more accurate. Moreover, when the state has a fully-functioning student identification system that can track students as they move around the state, the number of students who are considered dropouts because their location is unknown will decline.

### **Contents of This Report**

Chapter 2 provides statewide dropout statistics by grade, student population, and for the cohort of students in the Class of 2003. Chapter 3 provides statewide graduation and completion statistics for the Class of 2003, including estimated cohort graduation rates for the nine student populations that are held accountable under NCLB. This chapter also provides AYP results, i.e., those schools and districts that met the 66 percent threshold required to make AYP.

The appendixes contain detailed sets of data for districts and schools and by county.

- Appendix A provides three sets of **annual** dropout statistics for districts and schools—all grades combined, for each grade, and by race/ethnic group.
- Appendix B provides various sets of data related to the **cohort** graduation rates for districts and schools and the data used to compute those rates. Districts are also ranked in terms of their cohort graduation rate.
- Appendix C provides county-level statistics.
- Appendix D provides a copy of Form P-210 that districts used to report their student data to OSPI.

A final word of caution: Districts that make a strong effort to identify students who have dropped out and help them to return to the school system may incur lower on-time graduation rates than they would otherwise. Often these students may re-enroll in school, only to be considered dropouts later because they complete their education with a GED certificate. They may also drop out again or take longer than four years to graduate. Hence, lower graduation rates are not always an indication that a district is not making good efforts toward keeping students in school. Closely examining the kinds of individual schools that exist in a district may reveal the existence of specialized programs that are set up specifically to help these at-risk students.

## CHAPTER 2

# DROPOUT STATISTICS

### Annual Dropout Rates by Grade

For Grades 9–12 statewide, a total of 21,390 students dropped out of school during the 2002–03 school year. This represents an **annual dropout rate of 6.7 percent** based on all students enrolled during the year. This rate is one percentage point less than the dropout rate in 2001–02 (7.7%). Table 1 and Figure 1 provide data for the 2002–03 school year for each grade. They show a higher dropout rate in Grades 11 and 12, with the highest percentage of students dropping out of school in Grade 12. Nearly 11 percent of all students transferred from one school to another; with students transferring most often in Grade 9 and less often as they progress through the high school grades.

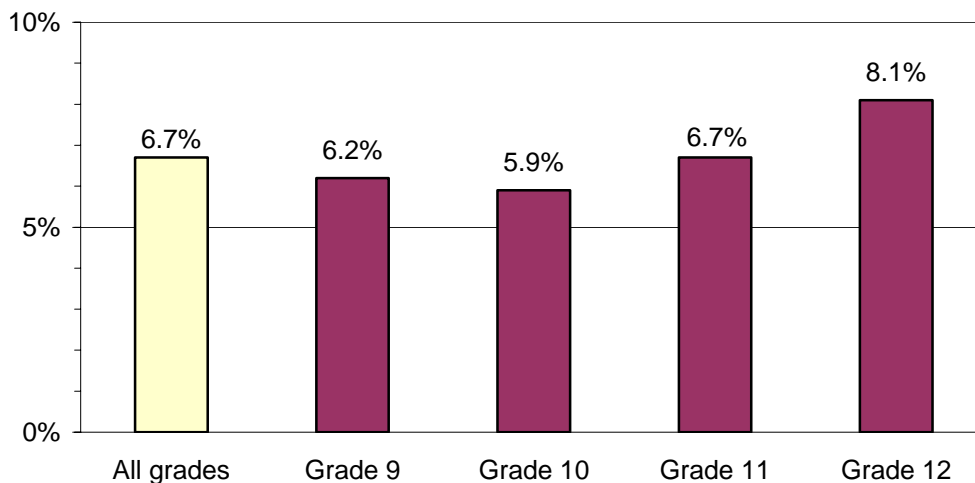
**Table 1: State Summary for Grades 9–12 (School Year 2002–2003)**

<b>Grade</b>	Total students served	Transferred out*	<b>Transfer rate</b>	Enrollment minus transfers	Dropped out**	<b>Annual dropout rate</b>
All grades	358,419	38,416	<b>10.7%</b>	320,003	21,390	<b>6.7%</b>
Grade 9	99,807	13,080	<b>13.1%</b>	86,727	5,355	<b>6.2%</b>
Grade 10	90,797	10,338	<b>11.4%</b>	80,459	4,737	<b>5.9%</b>
Grade 11	86,074	9,010	<b>10.5%</b>	77,064	5,193	<b>6.7%</b>
Grade 12	81,741	5,988	<b>7.3%</b>	75,753	6,105	<b>8.1%</b>

\* This category of students are removed from all dropout and graduation calculations.

\*\* Includes students who have an unknown location and those leaving to take the GED exam.

**Figure 1: Annual Dropout Rates by Grade (School Year 2002–2003)**



## Dropout Rates by Student Group

The dropout rate differs by racial/ethnic and other student groups. Table 2 provides information for these groups. Figure 2 illustrates the results by gender and racial/ethnic group.

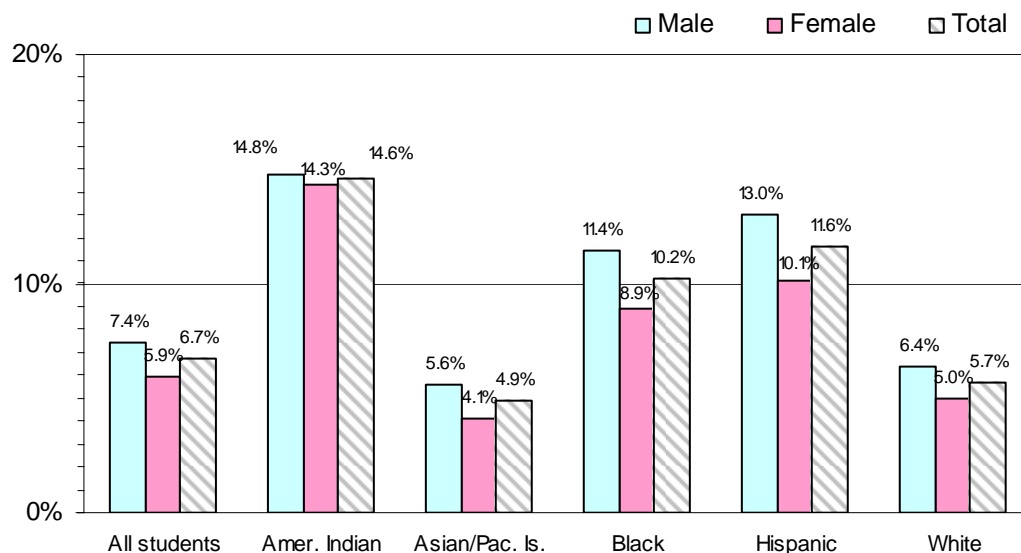
- Asian/Pacific Islander students had the lowest annual dropout rate (4.9%) while American Indian students had the highest annual dropout rate (14.6%).
- Black and Hispanic students and those with limited English proficiency had annual dropout rates above 10 percent.
- Males dropped out at a higher rate (7.4%) than females (5.9%). This pattern was true for every racial/ethnic group. The disparity between males and females was smallest among American Indian students (American Indian females have a very high dropout rate).
- Transfer rates show similar patterns—they are highest among Blacks and American Indians, lowest for Asian/Pacific Islanders, and higher for males than females.

**Table 2: State Summary for Grades 9–12 (School Year 2002–2003)**

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	Total students served	Transferred out*	<b>Transfer rate</b>	Enrollment minus transfers	Dropped out	Confirmed dropouts	Location unknown	Left to take GED	<b>Annual dropout rate</b>
Amer. Indian	10,505	1,922	<b>18.3%</b>	8,583	1,250	658	501	91	<b>14.6%</b>
Asian/Pacific Is.	27,955	2,552	<b>9.1%</b>	25,403	1,238	499	679	60	<b>4.9%</b>
Black	20,385	3,795	<b>18.6%</b>	16,590	1,698	761	860	77	<b>10.2%</b>
Hispanic	34,031	4,471	<b>13.1%</b>	29,560	3,442	1,582	1,724	136	<b>11.6%</b>
White	265,543	25,676	<b>9.7%</b>	239,867	13,762	6,213	6,244	1,305	<b>5.7%</b>
<b>Other Groups</b>									
Special education	35,793	4,583	<b>12.8%</b>	31,210	2,233	1,021	1,212	90	<b>7.2%</b>
Limited English	14,990	2,001	<b>13.3%</b>	12,989	1,329	563	742	24	<b>10.2%</b>
Low Income	67,316	8,604	<b>12.8%</b>	58,712	4,511	1,955	2,298	258	<b>7.7%</b>
Female	173,537	18,219	<b>10.5%</b>	155,318	9,130	4,028	4,441	661	<b>5.9%</b>
Male	184,882	20,197	<b>10.9%</b>	164,685	12,260	5,685	5,567	1,008	<b>7.4%</b>
<b>All Students</b>	<b>358,419</b>	<b>38,416</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>320,003</b>	<b>21,390</b>	<b>9,713</b>	<b>10,008</b>	<b>1,669</b>	<b>6.7%</b>

\* Students who transfer to another school are removed from all dropout and graduation calculations.

**Figure 2: Annual Dropout Rates by Gender and Race/Ethnicity, Grades 9–12 (School Year 2002–2003)**



Students in the different race/ethnic groups drop out of school at different rates in the various grades. Table 3 and Figures 3 and 4 show the annual dropout rate for various student groups in the different grades. All groups have the largest dropout rate in Grade 12. The highest rate was among American Indians students in Grade 12 — about one in six (16%) dropped out during their last year in school.

Since students drop out of school at different stages of their school experience, the combined effect of these dropouts over time can be quite substantial. The dropout rate for the cohort of students in the Class of 2003 can be calculated using the same methodology described in Chapter 1, except students who are still enrolled in school at the end of Grade 12 are not included in the calculation. The cumulative dropout rates for the Class of 2003 cohort and the data used to compute those rates are shown in Table 3. (Students who transferred out are excluded from all calculations.)

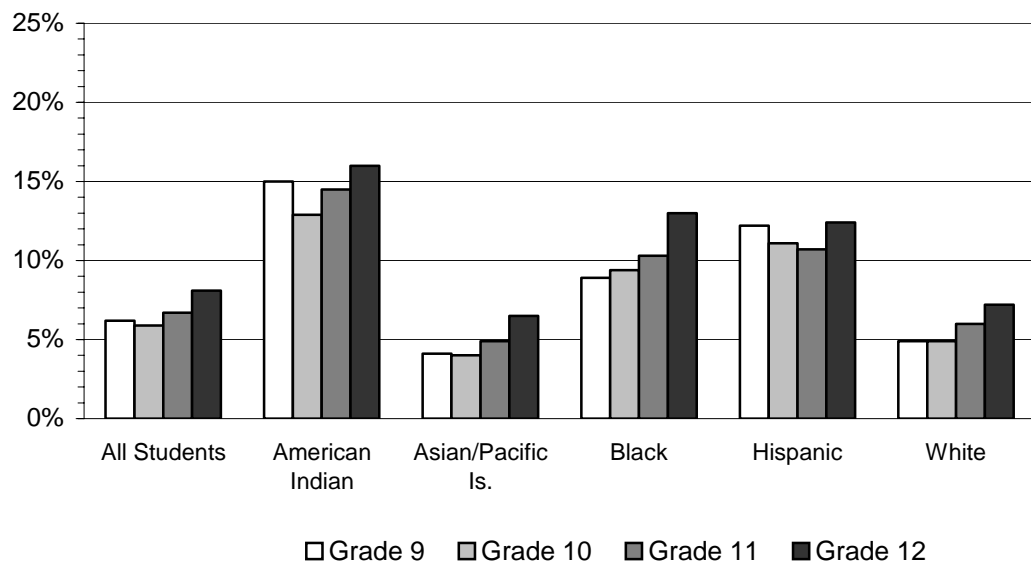
Based on the data provided by districts, we estimate that 24.3 percent of the Class of 2003 cohort dropped out of school (see Table 3). This is 12 percent less than the cumulative dropout rate that occurred the previous year (27.7%). Figure 5 shows the level of decline in the dropout rate from the previous year.

- Asian/Pacific Islanders had the lowest cohort dropout rate (18.1%) while American Indian students had the highest cumulative dropout rate (46.9%).
- Males dropped out at a higher rate (26.8%) than females (21.6%).
- Blacks made the largest reduction in the dropout rate from the previous year’s cohort (from 53.5% to 35.5%), although the size of this change may be due in part to improved data quality.

**Table 3: Annual and Cohort Dropout Rates by Grade for Student Groups (School Year 2002–2003)**

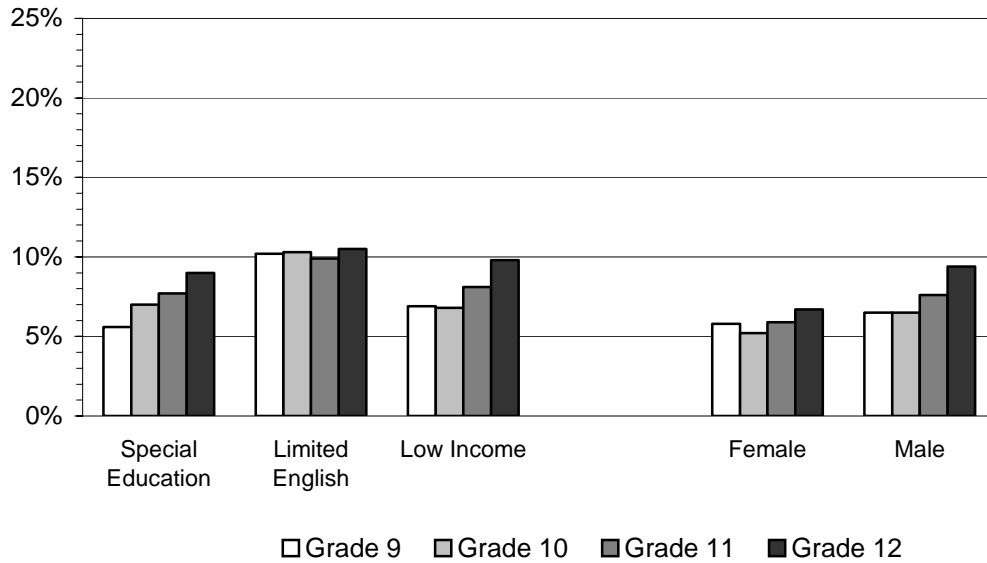
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Grade 9 dropout rate</b>	<b>Grade 10 dropout rate</b>	<b>Grade 11 dropout rate</b>	<b>Grade 12 dropout rate</b>	<b>Estimated cohort dropout rate</b>
All Students	6.2%	5.9%	6.7%	8.1%	24.3%
Amer. Indian	15.0%	12.9%	14.5%	16.0%	46.9%
Asian/Pacific Is.	4.1%	4.0%	4.9%	6.5%	18.1%
Black	8.9%	9.4%	10.3%	13.0%	35.5%
Hispanic	12.2%	11.1%	10.7%	12.4%	39.0%
White	4.9%	4.9%	6.0%	7.2%	21.2%
Special Education	5.6%	7.0%	7.7%	9.0%	26.2%
Limited English	10.2%	10.3%	9.9%	10.5%	35.1%
Low Income	6.9%	6.8%	8.1%	9.8%	28.1%
Female	5.8%	5.2%	5.9%	6.7%	21.6%
Male	6.5%	6.5%	7.6%	9.4%	26.8%

**Figure 3: Annual Dropout Rates by Grade and Race/Ethnicity (School Year 2002–2003)**

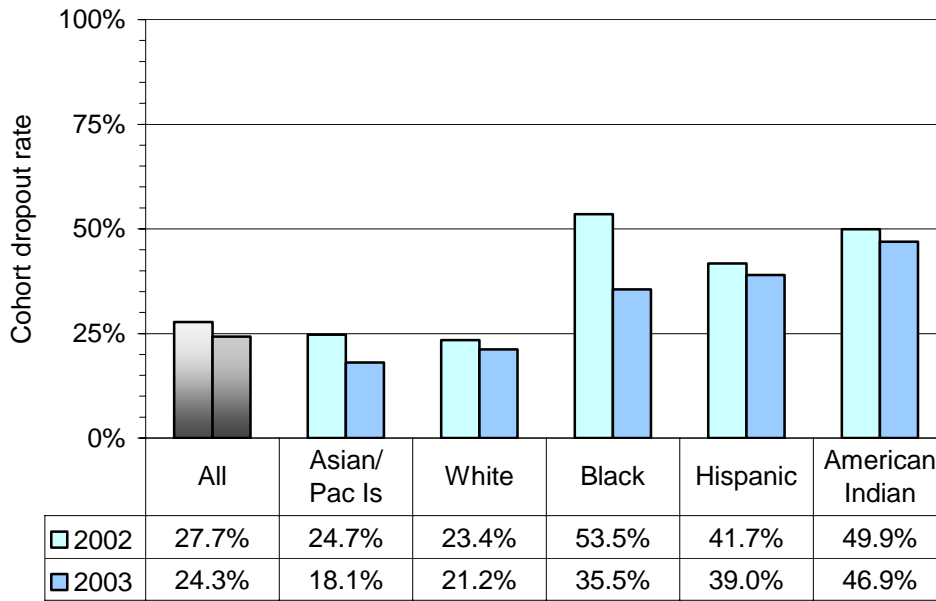




**Figure 4: Annual Dropout Rates by Grade, Program Type, and Gender (School Year 2002–2003)**



**Figure 5: Change in Cohort Dropout Rates**



## Reasons for Dropping Out

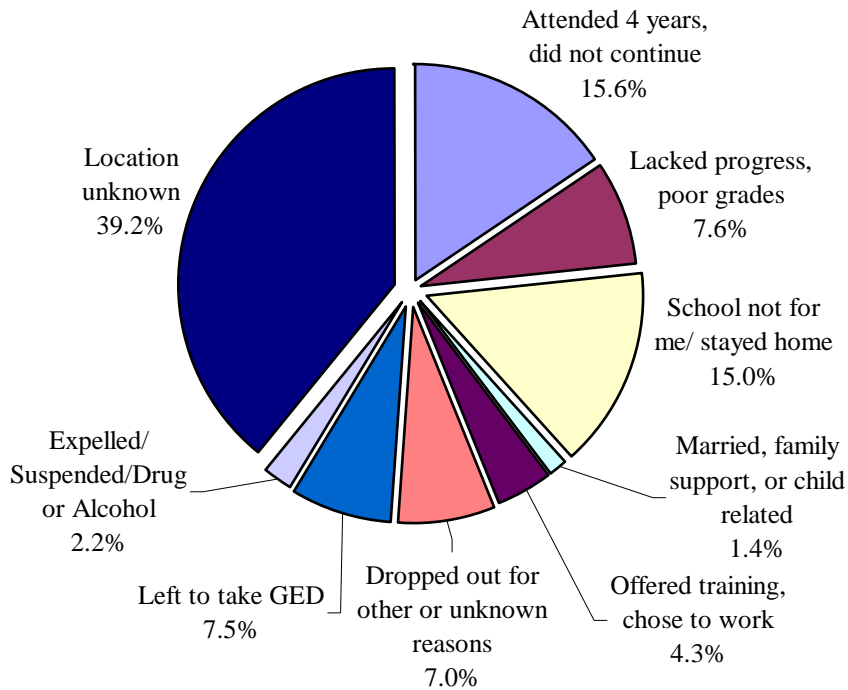
Students drop out for various reasons (see Table 4 and Figure 6). Nearly half of all dropouts in Grades 9–12 were students who had an unknown location and must be considered dropouts. Of the 6,105 students who dropped out of Grade 12, nearly 40 percent had an unknown location and nearly one quarter dropped out because they had not made or were not making sufficient academic progress in school (this includes nearly 16 percent who dropped out even though they had attended high school for four years). Relatively few students (less than 8%) who were considered dropouts may have actually completed their education by passing the GED exam.

The dropout rate could be reduced dramatically by taking steps to (1) locate students whose whereabouts are unknown and confirm they are a transfer, and (2) identify and provide extra help to students who are not on-track to have enough credits to graduate in the expected timeframe. When the state fully implements its Core Student Record System that can track student movements within the state, the high level of students with an unknown location probably will drop dramatically.

**Table 4: Reasons Given for Dropping Out, School Year 2002–03**

Grade	Attended school 4 years, did not continue	Lacked progress/poor grades	School not for me/stayed home	Married, family support, or child related	Offered training, chose to work	Dropped out for other or unknown reasons	Left to take GED	Expelled/suspended/drugs or alcohol	Location unknown	Total
All grades	1,248	1,282	3,556	265	873	1,622	1,669	867	10,008	21,390
<i>Percent (all grades)</i>	5.8%	6.0%	16.6%	1.2%	4.1%	7.6%	7.8%	4.1%	46.8%	
Grade 9	38	252	1,012	51	145	401	259	309	2,888	5,355
Grade 10	75	240	780	53	214	361	411	229	2,374	4,737
Grade 11	182	323	851	74	249	432	540	192	2,350	5,193
Grade 12	953	467	913	87	265	428	459	137	2,396	6,105
<i>Percent of Grade 12</i>	15.6%	7.6%	15.0%	1.4%	4.3%	7.0%	7.5%	2.2%	39.2%	

**Figure 6: Reasons Grade 12 Dropouts Gave for Leaving School (School Year 2002–2003)**



Appendix A provides the dropout statistics for districts and schools, and Appendix B shows how the dropout rates are used to compute cohort graduation rates. Appendix C provides dropout and graduation statistics for counties.

## CHAPTER 3

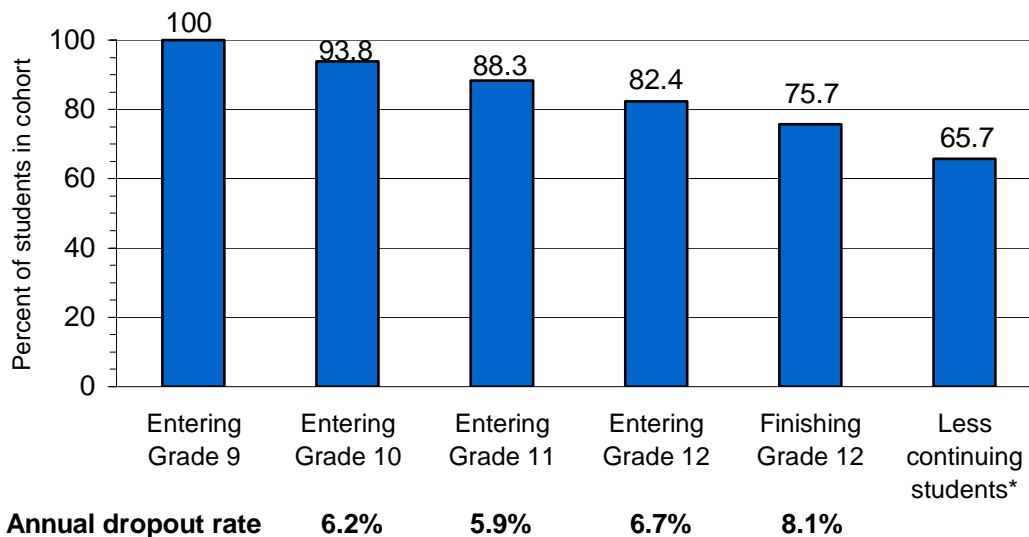
# GRADUATION STATISTICS

### Graduation Rates

The dropout rates shown in Chapter 2 are used to estimate the graduation rates for the cohort of students who were expected to graduate in 2003. This “Class of 2003” is the group of students who would have started Grade 9 in the fall of 1999 and were expected to graduate “on-time,” i.e., in a 4-year period.

Figure 7 shows how dropouts in previous years gradually reduced the number of enrolled students in the Class of 2003 over time.<sup>13</sup> By the end of the 2002–03 school year, 24.3 percent of the students in the cohort had dropped out (75.7% still remained). The Grade 12 students who were still enrolled at the end of the year and did not graduate reduces the on-time graduation rate even further. As a result, we estimated that **65.7 percent of the students in the Class of 2003 graduated by the end of the 4-year period** with a regular diploma (this includes adult and IEP diplomas). The remaining 10 percent of the cohort was still continuing their education.<sup>14</sup> Figure 8 summarizes the enrollment status of these students at the end of the 4-year period (the end of summer 2003).

**Figure 7: Attrition in the Class of 2003**

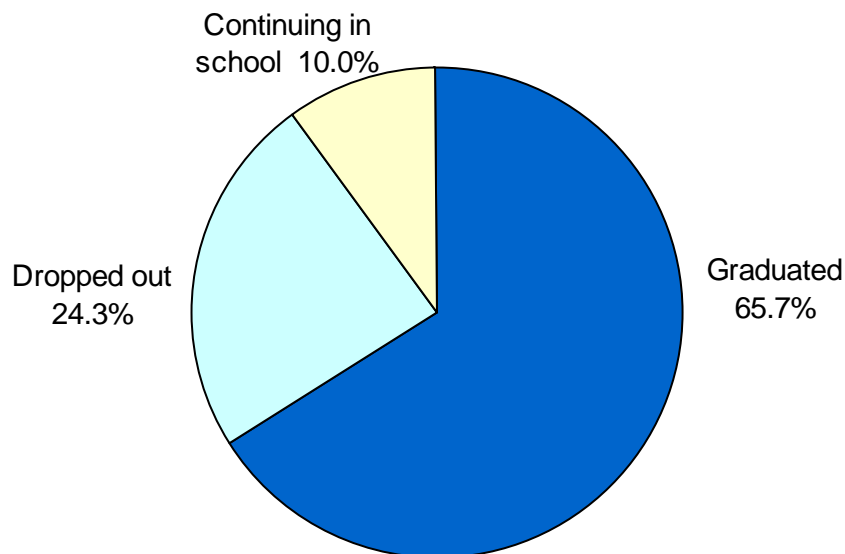


\* A total of 12.1% of the Grade 12 students were still enrolled in school at the end of the year, which represents 10% of the cohort.

<sup>13</sup> We assume the dropout rate that occurred in school year 2002-03 for each grade is the same that occurred for the cohort in earlier years. See Table 3 in the previous chapter for these rates.

<sup>14</sup> We estimate that 3-4 percent of the cohort will eventually graduate with a regular or adult diploma by age 21. The vast majority of the “continuing” students that graduate late do so in their 5th year.

**Figure 8: Class of 2003 Enrollment Status**



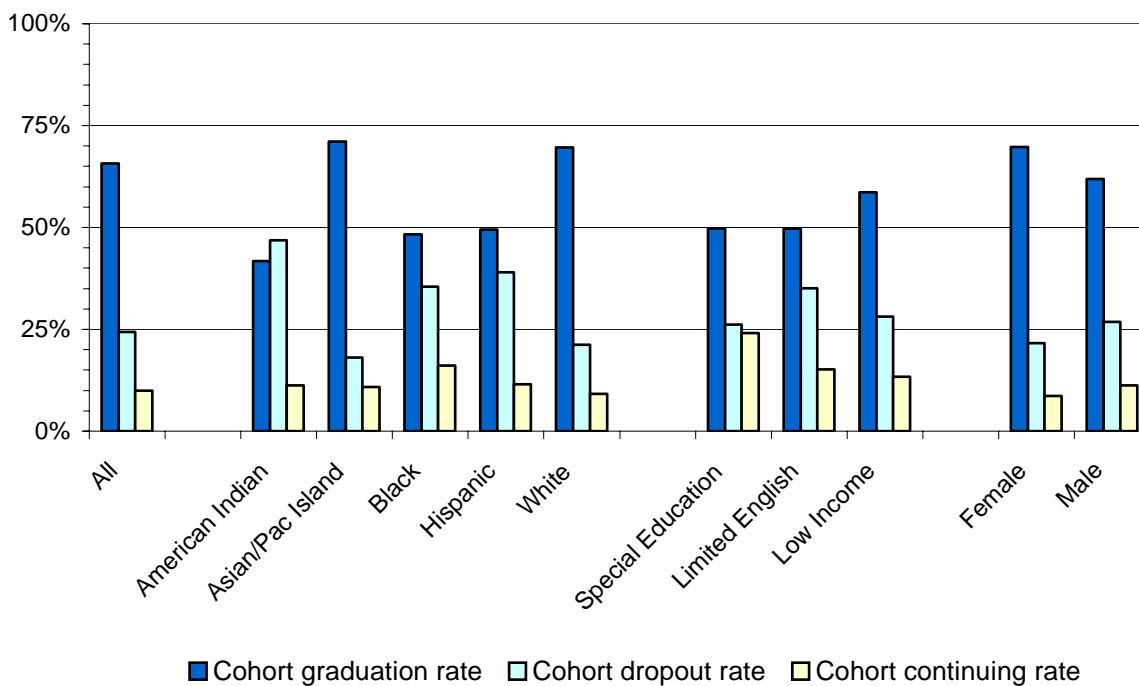
The cohort graduation rate varies significantly by racial/ethnic group and gender. The rates reflect the same type of disparity that is found on academic indicators (e.g., the “achievement gap” between the test scores of White and Asian students and those of other groups). Table 5 and Figure 9 provide detailed information on graduation, dropout, and continuing rates for the different student groups.

- Asian/Pacific Islander and White students had the highest on-time graduation rates (71.0% and 69.7% respectively).
- American Indian students had the lowest rate (41.8%). About half of the Black and Hispanic students and those with disabilities or limited English ability graduated on time.
- Females graduated on time at a higher rate (69.8%) than males (61.9%).
- In general, the continuing rates were similar across groups. Special education students had a much higher continuing rate (24.1%), and Blacks and those with limited English ability also had much higher rates than the other groups.

**Table 5: Class of 2003 Graduation Rates by Student Group**

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<i>Received high school diploma</i>	<i>Received adult /IEP diploma</i>	Total graduates	<b>Cohort graduation rate</b>	<b>Cohort dropout rate</b>	<b>Cohort continuing Rate</b>
All Students	60,171	354	60,525	<b>65.7%</b>	24.3%	10.0%
Amer. Indian	1,155	11	1,166	<b>41.8%</b>	46.9%	11.3%
Asian/Pacific Is.	5,163	20	5,183	<b>71.0%</b>	18.1%	10.9%
Black	2,375	21	2,396	<b>48.3%</b>	35.5%	16.2%
Hispanic	4,337	47	4,384	<b>49.5%</b>	39.0%	11.5%
White	47,141	255	47,396	<b>69.7%</b>	21.2%	9.1%
<b>Other Groups</b>						
Special education	3,987	101	4,088	<b>49.7%</b>	26.2%	24.1%
Limited English	1,803	18	1,821	<b>49.7%</b>	35.1%	15.2%
Low Income	7,953	62	8,015	<b>58.6%</b>	28.1%	13.3%
Female	30,878	151	31,029	<b>69.8%</b>	21.6%	8.6%
Male	29,293	203	29,496	<b>61.9%</b>	26.8%	11.3%

**Figure 9: Class of 2003 Graduation, Dropout, and Continuing Rates by Student Group**

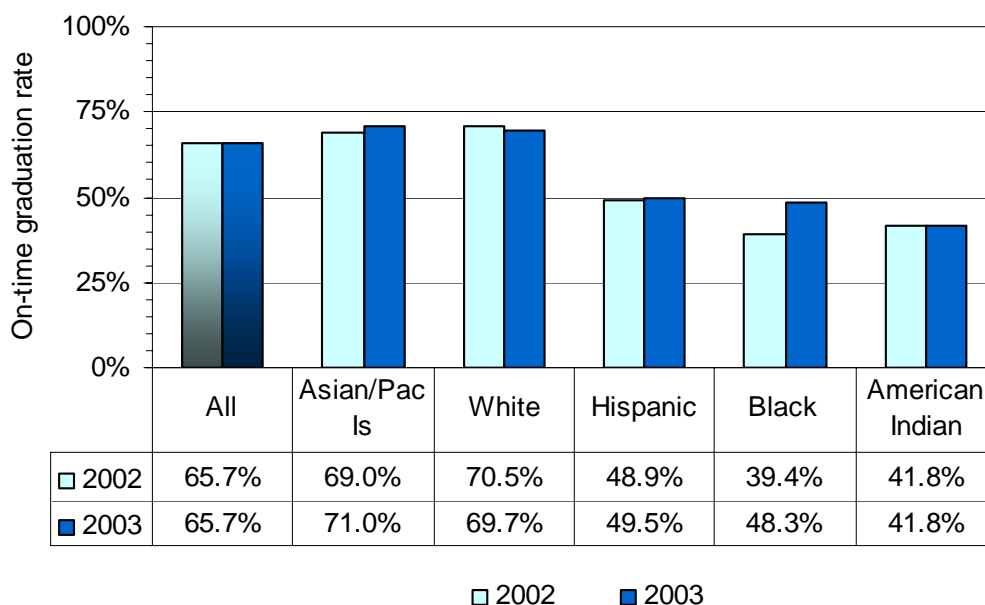


## Graduation Trends

The cohort graduation rate stayed the same as the previous year (65.7%). A number of factors contributed to the lack of improvement at the state level. The rate for White students, who represent the largest proportion of students statewide, declined slightly. The rate improved slightly for Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics, increased significantly for Blacks, and stayed the same for American Indians. There was also an increase in the percentage of students in the groups with lower rates, which had the effect of reducing the overall state rate.<sup>15</sup> Finally, more students were continuing their education beyond the end of Grade 12 (10% compared to 6.6% the previous year).

Figure 10 shows how the rates have changed from the previous year for the racial/ethnic groups. The rates shown were computed using the same method so they are comparable to one another.

**Figure 10: Two-Year Graduation Rates**



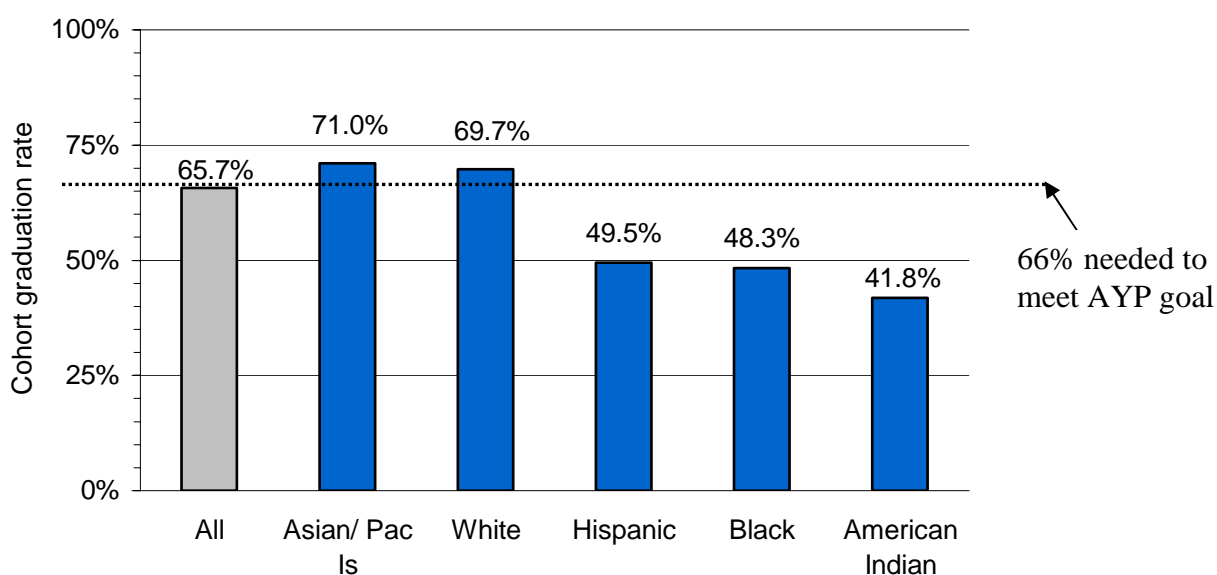
<sup>15</sup> From 2002 and 2003 the total percentage of American Indian, Black, and Hispanic students in Grades 9–12 increased from 14.6% to 17.1%. These three groups have much lower graduation rates than the Asian/Pacific Island and White groups. The statistical phenomenon known as “Simpson’s Paradox” occurs when improvement is made in subgroups but there is an increase in the proportion of people who have results that are below average, resulting in little or no rate increase over time.

## Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Results

Districts and high schools that have at least 30 students in the Class of 2003 must have a cohort graduation rate of at least 66 percent in order to meet the federal AYP goal.<sup>16</sup> If their rate is below 66 percent, they can make AYP if the rate is at least one percentage point above the previous year.<sup>17</sup> The state's Academic Achievement and Accountability (A+) Commission adopted the same goals for districts and high schools.

Figure 11 shows how the graduation rate of each racial/ethnic group compares to the 66 percent AYP and state goal. The American Indian, Black, and Hispanic groups missed the goal by a wide margin. (Table 5 provides the rates for all nine groups.)

**Figure 11: Cohort Graduation Rates Compared to the Accountability Goal**



## District and School Results

A total of 241 *districts* had at least 30 students in the Class of 2003. Of these, 171 had a cohort graduation rate of at least 66 percent. The other 70 districts had a rate below 66 percent. The districts that had rates below the annual goal tended to be much larger than the districts that met the goal.<sup>18</sup>

Of the 495 *schools* that had at least 30 students in the Class of 2003, 277 (56%) had a cohort graduation rate that met the 66 percent goal, while the other 218 schools (44%) had rates that did

<sup>16</sup> The size of the Class of 2003 was based on the total number of students enrolled in Grades 9–12 during the school year.

<sup>17</sup> For more information about the state's plan to meet the federal NCLB requirements, see the OSPI Web site at <http://www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/default.asp>.

<sup>18</sup> On average, districts with graduation rates of at least 66 percent had a Grades 9–12 enrollment of 1,020 students; districts that did not meet the 66 percent goal averaged 2,033 students in Grades 9–12.



not meet the goal.<sup>19</sup> Schools that did not meet the target tended to be much smaller than those that met the goal. The schools that had the lowest graduation rates were usually alternative schools or those that had special programs to serve students with special needs.<sup>20</sup>

Appendix B provides the cohort graduation rates for districts and schools, along with the dropout and continuing rates that are used to calculate the graduation rates. Analyses of the ranked district-level graduation rates in Appendix B4 can help identify districts that may have submitted incorrect data. Until the implementation of a statewide core student record system that can keep track of where students enroll over time, all statewide rates should be considered estimates.

Some districts did not report enrollment data for some buildings in time for inclusion in this report, and some juvenile detention centers and other correctional institutions did not report students on the P-210. In total, 31 buildings that served 1,449 students in Grades 9–12 in October 2002 did not report students on the P-210. These buildings are listed in Table 6 below. The exclusion of these students has very little impact on the totals shown in this report.

All of the data shown in the Appendix A and B are available in spreadsheets that can be downloaded from the OSPI Web site at <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/DataDownload.aspx>. The data used to generate the statewide results are shown in Table 7 on the following page.

**Table 6: Buildings Not Reporting Students on Form P-210**

<u>District</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Oct. 2002 Enrollment</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Oct. 2002 Enrollment</u>
Anacortes	Secret Harbor	22	Kelso	Cowlitz County Detention	50
Bellingham	Visions (Seamar Youth)	10	Kennewick	Benton/Franklin Juv Justice	45
Cape Flattery	Clallam Bay Corrections	46	Kennewick	Kennewick Alternative Ed.	42
Central Kitsap	New Frontiers Jr. High	49	Kittitas	Parke Creek Treatment	15
Chehalis	Lewis County Detention	19	North Franklin	Camp Outlook	27
Deer Park	Deer Park Home Link	38	North Kitsap	JHOP Program	19
Edmonds	Special Ed. Contracted	14	Okanogan	Okanogan County Detention	14
Ephrata	Grant County Detention	19	Rochester	Maple Lane School	234
ESD 101	Martin Hall Detention	51	Shoreline	Career Education Options	263
ESD 101	Spokane Detention	47	Snohomish	Home School	24
ESD 101	Structural Alt. Confinemt.	16	Tahoma	Tahoma Special Services	36
ESD 114	Clallam County Detention	12	Tumwater	Thurston County Juv Dept.	46
ESD 114	Kitsap Co Detention	45	Vancouver	Clark County Detention	56
ESD 189	Whatcom Co Detention	26	Walla Walla	Walla Walla Co. Detention	10
Everett	Charles Denny Special	63	Yakima	Yakima County Detention	35
Everett	Snohomish County Jail	56			

<sup>19</sup> Another 52 schools had less than 30 students in the cohort. In addition, some schools serve students in only a few high school grades (e.g., middle schools that serve Grades 7–9). The 495 schools served nearly 95 percent of all students in the Class of 2003.

<sup>20</sup> Schools that met the 66 percent goal had an average enrollment of 814, while those that did not meet the goal had an average enrollment of 352.

**Table 7: Detailed Statewide Results, School Year 2002-03**

Group	Net students served in grade*				Number of dropouts in grade**				Dropout rate in grade				Continuing***		Percent in cohort in school				Cohort Grad Rate
	9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	Number	Rate	Start of Grade 10	Start of Grade 11	Start of Grade 12	End of Grade 12	
All	86,727	80,459	77,064	75,753	5,355	4,737	5,193	6,105	6.2%	5.9%	6.7%	8.1%	9,176	12.1%	93.8%	88.3%	82.4%	75.7%	<b>65.7%</b>
American Indian	2,702	2,205	1,919	1,757	406	284	279	281	15.0%	12.9%	14.5%	16.0%	315	17.9%	85.0%	74.0%	63.3%	53.1%	<b>41.8%</b>
Asian/Pac Is	6,677	6,181	6,161	6,384	273	249	303	413	4.1%	4.0%	4.9%	6.5%	791	12.4%	95.9%	92.0%	87.5%	81.9%	<b>71.0%</b>
Black	4,878	4,283	3,766	3,663	433	403	387	475	8.9%	9.4%	10.3%	13.0%	797	21.8%	91.1%	82.5%	74.1%	64.5%	<b>48.3%</b>
Hispanic	9,363	7,636	6,394	6,167	1,144	848	684	766	12.2%	11.1%	10.7%	12.4%	1,023	16.6%	87.8%	78.0%	69.7%	61.0%	<b>49.5%</b>
White	63,107	60,154	58,824	57,782	3,099	2,953	3,540	4,170	4.9%	4.9%	6.0%	7.2%	6,250	10.8%	95.1%	90.4%	85.0%	78.8%	<b>69.7%</b>
Spec Education	9,521	7,972	7,076	6,641	535	555	548	595	5.6%	7.0%	7.7%	9.0%	1,971	29.7%	94.4%	87.8%	81.0%	73.8%	<b>49.7%</b>
Limited English	4,118	3,395	2,819	2,657	420	349	280	280	10.2%	10.3%	9.9%	10.5%	558	21.0%	89.8%	80.6%	72.6%	64.9%	<b>49.7%</b>
Low Income	19,209	15,390	13,215	10,898	1,324	1,048	1,072	1,067	6.9%	6.8%	8.1%	9.8%	1,820	16.7%	93.1%	86.8%	79.7%	71.9%	<b>58.6%</b>

\* Students who transferred out are removed from this number. Students who transferred in are included in this number.

\*\* Includes students who complete without a regular HS diploma (GED diploma) and those with an "unknown" status.

\*\*\* Grade 12 students still enrolled at the end of the school year.

# APPENDIX A

## Annual Dropout Statistics for Districts and Schools

This appendix provides annual dropout statistics for districts and schools for the 2002–03 school year. These statistics and rates are based on data collected from districts on Form P-210 (see Appendix D). Results from institutions and autonomous buildings (shown in *italics*) are not included in the district results.

There are three sets of data in this appendix:

- A1 Dropout Rates for All Grades Combined
- A2 Dropout Rates by Grade
- A3 Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity

# APPENDIX B

## Cohort Graduation Statistics for Districts and Schools

This appendix provides cohort graduation statistics for districts and schools for the 2002–03 school year. The data and rates shown in this appendix come from district reports submitted on Form P-210 (see Appendix D). Results from institutions and autonomous buildings (shown in *italics*) are not included in the district results.

There are four sets of data in this appendix:

- B1 Graduation Rates Based on Dropout and Continuing Rates
- B2 Graduation Rates for Nine Student Groups
- B3 Graduation, Dropout, and Continuing Rates by Race/Ethnicity
- B4 District Graduation Rates (Ranked)

# APPENDIX C

## County Graduation and Dropout Statistics

This appendix provides graduation and dropout data for each of the 39 counties of the state. There are five sets of data in this appendix:

- C1 Dropout Rates for All Grades Combined
- C2 Dropout Rates by Grade
- C3 Dropout Rates for Grades 9–12 by Race/Ethnicity
- C4 Graduation Rates Based on Dropout and Completion Rates
- C5 Graduation Rates for Nine Student Groups

# **APPENDIX D**

## **Form P-210**