Graduation Rates

All Kentucky students need to complete their high school education to be ready for adult success, and each high school's graduation rate is part of the school's accountability formula.

LEARNING MORE

For each school and district, graduation rate results are included in the school report cards at applications.education.ky.gov/SRC

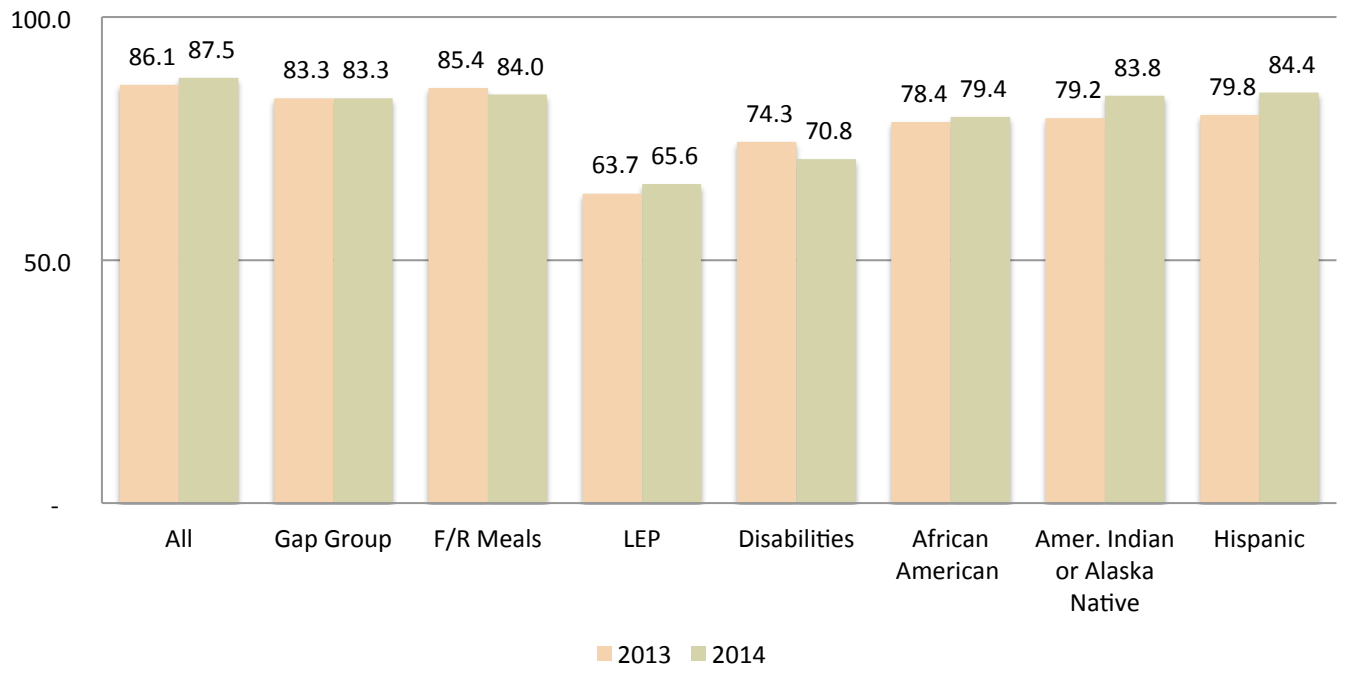
HOW ARE GRADUATION RATES CALCULATED?

Kentucky uses a cohort rate. That means each cohort of students is tracked starting when they enter grade 9. The Infinite Campus software used to track student information allows Kentucky to keep track of students even if they transfer to other Kentucky public schools. The cohort rate can be calculated based on four years, five years, or longer, depending on whether the goal is to report on-time graduations, students who take an extra year to earn their diplomas, or students who take even longer to earn that credential.

Up until 2012, Kentucky used an average freshman graduation rate, calculated by dividing the number of graduates in a particular year by the average of the number of ninth graders four years earlier and the number of tenth graders three years earlier. That averaging step was used as a way to estimate the number of students who were in grade 9 for the first time and double-counting students who repeat that grade—and the estimate was needed because there were technical problems tracking those students individually. As noted above, the Infinite Campus program has allowed Kentucky to solve those problems and move to the more accurate cohort rate in 2013.

In a nutshell, the cohort rate is more accurate, and Kentucky switched to that method as soon as the state data system student tracking software allowed that shift.

Statewide Graduation Rate (Four-Year Cohort Rate)



HOW ARE GRADUATION RATES USED?

All Kentucky high schools are expected to move their graduation rates up to 98% by 2022, making a step up each year until then. Those goals were reset in 2013 to start with the new, more accurate, cohort rate results. Each school's targets can be seen on its school report card, available at education.ky.gov.

The graduation rate is also used to calculate a school's score for Next Generation Learners, which in turn is used for important state accountability decisions.

Finally, Kentucky reports on graduation progress to the federal government.

ARE STUDENTS WHO RECEIVE ALTERNATIVE DIPLOMAS INCLUDED IN THE GRADUATION RATE?

No. If an exceptional student's disability is so severe that the student cannot complete the regular high school graduation requirements, that student is offered an alternative course of study and (starting with the class of 2013) that student can earn an alternative diploma by completing that work. Under rules set by the federal government, the alternative diploma cannot be included in the graduation rate.

ARE STUDENTS WHO CHOOSE EARLY GRADUATION INCLUDED IN THE GRADUATION RATE?

Students can qualify for early graduation by scoring proficient on their high school end of course exams and meeting the college readiness exam benchmarks as set by the Council on Postsecondary Education for placement in credit-bearing courses without the need for remediation. Those students receive standard diplomas and are counted in the state graduation rate for their assigned cohort year. The early graduation option was introduced in 2014-15.

This and other Kentucky EdGuides are available at www.prichardcommittee.org as tools for engaging students, parents, teachers, and other Kentucky public education stakeholders. © 2015 by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence