1.1.a High School Graduation Rates

Increase the proportion of students who graduate from Nebraska high schools.

One strategic approach to increasing the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska is to increase the proportion of students who graduate from the state's high schools. In other words, increase Nebraska's high school graduation rate and, in the process, increase the pool of high school students who could potentially attend college.

Past and Present Trends in the Number of Nebraska High School Graduates

- As shown in Figure 1.1.a.1, 24,699 students graduated from Nebraska high schools in 2020-2021, an increase of 9.1% (2,062 students) since 2010-2011.

- The number of students who graduated from Nebraska high schools increased 2.0% (474 students) between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

- Between 2010-2011 and 2020-2021, the number of public high school graduates increased 7.2% to 21,771, while the number graduating from nonpublic (private) high schools increased 29.5% to 2,856.

- Notably, between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, the number of public high school graduates increased 1.2% (265 students) while the number of nonpublic high school graduates increased 11.2% (287 students).

Figure 1.1.a.1
Numbers of Nebraska Public and Nonpublic High School Graduates
2010-2011 through 2020-2021

As shown in Table 1.1.a.1, since 2010-2011, about 9 out of 10 Nebraska high school graduates have received their diplomas from public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2019-2020</th>
<th>2020-2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Graduates</td>
<td>% of Graduates</td>
<td>No. of Graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>20,313</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
<td>21,506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonpublic</td>
<td>2,205</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>2,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>22,518</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>24,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESU &amp; SO</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Total</td>
<td>22,637</td>
<td></td>
<td>24,225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Graduates do not include GED recipients or completers who did not receive regular diplomas. ESU = Educational service units; SO = State-operated schools. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, February 2012 (2010-11 data), December 2020 (2019-20 data), and December 2021 (2020-21 data).

Projected Trends in the Number of Nebraska High School Graduates

- As shown in Figure 1.1.a.2, 26,130 students are forecast to graduate from Nebraska public and nonpublic high schools in 2030-2031. In addition, an estimated 100 students are projected to graduate from educational service units and state-operated schools, resulting in a total projected increase of 6.2% (1,531 students) over the next decade.
- Public schools are projected to account for 88% to 90% of Nebraska’s high school graduates through the 2030-2031 school year.
- The numbers of graduates from Nebraska’s public high schools are projected to increase 5.0% between 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 and then increase 1.9% from 2021-2022 to 2030-2031.
- The numbers of graduates from the state’s nonpublic (private) high schools are projected to increase 7.8% from 2020-2021 to 2021-2022 and then decrease 8.4% from 2021-2022 to 2030-2031.
- The latest projections of high school graduates were released during the COVID-19 pandemic and do not account for the impact of the pandemic on enrollments and graduations.

3 Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 2020*. See Table A2.2 in Appendix 2 for supporting data. For 2020-2021, the actual number of public school graduates (21,771) was 2.4% lower than WICHE predicted in their 2021 report (22,300).
Figure 1.1.a.2
Projected Numbers of Graduates from Nebraska Public and Nonpublic High Schools 2021-2022 through 2030-2031

Note. Projections above do not include graduates of educational service units or state-operated schools. An estimated 100 students per year are projected to graduate from these schools. Graduates do not include GED recipients or completers who did not receive regular diplomas. See Table A2.2 in Appendix 2 for supporting data. Data source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 2020.

Projected and Recent Changes in Nebraska Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

- As illustrated in Figure 1.1.a.3, White non-Hispanic students and Native American students are projected to account for lower percentages of the state’s public high school graduates in 2030-2031 than they did in 2010-2011.

- Actual changes in the racial/ethnic distribution of Nebraska’s public high school graduates over the decade have generally been in the direction of the projected trend. Between 2010-2011 and 2020-2021, the number of public high school graduates in each of the major racial/ethnic groups changed as follows:
  - White non-Hispanics decreased 4.7% (from 15,779 to 15,036 graduates)
  - Asian/Pacific Islanders increased 65.5% (from 380 to 629 graduates)
  - Hispanics increased 66.3% (from 2,351 to 3,909 graduates)
  - Native Americans increased 7.6% (from 237 to 255 graduates)
  - Black non-Hispanics increased 16.6% (from 1,074 to 1,252 graduates)
  - Two or more races increased 40.2% (from 492 to 690 graduates)
Figure 1.1.a.3
By Race/Ethnicity: Actual and Projected Percentages of Nebraska Public High School Graduates

Actual Percentages of Graduates: 2010-2011
- White non-Hispanic: 77.7%
- Hispanic: 11.6%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 1.9%
- Native American: 1.2%
- Black non-Hispanic: 5.3%
- Two or More Races: 2.4%

Actual Percentages of Graduates: 2020-2021
- White non-Hispanic: 69.1%
- Hispanic: 18.0%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 2.9%
- Native American: 1.2%
- Black non-Hispanic: 5.8%
- Two or More Races: 3.2%

Projected Percentages of Graduates: 2030-2031
- White non-Hispanic: 63.8%
- Hispanic: 20.1%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 4.4%
- Native American: 0.9%
- Black non-Hispanic: 6.0%
- Two or More Races: 4.8%

Note. Graduates do not include GED recipients or completers who did not receive regular diplomas. Actual counts and projections do not include graduates of educational service units or state-operated schools. See Table A2.3 in Appendix 2 for supporting data. Data sources: Nebraska Department of Education, February 2012 and February 2022 (actual number of graduates). Projection data obtained from Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 2020.
Nebraska Public High School Graduation Rates

The Coordinating Commission monitors Nebraska high school graduation rates to determine if the proportion of Nebraska’s high school students who graduate from high school is increasing, thereby potentially increasing the pool of students who are prepared to go on to college.

• Prior to the 2010-2011 school year, the Nebraska Department of Education used the four-year high school graduation rate to measure the proportion of high school students who receive regular diplomas.

• With the 2010-2011 school year, the Nebraska Department of Education began using the cohort four-year graduation rate to measure the proportion of Nebraska’s public high school students who earn regular diplomas. The cohort four-year graduation rate is calculated using an entirely different methodology than the four-year graduation rate; therefore, it is not comparable to the four-year graduation rates for previous school years. Consequently, the 2011 cohort four-year graduation rate established a new baseline for future comparisons.4

• See Explanatory Note A3.1 in Appendix 3 for information on how the cohort four-year graduation rates are calculated and see Table A3.1 in Appendix 3 for supporting data.

Cohort Four-Year High School Graduation Rates (2010-2011 through 2020-2021)

• Currently, data are not available to calculate a cohort four-year graduation rate for the nonpublic (private) high schools in Nebraska. Consequently, a statewide cohort four-year graduation rate for all public and nonpublic schools in Nebraska is not available.

• As shown in Figure 1.1.a.4, the cohort four-year graduation rate for Nebraska’s public schools was 86.1% in 2011 (2010-2011) and 87.6% in 2021 (2020-2021), or 1.5 percentage point higher than the cohort rate for 2011. Since 2020, the cohort graduation rate increased 0.1 point.

4 With the adoption of the cohort four-year graduation rate, the Nebraska Department of Education is no longer using its previous methodology for calculating graduation rates.
Figure 1.1.a.4
Nebraska Public High School Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates
2010-2011 through 2020-2021

Note. See Table A3.1 in Appendix 3 for additional data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, February 2022.

Public High School Graduation Rates by State

National public high school graduation data for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 cohorts have not yet been released by the National Center for Education Statistics. The latest available data are for the 2018-2019 cohort. Figure 1.1.a.5 shows the state-to-state comparisons of the cohort four-year graduation rates calculated for the 2018-2019 cohort.

• As shown in Figure 1.1.a.5, Nebraska’s 2018-2019 cohort four-year graduation rate was the 13th highest among the rates reported by 50 states and the District of Columbia.
Figure 1.1.a.5
By State: 2018-2019 Public High School
Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates

Nebraska Public High School Graduation Rates by Gender

An analysis of the high school graduation rate data obtained from the Nebraska Department of Education reveals that females continue to have higher graduation rates than males who attend Nebraska’s public high schools, regardless of the methodology used to calculate them.

- As evidenced in Figure 1.1.a.6, the cohort four-year graduation rates for females were higher than the rates for males from 2010-2011 to 2020-2021. While both rates increased during this time, the gap between males and females was 5.6 percentage points in 2010-2011 and in 2020-2021.

- The cohort graduation rate for females in 2020-2021 was 90.5%, 1.5 percentage points higher than the rate for 2010-2011. The cohort graduation rate for males in 2020-2021 was 84.9%, 1.5 percentage point higher than the rate for 2010-2011.

Figure 1.1.a.6
By Gender: Nebraska Public High School Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates 2010-2011 through 2020-2021

Note. See Table A3.1 in Appendix 3 for additional data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, February 2022.
Nebraska Public High School Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

As illustrated in Figure 1.1.a.7, high school graduation rates vary considerably by race/ethnicity.

- Between 2010-2011 and 2020-2021, the cohort four-year graduation rate decreased 7.2 percentage points for multiracial individuals. During this time, cohort four-year graduation rates increased for all other racial/ethnic groups, ranging from a 1.6 percentage point change for White non-Hispanics to an 11.4 percentage point increase for Native Americans.

- Since 2019-2020, cohort four-year graduation rates fell 0.4 percentage point for White non-Hispanics, 0.1 percentage point for Black non-Hispanics, and 1.4 percentage point for multiracial individuals.

Note. Cohort graduation rates are not shown for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. Note. See Table A3.1 in Appendix 3 for additional data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, February 2022.
District-Level Analysis of Graduation Rates

The distribution of the 2020-2021 cohort four-year graduation rates for Nebraska’s 249 public school districts is shown in Table 1.1.a.2.

- 50 (20.1%) of Nebraska’s public school districts had cohort four-year graduation rates of 100%, and 194 districts (77.9%) had graduation rates equal to or higher than the statewide rate in 2020-2021.

- 55 (22.1%) districts had graduation rates that were lower than the statewide rate for public schools in 2020-2021, and nine districts had rates of less than 75.0%.

- The three districts with the largest number of cohort graduates were Omaha Public Schools with a graduation rate of 74.2% (2,762 graduates), Lincoln Public Schools with a graduation rate of 80.5% (2,527 graduates), and Millard Public Schools with a graduation rate of 89.9% (1,606 graduates).

### Table 1.1.a.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort Four-Year High School Graduation Rate</th>
<th>No. of School Districts</th>
<th>% of School Districts</th>
<th>Cumulative % of School Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97.00% - 99.99%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94.00% - 96.99%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91.00% - 93.99%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.56% - 90.99%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>87.56% Nebraska Public High School Rate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.00% - 87.55%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>86.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.00% - 84.99%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 75.00%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Public Districts</td>
<td>249</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, February 2022.
Nebraska Public High School Cohort Extended Graduation Rates

Figure 1.1.a.8 shows extended five- and six-year graduation rates for the 2018-2019 cohort (Part A) and extended five-year graduation rates for the 2019-2020 cohort (Part B).

- As evidenced in Part A of Figure 1.1.a.8, the 2018-2019 cohort six-year graduation rate for Nebraska’s public school was 91%, three percentage points higher than the cohort four-year graduation rate.

- As shown in Part B of Figure 1.1.a.8, the overall five-year graduation rate for the 2019-2020 cohort was 90%, two percentage points higher than the cohort four-year graduation rate.

Extended Graduation Rates by Gender

Extending cohort graduation rates to five and six years often narrows the gap between graduation rates for males and females. In other words, males are more likely than females to take five or six years to graduate from high school.

- For the 2018-2019 cohort, the four-year graduation rate was 85% for males and 92% for females, a gap of seven percentage points. Extending the graduation rate out to six years reveals the gap remained at five percentage points (89% for males and 95% for females).

- For the 2019-2020 cohort, the five-year graduation rate was 93% for females (up from 91% for four years) and 87% for males (up from 84% for four years).

Extended Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

Extending cohort graduation rates to five and six years narrows the gaps between graduation rates for various racial/ethnic groups.

- The 2018-2019 cohort graduation rates for Native Americans increased eight percentage points when extended from four to six years, while the cohort graduation rate for White non-Hispanics increased two percentage points when extended from four to six years.

- For the 2019-2020 cohort, the graduation rates for Native Americans and Black non-Hispanics increased five percentage points when extended from four to five years, while the cohort graduation rate for White non-Hispanics and multiracial individuals increased two percentage points.
Figure 1.1.a.8
By Gender and By Race/Ethnicity: Nebraska Public High School Cohort Extended Graduation Rates for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020

Part A: 2018-2019 Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NE Public Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>White non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>Black non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-Year Graduation Rate</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Year Gain</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Year Gain</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Year Graduation Rate</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part B: 2019-2020 Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NE Public Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>White non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>Black non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-Year Graduation Rate</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Year Gain</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-Year Graduation Rate</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Graduates do not include GED recipients or completers who did not receive regular diplomas. Cohort graduation rates are not shown for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. See Table A3.1 in Appendix 3 for supporting data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, 2020-2021 Data Downloads, Cohort Graduation Data.