

**1.1.a High School Graduation Rates**

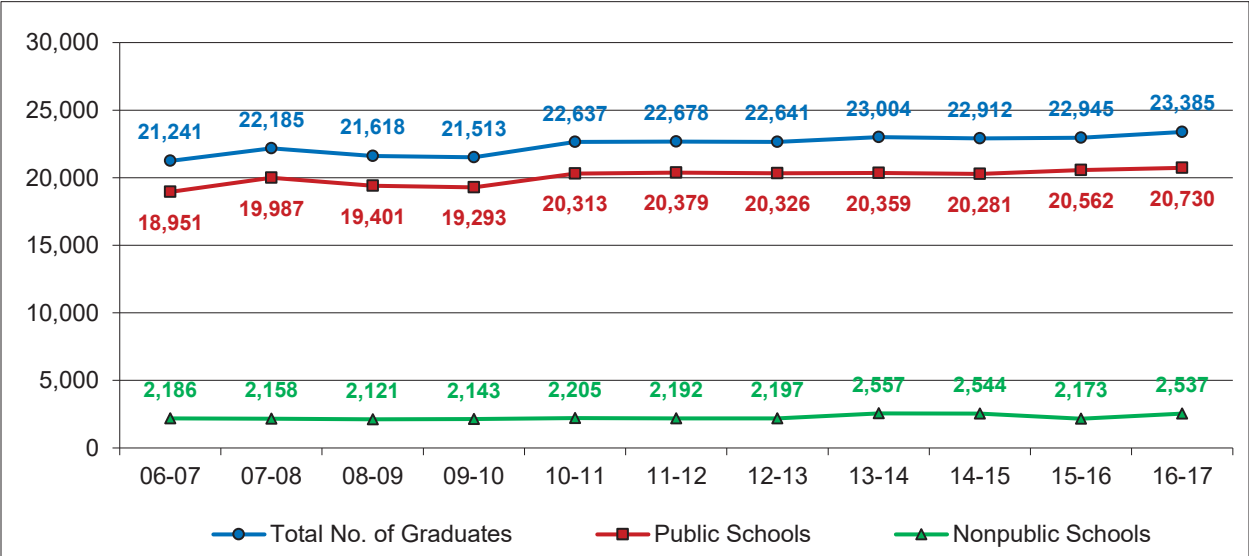
**Increase the proportion of students who graduate from Nebraska high schools.**

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, 23,385 students graduated from Nebraska high schools in 2016-2017, an increase of 10.1% (2,144 students) since 2006-2007.
- The number of students who graduated from Nebraska high schools increased 4.4% from 2006-2007 to 2007-2008, and there was a one-year increase of 5.2% in 2010-2011. Otherwise, the total number of graduates has increased or decreased only slightly between 2006-2007 and 2016-2017.
- Between 2006-2007 and 2016-2017, the number of public high school graduates increased 9.4% to 20,730, while the number graduating from nonpublic (private) high schools increased 16.1% to 2,537.
- Notably, between 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, the number of public high school graduates increased 0.8% (168 students) while the number of nonpublic high school graduates increased 16.8% (364 students).

**Figure 1.1.a.1  
Numbers of Nebraska Public and Nonpublic High School Graduates  
2006-2007 through 2016-2017**



*Note.* Graduates do not include GED recipients or completers who did not receive regular diplomas. The total number of graduates includes graduates of public schools, nonpublic (private) schools, educational service units, and state-operated schools. See Table A2.1 in Appendix 2 for supporting data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2009 (2006-07 data), February 2010 (2007-08 data), February 2011 (2008-09 and 2009-10 data), February 2012 (2010-11 data), December 2012 (2011-12 data), January 2014 (2012-13 data), January 2015 (2013-14 data), January 2016 (2014-15 data), December 2016 (2015-16 data), and December 2017 (2016-17 data).

- As shown in [Table 1.1.a.1](#), since 2006-2007, about 9 out of 10 Nebraska high school graduates have received their diplomas from public schools.

Type of School	2006-2007		2015-2016		2016-2017	
	No. of Graduates	% of Graduates	No. of Graduates	% of Graduates	No. of Graduates	% of Graduates
Public	18,951	89.7%	20,562	90.4%	20,730	89.1%
Nonpublic	2,186	10.3%	2,173	9.6%	2,537	10.9%
Subtotal	21,137	100.0%	22,735	100.0%	23,267	100.0%
ESU & SO	104		210		118	
State Total	21,241		22,945		23,385	

*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, January 2009 (2006-07 data), December 2016 (2015-16 data), and December 2017 (2016-17 data).

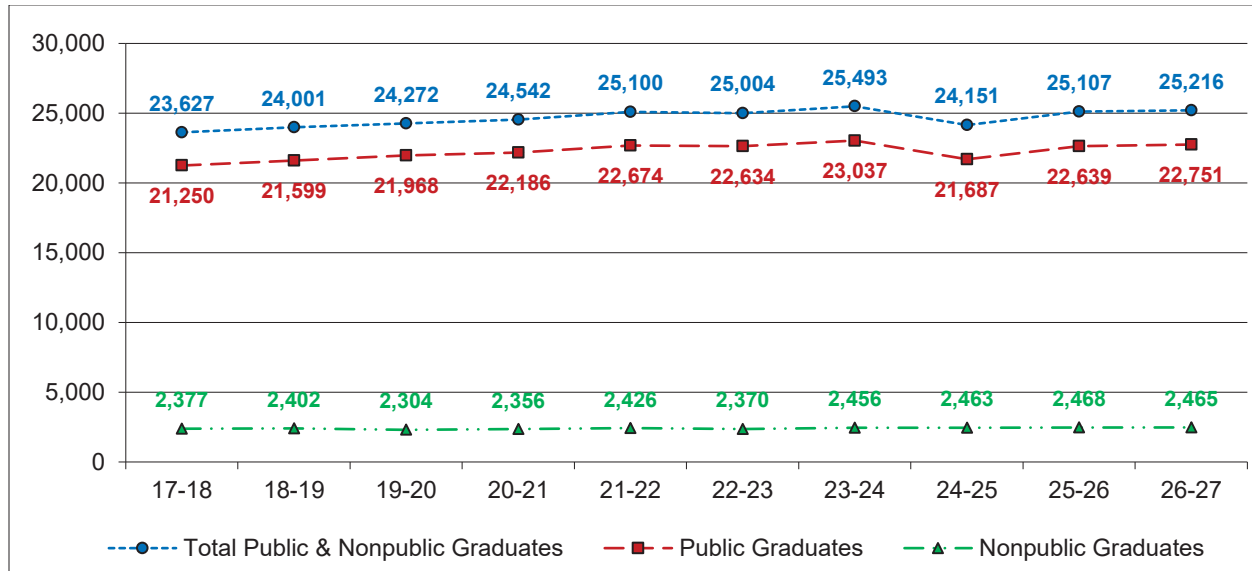
### **Projected Trends in the Number of Nebraska High School Graduates<sup>3</sup>**

- As shown in [Figure 1.1.a.2](#), 25,216 students are forecast to graduate from Nebraska public and nonpublic high schools in 2026-2027. 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 8.3% (1,931 students) since 2016-2017.
- Public schools are projected to account for 90% to 91% of Nebraska's high school graduates through the 2026-2027 school year.
- The numbers of graduates from Nebraska's public high schools are projected to increase 2.5% between 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 and then increase 7.1% from 2017-2018 to 2026-2027.
- The numbers of graduates from the state's nonpublic (private) high schools are projected to decrease 6.3% from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 and then increase 3.7% from 2017-2018 to 2026-2027.

<sup>3</sup> Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 2016*. See [Table A2.2](#) in [Appendix 2](#) for supporting data. For 2016-2017, the actual number of public school graduates (20,730) was 2.6% higher than WICHE predicted in their 2016 report (20,209).

Figure 1.1.a.2

**Projected Numbers of Graduates from Nebraska Public and Nonpublic High Schools  
2017-2018 through 2026-2027**



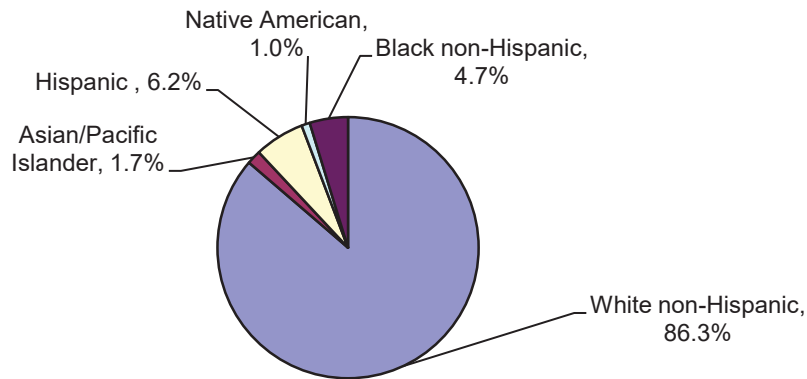
*Note.* Projections do not include graduates of educational service units or state-operated schools. Graduates do not include GED recipients or completers who did not receive regular diplomas. See [Table A2.2](#) in [Appendix 2](#) for supporting data. Data source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 2016*.

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

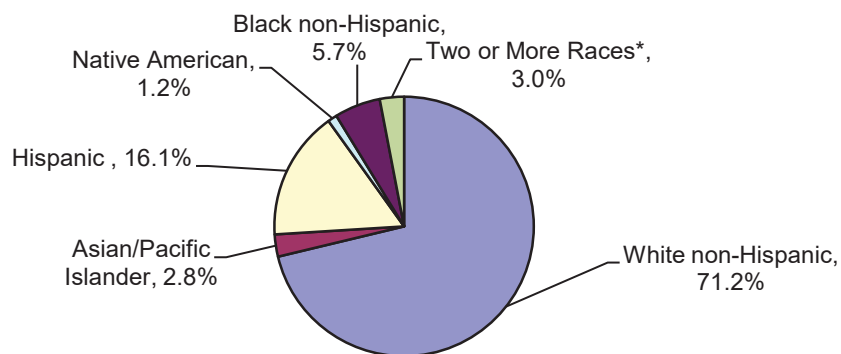
- As illustrated in [Figure 1.1.a.3](#), minority students, especially Hispanics, are projected to account for much higher percentages of the state’s public high school graduates in 2026-2027 than they did in 2006-2007.
- Actual changes in the racial/ethnic distribution of Nebraska’s public high school graduates over the decade have been in the direction of the projected trend. Between 2006-2007 and 2016-2017, the number of public high school graduates in each of the major racial/ethnic groups changed as follows:
  - White non-Hispanics decreased 9.7% (from 16,354 to 14,770 graduates)
  - Asian/Pacific Islanders increased 73.6% (from 330 to 573 graduates)
  - Hispanics increased 184.5% (from 1,172 to 3,334 graduates)
  - Native Americans increased 9.9% (from 196 to 240 graduates)
  - Black non-Hispanics increased 32.0% (from 899 to 1,187 graduates)
  - Since 2010-2011, graduates also have been classified in the category of “two or more races.” In 2010-2011, there were 492 public high school graduates in this category. By 2016-2017, the number had increased 27.2% to 626 graduates.

**Figure 1.1.a.3**  
**By Race/Ethnicity: Actual and Projected**  
**Percentages of Nebraska Public High School Graduates**

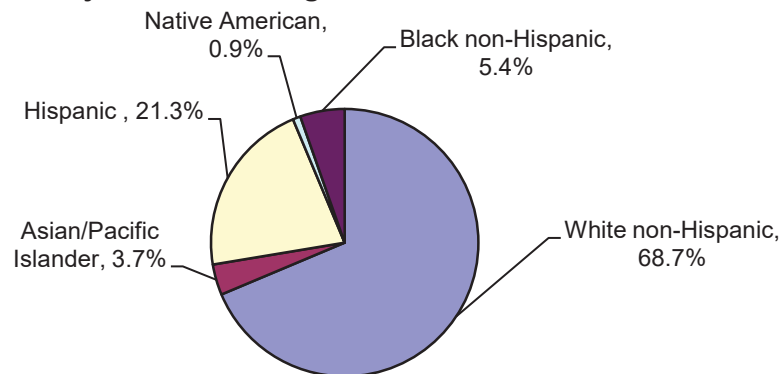
**Actual Percentages of Graduates: 2006-2007**



**Actual Percentages of Graduates: 2016-2017**



**Projected Percentages of Graduates: 2026-2027**



*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. \*Two or more races' was not a racial/ethnic category until 2010-11. For projections, multiracial graduates are proportionally distributed to the four race categories (American Indian/Alaska Native (i.e., Native American), Asian/Pacific Islander, black non-Hispanic, and white non-Hispanic). See [Table A2.3](#) in [Appendix 2](#) for supporting data. Data sources: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2009, and December 2017 (actual number of graduates). Projection data obtained from Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 2016*.

## **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.**<sup>4</sup>
- 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 2016-2017)*

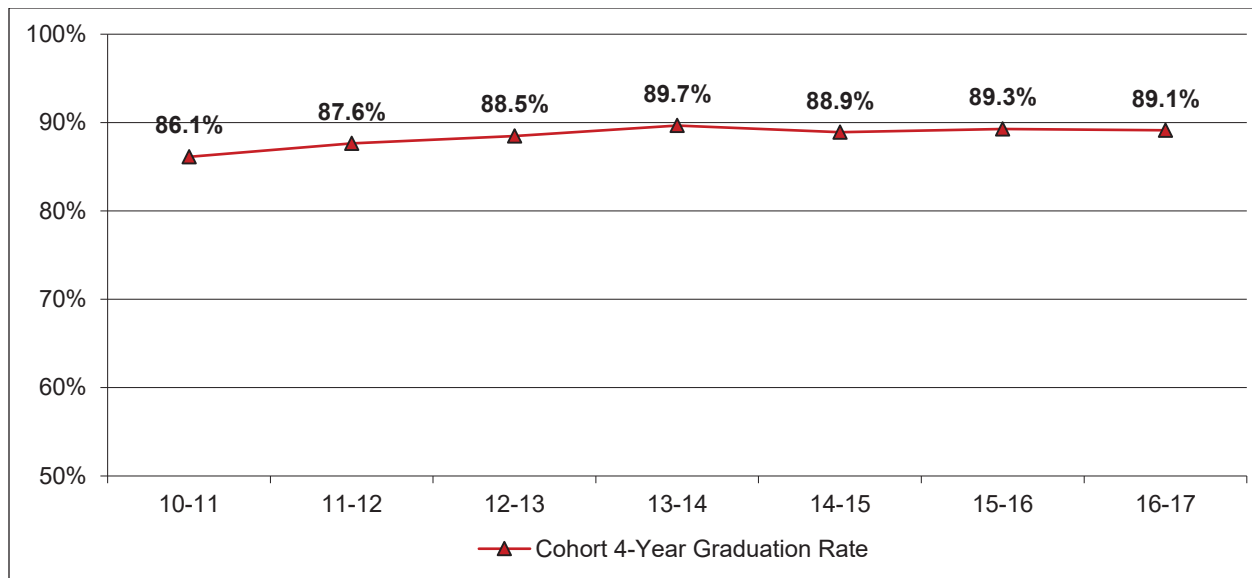
- Currently, data are not available to calculate a cohort four-year graduation rate for the nonpublic (private) high schools in Nebraska. Consequently, a statewide cohort four-year graduation rate for all public and nonpublic schools in Nebraska is not available.
- As shown in Figure 1.1.a.4, the **cohort four-year graduation rate for Nebraska's public schools was 86.1% in 2011 (2010-2011) and 89.1% in 2017 (2016-2017)**, or three percentage points higher than the cohort rate for 2011.

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<sup>4</sup> 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 2016-2017**



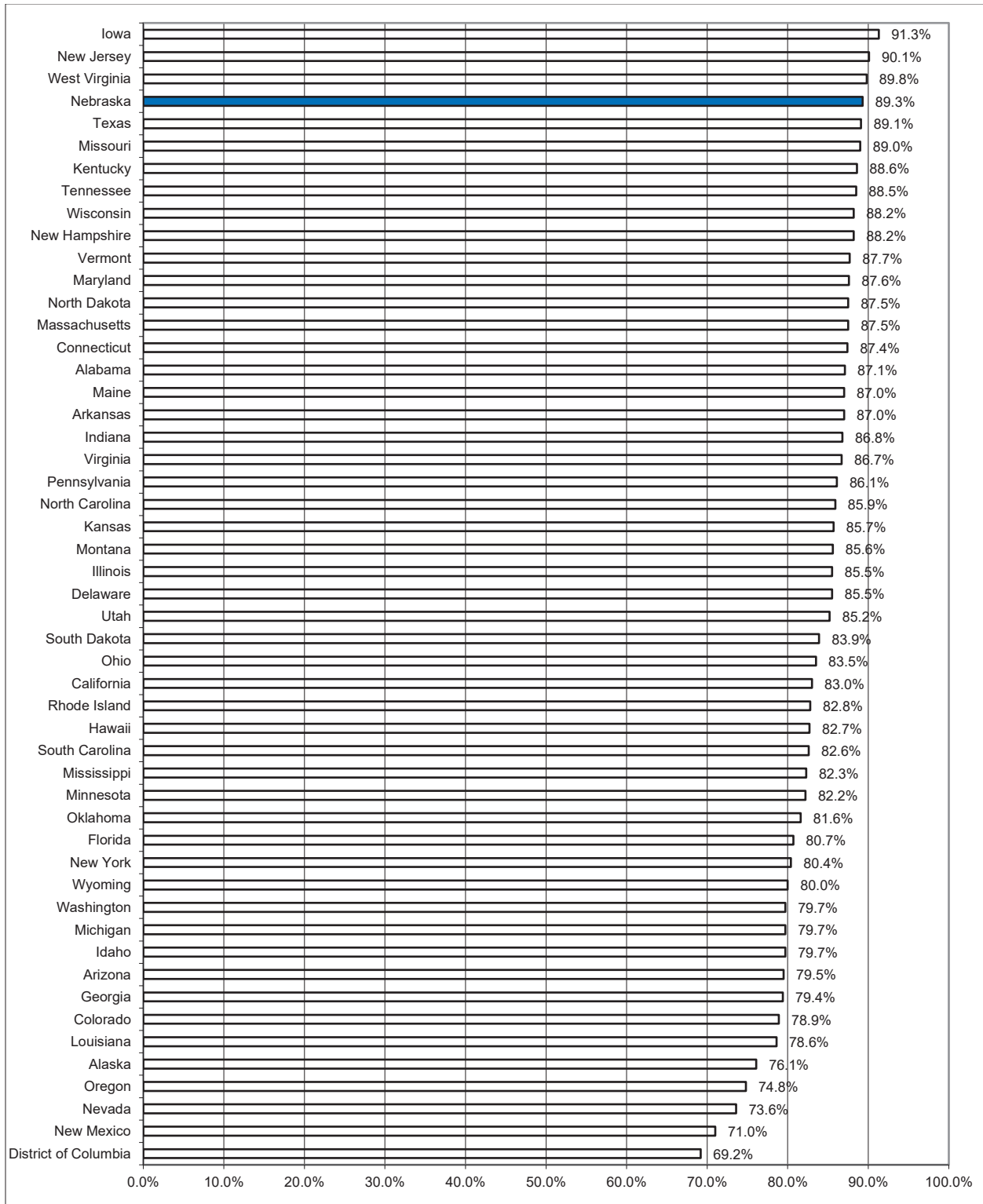
Note. See Table A3.1 in Appendix 3 for supporting data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, 2016-2017 Education Profile for State of Nebraska, Cohort Graduation Data.

**Public High School Graduation Rates by State**

Figure 1.1.a.5 shows the state-to-state comparisons of the cohort four-year graduation rates calculated for the 2015-2016 cohort.

- As shown in Figure 1.1.a.5, Nebraska's 2015-2016 cohort four-year graduation rate was the fourth highest among the rates reported by 50 states and the District of Columbia.

**Figure 1.1.a.5**  
**By State: 2015-2016 Public High School**  
**Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates**



Data source: U.S. Department of Education, ED<sup>o</sup> Facts Data Groups 695 and 696, School year 2015-16; October 25, 2017.

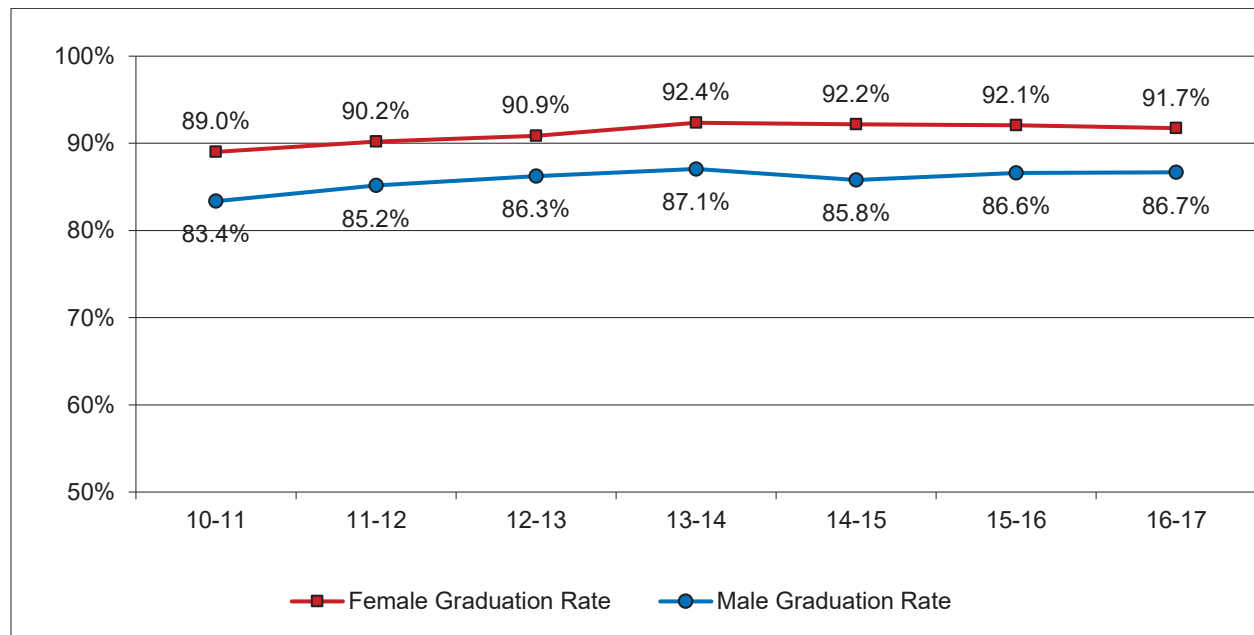
## Nebraska Public High School Graduation Rates by Gender

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 2016-2017. Both rates gradually increased during this time, and the gap between males and females decreased from 5.7 percentage points in 2010-2011 to 5.1 percentage points in 2016-2017.
- **The cohort graduation rate for females in 2016-2017 was 91.7%**, 2.7 percentage points higher than the rate for 2010-2011. **The cohort graduation rate for males in 2016-2017 was 86.7%**, 3.3 percentage points 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 2016-2017**



Note. See [Table A3.1](#) in [Appendix 3](#) for supporting data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, *2016-2017 Education Profile for State of Nebraska*, Cohort Graduation Data.



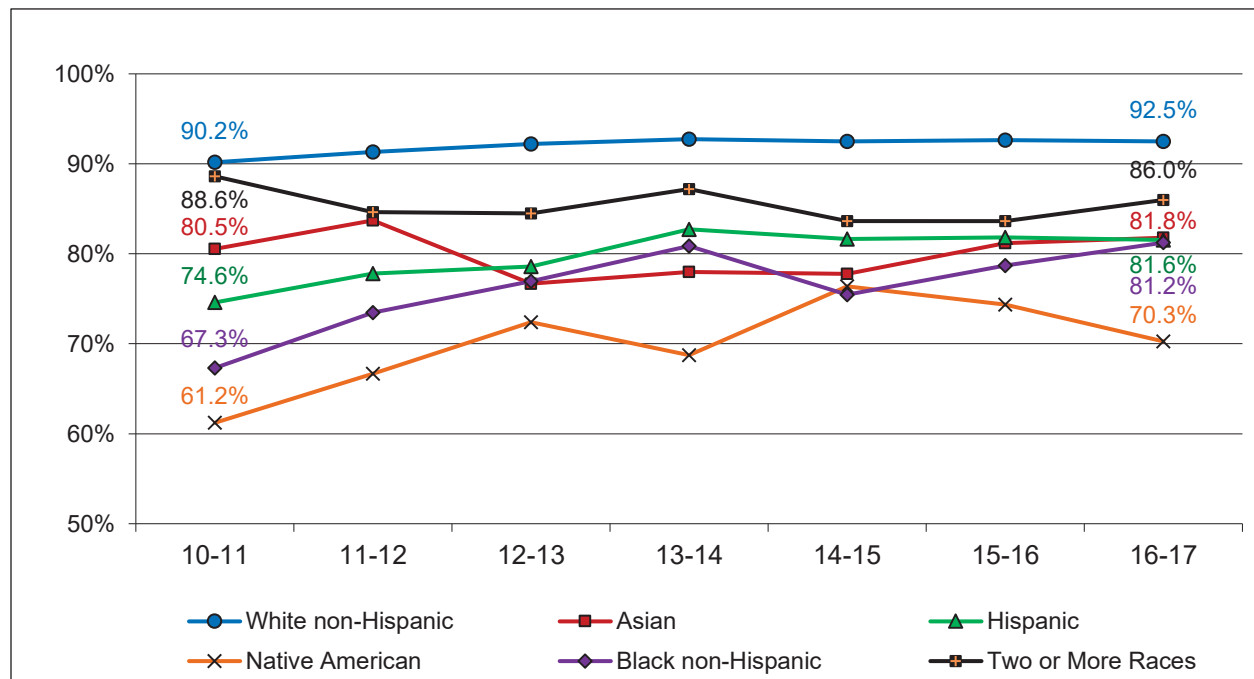
## Nebraska Public High School Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

As illustrated in [Figure 1.1.a.7](#), high school graduation rates vary considerably by race/ethnicity.

- Between 2010-2011 and 2016-2017, the cohort four-year graduation rate decreased 2.6 percentage points for multiracial individuals. During this same time, cohort four-year graduation rates increased for all other racial/ethnic groups, ranging from a 1.3 percentage point change for Asians to a 13.9 percentage point increase for black non-Hispanics.

Figure 1.1.a.7

### By Race/Ethnicity: Nebraska Public High School Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates 2010-2011 through 2016-2017



Note. 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, *2016-2017 Education Profile for State of Nebraska*, Cohort Graduation Data.

## **District-Level Analysis of Graduation Rates**

The Nebraska Department of Education provides the Commission with the distribution of the 2016-2017 cohort four-year graduation rates for Nebraska's 250 public school districts, as shown in Table 1.1.a.2.

- 84 (33.6%) of Nebraska's public school districts had cohort four-year graduation rates of 100%, and 207 districts (82.8%) had graduation rates equal to or higher than the statewide rate in 2016-2017.
- 43 (17.2%) of the districts had graduation rates that were lower than the statewide rate for public schools in 2016-2017, and eight 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 78.7% (2,711 graduates), Lincoln Public Schools with a graduation rate of 82.8% (2,189 graduates), and Millard Public Schools with a graduation rate of 93.4% (1,635 graduates).

<b>Table 1.1.a.2 Distribution of the Cohort Four-Year High School Graduation Rates for Nebraska Public High School Districts 2016-2017</b>			
Cohort Four-Year High School Graduation Rate	No. of School Districts	% of School Districts	Cumulative % of School Districts
100.00%	84	33.6%	33.6%
97.00% - 99.99%	14	5.6%	39.2%
94.00% - 96.99%	54	21.6%	60.8%
91.00% - 93.99%	41	16.4%	77.2%
89.11% - 90.99%	14	5.6%	82.8%
89.11% Nebraska Public High School Rate			
85.00% - 89.10%	20	8.0%	90.8%
75.00% - 84.99%	15	6.0%	96.8%
Less than 75.00%	8	3.2%	100.0%
All Public Districts	250		
Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, December 2017.			

## **Nebraska Public High School Cohort Extended Graduation Rates**

Figure 1.1.a.8 shows extended five- and six-year graduation rates for the 2014-2015 cohort (Part A) and extended five-year graduation rates for the 2015-2016 cohort (Part B).

- As evidenced in Part A of Figure 1.1.a.8, the 2014-2015 cohort **six-year** graduation rate for Nebraska's public school was 92%, 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 2015-2016 cohort was 91%, 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 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 2014-2015 cohort, the four-year graduation rate was 86% for males and 92% for females, a gap of six percentage points. However, extending the graduation rate out to six years reveals the gap narrowed to five percentage points (90% for males and 95% for females).
- For the 2015-2016 cohort, the five-year graduation rate was 94% for females (up from 92% for four years) and 89% for males (up from 87% for four years).

### *Extended Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity*

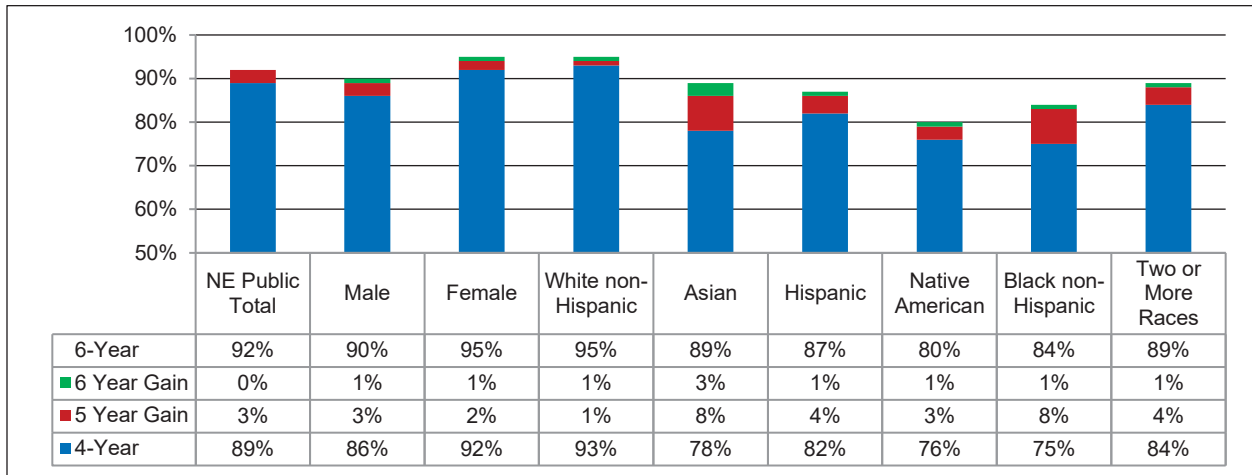
Extending cohort graduation rates to five and six years also narrows the gaps between graduation rates for various racial/ethnic groups.

- The 2014-2015 cohort graduation rate for Asians increased 11 percentage points when extended from four to six years, while the cohort graduation rate for black non-Hispanics increased nine percentage points when extended from four to six years.
- For the 2015-2016 cohort, the largest increases reported were for Hispanics, Native Americans, black non-Hispanics, and multiracial students (three percentage point increase for each of these racial/ethnic groups).

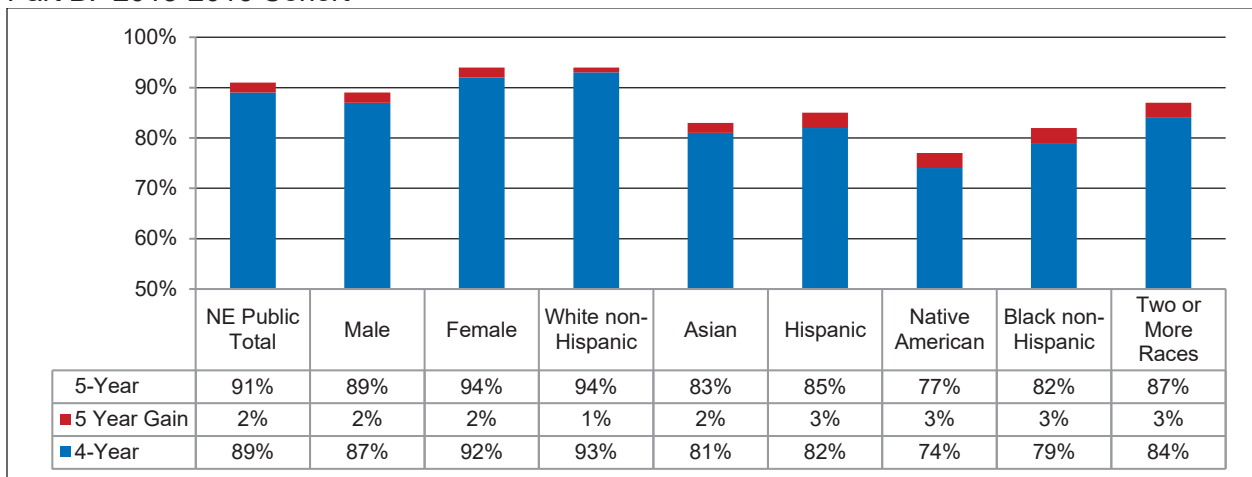
Figure 1.1.a.8

**By Gender and By Race/Ethnicity: Nebraska Public High School Cohort Extended Graduation Rates for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016**

Part A: 2014-2015 Cohort



Part B: 2015-2016 Cohort



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, 2016-2017 Education Profile for State of Nebraska, Cohort Graduation Data.