

1.1.a High School Graduation Rates

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

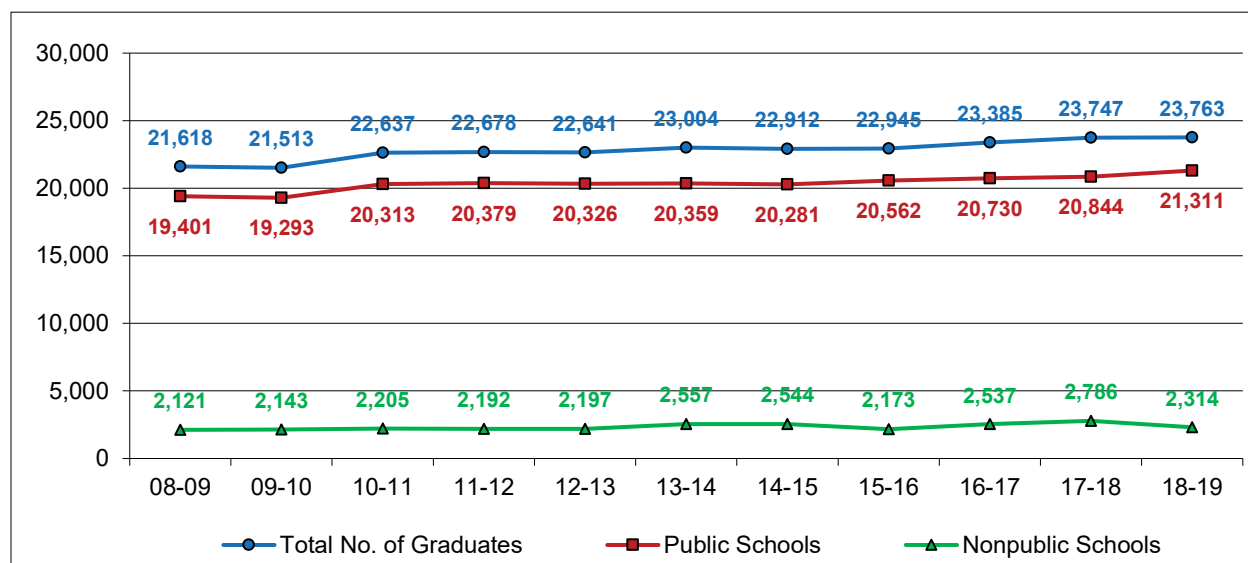
One strategic approach to increasing the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska is to increase the proportion of students who graduate from the state’s high schools. In other words, increase Nebraska’s high school graduation rate and, in the process, increase the pool of high 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](#), 23,763 students graduated from Nebraska high schools in 2018-2019, an increase of 9.9% (2,145 students) since 2008-2009.
- The number of students who graduated from Nebraska high schools increased 0.1% (16 students) between 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.
- Between 2008-2009 and 2018-2019, the number of public high school graduates increased 9.8% to 21,311, while the number graduating from nonpublic (private) high schools increased 9.1% to 2,314.
- Notably, between 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, the number of public high school graduates increased 2.2% (467 students) while the number of nonpublic high school graduates decreased 16.9% (472 students).

Figure 1.1.a.1

**Numbers of Nebraska Public and Nonpublic High School Graduates
2008-2009 through 2018-2019**



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, 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), December 2017 (2016-17 data), December 2018 (2017-18 data), and December 2019 (2018-19 data).

- As shown in [Table 1.1.a.1](#), since 2008-2009, about 9 out of 10 Nebraska high school graduates have received their diplomas from public schools.

Type of School	2008-2009		2017-2018		2018-2019	
	No. of Graduates	% of Graduates	No. of Graduates	% of Graduates	No. of Graduates	% of Graduates
Public	19,401	90.1%	20,844	88.2%	21,311	90.2%
Nonpublic	2,121	9.9%	2,786	11.8%	2,314	9.8%
Subtotal	21,522	100.0%	23,630	100.0%	23,625	100.0%
ESU & SO	96		117		138	
State Total	21,618		23,747		23,763	

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 2011 (2008-09 data), December 2018 (2017-18 data), and December 2019 (2018-19 data).

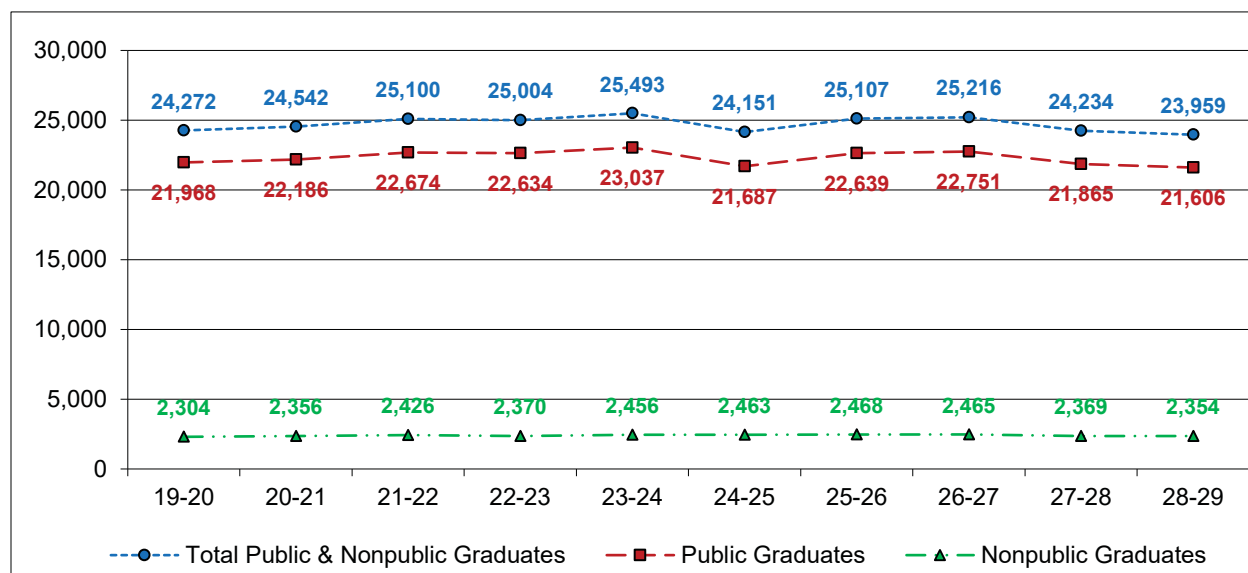
Projected Trends in the Number of Nebraska High School Graduates³

- As shown in [Figure 1.1.a.2](#), 23,959 students are forecast to graduate from Nebraska public and nonpublic high schools in 2028-2029. 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 1.2% (296 students) over the next decade.
- Public schools are projected to account for 90% to 91% of Nebraska’s high school graduates through the 2028-2029 school year.
- The numbers of graduates from Nebraska’s public high schools are projected to increase 3.1% between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 and then decrease 1.6% from 2019-2020 to 2028-2029.
- The numbers of graduates from the state’s nonpublic (private) high schools are projected to decrease 0.4% from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 and then increase 2.2% from 2019-2020 to 2028-2029.

³ 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 2018-2019, the actual number of public school graduates (21,311) was 1.3% lower than WICHE predicted in their 2016 report (21,599).

Figure 1.1.a.2

**Projected Numbers of Graduates from Nebraska Public and Nonpublic High Schools
2019-2020 through 2028-2029**

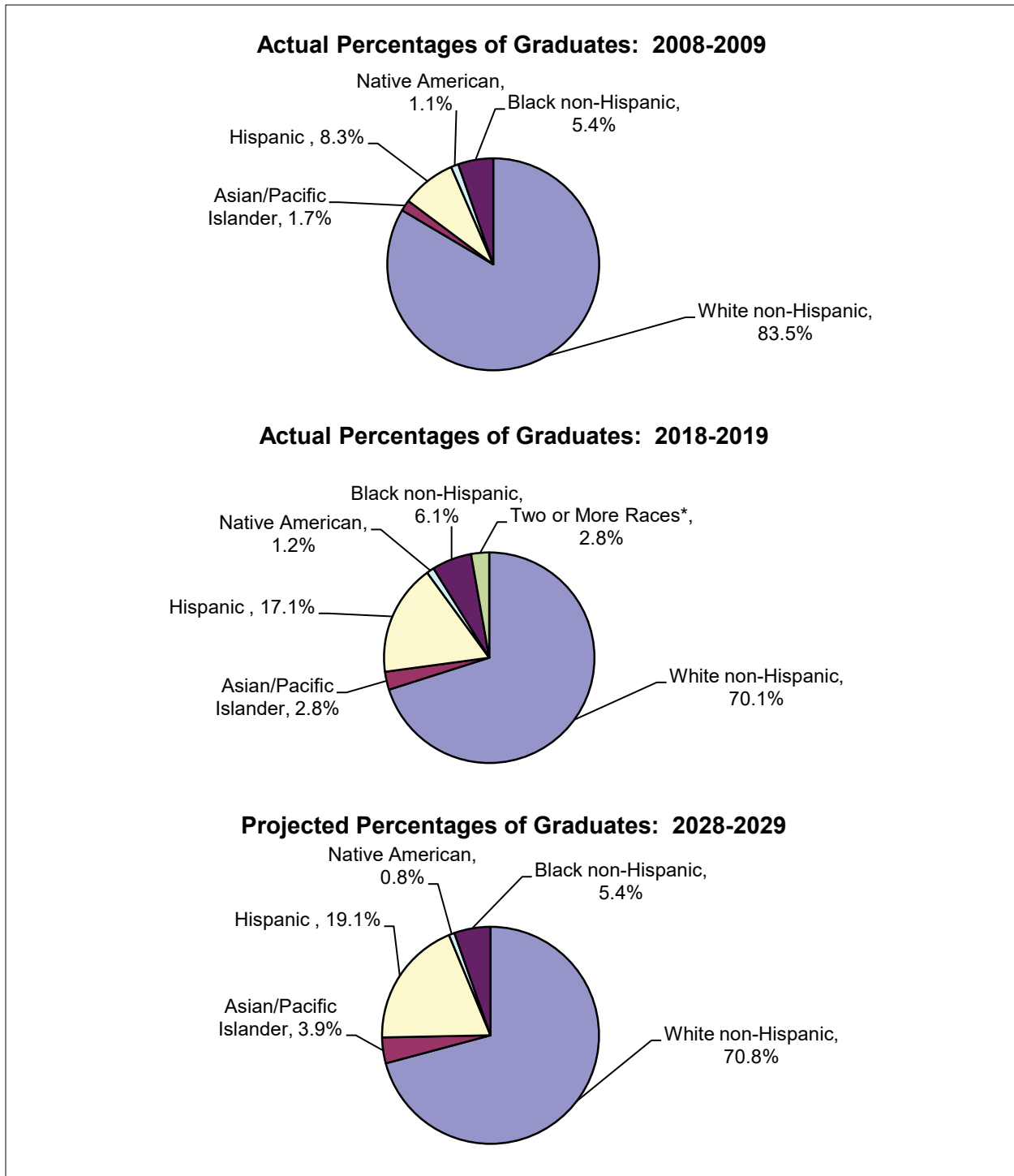


Note. Projections do not include graduates of educational service units or state-operated schools. Graduates do not include GED recipients or completers who did not receive regular diplomas. See [Table A2.2](#) in [Appendix 2](#) for supporting data. Data source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher 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](#), Asian/Pacific Islander students and Hispanic students are projected to account for higher percentages of the state’s public high school graduates in 2028-2029 than they did in 2008-2009.
- 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 2008-2009 and 2018-2019, the number of public high school graduates in each of the major racial/ethnic groups changed as follows:
 - White non-Hispanics decreased 7.8% (from 16,203 to 14,937 graduates)
 - Asian/Pacific Islanders increased 80.2% (from 328 to 591 graduates)
 - Hispanics increased 126.5% (from 1,609 to 3,644 graduates)
 - Native Americans increased 10.8% (from 222 to 246 graduates)
 - Black non-Hispanics increased 25.3% (from 1,039 to 1,302 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 2018-2019, the number had increased 20.1% to 591 graduates.

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



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, February 2011 and December 2019 (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.**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.

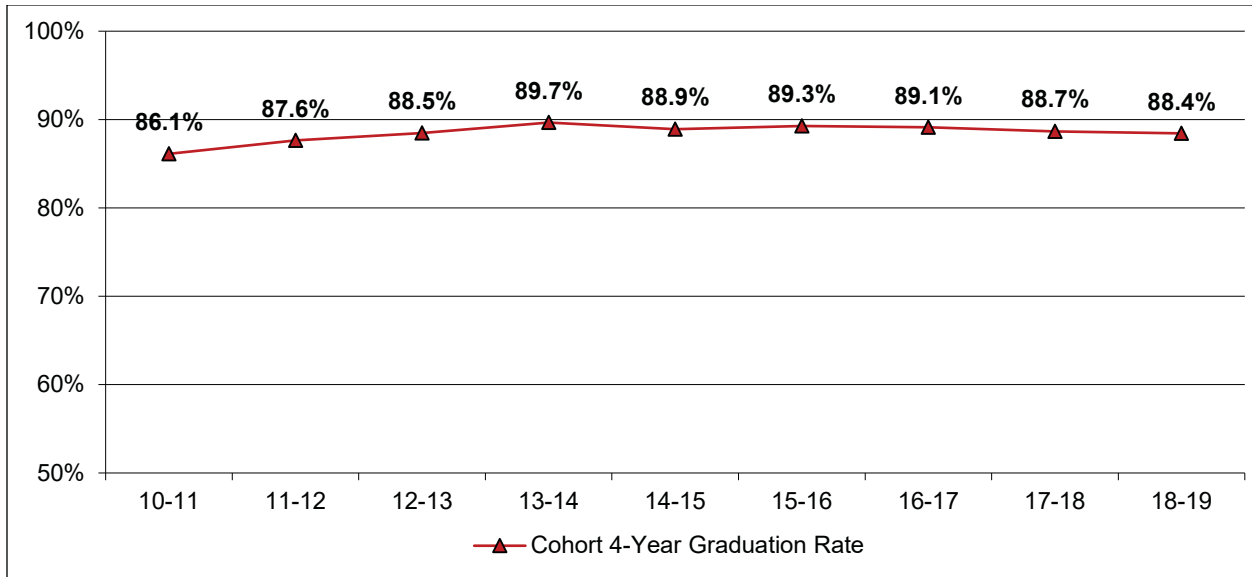
Cohort Four-Year High School Graduation Rates (2010-2011 through 2018-2019)

- 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 88.4% in 2015 (2018-2019)**, or 2.3 percentage points higher than the cohort rate for 2011.

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 2018-2019**



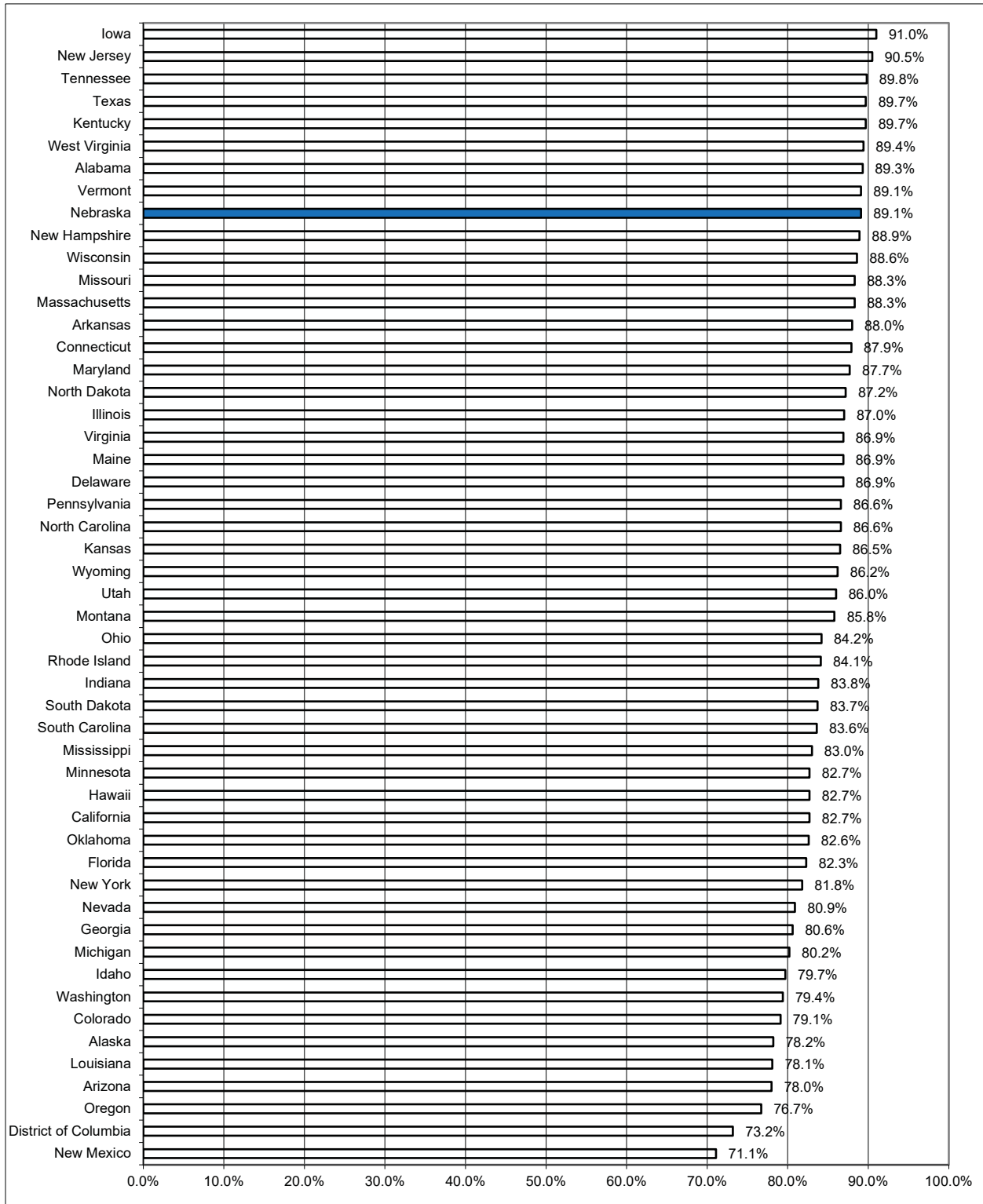
Note. See [Table A3.1](#) in [Appendix 3](#) for supporting data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, *2018-2019 Education Profile for State of Nebraska*, Cohort Graduation Data.

Public High School Graduation Rates by State

National public high school graduation data for the 2017-2018 cohort have not yet been released by the National Center for Education Statistics. The latest available data are for the 2016-2017 cohort and were previously reported in the *2019 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report*. [Figure 1.1.a.5](#) shows the state-to-state comparisons of the cohort four-year graduation rates calculated for the 2016-2017 cohort.

- As shown in [Figure 1.1.a.5](#), Nebraska’s 2016-2017 cohort four-year graduation rate was the ninth highest among the rates reported by 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Figure 1.1.a.5
By State: 2016-2017 Public High School
Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates



Data source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Common Core of Data*, school year 2016-17.

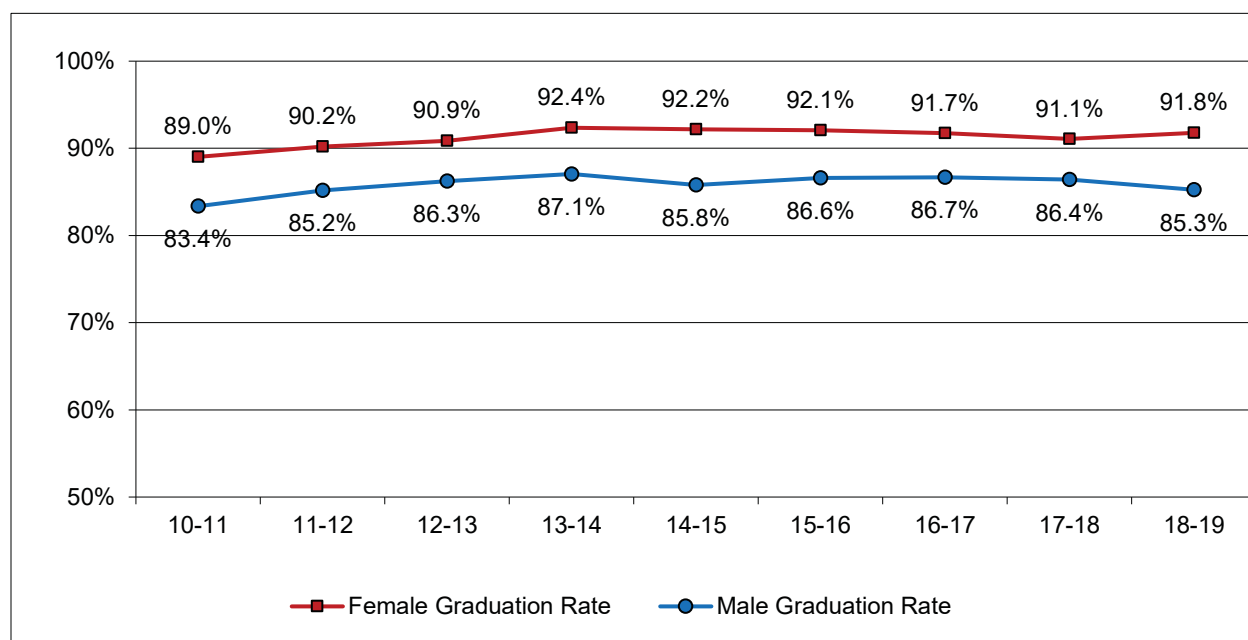
Nebraska Public High School Graduation Rates by Gender

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 2018-2019. While both rates increased during this time, the gap between males and females increased from 5.7 percentage points in 2010-2011 to 6.5 percentage points in 2018-2019.
- **The cohort graduation rate for females in 2018-2019 was 91.8%**, 2.8 percentage points higher than the rate for 2010-2011. **The cohort graduation rate for males in 2018-2019 was 85.3%**, 1.9 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 2018-2019**



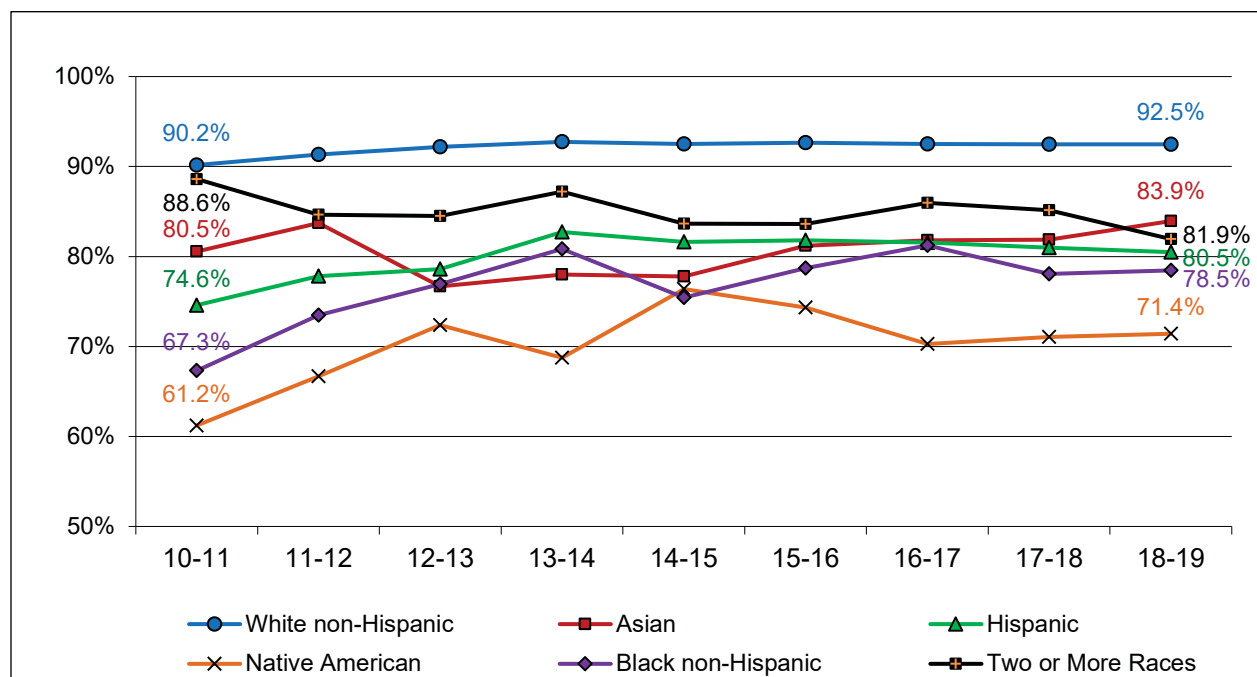
Note. See [Table A3.1](#) in [Appendix 3](#) for supporting data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, *2018-2019 Education Profile for State of Nebraska*, Cohort Graduation Data.

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 2018-2019, the cohort four-year graduation rate decreased 6.7 percentage points for multiracial individuals. During this same time, cohort four-year graduation rates increased for all other racial/ethnic groups, ranging from a 2.3 percentage point change for white non-Hispanics to an 11.2 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 2018-2019



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, *2018-2019 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 2018-2019 cohort four-year graduation rates for Nebraska's 249 public school districts, as shown in Table 1.1.a.2.

- 72 (28.9%) of Nebraska's public school districts had cohort four-year graduation rates of 100%, and 202 districts (81.1%) had graduation rates equal to or higher than the statewide rate in 2018-2019.
- 47 (18.9%) districts had graduation rates that were lower than the statewide rate for public schools in 2018-2019, 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 76.7% (2,733 graduates), Lincoln Public Schools with a graduation rate of 81.8% (2,373 graduates), and Millard Public Schools with a graduation rate of 92.8% (1,704 graduates).

Table 1.1.a.2 Distribution of the Cohort Four-Year High School Graduation Rates for Nebraska Public High School Districts 2018-2019			
Cohort Four-Year High School Graduation Rate	No. of School Districts	% of School Districts	Cumulative % of School Districts
100.00%	72	28.9%	28.9%
97.00% - 99.99%	18	7.2%	36.1%
94.00% - 96.99%	46	18.5%	54.6%
91.00% - 93.99%	44	17.7%	72.3%
88.42% - 90.99%	22	8.8%	81.1%
88.42% Nebraska Public High School Rate			
85.00% - 88.41%	28	11.2%	92.4%
75.00% - 84.99%	11	4.4%	96.8%
Less than 75.00%	8	3.2%	100.0%
All Public Districts	249		
Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, December 2019.			

Nebraska Public High School Cohort Extended Graduation Rates

Figure 1.1.a.8 shows extended five- and six-year graduation rates for the 2016-2017 cohort (Part A) and extended five-year graduation rates for the 2017-2018 cohort (Part B).

- As evidenced in Part A of Figure 1.1.a.8, the 2016-2017 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 2017-2018 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 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 2016-2017 cohort, the four-year graduation rate was 87% for males and 92% for females, a gap of five percentage points. However, extending the graduation rate out to six years reveals the gap narrowed to four percentage points (90% for males and 94% for females).
- For the 2017-2018 cohort, the five-year graduation rate was 93% for females (up from 91% for four years) and 89% for males (up from 87% for four years).

Extended Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

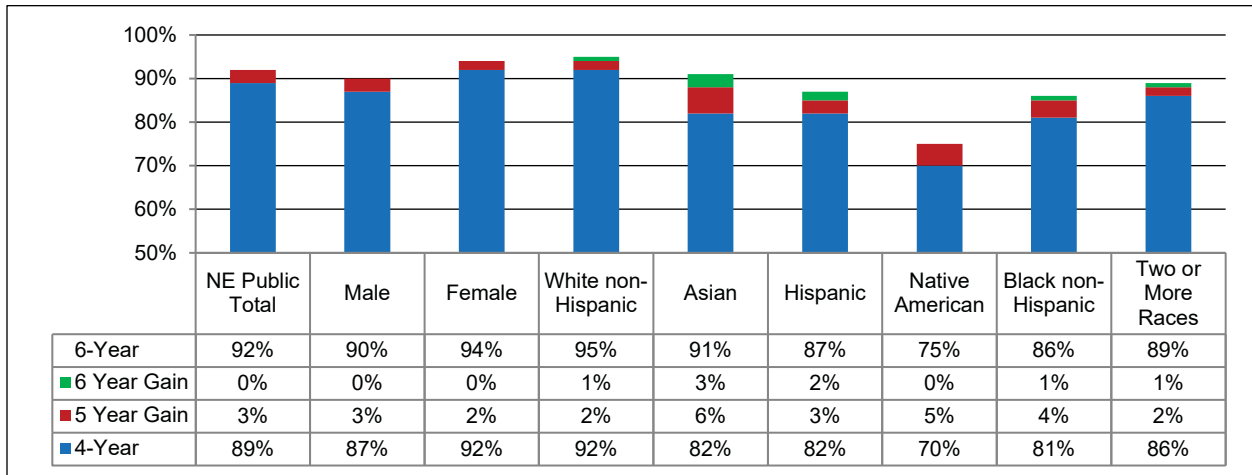
Extending cohort graduation rates to five and six years also narrows the gaps between graduation rates for various racial/ethnic groups.

- The 2016-2017 cohort graduation rate for Asians increased nine percentage points when extended from four to six years, while the cohort graduation rates for white non-Hispanics and multiracial students increased three percentage points when extended from four to six years.
- For the 2017-2018 cohort, the graduation rates for Asians, Hispanics, and black non-Hispanics increased four percentage points when extended from four to five years, while the cohort graduation rates for white non-Hispanics and multiracial students increased two percentage points.

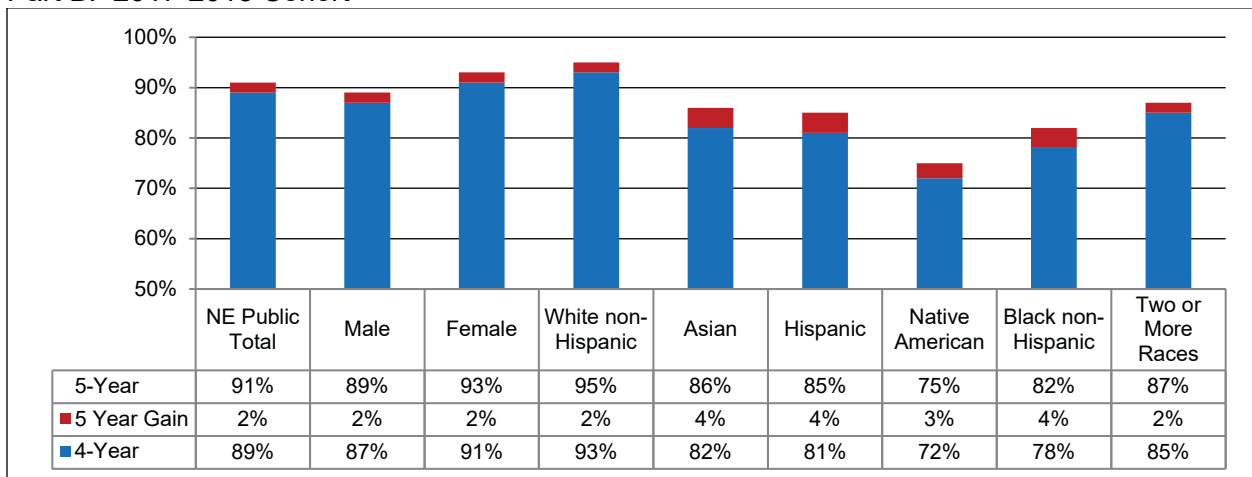
Figure 1.1.a.8

By Gender and By Race/Ethnicity: Nebraska Public High School Cohort Extended Graduation Rates for 2016-2017 and 2017-2018

Part A: 2016-2017 Cohort



Part B: 2017-2018 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, 2018-2019 Education Profile for State of Nebraska, Cohort Graduation Data.