

1.1.a High School Graduation Rates

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

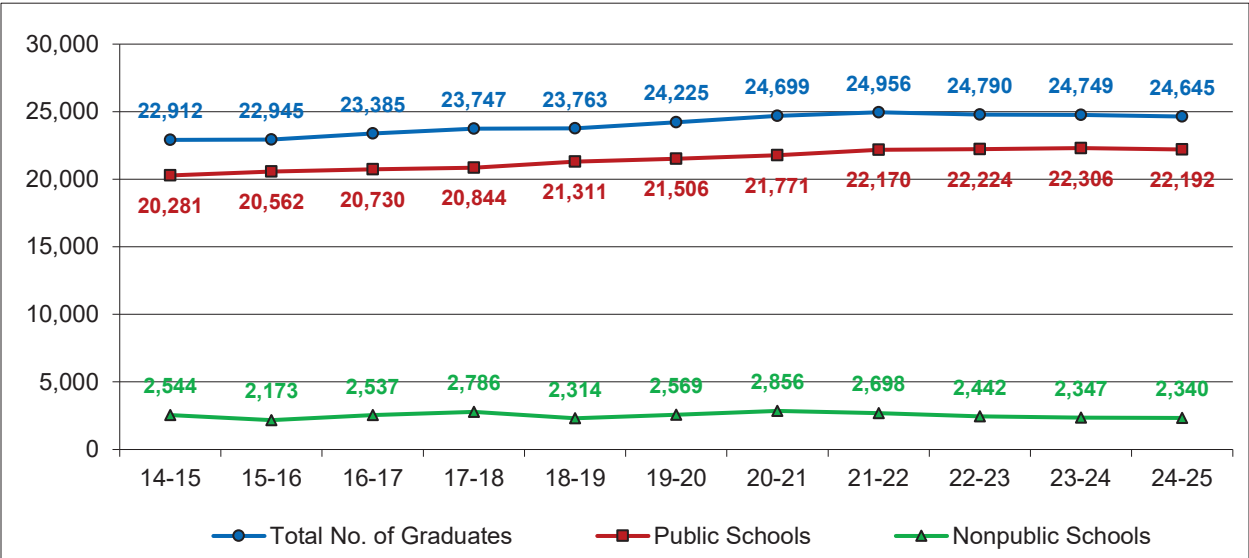
One strategic approach to increasing the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska is to increase the proportion of students who graduate from the state’s high schools. In other words, increase Nebraska’s high school graduation rate and, in the process, increase the pool of high 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, 24,645 students graduated from Nebraska high schools in 2024-2025, an increase of 7.6% (1,733 students) since 2014-2015.
- The number of students who graduated from Nebraska high schools decreased 0.4% (104 students) between 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.
- Between 2014-2015 and 2024-2025, the number of public high school graduates increased 9.4% to 22,192, while the number graduating from nonpublic (private) high schools decreased 8.0% to 2,340.
- Between 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, the number of public high school graduates decreased 0.5% (114 students) while the number of nonpublic high school graduates decreased 0.3% (seven students).

Figure 1.1.a.1

Numbers of Nebraska Public and Nonpublic High School Graduates 2014-2015 through 2024-2025



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 2016 (2014-15 data), December 2016 (2015-16 data), December 2017 (2016-17 data), December 2018 (2017-18 data), December 2019 (2018-19 data), December 2020 (2019-20 data), February 2022 (2020-21 data), January 2023 (2021-22 data), December 2023 (2022-23 data), January 2025 (2023-24 data), January 2026 (2024-25 data).

- As shown in [Table 1.1.a.1](#), since 2014-2015, about 9 out of 10 Nebraska high school graduates have received their diplomas from public schools.

Type of School	2014-2015		2023-2024		2024-2025	
	No. of Graduates	% of Graduates	No. of Graduates	% of Graduates	No. of Graduates	% of Graduates
Public	20,281	88.9%	22,306	90.5%	22,192	90.5%
Nonpublic	2,544	11.1%	2,347	9.5%	2,340	9.5%
Subtotal	22,825	100.0%	24,653	100.0%	24,532	100.0%
ESU & SO	87		96		113	
State Total	22,912		24,749		24,645	

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 2016 (2014-15 data), January 2025 (2023-24 data), and January 2026 (2024-25 data).

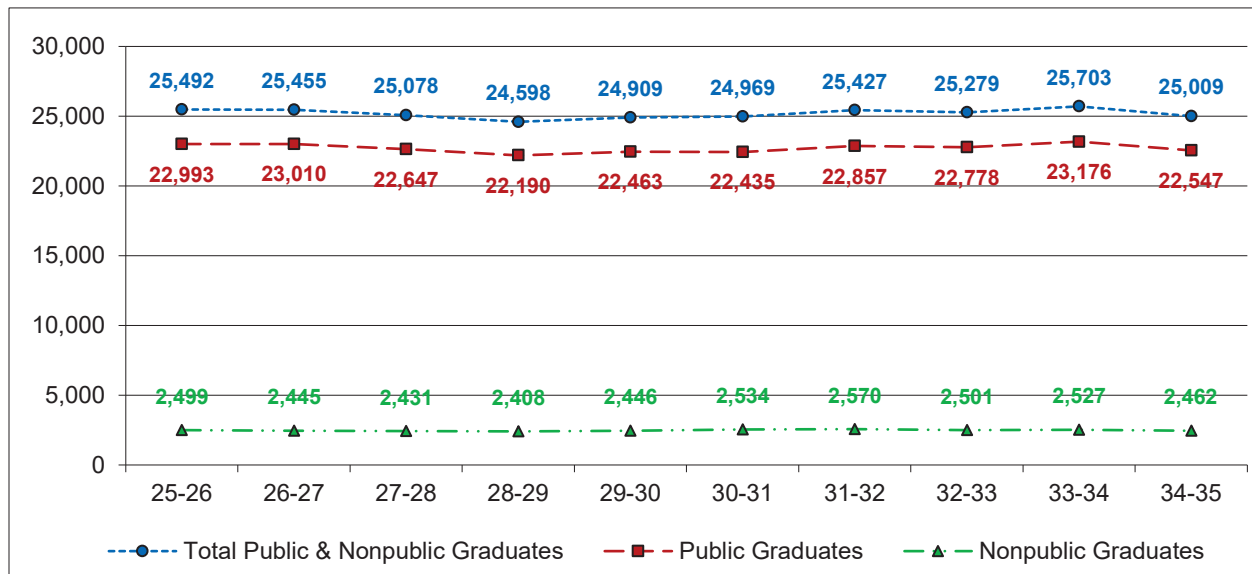
Projected Trends in the Number of Nebraska High School Graduates³

- As shown in [Figure 1.1.a.2](#), 25,009 students are forecast to graduate from Nebraska public and nonpublic high schools in 2034-2035. 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 1.9% (464 students) over the next decade.
- Public schools are projected to account for 90% to 91% of Nebraska’s high school graduates through the 2034-2035 school year.
- The numbers of graduates from Nebraska’s public high schools are projected to increase 3.6% between 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 and then decrease 1.9% from 2025-2026 to 2034-2035.
- The numbers of graduates from the state’s nonpublic (private) high schools are projected to increase 6.8% from 2024-2025 to 2025-2026 and then decrease 1.5% from 2025-2026 to 2034-2035.

³ Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 2024*. See [Table A2.2](#) in [Appendix 2](#) for supporting data. For 2024-2025, the actual number of public school graduates (22,192) was 2.5% higher than WICHE predicted (21,658).

Figure 1.1.a.2

**Projected Numbers of Graduates from Nebraska Public and Nonpublic High Schools
2025-2026 through 2034-2035**

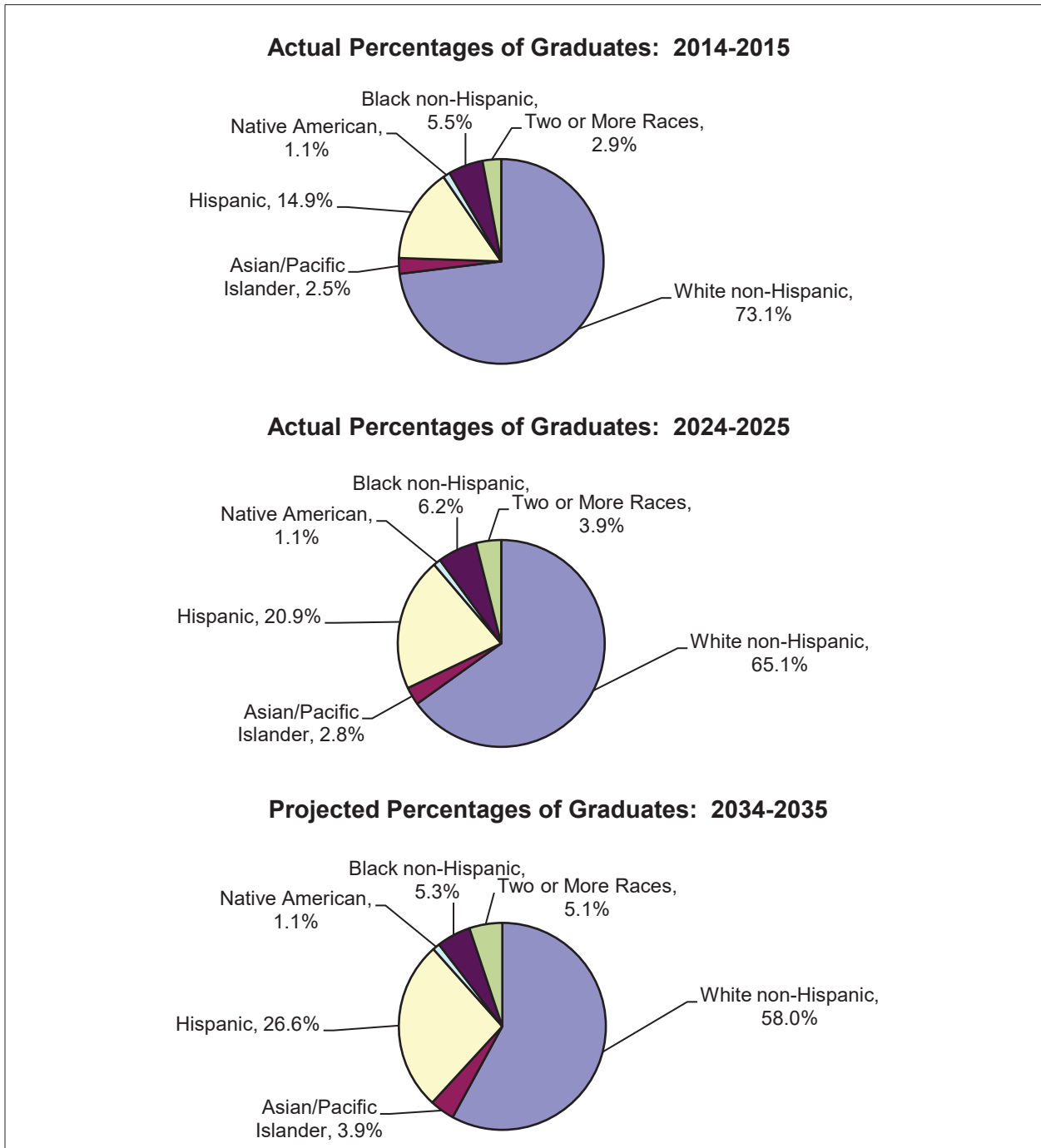


Note. Projections above do not include graduates of educational service units or state-operated schools. An estimated 100 students per year are projected to graduate from these schools. Graduates do not include GED recipients or completers who did not receive regular diplomas. See [Table A2.2](#) in [Appendix 2](#) for supporting data. Data source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 2024*.

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 Black non-Hispanic students are projected to account for lower percentages of the state’s public high school graduates in 2034-2035 than they did in 2024-2025.
- 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 2014-2015 and 2024-2025, the number of public high school graduates in each of the major racial/ethnic groups changed as follows:
 - White non-Hispanics decreased 2.5% (from 14,817 to 14,444 graduates)
 - Asian/Pacific Islanders increased 24.5% (from 503 to 626 graduates)
 - Hispanics increased 53.0% (from 3,026 to 4,631 graduates)
 - Native Americans increased 11.0% (from 228 to 253 graduates)
 - Black non-Hispanics increased 23.1% (from 1,112 to 1,369 graduates)
 - Two or more races increased 46.1% (from 595 to 869 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. See [Table A2.3 in Appendix 2](#) for supporting data. Data sources: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2016, and January 2026 (actual number of graduates). Projection data obtained from Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 2024*.

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.

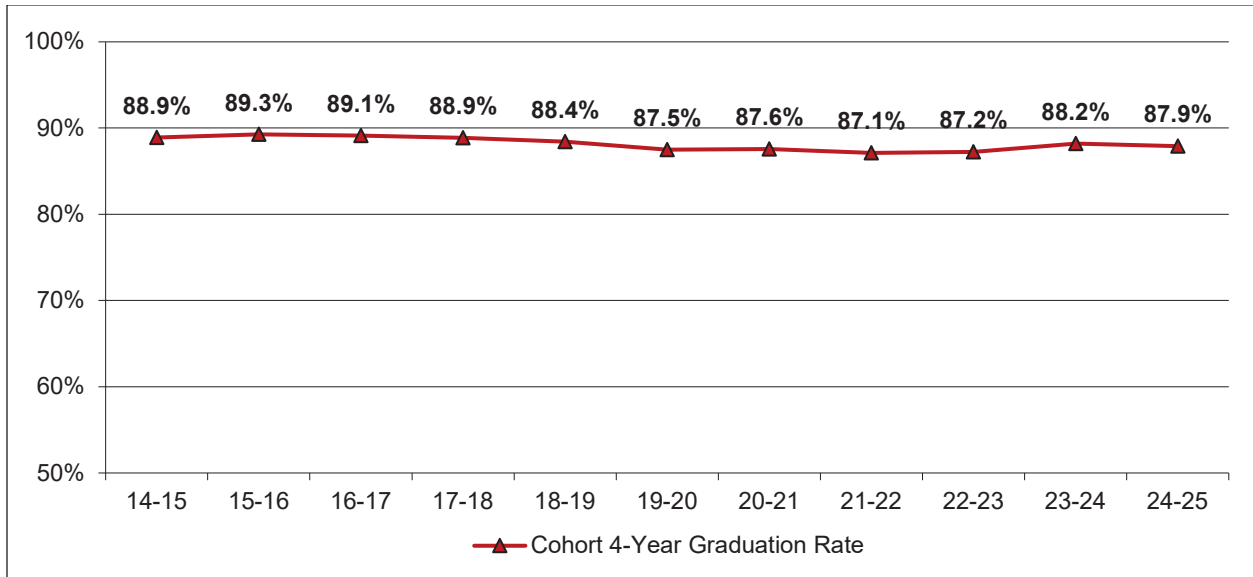
- Prior to the 2010-2011 school year, the Nebraska Department of Education used the **four-year high school graduation rate** to measure the proportion of high school students who receive regular diplomas.
- With the 2010-2011 school year, the Nebraska Department of Education began using the **cohort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

- 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 88.9% in 2015 (2014-2015) and 87.9% in 2025 (2024-2025)**, or 1.0 percentage point lower than the cohort rate for 2015. Since 2024, the cohort graduation rate decreased 0.3 points.

Figure 1.1.a.4

**Nebraska Public High School Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates
2014-2015 through 2024-2025**



Note. See [Table A3.1](#) in [Appendix 3](#) for additional data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2026.

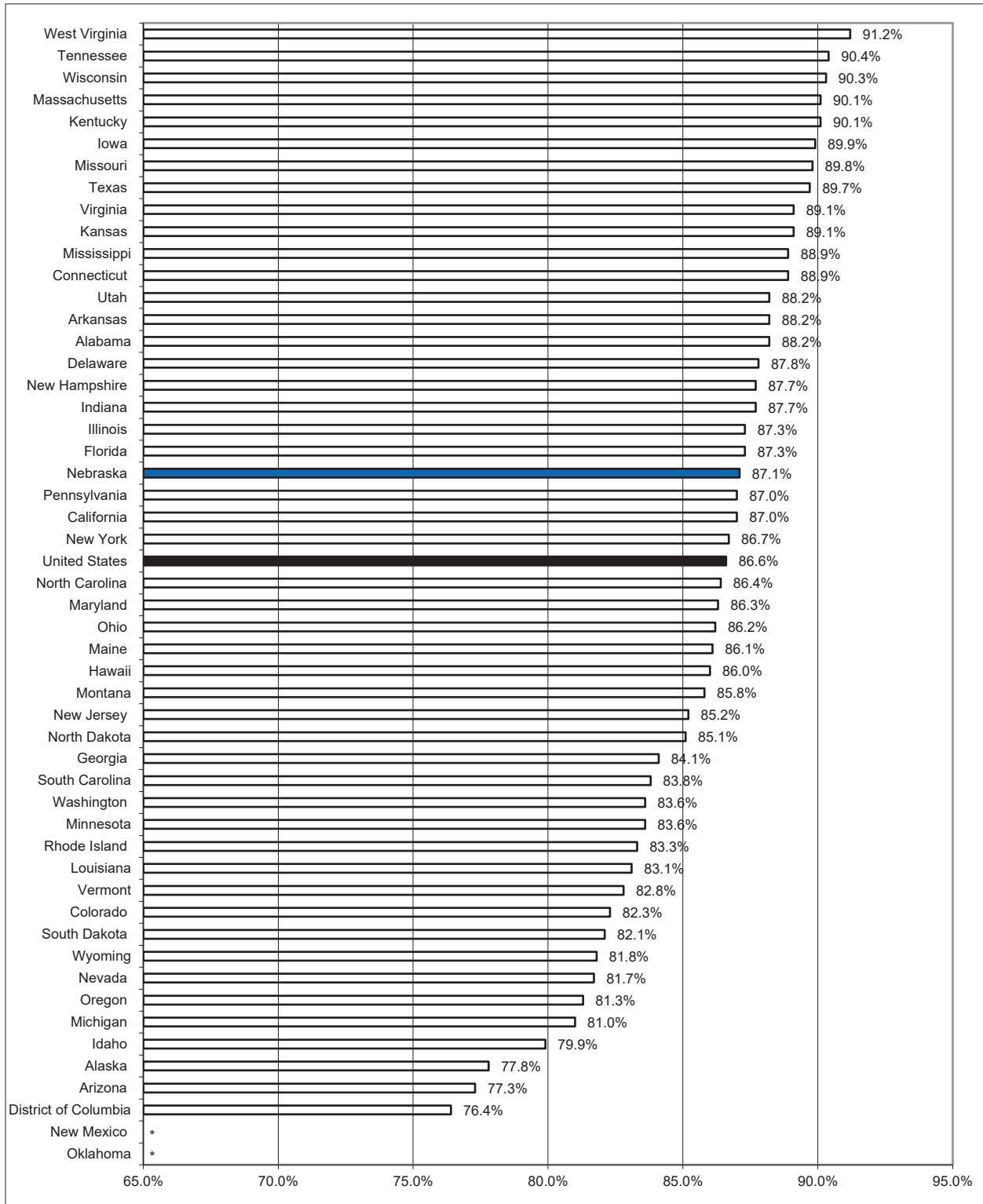
Public High School Graduation Rates by State

National public high school graduation rate data for the 2022-2023 through 2024-2025 cohorts has not yet been released by the National Center for Education Statistics. The latest available data is for the 2021-2022 cohort. [Figure 1.1.a.5](#) shows the state-to-state comparisons of the cohort four-year graduation rates calculated for the 2021-2022 cohort.

- As shown in [Figure 1.1.a.5](#), Nebraska's 2021-2022 cohort four-year graduation rate was the 21st highest among the rates reported by 48 states and the District of Columbia.⁴

⁴ Data not available for New Mexico or Oklahoma.

Figure 1.1.a.5
By State: 2021-2022 Public High School
Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates



Note. Data not available for New Mexico or Oklahoma. Data source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, ED Facts, school year 2021-22.

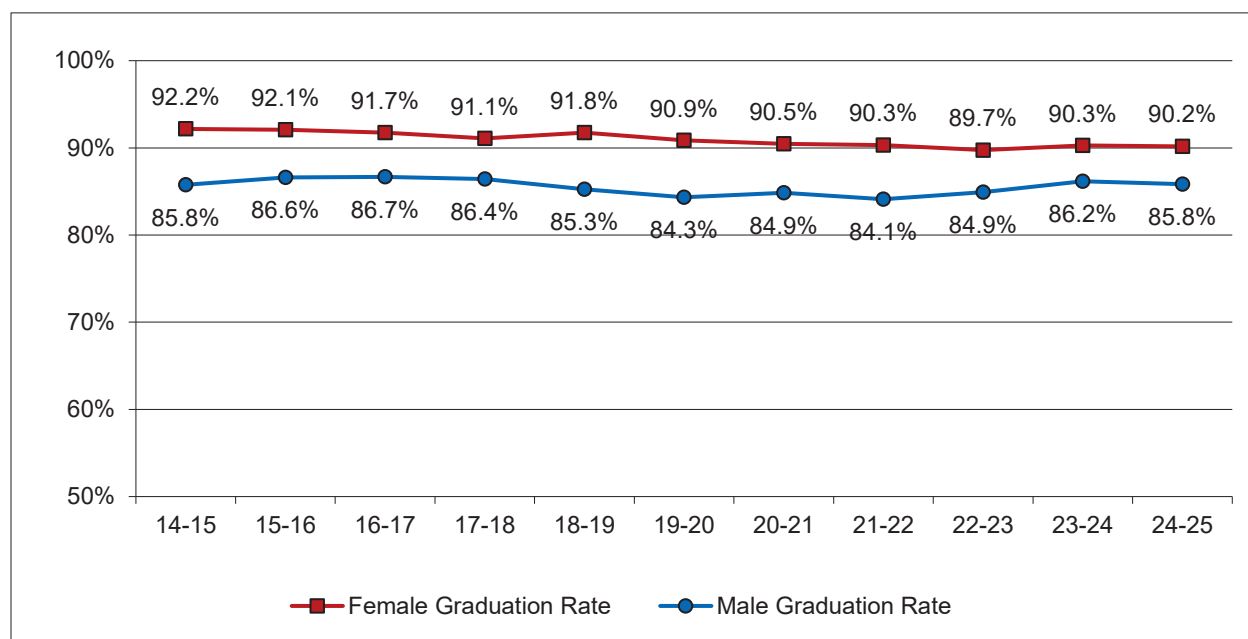
Nebraska Public High School Graduation Rates by Sex

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.

- As evidenced in [Figure 1.1.a.6](#), the cohort four-year graduation rates for females were higher than the rates for males from 2014-2015 to 2024-2025. The gap between males and females was 6.4 percentage points in 2014-2015 and 4.4 percentage points in 2024-2025.
- **The cohort graduation rate for females in 2024-2025 was 90.2%**, 2.0 percentage points lower than the rate for 2014-2015. **The cohort graduation rate for males in 2024-2025 was 85.8%**, the same rate as it was in 2014-2015.

Figure 1.1.a.6

By Sex: Nebraska Public High School Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates 2014-2015 through 2024-2025



Note. See [Table A3.1](#) in [Appendix 3](#) for additional data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2026.

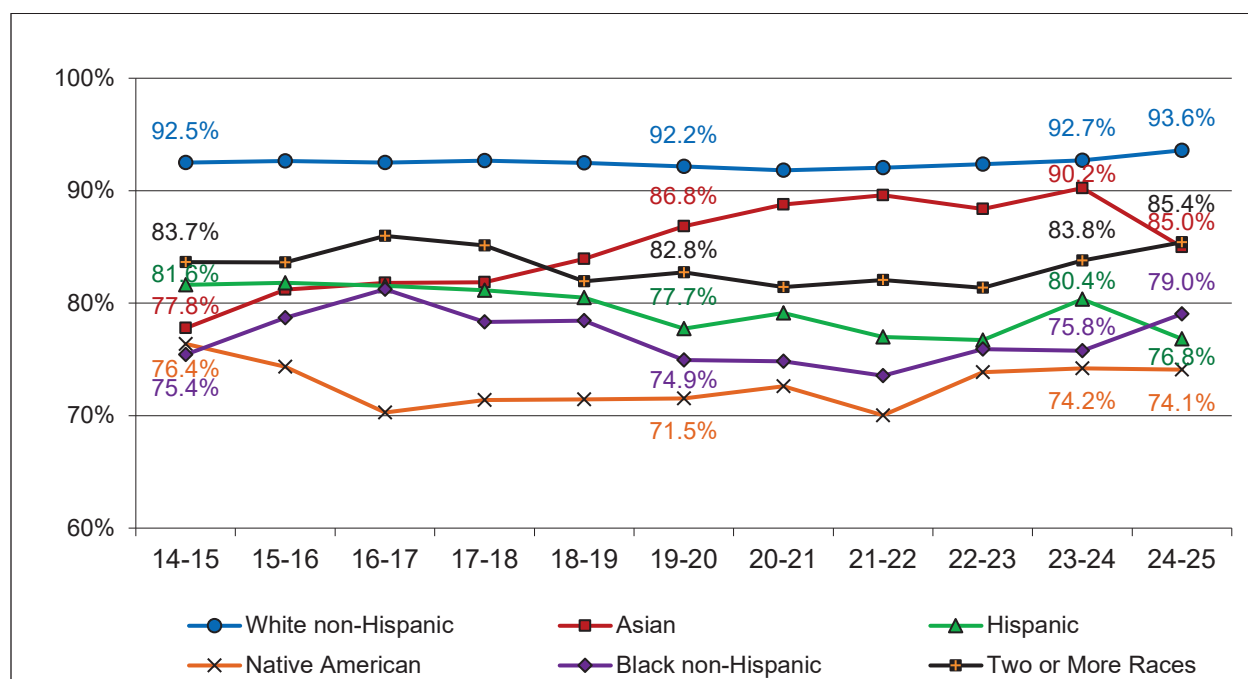
Nebraska Public High School Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

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

- Between 2014-2015 and 2024-2025, the cohort four-year graduation rate decreased 4.8 percentage points for Hispanics and 2.3 percentage points for Native Americans. During this time, cohort four-year graduation rates increased 1.1 percentage points for White non-Hispanics, 7.2 percentage points for Asians, 3.6 percentage points for Black non-Hispanics, and 1.7 percentage points for multiracial individuals.
- Since 2023-2024, cohort four-year graduation rates fell 5.2 percentage points for Asians, 3.6 percentage points for Hispanics, and 0.1 percentage points Native Americans but increased 0.9 percentage points for White non-Hispanics, 3.2 percentage points for Black non-Hispanics, and 1.6 percentage points for multiracial individuals.

Figure 1.1.a.7

By Race/Ethnicity: Nebraska Public High School Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates 2014-2015 through 2024-2025



Note. Cohort graduation rates are not shown for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. See [Table A3.1 in Appendix 3](#) for additional data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2026.

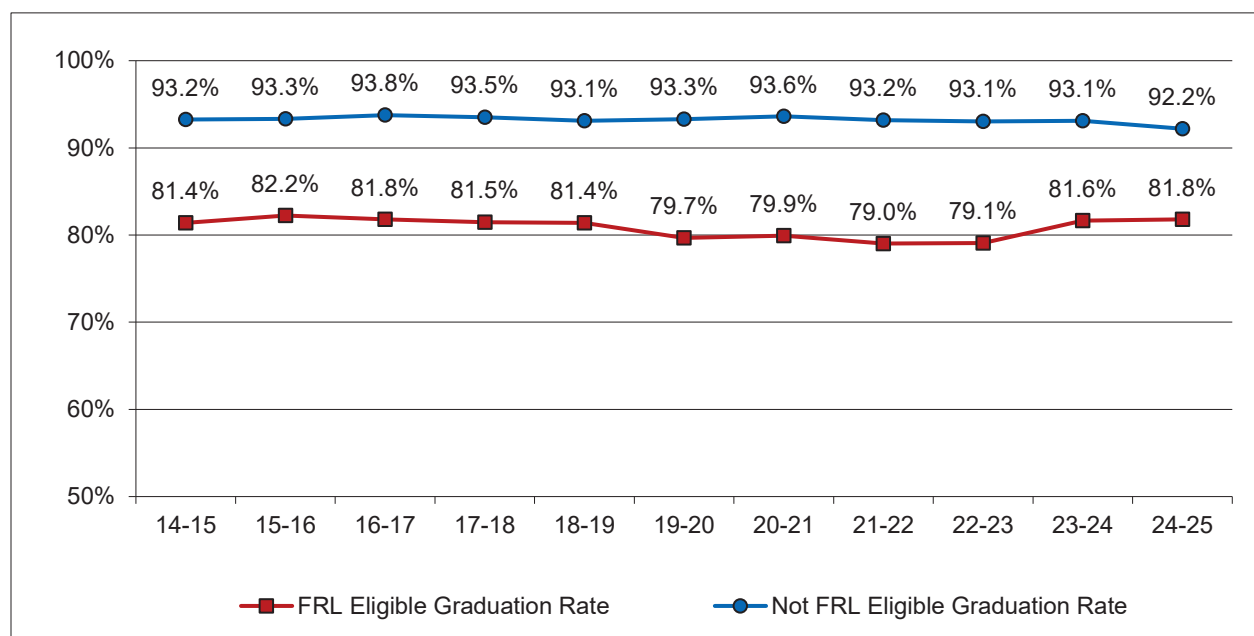
Nebraska Public High School Graduation Rates by Free or Reduced-Priced Lunch Eligibility

As illustrated in [Figure 1.1.a.8](#), high school graduation rates vary considerably by free or reduced-priced lunch (FRL) eligibility.

- Students eligible for FRL are less likely to graduate from high school in four years. For the 2024-2025 cohort, there was a 10.4 percentage point difference in on-time graduation rates between FRL and non-FRL students.
- Between 2014-2015 and 2024-2025, the cohort four-year graduation rate decreased 1.0 percentage point for students not eligible for FRL. Meanwhile, the cohort four-year graduate rate increased 0.4 percentage points for students eligible for FRL.

Figure 1.1.a.8

By Free or Reduced-Priced Lunch Eligibility: Nebraska Public High School Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates 2014-2015 through 2024-2025



Note. See [Table A3.1](#) in [Appendix 3](#) for additional data. Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2026.

District-Level Analysis of Graduation Rates

The distribution of the 2024-2025 cohort four-year graduation rates for Nebraska’s 250 public school districts is shown in [Table 1.1.a.2](#).

- Eighty-four (33.6%) of Nebraska’s public school districts had cohort four-year graduation rates of 100%. A total of 216 districts (86.4%) had graduation rates equal to or higher than the statewide rate in 2024-2025.
- Thirty-four (13.6%) districts had graduation rates that were lower than the statewide rate for public schools in 2024-2025, 10 of which (4.0%) 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 71.5% (2,722 graduates), Lincoln Public Schools with a graduation rate of 84.5% (2,683 graduates), and Millard Public Schools with a graduation rate of 92.6% (1,633 graduates).

Table 1.1.a.2 Distribution of the Cohort Four-Year High School Graduation Rates for Nebraska <u>Public</u> High School Districts 2024-2025			
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%	24	9.6%	43.2%
94.00% - 96.99%	51	20.4%	63.6%
91.00% - 93.99%	35	14.0%	77.6%
87.90% - 90.99%	22	8.8%	86.4%
87.90% Nebraska Public High School Rate			
85.00% - 87.89%	9	3.6%	90.0%
75.00% - 84.99%	15	6.0%	96.0%
Less than 75.00%	10	4.0%	100.0%
All Public Districts	250		
Data source: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2026.			

Nebraska Public High School Cohort Extended Graduation Rates

Figure 1.1.a.9 shows extended five- and six-year graduation rates for the 2022-2023 cohort (Part A) and extended five-year graduation rates for the 2023-2024 cohort (Part B).

- As evidenced in Part A of Figure 1.1.a.9, the 2022-2023 cohort **six-year** graduation rate for Nebraska's public school was 90.5%, 3.2 percentage points higher than the cohort four-year graduation rate.
- As shown in Part B of Figure 1.1.a.9, the overall **five-year** graduation rate for the 2023-2024 cohort was 90.6%, 2.4 percentage points higher than the cohort four-year graduation rate.

Extended Graduation Rates by Sex

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 2022-2023 cohort, the four-year graduation rate was 84.9% for males and 89.8% for females, a gap of 4.9 percentage points. Extending the graduation rate out to six years narrowed the gap to 4.1 percentage points (88.5% for males and 92.6% for females).
- For the 2023-2024 cohort, the five-year graduation rate was 92.2% for females (up from 90.3% for four years) and 89.0% for males (up from 86.2% for four years).

Extended Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

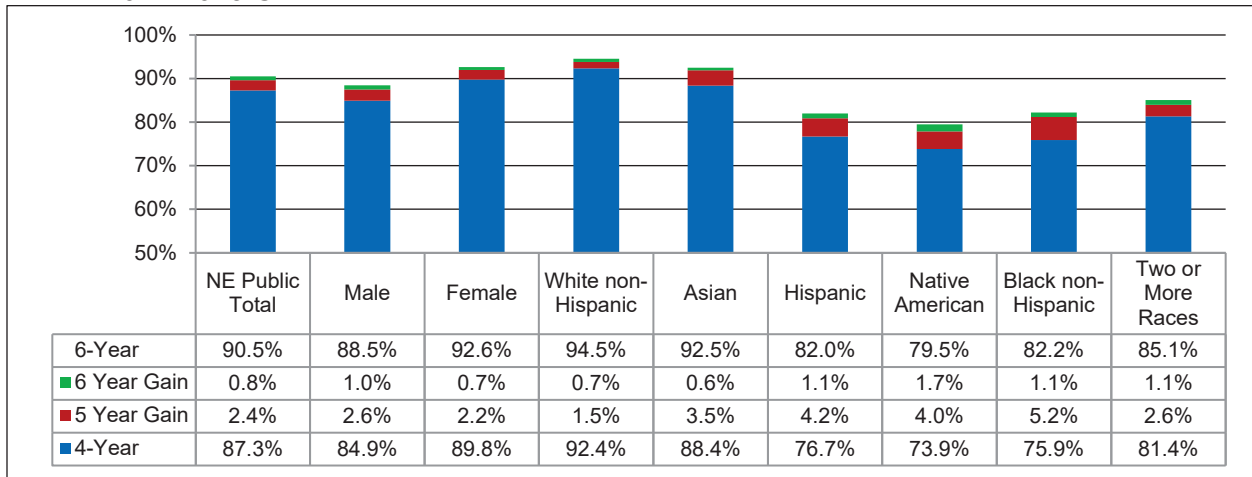
Extending cohort graduation rates to five and six years narrows the gaps between graduation rates for various racial/ethnic groups.

- For the 2022-2023 cohort, the smallest percentage point increase (2.2) was for White non-Hispanics when extended from four to six years. Meanwhile, the largest percentage point increase (6.3) was for Black non-Hispanics.
- For the 2023-2024 cohort, the smallest percentage point increase (1.4) was for White non-Hispanics when extended from four to five years. Meanwhile, the largest percentage point increase (6.9) was for Native Americans.

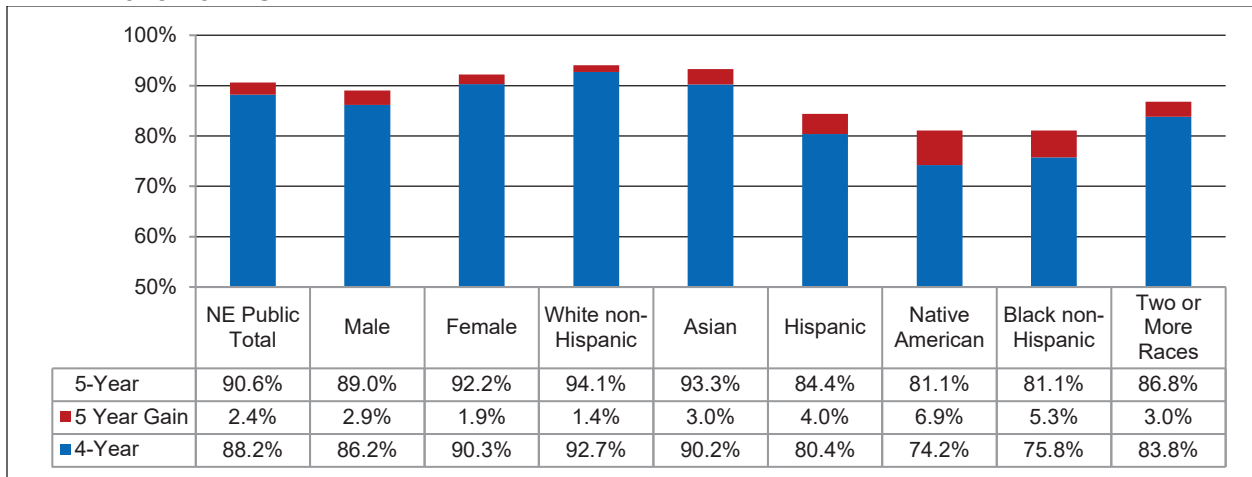
Figure 1.1.a.9

By Sex and By Race/Ethnicity: Nebraska Public High School Cohort Extended Graduation Rates for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024

Part A: 2022-2023 Cohort



Part B: 2023-2024 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, 2024-2025 Data Downloads, Graduation Cohort Data.