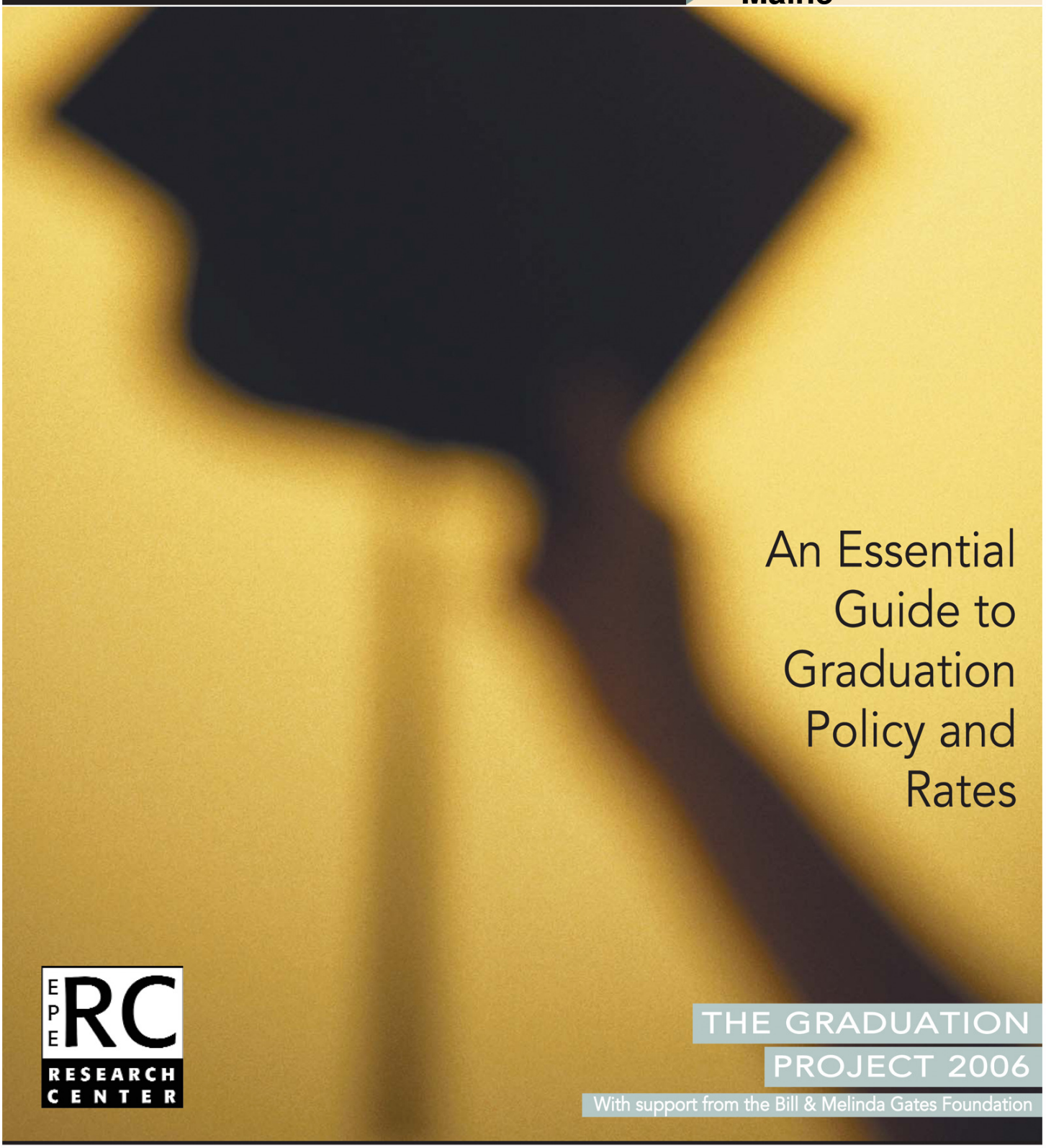
A Special State-Focused Supplement to Education Week's

Diplomas Count

Maine



An Essential Guide to Graduation Policy and Rates

EPE RESEARCH CENTER

THE GRADUATION PROJECT 2006

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

The Policy Context

High School Graduation and the No Child Left Behind Act

The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), enacted in 2002, holds states and the schools under their jurisdictions accountable for student performance. Proficiency on academic assessments must be the principal indicator of performance used under NCLB to determine whether schools are making adequate yearly progress (AYP). However, statewide accountability systems are also required to incorporate one additional academic outcome. At the secondary level, this "other academic indicator" must be the high school graduation rate.

NCLB defines the high school graduation rate as the "percentage of students, measured from the beginning of high school, who graduate from high school with a regular diploma (not including an alternative degree that is not fully aligned with the State's academic standards, such as a certificate or a GED) in the standard number of years." Federal regulations, however, allow states substantial flexibility over the specifics of graduation accountability. This includes choosing a formula for calculating graduation rates, setting goals for graduation rates, and establishing targets for improvement over time.

State Policy Overview – Accountability

This table describes state accountability measures related to high school graduation rates under the No Child Left Behind Act.

(Note: AMOs = annual measurable objectives)

	Maine	National Overview
Calculating Graduation Rates *		
Formula used by the state to calculate graduation rates for the federal No Child Left Behind Act (2005-06)	Leaver Rate	**33** states use a Leaver Rate
Graduation Rate Performance Goals for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)		
Current target (2005-06)	63%	**77%** in average state
Final target (2013-14)	75%	**82%** in average state
Minimum annual improvement required if not meeting target	Based on AMOs	**33** states allow any amount of improvement to make AYP
Data Systems		
State tracks high school completion status of individual students	No	**17** states have data to calculate individually tracked graduation rates

* A Key to NCLB Graduation Rate Formulas

Leaver Rate – Percent of students leaving high school with a standard high school diploma, expressed as a proportion of all those documented leaving with a diploma or other completion credential or as a dropout. This method is sometimes referred to as a departure-classification index. (33 states)

Cohort Rate – Percent of students from an entering 9th grade cohort who graduate with a standard diploma within four years. Method can account for transfers and students retained in grade. Student data may be tracked on a statewide or local basis. (10 states)

Persistence Rate – Percent of students who remain in school from grade 9 through grade 12. Rate is calculated using information on (1) the percent of students not dropping out at specific grade levels or (2) the percent of students estimated to be promoted from grade to grade. This method does not measure high school completion. (3 states)

Completion Ratio – Number of diploma recipients divided by an approximation of the starting 9th grade class. Method cannot fully account for entering cohort membership, net transfer, and grade retention. (2 states)

Dropout Rate – Percent of students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 who drop out during a given school year. High school completion is not measured. (1 state)

On-Time Rate – Proportion of all high school graduates in a given year who have received a standard diploma on time. This method compares on-time graduates to those taking longer than four years to earn a diploma. (1 state)

Composite Rate – Proportion of students estimated to remain in high school until grade 12 and receive a diploma. The rate for a given year is calculated by multiplying together (1) the rate of persistence between grades 9 and 12 and (2) the percent of completers who receive a diploma rather than another credential. (1 state)

State Policy – Graduation Requirements

This table describes state policies related to high school graduation, including the types of credentials available and requirements for receiving a standard diploma.

	Maine	
High School Completion Credentials		Number of states nationwide
Multiple standard diploma options offered by state	No	6
Advanced recognition offered for exceeding standard requirements	No	24
Alternative credential offered for not meeting all standard requirements	No	26
Course Credits Required to Earn a Standard Diploma		Number of credits required by average state
Mathematics	2	2.7
English/Language Arts	4	3.9
Science	2	2.5
History/Social Studies	2	2.8
Other Credits	6	8.6
Total Credits Required:	**16**	20.5
Exit Exam Required to Earn a Diploma		Number of states nationwide
State requires students to pass a statewide assessment or exam to earn a standard high school diploma (class of 2005-06)	No	23
Subjects tested (**E**nglish, **M**ath, **S**cience, **H**istory, **T**echnology)	na	---
Type of test	na	---
Exam based on standards for 10th grade or higher	na	18
Appeals process or alternative route offered for students to earn a standard diploma without passing required exit exam	na	15
Minimum-Age Policies		National average
Compulsory age for public school attendance	17 (or younger with waiver)	17
Minimum age at which students can take the General Educational Development (GED) test	18 (or younger with waiver)	18

Graduation Profile 2002-03

This table reports state demographics and graduation rates for specific student subgroups.

Student Demographics (percent of student population in specified group)	Maine	Nation
Race/Ethnicity	**(%)**	**(%)**
American Indian/Alaska Native	**0.5**	**1.2**
Asian/Pacific Islander	**1.1**	**4.4**
Hispanic	**0.7**	**18.1**
Black (not Hispanic)	**1.6**	**17.0**
White (not Hispanic)	**96.1**	**59.3**
Other Characteristics		
Poverty (Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch)	**30.1**	**38.7**
English-Language Learners	**1.3**	**9.3**
Special Education	**16.2**	**13.3**
Graduation Rate by Student Group	**Maine (%)**	**Nation (%)**
All Students		
	74.0	**69.6**
By Gender		
Male	**71.2**	**65.2**
Female	**73.3**	**72.7**
By Race and Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaska Native	**	**47.4**
Asian/Pacific Islander	**30.2**	**77.0**
Hispanic	**	**55.6**
Black (not Hispanic)	**	**51.6**
White (not Hispanic)	**73.1**	**76.2**
By Gender and Race and Ethnicity		
Male		
American Indian/Alaska Native	**33.9**	**42.7**
Asian/Pacific Islander	**	**73.1**
Hispanic	**40.0**	**50.1**
Black (not Hispanic)	**	**44.3**
White (not Hispanic)	**70.5**	**72.4**
Female		
American Indian/Alaska Native	**	**47.5**
Asian/Pacific Islander	**	**79.6**
Hispanic	**	**59.9**
Black (not Hispanic)	**	**57.8**
White (not Hispanic)	**73.5**	**77.9**

* Value not calculated because necessary data field(s) not reported in CCD or due to small group size.
** Value not reported due to insufficient data for reliable estimate.

How does the EPE Research Center calculate graduation rates?

In this report, the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center uses the **Cumulative Promotion Index** (CPI) method to calculate graduation rates. The CPI represents graduating from high school as a process rather than a single event. Specifically, it captures the four key steps a student must take in order to graduate – three grade-to-grade promotions (9 to 10, 10 to 11, and 11 to 12) and ultimately earning a diploma (grade 12 to graduation).

The formula below illustrates the CPI formula for calculating graduation rates. The class of 2002-03, the most recent year for which data were available, is used as an example.

$$\text{CPI} = \frac{\text{10th graders, fall 2003}}{\text{9th graders, fall 2002}} \times \frac{\text{11th graders, fall 2003}}{\text{10th graders, fall 2002}} \times \frac{\text{12th graders, fall 2003}}{\text{11th graders, fall 2002}} \times \frac{\text{Diploma recipients, spring 2003}}{\text{12th graders, fall 2002}}$$

By multiplying grade-specific promotion ratios together, the CPI estimates the likelihood that a 9th grader will complete high school on time with a regular diploma, given the schooling conditions prevailing during a particular school year. The CPI counts only students receiving standard high school diplomas as graduates, following the definition of a graduate adopted by the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

We can use a simplified example to further demonstrate the way we calculate the CPI. Let us suppose that a particular school district currently has 100 students enrolled in each grade from 9 through 12. We will also assume that 5 percent of students currently in grades 9, 10, and 11 will drop out of school this year, and that 5 percent of seniors will fail to earn a diploma at the end of the year. So, for example, we would count 100 9th graders at our starting point, but only 95 10th graders the following fall.

$$\text{CPI} = \frac{95}{100} \times \frac{95}{100} \times \frac{95}{100} \times \frac{95}{100} = .815$$

Carrying out the calculation shown above, we arrive at a graduation rate of 81.5 percent for this district. Given conditions in this hypothetical district (an effective 5 percent annual attrition rate for students at each grade level), only about 82 out of every 100 ninth graders would be expected to finish high school with a diploma.

The CPI can be calculated for public school districts that have students enrolled in the secondary grades (9 through 12). State and national statistics are generated by aggregating the district-level data upward.

Notes on Our Methodology

Graduation rates and demographic indicators presented in this report are created using data from the Common Core of Data (CCD). The CCD is an annual census of public schools and school districts in the United States conducted by the U.S. Department of Education. Detailed methodological descriptions of the CCD can be found in technical documentation published by the National Center for Education Statistics (available online at nces.ed.gov/ccd).

In order to avoid unintentional disclosure of information about individual students, we do not report graduation rates for very small demographic subgroups – those with fewer than five students in a given category.

Notes and Sources

About this Report

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center is engaged in a four-year project to study high school graduation and related issues pertaining to late secondary schooling and the transition to postsecondary education and employment.

The first annual report from this project, *Diplomas Count: An Essential Guide to Graduation Policy and Rates,* provides detailed data on high school graduation rates at the national, state, and district level. The report also examines how states calculate graduation rates, tracks state policies related to high school graduation requirements, and explores ways in which states and districts might improve graduation rates based on research.

In addition to the printed report, online-only features include state-specific policy reports and a new geographical web interface. Users can zoom in from the national to state to district levels and download a special report for any school district in the country that includes comparisons to state and national statistics.

Visit Diplomas Count at www.edweek.org/dc06.

State Policy Indicators

The policy indictors included in this report include information collected by the EPE Research Center as well as data obtained from other organizations. Definitions and sources for specific indicators are described below.

Graduation Rate Accountability Policies

NCLB Accountability

Accountability indicators based on EPE Research Center analysis of state accountability workbooks approved by the U.S. Department of Education (as of April 20, 2006) and supplemental state documentation.

Formula used to calculate graduation rates for NCLB: Graduation-rate formula described in state accountability workbooks for use in NCLB accountability.

Current graduation-rate target for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): Graduation rate that schools and school districts are expected to achieve to make AYP for the 2005-06 school year.

Final graduation-rate target for Adequate Yearly Progress: Graduation rate that schools and school districts are expected to achieve to make AYP for the 2013-14 school year.

Minimum annual improvement required if not meeting target: Minimum amount of annual improvement that schools and school districts that do not reach graduation-rate targets are expected to achieve to make AYP.

Data Systems

State tracks high school completion status of individual students: State data system capable of calculating a graduation rate as defined by the 2005 National Governors Association compact. Data Quality Campaign, 2006.

Graduation Requirements

High School Completion Credentials

Indicators for state-recognized completion credentials and other forms of recognition are based on an EPE Research Center analysis of state statutes related to graduation requirements, 2006.

Course Credits

Coursetaking requirements for standard diploma: Course requirements are expressed in Carnegie units unless otherwise specified. One Carnegie unit is equivalent to one year of coursework. Credits reflect the minimum course requirements (overall and by subject) mandated by the state for a standard high school diploma. Education Commission of the States, "Standard High School Graduation Requirements (50 state)," 2006. Figures independently verified by the EPE Research Center.

State Exit Exams

Exit exam required: State requires students to pass an exit exam or one or more end-of-course exams in order to graduate. EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2006.

Subjects tested on state exit exam: EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2006.

State exit-exam type: State exit exams are grouped into three categories based on states' descriptions of their tests: minimum-competency, standards-based, and end-of-course exams. Center on Education Policy, "State High School Exit Exams: States Try Harder, But Gaps Persist," 2005.

State exit exam based on standards for 10th grade or higher: State has exit or end-of-course exams aligned to state 10th grade standards or higher. EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2006.

Appeals process or alternative route: State allows students to appeal after failing an exit or end-of-course exam or has an alternative route students can take to earn a standard diploma. EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2006.

Minimum-Age Policies

Compulsory-attendance age: Age at which attendance is no longer required. U.S. Department of Labor, "Employment Related Provisions in State Compulsory School Attendance Laws," 2006.

Age to take GED test: General Educational Development Testing Service of the American Council on Education, "Who Passed the GED Tests? 2004 Statistical Report," January 2006.

About Editorial Projects in Education

Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization based in Bethesda, Md. Our primary mission is to help raise the level of awareness and understanding among professionals and the public of important issues in American education. We cover local, state, national, and international news and issues from preschool through the 12th grade. Editorial Projects in Education Inc. publishes *Education Week*, America's newspaper of record for precollegiate education, *Teacher Magazine*, edweek.org, and the Agent K-12 employment resource. We also produce periodic special reports on issues ranging from technology to textbooks, as well as books of special interest to educators.

The ***EPE Research Center*** conducts annual policy surveys, collects data, and performs analyses that appear in the *Quality Counts, Technology Counts*, and *Diplomas Count* annual reports. The center also produces independent research reports and contributes original data and analysis to special coverage in *Education Week*, *Teacher Magazine*, and edweek.org.

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Diplomas Count:
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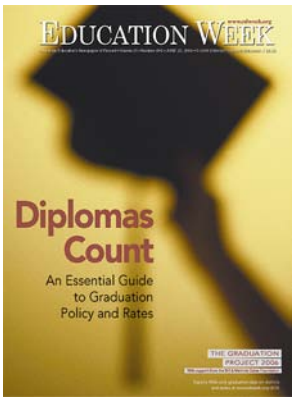
- ***Map Data Online*** – With the release of *Diplomas Count*, we are also launching a geographical-mapping website. This powerful new interface allows users to navigate maps, zoom in from the national to state to district levels, and download a special graduation report for any school district in the country that includes comparisons to state and national statistics.

- ***The EPE Research Center*** – Visit the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center online at www.edweek.org/rc to find original research reports, State Pages, and Education Counts, our database of 50-state policy indicators.



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