



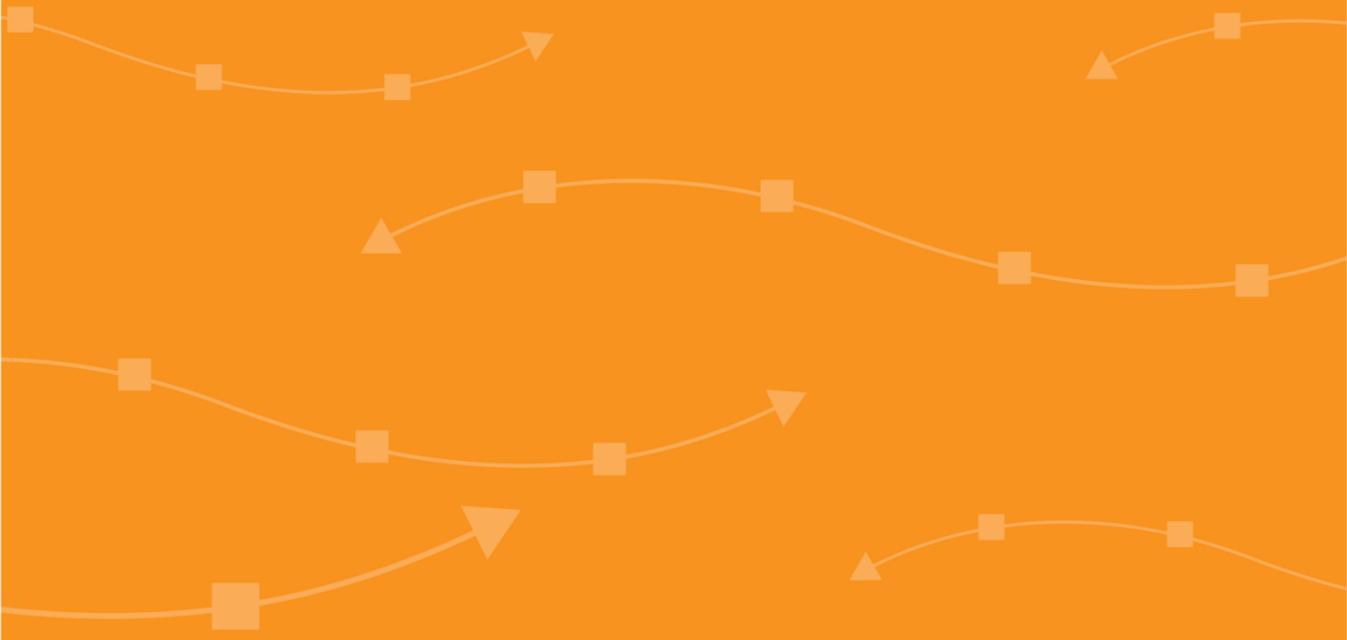
National Student Clearinghouse™  
Research Center™

# HIGH SCHOOL BENCHMARKS



*September 12, 2024*

## National College Progression Rates



## METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

This report contains college enrollment, persistence, and completion outcomes of high school graduating students. The results presented in the report center on the following outcomes:

- 1) [College enrollment](#) in the
  - first fall after high school graduation
  - first year after high school graduation
  - first two years after high school graduation
- 2) [Persistence](#) from the first year to the second year of college.
- 3) [College completion](#) within six years after high school graduation.

The outcomes are presented by type of college attended:

- Public and private institutions
- Two-year and four-year institutions
- In-state and out-of-state institutions.

These characteristics are defined by IPEDS Institutional Characteristics data as of 2021-22. In-state designations are

defined relative to the state in which the high school is located, not the residency of individual students.

The high school dataset used for this report is based on a voluntary sample and is not a nationally representative sample of schools or of high school graduates. High school diploma data are submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse (the Clearinghouse) by schools and districts that participate in the StudentTracker for High Schools (STHS) service.

This report is based on the data submitted to the Clearinghouse on graduating classes of 2017, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. The tables below show the number of participating high schools and high school graduates included in this report compared to the total number of US high schools and high school graduates. All types of high schools, including both public and private schools, participate in the Clearinghouse STHS service.

**Table 1. Number of public, non-charter high schools and graduates included in the report**

Academic year <sup>1</sup>	No. of participating high schools	Percent of all US public non-charter high schools <sup>2</sup>	Percent of US grade 12 enrollment represented <sup>3</sup>	No. of graduates in participating high schools
2016-2017	10,781	63.2%	69.0%	2,186,213
2019-2020	11,364	66.3%	73.5%	2,350,276
2020-2021	11,316	66.0%	72.6%	2,344,228
2021-2022	11,391	65.5%	72.4%	2,322,369
2022-2023	10,565	60.6%	66.2%	2,117,222

**Table 2. Number of public, charter high schools and graduates included in the report**

Academic year <sup>1</sup>	No. of participating high schools	Percent of all US public charter high schools <sup>2</sup>	Percent of US grade 12 enrollment represented <sup>3</sup>	No. of graduates in participating high schools
2016-2017	1,254	57.4%	57.4%	103,579
2019-2020	1,456	62.4%	58.4%	107,423
2020-2021	1,486	61.9%	58.1%	116,041
2021-2022	1,537	61.8%	57.8%	119,760
2022-2023	1,305	51.1%	51.0%	107,818

**Table 3. Number of private high schools and graduates included in the report**

Academic year <sup>1</sup>	Number of participating high schools	Percent of all US private high schools <sup>2</sup>	Percent of US grade 12 enrollment represented <sup>3</sup>	No. of graduates in participating high schools
2016-2017	319	6.4%	18.6%	40,668
2019-2020	301	5.8%	16.5%	35,905
2020-2021	209	4.0%	11.5%	25,068
2021-2022	195	3.7%	10.5%	22,864
2022-2023	174	3.3%	9.4%	20,374

<sup>1</sup>Academic year is defined as the period between September 1-August 31.

<sup>2</sup>The total number of schools used in the denominator of this calculation was obtained from NCES' Elementary and Secondary Information System (ELSI). The private school information is available from the Private School Survey, which is collected every two years through 2019-20. The number of private schools for intermediate years are estimates, equal to the number from the prior available year (2022-23).

<sup>3</sup>The numbers used in both the denominator and numerator of this calculation were obtained from NCES' Elementary and Secondary Information System (ELSI). Grade 12 enrollment information is available from the Private School Survey, which is collected every two years through 2019-20. The numbers for intermediate years are estimates, equal to the numbers from the prior available year (2022-23).

## Definitions of Public, Non-Charter High School Categories

We used the Common Core of Data (CCD) to construct the sampling frame of schools. The CCD is the Department of Education's primary database on public elementary and secondary education in the United States. From the CCD, we created a sample frame that contains all regular public schools with a 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

To enable public, non-charter high schools to compare their own outcomes with those of similar high schools, the outcomes in this report are presented based on school-level characteristics: low-income and higher-income; high-minority and low-minority; and urban, suburban, or rural. Membership in these categories for each academic year is based on CCD data for the corresponding year.

### Income-based Metrics

Low-income schools are defined as schools where at least 50% of the entire student population (not just graduating seniors) are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

NOTE: In 2020, the USDA allowed schools to provide free lunches to students through the [Summer Food Service Program](#) rather than the National Student Lunch Program (NSLP). As a result, fewer lunches were provided to students through the NSLP, and thus fewer students were reported as qualifying for a free or reduced lunch through the NSLP. Due to this shift in how students were reported, the number of high schools classified as low income and high poverty dropped for the 2021 and 2022 high school graduating classes nationally and in the high schools analyzed for this report (see Table 4). U.S. Congress did not renew the policy for the 2022-2023 school year and some schools returned to reporting students qualifying for free and reduced lunch

under the NSLP. This led to another shift in the number of high schools classified as low income, bringing the 2023 numbers in line with pre-pandemic levels. Due to this fluctuation over time, please use caution when interpreting income-related year-over-year changes for high school graduating classes between 2020 and 2023. This is discussed in more detail in Tab 1 of this report.

### Minority-based Metrics

High-Minority schools are defined as schools where at least 40% of the Grade 12-enrolled students are either Black or Hispanic.

### Local-Based Metrics

Locale is defined by the NCES urban-centric locale code. Schools with a code from 11 to 13 are defined as urban. Schools with a code from 21 to 23 are defined as suburban. And those with a code 31 to 43, covering both town and rural areas, are defined as rural.

Combinations of these characteristics result in seven groups of high schools. Thus, the outcomes are presented for the following categories of high schools:

- Low-income schools
- Higher-income schools
- Low-minority schools
- High-minority schools
- Urban schools
- Suburban schools
- Rural schools

**Table 4. Number of public, non-charter high schools and public, non-charter high school graduates included in the report by category of high schools**

Group	Academic year	Number of participating high schools	Percent of US grade 12 enrollment represented	Number of states represented	Total N (No. of graduates in sample)
Low-income Schools	2016-2017	4,041	67.0%	42	779,081
	2019-2020	4,546	73.3%	44	888,784
	2020-2021	3,842	72.8%	39	776,995
	2021-2022	3,836	75.9%	38	784,912
	2022-2023	4,465	65.7%	42	864,767
Higher-income Schools	2016-2017	6,740	70.2%	50	1,407,132
	2019-2020	6,818	73.5%	50	1,461,492
	2020-2021	7,474	72.6%	48	1,567,233
	2021-2022	7,555	70.7%	48	1,537,457
	2022-2023	6,100	66.5%	47	1,252,455
High-minority Schools	2016-2017	3,172	72.4%	43	863,405
	2019-2020	3,581	79.3%	45	1,019,169
	2020-2021	3,589	79.1%	42	1,024,356
	2021-2022	3,691	79.0%	45	1,027,650
	2022-2023	3,489	69.8%	45	948,380
Low-minority Schools	2016-2017	7,609	67.0%	50	1,322,808
	2019-2020	7,783	69.5%	50	1,331,107
	2020-2021	7,727	68.3%	49	1,319,872
	2021-2022	7,700	67.8%	49	1,292,719
	2022-2023	7,076	63.5%	48	1,168,842
Urban Schools	2016-2017	2,125	74.8%	48	638,168
	2019-2020	2,253	79.0%	47	692,324
	2020-2021	2,210	77.5%	47	683,847
	2021-2022	2,230	77.6%	46	676,317
	2022-2023	2,083	70.7%	45	612,380
Suburban Schools	2016-2017	2,744	71.3%	47	928,908
	2019-2020	2,934	76.6%	47	998,548
	2020-2021	2,909	75.9%	47	997,812
	2021-2022	2,933	75.5%	47	989,979
	2022-2023	2,709	68.9%	46	896,105
Rural Schools	2016-2017	5,912	61.2%	47	619,137
	2019-2020	6,177	64.7%	48	659,404
	2020-2021	6,197	64.4%	47	662,569
	2021-2022	6,228	63.9%	45	656,073
	2022-2023	5,773	58.8%	45	608,737

The numbers used in both the denominator and numerator of this calculation were obtained from the NCES Elementary and Secondary Information System (ELSi). The denominator is the number of grade 12 enrollments for all schools in a particular category of high schools. The numerator is the number of grade 12 enrollments for participating public high schools in the category. Grade 12 enrollment information is available from the Common Core of Data through 2022-23.

In addition to our standard results for schools in low-income and higher-income categories, the report also presents postsecondary outcomes for graduates from a subset of low-income schools defined as high-poverty schools and a subset of higher-income schools defined as low-poverty schools. High-poverty schools are defined as those where at least 75% of the student population is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Low-poverty schools are defined as those where less than 25% of the student population is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

**Table 5. Number of public, non-charter high schools and public, non-charter high school graduates in high-poverty and low-poverty schools included in the report by category**

Group	Academic year	Number of participating high schools	Percent of US grade 12 enrollment represented	Number of states represented	Total N (No. of graduates in sample)
High-poverty Schools	2016-2017	1,556	70.3%	38	292,835
	2019-2020	1,818	75.9%	35	344,117
	2020-2021	1,759	76.2%	34	351,765
	2021-2022	1,805	80.1%	33	356,101
	2022-2023	1,960	68.8%	37	365,827
Low-poverty Schools	2016-2017	2,024	74.3%	46	560,712
	2019-2020	2,027	76.3%	45	574,357
	2020-2021	1,683	71.3%	38	461,147
	2021-2022	2,193	74.2%	38	574,964
	2022-2023	1,593	66.9%	39	408,181

## Postsecondary Data

College enrollment, persistence, and completion outcomes are determined by matching the graduate files received from high schools each year, to the postsecondary enrollment data held by the National Student Clearinghouse. The National Student Clearinghouse is a unique and trusted source for higher education enrollment and degree verification. Currently, Clearinghouse data include 3,600 postsecondary institutions and [97 percent of U.S. postsecondary enrollments](#). Because the database is comprised of student-level data, researchers can use it to link concurrent as well as consecutive enrollments of individual students at multiple institutions — a capability that distinguishes the Clearinghouse data from national databases built with institution-level data.

To preserve comparability to the reports that schools and districts receive on their graduates’ college access, persistence, and completion rates through the Clearinghouse’s StudentTracker service, results have not been adjusted to account for a student’s outcome not being captured due to noncoverage by Clearinghouse data.

## Definitions of Outcomes

### College Enrollment:

- First fall after high school graduation: Percentage of high school graduates who enrolled in a two- or four- year postsecondary institution in the fall semester immediately following graduation. The fall semester immediately following graduation is defined as any enrollment that occurs between August 15 and October 31.

- First year after high school graduation: Percentage of high school students who enrolled in a two- or four-year postsecondary institution in the academic year immediately following graduation. The first year after high school includes any enrollment that occurs between August 15 of the graduation year and August 14 of the following year.

- First two years after high school graduation: Percentage of high school students who enrolled in a two- or four-year postsecondary institution in the first two years following graduation. The first two years after high school includes any enrollment that occurs between August 15 of the graduation year and August 14 of the second year.

### Persistence

Persistence from the first to second year of college: Percentage of students enrolled at any time in the first year after high school graduation who remained enrolled in postsecondary education at any time in the second year. This is the percentage of students who re-enrolled at any postsecondary institution, not necessarily the same one they started in. Thus, it is different from the typical measure of retention at the same institution.

### Completion

College completion within six years after high school graduation: Percentage of high school students who attained a degree in a two- or four-year postsecondary institution in the six academic years immediately following graduation. Students are included in this outcome regardless of whether they have enrolled in postsecondary education or not. Only associate’s, bachelor’s, and advanced degrees are counted in these rates. Certificates are not included.

## STEM College Completions

Analysis is based on degree records that were awarded to students within six years of high school graduation. Only associate's, bachelor's, and advanced degrees are considered. Certificates are not included. The field of study, whenever reported by the postsecondary institution, is mapped to the NCES' Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. NCES classifies instructional programs by a six-digit CIP code at the most granular level and organizes them into CIP families by their two-digit prefix.

The definition of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) used in this analysis is based on a listing of six-digit CIP codes used by the National Science Foundation, and it includes the following disciplines:

- Biological and Agricultural Sciences

- Computer Sciences
- Earth, Atmospheric, and Ocean Sciences
- Engineering
- Mathematics
- Physical Sciences
- Psychology
- Social Sciences

If a student is awarded more than one degree and at least one of them is in a STEM discipline, the earliest STEM degree is considered for this analysis.

### Suggested Citation

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