



REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

# Graduation and Dropout Statistics

2018

Authorizing legislation: [RCW 28A.175.010](https://leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.175.010)  
(<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.175.010>)

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## Executive Summary

Graduation and dropout rates are important indicators of the status of K–12 education in Washington. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) reports annually on rates for all students and sub-categories in the online state Report Card.

OSPI uses the “adjusted cohort rate” methodology as required by the U.S. Department of Education. Beginning with the 2016–17 school year results were produced for 4-, 5-, 6- and 7-year cohorts—or groups—of students. A student's cohort is based on the year they enter 9th grade for the first time. The calculation adjusts for students who transfer into a Washington public high school for the first time and join a cohort. Students are removed from the cohort if they transfer out of public school in Washington.

The adjusted cohort method tracks individual students over time and does not rely on estimates. It generally aligns with what most people think of as a graduation rate: Among a group of students who started high school together, what percent graduated in four (or five, or six, or seven) years?

Washington’s 4-year graduation rate is 79.3 percent for the Class of 2017, students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2013–14. The rate is a slight increase from the Class of 2016, which had a 4-year graduation rate of 79.1 percent.

The 5-year graduation rate for students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2012–13 is 82.4 percent. This is an increase from the previous year’s 5-year rate, which was 81.9 percent.

OSPI produced the 6- and 7-year rates for the first time in the 2016–17 school year. The 6-year graduation rate for students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2011–12 is 83.1 percent and the 7-year graduation rate for students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2010–11 is 82.9.

# Introduction

## Purpose

Under the guidelines of state law, [RCW 28A.175.010](#), the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required to report annually on the educational progress of public school students in grades 7–12. [Federal guidelines](#) provided by the U.S. Department of Education, issued under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), require all states to determine adjusted cohort graduation results for students. To meet the state and federal reporting requirements, OSPI prepares an annual report summarizing the enrollment activity of students in school grades 7–12 and adjusted cohort results for students.

## Definitions

**Adjusted Cohort:** A group of students identified as beginning 9th grade in a specified year. Students are included in the cohort based on when they first enter 9th grade, regardless of their expected graduation year. The cohort of entering 9th graders is “adjusted” for transfers in and out of high school through the next four and five years.

**Graduate:** A student who earns a high school diploma, a high school diploma with modifications allowed under a student’s Individualized Education Plan, or an associate degree from a community or technical college.

**Dropout:** A student who leaves school for any reason, except death, before completing school with a high school diploma or transferring to another school with a known exit reason. A student is considered a dropout regardless of when dropping out occurs (i.e., during or between regular school terms). A student who leaves during the year but returns during the reporting period is not considered a dropout. The dropout counts include students who provide a reason for dropping out and those for whom a dropout reason is unknown or not provided.

For information about data collection, calculations, and verification, please see the [2011–12 report](#) which details the graduation formulas.

## Graduation Rates

### Results for Adjusted 4-Year Cohort

The adjusted 4-year cohort graduation rate is calculated using the group of students identified as entering 9th grade for the first time in 2013–14 and who are reported as graduates by the end of 2016–17.

**Table 1: Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (4-year)**

<b>Student Group</b>	Received High School Diploma	<i>Graduated w/ Associates Degree</i>	Total All Graduates	Adjusted Cohort	<b>Adjusted 4-Year Cohort</b>
All Students	64,776	715	65,491	82,544	79.3%
Am. Indian/AK Native	744	3	747	1,238	60.3%
Asian	5,297	62	5,359	6,125	87.5%
Pacific Islander	539	2	541	794	68.1%
Black	2,785	10	2,795	3,909	71.5%
Hispanic	11,907	49	11,956	16,447	72.7%
White	39,278	546	39,824	48,613	81.9%
Two or More Races	4,225	43	4,268	5,353	79.7%
Special Education	6,135	2	6,137	10,336	59.4%
Limited English	3,043	6	3,049	5,274	57.8%
Low Income	29,819	228	30,047	42,941	70.0%
Migrant	1,421	1	1,422	2,086	68.2%
504 Plan	3,986	15	4,001	5,111	78.3%
Homeless	3,057	9	3,066	5,684	53.9%
Female	32,749	443	33,192	40,200	82.6%
Male	32,027	272	32,299	42,344	76.3%

Of the 65,491 students reported as graduates in the 4-year cohort, 439 students were reported as graduating in fewer than four years<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Students who graduate prior to February of the fourth year are defined as graduating in fewer than four years.

## Results for Adjusted 5-Year Cohort

The adjusted 5-year cohort graduation rate is calculated using the group of students identified as entering 9th grade for the first time in 2012–13 and who are reported as graduates by the end of 2016–17. The table below shows the adjusted 5-year rate as well as the 4-year rate for the same cohort. The difference between the two columns represents the percentage of the cohort who graduated in their fifth year of high school.

**Table 2: Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (5-year)**

Student Group	Received High School Diploma	Graduated w/ Associates Degree	Total All Graduates	Adjusted Cohort	(Class of 2016)	
					Adjusted 5-Year Cohort	Adjusted 4-Year Cohort
All Students	66,506	682	67,188	81,526	82.4%	79.1%
Am. Indian/AK Native	843	5	848	1,282	66.1%	60.6%
Asian	5,531	60	5,591	6,141	91.0%	88.6%
Pacific Islander	534	1	535	736	72.7%	68.2%
Black	2,846	11	2,857	3,766	75.9%	70.7%
Hispanic	11,798	62	11,860	15,517	76.4%	72.3%
White	41,009	496	41,505	49,174	84.4%	81.5%
Two or More Races	3,943	47	3,990	4,891	81.6%	77.9%
Special Education	6,443	5	6,448	9,819	65.7%	58.1%
Limited English	3,001	7	3,008	4,618	65.1%	57.6%
Low Income	30,799	220	31,019	42,094	73.7%	69.4%
Migrant	1,529	9	1,538	2,113	72.8%	67.4%
504 Plan	3,835	19	3,854	4,689	82.2%	77.5%
Homeless	3,058	3	3,061	5,281	58.0%	53.2%
Female	33,496	461	33,957	39,820	85.3%	82.4%
Male	33,010	221	33,231	41,742	79.6%	76.0%

Of the 67,188 students reported as graduates in the 5-year cohort, 2,982 students were reported as graduating in the fifth year of the cohort.

The 2016–17 school year is the first year OSPI calculated both a 6- and 7-year adjusted cohort graduation results.

### Results for Adjusted 6-Year Cohort

The adjusted 6-year cohort graduation rate is calculated using the group of students identified as entering 9th grade for the first time in 2011–12 and who are reported as graduates by the end of 2016–17. The table below shows the adjusted 6-year rate as well as the 4-year rate for the same cohort.

**Table 3: Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (6-year)**

Student Group	Received High School Diploma	Graduated w/ Associates Degree	Total All Graduates	Adjusted Cohort	(Class of 2015)	
					Adjusted 6-Year Cohort	Adjusted 4-Year Cohort
All Students	66,665	478	67,143	80,777	83.1%	78.1%
Am. Indian/AK Native	827	3	830	1,296	64.0%	56.4%
Asian	5,570	19	5,589	6,108	91.5%	87.8%
Pacific Islander	541	2	543	740	73.4%	67.0%
Black	2,893	2	2,895	3,806	76.1%	68.8%
Hispanic	11,366	40	11,406	14,880	76.7%	69.6%
White	41,603	386	41,989	49,233	85.3%	80.9%
Two or More Races	3,863	26	3,889	4,665	83.4%	77.9%
Special Education	6,810	2	6,812	9,726	70.0%	57.9%
Limited English	3,118	7	3,125	4,630	67.5%	55.8%
Low Income	31,081	144	31,225	41,840	74.6%	68.0%
Migrant	1,641	10	1,651	2,293	72.0%	64.4%
504 Plan	3,415	9	3,424	4,149	82.5%	76.3%
Homeless	2,706	3	2,709	4,753	57.0%	51.9%
Female	33,703	303	34,006	39,522	86.0%	81.6%
Male	32,962	175	33,137	41,255	80.3%	74.7%

Of the 67,143 students reported as graduates in the 6-year cohort, 1,034 students were reported as graduating in the sixth year of the cohort.



## Results for Adjusted 7-Year Cohort

The adjusted 7-year cohort graduation rate is calculated using the group of students identified as entering 9th grade for the first time in 2010–11 and who are reported as graduates by the end of 2016–17. The table below shows the adjusted 7-year rate as well as the 4-year rate for the same cohort.

**Table 4: Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (7-year)**

Student Group	Received High School Diploma	Graduated w/ Associates Degree	Total All Graduates	Adjusted Cohort	(Class of 2014)	
					Adjusted 7-Year Cohort	Adjusted 4-Year Cohort
All Students	65,393	409	65,802	79,376	82.9%	77.2%
Am. Indian/AK Native	820	3	823	1,327	62.0%	53.7%
Asian	5,503	28	5,531	6,059	91.3%	86.5%
Pacific Islander	488	0	488	670	72.8%	64.6%
Black	2,894	7	2,901	3,829	75.8%	67.8%
Hispanic	10,261	29	10,290	13,727	75.0%	67.3%
White	41,918	322	42,240	49,434	85.4%	80.5%
Two or More Races	3,508	20	3,528	4,305	82.0%	75.5%
Special Education	6,892	3	6,895	9,436	73.1%	55.7%
Limited English	2,915	6	2,921	4,635	66.9%	53.7%
Low Income	29,939	132	30,071	40,435	74.4%	66.4%
Migrant	1,482	4	1,486	2,054	72.3%	63.6%
504 Plan	3,092	5	3,097	3,761	82.3%	74.8%
Homeless	2,550	2	2,552	4,374	58.3%	46.1%
Female	33,017	275	33,292	38,850	85.7%	81.0%
Male	32,376	134	32,510	40,526	80.2%	73.6%

Of the 65,802 students reported as graduates in the 7-year cohort, 678 students were reported as graduating in the seventh year of the cohort.

## Dropout Rates

Students in an adjusted cohort may be in one of three categories: graduate, dropout, or still enrolled. In other words, a student who didn't graduate may still be enrolled in school and thus wouldn't be reflected in the dropout rate.

### Results for Adjusted 4-Year Cohort

For students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2013–14 and who are reported as dropouts within the 4-year timeframe, the table below shows the year in which they dropped out. For all students, the 2017 4-year adjusted cohort dropout rate was 11.5 percent. This is an increase of 0.3 percent from the 2016 4-year rate of 11.2 percent. Across the various subgroups of students, American Indian/Alaskan Native students had the highest 4-year dropout rate, 25.7 percent. Asian students had the lowest 4-year dropout rate, 6.1 percent.

**Table 5: Adjusted Cohort Dropouts (4-year)**

Student Group	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total Dropouts	(2017) Adjusted 4-Year Cohort Dropout Rate
All Students	438	885	2,169	5,986	9,478	<b>11.5%</b>
Am. Indian/AK Native	14	32	75	197	318	<b>25.7%</b>
Asian	33	43	71	228	375	<b>6.1%</b>
Pacific Islander	9	13	36	84	142	<b>17.9%</b>
Black	26	53	107	376	562	<b>14.4%</b>
Hispanic	121	249	582	1,662	2,614	<b>15.9%</b>
White	209	447	1,161	3,026	4,843	<b>10.0%</b>
Two or More Races	26	48	137	407	618	<b>11.5%</b>
Special Education	54	142	432	1,111	1,739	<b>16.8%</b>
Limited English	80	170	285	703	1,238	<b>23.5%</b>
Low Income	297	655	1,717	4,707	7,376	<b>17.2%</b>
Migrant	38	49	106	239	432	<b>20.7%</b>
504 Plan	8	35	113	424	580	<b>11.3%</b>
Homeless	41	86	344	1,092	1,563	<b>27.5%</b>
Female	197	400	858	2,444	3,899	<b>9.7%</b>
Male	241	485	1,311	3,542	5,579	<b>13.2%</b>

## Results for Adjusted 5-Year Cohort

For students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2012–13 and who are reported as dropouts within the 5-year timeframe, the table below shows the year in which they dropped out. The 2017 5-year adjusted cohort dropout rate was 14.2 percent. This rate decreased 0.6 percent from the 2015 5-year rate of 14.8 percent. Females had a 5-year dropout rate of 11.8 percent. Males had a 5-year dropout rate of 16.5 percent.

**Table 6: Adjusted Cohort Dropouts (5-year)**

<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Total Dropouts</b>	<b>(2017) Adjusted 5-Year Dropout Rate</b>
All Students	425	881	1,986	4,694	3,604	11,590	<b>14.2%</b>
Am. Indian/AK Native	11	34	77	145	103	370	<b>28.9%</b>
Asian	354	41	78	152	111	417	<b>6.8%</b>
Pacific Islander	7	11	20	64	69	171	<b>23.2%</b>
Black	26	42	85	277	285	715	<b>19.0%</b>
Hispanic	122	265	496	1,222	960	3,065	<b>19.8%</b>
White	205	435	1,116	2,534	1,823	6,113	<b>12.4%</b>
Two or More Races	19	53	114	297	242	725	<b>14.8%</b>
Special Education	46	144	355	863	735	2,143	<b>21.8%</b>
Limited English	61	156	218	475	403	1,313	<b>28.4%</b>
Low Income	258	653	1,528	3,649	2,995	9,083	<b>21.6%</b>
Migrant	232	49	89	189	149	499	<b>23.6%</b>
504 Plan	6	36	102	234	260	638	<b>13.6%</b>
Homeless	21	88	243	730	770	1,852	<b>35.1%</b>
Female	218	359	789	1,855	1,496	4,717	<b>11.8%</b>
Male	207	522	1,197	2,839	2,108	6,873	<b>16.5%</b>

The Adjusted Cohort Dropout Rates for both the 6- and 7-year cohorts are summarized below. Data displaying the number of dropouts by year and category can be found on the OSPI [Data and Reports](#) webpage.

### Results for Adjusted 6-Year Cohort

The table below shows the dropout rate for students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2011–12 and who are reported as dropouts within the 6-year timeframe. For all students, the 2017 6-year adjusted cohort dropout rate was 15.3 percent.

**Table 7: Adjusted Cohort Dropouts (6-year)**

Student Group	(Class of 2015)			
	Total Dropouts	Total Adjusted Cohort	Adjusted 6-Year Cohort Dropout Rate	Adjusted 4-Year Cohort Dropout Rate
All Students	12,397	80,777	15.3%	11.9%
Am. Indian/AK Native	439	1,296	33.9%	24.5%
Asian	419	6,108	6.9%	5.3%
Pacific Islander	188	740	25.4%	18.3%
Black	798	3,806	21.0%	14.8%
Hispanic	3,207	14,880	21.6%	16.4%
White	6,633	49,233	13.5%	10.7%
Two or More Races	703	4,665	15.1%	11.4%
Special Education	2,300	9,726	23.6%	17.9%
Limited English	1,381	4,630	29.8%	22.7%
Low Income	9,684	41,840	23.1%	17.6%
Migrant	603	2,293	26.3%	19.9%
504 Plan	630	4,149	15.2%	10.6%
Homeless	1,861	4,753	39.2%	28.9%
Female	4,987	39,522	12.6%	10.0%
Male	7,410	41,255	18.0%	13.7%

## Results for Adjusted 7-Year Cohort

The table below shows the dropout rate for students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2010–11 and who are reported as dropouts within the 7-year timeframe. For all students, the 2017 7-year adjusted cohort dropout rate was 17.0 percent.

**Table 8: Adjusted Cohort Dropouts (7-year)**

Student Group	Total Dropouts	Total Adjusted Cohort	(Class of 2014)	
			Adjusted 7-Year Cohort Dropout Rate	Adjusted 4-Year Cohort Dropout Rate
All Students	13,460	79,376	<b>17.0%</b>	12.3%
Am. Indian/AK Native	502	1,327	<b>37.8%</b>	26.6%
Asian	522	6,059	<b>8.6%</b>	6.0%
Pacific Islander	180	670	<b>26.9%</b>	19.0%
Black	923	3,829	<b>24.1%</b>	15.1%
Hispanic	3,413	13,727	<b>24.9%</b>	17.7%
White	7,145	49,434	<b>14.5%</b>	10.8%
Two or More Races	767	4,305	<b>17.8%</b>	13.3%
Special Education	2,501	9,436	<b>26.5%</b>	18.2%
Limited English	1,434	4,365	<b>32.9%</b>	23.5%
Low Income	10,286	40,435	<b>25.4%</b>	18.2%
Migrant	564	2,054	<b>27.5%</b>	19.9%
504 Plan	659	3,761	<b>17.5%</b>	11.9%
Homeless	1,802	4,374	<b>41.2%</b>	31.5%
Female	5,500	38,850	<b>14.2%</b>	10.5%
Male	7,960	40,526	<b>19.6%</b>	14.0%

## Results for Annual Dropouts Grades 7–12

The table below represents students who were enrolled in grades 7–12 during the 2016–17 school year and whose final status after that year was dropout. Note the annual dropout data below is based on students’ reported grade levels and not on graduation cohorts since those are not established until students enter 9th grade for the first time. This dropout rate is an annual snapshot for the 2016–17 school year for all students, rather than a look over multiple years for a specific group of students. Students reported in grades 7–12 with an expected year of graduation of 2017 or later, are included in this dropout rate.

**Table 9: Annual Dropout Rates**

<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>Grade 10</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>	<b>Grade 12</b>
All Students	2.0%	2.8%	2.1%	3.2%	4.7%	7.6%
Am. Indian/AK Native	4.0%	5.9%	5.8%	8.0%	9.7%	16.8%
Asian	1.7%	2.5%	1.5%	1.4%	1.9%	3.7%
Pacific Islander	2.8%	5.7%	3.0%	5.4%	7.6%	11.2%
Black	4.5%	6.9%	2.9%	4.7%	6.6%	10.7%
Hispanic	2.0%	2.8%	2.8%	4.1%	6.6%	10.9%
White	1.7%	2.2%	1.7%	2.8%	4.1%	6.4%
Two or More Races	2.3%	3.8%	2.4%	4.1%	5.3%	8.3%
Special Education	2.3%	3.1%	2.8%	4.4%	6.6%	10.3%
Limited English	2.3%	3.7%	4.0%	6.2%	9.1%	16.6%
Low Income	2.6%	3.5%	3.1%	4.9%	7.1%	11.2%
Migrant	1.7%	2.6%	3.4%	5.3%	7.6%	12.5%
504 Plan	1.9%	2.4%	1.6%	3.0%	4.3%	6.2%
Homeless	6.5%	9.9%	5.9%	11.1%	12.6%	18.5%
Female	2.0%	2.8%	2.1%	2.9%	4.1%	6.3%
Male	2.0%	2.8%	2.1%	3.6%	5.3%	8.8%

Table 10 shows the number of students associated with each dropout reason, by grade. It also shows the percent of dropouts overall with that given reason code. The most common categories associated with dropouts are unknown and unconfirmed transfers.

**Table 10: Annual Dropouts—Reasons for Dropping Out**

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total Dropouts	Percent of Total
Attended School 4 Years, Did Not Graduate	0	0	1	5	20	736	762	4.2%
Lacked Progress or Poor Grades	6	9	55	104	323	563	1,060	5.9%
School Not for Me, Chose to Stay Home	40	53	104	189	343	535	1,264	7.0%
Married, Family Support, or Child Related	0	3	6	7	16	33	65	0.4%
Offered Training or Chose to Work	0	0	8	27	66	120	221	1.2%
Left to Take GED	0	0	2	34	167	175	378	2.1%
Expelled or Suspended	6	12	12	11	27	22	90	0.5%
Drug or Alcohol Related	0	3	3	2	6	13	27	0.2%
Unconfirmed Transfer	753	937	588	786	818	665	4,547	25.3%
Dropped for Other or Unknown Reason	775	1,172	927	1,469	2,160	3,051	9,554	53.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,580</b>	<b>2,189</b>	<b>1,706</b>	<b>2,634</b>	<b>3,946</b>	<b>5,913</b>	<b>17,968</b>	

## Conclusion and Next Steps

At the direction of the U.S. Department of Education, Washington uses the adjusted cohort graduation calculation to track a single cohort of students over time. This report summarizes the graduation rates as of the 2016–17 school year for the four, five, six, and seven year graduation cohorts.

For the Class of 2017 (students who first began 9th grade in 2013–14), the 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is 79.3 percent, which is 0.2 percentage points higher than the Class of 2016 graduation rate (79.1 percent). An additional 2,982 students from the Class of 2016 graduated during their fifth year of high school (2016–17) for a total 5-year rate of 82.4 percent. With an adjusted cohort rate of 83.1 percent, the Class of 2015 had an increase of 1.2 percent in their sixth year (2016–17), or 5.0 percent more students graduating after the four year timeframe. The Class of 2014 had a rate of 82.9 percent graduating after seven years (2016–17), which is a total of 5.7 percent of students graduating in the extended timeframe.

**Table 11: Summary of Four-Year and Extended Graduation Rates**

Class	First Time	4-Year	5-Year	6-Year	7-Year
	9th Grade				
2017	2013–14	79.3% (65,491)	Avail 2018–19	Avail 2019–20	Avail 2020–21
2016	2012–13	79.1% (64,126)	82.4% (67,188)	Avail 2018–19	Avail 2019–20
2015	2011–12	78.1% (62,598)	81.9% (65,959)	83.1% (67,143)	Avail 2018–19
2014	2010–11	77.2% (60,680)	79.9% (64,083)	Not Available <sup>2</sup>	82.9% (65,802)

<sup>2</sup> The 6-year adjusted cohort graduation rate was not calculated for the class of 2014.



# APPENDICES

Appendices A through N are available as electronic files under *Graduation and Dropout Statistics* on OSPI's [Data and Reports webpage](#).

- Appendix A: State Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year and 5-Year)
- Appendix B: County Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year)
- Appendix C: District Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year)
- Appendix D: School Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year)
- Appendix E: County Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 5-Year)
- Appendix F: District Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 5-Year)
- Appendix G: School Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 5-Year)
- Appendix H: County Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year)
- Appendix I: District Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year)
- Appendix J: School Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 4-Year)
- Appendix K: County Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 5-Year)
- Appendix L: District Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 5-Year)
- Appendix M: School Level (2016 Adjusted Cohort 5-Year)
- Appendix N: State Level Subgroups vs NonSubgroups
- Appendix O: Estimated Benefits from Changes in Washington State's High School Graduation Rate

## **Appendix O: Estimated Benefits from Changes in Washington State's High School Graduation Rate**

This appendix was prepared by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) in December 2017.

The 2010 Legislature directed WSIPP to “calculate an annual estimate of the savings resulting from any change compared to the prior school year in the extended graduation rate.”<sup>3</sup>

To produce this estimate, WSIPP uses its economic model that assesses benefits and costs of public policies and outcomes. Monetary estimates are calculated for three perspectives: 1) benefits that accrue solely to high school graduates, 2) benefits received by taxpayers from having other people graduate from high school, and 3) any other measurable (non-graduate and non-taxpayer) monetary benefits. For technical details about the WSIPP model, visit the [WSIPP Benefit Cost Technical Documentation](#).

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<sup>3</sup> RCW 28A.175.010 (8)

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) calculates a five-year high school graduation rate, which includes students who take more than four years to graduate. In the 2015–16 school year, this graduation rate was 81.9 percent; in 2016–17, the rate was 82.4 percent, an increase of 0.5 percentage points, representing 441 additional graduates (see Exhibit 1).

**Change in the Five-Year High School Graduation Rate in Washington State, 2015–16 to 2016–17**

	<b>Five-year Graduation Rate</b>	<b>Students in Cohort</b>	<b>Graduates (Rate * Cohort)</b>
<b>Actual Graduates</b> (2015–16 rate)	82.4%	81,526	67,188
<b>Hypothetical Graduates</b> (based on the 2014–15 rate)	81.9%	81,526	66,747
<b>Difference</b>			441

*Totals may not add due to rounding.*

Using WSIPP’s benefit-cost model, we estimate that the per-student monetary benefit associated with graduating from high school is \$581,156 (see Exhibit 2). The benefits accrue over an individual’s lifetime and the dollar amount is in net present value terms, in 2016 dollars.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> To calculate net present value, we use a .035 discount rate.

**The Value of Graduation from High School**  
**Per-Student Estimate Benefits, Lifetime, Net Present Value, 2016 Dollars**

	<b>Benefits to Graduates</b>	<b>Benefits to taxpayers</b>	<b>Other beneficiaries</b>	<b>Total benefits</b>
Total	\$279,039	\$160,949	\$141,169	\$581,156
<b>Components of the Benefits</b>				
Higher earnings	\$312,909	\$142,099	\$174,672	\$629,681
Lower crime	\$0	\$892	\$2,651	\$3,543
Health care costs	(\$9,419)	\$34,197	(\$20,716)	\$4,062
Costs of higher education	(\$24,452)	(\$16,239)	(\$15,439)	(\$56,130)

*Source: Washington State Institute for Public Policy Benefit-Cost Model*

*Totals may not add due to rounding*

About half of the benefits go to the graduates themselves in the form of increased earnings, for which they pay taxes (represented as benefits to taxpayers). Some of these gains in earnings come from the greater rate at which high school graduates attend postsecondary institutions. The costs incurred in higher education to achieve the increased earnings are distributed across the funders of higher education. Graduating from high school is also associated with less crime. Additionally, individuals who graduate from high school are more likely to use private health care services and less likely to use publicly funded health care services.

For the 441 additional graduates in 2016–17, the total estimated monetary benefit is \$256.3 million.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> 441 x \$581,156 = \$256,289,955

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