High School Graduation in California

**High School Graduates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>50%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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</table>

**Definition:** Percentage of public high school students who graduate from high school, based on the four-year cohort graduation rate (e.g., among California students who started high school in 2011, 82.3% graduated with their class in 2015).

**Data Source:** California Dept. of Education, California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) (May 2016).

**Students Not Completing High School: 2015; Showing Counties**

**What It Is**

Kidsdata.org shows the California Dept. of Education’s four-year cohort graduation rate, which measures the number and percentage of students who graduate from high school with their class. These data also are available by gender and by race/ethnicity. In addition, kidsdata.org shows the California Dept. of Education’s four-year adjusted cohort dropout rate, which reflects the number and percentage of public high school students who exit grades 9-12 without a high school diploma, GED, or special education certificate of completion, and who do not remain enrolled after the end of the fourth year. These data are provided by race/ethnicity, as well.

**Why This Topic Is Important**

Dropping out of high school is associated with a range of adverse life outcomes (1). Young people who do not complete high school are more likely to struggle with employment, live in poverty, be dependent on welfare benefits, have poor physical and mental health, and engage in criminal activity than those with higher education levels (1). Though many individuals who do not receive a high school diploma go on to earn an equivalency degree, such as a GED, this credential also is associated with lower earning potential than a traditional diploma (2). The economic consequences of dropping out of high school do not stop with the individual; society also pays a high price (1). For example, dropouts from the nation’s class of 2011 will cost the U.S. economy an estimated $154 billion over the course of their lifetimes (1). Dropout rates also are related to higher rates of imprisonment. A report from the California Attorney General estimates that students who do not complete high school are eight times more likely to be incarcerated than those who graduate (3).

**How Children Are Faring**

In California, 82% of students who started high school in 2011 graduated with their class in 2015, up from 75% of the 2006-2010 cohort. Among counties with data in 2015, seven had graduation rates of at least 90%. Across counties and years, female students have higher graduation rates than their male counterparts.

According to 2015 data, more than 52,000 California students who started high school in 2011 exited before graduating—about 1 in every 9 students. Dropout rates vary at the county and school district levels, as well as by racial/ethnic group. Generally, African
American/black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students have higher dropout rates than Asian American, white, and Filipino students.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic: https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/21/high-school-graduation/summary