KidsData

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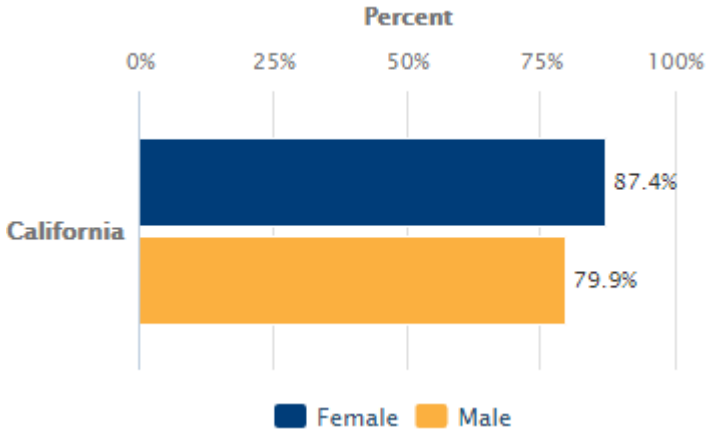
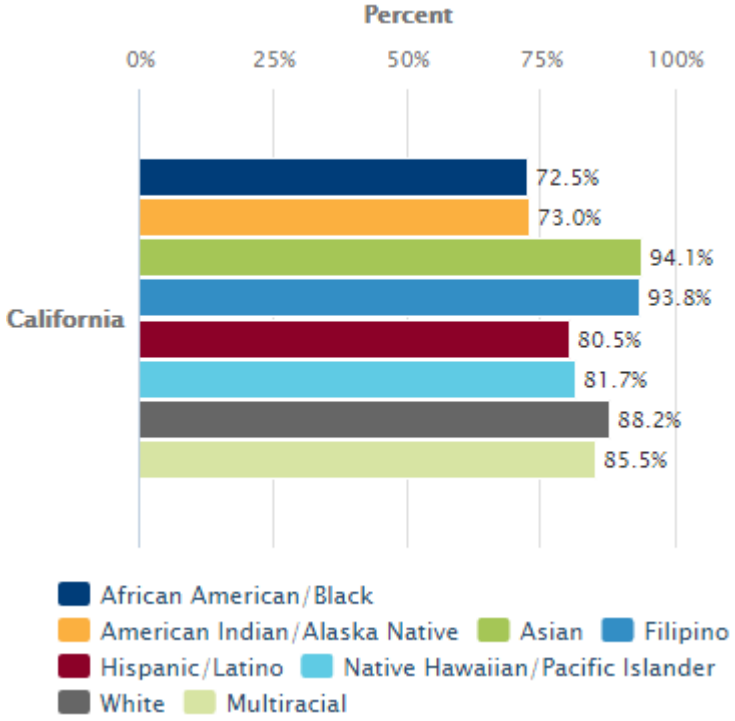
High School Graduation in California

Percentage of Students in the Graduating Class Receiving a High School Diploma, by Gender: 2021



Definition: Percentage of public school students from the graduating class who receive a high school diploma, by gender (e.g., in 2021, 87.4% of female students from the graduating class in California graduated high school).
Data Source: California Dept. of Education, Graduates by Race and Gender (Jun. 2017) & Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and Outcome Data (May 2022).

Percentage of Students in the Graduating Class Receiving a High School Diploma, by Race/Ethnicity



Definition: Percentage of public school students from the graduating class who receive a high school diploma, by race/ethnicity (e.g., in 2021, 80.5% of Hispanic/Latino students from the graduating class in California graduated high school).
Data Source: California Dept. of Education, Graduates by Race and Gender (Jun. 2017) & Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and Outcome Data (May 2022).

What It Is

On kidsdata.org, high school graduation is measured by the number and percentage of public school students from the graduating class (the four-year adjusted cohort) who receive a regular high school diploma. These data are available for the state, counties, and school districts overall and, at the state and county level, by gender and by race/ethnicity.

Kidsdata.org also provides the number and percentage of students who do not complete high school with their graduating class, overall and by race/ethnicity.

Why This Topic Is Important

Graduating from high school is associated with a range of positive life outcomes, from better employment and income prospects to better health and life expectancy. Although many young people who do not receive a high school diploma go on to earn an equivalency degree, such as a GED, this credential is associated with lower earning potential and generally poorer health outcomes than a standard diploma.

The benefits of graduating from high school do not stop with the individual; society also benefits in significant ways. An analysis of a single U.S. graduating class estimates that if the national graduation rate were to reach 90%, then an additional 250,000 young people would complete high school, with their earnings increasing by a combined $3.1 billion annually. It also is estimated that each young person in the U.S. who drops out of high school costs society, over their lifetime, an estimated $272,000 more than a peer who completes high school, due to their lower tax contributions, higher risk of criminal activity, and increased reliance on welfare, Medicaid, and Medicare.

Community, school, and family circumstances influence the likelihood that a young person will complete high school. Students with lower family income—who tend to have access to fewer educational resources and attend lower-performing schools—are more likely to drop out of high school than their higher-income peers. These factors, together with lower neighborhood stability and safety, are linked to higher dropout rates for students of color when compared with white youth.

How Children Are Faring

The graduation rate among California high school students from the class of 2021 was 84%. Across counties with data, nine had rates above 90%, whereas five were lower than 75%. Statewide, girls (87% in 2021) are more likely

Percentage of Students in the Graduating Class Receiving a High School Diploma: 2021

Locations	Percent
California	83.6%
Alameda County	86.9%
Contra Costa County	89.6%
Fresno County	81.1%
Kern County	83.6%
Los Angeles County	82.4%
Orange County	90.8%
Riverside County	89.9%
Sacramento County	80.6%
San Bernardino County	83.5%
San Diego County	82.5%
Santa Clara County	86.2%

Definition: Percentage of public school students from the graduating class who receive a high school diploma (e.g., in 2021, 83.6% of California students from the graduating class graduated high school).
Data Source: California Dept. of Education, Graduates by Race and Gender (Jun. 2017) & Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and Outcome Data (May 2022).

to graduate high school with their class than their male peers (80% in 2021).

More than 47,000 students from California's class of 2021 did not complete high school with their cohort—almost 1 in every 10 students. The percentage of students not completing high school with their class also varies widely at the local level, with rates across school districts with 2021 data ranging from fewer than 1 in 50 students to more than 1 in 3.

Gaps in high school completion by race/ethnicity widened in 2021. Compared with 2020, graduation rates among African American/black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students fell in 2021, while rates for Asian, Filipino, white, and multiracial students remained level or increased. African American/black and American Indian/Alaska Native students graduated high school at rates more than 20 percentage points lower than their Asian and Filipino classmates in 2021, and were more than twice as likely to exit before completing high school when compared with white and multiracial students.

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

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