High School Graduation in California

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 than a standard diploma.

The benefits of graduating from high school do not stop with the individual; society also benefits in significant ways. For example, if the U.S. reached a 90% graduation rate for just one class of students, it would increase annual earnings by an estimated $3.1 billion. High school graduates also are more likely to vote and less likely to need social services or engage in criminal activity. A recent study estimates that students who drop out of high school are over three times more likely to be arrested by age 18 than those who graduate.

How Children Are Faring
The graduation rate among California high school students from the class of 2020 was 84%. Across counties with data, 12 had rates above 90%, while four were lower than 75%. Statewide, girls are more likely to graduate high school with their class than are boys, as are Asian, Filipino, and white students when compared with their peers in other groups.

More than 43,000 students from California’s class of 2020 did not complete high school with their cohort—approximately 1 in every 11 students. The rate of exit before completing high school varies widely by region and race/ethnicity; e.g., among groups with data from the 2020 class, the percentage of African American/black and American Indian/Alaska Native students not completing high school was nearly double the percentage of white students and more than three times that for Asian and
Percentage of Students Not Completing High School, by Race/Ethnicity: 2020

**Definition:** Percentage of public school students who do not complete high school with their graduating class, by race/ethnicity (e.g., in 2020, 9.8% of Hispanic/Latino students from the graduating class in California did not complete high school).


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