



Recognizing Students' Needs to Improve High School Graduation Rates
2017-18 School Year Update

We know a lot about who is dropping out of school in Michigan and whose graduation chances are improving.

- ✓ The good news: Significantly fewer young people are dropping out before completing four years of high school.
- ✓ The bad news: Nearly one in every ten students who should have graduated in 2018 left high school without a diploma and this rate remains significantly higher for Black and Hispanic than for white students, and higher for students facing a variety of challenges, like poverty, disability, migrant status or limited English proficiency, homelessness and foster care.
- ✓ The potential opportunity: Increasing numbers of students are remaining in school for more than four years, where possible, to keep moving toward a high school credential. Fortunately, higher shares of many youth of color and those facing specific challenges like limited English proficiency and disability are still connected to school after four years, but need more time to finish. Others are not as likely to remain connected, but still benefit from additional years of high school, including those experiencing economic disadvantage and homelessness.

	On-Track Graduated			Dropout			Off-Track Continuing		
	2007	2018	2007-18 % Change	2007	2018	2007-18 % Change	2007	2018	2007-18 % Change
All Students	75%	80%	7%	15%	9%	-42%	9%	10%	12%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	66%	77%	16%	19%	10%	-45%	13%	11%	-12%
Asian	85%	91%	7%	10%	4%	-61%	4%	4%	12%
Black or African American	56%	69%	22%	28%	14%	-49%	15%	16%	7%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	78%	85%	9%	13%	n/a	n/a	6%	9%	47%
White	82%	84%	2%	11%	7%	-38%	7%	8%	20%
Hispanic or Latino	58%	73%	26%	29%	13%	-55%	12%	13%	5%
Multiracial	69%	75%	8%	17%	11%	-36%	10%	13%	35%
Economically Disadvantaged	57%	68%	19%	25%	14%	-43%	17%	16%	-5%
Limited English Proficient	70%	69%	-1%	20%	15%	-26%	10%	14%	40%
Migrant Education	57%	66%	16%	31%	18%	-40%	11%	n/a	n/a
Students with Disabilities	61%	57%	-7%	19%	14%	-29%	19%	23%	23%
Students Experiencing Homelessness*	51%	55%	7%	17%	20%	17%	30%	24%	-20%
Students Experiencing Foster Care**	n/a	40%	n/a	n/a	27%	n/a	n/a	30%	n/a
*Trend for homeless students, 2011-2018									
**Information for students experiencing foster care only available for 2018									

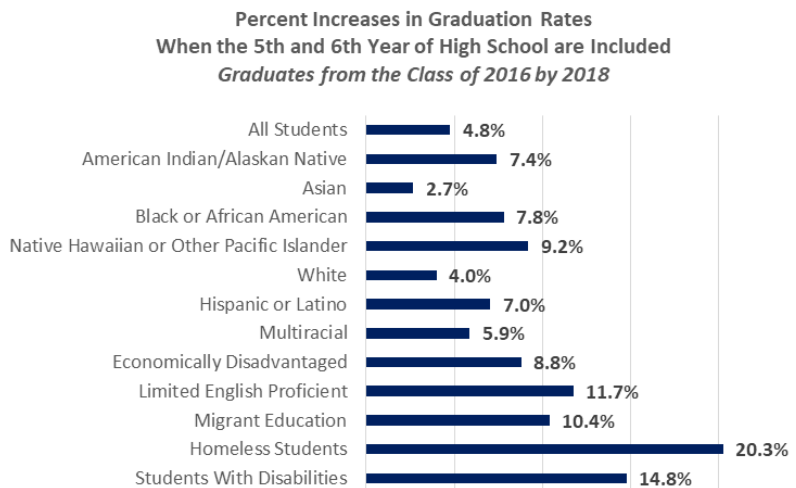
Source: Four-year Cohort Graduation and Dropout Reports, 2019 CEPI <https://www.mischooldata.org/>

Definitions: *On-Track Graduated:* Students who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less. *Dropout:* Students who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year cohort period, or whose whereabouts are unknown; *Off-Track Continuing:* Students who did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school. Percentages do not add to 100 due to Other Completers (GED, etc.) who are not included in this analysis.

There is strong research that allows us to predict which students are at-risk of dropping out.

- ✓ Students facing personal and educational obstacles are much more likely to not complete school. When young people fall behind in skills or credits, there are limited options for them to catch up. Traditional school days and years are not always successful in assisting and reengaging them, yet few alternative tools and academic pathway exist, especially for students who face extreme mobility through foster care or homelessness
- ✓ School discipline policies, lack of trauma informed practice and a lack of consistent attention to young people experiencing instability at home and in schools often contribute to student disengagement and lost credits.

Additional time in high school improves graduation rates for everybody. Graduation rates increased for all groups after a fifth or sixth year of high school. Those additional years are significantly more important for many students of color and those with other challenges.



Source: Four-year Cohort Graduation and Dropout Reports, 2019 CEPI
<https://www.mischooldata.org/>

High school graduation must be part of budget and policy conversation. A high school diploma is essential to future educational attainment, employment opportunities and lifelong success. Actions needed include:

Support multiple pathways to graduation that provide more time and flexibility for students. Michigan law allows state payments that allow for additional time beyond a traditional 4-years of high school. Improve support for the paths we currently employ, including alternative, adult and community education options, community college and workforce partnerships.

Invest in integrated student services strategies from cradle to career. Young people face barriers to graduation that education alone cannot remove. Investments are necessary not only in the quality of K-12 systems, but also in family literacy, parent support, high quality early education, expanded learning programs in K-12, physical and mental health services, specific initiatives for students experiencing homelessness and foster care, and meaningful education reform through career or post-secondary.

Promote policy and practice that recognize student trauma. Any efforts to improve graduation rates must address the challenges students and their families face. This includes basic needs outside the classroom, but also other unresolved or continuing issues including the mental and behavioral health of students and caregivers; family and neighborhood violence and loss; and other traumatic experiences that clearly impact their ability to excel in the classroom. Effective trauma training leads to diminished disciplinary actions and better outcomes for students.

Support programs that build skills of parents to assist. Youth need skilled caregivers at home as well as school to help them navigate high school and their postsecondary decision making. Ensuring that caregivers have literacy competency and have completed high school themselves assists young people in their high school completion and other goal setting and attainment.