The early years of a child’s life lay the foundation for lifelong success. Ensuring opportunity for each and every child’s educational achievement is critical. This begins with quality prenatal care and continues through the early elementary years. With a strong and healthy beginning, children can more easily stay on track to remain in school and graduate on time, pursue postsecondary education and training and successfully transition to adulthood.
Delaware shifted to a new method of calculating graduation rates in the 2009/10 school year. Although the change in methodology prevents long-term comparisons, the new method provides a more accurate picture of how many Delaware students are graduating from high school on time. Dropout rates in Delaware can be reliably compared back to the 2001/02 school year, providing a slightly longer-term perspective on how many Delaware students do not complete high school. Recent data show that Delaware’s on-time graduation rate is improving. Correspondingly, the state’s dropout rate is showing a long-term reduction.

**Why Does it Matter?**

While no guarantee to success, a high school diploma does open doors that lead to long-term career opportunities that those without the diploma may not have available. Students who graduate from high school on time have many more choices in young adulthood. They are more likely to pursue postsecondary education and training, make healthier decisions and engage in less risky behaviors. They are also more employable and have higher incomes than students who fail to graduate.

Nationally, students of color are more likely to drop out of school due to several factors including a higher likelihood of living in poverty and an increased risk of experiencing punitive academic or behavioral interventions, including suspensions and expulsions.

Like the nation, Delaware’s dropout rate reveals racial and ethnic disparity, with students of color more likely to drop out than white students. The good news is that as the state’s dropout rate has decreased over time, data illustrate a simultaneous narrowing of racial and ethnic disparity among dropouts.

**Next Steps**

In order to make obtaining a high school diploma achievable for all students, it is essential that we provide schools, educators and parents the resources they need to successfully support students and effectively intervene when a student is at risk of dropping out. Trauma informed interventions which are restorative rather than punitive are one part of a larger strategy to keep students engaged in their learning.

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**Delaware Graduation Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Years</th>
<th>Percentage of Public School Students Graduating on Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/10</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/13</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/14</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/15</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/16</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/17</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Delaware Department of Education

Note: Delaware uses the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, which measures the number and percentage of cohort members who earned a regular high school diploma within four years or less.

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**Graduation Rates**

Delaware, School Year 2017/18

| Percentage of June Graduates Compared to the 9th Grade Class Four Years Previous |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| All Students                    | Black                           | Hispanic                        | White                           | Female                          | Male                            | Gender                          |
|                                 | 86.7%                           | 83.7%                           | 83.3%                           | 88.9%                           | 84.7%                           | 77.9%                           | 89.9%                           | 69.8%                           |

Note: Graduation Rate – Delaware uses the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, which measures the number and percentage of cohort members who earned a regular high school diploma within four years or less.

Source: Delaware Department of Education
**Public High School Dropouts**

Grades 9–12, Delaware by Race and Ethnicity

- **Delaware All**
- **Hispanic**
- **Black**
- **White/Other**

**School Years**

- 01/02
- 02/03
- 03/04
- 04/05
- 05/06
- 06/07
- 07/08
- 08/09
- 09/10
- 10/11
- 11/12
- 12/13
- 13/14
- 14/15
- 15/16
- 16/17
- 17/18

**Percentage of Students who Dropped Out of All Students**

- **Delaware All**: 1.7
- **Hispanic**: 2.5
- **Black**: 2.0
- **White/Other**: 1.3

Note: Dropout – A 2014–15 dropout is an individual who was enrolled at the end of the 2013–14 school year, or at any time during the 2014–15 school year, and is no longer in school, has not graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved educational program; and does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions:

- Documentation proving transfer to another public school district, private school, or state- or district-approved education program or temporary absence due to suspension or school-approved illness; or
- Death.

Source: Delaware Department of Education

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**Dropout Rates**

**Race/Ethnicity**

**School Year 2017/18**

- **Delaware**
  - All – 1.7
  - White/Other – 1.3
  - Hispanic – 2.5
  - Black – 2.0

- **New Castle County**
  - All – 1.5
  - White/Other – 1.0
  - Hispanic – 1.7
  - Black – 2.1

- **Kent County**
  - All – 1.6
  - White/Other – 1.5
  - Hispanic – 2.2
  - Black – 1.6

- **Sussex County**
  - All – 2.2
  - White/Other – 1.4
  - Hispanic – 4.2
  - Black – 2.0

**Delaware Average**: 1.7

Source: Delaware Department of Education

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**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION/DROPOUTS TIMELINE**

- **1994**: Delaware starts to report dropout rates in compliance with the National Center for Educational Statistics requirements
- **2001**: Delaware’s Department of Education (DOE) implements the Dropout Verification System which increases the accuracy of student placement and enrollment data
- **2015**: DOE introduces Delaware’s College Success Report which provides data related to students’ college and career readiness
- **2017**: Delaware’s graduation rate reaches a record high of 86.7%
- **2018**: Delaware legislatively mandates that any student over the age of 16 who wishes to leave school prior to graduation must obtain written consent from a parent or guardian and attend an exit interview to discuss the negative impacts associated with dropping out of school
- **RESILIENCE**: Implement restorative practices in schools in conjunction with Delaware’s Trauma-Informed status to further reduce dropout rates/increase graduation rates

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**PARENT CONSENT**

Delaware's Department of Education (DOE) implements the Dropout Verification System which increases the accuracy of student placement and enrollment data.

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**COLLEGE**

DOE introduces Delaware’s College Success Report which provides data related to students’ college and career readiness.

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**GRADUATION**

Delaware’s graduation rate reaches a record high of 86.7%.
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The photographs in this data snapshot do not necessarily represent the situations described.