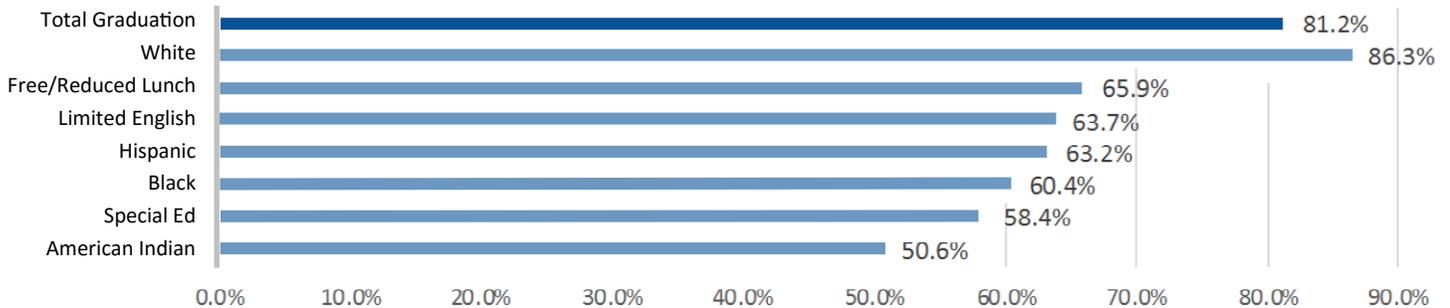


GradMinnesota



Call to Action & Policy Recommendations

MINNESOTA'S GRADUATION RATES AND GAPS



The Problem

In 2014, the Minnesota Department of Education four year cohort graduation rate for Minnesota reached 81.2%. Over 5,000 students dropped out or had unknown status. Minnesota continues to have one of the worst achievement gaps in the country between whites and students of color, as well as major differences in high school graduation rates based on race, special needs and socio-economic factors. GradMinnesota's vision is that **ALL young people in Minnesota graduate from high school prepared for success in postsecondary opportunities, work, civic engagement and life.** Our recommendations focus on ensuring that Minnesota attains a 90% graduation rate for all students by 2020.

The Cost

The U.S. Census estimates that high school dropouts will earn \$630,000 less than high school graduates over their working lives. For Minnesota, The Alliance for Excellent Education (2013) projected that if a graduation rate of 90% had been reached in 2012 - an increase of 4,700 graduates - realized benefits would have included \$62 million in increased annual earnings and \$7.6 million in increased annual state/local tax revenue.

See bit.ly/1OyyAMA for more information.

The Urgency

We cannot afford to lose these students. Research shows the financial benefits of investing in dropout prevention policies and practices will yield substantial benefits for the state in terms of increased revenue and societal well-being. Unfortunately, some of the very systems, policies and practices we currently have in place actively contribute to the disparities in outcomes for our youth. Achieving a 90% graduation rate by 2020 will require intentionally communicating and incorporating active involvement from critical partners including representatives and leaders from the local community, student parent organizations, parents and families, local government, law enforcement, juvenile corrections, tribal organizations, local mental and physical health organizations, nonprofit and social service organizations, faith organizations and young people themselves.

Call To Action & Recommendations

While there are successful evidence-informed efforts working in schools, districts and communities around the state, changes in policy and practice are necessary to bring those efforts to scale and assure that all students have access to an education that prepares them for post-secondary and career success. Over the last year, representatives from over 50 state agencies, associations, schools and community organizations have been collaborating to analyze the issues, determine programs and practices that work, and identify policy changes necessary to close Minnesota's student achievement gap and attain a 90% high school graduation rate by 2020 (see *GradMinnesota Contributors and Participants for those spearheading this work*). Investment in these recommended policies will be necessary, but the significant return on investment for Minnesota's people is indisputable (see *GradMinnesota Expanded Recommendations and Rationale for more detail*).

Recommendations

1. Ensure Quality Data is Available and Used to Effectively Target Supports for Students
2. Make Sure a Tiered Framework of Interventions and Supports is Effectively Implemented
3. Increase Mentoring Throughout the State to Enhance Educational Success
4. Design and Connect Services to Recover and Re-engage Youth
5. Replace Exclusionary Discipline Policies and Practices with More Effective Alternatives
6. Make Transportation Available to Ensure Access to Learning Opportunities Through Graduation
7. Provide Effective Alternative Pathways and Additional Time to Earn a Diploma