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# News Release

## State’s four-year graduation rate increases to 81.1%

### Statewide dropout rate continues to fall

DENVER – A total of 81.1% of the Class of 2019 graduated last spring, the highest graduation rate in nine years, according to data released today by the Colorado Department of Education.

The Class of 2019 had 999 more graduates than the Class of 2018 – a 0.4 percentage point increase. Colorado’s high school graduation rate has improved by a total of 8.7 percentage points since 2010, when the state changed how the rate was reported. Extended year rates for students taking five, six and seven years to graduate also have steadily improved.

“It is gratifying to see the graduation rates continue to increase and dropout rates continue to fall across the state,” said Colorado Education Commissioner Katy Anthes. “Students understand the value of completing high school. By giving students expanded high school options and implementing rigorous and useful graduation guidelines, Colorado’s school districts are determined to ensure that all students can be ready for college or living-wage jobs when they graduate.”

### State dropout rate improves to an all-time low

The state’s 2018-19 overall dropout rate is 2.0%, an improvement of 0.2 percentage points from the previous year. In total, the state saw 9,277 students in grades seven through 12 drop out last year - 903 fewer students from the previous year. Eighty-three percent of districts reported dropout rates at or below the state’s 2.0% rate. And 43% of districts reported their dropout rates in 2018-19 were lower than their 2017-18 rates.

### Graduation rates by ethnicity and race

More minority students are graduating within four years. The four-year graduation rate for minority students for 2018-19 was 75.5%, an increase of 0.2 percentage points from the previous year. The table below breaks down the four-year graduation and dropout rates by race/ethnicity for the Class of 2019.

Race/Ethnicity	Graduation Rate	Graduates	Percentage point change from 2017-18	Dropout Rate
American Indian	64.9%	348	-3.6	4.0%
Asian	89.9%	1,938	-0.4	0.8%



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Black	74.4%	2,277	0.0	3.0%
Hispanic	74%	16,490	+0.6	3.2%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	76%	133	+2.1	3.4%
Two or More Races	80.6%	2,030	-2.3	1.6%
White	85.9%	31,023	+0.6	1.2%

### **Graduation and dropout rates by gender**

The statewide, four-year graduation rate for females was 84.8% (27,824 graduates), a 0.2 percentage point increase from the previous year. The male graduation rate was 77.6% (26,415 graduates), a 0.5 percentage point increase from 2018. The overall dropout rate for males was 2.3% and the female rate was 1.7%.

### **Completion rate**

The completion rate combines all graduates with those who receive a certificate, a designation of high school completion, or a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED). The Class of 2019 had a four-year completion rate of 82.9% or 55,429 students. This is a 0.4 percentage point increase from the previous year.

### **Multiple pathways**

Apprenticeships, internships and concurrent enrollment classes are examples of ways that Colorado high school students can earn college credit or obtain a postsecondary credential while still in high school. These programs bridge the gap between education and career, increase the relevancy of high school and open a wide variety of options after high school, including meaningful careers and college. Nearly all of Colorado's school districts offered more than one pathway in the 2018-19 school year with 149 of the state's 178 school districts offering three or more pathways.

These pathways and others are graduation requirements that school districts can adopt as options for students to demonstrate what they know or can do in order to graduate from high school under state law. The Class of 2021 will be the first cohort of students who will be required under state law to meet or exceed the Colorado Graduation Guidelines.

The state has created programs to help provide additional postsecondary and workforce opportunities for students while in high school, including ASCENT and P-TECH. State policy now allows school districts to count students participating in ASCENT and P-TECH programs as graduates in the year that they complete all local graduation requirements, and that has contributed to the increasing graduation rate. This policy took effect last school year, resulting in a 0.8 percentage point increase in the graduation rate for both the Class of 2018 and the Class of 2019.

The ASCENT program allows eligible students to remain enrolled in their districts for one additional year while completing classes at a local institution of higher education.

P-TECH programs allow schools to partner with an employer in a high-growth industry for six years and for students to earn an industry-recognized associate degree as well as a high school diploma.

### **Giving students more time**

- Colorado promotes keeping students in high school who need more time to meet graduation requirements or who are participating in their high school's postsecondary program to earn college credit. In Colorado, students may remain enrolled beyond their fourth year of high school to graduate in five, six or seven years after entering ninth grade.
- A total of 9.2% (6,160 students) of students in the Class of 2019 remain enrolled and have the opportunity to graduate or complete in five, six or seven years from entering ninth grade.
- For the Class of 2018, the five-year state graduation rate was 84.9%, 4.2 percentage points higher than the Class of 2018's four-year rate, suggesting that many students benefit from the additional time they are given to meet their secondary outcome goals. The five-year completion rate was 87.2%.
- For the Class of 2017, the six-year state graduation rate was 85.7% (compared to a four-year rate of 79.0%). The six-year completion rate was 88.3% (compared to a four-year rate of 78.9%).
- For the Class of 2016, the seven-year graduation rate was 86.4%. The seven-year completion rate was 89.1%.

### **Tools to understand the numbers**

CDE has created interactive tools and maps to better illustrate how the graduation and dropout rates look across the state.

[Graduation statistics are available on this webpage.](#)

[Dropout statistics are available on this webpage.](#)

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### **Statewide four-year graduation rates**

Class of 2019

- 81.1%, 54,239 graduates

Class of 2018

- 80.7%, 53,240 graduates



Class of 2017

- 79.0%, 50,700 graduates

Class of 2016

- 78.9%, 49,824 graduates
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**Statewide five-year graduation rates**

Class of 2018

- 84.9%, 55,800 graduates

Class of 2017

- 84.2%, 53,834 graduates

Class of 2016

- 84.1%, 53,027 graduates
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**Statewide six-year graduation rates**

Class of 2017

- 85.7%, 54,721 graduates

Class of 2016

- 85.6%, 53,936 graduates
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**Statewide seven-year graduation rates**

Class of 2016

- 86.4%, 54,431 graduates