

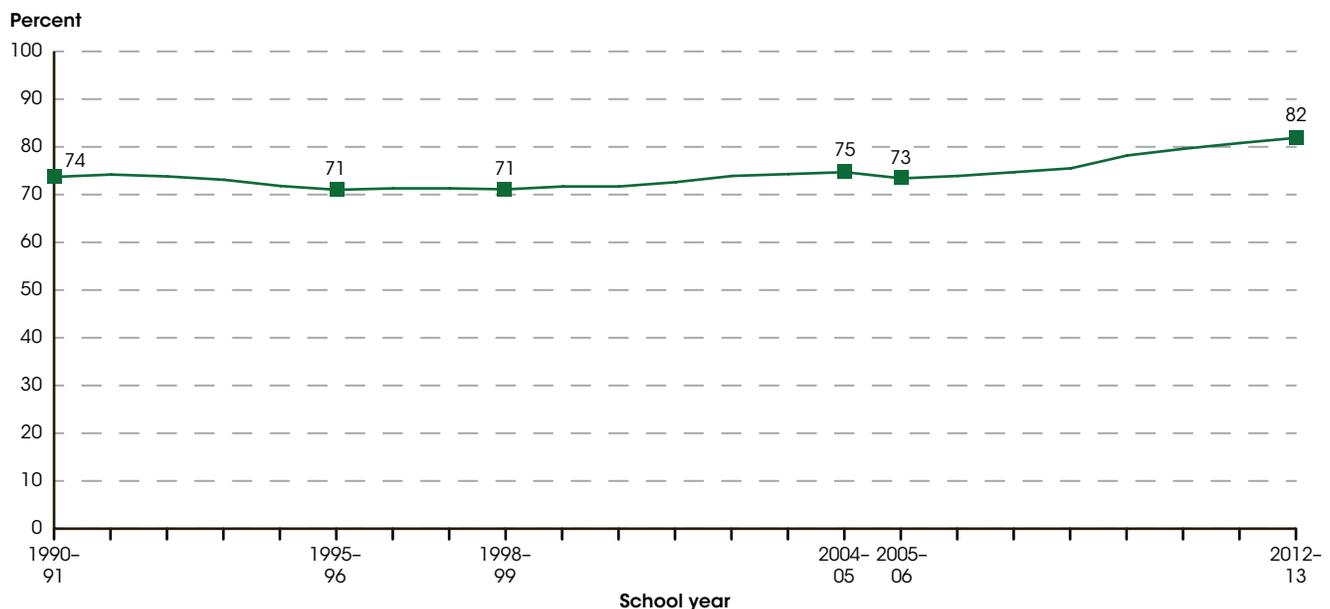
Public High School Graduation Rates

In school year 2013-14, the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) for public high schools rose to an all-time high of 82 percent. This indicates that approximately 4 out of 5 students graduated with a regular high school diploma within 4 years of the first time they started 9th grade. Asian/Pacific Islander students had the highest ACGR (89 percent), followed by White (87 percent), Hispanic (76 percent), Black (73 percent), and American Indian/Alaska Native (70 percent) students.

This indicator examines two widely used measures of high school completion: the averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR) and the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR). Both rates measure the percentage of public school students who attain a regular high school diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade for the first time. However, they differ in important ways. The AFGR is an estimate of the on-time 4-year graduation rate derived from

aggregate student enrollment data and graduate counts. The ACGR, on the other hand, uses detailed student-level data to determine the percentage of students who graduate within 4 years of starting 9th grade for the first time. In many states, the data required to produce the ACGR have become available only in recent years. The AFGR estimate is less precise than the ACGR, but it can be estimated as far back as the 1960s.

Figure 1. Averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR) for public high school students: School years 1990-91 through 2012-13

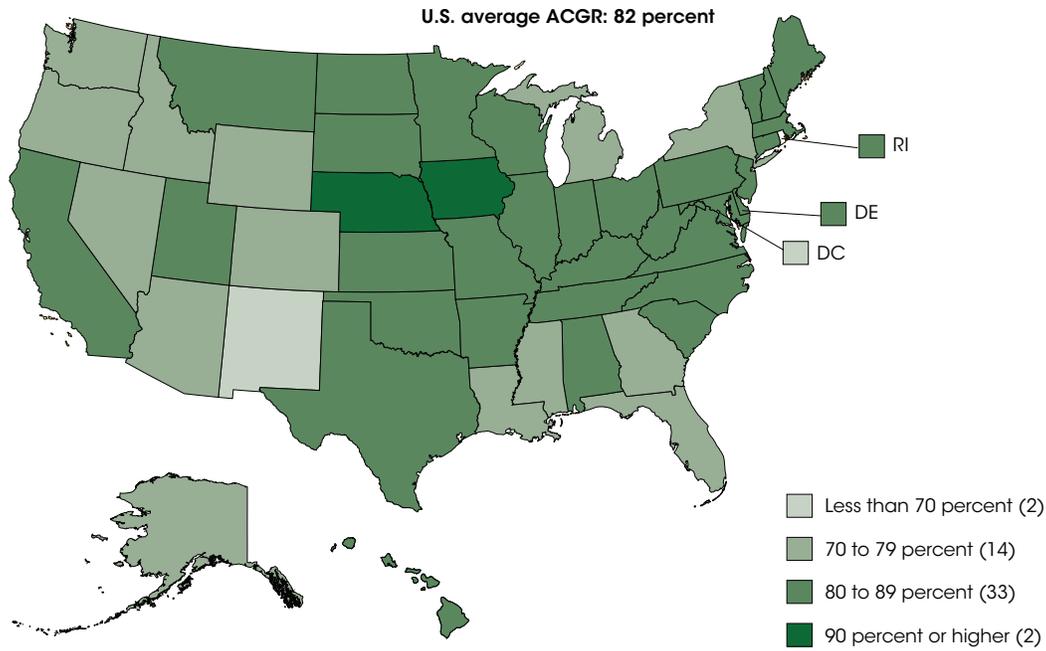


NOTE: The AFGR provides an estimate of the percentage of high school students who graduate within 4 years of first starting 9th grade. The rate uses aggregate student enrollment data to estimate the size of an incoming freshman class and aggregate counts of diplomas awarded 4 years later. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 1986-1987 through 2009-10; "State Dropout and Completion Data File," 2005-06 through 2012-13; *Public School Graduates and Dropouts From the Common Core of Data, 2007-08 and 2008-09*. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 219.10.

In school year 2012-13, the national AFGR was 82 percent,¹ and some 3.2 million public high school students graduated with a regular diploma. The overall AFGR was higher for the graduating class of 2012-13 than for the class of 1990-91 (74 percent). However,

from 1990-91 to 1995-96 the rate decreased from 74 to 71 percent. During the period from 1998-99 to 2004-05, the rate steadily increased from 71 to 75 percent. After dropping to 73 percent in 2005-06, the rate increased to 82 percent in 2012-13.

Figure 2. Adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) for public high school students, by state: School year 2013–14

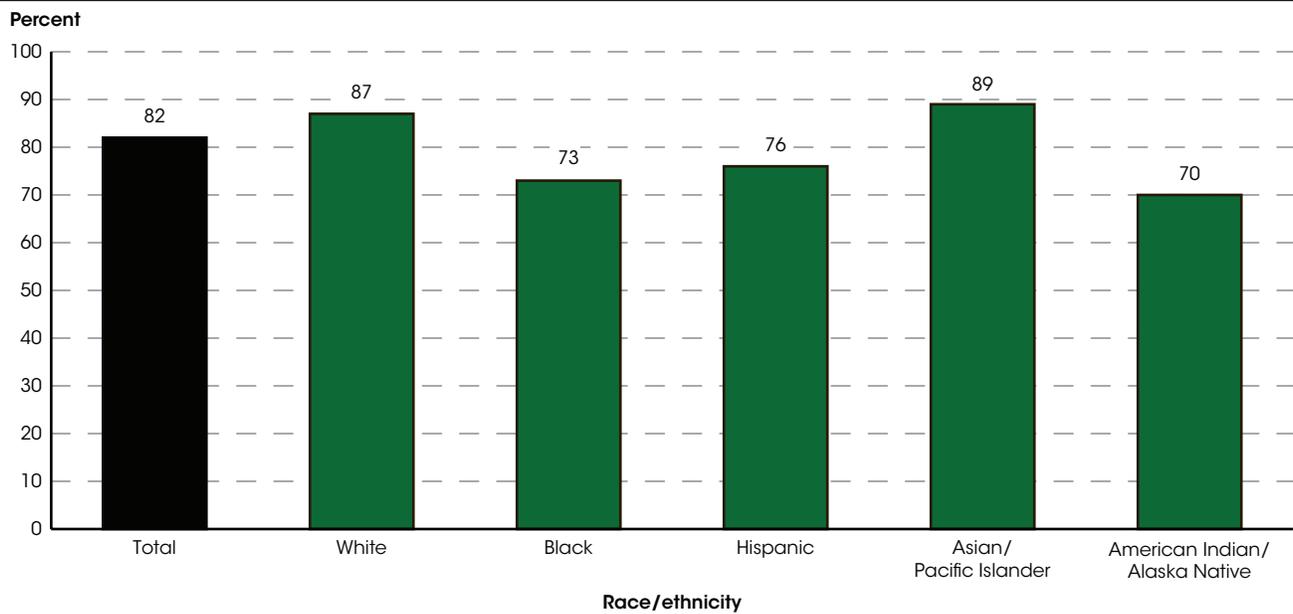


NOTE: The adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) is the percentage of public high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade. The Bureau of Indian Education and Puerto Rico were not included in the United States 4-year ACGR estimate. The graduation rates displayed above have been rounded to whole numbers. The categorizations shown may vary slightly from how the unrounded rates would be categorized. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Consolidated State Performance Report, 2013–14. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 219.46.

At the national level, the ACGR closely tracks the AFGR. The ACGR increased over the first 4 years in which it was collected by the U.S. Department of Education, from 79 percent in 2010–11 to 82 percent in 2013–14. These rates indicate that approximately 4 out of 5 students received a regular high school diploma within 4 years of first starting 9th grade.

In 2013–14, the state-level ACGRs ranged from 61 percent in the District of Columbia to 90 percent in Nebraska and 91 percent in Iowa. In addition to the District of Columbia, six states reported graduation rates at or below 75 percent: Louisiana (75 percent), Georgia (73 percent), Oregon (72 percent), Alaska (71 percent), Nevada (70 percent), and New Mexico (69 percent).

Figure 3. Adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) for public high school students, by race/ethnicity: School year 2013–14

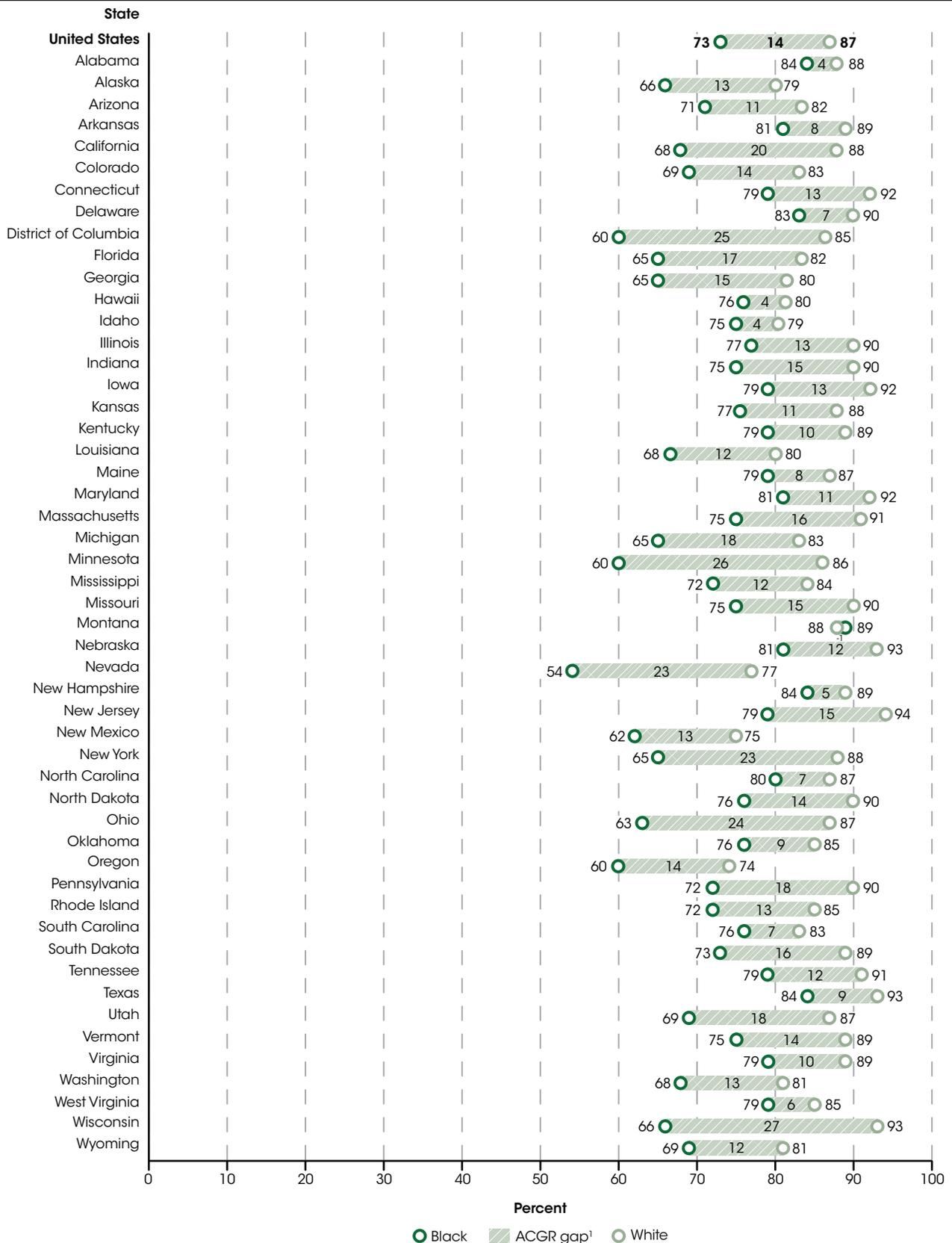


NOTE: The adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) is the percentage of public high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade. The Bureau of Indian Education and Puerto Rico were not included in United States 4-year ACGR estimates. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Consolidated State Performance Report, 2013–14. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 219.46.

In 2013–14, the ACGRs for American Indian/Alaska Native (70 percent), Black (73 percent), and Hispanic (76 percent) students were below the national average of 82 percent. The ACGRs for White (87 percent) and Asian/Pacific Islander (89 percent) students were above the national average. Across states, ACGRs for White students ranged from 74 percent in Oregon to 94 percent in New Jersey, and were higher than the overall national ACGR of 82 percent in 38 states and the District of Columbia. The rates for Black students ranged from 54 percent in Nevada to 89 percent in Montana and were higher than the total national ACGR in five states (Alabama, Delaware, Montana, New Hampshire, and Texas). The ACGRs for Hispanic students ranged from 63 percent in

Minnesota to 89 percent in West Virginia and were higher than the overall national ACGR in eight states (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Nebraska, Texas, and West Virginia). For Asian/Pacific Islander students, ACGRs ranged from 74 percent in Alaska to 96 percent in New Jersey and were higher than the overall national ACGR in 45 states.² The ACGRs for American Indian/Alaska Native students ranged from 47 percent in South Dakota and Wyoming to 89 percent in Delaware and were higher than the total national ACGR in 11 states (Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Texas).³

Figure 4. Adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) of White and Black public high school students, by state: 2013–14

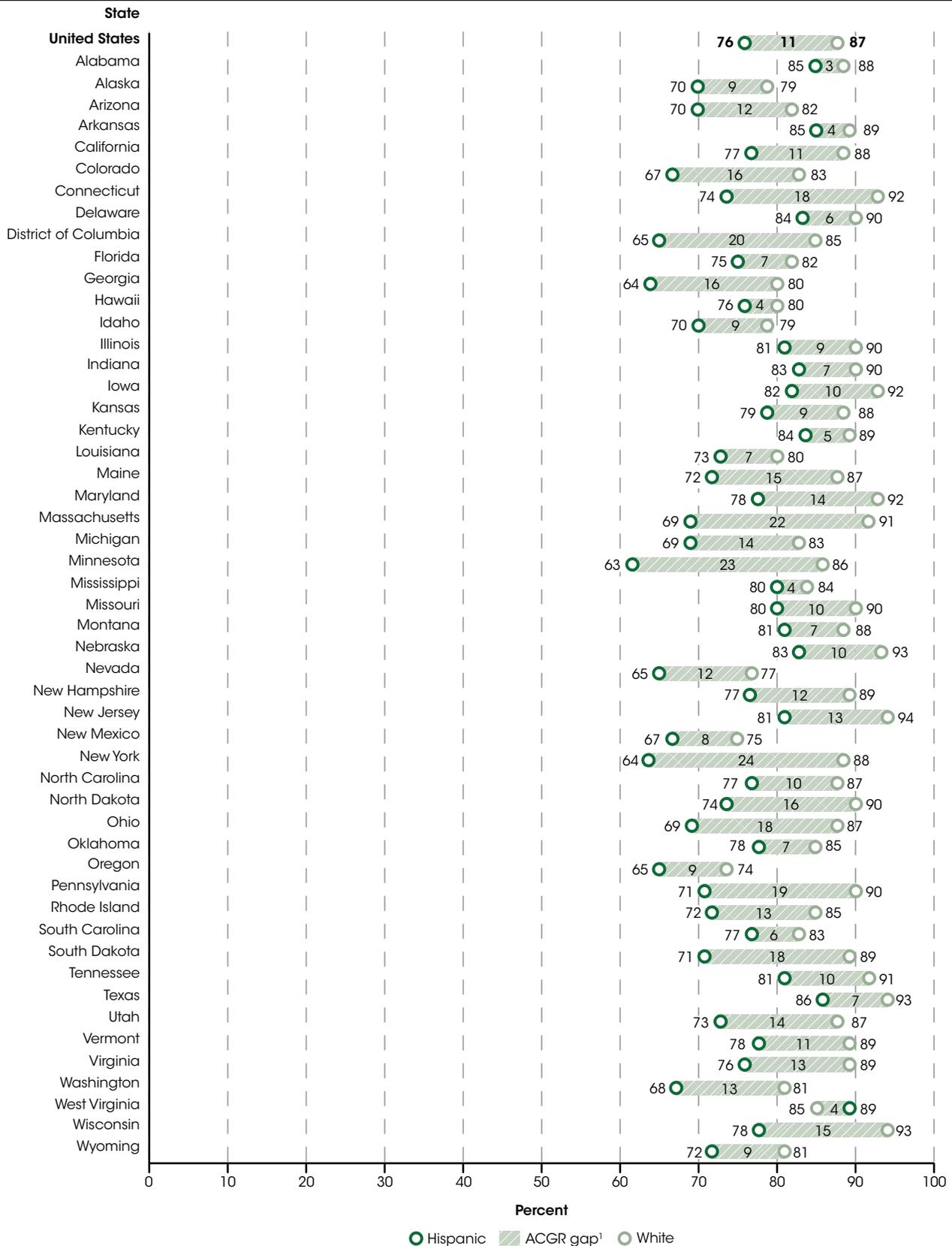


¹ The graduation rate gaps were calculated using graduation rates that were rounded to whole numbers. These gaps may vary slightly from those that would be calculated using unrounded rates.
 NOTE: The adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) is the percentage of public high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade. The Bureau of Indian Education and Puerto Rico were not included in the United States 4-year ACGR estimate. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Consolidated State Performance Report, 2013–14. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 219.46.

The national ACGR for White students (87 percent) was 14 percentage points⁴ higher than the national ACGR for Black students (73 percent) in 2013–14. White public high school students had higher ACGRs than Black public high school students in all states except Montana, where the ACGRs for White and Black students were 88 and 89 percent, respectively. Wisconsin,

Minnesota, the District of Columbia, Ohio, New York, and Nevada reported the largest gaps between White and Black students. In each of these states and the District of Columbia, the ACGR for White students was over 20 percentage points higher than the ACGR for Black students.

Figure 5. Adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) of White and Hispanic public high school students, by state: 2013–14



¹ The graduation rate gaps were calculated using graduation rates that were rounded to whole numbers. These gaps may vary slightly from those that would be calculated using unrounded rates.
 NOTE: The adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) is the percentage of public high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade. The Bureau of Indian Education and Puerto Rico were not included in the United States 4-year ACGR estimate. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Consolidated State Performance Report, 2013–14. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 219.46.

States reported similar gaps in ACGRs between White and Hispanic public high school students. The national ACGR for White students (87 percent) was 11 percentage points higher than the national ACGR for Hispanic students (76 percent) in 2013–14. The ACGRs for White students were higher than the ACGRs for Hispanic students in every state except West Virginia. In West

Virginia the ACGR for Hispanic students (89 percent) was 4 percentage points higher than the ACGR for White students (85 percent). New York, Minnesota, and Massachusetts reported the largest gaps between White and Hispanic students. In each of these three states, the ACGR for White students was more than 20 percentage points higher than the ACGR for Hispanic students.

Endnotes:

¹ This indicator uses graduation rates that have been rounded to whole numbers. As such, comparisons among states and between racial and ethnic groups may differ slightly from comparisons based on unrounded rates.

² Discussion of ACGRs for Asian/Pacific Islander students excludes data for the District of Columbia. Data for the District of Columbia were suppressed due to small cell sizes.

³ Discussion of ACGRs for American Indian/Alaska Native students excludes data for three jurisdictions: the District of Columbia, Vermont, and Virginia. Data for the District of Columbia and Vermont were suppressed due to small cell sizes, and data for Virginia were unavailable.

⁴ Percentage point gaps were calculated using graduation rates that have been rounded to whole numbers.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, tables 219.10 and 219.46

Related indicators: Educational Attainment of Young Adults, Status Dropout Rates

Glossary: Averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR), High school completer, High school diploma, Public school or institution, Racial/ethnic group