

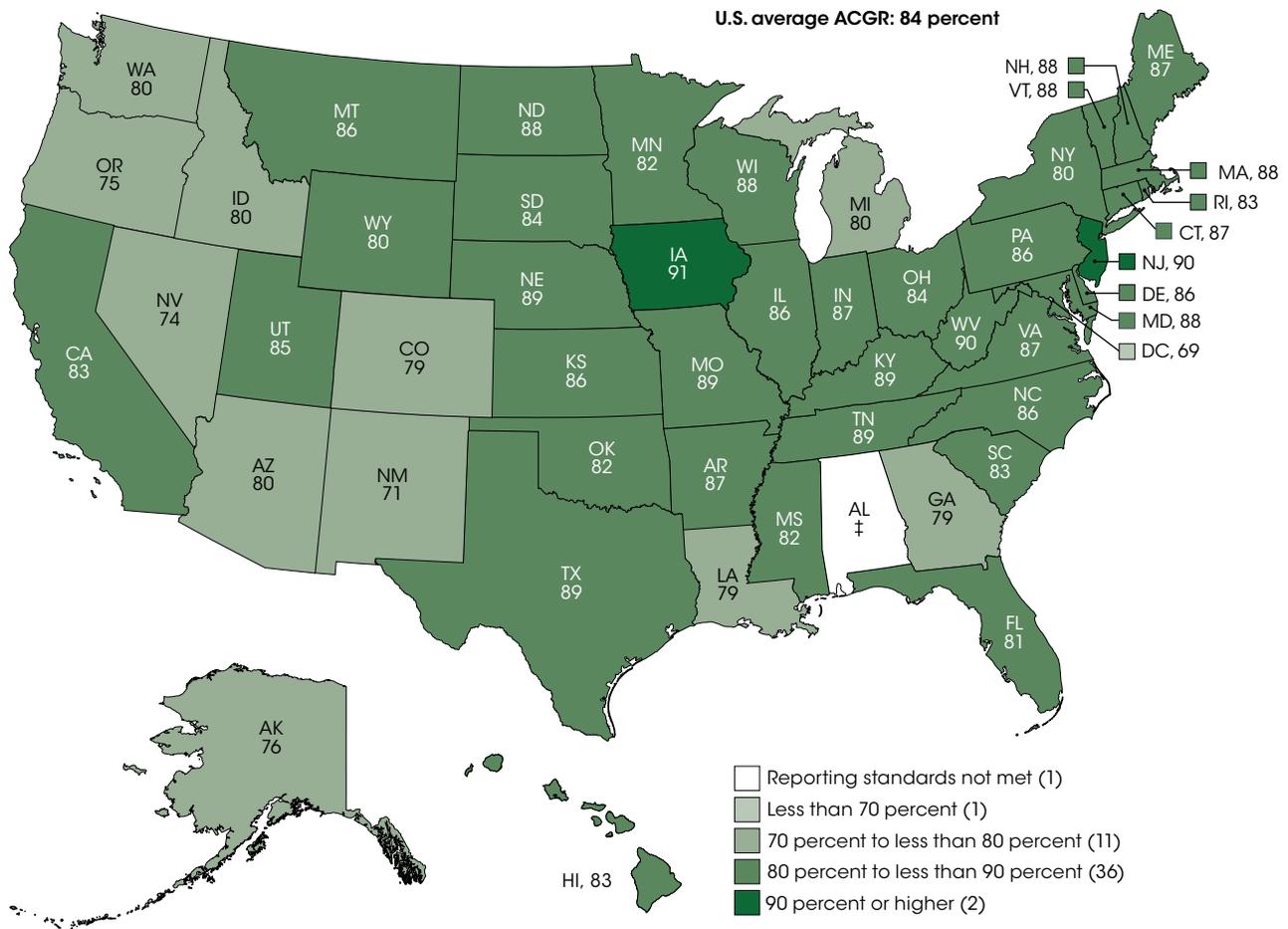
## Public High School Graduation Rates

*In school year 2015–16, the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) for public high school students was 84 percent, the highest it has been since the rate was first measured in 2010–11. In other words, more than four out of five students graduated with a regular high school diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade. Asian/Pacific Islander students had the highest ACGR (91 percent), followed by White (88 percent), Hispanic (79 percent), Black (76 percent), and American Indian/Alaska Native (72 percent) students.*

This indicator examines the percentage of public high school students who graduate on time, as measured by the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR). State education agencies calculate the ACGR by identifying the “cohort” of first-time 9th-graders in a particular school year. The cohort is then adjusted by adding any students who transfer into the cohort after 9th grade

and subtracting any students who transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die. The ACGR is the percentage of students in this adjusted cohort who graduate within 4 years with a regular high school diploma. The U.S. Department of Education first collected the ACGR in 2010–11.

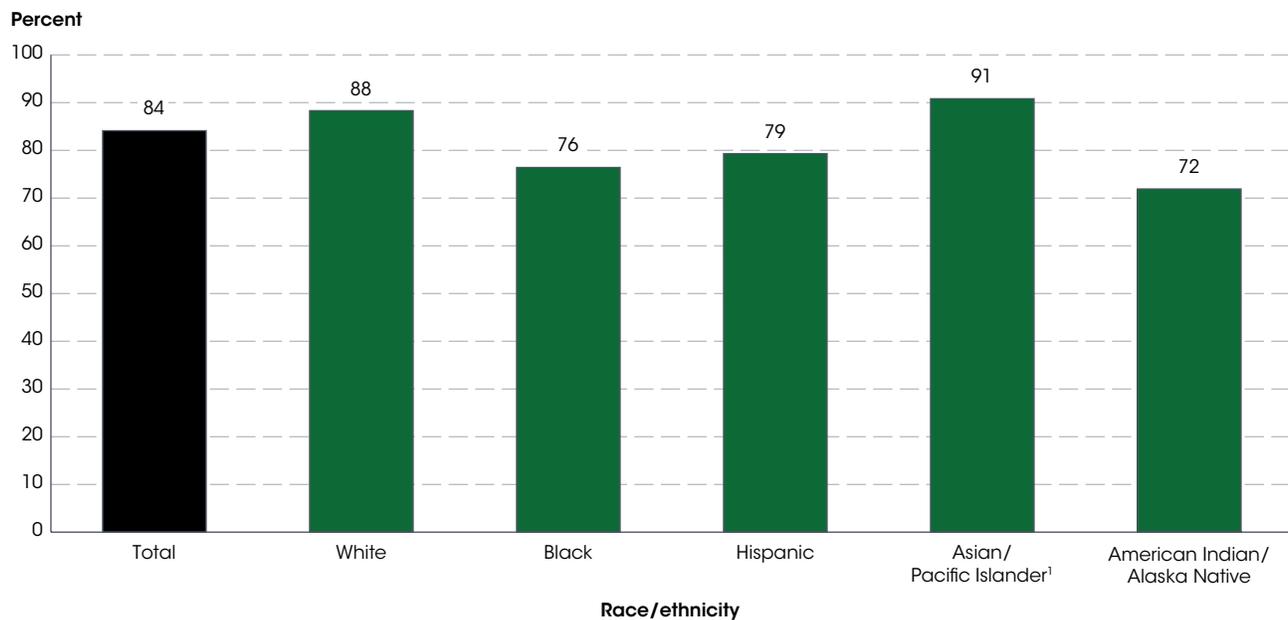
Figure 1. Adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) for public high school students, by state: 2015–16



‡ Reporting standards not met. The Alabama State Department of Education indicated that its ACGR data were misstated. For more information, please see the following press release issued by the state: <https://www.alsde.edu/sec/comm/News%20Releases/12-08-2016%20Graduation%20Rate%20Review.pdf>.  
 NOTE: The 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 U.S. 4-year ACGR estimate. The graduation rates displayed above have been rounded to whole numbers. Categorizations are based on unrounded percentages.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Consolidated State Performance Report, 2015–16. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 219.46.

The ACGR increased over the first 6 years it was collected, from 79 percent in 2010–11 to 84 percent in 2015–16. In other words, more than four out of five 9th-graders in 2012–13 had completed high school within 4 years by 2015–16. In 2015–16, the state-level

ACGRs ranged from 69 percent in the District of Columbia to 91 percent in Iowa.<sup>1</sup> More than two-thirds of states (36) reported graduation rates from 80 percent to less than 90 percent.<sup>2</sup>

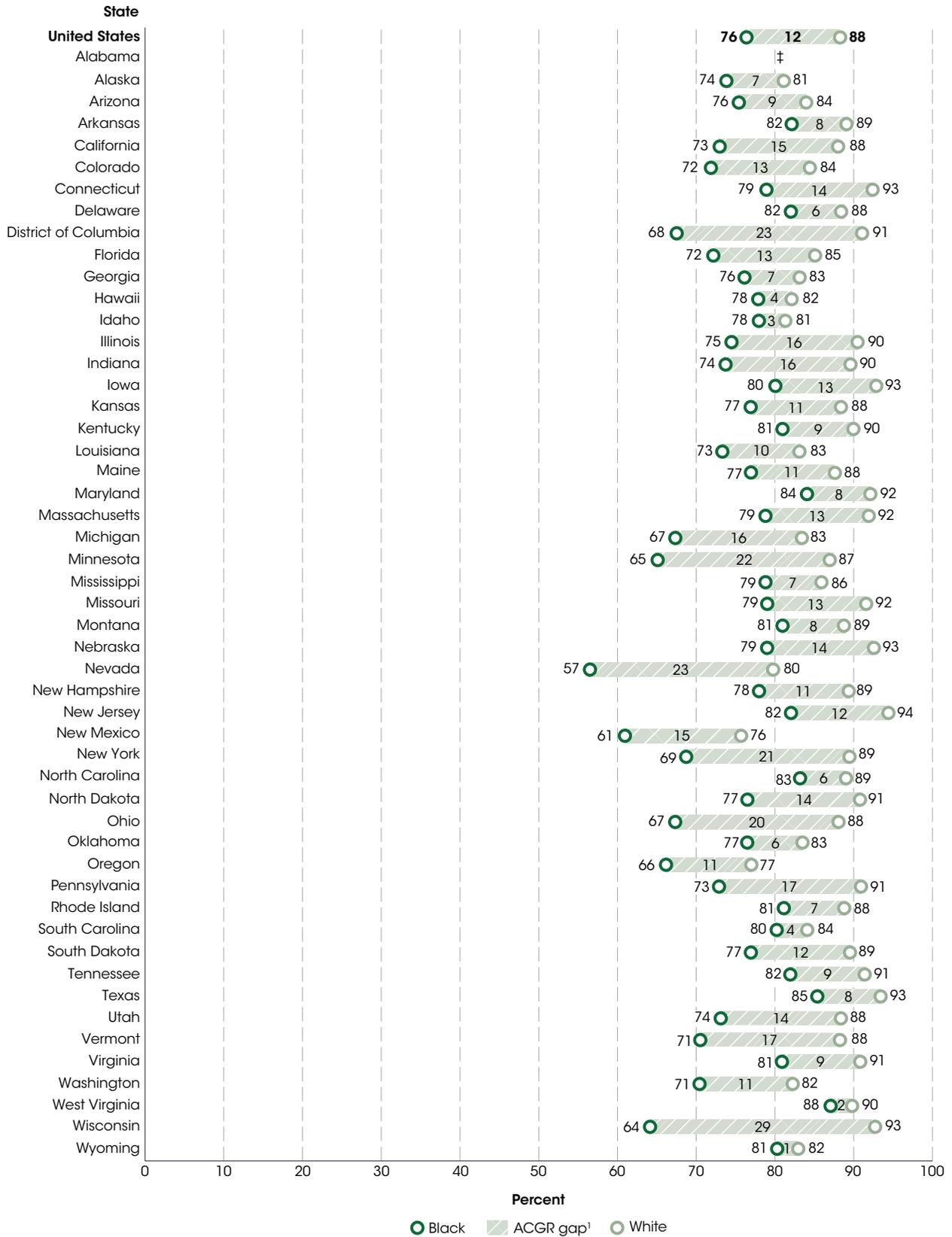
**Figure 2. Adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) for public high school students, by race/ethnicity: 2015–16**

NOTE: The 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 U.S. 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, 2015–16. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 219.46.

In 2015–16, the ACGRs for American Indian/Alaska Native (72 percent), Black (76 percent), and Hispanic (79 percent) public high school students were below the national average of 84 percent. The ACGRs for White (88 percent) and Asian/Pacific Islander<sup>3</sup> (91 percent) students were above the national average. Across states, ACGRs for White students ranged from 76 percent in New Mexico to 94 percent in New Jersey, and were higher than the overall national ACGR of 84 percent in 35 states and the District of Columbia. The rates for Black students ranged from 57 percent in Nevada to 88 percent in West Virginia. Texas and West Virginia were the only two states in which the ACGR for Black students was higher than the overall national ACGR. The ACGRs for Hispanic students ranged from 65 percent in

Minnesota to 89 percent in Vermont and West Virginia, and were higher than the overall national ACGR in six states (Arkansas, Iowa, Maine, Texas, Vermont, and West Virginia). For Asian/Pacific Islander students, ACGRs ranged from 77 percent in the District of Columbia to 95 percent or higher in Maryland, New Jersey, Texas, and West Virginia,<sup>4</sup> and were higher than the overall national ACGR in 40 states. The ACGRs for American Indian/Alaska Native students ranged from 51 percent in South Dakota to 90 percent or higher in Delaware,<sup>5</sup> and were higher than the overall national ACGR in nine states (Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, and Texas).<sup>6</sup>

Figure 3. Adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) of White and Black public high school students, by state: 2015–16



See notes on next page.

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<sup>1</sup> The graduation rate gaps were calculated using the most precise graduation rates available for public use, which include some rates rounded to one decimal place and some rates rounded to whole numbers. These gaps may vary slightly from those that would be calculated using unrounded rates.

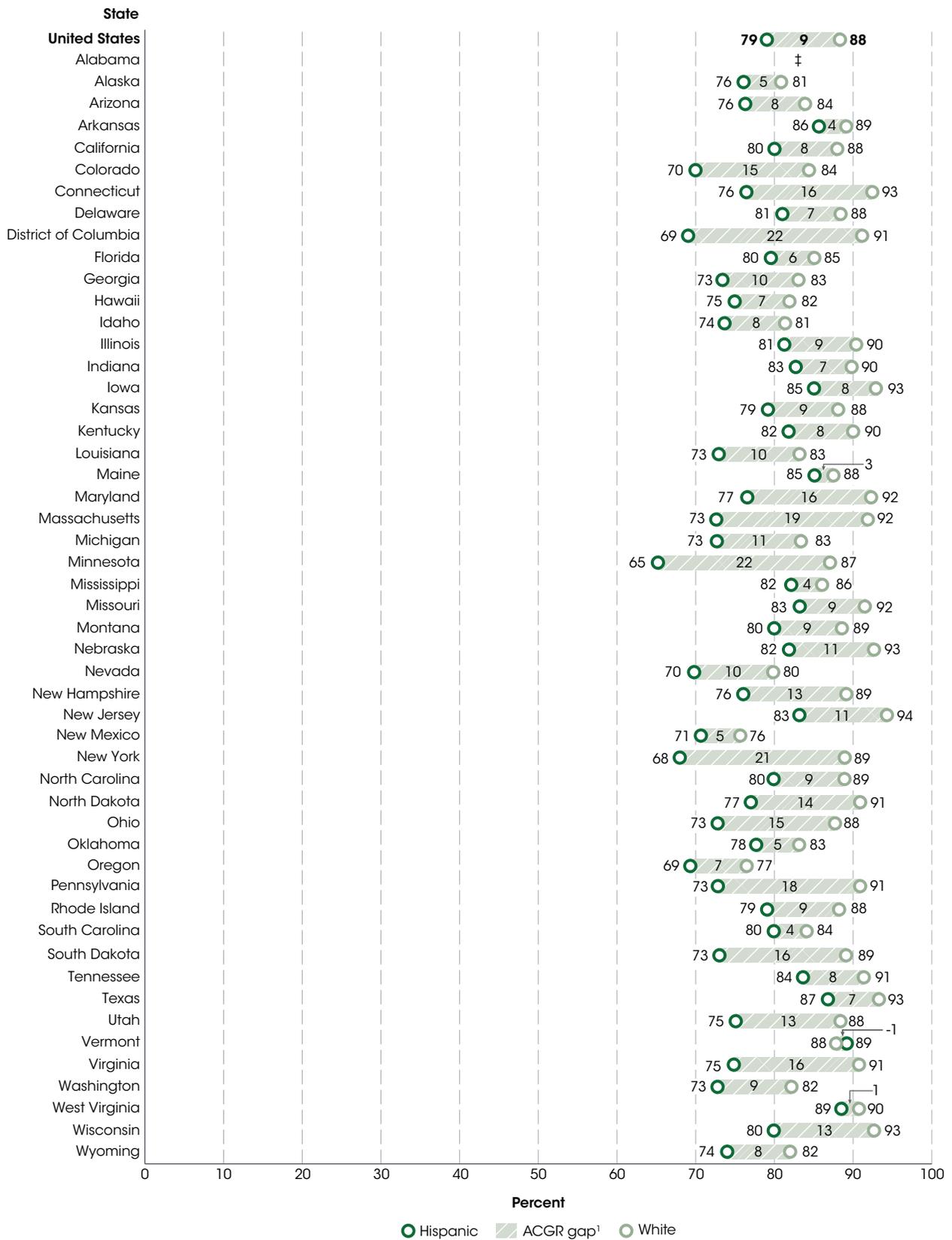
NOTE: The ACGR is the percentage of public high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade. The Bureau of Indian Education and Puerto Rico were not included in the U.S. 4-year ACGR estimate. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Consolidated State Performance Report, 2015–16. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 219.46.

The national ACGR for White public high school students (88 percent) was 12 percentage points higher than the national ACGR for their Black peers (76 percent) in 2015–16.<sup>7</sup> White students had higher ACGRs than Black students in every state and the District of Columbia. The District of Columbia,

Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin reported the largest gaps between White and Black students. In each of these six jurisdictions, the ACGR for White students was at least 20 percentage points higher than the ACGR for Black students.

Figure 4. Adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) of White and Hispanic public high school students, by state: 2015–16



See notes on next page.

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<sup>1</sup> The graduation rate gaps were calculated using the most precise graduation rates available for public use, which include some rates rounded to one decimal place and some rates rounded to whole numbers. These gaps may vary slightly from those that would be calculated using unrounded rates.

NOTE: The 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 U.S. 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, 2015–16. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 219.46.

States reported similar gaps in ACGRs between White and Hispanic public high school students. The national ACGR for White students (88 percent) was 9 percentage points higher than the national ACGR for Hispanic students (79 percent) in 2015–16. The ACGRs for White students were higher than the ACGRs for Hispanic students in 48 states and the District of Columbia. The

District of Columbia, Minnesota, and New York reported the largest gaps between White and Hispanic students. In each of these three jurisdictions, the ACGR for White students was at least 20 percentage points higher than the ACGR for Hispanic students. Vermont was the only state in which the ACGR for Hispanic students (89 percent) was higher than the ACGR for White students (88 percent).

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Alabama's data, including data by racial/ethnic groups, are not included in this indicator. The Alabama State Department of Education indicated that its ACGR data were misstated.

For more information, please see the following press release issued by the state: <https://www.alsde.edu/sec/comm/News%20Releases/12-08-2016%20Graduation%20Rate%20Review.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Based on unrounded graduation rates.

<sup>3</sup> Reporting practices for data on Asian and Pacific Islander students varied by state. Asian/Pacific Islander data in this indicator represent either the value reported by the state for the "Asian/Pacific Islander" group or an aggregation of separate values reported by the state for "Asian" and "Pacific Islander." "Pacific Islander" includes the "Filipino" group, which only California and Utah report separately.

<sup>4</sup> The ACGR for Asian/Pacific Islander students in West Virginia was greater than or equal to 95 percent. To protect student privacy, the exact value is not displayed.

<sup>5</sup> The ACGR for American Indian/Alaska Native students in Delaware was greater than or equal to 90 percent. To protect student privacy, the exact value is not displayed.

<sup>6</sup> Discussion of ACGRs for American Indian/Alaska Native students excludes data for three states (Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia) and the District of Columbia. Data for the District of Columbia, Vermont, and West Virginia were suppressed to protect student privacy, and data for Virginia were unavailable.

<sup>7</sup> Percentage point gaps were calculated using the most precise graduation rates available for public use, which include some rates rounded to one decimal place and some rates rounded to whole numbers. These gaps may vary slightly from those that would be calculated using unrounded rates.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 219.46

**Related indicators and resources:** [Educational Attainment of Young Adults](#); [High School Status Completion Rates \[Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups\]](#); [Status Dropout Rates](#); [Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States](#)

**Glossary:** Adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), Gap, High school completer, High school diploma, Public school or institution, Racial/ethnic group