

**GRADUATION RATES FOR HIGH SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
February 2008 "At a Glance"**

For federal (NCLB) and state accountability systems the standardized calculation adopted in the National Governors Association (NGA) Compact is used.

Calculation agreed to by the following: American Federation of Teachers, Business Roundtable, Center for Social Organization of Schools, Council of Chief State School Officers, Education Commission of the States, Educational Testing Service, Education Trust, Manhattan Institute, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Education Association, Standard and Poor's, State Higher Education Executive Officers, Urban Institutes.

States agreed to calculate the graduation rate by dividing the number of on-time graduates in a given year by the number of first-time entering ninth graders four years earlier. Graduates are those receiving a high school diploma. The denominator can be adjusted for transfers in and out of the system. Special education students and recent immigrants with limited English proficiency can be assigned to different cohorts to allow them more time to graduate.

<b>Treatment of Various Student Groups in Federal and State Accountability</b>				
	<b>No Child Left Behind</b>		<b>Education Accountability Act</b>	
	<b>School</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>District</b>
12 <sup>th</sup> graders in 9 <sup>th</sup> grade four years earlier	√	√	√	√
Early graduates	√	√	√	√
IEP with extended years	√	√	√	√
LEP with extended years				
Exclude Transfers	√	√	√	√
Non-IEP/LEP in five years			Under review, likely 3% gain	Under review, likely 3% gain
Non-IEP/LEP in six years			Under review, negligible gain	Under review, negligible gain
Adult Education-diploma, ages 17-21				Under review as separate criterion
Adult Education-GED, ages 17-21				Under review as separate criterion

**Reported Rates for 2005\***

77.1% SCDE (# diplomas including early graduates from cohort, and students with IEPs/12<sup>th</sup> graders in 9<sup>th</sup> grade four years earlier + dropouts - transfers)

60.3% National Center for Education Statistics (# diplomas/9<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled 4 years earlier)

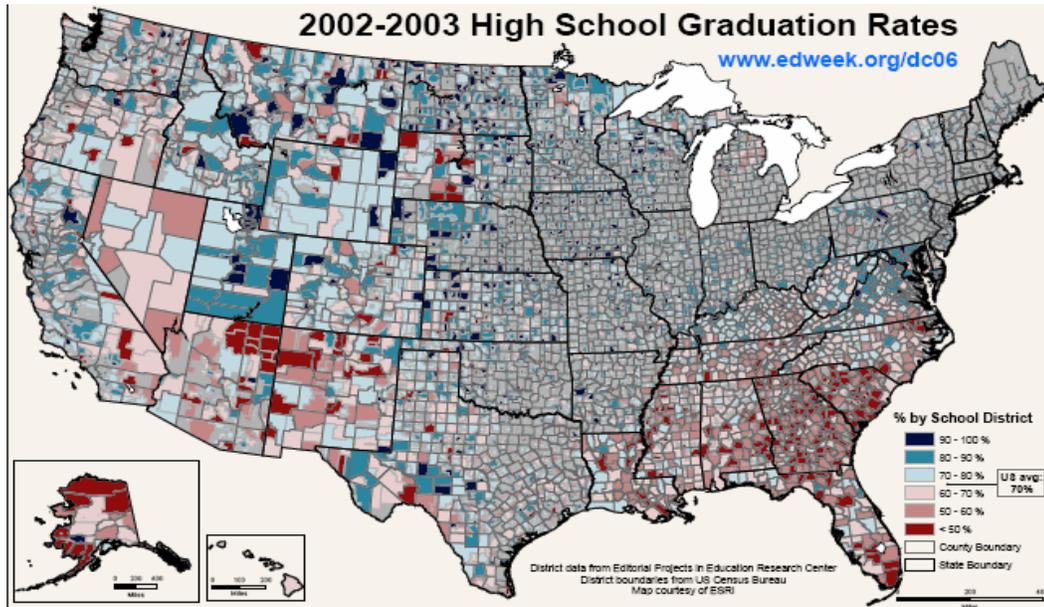
77.1% National Governor's Association (# on-time graduates/9<sup>th</sup> graders 4 years earlier adjusted for transfers, IEP and LEP)

54% Greene Method (# diplomas/9<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment 3 years earlier adjusted for student mobility)

52.5% Cumulative Promotion Index (captures grade to grade promotion across the four years, e.g., 10<sup>th</sup> graders in fall 2003/9<sup>th</sup> graders in fall 2002 x 11<sup>th</sup> graders in fall 2003/10<sup>th</sup> graders in fall 2002 x 12 graders in fall 2003/11<sup>th</sup> graders in fall 2002 x diploma recipients in spring 2003/12<sup>th</sup> graders in fall 2002)

60.3% Departure Classification Definition (uses NCES four year cohort definition)

49.2% United Health Foundation (graduates who were 9<sup>th</sup> graders 3 years earlier)



### **Procedural Challenges under Review**

Can practical, valid documentation be obtained for all transfers?

- Children of migrant workers
- Child transferring to private schools, home schools or other states

What is the level of documentation for accountability that ensures schools and districts take substantial action to prevent under-reporting students who drop out?

How can the system recognize exceptional situations?

- Extended illness

Are end-of-year transfers to adult education made to assist students or to improve a school's calculation?

### **\*Data Sources**

Education Resource Center. (2006 June 22). Diplomas count, South Carolina. An essential guide to graduation policy and rates. A special state-focused supplement to *Education Week volume 25*.

Greene, J. P., and Forster, G. (September 2003). *Public high school graduation and college readiness rates in the United States*. New York: Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

Greene, J.P., & Winters, M.A. (2005). Public High School Graduation and College- Readiness Rates: 1991-2002. New York: Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, *Education Working Paper*.

Greene, J., & Winters, M.A. (2006, April). Leaving boys behind: public high school graduation rates. New York: Manhattan Institute for Policy Research: *Civic Report*.

Hall, D. (2005, June). Getting honest about grad rates: How states play the numbers and students lose. *The Education Trust*.

Haney, W., Madaus, G., Abrams, L., Wheelock, A., Miao, J., and Gruia, I. (January 2004). *The education pipeline in the United States, 1970-2000*. Chestnut Hill, MA: National Board on Educational Testing and Public Policy.

Laird, J., Lew, S., DeBell, M., & Chapman, C. (2006, June). Dropout rates in the United States: 2002 and 2003. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics.

Miao, J., & Haney, W. (2004, October 15). High School Graduation Rates: Alternative methods and implications. *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 12(55).

National Center for Educational Statistics. (November 2006). Dropout Rates in the United States,; 2004. US Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics.

National Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis. (2006). *Public high school graduation rates – 2001*. Available online at [www.higheredinfo.org](http://www.higheredinfo.org).

SC High School Redesign Commission. (2006). Report of the South Carolina High School Redesign Commission. Columbia, SC.

Swanson, C. B. (2004). *Who graduates? Who doesn't? A statistical portrait of public high school graduation, Class of 2001*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Education Policy Center.

United Health Foundation. (2006). *High school graduation - Table 21*. Available online at [www.unitedhealthfoundation.org](http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org).

Warren, J. R. (2005). State-level school completion rates: Concepts, measures, and trends. *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 13 (51).