



# RESEARCH BRIEF

## Research Services

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Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis  
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## Dropout and Graduation Rates 2010-2011

The District conducts a **cross-sectional** analysis of student dropouts annually; it examines dropout rates among students enrolled in various grades at one point in time. A **longitudinal** analysis, also conducted annually, tracks a group of students in the same grade or cohort over a period of several years. Each method addresses a different aspect of how many students are dropping out of school. This research brief provides information on the cross-sectional and longitudinal dropout rates and longitudinal graduation rates for 2010-2011.

### Dropout Definitions

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) currently defines a dropout as a student who: (1) voluntarily removes himself or herself from the school system before graduation; (2) has not met the relevant attendance requirements of the school district, or the student's whereabouts are unknown; (3) has withdrawn from school but has not transferred to another public or private school; (4) has withdrawn from school because of hardship; or (5) is not eligible to attend school because of reaching the maximum age for an exceptional student program. Rates depicted in this brief reflect the withdrawal codes pertaining to these outcomes as recorded by school site personnel.

### Cross-Sectional Analysis and Dropout Rate

The methodology used to determine cross-sectional dropout rate divides the number of students in grades 9 through 12 who are classified as dropouts by the total number of students in grades 9 through 12 in attendance at any time during the school year. The cross-sectional dropout rate is expressed as a percentage of the membership for the entire school year. The dropout rate for 2010-2011 across grades 9-12 was 2.9 percent. Table 1 includes a breakdown of the rates by grade and across grades for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. The observed cross-sectional dropout rates are considerably lower in 2010-2011 across all grade levels.

**Table 1**  
**Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011**

Grade	2009-2010			2010-2011		
	2010 All Year Membership	No. of Dropouts	Dropout Rate	2011 All Year Membership	No. of Dropouts	Dropout Rate
9	30,176	1,099	3.6%	30,087	778	2.6%
10	26,450	1,107	4.2%	28,180	788	2.8%
11	26,025	944	3.6%	23,638	686	2.9%
12	25,428	1,392	5.5%	25,969	918	3.5%
9 - 12	108,079	4,542	4.2%	107,874	3,170	2.9%

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## Cross-Sectional Rate by Gender

Table 2 includes a breakdown of the rates by gender and grade for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. Consistent with previous local and national findings, female students were categorized as dropouts/truants less frequently than were male students. Specifically, the rate for 2010-2011 for female students in grades 9-12 was 2.4 percent. The rate for 2010-2011 for male students in grades 9-12 was 3.5 percent.

**Table 2**  
**Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 by Gender**

Grade	Female		Male	
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2009-2010	2010-2011
9	2.8	2.1	4.4	3.1
10	3.4	2.3	5.0	3.2
11	3.1	2.2	4.2	3.6
12	4.2	2.9	6.8	4.1
9 - 12	3.3	2.4	5.0	3.5

## Cross-Sectional Rate by Ethnic/Racial Background

White, Non-Hispanic students were categorized as dropouts less frequently than were either Hispanic or Black, Non-Hispanic students (Table 3). In examining the rate for White, Non-Hispanic students, it can be seen that the dropout rate for this group was 2.2 percent for grades 9-12 for 2010-2011. For Hispanic students, the rate for grades 9-12 was 2.5 percent for 2010-2011; and for Black, Non-Hispanics, the rate for students in grades 9-12 was 4.5 percent for 2010-2011. As can be seen, there is a substantial decrease in the dropout rate for all three major racial/ethnic groups. The largest decrease was seen in 9th-12th grade Hispanic students. The cross-sectional dropout rate for these students decreased from 3.9 percent in 2009-10 to 2.5 percent in 2010-11.

**Table 3**  
**Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity**

Grade	White, Non-Hispanic		Black, Non-Hispanic		Hispanic	
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2009-2010	2010-2011	2009-2010	2010-2011
9	2.7	1.6	4.9	3.7	3.3	2.3
10	2.9	2.3	5.6	4.5	3.9	2.2
11	2.7	2.3	4.2	4.5	3.6	2.5
12	3.6	2.5	7.0	5.2	5.1	3.0
9 - 12	2.9	2.2	5.4	4.5	3.9	2.5

## Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for Exceptional Student Education Programs

In keeping with the State's practice, the dropout rates for exceptional students was calculated using the grade 9-12 total membership from the End of Year Survey. This includes any 9-12 student who was in membership at any time during the year or its associated summer session.

**Table 4**  
**Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for Exceptional Student Education Programs**

Exceptional Student Education Program	2010-2011 All Year Membership	Dropout Rate
Total Excluding Gifted	12,398	5.8%

## Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students

The dropout rate for grades 9-12 students classified as ESOL Levels 1-4 was 6.7 percent for 2009-2010. The cross-sectional dropout rate for LEP students in 2010-2011 across all grade levels was considerably lower, at 4.0%. The majority of this decrease was found in grade 12, where the dropout rate decreased by close to four percent.

**Table 5**  
**Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for LEP Students**

Grade	2009-2010			2010-2011		
	All Year ESOL 1-4 Membership	No. of LEP Dropouts	LEP Dropout Rates	All Year ESOL 1-4 Membership	No. of LEP Dropouts	LEP Dropout Rates
9	3,128	191	6.1%	3,450	103	3.0%
10	3,034	155	5.1%	2,843	92	3.2%
11	2,666	164	6.2%	2,351	88	3.7%
12	2,028	221	10.9%	2,069	144	7.0%
9 - 12	10,856	731	6.7%	10,713	427	4.0%

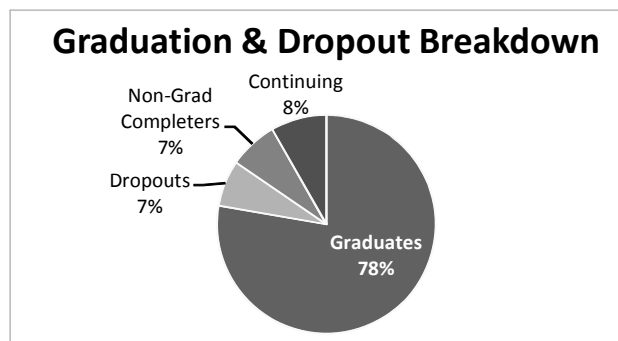
## Longitudinal Graduation Analysis and Dropout Rate

The longitudinal analysis tracks a single class over its high school career and retrospectively determines the proportion that dropped out and the proportion that graduated. The rates are reported as a percentage of the cohort group. As the cohort group advances through high school, withdrawals are dropped from the cohort group and transfers-in are added in. This report focuses one particular cohort group: the students who started 9<sup>th</sup> grade in October 2007, normally scheduled to graduate in June 2011.

The 4-year dropout rate for the cohort group was 6.8 % and the 4-year graduation rate was 77.7% (Table 6). Not all students in the cohort complete the normal 4-year high school span as either graduates or dropouts. Students can complete high-school with Certificates of Completion (7.2% for this cohort) and are not considered as graduates in this analysis. Additionally, 8.3% of the cohort was still enrolled in school and may be part of an extended-path graduate designation in the future.

**Table 6**  
**Longitudinal Dropout and Graduation Rates**

Regular			
	<b>Graduates</b>	19150	77.7%
	<b>Dropouts</b>	1683	6.8%
	<b>Non-Grad Completers</b>	1771	7.2%
	<b>Continuing</b>	2034	8.3%
	<b>Cohort</b>	24638	100.0%



## Longitudinal Rates by Ethnic/Racial Background

White, Non-Hispanic students had higher graduation rates than Hispanic students, who, in turn, had higher graduation rates than Black, Non-Hispanic students (Table 7). Conversely, the dropout rates for Black, Non-Hispanic students was higher than that for Hispanic students, which was, in turn higher than that for White, Non-Hispanic students.

**Table 7  
Longitudinal Dropout and Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity  
for the 2007 Cohort**

White				Hispanic				Black			
	Graduates	1980	87.1%		Graduates	12177	79%		Graduates	4432	69.3%
	Dropouts	103	4.5%		Dropouts	1001	7%		Dropouts	549	8.6%
	Non-Grad Completers	52	2.3%		Non-Grad Completers	1113	7%		Non-Grad Completers	581	9.1%
	Continuing	139	6.1%		Continuing	1039	7%		Continuing	832	13.0%
	<b>Cohort</b>	<b>2274</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		<b>Cohort</b>	<b>15330</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>Cohort</b>	<b>6394</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

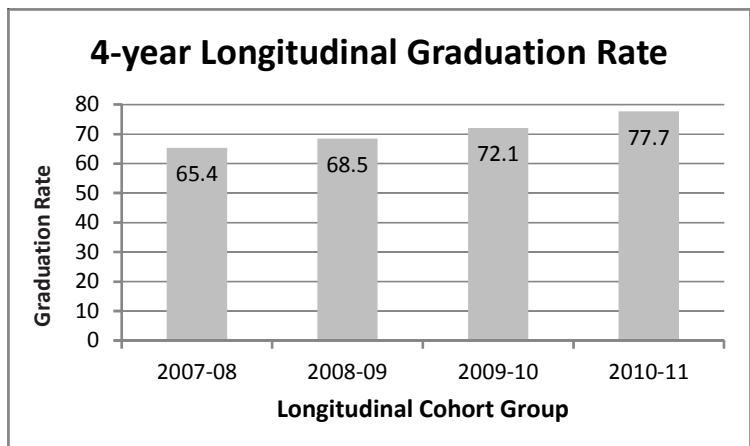
## Summary

### Cross-Sectional Dropout Analysis

- The cross-sectional dropout rate for 2010-2011 for grades 9-12 was 2.9%. This was considerably lower than the cross-sectional dropout rate for 2009-2010.
- Consistent with previous local and national findings, female students were categorized as dropouts less frequently than were male students. Specifically, the rate for male students for 2010-2011 was 3.5 percent (grades 9-12). The rate for female students was 2.4 percent (grades 9-12).
- White, Non-Hispanic students were categorized as dropouts less frequently than were either Hispanic or Black, Non-Hispanic students. Specifically, the 2010-2011 rate for White, Non-Hispanic students was 2.2 percent (grades 9-12); for Hispanic students the rate was 2.5 percent (grades 9-12); and for Black, Non-Hispanic students the rate was 4.5 percent (grades 9-12).

### Longitudinal Graduation Analysis and Dropout Rate

- The longitudinal 4-year dropout rate for the 2007-2011 cohort group was 6.8 percent. The longitudinal 4-year graduation rate for the 2007-2011 cohort group was 77.7 percent .
- The longitudinal 4-year 2007-2011 dropout rate for White, Non-Hispanic students was 4.5 percent; for Hispanics students the rate was 6.5 percent; and for Black, Non-Hispanic students the rate was 8.6 percent.



The longitudinal 4-year 2007-2011 graduation rate for White, Non-Hispanic students was 87.1 percent; for Hispanic students the rate was 79.4 percent; and for Black, Non-Hispanic students the rate was 69.3 percent.

The method for calculating graduation rates recently changed to exclude students who passed the General Educational Development (GED) test. Despite this change, the longitudinal graduation rate shows a steady improvement over the last four years.

The cross-sectional or single-year method and the longitudinal or multi-year method examine data at different points in time and may yield different conclusions depending on the method used. Furthermore, the methodology for defining the cohort group and calculating the dropout and graduation rates is subject to slight modification from year to year. A longitudinal methodology is generally preferred over cross-sectional analysis since the former is less susceptible to temporary fluctuations over time.