



RESEARCH BRIEF

Research Services

Vol. 1204
February 2013

Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis
Department of Research Services

Dropout and Federal Graduation Rates 2011-2012

The District conducts two kinds of dropout analyses every year. The **cross-sectional** analysis of student dropouts 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 of analysis 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 2011-2012.

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not met the relevant attendance requirements of the school district, or the student's whereabouts are unknown; (3) has withdrawn from school but has not transferred to another public or private school; (4) has withdrawn from school because of hardship; or (5) is not eligible to attend school because of reaching the maximum age for an exceptional student program.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.

Graduation Rate Model Comparisons

Starting in the 2011-2012 school year, the school grade accountability system for the State of Florida changed from using the National Governors Association (NGA) rate to the Federal Uniform Rate (FUR) for longitudinal analysis. The FUR is a more rigorous measure and generally results in lower graduation rates.

Both the NGA and Federal Uniform Rate are four-year adjusted cohort rate models. This means that the denominator consists of all students entering grade 9 for the first time four years prior to the year for which the rate is calculated, plus incoming transfers (ninth graders in the first year of the cohort, tenth graders in the second year of the cohort, eleventh graders in the third year of the cohort and twelfth graders in the fourth and final year of the cohort) **minus** adjustments to the cohort (exiting transfers and deceased students).

All students from the denominator who are not specifically classified as on-time graduates become non-graduates – including dropouts and other students who remain enrolled at the end of year 4 but have not yet graduated with a qualifying diploma, as well as certificate recipients and recipients of non-qualifying diploma types. The following table presents differences between NGA and FUR graduation rate calculation rules.

Research Services

Office of Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis
1450 NE Second Avenue, Suite 208, Miami, Florida 33132
(305) 995-7503 Fax (305) 995-7521

	Cohort Adjustments (Students Removed from the Denominator)	Graduates (On-Time Graduates from the Denominator)	Non-Graduates (All Non-Grads Remaining in the Denominator)
NGA Rate (To be used for school years 2009-10 and 2010-11.)	Transfers to: Other public high schools (including DJJs) or private high schools; Home-education programs; Adult- education programs*; and Deceased students. *Adult-Ed GED diploma recipients are also classified as adult-education transfers for the NGA rate and are removed from the cohort.	Standard diploma recipients. Special diploma recipients.	Dropouts, Certificate recipients, HS Exit Option GED* diploma recipients, Continuing enrollees who are not on-time graduates. Adult-Ed GED diploma recipients are classified as adult-education transfers and removed from the cohort (they are not non-grads here)
Federal Uniform Rate (To be used for school years 2011-12 and beyond.)	Transfers to: Other public or private high schools (not including DJJs); Home-education programs; and Deceased students.	Standard diploma recipients.	Dropouts, Certificate recipients, GED diploma recipients, Special diploma recipients, Continuing enrollees who are not on-time graduates, Transfers to adult education programs or DJJ centers who are not standard diploma recipients.

Source: FDOE

Cross-Sectional 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 2011-2012 across grades 9-12 was 2.6 percent. Table 1 includes a breakdown of the rates by grade and across grades for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. The observed cross-sectional dropout rates are slightly lower in 2011-2012 across almost all grade levels and overall.

Table 1
Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for 2010- 2011 and 2011-2012

Grade	2010-2011			2011-2012		
	2011 All Year Membership	No. of Dropouts	Dropout Rate	2012 All Year Membership	No. of Dropouts	Dropout Rate
9	30,087	778	2.6%	30,853	699	2.3%
10	28,180	788	2.8%	28,642	579	2.0%
11	23,638	686	2.9%	26,241	639	2.4%
12	25,969	918	3.5%	24,034	973	4.0%
9 - 12	107,874	3,170	2.9%	109,770	2,890	2.6%

Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates by Gender

Table 2 includes a breakdown of the rates by gender and grade for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. Consistent with previous local and national findings, female students were categorized as dropouts/truants less frequently than were male students. Specifically, the rate for 2011-2012 for female students in grades 9-12 was 2.3 percent. The rate for 2011-2012 for male students in grades 9-12 was 3.0 percent.

Table 2
Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for 2010- 2011 and 2011-2012 by Gender

Grade	Female		Male	
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2010-2011	2011-2012
9	2.1	2.1	3.1	2.5
10	2.3	1.7	3.2	2.3
11	2.2	2.1	3.6	2.7
12	2.9	3.5	4.1	4.6
9 - 12	2.4	2.3	3.5	3.0

Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates 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 1.8 percent for grades 9-12 for 2011-2012. For Hispanic students, the rate was 2.0, and for Black, Non-Hispanics, the rate was 4.7. As can be seen, there is a decrease in the dropout rate for all three major racial/ethnic groups at all grade levels except the 12th grade. The largest decrease was seen in 10th grade White, Non-Hispanic students. The cross-sectional dropout rate for these students decreased from 2.3 percent in 2010-11 to 1.2 percent in 2011-12.

Table 3
Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity

Grade	White, Non-Hispanic		Black, Non-Hispanic		Hispanic	
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2010-2011	2011-2012	2010-2011	2011-2012
9	1.6	1.8	3.7	4.1	2.3	1.7
10	2.3	1.2	4.5	4.3	2.2	1.3
11	2.3	1.6	4.5	4.4	2.5	1.8
12	2.5	2.6	5.2	6.3	3.0	3.4
9 - 12	2.2	1.8	4.5	4.7	2.5	2.0

Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for Exceptional Student Education Programs

In keeping with the State’s practice, the dropout rate for students in Exceptional Student Education programs was calculated using the grade 9-12 total membership from the End of Year Survey. This includes any grade 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	2011-2012 All Year Membership	Dropout Rate
Total Excluding Gifted	12,286	4.8%

Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for English Language Learners (ELL) Students

The dropout rate for grades 9-12 students classified as ESOL Levels 1-4 was 4.0 percent for 2010-2011. The cross-sectional dropout rate for ELL students in 2011-2012 across all grade levels was considerably lower, at 3.1 percent. This decrease was consistent across all grade levels.

Table 5
Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for LEP Students

Grade	2010-2011			2011-2012		
	All Year ESOL 1-4 Membership	No. of ELL Dropouts	LEP Dropout Rates	All Year ESOL 1-4 Membership	No. of ELL Dropouts	LEP Dropout Rates
9	3,450	103	3.0%	3,766	76	2.0%
10	2,843	92	3.2%	3,306	56	1.7%
11	2,351	88	3.7%	2,638	92	3.5%
12	2,069	144	7.0%	2,040	146	7.2%
9 - 12	10,713	427	4.0%	11,750	370	3.1%

Longitudinal Federal Graduation and Dropout Rates

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 on one particular

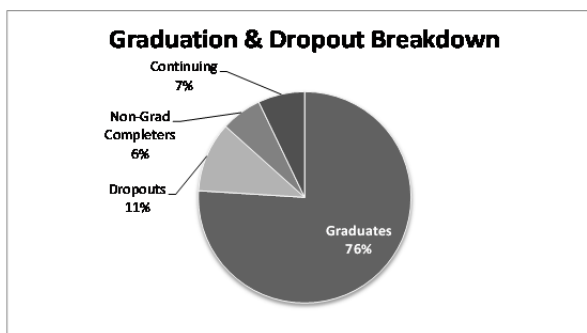
cohort group: the students who started 9th grade in October 2008 and who were normally scheduled to graduate in June 2012.

The 4-year dropout rate for the cohort group was 10.7 % and the 4-year graduation rate was 76.0% (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 (6.2% for this cohort) and are not considered as graduates in this analysis. Additionally, 7.1% of the cohort was still enrolled in school and may become part of an extended-path graduate designation in the future.

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 some improvement over the last four years.

Table 6
Longitudinal Dropout and Graduation Rates

Regular			
	Graduates	17574	76.0%
	Dropouts	2473	10.7%
	Non-Grad Completers	1436	6.2%
	Continuing	1642	7.1%
Cohort		23125	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 were 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 2008 Cohort

White				Hispanic				Black			
	Graduates	2010	85.1%		Graduates	11296	76.9%		Graduates	3737	68.3%
	Dropouts	170	7.2%		Dropouts	1507	10.3%		Dropouts	760	13.9%
	Non-Grad Completers	74	3.1%		Non-Grad Completers	1001	6.8%		Non-Grad Completers	340	6.2%
	Continuing	109	4.6%		Continuing	876	6.0%		Continuing	637	11.6%
Cohort		2363	100.0%	Cohort		14680	100.0%	Cohort		5474	100.0%

Summary

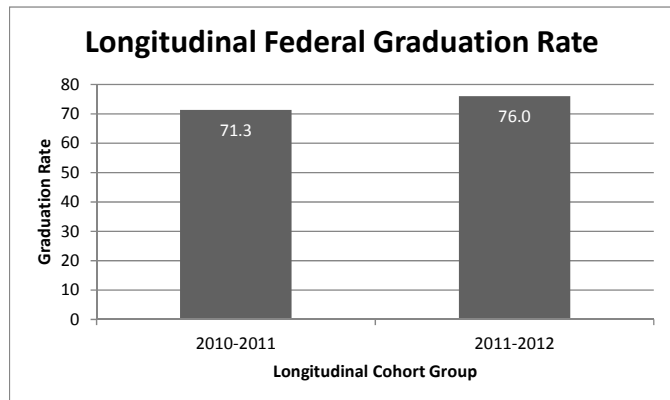
Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates

- The cross-sectional dropout rate for 2011-2012 for grades 9-12 was 2.6%. This was slightly lower than the cross-sectional dropout rate for 2010-2011.

- 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 2011-2012 was 3.0 percent (grades 9-12). The rate for female students was 2.3 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 2011-2012 rate for White, Non-Hispanic students was 1.8 percent (grades 9-12); for Hispanic students the rate was 2.0 percent (grades 9-12); and for Black, Non-Hispanic students the rate was 4.7 percent (grades 9-12).

Longitudinal Graduation and Dropout Rates

- The longitudinal 4-year dropout rate for the 2008-2012 cohort group was 10.7 percent. The longitudinal 4-year graduation rate for the 2008-2012 cohort group was 76.0 percent, an improvement from the 71.3 percent of the 2007-2011 cohort.
- The longitudinal 4-year 2008-2012 dropout rate for White, Non-Hispanic students was 7.2 percent; for Hispanics students the rate was 10.3 percent; and for Black, Non-Hispanic students the rate was 13.9 percent.



The longitudinal 4-year 2008-2012 graduation rate for White, Non-Hispanic students was 85.1 percent; for Hispanic students the rate was 76.9 percent; and for Black, Non-Hispanic students the rate was 68.3 percent.

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.