



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Improving Extended Graduation Rates: Insights from Four Connecticut Districts

August 2020

How are extended graduation rates calculated?

- The same approach that is used to calculate the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is used when calculating the five- and six-year adjusted cohort graduation rates (see [documentation](#)).
- Students are followed from when they enter high school for the first time to the expected year of graduation.
- The five- and six-year adjusted cohort graduation rates represent the percentage of first time 9th grade students who earn a standard high school diploma within five and six years respectively.

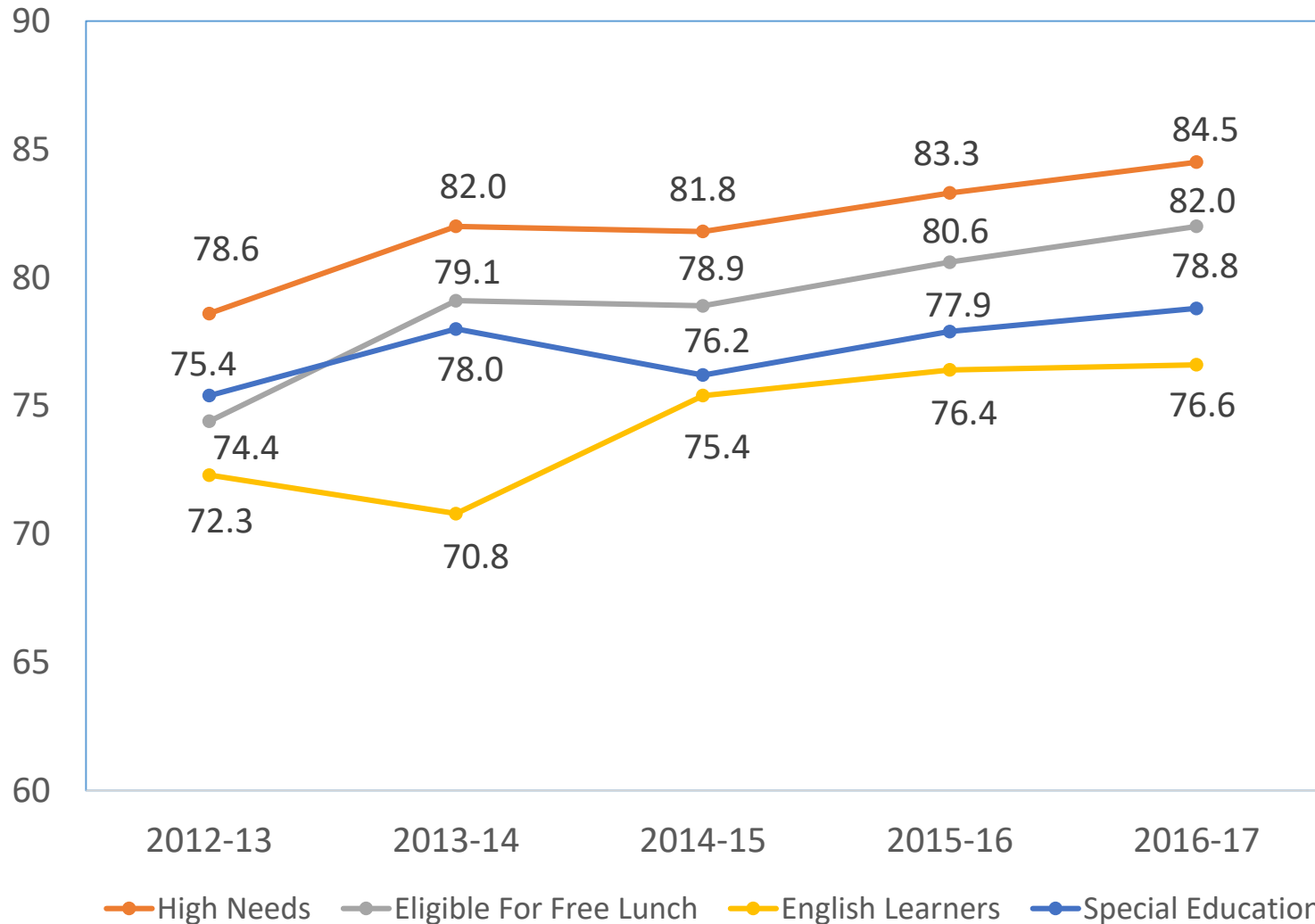


Extended Graduation Rates for the 2016-17 Cohort are the Highest Rates to Date for Students with High Needs

- The overall six-year graduation rate for all students statewide continues to improve.
- Student groups are improving.
 - Trend data for all groups available on [EdSight](#)
- Graduation rates for the majority of student groups with the greatest needs are improving at a faster rate than their peers.



Six-Year Graduation Rates Improve for Student Groups



Why are extended graduation rates important?

- Four years is the standard expectation, but some students need more time.
 - English learners who arrive in this country and enroll in middle or high school may need additional time to become proficient in English while mastering content and developing skills necessary for college and career readiness.
 - Students from low income families may need to work part-time to support their families while balancing coursework.
 - Some students with disabilities need additional “transition only services” to facilitate the transition from school to adult life.
- Extended rates are a more complete picture of the successes of our students and the educators who support them.

2016-17 Adjusted Cohort Four-, Five-, and Six-Year Graduation Rates

	4-year	5-year	6-year
All Students Rate	87.9	88.2	91.4
Count of Graduates	37,364	+94	+1,112



Improving Extended Graduation Rates: Insights from Four Connecticut Districts

Meeting the needs of all students by
empowering them to
explore the world and
achieve their goals



We make a difference in Enfield - every child, every day.



Click on a district to see the Connecticut Report Card.

EAST HAVEN Ensures that Students with Disabilities are Growing

- A retired special education teacher serves as the “Educational Benefits Coordinator”
 - She monitors student IEP goals and objectives to ensure that students are consistently challenged and supported. Recycling annual goals is unacceptable.
- Tremendous curriculum work has been done at the high school to ensure scaffolds are in place so that students can be successful.
- Social workers and behavior analysts push-in to classrooms and collaborate with classroom teachers to identify triggers for students and work to optimize conditions for learning.



Adult Actions in **EAST HAVEN** are Making a Difference

- Superintendent Forti praised her team. “We challenge each other, and we’re not afraid to make adjustments.”
- East Haven considers itself a “high touch” district in terms of communication with families. They are using feedback to develop new ways to share information (e.g. podcasts).
- District-wide effort underway to release responsibility for learning to students. “Adults can’t do the learning for kids.”
 - Paraprofessional staff enrolled in COMPASS, “a nationally recognized, comprehensive, job-embedded professional development curriculum aligned with national paraeducator standards.”



High School Consolidation in ENFIELD a Catalyst for Change

- In 2016-17 Enrico Fermi closed. Students joined Enfield High School.
 - Blending of students was positive for everyone
 - Added 20 high-interest courses (e.g. Technology, EMT, musical theater, etc.)
 - Block schedule format allows students to complete up to 32 credits in four years
 - Eagle Block is 55 minutes daily. Tiered supports offered. Students choose what they need. Has led to improved sense of connectedness for students.
- Many teachers live in Enfield. “They are invested in their neighbors.”



A Network of Supports Benefit ENFIELD Students

- Co-taught classes: English, math, social studies, science, and Spanish. Designed for students with IEPs but benefit all.
- Case managers meet daily with students.
- Success of specialized programs (SOAR, Eagle Academy, ALP) increased visibility in the community and resulted in students returning from outplaced settings.
- Partnership with Asnuntuck featured in [Learn Together, Grow Together](#). Participating students with disabilities have ~ 95% job placement rate following graduation.
- Reopening plan recognizes “vulnerable students would be the most adversely affected by remote learning.” Students with disabilities enrolled in specialized programs offered four in-person learning days weekly.



A Focus on the Needs of High School Students in **KILLINGLY**

- Four years ago, new leadership team changed expectations for how high school students need to be supported.
 - Co-teaching and Response to Intervention program implemented
 - “Pride Block” (Advisory/Intervention/Enrichment) meets every other day.
- 29 career pathway options for students
- Special attention paid to the Grade 9 transition
 - Social workers, counselors, case managers are all connecting. Information passed intentionally from middle to high school. Transition meetings happen throughout the spring, especially for Tier 3 students.
 - Freshman Academy: Teachers meet every other day. Case manager on every team. Discussions focused on individualized needs.
- “What is fair isn’t always equal.”



KILLINGLY Proud of its Culture of Inclusion

- Effectively dismantled the barriers between special education and regular education. Teachers support all students.
 - Blurred the lines between accommodations offered to students with IEPs and supports available to all. All students have access to what they need.
- Student-led PPTs have helped students understand how they learn best. They self-advocate.
- Unified Sports Program is a point of pride for the community.
 - Sponsored a well attended “Senior Night” for athletes.
 - Students with disabilities have many allies throughout the school.



Clear Commitment to English Learners in MANCHESTER

- Students provided with the best possible instructors.
 - TESOL certified teachers are hired whenever possible.
 - Effort to develop talent from within the district.
- All ELs served by the same counselor for consistency.
- Prioritize scheduling ELs in courses together to maximize resources.
- PLCs are comprised of generalists and TESOL teachers. The partnership helps all teachers understand best instructional practices for ELs.
- It is a collaborative effort to support ALL students.
 - “Graduation rates have increased because of the staff’s persistence, stamina, and ownership.”



MANCHESTER'S Responsive System of Supports for Students & Families

- Coordinator of EL Programs and Community works closely with instructional staff to make sure she knows what they need to support students. Meets regularly with the Director of Humanities K-12 to identify professional learning needs for EL staff. Participates in bi-weekly strategy sessions with Deputy Superintendent to ensure availability of resources.
- Coordinator creatively establishes relationships with the community. Volunteers step forward to support the district in reaching families (e.g. interpreters, connections to community organizations).
- Manchester will apply lessons learned during virtual summer school to more effectively serve ELs learning from home (e.g. Teachers invited caregivers to select a 30-minute period twice weekly to check-in).
- Superintendent Geary sees this as a time to “rethink practices and continue using what works.”



Conditions Promoting the Best Outcomes for Students

- An inclusive environment where **all** teachers feel responsible for the learning and engagement of students with disabilities and English learners;
- A school culture that fosters a strong sense of community and mutual respect among the students and staff;
- Carefully selected staff who possess the expertise, a willingness to continuously improve, and a talent for developing positive, productive relationships with students and their families;
- A range of pathways and choices that appeal to students and keep them engaged and excited about learning;
- Targeted attention to and careful planning for the middle to high school transition, especially for the most vulnerable students; and
- A leadership team that is unwavering in its practice of putting students at the center of all decisions.



Schools with Strong Academic Growth Use Similar Strategies

- In May 2018, CSDE asked schools with strong academic growth to identify the factors key to their success. The findings are summarized in [*Voices from the Field: Factors Influencing Academic Growth*](#).
- The report expands on six themes and provides specific examples that we see working in these four high schools.
 1. Climate, culture, and social and emotional factors for students and teachers
 2. Targeted and focused improvement of curriculum and instruction
 3. Data-based decision making
 4. Responsive and effective professional learning
 5. Personalized learning
 6. District-wide coherence



Thank You to Our District Partners

East Haven

[Erica Forti](#), Superintendent

[Robert Swan](#), Director of Pupil Services

[Ben Dix](#), Special Education Out of District/Magnet/Charter Coordinator

[Vincent DeNuzzo](#), East Haven High School Principal

Enfield

[Julie Carroll](#), Chief Pupil Services Officer

[Michelle Middleton](#), Chief Academic Officer

[Bridgette Birchall](#), Special Education Coordinator Grades 6-12

[Erin Clark](#), Enfield High School Principal



Thank You to Our District Partners

Killingly

[Paul Brenton](#), Assistant Superintendent

[Fran Lagace](#), Director of Pupil Services

[Elise Guari](#), Principal of Killingly High School

[Karen Lagace](#), Assistant Principal of KHS

[Michael Lefevre](#), Assistant Principal of KHS

Manchester

[Matt Geary](#), Superintendent

[Amy Radikas](#), Deputy Superintendent

