

VI.A.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO BE PROPOSED:

March 3, 2021

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-4(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, receives *The Condition of Education in Connecticut* (2019-20) and directs the Acting Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____, this third day of March, Two Thousand Twenty-One.

Signed: _____

Charlene Russell-Tucker, Secretary
State Board of Education

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Charlene Russell-Tucker, Acting Commissioner of Education
DATE: March 3, 2021
SUBJECT: The Condition of Education in Connecticut 2019-20

Executive Summary

Please find attached the 2019-20 report entitled *The Condition of Education in Connecticut*. This report presents indicators that describe the progress of the public education system, the characteristics of its students and educators, and student performance on key indicators of student engagement and student readiness for college and careers. It is required by Section 10-4(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes and will be forwarded to the Office of the Governor and the General Assembly.

In the 2019-20 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person classes were cancelled in mid-March and all districts switched to fully remote instruction for the remainder of the school year. Additionally, all state academic assessments and the Next Generation Accountability System reports were cancelled for the 2019-20 school year. Therefore, available data are included but several performance metrics are not part of this year's report. Here are some key highlights:

- Connecticut's student enrollment continues to decline at a rate of one half of one percent each year. Though lower, the enrollment is increasingly more diverse (i.e., 48.9 percent are non-white), poor (i.e., 43.3 percent are eligible for free or reduced price meals), and with greater educational needs (i.e., 16.0 percent are students with disabilities while 8.3 percent are English learners) than just five years ago.
- While the race/ethnic composition of students is changing, the teaching force is not changing nearly as rapidly. The percentage of non-white educators has only increased from 8.1 percent in 2014-15 to 9.6 percent in 2019-20.
- The percentage of students who received at least one suspension/expulsion in 2019-20 was 4.9 percent. The CSDE is grouping districts into four tiers based on suspension/expulsion rates in order to provide a system of supports and targeted action planning. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2018-19 district tiers are being used to identify those districts needing support. The chronic absenteeism rate was 12.2 percent in 2019-20; it should be noted that for the 2019-20 school year, chronic absenteeism calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020. Incidences of suspensions/expulsions and chronic absenteeism continue to be evidenced disproportionately among students of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and students from low-income families.

- The four-year high school cohort graduation rates are rising and the graduation rate gap between most student groups continues to shrink. Connecticut's graduation rate of 88.5 percent remains more than three points higher than the national average. Two 2019 cohorts noted their highest four-year graduation rates since 2011; English learners reached a new high of 71.5 percent, and students with disabilities, reached a new high of 67.9 percent. Cohorts of students who are eligible for free lunch, Hispanic/Latino students and both male and female cohorts all demonstrated increases as compared to the 2018 cohort.
- College entrance rates demonstrated a slight uptick for the class of 2019 (71.5 percent). College graduation rates dropped slightly from 50.5 percent for the high school class of 2013 to 50.3 percent for the class of 2014 earning a two- or four-year college degree in six years after high school graduation.

Prepared by: _____
Diane Murphy, Education Consultant
Performance Office

Approved by: _____
Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer



CONDITION OF EDUCATION

2019-20

The Condition of Education in Connecticut is the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) yearly status report on public education in the state. It fulfills the requirements under Section 10-4(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

FOREWORD

The Condition of Education in Connecticut is the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) yearly status report on public education in the state. It presents indicators that describe the progress of the public education system, the characteristics of its students and educators, and student performance on key indicators of student engagement and student readiness for college and careers.

Equity and excellence are the cornerstones of the State Board of Education's comprehensive plan for public education. Therefore, this report disaggregates data on several of the indicators to separately highlight the experiences and outcomes of students from historically under-performing groups like students with disabilities, English learners, students from low-income families, and those from minority racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Please visit our data portal, EdSight, at <http://edsight.ct.gov> for additional information about students, educators, instruction, resources, and performance of schools, districts, and the state.

Charlene Russell-Tucker, Acting Commissioner
Connecticut State Department of Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the 2019-20 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person classes were cancelled in mid-March and all districts switched to fully remote instruction for the remainder of the school year. Additionally, all state academic assessments and the Next Generation Accountability System reports were cancelled for the 2019-20 school year. Therefore, available data are included but several performance metrics are not part of this year's report. Here are some key highlights:

Connecticut's student enrollment continues to decline at a rate of one half of one percent each year. Though lower, the enrollment is increasingly more diverse (i.e., 48.9 percent are nonwhite), poor (i.e., 43.3 percent are eligible for free or reduced price meals), and with greater educational needs (i.e., 16.0 percent are students with disabilities while 8.3 percent are English learners) than just five years ago.

While the race/ethnic composition of students is changing, the teaching force is not changing nearly as rapidly. The percentage of nonwhite educators has only increased from 8.1 percent in 2014-15 to 9.6 percent in 2019-20.

The percentage of students who received at least one suspension/expulsion in 2019-20 was 4.9 percent. The CSDE is grouping districts into four tiers based on suspension/expulsion rates in order to provide a system of supports and targeted action planning. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2018-19 districts tiers are being used to identify those districts needing support. The chronic absenteeism rate was 12.2 percent in 2019-20; it should be noted that for the 2019-20 school year, chronic absenteeism calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020. Incidences of suspensions/expulsions and chronic absenteeism continue to be evidenced disproportionately among students of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and students from low-income families.

The four-year high school cohort graduation rates are rising and the graduation rate gap between most student groups continues to shrink. Connecticut's graduation rate of 88.5 percent remains more than three points higher than the national average. Two 2019 cohorts noted their highest 4-year graduation rates since 2011; English learners reached a new high of 71.5 percent, and students with disabilities, reached a new high of 67.9 percent. Cohorts of students who are eligible for free lunch, Hispanic/Latino students and both male and female cohorts all demonstrated increases as compared to the 2018 cohort.

College entrance rates demonstrated a slight uptick for the class of 2019 (71.5 percent). College graduation rates dropped slightly from 50.5 percent for the high school class of 2013 to 50.3 percent for the class of 2014 earning a two- or four-year college degree in six years after high school graduation.

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Districts, Schools, Programs, and Adult Education Providers

Public education in Connecticut is provided to students in prekindergarten to Grade 12 through many types of school districts. These include local and regional boards of education, regional educational service centers (RESA), public charter districts, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System, Endowed Academies, and state agencies. These school districts deliver their educational services to students through regular schools, specialized programs, and outplacements to private facilities.

Table 1: Number of Schools by the Type of Organization 2019-20

Organization Type	Number of Schools
Public Schools in Local and Regional Districts	936
Regional Educational Service Center Schools	29
Public Charter Schools	22
Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Schools	17
Endowed Academies	3
State Agency Facilities	35
Total Number of Schools	1,042

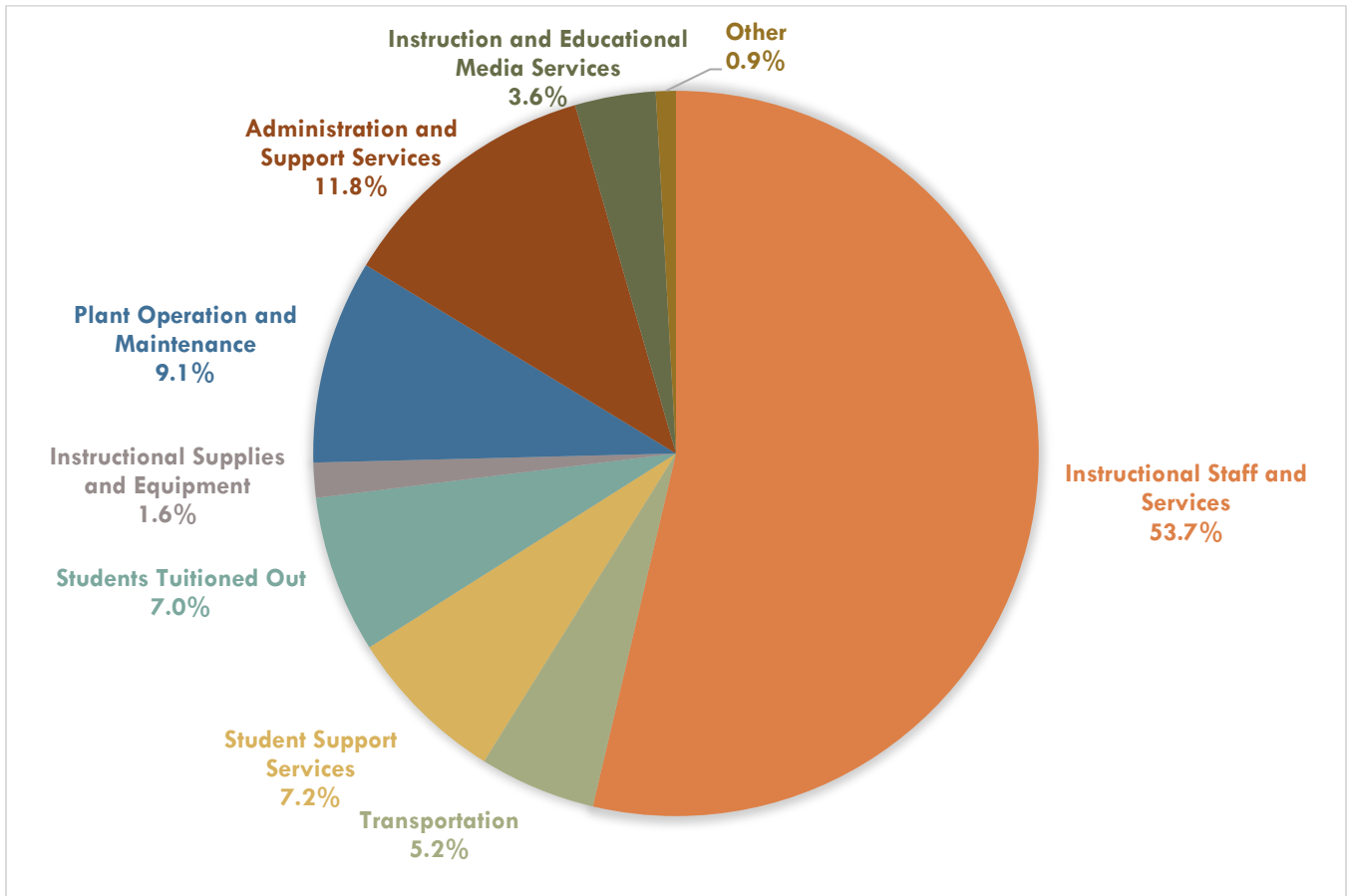
Of the 1,042 schools, 798 are elementary and/or middle schools and 244 are high schools. In addition to these 1,042 schools, 469 specialized programs provide targeted services. The vast majority of these programs are designed for special education students (325), alternative/credit recovery (78), or prekindergarten (39).

In addition to PK-12 education, adult education programs are also provided to residents in all towns across Connecticut through 41 local school district providers, three regional educational service centers, 13 community/faith-based organizations, and one state agency.

Expenditures

In 2019-20, the state’s overall school expenditures (excluding investments in land, buildings and debt) totaled approximately \$9.75 billion. Instructional staff and services represented a majority of the total expenditures; nearly 54 cents out of every education dollar was devoted to this area.

Figure 1: Expenditures by Category, 2019-20

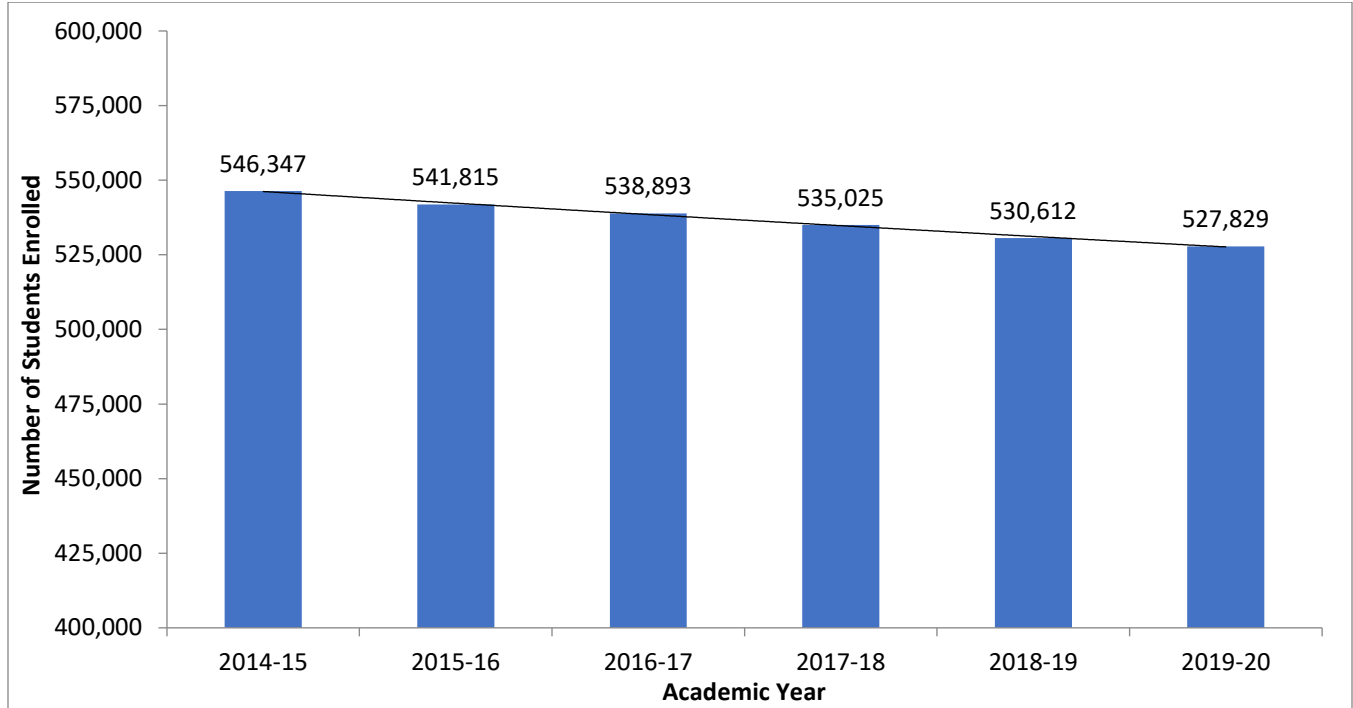


STUDENTS

Public School Enrollment

Connecticut's student enrollment in public schools continues to decline each year. The 2019-20 enrollment of 527,829 was 3.4 percent lower than the 2014-15 enrollment of 546,347.

Figure 2: Connecticut Public School Enrollment (PK-12)



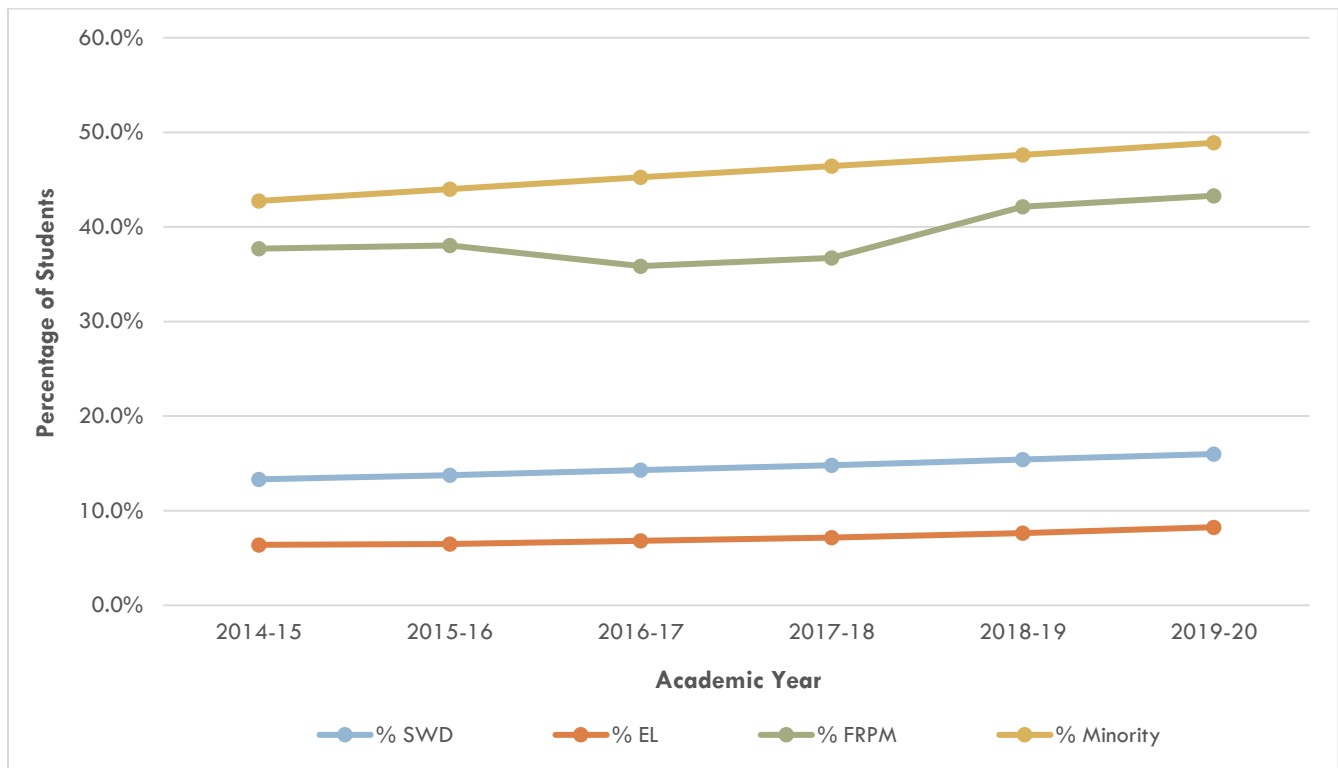
Although statewide enrollment is declining, some districts evidence substantial increases over the same period. These include:

- RESCs like Capitol Region Education Council and LEARN through the establishment of new interdistrict magnet schools and expanded slots in existing magnet schools;
- public charter districts through a combination of new charters and expanded slots in existing charters; and
- some Alliance Districts (Connecticut's 33 lowest-performing districts) including Danbury, Meriden, Norwalk, Stamford, and Windsor.

Student Demographics and Characteristics

An increasing proportion of public school students (PK-12) come from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of students from racial/ethnic minorities has increased from 42.7 percent in 2014-15 to 48.9 percent in 2019-20. Substantial increases occurred in the percentage of students who are English learners (EL) or students with disabilities (SWD). ELs account for 8.3 percent of the student population while 16.0 percent of students are receiving special education and related services. The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (FRPM) increased again in 2019-20 to the highest proportion to date (43.3 percent), after a slight dip in the 2016-17 school year.

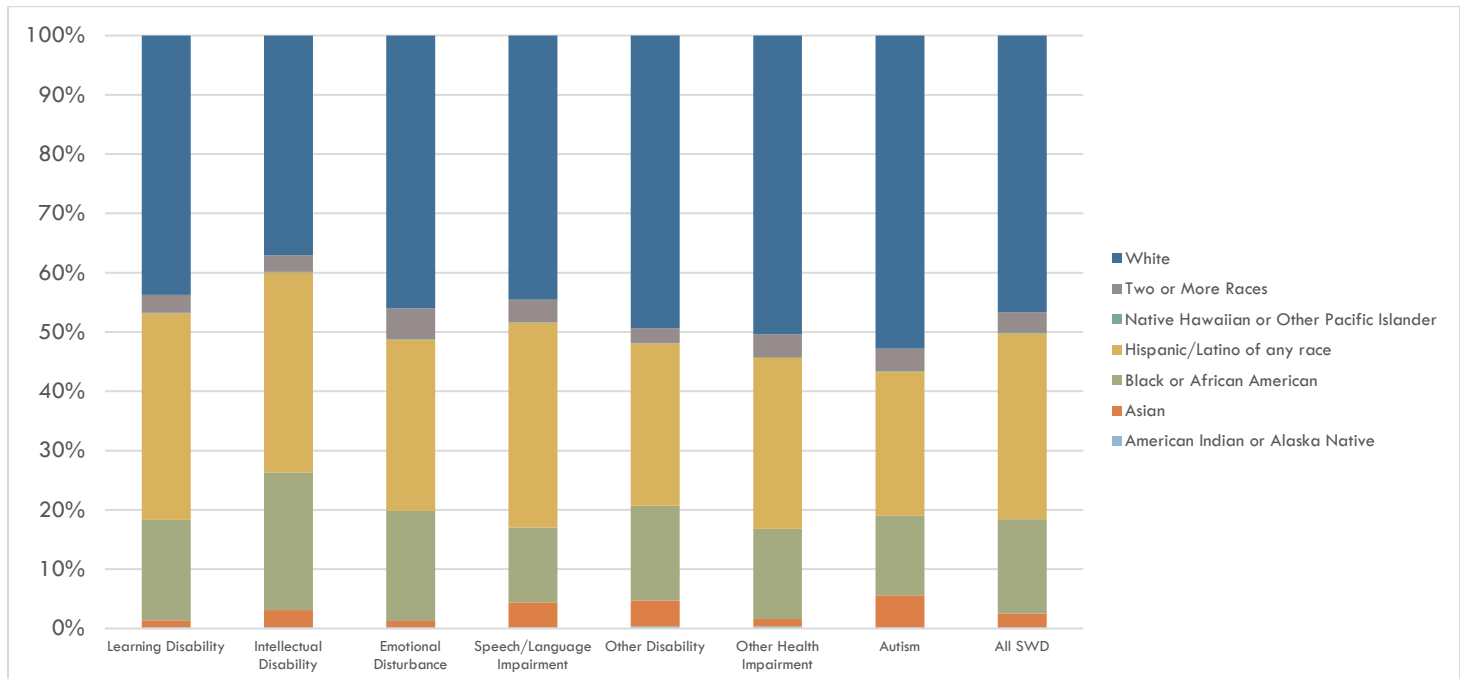
Figure 3: Student Demographics and Characteristics



Special Education by Race/Ethnicity

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the CSDE to investigate disproportionality based on race/ethnicity in the identification of students with disabilities. In 2019-20, district-level investigations revealed that the most common group that was disproportionately identified was black/African American students with learning disabilities. Of the districts with data of concern, upon investigation none were found to have disproportionate identification as a result of inappropriate policies, practices, or procedures. At the state level, black/African American students were more than twice as likely as their nonblack peers to be identified with intellectual disabilities and were more than one-and-a-half times as likely as their peers to be identified with serious emotional disturbance.

**Figure 4: Percentage of Students with Disabilities, Ages 6-21:
Disability Type by Race/Ethnicity, 2019-20**



Languages Spoken at Home among ELs

In the 2019-20 school year, Connecticut's ELs spoke 145 different non-English languages. The 15 most prevalent non-English languages among ELs in Grades PK-12 are listed below.

Table 2: 15 Most Prevalent Non-English Languages Spoken at Home among ELs, 2019-20

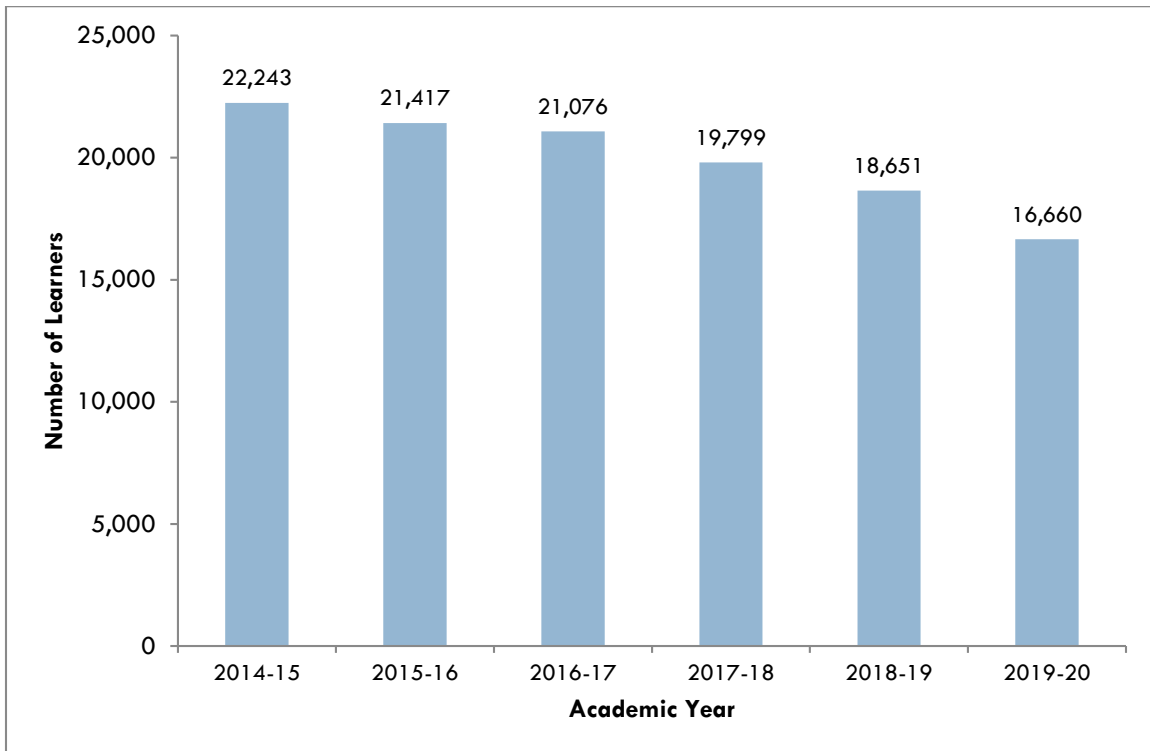
Language	Number of ELs
Spanish	31,303
Portuguese	2,410
Arabic	1,270
Creole-Haitian	831
Mandarin	728
Albanian	506
Polish	485
Urdu	439
Bengali	333
Vietnamese	326
French	305
Pashto	270
Russian	245
Tamil	244
Telugu	238

While most districts had to accommodate only a few languages, there were 48 districts whose ELs spoke 20 or more different non-English languages. Schools that have 20 or more students who are not proficient in English and speak the same language are required to offer a program of bilingual instruction in the following school year.

Adult Education Enrollment

Connecticut's adult education programs operate in their local communities to assist adults in obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment, self-sufficiency and citizenship; becoming full partners in the educational development of their own children; and completing their secondary school education. Connecticut law requires that adult education services be provided by local school districts free of charge to any adult, 17 years of age or older, who is not enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school program. In 2019-20, Connecticut programs served 16,660 adult learners.

Figure 5: Adult Education Enrollment

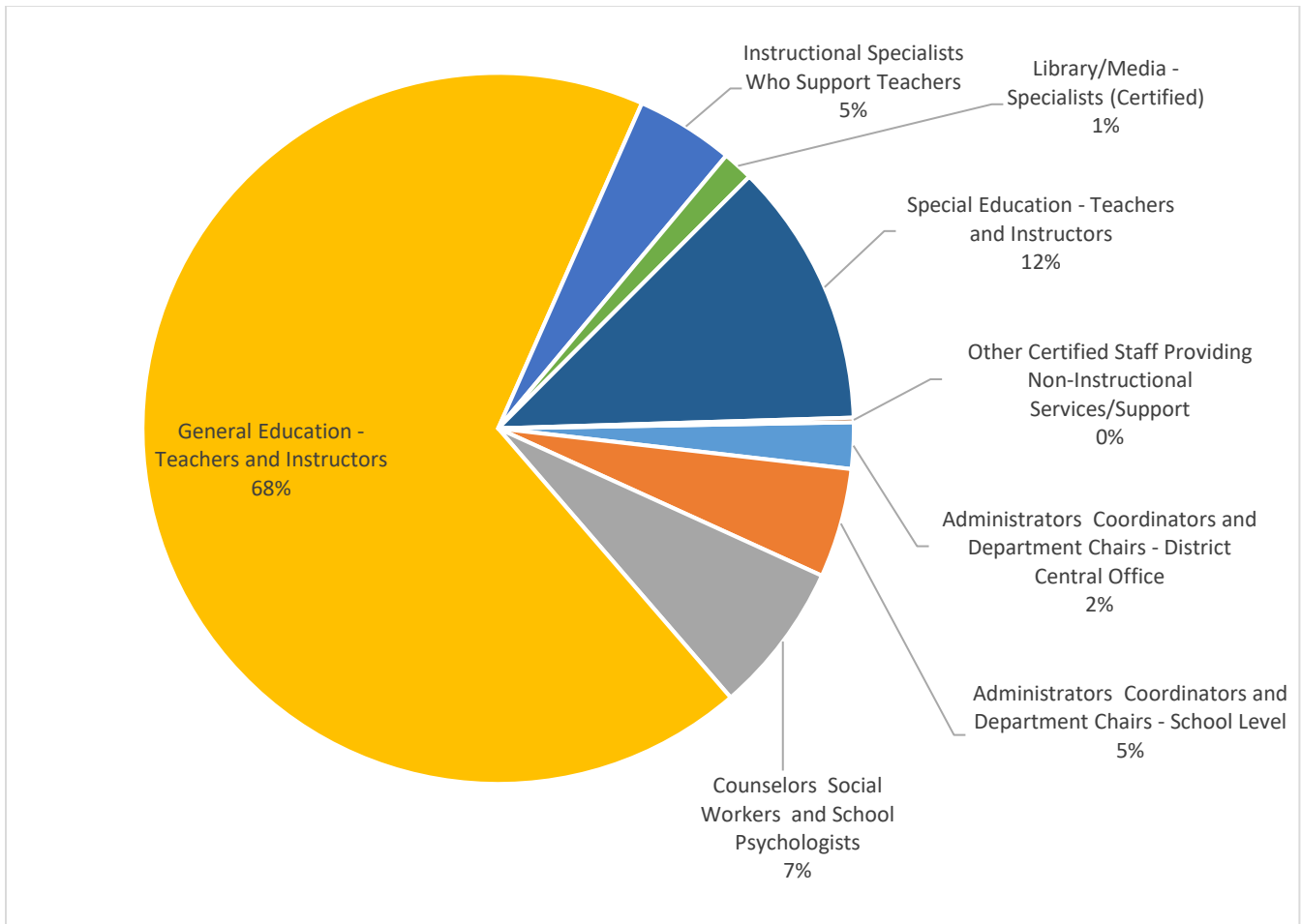


EDUCATORS

Capacity

General education and special education teachers combined constitute 80 percent of full-time equivalent (FTE) certified staff. The total general education teacher/instructor FTE has dropped every year since 2015-16, while the FTE of staff providing both instructional and non-instructional support to students and teachers continues to grow. These changes in the make-up of certified staff are a direct reflection of the continuing decreases in total public school enrollment and corresponding increases of students in need of greater supports.

Figure 6: Certified Staff Full-time Equivalent by Role Type: 2019-20

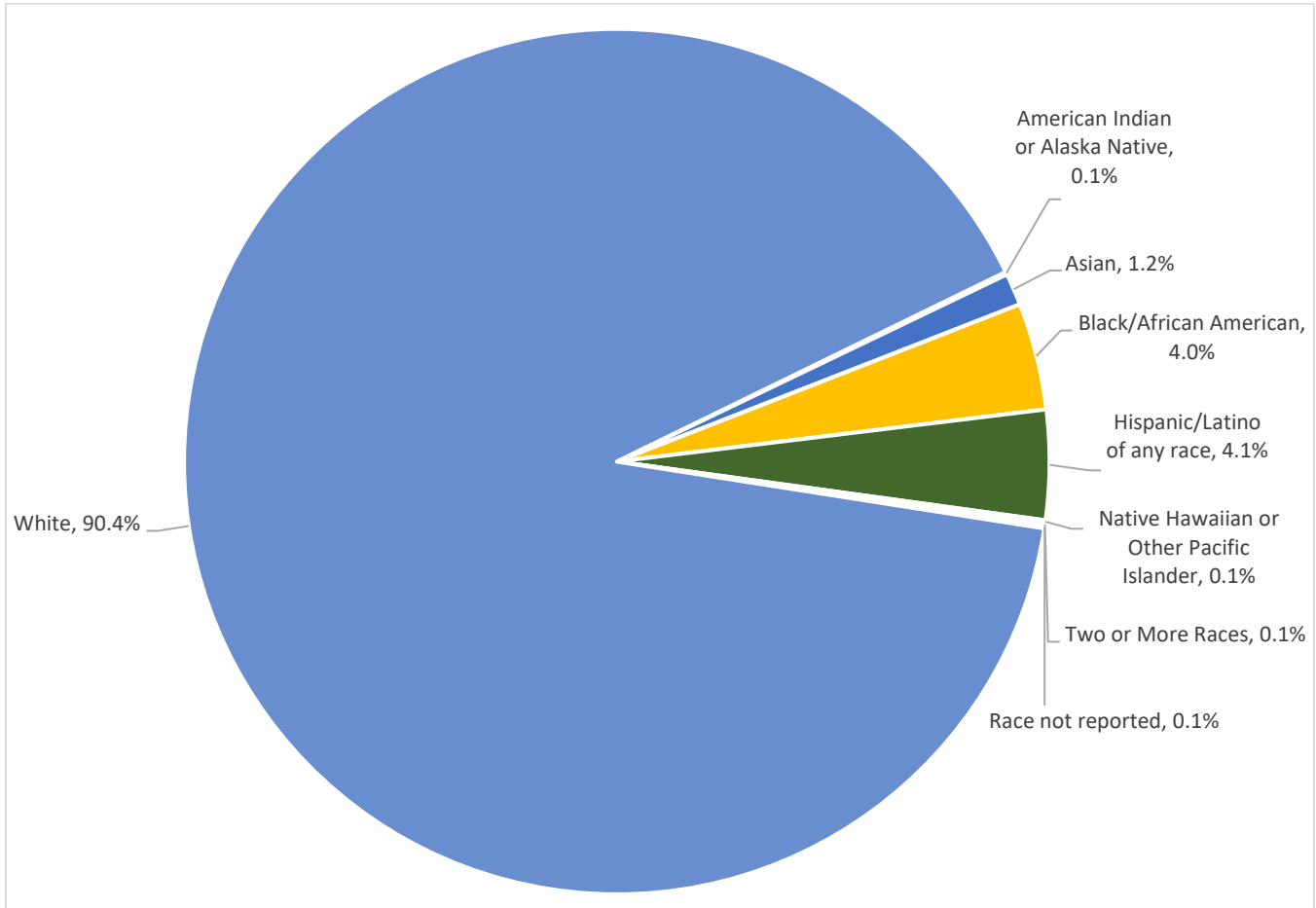


Full-time equivalent (FTE) is derived by dividing the amount of time a person works by the time required of a corresponding full-time position. A full-time position is considered to be 1.0 FTE. For example, a teacher who works two of the five days per week would be a 0.4 FTE (2 days/5 days = 0.4 of full time or 0.4 FTE).

Demographics

While Connecticut’s student population is diverse with nonwhite students comprising 48.9 percent of the student body, 90.4 percent of certified school staff are white. The percentage of nonwhite educators has increased over the past five years from 8.1 percent in 2014-15 to 9.6 percent in 2019-20.

Figure 7: Percentage of Certified Staff by Race/Ethnicity, 2019-20

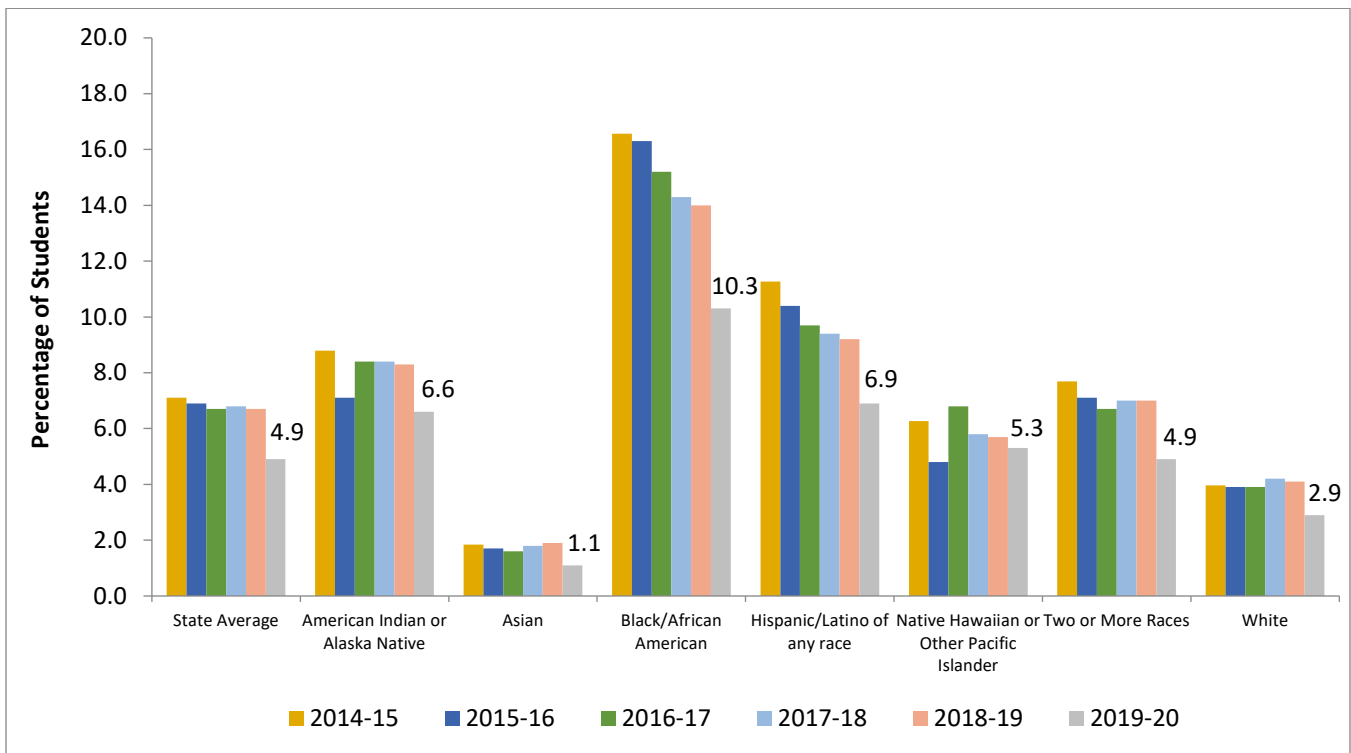


SCHOOL CLIMATE AND INSTRUCTION

School Discipline

Local Educational Agencies are required to report to the CSDE all disciplinary incidents that result in any of the following: In-School Suspension (ISS), Out-of-School Suspension (OSS), Bus Suspensions, and Expulsions (EXP). In addition, offenses classified as “serious” and all incidents involving alcohol, drugs, or weapons must be reported regardless of the type of sanction imposed. All bullying incidents must also be reported regardless of sanction. In the 2019-20 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person classes were cancelled in mid-March and all districts switched to fully remote instruction for the remainder of the school year. In 2019-20, 4.9 percent of all students received at least one suspension. Black/African American students are suspended at substantially higher rates than their white counterparts though suspension rates have been declining overall for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino student groups for the last eight years. The CSDE is also grouping districts into four tiers based on suspension/expulsion rates in order to provide a system of supports and targeted action planning. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2018-19 districts tiers are being used to identify those districts needing support.

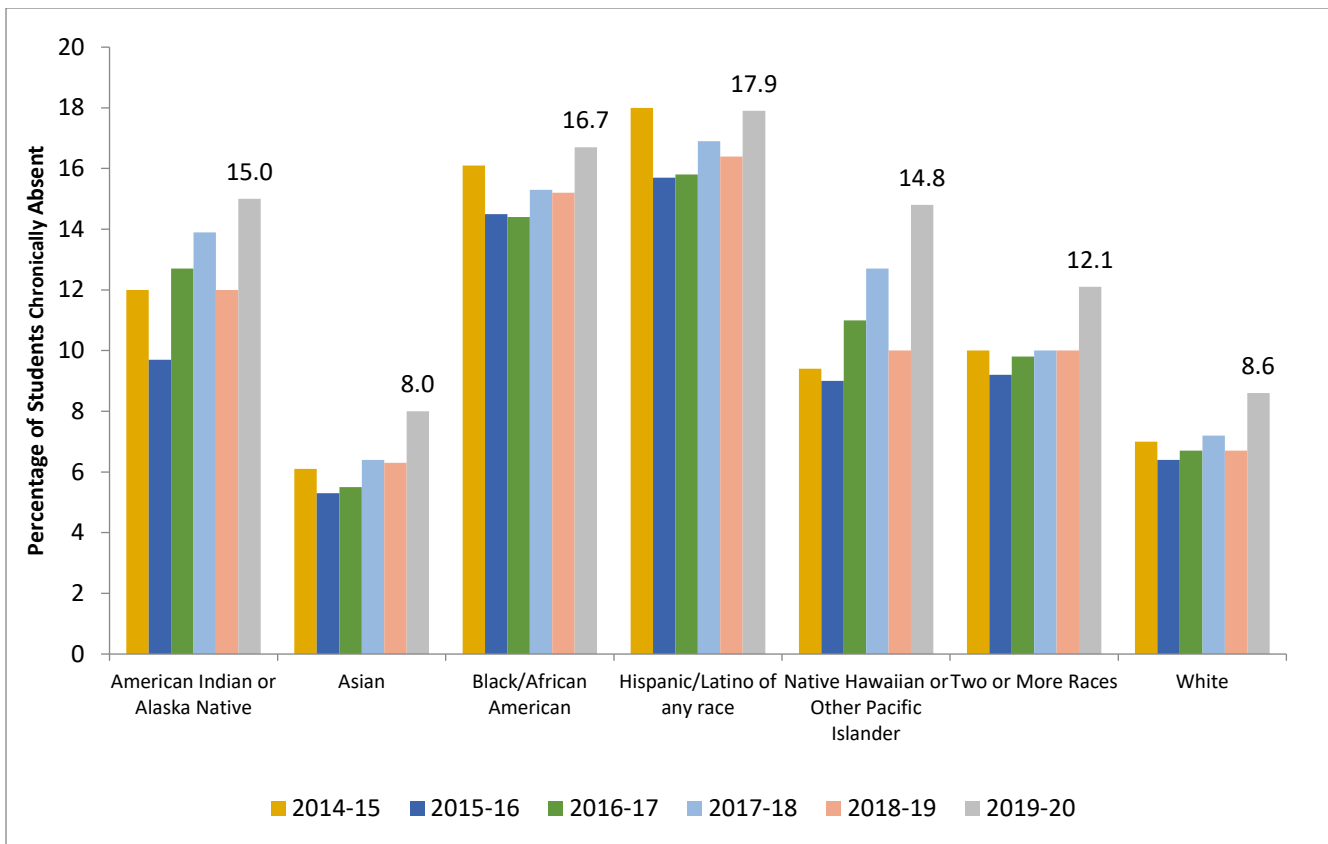
Figure 8: Suspension Rates by Race/Ethnicity



Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or greater of the total number of days enrolled in the school year for any reason. It includes both excused and unexcused absences. Several research studies have highlighted the association of chronic absenteeism with student academic achievement and high school graduation. Chronic absenteeism is also an indicator in Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System. Connecticut’s statewide chronic absenteeism rate for students in Grades K-12 was 12.2 percent in 2019-20; it should be noted that for the 2019-20 school year, chronic absenteeism calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020. There remains considerable variation in chronic absenteeism rates among students from different race/ethnic groups. Students with high needs continue to demonstrate high rates of chronic absenteeism (students eligible for free lunch, 20.3 percent; students with disabilities, 20.8 percent; and English learners, 17.2 percent).

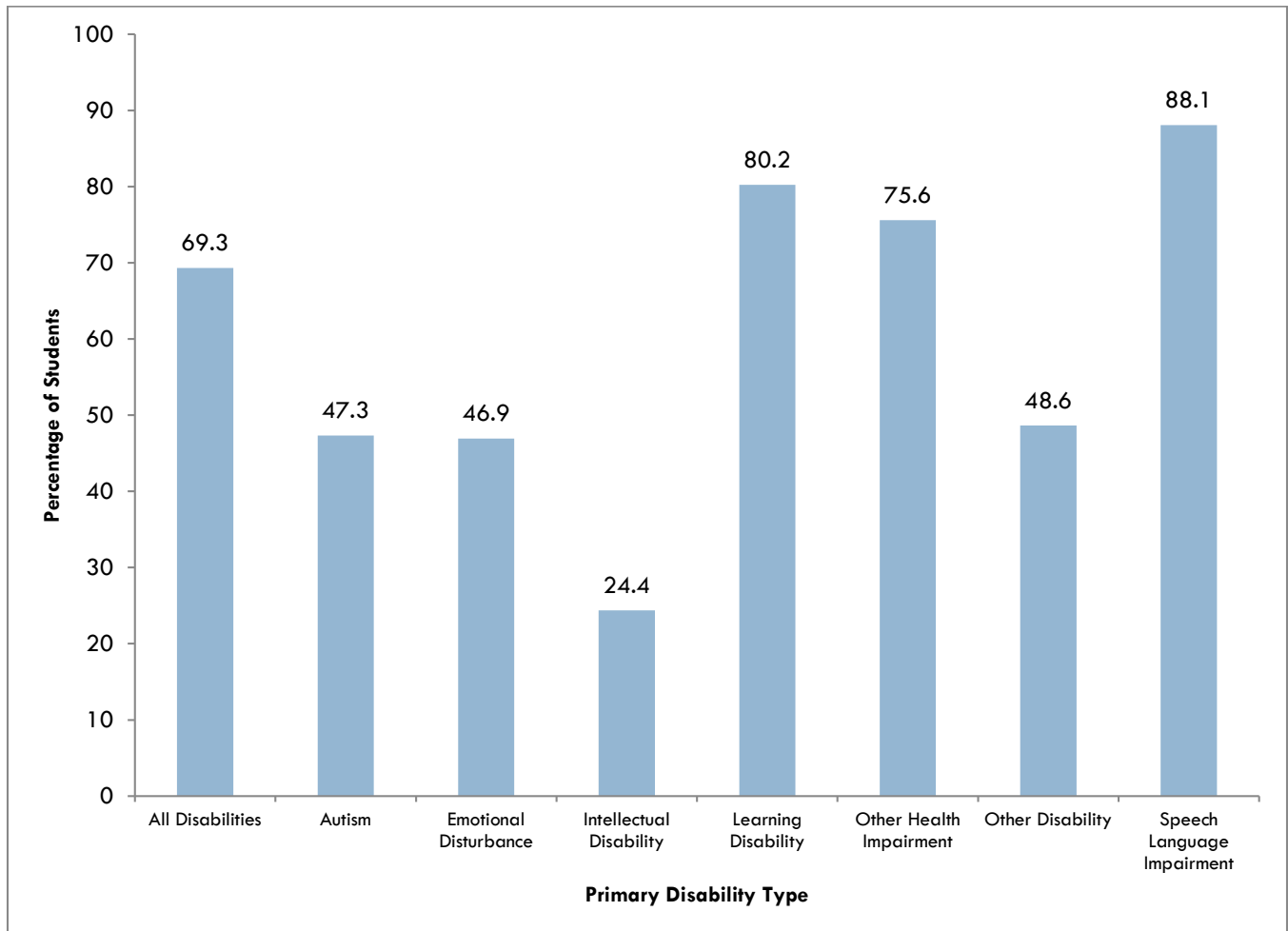
Figure 9: Chronic Absenteeism Rates by Race/Ethnicity



Time Students with Disabilities Spent with Nondisabled Peers

For students with disabilities, time spent with nondisabled peers is an important indicator of access to the general curriculum. It is also a demonstration of students being educated in their least restrictive setting; this complies with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirement that students with disabilities be educated with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. While 69.3 percent of all students with disabilities spent at least 80 percent of their time with nondisabled peers, there is significant variation across the primary disability types. Of all students with an intellectual disability, only 24.4 percent spent at least 80 percent of their time with nondisabled peers as compared to 80.2 percent of students with a learning disability. Similarly, 46.9 percent of students with an emotional disturbance spent at least 80 percent of their time with nondisabled peers, compared to 88.1 percent of students with a speech or language impairment.

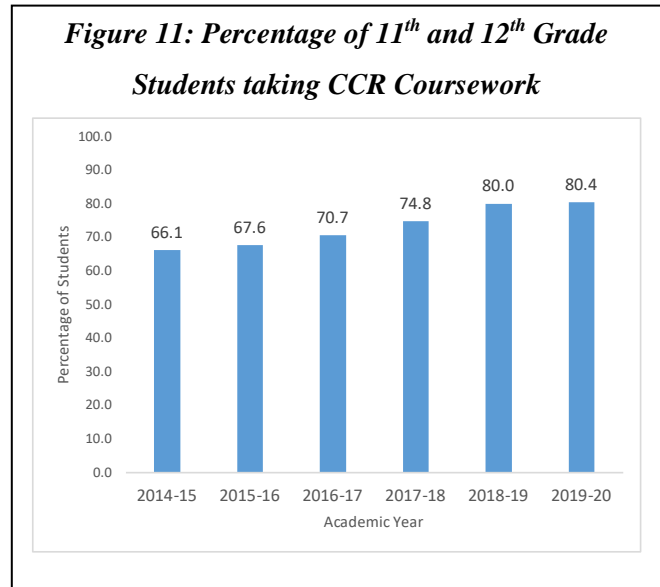
Figure 10: Percent of Students (K-12) who Spend 80-100% of Time with Nondisabled Peers by Primary Disability Type, 2019-20



Participation in College-and-Career Readiness Coursework

To be ready for college and careers upon high school graduation, students need to have participated in rigorous coursework during high school. In recognition of the diverse pathways of our students, the CSDE evaluates the percentage of students in 11th and 12th grade who participated in at least two courses in one of the following options during high school:

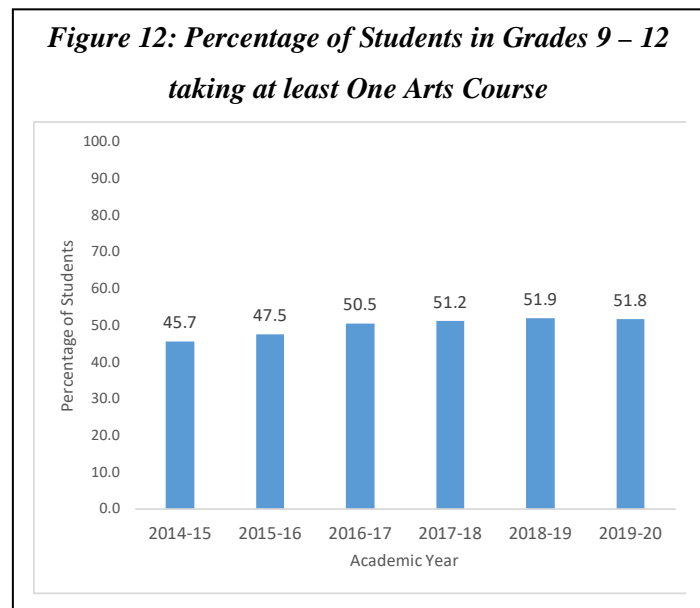
- two courses in advanced placement, international baccalaureate, and/or dual enrollment;
- two courses in one of seventeen career-technical education categories; or
- two workplace experience courses in any area.



This metric is Indicator 5 of Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System and has shown consistent increases since 2014-15.

Access to the Arts

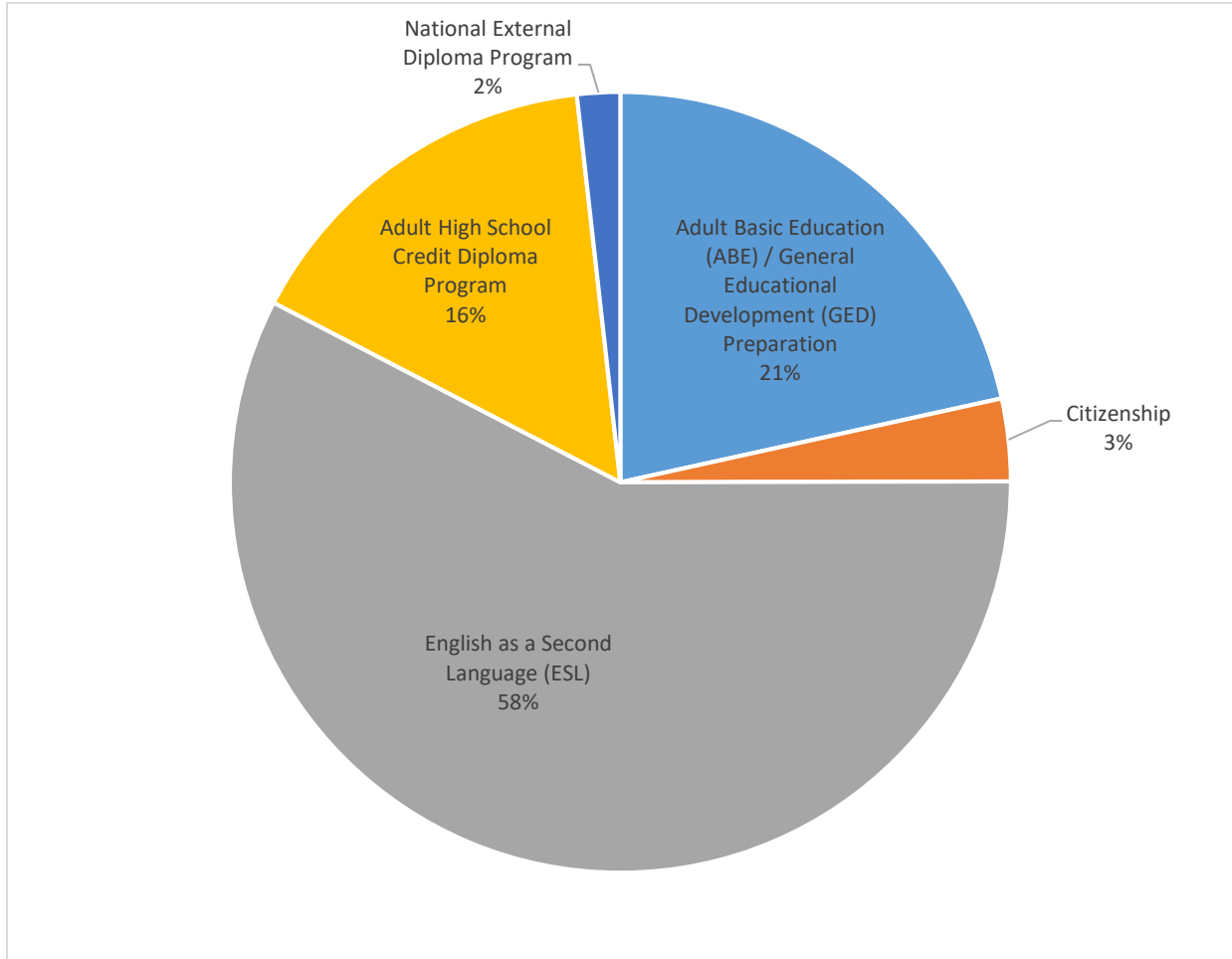
Every student needs and deserves a high-quality education in the arts, including dance, music, theater, and the visual arts. The arts are an integral component of the comprehensive curriculum provided to all Connecticut students. For accountability purposes, the CSDE evaluates the percentage of students in grades 9 through 12 who participated in at least one dance, theater, music, or visual arts course in the school year. This metric is Indicator 12 of Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System and has shown steady increases from 2014-15.



Adult Education Program Participation

Adult learners participate in one of the following state-mandated adult education instructional programs: citizenship preparation; English as a second language (ESL); adult basic literacy education; or one of three secondary school completion programs (i.e., General Educational Development [GED], Adult High School Credit Diploma, or National External Diploma).

Figure 13: Adult Education Enrollment by Program Type 2019-20

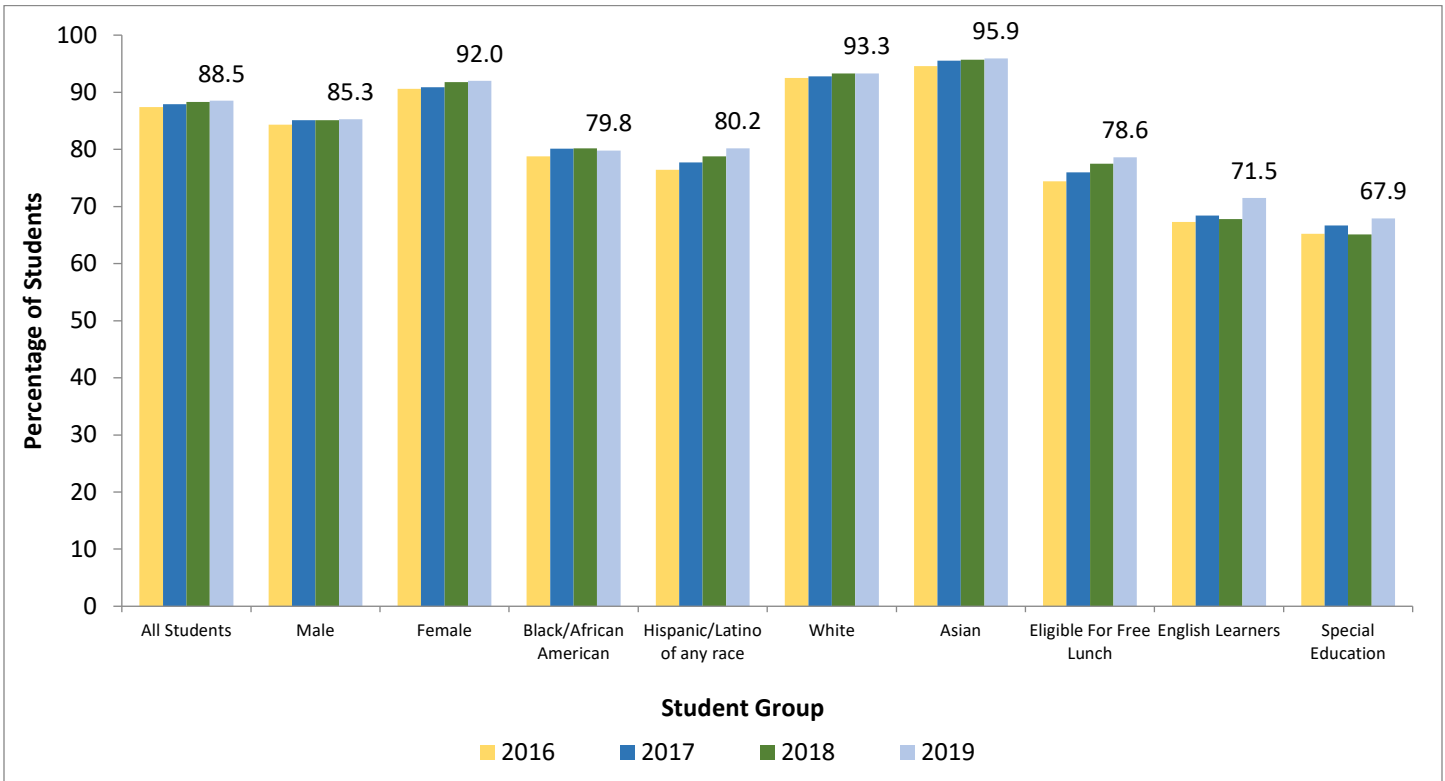


PERFORMANCE

High School Graduation Rates

The four-year graduation cohort rate is the percentage of first-time ninth graders who graduate in four years or less with a regular high school diploma. Connecticut’s four-year graduation rate has increased from 85.5 percent for the cohort of 2013 to 88.5 percent for the cohort of 2019. The graduation rates for students who are black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, English learners, students with disabilities, or eligible for free meals have increased at a rate that is greater than that of the state average.

Figure 16: Four-Year Graduation Rate Trend by Student Group



Some students benefit from having an extra year or two to complete high school. They may be English learners who came to this country in high school, or students with disabilities receiving transition services. For these students, the six-year graduation rate serves as an important measure of high school success (see table 4 below).

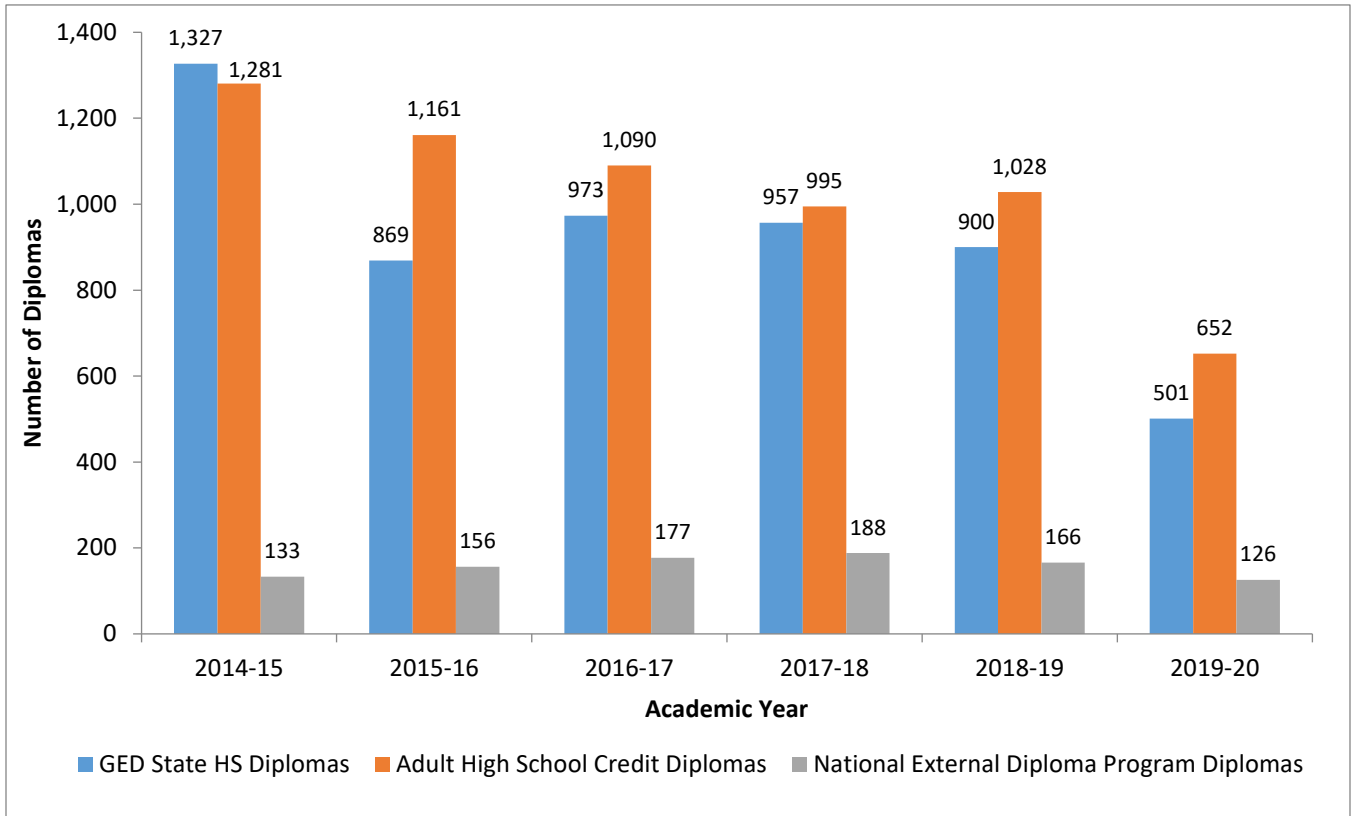
Table 4: Four- and Six-year Graduation Rates for the 2017 Graduation Cohort

Category	4-Year	6-Year
All Students	87.9	91.4
English Learners	68.4	76.6
Students with Disabilities	66.7	78.8
Eligible for Free Meals	76.0	82.0

Adult Education Diplomas Granted

Connecticut offers three pathways for adult learners to attain a high school diploma: (1) pass the General Educational Development (GED) Tests; (2) earn adult education credits toward an adult high school diploma; or (3) demonstrate 100 percent mastery on the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) assessments. In 2019-20, a total of 1,279 individuals earned diplomas through these adult education pathways. Earning a diploma through adult education enables individuals to pursue postsecondary education/training opportunities and participate more fully in Connecticut’s workforce.

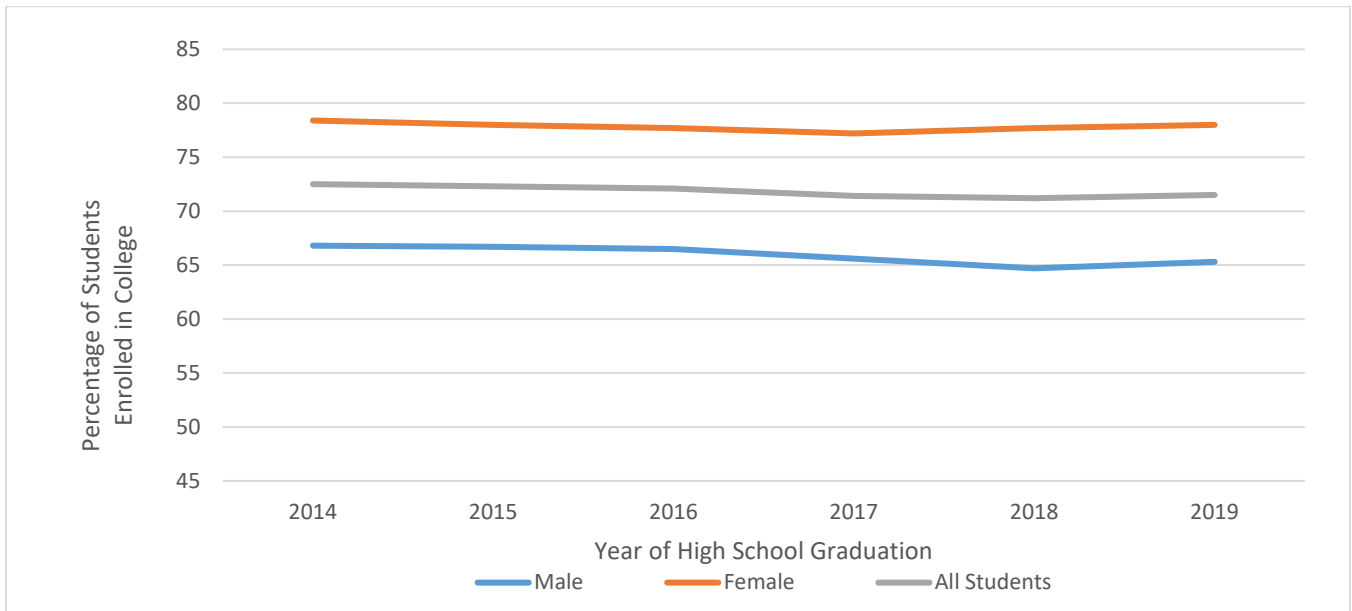
Figure 17: Adult Education Diplomas by Type



College Enrollment

Of the more than 38,300 Connecticut public high school graduates from the class of 2019, 71.5 percent enrolled in higher education within a year of graduating, which is slightly higher than the previous year’s graduating class (71.2 percent). The college enrollment rate of females (78.0 percent) from the high school class of 2019 remained steady and was substantially higher than that of males (65.3 percent).

Figure 18: Percentage of High School Graduates Who Enroll in College Anytime During the First Year after High School



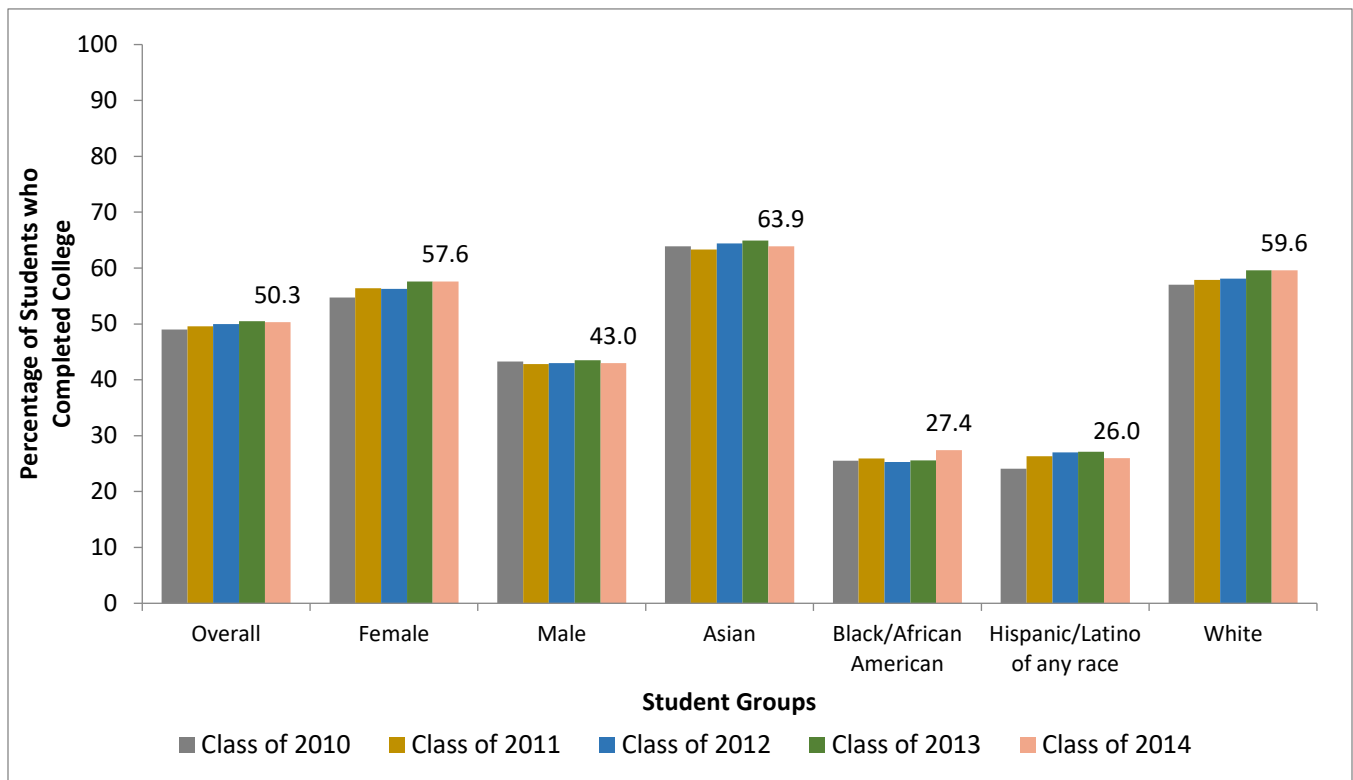
Source: EdSight and National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker

College Completion

More than fifty percent of the 2014 high school graduating class graduated from college with an associate, bachelor’s, or higher degree within six years. This is a slightly lower proportion (50.3 percent) than the class of 2013 (50.5 percent) and the first decline since 2008. The college completion rate for females was consistent among the 2014 high school class (57.7) as compared to the 2013 class, while the corresponding rates for males evidenced a decrease (43.5 to 43.0) for the class of 2014.

The college completion rate for students who identified as black/African American increased to 27.4 percent among the class of 2014, the highest rate for any class since 2008. A decrease from the prior year was evidenced among Hispanic/Latino students (27.1 percent to 26.0 percent). The six-year college completion rates were substantially higher among Asian students (63.9 percent) and white students (59.6 percent).

Figure 19: Percentage of High School Graduates Earning a College Degree in Six Years or Less



Source: EdSight and National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Ned Lamont, Governor

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Charlene Russell-Tucker

Acting Commissioner of Education

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of affirmative action/equal opportunity for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of age, ancestry, color, civil air patrol status, criminal record (in state employment and licensing), gender identity or expression, genetic information, intellectual disability, learning disability, marital status, mental disability (past or present), national origin, physical disability (including blindness), race, religious creed, retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, sex (pregnancy or sexual harassment), sexual orientation, veteran status or workplace hazards to reproductive systems, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes.

Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to:

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