

# VII.F.

## Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

**To Be Proposed:**  
April 5, 2023

**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* (2021-22) and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of \_\_\_\_\_, this fifth day of April, Two Thousand Twenty-Three.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Secretary  
State Board of Education

**Connecticut State Board of Education  
Hartford**

**TO:** State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education  
**DATE:** April 5, 2022  
**SUBJECT:** The Condition of Education in Connecticut 2021-22

*Executive Summary*

Please find attached the 2021-22 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.

The 2021-22 school year continued to present challenges due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The state's Next Generation Accountability System was resumed after being postponed for two years.

- Connecticut's student enrollment increased for the first time in over a decade. The enrollment is increasingly diverse (i.e., 51.4 percent are students of color) and with greater educational needs (i.e., 16.7 percent are students with disabilities and 8.8 percent of students are English learners) than just five years ago. Adult education enrollment also increased by 21 percent from 2020-21 to 2021-22.
- The racial/ethnic composition of the teaching force is also increasingly diverse. The percentage of educators of color has increased from 8.2 percent (around 4,370 educators) in 2015-16 to 10.6 percent (5,700 educators) in 2021-22. The number of full-time-equivalent certified staff grew from 2020-21 to 2021-22, with the largest increases (by percent) in central office administration, instructional specialists who support teachers, and counselors, social workers, and school psychologists.
- The chronic absenteeism rate grew from 19.0 percent in 2020-21 to 23.7 percent in 2021-22. The chronic absenteeism rates increased the most for White and Asian students, though these groups still demonstrate lower chronic absenteeism rates than students from other racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- The four-year high school cohort graduation rates continue to increase (89.6 percent for the cohort of 2021) while the graduation rate gap between White students and students of color continues to decrease. However, the percentage of Grade 9 students who were on-track to graduate declined for the second year in a row.

- More 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students are taking college-and-career readiness courses than ever before (84.8 percent). The percent of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students meeting benchmark on a college and career readiness exam – SAT, ACT, Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) – or earning three or more dual credits also increased substantially to 43.5 percent in 2021-22.
- College enrollment rates continued to decline to 66.1 percent for the class of 2021, though the rate of decline slowed from the dramatic decrease in 2020. College graduation rates declined slightly with 49.2 percent of the class of 2016 earning a two- or four-year college degree in six years after high school graduation, down from 50.0 percent for the class of 2015.

To ensure equitable access to learning acceleration and academic recovery, the CSDE is using its state and federal resources, including federal COVID relief funding, to **invest** in a range of projects including:

- [Summer enrichment programs](#) for four summers (2021 to 2024) that is delivering high-quality enrichment opportunities to children across the state at low to no cost. **(Over \$30 million)**
- The [Science of Reading \(SOR\) Masterclass](#) to develop local professional capacity to implement evidence-based reading aligned to the science of reading components including phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. **(\$6 Million)**
- A [high-dosage mathematics tutoring program](#) for students in Grades 6 through 9 that will give grants to districts so they can partner with proven organizations to bring added expert tutoring for students while supplementing the teacher’s capacity. **(\$10 Million)**
- [Model curricula](#) in K-8 Mathematics, K-8 Science, 6-12 Financial Literacy, and African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Course of Studies that are providing free access to high-quality curricula and instructional resources along with aligned professional development. **(\$10 Million)**
- The Connecticut Behavioral Health Pilot to ensure that every Connecticut school district has a coordinated and sustainable system of care for all K-12 schools to provide comprehensive behavioral and mental health supports and services to students and staff. **(\$3 Million)**
- Grants for districts to add additional school mental health staff including school social workers, school psychologists, trauma specialists, board certified behavior analysts, school counselors, and nurses. **(\$28 million)**
- The [Learner Engagement and Attendance Program \(LEAP\)](#) to increase direct engagement and support to families and students through targeted home visits. **(Over \$10 Million)**
- [Grants and professional learning initiatives](#) to districts and schools to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness and to provide academic, social-emotional, and mental and behavioral health supports to ensure that they can participate fully in school. **(\$7 Million)**

- [After-school program enhancement and expansion grants](#) to open new program locations that are free or affordable and offer increased capacity at existing programs. **(Over \$8 Million)**
- Special education recovery activities, dyslexia tutoring, special education evaluations, assistive technology, a special education jobs portal, and home supports/partnerships. **(\$22 Million)**
- A [FAFSA Challenge](#) that provides high schools with microgrants, trainings, and other resources to help seniors complete the FAFSA and access the financial aid they deserve to pursue a postsecondary education. **(Over \$1 Million)**
- Expanding dual credit opportunities by facilitating partnerships between school districts and Connecticut institutions of higher education through district grants, professional learning opportunities, a clearinghouse website, and new data collection and reporting. **(\$3.5 Million)**

The efficacy of several of the above-mentioned projects will be evaluated by the [Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration \(CCERC\)](#) – a ground-breaking, first-of-its-kind research collaborative of public and private universities across Connecticut.

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr. Briana Hennessy, Associate Education Consultant  
 Performance Office

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Diane Murphy, Education Consultant  
 Performance Office

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer



# THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT

2021-22

*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 students of color.

The COVID-19 pandemic has broadly affected all areas of human life including education. Several indicators in this report demonstrate those impacts. To support an equitable and accelerated recovery from this pandemic, Connecticut has seen an infusion of around **\$1.7 billion**. The vast majority (around 90 percent) of those significant new resources are distributed as grants to districts. The CSDE is using the remainder of funds to invest in a broad range of activities to further support districts through the recovery process. Please see the Executive Summary for a brief overview of some of those investments.

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

Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner  
Connecticut State Department of Education

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EDUCATION SYSTEM</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Districts, Schools, Programs, and Adult Education Providers .....	6
Expenditures .....	7
Public School Enrollment.....	8
Student Demographics and Characteristics .....	9
Special Education by Race/Ethnicity .....	10
Languages Spoken at Home among English Learners .....	11
Adult Education Enrollment.....	12
<b>EDUCATORS</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Capacity .....	13
Demographics.....	14
<b>SCHOOL CLIMATE AND INSTRUCTION</b> .....	<b>15</b>
School Discipline.....	15
Chronic Absenteeism.....	16
Time Students with Disabilities Spent with Nondisabled Peers .....	17
Participation in College-and-Career Readiness Coursework .....	18
On-Track to High School Graduation .....	18
Access to the Arts .....	19
Adult Education Program Participation.....	19
<b>PERFORMANCE</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Statewide Next Generation Accountability Report .....	20
Student Achievement and Growth through the Pandemic .....	21
Postsecondary Readiness.....	23
Physical Fitness .....	24
High School Graduation Rates .....	25
Adult Education Diplomas Granted .....	26
College Enrollment.....	27
College Completion.....	28

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2021-22 school year continued to present challenges due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The state's Next Generation Accountability System was resumed after being postponed for two years.

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- The racial/ethnic composition of the teaching force is also increasingly diverse. The percentage of educators of color has increased from 8.2 percent (around 4,370 educators) in 2015-16 to 10.6 percent (5,700 educators) in 2021-22. The number of full-time-equivalent certified staff grew from 2020-21 to 2021-22, with the largest increases (by percent) in central office administration, instructional specialists who support teachers, and counselors, social workers, and school psychologists.
- The chronic absenteeism rate grew from 19.0 percent in 2020-21 to 23.7 percent in 2021-22. The chronic absenteeism rates increased the most for White and Asian students, though these groups still demonstrate lower chronic absenteeism rates than students from other racial/ethnic backgrounds.
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# 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 2021-22*

<b>Organization Type</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>
Public Schools in Local and Regional Districts	934
Regional Educational Service Center Schools	25
Public Charter Schools	21
Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Schools	17
Endowed Academies	3
State Agency Facilities	29
College Affiliated Schools	2
<b>Total Number of Schools</b>	<b>1,031</b>

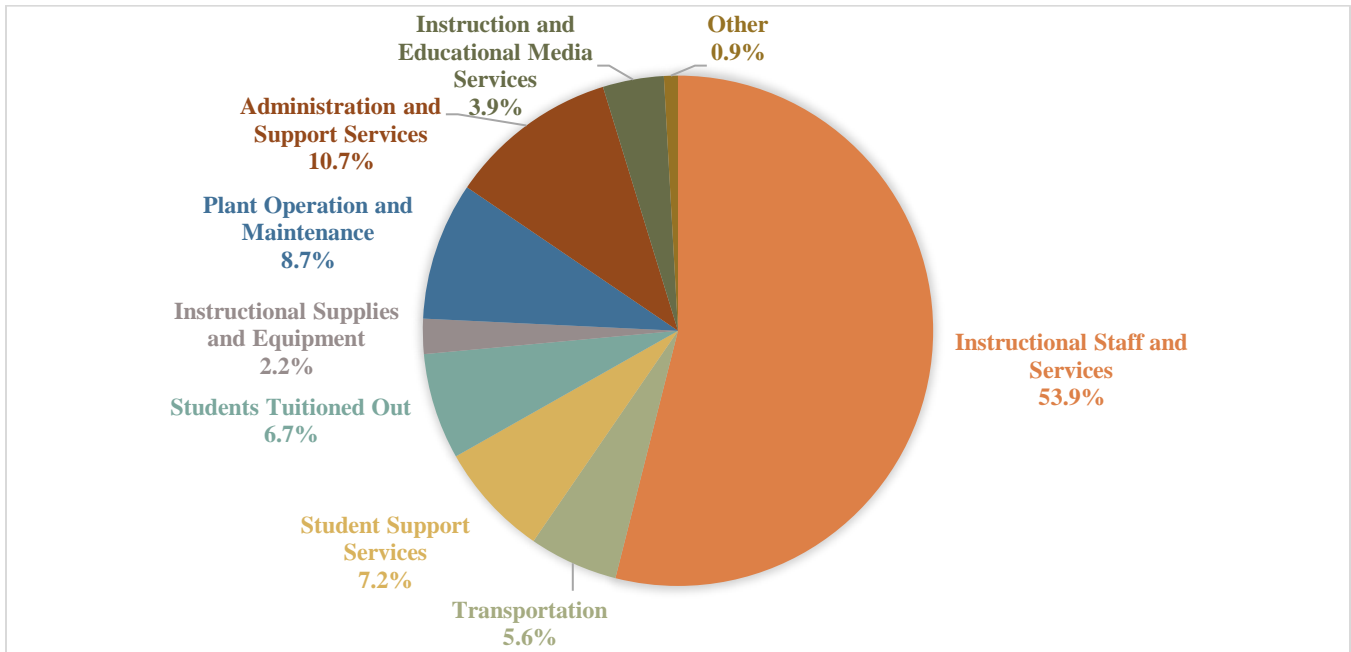
Of the 1,031 schools, 795 are elementary and/or middle schools and 236 are high schools. In addition to these 1,031 schools, 478 specialized programs provide targeted services. The vast majority of these programs are designed for special education students (342), alternative/credit recovery (76), or prekindergarten (37).

In addition to PK-12 education, adult education programs are also provided to residents in all towns across Connecticut through 39 local school district providers, three regional educational service centers, 15 community/faith-based organizations, and one state agency.

## Expenditures

In 2021-22, the state’s overall school expenditures (excluding investments in land, buildings, and debt) totaled approximately \$10.7 billion. Instructional staff and services represented a majority of the total expenditures; 54 cents out of every education dollar were devoted to this area.

**Figure 1: Expenditures by Category, 2021-22**

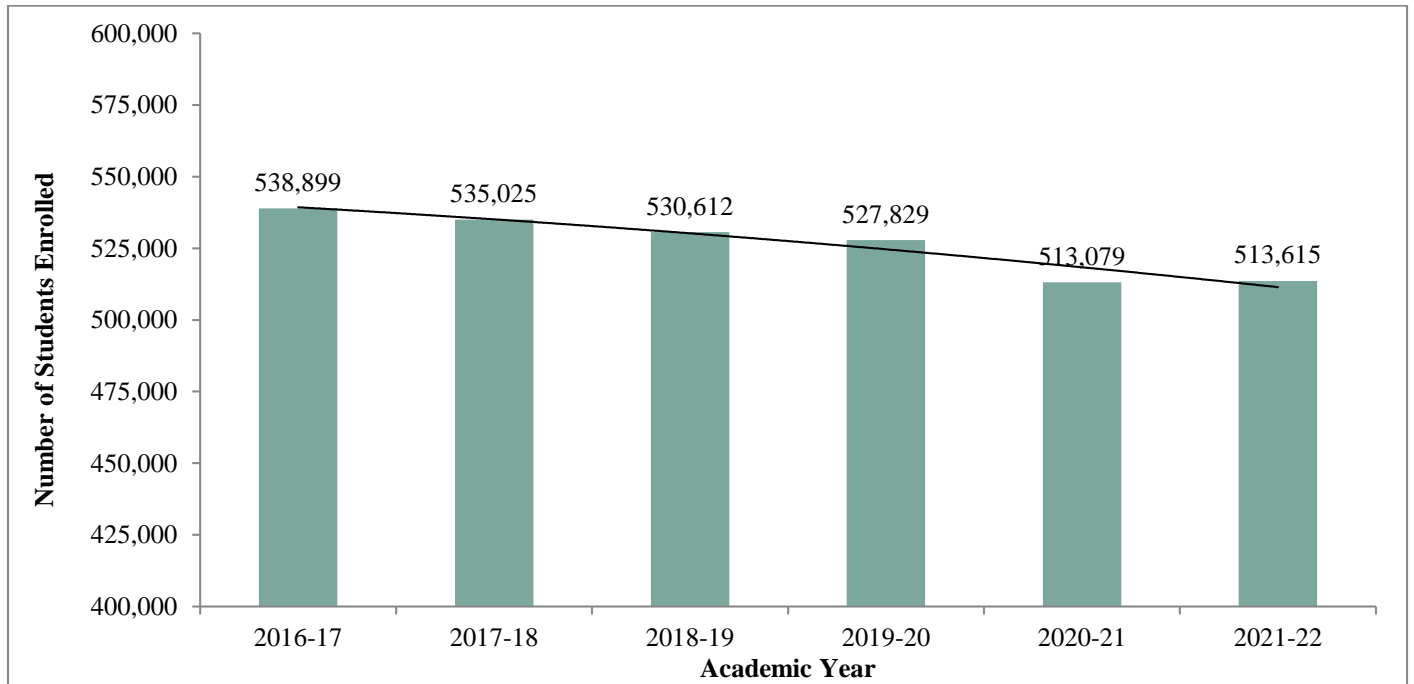


With the infusion of \$1.7 billion in federal COVID-19 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, it is expected that total public school expenditures will continue to increase over the next two to three year period.

## Public School Enrollment

In 2021-22 total enrollment increased by 0.1 percent over the prior year. This is the first increase in enrollment in a decade, though it follows a decline of nearly three percent in 2020-21. The 2021-22 enrollment of 513,615 was also 4.7 percent lower than the 2016-17 enrollment of 538,899.

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

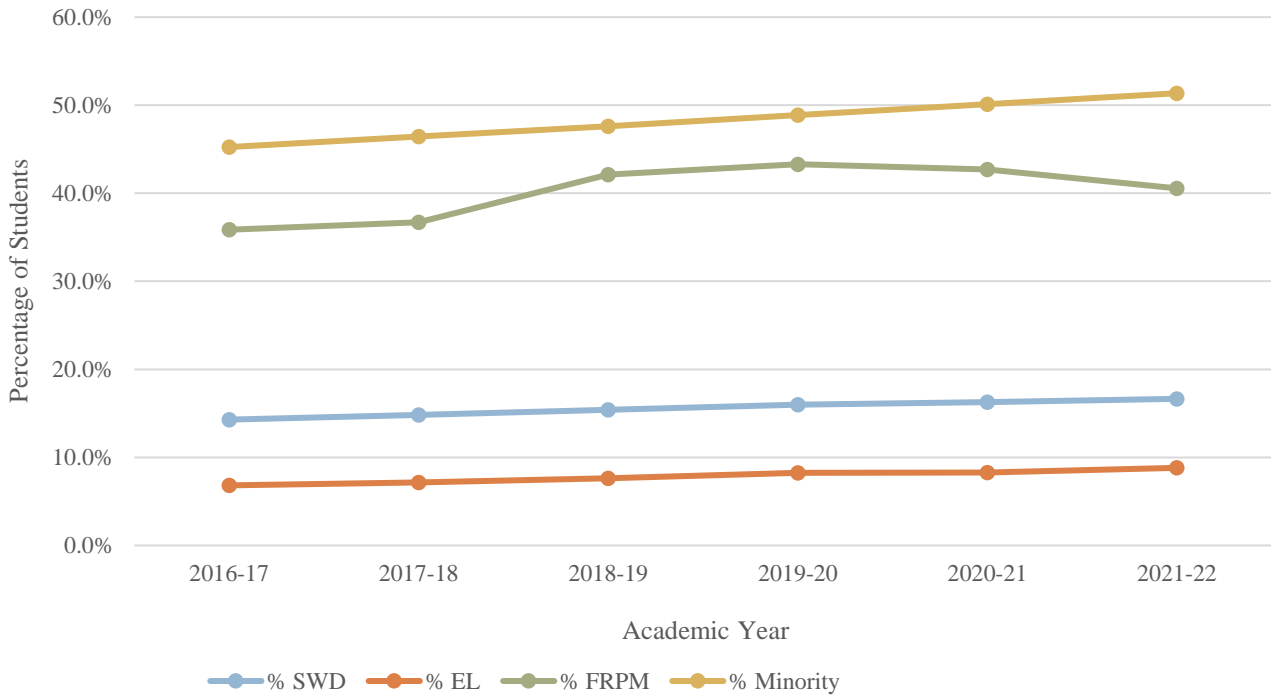


The two school-entering grades of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten saw the largest increases. Public pre-kindergarten enrollment increased by 16.1 percent (2,466 students) while kindergarten enrollment increased by 10.8 percent (3,471 students). Given the long-term downward trend, stabilization or slight increases in current enrollment signify a return to pre-pandemic enrollment levels.

## 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 45.2 percent in 2016-17 to 51.4 percent in 2021-22. Increases occurred in the percentage of students with disabilities (SWD) for the tenth year in a row with 16.7 percent of students now receiving special education and related services. Students who are English learners (EL) account for 8.8 percent of the student population. The percentage of students eligible for free- or reduced-price meals (FRPM) decreased for the second time in 2021-22 to 40.6 percent, after three years of increases. This is likely due to the decline in the completion of household meal applications because districts provided free meals to all students during the pandemic.

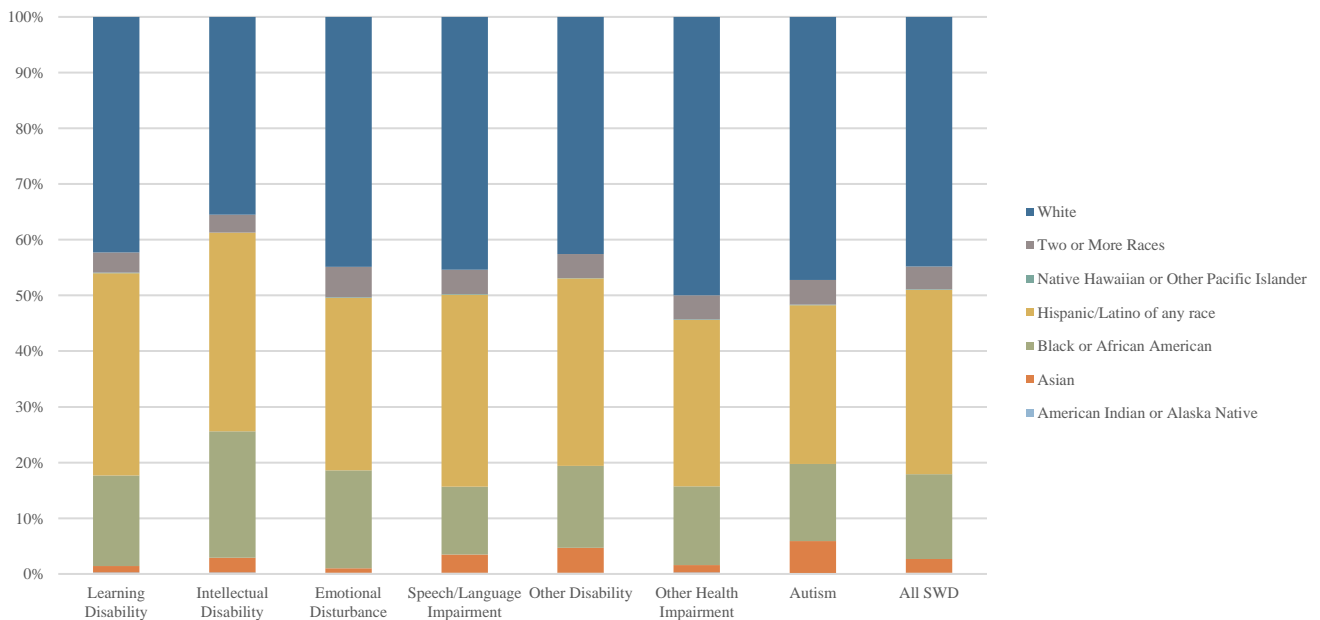
*Figure 3: Student Demographics and Characteristics*



## 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 at two levels. First, districts are monitored for disproportionate representation on an annual basis and second, districts are assessed for significant disproportionality for all students with disabilities ages three through 21 over the course of three years. Disproportionate representation requires a district review of policies, practices and procedures contributing to over-representation by race/ethnicity. Significant disproportionality requires the redirection of federal IDEA funds to address the identified disproportionality, after three years of identification without substantial improvement. Below are the state level data used to assess disproportionality. In 2021-22, 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 non-Black peers to be identified with intellectual disabilities.

**Figure 4: Percentage of Students with Disabilities, Ages 3-21:  
Disability Type by Race/Ethnicity, 2021-22**



## Languages Spoken at Home among English Learners

In the 2021-22 school year, Connecticut's English Learners (ELs) spoke 142 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, 2021-22*

Language	Number of ELs
Spanish	33,147
Portuguese	2,800
Arabic	1,266
Creole-Haitian	745
Mandarin	601
Polish	512
Albanian	496
Urdu	473
Pashto	376
Bengali	321
Vietnamese	301
French	253
Russian	243
Turkish	217
Gujarati	199

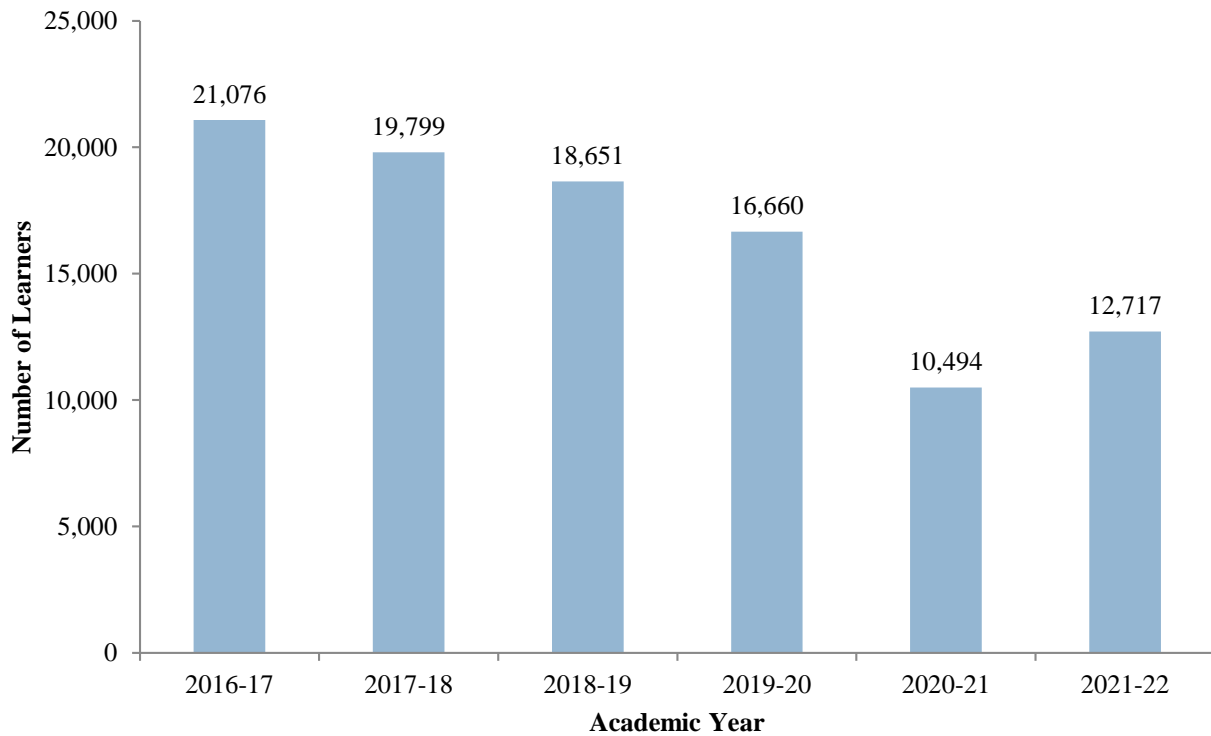
While most districts had to accommodate only a few languages, there were 48 districts whose ELs spoke 20 or more different non-English languages. Schools that have 20 or more students who are not proficient in English and speak the same language, are required to offer a program of bilingual instruction 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 2021-22, Connecticut programs served 12,717 adult learners, a 21 percent increase in enrollment compared to 2020-21. Despite this increase, following the 37 percent decline in 2020-21, the adult education enrollment has declined an average of about eight percent per year over the past five years.

*Figure 5: Adult Education Enrollment*

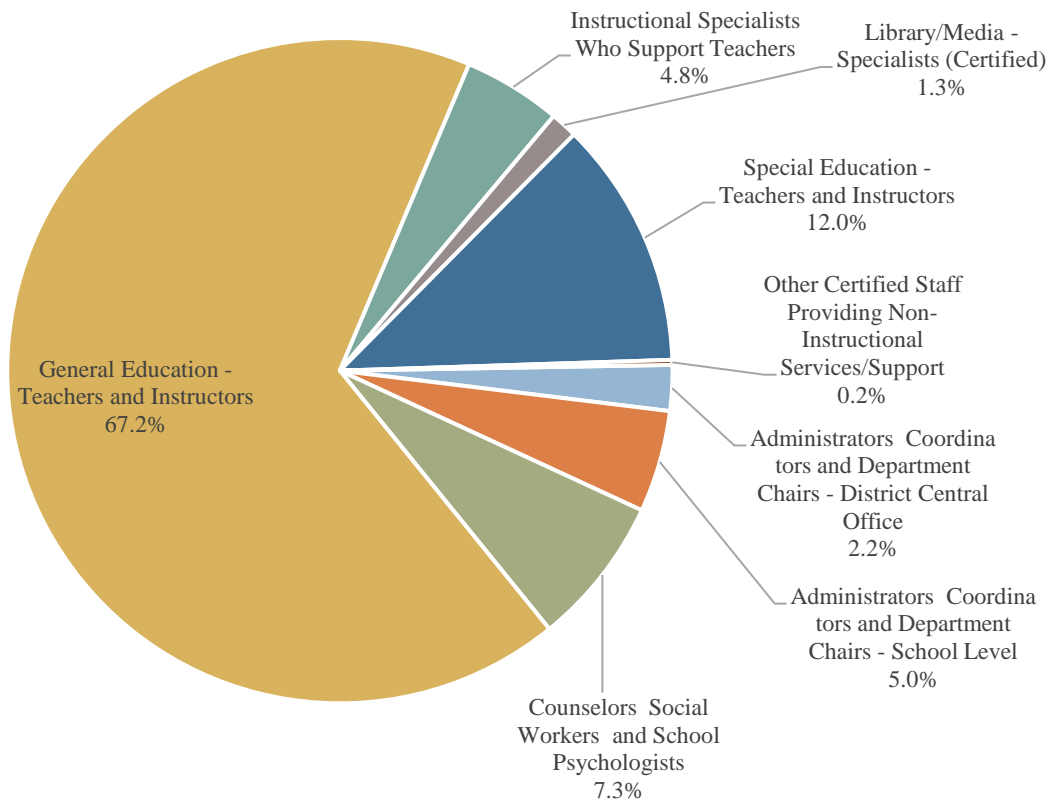


# EDUCATORS

## Capacity

General education and special education teachers combined constitute 79.2 percent of full-time equivalent (FTE) certified staff. The total general education teacher/instructor FTE increased slightly this year for the second year in a row. The FTE of staff providing both instructional and non-instructional support to students and teachers continues to grow. Of note in 2021-22, the FTE for Administrators in central office increased by 9.4 percent, and instructional specialists who support teachers increased by 9.2 percent. The number of other certified staff providing non-instructional services or support increased by 10.8 percent, and the number of counselors, social workers, and school psychologists increased by 6.5 percent.

**Figure 6: Certified Staff Full-time Equivalent by Role Type: 2021-22**

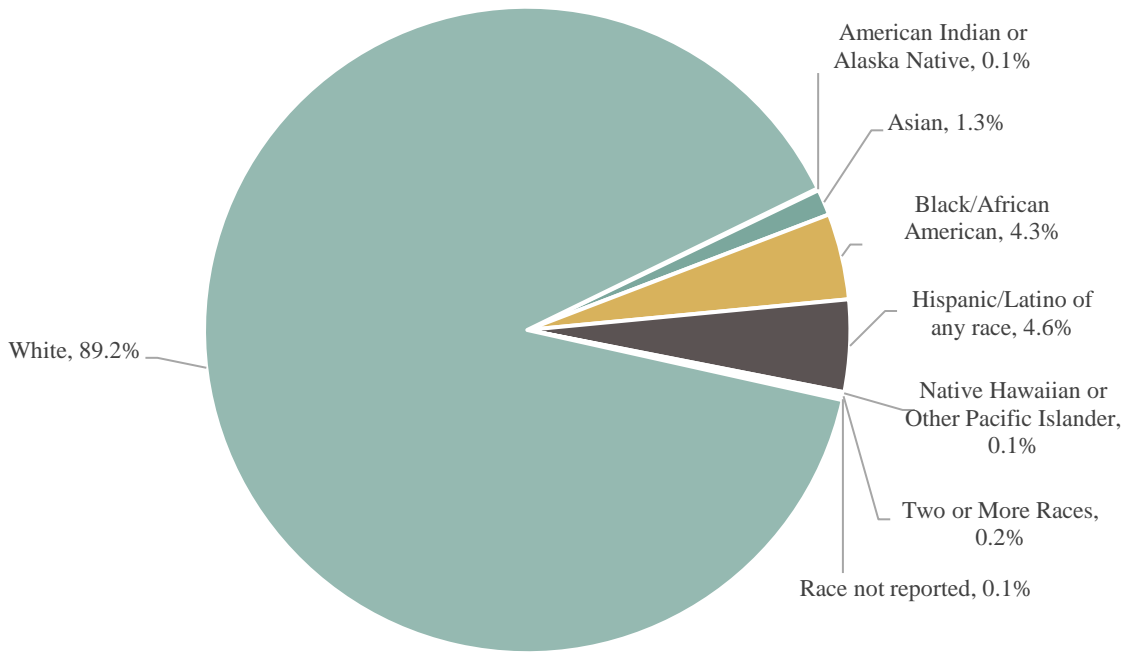


Full-time equivalent (FTE) is derived by dividing the amount of time a person works by the time required of a corresponding full-time position. A full-time position is considered to be 1.0 FTE. For example, a teacher who works two of the five days per week would be a 0.4 FTE (2 days/5 days = 0.4 of full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

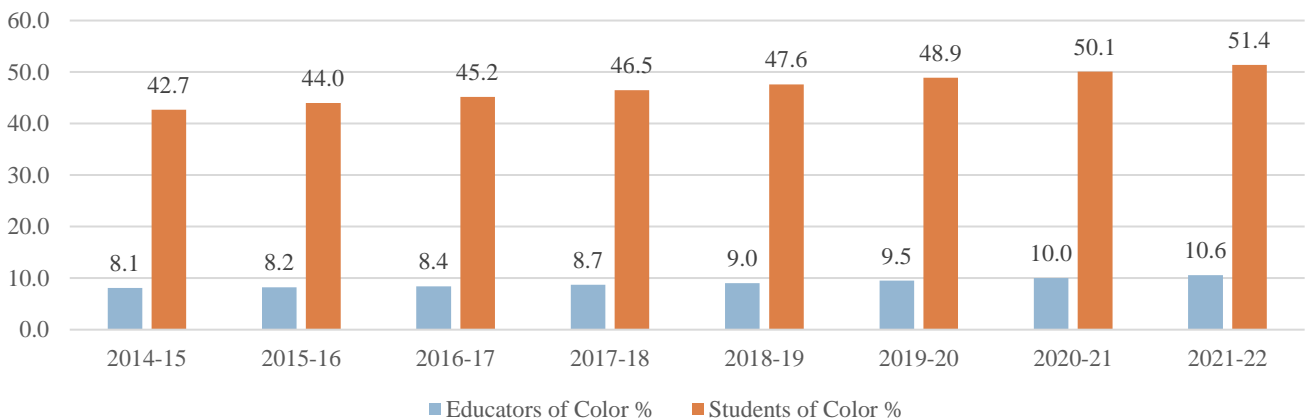
## Demographics

Connecticut’s student population continues to increase in diversity, with students of color comprising 51.4 percent of the student body. Additionally, the diversity of our staff is improving, albeit not at the same rate as our student population, with 10.6 percent of certified school staff identifying as educators of color. The percentage of educators of color has increased slowly over the past seven years from 8.2 percent (around 4,370 educators) in 2015-16 to 10.6 percent (5,700 educators) in 2021-22.

**Figure 7: Percentage of Certified Staff by Race/Ethnicity, 2021-22**



**Figure 8: Percentage of Students and Staff of Color (Trend)**

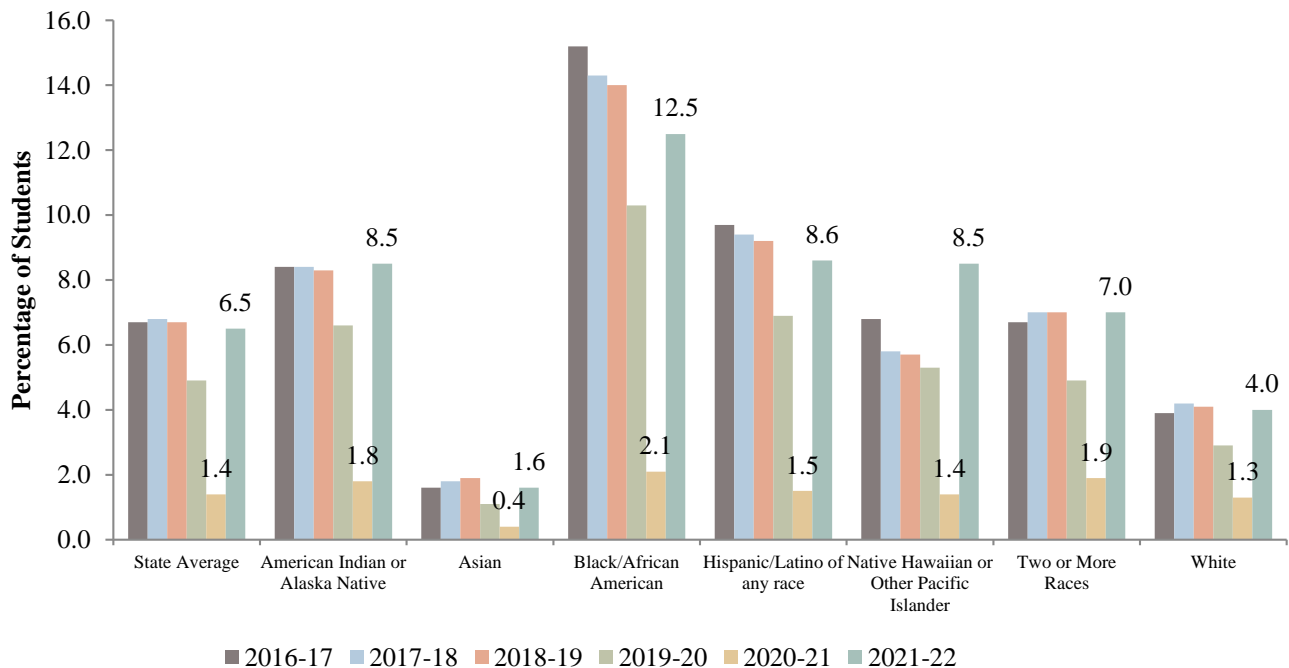


# SCHOOL CLIMATE AND INSTRUCTION

## School Discipline

Districts 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 2021-22 school year, suspension rates increased to 6.5 percent from a 2020-21 rate of 1.4 percent. The COVID-19 pandemic greatly skewed the discipline statistics as students attended classes in-person to varying degrees with over 25 percent of students fully or mostly remote for most of the 2020-21 school year. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, suspension rates ranged from 6.8 percent to 8.6 percent. Black/African American students are suspended at substantially higher rates than their White counterparts and evidenced the largest increase in suspension rates in 2021-22, however suspension rates declined from pre-pandemic years. The CSDE has continued grouping districts into four tiers based on their suspension/expulsion rates to provide a system of supports and targeted action planning. Since the 2019-20 and 2020-21 discipline statistics were distorted due to the pandemic, the 2018-19 district tiers are being used to identify those districts needing additional supports.

*Figure 9: Suspension Rates by Race/Ethnicity*

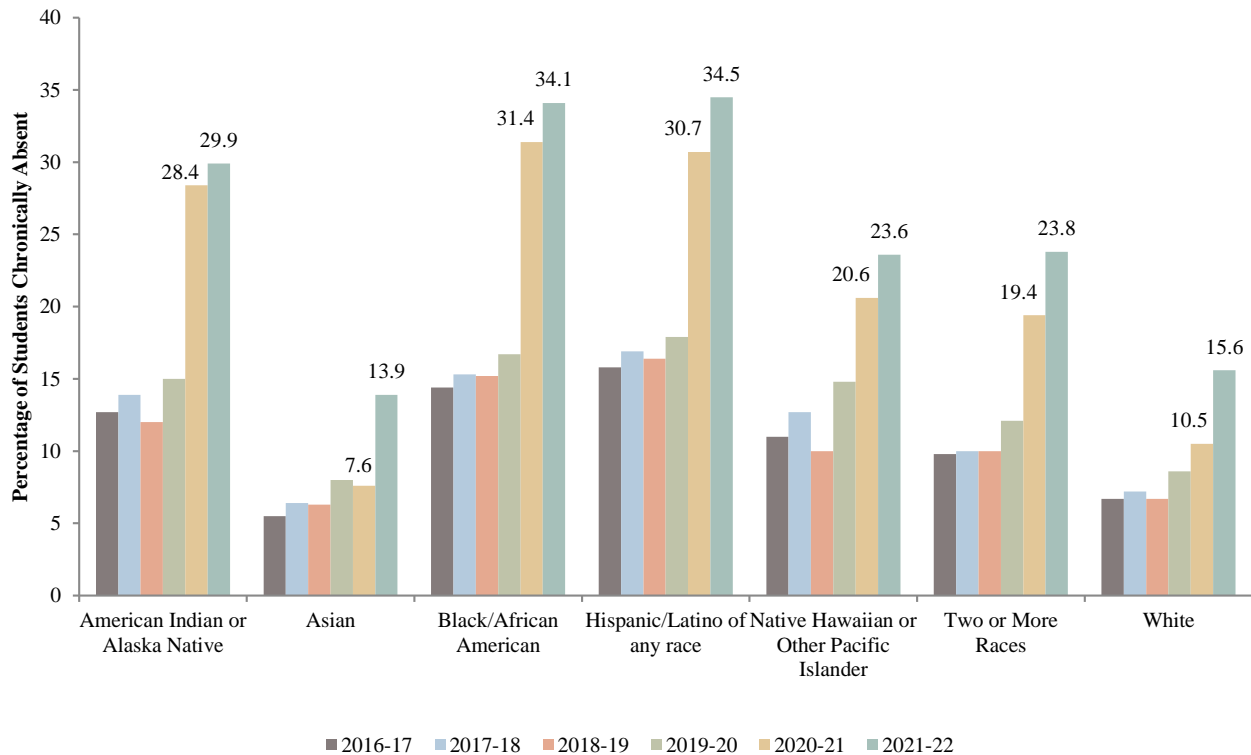


## Chronic Absenteeism

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 23.7 percent in 2021-22, a 25 percent increase over 2020-21. 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, 38.6 percent – a 10.3 percent increase; students with disabilities, 34.5 percent – a 12.0 percent increase; and English learners, 32.7 percent – a 2.8 percent increase over 2020-21 levels).

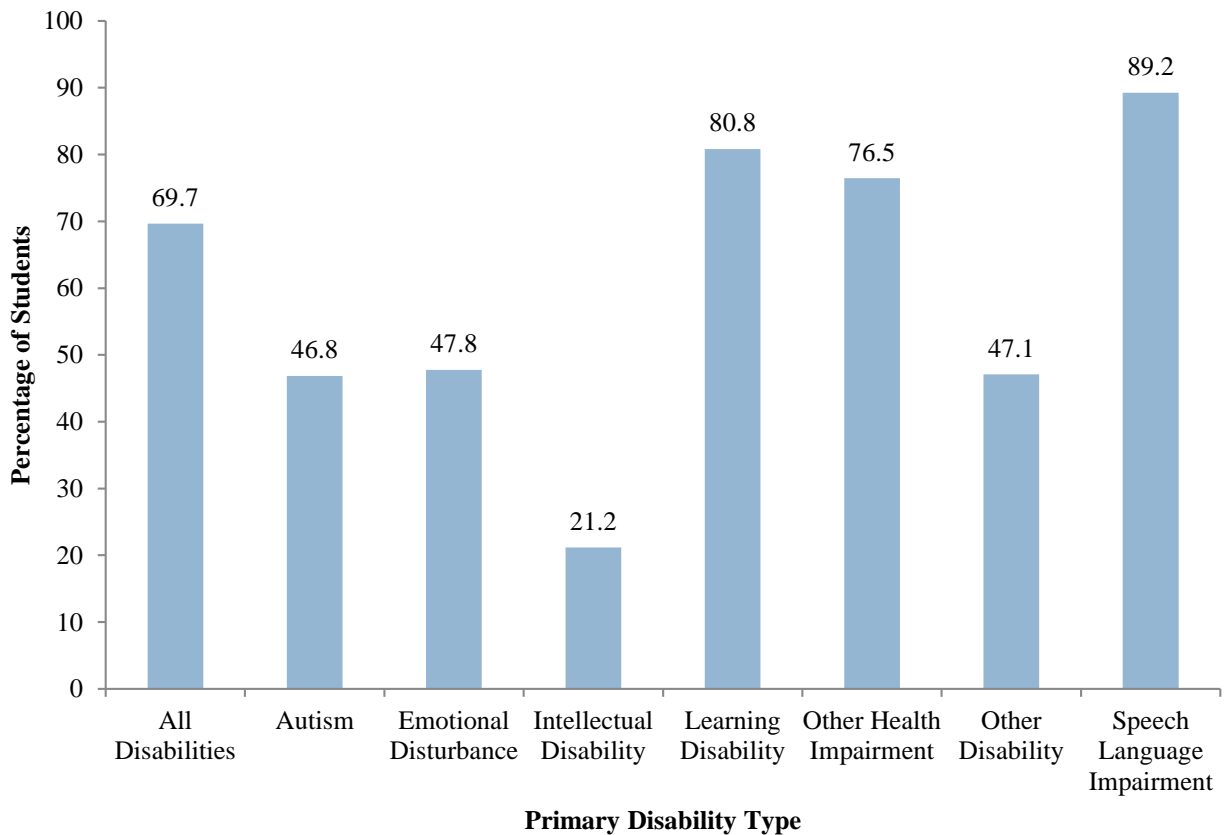
**Figure 10: Chronic Absenteeism Rates by Race/Ethnicity**



## 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 69.7 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 21.2 percent spent at least 80 percent of their time with nondisabled peers as compared to 80.8 percent of students with a learning disability. Similarly, 47.8 percent of students with an emotional disturbance spent at least 80 percent of their time with nondisabled peers, compared to 89.2 percent of students with a speech or language impairment.

**Figure 11: Percent of Students (K-12) who Spend 80-100% of Time with Nondisabled Peers by Primary Disability Type, 2021-22**

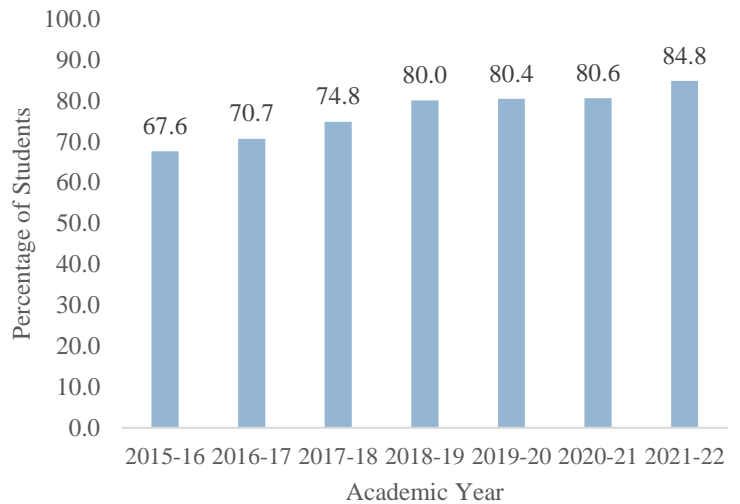


## Participation in College-and-Career Readiness Coursework

Indicator 5 of Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System evaluates the extent to which students participate in rigorous coursework during high school. In recognition of the diverse pathways of our students, the CSDE evaluates the percentage of students in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Figure 12: Percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students taking CCR Coursework**



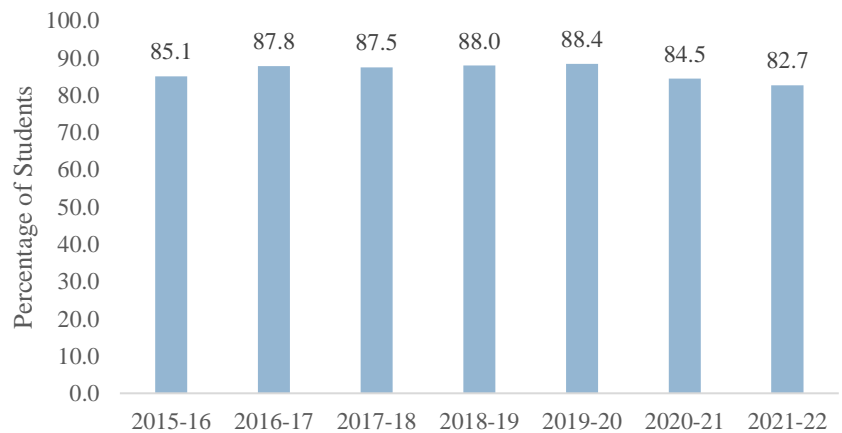
## On-Track to High School Graduation

Ninth grade is a critical year. The University of Chicago’s Consortium on Chicago School Research states that students who are on-track in 9<sup>th</sup> grade “are more than three and one-half times more likely to graduate from high school in four years than off-track students.”

Indicator 7 of Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System

evaluates the extent to which students are on-track in Grade 9. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the on-track percentage declined again in 2021-22 and was the lowest in the past seven years. Declining attendance, lower 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade performance, and an increase in required credits from five to six likely impact 9<sup>th</sup> grade credit attainment and on-track rates.

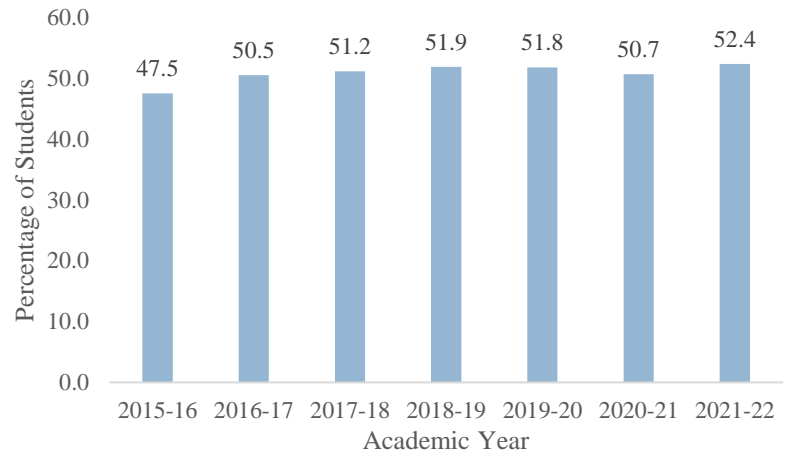
**Figure 13: Percentage of Students On-Track in Grade 9**



## Access to the 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 showed a slight increase in 2021-22.

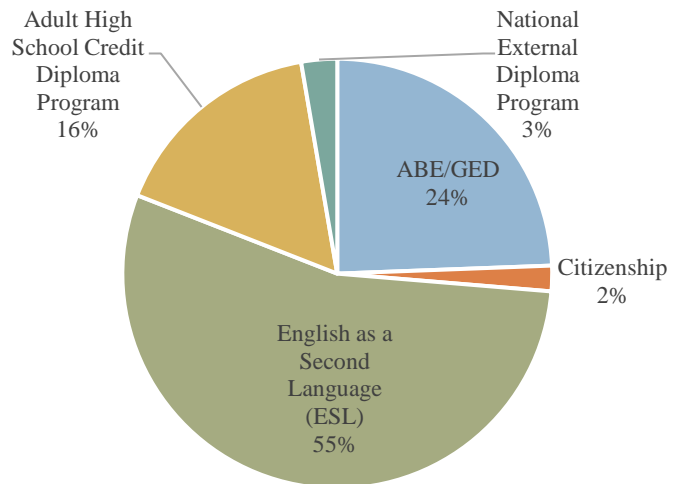
**Figure 14: Percentage of Students in Grades 9 – 12 taking at least One Arts Course**



## 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 education (ABE); or one of three secondary school completion programs (i.e., General Educational Development [GED], Adult High School Credit Diploma, or National External Diploma). In the 2021-22 school year, enrollment in ESL programs increased to 6,947, a 55 percent increase (2,454 students) over the 2020-21 school year.

**Figure 15: Adult Education Enrollment by Program Type 2021-22**





# PERFORMANCE

## Statewide Next Generation Accountability Report

These statistics represent the results from Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System for districts and schools. This system is a broad set of 12 indicators that help tell the story of how well a district/school is preparing its students for success in college, careers, and life. The Next Generation Accountability System was paused for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years due to the global pandemic. The trend for each indicator during that time is presented below with improvements from 2016-17 to 2021-22 noted in several indicators as designated by ↑.

*Table 3: Statewide Accountability Indicator Trend*

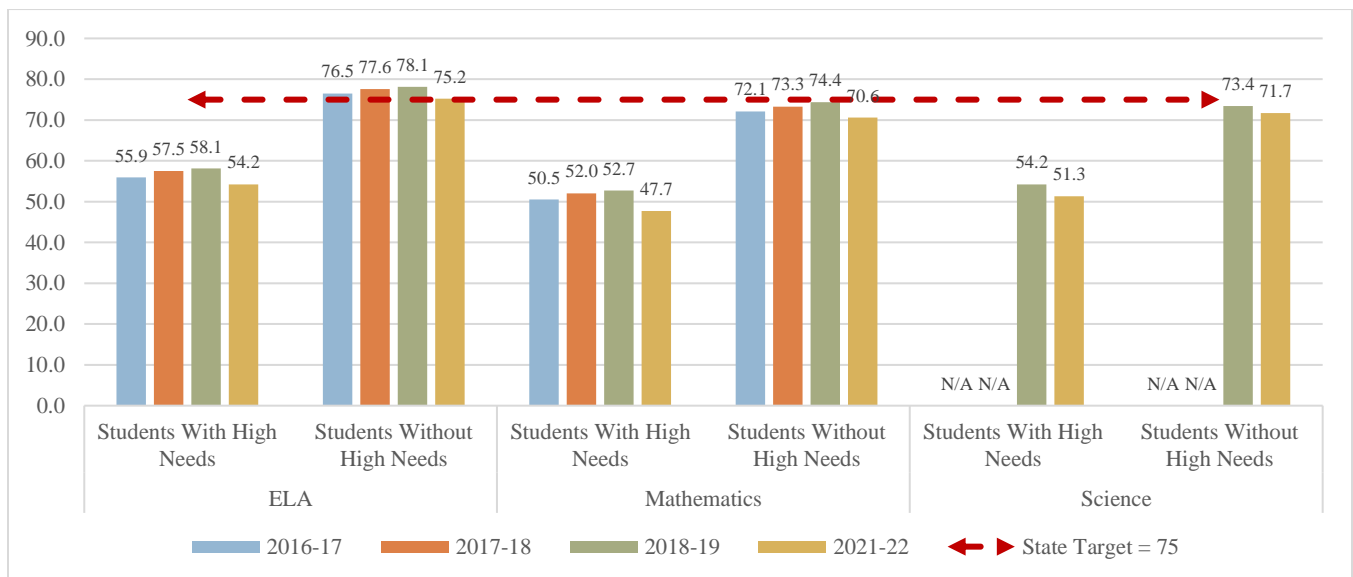
	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2021-22	
1a.	ELA Performance Index – All Students	67.1	67.6	67.7	64.2	
1b.	ELA Performance Index – High Needs Students	55.9	57.5	58.1	54.2	
1c.	Math Performance Index – All Students	62.2	62.7	63.1	58.6	
1d.	Math Performance Index – High Needs Students	50.5	52.0	52.7	47.7	
1e.	Science Performance Index – All Students			63.8	61.4	
1f.	Science Performance Index – High Needs Students			54.2	51.3	
2a.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	55.4%	60.7%	59.9%	60.4%	
2b.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	49.8%	55.6%	55.1%	56.2%	↑
2c.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	61.7%	61.9%	62.5%	65.2%	↑
2d.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	53.7%	55.4%	55.2%	59.1%	↑
2e.	Progress Toward English Proficiency – Literacy			60.0%	64.9%	↑
2f.	Progress Toward English Proficiency – Oral			52.1%	57.4%	↑
4a.	Chronic Absenteeism – All Students	9.9%	10.7%	10.4%	23.7%	
4b.	Chronic Absenteeism – High Needs Students	15.8%	16.6%	16.1%	34.0%	
5	Preparation for College and Career Readiness – % taking courses	70.7%	74.8%	80.0%	84.8%	↑
6	Preparation for College and Career Readiness – % passing exams	43.5%	44.8%	42.6%	43.5%	↑
7	On-track to High School Graduation	87.8%	87.5%	88.0%	82.7%	
8	4-year Graduation - All Students	87.4%	87.9%	88.3%	89.6%	↑
9	6-year Graduation - High Needs Students	82.0%	81.8%	83.3%	85.2%	↑
10	Postsecondary Entrance	72.0%	70.9%	70.9%	66.1%	
11	Physical Fitness	51.6%	50.1%	52.9%	45.8%	
12	Arts Access	50.5%	51.2%	51.9%	52.4%	↑
	Accountability Index	<b>73.2</b>	<b>74.9</b>	<b>74.2</b>	<b>69.7</b>	

Note: The NGSS Science assessment was adopted for the 2018-19 school year; prior results are not shown.

## Student Achievement and Growth through the Pandemic

Though all schools consistently offered full-time in-person learning in 2021-22, it was far from a normal school year. Student and staff illnesses due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting quarantines and isolations caused significant learning disruptions. The Performance Index – the best measure of overall average achievement in a content area – shows that while achievement was increasing prior to the pandemic, the achievement in 2021-22 is still below the three most recent pre-pandemic years. This is true for students with high needs (i.e., English learners, students with disabilities and/or students from low-income families) and those without high needs, thus illustrating the widespread impact of the pandemic on student achievement. These performance index changes translate to declines in student proficiency of around 6 to 8 percentage points in English language arts and mathematics and around 4 percentage points in science.

**Figure 16: Connecticut Performance Index  
Average Student Performance by Subject and High Needs Status**



While performance has not returned to pre-pandemic levels, academic growth results offer some encouraging signs of learning acceleration. Academic growth measures the pace of student learning in a school year. The 2021-22 academic growth results show that students grew slightly faster in 2021-22 in the elementary grades and in most grades in mathematics than they did in 2018-19.

Even with these improved rates of growth, it is estimated that students in grades 4 and 5 may be 2-3 months behind their expected performance had there not been a pandemic. In the middle school grades (6 through 8) students may be 5-7 months behind in ELA and a year or more behind in math.

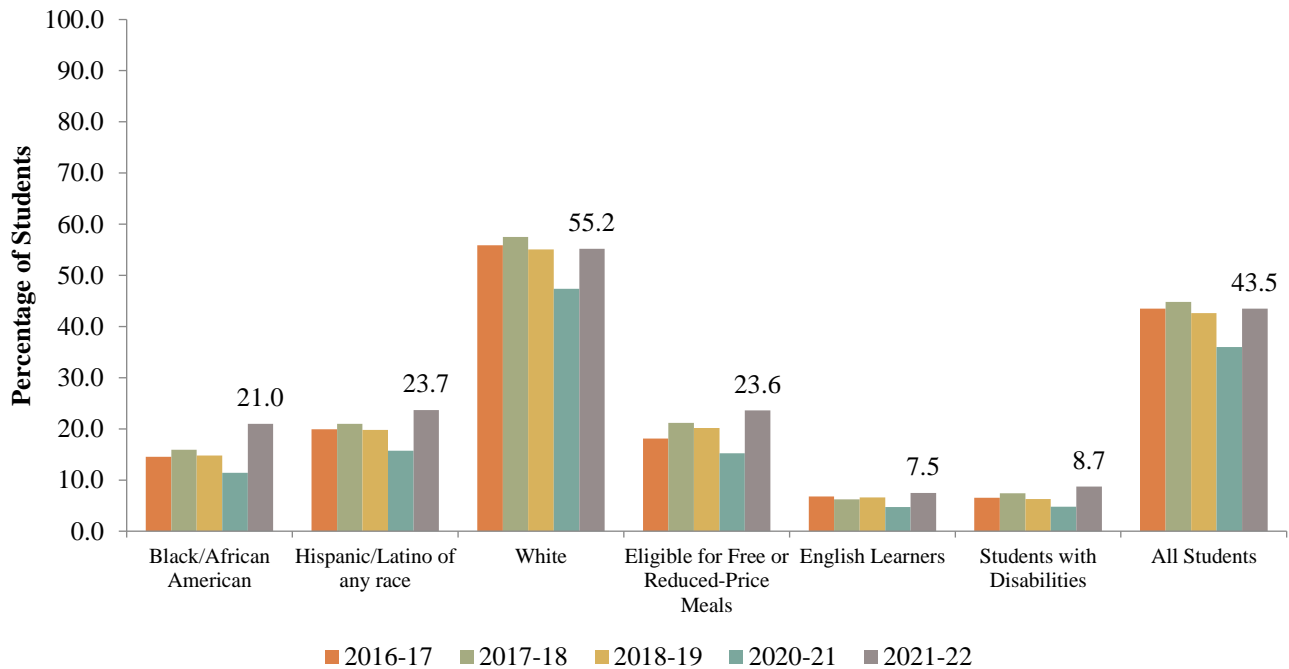
**Table 4: Academic Growth (Grades 4-8)**  
**Average Percentage of Growth Target Achieved**

Grade	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	2018-19	2021-22	2018-19	2021-22
4	64.9	67.5	71.3	76.4
5	63.6	67.3	65.1	71.2
6	56.7	57.1	59.1	60.8
7	59.5	56.7	59.6	64.5
8	55.3	54.0	57.7	53.4

## Postsecondary Readiness

The graph below shows the percentage of 11th and 12th graders who met the College and Career Readiness benchmark on any of the following exams: SAT, CT SAT School Day, ACT, Advanced Placement (AP), or International Baccalaureate (IB) *or* earned three or more college credits through dual credit coursework. This metric is Indicator 6 of the Next Generation Accountability System. Overall 43.5 percent of Connecticut 11th and 12th graders in 2021-22 met a college and career readiness standard on any of the aforementioned exams or courses. This represents a recovery from the substantial decline during the COVID-19 pandemic (36.0 percent in 2020-21 and 42.6 percent in 2018-19). All noted student groups have surpassed 2018-19 rates.

**Figure 17: Percentage of 11th and 12th Graders Meeting Benchmark on a College and Career Readiness Exam**

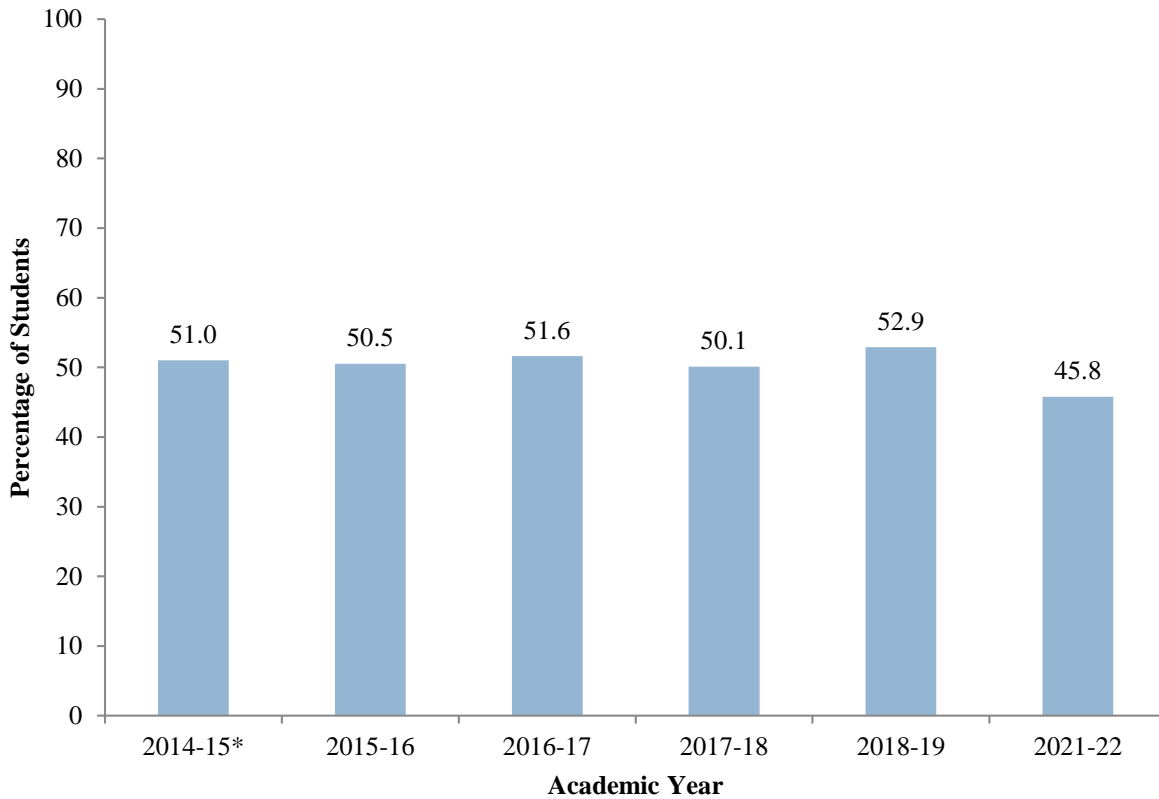


Note: 2019-20 data are not available due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Physical Fitness

The Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment program includes a variety of health-related physical fitness tests designed to assess muscle strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular fitness. Criterion-referenced standards associated with good health are used rather than the previously applied normative standards. Statewide, 45.8 percent of students in the tested grades (4, 6, 8 and once in high school) met the “Health Fitness Zone” standard on all four assessments in 2021-22. This is a significant decrease from the pre-pandemic level of 52.9 percent. The largest declines were evidenced in the aerobic capacity assessment in middle and high school. This metric, which also considers the participation rate in the Fitness Assessments, is Indicator 11 of Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System.

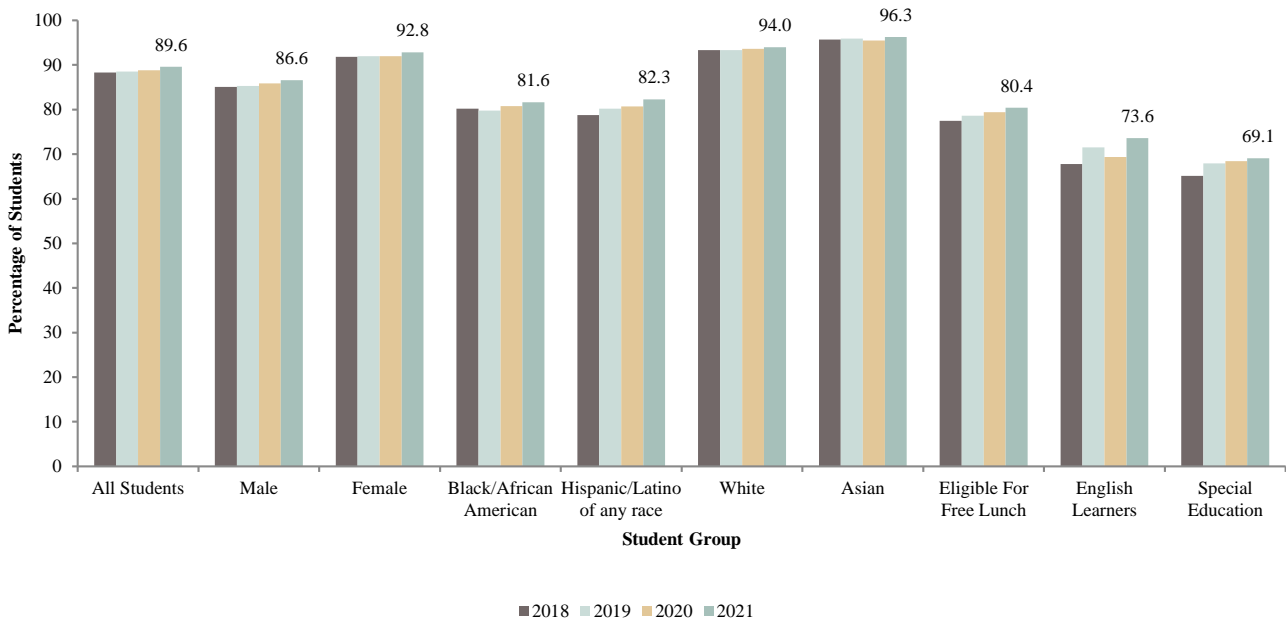
**Figure 18: Percentage of Students Reaching Health Standard of CT Physical Fitness Assessment**



## 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 87.0 percent for the cohort of 2014 to 89.6 percent for the cohort of 2021. The graduation rates for students who are Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, students with disabilities, or eligible for free meals have increased at a rate that is greater than that of the state average.

**Figure 19: 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 below).

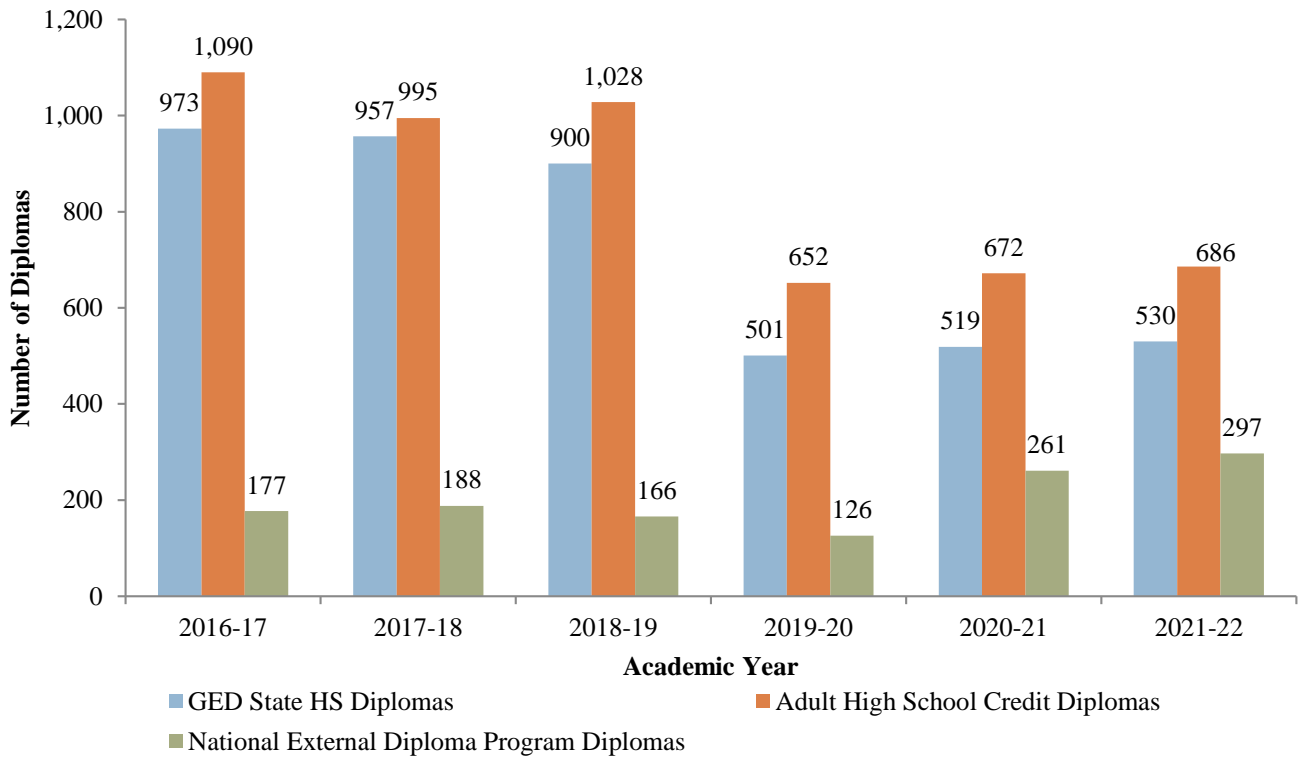
**Table 5: Four- and Six-year Graduation Rates for the 2019 Graduation Cohort**

Category	4-Year	6-Year
All Students	88.5	91.5
English Learners	71.5	79.5
Students with Disabilities	67.9	76.6
Eligible for Free Meals	78.6	83.5

## 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 2021-22, a total of 1,513 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.

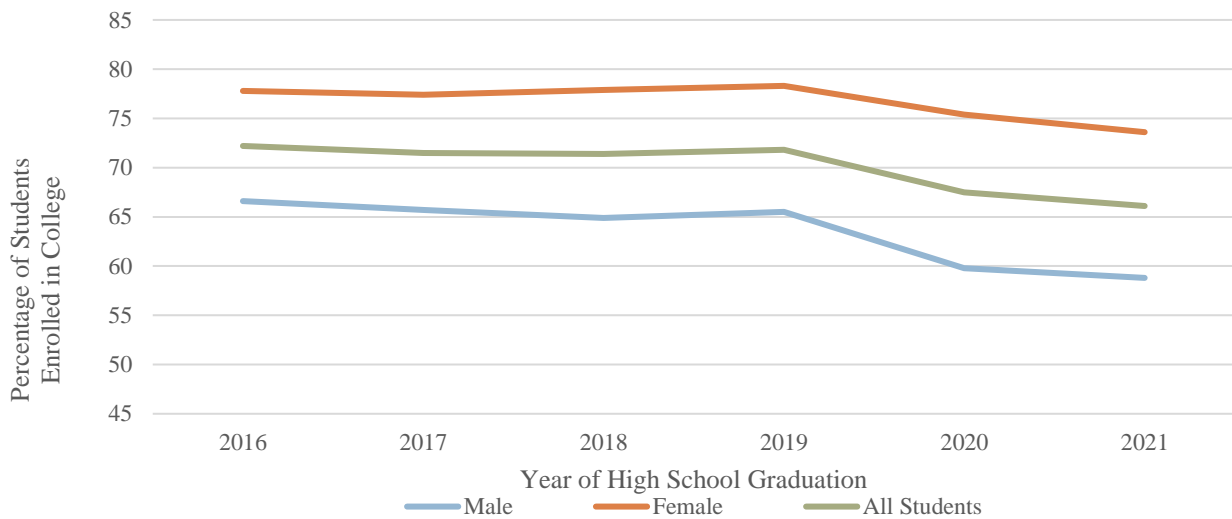
*Figure 20: Adult Education Diplomas by Type*



## College Enrollment

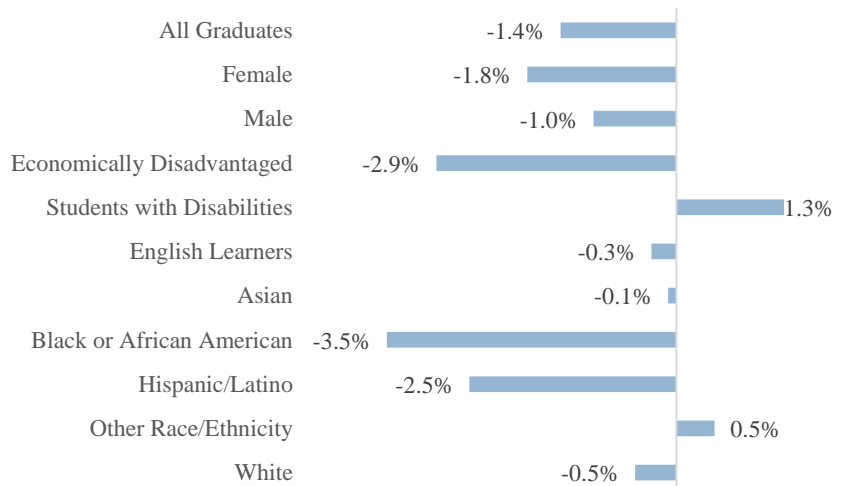
After many years of stability, the college enrollment rates for the public high school graduating class of 2021 declined for the second year in a row from 67.5 percent for the class of 2020 to 66.1 percent for the class of 2021.

**Figure 21: Percentage of High School Graduates Who Enroll in College in the First Year after High School**



College enrollment for Black/African American students, Hispanic/Latino students, and students from low-income families decreased for the second year in a row. College enrollment rates among students with disabilities increased by 1.3 percentage points to 41.5 percent for the class of 2021 but has not recovered to pre-pandemic rates (class of 2019 – 46.8%). College enrollment among English Learners declined 0.3 percent from the class of 2020, a smaller decline than the overall population.

**Figure 22: College Enrollment Rates of the High School Class of 2021: Change from Previous Year**



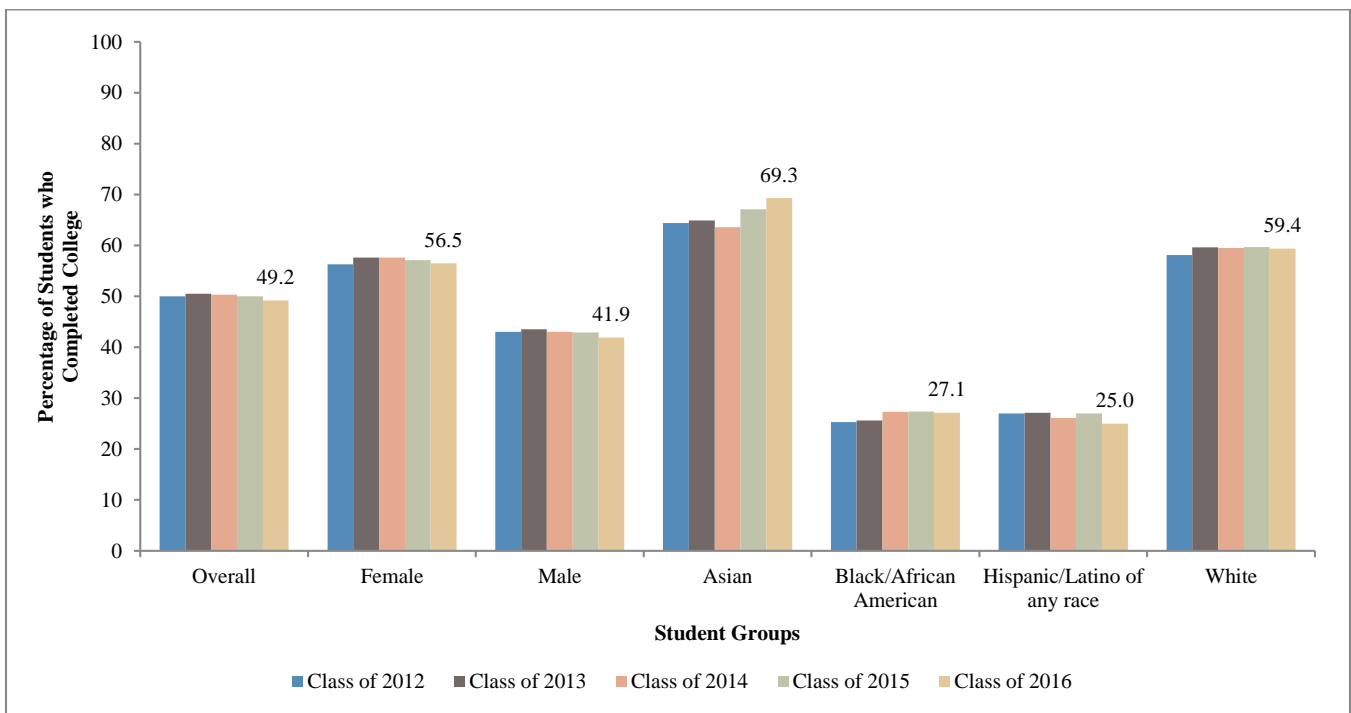


## College Completion

A slightly lower proportion (49.2 percent) of the class of 2016 graduated college in six years as compared to the class of 2015 (50.0 percent). The college completion rate for females decreased slightly from 57.1 percent for 2015 grads to 56.5 percent of 2016 grads, while the corresponding rates for males evidenced a decrease from 42.9 percent to 41.9 percent for the class of 2016.

The college completion rate for students who identified as Black/African American decreased by 0.3 percentage points for the class of 2016 (27.1 percent) as compared to the class of 2015 (27.4 percent). Six-year college completion rates also decreased for Hispanic/Latino students (27.0 to 25.0 percent) and White students (59.7 to 59.4 percent). Only Asian students saw an increased rate from 67.1 percent for the class of 2015 to 69.3 percent for the class of 2016.

**Figure 23: Percentage of High School Graduates Earning a College Degree in Six Years or Less**



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