

Data has N.Y. high school graduation rates rising

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WASHINGTON - The statewide graduation rate at New York high schools increased 1 percentage point to 77.8 percent in the 2013-14 school year, according to preliminary data released Monday by the National Center for Education Statistics. New York was among 36 states that saw a yearover- year increase in graduation rates. States with the biggest gains were Alabama, Delaware, Illinois, Oregon and West Virginia, the Education Department reported. Delaware's graduation rate jumped 6.6 percentage points to 87 percent and Alabama's rose 6.3 percentage points to 86.3 percent. Graduation rates dropped in only six states — Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota and Ohio — along with the District of Columbia.

The District of Columbia ranked last with a 61.4 percent rate while Iowa led the nation with 90.5 percent of students finishing secondary school.

Nationally, New York ranked in the bottom dozen states. The Empire State's graduation rate was 0.2 percentage points higher than Mississippi's 77.6 percent.

"The hard work of America's educators, families, communities and students is paying off, particularly after several years of intense work by educators transitioning to new, higher standards," U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said in a statement. "This is a vital step toward readiness for success in college and careers for every student in this country."

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