

Rochester graduation rate up

City lowest-performing large NY district

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Just over half of the students who entered a Rochester high school in 2010 graduated by August 2014, a jump of 3 percentage points over last year.

Despite the slight improvement to 51 percent, Rochester remains the lowest-performing large district in the state, according to data released Thursday by the New York state Education Department. And its June graduation rate of 43.4 percent is essentially unchanged from 2013.

The difference between 51 percent in August and 43.4 percent in June is about 155 Rochester students who were able to graduate because they attended summer school. The August rates varied wildly among city high schools: 37 percent at Charlotte, 39 percent at Monroe, 44 percent at East, 71 percent at Wilson and Early College, 86 percent at School of the Arts, 87 percent at School Without Walls.

Students with disabilities had a 27 percent August graduation rate; those who are learning English had a 17 percent rate; females (54 percent) did better than males (48 percent); and white students (63 percent) did better than black (52 percent) or Latino students (43 percent).

Outside the city, the Brighton Central School District showed the biggest gain since last year, increasing its August graduation rate to 95 percent from 89.3 percent. It is one of six districts to graduate at least 95 percent of students; the others are Honeoye Falls-Lima, Penfield, Pittsford, Webster and West Irondequoit.

The lowest-performing suburban districts are Rush-Henrietta and East Rochester, each with an 86 percent August graduation rate. Brockport, Gates Chili, Greece and Spencerport also failed to crack 90 percent. Statewide, a total of 76.4 percent of students who entered ninth grade in 2010 graduated with a diploma before June, up slightly from 74.9 percent the previous year. The students included in this year's graduation rates were the first who entered high school after the state adopted the Common Core standards, according to the Education Department.

"While the increased graduation rates are encouraging, nearly one in four students is not graduating after four years," NYSED Commissioner John King said. "It is imperative that we continue to support districts as they fully implement the higher expectations the Board of Regents has set for students and educators."

The statewide data continued to show a large gap between racial and ethnic groups, with 87.3 percent of white students graduating within four years compared to 61.6 percent of Hispanic and black students. The graduation rates were released about six months earlier than in previous years, which King said was attributed to a boost in the state's data system.

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