

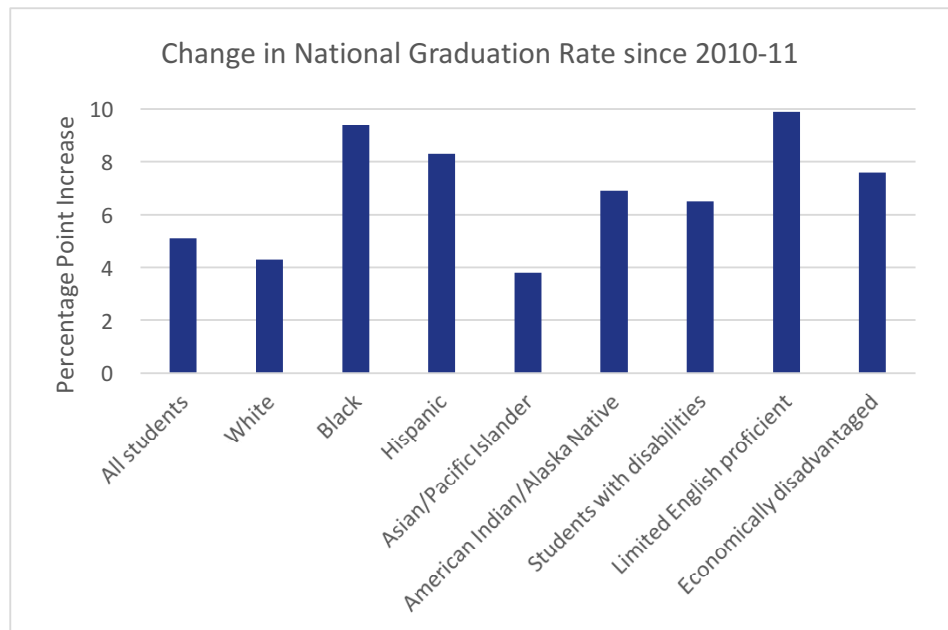
# THINKING LONG TERM: STATE GRADUATION RATE GOALS UNDER ESSA



A clear set of student performance goals can serve as the central driver of not only a state's accountability system, but also the entire education system. Well-articulated goals serve numerous critical purposes, including clarifying the state's aspirations and priorities for its students, schools, and the future of the state more broadly; focusing policy, practice, and resources on the most effective strategies to achieve their goals; and signaling the need to adjust course along the way if a state is not meeting its trajectory. Goals can be used by state leaders to rally support; bring stakeholders together for a common purpose; and communicate that what matters most is real, measurable improvement in student outcomes.

States have embraced the goal of graduating students prepared for their lives after high school, recognizing that high school completion is a significant marker of student readiness for career or college. For many students, high school is not the end of a student's journey. Graduating with a diploma that matters enables students to choose their path – whether at a two- or four-year college, technical school, workforce training, or military – rather than having some paths unavailable because they did not get the academic knowledge and skills they needed to be successful. Graduation rates are an important student outcome measure.

In 2015-16, more than 84 percent of public students across the United States graduated from high school in four years.<sup>1</sup> In the last five years, the nation's overall graduation rate has increased by more than five percentage points. Every subgroup of students has experienced gains, with most outpacing the national gains. While these gains represent real change, they have also raised some concerns about whether the high school diploma means that students are ready for what comes next, or if standards have been lowered or shortcuts taken to move students across the graduation stage. Furthermore, as graduation rates inch closer to 90 percent, there is less room for improvement, and could mean states begin bumping up against ceiling effects.



Goal setting is not a new exercise for states, but it has evolved over the last two decades. Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), states set graduation rate goals and annual targets toward those goals, but only for all students, not for individual groups of students. Thirty-five states opted to set graduation rate targets for 2002-2003 through 2013-2014 that did not increase each year; their final goal was the same as each interim goal. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia set goals that required schools to meet increasingly higher

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2017). Table 1: Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity and selected demographic characteristics for the United States, the 50 states, and the District of Columbia: School year 2015–16. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR\\_RE\\_and\\_characteristics\\_2015-16.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR_RE_and_characteristics_2015-16.asp).

targets until 2013-2014.<sup>2</sup> In 2008, federal regulations required states to calculate and report comparable and disaggregated graduation rates using the adjusted cohort graduation rate by 2010-11 and to use these rates in their accountability systems by school year (SY) 2011-12.<sup>3</sup> In more recent history, 41 states developed goals as part of their Race to the Top applications and 43 states developed goals in their waivers under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility program. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law in 2015, states must set “ambitious” long-term goals, but states have complete autonomy over where to set their goals and how fast to get there.<sup>4</sup> Under ESSA, states must also provide baseline data, measures of interim progress, and a timeline for attaining their goals; must use the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate to measure their goals; and must set goals both for “all students” and for individual subgroups of students,<sup>5</sup> unlike under NCLB. In addition, states are no longer required to set annual targets under ESSA and can determine the right cadence for setting interim measures of progress. Further, the measures of interim progress must be established in a way that, if attained, would help close gaps in graduation rates between groups of students. Finally, ESSA requires that high schools that graduate less than 67 percent of their students be labeled as low performing.

This brief examines long-term goals for improving graduation rates included in states’ submitted ESSA plans as of January 2018; for states whose plans were approved by the U.S. Department of Education at the time of publication, the analysis is based on the long-term goals in their final plans.<sup>6</sup> The brief offers early insights into the varied approaches states have taken in setting long-term goals, and the timelines and trajectories to reach them. It also compares the baselines states are working from in setting their trajectories, and given states’ increased autonomy for setting their goals under ESSA, compares differences in the approaches states have used to set their goals per their ESSA plans. We then take a closer look at how states’ graduation goals vary for different groups of students. We next look at how states’ goals for graduation rates and academic achievement converge – or diverge. And finally, we lay out a set of recommendations for states as they turn to the difficult task of making their graduation goals into a reality.

## Where should states sets long-term goals?

State goals should be ambitious enough to stretch and motivate actors throughout the education system but achievable enough to be legitimate and meaningful to all.<sup>7</sup> Goals should be based in the reality of historical performance data and improvement trends. **Our review of states’ ESSA plans found that most states did not call on historical data or trends to make the case for why they set their goals and measures of interim progress where they did.** And while states should require greater growth and/or faster improvements than has occurred in the recent past, especially to help close gaps between subgroups of students, goals should not be so much greater than what has been accomplished in recent years to make them unrealistic. In other words, the trajectory for improving graduation rates should be grounded both in evidence of past progress – and the level of progress that is possible. The timeline for reaching the goals should also not be so far into the future that they’re seen as lacking urgency. Finally, whatever goals they set for graduation rates, states should attempt to harmonize these with other state goals for postsecondary completion, workforce development, and similar outcomes, and look for continuous improvement strategies that can accelerate the rate of improvement.

<sup>2</sup> Education Commission of the States. *State Graduation Rate Goals for High School Accountability*. <http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/mb-tab3NE?Rep=GRG&SID=a0i700000009vZx>

<sup>3</sup> 34 CFR Part 200, Section 200.19(b)(5) <https://www2.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2008-4/102908a.html>

<sup>4</sup> States must also set goals and timelines to improve student achievement in mathematics and ELA/literacy and progress toward English language proficiency. These topics will be the subject of additional forthcoming briefs.

<sup>5</sup> ESSA requires data disaggregation for accountability purposes by race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, and English language learners (ELLs). States must also publicly report (but not necessarily use for accountability) disaggregated data for students with homeless status, students with a parent in the military, and students in foster care.

<sup>6</sup> Achieve created a tool that summarizes states’ long-term goals for student achievement and graduation rates, along with the accountability indicators and weighting included in states’ plans submitted under ESSA. For more information, see <https://states.achieve.org/essa-tracker>.

<sup>7</sup> Achieve and U.S. Education Delivery Institute. (March 2012). *Implementing Common Core State Standards and Assessments*. <https://www.achieve.org/publications/common-core-implementation-workbook>.

## How do states set long-term goals?

In order to set long-term goals, states must consider how well students are performing now (the **baseline**), where the state wants student performance to be (the **goal**) and by when (the **timeline**), and the path to set to reach the goal (the **trajectory**). The baseline level of performance defines how students performed based on the most recent year's data. The level of performance of each target in the trajectory communicates that student performance should improve to a specific number, by a specific point in time. In reviewing states' ESSA plans, Achieve found wide variation among states in the timelines they have adopted to reach their goals, **ranging from three years to 22 years** into the future; **graduation goals range from 83 percent to 100 percent**.

The trajectory is the path that a state expects performance will take from the current level of performance to the long-term goal. The trajectory is essential for monitoring progress and deciding when and where mid-course corrections need to be made. In reviewing states' interim targets, nearly all states have developed linear trajectories for setting graduation rate goals in their ESSA plans, requiring steady, incremental progress of schools – at least for the “all students” group.

Most states did not reference historical graduation rate data to set baselines, trajectories, and goals in their ESSA plans. One notable exception is [Massachusetts](#), which set goals based on the graduation rate improvement of recent years. Since 2010, the average high school in Massachusetts has improved its four-year graduation rate by 5.0 percentage points and the state cut its “graduation gap” for the all students group (the distance from a 100 percent four-year graduation rate) by 29 percent. The long-term goals established in Massachusetts' plan seek to achieve the same level of improvement for all students and all subgroups over the next five years.

## How far, how fast? A closer look at baselines and goals

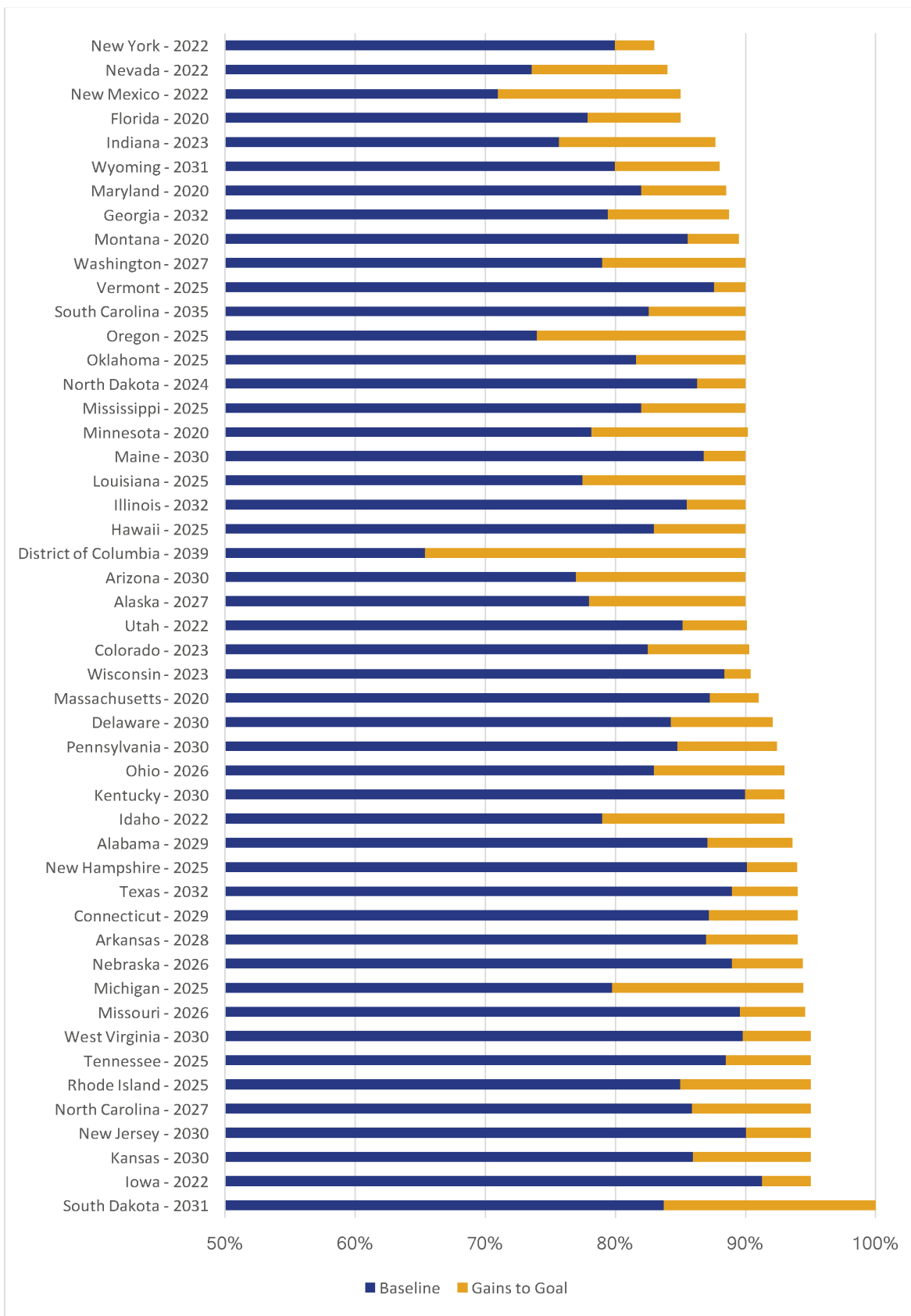
As part of their ESSA plans, all states submitted four-year graduation rate goals, including baseline data, a long-term goal, a date to reach the long-term goal, and interim goals to measure progress in between (see Figure 1 below for a state-by-state look and Appendix A for additional state details).

**Fourteen states and the District of Columbia** have baseline graduation rates lower than 80 percent; **19 states'** rates are between 81-86 percent; **15 states'** rates are 87 percent or above. Differences in states' baselines should be considered in light of differences in graduation requirements. The rigor and specificity of graduation course and assessment requirements vary considerably across states; all high school diplomas are not created equal.<sup>8</sup> For example, in some states, expectations are set that all students can and must complete a college- and career-ready course of study in English language arts (ELA)/literacy and mathematics. In other states, the state sets lower expectations, placing the burden on students and their families to know and advocate for placement in the courses students need to complete in order to be prepared for their next steps after high school.

Figure 1 also shows the differences in states' long-term goals. **Nine states** set their long-term goal for four-year graduation rates below 90 percent, **38 states** set goals between 90-95 percent, and **two states** set their long-term goal above 95 percent, including South Dakota whose long-term goal is for 100 percent of students to graduate in four years.

<sup>8</sup> For additional details on states' graduation requirements (including unit and subject requirements), see <http://www.achieve.org/graduation-requirements>. For additional information on diploma classifications and further analysis, see *How The States Got Their Rates, Class of 2015* (<http://www.achieve.org/how-the-states-got-their-rates-2015-graduates>).

Figure 1: The state of graduation rates



Note: California and Virginia do not appear in the graph because these states' submitted plans did not include baseline data and/or gains to goal data for "All students."

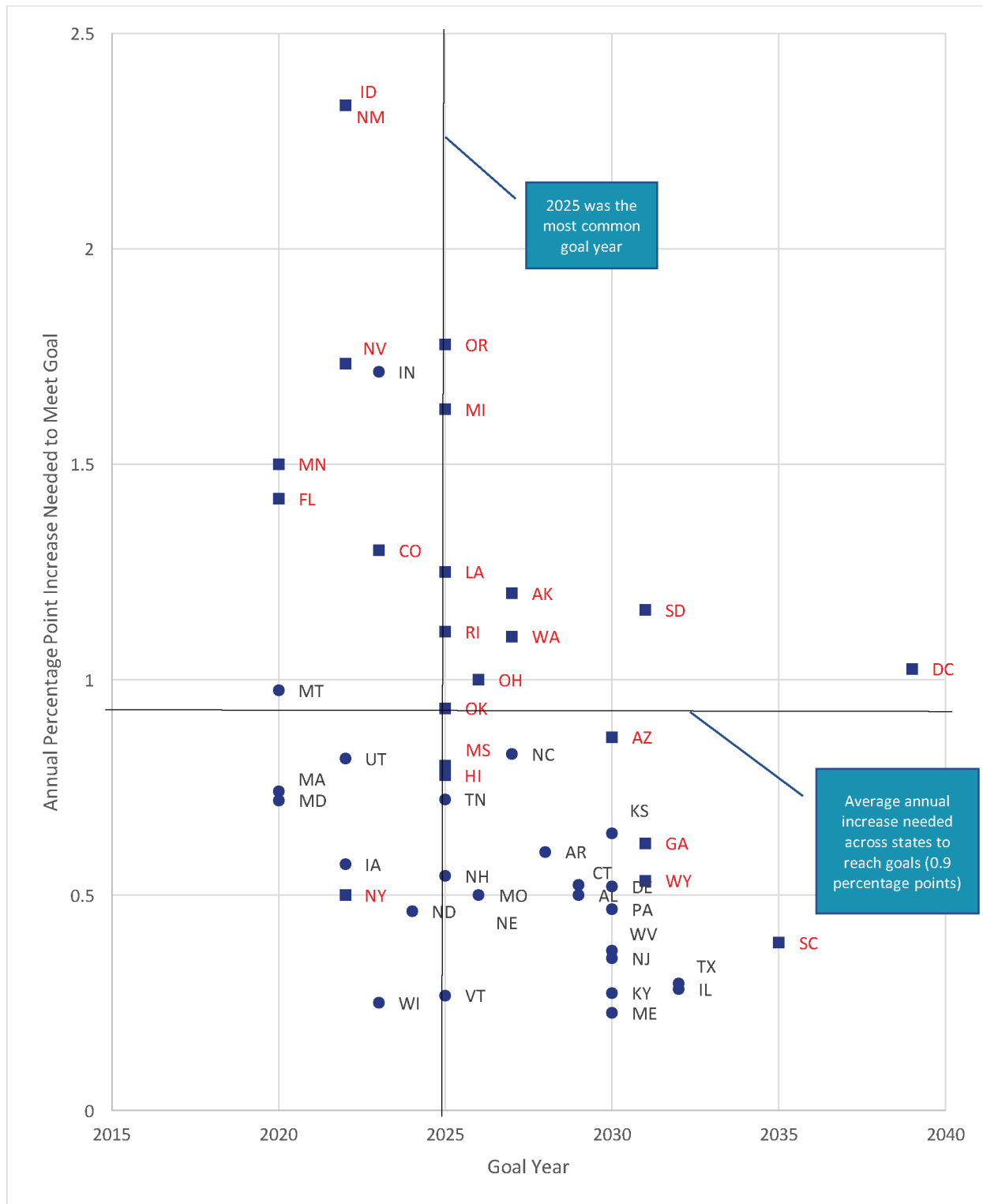
Beyond states' baseline and long-term goal for graduation rates, we used the timelines they established to reach those goals to compare how ambitious – and potentially attainable – states' goals are (see Figure 2 below). For example, Oklahoma's long-term graduation rate goal – set for 2025 – requires an annual 0.9 percentage point increase in graduation rates. The District of Columbia has set a twenty-year goal for 90 percent of all students in its adjusted cohort to graduate within four years. While this goal is set over a longer timeframe than other states, meeting the District of Columbia's goals requires a greater than average annual increase in graduation rates (1.025 percentage points per year). **On average**, states set goals that require **0.9 percentage point increases** in the four-year graduation rate each year – increases consistent with the graduation rate increases seen nationally over the last three years.<sup>9</sup>

Some states will need to achieve much greater gains, at a much faster rate, in order to reach the goals they have set. For example, Idaho and New Mexico, two states with 2015-16 graduation rates<sup>10</sup> in the bottom quartile of states, will need to increase their graduation rates by more than two percentage points annually over the next five years to meet their goals. Our review found that many of the states with the greatest ground to make up in graduation rate set their goals in the upper left quadrant in Figure 2 below – they have graduation rate goals that require higher annual gains on a shorter timeline. These states include New Mexico (71 percent in 2015-16, ranked 50th in graduation rate), Nevada (73.6 percent in 2015-16, ranked 49th in graduation rate), Oregon (74.8 percent in 2015-16, ranked 48th in graduation rate), Louisiana (78.6 percent, ranked 46th in graduation rate), and Colorado (78.9 percent, ranked 45th in graduation rate). On the other end of the spectrum, states like Wisconsin and Vermont, two states with graduation rates in the top quartile of states, have set more measured graduation rate goals; they will require approximately 0.25 percentage point gains each year over the next six and eight years, respectively, to meet graduation rate goals.

<sup>9</sup> In 2013-14, the national graduation rate was 82.3 percent. In 2014-15, the national graduation rate was 83.2 percent. In 2015-16, the national graduation rate was 84.1 percent. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/data\\_tables.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/data_tables.asp).

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2017). Table 1: Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity and selected demographic characteristics for the United States, the 50 states, and the District of Columbia: School year 2015–16. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR\\_RE\\_and\\_characteristics\\_2015-16.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR_RE_and_characteristics_2015-16.asp).

Figure 2: How much do state graduation rates need to increase each year to meet state goals?



Note 1: The state abbreviations in red next to “square markers” reported 2015-16 graduation rates below the national graduation rate of 84.1 percent. The state abbreviations in black next to “circle markers” reported 2015-16 graduation rates above the national graduation rate of 84.1 percent.

Note 2: California and Virginia do not appear in the scatterplot because these states’ submitted plans did not include the states’ baseline data needed to calculate their state’s position on the scatterplot.

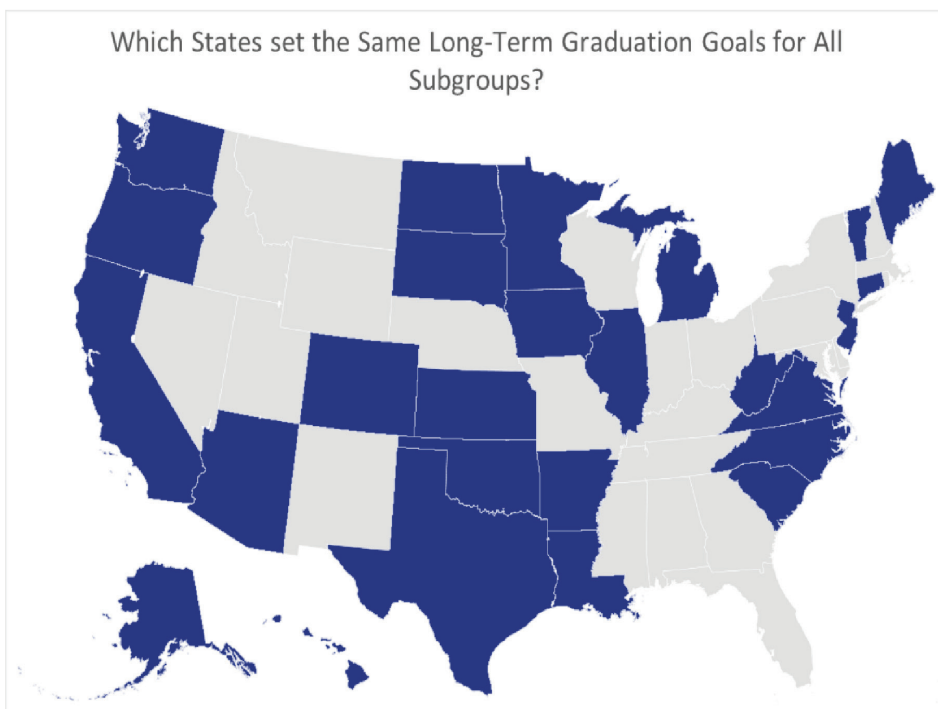
## Setting goals by subgroups

A closer inspection of every state’s graduation rate yields disparities along racial and ethnic lines. Thus, when states set their graduation rate goals, these subgroups have different graduation rate baselines. But, subgroups of students not only have different starting points in states’ long-term goals, they also often have a different finish line. Under ESSA, states have the option to set a different long-term goal for each subgroup of students, as long as the overall system sets goals in a way that would close graduation gaps over time.

**Twenty-six states and the District of Columbia** (shaded blue in the map) expect every individual subgroup to reach the same long-term goal graduation rate by a specific year. Subgroups that are the furthest behind will have the most catching up to do and at the end of each state’s timeline, all students, regardless of subgroup, will be held to the same goal.

The **24 states** shaded gray in the map have set different long-term graduation rate goals by subgroup. These states most frequently framed their goals in the context of “reducing graduation gaps” by a certain amount – most commonly reducing the gap in half between a subgroup’s baseline and 100 percent by the goal year – and thus, do not result in the same

final goal for all individual subgroups. Like the approaches that completely close graduation gaps above, however, it still expects the greatest graduation rate gains from subgroups who are the furthest behind. The table below demonstrates what the numbers in a state with a goal to reduce by half the percentage of students not graduating on time over the next ten years might look like.



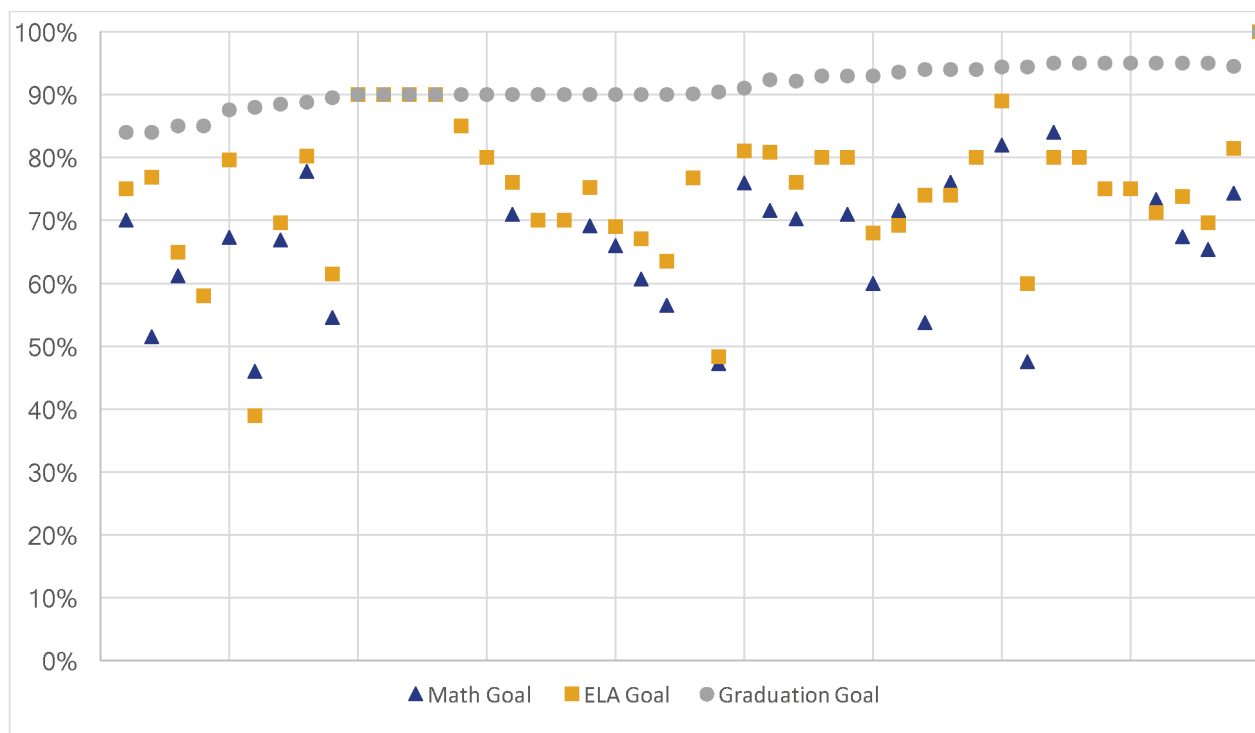
Subgroup	Baseline (%)	Goal (%)	Change Over Time
All students	80	90	10 pp
American Indian/Alaska Native	70	85	15 pp
Asian	90	95	5 pp
Black	76	88	12 pp
Hispanic	74	87	13 pp
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	60	80	20 pp
White	82	91	9 pp
Two or more races	72	86	14 pp
Students with disabilities	66	83	17pp
Low income	70	85	15 pp
English learners	68	84	16 pp

### Good enough to graduate – but not proficient?

For years, high school graduation rates have continued to rise while other measures of student achievement have remained stagnant or declined, raising questions as to what a high school diploma signals. In too many states, earning a high school diploma is no indication that a graduate is ready to successfully enter postsecondary education, the military, or the workforce. In fact, each year, states are graduating thousands of students who fail to demonstrate proficiency in key skills assessed by states’ mathematics and ELA summative assessments. In 2015-16, on average, across all states, just 42 percent of high school students demonstrated proficiency on their state assessments in mathematics. Just 56 percent of students were proficient in reading.<sup>11</sup> Compare this to the 84 percent graduation rate nationally in 2015-16. Alarming numbers of students continue to enter postsecondary institutions only to find out they need to enroll in — and pay for — remedial courses without earning college credit for these classes.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, most states have explicitly set long-term goals for mathematics and ELA proficiency that fall quite short of their related goals for the numbers of students they expect to graduate (see Figure 3 below and Appendix B for state-specific details). In other words, states seem resigned to continue awarding diplomas to large numbers of students who are underprepared in the core subjects of mathematics and ELA. Despite 40 states having four-year graduation rate goals at or above 90 percent, states’ proficiency goals for students are typically set much lower. Of note, **five states** have set consistent proficiency and graduation rate goals. **Twenty-nine states** have set long-term proficiency goals for all students in math at 75 percent or less. In ELA, **23 states** have set long-term proficiency goals for all students at 75 percent or less. And these are the *goals* – or “best case scenario.”

**Figure 3: How much do graduation rate goals differ from math/ELA proficiency goals?**



Note: Six states are not included in the chart because they set math/ELA scale score goals or normed percentile goals for achievement.

<sup>11</sup> ED Data Express. Retrieved January 2018 from <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/data-elements.cfm>.

<sup>12</sup> Achieve. (March 2017). *The State of American High School Graduates: What States Know (and Don't) about Student Performance*. <https://www.achieve.org/files/ACH50CROSS-STATE3.20.17.pdf>



It remains to be seen how meaningful these goals will be in states – or whether they will be lost in an environment filled with competing priorities and distractions. States have had graduation rate goals in the past, including those established under NCLB, but most leaders recognize that these goals of the past were not realistic and therefore, not front and center. States received a new opportunity under ESSA to establish meaningful goals and meaningful benchmarks for improving graduation rate. However, setting goals and the trajectory to meet them is only the first step in the process. States must own and manage their goals, developing and communicating a clear strategy to stakeholders for achieving them.

Regardless of where individual states have set their goals, states – and their districts and schools – share a set of next steps:

- *Align school accountability with the learning expectations for students:* If the expectation is that students need to master college- and career-ready standards in order to graduate, then graduation policies should reflect these expectations. If, however, schools are held accountable solely for graduation rates that reflect less rigorous course pathways — then states are setting a lower bar for schools than for the students they educate.
- *Expect students take courses that deliver the full breadth and depth of the state’s standards:* All states have adopted college- and career-ready standards in mathematics and ELA/literacy, but not all states expect students take courses aligned to those standards before graduation. Until they do, too many students will be underprepared for postsecondary success.
- *Review and reconcile graduation rate goals and proficiency/growth goals:* Graduation rates and proficiency rates should not convey drastically different pictures of readiness. Rather, these student outcomes, and related leading indicators (e.g. credit accumulation, grade point average, early high school assessments) should be used in conjunction with one another to move the needle on students’ readiness for life after high school.
- *Communicate and, whenever possible, celebrate:* These goals should be widely known and understood across the state; state leaders should communicate their graduation rate goals broadly to educators, school principals, district leaders, parents, and the public. States can use incentives and rewards to drive progress on goals – providing a forum for schools that have made great progress to share their strategies with other schools, or recognizing success through the media, banners, or other mediums.
- *Decide how to intervene and support:* Leaders can use the goals to drive a performance management process to ensure that individual districts and schools are making progress toward the goals and making mid-course corrections along the way when needed. However, states’ plans rarely specify the strategies and interventions that will be implemented to meet their interim targets and make progress against long-term goals. It is unrealistic to think that trajectories will change if strategies and interventions do not.
- *Translate state goals into district, school, and student goals:* State-level goals are just that – at the state level. State goals cannot be met if districts and schools do not improve – particularly those districts and schools that are performing below the state average. Districts and schools need to understand their baseline data and be able to map out an ambitious and feasible trajectory to begin to drive progress towards their goals. This includes subgroup-specific goals, which typically require greater gains at a faster pace than the “all students” measure.
- *Articulate how the state’s goals factor into the accountability system:* Most states’ ESSA plans do not connect graduation rate goals with how schools will be held accountable and supported if they are low-performing. It is not clear in all states how schools’ meeting – or missing – the interim measures of progress or long-term goals factor into the accountability system.

- *Track progress against these goals:* Under ESSA, states and districts must include a description of their long-term goals and interim measures of progress for all students and for each subgroup as part of their annual state and district report cards, though it is unclear how prominent or in what detail these must appear. Most states' plans do not address how they will comment on public reporting with a few exceptions. Arizona noted that *"School and district report cards will display progress toward these goals on an annual basis."* And Arkansas promised that, *"Enhanced reporting will be used to provide transparent information about the progress of student groups relative to the checkpoints along the trajectory to the long-term goal."* States should present performance data against their goals, using data visualization tools or dashboards to show where performance has been, where it's expected to go, and whether the school or district is on-track to reaching the goal.
- *Translate percentages into real numbers:* Goals are typically set and reported in terms of percentages, but reporting the number of students as well makes the data more real and increases the sense of urgency. For example, instead of saying only that a district's graduation rate increased by 0.25 percent, report that 1,000 more students graduated on-time.
- *Vertically align K-12 and higher education/workforce sector goals:* Alignment between systems can serve as a meaningful way to build buy-in and support for moving the needle on multiple fronts and signals that high school graduation is one step along the way towards college and career. A small number of states chose to align their high school graduation rate goals with the state's postsecondary completion/degree attainment and/or workforce development goals, but most states approached goal-setting strictly from a high school lens.

## Appendix A: Four-Year Graduation Rate Baselines and Goals Included in State ESSA Plans

Note: California and Virginia do not appear in the table because these states' submitted plans did not include baseline data.

State	Graduation Rate Goal Year	Graduation Rate Baseline	Graduation Rate Goal	Annual Percentage Point Gain Needed to Meet Goal
Alabama	2029	87.1%	93.6%	0.5
Alaska	2027	78.0%	90.0%	1.2
Arizona	2030	77.0%	90.0%	0.9
Arkansas	2028	87.0%	94.0%	0.6
Colorado	2023	82.5%	90.3%	1.3
Connecticut	2029	87.2%	94.0%	0.5
Delaware	2030	84.3%	92.1%	0.5
District of Columbia	2039	65.4%	90.0%	1.0
Florida	2020	77.9%	85.0%	1.4
Georgia	2032	79.4%	88.7%	0.6
Hawaii	2025	83.0%	90.0%	0.8
Idaho	2022	79.0%	93.0%	2.3
Illinois	2032	85.5%	90.0%	0.3
Indiana	2023	76.0%	88.0%	1.7
Iowa	2022	91.3%	95.0%	0.6
Kansas	2030	86.0%	95.0%	0.6
Kentucky	2030	90.0%	93.0%	0.3
Louisiana	2025	77.5%	90.0%	1.3
Maine	2030	86.8%	90.0%	0.2
Maryland	2020	82.0%	88.5%	0.7
Massachusetts	2020	87.3%	91.0%	0.7
Michigan	2025	79.8%	94.4%	1.6
Minnesota	2020	78.0%	90.0%	1.5
Mississippi	2025	82.0%	90.0%	0.8
Missouri	2026	91.5%	95.7%	0.5
Montana	2020	85.6%	89.5%	1.0
Nebraska	2026	89.0%	94.4%	0.5
Nevada	2022	73.6%	84.0%	1.7
New Hampshire	2025	90.2%	94.0%	0.5
New Jersey	2030	90.1%	95.0%	0.4
New Mexico	2022	71.0%	85.0%	2.3
New York	2022	80.0%	83.0%	0.5
North Carolina	2027	85.9%	95.0%	0.8
North Dakota	2024	86.3%	90.0%	0.5

**Appendix A: Four-Year Graduation Rate Baselines and Goals Included in State ESSA Plans  
(Continued)**

State	Graduation Rate Goal Year	Graduation Rate Baseline	Graduation Rate Goal	Annual Percentage Point Gain Needed to Meet Goal
Ohio	2026	83.0%	93.0%	1.0
Oklahoma	2025	81.6%	90.0%	0.9
Oregon	2025	74.0%	90.0%	1.8
Pennsylvania	2030	85.0%	92.0%	0.5
Rhode Island	2025	85.0%	95.0%	1.1
South Carolina	2035	82.6%	90.0%	0.4
South Dakota	2031	83.7%	100%	1.2
Tennessee	2025	88.5%	95.0%	0.7
Texas	2032	89.0%	94.0%	0.3
Utah	2022	85.2%	90.1%	0.8
Vermont	2025	87.6%	90.0%	0.3
Washington	2027	79.0%	90.0%	1.1
West Virginia	2030	89.8%	95.0%	0.4
Wisconsin	2023	88.4%	90.4%	0.3
Wyoming	2031	80.0%	88.0%	0.5

**Appendix B: Graduation Rate, Math, and ELA Goals Included in State ESSA Plans**

State	Graduation Rate Goal	Math Goal	ELA Goal
Alabama	93.6%	71.5%	69.2%
Alaska	90.0%	66.0%	69.0%
Arizona*	90.0%	90.0%	90.0%
Arkansas*	94.0%	80.0%	80.0%
California	High (Status) and Maintained (Change)	High (Status) and Maintained (Change)	High (Status) and Maintained (Change)
Colorado	90.3%	53rd percentile	53rd percentile
Connecticut	94.0%	75 (index value)	75 (index value)
Delaware	92.1%	70.3%	76.1%
District of Columbia	90.0%	85.0%	85.0%
Florida	85.0%	58.0%	58.0%
Georgia*	88.7%	77.8%	80.2%
Hawaii	90.0%	71.0%	76.0%
Idaho	93.0%	60.0%	68.0%
Illinois*	90.0%	90.0%	90.0%
Indiana*	88.0%	67.0%	80.0%
Iowa*	95.0%	84.0%	80.0%
Kansas	95.0%	75.0%	75.0%
Kentucky*	93.0%	71.0%	80.0%
Louisiana*	90.0%	56.5%	63.5%
Maine	90.0%	69.2%	75.2%
Maryland	88.5%	66.9%	69.7%
Massachusetts	91.0%	75.9%	81.0%
Michigan	94.4%	47.6%	60.0%
Minnesota	90.0%	90.0%	90.0%
Mississippi	90.0%	70.0%	70.0%
Missouri	95.7%	74.3%	81.5%
Montana	89.5%	54.5%	61.5%
Nebraska	94.4%	82.0%	89.0%
Nevada*	84.0%	51.5%	76.9%
New Hampshire	94.0%	53.8%	74.0%
New Jersey	95.0%	80.0%	80.0%
New Mexico	85.0%	61.2%	64.9%
New York*	83.0%	161 on Performance Index	182 on Performance Index
North Carolina*	95.0%	73.3%	71.3%
North Dakota	90.0%	60.7%	67.0%

**Appendix B: Graduation Rate, Math, and ELA Goals Included in State ESSA Plans  
(Continued)**

State	Graduation Rate Goal	Math Goal	ELA Goal
Ohio	93.0%	80.0%	80.0%
Oklahoma	90.0%	Not Specified	Not Specified
Oregon	90.0%	80.0%	80.0%
Pennsylvania	92.0%	72.0%	81.0%
Rhode Island	95.0%	75.0%	75.0%
South Carolina*	90.0%	70.0%	70.0%
South Dakota	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Tennessee*	95.0%	65.4%	69.6%
Texas	94.0%	76.0%	74.0%
Utah*	90.1%	76.8%	76.8%
Vermont*	90.0%	2619	2617
Virginia*	84.0%	70.0%	75.0%
Washington	90.0%	90.0%	90.0%
West Virginia	95.0%	67.4%	73.8%
Wisconsin	90.4%	47.2%	48.3%
Wyoming*	88.0%	46.0%	39.0%

\*These states did not set an aggregate long-term goal for “All Students” across all grades, so for purposes of this analysis a high school goal was used, if available. If no high school goal was available, a middle school goal was used.