

Lit Scan

Facts & Figures from the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative

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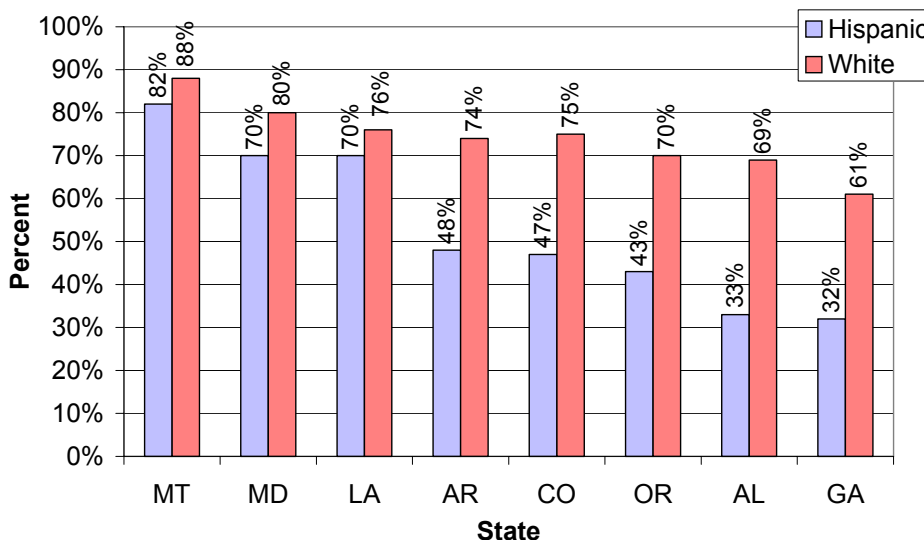
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Graduation Rates for Hispanic & Black Students Consistently Lower Than for White Students

On Graduation Rate Gap, Colorado Ranks 11th for Hispanic Students & 15th for Black Students Out of 38 States

Census Bureau estimates of educational attainment levels for all Coloradans age 25 and over consistently indicate that Hispanic and Black adults are less likely to have high school diplomas (including GED diplomas) than White adults. The reason for this education gap in the general population is clear from graduation rate statistics for a single class, the class of 1998. A major reason for this educational inequality is the fact that, in any given year, White students are far more likely to graduate from high school "on schedule" than their Hispanic and Black counterparts. In April 2002, the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research issued a revised report entitled **High School Graduation Rates in the United States**. Data from this report indicate Colorado's status on this issue relative to other states.

Chart 1. Graduation Rates for Hispanic & White Students in Colorado & Selected Other States, 1998



Hispanic & White Graduation Rates

Less than half of Colorado's Hispanic students—47 percent—graduate from high school. In several states, this percentage is much higher: 82 percent for Montana and 70 percent for Maryland and Louisiana. Other states look more similar to Colorado. The Hispanic graduation rates for Arkansas and Oregon are 48 and 43 percent, respectively. (See Chart 1.)



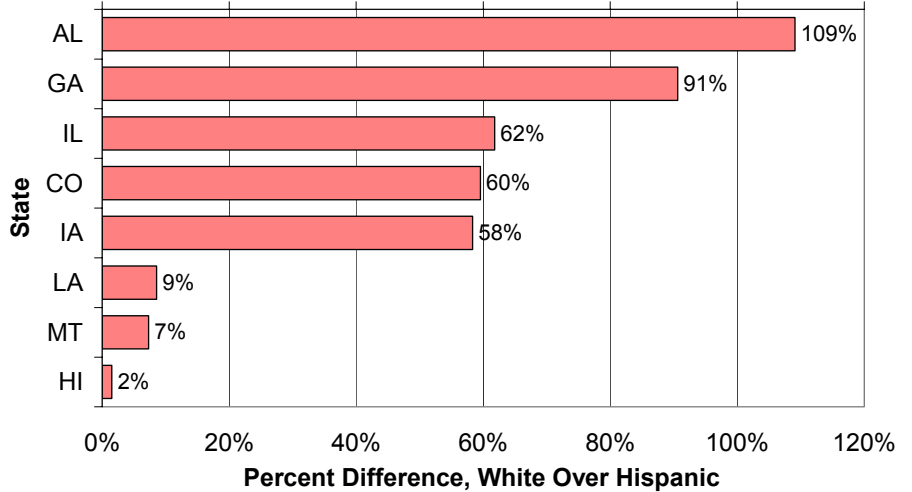
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However high or low the Hispanic graduation rate for a state may be, an important concern is the extent to which there is a graduation rate gap between Hispanic and White students. Colorado's gap between White and Hispanic graduation rates is 60 percent. In other words, 60 percent more White than Hispanic students graduate from high school in Colorado.

Colorado has the 11th largest graduation gap between White and Hispanic students of the 38 states included in the Manhattan Institute study.

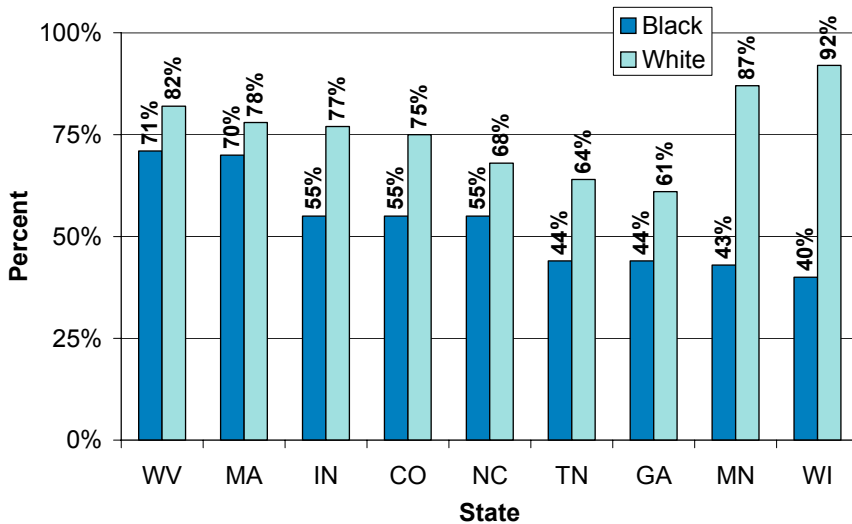
Chart 2. Percentage Increase in Graduation Rate of White Over Hispanic Students for Colorado & Selected Other States, 1998



States with the smallest White-Hispanic graduation rate gaps include Hawaii, at only two percent; Montana, at seven percent; and Louisiana, at nine percent. States with the largest gaps include Alabama, at 109 percent; and Georgia, at 91 percent. Colorado ranks similarly to Illinois (62 percent) and Iowa (58 percent).



Chart 3. Graduation Rates for Black and White Students in Colorado & Selected Other States, 1998



Black & White Graduation Rates

Just over half of Colorado's Hispanic students—55 percent—graduate from high school. In several states, this percentage is much higher: 71 percent for West Virginia and 70 percent for Massachusetts. Other states look more similar to Colorado. In fact, the Black graduation rates for Colorado, Indiana, and North Carolina are identical. (See Chart 3.)

Graduation Rates for Hispanic & Black Students Consistently Lower Than for White Students

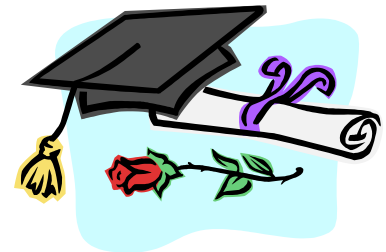
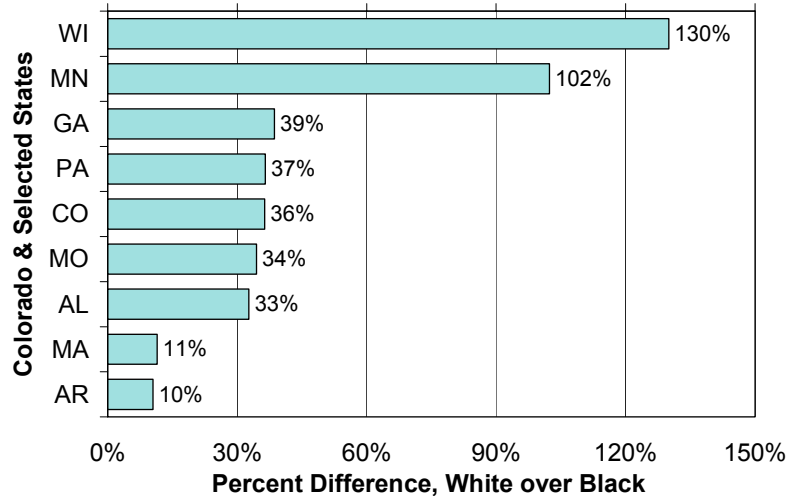
On Graduation Rate Gap, Colorado Ranks 11th for Hispanic Students & 15th for Black Students Out of 38 States

As for Black students, an important concern is the extent to which there is a graduation rate gap between Black and White students. Colorado's gap between White and Black graduation rates is 36 percent. In other words, 36 percent more White than Black students graduate from high school in Colorado.

Colorado has the 15th largest graduation gap between White and Black students of the 38 states included in the Manhattan Institute study.

States with the smallest White-Black graduation rate gaps are Arkansas and Massachusetts, at 10 and 11 percent, respectively. States with the largest gaps are Wisconsin, at 130 percent; and Minnesota, at 102 percent. Colorado ranks similarly to Georgia (39 percent), Pennsylvania (37 percent), Missouri (34 percent), and Alabama (33 percent).

Chart 4. Percentage Increase in Graduation Rate of White Over Black Students for Colorado & Selected Other States, 1998



Closing the Gap

What is being done to close these gaps? The Colorado Department of Education participates in a Closing the Achievement Gap initiative that is developing programs and services to improve graduation rates for poor and minority students. (See the CDE web pages about this initiative at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_c-tag.htm.) CDE's Center for At Risk Education (CARE) is an especially active partner in this public-private statewide initiative, encouraging the development of community-based adult education and family literacy services that are critical to ending the cycle of poverty and low educational attainment. (See the CARE website at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecare/index.htm>.)

SOURCES

- Jay P. Greene, **High School Graduation Rates in the United States**, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, April 2002. Available at: http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_baeo.htm.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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