



STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Contact: [Michael Yapple](#)

(609) 376-9072

School Performance Data Shows Gains in Key Metrics of College and Career Readiness

Trenton, NJ – Schools across New Jersey report improvements in key areas of college and career readiness, including graduation rates and dual enrollment, coupled with a decrease in chronic absenteeism and discipline issues, according to results announced by the New Jersey Department of Education.

“We’re seeing a sure and steady march toward improvement in many areas,” **said Dr. Lily Laux, Commissioner of Education.** “To be clear, educators universally strive for continual improvement in our schools, and our work is never done. Still, it’s reassuring that the data shows gains in a number of key benchmarks, and this helps shape a positive narrative of what is taking place in New Jersey schools.”

The data is from the 2024-2025 school year, the most recent available. Highlights include:

- **Graduation Rates:** New Jersey’s 2025 state graduation rate reached an all-time high of 91.8%, an increase from 90.9% four years earlier. Of note: Significant improvement was seen in the graduation rates of students with disabilities, which grew from 79% to 82.4% between those graduating in 2021 and 2025, and economically disadvantaged students, which grew from 84.8% to 88.9% in the same timeframe. The state graduation rate includes the cohort of students who graduated after entering high school four years earlier.
- **Seal of Biliteracy:** The number of students earning the Seal of Biliteracy, which recognizes graduates who are proficient in at least one language in addition to English, increased by 155% over the previous four years. A total of 12,644 12th graders earned the Seal in 2024-2025, representing 11.1% of graduates.
- **Industry Valued Credentials:** A total of 12,741 students earned credentials or certifications that are in demand in a particular occupation – a 244% increase over the previous four years.
- **Dual Enrollment:** The number of students taking part in dual enrollment courses, which allow students to earn credit from a college or university while still in high school, has steadily increased. In 2024-2025, 30% of 11th and 12th graders took dual enrollment courses, as compared to 22.3% four years earlier.
- **Advanced Placement (AP):** College-level AP courses allow students to earn credit or placement at many colleges and universities, after taking a national, end-of-year AP exam. New Jersey is ranked #1 in the nation in AP course offerings, with 93.5% of public high schools offering at least one AP course and 86.2% offering five or more AP courses. Of note, New Jersey is now ranked sixth in the nation for the 10-year increase in the percentage of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students taking AP exams while in high school.

Other areas: Attendance and Discipline

Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10 percent or more of school days, has been identified as a major issue, as research has shown that chronically absent students face substantial hurdles with academic recovery. New Jersey’s 14.4% chronic absenteeism rate for 2024-2025 remains much lower than the estimated national rate of 22% for the same year. While New Jersey’s chronic absenteeism rate has edged downward in recent years, it has not returned to the pre-pandemic level of 10.6% in 2018-2019.

In 2024-2025, New Jersey schools reported 56,564 in-school and out-of-school suspensions – as well as 29,829 instances of violence, vandalism, substance abuse, and harassment/intimidation/bullying. The discipline figures have shown a positive downward trend in recent years, but have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Department staff presented the state-level data at Wednesday’s State Board of Education meeting as part of a preview of the Department’s updated School Performance Reports, which will provide residents with detailed school-level and district-level data when they are posted online in the coming weeks. For more information, view the [recorded presentation](#) and accompanying [slides](#) from the State Board of Education meeting.

