



# CONDITION OF EDUCATION

2016-17

*The Condition of Education in Connecticut* is the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) yearly status report on public education in the state. It fulfills the requirements under Section 10-4(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

## FOREWORD

*The Condition of Education in Connecticut* is the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) yearly status report on public education in the state. It presents indicators that describe the progress of the public education system, the characteristics of its students and educators, and student performance on key indicators of student engagement and student readiness for college and careers.

Equity and excellence are the cornerstones of the State Board of Education's comprehensive plan for public education. Therefore, this report disaggregates data on several of the indicators to separately highlight the experiences and outcomes of students from historically under-performing groups like students with disabilities, English learners, students from low-income families, and those from minority racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Please visit our data portal, EdSight, at <http://edsight.ct.gov> for additional information about students, educators, instruction, resources, and performance of schools, districts, and the state.

Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner  
Connecticut State Department of Education

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The condition of education in Connecticut remains mixed. There are many bright spots but there are also significant areas for improvement. Here are some key highlights:

- Connecticut's student enrollment has declined by 3.5 percent over the past five years. Though lower, the enrollment is increasingly more diverse (i.e., 45.2 percent are nonwhite), poor (i.e., 35.9 percent are eligible for free or reduced price meals), and with greater educational needs (i.e., 14.3 percent are students with disabilities while 6.8 percent are English learners).
- While the race/ethnic composition of students is changing, the teaching force remains quite homogeneous (i.e., nearly 92 percent of certified staff are white). The percentage of nonwhite educators has shown a slight increase from 8.1 percent in 2014-15 to 8.5 percent in 2016-17.
- Suspension/expulsion rates declined again in 2016-17; 6.7 percent of students received at least one suspension/expulsion. Chronic absenteeism rates increased slightly to 9.9 percent, likely due to a new law which required in-school suspensions of half-a-day or greater to be reported as an absence (this law has since been repealed). Overall, incidences of suspensions/expulsions and chronic absenteeism continue to be evidenced disproportionately among students of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and students from low-income families.
- On the 12 indicators of the Next Generation Accountability System, the state accountability index was relatively unchanged (73.1 in 2015-16 to 73.2 in 2016-17). Some indicators increased (e.g., Mathematics achievement, benchmark attainment on college readiness exams) while others declined (e.g., ELA achievement for high needs students, academic growth).
- The percentage of all students in grades 11 and 12 meeting the college/career readiness benchmark increased from 40.7 percent to 43.5 percent. The universal administration of the SAT as the state assessment in Grade 11, combined with strategic investments to increase access to AP exams for students from low income families, appears to be contributing to this increase.
- The four-year high school cohort graduation rates are rising and the graduation rate gap between most student groups continues to shrink. Furthermore, the six-year graduation rate for high needs students (i.e., English learners, students with disabilities, or those from a low-income family) increased from 78.6 percent (2012- 13 cohort) to 82.0 percent (2013-14 cohort). These students are demonstrating that they can complete high school with additional time and support.
- College entrance rates were flat with about 72 percent of students from a high school graduating class enrolling in a two- or four-year college/university within one year of high school graduation; college graduation rates inched up slightly with 49.6 percent of students from the high school class of 2011 earning a two- or four-year college degree in six years after high school graduation, up from 49.0 for the class of 2010.

## THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

### Districts, Schools, Programs, and Adult Education Providers

Public education in Connecticut is provided to students in prekindergarten to Grade 12 through many types of school districts. These include local and regional boards of education, regional educational service centers (RESA), public charter districts, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System, Endowed Academies, and state agencies. These school districts deliver their educational services to students through regular schools, specialized programs, and outplacements to private facilities.

*Table 1: Number of Schools by the Type of Organization*

<b>Organization Type</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>
Public Schools in Local and Regional Districts	960
Regional Educational Service Center Schools	28
Public Charter Schools	24
Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Schools	17
Endowed Academies	3
State Agency Facilities	30
<b>Total Number of Schools</b>	<b>1062</b>

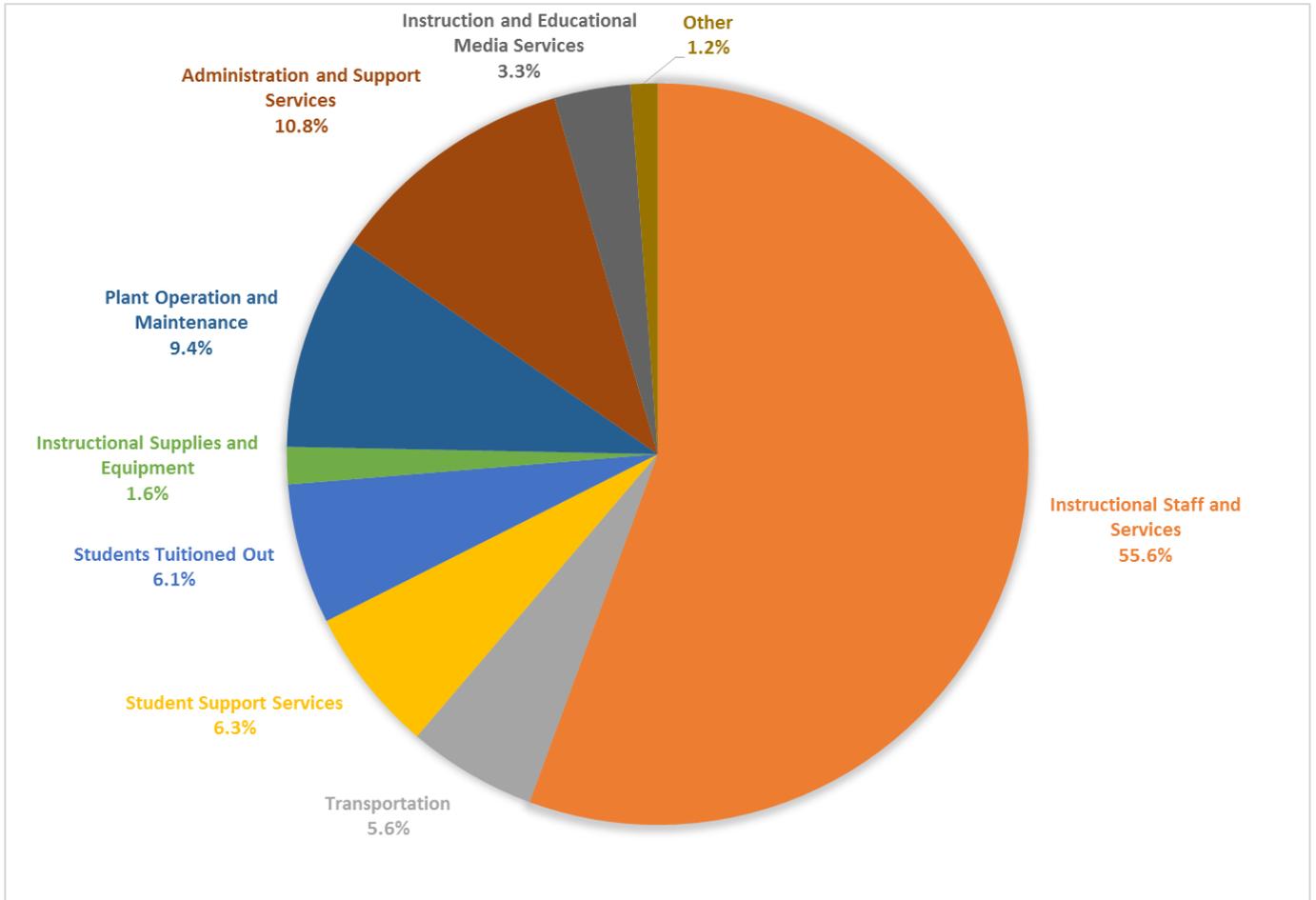
Of the 1,062 schools, 814 are elementary and/or middle schools and 248 are high schools. In addition to these 1,062 schools, 431 specialized programs provide targeted services. The vast majority of these programs are designed for special education students (287), alternative/credit recovery (80), or prekindergarten (43).

In addition to PK-12 education, adult education programs are also provided to residents in all towns across Connecticut through 42 local school district providers, three regional educational service centers, 14 community/faith-based organizations, and two state agencies.

## Expenditures

In 2016-17, the state’s overall school expenditures (excluding investments in land, buildings and debt) totaled \$8.9 billion. Instructional staff and services represented a majority of the total expenditures; 56 cents out of every education dollar was devoted to this area.

*Figure 1: Expenditures by Category, 2016-17*



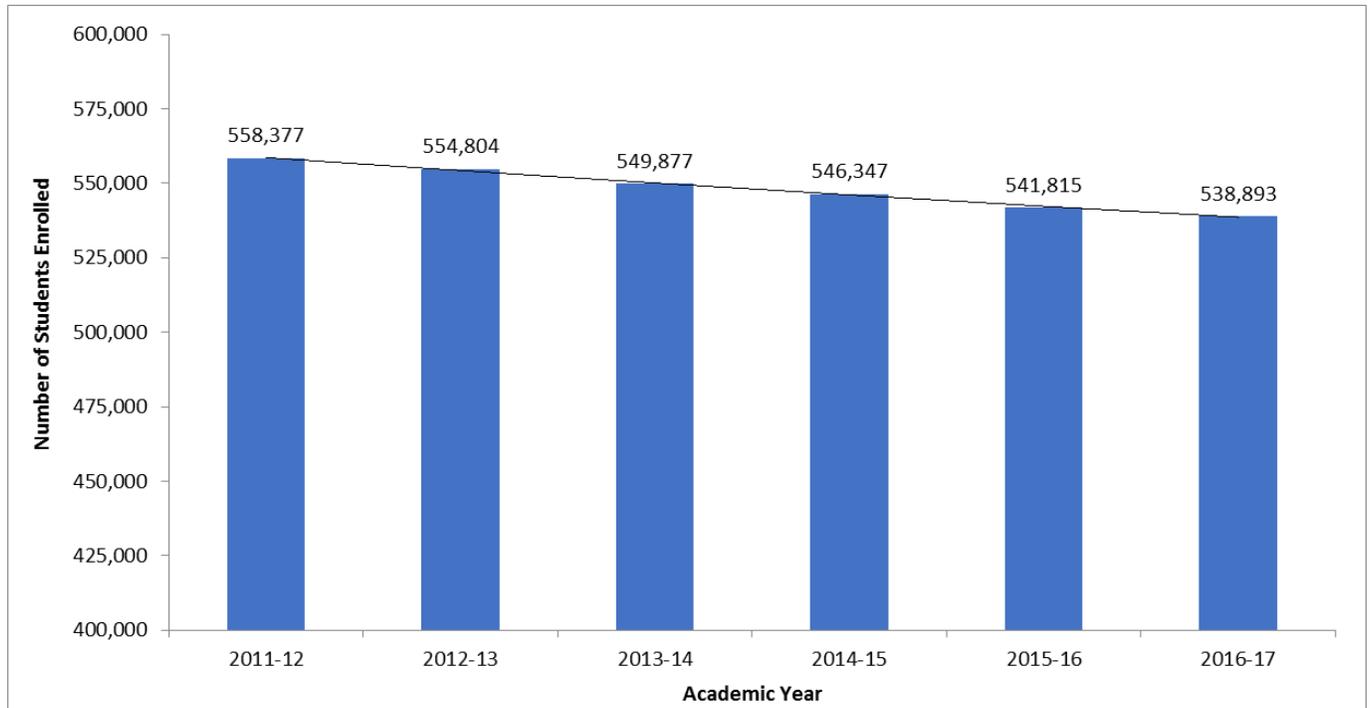
A portion of the cost of “students tuitioned out” was sent to other Connecticut public school districts and, therefore, is also included under the various expenditure categories.

## STUDENTS

### Public School Enrollment

Connecticut's student enrollment in public schools continues to decline each year. The 2016-17 enrollment of 538,893 was 3.5 percent lower than the 2011-12 enrollment of 558,377.

*Figure 2: Connecticut Public School Enrollment (PK-12)*



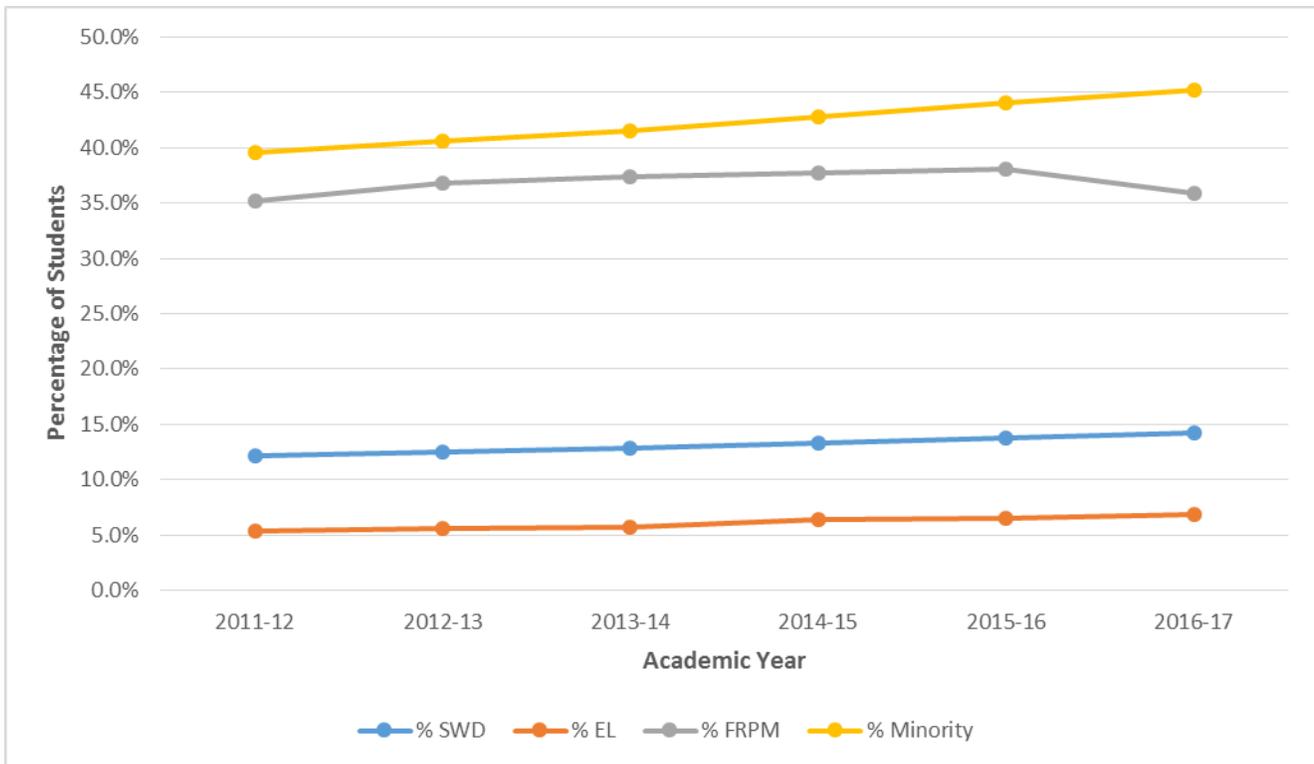
Although statewide enrollment is declining, some districts evidence substantial increases over the same period. These include:

- RESCs like Capitol Region Education Council and Learn through the establishment of new interdistrict magnet schools and expanded slots in existing magnet schools;
- public charter districts through a combination of new charters and expanded slots in existing charters; and
- some Alliance Districts including Bridgeport, Danbury, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Stamford, and Waterbury.

## Student Demographics and Characteristics

An increasing proportion of public school students (PK-12) come from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of students from racial/ethnic minorities has increased from 39.5 percent in 2011-12 to 45.2 percent in 2016-17. Substantial increases occurred in the percentage of students who are English learners (EL) or students with disabilities (SWD). ELs account for nearly seven percent of the student population while over 14 percent of students are receiving special education services. The percentage of students eligible for free-or-reduced-price meals (FRPM) decreased slightly in 2016-17 but still remains high at around 36 percent.

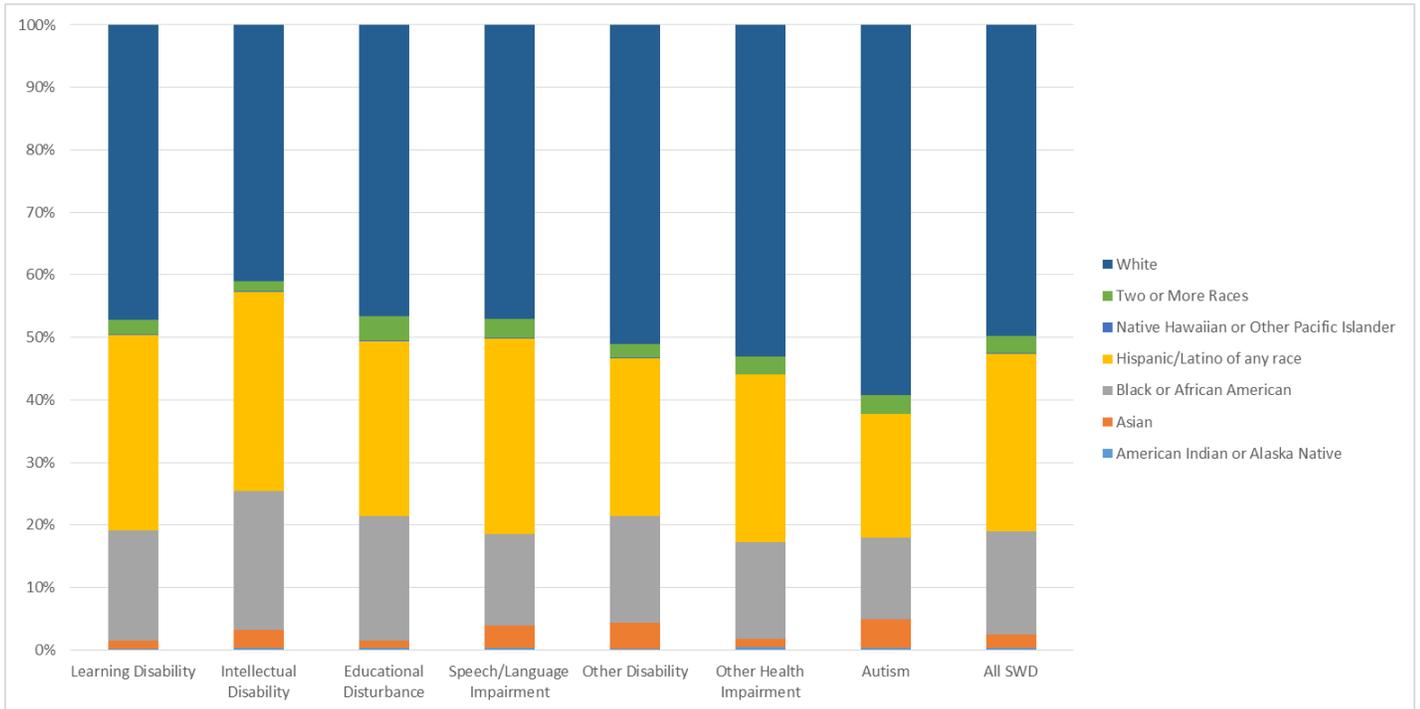
*Figure 3: Student Demographics and Characteristics*



## Special Education by Race/Ethnicity

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the CSDE to investigate disproportionality based on race/ethnicity in the identification of students with disabilities. In 2016-17, district-level investigations revealed that the most common groups that were disproportionately identified were the following: white students with other health impairments and white students with autism. Of the districts with data of concern, upon investigation none were found to have disproportionate identification as a result of inappropriate policies, practices, or procedures. At the state level, black/African American students were more than one-and-a-half times as likely as their nonblack peers to be identified with emotional disturbance and intellectual disability.

**Figure 4: Percentage of Students with Disabilities, Ages 6-21:  
Disability Type by Race/Ethnicity, 2016-17**



## Languages Spoken at Home among ELs

In the 2016-17 school year, Connecticut's ELs spoke 139 different non-English languages. The 15 most prevalent non-English dominant languages among ELs in Grades PK-12 are listed below.

*Table 2: 15 Most Prevalent Non-English Languages Spoken at Home among ELs, 2016-17*

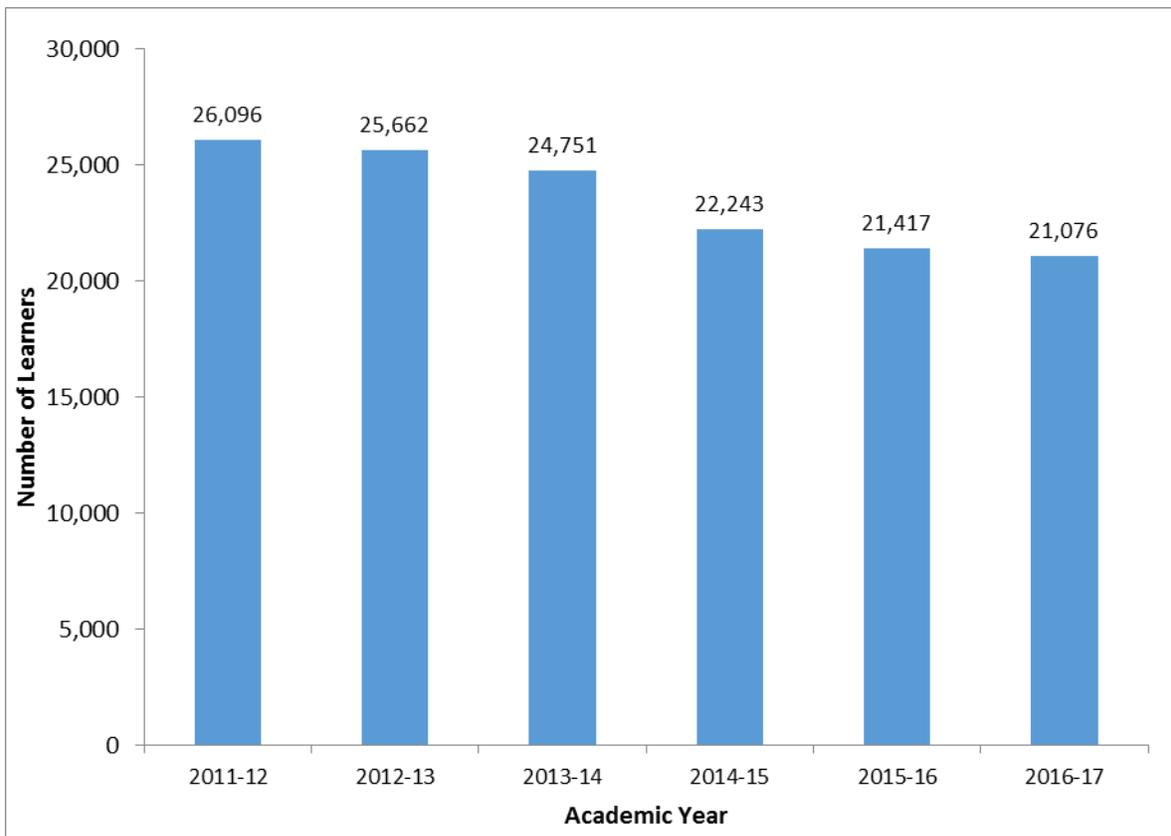
<b>Language</b>	<b>Number of ELs</b>
Spanish	26,349
Portuguese	1,616
Arabic	1,162
Creole-Haitian	755
Mandarin	660
Polish	474
Urdu	421
Albanian	406
Vietnamese	307
French	264
Gujarati	237
Bengali	215
Russian	202
Cantonese	187
Turkish	186

While most districts only had to accommodate a few languages, there were 42 districts whose ELs spoke 20 or more different non-English languages. Schools that have 20 or more students who are not proficient in English and speak the same language are required to offer a program of bilingual instruction in the following school year.

## Adult Education Enrollment

Connecticut’s adult education programs operate in their local communities to assist adults in obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment, self-sufficiency and citizenship; becoming full partners in the educational development of their own children; and completing their secondary school education. Connecticut law requires that adult education services be provided by local school districts free of charge to any adult, 17 years of age or older, who is not enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school program. In 2015-16, Connecticut programs served 21,076 adult learners.

*Figure 5: Adult Education Enrollment*

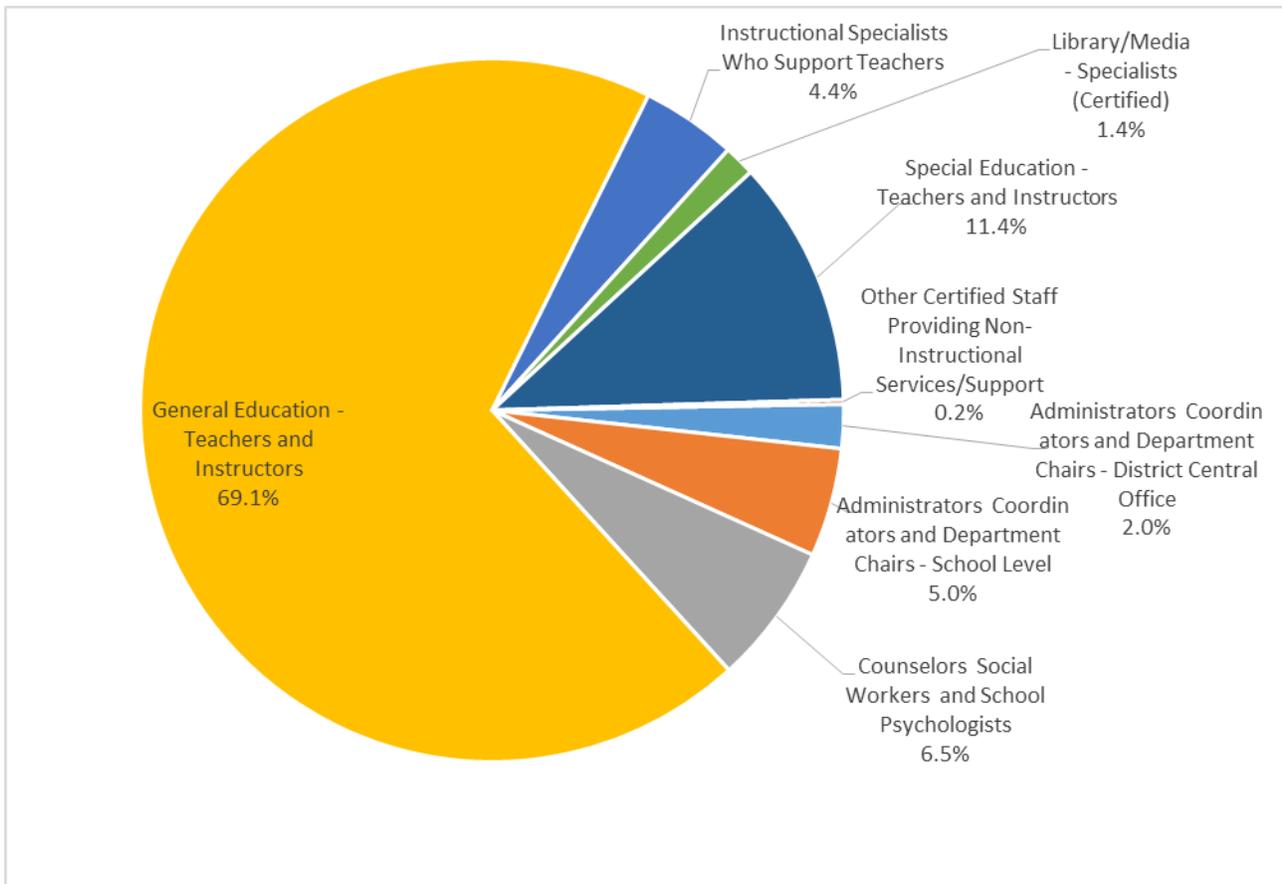


# EDUCATORS

## Capacity

General education and special education teachers combined constitute 80.5 percent of full-time equivalent (FTE) certified staff. The total FTE of certified staff exceeds 52,000 for the third straight year.

**Figure 6: Certified Staff Full-time Equivalent by Role Type: 2016-17**

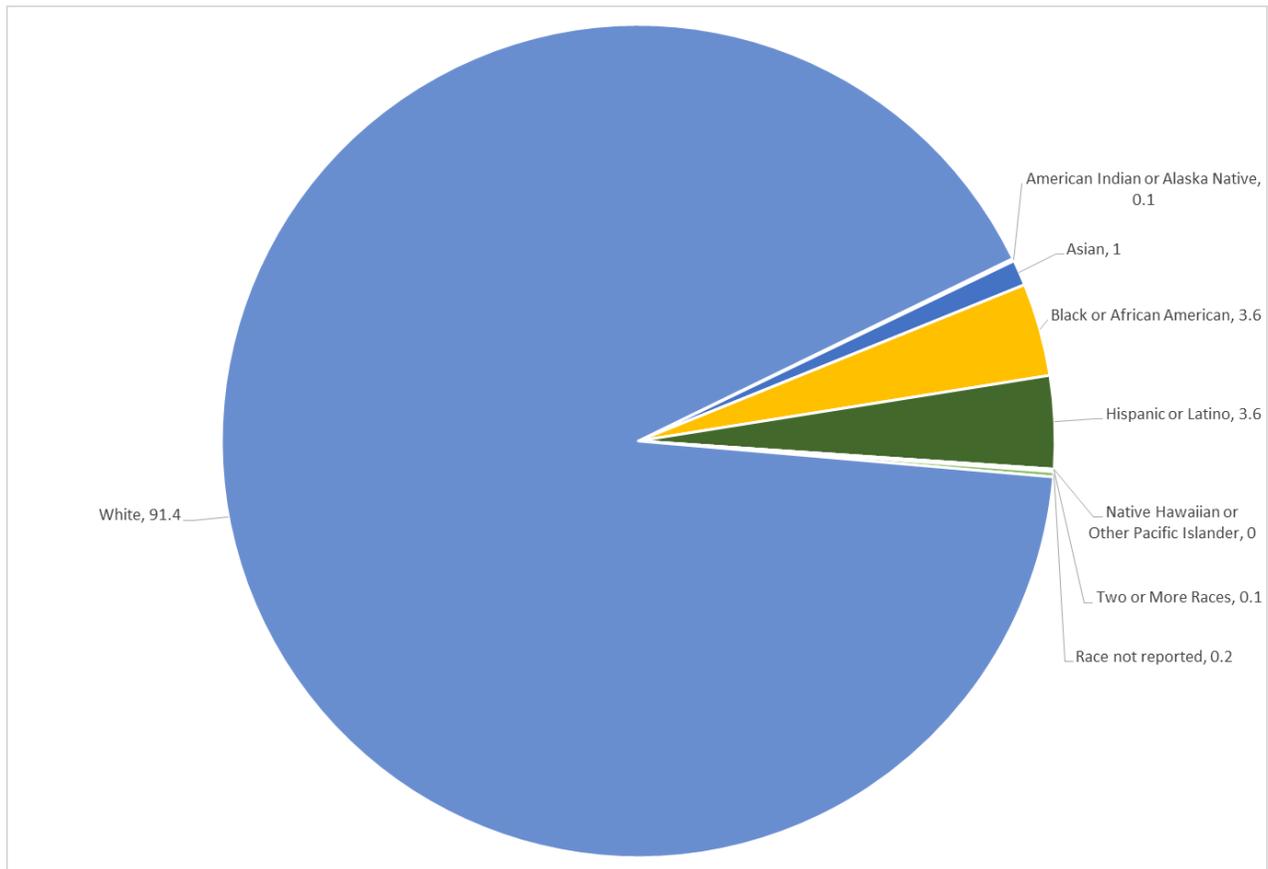


Full-time equivalent (FTE) is derived by dividing the amount of time a person works by the time required of a corresponding full-time position. A full-time position is considered to be 1.0 FTE. For example, a teacher who works two of the five days per week would be a .4 FTE (2 days/5 days = .4 of full time or .4 FTE).

## Demographics

While Connecticut’s student population is diverse with nonwhite students comprising 45 percent of the student body, 91.5 percent of certified school staff are white. The percentage of nonwhite educators has shown a slight increase over the past three years from 8.1 percent in 2014-15 to 8.5 percent in 2016-17.

**Figure 7: Percentage of Certified Staff by Race/Ethnicity, 2016-17**

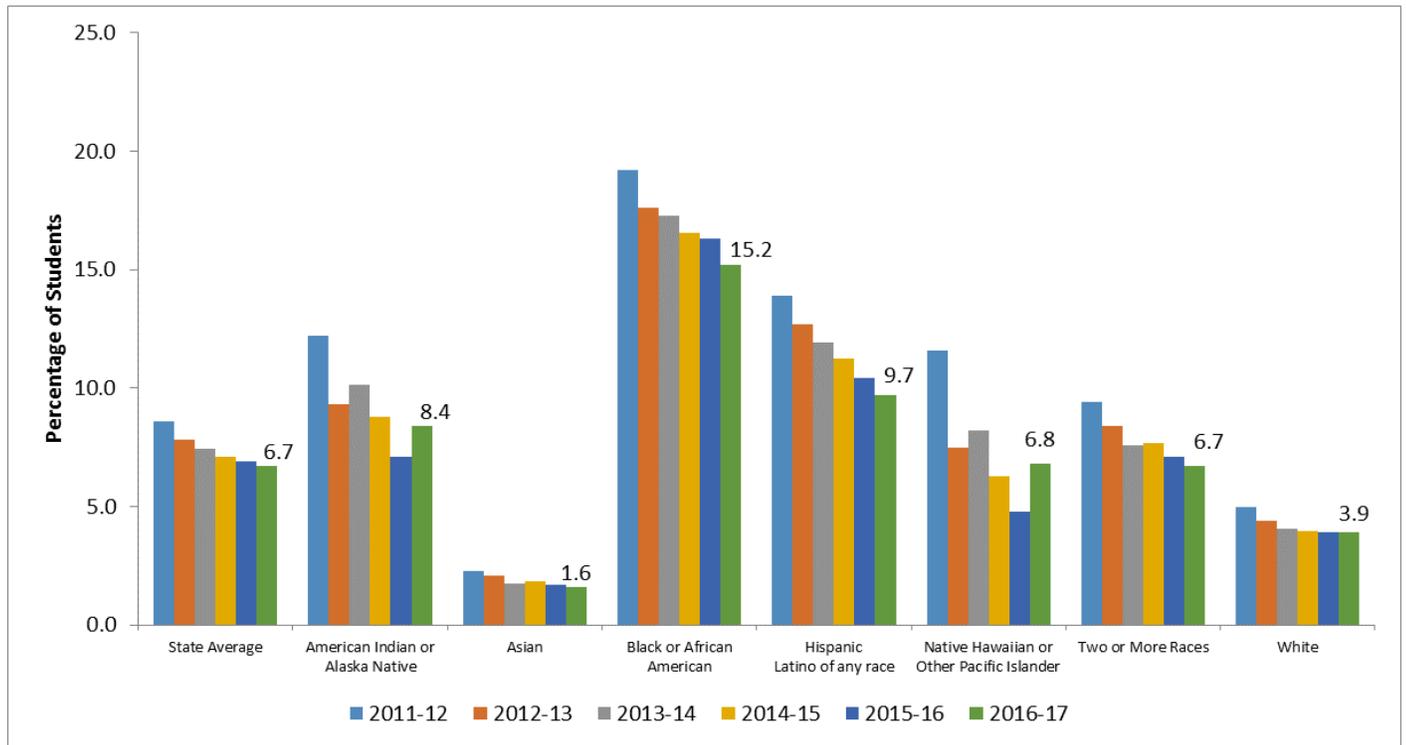


# SCHOOL CLIMATE AND INSTRUCTION

## School Discipline

The Connecticut State Department of Education collects sanction data, which includes in-school suspensions (ISS), out-of-school suspensions (OSS), and expulsions (EXP). Districts are required to report all incidents that result in a sanction. In the 2016-17 school year, 6.7 percent of all students received at least one suspension or expulsion. Black/African American and Hispanic students are suspended at substantially higher rates than their white counterparts though suspension rates are declining overall for most minority student groups.

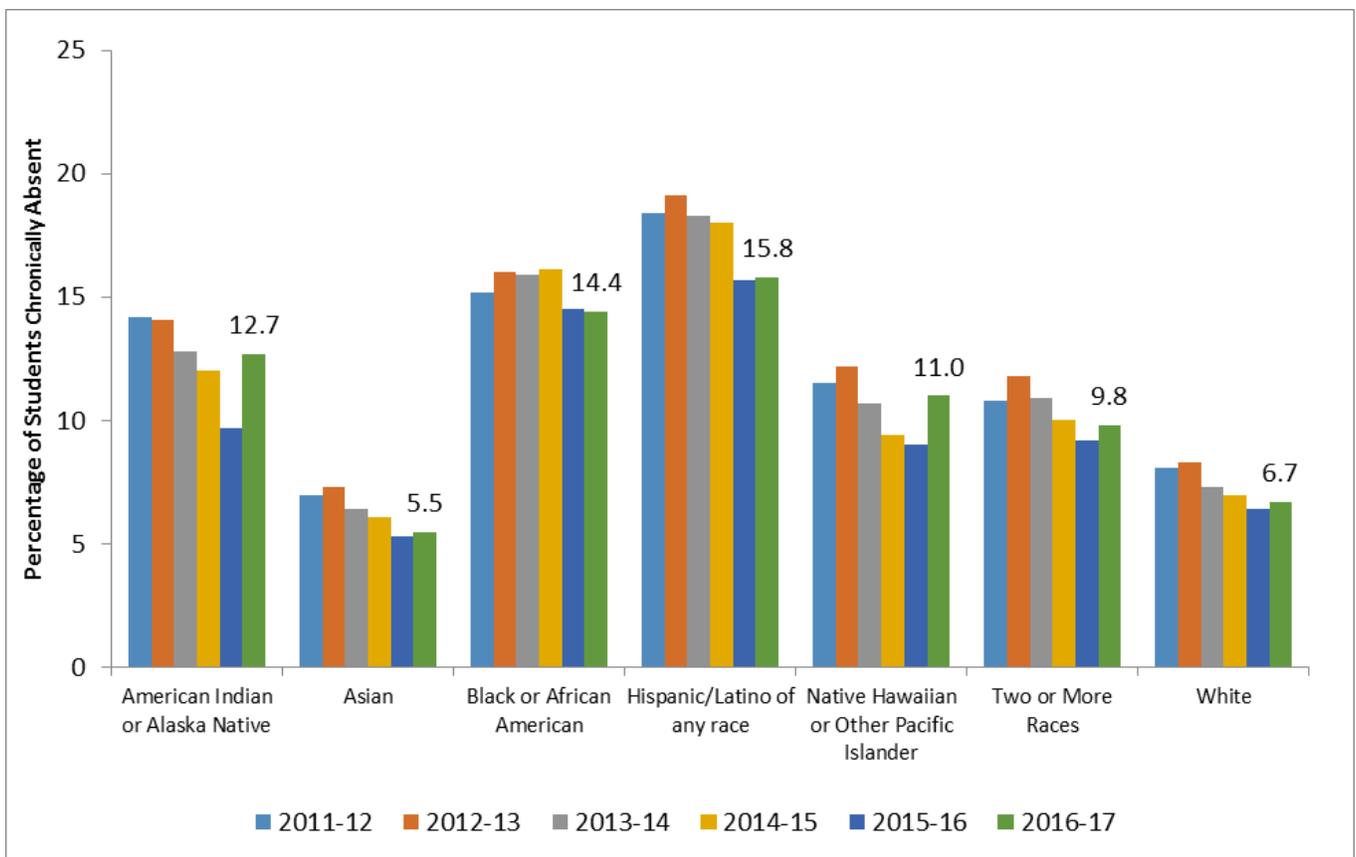
*Figure 8: Suspension Rates by Race/Ethnicity*



## Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or greater of the total number of days enrolled in the school year for any reason. It includes both excused and unexcused absences. Several research studies have highlighted the association of chronic absenteeism with student academic achievement and high school graduation. Chronic absenteeism is also an indicator in Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System. Connecticut’s state-wide chronic absenteeism rate for students in Grades K-12 was 9.9 percent in 2016-17. This translates to over 51,000 students. After several years of decline, the rate inched up a little bit in 2016-17 likely due to a 2016 law which required in-school suspensions of half-day or greater to be reported as an absence. This law was repealed in the 2017 legislative session. There remains considerable variation in chronic absenteeism rates among students from different race/ethnic groups.

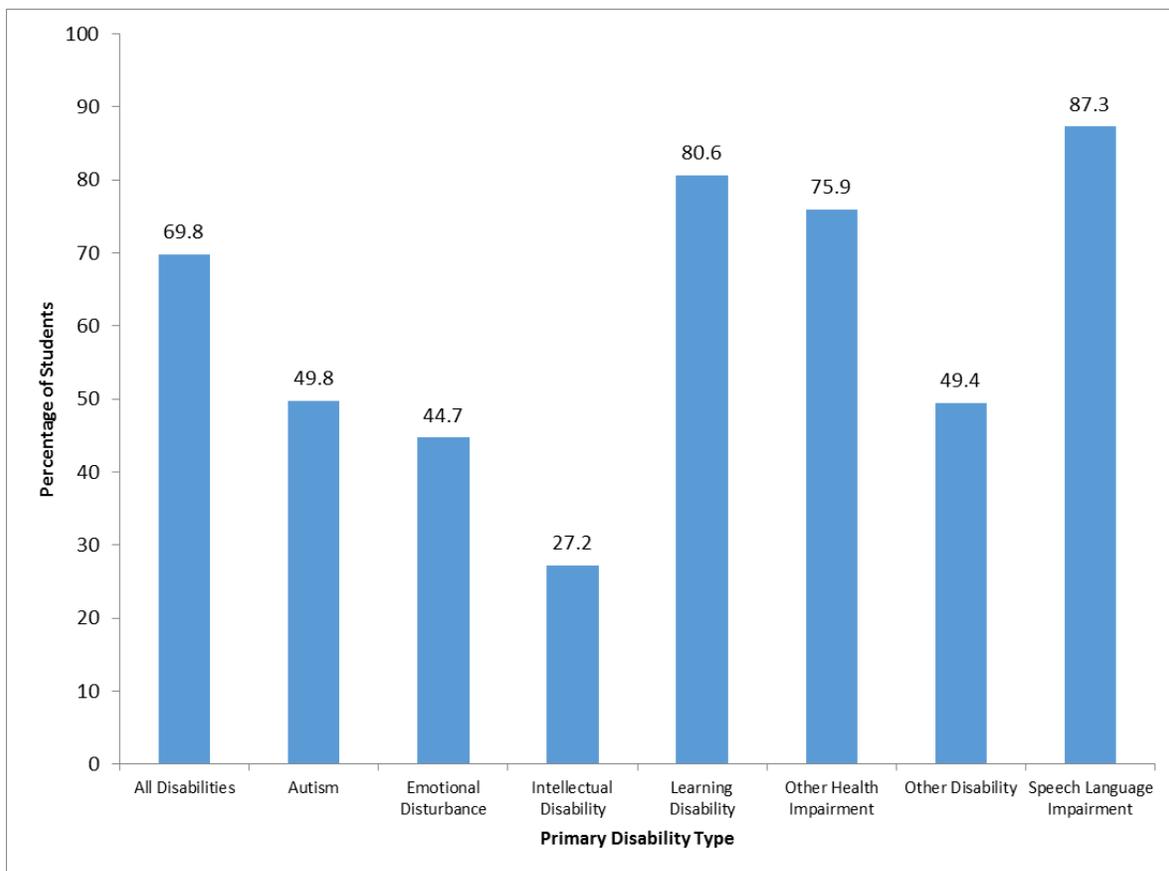
*Figure 9: Chronic Absenteeism Rates by Race/Ethnicity*



## Time Students with Disabilities Spent with Nondisabled Peers

For students with disabilities, time spent with nondisabled peers is an important indicator of access to the general curriculum. It is also a demonstration of students being educated in their least restrictive setting; this complies with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirement that students with disabilities be educated with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. While 69.8 percent of all students with disabilities spent at least 80 percent of time with nondisabled peers, there is significant variation across the primary disability types. Of all students with an intellectual disability, only 27.2 percent spent at least 80 percent of their time with nondisabled peers as compared to 80.6 percent of students with a learning disability. Similarly, 49.8 percent of students with an emotional disturbance spent at least 80 percent of their time with nondisabled peers, compared to 87.3 percent of students with a speech or language impairment.

**Figure 10: Percent of Students (K-12) who Spend 80-100% of Time with Nondisabled Peers by Primary Disability Type, 2016-17**

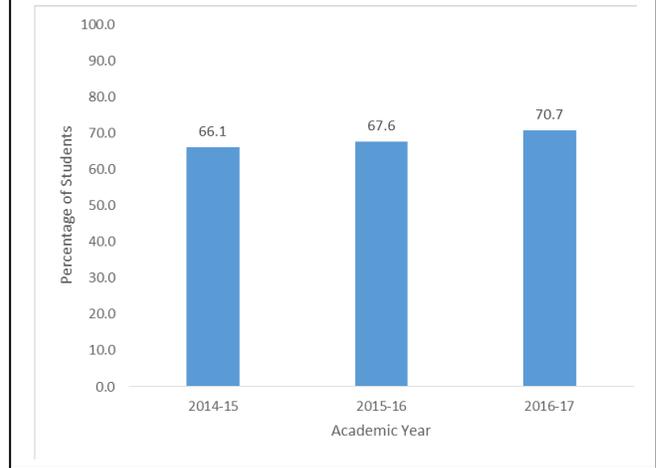


## Participation in College-and-Career Readiness Coursework

To be ready for college and careers upon high school graduation, students need to have participated in rigorous coursework during high school. In recognition of the diverse pathways of our students, the CSDE evaluates the percentage of students in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade who participated in at least two courses in one of the following options during high school:

- two courses in advanced placement, international baccalaureate, and/or dual enrollment;
- two courses in one of seventeen career-technical education categories; or
- two workplace experience courses in any area.

**Figure 11: Percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students taking CCR Coursework**

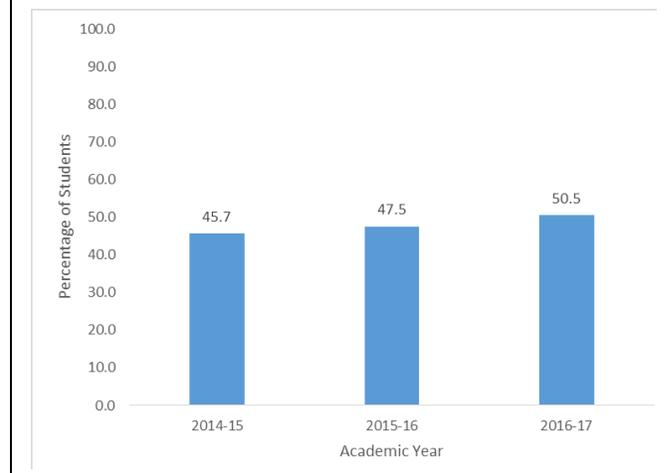


This metric is Indicator 5 of Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System.

## Access to the Arts

Every student needs and deserves a high-quality education in the arts, including dance, music, theater and the visual arts. The arts are an integral component of the comprehensive curriculum provided to all Connecticut students. For accountability purposes, the CSDE evaluates the percentage of students in grade 9 through 12 who participated in at least one dance, theater, music, or visual arts course in the school year. This metric is Indicator 12 of Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System.

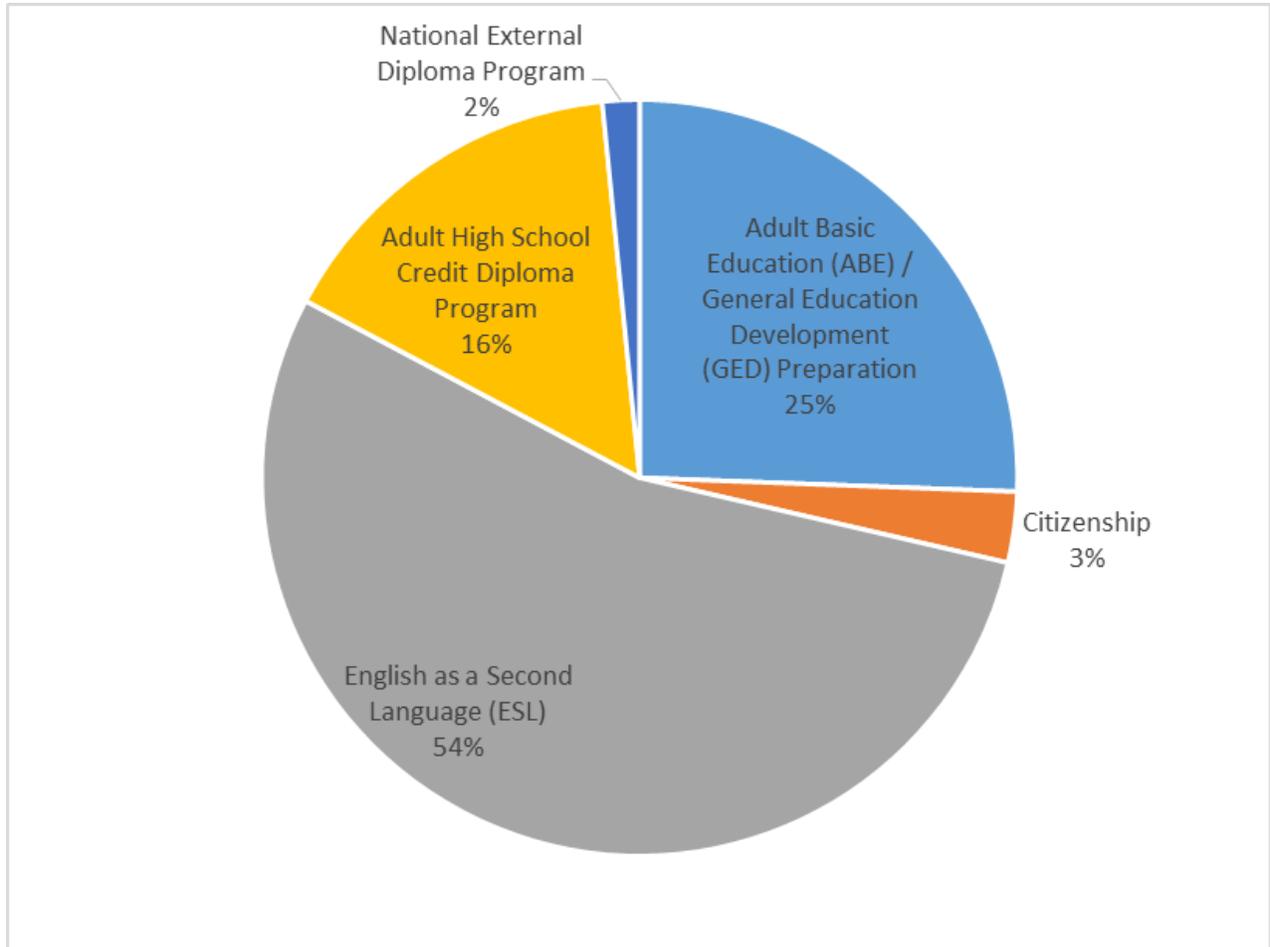
**Figure 12: Percentage of Students in Grades 9 – 12 taking at least One Arts Course**



## Adult Education Program Participation

Adult learners participate in one of the following state-mandated adult education instructional programs: citizenship preparation; English as a second language (ESL); adult basic literacy education; or one of three secondary school completion programs (i.e., General Educational Development [GED], Adult High School Credit Diploma, or National External Diploma).

**Figure 13: Adult Education Enrollment by Program Type**



# PERFORMANCE

## Statewide Next Generation Accountability Report

These statistics represent the results from the second year of [Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System](#) for districts and schools. This system is a broad set of 12 indicators that help tell the story of how well a district/school is preparing its students for success in college, careers and life. The overall statewide accountability index was relatively unchanged (73.1 in 2015-16 to 73.2 in 2016-17). Some indicators increased (e.g., Mathematics achievement, benchmark attainment on college readiness exams) while others declined (e.g., ELA achievement for high needs students, academic growth).

*Table 3: Statewide Accountability Report, 2016-17*

No:	Indicator	Index/ Rate	Target	Points Earned	Max Points	% Points Earned	Change from 2015-16
1a.	ELA Performance Index – All Students	67.1	75	44.7	50	89.5%	→ -0.8%
1b.	ELA Performance Index – High Needs Students	55.9	75	37.3	50	74.5%	↓ -1.1%
1c.	Math Performance Index – All Students	62.2	75	41.5	50	82.9%	↑ 1.1%
1d.	Math Performance Index – High Needs Students	50.5	75	33.7	50	67.3%	→ 0.8%
1e.	Science Performance Index – All Students	55.3	75	36.9	50	73.7%	↓ -2.9%
1f.	Science Performance Index – High Needs Students	45.2	75	30.1	50	60.3%	↓ -2.4%
2a.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	55.4%	100%	55.4	100	55.4%	↓ -8.4%
2b.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	49.8%	100%	49.8	100	49.8%	↓ -8.5%
2c.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	61.7%	100%	61.7	100	61.7%	↓ -3.3%
2d.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	53.7%	100%	53.7	100	53.7%	↓ -3.7%
4a.	Chronic Absenteeism – All Students	9.9%	≤5%	40.2	50	80.4%	↓ -1.0%
4b.	Chronic Absenteeism – High Needs Students	15.8%	≤5%	28.4	50	56.8%	→ -0.9%
5	Preparation for CCR – % taking courses	70.7%	75%	47.1	50	94.2%	↑ 4.1%
6	Preparation for CCR – % passing exams	43.5%	75%	29.0	50	58.0%	↑ 3.8%
7	On-track to High School Graduation	87.8%	94%	46.7	50	93.4%	↑ 2.9%
8	4-year Graduation All Students	87.4%	94%	93.0	100	93.0%	→ 0.2%
9	6-year Graduation - High Needs Students	82.0%	94%	87.2	100	87.2%	↑ 3.6%
10	Postsecondary Entrance	72.0%	75%	96.0	100	96.0%	→ 0.1%
11	Physical Fitness	51.6%	75%	34.4	50	68.8%	↑ 35.1%
12	Arts Access	50.5%	60%	42.1	50	84.2%	↑ 5.0%
<b>State Accountability Index</b>				<b>988.8</b>	<b>1350</b>	<b>73.2%</b>	→ 0.1%

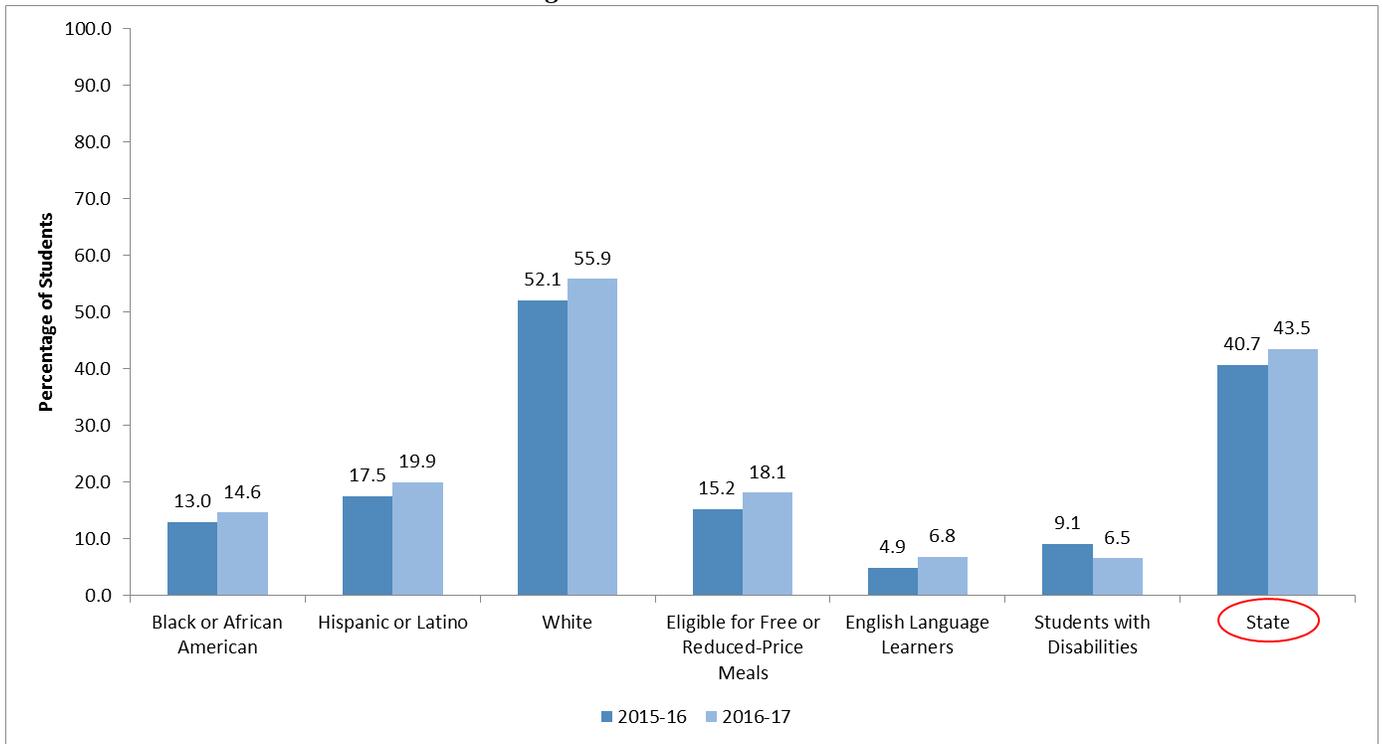
Note: Change between ±1 percentage point is indicated as →

## Meeting Benchmark on a College and Career Readiness Exam

The graph below shows the percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders who met the College and Career Readiness benchmark on any of the following exams: Smarter Balanced, SAT, CT SAT School Day, ACT, Advanced Placement (AP), or International Baccalaureate (IB). This metric is Indicator 6 of the Next Generation Accountability System. Overall, 43.5 percent of Connecticut 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 2016-17 met a college and career readiness standard on any of the above mentioned exams. This is a significant increase from 2015-16 when 40.7 percent met a standard.

Contributing to this is the notable increase in the number of students who took at least one AP exam in 2016-17 (28,961) – up 4.9 percent from 2015-16. These students took 53,106 exams – up 5.1 percent from the prior year. Of the exams taken, 36,404 exams achieved a score of three, four, or five – up 3.6 percent from 2015-16. These improvements were evidenced among students from all racial/ethnic backgrounds though performance gaps remain large.

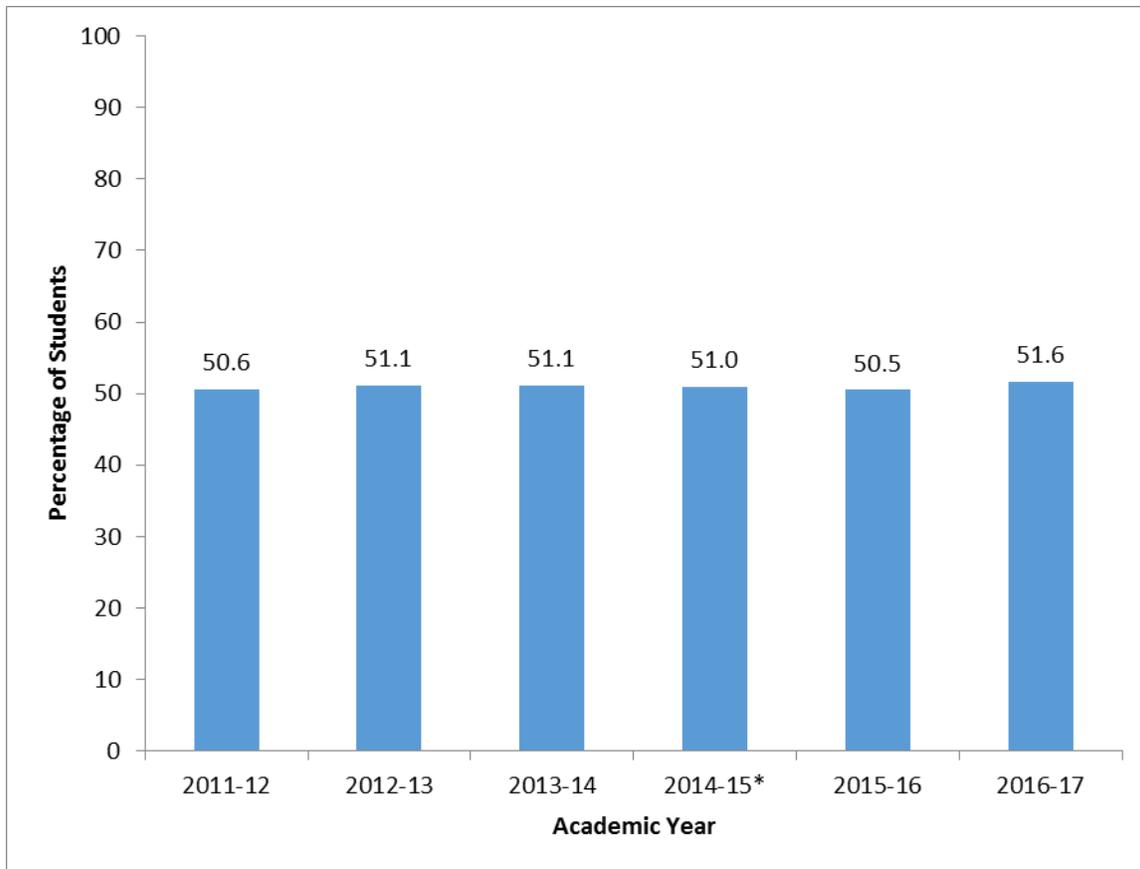
**Figure 14: Percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Graders Meeting Benchmark on a College and Career Readiness Exam**



## Physical Fitness

The Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment program includes a variety of health-related physical fitness tests designed to assess muscle strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular fitness. Criterion-referenced standards associated with good health are used rather than the previously applied normative standards. Statewide, 51.6 percent of students in the tested grades (4, 6, 8 and once in high school) met the “Health Fitness Zone” standard on all four assessments in 2016-17. This is the highest rate in the past six years. This metric is Indicator 11 of Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System.

**Figure 15: Percentage of Students Reaching Health Standard of CT Physical Fitness Assessment**

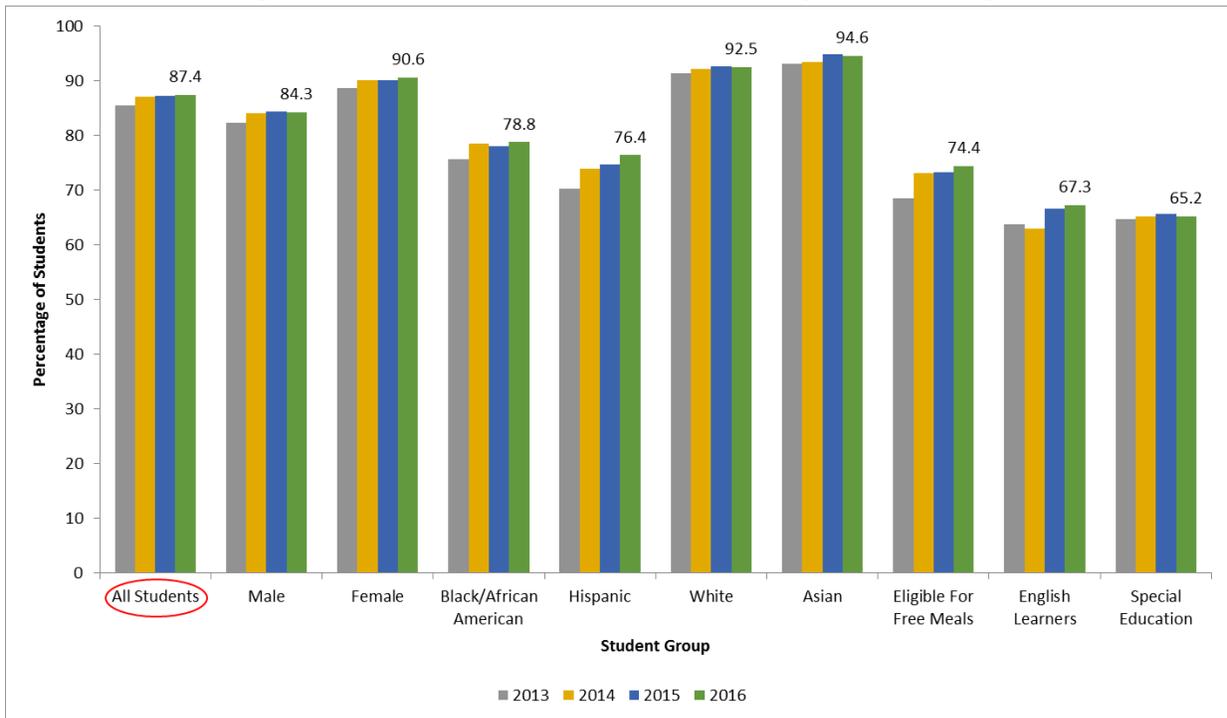


\*For the first time in 2014-15, the ED165 collected data from district-run programs. This means that students who may not have been reported in past years are included in the data in 2014-15 and the following years.

## High School Graduation Rates

The four-year graduation cohort rate is the percentage of first-time ninth graders who graduate in four years or less with a regular high school diploma. It is Indicator 8 of Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System. Connecticut’s four-year graduation rate has increased from 85.5 percent for the cohort of 2013 to 87.4 percent for the cohort of 2016. The graduation rates for students who are black/African American, Hispanic, or eligible for free meals has increased at a rate that is greater than that of the state average.

**Figure 16: Four-Year Graduation Rate Trend by Student Group**



Some students benefit from having an extra year or two to complete high school. They may be English learners who came to this country in high school, students who must work to support their families, or students with disabilities receiving transition services. For these and many other students, the six-year graduation rate serves as an important additional measure of high school success (see table 4 below). Therefore, Connecticut incorporates the six-year rate in its accountability system.

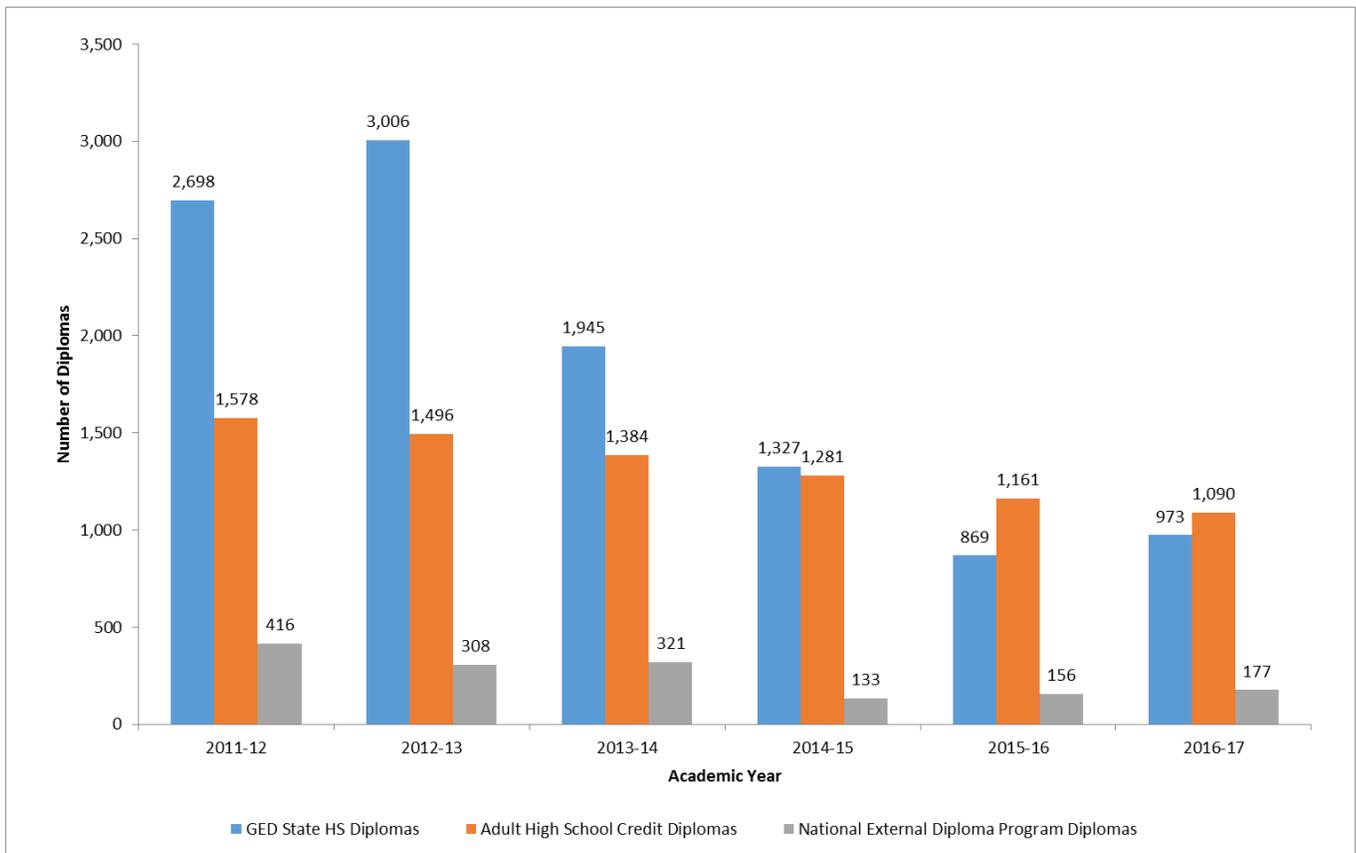
**Table 4: Four- and Six-year Graduation Rates for the 2014 Graduation Cohort**

Category	4-Year	6-year
All Students	87.0	90.5
English Learners	63.0	70.8
Students with Disabilities	65.2	78.0
Eligible for Free Meals	73.1	79.1

## Adult Education Diplomas Granted

Connecticut offers three pathways for adult learners to attain a high school diploma: (1) pass the General Educational Development (GED) Tests; (2) earn adult education credits toward an adult high school diploma; or (3) demonstrate 100 percent mastery on the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) assessments. In 2016-17, a total of 2,240 individuals earned diplomas through these adult education pathways. Earning a diploma through adult education enables individuals to pursue postsecondary education/training opportunities and participate more fully in Connecticut’s workforce.

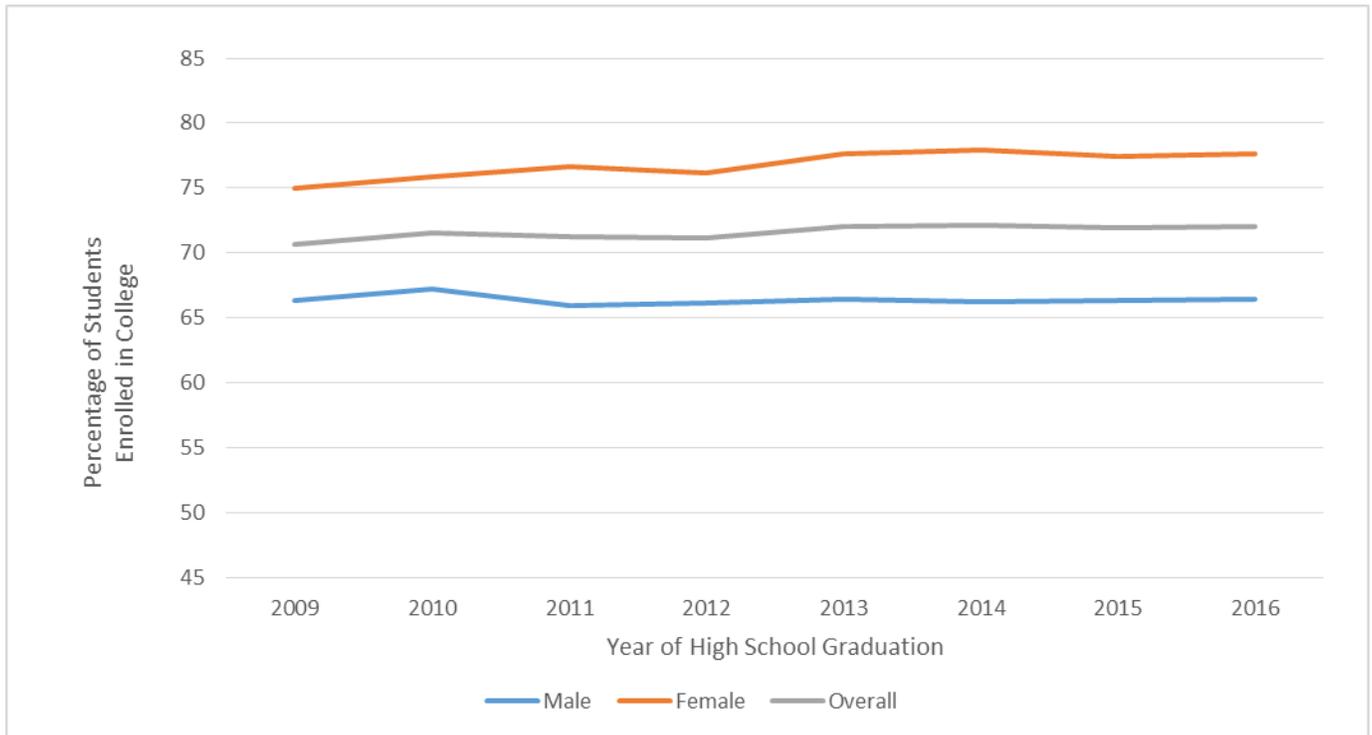
*Figure 16: Adult Education Diplomas by Type*



## College Enrollment

Of the more than 38,000 Connecticut public high school graduates from the class of 2016, 72.0 percent enrolled in higher education within a year of graduating, which is slightly higher than the previous year’s graduating class (71.9 percent). The college enrollment rate of females (77.6 percent) from the high school class of 2016 was substantially higher than that of males (66.4 percent).

**Figure 17: Percentage of High School Graduates Who Enroll in College Anytime During the First Year after High School**

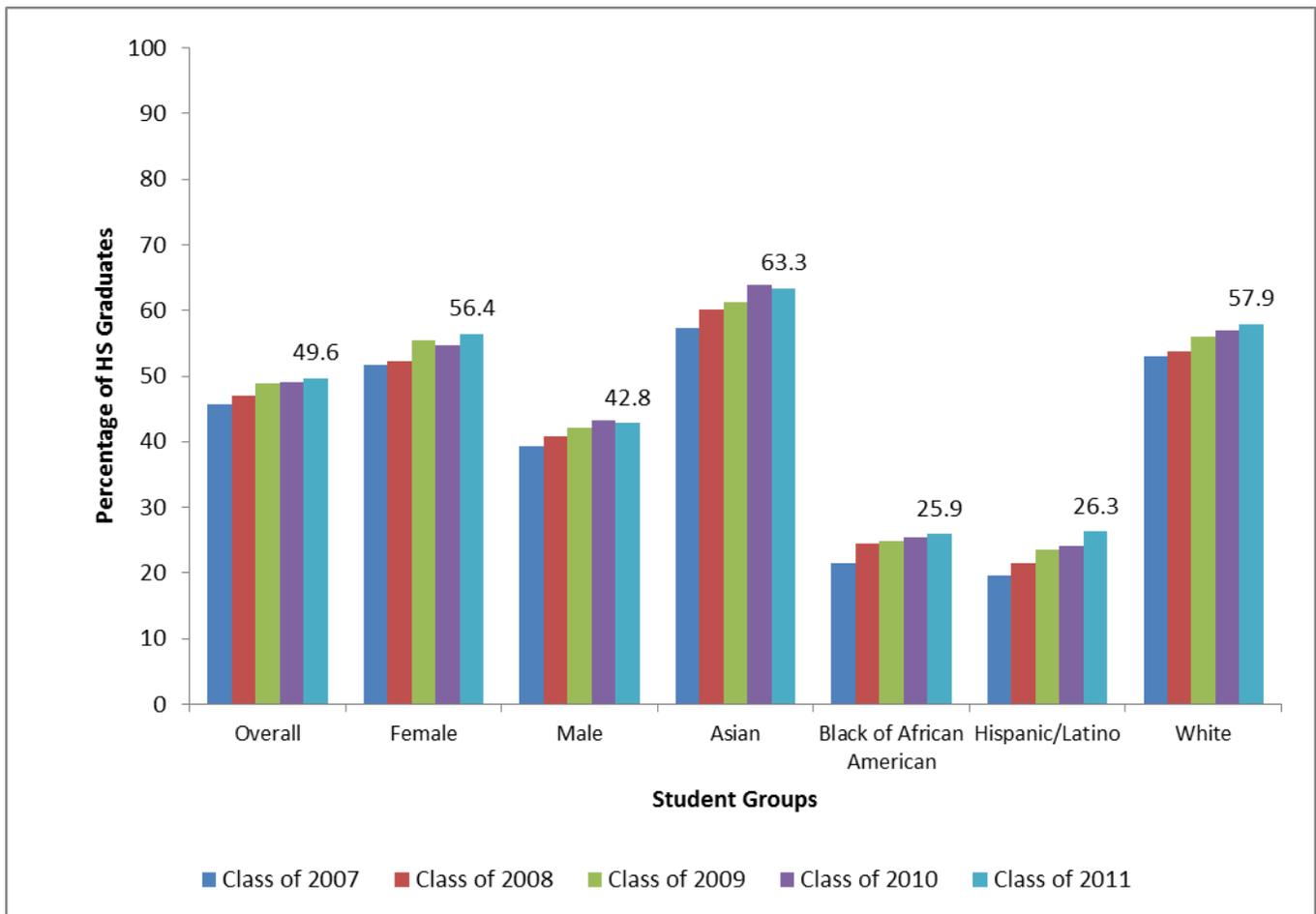


## College Completion

Nearly 50 percent of the 2011 high school graduating class graduated from college with an associate’s, bachelor’s, or higher degree within six years. This is up slightly from that of the 2010 class. The college completion rate for females was higher among the 2011 high school class (56.4) as compared to the 2010 class (54.7), while the corresponding rates for males evidenced a slight decline (43.3 to 42.8).

The college completion rate for students who identified as Hispanic/Latino increased to 26.3 percent among the class of 2011, an increase from 24.1 percent for the class of 2010. A smaller increase was evidenced among black/African American students (25.5 percent to 25.9 percent). The six-year college completion rates were substantially higher among Asian students (63.3 percent) and white students (57.9 percent).

**Figure 18: Percentage of High School Graduates Earning a College Degree in Six Years or Less**



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Levy Gillespie  
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