

NY graduation rates rise

■ **80.2% got high school diplomas, up from 79.7%**

■ **But on Long Island percentage fell slightly**

BY JOHN HILDEBRAND
AND MICHAEL R. EBERT

john.hildebrand@newsday.com
michael.ebert@newsday.com

The graduation rate for the high school Class of 2017 rose to 80.2 percent statewide — up from 79.7 percent the year before — while results on Long Island dipped slightly, the state Education Department announced Wednesday.

On Long Island, the average graduation rate was 88.9 percent, lower than the adjusted figure of 89.6 percent for the Class of 2016. Average rates for Nassau County and Suffolk County, though down a bit from a year ago, remained substantially above the state average.

Year-to-year comparisons are difficult to make because the state in recent years has relaxed diploma requirements to a degree.

Education officials in Albany, as well as on the Island, emphasized long-term gains.

Statewide, the percentage of teenagers earning diplomas during the 2016-17 school year was up more than 11 percentage points from the 68.6 percent recorded a decade ago for the Class of 2007.

The average Islandwide gain was up nearly 4 percentage points over the decade, from 85 percent reported for the 2006-07 school year.

“New York’s graduation rate continues its steady, upward trend,” Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia said in a prepared statement. “And that’s good news.”

In many cases, improvements in the two-county region were most pronounced in districts that struggled in the past. In Roosevelt, for example, graduation rates rose 7 percentage points from 2007 to 2017, from 56 percent to 63 percent.

“We have a laserlike focus on graduation,” said Marnie Hazelton, superintendent of Roosevelt’s 3,300-student system.

Efforts to boost Roosevelt’s



Brentwood High School students in the Class of 2017 celebrate at their graduation ceremony on June 25.

JAMES CARBONE

graduation rates include tutoring sessions after school and on Saturdays in advance of state Regents exams, Hazelton said.

The district has run independently since 2013-14, following a state takeover that began in 2002 and continued for 11 years.

For the Hempstead district, which has experienced some of the lowest graduation rates in the state, the Education Department on Wednesday reported another substantial drop. Only 36.7 percent of students graduated in 2016-17, compared with 47.6 percent the year before, the department’s data showed.

Regina Armstrong, who took over as Hempstead’s acting superintendent last month, said the 2016-17 figure was misleading because it included results for students who had been in the district’s high school for five or six years.

State graduation rates are supposed to be reported by “cohort” — a group that includes only students who enter high school in a particular year and graduate on time four years later. The graduation rates announced Wednesday, for instance, were for the

Class of 2017 graduation rates

Statewide	Long Island
80.2%	88.9%
Nassau	Suffolk
89.5%	88.4%

cohort of 2013.

Armstrong said she is confident that Hempstead’s actual graduation results are improving, and that the issue would be discussed Monday with state authorities who are monitoring the troubled district.

“Even now, we’re predicting that, for our current 11th-grade students, 60 percent are already on track for on-time graduation,” Armstrong said.

A total of 207,165 students statewide were included in the state’s graduation cohort for

the Class of 2017. Graduates included students earning both Regents diplomas and local diplomas, which are less demanding.

New York for many years has ranked in the middle-of-the-pack among states in terms of graduation rates. The latest available figures from the U.S. Education Department for 2014-15 show 37 states with higher graduation results.

One reason for New York’s relatively low ranking, according to expert analysts, is that its exam requirements for graduation have been among the nation’s most challenging.

Starting in 1995, New York moved toward a system in which students had to pass five Regents exams, written at a college-prep level, to earn diplomas. Until then, many students had graduated by passing easier state competency tests.

Subjects covered by the tests include English, math, science,

U.S. history and global history.

Many students have found the exam requirements to be an obstacle to graduation, and the state has begun relaxing some of its rules. Since June 2016, for example, students have been allowed to substitute completion of a series of vocational courses and a vocational exam for one of the Regents tests previously required.

Other course sequences and tests — including those focused on science, math and technology — also can be substituted in an approach known as “multiple pathways to graduation.”

On Wednesday, the state noted that 9,900 students statewide had earned diplomas through alternative routes. That figure included both June and August graduates.

MORE INSIDE

Graduation rates for each LI district
A22

More students in NYC earn diplomas
A29

INTERACTIVE
Graduation rates for LI districts broken down by gender and race.
newsday.com/data

OUR TOWNS

GRADUATION RATES

The state Education Department on Wednesday released district-by-district graduation rates for high school seniors in the Class of 2017. This chart for districts that have high schools shows the overall percentage of stu-

dents graduating on time in June and the percentage that graduated on time in June 2016. The chart also shows the percentage of students with disabilities who graduated, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students who graduated and the percentage of students going to college. The 2016 graduation rates for 12 districts are

different from those released in February 2017 — mainly by very small increments — because of recalculation that the agency allowed for districts that had inadvertently omitted some 2016 graduates. — **COMPILED BY MICHAEL R. EBERT**

(s) Indicates data was suppressed because figures represent less than five students. Blank spaces indicate data was suppressed or the district had no students in that category. SOURCE: NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Districts	% GRADUATING				% going to 2-yr or 4-yr colleges
	High school, 2017	High school, 2016	Students with disabilities	Economically disadvantaged	
NASSAU					
Baldwin	91.8%	91.1%	74.4%	84.5%	90.2%
Bellmore-Merrick	94.0	94.7	75.2	82.2	93.7
Bethpage	97.7	97.4	81.3	90.6	94.1
Carle Place	89.0	96.2	68.2	84.2	90.7
East Meadow	96.9	94.2	80.5	97.3	90.6
East Rockaway	82.9	87.5	61.1	65.2	86.8
East Williston	97.8	96.7	83.3	100.0	99.2
Farmingdale	89.7	90.7	64.0	83.1	88.0
Freeport	73.4	76.8	55.3	74.5	79.4
Garden City	96.9	98.7	71.4	85.7	96.9
Glen Cove	74.4	75.4	48.8	72.1	91.0
Great Neck	93.8	93.6	84.6	86.4	96.6
Hempstead	36.7	47.6	30.2	43.6	N/A
Herricks	96.6	96.9	84.8	100.0	97.5
Hewlett-Woodmere	96.2	96.8	86.5	90.6	93.6
Hicksville	87.3	90.3	63.6	80.7	89.9
Island Trees	94.6	93.7	65.0	94.3	89.6
Jericho	98.1	98.3	93.3	94.6	98.9
Lawrence	78.6	76.4	61.4	79.9	81.9
Levittown	94.1	93.4	82.2	88.4	85.9
Locust Valley	97.0	96.9	97.1	92.9	91.0
Long Beach	87.7	87.0	66.7	79.9	85.0
Lynbrook	92.6	91.6	66.7	82.8	93.6
Malverne	89.6	90.1	72.7	91.7	84.4
Manhasset	99.7	98.5	97.4	96.3	96.6
Massapequa	96.8	96.8	80.0	83.6	91.2
Mineola	94.5	93.5	77.8	91.1	97.9
North Shore	97.1	96.6	86.7	95.2	96.7
Oceanside	92.5	94.2	68.1	79.4	91.2
Oyster Bay-East Norwich	93.1	87.7	s	82.1	92.7
Plainedge	93.4	95.6	72.7	93.8	86.9
Plainview-Old Bethpage	94.7	97.7	76.3	95.1	97.4
Port Washington	90.6	92.5	61.1	81.3	99.2
Rockville Centre	98.5	96.9	91.2	97.2	94.6
Roosevelt	63.0	62.0	53.1	67.9	75.9
Roslyn	96.3	97.8	73.9	85.7	100.0
Seaford	94.7	94.0	78.6	85.7	93.9
Sewanhaka	93.8	92.7	77.6	93.5	93.7
Syosset	97.8	97.9	88.7	93.0	98.0
Uniondale	77.6	75.5	46.4	76.4	81.3
Valley Stream Central	93.0	93.7	76.9	90.0	92.6
Wantagh	97.9	98.2	83.9	94.7	94.7
West Hempstead	89.0	90.9	76.2	81.9	88.4
Westbury	79.1	80.4	35.1	78.0	79.9
SUFFOLK					
Amityville	72.7	78.3	60.0	73.1	75.2
Babylon	91.0	93.9	72.2	92.9	88.7
Bay Shore	87.3	86.9	61.1	83.4	83.5
Bayport-Blue Point	96.5	97.2	72.0	90.5	90.6
Brentwood	70.8	72.5	61.5	72.4	86.5
Bridgehampton	81.3	92.3	s	s	92.9

Districts	% GRADUATING				% going to 2-yr or 4-yr colleges
	High school, 2017	High school, 2016	Students with disabilities	Economically disadvantaged	
Center Moriches	88.0%	93.3%	68.2%	74.3%	81.6%
Central Islip	83.3	79.5	61.4	83.5	71.9
Cold Spring Harbor	98.2	99.4	88.9	s	97.6
Commack	97.9	96.7	88.9	93.3	92.9
Cornsewogue	89.1	86.0	76.1	78.2	90.5
Connetquot	92.4	93.3	72.4	84.6	84.1
Copiague	86.5	83.4	70.3	86.0	71.5
Deer Park	88.4	88.8	78.3	83.6	87.1
East Hampton	78.6	81.9	35.0	74.3	86.7
East Islip	93.1	94.3	76.1	77.8	87.4
Eastport-South Manor	95.2	95.3	85.0	86.4	89.9
Elwood	96.1	96.6	76.9	94.3	92.0
Fishers Island	85.7	100.0	s		83.3
Greenport	75.4	81.5	33.3	64.5	67.9
Half Hollow Hills	93.9	96.1	73.9	85.0	93.3
Hampton Bays	90.4	92.4	84.0	89.2	94.5
Harborfields	97.6	97.7	82.4	95.8	89.2
Hauppauge	93.4	93.3	81.1	84.8	92.4
Huntington	89.8	86.0	80.0	77.3	85.8
Islip	96.6	96.0	90.3	93.3	87.9
Kings Park	96.4	97.0	82.9	78.6	96.9
Lindenhurst	89.5	91.4	70.2	83.9	75.7
Longwood	84.4	87.2	61.6	78.0	82.4
Mattituck-Cutchogue	91.8	90.6	77.8	66.7	88.5
Middle Country	81.6	90.2	65.9	79.6	83.1
Miller Place	92.9	95.8	63.6	86.1	90.6
Mount Sinai	97.4	97.7	81.8	100.0	96.4
North Babylon	90.9	91.8	77.5	89.3	79.9
Northport-East Northport	92.6	94.7	81.7	72.1	91.2
Patchogue-Medford	85.2	84.9	60.9	78.9	73.9
Port Jefferson	97.1	96.3	75.0	90.9	97.9
Riverhead	79.9	71.2	68.3	75.2	83.2
Rocky Point	94.6	96.3	78.3	89.6	84.2
Sachem	91.5	93.2	67.9	79.3	86.7
Sag Harbor	87.9	92.6	83.3	80.0	87.3
Sayville	95.5	95.2	72.4	89.5	93.2
Shelter Island	84.2	86.4	s	57.1	88.2
Shoreham-Wading River	97.8	96.2	88.2	100.0	93.7
Smithtown	95.7	94.4	82.2	87.5	93.8
South Country	81.2	75.4	55.0	76.6	74.9
South Huntington	90.8	91.1	67.1	86.1	87.9
Southampton	85.5	80.8	66.7	72.6	91.3
Southold	85.7	78.2	80.0	60.0	79.7
Three Village	97.0	97.0	80.6	96.2	96.2
West Babylon	91.5	87.2	73.3	89.6	81.9
West Islip	96.4	94.2	87.1	89.0	90.1
Westhampton Beach	91.4	90.4	87.0	71.9	87.3
William Floyd	80.0	71.6	45.1	75.7	69.3
Wyandanch	64.0	70.1	57.5	60.8	68.7
Nassau	89.5	90.6	72.6	81.1	91.0
Suffolk	88.4	88.8	71.1	79.7	85.8
Long Island	88.9	89.6	71.8	80.3	88.1
New York State	80.2	79.7	54.2	73.4	78.3