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Newly Released State Data Shows Over 93 Percent of PGCPS' Class of 2020 Graduated on Time

PGCPS' on-time graduation rate above 90 percent for fourth consecutive year

PRINCE GEORGE, Va. - Newly released data from the Virginia Department of Education has revealed Prince George County Public Schools' on-time graduation rate rose to 93 percent in 2020, with more than nine out of ten students who entered the ninth grade during the 2016-2017 school year earning a diploma and graduating from high school within four years.

On Sept. 30, [State Superintendent of Public Instruction James Lane announced](#), despite the closure of schools due to COVID-19 in mid-March, 92.3 percent of the 98,481 students in the commonwealth's class of 2020 earned a Board of Education-approved diploma, up from 91.5 percent of the 2019 cohort. Additionally, VDOE reported the state-level dropout rate for the class of 2020 was 5.1 percent, down from the 5.6 percent for the previous graduating class.

"My first priority after schools closed was to make sure that every student in the class of 2020 who was on track to earn a diploma was able to graduate on time," **State Superintendent Lane said**. "In addition to congratulating our 2020 graduates, I want to thank all of the educators and administrators who made full use of the flexibility provided under the emergency waivers I issued in the spring to ensure that students were not held back because being unable to take a Standards of Learning test or complete a required course."

Last month's announcement also saw division-level data released regarding on-time graduation and other key metrics. According to the Virginia Department of Education, 93.22 percent of Prince George County Public Schools' class of 2020 received a Board of Education-approved diploma. The figure represents the highest on-time graduation rate for PGCPS based on available data dating back to 2008. Since 2008, the district's on-time graduation rate has increased from 77.96 percent during that year to the current rate of 93.22 percent, with the last four years sustaining a 90-percent or higher rate.

Additionally, the dropout rate among PGCPS' class of 2020 was 4.60 percent, with the school district maintaining a four-percent dropout rate over the last four years. Since 2008, PGCPS's dropout rate has declined by over 13 percent based on VDOE data.

Of the Prince George County Public Schools students who entered high school as first-time ninth graders in 2016:

- 54 percent earned Standard diplomas;
- 44 percent earned Advanced Studies diplomas;
- 0.4 percent earned a GED; and
- 4.6 percent dropped out.

Data regarding graduation rates and dropout rates for major student racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups across the state and individual school divisions was also released on Sept. 30. These metrics pertaining to PGCPs' class of 2020 are as follows:

- 92.1 percent of Black students graduated and 6.5 percent dropped out;
- 93.7 percent of economically disadvantaged students graduated and 3.4 percent dropped out;
- 90.6 percent of Hispanic students graduated and 7.5 percent dropped out;
- 83.9 percent of students with disabilities graduated and 11.3 percent dropped out;
- 100 percent of students with multiple races graduated; and
- 93.4 percent of white students graduated and 3.5 percent dropped out.

Since 2011, high schools have had to meet an annual benchmark for graduation and completion to earn state accreditation. Schools receive full credit for students who earn diplomas and partial credit for students who remain enrolled, earn GEDs or otherwise complete high school. In addition, revisions to the accreditation standards adopted by the state Board of Education in 2017 include benchmarks for reducing dropout rates and chronic absenteeism.

“Despite the challenges presented to our graduates during the COVID-19 closure, this data shows the resiliency of our teachers and their commitment to ensuring our students received the educational foundation they needed to be future-ready and prepared for the next step in their life's journey,” **Division Superintendent Dr. Lisa Pennycuff said.** “Ensuring our students graduate on time and have the support they need to stay engaged in the classroom to reduce instances of student dropouts is a top priority for Prince George County Public Schools. This data shows we are continuing to move in the right direction and we are committed to further improvement in the coming years.”

[High school cohort reports for schools, school divisions and the commonwealth](#) are available for viewing and downloading on the VDOE website and on [School Quality Profile reports](#) under the “College and Career Readiness” tab.