



Urban High School Graduation Rates Significantly Lower Than Rural, Town, Suburban Rates

An analysis recently conducted by researchers at the Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) Research Center finds large disparities in high school graduation rates between urban areas and other types of locales (towns, rural and suburban areas). With a national graduation rate of 70%, the overall urban graduation rate of 60% is significantly lower than the overall rates for other locale types: 71% in towns, 73% in rural areas, and 75% in suburban areas. The graduation rate is also significantly lower in the principal school districts¹ serving the largest 50 urban areas across the nation, from which just over half (52%) of students graduate. Of special concern are cities with especially poor graduation rates, such as Detroit, where the rate dips down to just 25%. Also of particular concern are metropolitan areas where the gap between their urban and suburban graduation rates is particularly large, such as the Baltimore metropolitan area, where the gap is 47% (35% graduation rate in Baltimore’s urban schools vs. 82% in its suburban schools).

Figure 1: Cities With the 5 Lowest High School Graduation Rates, Compared to the National Rate, 2003-04

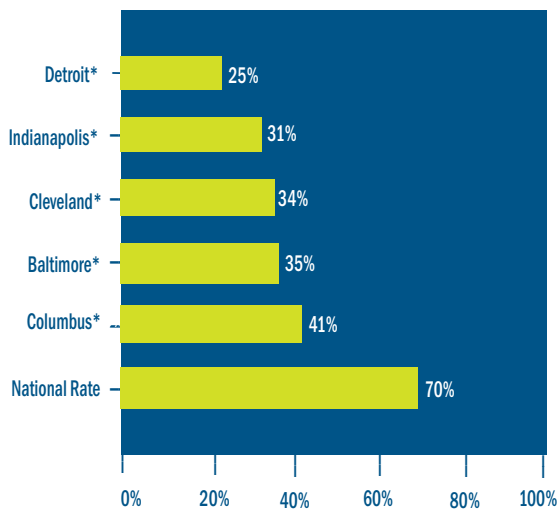
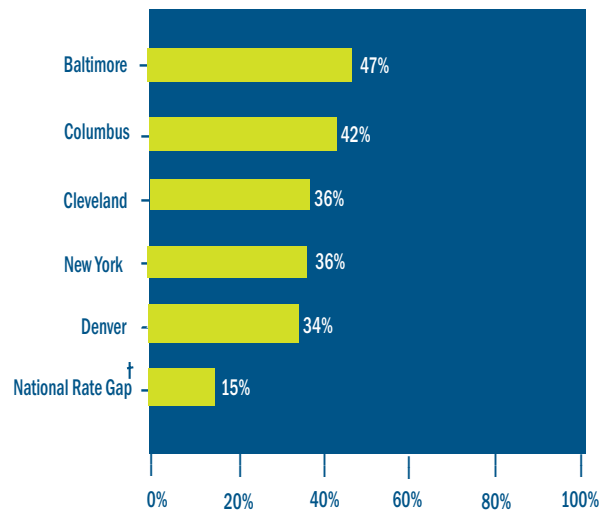


Figure 2: Metropolitan Areas With the 5 Largest Urban-Suburban Graduation Rate Gaps, Compared to the National Rate Gap, 2003-04



* In Figure 1, graduation rates for the 5 cities are for the principal school districts. † In Figure 2, The national rate gap is the disparity between the overall urban graduation rate (60%) and the overall suburban graduation rate (75%).

Source: Swanson, C. B. (2008). *Cities in Crisis: A Special Analytic Report on High School Graduation*. Baltimore, MD: Editorial Projects in Education Research Center.

¹ The “principal school district” denotes the largest or most central local education system serving the city.

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