



**OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Community Schools, Thriving Students

Strategies to Increase Graduation and A-G Rates: Equitable Grading & Board Policy Revisions



Presented to the Teaching and Learning Committee

Presented by the High School Network

April 29, 2025

Outcomes

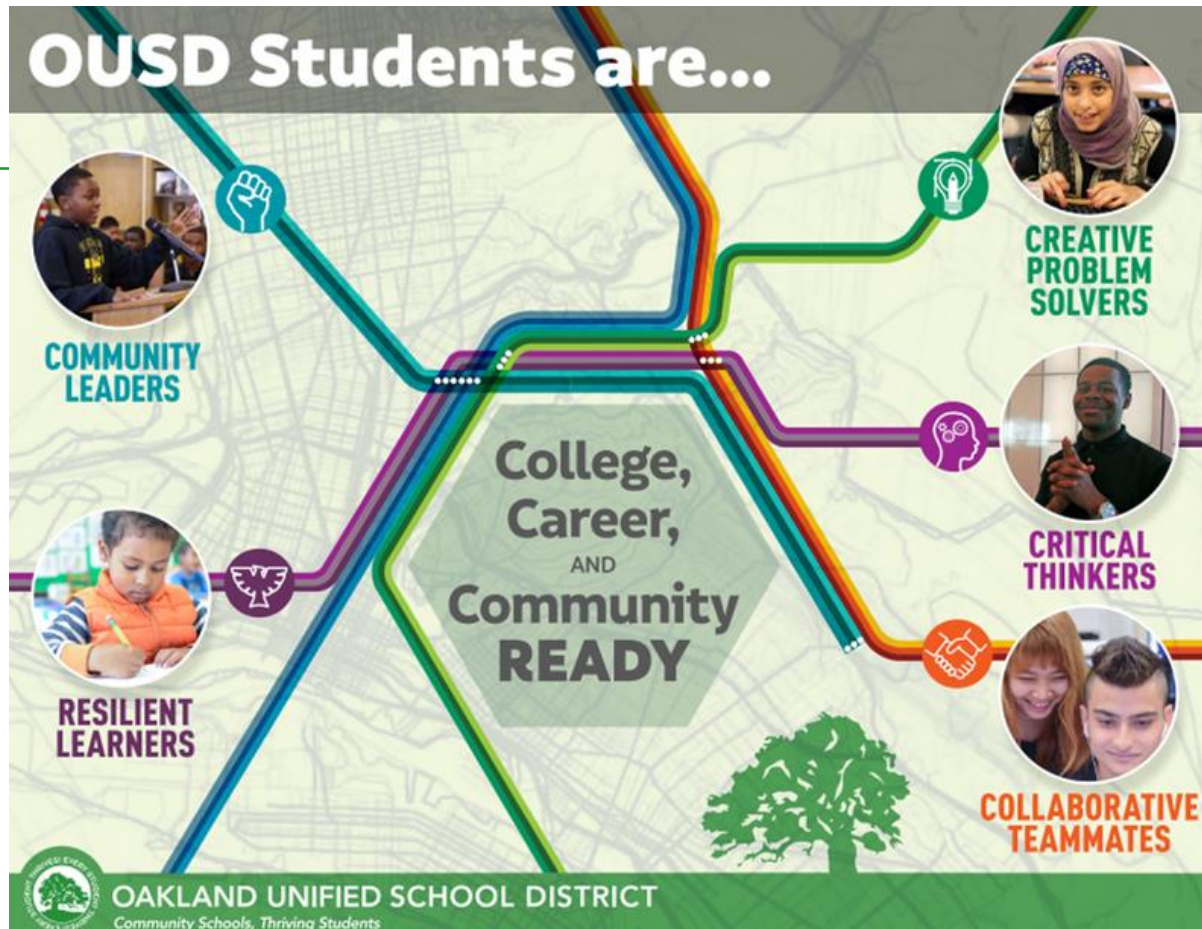
- Share updated information regarding two key strategies currently informing improvement efforts across OUSD high schools
- Gather insights from members of the Teaching and Learning Committee to inform current strategies and the ongoing improvement of long-term student outcomes

Our Vision: OUSD Students are...

All students will graduate from OUSD college, career, and community-ready as measured by the competencies of the OUSD Graduate Profile and California Dashboard Metrics.

Long-Term Metrics of Success:

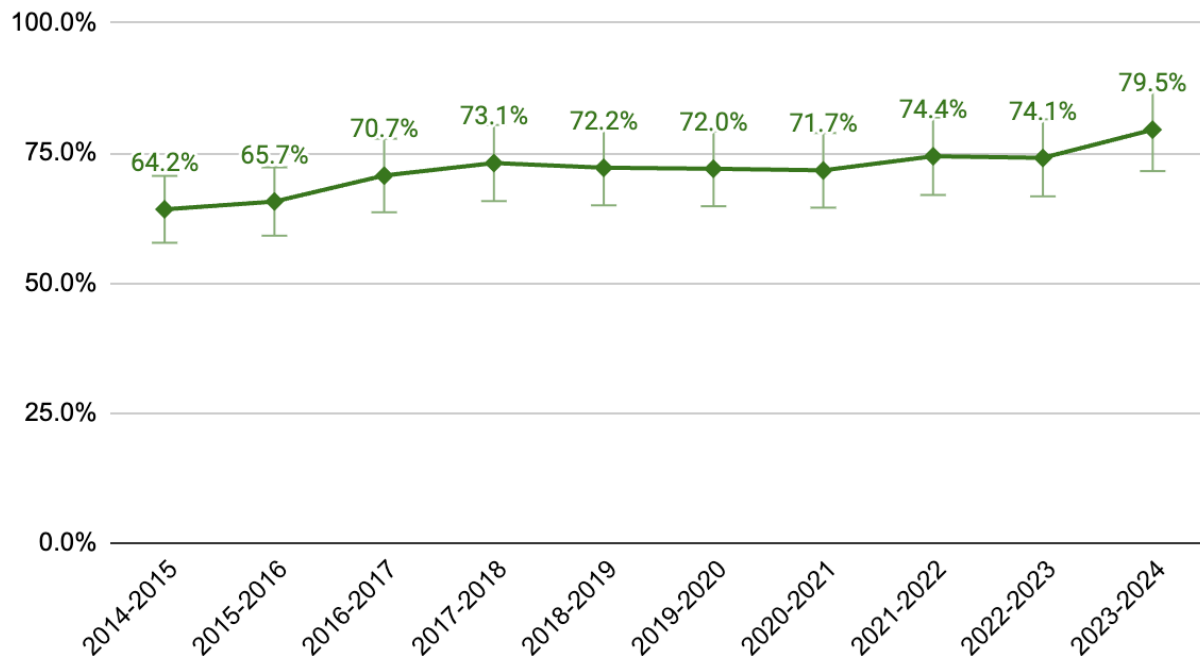
- 4 cohort graduation rate
- Dropout Rate
- A-G completion Rate
- [California College/Career Indicator](#)



A Decade of Progress

Headline #1: We have improved our Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate *overall*

OUSD Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate



**California State
Average 2024
(Cohort Grad):
86.2%**

<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest>

Headline #2: We have improved the four-year cohort graduation rate for *some* LCAP focal groups

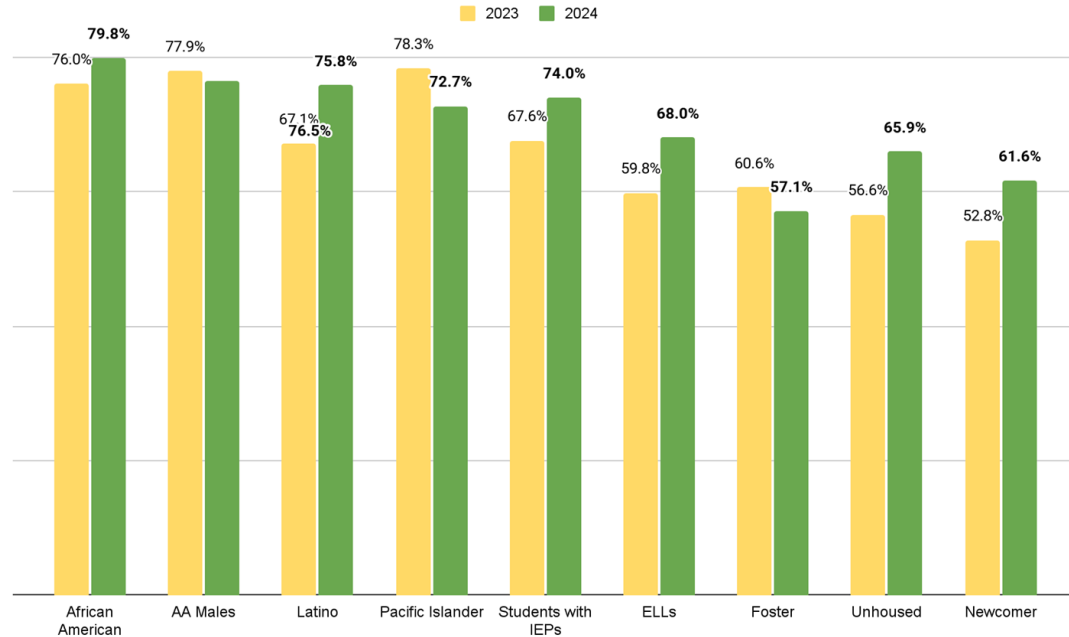
Graduation rates among several LCAP focal groups demonstrated notable gains between 2023 and 2024:

- African American
- Latino
- Students with IEPs
- ELLs
- Unhoused
- Newcomer

Graduation rates declined for the following student groups:

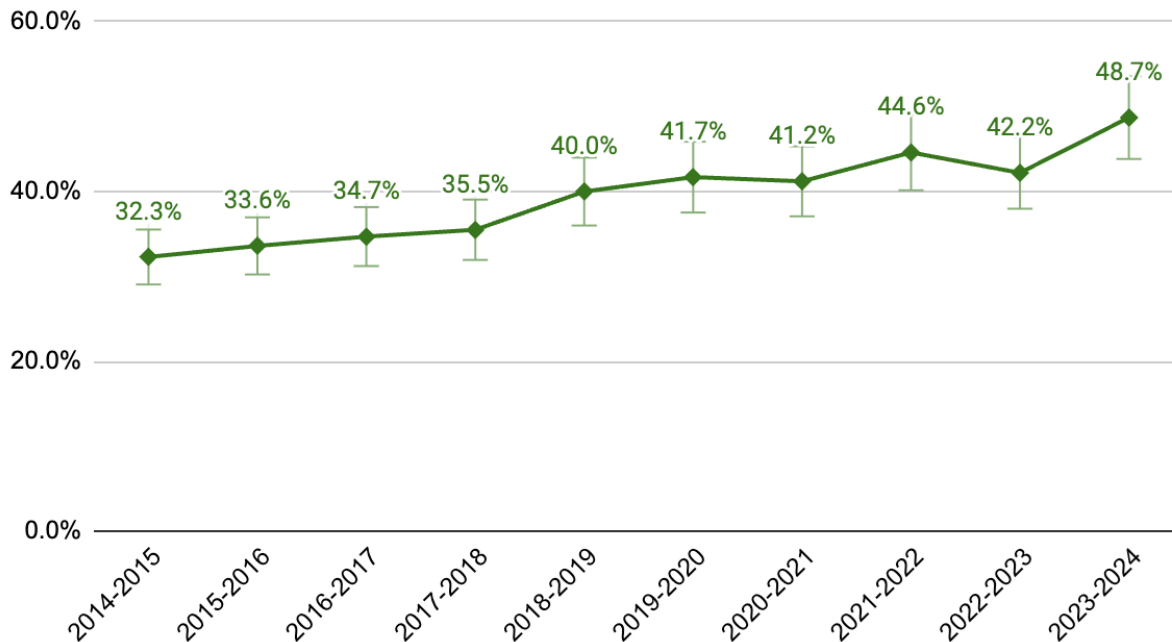
- African American males
- Pacific Islander
- Foster Youth

OUSD Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate (LCAP Focal Groups)



Headline #3: We have improved our A-G Completion Rate *overall*

OUSD A-G Completion Rate (12th Grade)



**California State
Average 2024
(A-G):
45%**

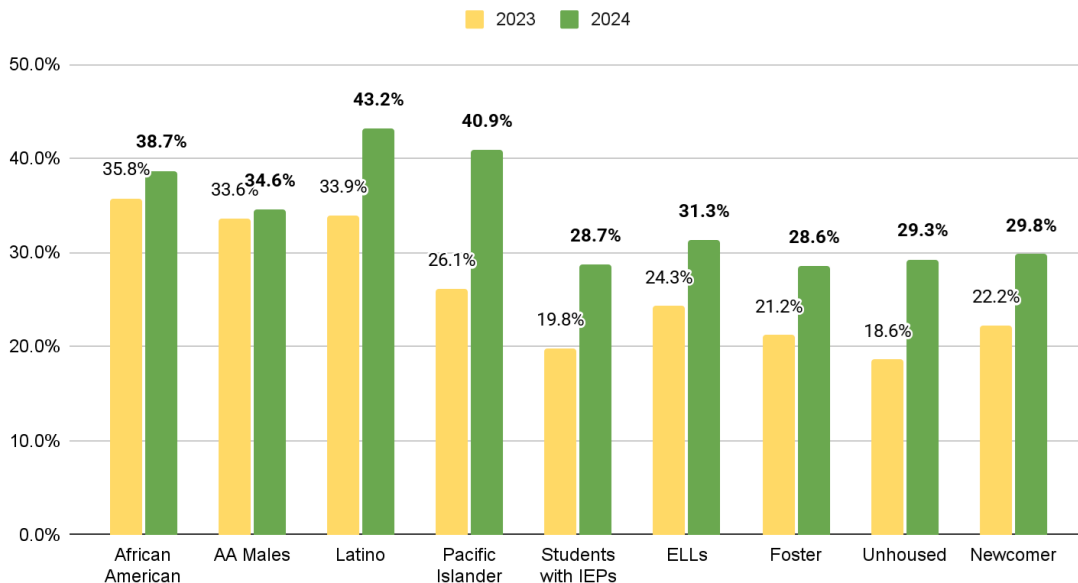
<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest>

Headline #4: We have improved our A-G Completion Rate for *all* of our LCAP focal groups

A-G completion rates have improved for the following student groups:

- African American
- African American Males
- Latino
- Pacific Islander
- Students with IEPs
- ELLs
- Foster
- Unhoused
- Newcomer

OUSD A-G Completion Rates 2023 to 2024



Graduation & A-G Completion Trends: 2023-2024

Positive Trends:

- Graduation rates improving overall & for many LCAP Focal Student Groups.
- A-G completion rates increased across all LCAP Focal Student Groups.

Notable Gains:

- Graduation rates increased for African American, Latino, English Learners, Unhoused, Newcomers, & Students with IEPs.
- Largest A-G completion gains: Latino, Pacific Islander, Students with IEPs, & Unhoused students.

Areas of Concern:

- Graduation rates declined for African American Males, Pacific Islander, & Foster Youth, signaling a need for targeted support.

Next Steps:

- Address disparities to ensure equitable outcomes for all students.

Ensuring Student Success: 2024-2025 Priorities

- **Goal:**

- Increase 4-year graduation rates & A-G completion to expand post-secondary opportunities.

- **Key Strategies:**

- **Equitable Grading Practices** – Piloting fair, accurate assessment methods.
- **Policy Revisions** – Updating graduation & post-secondary readiness policies for student success.

- **Impact:**

- More students prepared for college, careers, and community upon graduation.

Strategy #1: Equitable Grading Practices

Equitable Grading Practices in OUSD

- How do we reduce adult grading practices that lead to high D/F rates, biased grading, and a lack of clarity for students about what they have mastered?
- How do we ensure the majority of students' grades reflect current mastery in skills being taught?



Definitions



Equitable Grading

- General practices that decrease the chances a student starts off the year failing and cannot recover
 - 50% floor, no zeros policy, separating participation, retake days

Competency-Based Grading (also known as Mastery-Based Grading)

- General practices that support assessment of discrete skills in a classroom to be the majority of a student's grade.
 - 0-4 scale in Aeries, strong rubrics, backwards planning, retakes, rubric checklists

Standards-Based Grading

- Similar to competency-based grading, but the assessment of discrete skills in a classroom is directly connected to the language of content standards.
 - Use of a Learning Management System/Grading Platform that allows teachers to select standards language to assess

Each type of grading gets us closer to student success.

1. Equitable Grading

First-step actions that schools or teams can immediately take to lower barriers to student success.

2. Competency-Based Grading

Using strong rubrics and focusing classroom design around multiple assessments and retakes in order to support students in accessing skills.

3. Standards-Based Grading

Using a Learning Management System that allows for teachers to upload work, select standards, and track student progress on those standards.



Basic Equitable Grading



General practices that decrease the chances a student starts off the year failing and cannot recover.

- 50% floor ("F" starts at 50%)
- Eliminate the use of zeros to grade "Mastery" assignments
- Categorize grades into weighted categories of at least "Participation" (30%) and "Mastery" (70%)
- Institute retake days specifically geared towards students raising their "Mastery" grades

School-Based Equitable Grading Pilots

Madison Park Academy and Castlemont High School

- Gradebook analysis
- Student work analysis
- Standards Based Grading exploration
- 0-4 scale
- Aeries gradebook configuration
- Weekly gradebook updates
- Transparent gradebook content (due dates, commentary, categories and weighting)
- Retakes
- Make up days
- Rubric development

School-Based Equitable Grading Pilots

Pre-Existing

- **Life Academy**

- Student work analysis
- Common rubrics
- No D
- Grades weighted according to “habits of mind” and “habits of work”
- Sliding scale by grade level for mastery (9th is 70%, whereas 12th is 100%)

Coming up:

- **Skyline, Fremont, McClymonds**

- Engaging with 9th grade team-BTSC
- Common grading practices

- **MetWest**

- Engaging with principal

Strategy #2: Board Policy Revisions

Ensuring Equity in Expectations

Goal:

- Create fair conditions for all students to meet OUSD graduation, attendance, and college/career preparation requirements under California Education Code.

Constraint:

- Current Board Policy allows inconsistent application of requirements, leading to inequitable outcomes.
- High-performing students may be excused from required courses.
- Marginalized students, including LCAP focal groups, must meet all requirements without exceptions.

Need for Change:

- Align policies to ensure fair expectations and opportunities for all students.

Policy Alignment with Neighboring Districts:

- Written Request Required for external course approval.
- Credit Limitations on how many external credits count toward HS graduation.
- Accreditation Requirement for all external courses.

Reducing Subjectivity in Course Decisions

Current Issue:

- Students and parents sometimes make course decisions without school guidance.
- Some students enroll in courses that don't count for OUSD credit, delaying graduation.
- Lack of clear policies leads to inconsistent decision-making by different stakeholders.

Proposed Solution:

- Pre-approval process ensures courses align with graduation and post-secondary goals.
- Prevents last-minute denials, improves scheduling, and fosters collaboration.
- Clearer guidelines replace subjective decisions with consistent, equitable processes.

Enhancing Early College & Dual Enrollment Opportunities

- Expanding Access: Revisions support early college, dual enrollment, and concurrent enrollment options.
- Minimizing Barriers: Ensures students can access advanced courses without unnecessary restrictions.
- Streamlined Process: Promotes informed, collaborative decision-making without delays or surprises.
- Flexible Learning: Students can take community college courses to accelerate learning and, in some cases, earn OUSD credit.
- Equity & Consistency: Clearer policies increase awareness of options and ensure fair access.

Proposed Revisions

- BP 6146.11: Alternative Credits Toward Graduation
 - Updated Ed Codes
 - Added provision for approval/oversight of courses taken outside of OUSD
- BP 6146.1: High School Graduation Requirements
 - Updated terms to align with Linked Learning Pathway requirements (ex: program of study)
 - Differentiated between minimum credits for Comprehensive vs Continuation high schools
- BP 6172: Instruction
 - Updated Ed Codes
- BP 5121: Grades/Evaluation Of Student Achievement
 - Updated Ed Codes
 - Clarified language to specify the reasons for students to repeat courses.

Investments to Support Strategies

- 1.0 FTE Equitable Grading Teacher on Special Assignment
- Extended contracts for teachers participating in Equitable Grading Professional Learning Community
- Meeting refreshments for students participating in Listening Sessions
- Dedicated time during HS Principal Professional Learning for Grading Community of Practice
- High School Network and Linked Learning Office staff time

Questions for Board Directors

- What opportunities do Board Directors see to advance our work within the two strategy areas identified?
- What suggestions or additional strategies can Board Directors share in support of district-wide initiatives to improve graduation and A-G completion rates?