

More Greenville County students graduating on time

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The good news is more students in Greenville County Schools are graduating on time.

The bad news is a little more than one in four students won't graduate on time, will drop out or not earn a diploma.

Greenville County Schools' on-time graduation rate - defined as earning a high school diploma in four years - increased from 72.4 percent in 2012 to 76.9 percent in 2013.

That's lower than the state graduation rate - 77.5 percent. The state rate is up from 73.6 percent in 2011 and is the largest two-year increase ever. It is just below the 78.0 percent achieved in 2003, the highest rate during the past dozen years.

Graduation rates in Greenville County improved for African-American students, Hispanic students and students who receive subsidized or free school meals because of their families' incomes. Those groups have historically had lower graduation rates than white students.

Statewide, all of those groups showed improvement. Disabled students graduated at a higher rate statewide as well. But that category saw a decrease in Greenville County, something district officials attributed to fewer students being identified as disabled, giving the district a higher concentration of lower-functioning students.

The graduation rate is calculated by dividing the

number of students who graduated with a regular South Carolina diploma within four years of entering high school by the number of first-time ninth-graders, adding any students who transfer in and subtracting any who transferred to another diploma-granting school, emigrated or died.

Students who take longer than four years to earn a diploma, earn an occupational diploma, earn a local or state certificate, earn a GED and students who leave school and whose status is not known or cannot be documented, or who are incarcerated but do not enroll in a diploma-granting program, are counted as non-graduates.

Among Greenville County Schools, six had graduation rates below the state average. Unlike previous years, none had rates below 60 percent.

If students are given an extra year to earn their diplomas, schools' graduation rates improved as expected.

District officials say existing programs to help improve the graduation rate have been refined and new ones added. There are academic specialists to give additional support to schools.

At the preschool level, two new pre-K classrooms were added to serve students at risk of being unsuccessful in school. Summer programs were started for at-risk students and there is a proposed summer enrichment reading program.

In elementary schools, the district is monitoring academic progress of students, using a balanced literacy program and increasing utilization of personal

devices such as iPads in the classroom.

In middle schools, there's increased utilization of personal devices and one-to-one technology and special emphasis schools in the fields of science, technology, engineering, the arts and math.

At the high school level, satellite diploma programs have been started. The district's teen parent program has been restructured to serve students in their home schools.

ON-TIME GRADUATION RATES

SCHOOL	2010	2011	2012	2013
Mauldin High	83.6	83.7	83.7	89.1
Wade Hampton High	86.4	84.1	86.8	86.5
Blue Ridge High	73.3	80.0	75.0	82.7
Eastside High	76.0	75.4	80.2	82.6
Riverside High	83.0	85.7	82.0	82.3
Greenville High	70.8	70.0	69.8	81.5
J.L. Mann High	72.8	70.3	75.7	80.0
Hillcrest High	73.0	71.3	73.9	79.4
Berea High	63.5	63.1	64.5	71.4
Southside High	64.6	65.4	57.4	69.3
Greer High	71.0	72.3	65.5	67.8
Travelers Rest High	61.6	72.6	65.5	67.8
Woodmont High	61.7	61.5	64.7	65.3
Carolina Academy	48.8	55.8	58.7	62.4
South Carolina	72.0	73.6	74.9	77.5
Greenville County Schools	72.1	72.2	72.4	76.9

(Source: Greenville County Schools)