

New Bedford High School graduation rate increases to 72%

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released its annual data today on graduation and dropout rates across Massachusetts, citing New Bedford's improving dropout rate among the top five urban districts of the Commonwealth, noting that New Bedford High School "had 98 fewer students drop out in 2016-17 than in 2011-12, a 57 percent decrease."

New Bedford High School's 2017 four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate has increased to 72.0%, the highest in the 11 years that the state has officially documented graduation rates for all districts. The 2016 four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate was 70.9%, which has risen steadily from a low of 61.4% in 2010.

The graduation rate is growing or holding steady for key subgroups, including African-American/Black students at 70.6%, with Hispanic/Latino students showing a 6.1% increase, from 59.4% to 65.5%. The graduation rate for White students rose 2% from 76.2% to 78.2%.

The four-year dropout rate at New Bedford High School decreased 1.7% from 4.4% in 2016 to 2.7% in 2017. The district's high schools also showed a 3.3% decline from 6.8% in 2016 to 3.5% in 2017.

The data also underscores areas of continued focus for improvement. While the 4-year adjusted graduation rate for females at New Bedford High School shows a 5.7% increase, from 76.2% in 2016 to 81.9% in 2017, the 4-year adjusted rate for males during the same period has decreased -4.7% from 66.8% in 2016 to 62.1% in 2017.

Superintendent Pia Durkin lauded New Bedford High School's increasing graduation rate, which rose 1.3% from 2016 to 2017 to 72%, the highest rate since the state began recording in 2007, but also noted that "clearly, the data shows there is more work to be done in the disparity of graduation rates of females to males. We will continue to focus intensely on engagement strategies and on multiple pathways to graduation in order to close this gender gap as well as provide broader opportunities for all New Bedford students and their futures in this community."

Mayor Jon Mitchell said, "Increasing the graduation rate is a major objective in our school improvement effort, and it's encouraging to see continued progress on that front."

Headmaster Bernadette Coelho said, "Our graduation rate continues to increase and is further testament to our continued progress at NBHS, but we must continue the work to ensure that every student graduates and is fully prepared for college or other post-secondary opportunities."