



## Understanding Virginia High School Graduation Rates

Graduation rates are a fundamental indicator of whether or not the nation's public school system is doing what it is intended to do: enroll, engage, and educate youth to be productive members of society. In today's increasingly competitive global economy, graduating high school is a critical step towards securing a good job and a promising future. Yet nationally, one-third of our students—about 1.2 million each year—leave high school without a diploma, and graduation rates for poor and minority students are even lower. The failure to graduate every child prepared for the 21st century has serious consequences for both individual students and the rest of American society. Yet, the unacceptably low graduation rates of America's youth have been obscured for far too long by inaccurate data, misleading calculations and reporting, and flawed accountability systems.

Nationally, and for each state, Understanding High School Graduation Rates illustrates the discrepancies in graduation rates reported by government and independent sources, examines why this is important, and describes three core policy areas that are fundamental to calculating, reporting, and improving accurate graduation rates:

- Use of common, accurate graduation rate calculations
- Statewide data system that track individual student data from the time students enter the educational system until they leave it

Policies that meaningfully holds high schools accountable for improving student achievement on test scores and increasing graduation rates so that low-performing students are not unnecessarily held back or encouraged to leave school without a diploma.

To see Virginia report:

[http://www.all4ed.org/publications/wcwc/Virginia\\_wc.pdf](http://www.all4ed.org/publications/wcwc/Virginia_wc.pdf)