

Happy New Year!

Welcome to our **1st data newsletter!** In an effort to spread more awareness about data concerning Doña Ana County and New Mexico, we at the [Center for Community Analysis \(CCA\)](#) at [New Mexico State University](#) will be issuing newsletters every other month.

If you are interested in data, in particular, data related to **equity in education, early childhood, health, and the workforce** in Doña Ana County and New Mexico, please stay subscribed and share the data with friends.

Today we explore high school graduation rates in Doña Ana County. We will also introduce you to our new, interactive dashboard (see bottom of newsletter) where you can view graduation rates over time and see **if we are closing the graduation gap** among historically underrepresented students in individual high schools and within school districts.



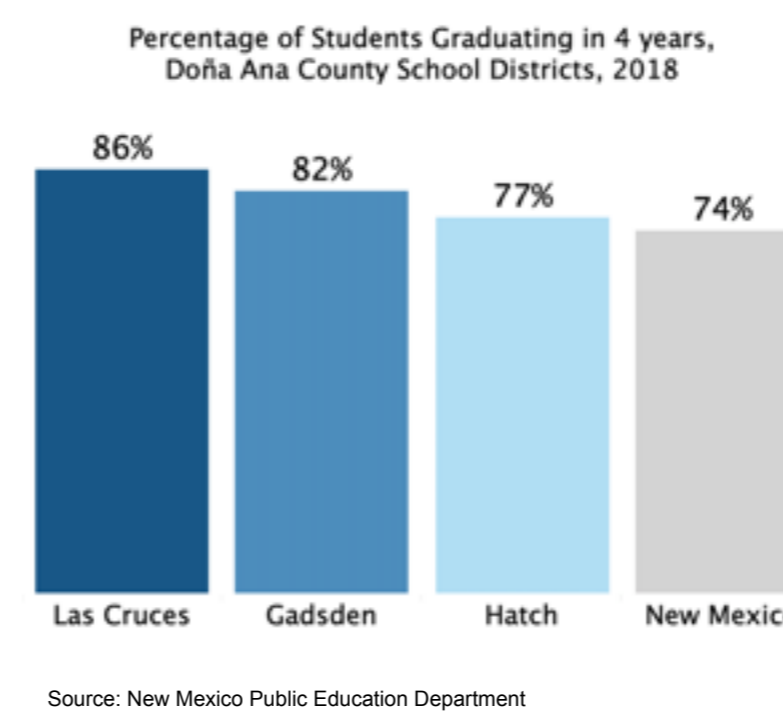
Graduation Rates Rise Above The State Average

Four-year high school graduation rates for the 2018 graduating cohort from Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS), reached a high of 86%. This figure surpassed the state average of 74% and inched past the national average of 85%.

Rates in the Gadsden Independent School District (GISD) and Hatch Valley Public Schools (HVPS) sat slightly lower but still managed to top the state.

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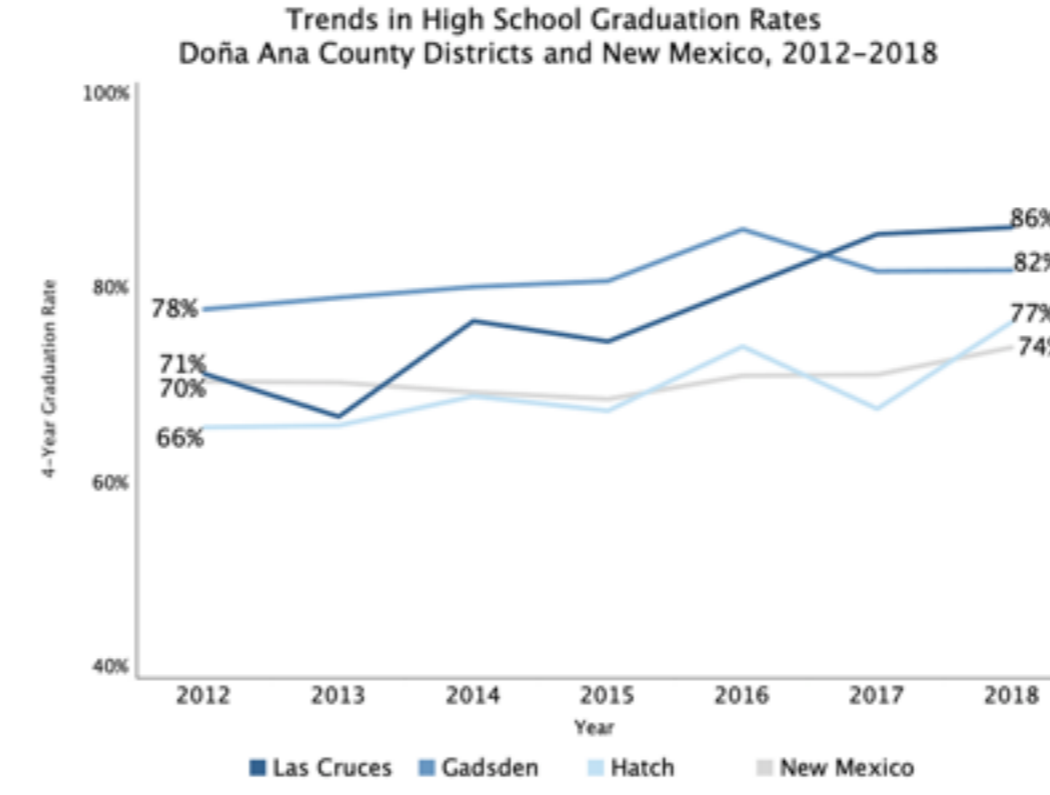


Source: New Mexico Public Education Department

How Much Have Graduation Rates Changed Over Time?

LCPS and GISD graduation rates changed little between 2017 and 2018, while Hatch's graduation rate jumped 6 percentage points, to a high of 77%, surpassing the state average.

All districts experienced increases in graduation rates since 2012; 4% in GISD, 11% in Hatch, and 15% in LCPS.

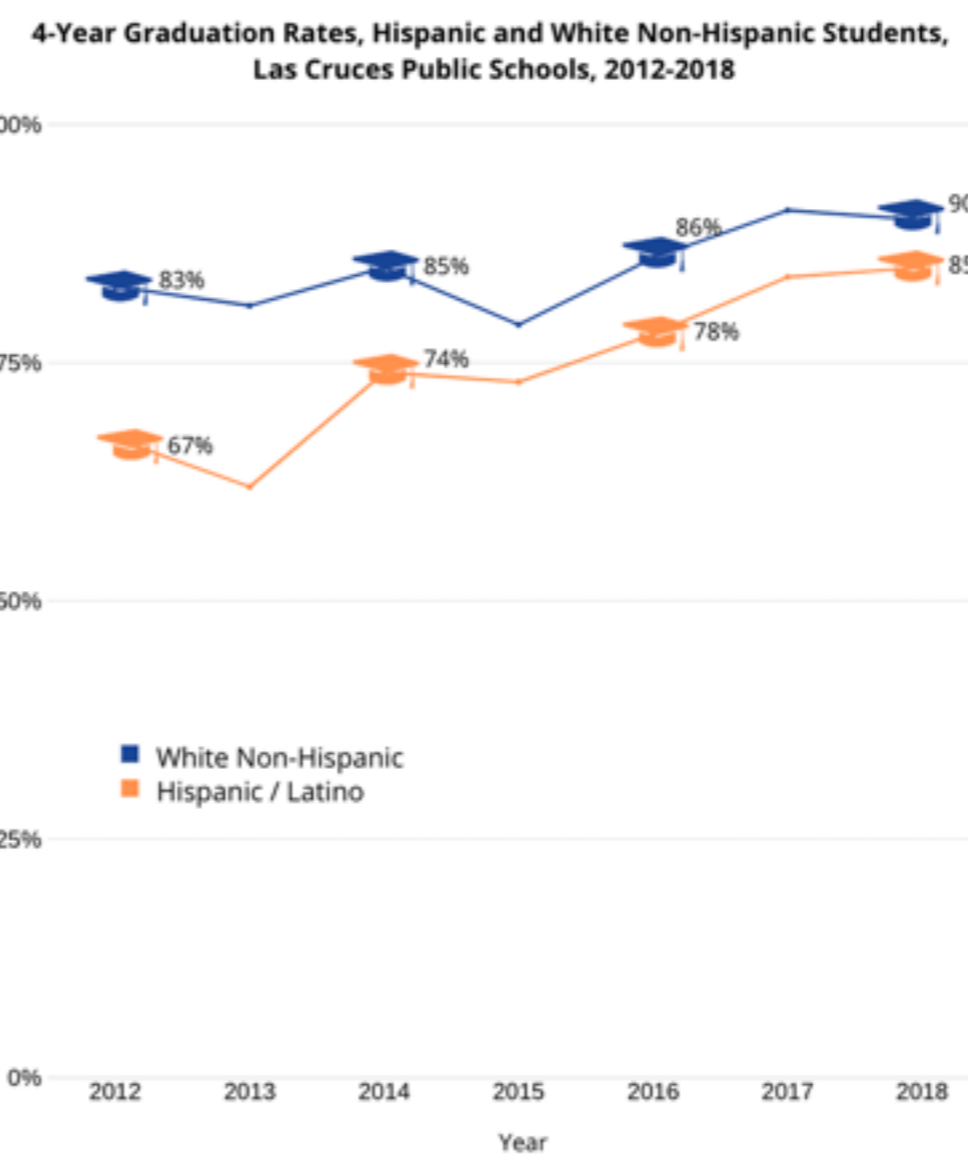


Source: New Mexico Public Education Department

Are We Reducing The Graduation Gap Between Students?

The third page of the dashboard allows the user to compare graduation rates between students based on their demographics. You can search by high school or district.

In nearly all cases, the gap between students appears to be shrinking over time which is great news. For example, in Las Cruces Public School District the graduation gap between Hispanic/Latino and White Non-Hispanic was 16% in 2012 and shrunk to 5% in 2018.

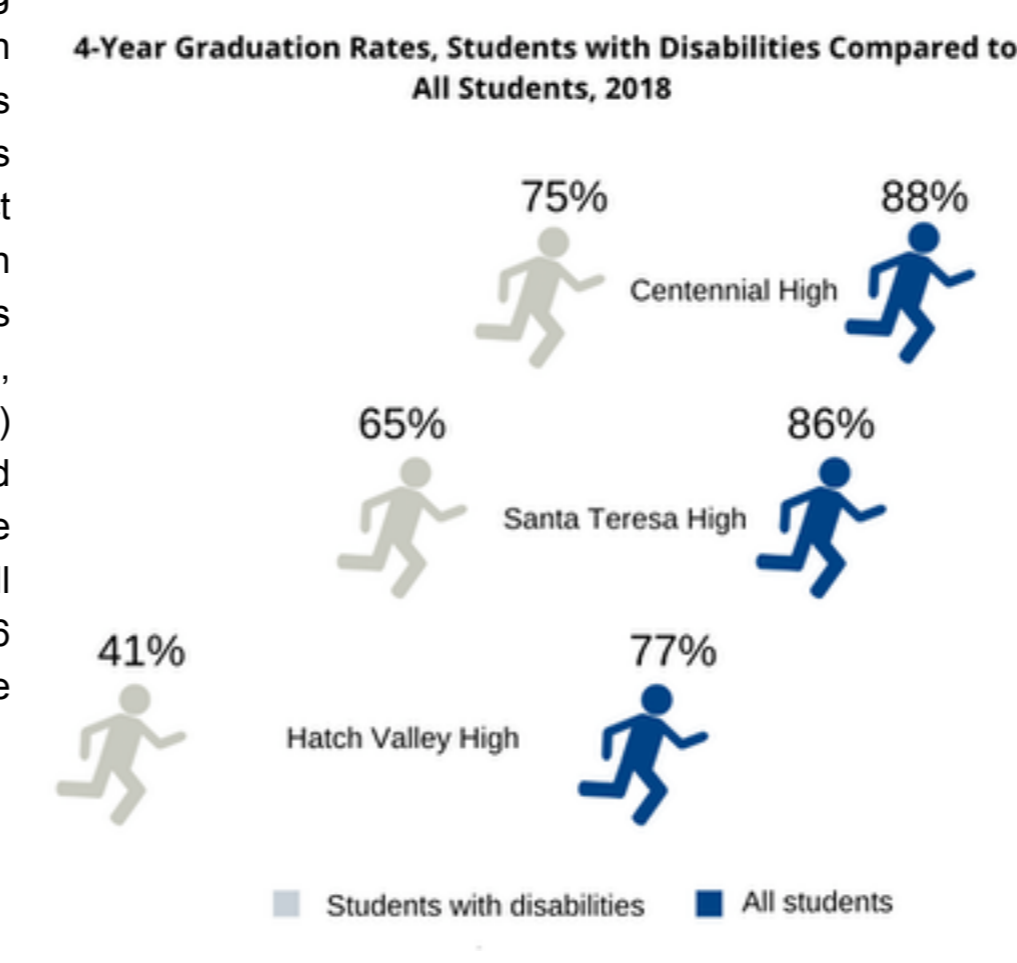


Source: New Mexico Public Education Department

Where can we do better?

However, we still have a long way to go for students with disabilities (SWD). Schools with some of the largest gaps for SWD in each district include: Centennial High School (LCPS) where students lag 13% below the average, Santa Teresa High (GISD) 21% below the average, and at Hatch Valley High where only 41% of SWD will graduate on time, 36 percentage points behind the school average.

How this will be addressed in light of the Yazzie Martinez lawsuit remains to be seen.



Source: New Mexico Public Education Department

What is Responsible for the Overall Increase in Graduation Rates?

What is responsible for the increase in 4 year graduation rates? Some cite dual credit programs, which 1 out of every 4 students participate in countywide. However, this brief snapshot and the dashboard point to some interesting trends, namely large increases in graduation rates among historically underrepresented groups, such as economically disadvantaged students, SWD, and Hispanic/Latinos (in LCPS), who do not participate in dual credit at the same rate as their peers. It is possible we are more aware of equity and are better serving our students in the classroom. The increase could also be attributed to an increase in online learning opportunities for students and the growing number of credit recovery classes offered in the summer and at night.

Through credit recovery, students who fail classes are given opportunities to make-up the credit through extended learning programs at night or in the summer. Although, controversial, advocates say credit recovery gives students who risk dropping out a better chance at graduation and hence, better job and life opportunities. Others argue that our goal should be meet the needs of struggling students through academic support and wrap-around school services *during* the school year so that credit recovery can be reduced. Although we at the CCA currently do not have data on credit recovery trends in the county, it would be interesting to examine that data, its growth and its correlation to success after graduation, whether that be in college, or in the workforce.

Are there any other contributors you know of?

[Click on the button below to explore graduation rates by individual high school and school districts in Doña Ana County:](#)

[CCA Dashboard](#)

To share this newsletter with a friend or colleague, click [HERE](#)

Please visit our [dashboard](#) to interact with this data on your own.

