**Graduation Rate for**

**Students in Foster Care**

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) requires states report on graduation rates for students in foster care. The Oregon Department of Education does not collect foster care information directly from districts, but ODE did obtain student level data from the Department of Human Services (DHS) for use in this report.

**Data Source:** The Office of Child Welfare Programs, a division of the Department of Human Services (DHS), collects data on youth in foster care. DHS provided data to ODE for students in foster care at any time between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2017.

**Match Rates:** Students in the 2013-14 cohort were matched to students that were in foster care at any time between July 1, 2013 and August 31, 2017, which is the reporting period for the four-year graduation rate calculation for this cohort. A total of 501 students in foster care were reliably matched to the cohort of 46,155 students; a match rate of 1.1%. This is reasonably consistent with the DHS estimate of about 0.9% of all youth age 13-17 being in foster care at some time during 2017.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Students were matched on first name, last name, date of birth, and gender. Ninety percent of the matches were exact matches on all four fields. The remaining 10% of matches were due to slight differences in first or last names (such as hyphens versus spaces), or small date of birth. We have fairly high confidence in these last 10% of matches as a group, but realize that a few of the individual matches might be incorrect. There may also be additional foster care youth that were not successfully matched to the cohort. Future studies may include more may slightly increase match rates.

**Student Outcomes:**  In this analysis, student outcomes are classified into four categories:

* Graduates: students earning a regular or modified diploma
* Other Completers: students earning an extended diploma, GED, or adult high school diploma
* Continuing Enrollment: students who continued high school into their fifth year
* Non-completers/dropouts: students who either dropped out of high school, or completed four years and exited without a credential.

**Conclusion:** Students in foster care graduate on time at a rate (35%) which is less than half that of their peers. Foster care students are also three times as likely to leave school without a credential.

The table below shows the percentages of students with each outcome. Rates are shown for students in foster care at some time during their first four years of high school, and for students that were not in foster care during high school. Note that percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

| **Student Outcome** | **Foster Care** | **Non-Foster Care** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Graduates | 35% | 77% |
| Other Completers | 11% |  3% |
| Continuing Enrollment | 18% |  6% |
| Non-completers/dropouts | 37% | 13% |

1. DHS reported 2,313 youth ages 13-17 were in foster care at some time during 2017, while the National Center for Health Statistics estimated that statewide population for this age group was 246,184 in 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)