

Return to State of the Union Report

High School Graduation Rates

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Section 1: Top 35 Countries with the Highest High School Graduation Rates

Data Source: Based on OECD Education at a Glance (2022-2023) and Gallup World Education Survey data. Year of data: 2022. Only countries with populations over 5 million are included.

Rank	Country	Graduation Rate (2022)
1	한국 Hanguk (South Korea)	94%
2	日本 Nippon (Japan)	93%
3	Россия Rossiya (Russia)	93%
4	Suomi (Finland)	93%
5	Norge (Norway)	92%
6	Polska (Poland)	92%
7	中国 Zhongguo (China)	91%
8	Sverige (Sweden)	91%
9	Deutschland (Germany)	91%
10	Suisse or Schweiz (Switzerland)	90%
11	Nederland (Netherlands)	90%
12	Österreich (Austria)	90%
13	Danmark (Denmark)	89%
14	Belgique (Belgium)	89%
15	Canada	87%

Rank	Country	Graduation Rate (2022)
16	Australia	86%
17	United Kingdom	86%
18	République française (France)	85%
19	Česko (Czech Republic)	85%
20	United States	85%
21	Magyarország (Hungary)	84%
22	Portugal	84%
23	Éire (Ireland)	84%
24	Ελλάδα Elláda (Greece)	83%
25	Italia (Italy)	83%
26	España (Spain)	82%
27	ישראל Yisra'el (Israel)	80%
28	Chile	78%
29	Argentina	76%
30	Türkiye (Turkey)	75%
31	Brasil (Brazil)	70%
32	México	65%
33	ประเทศไทย Prathet Thai (Thailand)	63%
34	Colombia	60%
35	Perú (Peru)	58%

Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2022; Gallup World Education Survey 2022 (data year: 2022).

United States Ranking and Analysis

The United States ranks 20th in the table above, with a high school graduation rate of approximately 85% as of the 2022-2023 school year, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

While the U.S. rate has improved significantly from 79% in 2010, it continues to lag behind top-performing nations by a margin of 6 to 9 percentage points. Several structural and systemic factors explain this gap.

The United States does not have a nationally unified education system; instead, responsibility falls on 50 states and over 13,000 local school districts, resulting in wide variation in resource allocation, teacher quality, and curriculum standards.

High poverty rates, racial and ethnic achievement gaps, inconsistent access to pre-kindergarten education, chronic absenteeism, and lack of mental health and counseling resources are among the primary contributors to lower graduation rates in many districts. In the 2022-2023 school year, the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) for public high school students was 85 percent nationally, with rates ranging from 70 percent in the District of Columbia to 93 percent in Iowa.

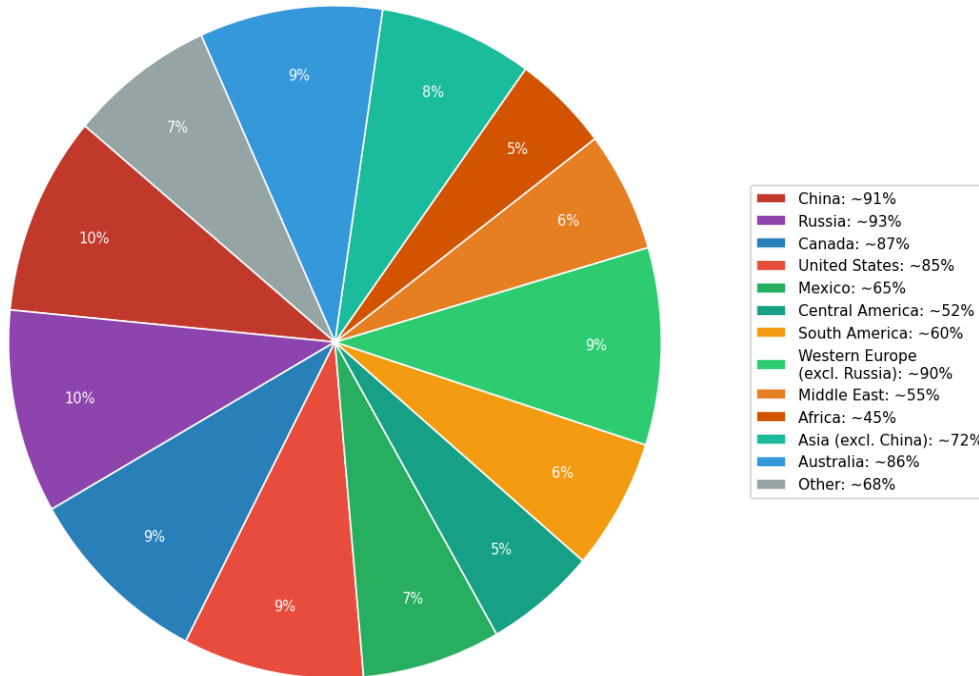
Top 8 Highest-Rated Countries

Rank	Country	Graduation Rate (2022)
1	한국 Hanguk (South Korea)	94%
2	日本 Nippon (Japan)	93%
3	Россия Rossiya (Russia)	93%
4	Suomi (Finland)	93%
5	Norge (Norway)	92%
6	Polska (Poland)	92%
7	中国 Zhongguo (China)	91%
8	Sverige (Sweden)	91%

References

- OECD Education at a Glance 2022 - www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance
- National Center for Education Statistics - nces.ed.gov
- Gallup World Education Reports - www.gallup.com/education
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics - uis.unesco.org

**High School Graduation Rates by World Region
(Estimated, 2022-2023)**



Section 2: What Other Countries Have Done to Increase Their High School Graduation Rates

Hanguk (South Korea)

Hanguk's exceptional graduation rate stems from a deeply embedded cultural emphasis on education, backed by robust government policy.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) instituted mandatory attendance laws through high school, supported by the High School Equalization Policy enacted in 1974 that eliminated elite high school entrance exams to democratize access.

After-school tutoring programs (hagwons) are widespread, though government regulations under the Education Ministry work to balance private education access.

The National Institute for Lifelong Education promotes adult completion programs. Hanguk's Smart Education Initiative digitized curricula with tablets and AI-based learning platforms.

The government invests over 5% of GDP in education. Key agency: Hanguk Ministry of Education (www.moe.go.kr).

Nippon (Japan)

Nippon's graduation success is rooted in the 1947 Fundamental Law of Education mandating compulsory education through lower secondary school, with strong social norms driving upper secondary (high school) completion.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) administers the School Education Law that governs curriculum standards and teacher certification nationwide.

Nippon implemented the Comprehensive Support Plan for Children and Young People to address dropout risks.

The government subsidized high school tuition through the High School Tuition Support Fund (Kotogyakko Mushouka) starting in 2010, making public high schools effectively free.

Career guidance programs integrate vocational training with academic coursework to maintain engagement. Key agency: MEXT (www.mext.go.jp).

Suomi (Finland)

Suomi transformed its education system in the 1970s through the comprehensive school (peruskoulu) reform, creating a unified nine-year basic education system accessible to all students regardless of socioeconomic status.

The Suomi National Agency for Education (EDUFI) oversees curriculum development emphasizing student well-being over standardized testing.

Upper secondary education is divided between academic general upper secondary schools and vocational institutes, both qualifying students for tertiary education. The Youth Guarantee program ensures every young person under 25 receives an education, employment, or training offer.

Schools employ welfare officers, psychologists, and special needs teachers as mandatory resources. Teacher education requires a master's degree, elevating the profession.

Key agency: Suomi National Agency for Education (www.oph.fi).

Norge (Norway)

Norge provides free upper secondary education as a legal right for all residents aged 16-24 under the Education Act.

The Norge Directorate for Education and Training (UDIR) administers Kunnskapsloft (Knowledge Promotion Reform) which restructured curriculum competencies and vocational pathways.

The government offers financial support through the Norge State Educational Loan Fund (Lanekassen) ensuring no financial barrier prevents enrollment.

The Ny GIV initiative (New Drive) targeted at-risk youth through intensive basic skills instruction in mathematics and Norwegian.

Municipalities are legally obligated to offer individualized training plans for students with special needs.

Immigrant integration programs include dedicated Norwegian language instruction. Key agency: Norge Directorate for Education and Training (www.udir.no).

Sverige (Sweden)

Sverige's Education Act of 2010 established that all young people between ages 16 and 20 are entitled to upper secondary education.

The Sverige National Agency for Education (Skolverket) manages curriculum, grading standards, and school inspection.

The government launched the School Commission in 2015 to address declining PISA scores and strengthen teacher competence requirements.

A principal's obligation to report school absence and connect students to social services is codified in law.

Sverige's Introductory Programme specifically addresses newly arrived immigrants and students who did not meet eligibility requirements for national programs.

School health services including counselors and psychologists are universally available. Key agency: Swedish National Agency for Education (www.skolverket.se).

Deutschland (Germany)

Deutschland employs a dual education system (Duales Ausbildungssystem) combining classroom instruction with apprenticeships across more than 300 recognized occupations, administered jointly by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBWF) and state Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK).

The Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz) governs apprenticeship quality and standards nationally.

Each of Deutschland's 16 Lander (states) maintains its own comprehensive school laws requiring attendance through age 18.

The Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) funds vocational guidance counselors in all secondary schools.

Programs for disadvantaged youth include Berufseinstiegsbegleitung (job entry mentoring) and Assistierte Ausbildung (supported apprenticeships).

Immigration integration classes are state-mandated for non-German-speaking students. Key agency: Federal Ministry of Education and Research (www.bmbf.de).

Canada

Education in Canada is provincially administered, with no federal department of education, but all provinces mandate school attendance to ages 16-18.

The Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) facilitates interprovincial cooperation and data sharing.

Ontario's Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat specifically targets at-risk students through evidence-based instructional strategies.

British Columbia reformed graduation requirements in 2018 with the BC Education Plan emphasizing personalized learning, flexible credentials, and co-curricular engagement.

The First Nations Education Act and provincial Indigenous education strategies address the historically low graduation rates of Indigenous students through culturally relevant programming.

Quebec offers a free adult education system allowing students to complete diplomas at any age.

Key agency: Council of Ministers of Education Canada (www.cmec.ca).

Australia

Australia's National Education Agreement commits all states and territories to providing schooling to age 17.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) develops the nationally consistent curriculum and administers NAPLAN literacy and numeracy testing.

The Gonski Review (2011) led to needs-based school funding reforms, directing additional resources to disadvantaged schools.

The Australian Government's Closing the Gap strategy specifically funds Indigenous student graduation programs including boarding school scholarships and community engagement officers.

States like Victoria operate the Senior Secondary Pathways program offering vocational education and training (VET) as equal credentials alongside academic certificates.

The Student Wellbeing Hub provides national resources on mental health, attendance, and engagement.

Key agency: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (www.acara.edu.au).

Section 3: What the U.S. Can Do to Increase Its High School Graduation Rates

The United States currently ranks approximately 20th globally in high school graduation rates, with an 85% graduation rate as of the 2022-2023 school year, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. While this represents progress from the 79% rate in 2010, significant disparities remain across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographic lines. Students from low-income families, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and students in rural or urban high-poverty schools continue to graduate at substantially lower rates than their peers.

To increase its high school graduation rates, the United States must adopt a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach drawing upon the most effective international models while addressing uniquely American challenges. Strategies must simultaneously address academic preparation, economic barriers, social-emotional supports, teacher quality, school accountability, and systemic equity gaps.

Early intervention programs beginning in pre-kindergarten would ensure that students arrive at high school academically prepared. Evidence shows that students who read proficiently by third grade are significantly more likely to graduate. Federal expansion of Head Start and state pre-K programs, modeled after Suomi's universal early childhood education, would address foundational skill deficits before they compound.

Universal access to high-quality counseling services is essential. Many American high schools have counselor-to-student ratios exceeding 400:1, far above the recommended 250:1. Congress must mandate and fund adequate counselor staffing, with counselors trained in both academic advising and mental health support, as mandated in countries such as Norge and Sverige.

Expanding career and technical education (CTE) pathways, modeled after Deutschland's dual education apprenticeship system, would increase engagement for students who do not thrive in exclusively academic environments. Public-private partnerships between the federal government, state workforce agencies, and industry sectors should create paid apprenticeships as graduation pathway options.

Addressing chronic absenteeism, which predicts dropout more reliably than academic performance, requires automated early warning systems linked to school, family, and community intervention protocols. States should mandate multi-tiered attendance response systems with legal obligations for schools and local governments to engage absent students.

Financial barriers must be eliminated. Hunger, housing instability, and the need to work prevent many students from completing high school. Expanding free and reduced-price meal programs, after-school programs, and emergency student assistance funds through the Department of Education would reduce these barriers.

Section 4: References

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) - Graduation Rates

OECD Education at a Glance 2022

UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI)

Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training

Swedish National Agency for Education

German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)

Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT)

Korean Ministry of Education

Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC)

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

Gallup World Education Survey

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Education

National Governors Association - Education Policy

Section 5: Draft of a House Bill

118th CONGRESS
1st Session

H.R. [NUMBER]

A BILL

To increase high school graduation rates across the United States through comprehensive educational reform, targeted intervention, interagency coordination, and sustained appropriations.

SHORT TITLE

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2025

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

As used in this Act:

- (1) GRADUATION RATE** - The percentage of students who complete a high school diploma within four years of entering ninth grade, as calculated by the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) methodology established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- (2) AT-RISK STUDENT** - A student who exhibits one or more risk factors for non-completion, including but not limited to: chronic absenteeism, academic deficiency in core subjects, English Language Learner status, disability status, involvement with the juvenile justice or child welfare systems, homelessness, or family income below 150% of the federal poverty level.
- (3) EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTION** - A program, practice, or strategy that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes, consistent with Tiers 1, 2, or 3 as defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 7801(21).
- (4) EARLY WARNING INDICATOR SYSTEM** - A data-driven tool that tracks student attendance, behavior, and academic performance to identify students at risk of dropout and trigger timely interventions.
- (5) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY (LEA)** - A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State to administer public elementary or secondary schools.
- (6) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY (SEA)** - The State board of education or other agency or officer primarily responsible for the State supervision of public elementary and secondary schools.

- (7) **DUAL ENROLLMENT** - A program that allows high school students to enroll in college-level courses and simultaneously earn high school and college credit.
- (8) **CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)** - Organized educational activities that offer a sequence of courses providing individuals with coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant technical knowledge and skills.
- (9) **MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)** - A comprehensive framework integrating assessment, instruction, and intervention at increasing levels of intensity to support the academic and behavioral success of all students.
- (10) **INTERAGENCY COUNCIL** - The Federal High School Graduation Interagency Council established under Section 3(a) of this Act.

SECTION 2. ENACTING CLAUSE

(a) FINDINGS - Congress finds the following:

- (1) The United States high school graduation rate of approximately 85 percent, while an improvement over prior years, continues to fall below the rates achieved by many economically comparable nations.
- (2) Significant disparities in graduation rates persist across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, geographic, and disability status lines, constituting a fundamental equity challenge.
- (3) The annual economic cost of school dropout, including lost tax revenues, increased social services, and reduced workforce productivity, is estimated to exceed \$200 billion annually.
- (4) Evidence-based interventions in early literacy, attendance monitoring, mentoring, career education, and social-emotional learning have demonstrated measurable improvements in graduation rates when implemented with fidelity.

(b) PURPOSE - The purpose of this Act is to:

- (1) Establish a federal framework and funding mechanism to support State and local efforts to increase high school graduation rates.
- (2) Promote coordination among federal agencies, States, localities, and the private sector.
- (3) Ensure that every student, regardless of background, has the opportunity to complete a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

SECTION 3. REQUIREMENTS BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

(a) FEDERAL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION INTERAGENCY COUNCIL - There is established a Federal High School Graduation Interagency Council (hereinafter 'the Interagency Council') to be chaired by the Secretary of Education.

- (1) The Interagency Council shall include the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the heads of such other Federal agencies as the President may designate.

(2) The Interagency Council shall meet no less than quarterly and shall submit an annual report to Congress on federal graduation improvement activities, expenditures, and outcomes.

(b) DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - The Department of Education shall:

(1) Develop and publish, within 180 days of enactment, a National High School Graduation Improvement Framework identifying evidence-based intervention strategies, outcome metrics, and reporting requirements for State and local grantees.

(2) Establish an Office of High School Completion within the Institute of Education Sciences charged with coordinating federal research on dropout prevention, early warning systems, and reengagement strategies.

(3) Require every State Educational Agency, as a condition of receiving funds under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), to implement a statewide Early Warning Indicator and Intervention System (EWIS) tracking student attendance, course performance, and behavior data beginning in sixth grade.

(A) The EWIS shall generate automated alerts to school counselors and administrators when a student meets two or more risk indicators within a 30-day period.

(4) Fund and administer a High School Graduation Improvement Grant Program, making competitive grants to Local Educational Agencies serving the highest proportions of at-risk students. Grants shall be no less than \$500,000 and no more than \$5,000,000 per LEA per year, renewable for up to five years subject to demonstrated progress.

(c) DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES - The Department of Health and Human Services shall:

(1) Coordinate with the Department of Education to integrate mental health services and substance abuse prevention resources in high-poverty secondary schools, ensuring a minimum of one licensed mental health professional per 250 enrolled students, consistent with standards applied in Suomi, Norge, and Sverige.

(2) Expand Medicaid coverage for school-based health services to include counseling, intervention services, and wellness programs for students identified as at-risk, as modeled under Canada's provincial school health mandates.

(d) DEPARTMENT OF LABOR - The Department of Labor shall:

(1) Partner with the Department of Education to establish a National Registered High School Apprenticeship Program creating paid apprenticeship opportunities in high-demand industries for students in grades 10 through 12, modeled after Deutschland's Dual Education System (Duales Ausbildungssystem).

(2) Provide funding to workforce development boards to create industry-sector career pathways programs integrated with local high school curricula.

(e) DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - The Department of Agriculture shall expand the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program to provide free meals to all students at Title I schools with poverty rates exceeding 60 percent, removing nutrition insecurity as a barrier to school attendance.

(f) DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT - The Department of Housing and Urban Development shall coordinate with Local Educational Agencies to prioritize stable housing assistance for families with school-age children and ensure that the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is fully funded and implemented to eliminate educational barriers for homeless youth.

SECTION 4. REQUIREMENTS BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

(a) SECRETARY OF EDUCATION - The Secretary of Education shall:

(1) Appoint a Deputy Assistant Secretary for High School Completion responsible for coordinating all agency programs relating to dropout prevention and graduation improvement.

(2) Publish and update no less than biennially a State-by-State Graduation Improvement Report Card comparing each State's graduation rates by demographic subgroup against national benchmarks and identifying States with persistent graduation gaps.

(3) Enforce accountability provisions under ESSA for States and LEAs that demonstrate persistent declines in graduation rates over two consecutive years, including requiring Comprehensive Support and Improvement plans with specific graduation rate targets.

(b) STATE GOVERNORS - Each State Governor shall:

(1) Establish a Governor's Commission on High School Graduation, comprising representatives from the State Board of Education, the State Workforce Development Board, higher education institutions, the business community, parent organizations, and community advocacy groups.

(2) Submit annually to the State legislature a Graduation Rate Improvement Plan identifying specific strategies, funding allocations, and measurable goals for increasing the State's graduation rate.

(c) STATE SUPERINTENDENTS OF EDUCATION - Each State Superintendent of Education or equivalent officer shall:

(1) Mandate that all LEAs implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) frameworks providing tiered academic and behavioral interventions for students at risk of non-completion, consistent with evidence-based frameworks endorsed by the What Works Clearinghouse.

(2) Require a minimum counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250 in all public high schools, consistent with the American School Counselor Association's national recommendation and standards applied in comparable nations.

(A) States that cannot meet this ratio within two years of enactment due to workforce shortages shall submit a remediation plan to the Department of Education with annual progress benchmarks.

(d) LOCAL SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS - Each local school superintendent shall designate a High School Completion Coordinator responsible for implementing Early Warning Indicator Systems, coordinating intervention services, maintaining reengagement pathways for dropouts, and reporting outcomes to the State Educational Agency.

SECTION 5. REQUIREMENTS BY CORPORATIONS

(a) EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION INCENTIVES - Congress declares that increasing high school graduation rates is a national economic priority and calls upon the private sector to participate in the following ways:

- (1)** Any corporation with 250 or more employees that establishes a documented partnership with a public high school to provide internships, mentorship, dual-enrollment funding, or career pathway instruction may claim a federal tax credit equal to 25 percent of qualified education partnership expenditures, not to exceed \$500,000 per taxable year.
- (2)** Corporations receiving federal contracts in excess of \$10 million annually shall include in their corporate social responsibility disclosures a description of any programs the corporation maintains to support high school completion among its workforce and in communities where it operates.

(b) WORKFORCE PIPELINE PARTNERSHIPS - The Secretary of Labor, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall establish a Workforce-Education Partnership Registry recognizing corporations that:

- (1)** Offer paid internships or apprenticeships to high school students at risk of dropout.
- (2)** Provide tuition assistance for employees who have not completed a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- (3)** Participate in career and technical education advisory boards for local high schools, consistent with the model successfully implemented in Deutschland and Australia.

(c) TECHNOLOGY SECTOR OBLIGATIONS - Technology companies receiving federal research and development grants shall dedicate no less than one percent of the award amount to developing or improving educational technology tools targeting at-risk high school students, including attendance monitoring software, adaptive learning platforms, and early warning systems.

SECTION 6. REQUIREMENTS BY PRIVATE CITIZENS

(a) PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES - Parents and guardians of enrolled students shall:

- (1)** Ensure regular school attendance for their children, consistent with compulsory attendance laws of their State. States shall revise compulsory attendance age thresholds to require attendance through age 18 or high school completion, whichever occurs first, consistent with laws in Norge, Sverige, Australia, and Canada.
- (2)** Cooperate with school outreach efforts, including attendance conferences, academic support plans, and MTSS team meetings, when their child is identified by an Early Warning Indicator System as at risk of non-completion.

(b) COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER MENTORSHIP - The Corporation for National and Community Service, operating through AmeriCorps, shall:

- (1)** Establish a High School Graduation Mentorship Corps placing trained volunteer mentors in high schools with graduation rates below 80 percent.

(2) Each AmeriCorps Graduation Mentor shall work with a caseload of no more than 15 identified at-risk students per semester, providing academic support, social-emotional coaching, and connections to community resources.

(c) **PHILANTHROPIC CONTRIBUTIONS** - Private foundations and individuals making charitable contributions to qualified high school completion programs recognized by the Department of Education shall receive an enhanced charitable deduction equal to 150 percent of the contribution amount for federal income tax purposes, encouraging private investment to supplement federal and State appropriations.

(d) **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS** - Community-based organizations, faith institutions, and nonprofit entities that establish and operate evidence-based after-school, tutoring, mentoring, or reengagement programs for at-risk high school students shall be eligible for grants under the High School Graduation Improvement Grant Program established in Section 3(b)(4) of this Act.

SECTION 7. PENALTY CLAUSES

(a) **STATE NON-COMPLIANCE** - A State Educational Agency that fails to submit a required annual Graduation Rate Improvement Plan or fails to implement mandated Early Warning Indicator Systems within the timeframes established by this Act shall:

(1) Receive a written notice of deficiency from the Secretary of Education.

(2) Be subject to a reduction of up to five percent of its Title I, Part A federal allocation for each year of continued non-compliance following the issuance of a notice of deficiency.

(3) Be required to enter into a Compliance Agreement with the Department of Education specifying corrective actions and measurable milestones.

(b) **LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY NON-COMPLIANCE** - An LEA that fails to implement mandated MTSS frameworks, minimum counselor ratios, or reporting requirements shall be placed on a Graduation Improvement Probation List, published annually by the Department of Education, and shall be required to use not less than 20 percent of its Title I allocation for evidence-based graduation improvement activities until removed from the list.

(c) **PARENTAL NON-COMPLIANCE** - Enforcement of compulsory attendance laws remains the responsibility of States and localities. Nothing in this Act creates a new federal cause of action against parents or guardians. However, States that do not enforce compulsory attendance through age 18 shall be ineligible for enhanced federal graduation improvement grants established under this Act.

(d) **FALSE REPORTING** - Any State or LEA official who knowingly submits false graduation rate data to the Department of Education shall be subject to applicable federal false claims penalties under 18 U.S.C. Section 1001 and may be referred to the Office of Inspector General.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATES AND IMPLEMENTATION

(a) **GENERAL EFFECTIVE DATE** - Except as otherwise provided, this Act shall take effect 90 days after the date of enactment.

(b) PHASED IMPLEMENTATION - The following provisions shall be implemented according to the schedule below:

- (1)** Within 180 days of enactment: The Department of Education shall publish the National High School Graduation Improvement Framework and open the High School Graduation Improvement Grant Program for applications.
- (2)** Within one year of enactment: All State Educational Agencies shall submit their first annual Graduation Rate Improvement Plan and certify adoption of Early Warning Indicator Systems in at least 50 percent of Title I high schools.
- (3)** Within two years of enactment: All State Educational Agencies shall certify full statewide implementation of Early Warning Indicator Systems and compliance with counselor-to-student ratio requirements or submission of approved remediation plans.
- (4)** Within three years of enactment: All LEAs receiving Graduation Improvement Grants shall demonstrate measurable improvement in graduation rates of at least two percentage points from their baseline, or provide documented justification for continued funding.
 - (A)** The Secretary of Education may extend implementation deadlines by no more than one year for States experiencing natural disasters, economic emergencies, or other extraordinary circumstances, upon receipt of a written request and corrective action plan.

(c) TRANSITION PROVISIONS - Programs and funding streams existing under prior law that serve the purposes of this Act shall continue uninterrupted during the implementation period and shall be integrated into the framework established by this Act within 24 months of enactment.

SECTION 9. APPROPRIATIONS AND BUDGETARY NOTES

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS - There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act the following amounts:

- (1)** For the High School Graduation Improvement Grant Program under Section 3(b)(4): \$500,000,000 for fiscal year 2026 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years.
- (2)** For the Office of High School Completion within the Institute of Education Sciences: \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2026 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years.
- (3)** For the National Registered High School Apprenticeship Program under Section 3(d)(1): \$150,000,000 for fiscal year 2026 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years.
- (4)** For the High School Graduation Mentorship Corps under Section 6(b): \$75,000,000 for fiscal year 2026 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years.
- (5)** For enhanced school-based mental health services under Section 3(c)(1): \$200,000,000 for fiscal year 2026 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

(b) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT - Federal funds provided under this Act shall be used to supplement, and not supplant, State and local expenditures for education.

(c) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT - A State that receives funds under this Act shall maintain its level of State financial support for secondary education at not less than 90 percent of the level of such support for the previous fiscal year.

(d) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS - Not more than five percent of any grant amount received under this Act may be used for administrative costs. The remainder shall be directed to direct student services, evidence-based programs, and school improvement activities.

(e) ANNUAL AUDIT - The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an annual audit of expenditures under this Act and report findings to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

ENDNOTES

1. Finnish education system requirements: Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI), www.oph.fi/en
2. Norwegian compulsory education through age 18: Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, www.udir.no/in-english
3. Swedish upper secondary education entitlement: Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket), www.skolverket.se
4. German Dual Education System (Duales Ausbildungssystem): Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), www.bmbf.de
5. Canadian provincial education mandates: Council of Ministers of Education Canada, www.cmec.ca
6. Australian National Education Agreement: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, www.acara.edu.au
7. English Education Act 2011 and participation requirements: UK Department for Education, www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education
8. Japanese School Education Law and MEXT programs: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, www.mext.go.jp/en
9. Chinese compulsory education law: Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Zhongguo, en.moe.gov.cn
10. French education system requirements: French Ministry of National Education, www.education.gouv.fr