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HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES, WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM (WCPSS): 2008-09

Author: Glenda Haynie, Ph.D.

As mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), all North Carolina public high schools must report a four-year graduation rate. The 2008-09 four-year cohort graduation rate is defined as follows: The percentage of students entering the 9th grade *for the first time* during the 2005-06 school year who earned a diploma by or prior to the spring of 2009. There are school, district, and state rates.

Students who transfer into a school on grade level are added to the school's cohort, and those who transfer out are removed. There are students in the district calculation who are not included in any school rate. These students are initially in a school cohort, but transfer off grade level from one WCPSS school to another WCPSS school. These students are removed from the sending school, and are not included in the receiving school cohort, but stay in the district cohort. Students who earn a certificate of completion are in the cohort, but are not counted as graduates.

There are now four years of cohort graduation rates for WCPSS. The current rate analyzed with the previous ones yielded trends and results.

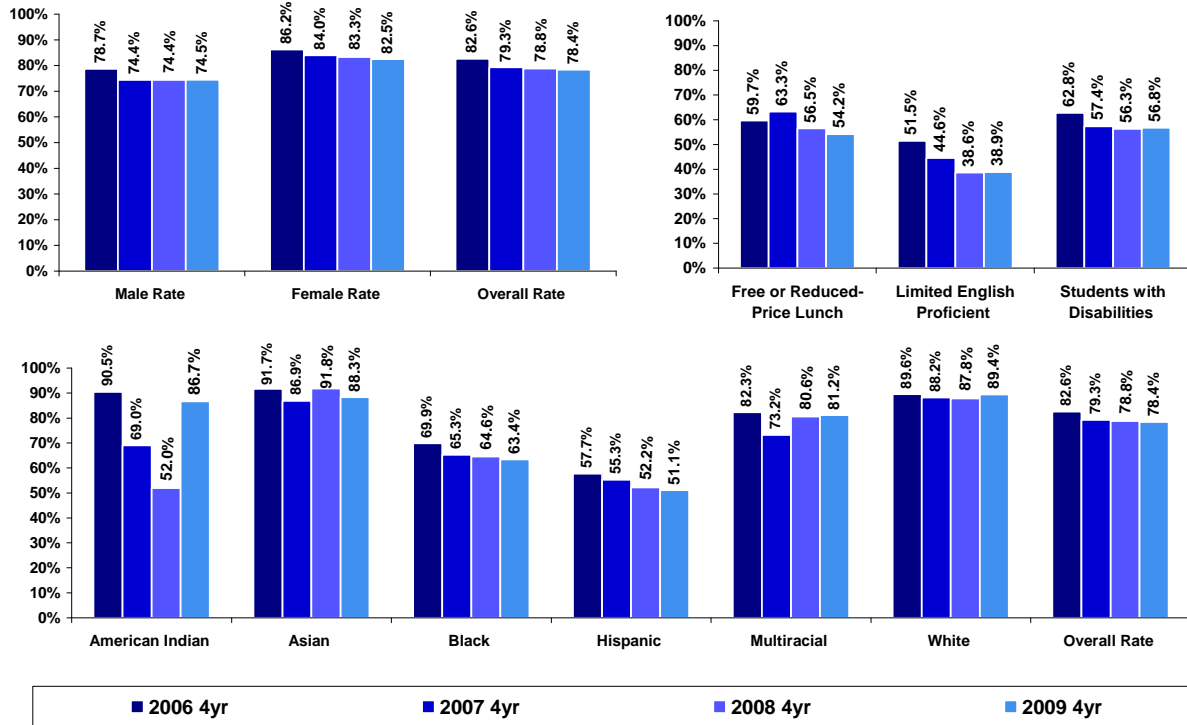
1. The overall graduation rate for WCPSS in 2008-09 was 78.4%, meaning that about four out of every five students who enrolled in 9th grade for the first time in the fall of 2005 had graduated four years later. This rate was down just slightly from 2007-08, when 78.8% of the cohort graduated (Figure 1).
2. Female students in WCPSS had a higher graduation rate in 2008-09 than male students. The rate for male students rose slightly to 74.5% from 74.4% in 2007-08 and 2006-07. The rate for females was 82.5%, lower than 83.3% in 2007-08 and 84.0% in 2006-07, showing a decreasing four-year trend (Figure 1). Within ethnic groups, male rates vary from 45.5% to 92.3%, and female rates vary from 58.4 % to 91.8% (Figure 2).

3. Students with disabilities (SWD), students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL), and students with limited English proficiency (LEP) had graduation rates that were substantially below the system-wide average. The rate for the LEP subgroup rose in 2008-09 as did the rate for the SWD subgroup (38.9% from 38.6% in 2007-08 and 56.8% from 56.3%, respectively). The rate for the FRL subgroup fell to 54.2% from 56.5% in 2007-08 (Figure 1).
4. The four-year graduation rate varied considerably (from 51.1% to 89.4%) among ethnic subgroups, with White and Asian students showing the highest rates and African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino students the lowest. In 2008-09, the rate for the White (89.4%) and Multiracial (81.2%) subgroups increased, but the Asian (88.3%), African American/Black (63.4%), and Hispanic/Latino (51.1%) rates decreased. Also, the African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino subgroups are showing a decreasing four-year trend (Figure 1).
5. Comparisons reveal that WCPSS overall rates compare favorably to other North Carolina school districts, the state, and the nation. WCPSS rates were as high as or higher than most other large NC public school districts in 2008-09, and higher than the state (Figure 3). Education Week, which used a different method to estimate rates, reported WCPSS to be second-highest in graduation rates among the 50 largest public school districts in 2005-06, 10th highest in 2006-07, 6th highest in 2007-08, and 7th highest in 2008-09¹.
6. Subgroup analysis that compared WCPSS 2008-09 graduation rates to other selected North Carolina school districts and the state found that WCPSS had rates above the state rates and also above most of the comparison districts for male, female, Asian, Multiracial, and White students. Black/African American and SWD rates were close to the state rate, while Hispanic/Latino, FRL, and LEP rates were all below the state rate and also below most of the comparison districts (Figures 4, 5, and 6).
7. The individual high school rates in 2008-09 varied from 71.8%² to 96.6%. Sixteen of twenty-four (67 %) schools had graduation rates above 80% (Table 1).

¹ <http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2009/06/11/index.html>

² Longview (13.3%) is a special school.

Figure 1
WCPSS Four-year Graduation Rates
Four -Year Trends by Subgroups



Note: The rate for the American Indian subgroup varies greatly from year to year since it is a very small group.

Figure 2
WCPSS Four-year Graduation Rates by Gender and Ethnicity, 2008-09

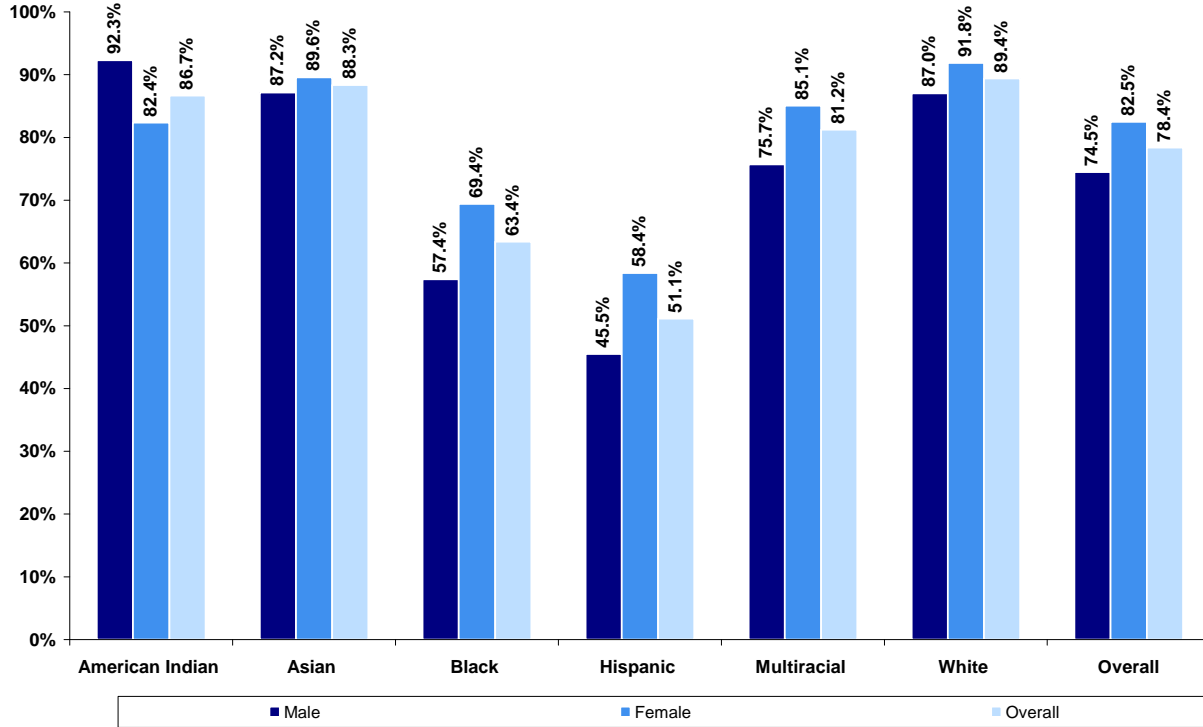
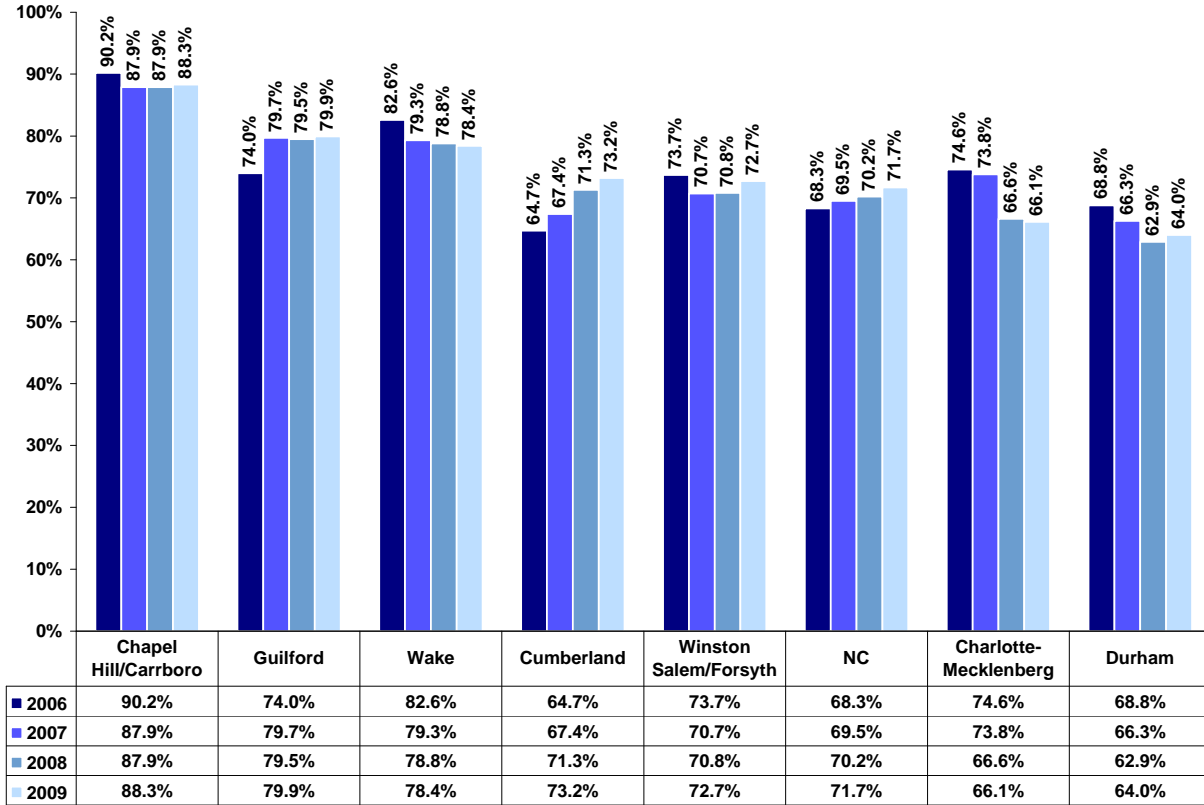


Figure 3
Four-Year Graduation Rates for Selected School Districts and NC
2005-06 to 2008-09*



*Note that the Guilford (2006) and North Carolina (2006 and 2007) percentages have changed from earlier reports due to data adjustments.

Figure 4
Graduation Rates by Gender for Selected School Districts and NC
2008-09

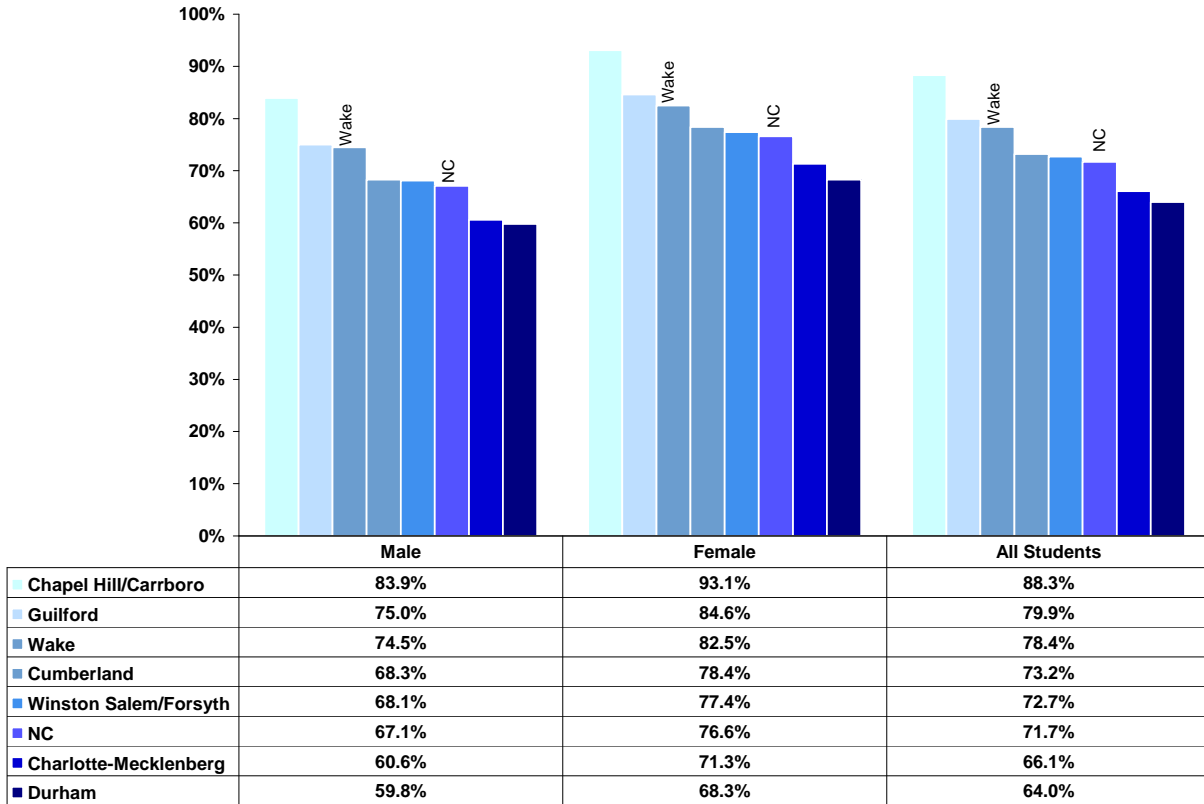


Figure 5
Graduation Rates by Ethnicity for Selected School Districts and NC
2008-09

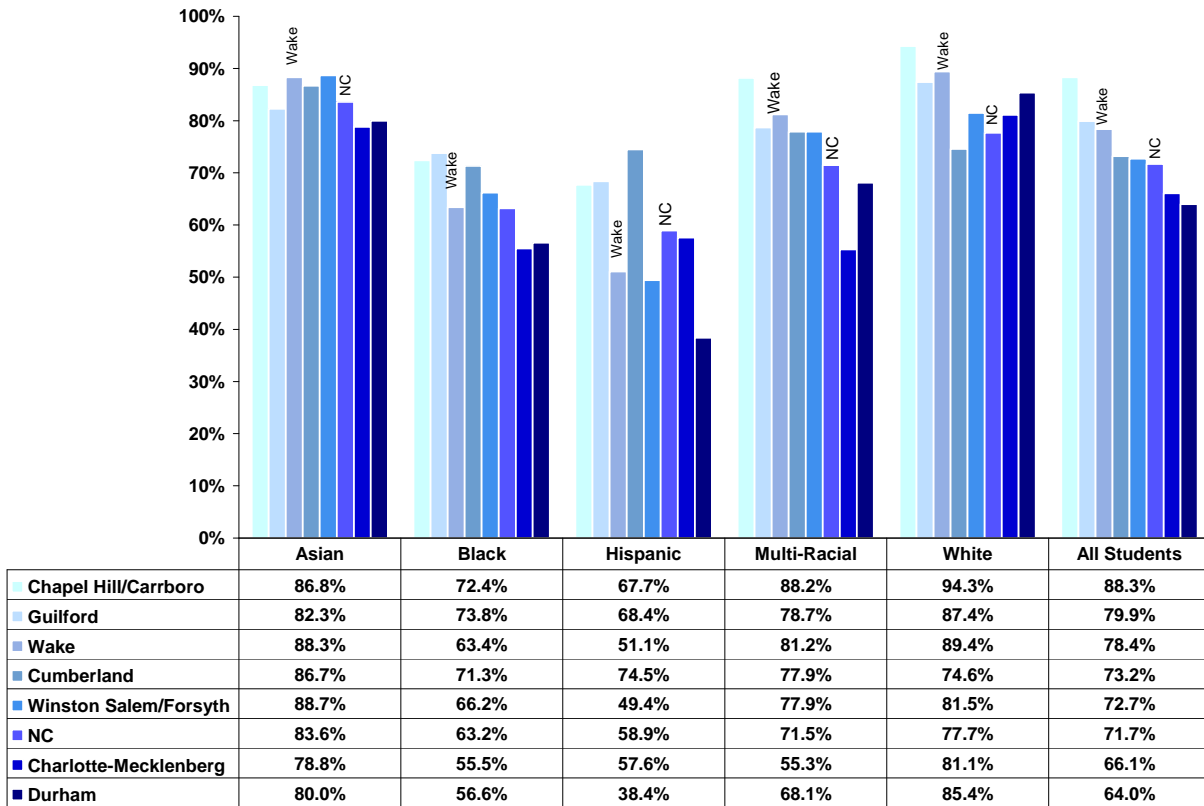
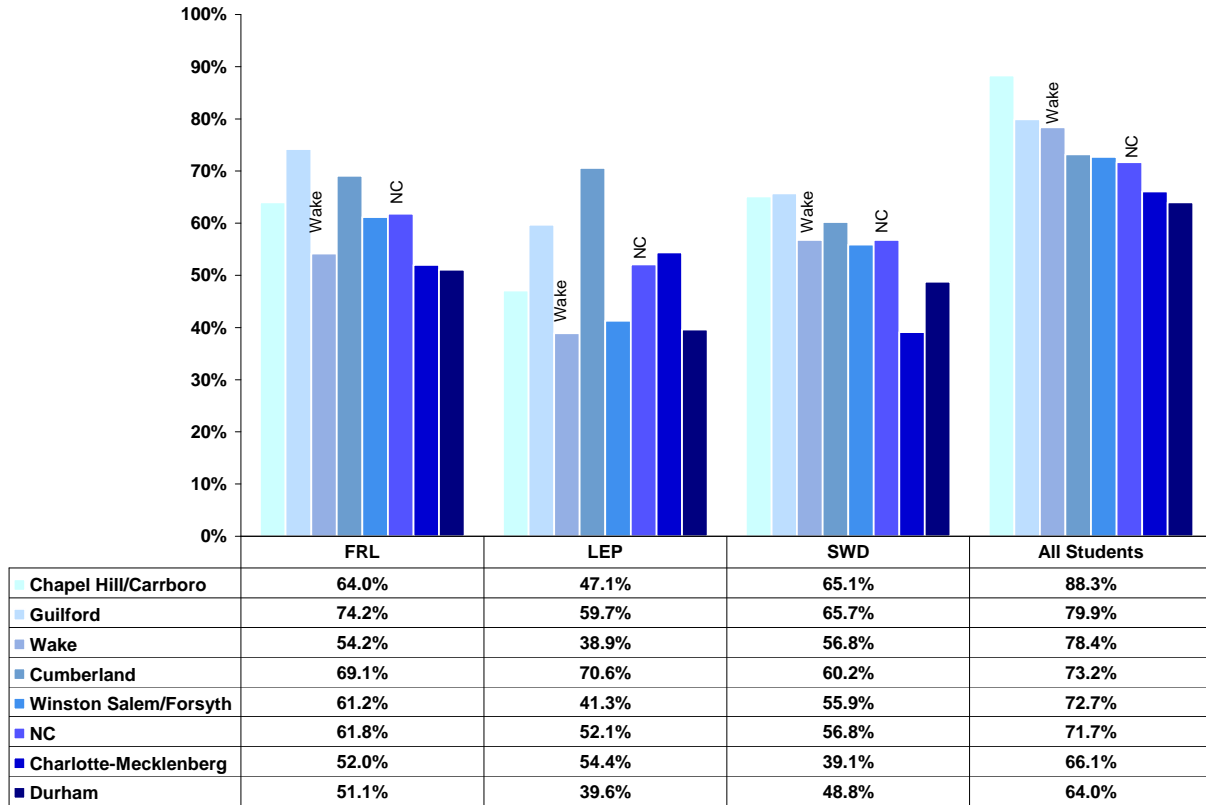


Figure 6
Graduation Rates by FRL, LEP, and SWD* Subgroups
for Selected School Districts and NC
2008-09



* FRL, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch
 LEP, students with limited English proficiency
 SWD, students with disabilities

Table 1

Four-year Graduation Rates by WCPSS High School, 2008-09

School/Unit	Rat
NC	71.7
WCPSS	78.4
Apex	90.2
Athens	75.8
Broughton	80.2
Cary	78.5
East Wake	85.2
East Wake Engineering	84.8
East Wake	84.0
East Wake	80.7
Enloe	85.5
Fuquay	83.0
Garne	71.8
Green Hope	94.0
Holly Springs	90.6
Knightdal	73.8
Leesville	87.5
Longview	13.3
Middle	80.4
Millbroo	72.6
Panther	96.6
Phillips	74.4
Sanderson	76.7
Southeast	80.9
Wake	86.7
Wakefield	85.0

Note: Rates are not calculated for high schools that did not have a graduating class in 2009.