

## Appendix 2: Is There Any Sign About the Prospects for On-Time High School Graduation Rates?

WICHE also looked at the numbers of 12th graders in fall 2020 compared to the number of ninth graders three years ago, in fall 2017 and then compared this to the ratio for the two most recent ninth-to-12th grade spans prior to the 2020-21 school year. To be clear, while this ratio is mathematically similar to a graduation rate indicator, it is not a cohort-adjusted indicator.

However, the overall ratio of 12th graders in fall 2020 compared to the number of ninth graders in fall 2017 was about one percentage point higher than the average of the previous two such ninth-to-12th grade ratios (i.e., it increased by one percentage point over these three years).<sup>33</sup> This ratio was higher in 38 of the 49 states and District of Columbia, on average by 1.2 percentage points.

### Ratio of 12th Graders to the Number of Ninth Graders Three Years Prior

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Total	91%	91%	92%
White	92%	92%	93%
Black	81%	82%	83%
Hispanic (any race)	91%	91%	92%
Asian	105%	104%	103%
Two or More Races	96%	97%	96%
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	89%	88%	87%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	85%	84%	84%

Source: WICHE analysis.

Increases in the ninth-to-12th grade ratios are also promising for some student populations of color, being at least as much as the observed overall increase. On the other hand, this ratio decreased over these three years for Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native students. This could be a concerning difference from what is observed overall.

The official cohort adjusted graduation rate would presumably be able to differentiate those

students who had affirmatively transferred out of their public schools (e.g., to homeschool or private schools) from those who stopped out or were unaccounted for, which is not possible from these fall headcount data. Still, this ratio ostensibly seems to be another indicator of the overall positive public high school enrollment trends even during the two school years impacted by COVID-19. Of course, these high-level indicators should be interpreted with caution, whether they indicate positive or negative change.