

District graduation hits historic high, beats state rate for 4th straight year

The gap between white and black students also narrowed

A record percentage of Alachua County Public Schools' students graduated in 2020.

According to the Florida Department of Education, which released graduation data today, 90.4% of local students graduated on time, compared to 89% in 2019. The district's rate is also higher than the state 2020 rate of 90%. It's the fourth straight year Alachua County Public Schools topped the Florida rate.

Overall, the district's graduation rate has increased from 78% to 90% in the last five years.



"We're definitely trending in a positive direction," said Dr. Carlee Simon, the Superintendent of Schools. "I want to congratulate the Class of 2020, which persevered under a difficult situation at the end of the last school year. Of course, credit also has to go to families, teachers and staff for their support of those seniors."

The district also posted gains for African-American students. The 2020 on-time graduation rate for African-American students in Alachua County was 84%, up from 80% in 2019. Over the last five years, the rate for local African-American students has increased by 23 percentage points. During that same period, the gap between white and African-American students has narrowed from 21 points to 10 points.

All the high schools operated by the district had total graduation rates of 93% and above, and all graduated at least 90% of their African-American students in 2020.

Newberry High School once again had the highest graduation rate, with 99% of its students graduating on time, including 97% of its African-American students.

Other groups of Alachua County Public School students also boosted their graduation rates in 2020. That includes Hispanic students (90% to 92%), students with disabilities (80% to 84%), students on free and reduced-price meals (81% to 85%) and English language learners (88% to 95%).

Because of COVID, Florida students were not able to take the standard state exams given at the end of each school year, some of which are required for graduation. However, in a typical year, fewer than 10 local seniors fail to graduate solely because of a test score. In 2020, the district graduated more than 1800 students.

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