

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

High school graduation rates

Educational attainment is one of the most reliable predictors of future income. High school graduates earn about \$8,400 more in annual wages than high school dropouts. How do the high school graduation rates in Madison and the state of Wisconsin compare to the nation? UW-Extension professor Andy Lewis says that Wisconsin typically ranks in the top three nationally in high school graduation rates (92 percent for the 2002-03 school year).

However, these averages mask real problems. In a 1998 national study of graduation rates, Wisconsin ranked last in graduating black students among the 39 states that reported graduation rates by race. Recent data from the 2002-03 school year suggest that Wisconsin has made progress since 1998 but also indicate significant gaps persist between races and between schools.

Since 1998, the graduation rate for black students in Wisconsin has risen from 55 percent to 63 percent compared to the graduation rate for white students, which has remained at about 95 percent. Information on graduation rates for specific communities, schools and ethnic groups is available at the UW-Extension Center for Community Economic Development Web: www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/indicate.html.