



Northwest Territories High School Graduation Rate 2021-22

Graduating high school is more critical today than it was even a generation ago. More and more employers are looking for job candidates who have finished high school. Statistics across Canada indicate that there is a strong relationship between not having a high school diploma and having a low income. Helping students achieve their high school diploma is therefore a key priority of the Northwest Territories (NWT) Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 (JK-12) education system.

In 2021, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) developed a new method for calculating the NWT graduation rate. Previously, the graduation rate in the NWT was calculated by dividing the number of students who enrolled in Grade 12 at the start of the academic year by the number of students who graduated before the end of that year. This was referred to as the Grade 12 Graduation Rate as it showed the percentage of Grade 12 students that go on to graduate within a year. While no graduation rate method is perfect, this approach to the graduation rate did not accurately count all students who graduated.

The new method, referred to as the [Six-Year High School Graduation Rate](#), reflects the Government of the Northwest Territories' philosophy that there are many paths to graduation beyond the traditional three-year time frame. Allowing students up to six years to graduate ensures that all students, no matter their circumstances, have a chance to be counted in the graduation rate.

What the results tell us

The Six-Year High School Graduation Rate is beginning to decline. We have work to do to improve graduation rates in the NWT.

In 2022, the Six-Year Graduation Rate for the NWT was 56% (Table 1).

When we look at it by community type, Yellowknife had the highest graduation rate, with 67% (Table 1).

The graduation rate in small communities was the lowest at 38% (Table 1).

This trend, of Yellowknife having the highest rate and small communities having the lowest, has been true for the last 10 years (Figure 1).

The Six-Year Graduation Rate had been steadily increasing over the last decade; but has remained steady in recent years. Yellowknife and small communities have both seen a decrease in their graduation rates since last year (Table 1).

Since the graduation rate allows students up to six years to complete high school, the group of students (cohort) represented in the 2022 rate started high school in the 2016-17 academic year. This means the COVID-19 pandemic would have impacted this cohort’s 4th, 5th, and 6th years since starting high school. As such, it’s possible the decreases seen in the graduation rates are related to the pandemic.

The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the Six-Year Graduation Rate increased in the 2021-22 academic year (Figure 2).

Table 1: Six-Year High School Graduation Rate by Community Type* (2013-2022)

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Northwest Territories	52%	52%	54%	57%	62%	57%	61%	58%	60%	56%
Small Communities	41%	38%	42%	40%	45%	44%	47%	43%	45%	38%
Regional Centres	50%	47%	50%	54%	65%	61%	53%	59%	55%	65%
Yellowknife	63%	67%	67%	73%	73%	66%	75%	69%	74%	67%

*Regional Centres include Inuvik, Hay River, and Fort Smith. Small Communities include all NWT communities outside of Regional Centres and Yellowknife.

Table 2: Six-Year High School Graduation Rate by Ethnicity (2013-2022)

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Indigenous	43%	38%	42%	46%	50%	47%	48%	46%	49%	42%
Non-Indigenous	74%	78%	79%	80%	84%	79%	84%	81%	81%	80%

Figure 1: Six-Year High School Graduation Rate by Community Type (2013-2022)

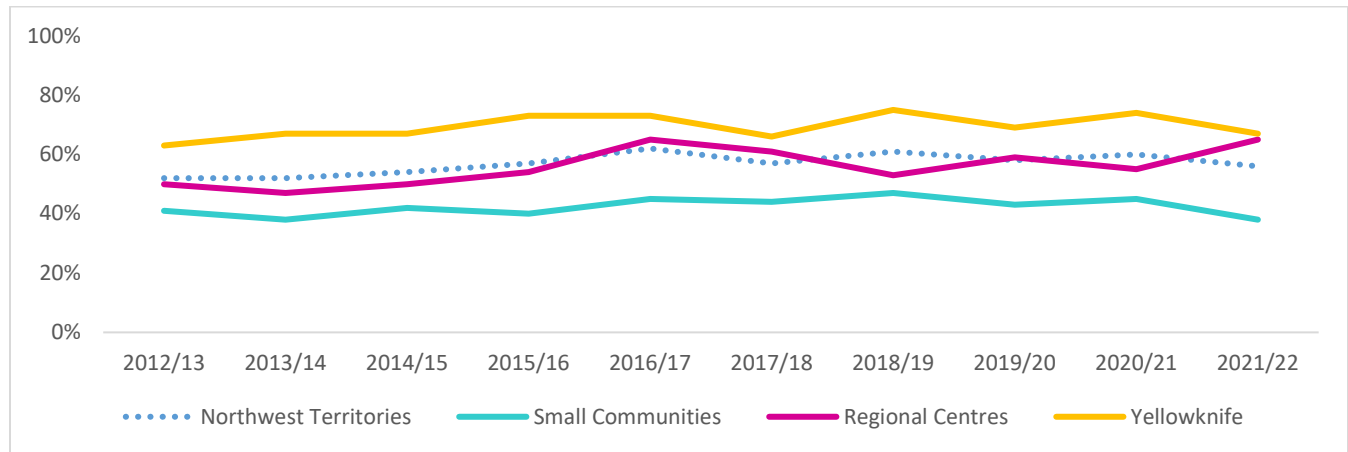
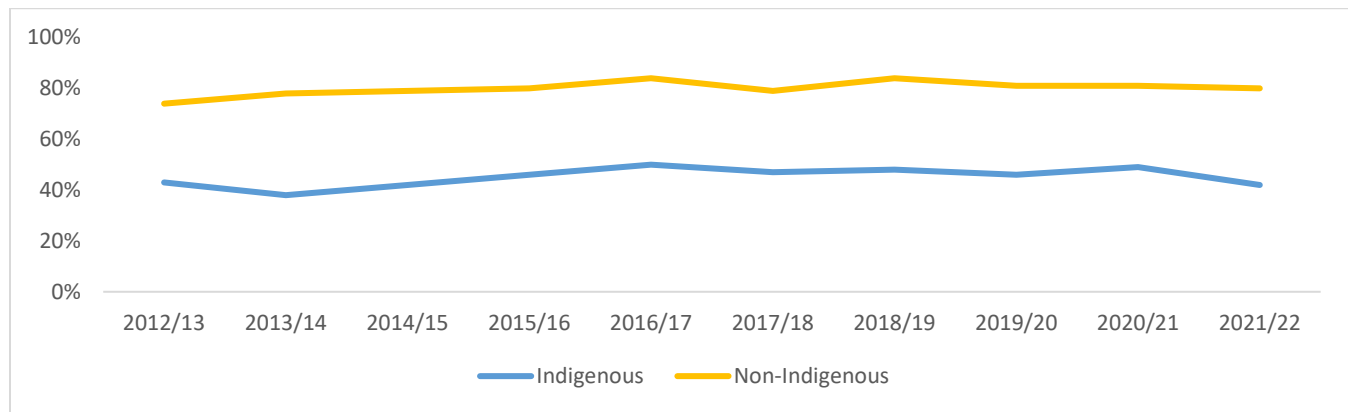


Figure 2: Six-Year High School Graduation Rate by Ethnicity (2013-2022)



In Summary

Graduation rates are important indicators of the overall effectiveness of the Northwest Territories education system. They are monitored annually and used to inform the department’s strategic planning and actions to improve student outcomes.

Graduation rates will continue to be shared with education partners, Indigenous Governments, and the public as the Government of the Northwest Territories continues its work to improve student outcomes across the NWT.