# Graduation in the United States 

## High School Completion Gains Momentum

Nearly 72 percent of all public school students in the nation graduated from high school with a regular diploma in the class of 2008, signaling a dramatic turnaround following two consecutive years of declines. Graduation rates also rose in three-quarters of the states. As the nation emerges from a two-year slump, the graduation rate has reached its highest level since the 1980 s.

Over the past decade, graduation improved by 6 percentage points, with all racial and ethnic groups posting solid improvements since the late 1990s. The largest increases were found among black and white students, whose graduation rates have risen by about eight and six percentage points respectively over this period. Gains for other minority students ranged between 4 and 5 points. Although all groups are improving, significant racial disparities persist nationwide, with a 29-percentage-point gap dividing Asian-American and Native American students, the groups with the highest and lowest graduation rates, respectively.

$\dagger$ Value not calculated because necessary data field(s) not reported in the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data and not provided by state education agency
$\ddagger$ Value not reported because of insufficient data for reliable estimate.
NOTE: The percentage point improvements for black students and white students listed in the introduction have been corrected from an earlier version.
SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2011. See Page 30 for more information about the methodology used to calculate graduation rates for this report.

