

***Alachua County Public Schools' graduation rate rises;  
dramatic increases for African-American students***

A higher percentage of Alachua County Public Schools students graduated on time in 2018, with a particularly significant increase in the graduation rate for the district's African-American students.

According to figures released by the Florida Department of Education, Alachua County's overall graduation rate for 2018 is 88%, up from 82.7% in 2017. That again puts the district ahead of the state average, which was 86.1 % this year.



The graduation rate for local African-American students rose from 68.3% in 2017 to 79.2% this year, an increase of nearly 11 percentage points. That means that the graduation gap between white and African American students fell from 21.7 percentage points to 13 percentage points in the span of one year. The graduation rate for white students also increased, from 90% to 92.2%.

“We’re very pleased that we were able to reduce the gap while still raising achievement for both white and African-American students,” said Superintendent Karen Clarke. “Throughout the 201718 school year, our district and school staff were hard at work implementing equitable strategies to boost the achievement of all our students. Those efforts have obviously paid off.”

Every high school in the district raised its graduation rate in 2018. Hawthorne High had the biggest increase, from 74.4% to 94.7%. The school with the highest graduation rate is Newberry High School, where 98.3% of students graduated on time.

Six of the seven high schools also saw increases in their African-American graduation rate. The most significant increase in that category was also at Hawthorne High School. One hundred percent of its African American students graduated on time in 2018, compared to 64.7% in 2017.

District officials point to a number of factors that contributed to the gains, including training for all teachers in creating culturally responsive classrooms, graduation coaches at larger high schools, strategies to reduce attendance and disciplinary issues that take students out of the classroom and a focus on getting and keeping all students on track to graduate on time beginning in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

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