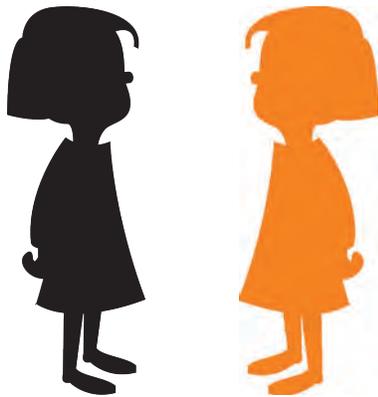


95%

of young children have at least one parent in the labor force, but there are only enough licensed child-care facilities for



1 of 2 kids

ages 0 to 8.



14% of high school students don't graduate on time.

Our values

A good education begins early. Access to high-quality early childhood and pre-kindergarten programs provides an important foundation for children as they move through their school years and into adulthood.

Children who are well educated are much more likely to become successful adults. Higher education is linked to higher income, higher job satisfaction, lower divorce rates and lower crime rates. By ensuring that all children have access to high-quality educational opportunities, we are investing in the future of our communities, our state and our economy.

Additional supports for educationally vulnerable children — such as special education, English language learning programs, and quality alternative education programs — help ensure that children with varying needs keep pace.

This section will provide data on early childhood education programs, child care facilities and subsidies, graduation rates, student characteristics, and school meals.

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Reading by the end of third grade matters.

But in 2011,

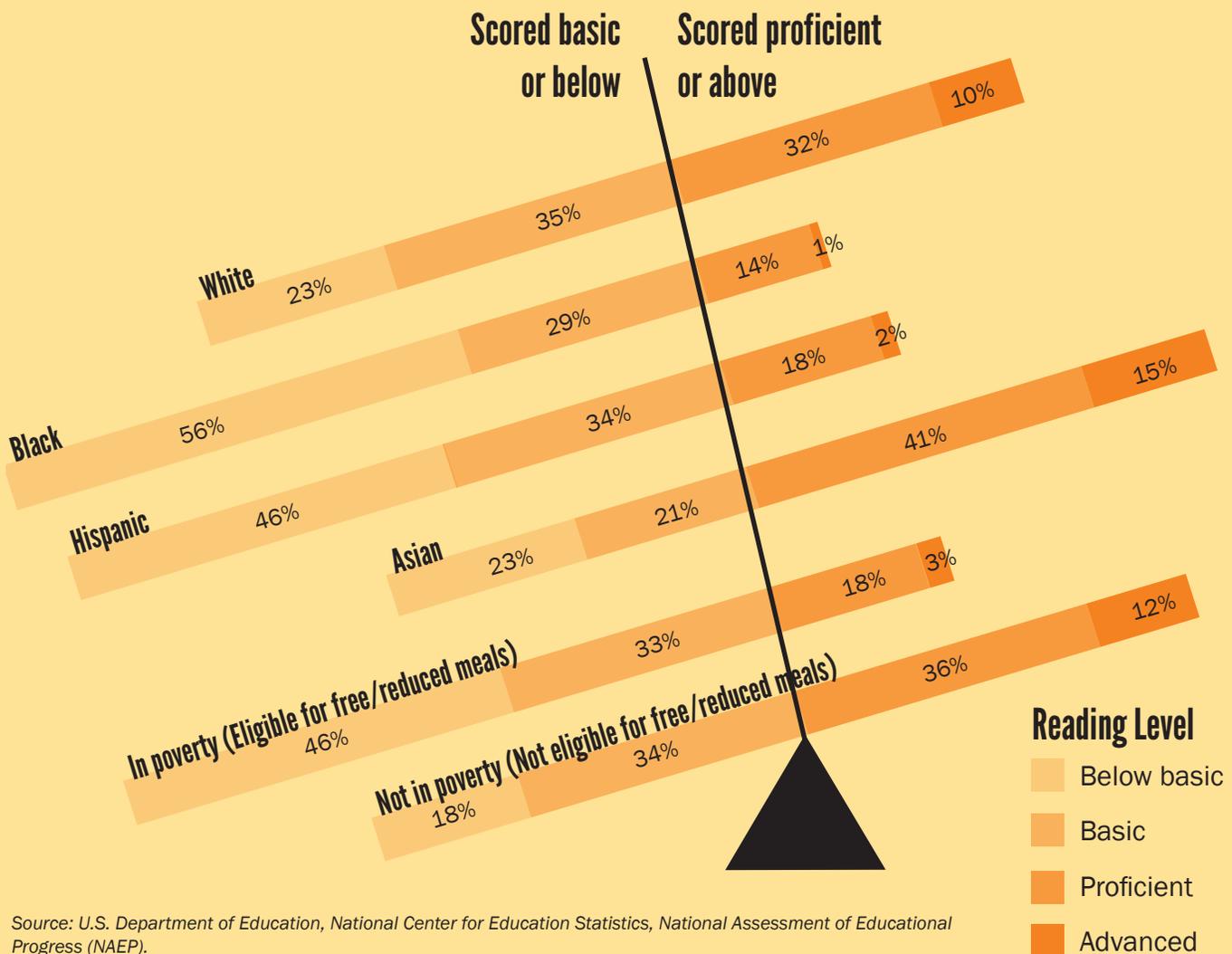
64%

of Nebraska kids didn't make the cut.¹

By the end of third grade, children should know how to read. That's because at the beginning of fourth grade, they'll begin *reading to learn*.

What does it matter if kids can't read by the end of third grade?

1. They won't understand up to half of the the printed fourth-grade curriculum.
2. Three-fourths of kids who are poor readers in grade 3 will be poor readers in high school.
3. Poor readers tend to have behavioral and social problems.
4. They're more likely to be held back.
5. They're less likely to graduate from high school.²



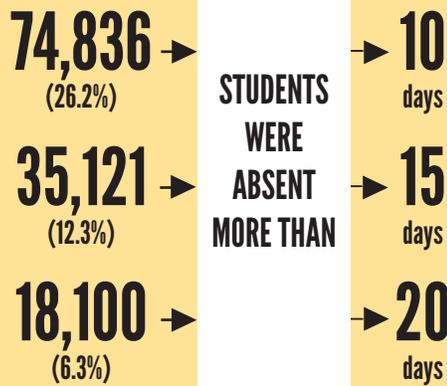
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

1. Defined as scoring at proficient or above. Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

2. Leila Fiester, Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters: A KIDS COUNT Special Report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, *The Annie E. Casey Foundation*, (2010).

Dropouts & absences

Absences



How many students dropped out during the 2010-2011 school year?

1,180 boys
+ 757 girls

1,937 students

918

students in grades
7-12 were expelled

Source of all data in this column:
Nebraska Department of Education.

Spotlight on: Truancy

By Amor Habbab, *Voices for Children in Nebraska*

In 2010, the Nebraska Legislature passed a bill intended to address truancy. Under LB 800, Nebraska schools had to report children who had missed 20 days of school, without differentiating between excused and unexcused absences, to the county attorney. The tougher restrictions raised concern within the legal system.¹ While some educators noted success related to the bill, other complaints came from parents whose children had illnesses, chronic diseases, or were absent due to religious holidays and special education plans.²

Following these concerns, Sen. Brad Ashford, who introduced LB 800, introduced LB 933 in 2012. The new bill, he said, “would amend the law on excessive absenteeism to make the process less burdensome on families.”³ The bill passed.

Under LB 933, after a child has been absent for 20 days, the school attendance officer or any other school authority, must file a report to the county attorney accompanied by one of these statements:

- Absences are due to documented illness or some other reason determined to be an excused absence by the school;
- School needs more time to work with the student prior to intervention by the county attorney; and
- The school has used all reasonable efforts to resolve the student’s excessive absenteeism without success and recommends county attorney intervention.⁴

Under these provisions, all school districts must have a written policy on excessive absenteeism and define excused and unexcused absences. This policy should have provisions indicating how the school and the county attorney will handle a child who has been absent due to a documented illness.

Schools are expected to help the student decrease absenteeism by:

- Having one or two meetings with the child, his or her parent or guardian, and a social worker or other school staff, trying to find solutions to the problem of excessive absenteeism;
- Providing educational counseling that will help the child enroll in an alternative educational program that matches the behavioral needs of the child;
- Providing educational evaluation that can include psychological testing to analyze the causes of absenteeism; and
- Investigating the causes of excessive absenteeism by the school. If the child and his or her family need services, the school should provide a referral to community agencies.⁵

1. Stoddard, Martha. “Nebraska goes own way on truancy laws.” *Omaha World-Herald* (October 2, 2012).

2. Young, JoAnne. “Some parents unhappy with Nebraska’s truancy law, but officials say it’s working.” *Lincoln Journal-Star* (December 26, 2012).

3. Nebraska Legislative Bill 933, Statement of Intent, February 03, 2012.

4. Nebraska Legislative Bill 933.

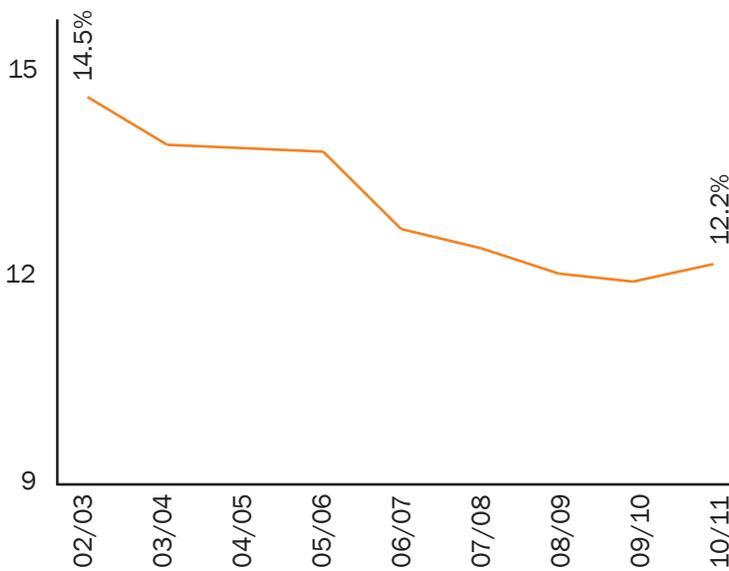
5. *Ibid.*

Student characteristics & graduation

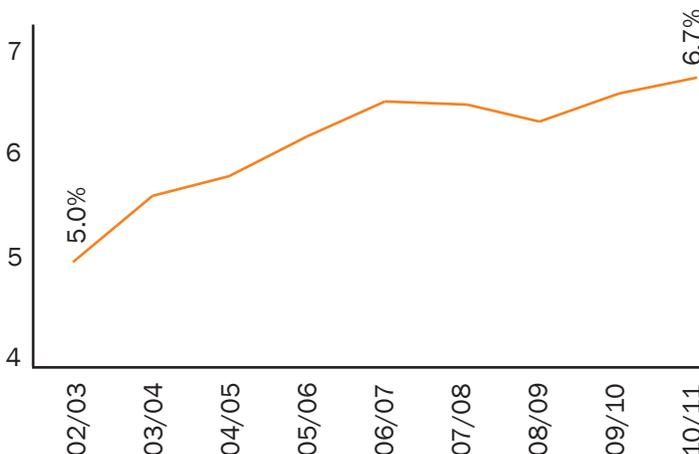
Number of students who attended home school in 2002/03 - 2010/11



Percentage of students who were highly mobile in 2002/03 - 2010/11



Percentage of students who were English language learners in 2002/03 - 2010/11



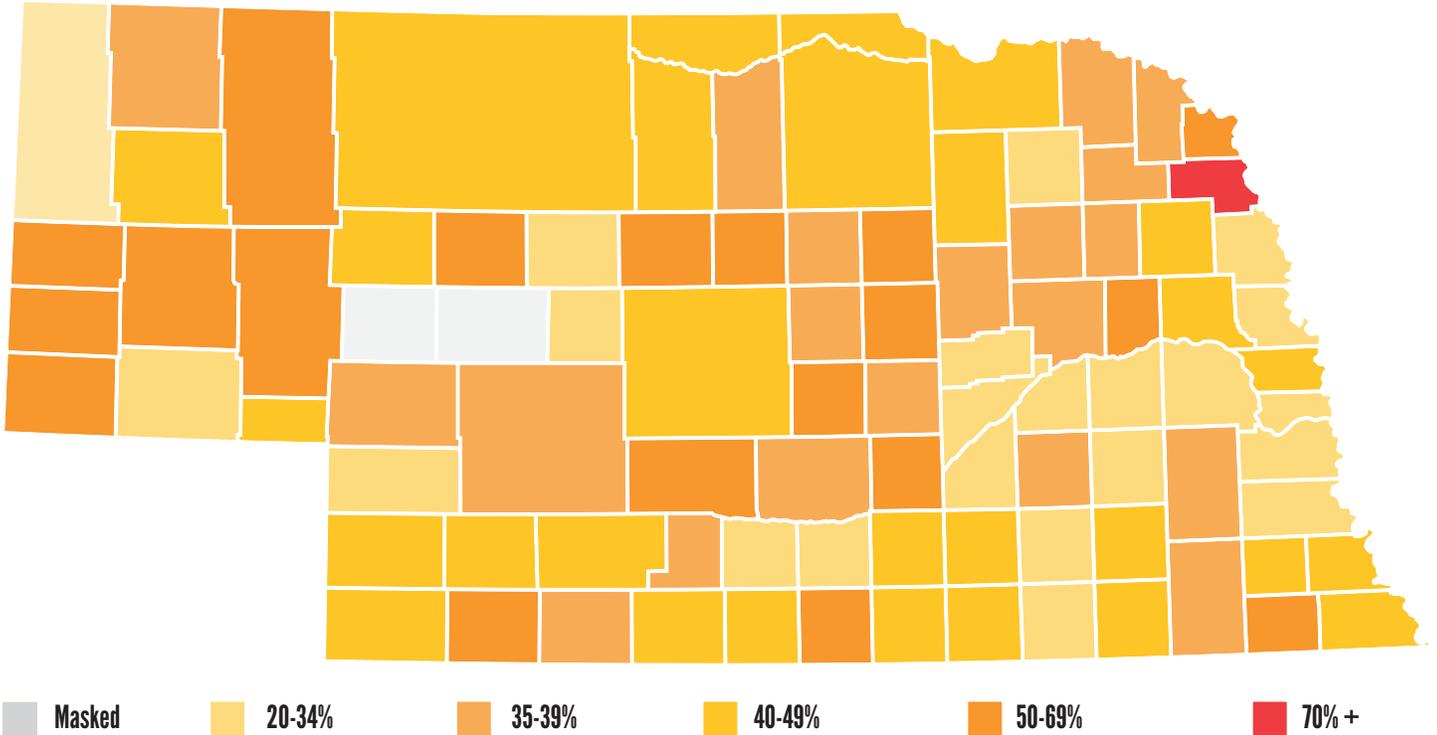
Graduation rates by race and ethnicity in 2011



Source of all data on this page:
Nebraska Department of Education.

School meals

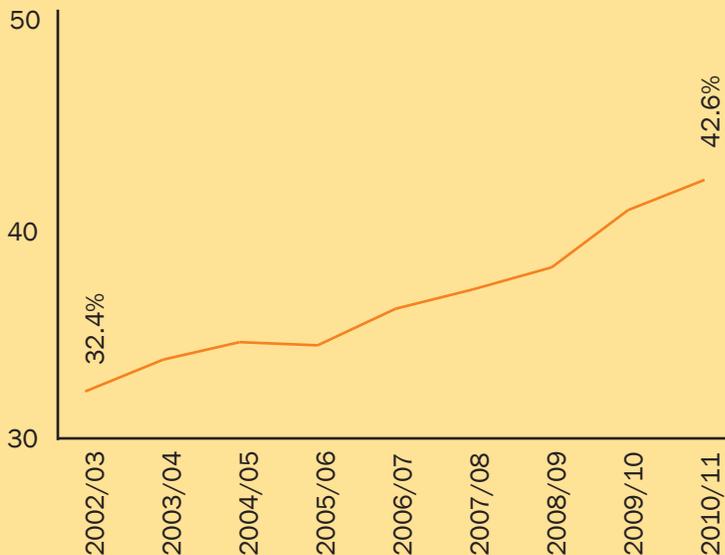
Students eligible for free and reduced meals during the 2010-2011 school year



Note: Data are masked when fewer than 10 or more than 99% of students participate.

130,814
students were eligible for free and reduced meals in 2010-2011

Percentage of students eligible for free and reduced school meals in 2002/03 - 2010/11



MEAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Breakfast	Lunch
278 districts	426 districts
761 sites	1,022 sites

Source of all data on this page is Nebraska Department of Education.