

Education Trends

NORTH DAKOTA

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Education Trends Summary

- In 2021, North Dakota had the second lowest percentage of 3 and 4 year old children enrolled in preschool among the 50 states.
- Achievement scores in English Language Arts/Literacy fell for North Dakota 3rd graders in 2021 as compared to pre-pandemic years.
- Achievement scores in math decreased for North Dakota 8th graders in 2021 as compared to pre-pandemic years.
- Large racial and income gaps in academic achievement continue to exist in North Dakota as related to 3rd grade English Language Arts/Literacy and 8th grade math scores.
- High school graduation rates have been fairly constant in North Dakota. Fairly large disparities in graduation rates of different racial and ethnic groups continue to exist.
- The percentage of adults (age 25 and older) with postsecondary education in North Dakota increased from 2000 to 2021. Differences in educational attainment exist by racial and ethnic group and poverty status.

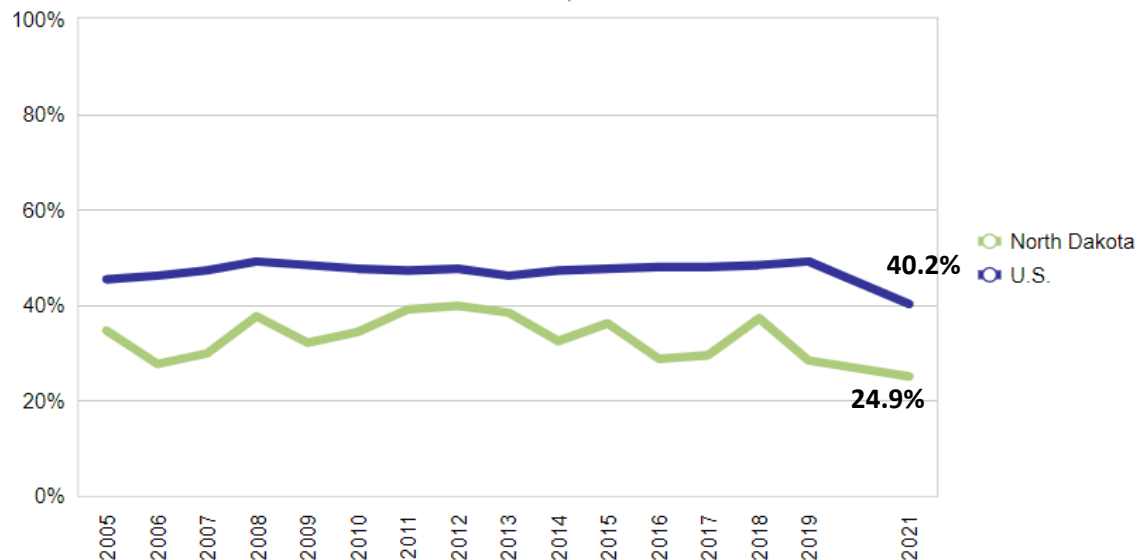
Preschool enrollment

Preschool programs include organized childcare programs offering educational experiences for children during the years preceding kindergarten. The percentage of 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in preschool programs in North Dakota has historically trended below the national average.

In 2021, 24.9 percent of children ages 3 and 4 were enrolled in preschool in North Dakota; the national average in 2021 was 40.2 percent.

In 2021, North Dakota had second to the lowest percentage of 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in preschool among the 50 states (rank 49).

Percent of 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in preschool
North Dakota and U.S., 2005-2021



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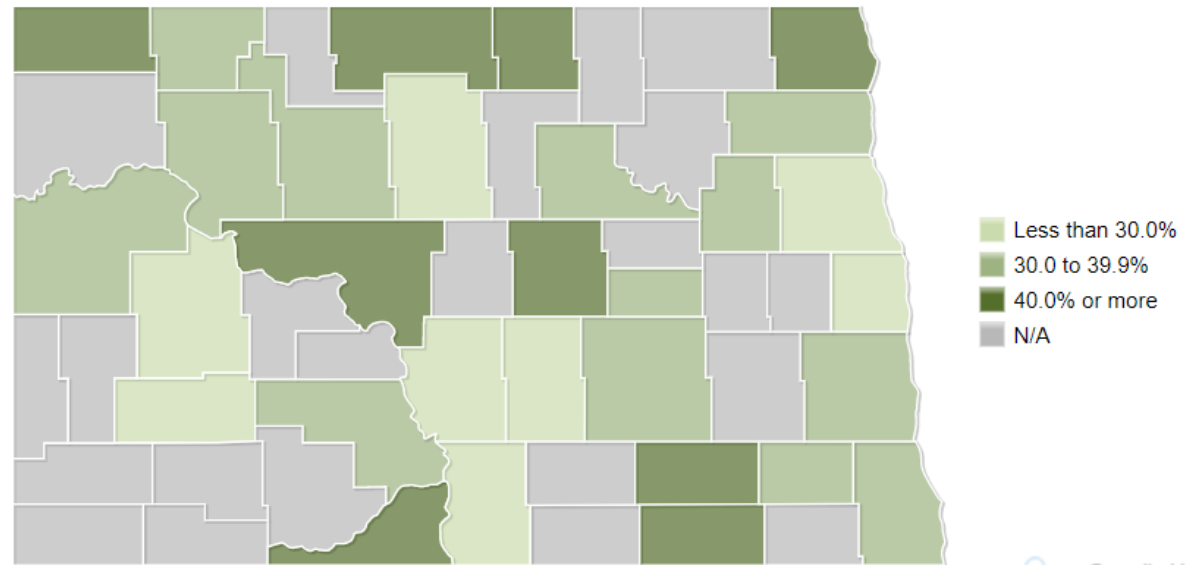
Preschool enrollment by county

Preschool enrollment varies greatly by county. In 2020, nine counties in North Dakota had enrollment higher than the national average (40 percent), with LaMoure County having the highest percent of 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in preschool at 63.1 percent.

Eight counties had less than 30 percent of 3 and 4 year old children enrolled in preschool. Data for 23 counties was suppressed due to data unavailability or low number of cases recorded during the time period (2016-2020).

Percent of 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in preschool

By county, North Dakota, 2016-2020



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3rd grade reading scores

Only a little over one-third of North Dakota's students were achieving standards in 3rd grade English Language Arts/Literacy in 2021 (28.6% meeting standards and 9.8% exceeding standards, totaling 38.4% achieving).

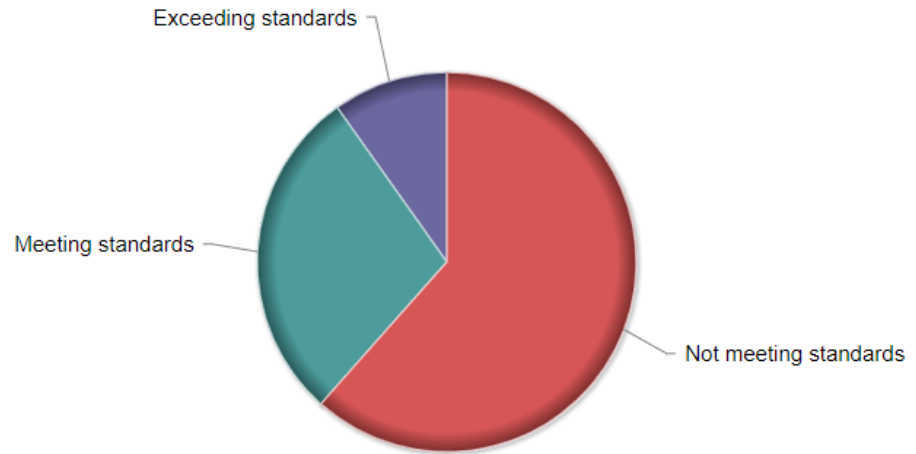
Notes:

The North Dakota State Assessments are standards-based tests that measure how well students have mastered the challenging ND state content standards. The NDSA tests report student achievement at the following four levels:

1. Advanced. Demonstrates exemplary understanding and exceeds expected level of performance.
 2. Proficient. Demonstrates understanding and meets expected level of performance.
 3. Partially Proficient. Demonstrates an emerging or developing level of understanding and performance.
 4. Novice. Attempt made; however, lack of understanding and performance is evident.
- Achieving standards represent Proficient and Advanced achievement levels;
Exceeding standards represent Advanced achievement levels;
Meeting standards represent Proficient achievement levels;
Not meeting standards represent Novice and Partially proficient achievement levels.

3rd grade students by achievement of English Language Arts/Literacy standards

North Dakota, 2021



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3rd grade reading scores

Achievement scores in English Language Arts/Literacy remained consistent for North Dakota 3rd graders from 2015 to 2019 and decreased in 2021 due to the pandemic.

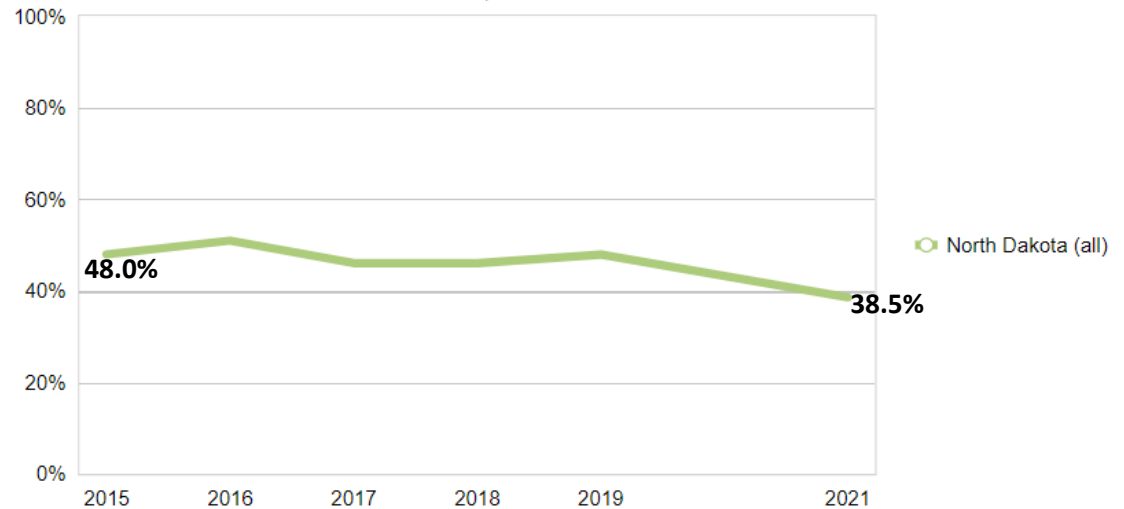
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3rd grade students achieving reading/English Language Arts/Literacy standards

North Dakota, 2015-2021



Compiled by
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3rd grade reading scores

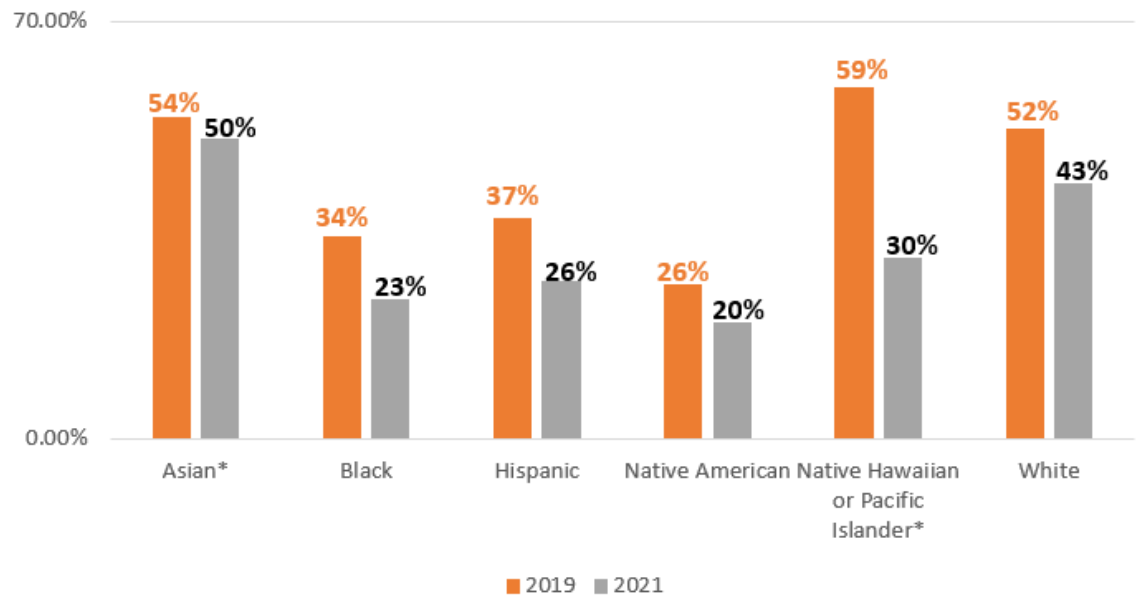
North Dakota's students have been impacted by the pandemic regardless of race and ethnicity. The percent of 3rd grade students achieving [English Language Arts \(ELA\)](#) standards decreased for all race and ethnicity groups, especially for Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Black students.

Note:

Achieving standards represent Proficient and Advanced achievement levels:

1. Advanced. Demonstrates exemplary understanding and exceeds expected level of performance.
2. Proficient. Demonstrates understanding and meets expected level of performance.

3rd grade students achieving reading standards by racial and ethnic group
North Dakota, 2019 and 2021



*The source provides an interval for achievement rates for some smaller groups; the data displayed here are the average of the end points of the interval.

3rd grade reading scores

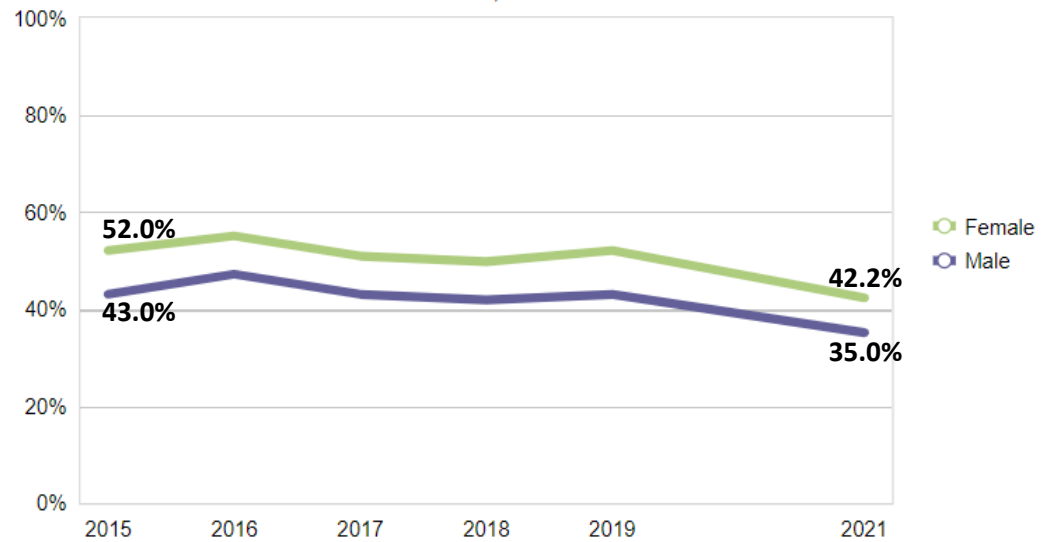
Female students consistently performed better than male students at the North Dakota State English Language Arts (ELA) assessment tests administered to 3rd graders over the last 6 years. The gap remained uniform from 2015 to 2021.

In 2021, 42 percent of female and 35 percent of male 3rd grade students achieved the ELA standards.

Note:

- Achieving standards represent Proficient and Advanced achievement levels:
1. Advanced. Demonstrates exemplary understanding and exceeds expected level of performance.
 2. Proficient. Demonstrates understanding and meets expected level of performance.

3rd grade students achieving reading/ English Language Arts/Literacy standards by gender
North Dakota, 2015-2021



3rd grade reading scores

The percentage of 3rd grade students achieving English Language Arts (ELA) standards who live in moderate and high income households was almost double than the percentage of low income students achieving ELA standards in 2021 (46% and 24%, respectively). The gap remained consistent from 2015 to 2021.

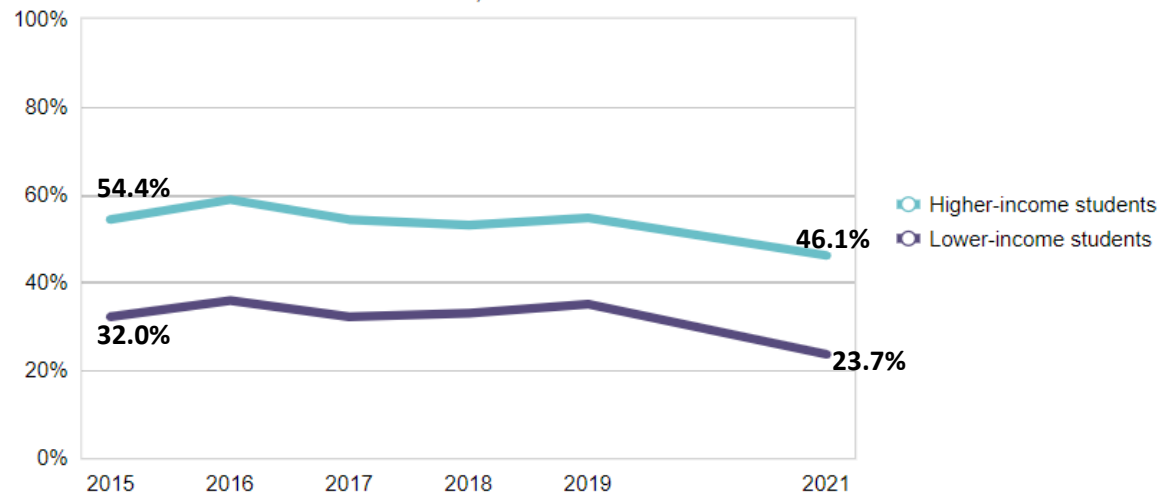
Note:

Achieving standards represent Proficient and Advanced achievement levels:

1. Advanced. Demonstrates exemplary understanding and exceeds expected level of performance.
2. Proficient. Demonstrates understanding and meets expected level of performance.

3rd grade students achieving reading/English Language Arts/Literacy standards by income

North Dakota, 2015-2021



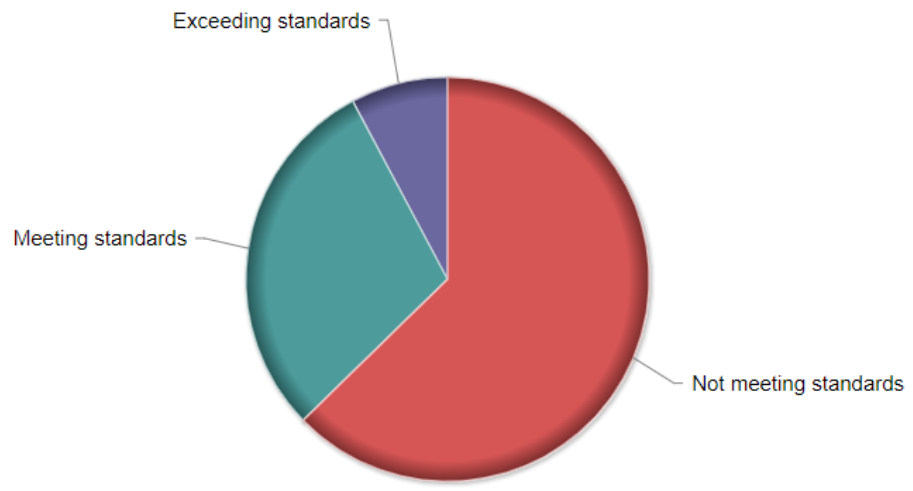
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8th grade math scores

Only a little over one-third of North Dakota 8th grade students were achieving standards in math in 2021 (29.5% meeting standards and 7.8% exceeding standards, totaling 37.3% achieving). The remaining 62.7 percent of 8th graders were not meeting math standards in 2021.

Notes:
The North Dakota State Assessments are standards-based tests that measure how well students have mastered the challenging ND state content standards. The NDSA tests report student achievement at the following four levels:
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4. Novice. Attempt made; however, lack of understanding and performance is evident.
Achieving standards represent Proficient and Advanced achievement levels:
Exceeding standards represent Advanced achievement levels;
Meeting standards represent Proficient achievement levels;
Not meeting standards represent Novice and Partially proficient achievement levels.

8th grade students by level of math achievement
North Dakota, 2021



Compiled by
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8th grade math scores

Compared to 2019, the percentage of 8th graders who were achieving math standards decreased by 10 percentage points in 2021 (47% and 37%, respectively).

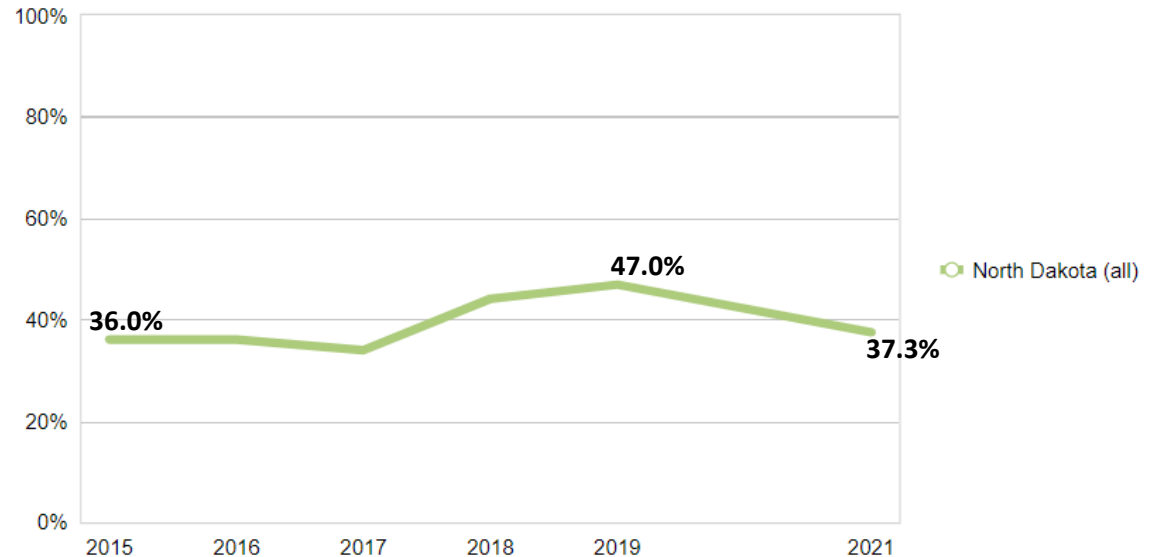
Note:

Achieving standards represent Proficient and Advanced achievement levels:

1. Advanced. Demonstrates exemplary understanding and exceeds expected level of performance.
2. Proficient. Demonstrates understanding and meets expected level of performance.

8th grade students achieving math standards

North Dakota, 2015-2021



Compiled by
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8th grade math scores

In 2021, 46.5 percent of [Asian](#) students and 42.6 percent of [White](#) North Dakota 8th grade students achieved math standards, compared to 22.0 percent of [Hispanic](#) students, 13.7 percent of [Native American](#) students, and 18.2 percent of [Black](#) students.

After increasing from 2015 to 2019, the percentage of Native American students achieving 8th grade Math scores decreased drastically from 23.0 percent in 2019 to 13.7 percent in 2021.

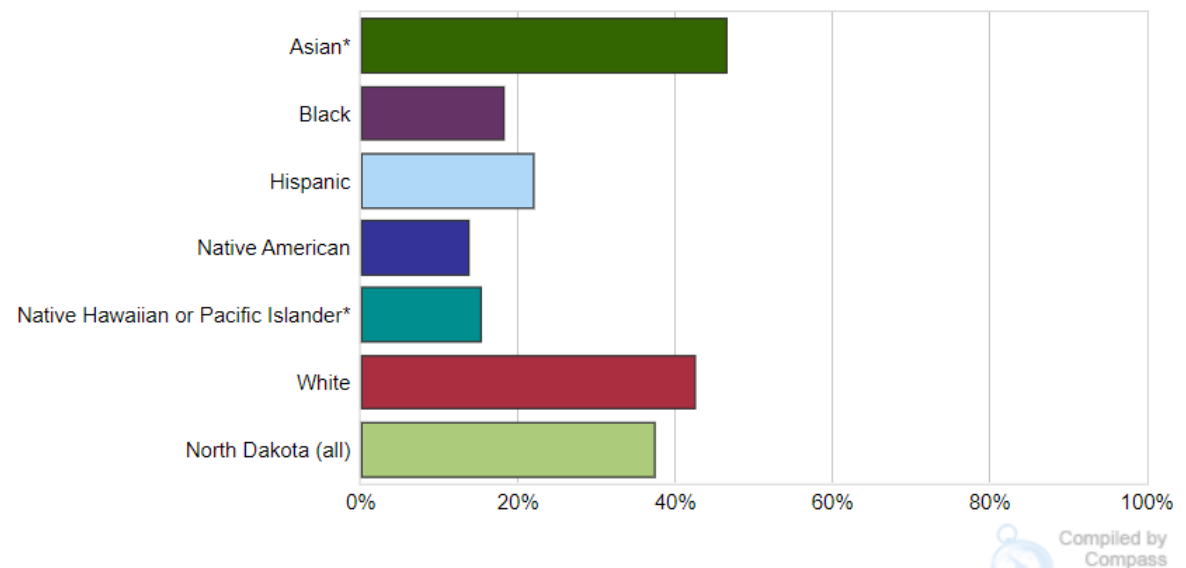
Note:

Achieving standards represent Proficient and Advanced achievement levels:

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8th grade students achieving math standards by racial and ethnic group

North Dakota, 2021



8th grade math scores

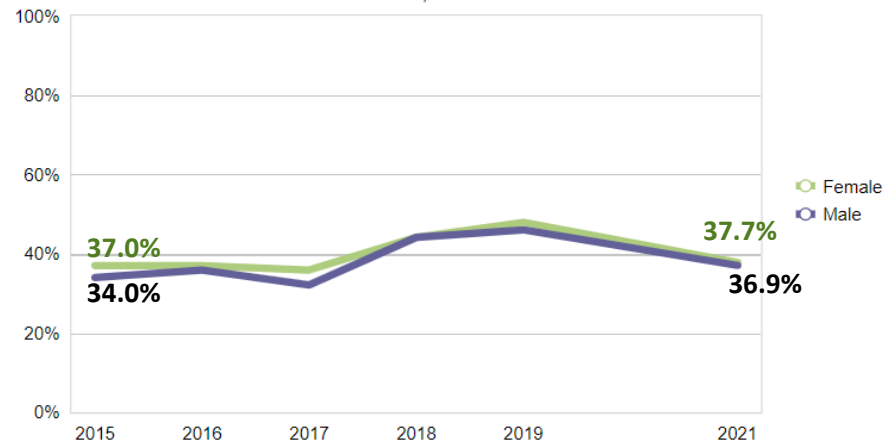
The percentage for both male and female 8th grade students in North Dakota who achieved math standards improved from 2015 to 2019 and decreased in 2021.

Note:

Achieving standards represent Proficient and Advanced achievement levels:

1. Advanced. Demonstrates exemplary understanding and exceeds expected level of performance.
2. Proficient. Demonstrates understanding and meets expected level of performance.

8th grade students achieving math standards by gender
North Dakota, 2015-2021



Compiled by
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8th grade math scores

The percentage of 8th grade students achieving math standards who live in moderate and high income households was double the percentage of low income students achieving math standards in 2021 (44% and 22%, respectively). While both groups improved their math scores, the gap has remained about the same from 2015 to 2021.

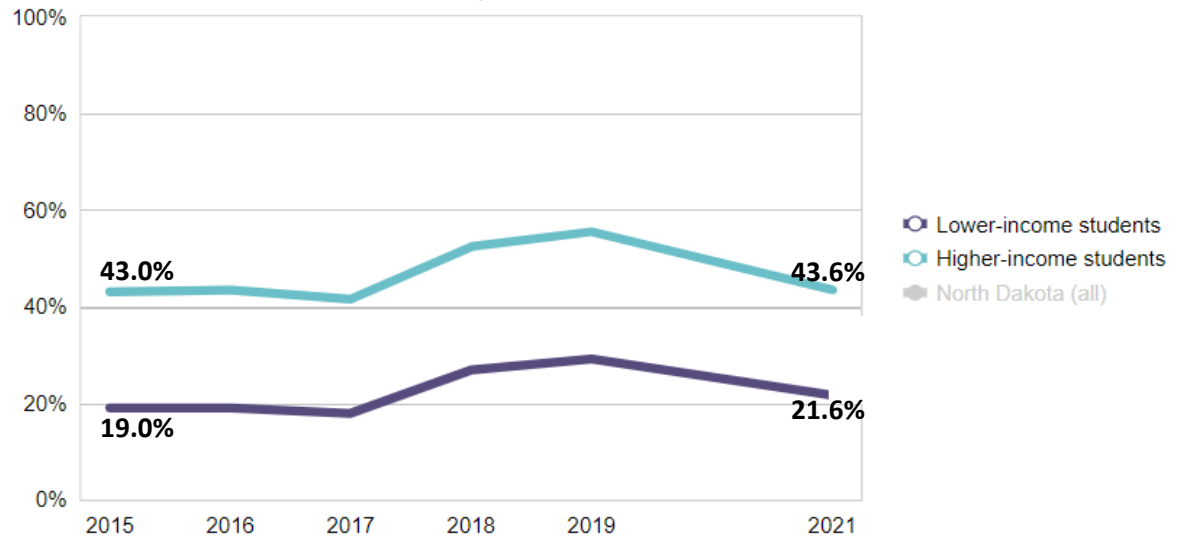
Note:

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8th grade students achieving math standards by income

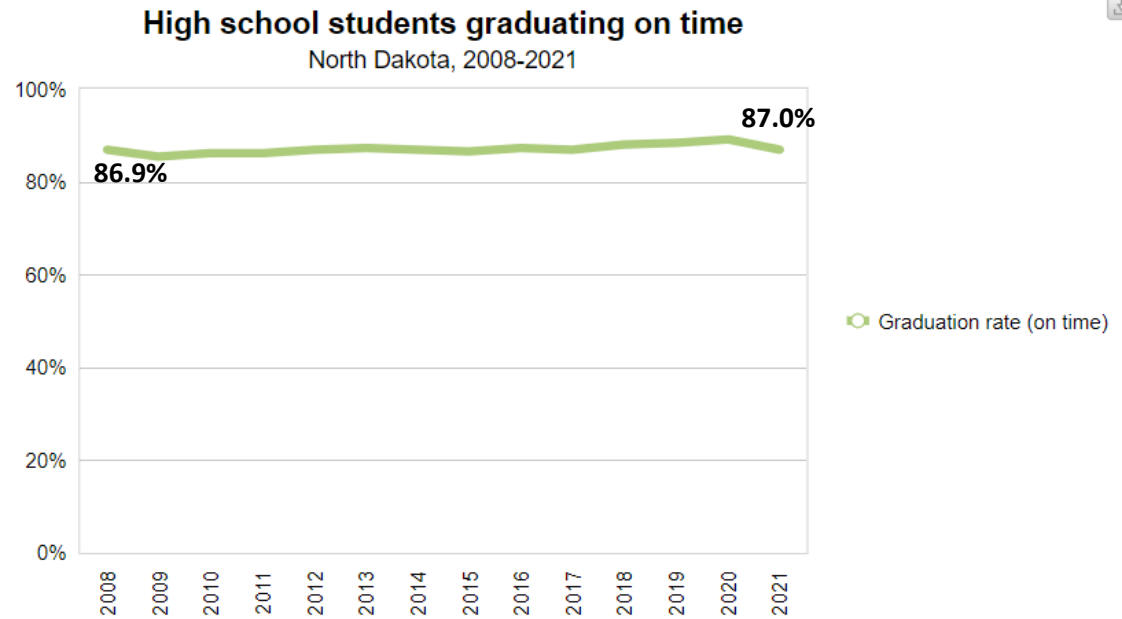
North Dakota, 2015-2021



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High school graduation

The percentage of students graduating on time in North Dakota have remained fairly stable over the past 13 years, from 86.9 percent in 2008 and 87.0 percent in 2021.

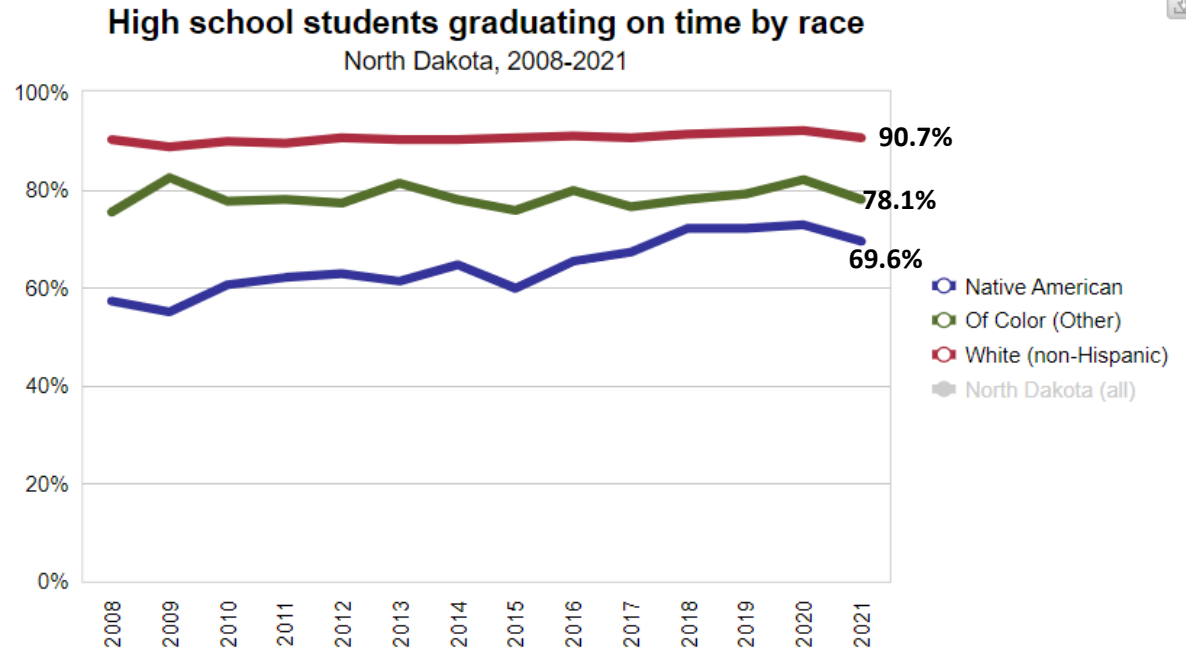


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High school graduation

Racial gaps in the high school graduation rate continue to persist in North Dakota. In 2021, 69.6 percent of Native American students and 78.1 percent students of color (Asian, Black, and Hispanic) graduated on-time, as compared to 90.7 percent of White (non-Hispanic) students.

Although racial gaps persist, they are slightly shrinking, especially for Native American students.

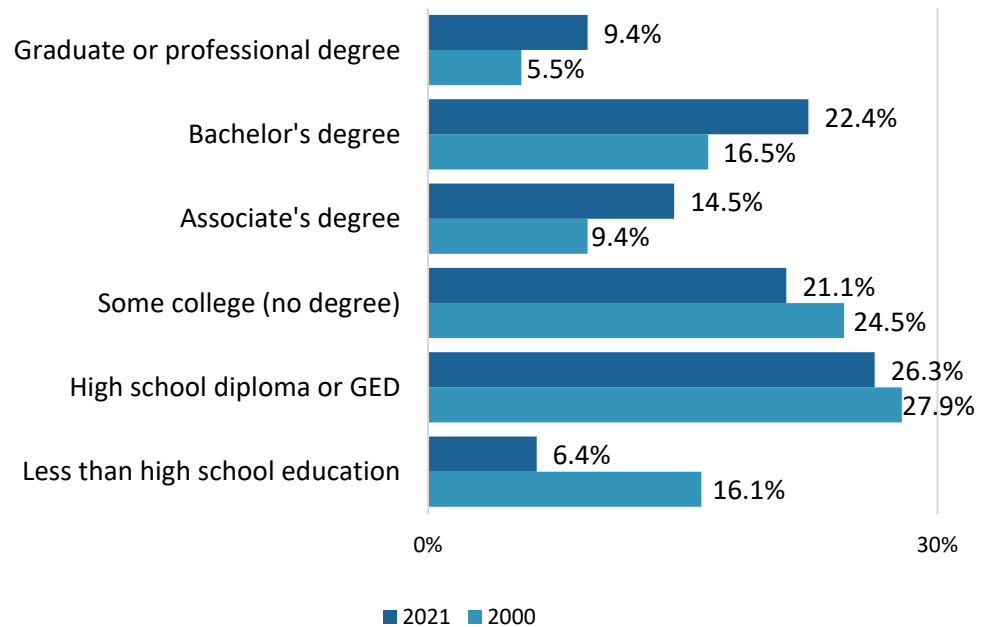


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Educational attainment

Educational attainment of North Dakota residents age 25 and older improved from 2000 to 2021 (the percentage of residents with lower education decreased and the percentage of those with higher education decreased).

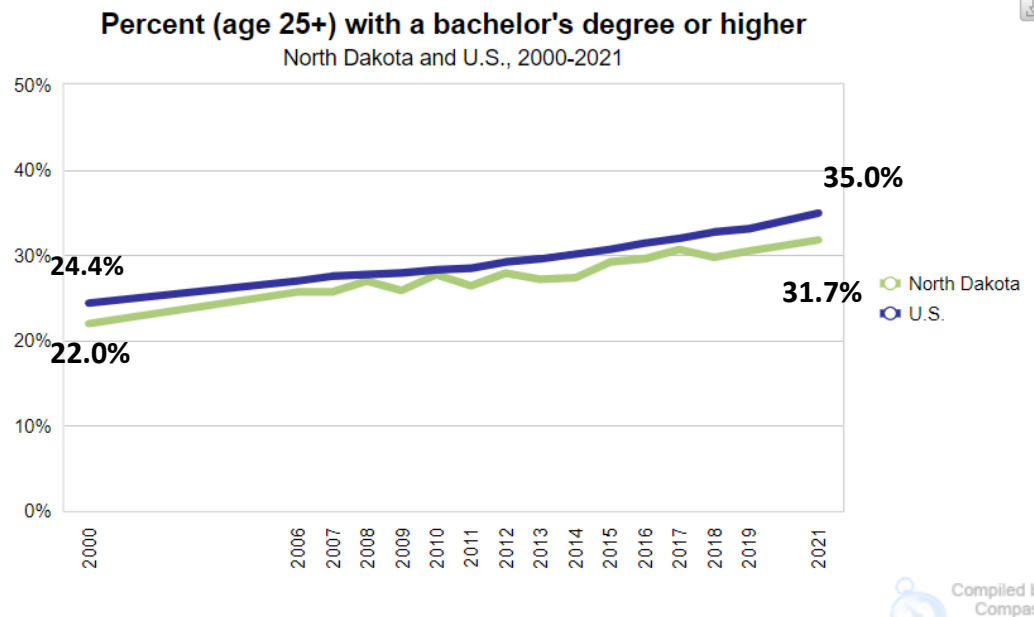
Educational attainment of adults (age 25 and older)
North Dakota, 2000 and 2021



Adults with a bachelor's degree or higher

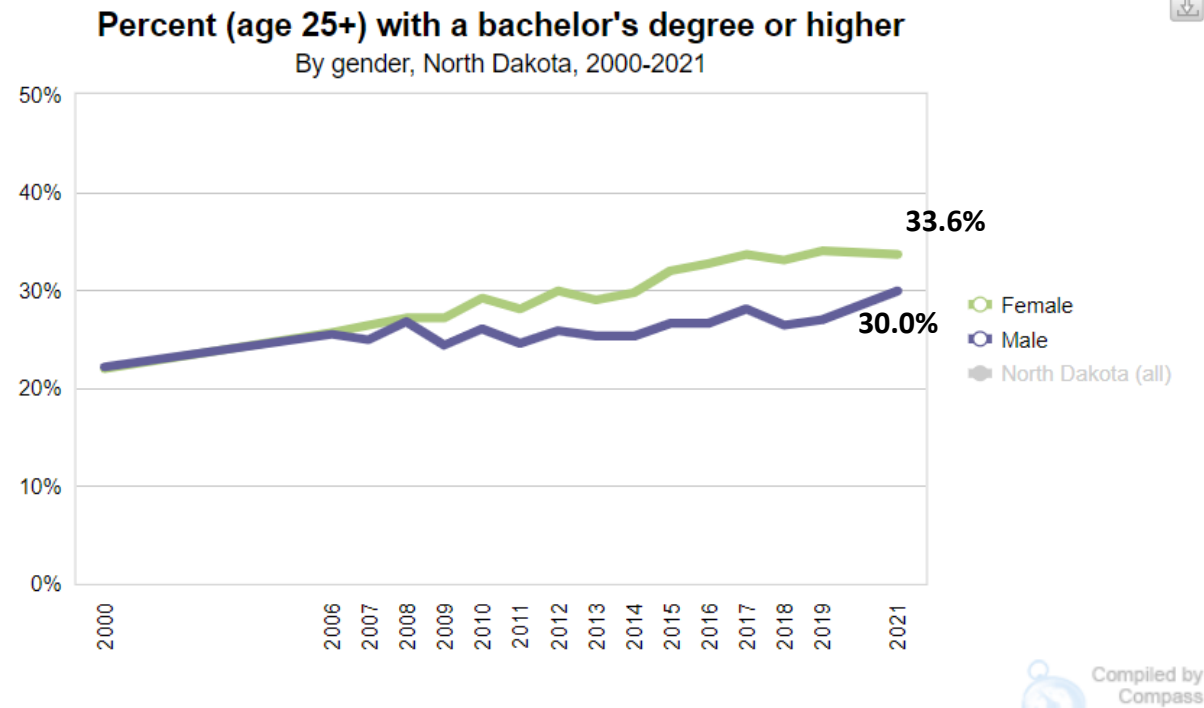
North Dakota's percentage of adults (age 25 and older) holding a bachelor's degree or higher increased from 22.0 percent in 2000 to 31.7 percent in 2021.

In 2021, North Dakota ranked 33rd among the 50 states (from highest to lowest percent) for the percentage of adults holding a bachelor's degree or higher.



Adults with a bachelor's degree or higher

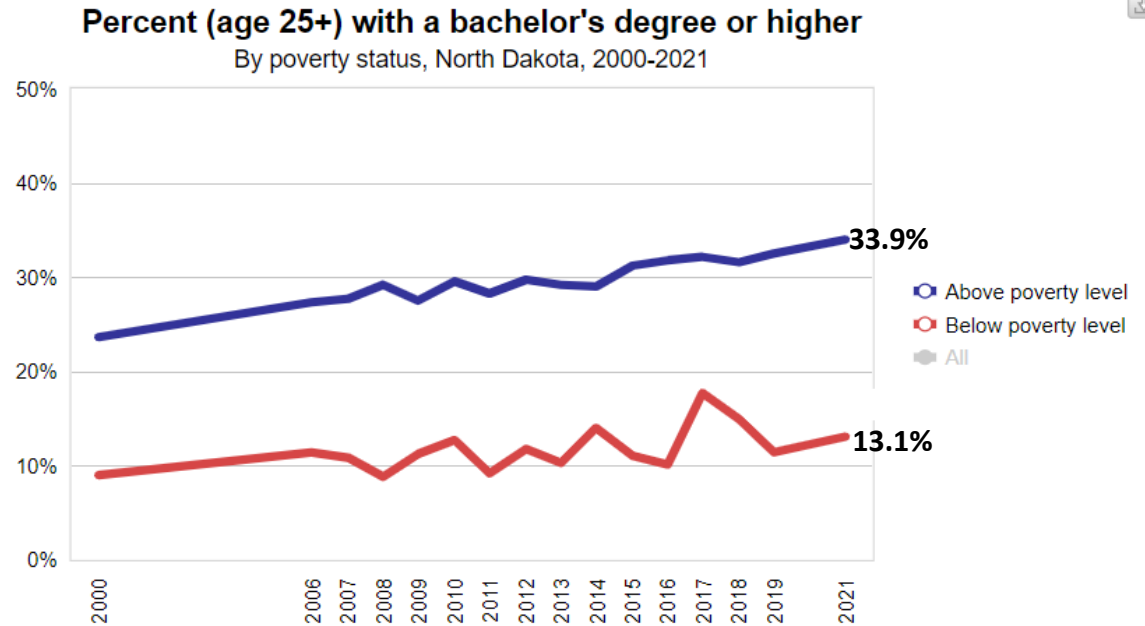
Since 2007, female in North Dakota have been more likely than male to have a bachelor's degree or higher. This trend continued into 2021 with 33.6 percent of female and 30.0 percent of male holding a bachelor's degree or higher.



Adults with a bachelor's degree or higher

There continues to be a large gap in [educational attainment](#) by poverty level in North Dakota.

The percentage of adults (age 25 and older) with a bachelor's degree or higher above the poverty level is almost three times the percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree below the poverty level in 2021 (33.9% and 13.1%, respectively).



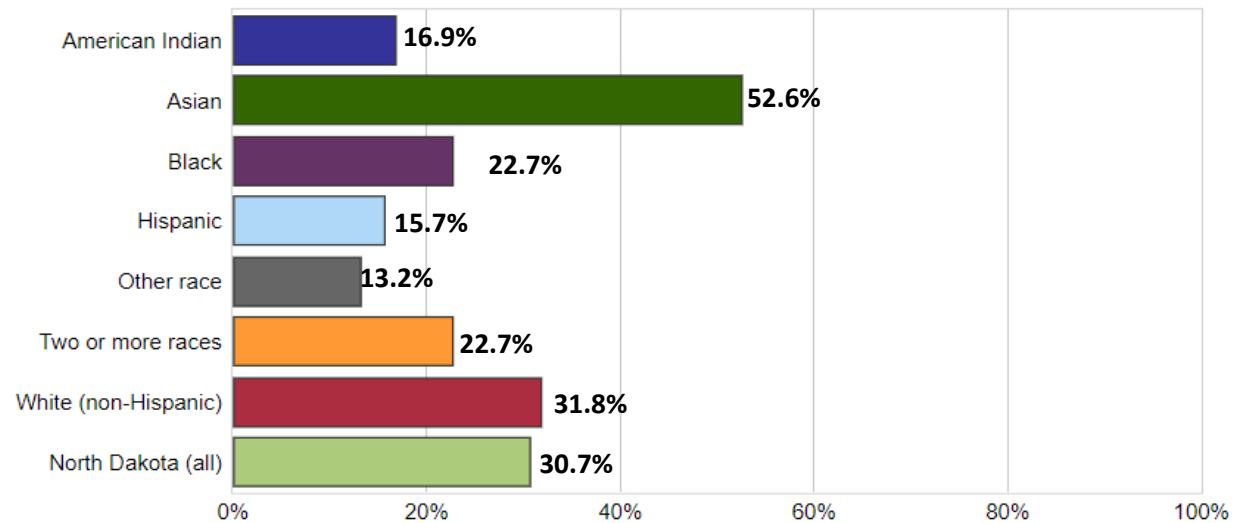
Adults with a bachelor's degree or higher

Gaps in educational attainment by racial and ethnic groups persist, especially for American Indian and Hispanic adults.

Asian adults have the highest percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher. In 2021, more than half (52.6%) of Asians had at least a bachelor's degree, as compared to 31.8 percent non-Hispanic White, 22.7 percent Black, 15.7 percent Hispanic, and 16.9 percent American Indian.

Percent (age 25+) with a bachelor's degree or higher by racial and ethnic group

North Dakota, 2016-2020



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