Today's report: The city's public school class of 2009

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The Independent Budget Office checked up on the Education Department's tallying of graduation rates and found their numbers solid. But they looked beyond that for finer data, such as why and who was discharged.

Based on IBOâ€™s calculations, nearly 66 percent of the general education class of 2009 graduated, 12 percent dropped out, and 21 percent were still enrolled after four years. Each of these rates differs by no more than 1 percentage point from the Department of Educationâ€™s published rates.

More than a quarter of all discharged students left in the first semester of their first year, with most of these students leaving during the first days of the school year. The vast majority of discharges were recorded as students who transferred to private and parochial schools in the city as well as schools outside New York City.

On average, immigrant students graduated at a slightly higher rate than students born in the U.S. But IBO found large variations in graduation rates among immigrants based on their country of origin.

About 80 percent of white and Asian class of 2009 students graduated, but the graduation rate was 62 percent for black students and 59 percent for Hispanics. Black and Hispanic students were roughly twice as likely to drop out, and also more likely to be discharged, than their Asian classmates.

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