

Sociology 101 Assignment 4 - High School Dropouts

To: Commissioner of Education
From: Jim Fisher, Department of Education Intern
Date: 2/27/15
Re: Community Concern about Dropout Rates

This memo describes the current patterns of dropping-out and graduation at Narraguagus High School in Harrington, Maine. Data for this analysis were excerpted from the Maine Department of Education website: http://dw.education.maine.gov/DirectoryManager/Web/maine_report/MaineLanding.aspx.

	Year	Graduates	Graduation Rate	Dropout Rate (2012)
RSU/MSAD 37 Narraguagus High School	2008-09	62	80.5%	Not Disclosed
	2009-10	55	88.7%	Not Disclosed
	2010-11	49	76.6%	Not Disclosed
	2011-12	50	89.3%	Not Disclosed
	2012-13	46	88.5%	Not Disclosed
State	2012-13	12,800	86.4%	3.2%
USA	2012-13		79%	3.3%

(**Source:** National Center for Education Statistics, Public High School Four-Year OnTime Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates: School Years 2010–11 and 2011–12 First Look APRIL 2014 nces.ed.gov/pubs2014/2014391.pdf) and Maine Department of Education

The data for Narraguagus High School indicate that contrary to local concerns, the graduation rate for Narraguagus High School is slightly higher than the state rates and substantially higher than national rates. Note that dropout rates are not disclosed, so most of this analysis relies on graduation rates.

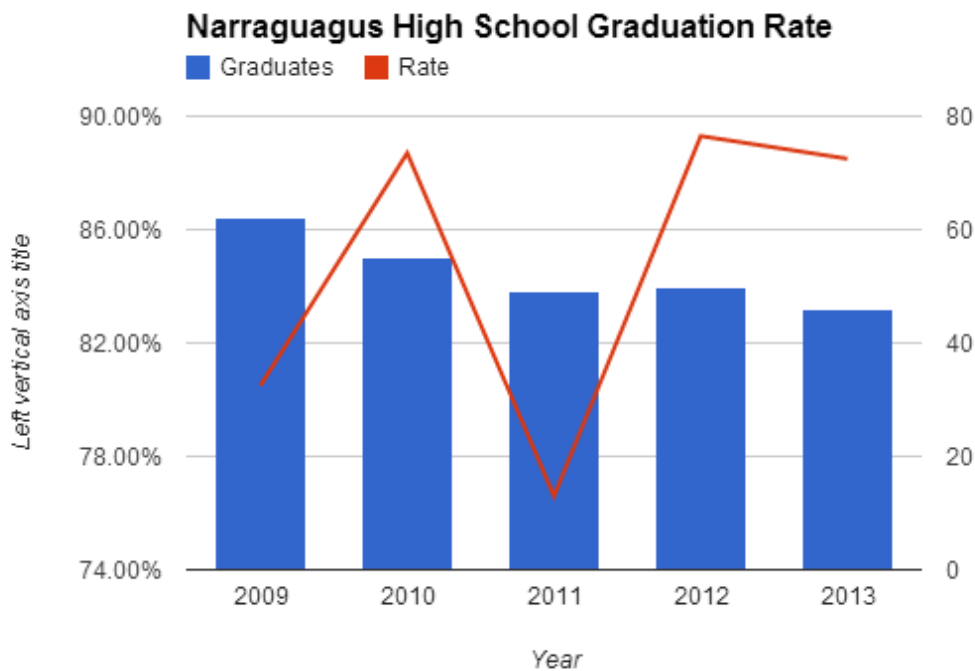
Narraguagus is a very small high school. With 46 students graduating in 2013, each student represents 2% of the graduating class. The graduation rate is likely to fluctuate from year to year due to the small number of students. As the following chart illustrates, the size of the graduating class has been declining over time, not because graduation rates are declining. The senior class size appears to be shrinking, indicative of a pattern of declining population in the younger years throughout eastern Maine. It is possible that parents are noting the smaller size of graduating class rather than higher dropout rates.

Recommendations

There are many competing programs for reducing dropout rates or increasing graduation rates in this high school. You may want to look quickly at the literature on why students drop out for ideas. The Maine Department of Education lists 15 strategies to reduce truancy and dropping out recommended by the [National Dropout Prevention Center](#) at Clemson University.

(www.maine.gov/education/tdae/strategies.html). These include Core Strategies, Early Interventions, Instructional Quality and Community Resources.

We recommend that the faculty and administration at Narraguagus High School review past instances of dropping out to identify any missed opportunities for early intervention, alternative education opportunities, social services support or other actions. As we noted, graduation rates for Narraguagus High School fluctuate significantly, but the actual numbers of dropouts remains small enough to permit individualized intervention strategies.



References

Maine Department of Education website data warehouse:

http://dw.education.maine.gov/DirectoryManager/Web/maine_report/MaineLanding.aspx.

Maine Department of Education page on Truancy, Drop Out and Alternative Education

<http://www.maine.gov/education/tdae/strategies.html>

[National Dropout Prevention Center](http://www.dropoutprevention.org/) Clemson University <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/>