



## Marion County high school graduation rates improving

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[Rich Van Wyk](#)/Eyewitness News

Indianapolis - New figures show that more Indiana high school students are graduating within four years. The improvement is happening in Marion County as well as the rest of the state.



Warren Central High School's graduation rate jumped more than five percent in one year. There is not one good reason for the remarkable improvement. Administrators say there are many.

"Layers upon layers, like an onion. Eventually one of the layers will hit and help a student get through the challenges they are facing," said Emily Brown, Warren Central assistant principal.

Layers of help include extra classes, tutoring, mentors and academic coaches. Colorful pie charts keep a running score board of grade point averages, attendance and student progress.

"We want to make sure that the interventions we are doing are effective and if they are not effective how can we make them effective," said Marcus Clayton, athletic director.

Every year, tens of thousands of Indiana teenagers quit school with staggering effects. State and community leaders cite studies showing Indiana's high school drop-outs forfeit \$6 billion in lifetime earnings, are twice as likely to be unemployed and more likely to go to prison.

The Department of Education announced Friday that 76 percent of high schools improved their graduation rates from 2008 to 2009. And 27 percent of Indiana's public high schools recorded a graduation rate of 90 percent or better last year.

Raising graduation rates is a top priority of the state school superintendent. Dr. Tony Bennett praised educators for their work.

"Statewide, 81 and a half percent of the class of 2009 graduated - a significant increase," he said.

Marion County high schools saw an even bigger improvement as almost three fourths of their students earned a diploma. In 2006, the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce began community wide effort to raise graduation rates.

"We've not scored. We have not won the game, but we are gaining yardage," said Roland Dorson, Chamber of Commerce president.

The Common Goal program is moving toward its graduation goal of 80 percent by 2012 for Marion County high school students.

Some schools are still struggling. Fifteen Indiana high schools had a graduation rate of 50 percent or less.

[Indiana High School Graduation Rates](#)