



DATA DIALOGUE SERIES

A New England Secondary School Consortium Resource

Week 2: Exploring regional economic disadvantage

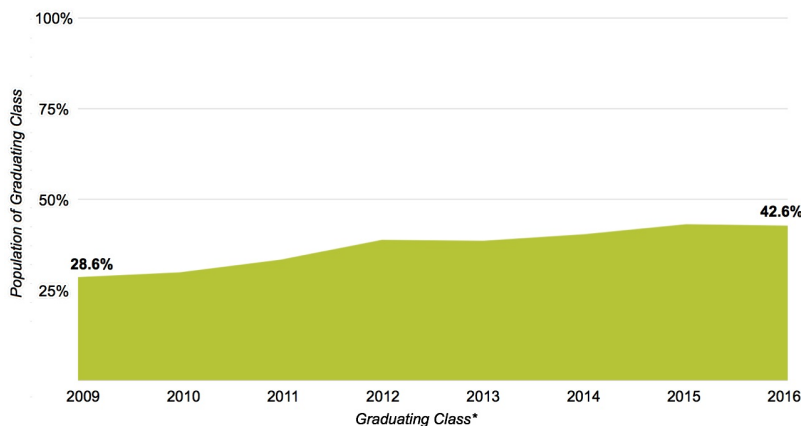
About the Data Dialogue Series

Thank you for participating in the NESSC's *Data Dialogue Series*, an opportunity to explore, reflect on, and talk about our region's education data with your students, colleagues, and community.

In **week one**, we explored a gap in 4-year graduation rates between economically-disadvantaged students and their non-economically disadvantaged peers. This week, we'll further explore the relationship between family income and education by considering the percentage of New England's high school seniors that qualify as economically-disadvantaged, and how that percentage has changed over time.

Let's dive in!

Exploring the Data



In 2016, **42.6%** of high school seniors qualified as **economically-disadvantaged**, up 14 percentage points from 2009. That's **37,659 students**.

What This Means + Why It Matters

The visualization above illustrates the changing demographics of our region. As you can see, the percentage of high school seniors that qualified as economically-disadvantaged increased by 14 percentage points from 2009 to 2016. In the graduating class* of 2016, 37,659 students—42.6%



of the class—qualified as economically-disadvantaged.

You may remember from last week's data that New England's economically-disadvantaged students tend to graduate high school at lower rates than their peers (in 2016, 17 percentage points lower). Considering that such a large percentage of New England's students live in poverty, this gap is especially concerning.

Below, we've provided a set of questions to prompt reflection and conversation about how this regional trend relates to your local context, and what we all can do to foster learning environments that help all students realize success.

** The graduating class represents the number of students who enter 9th grade plus any students who transfer in grades 9-12, minus any students who transfer out grades 9-12. Massachusetts data is not reflected in these totals, as Massachusetts is a new member of the NESSC.*

Reflection + Dialogue Questions

While the visual above is a rich starting point for personal reflection, we urge you to consider the data with colleagues and youth. This topic, especially when paired with the dialogue questions below, is particularly appropriate for a conversation among students.

1. This visual shows a regional trend across New England, which was calculated by aggregating state-level data (meaning that your school's data contributed to this trend). What does this make you wonder about the student demographics for your school? What additional data do you need in order to understand how this plays out in your school? Where can you find that data?
2. What lens—or lenses—are you using to interpret the data (e.g. role, age, experience, comfort working with data, geographic location)? How might this lens influence what data you perceive as being important or reliable?
3. How do you think your school district can become a place in which all students are encouraged to remain engaged with school and are able to be successful?

Make it through 1-3? Consider taking your conversation further by tackling this bonus question: Whose perspectives were present in this conversation, and whose perspective was missing? Why might that be? Why is it important to have diverse perspectives represented when talking about school data?

**Would you like to share your reflection with the NESSC?
Don't hesitate to reach out at info@newenglandssc.org.**