

# COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

## INDICATOR #51 High School Completion

### DEFINITION

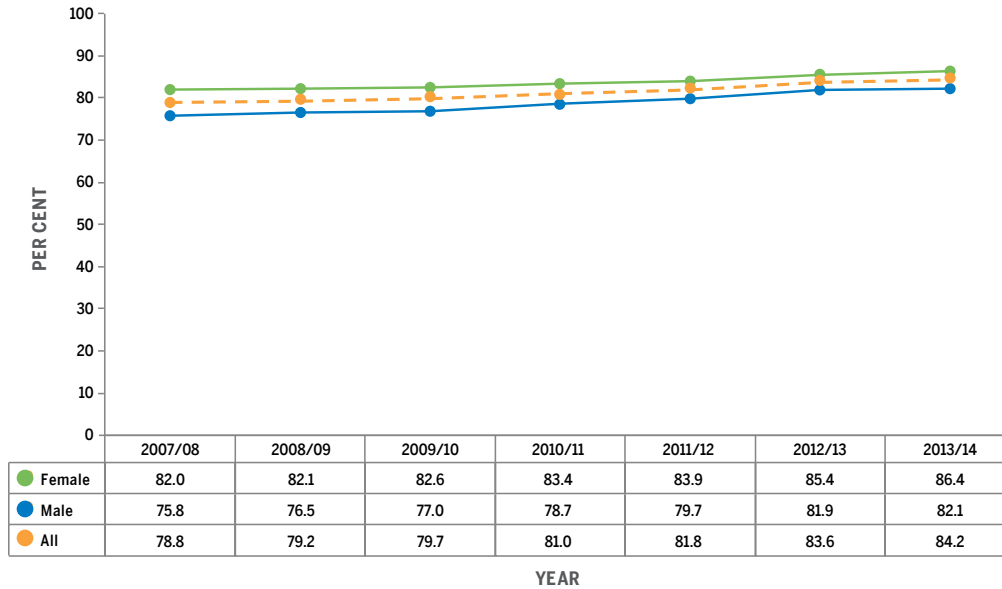
**INDICATOR #51** — The percentage of students who obtain their BC Certificate of Graduation (“Dogwood” diploma) within six years of entering grade 8.

### KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Research shows a positive association between educational attainment and health. Researchers have suggested that this may be related to people with higher levels of education having better employment and higher incomes.<sup>1,2</sup> However, the association is most evident when comparing the levels that are more at the extremes; for example, completing just grade school versus being a college graduate.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ In addition to educational attainment, educational achievement is also an important predictor of future socio-economic outcomes and positive health. The impact of simply passing a grade or acquiring a credential can be amplified by being more successful academically in terms of higher letter grades and/or exam scores.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ The BC Certificate of Graduation<sup>1</sup> (Dogwood Diploma) is granted by the Ministry of Education to students who meet BC secondary school graduation requirements. While other indicators mark progress along the way, the Dogwood Diploma is the definitive measure of whether or not a student has met generally held expectations for learning, including **literacy** and **numeracy**.<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ Figure 51.1 shows the percentage of BC students who completed high school within six years of entering grade 8, from 2007/08 to 2013/14. It indicates that there was a steady increase in the completion rate over these seven school years. The increase is likely due in part to significant increases in the completion rates of Aboriginal students over these years. Aboriginal students constitute about 10 per cent of the BC student population.<sup>6</sup> The increase in educational completion/attainment percentage shown may also reflect the increased focus of school districts on improving student achievement.<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ Figure 51.2 shows that the percentage of students who completed secondary school ranged from 76.4 to 87.6 per cent in the 2013/14 school year among health authorities, and Figure 51.3 shows a range of 66.7 to 88.3 per cent among the health service delivery areas for the same year. Generally, higher rates were found in more urban health service delivery areas.

<sup>1</sup>A small number of students who are not cognitively capable of achieving a British Columbia Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood) or British Columbia Adult Graduation Diploma (Adult Dogwood) may still obtain a British Columbia School Completion Certificate (Evergreen). Expectations are set for each student individually. If the student successfully completes the goals and objectives contained in his or her Individual Education Plan, they receive an “Evergreen” Certificate.

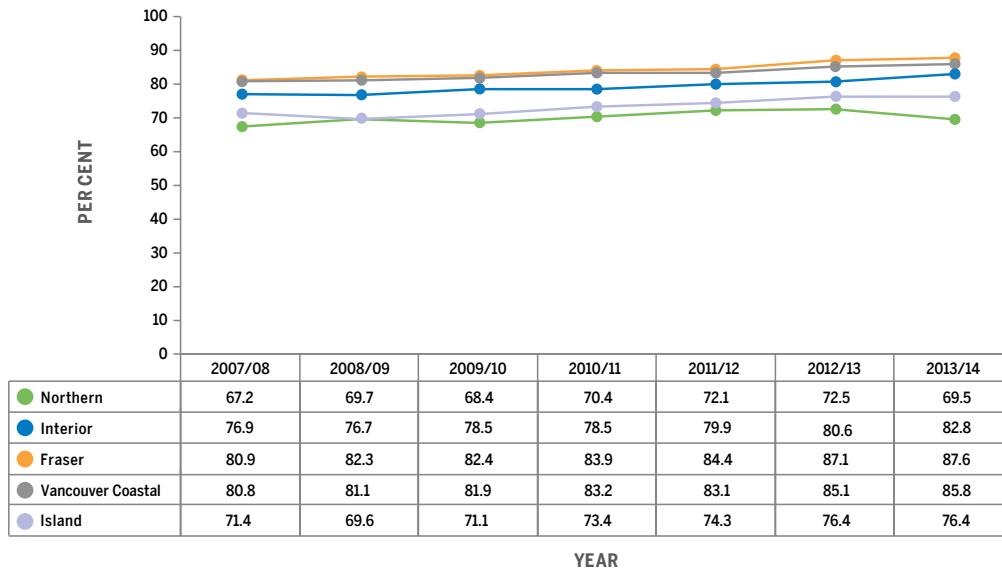
**FIG 51.1** Percentage of Students Who Complete High School within Six Years, by Sex, BC, 2007/08 to 2013/14



**Notes:** "Students who complete high school within six years" means students under age 20 who graduate with a BC Certificate of Graduation or BC Adult Graduation Diploma within six years from the first time they enrolled in grade 8. The rate is adjusted for migration in and out of BC. Data include public and independent schools in School Districts 005 to 092 only. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.

**Source:** BC Ministry of Education, Education Data Warehouse, 2007/08-2013/14. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

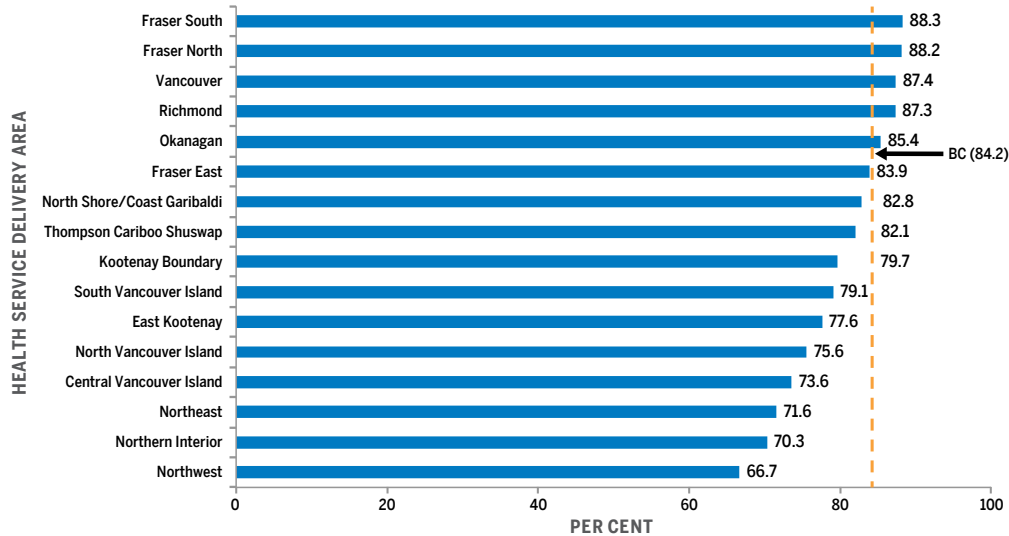
**FIG 51.2** Percentage of Students Who Complete High School within Six Years, by Health Authority, BC, 2007/08 to 2013/14



**Notes:** "Students who complete high school within six years" means students under age 20 who graduate with a BC Certificate of Graduation or BC Adult Graduation Diploma within six years from the first time they enrolled in grade 8. The rate is adjusted for migration in and out of BC. Data include public and independent schools in School Districts 005 to 092 only. Health authority is based on the location of the school district. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.

**Source:** BC Ministry of Education, Education Data Warehouse, 2007/08-2013/14. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

**FIG 51.3** Percentage of Students Who Complete High School within Six Years, by Health Service Delivery Area, BC, 2013/14



**Notes:** "Students who complete high school within six years" means students under age 20 who graduate with a BC Certificate of Graduation or BC Adult Graduation Diploma within six years from the first time they enrolled in grade 8. The rate is adjusted for migration in and out of BC. Data include public and independent schools in School Districts 005 to 092 only. Health service delivery area is based on the location of the school district. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.

**Source:** Education Data Warehouse, BC Ministry of Education, 2013/14. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup>Lynch SM. Explaining life course and cohort variation in the relationship between education and health: the role of income. *J Health Soc Behav.* 2006 Dec;47(4):324-38.
- <sup>2</sup>Statistics Canada. Education and occupation of high-income Canadians [Catalogue no. 99-014-X2011003]. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Industry; 2013 [cited 2016 Jul 13]. Available from: [https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-014-x/99-014-x2011003\\_2-eng.cfm](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-014-x/99-014-x2011003_2-eng.cfm).
- <sup>3</sup>H. Krueger & Associates. Child and youth health and well-being indicators project: appendix J – cognitive development evidence review [prepared for the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the Canadian Institute for Health Information]. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Institute for Health Information; 2011.
- <sup>4</sup>Herd P. Education and health in late-life among high school graduates: Cognitive versus psychological aspects of human capital. *J Health Soc Behav.* 2010;51(4):478-96.
- <sup>5</sup>BC Ministry of Education. Student credentials [Internet]. Victoria, BC: Government of BC; 2016 [cited 2016 Apr 20]. Available from: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/student-credentials>.
- <sup>6</sup>BC Ministry of Education. Aboriginal report 2008/09 – 2012/13: how are we doing? Victoria, BC: Government of BC; 2013 Nov [cited 2016 Apr 25]. Available from: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/perf2013.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/perf2013.pdf).
- <sup>7</sup>Archibald J, Rose D. Is B.C. getting it right? Moving towards Aboriginal education success in British Columbia. *Education Canada.* 2014 Summer; 54(3). Available from: <http://www.ce-a-ce.ca/education-canada/article/bc-getting-it-right>.