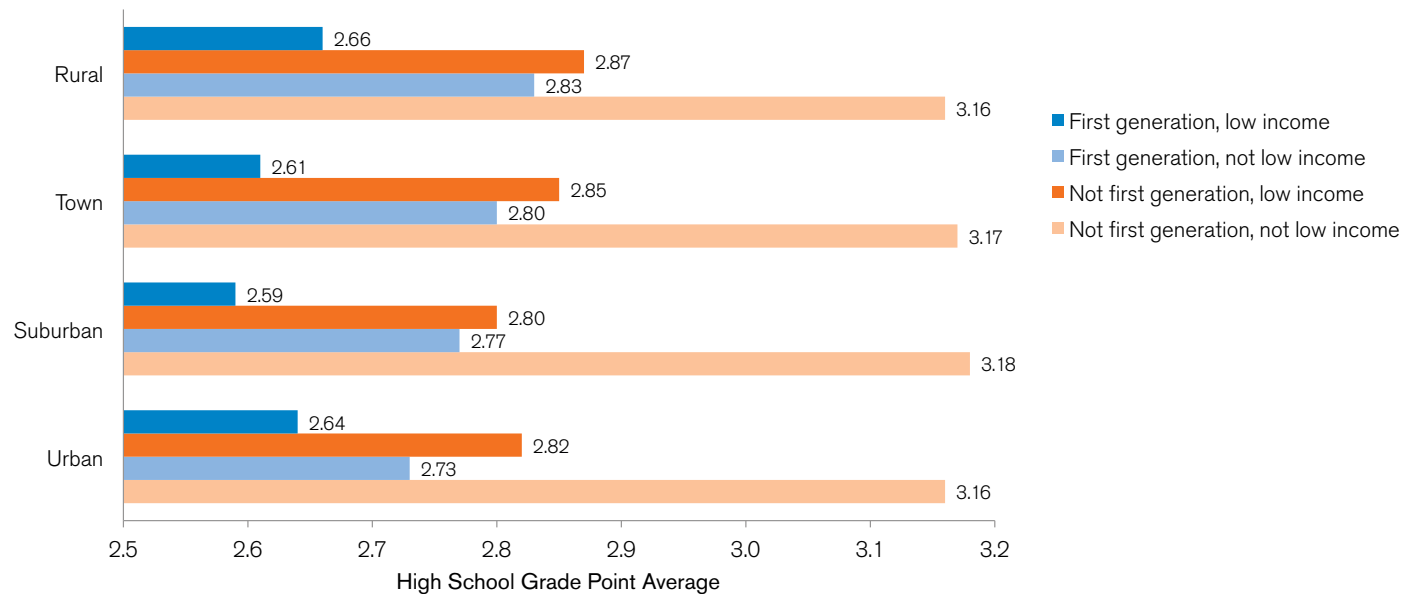


First-generation, low-income high school graduates in 2013 averaged lower high school GPAs than their peers, regardless of school location.

High School GPA by Student Background and School Location

RICHARD BUDDIN

High School GPA by First-Generation College and Low-Income Status for High School Locations



Note: Data come from 587,008 high school graduates in 2013 in at least one of eleven states that had ACT® college readiness assessment testing for all students. Families with annual incomes of less than \$36,000 are defined as low income. Students whose parents or guardians have no postsecondary education are defined as first-generation students.

High school grades typically reflect the day-to-day academic achievements of students relative to their peers. However, teachers do sometimes use grades to reward noncognitive behaviors such as persistence, effort, and organization.

As shown in the chart above, first-generation students from low-income families have much lower high school grades than all other groups. First-generation college students from middle- and high-income families earn much higher grades than those from low-income families but slightly lower grades than students from

low-income families having at least one parent or guardian with some postsecondary education. Extra parental education more than offsets the adverse effects of lower family income at each type of school. Finally, students from middle- and high-income families and with at least one parent or guardian with some postsecondary education have much higher grades than all other groups.

High school grades for first-generation and family income groups vary little across high school locations. The relative ordering of grades across groups is the same across each type of location. ■