Editor’s Note: The Spring 2013 issue of the CURA Reporter presented maps showing school performance in the Twin Cities for 2010–2011. The maps depicted third grade reading scores and eighth grade math scores. It should be noted that the maps showed the performance of the children attending those schools, and not the performance of the schools themselves. In this issue, we present data on high school graduation rates in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

A young person needs a high school degree to succeed in today’s economy. Unfortunately, that goal is not achieved by all students, and the unsuccessful ones are disproportionately located in the central cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The district graduation rate is 53.9% for Minneapolis schools, and 73.3% for St. Paul schools.

This map presents data on the percentage of public high school students who graduate on time (i.e., within four years). Data are mapped by high school attendance area. The darkest areas graduate 90% of their students in four years. Half of Twin Cities–area high schools meet that standard. Others are somewhat below that standard—or far below.

Schools that serve low-income or immigrant communities have lower graduation rates. Parents in low-income families may not have good school histories and are less able to help their children succeed. Children from immigrant families often have language issues that slow their progress. These factors help to explain low high school graduation rates in Minneapolis and St. Paul.