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Dropout Rates in the United States: 2001

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the latest in a series of National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports on high school dropout and completion rates that began in 1988. It presents estimates of rates in 2001, and includes time series data on high school dropout and completion rates for the period 1972 through 2001. In addition to extending time series data reported in earlier years, the report examines the characteristics of high school dropouts and high school completers in 2001. It shows that while progress was made during the 1970s and 1980s in reducing high school dropout rates and increasing high school completion rates, these rates have since stagnated. The report includes four rates to provide a broad picture of high school dropouts and completers in the United States: the event dropout rate, the status dropout rate, the status completion rate, and the 4-year completion rate. Each rate, defined in the sections that follow, provides unique information about the state of high school education.

Event Dropout Rates

Event dropout rates indicate the percentage of students who dropped out of school over a relatively short period of time. They are useful for studying the possible effects of particular phenomena, or events, on the propensity to drop out. Such events might include the introduction of new education policies or changes in economic conditions.

The event dropout rates presented in this report estimate the percentage of high school students who dropped out of high school between the beginning of one school year and the beginning of the next. Using data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), event dropout rates are presented that describe the percentage of youth ages 15 through 24 who dropped out of grades 10–12. Demographic data collected in the CPS permit event dropout rates to be calculated across various individual characteristics, including race/ethnicity, sex, region of residence, and income level.

Table A. Percentage of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12 in the past year (event dropout rate), percentage of 16- through 24-year-olds who were dropouts (status dropout rate), and percentage of 18- through 24-year-olds who completed high school (status completion rate), by race/ethnicity: October 2001

Dropout and completion measures	Total[1]	White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander
Event dropout out	5.0	4.1	6.3	8.8	2.3
Status dropout rate	10.7	7.3	10.9	27.0	3.6
Status completion rate [2]	86.5	91.0	85.6	65.7	96.1

[1]Due to small sample sizes, American Indians/Alaska Natives are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Excludes those still enrolled in high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2001.

- Five out of every 100 students enrolled in high school in October 2000 left school before October 2001 without successfully completing a high school program. The percentage of students who were event dropouts decreased from 1972 through 1987.[1] However, despite some year-to-year fluctuations, the percentage of students dropping out of school each year has stayed relatively flat since 1987 (table A and figure A).
- From 1990 through 2001, between 347,000 and 544,000 students in grades 10 through 12 left school each year without successfully completing a high school program (table A3).
- In 2001, students living in low-income families were six times more likely than their peers in high-income families to drop out of high school over the one-year period of October 2000 to 2001 (table 1). (Low income is defined as the lowest 20 percent of all family incomes, while high income refers to the top 20 percent of the income distribution.)
- About three-fourths (77.3 percent) of event dropouts in 2001 were ages 15 through 18, and about two-fifths (42.5 percent) were ages 15 through 17 (table 1).

In order to look at variation in event dropout rates at the state level, a second data source is necessary. Using data from the Common Core of Data (CCD), event dropout rates are presented that describe the percentage of public high school students who dropped out of grades 9–12 in the 2000-01 school year (table 2).

- Among those states for which CCD dropout data are available, event dropout rates for public high school students ranged from 2.2 percent to 10.9 percent.

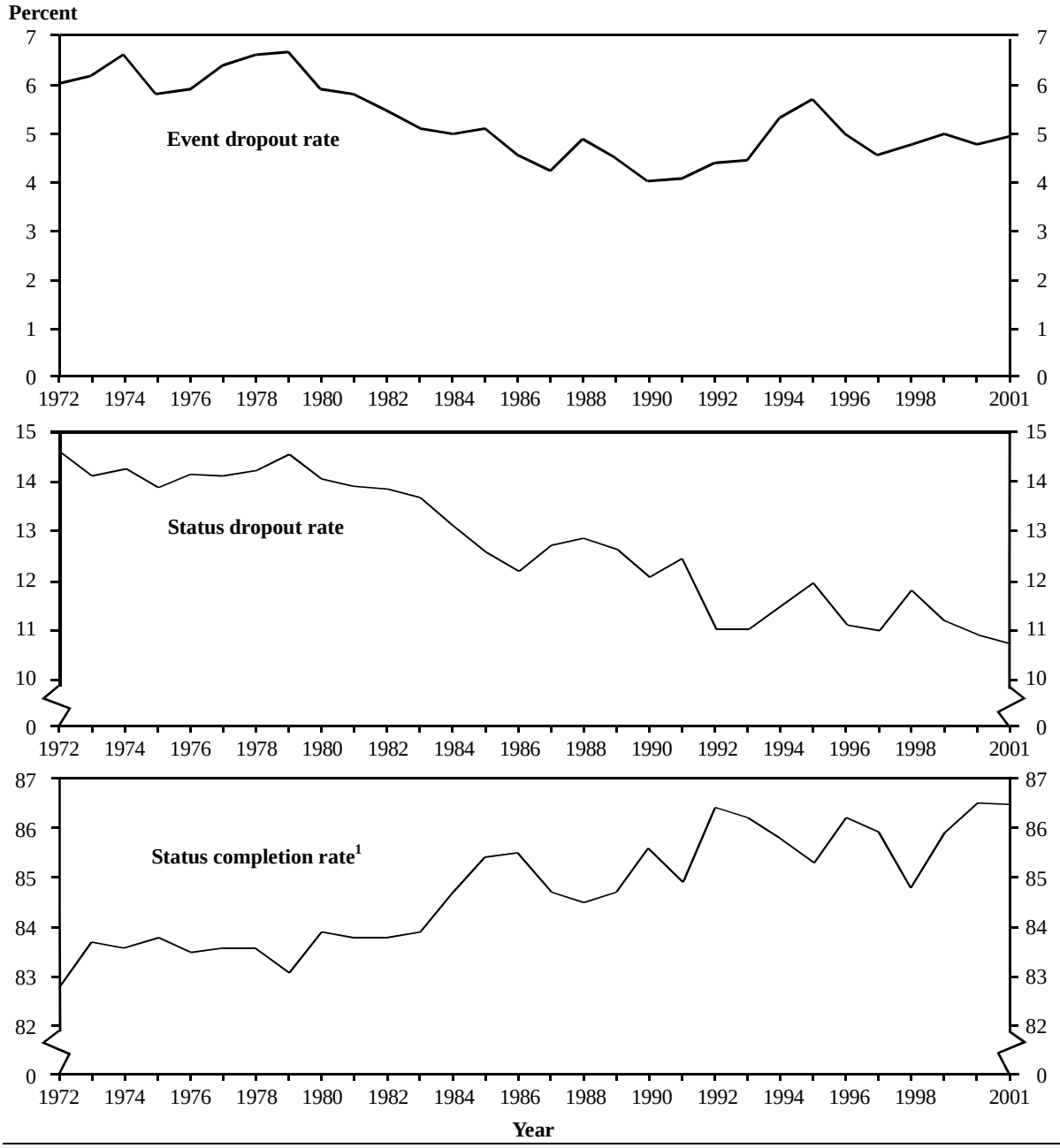
Status Dropout Rates

Because event dropout rates look at what happened over a relatively short period of time, they are not well suited for the study of broader and less time-sensitive educational issues such as the general educational attainment level of a population. For example, an event dropout rate can indicate how many people dropped out last year, but cannot show how many Americans lack a basic high school education more generally. Status dropout rates are better suited to study more general questions of educational attainment.

Status dropout rates measure the percentage of individuals who are not enrolled in high school and who lack a high school credential, irrespective of when they dropped out. Using data from the CPS, status dropout rates show the percentage of young people ages 16 through 24 who are out of school and who have not earned a high school credential (either diploma or equivalency credential such as a General Educational Development certificate). Status rates are higher than event rates because they include all dropouts in this age range, regardless of when they last attended school, as well as individuals who may have never attended school in the U.S. (for example, immigrants who did not complete a high school diploma in their home country).

[1]The statistical significance of time trends noted in this report were assessed using weighted least squares regressions. Comparisons among groups in 2001 were assessed using the Student's *t*-test, without Bonferroni adjustment (for number of comparisons). In previous reports, Bonferroni adjustments had been applied. This change in statistical testing may lead to tests being significant in this report that were noted as not significant in previous reports. All changes or differences noted in this report are statistically significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level. For a full discussion of the statistical methods used, see appendix C.

Figure A. Percentage of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12 in the past year (event dropout rate), percentage of 16- through 24-year-olds who were dropouts (status dropout rate), and percentage of 18- through 24-year-olds who completed high school (status completion rate): October 1972 through October 2001



[1]Excludes students still enrolled in high school.

NOTE: Data for 1987 through 2001 reflect new editing procedures instituted by the U.S. Census Bureau for cases with missing data on school enrollment items. Data for 1992 through 2001 reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the Current Population Survey beginning in 1992. Data for 1994 through 2001 reflect computer-assisted interviewing methods and a change in population controls (adjustment for undercounting) in the 1990 U.S. Census. See appendix C for a description of the impact of these changes on rates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1972–2001.

- In October 2001, some 3.8 million 16- through 24-year-olds were not enrolled in a high school program and had not completed high school (status dropouts). These individuals accounted for 10.7 percent of the 35.2 million 16- through 24-year-olds in the United States in 2001 (tables A and 3). As noted with event rates, this estimate is consistent with the estimates reported over the last 10 years (figure A and table A5).

- The status dropout rate of Whites[2] remains lower than that of Blacks, but over the past 30 years the difference between the rates of Whites and Blacks has narrowed (figure 2). However, this narrowing of the gap occurred during the 1980s; since 1990, the gap between Whites and Blacks has remained fairly constant. In addition, Hispanics in the United States continued to have relatively high status dropout rates when compared to Whites, Blacks, or Asians/Pacific Islanders (tables A and 3).

- In 2001, the status dropout rate for Asians/Pacific Islanders ages 16-24 was lower than for other 16- through 24-year-olds. The status rate for Asians/Pacific Islanders was 3.6 percent, compared with 27.0 percent for Hispanics, 10.9 percent for Blacks, and 7.3 percent for Whites (tables A and 3).

- In 2001, 43.4 percent of Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds born outside of the United States were high school dropouts. Hispanics born in the United States were much less likely to be dropouts. Regardless of when the youth or their families immigrated to the United States, Hispanic youth were more likely to be dropouts than their counterparts of other racial and ethnic groups.

Sample size limitations on the CPS prohibit the development of state-level status dropout rate estimates. Unfortunately, there are no good alternative sources of data available to calculate state-level status dropout rates on an annual basis.

Status Completion Rates

Status completion rates measure the percentage of a given population that has a high school credential, regardless of when the credential was earned. Using data from the CPS, status completion rates are presented that show the percentage of young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 who hold a high school credential. Credentials include regular and alternative diplomas as well as equivalent credentials such as the General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Those still enrolled in high school are excluded from the equation.[3]

- In 2001, 86.5 percent of 18- through 24-year-olds not enrolled in elementary or secondary school had completed high school. Between 1972 and 1990, status completion rates increased by 2.8 percentage points from 82.8 percent in 1972 to 85.6 percent in 1990; since 1991, the rate has shown no consistent trend and has fluctuated between 84.8 and 86.5 percent (figure 3 and table A7).

[2]The racial/ethnic categories used in this report are White, non-Hispanic; Black, non-Hispanic; Hispanic (any race); and Asian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic. However, for ease of reading, the shorter terms White, Black, Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander are sometimes used.

[3]Status completion rates and status dropout rates presented in this report are not complementary. The status completion rates exclude those still enrolled in high school or below while the status dropout rates account for these individuals. They are also based on different age groups.

- High school status completion rates for White and Black young adults increased between the early 1970s and 1990 but have remained relatively flat since 1990. In 2001, 91.0 percent of White and 85.6 percent of Black 18- through 24-year-olds had completed high school (tables A and A7 and figure 3).
- Whites and Asians/Pacific Islanders in 2001 were more likely than their Black and Hispanic peers to have completed high school (table A and figure 3).

4-Year Completion Rates

Four-year completion rates report the percentage of 9th-grade students who left school over a subsequent 4-year period and who did so with a high school credential. Put simply, it asks, "of those who left school, what proportion did so as a completer?" Similar to the status completion rate, those who are still enrolled in high school four years after entering 9th grade are excluded from the calculation. Using data from the Common Core of Data (CCD), an annual cross sectional data collection, 4-year completion rates are presented for public school students at the state level. Students earning a regular diploma, and students who meet modified graduation requirements established for special conditions are considered completers. Though considered valid credentials, students earning alternative credentials such as GEDs are not considered completers for this measure.

- Looking at completers at the end of the 2000–01 school year, the 4-year high school completion rates ranged from 65.0 percent to 90.1 percent among reporting states (table 5).

Data Considerations

As with all data collections, those used in this report are useful for calculating some estimates but are poorly suited for calculating other types of estimates. For example, the Current Population Survey data are well suited for studying the civilian, noninstitutionalized population residing in the United States. They are not designed to provide information about military personnel or individuals residing in group quarters such as prison inmates. In addition, data from the Common Core of Data are well suited for studying the public school student population in a given year. They are not well suited for studying private school students, and because of missing data from some states, are not well suited for studying high school dropouts at the national level.

Legislation enacted as part of the No Child Left Behind Act has increased interest in being able to study yearly change in high school graduation rates in general, and in on-time public high school graduation rates more specifically. Graduation rates measure the percent of a population holding a regular high school diploma. Measuring such rates requires an analytic ability to separate regular diploma holders from GED recipients and individuals who earn other alternative credentials, and to have a clearly defined population that should be graduates. Existing CPS and CCD data that might be used to develop such rates on an annual basis have important limitations on one or both of these prerequisites. For example, CPS estimates of GED recipients appear to be unreliable, and it is not clear which reference population to use to determine who should be graduates for CCD based calculations. Such limitations become even more significant for developing on-time graduation rates. NCES is currently working with experts in the field of high school outcomes research to develop graduation rate statistics that can be produced on an annual basis to help address this research need. While there is ongoing research into different measurement approaches, this report does not include statistics on either concept. For additional technical information about the data and rates presented in this report, please see appendix C.

FOREWORD

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) collects and publishes information on the condition of education in the United States. Under mandate from the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvements Amendment of 1988 (P.L. 100–297), NCES released the first annual report on school dropouts in 1989. Although law no longer requires the reporting of dropout statistics, such statistics continue to be a high priority for the U.S. Department of Education and for Congress as reflected in the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (P.L. 107–279). This act requires that NCES continue to develop approaches to measuring high school dropout rates, completion rates, and graduation rates.

Dropout Rates in the United States: 2001 is the 14th in the series of annual dropout reports from NCES. The current report presents data for 2001 on high school dropout rates, and examines high school completion rates. In addition to extending time series data reported in earlier years, this report focuses on the characteristics of high school dropouts and high school completers in 2001.

The report is based on the best and most current national data available at this time. It utilizes data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, to develop national event and status dropout rates for individuals of various ages. Data from CPS are also used to estimate national and state-level status completion rates. As part of an ongoing effort to expand and improve data collected about dropouts, NCES initiated a dropout statistics collection in the 1991–92 school year as a component of the Common Core of Data (CCD); data from the 10th year of that collection are included in this report for most states. Public high school event dropout rates and public high school 4-year completion rates in this report are derived from CCD data. Data collected by the American Council on Education on the number of General Educational Development (GED) certificate recipients are used to provide numbers of students who complete high school by earning a GED.

I hope the information in this report will be useful in discussions about this critical national issue.

Robert Lerner
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sadly, this report will be the last coauthored by Phillip Kaufman. Dr. Kaufman was a senior researcher at MPR Associates, Inc., and former member of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) staff. Dr. Kaufman joined NCES in 1984, where he worked on the *Condition of Education* report, and then on longitudinal and household studies. He left NCES for MPR Associates, Inc., where he continued to contribute to NCES studies like this one. Dr. Kaufman helped coauthor the second report in this series in 1989 and has contributed to every subsequent report. He also helped NCES study issues related to school crime and analyze some of NCES' more complex longitudinal studies. Dr. Kaufman passed away suddenly earlier this year. His expertise, dedication, and collegiality will be deeply missed.

Many other individuals made substantial contributions to the preparation of this report. This report was prepared under the direction of Val Plisko, Associate Commissioner for NCES.

The report was reviewed by Duncan Chaplin of the Urban Institute; Thomas Corwin of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement; Kathleen Leos of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition; Beth Young, formerly of NCES; and Marilyn Seastrom, Shelley Burns, John Wirt, Lee Hoffman, and Jerry West of NCES.

This report builds on the initial reports developed by both Mary Frase (previously of NCES and now at the National Science Foundation) and Marilyn Seastrom and reflects their joint dedication to producing accurate and useful information on high school dropouts and completers.

Without the efforts of the staff who work on the Common Core of Data (CCD) collection at NCES, the CCD dropout data collection would not continue to expand; we thank them for their hard work. We also thank those within the states that continue to work hard to supply the dropout data to NCES in a consistent and timely manner; without the hard work within these states, the timely release of this report would not have been possible. We would also like to extend our gratitude to Lisa Richards Hone and the American Council on Education for supplying data on General Educational Development (GED) test-takers and certificates issued, and to Stacey Bielick and Matthew DeBell at the Education Statistics Services Institute (ESSI). Hyon Shin from the U.S. Census Bureau also deserves special mention for her efforts to assure the timely release of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Xiaojie Li, Joanna Wu, Barbara Kridl, Francesca Tussing, Stephen Lew, and Jennifer Laird of MPR Associates were instrumental in the production of the report. They provided invaluable technical, editorial, graphic, and production assistance.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past 50 years, the value of a high school education has changed dramatically. During the 1950s, a high school diploma was considered a valued asset in the labor market, and through the 1970s, having completed high school continued to open doors to many promising career opportunities. In recent years, however, advances in technology have fueled the demand for a more highly skilled labor force, transforming a high school education into a minimum requirement for entry into the labor market.[4]

Because high school completion has become a requirement for accessing additional education, training, or entering the labor force, the economic consequences of leaving high school without a credential are severe. On average, dropouts are more likely to be unemployed than high school completers and to earn less money when they secure work.[5] High school dropouts are also more likely to receive public assistance than high school completers who do not go to college.[6] Young women who drop out of school are more likely to have children at younger ages and more likely to be single parents than high school completers, making them more likely to rely on public assistance.[7] Dropouts also make up disproportionately high percentages of the nation's prison and death row inmates.[8]

Secondary schools in today's society are faced with the challenge of increasing curricular rigor to strengthen the knowledge base of high school graduates. Since the mid-1980s, many states have increased their high school course requirements and more states require students to pass what are widely termed "high school exit exams."[9] Educators are also faced with the challenge of increasing the percentage of all students who successfully complete a high school program. Under the No Child Left Behind Act

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[4]Mishel, L., Bernstein, J., & Boushey, H. (2003). *The State of Working America: 2002/2003*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press; Murnane, R., and Levy, F. (1996). *Teaching the New Basic Skills: Principles for Educating Children to Thrive in a Changing Economy*. New York, NY: Free Press; and Snyder, T., and Hoffman, C. (2000). *Digest of Education Statistics: 1999* (NCES 2000–031). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

[5]For employment data, see U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1999). *The Condition of Education 1999* (NCES 99–022). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Indicator 11. For income data, see U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2002). *The Condition of Education 2002* (NCES 2002-025). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Indicator 16. For additional information, also see Ingels, S.J., Curtin, T.R., Kaufman, P., Alt, M.N., and Chen, X. (2002). C*oming of Age in the 1990s: The Eighth-Grade Class of 1988 12 Years Later* (NCES 2002–321). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

[6]U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1998). *The Condition of Education 1998* (NCES 98–013). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Indicator 34.

[7]McMillen, M., and Kaufman, P. (1996). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994* (NCES 96–863). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

[8]Estimates indicate that approximately 30 percent of federal and 40 percent of state prison inmates are high school dropouts. See U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2000). *Correctional Populations in the United States, 1997* (NCJ–177613). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

[9]Council of Chief State School Officers. (2000). *Annual Survey of State Student Assessment Programs, 1997-1998*. Washington, DC; Council of Chief State School Officers. (2002). *Annual Survey of State Student Assessment Programs, 2000-2001*. Washington, DC; Council of Chief State School Officers. (2002). *Key State Education Policies on PK–12 Education: 2002*. Washington, DC; Lillard, D.R. & DeCicca, P.P. (2001). Higher standards, more dropouts? Evidence within and across time. *Economics of Education Review, 20*, 459-473.

of 2001 states must report graduation rates and demonstrate that schools are making progress on this and other indicators of student achievement.[10] Some are concerned that the increased graduation requirements will lead to higher dropout rates.[11]

This is the 14th annual dropout report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This report spans the 30-year time period from 1972 through 2001 and focuses primarily on updates to annual time series data. Data from the October 2001 Current Population Survey (CPS), a household survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, are used to compute national high school dropout and completion rates and rates by background characteristics, such as sex, race/ethnicity, family income, and region of the country.[12] State-level data from the CPS are used in this report to produce estimates of high school status completion rates by state. The CPS sample size is not large enough to reliably estimate state-level dropout rates. Also, CPS does not capture information needed to calculate separate rates for those who attended public schools and private schools.

The CPS surveys the civilian, noninstitutionalized population of the United States. Data are collected about individuals who attend or attended public schools, private schools, who were homeschooled, or who never attended school in the U.S. The excluded population is composed of those living in group quarters such as prison inmates and those on active duty in the Armed Services. The overall response rate for the CPS in 2001 was 93 percent.

The report also incorporates data from the Common Core of Data (CCD) to study public high school students at the state level.[13] The CCD collects data directly from state education agencies (SEAs) on all of the nation's public schools, school districts, and state education systems. Data from the CCD are used to develop state level public high school event dropout rates and 4-year completion rates in this report.

As noted, the CCD collects data about public school students. Individuals attending private schools, homeschoolers, those who never attended school in the U.S., and those who have been out of a public school system for more than a year are excluded. The overall response rate for the CCD was 100 percent. However, not all states report dropout statistics using comparable reporting rules. As a result, some states are missing data necessary to calculate dropout and completion rates so CCD data cannot yet be used to calculate national level rates.

This report begins with a discussion of dropout rates in general and describes various ways to measure them. Separate sections on event dropout rates and status dropout rates follow this general discussion. After dropout rates are addressed, the report provides an overview of completion and graduation rates followed by separate sections that focus on the status completion rate and the 4-year completion rate. Following the conclusion,

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[10]No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. (P.L. 107-110). Available online at www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html.

[11] Jacob, B.A. (2001). Getting tough? The impact of high school graduation exams. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *23*, 99-121; Lillard, D.R. & DeCicca, P.P. (2001). Higher standards, more dropouts? Evidence within and across time. *Economics of Education Review*, *20*, 459-473.

[12]U.S. Commerce Department, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS).

[13]U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD).

appendix tables and a technical appendix provide details on standard errors associated with the estimates presented in the report, the data behind the figures used in the report, and more detailed information about the data and rates used in the report.

Dropout and completion statistics are disaggregated by a number of factors throughout the report. In general, these factors were chosen because they have been related to the likelihood of having completed or not completed a high school education in previous analyses. Inconsistencies across some of the tables in terms of the factors presented are largely due to data limitations. Analyses of all the specific interplay among intervening variables that mediate the dropout decision are beyond the scope of this report.[14]

Data Considerations

As with all data collections, those used in this report are useful for calculating some estimates but are poorly suited for calculating other types of estimates. For example, the Current Population Survey data are well suited for studying the civilian, non-institutionalized population residing in the United States. They are not designed to provide information about military personnel or individuals residing in group quarters such as prison inmates. Military personnel have relatively high completion rates and relatively low dropout rates, while prison inmates have relatively low completion rates and relatively high dropout rates.[15] In addition, data from the Common Core of Data are well suited for studying the public school student population in a given year. They are not well suited for studying private school students, and because of missing data from some states, are not well suited for studying high school dropouts at the national level. This latter limitation reduces the number of states for which 4-year completion rates are available because the calculation is based in part on the dropout data.

Recent legislation enacted as part of the No Child Left Behind Act has increased interest in being able to study yearly change in high school graduation rates in general, and in on-time public high school graduation rates more specifically. Because of data limitations and ongoing research into different measurement approaches, this report does not include statistics on either concept. NCES is currently working with experts in the field of high school outcomes research to develop graduation rate statistics that can be produced on an annual basis to help address this research need. For additional technical information about the data and rates presented in this report, please see appendix C.

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[14]For coverage on the interplay of race/ethnicity with other factors, please see Alexander, K. L., Entwisle, D. R., and Kabbani, N. (2001). The dropout process in life course perspective: Early risk factors at home and school. *Teachers College Record* 103 (5): 760–822; Kaufman, P., McMillen, M., and Sweet, D. (1996). *A Comparison of High School Dropout Rates in 1982 and 1992*. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education (NCES 96-893); and Rumberger, R. (1995). Dropping out of middle school: A multilevel analysis of students and schools. *American Educational Research Journal* 32 (3): 583-625. For an ethnographic depiction of these factors at work, see Fine, M. (1991). *Framing Dropouts.* New York, NY: State University of New York Press.

[15]U.S. Department of Defense. (2001). *Annual Report to the President and the Congress: 2001*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2000). *Correctional Populations in the United States: 1997*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

DROPOUT RATES

Depending on the question being addressed, a number of different dropout rates might be suitable. Event, status, and cohort dropout rates each provide a different perspective on the dropout population. This report provides event and status dropout estimates; at this time, current cohort rates are not available. Before providing actual estimates, more detail about each of the three approaches to calculating dropout rates is provided.

Types of Dropout Rates

- **Event** rates describe the percentage of students in a given age range who leave school each year without completing a high school program. In this report, national estimates are provided for 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12 during the year preceding data collection. State-level estimates are provided for public school students in grades 9–12.
- **Status** rates provide data on dropouts among all individuals in a specified age range. Status rates are higher than event rates because they include all dropouts in a given age range, regardless of when they last attended school. Status rates also count individuals who never attended school, and immigrants who did not complete the equivalency of a high school education in their home country as a dropout. In this report, the status rate measures individuals ages 16 through 24 who are not enrolled in school and who have neither earned a high school diploma nor obtained an alternative high school credential, such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.
- **Cohort** rates measure what happens to a group of students over a period of time. These rates are based on repeated measures of a particular cohort of students with shared experiences; they show how many students starting in a specific grade drop out over time. Unlike event rates that measure the percentage of persons dropping out over a single time period (typically one school year), cohort rates measure the percentage of persons dropping out over longer periods of time and over multiple periods of time (over 2 years, 4 years, etc). Cohort rates require data from longitudinal collections. Cohort rates are not presented in this report. However, the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 provided cohort dropout data that were published in previous reports.[16] New cohort data will be collected in 2004 with the first follow-up to the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002.[17]

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[16]McMillen, M. (1994). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1993* (NCES 94–669). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office; and McMillen, M., and Kaufman, P. (1996). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994* (NCES 96–863). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

[17]U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *Education Longitudinal Study of 2002: Base Year Data File User's Manual*, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 2004-405). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Event Dropout Rates

Event dropout rates indicate the percentage of students who dropped out of school over a relatively short period of time. They are useful for studying the possible effects of particular phenomena, or events, on the propensity to drop out. Such events might include the introduction of new education policies or changes in economic conditions.

Event dropout rates, calculated here using October 2001 CPS data, measure the percentage of students who dropped out between October 2000 and October 2001.[18] These dropouts were 15- through 24-year-olds who had been enrolled in high school in October 2000 but had not completed high school and were not enrolled in grades 10–12 one year later. According to this definition, dropouts neither complete high school by earning a diploma nor receive an alternative credential such as a GED. In October 2001, 5 out of every 100 15- through 24-year-olds who were enrolled in high school in October 2000 were no longer in school and had not successfully completed a high school program (table 1).[19]

Over the past 30 years, estimates of the event dropout rate have fluctuated between 4.0 and 6.7 percent (figure 1 and table A1). However, over the whole period since 1972, event dropout rates have trended downward, from 6.1 percent in 1972 to 5.0 percent in 2001.[20] This decline in dropout rates occurred primarily from 1972 through 1987. Despite year-to-year fluctuations, the percentage of students dropping out of school each year has not changed in a consistent direction since then. Changes in data collection and estimation procedures coincided with an increase in the rates from 1991 through 1995 (see appendix C for details on these changes). Nevertheless, from 1988 through 2001, no consistent upward or downward trend occurred in event dropout rates.

[18]The numerator of the event rate for 2001 is the number of people 15 through 24 years old surveyed in 2001 who were enrolled in high school in October 2000, were not enrolled in October 2001, and had not completed high school (i.e., had not received a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate) by October 2001. The denominator of the event rate is the sum of the dropouts (i.e., the numerator) plus the number of all people 15 through 24 years old who attended grades 10–12 in 2000 and were still enrolled in 2001 or had graduated or earned a high school credential.

[19]Standard errors for all tables and figures are provided in appendix B.

[20]The statistical significance of time trends noted in this report were assessed using weighted least squares regressions. Comparisons among groups in 2001 were assessed using the Student's *t*-test, without Bonferroni adjustment (for number of comparisons). In previous reports, Bonferroni adjustments had been applied. This change in statistical testing may lead to tests being significant in this report that were noted as not significant in previous reports. All changes or differences noted in this report are statistically significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level. For a full discussion of the statistical methods used, see appendix C.

Table 1. Event dropout rates and number and distribution of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12, by background characteristics: October 2001

Characteristic	Event dropout rate (percent)	Number of event dropouts (thousands)	Population enrolled[1] (thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population enrolled
Total	5.0	505	10,187	100.0	100.0
Sex					
Male	5.6	293	5,262	58.1	51.6
Female	4.3	212	4,926	41.9	48.4
Race/ethnicity[2]					
White, non-Hispanic	4.1	278	6,840	55.1	67.1
Black, non-Hispanic	6.3	97	1,550	19.3	15.2
Hispanic	8.8	112	1,273	22.1	12.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.3	9	412	1.9	4.0
Family income[3]					
Low income	10.7	131	1,227	26.0	12.0
Middle income	5.4	323	5,991	63.9	58.8
High income	1.7	51	2,969	10.1	29.1
Age[4]					
15–16	3.9	118	3,061	23.4	30.1
17	2.8	96	3,494	19.1	34.3
18	6.6	176	2,646	34.8	26.0
19	8.4	62	739	12.3	7.3
20–24	21.2	52	246	10.3	2.4
Region					
Northeast	4.2	82	1,951	16.2	19.1
Midwest	5.1	128	2,488	25.3	24.4
South	5.4	188	3,466	37.2	34.0
West	4.7	108	2,282	21.3	22.4

[1]This is an estimate of the population of 15- through 24-year-olds enrolled during the previous year in high school based on the number of students still enrolled in the current year and the number of students who either graduated or dropped out the previous year.

[2]Due to small sample sizes, American Indians/Alaska Natives are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[3]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 2001; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes. See appendix C of this report for a full definition of family income.

[4]Age when a person dropped out may be 1 year younger, because the dropout event could occur at any time over a 12-month period.

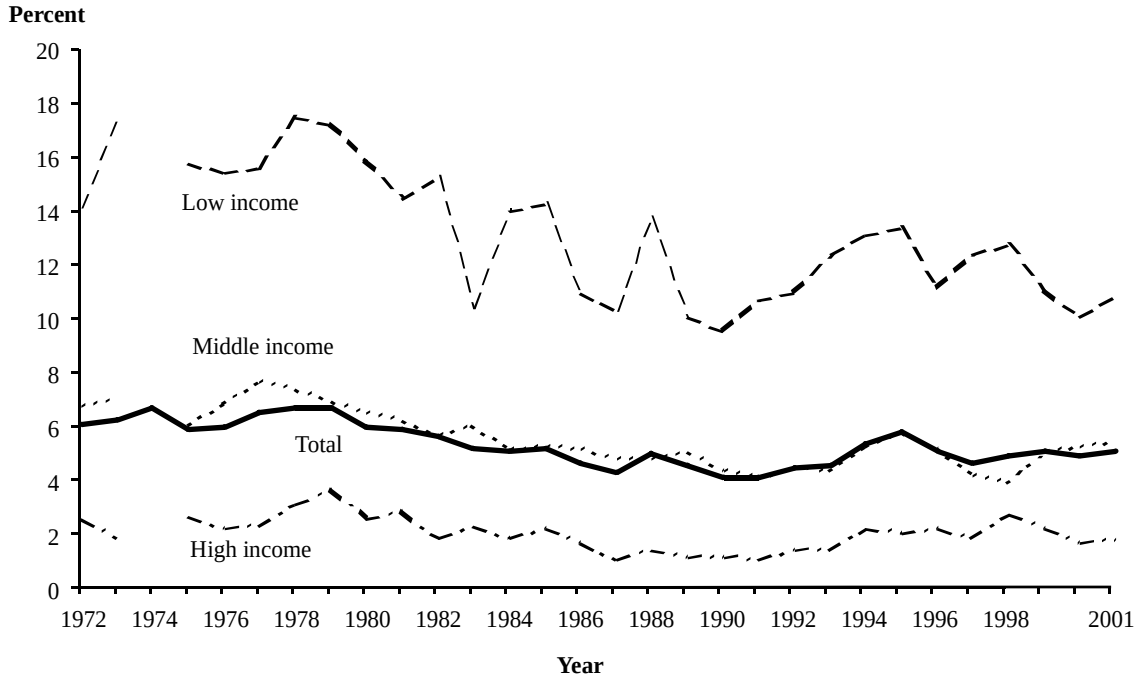
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2001.

Income

The CPS includes family income data that can be used to provide information about how socioeconomic background is related to the decision to drop out of school. Of course, the range of factors that may affect the life decisions of young people extend beyond the economic conditions associated with family income; however, in the absence of additional measures, family income serves as a good indicator for other social and economic factors that are likely to be related to a student's decision to stay in school or to drop out.[21]

Figure 1. Event dropout rates of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12, by family income:[1] October 1972 through October 2001



[1]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for the year; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes. See appendix C of this report for a more detailed definition of family income.

NOTE: Data on family income are missing for 1974. Estimates for years 1987 through 2001 reflect new editing procedures instituted by the U.S. Census Bureau for cases with missing data on school enrollment items. Numbers for years 1992 through 2001 reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS. Numbers for years 1994 through 2001 reflect changes in the CPS due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing and the change in population controls used in the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment for undercounting in the 1990 Census. See appendix C for discussions of changes to the CPS implemented in 1987, 1992, and 1994.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1972–2001.

[21]The variable used to assess family income is derived from a single question asked of the household respondent in the October CPS. In some cases, a 15- through 24-year-old is unrelated to the household head or is the head of the household (or spouse/companion of the head). Because family income for a 15- through 24-year-old is defined as the current household income of the family of the household respondent, reported incomes may not reflect the family background of all youth. See appendix C for a more detailed discussion.

In 2001, high school students living in low-income families were six times as likely as their peers from high-income families to drop out of high school. (For this analysis, family income was divided into three groups: the lowest 20 percent of all family incomes, the middle 60 percent, and the top 20 percent of the income distribution.) About 10.7 percent of students from low-income families (bottom quintile) dropped out of high school; by comparison, 5.4 percent of middle-income students dropped out, as did 1.7 percent of students from high-income families (table 1).

A decline in dropout rates for each of these three income groups occurred in the 1970s and 1980s (figure 1 and table A1). Since 1990, event dropout rates for all income groups have stabilized, or shifted but in no specific direction. For example, since 1990, event dropout rates for low-income youth have fluctuated between 9.5 and 13.3 percent. Event dropout rates for students living in middle- and high-income families have also shown no upward or downward trend since 1990, with rates fluctuating between 3.8 and 5.7 percent, and 1.0 and 2.7 percent, respectively.

Race/Ethnicity

Past data have shown a strong association between race/ethnicity and the likelihood of dropping out of school.[22] In particular, cohort studies of national longitudinal data for American high school students, such as the High School and Beyond study and the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, both sponsored by NCES, show that Blacks and Hispanics were at greater risk of dropping out than Whites.[23]

Data from the October 2001 CPS show that Blacks and Hispanics were more likely to have dropped out of high school between October 2000 and October 2001 than were Whites or Asians/Pacific Islanders (table 1). During this one-year period, 6.3 percent of Black and 8.8 percent of Hispanic high school students dropped out compared to 4.1 percent of White and 2.3 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander high school students.

Age and Sex

Data from the October 2001 CPS show that students who pursue a high school program past typical high school age are at higher risk than others of dropping out of school (table 1). Event dropout rates for students in the typical age range for high school enrollment (ages 15 through 17) were substantially lower than those for older students, ages 19 through 24. Specifically, 3.9 percent of 15- and 16-year-olds—and 2.8 percent of 17-year-olds—dropped out in the one-year reference period, compared to 8.4 percent of 19-year-olds, and 21.2 percent for 20- through 24-year-olds.[24] Not only are older students more likely to drop out than younger students but they also represent a disproportionate

[22]Alexander, K. L., Entwisle, D. R., and Kabbani, N. (2001). The dropout process in life course perspective: Early risk factors at home and school. *Teachers College Record* 103 (5): 760–822.

[23]Kaufman, P., and Bradby, D. (1992). *Characteristics of At-Risk Students in NELS:88* (NCES 92–042). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Kaufman, P., McMillen, M, and Sweet, D. (1996). *A Comparison of High School Dropout Rates in 1982 and 1992* (NCES 96-893). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

[24]Eighteen-year-olds represent a transitional population in terms of high school education. Many are still in high school, while a large proportion has entered postsecondary education or the labor market [U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau. (2003). *School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 2001*]. As such, they are not included with those who are 17 and under or 19 and over in this analysis.

number of dropouts in 2001; students who were 19 through 24 accounted for 9.7 percent of students in the 15- through 24-year-old age group but 22.6 percent of the high school dropouts. Although event dropout rates were highest among students ages 19 and 20–24, about two-fifths (42.5 percent) of all students who left school between October 2000 and October 2001 were ages 15, 16, or 17 in October 2001.

In general, the dropout rates for males and females have not tended to differ significantly over the last 30 years (table A2), although in 2000 and 2001 females had a lower dropout rate than males. Approximately 5.6 percent of males and 4.3 percent of females ages 15 through 24 who were enrolled in high school in October 2000 had dropped out of school by October 2001 (table 1).

Region and State

In 2001, no differences were detected among event dropout rates across the four regions of the country. The event rates were 5.4 in the South, 5.1 in the Midwest, 4.7 in the West, and 4.2 in the Northeast (table 1). The small differences between these rates are not statistically significant.

As mentioned in the introduction, CPS data cannot be used to develop reliable state-level event dropout rate estimates or to study public school dropouts. Using data from the CCD, state-level event dropout rates can be calculated for public school students in grades 9–12. Preliminary data from the 2000-01 CCD collection on event dropout rates for public school students showed considerable variability across the states, ranging from 2.2 percent in North Dakota to 10.9 percent in Arizona (table 2). In all, 4 states had event dropout rates of less than 3 percent. Apart from North Dakota, Wisconsin reported a 2.3 percent dropout rate, Iowa a 2.7 percent dropout rate, and New Jersey a 2.8 percent dropout rate (for a rank ordering of states for 2000-01, see table A7).

Table 2. Event dropout rates for public school students in grades 9–12, by state: 1993–94 through 2000–01

State	Event dropout rate (percent)							
	1993–94	1994–95	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01
Alabama[1]	5.8	6.2	5.6	5.3	4.8	4.4	4.5	4.1
Alaska[2]	—	—	5.6	4.9	4.6	5.3	5.5	8.2
Arizona[1]	13.7	9.6	10.2	10.0	9.4	8.4	—	10.9
Arkansas	5.3	4.9	4.1	5.0	5.4	6.0	5.7	5.3
California	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Colorado	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Connecticut	4.8	4.9	4.8	3.9	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.0
Delaware	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.1	4.1	4.2
District of Columbia	9.5	10.6	—	—	12.8	8.2	7.2	—
Florida[1]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4.4
Georgia	8.7	9.0	8.5	8.2	7.3	7.4	7.2	7.2
Hawaii	—	—	—	—	5.2	5.3	5.3	5.7
Idaho[2]	8.5	9.2	8.0	7.2	6.7	6.9	—	5.6
Illinois[1]	6.8	6.6	6.4	6.6	6.9	6.5	6.2	6.0
Indiana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Iowa	3.2	3.5	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.5	2.5	2.7
Kansas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.2
Kentucky	—	—	—	—	5.2	4.9	5.0	4.6
Louisiana[3]	4.7	3.5	11.6	11.6	11.4	10.0	9.2	8.3
Maine	3.1	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.1
Maryland[1]	5.2	5.2	4.8	4.9	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.1
Massachusetts	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.6	4.1	3.4
Michigan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Minnesota	5.1	5.2	5.2	5.5	4.9	4.5	4.3	4.0
Mississippi	6.1	6.4	6.2	6.0	5.8	5.2	4.9	4.6
Missouri	7.0	7.0	6.5	5.8	5.2	4.8	4.4	4.2
Montana	—	—	5.6	5.1	4.4	4.5	4.2	4.2
Nebraska	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.0	4.0
Nevada	9.8	10.3	9.6	10.2	10.1	7.9	6.2	5.2
New Hampshire[4]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5.4
New Jersey[1]	4.3	4.0	4.1	3.7	3.5	3.1	3.1	2.8
New Mexico	8.1	8.5	8.3	7.5	7.1	7.0	6.0	5.3
New York[1]	—	—	—	—	3.2	4.0	4.1	3.8
North Carolina	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6.3
North Dakota	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.7	2.2
Ohio[2]	4.7	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.1	3.9	5.0	3.9
Oklahoma[1]	4.6	5.8	5.7	5.9	5.8	5.2	5.4	5.2
Oregon	7.3	7.1	7.0	—	6.8	6.4	6.2	5.3
Pennsylvania	3.8	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.6
Rhode Island	4.9	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.9	4.5	4.8	5.0
South Carolina	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.3

See notes at end of table.

Table 2. Event dropout rates for public school students in grades 9–12, by state: 1993–94 through 2000–01—Continued

State	Event dropout rate (percent)							
	1993–94	1994–95	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01
South Dakota[2]	5.3	5.3	5.7	4.5	3.1	4.5	3.5	3.9
Tennessee[1]	4.8	5.0	4.9	5.1	5.0	4.6	4.2	4.3
Texas	—	—	—	—	—	—	5.0	4.2
Utah	3.1	3.5	4.4	4.5	5.2	4.7	4.1	3.7
Vermont[1]	4.8	4.7	5.3	5.0	5.2	4.6	4.7	4.7
Virginia[2]	4.8	5.2	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.5	3.9	3.5
Washington	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
West Virginia	3.8	4.2	3.8	4.1	4.1	4.9	4.2	4.2
Wisconsin[2]	3.1	2.7	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.3
Wyoming[2]	6.5	6.7	5.7	6.2	6.4	5.2	5.7	6.4

—Not available. These states do not report dropouts that are consistent with the NCES definition.

[1]These states reported on an alternative July through June cycle rather than the specified October through September cycle.

[2]The following states reported data using an alternative calendar in the years indicated: Alaska (1995–96, 1999–2000, and 2000-01), Idaho (1993-94 through 1998-99), Ohio (1993–94), South Dakota (1993-94 through 1998-99), Virginia (1993-94 through 1999-2000), Wisconsin (1993-94 through 1997-98) and Wyoming (1993–94).

[3]Effective in the 1995–96 school year, Louisiana changed its dropout data collection from school-level aggregate counts reported to districts to an individual student-record system. The apparent increase in the dropout rate is partly due to the resulting increased ability to track students.

[4]New Hampshire is missing reported dropouts for 14 of their 76 school districts that operate high schools (16.3 percent of enrollment in the 76 school districts).

NOTE: See appendix C for a detailed discussion of the CCD dropout definition. Data are reported by states to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. CCD includes public school students only. Also, for event dropout rates by state for the 1991–92 through 1992-93 school years, see Young, B.A. (2003). *Public High School Dropouts and Completers From the Common Core of Data: School Year 2000–01* (NCES 2004–310). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

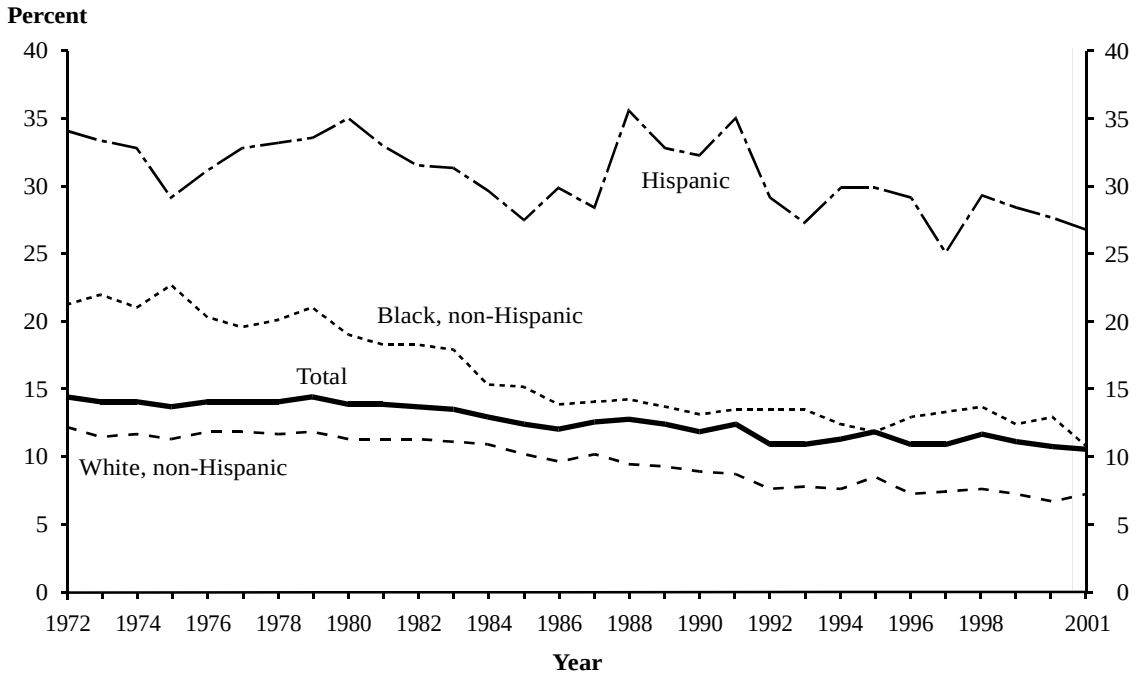
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Local Education Agency Universe Survey Dropout and Completion Data File: School Years 1991–92 through 1996–97" Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey Dropout and Completion Data File: School Years 1997–98, 1998–99, and 1999–2000" Versions 1b, and 2000–01 Version 1a. The data in the 2000-01 Version 1a file are preliminary release data.

Status Dropout Rates

Because event dropout rates look at what happened over a relatively short period of time, they are not well suited for the study of broader and less time-sensitive educational issues such as the general educational attainment level of a population. For example, an event dropout rate can indicate how many people dropped out last year, but cannot show how many lack a basic high school education. Status dropout rates are better suited to study more general questions of educational attainment.

There were 3.8 million 16- through 24-year-olds who were not in high school and who lacked a high school credential in 2001 (table 3). This represented 10.7 percent of the 35.2 million individuals in this age group. The percentage of all 16- through 24-year-olds who are out of high school without a credential is referred to as the status dropout rate. Though there has been an overall decline in status dropout rates since 1972, they have remained more or less stable since 1985 (figure 2 and table A5).

Figure 2. Status dropout rates of 16- through 24-year-olds, by race/ethnicity: October 1972 through October 2001



NOTE: Due to small sample sizes, American Indians/Alaska Natives and Asians/Pacific Islanders are included in the totals but are not shown separately. In addition, the erratic nature of the Hispanic status rates reflects, in part, the small sample size of Hispanics in the CPS. Numbers for years 1987 through 2001 reflect new editing procedures instituted by the U.S. Census Bureau for cases with missing data on school enrollment items. Numbers for years 1992 through 2001 reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS beginning in 1992. Numbers for years 1994 through 2001 reflect changes in the CPS due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing and the change in population controls used in the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment for undercounting in the 1990 Census. See appendix C for a fuller description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1972–2001.

Race/Ethnicity

Over the past three decades, the status dropout rates for Whites have been consistently lower than the rates observed for either Blacks or Hispanics (figure 2 and table A6). However, both Whites and Blacks experienced a decline in their status dropout rates over this period. When compared to 1972, the status dropout rates for Whites and Blacks were 40 and 49 percent lower, respectively. Because the Black rate declined more steeply than the White rate, there has been a narrowing of the gap between the dropout rates for Blacks and Whites. However, this narrowing occurred in the 1980s. Since 1990, the gap has shown no significant change one way or the other.

The percentage of Hispanics who were status dropouts has remained higher than that of Blacks and Whites in every year throughout this 30-year period. Apart from remaining relatively high, the Hispanic rates have not experienced the declines observed for the White and Black rates. Over the 1972–2001 period, the status dropout rates for Hispanics have fluctuated, but have not demonstrated a long-term trend.[25] However, looking at just the last decade, Hispanic dropout rates have declined from 35.3 percent to 27.0 percent (figure 2 and table A6).

It is not possible to calculate reliable estimates of the status dropout rate for Asians/Pacific Islanders before 1998 because of their relatively small sample sizes, so they are not shown separately in the trend lines (figure 2). In 2001, Asians/Pacific Islanders represented 4.2 percent of the total 16- through 24-year-old population and had a status dropout rate of 3.6 percent, the lowest among the four racial/ethnic groups shown separately (table 3). By contrast, Whites represented 65.1 percent of the 16- through 24-year-old population and 7.3 percent of White 16-24-year-olds were status dropouts. Even though Whites were less likely to be status dropouts in 2001 than their Black or Hispanic peers, Whites constituted a large number of status dropouts, accounting for 1.7 million (44.4 percent) of the 3.8 million dropouts.

While Hispanics represented approximately the same percentage of the young adult population as did Blacks (15.2 and 14.5 percent, respectively), Hispanics were disproportionately represented among status dropouts in 2001 (38.2 percent of all dropouts). A total of 1.4 million Hispanics ages 16–24 were dropouts in 2001, or 27.0 percent of all Hispanics in this age group. In comparison, about 560,000 Blacks, or 10.9 percent of the total Black population of 16- through 24-year-olds, were dropouts in the corresponding period. Though no difference was detected between the percent of all status dropouts who were Hispanics (38.2 percent) and the percent of all status dropouts who were White (44.4 percent), Whites were disproportionately underrepresented among status dropouts. As noted, Whites made up 65.1 percent of the 16- through 24-year-old population, but 44.4 percent of all status dropouts.

[25]The erratic nature of the Hispanic status rate reflects, in part, the small sample of Hispanics in the CPS.

Table 3. Status dropout rates and number and distribution of dropouts of 16- through 24-year-olds, by background characteristics: October 2001

Characteristic	Status dropout rate (percent)	Number of status dropouts (thousands)	Population (thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	10.7	3,774	35,195	100.0	100.0
Sex					
Male	12.2	2,151	17,645	57.0	50.1
Female	9.3	1,623	17,549	43.0	49.9
Race/ethnicity[1]					
White, non-Hispanic	7.3	1,677	22,903	44.4	65.1
Black, non-Hispanic	10.9	557	5,111	14.7	14.5
Hispanic	27.0	1,442	5,350	38.2	15.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.6	53	1,487	1.4	4.2
Age					
16	4.2	168	3,984	4.4	11.3
17	5.6	229	4,060	6.1	11.5
18	12.9	514	3,975	13.6	11.3
19	12.5	528	4,227	14.0	12.0
20–24	12.3	2,336	18,949	61.9	53.8
Recency of immigration					
Born outside the 50 states and District of Columbia					
Hispanic	43.4	980	2,261	26.0	6.4
Non-Hispanic	6.2	125	2,001	3.3	5.7
First generation[2]					
Hispanic	15.4	267	1,735	7.1	4.9
Non-Hispanic	4.8	92	1,917	2.4	5.4
Second generation or more[2]					
Hispanic	14.4	195	1,353	5.2	3.8
Non-Hispanic	8.2	2,116	25,927	56.1	73.7
Region					
Northeast	8.8	543	6,133	14.4	17.4
Midwest	8.6	717	8,288	19.0	23.5
South	13.1	1,643	12,527	43.5	35.6
West	10.6	872	8,248	23.1	23.4

[1]Due to small sample sizes, American Indians/Alaska Natives are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Individuals defined as "first generation" were born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia, and one or both of their parents were born outside the 50 states or the District of Columbia. Individuals defined as "second generation or more" were born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia, as were both of their parents.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2001.

Hispanic Dropout Rates by Immigration Status

High Hispanic status dropout rates are partly attributable to relatively higher dropout rates among Hispanic immigrants than among those born in the U.S. Data from the 2001 CPS substantiate earlier findings in this regard.[26] In fact, the status dropout rate of 43.4 percent for Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds born outside the United States was more than double the rates of 15.4 percent for U.S. first-generation Hispanic youth, and of 14.4 percent for second-generation or later Hispanic youth (table 3).[27] Regardless of when the youth or their families immigrated to the United States, Hispanic youth were more likely to be dropouts than their counterparts of other racial and ethnic groups.

Data from 1999 show that more than half (73.1 percent) of the foreign-born Hispanic youths who were identified as "dropouts" had never enrolled in a U.S. school, and 73.8 percent of this group reportedly spoke English not well or not at all (data not shown in tables).[28] Some of the Hispanic immigrants who did not enroll in school in the United States may have entered the country when they were older than normal high school age, and some may have come to the United States in search of employment rather than education. However, the data cited here and other research suggests that language may be a barrier to participation in U.S. schools among Hispanic immigrants.[29] Regardless of the reasons that the large percentage of Hispanics lack a high school credential, the impact is the same: whether they were born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia or elsewhere and whether or not they enrolled in U.S. schools, these individuals probably lack the basic level of education that is considered essential for participating fully in today's economy.

Age and Sex

As might be expected, people ages 16 or 17 registered the lowest status dropout rates compared to 18- through 24-year-olds, because most were still actively pursuing a high school diploma. For example, though 16-year-olds represented 11.3 percent of the 16- through 24-year-old population in 2001, they accounted for just 4.4 percent of all status

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[26]See, for example, Bennici, F., and Strang, W. (1995). *An Analysis of Language Minority and Limited English Proficient Students from NELS:88.* U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office; McMillen, M., Kaufman, P., and Klein, S. (1997). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1995* (NCES 97-473). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office; Rumberger, R. W. & Rodriguez, G. (2002). Chicano dropouts: An update of research and policy issues. In Richard R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success: Research and policy agendas for the New Millennium* (pp.114-146). New York: Teachers College Press.

[27]"First generation" youth are defined as being U.S.–born but having at least one parent born outside the United States, while "second generation" means U.S.–born citizens with both parents also U.S.–born. For the sake of simplicity, the terms "foreign-born" and "born outside the United States" are used to refer to anyone born outside the 50 states or the District of Columbia, and the term "born in the United States" is used to refer to persons born within the 50 states or the District of Columbia. People born in Puerto Rico or the territories, although U.S. citizens, are grouped with those born in other countries.

[28]English-speaking ability is based on the reports of a household respondent rather than self-reports from each individual in the household. Data for these estimates are from the School Enrollment Supplement of the October 1999 Current Population Survey, the most recent School Enrollment Supplement that included English language proficiency questions.

[29]Rumberger, R. W. & Rodriguez, G. (2002). Chicano dropouts: An update of research and policy issues. In Richard R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success: Research and policy agendas for the New Millennium* (pp.114-146). New York: Teachers College Press.

dropouts (table 3). Seventeen-year-olds were 11.5 percent of the age group, but 6.1 percent of dropouts. Consequently, the number of people 18 through 24 who were out of school but who had not completed a high school education was comparatively higher, comprising 77.1 percent of the age group, and 89.5 percent of dropouts.

Data on status dropout rates indicate that males were more likely to be status dropouts than females in 2001. Although the sexes are about equally represented among people ages 16–24, males constituted a greater percentage of all status dropouts. In 2001, 57.0 percent of all status dropouts were male, while 43.0 percent were female.

Region

The South (13.1 percent) had a higher status dropout rate than each of the other three regions, while the West's rate (10.6 percent) was higher than both the Midwest's and the Northeast's (table 3). No differences were detected between the status dropout rates of the Midwest (8.6 percent) and the Northeast (8.8 percent). Moreover, a disproportionately large percentage of all status dropouts resided in the South; the region comprised 35.6 percent of 16- through 24-year-olds but 43.5 percent of all young dropouts in 2001. In contrast, while the Midwest was home to roughly 23.5 percent of the population ages 16–24 in the United States, 19.0 percent of all dropouts resided in the Midwest. Status dropouts were also underrepresented in the Northeast, which contained 17.4 percent of the country's 16- through 24-year-olds, but 14.4 percent of the country's status dropouts. The West accounted for about 23.1 percent of all dropouts in this age group, proportionate to its share of the population ages 16–24 (23.4 percent).

COMPLETION RATES

Technological advances in the workplace have increased the demand for highly skilled labor so much that a high school education now serves more as a minimum requirement for entry into the labor force, as opposed to a credential that opened up number of promising career path as was the case a few decades ago.[30] As with dropout rates, depending on the question being addressed, different completion rates might be used to examine the extent to which the nation's youth are reaching what is now considered a minimal level of education. This report provides status completion rates and 4-year completion rates. Previous editions of this report have also presented cohort completion rates. Because longitudinal data necessary to calculate cohorts rate have not been collected recently, cohort rates are not presented here. Before providing findings pertaining to high school completions in 2001 and earlier years, more detail about each of the three approaches to calculating completion rates is provided.

Types of Completion Rates

- **Status completion rates** provide data on high school completers among individuals in a specified age range. In this report, the status completion rate is also dependent on enrollment status. Those still in high school are excluded from the calculation. Status completion rates reported here represent the percentage of 18- through 24-year-olds who have left high school and earned a high school diploma or the equivalent, including a General Educational Development (GED) credential.

- **Four-year completion rates** show the percentage of 9th-grade students who left school over a subsequent 4-year period who did so with a high school credential. Similar to the status completion rate, 9th-graders who are still enrolled 4 years after entering 9th grade are excluded from the calculation. The 4-year completion rates used in this report rely on repeating cross sectional data collected from public schools and are representative of public school students only. Students earning a regular diploma, and students who meet modified graduation requirements established for special conditions are considered completers. Though considered valid credentials, students earning alternative credentials such as GEDs are not considered completers for this measure.

[30]Mishel, L., Bernstein, J., & Boushey, H. (2003). *The State of Working America: 2002-2003.* Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press; Murnane, R., and Levy, F. (1996). *Teaching the New Basic Skills: Principles for Educating Children to Thrive in a Changing Economy*. New York, NY: Free Press; and Snyder, T., and Hoffman, C. (2000). *Digest of Education Statistics: 1999* (NCES 2000–031). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

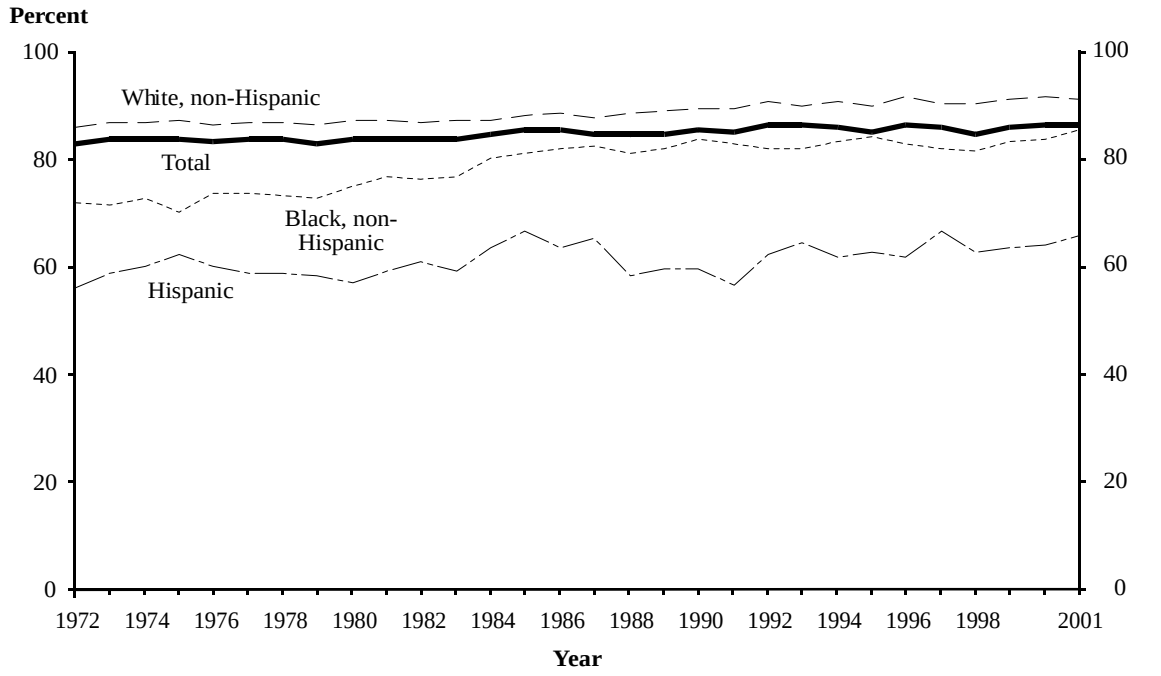
- **Cohort completion rates** measure what happens to a group of students over a period of time. These rates are based on repeated measures over time of a particular cohort of students with shared experiences; they show how many students starting in a specific grade complete or graduate over time. Cohort rates require data from longitudinal collections. Cohort rates are not presented in this report. However, the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 provided cohort dropout data that were used in previous reports. New cohort data will be collected in 2004 with the first follow-up to the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002.

Status Completion Rates

Status completion rates measure the percentage of those not enrolled in elementary/secondary school that have a high school credential, regardless of when the credential was earned. While conceptually the status completion and status dropout rates are related, they are not perfectly complementary. Because individuals can legally drop out of high school in many states at age 16, the status dropout age range starts at 16. Because most people graduate from high school when they are 18, the status completion rate starts at age 18. In addition, the status dropout rate includes all 16- through 24-year-olds, whereas the status completion rate excludes those still enrolled in high school. Hence, the base populations used are different.

The status completion rate for the nation has increased only slightly over the last three decades. Between 1972 and 1990, status completion rates increased by 2.8 percentage points from 82.8 percent in 1972 to 85.6 percent in 1990; since 1991, the rate has shown no consistent trend and has fluctuated between 84.8 and 86.5 percent (figure 3 and table A7). This net increase of almost 3 percentage points over 30 years represents slow progress toward assuring that all Americans have at least a basic high school education.

Figure 3. Status completion rates[1] of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below, by race/ethnicity: October 1972 through October 2001



[1]Status completion rates represent the percentage of 18- through 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and have not completed high school by earning a diploma or obtaining a high school equivalency certificate.

NOTE: Due to small sample sizes, American Indians/Alaska Natives and Asians/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately. Numbers for years 1987 through 2001 reflect new editing procedures instituted by the U.S. Census Bureau for cases with missing data on school enrollment items. Numbers for years 1992 through 2001 reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS beginning in 1992. Numbers for years 1994 through 2001 reflect changes in the CPS due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing and the change in population controls used in the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment for undercounting in the 1990 Census. See appendix C for a fuller description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1972–2001.

Race/Ethnicity

In 2001, high school status completion rates ranged from 96.1 percent of Asians/Pacific Islanders to 65.7 percent of Hispanics (table 4). Trends in status completion rates show a mixed picture for those racial/ethnic groups for which data have been available over the past 30 years (figure 3 and table A7). Whites exhibited a small positive trend in status completion over this period, although rates have not changed significantly in the last decade. Specifically, status completion rates for White students increased from 86.0 percent in 1972 to 89.6 percent in 1990. Since 1990, White completion rates have remained in the range of 89.4–91.8 percent.

The percentage of Black students completing high school over the last 30 years rose from 72.1 percent in 1972 to 85.6 percent in 2001. In addition, the gap between Black and White completion rates narrowed between 1972 and 2001. However, like the White rates, Black completion rates have stabilized in the last decade, at 81.4–85.6 percent; and the gap between the two groups has also stabilized (figure 3 and table A7).

A relatively low percentage of Hispanics had completed high school programs, including GED programs, in 2001 with 65.7 percent of all Hispanic 18- through 24-year-olds having done so. This compares to 91.0 percent of Whites, 85.6 percent of Blacks, and 96.1 percent of Asians/Pacific Islanders.

Only about half of Hispanics ages 18-24 who were born outside the U.S. completed high school (50.3 percent) (table 4). Status completion rates were higher for Hispanics born in the U.S. (78.2 percent for first generation and 85.1 percent for second or more generation), although in each immigrant category Hispanics were less likely to have earned a high school credential than non-Hispanics.

Though the 2001 rate for Hispanics was significantly higher than the completion rate in 1972 (56.2 percent), overall, completion rates for Hispanics have fluctuated over the last 30 years and have shown no consistent trend. For example, completion rates for Hispanics increased between 1980 and 1985, and then remained at the same level between 1985 and 2001. Furthermore, no difference was detected between the 65.7 percent estimate in 2001 and the estimate of 66.6 percent in 1985.

Asians/Pacific Islanders were more likely than their White, Black, and Hispanic peers to complete high school (table 4). In 2001, 96.1 percent of Asians/Pacific Islanders ages 18 through 24 had completed high school, compared with 91.0 percent of Whites, 85.6 percent of Blacks, and 65.7 percent of Hispanics. Whites also completed high school at a higher rate than both Blacks and Hispanics, and Blacks completed high school at a higher rate than Hispanics.

Age and Sex

Persons ages 18–19 who were no longer enrolled in high school were less likely than those ages 20–24 to have completed high school in 2001; 83.8 percent of 18- and 19-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school had completed high school, compared with 87.1 percent of persons ages 20–21 and 87.6 percent of those ages 22–24 (table 4).

As might be expected given their lower status dropout rates, females ages 18–24 who were no longer enrolled in high school were more likely to have completed high school than their male peers in 2001 (88.3 percent versus 84.6 percent, respectively).

Table 4. Status completion rates, and number and distribution of completers ages 18–24 not currently enrolled in high school or below, by selected background characteristics: October 2001

Characteristic	Completion rate	Population (thousands)	Number of completers (thousands)	Percent of all completers
Total	86.5	25,543	22,084	100.0
Sex				
Male	84.6	12,556	10,617	48.1
Female	88.3	12,988	11,467	51.9
Race/ethnicity[1]				
White, non-Hispanic	91.0	16,677	15,182	68.7
Black, non-Hispanic	85.6	3,528	3,020	13.7
Hispanic	65.7	4,003	2,632	11.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	96.1	1,093	1,050	4.8
Age				
18–19	83.8	6,802	5,700	25.8
20–21	87.1	7,719	6,726	30.5
22–24	87.6	11,023	9,658	43.7
Recency of immigration				
Born outside the 50 states and District of Columbia				
Hispanic	50.3	1,903	958	4.3
Non-Hispanic	92.7	1,519	1,407	6.3
First generation[2]				
Hispanic	78.2	1,147	897	4.1
Non-Hispanic	93.4	1,334	1,246	5.6
Second generation or more[2]				
Hispanic	81.5	945	778	3.5
Non-Hispanic	89.9	18,687	16,799	76.0
Region				
Northeast	88.7	4,413	3,915	17.7
Midwest	88.9	5,910	5,253	23.8
South	83.4	9,107	7,598	34.4
West	87.0	6,113	5,318	24.1

[1]Due to small sample size, American Indians/Alaska Natives are included in the total but are not shown separately.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2001.

Region and State

Status completion rates by region ranged from 83.4–88.9 percent. Consistent with status dropout data by region, young adults in the South had lower completion rates than their contemporaries in other regions of the country (83.4 percent compared with 88.9 percent in the Midwest, 88.7 percent in the Northeast, and 87.0 percent in the West) (table 4).

Interest in geographic comparisons often extends beyond the regional level to state-specific data. In order to compare status completions across different states, rates are computed using data collected over a 3-year period and then averaged.[31] The 1999–2001 averages show considerable state-by-state variation (figure 4 and table A8). The 1999–2001 national completion rate was 86.3 percent, with state rates ranging from 77.6 percent in Arizona to 96.8 percent in North Dakota.

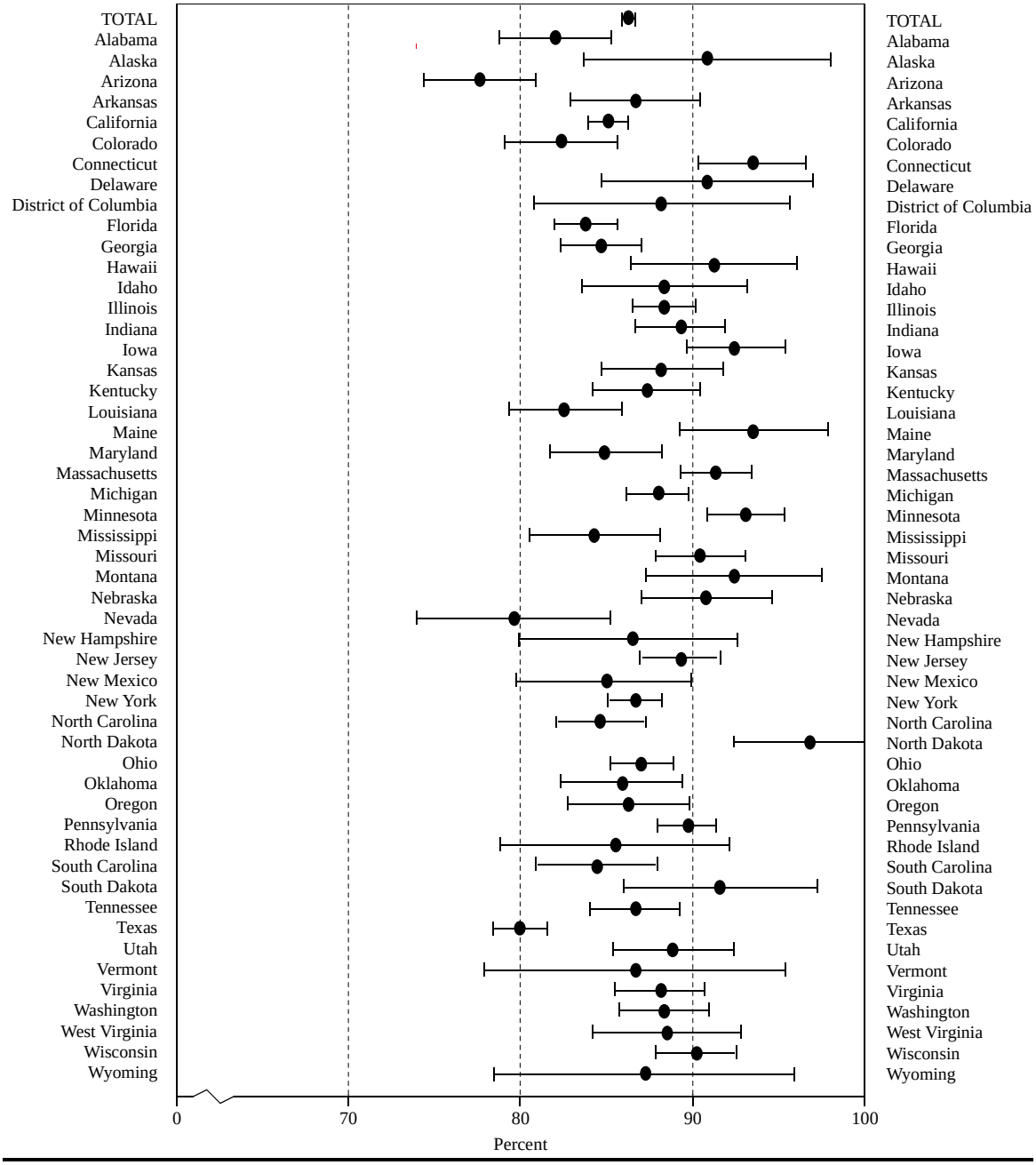
The purpose of showing the confidence intervals in figure 4 is to graphically illustrate that even after averaging 3 years of data, the standard errors[32] for some state estimates are quite large (table B8), making state-to-state comparisons difficult. Figure 4 includes error bars (representing the 95 percent confidence level) along with point estimates for the state status completion rates. For example, in the first line in the figure, Arizona's completion rate is represented by the symbol |—•—|. The • represents the estimate of the 3-year average completion rate for Arizona (77.6 percent). The error bars surrounding the • represent the 95 percent confidence interval around that estimate. Therefore, with a probability of 95 percent, Arizona's completion rate lies somewhere between 74.4 percent (the lower bound) and 80.8 percent (the upper bound). As one can see from this figure, the confidence intervals for most states' completion rates overlap, making distinctions among most states' completion rates difficult to make. For example, no difference was detected between Idaho's completion rate of 88.3 percent and Louisiana's rate of 82.6 percent nor was there a difference between Nevada's completion rate of 79.6 and Mississippi's completion rate of 84.3.[33]

[31]The sample sizes for number of completers in each state in the October CPS are substantially smaller than the counts of completers supporting national estimates (but appreciably larger than the counts of dropouts). To improve the stability of the state-level estimates for high school completion rates, the rates are calculated and displayed as 3-year averages (for example, the data for 1999–2001 are averages of data from 1999, 2000, and 2001). Even given this method, sampling variability is higher in states with relatively small populations in the 18–24 age range.

[32]Standard errors indicate the statistical reliability of an estimate due to the fact that the estimate is derived from a sample of the population rather than an actual count from the population. See appendix C for further discussion of standard errors.

[33]Readers should keep in mind that some people counted in completion rates may not have attended high school in the state in which they resided when surveyed. For example, states with a large number of out-of-state college students may have high completion rates that may have little relationship to the secondary education system in that state. Likewise, states with large numbers of migrant workers who never attended school in that state may have low completion rates that are also partially unrelated to the performance of their secondary education system.

Figure 4. Status completion rates of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below with 95 percent confidence intervals, by state: October 1999–2001



NOTE: The estimates in this figure (•) correspond to 3-year averages, and the horizontal bars show the 95 percent confidence intervals for these averages.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1999–2001.

Four-Year Completion Rates for 9th Grade Public School Students: 2000–01 School Year[34]

Status completion rates provide information about the relative level of education of a given population. The 4-year completion rate measures the percentage of 9th-graders who leave school over a subsequent 4-year period and who do so with a high school credential. This rate differs from the status completion rate in that it is based on the recent experiences of an estimated cohort of 9th-graders over a 4-year period.[35] It also focuses solely on public school students. Similar to the status completion rate, those students still in high school after the 4-year period are excluded from the estimate. The No Child Left Behind Act calls for an on-time graduation rate. However, to calculate such a rate for 9th-graders would require an estimate of the number of 9th-graders who are still enrolled in grades 9-12 after 4 years. These data are not currently available to NCES.

Data for the 4-year completion rate calculations are taken from the Common Core of Data (CCD). The 4-year completion rate calculation is dependent on the availability of dropout estimates over a 4-year span, and current counts of completers. Because dropout rate information was missing for many states during the 4-year period considered here, 4-year completion rate estimates for the 2000-01 school year were available for 39 states (table 5 and shown in rank order in table A9). Since data were not available from all states, an overall national rate could not be calculated. However, among reporting states, the high school 4-year completion rates for public school students ranged from a high of 90.1 percent in North Dakota to a low of 65.0 percent in Louisiana. (This rate includes other high school completers but does not reflect those receiving a GED-based equivalency credential.) In 2000–01, seven of the reporting states had 4-year completion rates above 85 percent: Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. Five states had 4-year completion rates below 75 percent: Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Nevada, and New Mexico.

One of the strengths of the data on high school completion from the CCD is that high school diploma recipients can be distinguished from all completers. In fact, almost all high school completion credentials are in the form of a diploma. There were 37 reporting states with data available to calculate a 2000–01 high school 4-year completion rate that either reported other high school completer data (e.g., certificates of completion) or did not award any type of other high school completer credentials. Other high school completers made up only 1.8 percent of all high school completers in these 37 reporting states (data not shown).

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[34]The following text and discussion are derived from Young, B.A. (2003). *Public High School Dropouts and Completers From the Common Core of Data: School Year 2000–01* (NCES 2004-310). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. The 2000-01 data from CCD used in that report and this report are preliminary release data.

[35]The rate uses an estimated cohort and not a true cohort. A true cohort is a group of individuals who are followed over time. The 4-year completion rate is based on data from 4 separate data collections, which do not follow individuals, but rather collect information about an independent cross section of students in each of the 4 years. True cohort data are not available from most states.

Twenty-eight of these states awarded other high school completion credentials and had data necessary to calculate a 2000–01 4-year completion rate for other high school completers (e.g., recipients of certificates of completion). In 6 of these 28 states—Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, Oregon, and Tennessee—the percentage of all students who completed by means of another high school completion credential was 5 percent or more.

A comparison of state-level status completion rates and 4-year completion rates shows that the 4-year completion rates are consistently lower than the status completion rates. There are several possible reasons for this difference. The 4-year rate is based only on those enrolled in public schools in the United States, while the status completion rate includes students from both public and private schools, thus differential completion rates between public and private schools could contribute to this difference. There is also an age difference in the populations covered by the two completion rates. The 4-year completion rate primarily reflects the experiences of students in the 17- through 19-year-old age range. The status completion rate reflects the experiences of young adults ages 18-24. Age specific status completion rates confirm the fact that the rate increases with age (table 4). Thus, the lower 4-year completion rate estimates may be due in part to the different age group covered. Another contributing factor is the inclusion of GED completers in the status completion rate, but not in the 4-year completion rate.

An additional reason for the differences in the two rates is that they are based on different data collection methods. The 4-year completion rate is based on data collected from state administrative records (CCD), while the status completion rate is based on data from household informants (CPS). Also, while NCES sets a standard definition of what constitutes a dropout and a completer, state policies and differing interpretations by household informants may lead to inconsistent reporting that can effect the 4-year completion rates and status completion rates, respectively. These different methods and procedures may introduce different kinds of measurement errors. For example, the administrative data are collected for purposes that are not purely statistical and are not generally subject to the same controlled procedures as census or sample surveys. For data collected from households, the household informant may overestimate the educational attainment of household members due to the social desirability of a high school diploma. Nevertheless, the 0.76 correlation between the state-level status completion rates and the state-level 4-year completion rates is high.[36]

[36]As noted, the state-level status completion rates are based on the average rate of three consecutive years. The most recent estimates use data from 1999, 2000, and 2001. Because the midpoint is 2000, the 4-year completion rates from 1999-2000 are used in the correlation. Using 2000-01 4-year completion rates, the correlation is 0.72.

Table 5. Four-year completion rates for 9th-grade public school students, by state: 2000–01

State	Total number of completers[1]	4-year completion rate (percent)[2]		
		Total	Diploma	Other completers
United States	2,616,570	—	—	—
Alabama	39,613	80.0	74.9	5.1
Alaska	6,829	75.2	75.0	0.2
Arizona[3]	47,543	68.3	67.2	1.1
Arkansas	29,019	79.1	73.9	5.2
California	316,124	—	—	—
Colorado	39,370	—	—	—
Connecticut	30,435	86.6	86.5	0.1
Delaware	6,712	81.6	80.4	1.2
District of Columbia[5]	3,043	—	—	—
Florida[5]	115,522	—	—	—
Georgia	69,215	71.1	64.2	6.9
Hawaii	10,323	77.7	76.0	1.7
Idaho[3]	16,101	76.9	76.5	0.4
Illinois	110,624	75.8	75.8	†
Indiana	60,464	—	—	—
Iowa	33,909	89.2	88.9	0.4
Kansas	29,360	—	—	—
Kentucky[5]	37,293	79.9	79.2	0.7
Louisiana	39,296	65.0	63.4	1.6
Maine	12,129	86.5	86.4	0.1
Maryland	49,569	83.2	82.6	0.6
Massachusetts	54,393	86.3	86.3	†
Michigan	97,124	—	—	—
Minnesota	56,550	82.5	82.5	†
Mississippi	25,762	77.3	71.3	6.0
Missouri	54,198	81.0	80.9	0.1
Montana	10,628	82.1	82.1	†
Nebraska	19,738	83.9	83.2	0.7
Nevada	15,880	73.5	70.3	3.1
New Hampshire[5]	12,294	—	—	—
New Jersey	75,948	88.0	88.0	†
New Mexico	18,354	74.4	73.8	0.6
New York	147,305	81.6	78.6	3.0
North Carolina[5]	63,954	—	—	—
North Dakota	8,445	90.1	90.1	†
Ohio	113,973	81.0	77.3	3.7
Oklahoma	37,448	79.2	79.2	†
Oregon	33,713	76.4	70.4	6.0
Pennsylvania	114,436	84.0	84.0	†
Rhode Island	8,617	79.8	79.7	0.1

See notes at end of table.

Table 5. Four-year completion rates for 9th-grade public school students, by state: 2000–01—Continued

State	Total number of completers[1]	4-year completion rate (percent)[2]		
		Total	Diploma	Other completers
South Carolina[5]	30,577	—	—	—
South Dakota	8,881	84.6	84.6	†
Tennessee	44,663	79.5	72.4	7.2
Texas[5]	215,316	—	—	—
Utah	31,214	82.6	82.2	0.4
Vermont	6,876	81.9	81.6	0.2
Virginia	68,593	83.8	80.7	3.1
Washington[5]	55,337	—	—	—
West Virginia	18,452	83.4	83.3	0.1
Wisconsin[4]	59,341	90.0	90.0	—
Wyoming[4]	6,067	76.5	76.5	—

—Not available.

†Not applicable; state does not award this type of credential.

[1]Includes regular and other diplomas as well as other completers, but does not include high school equivalencies (e.g., GED).

[2]The 4-year completion rate is calculated by dividing the number of high school completers in a given year by the number of high school completers in that year and dropouts over the preceding 4-year period.

[3]Values for 1 year of the 4-year completion rate denominator are imputed.

[4]Other completers data are missing for Wisconsin and Wyoming.

[5]States that reported completers but not 4 consecutive years of dropout data cannot have a 4-year high school completion rate.

NOTE: See appendix C for a detailed discussion of the CCD dropout definition. Includes public school students only. States that reported completers but not 4 consecutive years of dropout data cannot have a 4-year high school completion rate.

SOURCE: Data are reported by states to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Local Education Agency Universe Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2000–01," Version 1a. The data in the 2000-01 Version 1a file are preliminary release data.

CONCLUSIONS

In October 2001, 5 out of every 100 (5 percent) individuals ages 15–24 who were enrolled in high school the previous October had left high school without successfully completing a high school program. In total, these dropouts accounted for approximately one-half million of the 10 million students who were enrolled in high school in October 2000. The annual state-level dropout rates for public high school students in 2000–01 showed considerable variability, ranging from 2.2 percent in North Dakota to 10.9 percent in Arizona. These annual national and state dropout estimates have not changed appreciably in recent years.

The cumulative effect of hundreds of thousands of young people leaving school each year short of finishing a high school program translates into several million youths who are out of school yet lack a high school credential. Considering the civilian, non-institutionalized population in 2001, there were 3.8 million 16- through 24-year-olds who, although not enrolled in school, had not yet completed a high school program. This translated into a 10.7 percent status dropout rate for the 35.2 million 16- through 24-year-olds in the United States.

One goal of reducing the dropout rate is to increase the percentage of youth who complete a high school education. Despite the importance of a high school education for entry to postsecondary education and the labor market, the status completion rate has shown little change over the last three decades. The status completion rate has increased gradually since 1972 when it was 82.8 percent, but has shown no consistent trend since 1991 and has fluctuated between 84.8 and 86.5 percent. The rate in 2001 was 86.5. Focusing on public high school students, there is considerable variability in terms of realizing high completion rates. In 2000–01, the 4-year completion rates ranged from a high of 90.1 percent in North Dakota to a low of 65.0 percent in Louisiana.

There are persistent gaps between the high school dropout and completion rates among racial/ethnic groups. For example, Whites continue to complete high school at higher rates than either Blacks or Hispanics. In 2001, the status completion rate for Whites was 91.0 percent compared with 65.7 percent for Hispanics. The status dropout rate was 7.3 percent for Whites and 27 percent for Hispanics.

While the gaps between White and Black completion and dropout rates was smaller in 2001 than in 1972, the baseline year, the narrowing of differences occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. Since 1990, no further narrowing of the gaps has been detected. In 2001, the Black status completion rate of 85.6 percent was lower than the White rate of 91.0, and the Black status dropout rate of 10.9 percent was higher than the White rate of 7.3 percent.

The four rates presented in this report provide a broad picture of high school dropouts and completers. While informative, the report is limited by a lack of annual graduation rate measures. NCES is currently working with the National Institute of Statistical Sciences (NISS) and a group of experts on the topic of high school outcomes to develop such measures, and to review existing measures of high school dropout and completion rates. Once completed, this work will help enhance both the utility of NCES' annual dropout reports and other studies.

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APPENDIX A

Supplemental Tables

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Table A1. Event dropout rates of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12, by family income: October 1972 through October 2001

Year	Total (percent)	Family income (percent)[1] Low income	Middle income	High income
1972	6.1	14.1	6.7	2.5
1973	6.3	17.3	7.0	1.8
1974	6.7	—	—	—
1975	5.8	15.7	6.0	2.6
1976	5.9	15.4	6.8	2.1
1977	6.5	15.5	7.6	2.2
1978	6.7	17.4	7.3	3.0
1979	6.7	17.1	6.9	3.6
1980	6.1	15.8	6.4	2.5
1981	5.9	14.4	6.2	2.8
1982	5.5	15.2	5.6	1.8
1983	5.2	10.4	6.0	2.2
1984	5.1	13.9	5.1	1.8
1985	5.2	14.2	5.2	2.1
1986	4.7	10.9	5.1	1.6
1987[2]	4.1	10.3	4.7	1.0
1988[2]	4.8	13.7	4.7	1.3
1989[2]	4.5	10.0	5.0	1.1
1990[2]	4.0	9.5	4.3	1.1
1991[2]	4.1	10.6	4.0	1.0
1992[2,3]	4.4	10.9	4.4	1.3
1993[2,3]	4.5	12.3	4.3	1.3
1994[2,3,4]	5.3	13.0	5.2	2.1
1995[2,3,4]	5.7	13.3	5.7	2.0
1996[2,3,4]	5.0	11.1	5.1	2.1
1997[2,3,4]	4.6	12.3	4.1	1.8
1998[2,3,4]	4.8	12.7	3.8	2.7
1999[2,3,4]	5.0	11.0	5.0	2.1
2000[2,3,4]	4.8	10.0	5.2	1.6
2001[2,3,4]	5.0	10.7	5.4	1.7

—Not available.

[1]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for the year; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes. See appendix C of this report for a full definition of family income.

[2]Estimates for these years reflect the new editing procedures instituted by the Census Bureau for cases with missing data on school enrollment items. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

[3]Estimates for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS beginning in 1992. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

[4]Estimates in these years reflect changes in the CPS due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing and the change in the population controls used in the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustments for undercounting in the 1990 Census. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1972–2001.

Table A2. Event dropout rates of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12, by sex and race/ethnicity: October 1972 through October 2001

Year	Total (percent)	Sex (percent)		Race/ethnicity (percent)[1]		
		Male	Female	White non-Hispanic	Black non-Hispanic	Hispanic
1972	6.1	5.9	6.3	5.3	9.5	11.2
1973	6.3	6.8	5.7	5.5	9.9	10.0
1974	6.7	7.4	6.0	5.8	11.6	9.9
1975	5.8	5.4	6.1	5.0	8.7	10.9
1976	5.9	6.6	5.2	5.6	7.4	7.3
1977	6.5	6.9	6.1	6.1	8.6	7.8
1978	6.7	7.5	5.9	5.8	10.2	12.3
1979	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.0	9.9	9.8
1980	6.1	6.7	5.5	5.2	8.2	11.7
1981	5.9	6.0	5.8	4.8	9.7	10.7
1982	5.5	5.8	5.1	4.7	7.8	9.2
1983	5.2	5.8	4.7	4.4	7.0	10.1
1984	5.1	5.4	4.8	4.4	5.7	11.1
1985	5.2	5.4	5.0	4.3	7.8	9.8
1986	4.7	4.7	4.7	3.7	5.4	11.9
1987[2]	4.1	4.3	3.8	3.5	6.4	5.4
1988[2]	4.8	5.1	4.4	4.2	5.9	10.4
1989[2]	4.5	4.5	4.5	3.5	7.8	7.8
1990[2]	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.3	5.0	7.9
1991[2]	4.1	3.8	4.2	3.2	6.0	7.3
1992[2,3]	4.4	3.9	4.9	3.7	5.0	8.2
1993[2,3]	4.5	4.6	4.3	3.9	5.8	6.7
1994[2,3,4]	5.3	5.2	5.4	4.2	6.6	10.0
1995[2,3,4]	5.7	6.2	5.3	4.5	6.4	12.4
1996[2,3,4]	5.0	5.0	5.1	4.1	6.7	9.0
1997[2,3,4]	4.6	5.0	4.1	3.6	5.0	9.5
1998[2,3,4]	4.8	4.6	4.9	3.9	5.2	9.4
1999[2,3,4]	5.0	4.6	5.4	4.0	6.5	7.8
2000[2,3,4]	4.8	5.5	4.1	4.1	6.1	7.4
2001[2,3,4]	5.0	5.6	4.3	4.1	6.3	8.8

[1]Due to small sample sizes, American Indians/Alaska Natives and Asians/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Estimates for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Census Bureau for cases with missing data on school enrollment items. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

[3]Estimates for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS beginning in 1992. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

[4]Estimates in these years reflect changes in the CPS beginning in 1994 due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing and the change in the population controls used in the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustments for undercounting in the 1990 Census. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1972–2001.

Table A3. Event dropout rates of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12, and number of dropouts and population of 15- through 24-year-olds who were enrolled: October 1990 through October 2001

Year	Event dropout rate (percent)	Number of dropouts (thousands)	Population enrolled (thousands)
1990	4.0	347	8,675
1991	4.1	348	8,700
1992[1]	4.4	383	8,705
1993[1]	4.5	381	8,469
1994[1,2]	5.3	497	9,377
1995[1,2]	5.7	544	9,509
1996[1,2]	5.0	485	9,612
1997[1,2]	4.6	454	9,984
1998[1,2]	4.8	479	10,079
1999[1,2]	5.0	519	10,464
2000[1,2]	4.8	488	10,126
2001[1,2]	5.0	505	10,187

[1]Estimates for these periods reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS beginning in 1992. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

[2]Estimates for these periods reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS beginning in 1992 and changes in the CPS beginning in 1994 due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing. They also reflect changes in population controls used in the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustments for undercounting in the 1990 Census. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1990–2001.

Table A4. Event dropout rates for public school students in grades 9–12 in rank order, by state: 2000–01

State	Event dropout rate (percent) 2000–01
North Dakota	2.2
Wisconsin	2.3
Iowa	2.7
New Jersey[1]	2.8
Connecticut	3.0
Maine	3.1
Kansas	3.2
South Carolina	3.3
Massachusetts	3.4
Virginia	3.5
Pennsylvania	3.6
Utah	3.7
New York[1]	3.8
Ohio	3.9
South Dakota	3.9
Minnesota	4.0
Nebraska	4.0
Alabama[1]	4.1
Maryland[1]	4.1
Delaware	4.2
Missouri	4.2
Montana	4.2
Texas	4.2
West Virginia	4.2
Tennessee[1]	4.3
Florida[1]	4.4
Kentucky	4.6
Mississippi	4.6
Vermont[1]	4.7
Rhode Island	5.0
Nevada	5.2
Oklahoma[1]	5.2
Arkansas	5.3
New Mexico	5.3
Oregon	5.3
New Hampshire[2]	5.4
Idaho	5.6
Hawaii	5.7
Illinois[1]	6.0
North Carolina	6.3
Wyoming	6.4

See notes at end of table.

Table A4. Event dropout rates for public school students in grades 9–12 in rank order, by state: 2000–01 —Continued

State	Event dropout rate (percent) 2000–01
Georgia	7.2
Alaska[1]	8.2
Louisiana	8.3
Arizona[1]	10.9
California	—
Colorado	—
District of Columbia	—
Indiana	—
Michigan	—
Washington	—

—Not available. These states do not report dropouts that are consistent with the NCES definition.

[1]These states reported on an alternative July through June cycle rather than the specified October through September cycle.

[2]New Hampshire is missing reported dropouts for 14 of their 76 school districts that operate high schools (16.3 percent of enrollment in the 76 school districts).

NOTE: See appendix C for a detailed discussion of the CCD dropout definition. Data are reported by states to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. CCD includes public school students only.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Local Education Agency Universe Survey Dropout and Completion Data File" School Year 2000–01, Version 1a. The data in the 2000-01 Version 1a file are preliminary release data.

Table A5. Status dropout rates, number of status dropouts, and population of 16- through 24-year-olds: October 1990 through October 2001

Year	Status dropout rate (percent)	Number of status dropouts (thousands)	Population (thousands)
1990	12.1	3,797	31,443
1991	12.5	3,881	31,171
1992[1]	11.0	3,410	30,944
1993[1]	11.0	3,396	30,845
1994[1,2]	11.5	3,727	32,560
1995[1,2]	12.0	3,876	32,379
1996[1,2]	11.1	3,611	32,452
1997[1,2]	11.0	3,624	32,960
1998[1,2]	11.8	3,942	33,445
1999[1,2]	11.2	3,829	34,173
2000[1,2]	10.9	3,776	34,568
2001[1,2]	10.7	3,774	35,195

[1]Estimates for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS beginning in 1992. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

[2]Estimates for these years reflect changes in the CPS beginning in 1994 due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing and the change in the population controls used in the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustments for undercounting in the 1990 Census. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1990–2001.

Table A6. Status dropout rates of 16- through 24-year-olds, by race/ethnicity: October 1972 through October 2001

Year	Total (percent)	Race/ethnicity (percent)[1]		
		White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
1972	14.6	12.3	21.3	34.3
1973	14.1	11.6	22.2	33.5
1974	14.3	11.9	21.2	33.0
1975	13.9	11.4	22.9	29.2
1976	14.1	12.0	20.5	31.4
1977	14.1	11.9	19.8	33.0
1978	14.2	11.9	20.2	33.3
1979	14.6	12.0	21.1	33.8
1980	14.1	11.4	19.1	35.2
1981	13.9	11.4	18.4	33.2
1982	13.9	11.4	18.4	31.7
1983	13.7	11.2	18.0	31.6
1984	13.1	11.0	15.5	29.8
1985	12.6	10.4	15.2	27.6
1986	12.2	9.7	14.2	30.1
1987[2]	12.7	10.4	14.1	28.6
1988[2]	12.9	9.6	14.5	35.8
1989[2]	12.6	9.4	13.9	33.0
1990[2]	12.1	9.0	13.2	32.4
1991[2]	12.5	8.9	13.6	35.3
1992[2,3]	11.0	7.7	13.7	29.4
1993[2,3]	11.0	7.9	13.6	27.5
1994[2,3,4]	11.5	7.7	12.6	30.0
1995[2,3,4]	12.0	8.6	12.1	30.0
1996[2,3,4]	11.1	7.3	13.0	29.4
1997[2,3,4]	11.0	7.6	13.4	25.3
1998[2,3,4]	11.8	7.7	13.8	29.5
1999[2,3,4]	11.2	7.3	12.6	28.6
2000[2,3,4]	10.9	6.9	13.1	27.8
2001[2,3,4]	10.7	7.3	10.9	27.0

[1]Due to small sample sizes, American Indians/Alaska Natives and Asians/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Estimates for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Census Bureau for cases with missing data on school enrollment items. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

[3]Estimates for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS beginning in 1992. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

[4]Estimates in these years reflect changes in the CPS due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing and the change in the population controls used in the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustments for undercounting in the 1990 Census. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1972–2001.

Table A7. Status completion rates of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below, by race/ethnicity: October 1972 through October 2001

Year	Total (percent)	Race/ethnicity (percent)[1]		
		White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
1972	82.8	86.0	72.1	56.2
1973	83.7	87.0	71.6	58.7
1974	83.6	86.7	73.0	60.1
1975	83.8	87.2	70.2	62.2
1976	83.5	86.4	73.5	60.3
1977	83.6	86.7	73.9	58.6
1978	83.6	86.9	73.4	58.8
1979	83.1	86.6	72.6	58.5
1980	83.9	87.5	75.2	57.1
1981	83.8	87.1	76.7	59.1
1982	83.8	87.0	76.4	60.9
1983	83.9	87.4	76.8	59.4
1984	84.7	87.5	80.3	63.7
1985	85.4	88.2	81.0	66.6
1986	85.5	88.8	81.8	63.5
1987[2]	84.7	87.7	81.9	65.1
1988[2]	84.5	88.7	80.9	58.2
1989[2]	84.7	89.0	81.9	59.4
1990[2]	85.6	89.6	83.2	59.1
1991[2]	84.9	89.4	82.5	56.5
1992[2,3]	86.4	90.7	82.0	62.1
1993[2,3]	86.2	90.1	81.9	64.4
1994[2,3,4]	85.8	90.7	83.3	61.8
1995[2,3,4]	85.3	89.8	84.5	62.8
1996[2,3,4]	86.2	91.5	83.0	61.9
1997[2,3,4]	85.9	90.5	82.0	66.7
1998[2,3,4]	84.8	90.2	81.4	62.8
1999[2,3,4]	85.9	91.2	83.5	63.4
2000[2,3,4]	86.5	91.8	83.7	64.1
2001[2,3,4]	86.5	91.0	85.6	65.7

[1]Due to small sample sizes, American Indians/Alaska Natives and Asians/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Estimates for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Census Bureau for cases with missing data on school enrollment items. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

[3]Estimates for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS beginning in 1992. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

[4]Estimates in these years reflect changes in the CPS due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing and the change in the population controls used in the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustments for undercounting in the 1990 Census. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1972–2001.

Table A8. Status completion rates of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below, by state: October 1989–91 through October 1999–2001

State	Completion rate (percent)										
	1989–1991	1990–1992[1]	1991–1993[1]	1992–1994[2]	1993–1995[2]	1994–1996[2]	1995–1997[2]	1996–1998[2]	1997–1999[2]	1998–2000[2]	1999–2001[2]
Total	85.0	85.5	85.7	86.1	85.8	85.8	85.8	85.6	85.5	85.7	86.3
Alabama	82.2	83.9	81.0	82.2	83.6	87.2	85.3	84.2	83.1	81.6	82.0
Alaska	88.7	86.9	89.0	90.9	90.5	87.4	85.1	88.3	90.8	93.3	90.9
Arizona	83.2	81.7	81.1	83.7	83.8	84.0	80.9	77.1	75.0	73.5	77.6
Arkansas	87.1	87.5	87.7	87.5	88.3	88.6	87.6	84.5	82.9	84.1	86.7
California	76.7	77.3	78.2	78.9	78.7	78.6	80.6	81.2	81.5	82.5	85.1
Colorado	87.8	88.1	87.2	87.6	88.4	87.9	88.2	85.5	83.3	81.6	82.4
Connecticut	89.7	89.9	90.9	92.6	94.7	96.1	94.4	91.6	90.1	91.7	93.6
Delaware	85.9	86.2	90.3	93.7	93.0	90.3	89.0	88.5	89.1	91.0	90.8
District of Columbia	82.0	84.0	87.2	86.4	87.7	86.2	85.7	84.9	87.2	88.0	88.2
Florida	83.2	84.1	84.5	83.2	80.6	80.1	81.8	83.6	84.8	84.6	83.8
Georgia	85.5	85.1	81.9	79.4	80.3	81.3	84.1	84.8	83.7	83.5	84.7
Hawaii	92.9	93.5	92.8	90.7	92.0	92.6	93.5	92.3	90.7	91.8	91.3
Idaho	83.1	84.7	89.0	86.7	86.0	84.9	87.6	85.8	85.5	86.4	88.3
Illinois	85.4	86.0	86.0	86.7	86.5	87.9	87.3	86.6	86.2	87.1	88.4
Indiana	88.9	87.8	87.4	88.4	88.5	89.7	88.9	89.3	88.6	89.4	89.4
Iowa	94.5	94.6	94.0	94.2	93.2	91.9	88.6	88.0	88.2	90.8	92.4
Kansas	92.5	93.2	91.4	92.2	90.9	91.6	91.5	91.5	91.6	90.4	88.2
Kentucky	81.6	81.1	82.6	83.3	82.4	82.2	83.3	85.2	86.6	86.2	87.4
Louisiana	80.6	83.9	82.5	83.9	80.1	82.2	80.4	81.6	82.1	82.1	82.6
Maine	90.5	91.9	93.4	94.0	92.9	91.4	90.4	91.6	92.9	94.5	93.6
Maryland	87.3	88.6	91.0	92.9	93.6	93.4	94.9	94.5	90.1	87.4	84.9
Massachusetts	89.6	89.8	90.5	91.2	92.5	92.4	91.4	90.6	90.1	90.9	91.4
Michigan	86.3	87.2	88.3	89.2	88.6	89.1	89.7	91.0	90.1	89.2	88.1
Minnesota	92.0	92.5	91.7	93.2	93.1	95.3	91.6	90.0	90.4	91.9	93.1
Mississippi	84.0	85.4	88.6	88.8	83.9	82.0	80.9	82.0	82.1	82.3	84.3
Missouri	88.0	88.1	88.3	90.0	90.3	89.9	89.2	90.4	91.6	92.6	90.4
Montana	92.7	91.6	91.6	91.6	89.6	89.8	89.3	91.1	91.0	91.1	92.4
Nebraska	90.8	92.5	92.5	95.9	94.1	93.0	90.8	91.2	91.5	91.3	90.8
Nevada	82.6	82.1	83.3	83.4	81.9	81.5	76.7	78.1	74.5	77.9	79.6
New Hampshire	87.3	87.9	89.0	86.6	86.9	87.4	90.3	89.2	87.3	85.1	86.6
New Jersey	90.0	90.8	89.8	91.0	91.6	93.0	93.0	91.8	90.2	90.1	89.3
New Mexico	84.7	84.1	84.3	83.7	82.3	78.8	78.8	78.6	82.7	83.0	85.0
New York	87.7	88.0	87.6	87.5	87.0	86.4	85.0	84.7	85.2	86.3	86.8
North Carolina	82.8	83.0	84.2	85.3	85.5	85.3	85.3	85.2	86.1	86.1	84.7
North Dakota	95.6	96.3	95.7	96.6	96.4	97.9	97.2	94.7	93.6	94.4	96.8
Ohio	89.3	90.0	89.7	89.6	88.3	87.7	88.5	89.4	89.3	87.7	87.0
Oklahoma	87.1	84.3	81.8	83.1	86.7	89.5	87.4	86.0	85.4	85.7	86.0
Oregon	89.2	89.6	85.5	82.9	82.6	81.1	79.3	75.4	78.5	82.3	86.3
Pennsylvania	90.2	90.2	90.5	89.7	89.4	89.6	88.3	87.6	87.6	89.0	89.8
Rhode Island	87.4	87.9	90.4	90.7	89.4	87.5	86.0	86.1	86.7	87.9	85.5

See notes at end of table.

Table A8. Status completion rates of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below, by state: October 1989–91 through October 1999–2001—Continued

State	Completion rate (percent)										
	1989–1991	1990–1992[1]	1991–1993[1]	1992–1994[2]	1993–1995[2]	1994–1996[2]	1995–1997[2]	1996–1998[2]	1997–1999[2]	1998–2000[2]	1999–2001[2]
South Carolina	82.6	85.0	85.5	87.0	87.8	88.4	89.2	87.6	86.9	85.1	84.5
South Dakota	87.6	89.1	91.2	93.2	91.3	89.6	88.2	89.8	91.5	92.0	91.6
Tennessee	76.5	76.7	77.5	82.3	84.5	83.3	84.2	86.8	89.5	89.0	86.6
Texas	78.4	80.0	81.2	80.5	79.5	79.3	80.5	80.2	79.2	79.4	79.9
Utah	93.9	93.9	94.6	93.9	93.3	91.3	90.9	90.7	89.7	90.0	88.9
Vermont	85.9	87.0	89.6	89.8	88.1	87.2	89.6	93.6	95.3	90.8	86.6
Virginia	87.0	88.6	89.8	88.6	87.5	86.3	87.1	85.9	87.0	87.3	88.2
Washington	87.4	90.7	89.2	87.3	85.7	86.8	88.2	87.7	87.0	87.4	88.3
West Virginia	82.7	83.3	84.6	85.6	86.8	87.7	88.6	89.1	89.2	89.6	88.5
Wisconsin	93.4	92.4	92.4	93.4	93.5	94.2	92.4	90.8	90.6	90.0	90.3
Wyoming	91.4	92.0	92.1	91.6	90.8	89.4	88.9	87.6	87.8	86.5	87.3

[1]Estimates for these periods reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS beginning in 1992. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

[2]Estimates for these periods reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS beginning in 1992 and changes in the CPS beginning in 1994 due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing. They also reflect changes in population controls used in the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustments for undercounting in the 1990 Census. See appendix C for a more detailed description of the impact of these changes on reported rates.

NOTE: Estimates in this table are 3-year averages.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1989–2001.

Table A9. Four-year completion rates for 9th-grade public school students in rank order, by state: 2000–01

State	Total number of completers[1]	4-year completion rate (percent)[2]		
		Total	Diploma	Other completers
United States	2,616,570	—	—	—
North Dakota	8,445	90.1	90.1	†
Wisconsin[3]	59,341	90.0	90.0	—
Iowa	33,909	89.2	88.9	0.4
New Jersey	75,948	88.0	88.0	†
Connecticut	30,435	86.6	86.5	0.1
Maine	12,129	86.5	86.4	0.1
Massachusetts	54,393	86.3	86.3	†
South Dakota	8,881	84.6	84.6	†
Pennsylvania	114,436	84.0	84.0	†
Nebraska	19,738	83.9	83.2	0.7
Virginia	68,593	83.8	80.7	3.1
West Virginia	18,452	83.4	83.3	0.1
Maryland	49,569	83.2	82.6	0.6
Utah	31,214	82.6	82.2	0.4
Minnesota	56,550	82.5	82.5	†
Montana	10,628	82.1	82.1	†
Vermont	6,876	81.9	81.6	0.2
Delaware	6,712	81.6	80.4	1.2
New York	147,305	81.6	78.6	3.0
Missouri	54,198	81.0	80.9	0.1
Ohio	113,973	81.0	77.3	3.7
Alabama	39,613	80.0	74.9	5.1
Kentucky[5]	37,293	79.9	79.2	0.7
Rhode Island	8,617	79.8	79.7	0.1
Tennessee	44,663	79.5	72.4	7.2
Oklahoma	37,448	79.2	79.2	†
Arkansas	29,019	79.1	73.9	5.2
Hawaii	10,323	77.7	76.0	1.7
Mississippi	25,762	77.3	71.3	6.0
Idaho[4]	16,101	76.9	76.5	0.4
Wyoming[3]	6,067	76.5	76.5	—
Oregon	33,713	76.4	70.4	6.0
Illinois	110,624	75.8	75.8	†
Alaska	6,829	75.2	75.0	0.2
New Mexico	18,354	74.4	73.8	0.6
Nevada	15,880	73.5	70.3	3.1
Georgia	69,215	71.1	64.2	6.9
Arizona[4]	47,543	68.3	67.2	1.1
Louisiana	39,296	65.0	63.4	1.6

See notes at end of table.

Table A9. Four-year completion rates for 9th-grade public school students in rank order, by state: 2000–01 —Continued

State	Total number of completers[1]	4-year completion rate (percent)[2]		
		Total	Diploma	Other completers
California	316,124	—	—	—
Colorado	39,370	—	—	—
District of Columbia[5]	3,043	—	—	—
Florida[5]	115,522	—	—	—
Indiana	60,464	—	—	—
Kansas	29,360	—	—	—
Michigan	97,124	—	—	—
New Hampshire[5]	12,294	—	—	—
North Carolina[5]	63,954	—	—	—
South Carolina[5]	30,577	—	—	—
Texas[5]	215,316	—	—	—
Washington[5]	55,337	—	—	—

—Not available.

†Not applicable; state does not award this type of credential.

[1]Includes regular and other diplomas as well as other completers, but does not include high school equivalencies (e.g., GED).

[2]The 4-year completion rate is calculated by dividing the number of high school completers in a given year by the number of high school completers in that year and dropouts over the preceding 4-year period.

[3]Other Completers data are missing for Wisconsin and Wyoming.

[4]Values for 1 year of the 4-year completion rate denominator are imputed.

[5]States that reported completers but not 4 consecutive years of dropout data cannot have a 4-year high school completion rate.

NOTE: See appendix C for a detailed discussion of the CCD dropout definition. Includes public school students only. States that reported completers but not 4 consecutive years of dropout data cannot have a 4-year high school completion rate.

SOURCE: Data are reported by states to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Local Education Agency Universe Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2000–01," Version 1a. The data in the 2000-01 Version 1a file are preliminary release data.

APPENDIX B

Standard Error Tables

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Table B1-S. Standard errors for table 1: Event dropout rates and number and distribution of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12, by background characteristics: October 2001

Characteristic	Event dropout rate (percent)	Number of event dropouts (thousands)	Population enrolled[1] (thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population enrolled
Total	0.33	34	134	†	†
Sex					
Male	0.49	26	96	3.38	0.76
Female	0.44	22	93	3.38	0.76
Race/ethnicity[2]					
White, non-Hispanic	0.37	25	109	3.41	0.72
Black, non-Hispanic	1.01	16	55	2.87	0.58
Hispanic	1.38	18	55	3.22	0.57
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.28	5	31	1.05	0.34
Family income[3]					
Low income	1.36	17	49	3.00	0.50
Middle income	0.45	27	103	3.29	0.75
High income	0.37	11	69	2.07	0.69
Age[4]					
15–16	0.54	16	67	2.90	0.70
17	0.43	15	34	2.69	0.72
18	0.75	20	46	3.26	0.67
19	1.57	12	38	2.25	0.40
20–24	4.01	10	24	2.08	0.23
Region					
Northeast	0.67	13	55	2.41	0.57
Midwest	0.66	16	63	2.87	0.63
South	0.63	22	84	3.53	0.77
West	0.73	17	68	3.01	0.68

†Not applicable.

[1]This is an estimate of the population of 15- to 24-year olds enrolled last year in high school based on the number of students still enrolled this year and the number of students who either graduated or dropped out last year.

[2]Due to small sample sizes, American Indians/Alaska Natives are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[3]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 2001; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes. See appendix C of this report for a full definition of family income.

[4]Age when a person dropped out may be 1 year younger, because the dropout event could occur at any time over a 12-month period.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2001.

Table B3-S. Standard errors for table 3: Status dropout rates and number and distribution of dropouts of 16- through 24-year-olds, by background characteristics: October 2001

Characteristic	Status dropout rate (percent)	Number of status dropouts (thousands)	Population (thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	0.25	89	†	†	†
Sex					
Male	0.38	67	†	1.24	0.41
Female	0.34	59	†	1.24	0.41
Race/ethnicity[1]					
White, non-Hispanic	0.26	61	†	1.24	0.39
Black, non-Hispanic	0.71	36	†	0.94	0.31
Hispanic	1.06	57	†	1.38	0.33
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.84	12	†	0.33	0.19
Age					
16	0.49	20	†	0.52	0.26
17	0.56	23	†	0.60	0.26
18	0.82	33	†	0.86	0.26
19	0.78	33	†	0.87	0.27
20	0.37	70	†	1.22	0.41
Recency of immigration					
Born outside the 50 states and District of Columbia					
Hispanic	1.82	41	†	1.25	0.23
Non-Hispanic	0.83	17	†	0.45	0.19
First generation[2]					
Hispanic	1.51	26	†	0.73	0.20
Non-Hispanic	0.75	14	†	0.39	0.19
Second generation or more[2]					
Hispanic	1.67	23	†	0.63	0.18
Non-Hispanic	0.26	68	†	1.24	0.36
Region					
Northeast	0.53	33	†	0.84	0.30
Midwest	0.46	38	†	0.95	0.34
South	0.50	62	†	1.33	0.42
West	0.56	46	†	1.13	0.37

†Not applicable.

[1]Due to small sample sizes, American Indians/Alaska Natives are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Individuals defined as "first generation" were born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia, and one or both of their parents were born outside the 50 states or the District of Columbia. Individuals defined as "second generation or more" were born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia, as were both of their parents.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2001.

Table B4-S. Standard errors for table 4: Status completion rates, and number and distribution of completers ages 18–24 not currently enrolled in high school or below, by selected background characteristics: October 2001

Characteristic	Completion rate	Number of completers (thousands)	Percent of all completers
Total	0.33	84	†
Sex			
Male	0.50	62	0.52
Female	0.43	56	0.52
Race/ethnicity			
White, non-Hispanic	0.34	57	0.48
Black, non-Hispanic	0.97	34	0.38
Hispanic	1.31	52	0.38
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.03	11	0.25
Age			
18–19	0.69	47	0.45
20–21	0.59	45	0.48
22–24	0.48	53	0.51
Recency of immigration			
Born outside the 50 states and District of Columbia			
Hispanic	2.00	38	0.24
Non-Hispanic	1.03	16	0.25
First generation[2]			
Hispanic	2.13	24	0.23
Non-Hispanic	1.04	14	0.24
Second generation or more[2]			
Hispanic	2.20	21	0.22
Non-Hispanic	1.34	63	0.44
Region			
Northeast	0.70	31	0.38
Midwest	0.61	36	0.43
South	0.64	58	0.53
West	0.71	43	0.47

†Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2001.

Table B1. Standard errors for table A1: Event dropout rates of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12, by family income: October 1972 through October 2001

Year	Total (percent)	Family income (percent)		
		Low income	Middle income	High income
1972	0.33	1.55	0.45	0.39
1973	0.33	1.65	0.46	0.32
1974	0.34	—	—	—
1975	0.32	1.57	0.43	0.38
1976	0.32	1.61	0.46	0.34
1977	0.34	1.57	0.48	0.35
1978	0.34	1.69	0.48	0.40
1979	0.34	1.62	0.47	0.44
1980	0.33	1.51	0.46	0.38
1981	0.33	1.50	0.45	0.41
1982	0.34	1.52	0.46	0.36
1983	0.33	1.35	0.48	0.39
1984	0.33	1.49	0.45	0.37
1985	0.34	1.53	0.47	0.39
1986	0.32	1.33	0.45	0.34
1987	0.30	1.29	0.45	0.27
1988	0.36	1.59	0.48	0.35
1989	0.36	1.43	0.50	0.33
1990	0.34	1.39	0.45	0.33
1991	0.34	1.43	0.44	0.31
1992	0.35	1.42	0.46	0.36
1993	0.36	1.57	0.46	0.35
1994	0.34	1.44	0.44	0.41
1995	0.35	1.36	0.47	0.39
1996	0.34	1.34	0.46	0.41
1997	0.32	1.36	0.41	0.37
1998	0.33	1.34	0.39	0.46
1999	0.33	1.26	0.44	0.40
2000	0.33	1.23	0.45	0.35
2001	0.33	1.36	0.45	0.37

—Not available.

NOTE: Some of the standard error estimates in this table may differ from those previously published due to changes in the generalized variance parameters developed by the Census Bureau.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1972–2001.

Table B2. Standard errors for table A2: Event dropout rates of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12, by sex and race/ethnicity: October 1972 through October 2001

		Sex (percent)		Race/ethnicity (percent)		
Year	Total	Male	Female	White non-Hispanic	Black non-Hispanic	Hispanic
1972	0.33	0.46	0.48	0.34	1.32	2.81
1973	0.33	0.49	0.45	0.35	1.35	2.65
1974	0.34	0.51	0.46	0.35	1.41	2.52
1975	0.32	0.44	0.46	0.33	1.25	2.50
1976	0.32	0.48	0.43	0.35	1.15	2.05
1977	0.34	0.49	0.46	0.37	1.20	2.13
1978	0.34	0.51	0.46	0.36	1.31	2.75
1979	0.34	0.49	0.48	0.37	1.32	2.43
1980	0.33	0.49	0.45	0.35	1.21	2.56
1981	0.33	0.47	0.46	0.34	1.29	2.28
1982	0.34	0.49	0.46	0.36	1.21	2.31
1983	0.33	0.50	0.45	0.35	1.17	2.44
1984	0.33	0.49	0.46	0.36	1.06	2.51
1985	0.34	0.50	0.48	0.36	1.26	2.55
1986	0.32	0.46	0.45	0.34	1.05	2.69
1987	0.30	0.44	0.41	0.33	1.14	1.89
1988	0.36	0.52	0.50	0.39	1.20	3.09
1989	0.36	0.51	0.51	0.37	1.39	2.65
1990	0.34	0.48	0.47	0.36	1.15	2.29
1991	0.34	0.46	0.49	0.36	1.20	2.17
1992	0.35	0.46	0.53	0.38	1.09	2.23
1993	0.36	0.51	0.50	0.40	1.20	2.03
1994	0.34	0.48	0.49	0.37	1.03	1.52
1995	0.35	0.51	0.48	0.38	1.00	1.61
1996	0.34	0.49	0.51	0.38	1.05	1.50
1997	0.32	0.47	0.43	0.35	0.92	1.45
1998	0.33	0.45	0.47	0.36	0.91	1.48
1999	0.33	0.44	0.49	0.36	1.00	1.28
2000	0.33	0.49	0.43	0.37	1.01	1.24
2001	0.33	0.49	0.44	0.37	1.01	1.38

NOTE: Some of the standard error estimates in this table may differ from those previously published due to changes in the generalized variance parameters developed by the Census Bureau.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1972–2001.

Table B3. Standard errors for table A3: Event dropout rates of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12, and number of dropouts and population of 15- through 24-year-olds who were enrolled: October 1990 through October 2001

Year	Event dropout rate (percent)	Number of dropouts (thousands)	Population enrolled (thousands)
1990	0.34	29	128
1991	0.34	29	128
1992	0.35	30	128
1993	0.36	30	127
1994	0.34	32	123
1995	0.35	33	124
1996	0.34	33	129
1997	0.32	32	131
1998	0.33	33	132
1999	0.33	34	134
2000	0.33	33	133
2001	0.33	34	134

NOTE: Some of the standard error estimates in this table may differ from those previously published due to changes in the generalized variance parameters developed by the Census Bureau.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1990–2001.

Table B5. Standard errors for table A5: Status dropout rates, number of status dropouts, and population of 16- through 24-year-olds: October 1990 through October 2001

Year	Status dropout rate (percent)	Number of status dropouts (thousands)
1990	0.29	92
1991	0.30	93
1992	0.28	88
1993	0.28	88
1994	0.26	85
1995	0.27	86
1996	0.27	87
1997	0.27	87
1998	0.27	91
1999	0.26	90
2000	0.26	89
2001	0.25	89

NOTE: Some of the standard error estimates in this table may differ from those previously published due to changes in the generalized variance parameters developed by the Census Bureau. Standard errors for population estimates in table A3 cannot be calculated.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1990–2001.

Table B6. Standard errors for table A6: Status dropout rates of 16- through 24-year-olds, by race/ethnicity: October 1972 through October 2001

Year	Total (percent)	Race/ethnicity (percent)		
		White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
1972	0.28	0.29	1.07	2.22
1973	0.27	0.28	1.06	2.24
1974	0.27	0.28	1.05	2.08
1975	0.27	0.27	1.06	2.02
1976	0.26	0.28	1.01	2.01
1977	0.27	0.28	1.00	2.02
1978	0.27	0.28	1.00	2.00
1979	0.27	0.28	1.01	1.98
1980	0.26	0.27	0.97	1.89
1981	0.26	0.27	0.93	1.80
1982	0.27	0.29	0.98	1.93
1983	0.27	0.29	0.97	1.93
1984	0.27	0.29	0.92	1.91
1985	0.27	0.29	0.92	1.93
1986	0.27	0.28	0.90	1.88
1987	0.28	0.30	0.91	1.84
1988	0.30	0.32	1.00	2.30
1989	0.31	0.32	0.98	2.19
1990	0.29	0.30	0.94	1.91
1991	0.30	0.31	0.95	1.93
1992	0.28	0.29	0.95	1.86
1993	0.28	0.29	0.94	1.79
1994	0.26	0.27	0.75	1.16
1995	0.27	0.28	0.74	1.15
1996	0.27	0.26	0.75	1.13
1997	0.27	0.28	0.80	1.11
1998	0.27	0.28	0.81	1.12
1999	0.26	0.27	0.77	1.11
2000	0.26	0.26	0.78	1.08
2001	0.25	0.26	0.71	1.06

NOTE: Some of the standard error estimates in this table may differ from those previously published due to changes in the generalized variance parameters developed by the Census Bureau.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1972–2001.

Table B7. Standard errors for table A7: Status completion rates of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below, by race/ethnicity: October 1972 through October 2001

Year	Total (percent)	Race/ethnicity (percent)		
		White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
1972	0.32	0.33	1.20	1.83
1973	0.31	0.31	1.17	1.83
1974	0.31	0.31	1.17	1.70
1975	0.30	0.30	1.18	1.72
1976	0.30	0.31	1.12	1.68
1977	0.30	0.31	1.12	1.66
1978	0.30	0.31	1.11	1.61
1979	0.30	0.31	1.11	1.58
1980	0.30	0.30	1.07	1.51
1981	0.29	0.30	1.02	1.46
1982	0.31	0.32	1.06	1.57
1983	0.31	0.32	1.06	1.59
1984	0.31	0.32	0.99	1.54
1985	0.31	0.32	1.00	1.58
1986	0.31	0.32	0.99	1.51
1987	0.32	0.34	0.99	1.47
1988	0.36	0.36	1.13	1.78
1989	0.36	0.37	1.11	1.73
1990	0.34	0.34	1.03	1.54
1991	0.34	0.35	1.06	1.53
1992	0.33	0.33	1.07	1.53
1993	0.34	0.35	1.07	1.49
1994	0.34	0.34	1.02	1.43
1995	0.35	0.36	1.01	1.40
1996	0.35	0.34	1.08	1.49
1997	0.35	0.36	1.10	1.42
1998	0.36	0.36	1.11	1.37
1999	0.34	0.34	1.04	1.39
2000	0.33	0.33	1.01	1.36
2001	0.33	0.34	0.97	1.31

NOTE: Some of the standard error estimates in this table may differ from those previously published due to changes in the generalized variance parameters developed by the Census Bureau.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1972–2001.

Table B8. Standard errors for table A8: Status completion rates of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below, by state: October 1989–91 through 1999–2001

	Completion rate (percent)										
State	1989–1991	1990–1992	1991–1993	1992–1994	1993–1995	1994–1996	1995–1997	1996–1998	1997–1999	1998–2000	1999–2001
Total	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.19	0.19	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.19
Alabama	1.75	1.65	1.77	1.75	1.58	1.37	1.47	1.50	1.59	1.67	1.70
Alaska	4.42	4.78	4.27	3.93	3.62	4.11	4.53	4.02	3.70	3.17	3.64
Arizona	1.91	2.06	2.17	2.01	1.70	1.56	1.65	1.70	1.71	1.73	1.64
Arkansas	2.11	2.09	2.16	2.08	1.86	1.70	1.84	2.04	2.20	2.14	1.94
California	0.71	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.66	0.64	0.65	0.63	0.63	0.60	0.55
Colorado	1.74	1.74	1.78	1.69	1.44	1.42	1.48	1.63	1.75	1.79	1.73
Connecticut	1.58	1.60	1.59	1.46	1.19	1.01	1.27	1.56	1.73	1.64	1.45
Delaware	4.10	4.10	3.52	2.79	2.69	3.09	3.43	3.43	3.49	3.18	3.16
District of Columbia	4.71	4.79	4.65	4.78	3.83	3.85	4.05	4.22	3.95	3.80	3.82
Florida	1.02	0.98	0.95	0.97	0.96	0.97	0.99	0.95	0.92	0.91	0.91
Georgia	1.31	1.35	1.44	1.48	1.29	1.26	1.24	1.24	1.28	1.23	1.17
Hawaii	2.49	2.31	2.45	2.75	2.34	2.05	1.97	2.15	2.51	2.42	2.51
Idaho	3.82	3.71	3.19	3.19	2.81	2.73	2.61	2.77	2.83	2.64	2.50
Illinois	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.93	0.87	0.83	0.88	0.91	0.93	0.91	0.86
Indiana	1.28	1.36	1.34	1.26	1.15	1.12	1.23	1.21	1.26	1.23	1.26
Iowa	1.28	1.24	1.31	1.26	1.24	1.35	1.76	1.87	1.86	1.61	1.45
Kansas	1.55	1.48	1.64	1.58	1.60	1.53	1.56	1.52	1.50	1.59	1.79
Kentucky	1.86	1.94	1.95	1.93	1.81	1.79	1.85	1.78	1.72	1.68	1.57
Louisiana	1.79	1.67	1.77	1.77	1.75	1.63	1.66	1.58	1.57	1.62	1.63
Maine	2.68	2.42	2.16	2.05	2.14	2.36	2.68	2.50	2.33	2.02	2.19
Maryland	1.41	1.34	1.26	1.15	1.04	1.07	1.02	1.06	1.37	1.53	1.60
Massachusetts	1.13	1.16	1.16	1.13	0.98	1.01	1.15	1.18	1.18	1.11	1.08
Michigan	1.04	1.03	0.99	0.96	0.91	0.89	0.91	0.85	0.88	0.89	0.92
Minnesota	1.19	1.17	1.22	1.11	1.05	0.91	1.25	1.35	1.29	1.16	1.06
Mississippi	2.09	2.02	1.85	1.80	1.99	2.07	2.20	2.14	2.14	2.11	2.00
Missouri	1.33	1.31	1.34	1.27	1.23	1.19	1.29	1.20	1.16	1.08	1.18
Montana	2.92	3.00	2.96	3.07	3.24	3.08	3.16	2.74	2.74	2.73	2.67
Nebraska	2.21	2.00	2.00	1.49	1.66	1.76	2.07	1.97	1.89	1.89	1.94
Nevada	3.40	3.46	3.41	3.23	3.11	3.09	3.45	3.12	3.11	2.92	2.84
New Hampshire	2.95	3.05	2.93	3.25	2.95	3.03	2.85	2.99	3.29	3.63	3.30
New Jersey	1.01	1.01	1.08	1.04	0.92	0.86	0.89	0.94	1.00	1.02	1.07
New Mexico	2.82	2.97	3.00	2.99	2.78	2.86	2.89	2.85	2.66	2.74	2.59
New York	0.74	0.74	0.77	0.77	0.72	0.72	0.79	0.80	0.80	0.77	0.76
North Carolina	1.36	1.37	1.35	1.28	1.17	1.16	1.20	1.17	1.14	1.16	1.23
North Dakota	2.38	2.26	2.40	2.17	2.02	1.56	1.82	2.52	2.84	2.69	2.01
Ohio	0.86	0.86	0.88	0.89	0.86	0.88	0.89	0.87	0.86	0.91	0.91
Oklahoma	1.88	2.01	2.15	2.14	1.79	1.55	1.71	1.84	1.87	1.82	1.74
Oregon	1.81	1.78	2.01	2.15	1.97	2.02	2.13	2.20	2.08	1.92	1.70
Pennsylvania	0.85	0.85	0.83	0.86	0.82	0.82	0.90	0.91	0.91	0.86	0.83
Rhode Island	3.15	3.20	2.95	3.02	3.06	3.33	3.48	3.36	3.27	3.19	3.46

See notes at end of table.

Table B8. Standard errors for table A8: Status completion rates of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below, by state: October 1989–91 through 1999–2001—Continued

State	Completion rate (percent)										
	1989–1991	1990–1992	1991–1993	1992–1994	1993–1995	1994–1996	1995–1997	1996–1998	1997–1999	1998–2000	1999–2001
South Carolina	1.91	1.82	1.79	1.70	1.53	1.48	1.52	1.60	1.66	1.74	1.71
South Dakota	3.71	3.51	3.26	2.90	3.06	3.24	3.44	3.07	2.77	2.78	2.90
Tennessee	1.72	1.79	1.76	1.59	1.41	1.46	1.50	1.41	1.31	1.32	1.36
Texas	0.93	0.90	0.87	0.87	0.81	0.78	0.80	0.82	0.85	0.82	0.79
Utah	1.59	1.60	1.53	1.57	1.45	1.56	1.60	1.60	1.63	1.62	1.67
Vermont	4.71	4.67	4.08	3.94	4.03	3.99	3.90	3.06	2.79	3.87	4.47
Virginia	1.34	1.28	1.18	1.21	1.15	1.23	1.28	1.36	1.28	1.28	1.20
Washington	1.52	1.33	1.38	1.41	1.34	1.30	1.32	1.29	1.28	1.25	1.25
West Virginia	2.65	2.58	2.43	2.21	2.18	2.25	2.25	2.17	2.16	2.15	2.26
Wisconsin	1.05	1.12	1.13	1.07	0.97	0.91	1.07	1.20	1.22	1.25	1.19
Wyoming	4.21	4.08	3.94	3.85	3.69	3.93	4.30	4.38	4.42	4.53	4.51

NOTE: Some of the standard error estimates in this table may differ from those previously published due to changes in the generalized variance parameters developed by the Census Bureau. Estimates in this table reflect 3-year averages.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Local Education Agency Universe Survey: School Years 1991–92 through 1996–97," "Local Education Agency Universe Dropout File: School Year 1997–98," and "Local Education Agency Universe Dropout File: School Year 1999–2001."

APPENDIX C

Technical Notes

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Data used in this report are drawn primarily from the Common Core of Data (CCD) and the Current Population Survey (CPS). Both provide data that are regularly used to study high school dropouts and completers. Because of differences in populations covered, data collection methods, and data elements included in the collections, they can be used in tandem to provide a more complete picture of high school outcomes than either can in isolation. Details about both collections and estimates derived from them are described in this appendix.

CCD Design

The CCD, administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), is an annual survey of the state-level education agencies in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the outlying areas. Through this survey, statistical information is collected on public school districts and their schools, staff, students, and finances. All states responded to the CCD collection for the 2000-01 school year so the state response rate was 100 percent. However, not all states reported dropout and completion counts using comparable reporting rules. As a result, some states are missing data necessary to calculate dropout and completion rates.

Defining and Calculating Event Dropout Rates Using the CCD

A dropout data collection component was field-tested for CCD during the 1989–90 school year. The participants were in approximately 300 school districts that included representatives from 27 states and two territories. The data were gathered through administrative records maintained by school districts and schools. The field test data were used to inform the design of a dropout statistics component for the CCD. For the 2000-01 school year, a total of 49 states submitted dropout data to the CCD. Of these, 45 reported using agreed-upon reporting definitions. Those that did not were excluded from the CCD dropout data.

The definition that was agreed upon by NCES and the states was the following:

The denominator of the rate is the October 1st membership count for the state.

The numerator (dropouts) is all individuals who:

- were enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year;
- were not enrolled at the beginning of the current school year;
- have not graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved education program; and
- do not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions: transferred to another public school district, private school, or state- or district-approved education program; temporary absence due to suspension or school-approved education program; or death.

For the purpose of this definition:

- The school year is the 12-month period of time from the first day of school (operationally set as October 1), with dropouts from the previous summer reported for the year and grade in which they fail to enroll;[37]
- Individuals who are not accounted for on October 1 are considered dropouts; and,
- An individual has graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved education program upon receipt of formal recognition from school authorities. A state- or district-approved education program may consist of special education and district- or state-sponsored GED preparation.

The dropout data collection was initiated with a set of instructions to state CCD coordinators in the summer of 1991. Those instructions specified the details of dropout data to be collected during the 1991–92 school year. Dropouts, like graduates, are reported for the preceding school year. The 1991–92 data were submitted to NCES as a component of the 1992–93 CCD data collection. Most recently, the 2000-01 dropout data were submitted as a component of the 2001-02 CCD data collection.

In the late 1990s technical work was done to evaluate the quality of dropout data in the CCD and to determine whether it was feasible to compensate for inconsistencies in states' reporting practices.[38] One of the findings that came out of the report was that the types of noncompliant practices have different effects on the dropout rate. The dropout statistic developed followed an October through September school year because in the field test, it was determined that the majority of states followed this calendar. The practice of reporting on a July–June calendar (in which the dropout status is determined on the last day of the school year rather than the first day of the following school year) is the most common departure from the CCD definition. This practice typically leads to over-reporting of dropouts, although the net effects on the dropout rates are small. The possible discrepancies introduced by the states that reported dropouts from July through June, rather than October through September, are small enough to justify the inclusion of the dropout data from these states.

The dropout data collection through the CCD is designed to be consistent with the current CPS procedures. However, there are differences in dropout data collection procedures between the two data sets. First, the CCD collection represents public school dropout counts. The CPS counts include students who were enrolled in either public or private schools. Second, the CCD collects data about dropouts from a given state's public school system. CPS data indicate where dropouts currently reside, but not necessarily the

[37] Although states were asked to report on an October through September reporting cycle, for purposes of this report, states that reported on an alternative July through June cycle are also included. Twelve states reported on a July to June cycle.

[38] Winglee, M., Marker, D., Henderson, A., Young, B., and Hoffman, L. (2000). *A Recommended Approach to Providing High School Dropout and Completion Rates at the State Level* (NCES 2000-305). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

state in which they lived when they dropped out. Third, the CCD collection includes dropouts in grades 7 through 12 versus grades 10 through 12 in the CPS (although CCD event rates are reported for grades 9 through 12 in this report). Fourth, the CCD collection is based on administrative records rather than household surveys as in the CPS. More details about the CPS collection follow.

Defining and Calculating 4-Year High School Completion Rates Using the CCD

The term "high school completer" includes both diploma recipients and other high school completers. Thus, the 4–year high school completion rate includes both diploma recipients and other high school completers. This rate includes other high school completers but does not reflect those receiving a GED-based equivalency credential.

Diploma Recipients. These are individuals who are awarded, in a given year, a high school diploma or a diploma that recognizes some higher level of academic achievement. They can be thought of as students who meet or exceed the coursework and performance standards for high school completion established by the state or other relevant authorities.

Other High School Completers. These individuals receive a certificate of attendance or some other credential in lieu of a diploma. Students awarded this credential typically meet requirements that differ from those for a high school diploma. Some states do not issue an "other high school completion" type of certificate, but award all students who complete school a diploma regardless of what academic requirements the students have met. Thus, in order to make data as comparable as possible across states, this report includes both regular and other diploma recipients in its high school 4-year completion rate.

Exclusion of High School Equivalency Recipients. High school equivalency recipients are awarded a credential certifying that they have met state or district requirements for high school completion by passing an examination or completing some other performance requirement. High school equivalency diplomas are considered valid completion credentials, but high school equivalency recipients are not included in the 4-year completion rate. There are two reasons for this exclusion. First, high school equivalency recipients are reported on the CCD only at the state level and can not be disaggregated to the district level. Second, not all states report high school equivalency counts on the CCD, and the statistic is therefore not comparable across states.

High School 4-year Completion Rate. Put simply, this rate asks, "Of those students who have left school, what proportion have done so as completers?" This rate does not include those students who are still enrolled. The rate incorporates 4 years' worth of data and thus is an estimated cohort rate. It is calculated by dividing the number of high school completers by the sum of dropouts for grades 9 through 12, respectively, in consecutive years, plus the number of completers. If a hypothetical graduating class began as 9th-graders in year 1, this 4-year completion rate would look like

$$\frac{\text{High School Completers Year 4}}{\text{Dropouts (Grade 9 Year 1 + Grade 10 Year 2 + Grade 11 Year 3 + Grade 12 Year 4) + High School Completers Year 4}}$$

Note that the completion rate is not the same as a true cohort graduation rate that shows the proportion of 9th-grade students who graduate 4 years later. A true cohort rate requires data that track a given set of students over time. The data used for the 4-year completion rate are collected using repeating cross sectional surveys. Individual students are not followed from year to year. To get a more detailed description of the development and limitations of the dropout and completion rates, see *Public High School Dropouts and Completers From the Common Core of Data: School Years 1991–92 Through 1997–98* (NCES 2002–317).

CPS Design

The CPS is a nationally representative sample survey of all households. The survey is conducted in approximately 50,000 households. Households are interviewed for 4 successive monthly interviews, are not interviewed for the next 8 months, and then re-interviewed for the following 4 months. Typically, the 1st and the 5^{th} interviews are conducted in person. The sample frame is a complete list of dwelling-unit addresses at the time of the Census updated by demolitions and new construction and field listings. The population surveyed excludes members of the armed forces, inmates of correctional institutions, and patients in long-term medical or custodial facilities; it is referred to as the civilian, noninstitutionalized population. Typically, about 4 percent of dwelling units are not interviewed because occupants are not at home after repeated callbacks or for some other reason. For the October 2001 core CPS, the unweighted response rate was 93 percent, and the response rate for the school enrollment supplement was 90 percent.

An adult member of each household serves as the informant for that household, supplying basic monthly data for each member of the household. In addition, in October of each year, supplementary questions regarding school enrollment are asked about eligible household members 3 years old and over. Most interviews each month are conducted by phone using computer-assisted telephone interviewing.

Defining and Calculating Dropout Rates Using the CPS

Event Dropout Rates

The October Supplement to the CPS is the only national data source that currently can be used to estimate annual national dropout rates. As a measure of recent dropout experiences, the event dropout rate measures the proportion of students who dropped out over a 1-year interval of time.

The numerator of the event dropout rate for October 2001 is the number of persons 15 through 24 years old surveyed in 2001 who were enrolled in grades 10–12 in October 2000, were not enrolled in high school in October 2001, and who also did not complete high school (that is, had not received a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate) between October 2000 and October 2001.

The denominator of the event dropout rate for 2001 is the sum of the dropouts (that is, the numerator) and all persons 15 through 24 years old who were attending grades 10–12 in October 2000, who were still enrolled in October 2001, or who graduated or completed high school between October 2000 and October 2001.

The dropout interval is defined to include the previous summer (in this case, the summer of 2001) and the previous school year (in the case of the 2000-2001 school year), so that once a grade is completed, the student is then at risk of dropping out of the next grade. Given that the data collection is tied to each person's enrollment status in October of two consecutive years, any student who drops out and returns within the 12-month period is not counted as a dropout.

Status Dropout Rates

The status dropout rate reflects the percentage of individuals who are dropouts, regardless of when they dropped out.

The numerator of the status dropout rate for 2001 is the number of individuals ages 16 through 24 years who, as of October 2001, had not completed high school and were not currently enrolled. The denominator is the total number of 16- through 24-year-olds in October 2001.

Defining and Calculating High School Completion Rates Using the CPS

The educational attainment and high school completion status data from the October CPS are also used to measure the high school completion rates. The completion rate computed and published is for the young adult population in the years beyond high school—that is, the 18- through 24-year-old population. These rates are reported nationally by various demographic variables such as age, sex, and race/ethnicity. At the

state level, 3-year moving averages are computed to yield more stable estimates for completion rates.

As was noted in the section discussing completion rates in this report, state completion rates reflect the experiences of the 18- through 24-year-olds living in the state at the time of the interview; thus, movements in and out of states to accommodate employment and postsecondary education may influence the apparent rates in some states. For example, a state with a relatively large unskilled labor employment sector might have a lower high school completion rate than anticipated due to migration of young workers from other states. Conversely, a state with a disproportionate number of colleges and universities might have a higher high school completion rate than anticipated due to an influx of postsecondary education students.

CPS Data Collection

CPS data on educational attainment and enrollment status in the current year and prior year are used to identify dropouts and completers, and additional items in the CPS data are used to describe some of their basic characteristics. The CPS is the only source of national time series data on dropout and completion rates. However, because CPS collects no information on school characteristics and experiences, its usefulness in addressing dropout and completion issues is primarily for providing some insights on who drops out and who completes.

The October CPS Supplement enrollment items used to identify dropouts include the following:

- *Is . . . attending or enrolled in regular school?*
- *What grade or year is . . . attending?*
- *Was . . . attending or enrolled in a regular school or college in October, 200x, that is, October of last year?*
- *What grade or year was . . . attending last year?*

The October CPS educational attainment item is found on the basic CPS instrument and is asked every month. The educational attainment item asks:

- *What is the highest level of school ... has completed or the highest degree ... has received?*

Changes Introduced in 1986

In an effort to improve data quality, in 1986, the U.S. Census Bureau instituted new editing procedures for cases with missing data on school enrollment items. The effect of the editing changes was evaluated for data from 1986 by applying both the old and new editing procedures. The result was an increase in the number of students enrolled in school the current year and a decrease in the number of students enrolled last year but not enrolled in the current year (i.e., dropouts). The new editing procedures

lowered, but not significantly, the 1986 event rate for 14- through 24-year-olds dropping out of grades 10–12 by about 0.4 percentage points, from 4.69 to 4.28. The changes in the editing procedures made even less of a difference in the status dropout rates for 16- through 24-year-olds (12.2 percent based on the old procedures and 12.1 percent based on the new).

While a change in procedures occurred in 1986, the new procedures are reflected beginning in 1987 in this report. The 1986 data are based on the old editing procedures.

Changes Introduced in 1992

Before 1992, educational attainment was based on the basic monthly questions on highest grade attended and completed. Identification as a high school graduate was derived based on attendance and completion of grade 12. The items used to identify educational attainment before 1992 were the following:

- *What is the highest grade or year . . . has attended?*
- *Did . . . complete that grade?*

The 1992 redesign of the CPS introduced a change in the method used to identify high school completers. Dropout data from the CPS are now based on a combination of basic monthly data on educational attainment and October Supplement data on school enrollment. In 1992, the U.S. Census Bureau changed the items on the basic monthly questionnaire that measured each individual's educational attainment. The basic monthly educational attainment item is as follows:

- *What is the highest level of school . . . has completed or the highest degree . . . has received?*

These response categories apply to grades in high school:

- 9th grade;
- 10th grade;
- 11th grade; and
- 12th grade—no diploma.

In the calculation of dropout rates, students whose highest grade completed is 9th, 10th, or 11th grade are assumed to have dropped out in the next grade (i.e., the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, respectively).

The following response categories are used to identify high school completers:

- high school graduate—high school diploma or the equivalent (for example, GED); and
- all categories indicating some postsecondary education, from "some college, no degree" through "doctorate degree."

Although the response categories are not automatically read to each respondent, they can be used as a prompt to help clarify the meaning of a question or a response. Identification as a high school completer is based on the direct response to the new basic monthly educational attainment item.

Differences between the pre- and post-1992 methods of identifying high school completers reflect two phenomena: not all 12th-grade completers receive a high school diploma or equivalent, and not all holders of a high school diploma or certificate complete the 12th grade. These differences affect the numbers and proportions of event and status dropouts.

Differences in the event dropout rate. In the case of the event dropout rate, prior to 1992, students who completed 12th grade and left high school without graduating or receiving an equivalent credential were counted as completers when they were, in fact, dropouts. On the other hand, some students who left school because they completed high school before the 12th grade were identified as dropouts when they were really early completers (e.g., those who passed the California Challenge Exam, received a GED certificate, or were admitted early to college).[39] The current use of actual graduation or completion status includes the first group as dropouts and the second group as completers.

Compared with previous years, the event dropout rate now includes in the numerator count 12th-graders who did not receive any type of credential, while the early completers are not included in the numerator as dropouts. The denominator is unchanged.

In 1992, the net effect of these changes resulted in an increase in the aggregate event dropout rate that was not significant. In 1992, the October CPS included both versions of the educational attainment items—the old items based on the number of years of school completed and the new one based on the more accurate response categories.[40] Using the old items, the estimated event rate for 1992 was 4.0 percent, compared with a rate of 4.4 percent in 1992 using the new educational attainment item.

Differences in the status dropout rate. The status dropout rate involves another group of students who were coded differently before 1992. These students leave high school before completing the 12th grade, never complete the 12th grade, but later graduate or complete high school by some alternative means, such as an equivalency exam. Before 1992, these young adults were coded as dropouts. Since 1992, members of this group have been coded as graduates or completers. Furthermore, the explicit

[39]Although before 1992 the questionnaire did not include the words "high school diploma or equivalency certificate," the interviewer instructions included an instruction to record 12th grade for people who completed high school with a GED or other certificate, although they had dropped out earlier. The specific inclusion of these words on the questionnaire appear to have made a difference in the quality of responses from the household informant.

[40]Unlike previous years, however, data for individuals missing on the variables representing years of school completed ("What is the highest grade or year . . . has attended?" and "Did . . . complete that grade?") were not imputed by the U.S. Census Bureau. For this analysis, missing data were imputed on these variables based on the grade individuals attended last year (if enrolled last year). For those individuals who were missing data and were not enrolled last year, the highest grade completed was imputed by examining the responses to the new educational attainment variable.

inclusion of these completers, including GED recipients as a response category, may have increased the likelihood of identifying late completers.

Under the procedures introduced in 1992, the 12th-graders who did not complete high school or the equivalent are included in the numerator of the status dropout rate, while early and late completers are not included. The denominator was not changed. These changes, including the identification and removal of late completers from the dropout count, contributed to a decrease in the status dropout rate. Indeed, using years of school completed rather than the new educational attainment item, the status rate in 1992 rose to 11.4 percent rather than the 11.0 percent based on the new educational attainment item. However, the estimate of 11.4 percent based on the old item is still lower than the status rate for 1991 (12.5 percent). While the estimate of 11.0 percent in 1992 could represent real change in the status dropout rate—the fact that this would be the largest decrease in the status dropout rate seen in the time series data from 1972 to 1995, coupled with the fact that the rate for 1993 also was 11.0 percent—leads one to speculate that introducing the new educational attainment item resulted in more accurate data on educational attainment throughout the survey, including the variables that had been used to calculate the number of years of school completed.

One exception to the procedures used to identify dropouts in the CPS is the treatment by the Census Bureau of students in special schools. These special schools are:

> ". . . schools that are not in the regular school system, such as trade schools, business colleges, and schools for the mentally handicapped, which do not advance students to regular school degrees.[41]

When the U.S. Census Bureau identifies students in special schools, they code them as not enrolled in regular school. (Prior to 1992, the analyst had to code them separately as not enrolled). If a person enrolled in a special school is reported as completing less than the 12th grade, he or she will be counted as a status dropout.

Changes Introduced in 1994

During the 1994 data collection and processing, two additional changes were implemented in the CPS. Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) was introduced, resulting in higher response rates for each individual data item and thus less reliance on allocation of missing responses. If the allocation procedures yielded a distribution different from the 1994 reported patterns, there is the potential for a change in the distribution of the high school completion status.

In 1994, there were also changes introduced in the processing and computing phase of data preparation. The benchmarking year for these survey estimates was changed from the 1980 Census to the 1990 Census. In addition, adjustments for

[41]U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau. (1996). *School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1994.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

undercounting in the Census were also included, which had not been done before. Thus, any age, sex, or racial/ethnic groups that were found to be underrepresented in the 1990 Census were given increased weights. Analysis using 1993 data of the effect of the changes in the benchmarking year and adjustments for undercounting indicate that the change especially affected the weights assigned to young Hispanics (table C1).

Table C1. Average weights and population estimates using 1980 and 1990 Census-based weights for all 15- through 24-year-olds, by race/ethnicity: October 1993

	1980-based weights		1990-based weights		
Race/ethnicity	Average weight (thousands)	Population estimate (thousands)	Average weight (thousands)	Population estimate (thousands)	Percentage change[1]
Total	1.85	34,347	1.95	36,184	5.3
Race/ethnicity					
White, non-Hispanic	1.79	23,911	1.84	24,611	2.8
Black, non-Hispanic	2.25	5,087	2.33	5,285	3.6
Hispanic	2.09	3,998	2.48	4,747	18.7

[1]Change in rates between 1980-based weights and 1990-based weights using 1980 as the base year (i.e., for Whites the calculation is [(1.84-1.79)/1.79]).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1993.

These changes can affect both the numerator and denominator of the dropout rates. Analyses of the 1993 data showed that the change in the benchmark year for the sample weights increased the Hispanic status and event dropout rates somewhat, while it had little effect on the White or Black rates (table C2). However, the change in the overall event and status rates appears to be driven by the increase in the estimated size of the Hispanic population. Since Hispanics drop out at higher rates than do other groups, increasing their relative proportion of the population increases the overall dropout rates. The change also increased the male dropout rates more so than it did female dropout rates.

Table C2 shows that, overall, the change in the benchmark year had a larger impact on status dropout rates than on event dropout rates. Using the 1990-based weights increased the event rate by 1.3 percent, but raised the status rate by 3.2 percent.

Table C2. Estimated event and status dropout rates based on 1980 and 1990 Census weights: October 1993

Characteristic	1980-based weights (percent)		1990-based weights (percent)		Percent difference in rates	
	Event	Status	Event	Status	Event	Status
Total	4.46	11.01	4.52	11.36	1.3	3.2
Sex						
Male	4.58	11.17	4.65	11.61	1.5	4.0
Female	4.34	10.85	4.38	11.10	1.0	2.3
Race/ethnicity						
White, non-Hispanic	3.93	7.94	3.95	7.96	0.5	0.3
Black, non-Hispanic	5.83	13.56	5.81	13.52	–0.3	–0.3
Hispanic	6.72	27.52	6.90	27.88	2.8	1.3
Other	2.79	7.01	2.87	7.04	2.9	0.4

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1993.

Changes Introduced in 1997

In 1997, the Census Bureau added an item on alternative credentials to the basic monthly survey. Since then there have been two items on the October CPS concerning alternative credentials—one on the basic survey and one on the supplement (first introduced in 1988). The item on the basic survey is:

- *People can get their high school diploma in a variety of ways, such as graduation from high school or by getting a GED or other equivalent. How did ... get ...'s high school diploma?*

Response choices were:
- Graduation from high school
- GED or other equivalent

Asking this item every month in the basic survey rather than just in the October supplement may have had some effect on the responses to the October supplement item. Presumably, asking the question every month reduces the amount of random error in responses to the question of GED status as household informants are reminded of earlier responses to this item. However, the magnitude of any such effect is unknown.

This change might have had an effect on the proportion of persons reported to have completed high school with a GED rather than a regular diploma. This change should not have had an effect on dropout rates.

Changes Introduced in 2000

In 2000, the variable indicating whether a person had an alternative credential was a derived variable based on the responses to four items.

1. Information from the basic monthly survey from the question about educational attainment:

- *"What is the highest level of school ... has completed or the highest degree ... has received?"*

was used to autocode GED items asked in the supplement. Individuals reported as having a high school diploma as their highest level of education were autocoded as not having a GED on GED items in the supplement. Individuals reported as having a GED as their highest level of education were autocoded as having a GED on GED items in the supplement. Autocoding means respondents were not asked these questions.

2. People with less than a high school education on the educational attainment item were asked the following item in the supplement.

- *"Earlier you said that the highest level … had completed was [VALUE]. Did ... complete high school by getting a GED or other equivalent?"*

3. People with greater than a high school education were asked the following item in the supplement.

- *"People can get their high school diploma in a variety of ways, such as graduation from high school or by getting a GED or other equivalent. How did ... get ...'s high school diploma ?"*

4. Finally, people who did not have an educational attainment value were asked the following item in the supplement.

- *"Earlier you were unable to tell us the highest level of education...had completed. Did ... complete high school by getting a GED or other equivalent ?"*

This reformulation of the GED items on the supplement and the editing of the supplement item based on the basic monthly questionnaire attainment items may have had an impact on the estimate of the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds with an alternative credential. It should have had little effect on the event dropout rates, status dropout rates or status completion rates.

Changes in GED Rates

In order to bring the CPS estimate more in line with the counts provided by the GED testing, changes were made to the GED items in the October 2000 CPS (details shown above). This new data approach was also designed to correct for internal inconsistencies in the data where some individuals who said they had a GED in the basic monthly questionnaire were recorded as not having a GED in the supplement (or were reported to have one in the supplement, but not in the basic monthly item). Furthermore, inconsistencies arose when those who said they had a GED at one point in time were recorded as not having one at a later time. The expectation was that these changes would result in a reduction of approximately 20 percent in the GED estimates from the CPS. However, as figure C1 indicates, the 2000 and 2001 estimates of GED recipients were about 50 percent of the 1999 estimate and are now substantially lower than the counts from the GED service. Because of this potential undercount of GED receipt, the estimates of the percentage of completers with a GED are not reported.

Though GED data are not presented for 2001 in the body of this report, data from past reports in this series indicated that there has been a substantial increase in the last few years in the estimate of the percentage of 18- through 24-year-olds obtaining GEDs. For example, the 1999 report showed that the alternative completion rate was 4.9 percent in 1993; however, it rose to 7.0 percent in 1994, 9.8 percent in 1996, 10.1 in 1998, and then 9.2 in 1999. Although the standard errors of these estimates are fairly large, the absolute changes are also quite large. The increase between 1993 and 1994 came at the time when CPS instituted computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) in 1994. However, increases have occurred between subsequent years, suggesting that the change in instrumentation was not the only reason for the increase in reported GED credentialing from 1993 to 1994.

The American Council on Education (ACE), which administers the GED, produces annual reports on the number of persons taking the GED and the number of persons who were issued a GED credential. From these reports, it is possible to calculate the number of 18- through 24-year-olds who received a GED each year from 1989 through 2001. Comparisons between the ACE based estimates and CPS based estimates for the 1990-2001 period are presented here. The CPS estimates of the number of GED recipients in the years 1990 through 1993 were lower than the ACE estimates in each of these years. For 1994 through 1997, the CPS estimates are closer to the corresponding estimates from ACE than in previous years and, in fact, are not statistically different from the corresponding ACE estimates. The CPS estimate for 1998 was statistically different from the ACE estimate (figure C1 and table C3), but in 1999, the estimates from CPS and ACE did not differ. Changes introduced to CPS items on GED receipt in 2000 coincide with a large difference between CPS and ACE based estimates. Since the GED items on the CPS were changed in 2000, CPS estimates of the number and percentage of 18-24 year-olds earning a GED are significantly lower than ACE estimates.

Figure C1. Number of 18- through 24-year-olds who received a GED, by data source: 1990 through 2001

NOTE: These numbers represent the total number of GED credentials earned by 18- through 24-year-olds in the United States. The GED estimate from CPS may include alternative high school credentials other than the GED.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 1990-2001; and American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, *GED Statistical Report*, 1990-2001.

Table C3. Number of 18- through 24-year-olds who received a GED, by data source: 1990 through 2001

Year	GED Service[1]	CPS[1,2]	Standard error (CPS)
1990	222,295	111,023	16,728
1991	247,767	117,371	17,197
1992	249,470	107,030	16,425
1993	241,787	107,415	16,455
1994	247,051	211,560	23,047
1995	256,441	237,876	24,424
1996	258,957	312,645	27,957
1997	244,749	286,811	26,793
1998	254,239	340,784	24,790
1999	267,932	320,187	27,331
2000[3]	263,465	90,810	24,831
2001[3]	342,156	107,202	28,249

[1]These numbers represent the total number of GED credentials earned by 18- through 24-year-olds in the United States only.
[2]The estimate of the number of GEDs from CPS may include alternative high school credentials other than those earned by passing the GED.
[3]Reflects changes made to questions about GED receipt introduced in October 2000.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 1990-2001; and American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, *GED Statistical Report,* 1990-2001.

CPS Coverage Errors

Coverage errors in the CPS can occur for a variety of reasons. For example, CPS is based on a sample of households in which a person within the household (the reference person) is asked to provide information on other members of the household. If the list of households is incomplete, whole households can be missed. If for some reason the reference person does not give a full enumeration of their household members, individuals can be omitted from the survey.[42] It is estimated that the CPS survey misses about 7 persons out of 100 because of such coverage errors. That is, the coverage ratio is about 93 percent. However, for some subgroups this ratio is much lower. Historically, Black and Hispanic males have had low coverage ratios. In 1996, the coverage ratio for Black males age 20 to 29 was about 66 percent (i.e., one in three were missed in the survey).

CPS uses independently derived population estimates to modify the sampling weights to adjust for the undercount of various subpopulations. These adjustments are made within weighting cells based on age, race, ethnicity, and sex. To oversimplify, if Black males age 20 to 29 are undercovered by 50 percent, then the first stage sampling weights for Black males age 20 to 29 are doubled to properly sum to known population totals. However, this weighting will introduce bias into the estimates of dropout rates if

[42]See U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2000). *Current Population Survey Design and Methodology* (Technical Paper #63rv). Washington, DC.

those persons missed by the CPS drop out at a different rate than those not missed by the CPS (for example, if Black males ages 20 to 29 missed in the survey drop out at a higher rate than those not missed).

While the size of this bias is not known (i.e., one cannot interview people who are not included in a survey), it is possible to make some assumptions and estimate what the *potential* bias may be. This was done for CPS data, as shown in table C4 below.[43] Using the age-, sex-, and race/ethnicity-specific coverage ratios provided by the Census Bureau, the status and completion rates were calculated under different assumptions about the dropout status of those persons missed by the CPS sampling frame.

The first column of estimates in table C4 shows the status dropout rates and completion rates calculated directly from the 2001 CPS. The data in the second and third columns of estimates were calculated with the assumption that those undercovered by the survey—regardless of their age, race/ethnicity, and sex—were more likely to be dropouts than others. This would mean that undercovered White males are more likely to be dropouts than covered White males, and so on with other groups. The second column of estimates shows the status dropout rates and completion rates assuming that 50 percent of those undercovered dropped out. The third column of estimates shows rates based on a "worst-case scenario" in which all of those who were undercovered actually dropped out. Although this assumption is almost certainly wrong, it does provide an upper bound to the effect of undercoverage on these rates.

[43]The following discussion is based, in part, on Kaufman, P. (2001, January). *The National Dropout Data Collection System: Assessing Consistency*. Paper presented at the Achieve and the Harvard Civil Rights Project conference Dropout Research: Accurate Counts and Positive Interventions, Boston, MA. In that paper, 1999 data were analyzed.

Table C4. Status dropout and completion rates adjusted for potential undercoverage: October 2001

	Actual CPS rate (percent)	Assuming undercoverage[1] population has: 50% dropout rate (percent)	100% dropout rate (percent)
		Status dropout rate	
Total	10.7	11.7	12.7
Race/ethnicity			
White, non-Hispanic	7.3	7.8	8.2
Black, non-Hispanic	10.9	12.6	14.3
Hispanic	27.0	29.8	32.7
Other	5.4	5.7	6.1
		Status completion rate	
Total	86.5	80.5	74.8
Race/ethnicity			
White, non-Hispanic	91.0	85.8	80.8
Black, non-Hispanic	85.6	76.1	66.8
Hispanic	65.7	60.4	55.1
Other	96.1	88.1	82.6

[1]Based on undercoverage ratios by age, sex, and race/ethnicity, 1996.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2001.

Using these assumptions, adjusting for the undercoverage raises the status dropout rate from 10.7 percent to 11.7 percent for the 50 percent dropout scenario. The status dropout rate for Blacks rises from 10.9 percent to 12.6 percent under the 50 percent scenario. The undercoverage would potentially have a greater effect on the status completion rate, lowering the overall rate from 86.5 percent to 80.5 percent (under the 50 percent dropout assumption). The status completion rate for Blacks falls from 85.4 percent to 76.1 percent. It must be emphasized again, however, that the assumption that 50 percent of those missed by CPS are dropouts may not be true. The truth lies somewhere between the extreme of not accounting for possible bias due to undercoverage and the extreme of assuming that all of those undercounted dropped out.

Definition of Family Income in the CPS

Family income is derived from a single question asked of the household respondent. Income includes money income from all sources including jobs, business, interest, rent, social security payments. The income of nonrelatives living in the household is excluded, but the income of all family members 14 years old and over, including those temporarily living away, is included. Family income refers to receipts over a 12-month period.

There are several issues that affect the interpretation of dropout rates by family income using the CPS. First, it is possible that the family income of the students at the time they dropped out was somewhat different from their family income at the time of the CPS interview. Furthermore, family income is derived from a single question asked of the household respondent in the October CPS. In some cases, there are persons 15 through 24 years old living in the household who are unrelated to the household respondent, yet whose family income is defined as the income of the family of the household respondent. Therefore, the current family income of the respondent may not accurately reflect that person's family background. In particular, some of the young adults in the 15- through 24-year age range do not live in a family unit with a parent present.

Definition of Geographic Regions in CPS

There are four Census regions used in this report: Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. The Northeast consists of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The Midwest consists of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. The South consists of Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. The West consists of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, and Hawaii.

Definition of Immigration Status in CPS

Immigration status was derived from a question on the basic monthly survey inquiring about the citizenship status of the reference person, with the following response categories:

1 = Native, born in the United States
2 = Native, born in Puerto Rico or U.S. outlying area
3 = Native, born abroad of American parent or parents
4 = Foreign-born, U.S. citizen by naturalization
5 = Foreign-born, not a citizen of the United States

Those coded (1) above (Native, born in the United States) were considered as born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia. All others were considered as born elsewhere. In 1997, an equivalent percentage of Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds and all persons 16- through 24-year-old were born abroad to American parents (approximately 1.0 percent).

Imputation for Item Nonresponse

For many key items in the October CPS, the U.S. Census Bureau imputes data for cases with missing data due to item nonresponse. However, item nonresponse data for the method of high school completion were not imputed by the Census Bureau before 1997. Special imputations were conducted for these items using a sequential hot deck procedure implemented through the PROC IMPUTE computer program developed by the American Institutes for Research.[44] Three categories of age, two categories of race, two categories of sex, and two categories of citizenship were used as imputation cells.

Accuracy of Estimates

Most of the estimates in this report are derived from samples and are subject to two broad classes of error—sampling and nonsampling error. Sampling errors occur because the data are collected from a sample of a population rather than from the entire population. Estimates based on a sample will differ somewhat from the values that would have been obtained from a universe survey using the same instruments, instructions, and procedures. Nonsampling errors come from a variety of sources and affect all types of surveys, universe as well as sample surveys. Examples of sources of nonsampling error include design, reporting, and processing errors and errors due to nonresponse. The effects of nonsampling errors are more difficult to evaluate than those that result from sampling variability. As much as possible, procedures are built into surveys in order to minimize nonsampling errors.

The standard error is a measure of the variability due to sampling when estimating a parameter. It indicates how much variance there is in the population of possible estimates of a parameter for a given sample size. Standard errors can be used as a measure of the precision expected from a particular sample. The probability that a sample stastic would differ from a population parameter by less than the standard error is about 68 percent. The chances that the difference would be less than 1.65 times the standard error are about 90 out of 100; that the difference would be less than 1.96 times the standard error, about 95 out of 100.

Because CCD data and ACE data are essentially censuses, they are not based on samples and therefore do not have standard errors. Standard errors for percentages and number of persons based on CPS data were calculated using the following formulas:

[44]McLaughlin, D. H. (1994). *Imputation for Non-Response Adjustment*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

Percentage:

$$\text{se} = \sqrt{(b / N)(p)(100 - p)}$$

where p = the percentage ($0 < p < 100$),
N = the population on which the percentage is based, and
b = the regression parameter based on a generalized variance formula and is associated with the characteristic;
b is equal to 2,369 for the total or White population; 2,680 for the Black population; and 3,051 for the Hispanic and the Asian/Pacific Islander populations ages 14 through 24 for 2001.

Number of persons:

$$\text{se} = \sqrt{(bx)(1 - x / T)}$$

where x = the number of persons (i.e., dropouts),
T = population in the category (e.g., Blacks ages 16 through 24), and
b = as above.

Standard errors for the estimates in the tables appear in appendix B.

Methodology and Statistical Procedures

The descriptive comparisons were tested in this report using Student's *t* statistic. Differences between estimates are tested against the probability of a type I error, or significance level. The significance levels were determined by calculating the Student's *t* values for the differences between each pair of means or proportions and comparing these with published tables of significance levels for two-tailed hypothesis testing.

Student's *t* values may be computed to test the difference between percentages with the following formula:

$$t = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{se_1^2 + se_2^2}}$$

where P_1 and P_2 are the estimates to be compared and se_1 and se_2 are their corresponding standard errors.

When considering *t* statistics for data presented in this report or others, readers should keep three points in mind. First, comparisons based on large *t* statistics may appear to merit special attention. This can be misleading since the magnitude of the *t* statistic is related not only to the observed differences in means or proportions but also to the number of respondents in the specific categories used for comparison. Hence, a small difference compared across a large number of respondents would produce a large *t* statistic.

Second, there is a possibility that one can report a "false positive" or type I error. In the case of a *t* statistic, this false positive would result when a difference measured with a particular sample showed a statistically significant difference when there was no difference in the underlying population. Statistical tests are designed to control this type of error, denoted by alpha. The alpha level of .05 selected for findings in this report indicates that a difference of a certain magnitude or larger would be produced no more than one time out of twenty when there was no actual difference in the quantities in the underlying population. When *t* values are at the .05 level or smaller, the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the two quantities is rejected. Finding no difference, however, does not necessarily imply the values are the same or equivalent.

Third, the probability of a type I error increases with the number of comparisons being made. Bonferroni adjustments are sometimes used to correct for this problem. Bonferroni adjustments do this by reducing the alpha level for each individual test in proportion to the number of tests being done. However, while Bonferroni adjustments help avoid type I errors, they increase the chance of making type II errors. Type II errors occur when there actually is a difference present in a population, but a statistical test applied to estimates from a sample indicates that no difference exists. In previous reports in this series, Bonferroni adjustments were employed. Because of changes in NCES reporting standards, Bonferroni adjustments are not employed in this report.

Trends. Regression analysis was used to test for trends across age groups and over time. Regression analysis assesses the degree to which one variable (the dependent variable) is related to one or more other variables (the independent variables). The estimation procedure most commonly used in regression analysis is ordinary least squares (OLS).

The analyses in this report were conducted on the event rates, status rates, and completion rates. The event rate and status rate estimates were used as dependent measures in the analysis, with a variable representing time and a dummy variable controlling for changes in the educational attainment item in 1992 (=0 for years 1968 to 1991, =1 for 1992 to 2001) used as independent variables. However, in these data, some of the observations were less reliable than others (i.e., some years' standard errors were larger than those for other years). In such cases, OLS estimation procedures do not apply, and it is necessary to modify the regression procedures to obtain unbiased regression parameters.

The modification that is usually recommended transforms the observations to variables that satisfy the usual assumptions of ordinary least squares regression and then applies the usual OLS analysis to these variables. This was done in this analysis using the data manipulation and regression capability of Microsoft EXCEL®. Each variable in the analysis was transformed by dividing by the standard error of the relevant year's rate (event, status, or completion). The new dependent variable was then regressed on the new time variable and new editing-change dummy variable. All statements about trend changes in this report are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.