

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN 2005

To determine the needs of next year's class, educators look carefully at last year's statistics. Businesses supplying paper, pens, desks, computers, and many other products and services are also interested in the facts about changing school enrollment. Human resource planners look to these numbers to see where the next wave of workers will come from and how well prepared they will be. In October 2005, 27 percent of the population 3 years old and older—75.8 million people—were enrolled in school, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS).¹

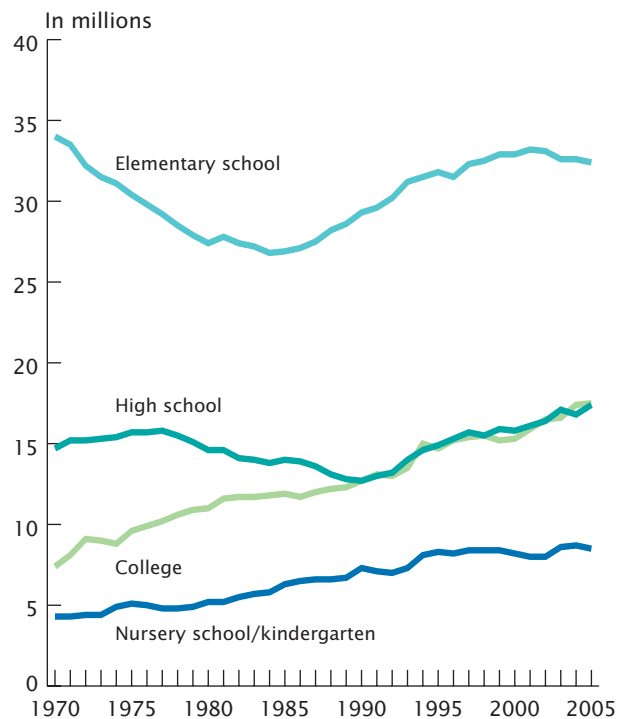
¹ The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text and figures) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

Words That Count

Regular schools include public, parochial, and other private schools that advance a student toward an elementary school graduation, high school diploma, or a college, university, or professional school degree. Trade schools, business colleges, and schools for people with mental or emotional conditions, which do not advance students to regular school degrees, are not included.

Nursery schools, preschools, or prekindergartens are regular schools that provide educational experiences for children during the years preceding kindergarten. Private homes that provide primarily custodial care are not considered nursery schools. Children in Head Start or similar programs are counted as in nursery school or kindergarten as appropriate.

Figure 1.
Students by Level of Enrollment: 1970–2005



Note: The figures for 1970 and 1971 do not include students 35 and older.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1970 through October 2005.

Nursery school and kindergarten enrolled 8.5 million students in October 2005. Another 32.4 million attended elementary school. High schools and colleges each instructed about 17.4 million students, as shown in Figure 1.²

² For the purposes of this report, elementary school includes grades 1 through 8 and high school includes grades 9 through 12.

Nursery School and Kindergarten

In 2005, 4.6 million children aged 3 to 6 attended nursery school, compared with one-half million children this age in 1964—the first year these data were collected.

In 2005, at least half of non-Hispanic White (59 percent), Black (52 percent), and Asian (55 percent) 3- and 4-year-olds attended school.³ Forty-three percent of Hispanic 3- and 4-year-olds attended school.

Among 3- and 4-year-olds, school enrollment was related to the education and labor force participation of a child's mother. In 2005, children of mothers who were college graduates were much more likely to attend school than children whose mothers did not finish high school—67 percent compared with 38 percent. Also, children of mothers in the labor force were more likely to attend school than those whose mothers were not in the labor force—58 percent compared with 48 percent.⁴

In 2005, 65 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds in families with incomes of \$50,000 or more attended school, compared with 44 percent of children this age in families with incomes less than \$20,000. Since nursery school is not part of the regular public school system, the cost of attending may prevent some families from enrolling their children.

³ The percentage of Asian 3- and 4-year olds enrolled in school was not statistically different from the percentage of non-Hispanic White 3- and 4-year olds and the percentage of Black 3- and 4-year olds enrolled in school.

Federal surveys now give respondents the option of reporting more than one race. Therefore, two basic ways of defining a race group are possible. A group such as Asian may be defined as those who reported Asian and no other race (the race-alone or single-race concept) or as those who reported Asian regardless of whether they also reported another race (the race-alone-or-in-combination concept). This report (text and figures) shows data using the first approach (race alone). Use of the single-race population in this chapter does not imply that this is the preferred method of presenting data. The Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches.

In this chapter, the term "non-Hispanic White" refers to people who are not Hispanic and who reported White and no other race. The Census Bureau often uses non-Hispanic Whites as the comparison group for other race groups and Hispanics.

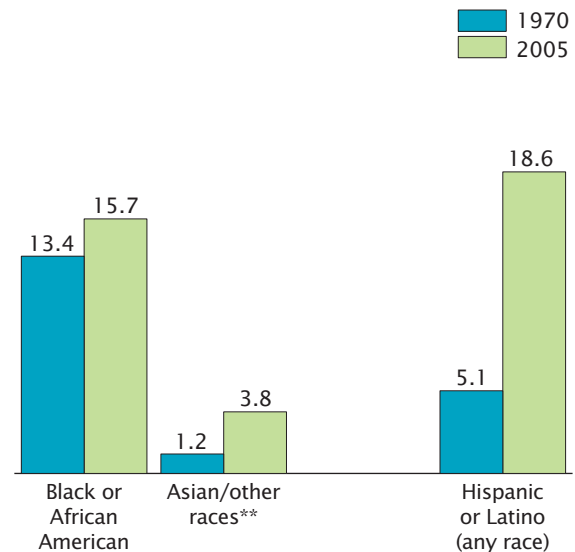
Data users should exercise caution when interpreting aggregate results for the Hispanic population or for race groups because these populations consist of many distinct groups that differ in socioeconomic characteristics, culture, and recency of immigration.

Because Hispanics may be any race, data for Hispanics overlap with data for the Black and the Asian populations. Based on the population aged 3 and older surveyed in the October 2005 CPS, 3.3 percent of the single-race Black population and 1.3 percent of the single-race Asian population were also Hispanic. Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population, the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population, and the Two or More Races population are not shown here based on their small sample size in the October CPS.

⁴ The labor force includes people who were employed and those who were unemployed but looking for work.

Figure 2.
Race* and Hispanic Origin in Elementary and High Schools: 1970 and 2005

(Percent of all students in elementary and high school)



* 2005 race groups are single race.

** The Asian student population in 1970 includes Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders and American Indians and Alaska Natives while the Asian population in 2005 includes only single-race Asians.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 Current Population Survey and 1970 Census of Population and Housing.

In October 2005, the vast majority of 5-year-olds were enrolled in school—93 percent. Most 5-year-olds, 74 percent, were in kindergarten. In addition, 13 percent were in nursery school and 7 percent were in elementary school.

Among children aged 3 to 6, the total enrollment in kindergarten was 3.9 million in 2005. Between 1975 and 2005, the proportion of kindergarten students attending school all day increased from 22 percent to 70 percent.

Elementary School and High School

The number of students enrolled in elementary and high school (49.8 million) in 2005 was larger than the peak enrollment for the Baby Boom Generation—48.7 million in 1970.⁵ Immigration has contributed to growing enrollment. Among elementary and high school

⁵ The comparison of elementary and high school enrollment in 1970 and 2005 is limited to students 3 to 34 years old because that was the population asked about enrollment in 1970.

students, 22 percent had at least one foreign-born parent and 5 percent were foreign-born themselves.

The baby-boom students in 1970 were less diverse than the students enrolled in elementary and high school in 2005, as shown in Figure 2. In 1970, 13 percent of these students were Black and 1 percent were races other than Black or White.⁶ Hispanics made up 5 percent of the 1970 student body. In 2005, Blacks accounted for 16 percent of these students and Asians by themselves accounted for another 4 percent. Nineteen percent of elementary and high school students were Hispanic in 2005.

During the 1-year period ending in October 2005, 414,000 students, or 4 percent of all students in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades, dropped out of high school.⁷ In 2005, the high school dropout rates for Blacks (7 percent) and Hispanics (5 percent) were higher than the rates for non-Hispanic Whites (3 percent) and Asians (1 percent).⁸

⁶ In this chapter, the data on race and Hispanic origin for 1970 come from the 1970 decennial census while the 2005 data come from the CPS. Races other than Black or White include American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

⁷ The annual high school dropout rate is an estimate of the proportion of students in a single year who were not enrolled in high school and who were not high school graduates.

⁸ The rates for Asians and non-Hispanic Whites are not statistically different. The rate for Hispanics is not statistically different from the national rate.

College

In October 2005, 17.5 million students were enrolled in college, in contrast with 7.4 million in 1970. Since the late 1980s, the percentage of students aged 25 and older has remained fairly stable, with 37 percent of students in this age group in 2005. Women accounted for 57 percent of all college students, continuing the majority presence they established in 1979.

The race and Hispanic composition of college students has shifted over the decades. In 1970, 6 percent of college students were Black and 2 percent were races other than Black or White. Hispanics accounted for 2 percent of enrollment. In 2005, Blacks accounted for 13 percent of college students and Asians by themselves made up 7 percent of enrollment. Hispanics accounted for 11 percent of the college population.

Sixty-one percent of college students worked while attending school. Three in ten college students were enrolled part-time in 2005. A larger proportion of women than men went to school part-time, 32 percent compared with 27 percent. While 15 percent of students under age 25 attended college part-time, 56 percent of older students did.

Eighty-one percent of college students were undergraduates in 2005. Among them, 3 out of 10 attended a 2-year institution. Among those in graduate school, more than three-quarters were at least 25 years old and about one-third were at least 35 years old.

POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS, COSTS, AND FINANCIAL AID (1996–1997)

While education has become increasingly important, schooling beyond high school has become increasingly expensive.⁹ The average cost of in-state tuition, fees, and room and board for a full-time undergraduate student rose from \$2,800 in 1979–80 to \$9,200 in 1996–97, according to the U.S. Department of Education. This amounts to a 228-percent increase during a time when median family income rose 112 percent.

Among full-time students under age 25, 71 percent were claimed as dependents on their parents' income tax returns.¹⁰ Rates of financial dependence were highest among first- and second-year college

students (77 percent) and lowest among graduate students (41 percent).

In addition to receiving financial assistance from their parents, students also supplemented their incomes by working or obtaining financial aid. Seventy-two percent of all full-time, postsecondary students worked either full-time or part-time during the previous 4 months, as shown in Figure 3. Third- and fourth-year college students and graduate students were even more likely to have worked than first- and second-year college students or vocational, technical, and business school students.

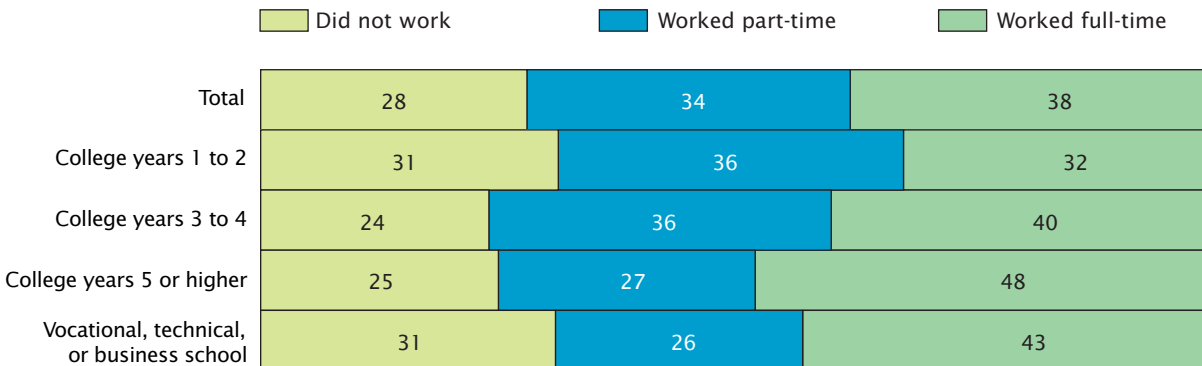
The majority of full-time, postsecondary students (62 percent) received some form of financial aid during the year, including student loans, grants, fellowships, scholarships, work-study appointments, Veterans Educational Assistance, employer assistance, and other sources. Among students who received aid, the average amount was about \$6,000, covering an average of 62 percent of their total costs.

⁹ See discussion on estimates of work-life earnings in chapter on educational attainment.

¹⁰ Data for this section of the report come from the 1996 Survey of Income and Program Participation and the 1997 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. The two datasets were linked by their common variable, the name of the respondent's postsecondary institution. Linking the two data files allowed an examination of student characteristics and financial aid receipt by institutional characteristics.

Figure 3.
Work Status in the Last 4 Months for Full-Time Postsecondary Students by Enrollment Level: 1996–1997

(Percent distribution)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Panel, Wave 5.

School Days: 2003

Data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) highlight a variety of indicators about children's experiences at school.¹¹ The SIPP provides information on children enrolled in gifted classes, those who repeat grades, and parents' educational expectations for their children, as well as other indicators of academic success.

In 2003, 75 percent of children aged 12 to 17 who were enrolled in school were on-track academically—enrolled in school at or above the modal grade for their age. Seventy-eight percent of girls this age were on track, compared with 72 percent of boys. Children were more likely to be on track if their parents were married or if their families were not in poverty.¹²

¹¹ The data in this section are for 2003 and are taken from the SIPP 2001 Panel.

¹² In this section, the term parent refers to the designated parent—the biological, step, or adoptive parent—or some other person acting as the child's guardian who was the respondent to the SIPP questionnaire. In married-couple families, the mother was usually the designated parent. In single-parent families, the parent living with the child was the designated parent. When neither parent was in the household, a guardian was the designated parent.

Among children 12 to 17 years old, 10 percent had repeated a grade at some time during their academic lives. Those who were living below the poverty level were about twice as likely to have repeated a grade as those whose family income was at least double the poverty threshold—18 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

Twenty-four percent of children aged 12 to 17 were in special classes for gifted students or did advanced work in certain subjects. Some situations increased children's likelihood of attending these types of classes, including if they did not live in poverty, if they lived with married parents, or if their parent held an advanced degree.

Parents with advanced degrees were twice as likely as those with only a high school education to want their children to get education beyond college. Regardless of the parent's level of education, parental expectations about what their children would achieve fell below what they desired for their children.

The Census Bureau Can Tell You More

Consult the following Census Bureau Current Population Reports: *School Enrollment in the United States—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 2003* (P20-554) by Hyon B. Shin, *A Child's Day: 2003 (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being)* (P70-109) by Jane Lawler Dye and Tallese Johnson, and *Financing the Future—Postsecondary Students, Costs, and Financial Aid: 1996–1997* (P70-83) by Scott Boggess and Camille Ryan.

Look for complete reports and detailed tables on the Census Bureau's Web site <www.census.gov>.

Click on "Subjects A to Z," then click on "S," and select "Enrollment (including College)" under the heading "School."

Contact the Census Bureau's Demographic Call Center (toll-free) at 1-866-758-1060.

E-mail <ask.census.gov>.

See Appendix A for information on the accuracy of the estimates.