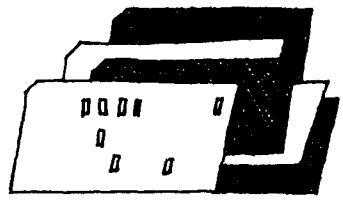
Research Summaries



New monthly data series on school age youth

ANNE MCDOUGALL YOUNG

A new monthly data series on the employment situation among youth 16 to 24 years old by their school enrollment status has recently been established. Publication began with data for January 1985 in the February 1985 issue of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Employment and Earnings*.

The monthly collection and publication of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) on the school enrollment status of youth was recommended by the National Commission on Employment and Unemployment Statistics.[1] The Commission determined that current information on school age youth was needed "to understand work and education choices, to design appropriate employment policies and training programs, and to help appraise the labor market attachment of students."[2]

Prior to 1985, the Bureau of Labor Statistics published two types of information on the school activity of youth. One series was based on the school enrollment status of 16- to 24-year-olds that was collected annually in the October supplement to the CPS.[3] The other series was based on a "major activity" concept of "school" *or* "other" for 16- to 21-year-olds and was collected in the CPS each month. A major drawback of this latter series was that the school total excluded part-time students who reported work as their major activity. In October 1983, for example, the CPS supplement recorded 1.2 million *more* persons 16 to 21 in both school *and* the labor force than the total derived from the regular, monthly major activity question.

The new monthly series replaces both the major activity series, which was published in *Employment and Earnings*, and the annual series on school enrollment, published from the October CPS supplement. The new data have been collected on a trial basis since November 1983. For youth enrolled in school, employment is iterated by age, sex, race, level of school attended, full- or part-time college status, and full- or part-time employment status. For those not enrolled, the data are iterated by age, sex, race, years of school completed, and full- or part-time employment status.

Table 1 shows the extent to which school and work are combined and how participation in these activities varies between a typical school month and the summer. In January 1984, 46 percent of the 16- to 24-year-old population was enrolled in school. About a third of the high school students and half of the full-time college students were in the labor force. Most students were employed only part time or were looking for part-time jobs; most youth not enrolled in school, as well as those enrolled only part time, were in the labor force on a full-time basis, with their labor force participation rates rising with the level of their educational attainment.

At the peak of the summer (July 1984), only 15 percent of the youth were enrolled in school, mostly at the college level. Therefore, the effect of school vacation was to increase sharply, and, of course, temporarily, the number of out-of-school youth in the labor force. It should be pointed out in this context that these statistics do not measure "students" *per se* but rather those currently enrolled in school. This is a very important distinction, because, clearly, there are many continuing students who do not attend school in the summer months and thus cause marked changes in enrollment between April and October of each year. Ideally, it would be appropriate to develop a "students' measure," one that would determine that a person was enrolled in the past school year and intended to return to school in the fall. There are certain pitfalls with this approach, however—including the fact that intentions do not always come to fruition—but the BLS is currently studying the possibility of expanding the measure in this way if it can be shown to have merit.

The data for January 1985 show patterns similar to those of a year earlier. But despite the fact that the population had decreased as the baby-bust generation continued to replace the baby-boom generation in the 16–24 age group, the size of the student labor force was relatively unchanged, as higher participation rates offset this population decline. Among those not enrolled in school, relatively more were employed and fewer unemployed than a year earlier, reflecting the continued economic recovery.

The new monthly school enrollment data are also a source of information on several other issues related to youth. One is the size of the pool of out-of-school youth available for

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Table 1. Employment status of persons 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment status, January 1984, July 1984, and January 1985

[Numbers in thousands]

School and employment status	January 1984	July 1984	January 1985
Population, 16 to 24 years	35,772	35,385	34,936
Enrolled in school	16,614	5,431	16,246
Proportion enrolled	46.4	15.3	46.5
In high school	8,374	1,506	8,200
Labor force	2,991	690	3,133
Employed full time	211	272	239
Employed part time	2,185	218	2,294
Unemployed	595	200	599
Looking for full-time work	51	91	65
Looking for part-time work	544	109	534
In college	8,239	3,925	8,046
Full-time students	6,773	2,381	6,857
Labor force	3,264	1,464	3,375
Employed full time	825	760	935
Employed part time	2,075	533	2,107
Unemployed	361	171	333
Looking for full-time work	90	109	94
Looking for part-time work	271	62	240
Part-time students	1,466	1,544	1,189
Labor force	1,279	1,240	1,067
Employed full time	856	831	724
Employed part time	285	301	268
Unemployed	137	108	75
Looking for full-time work	101	83	49
Looking for part-time work	37	25	26
Not enrolled in school	19,158	29,954	18,690
Labor force	15,447	23,611	15,264
Employed	12,876	20,478	12,944
Full time	11,886	17,505	12,006
Part time	990	2,973	938
Unemployed	2,571	3,133	2,320
Labor force participation rates			
School years completed:			
Less than 4 years high school	64.6	62.8	65.8
High school, 4 years only	83.0	84.2	84.1
College, 1 to 3 years	89.4	88.7	89.8
College, 4 years or more	94.8	91.8	95.1

civilian work or for the Armed Forces. Rather than once a year in October, these data are now available simultaneously with the release of the monthly report on the Nation's employment situation.

Another area of interest is the effect of students on the overall unemployment rate. The new series can help to measure that impact more precisely, using the data on full- and part-time enrollment status. In April 1985, for example, the overall civilian unemployment rate, *not* seasonally adjusted, would have been 6.8 instead of 7.1 percent if teenagers (16- to 19-year-olds) in high school and college full time had been excluded from the employed and unemployed counts.

These data on youth according to their school enrollment status are published in table A–7 of *Employment and Earnings*, the BLS' monthly statistical compendium of labor force, employment, and unemployment statistics. Other information on these youth, such as the occupation of those employed, are available upon request. □

FOOTNOTES

[1] National Commission on Employment and Unemployment Statistics, *Counting the Labor Force* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1979). See also Harvey R. Hamel and John T. Tucker, "Implementing the Levitan Commission's recommendations to improve labor data," *Monthly Labor Review*, February 1985, pp. 16–24.

[2] *Counting the Labor Force*, p. 90.

[3] School enrollment data from the October CPS were published in the Special Labor Force Report series for the years 1959 through 1979 and in Special Labor Force Bulletin 2192 for 1980–1982. Recent data have appeared in press releases and in Anne McDougall Young, "Fewer students in work force as school age population declines," *Monthly Labor Review*, July 1984, pp.34–37; unpublished data are available upon request.

Tips: the mainstay of many hotel workers' pay

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Reported customer tips averaged about half the cash earnings of waiters and waitresses in hotels and motels studied by the Bureau of Labor Statistics during July through September 1983. The survey, covering 23 metropolitan areas,[1] found employer-paid wages making up the balance. In most areas, these wages averaged between $2 and $3 an hour, largely reflecting the tip allowance employers can apply toward meeting the Federal minimum wage of $3.35 an hour.[2]

Customer tips also contributed substantially to the earnings of several other occupational groups. For waiter and waitress assistants, tips commonly averaged 16 to 22 percent of their earnings, 44 to 57 percent for bellpersons, 25 to 40 percent for public bartenders, and less than 20 percent for service bartenders. Among these occupations, service bartenders usually had the highest employer-paid wages, ranging from $3.99 an hour in Dallas–Fort Worth to $10.16 in Las Vegas.[3] (See table 1.) Public bartenders, receiving tips to a greater extent than service bartenders, had wages averaging from $3.55 an hour in Miami to $9.83 in San Francisco–Oakland.

Although service bartenders, who prepare drinks for waiters and waitresses to serve, usually averaged more in wages than public bartenders, this pattern was reversed when tips were included in the comparisons. Similar patterns occurred between other occupations, including waiters and waitresses and their assistants. For example, table waiters and waitresses in full-course restaurants averaged less in wages than their assistants in each area surveyed—usually by 30 to 60 percent. When tips were included in the comparisons, waiters and waitresses averaged more—usually by 40 to 70 percent.

Paid holidays, most commonly 6 to 8 days annually, were provided to at least three-fourths of the nonsupervisory, nonoffice workers in each area studied. At least nine-tenths of the workers in each area were also covered by paid

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