

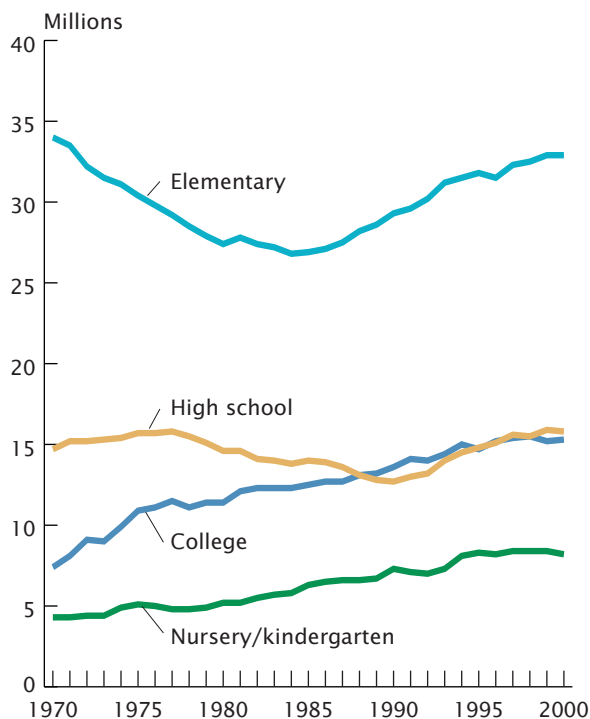
## School Enrollment, 2000

Education is not just our future, it is very much a part of our daily lives with more than one in four Americans aged 3 and older — 72 million people — enrolled in school.

To determine the needs of next year's class, educators begin by looking at last year's statistics. Businesses supplying paper, pens, desks, and computers are also interested in the facts about changing school enrollment. Human resource planners look to these numbers to see where the next generation of workers will come from and how well prepared they will be.

Figure 8-1.

## Students by Level of School Enrollment: 1970-2000



Note: The figures for 1970 and 1971 do not include students aged 35 and older.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey October 1970 to October 2000.

Eight million children were enrolled in nursery school or kindergarten and 33 million in elementary school,<sup>1</sup> according to the October 2000 Current Population Survey (CPS).<sup>2</sup> Sixteen million students attended high schools and 15 million attended college.<sup>3</sup>

For many children, nursery school enrollment has replaced kindergarten as their first school experience.

In 1964, the first year these data were collected, only about one-half million children attended nursery school, compared with the 2000 enrollment of about 4 million. The majority of White non-Hispanic, Black,

<sup>1</sup> Junior high school students are included with elementary school students for the purposes of this report.

<sup>2</sup> Estimates in this chapter are calculated using sample data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), weighted by population controls based on the 1990 decennial census. The population universe for the CPS is the civilian noninstitutional population. As a result, these estimates will differ from population estimates computed from either the intercensal estimates program or the 2000 decennial census.

<sup>3</sup> The estimates for high school and college enrollment were not significantly different from each other.

## Words That Count

- **Regular schools** include public, parochial, and other private schools that advance a student toward an elementary or high school diploma, or a college, university, or professional school degree. Trade schools, business colleges, and schools for the mentally handicapped, which do not advance students to regular school degrees, are not included.
- **Nursery schools** 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 under nursery school or kindergarten, as appropriate.

and Asian and Pacific Islander 3- and 4-year olds were enrolled in school.<sup>4</sup> About 36 percent of Hispanic children<sup>5</sup> this age also were enrolled.

Since nursery school is predominantly private in most areas, the cost of attending may prevent some families from sending their children. In 2000, 61 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds in families with incomes of \$40,000 or more attended school, compared with 46 percent of children this age in families with incomes less than \$20,000.

Among 3- and 4-year olds, school enrollment is also related to education and labor force participation of a child's mother. In 2000, children of mothers who were college graduates were substantially more likely to attend nursery school than children whose mother did not finish high school — 68 percent, compared with 36 percent. And children of mothers in the labor force<sup>6</sup> were more likely to attend school than those whose mothers were not working nor looking for work — 56 percent, compared with 47 percent.

In October 2000, the vast majority of 5-year-olds were enrolled in school — 94 percent. Most 5-year olds, 73 percent, were in kindergarten. However, 14 percent were in nursery school and 6 percent were in first grade.

The total enrollment in kindergarten was about 4 million. During the past three decades, the number of children attending kindergarten all day increased from one in ten to six in ten. Moreover, most of these children (60 percent) were enrolled in nursery school in the preceding year.<sup>7</sup>

**In 2000, the number of students enrolled in elementary and high school (49 million) matched the previous record set in 1970 when the baby-boom<sup>8</sup> children were in school.**

Much of the growth in enrollment has been driven by an increase in births that took place between 1981 and 1994 as women born during the baby boom reached

<sup>4</sup> There is no statistical difference between the percentages of White non-Hispanic, Black, and Asian and Pacific Islander 3- and 4-year olds enrolled in school.

<sup>5</sup> Hispanics may be of any race.

<sup>6</sup> The labor force includes people who are employed and those who are unemployed but looking for work.

<sup>7</sup> The percentage of kindergarten children enrolled in nursery school in the preceding year is not significantly different than the percentage of kindergarten children who attend school full day.

<sup>8</sup> The term "baby boom" refers to the large number of children born from 1946 to 1964.

their peak childbearing ages. In 2000, 65 percent of elementary and high school students had baby-boomer parents.<sup>9</sup> Immigration has been another factor contributing to growing enrollment. Among school-aged children, 19 percent had at least one foreign-born parent — and 5 percent of elementary and high school students were foreign-born themselves.

Students enrolled in elementary and high schools in 2000 came from diverse backgrounds. About 63 percent were White non-Hispanics, 16 percent were Black, and 4 percent were Asian and Pacific Islander. Fifteen percent of these students were Hispanic, an ethnic group that contains people of all races.

Seventy percent of students lived in married-couple households. An additional 24 percent lived with only a mother, and 5 percent lived with only a father. More than half of elementary and high school students came from families with annual incomes of \$40,000 or more, but almost one in five came from families with annual incomes below \$20,000.

During the 1-year period ending in October 2000, 488,000 students — almost 5 percent of all students in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades — dropped out of high school.<sup>10</sup> The rate was 5.2 percent for boys and 3.9 percent for girls.<sup>11</sup> The high school dropout rates were higher for Blacks (5.6 percent) and Hispanics (6.9 percent) than for White non-Hispanics (3.9 percent).<sup>12</sup> The likelihood of dropping out was higher for students from lower-income families than for students from higher-income families. While 10.1 percent of high school students from families with annual incomes below \$20,000 dropped out, only 2.6 percent of those from families with annual incomes of \$40,000 or more left before graduation.

**The end of high school presents a multitude of pathways, but many continue on in school.**

Among the population aged 18 to 24 in 2000, 12 percent were no longer in school, but had not graduated from high school. However, 82 percent were

<sup>9</sup> The term "baby-boomer parent" refers to native parents and does not include foreign-born parents.

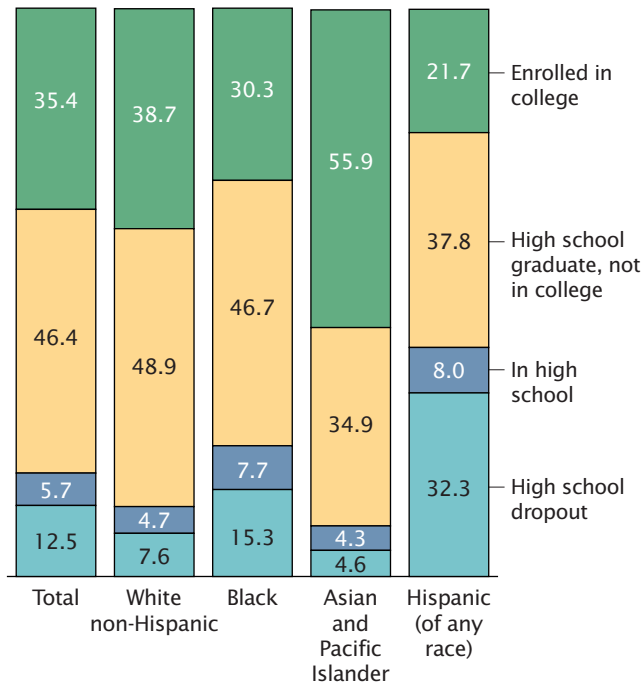
<sup>10</sup> The dropout rate has remained the same since 1997. The total dropout rate in 2000 is not statistically different than the rate for males, females, White non-Hispanics, and Blacks.

<sup>11</sup> The dropout rate for boys in 2000 is not significantly different than the rate for Blacks or Hispanics, and the rate for girls is not statistically different than the rate for White non-Hispanics.

<sup>12</sup> The dropout rates for Blacks and Hispanics in 2000 are not statistically different.

Figure 8-2.  
**People Aged 18 to 24 by Enrollment Status and Race and Hispanic Origin: October 2000**

(Percent distribution of people in age group)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2000.

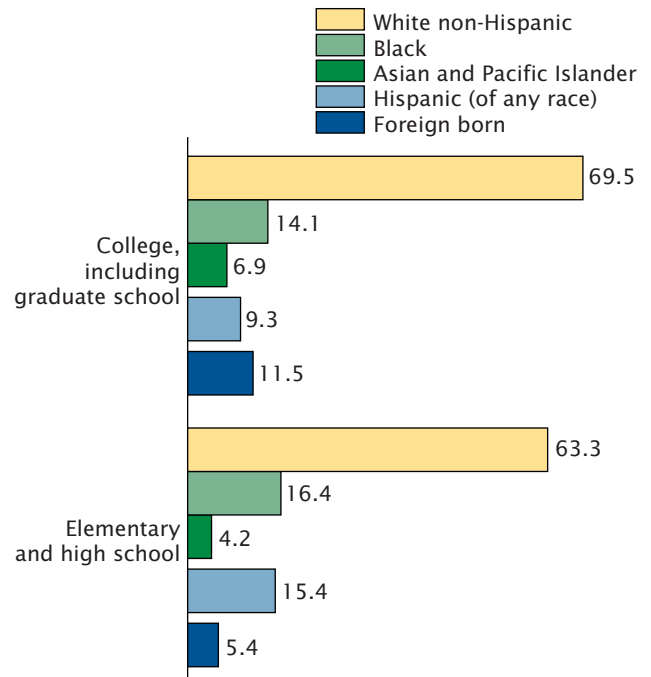
high school graduates and 43 percent of these graduates were enrolled in college.

In October 2000, 15 million students were enrolled in college. This number was not significantly different from that of the previous year, but it was higher than it was a decade earlier when 14 million students were enrolled. The number of college students under age 25 continued at the record high, reaching nearly 10 million in 2000. This peak was fueled by the growing proportion of high school graduates who went directly into college, as well as the fact that there were more people in this age group. Six million students aged 25 and older were also enrolled in college in 2000 — slightly fewer than in 1998. These older college students accounted for about 37 percent of all college students in 2000.

Women accounted for 56 percent of all college students, continuing the majority role they established in 1979. However, women constituted a greater share of older students than of those under age 25. Women

Figure 8-3.  
**Students by Level of School and Race, Hispanic Origin, and Foreign-born Status: October 2000**

(Percent of students by level of school)



Note: The categories overlap and will add to more than 100 percent.  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2000.

represented 54 percent of students under age 25 and 60 percent of older students.

The race and ethnic composition of college students has shifted during the last two decades. In 1979, 84 percent of students were White non-Hispanic and 10 percent were Black. In 2000, 69 percent were White non-Hispanic and 14 percent were Black. While few students were of other races in 1979, Asians and Pacific Islanders accounted for 7 percent of college enrollment in 2000. Additionally, Hispanic enrollment grew from 4 percent of all students in 1979 to 9 percent in 2000. And in 2000, 12 percent of all U.S. college students were foreign born.

One-third of college students were enrolled part-time in 2000. A greater proportion of women than men went to school part time, 36 percent compared with 31 percent. Older students were especially in need of flexibility to schedule their college careers around jobs and families. While only 16 percent of students under age 25 attended college part-time, 63 percent of older students did.

## The Census Bureau Can Tell You More

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- For more detailed information, consult the following U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Report: *School Enrollment — Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1999* by Amie Jamieson, Andrea Curry, and Gladys Martinez and *School Enrollment — Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 2000*.

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- Look for complete reports and detailed tables on the Census Bureau's World Wide Web site ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). Click on "S" and select "School Enrollment."

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- Contact the Education and Social Stratification Branch of the U.S. Census Bureau at 301-457-2464 or e-mail [pop@census.gov](mailto:pop@census.gov).

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- For information on publications and other resources, see Appendix A.