

## **Findings From *The Condition of Education 2008*: Enrollment, Student Diversity on the Rise**

Enrollment in America's public schools is rising to an all-time high, and the nation's student body is becoming more diverse, according to *The Condition of Education 2008* report released today by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

"This report allows us to take a big-picture look at the condition of American education," said NCES Commissioner Mark Schneider. "What we see are improvements, such as higher math and reading scores for 4th- and 8th-graders, and increases in college enrollment. But persistent challenges remain in educating a growing and increasingly diverse population."

Hispanic students now make up 1 in 5 public school students, but these students as well as other minority students are disproportionately clustered in high-poverty schools. More individuals of all races are enrolling in college, and more bachelor's degrees have been awarded than in the past. However, gaps in achievement and high school and college graduation rates between White and minority students continue.

*The Condition of Education* is a congressionally mandated report that provides an annual portrait of education in the United States. The 43 indicators included in this year's report cover all aspects of education, from early childhood through postsecondary education and from student achievement to school environment and resources.

Among the report's other findings:

- This year, public school enrollment is expected to approach about 50 million students. Total public school enrollment is projected to set new records each year from 2008 to 2017, at which time it is expected to reach 54.1 million.
- Minority students make up 43 percent of the public school enrollment overall and 48 percent in the South and 55 percent in the West.
- Twenty percent of school-age children speak a language other than English at home; about 5 percent speak English with difficulty.
- In 2005–06, about a third of Black students and a third of Hispanic students attended high-poverty schools compared with 4 percent of White students.
- Between 1989–90 and 2004–05, total spending per student in public elementary and secondary schools rose 29 percent after adjusting for inflation, to \$10,892.
- Average reading scores of 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were higher in 2007 than in 1992.
- Average mathematics scores increased 27 points for 4th-graders and 19 points for 8th-graders between 1990 and 2007.

- The dropout rates for Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics have generally declined between 1972 and 2006. However, over this period, the dropout rates for Hispanics and Blacks remained higher than the White rates.
- Among public high school students in the class of 2005, about three-fourths graduated on time.
- The rate of students entering college immediately after high school graduation increased from 49 percent in 1972 to 67 percent by 1997, but has since fluctuated between 62 and 69 percent.
- Since 1970, women's undergraduate enrollment has increased over three times as fast as men's. Currently, women make up 57 percent of undergraduate enrollment.
- Minority students have accounted for about half of the growth in associate's and bachelor's degrees awarded between 1989-90 and 2003-04.
- In 2006, young adults with a bachelor's degree earned about \$11,000 more than those with an associate's degree, about \$16,000 more than those who had completed high school, and more than twice as much than those who did not earn a high school diploma.