NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Statistical Analysis Report July 1997

Dropout Rates in the United States: 1995

U. S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement NCES 97-473

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Marilyn McMillen
National Center for Education Statistics

U. S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement **NCES 97-473**

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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 Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297), NCES released the first annual report on school dropouts in 1989. Although the reporting of dropout statistics is no longer required by law, this report has been continued because of the importance of charting dropout behavior among America's youths.

This report, which is the eighth in the series, presents data for 1995 on high school dropout and retention rates, and examines high school completion and graduation rates. In addition to extending time series data reported in earlier reports, this report focuses on three specific sub-populations that are at particular risk of dropping out of school: foreign-born persons attending U.S. schools, young adults who have been retained a grade or more while enrolled, and individuals who have some type of learning, physical, or other disability.

The report is based on the best and most current national data available at this time. It utilizes the Current Population Survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census to develop national event and status dropout rates and the NELS:88 to develop 8th- through 12th-grade and 10th- through 12th-grade cohort dropout rates. NCES is currently pursuing an extensive, integrated program to expand and improve data collected about dropouts. To this end, a dropout statistics collection was initiated in the 1991-92 school year as a component of the NCES Common Core of Data (CCD); data from the third year of that collection are included in this report.

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

Pascal D. Forgione, Jr.
Commissioner of Education Statistics

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals made substantial contributions to the preparation of this report. This report was prepared under the direction of Paul Planchon, Associate Commissioner for Surveys and Cooperative Systems Group.

Special recognition is extended to Rosalind Bruno of the Education and Social Stratification Branch, Population Division, Bureau of the Census for her contributions to the preparations of the sections of the report based on the CPS data. Thanks also go to the staff at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago for their work in the collection and preparation of the data from NELS:88.

Nabeel Alsalam and his staff at NCES provided assistance in formulating the definition of event dropouts applied to the CPS data. They also provided the family income data used in the reporting of the event and status rates in this report. Summer D. Whitener in the Surveys and Cooperative Systems Group at NCES also deserves special recognition for her assistance in coordinating and organizing the release and distribution of this document.

Without the assistance of Wanjiru Wanyeki, Vicky Dingler, Ellen Liebman, and Denise Bradby of MPR Associates this report could not have been prepared. They provided invaluable analytical, editorial, graphic, and production assistance.

The report was reviewed within the U.S. Department of Education by Lee Hoffman, Robert Burton, and Mary Frase of NCES, Alan Ginsberg of OPE, Delia Pompa of OBEMLA, and Harry Pachon, Ph.D. of the Tomas Riviera Policy Institute at the Claremont Graduate University. Their efforts and contributions are greatly appreciated.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the eighth in a series of reports to Congress by the National Center for Education Statistics. It presents data on dropout rates in 1995, the most recent year for which data are available, and includes time series data on high school dropout and completion rates for the period 1972 through 1995. In addition to extending time series data reported in earlier reports, this report uses data on country of birth and enrollment in U.S. schools to examine dropout rates among Hispanic young adults who attend U.S. schools. This report uses these and other data available for 1995 to focus on three specific sub-populations that are at particular risk of dropping out of school: foreign-born persons attending U.S. schools, young adults who have been retained a grade or more while enrolled, and individuals who have some type of learning, physical, or other disability.

Event Dropout Rates

Event dropout rates for 1995 describe the proportion of youths ages 15-24 years who dropped out of school in the 12 months preceding October 1995. Demographic data collected as part of the CPS study permit event dropout rates to be calculated across a variety of individual characteristics, including race, sex, region of residence, and income level.

- One-half million of the 9.5 million 15- through 24-year-olds enrolled in 1994 left school by October of 1995 without successfully completing a high school program. This amounts to 5.7 percent of this group of young adults. This estimate is on a par with those reported over the last 24 years (figure A).

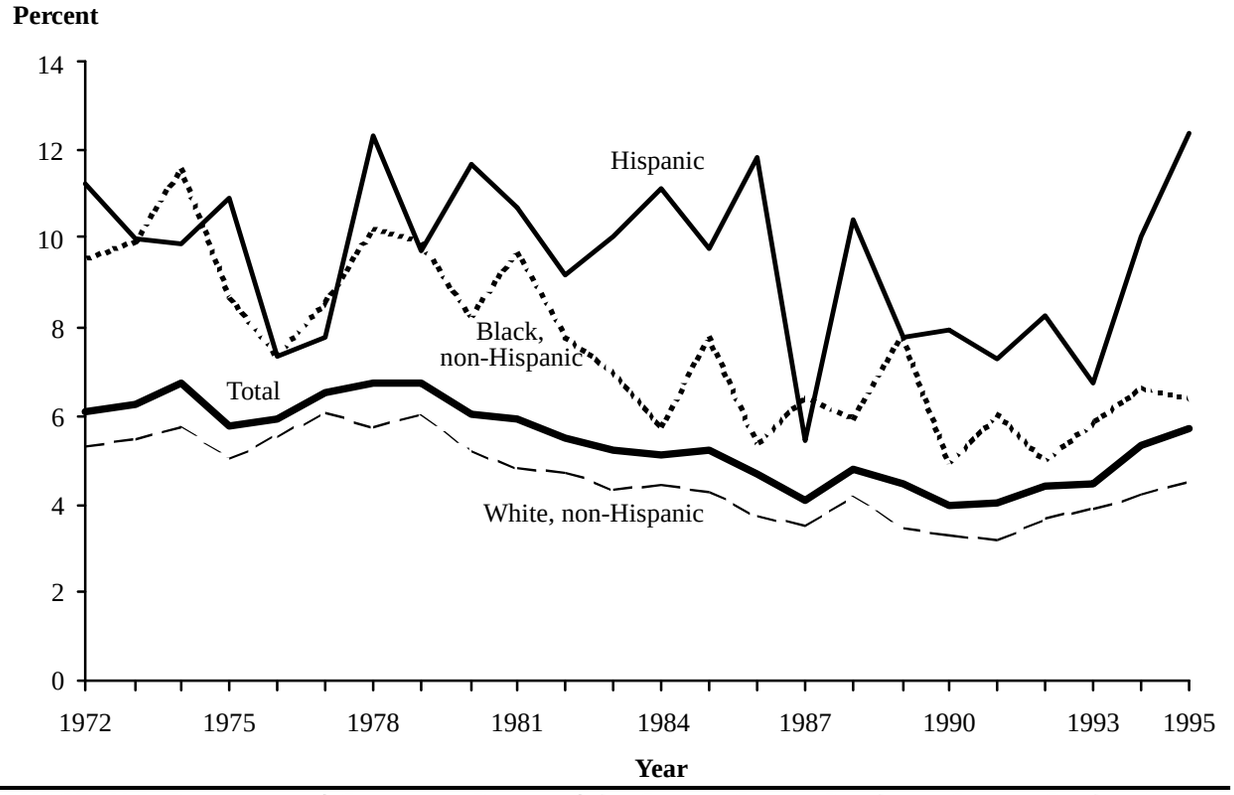
- Hispanic students are more likely than white students to leave school short of completing a high school program. Although the estimated rate for black students (6.4 percent) falls between the rates for Hispanics and whites, the differences are not significant (table 1, page 6).

- In 1995, young adults living in families with incomes in the lowest 20 percent of all family incomes were six times as likely as their peers from families in the top 20 percent of the income distribution to drop out (table 1, page 6).

- Students who remain in school after the majority of their age cohort has left are more likely to drop out than their younger peers (table 2, page 10).

- Youths 15 through 18 years of age account for two-thirds of all those who dropped out during the preceding year; moreover, nearly 40 percent of the 1995 dropouts were 15 through 17 years of age (table 2, page 10).

Figure A.-Event dropout rates for grades 10-12, ages 15-24, by race-ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Status Rates

Over the last decade, 300 to 500 thousand 10th through 12th graders left school each year without successfully completing a high school program. Each year some of these young adults return to school or an alternative certification program, and others pass out of this age group. Status rates describe the proportion of young adults ages 16-24 years who are considered dropouts in October 1995.

- In October of 1995 nearly 3.9 million young adults were not enrolled in a high school program and had not completed high school. These youths account for 12 percent of the 32.4 million 16- through 24-year-olds in the United States in 1995 (figure B).

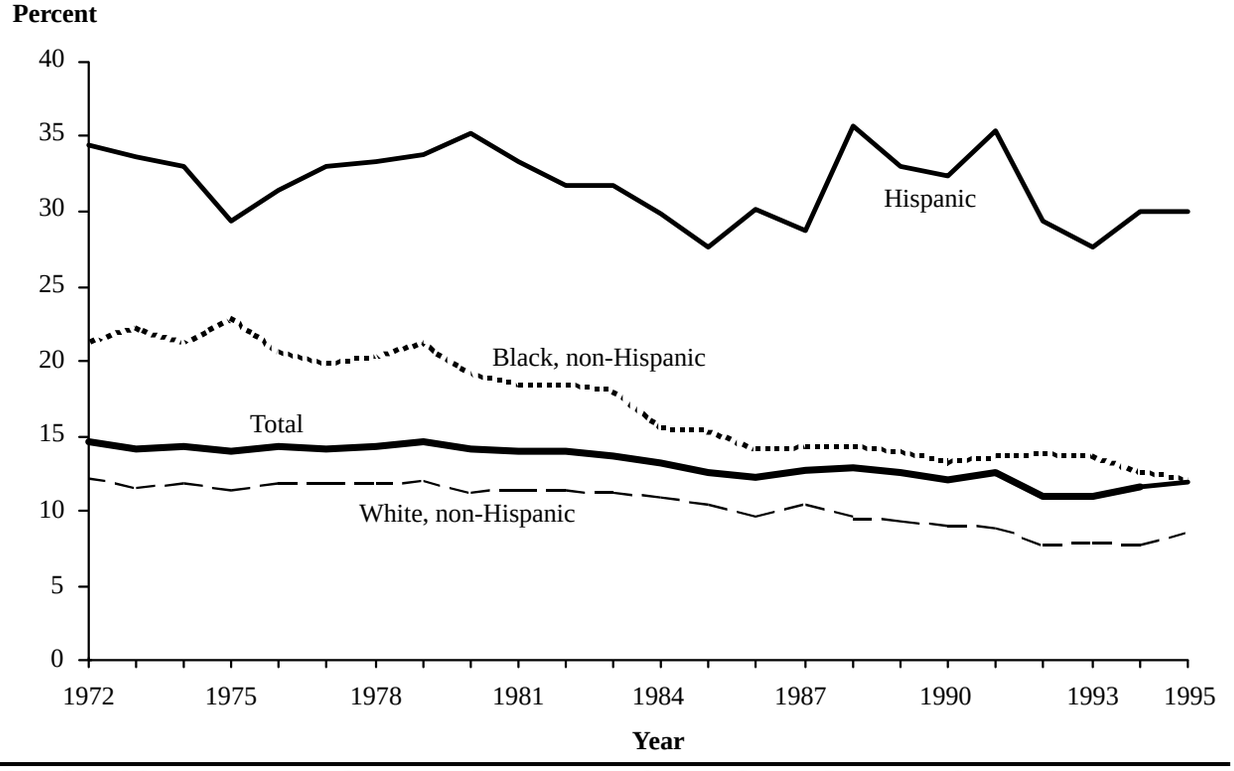
- While there are still differences in the levels of the status dropout rates of whites, blacks, and Hispanics, the gap between the rates for blacks and whites is closing (figure B).

- In addition to higher dropout rates, many Hispanic dropouts do not progress as far in school as black and white students who drop out. In 1995, over half of the Hispanic dropouts reported less than a tenth grade education, compared with 31 percent of the white dropouts and 27 percent of the black dropouts (table 6, page 15).

- Youths from families with the lowest incomes are eight times more likely to be dropouts than those from families with high incomes (table 5, page 14).

- Status dropout rates are highest in the Southern and Western regions of the country, where rates are at least one and one-half times those in the Northeast and Midwest (table 5, page 14).

Figure B.-Status dropout rates for persons ages 16-24, by race-ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

High School Completion Rates

By definition, the completion rate includes everyone reporting a high school diploma or the equivalent, regardless of the type of credential. The data on high school completions discussed here are reported for all 18- through 24-year-olds who held some type of high school certificate in October 1995.

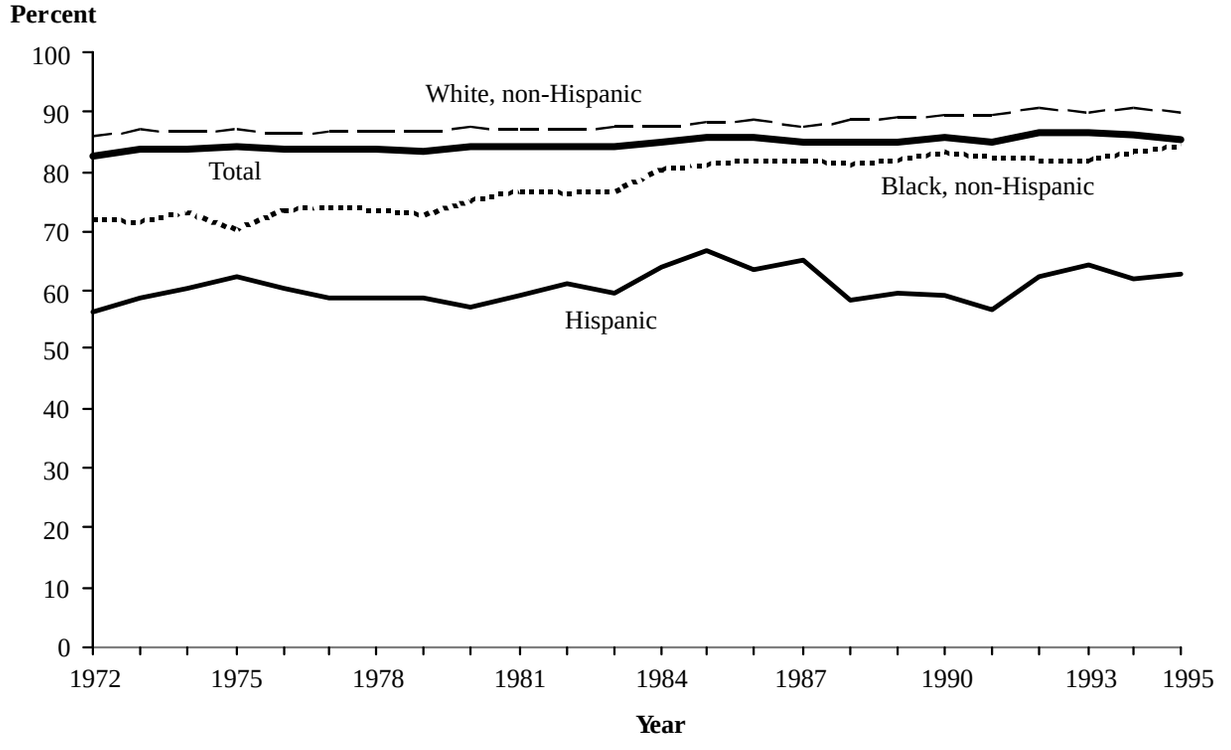
- In 1995, about 85 percent of all 18- through 24-year-olds, not still enrolled, had completed a high school program (figure C).

- Whites are most likely to complete high school (90 percent) followed by blacks (85 percent) and Hispanics (63 percent) (table 11, page 23).

- The relatively low dropout rates observed in the Northeast and Midwest are reflected in high school completion rates of nearly 90 percent in the Northeast and 89 percent in the Midwest (table 12, page 24).

- Young adults who completed high school with a GED account for over 7 percent of the 18- through 24-year-olds who were not enrolled in high school in 1995 (table 11, page 23).

Figure C.-Completion rates for persons ages 18-24, by race-ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Immigration, Participation in U.S. Schools, and High School Dropout Rates

The status dropout rates for Hispanic youths have remained at levels consistently higher than the dropout rates experienced by their white and black peers since the early 1970s. Although a number of factors may contribute to these elevated dropout rates, immigrants who come to the U.S. seeking employment without a high school education and never enroll in U.S. schools have traditionally been counted as dropouts. This may lead to an inaccurate view of Hispanic dropout experiences in U.S. schools.

- The Hispanic dropout rate of 30.0 percent includes young immigrants who came to the U.S. without high school credentials and did not enroll in school in the U.S. The status dropout rate for Hispanic immigrants ages 16 through 24 is 46.2 percent (table 16, page 30). The comparable rate for Hispanics born in the U.S. is 17.9 percent (table 17, page 32).

- The dropout rate for all Hispanic students who have ever enrolled in U.S. schools, regardless of country of birth, is 19.6 percent (table 17, page 32).

- Eighty percent of all Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds in the U.S. speak Spanish at home. The majority of these young adults (76 percent) were reported as speaking English "well" or "very well" (table 20, page 35).

- Hispanic young adults who spoke Spanish at home and also spoke English "well" or "very well" were as likely to remain in school as their peers who spoke only English at home (table 19, page 34 and table 20, page 35).

- Two-thirds of the Hispanic young adults who reported limited English speaking ability did not have a high school credential and were not enrolled in school in 1995 (table 20, page 35).

- About three-quarters of the Hispanic young adults with limited English speaking ability reported no English as a Second Language instruction (table 21, page 36).

- Eighty percent of Hispanic immigrants ages 16 through 24 who did not enroll in U.S. schools completed the fifth or sixth grade, compared to 50 percent who completed grades seven or eight, and 20 percent who completed the tenth grade (table 23, page 38).

Grade Retention

Students judged by their teachers as not ready for grade promotion are often held back a year to master missed coursework or acquire developmentally appropriate social skills. While not able to disentangle the causal effects of retention on dropout rates, 1992 and 1995 CPS data provide the opportunity to examine, on a national scale, the proportion of young adults who were retained in school. They also allow for the examination of the association between grade retention and dropping out.

- Students who are retained in school are at higher risk of dropping out of school (table 25, page 42).

- Although males were more likely to have been retained, the dropout rate for male students who were retained is lower than the dropout rate for female students who were retained (table 26, page 43).

- While black students are more likely to be retained, the dropout rates for retained students were comparable for black, white, and Hispanic students (table 26, page 43).

- Despite differences in dropout rates across income levels, within each income level, students who had been retained were more likely to drop out than their peers who were not retained (table 26, page 43).

- Youths whose last grade retention occurred in their early elementary grades are less at risk of dropping out than those retained in the later grades (table 27, page 45).

- Individuals held back for two or more years of school were nearly four times as likely to be status dropouts as those who had never been retained (table 28, page 46).

Dropping Out and Disabilities

Although they are often held to the same standard as the general population, disabled students must overcome serious obstacles that can interfere with their education. To graduate from high school, disabled students may need to work harder, study longer, or possess greater academic ability than their peers without a corresponding physical, emotional, or learning handicap. The added work and frustration associated with a disability can take its toll over time: national and local studies reveal that disabled youths drop out of school at higher rates than the general population.

- In 1995, the dropout rate of 14.6 percent for youths with disabilities was larger than the 11.8 percent rate experienced by youths without disabilities (table 29, page 48).

- Young adults reported with mental or emotional disabilities were at an increased risk of dropping out (table 29, page 48).

- Dropout rates for male and female 16- through 24-year-olds are comparable, and this relationship holds for students with disabilities as well as those without (table 30, page 49).

- Race-ethnicity differences evident between black and white young adults in the general population are repeated among students with disabilities, with black disabled students at an increased risk of dropping out (table 31, page 50).

- Disabled youths who are retained in school are at no greater risk of being status dropouts than non-disabled youths who repeated a grade in school (table 32, page 51).

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INTRODUCTION

This eighth annual dropout report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) presents data on high school dropout and completion rates over the 1972 through 1995 time period. In addition to extending time series data from earlier reports, this report uses data on country of birth and enrollment in U.S. schools to examine dropout rates among Hispanic young adults. This report uses these and other data available for 1995 to focus on three specific subpopulations that are at particular risk of dropping out of school: foreign-born persons attending U.S. schools, young adults who have been retained a grade or more while enrolled, and individuals who have some type of learning, physical, or other disability.

Data from the October 1995 Current Population Survey (CPS) of the U.S. Bureau of the Census are used to compute national dropout and completion rates, as well as identify personal and demographic characteristics of survey respondents. Dropout and completion rates are calculated for population subgroups defined by sex and race-ethnicity, as well as income levels and regions of the country. In addition, NCES data from the Common Core of Data (CCD) are used to provide estimates of dropout rates by state.

Addressing the Problem

The economic consequences of leaving high school without a diploma are severe. On average, dropouts are more likely to be unemployed than high school graduates and to earn less money when they eventually secure work.[1] Moreover, young women who drop out of high school are more likely to become pregnant at young ages, and more likely to be single parents.[2] As a result, high school dropouts are more likely to receive public assistance than graduates who did not go on to college.[3] The individual stresses and frustrations associated with dropping out have social implications as well: dropouts comprise a disproportionate percentage of the nation's prison and death row inmates.[4]

To address concerns over high dropout rates, as well as other shortcomings in the U.S. educational system, in 1993 Congress passed and President Clinton signed into law the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*. Among other things, the National Education Goals call for a high school graduation rate of 90 percent for our nation's schools. More recently, the *School-to-Work Opportunities Act*, enacted in the spring of 1994, is intended to help build systems that will prepare young people for high skill, high wage jobs. These programs, along with legislation for Head Start and Chapter 1 programs and new initiatives in welfare reform, all make evident the need for cooperation across departments and agencies at all levels of government if the nation's education goals are to be achieved.

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[1]U.S. Department of Education. *Condition of Education 1996* (Indicators 32 and 34).

[2]In M. McMillen and P. Kaufman. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994* U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 96-863.

[3]U.S. Department of Education. *Condition of Education 1996* (Indicator 36).

[4] Estimates of the number of prison inmates who are high school dropouts range from about one quarter of Federal inmates to about half of all state prison inmates. See C.W. Harlow, *Comparing Federal and State Prison Inmates, 1991*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, September 1994, NCJ-145864.

Monitoring high school dropout and completion rates provides one measure of progress in improving the status of our nation's youth. While this report on dropout and retention is the eighth in a series of annual reports to Congress, it offers a significant departure from the organization of earlier editions. This volume opens with an update of three measures; event, status, and cohort dropout rates that have been presented in each of the previous seven annual reports. Following this discussion, data on high school completion and graduation rates are presented, aggregated at the state and national level. Providing consistent trend data beginning with the 1972 CPS survey, the purpose of these first two sections is to provide readers with a better understanding of general changes in the national dropout rate, as well as specific information about how demographic characteristics were related to the dropout rate in 1995.

Although all students have the potential to drop out of school, some youths face significant challenges that place them at greater risk. Unlike earlier dropout reports, this eighth edition focuses on dropout rates among three specific sub-populations of youths at high risk of dropping out.

Foreign-born Youths

Individuals who migrate to the U.S. face considerable obstacles to graduating from high school, including the need to assimilate into a new culture and economic system, and in some cases, the need to learn a new language. For some immigrant youths, these obstacles prove insurmountable, preventing them from ever entering school in the U.S. Others come to the U.S. seeking employment rather than education.[5] Failure to take foreign-born status into account when calculating dropout rates can result in inaccurate estimates of dropout incidence for certain race-ethnicity groups, such as Hispanics. As a result, dropout rates are inflated because some immigrants, particularly non-English speakers, never officially "drop in" to the American educational system.[6] In particular, when counted as status dropouts, even though they never enroll in a U.S. school, these individuals increase the observed dropout rates.

Section three of this report offers a better understanding of the impact of the related issues of immigration and English-speaking ability on overall dropout rates. To better understand the dropout experiences of youths in the U.S. educational system, dropout rates are computed based on new information on school enrollment. Rates are computed separately for native- and foreign-born youths. Since Hispanic young adults account for nearly 90 percent of the immigrant dropout population, particular attention is focused on dropout rates among Hispanic young adults.

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[5]See for example, J.R. Warren. 1996. ìEducational Inequality among White and Mexican-Origin Adolescents in the American Southwest: 1990.î *Sociology of Education*, vol. 69 (April). pp: 142-158; and *Hispanicsí Schooling: Risk Factors for Dropping Out and Barriers to Resuming Education* GAO/PEMD-94-24 (Washington DC: July 1994)

[6]G. Vernez and A. Abrahams. 1996. *How Immigrants Fare in U.S. Education*.î RAND: Santa Monica CA.

Grade Retention

Students who fail to master the academic and social skills appropriate for their grade may be held back a year so that they may have additional time to learn course material. Although grade retention is widely practiced; estimates are that between 7 to 9 percent of all children are retained each year.-there is a growing body of evidence against retaining youths. Recent studies suggest that students who are retained often fail to realize increased academic achievement, and may suffer damage to their self-esteem or be stigmatized by their friends and teachers.[7] Moreover, in some cases, mixing older, aggressive, more physically mature youths with younger children can have negative, unintended consequences for all students.[8] Alternatively, there is also evidence that suggests that retention provides positive academic benefits to some students that presumably translates into a decreased likelihood of dropping out.[9]

While it is unclear whether retention contributes to the decision to leave school or is simply a signal of an underlying learning or emotional problem, individuals who are retained in school are at particular risk of dropping out. It appears, moreover, that the timing of school retention may be related to the dropout decision. Section four of this report examines grade retention and dropout rates, with particular attention focused on dropouts and the timing of retention in the elementary, middle, and secondary years.

Youths with Disabilities

Some students with disabling conditions are at greater risk of dropping out than students without a reported disability. This may be because the disability itself leads youths to consider leaving school, or because a disability indirectly contributes to lower achievement levels and thus a higher likelihood of school failure.

The likelihood of school dropout is often a function of the type of disability.-learning, physical, emotional, or mental. Past studies suggest that youths who possess a learning disability coupled with some other form of disability are at greatest risk.[10] Section five of this report examines the relationship between disability and dropping out in greater detail.

Methodological Changes

This year's dropout report differs in several ways from previous years' reports. Beginning in 1994, the U.S. Census Bureau made improvements to the administration and methodology of the CPS to obtain a more accurate count of young people without diplomas. With this improvement in methods (and adjustments for population shifts between 1980 and 1990), a more accurate estimate of these rates showed that dropout rates were somewhat higher than those

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[7]For a review of the literature on the effects of retention see V. Dill. 1993. *Closing the Gap: Acceleration vs. Remediation and the Impact of Retention in Grade on Student Achievement.* Austin, TX: Texas Education Agency; or J.E. Foster. 1993. ìRetaining Children in Grade.î *Childhood Education*, Fall (38-43).

[8]J. Moran. 1989. ìProfessional Standards for Educators Making Retention Decisions.î *Education*, 109: (268-275).

[9]K. Alexander, D. Entwisle and S. Dauber. 1994. *On the Success of Failure*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[10]M. McMillen, P. Kaufman and S. Whitener. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1993.* U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 94-669.

estimated in previous years. Since this report uses this new CPS methodology in reporting rates, readers should use care when making comparisons across years.[11] In addition, while the item non-response in the basic data reported for event and status dropout rates and high school completion rates were imputed by the Census Bureau, imputations for item non-response in the other 1995 data elements in sections on immigration, disability and grade retention were imputed as part of the analyses for this report.[12]

[11]The 1994 Dropout Report was the first report to take into account these new Census methodologies. As such, data are relatively comparable between the 1994 and 1995 reports.

[12] Imputations were performed using a hot-deck procedure with software supplied by D. McLaughlin of the American Institute for Research. For more information on the imputation procedures used, see the technical appendix.

EVENT, STATUS, AND COHORT DROPOUT RATES

To provide a more detailed picture of dropouts in the United States, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) defines and calculates different types of dropout rates. This section concentrates on three of these rates.-event, status, and cohort.-each of which provides unique information about the student dropout population. Data from the CPS are also used to compute high school graduation and completion rates that, when examined within racial and ethnic groups, and across states and geographical regions, can provide a more detailed understanding of the dropout phenomenon.

Types of Dropout Rates

Event rates describe the proportion of students who leave high school each year without completing a high school program. Offering an annual measure of recent dropout occurrences, event rates can provide important information about how effective educators are in keeping students enrolled in school.

Status rates provide cumulative data on dropouts among all young adults within a specified age range. Generally, status rates are much higher than event rates because they include all dropouts regardless of when they last attended school. Since status rates reveal the extent of the dropout problem in the population, this rate also can be used to estimate the need for further education and training that will help dropouts participate fully in the economy and life of the nation.

Cohort rates measure what happens to a cohort of students over a period of time. This rate is based on repeated measures of a group of students with shared experiences, and reveals how many students starting in a specific grade drop out over time. Typically, cohort rates from longitudinal studies provide more background and contextual data on the students who drop out than are available through the CPS or CCD data collections.

Event Dropout Rates

Event rates calculated using the October 1995 CPS data measure the proportion of individuals who dropped out of school over the 12-month period beginning in October 1994. Data are based on the number of 15- through 24-year-olds who were enrolled in high school a year ago, are not presently enrolled in grades 10-12, and have not yet completed high school.[13] Demographic data collected as part of the CPS study permit event dropout rates to be calculated across a variety of individual characteristics, including race, sex, region of residence, and income level.

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[13]Specifically, the numerator of the event rate for 1995 is the number of persons 15 through 24 years old surveyed in 1995 who were enrolled in high school in October of 1994, were not enrolled in October of 1995, and who also did not complete high school (i.e., had not received a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate) between October 1994 and October 1995. The denominator of the event rate is the sum of the dropouts (i.e., the numerator) and the number of all persons 15 through 24 years old who attended grades 10 through 12 and are still enrolled or who graduated or completed high school.

Data from the CPS show that one-half million of the 9.5 million 15- through 24-year-olds enrolled in grades 10–12 in October 1994 left school by October of 1995 without successfully completing a high school program (see table C1).[14] This amounts to 5.7 percent of this group of young adults (table 1).

Table 1.-Event dropout and persistence rates and number and distribution of dropouts from grades 10-12, ages 15-24, by background characteristics: October 1995

Characteristics	Event dropout rate (percent)	School persistence rate (percent)	Number of dropouts (thousands)	Percent of all dropouts
Total	5.7	94.3	544	100.0
Sex				
Male	6.2	93.8	297	54.6
Female	5.3	94.7	247	45.4
Race-ethnicity[1]				
White, non-Hispanic	4.5	95.5	296	54.3
Black, non-Hispanic	6.4	93.6	93	17.1
Hispanic	12.4	87.6	145	26.6
Family income[2]				
Low income level	13.3	86.7	182	33.5
Middle income level	5.7	94.3	305	56.1
High income level	2.0	98.0	57	10.4
Region				
Northeast	3.0	97.0	54	9.9
Midwest	4.2	95.8	99	18.2
South	7.2	92.8	239	43.9
West	7.4	92.6	153	28.1

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

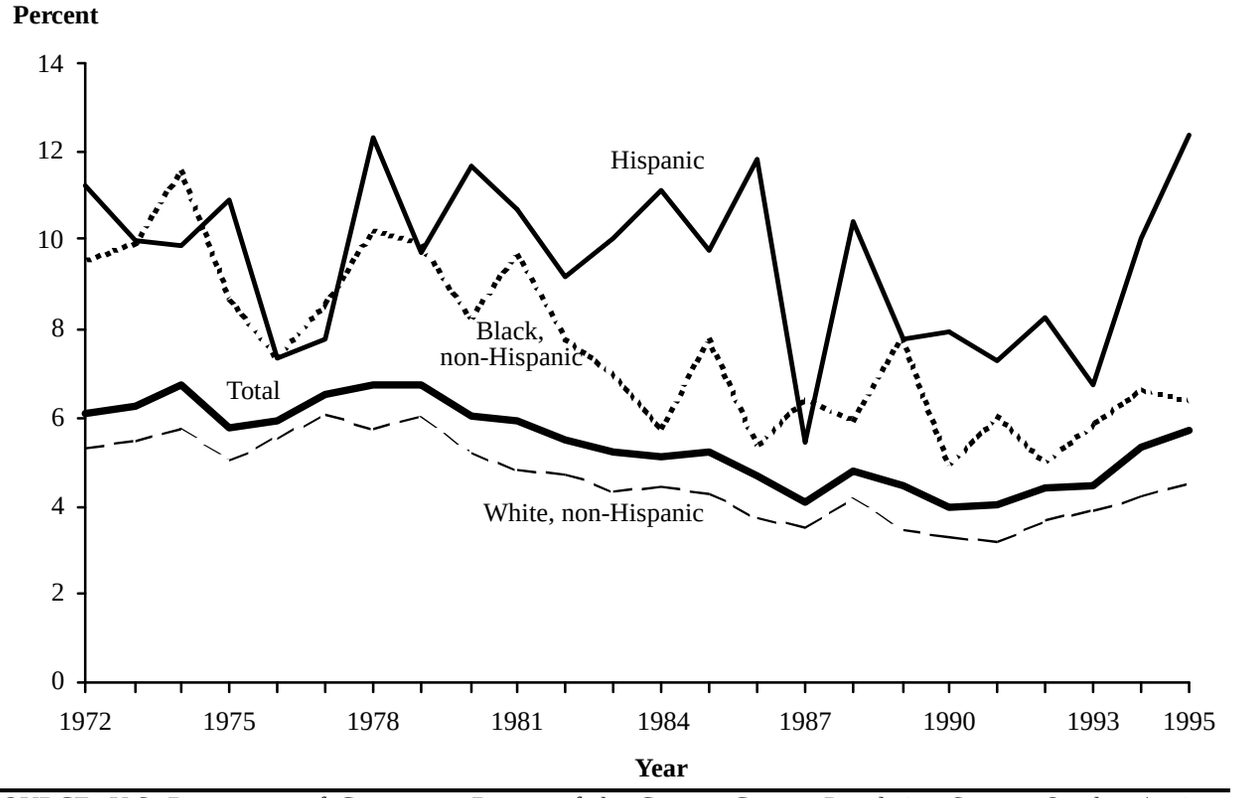
[2]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes. See the technical appendix to this report for a full definition of family income.

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

[14]Completion includes receiving an alternative credential such as a GED.

This estimate of 5.7 percent for the event dropout rate is on a par with the estimates for this rate over the last 24 years (figure 1 and table A33).[15] Over this period annual estimates of the event dropout rate have fluctuated between 4.0 and 6.7 percent. Although a downward trend in the estimates in the 1980s was encouraging, more recent estimates do not show continuing improvements. Moreover, changes in the CPS data collection strategies complicate the analysis of recent estimates.[16] Given the changes in survey methodology, the best that can be said at this time is that the percent of young adults leaving school each year without successfully completing a high school program decreased from 1972 through 1986, but has neither increased or decreased since the late 1980s.

Figure 1.-Event dropout rates for grades 10-12, ages 15-24, by race-ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

[15]There were seven years during this 24-year period with rates of 4.0 to 4.7 which are significantly lower than the current year estimate: 1986, 1987 and 1989ñ93.

[16]In 1992 the wording of the educational attainment item was changed. Then in 1994, computer assisted interviewing was instituted and the population controls that are used to produce the final estimates were changed from 1980 Census-based estimates to 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment for undercount. See the discussions in the Introduction and the Technical Notes for more details on the potential impact of these changes.

Race-ethnicity

The 1995 CPS data confirm the finding from earlier studies that race-ethnicity is strongly associated with dropping out of school. For example, cohort studies using national longitudinal data about American high school students, such as the High School and Beyond (HS&B) study sponsored by NCES, show that Hispanics and blacks are at greater risk of dropping out than whites, with Hispanics at greatest risk of these groups.[17] More recently, analyses of data from the NCES study of National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), and analyses reported by the White House Panel on Hispanic dropouts also confirm these patterns.[18]

A closer look at the 1995 CPS data shows that Hispanic students are indeed more likely than white students to leave school short of completing a high school program (12.4 percent versus 4.5 percent). Although the estimated rate for black students (6.4 percent) falls between the rates for Hispanics and whites, the differences are not significant (table 1).

While membership in a particular minority group may be associated with higher dropout rates, race-ethnicity is only one of a number of closely linked factors that mediate the dropout decision. For example, socioeconomic status, the ability to communicate in English, and the geographic region of residence are all highly correlated with individuals' racial and ethnic background. It is, however, beyond the scope of this report to evaluate all of the specific interactions among intervening variables that mediate the dropout decision. The following sections review some of the primary factors that are associated with higher event dropout rates.[19]

Income

Family income data available from CPS provide information about the impact of socioeconomic background and home environment on the dropout decision of these young adults. Certainly the multitude of factors that impact their lives is much broader than their economic conditions; however, in the absence of additional measures, family income has been found to serve as a good indicator for the range of social factors that may affect a young adult’s decision to stay in school.

In fact, income, or more likely the social factors affected by income, does seem to make a difference. In 1995, young adults living in families with incomes in the lowest 20 percent of all family incomes were six times as likely as their peers from families in the top 20 percent of the income distribution to drop out (table 1). As Figure 2 shows, this finding persists over time. Since 1972 individuals from low income families have been consistently more likely to drop out than individuals from high and middle income families (those whose incomes are in the middle 60 percent of the distribution).

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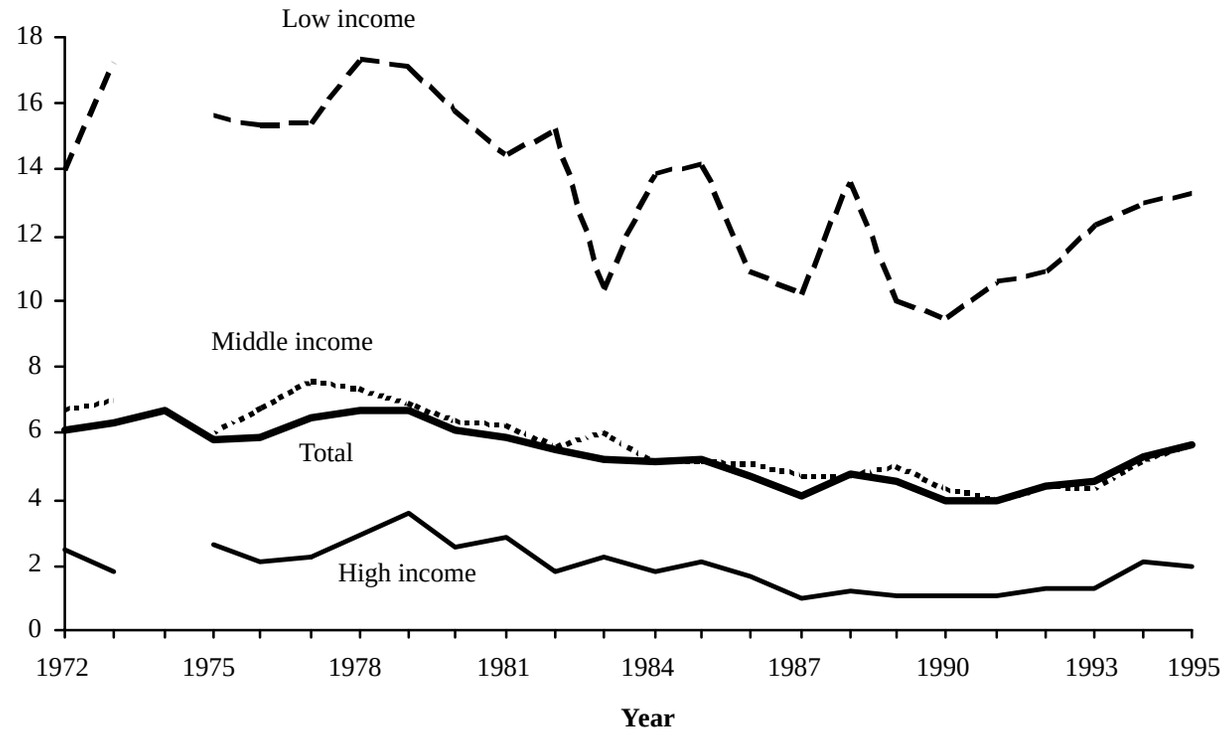
[17]See R. Ekstron, M. Goertz, J. Pollack and D. Rock. 1987. ìWho Drops Out of High School and Why? Findings from a National Study.î In *School Dropouts: Patterns and Policies*, G. Natriello (Ed.). New York: Teachers College Press, 52-69. For dropout data using the National Education Longitudinal Study, see the NCES publication, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994.*

[18] P. Kaufman and M. McMillen. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994.* Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. NCES 96-863; White House Panel on Hispanic Dropouts, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, 1996.

[19]For more in-depth coverage on the interaction of race-ethnicity with other factors, the interested reader is referred to G. Natriello [Ed.] 1987. *School Dropouts: Patterns and Policies.* New York: Teachers College Press. For an excellent ethnographic depiction of these factors at work, see M. Fine. 1991. *Framing Dropouts*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Figure 2.-Event dropout rates for grades 10-12, ages 15-24, by family income: October 1972 through October 1995



NOTE: Data on family income are missing for 1974.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Age

Students who remain in school after the majority of their age cohort has left are more likely to drop out than their younger peers (table 2). By October of 1995, only about 6 percent of all 19-year-olds were still enrolled in high school. The dropout rate among 19-year-olds who were enrolled in school a year earlier was approximately 15 percent (table 2 and table C11). By age 20 the percent enrolled was down to 1.9 percent, and by age 24 it was down to 0.4 percent. The dropout rate among the 20- to 24-year-olds who were enrolled in school a year earlier was almost 30 percent. These high dropout rates at ages 19 through 24 suggest that students who fall behind their age cohort in school are at increased risk of dropping out of school. CPS data available this year on grade retention, dropout rates, and educational attainment levels will help inform this issue.

Table 2.-Event dropout and persistence rates and number and distribution of dropouts from grades 10-12, ages 15-24, by age group: October 1995

Age	Event dropout rate (percent)	School persistence rate (percent)	Number of dropouts (thousands)	Percent of all dropouts
Total	5.7	94.3	544	100.0
Age*				
15-16	4.0	96.0	110	20.1
17	3.2	96.8	102	18.8
18	5.9	94.1	155	28.6
19	14.8	85.2	96	17.6
20-24	29.4	70.6	81	14.9

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

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Despite the high dropout rates observed at ages 19 through 24, these young adults only account for a small proportion of all students who left school prior to a successful completion between October of 1994 and October of 1995. Youths ages 15 through 18 account for two-thirds of all those who dropped out during the preceding year; moreover, nearly 40 percent of the 1995 dropouts were 15 through 17 years of age. These are the young adults who left school short of what likely would be expected for a normal school completion. While there may be obvious reasons why older youths elect to leave school prior to graduating.-for example to find employment or seek vocational training.-understanding why younger students with fewer career options choose to leave school early and designing effective intervention programs to address this problem are issues deserving greater study.[20]

State Dropout Rates

NCES, through the National Cooperative for Elementary and Secondary Education Statistics and the CCD collection, is working with states and school districts to develop a national database of public school dropout rates. When complete, **event** data for sex, race-ethnicity, and for grades 7 through 12 will be collected at the school district level, aggregated, and reported at the state and national levels.

[20]Some preliminary research into the issue has already taken place. For a description of related issues and some policy recommendations, see D.E. Berkell and J.M. Brown. 1989. *Transition from School to Work for Persons with Disabilities.* New York: Longman, Inc. State grantees participating in the current federal School-to-Work initiative may contribute greater understanding of this issue, in part, because federal School-to-Work legislation encourages states to target services to disabled, low-achieving, and other at-risk students.

In the 1994-95 school year collection, 43 states plus the District of Columbia submitted dropout data to CCD for dropouts from the 1993-94 school year. Data from 23 states meet the quality and comparability levels necessary for publishing state level estimates that support valid cross state comparisons. The middle case, or median, of the dropout rates for these states is 5.0 percent, with the rates ranging from 2.7 percent in North Dakota to 9.7 percent in Nevada (table 3).

Table 3.-Membership, dropout counts, and event dropout rates for grades 9-12, 1993-94

State	Dropout count	Membership	Dropout rate(%)
Alabama	11,679	203,073	5.8
Arkansas	6,674	126,496	5.3
California	75,705	1,424,066	5.3
Connecticut	6,209	128,798	4.8
Delaware	1,343	28,930	4.6
Georgia	28,352	324,879	8.7
Hawaii	2,485	48,756	5.1
Iowa	4,609	145,678	3.2
Kansas	6,371	127,077	5.0
Louisiana	9,895	211,785	4.7
Maine	1,729	56,231	3.1
Massachusetts	8,674	233,987	3.7
Minnesota	11,715	230,268	5.1
Mississippi	8,273	135,192	6.1
Missouri	17,107	244,032	7.0
Nebraska	3,778	81,635	4.6
Nevada	5,950	61,069	9.7
New Mexico	7,107	89,175	8.0
North Dakota	941	35,086	2.7
Oregon	10,718	147,066	7.3
Pennsylvania	18,859	503,988	3.7
Rhode Island	1,918	39,228	4.9
Texas	34,684	927,154	3.7

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, universe collection, 1996.

Status Dropout Rates

Over the last decade, 300 to 500 thousand 10th through 12th graders left school each year without successfully completing a high school program.[21] Each year some of these young adults return to school or participate in an alternative certification program, and others pass out of this age group. Nonetheless, the cumulative effect of having so many young adults participate in the "event" of dropping out is reflected in the fact that each year during the last decade over 3 million 16- through 24-year-olds have shared the status of dropouts. In October of 1995 there were nearly 3.9 million young adults ages 16 through 24 who were not enrolled in a high school program and had not completed high school (table 4). These youths account for 12.0 percent of the 32.4 million 16- through 24-year-olds in the United States in 1995.

Table 4.-Rate and number of status dropouts, ages 16-24: October 1991 through October 1995

	October				
	1991	1992[1]	1993[1]	1994[1,2]	1995[1,2]
Status dropout rate (percent)	12.5	11.0	11.0	11.5	12.0
Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	3,881	3,410	3,396	3,727	3,876
Population (in thousands)	31,171	30,944	30,845	32,560	32,379

[1]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.

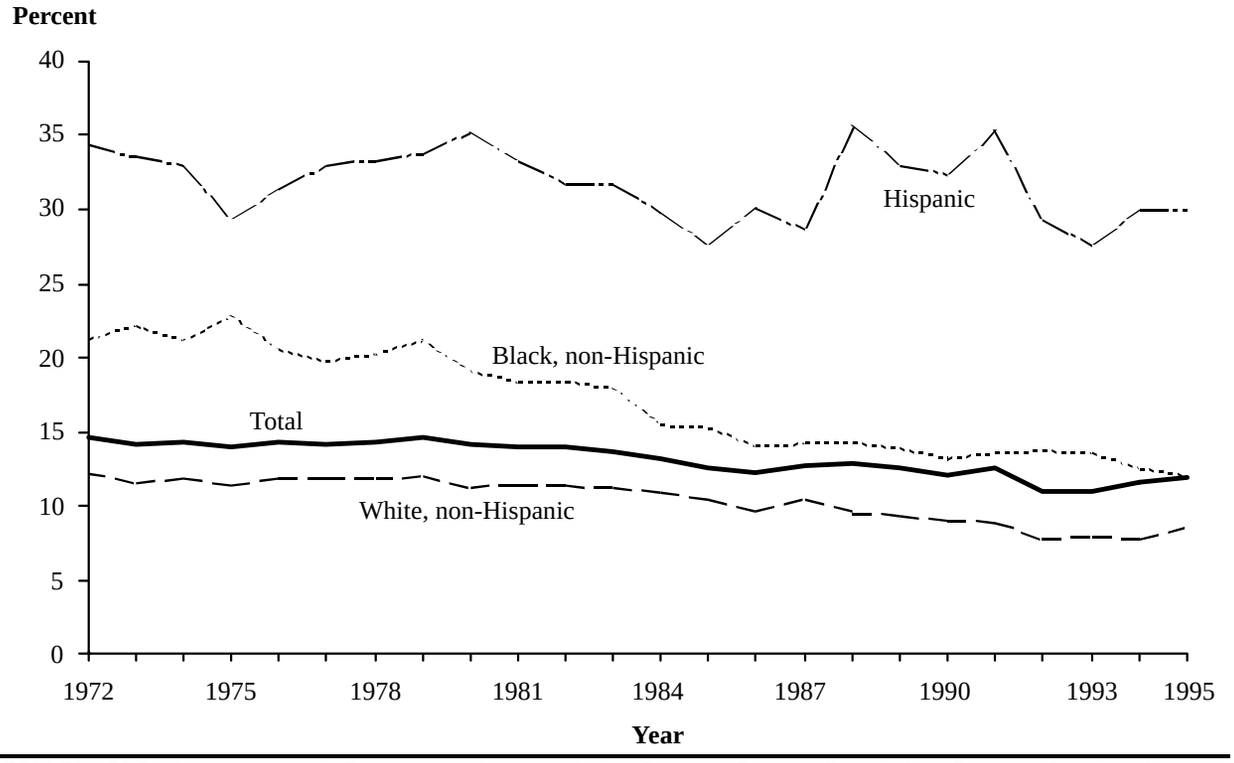
[2]Numbers in these years may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

The 1995 status dropout rate of 12.0 percent is similar to the rates experienced since the mid-1980s, but lower than the rates of 13.1 to 14.6 percent that occurred between 1972 and 1984 (figure 3 and table A37). While the year to year fluctuations make it difficult to form short term comparisons, a time-series analysis based on the annual data provides a framework for describing longer term patterns of change. Over the last 24 years there has been an overall pattern of decline that on average amounts to a change of 0.15 percent per year.

[21]For data from 1985-1990, see P. Kaufman and M. Frase. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1989.* Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. NCES 90-659; P. Kaufman and M. McMillen. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1990.* Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. NCES 91-053.

Figure 3.-Status dropout rates for persons ages 16-24, by race-ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Race-Ethnicity

In 1995, the 1.9 million white youths who were high school dropouts made up 8.6 percent of all whites between the ages of 16 and 24 (table 5). Another 1.3 million dropouts were Hispanics; this amounts to nearly one-third of all Hispanics in the 16- through 24-year-old age group. About 12.1 percent of all blacks in this age group were dropouts (representing 571 thousand persons).

Figure 3 shows that while there are still differences in the levels of the status dropout rates of whites, blacks, and Hispanics, the gap between the rates for blacks and whites is closing. The 3.5 percentage point difference in the 1995 rates is substantially smaller than the difference of 10 to 11 percentage points observed 20 years ago. Over this time period the rates fell in both groups, but the narrowing gap is due to a more rapid rate of improvement for blacks than whites (See table A37 for detail).

Table 5.-Rate, number, and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16-24, by sex, race-ethnicity, income, and region: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	12.0	3,876	32,379	100.0	100.0
Sex					
Male	12.2	1,978	16,208	51.0	50.1
Female	11.7	1,898	16,170	49.0	49.9
Race-ethnicity[1]					
White, non-Hispanic	8.6	1,887	21,991	48.7	67.9
Black, non-Hispanic	12.1	571	4,732	14.7	14.6
Hispanic	30.0	1,345	4,485	34.7	13.9
Family income[2]					
Low income level	23.2	1,558	6,726	40.2	20.8
Middle income level	11.5	2,108	18,365	54.4	56.7
High income level	2.9	210	7,287	5.4	22.5
Region					
Northeast	8.4	498	5,935	12.9	18.3
Midwest	8.9	680	7,686	17.6	23.7
South	14.2	1,657	11,638	42.8	35.9
West	14.6	1,040	7,120	26.8	22.0

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Over the same time period, the percent of Hispanic young adults without high school certification has fluctuated around one-third, at a level consistently higher than the status dropout rates observed for black and white young adults. The high dropout rates for Hispanic youths do not show the full extent of educational differences between Hispanic youths and their black and white peers. In addition to higher dropout rates, many Hispanic dropouts do not progress as far in school as black and white students who drop out. In 1995, over half of the Hispanic dropouts reported less than a tenth grade education, compared with 31.1 percent of the white dropouts and 26.6 percent of the black dropouts (table 6).

Table 6.-Percentage distribution of status dropouts, ages 16-24, by level of schooling attained and race-ethnicity: October 1995

Level of schooling attained	Total	Race-ethnicity* White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Level of schooling attained				
Less than 1st grade	1.6	1.0	1.0	2.3
1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th grade	2.5	0.3	0.3	6.6
5th or 6th grade	6.1	0.9	0.9	15.9
7th or 8th grade	12.0	12.6	7.4	13.2
Less than 9th grade	22.2	14.8	9.6	38.0
9th grade	17.0	16.4	17.0	17.9
Less than 10th grade	39.2	31.1	26.6	55.9
10th grade	22.5	26.6	30.6	13.8
11th grade	28.4	32.9	36.1	18.6
12th grade, without diploma	9.9	9.5	6.8	11.8

*Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

What accounts for these differences? Previous analyses have shown that the dropout rate is high among Hispanics who were born outside the United States (43.0 percent in 1989).[22] It may well be the case that some of these “dropouts” are immigrants who never entered schools in this country. Similarly, earlier analyses have shown that dropout rates are high among Hispanic young adults who speak Spanish at home (32 percent for Spanish speaking versus 14 percent for English speaking in 1992) and among Hispanic young adults who report speaking English not well or not at all (62 percent and 83 percent, respectively).[23] Clearly, language limitations are associated with failure to complete a high school program.

Regardless of the reasons behind their lack of high school credentials, the impact is the same.-these young adults do not have the basic level of education that is thought to be essential in today's economy. While Hispanics as a group appear to have lower educational outcomes than white and black non-Hispanics, there are at least two subgroups of dropouts among Hispanic youths who migrated to this country: those who entered U.S. schools and subsequently dropped out, and those who never enrolled in a U.S. school. A better understanding of the relative sizes of

[22]P. Kaufman, M. McMillen and D. Bradby. 1991. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1991*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. NCES 92-129.
[23]M. McMillen and P. Kaufman. 1996. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994.* Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. NCES 96-863.

these two groups, coupled with data on the English-speaking ability of the young adults in each of these groups, can improve our understanding of the role that language may play in keeping these rates high. Because of this, an analysis of CPS data available this year on language use, participation in U.S. schools, and high school completion status is provided in subsequent chapters to help inform this issue.

Income

The importance of family income and related social factors highlighted in the discussion of event dropout rates shows up in the status dropout rates as well. In this case, youths from families with the lowest incomes are eight times more likely than their peers from families with high incomes to be in the group of young adults who are out of school without high school certification (table 7).

Table 7.-Status dropout rate, ages 16-24, by income and race-ethnicity: October 1995

		Race-ethnicity[1]		
Family income	Total	White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
Total	12.0	8.6	12.1	30.0
Family income[2]				
Low income level	23.2	18.6	20.1	38.9
Middle income level	11.5	8.8	8.7	28.2
High income level	2.9	2.6	3.2	8.7

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1995; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Which youths are most likely to be affected by these income differentials? Within each race-ethnicity group, status dropout rates are lowest at the highest income levels and highest at the lowest income levels. And, within each income level the aggregate difference observed between white and black youths is no longer evident. In other words, white and black youths from families at the highest income levels have a similar risk of not completing a high school program (only about 3 percent are status dropouts), and this risk is lower than youths from lower income levels. Moreover, black and white youths from families at the lowest income levels are at increased risk of not completing high school (about 19 percent of whites and 20 percent of blacks are status dropouts).

Evidently, at least part of the 3.5 percentage point difference between the rates for blacks and whites is related to differences in the income distributions within the two groups. At each income level, the percent of black young adults who drop out is about the same as the percent of white young adults who drop out. However, a large share of the black young adult population live with families with low incomes—where the highest dropout rates occur for both black and white youth. (35 percent for black youth, compared to 15 percent for white youth).

Although the pattern of dropout rates by income level is the same for Hispanics, the higher rates observed for Hispanics persist. While Hispanic young adults from families with low and middle incomes are the more likely to drop out than Hispanic youth from families with high incomes, Hispanic youth from families with low and middle incomes are more likely to drop out than white and black youths at the same income levels. Thus, the higher dropout rates experienced by Hispanic youth appear to be due, at least in part, to factors other than income.

Geographic Region

Concerns over dropout rates frequently lead to geographic comparisons. At the regional level, status dropout rates are highest in the Southern and Western regions of the country, where rates of 14.2 percent and 14.6 percent, respectively, are at least one and one-half times the rates of 8.4 percent in the Northeast and 8.9 percent in the Midwest (table 8). But these regional differences are not repeated within each race-ethnicity group. Among white young adults, the highest status dropout rates are in the South (11.8 percent versus 8.0 percent in the West, 6.1 percent in the Northeast, and 7.0 percent in the Midwest). Any apparent differences across the regions for blacks or Hispanics are not statistically significant, due at least in part to large standard errors associated with small sample sizes.

Table 8.-Status dropout rate, ages 16-24, by region and race-ethnicity: October 1995

Region	Total	Race-ethnicity*		
		White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
Total	12.0	8.6	12.1	30.0
Region				
Northeast	8.4	6.1	9.3	23.6
Midwest	8.9	7.0	14.2	28.0
South	14.2	11.8	12.7	30.3
West	14.6	8.0	7.9	32.1

*Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Cohort Dropout Rates

Longitudinal studies follow the experiences that a **cohort** of students share as they progress through school. This type of study provides an opportunity to examine in more detail questions about who drops out, the life circumstances of dropouts, the factors that influence the decision to drop out of high school, and the experiences young adults encounter after leaving school. The NELS:88 started with the cohort of students who were in the eighth grade in the 1987-88 school year.[24] Subsequently, these students were re-interviewed at two year intervals through 1994.[25]

Table 9.-NELS:88 8th- to 12th-grade cohort dropout rates, by sex and race-ethnicity:1992 and 1994

	Cohort dropout rate			
Characteristics	Spring 1990-92[1]	Spring 1988-92	August 1992	August 1994
Total	7.1	10.8	10.1	7.2
Sex				
Male	6.9	10.3	9.8	7.5
Female	7.4	11.3	10.4	6.9
Race-ethnicity[2]				
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.9	4.9	4.3	5.1
Hispanic	12.2	17.8	17.9	14.3
Black, non-Hispanic	9.1	13.4	12.7	8.4
White, non-Hispanic	5.9	9.1	8.3	5.7
Native American	22.3	30.4	30.4	16.9

[1]The denominator for this rate includes the members of the 1988 eighth-grade cohort who were still enrolled in school in the spring of 1990; excluded are students who dropped out between 1988 and 1990 and students who migrated out of the country or died.
[2]Not shown separately are 434 persons (approximately 2 percent of the unweighted sample) whose race-ethnicity is unknown.

NOTE: This table is based on the core cohort of eighth graders (i.e., this sample excludes students in the base year sample whose sex, race, and dropout status were determined through the Followback Study of Excluded Students). As such, numbers may differ from earlier reports.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 Base-Year, First, and Second Follow-up Survey, 1988, 1990, 1992, and 1994, unpublished data.

[24]For more information see: S. Ingels, S. Abraham, K. Rasinski, R. Karr, B. Spencer, M. Frankel and J. Owings. *NELS:88 Base Year Data File Userís Manuals:* Student Component: March 1990, NCES 90-464; Parent Component: March 1990, NCES 90-466; School Component: March 1990, NCES 90-482; and Teacher Component: March 1990, NCES 90-484; and B. Spencer, M. Frankel, S. Ingels, K. Rasinski and R. Tourangeau. *NELS:88 Base Year Sample Design Report*, August 1990; NCES 90-463.
[25] Although these rates suggest a decrease in the cohort dropout rate as this cohort ages, the apparent differences are not statistically significant.

The **cohort** dropout rates for the eighth-grade class of 1988 show that by the spring of 1992, 10.8 percent of the 1988 cohort of eighth graders were out of school and had not completed a high school program (table 9). Some of these dropouts completed a high school program over the following summer, so that by August of 1992 the size of this group was reduced to 10.1 percent. By August of 1994, only 7.2 percent of the cohort remained as dropouts who were not working towards completing high school.

Analysis of the outcomes experienced by these dropouts shows that, relative to their peers who completed high school, they were less likely to participate in postsecondary education; on average, they earned lower incomes; and they were more likely to be unemployed or out of the labor force. They were also more likely to make early transitions into adult roles.-to have children and marry or live in marriage-like arrangements.[26]

Comparisons can also be drawn across cohorts measured at the same point in their school careers but in different years. The NELS:88 also included a nationally representative sample of sophomores in 1990; these students were re-interviewed in 1992 and 1994. Comparable data were collected for sophomores in 1980 in the HS&B study; these students were re-interviewed in 1982 and 1984.

A comparison of cohort dropout rates from the 1980 and 1990 sophomore classes shows that 9.9 percent of the students who were sophomores in 1980 were high school dropouts by August of the 1981-82 school year (table 10).[27] For the sophomore class of 1990, the cohort dropout rate was lower, with 5.6 percent of the students who were counted as sophomores in 1990 counted as dropouts by August of the 1991-92 school year.[28] This amounts to a 43 percent reduction in the sophomore to senior dropout rate over the decade.[29]

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[26]M. McMillen, P. Kaufman and S. Whitener. 1993. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1993.* Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. NCES 94-669.

[27]Previous analyses of HS&B data from the spring 1982 followup counted students who had enrolled in alternative programs to prepare for a high school equivalency test or who had completed high school by an alternative means as dropouts. See S.M. Barro and A. Kolstad, *Who Drops Out of High School? Findings from High School and Beyond* (1987); and A. Pallas, ìSchool Dropouts in the United States,î Issue Paper, U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics (1987). The analysis presented here treats them as students or completers.

[28]M. McMillen and P. Kaufman. 1996. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994.* Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. NCES 96-863.

[29]In both HS&B and NELS:88, a subset of students who were not considered capable of completing the questionnaire were deemed ineligible for participation in the study. Inasmuch as no attempt was made to identify and include data from students deemed ineligible in the 1980 HS&B cohort, analyses that compare NELS:88 sophomores with HS&B sophomores do not include data reflecting the experiences of the ineligible students in NELS:88. The option for the school coordinators to determine some students ineligible led to the exclusion of an unknown number of language minority (LM) and limited English proficient (LEP) students in HS&B. In NELS:88 however, a Spanish language questionnaire was administered to those members of the sophomore cohort who preferred to take this version of the questionnaire.

Decreases in dropout rates were widespread, with a number of different groups of students sharing in the decline. Dropout rates decreased for both male and female students, for white, black, and Hispanic students, for students in intact families and non-intact families, and for students with children of their own living in their household. At the same time, students in poverty and with relatively poor academic achievement seem to be left untouched by the combination of factors that have led to lower dropout rates during the last 10 years. Sophomores with these characteristics dropped out at comparable rates in 1980 and 1990.[30]

[30]P. Kaufman, M. McMillen and D. West. *A Comparison of High School Dropout Rates in 1982 and 1992*. U.S. Department of Education, NCES 96-893.

Table 10.-HS&B and NELS:88 10th- to 12th-grade cohort dropout rates, by demographic characteristics: August 1982 and 1992

Status in 10th grade	Cohort dropout rate HS&B 1980-82	Cohort dropout rate NELS:88 1990-92
Total	9.9	5.6
Sex		
Male	11.0	5.2
Female	9.0	6.0
Race-ethnicity*		
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.2	4.6
Hispanic	16.8	10.9
Black, non-Hispanic	11.3	7.6
White, non-Hispanic	8.8	4.3
Native American	25.1	18.2
Family below poverty level		
Yes	13.0	10.9
No	6.1	3.6
Family composition		
Intact family	5.5	4.2
Two adults/step-parents	12.9	7.9
Single parent	11.0	7.4
Other	19.8	10.4
Own child in home		
Yes		
Male	19.4	6.8
Female	33.0	18.3
No		
Male	8.3	5.1
Female	7.0	5.5

*Not shown separately are those included in the total whose race-ethnicity is unknown.

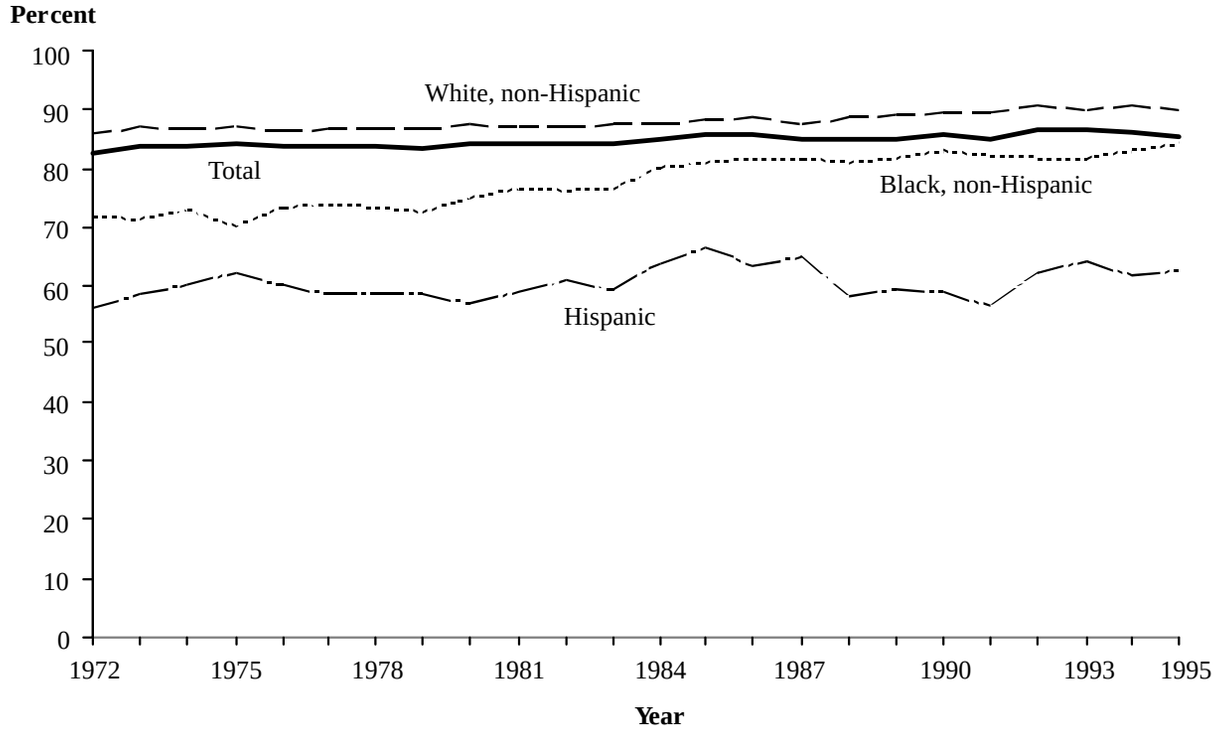
NOTE: See the technical appendix for the definitions of poverty and family composition used in these tables.
SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, High School and Beyond Study, Sophomore cohort, First Follow-up Survey, 1982, unpublished data. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 First and Second Follow-up Surveys, 1990 and 1992, unpublished data.

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES

Concerns over high school dropouts stem from an increased understanding of the importance of having an educated workforce. Technological advances in the workplace have increased the demand for skilled labor to the point where today a high school education serves more as a minimum requirement for entry to the labor force. This increased emphasis on educational requirements makes the completion of a high school program more essential than ever.

In fact, youths entering adulthood today face more challenging educational requirements than their parents or grandparents 20 to 50 years earlier. When the grandparents of today's high school students entered adulthood, a high school education was viewed as an asset in the labor force; and for their children, a high school education still served as an entryway to a number of promising career paths. For example, in 1950, when grandparents of many of today's high school students were new to the workforce, only about one-half of the population ages 25 to 29 had completed a high school program (Digest of Education Statistics 1995). In contrast, during the 1970s, when the parents of many of today's high schoolers entered the labor force, about 83 to 84 percent of the population ages 18 through 24 not enrolled in high school had a high school education (figure 4 and table A39).

Figure 4.-Completion rates for persons ages 18-24 not currently enrolled in high school or below, by race-ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

If the population is considered as a whole, the net increase in high school completion observed over the last 20 years is less than 2 percent. By 1995 about 85 percent of the 18- through 24-year-olds who were not still in high school had completed a high school program. The picture is somewhat different when the experiences of individual racial-ethnic groups are considered separately (Table 11). The percent of white young adults with a high school education during the 1970s was between 86 and 87 percent—by 1995 89.8 percent of this group held high school credentials. During the 1970s, between 70 and 74 percent of black young adults had completed a high school program; by 1995, the number was up to 84.5 percent. A lower percentage of Hispanic youths complete high school programs, and the pattern for Hispanics has continued relatively unchanged.-during the 1970s the percentage of Hispanic 18- through 24-year-olds with a high school education fluctuated between 56 and 62 percent; in the 1990s it ranged from about 59 to 64 percent, and in 1995 the rate was 62.8 percent.

Table 11.-High school completion rates and method of completion of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below, by race-ethnicity: October 1990 through October 1995

	Year					
Completion method	1990	1991	1992[2]	1993[2]	1994[2,3]	1995[2,3]
	(percent)					
Total[1]						
Completed	85.6	84.9	86.4	86.2	85.8	85.3
Diploma	81.0	80.9	81.5	81.3	79.4	77.9
Alternative	4.6	4.0	4.9	4.9	6.4	7.4
White, non-Hispanic						
Completed	89.6	89.4	90.7	90.1	90.7	89.8
Diploma	85.0	85.2	85.7	85.4	84.6	82.9
Alternative	4.6	4.2	5.0	4.7	6.1	6.9
Black, non-Hispanic						
Completed	83.2	82.5	82.0	81.9	83.3	84.5
Diploma	78.0	77.4	76.8	75.9	75.7	75.9
Alternative	5.2	5.1	5.2	6.0	7.6	8.5
Hispanic						
Completed	59.1	56.5	62.1	64.4	61.8	62.8
Diploma	56.5	54.4	58.0	58.5	56.5	54.2
Alternative	2.6	2.1	4.1	5.9	5.3	8.6

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.

[3]Numbers in these years reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

The race-ethnicity differences evident in these high school completion rates mirror the pattern of differences observed in the status dropout rates. The same is true when high school completion rates are examined within income levels and geographic regions.

Youths living in families at the highest income levels were the least likely to drop out of high school, compared with young adults from families with low incomes who were eight times more likely to drop out. Correspondingly, nearly 97 percent of the youngsters from families at high income levels complete high school, compared with about 73 percent of the youths from low income families (table 12).

Table 12.-Completion rates and number and distribution of completers, ages 18–24, not currently enrolled in high school or below, by sex, race-ethnicity, income, and region: October 1995

	Completion rate (percent)	Number of completers (thousands)	Percent of all completers
Total	85.3	20,102	100.0
Sex			
Male	84.5	9,785	48.7
Female	86.0	10,317	51.3
Race-ethnicity[1]			
White, non-Hispanic	89.8	14,486	72.1
Black, non-Hispanic	84.5	2,738	13.6
Hispanic	62.8	2,112	10.5
Family income[2]			
Low income level	73.2	3,840	19.1
Middle income level	85.8	11,464	57.0
High income level	96.6	4,798	23.9
Region			
Northeast	89.6	3,863	19.2
Midwest	88.9	4,991	24.8
South	82.8	6,997	34.8
West	81.8	4,251	21.1

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

The relatively low dropout rates observed in the Northeast and Midwest are reflected in high school completion rates of nearly 90 percent in the Northeast and 89 percent in the Midwest.[31] Similarly, the higher dropout rates evident in the South and West translate into lower high school completion rates of about 83 percent in the South and 82 percent in the West.

Completion Rates by State

Often interest in geographic comparisons extends beyond the regional level to state-specific data. One obvious question, given the regional differences in high school completion rates, is whether the completion rates are comparable or vary across states within each region. In order to consider data by states, completion rates are computed based on data spanning a three year period, so that the data by state presented in table 13 represent the averages experienced over the three year periods of 1990-92 and 1993-95.[32] In looking at these data, it should be noted that the survey respondents may have attended school in a different state from that in which they resided at the time of the interview.

Data for the most recent three years show that the state-by-state estimates in the Northeast range from 86.9 percent in New Hampshire to 94.7 percent in Connecticut, with Pennsylvania at a median of 89.5 percent. The rates in the Midwest range from 86.7 percent in Illinois to 96.6 percent in North Dakota, and the median of 91.2 percent falls between the rates of 91.5 percent in South Dakota and 90.9 percent in Kansas. In the South, the rates range from 79.5 percent in Texas to 93.6 percent in Maryland, with North Carolina at the median of 85.5 percent. Similarly, the Western rates range from 78.9 percent in California to 93.6 percent in Utah, with Idaho at the median of 86.4 percent.

In some cases, the sample sizes for individual states make it difficult to draw firm conclusions. For example, the highest and lowest rates observed in the Northeast are not significantly different from one another, despite a 7.8 percentage point range. However, some interesting comparisons can made. In particular, in the Midwest, South and West there are significant differences between the completion rates of states with the highest and lowest rates within each region. The highest completion rates in each of the four regions are on a par with one another and are all over 90 percent; the lowest rates in the South and West are lower, however, than the lowest rates in the Midwest.

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[31]The high school completion rate is based on the population of young adults ages 18 through 24 who are not still enrolled in school; the status dropout rate is based on the population ages 16 through 24. Thus, the age range of the status dropout rate is two years wider, and those 18- through 24-year-olds who are still enrolled in a high school program are excluded from the calculation of the high school completion rate. Because of these differences the status dropout rate and the high school completion rate are not the simple inverse of each other.

[32]The sample sizes of the numbers of completers at the state level are, by definition, substantially smaller than the counts of completers supporting the 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 displayed as three year moving averages (for example, the data for 1991 represent the average of the data from 1990, 1991, and 1992 and the data for 1994 are based on averages of data from 1993, 1994, and 1995). Even with this, sampling variability is increased substantially, especially in states with relatively smaller populations in the 18 through 24 age range.

Table 13.-High school completion rates of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below, by state: October 1990-92 and 1993-95

State		1990-92*	1993-95*
TOTAL		85.5	85.3
NORTHEAST	Connecticut	89.9	94.7
	Maine	91.9	92.9
	Massachusetts	89.8	92.5
	New Hampshire	87.9	86.9
	New Jersey	90.8	91.8
	New York	88.0	87.1
	Pennsylvania	90.2	89.5
	Rhode Island	87.9	89.4
	Vermont	87.0	88.1
MIDWEST	Illinois	86.0	86.7
	Indiana	87.8	88.5
	Iowa	94.6	93.2
	Kansas	93.2	90.9
	Michigan	87.2	88.7
	Minnesota	92.5	93.3
	Missouri	88.1	90.3
	Nebraska	92.5	94.5
	North Dakota	96.3	96.6
	Ohio	90.0	88.4
	South Dakota	89.1	91.5
	Wisconsin	92.4	93.7
SOUTH	Alabama	85.2	84.0
	Arkansas	87.5	88.4
	Delaware	86.2	93.3
	Florida	84.1	80.7
	Georgia	85.1	80.3
	Kentucky	81.1	82.4
	Louisiana	83.9	80.5
	Maryland	88.6	93.6
	Mississippi	85.4	83.9
	North Carolina	83.0	85.5
	Oklahoma	84.3	87.0
	South Carolina	85.0	88.0
	Tennessee	76.7	84.6
	Texas	80.0	79.5
	Virginia	88.6	87.7
	Washington, D.C.	84.0	87.7
	West Virginia	83.3	86.8
WEST	Alaska	85.6	90.5
	Arizona	81.7	84.0
	California	77.3	78.9
	Colorado	88.1	88.4
	Hawaii	93.5	92.0
	Idaho	84.7	86.4
	Montana	91.6	89.8
	Nevada	82.1	81.9
	New Mexico	84.1	82.4
	Oregon	89.6	82.7
	Utah	93.9	93.6
	Washington	90.7	85.7
	Wyoming	92.0	90.8

*Numbers on this table reflect 3-year averages.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

High school completion rates in table 11 and table 12 provide a measure of the relative size of the young adult population who have attained a high school credential (85.3 percent in 1995). Most of these young adults attended high school, completed the required secondary coursework, and graduated with a regular diploma. (Strictly speaking, a high school graduation rate is based on students receiving regular high school diplomas.) In 1995, 77.9 percent of the 18- through 24-year-olds who were not still enrolled in high school were graduates holding regular high school diplomas (Table 14).

The path is not so direct for all young adults; as the dropout rates show, each year over the last decade 300 to 500 thousand 10th through 12th graders left school without a high school diploma. Some of them return to school and earn a regular high school diploma. Others use the knowledge acquired while they were in school, perhaps in combination with skills and knowledge from their post high school experiences, or alternatively through special study programs, to take and pass a high school equivalency examination.[33]

In 1995, over 1.7 million young adults 18 through 24 years of age had earned high school credentials by passing an equivalency exam such as the General Educational Development (GED) test.[34] The young adults who completed high school through this alternative account for 7.4 percent of the 18- through 24-year-olds who were not still enrolled in high school in 1995.

Table 14.-High school completion rates and method of completion of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below, by income level: October 1995

Family income	Completed	Method of completion: Diploma	Method of completion: Alternative
		(percent)	
Total*	85.3	77.9	7.4
Low income level	73.2	64.8	8.5
Middle income level	85.8	77.8	8.0
High income level	96.6	92.1	4.5

*Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

[33]The General Educational Development (GED) test is the principal equivalency exam in use at this time. In 1994, about 680,000 people age 16 or older took the GED test, and 73 percent or nearly one-half million passed the exam to earn a high school credential. GED Testing Service. 1995. "Who took the GED? 1994 GED statistical report." Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education.

[34] In the CPS data there may be some ambiguity concerning students who complete high school with a certificate of attendance. While they are supposed to be counted as non-completers, some respondents may report them as completers when asked about educational attainment.

When these two methods of high school completion are examined across racial and ethnic groups, the differences observed in the aggregate high school completion measure are repeated for high school graduates. The percentage of white young adults who complete high school with a regular diploma (82.9 percent) is larger than the percent for blacks (75.9 percent), and the percent for Hispanics (54.2 percent) is even lower than the percent for either blacks or whites (table 11). In contrast, similar portions of each group complete high school by passing an equivalency test (6.9 percent for whites, 8.5 percent for blacks, and 8.6 percent for Hispanics).

These data have only been collected since 1990. A comparison of the 1995 data with those from 1990 suggests that the percent of young adults who earn a regular diploma is relatively stable within each race-ethnicity group. Over the same time period, modest increases have been recorded in the size of the group earning alternative high school credentials.-this increase is present in the aggregate rates (4.6 percent in 1990 and 7.4 percent in 1995) and in the rates for white young adults (4.6 percent in 1990 and 6.9 percent in 1995). While the apparent increases in the rates for black alternative completers are not significant, the proportion of Hispanics graduating high school with alternative degrees increased (2.6 percent in 1990 and 8.6 percent in 1995).[35]

Recall that the income data in table 12 show that young adults from families with high incomes were the most likely to complete high school (nearly 97 percent); over 90 percent of them graduated from high school with a regular diploma and about 4 percent followed an equivalency test alternative (table 14). By comparison, just over three-quarters of middle income youths and nearly two-thirds of low income youths graduated from high school with regular diplomas, while an additional 8 percent within each of these income groups passed equivalency exams to earn high school credentials.

[35] Part of the increase in these estimates may be due to changes in the CPS methodology. The CPS does not specifically identify youths receiving certificates of attendance, but not earning a high school credential. Since 1992, youths who completed the 12th grade without earning a high school credential are not reported as high school completers; prior to 1992 students reported as attending and completing the 12th grade were counted as high school completers. See the technical appendix for a discussion of this issue.

IMMIGRATION, PARTICIPATION IN U.S. SCHOOLS, AND HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES

The dropout rates for Hispanic youth have remained at levels consistently higher than the dropout rates experienced by their white and black peers since the early 1970s (tables 1 and 5). Although a number of factors may contribute to the dropout rates observed for Hispanic youth, previous analyses have shown even higher dropout rates for foreign-born Hispanic youths.[36] What is not clear is what portion of the dropout rate observed for Hispanic youth is attributable to dropouts from U.S. schools, as opposed to immigrants who come to the U.S. without a high school credential and never enter U.S. schools. In addition, questions persist over the role that language limitations may play in determining participation and success in U.S. schools. In 1995, data on country of birth, participation in U.S. schools, and language use and ability may help provide answers to some of these questions.

Table 15—Rate, number, and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by race-ethnicity and place of birth: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	12.0	3,876	32,379	100.0	100.0
Born in U.S.	9.9	2,875	28,935	74.2	89.4
Foreign-born	29.1	1,001	3,444	25.8	10.6
White, non-Hispanic	8.6	1,887	21,991	48.7	67.9
Born in U.S.	8.6	1,831	21,242	47.2	65.6
Foreign-born	7.5	56	749	1.4	2.3
Black, non-Hispanic	12.1	571	4,732	14.7	14.6
Born in U.S.	12.2	552	4,519	14.2	14.0
Foreign-born	8.8	19	213	0.5	0.7
Hispanic	30.0	1,345	4,485	34.7	13.9
Born in U.S.	17.9	458	2,562	11.8	7.9
Foreign-born	46.2	887	1,923	22.9	5.9
Other	6.2	73	1,171	1.9	3.6
Born in U.S.	5.6	34	611	0.9	1.9
Foreign-born	6.9	39	559	1.0	1.7

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

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[36] See for example, F. Bennici and W. Strang. *An Analysis of Language Minority and Limited English Proficient Students from NELS:88*, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs, August 1995; W.Strang, M. Winglee, and J. Stunkard. *Characteristics of Secondary-School-Age Language Minority and Limited English Proficient Youth*, U.S. Department of Education, 1993; and P. Kaufman and M. McMillen. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1990*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. NCES 91-053.

Immigration

Among all youth 16 through 24 years of age, immigrants are more likely to be status dropouts than the native-born. The status dropout rate of 29.1 percent for immigrants ages 16 through 24 is nearly three times the rate of 9.9 percent for native-born youths (table 15). Consequently, although immigrants comprise about one-tenth of the U.S. population ages 16 through 24, they account for one-quarter of the status dropouts in this age group.

Among the different race-ethnicity groups, only Hispanic foreign-born are at greater risk of dropping out than native-born youths. For Hispanics, the dropout rate of 46.2 percent for immigrants is two and one-half times the dropout rate of 17.9 percent for Hispanic young adults born in the U.S.

A closer look at the immigrant population shows that Hispanic young adults account for 56 percent of all foreign-born 16- through 24-year-olds in the U.S., but close to 90 percent of all status dropouts in the immigrant population (table 16).

Table 16—Rate, number, and distribution of foreign-born status dropouts, ages 16–24, by enrollment in U.S. schools and race-ethnicity: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	29.1	1,001	3,444	100.0	100.0
Ever enrolled in U.S.	13.2	326	2,469	32.6	71.7
Never enrolled in U.S.	69.3	675	975	67.4	28.3
Hispanic	46.2	887	1,923	88.6	55.8
Ever enrolled in U.S.	23.7	261	1,105	26.1	32.1
Never enrolled in U.S.	76.5	626	818	62.5	23.8

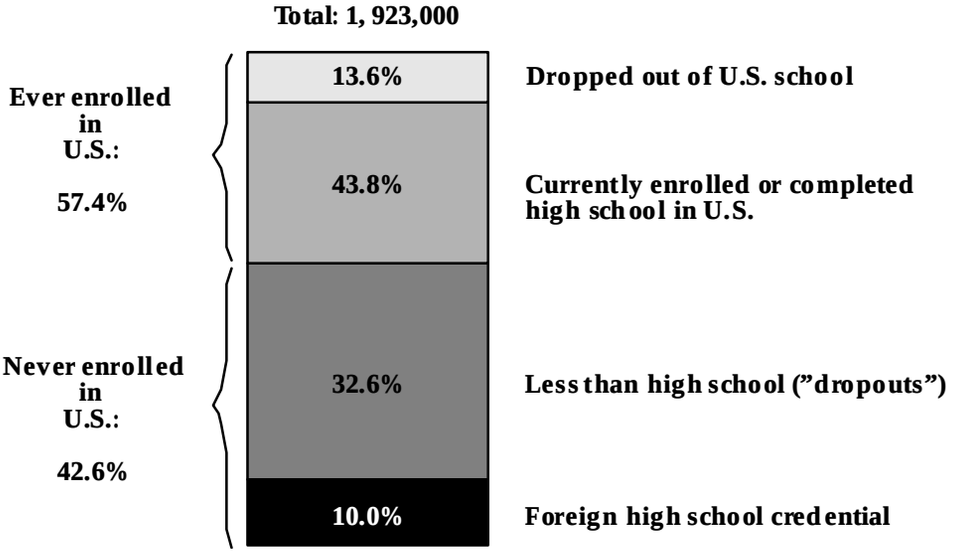
NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Educational Attainment, Participation in U.S. Schools, and Dropout Rates

Experience and anecdotal evidence both suggest that some number of these Hispanic "dropouts" never enrolled in U.S. schools. Undoubtedly, some young Hispanics arrive in the U.S. in search of employment rather than schooling. But others must find the barriers imposed by language limitations, crowded schools, limited openings in special programs, personal and economic exigencies, cultural differences, and limited first hand exposure to the intrinsic and extrinsic value of high school or post-secondary education so insurmountable that they prevent entry to U.S. schools. For example, in 1995, approximately 43 percent of Hispanic immigrants ages 16 through 24 had not enrolled in school in the U.S. (figure 5). Only ten percent of Hispanic

immigrants came to the U.S. with a high school education and never enrolled. One-third never enrolled and did not have a high school education and are counted as dropouts.

Figure 5—Hispanic immigrants, ages 16-24, by high school education status



NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.
(Readers please note this figure is based on the foreign-born Hispanic population ages 16 through 24 and the two categories on the right of the bar are ever enrolled in U.S. schools and never enrolled in U.S. schools)

Recall that the 1995 status dropout rate for all Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds in the U.S. was 30.0 percent. This rate reflects the educational attainment of all Hispanic young adults in the U.S., regardless of their immigration status. However, since only four out of five Hispanic young adults ever enrolled in U.S. schools (table 17), dropout rates that include young Hispanics who have not participated in U.S. schools fail to give an accurate view of the success of Hispanic students in U.S. schools.

In fact, the status dropout rate for Hispanic students ever enrolled in U.S. schools is 19.6 percent, a rate appreciably lower than the aggregate rate of 30.0 percent (table 17). Furthermore, the dropout rate for foreign-born Hispanics who enrolled in U.S. schools is 23.7 percent. Thus, the dropout rate from U.S. schools for Hispanic youths born in the U.S. and the rate for foreign-born Hispanic youths are similar (17.9 percent for U.S. born and 23.7 percent for foreign-born). These rates are still higher than the rates registered for white and black young adults in the same age range (8.6 percent for whites and 12.1 percent for blacks) (table 15). Nevertheless, a third of the 30.0 percent dropout rate registered for all Hispanic youths is due to the large proportion of young Hispanic immigrants who come to this country without a high school education and are not subsequently enrolled in U.S. schools. Some of the young Hispanic immigrants who do not enroll in school in the U.S. may have entered the U.S. beyond what is considered "normal" high school age, and some may have come to the U.S. in search of employment rather than education. However, for some of these youths, language may be a barrier to participation in U.S. schools.

Table 17—Rate, number, and distribution of Hispanics, ages 16–24, by enrollment in U.S. schools, dropout status, and place of birth: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	30.0	1,345	4,485	100.0	100.0
Never enrolled in U.S. schools	76.5	626	818	46.5	18.2
Dropouts	100.0	626	626	46.5	14.0
Graduates	—	—	192	—	4.3
Ever enrolled in U.S. schools	19.6	719	3,667	53.5	81.8
Born in U.S.	17.9	458	2,562	34.1	57.1
Foreign-born	23.7	261	1,105	19.4	24.6

—Not applicable

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Language Usage and Hispanic Dropout Rates

In 1995, four out of five Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds in the U.S. were reported as speaking Spanish at home (table 18).[37] And, 22 percent of these youths that spoke Spanish at home never attended school in the U.S. (table 19).[38] In contrast, 96 percent of the Hispanic young adults who spoke only English at home did attend school in the U.S.

[37] These data, like all CPS data in this report, are based on the report of a household respondent rather than reports from each individual in the household.

[38] Five percent of the Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds who spoke Spanish at home completed their high school programs outside of the U.S. These youths have a high school credential, but are reported as never enrolling in U.S. schools.

Table 18—Rate, number, and distribution of Hispanic status dropouts, ages 16–24, by language spoken at home: October 1995

Language spoken	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	30.0	1,345	4,485	100.0	100.0
Speaks only English	20.4	188	921	14.0	20.5
Speaks Spanish	32.5	1,157	3,564	86.0	79.5

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Among Hispanic youths who attended school in the U.S., dropout rates are similar, regardless of the language spoken at home: 20.3 percent of Hispanics who spoke Spanish at home were status dropouts in 1995 and 17.5 percent of Hispanics who spoke only English at home were status dropouts in 1995. Thus, while a larger percentage of Hispanic youth who spoke Spanish at home never entered U.S. schools (22 percent versus 4 percent), once enrolled, Hispanic students who spoke Spanish at home are as likely to remain in school as their peers who only spoke English at home. However, among the Hispanic students who spoke Spanish at home, English speaking ability is related to their success in school.

Table 19—Rate, number, and distribution of Hispanics, ages 16–24, by language spoken at home, enrollment in U.S. schools, dropout status, and school completion status: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	30.0	1,345	4,485	100.0	100.0
Speaks only English	20.4	188	921	100.0	100.0
Ever enrolled in U.S.	17.5	154	883	82.1	95.9
Never enrolled in U.S.	88.1	34	38	17.9	4.1
Dropout	100.0	34	34	—	—
Completed	—	—	—	—	—
Speaks Spanish	32.5	1,157	3,564	100.0	100.0
Ever enrolled in U.S.	20.3	565	2,784	48.8	78.1
Never enrolled in U.S.	75.9	592	780	51.2	21.9
Dropout	100.0	592	592	—	—
Completed	—	—	188	—	—

—Not applicable

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

English Speaking Ability

Three-quarters (76.3 percent) of the Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds who spoke Spanish at home were also reported as speaking English "well" or "very well" (table 20).[39] For these young adults, speaking Spanish at home is not an indication of limited English speaking ability. Nearly this entire group attended school in the U.S. (94 percent or 2,560,000 out of 2,718,000). And the dropout rate of 19.2 percent for this group is on a par with the dropout rate of 17.5 percent observed for enrolled Hispanic young adults who spoke only English at home.

[39] The question on English speaking ability was only asked of persons who spoke a language other than English at home, thus the data do not include the English speaking ability of Hispanic youths who reported only speaking English at home.

Table 20—Rate, number, and distribution of Hispanic status dropouts who speak Spanish at home, ages 16–24, by enrollment in U.S. schools and English language ability: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	32.5	1,157	3,564	100.0	100.0
Speaks English well[1]	21.4	581	2,718	50.3	76.3
Speaks English not well[2]	68.0	576	846	49.7	23.7
Ever enrolled in U.S. schools	20.3	565	2,784	100.0	100.0
Speaks English well	19.2	491	2,560	86.9	92.0
Very well	17.4	362	2,081	64.1	74.7
Well	27.0	129	479	22.8	17.2
Speaks English not well	32.9	74	224	13.1	8.0
Not enrolled in U.S. schools	75.9	592	780	100.0	100.0
Speaks English well	57.4	90	158	15.3	20.2
Speaks English not well	80.7	502	622	84.7	79.8

[1]Consists of those who speak English very well or well.
[2]Consists of those who speak English not well or not at all.

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

The situation is reversed among Hispanic young adults who reported limited English speaking ability. Only one-quarter of this group attended school in the U.S. (224,000 out of 846,000) and a third of those who did attend dropped out. What is more, eighty-one percent of the group who reported speaking English "not well" or "not at all," and also never enrolled in U.S. schools, lacked a high school education.

Participation in English as a Second Language Instruction

Programs in bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL) are intended to broaden the educational and employment opportunities available to youths with limited English ability. In 1995, 12.4 percent of the Hispanic young adults spoke Spanish at home, had participated in ESL instruction, and were reported as speaking English "well" or "very well" (table 21). The 22.3 percent status dropout rate for this group is on a par with the rate of 21.2 percent experienced by the group of Hispanic young adults who spoke Spanish at home and were reported as speaking English "well" or "very well" without any ESL instruction. And both of these rates are similar to the status dropout rate of 20.4 percent experienced by Hispanic youths that spoke only English at home. Taken together, these three groups of Hispanic youths make up approximately 80 percent of all Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds in the U.S. in 1995: 12.4 percent spoke Spanish at home and spoke English "well" or "very well" with ESL instruction,

48.2 percent spoke Spanish at home and spoke English "well" or "very well" without ESL instruction, and 20.5 percent spoke only English at home.

Table 21—Rate, number, and distribution of Hispanics, ages 16–24, by language spoken at home, English language ability, and enrollment in ESL classes: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	30.0	1,345	4,485	100.0	100.0
Speaks only English	20.4	188	921	14.0	20.5
Speaks Spanish	32.5	1,157	3,564	86.0	79.5
Speaks English well	21.4	581	2,718	43.2	60.6
Ever enrolled in ESL classes	22.3	124	556	9.2	12.4
Never enrolled in ESL classes	21.2	457	2,162	34.0	48.2
Speaks English not well	68.0	576	846	42.8	18.9
Ever enrolled in ESL classes	57.1	131	229	9.7	5.1
Never enrolled in ESL classes	72.1	445	617	33.1	13.8

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

The remaining 20 percent of Hispanic young adults ages 16 through 24 were reported as either speaking English "not well" or "not at all." Twenty-seven percent of these youths reported some prior participation in ESL (57 percent of this group dropped out of school), but the majority (73 percent) reported no ESL instruction (with a status dropout rate of 72 percent) (table 21). In 1995, two-thirds (68 percent) of the Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds in the U.S. who reported limited English speaking ability did not have a high school credential and were not enrolled in school.[40] Since the majority of these youths are not enrolled in U.S. schools, ESL training offered outside of traditional school settings (for example, community organizations, churches, and adult education programs) may be more likely to reach this group of young Hispanics.

[40] Recall from table 20, that 81 percent of the youths with limited English speaking ability and who never enrolled in U.S. schools did not have a high school credential.

Table 22—Rate, number, and distribution of Hispanics who speak Spanish at home, ages 16–24, with limited English speaking ability, by enrollment in ESL classes and enrollment in U.S. schools: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	68.0	576	846	100.0	100.0
Ever enrolled in ESL	57.1	131	229	22.6	27.1
Ever enrolled in U.S. schools	40.7	47	115	8.0	13.5
Not enrolled in U.S. schools	73.7	84	114	14.6	13.6
Never enrolled in ESL	72.1	445	617	77.4	72.9
Ever enrolled in U.S. schools	24.8	27	109	4.7	12.9
Not enrolled in U.S. schools	82.2	418	508	72.7	60.1

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Educational Attainment Levels of Hispanic Young Adults

The life chances of young Hispanic immigrants without a high school education may be further hampered by the amount of schooling they have completed. This is especially the case for those without a high school credential who never enrolled in U.S. schools. For example, at least 90 percent of high school dropouts in the 16 through 24 age group who attended school in the U.S. completed a seventh or eighth grade education—this holds for all Hispanic dropouts born in the U.S. (98.0 percent) and for foreign-born Hispanics who enrolled and then dropped out of U.S. schools (91.6 percent) (table 23). In contrast, only one-half of foreign-born Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds who did not enroll in school in the U.S. completed a seventh or eighth grade education.

Table 23—Percentage of status dropouts, ages 16–24, completing various grades of school: October 1995

Percent completing	Total U.S. Born	Hispanics			
		Born in U.S.	Foreign-born		
			Total	Enrolled in U.S. schools	Never enrolled in U.S. schools
Grades 5 or 6	98.9	99.1	86.9	98.0	82.3
Grades 7 or 8	98.0	98.0	63.4	91.6	51.6
Grade 9	86.9	88.4	48.4	71.7	38.6
Grade 10	69.9	70.4	30.5	56.4	19.7
Grade 11	43.1	47.2	21.6	36.8	15.2
Grade 12, no diploma	9.5	15.1	10.0	16.3	7.4

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Many students who drop out of school in the U.S. do so between the ninth and eleventh grades. About 87 percent of the dropouts who were born in the U.S. completed the ninth grade and nearly 70 percent completed the tenth grade, but less than 50 percent completed the eleventh grade. The data for Hispanic youth born in the U.S. are very similar to the data for all U.S. born 16- through 24-year-olds, with about 88 percent completing the ninth grade, 70 percent completing the tenth grade, and 47 percent completing the eleventh grade. The data for foreign-born Hispanic youth who attend schools in the U.S. mirror the same pattern; with about 72 percent completing the ninth grade, 56 percent completing the tenth grade, and 37 percent completing the eleventh grade.[41]

The pattern is different for foreign-born Hispanics who did not enroll in U.S. schools. In this group, only 39 percent completed the ninth grade and only 20 percent had a tenth grade education. The net effect of these differences is that Hispanic dropouts have more grades to make up to reach parity with their white and black peers. A large share of Hispanic youths drop out of school in the U.S., and on average, those who do not attend U.S. schools have completed fewer years of schooling than their peers.

Summary

These data on country of birth and participation in U.S. schools show that the inclusion of immigrant young adults in the aggregate dropout rate for Hispanics has resulted in a substantial increase in the reported dropout rate for Hispanics in the U.S. In 1995, for example, nearly one-half of the Hispanic dropouts were immigrants who never enrolled in U.S. schools. The Hispanic status dropout rate with these immigrants included is 30.0 percent; when they are excluded, the dropout rate for Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds falls to 19.6 percent. Still, this rate is higher than the status dropout rates registered by black and white youths in this age group (12.1 percent for blacks and 8.6 percent for whites).

[41] When the percent of Hispanic dropouts who complete each grade is compared for youths born in the U.S. and foreign-born youths who enrolled in U.S. schools, the apparent differences are not statistically significant.

Data on language usage show that eighty percent of the Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds spoke Spanish at home and about one out of every five of these youths never attended school in the U.S. However, among the Hispanic youths that attended school in the U.S., the dropout rates were similar, regardless of whether the youth spoke only English at home (17.5 percent) or spoke Spanish at home (20.3 percent).

For those youths that spoke Spanish at home, English speaking ability was related to their success in school. The status dropout rate for young Hispanics reported to speak English "well" or "very well" who attended U.S. schools was 19.2 percent, a rate similar to the 17.5 percent status dropout rate observed for enrolled Hispanic youths that spoke only English at home. In contrast, only one-fourth of the Hispanic youths who reported limited English speaking ability attended school in the U.S. and one-third of those who attended dropped out.

Hispanic young adults who received ESL instruction and reported speaking English "well" or "very well" had a dropout rate of 22.3 percent comparable to the rate of 20.4 percent observed for Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds who spoke only English at home. Youth who were reported with limited English speaking ability did not fare as well. About one-quarter of the Hispanic youths with limited English speaking ability had received some ESL instruction, but 57 percent of these youths were dropouts. And, 72 percent of the youths with limited English speaking ability and no ESL instruction were dropouts. This suggests that ESL instruction offered in nonschool settings may be more likely to reach these youths.

Many of the youths with limited English speaking ability (74 percent) are immigrants who never enrolled in U.S. schools, and a number of these youths have completed fewer years of schooling than Hispanic dropouts born in the U.S. or Hispanic dropouts who migrated to the U.S. and attended U.S. schools. As a result, many Hispanic dropouts have more work to do to complete a high school education.

GRADE RETENTION

Students judged by their teachers as not ready for grade promotion are often held back a year to master missed coursework or acquire developmentally appropriate social skills. While retention is intended to improve a student's chance for school success, some researchers have found that the stigma of failure associated with retention has a negative impact on students' self-esteem and subsequent academic achievement, thereby increasing their likelihood of dropping out of school.[42]

Alternatively, there is also evidence that suggests that retention provides positive academic benefits to some students that presumably translates into a decreased likelihood of dropping out. A recent study has provided evidence that retention can help elementary school-age children perform better in classes, while improving their attitudes about themselves and school.[43] It is not clear from these findings whether grade retention increases the likelihood of dropping out, or whether grade retention is an early indicator of learning problems that, if not corrected, could eventually lead a student to drop out. The first set of findings suggests a negative impact for grade retention; the second set suggests a more positive outcome.

While not being able to disentangle the causal effects of retention on dropout rates, 1992 and 1995 CPS data provide the opportunity to examine, on a national scale, the proportion of young adults who were retained in school. They also allow for the examination of the association between grade retention and dropping out.

Retention Rates Over Time

Although the long term impact of grade retention is still unclear, the number of young adults who had ever been retained increased from 11.1 percent in 1992 to 13.3 percent in 1995 (table 24). Nearly all of this increase occurred in the early elementary grades (K-3). Although retention rates increased for both males and females, males were nearly two-thirds times more likely to be retained than females in 1995.

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[42] For an excellent summary of the literature on the affect of retention on youth, see V. Dill. 1993. *Closing the Gap: Acceleration vs. Remediation and the Impact of Retention in Grade on Student Achievement.* Austin: Texas Education Agency; or R. Sheehan. 1993. "Retaining Children in Grade." *Childhood Education*, Fall, 38-43. Also see M. McMillen, P. Kaufman, E. Hausken and D. Bradby, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1992*, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. NCES 93-464.

[43] K. Alexander, D. Entwisle and S. Dauber. 1994. *On the Success of Failure*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Table 24—Rate of retention, ages 16–24, by background characteristics: October 1992 and October 1995

Characteristics	1992[1] Percent retained	1992[1] Grade of last retention[2] K-3	4-8	9-12	1995 Percent retained	1995 Grade of last retention[2] K-3	4-8	9-12
Total[2]	11.1	4.1	2.7	2.2	13.3	6.1	3.3	2.4
Sex								
Male	14.2	5.1	3.3	2.7	16.9	7.3	4.2	3.2
Female	8.1	3.0	2.1	1.7	9.6	4.9	2.4	1.6
Race-ethnicity								
White, non-Hispanic	10.2	4.1	2.3	1.7	12.1	6.2	2.9	2.0
Black, non-Hispanic	17.4	5.2	5.0	3.8	18.7	7.0	5.0	3.7
Hispanic	10.4	3.1	2.5	2.8	14.7	5.7	3.8	3.0
Region								
Northeast	10.6	4.0	2.6	1.6	12.7	5.9	2.7	2.8
Midwest	9.1	3.6	2.0	1.6	10.9	5.5	2.3	2.1
South	14.3	4.8	3.9	3.2	16.9	6.8	5.3	3.3
West	8.6	3.5	1.5	1.7	10.3	6.0	1.5	1.1
Income[3]								
Low	15.8	4.6	4.7	3.6	18.2	7.2	5.0	4.0
Middle	11.0	4.2	2.7	2.0	13.1	6.2	3.2	2.3
High	7.7	3.2	1.2	1.4	9.1	5.0	1.8	1.2

[1]Missing data for 1992 have been imputed for this analysis and the estimates of retention rates may therefore differ from those previously published.
[2]Does not include 682 respondents (20 percent) in 1992 and 464 respondents (11 percent) in 1995 with missing data on grade of last retention who are included in the total.
[3]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1991 and 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1992 and 1995, unpublished data.

Consistent with earlier findings, black students were more likely to be retained than students from other race-ethnicity groups. Black, white, and Hispanic students were more likely to be retained in the early elementary grades (K-3) than secondary grades (9-12). While retention rates increased for nearly all regions and income groups between 1992 and 1995, the distribution remained relatively unchanged. Young adults living in the South and from families with the lowest incomes were at the greatest risk of retention in both years.

While the observed rates for whites and Hispanics are very similar (10.2 and 10.4 percent respectively), the observed difference between blacks and Hispanics is not statistically significant. This lack of statistical significance is related to smaller sample sizes and resulting larger standard errors.

Status Dropout Rates

The 1995 CPS data confirm earlier findings that students who are retained are at higher risk of dropping out of school. Of the 13.3 percent of 16- through 24-year-olds who repeated one or more grades by 1995, approximately one-quarter had dropped out by 1995, compared to only about 10 percent of the young adults who were never held back in school (24.1 percent versus 10.1 percent) (table 25).

Table 25—Rate, number, and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by repetition of grade(s): October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	12.0	3,876	32,379	100.0	100.0
Grade repetition					
Ever retained	24.1	1,034	4,290	26.7	13.3
Never retained	10.1	2,842	28,088	73.3	86.7

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Background Characteristics

The differences in retention rates between male and female students and between students from the identified race-ethnicity groups are not repeated in the status dropout rates of each of these groups. For example, although males were more likely to have been retained, the dropout rate for male students who were retained is lower than the dropout rate for female students who were retained. Although black students were more likely to be retained, the dropout rates for retained students were comparable for black, white, and Hispanic students (table 26).

This similarity in dropout rates among retained students from different race-ethnicity groups suggests that there may be a common set of characteristics or experiences that results in higher dropout rates for all retained students, regardless of race or ethnicity. In contrast, the race-ethnicity differences observed earlier in the aggregate status dropout rates are still evident in the dropout rates among those students who have not been retained.

At each income level, students who had been retained were more likely to drop out than their peers who were not retained, but the income differentials are evident regardless of whether students were ever retained. Young adults from families with low incomes were more likely to drop out than their peers from middle and upper income families, whether they had been retained or not.

Table 26—Rate and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by retention status, sex, race, region, and income: October 1995

Characteristics	Ever retained			Never retained		
	Status dropout rate	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population	Status dropout rate	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	24.1	100.0	100.0	10.1	100.0	100.0
Sex						
Male	21.8	57.7	63.7	10.3	48.6	48.0
Female	28.1	42.3	36.3	10.0	51.4	52.0
Race-ethnicity						
White, non-Hispanic	23.9	61.6	62.3	6.5	44.0	68.8
Black, non-Hispanic	23.8	20.3	20.6	9.4	12.7	13.7
Hispanic	25.9	16.5	15.3	30.7	41.3	13.6
Region						
Northeast	20.8	15.2	17.6	6.6	12.0	18.4
Midwest	25.0	20.3	19.6	6.9	16.6	24.4
South	26.6	50.5	45.7	11.7	39.9	34.4
West	19.7	13.9	17.0	14.0	31.5	22.7
Income*						
Low	36.8	43.4	28.5	20.1	39.0	19.6
Middle	22.2	51.6	56.1	9.9	55.4	56.8
High	7.7	5.0	15.5	2.4	5.6	23.6

*Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Timing of Retention

Retention in the early grades may reflect a lack of school readiness or signal a more serious problem with a student's learning ability.[44] As shown in earlier research, 1995 CPS data confirm that youths whose last grade retention occurred in their early elementary grades are less at risk of dropping out than those retained in the later grades (table 27).[45] Lower dropout rates among those held back in elementary school may reflect the positive effect of additional time for mastery of fundamental academic and age appropriate social skills, or possibly the benefit from special services targeted for students perceived to be at risk of school failure. However, youths that were retained in the early grades are more likely to drop out than their peers who were never retained.

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[44] One of the landmark studies on retention's effects was released in 1989 by L. Shepard and M. Smith, (Eds.) *Flunking Grades: Research and Policies on Retention.* London: The Falmer Press. For more recent work on specific effects, see for example: A. Thomas, *Early Retention: Are there Long-Term Beneficial Effects?* Psychology in the Schools 29, October 1992; C. Kaczala. April 1991. *Grade Retention: A Longitudinal Study of School Correlates of Rates of Retention*. Ohio: Cleveland Public Schools; W. Hamburg and G. Males, *A Follow-up Study of High School Students with a History of Grade Retention*. Psychology in the Schools, 28 1991.

[45] See M. McMillen and P. Kaufman, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1993*, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. NCES 90-659.

Table 27—Rate of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by retention status, sex, race, region, and income: October 1995

Characteristics	Total	Never retained	Retained	Grade of last retention[1]		
				K – 3	4 – 8	9 – 12
Total	12.0	10.1	24.1	19.9	28.0	30.1
Sex						
Male	12.2	10.3	21.8	18.4	24.6	27.0
Female	11.7	10.0	28.1	22.2	34.1	36.2
Race-ethnicity						
White, non-Hispanic	8.6	6.5	23.9	19.6	29.6	30.3
Black, non-Hispanic	12.1	9.4	23.8	17.6	31.4	29.1
Hispanic	30.0	30.7	25.9	25.0	17.0	34.8
Region						
Northeast	8.4	6.6	20.8	17.0	21.2	24.6
Midwest	8.9	6.9	25.0	22.3	29.5	26.8
South	14.2	11.7	26.6	21.2	29.1	35.4
West	14.6	14.0	19.7	17.5	29.5	22.8
Income[2]						
Low	23.2	20.1	36.8	36.8	43.8	32.7
Middle	11.5	9.9	22.2	17.3	23.8	32.0
High	2.9	2.4	7.7	5.8	6.6	12.8

[1]Does not include 464 respondents missing data on grade of last retention who are included in the total.
[2]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Students whose last school retention occurred in the middle (4-8) or secondary (9-12) grades were more likely to drop out than those retained in the early elementary grades. Higher dropouts rates among students retained later in their school careers may be due to a number of factors, including problems in progressing from one grade level to the next, unhappiness and dissatisfaction with their school experience, the decision to avoid the stigma associated with being held back in school, the decision to start a family, or the decision to seek employment. A small proportion of students retained last in the upper grades were also retained at an earlier grade and these repeated retentions may further their risk of dropping out. There is some evidence from the NELS: 88 and the earlier HS&B study that a number of these factors contribute to the decision to drop out of school. Further analysis of the reasons cited for dropping out by retainees in NELS:88 could shed further light on these issues.

A relatively small number of young adults—1.2 percent of the total population—were held back for two or more years of school (table 28). These individuals were nearly four times as likely to be status dropouts as those who had never been retained (39.3 percent versus 10.1

percent), and nearly twice as likely to drop out as individuals retained for one year (39.3 percent versus 22.4 percent) (table 28).

Table 28—Rate and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by characteristics of retention: October 1995

Characteristics	Status rate	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	12.0	100.0	100.0
Number of retentions*			
Never	10.1	73.3	86.7
One grade	22.4	19.8	10.6
Two or more grades	39.3	4.1	1.2

*Does not include 460 respondents with missing data on grade of last retention who are included in the total.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Summary

While the impact of retention on subsequent school success is still the subject of some debate, school retention rates continue to rise, with the largest share of retentions taking place in the early elementary grades. The 1995 CPS data confirm that students who are retained in school are generally at higher risk of school dropout: 24.1 percent of retained youths aged 16–24 years of age were status dropouts in 1995 compared to 10.1 percent of young adults who were never held back in school. Although black students were slightly more likely to be retained, dropout rates for retained students were comparable for black, white, and Hispanic students.

It appears that the timing of retention is closely linked to students' subsequent dropout decisions. Youths whose last retention occurred in the early elementary grades were at less risk of dropping out than those retained in later years. This may reflect the positive effect that retention has in providing additional learning time for youths, or may capture the effects of special services targeted to at-risk students. Moreover, since the stigma of retention may be greater in the middle and secondary years, older youths faced with retention may be more likely to choose to leave school to consider different life options.

DROPPING OUT AND DISABILITIES

Although they are often held to the same standard as the general population, students with disabilities must overcome serious obstacles that can interfere with their education. To graduate from high school, students with disabilities may need to work harder, study longer, or possess greater academic ability than their peers without a corresponding physical, emotional, or learning handicap. The added work and frustration associated with a disability can take its toll over time: national and local studies reveal that youths with disabilities drop out of school at higher rates than the general population.[46]

In 1995, young adults with reported disabilities accounted for 6.9 percent of the population and 8.5 percent of the dropouts in the 16- through 24-year-old age group (table 29).[47] As a result, students with disabilities were more likely to have dropped out than students without disabilities (14.6 percent versus 11.8 percent).

Disability Type

Learning disabilities were the most commonly reported disability, affecting 2.2 percent of the population, or one-third of the disabled youths in this age group. The dropout rate for this group was 17.6 percent.[48] The aggregate dropout rate for the two-thirds of disabled youths with other types of disabilities was 13.2 percent; however, there is considerable variation in the dropout rates when each disabling condition is considered separately. Young adults reported with mental or emotional disabilities were at an increased risk of dropping out. In particular, 56.1 percent of the 16- through 24-year-olds reported with mental illness, 31.1 percent of those reported with mental retardation, and 23.6 percent of those reported with a serious emotional disturbance had dropped out of school by 1995.

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[46] For a review of other work, see for example: *Youth with Disabilities: How are they Doing?* Washington, D.C.: Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 1991; *Hidden Youth: Dropouts from Special Education* Washington, D.C.: Council for Exceptional Children, 1991; *How Well are Youth with Disabilities Really Doing? A Comparison of Youth with Disabilities and Youth in General*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International, 1992.

[47] The reader should keep in mind that the data come from a household informant and may not necessarily come from the young adults themselves.

[48] One quarter of the learning disabled in this age group reported at least one additional disability and the dropout rate for them was 23.7 percent. The comparable rate for those only reporting learning disabilities was 15.7 percent.

Table 29—Rate, number, and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by disabling condition(s): October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	12.0	3,876	32,379	100.0	100.0
Disability status					
No disability	11.8	3,548	30,129	91.5	93.1
Disabled	14.6	328	2,250	8.5	6.9
Specific learning disabilities	17.6	128	726	3.3	2.2
Learning only	15.7	88	557	2.3	1.7
Learning & other	23.7	40	169	1.0	0.5
All other disabilities	13.2	201	1,524	5.2	4.7
Type of disabling condition*					
Blindness	16.9	7	—	0.2	0.1
Other vision impairment	6.6	35	530	0.9	1.6
Deafness	15.6	10	65	0.3	0.2
Other hearing impairment	——	—	—	—	
Orthopedic impairment	14.2	30	209	0.8	0.6
Serious emotional disturbance	23.6	38	159	1.0	0.5
Speech impairment	15.8	22	136	0.6	0.4
Specific learning disability	17.6	128	726	3.3	2.2
Mental retardation	31.1	50	162	1.3	0.5
Mental illness	56.1	25	—	0.6	0.1
Other health impairment or serious illness	16.3	85	523	2.2	1.6

—Insufficient sample size

*Some individuals have more than one disabling condition.

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Disability and Individual Characteristics

Overall, dropout rates for male and female 16- through 24-year-olds are comparable, and this relationship holds for students with disabilities as well as those without (table 30).

Table 30—Rate and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by sex and disabling condition(s): October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of dropouts	Percent of population
		Males			
Total	12.2	1,998	16,208	100.0	100.0
No disability	11.8	1,765	14,913	89.2	92.0
Disabled	16.5	213	1,295	10.8	8.0
Learning only	17.4	66	380	3.3	2.3
Learning & other	25.0	26	103	1.3	0.6
All other disabilities	14.9	121	812	6.1	5.0
		Females			
Total	11.7	1,868	16,170	100.0	100.0
No disability	11.7	1,783	15,216	93.9	94.1
Disabled	12.1	115	955	6.1	5.9
Learning only	12.1	21	178	1.1	1.1
Learning & other	21.6	14	65	0.7	0.4
All other disabilities	11.2	79	712	4.2	4.4

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

White youths with disabilities are more likely to drop out than those with no disabilities. However, race-ethnicity differences evident between black and white young adults in the general population are repeated among students with disabilities, with black disabled students at an increased risk of dropping out (table 31).

Table 31—Rate and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by race-ethnicity and disabling condition(s): October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Population (in thousands)	Percent of dropouts	Percent of population
			White non-Hispanic		
Total	8.6	1,887	24,661	100.0	100.0
No disability	8.2	1,671	22,664	88.6	88.5
Disabled	12.5	216	1,997	11.4	11.3
Learning only	16.6	76	546	4.0	4.0
Learning & other	22.7	30	159	1.6	1.6
All other disabilities	9.6	111	1,292	5.9	5.9
			Black non-Hispanic		
Total	12.1	571	5,362	100.0	100.0
No disability	11.3	507	5,066	88.8	88.8
Disabled	25.1	64	296	11.2	11.2
Learning only	—	—	—	—	—
Learning & other	—	—	—	—	—
All other disabilities	25.2	42	194	7.4	7.3
			Hispanic		
Total	30.0	1,345	4,976	100.0	100.0
No disability	30.4	1,301	4,751	96.7	96.7
Disabled	21.8	44	226	3.3	3.3
Learning only	0.0	0	38	0.0	0.0
Learning & other	0.0	0	13	0.0	0.0
All other disabilities	27.1	44	175	3.3	3.3

—Insufficient sample size

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

The patterns are different for Hispanic young adults. Only 3.3 percent of these youths were reported with identified disabilities; none of them were reported with learning disabilities. In contrast, about 11 percent of both white and black young adults were reported with disabilities. Among those with disabilities, one-third of the white youths had specific learning disabilities.

Like other students who have been held back in school, retained students with disabilities are more likely to drop out than their peers who have not repeated a grade (table 32). However, disabled youths who are retained in school are at no greater risk of being non-disabled youths who repeated a grade in school. This seems to be the case for those with either a learning or learning and some other type of disability.

Table 32—Status dropout rates for 16- to 24-year-olds by retention status and disabling condition(s): October 1995

Characteristics	Percentage retained	Dropout rate		
		Total	Never retained	Retained
Total	12.0	12.0	10.1	24.1
No disability	12.0	11.8	10.1	24.4
Disabled	29.8	14.6	11.2	22.6
Learning only	49.1	15.7	12.9	18.7
Learning & other	47.9	23.7	28.7	18.2
All other disabilities	20.7	13.2	9.5	27.1

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

On the face of things, when the aggregate dropout rates for disabled youth who were never retained are compared to the dropout rate for students with disabilities who were never held back in school, many of the disabled students appear to do as well as students without disabilities.[49]

Summary

Youths with disabilities are at greater risk of dropping out of school. In 1995, 14.6 percent of all disabled youth were dropouts, compared to 11.8 percent of their peers without disabilities. Dropout rates vary, however, with the nature and severity of a disability, with youths with mental or emotional disabilities at the highest risk of dropping out.

Overall, dropout rates for disabled male and female 16- through 24-year-olds are comparable, and this relationship holds for students with different types of disabilities. Race-ethnicity differences observed between black and white young adults in the general population are repeated among students with disabilities, with black disabled students at an increased risk of dropping out.

Disabled youths who were retained in school were at no greater risk of dropping out than non-disabled youths who repeated a grade in school. This seems to be the case for those with either a learning or learning and some other type of disability.

[49]The possible exception is the small group with both a learning disability and a second disability.

APPENDIX A

Standard Error and Time Series Tables

Table A1—Standard errors and population sizes for Table 1: Event dropout and persistence rates and number and distribution of dropouts from grades 10–12, ages 15–24, by sex, race–ethnicity, income, and region: October 1995

Characteristics	Event dropout and persistence rate		Percent of all dropouts	
	Standard error	Population size (in thousands)	Standard error	Population size (in thousands)
Total	0.38	9,509	—	544
Sex				
Male	0.55	4,805	3.40	297
Female	0.52	4,704	3.40	247
Race–ethnicity[1]				
White, non-Hispanic	0.41	6,532	3.40	296
Black, non-Hispanic	1.18	1,458	2.99	93
Hispanic	2.31	1,171	4.55	145
Family income[2]				
Low income level	1.46	1,368	3.22	182
Middle income level	0.51	5,328	3.39	305
High income level	0.42	2,813	2.09	57
Region				
Northeast	0.56	1,778	1.75	54
Midwest	0.65	2,347	2.60	99
South	0.73	3,309	3.45	239
West	0.94	2,075	3.15	153

—Not applicable.

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Family income in current residence. Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A2—Standard errors for Table 2: Event dropout and persistence rates and number and distribution of dropouts from grades 10–12, ages 15–24, by age group: October 1995

	Event dropout and persistence rate		Percent of all dropouts	
Age	Standard error	Population size (in thousands)	Standard error	Population size (in thousands)
Total	0.38	9,509	—	544
Age*				
15–16	0.60	2,722	2.74	110
17	0.49	3,216	2.66	102
18	0.73	2,647	3.08	155
19	2.22	647	2.60	96
20–24	4.38	276	2.43	81

—Not applicable.

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

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A3—Standard errors for Table 3: Membership, dropout counts and event dropout rates for grades 9-12, 1993-94

Data for table 3 represents a universe collection and, as such, do not have an associated standard error. This sheet is intended as a placeholder to keep numbering consistent with the report.

Table A4—Standard errors for Table 4: Rate and number of status dropouts, ages 16–24: October 1991 through October 1995

	October				
	1991	1992[1]	1993[1]	1994[1,2]	1995[1,2]
Status dropout rate (percent)	0.30	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.29
Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	93	88	87	91	93

[1]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.

[2]Numbers in these years may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table A5—Standard errors for Table 5: Rate, number, and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by sex, race–ethnicity, income, and region: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	0.29	93	—	—
Sex				
Male	0.41	66	1.28	0.44
Female	0.40	65	1.28	0.44
Race–ethnicity[1]				
White, non-Hispanic	0.30	66	1.28	0.41
Black, non-Hispanic	0.88	41	1.05	0.36
Hispanic	1.64	74	1.84	0.46
Family income[2]				
Low income level	0.82	55	1.25	0.36
Middle income level	0.37	69	1.27	0.44
High income level	0.31	23	0.58	0.37
Region				
Northeast	0.49	29	0.74	0.29
Midwest	0.51	39	0.96	0.37
South	0.53	61	1.29	0.43
West	0.69	49	1.17	0.38

—Not applicable.

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A6—Standard errors for Table 6: Percentage distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by level of schooling attained and race–ethnicity: October 1995

Level of schooling attained	Total	Race–ethnicity* White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
Total	—	—	—	—
Level of schooling attained				
Less than 1st grade	0.32	0.37	0.77	0.99
1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th grade	0.40	0.19	0.41	1.63
5th or 6th grade	0.61	0.35	0.73	2.39
7th or 8th grade	0.83	1.21	2.03	2.22
Less than 9th grade	1.06	1.30	2.28	3.18
9th grade	0.96	1.36	2.91	2.51
Less than 10th grade	1.25	1.70	3.42	3.25
10th grade	1.07	1.62	3.57	2.26
11th grade	1.15	1.72	3.72	2.55
12th grade, without diploma	0.76	1.08	1.94	2.11

—Not applicable.

*Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A7—Standard errors for Table 7: Status dropout rate, ages 16–24, by income and race–ethnicity: October 1995

Family income	Total	Race–ethnicity[1]		
		White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
Total	0.29	0.30	0.88	1.64
Family income[2]				
Low income level	0.82	1.06	1.83	3.07
Middle income level	0.37	0.40	1.02	2.11
High income level	0.31	0.32	1.46	3.43

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A8—Standard errors for Table 8: Status dropout rate, ages 16–24, by region and race–ethnicity: October 1995

Region	Total	Race–ethnicity*		
		White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
Total	0.29	0.30	0.88	1.64
Region				
Northeast	0.49	0.50	1.70	3.49
Midwest	0.51	0.51	2.22	5.80
South	0.53	0.62	1.20	2.92
West	0.69	0.69	2.56	2.56

*Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A9—Standard errors for Table 9: NELS:88 8th- to 12th-grade cohort dropout rates, by sex and race–ethnicity:1992

Characteristics	Cohort dropout rate			
	Spring 1990–92[1]	Spring 1988-92	August 1992	Spring 1994
Total	1.28	1.58	1.66	0.45
Sex				
Male	1.45	1.90	1.97	0.69
Female	1.18	1.36	1.42	0.48
Race–ethnicity[2]				
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.9	4.9	4.3	5.1
Hispanic	12.2	17.8	17.9	14.3
Black, non-Hispanic	9.1	13.4	12.7	8.4
White, non-Hispanic	5.9	9.1	8.3	5.7
Native American	22.3	30.4	30.4	16.9

[1]The denominator for this rate includes the members of the 1988 eighth-grade cohort who were still enrolled in school in the spring of 1990; excluded are students who dropped out between 1988 and 1990 and students who migrated out of the country or died.
[2]Not shown separately are 434 persons (approximately 2 percent of the unweighted sample) whose race–ethnicity is unknown.

NOTE: This table is based on the core cohort of eighth graders (i.e., this sample excludes students in the base year sample, whose sex, race, and dropout status were determined through the Followback Study of Excluded Students). As such, numbers may differ from earlier reports.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 Base-Year, First, and Second Followup Survey, 1988, 1990, 1992, and 1994, unpublished data.

Table A10—Standard errors for Table 10: HS&B and NELS:88 10th- to 12th-grade cohort dropout rates, by demographic characteristics: August 1982 and 1992

Status in 10th grade	Cohort dropout rate HS&B 1980–82	Cohort dropout rate NELS:88 1990–92
Total	0.42	0.36
Sex		
Male	0.64	0.45
Female	0.54	0.56
Race–ethnicity*		
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.73	2.14
Hispanic	1.65	1.44
Black, non-Hispanic	1.15	1.22
White, non-Hispanic	0.46	0.33
Native American	5.33	8.09
Family below poverty level		
Yes	0.86	1.16
No	0.28	0.35
Family composition		
Intact family	0.24	0.42
Two adults/step-parents	1.25	1.06
Single parent	0.78	0.96
Other	1.86	2.22
Own child in home		
Yes		
Male	6.50	2.35
Female	7.42	3.91
No		
Male	0.38	0.46
Female	0.36	0.56

*Not shown separately are those included in the total whose race–ethnicity is unknown.

NOTE: See the technical appendix for the definitions of poverty and family composition used in these tables.
SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, High School and Beyond Study, Sophomore cohort, First Followup Survey, 1982, unpublished data. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 First and Second Followup Surveys, 1990 and 1992, unpublished data.

Table A11—Standard errors for Table 11: High school completion rates and method of completion of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below, by race–ethnicity: October 1990 through October 1995

Completion method	Year					
	1990	1991	1992[2]	1993[2]	1994[2,3]	1995[2,3]
	(percent)					
Total[1]						
Completed	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.37
Diploma	0.82	0.82	0.81	0.81	0.84	0.43
Alternative	0.44	0.41	0.45	0.45	0.51	0.27
White, non-Hispanic						
Completed	0.37	0.38	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.38
Diploma	0.88	0.88	0.86	0.87	0.89	0.47
Alternative	0.52	0.50	0.54	0.52	0.59	0.32
Black, non-Hispanic						
Completed	1.22	1.26	1.27	1.27	1.19	1.18
Diploma	2.78	2.81	2.83	2.87	2.88	1.39
Alternative	1.48	1.48	1.49	1.59	1.78	0.91
Hispanic						
Completed	2.35	2.32	2.32	2.26	2.06	2.00
Diploma	4.50	4.53	4.48	4.48	4.50	2.06
Alternative	1.44	1.30	1.80	2.13	2.03	1.16

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.

[3]Numbers in this year may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table A12—Standard errors for Table 12: Completion rates and number and distribution of completers, ages 18–24, by sex, race–ethnicity, income, and region: October 1995

Characteristics	Completion rate		Percent of all completers
	Standard error	Population (in thousands)	Standard error
Total	0.37	87	—
Sex			
Male	0.53	62	0.56
Female	0.50	60	0.56
Race–ethnicity[1]			
White, non-Hispanic	0.38	61	0.50
Black, non-Hispanic	1.18	38	0.45
Hispanic	2.00	67	0.52
Family income[2]			
Low income level	0.97	51	0.44
Middle income level	0.48	64	0.56
High income level	0.41	20	0.48
Region			
Northeast	0.64	27	0.38
Midwest	0.66	37	0.48
South	0.68	56	0.55
West	0.88	46	0.47

—Not applicable.

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A13—Standard errors for Table 13: High school completion rates of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below by state: October 1990–92 and 1993–95

State		1990-92*	1993-95*
TOTAL		0.21	0.21
NORTHEAST	Connecticut	1.59	1.29
	Maine	2.42	2.30
	Massachusetts	1.16	1.06
	New Hampshire	3.05	3.18
	New Jersey	1.01	0.98
	New York	0.74	0.77
	Pennsylvania	0.85	0.89
	Rhode Island	3.20	3.30
	Vermont	4.66	4.34
MIDWEST	Illinois	0.96	0.94
	Indiana	1.36	1.24
	Iowa	1.24	1.34
	Kansas	1.48	1.73
	Michigan	1.03	0.98
	Minnesota	1.17	1.12
	Missouri	1.31	1.33
	Nebraska	2.00	1.73
	North Dakota	2.25	2.14
	Ohio	0.86	0.92
	South Dakota	3.51	3.27
	Wisconsin	1.11	1.03
SOUTH	Alabama	1.90	1.68
	Arkansas	2.09	2.00
	Delaware	4.09	2.84
	Florida	0.98	1.03
	Georgia	1.35	1.39
	Kentucky	1.94	1.95
	Louisiana	1.67	1.87
	Maryland	1.34	1.12
	Mississippi	2.02	2.14
	North Carolina	1.37	1.26
	Oklahoma	2.01	1.91
	South Carolina	1.82	1.64
	Tennessee	1.79	1.51
	Texas	0.89	0.87
	Virginia	1.28	1.23
	Washington, D.C.	4.79	4.13
	West Virginia	2.65	2.38
WEST	Alaska	2.49	3.90
	Arizona	2.06	1.82
	California	0.70	0.71
	Colorado	1.74	1.55
	Idaho	3.70	3.00
	Hawaii	2.31	2.53
	Montana	2.99	3.46
	Nevada	3.46	3.35
	New Mexico	2.97	2.99
	Oregon	1.78	2.12
	Utah	1.60	1.52
	Washington	1.33	1.44
	Wyoming	4.07	3.98

*Numbers on this table reflect 3-year averages.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table A14—Standard errors for Table 14: High school completion rates and method of completion of 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school or below, by income level: October 1995[1]

Family income	Method of completion		
	Completed	Diploma	Alternative
	(percent)		
Total[2]	0.37	0.43	0.27
Low income level	0.97	1.05	0.61
Middle income level	0.48	0.57	0.37
High income level	0.41	0.61	0.47

[1]Numbers in this may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

[2]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table A15—Standard errors for Table 15: Rate, number, and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by race-ethnicity and place of birth: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of Status dropouts (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	0.29	93	—	—
Born in U.S.	0.28	81	1.12	0.27
Foreign-born	1.23	42	1.12	0.27
White, non-Hispanic	0.30	66	1.28	0.41
Born in U.S.	0.31	65	1.28	0.42
Foreign-born	1.53	11	0.31	0.13
Black, non-Hispanic	0.88	41	1.05	0.36
Born in U.S.	0.90	41	1.04	0.36
Foreign-born	3.59	8	0.21	0.08
Hispanic	1.64	74	1.84	0.46
Born in U.S.	1.82	47	1.25	0.36
Foreign-born	2.73	53	1.62	0.32
Other	1.70	20	0.52	0.25
Born in U.S.	2.23	14	0.36	0.18
Foreign-born	2.58	14	0.38	0.17

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A16—Standard errors for Table 16: Rate, number, and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by enrollment in U.S. schools and race-ethnicity: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of Status dropouts (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	1.23	42	—	—
Ever enrolled in U.S.	1.08	27	2.36	1.22
Never enrolled in U.S.	2.35	23	2.36	1.22
Hispanic	2.73	53	2.41	2.03
Ever enrolled in U.S.	3.07	34	3.33	1.91
Never enrolled in U.S.	3.56	29	3.68	1.74

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A17—Standard errors for Table 17: Rate, number, and distribution of Hispanics, ages 16–24, by enrollment in U.S. schools, dropout status and place of birth: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of Status dropouts (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	1.64	74	—	—
Never enrolled in U.S. schools				
Dropouts	—	—	3.27	1.24
Graduates	—	—	—	0.73
Ever enrolled in U.S. schools	1.58	58	3.27	1.39
Born in U.S.	1.82	47	3.10	1.78
Foreign-born	3.07	34	2.59	1.55

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A18—Standard errors for Table 18: Rate, number, and distribution of Hispanic status dropouts, ages 16–24, by language spoken at home: October 1995

Language spoken	Status dropout rate	Number of Status dropouts (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	1.64	74	—	—
Speaks only English	3.19	29	2.27	1.45
Speak Spanish	1.88	67	2.27	1.45

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A19—Standard errors for Table 19: Rate, number, and distribution of Hispanics, ages 16–24, by language spoken at home, enrollment in U.S. schools, dropout status, and school completion status: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	1.64	74	—	—
Speaks only English	3.19	29	—	—
Ever enrolled in U.S.	3.07	27	6.72	1.58
Never enrolled in U.S.	12.61	5	6.72	1.58
Dropout	—	—	—	—
Completed	—	—	—	—
Speaks Spanish	1.88	67	—	—
Ever enrolled in U.S.	1.83	51	3.53	1.66
Never enrolled in U.S.	3.68	29	3.53	1.66
Dropout	—	—	—	—
Completed	—	—	—	—

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A20—Standard errors for Table 20: Rate, number, and distribution of Hispanic status dropouts who speak Spanish at home, ages 16–24, by enrollment in U.S. schools and English language ability: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	1.88	67	—	—
Speaks English well[1]	1.89	51	3.53	1.71
Speaks English not well[2]	3.85	33	3.53	1.71
Ever enrolled in U.S. schools	1.83	51	—	—
Speaks English well	1.87	48	3.41	1.24
Very well	2.00	42	4.85	1.98
Well	4.87	23	4.24	1.72
Speaks English not well	7.55	17	3.41	1.24
Not enrolled in U.S. schools	3.68	29	—	—
Speaks English well	9.46	15	3.55	3.45
Speaks English not well	3.80	24	3.55	3.45

—Not applicable.
[1]Consists of those who speak English very well or well.
[2]Consists of those who speak English not well or not at all.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A21—Standard errors for Table 21: Rate, number, and distribution of Hispanic status dropouts, ages 16–24, by language spoken at home, English language ability, and enrollment in ESL classes: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	1.64	74	—	—
Speaks only English	3.19	29	2.27	1.45
Speaks Spanish	1.88	67	2.27	1.45
Speaks English well	1.89	51	3.25	1.75
Ever enrolled in ESL classes	4.24	24	1.90	1.18
Never enrolled in ESL classes	2.11	46	3.10	1.79
Speaks English not well	3.85	33	3.24	1.40
Ever enrolled in ESL classes	7.86	18	1.94	0.79
Never enrolled in ESL classes	4.34	27	3.08	1.24

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A22—Standard errors for Table 22: Rate, number, and distribution of Hispanics who speak Spanish at home, ages 16–24, with limited English speaking ability, by enrollment in ESL classes and enrollment in U.S. schools: October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	3.85	33	—	—
Ever enrolled in ESL	7.86	18	4.19	3.67
Ever enrolled in U.S. schools	11.01	13	2.72	2.82
Not enrolled in U.S. schools	9.90	11	3.54	2.83
Never enrolled in ESL	4.34	27	4.19	3.67
Ever enrolled in U.S. schools	9.94	11	2.12	2.77
Not enrolled in U.S. schools	4.08	21	4.46	4.04

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A23—Standard errors for Table 23: Distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by highest level of education completed: October 1995

		Hispanics			
			Foreign-born		
Percent completing	Total U.S. Born	Born in U.S.	Total	Enrolled in U.S. schools	Never enrolled in U.S. schools
Grades 5 or 6	0.31	1.06	2.72	2.06	3.67
Grades 7 or 8	0.41	1.56	3.88	4.12	4.80
Grade 9	1.00	3.60	4.03	6.69	4.68
Grade 10	1.36	5.13	3.71	7.37	3.82
Grade 11	1.47	5.61	3.32	7.17	3.45
Grade 12, no diploma	0.87	4.02	2.42	5.48	2.52

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A24—Standard errors for Table 24: Rate of retention, ages 16–24, by background characteristics: October 1992 and October 1995

Characteristics	1992[1] Percent retained	1992[1] Grade of last retention[2] K-3	1992[1] Grade of last retention[2] 4-6	1992[1] Grade of last retention[2] 7-12	1995 Percent retained	1995 Grade of last retention[2] K-3	1995 Grade of last retention[2] 4-6	1995 Grade of last retention[2] 7-12
Total[2]	0.28	0.18	0.15	0.13	0.30	0.21	0.16	0.14
Sex								
Male	0.45	0.28	0.23	0.21	0.47	0.33	0.25	0.22
Female	0.35	0.22	0.18	0.16	0.37	0.27	0.19	0.16
Race-ethnicity								
White, non-Hispanic	0.33	0.21	0.16	0.14	0.35	0.26	0.18	0.15
Black, non-Hispanic	1.04	0.61	0.60	0.53	1.05	0.69	0.59	0.51
Hispanic	1.24	0.70	0.63	0.67	1.27	0.83	0.69	0.61
Region								
Northeast	0.55	0.35	0.29	0.22	0.59	0.42	0.29	0.29
Midwest	0.52	0.34	0.25	0.23	0.56	0.41	0.27	0.26
South	0.54	0.33	0.30	0.27	0.56	0.38	0.34	0.27
West	0.56	0.37	0.25	0.26	0.59	0.46	0.24	0.20
Income[3]								
Low	0.76	0.44	0.44	0.39	0.75	0.50	0.42	0.38
Middle	0.37	0.24	0.19	0.17	0.40	0.28	0.21	0.18
High	0.50	0.33	0.20	0.22	0.54	0.41	0.25	0.20

[1]Missing data for 1992 have been imputed for this analysis and the estimatees of retention rates may therefore differ from those previously published.

[2]Does not include 682 respondents (20 percent) in 1992 and 464 respondents (11 percent) in 1995 missing data on grade of last retention who are included in the total.

[3]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A25—Standard errors for Table 25: Rate, number, and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by repetition of grade(s): October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	0.29	93	—	—
Grade repetition				
Ever retained	1.04	45	1.13	0.30
Never retained	0.29	80	1.13	0.30

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A26—Standard errors for Table 26: Rate and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by retention status, sex, race, region, and income: October 1995

Characteristics	Ever retained			Never retained		
	Status dropout rate	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population	Status dropout rate	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	1.04	—	—	0.29	—	—
Sex						
Male	1.26	2.45	1.17	0.42	1.49	0.47
Female	1.81	2.45	1.17	0.39	1.49	0.47
Race-ethnicity						
White, non-Hispanic	1.31	2.41	1.18	0.28	1.48	0.44
Black, non-Hispanic	2.65	2.32	1.14	0.87	1.16	0.38
Hispanic	3.16	2.77	1.32	1.38	2.22	0.49
Region						
Northeast	2.02	1.53	0.80	0.47	0.83	0.32
Midwest	2.35	1.97	0.95	0.48	1.10	0.40
South	1.62	2.52	1.23	0.53	1.49	0.46
West	2.41	1.76	0.95	0.71	1.43	0.41
Income*						
Low	2.20	2.45	1.10	0.86	1.46	0.38
Middle	1.35	2.47	1.21	0.38	1.48	0.47
High	1.65	1.08	0.88	0.30	0.68	0.40

—Not applicable.

*Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A27—Standard errors for Table 27: Rate of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by retention status, sex, race, region, and income: October 1995

Characteristics	Total	Never retained	Retained	Grade of last retention[1] K – 3	4 – 8	9 – 12
Total	0.29	0.29	1.04	1.43	2.19	2.61
Sex						
Male	0.41	0.42	1.26	1.79	2.63	3.12
Female	0.40	0.39	1.81	2.34	3.85	4.68
Race-ethnicity						
White, non-Hispanic	0.30	0.28	1.31	1.70	2.87	3.47
Black, non-Hispanic	0.88	0.87	2.65	3.86	5.59	6.34
Hispanic	1.64	1.79	4.11	6.48	6.92	9.93
Region						
Northeast	0.49	0.47	2.02	2.76	4.38	4.61
Midwest	0.51	0.48	2.35	3.18	5.39	5.50
South	0.53	0.53	1.62	2.36	2.97	3.98
West	0.69	0.71	2.41	3.02	7.25	7.86
Income[2]						
Low	0.82	0.86	2.20	3.49	4.30	4.56
Middle	0.37	0.38	1.35	1.78	2.78	3.59
High	0.31	0.30	1.65	1.96	3.41	5.74

[1]Does not include 464 respondents missing data on grade of last retention who are included in the total.

[2]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A28—Standard errors for Table 28: Rate and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by timing of first retention: October 1995

Characteristics	Status rate	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Number of retentions			
never	0.29	1.13	0.30
one grade	1.13	1.02	0.27
two or more grades	3.87	0.51	0.10

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A29—Standard errors for Table 29: Rate, number, and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by disabling condition(s): October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	0.29	93	—	—
Disability status				
No disability	0.30	89	0.71	0.22
Disabiled	1.18	27	0.71	0.22
Specific learning disability	2.25	16	0.46	0.13
Learning only	2.45	14	0.38	0.11
Learning & other	5.21	9	0.26	0.06
All other disabilities	1.38	21	0.57	0.19
Type of disabling condition				
Blindness	9.14	—	—	0.03
Other vision impairment	1.72	9	0.24	0.11
Deafness	7.13	5	0.13	0.04
Other hearing impairment	—	—	—	—
Orthopedic impairment	3.84	8	0.22	0.07
Serious emotional disturbance	5.35	9	0.25	0.06
Speech impairment	4.97	7	0.19	0.06
Specific learning disability	2.25	16	0.46	0.13
Mental retardation	5.78	9	0.29	0.06
Mental illness	11.87	—	—	0.03
Other health impairment or serious illness	2.57	13	0.37	0.11

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A30—Standard errors for Table 30: Rate and distribution of status dropouts, ages 16–24, by sex and disabling condition(s): October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Percent of dropouts	Percent of population
		Males	
Total	0.41	—	—
No disability	0.42	1.11	0.34
Disabled	1.64	1.11	0.34
Learning only	3.10	0.64	0.19
Learning & other	6.78	0.41	0.10
All other disabilities	1.99	0.86	0.27
		Females	
Total	0.40	—	—
No disability	0.41	0.87	0.29
Disabled	1.68	0.87	0.29
Learning only	3.89	0.39	0.13
Learning & other	8.10	0.31	0.08
All other disabilities	1.88	0.73	0.26

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A31—Standard errors for Table 31: Status dropout rate, ages 16–24, by race-ethnicity and disabling condition(s): October 1995

Characteristics	Status dropout rate	Percent of population
	White non-Hispanic	
Total	0.30	—
No disability	0.31	1.17
Disabled	1.26	1.17
Learning only	2.77	0.72
Learning & other	5.84	0.45
All other disabilities	1.39	0.86
	Black non-Hispanic	
Total	0.75	—
No disability	0.75	2.10
Disabled	4.34	2.10
Learning only	—	—
Learning & other	—	—
All other disabilities	5.37	1.74
	Hispanic	
Total	1.09	—
No disability	1.12	0.78
Disabled	4.60	0.78
Learning only	—	—
Learning & other	—	—
All other disabilities	5.52	0.78

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A32—Standard errors for Table 32: Status dropout rates for 16- to 24- year-olds by retention status and disabling condition(s): October 1995

Characteristics	Dropout rate		
	Total	Never retained	Retained
Total	0.29	0.29	1.04
No disability	0.30	0.29	1.14
Disabled	1.18	1.26	2.57
Learning only	2.45	3.17	3.75
Learning & other	5.21	7.68	6.83
All other disabilities	1.38	1.34	3.98

—Not applicable

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table A33—Supporting data for Figure 1: Event dropout rates for grades 10–12, ages 15–24, by race–ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995

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

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Numbers for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Bureau of the Census for cases with missing data on school enrollment items.

[3]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.

[4]Numbers in these years may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table A34—Standard errors for Figure 1: Event dropout rates for grades 10–12, ages 15–24, by race–ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995

Year	Total	Race–ethnicity[1]		
		White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
		(percent)		
1972	0.33	0.34	1.32	2.80
1973	0.33	0.35	1.35	2.65
1974	0.34	0.35	1.41	2.52
1975	0.32	0.33	1.25	2.49
1976	0.32	0.35	1.15	2.05
1977	0.34	0.37	1.20	2.13
1978	0.34	0.36	1.30	2.74
1979	0.34	0.37	1.32	2.43
1980	0.33	0.35	1.20	2.56
1981	0.33	0.34	1.29	2.28
1982	0.34	0.36	1.21	2.31
1983	0.33	0.35	1.18	2.44
1984	0.33	0.36	1.06	2.51
1985	0.34	0.37	1.26	2.55
1986	0.32	0.34	1.05	2.69
1987[2]	0.28	0.31	1.16	1.74
1988[2]	0.36	0.39	1.20	3.09
1989[2]	0.36	0.37	1.39	2.65
1990[2]	0.33	0.36	1.12	2.27
1991[2]	0.34	0.36	1.20	2.18
1992[2,3]	0.35	0.38	1.09	2.24
1993[2,3]	0.36	0.40	1.20	2.03
1994[2,3,4]	0.37	0.40	1.22	2.19
1995[2,3,4]	0.38	0.41	1.18	2.31

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Numbers for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Bureau of the Census for cases with missing data on school enrollment items.

[3]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.

[4]Numbers in these years may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table A35—Supporting data for Figure 2: Event dropout rates from grades 10–12, ages 15–24, by income: October 1972 through October 1995

Characteristics	Event dropout rate	Family income[1]		
		Low income level	Middle income level	High income level
1972	6.1	14.1	6.7	2.5
1973	6.3	17.3	7.0	1.8
1974[2]	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	4.1	10.3	4.7	1.0
1988	4.8	13.7	4.7	1.3
1989	4.5	10.0	5.0	1.1
1990	4.0	9.5	4.3	1.1
1991	4.0	10.6	4.0	1.0
1992	4.4	10.9	4.4	1.3
1993	4.5	12.3	4.3	1.3
1994	5.3	13.0	5.2	2.1
1995	5.7	13.3	5.7	2.0

[1]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; 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 the technical appendix to this report for a full definition of family income.

[2]Data not available for this year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table A36—Standard errors for Figure 2: Event dropout rates from grades 10–12, ages 15–24, by income: October 1972 through October 1995

Characteristics	Event dropout rate	Family income[1]		
		Low income level	Middle income level	High income level
1972	0.37	1.73	0.50	0.44
1973	0.37	1.84	0.52	0.36
1974[2]	0.38			
1975	0.36	1.75	0.48	0.43
1976	0.36	1.79	0.52	0.37
1977	0.37	1.72	0.53	0.39
1978	0.38	1.86	0.53	0.44
1979	0.38	1.78	0.52	0.49
1980	0.37	1.66	0.51	0.42
1981	0.36	1.65	0.49	0.46
1982	0.36	1.60	0.49	0.37
1983	0.35	1.42	0.50	0.42
1984	0.36	1.56	0.48	0.39
1985	0.36	1.60	0.49	0.41
1986	0.34	1.40	0.48	0.37
1987	0.32	1.35	0.47	0.28
1988	0.35	1.53	0.46	0.33
1989	0.35	1.37	0.49	0.32
1990	0.34	1.41	0.46	0.33
1991	0.33	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	0.37	1.55	0.48	0.44
1995	0.38	1.46	0.51	0.42

[1]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; 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 the technical appendix to this report for a full definition of family income.

[2]Data not available for this year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table A37—Supporting data for Figure 3: Status dropout rates for persons ages 16–24, by race–ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995

Year	Total	Race–ethnicity		
		White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
		(percent)		
1972	14.6	12.3	21.3	34.3
1973	14.1	11.6	22.2	33.5
1974	14.3	11.8	21.2	33.0
1975	13.9	11.4	22.8	29.2
1976	14.1	11.9	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	11.3	19.2	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	14.1	30.1
1987[2]	12.7	10.4	14.2	28.6
1988[2]	12.9	9.6	14.3	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

[1] Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Numbers for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Bureau of the Census for cases with missing data on school enrollment items.

[3]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.

[4]Numbers in this year may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table A38—Standard errors for Figure 3: Status dropout rates for persons ages 16–24, by race–ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995

Year	Total	Race–ethnicity[1]		
		White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
		(percent)		
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	0.26	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	1.92
1983	0.28	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[2]	0.28	0.30	0.91	1.84
1988[2]	0.31	0.32	1.00	2.30
1989[2]	0.31	0.32	0.98	2.19
1990[2]	0.29	0.30	0.94	1.92
1991[2]	0.30	0.31	0.95	1.94
1992[2,3]	0.28	0.29	0.95	1.86
1993[2,3]	0.28	0.29	0.94	1.79
1994[2,3,4]	0.28	0.29	0.89	1.66
1995[2,3,4]	0.29	0.30	0.88	1.64

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Numbers for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Bureau of the Census for cases with missing data on school enrollment items.

[3]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.

[4]Numbers in this year may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table A39—Supporting data for Figure 4: Completion rates for persons ages 18–24 not currently in high school or below, by race–ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995

Year	Total	Race–ethnicity[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

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Numbers for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Bureau of the Census for cases with missing data on school enrollment items.

[3]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.

[4]Numbers in this year may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table A40—Standard errors for Figure 4: Completion rates for persons ages 18–24 not currently enrolled in high school or below, by race–ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995

Year	Total	Race–ethnicity[1]		
		White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
1972	0.35	0.35	1.42	2.78
1973	0.34	0.34	1.39	2.79
1974	0.33	0.34	1.38	2.57
1975	0.33	0.33	1.40	2.61
1976	0.33	0.34	1.33	2.55
1977	0.33	0.34	1.33	2.52
1978	0.33	0.33	1.32	2.45
1979	0.33	0.30	1.32	2.40
1980	0.32	0.33	1.26	2.28
1981	0.32	0.33	1.20	2.22
1982	0.34	0.35	1.26	2.36
1983	0.34	0.35	1.25	2.39
1984	0.33	0.35	1.18	2.32
1985	0.33	0.35	1.18	2.39
1986	0.33	0.35	1.17	2.29
1987[2]	0.35	0.37	1.19	2.23
1988[2]	0.38	0.39	1.33	2.70
1989[2]	0.38	0.39	1.30	2.62
1990[2]	0.36	0.37	1.23	2.35
1991[2]	0.37	0.38	1.26	2.32
1992[2,3]	0.36	0.36	1.27	2.32
1993[2,3]	0.36	0.37	1.27	2.26
1994[2,3,4]	0.36	0.36	1.19	2.06
1995[2,3,4]	0.37	0.38	1.18	2.00

[1]Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately.

[2]Numbers for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Bureau of the Census for cases with missing data on school enrollment items.

[3]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.

[4]Numbers in this year may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

APPENDIX B

Technical Notes

Definition of Who Is a Dropout

There are variations in the dropout definitions in the existing data sources, including the Current Population Survey (CPS), the High School and Beyond Study (HS&B), and the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88). In addition, the age or grade span examined and the type of dropout rate—status, event, or cohort—varies across the data sources. Furthermore, there were potentially significant changes in CPS procedures in 1986, 1992, and 1994.

The new collection through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD) is designed to be consistent with the current CPS procedures. However, the CCD collection includes all dropouts in grades 7 through 12 versus only grades 10 through 12 in CPS, it is on administrative records rather than a household survey as in CPS, and counts anyone receiving a GED outside of a regular (approved) secondary education program as a dropout as opposed to the CPS approach of counting GED certificate holders as high school completers.

One of the concerns addressed in the new National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD) data collection on dropouts is the development and implementation of a nationally consistent definition of a dropout to be used in school districts and state departments of education. Currently, there is considerable variation across local, state, and federal data collections on such issues as:

- whether those below the legal school-leaving age are identified as dropouts;
- whether those who complete a grade and dropout over the summer are attributed to the grade completed or the next grade;
- whether students entering correctional institutions are considered dropouts;
- whether those in GED programs or with an equivalency certificate are considered dropouts;
- whether those not graduating with their class (but never leaving school) are considered dropouts; and
- whether those leaving high school early to enter college are considered dropouts.

There will, no doubt, be some discontinuities in dropout reporting as the new and more consistent data become available.

Defining and Calculating Event Dropout Rates Using the CCD

The Common Core of Data (CCD) administered by NCES is an annual survey of the state-level education agencies in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the outlying areas. Statistical information is collected on public schools, staff, students, and finance.

A dropout data collection component was field tested 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 at school districts and schools. The field test data were used to inform the design of a dropout statistics component for CCD.

In the CCD dropout data collection the event of dropping out is the focus of the collection. A school dropout is defined as an individual who was enrolled in school at some time during the previous year, was not enrolled at the beginning of the current school year, had not graduated from high school or completed an approved educational program, and did not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions:

- death;
- temporary absence due to suspension or illness; or
- transfer to another public school district, private school, or state- or district-approved education program.

For the purpose of this definition:

- a school year is the 12-month period of time beginning with the normal opening of school in the fall, with dropouts from the previous summer reported for the year and grade for which they fail to enroll;
- an individual has graduated from high school or completed an approved education program upon receipt of formal recognition from school authorities; and
- a state- or district-approved education program may include special education programs, home-based instruction, and school-sponsored GED preparation.

This new 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 1993–94 date were submitted as a component of the 1994–95 CCD.

There were fifteen states that reported 1991–92 data that are consistent with the specified definition. State data submissions for the 1994–95 CCD show that 43 states and the District of Columbia submitted dropout data for 1993–94, and in 24 of the states and the District of Columbia the data are consistent with the specified definition.

Defining and Calculating Dropout Rates Using the CPS

Event Rates

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

The numerator of the event rate for 1995 is the number of persons 15- through 24-years-old surveyed in 1995 (grades 10–12) who were enrolled in high school in October 1994, were not enrolled in high school in October 1995, and who also did not complete high school (that is, had not received a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate) between October 1994 and October 1995.

The denominator of the event rate is the sum of the dropouts (that is, the numerator) and the number of all persons 15- through 24-years-old who attended grades 10, 11, and 12 last year who are still enrolled or who graduated or completed high school last year.

The dropout interval is defined to include the previous summer and the current 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 young adult's enrollment status in October of two consecutive years, any students who drop out and return within the 12-month period are not counted as dropouts.

Status Rates

The status dropout rate is a cumulative rate that estimates the proportion of young adults who are dropouts, regardless of when they dropped out.

The numerator of the status rate for 1995 is the number of young adults ages 16- through 24-years of age who, as of October 1995, have not completed high school and are not currently enrolled. The denominator is the total number of 16- through 24-year-olds in October 1995.

CPS Design

CPS is a nationally representative sample survey of all households. The survey is conducted in approximately 60,000 dwelling units in 729 primary sampling units. Dwelling units are in-sample for four successive monthly interviews, out-of-sample for the next 8 months, and then returned to the sample for the following four months. The sample frame is a complete list of dwelling-unit addresses at 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, non-institutionalized 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.

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

CPS Dropout Data Collection

CPS data on educational attainment and enrollment status in the current year and prior year are used to identify dropouts; and additional CPS data are used to describe some basic characteristics of dropouts. The CPS provides the only source of national time series data on dropout rates. However, because CPS collects no information on school characteristics and experiences, its uses in addressing dropout issues are primarily for providing some insights into who drops out. In addition, the sample design of the CPS yields estimates for Hispanics that tend to have large standard errors which make it difficult to understand patterns in Hispanic dropout rates.

Changes Introduced in 1986

In an effort to improve data quality, in 1986 the Bureau of Census instituted new editing procedures for cases with missing data on school enrollment items. The effect of the editing changes were 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 and a decrease in the number of students enrolled last year but not enrolled in the current year. The new editing procedures lowered, but not significantly, the 1986 event rate for grades 10–12, ages 14- through 24, 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).

Changes Introduced in 1992

Prior to 1992, educational attainment was based on the control card questions on highest grade attended and completed. Identification as a high school graduate was derived based on attendance and completion of grade 12.

The control card items used to identify educational attainment were:

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

The 1992 redesign of the CPS introduced a change in the data used to identify high school completers. Dropout data from the CPS year are now based on a combination of control card data on educational attainment and October Supplement data on school enrollment and educational attainment. In 1992 the Census Bureau changed the items on the control card which measured each individual's educational attainment.

The October CPS Supplement 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, 199-, that is of October of last year?
- What grade or year was...attending last year?

The new control card educational attainment item is as follows:

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

Educational attainment status is now based on the response to the control card item. The following response categories are used for high school:

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

Students whose highest grade completed the 9th, 10th, or 11th grade are assumed to have dropped out in the next grade.

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

- high school graduate—high school diploma or the equivalent (for example GED),
- 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 control card educational item.

Differences in the pre- and post-1992 methods of identifying high school completers come from the observation that 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 have an impact on the numbers and proportions of event and status dropouts

Differences in event rates. In the case of the event rate, in prior years students who completed 12th grade and left school without graduation or certification 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).[50] The current use of actual graduation or completion status includes the first group as dropouts and the second group as completers.

Compared to before, the event dropout rate includes 12th graders who did not receive a credential of some sort in the numerator count of dropouts and the early completers are subtracted from the numerator. The denominator is not changed.

The net effect of these changes is small, resulting in an increase in the aggregate event dropout rate that is 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.[51] Using the old items, the estimated event rate for 1992 was 4.0, compared with a rate of 4.4 percent in 1992 using the new educational attainment item.

Differences in the status rate. The status rate involves a third group of students who were miscoded prior to 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. Prior to 1992 these young adults were coded as dropouts. Since 1992 members of this group have been coded as graduates or completers. Furthermore, the explicit inclusion of high school graduation or completion, including the GED (e.g. "GED" as a response category may have increased the likelihood of identifying late completers.

Under the procedures introduced in 1992, the 12th graders who do not complete high school or the equivalent are added to the numerator of the status dropout rate and early and late completers are subtracted from the numerator. The denominator is not changed. These changes, especially 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 rises to 11.4 percent rather than the 11.0 percent based on the educational attainment item. However, the estimate of 11.4 percent is still much lower than the status rate for 1991 (12.5 percent). While this 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 the introduction of 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.

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[50] Although prior to 1992 the questionnaire did not have the words “high school diploma or equivalency certificate”, the interviewer instruction 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.

[51] Unlike prior 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 Census Bureau. For this analysis we imputed missing on these variables based on the grade they attended last year (if enrolled last year). For those individuals that were missing data and were not enrolled last year we imputed their highest grade completed by examining the responses to the new educational attainment variable.

Special education students. One exception to the procedures to identify dropouts in CPS is the categorization of special education students. In principle, efforts are made by the Census Bureau to identify special education students in special schools and treat them as not enrolled. However, if special education students are not identified, they may be reported as completing 12th grade with no diploma. If this happens, they will, by definition, be counted as dropouts.

Changes Introduced in 1994

During the 1994 data collection and processing two additional changes were implemented in the CPS. Computer assisted telephone interviewing was introduced, resulting in higher completion 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, and adjustments for undercount in the 1990 Census were included. Thus, any age, sex, or race/ethnicity groups that were found to be under-represented in the 1990 Census are given increased weights. An analysis of the effect of the changes in the benchmarking year using the 1993 data indicate that the change especially effected the weights assigned to Hispanic young adults (table B1).

Table B1—Average weight and number in population using 1980 and 1990 Census based weights, by race ethnicity: October 1993

	1980 Based		1980 Based		
	Average weight	Number in thousands (population)	Average weight	Number in thousands (population)	Percentage change
Race-ethnicity					
White non-Hispanic	1.79	23,911	1.84	24,611	2.7
Black non-Hispanic	2.25	5,087	2.33	5,285	3.4
Hispanic	2.09	3,998	2.48	4,747	15.7
Other	1.32	1,351	1.51	1,541	12.6

These changes have the potential for affecting both the numerator and denominator of the dropout rates. Analyses of the 1993 data show that the change in the benchmark year for the sample weights increased the male and Hispanic status and event dropout rates, while having little effect on the white or black rates (table B2).

Table B2—Estimated event and status rates based on 1980 census controls and 1990 Census controls : October 1993

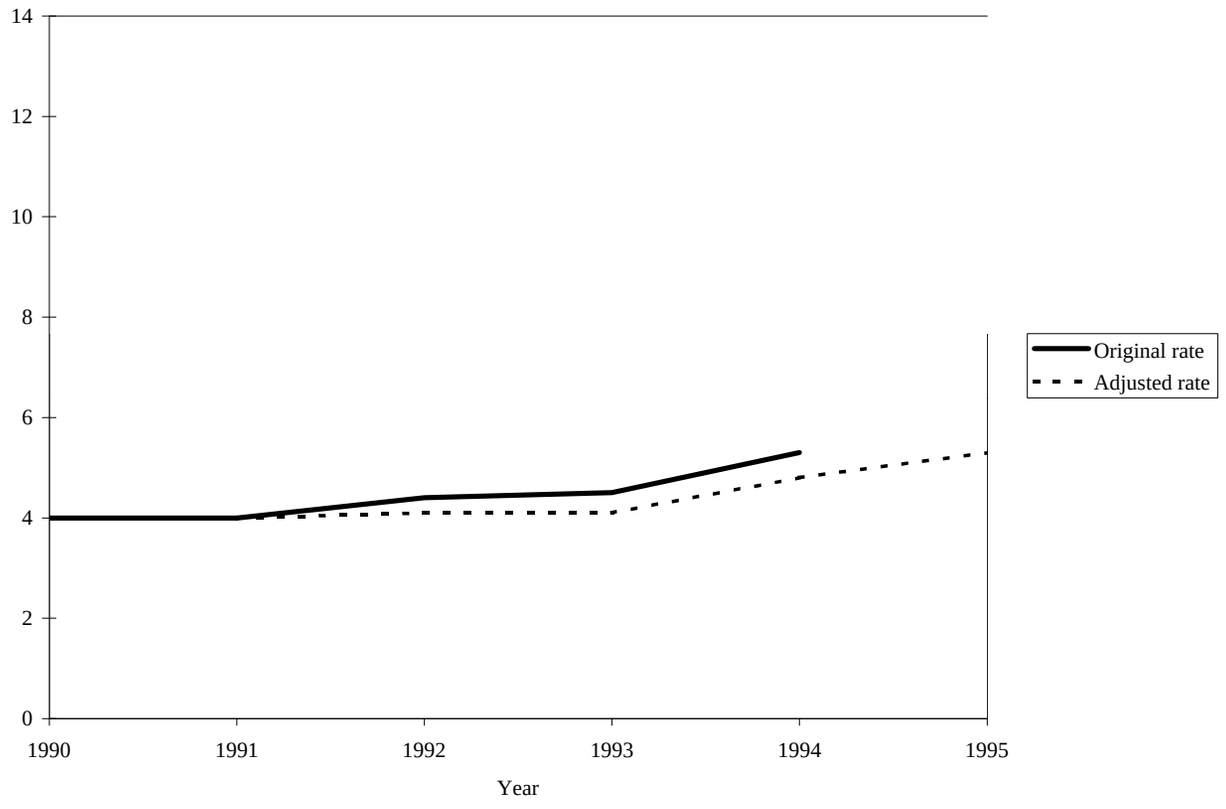
	1980 based weights		1990 based weights		Difference in rates	
	Event	Status	Event	Status	Event	Status
Total	4.46	11.01	4.52	11.36	1.3%	3.2%
Sex						
Male	4.58	11.17	4.65	11.61	1.5	4.0
Female	4.34	10.85	4.38	11.10	1.0	2.3
Race-ethnicity						
White non-Hispanic	3.93	7.94	3.95	7.96	0.5	0.3
Black non-Hispanic	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
Family income						
Low income level	12.32	23.88	12.44	24.38	1.0	2.1
Middle income level	4.33	9.90	4.36	10.22	0.7	3.2
High income level	1.34	2.72	1.36	2.75	1.1	1.3

Table B2 also shows that overall the change in control years had a larger impact on status rates than on event rates. Using the 1990 controls increases the event rate by only 1.3 percent, but raises the status rate by 3.2 percent—from 11.0 percent to 11.4 percent.

Summary of Changes Since 1992

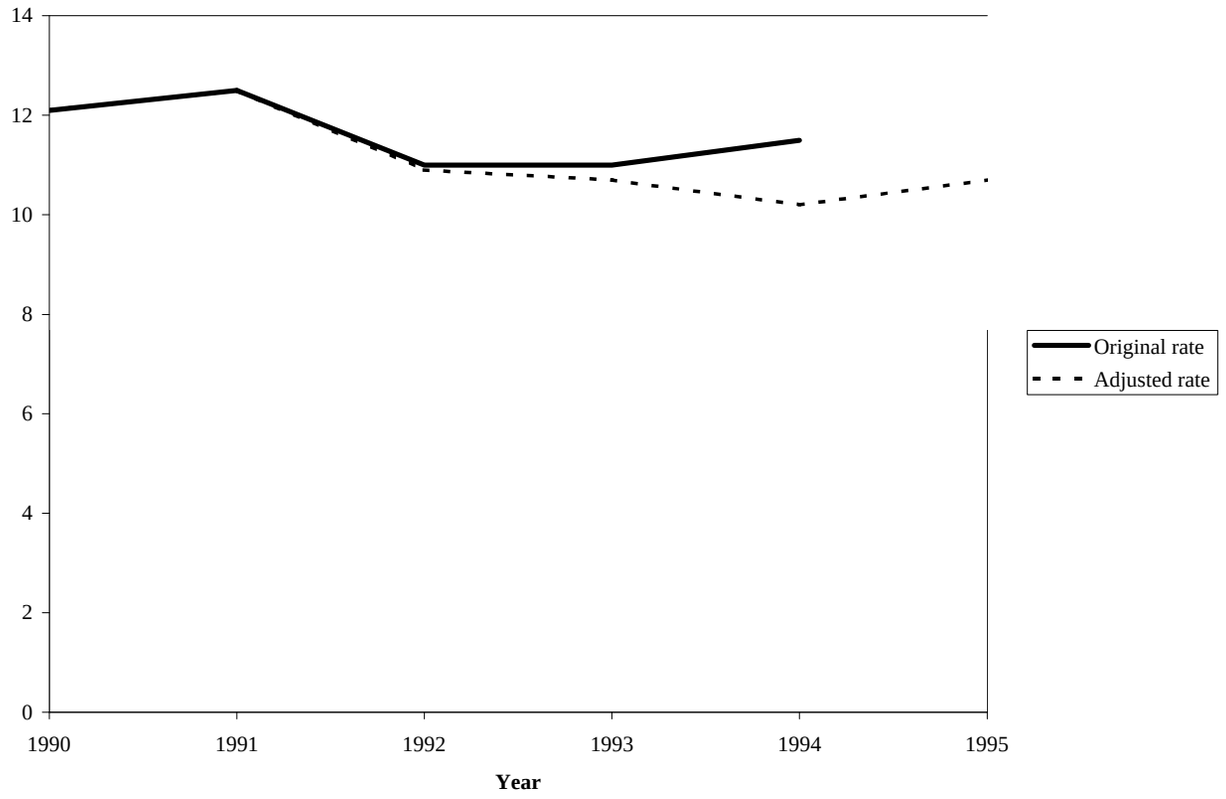
Figures B1 and B2 display the actual event and status rates from 1990 to 1995 and also event and status rates which attempt to adjust for the various changes in CPS since 1992. The details of these adjustments are described in the next section.

Figure B1—Event rates, actual and adjusted: 1990 to 1995



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, various years, unpublished data

Figure B2—Status rates, actual and adjusted: 1990 to 1995



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, various years, unpublished data

These figures of adjusted rates reflect the fact that we can adjust for the increase in the *status* rates of the weighting changes in 1994 and the increase in the *event* rates associated with the change to the new educational attainment item in 1992. What is more difficult to account for is the drop in *status* rates between 1991 and 1992 and for the increase in *event* rates from 1993 to 1995. It is plausible that the decrease in status rate in 1992 was due to the fact that the introduction of the educational attainment item to the control card resulted in the collection of better data throughout the survey, including the data on years of school completed. While we cannot rule out that this drop in the status rate represented real change in the proportion of 16- to 24-year-olds who were dropouts in 1992, if true, this single year drop would represent the largest one year drop in the history of the time series.

There also appears to be an increase in the event rate from 1993 through 1995; although the year-to-year increases are not statistically significant. The adjustment for the definitional changes between 1991 and 1992 "corrects" for or "explains" the increase observed in the actual data from 1991 to 1992. And a ratio adjustment of the 1990 to the 1980 based rates is constant over time. However, changes over time in the relative size of each subpopulation and their respective contributions to the pool of dropouts is likely to result in a change in the ratio of 1990 to 1980 based rates over time; thus, intercensal estimates based on 1990 data are likely to yield a different pattern of year to year change than was observed in intercensal estimates based on 1980 data. This factor was not taken into consideration in the adjusted rates in figures B1 and B2. Thus, the apparent increases may be due to changing population dynamics that were beyond the

scope of this analysis, or they represent the beginning of a real increase in event dropout rates (which would eventually effect the status rates as well). Alternatively, this apparent increase may be due to mere statistical fluctuations owing to sampling error and does not represent real change. Several more years of data are needed in order to answer these questions.

Details of Adjustment Procedures

Changes in 1992. In prior years students who completed 12th grade and left school without graduation or certification were counted as completers when they were in fact dropouts. It was fairly simple to subtract from the numerators of both the status and the event rates, thus treating them as before, as completers. The SPSS code is listed below:

```
compute event2=event.
compute status2=status.
if (enlastyr eq 1 & edat eq 38 and enroll eq 2) event2=0.
if (edat eq 38 and enroll eq 2) status2=0.
variable labels
  status2 "Status without 12th grade non completers"
  event2 "Event without 12th grade non completers".
```

As stated earlier, the status rate involves two other groups of students who were miscoded prior to 1992. On the one hand, students who left school because they completed high school before the 12th grade were identified as dropouts when they were really early completers. Another group of 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. Prior to 1992 these young adults were coded as dropouts. Since 1992 members of this group have been coded as graduates or completers. In order to adjust the post 1992 rates to be equivalent to prior years, these cases had to be identified and then added back into the numerator and counted as dropouts. In principle this should have been straightforward. In 1992, the survey asked both the items that are used to create the “years completed” variable and also the new educational attainment item. Those former students with an educational attainment of 39 (high school diploma or GED) or more and with less than 12 years completed should be those late completers that prior to 1992 were counted as dropouts. Unfortunately, there were missing data on the “years completed” variable. To compensate, we took the proportion of status completers who had a code greater than 38 on the educational attainment item (graduate or more) and had less than 12 years completed and applied that ratio to the number of status completers. For example, of the 10,606,000 (weighted) cases who 1) had a code of 39 or above on the educational attainment item, 2) were not currently enrolled in school, and 3) had a non-missing value on the “years completed” variable, 2.3 percent had been reported to have completed less than 12 years of school. We therefore took this proportion and applied it to the proportion of all young persons who had a code of 39 or above and were not enrolled in school (11,647,000). This resulted in 279,000 (2.3 percent of 11,647,000) persons that we subtracted out of the numerator of the status dropout rate.

Changes in 1994. The only change that we could estimate was the impact of the weighting change on the estimates for 1994 and 1995. The Census Bureau provided us with 1990 control weights for the 1993 data. The ratio of the rates calculated by the 1980 weights in 1993 to the rates calculated with the 1990 based weights were then applied to the 1994 and 1995 event and

status rates. As shown in table B2, changes in the benchmarking year had little effect on overall rates, but did have an effect on Hispanic rates.

We had no way of gauging the impact of CPS implementing computer assisted interviews in 1994. Clearly, this innovation has resulted in better, cleaner, and more accurate data. This can be concluded from the absence of outliers seen in previous waves of the survey (e.g. 24-year-olds enrolled in the 3rd grade). Both the estimates for event and status rates went up (though non-significantly) in 1994, leading one to believe that CATI may have had some influence on the estimate. The estimates in 1995 also showed apparent (though not statistically significantly) increases; again, these changes are likely to be linked to the changes associated with CATI, since in this second year, preloaded data were based on the "improved" data from the first year of the CATI operation. Alternatively, the apparent changes could represent the beginning of a real increase in dropout rates, or they could be noting more than statistical fluctuations owing to sampling error. Again, several more years of data are needed in order to answer these questions.

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 graduation and completion rates.

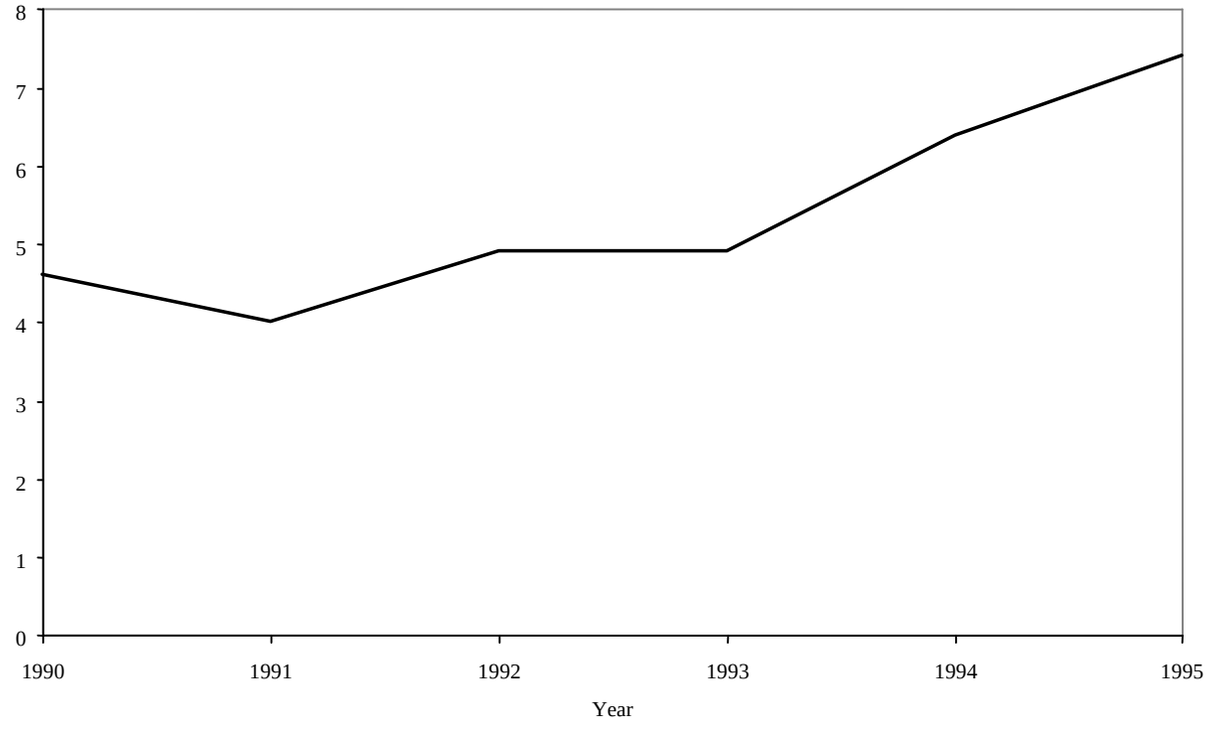
In years prior to 1974, completion rates were reported in a series of separate two year age groups, but no overall rates comparable to the event and status dropout rates were computed. The completion rate computed and published first in 1994, and now again for 1995 is for the young adult population in the years beyond high school—that is, the 18- to 24-year-old population. These rates are reported nationally by race-ethnicity and at the state level, three year moving averages are computed to yield more stable estimates.

As was noted in the text, the state completion rates reflect the experiences of the 18- to 24-year-olds living in the state at the time of the interview; thus, movements in and out of states to accommodate employment and post-secondary education may be evident in some states. For example, a state with a relatively large unskilled labor workplace sector might have a lower high school completion rate than anticipated, due to an influx of young workers. 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 post-secondary students.

Increases in GED rates

The section on completion indicated that there was a substantial increase in the last couple of years in the estimate of the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds getting GED's. In 1990 it was only 4.0 percent, but went from 4.9 in 1993 to 6.4 in 1994 and 7.4 in 1995. Although the standard errors on these estimates are fairly large, the absolute change is also quite large. The large increases in 1994 and 1995 came at the time that CPS instituted CATI in 1994. The figure below shows this increase:

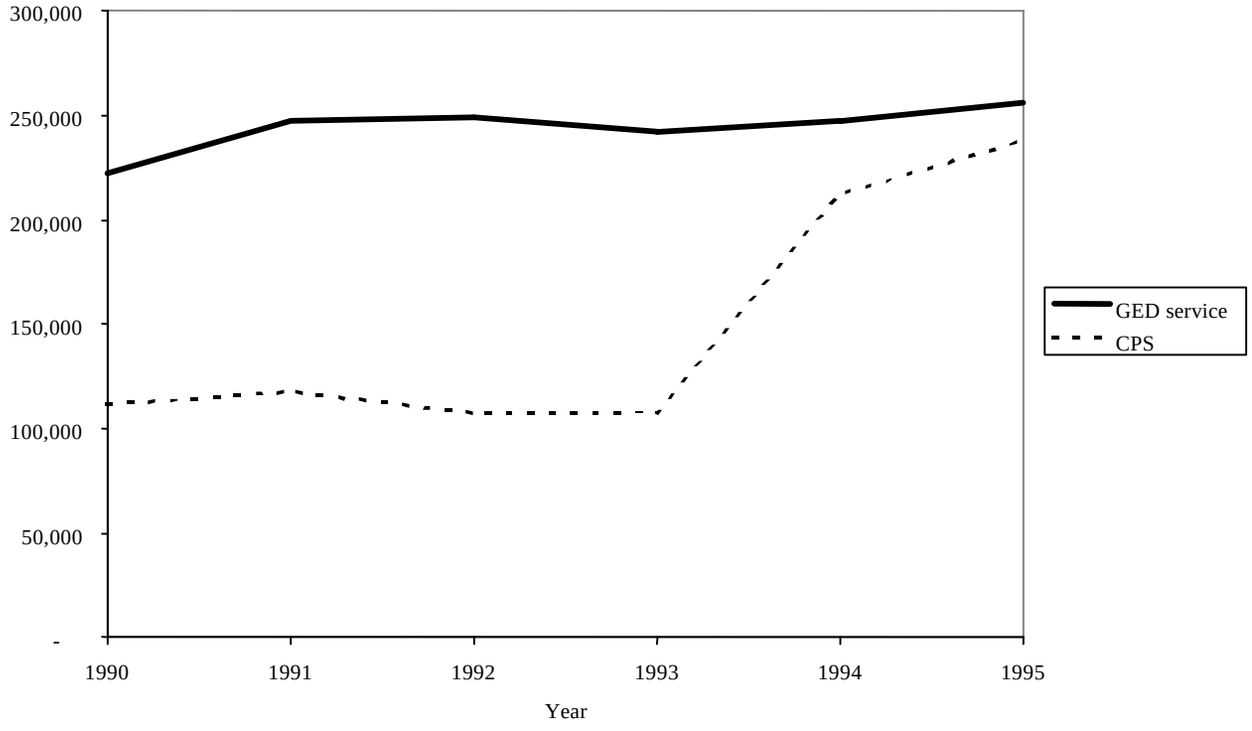
Figure B3—Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds completing high school by earning a GED



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, various years, unpublished data

The American Council on Education, who 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- to 24-year-olds who received a GED in the past year for 1990 through 1995. It is also possible to estimate the same quantity from the CPS data for 1990 to 1995 by looking at only those who were reported to have completed a GED last year and using this, along with the GED item, to calculate how many 18- to 24-year-olds obtained GEDs each year. This results in the following figure:

Figure B4—Number of 18- to 24-year-olds who received a GED in given year



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, various years, unpublished data; and American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, *GED Statistical Report* 1990 to 1995.

The CPS numbers for 1994 and 1995 are much closer to the estimates from the American Council on Education than previous years. It seems reasonable that in the CPS data since the institution of CATI, better data on the number of GEDs are being collected and that the increases seen in 1994 and 1995 are a reflection of better more accurate data collection and not a change in the actual number of young people getting GED's.

Definition of Family Income in 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, and so forth. 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.

Income for families from which no income information was obtained (about 5 percent of families) was imputed. A sequential hotdeck procedure was used. A total of 200 imputation classes were created—5 levels of the age of head of household by 5 levels of the education of the head of household by 2 levels for the employment status of the head of household, and 4 levels of the number of workers in the household. To minimize the multiple use of a single donor, up to 5

donors were placed in each imputation class. A donor was selected at random from these when a family with missing income information was encountered. In a few instances (about 10 of 50,000 families in each year) an imputation class had no donors but a family from the class with missing income information was encountered. In these cases a donor was selected by collapsing similar classes until a non-empty imputation class was created.

To facilitate comparisons over time, the categorical family income information was transformed into a continuous family income variable. The transformation was accomplished by randomly assigning for each family an income value from the income interval to which their income belonged. For intervals below the median a rectangular probability density function was used; for those above the median a Pareto probability density function was used. The methodology has a feature that if the continuous family income variable were transformed back to a categorical family income variable, the value for each family would be identical to the original data. Based on the continuous family income variable, a family income percentile variable is calculated for each person in the survey which represents that person's position in the family income distribution. For example, if 25 percent of all persons have a lower value of family income (and 75 percent have a higher value), then the person's family income percentile variable has a value of 25. The methodology gives all persons in the same household the same value of both the categorical and continuous versions of family income. 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 than their current family income. (The problem is potentially greatest with status dropouts who could have dropped out several years ago.)

Furthermore, family income is 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 that 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 household income of the respondent may not accurately reflect that person's family background. In particular, in 1991 some of the dropouts in the 15- through 24-year age range were not still living in a family unit with a parent present. However, an analysis of 1991 status dropout rates by family income, race—ethnicity, and family status (presence of parent in the household) indicates that the bias introduced by persons not living in their parent's household is small (table B2). For example, while only 62 percent of 16- through 24-year-olds lived with at least one parent, the status dropout rates for black and white persons were similar with or without the parent present. For example, 20.6 percent of low income blacks without a parent present were dropouts compared with 21.3 percent of those living in their parent's household. In addition, the relationship between dropout rates and income held within each racial category regardless of whether the person was living in a household with his or her parent. That is, blacks and whites within income levels dropped out at similar levels—with or without the parent present. However, this was not true of Hispanics. Hispanics in upper income levels not residing with either parent were more likely than upper income Hispanics with parents present to be status dropouts.

Table B3—Percentage of status dropouts by household type by race—ethnicity and income: October 1992

	Total	Parent not present	Parent present
Total	100.0	38.0	62.0
White, non-Hispanic	100.0	37.1	62.9
Low income	19.9	20.5	18.1
Middle income	7.9	10.0	6.6
High income	2.1	7.7	1.6
Black, non-Hispanic	100.0	33.9	66.1
Low income	21.0	20.6	21.3
Middle income	7.6	9.1	7.1
High income	3.0	4.1	2.7
Hispanic	100.0	48.7	51.3
Low income	45.8	59.6	26.2
Middle income	28.4	46.0	15.4
High income	12.8	28.4	8.3

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1991, unpublished data.

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, Washington D.C., 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 variable on the control card inquiring about the citizenship status of the reference person:

Citizen Status:

1= Native, born in the US
2=Native, born in Puerto Rico of us outlying area
3=Native, born abroad of American parent or parents
4=Foreign born, US citizen by naturalization
5=Foreign born, Not a citizen of the US

Those coded ‘1’ above (Native, born in US) were considered born in US. All others were considered foreign born. (Less than one percent of Hispanics were born abroad of American parents).

Definition of English Language Ability in CPS

English language ability for Hispanics 16- to 24-year olds was derived from several items in the CPS October Supplement. The first items was:

Does … speak a language other than English at home?

1=Yes
2=No - Speaks only English

For those who answered “yes” to this item they were asked the following question:

What is this language?

1=Spanish
2=Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese)
3=Other European (e.g. French, German, Polish)
4=Other

For Hispanics, 98.9 percent who spoke another language at home spoke Spanish. Also, for those persons who spoke another language at home other than English only, the respondent was asked:

How well does … speak English?

1=Very well
2=Well
3=Not well
4=Not at all

For some of the tables in this report, the first two categories of the above item were collapsed into “Speak English well” and the last two categories were collapsed into “Speak English not well.”

Imputation for Item Non-Response

For many key items in the October CPS, the Bureau of the Census imputes data for cases with missing data due to item non-response. However, for some of the items that were used in this report item non-response was not imputed by the Bureau of the Census. 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.[52] Three categories of age, two categories of race, two categories of sex, and two categories of citizenship were used as imputation cells. The following table shows the variables for which missing data were imputed and the number of unweighted cases imputed:

Table B4—Imputed variables and unweighted counts of imputed cases

	Age group			
	15-24		16-24	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Using age, sex, race:				
Completed high school by equivalency test (hsbyged)	780	8.4	780	8.4
Repeated a grade (repeat)	1,400	8.2	1,262	8.4
Years attended U.S. school (Foreign-born, not enrolled) (schyrus1)	28	7.8	28	7.8
Years attended U.S. school (Foreign-born, enrolled) (schyrus2)	169	19.3	144	19.4
Using age, sex, race, citizen:				
Ever taken course to read/write English as a second language (esl)	309	11.3	118	8.8
How well speak English (spkeng)	267	9.8	172	8.5
Does disability affect ability to learn (learndis)	11	0.9	8	0.8
Speak other than English at home (spkothr)	1,152	6.8	907	6.4
Ever attended a U.S. school (schatusa)	155	0.9	150	0.9

Imputations were conducted for all 15- through 24-year-olds, but only for the 16- through 24-year-olds for status calculations. Also, esl and spkeng were imputed based on spkothr=1 (not English speaker).

Defining and Calculating Cohort Dropout Rates Using NELS:88

The NELS:88 baseline comprised a national probability sample of all regular public and private 8th-grade schools in the 50 states and District of Columbia in the 1987–88 school year. Excluded from the NELS:88 sample were Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, special education schools for the handicapped, area vocational schools that do not enroll students directly, and schools for dependents of U.S. personnel overseas; such school-level exclusions have a quite small impact on national estimates.

NELS:88 started with the base-year data collection in which students, parents, teachers, and school administrators were selected to participate in the survey. NELS:88 began with a target

[52] D. H. McLaughlin**,** *Imputation for Non-Response Adjustment*, American Institutes for Research, October 1991, updated: February 1994.

sample of 1,032 sample schools, of which 30 were deemed ineligible. Some 698 of the 1,002 eligible schools agreed to participate in the study. Given the longitudinal nature of the study, the initial school response rate of 69.7 percent was deemed too low to yield acceptable levels of schools, administrators, teachers, parents, and most importantly, students. To address this concern, a sample of sister schools was selected and 359 replacement schools were identified and added to the study. Responses were obtained from 1,057 schools, thus increasing the school response rate to 77.7 percent (1,057/(1,002+359)). Usable student data were received for 1,052 of the schools.

The total eighth-grade enrollment for the 1,052 NELS:88 sample schools was 202,996. During the listing procedures (before 24-26 students were selected per school), 5.35 percent of the students were excluded because they were identified by school staff as being incapable of completing the NELS:88 instruments owing to limitations in their language proficiency or to mental or physical disabilities. Ultimately, 93 percent or 24,599 of the sample students participated in the base-year survey in the spring of 1988.

The NELS:88 first follow-up survey was conducted in the spring of 1990. Students, dropouts, teachers, and school administrators participated in the followup, with a successful data collection effort for approximately 93 percent of the base-year student respondents. In addition, because the characteristics and education outcomes of the students excluded from the base year may differ from those of students who participated in the base-year data collection, a special study was initiated to identify the enrollment status of a representative sample of the base-year ineligible students. Data from this sample were then combined with first and second follow-up data for the computation of 8th- to 10th-grade, 10th- to 12th-grade, and 8th- to 12th-grade cohort dropout rates.

The second follow-up survey was conducted in the spring of 1992. Students, dropouts, parents, teachers, and school administrators participated in this followup. Approximately 91 percent of the sample of students participated in the second follow-up survey, with 88 percent of the dropouts responding.

The second follow-up High School Transcript Study was conducted in the Fall of 1992. Transcript data spanning the three or four years of high school (ninth or tenth through twelfth grades) were collected for 1) students attending, in the spring of 1992, schools sampled for the second follow-up school administrator and teacher surveys,[53] 2) all dropouts and dropouts in alternative programs who had attended high school for a minimum of one term; 3) all early graduates, regardless of school contextual sample type; and 4) triple ineligibles enrolled in the twelfth grade in the spring of 1992, regardless of school affiliation. Triple ineligibles are sample members who were ineligible—due to mental or physical handicap or language barrier—for the base year, first follow-up, and second follow-up surveys. The transcript data collected from schools included student-level data (e.g., number of days absent per school year, standardized test scores) and complete course-taking histories. Complete high school course-taking records were, of course, obtained only for those transcript survey sample members who graduated by the end of the spring term of 1992; incomplete records were collected for sample members who had

[53]School selected for the contextual components of the second follow-up the school administrator and teacher surveys. Care referred to as *contextual* schools. Sample members enrolled in those schools are referred to as *contextual* students.

dropped out of school, had fallen behind the modal progression sequence, or were enrolled in a special education program requiring or allowing more than twelve years of schooling.

A total of 1,287 contextual schools and 256 non-contextual schools responded to the request for transcripts. Reasons cited by school staff for not complying with the request included: inadequate permission for transcript release (some schools required parental permission for the release of minors' transcripts); no record of the sample, member, or no course-taking record because of brevity of enrollment; insufficient staff for transcript preparation (despite offers of remuneration for preparation costs); and archiving or transfer of sample member records. Student coverage rates were 89.5 percent for the total transcript sample and 74.2 percent for the dropout/alternative completers.

Missing from the cohort rates from NELS:88 is anyone who had dropped out prior to the spring of their eighth-grade year. Thus, the overall cohort rates reported here may be lower than they would have been if a younger cohort were used. This may be particularly important for Hispanics, given that CPS data show that Hispanic dropouts tend to have completed less schooling than other dropouts. The cohort rates also reflect the school enrollment status of both eligible and ineligible non-participants and participants, to the extent that this information could be obtained.

The following definition of a dropout was employed in NELS:88:

1. an individual who, according to the school (if the sample member could not be located), or according to the school and home, is not attending school (i.e., has not been in school for 4 consecutive weeks or more and is not absent due to accident or illness); or

2. a student who has been in school less than 2 weeks after a period in which he or she was classified as a dropout.

Thus, a student who was a temporary dropout (stopout) who was found by the study to be out of school for 4 consecutive school weeks or more and had returned to school (that is, had been back in school for a period of at least 2 weeks at the time of survey administration in the spring of 1990) would not be classified as a dropout for purposes of the cohort dropout rates reported here.

The basic NELS:88 procedure for identification of a dropout was to confirm school reported dropout status with the student's household. For the first follow-up, dropout status was obtained first from the school and then confirmed with the household for 96.4 percent of the dropouts. Thus only 3.6 percent of the dropouts were identified by only school-reported information. For the second followup, 4.9 percent of the dropouts were identified by only school-reported information.

The 1988–1990 dropout rate requires data from both 1988 and 1990. As a result, the size of the sample used in computing the 1988 to 1990 rate is tied to the size of the sample in 1990. Many students changed schools between 1988 and 1990. Because of the costs associated with following small numbers of students to many schools, a subsampling operation was conducted at the time of the first follow-up (figure B1). Of the 24,599 students who participated in 1988, 20,263 students were sampled, and 130 were found to be out of scope (due to death or migration

out of the country). The dropout rates from 1988–1990 reflect the experiences of 20,133 sample cases. Some 1,088 sample cases dropped out and 19,045 sample cases continued in school.

The 1990–1992 rate starts from the 19,045 student sample cases. Some 91 of the student sample cases from 1990 were identified as out of scope in 1992. The dropout rates from 1990 to 1992 reflect the experiences of 18,954 student sample cases.

The 1988–1992 rates reflect the experiences of the 20,070 student sample cases. These cases result from the 20,263 subsampled student cases in 1990, less the 92 cases that were out of scope in both 1990 and 1992, less the 91 students sample cases identified as out of scope in 1992, less the 10 dropout sample cases identified as out of scope in 1992. Note that 24 student sample cases who were out of the country in 1990 returned to school in the U.S. by spring 1992, and an additional 14 student sample cases who were out of the country in spring 1990 returned to the U.S. by spring 1992 but did not reenroll (dropouts). And, another 354 student sample cases who dropped out between 1988 and 1990 returned to school by spring 1992.

HS&B Calculation of Cohort Dropout Rates

In HS&B, students are reported as having either a regular diploma or some alternative credential—described as the equivalent of a class of 1982 held alternative credentials by 1986 refers to a comparison of alternative completers with all regular diploma recipients. The estimates of a 16.6 percent dropout rate and an 8.2 percent alternative completion rate by 1986 are based on a comparison of on-line regular diploma recipients versus all other completers. The difference in the last two estimates is due to the fact that they are computed from two differently derived variables on the public use data files.

Variables Used in Comparison of HS&B and NELS:88

Listed below are the definitions for the poverty and family composition variables used in the section comparing 10th- to 12th-grade dropout rates in HS&B and NELS:88.

Poverty

HS&B

1. Below poverty line:
   If family size (famsize) is 1 to 3 and family income (bb101) is $7,000 or less or;
   If family size is 4 to 6 and income is $11,999 or less or;
   If family size is 7 or more and income is under $15,999

2. Not below poverty line:
   All other cases.

NELS:88

Below poverty line:

If family size (byfamsize) is I or 2 and family income (byfaminc) is $7,499 or less or;
If family size is 3 and family income is $9,999 or less or;
If family size is 4 or 5 and family income is $14,999 or less or;
If family size is 6 or 7 and family income is $19,999 or less or;
If family size is 8 and family income is $24,999 or less or;
If family size is 9 or more and family income is $34,999 or less;

Not below poverty line:

All other cases.

Family composition

HS&B

1. Intact:

If father in household (bb036b=l) and mother in HH (bb036d=l)

2. Parent plus step parent

If father not in HH (bb036b=0) and mother in HH (bb036d=l) and male guardian in HH (bb036c=l) or;
If mother not in HH (bb036d=0) and father in HH (bb036b=1) and female guardian in HH (bb036e=l)

3. Single parent

If father is in HH (bb036b=l) and no other adult partner is in HH (bb036d to bb036e=0) or;
If mother is in HH (bb036d=l) and not other adult partner is in HH (bb036b to bb036c=0)

4. Other

All other cases.

NELS:88

1. Intact:

If father in household (f1s92a=1) and mother in HH (f1s92d=1)

2. Parent plus step parent

If father not in HH (f1s92a=0) and mother in HH (f1s92d=1) and male guardian or stepfather in HH (f1s92c=1 or f1s92b=1) or;
If mother not in HH (f1s92d=0) and father in HH (f1s92a=1) and female guardian or stepmother in HH (f1s92e=1 or f1s92f)

3. Single parent
   If father is in HH (f1s92a=1) and no other adult partner is in HH (f1s92d to f1s92f=0)
   or;
   If mother is in HH (f1s92c=1) and no other adult partner is in HH (f1s92a to f1s92c=0).

4. Other
   All other cases.

Variables used in NELS:88

High School Completion Status

1. High school graduate:
   If individual has received a high school diploma (f3diplom=1);

2. Received alternative credential
   If individual has received a GED (f3diplom=2) or received a certificate of attendance (f3diplom=3);

3. Still enrolled in high school
   If individual is currently in high school (f3diplom=4) or is working toward an equivalent (f3diplom=5);

4. Dropout
   If individual is not a graduate or GED/certificate holder (f3diplom = 6)

Accuracy of Estimates

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.

In reporting sample survey data, estimates based on unweighted samlpe sizes less than 30 are not displayed. 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 complete census would differ from the sample by less than the standard error is about 68 out of 100. 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 the standard error, about 95 out of 100.

Standard errors for rates and number of persons based on CPS data were calculated using the following formulas:

Dropout rate:

$$\text{s.e.} = \sqrt{(b / N)(p)(100 - p)}$$

where p = the percentage ($0 < p < 100$),
N = the population on which the percentage is based, and
b = the parameter associated with the characteristic;
b is equal to 2,532 for the total or white population; 3,425 for the black population; and 5,772 for the Hispanic population ages 14- through 34 years old.

Number of persons:

$$\text{s.e.} = \sqrt{(bx)(1 - x / T)}$$

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

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

In October of 1991, the Bureau of the Census released new b parameters for 1988 and 1990. With the release of the new parameters, the Bureau of the Census also made adjustments to the parameters for earlier years. Therefore, for some years, the standard errors presented in the appendix tables here are different than the standard errors presented in earlier reports.

Methodology and Statistical Procedures

The comparisons in the text have all been tested for statistical significance to ensure that the differences are larger than those that might be expected due to sampling variation. Two types of comparisons have been made in the text.

Differences in two estimated percentages. The Student's *t* statistic can be used to test the likelihood that the differences between two percentages are larger than would be expected by sampling error.

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

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

As the number of comparisons on the same set of data increases, the likelihood that the *t* value for at least one of the comparisons will exceed 1.96 simply due to sampling error increases. For a single comparison, there is a 5 percent chance that the *t* value will exceed 1.96 due to sampling error. For five tests, the risk of getting at least one *t* value that high increases to 23 percent and for 20 comparisons, 64 percent.

One way to compensate for this danger when making multiple comparisons is to adjust the alpha level to take into account the number of comparisons being made. For example, rather than establishing an alpha level of 0.05 for a single comparison, the alpha level is set to ensure that the likelihood is less than 0.05 that the *t* value for any of the comparisons exceeds the critical value by chance alone when there are truly no differences for any of the comparisons. This Bonferroni adjustment is calculated by taking the desired alpha level and dividing by the number of possible comparisons, based on the variable(s) being compared. The *t* value corresponding to the revised, lower alpha level must be exceeded in order for any of the comparisons to be considered significant. For example, to test for differences in dropout rates between whites, blacks, and Hispanics, the following steps would be involved:

- Establish the number of comparisons—in this case three (whites and blacks; whites and Hispanics; and blacks and Hispanics). The number of two-way comparisons that can be made equals [(n)(n-1)]/2, where n is the number of variable categories. Thus, with three categories the number of possible comparisons is [(3)(2)]/2 = 3.

- Divide the desired alpha level, 0.05, by the number of comparisons (e.g. three) to obtain the new alpha level (0.05/3 = 0.0166).

- Consult a table of *t* statistics (or the standard normal table for *z* values if the N is large) to find the *t* value that corresponds to that alpha (*t* = 2.39 for alpha = 0.0166).

All comparisons in this report were tested using the Bonferroni adjustment for the *t* tests. Where categories of two variables were involved, the number of comparisons used to make the Bonferroni adjustment was based on the relationship(s) being tested.

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 a set of other variables (the independent variables). The estimation procedure most commonly used in regression analysis is ordinary least squares (OLS). While some of the trends span the entire period from 1972 to 1995, many of the rates reached a high point during the late 1970s. Thus, most of the descriptions that refer to “since the late 1970s” use 1978 as a starting point.

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 editing procedure (0 = years 1968 to 1986, 1 = 1987 to 1995) 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 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 which 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 of the variables in the analysis was transformed by dividing each by the standard error of the relevant year's rate (event or status). The new dependent variable was

then regressed on the new time variable and new editing-change dummy variable. All statements about trends in this report are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

APPENDIX C

Supplemental Tables

Table C1–Event dropout and retention rates and number of dropouts ages 15–24 in grades 10–12: October 1990 through October 1995

Year ending	Event dropout rate (percent)	School retention rate (percent)	Number of dropouts (in thousands)	Number of enrolled (in thousands)
1990	4.0	96.0	347	8,675
1991	4.0	96.0	348	8,700
1992[1]	4.4	95.6	383	8,705
1993[1]	4.5	95.5	381	8,469
1994[1,2]	5.3	94.7	497	9,377
1995[1,2]	5.7	94.3	544	9,509

[1]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.

[2]Numbers in this year may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table C2–Standard errors for Table C1: Event dropout and retention rates and number of dropouts ages 15–24 in grades 10–12: October 1990 through October 1995

Year ending	Event dropout rate (percent)	School retention rate (percent)	Number of dropouts (in thousands)
1990	0.33	0.33	29
1991	0.34	0.34	29
1992[1]	0.35	0.35	30
1993[1]	0.36	0.36	30
1994[1,2]	0.37	0.37	35
1995[1,2]	0.38	0.38	36

[1]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.

[2]Numbers in this year may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table C3—Event dropout rates, grades 10–12, ages 15–24, by sex and race–ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1995

Year	Total	Male	Female	White, non-Hispanic		Black, non-Hispanic		Hispanic	
				Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
				(percent)					
1972	6.1	5.9	6.3	5.0	5.6	9.8	9.3	11.6	10.9
1973	6.3	6.8	5.7	6.0	5.0	11.9	8.2	7.9	11.9
1974	6.7	7.4	6.0	6.6	4.9	10.8	12.3	12.8	7.1
1975	5.8	5.4	6.1	4.7	5.4	8.4	9.0	10.3	11.6
1976	5.9	6.6	5.2	6.3	4.9	8.5	6.3	7.6	7.1
1977	6.5	6.9	6.1	6.6	5.6	7.8	9.3	9.8	5.4
1978	6.7	7.5	5.9	6.4	5.1	11.0	9.5	15.9	8.5
1979	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.4	5.7	7.8	11.7	10.5	9.1
1980	6.1	6.7	5.5	5.7	4.8	7.7	8.7	17.6	6.7
1981	5.9	6.0	5.8	5.2	4.5	9.4	10.0	10.7	10.7
1982	5.5	5.8	5.1	4.9	4.6	8.9	6.6	9.5	8.8
1983	5.2	5.8	4.7	4.7	4.0	6.9	7.1	13.8	6.2
1984	5.1	5.4	4.8	4.8	4.1	6.0	5.5	12.3	10.2
1985	5.2	5.4	5.0	4.6	4.1	8.3	7.3	9.4	10.0
1986	4.7	4.7	4.7	3.8	3.7	5.1	5.7	12.4	11.3
1987	4.1	4.3	3.8	3.9	3.1	6.2	6.7	4.8	6.1
1988[1]	4.8	5.1	4.4	4.3	4.1	6.3	5.6	12.3	8.2
1989[1]	4.5	4.5	4.5	3.7	3.3	7.0	8.6	7.8	7.7
1990[1]	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.5	3.1	4.2	5.7	8.7	7.2
1991[1]	4.0	3.8	4.2	2.8	3.7	5.3	6.8	10.1	4.6
1992[1,2]	4.4	3.9	4.9	3.5	4.0	3.3	6.7	7.6	9.0
1993[1,2]	4.5	4.6	4.3	4.1	3.7	6.4	5.3	5.1	8.0
1994[1,2,3]	5.3	5.2	5.4	4.1	4.3	6.9	6.3	9.1	10.9
1995[1,2,3]	5.7	6.2	5.3	4.9	4.1	8.3	4.6	11.8	12.9

[1]Numbers for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Bureau of the Census for cases with missing data on school enrollment items.
[2]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment in the CPS.
[3]Numbers in this year reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

NOTE: Some figures are revised from those previously published.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table C4—Standard errors for Table C3: Event dropout rates, grades 10–12, ages 15–24, by sex and race–ethnicity: October 1978 through October 1995

Year	Total	Male	Female	White, non-Hispanic		Black, non-Hispanic		Hispanic	
				Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
				(percent)					
1972	0.33	0.46	0.48	0.47	0.50	1.96	1.79	3.99	3.93
1973	0.33	0.49	0.45	0.51	0.47	2.13	1.70	3.46	3.95
1974	0.34	0.51	0.46	0.54	0.46	1.99	1.99	4.00	3.04
1975	0.32	0.44	0.46	0.45	0.48	1.79	1.75	3.37	3.69
1976	0.32	0.48	0.43	0.52	0.47	1.74	1.52	3.05	2.76
1977	0.34	0.49	0.46	0.54	0.50	1.62	1.76	3.21	2.65
1978	0.34	0.51	0.46	0.53	0.48	2.00	1.71	4.22	3.35
1979	0.34	0.49	0.48	0.53	0.50	1.75	1.93	3.57	3.30
1980	0.33	0.49	0.45	0.51	0.48	1.69	1.72	4.48	2.70
1981	0.33	0.47	0.46	0.49	0.47	1.86	1.77	3.26	3.19
1982	0.34	0.49	0.46	0.52	0.50	1.81	1.59	3.19	3.34
1983	0.33	0.50	0.45	0.52	0.48	1.71	1.62	3.93	2.79
1984	0.33	0.49	0.46	0.53	0.49	1.57	1.44	3.94	3.23
1985	0.34	0.50	0.48	0.53	0.50	1.83	1.74	3.72	3.50
1986	0.32	0.46	0.45	0.48	0.47	1.45	1.51	3.92	3.68
1987[1]	0.30	0.44	0.42	0.48	0.44	1.58	1.64	2.53	2.80
1988[1]	0.36	0.52	0.50	0.55	0.56	1.71	1.67	4.52	4.09
1989[1]	0.36	0.51	0.51	0.54	0.52	1.87	2.05	3.68	3.81
1990[1]	0.33	0.47	0.47	0.52	0.50	1.49	1.67	3.47	2.98
1991[1]	0.34	0.46	0.49	0.46	0.55	1.60	1.79	3.61	2.45
1992[1,2]	0.35	0.46	0.53	0.52	0.56	1.27	1.75	2.98	3.36
1993[1,2]	0.36	0.50	0.50	0.57	0.56	1.76	1.63	2.65	2.98
1994[1,2,3]	0.37	0.51	0.53	0.55	0.57	1.76	1.68	2.91	3.27
1995[1,2,3]	0.38	0.55	0.52	0.59	0.56	1.91	1.42	3.21	3.32

[1]Numbers for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Bureau of the Census for cases with missing data on school enrollment items.
[2]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.
[3]Numbers in this year may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

Table C5—Rate, number, and distribution of status dropouts, by age: October 1995

Age	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts	Population (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	12.0	3,876	32,379	100.0	100.0
Age					
16	5.3	202	3,806	5.2	11.8
17	5.5	203	3,673	5.2	11.3
18	12.9	477	3,687	12.3	11.4
19	16.3	574	3,511	14.8	10.8
20	14.9	505	3,392	13.0	10.5
21	12.7	424	3,345	10.9	10.3
22	14.1	484	3,437	12.5	10.6
23	13.6	483	3,564	12.5	11.0
24	13.2	524	3,965	13.5	12.2

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1994, unpublished data.

Table C6—Standard errors for Table 5: Rate, number, and distribution of status dropouts, by age: October 1995

Age	Status dropout rate	Number of status dropouts (in thousands)	Percent of all dropouts	Percent of population
Total	0.29	93	—	—
Age				
16	0.58	22	0.57	0.28
17	0.60	22	0.57	0.28
18	0.88	32	0.84	0.28
19	0.99	35	0.91	0.27
20	0.97	33	0.86	0.27
21	0.92	31	0.80	0.27
22	0.94	32	0.84	0.27
23	0.91	33	0.84	0.28
24	0.86	34	0.87	0.29

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1994, unpublished data.

Table C7—Status dropout rate, ages 16-24, by region: selected years October 1975 through October 1994

Region	October								
	1975	1980	1985	1990[1]	1991[1]	1992[1,2]	1993[1,2]	1994[1,2,3]	1995[1,2,3]
	(percent)								
Total	13.9	14.1	12.6	12.1	12.5	11.0	11.0	11.5	12.0
Region									
Northeast	11.3	10.4	9.9	8.7	9.1	8.6	8.5	8.6	8.4
Midwest	10.9	11.5	9.8	9.1	9.7	7.9	8.8	7.7	8.9
South	18.9	18.2	15.2	14.5	14.1	12.4	13.0	13.5	14.2
West	13.0	14.9	14.6	14.7	15.9	14.4	12.5	14.7	14.6

[1]Numbers for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Bureau of the Census for cases with missing data on school enrollment items.
[2]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.
[3]Numbers in this year may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students, October (various years)," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, and unpublished tabulations.

Table C8—Standard errors for Table C7: Status dropout rate, ages 16–24, by region: selected years, October 1975 through October 1995

	October								
Region	1975	1980	1985	1990[1]	1991[1]	1992[1,2]	1993[1,2]	1994[1,2,3]	1995[1,2,3]
Total	0.26	0.27	0.27	0.29	0.30	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.29
Region									
Northeast	0.52	0.51	0.54	0.57	0.54	0.50	0.50	0.49	0.49
Midwest	0.46	0.46	0.49	0.52	0.50	0.49	0.51	0.47	0.51
South	0.54	0.52	0.52	0.54	0.51	0.51	0.52	0.52	0.53
West	0.62	0.63	0.67	0.69	0.83	0.70	0.67	0.69	0.69

[1]Numbers for these years reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Bureau of the Census for cases with missing data on school enrollment items.
[2]Numbers for these years reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the CPS.
[3]Numbers in this year may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students, October (various years)," Current Population Reports, Series P-20, and unpublished tabulations.

Table C9—Demographic characteristics of the sophomore classes of 1980 and 1990

Status in 10th grade	HS&B 1980-82	NELS:88 1990-92
Total	100.0	100.0
Race–ethnicity*		
White, non-Hispanic	75.8	71.7
Minority	24.2	28.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.4	4.0
Hispanic	7.8	10.7
Black, non-Hispanic	13.4	12.5
Native American	1.6	1.1
Below poverty level		
Yes	13.0	17.6
No	87.1	82.4
Family composition		
Intact family	69.6	63.5
Non-intact family	30.4	36.5
Two adults/step-parents	8.9	15.2
Single parent	17.2	18.1
Other	4.3	3.1
Own children living in home		
Yes	0.6	2.5
No	99.4	97.5

*Not shown separately are those included in the total whose race–ethnicity is unknown.

NOTE: See the technical appendix for the definitions of poverty and family composition used in these tables.
SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, High School and Beyond Study, Sophomore cohort, First Followup Survey, 1982, unpublished data. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 First and Second Followup Surveys, 1990 and 1992, unpublished data.

Table C10—Standard errors for Table C9: Demographic characteristics of the sophomore classes of 1980 and 1990

Status in 10th grade	HS&B 1980–82	NELS:88 1990–92
Total	—	—
Race-ethnicity*		
White, non-Hispanic	1.07	1.18
Minority	1.07	1.18
Asian, Pacific Islander	0.14	0.27
Hispanic	0.40	0.86
Black, non-Hispanic	0.84	0.79
Native American	0.23	0.20
Below poverty level		
Yes	0.51	0.69
No	0.51	0.69
Family composition		
Intact family	0.66	0.69
Non-intact family	0.66	0.69
Two adults / step-parents	0.34	0.51
Single parent	0.47	0.53
Other	0.26	0.23
Own children living in home		
Yes	0.09	0.16
No	0.09	0.16

— Not applicable.
* Not shown separately are those included in the total whose race–ethnicity is unknown.

NOTE: See the technical appendix for the definitions of poverty and family composition used in these tables.
SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, High School and Beyond Study, Sophomore cohort, First Followup Survey, 1982, unpublished data. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 First and Second Followup Surveys, 1990 and 1992, unpublished data.

Table C11—Percentage of persons attending high school or below by sex, race–ethnicity, and age: October 1995

Characteristics	Age								
	15/16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Total	96.5	88.1	26.4	5.5	1.9	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.4
Sex									
Male	97.1	89.7	31.1	7.4	2.0	1.2	0.4	0.1	0.5
Female	95.8	86.3	21.6	3.6	1.8	0.8	1.3	1.1	0.4
Race–ethnicity[1]									
White, non-Hispanic	96.9	89.1	23.6	3.6	0.7	1.1	0.8	0.5	0.3
Black, non-Hispanic	96.2	88.0	36.7	9.5	4.6	—	0.5	0.3	—
Hispanic	93.6	82.7	27.9	10.6	3.8	0.7	1.3	0.5	1.3
Family income[2]									
Low income level	90.7	81.5	28.4	5.2	2.9	1.5	1.9	1.2	1.0
Middle income level	97.4	88.4	27.3	7.2	1.5	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.1
High income level	98.3	90.4	23.1	2.3	1.7	0.3	—	0.7	0.9

—Insufficient sample size

[1]Not shown separately are non-Hispanics who are neither black nor white, but who are included in the total.

[2]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

Table C12—Standard errors for Table C11: Percentage of persons attending high school or below by sex, race–ethnicity, and age: October 1995

Characteristics	Age								
	15/16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Total	0.33	0.85	1.16	0.61	0.37	0.27	0.25	0.20	0.16
Sex									
Male	0.42	1.11	1.71	0.99	0.55	0.43	0.24	0.09	0.25
Female	0.52	1.30	1.53	0.70	0.51	0.34	0.43	0.39	0.22
Race–ethnicity[1]									
White, non-Hispanic	0.38	0.98	1.38	0.60	0.28	0.34	0.30	0.24	0.16
Black, non-Hispanic	1.00	2.52	3.62	2.53	1.72	—	0.61	0.47	—
Hispanic	1.91	4.42	4.65	3.40	2.03	0.95	1.13	0.74	1.22
Family income[2]									
Low income level	1.29	2.86	2.68	1.28	0.90	0.66	0.78	0.61	0.57
Middle income level	0.39	1.09	1.60	0.97	0.46	0.39	0.29	0.19	0.12
High income level	0.45	1.47	2.12	0.78	0.75	0.30	—	0.55	0.60

—Not Applicable

[1]Not shown separately are non-Hispanics who are neither black nor white, but who are included in the total.

[2]Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for 1994; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.