Section 4

Contexts of Elementary and Secondary Education



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This List of Indicators includes all the indicators in Section 4 that appear on *The Condition of Education* website (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe), drawn from the 2000—2005 print volumes. The list is organized by subject area. The indicator numbers and the years in which the indicators were published are not necessarily sequential.

Introduction: Contexts of Elementary and Secondary Education

The indicators in this section of *The Condition of Education* measure salient features of the context of learning in schools. This includes the content of learning and expectations for student performance; processes of instruction; mechanisms of choice in education; characteristics of teachers and the teaching profession; the climate for learning and other organizational aspects of schools; and other school resources. There are 19 indicators in this section: 7, prepared for this year's volume, appear on the following pages, and all 19, including indicators from previous years, appear on the Web (see Website Contents on the facing page for a full list of the indicators).

The first feature of schooling and schools is patterns of coursetaking by students and the standards of performance they are now expected to meet. The main prism for examining this feature is student transcripts, which are collected as part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and some of the longitudinal surveys conducted by NCES. Four indicators on the Web trace trends over time in the academic level and number of courses taken by high school students by the time they graduate. A new indicator this year shows the numbers of students across the country who are required to pass an exit examination of some kind in order to graduate.

A second feature of learning opportunities afforded students concerns coursework availability, instructional time, classroom placement, and school choice. Two new indicators in this area are included in *The Condition of Education* this year: differences among schools in the availability of advanced-level academic courses, and the average amount of time that students spend in school each day and over the course of a school year by student characteristics, grade level, and other school characteristics.

School districts and schools have special programs to serve the particular educational

needs of special populations. One indicator in this volume shows the extent to which students with disabilities are included in regular classrooms for purposes of instruction. An indicator on the Web describes the number, location, purposes, and other characteristics of alternative schools.

School choice provides parents with the opportunity to choose a school for their children beyond the assigned school, but there are several different forms of choice. Parents may choose a private school, they may live in a district that offers choice among public schools, or they may select a school by moving into that school's community. A new indicator in this edition of *The Condition of Education* provides information about the characteristics of one of the newest forms of choice: charter schools.

Teachers are critical to the learning process in schools. One indicator on the Web shows the extent to which teachers participate in different kinds of professional development.

Another feature of the contexts of elementary and secondary schools is the climate for learning. The climate is shaped by different factors in the school environment, including teacher as well as student behaviors and attitudes, and students' sense of physical security and freedom from violence. Indicators in both of these areas are included in this volume.

Other school resources also form part of the context for learning in schools. Two indicators on the Web describe "other staff" employed in the schools, including guidance counselors and various kinds of instructional aides and specialists.

The indicators on contexts of elementary and secondary schooling from previous editions of *The Condition of Education*, which are not included in this volume, are available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/list/i4.asp.

Coursetaking and Standards

High School Exit Examinations

Students in 20 states, accounting for more than half of all public school students in the United States, are required to pass exit examinations in order to graduate from high school.

Standards-based reform has expanded since the 1990s, and the number of states with tests that students must pass in order to graduate high school has grown (Chudowsky et al. 2002). To date, more than half of all public school students currently live in states with exit examination requirements (Gayler et al. 2004). This indicator examines the extent to which exit examinations are required in the United States, the types of exams being administered, and the initial passing rates.

In 2004, 20 states had exit examinations. Of these states, 7 had minimum competency examinations, 10 had standards-based examinations, and 3 had end-of-course examinations (see supplemental tables 24-1 and 24-2). Five additional states—Arizona, California, Idaho, Utah, and Washington—will be phasing in exit examinations between 2004 and 2008. Of these five states, only Utah will institute a minimum competency examination. The other four will institute standards-based examinations, a change that is consistent with a general trend away from minimum competency examinations.¹

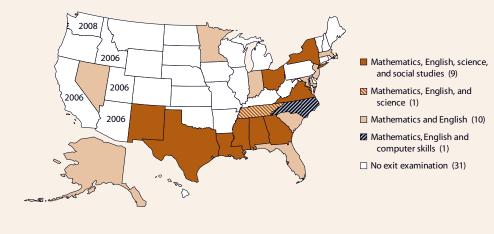
By 2009, of the 25 states with exit examinations in place, all but 6—Maryland, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Texas, and Utah—will

use these examinations to meet the accountability requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.²

All 20 of the states with mandatory exit examinations in 2004 tested both English/language arts and mathematics ability. Ten states also tested science knowledge, and 9 of these 10 states also tested social studies knowledge. All 20 states included multiple-choice questions on their examinations, though only Alabama used these questions exclusively. The other states included various types of extended responses, the most common of which asked students to compose a written response.

The percentage of students who passed their exit examinations on their first try ranged from 36 percent in Arizona to 91 percent in Georgia in mathematics, and from 40 percent in Maryland to 95 percent in Georgia in English/language arts (see supplemental tables 24-3 and 24-4). Although the percentage of students who passed exit examinations varied greatly by race/ethnicity across states, Asian and White students were more likely to pass their mathematics and English/language arts exit examinations on their first try than Black or Hispanic students.





¹ Gayler et al. 2004, figure 2.

²Gayler et al. 2004, table 15.

NOTE: States labeled with years are scheduled to institute exit examinations in the year shown.

SOURCE: Gayler, K., Chudowsky, N., Hamilton, M., Kober, N., and Yeager, M. (2004). *State High School Exit Exams: A Maturing Reform*, adapted from tables 3 and 15, figures 2,3, and 4, and page 217. Data from state departments of education, July 2004.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Tables 24-1, 24-2, 24-3, 24-4

Chudowsky et al. 2002

Gayler et al. 2004



Learning Opportunities

Availability of Advanced Courses in High Schools

Students in rural schools or schools with a 12th-grade enrollment of less than 150 have the least opportunity to take one or more advanced courses in mathematics, English, science, and a foreign language.

Since 1982, the percentage of students completing advanced coursework in mathematics, English, science, and foreign language has increased (NCES 2003-067, indicator 24; NCES 2004–077, *indicator* 21). However, students can be limited in the number of advanced courses they take by the level of coursework offered in their schools. This indicator examines the extent to which students attend schools that offer advanced courses in these four subject areas.

Overall, 74 percent of high school students attended schools that offered at least one advanced course in each of these four subjects in 2000, some 58 percent attended schools that offered at least two, and 22 percent attended schools that offered four or more (see supplemental table 25-1).

Students attending schools in a central city or urban fringe/large town and students in schools with a 12thgrade enrollment of 450 or more were more likely than their peers to have the opportunity to take four or more advanced courses in each subject. Students attending schools in the Northeast and Southeast were also more likely to have such an opportunity than their peers in schools in Central states.

Students in rural/small town schools and in schools with a 12th-grade enrollment of less than 150 students were less likely than their peers to be able to take one or more advanced courses in each subject in 2000. Compared with their peers in central city or urban fringe/large town schools, students in rural/small town schools were also less than one-fourth as likely to be offered seven or more advanced mathematics courses or four or more advanced foreign language courses. They were also half as likely to be offered four or more advanced science courses (see supplemental tables 25-2 and 25-3).

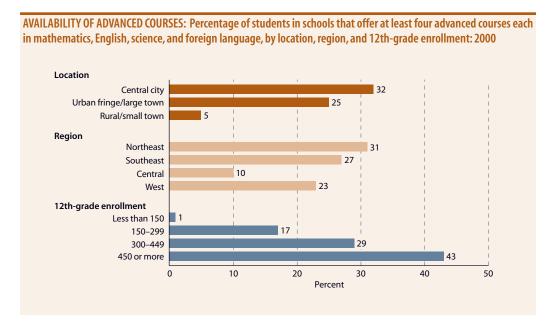
Differences in the number of advanced courses offered by race/ethnicity were also found. A greater percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students than American Indian, Black, White, and Hispanic students were likely to attend schools that offered four or more foreign language courses. When compared with American Indian students, Asian/Pacific Islander students were also more likely to attend schools that offered four or more science courses.

NOTE: See supplemental note 6 for a definition of advanced coursework. See supplemental note 1 for details on geographic location, region, and poverty. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2000 High School Transcript Study (HSTS), previously unpublished tabulation (November 2004).



FOR MORE INFORMATION: Supplemental Notes 1,6 Supplemental Tables 25-1, 25-2, 25-3 NCES 2003-067 NCES 2004-077



Learning Opportunities

Time Spent in School

The average number of hours per year that U.S. public school students spent in school increased between 1987–88 and 1999–2000.

Various advocates of educational reform have called for students to spend more time in school (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983; Peterson 2003). Arguments for lengthening the school year assume that an increase in the time allocated to schooling would yield higher achievement. This indicator looks at the average number of hours per year (allocated time)¹ that public school students spent in school between 1987–88 and 1999–2000. It also compares the average number of instructional hours per year that students in the United States received compared with other countries in 2000 and 2001.

At all three instructional levels (elementary, middle, and high), the average number of hours a public school student spent in school per year rose between 1987–88 and 1999–2000. On average, middle school students spent more time in school than elementary or high school students. In both school years, the number of hours differed by location (see supplemental table 26-1). Students who attended rural schools spent more time in school, on average, than students in urban fringe/large town schools. In both 1987–88 and 1999–2000, regional differ-

ences were discernible: at all three instructional levels, students in the Midwest generally spent more time in school than their counterparts in the Northeast, South, and West.

International comparisons of instructional hours (vs. allocated time) revealed that among 15-year-olds in the 22 countries participating in the 2000 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), only Austrian students received more instructional hours per year than U.S. students (1,120 vs. 990 hours) (see supplemental table 26-2). In contrast, students in 10 countries (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Poland, Portugal, and Sweden) received fewer instructional hours per year than U.S. students. Among 4th graders² in 10 countries participating in the 2001 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), U.S. students received more instructional time, on average, than students in every country except Italy, where no measurable difference was found. Compared with students in the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, and Iceland, U.S. 4th-grade students received about 200 more hours of instruction per year.³

¹ Allocated time refers to the total number of hours per year a student is required to attend school and does not include extracurricular activities. Allocated time can be divided into instructional and noninstructional time. Instructional time refers to the portion of the school day that is allocated to instruction. Noninstructional time refers to the portion of the school day allocated to such activities as lunch, recess, school assemblies, and other required nonclassroom activities.

²The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) sample is taken from the upper of two adjacent grades with most 9-year-olds at the time of testing (4th grade in the United States and most countries). In other words, the goal was to assess students who had completed 4 years of formal education. The exceptions to this are England and New Zealand. The English and New Zealand students in PIRLS had received 5 years of formal schooling. The data for the United Kingdom are for England only.

³ For international comparisons of 8th-graders' achievement in mathematics and science, see NCES 2002–025, indicator 13. For international comparisons of 4th-graders in reading literacy, see NCES 2003–067, indicator 10.

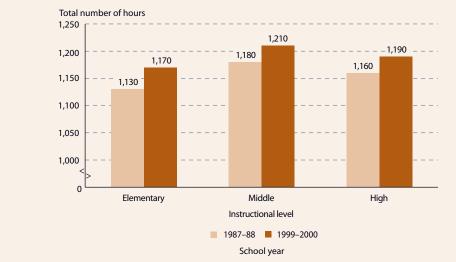
NOTE:The average number of hours does include hours spent by students attending ungraded schools (i.e., not classified by standard grade levels)

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Questionnaire" and "School District Questionnaire," 1987—88 and 1999—2000, previously unpublished tabulation (November 2004).

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Supplemental Notes 1,3,5 Supplemental Tables 26–1,26–2 Peterson 2003 National Commision on

Excellence in Education 1983

HOURS SPENT IN SCHOOL: Total number of hours per year spent in public school per student, by instructional level: 1987–88 and 1999–2000



Special Programs

Inclusion of Students With Disabilities in Regular Classrooms

Approximately half of all disabled students in 2003-04 spent 80 percent or more of their day in a regular classroom. Black students with disabilities spend less time in a regular classroom than non-Black students with disabilities, on average.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires public schools to make available to all eligible children with disabilities a free public education in the least restrictive environment¹ appropriate for their needs. In 1997, Congress passed amendments to IDEA, mandating for the first time that states collect data on the race/ethnicity of students identified with special education needs. These data reveal a disproportionate representation of minorities among students with disabilities (see indicator 6).

This indicator compares the differences by race/ethnicity in the percentage of time that disabled students spent in regular classrooms in 2003-04. Additionally, the indicator looks at change between 1994-95 and 2003-04 in the percentage of time that disabled students ages 6-21 spent in regular classrooms versus other settings.

Between 1994 and 2004, the percentage of students with disabilities spending 80 percent or more of the school day in a regular classroom showed an overall increase from 45 to 50 percent (see supplemental table 27-1). At the same time, the percentage of students with disabilities attending a regular school and spending less than 80 percent of the day in a regular classroom showed an overall decline during this period. The percentage of disabled students who did not attend regular schools showed little change, staying at approximately 4 percent over the 10-year span.

In the 2003-04 school year, almost half of all students with disabilities were in regular classrooms 80 percent or more of the day, although there were marked racial/ethnic differences in students' placement in this category (see supplemental table 27-2). For example, White students with disabilities were more likely than students of any other race/ ethnicity to spend 80 percent or more of their day in a regular classroom. In contrast, Black students with disabilities were more likely than students of any other race/ethnicity to spend less than 40 percent of their day in a regular classroom and were the most likely to be placed outside of a regular school. American Indians and Hispanics were less likely than students of any other race/ethnicity to be placed outside of a regular school.

¹ This requirement is in effect under section 612(a)(5) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 (P.L. 105-17). A "least restrictive environment" is determined on a case-by-case basis to ensure that each student's special needs are met, while allowing that student the maximum possible exposure to students without disabilities as well as the general education curriculum

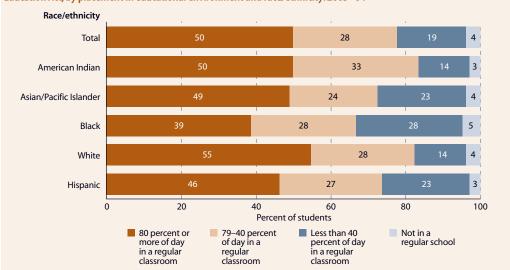
NOTE: Students counted as disabled are those students served under Part B of the IDEA in the United States and outlying areas. American Indian includes Alaska Native, Black includes African American Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (2003). Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Data from tables AB8 and AB10, unpublished tabulations. Retrieved February 7, 2005, from http:// www.ideadata.org/arc_toc5.asp#partbLRE.



FOR MORE INFORMATION: Supplemental Note 7 Supplemental Tables 27-1, 27-2





School Choice

Profile and Demographic Characteristics of Public Charter Schools

Charter schools differ from one another in terms of their origins, the authority under which they are chartered, and the students they serve.

A public charter school is a publicly funded school that is typically governed by a group or organization under a contract or charter that exempts it from selected state or local rules and regulations. These schools differ from one another in terms of their origins, the authority under which they are chartered, and the students they serve. This indicator profiles some of the differences among charter schools that served 4th-graders in 2003 and compares them with conventional public schools that year.

In 2003, the majority of charter school students (70 percent) attended newly created charter schools, while approximately one-third (30 percent) attended pre-existing public or private schools converted into charter schools (see supplemental table 28-1). Charter schools obtained charters from one of several entities: school districts, which served 51 percent of charter school students in 2003; state boards of education, which served 28 percent; postsecondary institutions, which served 16 percent; or state-chartering agencies, which served 6 percent.

Schools chartered by different entities varied in terms of the regions of the country in which

they were located and in terms of the communities they served. For example, schools chartered by a school district tended to serve students in the Southeast and West, and in central cities and urban fringe/large towns (see supplemental table 28-2). Schools chartered by a state board of education most commonly served students in central cities. Schools chartered by a state-chartering agency most commonly served students in the West, and schools chartered by postsecondary institutions served students exclusively in the Central region (especially Michigan).

Schools chartered by a state board of education or a postsecondary institution were more likely to serve Black students than conventional public schools or other types of charter schools (see supplemental table 28-3). Schools chartered by a state board of education were also more likely to serve students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch than conventional public schools. Conversely, schools chartered by a school district served a greater percentage of students not eligible for free and reduced-price lunch than conventional public schools.

Rounds to zero.

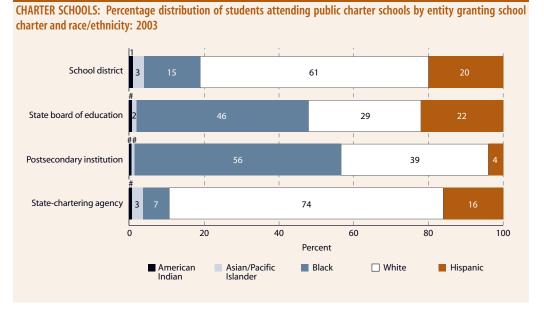
¹ Public charter schools are publicly funded schools that, in accordance with an enabling statute, have been granted a charter exempting them from selected state or local rules and regulations. A public charter school may be a newly created school, or it may previously have been a public or private school. In return for public funding and autonomy, the charter school must meet accountability standards. A school's charter is reviewed (typically every 3 to 5 years) and can be revoked if guidelines on curriculum and management are not followed or the standards are not met.

NOTE: Public charter schools include those open as of the 2001–02 school year and still operating in the 2002–03 school year. American Indian includes Alaska Native, Black includes African American, Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2003 Reading Charter School Pilot Study, previously unpublished tabulation (November 2004).

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Supplemental Notes 1, 4 Supplemental Tables 28-1, 28-2, 28-3 NCES 2005–456

NCFS 2003-411





School Characteristics and Climate

Student Perceptions of Their School's Social and Learning Environment

In both high- and low-minority public schools, the majority of students reported that when they work hard at school, their teachers praise their efforts. In addition, they reported that they make friends with students from other racial and ethnic groups.

This indicator examines how public school 10th-graders perceived their school's learning and social environment in the spring of 2002. When asked about their school's learning environment, the majority of students reported that teachers praised their efforts on schoolwork (63 percent), and that students did not feel "put down" by teachers (87 percent), but that students often got away with misbehavior (53 percent) (see supplemental table 29-1). There were no discernible differences in the percentage of students who reported these perceptions between high- and low-minority schools. About half of 10th-grade students in all public schools reported that disruptions by other students did not interfere with their learning (53 percent). However, students in low-minority schools were more likely to report this perception than students in high-minority schools (59 vs. 44 percent).

When asked about their school's social environment, the majority of students reported that students made friends with students of other racial and ethnic groups (90 percent), and that students did not often feel "put down" by other students (83 percent) (see supplemental table 29-2). The percentage of students who reported these perceptions was not measurably different in low- and high-minority schools. In contrast, the percentage of students who reported that fights often occurred between different racial/ ethnic groups and the percentage who reported not feeling safe at school differed between lowand high-minority schools, with the percentage agreeing increasing from low- to high-minority schools.

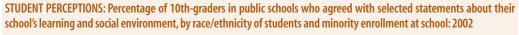
Among students of the same race or ethnicity, differences were found between high- and lowminority schools in four of the eight student perception measures. For example, White and Hispanic students in high-minority schools were more likely to agree with the statement that misbehaving students often "get away with it" than their counterparts in low-minority schools. Asian/Pacific Islander, White, and Hispanic students in high-minority schools were more likely to report that fights often occur between different racial/ethnic groups than their peers in low-minority schools. The opposite was true for Blacks.

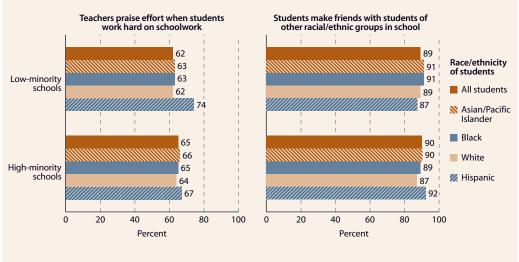
NOTE: When asked to respond about their school's social and learning environment, students could respond in four ways. "Agree" includes responses "Strongly agree" and "Agree"; "Disagree" includes responses "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree." Schools classified as "low minority" had less than 25 percent minority enrollment, and schools classified as "high minority" had 50 percent or more minority enrollment. Only data for major racial/ ethnic groups are shown separately in the figure. Black includes African American, Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian, and Hispanic includes Latino, Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002), "Base Year, Student Questionnaire, 2002" and Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey" 2001–02, previously unpublished tabulation (October 2004).



FOR MORE INFORMATION: Supplemental Notes 1,3 Supplemental Tables 29-1, 29-2





School Characteristics and Climate

School Violence and Safety

From 1992 through 2002, there was a general decline in the rate at which students ages 12–18 were victims of theft, violent crime, and serious violent crime at school.

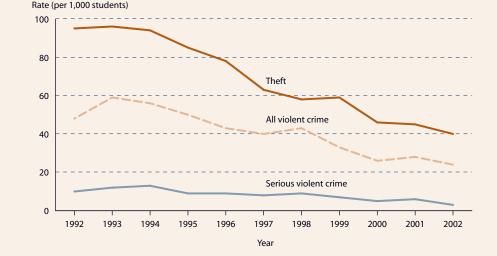
Theft and violence that occurs at school¹ can lead to a disruptive and threatening environment, physical injury, and emotional stress, all of which can be obstacles to student achievement (Elliott, Hamburg, and Williams 1998). To measure the prevalence of theft and violence in our nation's schools, this indicator examines nonfatal crime rates per 1,000 students, ages 12–18, from 1992 through 2002. Nonfatal crime includes theft and all violent crime; all violent crime includes serious violent crimes (rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault) and simple assault.

From 1992 through 2002, crime rates against students at school declined by 58 percent for theft (from 95 to 40 crimes per 1,000 students), 50 percent for all violent crime (from 48 to 24 crimes per 1,000 students), and 70 percent for serious violent crime (from 10 to 3 crimes per 1,000 students) (see supplemental table 30-1). The rates for these crimes also decreased for the time when students were away from school. Furthermore, in each of the years observed, the rates for serious violent crime were lower when students were at school than when they were away from school.

In 2002, middle school-aged students (ages 12–14) were more likely than high school-aged students (ages 15–18) to be victims of crime at school (see supplemental table 30-2). However, high school-aged students were more likely to be victims of crime away from school. The rates of theft and serious violent crime at school were higher for urban and suburban students than for rural students. Students from high-income households were more likely than students from low-income households were more likely than students from high-income households were more likely than students from high-income households to be victims of theft away from school.

In 2002, White students were more likely than Hispanic students to be victims of theft at school, but no differences were detected between White students and students of any other racial groups. No differences were found between males and females in the rates at which they were victims of theft, violent crime, and serious violent crime at school.





¹ "At school" includes inside the school building, on school property, or on the way to and from school.

² High-income households are households with incomes of \$75,000 or more per year. Low-income households are those with incomes of less than \$15,000 per year.

SOURCE: DeVoe, J., Peter, K., Kaufman, P., Miller, A., Noonan, M., Snyder T., and Baum, K. (2004). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2004* (NCES 2005–002/NCJ 205290), tables 2.2 and 2.4. Data from U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), 1992–2002.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Supplemental Notes 1,3 Supplemental Tables 30-1, 30-2 Elliott, Hamburg, and



Williams 1998

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