

# Section 3

## *Student Effort and Educational Progress*





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## Summary: Student Effort and Educational Progress

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The indicators in this section focus on students to examine the effort they put into their studies, their progress through the educational pipeline, and their eventual attainment. Particular attention is paid to how various subgroups in the population proceed through school to different levels of educational attainment and what factors contribute to their success along the way.

The effort students put into their studies affects their performance and their access to and success at the next level. Indicators of student effort include how often students are absent from school, how interested they are in their schoolwork, whether they try to do their best, whether they complete their assignments, and how much time they spend on homework and other activities such as work or watching television.

Early school problems can accumulate and may lead eventually to dropping out of school, which has long-term negative consequences. Thus, the indicators in this section track students' progress through elementary and secondary education up to and including high school completion, showing differences by sex, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and urbanicity.

Issues of access, persistence, and attainment have been predominant concerns in postsecondary education. The transition to postsecondary education and persistence are monitored by examining who prepares for college, who enrolls, when and where they enroll, and what factors affect the likelihood of enrolling and staying enrolled. Overall educational attainment levels in the population over time provide an indicator of the success of various population subgroups.



# Student Effort

## Students' Absence From School

*More than half of students in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades missed 1 or more days of school in a 4-week period in spring 2000 due to illness, skipping school, or other reasons.*

Missing school hinders students' learning, as well as that of their classmates when it leads to repetition of material in class. Yet absenteeism for various reasons is widespread, according to students' own reports. More than half of students in 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades missed at least 1 day of school in a 4-week period (the reference period used throughout here). Specifically, 55 percent of 8<sup>th</sup>-graders, 60 percent of 10<sup>th</sup>-graders, and 72 percent of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders reported being absent at least 1 day of the 4 weeks in 2000. Moreover, about 13–14 percent of 8<sup>th</sup>- and 10<sup>th</sup>-graders were absent more than 5 days—or one-fourth of the school days in this reference period (see supplemental table 17-1).

Illness was the primary reason for absences in 2000, except among the seniors. Nevertheless, even among 10<sup>th</sup>-graders, fewer than half (45 percent) of absences were due to illness, and 39 percent were for reasons other than illness or skipping. Skipping school also contributed to absenteeism, but it played a smaller role than illness or other reasons. Skipping accounted for 26 percent of all days that 12<sup>th</sup>-graders were absent in 2000, 16 percent of those that 10<sup>th</sup>-

graders missed, and 9 percent of those that 8<sup>th</sup>-graders missed.

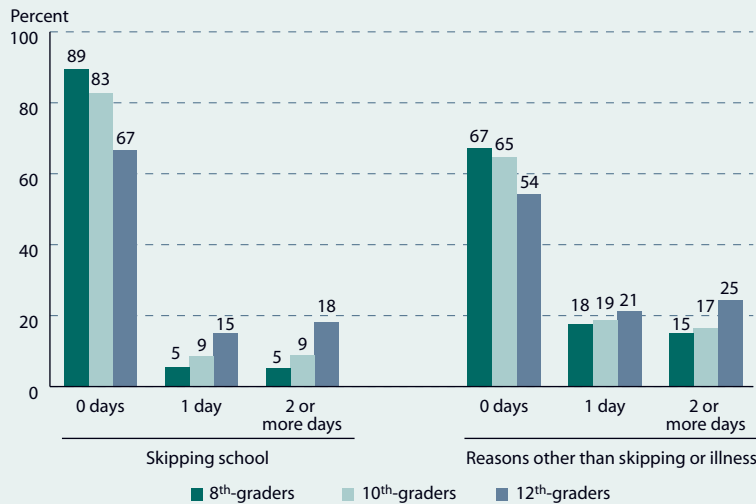
Although absenteeism due to illness did not rise with grade level, the propensity to miss school either by skipping or for other reasons increased notably with grade level. While 11 percent of 8<sup>th</sup>-graders skipped at least 1 day of school in a 4-week period in 2000, this figure increased to 17 percent for 10<sup>th</sup>-graders and to 33 percent for 12<sup>th</sup>-graders. Roughly one-third of students in 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades missed some school for other reasons in 2000, compared with nearly one-half of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders. Cutting classes—another way that students miss opportunities to learn and share ideas—also increased with grade level in 2000, repeating the pattern for skipping (see supplemental table 17-2).

The percentages of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders who had no absences and who cut no classes (in the 4-week period) have both decreased between 1983 and 2000 (see supplemental table 17-2). In addition, illness accounted for a decreasing proportion of total days absent for 12<sup>th</sup>-graders, from 40 percent of absences in 1983 to 34 percent in 2000 (see supplemental table 17-1).

NOTE: The data do not meet NCES standards for response rates. Students absent from the class in which the survey was administered are not included in the data. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research. *Monitoring the Future 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup>-Grade Studies, 2000.*

**STUDENT ABSENTEEISM: Percentage distributions of 8<sup>th</sup>-, 10<sup>th</sup>-, and 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students by how many school days they missed in a 4-week period from skipping school, and for reasons other than skipping or illness: 2000**



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Supplemental Note 6  
Supplemental Tables 17-1,  
17-2

Hoachlander, Dykman, and  
Godowsky 2001; National  
Commission on the Senior  
Year 2001.

# Student Effort

## 12<sup>th</sup>-Graders' Effort and Interest in School

Over the past 2 decades, 12<sup>th</sup>-graders have reported a declining interest in school, while the effort they apply to their school work has generally shown no measurable change over the past decade.

Many reforms of the past 2 decades have attempted to increase high school students' effort and interest in their education (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983; Newmann 1992). Despite such attempts, seniors' valuation of their learning activities and self-reports on their efforts do not indicate that higher proportions are more engaged in their school work or trying harder than in years past.

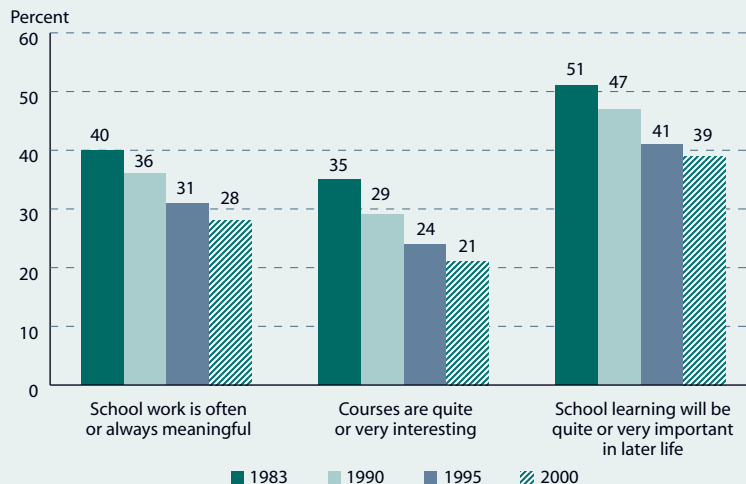
Indeed, 12<sup>th</sup>-graders' interest in school exhibited a decline from 1983 to 2000. For example, while 40 percent of 1983 seniors said their school work was "often or always meaningful," 28 percent gave this response in 2000. Similarly, the proportion of seniors who said most of their courses were "quite or very interesting" dropped from 35 percent to 21 percent, and the percentage who said what they were learning in school will be "quite or very important later in life" also declined. Even seniors who reported earning mostly A's decreased their ratings of school work's meaningfulness and how important this learning would be later in life. In addition, students became more likely to take a dim view of school courses over this period: 32 percent of seniors in 2000 said that

most of their courses were "very or slightly dull," up from 20 percent in 1983 (see supplemental table 18-1).

In contrast to these changes, three measures related to student effort have generally shown no measurable change since 1990. (Data on these three measures were first collected in 1989.) The proportion of seniors who said they "often or always try to do their best work" remained between 61 and 65 percent. The percentage who reported they "seldom or never fail to complete/hand in school assignments" held steady at roughly 60 percent, and 35–38 percent in 1990, 1995, and 2000 said they "seldom or never fool around in class" (see supplemental table 18-2).

Few notable differences appeared between high school seniors in academic and vocational/technical programs in 2000 on measures related to interest and effort in school. However, while about 70 percent of seniors in an academic program in 2000 said they seldom or never fail to complete school assignments, fewer vocational/technical program seniors (50 percent) responded in this way.

**INTEREST IN SCHOOL:** Percentage of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders who expressed various opinions about their school experience: 1983, 1990, 1995, and 2000



NOTE: The data do not meet NCES standards for response rates.

SOURCE: University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research. Monitoring the Future 12<sup>th</sup>-Grade Study: 1983, 1990, 1995, and 2000.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Note 6  
Supplemental Tables 18-1,  
18-2

National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983; Newmann 1992





# Elementary/Secondary Persistence and Progress

## Status Dropout Rates, by Race/Ethnicity

*Status dropout rates for Whites and Blacks ages 16–24 have declined since 1972, but have remained relatively stable since the early 1990s. The rates for Hispanics have not declined and remain higher than those for other racial/ethnic groups.*

Young adults who do not finish high school are more likely to be unemployed and earn less when they are employed than those who completed high school (NCES 2001–022). In addition, high school dropouts are more likely to receive public assistance than high school graduates who did not go to college.

The status dropout rate represents the percentage of an age group not enrolled in school and that has not earned a high school diploma, GED, or other certificate of completion. According to this measure, 11 percent of 16- to 24-year-olds were out of school without a high school credential in 2000. Although the status dropout rate remained fairly consistent from 1992 to 2000, it declined for young adults as a group between the early 1970s and 2000. The rate of this decline, however, varied for Whites and Blacks (see supplemental table 19-1).

Between 1972 and 2000, the status dropout rate for Whites was lower each year than the rate for Blacks or Hispanics. During these years, the percentage of Hispanic youths who

were out of school without a high school credential was also higher than that of Whites and Blacks in every year. In addition, during these years, the status dropout rates for Whites and Blacks declined by nearly 40 percent in each group, while the rate for Hispanic young adults remained fairly constant. The gap between Blacks and Whites narrowed during the 1970s and 1980s, but not during the 1990s.

Greater dropout rates among Hispanic immigrants partly account for the persistently high dropout rates for all Hispanic young adults. Among Hispanic 16- to 24-year-olds who were born outside the 50 states and the District of Columbia, the status dropout rate of 44 percent in 2000 was more than double the rates for first- or later-generation Hispanic young adults born in the United States (15 percent and 16 percent, respectively). Nevertheless, Hispanic young adults born in the United States are more likely to be high school dropouts than their peers of other race/ethnicities (see supplemental table 19-2).

NOTE: Due to relatively small sample sizes, American Indians/Alaska Natives and Asians/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately. In addition, the erratic nature of the Hispanic status rates reflects, in part, the small sample size of Hispanics. Data have been reported separately for Asian/Pacific Islanders since 1998. In 2000, they had a dropout rate of 4 percent (NCES 2002–114).

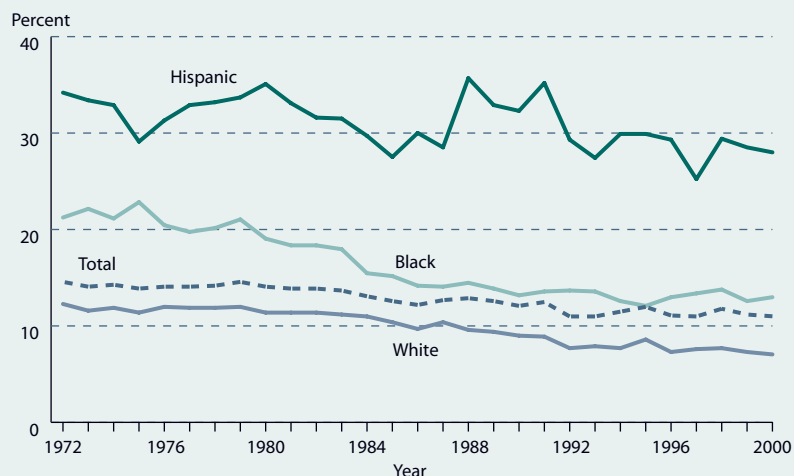
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. October Current Population Surveys, 1972–2000.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Supplemental Notes 1, 2  
Supplemental Tables 19-1,  
19-2

NCES 98–013; NCES 2001–  
022; NCES 2002–114

**STATUS DROPOUTS: Dropout rates of 16- to 24-year-olds, by race/ethnicity: October 1972–2000**



# Transition to College

## Immediate Transition to College

*Immediate college enrollment upon completing high school has increased since 1972. Rates of immediate enrollment for females have increased faster than those for males.*

The percentage of high school completers who enroll in college in the fall immediately after high school reflects the accessibility of higher education and the value high school completers place on college compared with other pursuits. Overall, immediate college enrollment rates of high school completers increased from 49 to 63 percent between 1972 and 2000 (see supplemental table 20-1).

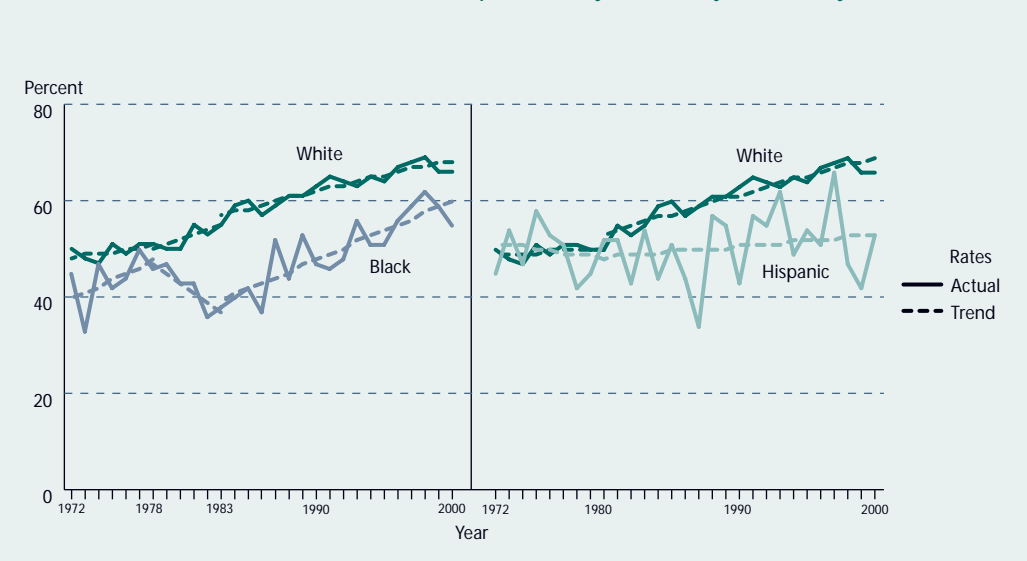
From 1972 to 2000, immediate enrollment rates of female high school completers increased faster than those of male completers. Much of the growth in immediate college enrollment rates between 1984 and 2000 was due to increases in the immediate enrollment rates of females at 4-year institutions. In this period, the rate at which females enrolled at 4-year institutions increased faster than that of males at 4-year institutions and both males and females at 2-year institutions (see supplemental table 20-2).

Immediate enrollment rates for White high school completers increased between 1972 and 2000, from 50 to 66 percent. Among Black high school completers, immediate enrollment

rates remained fairly constant between 1972 and 1978, decreased between 1978 and 1983, and then increased between 1983 and 2000, rising from 38 to 55 percent. Since 1983, immediate enrollment rates for Blacks have increased faster than those for Whites, reducing the gap between the two groups. For Hispanic high school completers, immediate transition rates remained relatively constant between 1972 and 2000. Thus, while White rates rose during the 1980s and 1990s, stagnant Hispanic rates during this time resulted in the gap increasing between Hispanic and White rates (see supplemental table 20-1).

Some differences in immediate enrollment rates among groups of completers have not changed. The gap in rates of those from high- and low-income families persisted for each year between 1990 and 2000. Likewise, completers whose parents had attained a bachelor's degree or higher were more likely than those with parents who had less education to enter college immediately after high school graduation for each year between 1990 and 2000 (see supplemental tables 20-1 and 20-3).

**COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATES: Immediate enrollment in postsecondary education, by race/ethnicity: October 1972–2000**



NOTE: Includes those ages 16–24 completing high school in a given year. Actual values are 1-year averages calculated from the Current Population Survey (CPS). The trend values show the linear trend of these average values over the time periods shown. In 1994, the survey instrument for the CPS was changed and weights were adjusted. See Supplemental Note 2 for further discussion.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. October Current Population Surveys, 1972–2000.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Notes 1, 2  
Supplemental Tables 20-1, 20-2, 20-3

NCES 1999–022





# Transition to College

## College Qualifications and College Enrollment

*Enrollment rates of high school graduates vary with family income, but among those who are college qualified and take the steps necessary for admission, low-income students are as likely as middle-income students to enroll in a 4-year institution.*

The higher the family income of high school graduates, the more likely they are to enroll in postsecondary education. Among 1992 graduates as a whole, the proportion who enrolled in 4-year institutions by 1994 increased at each family income level, from 33 percent of low-income students to 47 percent of middle-income students to 77 percent of high-income students (NCES 98–105).

However, financial resources are not the only obstacle to enrollment for students from low-income families. High school graduates from low-income families are less likely to enroll in college because they tend to be less qualified (NCES 2000–062, *indicator 30*). Nevertheless, even among college-qualified graduates, enrollment rates in 4-year or any postsecondary institutions within 2 years of graduating from high school increased with family income.

In addition to being college qualified, students wanting to enter a 4-year institution need to take additional steps, defined here as taking a college admissions test and applying for admission. Some of the income-related differences in enrollment rates disappeared among those who were both college qualified and took these two steps. College-qualified high school graduates from families with low and middle incomes who took the steps were equally likely to enroll in a 4-year institution (83 and 82 percent, respectively) or in any postsecondary institution within 2 years of high school graduation.

A large majority (83 percent) of low-income high school graduates who were both college qualified and took the two steps toward admission were able to attend a 4-year institution. Financial or other reasons did not deter them from enrolling.

\*Took a college admissions test (SAT or ACT) and applied for admission to a 4-year institution.

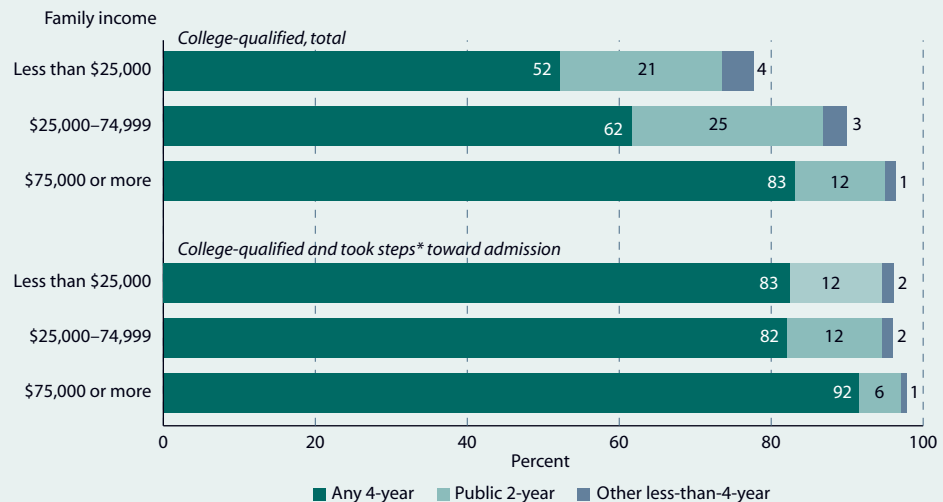
NOTE: The 4-year College Qualification Index is based on high school GPA, senior class rank, NELS 1992 aptitude test, SAT or ACT scores, and curricular rigor. See *Supplemental Note 11* for further information about the College Qualification Index. Type of institution attended refers to first institution attended.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, "Third Follow-up" (NELS: 1988/1994).



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Supplemental Note 11  
NCES 98–105, NCES 2000–062

**POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT: Percentage of college-qualified 1992 high school graduates who enrolled in postsecondary education by 1994, by type of institution and family income**





# Transition to College

## Enrollment of Students With Risk Factors

*About one-third of young people at risk for low educational attainment persist in high school and enroll in a 4-year college despite being at risk.*

Some students who enter high school with risk factors associated with dropping out nonetheless graduate from high school and enroll in postsecondary education. About 58 percent of all 1992 high school graduates had at least one factor in their family background or school experiences prior to entering high school that placed them at some risk of lower educational attainment. These risk factors include changing schools two or more times from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade (except to the next level), being in the lowest socioeconomic status quartile, having average grades of C's or lower from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, being in a single-parent household in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, having one or more older siblings who left high school without completing, and being held back one or more grades from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

However, 35 percent of the graduates with any risk factors not only finished high school but also enrolled in a 4-year college or university within 2 years of their high school graduation (and 68 percent enrolled in some type of postsecondary institution).

Why were some students with risk factors able to make it to college while others were not? Many factors may have contributed to their success, including academic preparation, family background, and support from schools, parents, and friends.

Students with risk factors who aspired in 10<sup>th</sup> grade to earn at least a bachelor's degree, were at least minimally academically prepared for enrollment in a 4-year college, and got help with college applications from their school were more likely to enroll in a 4-year college than those who did not have these experiences. In addition, those who completed at least one advanced mathematics course and those who participated in two or more extracurricular activities in 10<sup>th</sup> grade were more likely than others to enroll in a 4-year college. Also, students whose parents discussed school and college matters at least moderately frequently during 12<sup>th</sup> grade and those with parents who had completed a bachelor's degree were more likely to enroll in a 4-year college than those whose parents were not in these categories. Finally, when most of the friends of a student with risk factors planned to enroll in a 4-year college, the student was more likely than other students with risk factors to do so as well.

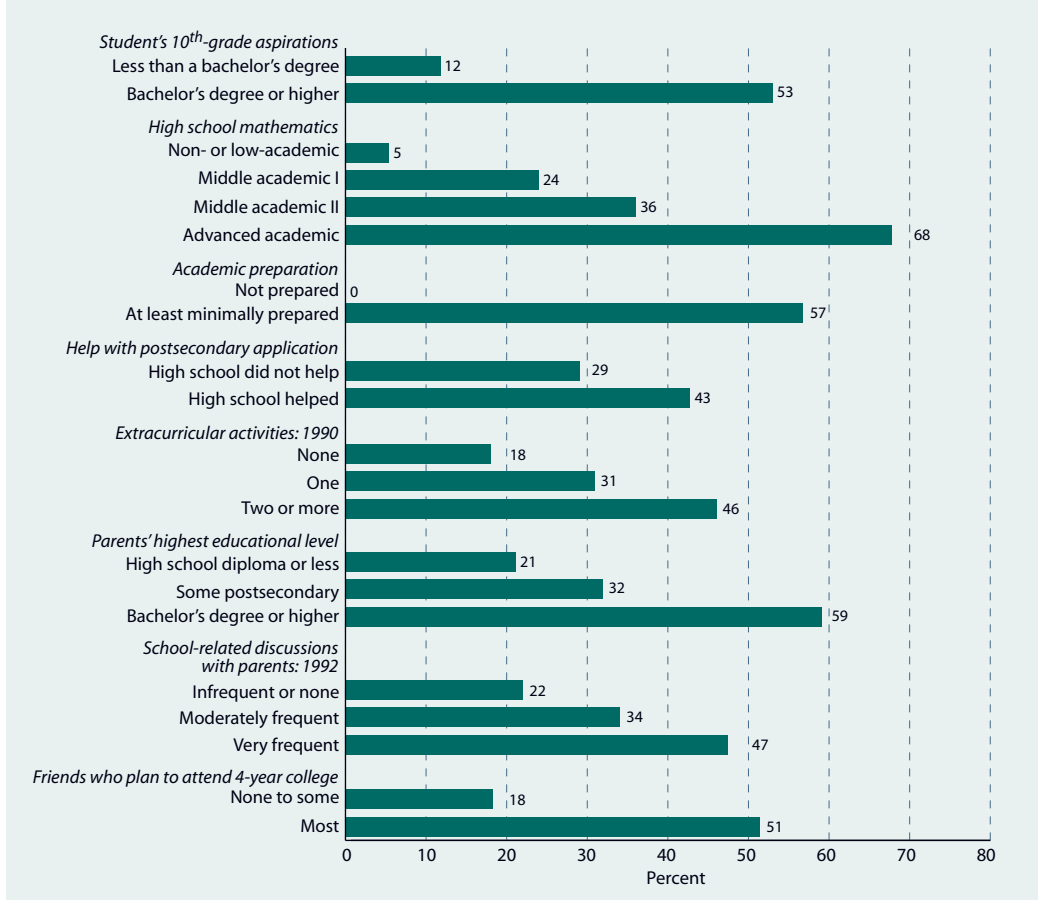
A multivariate analysis confirmed that the positive association between enrolling in a 4-year college and each of these characteristics persists even after controlling for the interrelationships of the characteristics (NCES 98-094).



**TRANSITION TO COLLEGE: Percentage of 1992 high school graduates with risk factors for low educational attainment, and percentage distribution according to type of institution in which first enrolled (by 1994)**

Risk factors	Percentage of all students	Type of institution first enrolled			
		4-year	Public 2-year	Other less-than-4-year	Never enrolled
<b>Number of risk factors</b>					
No risk factors	42.2	63.5	21.9	2.4	12.2
Any risk factors	57.8	35.0	27.3	5.7	32.0
One risk factor	32.2	45.1	26.0	5.2	23.8
Two risk factors	16.3	27.0	28.4	5.9	38.7
Three or more risk factors	9.3	14.0	29.7	7.1	49.2
<b>Risk factors</b>					
Changed schools two or more times from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> grade (except to next level)	26.8	39.8	28.0	6.1	26.1
Lowest SES quartile	18.2	21.7	25.2	6.3	46.8
Average grades C's or lower from 6 <sup>th</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> grade	16.7	16.3	29.8	7.7	46.2
Single-parent household in 8 <sup>th</sup> grade	15.3	38.6	28.1	4.7	28.7
One or more older siblings left high school	11.2	25.7	28.7	5.5	40.1
Held back one or more grades from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> grade	11.2	20.6	30.0	5.3	44.2

**TRANSITION TO COLLEGE: Percentage of 1992 high school graduates with risk factors who had enrolled in a 4-year college by 1994, by selected student characteristics**



NOTE: High school mathematics levels are described in *Supplemental Note 5*. Academic preparation levels are described in *Supplemental Note 77*. Table percentages may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES. National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, "Third Follow-up" (NELS:1988/1994).



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Supplemental Notes 1, 5, 11  
NCES 98-094

# Postsecondary Persistence and Progress

## High School Academic Preparation and Postsecondary Progress

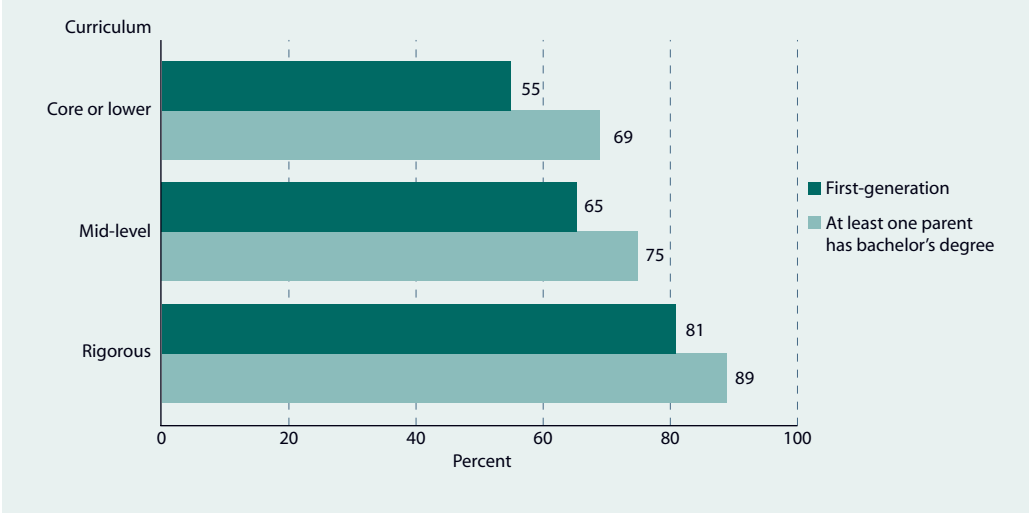
*Rigorous academic preparation in high school narrows the gap in postsecondary persistence between first-generation students and their peers with a parent who has a bachelor's degree.*

First-generation students are less likely to persist toward a bachelor's degree than other students. Among students who began their postsecondary education in 1995–96, first-generation students—those whose parents have no education beyond high school—were less likely than their peers to enroll in 4-year institutions (30 versus 70 percent) and, if they did, were less likely than other students to persist toward a bachelor's degree 3 years later (13 versus 33 percent) (NCES 98–082). The strongest predictor of eventual completion of a bachelor's degree is the academic rigor of secondary education (Adelman 1999). Three years after entering a 4-year institution, 87 percent of postsecondary students who had taken rigorous coursework in high school had stayed on the persistence track toward a bachelor's degree, compared with 62 percent who had not exceeded the Core curriculum (NCES 2001–153). Students who stayed on the persistence track either remained at the initial 4-year institution in which they enrolled or made a lateral trans-

fer to a new 4-year institution with no break in enrollment.

Parents' level of education is associated with students' persistence in postsecondary education, but rigorous academic preparation in high school narrows the gap in postsecondary persistence between first-generation and other students. Among postsecondary students who had taken no more than the Core curriculum in high school and enrolled in a 4-year institution in 1995–96, first-generation students were less likely to stay on the persistence track toward a bachelor's degree in 1998 than their counterparts with a parent who has a bachelor's degree (55 versus 69 percent). In contrast, the likelihood of students who had taken rigorous coursework in high school staying on the persistence track did not differ meaningfully between first-generation students and their peers with a parent who has a bachelor's degree (81 versus 89 percent).

**PERSISTENCE TRACK: Percentage of 1995–96 beginning postsecondary students who persisted toward a bachelor's degree, by the academic rigor of their secondary school curriculum and first-generation status: June 1998**



NOTE: First-generation students are those whose parents have no postsecondary education. The Core curriculum includes 4 years of English and 3 years each of mathematics, science, and social science. The "rigorous" curriculum includes at least 4 years of English and mathematics (including precalculus), 3 years each of science (including biology, chemistry, and physics) and social studies, 3 years of foreign language, and 1 honors/AP course or AP test score. Supplemental Note 5 provides more detail.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES. Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, "First Follow-up" (BPS:1996/1998).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Notes 1, 5  
 NCES 98–082, NCES 2001–153  
 Adelman 1999





# Postsecondary Persistence and Progress

## Persistence of Students With Pell Grants

*Among low- and middle-income students at public 2- and 4-year institutions, recipients of Pell Grants persist at the same rate as nonrecipients despite being less prepared academically and being more likely to have certain risk factors.*

The Pell Grant program is the largest federal need-based education grant program. In 1999–2000, \$7.2 billion in grants were awarded to 3.8 million students (U.S. Department of Education 2000e). Most recipients are from low-income families, but some middle-income students have sufficient financial need—if they have siblings also enrolled in college, for example. Twenty-nine percent of all beginning postsecondary students received a Pell Grant in 1995–96; the average award was about \$1,600 (NCES 2002–169).

Among 1995–96 beginning postsecondary students from low- and middle-income families, recipients of Pell Grants tended to be less well prepared academically than nonrecipients. If recipients attended 4-year institutions, they were more likely than nonrecipients to have SAT/ACT composite scores in the lowest quartile and less likely to have completed a rigorous high school curriculum. If they attended a less-than-4-year institution, they were less likely to have a high school diploma (see supplemental tables 24-1 and 24-2).

Recipients of the Pell Grant have characteristics associated with greater risk of leaving post-

secondary education before earning a degree. In addition to being more likely than nonrecipients not to have graduated from high school, they were more likely to have delayed enrollment in postsecondary education, to be financially independent, to have one or more dependents other than a spouse, or to be a single parent, all of which have been associated with a greater likelihood of leaving without a degree (NCES 97–578) (see supplemental table 24-3).

Given these disadvantages, one might expect recipients of Pell Grants to be less persistent in postsecondary education than other low- and middle-income students (overlooking any impact that the Pell Grant might have on persistence). After 3 years, however, Pell Grant recipients were just as likely as nonrecipients to persist at public 2- and 4-year institutions—that is, to have earned a degree or certificate, still be enrolled, or have transferred to another institution at the same or higher level. Pell Grant recipients were less likely than nonrecipients to persist at private not-for-profit 4-year institutions overall, but they were as likely to persist if they had completed a rigorous high school curriculum.

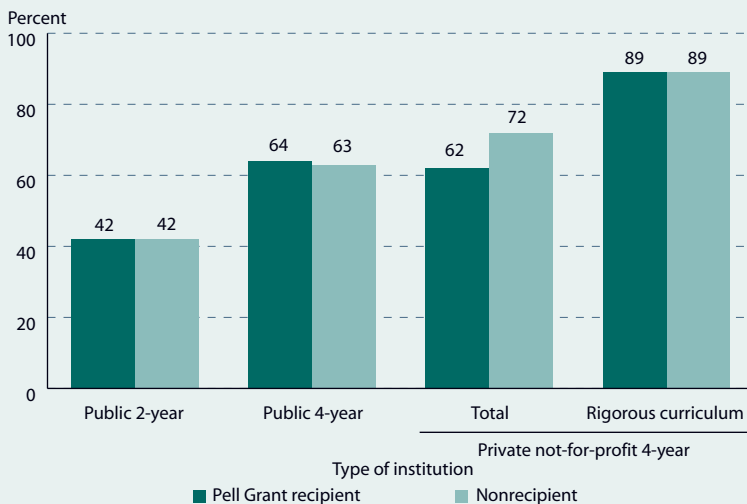
NOTE: Low- and middle-income students include all dependent students whose parents had annual incomes of less than \$70,000 in 1994 and all independent students who, combined with their spouses' earnings, had annual incomes of less than \$25,000 in 1994. "Persistence" is defined as having earned a degree or certificate, being continuously enrolled, or making an immediate lateral or upward transfer to another institution. Curriculum levels are described in *Supplemental Note 5*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES. Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, "First Follow-up" (BPS:1996/1998).



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
 Supplemental Notes 5, 9  
 Supplemental Tables 24-1, 24-2, 24-3  
 NCES 97–578,  
 NCES 2002–169  
 U.S. Department of Education  
 2000e

**PERSISTENCE IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION: Percentage of low- and middle-income 1995–96 beginning postsecondary students who persisted, by receipt of Pell Grant and type of institution: 1998**



# Completions

## Educational Attainment

*The percentages of 25- to 29-year-olds who have completed high school, some college, or a bachelor's degree or higher have increased since 1971, but disparities in attainment among racial/ethnic groups remain.*

In 2001, 88 percent of all 25- to 29-year-olds had completed high school with a diploma or high school equivalency certificate. Although this represents an increase since 1971, the high school completion rate has been at least 85 percent since the mid-1970s.

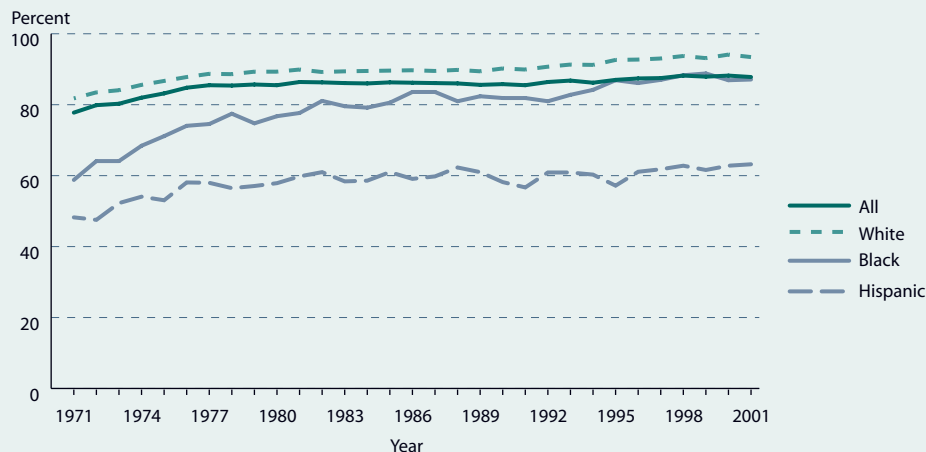
In 1971, Blacks were considerably less likely than Whites to have completed high school (59 versus 82 percent). Although Blacks have narrowed the gap, their high school completion rate was still below that of Whites in 2001 (87 versus 93 percent). The high school completion rate for Hispanics also increased between 1971 and 2001 (from 48 to 63 percent), but Hispanics, unlike Blacks, have not made progress in closing the gap with Whites (see supplemental table 25-1).

In 1971, 34 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had completed some college. The rate for completing some college increased during the 1970s, leveled off during the 1980s, and then increased again. This overall upward trend reflects the increased propensity of high school graduates to enroll in college immediately after high

school (*indicator 20*). By 2001, 58 percent of all 25- to 29-year-olds had completed some college, with Whites (65 percent) more likely than Blacks (51 percent) or Hispanics (32 percent) to have done so. The percentage completing some college increased between 1971 and 2001 for each racial/ethnic group, but less for Hispanics than for Whites or Blacks (see supplemental table 25-2).

Twenty-nine percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had at least a bachelor's degree in 2001, up from 17 percent in 1971. The rate for completing a bachelor's degree or higher was roughly half the rate for completing some college throughout this period. Although the percentage with a bachelor's degree or higher increased for all three racial/ethnic groups, the Black and Hispanic gaps with Whites widened slightly. Until the early 1980s, women aged 25–29 were less likely than their male counterparts to have a bachelor's or higher degree, but that difference has disappeared. In 2001, women were more likely than men to have graduated (see supplemental table 25-3).

**HIGH SCHOOL: Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who completed high school, by race/ethnicity: March 1971–2001**



NOTE: "High school completers" also includes those with higher levels of education, and "some college" also includes those with a bachelor's degree or higher. The questions about educational attainment were reworded in 1992. Before then, "some college" meant 1 or more years; beginning in 1992, it meant any college at all. In 1994, the survey instrument for the Current Population Survey (CPS) was changed and weights for undercounted populations were adjusted. See *Supplemental Note 2* for further discussion.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. March Current Population Surveys, 1971–2001.

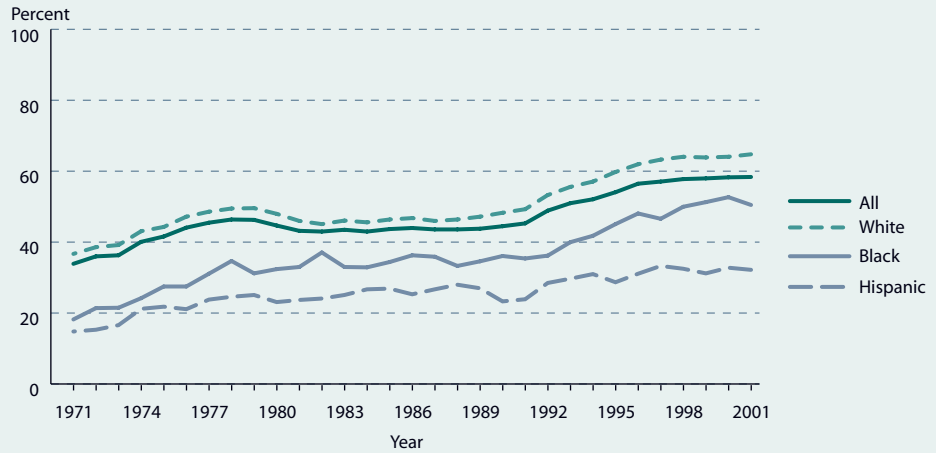
FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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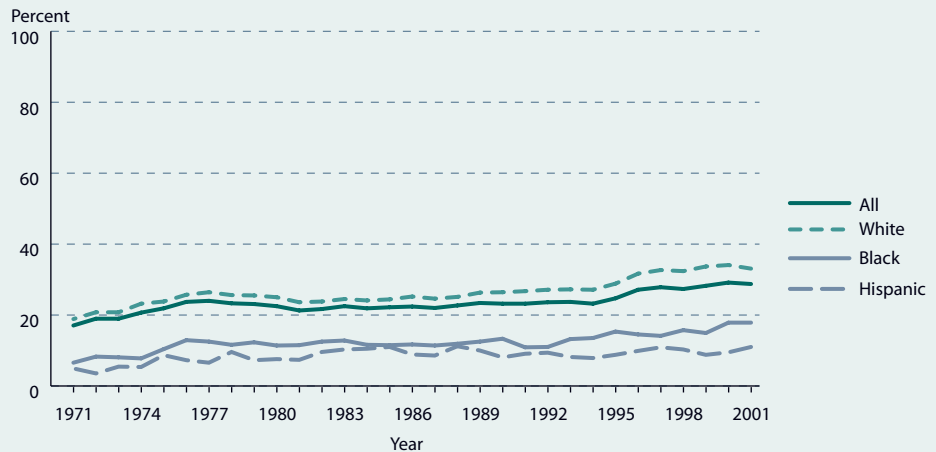




**SOME COLLEGE: Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with at least some college, by race/ethnicity: March 1971–2001**



**BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER: Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with a bachelor's degree or higher, by race/ethnicity: March 1971–2001**



NOTE: "High school completers" also includes those with higher levels of education, and "some college" also includes those with a bachelor's degree or higher. The questions about educational attainment were reworded in 1992. Before then, "some college" meant 1 or more years; beginning in 1992, it meant any college at all. In 1994, the survey instrument for the Current Population Survey (CPS) was changed and weights for undercounted populations were adjusted. See *Supplemental Note 2* for further discussion.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. March Current Population Surveys, 1971–2001.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
 Supplemental Notes 1, 2  
 Supplemental Tables 25-1,  
 25-2, 25-3