

# the condition of education 2008



## INDICATOR 24

# Immediate Transition to College

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Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2008*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008031>) or contact ED PUBS at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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# Transition to College

## Immediate Transition to College

*The rate of college enrollment immediately after high school completion increased from 49 percent in 1972 to 67 percent by 1997, but has since fluctuated between 62 and 69 percent.*

The immediate college enrollment rate is defined as the percentage of all high school completers<sup>1</sup> ages 16–24 who enroll in college (2- or 4-year) in the fall immediately after high school. In most years between 1972 and 1980, this rate was approximately 50 percent. It subsequently increased to 67 percent by 1997 and then decreased to 62 percent by 2001. Since 2002, the rate has fluctuated between 64 and 69 percent (see supplemental table 24-1).

Differences were evident in the immediate college enrollment rate among racial/ethnic groups between 1972 and 2006. Although the enrollment rates increased overall during this period for both Whites and Blacks, the gap between the two has widened and narrowed at various times, resulting in no overall change in the gap. In 2006, the enrollment rate for Black high school completers was 13 percentage points lower than for their White counterparts (55 vs. 69 percent). For Hispanics, the immediate college enrollment rate has fluctuated over time, but increased overall between 1972 and 2006. Nonetheless, the gap between Hispanics and Whites has widened over this period. In

2006, the immediate college enrollment rate was 58 percent for Hispanics, compared with 69 percent for Whites.

From 1972 through 2006, the immediate enrollment rate of high school completers increased faster for females than for males (see supplemental table 24-2). Much of the growth in the overall rate for females was due to increases in the rate of attending 4-year institutions.

Differences in immediate enrollment rates by family income and parents' education have persisted. Despite an overall narrowing of the gap between students from low-income families and their peers from high-income families, the immediate college enrollment rate was higher for students from high-income families in each year between 1972 and 2006 (see supplemental table 24-1).<sup>2</sup> Likewise, compared with completers whose parents had a bachelor's degree or higher, those whose parents had less education had lower rates of immediate college enrollment in each year between 1992 and 2006 (see supplemental table 24-3).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Refers to those who completed 12 years of school for survey years 1972–1991 and to those who earned a high school diploma or equivalent certificate such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate for all years since 1992. See supplemental note 2 for more information.

<sup>2</sup> Low income refers to the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes, high income refers to the top 20 percent of all family incomes, and middle income refers to the 60 percent in between. See supplemental note 2 for further information.

<sup>3</sup> The earliest year with comparable data available for parents' educational attainment is 1992.

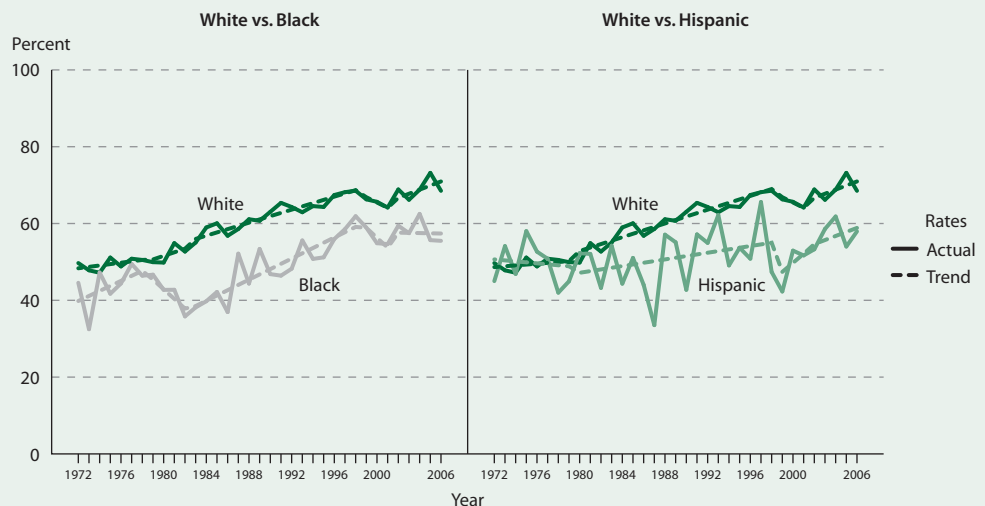
NOTE: Includes those ages 16–24 completing high school in a given year. Actual rates are annual estimates; trend rates show the linear trend of these annual values over the period shown. See supplemental note 2 for further information. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. The erratic nature of the Hispanic rate reflects, in part, the small sample size of Hispanic high school completers. Some estimates have been revised from previous publications.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1972–2006.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Supplemental Note 2  
Supplemental Tables 24-1,  
24-2, 24-3

**COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATES: Actual and trend rates of high school completers who were enrolled in college the October immediately following high school completion, by race/ethnicity: 1972–2006**



## Immediate Transition to College

**Table 24-1. Percentage of high school completers who were enrolled in college the October immediately following high school completion, by race/ethnicity and family income: 1972–2006**

Year	Total	Race/ethnicity <sup>1</sup>					Family income <sup>2</sup>				
		White	Black	Hispanic	Gap between White and Black	Gap between White and Hispanic	Low	Middle	High	Gap between low and high	
1972	49.2	49.7	44.6	45.0	5.1	4.7	26.1	45.2	63.8	37.7	
1973	46.6	47.8	32.5	54.1	15.3	-6.3	20.3	40.9	64.4	44.1	
1974	47.6	47.2	47.2	46.9	-0.1	0.3	—	—	—	—	
1975	50.7	51.1	41.7	58.0	9.4	-6.9	31.2	46.2	64.5	33.3	
1976	48.8	48.8	44.4	52.7	4.4	-3.9	39.1	40.5	63.0	23.8	
1977	50.6	50.8	49.5	50.8	1.4	0.0	27.7	44.2	66.3	38.6	
1978	50.1	50.5	46.4	42.0	4.1	8.5	31.4	44.3	64.0	32.6	
1979	49.3	49.9	46.7	45.0	3.3	5.0	30.5	43.2	63.2	32.7	
1980	49.3	49.8	42.7	52.3	7.1	-2.5	32.5	42.5	65.2	32.7	
1981	53.9	54.9	42.7	52.1	12.2	2.8	33.6	49.2	67.6	34.0	
1982	50.6	52.7	35.8	43.2	16.9	9.5	32.8	41.7	70.9	38.1	
1983	52.7	55.0	38.2	54.2	16.9	0.8	34.6	45.2	70.3	35.8	
1984	55.2	59.0	39.8	44.3	19.2	14.6	34.5	48.4	74.0	39.5	
1985	57.7	60.1	42.2	51.0	17.9	9.0	40.2	50.6	74.6	34.3	
1986	53.8	56.8	36.9	44.0	19.9	12.8	33.9	48.5	71.0	37.1	
1987	56.8	58.6	52.2	33.5	6.4	25.0	36.9	50.0	73.8	36.9	
1988	58.9	61.1	44.4	57.1	16.8	4.0	42.5	54.7	72.8	30.3	
1989	59.6	60.7	53.4	55.1	7.3	5.6	48.1	55.4	70.7	22.6	
1990	60.1	63.0	46.8	42.7	16.2	20.3	46.7	54.4	76.6	29.9	
1991	62.5	65.4	46.4	57.2	19.0	8.2	39.5	58.4	78.2	38.8	
1992	61.9	64.3	48.2	55.0	16.1	9.4	40.9	57.0	79.0	38.1	
1993	62.6	62.9	55.6	62.2	7.3	0.7	50.4	56.9	79.3	28.9	
1994	61.9	64.5	50.8	49.1	13.7	15.4	43.3	57.8	77.9	34.6	
1995	61.9	64.3	51.2	53.7	13.1	10.6	34.2	56.0	83.5	49.2	
1996	65.0	67.4	56.0	50.8	11.5	16.6	48.6	62.7	78.0	29.4	
1997	67.0	68.2	58.5	65.6	9.6	2.6	57.0	60.7	82.2	25.2	
1998	65.6	68.5	61.9	47.4	6.6	21.2	46.4	64.7	77.5	31.1	
1999	62.9	66.3	58.9	42.3	7.4	24.0	49.4	59.4	76.1	26.7	
2000	63.3	65.7	54.9	52.9	10.8	12.7	49.7	59.5	76.9	27.2	
2001	61.7	64.2	54.6	51.7	9.5	12.5	43.8	56.3	79.9	36.1	
2002	65.2	68.9	59.4	53.3	9.4	15.6	56.4	60.7	78.2	21.8	
2003	63.9	66.2	57.5	58.6	8.7	7.6	52.8	57.6	80.1	27.3	
2004	66.7	68.8	62.5	61.8	6.3	7.0	47.8	63.3	80.1	32.3	
2005	68.6	73.2	55.7	54.0	17.5	19.2	53.5	65.1	81.2	27.6	
2006	66.0	68.5	55.5	57.9	13.0	10.6	50.9	61.4	80.7	29.8	

— Not available. Data on family income were not available in 1974.

<sup>1</sup> Included in the total but not shown separately are high school completers from other racial/ethnic groups. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

<sup>2</sup> *Low income* refers to the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes, *high income* refers to the top 20 percent of all family incomes, and *middle income* refers to the 60 percent in between. See *supplemental note 2* for further information.

NOTE: Includes those ages 16–24 completing high school in a given year. The Current Population Survey (CPS) questions about educational attainment were reworded in 1992. Before then, *high school completers* referred to those who had completed 12 years of schooling; beginning in 1992, the term referred to those who had received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate. In 1994, the survey methodology for the CPS was changed and weights were adjusted. See *supplemental note 2* for further information. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Some estimates have been revised from previous publications.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1972–2006.

## Immediate Transition to College

**Table 24-2. Percentage of high school completers who were enrolled in college the October immediately following high school completion, by sex and type of institution: 1972–2006**

Year	Male			Female		
	Total	2-year <sup>1</sup>	4-year <sup>1</sup>	Total	2-year <sup>1</sup>	4-year <sup>1</sup>
1972	52.7	—	—	46.0	—	—
1973	50.0	14.6	35.4	43.4	15.2	28.2
1974	49.4	16.6	32.8	45.9	13.9	32.0
1975	52.6	19.0	33.6	49.0	17.4	31.6
1976	47.2	14.5	32.7	50.3	16.6	33.8
1977	52.1	17.2	35.0	49.3	17.8	31.5
1978	51.1	15.6	35.5	49.3	18.3	31.0
1979	50.4	16.9	33.5	48.4	18.1	30.3
1980	46.7	17.1	29.7	51.8	21.6	30.2
1981	54.8	20.9	33.9	53.1	20.1	33.0
1982	49.1	17.5	31.6	52.0	20.6	31.4
1983	51.9	20.2	31.7	53.4	18.4	35.1
1984	56.0	17.7	38.4	54.5	21.0	33.5
1985	58.6	19.9	38.8	56.8	19.3	37.5
1986	55.8	21.3	34.5	51.9	17.3	34.6
1987	58.3	17.3	41.0	55.3	20.3	35.0
1988	57.1	21.3	35.8	60.7	22.4	38.3
1989	57.6	18.3	39.3	61.6	23.1	38.5
1990	58.0	19.6	38.4	62.2	20.6	41.6
1991	57.9	22.9	35.0	67.1	26.8	40.3
1992	60.0	22.1	37.8	63.8	23.9	40.0
1993	59.9	22.9	37.0	65.2	22.8	42.4
1994	60.6	23.0	37.5	63.2	19.1	44.1
1995	62.6	25.3	37.4	61.3	18.1	43.2
1996	60.1	21.5	38.5	69.7	24.6	45.1
1997	63.6	21.4	42.2	70.3	24.1	46.2
1998	62.4	24.4	38.0	69.1	24.3	44.8
1999	61.4	21.0	40.5	64.4	21.1	43.3
2000	59.9	23.1	36.8	66.2	20.0	46.2
2001	59.7	18.6	41.1	63.6	20.7	42.9
2002	62.1	20.5	41.7	68.3	23.0	45.3
2003	61.2	21.9	39.3	66.5	21.0	45.5
2004	61.4	21.8	39.6	71.5	23.1	48.5
2005	66.5	24.7	41.8	70.4	23.4	47.0
2006	65.8	24.9	40.9	66.1	24.5	41.7

— Not available. Data on type of institution were not collected until 1973.

<sup>1</sup> From 1973 through 1986, due to a skip pattern in the Current Population Survey (CPS), about 3–9 percent of high school completers ages 16–24 who enrolled in college immediately were not asked the question about the type of institutions attended. Such respondents were assumed to have the same probability of enrolling at a 2- or 4-year institution as those who were asked the question.

NOTE: Includes those ages 16–24 completing high school in a given year. The Current Population Survey (CPS) questions about educational attainment were reworded in 1992. Before then, *high school completers* referred to those who had completed 12 years of schooling; beginning in 1992, the term referred to those who had received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate. In 1994, the survey methodology for the CPS was changed and weights were adjusted. See *supplemental note 2* for further information. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1972–2006.

## Immediate Transition to College

**Table 24-3. Percentage of high school completers who were enrolled in college the October immediately following high school completion, by parents' education: 1992–2006**

Year	Total	Less than high school	High school diploma or equivalent	Some college, including vocational/technical	Bachelor's degree or higher	Not available <sup>1</sup>
1992	61.9	33.1	55.5	67.5	81.3	38.0
1993	62.6	47.1	52.3	62.7	87.9	42.0
1994	61.9	43.0	49.9	65.0	82.5	43.1
1995	61.9	27.3	47.0	70.2	87.7	30.8
1996	65.0	45.0	56.1	66.6	85.2	45.6
1997	67.0	51.4	61.7	62.6	86.1	51.3
1998	65.6	49.8	57.2	67.7	82.3	50.1
1999	62.9	36.3	54.4	60.3	82.2	53.1
2000	63.3	44.4	51.8	63.8	81.2	50.5
2001	61.7	39.0	51.9	62.0	81.3	41.9
2002	65.2	43.3	51.9	65.9	82.6	58.7
2003	63.9	43.3	53.9	62.9	82.1	48.8
2004	66.7	40.2	53.8	67.0	85.9	53.6
2005	68.6	43.0	62.1	65.6	88.8	54.8
2006	66.0	43.0	56.1	67.0	78.2	54.6

<sup>1</sup> Information on parents' education was not available for those who did not live with their parents and were classified as a householder, and for those whose parents' educational attainment was not reported; about 9–14 percent of high school completers ages 16–24 were in this category for the period covered.

NOTE: Includes those ages 16–24 completing high school in a given year. *High school completers* referred to those who received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate. In 1994, the survey methodology for the CPS was changed and weights were adjusted. See *supplemental note 2* for further information, including the definition of parents' education. Some estimates have been revised from previous publications.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1992–2006.

## Immediate Transition to College

**Table S24-1. Standard errors for the percentage of high school completers who were enrolled in college the October immediately following high school completion, by race/ethnicity and family income: 1972–2006**

Year	Race/ethnicity						Family income			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Gap between White and Black	Gap between White and Hispanic	Low	Middle	High	Gap between low and high
1972	1.31	1.42	4.62	9.74	4.84	9.84	3.45	1.75	2.19	4.08
1973	1.29	1.40	4.30	9.01	4.52	9.12	3.18	1.70	2.13	3.83
1974	1.28	1.39	4.58	8.94	4.78	9.04	†	†	†	†
1975	1.26	1.37	4.69	8.44	4.89	8.55	3.59	1.69	2.09	4.15
1976	1.31	1.43	4.82	7.97	5.03	8.10	4.20	1.76	2.06	4.68
1977	1.29	1.41	4.65	7.96	4.86	8.09	3.54	1.76	2.01	4.07
1978	1.28	1.41	4.51	8.44	4.72	8.56	3.74	1.74	2.05	4.27
1979	1.28	1.41	4.69	7.92	4.90	8.04	3.78	1.74	2.04	4.29
1980	1.30	1.43	4.44	8.70	4.66	8.81	3.47	1.78	2.08	4.05
1981	1.30	1.44	4.44	8.19	4.67	8.32	3.90	1.75	2.09	4.43
1982	1.36	1.52	4.33	7.96	4.59	8.10	3.81	1.81	2.13	4.36
1983	1.39	1.55	4.34	8.96	4.61	9.10	4.02	1.88	2.17	4.56
1984	1.37	1.54	4.15	7.67	4.42	7.83	3.62	1.89	2.09	4.18
1985	1.45	1.62	4.78	9.76	5.05	9.89	4.14	2.02	2.16	4.67
1986	1.43	1.62	4.38	8.85	4.67	9.00	3.59	1.97	2.28	4.25
1987	1.46	1.65	4.82	8.25	5.10	8.42	3.88	2.07	2.16	4.44
1988	1.57	1.79	4.91	10.14	5.23	10.30	4.39	2.14	2.52	5.06
1989	1.64	1.85	5.27	10.51	5.59	10.67	4.56	2.28	2.61	5.25
1990	1.60	1.80	5.08	10.82	5.39	10.97	4.76	2.14	2.54	5.39
1991	1.62	1.82	5.25	9.58	5.55	9.75	4.50	2.25	2.39	5.09
1992	1.58	1.84	4.92	8.50	5.25	8.70	4.37	2.18	2.35	4.96
1993	1.59	1.85	5.28	8.22	5.60	8.42	4.56	2.15	2.46	5.18
1994	1.43	1.61	4.42	6.28	4.70	6.48	3.96	1.94	2.22	4.54
1995	1.41	1.64	4.20	4.92	4.51	5.19	3.56	2.00	1.86	4.02
1996	1.42	1.67	4.03	5.79	4.37	6.03	3.78	1.95	2.27	4.41
1997	1.38	1.64	4.12	4.53	4.43	4.82	3.66	1.97	1.98	4.16
1998	1.38	1.61	4.05	4.92	4.35	5.18	3.62	1.89	2.21	4.24
1999	1.38	1.64	3.86	4.76	4.19	5.03	3.66	1.90	2.22	4.28
2000	1.41	1.66	4.11	5.03	4.43	5.30	3.67	1.97	2.22	4.29
2001	1.41	1.64	3.97	5.33	4.30	5.58	3.61	1.97	2.08	4.17
2002	1.31	1.53	3.84	4.55	4.13	4.81	3.60	1.78	2.11	4.18
2003	1.35	1.61	4.25	4.61	4.54	4.88	3.83	1.87	2.02	4.33
2004	1.31	1.57	3.77	4.76	4.08	5.01	3.95	1.79	1.98	4.42
2005	1.31	1.52	4.15	4.18	4.43	4.45	3.86	1.81	1.98	4.34
2006	1.33	1.60	4.33	4.18	4.61	4.48	3.92	1.82	2.01	4.41

† Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1972–2006.

## Immediate Transition to College

**Table S24-2. Standard errors for the percentage of high school completers who were enrolled in college the October immediately following high school completion, by sex and type of institution: 1972–2006**

Year	Male			Female		
	Total	2-year	4-year	Total	2-year	4-year
1972	1.89	†	†	1.81	†	†
1973	1.87	1.32	1.79	1.77	1.28	1.61
1974	1.85	1.37	1.74	1.77	1.23	1.66
1975	1.83	1.44	1.73	1.75	1.32	1.62
1976	1.87	1.32	1.76	1.82	1.35	1.72
1977	1.87	1.41	1.79	1.77	1.36	1.65
1978	1.87	1.36	1.79	1.76	1.36	1.63
1979	1.88	1.41	1.78	1.76	1.35	1.62
1980	1.86	1.40	1.70	1.81	1.49	1.66
1981	1.86	1.52	1.77	1.82	1.46	1.72
1982	1.95	1.48	1.81	1.90	1.54	1.76
1983	2.03	1.63	1.89	1.91	1.48	1.82
1984	1.99	1.53	1.95	1.90	1.55	1.80
1985	2.08	1.69	2.06	2.02	1.61	1.97
1986	2.06	1.70	1.97	1.99	1.50	1.89
1987	2.09	1.60	2.09	2.04	1.65	1.95
1988	2.24	1.85	2.17	2.20	1.88	2.19
1989	2.35	1.84	2.32	2.27	1.97	2.28
1990	2.29	1.85	2.26	2.24	1.87	2.28
1991	2.33	1.98	2.25	2.22	2.09	2.32
1992	2.24	1.89	2.21	2.23	1.98	2.27
1993	2.33	2.00	2.30	2.17	1.91	2.25
1994	2.05	1.76	2.03	1.99	1.63	2.05
1995	2.03	1.82	2.03	1.95	1.54	1.98
1996	2.09	1.76	2.08	1.92	1.80	2.07
1997	2.01	1.71	2.07	1.87	1.75	2.04
1998	1.96	1.74	1.96	1.93	1.79	2.08
1999	1.95	1.63	1.97	1.95	1.67	2.02
2000	2.13	1.83	2.10	1.88	1.59	1.98
2001	2.01	1.59	2.01	1.97	1.66	2.03
2002	1.88	1.56	1.91	1.82	1.64	1.94
2003	1.97	1.67	1.97	1.86	1.61	1.96
2004	1.95	1.65	1.96	1.74	1.63	1.93
2005	1.94	1.77	2.03	1.77	1.64	1.94
2006	1.90	1.73	1.97	1.87	1.70	1.95

† Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1972–2006.

## Immediate Transition to College

**Table S24-3. Standard errors for the percentage of high school completers who were enrolled in college the October immediately following high school completion, by parents' education: 1992–2006**

Year	Total	Less than high school	High school diploma or equivalent	Some college, including vocational/technical	Bachelor's degree or higher	Not available
1992	1.58	4.99	2.97	3.03	2.44	5.36
1993	1.59	6.00	2.90	3.28	2.09	5.00
1994	1.43	5.00	2.96	2.77	2.06	4.22
1995	1.41	4.44	2.95	2.46	1.79	4.20
1996	1.42	5.63	2.84	2.73	2.01	4.42
1997	1.38	5.51	2.97	2.74	1.86	3.95
1998	1.38	5.61	2.83	2.56	2.12	4.17
1999	1.38	5.00	3.00	2.67	1.99	4.11
2000	1.41	5.49	2.98	2.76	2.06	4.28
2001	1.41	5.29	3.00	2.61	2.06	4.36
2002	1.31	4.90	2.86	2.51	1.88	3.96
2003	1.35	5.61	2.98	2.58	1.94	3.99
2004	1.31	5.10	2.72	2.51	1.71	5.02
2005	1.31	4.81	2.63	2.54	1.66	4.96
2006	1.33	5.50	2.97	2.35	2.01	5.56

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1992–2006.