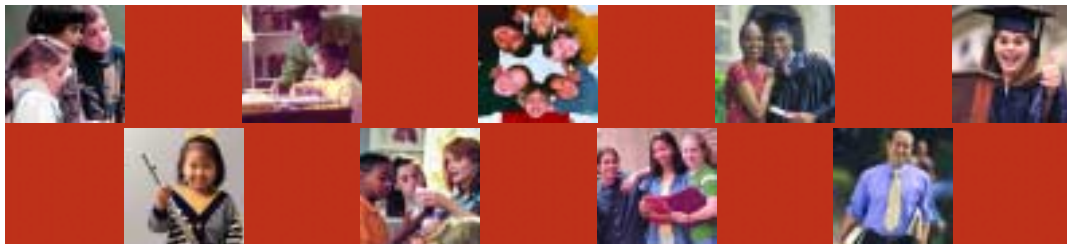


the condition of education 2003



INDICATOR 30

Size of High Schools

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2003*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2003*, visit the NCES web site (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003067>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

Suggested Citation:

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2003*, NCES 2003-067, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003.

School Characteristics and Climate

Size of High Schools

High school sizes vary by location. In urban areas almost half of all high schools are large (900 or more students), whereas in rural areas half of all high schools are very small (fewer than 300 students).

Large high schools have traditionally been considered more economical and able to support a broader curriculum than smaller ones (Lee et al. 2000). In recent years, however, research has suggested that small and moderate size high schools foster more positive social and academic environments than large high schools, especially for economically disadvantaged students (Lee and Bryk 1988, 1989; Bickel et al. 2001). This research also suggests that students in very small high schools learn less than students in “moderate” size (600–899 students) high schools (Lee and Smith 1997). This indicator profiles the distribution of high schools by size and selected characteristics.

During the 1999–2000 school year, high schools were not evenly distributed by size. Those in central cities or in urban fringe/large towns were more likely than those in rural areas/small towns to be large (i.e., to have 900 or more students), while those in rural areas/small towns were more likely than those elsewhere to be very small (to have fewer than 300 students). High schools with the highest

percentages of limited English proficiency (LEP) enrollments were more likely than those with the lower percentages to be large, while those with the lowest percentages of LEP enrollments were more likely than all others to be very small. Among public high schools, those with the highest percentages of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches were more likely than those with lower percentages to be very small (see supplemental table 30-1).

Among regular high schools, a positive relationship exists between school size and the percentage of teachers who reported that apathy, tardiness, absenteeism, dropping out, and drug use are “serious” problems among students in their school. Teachers in larger schools were generally more likely to report that these problems are serious than were their peers in relatively smaller schools. When examined across locations, this pattern generally held true in central cities and rural areas/small towns, but not in urban fringe/large towns (see supplemental table 30-2).

NOTE: See supplemental note 1 for more information on location. Data on general high school characteristics by size include data on all secondary schools—i.e., special education, vocational education, and alternative high schools as well as regular high schools. Secondary schools include all schools with no grade below grade 7 and with one grade at grade 9 or higher. A secondary school may include an ungraded class.

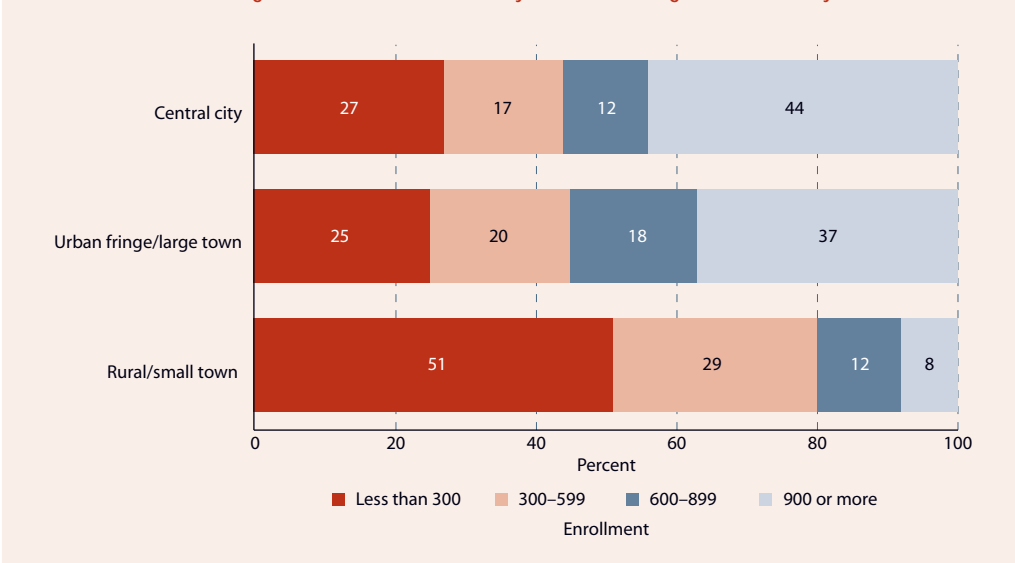
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), “Public School Questionnaire, Charter School Questionnaire, and Private School Questionnaire,” 1999–2000.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Notes 1, 3
Supplemental tables 30-1,
30-2



Bickel et al. 2001; Lee et al. 2000; Lee and Bryk 1988, 1989; Lee and Smith 1997

HIGH SCHOOL SIZE: Percentage distributions of all secondary schools according to enrollment, by location: 1999–2000



Size of High Schools

Table 30-1. Number and percentage distribution of secondary schools according to enrollment, by selected school characteristics: 1999–2000

School characteristic	All schools	Enrollment			
		Less than 300	300–599	600–899	900 or more
Total	23,500	34.9	22.4	14.6	28.1
Sector					
Public	20,900	31.7	22.5	15.3	30.5
Private	2,600	61.5	21.8	8.7	8.0
Type					
Regular	19,900	27.3	24.3	16.1	32.4
Special education	200	98.7	#	#	‡
Vocational education	700	28.7	31.0	26.0	14.4!
Alternative	2,600	89.2	7.9!	1.8!	1.1!
Region					
Northeast	3,800	20.7	27.8	18.5	33.1
Midwest	7,200	41.4	24.7	14.4	19.5
South	6,900	27.8	24.4	16.2	31.6
West	5,500	45.4	13.2	10.1	31.3
Location					
Central city	4,900	26.8	16.5	12.5	44.2
Urban fringe/large town	9,800	25.0	19.5	18.3	37.2
Rural/small town	8,700	50.8	29.0	11.7	8.5
Percent minority					
Less than 10	10,200	38.6	27.3	16.0	18.1
10–24	4,600	36.1	19.3	13.0	31.6
25–49	3,600	28.2	18.5	14.3	39.0
50–75	2,300	32.6	14.5	15.2	37.7
More than 75	2,800	30.3	20.8	12.2	36.7
Percent of students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch¹					
Less than 15	5,900	13.5	21.8	19.1	45.6
15–29	4,800	28.3	25.4	16.5	29.8
30–49	4,100	35.6	22.5	14.2	27.7
50–74	3,000	43.3	22.3	13.8	20.7
75 or more	2,200	53.2	21.9	7.2	17.7
Percent of students with limited English proficiency					
Less than 1	17,000	40.0	24.6	14.3	21.1
1–10	4,700	22.0	17.9	15.6	44.4
More than 10	1,800	20.7	13.6	14.9	50.7

#Rounds to zero.

!Interpret data with caution (estimates are unstable).

‡Reporting standards not met (too few cases).

¹Data for public schools only.

NOTE: See *supplemental note 1* for more information on region and location. Data include teachers in regular, special education, vocational education, and alternative high schools. Secondary schools include all schools with no grade below grade 7 and with one grade at grade 9 or higher. A secondary school may include an ungraded class. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Questionnaire, Charter School Questionnaire, and Private School Questionnaire," 1999–2000.

Size of High Schools

Table 30-2. Percentage of regular secondary school teachers who thought that certain issues were a “serious” problem in their schools, by location and enrollment: 1999–2000

School characteristic	Students unprepared to learn	Student apathy	Student tardiness	Student absenteeism	Students dropping out	Physical conflicts among students	Student alcohol use	Student drug abuse
Total	32.4	31.6	16.0	23.1	10.4	3.5	19.4	15.0
Enrollment								
Less than 300	24.9	23.9	8.4	13.4	4.9	2.2	22.6	12.3
300–599	28.8	28.1	9.9	14.1	6.6	1.9	21.7	13.9
600–899	33.1	31.9	12.8	19.5	7.3	3.5	18.5	13.7
900 or more	34.4	33.7	19.8	28.1	13.2	4.2	18.6	16.1
Location and enrollment								
Central city								
Less than 300	20.4!	16.6!	15.5!	9.6!	5.8!	5.1!	5.6!	7.2!
300–599	27.6	21.3	14.5	15.0	4.9!	3.3!	9.1	5.5
600–899	40.8	32.0	19.0	28.2	8.8	6.4!	8.5	7.5
900 or more	45.1	40.1	28.4	39.3	21.8	6.8	17.1	17.2
Urban fringe/large town								
Less than 300	27.8	28.8	14.0	19.2	6.9	2.5	18.4	14.1
300–599	27.0	25.8	10.0	16.9	6.9!	2.4!	20.3	13.6
600–899	25.1	25.9	8.7	11.1	4.1	1.4!	18.9	12.0
900 or more	28.6	29.6	11.6	16.3	5.4	2.4!	17.4	12.8
Rural/small town								
Less than 300	31.5	32.0	10.0	18.5	9.3	2.5	26.0	16.9
300–599	25.0	24.5	6.8	13.0	4.2	1.7	25.8	12.7
600–899	32.0	31.5	9.8	16.3	9.1	2.0	26.9	17.5
900 or more	36.4	36.0	11.5	19.9	9.5	3.6	26.2	18.9
	33.7	37.6	12.4	26.9	15.1	3.4	24.7	19.1

!Interpret data with caution (estimates are unstable).

NOTE: See *supplemental note 1* for more information on location. Data include regular high school teachers only; teachers in special education, vocational education, and alternative high schools are excluded. Secondary schools include all schools with no grade below grade 7 and with one grade at grade 9 or higher. A secondary school may include an ungraded class.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), “Public Teacher Questionnaire, Charter Teacher Questionnaire, and Private Teacher Questionnaire,” 1999–2000.

Size of High Schools

Table S30. Standard errors for the percentage distributions of all secondary schools according to enrollment, by location: 1999–2000

School characteristic	Enrollment			
	Less than 300	300–599	600–899	900 or more
Central city	1.9	1.4	1.0	1.7
Urban fringe/large town	1.3	1.0	0.9	1.1
Rural/small town	1.2	1.1	0.8	0.5

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Questionnaire, Charter School Questionnaire, and Private School Questionnaire," 1999–2000.

Size of High Schools

Table S30-1. Standard errors for the number and percentage distribution of secondary schools according to enrollment, by selected school characteristics: 1999–2000

School characteristic	All schools	Enrollment			
		Less than 300	300–599	600–899	900 or more
Total	220	0.78	0.66	0.47	0.60
Sector					
Public	190	0.76	0.69	0.52	0.67
Private	130	2.24	1.68	0.75	0.74
Type					
Regular	230	0.68	0.69	0.51	0.64
Special education	50	1.01	#	#	‡
Vocational education	50	4.61	4.06	4.31	3.36
Alternative	170	2.00	1.91	0.52	0.54
Region					
Northeast	70	1.69	1.66	1.55	1.32
Midwest	130	1.48	1.41	0.91	1.05
South	130	1.41	1.05	0.92	1.08
West	90	1.92	1.24	0.84	1.19
Location					
Central city	150	1.88	1.42	0.96	1.70
Urban fringe/large town	180	1.30	0.99	0.87	1.12
Rural/small town	180	1.15	1.14	0.76	0.52
Percent minority					
Less than 10	210	1.20	1.09	0.81	0.88
10–24	150	2.22	1.55	1.02	1.43
25–49	150	2.26	1.50	1.27	2.10
50–75	110	3.05	1.97	1.75	2.47
More than 75	90	2.37	1.96	1.44	2.02
Percent of students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch					
Less than 15	170	1.49	1.56	1.29	1.77
15–29	160	1.62	1.42	1.17	1.34
30–49	150	2.05	1.65	1.26	1.53
50–74	150	2.96	2.02	1.40	2.05
75 or more	110	2.87	2.53	1.05	1.90
Percent of students with limited English proficiency					
Less than 1	250	0.92	0.75	0.61	0.64
1–10	150	1.70	1.22	1.31	1.53
More than 10	90	2.83	2.40	2.00	2.95

#Rounds to zero.

‡Reporting standards not met (too few cases).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Questionnaire, Charter School Questionnaire, and Private School Questionnaire," 1999–2000.

Size of High Schools

Table S30-2. Standard errors for the percentage of regular secondary school teachers who thought that certain issues were a “serious” problem in their schools, by location and enrollment: 1999–2000

School characteristic	Students unprepared to learn	Student apathy	Student tardiness	Student absenteeism	Students dropping out	Physical conflicts among students	Student alcohol use	Student drug abuse
Total	0.44	0.43	0.34	0.38	0.27	0.18	0.35	0.26
Enrollment								
Less than 300	1.25	1.04	0.75	0.94	0.48	0.38	1.02	0.75
300–599	0.87	0.91	0.59	0.77	0.45	0.21	0.86	0.64
600–899	1.23	1.04	0.79	1.05	0.60	0.49	0.86	0.75
900 or more	0.62	0.55	0.51	0.53	0.42	0.26	0.48	0.40
School location and enrollment								
Central city								
Less than 300	5.82	4.51	4.46	3.14	2.27	2.56	1.53	1.89
300–599	2.84	2.44	2.21	2.02	1.30	0.86	1.59	0.85
600–899	2.75	2.13	1.88	2.51	1.35	1.43	1.33	1.09
900 or more	1.11	1.06	1.19	1.29	1.08	0.71	0.75	0.78
Urban fringe/large town								
Less than 300	2.72	2.50	1.99	2.71	1.59	0.73	2.22	1.86
300–599	1.63	1.43	0.90	0.98	0.63	0.33	1.34	1.04
600–899	1.69	1.38	1.18	1.49	0.90	0.57	1.14	0.88
900 or more	0.82	0.81	0.59	0.71	0.42	0.29	0.65	0.55
Rural/small town								
Less than 300	1.32	1.05	0.74	0.89	0.38	0.26	1.22	0.78
300–599	0.99	1.14	0.87	1.16	0.75	0.27	1.22	0.92
600–899	1.70	1.72	1.28	1.58	1.12	0.65	1.61	1.54
900 or more	1.51	1.70	0.86	1.75	1.38	0.63	1.37	1.06

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), “Public School Questionnaire, Charter School Questionnaire, and Private School Questionnaire,” 1999–2000.