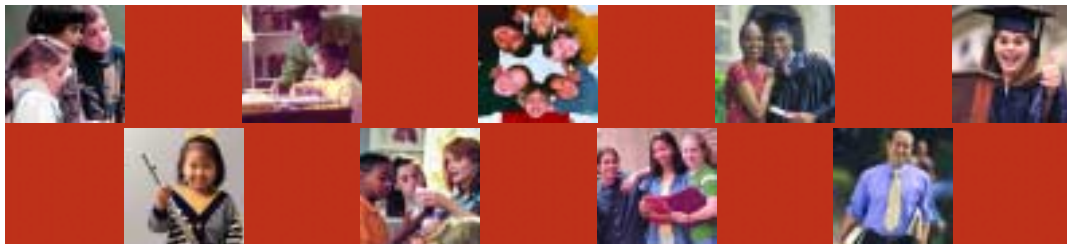


# the condition of education 2003



## INDICATOR 27

# Public Alternative Schools for At-Risk Students

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.

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# Special Programs

## Public Alternative Schools for At-Risk Students

*Public alternative schools and programs are most common in school districts with large enrollments, those in urban areas, and those in the Southeast.*

Alternative schools and programs serve students who are at risk of dropping out of school for any of a number of reasons, including poor grades, truancy, suspension, and pregnancy (Paglin and Fager 1997). Concerns with maintaining order and discipline in regular schools, combined with a desire to provide such at-risk students with alternatives to dropping out, have increased interest in such schools and programs. This indicator profiles the nation's public alternative schools and programs for at-risk students.<sup>1</sup>

In 2000–01, 39 percent of public school districts had alternative schools and programs (see supplemental table 27-1), serving approximately 613,000 at-risk students (or about 1.3 percent of all students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools) (see supplemental table 27-2) in about 10,900 alternative schools and programs nationwide (see supplemental table 27-3). Taken together, alternative schools and programs were more common in large districts (those with 10,000 or more students) than smaller districts (those with less than 9,999 students), in urban districts than suburban or rural districts, and in southeastern districts than districts in other regions.

Enrollment in alternative schools and programs varied by district characteristics. Eight percent of districts in the Northeast and 5 percent in the Southeast enrolled more than 3 percent of their students in alternative schools and programs; however, 20 percent of districts in the Central region and 23 percent of districts in the West did so in 2000–01. Districts with the largest percentages of children in poverty also were more likely than districts with the smallest percentages of such children to enroll 3 percent or more of their students in these schools and programs (see supplemental table 27-2).

In addition to classes, many districts with alternative schools and programs provide their students with various services, such as academic counseling or preparation for their GED exam. The great majority of such districts (91 percent) offered coursework for a regular high school diploma, while roughly half (48 percent) offered vocational or skills training in 2000–01 (see supplemental table 27-1).

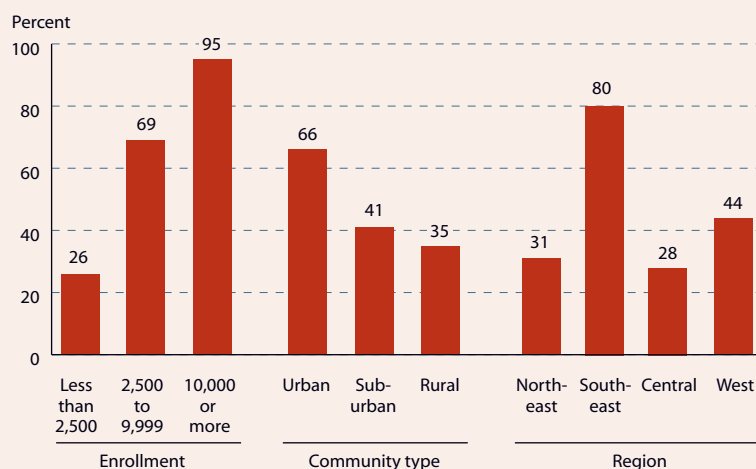
<sup>1</sup>This analysis does not differentiate between these schools and programs. Districts with either a public alternative school or program are counted the same as districts with both. For this analysis, public alternative schools for at-risk students are publicly administered schools in facilities separate from regular schools; public alternative programs for at-risk students are programs offered within regular schools. These schools and programs do not serve special education students exclusively or serve short-term (2 weeks or less) in-house suspended students. Schools and programs not administered by a regular school district or in which the majority of students attended less than half of their instructional time are excluded.

SOURCE: Kleiner, B., Porch, R., and Farris, E. (2002). *Public Alternative Schools and Programs for Students At Risk of Education Failure: 2000–01* (NCES 2002–004), table 1. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), "District Survey of Alternative Schools and Programs," FRSS 76, 2001.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Supplemental Notes 1, 3  
Supplemental Tables 27-1,  
27-2, 27-3  
Paglin and Fager 1997

**ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS: Percentage of school districts with public alternative schools and/or programs for at-risk students, by selected district characteristics: 2000–01**



## Public Alternative Schools for At-Risk Students

**Table 27-1.** Percentage of school districts with alternative schools and/or programs for at-risk students and percentage of such districts with selected services or practices, by district characteristics: 2000–01

District characteristic	Districts that supported an alternative school and/or program for at-risk students	Districts with an alternative school and/or program for at-risk students that provided							
		Curricula for regular high school diploma	Academic counseling	Smaller class size	Remedial instruction	Crisis or behavioral intervention	Career counseling	Vocational or skills training	Preparation for the GED exam
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>41</b>
Community type									
Urban	66	98	93	93	90	88	84	58	48
Suburban	41	92	87	87	83	78	77	46	36
Rural	35	89	86	82	83	78	80	48	43
Enrollment									
Less than 2,500	26	89	87	81	82	75	79	45	39
2,500 to 9,999	69	92	86	86	84	81	77	47	40
10,000 or more	95	96	89	95	89	85	84	61	48
Region									
Northeast	31	95	91	93	81	84	80	47	23
Southeast	80	90	87	92	84	80	80	46	48
Central	28	89	85	80	82	74	79	51	37
West	44	92	87	81	86	80	79	47	46
Percent minority <sup>1</sup>									
5 or less	26	91	89	83	83	78	81	50	35
6 to 20	43	91	85	85	81	78	75	48	41
21 to 50	51	94	88	88	85	80	77	52	44
More than 50	62	88	86	84	86	81	83	40	44
Poverty concentration <sup>2</sup>									
10 percent or less	31	92	86	84	79	75	75	46	33
11 to 20 percent	43	91	87	88	87	80	79	52	43
More than 20 percent	45	91	87	82	82	81	83	45	43

<sup>1</sup>Estimates for districts that supported an alternative school and program are based on the 1,515 districts for which data on percent minority enrollment are available; estimates for services and practices are based on the 840 districts with alternative schools and programs for which data on percent minority enrollment are available.

<sup>2</sup>Estimates for districts that supported an alternative school and program are based on the 1,503 districts for which data on poverty concentration are available; estimates for services and practices are based on the 843 districts with alternative schools and programs for which data on poverty concentration are available. Poverty concentration is based on data from the Bureau of the Census on the percentage of children ages 5–17 in families below the poverty level within districts in 1996–97.

NOTE: Percentages are based on the unified and secondary districts that reported administrating at least one alternative school or program during the 2000–01 school year. Since some of the services are not relevant at the elementary level (e.g., career counseling, preparation for the GED exam, and so on), the 27 elementary districts that were asked questions about services are excluded from the findings presented in this table to ensure comparability across services. Response categories are not mutually exclusive. See *supplemental note 1* for more information on community type and region.

SOURCE: Kleiner, B., Porch, R., and Farris, E. (2002). *Public Alternative Schools and Programs for Students At Risk of Education Failure: 2000–01* (NCES 2002–004), tables 1 and 13, and unpublished tabulations. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), "District Survey of Alternative Schools and Programs," FRSS 76, 2001.

## Public Alternative Schools for At-Risk Students

**Table 27-2.** Number of students enrolled in alternative schools and programs for at-risk students and the percentage distribution of districts with such students enrolled, grouped by the percentage that such students constitute of the total district enrollment, by district characteristics: 2000–01

District characteristic	Students enrolled in alternative schools and programs for at-risk students <sup>1</sup>	Districts where students enrolled in alternative schools and programs for at-risk students constitute			
		Less than 1 percent of total district enrollment	1 to 1.99 percent of total district enrollment	2 to 2.99 percent of total district enrollment	3 or more percent of total district enrollment
<b>Total</b>	<b>613,000</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Community type</b>					
Urban	245,000	36	30	17	16
Suburban	269,000	49	26	12	13
Rural	99,000	38	28	16	18
<b>Enrollment</b>					
Less than 2,500	58,000	39	26	15	20
2,500 to 9,999	157,000	46	29	13	12
10,000 or more	397,000	46	25	17	12
<b>Region</b>					
Northeast	91,000	63	21	7	8
Southeast	122,000	60	25	10	5
Central	106,000	37	31	13	20
West	294,000	27	28	22	23
<b>Percent minority<sup>2</sup></b>					
5 or less	51,000	49	26	11	14
6 to 20	103,000	48	22	14	16
21 to 50	159,000	38	32	18	12
More than 50	293,000	34	28	16	22
<b>Poverty concentration<sup>3</sup></b>					
10 percent or less	109,000	56	24	10	10
11 to 20 percent	239,000	40	27	17	16
More than 20 percent	261,000	38	29	15	18

<sup>1</sup>Numbers reflect enrollment figures as of October 1, 2000, according to survey results. The number of students enrolled in public alternative schools and programs represents about 1.3 percent of the total number of all students enrolled in public schools (about 47,000,000). The number of special education students with Individualized Education Programs enrolled in public alternative schools and programs represents about 12 percent of the total number of at-risk students enrolled in public alternative schools and programs.

<sup>2</sup>Estimates are based on the 840 districts with alternative schools and programs for which data on percent minority enrollment are available.

<sup>3</sup>Estimates are based on the 843 districts with alternative schools and programs for which data on poverty concentration are available. Poverty concentration is based on data from the Bureau of the Census on the percentage of children ages 5–17 in families below the poverty level within districts in 1996–97.

NOTE: Percentages are based on the 39 percent of districts that reported administering at least one alternative school or program during the 2000–01 school year. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. See *supplemental note 1* for more information on community type and region.

SOURCE: Kleiner, B., Porch, R., and Farris, E. (2002). *Public Alternative Schools and Programs for Students At Risk of Education Failure: 2000–01* (NCES 2002–004), tables 2 and 4, and unpublished tabulations. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), "District Survey of Alternative Schools and Programs," FRSS 76, 2001.

## Public Alternative Schools for At-Risk Students

**Table 27-3.** Number of public alternative schools and programs for at-risk students, number of such schools and programs housed in a separate facility, and percentage distribution of districts with such schools and programs according to the number per district, by district characteristics: 2000–01

District characteristic	Number of public alternative schools and programs		Districts where the number of public alternative schools and programs for at-risk students per district is		
	Total	Public alternative schools and programs housed in a separate facility	One	Two	Three or more
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,900</b>	<b>6,400<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>65</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>
Community type					
Urban	2,200	1,400	33	15	52
Suburban	5,000	2,800	63	19	18
Rural	3,700	2,300	74	17	8
Enrollment					
Less than 2,500	3,400	2,000	82	11	7
2,500 to 9,999	3,600	2,300	58	26	16
10,000 or more	3,900	2,200	27	17	56
Region					
Northeast	1,600	700	71	13	16
Southeast	2,600	1,500	71	14	15
Central	2,600	1,600	65	21	14
West	4,100	2,700	60	20	21
Percent minority <sup>2</sup>					
5 percent or less	2,300	1,400	75	15	10
6 to 20 percent	2,600	1,500	63	20	17
21 to 50 percent	2,800	1,800	63	16	22
More than 50 percent	3,200	1,800	58	20	22
Poverty concentration <sup>3</sup>					
10 percent or less	2,500	1,400	68	15	16
11 to 20 percent	4,600	2,700	59	22	20
More than 20 percent	3,700	2,400	71	15	14

<sup>1</sup>The number of public alternative schools and programs housed in separate facilities represents about 59 percent of the total number of public alternative schools and programs for at-risk students.

<sup>2</sup>Estimates are based on the 840 districts with alternative schools and programs for which data on percent minority enrollment are available.

<sup>3</sup>Estimates are based on the 843 districts with alternative schools and programs for which data on poverty concentration are available. Poverty concentration is based on data from the Bureau of the Census on the percentage of children ages 5–17 in families below the poverty level within districts in 1996–97.

NOTE: Percentages are based on the 39 percent of districts that reported administering at least one alternative school or program during the 2000–01 school year. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. See *supplemental note 1* for more information on community type and region.

SOURCE: Kleiner, B., Porch, R., and Farris, E. (2002). *Public Alternative Schools and Programs for Students At Risk of Education Failure: 2000–01* (NCES 2002–004), tables 2 and 3, and unpublished tabulations. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), "District Survey of Alternative Schools and Programs," FRSS 76, 2001.

## Public Alternative Schools for At-Risk Students

**Table S27.** Standard errors for the percentage of school districts with public alternative schools and/or programs for at-risk students, by selected district characteristics: 2000–01

District characteristic	Districts with alternative schools and programs for at-risk students
Enrollment	
Less than 2,500	1.8
2,500 to 9,999	2.1
10,000 or more	1.4
Community type	
Urban	5.4
Suburban	2.1
Rural	1.7
Region	
Northeast	2.4
Southeast	3.6
Central	2.2
West	2.4

SOURCE: Kleiner, B., Porch, R., and Farris, E. (2002). *Public Alternative Schools and Programs for Students At Risk of Education Failure: 2000–01* (NCES 2002–004), table B-1. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), "District Survey of Alternative Schools and Programs," FRSS 76, 2001.

## Public Alternative Schools for At-Risk Students

**Table S27-1.** Standard errors for the percentage of school districts with alternative schools and/or programs for at-risk students and percentage of such districts with selected services or practices, by district characteristics: 2000–01

District characteristic	Districts that supported an alternative school and/or program for at-risk students	Districts with an alternative school and/or program for at-risk students that provided							
		Curricula for regular high school diploma	Academic counseling	Smaller class size	Remedial instruction	Crisis or behavioral intervention	Career counseling	Vocational or skills training	Preparation for the GED exam
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>Community type</b>									
Urban	5.4	1.3	2.5	2.5	2.9	3.3	3.8	5.0	5.1
Suburban	2.1	1.5	1.8	2.0	2.4	2.3	2.8	3.2	3.1
Rural	1.7	2.0	1.9	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.9	3.1
<b>Enrollment</b>									
Less than 2,500	1.8	2.0	2.3	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.4	3.6	3.3
2,500 to 9,999	2.1	1.5	1.6	1.9	1.9	1.8	2.5	2.8	2.8
10,000 or more	1.4	1.1	2.1	1.3	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.8	3.7
<b>Region</b>									
Northeast	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.6	3.7	4.2	3.8	4.9	3.7
Southeast	3.6	2.8	2.9	1.9	3.2	3.4	3.7	4.1	4.0
Central	2.2	2.7	2.3	3.2	3.2	3.6	3.1	4.6	4.0
West	2.4	1.9	2.9	3.3	2.8	3.4	2.8	4.2	3.8
<b>Percent minority</b>									
5 or less	1.9	2.3	2.3	3.1	3.2	3.6	3.7	4.9	4.3
6 to 20	2.8	2.3	2.6	2.5	3.1	3.2	3.9	4.5	3.8
21 to 50	3.1	2.1	3.1	2.9	3.0	3.3	3.4	4.9	3.7
More than 50	4.1	3.1	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.8	3.4	4.5	4.8
<b>Poverty concentration</b>									
10 percent or less	2.2	2.1	2.5	2.8	3.2	3.3	3.5	3.6	4.0
11 to 20 percent	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	3.1	2.5	3.4	3.4
More than 20 percent	2.2	2.3	3.1	2.7	2.4	3.0	3.0	4.1	3.7

SOURCE: Kleiner, B., Porch, R., and Farris, E. (2002). *Public Alternative Schools and Programs for Students At Risk of Education Failure: 2000–01* (NCES 2002–004), tables B-1 and B-13, and unpublished tabulations. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), "District Survey of Alternative Schools and Programs," FRSS 76, 2001.

## Public Alternative Schools for At-Risk Students

Table S27-2. Standard errors for the number of students enrolled in alternative schools and programs for at-risk students and the percentage distribution of districts with such students enrolled, grouped by the percentage that such students constitute of the total district enrollment, by district characteristics: 2000–01

District characteristic	Students enrolled in alternative schools and programs for at-risk students	Districts where students enrolled in alternative schools and programs for at-risk students constitute			
		Less than 1 percent of total district enrollment	1 to 1.99 percent of total district enrollment	2 to 2.99 percent of total district enrollment	3 or more percent of total district enrollment
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,100</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.5</b>
Community type					
Urban	31,100	4.5	3.6	3.1	3.0
Suburban	16,800	2.8	2.7	2.4	1.7
Rural	7,000	2.9	2.7	2.3	2.8
Enrollment					
Less than 2,500	5,900	3.2	3.3	2.9	3.0
2,500 to 9,999	10,300	2.1	2.3	1.6	1.5
10,000 or more	35,600	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.0
Region					
Northeast	6,170	4.7	4.6	2.4	3.1
Southeast	5,700	4.1	3.8	2.3	2.0
Central	9,000	3.6	4.0	2.7	3.6
West	32,700	3.2	2.9	2.9	2.7
Percent minority					
5 or less	6,200	3.5	3.7	2.3	3.2
6 to 20	8,700	4.0	3.4	2.8	2.6
21 to 50	14,300	3.4	3.5	3.6	2.6
More than 50	32,100	3.8	3.8	3.5	4.0
Poverty concentration					
10 percent or less	11,600	3.9	3.4	2.4	2.7
11 to 20 percent	15,200	2.6	2.9	2.6	2.3
More than 20 percent	31,500	3.3	3.2	2.5	2.8

SOURCE: Kleiner, B., Porch, R., and Farris, E. (2002). *Public Alternative Schools and Programs for Students At Risk of Education Failure: 2000–01* (NCES 2002–004), tables B-2 and B-4, and unpublished tabulations. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), "District Survey of Alternative Schools and Programs," FRSS 76, 2001.



## Public Alternative Schools for At-Risk Students

**Table S27-3.** Standard errors for the number of public alternative schools and programs for at-risk students, number of such schools and programs housed in a separate facility, and percentage distribution of districts with such schools and programs according to the number per district, by district characteristics: 2000–01

District characteristic	Number of public alternative schools and programs		Districts where number of public alternative schools and programs for at-risk students per district is		
	Total	Public alternative schools and programs housed in a separate facility	One	Two	Three or more
<b>Total</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>Community type</b>					
Urban	160	110	5.2	3.0	5.6
Suburban	210	150	2.6	2.1	2.0
Rural	200	130	2.9	2.5	1.4
<b>Enrollment</b>					
Less than 2,500	270	140	2.9	2.3	1.5
2,500 to 9,999	220	130	2.5	2.4	1.9
10,000 or more	230	140	3.2	2.6	2.7
<b>Region</b>					
Northeast	150	80	4.7	3.2	3.3
Southeast	110	90	3.3	2.4	2.3
Central	190	120	4.4	3.7	2.1
West	200	140	3.0	2.5	1.8
<b>Percent minority</b>					
5 percent or less	200	120	3.9	3.0	2.1
6 to 20 percent	180	140	3.7	3.0	2.3
21 to 50 percent	210	140	3.6	2.6	3.1
More than 50 percent	190	140	4.3	3.5	2.8
<b>Poverty concentration</b>					
10 percent or less	190	120	3.5	2.5	2.3
11 to 20 percent	240	160	3.4	2.8	2.2
More than 20 percent	200	160	3.2	2.3	1.9

SOURCE: Kleiner, B., Porch, R., and Farris, E. (2002). *Public Alternative Schools and Programs for Students At Risk of Education Failure: 2000–01* (NCES 2002–004), tables B-2 and B-3, and unpublished tabulations. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), "District Survey of Alternative Schools and Programs," FRSS 76, 2001.