

Glossary





Glossary

A

Academic library: An academic library is the library for a degree-granting institution of higher education. It provides all of the following: (1) an organized collection of printed or other materials or a combination thereof; (2) a staff trained to provide and interpret such materials; (3) an established schedule in which services of the staff are available; and (4) the physical facilities necessary to support such a collection, staff, and schedule.

Achievement levels: Achievement levels, which are set through a National Assessment Governing Board process, define what students should know and be able to do at different levels of performance. In the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the achievement levels are *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*. The definitions of these levels, which apply across all grades and subject areas, are as follows:

Basic: This level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.

Proficient: This level represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.

Advanced: This level signifies superior performance.

Allocated time: Allocated time refers to the total number of hours per year a student is required to attend school. Allocated time can then be divided into instructional and noninstructional time. (See Instructional time and Noninstructional time.)

Appropriations (institutional revenues): An amount (other than a grant or contract) re-

ceived from or made available to an institution through an act of a legislative body.

Associate's degree: A degree granted for the successful completion of a subbaccalaureate program of studies, usually requiring at least 2 years (or the equivalent) of full-time college-level study.

B

Bachelor's degree: A degree granted for the successful completion of a baccalaureate program of studies, usually requiring at least 4 years (or the equivalent) of full-time college-level study.

C

Cohort: A group of persons who share one or more particular statistical or demographic characteristics, such as having received their bachelor's degree in a certain year or range of years.

Combined schools: A combined school has one or more of grades K–6 and one or more of grades 9–12. For example, schools with grades K–12, 6–9, or 1–12 are classified as combined schools.

Community college: A commonly used term for a public 2-year institution, which provides 2-year programs that lead to a certificate or an associate's degree or that fulfill part of the requirements for a bachelor's degree or higher at a 4-year institution.

Conservative Christian school: A school with membership in at least one of the following four associations: Accelerated Christian Education, American Association of Christian Schools, Association of Christian Schools International, or Oral Roberts University Education Fellowship.

Constant dollars: Dollar amounts that have been adjusted by means of price and cost

Glossary

Continued

indexes to eliminate inflationary factors and allow direct comparison across years.

Consumer price index (CPI): This price index measures the average change in the cost of a fixed-market basket of goods and services purchased by consumers.

D

Derive meaning from text: A reading skill measured in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998 (ECLS-K). An example of this reading skill is using background knowledge combined with sentence cues to understand the use of homonyms.

Diocesan school: A private Catholic school serving students in one or more grades K–12 that is the domain of a bishop.

Dropout: The term is used to describe both the event of leaving school before graduating and the status of an individual who is not in school and who is not a graduate. Transferring from a public school to a private school, for example, is not regarded as a dropout event. A person who drops out of school may later return and graduate but is called a “dropout” at the time he or she left school. At the time the person returns to school, he or she is called a “stopout.” Measures to describe these often complicated behaviors include the event dropout rate (or the closely related school persistence rate), the status dropout rate, and the high school completion rate. (See Status dropout rate.)

E

Education specialist degree: A post-master’s degree that focuses on the study of applied instruction, administration, counseling, and curriculum development. Some Ed.S. degrees offer specialization in areas such as early childhood education, health and physical education, educational leadership, and special education.

Educational attainment: The highest level of schooling attended and completed.

Elementary school: An elementary/secondary school with one or more grades of K–6 that does not have any grade higher than grade 8. For example, schools with grades K–6, 1–3, or 6–8 are classified as elementary.

Elementary/secondary school: As reported in this publication, elementary/secondary schools include regular schools (i.e., schools that are part of state and local school systems and private elementary/secondary schools, both religiously affiliated and nonsectarian); alternative schools; vocational education schools; and special education schools. Schools not reported here include subcollegiate departments of postsecondary institutions, residential schools for exceptional children, federal schools for American Indians or Alaska Natives, and federal schools on military posts and other federal installations.

Employment status: The employment status of civilian, noninstitutionalized individuals in the population is indicated by whether they are in the labor force or not. If they are employed either full time or part time or unemployed but looking for work they are in the labor force; otherwise, they are not.

End-of-course examination: End-of-course examinations are taken to meet curriculum standards.

English as a Second Language (ESL) programs: Programs that provide intensive instruction in English for students with limited English proficiency.

Exit examination: A state-defined test, or series of tests, which students must pass in order to graduate from high school. The examination and all of its components are established by the state and vary greatly. End-of-course examina-

Glossary

Continued

tions are taken to meet curriculum standards; minimum competency examinations assess baseline knowledge; and standards-based examinations are aligned with state-adopted requirements at a particular grade level.

Extended response: Extended-response questions are open-ended questions that allow students to provide detailed written answers to questions. The length of a written response may vary from a short phrase or list to a multipage composition written to respond to a specific writing prompt.

F

Four-year institution: Denotes a postsecondary institution that can award a bachelor's degree or higher.

Free lunch eligibles: (See National school lunch program.)

Full-time worker: One who is employed for 35 or more hours per week, including paid leave for illness, vacation, and holidays. Hours may be reported either for a survey reference week or for the previous calendar year, in which case they refer to the usual hours worked.

G

GED certificate: (See High school equivalency certificate.)

GED recipient: A person who has obtained certification of high school equivalency by meeting state requirements and passing an approved exam, which is intended to provide an appraisal of the person's achievement or performance in the broad subject matter areas usually required for high school graduation.

Gross domestic product (GDP): Gross national product less net property income from abroad. Both gross national product (GNP) and gross domestic product (GDP) aggregate only the incomes of residents of a nation, corporate and

individual, derived directly from the current production of goods and services by individuals, businesses, and government, gross private domestic investment in infrastructure, and total exports of goods and services. The goods and services included are largely those bought for final use (excluding illegal transactions) in the market economy. A number of inclusions, however, represent imputed values, the most important of which is rental value of owner-occupied housing.

H

High school: A secondary school offering the final years of high school study necessary for graduation, usually including grades 10, 11, and 12 (in a 6-3-3 plan) or grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 (in a 6-2-4 plan).

High school completion: An individual has completed high school if he or she has been awarded a high school diploma or an equivalent credential, including a General Educational Development (GED) credential.

High school diploma: A formal document regulated by the state certifying the successful completion of a prescribed secondary school program of studies. In some states or communities, high school diplomas are differentiated by type, such as an academic diploma, a general diploma, or a vocational diploma.

High school equivalency certificate: A formal document certifying that an individual has met the state requirements for high school graduation equivalency by obtaining satisfactory scores on an approved examination and meeting other performance requirements (if any) set by a state education agency or other appropriate body. One particular version of this certificate is the GED. The GED (General Educational Development) test is a comprehensive test used primarily to appraise the educational development of students who

Glossary

Continued

have not completed their formal high school education and who may earn a high school equivalency certificate through achieving satisfactory scores. GEDs are awarded by the states or other agencies, and the test is developed and distributed by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education.

Homeschool: Students are considered to be homeschooled if (1) they are ages 5–17 in a grade equivalent to at least kindergarten and no higher than 12th grade; (2) their parents report them as being schooled at home instead of at a public or private school for at least part of their education; and (3) their part-time enrollment in public or private schools does not exceed 25 hours a week. Students who are schooled at home only because of a temporary illness are not considered to be homeschooled students.

Industrialized country: A country with a market economy comprising a significant portion of world production and trade markets.

Instructional time: Instructional time refers to the portion of the school day that is allocated to instruction. (See also Allocated time and Noninstructional time.)

Interpreting beyond text: A reading skill measured in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998 (ECLS–K). An example of this reading skill is making connections between problems in a narrative and similar life problems.

Language minority students: Students for whom English is not their primary home language and who may or may not be able to speak English very well.

Limited-English-proficient: The term limited-English-proficient, when used with respect to

an individual, means an individual who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school, who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English or who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency, or who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant, and whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual the ability to meet the state's proficient level of achievement on state assessments as specified under the No Child Left Behind Act, the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, or the opportunity to participate fully in society.

Literal inference: A reading skill measured in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998 (ECLS–K). An example of this reading skill is recognizing the comparison being made in a simile.

Mathematics literacy: An individual's capacity to identify and understand the role that mathematics plays in the world, to make well-founded judgments, and to use and engage with mathematics in ways that meet the needs of that individual's life as a constructive, concerned, and reflective citizen.

Median: The median is a measure of central tendency on a scale indicating where a population is centered. The median of the population is the point on the scale that divides the population in half. Half of the population will have values that are equal to or larger than the median, and half will have values that are smaller than the median.

Glossary

Continued

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA): A geographic entity designated by the federal Office of Management and Budget for use by federal statistical agencies. A metropolitan statistical area (MSA) is a metropolitan area (MA) that is not closely associated with another MA. An MSA consists of one or more counties, except in New England, where MSAs are defined in terms of county subdivisions (primarily cities and towns). (See also *supplemental note 1*.)

Middle school: A separately organized and administered school between the elementary and senior high schools. When called a “junior high school,” a middle school usually includes grades 7, 8, and 9 (in a 6-3-3 plan) or grades 7 and 8 (in a 6-2-4 plan). In some districts, however, a middle school spans grades 5 to 8 or grades 6 to 8.

Minimum competency examination: Minimum competency examinations assess baseline knowledge.

Multiple choice: Multiple-choice questions ask students to identify one or more correct answers from a list of possible responses.

N

National school lunch program: Established by President Truman in 1946, the program is a federally assisted meal program operated in public and private nonprofit schools and residential child care centers. To be eligible, a student must be from a household with an income at 185 percent of the poverty level for reduced-price lunch or 130 percent of the poverty level for free lunch.

Nonfatal crime: Crimes, whether theft, violent crimes, or serious violent crimes, without fatalities.

Noninstructional time: Noninstructional time refers to the portion of the school day allocated

to such activities as lunch, recess, school assemblies, and other nonclassroom activities. (See allocated time and instructional time.)

Nonsectarian school: A private school whose curriculum and operation are independent of religious orientation and influence in all but incidental ways.

O

Ordinality and sequence: As used in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998 (ECLS-K), this mathematics skill is an understanding of the relative position of objects.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): The OECD is an organization of 30 nations (as of 2002) whose purpose is to promote trade and economic growth in both member and nonmember nations. OECD’s activities cover almost all aspects of economic and social policy. The current member countries include Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

P

Parochial school: A private Catholic school serving students in one or more grades K–12 that is the domain of a local church parish.

Place value: As used in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998 (ECLS-K), this mathematics skill involves demonstrating an understanding of place value in integers to the hundreds place.

Prekindergarten: Public preprimary education for children ages 3–4 (ages 3–5 in some states)

Glossary

Continued

who have not yet entered kindergarten. It may offer a program of general education or special education and, in some states, may be part of a collaborative effort with Head Start. Private preprimary educational programs are typically referred to as “center-based programs.”

Private school or institution: A school or institution that is controlled by an individual or agency other than a state, a subdivision of a state, or the federal government; that is usually not supported primarily by public funds; and that is not operated by publicly elected or appointed officials.

Problem solving: An individual’s capacity to use cognitive processes to confront and resolve real, cross-disciplinary situations where the solution is not immediately obvious, and where the literacy domains or curricular areas that might be applicable are not within a single domain of mathematics, science, or reading.

Property tax: The sum of money collected from a tax levied against the value of property.

Public charter school: A public charter school is a publicly funded school that, in accordance with an enabling statute, has been granted a charter exempting it 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 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. (See also Public school.)

Public school: An institution that provides educational services for at least one of grades 1–12 (or comparable ungraded levels), has one or more teachers to give instruction, is located in one or more buildings, receives public funds as primary support, and is operated by an educa-

tion or chartering agency. Public schools include regular, special education, vocational/technical, alternative, and public charter schools. They also include schools in juvenile detention centers, schools located on military bases and operated by the Department of Defense, and Bureau of Indian Affairs-funded schools operated by local public school districts.

R

Rate and measurement: As used in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998 (ECLS–K), this mathematics skill involves using rate and measurement to solve word problems.

Religious private school: A school with a designated religious orientation or purpose, which is not supported primarily by public funds. It must provide instruction for one or more of grades K–12 (or comparable ungraded levels) and have one or more teachers. Organizations or institutions that provide support for homeschooling but do not offer classroom instruction for students are not included.

Revenues from federal sources: Revenues from federal sources include direct grants-in-aid from the federal government; federal grants-in-aid through the state or an intermediate agency; and other revenue, in lieu of taxes that would have accrued had the tax base been subject to taxation.

Revenues from local sources: Revenues from local sources include revenues from a local education agency (LEA), including taxes levied or assessed by an LEA; revenues from a local government to the LEA; tuition received; transportation fees; earnings on investments from LEA holdings; net revenues from food services (gross receipts less gross expenditures); net revenues from student activities (gross receipts less gross expenditures); and other revenues (textbook sales, donations, property rentals).

Glossary

Continued

Revenues from state sources: Revenues from state sources include revenues from an agency of state government including those that can be used without restriction, those for categorical purposes, and revenues in lieu of taxation.

S

School district: An education agency at the local level that exists primarily to operate public schools or to contract for public school services. Synonyms are “local basic administrative unit” and “local education agency.”

Score: Scores are scale scores, generally estimated using Item Response Theory (IRT) by modeling the probability of answering a question in a certain way as a mathematical function of proficiency or skill. A set scale is created (e.g., 0–500 on the National Assessment of Educational Progress), with a set median and standard deviation. The results on the assessment are then related to the median of the scale such that almost all results are within two standard deviations of the median.

Secondary school: An elementary/secondary school with one or more of grades 7–12 that does not have any grade lower than grade 7. For example, schools with grades 9–12, 7–9, 10–12, or 7–8 are classified as secondary.

Serious violent crime: Rape, sexual assault, robbery, or aggravated assault.

Short-written answer: Short-written answer is a subcategory of extended response. The answer can be a word, a phrase, or a sentence or two. (See Extended response.)

Sight words: As used in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998 (ECLS–K), this reading skill is one in which the reader can recognize common words by sight.

Standard deviation: The standard deviation measures the spread of a set of data around the mean of the data. In a normal distribution, approximately 68 percent of scores fall within plus or minus one standard deviation of the mean, and 95 percent fall within plus or minus two standard deviations of the mean.

Standards-based examination: Standards-based examinations are aligned with curriculum content or student performance requirements that have been established by a state and/or local education agency at a particular grade.

Status dropout rate: The status dropout rate is a cumulative rate that estimates the proportion of young adults who are dropouts, regardless of when they dropped out. The numerator of the status dropout rate for any given year is the number of young adults ages 16–24 who, as of October of that year, had not completed high school and were not currently enrolled. The denominator is the total number of 16- to 24-year-olds in October of that same year.

T

Tenure: The status that teachers or professors may be granted, after a trial period, to protect them from summary dismissal.

Two-year institution: Denotes a postsecondary institution that does not confer bachelor’s degrees, but does provide 2-year programs that result in a certificate or an associate’s degree, or 2-year programs that fulfill part of the requirements for a bachelor’s degree or higher at a 4-year institution.

V

Violent crime: Rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, or simple assault.

Glossary

Continued

W

Writing prompt: A statement or group of statements about a specific topic, constructed to motivate students' thoughts and elicit their best writing.

Bibliography





Contents

NCES Publications (Complete citation).....	298
NCES Publications (Chronologically, by NCES number)	301
Other Publications	303
NCES Surveys	305
Surveys From Other Agencies.....	308

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NCVS, 1992–2002.

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Index





Index

- A**
- Ability-level instructional activities, **2003:SA9**
- Absenteeism, **2002:17**
- Academic aspirations, **2001:xviii, 2001:xxii**.
See also Expectations for education
- Academic preparation. *See* Curriculum, high school; Preparing for college
- Academic standards, **2001:41**. *See also* Core curriculum (New Basics)
- Access to postsecondary education, **2001:xviii–xxxvi**. *See also* Postsecondary education
- Accommodations. *See* Testing accommodations
- Achievement tests. *See also* College entrance examinations
- comparison between private and public school students, **2002:SA17–SA18, 2002:SA22**
- geography performance through elementary/secondary level, **2003:13**
- history performance through elementary/secondary level, **2003:14**
- international comparisons, **2002:13, 2003:10**
- mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:12, 2003:11, 2003:12, 2004:11, 2005:10**
- poverty affecting results from, **2002:11**
- reading performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:10, 2002:8, 2004:9, 2005:9**
- reading skill gains for kindergarten through 1st grade, **2003:SA2–SA13**
- science performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:13, 2002:12**
- writing performance through elementary/secondary level, **2004:10**
- ACT (American College Testing Program), **2001:xxii, 2001:xxviii, 2003:20**. *See also* College entrance examinations and teachers, **2002:31**
- Activities for supervision, **2004:33, 2004:34**
- Administration, expenditures in public elementary/secondary schools for, **2005:38**
- Adult education, **2003:8, 2003:44**
- enrollment in, **2004:1**
- work-related learning, **2004:7**
- Adult literacy, **2001:15**. *See also* Literacy
- Advanced degrees, **2001:30**. *See also* Educational attainment
- attendance and employment patterns, **2001:6**
- parental level of education, **2001:xix**
- Advanced placement, **2001:xli–xlii, 2003:24**
- availability of courses, **2005:25**
- in private schools, **2002:SA6–SA7**
- Affiliated schools, **2005:2**. *See also* Private elementary/secondary schools
- African Americans. *See* Blacks
- After-school activities/care, **2001:53, 2004:33, 2004:34**
- Age/Age comparisons. *See also* Grade-level studies
- college attendance, **2001:xxx–xxxii**
- enrollment in school by, **2004:1**
- health affected by, **2004:12**
- kindergarten enrollment, **2004:3**
- kindergarten through 1st-grade reading and mathematics skills, **2001:8**
- reading performance, **2001:10, 2002:8**
- students' use of time, **2001:22**
- teachers in elementary/secondary education, **2005:SA3, 2005:SA4, 2005:SA8–SA9**
- voting participation, **2003:15**
- Algebra, **2001:24, 2003:22**. *See also* Mathematics
- coursetaking by high school students, **2004:21**
- mathematics performance, **2003:11**
- Allocated time in class instruction, **2005:26**
- Alternative schools, **2003:27**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

- American College Testing Program (ACT), 2001:xxii, 2001:xxviii, 2003:20. *See also* College entrance examinations and teachers, 2002:31
- American Indians/Alaska Natives
- advanced placement course availability, 2005:25
 - disabilities, inclusion of students with in regular classrooms, 2005:27
 - disabilities, students with in elementary/secondary schools, 2005:6
 - enrollment rates in college, 2005:31
 - faculty at postsecondary institutions, 2002:39
 - geography performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:13
 - graduate enrollment, 2002:6, 2003:7
 - history performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:14
 - mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, 2002:27, 2004:22
 - mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:11, 2004:11, 2005:10
 - in public charter schools, 2005:28
 - reading performance through elementary/secondary level, 2005:9
 - science performance through elementary/secondary level, 2002:12
 - undergraduate enrollment, 2003:32
 - young adults not in school or working, 2004:13
- Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), 2003:34
- Applying for college, 2001:xxviii–xxx
- Argentina, reading literacy in, 2003:10
- Armenia
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
 - science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- Arts education
- after-school activities, 2004:34
 - subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, 2003:28
- Asian/Pacific Islanders
- advanced placement course availability, 2005:25
 - disabilities, inclusion of students with in regular classrooms, 2005:27
 - disabilities, students with in elementary/secondary schools, 2005:6
 - enrollment rates in college, 2005:31
 - faculty at postsecondary institutions, 2002:39
 - geography performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:13
 - graduate enrollment, 2002:6, 2003:7
 - history performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:14
 - home activities and early childhood development, 2005:35
 - kindergarten enrollment, 2004:3
 - language courses taken in high school, 2003:25
 - language spoken at home, 2005:5
 - mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, 2002:27, 2004:22
 - mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:11, 2004:11, 2005:10
 - passing exit examinations for high school, 2005:24
 - in private schools, 2002:SA8
 - in public charter schools, 2005:28
 - reading and mathematics achievement through 3rd grade, 2004:8
 - reading performance through elementary/secondary level, 2005:9
 - science performance through elementary/secondary level, 2002:12

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

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For 2001:

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(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Asian/Pacific Islanders—*continued*

- student perceptions of school's social and learning environment, **2005:29**
- undergraduate enrollment, **2003:32**
- work-related adult education, participation in, **2004:7**
- writing performance through elementary/secondary level, **2004:10**
- young adults not in school or working, **2004:13**

Assessment of students, **2001:46**. *See also* Achievement tests

Associate's degrees, **2001:27**

- attrition rates in programs for, **2002:SA37**
- employment while enrolled in program, **2004:29**
- by field of study, **2003:33**
- geographic mobility of students, **2005:21**
- international comparisons, **2004:17**
- persistence towards, **2004:19**
- persistence towards for nontraditional students, **2002:SA33–SA35**, **2002:SA36**
- transferring to a 4-year institution, **2003:19**

Athletics, **2001:20**. *See also* Sports

- At-risk students, **2001:52**, **2002:22**, **2003:SA13n4**. *See also* Students whose parents did not go to college
- in public alternative schools, **2003:27**
- reading and mathematics achievement through 3rd grade, **2004:8**
- reading skill gains in kindergarten, **2003:SA4**, **2003:SA5**
- in smaller classrooms, **2002:SA5**

Attainment in education. *See* Educational attainment

- Attendance status, postsecondary education, **2001:xxxiii**. *See also* Full-time enrollment at postsecondary institutions; Part-time enrollment at postsecondary institutions
- enrollment, **2004:1**
- graduate enrollment, **2001:6**

Attendance status—*continued*

- undergraduate enrollment, **2001:5**
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), **2003:34**
- Attitudes of students, **2001:19**, **2001:20**
 - perceptions of school's social and learning environment, **2005:29**
 - reading skill gains of kindergartners, **2003:SA6**
- Attrition rates (students), **2002:SA37**. *See also* Stopouts from postsecondary education
- Attrition rates (teachers), **2005:SA2**, **2005:SA11–SA12**. *See also* Turnover rates for teachers

Australia, **2002:9**

- civic performance, **2002:15**
- expenditures for education, **2003:40**
- instructional activities in 8th-grade mathematics, **2003:26**
- instructional activities in 8th-grade science classes, **2004:23**
- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
- mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- transition to postsecondary education, **2004:17**

Austria, **2001:57**

- expenditures for education, **2002:41**
- instructional hours, **2005:26**
- mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
- reading literacy in, **2002:9**

B

- Baby boom echo, **2001:2**, **2002:2**, **2003:1**, **2004:4**, **2005:1**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

- Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B), 2001:xix
- Bachelor's degrees, 2001:24. *See also* Educational attainment
- adult learning patterns, 2001:7
 - attrition rates at, 2002:SA37
 - community college students completing, 2003:19
 - coursetaking by undergraduate students, 2004:30
 - debt burden of college graduates, 2004:38
 - earnings of young adults affected by, 2004:14
 - educational expectations of 10th-graders, 2004:15
 - employment while enrolled in program, 2004:29
 - by field of study, 2003:33
 - geographic mobility of students, 2005:21
 - health affected by, 2004:12
 - international comparisons, 2004:17
 - parents attaining, 2001:4, 2003:2
 - persistence of nontraditional students towards, 2002:SA33–SA35, 2002:SA36
 - persistence of traditional-age students towards, 2005:22
 - persistence towards, 2001:27, 2002:23, 2003:20, 2004:19
 - by race/ethnicity, 2005:23
 - and student debt burden, 2001:59
 - time to completion, 2003:21
 - women earning, 2004:20
 - work-related adult education, participation in, 2004:7
- Bahrain
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
 - science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS), 2001:xviii, 2001:xxx, 2002:SA25
- Belgium
- civic performance, 2002:15
 - expenditures for education, 2002:41
 - mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
 - mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
 - mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
 - reading literacy in, 2002:9
 - science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- Belize, reading literacy in, 2003:10
- Benefits to faculty at postsecondary institutions, 2005:32
- Beyond New Basics high school curriculum, 2001:xlii, 2001:28. *See also* Curriculum, high school
- Bilingual education, 2004:28. *See also* English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Birthrate for the United States, 2001:2, 2002:2
- Blacks
- advanced placement course availability, 2005:25
 - annual earnings of young adults, 2005:16
 - Black-White reading achievement gap, 2002:8
 - child care, 2001:38, 2004:33
 - community service of young adults, 2001:16
 - disabilities, inclusion of students with in regular classrooms, 2005:27
 - disabilities, students with in elementary/secondary schools, 2005:6
 - dropout rates from high school, 2001:23, 2002:19, 2003:17, 2004:16, 2005:19
 - early literacy activities, 2003:37

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Blacks—*continued*

educational attainment by, **2001:31, 2002:25, 2005:23**
 elementary/secondary enrollment, **2002:3, 2004:5**
 employer financial aid for adult education, **2003:44**
 employment status of, **2005:17**
 English and foreign languages courses taken in high school, **2003:25**
 enrollment in public schools, **2001:3, 2005:4**
 enrollment rates in college, **2001:26, 2002:20, 2003:18, 2005:20, 2005:31**
 faculty at postsecondary institutions, **2002:39**
 family characteristics of, **2003:2**
 geography performance through elementary/secondary level, **2003:13**
 graduate enrollment, **2002:6, 2003:7**
 history performance through elementary/secondary level, **2003:14**
 homeschooling, **2005:3**
 kindergarten enrollment, **2004:3**
 language spoken at home, **2005:5**
 mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, **2002:27, 2004:22**
 mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:12, 2003:11, 2003:12, 2004:11, 2005:10**
 parental satisfaction with schools, **2001:55, 2002:40**
 parents' level of education, **2001:4**
 passing exit examinations for high school, **2005:24**
 persistence of traditional-age students towards bachelor's degrees, **2005:22**
 and poverty, **2002:11**
 prekindergarten programs, participation in, **2004:2**
 preprimary enrollment, **2001:1, 2002:1**

Blacks—*continued*

in private schools, **2002:SA8, 2005:2**
 in public charter schools, **2002:30, 2005:28**
 reading and mathematics achievement through 3rd grade, **2004:8**
 reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, **2005:14**
 reading habits of adults, **2001:15, 2005:15**
 reading performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:10, 2002:8, 2005:9**
 reading skill gains in kindergarten, **2003:SA4, 2003:SA11**
 school choice, **2001:41, 2002:29**
 science performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:13, 2002:12**
 status dropout rates for high school, **2004:16**
 student perceptions of school's social and learning environment, **2005:29**
 student victimization, **2003:31**
 undergraduate enrollment, **2003:32**
 voting participation, **2003:15**
 work-related adult education, participation in, **2004:7**
 writing performance through elementary/secondary level, **2004:10**
 young adults not in school or working, **2004:13**

Botswana

mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**

Brazil

mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 reading literacy in, **2002:9**

Building maintenance and operations, expenditures in public elementary/secondary schools for, **2005:38**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- Bulgaria
- civic performance, **2002:15**
 - mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 - mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 - reading literacy in, **2003:10**
 - science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Bureau of the Census, **2002:4**
- Business, degrees in, **2003:33**
- Business colleges, **2004:1**
- Business courses, **2004:30**
- C**
- Calculus, **2002:SA21**, **2003:22**. *See also* Mathematics
- coursetaking by high school students, **2004:21**
- California
- state polices and procedures for transfer students, **2005:34**
- Canada, **2001:57**
- educational attainment in, **2001:32**
 - mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 - mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 - reading literacy in, **2003:10**
- Capital expenditures for public elementary/secondary schools, **2005:38**
- Catholic schools, **2002:SA3**, **2002:SA4**, **2002:SA5**. *See also* Private elementary/secondary schools
- class size, **2002:SA6**
 - diversity in, **2002:SA8**, **2002:SA9**
 - enrollment in, **2005:2**
 - mathematics requirements at, **2002:SA18**
 - principals in, **2002:SA16–SA17**
- Catholic schools—*continued*
- school climate, **2002:SA10–SA11**
 - special programs in, **2002:SA7**
 - teacher satisfaction, **2002:SA14**
- Census Bureau, **2002:4**
- Center-based childcare programs, **2002:1**, **2003:38**
- after-school activities, **2004:34**
 - after-school childcare, **2001:53**, **2004:33**
 - enrollment in preprimary education, **2001:1**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **2001:44**
- Certificate programs, **2001:6**, **2001:27**
- attrition rates at, **2002:SA37**
 - persistence of nontraditional students in, **2002:SA33–SA35**, **2002:SA36**
 - at private for-profit institutions, **2004:SA5**
 - working while attending, **2004:29**
- Certification for teachers, **2005:SA5**, **2005:SA9**
- alternative programs for, **2005:SA22n20**
- Charter schools, **2002:SA2**, **2002:30**. *See also* Public charter schools
- Chemistry, **2004:21**
- Child care, **2002:1**
- after-school activities, **2004:34**
 - arrangements for after school, **2001:53**, **2003:38**, **2004:33**
 - enrollment in preprimary education, **2001:1**
- Chile
- civic performance, **2002:15**
 - mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 - mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 - science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- China. *See also* Hong Kong
- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- China—*continued*
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
- Chinese Taipei
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- Choice of school, elementary/secondary education, 2001:41. *See also* School choice
- Choices of students for high school curriculum, 2001:xxviii. *See also* Coursetaking by high school students; Curriculum, high school
- Church-related private schools, 2002:29, 2004:25. *See also* Private elementary/secondary schools; Religious affiliation
- Citizenship, 2001:15, 2001:16
- Civic Education Study, 2002:15, 2003:16
- Civic knowledge performance, 2002:15
- Civic participation, 2003:16
- Classroom activities, kindergarten, 2003:SA8
- Class size, elementary/secondary schools, 2001:38
 kindergartens, 2001:37
 private schools, 2002:SA5–SA6, 2002:SA22
- Class time, elementary/secondary education, 2005:26
- Clubs as after-school activity, 2004:34
- Collaboration between teachers, 2002:SA5, 2002:33
 school climate, 2002:SA12
- College education. *See* Postsecondary education
- College entrance examinations, 2001:xxii, 2001:xxviii. *See also* Achievement tests
 increasing participation in, 2001:19
 measuring teacher qualifications, 2001:42, 2002:31
- College preparation. *See* Preparing for college
- College qualification index, 2001:xxv, 2001:xli
- Colleges. *See* Four-year institutions; Postsecondary education
- Colombia
 civic participation, 2003:16
 civic performance, 2002:15
 reading literacy in, 2003:10
- Combined schools (K–12), 2002:SA4
- Community colleges, 2003:19, 2005:34. *See also* Two-year institutions
- Community outreach
 electronic resources in academic libraries used for, 2005:33
- Community service, 2001:16
 as after-school activity, 2004:34
 parental involvement in education process, 2001:54
 required for high school graduation, 2002:SA18, 2002:SA19
- Computer sciences, degrees in, 2003:33
- Computers in education, 2001:39, 2001:48
- Congressional elections, 2003:15
- Consumer Price Index (CPI), 2005:39
- Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, 2004:SA5
- Continuing education, 2003:8, 2003:44. *See also* Adult education
- Core curriculum (New Basics), 2001:xxxiv, 2001:xliv. *See also* Curriculum, high school and college persistence rates, 2002:23
 English and foreign languages, 2003:25
 mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, 2004:22
 science and mathematics, 2002:27
- Cost of attending college, 2001:55, 2001:58, 2004:SA2–SA3
 efforts to fund postsecondary education, 2002:42

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

- Cost of attending college—*continued*
 need analysis for financial aid eligibility, 2004:SA8–SA13
 net price after grants and loans, 2004:SA21–SA25
 net price of, 2002:44, 2003:43
 student financial aid, 2004:SA2–SA4, 2004:SA6–SA7, 2004:SA13–SA21 (*See also* Financial aid to students)
 students' and parents' knowledge of, 2001:xxx, 2001:25
 and students' debts, 2001:59
 tuition and fee increases, 2004:SA2
- Cost of Education Index, 2001:56
- Coursetaking by high school students, 2004:21, 2004:22. *See also* Curriculum, high school
- Coursetaking by undergraduate students, 2004:30, 2004:31
- Credits earned for bachelor's degrees, 2004:30, 2004:31, 2005:22
- Crime in schools, 2001:44, 2005:30
- Current Population Survey (CPS), 2004:1, 2004:13, 2004:14
 educational attainment, 2005:16, 2005:23
 language spoken at home, 2005:5
- Curriculum, high school, 2001:xxiv–xxviii
 advanced placement courses, 2005:25 (*See also* Advanced placement)
 comparison between private and public schools, 2002:SA6–SA7, 2002:SA17–SA19
 English and foreign language courses, 2003:24, 2003:25
 influence of principals on, 2004:26
 influence of teachers on, 2002:SA11–SA12, 2002:SA13
 levels of achievement, 2001:xli–xlii
 mathematics, 2001:24
 mathematics and science coursetaking, 2002:26, 2002:27, 2004:21, 2004:22
- Curriculum, high school—*continued*
 persistence at college influenced by, 2001:xxxiv–xxxvi, 2002:23
 science achievement, 2002:12
 size of school, 2002:SA5
 vocational education, 2001:35
- Cutting classes, 2002:17
- Cyprus
 civic participation, 2003:16
 civic performance, 2002:15
 mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
 reading literacy in, 2003:10
- Czech Republic
 civic performance, 2002:15
 expenditures for education, 2002:41
 instructional activities in 8th-grade mathematics, 2003:26
 instructional activities in 8th-grade science classes, 2004:23
 instructional hours, 2005:26
 mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
 reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

D

- Day care, 2001:53, 2003:38
- Debts for college, 2001:59, 2004:38
- Decision-making in schools, 2002:SA11–SA12, 2002:SA13
- Degree programs, distance education and, 2004:32
- Degrees earned, 2001:31. *See also* Educational attainment
 affecting annual income, 2002:16

Index

Continued

Degrees earned—*continued*
 educational expectations of 10th-graders, 2004:15
 by field of study, 2003:33
 geographic mobility of students, 2005:21
 nontraditional undergraduate students, 2002:SA35
 persistence of traditional-age students towards bachelor's degrees, 2005:22
 by race/ethnicity, 2002:25, 2005:23
 teachers, 2002:32, 2005:SA4
 time taken to earn degree, 2001:xxxvi–xxxvii
 by women, 2001:30

Delayed entrants (teachers), 2005:SA7, 2005:SA18
 teaching out-of-field, 2005:SA9, 2005:SA22n21

Delayed entry to kindergarten, 2005:18. *See also* Kindergarten

Denmark, 2001:57
 civic performance, 2002:15
 expenditures for education, 2002:41
 instructional hours, 2005:26
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
 reading literacy in, 2002:9

Disabilities, students with, 2001:40, 2002:28
 inclusion of in regular classrooms, 2005:27
 public school enrollment, 2005:6
 services in postsecondary education for, 2003:34
 testing accommodations, 2004:9, 2004:11

Disadvantaged students. *See* Students whose parents did not go to college

Discipline at school, 2001:41, 2003:30, 2004:26

Dissatisfaction of teachers with schools, 2005:SA18, 2005:SA19, 2005:SA20, 2005:SA22n37, 2005:SA22n38

Distance education, 2002:38
 faculty participation in, 2001:49
 increase in classes, 2004:32
 nontraditional students using, 2002:SA31–SA32

Doctoral degrees, 2001:6, 2001:30, 2004:20

Doctoral institutions, 2001:47, 2001:48, 2001:51
 faculty salaries and benefits at, 2005:32
 minority enrollment rates, 2005:31

Dropout rates, 2001:23. *See also* Stopouts from postsecondary education
 earnings of young adults affected by, 2004:14
 by family income, 2004:16
 by race/ethnicity, 2002:19, 2003:17, 2005:19
 risk factors, 2002:22
 youth neither enrolled nor working, 2004:13

E

Early childhood education, 2001:37. *See also* Preprimary education
 center-based early childhood care, 2001:53
 early literacy activities, 2003:37
 enrollment in, 2001:1, 2002:1
 home activities affecting reading skills, 2003:36
 home environment, 2005:35
 prekindergarten programs at public schools, 2004:2
 reading and mathematics skills, 2001:8, 2001:9

Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, 2003:SA2, 2003:SA13n6
 reading and mathematics achievement through 3rd grade, 2004:8
 reading and mathematics achievement through 1st grade, 2003:9

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

- Earnings, young adults, **2001:18**, **2002:16**, **2004:14**. *See also* Income
- Educational attainment, **2001:31**. *See also* Degrees earned
- annual earnings of young adults, **2005:16**
- and earnings of young adults, **2001:18**, **2002:16**
- earnings of young adults affected by, **2004:14**
- employment status by, **2005:17**
- expectations for, **2004:15** (*See also* Expectations for education)
- health affected by, **2001:xxxv**, **2002:14**, **2004:12**
- and high school mathematics curriculum, **2001:24**
- international comparisons, **2001:32**
- of nontraditional undergraduate students, **2002:SA34–SA38**
- parents of school-age children, **2003:2** (*See also under* Parents)
- persistence towards bachelor's degrees, **2003:20**
- private *vs.* public schools, **2002:SA19–SA21**
- by race/ethnicity, **2002:25**, **2005:23**
- reading habits of adults affected by, **2001:15**, **2005:15**
- teachers, **2002:32**, **2005:SA4**
- by the 8th-graders of 1988, **2003:22**
- voting participation affected by, **2003:15**
- working while attending postsecondary institutions, **2004:29**
- work-related adult education, **2004:7**
- Egypt
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Eighth grade, **2001:36**, **2001:43**
- educational achievement level by 1988 cohort, **2003:22**
- geography performance, **2003:13**
- history performance, **2003:14**
- instructional activities in mathematics, **2003:26**
- instructional activities in science, **2004:23**
- international comparisons of mathematics and science, **2002:13**
- international comparisons of mathematics performance, **2005:11**
- international comparisons of science performance, **2005:12**
- mathematics performance in, **2003:11**, **2004:11**, **2005:10**
- private *vs.* public school students' educational attainment, **2002:SA19–SA21**
- reading performance in, **2004:9**, **2005:9**
- writing performance in, **2004:10**
- Elections, voting participation in, **2003:15**
- Electronic resources in libraries in postsecondary institutions, **2005:33**
- Elementary/secondary education, **2001:33–45**, **2002:26–34**, **2004:21–28**
- absenteeism in, **2002:17**
- choice of school, **2001:41**
- completion rates by race/ethnicity, **2002:25**
- computer and Internet usage, **2001:39**
- disabilities, students with enrolled in, **2005:6**
- dropout rates, **2001:23**, **2002:19**
- English and foreign language courses taken, **2003:24**, **2003:25**
- enrollment, **2001:2**, **2002:2**, **2003:1**, **2004:1**, **2004:4**, **2005:1**
- expectations for education, **2001:19** (*See also* Expectations for education)
- expenditures by category and region, **2005:38**
- expenditures by district poverty, **2005:36**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Elementary/secondary education—*continued*
 expenditures per student, 2001:56, 2001:57, 2002:41
 guidance counselors, 2004:27
 homeschooling, 2004:25, 2005:2
 homework, 2001:21
 international comparisons for mathematics, 2005:11
 international comparisons for mathematics and science, 2001:36, 2002:13
 international comparisons for science instructional methods, 2004:23
 international comparisons of expenditures for education, 2003:40, 2004:36
 kindergarten through 1st-grade skills development, 2001:8, 2001:9
 mainstreaming disabled students, 2001:40, 2002:28 (*See also* Disabilities, students with)
 mathematics achievement, 2001:12 (*See also* Mathematics)
 mathematics and science coursetaking, 2002:26, 2002:27, 2004:21, 2004:22
 “out-of-field” teachers, 2003:28, 2004:24 (*See also* “Out-of-field” teachers)
 overcrowding in schools, 2001:45
 parental educational attainment, 2001:4 (*See also* Parents, level of education)
 parental involvement in schools, 2001:54
 parents’ satisfaction with schools, 2001:55
 persistence in, 2001:23
 poverty-level children, 2002:4, 2003:3
 prekindergarten programs, 2004:2 (*See also* Preprimary education)
 principals, 2004:26 (*See also* Principals)
 public charter schools, 2002:30
 public support for, 2002:42
 race/ethnicity in, 2001:3, 2002:3, 2004:5 (*See also* Race/ethnicity)
 reading achievement, 2001:10, 2002:8 (*See also* Reading)

Elementary/secondary education—*continued*
 revenues, changes in sources for, 2005:37
 revenues for, 2003:41, 2005:39
 school choice, 2002:29, 2002:30, 2004:25
 science achievement, 2001:13 (*See also* Science)
 sources of revenue for, 2002:43
 status dropouts from, 2002:19
 students’ use of time, 2001:21
 student/teacher ratios, 2001:38
 student victimization in, 2003:31
 support staff, 2004:27
 teachers in, 2005:SA2–SA4
 teachers/teaching, 2002:31, 2002:32, 2002:33 (*See also* Teachers/Teaching)
 time spent in classroom, 2005:26
 twelfth-grade interest in school, 2002:18
 values of high school seniors, 2001:20
 violence at school, 2001:44
 vocational education, 2001:35
 E-mail, 2001:48
 Emotional disturbances, 2005:6
 Employer financial aid for adult education, 2003:44
 Employment background of teachers, 2005:SA6–SA8
 Employment status, 2001:xxxvii–xxxviii
 and dropouts from high school, 2001:23
 in high school, 2001:21
 by race/ethnicity, 2005:17
 teachers, 2005:SA9
 undergraduate students, 2002:37
 while earning postsecondary degree, 2001:6, 2004:29 (*See also* Working while attending school (postsecondary education))
 Engineering, degrees in, 2003:33
 England, reading literacy in, 2003:10. *See also* United Kingdom of Great Britain

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- English, high school, **2001:xli**, **2001:xlii**
 exit examinations for high school, **2005:24**
 “out-of-field” teachers teaching, **2004:24**
 student characteristics, **2003:25**
 subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, **2003:28**
 trends in, **2003:24**
- English as a Second Language (ESL), **2003:8**
 language spoken at home, **2005:5**
 reading and mathematics proficiency of elementary students, **2005:8**
 teacher aides for, **2004:28**
- English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), **2002:2**, **2002:4**. *See also* Limited English proficiency (LEP)
 adult literacy habits, **2001:15**
 increasing numbers of, **2003:2**, **2003:4**
- Enrollment, elementary/secondary schools, **2001:2**, **2002:2**, **2004:4**
 by age, **2004:1**
 alternative schools, **2003:27**
 kindergarten, **2004:3**
 overcrowding, **2001:45**
 past and projected, **2003:3**, **2005:1**
 private elementary/secondary schools, **2002:SA3**, **2002:SA4**, **2002:SA5** (*See also* Private elementary/secondary schools)
 by race/ethnicity, **2002:3**, **2005:4**
 size of high schools, **2003:30**
- Enrollment, postsecondary education, **2001:xviii**, **2001:5**, **2001:26**
 and academic qualifications, **2001:xxiv–xxv**
 delayed, **2002:SA26**, **2002:SA28**
 of employees as undergraduates, **2002:SA31**
 foreign-born students, **2003:6**
 graduate level, **2001:xxxviii**, **2002:6**, **2003:7**
 mathematics courses taken in high school affecting, **2001:xxvi–xxvii**, **2001:24**
- Enrollment, postsecondary education
 —*continued*
 parental level of education affecting, **2001:xx**, **2001:xxii**, **2001:xxxiii**
 and preparing for college, **2001:xxix**
 race/ethnicity, **2003:18**
 types of institutions, **2004:SA5–SA6**
 undergraduate level, **2002:5**, **2002:20**, **2002:21**, **2002:22**, **2003:5**, **2003:32**, **2005:7** (*See also* Undergraduate students)
- Enrollment, preprimary education, **2001:1**, **2002:1**
 trends by age, **2004:1**
- Environmental organizations, **2003:16**
- ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages). *See* English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Estonia
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Estonia, civic performance, **2002:15**
- Evaluation of teachers, **2002:SA13**. *See also* Teachers/Teaching
- Event dropout rates, **2004:16**. *See also* Drop-out rates
- Exit examinations for high school, **2005:24**
- Expectations for education, **2001:xviii**, **2001:xxii**
 attaining a degree, **2001:xxxv**
 and grade level of students, **2001:xxiii–xxiv**
 nontraditional undergraduate students, **2002:SA32**
 postsecondary expectations for 10th-graders, **2004:15**
 principals’, **2002:SA16–SA17**
 seniors’ for postsecondary education, **2001:19**, **2001:20**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) for college costs, **2004:SA10–SA11**, **2004:SA12**, **2004:SA25–SA28**

Expenditures for elementary/secondary education, **2001:56**, **2001:57**
 by district poverty, **2005:36**
 international comparisons, **2002:41**, **2003:40**
 per student, **2004:35**
 by region and category of expenditure, **2005:38**
 by urbanicity, **2003:39**

Expenditures for postsecondary education, **2002:41**

Extended families. *See* Families

Extracurricular activities

affecting transition to college, **2002:22**
 as after-school childcare, **2004:33**

F

Faculty, postsecondary education. *See also* Teachers/Teaching

distance education, teaching, **2001:49**
 instructional methods of, **2001:46**
 part-time, **2001:50**
 salaries and benefits for, **2005:32**
 teaching undergraduates, **2001:47**
 tenure, **2003:35**
 time allocation of, **2001:51**
 use of technology, **2001:48**
 women and minorities, **2002:39**

Families, **2003:2**. *See also* Income, family; Parents

child care, **2001:53**, **2003:38**
 contributions for college, **2004:SA10–SA11**, **2004:SA12**, **2004:SA25–SA28**
 and home activities, **2001:52** (*See also* Home activities)
 teacher turnover rates affected by, **2005:SA14**, **2005:SA18**, **2005:SA20**

Fathers. *See* Parents

Federal government, **2002:43**, **2003:42**
 financial aid to students, **2004:SA3–SA4**
 Pell grants, **2004:SA16**
 revenues to postsecondary institutions, **2005:40**
 revenues to school districts from, **2005:37**
 tax credits for student loans, **2004:SA2**

Federal Methodology (need analysis for financial aid to students), **2004:SA25**

Field of study

degrees earned by women, **2001:30**, **2004:20**
 instructional methods, **2001:46**
 “out-of-field” teachers, **2005:SA5**
 teachers, **2004:24**, **2005:SA9**
 undergraduate degrees, **2003:33**

Fights in school, **2005:29**

Financial aid to students, **2001:xxix**, **2001:xxxix**, **2004:SA13–SA21**. *See also* Need analysis for financial aid to students
 adult education, **2003:44**

combinations of aid packages, **2004:SA13–SA14**

cost of attending college, **2001:58**, **2002:44**, **2003:43**

eligibility for, **2004:SA11–SA13**

federal grants and loans, **2003:42**

from 4-year colleges and universities, **2004:37**

grants, **2004:SA14–SA18** (*See also* Grants and scholarships)

increase of, **2004:SA2**

loans to students, **2001:59**

net price of postsecondary education after grants, **2004:SA18**, **2004:SA19**

overview of system of, **2004:SA6–SA7**

Pell Grants, **2002:24**, **2003:23**

percentage of undergraduates receiving, **2004:SA14**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

- Financial aid to students—*continued*
 student loans, **2004:SA18–SA21** (*See also* Student loans)
 types and sources of, **2004:SA2–SA4**
- Finland
 civic performance, **2002:15**
 instructional hours, **2005:26**
 mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 transition to postsecondary education, **2004:17**
- First-generation college students, **2001:xxx–xxxix**
 after earning a degree, **2001:xxxvii–xxxviii**
 after 5 years, **2001:xxxvi–xxxvii**
 after 3 years, **2001:xxxiv–xxxv**
 among the foreign-born population, **2003:6**
 characteristics of, **2001:xxx–xxxi**
 high school curriculum, **2001:24, 2002:23**
- First-professional degrees, **2001:6**
 rate of enrollment, **2002:6, 2003:7**
- First grade, **2001:8, 2001:9, 2002:SA2–SA13, 2003:9**. *See also* Kindergarten
- First year at college, **2001:xxxi–xxxii, 2001:xxxiv**
- Florida
 state policies and procedures for transfer students, **2005:34**
- Foreign-born children, **2003:4, 2003:6**. *See also* Immigrants/Immigration
- Foreign languages
 courses taken in high school, **2001:xli, 2003:24, 2003:25**
 immersion programs, **2002:SA6, 2002:SA7**
 requirements for high school graduation, **2002:SA18, 2002:SA19**
 subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, **2003:28**
- Fourth grade, **2002:13**
 geography performance, **2003:13**
 history performance, **2003:14**
 international comparisons of mathematics performance, **2005:11**
 international comparisons of reading literacy, **2003:10**
 international comparisons of science performance, **2005:12**
 mathematics performance, **2003:11, 2003:12, 2004:11**
 mathematics performance in, **2005:10**
 poverty levels among school-aged children, **2004:5**
 reading performance in, **2004:9, 2005:9**
 writing performance in, **2004:10**
- Four-year institutions, **2001:58, 2004:38**. *See also* Postsecondary education
 average expected family contribution for tuition, **2004:SA26–SA27**
 average price of attending, **2004:38**
 debt burden of college graduates, **2004:38**
 disabilities, student with, **2003:34**
 distance education courses, **2004:32**
 and distance education courses, **2001:49**
 enrollment patterns, **2004:SA5, 2004:SA6**
 enrollment rates, **2001:xxxiii, 2001:5, 2003:5, 2003:18**
 expectations for high school seniors, **2001:19**
 expected family contribution (EFC) for college costs, **2004:SA12**
 faculty at, **2001:47**
 faculty salaries and benefits at, **2005:32**
 faculty tenure at, **2003:35**
 financial aid to students, **2004:37**
 first-generation students enrolling in, **2001:xx, 2001:xxx**
 grants to undergraduates, **2004:SA15, 2004:SA17**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Four-year institutions—*continued*

mathematics taken in high school affecting enrollment in, 2001:xxvi, 2001:xxviii

minority enrollment rates, 2005:31

net price for, 2002:44, 2003:43

net price for after grants, 2004:SA18, 2004:SA19

net price for after grants and loans, 2004:SA22, 2004:SA23, 2004:SA24

nontraditional undergraduate students at, 2002:SA27, 2002:SA28–SA29

paying for, 2001:25

Pell Grants, students with, 2002:24, 2003:23

Pell grants to undergraduates, 2004:SA16

persistence in attaining a degree at, 2001:27, 2002:23, 2003:20, 2004:19

persistence of nontraditional undergraduates at, 2002:SA33, 2002:SA34

preparation for enrollment, 2001:xxiii, 2001:xxx (See also Preparing for college)

remedial coursework at, 2001:29, 2004:18, 2004:31

state polices and procedures for transfer students, 2005:34

stopouts, 2001:xxxii, 2001:xxxiv

student loans for, 2004:SA20

technology used at, 2001:48

time to completion for bachelor's degree, 2003:21

transferring from 2-year institutions, 2003:19

transferring to 2-year institutions, 2002:SA36

tuition/fee increases, 2004:SA2

tuition/fees for, 2004:SA8, 2004:SA9

undergraduate diversity at, 2003:32

undergraduate enrollment, 2002:5, 2002:21, 2002:22, 2004:6, 2005:7 (See also Undergraduate students)

France, 2001:32

expenditures for education, 2002:41, 2003:40, 2004:36

mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13

reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10

Free or reduced-price lunch programs, 2005:36. See also School lunch programs

Freshman undergraduates, 2004:31. See also Undergraduate students

Fringe benefits to faculty at postsecondary institutions, 2005:32

Full-day kindergarten, 2003:SA2, 2003:SA7–SA11, 2003:SA12. See also Kindergarten increase in enrollment in, 2004:3

Full-time employment for teachers, 2005:SA9

Full-time enrollment at postsecondary institutions, 2001:xxxiii, 2002:5, 2004:1. See also Enrollment, postsecondary education graduate students, 2001:6, 2003:7 undergraduate students, past and projected, 2001:5, 2003:5, 2004:6

G

Gangs at schools, 2003:31

Gender, 2001:31

adult education participation, 2003:8

annual earnings of young adults, 2004:14

annual income, 2002:16

beginning teachers, 2003:29

community service of young adults, 2001:16

degrees earned by women, 2001:30

differences in values of high school seniors, 2001:20

disabilities, students with in elementary/secondary schools, 2005:6

distance education, 2002:38

English and foreign languages courses taken in high school, 2003:25

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Gender—*continued*

enrollment rates in college, **2001:5**, **2001:26**, **2003:18**, **2005:7**
 expectations for education, **2001:19**
 faculty at postsecondary institutions, **2002:39**
 fourth-grade reading performance, **2002:7**
 graduate enrollment, **2002:6**, **2003:7**
 international comparisons for the transition to postsecondary education, **2004:17**
 international comparisons of mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 international comparisons of reading performance, **2002:9**
 international comparisons of science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
 kindergarten, entry and retention, **2005:18**
 mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, **2002:27**, **2004:22**
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:12**, **2003:11**, **2004:11**, **2005:10**
 persistence of traditional-age students towards bachelor's degrees, **2005:22**
 principals in elementary/secondary schools, **2004:26**
 reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, **2005:14**
 reading habits of adults, **2001:15**, **2005:15**
 reading performance through elementary/secondary level, **2004:9**, **2005:9**
 reading skill gains in kindergarten, **2003:SA4–SA5**
 and salary parity, **2001:xxxviii**, **2001:18**
 and school violence, **2001:44**
 science performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:13**, **2002:12**
 student victimization, **2003:31**

Gender—*continued*

teachers in elementary/secondary education, **2005:SA3**
 teacher turnover rates, **2005:SA14**, **2005:SA20**
 undergraduate enrollment, **2002:5**, **2003:5**, **2003:32**, **2004:6**
 violence at schools, **2005:30**
 writing performance through elementary/secondary level, **2004:10**
 General Education Development (GED), **2002:SA26**, **2003:27**, **2004:16**
 Geographic mobility of students, **2005:21**
 Geographic regions. *See* Regional distributions
 Geography, **2003:13**
 Geometry, **2001:24**, **2003:11**. *See also* Mathematics
 coursetaking by high school students, **2004:21**
 Germany, **2001:32**, **2001:36**
 civic performance, **2002:15**
 expenditures for education, **2002:41**, **2003:40**, **2004:36**
 instructional hours, **2005:26**
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 reading literacy in, **2002:9**, **2003:10**
 Ghana
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
 Gifted and talented students, **2002:SA6**, **2002:SA7**
 Goals for education. *See* Expectations for education
 Government appropriations for public postsecondary institutions, **2005:40**. *See also* Federal government; State governments

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Grade-level studies. *See also* Age/Age comparisons
 absenteeism, 2002:17
 civic activities, 2003:16
 civic knowledge performance, 2002:15
 fourth-grade reading performance, 2002:7
 geography performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:13
 history performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:14
 international comparisons of mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
 kindergarten through 1st-grade reading and mathematics skills, 2001:8, 2001:9
 mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:11, 2005:10
 quality of teaching in 8th-grade mathematics, 2001:36
 reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, 2005:14
 reading performance through elementary/secondary level, 2005:9
 teacher preparation for mathematics and science, 2001:43
 teachers, 2005:SA21n7
 twelfth-grade efforts, 2002:18

Grade-point average (GPA), 2001:xxxv

Grading students, 2001:46

Graduate degrees
 attendance and employment patterns, 2001:6
 doctoral degrees, 2001:6, 2001:30, 2004:20
 earned by women, 2001:30, 2004:20
 educational expectations of 10th-graders, 2004:15
 first-professional degrees, 2001:6
 master's degrees, 2001:30, 2004:20, 2004:26

Graduate degrees—*continued*
 principals in elementary/secondary schools holding, 2004:26
 work-related adult education, participation in, 2004:7

Graduate students, 2001:59
 distance education, 2002:38
 first-generation college students enrollment, 2001:xxxviii
 foreign-born students, 2003:6
 rate of enrollment, 2002:6, 2003:7

Grants and scholarships, 2003:42, 2004:SA2, 2004:SA28
 balance with loans, 2004:SA23, 2004:SA25
 from colleges and universities, 2004:SA4, 2004:37
 cost of attending college, 2002:44, 2003:43
 net price of tuition after, 2004:SA18, 2004:SA21–SA25, 2004:SA29n, 2004:13
 as part of financial aid package to students, 2004:SA14–SA18
 Pell Grants, 2002:24, 2003:23
 percentage of undergraduates receiving, 2004:SA15

Great Britain, 2001:32, 2001:57. *See also* United Kingdom of Great Britain

Greece
 civic participation, 2003:16
 civic performance, 2002:15
 expenditures for education, 2003:40
 instructional hours, 2005:26
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
 reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10

Gross domestic product (GDP), 2001:57, 2002:41, 2003:40, 2004:36
 revenues for elementary/secondary education, 2005:39
 revenues for postsecondary education, 2005:40

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Guidance counselors, **2004:27**

Guns at schools, **2003:31**

H

Half-day kindergarten, **2003:SA2**, **2003:SA7–SA11**, **2003:SA12**. *See also* Kindergarten

full-day kindergarten compared to, **2004:3**

Handicapped students. *See* Disabilities, students with

Head Start, **2001:1**

Health of population, **2002:14**, **2004:12**

high school dropouts reporting worse health, **2005:19**

illness causing absenteeism, **2002:17**

learning amongst kindergartners affected by, **2003:SA6**

Health professions, degrees in, **2003:33**

Higher education. *See* Postsecondary education

Higher Education Act (1965), **2004:SA3**, **2004:SA28n**, **2004:1**

Higher Education Act (1972 reauthorization), **2004:SA4**

Higher Education Amendments (1992), **2004:SA5**, **2004:SA10**

Highly selective postsecondary institutions, **2004:30**

High school education, **2001:31**. *See also* Educational attainment; Elementary/secondary education

completion rates by race/ethnicity, **2002:25**, **2005:23**

dropout rates, **2002:19**

dropout rates by race/ethnicity, **2005:19**

earnings of young adults affected by, **2004:14**

exit examinations, **2005:24**

gender of teachers, **2005:SA3**

graduation rates, **2001:xxi**, **2001:23**

High school education—*continued*

graduation requirements, **2004:21**

guidance counselors in public elementary/secondary schools, **2004:27**

health affected by, **2004:12**

international comparisons, **2001:32**

“out-of-field” teachers, **2004:24**

parents attaining, **2001:4**, **2003:2**

size of schools, **2003:30**

twelfth-grade interest in school, **2002:18**

High School Transcript Study of 1998, **2002:SA2–SA3**, **2002:SA19**

Hispanics

advanced placement course availability, **2005:25**

annual earnings of young adults, **2005:16**

child care, **2003:38**, **2004:33**

community service of young adults, **2001:16**

disabilities, inclusion of students with in regular classrooms, **2005:27**

disabilities, students with in elementary/secondary schools, **2005:6**

dropout rates from high school, **2001:23**, **2002:19**, **2003:17**, **2004:16**, **2005:19**

early literacy activities, **2003:37**

educational attainment, **2001:31**, **2002:25**, **2005:23**

elementary/secondary enrollment, **2002:3**, **2004:5**

employer financial aid for adult education, **2003:44**

employment status of, **2005:17**

English and foreign languages courses taken in high school, **2003:25**

enrollment in public schools, **2001:3**, **2005:4**

enrollment rates in college, **2001:26**, **2002:20**, **2003:18**, **2005:20**, **2005:31**

faculty at postsecondary institutions, **2002:39**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Hispanics—*continued*

family characteristics of, 2003:2
 geographic mobility of students, 2005:21
 geography performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:13
 graduate enrollment, 2002:6, 2003:7
 history performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:14
 homeschooling, 2005:3
 kindergarten enrollment, 2004:3
 language spoken at home, 2003:4, 2005:5
 mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, 2002:27, 2004:22
 mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, 2001:12, 2003:11, 2003:12, 2004:11, 2005:10
 parental satisfaction with schools, 2001:55, 2002:40
 parents' level of education, 2001:4
 passing exit examinations for high school, 2005:24
 persistence of traditional-age students towards bachelor's degrees, 2005:22
 and poverty, 2002:11
 prekindergarten programs, participation in, 2004:2
 preprimary enrollment, 2001:1, 2002:1
 in private schools, 2002:SA8, 2005:2
 in public charter schools, 2002:30, 2005:28
 reading and mathematics achievement through 3rd grade, 2004:8
 reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, 2005:14
 reading habits of adults, 2001:15, 2005:15
 reading performance through elementary/secondary level, 2001:10, 2005:9
 reading skill gains in kindergarten, 2003:SA4, 2003:SA11
 school choice, 2001:41, 2002:29
 science performance through elementary/secondary level, 2001:13, 2002:12

Hispanics—*continued*

status dropout rates for high school, 2004:16
 student perceptions of school's social and learning environment, 2005:29
 student victimization, 2003:31
 theft at schools, 2005:30
 undergraduate enrollment, 2003:32
 voting participation, 2003:15
 work-related adult education, participation in, 2004:7
 writing performance through elementary/secondary level, 2004:10
 young adults not in school or working, 2004:13
 Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), 2005:31
 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), 2005:31
 History performance, 2003:14
 Home activities, 2001:52
 after school, 2003:38
 child development and, 2005:35
 for children entering kindergarten, 2003:36
 early literacy activities, 2003:SA2, 2003:SA5, 2003:SA11–SA12, 2003:37
 fourth-grade reading performance, 2002:7
 language spoken at home, 2003:4, 2005:5, 2005:8
 Homeschooling, 2004:25, 2005:3
 number of children in, 2005:39
 Homework, 2001:21, 2001:22, 2003:38
 Hong Kong. *See also* China
 civic performance, 2002:15
 instructional activities in 8th-grade mathematics, 2003:26
 mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

- Hong Kong—*continued*
 reading literacy in, 2003:10
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- Honors courses, 2001:xli–xlii, 2003:24
- Humanities courses, 2004:30
- Human rights organizations, 2003:16
- Hungary, 2001:57
 civic performance, 2002:15
 expenditures for education, 2002:41, 2003:40, 2004:36
 instructional hours, 2005:26
 mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
 reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- I**
- Iceland
 instructional hours, 2005:26
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
 reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
 transition to postsecondary education, 2004:17
- IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) (1975), 2005:6
- Illinois
 state polices and procedures for transfer students, 2005:34
- Immigrants/Immigration
 elementary/secondary school enrollment, 2001:2, 2003:1, 2004:4, 2005:1
 foreign-born students in postsecondary education, 2003:6
- Immigrants/Immigration—*continued*
 language spoken at home, 2003:4
- Income. *See also* Poverty levels; Salaries
 annual earnings of young adults, 2004:14, 2005:16
 enrollment in postsecondary education, 2002:21
 faculty at higher education institutions, 2001:49, 2002:39
 family, 2001:25
 affecting health, 2002:14, 2004:12
 cost of attending college, 2001:58, 2002:44, 2003:43, 2004:SA11 (*See also* Expected Family Contribution (EFC) for college costs)
 crime in school and, 2005:30
 dropout rates affected by, 2004:16
 enrollment in different types of postsecondary institutions, 2004:SA6
 enrollment rates in college affected by, 2001:26, 2005:20
 federal grants for postsecondary education, 2003:42
 financial aid to students affected by, 2004:SA5, 2004:37 (*See also* Financial aid to students)
 and first-generation students, 2001:xxxix
 grants to undergraduates, 2004:SA15
 influencing parental satisfaction with schools, 2001:55, 2002:40
 net price for college after grant money, 2004:SA19
 net price for college after grants and loans, 2004:SA22, 2004:SA25
 and parental involvement, 2001:54
 student loans for postsecondary education, 2004:SA20, 2004:SA21
 first-generation college students, 2001:xxxvii–xxxviii
 kindergarten enrollment affected by, 2004:3

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Income—*continued*

- low-income students enrolling in college, **2004:SA6**
- poverty levels, **2001:56, 2002:4**
- students with Pell Grants, **2002:24, 2003:23**
- young adults, **2001:18, 2002:16**

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1975), **2005:6, 2005:27**

Indonesia

- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
- mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**

Inservice training for teachers, **2002:SA13**

Institutional aid to postsecondary students, **2004:SA4, 2004:SA17, 2004:SA18**

Instruction

- allocated time in class, **2005:26**
- expenditures in public elementary/secondary schools for, **2005:38**

Instructional methods, **2001:48**. *See also* Faculty; Teachers/Teaching

- international comparisons for 8th-grade science class, **2004:23**

- principals' involvement with, **2002:SA15–SA16**

- private elementary/secondary schools, **2002:SA6–SA7, 2002:SA11–SA12**

- reading skill gains for kindergartners, **2003:SA8–SA9**

Interest rates for student loans, **2004:38**

Internal Revenue Service, **2004:38**

International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), **2002:15, 2003:16**

International comparisons

- civic participation, **2003:16**
- civic performance, **2002:15**
- educational attainment, **2001:32**
- expenditures for education, **2001:57, 2003:40, 2004:36**
- instructional activities in mathematics, **2003:26**
- instructional activities in 8th-grade science classes, **2004:23**
- instructional hours, **2005:26**
- mathematics literacy, **2005:13**
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
- reading literacy, **2002:9, 2003:10**
- science and mathematics, **2001:43, 2002:13**
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- transition to postsecondary education, **2004:17**

International Socioeconomic Index (ISEI), **2002:9**

Internet usage in education, **2001:39**

- distance education, **2002:SA32, 2002:38** (*See also* Distance education)

- used by faculty, **2001:48**

Interpretation of text, **2005:8**

Iran

- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**

- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**

- reading literacy in, **2003:10**

- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**

Ireland, **2002:9**

- mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Israel

- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
- reading literacy in, **2003:10**
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**

Italy, **2001:32**

- civic performance, **2002:15**
- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
- mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
- reading literacy in, **2002:9, 2003:10**
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**

JJapan, **2001:57**

- educational attainment, **2001:32**
- instructional activities in 8th-grade mathematics, **2003:26**
- instructional activities in 8th-grade science classes, **2004:23**
- mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
- quality of mathematics lessons in, **2001:36**
- reading literacy in, **2002:9**
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- transition to postsecondary education, **2004:17**

Jordan

- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**

Jordan—*continued*

- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**

K

- Kindergarten, **2001:8, 2001:9, 2001:37, 2003:SA2–SA13**. *See also* Preprimary education
- Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99, **2004:8**
- enrollment, **2005:1**
- entry and retention, **2005:18**
- full-day *vs.* half-day, **2003:SA2, 2003:SA7–SA11, 2003:SA12, 2004:3**
- home activities of children entering, **2003:36**
- reading and mathematics proficiency in, **2003:9, 2005:8**
- reading skill gains in, **2003:SA2–SA6**
- time spent on reading activities and skills, **2003:SA9–SA11**

Korea, **2002:9**

- expenditures for education, **2002:41, 2003:40, 2004:36**
- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
- mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- transition to postsecondary education, **2004:17**

Kuwait, reading literacy in, **2003:10****L**

- Laboratory activities, **2004:23**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- Labor market outcomes, 2001:xxxvii–xxxviii
- Language spoken at home, 2003:2, 2003:4
as risk factor, 2004:8, 2005:8
- Latch-key children, 2001:53, 2004:33
- Latinos. *See* Hispanics
- Latvia
civic performance, 2002:15
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- Law degrees, 2001:6
- Learner outcomes. *See* Outcomes of education
- Learning disabilities, 2002:28, 2003:34, 2005:6
- Leave of absence from teaching, 2005:SA14
- “Leavers” (teachers who left teaching), 2005:SA11–SA12. *See also* Turnover rates for teachers
- Lebanon
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- Leisure reading. *See* Reading
- Letter recognition, 2003:SA2, 2003:SA3–SA4, 2003:SA5, 2003:SA6, 2003:SA7, 2003:SA10
- Liberal arts, degrees in, 2003:33
- Libraries in postsecondary institutions, 2005:33
- Liechtenstein
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
reading literacy in, 2002:9
- Lifelong learning, 2003:8, 2003:44. *See also* Adult education
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP). *See also* English as a Second Language (ESL)
beginning teachers teaching students with, 2003:29
language spoken at home, 2005:5
in larger high schools, 2003:30
in private schools, 2002:SA9, 2002:SA10
teachers’ professional development, 2002:33
testing accommodations for, 2004:9, 2004:11
- Literacy, 2001:15, 2001:52. *See also* Reading
as goal for principals, 2002:SA16
international comparisons, 2002:9
reading habits of adults, 2005:15
- Literal inferences, 2005:8
- Lithuania
civic performance, 2002:15
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
reading literacy in, 2003:10
science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- Loans to students for college, 2001:59, 2003:42, 2004:38. *See also* Student loans
- Local sources of revenues, 2002:43, 2003:41, 2005:37
to postsecondary institutions, 2005:40
- Luxembourg
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
reading literacy in, 2002:9

M

- Macao-China
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- Macedonia
- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 - mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 - reading literacy in, **2003:10**
 - science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Mainstreaming students with disabilities, **2001:40, 2002:28, 2005:27**
- Malaysia
- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 - mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 - science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Marriage, **2004:29**
- Master's degrees, **2001:30, 2004:20, 2004:26**.
See also Graduate degrees
- Master's postsecondary institutions
- faculty salaries and benefits at, **2005:32**
 - minority enrollment rates, **2005:31**
- Mathematics, **2001:xli, 2001:xliv**
- affecting transition to college, **2002:22**
 - and college enrollment, **2001:xxvi–xxviii, 2001:24, 2003:22**
 - coursetaking by undergraduate students, **2004:30**
 - coursetaking in high school, **2002:SA5, 2002:26, 2002:27, 2004:21, 2004:22**
 - eighth-grade performance, **2005:10**
 - exit examinations for high school, **2005:24**
 - fourth-grade performance, **2005:10**
 - instructional activities in 8th grade, **2003:26**
 - international comparisons, **2001:36, 2002:13, 2005:11**
 - in kindergarten through 1st grade, **2001:8, 2001:9, 2003:9**
 - in kindergarten through 3rd grade, **2005:8**
- Mathematics—*continued*
- literacy, international comparisons in, **2005:13**
 - “out-of-field” teachers teaching, **2004:24**
 - performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:12, 2003:11, 2003:12, 2004:11**
 - private *vs.* public school achievement, **2002:SA18, 2002:SA19, 2002:SA20**
 - quality of content, **2001:36**
 - remedial coursework in postsecondary education, **2001:29, 2004:18, 2004:31**
 - subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, **2003:28**
 - teachers' preparation for, **2001:43**
 - urbanicity and performance in, **2005:14**
 - with vocational education, **2001:35**
- Meaning derived from text, **2005:8**
- Medical degrees, **2001:6**
- Mental retardation, **2005:6**
- Merit-based financial aid to students, **2004:SA2, 2004:37**. *See also* Financial aid to students; Grants and scholarships
- Metropolitan areas, **2001:56**. *See also* Urbanicity
- Mexico, **2001:57**
- expenditures for education, **2002:41, 2003:40, 2004:36**
 - mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 - reading literacy in, **2002:9**
 - transition to postsecondary education, **2004:17**
- Middle schools, **2003:28, 2004:24**. *See also* Elementary/secondary education
- gender of teachers in, **2005:SA3**
 - time spent in classrooms, **2005:26**
- Midwestern region schools. *See* Regional distributions
- Minimum competency examinations, **2005:24**
- Minorities. *See* Race/ethnicity

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- Mobility of students, **2005:21**
- Mobility of teachers, **2005:SA2–SA24**. *See also* Teachers/Teaching
- Moldova
- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 - mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 - reading literacy in, **2003:10**
 - science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Montenegro
- mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
- Morocco
- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 - mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 - reading literacy in, **2003:10**
 - science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Mothers. *See also* Parents
- expectation for student's attainment, **2002:SA21**
 - level of education, **2002:1**, **2003:SA4**, **2003:9**
 - enrollment of child in preprimary education, **2001:1**
 - home activities and early childhood development, **2005:35**
 - reading and mathematics performance of child through 1st grade, **2001:8**
 - reading and mathematics proficiency of elementary students, **2005:8**
 - as risk factor for child, **2004:8**
- Motor skill development, **2005:35**
- Music
- coursetaking by undergraduate students, **2004:30**
- Music—*continued*
- subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, **2003:28**
- N**
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), **2002:SA2**
- comparison between private and public school students, **2002:SA17**
 - fourth-grade reading performance, **2002:7**
 - geography performance through elementary/secondary level, **2003:13**
 - High School Transcript Study of 1998, **2002:SA2**, **2002:SA19**
 - history performance through elementary/secondary level, **2003:14**
 - homework, **2001:21**, **2001:22**
 - mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:12**, **2003:11**, **2004:11**, **2005:10**
 - poverty affecting achievement, **2003:12**
 - reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, **2005:14**
 - reading performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:10**, **2002:8**, **2004:9**, **2005:9**
 - science performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:13**, **2002:7**
 - writing performance through elementary/secondary level, **2004:10**
- National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), **2002:14**
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), **2003:20**
- National Commission on Excellence in Education, **2001:xliv**
- National Education Goals Panel, **2001:15**, **2001:16**
- National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), **2001:xviii**, **2001:xix**
- educational expectations, **2001:xxii**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS)—*continued*
- postsecondary education persistence, **2001:xxx**
 - private school attendance, **2002:SA3, 2002:SA19**
 - proficiency test levels, **2001:xli**
- National Health Interview Survey, **2002:14, 2004:12**
- National Household Education Surveys Program, **2001:52**
- National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), **2002:SA25, 2004:SA4**
- National School Lunch Programs, **2002:7, 2002:12, 2005:36**. *See also* School lunch programs
- National Student Loan Data Base, **2004:38**
- “Near-poor,” **2004:13**
- Need analysis for financial aid to students, **2004:SA6, 2004:SA7, 2004:SA8**. *See also* Financial aid to students
- Federal Methodology for, **2004:SA25**
 - Stafford loan program, **2004:SA20**
- Need-based financial aid to students, **2004:SA2, 2004:37**. *See also* Financial aid to students
- NELS. *See* National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS)
- Netherlands
- instructional activities in 8th-grade mathematics, **2003:26**
 - instructional activities in 8th-grade science classes, **2004:23**
 - mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 - mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 - mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 - reading literacy in, **2003:10**
 - science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Net price of college attendance, **2002:44, 2003:43**. *See also* Cost of attending college
- New Basics curriculum, **2001:xlii**. *See also* Core curriculum (New Basics); Curriculum, high school
- Newly hired teachers, **2005:SA6–SA11, 2005:SA18, 2005:SA20**. *See also* Teachers/Teaching
- New York
- state polices and procedures for transfer students, **2005:34**
- New Zealand
- mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 - mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 - mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 - reading literacy in, **2003:10**
 - science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
 - transition to postsecondary education, **2004:17**
- Ninth grade, civic activities, **2003:16**
- No Child Left Behind Act (2001), **2005:24**
- Nonparental childcare arrangements, **2003:38, 2004:33**
- “Nonpoor,” **2004:13**
- Nonsectarian private schools, **2005:2**. *See also* Private elementary/secondary schools
- Nonselective postsecondary institutions, **2004:30**
- Nontraditional undergraduate students, **2002:SA25–SA39**
- combining school and work, **2002:SA29–SA31**
 - definitions of, **2002:SA25–SA27**
 - distance education, **2002:SA31–SA32**
 - persistence after 3 years, **2002:SA32–SA34**
 - persistence and attainment after 5 years, **2002:SA34–SA38**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- Northeastern region schools. *See* Regional distributions
- Norway, **2001:57**
 civic performance, **2002:15**
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 reading literacy in, **2002:9, 2003:10**
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
 transition to postsecondary education, **2004:17**
- Nursery schools, **2001:1**
- Nurses, **2004:28**
- O**
- Occupational coursetaking, **2001:35**. *See also* Vocational education
- Occupations
 chosen by college students, **2001:xxxvii** (*See also* Field of study)
 work-related adult education, participation in, **2004:7**
- Office of Special Education Programs, **2001:40**
- Opinion surveys
 parental satisfaction with school, **2001:41, 2001:55**
 parents' on children's schools, **2002:40**
 teachers' on satisfaction with school, **2002:SA14**
 twelfth-graders' interest in school, **2002:18**
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), **2001:57**
 expenditures for education, **2002:41, 2003:40, 2004:36**
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 reading literacy, international comparisons, **2002:9**
 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—*continued*
 transition to postsecondary education, **2004:17**
- Outcomes of education, **2002:7–16, 2004:8–14**
 adult reading habits, **2001:15, 2005:15**
 annual earnings of young adults, **2005:16**
 civics performance in elementary/secondary school, **2002:15**
 community service participation in grades 6–12, **2001:16**
 earnings of young adults, **2001:18, 2002:16, 2004:13**
 employment status, **2005:17**
 first-generation college students, **2001:xxxvii–xxxviii** (*See also* First-generation college students)
 health issues, **2002:14, 2004:12**
 international comparisons in mathematics and science, **2002:13**
 mathematics performance in elementary/secondary education, **2001:12, 2003:11, 2004:11** (*See also* Mathematics)
 reading and mathematics through 3rd grade, **2004:8**
 reading and mathematics through 1st grade, **2001:8, 2001:9**
 reading performance in elementary/secondary education, **2002:7, 2002:8, 2002:9, 2004:9** (*See also* Reading)
 science performance in elementary/secondary education, **2001:13, 2002:12** (*See also* Science)
 writing performance in elementary/secondary education, **2004:10**
 youth neither enrolled nor working, **2004:13**
- “Out-of-field” teachers, **2003:28, 2004:24, 2005:SA4–SA5**
 average length of stay at one school, **2005:SA18**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

“Out-of-field” teachers—*continued*
 dissatisfaction, sources of, 2005:SA18
 measurements for, 2005:SA21n9
 newly hired teachers, 2005:SA9
 turnover rates affected by, 2005:SA13–
 SA14

Overcrowding in schools, 2001:45

P

Palestinian National Authority
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th
 grade, 2005:11
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade,
 2005:12

Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students
 (PLUS), 2004:SA18, 2004:SA23

Parents, 2001:25. *See also* Families; Income,
 family

arrangements for after-school care for chil-
 dren, 2004:33

going to school while raising children,
 2002:SA25, 2002:SA28, 2002:SA36

homeschooling, 2005:3

involvement with children’s education,
 2001:xxvii–xxx, 2001:54, 2002:SA14,
 2003:12

level of education, 2001:xviii–xli, 2001:4,
 2003:2, 2004:29 (*See also* Students whose
 parents did not go to college)

college completion time for children af-
 fected by, 2003:21

college enrollment rate of their children
 affected by, 2001:26, 2002:20, 2003:18

home activities and early childhood
 development, 2005:35

kindergarten, entry and retention, 2005:
 18

participation of children in community
 service affected by, 2001:16

persistence of children at college affected
 by, 2002:23

Parents—*continued*

level of education—*continued*

preprimary education enrollment affected
 by, 2001:1, 2002:1

reading and mathematics proficiency of
 elementary students, 2005:8

reading skills of kindergartners and 1st-
 graders affected by, 2001:8, 2003:9

as risk factor, 2004:8

opinions of children’s schools, 2002:40

satisfaction with school at elementary/
 secondary level, 2001:41, 2001:55

school choice, 2004:25

two-parent households, 2003:2

Parochial schools, 2005:2. *See also* Catholic
 schools

Part-time employment for teachers, 2005:SA9

Part-time enrollment at postsecondary institu-
 tions, 2001:xxxiii, 2001:5, 2004:1

employment during, 2004:29

graduate students, 2001:6, 2003:7

nontraditional undergraduate students,
 2002:SA26, 2002:SA27–SA28

undergraduate students, 2002:5, 2003:5,
 2004:6

Part-time faculty and staff at postsecondary
 institutions, 2001:50

Paying for college, 2001:xxx, 2001:58, 2004:
 SA2–SA30. *See also* Cost of attending col-
 lege

Peer culture, 2001:20

Peer-tutoring in kindergarten, 2003:SA9

Pell grants, 2002:24, 2004:SA16, 2004:SA17.
See also Grants and scholarships

persistence of student receiving, 2003:23

Reauthorization of the Higher Education
 Act (1992) changes to, 2004:SA29n, 2004:
 12

Perceptions by students of school environ-
 ment, 2005:29

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002,
 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The
 Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year
 refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3,
 SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special
 Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page
 numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001,
 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in
 the Indicator List on The Condition of Education
 website and can only be found in the Print Edi-
 tions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- Performance standards for students, **2002:SA13**, **2002:33**
 influence of principals on, **2004:26**
- Performing arts, degrees in, **2003:33**
- Persistence in education
 elementary/secondary education, **2001:23**, **2003:17** (*See also* Dropout rates)
 postsecondary education, **2001:xxx–xxxvii**
 after 5 years, **2001:xxxvi–xxxvii**, **2004:19**
 after 3 years, **2001:xxxiv–xxxvi**, **2001:27**
 bachelor's degrees earning, **2005:22**
 characteristics of first-generation students, **2001:xxx–xxxi** (*See also* First-generation college students)
 employment affecting, **2004:29**
 first-year challenges, **2001:xxx–xxxii**, **2001:xxxiv**
 high school curriculum affecting, **2002:23**
 nontraditional students, **2002:SA32–SA38**
 remedial coursework affecting, **2001:29**
 students with Pell Grants, **2002:24**, **2003:23**
 transfer students from community colleges, **2003:19**
- Philippines
 mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Phonics, **2003:SA3**, **2003:SA6**, **2003:SA7**, **2003:SA10**
- Physical education
 coursetaking by undergraduate students, **2004:30**
 subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, **2003:28**
- Physics, **2004:21**
- Playing with children, **2005:35**. *See also* Home activities
- Poland, **2001:57**
 civic performance, **2002:15**
 expenditures for education, **2002:41**
 instructional hours, **2005:26**
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 reading literacy in, **2002:9**
 transition to postsecondary education, **2004:17**
- Policymaking in schools, **2002:SA11–SA12**, **2002:SA13**
- Political parties, **2003:16**
- Population, **2003:1**, **2004:1**, **2005:1**
- Portugal
 civic participation, **2003:16**
 civic performance, **2002:15**
 instructional hours, **2005:26**
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 reading literacy in, **2002:9**
- Postsecondary education, **2001:46–51**, **2002:35–39**, **2004:29–32**. *See also* Enrollment, postsecondary education; Four-year institutions; Private postsecondary institutions; Public postsecondary institutions; Students whose parents did not go to college; Two-year institutions
 access to, **2001:xviii–xxxvi**
 adult learning, **2001:7**
 cost of attending college, **2001:58**, **2004:SA2–SA30** (*See also* Cost of attending college)
 debt burden of college graduates, **2004:38**
 degrees earned by women, **2001:30**
 distance education, **2001:49**, **2004:32**
 employment while enrolled in, **2001:6**, **2004:29**
 expenditures for, **2002:41**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Postsecondary education—*continued*

faculty and staff, **2001:47, 2001:50, 2001:51**

geographic mobility of students, **2005:21**

graduate enrollment, **2002:6**

guidance counselors preparing students for, **2004:27**

increase in enrollment in, **2004:1**

instructional methods, **2001:46**

international comparisons, **2001:32, 2001:57**

international comparisons of expenditures for, **2003:40, 2004:36**

mathematics curriculum in high school affecting, **2001:24**

nontraditional undergraduate students, **2002:SA25–SA39** (*See also* Nontraditional undergraduate students)

Pell Grants, **2002:24, 2003:23**

perceptions of college costs, **2001:25**

persistence in attaining a degree, **2001:27, 2004:19** (*See also* Persistence in education)

preparing for, **2001:xxii–xxx** (*See also* Preparing for college)

public support for, **2002:42, 2005:40**

remedial coursework affecting persistence, **2001:29**

remedial coursework provided, **2004:31**

tertiary-type A and B programs, **2004:17**

undergraduate students (*See also* Undergraduate students)

- coursetaking by, **2004:30**
- diversity among, **2003:32**
- enrollment, **2001:5, 2002:5, 2002:20, 2004:6**

Poverty levels, **2001:56, 2003:SA13n3**

achievement test outcomes, **2003:12**

dropout rates affected by, **2004:16**

early literacy activities, **2003:SA5, 2003:37**

educational attainment, **2003:22**

Poverty levels—*continued*

educational expectations of 10th-graders, **2004:15**

of elementary/secondary students, **2002:4, 2004:5**

expenditures for elementary/secondary education by, **2005:36**

federal grants and loans to undergraduates, **2003:42**

full-day *vs.* half-day kindergarten, **2003:SA7**

geography performance of elementary/secondary students, **2003:13**

health affected by, **2004:12**

history performance of elementary/secondary students, **2003:14**

home activities and early childhood development, **2005:35**

home reading activities, **2003:36**

kindergarten, entry and retention, **2005:18**

mathematics performance of elementary/secondary students, **2003:11**

mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, **2005:10**

mathematics proficiency of elementary students, **2005:8**

“out-of-field” teachers, **2004:24**

prekindergarten programs, participation in, **2004:2**

preprimary education, **2002:1**

for private schools, **2002:SA9**

reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, **2005:14**

reading performance through elementary/secondary level, **2004:9, 2005:9**

reading proficiency of elementary students, **2005:8**

reading skill gains in kindergarten, **2003:SA4, 2003:SA11**

revenues for schools districts affected by, **2003:41**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Poverty levels—*continued*

- as risk factor, **2004:8**
 - for school-aged children, **2003:2**
 - science performance of elementary/secondary students, **2002:12**
 - support staff at public elementary/secondary schools, **2004:28**
 - teachers' average length of stay at public schools affected by, **2005:SA17–SA18**
 - turnover rates for teachers affected by, **2005:SA10, 2005:SA11, 2005:SA15–SA16, 2005:SA22n33**
 - urbanicity, **2003:3**
 - young adults not in school or working, **2004:13**
- Prekindergarten programs, **2004:2**
- Preparing for college, **2001:xxii–xxx**
- application process, **2001:xxix–xxx**
 - at-risk students, **2002:22**
 - cost of attending college, **2001:xxx** (*See also* Cost of attending college)
 - expectations, **2001:xxiii**
 - first-generation students, **2001:xxxi** (*See also* First-generation college students)
 - guidance counselors, **2004:27**
 - high school curriculum, **2001:xxiv–xxviii, 2001:xxxiii, 2002:23** (*See also* Curriculum, high school)
 - taking college entrance examinations, **2001:xxviii** (*See also* College entrance examinations)
- Preprimary education, **2001:37**. *See also* Early childhood education
- center-based early childhood care, **2001:53**
 - early literacy activities, **2003:37**
 - enrollment in, **2001:1, 2002:1, 2004:1, 2005:1**
 - home activities affecting reading skills, **2003:36**
 - prekindergarten programs at public schools, **2004:2**

Preprimary education—*continued*

- reading and mathematics skills, **2001:8, 2001:9, 2003:9**
- Presidential elections, **2003:15**
- Principals, **2004:26**
- private schools, **2002:SA10, 2002:SA14, 2002:SA15–SA17, 2002:SA21–SA22**
- Private elementary/secondary schools, **2002:SA2–SA24**. *See also* Catholic schools; Elementary/secondary education
- average length of stay for teachers at, **2005:SA17**
 - beginning teachers at, **2003:29**
 - characteristics of, **2002:SA3–SA7**
 - class size of kindergarten classes, **2001:37**
 - coursework completion, **2002:SA19**
 - curriculum and achievement at, **2002:SA17–SA19**
 - educational attainment of students, **2002:SA19–SA21**
 - English and foreign languages courses taken in high school, **2003:25**
 - enrollments, **2001:2, 2002:2, 2004:4**
 - by affiliation of school, **2005:2**
 - by poverty level, **2002:SA9**
 - by race/ethnicity, **2002:SA8**
 - by region, **2003:1**
 - full-day *vs.* half-day kindergarten, **2003:SA7**
 - instructional methods, **2002:SA6–SA7**
 - kindergarten enrollment, **2004:3** (*See also* Kindergarten)
 - mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, **2002:27, 2004:22**
 - nonsectarian, **2002:SA3, 2002:SA6, 2002:SA11, 2002:SA17, 2002:SA19**
 - “out-of-field” teachers in, **2005:SA5** (*See also* “Out-of-field” teachers)
 - parental satisfaction, **2001:41**
 - principals, **2004:26**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

- Private elementary/secondary schools
—*continued*
- religious but not Catholic, 2002:SA3, 2002:SA6, 2002:SA11, 2002:SA17, 2002:SA19
 - school choice, 2002:SA2, 2002:29, 2004:25
 - school climate, 2002:SA10–SA17
 - student achievement, 2002:SA18
 - student characteristics, 2002:SA7–SA10
 - teachers at, 2002:SA11, 2002:32
 - turnover rate for teachers at, 2005:SA10–SA11, 2005:SA15 (*See also* Turnover rates for teachers)
- Private postsecondary institutions, 2001:27, 2001:58. *See also* Postsecondary education
- average expected family contribution for tuition, 2004:SA27
 - average price of attending, 2004:SA10
 - debt burden of college graduates, 2004:38
 - distance education courses, 2004:32
 - enrollment patterns, 2004:SA5, 2004:SA6
 - expected family contribution (EFC) for college costs, 2004:SA10–SA11, 2004:SA12, 2004:SA25–SA28
 - faculty salaries and benefits at, 2005:32
 - faculty tenure at, 2003:35
 - financial aid to students, 2004:SA4, 2004:37 (*See also* Financial aid to students)
 - grants to undergraduates, 2004:SA15, 2004:SA17
 - net price for, 2002:44, 2003:43
 - net price for after grants, 2004:SA18, 2004:SA19
 - net price for after grants and loans, 2004:SA22, 2004:SA23, 2004:SA24
 - nontraditional undergraduate students at, 2002:SA27, 2002:SA28–SA29
 - Pell grants to students, 2002:24, 2003:23, 2004:SA16
 - persistence in attaining a degree, 2003:20, 2004:19
- Private postsecondary institutions
—*continued*
- remedial coursework in, 2004:31
 - student loans for, 2004:SA20
 - students with disabilities at, 2003:34
 - time to completion for bachelor's degree, 2003:21
 - tuition/fee increases, 2004:SA2
 - tuition/fees for, 2004:SA8
 - undergraduate enrollment at, 2003:32
- Professional development for teachers, 2002:33
- Proficiency, subject
- mathematics in grade 4 and grade 8, 2004:11
 - reading and mathematics, kindergarten through grade 3, 2005:8
 - reading in grade 4 and grade 8, 2004:9
 - writing, 2004:10
- Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2002:9
- instructional hours, 2005:26
 - mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), 2003:10
- instructional hours, 2005:26
- Projections
- elementary/secondary school enrollment, 2004:4, 2005:1
 - undergraduate enrollment in college, 2004:6, 2005:7
- Property taxes as source of revenue for public schools, 2005:37
- Proprietary schools, 2004:SA5
- Protective services, degrees in, 2003:33
- Psychologists, 2004:28
- Public charter schools, 2002:SA2, 2002:SA22n2, 2002:30
- demographic characteristics of, 2005:28

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- Public elementary/secondary schools, **2001:2**, **2004:4**. *See also* Elementary/secondary education
- alternative schools, **2003:27**
 - average length of stay for teachers at, **2005:SA17**
 - beginning teachers at, **2003:29**
 - class size of kindergarten classes, **2001:37**
 - compared to private schools, **2002:SA2–SA39** (*See also* Private elementary/secondary schools)
 - disabilities, students with enrolled in, **2005:6**
 - English and foreign languages courses taken in high school, **2003:25**
 - enrollment, **2002:2**, **2004:1**, **2005:1**
 - expenditures by category and region, **2005:38**
 - expenditures by district poverty, **2005:36**
 - expenditures per student, **2001:56**, **2003:39**, **2004:35**
 - full-day *vs.* half-day kindergarten, **2003:SA7**, **2003:SA12** (*See also* Kindergarten)
 - funding for, **2002:SA2**
 - guidance counselors in, **2004:27**
 - kindergarten enrollment, **2004:3**
 - mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, **2002:27**, **2004:22**
 - mathematics performance, **2004:11**, **2005:10**
 - “out-of-field” teachers in, **2005:SA5** (*See also* “Out-of-field” teachers)
 - overcrowding in, **2001:45**
 - prekindergarten programs at, **2004:2**
 - principals, **2002:SA16**, **2004:26**
 - professional development of teachers, **2002:33**
 - racial distribution in, **2001:3**, **2002:3**, **2005:4**
 - reading performance, **2004:9**, **2005:9**
 - revenues, changes in sources for, **2005:37**
 - revenues for, **2003:41**
- Public elementary/secondary schools
—*continued*
- school choice, **2002:SA2**, **2002:29**, **2002:30**, **2004:25**
 - student/teacher ratios in, **2001:38**
 - support staff at, **2004:28**
 - teacher qualifications, **2002:32**
 - teachers’ preparedness to use computers and the Internet, **2001:39**
 - time spent in classroom, **2005:26**
 - turnover rate for teachers at, **2005:SA10–SA11**, **2005:SA15–SA16**
 - urbanicity affecting reading and mathematics performances, **2005:14**
 - writing performance, **2004:10**
- Public postsecondary institutions, **2001:27**, **2001:58**. *See also* Postsecondary education
- average expected family contribution for tuition, **2004:SA26–SA27** (*See also* Cost of attending college)
 - average price of attending, **2004:SA10**
 - debt burden of college graduates, **2004:38**
 - distance education courses, **2004:32**
 - enrollment patterns, **2004:SA5**, **2004:SA6**
 - expected family contribution (EFC) for college costs, **2004:SA12**
 - faculty salaries and benefits at, **2005:32**
 - faculty tenure at, **2003:35**
 - financial aid to students, **2004:37**
 - grants to undergraduates, **2004:SA15**, **2004:SA17**
 - net price for, **2002:44**, **2003:43**
 - net price for after grants, **2004:SA18**, **2004:SA19**
 - net price for after grants and loans, **2004:SA22**, **2004:SA23**, **2004:SA24**
 - nontraditional undergraduate students at, **2002:SA27**, **2002:SA28–SA29**
 - Pell grants to students, **2002:24**, **2003:23**, **2004:SA16**
 - persistence in attaining a degree, **2004:19**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Public postsecondary institutions
—*continued*
persistence towards a bachelor's degree at, 2003:20
remedial coursework in, 2004:31
revenues for, 2005:40
student loans for, 2004:SA20
students with disabilities at, 2003:34
time to completion for bachelor's degree, 2003:21
tuition/fee increases, 2004:SA2
tuition/fees for, 2004:SA8
Public revenue, 2005:39. *See also* Revenues for education
Pupil/teacher ratios, 2001:38

Q

Qualifications of teachers, 2001:42. *See also* Teachers/Teaching
Qualifying for college, 2001:xxv, 2001:xli.
See also Preparing for college

R

Race/ethnicity
adult education, 2003:8
advanced placement course availability, 2005:25
annual earnings of young adults, 2005:16
beginning teachers, 2003:29
child care, 2001:38, 2001:53
child care after school, 2004:33
class size of kindergarten classes, 2001:37
community service of young adults, 2001:16
disabilities, students with included in regular classrooms, 2005:27
disabilities, students with in elementary/secondary schools, 2005:6
dropout rates, 2001:23, 2002:19, 2003:17, 2004:16, 2005:19

Race/ethnicity—*continued*
early literacy activities, 2003:37
educational attainment, 2001:31, 2002:25, 2005:23
elementary/secondary enrollment, 2002:3, 2004:5
employer financial aid for adult education, 2003:44
employment status by, 2005:17
English and foreign languages courses taken in high school, 2003:25
enrollment rates in college, 2001:26, 2002:20, 2003:18, 2003:32, 2005:20, 2005:31
exit examinations for high school, 2005:24
faculty at postsecondary institutions, 2002:39
and family environment, 2003:2
full-day *vs.* half-day kindergarten, 2003:SA7
geographic mobility of students, 2005:21
geography performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:13
graduate enrollment, 2002:6, 2003:7
history performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:14
home activities and early childhood development, 2005:35
homeschooling, 2005:3
kindergarten enrollment, 2004:3
language spoken at home, 2005:5
mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, 2002:27, 2004:22
mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, 2001:12, 2003:11, 2003:12, 2004:11, 2005:10
“out-of-field” teachers, 2004:24
parental involvement in schools, 2001:54
parental satisfaction with schools, 2001:55, 2002:40
parents' level of education, 2001:4 (*See also* Parents)

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Race/ethnicity—*continued*

- persistence of traditional-age students towards bachelor's degrees, **2005:22**
- and poverty, **2002:11**
- prekindergarten programs, participation in, **2004:2**
- preprimary education, **2001:1, 2002:1**
- principals in elementary/secondary schools, **2004:26**
- private school enrollment, **2002:SA7–SA9, 2005:2**
- public charter schools, **2002:30, 2005:28**
- public school enrollment, **2005:4**
- reading and mathematics achievement through 3rd grade, **2004:8**
- reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, **2005:14**
- reading habits of adults, **2001:15, 2005:15**
- reading performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:10, 2002:8, 2004:9, 2005:9**
- reading skill gains in kindergarten, **2003:SA4, 2003:SA11**
- school choice, **2001:41, 2002:29, 2004:25**
- and school violence, **2001:44, 2005:30**
- science performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:13, 2002:12**
- status dropout rates for high school, **2004:16**
- student perceptions of school's social and learning environment, **2005:29**
- student victimization, **2002:34**
- voting participation, **2003:15**
- work-related adult education, participation in, **2004:7**
- writing performance through elementary/secondary level, **2004:10**
- young adults not in school or working, **2004:13**

Reading

- Black-White achievement gap, **2002:8**

Reading—*continued*

- early literacy activities, **2003:37, 2005:35**
 - eighth-grade performance, **2004:9, 2005:9**
 - family activities encouraging, **2001:52, 2003:36**
 - fourth-grade performance, **2002:7, 2005:9**
 - international comparisons, **2002:9, 2003:10**
 - in kindergarten through 1st grade, **2001:8, 2001:9, 2003:SA2–SA13, 2003:9** (*See also* Kindergarten)
 - in kindergarten through 3rd grade, **2005:8**
 - leisure, **2001:15, 2001:22, 2005:15**
 - performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:10, 2002:8, 2004:9**
 - private *vs.* public school achievement, **2002:SA18**
 - remedial coursework in postsecondary education, **2001:29, 2004:18**
 - remedial coursework provided for undergraduate students, **2004:31**
 - urbanicity and performance in, **2005:14**
- ### Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (1992), **2004:SA2, 2004:38**
- changes to the federal financial aid system, **2004:SA3**
 - Pell grants, **2004:SA16, 2004:SA29n, 2004:12**
 - Stafford loan program, changes to, **2004:SA19–SA20**
- ### Recognition of letters and words, **2003:SA2, 2003:SA3–SA4, 2003:SA5, 2003:SA6, 2003:SA7, 2003:SA10**
- ### Re-entrants (teachers), **2005:SA6**
- ### Regional distributions
- advanced placement course availability, **2005:25**
 - elementary/secondary school enrollment, **2001:2, 2001:3, 2002:2, 2003:1, 2004:4, 2005:1**
 - expenditures for elementary/secondary education, **2005:38**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

- Regional distributions—*continued*
- full-day *vs.* half-day kindergarten, **2003:SA7**
 - kindergarten enrollment, **2004:3**
 - overcrowding in schools, **2001:45**
 - poverty levels among school-aged children, **2002:4, 2003:3**
 - prekindergarten programs at public schools, **2004:2**
 - private school enrollment, **2005:2**
 - public alternative schools, **2003:27**
 - public charter schools, **2005:28**
 - public school enrollment, **2005:4**
 - race/ethnicity in elementary/secondary schools enrollment, **2002:3**
 - revenue sources for elementary/secondary schools, **2002:43**
 - revenue sources for public elementary/secondary schools, **2005:37**
 - school choice, **2002:29, 2004:25**
 - time spent in classroom, **2005:26**
- Rehabilitation Act (1973), **2003:34**
- Relatives of families. *See* Families
- Religious affiliation
- private elementary/secondary schools, **2002:SA3, 2002:SA4, 2002:SA5** (*See also* Catholic schools; Private elementary/secondary schools)
 - school choice, **2002:29, 2004:25**
- Remedial coursework in postsecondary education, **2001:29, 2004:18, 2004:31**
- Repayment of school debt, **2004:38**. *See also* Student loans
- Repeating kindergarten, **2005:18**
- Research by postsecondary faculty and staff, **2001:51**
- Residency, length of, **2003:15**
- Retention of students, **2003:20, 2005:18**
- Retirement of faculty, **2003:35**
- Retirement of teachers, **2005:SA20, 2005:SA22n30**
- Returning teachers, **2005:SA6–SA7, 2005:SA20**
- defining, **2005:SA21n11**
 - employment status, **2005:SA22n22**
 - teaching out-of-field, **2005:SA9**
- Revenues for education, **2002:42, 2002:43**
- changes in sources for public elementary/secondary schools, **2005:37** (*See also* Public elementary/secondary schools)
 - as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), **2005:39**
 - postsecondary institutions, **2005:40**
 - private elementary/secondary schools, **2002:SA2**
 - for public school districts, **2003:41**
- Risk factors, **2001:52, 2002:22, 2003:SA13n4**. *See also* At-risk students
- home activities and early childhood development, **2005:35**
 - reading and mathematics proficiency of elementary students, **2005:8**
 - reading skill gains in kindergarten, **2003:SA4, 2003:SA5**
- Romania
- civic performance, **2002:15**
 - mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 - mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 - reading literacy in, **2003:10**
 - science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Rural education, elementary/secondary expenditures, **2001:56**. *See also* Urbanicity
- Russia
- civic performance, **2002:15**
 - mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 - mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- Russia—*continued*
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
 reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- S**
- Sabbaticals (teachers), 2005:SA14
- Safety at schools, 2001:44, 2005:30
- Salaries. *See also* Income
 college graduates, 2004:38
 faculty at postsecondary institutions, 2001:49, 2002:39, 2005:32
 first-generation college students, 2001:xxxvii–xxxviii
 gender and, 2001:18
- Saudi Arabia
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- Scale scores, reading and mathematics achievement through 3rd grade, 2004:8
- Scholarships and grants, 2003:42. *See also* Grants and scholarships
 from colleges and universities, 2004:37
 cost of attending college, 2002:44, 2003:43
 Pell Grants, 2002:24, 2003:23
- Scholastic Assessment Tests (SAT). *See also* College entrance examinations
 as preparation for college, 2001:xxii, 2001:xxviii
 and teachers, 2002:31
- School-based child care programs, 2004:33. *See also* Child care
- School choice, 2001:41, 2002:29, 2002:30
 private schools, 2002:SA2
 public schools, 2004:25
- School climate, 2001:44, 2001:45. *See also* Violence at schools
 private elementary/secondary schools, 2002:SA10–SA17
 size of high school, 2003:30
 student perceptions of school's social and learning environment, 2005:29
 student victimization, 2002:34
 teachers in private schools, 2002:SA12, 2002:SA14–SA15
 violence at schools declining, 2005:30
- School districts, 2005:36, 2005:39
- School lunch programs, 2002:7, 2004:5
 beginning teachers teaching at schools with high percentage of, 2003:29
 expenditures for elementary/secondary education measured by students in, 2005:36
 geography test scores, influence on, 2003:13
 history test scores affected by, 2003:14
 mathematics achievement affected by, 2003:11, 2003:12, 2004:11
 mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, 2005:10
 as measure of poverty, 2004:9
 prekindergarten programs, 2004:2
 in private schools, 2002:SA9, 2002:SA10
 reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, 2005:14
 reading performance through elementary/secondary level, 2005:9
 science achievement affected by, 2002:12
 in smaller high schools, 2003:30
 student achievement, 2002:11, 2002:12
 teacher qualifications in schools with, 2002:32
 turnover rates for teachers, 2005:SA10
 writing achievement affected by, 2004:10
- Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), 2002:SA2, 2005:SA2, 2005:SA21n1, 2005:SA21n3

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

- School size, **2004:22**
 overcrowding, **2001:45**
 pupil/teacher ratios, **2001:38**
- School-sponsored activities, **2001:16**
- Science, **2001:xli**, **2001:xlii**
 coursetaking by undergraduate students, **2004:30**
 coursetaking in high school, **2002:SA5**, **2002:26**, **2002:27**, **2004:21**, **2004:22**
 exit examinations for high school, **2005:24**
 instructional activities in 8th grade, **2004:23**
 international comparisons of performance in, **2002:13**, **2005:11**
 “out-of-field” teachers teaching, **2004:24**
 performance through elementary/secondary level, **2001:13**, **2002:12**
 private *vs.* public school achievement, **2002:SA18**, **2002:SA19**, **2002:SA20**
 subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, **2003:28**
 teachers’ preparation for, **2001:43**
- Scotland. *See also* United Kingdom of Great Britain
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 reading literacy in, **2003:10**
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Secondary education. *See* Elementary/secondary education; High school education
- Selective postsecondary institutions, **2004:30**
- Seniors in high school, **2001:19**, **2001:21**, **2003:11**
 enrollment and persistence towards a bachelor’s degree, **2005:22**
 geography performance, **2003:13**
 history performance, **2003:14**
- Serbia
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
- Serbia—*continued*
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Sex. *See* Gender
- Singapore
 mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 reading literacy in, **2003:10**
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Single-parent households, **2004:8**
 home activities and early childhood development, **2005:35**
 reading and mathematics proficiency of elementary students affected by, **2005:8**
- Skills for beginning reading, **2003:SA3–SA6**, **2005:8**
- Skipping school, **2002:17**
- Slovak Republic
 civic performance, **2002:15**
 mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 reading literacy in, **2003:10**
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Slovenia
 civic performance, **2002:15**
 mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 reading literacy in, **2003:10**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- Slovenia—*continued*
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- Social sciences
 coursetaking by undergraduate students, 2004:30
 exit examinations for high school, 2005:24
 subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, 2003:28
- Social studies
 coursetaking in secondary school, 2001:xli, 2001:xlii
 “out-of-field” teachers teaching, 2004:24
- Social workers, 2004:28
- Socioeconomic status (SES), 2003:22. *See also* Poverty levels
 educational expectations of 10th-graders, 2004:15
- South Africa
 mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- Southern region schools. *See* Regional distributions
- Spain
 expenditures for education, 2002:41, 2004:36
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
 reading literacy in, 2002:9
- Spanish as language spoken at home, 2005:5
- Special education, 2001:40
 aides, 2004:28
 disabilities, students with in elementary/secondary schools, 2005:6
- Special instructional programs, 2002:SA6–SA7
- Speech therapists, 2004:28
- Sports, 2001:20
 after-school activities, 2004:33, 2004:34
- Staff, 2004:27, 2004:28. *See also* Faculty; Principals; Teachers/Teaching
- Stafford loan program, 2004:SA3, 2004:SA18–SA20, 2004:SA23, 2004:SA29n, 2004:1
- Standards-based exit examinations, 2005:24
- State governments, 2002:43
 exit examination requirements, 2005:24
 financial aid to students, 2004:SA4
 grants to undergraduates, 2004:SA16–SA18
 retirement requirements for teachers, 2005:SA22n30
 revenues to postsecondary institutions, 2005:40
 revenues to school districts from, 2003:41, 2005:37
 transfer students, policies and procedures towards, 2005:34
- Status dropout rates for high school, 2002:19, 2003:17, 2004:16, 2005:19. *See also* Dropout rates
- Stopouts from postsecondary education, 2001:xxxii, 2001:xxxiv, 2001:27. *See also* Dropout rates
 nontraditional students, 2002:SA32–SA38 (*See also* Nontraditional undergraduate students)
- Student loans, 2001:59, 2003:42, 2004:SA2–SA4, 2004:SA18–SA21, 2004:SA28. *See also* Financial aid to students
 balance with grants, 2004:SA23, 2004:SA25
 cost of college attendance, 2002:44
 within financial aid system, 2004:SA6, 2004:SA7
 net price of college after grants and loans, 2004:SA21–SA25
 repayment, 2004:SA29n, 2004:15

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

- Students whose parents did not go to college, **2001**:xviii–xliii
 after college, **2001**:xxxvii–xxxviii
 characteristics of, **2001**:xix–xx, **2001**:xxxix
 enrollment rates, **2001**:xx, **2001**:xxii
 persistence in postsecondary education, **2001**:xxx–xxxvii (*See also* First-generation college students)
 preparing for college, **2001**:xxii–xxx (*See also* Preparing for college)
- Student/teacher ratios, **2001**:38
 private schools, **2002**:SA5, **2002**:SA6
- Student teaching, **2004**:30
- Student victimization, **2002**:34
 fights between racial/ethnic groups, **2005**:29
 theft at schools, **2005**:30
 violence declining at elementary/secondary schools, **2005**:30 (*See also* Violence)
- Subject expertise for elementary/secondary teachers, **2003**:28. *See also* “Out-of-field” teachers
- Surveys of opinions
 parental satisfaction with school, **2001**:41, **2001**:55
 parents’ on children’s schools, **2002**:40
 teachers’ on satisfaction with school, **2002**:SA14
 twelfth-graders’ interest in school, **2002**:18
- Sweden, **2001**:57
 civic performance, **2002**:15
 expenditures for education, **2002**:41, **2003**:40
 instructional hours, **2005**:26
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005**:13
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005**:11
 reading literacy in, **2002**:9, **2003**:10
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005**:12
- Sweden—*continued*
 transition to postsecondary education, **2004**:17
- Switzerland, **2001**:57
 civic performance, **2002**:15
 expenditures for education, **2002**:41, **2003**:40, **2004**:36
 instructional activities in 8th-grade mathematics, **2003**:26
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005**:13
 reading literacy in, **2002**:9
- T**
- Taxes as source of revenue for public schools, **2005**:37
- Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), **2005**:SA2, **2005**:SA21n2, **2005**:SA21n3
- Teachers/Teaching, **2002**:31, **2002**:32, **2002**:33, **2005**:SA2–SA24. *See also* Faculty, postsecondary education
 academic background, **2002**:31
 beginning, **2003**:29
 demographics of workforce, **2005**:SA3–SA6
 evaluation of, **2002**:SA13
 instructional practices in kindergarten, **2003**:SA8–SA9
 mathematics and science, **2001**:36, **2001**:43
 newly hired, **2005**:SA6–SA11
 “out-of-field,” **2003**:28, **2004**:24
 preparedness in using computers and the Internet, **2001**:39
 in private schools, **2002**:SA11–SA15, **2002**:SA21
 in public charter schools, **2002**:30
 qualifications of, **2001**:42
 ratios to students, **2001**:38, **2002**:SA5, **2002**:SA6
 turnover rates for, **2005**:SA11–SA18 (*See also* Turnover rates for teachers)

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

- Technology in education
 elementary/secondary, **2001:39**
 libraries in postsecondary institutions, **2005:33**
 postsecondary, **2001:48**
- Television
 distance education, **2002:SA32**, **2002:38**
 students' use of time, **2001:22**
- Tenth grade, **2004:15**
- Tenure at postsecondary institutions, **2003:35**
- Tertiary-type A and B programs, **2004:17**
- Testing accommodations, **2004:9**, **2004:11**
 mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, **2005:10**
 reading performance through elementary/secondary level, **2005:9**
- Tests. *See* Achievement tests; College entrance examinations; Exit examinations for high school
- Texas
 state polices and procedures for transfer students, **2005:34**
 turnover rates for teachers affected by poverty, **2005:SA16**
- Thailand
 mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
- Theft at schools, **2005:30**
- Third grade
 reading and mathematics achievement, **2004:8**
 reading and mathematics skills attained in, **2005:8**
- Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), **2001:43**
 activities in 8th-grade mathematics, **2003:26**
 compared to the TIMSS-Repeat, **2002:13**
- Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)—*continued*
 quality of mathematics lessons, **2001:36**
 Videotape Study of 8th-grade science classes, **2004:23**
- Time
 faculty use of, **2001:51**
 spent in classroom, elementary/secondary education, **2005:26**
 student use of, **2001:22**
- Time to completion for bachelor's degree, **2003:21**
- Title I, **2004:28**
- Title IV postsecondary institutions, **2004:31**
 distance education, **2004:32**
- Trade schools, **2004:SA5**, **2004:1**
- Training for teachers, **2002:SA13**
- Transfers, teacher, **2005:SA6**, **2005:SA12**, **2005:SA20**
 characteristics of, **2005:SA15**
 defining, **2005:SA21n11**
 teaching out-of-field, **2005:SA9**
 years of teaching experience, **2005:SA16–SA17**
- Transfer students in postsecondary education, **2001:27**, **2003:19**, **2003:20**
 state polices and procedures for, **2005:34**
 time to completion for bachelor's degrees, **2003:21**
- Transition to postsecondary education, **2001:25**, **2001:26**, **2002:20**, **2002:21**, **2002:22**. *See also* Preparing for college
 enrollment rates in college, **2003:18**, **2005:20**
 international comparisons, **2004:17**
- Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)
 fourth- and eighth-grade mathematics performance, **2005:11**
 fourth- and eighth-grade science performance, **2005:12**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

- Tuition/fees for postsecondary education, **2001:58**. *See also* Cost of attending college efforts to fund postsecondary education, **2002:42**
 increases in, **2004:SA2**, **2005:40**
 need analysis for student financial aid, **2004:SA8–SA10**
 net tuition after grants, **2004:SA18**, **2004:SA19**
 net tuition after grants and loans, **2004:SA21–SA25**, **2004:SA28**
 percentage distribution for undergraduates at 4-year institutions, **2004:SA9**
 perceptions of college costs, **2001:25**
 for types of institutions, **2004:SA8**
- Tunisia
 mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:11**
 science performance for 4th and 8th grade, **2005:12**
- Turkey
 mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**
 reading literacy in, **2003:10**
 transition to postsecondary education, **2004:17**
- Turnover rates for teachers, **2005:SA11–SA18**
 “leavers” versus transfers, **2005:SA13–SA15**
 number of years before leaving school, **2005:SA16–SA18**
 by school control and poverty levels, **2005:SA15–SA16**
 teacher dissatisfaction, **2005:SA18**, **2005:SA19**
- Twelfth grade, **2004:18**
- Two-parent households, **2003:2**. *See also* Parents
- Two-year institutions, **2001:58**. *See also* Postsecondary education
 average price of attending, **2004:38**
 distance education courses, **2001:49**, **2004:32**
 enrollment patterns, **2004:SA5**, **2004:SA6**
 enrollment rates, **2001:5**, **2003:5**, **2003:18**
 expectations for high school seniors, **2001:19**
 expected family contribution (EFC) for college costs, **2004:SA12**, **2004:SA26**
 faculty salaries and benefits at, **2005:32**
 faculty tenure at, **2003:35**
 first-generation students enrolling in, **2001:xx**, **2001:xxx**, **2001:xxxiii**
 grants to undergraduates, **2004:SA15**, **2004:SA17**
 minority enrollment rates, **2005:31**
 net price for, **2002:44**, **2003:43**
 net price for after grants, **2004:SA18**, **2004:SA19**
 net price for after grants and loans, **2004:SA22**, **2004:SA23**, **2004:SA24**
 nontraditional undergraduate students at, **2002:SA27**, **2002:SA28–SA29**, **2002:SA38**
 Pell grants to students, **2002:24**, **2003:23**, **2004:SA16**
 persistence in attaining a degree, **2001:27**, **2004:19**
 remedial coursework at, **2001:29**, **2004:18**, **2004:31**
 state polices and procedures for transfer students, **2005:34**
 stopouts at, **2001:xxxiv**
 student loans for, **2004:SA20**
 students with disabilities at, **2003:34**
 transferring to 4-year institutions, **2003:19**, **2003:21**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The year of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

Two-year institutions—*continued*
 tuition/fee increases, **2004:SA2**
 tuition/fees for, **2004:SA8**
 undergraduate diversity at, **2003:32**
 undergraduate enrollment, **2002:5, 2002:21, 2004:6, 2005:7**

U

Unaffiliated schools, **2005:2**. *See also* Private elementary/secondary schools
 Undergraduate students, **2001:47, 2001:59**. *See also* Postsecondary education
 definition of financial dependence, **2002:SA39**
 with disabilities, **2003:34**
 distance education, **2002:38**
 diversity of, **2003:32**
 financial aid to, **2003:42, 2004:SA2, 2004:SA5** (*See also* Financial aid to students)
 foreign-born students, **2003:6**
 increasing enrollment for, **2004:6, 2005:7**
 nontraditional, **2002:SA25–SA39** (*See also* Nontraditional undergraduate students)
 rate of enrollment, **2002:5, 2002:21, 2003:5** (*See also* Enrollment, postsecondary education)
 transitioning to college, **2005:20**
 Unemployment, **2004:13, 2005:17**
 United Kingdom of Great Britain, **2001:32, 2001:57**
 civic performance, **2002:15**
 mathematics and science performance, **2002:13**
 reading literacy in, **2002:9, 2003:10**
 Universities. *See* Four-year institutions; Postsecondary education
 Urbanicity
 advanced placement course availability, **2005:25**
 crime in schools, **2005:30**

Urbanicity—*continued*
 expenditures for elementary/secondary education, **2001:56, 2003:39, 2004:35**
 fourth-grade reading performance, **2002:7**
 guidance counselors in public elementary/secondary schools, **2004:27**
 poverty levels among school-aged children, **2002:4, 2003:3, 2004:5**
 private elementary/secondary schools, **2002:SA3–SA4**
 public alternative schools, **2003:27**
 reading and mathematics performances in elementary/secondary schools, **2005:14**
 size of high schools, **2003:30**
 time spent in classroom, **2005:26**
 Uruguay
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, **2005:13**

V

Violence at schools, **2001:44, 2003:31**
 declining, **2005:30**
 fights between racial/ethnic groups, **2005:29**
 Visas, student, **2003:6**
 Visual arts, degrees in, **2003:33**
 Vocabulary gains, early childhood, **2003:SA2, 2003:SA3–SA4**
 Vocational education, **2001:35**
 comparison between private and public schools, **2002:SA6, 2002:SA7**
 health affected by, **2004:12**
 not included as adult education, **2003:8**
 at public alternative schools, **2003:27**
 student aspirations, **2001:19**
 work-related adult education, participation in, **2004:7**
 Volunteerism, **2001:16, 2001:54**
 international comparisons, **2003:16**
 Voting participation, **2003:15**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:

References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:

Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)

Index

Continued

W

Weapons in schools, **2001:44**, **2003:31**Web sites, **2001:48**Western region schools. *See* Regional distributionsWomen, earning degrees, **2001:30**, **2004:20**.
See also GenderWord recognition, **2003:SA3–SA4**, **2003:SA6**,
2003:SA7Work-based learning programs, **2002:SA6**,
2002:SA7, **2004:7**Work experience of teachers, **2005:SA3**,
2005:SA8. *See also* Teachers/TeachingWorking while attending school (postsecondary education), **2002:37**, **2004:29**. *See also* Employment statusaffecting persistence in educational attainment, **2002:SA36**, **2002:SA38**changes in last decade, **2003:32**distance education, **2002:38**nontraditional undergraduate students, **2002:SA25**, **2002:SA26**, **2002:SA29–SA31**
(*See also* Nontraditional undergraduate students)Working while attending school (secondary education), **2001:21**. *See also* Employment statusWork-related education, **2003:44**, **2004:7**. *See also* Work-based learning programsWork-study programs, **2004:SA3**Writing, **2004:10**remedial coursework provided for undergraduate students, **2004:31**

Y

Young adults

annual earnings of, **2004:14**not in school or working, **2004:13**

Reference Numbers

This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of *The Condition of Education*.

The **year** of publication appears in bold type.

Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

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