

Glossary





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A

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.

Alternative schools: Alternative schools serve students whose needs cannot be met in a regular, special education, or vocational school. They provide nontraditional education and may serve as an adjunct to a regular school. Although these schools fall outside the categories of regular, special education, and vocational education, they may provide similar services or curriculum. Some examples of alternative schools are schools for potential dropouts; residential treatment centers for substance abuse (if they provide elementary or secondary education); schools for chronic truants; and schools for students with behavioral problems. About 6 percent of schools in the Common Core of Data files are alternative schools.

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

College entrance examination score: Graduates' SAT combined score, derived as either the sum of SAT verbal and math scores or an ACT composite score converted to an estimated SAT combined score.

Combined school: 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.

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

Current expenditures: Expenditures for operating local public schools, excluding capital outlay and interest on debt. These expenditures include such items as salaries for school personnel, fixed charges, student transportation, books and materials, and energy costs. Expenditures for state administration are excluded.

D

Dependent student: (See Financial dependency.)

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

Doctoral degree: An earned degree carrying the title of Doctor. The Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D.) is the highest academic degree and requires mastery within a field of knowledge and demonstrated ability to perform scholarly research. Other doctor's degrees are awarded for fulfilling specialized requirements in professional fields, such as education (Ed.D.), musical arts (D.M.A.), business administration (D.B.A.), and engineering (D. Eng. or D.E.S.). Many doctor's degrees in both academic and professional fields require an earned master's degree as a prerequisite. First-professional degrees, such as M.D. and D.D.S., are not included under this heading. (See First-professional degree.)

Doctoral institutions: Includes 4-year postsecondary institutions that award at least a doctoral or first-professional degree in one or more programs.

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

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.

Enrollment: The total number of students registered in a given school unit at a given time, generally in the fall of a year.

Expenditures: Charges incurred, whether paid or unpaid, that are presumed to benefit the current fiscal year. For elementary/secondary schools, these include all charges for current outlays plus capital outlays and interest on school debt. For postsecondary institutions, these include current outlays plus capital outlays. For government, these include charges net of recoveries and other correcting transactions, other than retirement of debt, investment in securities, extension of credit, or as agency transactions. Also, government expenditures include only external transactions, such as the provision of prerequisites or other payments in kind. Aggregates for groups of governments exclude intergovernmental transactions among the governments.

Expenditures per pupil: Charges incurred for a particular period of time divided by a student unit of measure, such as enrollment, average

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daily attendance, or average daily membership.

F

Financial dependency: For purposes of determining eligibility for federal student aid, students are normally considered financially dependent on their parents or guardians (regardless of the amount of support actually provided) unless they meet one of the criteria for independence. A student is considered to be independent if he or she is age 24 or older, a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces, enrolled in a graduate or professional program beyond a bachelor's degree, married, an orphan or ward of the court, or has legal dependents other than a spouse. Students under 24 who do not meet any of these conditions but are receiving no parental support may be classified as independent by campus financial aid officers using their professional judgment. Most undergraduates under 24 are considered dependent.

First-professional degree: An award that requires completion of a degree program that meets all of the following criteria: (1) completion of the academic requirements to begin practice in the profession; (2) at least 2 years of college work before entering the degree program; and (3) a total of at least 6 academic years of college work to complete the degree program, including previously required college work plus the work required in the professional program itself. First-professional degrees may be awarded in the following 10 fields: chiropractic (D.C. or D.C.M.), osteopathic medicine (D.O.), dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.), pharmacy (Pharm.D.), law (L.L.B. or J.D.), podiatry (D.P.M., D.P., or Pod.D.), medicine (M.D.), theology (M.Div., M.H.L., B.D., or Ordination), optometry (O.D.), and veterinary medicine (D.V.M.).

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

Full-time enrollment: The number of students enrolled in postsecondary education courses with a total credit load equal to at least 75 percent of the normal full-time course load.

Full-time-equivalent (FTE) enrollment: For institutions of higher education, enrollment of full-time students, plus the full-time equivalent of part-time students as reported by institutions. In the absence of an equivalent reported by an institution, the FTE enrollment is estimated by adding one-third of part-time enrollment to full-time enrollment.

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.

Grade point average (GPA): Student's cumulative undergraduate grade point average (GPA) standardized to a 4.00-point scale.

Graduate: An individual who has received formal recognition for the successful completion of a prescribed program of studies.

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Grants: This term can have one of two possible meanings. In this publication, grants most commonly refer to funds awarded to an individual by a college, an agency, or another institution to attend postsecondary education. Grants, also known as scholarships, do not have to be repaid. Grants may also refer to funds provided by the federal or state government or some other institution to other agencies to support the delivery of services, undertake research or another innovative activity, or to provide other beneficial services.

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

Head Start programs: Head Start is a federally sponsored preschool program primarily for children from low-income families.

High school: A secondary school offering the final years of high school study necessary for graduation, usually including grades 10, 11, 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 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.

Independent student: (See Financial dependency.)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): IDEA is a federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth–2) and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth (ages 3–21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B.

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

Instructional expenditures (elementary/secondary): Current expenditures for activities directly associated with the interaction between teachers and students. These include teacher salaries and benefits, supplies (such as textbooks), and purchased instructional services.

L

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.

Loan: Borrowed money that must be repaid.

Longitudinal dropout rate: The longitudinal dropout rate is the percentage of students in a nationally representative cohort of students

selected at some grade level in school at a certain point in the school year who have left school and not graduated with a diploma or certificate of graduation as of a certain later time. One example of a longitudinal dropout rate is the percentage of high school freshmen enrolled in spring 2002 who dropped out 2 years later as of spring 2004. (See Dropout and Status dropout rate.)

M

Master’s degree: A degree awarded for successful completion of a program generally requiring 1 or 2 years of full-time college-level study beyond the bachelor’s degree. One type of master’s degree, including the Master of Arts degree, or M.A., and the Master of Science degree, or M.S., is awarded in the liberal arts and sciences for advanced scholarship in a subject field or discipline and demonstrated ability to perform scholarly research. A second type of master’s degree is awarded for the completion of a professionally oriented program—for example, an M.Ed. in education, an M.B.A. in business administration, an M.F.A. in fine arts, an M.M. in music, an M.S.W. in social work, and an M.P.A. in public administration. A third type of master’s degree is awarded in professional fields for study beyond the first-professional degree—for example, the Master of Laws (LL.M.) and Master of Science (M.S.) in various medical specializations.

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.

Minority: Any individual or racial/ethnic group that is not categorized as White, not Hispanic or Latino.

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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.

Nonresident alien: A person who is not a citizen of the United States and who is in this country on a temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely.

Nursery school: A separately organized and administered elementary school for groups of children during the year or years preceding kindergarten, which provides educational experiences under the direction of professionally qualified teachers.

O

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, the 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.

Part-time enrollment: The number of students enrolled in postsecondary education courses with a total credit load less than 75 percent of the normal full-time credit load.

Postsecondary education: The provision of formal instructional programs with a curriculum designed primarily for students who have completed the requirements for a high school diploma or equivalent. This includes programs with an academic, vocational, and continuing professional education purpose and excludes vocational and adult basic education programs. (See also *supplemental note 9*.)

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

Preschool: A beginning group or class enrolling children younger than 5 years of age and organized to provide educational experiences under professionally qualified teachers in cooperation with parents during the year or years immediately preceding kindergarten (or prior to entry into elementary school when there is no kindergarten).

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.

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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 institution: A postsecondary education institution supported primarily by public funds and operated by publicly elected or appointed officials who control the program and activities (See also *supplemental note 9*.)

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 education 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.

Purchasing power parities: Purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion factors take into account differences in the relative prices of goods and services—particularly nontradables—and therefore provide a better overall measure of the real value of output produced by an economy compared with other economies. PPP gross national income (GNI) is measured in current international dollars, which, in principal, have the same purchasing power as a dollar spent on GNI in the U.S. economy. Because PPPs provide a better measure of the standard of living of residents of an economy, they are the basis for the World Bank's calculations of poverty rates at \$1 and \$2 a day. The GNI of developing countries measured in PPP terms generally exceeds their GNI measured using the Atlas method or using market exchange rates.

Purchasing power parity (PPP) indices: Purchasing power parity (PPP) exchange rates, or indices, are the currency exchange rates that equalize the purchasing power of different currencies, meaning that when a given sum of money is converted into different currencies at the PPP exchange rates, it will buy the same basket of goods and services in all countries. PPP indices are the rates of currency conversion that eliminate the difference in price levels among countries. Thus, when expenditures on gross domestic product (GDP) for different countries are converted into a common currency by means of PPP indices, they are expressed at the same set of international prices, so that comparisons among countries reflect only differences in the volume of goods and services purchased.

R

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)

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and have one or more teachers. Organizations or institutions that provide support for home-schooling 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 a 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).

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

Salary: The total amount regularly paid or stipulated to be paid to an individual, before deductions, for personal services rendered while on the payroll of a business or organization.

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.

Socioeconomic status (SES): A measure of an individual or family's relative economic and social ranking. In the analyses in this publication, SES is constructed based on father's education level, mother's education level, father's occupation, mother's occupation, and family income. Also, students are classified into high, middle, and low SES based on a standardized composite index score of their parents' education level, mother's and father's occupation, family's income, and certain household items. The terms "high SES," "middle SES," and "low SES," respectively, refer to the upper, middle two, and lower quartiles of the composite index score distribution. By definition, one-quarter of each cohort of students will be in the bottom SES quartile, even if education levels, average family incomes, and the number of persons in more prestigious occupations change.

Special education schools: Special education schools provide educational services to students with special physical or mental needs, i.e., students with mental disabilities (such as mental retardation or autism), physical disabilities (such as hearing impairments), or learning disabilities (such as dyslexia). About 2 percent of schools in the Common Core of Data files are vocational schools.

Stafford Loan program: The Stafford Loan program is the largest of federal student loans. For students with financial need, the federal government subsidizes the interest while the student is enrolled. Unsubsidized loans are available to students without regard to financial need.

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.

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The denominator is the total number of 16- to 24-year-olds in October of that same year.

T

Title I grant program: The federal government provides grants to local education agencies (LEAs) to supplement state and local education funding based primarily on the number of children from low-income families in each LEA. The program provides extra academic support and learning opportunities to help disadvantaged students catch up with their classmates or make significant academic progress.

Total expenditures per pupil in average daily attendance: Includes all expenditures allocable to per pupil costs divided by average daily attendance. These allocable expenditures include current expenditures for regular school programs, interest on school debt, and capital outlay. Beginning in 1980–81, expenditures for state administration are excluded and expenditures for other programs (summer schools, community colleges, and private schools) are included.

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.

U

Undergraduate students: Students registered at a postsecondary institution in a program leading to a baccalaureate degree or other formal award below the baccalaureate such as an associate's degree.

University: A postsecondary institution that consists of a liberal arts college, a diverse graduate program, and usually two or more professional schools or faculties and that is

empowered to confer degrees in various fields of study.

Unsubsidized loans: (See Stafford Loan program.)

V

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

Vocational education schools: Vocational schools primarily serve students who are being trained for semi-skilled or technical occupations. They may be part of a regular district (along with academic schools) or in a vocational district (serving more than one academic school district). About 1 percent of schools in the Common Core of Data files are vocational schools.

W

World Bank Atlas method: In calculating gross national income (GNI—formerly referred to as gross national product) and GNI per capita in U.S. dollars for certain operational purposes, the World Bank uses the Atlas conversion factor. The purpose of the Atlas conversion factor is to reduce the impact of exchange rate fluctuations in the cross-country comparison of national incomes.

The Atlas conversion factor for any year is the average of a country's exchange rate (or alternative conversion factor) for that year and its exchange rates for the two preceding years, adjusted for the difference between the rate of inflation in the country, and through 2000, the rate of inflation in the G-5 countries (France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States). For 2001 onwards, these countries include the Euro Zone, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. A country's inflation rate is measured by the change in its gross domestic product (GDP) deflator.

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The inflation rate for G-5 countries (through 2000, and the Euro Zone, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States for 2001 onwards), representing international inflation, is measured by the change in the SDR deflator. (Special drawing rights, or SDRs, are the IMF's unit of account.) The SDR deflator is calculated as a weighted average of the G-5 countries' (through 2000, and the Euro Zone, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States for 2001 onwards) GDP deflators in SDR terms,

the weights being the amount of each country's currency in one SDR unit. Weights vary over time because both the composition of the SDR and the relative exchange rates for each currency change. The SDR deflator is calculated in SDR terms first and then converted to U.S. dollars using the SDR to dollar Atlas conversion factor. The Atlas conversion factor is then applied to a country's GNI. The resulting GNI in U.S. dollars is divided by the midyear population to derive GNI per capita.

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