

Back to School

The sight of crossing guards and bright yellow buses mean the “dog days of summer” and the traditional summer break have come to a close — our nation’s schools have reopened! This edition of *Facts for Features* highlights the many interesting statistics evolving from students and teachers returning to the classrooms.



Students

74.9 million

The number of people enrolled in school throughout the country — from nursery school to college. That amounts to more than one-fourth of the U.S. population age 3 and older.

Pre-K through 12 Enrollment

About 60%

Percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in nursery school, up from about 6 percent in 1964, when these data were first collected.



65%

Percentage of children enrolled in kindergarten who attend all day, up from 20 percent three decades earlier.

54.6 million

The projected number of students to be enrolled in the nation’s elementary and high schools (grades K-12) this fall [PDF]. That number exceeds the 1970 total of 51.3 million, when virtually all of these students were “baby boomers,” who swelled school enrollments.

Back-to-School Shopping

\$6.0 billion

The amount of money spent at family clothing stores in August 2004. Only in October, November and December — the holiday shopping season — were sales higher. Similarly, bookstore sales in August 2004 totaled \$2.0 billion, an amount equaled in 2004 only by sales in December and January. (The dollar volume estimates have not been adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday or trading day differences or price changes.)

If you’re not sure where to do your back-to-school shopping, choices of retail establishments abound: In 2003, there were 24,065 family clothing stores; 6,457 children and infants clothing stores; 27,352 shoe stores; 8,840 office supplies and stationery stores; 22,410 sporting goods stores; 11,036 bookstores and 9,366 department stores.

Languages

9.9 million

Number of school-age children (5 to 17) who speak a language other than English at home.

These children make up nearly 1-in-5 in this age group. Most of them (7.0 million) speak Spanish at home.

381,000

The national decrease in elementary school-age children between 2003 and 2004. Only six states experienced an increase in this population during that period: Arizona, Nevada, Florida, North Carolina, Colorado and Georgia.

329,000

The increase in the nation's high school-age population between 2003 and 2004. More than two-thirds of the states experienced an increase in this group over that period, led by California (78,000), Florida (33,000) and New York (24,000).

12%

Projected percentage of elementary and high school students enrolled in private schools this fall [PDF].

40%

Percentage of elementary and high school students who are minorities (i.e., people who are other than non-Hispanic white). This compares with 21 percent in 1970, when the crest of the baby boom was enrolled at this level of school.

22%

Percentage of elementary and high school students with at least one foreign-born parent. This includes 6 percent who were foreign-born themselves.



Technology in the Schools

14.1 million

Number of computers available for classroom use in the nation's 114,000 elementary and secondary schools [PDF]; that works out to one computer for every four students.

College

64%

Percentage of the 2003 high school graduating class that went directly to college.

16.7 million

The projected number of students enrolled in the nation's colleges and universities this fall [PDF]. This is up from 12.1 million a quarter-century ago.

37%

Percentage of all college students age 25 and over. The majority of these older students (56 percent) attend school part-time.

1-in-3

Ratio of undergraduates attending two-year institutions.



Lunchtime

29.0 million

Average number of children participating each month in the national school lunch program. (From the upcoming *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2006*.)

10.1 billion

The nation's total apple production, in pounds, in 2004. The chances are good that the apples your children present to their teachers or enjoy for lunch were grown in Washington state, which accounted for more than half of the nation's total production.

The Rising Cost of College

\$10,660

Average tuition, room and board (for in-state students) at the nation's four-year public colleges and universities for an entire academic year [PDF]; that is double the corresponding figure in 1990.

\$31,051

Average tuition, room and board at the nation's four-year private colleges and universities for one complete academic year [PDF]; that is more than double the corresponding 1990 figure.



Graduation

3.1 million

Projected number of high school diplomas that will be awarded this school year [PDF].

2.7 million

Number of college degrees expected to be conferred this school year [PDF].

The Rewards of Staying in School

\$74,602

Average annual earnings of workers age 18 and over with an advanced degree. This compares with \$51,206 a year for those with bachelor's degrees, \$27,915 for those with a high school diploma only and \$18,734 for those without a high school diploma.

\$55,987

Average starting salary offered to bachelor's degree candidates in petroleum engineering [PDF], among the highest of any field of study. At the other end of the spectrum were those majoring in the social sciences; they were offered an average of \$29,098.

Government Spending on Education

\$8,019

The per-pupil expenditure on elementary and secondary education nationally in 2003.

The District of Columbia (\$13,328) spent the most among states or state-equivalents, followed by New Jersey (\$12,202), New York (\$12,140), Connecticut (\$10,372) and Vermont (\$10,322).

Teachers and Other School Personnel

6.5 million

Number of teachers in the United States [PDF]. The bulk of them (2.6 million) teach at the elementary and middle school level.

\$56,300

Average annual salary of public elementary and secondary school teachers in California as of the 2002-2003 school year [PDF] — highest of any state in the nation. Teachers in South Dakota received the lowest pay — \$32,400. The national average was \$45,900.



\$13.85

Average hourly wage for the nation's school bus drivers [PDF]. Custodians earned \$12.40 while cafeteria workers made \$9.98. (The federal minimum wage is \$5.15.)

Following is a list of observances typically covered by the Census Bureau **Facts for Features** series:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Jan. 17) & African-American History Month (February)
- Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)
- Women's History Month (March)
- St. Patrick's Day (March 17)
- Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (May)
- Older Americans Month (May)
- Mother's Day (May 8)
- Father's Day (June 19)
- The Fourth of July (July 4)
- Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (July 26)
- Back to School (August)
- Labor Day (Sept. 5)
- Grandparents Day (Sept. 11)
- Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)
- Halloween (Oct. 31)
- American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month (November)
- Veterans Day (Nov. 11)
- Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 24)
- The Holiday Season (December)

Individual source links for each statement herein may be accessed on the Internet at http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/005225.html.

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Editor's note: Some of the preceding data were collected in surveys and, therefore, are subject to sampling error. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office at (301) 763-3030; fax (301) 457-3670; or e-mail pio@census.gov.