

School Enrollment in the United States — Social and Economic Characteristics of Students

October
1999

Population Characteristics

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Going to school opens doors and facilitates the pathway for future individual achievement and economic success. Today, with more than one-fourth of the U.S. population enrolled in school, the student population is quite diverse. This report highlights school enrollment trends and the social and economic characteristics of the student population. The findings are based on data collected in the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the Census Bureau in October 1999.

Over one-fourth of the U.S. population is enrolled in school.

More than one-fourth of the population, 72 million people, were in school throughout the United States in October 1999. Figure 1 shows that 8 million were enrolled in nursery school and kindergarten, 33 million in elementary school, 16 million in high school, and 15 million in college.¹

The number of students at each grade level is determined primarily by population trends. In fact, at the kindergarten, elementary, and high school levels, enrollment numbers tend to mirror closely the population count in those ages (with

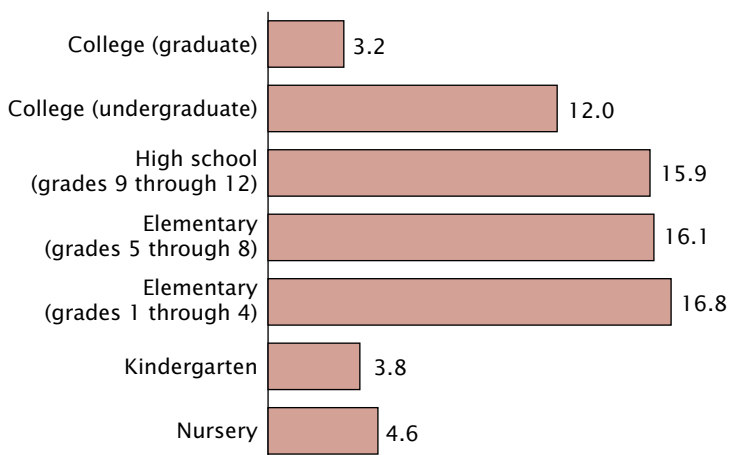
¹The estimates for high school and college enrollment were not significantly different from each other.

close to 100 percent enrollment of the population aged 5 through 16) because of compulsory attendance requirements. In contrast, nursery school and college enrollment levels are influenced more by social and economic factors than just the age structure.

Defining school enrollment: Regular school includes nursery school, kindergarten, and that which may advance a person toward an elementary or high school diploma, or a college, university, or professional school degree. Technical or vocational schooling is not included.

Figure 1.
**School Enrollment by Grade Levels:
October 1999**

(In millions)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1999.

Current Population Reports

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Nursery school enrollment equals record level set in 1995.

Total nursery school enrollment has increased dramatically over the past few decades, from about one-half million in 1964 (when the data were first collected) to 5 million currently — not statistically different from the record level set in 1995 (Figure 2).

At the same time, the eligible population (children aged 3 and 4)² fluctuated around 8 million. In fact, over this period, the enrollment rate in nursery school rose from about 5 percent to about 50 percent, reflecting a shift in the societal norm of young children in school.

Most of the children enrolled in nursery school were White non-Hispanic (66 percent), as shown in Table A. Proportionally, White non-Hispanic children (55 percent) were more likely to be enrolled than Black (50 percent) or Hispanic (32 percent) children.³ Of the children enrolled in nursery school, Blacks (77 percent) and Hispanics (76 percent) were more likely than White non-Hispanics (36 percent) to be enrolled in public rather than private programs.⁴

Since nursery school is not part of the regular public school system in most areas and is predominantly private, the cost of attending may prevent some families from enrolling their children. Thus, nursery school attendance is closely linked to family income, even though Head Start and other locally funded nursery school programs are available to some children in low-income families. In

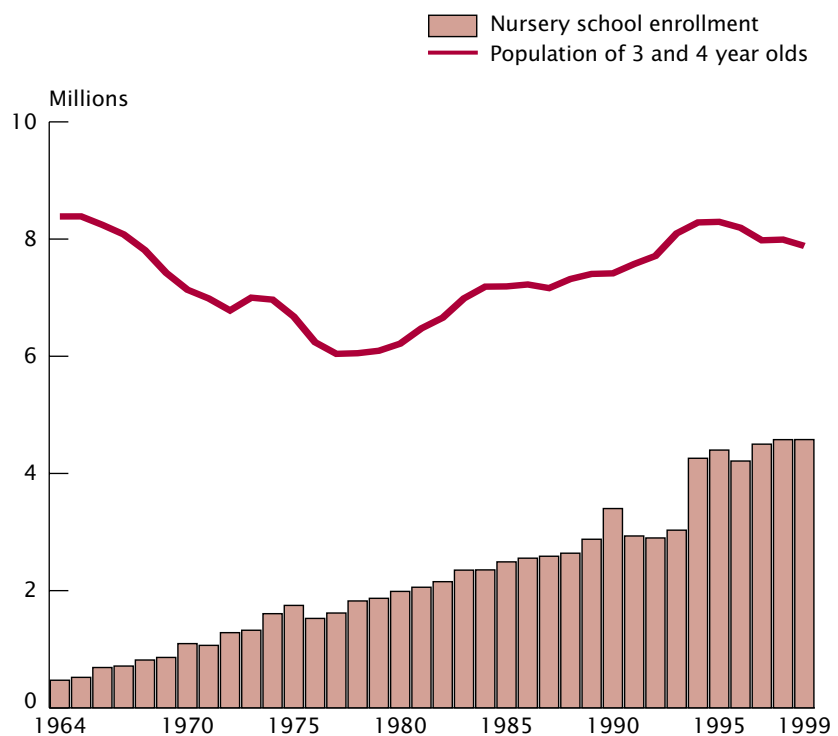
²With the exception of the estimate for the total nursery school enrollment, discussion in this report about nursery school refers to children 3 to 4 years old.

³Hispanics may be of any race. Based on the October 1999 Current Population Survey, 3 percent of the Black and 2 percent of the Asian and Pacific Islander population are also of Hispanic origin. Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population are not shown in this report because of the small sample size in the Current Population Survey.

⁴The percentages of Hispanics and Blacks in public nursery school were not significantly different from each other.

Figure 2.

Nursery School Enrollment and the Number of 3 and 4 Year Olds: 1964 to 1999



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys.

1999, 58 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds from families with incomes of \$40,000 or more attended nursery school, compared with 41 percent of those from families with incomes less than \$20,000. More than three-fourths (81 percent) of these lower-income nursery school students attended public schools, compared with about one-third (29 percent) of the high-income students.

Nursery school enrollment is also related to the education and labor force participation of a child's mother. Children of mothers who are college graduates were substantially more likely to attend nursery school than children whose mothers did not finish high school (66 percent compared with 34 percent). Children of mothers in the labor force were more likely to

attend nursery school than those whose mothers were not in the labor force (53 percent compared with 44 percent).

In addition to its educational benefit, nursery school may provide child care for some families. Although half of nursery school students attended part day, among nursery school students whose mothers worked full-time, 63 percent attended full-time. For the nursery school students whose mothers were not in the labor force, 38 percent attended full-time.

Kindergarten enrollment remains high.

In October 1999, about 4 million children were enrolled in kindergarten. Over the past decade, the kindergarten enrollment figures

Table A.
**Summary Measures of School Enrollment for Nursery, Kindergarten,
 Elementary, and High School: October 1999**

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristics	Race and Hispanic origin							
	Total	Male	Female	White		Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic (of any race)
				Total	Non-Hispanic			
All Students	57,191	29,300	27,892	44,578	36,474	9,285	2,580	8,629
Nursery	4,578	2,311	2,267	3,590	3,044	729	205	585
Full day	2,293	1,169	1,124	1,621	1,713	525	109	271
Part day	2,285	1,142	1,144	1,968	1,332	204	96	314
Kindergarten	3,824	1,958	1,867	2,956	2,307	632	195	666
Elementary	32,873	16,867	16,006	25,616	20,779	5,388	1,461	5,088
High School	15,916	8,164	7,752	12,416	10,344	2,536	719	2,290
Students in Public School	49,339	25,258	24,079	37,919	30,259	8,556	2,253	8,081
Nursery	2,269	1,128	1,141	1,571	1,146	569	96	458
Full day	1,072	567	504	745	624	380	56	217
Part day	1,198	561	637	826	522	189	40	241
Kindergarten	3,167	1,609	1,557	2,422	1,839	558	148	594
Elementary	29,264	14,979	14,284	22,552	17,960	5,002	1,343	4,829
High School	14,638	7,542	7,097	11,374	9,314	2,427	666	2,200
Population, 15 to 17 Years Old								
Percent below modal grade	30.8	36.2	25.1	30.0	28.9	34.8	25.6	36.5
Students, 10th to 12th Grade								
Annual dropout rate	4.7	4.3	5.1	4.4	3.8	6.0	4.8	7.1
Population, 18 to 24 Years Old	26,042	12,906	13,136	20,865	17,080	3,827	1,130	3,954
Dropouts	3,413	1,818	1,594	2,680	1,404	613	58	1,340
High school graduates	21,127	10,201	10,926	16,755	14,812	2,907	1,019	2,325
Enrolled in college	9,259	4,396	4,863	7,151	6,735	1,142	626	740

Note: The number of students in the three race groups shown here do not sum to the total because data for American Indians and Alaska Natives are not shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1999.

fluctuated in a narrow range around this level. Among children enrolled in kindergarten, the majority were White non-Hispanics (60 percent), followed by Blacks (16 percent), and Hispanics (17 percent).⁵ Asians and Pacific Islanders accounted for 5 percent of children enrolled in kindergarten.

Given the availability of public kindergarten in most states, the vast majority of 5-year-olds were enrolled in school (94 percent). Most 5-year-olds were enrolled in kindergarten (74 percent), 15 percent were in nursery school, and 6 percent were in first grade.

⁵The percentages of Hispanics and Blacks enrolled in kindergarten were not significantly different from each other.

During the past three decades, the percent of children attending kindergarten all day increased dramatically, from one in ten (11 percent) in 1969 to more than one in two (58 percent) today (Figure 3). Moreover, most of these children (59 percent) entered kindergarten with previous school experience — that is, they were enrolled in nursery school the preceding year. Thus, for many students, kindergarten is not the major transition from home to school that it was in the past.

The number of elementary and high school students returns to the baby-boom peak.

The number of students enrolled in elementary and high school

(49 million) in 1999 reached the all time high (49 million) set in 1970 when the baby-boom children were in school⁶ (Figure 4). During the 1970s and early 1980s, elementary and high school enrollments fell, following a general decrease in the size of the 6- to 17-year-old population. In the past few years, however, enrollments have risen along with the population of 6- to 17-year-olds.⁷ This increased enrollment is expected to continue for the near future, as the number of

⁶The comparison of elementary and high school enrollment between 1970 and 1999 is limited to students 3- to 34-years-old because that was the population asked about school enrollment in 1970.

⁷For 1995 and 1996, the numbers of people enrolled were not significantly different.

children ages 6 to 17 is projected to increase moderately.⁸

Elementary and high school students today are more racially and ethnically diverse than the baby-boom generation of students. In 1972, when the crest of the baby-boom was enrolled in elementary and high school, 79 percent of the student population was White non-Hispanic, 14 percent Black, and the remaining 1 percent Asian and Pacific Islander and other races. Only 6 percent were Hispanic. In 1999, 64 percent of elementary and high school students were White non-Hispanic, 16 percent Black, 5 percent Asian and Pacific Islander and other races, and 15 percent Hispanic. Moreover, the Census Bureau's population projections indicate that the school-age population (ages 6 to 17 years) will become even more diverse in future years.

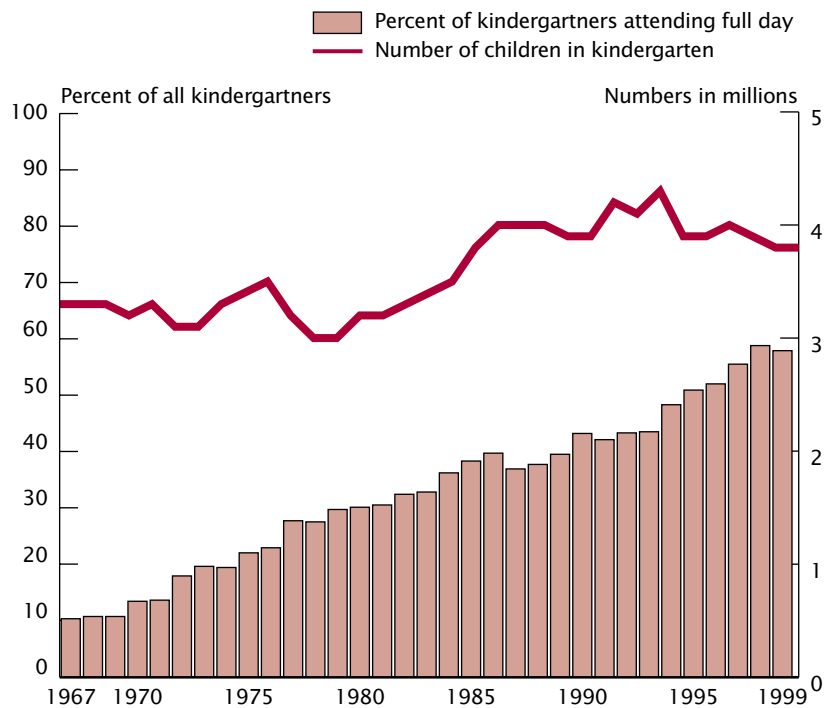
Recent births and immigration increase elementary and high school enrollment.

Much of the growth in the number of children enrolled in school today is driven by the number of babies born during the prior 5- to 18- year period (1981 - 1994). During this time, the number of births increased from 3.6 million to 4.0 million annually. This increase was driven in part by the demographic momentum of the population, that is, a large number of women who were born during the baby-boom and who are now in their prime childbearing ages having births. In fact, 65 percent of elementary and high school students have a baby-boomer parent.⁹ In addition, the

⁸U.S. Census Bureau; "Projections of the Total Resident Population by 5-Year Age Groups, and Sex With Special Age Categories: Middle Series, 1999 to 2100," released 13 January 2000, <www.census.gov/population/projections/natsum.html>

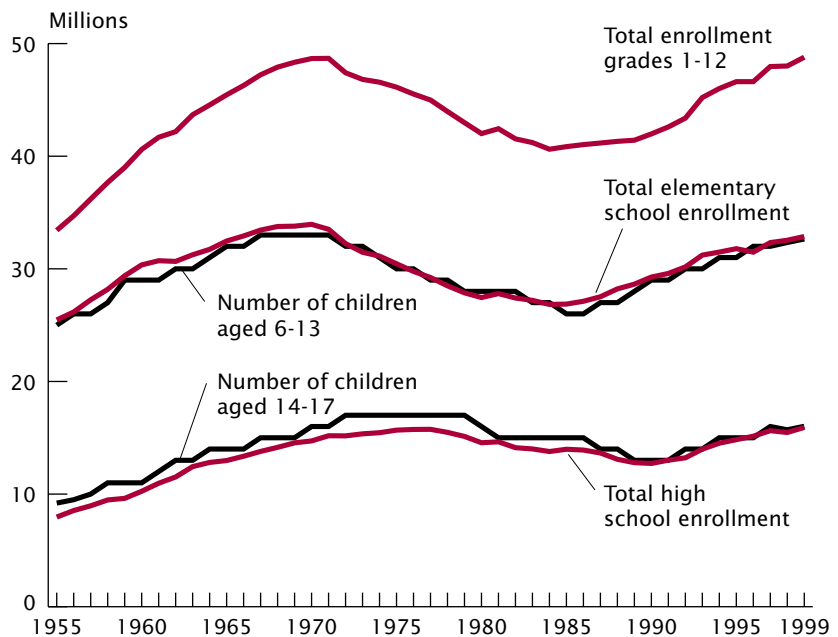
⁹The term "baby-boomer parent" refers to native parents and does not include foreign-born parents.

Figure 3.
Kindergartners: 1967 to 1999



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys.

Figure 4.
Elementary and High School Enrollment and School-Age Population: 1955 to 1999



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys.

Table B.
Students Who Are Foreign Born or Have Foreign-Born Parents: October 1999

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristics	All students	Students with at least one foreign-born parent					
		Total		Foreign-born student		Native student	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Elementary and High School							
Total	48,789	9,731	19.9	2,494	5.1	7,237	14.8
White	38,115	6,867	18.0	1,666	4.4	5,201	13.6
White non-Hispanic	31,123	2,290	7.4	467	1.5	1,823	5.9
Black	7,924	839	10.6	240	3.0	599	7.6
Asian and Pacific Islander	2,181	1,914	87.8	553	25.3	1,361	62.5
Hispanic (of any race)	7,378	4,820	65.3	1,288	17.5	3,532	47.9
College, 1 to 4 Years							
Total	12,046	2,496	20.7	1,280	10.6	1,216	10.1
White	9,481	1,525	16.1	648	6.8	877	9.3
White non-Hispanic	8,410	832	9.9	297	3.5	535	6.4
Black	1,726	268	15.5	167	9.7	101	5.9
Asian and Pacific Islander	743	676	91.0	450	60.6	226	30.4
Hispanic (of any race)	1,136	725	63.8	378	33.3	347	30.5
Graduate School							
Total	3,157	794	25.1	498	15.8	296	9.4
White	2,571	455	17.7	225	8.8	230	8.9
White non-Hispanic	2,408	348	14.5	158	6.6	190	7.9
Black	271	54	20.0	42	15.8	12	4.2
Asian and Pacific Islander	298	283	94.8	228	76.4	55	18.5
Hispanic (of any race)	170	110	64.7	68	39.7	42	25.0

Note: The number of students in the three race groups shown here do not sum to the total because data for American Indians and Alaska Natives are not shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1999.

increase in births was influenced by the rise in the total fertility rate from 1.8 to 2.0 births per woman.¹⁰

Immigration is also an important contributor. Of school-age children, 20 percent had at least one foreign-born parent, including 5 percent of elementary and high school students who are themselves foreign born (Table B).

However, the factors that underlie the increased enrollment differ dramatically by race and Hispanic origin. The increased number of

¹⁰The total fertility rate is an approximate measure of the total number of children women will bear in their lifetime. Ventura, Stephanie, et al., *Report of Final Natality Statistics, 1996*. Monthly Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 46, No. 11, Supplement, NCHS, June 30, 1998, Table 4.

White non-Hispanic and Black children enrolled in school is due primarily to an increased number of births. In contrast, immigration amplifies the increase of Asian and Pacific Islander and Hispanic children — 88 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander and 65 percent of Hispanic school-age children have a foreign-born parent.

Other aspects of students' family backgrounds are diverse.

Elementary and high school students come from diverse family backgrounds. More than two-thirds of these students (70 percent) came from families with both parents present, 24 percent lived with only their mother, and 5 percent lived with only their father.

Over half (52 percent) of elementary and high school students came from families with annual incomes of at least \$40,000, and 21 percent came from families with incomes below \$20,000.

Children from families with higher incomes are more likely to be enrolled in private school. Whereas 4 percent of children from families with incomes under \$20,000 attended private elementary or high school, 14 percent of those from families with incomes of \$40,000 or more did so. About one in ten students attended private school in 1999, and the proportion has fluctuated around this level since the 1970s.

Some students fall behind.

In 1999, nearly one-third (31 percent) of 15- to 17-year-olds were enrolled below the modal grade for their age, that is, the grade that is most common for a given age. Enrollment below the mode in school could be due to late entry into school or to falling behind after entering school.¹¹ In 1990, when they were 6- to 8-year-olds, 22 percent of the aforementioned cohort of 15- to 17-year-olds were below modal grade. In the intervening years, about 1 in 10 students were retained in grade (or held back).

Boys tend to start school at older ages than girls, with 19 percent of boys aged 6 to 8 below modal grade in 1999, compared with 16 percent of girls. Boys also have a significantly higher rate of retention throughout their school years. By ages 15 to 17 in 1999, 36 percent of boys were below modal grade, compared with 25 percent of girls.

Although Asian and Pacific Islander students had the lowest proportion below modal grade among 6- to 8-year-olds (7 percent), smaller differences exist between White non-Hispanic children and Black or Hispanic children in this age group.¹² This suggests that with the exception of Asian and Pacific Islanders, they all start school around the same ages. However, one-third of Hispanic and Black students were below modal grade in the 15- to 17-year-old student population compared with about

one-quarter of White non-Hispanic and Asian and Pacific Islander students.¹³

Some students drop out.

During the 1-year period ending in October 1999, about 520,000, or 4.7 percent, of all students in the 10th, 11th, or 12th grades dropped out of high school. This rate has remained the same since 1997.

The high school dropout rates of Blacks (6 percent) and Hispanics (7 percent) were higher than that of White non-Hispanics (4 percent).¹⁴

The rates for boys and girls, at 4 percent and 5 percent, respectively, were not statistically different from each other. (Table C).

The likelihood of dropping out of high school was higher for students from lower-income families. While 9 percent of high school students from families with incomes below \$20,000 dropped out of school in this one-year period, just 2 percent of those from families with incomes of \$40,000 or more left school before graduation.

The risk of dropping out varied by the student's grade level. Three percent of 10th graders dropped out of school compared with 4 percent of 11th graders and 8 percent of 12th graders.

Some students continue.

Unlike the earlier school years with their prescribed sequential grade levels, the end of high school presents a multitude of pathways for young adults. By the time students

¹¹State laws differ on the minimum enrollment age and some parents choose to start their children later. State laws have also been changing in recent years to move the cut-off date forward in many states (such as from December 31 to September 1).

¹²The percentages of Black and Hispanic students ages 6-8 below modal grade were not significantly different.

¹³The percentages of Black and Hispanic students below modal grade were not significantly different. Also, the percentages of White non-Hispanic and Asian and Pacific Islander students ages 15-17 below modal grade were not significantly different.

¹⁴The dropout rates for Blacks and Hispanics were not significantly different from each other.

Table C.
Annual High School Dropout Rates by Sex, Race, Hispanic Origin, Family Income, and Grade Level: October 1999

Characteristics	Dropout rate
Total	4.7
Sex	
Male	4.3
Female	5.1
Race and Hispanic Origin	
White	4.4
White non-Hispanic	3.8
Black	6.0
Asian and Pacific Islander	4.8
Hispanic (of any race)	7.1
Family Income	
Less than \$20,000	9.0
\$20,000-\$39,999	3.8
\$40,000 and over	2.3
Grade Level	
10th Grade	2.7
11th Grade	3.7
12th Grade	8.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1999.

reach age 18, some will have dropped out of school, some will still be in high school, and some will have graduated. Among those who have completed high school, many will go on to college.

For the 18- to 24-year-olds in 1999, 3.4 million, or 13 percent, were in the "dropout pool." The dropout pool is the population that is no longer enrolled and has not completed high school. This dropout pool measure is to some extent a summary of the year-to-year dropout rates (and re-enrollments) during the high school years. Men and women were significantly different in their dropout pool proportions (14 percent compared with 12 percent). In 1999, Hispanics were most likely to be in the dropout pool (34 percent), followed by Blacks (16 percent), and White non-Hispanics (8 percent).

In October 1999, 6 percent of the 18- to 24-year-olds were still enrolled in high school. Most of them were just 18 years old.

More than 4 out of 5 people 18- to 24-years-old were high school graduates. The proportion of women was significantly higher than the proportion of men who had completed high school (83 percent compared with 79 percent). Also within this age group, higher proportions of White non-Hispanics (87 percent) and Asians and Pacific Islanders (90 percent) were high school graduates than of Blacks (76 percent) and Hispanics (59 percent).

In the fall of 1999, 44 percent of high school graduates 18 to 24 years old were enrolled in college. The proportion of women enrolled was not statistically different from the proportion of men enrolled (44 percent and 43 percent, respectively). Asians and Pacific Islanders had the highest proportion of high school graduates enrolled in college at 61 percent, well above the rates for White non-Hispanics (45 percent), Blacks (39 percent), and Hispanics (32 percent).

Specifically, for the 1999 graduating class of approximately 3 million students, the percent going immediately on to college dropped to the 1995 level of 63 percent. Significant differences were apparent among the proportions of White non-Hispanic (66 percent), Black (59 percent), Asian and Pacific Islander (78 percent), and Hispanic (42 percent) recent graduates who went directly to college. Although these groups may have high ambitions immediately out of high school, intervening factors, such as financial difficulty, family obligations, and inadequate college preparedness, may affect some groups

disproportionately more than others, resulting in differences in ultimate college completion rates.¹⁵

College enrollment of traditional college-age students continues at a record high.

In October 1999, 15.2 million students were enrolled in colleges across the country (Table D), not significantly different from the previous year, but dramatically higher than a decade ago when 13.2 million students were enrolled in college.

The number of traditional college-age students (those under 25 years old) continued at the record high level of 9 million set in 1997 (Figure 5). This peak was fueled by both the demographic momentum of the population structure (that is, the increased number of people in that age group) and the increased proportion of those who continue on to college soon after high school. Even if the proportion of students who continue on to college soon after high school rises no further, the number of college students under age 25 will increase dramatically over the next decade, as the larger population groups born during the 1980s and 1990s reach college age.

In 1999, 5.8 million nontraditional college-age students (aged 25 or older) were enrolled in college, slightly fewer than in 1998. Nontraditional college-age students account for about 38 percent of all college students and have

¹⁵In 1999, among people aged 25 to 29 who completed high school, 36 percent of White non-Hispanics, 17 percent of Blacks, and 14 percent of Hispanics completed a bachelor's degree or higher. The percentages of Blacks and Hispanics were not significantly different. Newburger, Eric C. and Andrea Curry, *Educational Attainment in the United States, March 1999*. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P20-528. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2000.

remained near this proportion since the late 1980s.

Women accounted for 54 percent of all college students, continuing the majority role they have occupied since 1979. Women constitute the majority in the traditional college-age student population (52 percent), and they are especially prevalent among older students, with women making up 57 percent of nontraditional college-age students. Among students aged 35 and over, 62 percent are women.

Of the 15 million college students enrolled in 1999, 71 percent were White non-Hispanic, 13 percent were Black, 7 percent were Asian and Pacific Islander, and 9 percent were Hispanic. Similar to the trends in the elementary and high school levels, the race and ethnic composition of college students has shifted during the past two decades, from 84 percent White non-Hispanic, 10 percent Black, 2 percent other races, and 4 percent Hispanic in 1979.

One-third of college students were enrolled part-time in 1999. For many people, college enrollment must be negotiated not only with respect to financial cost, but among many life-cycle factors, such as marriage, family, and career. Indeed, nontraditional college-age students were much more likely than their younger counterparts to attend college part-time (63 percent compared with 15 percent). A greater proportion of female than male students attended part-time (36 percent compared with 30 percent). The proportions of White non-Hispanic (34 percent) and Black (32 percent) students who attended part-time did not differ significantly, but Asian and Pacific Islander students (24 percent) were less likely than students of

Table D.
Summary Measures of College Enrollment: October 1999

(Numbers in thousands)

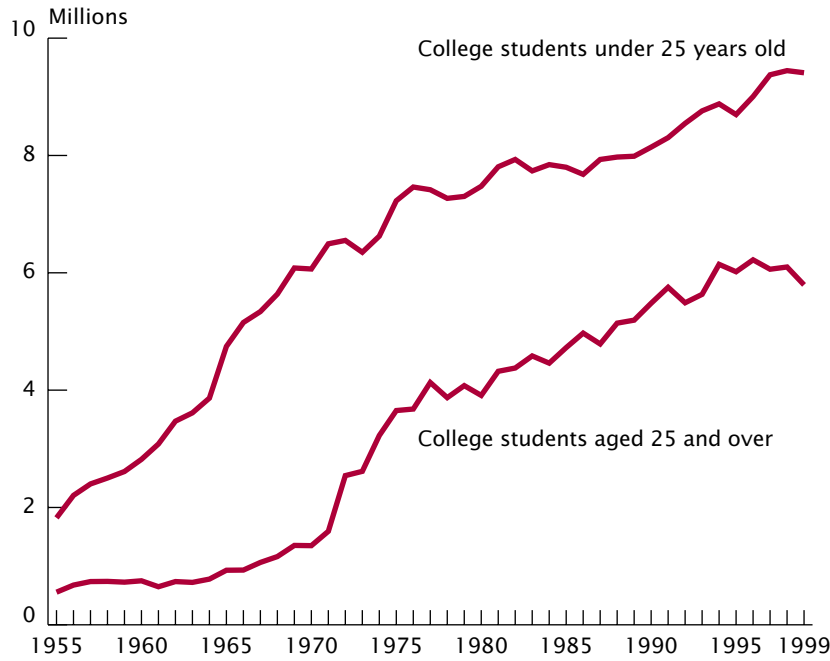
Characteristics	Total	Male	Female	Race and Hispanic origin				
				White		Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic (of any race)
				Total	Non-Hispanic			
Total College Enrollment								
Ages 15 years and over	15,203	6,956	8,247	12,053	10,818	1,998	1,042	1,307
15 to 17 years	151	78	73	86	80	45	16	7
18 to 19 years	3,520	1,648	1,872	2,848	2,574	430	223	297
20 to 21 years	3,120	1,525	1,595	2,519	2,324	391	192	196
22 to 24 years	2,620	1,224	1,396	2,076	1,837	327	211	247
25 to 29 years	1,940	911	1,029	1,474	1,283	254	187	207
30 to 34 years	1,156	547	608	867	755	198	71	127
35 years and over	2,698	1,023	1,674	2,173	1,965	355	142	226
Type of school								
2-year college	3,794	1,637	2,157	3,002	2,490	534	213	534
15 to 19 years old	1,187	537	649	944	794	170	70	155
20 to 24 years old	1,175	536	639	937	783	140	87	157
25 years and over	1,432	563	868	1,119	913	228	56	223
4-year college	8,252	3,916	4,336	6,480	5,920	1,192	530	603
15 to 19 years old	2,439	1,166	1,273	1,956	1,835	305	163	139
20 to 24 years old	3,867	1,902	1,965	3,094	2,837	508	255	263
25 years and over	1,946	849	1,097	1,427	1,248	380	112	200
Graduate school	3,157	1,403	1,755	2,571	2,408	272	298	170
15 to 24 years old	742	333	409	598	566	70	67	33
25 to 34 years old	1,211	584	627	976	921	88	135	56
35 years and over	1,204	486	719	992	921	111	96	80
Public	11,659	5,185	6,474	9,186	8,158	1,586	779	1,093
2-year	3,482	1,486	1,996	2,765	2,297	482	191	490
4-year	6,207	2,876	3,331	4,838	4,388	903	417	486
Graduate	1,970	823	1,147	1,583	1,473	201	172	117
Percent of students								
Employed full-time	33.1	33.9	32.4	33.9	33.6	34.8	20.7	37.1
Employed part-time	30.3	28.9	31.5	32.0	32.8	21.7	28.1	24.6
Full-Time Enrollment								
Ages 15 years and over	10,112	4,842	5,271	7,886	7,161	1,372	787	766
15 to 17 years	144	74	71	82	78	45	14	5
18 to 19 years	3,173	1,480	1,693	2,550	2,331	398	206	241
20 to 21 years	2,696	1,344	1,352	2,163	2,007	342	174	158
22 to 24 years	1,972	976	996	1,527	1,384	267	174	147
25 to 29 years	1,024	517	508	742	653	139	132	101
30 to 34 years	403	189	214	289	248	78	26	44
35 years and over	699	262	437	526	460	101	61	70
Type of school								
2-year college	2,106	948	1,157	1,621	1,360	315	152	277
15 to 19 years old	955	427	528	745	639	151	57	110
20 to 24 years old	760	360	399	590	492	90	68	101
25 years and over	391	161	230	284	229	75	27	66
4-year college	6,585	3,194	3,391	5,151	4,761	939	457	416
15 to 19 years old	2,325	1,111	1,214	1,859	1,748	292	159	129
20 to 24 years old	3,351	1,695	1,656	2,653	2,470	457	231	186
25 years and over	909	388	521	636	543	192	67	101
Graduate school	1,421	699	723	1,114	1,041	118	179	73
15 to 24 years old	596	281	315	475	451	62	53	25
25 to 34 years old	539	294	245	410	380	37	87	31
35 years and over	287	124	163	227	210	17	39	18
Public	7,684	3,584	4,100	5,936	5,349	1,094	590	625
2-year	1,937	866	1,071	1,497	1,260	284	137	253
4-year	4,910	2,325	2,585	3,778	3,478	732	362	323
Graduate	837	393	444	661	611	78	91	49
Percent of students								
Employed full-time	14.5	14.5	14.6	14.6	14.4	17.6	8.6	17.5
Employed part-time	37.5	36.4	38.5	39.8	40.7	27.6	32.1	30.9

Note: The number of students in the three race groups shown here do not sum to the total because data for American Indians and Alaska Natives are not shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1999.

Figure 5.

College Students: 1955 to 1999



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys.

other races to attend college part-time. Hispanic students (41 percent) were most likely to be enrolled part-time.

Most college students (63 percent) worked while attending school. Although female college students were just as likely to be employed full-time as part-time (32 percent and 31 percent), men were more likely to be employed full-time than part-time (34 percent and 29 percent).¹⁶ White non-Hispanic (66 percent) college students were more likely to be employed than Black (57 percent) or Asian and Pacific Islander students (49 percent). Among Hispanic students, 62 percent were employed while they were enrolled in college in 1999.

¹⁶The percentages of men and women working full-time were not significantly different.

Most college students were enrolled at the undergraduate rather than the graduate level (12 million or 79 percent). Of undergraduates, nearly one-third attended 2-year institutions. About 38 percent of students at 2-year institutions were of nontraditional college ages (ages 25 and older), and most of them were women (61 percent). In comparison, of the 8 million undergraduates enrolled in 4-year institutions, nearly one-fourth were ages 25 and older.

About 3 million students were enrolled in graduate school in the fall of 1999. The majority of these students were at least age 25, and more than one-third were at least age 35. More women than men were enrolled at the graduate level (1.8 million compared with 1.4 million). Of the Asian and Pacific Islander college students, 29 percent

were in graduate school in 1999 — significantly higher than the percentage of White non-Hispanic or Black college students in graduate school (22 percent and 14 percent, respectively). About 16 percent of all graduate students were foreign born.

The majority of people enrolled in college were attending public institutions (77 percent). Blacks were slightly more likely to be enrolled in public colleges (79 percent) than White non-Hispanics or Asians and Pacific Islanders (both 75 percent).¹⁷ About 84 percent of Hispanic college students were enrolled in a public college.

SOURCE OF THE DATA

Most estimates in this report come from data obtained in October 1999 from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Some estimates are based on data obtained from the CPS in earlier years and from decennial censuses. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the survey every month, although this report uses only October data for its estimates.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

All statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling error and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling error in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and

¹⁷The percentages of White non-Hispanic and Asian and Pacific Islander college students attending public schools were not significantly different from each other.

classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process — including the overall design of surveys, testing the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

The CPS employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources. Please contact Jeffrey Stratton of the Demographic Statistical Methods Division via Internet e-mail at dsm�_s&a@census.gov for

information on the source of the data, the accuracy of the estimates, the use of standard errors, and the computation of standard errors.

MORE INFORMATION

Detailed tabulations are available (15 detailed tables and 7 historical tables) that provide demographic characteristics of the population by school enrollment. The electronic version of these tables is available on the Internet, at the Census Bureau's World Wide Web site (www.census.gov). Once on the site, in the "Subjects A-Z" area, click on "S," and then on "Enrollment (including college)."

A paper version of these tables is available as PPL-134 for \$31. To receive a paper copy, send your request for "PPL-134, School Enrollment — Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1999," along with a check or money order in the amount of \$31 payable to Commerce-Census-88-00-9010, to U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, P.O. Box 277943, Atlanta, GA 30384-7943, or call the Statistical

Information Office at 301-457-2422. A copy of these tabulations will be made available to any existing CPR P20 subscriber without charge, provided that the request is made within 3 months of the issue date of this report. Contact our Statistical Information Office at 301-457-2422.

CONTACT

For additional information on these topics, contact Amie Jamieson or Andrea E. Curry, Education and Social Stratification Branch, 301-457-2464 or via Internet e-mail (amie.l.jamieson@census.gov or acurry@census.gov).

USER COMMENTS

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of data and report users. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

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