

# *Glossary*





## Glossary

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### A

**ACT Assessment:** An examination administered by ACT, Inc. (formerly the American College Testing Program) and used to predict the facility with which an individual will progress in learning college-level subjects. The ACT differs from the SAT in that it assesses students' knowledge in the curricular areas of English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning.

**Advanced degree:** Any formal degree attained after the bachelor's degree. Advanced degrees include master's degrees, doctoral degrees, and first-professional degrees.

**Advanced Placement:** The Advanced Placement (AP) program is an assessment program owned and conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The program includes a demanding academic course of study in college-level subjects such as physics, biology, calculus, and foreign languages, among others. A student who performs above a specified level on the assessment may be awarded college credit for certain courses upon entry to the institution.

**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. This includes degrees granted in a cooperative or work-study program.

### 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. This includes degrees granted in a cooperative or work-study program.

**Biological/life sciences:** Biological/life sciences are instructional programs that describe the systematic study of living organisms. Life sciences include biology, biochemistry, biophysics, and zoology.

### C

**Carnegie unit:** A standard of measurement used for secondary education that represents the completion of a course that meets 1 period per day for 1 year.

**Center-based programs:** Includes Head Start, nursery school, prekindergartens, day care centers, and preschools.

**Certificate:** An award granted for the successful completion of a subbaccalaureate program of studies, which usually requires less than 2 years of full-time postsecondary study.

**Charter school:** (See Public charter school.)

**Civic education:** Civic education in school takes place across a wide range of courses, such as social studies, civics, history, government, global studies, and geography. It is concerned, in part, with the meaning of democracy in a national context, describing a sense of national identity and issues of social cohesion and social diversity.

**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. Schools in which all students are ungraded (i.e., not classified by standard grade levels) are also classified as combined.

**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.

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**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.

**Control of institutions:** A classification of institutions of elementary/secondary or postsecondary education by whether the institution is operated by publicly elected or appointed officials (public control) or by privately elected or appointed officials and derives its major source of funds from private sources (private control).

**Core New Basics curriculum:** The most commonly implemented form of the New Basics curriculum, which includes 4 years of English and 3 years each of mathematics, science, and social studies, but not the one-half of year of computer science included in the New Basics curriculum. (See New Basics curriculum.)

**Core subjects:** *A Nation at Risk* recommended that all students seeking a high school diploma be required to enroll in a core curriculum called “New Basics.” The core subjects included in this plan are 4 units of English; 3 units each of science, social studies, and mathematics; and 0.5 units of computer science.

### D

**Dependent student:** (See Financial dependency.)

**Distance education:** Instructional programs or courses in which the instructor and students need not be in the same physical place, particularly those relying on computers, audio, or video technology as the medium for delivery and sometimes for two-way interaction.

**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 schools from a public 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 Event dropout rate and Status dropout rate.)

### E

**Educational attainment:** The highest grade of regular school attended and completed.

**English:** A group of instructional programs that describes the English language arts, including composition, creative writing, and the study of literature.

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

**Event dropout rate:** Event rates calculated using the October CPS data for a certain year measure the proportion of students who dropped out between October of that year and October of the previous year. The event rate is determined by counting all persons in a certain age range (e.g., 15–24 years old) who were enrolled in high school in October of the previous year but had not completed high school and were not enrolled in grades 10–12 a year later. This count is then divided by the total number of persons in the age range who were enrolled the previous October to compute the rate. High school is completed when the person either earns a high school diploma or an alternative credential such as a GED.

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**Financial dependency:** Students are considered dependent for purposes of federal financial aid programs if they are (1) age 24 or older; (2) a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces; (3) enrolled in a graduate or professional program (beyond a bachelor's degree); (4) married; (5) an orphan or ward of the court; or (6) have legal dependents, other than a spouse. If any of these conditions are met, the student is classified as independent for purposes of financial aid.

**First-professional enrollment:** The number of students enrolled in a professional school or program requiring at least 2 years of academic college work for entrance and a total of at least 6 years for a degree, including both previously required college work and the professional program itself. These programs include dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.), medicine (M.D.), optometry (O.D.), osteopathic medicine (D.O.), pharmacy (D.Pharm.), podiatric medicine (D.P.M.), veterinary medicine (D.V.M.), chiropractic (D.C. or D.C.M.), law (J.D.), and theological professions (M.Div. or M.H.L.).

**Foreign languages:** A group of instructional programs that describes the structure and use of language that is common or indigenous to individuals of the same community or nation, the same geographical area, or the same cultural traditions. Programs cover such features as sound, literature, syntax, phonology, semantics, sentences, prose, and verse, as well as the development of skills and attitudes used in communicating and evaluating thoughts and feelings through oral and written language.

**Free lunch eligibles:** (See National School Lunch Program.)

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

### G

**GED certificate:** (See High school equivalency certificate.)

**General formula assistance:** State revenues from general noncategorical state assistance programs such as foundation, minimum or basic formula support, principal apportionment, equalization, flat or block grants, and state public school fund distributions. It also includes state revenue dedicated from major state taxes, such as income and sales taxes.

**General revenues:** Noncategorical revenues that consist of all local revenues, state general formula assistance, and state payments on behalf of the local education agency for employee benefits.

**Graduate enrollment:** The number of students who hold the bachelor's or first-professional degree, or the equivalent, and who are working toward a master's or doctor's degree. These enrollment data measure those students who are registered at a particular institution during the fall. At some institutions, graduate enrollment also includes students who are in post baccalaureate classes, but not in degree programs.

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** Gross National Product (GNP) less net property income from abroad. Both GNP and GDP aggregate only the incomes of residents of a nation, corporate and individual, derived directly from the current production of goods and services by consumers and government, gross private domestic investment, and net exports of goods and services. The goods and services included are largely those brought

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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. GNP, in this broad context, measures the output attributable to the factors of production, labor, and property supplied by U.S. residents.

### H

**High school:** A secondary school offering the final years of high school work 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 is between the ages of 18 and 24 and has completed a high school diploma or an equivalent credential, including a General Education 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 met the state requirements for high school graduation equivalency by obtaining satisfactory scores on an approved examination and by 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 Education Development test) is defined as 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 achievement of satisfactory scores.

### I

**Income tax:** Taxes levied on net income, that is, on gross income less certain deductions permitted by law. These taxes can be levied on individuals, corporations, or unincorporated businesses where the income is taxed distinctly from individual income.

**Independent student:** (See Financial dependency.)

**International Baccalaureate (IB):** A high school degree program internationally licensed by the International Baccalaureate Organization. The program placed a strong emphasis on the ideals of international understanding and responsible citizenship. The IBO (International Baccalaureate Organization) offers schools three programs: the Diploma Programme for students in the final two years of secondary school, the Middle Years Programme for students ages 11–16, and the Primary Years Programme for students ages 3–12. Additional information can be found at ([www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)).

**International Socioeconomic Index (ISEI):** An index with a range from 0–90 used in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) to create a hierarchy of occupational status to equate the socioeconomic status of parents to student achievement.

### K

**Kindergarten:** Includes transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and pre-first-grade students.

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### L

**Local Education Agency (LEA):** (See School district.)

### 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 in various medical specializations.

**Metropolitan population:** The population residing in Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). (See Metropolitan Statistical Area.)

**Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA):** A large population nucleus and the nearby communities that have a high degree of economic and social integration with that nucleus. Each MSA consists of one or more entire counties (or county equivalents) that meet specified standards pertaining to population, commuting ties, and metropolitan character. In New England, towns and cities, rather than counties, are the basic units. MSAs are designated by the Office of

Management and Budget. An MSA includes a city and generally its entire urban area and the remainder of the county or counties in which the urban area is located. An MSA also includes such additional outlying counties that meet specified criteria relating to the metropolitan character and level of commuting of workers into the central city or counties. Specified criteria governing the definition of MSAs recognized before 1980 are published in *Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas: 1975*, issued by the Office of Management and Budget. New MSAs were designated when 1980 and 1990 counts showed that they met one or both of the following criteria:

- (1) Included a city with population of at least 50,000 within their corporate limits; or
- (2) Included a Census Bureau-defined urbanized area (which must have a population of at least 50,000) and a total MSA population of at least 100,000 (or in New England, 75,000).

**Minority:** Any racial/ethnic group that is nonwhite and not Hispanic is considered minority.

### N

**National School Lunch Program:** This 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 or below 185 percent of the poverty level for reduced-price lunch or at or below 130 percent of the poverty level for free lunch.

**New Basics curriculum:** A minimum curriculum recommended by the National Commission of Excellence in Education (NCEE) in 1983 to be completed by high school gradu-

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ates that consists of 4 years of English; 3 years each of mathematics, science, and social studies; and one-half year of computer science. College-bound high school graduates are also advised to complete 2 years of foreign language. (See Core New Basics curriculum.)

**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

**Odds ratio:** Odds is the ratio of success to failure in probability calculation. Odds ratio is the ratio of one odds to another.

### P

**Part-time enrollment:** The number of students enrolled in higher 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 its 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*.)

**Praxis Core Battery Tests:** A subgroup of the Praxis II Subject Assessments, the Core Battery consists of three Praxis II tests: the Test of General Knowledge, the Test of

Communication Skills, and the Test of Professional Knowledge. General Knowledge tests fundamental understanding of general principles known to the average well-educated person. Communication Skills tests the ability to retain and interpret spoken and written language and the ability to communicate effectively in standard written English. Professional Knowledge tests classroom management, evaluations, instruction, professional foundations, and professional functions. Many states require the candidate to take some or all of the three Core Battery tests for teacher certification.

**Praxis II:** A series of professional assessments for beginning teachers. The Praxis II National Teacher Exam (NTE) is designed to assess qualifications of prospective teachers. It is used by state education agencies in making licensing decisions. The Praxis II Subject Assessments measure knowledge of the subjects that candidates will teach, as well as general and subject-specific teaching skills and knowledge. A set of Core Battery tests, as well as Specialty area tests in more than 140 subject areas, are included in this group. Many states require some or all of the Praxis II elements for teacher certification.

**Prekindergarten:** (See Preprimary.)

**Preprimary:** Elementary education programs for children who are too young for first grade. Includes center-based programs and kindergarten.

**Preschool:** A beginning group or class enrolling children younger than 5 years of age and organized to provide educational experience 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).

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**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.

**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 (U.S. Department of Education 2000e). (See Public school.)

**Public school:** A public school is defined as 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 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 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

**Reading literacy:** Understanding, using, and reflecting on written texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society.

**Revenues:** All funds received from external sources, net of refunds, and correcting transactions. Noncash transactions such as receipt of services, commodities, or other receipts "in kind" are excluded, as are funds received from the issuance of debt, liquidation of investments, and nonroutine sale of property.

**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

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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).

**Revenues from state sources:** Revenues from a state government source include those that can be used without restriction; those for categorical purposes; and revenues in lieu of taxation.

### S

**Sales taxes:** Tax imposed upon the sale and consumption of goods and services. It can be imposed either as a general tax on the retail price of all goods and services sold or as a tax on the sale of selected goods and services.

**SAT Assessment:** (See Scholastic Assessment Test.)

**Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT):** An examination administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and used to predict the facility with which an individual will progress in learning college-level subjects. The SAT differs from the ACT in that it assesses students' aptitude in English, reading, and mathematics generally rather than on their curricular knowledge.

**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."

**School lunch program:** (See National School Lunch Program.)

**Science:** The body of related courses concerned with knowledge of the physical and biological world and with the processes of discovering and validating this knowledge.

**Social studies:** A group of instructional programs that describes the substantive portions of behavior, past and present activities, interactions, and organizations of people associated together for religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic, or other purposes.

**Socioeconomic status (SES):** The SES quartile variable used for both High School and Beyond and the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 was built using parental education level, parental occupation, family income, and household items. Students were placed in quartiles based on their standardized composite score. By definition, one-quarter of each cohort will reside in the bottom SES quartile, even if education levels, income, and the number of persons in more prestigious occupations increase. The terms high, middle, and low SES refer to the upper, middle two, and lower quartiles of the weighted SES composite index distribution.

**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.

**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 years who, as of October of that

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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

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

**Traditional public school:** In this volume, traditional public schools are all public schools

that are not public charter schools or Bureau of Indian Affairs-funded schools operated by local public school districts. These traditional public schools include regular, special education, vocational/technical, and alternative schools. They also include schools in juvenile detention centers and schools located on military bases and operated by the Department of Defense. (See Public school and Public charter school.)

### U

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

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