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

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

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

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

Advanced: This level signifies superior performance.

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

Appropriations (institutional revenues): An amount (other than a grant or contract) received from or made available to an institution through an act of a legislative body.

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Exit examination:** A state-defined test, or series of tests, which students must pass in order to graduate from high school. The examination and all of its components are established by the state and vary greatly. End-of-course examina-
tions are taken to meet curriculum standards; minimum competency examinations assess baseline knowledge; and standards-based examinations are aligned with state-adopted requirements at a particular grade level.

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

**F**

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

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

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

**G**

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

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

**Gross domestic product (GDP)**: Gross national product less net property income from abroad. Both gross national product (GNP) and gross domestic product (GDP) aggregate only the incomes of residents of a nation, corporate and individual, derived directly from the current production of goods and services by individuals, businesses, and government, gross private domestic investment in infrastructure, and total exports of goods and services. The goods and services included are largely those bought for final use (excluding illegal transactions) in the market economy. A number of inclusions, however, represent imputed values, the most important of which is rental value of owner-occupied housing.

**H**

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

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

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

**High school equivalency certificate**: A formal document certifying that an individual has met the state requirements for high school graduation equivalency by obtaining satisfactory scores on an approved examination and meeting other performance requirements (if any) set by a state education agency or other appropriate body. One particular version of this certificate is the GED. The GED (General Educational Development) test is a comprehensive test used primarily to appraise the educational development of students who
have not completed their formal high school education and who may earn a high school equivalency certificate through achieving satisfactory scores. GEDs are awarded by the states or other agencies, and the test is developed and distributed by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Median:** The median is a measure of central tendency on a scale indicating where a population is centered. The median of the population is the point on the scale that divides the population in half. Half of the population will have values that are equal to or larger than the median, and half will have values that are smaller than the median.
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA): A geographic entity designated by the federal Office of Management and Budget for use by federal statistical agencies. A metropolitan statistical area (MSA) is a metropolitan area (MA) that is not closely associated with another MA. An MSA consists of one or more counties, except in New England, where MSAs are defined in terms of county subdivisions (primarily cities and towns). (See also supplemental note 1.)

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

Minimum competency examination: Minimum competency examinations assess baseline knowledge.

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

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

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

Noninstructional time: Noninstructional time refers to the portion of the school day allocated to such activities as lunch, recess, school assemblies, and other nonclassroom activities. (See allocated time and instructional time.)

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

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

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

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

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

Prekindergarten: Public preprimary education for children ages 3–4 (ages 3–5 in some states)
who have not yet entered kindergarten. It may offer a program of general education or special education and, in some states, may be part of a collaborative effort with Head Start. Private preprimary educational programs are typically referred to as “center-based programs.”

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

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

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

Public charter school: A public charter school is a publicly funded school that, in accordance with an enabling statute, has been granted a charter exempting it from selected state or local rules and regulations. A public charter school may be a newly created school or it may previously have been a public or private school. In return for funding and autonomy, the charter school must meet accountability standards. A school’s charter is reviewed (typically every 3 to 5 years) and can be revoked if guidelines on curriculum and management are not followed or the standards are not met. (See also Public school.)

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

R

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


NCES Publications (Complete citation)

Continued


NCES Surveys


“Birth Cohort (ECLS–B), Restricted-Use File.”


“Third Grade Restricted-Use Data File,” fall 1998 through spring 2002.


“Student Questionnaire, Base Year 10th Grade.”


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NCES Surveys

Continued


“Fifth Follow-up” (NLS:72/86).


PSS, various years, 1989–90 through 2001–02.


Surveys From Other Agencies

   “American Community Survey” (ACS), 2000–03.
   October Supplements, selected years, 1972–2003.


Index

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


Reference Numbers
This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of The Condition of Education. The year of publication appears in bold type. Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers. For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Asian/Pacific Islanders—continued
student perceptions of school’s social and
learning environment, 2005:29
undergraduate enrollment, 2003:32
work-related adult education, participation
in, 2004:7
writing performance through elementary/
secondary level, 2004:10
young adults not in school or working,
2004:13
Assessment of students, 2001:46. See also
Achievement tests
Associate’s degrees, 2001:27
attrition rates in programs for, 2002:SA37
employment while enrolled in program,
2004:29
by field of study, 2003:33
geographic mobility of students, 2005:21
international comparisons, 2004:17
persistence towards, 2004:19
persistence towards for nontraditional
transferring to a 4-year institution, 2003:19
Athletics, 2001:20. See also Sports
At-risk students, 2001:52, 2002:22, 2003:
SA13n4. See also Students whose parents
did not go to college
in public alternative schools, 2003:27
reading and mathematics achievement
through 3rd grade, 2004:8
reading skill gains in kindergarten, 2003:
SA4, 2003:SA5
in smaller classrooms, 2002:SA5
Attainment in education. See Educational
attainment
Attendance status, postsecondary education,
2001:xxxii. See also Full-time enrollment at
postsecondary institutions; Part-time
enrollment at postsecondary institutions
enrollment, 2004:1
graduate enrollment, 2001:6
Attendance status—continued
undergraduate enrollment, 2001:5
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), 2003:34
Attitudes of students, 2001:19, 2001:20
perceptions of school’s social and learning
environment, 2005:29
reading skill gains of kindergartners, 2003:
SA6
Attrition rates (students), 2002:SA37. See also
Stopouts from postsecondary education
Attrition rates (teachers), 2005:SA2, 2005:
SA11–SA12. See also Turnover rates for
teachers
Australia, 2002:9
civic performance, 2002:15
expenditures for education, 2003:40
instructional activities in 8th-grade math-
ematics, 2003:26
instructional activities in 8th-grade science
classes, 2004:23
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics literacy, international com-
parisons, 2005:13
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th
grade, 2005:11
science performance for 4th and 8th grade,
2005:12
transition to postsecondary education,
2004:17
Austria, 2001:57
expenditures for education, 2002:41
instructional hours, 2005:26
mathematics literacy, international com-
parisons, 2005:13
reading literacy in, 2002:9

B
Baby boom echo, 2001:2, 2002:2, 2003:1,
2004:4, 2005:1
Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B), 2001:xix
Bachelor’s degrees, 2001:24. See also Educational attainment
adult learning patterns, 2001:7
attrition rates at, 2002:SA37
community college students completing, 2003:19
coursetaking by undergraduate students, 2004:30
debt burden of college graduates, 2004:38
earnings of young adults affected by, 2004:14
educational expectations of 10th-graders, 2004:15
employment while enrolled in program, 2004:29
by field of study, 2003:33
geographic mobility of students, 2005:21
health affected by, 2004:12
international comparisons, 2004:17
parents attaining, 2001:4, 2003:2
persistence of traditional-age students towards, 2005:22
by race/ethnicity, 2005:23
and student debt burden, 2001:59
time to completion, 2003:21
women earning, 2004:20
work-related adult education, participation in, 2004:7

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


Belgium
civic performance, 2002:15
expenditures for education, 2002:41
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
reading literacy in, 2002:9
science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12

Belize, reading literacy in, 2003:10
Benefits to faculty at postsecondary institutions, 2005:32
Beyond New Basics high school curriculum, 2001:xlvi, 2001:28. See also Curriculum, high school
Bilingual education, 2004:28. See also English as a Second Language (ESL)
Birthrate for the United States, 2001:2, 2002:2

Blacks
advanced placement course availability, 2005:25
annual earnings of young adults, 2005:16
Black-White reading achievement gap, 2002:8
child care, 2001:38, 2004:33
community service of young adults, 2001:16
disabilities, inclusion of students with in regular classrooms, 2005:27
disabilities, students with in elementary/secondary schools, 2005:6
early literacy activities, 2003:37

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Blacks—continued


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

employer financial aid for adult education, 2003:44

employment status of, 2005:17

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

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


faculty at postsecondary institutions, 2002:39

family characteristics of, 2003:2

geography performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:13

graduate enrollment, 2002:6, 2003:7

history performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:14

homeschooling, 2005:3

kindergarten enrollment, 2004:3

language spoken at home, 2005:5

mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, 2002:27, 2004:22


parental satisfaction with schools, 2001:55, 2002:40

parents’ level of education, 2001:4

passing exit examinations for high school, 2005:24

persistance of traditional-age students towards bachelor’s degrees, 2005:22

and poverty, 2002:11

prekindergarten programs, participation in, 2004:2

preprimary enrollment, 2001:1, 2002:1

Blacks—continued

in private schools, 2002:SA8, 2005:2

in public charter schools, 2002:30, 2005:28

reading and mathematics achievement through 3rd grade, 2004:8

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

reading habits of adults, 2001:15, 2005:15


school choice, 2001:41, 2002:29

science performance through elementary/secondary level, 2001:13, 2002:12

status dropout rates for high school, 2004:16

student perceptions of school’s social and learning environment, 2005:29

student victimization, 2003:31

undergraduate enrollment, 2003:32

voting participation, 2003:15

work-related adult education, participation in, 2004:7

writing performance through elementary/secondary level, 2004:10

young adults not in school or working, 2004:13

Botswana

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

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

Brazil

mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13

reading literacy in, 2002:9

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

Reference Numbers


The year of publication appears in bold type.

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

For 2002–2005:

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

For 2001:

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

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Bulgaria
  civic performance, 2002:15
  mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
  mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
  reading literacy in, 2003:10
  science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
  Bureau of the Census, 2002:4
  Business, degrees in, 2003:33
  Business colleges, 2004:1
  Business courses, 2004:30

C
  Calculus, 2002:SA21, 2003:22. See also Mathematics
coursetaking by high school students, 2004:21
  California
  state polices and procedures for transfer students, 2005:34
  Canada, 2001:57
  educational attainment in, 2001:32
  mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
  mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
  reading literacy in, 2003:10
  Capital expenditures for public elementary/secondary schools, 2005:38
  Catholic schools—continued
  school climate, 2002:SA10–SA11
  special programs in, 2002:SA7
  teacher satisfaction, 2002:SA14
  Census Bureau, 2002:4
  Center-based childcare programs, 2002:1, 2003:38
  after-school activities, 2004:34
  enrollment in preprimary education, 2001:1
  Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2001:44
  Certificate programs, 2001:6, 2001:27
  attrition rates at, 2002:SA37
  at private for-profit institutions, 2004:SA5
  working while attending, 2004:29
  Certification for teachers, 2005:SA5, 2005:SA9
  alternative programs for, 2005:SA22n20
  Charter schools, 2002:SA2, 2002:30. See also Public charter schools
  Chemistry, 2004:21
  Child care, 2002:1
  after-school activities, 2004:34
  enrollment in preprimary education, 2001:1
  Chile
  civic performance, 2002:15
  mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
  mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
  science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
  China. See also Hong Kong
  mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
China—continued
  mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
Chinese Taipei
  mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
  science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Choice of school, elementary/secondary education, 2001:41. See also School choice
Choices of students for high school curriculum, 2001:xxviii. See also Coursetaking by high school students; Curriculum, high school
Church-related private schools, 2002:29, 2004:25. See also Private elementary/secondary schools; Religious affiliation
Citizenship, 2001:15, 2001:16
Civic Education Study, 2002:15, 2003:16
Civic knowledge performance, 2002:15
Civic participation, 2003:16
Classroom activities, kindergarten, 2003:SA8
Class size, elementary/secondary schools, 2001:38
  kindergartens, 2001:37
Class time, elementary/secondary education, 2005:26
Clubs as after-school activity, 2004:34
  school climate, 2002:SA12
College education. See Postsecondary education
College entrance examinations, 2001:xxii, 2001:xxviii. See also Achievement tests increasing participation in, 2001:19
College preparation. See Preparing for college
College qualification index, 2001:xxv, 2001:xli
Colleges. See Four-year institutions; Postsecondary education
Colombia
  civic participation, 2003:16
  civic performance, 2002:15
  reading literacy in, 2003:10
Combined schools (K–12), 2002:SA4
Community colleges, 2003:19, 2005:34. See also Two-year institutions
Community outreach
  electronic resources in academic libraries used for, 2005:33
Community service, 2001:16
  as after-school activity, 2004:34
  parental involvement in education process, 2001:54
  required for high school graduation, 2002:SA18, 2002:SA19
Computer sciences, degrees in, 2003:33
Congressional elections, 2003:15
Consumer Price Index (CPI), 2005:39
Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, 2004:SA5
Continuing education, 2003:8, 2003:44. See also Adult education
Core curriculum (New Basics), 2001:xxxiv, 2001:xlii. See also Curriculum, high school and college persistence rates, 2002:23
English and foreign languages, 2003:25
  mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, 2004:22
  science and mathematics, 2002:27
  efforts to fund postsecondary education, 2002:42

Reference Numbers
This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of The Condition of Education. The year of publication appears in bold type. Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
  References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
  Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Cost of attending college—continued
need analysis for financial aid eligibility, 2004: SA8–SA13
net price after grants and loans, 2004: SA21–SA25
net price of, 2002:44, 2003:43
students' and parents' knowledge of, 2001: xxx, 2001:25
and students' debts, 2001:59
tuition and fee increases, 2004: SA2
Cost of Education Index, 2001:56
Coursetaking by high school students, 2004: 21, 2004:22. See also Curriculum, high school
Coursetaking by undergraduate students, 2004:30, 2004:31
Crime in schools, 2001:44, 2005:30
educational attainment, 2005:16, 2005:23
language spoken at home, 2005:5
Curriculum, high school, 2001:xxiv–xxviii advanced placement courses, 2005:25 (See also Advanced placement)
English and foreign language courses, 2003:24, 2003:25
influence of principals on, 2004:26
levels of achievement, 2001:xli–xlii
mathematics, 2001:24
Curriculum, high school—continued
 persistence at college influenced by, 2001: xxxiv–xxxvi, 2002:23
 science achievement, 2002:12
 size of school, 2002:SA5
 vocational education, 2001:35
 Cutting classes, 2002:17
 Cyprus
civic participation, 2003:16
civic performance, 2002:15
 mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
 mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
 reading literacy in, 2003:10
 Czech Republic
civic performance, 2002:15
 expenditures for education, 2002:41
 instructional activities in 8th-grade mathematics, 2003:26
 instructional activities in 8th-grade science classes, 2004:23
 instructional hours, 2005:26
 mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
 mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
 reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
 D
Debts for college, 2001:59, 2004:38
 Degree programs, distance education and, 2004:32
 Degrees earned, 2001:31. See also Educational attainment affecting annual income, 2002:16
Degrees earned—continued
educational expectations of 10th-graders,  2004:15
by field of study,  2003:33
gеographic mobility of students,  2005:21
nontraditional undergraduate students,  2002:SA35
persistence of traditional-age students
towards bachelor’s degrees,  2005:22
by race/ethnicity,  2002:23,  2005:23
teachers,  2002:32,  2005:SA4
time taken to earn degree,  2001:xxxvi–xxxvii
by women,  2001:30

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

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

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

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

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


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

faculty salaries and benefits at,  2005:32
minority enrollment rates,  2005:31

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

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

reading and mathematics achievement through 3rd grade,  2004:8
reading and mathematics achievement through 1st grade,  2003:9

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.

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

For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA14) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Educational attainment, 2001:31. See also Degrees earned
annual earnings of young adults, 2005:16
and earnings of young adults, 2001:18, 2002:16
earnings of young adults affected by, 2004:14
employment status by, 2005:17
expectations for, 2004:15 (See also Expectations for education)
and high school mathematics curriculum, 2001:24
international comparisons, 2001:32
of nontraditional undergraduate students, 2002:SA34–SA38
parents of school-age children, 2003:2 (See also under Parents)
persistence towards bachelor’s degrees, 2003:20
private vs. public schools, 2002:SA19–SA21
by race/ethnicity, 2002:25, 2005:23
reading habits of adults affected by, 2001:15, 2005:15
teachers, 2002:32, 2005:SA4
by the 8th-graders of 1988, 2003:22
voting participation affected by, 2003:15
working while attending postsecondary institutions, 2004:29
work-related adult education, 2004:7

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

Eighth grade, 2001:36, 2001:43
educational achievement level by 1988 cohort, 2003:22
geography performance, 2003:13
history performance, 2003:14
instructional activities in mathematics, 2003:26
instructional activities in science, 2004:23
international comparisons of mathematics and science, 2002:13
international comparisons of mathematics performance, 2005:11
international comparisons of science performance, 2005:12
private vs. public school students’ educational attainment, 2002:SA19–SA21
reading performance in, 2004:9, 2005:9
writing performance in, 2004:10
Elections, voting participation in, 2003:15
Electronic resources in libraries in postsecondary institutions, 2005:33
absenteeism in, 2002:17
choice of school, 2001:41
completion rates by race/ethnicity, 2002:25
computer and Internet usage, 2001:39
disabilities, students with enrolled in, 2005:6
dropout rates, 2001:23, 2002:19
English and foreign language courses taken, 2003:24, 2003:25
expectations for education, 2001:19 (See also Expectations for education)
expenditures by category and region, 2005:38
expenditures by district poverty, 2005:36
Elementary/secondary education—continued

guidance counselors, 2004:27
homeschooling, 2004:25, 2005:2
homework, 2001:21
international comparisons for mathematics, 2005:11
international comparisons for mathematics and science, 2001:36, 2002:13
international comparisons for science instructional methods, 2004:23
kindergarten through 1st-grade skills development, 2001:8, 2001:9
mainstreaming disabled students, 2001:40, 2002:28 (See also Disabilities, students with)
mathematics achievement, 2001:12 (See also Mathematics)
“out-of-field” teachers, 2003:28, 2004:24 (See also “Out-of-field” teachers)
overcrowding in schools, 2001:45
parental educational attainment, 2001:4 (See also Parents, level of education)
parental involvement in schools, 2001:54
parents’ satisfaction with schools, 2001:55
persistence in, 2001:23
prekindergarten programs, 2004:2 (See also Preprimary education)
principals, 2004:26 (See also Principals)
public charter schools, 2002:30
public support for, 2002:42
race/ethnicity in, 2001:3, 2002:3, 2004:5 (See also Race/ethnicity)
reading achievement, 2001:10, 2002:8 (See also Reading)
E-mail, 2001:48
Emotional disturbances, 2005:6
Employer financial aid for adult education, 2003:44
Employment background of teachers, 2005:SA6–SA8
Employment status, 2001:xxxxvii–xxxxviii
and dropouts from high school, 2001:23
in high school, 2001:21
by race/ethnicity, 2005:17
teachers, 2005:SA9
undergraduate students, 2002:37
while earning postsecondary degree, 2001:6, 2004:29 (See also Working while attending school (postsecondary education))
Engineering, degrees in, 2003:33
England, reading literacy in, 2003:10. See also United Kingdom of Great Britain

Reference Numbers
This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of The Condition of Education. The year of publication appears in bold type. Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
English, high school, 2001:xli, 2001:xlii
exit examinations for high school, 2005:24
“out-of-field” teachers teaching, 2004:24
student characteristics, 2003:2.5
subject expertise of elementary/secondary
teachers, 2003:28
trends in, 2003:24
English as a Second Language (ESL), 2003:8
language spoken at home, 2005:5
reading and mathematics proficiency of
elementary students, 2005:8
teacher aides for, 2004:28
English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL),
2002:2, 2002:4. See also Limited English
proficiency (LEP)
adult literacy habits, 2001:15
increasing numbers of, 2003:2, 2003:4
Enrollment, elementary/secondary schools,
2001:2, 2002:2, 2004:4
by age, 2004:1
alternative schools, 2003:27
kindergarten, 2004:3
overcrowding, 2001:45
past and projected, 2003:3, 2005:1
private elementary/secondary schools,
2002:SA3, 2002:SA4, 2002:SA5 (See also
Private elementary/secondary schools)
by race/ethnicity, 2002:3, 2005:4
size of high schools, 2003:30
Enrollment, postsecondary education, 2001:
xviii, 2001:5, 2001:26
and academic qualifications, 2001:xxiv–
xxv
of employees as undergraduates, 2002:
SA31
foreign-born students, 2003:6
mathematics courses taken in high school
Enrollment, postsecondary education —continued
parental level of education affecting, 2001:
and preparing for college, 2001:xxix
race/ethnicity, 2003:18
types of institutions, 2004:SA5–SA6
undergraduate level, 2002:5, 2002:20,
7 (See also Undergraduate students)
Enrollment, preprimary education, 2001:1,
2002:1
trends by age, 2004:1
Environmental organizations, 2003:16
ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages).
See English Speakers of Other Languages
(ESOL)
Estonia
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th
grade, 2005:11
science performance for 4th and 8th grade,
2005:12
Estonia, civic performance, 2002:15
Evaluation of teachers, 2002:SA13. See also
Teachers/Teaching
Event dropout rates, 2004:16. See also Drop-
out rates
Exit examinations for high school, 2005:24
Expectations for education, 2001:xviii, 2001:
xxii
attaining a degree, 2001:xxxv
and grade level of students, 2001:xxxiii–xxiv
nontraditional undergraduate students,
2002:SA32
postsecondary expectations for 10th-graders,
2004:15
principals’, 2002:SA16–SA17
seniors’ for postsecondary education, 2001:
19, 2001:20

by district poverty, 2005:36
international comparisons, 2002:41, 2003:40
per student, 2004:35
by region and category of expenditure, 2005:38
by urbanicity, 2003:39

Expenditures for postsecondary education, 2002:41

Extended families. See Families

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

F
Faculty, postsecondary education. See also Teachers/Teaching
distance education, teaching, 2001:49
instructional methods of, 2001:46
part-time, 2001:50
salaries and benefits for, 2005:32
teaching undergraduates, 2001:47
tenure, 2003:35
time allocation of, 2001:51
use of technology, 2001:48
women and minorities, 2002:39

Families, 2003:2. See also Income, family; Parents
and home activities, 2001:52 (See also Home activities)

Fathers. See Parents

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

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

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

Fights in school, 2005:29


adult education, 2003:44
combination of aid packages, 2004:SA13–SA14
eligibility for, 2004:SA11–SA13
federal grants and loans, 2003:42
from 4-year colleges and universities, 2004:37
grants, 2004:SA14–SA18 (See also Grants and scholarships)
increase of, 2004:SA2
loans to students, 2001:59
overview of system of, 2004:SA6–SA7
percentage of undergraduates receiving, 2004:SA14

Reference Numbers

The year of publication appears in bold type.

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

For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDF’s].)
Financial aid to students—continued
student loans, 2004:SA18–SA21 (See also Student loans)
types and sources of, 2004:SA2–SA4

Finland
civic performance, 2002:15
instructional hours, 2005:26
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
transition to postsecondary education, 2004:17
First-generation college students, 2001:
xxx–xxxix
after earning a degree, 2001:xxxxvi–xxxxviii
after 5 years, 2001:xxxxvi–xxxxvii
after 3 years, 2001:xxxxiv–xxxxvi
among the foreign-born population, 2003:6
characteristics of, 2001:xxx–xxxi
high school curriculum, 2001:24, 2002:23
First-professional degrees, 2001:6
rate of enrollment, 2002:6, 2003:7
First year at college, 2001:xxxii–xxxii, 2001:
xxxiv
Florida
state policies and procedures for transfer students, 2005:34
Foreign languages
immersion programs, 2002:SA6, 2002:SA7
requirements for high school graduation, 2002:SA18, 2002:SA19
subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, 2003:28

Fourth grade, 2002:13
geography performance, 2003:13
history performance, 2003:14
international comparisons of mathematics performance, 2005:11
international comparisons of reading literacy, 2003:10
international comparisons of science performance, 2005:12
mathematics performance in, 2005:10
poverty levels among school-aged children, 2004:5
reading performance in, 2004:9, 2005:9
writing performance in, 2004:10
Four-year institutions, 2001:58, 2004:38. See also Postsecondary education
average expected family contribution for tuition, 2004:SA26–SA27
average price of attending, 2004:38
debt burden of college graduates, 2004:38
disabilities, student with, 2003:34
distance education courses, 2004:32
distance education courses, 2001:49
expectations for high school seniors, 2001:19
expected family contribution (EFC) for college costs, 2004:SA12
faculty at, 2001:47
faculty salaries and benefits at, 2005:32
faculty tenure at, 2003:35
financial aid to students, 2004:37
first-generation students enrolling in, 2001:xx, 2001:xxx
grants to undergraduates, 2004:SA15, 2004:SA17
Four-year institutions—continued
mathematics taken in high school affecting enrollment in, 2001:xxvi, 2001:xxviii
minority enrollment rates, 2005:31
net price for, 2002:44, 2003:43
net price for after grants, 2004:SA18, 2004:SA19
paying for, 2001:25
Pell Grants, students with, 2002:24, 2003:23
Pell grants to undergraduates, 2004:SA16
persistence of nontraditional undergraduates at, 2002:SA33, 2002:SA34
preparation for enrollment, 2001:xxiii, 2001:xxx (See also Preparing for college)
state polices and procedures for transfer students, 2005:34
stopouts, 2001:xxxii, 2001:xxxiv
student loans for, 2004:SA20
technology used at, 2001:48
time to completion for bachelor’s degree, 2003:21
transferring from 2-year institutions, 2003:19
transferring to 2-year institutions, 2002:SA36
tuition/fee increases, 2004:SA2
tuition/fees for, 2004:SA8, 2004:SA9
undergraduate diversity at, 2003:32
France, 2001:32
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
Free or reduced-price lunch programs, 2005:36. See also School lunch programs
Freshman undergraduates, 2004:31. See also Undergraduate students
Fringe benefits to faculty at postsecondary institutions, 2005:32
increase in enrollment in, 2004:3
Full-time employment for teachers, 2005:SA9
Full-time enrollment at postsecondary institutions, 2001:xxxiii, 2002:5, 2004:1. See also Enrollment, postsecondary education
graduate students, 2001:6, 2003:7
Gangs at schools, 2003:31
Gender, 2001:31
adult education participation, 2003:8
annual earnings of young adults, 2004:14
annual income, 2002:16
beginning teachers, 2003:29
community service of young adults, 2001:16
degrees earned by women, 2001:30
differences in values of high school seniors, 2001:20
disabilities, students with in elementary/secondary schools, 2005:6
distance education, 2002:38
English and foreign languages courses taken in high school, 2003:25
G Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Gender—continued


expectations for education, 2001:19

faculty at postsecondary institutions, 2002: 39

fourth-grade reading performance, 2002:7

graduate enrollment, 2002:6, 2003:7

international comparisons for the transition
to postsecondary education, 2004:17

international comparisons of mathematics
performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005: 11

international comparisons of reading per-
formance, 2002:9

international comparisons of science per-
formance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12

kindergarten, entry and retention, 2005:18

mathematics and science coursetaking in
high school, 2002:27, 2004:22

mathematics literacy, international com-
parisons, 2005:13

mathematics performance through
elementary/secondary level, 2001:12, 2003:
11, 2004:11, 2005:10

persistence of traditional-age students
towards bachelor’s degrees, 2005:22

principals in elementary/secondary schools,
2004:26

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

reading habits of adults, 2001:15, 2005:15

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

reading skill gains in kindergarten, 2003:
SA4–SA5

and salary parity, 2001:xxxviii, 2001:18

and school violence, 2001:44

science performance through elementary/
secondary level, 2001:13, 2002:12

student victimization, 2003:31

Gender—continued
teachers in elementary/secondary educa-
tion, 2005:SA3

teacher turnover rates, 2005:SA14, 2005: SA20

undergraduate enrollment, 2002:5, 2003:5,

violence at schools, 2005:30

writing performance through elementary/
secondary level, 2004:10

General Education Development (GED),

Geographic mobility of students, 2005:21

Geographic regions. See Regional distribu-
tions

Geography, 2003:13

Geometry, 2001:24, 2003:11. See also Math-
ematics
coursetaking by high school students, 2004:
21

Germany, 2001:32, 2001:36

civic performance, 2002:15

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

instructional hours, 2005:26

mathematics literacy, international com-
parisons, 2005:13

reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10

Ghana

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

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

Gifted and talented students, 2002:SA6,
2002:SA7

Goals for education. See Expectations for
education

Government appropriations for public post-
secondary institutions, 2005:40. See also
Federal government; State governments

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

The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year
refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3,
SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special
Analyses.

For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page
numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001,
2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in
the Indicator List on The Condition of Education
website and can only be found in the Print Edi-
tions [PDF’s].)
Grade-level studies. See also Age/Age comparisons
absenteeism, 2002:17
civic activities, 2003:16
civic knowledge performance, 2002:15
fourth-grade reading performance, 2002:7
geography performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:13
history performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:14
international comparisons of mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
kindergarten through 1st-grade reading and mathematics skills, 2001:8, 2001:9
mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:11, 2005:10
quality of teaching in 8th-grade mathematics, 2001:36
reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, 2005:14
reading performance through elementary/secondary level, 2005:9
teacher preparation for mathematics and science, 2001:43
teachers, 2005:SA21n7
twelfth-grade efforts, 2002:18
Grade-point average (GPA), 2001:xxxv
Grading students, 2001:46
Graduate degrees
attendance and employment patterns, 2001:6
earned by women, 2001:30, 2004:20
educational expectations of 10th-graders, 2004:15
first-professional degrees, 2001:6
Graduate degrees—continued
principals in elementary/secondary schools holding, 2004:26
work-related adult education, participation in, 2004:7
Graduate students, 2001:59
distance education, 2002:38
first-generation college students enrollment, 2001:xxxviii
foreign-born students, 2003:6
rate of enrollment, 2002:6, 2003:7
from colleges and universities, 2004:SA4, 2004:37
cost of attending college, 2002:44, 2003:43
as part of financial aid package to students, 2004:SA14–SA18
percentage of undergraduates receiving, 2004:SA15
Great Britain, 2001:32, 2001:57. See also United Kingdom of Great Britain
Greece
civic participation, 2003:16
civic performance, 2002:15
expenditures for education, 2003:40
instructional hours, 2005:26
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
revenues for elementary/secondary education, 2005:39
revenues for postsecondary education, 2005:40
Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Guidance counselors, 2004:27
Guns at schools, 2003:31

full-day kindergarten compared to, 2004:3
Handicapped students. See Disabilities, students with
Head Start, 2001:1
Health of population, 2002:14, 2004:12
high school dropouts reporting worse health, 2005:19
illness causing absenteeism, 2002:17
learning amongst kindergartners affected by, 2003:SA6
Health professions, degrees in, 2003:33
Higher education. See Postsecondary education
Higher Education Act (1972 reauthorization), 2004:SA4
Highly selective postsecondary institutions, 2004:30
High school education, 2001:31. See also Educational attainment; Elementary/secondary education
completion rates by race/ethnicity, 2002:25, 2005:23
dropout rates, 2002:19
dropout rates by race/ethnicity, 2005:19
earnings of young adults affected by, 2004:14
exit examinations, 2005:24
gender of teachers, 2005:SA3
High school education—continued
graduation requirements, 2004:21
guidance counselors in public elementary/secondary schools, 2004:27
health affected by, 2004:12
international comparisons, 2001:32
“out-of-field” teachers, 2004:24
parents attaining, 2001:4, 2003:2
size of schools, 2003:30
twelfth-grade interest in school, 2002:18
Hispanics
advanced placement course availability, 2005:25
annual earnings of young adults, 2005:16
community service of young adults, 2001:16
disabilities, inclusion of students with in regular classrooms, 2005:27
disabilities, students with in elementary/secondary schools, 2005:6
eyear literacy activities, 2003:37
elementary/secondary enrollment, 2002:3, 2004:5
employer financial aid for adult education, 2003:44
employment status of, 2005:17
English and foreign languages courses taken in high school, 2003:25
enrollment in public schools, 2001:3, 2005:4
faculty at postsecondary institutions, 2002:39
Hispanics—continued
family characteristics of, 2003:2
geographic mobility of students, 2005:21
geography performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:13
graduate enrollment, 2002:6, 2003:7
history performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:14
homeschooling, 2005:3
kindergarten enrollment, 2004:3
language spoken at home, 2003:4, 2005:5
mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, 2002:27, 2004:22
parental satisfaction with schools, 2001:55, 2002:40
parents’ level of education, 2001:4
passing exit examinations for high school, 2005:24
persistence of traditional-age students towards bachelor’s degrees, 2005:22
and poverty, 2002:11
prekindergarten programs, participation in, 2004:2
preprimary enrollment, 2001:1, 2002:1
in private schools, 2002:SA8, 2005:2
in public charter schools, 2002:30, 2005:28
reading and mathematics achievement through 3rd grade, 2004:8
reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, 2005:14
reading habits of adults, 2001:15, 2005:15
reading performance through elementary/secondary level, 2001:10, 2005:9
school choice, 2001:41, 2002:29
science performance through elementary/secondary level, 2001:13, 2002:12
Hispanics—continued
status dropout rates for high school, 2004:16
student perceptions of school’s social and learning environment, 2005:29
student victimization, 2003:31
theft at schools, 2005:30
undergraduate enrollment, 2003:12
voting participation, 2003:15
work-related adult education, participation in, 2004:7
writing performance through elementary/secondary level, 2004:10
young adults not in school or working, 2004:13
Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), 2005:31
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), 2005:31
History performance, 2003:14
Home activities, 2001:52
after school, 2003:38
child development and, 2005:35
for children entering kindergarten, 2003:36
fourth-grade reading performance, 2002:7
fourth-grade reading performance, 2002:7
Homeschooling, 2004:25, 2005:3
number of children in, 2005:39
Hong Kong. See also China
civic performance, 2002:15
instructional activities in 8th-grade mathematics, 2003:26
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
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For 2001:
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(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Hong Kong—continued
  reading literacy in, 2003:10
  science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Humanities courses, 2004:30
Human rights organizations, 2003:16
Hungary, 2001:57
  civic performance, 2002:15
  instructional hours, 2005:26
  mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
  mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
  mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
  reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
  science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Iceland
  instructional hours, 2005:26
  mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
  reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
  transition to postsecondary education, 2004:17
IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) (1975), 2005:6
Illinois
  state policies and procedures for transfer students, 2005:34
Immigrants/Immigration
  foreign-born students in postsecondary education, 2003:6
  language spoken at home, 2003:4
Income. See also Poverty levels; Salaries
  annual earnings of young adults, 2004:14, 2005:16
  enrollment in postsecondary education, 2002:21
  faculty at higher education institutions, 2001:49, 2002:39
  family, 2001:25
  affecting health, 2002:14, 2004:12
  cost of attending college, 2001:58, 2002:44, 2003:43, 2004:SA11 (See also Expected Family Contribution (EFC) for college costs)
  crime in school and, 2005:30
  dropout rates affected by, 2004:16
  enrollment in different types of postsecondary institutions, 2004:SA6
  enrollment rates in college affected by, 2001:26, 2005:20
  federal grants for postsecondary education, 2003:42
  financial aid to students affected by, 2004:SA5, 2004:37 (See also Financial aid to students)
  and first-generation students, 2001:xxxi
  grants to undergraduates, 2004:SA15
  influencing parental satisfaction with schools, 2001:55, 2002:40
  net price for college after grant money, 2004:SA19
  and parental involvement, 2001:54
  first-generation college students, 2001:xxxvii–xxxviii
  kindergarten enrollment affected by, 2004:3
Income—continued

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

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

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

Inservice training for teachers, 2002:SA13

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

Instructional methods, 2001:48. See also Faculty; Teachers/Teaching
international comparisons for 8th-grade science class, 2004:23
principals’ involvement with, 2002:SA15–SA16
reading skill gains for kindergartners, 2003:SA8–SA9

Interest rates for student loans, 2004:38
Internal Revenue Service, 2004:38
International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), 2002:15, 2003:16
International comparisons
civic participation, 2003:16
civic performance, 2002:15
educational attainment, 2001:32
instructional activities in mathematics, 2003:26
instructional activities in 8th-grade science classes, 2004:23
instructional hours, 2005:26
mathematics literacy, 2005:13
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
reading literacy, 2002:9, 2003:10
science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
transition to postsecondary education, 2004:17
International Socioeconomic Index (ISEI), 2002:9

Internet usage in education, 2001:39
distance education, 2002:SA32, 2002:38 (See also Distance education)
used by faculty, 2001:48
Interpretation of text, 2005:8

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

Ireland, 2002:9
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
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(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Israel
- mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
- reading literacy in, 2003:10
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12

Italy, 2001:32
- civic performance, 2002:15
- mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
- mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
- reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12

J

Japan, 2001:57
- educational attainment, 2001:32
- instructional activities in 8th-grade mathematics, 2003:26
- instructional activities in 8th-grade science classes, 2004:23
- mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
- quality of mathematics lessons in, 2001:36
- reading literacy in, 2002:9
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- transition to postsecondary education, 2004:17

Jordan
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- mathematics and science performance, 2002:13

K

- enrollment, 2005:1
- entry and retention, 2005:18
- home activities of children entering, 2003:36
- reading and mathematics proficiency in, 2003:9, 2005:8
- reading skill gains in, 2003:SA2–SA6
- time spent on reading activities and skills, 2003:SA9–SA11

Korea, 2002:9
- mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
- mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
- mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
- science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
- transition to postsecondary education, 2004:17

Kuwait, reading literacy in, 2003:10

L

Laboratory activities, 2004:23
Labor market outcomes, 2001:xxvii–xxxviii
Language spoken at home, 2003:2, 2003:4
   as risk factor, 2004:8, 2005:8
Latinos. See Hispanics
Latvia
   civic performance, 2002:15
   mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
   mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
   mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
   reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
   science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Law degrees, 2001:6
Learner outcomes. See Outcomes of education
Leave of absence from teaching, 2005:SA14
   “Leavers” (teachers who left teaching), 2005:SA11–SA12. See also Turnover rates for teachers
Lebanon
   mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
   science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Leisure reading. See Reading
Liberal arts, degrees in, 2003:33
Libraries in postsecondary institutions, 2005:33
Liechtenstein
   mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
   reading literacy in, 2002:9
Lifelong learning, 2003:8, 2003:44. See also
   Adult education
Limited English Proficiency (LEP). See also English as a Second Language (ESL)
   beginning teachers teaching students with, 2003:29
   language spoken at home, 2005:5
   in larger high schools, 2003:30
   in private schools, 2002:SA9, 2002:SA10
   teachers’ professional development, 2002:33
   testing accommodations for, 2004:9, 2004:11
Literacy, 2001:15, 2001:52. See also Reading
   as goal for principals, 2002:SA16
   international comparisons, 2002:9
   reading habits of adults, 2005:15
Literal inferences, 2005:8
Lithuania
   civic performance, 2002:15
   mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
   mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
   reading literacy in, 2003:10
   science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Loans to students for college, 2001:59, 2003:42, 2004:38. See also Student loans
   to postsecondary institutions, 2005:40
Luxembourg
   mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
   reading literacy in, 2002:9

M
Macao-China
   mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
Macedonia
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
reading literacy in, 2003:10
science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12

Malaysia
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12

Marriage, 2004:29
Master’s degrees, 2001:30, 2004:20, 2004:26. See also Graduate degrees
Master’s postsecondary institutions
faculty salaries and benefits at, 2005:32
minority enrollment rates, 2005:31
affecting transition to college, 2002:22
course taking by undergraduate students, 2004:30
eight-grade performance, 2005:10
exit examinations for high school, 2005:24
fourth-grade performance, 2005:10
instructional activities in 8th grade, 2003:26
in kindergarten through 1st grade, 2001:8, 2001:9, 2003:9
in kindergarten through 3rd grade, 2005:8
Mathematics—continued
literacy, international comparisons in, 2005:13
“out-of-field” teachers teaching, 2004:24
quality of content, 2001:36
subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, 2003:28
teachers’ preparation for, 2001:43
urbanicity and performance in, 2005:14
with vocational education, 2001:35
Meaning derived from text, 2005:8
Medical degrees, 2001:6
Mental retardation, 2005:6
Merit-based financial aid to students, 2004:SA2, 2004:37. See also Financial aid to students; Grants and scholarships
Metropolitan areas, 2001:56. See also Urbanicity
Mexico, 2001:57
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
reading literacy in, 2002:9
transition to postsecondary education, 2004:17
gender of teachers in, 2005:SA3
time spent in classrooms, 2005:26
Midwestern region schools. See Regional distributions
Minimum competency examinations, 2005:24
Minorities. See Race/ethnicity

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
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(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Mobility of students, 2005:21
Mobility of teachers, 2005:SA2–SA24. See also Teachers/Teaching

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

Montenegro
  mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13

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

Mothers. See also Parents
  expectation for student’s attainment, 2002:SA21
    enrollment of child in preprimary education, 2001:1
    home activities and early childhood development, 2005:35
  reading and mathematics performance of child through 1st grade, 2001:8
  reading and mathematics proficiency of elementary students, 2005:8
  as risk factor for child, 2004:8
Motor skill development, 2005:35

Music
  coursetaking by undergraduate students, 2004:30

Music—continued
  subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, 2003:28

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2002:SA2
  comparison between private and public school students, 2002:SA17
  fourth-grade reading performance, 2002:7
  geography performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:13
  history performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:14
  homework, 2001:21, 2001:22
  poverty affecting achievement, 2003:12
  reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, 2005:14
  science performance through elementary/secondary level, 2001:13, 2002:7
  writing performance through elementary/secondary level, 2004:10

National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), 2002:14

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), 2003:20

National Commission on Excellence in Education, 2001:xiii

National Education Goals Panel, 2001:15, 2001:16

National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), 2001:xviii, 2001:xix
  educational expectations, 2001:xxii

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions (PDFs).)
National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS)—continued
postsecondary education persistence, 2001: xxx
proficiency test levels, 2001: xli
National Health Interview Survey, 2002: 14, 2004: 12
National Household Education Surveys Program, 2001: 52
National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), 2002: SA25, 2004: SA4
National School Lunch Programs, 2002: 7, 2002: 12, 2005: 36. See also School lunch programs
New York state policies and procedures for transfer students, 2005: 34
New Zealand mathematics and science performance, 2002: 13
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005: 13
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005: 11
reading literacy, 2003: 10
science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005: 12
transition to postsecondary education, 2004: 17
Ninth grade, civic activities, 2003: 16
No Child Left Behind Act (2001), 2005: 24
Nonparental childcare arrangements, 2003: 38, 2004: 33
“Nonpoor,” 2004: 13
Nonsectarian private schools, 2005: 2. See also Private elementary/secondary schools
Nonselective postsecondary institutions, 2004: 30
Nontraditional undergraduate students, 2002: SA25–SA39
combining school and work, 2002: SA29–SA31
definitions of, 2002: SA25–SA27
distance education, 2002: SA31–SA32
distance education, 2002: SA31–SA32
persistence after 3 years, 2002: SA32–SA34
persistence and attainment after 5 years, 2002: SA34–SA38

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
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References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions (PDF).)
Northeastern region schools. See Regional distributions
Norway, 2001:57
  civic performance, 2002:15
  mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
  mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
  reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
  science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
  transition to postsecondary education, 2004:17
Nursery schools, 2001:1
Nurses, 2004:28

0
Occupational coursetaking, 2001:35. See also Vocational education
Occupations
  chosen by college students, 2001:xxxvii
  (See also Field of study)
  work-related adult education, participation in, 2004:7
Office of Special Education Programs, 2001: 40
Opinion surveys
  parental satisfaction with school, 2001:41, 2001:55
  parents’ on children’s schools, 2002:40
  teachers’ on satisfaction with school, 2002: SA14
  twelfth-graders’ interest in school, 2002:18
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2001:57
  mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
  reading literacy, international comparisons, 2002:9
  Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—continued
  transition to postsecondary education, 2004:17
Outcomes of education, 2002:7–16, 2004: 8–14
  adult reading habits, 2001:15, 2005:15
  annual earnings of young adults, 2005:16
  civics performance in elementary/secondary school, 2002:15
  community service participation in grades 6–12, 2001:16
  employment status, 2005:17
  first-generation college students, 2001: xxxvii–xxxviii (See also First-generation college students)
  health issues, 2002:14, 2004:12
  international comparisons in mathematics and science, 2002:13
  (See also Mathematics)
  reading and mathematics through 3rd grade, 2004:8
  reading and mathematics through 1st grade, 2001:8, 2001:9
  (See also Reading)
  (See also Science)
  writing performance in elementary/secondary education, 2004:10
  youth neither enrolled nor working, 2004:13
  average length of stay at one school, 2005: SA18

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
  References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
  Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions (PDF's).)
“Out-of-field” teachers—continued
  dissatisfaction, sources of, 2005:SA18
  measurements for, 2005:SA21n9
  newly hired teachers, 2005:SA9
  turnover rates affected by, 2005:SA13–SA14

Overcrowding in schools, 2001:45

P

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

Parents—continued
  level of education—continued
    preprimary education enrollment affected by, 2001:1, 2002:1
    reading and mathematics proficiency of elementary students, 2005:8
    reading skills of kindergartners and 1st-graders affected by, 2001:8, 2003:9
    as risk factor, 2004:8
    opinions of children’s schools, 2002:40
    satisfaction with school at elementary/secondary level, 2001:41, 2001:55
    school choice, 2004:25
    two-parent households, 2003:2

Parochial schools, 2005:2. See also Catholic schools

Part-time employment for teachers, 2005:SA9
  employment during, 2004:29
  graduate students, 2001:6, 2003:7

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


Peer culture, 2001:20

Peer-tutoring in kindergarten, 2003:SA9

  persistence of student receiving, 2003:23

Perceptions by students of school environment, 2005:29

Reference Numbers


The year of publication appears in bold type.

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

For 2002–2005:

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

For 2001:

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

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
influence of principals on, 2004:26
Performing arts, degrees in, 2003:33
Persistence in education
elementary/secondary education, 2001:23, 2003:17 (See also Dropout rates)
postsecondary education, 2001:xxx–xxxvii
after 5 years, 2001:xxxvi–xxxvii, 2004:19
after 3 years, 2001:xxxiv–xxxvi
bachelor’s degrees earning, 2005:22
cost of attending college, 2001:58, 2004:SA2–SA30 (See also Cost of attending college)

cost burden of college graduates, 2004:38
degrees earned by women, 2001:30
distance education, 2001:49
employment while enrolled in, 2001:6, 2004:29
expenditures for, 2002:41
first-generation students, 2001:xxx–xxxi (See also First-generation college students)
employment affecting, 2004:29
first-year challenges, 2001:xxxi–xxxii
high school curriculum affecting, 2002:23
nontraditional students, 2002:SA32–SA38
remedial coursework affecting, 2001:29
students with Pell Grants, 2002:24, 2003:23
transfer students from community colleges, 2003:19
Philippines
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Physical education
coursetaking by undergraduate students, 2004:30
subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, 2003:28
Physics, 2004:21
Playing with children, 2005:35. See also Home activities
Poland, 2001:57
civic performance, 2002:15
expenditures for education, 2002:41
instructional hours, 2005:26
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
reading literacy in, 2002:9
transition to postsecondary education, 2004:17
Political parties, 2003:16
Portugal

civic participation, 2003:16
civic performance, 2002:15
instructional hours, 2005:26
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
reading literacy in, 2002:9
Postsecondary education, 2001:46–51, 2002:35–39, 2004:29–32. See also Enrollment, postsecondary education; Four-year institutions; Private postsecondary institutions; Public postsecondary institutions; Students whose parents did not go to college; Two-year institutions
access to, 2001:xxviii–xxxvi
adult learning, 2001:7
Expenditures for, 2002:41
Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Postsecondary education—continued
geographic mobility of students, 2005:21
graduate enrollment, 2002:6
guidance counselors preparing students for, 2004:27
increase in enrollment in, 2004:1
instructional methods, 2001:46
international comparisons of expenditures for, 2003:40, 2004:36
mathematics curriculum in high school affecting, 2001:24
nontraditional undergraduate students, 2002:SA25–SA39 (See also Nontraditional undergraduate students)
perceptions of college costs, 2001:25
Persistence in attaining a degree, 2001:27, 2004:19 (See also Persistence in education)
preparing for, 2001:xxii–xxx (See also Preparing for college)
public support for, 2002:42, 2005:40
remedial coursework affecting persistence, 2001:29
remedial coursework provided, 2004:31
tertiary-type A and B programs, 2004:17
undergraduate students (See also Undergraduate students)
coursetaking by, 2004:30
diversity among, 2003:32
Poverty levels, 2001:56, 2003:SA13n3
achievement test outcomes, 2003:12
dropout rates affected by, 2004:16
early literacy activities, 2003:SA5, 2003:37
educational attainment, 2003:22
educational expectations of 10th-graders, 2004:15
of elementary/secondary students, 2002:4, 2004:5
expenditures for elementary/secondary education by, 2005:36
federal grants and loans to undergraduates, 2003:42
full-day vs. half-day kindergarten, 2003:SA7
geography performance of elementary/secondary students, 2003:13
health affected by, 2004:12
history performance of elementary/secondary students, 2003:14
home activities and early childhood development, 2005:35
home reading activities, 2003:36
kindergarten, entry and retention, 2005:18
mathematics performance of elementary/secondary students, 2003:11
mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, 2005:10
mathematics proficiency of elementary students, 2005:8
“out-of-field” teachers, 2004:24
prekindergarten programs, participation in, 2004:2
preprimary education, 2002:1
for private schools, 2002:SA9
reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, 2005:14
reading performance through elementary/secondary level, 2004:9, 2005:9
reading proficiency of elementary students, 2005:8
revenues for schools districts affected by, 2003:41
Poverty levels—continued

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Poverty levels—continued
as risk factor, 2004:8
for school-aged children, 2003:2
science performance of elementary/secondary students, 2002:12
support staff at public elementary/secondary schools, 2004:28
teachers’ average length of stay at public schools affected by, 2005:SA17–SA18
urbanicity, 2003:3
young adults not in school or working, 2004:13
Prekindergarten programs, 2004:2
Preparing for college, 2001:xxii–xxx
application process, 2001:xxix–xxx
at-risk students, 2002:22
cost of attending college, 2001:xxx (See also Cost of attending college)
extpectations, 2001:xxiii
first-generation students, 2001:xxxi (See also First-generation college students)
guidance counselors, 2004:27
high school curriculum, 2001:xxiv–xxviii, 2001:xxxi, 2002:23 (See also Curriculum, high school)
taking college entrance examinations, 2001:xxviii (See also College entrance examinations)

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

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Private elementary/secondary schools
—continued
  school climate, 2002:SA10–SA17
  student achievement, 2002:SA18
  student characteristics, 2002:SA7–SA10
  teachers at, 2002:SA11, 2002:32
  turnover rate for teachers at, 2005:SA10–SA11, 2005:SA15 (See also Turnover rates for teachers)

Private postsecondary institutions, 2001:27, 2001:58. See also Postsecondary education
  average expected family contribution for tuition, 2004:SA27
  average price of attending, 2004:SA10
  debt burden of college graduates, 2004:38
  distance education courses, 2004:32
  faculty salaries and benefits at, 2005:32
  faculty tenure at, 2003:35
  financial aid to students, 2004:SA4, 2004:37 (See also Financial aid to students)
  grants to undergraduates, 2004:SA15, 2004:SA17
  net price for, 2002:44, 2003:43
  net price for after grants, 2004:SA18, 2004:SA19
  persistence in attaining a degree, 2003:20, 2004:19

Private postsecondary institutions
—continued
  remedial coursework in, 2004:31
  student loans for, 2004:SA20
  students with disabilities at, 2003:34
  time to completion for bachelor’s degree, 2003:21
  tuition/fee increases, 2004:SA2
  tuition/fees for, 2004:SA8
  undergraduate enrollment at, 2003:32
  Professional development for teachers, 2002:33
  Proficiency, subject
    mathematics in grade 4 and grade 8, 2004:11
    reading and mathematics, kindergarten through grade 3, 2005:8
    reading in grade 4 and grade 8, 2004:9
    writing, 2004:10
  Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2002:9
    instructional hours, 2005:26
    mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
  Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), 2003:10
    instructional hours, 2005:26
  Projections
    elementary/secondary school enrollment, 2004:4, 2005:1
    undergraduate enrollment in college, 2004:6, 2005:7
  Property taxes as source of revenue for public schools, 2005:37
  Proprietary schools, 2004:SA5
  Protective services, degrees in, 2003:33
  Psychologists, 2004:28
  demographic characteristics of, 2005:28
Public elementary/secondary schools, 2001: 2, 2004: 4. See also Elementary/secondary education
alternative schools, 2003: 27
average length of stay for teachers at, 2005: SA17
beginning teachers at, 2003: 29
class size of kindergarten classes, 2001: 37
compared to private schools, 2002: SA2–SA39 (See also Private elementary/secondary schools)
disabilities, students with enrolled in, 2005: 6
English and foreign languages courses taken in high school, 2003: 25
enrollment, 2002: 2, 2004: 1, 2005: 1
expenditures by category and region, 2005: 38
expenditures by district poverty, 2005: 36
full-day vs. half-day kindergarten, 2003: SA7, 2003: SA12 (See also Kindergarten)
funding for, 2002: SA2
guidance counselors in, 2004: 27
kindergarten enrollment, 2004: 3
mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, 2002: 27, 2004: 22
mathematics performance, 2004: 11, 2005: 10
“out-of-field” teachers in, 2005: SA5 (See also “Out-of-field” teachers)
overcrowding in, 2001: 45
prekindergarten programs at, 2004: 2
principals, 2002: SA16, 2004: 26
professional development of teachers, 2002: 33
racial distribution in, 2001: 3, 2002: 3, 2005: 4
reading performance, 2004: 9, 2005: 9
revenues, changes in sources for, 2005: 37
revenues for, 2003: 41

Public elementary/secondary schools—continued
student/teacher ratios in, 2001: 38
support staff at, 2004: 28
teacher qualifications, 2002: 32
teachers’ preparedness to use computers and the Internet, 2001: 39
time spent in classroom, 2005: 26
urbanicity affecting reading and mathematics performances, 2005: 14
writing performance, 2004: 10

Public postsecondary institutions, 2001: 27, 2001: 58. See also Postsecondary education
average expected family contribution for tuition, 2004: SA26–SA27 (See also Cost of attending college)
average price of attending, 2004: SA10
debt burden of college graduates, 2004: 38
distance education courses, 2004: 32
expected family contribution (EFC) for college costs, 2004: SA12
faculty salaries and benefits at, 2005: 32
faculty tenure at, 2003: 35
financial aid to students, 2004: 37
grants to undergraduates, 2004: SA15, 2004: SA17
net price for, 2002: 44, 2003: 43
net price for after grants, 2004: SA18, 2004: SA19
persistence in attaining a degree, 2004: 19

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Public postsecondary institutions —continued
  persistence towards a bachelor’s degree at, 2003:20
  remedial coursework in, 2004:31
  revenues for, 2005:40
  student loans for, 2004:SA20
  students with disabilities at, 2003:34
time to completion for bachelor’s degree, 2003:21
tuition/fee increases, 2004:SA2
  tuition/fees for, 2004:SA8
Public revenue, 2005:39. See also Revenues for education
Pupil/teacher ratios, 2001:38

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

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

Race/ethnicity—continued
  early literacy activities, 2003:37
  elementary/secondary enrollment, 2002:3, 2004:5
  employer financial aid for adult education, 2003:44
  employment status by, 2005:17
  English and foreign languages courses taken in high school, 2003:25
  exit examinations for high school, 2005:24
  faculty at postsecondary institutions, 2002:39
  and family environment, 2003:2
  full-day vs. half-day kindergarten, 2003:SA7
  geographic mobility of students, 2005:21
  geography performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:13
  graduate enrollment, 2002:6, 2003:7
  history performance through elementary/secondary level, 2003:14
  home activities and early childhood development, 2005:35
  homeschooling, 2005:3
  kindergarten enrollment, 2004:3
  language spoken at home, 2005:5
  mathematics and science coursetaking in high school, 2002:27, 2004:22
  “out-of-field” teachers, 2004:24
  parental involvement in schools, 2001:54
  parental satisfaction with schools, 2001:55, 2002:40
  parents’ level of education, 2001:4 (See also Parents)
Race/ethnicity—continued
persistence of traditional-age students towards bachelor’s degrees, 2005:22
and poverty, 2002:11
prekindergarten programs, participation in, 2004:2
preprimary education, 2001:1, 2002:1
principal in elementary/secondary schools, 2004:26
private school enrollment, 2002:SA7–SA9, 2005:2
public charter schools, 2002:30, 2005:28
public school enrollment, 2001:1, 2002:1
reading and mathematics achievement through 3rd grade, 2004:8
reading and mathematics performances in public schools by urbanicity, 2005:14
reading habits of adults, 2001:15, 2005:9
and school violence, 2001:44, 2005:30
science performance through elementary/secondary level, 2001:13, 2002:12
status dropout rates for high school, 2004:16
student perceptions of school’s social and learning environment, 2005:29
student victimization, 2002:34
voting participation, 2003:15
work-related adult education, participation in, 2004:7
writing performance through elementary/secondary level, 2004:10
young adults not in school or working, 2004:13
Reading
Black-White achievement gap, 2002:8
early literacy activities, 2003:37, 2005:35
eighth-grade performance, 2004:9, 2005:9
family activities encouraging, 2001:52, 2003:36
international comparisons, 2002:9, 2003:10
in kindergarten through 1st grade, 2001:8, 2001:9, 2003:SA2–SA13, 2003:9 (See also Kindergarten)
in kindergarten through 3rd grade, 2005:8
private vs. public school achievement, 2002:SA18
remedial coursework in postsecondary education, 2001:29, 2004:18
remedial coursework provided for undergraduates, 2004:31
urbanicity and performance in, 2005:14
changes to the federal financial aid system, 2004:SA3
Stafford loan program, changes to, 2004:SA19–SA20
Re-entrants (teachers), 2005:SA6
Regional distributions
advanced placement course availability, 2005:25
expenditures for elementary/secondary education, 2005:38

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Regional distributions—continued
full-day vs. half-day kindergarten, 2003: SA7
kindergarten enrollment, 2004:3
overcrowding in schools, 2001:45
poverty levels among school-aged children, 2002:4, 2003:3
prekindergarten programs at public schools, 2004:2
private school enrollment, 2005:2
public alternative schools, 2003:27
public charter schools, 2005:28
public school enrollment, 2005:4
race/ethnicity in elementary/secondary schools enrollment, 2002:3
revenue sources for elementary/secondary schools, 2002:43
revenue sources for public elementary/secondary schools, 2005:37
school choice, 2002:29, 2004:25
time spent in classroom, 2005:26
Rehabilitation Act (1973), 2003:34
Relatives of families. See Families
Religious affiliation
private elementary/secondary schools, 2002:SA3, 2002:SA4, 2002:SA5 (See also Catholic schools; Private elementary/secondary schools)
school choice, 2002:29, 2004:25
Repayment of school debt, 2004:38. See also Student loans
Repeating kindergarten, 2005:18
Research by postsecondary faculty and staff, 2001:51
Residency, length of, 2003:15
Retention of students, 2003:20, 2005:18
Retirement of faculty, 2003:35
Retirement of teachers, 2005:SA20, 2005:SA22n30
defining, 2005:SA21n11
employment status, 2005:SA22n22
teaching out-of-field, 2005:SA9
Revenues for education, 2002:42, 2002:43
changes in sources for public elementary/secondary schools, 2005:37 (See also Public elementary/secondary schools)
as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), 2005:39
postsecondary institutions, 2005:40
private elementary/secondary schools, 2002:SA2
for public school districts, 2003:41
home activities and early childhood development, 2005:35
reading and mathematics proficiency of elementary students, 2005:8
Romania
civic performance, 2002:15
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
reading literacy in, 2003:10
science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Rural education, elementary/secondary expenditures, 2001:56. See also Urbanicity
Russia
civic performance, 2002:15
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
Index

Continued

Russia—continued
  mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
  reading literacy in, 2002:9, 2003:10
  science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12

S

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

Reference Numbers


The year of publication appears in bold type.

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

For 2002–2005:
  References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
  For 2001:
  Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
School size, 2004:22
  overcrowding, 2001:45
pupil/teacher ratios, 2001:38
School-sponsored activities, 2001:16
course-taking by undergraduate students, 2004:30
exit examinations for high school, 2005:24
instructional activities in 8th grade, 2004:23
international comparisons of performance in, 2002:13, 2005:11
“out-of-field” teachers teaching, 2004:24
performance through elementary/secondary level, 2001:13, 2002:12
subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, 2003:28
teachers’ preparation for, 2001:43
Scotland. See also United Kingdom of Great Britain
  mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
  reading literacy in, 2003:10
  science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Selective postsecondary institutions, 2004:30
  enrollment and persistence towards a bachelor’s degree, 2005:22
gender
  geography performance, 2003:13
  history performance, 2003:14
Serbia—continued
  mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
  science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Sex. See Gender
Singapore
  mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
  mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
  reading literacy in, 2003:10
  science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Single-parent households, 2004:8
  home activities and early childhood development, 2005:35
  reading and mathematics proficiency of elementary students affected by, 2005:8
Skipping school, 2002:17
Slovak Republic
  civic performance, 2002:15
  mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
  mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
  mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
  reading literacy in, 2003:10
  science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Slovenia
  civic performance, 2002:15
  mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
  mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
  reading literacy in, 2003:10
  science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
  References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
  Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Slovenia—continued
science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Social sciences
coursetaking by undergraduate students, 2004:30
exit examinations for high school, 2005:24
subject expertise of elementary/secondary teachers, 2003:28
Social studies
“out-of-field” teachers teaching, 2004:24
Social workers, 2004:28
Socioeconomic status (SES), 2003:22. See also
Poverty levels
educational expectations of 10th-graders, 2004:15
South Africa
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:11
science performance for 4th and 8th grade, 2005:12
Southern region schools. See Regional distributions
Spain
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
reading literacy in, 2002:9
Spanish as language spoken at home, 2005:5
Special education, 2001:40
aides, 2004:28
disabilities, students with in elementary/secondary schools, 2005:6
Special instructional programs, 2002:
SA6–SA7
Speech therapists, 2004:28
Sports, 2001:20
after-school activities, 2004:33, 2004:34
Staff, 2004:27, 2004:28. See also Faculty;
Principals; Teachers/Teaching
Stafford loan program, 2004:SA3, 2004:
Standards-based exit examinations, 2005:24
State governments, 2002:43
exit examination requirements, 2005:24
financial aid to students, 2004:SA4
grants to undergraduates, 2004:SA16–
SA18
retirement requirements for teachers, 2005:
SA22n30
revenues to postsecondary institutions, 2005:40
revenues to school districts from, 2003:41,
2005:37
transfer students, policies and procedures
towards, 2005:34
Status dropout rates for high school, 2002:
19, 2003:17, 2004:16, 2005:19. See also
Dropout rates
Stopouts from postsecondary education,
2001:xxxii, 2001:xxxiv, 2001:27. See also
Dropout rates
nontraditional students, 2002:SA32–SA38
(See also Nontraditional undergraduate students)
Student loans, 2001:59, 2003:42, 2004:
See also Financial aid to students
balance with grants, 2004:SA23, 2004:
SA25
cost of college attendance, 2002:44
within financial aid system, 2004:SA6,
2004:SA7
net price of college after grants and loans,
2004:SA21–SA25
repayment, 2004:SA29n, 2004:15

Reference Numbers
This is a cumulative index for the 2001, 2002,
2003, 2004, and 2005 print editions of The
Condition of Education.
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
Students whose parents did not go to college, 2001:xviii–xliii
after college, 2001:xxxvii–xxxviii
preparation in postsecondary education, 2001:xxx–xxxvii (See also First-generation college students)
preparing for college, 2001:xxii–xxx (See also Preparing for college)
Student/teacher ratios, 2001:38
private schools, 2002:SA5, 2002:SA6
Student teaching, 2004:30
Student victimization, 2002:34
fights between racial/ethnic groups, 2005:29
theft at schools, 2005:30
violence declining at elementary/secondary schools, 2005:30 (See also Violence)
Subject expertise for elementary/secondary teachers, 2003:28. See also “Out-of-field” teachers
Surveys of opinions
parental satisfaction with school, 2001:41, 2001:55
parents’ on children’s schools, 2002:40
teachers’ on satisfaction with school, 2002:SA14
twelfth-graders’ interest in school, 2002:18
Sweden, 2001:57
civic performance, 2002:15
instructional activities in 8th-grade mathematics, 2003:26
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
reading literacy in, 2002:9

T
Taxes as sources of revenue for public schools, 2005:37
academic background, 2002:31
beginning, 2003:29
demographics of workforce, 2005:SA3–SA6
evaluation of, 2002:SA13
instructional practices in kindergarten, 2003:SA8–SA9
mathematics and science, 2001:36, 2001:43
newly hired, 2005:SA6–SA11
preparedness in using computers and the Internet, 2001:39
in public charter schools, 2002:30
qualifications of, 2001:42
turnover rates for, 2005:SA11–SA18 (See also Turnover rates for teachers)
Technology in education
  elementary/secondary, 2001:39
  libraries in postsecondary institutions, 2005:33
  postsecondary, 2001:48
Television
  students’ use of time, 2001:22
Tenth grade, 2004:15
Tenure at postsecondary institutions, 2003:35
Tertiary-type A and B programs, 2004:17
Testing accommodations, 2004:9, 2004:11
  mathematics performance through elementary/secondary level, 2005:10
  reading performance through elementary/secondary level, 2005:9
Tests. See Achievement tests; College entrance examinations; Exit examinations for high school
Texas
  state polices and procedures for transfer students, 2005:34
  turnover rates for teachers affected by poverty, 2005:SA16
Thailand
  mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
  mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
Theft at schools, 2005:30
Third grade
  reading and mathematics achievement, 2004:8
  reading and mathematics skills attained in, 2005:8
Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), 2001:43
  activities in 8th-grade mathematics, 2003:26
  compared to the TIMSS-Repeat, 2002:13
Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)—continued
  quality of mathematics lessons, 2001:36
  Videotape Study of 8th-grade science classes, 2004:23
Time
  faculty use of, 2001:51
  spent in classroom, elementary/secondary education, 2005:26
  student use of, 2001:22
Time to completion for bachelor’s degree, 2003:21
Title I, 2004:28
Title IV postsecondary institutions, 2004:31
  distance education, 2004:32
Trade schools, 2004:SA5, 2004:1
Training for teachers, 2002:SA13
  characteristics of, 2005:SA15
  defining, 2005:SA21n11
  teaching out-of-field, 2005:SA9
  years of teaching experience, 2005:SA16–SA17
  state polices and procedures for, 2005:34
  time to completion for bachelor’s degrees, 2003:21
  See also Preparing for college
  enrollment rates in college, 2003:18, 2005:20
  international comparisons, 2004:17
Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)
  fourth- and eighth-grade mathematics performance, 2005:11
  fourth- and eighth-grade science performance, 2005:12

Reference Numbers

The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.

For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.

For 2001:
Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.

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

Continued

Tuition/fees for postsecondary education, 2001:58. See also Cost of attending college efforts to fund postsecondary education, 2002:42
increases in, 2004:SA2, 2005:40
need analysis for student financial aid, 2004:SA8–SA10
net tuition after grants, 2004:SA18, 2004:SA19
percentage distribution for undergraduates at 4-year institutions, 2004:SA9
perceptions of college costs, 2001:25
for types of institutions, 2004:SA8

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

Turkey
mathematics and science performance, 2002:13
mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13
reading literacy in, 2003:10
transition to postsecondary education, 2004:17

Turnover rates for teachers, 2005:SA11–SA18
“leavers” versus transfers, 2005:SA13–SA15
number of years before leaving school, 2005:SA16–SA18
by school control and poverty levels, 2005:SA15–SA16
teacher dissatisfaction, 2005:SA18, 2005:SA19

Twelfth grade, 2004:18
Two-parent households, 2003:2. See also Parents
Two-year institutions, 2001:58. See also Post-secondary education
average price of attending, 2004:38
expectations for high school seniors, 2001:19
expected family contribution (EFC) for college costs, 2004:SA12, 2004:SA26
faculty salaries and benefits at, 2005:32
faculty tenure at, 2003:35
grants to undergraduates, 2004:SA15, 2004:SA17
minority enrollment rates, 2005:31
net price for, 2002:44, 2003:43
net price for after grants, 2004:SA18, 2004:SA19
persistence in attaining a degree, 2001:27, 2004:19
state polices and procedures for transfer students, 2005:34
stopouts at, 2001:xxxiv

state loans for, 2004:SA20
students with disabilities at, 2003:34
transferring to 4-year institutions, 2003:19, 2003:21

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type. Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
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Two-year institutions—continued
  tuition/fee increases, 2004:SA2
  tuition/fees for, 2004:SA8
  undergraduate diversity at, 2003:32

Urbanicity—continued
  fourth-grade reading performance, 2002:7
  guidance counselors in public elementary/secondary schools, 2004:27
  private elementary/secondary schools, 2002:SA3–SA4
  public alternative schools, 2003:27
  reading and mathematics performances in elementary/secondary schools, 2005:14
  size of high schools, 2003:30
  time spent in classroom, 2005:26

Uruguay
  mathematics literacy, international comparisons, 2005:13

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

V
    declining, 2005:30
    fights between racial/ethnic groups, 2005:29
  Visas, student, 2003:6
  Visual arts, degrees in, 2003:33
  Vocational education, 2001:35
    comparison between private and public schools, 2002:SA6, 2002:SA7
    health affected by, 2004:12
    not included as adult education, 2003:8
    at public alternative schools, 2003:27
    student aspirations, 2001:19
    work-related adult education, participation in, 2004:7
  Volunteering, 2001:16, 2001:54
    international comparisons, 2003:16
  Voting participation, 2003:15

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
  References beginning with “SA” (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
For 2001:
  Roman numerals (e.g., ii, iii, iv) refer to page numbers in the Essay.
(Please note that some indicators from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 may no longer appear in the Indicator List on The Condition of Education website and can only be found in the Print Editions [PDFs].)
W
Web sites, 2001:48
Western region schools. See Regional distributions
Women, earning degrees, 2001:30, 2004:20. See also Gender
Work experience of teachers, 2005:SA3, 2005:SA8. See also Teachers/Teaching
Working while attending school (postsecondary education), 2002:37, 2004:29. See also Employment status
affecting persistence in educational attainment, 2002:SA36, 2002:SA38
changes in last decade, 2003:32
distance education, 2002:38
nontraditional undergraduate students, 2002:SA25, 2002:SA26, 2002:SA29–SA31 (See also Nontraditional undergraduate students)
Working while attending school (secondary education), 2001:21. See also Employment status
Work-related education, 2003:44, 2004:7. See also Work-based learning programs
Work-study programs, 2004:SA3
Writing, 2004:10
remedial coursework provided for undergraduate students, 2004:31
Y
Young adults
annual earnings of, 2004:14
not in school or working, 2004:13

Reference Numbers
The year of publication appears in bold type.
Arabic numerals (e.g., 2, 3, 4) following the year refer to Indicator numbers.
For 2002–2005:
References beginning with "SA" (e.g., SA2, SA3, SA4) refer to page numbers in the Special Analyses.
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