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FOREWORD

The 2008 edition of the Digest of Education Statistics is the 44th in a series of publications initiated in 1962. The Digest has been issued annually except for combined editions for the years 1977–78, 1983–84, and 1985–86. Its primary purpose is to provide a compilation of statistical information covering the broad field of American education from prekindergarten through graduate school. The Digest includes a selection of data from many sources, both government and private, and draws especially on the results of surveys and activities carried out by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). To qualify for inclusion in the Digest, material must be nationwide in scope and of current interest and value. The publication contains information on a variety of subjects in the field of education statistics, including the number of schools and colleges, teachers, enrollments, and graduates, in addition to educational attainment, finances, federal funds for education, libraries, and international comparisons. Supplemental information on population trends, attitudes on education, education characteristics of the labor force, government finances, and economic trends provides background for evaluating education data. Although the Digest contains important information on federal education funding, more detailed information on federal activities is available from federal education program offices.

The Digest contains seven chapters: All Levels of Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, Postsecondary Education, Federal Programs for Education and Related Activities, Outcomes of Education, International Comparisons of Education, and Libraries and Educational Technology. Preceding these chapters is an Introduction that provides a brief overview of current trends in American education, which supplements the tabular materials in chapters 1 through 7. The Digest concludes with three appendixes. The first appendix, Guide to Sources, provides a brief synopsis of the surveys used to generate the Digest tables; the second, Definitions, is included to help readers understand terms used in the Digest; and the third, Index of Table Numbers, allows readers to quickly locate tables on specific topics.

In addition to updating many of the statistics that have appeared in previous years, this edition contains new material, including:

• percentage distribution of quality ratings of child care arrangements of children at about 4 years of age, by type of arrangement and selected child and family characteristics (table 47);
• children's specific language, literacy, mathematics, color knowledge, and fine motor skills at about 4 years of age, by age of child and selected characteristics (table 114);
• average National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading scale scores of 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-graders, by selected student and school characteristics (table 123);
• average NAEP writing scale score and percentage of students attaining NAEP writing achievement levels, by selected student characteristics and grade level (table 125);
• average NAEP mathematics scale scores of 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-graders, by selected student and school characteristics (table 136);
• average NAEP mathematics scale score of 8th-graders and percentage reporting various attitudes toward mathematics work, by frequency of attitude and selected student and school characteristics (table 137);
• average NAEP science scale score of 12th-graders and percentage reporting various attitudes toward science, by selected student and school characteristics (table 140);
• percentage of elementary and secondary school students who do homework outside of school, whose parents check that homework is done, and whose parents help with homework, by frequency and selected student and school characteristics (table 156);
• total full-year enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by control and type of institution and state or jurisdiction (table 222);
• degrees in Arabic, Chinese, Korean, and Russian conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree (table 309);
• full-time, first-time degree/certificate seeking undergraduate students enrolled in degree-granting institutions, by participation and average amount awarded in financial aid programs, and type and control of institution (table 336); and
• percentage of 18- to 25-year-olds reporting substance abuse during the past 30 days and the past year, by drug used and selected characteristics (table 396).

Updates to tables from the next Digest of Education Statistics will appear on the NCES website prior to printing the full edition. The Digest can be accessed from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest.

Val Plisko
Associate Commissioner
Early Childhood, International, and Crosscutting Studies Division
Contents

Foreword ................................................................. iii
List of Figures .......................................................... vi
List of Tables ........................................................... vii
Introduction ............................................................... 1
Guide to Tabular Presentation ........................................ 7
Chapter 1. All Levels of Education ................................... 9
Chapter 2. Elementary and Secondary Education .................... 53
Chapter 3. Postsecondary Education ................................. 269
Chapter 4. Federal Programs for Education and Related Activities ............................................ 527
Chapter 5. Outcomes of Education .................................... 553
Chapter 6. International Comparisons of Education ................ 577
Chapter 7. Libraries and Educational Technology ................... 611
Appendices
   A. Guide to Sources ................................................ 629
   B. Definitions ......................................................... 669
   C. Index of Table Numbers ........................................ 683
# List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The structure of education in the United States</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Enrollment, total expenditures in constant dollars, and expenditures as a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP), by level of education: Selected years, 1965–66 through 2007–08</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Percentage of persons 25 years old and over, by highest level of educational attainment: Selected years, 1940 through 2008</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Percentage of persons 25 through 29 years old, by highest level of educational attainment: Selected years, 1940 through 2008</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Highest level of education attained by persons 25 years old and over: March 2008</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Total and full-day preprimary enrollment of 3- to 5-year-olds: October 1970 through October 2007</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Percentage change in public elementary and secondary enrollment, by state: Fall 2000 to fall 2006</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Percentage change in total enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by state: Fall 2000 through fall 2006</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by age: Fall 1970 through fall 2017</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Full-time-equivalent (FTE) students per staff member in public and private degree-granting institutions, by type of staff: 1976 and 2007</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Percentage distribution of total revenues of private not-for-profit degree-granting institutions, by source of funds: 2005–06</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Federal on-budget funds for education, by level or other educational purpose: Selected years, 1965 through 2008</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Percentage of federal on-budget funds for education, by agency: Fiscal year 2007</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Labor force participation rate of persons 20 to 64 years old, by age group and highest level of education: 2007</td>
<td>554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Unemployment rates of persons 25 years old and over, by highest level of education: 2007</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Labor force status of 2006–07 high school dropouts and completers not enrolled in college: October 2007</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Median annual earnings of persons 25 years old and over, by highest level of education and sex: 2007</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Percentage change in enrollment, by selected areas of the world and level of education: 1990 to 2005</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Bachelor's degree recipients as a percentage of the population of the typical ages of graduation, by country: 2005</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Public direct expenditures for education as a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP), by country: 2005</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Percentage of all public schools and instructional rooms with internet access: Various years, fall 1994 through fall 2005</td>
<td>612</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Chapter 1. All Levels of Education

*Enrollment, Teachers, and Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Projected number of participants in educational institutions, by level and control of institution: Fall 2008</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Enrollment in educational institutions, by level and control of institution: Selected years, fall 1980 through fall 2008</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Enrollment in educational institutions, by level and control of institution: Selected years, 1869–70 through fall 2017</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Number of teachers in elementary and secondary schools, and instructional staff in postsecondary degree-granting institutions, by control of institution: Selected years, fall 1970 through fall 2017</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of educational institutions, by level and control of institution: Selected years, 1980–81 through 2006–07</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Enrollment Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Percentage of the population 3 to 34 years old enrolled in school, by sex, race/ethnicity, and age: Selected years, 1980 through 2007</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Percentage of the population 3 to 34 years old enrolled in school, by age group: Selected years, 1940 through 2007</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Educational Attainment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Percentage of persons age 25 and over and 25 to 29, by race/ethnicity, years of school completed, and sex: Selected years, 1910 through 2008</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Number of persons age 18 and over, by highest level of education attained, age, sex, and race/ethnicity: 2008</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Persons age 18 and over who hold at least a bachelor’s degree in specific fields of study, by sex, race/ethnicity, and age: 2001</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Educational attainment of persons 25 years old and over, by race/ethnicity and state: 2006</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Educational attainment of persons 25 years old and over for the 15 largest metropolitan areas, by sex: 2008</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Population*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Estimates of resident population, by age group: 1970 through 2008</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Estimates of resident population, by race/ethnicity and age group: Selected years, 1980 through 2008</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Estimated total and school-age resident populations, by state: Selected years, 1970 through 2007</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Characteristics of Families With Children*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. Number and percentage of family households, by family status and presence of own children under 18: Selected years, 1970 through 2007</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
21. Poverty status of all persons, persons in families, and related children under age 18, by race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1959 through 2007 ............................................................................. 39

Opinions on and Parent Involvement in Education
22. Average grade that the public would give the public schools in their community and in the nation at large: 1974 through 2008 ..................................................................... 42
23. Percentage of elementary and secondary school children whose parents were involved in school activities, by selected child, parent, and school characteristics: 1999, 2003, and 2007 ........................................... 43
24. Percentage of kindergartners through fifth-graders whose parents were involved in education-related activities, by selected child, parent, and school characteristics: 1999 and 2003 ....................................................... 44

Finances
25. Expenditures of educational institutions related to the gross domestic product, by level of institution: Selected years, 1929–30 through 2007–08 ........................................................................ 45
26. Expenditures of educational institutions, by level and control of institution: Selected years, 1899–1900 through 2007–08 ........................................................................................................ 46
27. Amount and percentage distribution of direct general expenditures of state and local governments, by function: Selected years, 1970–71 through 2005–06 .......................................................... 47
28. Direct general expenditures of state and local governments for all functions and for education, by level of education and state: 2005–06 ....................................................................................... 48
29. Direct general expenditures per capita of state and local governments for all functions and for education, by level of education and state: 2005–06 ....................................................................................... 49
30. Gross domestic product, state and local expenditures, personal income, disposable personal income, median family income, and population: Selected years, 1929 through 2007 ........................................ 50
31. Gross domestic product price index, Consumer Price Index, education price indexes, and federal budget composite deflator: Selected years, 1919 through 2007 .................................................. 51

Chapter 2. Elementary and Secondary Education

Enrollment
32. Historical summary of public elementary and secondary school statistics: Selected years, 1869–70 through 2005–06 .................................................................................................................. 60
33. Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, fall 1990 through fall 2008 ........................................................................................................ 62
34. Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by level, grade, and state or jurisdiction: Fall 2006 ........................................................................................................................................ 64
35. Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by level, grade, and state or jurisdiction: Fall 2005 ........................................................................................................................................ 66
36. Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by level, grade, and state or jurisdiction: Fall 2004 ........................................................................................................................................ 68
37. Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by grade: Selected years, fall 1980 through fall 2006 .................................................................................................................. 70
38. Number and percentage of homeschooled students ages 5 through 17 with a grade equivalent of kindergarten through 12th grade, by selected child, parent, and household characteristics: 1999 and 2003 ..................................................................................... 71
39. Percentage distribution of students ages 5 through 17 attending kindergarten through 12th grade, by school type or participation in homeschooling and selected child, parent, and household characteristics: 1999 and 2003 ..................................................................................... 72
40. Average daily attendance in public elementary and secondary schools, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1969–70 through 2005–06 .......................................................... 73
41. Percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ ethnicity and state or jurisdiction: Fall 1996 and fall 2006 ................................................... 74
42. Number and percentage of public school students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, by state: 2000–01, 2004–05, 2005–06, and 2006–07 ......................................................... 75
43. Enrollment of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children in preprimary programs, by level of program, control of program, and attendance status: Selected years, 1965 through 2007 ........................................... 76
44. Number of children under 6 years old and not yet enrolled in kindergarten, percentage in center-based programs, average weekly hours in nonparental care, and percentage in various types of primary care arrangements, by selected child and family characteristics: 2005 .......................................................... 77
45. Child care arrangements of 3- to 5-year-old children who are not yet in kindergarten, by age and race/ethnicity: Various years, 1991 through 2005 ......................................................... 78
46. Percentage distribution of children at about 2 and 4 years of age, by type of child care arrangement and selected child and family characteristics: 2003–04 and 2005–06 ................................................. 79
47. Percentage distribution of quality rating of child care arrangements of children at about 4 years of age, by type of arrangement and selected child and family characteristics: 2005–06 .............................................. 80
48. Children of prekindergarten through second-grade age, by enrollment status, selected maternal characteristics, and household income: 1995, 2001, and 2005 .............................................................. 81
49. Percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds not yet enrolled in kindergarten who have participated in home literacy activities with a family member, by type of activity and selected child and family characteristics: 1993, 2001, and 2005 ......................................................... 82
50. Children 3 to 21 years old served in federally supported programs for the disabled, by type of disability: Selected years, 1976–77 through 2006–07 .................................................. 83
51. Percentage distribution of students 6 to 21 years old served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B, by educational environment and type of disability: Selected years, fall 1989 through fall 2006 .................................................. 84
52. Number and percentage of children served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B, by age group and state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1990–91 through 2006–07 .................................................. 85
53. Number of gifted and talented students in public elementary and secondary schools, by sex, race/ ethnicity, and state: 2004 and 2006 .............................................................. 86
54. Percentage of gifted and talented students in public elementary and secondary schools, by sex, race/ethnicity, and state: 2004 and 2006 .............................................................. 87
55. Enrollment in grades 9 through 12 in public and private schools compared with population 14 to 17 years of age: Selected years, 1889–90 through fall 2008 .................................................. 88
56. Enrollment in foreign language courses compared with enrollment in grades 9 through 12 in public secondary schools: Selected years, fall 1948 through fall 2000 .................................................. 89
57. Number and percentage of schools with students enrolled in distance education courses and enrollment in distance education courses, by instructional level and district characteristics: 2002–03 ...................................................... 90

**Private Elementary and Secondary Schools**

58. Private elementary and secondary enrollment, teachers, and schools, by orientation of school and selected school characteristics: Fall 2005 .............................................................. 91
59. Private elementary and secondary enrollment, number of schools, and average tuition, by school level, orientation, and tuition: 1999–2000 and 2003–04 .................................................. 92
60. Private elementary and secondary school full-time-equivalent staff and student to full-time-equivalent staff ratios, by orientation of school, school level, and type of staff: 2003–04 .................................................. 93
61. Enrollment and instructional staff in Catholic elementary and secondary schools, by level: Selected years, 1919–20 through 2007–08 .............................................................. 95
62. Private elementary and secondary schools, enrollment, teachers, and high school graduates, by state: Selected years, 1997 through 2005 .............................................................. 96
Teachers and Other Staff

63. Public elementary and secondary pupil/teacher ratios, by enrollment size, type, and level of school: Fall 1987 through fall 2006 ................................................................. 97
64. Public and private elementary and secondary teachers, enrollment, and pupil/teacher ratios: Selected years, fall 1955 through fall 2017 .................................................. 98
65. Public elementary and secondary teachers, by level and state or jurisdiction: Selected years, fall 2000 through fall 2006 ................................................................. 99
66. Teachers, enrollment, and pupil/teacher ratios in public elementary and secondary schools, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, fall 2000 through fall 2006 ............... 100
67. Highest degree earned, years of full-time teaching experience, and average class size for teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by state: 2003–04 .................................................... 101
68. Highest degree earned and years of full-time teaching experience for teachers in public and private elementary and secondary schools, by selected teacher characteristics: 1999–2000 and 2003–04 ................................................................. 102
69. Selected characteristics of public school teachers: Selected years, spring 1961 through spring 2001 ................................................................. 104
70. Percentage of public school teachers of grades 9 through 12, by field of main teaching assignment and selected demographic and educational characteristics: 2003–04 ................................. 105
71. Teachers’ perceptions about serious problems in their schools, by control and level of school: Selected years, 1987–88 through 2003–04 ................................................................. 106
73. Mobility of public and private elementary and secondary teachers, by selected teacher and school characteristics: Selected years, 1987–88 through 2004–05 ................................................................. 108
74. Average base salary for full-time teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by highest degree earned and years of full-time teaching: Selected years, 1990–91 through 2003–04 ................................................................. 109
75. Average salaries for full-time teachers in public and private elementary and secondary schools, by selected characteristics: 2003–04 ................................................................. 111
76. Average base salary for full-time public elementary and secondary school teachers with a bachelor’s degree as their highest degree, by years of full-time teaching experience and state: 1993–94, 1999–2000, and 2003–04 ................................................................. 113
77. Average base salary for full-time public elementary and secondary school teachers with a master’s degree as their highest degree, by years of full-time teaching experience and state: 1993–94, 1999–2000, and 2003–04 ................................................................. 114
78. Estimated average annual salary of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools: Selected years, 1959–60 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 115
79. Estimated average annual salary of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1969–70 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 116
80. Staff employed in public elementary and secondary school systems, by functional area: Selected years, 1949–50 through fall 2006 ................................................................. 117
81. Staff employed in public elementary and secondary school systems, by type of assignment and state or jurisdiction: Fall 2006 ................................................................. 118
82. Staff employed in public elementary and secondary school systems, by type of assignment and state or jurisdiction: Fall 2005 ................................................................. 119
83. Staff employed in public elementary and secondary school systems, by type of assignment and state or jurisdiction: Fall 2004 ................................................................. 120
84. Staff and teachers in public elementary and secondary school systems, by state or jurisdiction: Fall 2000 through fall 2006 ................................................................. 121
85. Staff, enrollment, and pupil/staff ratios in public elementary and secondary school systems, by state or jurisdiction: Fall 1999 through fall 2006 ................................................................. 122
**Schools and School Districts**

87. Number of public school districts and public and private elementary and secondary schools: Selected years, 1869–70 through 2006–07 .................................................. 124
88. Number and enrollment of regular public school districts, by enrollment size of district: Selected years, 1979–80 through 2006–07 .......................................................... 125
89. Number of public elementary and secondary education agencies, by type of agency and state or jurisdiction: 2005–06 and 2006–07 .......................................................... 126
91. Selected statistics on enrollment, teachers, dropouts, and graduates in public school districts enrolling more than 15,000 students: 1990, 2000, 2004–05, and 2006 .................................................. 129
92. Revenues, expenditures, poverty rate, and Title I allocations of public school districts enrolling more than 15,000 students: 2005–06 and fiscal year 2008 ............................................. 140
93. Enrollment, poverty, and federal funds for the 100 largest school districts, by enrollment size in 2006: Fall 2006, 2005–06, and fiscal year 2008 .................................................. 151
95. Number and percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary schools and enrollment, by type and enrollment size of school: 2004–05, 2005–06, and 2006–07 .................................................. 155
96. Average enrollment and percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary schools, by type and size: Selected years, 1982–83 through 2006–07 .................................................. 156
97. Public elementary and secondary school students, by racial/ethnic enrollment concentration of school: Fall 1995, fall 2000, and fall 2006 .................................................. 157
99. Public elementary schools, by grade span, average school size, and state or jurisdiction: 2006–07 .......................................................... 159
100. Public secondary schools, by grade span, average school size, and state or jurisdiction: 2006–07 .......................................................... 160
101. Number and enrollment of traditional public and public charter elementary and secondary schools and percentages of students, teachers, and schools, by selected characteristics: 2003–04 .................................................. 161
102. Percentage of public schools with permanent and portable (temporary) buildings and with environmental factors that interfere with instruction in classrooms, by selected school characteristics, type of factor, and extent of interference: 2005 .................................................. 163
103. Percentage of public schools with enrollment under, at, or over capacity, by selected school characteristics: 1999 and 2005 .................................................. 163

**High School Completers and Dropouts**

104. High school graduates, by sex and control of school: Selected years, 1869–70 through 2008–09 .................................................. 164
105. Public high school graduates, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1980–81 through 2006–07 .................................................. 165
106. Averaged freshman graduation rates for public secondary schools, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1990–91 through 2005–06 .................................................. 166
107. Public high school graduates and dropouts, by race/ethnicity and state or jurisdiction: 2005–06 .................................................. 167
108. General Educational Development (GED) test takers and test passers, by age: 1971 through 2006 .................................................. 168
109. Percentage of high school dropouts among persons 16 through 24 years old (status dropout rate), by sex and race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1960 through 2007 .................................................. 169
110. Percentage of high school dropouts among persons 16 through 24 years old (status dropout rate), by income level, and percentage distribution of status dropouts, by labor force status and educational attainment: 1970 through 2007 .................................................. 170
111. Number of 14- through 21-year-old students served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B, who exited school, by exit reason, age, and type of disability: United States and other jurisdictions, 2004–05 and 2005–06 .................................................. 171
Educational Achievement

112. Percentage of children demonstrating specific cognitive and motor skills at about 9 months of age, by child’s age and selected characteristics: 2001–02 ................................................................. 172
113. Percentage of children demonstrating specific mental skills, physical skills, and secure emotional attachment to parents at about 2 years of age, by selected characteristics: 2003–04 ......................................................... 173
114. Children’s specific language, literacy, mathematics, color knowledge, and fine motor skills at about 4 years of age, by age of child and selected characteristics: 2005–06 ................................................................. 174
115. Mean reading scale scores and specific reading skills of fall 1998 first-time kindergartners, by time of assessment and selected characteristics: Selected years, fall 1998 through spring 2004 175
116. Mean mathematics and science scale scores and specific mathematics skills of fall 1998 first-time kindergartners, by time of assessment and selected characteristics: Selected years, fall 1998 through spring 2004 ................................................................. 176
117. Average reading scale score, by age and selected student and school characteristics: Selected years, 1971 through 2004 ................................................................. 177
118. Average reading scale score, by sex, grade, race/ethnicity, and percentile: Selected years, 1992 through 2007 ................................................................. 178
119. Average reading scale score, by age and amount of time spent on reading and homework: Selected years, 1984 through 2004 ................................................................. 179
120. Percentage of students at or above selected reading score levels, by age, sex, and race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1971 through 2004 ................................................................. 180
121. Average reading scale score and percentage of 4th-graders in public schools attaining reading achievement levels, by race/ethnicity and state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1992 through 2007 ................................................................. 182
122. Average reading scale score and percentage of 8th-graders in public schools attaining reading achievement levels, by locale and state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1998 through 2007 ................................................................. 184
123. Average reading scale scores of 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-graders, by selected student and school characteristics: Selected years, 1992 through 2007 ................................................................. 186
124. Average reading scale scores of 4th- and 8th-graders, by selected student and parent characteristics and school type: Various years, 2000 through 2005 ................................................................. 187
125. Average writing scale score and percentage of students attaining writing achievement levels, by selected student characteristics and grade level: 2002 and 2007 ................................................................. 188
126. Percentage of students attaining U.S. history achievement levels, by grade level and selected student characteristics: 2001 and 2006 ................................................................. 189
127. Average U.S. history scale score, by grade level and selected student characteristics, and percentage distribution of 12th-graders, by selected student characteristics: 1994, 2001, and 2006 ................................................................. 190
128. Average civics scale score and percentage of students attaining civics achievement levels, by grade level and selected student characteristics: 1998 and 2006 ................................................................. 191
129. Average economics scale score of 12th-graders, percentage attaining economics achievement levels, and percentage with different levels of economics coursework, by selected student and school characteristics: 2006 ................................................................. 192
130. Percentage of students attaining geography achievement levels, by grade level and selected student characteristics: 2001 ................................................................. 193
131. Average mathematics scale score, by age and selected student and school characteristics: Selected years, 1973 through 2004 ................................................................. 194
132. Percentage of students at or above selected mathematics proficiency levels, by age, sex, and race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1978 through 2004 ................................................................. 195
133. Mathematics performance of 17-year-olds, by highest mathematics course taken, sex, and race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1978 through 2004 ................................................................. 197
134. Average mathematics scale score, percentage attaining mathematics achievement levels, and selected statistics on mathematics education of 4th-graders in public schools, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1992 through 2007 ................................................................. 198
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>135.</td>
<td>Average mathematics scale score and percentage attaining mathematics achievement levels of 8th-graders in public schools, by level of parental education and state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1990 through 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136.</td>
<td>Average mathematics scale scores of 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-graders, by selected student and school characteristics: Selected years, 1990 through 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137.</td>
<td>Average mathematics scale score of 8th-graders and percentage reporting various attitudes toward mathematics work, by frequency of attitude and selected student and school characteristics: 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138.</td>
<td>Average science scale scores and percentage of 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-graders attaining science achievement levels, by selected student characteristics and percentile: 1996, 2000, and 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139.</td>
<td>Average science scale score of 8th-graders in public schools, by selected student characteristics and state or jurisdiction: 1996, 2000, and 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140.</td>
<td>Average science scale score of 12th-graders and percentage reporting various attitudes toward science, by selected student and school characteristics: 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141.</td>
<td>SAT mean scores of college-bound seniors, by race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1986–87 through 2007–08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142.</td>
<td>SAT mean scores of college-bound seniors, by sex: 1966–67 through 2007–08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143.</td>
<td>SAT mean scores of college-bound seniors, by selected student characteristics: Selected years, 1995–96 through 2007–08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144.</td>
<td>SAT mean scores of college-bound seniors and percentage of graduates taking SAT, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1987–88 through 2007–08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145.</td>
<td>ACT score averages and standard deviations, by sex and race/ethnicity, and percentage of ACT test takers, by selected composite score ranges and planned fields of study: Selected years, 1995 through 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course-taking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>147.</td>
<td>Average number of Carnegie units earned by public high school graduates in various subject fields, by selected student characteristics: Selected years, 1982 through 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148.</td>
<td>Average number of Carnegie units earned by public high school graduates in career/technical education courses, by selected student characteristics: Selected years, 1982 through 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149.</td>
<td>Percentage of public and private high school graduates taking selected mathematics and science courses in high school, by sex and race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1982 through 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150.</td>
<td>Percentage distribution of public and private high school graduates, by highest level of mathematics and science course completed and selected student characteristics: 2003–04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151.</td>
<td>Percentage of public and private high school graduates earning minimum credits in selected combinations of academic courses, by sex and race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1982 through 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152.</td>
<td>Public high schools that offered and students enrolled in dual credit, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate courses, by school characteristics: 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Activities and Behavior**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>153.</td>
<td>Percentage of high school seniors who say they engage in various activities, by selected student and school characteristics: 1992 and 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154.</td>
<td>Percentage of high school sophomores who participate in various school-sponsored extracurricular activities, by selected student characteristics: 1990 and 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155.</td>
<td>Percentage distribution of 4th-graders, by time spent on homework and television viewing each day and selected student and school characteristics: Selected years, 1992 through 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156.</td>
<td>Percentage of elementary and secondary school students who do homework outside of school, whose parents check that homework is done, and whose parents help with homework, by frequency and selected student and school characteristics: 2003 and 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Number</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157</td>
<td>Tenth-graders’ attendance patterns, by selected student and school characteristics: 1990 and 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158</td>
<td>Percentage of public schools reporting crime incidents, and number and rate of incidents, by school characteristics and type of incident: 1999–2000 and 2005–06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159</td>
<td>Percentage of schools with various security measures, by school control and selected characteristics: 2003–04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>Number of students suspended and expelled from public elementary and secondary schools, by sex, race/ethnicity, and state: 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161</td>
<td>Percentage of students suspended and expelled from public elementary and secondary schools, by sex, race/ethnicity, and state: 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>Percentage of students in grades 9 through 12 who reported experience with drugs and violence on school property, by race/ethnicity, grade, and sex: Selected years, 1997 through 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>Percentage of 12- to 17-year-olds reporting substance abuse during the past 30 days and the past year, by drug used, sex, and race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1982 through 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>Percentage of high school seniors reporting drug use, by type of drug and reporting period: Selected years, 1975 through 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**State Regulations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>165</td>
<td>Age range for compulsory school attendance and special education services, and policies on year-round schools and kindergarten programs, by state: Selected years, 1997 through 2008</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167</td>
<td>State requirements for a standard high school diploma: 2006</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168</td>
<td>States that use criterion-referenced tests (CRTs) aligned to state standards, by subject area and level: 2006–07</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>169</td>
<td>States using minimum-competency testing, by grade levels assessed, expected uses of standards, and state or jurisdiction: 2001–02</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td>States requiring testing for initial certification of elementary and secondary teachers, by skills or knowledge assessment and state: 2007 and 2008</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Revenues and Expenditures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>171</td>
<td>Revenues for public elementary and secondary schools, by source of funds: Selected years, 1919–20 through 2005–06</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172</td>
<td>Revenues for public elementary and secondary schools, by source and state or jurisdiction: 2005–06</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>173</td>
<td>Revenues for public elementary and secondary schools, by source and state or jurisdiction: 2004–05</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174</td>
<td>Summary of expenditures for public elementary and secondary education, by purpose: Selected years, 1919–20 through 2005–06</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175</td>
<td>Students transported at public expense and current expenditures for transportation: Selected years, 1929–30 through 2005–06</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>Current expenditures for public elementary and secondary education, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1969–70 through 2005–06</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177</td>
<td>Total expenditures for public elementary and secondary education, by function and state or jurisdiction: 2005–06</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178</td>
<td>Total expenditures for public elementary and secondary education, by function and state or jurisdiction: 2004–05</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>179</td>
<td>Total expenditures for public elementary and secondary education, by function and subfunction: Selected years, 1990–91 through 2005–06</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180</td>
<td>Expenditures for instruction in public elementary and secondary schools, by subfunction and state or jurisdiction: 2004–05 and 2005–06</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181</td>
<td>Total and current expenditures per pupil in public elementary and secondary schools: Selected years, 1919–20 through 2005–06</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3. Postsecondary Education

Enrollment

186. Enrollment, staff, and degrees conferred in postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV programs, by type and control of institution, sex of student, type of staff, and type of degree: Fall 2005, fall 2006, and 2006–07 ................................. 276
187. Historical summary of faculty, students, degrees, and finances in degree-granting institutions: Selected years, 1869–70 through 2006–07 ................................. 277
188. Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by attendance status, sex of student, and control of institution: Selected years, 1947 through 2007 ......................... 278
189. Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by control and type of institution: 1963 through 2007 ................................. 279
190. Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by sex, age, and attendance status: Selected years, 1970 through 2017 ................................. 280
191. Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by level of enrollment, sex, age, and attendance status of student: 2007 ................................. 281
192. Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by control and type of institution, age, and attendance status of student: 2007 ................................. 282
193. Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by level of enrollment, sex, attendance status, and type and control of institution: 2007 ................................. 283
194. Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by level of enrollment, sex, attendance status, and type and control of institution: 2006 ................................. 284
195. Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by level of enrollment, sex, attendance status, and type and control of institution: 2005 ................................. 285
196. Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by attendance status, sex of student, and type and control of institution: Selected years, 1970 through 2006 ................................. 286
197. Fall enrollment and number of degree-granting institutions, by control and affiliation of institution: Selected years, 1980 through 2006 ................................. 287
198. Total first-time freshmen fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by attendance status, sex of student, and type and control of institution: 1955 through 2007 ................................. 288
199. Total first-time freshmen fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by attendance status, sex, control of institution, and state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 2000 through 2006 ................................. 289
200. Recent high school completers and their enrollment in college, by sex: 1960 through 2007 ................................. 290
201. Recent high school completers and their enrollment in college, by race/ethnicity: 1960 through 2007 ................................. 291
203. Estimated rate of 2005–06 high school graduates attending degree-granting institutions, by state: 2006 ................................. 293
204. Enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds in degree-granting institutions, by type of institution and sex and race/ethnicity of student: 1967 through 2007 ................................. 294
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>208.</td>
<td>Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1970 through 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>209.</td>
<td>Total fall enrollment in public degree-granting institutions, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1970 through 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211.</td>
<td>Total fall enrollment in all degree-granting institutions, by attendance status, sex, and state or jurisdiction: 2005 and 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212.</td>
<td>Total fall enrollment in public degree-granting institutions, by attendance status, sex, and state or jurisdiction: 2005 and 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>213.</td>
<td>Total fall enrollment in private degree-granting institutions, by attendance status, sex, and state or jurisdiction: 2005 and 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214.</td>
<td>Total fall enrollment in private not-for-profit degree-granting institutions, by attendance status, sex, and state or jurisdiction: 2005 and 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215.</td>
<td>Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by control and type of institution and state or jurisdiction: 2005 and 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>217.</td>
<td>Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by control, level of enrollment, type of institution, and state or jurisdiction: 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>218.</td>
<td>Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by control, level of enrollment, type of institution, and state or jurisdiction: 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221.</td>
<td>Full-time-equivalent fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by control and state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1980 through 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222.</td>
<td>Total full-year enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by control and type of institution and state or jurisdiction: 2005–06 and 2006–07.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223.</td>
<td>Residence and migration of all freshmen students in degree-granting institutions, by state or jurisdiction: Fall 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224.</td>
<td>Residence and migration of all freshmen students in degree-granting institutions who graduated from high school in the previous 12 months, by state or jurisdiction: Fall 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>225.</td>
<td>Residence and migration of all freshmen students in 4-year degree-granting institutions who graduated from high school in the previous 12 months, by state or jurisdiction: Fall 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226.</td>
<td>Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, attendance status, and level of student: Selected years, 1976 through 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228.</td>
<td>Fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity of student and by state or jurisdiction: 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>229.</td>
<td>Fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity of student and by state or jurisdiction: 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230.</td>
<td>Total number of degree-granting institutions and fall enrollment in these institutions, by type and control of institution and percentage of minority enrollment: 2007.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
231. Number and percentage of students enrolled in postsecondary institutions, by level, disability status, and selected student characteristics: 2003–04 .................................................. 329
232. Enrollment in postsecondary education, by student level, type of institution, age, and major field of study: 2003–04 ................................................................. 330
233. Graduate enrollment in science and engineering programs in degree-granting institutions, by discipline division: Fall 1994 through fall 2006 .................................................. 332
234. Number of degree-granting institutions and enrollment in these institutions, by size, type, and control of institution: Fall 2006 ................................................................. 333
235. Selected statistics for degree-granting institutions enrolling more than 15,000 students in 2006: Selected years, 1990 through 2007 .................................................. 334
236. Enrollment of the 120 largest degree-granting college and university campuses, by selected characteristics and institution: Fall 2006 ................................................................. 344
237. Enrollment and degrees conferred in degree-granting women’s colleges, by selected characteristics and institution: Fall 2006 and 2006–07 .................................................. 345
238. Enrollment and degrees conferred in degree-granting institutions that serve large proportions of undergraduate Hispanic students, by selected characteristics and institution: Fall 2006 and 2006–07 .................................................. 346
241. Selected statistics on degree-granting historically Black colleges and universities, by control and type of institution: Selected years, 1990 through 2007 .................................................. 356
242. Fall enrollment in degree-granting historically Black colleges and universities, by type and control of institution: 1976 through 2006 .................................................. 357

**Staff**

243. Employees in degree-granting institutions, by sex, employment status, control and type of institution, and primary occupation: Selected years, fall 1987 through fall 2007 .................................................. 358
244. Total and full-time-equivalent staff in degree-granting institutions, by employment status, control of institution, and occupation: Fall 1976, fall 1997, and fall 2007 .................................................. 359
245. Employees in degree-granting institutions, by employment status, sex, control and type of institution, and primary occupation: Fall 2007 .................................................. 360
246. Employees in degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, employment status, control and type of institution, and primary occupation: Fall 2007 .................................................. 362
247. Number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) staff and faculty, and FTE staff and faculty/FTE student ratios in degree-granting institutions, by control and type of institution and state or jurisdiction: Fall 2005 .................................................. 363
248. Number of instructional faculty in degree-granting institutions, by employment status and control and type of institution: Selected years, fall 1970 through fall 2005 .................................................. 365
249. Full-time instructional faculty in degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, and academic rank: Fall 2003, fall 2005, and fall 2007 .................................................. 366
250. Percentage distribution of full-time faculty and instructional staff in degree-granting institutions, by type and control of institution, selected instruction activities, and number of classes taught for credit: Fall 2003 .................................................. 367
251. Percentage distribution of part-time faculty and instructional staff in degree-granting institutions, by type and control of institution, selected instruction activities, and number of classes taught for credit: Fall 2003 .................................................. 369
252. Full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff in degree-granting institutions, by type and control of institution and selected characteristics: Fall 1992, fall 1998, and fall 2003 .................................................. 371
253. Full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff in degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, and selected characteristics: Fall 2003 .................................................. 373
254. Full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff in degree-granting institutions, by field and faculty characteristics: Fall 1992, fall 1998, and fall 2003 .................................................. 375
255. Full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff in degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, and program area: Fall 1998 and fall 2003 ................................................................. 377
256. Average base salary of full-time faculty and instructional staff in degree-granting institutions, by type and control of institution and field of instruction: Selected years, 1987–88 through 2003–04 379
257. Average salary of full-time instructional faculty on 9-month contracts in degree-granting institutions, by academic rank, control and type of institution, and sex: Selected years, 1970–71 through 2007–08 . 380
258. Average salary of full-time instructional faculty on 9-month contracts in degree-granting institutions, by sex, academic rank, and control and type of institution: Selected years, 1999–2000 through 2007–08 ........................................................................ 383
259. Average salary of full-time instructional faculty on 9-month contracts in degree-granting institutions, by control and type of institution and state or jurisdiction: 2006–07. 384
260. Average salary of full-time instructional faculty on 9-month contracts in degree-granting institutions, by control and type of institution and state or jurisdiction: 2005–06 . 385
261. Average salary of full-time instructional faculty on 9-month contracts in 4-year degree-granting institutions, by type and control of institution, rank of faculty, and state or jurisdiction: 2006–07. 386
262. Average salary of full-time instructional faculty on 9-month contracts in 4-year degree-granting institutions, by type and control of institution, rank of faculty, and state or jurisdiction: 2005–06 . 387
263. Average benefit expenditure for full-time instructional faculty on 9-month contracts in degree-granting institutions, by type of benefit and control of institution: Selected years, 1977–78 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 388
264. Percentage of full-time instructional staff with tenure for degree-granting institutions with a tenure system, by academic rank, sex, and control and type of institution: Selected years, 1993–94 through 2005–06 . 390

Institutions
265. Degree-granting institutions, by control and type of institution: Selected years, 1949–50 through 2007–08 ................................................................. 391
266. Degree-granting institutions and branches, by type and control of institution and state or jurisdiction: 2007–08 ................................................................. 392
267. Degree-granting institutions that have closed their doors, by control and type of institution: 1969–70 through 2007–08 ................................................................. 394

Degrees
268. Degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: Selected years, 1869–70 through 2017–18 ................................................................. 395
269. Associate’s degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by discipline division: 1995–96 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 396
270. Associate’s degrees and other subbaccalaureate awards conferred by degree-granting institutions, by length of curriculum, sex of student, and discipline division: 2006–07 ................................................................. 397
271. Bachelor’s degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by field of study: Selected years, 1970–71 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 398
272. Master’s degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by field of study: Selected years, 1970–71 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 399
273. Doctor’s degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by field of study: Selected years, 1970–71 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 400
274. Bachelor’s, master’s, and doctor’s degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by field of study and year: Selected years, 1970–71 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 401
275. Bachelor’s, master’s, and doctor’s degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by sex of student and discipline division: 2006–07 ................................................................. 402
276. Degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by control of institution and level of degree: 1969–70 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 417
302. Degrees in computer and information sciences conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: 1970–71 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 442
303. Degrees in education conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: Selected years, 1949–50 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 443
304. Degrees in engineering and engineering technologies conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: Selected years, 1949–50 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 444
305. Degrees in chemical, civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree: 1970–71 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 445
306. Degrees in English language and literature/letters conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: Selected years, 1949–50 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 446
307. Degrees in modern foreign languages and literatures conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: Selected years, 1949–50 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 447
308. Degrees in French, German, Italian, and Spanish conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree: Selected years, 1949–50 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 448
309. Degrees in Arabic, Chinese, Korean, and Russian conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree: 1969–70 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 449
310. Degrees in the health professions and related sciences conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: 1970–71 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 450
311. Degrees in mathematics and statistics conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: Selected years, 1949–50 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 451
312. Degrees in the physical sciences and science technologies conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: Selected years, 1959–60 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 452
313. Degrees in chemistry, geology and earth science, and physics conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree: 1970–71 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 453
314. Degrees in psychology conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: Selected years, 1949–50 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 454
315. Degrees in public administration and social services conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: 1970–71 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 455
316. Degrees in the social sciences and history conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: 1970–71 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 456
317. Degrees in economics, history, political science and government, and sociology conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree: Selected years, 1949–50 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 457
318. Degrees in visual and performing arts conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: 1970–71 through 2006–07 ...................................................... 458
319. Statistical profile of persons receiving doctor's degrees, by field of study and selected characteristics: 2004–05 and 2005–06 ...................................................... 459
320. Degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by control, level of degree, and state or jurisdiction: 2006–07 ................................................................. 460
321. Bachelor's and master's degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by field of study and state or jurisdiction: 2006–07 ................................................................. 461
322. Degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and state or jurisdiction: 2005–06 and 2006–07 ................................................................. 462
323. Doctor's degrees conferred by the 60 institutions conferring the most doctor's degrees: 1997–98 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 463

Outcomes
324. Percentage distribution of 1990 high school sophomores, by highest level of education completed through 2000 and selected student characteristics: 2000 ................................................................. 464
325. Mean number of semester credits completed by bachelor's degree recipients, by course area and major: 1976, 1984, and 1992–93 ................................................................. 465
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>326.</td>
<td>Number and percentage of degree-granting institutions with first-year undergraduates using various selection criteria for admission, by type and control of institution: Selected years, 2000–01 through 2007–08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>327.</td>
<td>Number of applications, admissions, and enrollees; their distribution across institutions accepting various percentages of applications; and SAT and ACT scores of applicants, by type and control of institution: 2007–08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>328.</td>
<td>Percentage of degree-granting institutions offering remedial services, by type and control of institution: 1989–90 through 2007–08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>329.</td>
<td>Percentage distribution of enrollment and completion status of first-time postsecondary students starting during the 1995–96 academic year, by type of institution and other student characteristics: 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330.</td>
<td>Average scores on Graduate Record Examination (GRE) general and subject tests: 1965 through 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>331.</td>
<td>Average undergraduate tuition and fees and room and board rates charged for full-time students in degree-granting institutions, by type and control of institution: 1964–65 through 2007–08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>332.</td>
<td>Average undergraduate tuition and fees and room and board rates charged for full-time students in degree-granting institutions, by type and control of institution and state or jurisdiction: 2006–07 and 2007–08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>333.</td>
<td>Undergraduate tuition and fees and room and board rates for full-time students in degree-granting institutions, by percentile of charges and control and type of institution: 2000–01 through 2007–08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>334.</td>
<td>Average graduate and first-professional tuition and required fees in degree-granting institutions, by first-professional field of study and control of institution: 1987–88 through 2007–08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>335.</td>
<td>Percentage of undergraduates receiving aid, by type and source of aid and selected student characteristics: 2003–04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>336.</td>
<td>Full-time, first-time degree/certificate seeking undergraduate students enrolled in degree-granting institutions, by participation and average amount awarded in financial aid programs, and type and control of institution: 2000–01 through 2005–06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>337.</td>
<td>Average amount of financial aid awarded to full-time, full-year undergraduates, by type and source of aid and selected student characteristics: 2003–04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>338.</td>
<td>Average amount of financial aid awarded to part-time or part-year undergraduates, by type and source of aid and selected student characteristics: 2003–04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>339.</td>
<td>Amount borrowed, aid status, and sources of aid for full-time and part-time undergraduates, by control and type of institution: 2003–04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>341.</td>
<td>Average amount of financial aid awarded to full-time, full-year undergraduates, by type and source of aid and control and type of institution: Selected years, 1992–93 through 2003–04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342.</td>
<td>Percentage of part-time or part-year undergraduates receiving aid, by type and source of aid and control and type of institution: Selected years, 1992–93 through 2003–04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>343.</td>
<td>Percentage of full-time and part-time undergraduates receiving federal aid, by aid program and control and type of institution: 2003–04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>344.</td>
<td>Amount borrowed, aid status, and sources of aid for full-time, full-year postbaccalaureate students, by level of study and control and type of institution: Selected years, 1992–93 through 2003–04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>345.</td>
<td>Amount borrowed, aid status, and sources of aid for part-time or part-year postbaccalaureate students, by level of study and control and type of institution: Selected years, 1992–93 through 2003–04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>346.</td>
<td>Percentage of full-time, full-year postbaccalaureate students receiving aid, by type of aid, level of study, and control and type of institution: Selected years, 1992–93 through 2003–04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>347.</td>
<td>Percentage of part-time or part-year postbaccalaureate students receiving aid, by type of aid, level of study, and control and type of institution: Selected years, 1992–93 through 2003–04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Revenue

349. Current-fund revenue of public degree-granting institutions, by source of funds: Selected years, 1980–81 through 2000–01. 495
351. Revenues of public degree-granting institutions, by source of revenue and state or jurisdiction: 2005–06. 498
352. Appropriations from state and local governments for public degree-granting institutions, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1990–91 through 2005–06. 499
353. Total revenue of private not-for-profit degree-granting institutions, by source of funds and type of institution: 1997–98 through 2005–06. 500
354. Total revenue of private not-for-profit degree-granting institutions, by source of funds and type of institution: 2005–06. 502
355. Total revenue of private for-profit degree-granting institutions, by source of funds and type of institution: 1999–2000 through 2005–06. 503
356. Total revenue of private for-profit degree-granting institutions, by source of funds and type of institution: 2004–05 and 2005–06. 504
357. Current-fund revenue received from the federal government by the 120 degree-granting institutions receiving the largest amounts, by control and rank order: 2005–06. 505
358. Voluntary support for degree-granting institutions, by source and purpose of support: Selected years, 1959–60 through 2006–07. 506
359. Endowment funds of the 120 colleges and universities with the largest endowments, by rank order: 2006 and 2007. 507

Expenditures

361. Current-fund expenditures and educational and general expenditures of institutions of higher education, by purpose and per student: Selected years, 1929–30 through 1995–96. 509
365. Total expenditures of private not-for-profit degree-granting institutions, by purpose and type of institution: 2005–06. 515
367. Total expenditures of private for-profit degree-granting institutions, by purpose and type of institution: 2004–05 and 2005–06. 518
368. Total expenditures of private not-for-profit and for-profit degree-granting institutions, by level and state or jurisdiction: 1998–99 through 2005–06. 519
## List of Tables

### Adult Education

369. Participants in adult basic and secondary education programs, by type of program and state or jurisdiction: Selected fiscal years, 1990 through 2005

370. Participation of employed persons, 17 years old and over, in career-related adult education during the previous 12 months, by selected characteristics of participants: Various years, 1995 through 2005

371. Participation rate of persons, 17 years old and over, in adult education during the previous 12 months, by selected characteristics of participants: Selected years, 1991 through 2005

### Vocational Education

372. Number of non-degree-granting Title IV institutions offering postsecondary education, by control and state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 2000–01 through 2007–08

### Chapter 4. Federal Programs for Education and Related Activities

373. Federal support and estimated federal tax expenditures for education, by category: Selected fiscal years, 1965 through 2008


375. Federal on-budget funds for education, by level/educational purpose, agency, and program: Selected fiscal years, 1970 through 2008

376. Estimated federal support for education, by type of ultimate recipient and agency: Fiscal year 2007


380. Federal obligations for research, development, and R&D plant, by performers, fields of science, and category of obligation: Fiscal years 1999 through 2007

### Chapter 5. Outcomes of Education

#### Educational Characteristics of the Workforce

381. Labor force participation rates and employment to population ratios of persons 16 to 64 years old, by highest level of education, age, sex, and race/ethnicity: 2007

382. Unemployment rate of persons 16 years old and over, by age, sex, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment: 2005, 2006, and 2007

383. Occupation of employed persons 25 years old and over, by educational attainment and sex: 2007

384. Median annual income of year-round, full-time workers 25 years old and over, by highest level of educational attainment and sex: 1990 through 2007

385. Distribution of earnings and median earnings of persons 25 years old and over, by highest level of educational attainment and sex: 2007

386. Literacy skills of adults, by type of literacy, proficiency levels, and selected characteristics: 1992 and 2003

387. Percentage of 12th-graders working different numbers of hours per week, by selected student characteristics and school locale type: 1992 and 2004
Recent High School and College Graduates

389. Labor force status of high school dropouts, by sex and race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1980 through 2007 ................................................................. 569
390. Current postsecondary education and employment status, wages earned, and living arrangements of special education students out of secondary school up to 4 years, by type of disability: 2005 . 570
391. Full-time employment status of bachelor's degree recipients 1 year after graduation, by field of study: Selected years, 1976 through 2001 ................. 570
392. Percentage distribution of 1999–2000 bachelor's degree recipients 1 year after graduation, by field of study, time to completion, enrollment status, employment status, occupational area, job characteristics, and annual salaries: 2001 .................................................. 571
393. Enrollment in postbaccalaureate certificate or advanced degree programs and highest degree attained by 1992–93 bachelor's degree recipients, by education characteristics: 2003 ................. 572
394. Average annual salary of bachelor's degree recipients employed full time 1 year after graduation, by field of study: Selected years, 1976 through 2001 ................. 573
395. Percentage of 18- to 25-year-olds reporting substance abuse during the past 30 days and the past year, by drug used: Selected years, 1982 through 2006 ................. 574
396. Percentage of 18- to 25-year-olds reporting substance abuse during the past 30 days and the past year, by drug used and selected characteristics: 2000 and 2006 ....... 575
397. Percentage of 1972 high school seniors, 1992 high school seniors, and 2004 high school seniors who felt that certain life values were “very important,” by sex: Selected years, 1972 through 2004 ...

Chapter 6. International Comparisons of Education

Population, Enrollment, and Teachers

398. Selected population and finance statistics, school enrollment, and teachers, by major areas of the world: Selected years, 1980 through 2005 ................................................................. 581
399. Selected population and enrollment statistics for countries with populations over 10 million, by continent: Selected years, 1990 through 2006 ................................................................. 582
400. School-age populations as a percentage of total population, by age group and country: Selected years, 1985 through 2005 ................................................................. 584
401. Percentage of population enrolled in secondary and postsecondary education, by age group and country: Selected years, 1985 through 2005 ................................................................. 585
402. Pupils per teacher in public and private elementary and secondary schools, by level of education and country: Selected years, 1985 through 2006 ................................................................. 586

Achievement, Instruction, and Student Activities

403. Average mathematics literacy, reading literacy, and science literacy scores of 15-year-olds, by sex and country: 2006 ................................................................. 587
404. Mean scores and percentage distribution of 15-year-olds scoring at each mathematics literacy proficiency level, by country: 2006 ................................................................. 588
405. Mean scores and percentage distribution of 15-year-olds scoring at each scientific literacy proficiency level, by country: 2006 ................................................................. 589
406. Average fourth-grade mathematics scores, by content areas, index of time students spend doing mathematics homework in a normal school week, and country: 2003 ................. 590
407. Average eighth-grade mathematics scores, by content areas, index of time students spend doing mathematics homework in a normal school week, and country: 2003 ................. 591
408. Percentage of lesson time spent on various mathematics activities, yearly mathematics instructional time, and mathematics instructional time as a percentage of total instructional time in eighth grade, by country: 2003 ................................................................. 593
409. Average size and scores of eighth-grade mathematics classes and Index of Teachers’ Emphasis on Mathematics Homework (EMH), by country: 2003 ................................................................. 595
410. Eighth-grade students’ perceptions about mathematics and hours spent on leisure activities, by country: 2003 ........................................................................................................... 597
411. Average mathematics scores at the end of secondary school, by sex, average time spent studying mathematics out of school, and country: 1995 ................................................................. 598
412. Average fourth-grade science scores in content areas and average time spent teaching science in school, by country: 2003 ................................................................. 599
413. Average eighth-grade science scores in content areas and average time spent studying out of school, by country: 2003 ................................................................. 600
414. Instructional practices and time spent teaching science in eighth grade, by country: 2003 .......... 602

Postsecondary Degrees
415. Number of bachelor’s degree recipients per 100 persons of the typical age of graduation, by sex and country: 2002 through 2005 ................................................................. 604
416. Percentage of bachelor’s degrees awarded in mathematics and science, by field and country: Selected years, 1985 through 2005 ................................................................. 605
417. Percentage of graduate degrees awarded in mathematics and science, by field and country: Selected years, 1985 through 2005 ................................................................. 606

Finances
418. Public and private education expenditures per student, by level of education and country: Selected years, 2000 through 2005 ................................................................. 607
419. Total public direct expenditures on education as a percentage of the gross domestic product, by level and country: Selected years, 1985 through 2005 ................................................................. 608

Foreign Students in the United States
420. Foreign students enrolled in institutions of higher education in the United States and other jurisdictions, by continent, region, and selected countries of origin: Selected years, 1980–81 through 2006–07 ................................................................. 609

Chapter 7. Libraries and Educational Technology

Libraries
421. Selected statistics on school libraries/media centers, by control and level of school: 1999–2000 and 2003–04 ................................................................. 613
422. Selected statistics on public school libraries/media centers, by level and enrollment size of school: 2003–04 ................................................................. 614
423. Selected statistics on public school libraries/media centers, by state: 2003–04 ................................................................. 615
424. Collections, staff, and operating expenditures of degree-granting institution libraries: Selected years, 1976–77 through 2005–06 ................................................................. 616
425. Collections, staff, and operating expenditures of the 60 largest college and university libraries: 2005–06 ................................................................. 617

Computers and Technology
427. Public schools and instructional rooms with internet access, by selected school characteristics: Selected years, 1994 through 2005 ................................................................. 619
428. Use of the Internet by persons 3 years old and over, by type of use and selected characteristics of students and other users: 2003 ................................................................. 621
429. Number and percentage of home computer users, by type of application and selected characteristics: 1997 and 2003 ........................................... 623
430. Number and percentage of student home computer users, by type of application and selected characteristics: 2003 ........................................... 624
431. Student use of computers, by level of enrollment, age, and student and school characteristics: 1993, 1997, and 2003 ........................................... 625
432. Percentage of workers, 18 years old and over, using computers on the job, by type of computer application and selected characteristics: 1993, 1997, and 2003 ........................................... 627

Appendix A. Guide to Sources

A-2. Design effects (DEFF) and root design effects (DEFT) for selected High School and Beyond surveys and subsamples: 1984 and 1986 ........................................... 666
A-4. Sampling errors (95 percent confidence level) for percentages estimated from the Gallup Poll: 1992, 1993, and 1996 through 2008 ........................................... 667
A-5. Sampling errors (95 percent confidence level) for the difference in two percentages estimated from the Gallup Poll: 1992, 1993, and 1996 through 2008 ........................................... 667
A-6. Maximum differences required for significance (90 percent confidence level) between sample subgroups from the “Status of the American Public School Teacher” survey: 2000–01 ........ 667
INTRODUCTION

In fall 2008, about 74.1 million people were enrolled in American schools and colleges (table 1). About 4.6 million people were employed as elementary and secondary school teachers or as college faculty, in full-time equivalents (FTE). Other professional, administrative, and support staff at educational institutions totaled 5.2 million. All data for 2008 in this Introduction are projected. Some data for other years are projected or estimated as noted. In discussions of historical trends, different time periods and specific years are cited, depending on the timing of important changes as well as the availability of relevant data.

Elementary/Secondary Education

Enrollment

A pattern of annual increases in total public elementary and secondary school enrollment began in 1985 (table 3). Between 1985 and 2008, public school enrollment rose 26 percent, from 39.4 million to 49.8 million (table 2). Private school enrollment grew more slowly than public school enrollment during this period, rising 9 percent, from 5.6 million to 6.1 million. As a result, the percentage of elementary and secondary students enrolled in private schools declined from 12.4 percent in 1985 to 10.8 percent in 2008.

In public schools between 1985 and 2008, there was a 29 percent increase in elementary enrollment (prekindergarten through grade 8), compared with a 20 percent increase in secondary enrollment. Part of the relatively fast growth in public elementary school enrollment resulted from the expansion of prekindergarten programs (table 37). Between 1985 and 2006, enrollment in prekindergarten increased 611 percent, while enrollment in other elementary grades increased 23 percent. The number of children enrolled in prekindergarten increased from 0.2 million in 1985 to 1.1 million in 2006, and the number enrolled in kindergarten through grade 8 increased from 26.9 million to 33.1 million. Public secondary school enrollment declined 8 percent from 1985 to 1990, but then started increasing. For most of the period after 1992, secondary enrollment increased more rapidly than elementary enrollment, leading to relatively large secondary enrollment gains in recent years. For example, between 1998 and 2008, public secondary school enrollment rose 13 percent, compared with 5 percent for public elementary school enrollment. Overall, public school enrollment rose 7 percent between 1998 and 2008.

Since the enrollment rates of kindergarten, elementary, and secondary school-age children changed by less than 2 percentage points between 1985 and 2007 (table 7), increases in public and private elementary and secondary school enrollment have been driven primarily by increases in the number of children in these age groups. The enrollment rate of prekindergarten age children (ages 3 and 4) rose between 1985 and 2007, which was reflected by an increase in prekindergarten enrollment.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) forecasts record levels of total elementary and secondary enrollment through at least 2017, reflecting expected increases in the school-age population. For public schools, the projected fall 2008 enrollment is expected to be a new record, and new records are expected every year through 2017, the last year for which NCES enrollment projections have been developed (table 3). Public elementary school enrollment (prekindergarten through grade 8) is projected to increase by 10 percent between 2008 and 2017. Public secondary school enrollment (grades 9 through 12) is expected to increase 5 percent between 2008 and 2017. Overall, total public school enrollment is expected to increase 9 percent between 2008 and 2017.

Teachers

A projected 3.7 million full-time-equivalent (FTE) elementary and secondary school teachers were engaged in classroom instruction in fall 2008 (table 4). This number has risen 15 percent since 1998. The 2008 projected number of FTE teachers includes 3.2 million public school teachers and 0.5 million private school teachers.

The number of public school teachers has risen faster than the number of public school students over the past 10 years, resulting in declines in the pupil/teacher ratio (table 64). In the fall of 2008, there were a projected 15.3 public school pupils per teacher, compared with 16.4 public school pupils per teacher 10 years earlier.

The average salary for public school teachers in 2006–07 was $50,816, about 3 percent higher than in 1996–97, after adjustment for inflation (table 78). The salaries of public school teachers have generally maintained pace with inflation since 1990–91.

Student Performance

Most of the student performance data in the Digest are drawn from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP assessments have been conducted using three basic designs: the national main NAEP, state NAEP, and long-term trend NAEP. The national main NAEP and state
NAEP provide current information about student performance in a variety of subjects, while long-term trend NAEP provides information on performance since the early 1970s in reading and mathematics only. Results from long-term trend NAEP are included in the discussion in chapter 2 of the Digest, while the information in this Introduction includes only results from the national main and state NAEP.

The main NAEP reports current information for the nation and specific geographic regions of the country. The assessment program includes students drawn from both public and nonpublic schools and reports results for student achievement at grades 4, 8, and 12. The main NAEP assessments follow the frameworks developed by the National Assessment Governing Board and use the latest advances in assessment methodology. The state NAEP is identical in content to the national main NAEP, but the state NAEP reports information only for public school students. Chapter 2 presents more information on the NAEP designs and methodology, and additional details appear in Appendix A: Guide to Sources.

Reading

Reported on a scale of 0 to 500, national average reading scores of 4th- and 8th-graders were higher in 2007 than in 1992, by 4 and 3 points, respectively (table 123). These 2007 scores were also higher than the 2005 scores. The reading score of 12th-graders was 6 points lower in 2005 (the most recent assessment year for grade 12) than in 1992. In the most recent assessment, females at each grade level outscored their male counterparts. For example, 12th-grade females scored 13 points higher than males in 2005. Average scores were higher in 2007 than in 1992 for White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander 4th-graders (ranging from 6 to 16 points) and for White, Black, and Hispanic 8th-graders (ranging from 5 to 7 points), while scores were lower in 2005 than in 1992 for White, Black, and Hispanic 12th-graders (ranging from 5 to 7 points).

The 2007 main NAEP reading assessment of states found that the average reading proficiency of public school 4th- and 8th-graders varied across participating jurisdictions (the 50 states, the Department of Defense overseas and domestic schools, and the District of Columbia). For 4th-graders in public schools, the U.S. average score was 239, with average scores in participating jurisdictions ranging from 214 in the District of Columbia to 252 in Massachusetts (table 134). For 8th-graders in public schools, the U.S. average score was 280, with average scores in participating jurisdictions ranging from 248 in the District of Columbia to 298 in Massachusetts (table 135).

Science

NAEP has assessed the science abilities of students in grades 4, 8, and 12 in both public and private schools since 1996, using a separate scale of 0 to 300 for each grade. The national average 4th-grade science score increased from 147 in 1996 to 151 in 2005; there was no measurable change in the 8th-grade score; and the 12th-grade score decreased from 150 in 1996 to 147 in 2005 (table 138). Certain subgroups outperformed others in science in 2005. For example, males outperformed females at all three grades. Male 4th-graders had a higher average score in 2005 than in 1996, and both male and female 12th-graders had lower scores in 2005 than in 1996. White students scored higher, on average, than Black and Hispanic students at all three grades in 2005. At grade 4, average scores were higher for White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander students in 2005 than in 1996. At grade 8, the average score for Black students was higher in 2005 than in 1996, but the scores did not measurably change for other racial/ethnic groups. At grade 12, there were no measurable changes in average scores for any racial/ethnic group when comparing results from 2005 with those from 1996.

International Comparisons

On the 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the average mathematics score of U.S. 4th-graders exceeded the international average for the 25 participating educational systems (table 406). (Most participating educational systems represent countries; however, some represent subnational entities with separate educational systems.)
High School Graduates and Dropouts

About 3,328,000 high school students are expected to graduate during the 2008–09 school year (table 104), including 3,011,000 public school graduates and 317,000 private school graduates. High school graduates include only recipients of diplomas, not recipients of equivalency credentials. The number of high school graduates projected for 2008–09 is up from 330,000 in 2002, the first year of the new test series.1 The number of General Educational Development (GED) credentials issued rose from 330,000 in 1977 to 487,000 in 2005 (table 403). (Possible scores on PISA assessments range from 0 to 1,000.) The average mathematics literacy score in the United States was lower than the average score in 23 of the other 29 OECD countries for which comparable PISA results were reported, higher than the average score in 4 of the other OECD countries, and not measurably different from the average score in 2 of the OECD countries. In science literacy, the average score of 15-year-olds in the United States was lower than the average score in 16 of the other 29 OECD countries, higher than the average score in 5 of the other OECD countries, and not measurably different from the average score in 8 of the OECD countries.

1 Information on changes in GED test series and reporting is based on the 2003 edition of Who Passed the GED Tests?, by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education, as well as communication with staff of the GED Testing Service.

Educational Technology

College Enrollment

College enrollment was a projected 18.2 million in fall 2008, higher than in any previous year except 2007 (table 3). College enrollment is expected to continue setting new records throughout the fall 2009 through fall 2017 period. Between fall 2007 and fall 2017, enrollment is expected to increase by 10 percent. Despite decreases in the traditional college-age population during the late 1980s and early 1990s, total enrollment increased during this period (tables 7, 15, 188, and 204). The traditional college-age population (18 to 24 years old) rose 16 percent between 1997 and 2007, which was reflected by an increase of 26 percent in college enrollment. Between 1997 and 2007, the number of full-time students increased by 34 percent compared to a 15 percent increase in part-time students (table 188). During the same time period, the number of males enrolled increased 22 percent, while the number of females enrolled increased 29 percent.

Faculty

In fall 2007, degree-granting institutions—defined as post-secondary institutions that grant an associate’s or higher degree and are eligible for Title IV federal financial aid programs—employed 1.4 million faculty members, including 0.7 million full-time and 0.7 million part-time faculty (table 245). In addition, degree-granting institutions employed 0.3 million graduate assistants.
Postsecondary Degrees

During the 2008–09 academic year, postsecondary degrees are projected to number 731,000 associate’s degrees; 1,603,000 bachelor’s degrees; 649,000 master’s degrees; 93,300 first-professional degrees; and 61,700 doctor’s degrees (table 268). Between 1996–97 and 2006–07, the number of degrees conferred rose at all levels. The number of associate’s degrees was 27 percent higher in 2006–07 than in 1996–97, the number of bachelor’s degrees was 30 percent higher, the number of master’s degrees was 44 percent higher, the number of first-professional degrees was 14 percent higher, and the number of doctor’s degrees was 32 percent higher.

Between 1996–97 and 2006–07, the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded to males increased 25 percent, while the number awarded to females increased 34 percent. As a result, females earned 57 percent of all bachelor’s degrees in 2006–07, compared with 56 percent in 1996–97. Between 1996–97 and 2006–07, the number of White students earning bachelor’s degrees increased 22 percent, compared with larger increases of 55 percent for Black students, 84 percent for Hispanic students, 53 percent for Asian/Pacific Islander students, and 54 percent for American Indian/Alaska Native students (table 284). In 2006–07, White students earned 72 percent of all bachelor’s degrees awarded (vs. 77 percent in 1996–97), Black students earned 10 percent (vs. 8 percent in 1996–97), Hispanic students earned 8 percent (vs. 5 percent in 1996–97), and Asian/Pacific Islander students earned 7 percent (vs. 6 percent in 1996–97). American Indian/Alaska Native students earned about 1 percent of the degrees in both years.

Undergraduate Prices

For the 2007–08 academic year, annual prices for undergraduate tuition, room, and board were estimated to be $11,578 at public institutions and $29,915 at private institutions (table 331). Between 1997–98 and 2007–08, prices for undergraduate tuition, room, and board at public institutions rose 30 percent, and prices at private institutions rose 23 percent, after adjustment for inflation.

Educational Attainment

The U.S. Census Bureau collects annual statistics on the educational attainment of the population. Between 1998 and 2008, the percentage of the adult population 25 years of age and over who had completed high school rose from 83 percent to 87 percent, and the percentage of adults with a bachelor’s degree increased from 24 percent to 29 percent (table 8). High school completers include those people who graduated from high school with a diploma, as well as those who completed high school through equivalency programs. The percentage of young adults (25- to 29-year-olds) who had completed high school in 2008 was about the same as it was in 1998 (88 percent in both years). The percentage of young adults who had completed a bachelor’s degree increased from 27 percent in 1998 to 31 percent in 2008.

Education Expenditures

Expenditures for public and private education, from pre-kindergarten through graduate school (excluding postsecondary schools not awarding associate’s or higher degrees), are estimated at $1,017 billion for 2007–08 (table 25). Expenditures of elementary and secondary schools are expected to total $631 billion, while those of degree-granting postsecondary institutions are expected to total $386 billion. Total expenditures for education are expected to amount to 7.4 percent of the gross domestic product in 2007–08, about 0.5 percentage points higher than in 1997–98.

Interpreting Statistics

Readers should be aware of the limitations of statistics. These limitations vary with the exact nature of a particular survey. For example, estimates based on a sample of institutions will differ somewhat from the figures that would have been obtained if a complete census had been taken using the same survey procedures. Standard errors are available for sample survey data appearing in this report. In most cases, standard errors for all items appear in the printed table. In some cases, only standard errors for key items appear in the printed table. Standard errors that do not appear in the tables are available from NCES upon request. Although some of the surveys conducted by NCES are census or universe surveys (which attempt to collect information from all potential respondents), all surveys are subject to design, reporting, and processing errors and errors due to nonresponse. Differences in sampling, data collection procedures, coverage of target population, timing, phrasing of questions, scope of nonresponse, interviewer training, data processing, coding, and so forth mean that the results from the different sources may not be strictly comparable. More information on survey methodologies can be found in Appendix A: Guide to Sources.

Estimates presented in the text and figures are rounded from original estimates, not from a series of roundings. Percentages in the text are rounded to whole numbers, while ratios and percentage distributions are normally presented to one decimal place, where applicable.

Unless otherwise noted, all data in this report are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Unless otherwise noted, all financial data are in current dollars, meaning not adjusted for changes in the purchasing power of the dollar due to inflation. Price indexes for inflation adjustments can be found in table 31.

Common data elements are collected in different ways in different surveys. Since the Digest relies on a number of data sources, there are discrepancies in definitions and data across tables in the volume. For example, several different surveys collect data on public school enrollment, and while similar, the estimates are not identical. The definitions of racial/ethnic groups also differ across surveys, particularly with respect to whether Hispanic origin is considered an ethnic group regardless of race, or counted separately as a racial/ethnic group. Individual tables note the definitions used in the given studies.
All statements cited in the text about differences between two or more groups or changes over time were tested for statistical significance and are statistically significant at the .05 level. Various test procedures were used, depending on the nature of the statement tested. The most commonly used test procedures were $t$ tests, equivalence tests, and linear trend tests. Equivalence tests were used to determine whether two statistics are substantively equivalent or substantively different. This was accomplished by using a hypothesis test to determine whether the confidence interval of the difference between sample estimates is substantively significant (i.e., greater or less than a preset substantively important difference). In most cases involving percentages, a difference of 3.0 was used to determine substantive equivalence or difference. In some comparisons involving only very small percentages, a lower difference was used. In cases involving only relatively large values, a larger difference was used, such as $1,000 in the case of annual salaries. Linear trend tests were conducted by evaluating the significance of the slope of a simple regression of the data over time, and a $t$ test comparing the end points.
GUIDE TO TABULAR PRESENTATION

This section is intended to assist the reader in following the basic structure of the Digest tables and to provide a legend for some of the common symbols and indexes used throughout the book. Unless otherwise noted, all data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Changes in survey instruments sometimes mean that data for specific categories are not available in a consistent manner over the entire reporting period. Because of these survey limitations, data for these specific categories may be noted as included with other categories where applicable.

Table Components

**Title** Describes the table content concisely. (Tables may not include data for all years implied in table titles. When this is the case, the title will include the term “Selected years.”)

**Unit indicator** Informs the reader of the measurement unit in the table—“In thousands,” “In millions of dollars,” etc. Noted below the title unless several units are used, in which case the unit indicators are generally given in the spanner or individual column heads.

**Spanner** Describes a group of two or more columns.

**Column head** Describes a specific column.

**Stub** Describes a row or a group of rows. Each stub row is followed by a number of dots (leaders).

**Field** The area of the table which contains the data elements.

Example of Table Structure

```
Table 0. Projected number of participants in educational institutions, by level and control of institution: Fall 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column Heads</th>
<th>All levels (elementary, secondary, and postsecondary degree-granting)</th>
<th>Elementary and secondary schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>62.0, 55.0, 6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Public, Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>55.1, 48.9, 6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>55.1, 48.9, 6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers and faculty</td>
<td>55.1, 48.9, 6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other professional, administrative, and support staff</td>
<td>55.1, 48.9, 6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Includes enrollment in local public school systems and in most private schools (religiously affiliated and nonsectarian). Excludes federal schools. Includes private pre-primary enrollment in schools that do not offer kindergarten or above. Degree-granting institutions report associate’s or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Data for teachers and other staff in public elementary and secondary schools and colleges and universities are reported in terms of full-time equivalents. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Projections of Education Statistics to 2015; and unpublished projections and estimates. (This table was prepared September 2006.)
```
Special notes  Symbols used to indicate why data do not appear in designated cell.

— Not available.
† Not applicable.
# Rounds to zero.
! Interpret data with caution.
‡ Reporting standards not met.

Footnote  Describes a unique circumstance relating to a specific item within the table. Following are two typical examples:

Estimated  Based on available information from a subset of the population of interest.

Projected  Calculated from a forecasting model based on historical information.

Note  Furnishes general information that relates to the entire table.

Source  The document or reference from which the data are drawn. This note may also include the organizational unit responsible for preparing the data.

Descriptive Terms

Measures of central tendency  A number that is used to represent the “typical value” of a group of numbers. It is regarded as a measure of “location” or “central tendency” of a group of numbers.

Arithmetic mean (average)  is the most commonly used average. It is derived by summing the individual item values of a particular group and dividing that sum by the number of items. This value is often referred to simply as the “mean” or “average.”

Median  is the measure of central tendency that occupies the middle position in a rank order of values. It generally has the same number of items above it as below it. If there is an even number of items in the group, the median is the average of the middle two items.

Average per capita, or per person, figure represents an average computed for every person in a specified group, or population. It is derived by dividing the total for an item (such as income or expenditures) by the number of persons in the specified population.

Index number  A value that provides a means of measuring, summarizing, and communicating the nature of changes that occur from time to time or from place to place. An index is used to express changes in prices over periods of time, but may also be used to express differences between related subjects at a single point in time.

The Digest most often uses the Consumer Price Index to compare purchasing power over time.

To compute a price index, a base year or period is selected. The base-year price is then designated as the base or reference price to which the prices for other years or periods are related.

A method of expressing the price relationship is:

\[
\text{Index number} = \frac{\text{Price of a set of one or more items for related year}}{\text{Price of the same set of items for base year}} \times 100
\]

When 100 is subtracted from the index number, the result equals the percent change in price from the base year.

Current and constant dollars  are used in a number of tables to express finance data. Unless otherwise noted, all figures are in current dollars, not adjusted for inflation. Constant dollars provide a measure of the impact of inflation on the current dollars.

Current dollar  figures reflect actual prices or costs prevailing during the specified year(s).

Constant dollar  figures attempt to remove the effects of price changes (inflation) from statistical series reported in dollar terms.

The constant dollar value for an item is derived by dividing the base-year price index (for example, the Consumer Price Index for 1999) by the price index for the year of data to be adjusted and multiplying by the price of item to be adjusted. The result is an adjusted dollar value as it would presumably exist if prices were the same as the base year—in other words, as if the dollar had constant purchasing power. Any changes in the constant dollar amounts would reflect only changes in the real values.

In the 2008 edition of the Digest, the following 26 tables include finance data that are adjusted to school year 2006–07 dollars: tables 26, 32, 74, 78, 79, 86, 171, 174, 175, 181, 184, 185, 256, 257, 263, 331, 334, 350, 353, 355, 360, 361, 362, 364, 366, and 424. Data adjusted to calendar year 2007 dollars appear in tables 20, 384, 394, and 418. Table 373 includes adjustments to fiscal year (FY) 2008 dollars.