

DATA POINT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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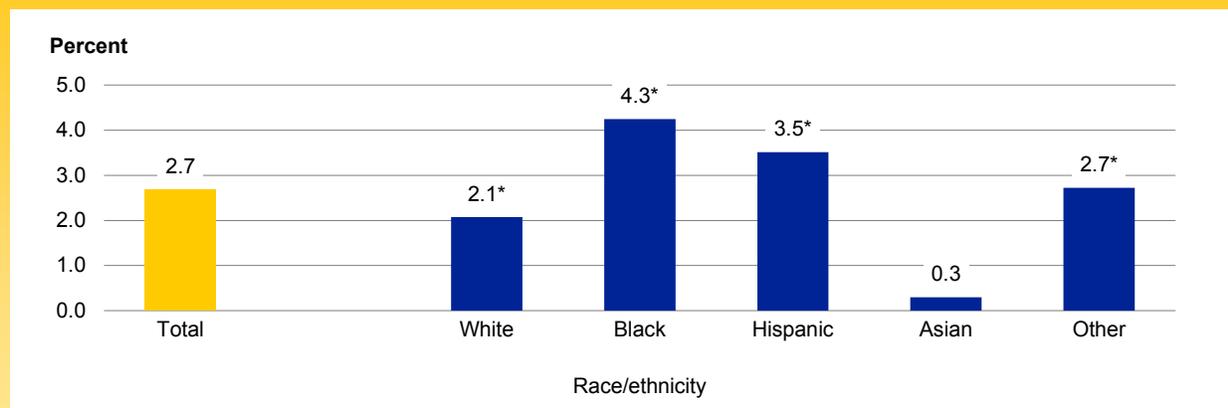
Early High School Dropouts: What Are Their Characteristics?

Data from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09), a nationally representative, longitudinal study of more than 23,000 ninth-graders in 2009, were used for this report. HSLs:09 surveyed students, their parents, math and science teachers, school administrators, and school counselors. The study included information about students who were enrolled in school in the fall term of 2009 as ninth-graders and who were not enrolled in school and had not earned a regular high school diploma or alternative credential such as a GED in spring 2012, when they should have been 11th-graders. These students are referred to as “dropouts” in this report.¹

What percentage of enrolled ninth-graders dropped out of school between fall 2009 and spring 2012 and how did the percentage vary by race/ethnicity?

- Among 2009 ninth-graders, 2.7 percent had dropped out by 2012, when they should have been 11th-graders. (Figure 1).
- Dropout rates for Black, Hispanic, and White students were 4.3 percent, 3.5 percent, and 2.1 percent, respectively. Asian students had the lowest dropout rate (0.3 percent).² (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. Percentage of 2009 ninth-graders who dropped out of high school, by race/ethnicity: 2012



NOTE: Dropouts are students who were not enrolled in school and had not completed high school or an alternative program as of the 2012 interview. The “Other” group includes American Indian/Alaska Native, More than one race, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. All race categories exclude Hispanic or Latino origin, unless specified. The racial/ethnic group rates with a * were significantly different from the Asian group’s rate. Standard error tables are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015066>.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. *High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09) First Follow-up Public-Use Data File* (NCES 2014-358).

Data in this report are from the High School Longitudinal Study (HSLs:09) a nationally representative sample survey. To learn more, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/hsls09>. For questions about content or to view this report online, go to <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015066>.

What were the dropout rates of males and females, and how did dropout rates vary by socioeconomic status (SES)?

- Between 2009 and 2012, some 2.7 percent of males and 2.6 percent of females had dropped out, a difference that is not statistically significant. (**Figure 2**).
- About 5 percent of students who were in the lowest fifth of the 2012 SES distribution (first SES quintile) had dropped out between 2009 and 2012. (**Figure 2**).³
- In contrast, 0.6 percent of students in the highest fifth of the 2012 SES distribution had dropped out. (**Figure 2**).

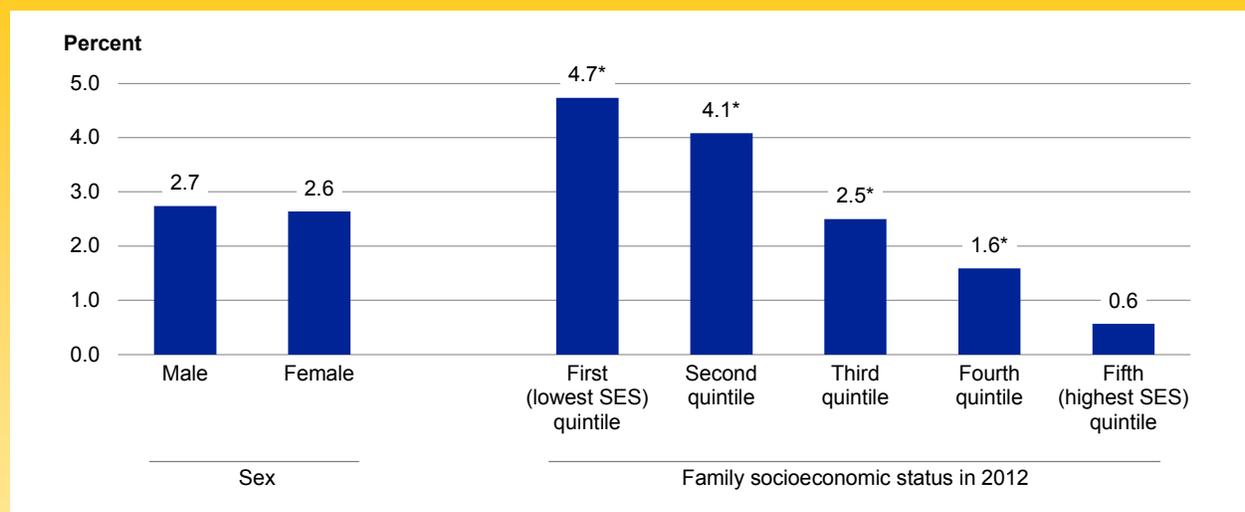
Endnotes

¹ The *First Look* report for HSLs:09 (NCES 2014-360) also reported estimates on dropouts which are slightly different from those reported in this *DataPoint* because the *First Look* report did not include ninth-grade dropouts.

² The race/ethnicity distribution of the population from which these dropout rates were calculated is 51.9 percent White, 13.7 percent Black, 22.3 percent Hispanic, 3.6 percent Asian, and 8.4 percent Other (Ingels, S.J., and Dalton, B. (2013). *High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09) First Follow-up: A First Look at Fall 2009 Ninth-Graders in 2012* (NCES 2014-360).

³ See figure note for quintile definition.

FIGURE 2. Percentage of 2009 ninth-graders who dropped out of high school, by sex and socioeconomic status: 2012



NOTE: Dropouts are students who were not enrolled in school and had not completed high school or an alternative program as of the 2012 interview. Socioeconomic status (SES) is an index score of the family's relative social position based on parents' education, occupational prestige, and family income. Here, SES is reported in quintiles (fifths) by dividing the weighted SES index score distribution into five equal groups. The first quintile is the lowest one-fifth of the SES distribution and fifth quintile is the highest. Estimates with * are significantly different from the estimate for the highest SES quintile. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard error tables are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015066>.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. *High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09) First Follow-up Public-Use Data File* (NCES 2014-358).

This NCES Data Point presents information on education topics of interest. It was authored by Jeffrey A. Rosen, Xianglei Chen, and Steven Ingels of RTI International. Estimates based on samples are subject to sampling variability, and apparent differences may not be statistically significant. All noted differences are statistically significant

at the .05 level. In the design, conduct, and data processing of National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors, such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error.