

Highlights From *The Condition of Education 2015*

Spotlights



Kindergartners' Approaches to Learning Behaviors and Academic Outcomes

In the fall of 2010, about 26 percent of first-time kindergartners were rated by their teachers as demonstrating positive approaches to learning behaviors “very often,” 47 percent were rated as demonstrating these behaviors “often,” 25 percent were rated as demonstrating them “sometimes,” and 1 percent were rated as “never” demonstrating them. Fall kindergarten Approaches to Learning scores were positively associated with reading, mathematics, and science scores in kindergarten and first grade.

Disparities in Educational Outcomes Among Male Youth

In 2013, the percentage of males ages 25–29 who had completed a bachelor’s or higher degree was higher for Asians (55 percent) than for Whites (37 percent), those of Two or more races (29 percent), Blacks (17 percent), and Hispanics (13 percent). This percentage was also higher for White males and males of Two or more races than for their Hispanic and Black peers.

Postsecondary Attainment: Differences by Socioeconomic Status

A smaller percentage of students of low socioeconomic status (SES) than students of middle SES attained a bachelor’s or higher degree within 8 years of high school completion (14 vs. 29 percent), and percentages for both groups were smaller than the percentage of high-SES students who attained this level of education (60 percent).

Population Characteristics



ATTAINMENT

Educational Attainment

In 2014, some 91 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had received at least a high school diploma or its equivalent. Between 1990 and 2014, the size of the White-Black gap in attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent narrowed from 8 to 4 percentage points, and the size of the White-Hispanic gap narrowed from 32 to 21 percentage points.

International Educational Attainment

The percentage of 25- to 64-year-olds who had earned a bachelor’s or higher degree was higher in 2012 than in 2001 in the United States (33 vs. 28 percent) and across OECD countries (24 vs. 15 percent).



ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

Annual Earnings of Young Adults

In 2013, young adults with a bachelor’s degree earned more than twice as much as those without a high school credential (\$48,500 vs. \$23,900) and 62 percent more than young adult high school completers (\$48,500 vs. \$30,000).

Employment Rates and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment

The percentage of the adult population who were employed was higher in 2014 than at the end of the recent recession in 2010, but lower than before the recession began in 2008.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Children Living in Poverty

In 2013, approximately 21 percent of school-age children were in families living in poverty. The percentage of school-age children living in poverty ranged across the United States from 9 percent in New Hampshire to 33 percent in Mississippi.

Participation in Education

ALL AGES

Enrollment Trends by Age

In 2013, some 94 percent of 5- to 6-year-olds and 98 percent of 7- to 13-year-olds were enrolled in elementary or secondary school. In that same year, 47 percent of 18- to 19-year-olds and 39 percent of 20- to 24-year-olds were enrolled in postsecondary education. Although the total school enrollment rate of most age groups from 3 to 34 did not change measurably between 2012 and 2013, the enrollment rate of 16- to 17-year-olds was 2 percentage points lower in 2013 than in 2012.

PREPRIMARY EDUCATION

Preprimary Enrollment

The percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in preprimary programs increased from 59 to 64 percent between 1990 and 2000, but there has been no measurable increase since then. The percentage of these children who attended full-day programs increased from 39 to 60 percent between 1990 and 2013 overall, although the 2013 full-day enrollment rate was not measurably different from the 2012 rate.

ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY ENROLLMENT

Public School Enrollment

From school years 2012–13 through 2024–25, overall public elementary and secondary school enrollment is projected to increase by 6 percent (from 49.8 million to 52.9 million students), with changes across states ranging from an increase of 26 percent in Nevada to a decrease of 11 percent in West Virginia.

Charter School Enrollment

From school year 1999–2000 to 2012–13, the number of students enrolled in public charter schools increased from 0.3 million to 2.3 million. During this period, the percentage of public school students who attended charter schools increased from 0.7 to 4.6 percent.

Private School Enrollment

Private school enrollment in prekindergarten through grade 12 increased from 5.9 million in 1995–96 to 6.3 million in 2001–02, then decreased to 5.3 million in 2011–12. The percentage of all students in private schools decreased from 12 percent in 1995–96 to 10 percent in 2011–12.

Racial/Ethnic Enrollment in Public Schools

From fall 2002 through fall 2012, the number of White students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools decreased from 28.6 million to 25.4 million, and their share of public school enrollment decreased from 59 to 51 percent. In contrast, the number of Hispanic students enrolled during this period increased from 8.6 million to 12.1 million students, and their share of public school enrollment increased from 18 to 24 percent.

English Language Learners

The percentage of public school students in the United States who were English language learners (ELL) was higher in school year 2012–13 (9.2 percent) than in 2002–03 (8.7 percent) and in 2011–12 (9.1 percent). In 2012–13, five of the six states with the highest percentages of ELL students in their public schools were located in the West.

Children and Youth With Disabilities

The number of children and youth ages 3–21 receiving special education services was 6.4 million, or about 13 percent of all public school students, in 2012–13. Some 35 percent of students receiving special education services had specific learning disabilities.



POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT

Undergraduate Enrollment

Total undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions was 17.5 million students in fall 2013, an increase of 46 percent from 1990, when it was 12.0 million students. By 2024, total undergraduate enrollment is projected to increase to 19.6 million students.

Postbaccalaureate Enrollment

Total enrollment in postbaccalaureate degree programs was 2.9 million students in fall 2013. Between 2013 and 2024, postbaccalaureate enrollment is projected to increase by 20 percent to 3.5 million students.

Elementary and Secondary Education



SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND CLIMATE

Characteristics of Traditional Public and Public Charter Schools

In school year 2012–13, the majority of charter schools (57 percent) were in cities, compared with 25 percent of traditional public schools. In contrast, 11 percent of charter schools were in rural areas, compared with 29 percent of traditional public schools.

Concentration of Public School Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

In school year 2012–13, higher percentages of Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students attended high-poverty public schools than did Pacific Islander students, students of Two or more races, Asian students, and White students (ordered by descending percentages).

Rates of School Crime

Through nearly two decades of decline, the nonfatal victimization rate for 12- to 18-year-old students at school fell from 181 crimes per 1,000 students in 1992 to 55 per 1,000 students in 2013. The nonfatal victimization rate away from school for these students also declined from 173 to 30 crimes per 1,000 students during the same period.

Teachers and Pupil/Teacher Ratios

Of the 6.2 million staff members in public elementary and secondary schools in fall 2012, some 3.1 million, or 50 percent, were teachers. The pupil/teacher ratio in public schools decreased over time from 26.9 students per teacher in 1955 to 17.9 in 1985, and then further declined to 15.3 in 2008. In the most recent years, the pupil/teacher ratios in 2010, 2011, and 2012 (all 16.0) were higher than the ratio in 2009 (15.4).



FINANCE

Public School Revenue Sources

From school years 2001–02 through 2011–12, total elementary and secondary public school revenues increased from \$553 billion to \$620 billion (in constant 2013–14 dollars). During the most recent period from 2010–11 through 2011–12, total revenues for public elementary and secondary schools decreased by about \$22 billion, or more than 3 percent.

Public School Expenditures

From 2000–01 to 2011–12, current expenditures per student in public elementary and secondary schools increased by 11 percent, after adjusting for inflation. Current expenditures per student peaked in 2008–09 at \$11,537 and have decreased each year since then. The amount for 2011–12 (\$11,014) was 3 percent less than the amount for 2010–11 (\$11,332).

Education Expenditures by Country

In 2011, the United States spent \$11,841 per full-time-equivalent (FTE) student on elementary and secondary education, an amount 35 percent higher than the OECD average of \$8,789. At the postsecondary level, U.S. expenditures per FTE student were \$26,021, almost twice as high as the OECD average of \$13,619.

ASSESSMENTS

Reading Performance

The average grade 8 reading score was higher in 2013 than in 2011, according to data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. At grade 4, the average score in 2013 was not measurably different from the score in 2011. Similarly, at grade 12 the average score in 2013 was not measurably different from that in 2009.

Mathematics Performance

The average 4th- and 8th-grade mathematics scores in 2013 were higher than the scores in all previous assessment years, according to data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. At grade 12, the average mathematics score in 2013 was higher than in 2005 but not measurably different from the score in 2009.

Reading and Mathematics Score Trends

NAEP long-term trend results indicate that the average reading and mathematics achievement of 9- and 13-year-olds improved between the early 1970s and 2012; however, only 13-year-olds made score gains from 2008 to 2012, and they did so in both subject areas. Average reading and mathematics achievement for 17-year-olds did not change significantly between the early 1970s and 2012 or between 2008 and 2012.

International Assessments

Among 15-year-old students, 29 education systems had higher average scores than the United States in mathematics literacy, 22 had higher average scores in science literacy, and 19 had higher average scores in reading literacy, according to the 2012 Program in International Student Assessment (PISA).

STUDENT EFFORT, PERSISTENCE, AND PROGRESS

High School Coursetaking

The percentages of high school graduates who had taken mathematics courses in algebra I, geometry, algebra II/trigonometry, analysis/precalculus, statistics/probability, and calculus increased from 1990 to 2009. The percentages of high school graduates who had taken science courses in chemistry and physics also increased between 1990 and 2009.

Public High School Graduation Rates

In school year 2011–12, some 3.1 million public high school students, or 81 percent, graduated on time with a regular diploma. Among all public high school students, Asian/Pacific Islander students had the highest graduation rate (93 percent), followed by Whites (85 percent), Hispanics (76 percent), and American Indians/Alaska Natives and Blacks (68 percent each).

Status Dropout Rates

The status dropout rate decreased from 12 percent in 1990 to 7 percent in 2013, with most of the decline occurring since 2000. From 1990 to 2013, the Hispanic status dropout rate declined from 32 percent to 12 percent, while Black and White status dropout rates decreased by 6 and 4 percentage points, respectively. Nevertheless, the Hispanic status dropout rate in 2013 (12 percent) remained higher than the White (5 percent) and Black (7 percent) status dropout rates.

TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

Immediate College Enrollment Rate

The immediate college enrollment rate increased from 60 percent in 1990 to 66 percent in 2013; however, this rate has decreased in recent years—down from 70 percent in 2009. In 2013, the immediate college enrollment rate for high school completers from high-income families (80 percent) was 31 percentage points higher than the rate for those from low-income families (49 percent). The 2013 gap between high school completers from high- and low-income families did not measurably differ from the corresponding gap in 1990 (30 percentage points).

Postsecondary Education



CHARACTERISTICS OF POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS

Characteristics of Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions

In 2013–14, some 29 percent of 4-year institutions had open admissions policies, 26 percent accepted three-quarters or more of their applicants, 32 percent accepted from one-half to less than three-quarters of their applicants, and 13 percent accepted less than one-half of their applicants.

Characteristics of Postsecondary Students

Some 10.5 million undergraduate students attended 4-year institutions in fall 2013, while 7.0 million attended 2-year institutions. At 4-year institutions in fall 2013, some 77 percent of undergraduate students attended full time, compared with 41 percent at 2-year institutions.



PROGRAMS AND COURSES

Undergraduate Degree Fields

From 2002–03 to 2012–13, the number of associate's degrees awarded increased by 59 percent, from 634,000 to over 1 million, and the number of bachelor's degrees awarded increased by 36 percent, from 1.3 million to 1.8 million.

Graduate Degree Fields

Between academic years 2002–03 and 2012–13, the number of master's degrees awarded increased by 45 percent, from 519,000 to 752,000, and the number of doctor's degrees awarded increased by 44 percent, from 122,000 to 175,000.



FINANCE AND RESOURCES

Price of Attending an Undergraduate Institution

The average net price of attendance (total cost minus grant and scholarship aid) in 2012–13 (in constant 2013–14 dollars) for first-time, full-time students was \$12,890 at public, in-state 4-year institutions, \$24,430 at private nonprofit 4-year institutions, and \$21,740 at private for-profit 4-year institutions.

Grants and Loan Aid to Undergraduate Students

The percentage of first-time, full-time undergraduate students at 4-year degree-granting institutions receiving financial aid increased from 80 percent in 2007–08 to 85 percent in 2012–13.

Postsecondary Revenues by Source

Between 2007–08 and 2012–13, revenues from tuition and fees per full-time-equivalent (FTE) student increased by 17 percent at public institutions (from \$5,478 to \$6,415, in constant 2013–14 dollars) and by 7 percent at private nonprofit institutions (from \$18,550 to \$19,866). At private for-profit institutions, revenues from tuition and fees were 7 percent higher in 2012–13 than in 2007–08 (\$16,135 vs. \$15,110).

Expenses of Postsecondary Institutions

In 2012–13, instruction expenses per full-time-equivalent (FTE) student were \$7,814 (in constant 2013–14 dollars) at public institutions, \$16,432 at private nonprofit institutions, and \$3,893 at private for-profit institutions. Instruction was the largest expense category at public and private nonprofit institutions and the second largest expense category at private for-profit institutions.

Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty

From fall 1993 to fall 2013, the number of full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions increased by 45 percent (from 545,700 to 791,400), while the number of part-time faculty increased by 104 percent (from 369,800 to 752,700). As a result of the faster increase in the number of part-time faculty, the percentage of faculty who were part time increased from 40 to 49 percent during this period.

Student Loan Volume and Default Rates

In 2012–13, the average student loan amount of \$7,000 represented a 39 percent increase over the 2000–01 amount of \$5,100 (in constant 2013–14 dollars). Of the 4.7 million students who entered the repayment phase on their student loans in fiscal year (FY) 2011, some 651,000, or 13.7 percent, defaulted before the end of FY 2013.



COMPLETIONS

Institutional Retention and Graduation Rates for Undergraduate Students

About 59 percent of students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a 4-year institution in fall 2007 completed that degree within 6 years. The graduation rate for females (62 percent) was higher than the rate for males (56 percent).

Degrees Conferred by Public and Private Institutions

The number of postsecondary degrees conferred at each degree level increased between 2002–03 and 2012–13. The certificates below the associate's degree level awarded during this period increased by 49 percent, associate's degrees increased by 59 percent, bachelor's degrees increased by 36 percent, master's degrees increased by 45 percent, and doctor's degrees increased by 44 percent.