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**One in Six Public School Students Now in High-Poverty Schools**  
***The Condition of Education Highlights***  
***Characteristics of High-Poverty Schools and their Students***

Students who attend high-poverty schools perform persistently lower in math and reading achievement and are less likely to attend four-year colleges when compared to their peers in low-poverty schools, according to *The Condition of Education 2010* report released today by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

*The Condition of Education* is a congressionally mandated report that provides an annual portrait of education in the United States. There are 49 indicators in this year's report covering all aspects of education, including early childhood through postsecondary education, student achievement and educational outcomes, and school environments and resources.

This year's report features a special section that examines high-poverty schools, defined as those with more than 75 percent of the students eligible for subsidized lunch.

"It is important to focus attention on the challenges that our country faces as the number of students in high-poverty schools grows," said NCES Deputy Commissioner Stuart Kerachsky. "There is a wide and persistent achievement gap associated with school poverty."

The school poverty findings include:

- In 2007-08, about 20 percent of all public elementary schools and 9 percent of public secondary schools were considered high-poverty schools, compared with 15 percent and 5 percent respectively in 1999-2000.
- The reading achievement gap between 8th-grade students in low-poverty vs. high-poverty schools was 34 points, on a 500 point scale, in 2009, and the mathematics achievement gap was 38 points.
- In 2007-08, according to school administrators, about 28 percent of high school graduates from high-poverty schools attended 4-year colleges after graduation, compared with 52 percent of high school graduates from low-poverty schools.

The *Condition* continues its role in documenting trends, and also sheds light on a number of new items – from teacher pay incentives and principal characteristics to international performance on science content and students studying abroad.

- Between 1988 and 2008, the percentage of Hispanic public school students increased from 11 to 22 percent. Largely as a result of this increase, the percentage of White students decreased from 68 to 55 percent over those two decades.
- From 1999 to 2008, the number of students enrolled in charter schools has nearly quadrupled, from 340,000 to 1.3 million students. During this period, the percentage of all public schools that were charter schools increased from 2 to 5 percent.
- In 2007-08, some 61 percent of teachers worked in districts that offered at least one type of pay incentive, such as cash bonuses or salary increases. These incentives are designed to recruit or retain teachers in less desirable locations or for positions in fields with shortages, and to reward for national board certification or excellence in teaching.
- The percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who completed a bachelor's degree increased from 17 percent in 1971 to 29 percent in 2009. During this same period, bachelor's degree attainment more than doubled for Blacks (from 7 to 19 percent) and Hispanics (from 5 to 12 percent) and nearly doubled for Whites (from 19 to 37 percent).
- The number of U.S. college students studying abroad has quadrupled in the past two decades, from 62,000 in 1987-88 to more than 260,000 students in 2007-08 –or about 15 out of every 100 students in a bachelor's degree program. China is now the fifth most popular destination, and business/management majors now represent an increasing share of those studying abroad.

The National Center for Education Statistics is the statistical center of the Institute of Education Sciences in the U.S. Department of Education. The full text of *The Condition of Education 2010* (in HTML format), along with related data tables and indicators from previous years, can be viewed at <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe>.