

## Commissioner's Statement

### INTRODUCTION

Efforts to monitor the progress of U.S. education and respond to its opportunities and challenges depend on reliable, accurate, and timely data. To provide such data, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) each year submits to Congress the mandated report, *The Condition of Education*. This year's report presents indicators of important developments and trends in American education. Recurrent themes underscored by the indicators include participation and persistence in education, student performance and other outcomes, the environment for learning, and resources for education. In addition, this year's volume contains a special analysis that presents key findings of several recent international assessments that examine the achievement of U.S. students in reading, mathematics, and science and the literacy of adults relative to the performance of their peers in other countries. This analysis is particularly timely given the concern for the competitiveness of the United States.

This statement summarizes the main findings of the special analysis and the 50 indicators that appear in the five following sections. Each indicator is referenced by its number (e.g., *indicator 10*) in the volume.

### SPECIAL ANALYSIS ON U.S. STUDENT AND ADULT PERFORMANCE ON INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

The United States participates in several international assessments designed to compare the overall performance of U.S. students and adults with that of their peers in other countries. These assessments also allow us to examine characteristics related to high and low achievement across countries.

The following provides a summary of the major findings of four international assessments in which the United States has participated:

the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and the Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALL):

- U.S. 4th-graders had higher average scores in reading literacy than the international average and higher scores than students in 23 of the other 34 countries that participated in PIRLS 2001.
- U.S. 15-year-olds performed as well as or better in reading literacy than most of their peers in the other 26 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)-member countries that participated in PISA 2000. The U.S. average scores were not significantly different from those in most other industrialized countries as well as the OECD average.
- Between 1995 and 2003, U.S. 4th-graders showed no measurable change in their mathematics performance on TIMSS, on average, while the performance of 8th-graders improved. The standing of U.S. 4th-graders declined relative to the other 14 countries participating in both 1995 and 2003, while the standing of 8th-graders increased relative to the other 21 countries participating in both years.
- U.S. 15-year-olds had lower average scores in mathematics literacy than the OECD average and lower scores than their peers in 20 of the other 28 OECD countries that participated in PISA 2003.
- Between 1995 and 2003, U.S. 4th-graders showed no measurable change in their science performance on TIMSS, on average, while 8th-graders showed some improvement. The standing of U.S. 4th-graders declined relative to the other 14 countries participating in both 1995 and

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2003, while the standing of 8th-graders increased relative to the other 21 countries participating in both years.

- U.S. 15-year-olds scored below the OECD average in science literacy and below the average scores of students in 15 of the other 28 participating OECD countries in PISA 2003.
- U.S. adults had lower numeracy scores on the ALL study, on average, than adults in Norway, Bermuda, Switzerland, and Canada in 2003 and had higher numeracy scores than adults in Italy.

### PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

As the U.S. population increases in size, so does its enrollment at all levels of public and private education. At the elementary and secondary levels, growth is due largely to the increase in the size of the school-age population. At the postsecondary level, both population growth and increasing enrollment rates help account for rising enrollments in undergraduate, graduate, and first-professional programs. Adult education is also increasing, due to demographic shifts in the age of the U.S. population, increasing rates of enrollment, and changing employer requirements for skills. The cohorts of learners have become more diverse than ever before, with students who are members of racial/ethnic minorities or who speak a language other than English at home making up an increasing proportion of the school-age population over time.

- Between 1970 and 2004, the enrollment rate increased among all groups of adults ages 18–34, when individuals typically enroll in postsecondary education, and the enrollment rate of those ages 18–19 increased from 48 to 64 percent (*indicator 1*).
- The percentage of prekindergarten children ages 3–5 who attended center-based

early childhood care and education programs—including day care centers, Head Start programs, preschool, nursery school, prekindergarten, and other early childhood programs—increased from 53 percent in 1991 to 60 percent in 1999, before decreasing to 57 percent in 2005. A greater percentage of nonpoor children ages 3–5 have participated in center-based programs than poor children since 1991 (*indicator 2*).

- Rising immigration since 1970 and a 25 percent increase in the number of annual births that began in the mid-1970s and peaked in 1990 have boosted school enrollment. Public school enrollment in grades prekindergarten through 12 is projected to have reached an estimated 48.7 million in 2005 and to increase each year from 2006 to an all-time high of approximately 51.2 million in 2015. The South is projected to experience the largest increase in enrollments of all regions in the country (*indicator 3*).
- The percentage of all children enrolled in private schools in kindergarten through grade 12 fluctuated at around 10 percent between 1989–90 and 2003–04. Catholic schools continued to have the largest percentage of total private school enrollment during this period, but there was a shift in the distribution of students from Catholic to other religious and nonsectarian private schools at both the elementary and secondary levels (*indicator 4*).
- Between 1972 and 2004, the percentage of racial/ethnic minority students enrolled in the nation's public schools increased from 22 to 43 percent, primarily due to growth in Hispanic enrollment. In 2004, Hispanic students represented 19 percent of public school enrollment, up from 6 percent in 1972. The distribution of mi-

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nority students in public schools differed across regions of the country, with minority public school enrollment (57 percent) in 2004 exceeding White enrollment (43 percent) in the West (*indicator 5*).

- In 2005, larger percentages of Black, Hispanic, and American Indian 4th-graders than Asian/Pacific Islander and White 4th-graders attended high-poverty schools (those with more than 75 percent of students in the school eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch). Black and Hispanic 4th-graders were more likely than their White or Asian/Pacific Islander peers to attend high-poverty schools, whether they were located in central city, urban fringe, or rural areas. Black and Hispanic 4th-graders were also more likely than White, Asian/Pacific Islander, or American Indian 4th-graders to attend schools with high minority enrollments (schools in which 75 percent or more of the students are minorities) (*indicator 6*).
- The number of children ages 5–17 who spoke a language other than English at home more than doubled between 1979 and 2004, though the number has remained stable since 2001. Among these children, the number who did not speak English “very well” also grew markedly during this period, again remaining stable since 2001. The percentages of poor and near-poor youth who spoke a language other than English at home were higher than the percentage of nonpoor children who did so (*indicator 7*).
- Since the inception of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the mid-1970s, the number and percentage of youth ages 3–21 who are enrolled in public schools and receive special education services have grown steadily. Growth in the receipt of service occurred between 1976 and 2002 among all age groups. Specific learning disabilities are the fastest growing and the most prevalent of all disabilities among school-age children (*indicator 8*).
- Over the past 35 years, total undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions has generally increased and is projected to continue to do so through 2015. From 2006 to 2015, women’s enrollment is expected to continue growing at a faster rate than men’s, full-time undergraduate enrollment is expected to increase more rapidly than part-time enrollment, and enrollment at 4-year institutions is expected to grow faster than at 2-year institutions (*indicator 9*).
- Graduate and first-professional enrollments in degree-granting institutions increased between 1976 and 2004, with women’s enrollment growing at a faster rate than men’s. During this period, minority enrollment in graduate programs increased 254 percent, with Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander enrollments experiencing the greatest growth. Since 1976, the majority of graduate students have been enrolled part time, and most first-professional students have been enrolled full time (*indicator 10*).
- The percentage of the population age 16 or older participating in adult learning—including basic skills training, apprenticeships, work-related courses, personal interest courses, English as a Second Language classes, and part-time college or university degree programs—increased between 1995 and 2001 before decreasing in 2005. The most common forms of adult learning in 2005 were work-related courses and personal interest courses (*indicator 11*).

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#### LEARNER OUTCOMES

How well does the American educational system—and its students—perform? Data from national and international assessments of students' academic achievement can help address this question, as can data on adults' educational and work experiences, literacy levels, and earnings. In some areas, such as mathematics and science, the performance of elementary and secondary students has shown some improvement over the past decade, but not in all grades assessed and not equally for all groups of students. The association between education and the earnings and employment of adults helps underscore the importance of education for individuals and society and the outcomes of different levels of educational attainment.

- The average reading scores of 4th- and 8th-graders assessed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) increased 2 points between 1992 and 2005 (from 217 to 219 for 4th-graders and from 260 to 262 for 8th-graders). The percentage of 4th-graders performing at or above *Proficient* (indicating solid academic achievement) increased between 1992 and 2002 (from 29 to 31 percent) and has remained steady since then. In 2005, 31 percent of 8th-graders performed at or above *Proficient* (*indicator 12*).
- The average NAEP mathematics scores of 4th- and 8th-graders improved steadily between 1990 and 2005. The average score of 4th-graders increased 25 points (from 213 in 1990 to 238 in 2005), and the average score of 8th-graders increased 16 points (from 263 to 279). In 2005, some 36 percent of 4th-graders and 30 percent of 8th-graders performed at or above *Proficient*, an increase from 13 and 15 percent, respectively, in 1990 (*indicator 13*).
- Results from NAEP indicate that the achievement gaps in reading, from the first assessment in 1992 to 2005, between White and Black and White and Hispanic 4th- and 8th-graders have shown little measurable change. In mathematics, the 4th-grade White-Black mathematics gap decreased between the first assessment in 1990 and 2005, while the 8th-grade White-Black gap and the White-Hispanic gap increased in the 1990s before decreasing to levels in 2005 not measurably different from 1990 (*indicator 14*).
- Using the percentage of students eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch as a measure of school poverty, 4th-graders in the highest poverty public schools (those with more than 75 percent of students eligible) scored lower on the NAEP Mathematics Assessment than their peers in the lowest poverty public schools (those with 10 percent or less eligible) in 2005. Students in the highest poverty schools were more likely than their peers in the lowest poverty schools to have lower mathematics scores, on average, regardless of whether the student was personally eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch (*indicator 15*).
- The performance of 9-year-olds in both reading and mathematics on the long-term NAEP has improved since the early 1970s. Among 13-year-olds, the results are mixed: improvements were seen in their mathematics scores, but overall trends in reading achievement have remained flat for more than two decades. Among 17-year-olds, despite no change in scores overall, scores for Black and Hispanic students have improved (*indicator 16*).
- The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)—which reports on the mathematics literacy and problem-solving ability of 15-year-olds in 29 participating

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Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) industrialized countries and 10 non-OECD countries—showed that U.S. 15-year-olds, on average, scored below the international average for participating OECD countries in combined mathematics literacy, specific mathematics skill areas, and problem solving in 2003 (*indicator 17*).

- The average NAEP science score of 4th-graders improved between 1996 and 2005, was not measurably different at grade 8, and was lower than in 1996 at grade 12. The percentages of 4th- and 8th-graders who performed at or above *Proficient* (29 percent in 2005) were not measurably different from the percentages who did so in 1996, while the percentage of 12th-graders performing at this achievement level (18 percent in 2005) decreased (*indicator 18*).
- Results from the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), which assessed the U.S. population age 16 or older in three types of literacy (prose, document, and quantitative), showed that while the average prose and document literacy scores of U.S. adults did not measurably change between 1992 and 2003, the average quantitative literacy score increased. Educational attainment and all three types of literacy were positively related, but between these years, average prose literacy decreased for all levels of educational attainment and document literacy decreased for those with at least some college education or a bachelor's or higher degree. From 1992 to 2003, the average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of adults ages 50–64 and 65 or older increased (*indicator 19*).
- According to findings from NAAL, the educational attainment of the U.S. population age 16 or older was positively associated with the likelihood of reading three types of printed materials—newspapers or magazines, books, and letters and notes—as well as having 25 or more books in the home in 2003. For example, 46 percent of those with a bachelor's or higher degree reported reading books daily, compared with 35 percent of those with some college education, 24 percent of those with a high school diploma or its equivalent, and 21 percent of those with less than a high school diploma (*indicator 20*).
- In 2005, about 8 percent of youth ages 16–19 were neither enrolled in school nor working. Fifty-four percent of dropouts were not working, compared with 13 percent of those with at least a high school diploma or its equivalent who were not in school. Between 1986 and 2005, youth from poor families were more likely than youth from nonpoor families to be neither in school nor working (*indicator 21*).
- Young adults (ages 25–34) with at least a bachelor's degree had higher median earnings than their peers with less education between 1980 and 2004. This pattern held for the total population of young adults as well as for males, females, Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. Moreover, for the entire young adult population and generally for each subgroup, the gap in earnings by educational attainment grew during this period. For example, males with a bachelor's or higher degree earned 19 percent more than male high school completers in 1980, while they earned 67 percent more in 2004 (*indicator 22*).

### STUDENT EFFORT AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

Many factors are associated with school success, persistence, and progress toward a high school diploma or a college or advanced de-

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gree. These include students' motivation and effort, learning experiences, and expectations for further education, as well as various family characteristics, such as parents' educational attainment and family income. Monitoring these factors and tracking educational attainment provide key indicators for describing the progress of students and schooling in the United States.

- Since the early 1980s, the proportions of 12th-graders expecting to earn a bachelor's degree or to attend graduate school have increased. In 2003–04, some 69 percent of 12th-graders expected to attain a bachelor's degree or attend graduate school (34 percent expected a bachelor's as their highest degree and 35 percent expected to continue to graduate school). Females were more likely than males in 2003–04 to expect to attend graduate school (*indicator 23*).
- Between 1994 and 2005, there was no measurable change in the percentage of 4th-graders who were absent 3 or more days in the previous month (19 percent in 2005), but the percentage of 8th-graders who were absent this much decreased from 22 to 20 percent. Females in both grades were more likely than males to miss 3 or more days of school (*indicator 24*).
- The percentage of youth ages 16–19 who had ever been retained in a grade decreased between 1995 and 2004. Youth who had dropped out of high school were more likely to have been retained than youth who were either enrolled currently or had completed high school. For example, in 2004, 21 percent of youth who had dropped out had ever been retained, compared with 12 percent of those still enrolled and 4 percent of those who had completed high school (*indicator 25*).
- The status dropout rate represents the percentage of an age group that is not enrolled in school and has not earned a high school diploma or its equivalent, such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Status dropout rates for Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics ages 16–24 have declined since 1972. Rates remained lowest for Whites and highest for Hispanics. In 2004, about one-quarter of status dropouts in this age group were Hispanics who were born outside the United States (*indicator 26*).
- Eight percent of high school students who were sophomores in spring 2002 left school without a regular diploma or certificate of attendance by spring 2004. High school sophomores in 2002 whose parents had not completed high school were four times more likely to have left school in spring 2004 than those with a parent who had earned at least a bachelor's degree (19 vs. 4 percent). Among the most frequently cited reasons students gave for leaving school were that they had missed too many school days, they thought it would be easier to get a GED, they were getting poor grades and failing in school, and they did not like school (*indicator 27*).
- The *averaged freshman graduation rate*—a measure of the percentage of the incoming freshman class that graduates 4 years later—can be used as a measure of the percentage of public high school students who graduate on time. Among all public high school students in the graduating class of 2002–03, the averaged freshman graduation rate was 73.9 percent, ranging from a low of 59.6 percent in the District of Columbia to a high of 87.0 percent in New Jersey (*indicator 28*).

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- From 1972 to 2004, the rate at which high school completers enrolled in college in the fall immediately after high school increased from 49 to 67 percent. After widening between 1977 and 1983, the gap in the immediate college enrollment rate between Blacks and Whites narrowed between 1998 and 2001, while the gap between Hispanics and Whites widened between 1979 and 1997. Since 1972, the immediate college enrollment rate of high school completers has increased faster for females than for males (*indicator 29*).
- Women have earned a greater percentage of bachelor's degrees than men since the early 1980s, and a greater percentage of master's degrees since the mid-1980s. They now earn at least 4 out of 10 bachelor's degrees in all fields except computer and information sciences and engineering. Women have made gains at the graduate level as well: they earned 59 percent of master's degrees in 2003–04, compared with 49 percent in 1979–80; they earned 48 percent of doctoral degrees in 2003–04, compared with 30 percent in 1979–80 (*indicator 30*).
- The percentages of 25- to 29-year-olds who have completed high school, some college, or a bachelor's degree or higher have increased since 1971. By 2005, some 86 percent of these young adults had received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, and 57 percent had received additional education. However, racial/ethnic differences in levels of educational attainment remain (*indicator 31*).
- About one-fourth of 1992–93 bachelor's degree recipients had earned at least one advanced degree by 2003. Twenty percent of these graduates had earned a master's degree, 4 percent had earned a first-professional degree, and 2 percent had earned a doctoral degree. Compared with their peers who had other majors, those who majored in the fields of science, mathematics, and engineering were the most likely to have earned any advanced degree and to have earned a doctoral degree. Attainment of an advanced degree varied by parents' highest level of education: 34 percent of those whose parents had an advanced degree had earned a graduate degree by 2003, compared with 19 percent of those whose parents had not attended college (*indicator 32*).

### CONTEXTS OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The school environment is described by a number of features, including learning opportunities, student/teacher ratios, the backgrounds and qualifications of teachers, and the climate for learning. Monitoring these and other factors provides a fuller picture of the conditions in schools that can influence education. Society also influences and provides support for education. This support includes learning activities that take place outside school, as well as financial support for education.

- The percentage of prekindergarten children ages 3–5 read to three or more times per week by a family member increased from 78 percent in 1993 to 86 percent in 2005. Increases were also found in the percentage of children whose family members frequently told them a story; taught them letters, words, or numbers; and taught them songs or music (*indicator 33*).
- Among all kindergarten through 8th-grade students who participated in various afterschool activities in 2005, some 31 percent participated in sports, 20 percent in religious activities, 18 percent in arts, 10 percent in scouts, 8 percent in community service, 7 percent in academic

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activities, and 6 percent in clubs. A greater percentage of students from nonpoor families participated in each activity than students from poor and near-poor families (*indicator 34*).

- The ratio of students to teachers, which is frequently used as a proxy measure for class size, declined from 17.6 students per teacher in 1990 to 16.5 in 2003 for all regular public elementary, secondary, and combined schools. In every year during this period, the student/teacher ratios tended to be higher in public schools with larger enrollments than in public schools with smaller enrollments. For example, regular public elementary schools with enrollments over 1,500 had 6.9 more students per teacher, on average, than elementary schools with enrollments under 300 (*indicator 35*).
- The percentage of students in grades 1–12 whose parents enrolled them in a “chosen” public school (i.e., a public school other than their assigned public school) increased from 11 to 15 percent between 1993 and 2003. During the same period, the percentage of children attending private schools also increased (0.9 percentage points for private church-related schools and 0.8 percentage points for private not church-related schools). Additionally, in 2003, the parents of 24 percent of students reported that they moved to their current neighborhood so that their children could attend their current school (*indicator 36*).
- The proportion of bachelor's degree recipients who had taught at the kindergarten through 12th-grade level within a year of graduation increased from 1994 to 2001 but the proportion who had prepared to teach (including those who had not yet taught) remained steady. Among those with majors in education, 1999–2000 graduates were more inclined than 1992–93 graduates to teach. The proportion of graduates who had either taught or prepared to teach but not taught increased between 1992–93 and 1999–2000 for those with the lowest college entrance examination scores, but not for those with scores in the middle range or at the highest level (*indicator 37*).
- In 2003, more than half of all children in grades 3–12 had parents who reported that they were “very satisfied” with their child's school, their child's teachers, the school's academic standards, and the school's order and discipline. A greater percentage of White children in grades 3–12 than Black children had parents who reported this level of satisfaction with each of these four aspects of their child's education. Higher percentages of nonpoor than near-poor or poor children had parents who reported being very satisfied with their child's school, its academic standards, and its order and discipline (*indicator 38*).
- There was a general decline in the rate at which students ages 12–18 were victims of nonfatal crime—including theft, violent crime, and serious violent crime—at school from 1992 through 2003. The rate of crime against students at school declined by 53 percent for theft (from 95 to 45 crimes per 1,000 students) and by 42 percent for all violent crime (from 48 to 28 crimes per 1,000 students). In each year observed, the rates for serious violent crime—including rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault—were lower when students were at school than away from school (*indicator 39*).
- Between 1989–90 and 2002–03, differences between states accounted for



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a greater proportion of the variation in instructional expenditures per student among public school districts than differences within states. Since 1997–98, the between-state differences increased, while the within-state differences remained largely unchanged. The between-state variation accounted for 78 percent of the total difference in 2002–03 (*indicator 40*).

- In 2002–03, total expenditures per student—including all expenditures allocable to per student costs divided by fall enrollment—in public elementary and secondary schools were highest in the most affluent school districts and next highest in the least affluent school districts. Between 1995–96 and 2002–03, total expenditures per student in constant dollars increased the most for the districts with the two highest levels of poverty. Current expenditures per student—all costs except interest on school debt and capital outlays—followed a similar pattern, except that, in 2002–03, the current expenditures per student were greatest in the least affluent school districts followed by the most affluent districts (*indicator 41*).
- Between 1989–90 and 2002–03, total expenditures per student in public elementary and secondary schools rose 25 percent in constant 2003–04 dollars, from \$7,692 to \$9,644. Among the five major categories of expenditures (instruction, administration, operation and maintenance, capital outlay and interest, and other), capital expenditures increased the most (64 percent), while instructional expenditures increased 23 percent and spending on administration and on operation and maintenance each increased 7 percent. In 2002–03, more than half of the total amount spent went toward instructional expenditures. Total expenditures per student were highest in the Northeast, followed by the Midwest, West, and South (*indicator 42*).
- In 2002, elementary and secondary expenditures per student for the United States averaged \$8,556—which was higher than the average of \$6,134 for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)-member countries. Wealthy countries such as the United States spent more per student and a larger share of their gross domestic product (GDP) per capita on education than less wealthy countries (*indicator 43*).
- The proportion of total revenue for public elementary and secondary education from local sources declined nationally from 47 to 43 percent between 1989–90 and 2002–03. However, the proportion of total revenue flowing to public schools from both federal and state sources increased. In both the Midwest and Northeast, the proportion of total public school revenue from property taxes declined during this period, while the proportion grew in the South and West (*indicator 44*).

### CONTEXTS OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

The postsecondary education system encompasses various types of institutions under public, not-for-profit, and for-profit control and can be described according to a number of contextual factors. Important indicators of this context include student coursetaking and fields of study; the price of attending college; the availability of financial aid; the instructional responsibilities of faculty and staff; and the ways in which colleges and universities attract and compensate faculty.

- Between 1989–90 and 2003–04, the number of bachelor's degrees awarded increased by 33 percent, while the number of associate's degrees awarded increased

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- by 46 percent. While more bachelor's degrees were awarded in business than in any other field in each year during this period, the rate of increase (24 percent) was slower than the rate of increase for bachelor's degrees overall. Among associate's degrees, the field of liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities was the most popular throughout this period (*indicator 45*).
- Among full-time instructional faculty and staff who taught for-credit classes at bachelor's, master's, and doctoral institutions, 78 percent taught at least one undergraduate for-credit class in fall 2003, and 59 percent taught these classes exclusively. The percentage of instructional faculty and staff who taught undergraduate classes generally declined as their academic rank increased. Instructional faculty and staff at doctoral institutions were less likely than those at master's or bachelor's institutions to have taught any undergraduate classes and to have taught such classes exclusively (*indicator 46*).
  - Distance education courses are currently offered at more than half of 2- and 4-year postsecondary institutions. In fall 2003, the percentage of full-time instructional faculty and staff who taught distance education courses—defined as classes in which students and instructors are separated either primarily or exclusively by distance or time—was greater at public institutions offering primarily associate's degrees and certificates than at other types of institutions. Among full-time faculty and staff at such institutions, full or associate professors were more likely than their colleagues of lower ranks to have taught a distance education course (*indicator 47*).
  - The average salaries of full-time instructional faculty increased by 20 percent (in constant 2003–04 dollars) over the past 25 years to \$63,300 in 2004–05. When combining salary with benefits, full-time instructional faculty across all types of institutions received a total compensation package averaging \$79,900 in 2004–05, about 27 percent more than they had received in 1979–80. Faculty at private 4-year doctoral universities had higher salaries and more benefits than their colleagues at other types of institutions (*indicator 48*).
  - For full-time dependent undergraduates attending public 2- and 4-year and private not-for-profit 4-year institutions in the 1990s, larger grants and loans generally compensated for increases in the total price of attending a postsecondary institution (including tuition and fees, books and materials, and an allowance for living expenses). Since 1999–2000, however, the total price of attendance minus all grants and loans has increased at public 4-year institutions for middle-income students. At private not-for-profit 4-year institutions, the net price of attending has increased only for low-income students (*indicator 49*).
  - Between 1992–93 and 1999–2000, the percentage of full-time, full-year undergraduates with federal loans increased from 31 to 44 percent, while the percentage receiving federal grants, available to those who qualify by income, did not. By 2003–04, both the percentages who had taken out loans and who had received grants had increased. In 2003–04, some 63 percent of federal aid was received as loans, an increase from 1992–93 but not measurably different from 1999–2000 (*indicator 50*).

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### CONCLUSION

The current state of American education shows both promises and challenges. Progress on national assessments in reading and science achievement is uneven or static, while mathematics performance has risen. International assessments of students' and adults' performance in reading, mathematics, and science also present a mixed picture: 4th-graders' math and science scores are static or losing ground relative to students in other countries, while 8th-graders' scores show improvement. Certain family risk factors, such as poverty or the language spoken in the home, present challenges to students' educational progress and achievement. The indicators in this report underscore the importance of schooling for individuals and society, from early childhood reading to continuing adult education.

In elementary and secondary education, enrollments have followed population shifts and are projected to increase each year through 2015 to an all-time high of 51 million, with the South expected to experience the largest increase in enrollments. Rates of enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels have

increased and are projected to continue to do so throughout the next 10 years.

NCES produces an array of reports each year that present findings about the U.S. education system. *The Condition of Education 2006* is the culmination of a yearlong project. It includes data that were available by early April 2006. In the coming months, a number of other reports and surveys informing us about education will be released, including the age 2 follow-up to the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort; the 5th-grade follow-up to the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99; the 2003–04 Schools and Staffing Survey; and the first follow-up of the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, begun in 2004. Along with the indicators in this volume, NCES intends these surveys and reports to help inform policymakers and the American public about trends and conditions in U.S. education.



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