

Section 3
*Student Effort and
Educational Progress*



Section 3

Student Effort and Educational Progress

Contents	
Introduction	65
Elementary/Secondary Persistence and Progress	
Indicator 18. Public High School Graduation Rates	66
Indicator 19. Status Dropout Rates	68
Transition to College	
Indicator 20. Immediate Transition to College	70
Completions	
Indicator 21. Postsecondary Graduation Rates	72
Indicator 22. Educational Attainment	74
Indicator 23. Degrees Earned	76

Introduction

The indicators in this section of *The Condition of Education* report on the progress students make as they move through the education system. Particular attention is paid in this section to how various subgroups in the population proceed through school and attain different levels of education, as well as the factors that are associated with their progress along the way. Indicators prepared for this year's volume appear on the following pages, and all indicators in this section, including various indicators from previous years, appear on the Web (see the "List of Indicators on *The Condition of Education* Website" on page xxix for a full listing of indicators).

The indicators in the first two subsections (found on the website) focus on the educational aspirations and efforts of students. These indicators include student measures of time spent on homework, preparedness for academic activities, postsecondary education expectations, and patterns of school attendance.

The third subsection traces the progress of students from elementary and secondary education to graduation from high school (or some alternate form of completion). Measures in this volume and on the website include the percentage of students who have ever been retained; the averaged freshman graduation rate, which estimates the on-time graduation rate for students in each state; the percentage of students with disabilities who leave high school with a regular diploma; and the dropout rates by race/ethnicity and nativity. Dropping out of high school is measured here in two ways: by status rates (the percentage of students in a given age range who are not enrolled in school and who have not completed high school), which are discussed in an indicator in this volume, and by event rates (the percentage of students in an age range who leave school in a given year), which are discussed in an indicator on the website.

The fourth subsection examines students' transition to college. One important measure featured in this volume is the percentage of students who enroll in college within 1 year of completing high school. Another indicator, found on the website, compares the rate of first-time enrollment in postsecondary education in the United States with the rates in other countries.

The fifth subsection concerns the persistence and progress of postsecondary students. Included in this subsection are indicators that describe the relationship between the qualifications and characteristics of students who enter postsecondary education and the time it takes to earn a credential.

Indicators in the sixth subsection focus on the highest level of education attained by a certain age. *The Condition of Education* annually includes an indicator that examines levels of attainment for 25- through 29-year-olds. Another indicator in this volume showcases the number of postsecondary degrees earned over time by gender and race/ethnicity. Other indicators in this subsection, found on the website, focus on the level of attainment achieved by a 1988 cohort of eighth-graders 12 years later (in 2000) and the attainment of students who received Pell grants.

The indicators on student effort and educational progress from previous editions of *The Condition of Education*, which are not included in this volume, are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe>.

Public High School Graduation Rates

In 2006–07, about three-quarters of the 2003–04 freshman class graduated from high school on time with a regular diploma.

This indicator examines the percentage of public high school students who graduate on time with a regular diploma. To do so, it uses the *averaged freshman graduation rate*—an estimate of the percentage of an incoming freshman class that graduates 4 years later. For each year, the averaged freshman enrollment count is the sum of the number of 8th-graders 5 years earlier, the number of 9th-graders 4 years earlier (when current-year seniors were freshmen), and the number of 10th-graders 3 years earlier, divided by 3. The intent of this averaging is to account for the high rate of grade retention in the freshman year, which adds 9th-grade repeaters from the previous year to the number of students in the incoming freshman class each year.

Among public high school students in the class of 2006–07, the averaged freshman graduation rate was 73.9 percent; that is, 2.9 million students graduated on time (see table A-18-1). Vermont had the highest graduation rate, at 88.6 percent. Fifteen other states had rates of 80 percent or more (ordered from high to low): Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Missouri, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Montana, Massachusetts, Idaho, and

Maryland. Nevada had the lowest rate, at 52.0 percent. Eleven other states and the District of Columbia had graduation rates below 70 percent (ordered from high to low): Arizona, Alaska, New York, North Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, New Mexico, South Carolina, and the District of Columbia.

The overall averaged freshman graduation rate among public school students increased from 71.7 percent for the graduating class of 2000–01 to 73.9 percent for the graduating class of 2006–07. However, from 2004–05 to 2005–06, the overall averaged freshman graduation rate decreased from 74.7 percent to 73.4 percent. Overall, from school years 2000–01 to 2006–07, there was an increase in the graduation rate in 41 states; 11 of these states (Georgia, Hawaii, Kentucky, Missouri, New York, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin) had an increase of greater than 5 percentage points. The graduation rate decreased in nine states (Arizona, California, Louisiana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Utah, and Virginia) and the District of Columbia, with the District of Columbia, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah experiencing a decline of greater than 5 percentage points.



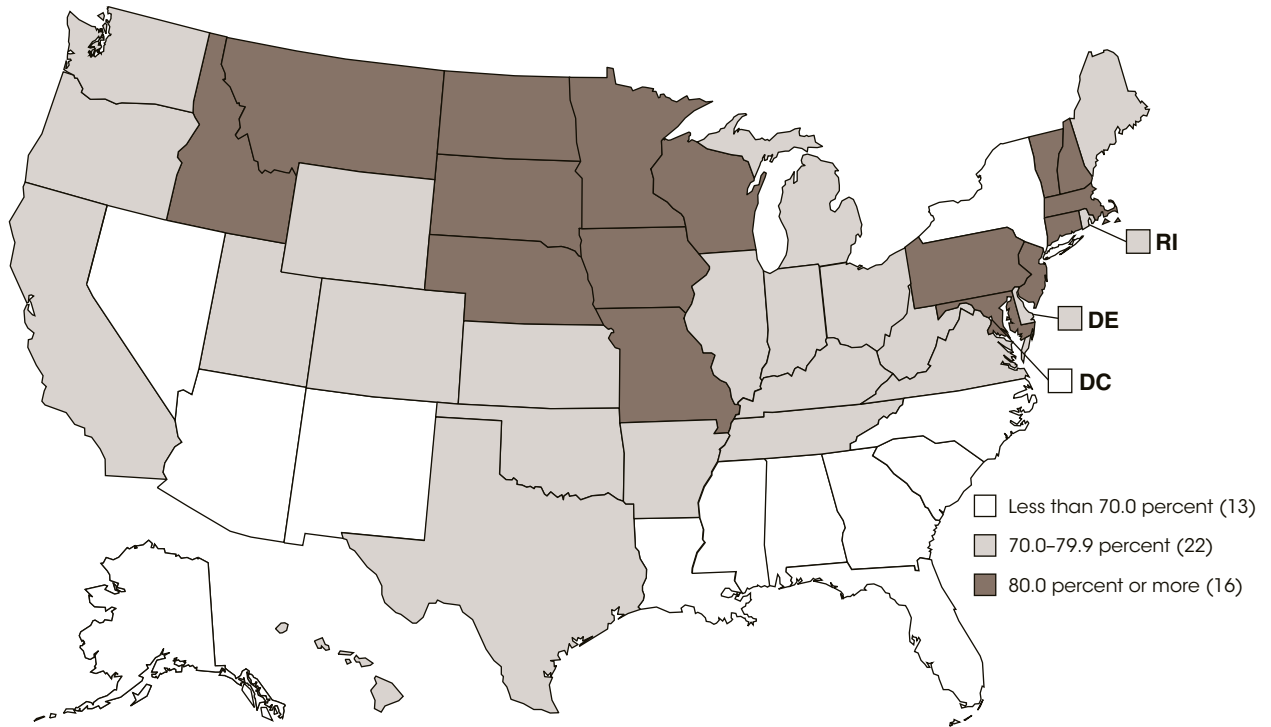
For more information: *Table A-18-1*

Technical Notes

Ungraded students were allocated to individual grades proportional to each state's enrollment in those grades. Graduates include only those who earned regular diplomas or diplomas for advanced academic achievement (e.g., honors diploma) as defined by the state or jurisdiction. Totals for reporting states include any of the 50 states and the District of Columbia that reported data

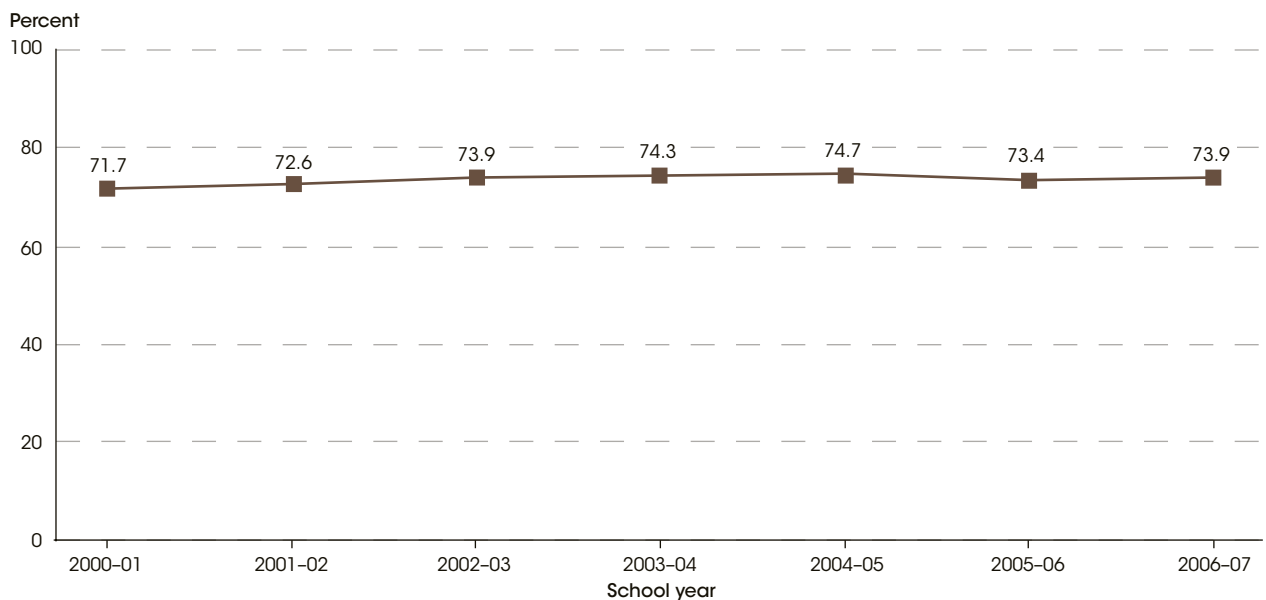
for a given year. The 2003–04 national estimates include imputed data for New York and Wisconsin. The 2005–06 national estimates include imputed data for the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. For more information on the Common Core of Data (CCD), see *supplemental note 3*; for more information on measures of student progress and persistence, see *supplemental note 6*.

Figure 18-1. Averaged freshman graduation rate for public high school students, by state: School year 2006-07



NOTE: The rate is the number of graduates divided by the estimated freshman count 4 years earlier. This count is the sum of the number of 8th-graders 5 years earlier, 9th-graders 4 years earlier, and 10th-graders 3 years earlier, divided by 3. Ungraded students were allocated to individual grades proportional to each state's enrollment in those grades.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "NCES Common Core of Data State Dropout and Completion Data File," school year 2006-07, version 1a; and "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2002-03, Version 1b; 2003-04, Version 1b; 2004-05, Version 1b; and 2005-06, Version 1b.

Figure 18-2. Averaged freshman graduation rate for public high school students: School years 2000-01 through 2006-07



NOTE: The rate is the number of graduates divided by the estimated freshman count 4 years earlier. This count is the sum of the number of 8th-graders 5 years earlier, 9th-graders 4 years earlier, and 10th-graders 3 years earlier, divided by 3. Ungraded students were allocated to individual grades proportional to each state's enrollment in those grades. The 2003-04 national estimates include imputed data for New York and Wisconsin. The 2005-06 national estimates include imputed data for the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "NCES Common Core of Data State Dropout and Completion Data File," school year 2006-07, version 1a; and "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2002-03, Version 1b; 2003-04, Version 1b; 2004-05, Version 1b; and 2005-06, Version 1b.

Status Dropout Rates

In general, the status dropout rates for Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics each declined between 1980 and 2008. In 2008, foreign-born Hispanics dropped out at a higher rate than native-born Hispanics, while the opposite trend held for native-born Whites, Blacks, and persons of two or more races.

The *status dropout rate* represents the percentage of 16- through 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a General Educational Development [GED] certificate). In this indicator, status dropout rates are estimated using both the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Current Population Survey (CPS). The 2008 ACS has a larger sample size than the CPS, which allows for more detailed comparisons of status dropout rates by race/ethnicity, nativity, and sex. Unlike the CPS, the ACS includes persons living in military barracks in the United States and institutionalized persons. The CPS, however, provides several decades of historical trends on status dropouts that are not available from the ACS. For more information on these surveys, see *supplemental notes 2 and 3*.

Based on the CPS, the status dropout rate declined from 14 percent in 1980 to 8 percent in 2008 (see table A-19-1). A significant part of this decline occurred between 2000 and 2008 (from 11 percent to 8 percent). Status dropout rates and changes in these rates over time differed by race/ethnicity. In general, the status dropout rates for Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics each declined between 1980 and 2008. However, in each year during that period, the status dropout rate was lower for Whites and Blacks than for Hispanics. In addition, the rate for Asians/Pacific Islanders was lower than that for Hispanics and Blacks every year between 1989 and 2008. Although the gaps between the rates of Blacks and Whites, Hispanics and Whites, and Hispanics and Blacks have decreased, the decreases occurred in different time periods. The Black-White gap narrowed during the 1980s, with no measurable change between 1990 and 2008. In contrast, the Hispanic-White and Hispanic-Black gaps narrowed between 1990 and 2008, with no measurable change in the gaps during the 1980s.

The ACS allows for comparisons of status dropout rates for 16- through 24-year-olds residing in households, as well as those in institutionalized group quarters, such

as adult and juvenile detention centers and health care facilities. Among those living in households in 2008, the status dropout rate was 9 percent (see table A-19-2). A higher percentage of males than females were status dropouts (10 vs. 8 percent). This pattern was evident across certain racial/ethnic groups, namely Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. The status dropout rate includes all 16- through 24-year-old dropouts, regardless of when they last attended school, as well as individuals who may never have attended school in the United States and who may never have earned a high school credential. Therefore, examining status dropout rates for the native-born population may provide a more accurate measure of dropouts who have attended U.S. schools. In 2008, the status dropout rate was higher for native-born Hispanics than for native-born Asians, Whites, and persons of two or more races. No measurable differences, however, were found between native-born Hispanics and native-born Blacks and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders. Overall, the status dropout rate for native-born 16- through 24-year-olds was lower than the rate for their foreign-born peers (8 vs. 21 percent). Native-born Hispanics and Asians had lower status dropout rates than their foreign-born counterparts, whereas native-born Whites, Blacks, and persons of two or more races had higher status dropout rates than their foreign-born counterparts. Higher dropout rates among foreign-born Hispanics partially account for the high dropout rates for all Hispanic young adults. Among foreign-born Hispanics, the 2008 status dropout rate was 35 percent—higher than the rate for native-born Hispanics (11 percent). In 2008, the status dropout rate for the institutionalized population was 41 percent (see table A-19-3). This rate varied by race/ethnicity, ranging from 31 percent for Whites to 48 percent for Hispanics.



For more information: *Tables A-19-1 through A-19-3; Indicators 18 and 20*

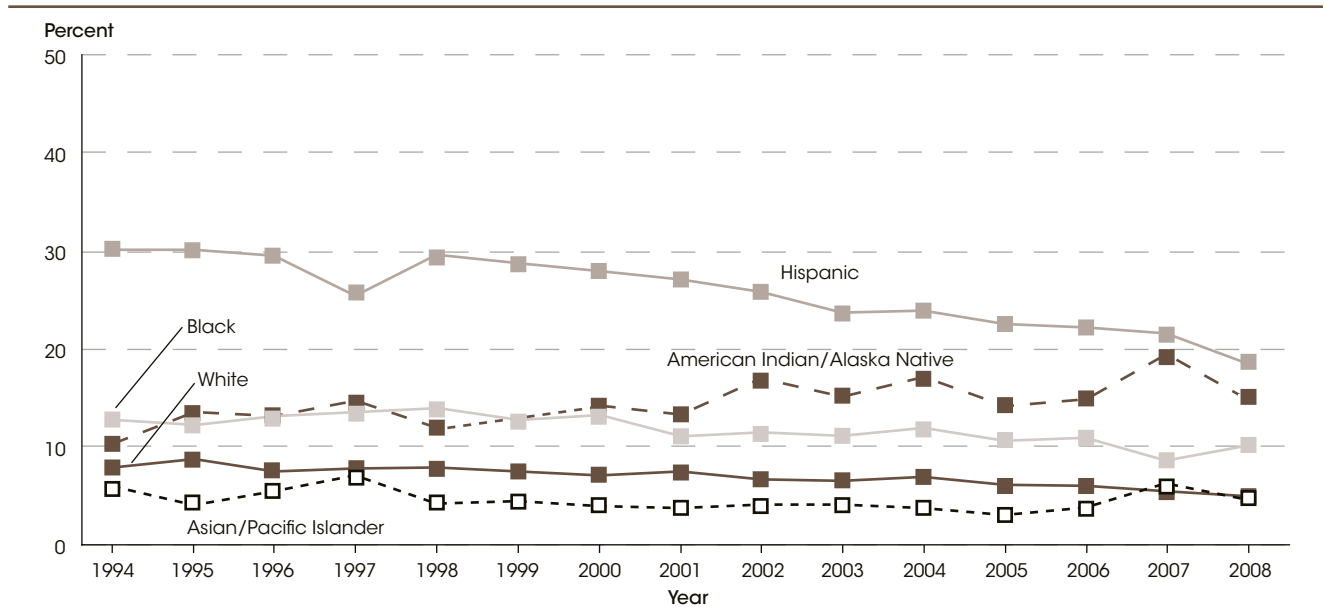
Glossary: *GED certificate, High school equivalency certificate, Status dropout rate*

Technical Notes

The United States refers to the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*. Estimates of the status dropout rate using the CPS include civilian, noninstitutionalized 16- through 24-year-olds. Young adults in the military or those who are incarcerated, for instance, are not included in this measure. However, the 2008 ACS

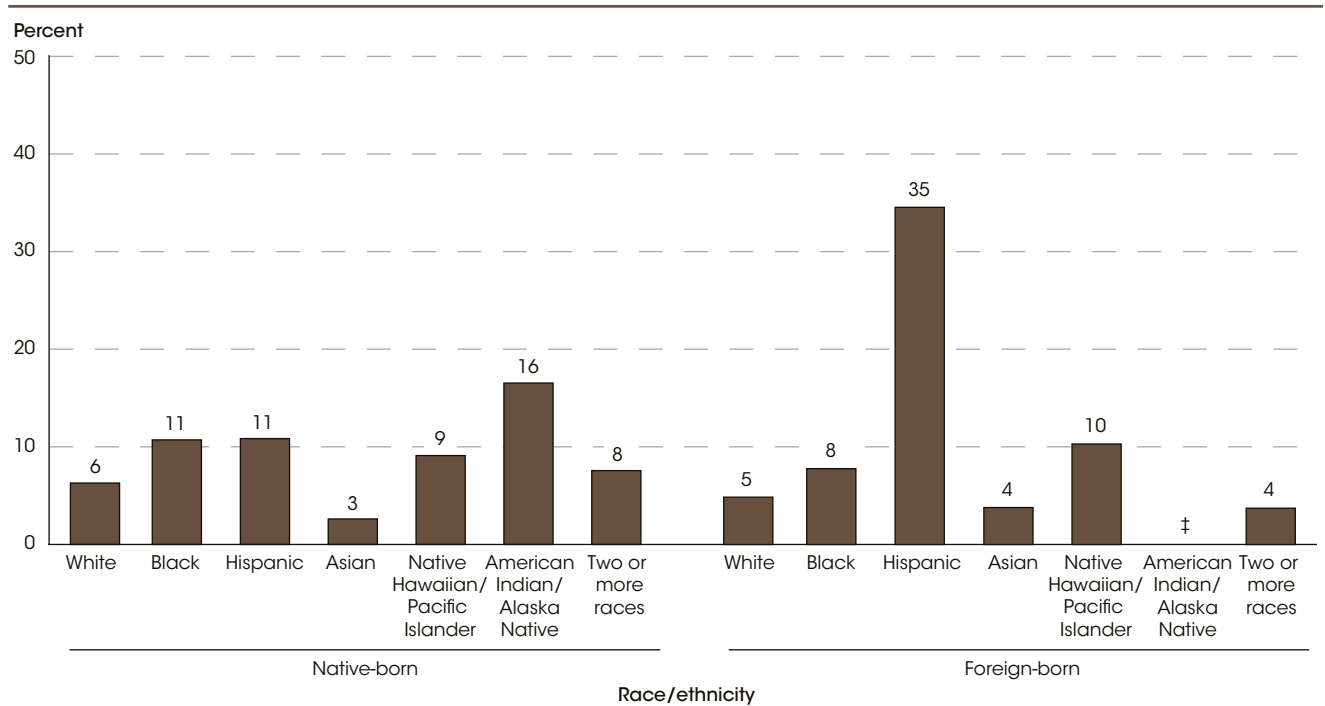
includes noninstitutionalized and institutionalized group quarters. Therefore, due to this and other methodological differences between the CPS and ACS, status dropout estimates from the two surveys are not directly comparable. For more information on these surveys, see *supplemental notes 2 and 3*. For more information on the status dropout rate reported here, see *supplemental note 6*.

Figure 19-1. Status dropout rates of 16- through 24-year-olds in the civilian, noninstitutionalized population, by race/ethnicity: October Current Population Survey (CPS) 1994–2008



NOTE: The *status dropout rate* is the percentage of 16- through 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in high school and who have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a General Educational Development [GED] certificate). The status dropout rate includes all dropouts regardless of when they last attended school. Data for American Indians/Alaska Natives in 1999 have been suppressed due to unstable estimates. This figure uses a different data source than figure 19-2; therefore, estimates for 2008 are not directly comparable to the estimates in figure 19-2. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity and the CPS, see *supplemental notes 1 and 2*. For more information on measures of student persistence and progress, see *supplemental note 6*. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1994–2008.

Figure 19-2. Status dropout rates of 16- through 24-year-olds in the household population, by race/ethnicity and nativity: American Community Survey (ACS) 2008



‡ Reporting standards not met (too few cases).

NOTE: The *status dropout rate* is the percentage of 16- through 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in high school and who have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a General Educational Development [GED] certificate). The status dropout rate includes all dropouts regardless of when they last attended school. This figure uses a different data source than figure 19-1; therefore, estimates are not directly comparable to the 2008 estimates in figure 19-1. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity and the ACS, see *supplemental notes 1 and 3*. For more information on measures of student persistence and progress, see *supplemental note 6*. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2008.

Immediate Transition to College

The rate of college enrollment immediately after high school completion increased from 49 percent in 1972 to 67 percent in 1997 and ranged between 62 and 69 percent through 2008. Gaps in immediate enrollment rates by family income, parents' education, and race/ethnicity have persisted over time.

The immediate college enrollment rate is defined as the percentage of high school completers of a given year who enroll in 2- or 4-year colleges in the fall immediately after completing high school. Between 1972 and 1980, the overall immediate enrollment rate was approximately 50 percent (see table A-20-1). The rate then increased, reaching 67 percent by 1997. The enrollment rate declined through 2001 to 62 percent before increasing to 69 percent in 2008.

Differences in immediate college enrollment rates by family income, parents' education, and racial/ethnic group have persisted over time. In almost every year between 1972 and 2008, the immediate college enrollment rates of high school completers from low-income families trailed the rates of those from high-income families by at least 20 percentage points. The difference between the enrollment rates of high school completers from high- and low-income families fluctuated during this time; for example, it was 41 percentage points in 1995 and 25 percentage points in 2008. The immediate college enrollment rates of high school completers from middle-income families were more than 10 percentage points lower than the rates of those from high-income families in almost every year between 1972 and 2008. In 2008, the enrollment rate gap between students from low and high-income families was 25 percentage points (82 vs. 57 percent), and the gap between students from middle- and high-income families was 17 percentage points (82 vs. 65 percent).

Compared with high school completers whose parents had a bachelor's degree or higher, those whose parents had less education have had lower immediate college enrollment rates each year since 1992 (the earliest year for which comparable data on parents' education are available) (see table A-20-2). In 2008, the gap in the immediate college enrollment rate was 29 percentage

points between students whose parents had a bachelor's degree or higher and students whose parents' highest level of educational attainment was high school or less (82 vs. 54 percent); the gap was 10 percentage points between students whose parents had a bachelor's degree or higher and students whose parents had some college education (82 vs. 72 percent).

Although the immediate college enrollment rates of White, Black, and Hispanic high school completers each increased between 1972 and 2008, enrollment rates of Black and Hispanic high school completers have nonetheless been lower than the rates of their White peers almost every year since 1985 (see table A-20-3). In 2008, the immediate college enrollment rate was 72 percent for White high school completers, compared with 56 percent for Black high school completers and 64 percent for Hispanic high school completers.

From 1972 through 2008, the immediate college enrollment rate increased for both male and female high school completers, but the increase was greater for females than for males (see table A-20-4). In 2008, the rate for females (72 percent) was higher than for males (66 percent). Overall, a higher percentage of high school completers were enrolled in 4-year colleges (41 percent) than 2-year colleges (28 percent) in 2008. While the enrollment rates for males and females in 4-year colleges were both 41 percent in 2008, a higher percentage of females than males were enrolled in 2-year colleges (31 vs. 25 percent).



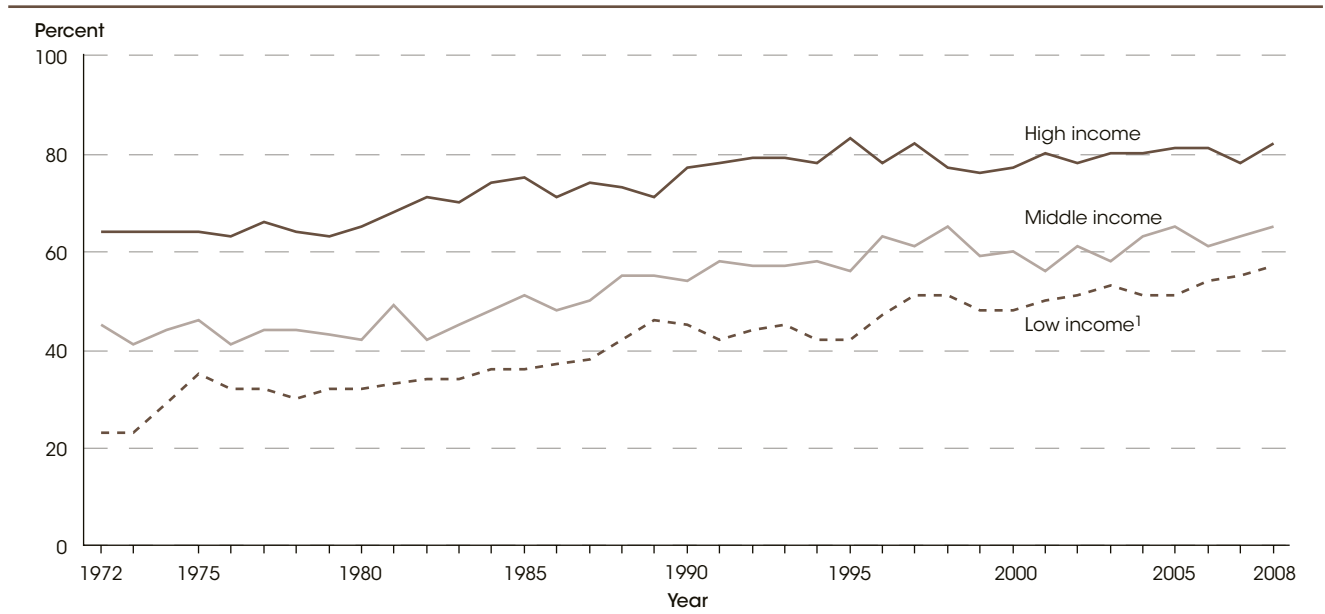
For more information: *Tables A-20-1 through A-20-4*
Glossary: *Educational attainment, High school completer*

Technical Notes

This indicator provides data on high school completers ages 16–24, who account for about 98 percent of all high school completers in a given year. Enrollment rates were calculated using data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Before 1992, *high school completer* referred to those who had completed 12 years of schooling. Beginning in 1992, *high school completer* has referred to those who have received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate. *Low income* refers to the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes, *high income* refers to the top 20 percent of all family incomes, and *middle income* refers to the 60 percent in between. Race categories exclude persons of

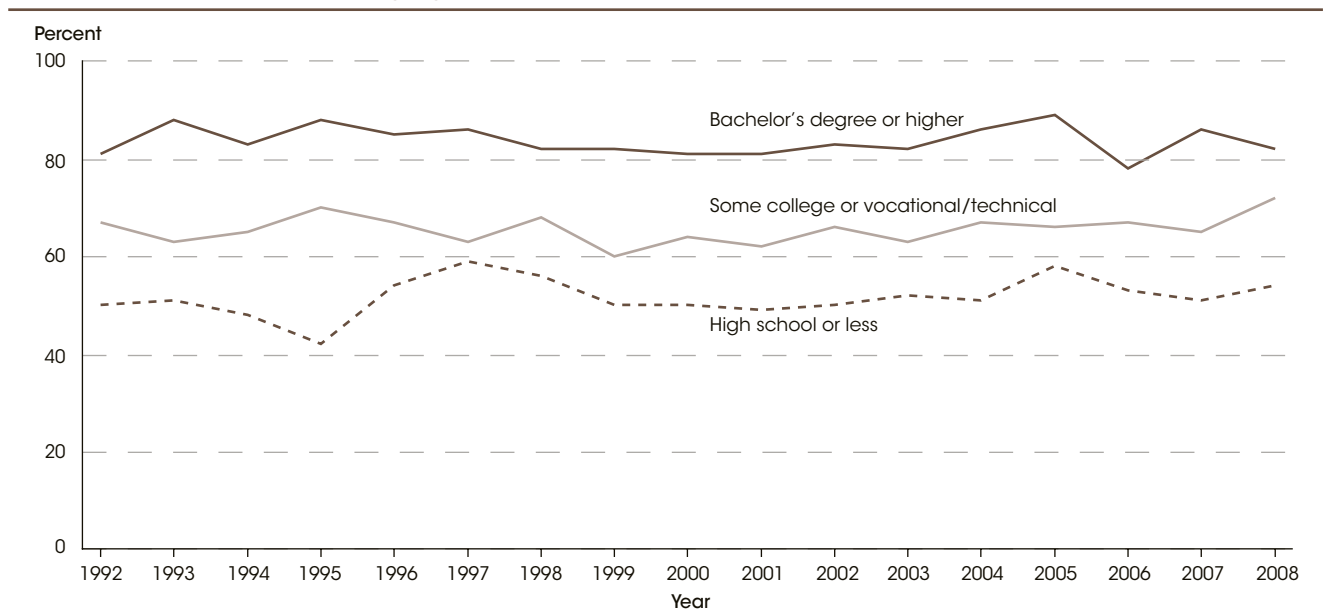
Hispanic ethnicity. Parents' education refers to the highest education of the parent(s). If no parent resided with the student and the student was the householder or spouse of the householder, then the value of parental education is set to missing. Due to short-term data fluctuations associated with small sample sizes for the Black, Hispanic, and low-income categories in some years, moving average rates are also presented and discussed in the indicator text. For more information on the CPS, educational attainment, family income, race/ethnicity, and parents' education, see *supplemental note 2*.

Figure 20-1. Percentage of high school completers who were enrolled in 2- or 4-year colleges the October immediately following high school completion, by family income: 1972–2008



¹ Due to unreliable (or unstable) estimates associated with small sample sizes for the low-income category, moving average rates are presented. Moving average rates were generally calculated as the average of the annual rates for the following 3 adjacent years: the year in question, the year immediately before it, and the year immediately after it. For 1972, 1973, 1975, and 2008, data are not available for 1 of the 3 adjacent years, so the moving average rate was calculated as the average of the annual rates in the 2 available adjacent years.
 NOTE: Includes high school completers ages 16–24, who account for about 98 percent of all high school completers in a given year. *Low income* refers to the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes, *high income* refers to the top 20 percent of all family incomes, and *middle income* refers to the 60 percent in between. Family income data were not available for 1974. For more information on the Current Population Survey (CPS), educational attainment, and family income, see *supplemental note 2*.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1972–2008.

Figure 20-2. Percentage of high school completers who were enrolled in 2- or 4-year colleges the October immediately following high school completion, by parents' education: 1992–2008



NOTE: Includes high school completers ages 16–24, who account for about 98 percent of all high school completers in a given year. *High school completers* refers to those who have received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate. Parents' education refers to the highest education of the parent(s). If no parent resided with the student and the student was the householder or spouse of the householder, then the value of parental education is set to missing. For more information on the Current Population Survey (CPS) and parents' education, see *supplemental note 2*.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1992–2008.

Postsecondary Graduation Rates

About 57 percent of first-time students seeking a bachelor's degree and attending a 4-year institution full time in 2001–02 completed a bachelor's degree at that institution within 6 years.

Approximately 57 percent of first-time students seeking a bachelor's degree or its equivalent and attending a 4-year institution full time in 2001–02 completed a bachelor's degree or its equivalent at that institution in 6 years or less (see table A-21-1). This indicator focuses on the cohort of first-time, full-time students seeking a bachelor's degree or its equivalent who began attending a 4-year institution in 2001 and who completed a bachelor's degree or its equivalent 4, 5, and 6 years later. These graduation rates were calculated as the total number of completers within the specified time to degree attainment divided by the cohort of students who first enrolled in the 2001–02 academic year.

The bachelor's degree completion rates of students seeking a bachelor's degree at 4-year institutions varied by the type of institution. Graduation rates were highest at private not-for-profit institutions, followed by public institutions, then by private for-profit institutions. For example, the 6-year graduation rate for private not-for-profit institutions was 64 percent, compared with 55 percent for public institutions and 25 percent for private for-profit institutions. In addition, the gap in the rates between private not-for-profit and public institutions was larger for the 4-year and 5-year graduation rates than for the 6-year graduation rate. For example, the 4-year graduation rate at private not-for-profit institutions was 51 percent, compared with 29 percent at public institutions (a graduation gap of 21.5 percentage points compared with 9.4 percentage points for the 6-year rate).

Bachelor's degree completion rates of students seeking a bachelor's degree at 4-year institutions also varied by student characteristics, including race/ethnicity and sex. Asian/Pacific Islander students had the highest 6-year graduation rate, followed by White, Hispanic, Black, and American Indian/Alaska Native students (see table A-21-2). Approximately 67 percent of Asians/Pacific Islanders, compared with 60 percent of Whites, 48 percent of Hispanics, 42 percent of Blacks, and 40 percent of American Indians/Alaska Natives graduated with a bachelor's degree or its equivalent within 6 years. This pattern held for Asians/Pacific Islanders, Whites, and Hispanics at each institution type while Blacks and American Indians/Alaska Natives consistently had the lowest graduation rates of the five racial/ethnic groups.

In both public and private not-for-profit 4-year institutions, the 6-year graduation rates for females were higher than the rates for males. For public institutions, approximately 58 percent of females seeking a bachelor's degree or its equivalent graduated within 6 years, compared with 52 percent of their male counterparts; for private not-for-profit institutions, 67 percent of females graduated within 6 years, compared with 61 percent of males. At private for-profit institutions, however, the 6-year graduation rate was higher for males than females (28 vs. 21 percent).



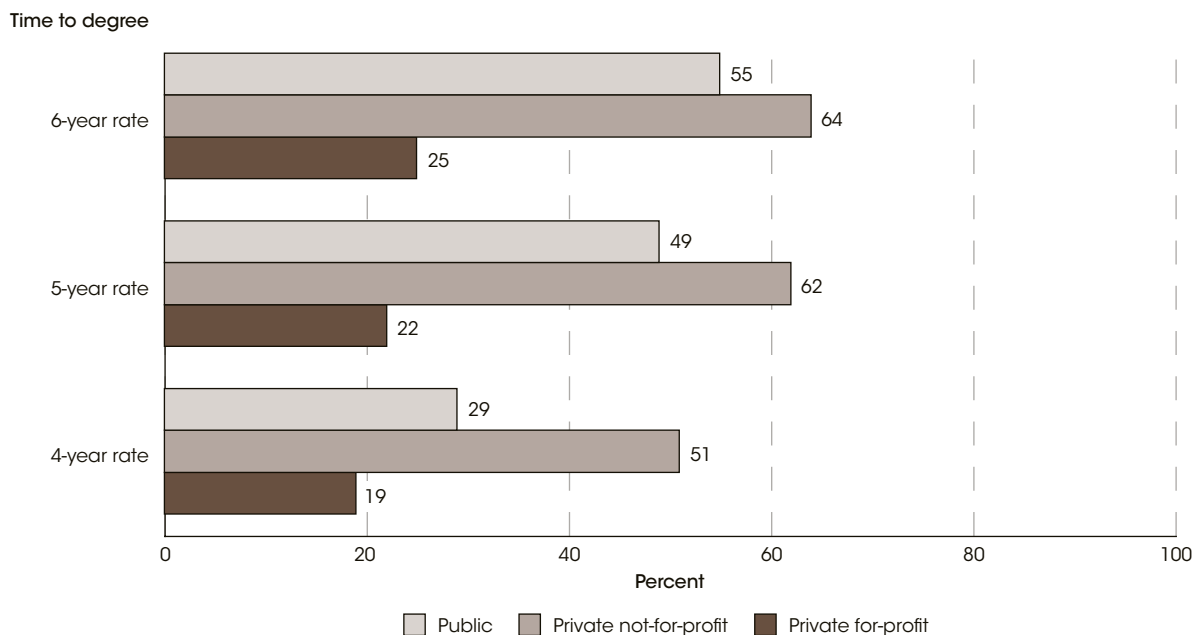
For more information: *Tables A-21-1 and A-21-2*
 Glossary: *Four-year postsecondary institution, Private institution, Public institution*

Technical Notes

The graduation rate was calculated in the manner required for disclosure and reporting purposes under the Student Right-To-Know Act as the total number of completers within the specified time to degree attainment divided by the spring 2008 estimate of students who entered the institution in 2001–02 as first-time, full-time undergraduates seeking a bachelor's or equivalent degree minus any allowable exclusions. Allowable exclusions include those students who had died or were totally and permanently disabled; those who had left school to serve in the armed forces; those who had left to serve with a foreign aid service of the federal government such as the Peace Corps; and those who had left to serve on official church missions. The cohort in this indicator consists of those students who enrolled for the first time in 4-year

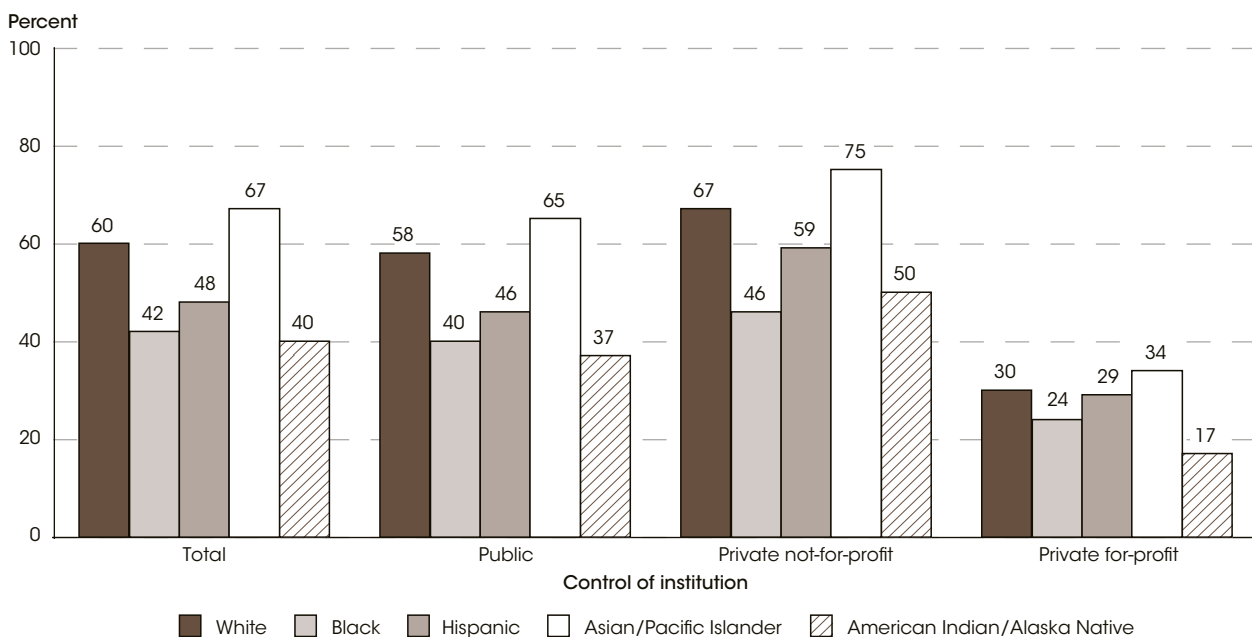
institution in the 2001–02 academic year. Students who transferred to another institution are included in the 2001–02 enrollment of the institution they transferred out of and are not included in the enrollment of the institution they transferred into. In addition, students who transferred to another institution are not counted as completers in either institution, even if they graduated from the institution they transferred into. The number of completers used in the calculation of the graduation rate for each time-to-degree designation is cumulative; for example, the 6-year graduation rate includes all students who graduated in 4 years and 5 years, as well as those who graduated in 6 years. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), see *supplemental note 3*.

Figure 21-1. Percentage of students seeking a bachelor’s degree at 4-year institutions who completed a bachelor’s degree, by time to degree attainment and control of institution: Cohort year 2001



NOTE: The rate was calculated in the manner required for disclosure and reporting purposes under the Student Right-To-Know Act as the total number of completers within the specified time to degree attainment divided by the revised cohort minus any allowable exclusions. The revised cohort is the spring 2008 estimate of the number of students entering the institution in 2001 as first-time, full-time undergraduates seeking a bachelor’s degree or its equivalent. Students who transferred to another 4-year institution and graduated from the other institution do not count towards the initial institution’s rate. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), see *supplemental note 3*. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2008, Graduation Rates component.

Figure 21-2. Percentage of students seeking a bachelor’s degree at 4-year institutions who completed a bachelor’s degree in 6 years, by race/ethnicity and control of institution: Cohort year 2001



NOTE: The rate was calculated in the manner required for disclosure and reporting purposes under the Student Right-To-Know Act as the total number of completers within the specified time to degree attainment divided by the revised cohort minus any allowable exclusions. The revised cohort is the spring 2008 estimate of the number of students entering the institution in 2001 as first-time, full-time undergraduates seeking a bachelor’s or equivalent degree. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), see *supplemental note 3*. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Persons with unknown race/ethnicity and nonresident alien are not shown. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2008, Graduation Rates component.

Educational Attainment

In 2009, some 31 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had completed at least a bachelor's degree. Between 1971 and 2009, the gap in bachelor's degree attainment between Whites and Hispanics widened from 14 to 25 percentage points.

Between 1971 and 2009, the educational attainment of 25- to 29-year-olds increased. For the purpose of this indicator, educational attainment represents the percentage who achieved at least the cited credential. In 2009, for example, 89 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had received at least a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, an 11 percentage point increase from 1971 (see table A-22-1). Although the high school completion rate increased 8 percentage points during the 1970s, it has remained between 85 and 89 percent since the late 1970s.

Higher percentages of Whites had completed high school than Blacks or Hispanics in 1971 and in 2009, although the gaps narrowed over the years. Between 1971 and 2009, the high school completion rate for Blacks increased from 59 to 89 percent, and the gap in high school attainment between Blacks and Whites decreased from 23 to 6 percentage points. During this period, the high school completion rate for Hispanics increased from 48 to 69 percent, and the gap between Hispanics and Whites decreased from 33 to 26 percentage points. Data for Asians/Pacific Islanders were not separately available until 1990, in which year 90 percent had completed high school, a higher percentage than that of Blacks (82 percent) and Hispanics (58 percent). Between 1971 and 2009, the high school completion rate for Asians/Pacific Islanders increased from 90 to 95 percent, but the gaps in high school attainment between Asians/Pacific Islanders and other racial/ethnic groups did not measurably change.

Between 1971 and 2000, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed a bachelor's degree or higher increased from 17 to 29 percent; however, the rate in 2009 was about the same as the rate in 2000. Between 1971 and 2009, the percentage who had attained a bachelor's degree increased from 19 to 37 percent for Whites, from 7 to 19 percent for Blacks, and from 5 to 12 percent for Hispanics. During this period, the gap

in bachelor's degree attainment between Blacks and Whites increased from 12 to 18 percentage points, and the gap between Whites and Hispanics increased from 14 to 25 percentage points. Between 1990 and 2002, the percentage of Asians/Pacific Islanders who had attained a bachelor's degree increased from 42 to 56 percent; however, between 2002 and 2009 this percentage remained relatively stable. Between 1990 and 2009, the gap between Asians/Pacific Islanders and Whites increased from 16 to 19 percentage points.

In 2009, some 7 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had completed a master's degree or higher. The percentage of Asians/Pacific Islanders who had attained a master's degree in 2009 (21 percent) was higher than that of their peers from all other races/ethnicities: 9 percent of Whites, 4 percent of Blacks, and 2 percent of Hispanics had attained a master's degree in 2009. Between 1995 and 2009, the rate of master's degree attainment increased for Whites (from 5 to 9 percent), Blacks (from 2 to 4 percent), and Asians/Pacific Islanders (from 11 to 21 percent).

Gender gaps in educational attainment shifted between 1971 and 2009. For example, in 1971, a higher percentage of males completed high school than females, by a difference of 3 percentage points, but by 2009 the rate of high school attainment was higher for females than males, by 2 percentage points. A higher percentage of males than females had attained a bachelor's degree in 1971, by a difference of 7 percentage points, while by 2009 the percentage of females who had attained a bachelor's degree was 8 percentage points higher than that of males.



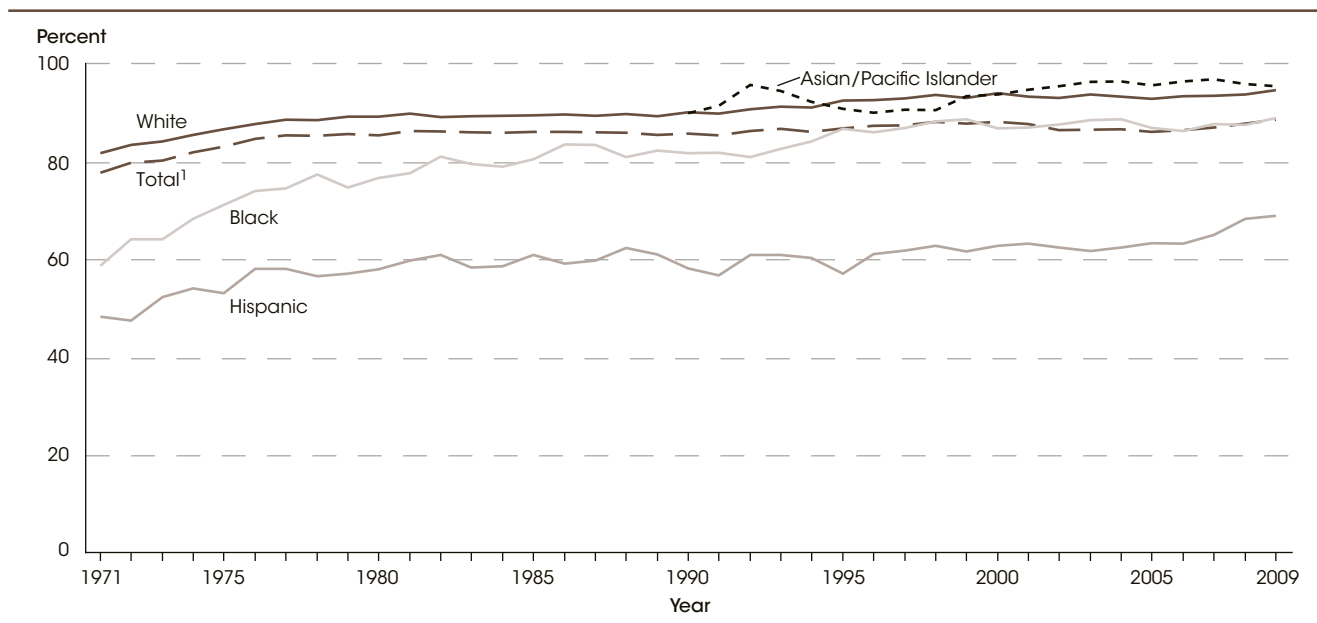
For more information: *Table A-22-1*

Technical Notes

This indicator uses March Current Population Survey (CPS) data to estimate the percentage of civilian, noninstitutionalized people ages 25 through 29 who are out of high school. Prior to 1992, *high school completers* referred to those who completed 12 years of schooling, *some college* meant completing 1 or more years of college, and *bachelor's degree or higher* referred to those who completed 4 years of college; beginning in 1992, *high school completers* referred to those who received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, *some college*

meant completing any college at all, and *bachelor's degree or higher* referred to those who earned a bachelor's degree. For more information on the CPS, see *supplemental note 2*. For more information on educational attainment of 25- to 29-year-olds, see *supplemental note 6*. Some estimates are revised from previous publications. Included in the totals but not shown separately are estimates for persons from other racial/ethnic groups. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*.

Figure 22-1. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who completed at least high school, by race/ethnicity: March 1971–2009

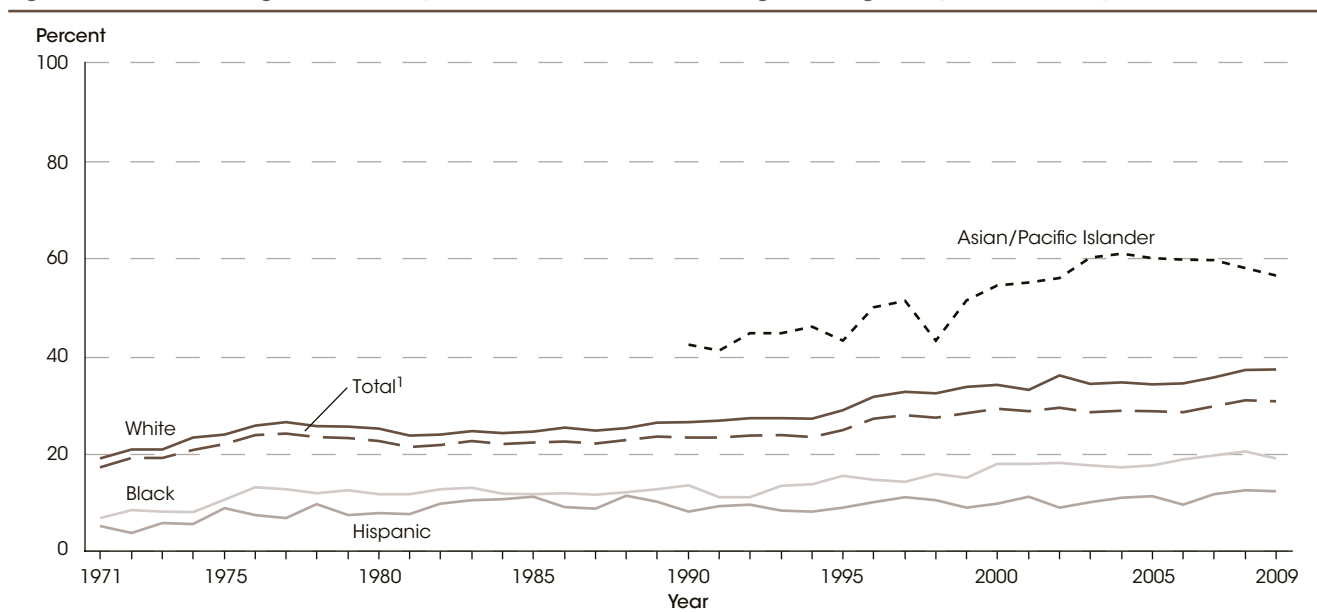


¹ Included in the total but not shown separately are estimates for persons from other racial/ethnic groups.

NOTE: Data for Asians/Pacific Islanders were available beginning in 1990. Prior to 1992, *high school completers* referred to those who completed 12 years of schooling; beginning in 1992, the term referred to those who received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate. For more information on educational attainment of 25- to 29-year-olds, see *supplemental note 6*. For more information on the Current Population Survey (CPS), see *supplemental note 2*. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1971–2009.

Figure 22-2. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with a bachelor's degree or higher, by race/ethnicity: March 1971–2009



¹ Included in the total but not shown separately are estimates for persons from other racial/ethnic groups.

NOTE: Data for Asians/Pacific Islanders were available beginning in 1990. Data prior to 1992 were for completing 4 years of college; beginning in 1992, data were for earning a bachelor's degree. For more information on educational attainment of 25- to 29-year-olds, see *supplemental note 6*. For more information on the Current Population Survey (CPS), see *supplemental note 2*. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1971–2009.

Degrees Earned

Between 1997–98 and 2007–08, the number of degrees earned increased by 34 percent for associate’s degrees, by 32 percent for bachelor’s degrees, and by 45 percent for master’s degrees.

Enrollment in degree-granting institutions increased between academic years 1997–98 and 2007–08, with total postsecondary enrollment increasing from 14.5 to 18.2 million students, a 26 percent increase (see *indicators 7 and 8*). This growth was accompanied by an increase in the number of degrees earned: during this period, the total number of degrees earned rose from 2.3 to 3.1 million, a 35 percent increase. The number of degrees earned increased by 34 percent for associate’s degrees (from 558,600 to 750,200 degrees), by 32 percent for bachelor’s degrees (from 1.2 to 1.6 million), and by 45 percent for master’s degrees (from 430,200 to 625,000). In addition, the number of first-professional degrees increased by 16 percent (from 78,600 to 91,300 degrees), and the number of doctoral degrees increased by 38 percent (from 46,000 to 63,700) (see table A-23-1).

The number of degrees earned increased for all racial/ethnic groups for each type of degree, but at varying rates. Looking at trends in associate’s degrees between 1997–98 and 2007–08, the number earned by Hispanics almost doubled (from 45,900 to 91,300 degrees) and the number earned by Black students increased by 73 percent (from 55,300 to 95,700 degrees), while the number earned by White students increased by 21 percent (from 413,600 to 501,100 degrees) (see table A-23-2). In 2007–08, Blacks earned 13 percent and Hispanics earned 12 percent of all associate’s degrees awarded, up from the 10 and 8 percent that they earned, respectively, in 1997–98. Between 1997–98 and 2007–08, the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded to White students increased by 25 percent (from 0.9 to 1.1 million degrees), while the number awarded to Hispanic students increased by 86 percent (from 66,000 to 123,000 degrees) and the number awarded to Black students increased by 55 percent (from 98,300 to 152,500 degrees). In 2007–08, Blacks earned 10 percent and Hispanics earned 8 percent of all bachelor’s degrees awarded, up from 10 years earlier when they earned 8 and 6 percent, respectively.

Between 1997–98 and 2007–08, while the number of master’s degrees earned by White students grew by less than one-third, the number of master’s degrees earned more than doubled for Black students and Hispanic students. For Blacks, the number of degrees earned increased from 30,200 to 65,100; for Hispanics, the number of degrees earned increased from 16,200 to

36,800. In 2007–08, Blacks earned 10 percent and Hispanics earned 6 percent of all master’s degrees awarded, up from the 7 and 4 percent that they earned, respectively, in 1997–98. For first-professional degrees, the number of degrees earned by Asian/Pacific Islander students increased from 7,800 to 11,800. In 2007–08, Asians/Pacific Islanders earned 13 percent of all first-professional degrees, compared with the 10 percent they earned in 1997–98. Of the doctoral degrees awarded in 2007–08, about 57 percent were awarded to White students and more than one-quarter (27 percent) were awarded to nonresident alien students. Black and Asian/Pacific Islander students each earned 6 percent of all doctoral degrees, Hispanic students earned 4 percent, and American Indian/Alaska Native students earned less than one-half percent.

Between 1997–98 and 2007–08, the percentage of degrees earned by females fluctuated between 60 and 62 percent for associate’s degrees and between 56 and 58 percent for bachelor’s degrees, while the percentage of master’s degrees earned by females increased from 57 to 61 percent (see table A-23-1). The percentage of first-professional degrees and doctoral degrees earned by females also increased during this period. In 1997–98, females earned 43 percent of first-professional degrees and 42 percent of doctoral degrees; in 2007–08, the respective percentages were 50 and 51 percent.

In 2007–08, females of each racial/ethnic group generally earned more degrees than their male counterparts for each type of degree. For example, in 2007–08, Black females earned 69 percent of associate’s, 66 percent of bachelor’s, 72 percent of master’s, 63 percent of first-professional, and 66 percent of doctoral degrees awarded to Black students (see table A-23-2). In addition, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native females earned more than 60 percent of all associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees awarded to students in those racial/ethnic groups. White females earned more degrees than White males for each type of degree, except first-professional, where they earned 47 percent of the degrees awarded.



For more information: *Tables A-23-1 and A-23-2; Indicators 7 and 8*

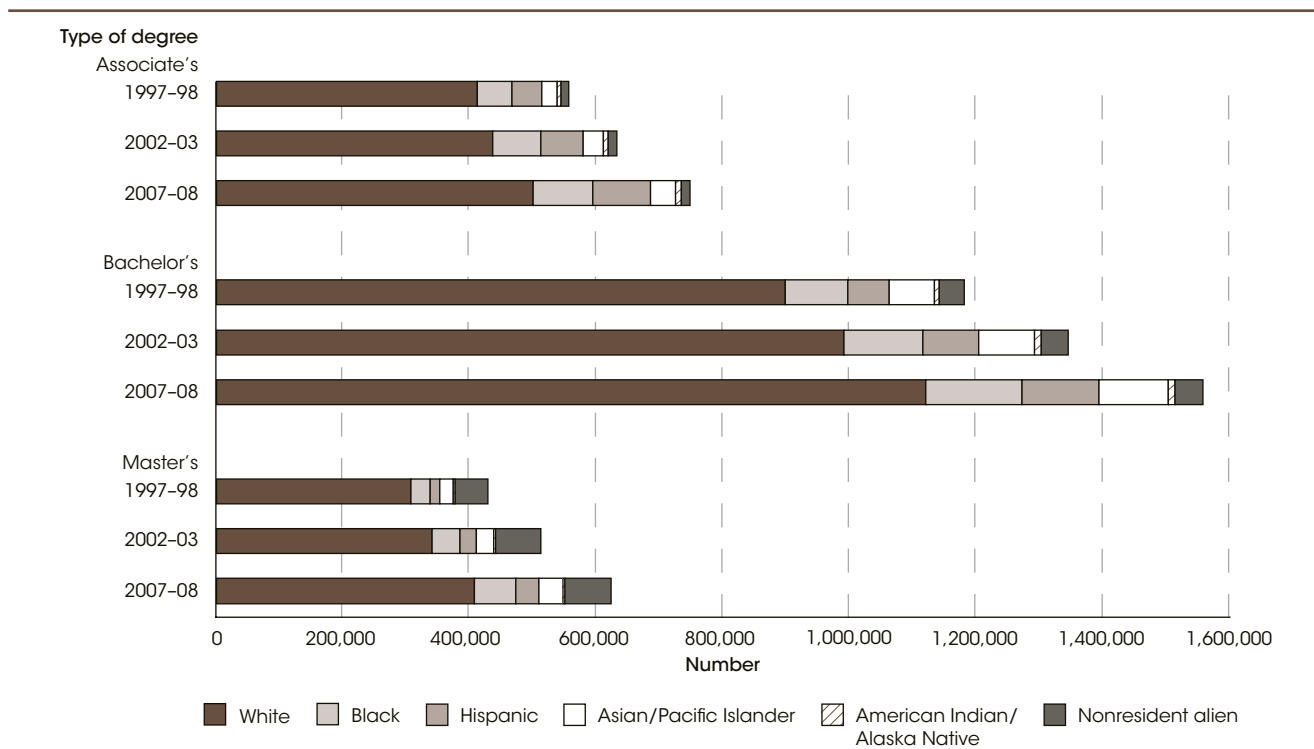
Glossary: *Doctoral degree, First-professional degree, Nonresident alien*

Technical Notes

Reported racial/ethnic distributions of students by type of degree, field of degree, and sex were used to estimate race/ethnicity for students whose race/ethnicity was not reported. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic

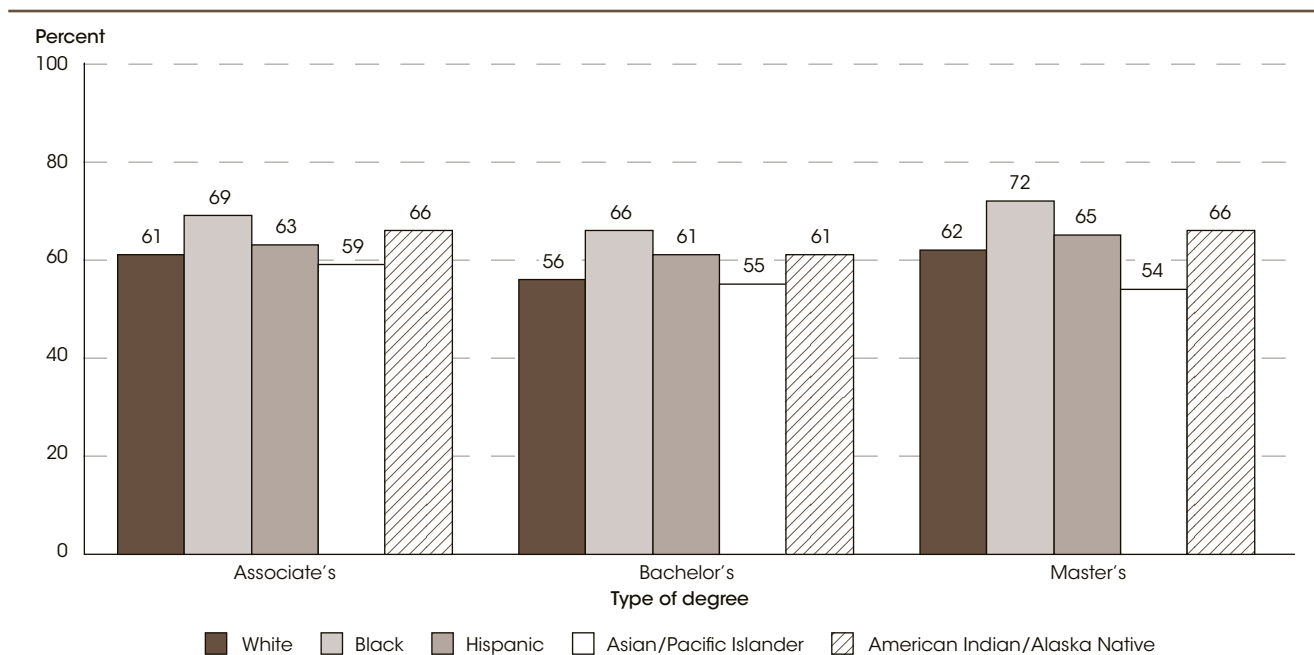
ethnicity. Nonresident aliens are featured separately since information about their race/ethnicity is not available. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*.

Figure 23-1. Number of degrees conferred, by type of degree and race/ethnicity: Academic years 1997-98, 2002-03, and 2007-08



NOTE: Reported racial/ethnic distributions of students by type of degree, field of degree, and sex were used to estimate race/ethnicity for students whose race/ethnicity was not reported. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Nonresident aliens are shown separately since information about their race/ethnicity is not available. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), see *supplemental note 3*. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997-98, 2002-03, and 2007-08 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Completions Survey" (IPEDS-C:98) and Fall 2003 and 2008.

Figure 23-2. Percentage of degrees conferred to females, by type of degree and race/ethnicity: Academic year 2007-08



NOTE: Reported racial/ethnic distributions of students by type of degree, field of degree, and sex were used to estimate race/ethnicity for students whose race/ethnicity was not reported. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), see *supplemental note 3*. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2007-08 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Completions Survey," Fall 2008.