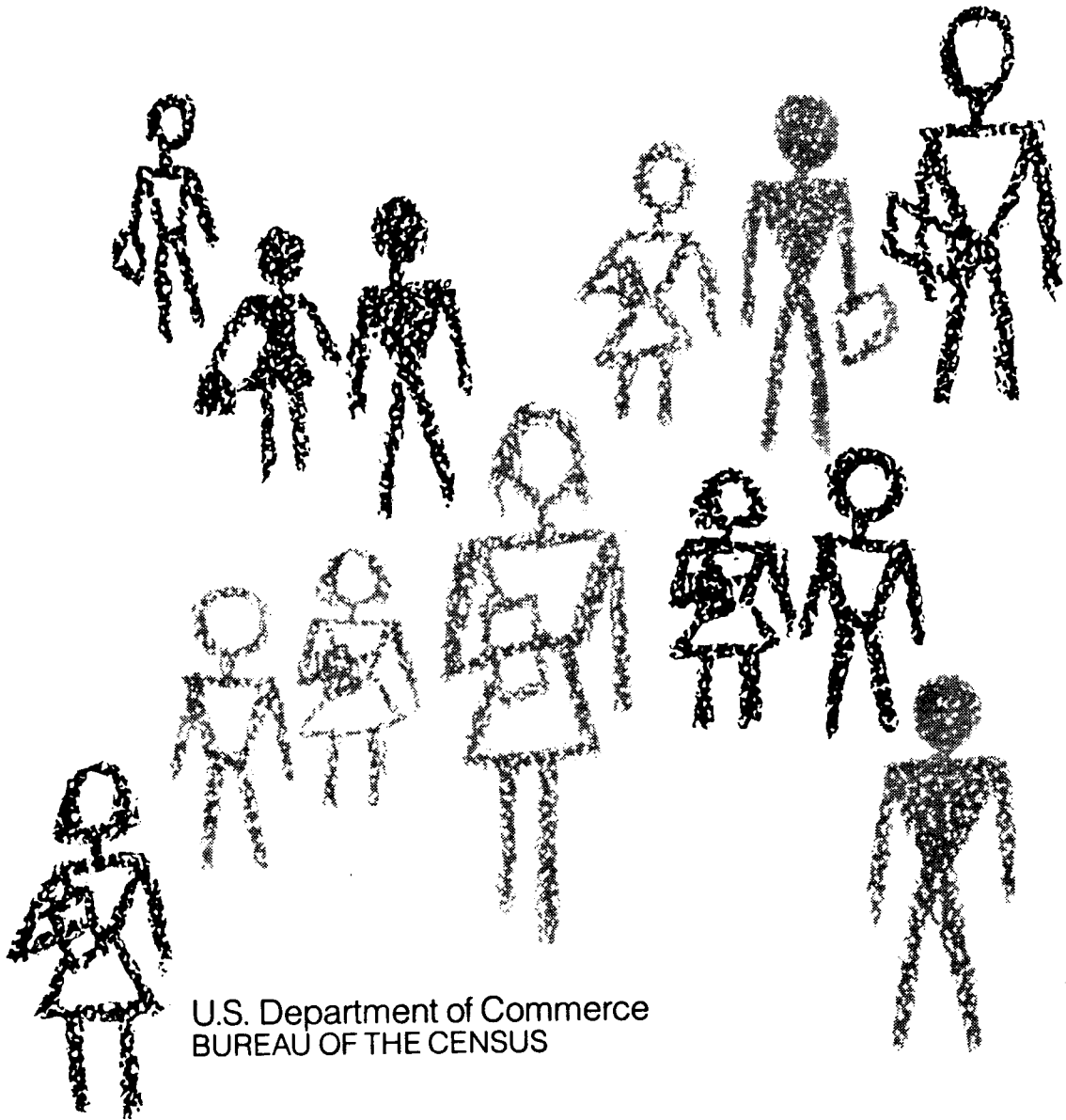


## **Population Characteristics**

Series P-20, No. 443

# **School Enrollment- Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1988 and 1987**



U.S. Department of Commerce  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

# Acknowledgments

This report was prepared in the Education and Social Stratification Branch, under the general direction of **Paul M. Siegel**, Chief. **Brenda R. Jeffries** contributed to table preparation, **D. Darcel Carter** prepared the manuscript, and **Andrea E. Adams** conducted the statistical review of the text. Survey operations and data processing were coordinated by **Kathleen P. Creighton**, **Ronald R. Tucker**, **Gregory D. Weyland**, and **Linda A. Seymour**, and programming of tabulations was performed by **Randy J. Gardner**, Demographic Surveys Division. Sampling review and appendix C were provided by **Lloyd Hicks** and **Caroline A. Riker**, Statistical Methods Division. **Lisa H. Fell** of Education and Social Stratification Branch and **Robert Kominski**, Survey Research Advisor, reviewed the contents of the report. Overall direction was provided by **Arthur J. Norton**, Assistant Chief, Population Division. Data collection was conducted by Bureau of the Census interviewers under the overall direction of **Stanley D. Matchett**, Chief, Field Division.

The staff of the Administrative and Publications Services Division, **Walter C. Odom**, Chief, provided publication planning, design, composition, editorial review, and printing planning and procurement. **Linda H. Ambill** provided publication coordination and editing.

CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

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**Population Characteristics**

Series P-20, No. 443

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Issued April 1990

**School Enrollment-  
Social and Economic  
Characteristics of  
Students: October  
1988 and 1987**

by Rosalind R. Bruno



**U.S. Department of Commerce**  
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### **SUGGESTED CITATION**

U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 443  
*School Enrollment-Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1988 and 1987*  
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 1990

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# Contents

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	Page
Introduction.....	1
Highlights.....	1
Trends:	
Preprimary enrollment.....	1
Elementary and secondary school enrollment .....	2
High school dropout rate .....	2
College enrollment .....	2
New vocational course enrollment data.....	3
User comments .....	3

## FIGURE

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. College enrollment of high school graduates 18 to 24 years old by race and Hispanic origin: October 1968, 1978, and 1988 ..... | 4 |
|---|---|

## TEXT TABLE

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| A. Full-time undergraduate enrollment by type of college and age: October 1988 ..... | 3 |
|--|---|

## DETAILED TABLES

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Enrollment status of the population 3 years old and over, by age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, and selected educational characteristics: October 1988.....  | 5  |
| 2. Enrollment status of the population 3 years old and over, by age, metropolitan status, race, Hispanic origin, and selected educational characteristics: October 1988 .....                                 | 8  |
| 3. Single grade of enrollment and high school graduation status for persons 3 years old and over, by age (single years for 3 to 24 years), sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988.....                  | 12 |
| 4. Preprimary school enrollment of persons 3 to 6 years old, by residence, mother's labor force status and education, family income, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988 .....                            | 19 |
| 5. Level of enrollment below college for persons 3 to 24 years old, by control of school, metropolitan status, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988.....  | 24 |
| 6. Enrollment status of primary family members 3 to 17 years old, by family income, level of enrollment, control of school, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988 .....                                | 25 |
| 7. Enrollment status of primary family members 3 to 17 years old, by educational attainment of family householder, level of enrollment, control of school, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988 ..... | 28 |

8.	Persons 14 to 24 years old enrolled in secondary school in previous year by current enrollment status, age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, and family income (for dependent family members): October 1988.....	31
9.	College enrollment of the population 14 years old and over, by type of school, attendance status, age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988 .....	34
10.	Attendance status of college students 14 years old and over, by sex, age, year and type of college, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988 .....	37
11.	Employment status of high school and college students 14 years old and over, by level of school, type of college, attendance status, age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988.....	39
12.	Population 14 years old and over enrolled in vocational courses, by employment status, age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988.....	45
13.	Level of enrollment of the population 14 years old and over, by type of school, attendance status, age, sex, marital status, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988 .....	48
14.	Enrollment and employment status of recent high school graduates 16 to 24 years old, by type of school, year of school, attainment level for persons not enrolled, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988.....	54
15.	Enrollment status of primary family members 18 to 24 years old, by family income, level of enrollment, type of school, attendance status, sex, family status, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988 .....	58
16.	Families by full-time college enrollment of dependent members 18 to 24 years old, by family income, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988.....	64
17.	Enrollment status of dependent family members 18 to 24 years old, by educational attainment of family householder, level of enrollment, attendance status, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988 .....	65
18.	College enrollment this year, by enrollment status last year, attendance status, years of school completed, age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin for high school graduates: October 1988.....	68
19.	Families with children 3 to 17 years old by enrollment status in nursery school to high school, by control of school, family income, metropolitan status, region, type of family, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988.....	74
20.	Enrollment status of the population 3 years old and over, by age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, and selected educational characteristics: October 1987.....	78
21.	Enrollment status of the population 3 years old and over, by age, metropolitan status, race, Hispanic origin, and selected educational characteristics: October 1987 .....	81
22.	Single grade of enrollment and high school graduation status for persons 3 years old and over, by age (single years for 3 to 24 years), sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987.....	85
23.	Preprimary school enrollment of persons 3 to 6 years old, by residence, mother's labor force status and education, family income, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	92
24.	Level of enrollment below college for persons 3 to 24 years old, by control of school, metropolitan status, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987.....	97
25.	Enrollment status of primary family members 3 to 17 years old, by family income, level of enrollment, control of school, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	98
26.	Enrollment status of primary family members 3 to 17 years old, by educational attainment of family householder, level of enrollment, control of school, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	101
27.	Persons 14 to 24 years old enrolled in secondary school in previous year by current enrollment status, age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, and family income (for dependent family members): October 1987.....	104

28.	College enrollment of the population 14 years old and over, by type of school, attendance status, age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	107
29.	Attendance status of college students 14 years old and over, by sex, age, year and type of college, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	110
30.	Employment status of high school and college students 14 years old and over, by level of school, type of college, attendance status, age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	112
31.	Population 14 years old and over enrolled in vocational courses, by employment status, age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	118
32.	Level of enrollment of the population 14 years old and over, by type of school, attendance status, age, sex, marital status, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	125
33.	Enrollment and employment status of recent high school graduates 16 to 24 years old, by type of school, year of school, attainment level for persons not enrolled, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	127
34.	Enrollment status of primary family members 18 to 24 years old, by family income, level of enrollment, type of school, attendance status, sex, family status, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	131
35.	Families by full-time college enrollment of dependent members 18 to 24 years old, by family income, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	137
36.	Enrollment status of dependent family members 18 to 24 years old, by educational attainment of family householder, level of enrollment, attendance status, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	138
37.	College enrollment this year, by enrollment status last year, attendance status, years of school completed, age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin for high school graduates: October 1987 .....	141
38.	Families with children 3 to 17 years old by enrollment status in nursery school to high school, by control of school, family income, metropolitan status, region, type of family, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1987 .....	147
39.	Enrollment status of the population 3 years old and over, by age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, and selected educational characteristics: October 1986 .....	151

## APPENDIXES

A.	Supplementary tables .....	155
B.	Definitions and explanations .....	187
C.	Source and accuracy of the estimates .....	195

## APPENDIX TABLES

A-1.	Modal grade of enrollment for persons 3 to 21 years old, by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1988 and 1987 .....	157
A-2.	School enrollment of persons 3 to 34 years old, by level and control of school, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1955 to 1988 .....	166
A-3.	Percentage of Persons 3 to 34 years old enrolled in school, by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1955 to 1988 .....	168
A-4.	Age distribution of college students 14 years old and over, by sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1947 to 1988 .....	172
A-5.	College enrollment of persons 14 to 34 years old, by sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1965 to 1988 .....	177
A-6.	College enrollment of students 14 to 34 years old, by type of college, attendance status, age, and sex: October 1970 to 1988 .....	178
A-7.	Persons 14 to 24 years old by high school graduate status, college enrollment, attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1967 to 1986 .....	180

A-8. Civilian college enrollment and Armed Forces participation of males 18 to 24 years old and college enrollment of civilian females 18 to 24 years old: October 1960 and 1965 to 1988.....	186
C-1. Standard errors for estimated numbers of persons: total or White .....	199
C-2. Standard errors for estimated numbers of persons: Black or Hispanic.....	200
C-3. Standard errors of estimated percentages: total or White.....	200
C-4. Standard errors of estimated percentages: Black or Hispanic .....	201
C-5. Parameters and factors for school enrollment characteristics .....	201



# School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1988 and 1987

## INTRODUCTION

This report presents detailed tabulations of data on school enrollment of the civilian noninstitutional population in October 1987 and 1988. It also includes summary time series of data collected since the beginning of the survey. The data are from the October school enrollment supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data on school enrollment have been collected annually in the CPS since 1946 and reported in this publication series. The data cover enrollment in "regular school," which includes nursery school, kindergarten, elementary school, high school, and college and professional school and are shown by the following person characteristics: age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, marital status, family status, family income, education of householder, labor force status, metropolitan residence, region, and mother's labor force status and education (for preprimary enrollment). Also, the following enrollment characteristics are shown: level and grade of school, public/private school, full-time attendance status, and 2-year/4-year college. Vocational school enrollment is shown separately.

Revisions in edit and tabulation processing have improved data quality but have made the data for 1987 and 1988 not strictly comparable to data for earlier years. The previous processing procedures were used from 1967 to 1986. Data for 1986 were processed with both the older and the revised procedures. The time series tables in appendix A show two data entries for 1986 as a bridge year, permitting comparisons of results according to each set of processing procedures.

## HIGHLIGHTS

(The number in parentheses is equal to 1.6 times the standard error of the estimate. This gives the 90 percent confidence interval when added to and subtracted from the estimate. For a more detailed discussion of sampling error, see appendix C.) Some of the highlights of the data presented in the tables are:

- In 1988, there were 61.1 ( $\pm 0.6$ ) million persons 3 years old and over enrolled in regular school—nursery school through college (table 1).
- Elementary school enrollment grew by 1.4 ( $\pm 0.2$ ) million from 1985 to 1988 to 28.2 ( $\pm 0.1$ ) million, the first growth since elementary school enrollment began to decline in the early 1970's (table A-2).

- High school enrollment continued the decline begun in the late 1970's, to 13.1 ( $\pm 0.3$ ) million in 1988 (table A-2).
- The annual high school dropout rate for 1988 was 4.8 ( $\pm 0.6$ ) percent (table 8).
- College enrollment totaled 13.1 ( $\pm 0.3$ ) million students in 1988, greater than enrollment in any previous year (table A-4).
- In 1988, there were 1.3 ( $\pm 0.1$ ) million Black college students 14 years old and over (table A-4).
- Among 18- to 24-year-olds, 82.3 ( $\pm 0.7$ ) percent of Whites, 75.1 ( $\pm 2.0$ ) percent of Blacks, and 55.2 ( $\pm 2.7$ ) percent of persons of Hispanic origin (who can be of any race) were high school graduates; of those graduates, 38.1 ( $\pm 1.0$ ), 28.1 ( $\pm 2.4$ ), and 30.9 ( $\pm 3.4$ ) percent, respectively, were enrolled in college (table A-7).<sup>1</sup>

## TRENDS

**Preprimary enrollment.**<sup>2</sup> About 38.2 percent of children 3 and 4 years old were enrolled in preprimary school in 1988 (85 percent of them in nursery school). In 1970, 20.5 percent of 3 and 4 year olds were enrolled (table A-3). Of children whose mothers were in the labor force in 1988, 41.1 percent were enrolled in school compared with 34.8 percent of those whose mothers were not in the labor force (table 4). Although children with mothers in the labor force were more likely than those whose mothers were not in the labor force to attend nursery school, the difference is not as great as one would expect if the main purpose for nursery school enrollment were provision of child care for working mothers.

Among 3- and 4-year-olds in nursery school, 31.4 percent were attending full day, including 40.7 percent of those whose mothers were in the labor force and 17.0 percent of those whose mothers were not in the labor force. In addition, 69.3 percent of Black students and 26.1 percent of White students attended full day.

<sup>1</sup>College enrollment proportions for Blacks and persons of Hispanic origin were not significantly different.

<sup>2</sup>All comparisons for children by labor force status of mother are for children whose mother is living in the same household.

Nearly all 5-year-olds were enrolled in school (92.6 percent), most in kindergarten. Of all kindergarten students 3 to 6 years old, 38.0 percent attended full day (table 4), including 33.6 percent of Whites and 58.0 percent of Blacks.

**Elementary and secondary school enrollment.** Elementary school enrollment declined by 21 percent or by about 7.1 million from 1970 to 1984 (table A-2). It has since increased by 1.4 million, to 28.2 million in 1988. Private school enrollment has not followed the same general trend. The long-term trend of declining enrollment in private elementary schools which began in the 1960's has not been reversed.<sup>3</sup> Private elementary school enrollment peaked in the mid 1960's at 4.9 million and 15.5 percent of all students. In 1988, there were 2.8 million students in private elementary schools, only 9.8 percent of all elementary students.

High school enrollment has continued to decline. The larger cohorts, born in the late 1970's, who caused the increase in elementary enrollment, have not yet arrived at high school age. The number of high school students in 1988 was 17 percent below the mid 1970's peak (table A-2). About 7.6 percent of high school students were enrolled in private school in 1988, compared with 11.2 percent in 1965.

**High school dropout rate.** The annual high school dropout rate for 1988 was 4.8 percent which included 4.7 percent for Whites, 6.3 percent for Blacks,<sup>4</sup> and 10.5 percent for persons of Hispanic origin. The rate for persons of Hispanic origin was significantly higher than that of any other group shown (which were not different from each other) in 1988. Between 1978 and 1988, the dropout rates decreased for all groups except for persons of Hispanic origin. In 1978 the high school dropout rates were 6.8 percent, 6.1 percent, 9.6 percent, and 12.3 percent, respectively.<sup>5</sup> The annual dropout rate for 1988 is calculated as the proportion of 14- to 24-year-olds enrolled in 10th to 12th grades in October 1987 who were no longer enrolled and had not graduated by October 1988 (table 8). See appendix B. The high

school dropout population may also be represented by the proportion of an age group (e.g. 18 to 21 years old) not enrolled in school and not high school graduates (table 1).

**College enrollment.** Total college enrollment was 13.1 million in 1988, an increase of about 400,000 over the 1987 estimate (table A-4). Although the traditional college-age population has been declining throughout the decade, college enrollment has grown since 1980. Enrollment of traditional-age students grew slightly, but most of the growth was among students above traditional college age. In 1980, 34.4 percent of students were 25 years old and over; in 1988, 39.2 percent were in that age group.

The usual prerequisite for college enrollment is high school graduation. Figure 1 shows that the proportion of Black young adults, 18 to 24 years old, who were high school graduates grew substantially (17 percentage points) between 1968 and 1988, which resulted in a much larger group of Black young adults eligible for college in 1988. Black young adults were only slightly less likely than Whites of the same age to be high school graduates in 1988 (75.1 and 82.3 percent, respectively). The proportion of persons of Hispanic origin who were high school graduates remained far below the proportions for the other groups. College enrollment grew for all groups between 1968 and 1988 (table A-7). The proportion of high school graduates enrolled in college grew for the White population, but for Blacks the proportions were not significantly different in 1968 and 1988. Although the number and proportion of Black young adults who were high school graduates rose substantially between 1968 and 1988 (shown in figure 1), the proportion of graduates enrolled in college grew only between 1968 and 1978—there was no statistically significant improvement in college enrollment of Black high school graduates between 1978 and 1988. Among high school graduates in 1988, Whites were more likely than Blacks and persons of Hispanic origin to be enrolled in college (38.1, 28.1, and 30.9 percent respectively).<sup>6</sup>

Two-year colleges (junior and community colleges) enrolled 36.2 percent of undergraduates in 1988, including 35.9 percent of Whites, 39.1 percent of Blacks, and 48.3 percent of persons of Hispanic origin (table 9).<sup>7</sup> Undergraduates attending 4-year colleges were more likely than students in 2-year colleges to attend full time (79.1 percent vs. 49.5 percent). Younger students, less than 25 years old, were more likely than older students to attend 4-year colleges and also more likely to attend full time. See table A.

<sup>3</sup>A significant increase in private school enrollment occurred in 1985, following a significant decrease in 1984. This 1-year divergence from the long-term trend did not appear to affect the trend.

<sup>4</sup>The dropout rates for All Races, Whites, and Blacks were not significantly different.

<sup>5</sup>In the CPS the sample size for persons of Hispanic origin was not of sufficient size to determine a statistically significant difference between years. In 1978, the rates for persons of Hispanic origin and for Blacks were not significantly different. They were different from those for All Races and Whites, which were not different from each other.

The dropout rate for 1978 was calculated from Current Population Report, Series P-20, No. 346, *School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1978*. The calculation of the dropout rate from tables in reports for 1968 to 1986 is described in CPR, P-20, No. 413, *School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1983*.

<sup>6</sup>College enrollment proportions for Blacks and persons of Hispanic origin were not significantly different.

<sup>7</sup>Only persons of Hispanic origin were significantly different from the other groups.

**Table A. Full-time Undergraduate Enrollment by Type of College and Age: October 1988**

(Numbers in thousands)

Age	Under-graduate	2-year college	4-year college
<b>TOTAL ENROLLED</b>			
14 years and over.....	10,604	3,837	6,768
14 to 24 years.....	7,474	2,296	5,178
25 years and over.....	3,131	1,541	1,590
<b>PERCENT FULL TIME</b>			
14 years and over.....	68.4	49.5	79.1
14 to 24 years.....	84.0	67.3	91.4
25 years and over.....	31.1	23.0	39.1

## NEW VOCATIONAL COURSE ENROLLMENT DATA

Enrollment in postsecondary school which is not part of the "regular" school system has not generally been presented in this report series. A question was included in the 1987 and 1988 surveys, which asks for all persons not enrolled in elementary or high school: "Excluding regular college courses and on the job training is ... taking any business, vocational, technical, secretarial, trade, or correspondence courses?"

In 1988, 4.5 million persons reported being enrolled in vocational courses, more than half (54.6 percent) were women and three-fourths (77.7 percent) were 25 years old and over (table 12). About half (48.9 percent) had completed at least 1 year of college and two-thirds (66.0 percent) were employed full time. Of young adults 14 to 24 years old, the proportions of Blacks and Whites enrolled in vocational courses was not significantly different, 2.5 percent of Whites and 2.8 percent of Blacks.

Data on vocational school enrollment in tables 14 and 33 are incorrect (see appendix B).

## USER COMMENTS

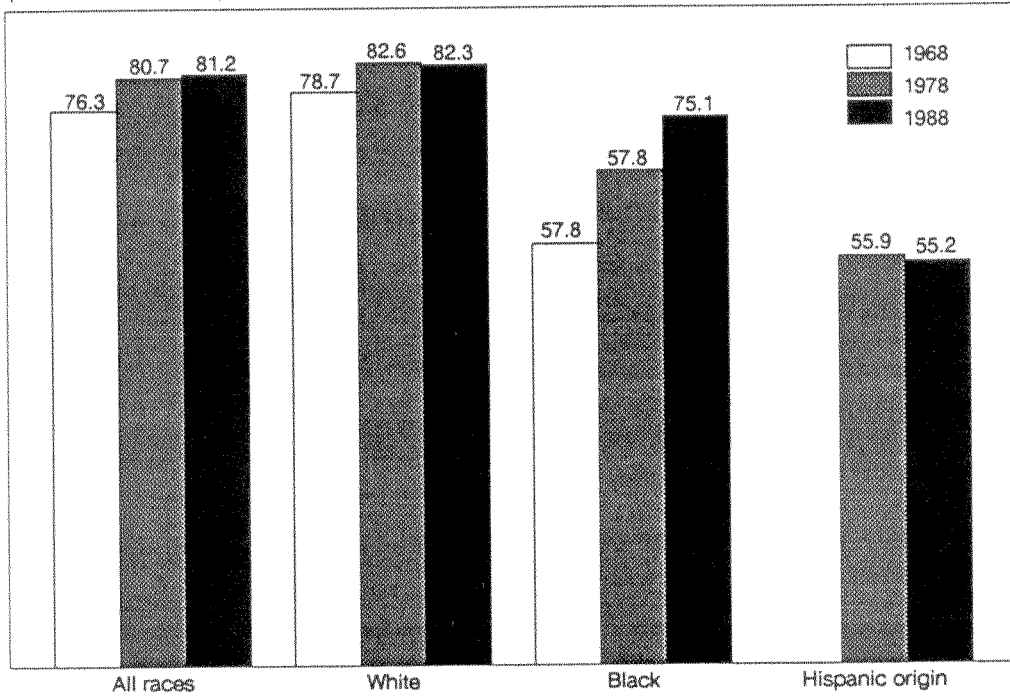
We are interested in your reaction to the usefulness of the information presented here and to the content of the questions used to provide these results. (There are facsimiles of the CPS school enrollment supplement portions of the questionnaire in appendix B). We welcome your recommendations for improving our survey work. If you have suggestions or comments, please send them to:

Current Survey Comments  
Population Division  
U.S. Bureau of the Census  
Washington, DC 20233

FIGURE 1.  
College Enrollment of High School Graduates 18 to 24 Years Old  
by Race and Hispanic Origin: October 1968, 1978, and 1988

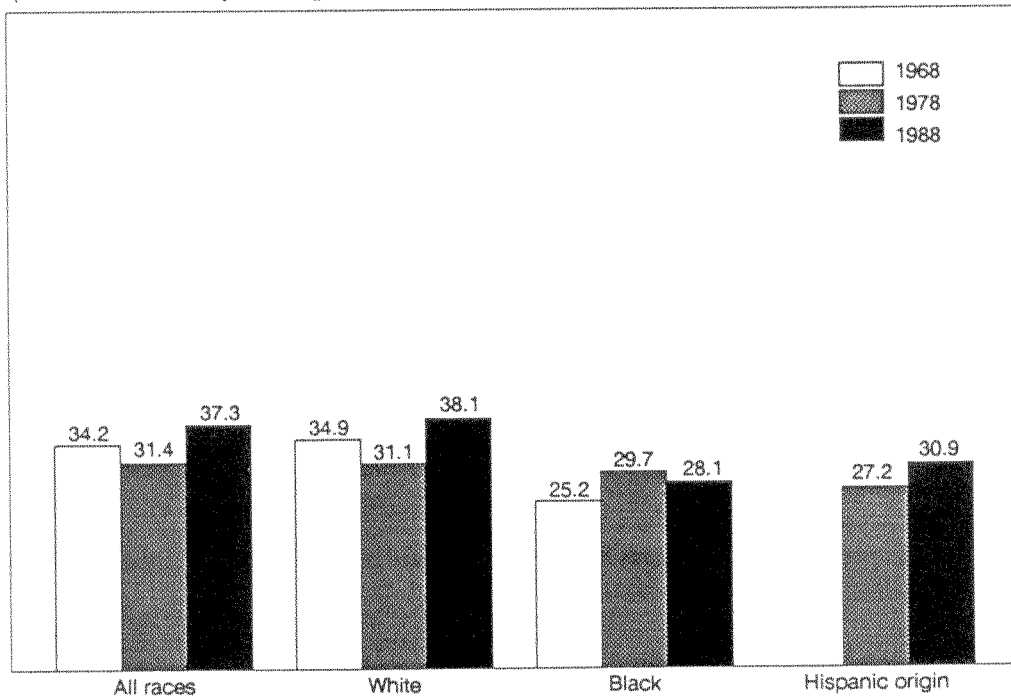
a. Percent High School Graduates

(Percent of 18- to 24-year-olds)



b. Percent of High School Graduates Enrolled in College

(Percent of 18- to 24-year-old graduates)



Source: Table A-7.