

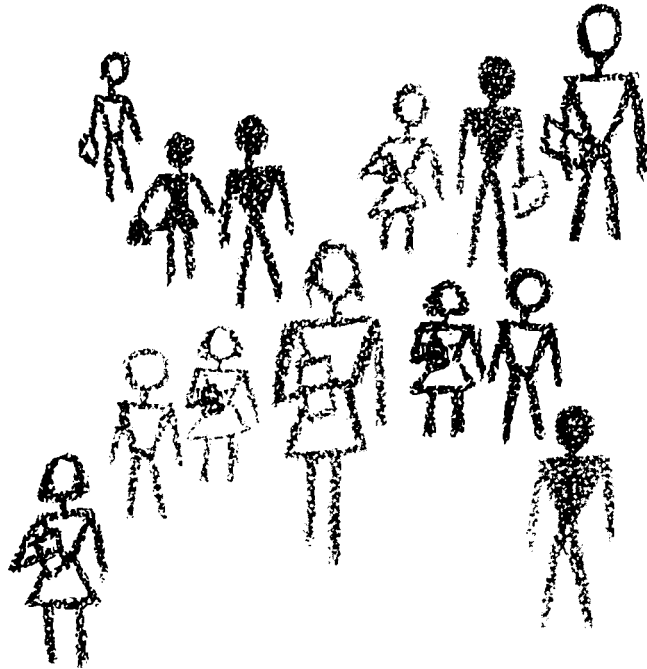


CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

Population Characteristics

P20-469

School Enrollment— Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1991



by Robert Kominski and Andrea Adams

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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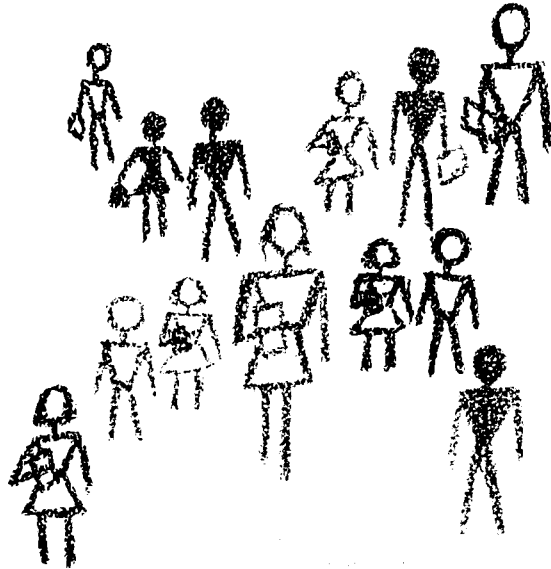
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U.S. Department of Commerce

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School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1991

(NOTE: The estimates for 1991 in this report are inflated to national population controls by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. The population controls are based on results of the 1980 census carried forward to 1991. The estimates in this report, therefore, may differ from estimates that would have been obtained using 1990 census results brought forward to the survey date. Population controls incorporating 1990 census results will be used for survey estimation beginning in 1993.)

INTRODUCTION

This report presents detailed tabulations of data on school enrollment of the civilian noninstitutional population in October 1991. 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. Data are shown by the following characteristics: age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, marital status, family status, family income, education of the 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 and part-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 beginning with 1987 not strictly comparable with data from earlier years. The previous processing procedures were used from 1967 to 1986. Time series tables in appendix A show two data entries for 1986 which permit comparisons of results according to each set of processing procedures.

HIGHLIGHTS

(Figures shown in parentheses define 90-percent confidence intervals. For details of calculation see "Appendix B, Source and Accuracy of the Estimates.")

- In October 1991, 63.9 (± 0.5) million persons were enrolled in regular school—nursery school through college. About 61.3 (± 0.4) million of these persons were between the ages of 3 and 34.
- The number of persons in nursery school or kindergarten was 7.1 (± 0.2) million, not statistically different from the 7.3 (± 0.2) million enrolled in the fall of 1990.
- Elementary school enrollment (grades 1-8) stood at 29.6 (± 0.2) million persons, up from 29.3 (± 0.2) million one year earlier.
- High school enrollment totalled 13.1 (± 0.2) million persons, an increase from the 12.8 (± 0.2) million enrolled in the fall of 1990.
- The annual high school dropout rate (from grades 10-12) for 1991 was not different from 1990: 4.0 (± 0.5) percent.
- The "dropout pool" (persons not enrolled and not a high school graduate) of young adults ages 18 to 24 totalled 3.5 million (± 0.1) or 14.2 percent (± 0.6) of this age group. This was not a significant change, either numerically or proportionately, from 1990 (3.4 (± 0.1) million and 13.6 percent (± 0.6)).
- The number of persons enrolled in college totalled 14.1 (± 0.3) million, significantly more than the 13.6 (± 0.3) million enrolled one year before. About 2.5 (± 0.1) million of current college students were over age 34.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN 1991

Preprimary Enrollment

About 55.7 percent (6,334,000) of children 3 to 5 years old were enrolled in preprimary school in the fall of 1991. Figure 1 shows the level of preprimary enrollments since 1970. Among children 3 or 4 years old, 40.5

Table A. Enrollment of Children 3 and 4 Years Old in Nursery School, by Family Income and Race: October 1991

(In thousands)

Characteristic	Total	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000 to \$39,999	\$40,000 and over
TOTAL				
Total children	7,574	2,710	2,393	2,176
Enrolled in nursery school ..	2,581	658	749	1,082
Percent enrolled	34.1	24.3	31.3	49.7
Percent public	34.8	71.7	31.2	14.4
Percent private	65.2	28.3	68.8	85.6
WHITE				
Total children	6,062	1,837	2,079	1,940
Enrolled in nursery school ..	2,157	452	669	972
Percent enrolled	35.6	24.6	32.2	50.1
Percent public	30.4	67.3	30.0	13.6
Percent private	69.6	32.7	70.0	86.4
BLACK				
Total children	1,151	732	237	117
Enrolled in nursery school ..	311	184	63	46
Percent enrolled	27.0	25.1	26.6	39.3
Percent public	66.6	83.7	(B)	(B)
Percent private	33.4	16.3	(B)	(B)
HISPANIC ORIGIN¹				
Total children	977	621	225	99
Enrolled in nursery school ..	194	102	48	38
Percent enrolled	19.9	16.4	21.3	38.4
Percent public	66.0	84.3	(B)	(B)
Percent private	34.0	15.7	(B)	(B)

B Base less than 75,000.

¹May be of any race.

percent were enrolled, most of them in nursery school (2.6 million of 3.1 million total enrollees). Given the availability of public kindergarten in all states, most 5 year olds were enrolled in school (91.4 percent), the majority in kindergarten (79.6 percent). There was no difference measured in preprimary enrollment levels for Whites (56.2 percent) and Blacks (53.1 percent), but the level for Hispanic children (who can be of any race) was significantly lower (46.4 percent).

A large difference in nursery school enrollment is observed when examined across family income groups. Table A shows that 24.3 percent of young children (ages 3 to 4) from families with income less than \$20,000 were enrolled in nursery school, as compared to 31.3 percent for children from families with income between \$20,000 and \$39,999. Children from families with income \$40,000 and above had the highest level of nursery school enrollment (49.7 percent).

Of the 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in nursery school, 896,000 (34.8 percent) were in public school, while 1,684,000 (65.2 percent) attended private school. Family income is strongly associated with patterns of public and private nursery schooling. Children from families

with high income are more likely to attend private school, while those from lower income families are more likely to enroll in public systems. Seventy-two percent of the nursery school students from families with income less than \$20,000 attended public school, compared to fourteen percent of those from families with income over \$40,000.

Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment

There were 29.6 million persons enrolled in elementary school (grades 1 through 8) in the fall of 1991. Given the near universal nature of schooling for young persons, the number of persons enrolled in elementary school closely parallels the size of the population 6 to 13 years of age as shown in figure 2. During the 1970's and early 1980's, elementary school enrollments fell, following the general decrease in the size of the 6 to 13 year old population. In the past few years, however as "echo boom" children have come of school age, this has changed, and both the school age population and elementary enrollments have risen. This trend is expected to continue for the near-term future. The current projections of the population for children ages 6 to 13 for 1996 is 30.8 million.¹ If existing enrollment rates for this age group continue, there will be over a million more elementary students in 1996 than in 1991.

Most elementary school students attend public institutions, as the top panel of table B shows. In the fall of 1991, about 10.2 percent of all elementary school students ages 3 to 17 were in private schools, but the data indicate that private school enrollment is more likely for children from families with higher family income. Whereas 3.5 percent of children from families with income less than \$20,000 attended private school, 17.2 percent of those from families with income of \$40,000 or more did so.

Table C shows the variation in private school enrollment in a different way, along a dimension of metropolitan areas. As can be seen, the proportion of children in private elementary schools has declined substantially in metropolitan areas over the last 25 years. In 1967, nearly 1 in 5 elementary school students in central cities were in private school. In 1991 this had fallen to 12.3 percent, only slightly larger than the 10.6 percent in private schools in the suburbs. Private elementary school enrollments in nonmetropolitan areas were relatively low in each of the time points examined.

In the fall of 1991, about 13.1 million persons were enrolled at the high school level (grades 9 through 12). Figure 3 shows the strong correspondence between high school enrollment and the population between the ages of 14 and 17. During the late 1980's, the number of

¹Current Population Report, Series P 25-1092, *Population Projections of the United States by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1992 to 2050*. Middle series are used for all projections in this report.

Figure 1.
Nursery School and Kindergarten Enrollment, 1970 to 1991;
and Population Ages 3 to 5, 1970 to 2001

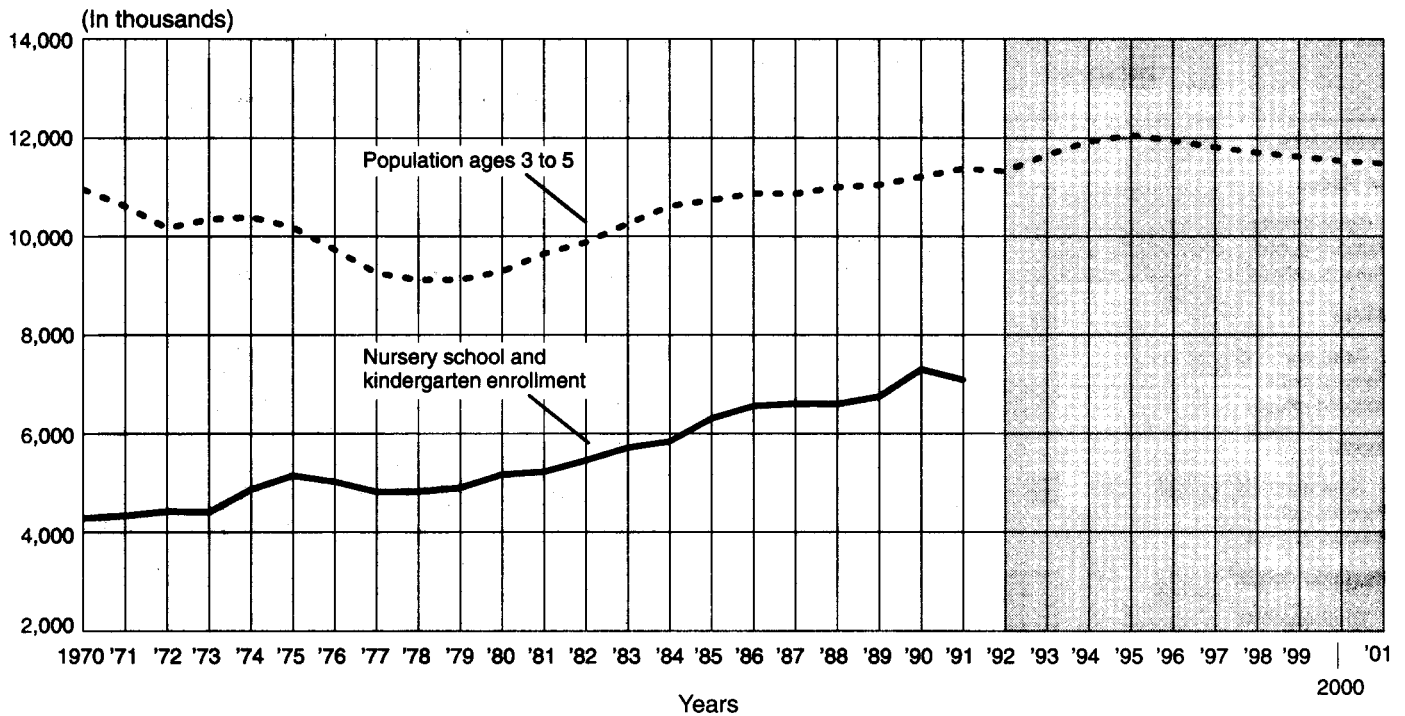


Figure 2.
Elementary School Enrollment, 1970 to 1991;
and Population Ages 6 to 13, 1970 to 2001

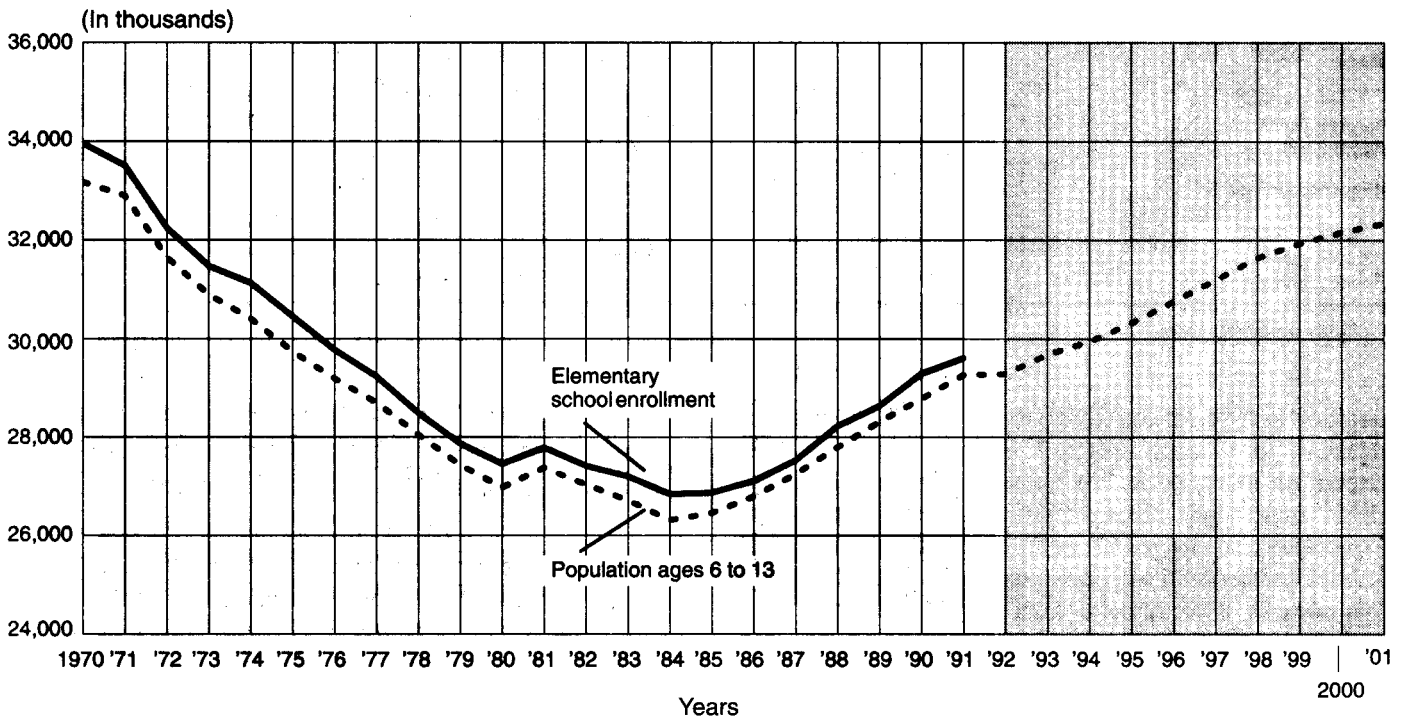


Table B. Public and Private Elementary and High School Enrollment of Primary Family Members 3 to 17 Years Old, by Family Income, Race, and Hispanic Origin: October 1991

(In thousands)

Characteristic	Total	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000 to \$39,999	\$40,000 and over
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL				
All Races				
Total enrolled	28,966	9,198	9,286	9,098
Percent public	89.8	96.5	90.6	82.8
Percent private	10.2	3.5	9.4	17.2
White				
Total enrolled	23,054	5,883	7,987	8,110
Percent public	88.8	96.1	90.0	82.7
Percent private	11.2	3.9	10.0	17.3
Black				
Total enrolled	4,567	2,814	978	536
Percent public	95.0	97.4	94.5	83.4
Percent private	5.0	2.6	5.5	16.6
Hispanic Origin¹				
Total enrolled	3,399	1,788	1,025	458
Percent public	93.6	98.0	94.2	74.0
Percent private	6.4	2.0	5.8	26.0
HIGH SCHOOL				
All Races				
Total enrolled	11,441	2,975	3,517	4,242
Percent public	92.3	97.3	93.6	88.1
Percent private	7.7	2.7	6.4	11.9
White				
Total enrolled	9,215	1,883	2,968	3,792
Percent public	91.4	97.3	93.0	87.6
Percent private	8.6	2.7	7.0	12.4
Black				
Total enrolled	1,711	949	405	245
Percent public	97.4	97.6	98.0	94.7
Percent private	2.6	2.4	2.0	5.3
Hispanic Origin¹				
Total enrolled	1,057	521	336	145
Percent public	95.7	99.6	94.0	85.5
Percent private	4.3	0.4	6.0	14.5

¹May be of any race.

persons in high school fell as the size of the population ages 14 to 17 also dropped. However data for 1991 shows an increase in the number of high school students over 1990 (13.1 versus 12.8 million persons). Projections of 14 to 17 year olds indicate that high school enrollments will continue to rise through most of this decade, if enrollment rates remain the same.

Public institutions account for most high school enrollments, with just 7.7 percent of secondary students

attending private schools. The bottom half of table B shows public and private high school enrollment levels by income, race, and Hispanic origin groupings. As with primary school, there is a relationship between family income and private school enrollment. About 2.7 percent of children from lower income (less than \$20,000) families attended private high school, compared to 11.9 percent from higher income families.

Table C. Proportion of Elementary and High School Students Enrolled in Private School, by Metropolitan Type: October CPS, for Various Years

Year	Percent enrolled in private elementary school			Percent enrolled in private high school		
	Central city	Suburbs	Nonmetropolitan	Central city	Suburbs	Nonmetropolitan
TOTAL						
1991.....	12.3	10.6	5.7	9.0	8.2	3.5
1986.....	13.3	11.2	7.5	11.4	8.1	5.4
1981.....	15.7	11.2	6.8	10.9	8.4	4.2
1976.....	15.4	10.4	6.0	13.9	6.7	3.6
1971.....	16.2	12.3	6.1	11.6	8.3	3.6
1967.....	19.1	13.9	6.5	16.4	10.3	4.0
WHITE						
1991.....	15.5	11.2	6.4	11.2	9.0	3.0
1986.....	17.1	11.9	8.5	14.8	8.2	6.0
1981.....	20.6	11.7	7.5	14.9	8.9	4.5
1976.....	19.9	10.9	6.7	18.9	7.0	4.0
1971.....	21.7	12.8	6.8	15.0	8.7	3.9
1967.....	24.8	14.7	7.4	19.8	10.8	4.3
BLACK						
1991.....	5.8	5.5	1.0	2.9	3.6	0.8
1986.....	5.5	4.7	1.4	4.3	5.7	2.4
1981.....	6.1	5.7	1.2	4.2	1.2	1.7
1976.....	5.1	3.8	0.5	4.3	2.8	0.7
1971.....	4.0	6.1	1.0	3.5	2.7	1.1
1967.....	5.3	1.6	0.1	6.0	2.3	0.4
HISPANIC¹						
1991.....	5.9	7.3	4.4	5.6	3.3	-
1986.....	7.9	5.5	6.5	8.7	5.1	4.3
1981.....	11.3	9.5	3.5	7.9	6.3	3.3
1976.....	11.7	6.7	3.2	11.7	3.5	1.6
1972.....	9.7	8.4	8.7	8.8	5.0	0.6

Note: Data for Hispanics not collected prior to 1972.

¹May be of any race.

Composition of the Elementary and Secondary School-Age Population

Over the past few decades, the nature of the school age population has changed substantially. Changes in residence, income and family structure have created a student population that is very different from that of the 1960's. As table D shows the school-age population has also changed in terms of its racial and ethnic composition over time. In 1972, about 21 percent of the school age population (ages 3 to 17) were of a race or ethnic group other than White.² By 1990, this had risen to 31 percent, and projections for 2000 indicate that 33.5 percent of school-age children will be Hispanic, Black, or a member of some other racial group other than White. The data show that this group is quite diverse; by the year 2000 no single group will constitute a majority of all nonwhite/nonhispanic students. Educators and school systems need to prepare for a population of students that is increasingly becoming more heterogeneous, including, as table D shows, in terms of racial and ethnic background.

²For the purposes of this analysis, Hispanics are subtracted from the White population count. Analysis of CPS data indicates that this is a reasonable simplifying assumption, since the vast majority of Hispanics in the CPS also classify themselves as White.

High School Dropouts

During the one-year period from October 1990 to October 1991, about 347,000, or 4.0 percent, of all students in the 10th, 11th or 12th grade dropped out of high school.³ While this overall national dropout rate is considerably lower than the level of 5.9 percent just 10 years earlier (see table A-3), variation among different subpopulations is apparent.

The data in table E show that the high school dropout rate of 3.7 percent for Whites is statistically different from the Black rate of 6.2 percent, and the Hispanic rate of 7.3 percent. (The Black and Hispanic rates are not statistically different from each other.) The rates for men and women, at 3.8 and 4.3 percent, respectively, are not statistically different from each other. Across family income groups there are differences in the dropout rate. While 6.8 percent of high school students from families with income below \$20,000 dropped out of high school in the past year, just 0.9 percent of those from families with incomes of \$40,000 or more left school before graduation.

³The annual high school dropout rate was first presented in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 413, *School Enrollment Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1983*. Details of its calculation are presented in that report, as well as in appendix B, Definitions and Explanations, of this report.

Table D. Racial and Ethnic Composition of the School Age Population: October 1972, 1980, 1990 and Projected Year 2000

(In thousands)

Year and age	All Persons	White	Nonwhite race or ethnicity						
			Total ¹ percent	Black		Hispanic ²		Other	
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1972									
Total	58,170	49,344	21.0	7,995	13.7	3,418	5.9	831	1.4
3 to 5 years	10,165	8,560	22.6	1,443	14.2	694	6.8	162	1.6
6 to 11 years	23,271	19,672	21.5	3,223	13.8	1,397	6.0	376	1.6
12 to 17 years	24,734	21,112	20.0	3,329	13.5	1,327	5.4	293	1.2
1980									
Total	53,125	43,741	26.1	7,856	14.8	4,467	8.4	1,528	2.9
3 to 5 years	9,528	7,787	27.6	1,433	15.0	885	9.3	308	3.2
6 to 11 years	20,622	16,915	26.8	3,090	15.0	1,830	8.9	617	3.0
12 to 17 years	22,975	19,039	24.8	3,333	14.5	1,752	7.6	603	2.6
1990									
Total	53,200	42,694	31.0	8,177	15.4	5,969	11.2	2,329	4.4
3 to 5 years	11,207	9,032	31.1	1,670	14.9	1,310	11.7	505	4.5
6 to 11 years	21,929	17,613	31.1	3,362	15.3	2,500	11.4	954	4.4
12 to 17 years	20,064	16,049	30.8	3,145	15.7	2,159	10.8	870	4.3
2000									
Total	59,428	46,253	33.5	9,517	16.0	6,760	11.4	3,658	6.2
3 to 5 years	11,538	8,901	36.0	1,910	16.6	1,519	13.2	727	6.3
6 to 11 years	24,291	18,907	33.5	3,942	16.2	2,753	11.3	1,442	5.9
12 to 17 years	23,599	18,445	32.4	3,665	15.5	2,488	10.5	1,489	6.3

¹Percent equals sum of Hispanics, Blacks, and persons of other races, divided by total.

²May be of any race.

Figure 3.
High School Enrollment, 1970 to 1991;
and Population Ages 14 to 17, 1970 to 2001

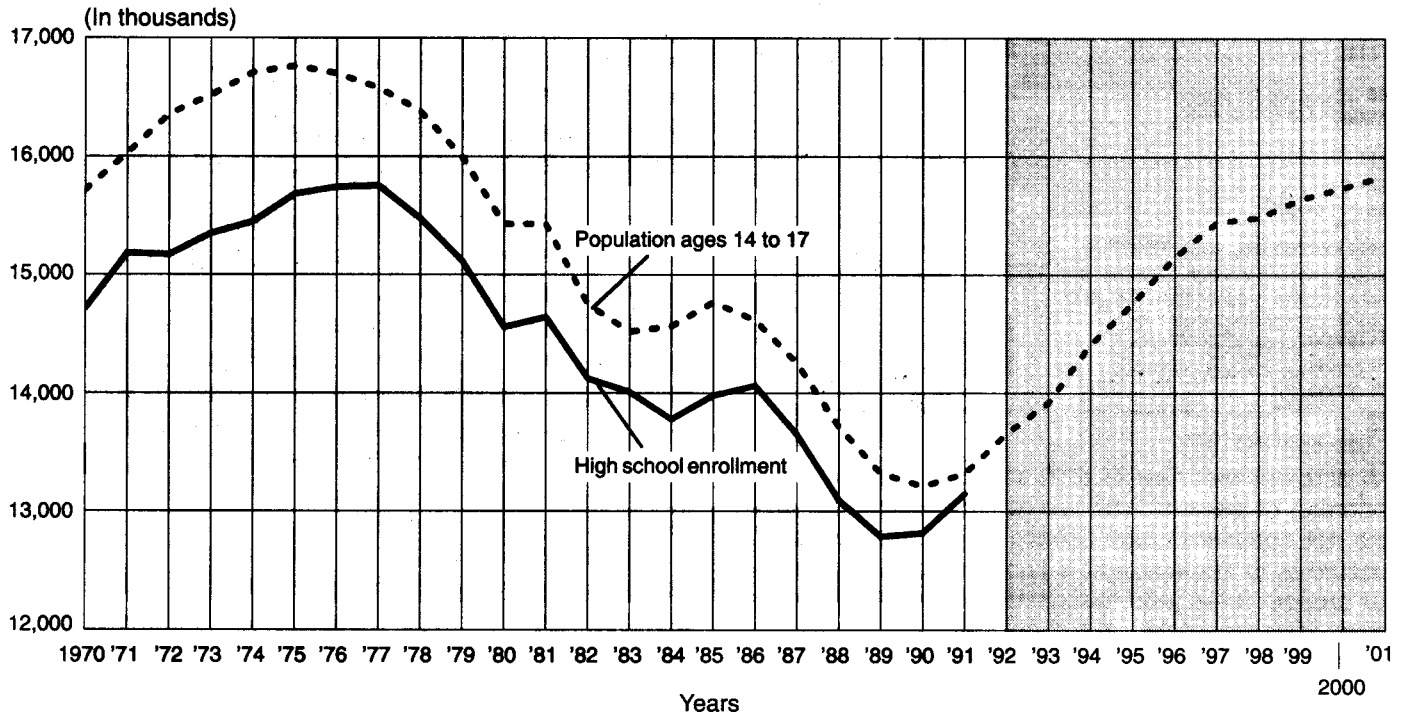


Figure 4.
College Enrollment, 1972 to 1991;
and Population Ages 18 to 24, 1972 to 2001

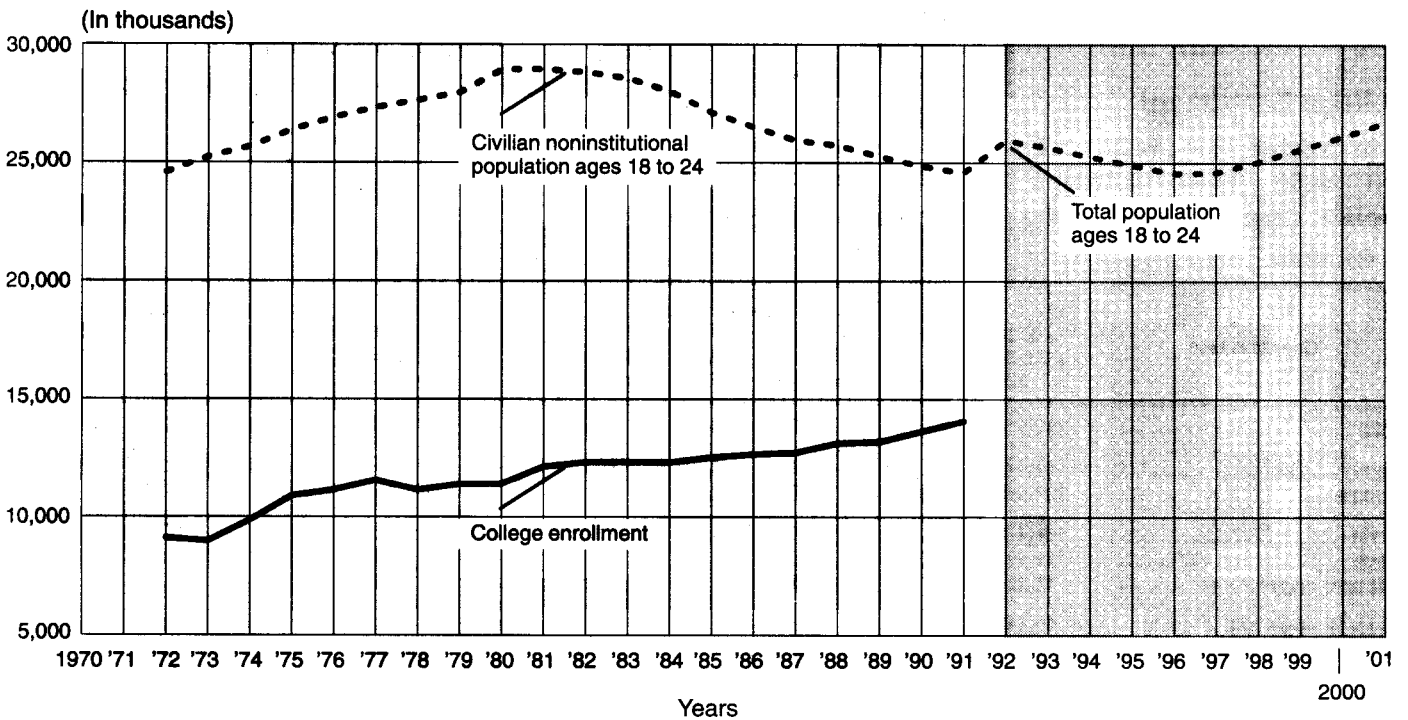


Table E. Annual High School Dropout Rates: October 1991

Characteristic	Percent
Total.....	4.0
Male.....	3.8
Female.....	4.3
White.....	3.7
Black.....	6.2
Hispanic origin ¹	7.3
Family income less than \$20,000.....	6.8
Family income between \$20,000 and \$39,999.....	3.5
Family income greater than \$40,000.....	0.9
10th grade.....	3.4
11th grade.....	3.3
12th grade.....	5.9

¹May be of any race.

A different measure of high school dropouts is the proportion of persons who are no longer enrolled and have not completed high school. This "dropout pool" measure is to some extent a summary of the year-to-year dropout rates (and reenrollment) over the life of a cohort. Data from table A-4 show that among persons ages 18 to 24 years, 3.5 million (14.2 percent) were high school dropouts; this is a significant decrease in both number (4.5 million) and percent (15.6 percent) from the level of 10 years earlier. Men and women were different in their proportions of dropouts (15.0 versus 13.4 percent). While Blacks and Whites had roughly equal proportions (15.6 versus 14.2 percent), the level for Hispanics was 39.6 percent. Data from table 2 shows that the dropout proportion was considerably higher among students of central cities (17.9), than of suburbs (11.8) or nonmetropolitan areas (13.1), which were not statistically different from each other.

College Enrollment

In October 1991, 14,057,000 persons were enrolled in colleges across the nation; this was a significant

Table F. Characteristics of the College Population: October 1991

(In thousands)

Characteristic	Total population	Enrolled in college	Type of school			Percent enrolled full time	Percent public school	Percent employed		
			2-year college	4-year college	Graduate school			Total	Full time	Part time
Total.....	193,610	14,057	4,277	7,097	2,683	64.4	78.8	62.0	32.8	29.1
Male.....	92,543	6,439	1,798	3,322	1,320	68.5	77.0	61.5	33.9	27.6
Female.....	101,067	7,618	2,479	3,775	1,364	60.9	80.4	62.4	32.0	30.4
White.....	164,495	11,686	3,491	5,967	2,228	74.6	78.5	64.2	33.9	30.3
Black.....	22,241	1,477	555	709	213	66.1	82.3	51.2	31.3	19.9
Hispanic origin ¹	15,281	830	362	377	92	60.2	84.6	62.2	30.4	31.8
15 to 19 years old.....	16,587	3,061	1,120	1,942	-	91.8	78.8	46.0	6.7	39.3
20 and 21 years old.....	7,242	2,939	732	2,169	37	87.2	78.4	52.1	13.3	38.8
22 to 24 years old.....	10,666	2,304	560	1,197	547	72.5	77.7	63.6	28.0	35.6
25 to 34 years old.....	42,254	3,285	1,084	1,035	1,165	43.1	78.3	72.3	55.1	17.3
35 years and older.....	116,861	2,468	781	753	934	23.8	81.2	78.2	63.5	14.7

¹May be of any race.

increase from the 13.6 million who were enrolled in the fall of 1990. Figure 4 shows the level of college enrollment since 1972 along with the number of persons 18 to 24, the "traditional" college age group. While this traditional college age population declined by 4.3 million persons in the past 10 years, the number of college students rose by 1.9 million, largely reflecting the increase in college enrollment by persons ages 25 and older.

Table F details some of the basic characteristics of college students in 1991, illustrating the diverse nature of the college population. As can be seen in the age detail, 40.9 percent of all college students were age 25 or older. In 1972, the year the Bureau first began collecting school enrollment data on a routine basis for persons age 35 and above, just 8.6 percent were enrolled in college; by 1981 it had risen to 11.5 percent; in 1991 it stood at 17.6 percent.

Women accounted for 54.2 percent of all college students, continuing the majority role they have occupied since 1979. Just 20 years ago, women constituted only 40 percent of all college students. Table A-4 shows the proportion of high school graduates ages 18 to 24 who are enrolled in college. The data show that men and women in this age group have enrollment rates which are not statistically different (41.7 versus 40.6). Just twenty years earlier, the enrollment rates strongly favored men, 41.5 versus 26 percent. The age and gender data illustrate the fact that much of the older student enrollment is also enrollment by women. In 1991, among students 35 and over, two-thirds were women. Proportionately, women were more likely than men to be enrolled in a 2-year college, and more likely to be in a public school.

There were 11.4 million students enrolled at the undergraduate level, and 62.4 percent of them were enrolled in 4-year institutions. The majority of students (64.4 percent) were enrolled full time, and 78.8 percent were enrolled in a public college or university. Finally, 62.0 percent of all college students were employed either full or part time.

For many persons, college enrollment must be negotiated not only with respect to financial cost, but among many lifecycle factors as well, such as marriage, building a family and establishing a career. Table G shows the proportion of students attending full time at 2-year and 4-year institutions, by the age of the student. In general, a much larger proportion of students at 4-year schools attend full-time, but there is also a strong relationship between age and full time attendance. While 92.9 percent of traditional age college students in 4-year schools are attending full time, just 24.5 percent of persons age 35 or older in 2-year schools are full-time students.

DATA FILES AVAILABLE

The time series tabulations of enrollment shown in tables A-1 through A-6 in appendix A are now available on two floppy diskettes. The tables are available as either six ASCII print files, or six LOTUS 1-2-3 @ files (version 2.1). Users wishing to purchase files should specify which data format they prefer (ASCII or LOTUS), include a check for \$25 (make checks payable to "Commerce-Census") and send to:

Education and Social Stratification Branch
 Population Division
 U.S. Bureau of the Census
 Washington, D.C. 20233

Table G. Full-time Enrollment by Age and Type of College: October 1991

(In thousands)

Age	All colleges		2-Year colleges		4-Year colleges		Graduate school	
	Total students	Percent full time	Total students	Percent full time	Total students	Percent full time	Total students	Percent full time
Total	14,057	64.3	4,277	51.7	7,097	79.7	2,683	44.0
15 to 24 years	8,304	84.8	2,412	68.8	5,308	92.9	584	77.4
25 to 34 years	3,285	43.1	1,084	33.3	1,035	50.0	1,165	46.3
35 years and over	2,468	23.8	781	24.5	753	27.8	934	20.1