

Key Findings – *The Condition of Education in 2014*

The latest edition of *The Condition of Education 2014*, an annual report on the developments and trends in all levels of U.S. education, reflects trends in achievement in reading and mathematics, high school graduation rates, rates of immediate transition to college, and economic outcomes of graduates.

The report presents 42 indicators in four main areas: population characteristics; participation in education; elementary and secondary education; and postsecondary education; this summary gives an overview of the report's key findings.

AIR played a major role in producing the congressionally mandated report, which is published by the National Center for Education Statistics and submitted to Congress and the President of the United States.

Educational Attainment

- In 2013, some 90 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had had received at least a high school diploma or its equivalent. Between 1990 and 2013, the size of the White-Black attainment gap at this education level narrowed from 8 to 4 percentage points, and the White-Hispanic gap narrowed from 32 to 18 percentage points.
- In 2013, some 34 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had earned a bachelor's or higher degree. Between 1990 and 2013, the size of the White-Black gap at this education level widened from 13 to 20 percentage points, and the White-Hispanic gap widened from 18 to 25 percentage points.

Annual Earnings of Young Adults

- Changes over time in the percentage of young adults who worked full time, year round varied by educational attainment. From 2002 to 2012, the percentage of young adults without a high school credential (i.e., without a high school diploma or its equivalent) who worked full time, year round dropped from 60 to 49 percent, and the corresponding percentage of those who had a high school credential was lower in 2012 than in 2002 (60 vs. 64 percent). However, the percentages of those with a bachelor's degree and of those with at least a master's degree who worked full time, year round did not change measurably between 2002 and 2012.
- For young adults ages 25–34 who worked full time, year round, higher educational attainment was associated with higher median earnings. For example, in 2012, young adults with a bachelor's degree earned more than twice as much as those without a high school credential (\$46,900 vs. \$22,900) and 57 percent more than young adult high school completers (\$46,900 vs. \$30,000).
- Median earnings (in constant 2012 dollars) for young adults with different levels of educational attainment generally declined over the period of 2002 to 2012. Between 2002 and 2012, the median earnings for young adults without a high school credential declined by 10 percent from \$25,500 to \$22,900, and the median earnings for young adult high school completers declined by 10 percent from \$33,200 to \$30,000. The median earnings for those with a bachelor's degree also decreased by 8 percent from \$51,000 to \$46,900.
- In 2012, the median of earnings for young adult males was higher than the median for young adult females at every education level. For example, in 2012 young adult males with a bachelor's degree earned \$50,000, while their female counterparts earned \$42,900. In the same year, the median of earnings for White young adults generally exceeded the corresponding medians for Black and Hispanic young adults at each educational level, except less than high school completion and master's degree or higher. Among those with a bachelor's degree and those with a master's degree or higher, Asian young adults had higher

median earnings than their peers in other racial/ethnic groups. For example, the median of earnings in 2012 for young adults with at least a master's degree was \$69,700 for Asians, \$56,900 for Whites, \$54,700 for Blacks, and \$50,000 for Hispanics.

Children Living in Poverty

- In 2012, approximately 11.1 million school-age children, or children 5 to 17 years old, were in families living in poverty. The percentage of school-age children living in poverty in 2012 (21 percent) was higher than it was two decades earlier in 1990 (17 percent), even though the poverty rate for school-age children was lower in 2000 (15 percent) than in 1990. Between the two most recent survey years, 2011 and 2012, the poverty rate for school-age children did not change measurably.
- The percentage of children under age 18 living in poverty varied across racial/ethnic groups. In 2012, the percentage was highest for Black children (39 percent), followed by American Indian/Alaska Native children (36 percent), Hispanic children (33 percent), Pacific Islander children (25 percent), and children of two or more races (22 percent). The poverty rate was lowest for White children (13 percent) and Asian children (14 percent).
- Among children under age 18 living in poverty in 2012, those living in a mother-only household had the highest rate of poverty (46 percent) and those living in a father-only household had the next highest rate (27 percent). Children living in a married-couple household had the lowest rate of poverty, at 11 percent. This pattern was observed across most racial/ethnic groups.

Preprimary Enrollment

- From 1990 to 2012, the percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in preprimary programs increased from 59 to 64 percent. The percentage of these children who attended full-day programs increased from 39 to 60 percent during this period.
- Enrollment in preprimary programs varied by parents' highest level of education, defined as the highest level of education attained by the most educated parent in the child's household. In 2012, the percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds who were enrolled in preprimary programs was generally higher for those whose parents had either a graduate or professional degree (75 percent) or a bachelor's degree (69 percent) than for children whose parents had lower levels of educational attainment.

Public School Enrollment

- From school years 2011–12 through 2023–24, overall public elementary and secondary school enrollment is projected to increase by 5 percent (from 49.5 to 52.1 million students), with changes across states ranging from an increase of 22 percent in Nevada to a decrease of 11 percent in West Virginia.

English Language Learners

- The percentage of public school students in the United States who were English language learners was higher in school year 2011–12 (9.1 percent, or an estimated 4.4 million students) than in 2002–03 (8.7 percent, or an estimated 4.1 million students). In 2011–12, seven of the eight states with the highest percentages of ELL students in their public schools were in the West.

Children and Youth with Disabilities

- The number of children and youth ages 3–21 receiving special education services was 6.4 million in 2011–12, or about 13 percent of all public school students. Some 36 percent of the students receiving special education services had specific learning disabilities.

Undergraduate Enrollment

- Total undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions was 17.7 million in fall 2012, an increase of 48 percent from 1990 when total undergraduate enrollment was 12.0 million students. By 2023, undergraduate enrollment is projected to increase to 20.2 million.
- In fall 2012, about 4.6 million undergraduate students participated in distance education, with 2.0 million students (11 percent of total undergraduate enrollment) exclusively taking distance education courses. There were differences by institutional control and level in the percentage of undergraduate students participating exclusively in distance education programs. In 2012, a higher percentage of students at private for-profit 4-year institutions exclusively took distance education courses (58 percent) than did students at any other control and level of institution (percentages at these institutions ranged from 2 percent at private nonprofit 2-year institutions to 10 percent at both public 2-year and private nonprofit 4-year institutions).

Postbaccalaureate Enrollment

- Total enrollment in postbaccalaureate degree programs was 2.9 million in 2012, an increase of 57 percent since 1990. Postbaccalaureate enrollment is projected to increase to 3.6 million by 2023.
- In 2012, about 867,000 postbaccalaureate students participated in distance education, with 639,000 students (22 percent of total postbaccalaureate enrollment) exclusively taking distance education courses. There were differences by institutional control in the percentage of students participating exclusively in distance education programs. In 2012, the percentage of students who exclusively took distance education courses was higher for those enrolled at private for-profit institutions (77 percent) than for those at either public (15 percent) or private nonprofit institutions (17 percent).

Characteristics of Traditional Public and Public Charter Schools

- In school year 2011–12, there were 98,328 public schools in the United States, including 92,632 traditional public schools and 5,696 charter schools. These numbers are higher than those in school year 1999–2000, when there were a total of 92,012 public schools, with 90,488 traditional public schools and 1,524 charter schools.
- In school year 2011–12, about one third of traditional public schools (34 percent) were in rural areas, compared with 16 percent of charter schools. In contrast, 24 percent of traditional public schools and the majority of charter schools (55 percent) were in cities.

Concentration of Public School Students Eligible for FRPL

- Among public school students, the percentage of those attending high-poverty schools was greater in 2011–12 than it was over a decade ago: 19 percent of public schools students attended a high-poverty school in 2011–12, compared with 12 percent in 1999–2000. The increase in the percentage of children who are eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program may have been influenced by a number of factors, including more systematic identification of eligible

children as well as an increase in the actual rate of child poverty. In 2011, some 21 percent of children under the age of 18 were living in poverty, compared with 16 percent in 2000.

- The distribution of schools across poverty concentration varied by school locale (i.e., city, suburb, town, or rural). In school year 2011–12, over one-third (34 percent) of students attending city schools were in a high-poverty school, compared with 10 percent of students attending rural schools, 13 percent of students attending suburban schools, and 15 percent of students attending town schools.

Teachers and Pupil/Teacher Ratios

- The number of students per teacher, or the pupil/teacher ratio, has been generally decreasing for more than 50 years at both public and private schools. For public schools, the pupil/teacher ratio fell from 26.9 teachers per pupil in 1955 to 17.9 in 1985 and then further declined to 15.3 in 2008. In the most recent years, the pupil/teacher ratios in 2010 and 2011 (both at 16.0) were higher than the ratio in 2009 (15.4).

Public School Revenue Sources

- From school years 2000–01 through 2010–11, total elementary and secondary public school revenues increased from \$530 billion to \$632 billion (in constant 2012–13 dollars), a 19 percent increase, adjusting for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This increase was accompanied by a 5 percent increase in total elementary and secondary public school enrollment, from 47 million students in 2000–01 to 49 million students in 2010–11. During this period, the total amounts from federal and local sources increased. Federal revenues, traditionally the smallest of the three revenue sources, increased by 106 percent (to \$79 billion in 2010–11), and local revenues increased by 20 percent (to \$274 billion in 2010–11). State revenues fluctuated between \$264 billion and \$309 billion during this period, and they were 6 percent higher in 2010–11 than in 2000–01 (\$279 billion vs. \$264 billion). During this period, federal revenues peaked in 2009–10 at \$81 billion, while local revenues peaked in 2008–09 at \$279 billion and state revenues peaked in 2007–08 at \$309 billion.

International Assessments

- Among 15-year-old students, 29 education systems had higher average scores than the United States in mathematics literacy, 22 had higher average scores in science literacy, and 19 had higher average scores in reading literacy, according to the 2012 Program in International Student Assessment (PISA).

Status Dropout Rates

- The status dropout rate decreased from 12 percent in 1990 to 7 percent in 2012, with most of the decline occurring since 2000 (when it was 11 percent).
- In each year from 1990 to 2012, the status dropout rate was lower for Whites than for Blacks and Hispanics. During this period, the rate for Whites declined from 9 to 4 percent; the rate for Blacks declined from 13 to 8 percent; and the rate for Hispanics declined from 32 to 13 percent.

Public High School Graduation Rates

- In school year 2011–12, some 3.1 million public high school students, or 81 percent, graduated on time with a regular diploma. Among all public high school students, Asians/Pacific Islanders had the highest graduation rate (93 percent), followed by Whites (85 percent), Hispanics (76 percent), and American Indians/Alaska Natives and Blacks (68 percent each).

Undergraduate Degrees by Field

- In 2011–12, some 1.8 million bachelor’s degrees were awarded by postsecondary institutions, an increase of 4 percent from 2010–11. Of the bachelor’s degrees awarded in 2011–12, almost one-third (30 percent) were concentrated in two fields: business (20 percent) and social sciences and history (10 percent). The three fields awarding the next largest percentages of bachelor’s degrees in 2011–12 were health professions and related programs (9 percent), psychology (6 percent), and education (6 percent). These were the same five fields in which the largest percentages of bachelor’s degrees were awarded in 2001–02, 2006–07, and 2010–11.

Price of Attending an Undergraduate Institution

- The average net price (total cost minus grants) of attendance in 2011–12 for first-time, full-time students was \$12,410 at public, in-state 4-year institutions, \$21,330 at private for-profit 4-year institutions, and \$23,540 at private nonprofit 4-year institutions.

Grants and Loan Aid to Undergraduate Students

- From academic years 2006–07 to 2011–12, the percentage of first-time, full-time undergraduate students at 4-year degree-granting institutions receiving any financial aid increased from 75 to 85 percent. During this time, the largest percentage increase was at 4-year private for-profit institutions (from 55 to 91 percent). The percentage of students receiving aid at 4-year public institutions increased from 75 to 83 percent, while the percentage of students at 4-year private nonprofit institutions had the smallest increase, from 85 to 89 percent.
- Average grant amounts are reported in constant 2012–13 dollars. The average institutional grant award for first-time, full-time students receiving institutional grants in 2011–12 at 4-year institutions was highest at private nonprofit institutions (\$15,428), compared with the average institutional grant award at public institutions (\$4,965) and at private for-profit institutions (\$2,945). There were smaller differences in the average federal grant awards by institution type. The average federal grant award for students receiving federal grants at 4-year institutions was \$4,764 for students attending private for-profit institutions, \$4,751 for students attending private nonprofit institutions, and \$4,540 for students attending public institutions.

Student Loan Volume and Default Rates

- Average annual student loan amounts for first-time, full-time undergraduate students enrolled in student aid programs also increased between 2000–01 and 2011–12, from \$5,000 to \$6,800, after adjusting for inflation (a 36 percent increase). Average loan amounts were higher in 2011–12 than in 2000–01 for all types of institutions.
- Approximately 4.7 million students entered the repayment phase of their student loans in fiscal year (FY) 2011, meaning that their student loans became due between October 1, 2010, and September 30, 2011. The percentage of students who entered repayment on their loans in FY 2011 and defaulted prior to the end of the next fiscal year is the 2-year cohort default rate. Of the 4.7 million students who entered the repayment phase on their student loans in fiscal year (FY) 2011, some 476,000, or 10.0 percent, had defaulted before the end of FY 2012. For students in the Direct Loan Program or the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program, default occurs when a payment has not been made for 270 days.

- Across all institutions, the overall default rate for the FY 2011 cohort (10.0 percent) was higher than the rates for the FY 2010 (9.1 percent) and FY 2009 (8.8 percent) cohorts.

Institutional Retention and Graduation Rates for Undergraduate Students

- About 59 percent of first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a 4-year institution in fall 2006 completed that degree within 6 years. The graduation rate for females (61 percent) was higher than the rate for males (56 percent).