

**CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM  
AND  
EMPOWER AMERICA**

**ACHIEVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES:  
PROGRESS SINCE A NATION AT RISK?**

By:

Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., Ph.D.  
U.S. Commissioner of Education Statistics  
National Center for Education Statistics  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
U.S. Department of Education  
555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Room 400  
Washington, DC 20208  
202-219-1828 (Telephone)  
202-219-1736 (Fax)  
Pascal\_Forgione@ed.gov (email)

NCES World Wide Web Home Page: <http://www.nces.ed.gov>

April 3, 1998

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                          |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Highlights.....                                                          | 3  |
| Introduction.....                                                        | 5  |
| I. Performance Over Time.....                                            | 6  |
| Long-Term Trends in Science, Mathematics, and Reading.....               | 6  |
| Subgroup Performance on NAEP.....                                        | 7  |
| Framework-based Assessments in Mathematics, Reading,<br>and Science..... | 8  |
| II. International Comparisons.....                                       | 12 |
| International Comparisons of Mathematics and<br>Science.....             | 12 |
| Lessons From TIMSS.....                                                  | 14 |
| International Comparisons of<br>Reading.....                             | 16 |
| International Perspective on Labor Force<br>Proficiency.....             | 17 |
| III. Changes in Students' Behavior Since <i>A Nation at Risk</i> .....   | 17 |
| Dropping Out of School.....                                              | 18 |
| Educational Aspirations and College<br>Attendance.....                   | 18 |
| Coursetaking Patterns in High School.....                                | 18 |
| Conclusion.....                                                          | 19 |
| Figures.....                                                             | 20 |

## Highlights

### *Student Achievement Over Time*

- Long-term trends in science and mathematics show declines in the 1970s and early 1980s, followed by modest increases. For example, the mathematics score averages of 17-year-olds declined from 1973 to 1982, then increased to a level in 1996 similar to the 1973 level.
- Long term trends in reading achievement show minimal changes across the assessment years. In 1996, the average reading score for 9-year-olds was higher than it was in 1971. Thirteen-year-olds showed moderate gains in reading achievement; in 1996, their average reading score was higher than that in 1971. There was an overall pattern of increase in reading scores for 17-year-olds, but the 1996 average score was not significantly different than in 1971.
- Many states have had increases in mathematics performance in recent years. Eighth-graders in 27 out of the 32 jurisdictions participating in both the 1990 and 1996 assessments showed an *increase* in their average scale scores.
- Despite these widespread increases in performance, large variations in state mathematics achievement persist. The proportion of eighth-graders performing at a *Basic* or above level ranged from 36 percent in Mississippi to 77 percent in Maine and North Dakota and 78 percent in Iowa.
- The mathematics and science achievement gap between white, black, and Hispanic students, has narrowed somewhat since *A Nation at Risk*. Blacks and Hispanics in each of the age groups tested (9, 13, and 17-year-olds) tended to make larger gains than whites during this period. Paradoxically, the achievement gains of each of these major subgroups are larger than that for the nation as a whole because of compositional changes in the student population. In particular, the lowest scoring subgroups represent a greater share of the population in 1996 than in earlier years.

### *International Comparisons*

- Data from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) suggests that the relative international standing of U.S. students declines as they progress through school. In both subject areas, our students perform above the international average in grade 4, close to the international average in grade 8, and considerably below it in grade 12.
- In twelfth-grade, the achievement scores of both our overall student population tested on general mathematics and science knowledge, and of our more advance students tested in mathematics and physics, were well below the international average.
- Findings from TIMSS suggest that many of the “cure-alls” recommended in the past are not associated with high performance in all nations. While strategies such as more homework, more seat time, and less television may be important in improving the

achievement of individual students and schools, they do not appear to be potent variables in explaining cross-national student achievement differences.

- U.S. students perform relatively well in reading compared with their international counterparts. Out of 27 countries in fourth-grade and 31 countries in ninth-grade, only Finland's achievement was significantly higher than that of the U.S.
- TIMSS data do encourage us to focus on rigorous content, focused curriculum, and good teaching as critical to improved national performance. For example, while most countries introduce algebra before high school, in the U.S. only 25 percent of students take algebra before high school. Similarly, fully 90 percent of all U.S. high school students stop taking mathematics before getting to calculus. And 55 percent of physical science teachers in this country (i.e., teachers of chemistry, physics, earth science or physical science) lack either a major or minor in their teaching sub-field.
- The United States has close to 20 percent of the adult population at both the high and low ends of the literacy scale. In contrast, European countries tend to have an adult population with skills concentrated in the middle literacy levels.
- Workers with higher literacy scores are unemployed less and earn more than workers with lower literacy scores.

### ***Changes in Student Behavior Since A Nation at Risk***

- The dropout rate has declined since *A Nation at Risk*, particularly for blacks. The Hispanic dropout rate remains much higher than for black or whites and has not changed significantly since 1982. However, the dropout rate for Hispanic immigrants is much higher (44 percent), than for first-generation Hispanics born in the U.S. (17 percent).
- The educational aspirations of high school seniors increased substantially between 1982 and 1992. In 1992, 69 percent of seniors said that they hoped to graduate from college, compared with 39 percent of 1982 seniors.
- There has been a marked increase in the number of mathematics and science courses taken by high school graduates. Between 1982 and 1994, the percentage of high school graduates completing the "New Basics" curriculum (4 years of English, 3 of social sciences, 3 of sciences, and 3 of mathematics) rose from 14 percent to 50 percent.

## Introduction

Fifteen years ago when *A Nation at Risk* was released some critics charged that the report was long on conclusions and short on evidence. One observer argued that the report's subtext was the appalling lack of reliable, national education data at the disposal of policy analysts and policymakers at that time. Today, as I stand before you as the Commissioner of Education Statistics I can say -- in terms of data -- things have improved. And some of the people responsible for expanding the Nation's investment in education data are in this room today. As a result, we now have a much clearer picture of how well American schools and their students are faring.

To ask if today's students are as smart as students used to be -- if they know more or can do more -- invokes the most traditional and simplest form of benchmarking; it compares performance today by the standard of performance in the past. That is the main question I will address today -- to ask if students are performing better by presenting data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which looks at national and state performance over time. What we shall see is that the news is mixed.

But there are other ways to ask the general question "how are we doing?" Policymakers often ask if American students are doing as well as they should or as well as they can. International comparisons present an alternative kind of benchmark for gauging overall performance and are probably the most important indicator to business leaders. Comparisons of academic performance among our major economic partners are leading indicators for employers who must compete in a global economy. International comparisons are the second group of data I want to present here today, and for that I will draw primarily from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the International Reading Literacy Study (IRLS) and the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). These data also paint an uneven picture of our relative educational standing.

Finally, I will present data on how students have responded to the call for better performance and higher standards. We shall see that students have changed their behavior since *A Nation at Risk*: they are more likely to graduate from high school, have higher educational aspirations, and take more academic courses.

## I. Performance Over Time

### *Long-Term Trends in Science, Mathematics, and Reading*

Measuring students' academic performance has been the purpose of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) since its inception in 1969. Students in both public and nonpublic schools have been assessed in various subject areas on a regular basis. In addition, NAEP collects information about relevant background variables to provide an important context for interpreting the assessment results and to document the extent to which education reform has been implemented.

NAEP enables us to monitor trends in academic achievement in core curriculum areas over an extended period of time. To do so, NAEP readministers materials and replicates procedures from assessment to assessment, always testing students in the same age groups (9, 13, and 17). In this manner, the long-term trends NAEP provides valuable information about progress in academic achievement and about the ability of the United States to achieve its national education goals.

To provide a numeric summary of students' performance on the assessment questions and tasks, NAEP uses a 0 to 500 scale for each subject area. Comparisons of average scale scores are provided across the years in which the NAEP long-term trend assessments have been administered and among subpopulations of students. These results chart trends from the first year in which each NAEP assessment was given: 1969/70 in science; 1971 in reading; 1973 in mathematics; and 1984 in writing.

Trends in average performance over these time periods are discussed for students at ages 9, 13, and 17 for science, mathematics, and reading. In general, the NAEP long term trends in science and mathematics show a pattern of early declines or relative stability followed by improved performance; in reading, minimal changes have occurred over the assessment period.

**Science.** The overall pattern of performance in science for 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds is one of early declines followed by a period of improvement (Figure A). For 9-year-olds, the overall trend shows improvement; in 1996, the average score for these students was higher than in 1970. The overall trend for 13-year-olds was also positive, but there was no significant difference between the average science scores in 1970 and those in 1996. The average science score of 17-year-olds in 1996 was lower than the average score in 1969. Science scores have been increasing upward for all ages tested since 1982 and the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. Average scores at all three ages were higher in 1996 than in 1982 (for 17-year-olds, scores increased by 13 points; at age 13, scores increased 6 points, and at age 9, scores increased 9 points).

**Mathematics.** The overall pattern of mathematics achievement for 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds shows overall improvement, with early declines or relative stability followed by increased performance (Figure B). Further, the scores of 9- and 13-year-olds were significantly higher in 1996 than in 1973. As with science, mathematics scores have also shown an upward trend at all ages since 1982 and the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. On average, the scores of 17-year-olds increased 8 points; 13-year-olds increased 5 points; and 9-year-olds increased 12 points.

**Reading.** The overall trend pattern in reading achievement is one of minimal changes across the assessment years (Figure C). The performance of 9-year-olds improved from 1971 to 1980, but has declined slightly since that time. However, in 1996, the average reading score for these students was higher than it was in 1971. Thirteen-year-olds showed moderate gains in reading achievement; in 1996, their average reading score was higher than that in 1971. There was an overall pattern of increase in reading scores for 17-year-olds, but the 1996 average score was not significantly different than in 1971. Reading scores have remained fairly stable between 1984 and 1996, the time period immediately following the release of *A Nation at Risk*. No significant changes at any age occurred during this time period.

### ***Subgroup Performance on NAEP***

Analyses of NAEP assessment data by race show how achievement gaps have been changing over time. In mathematics and reading, score gaps between white and black students aged 13 and 17 narrowed during the 1970s and the 1980s. Although there was some evidence of widening gaps during the late 1980s and 1990s, the score gaps in 1996 were smaller than those in the first assessment year for 13- and 17-year-olds in mathematics and for 17-year-olds in reading. Among 9-year-olds, score gaps in mathematics and reading have generally decreased across the assessment years, resulting in smaller gaps in 1996 compared to those in the first assessment year.

Since *A Nation at Risk*, performance in science has been increasing for white, black, and Hispanic students at ages 9, 13, and 17. At age 17, for example, average scores of white students increased 14 points from 1982 to 1996; for black students the increase was 25 points; and Hispanic students improved by 20 points. As a result of these increases, the gap between white and black students closed significantly (although it is still 47 points); the gap between white and Hispanic students also narrowed, though the change was not statistically significant (the gap in 1996 was 38 points).

Average mathematics scores of white, black, and Hispanic students also increased since 1982. For 17-year-olds, for example, white students improved 9 points; black students improved 14 points; and Hispanic students increased 15 points. The gaps between white and black students narrowed between 1982 and 1990, but has widened again through the 1990s, to 27 points in 1996. The gap between white and Hispanic students narrowed somewhat since 1982, though the change was not statistically significant, and the gap remained at 21 points in 1996.

Changes in reading were minimal for white, black, and Hispanic students at all ages during the years 1982 to 1996. As a result, the gaps between white and black students remained about the same (in 1996 the gap at age 17 was 29 points). The gap between white and Hispanic students also changed little (in 1996 the gap at age 17 was 30 points).

In looking at subgroup performance in NAEP, it is particularly interesting to examine how gains made by subgroups over time can be masked by simple averages. Whenever the demographic balance among subgroups shifts, it can result in what is sometimes termed “Simpson’s paradox” – which is illustrated by the NAEP long-term reading gains of 9 year-old whites, blacks, and Hispanics compared to the overall average gains shown in Figure D. Between 1971 and 1996, 9-year-old students’ average performance in reading rose by 4

points on a 500 point scale. Yet average score increases for each of the subgroups — blacks, Hispanics, and whites — exceeded the overall average increase. Why? Blacks and Hispanics, the lowest scoring subgroups represent a greater share of the total population in 1996 compared with 1971, which had the paradoxical effect of lowering overall gains even as each group's performance improved.

### ***Framework-based Assessments in Mathematics, Reading, and Science***

In addition to, and separate from, the long-term trend assessments, NAEP also provides cross sectional data based on grade level student samples. These reports, called "The Nation's Report Card", involve more recently developed testing instruments. Instead of repeatedly using the same sets of questions and tasks necessary to generate trend data, the Nation's Report Card is framework-based, that is they reflect the best current thinking about what all children should know and be able to do. Each of these framework-based assessments is based on different sets of questions or tasks; therefore, the results from each cannot be directly compared.

**Mathematics.** The NAEP 1996 mathematics assessment continues the commitment to evaluate and report the educational progress of students at grades 4, 8, and 12. Like previous NAEP mathematics assessments in 1990 and 1992, the 1996 assessment uses a framework influenced by the Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). The 1996 framework was updated to more adequately reflect recent curricular emphases and objectives.

The framework characterizes the mathematics domain in terms of five content strands -- number sense, properties, and operations; measurement; geometry and spatial sense; data analysis, statistics, and probability; and algebra and functions. Across the five content strands, the assessment examines mathematical abilities (conceptual understanding, procedural knowledge, and problem solving) and mathematical power (reasoning, connections, and communication). The positive news is that national data from the 1996 mathematics assessment showed progress in students' mathematics performance on a broad front, as compared with both the 1990 and 1992 assessments.

- Students' scores on the NAEP mathematics scale increased for grades 4, 8, and 12 (Figure E). For all three grades scores were higher in 1996 than in 1992, and higher in 1992 than in 1990. The national average scale score for fourth-graders in 1996 was 224, an increase of 11 points from 1990; the average scale score for eighth-graders in 1996 was 272, an increase of 9 points from 1990; and the average score for twelfth-graders was 304, an increase of 10 points from 1990.
- Student performance also increased as measured by the three mathematics achievement levels set by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB): *Basic*, *Proficient* and *Advanced*. The percentage of students at or above the *Basic* level increased for all three grades. The percentage of fourth-grade students at or above the *Proficient* level increased between 1990 and 1992, and between 1992 and 1996, while the percentage of eighth- and twelfth-grade students at or above the *Proficient* level increased between 1990 and 1996, but was not significantly different from 1992. However, only eighth-grade students

showed an increase in the percentage at the *Advanced* level, and this increase was for the period 1990 to 1996.

- For fourth-grade students, the percentage performing at or above the *Basic* level was 64 percent in 1996, as compared to 50 percent in 1990; for eighth-grade students, 62 percent, as compared to 52 percent; and for twelfth-grade students, 69 percent, as compared to 58 percent.
- The performance of minority students, however, showed no improvement during the period, with a large performance gap persisting. For example, at grade 4 in 1996, 64 percent of black students failed to meet the *Basic* standard, in contrast to 32 percent of white students.

State data for the NAEP 1996 mathematics assessment covered fourth-graders in 47 states, territories, and other jurisdictions and eighth-graders in 44 states and jurisdictions. Many, but not all, states and jurisdictions showed increases in mathematics performance for the 1996 assessment (Figure F).

- Fourth-graders in 15 of the 39 states and jurisdictions participating in both the 1992 and 1996 assessments showed an increase in their average scale scores for 1996; 3 states showed a decrease; and 21 states had no change.
- Eighth-graders in 27 of the 32 jurisdictions participating in both the 1990 and 1996 State NAEP mathematics assessments showed an increase in their average scale scores; none declined, and 5 had no change.
- Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia reported increases in the percentages of fourth-graders who scored at or above the *Basic* and *Proficient* achievement levels over the period 1992 to 1996.
- Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Wisconsin reported increases in the percentages of eighth-graders that scored at or above all three achievement levels over the period 1990 to 1996.
- According to several achievement benchmarks, eighth-graders in 23 of the 32 states and jurisdictions showed improvement between 1990 and 1996. For example, the average mathematics scale scores increased in these states and jurisdictions, as well as the number of students scoring at or about the *Basic* and *Proficient* achievement levels.
- Despite these widespread increases in performance, large variations in state averages persist. The proportion of eighth-graders performing at a *Basic* or above mathematics level ranged from 36 percent in Mississippi to 77 percent in Maine and North Dakota and 78 percent in Iowa.

**Reading.** As is the case in mathematics, the two most recent NAEP reading assessments in 1992 and 1994 were based on a framework developed through NAGB's consensus process. The framework reflects the state of the art in curricular emphasis and objectives, as well as in assessment design. The framework defines reading in terms of three general types of text and reading situations: (1) reading for a literary experience, which focuses mostly on narrative

text; (2) reading to be informed, based on expository text; and (3) reading to perform a task, which is document based. In addition, the framework emphasizes four ways readers respond to text — they construct an initial understanding, develop an interpretation; examine the meaning to respond personally, and take a critical stance so that they might evaluate the content and/or the author's craft.

Since 1990, the NAEP reading assessments have increasingly emphasized the importance of having students construct a response to what they have read. This has been accomplished through the use of fewer but longer text selections and an increasing number of items that require students to answer with original responses as short as one or two sentences or as long as a few paragraphs.

National data from the *NAEP 1994 Reading Report Card* showed no significant changes in average performance among the national population of fourth- or eighth-graders from 1992 to 1994. However, between these years there was a decline in the average reading performance of twelfth-graders in all three assessed purposes for reading.

- The decline in performance among twelfth graders between 1992 and 1994 was concentrated among lower performing students – those scoring at the 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 50<sup>th</sup> percentiles. No significant declines were observed among twelfth graders at the 75<sup>th</sup> or 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles.
- The decline in performance among twelfth graders in 1994 also reflected in the distribution of student performance as measured against the three reading achievement levels set by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). The percent of twelfth grade students who reached the *Proficient* level in reading declined from 1992 to 1994, and there was also a decrease in the percent who were at or above the *Basic* level.
- In 1994, 30 percent of fourth graders, 30 percent of eighth graders, and 36 percent of twelfth graders attained the *Proficient* level in reading. Across the three grades, 3 to 7 percent reached the *Advanced* level.
- Across the nation, there were declines in average reading performance from 1992 to 1994 for Hispanic students in grade 4, as well as for white, black, and Hispanic students in grade 12.
- Performance at all three grades was higher on average for students whose parents had more education. Among twelfth graders, the decline in average reading performance since 1992 was evident for students reporting at all levels of parental education.
- At all three grades, females had higher average reading scores than males. At twelfth grade the performance of both males and females declined between 1992 and 1994.
- In 1994, fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade students attending nonpublic schools displayed higher average reading scores than their public school counterparts. The performance of twelfth graders in public and nonpublic schools declined since 1992.

State NAEP 1992 and 1994 reading data are only available for fourth graders with 41 participating jurisdictions.

- The eight states with the highest average reading performance in 1994 among fourth graders in public schools were Maine, North Dakota, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Iowa, Connecticut, and Montana.
- Approximately 20 percent of the jurisdictions that participated in both the 1992 and 1994 reading assessments showed significant decreases in average reading performance among fourth graders. The eight jurisdictions making up the 20 percent were California, Delaware, Louisiana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia.

**Science.** The NAEP 1996 science assessment, which gathered information about the science knowledge of the nation's fourth, eighth, and twelfth-grade students, provides baseline information about science achievement in this country. The NAEP 1996 science results are important not only because they provide this baseline information, but also because their release coincides with release of the science achievement results for the United States on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The results from these two major surveys provide valuable data on how science is taught and learned in U.S. schools.

The science framework for the 1996 NAEP science assessment was developed through a national consensus process involving educators, policymakers, science teachers, representatives of the business community, assessment and curriculum experts, and members of the general public. Two principles guide the science framework. First, the framework recognizes that scientific knowledge relies on the ability to organize disparate facts and to draw inferences from patterns and relationships. Second, the NAEP framework assumes that scientific performance depends on the ability to use scientific tools, procedures, and reasoning processes.

The core of the science framework is organized into three major fields: earth, physical, and life sciences. The assessment measures a student's ability to know and do science within these fields by testing the knowledge of important facts and concepts; the ability to explain, integrate, apply, analyze, evaluate, and communicate scientific information; and the ability to perform investigations, and evaluate and apply the results of investigations.

- Nationally, 29 percent of students in grades 4 and 8 were at or above the *Proficient* level, and 21 percent of students in grade 12 reached this level.
- Nationally, approximately 30 percent of students in grade 4 were below the *Basic* level, while nearly 40 percent of students in grades 8 and 12 failed to reach this level.
- No significant differences in percentages of male and female achievement level attainment occurred in grade 8, but at grade 4 more males than females performed at or above the *Proficient* level. At grade 12, greater percentages of males than females performed at or above the *Advanced*, *Proficient*, and *Basic* levels.
- Whites scores significantly higher than blacks and Hispanics at all three grade levels.

## II. International Comparisons

### *International Comparisons of Mathematics and Science*

NCES uses a combination of international and U.S. databases to look at the performance of our students. The combination of both types of data is required to see ourselves in stereographic or parallel perspective. U.S.-only data is blind in one eye, and international data is blind in the other. Both types of data are necessary for a clear and an accurate view of our students' performance.

TIMSS is noteworthy not only because of its scope and magnitude, but also because of innovations in its design. In this international study, NCES along with the National Science Foundation (NSF) combined multiple methodologies to create an information base that goes beyond simple student test score comparisons to examine the fundamental elements of schooling. Innovative research techniques include analyses of textbooks and curricula, videotapes, and ethnographic case studies. The result is a more complete portrait of how U.S. mathematics and science education differs from that of other nations, especially in extended comparisons with Germany and Japan.

The information in these reports can serve as a starting point for our efforts to define a "world-class" education. If the United States is to improve the mathematics and science education of its students, we must carefully examine not just how other countries rank, but also how their policies and practices help students achieve. TIMSS shows us where U.S. education stands -- not just in terms of test scores, but also what is included in textbooks, taught in the schools, and learned by students. Examining these data provides a valuable opportunity to shed new light on education in the United States through the prism of other countries. At the same time, we should avoid the temptation to zero in on any one finding or leap to a conclusion without carefully considering the broader context.

Our students' international standing declines as students progress through school, according to TIMSS. Overall, U.S. fourth-graders scored above the international average in both science and mathematics. Our eighth-graders scored above the international average in science but below it in mathematics. In twelfth-grade, the scores of both our overall student population tested on general mathematics and science knowledge, and of our more advanced students tested in mathematics and physics, were well below the international average.

***Fourth-Grade Findings.*** In both mathematics and science, U.S. fourth-graders performed above the international average. In mathematics, of the 26 participating TIMSS countries, U.S. fourth-graders outperformed students in 12 countries and were outperformed by students in seven countries. In science, U.S. students outperformed students in 19 countries, and were outperformed by students in only one country—Korea. In the six mathematics content areas, U.S. fourth-graders exceeded the international average in five. In the science content areas, U.S. fourth-graders exceeded the international average in all four areas assessed.

***Eighth-Grade Findings.*** Data on eighth-grade performance from TIMSS suggests a general improvement in U.S. eighth-grade science scores as compared to a prior 1991 international assessment that placed U.S. students below average, though the tests and the set of participating nations have changed. The TIMSS data, however, show that U.S. eighth-grade

students' mathematics performance remains slightly below the international average. U.S. eighth-grade students scored lower, on average, in mathematics than students in Canada, France, and Japan, and scored about the same as students in England and Germany. In science, eighth grade students from the United States scored higher, on average, than students in France, about the same as students in Canada, England, and Germany, and lower than students in Japan. Figure G summarizes U.S. performance by content area on the fourth- and eighth-grade assessments.

***Twelfth-Grade Findings.*** The twelfth-grade TIMSS included 21 countries that conducted assessments of their students' general knowledge in mathematics and science during their last year in secondary school. Japan and other Asian countries that traditionally perform well in mathematics and science did not participate in the twelfth-grade TIMSS. Even with those Asian countries excluded, the United States performed relatively poorly. In the mathematics general knowledge assessment, U.S. twelfth-grade students were outperformed by 14 countries, and outperformed two countries. U.S. students performed the same as students in four other countries. In science, U.S. twelfth-grade students were outperformed by students in 11 countries, and outperformed students in two countries. U.S. students performed the same as students in seven other countries (Figure H).

Average test scores can mask important differences in the distribution of scores. For example, as a result of our country's diverse population, U.S. test score averages could be unduly lowered by a relatively large group of low-scoring students. In the twelfth-grade TIMSS assessments, however, the distribution of scores among U.S. students was no wider than that in most other participating countries; the U.S. scores also start and end lower than those in higher scoring countries. We also like to think that at least America's "best and brightest" students are among the smartest in the world; again, TIMSS findings suggest otherwise. Sixteen countries assessed advanced mathematics and physics among a select group of advanced students. In advanced mathematics, 11 countries outperformed the U.S., and no countries performed more poorly. In physics, 14 countries outperformed the U.S.; again, no countries performed more poorly (Figure I).

Several other factors suggested by observers also do not account for the relatively poor performance of U.S. students in grade 12. For example, it is not the case that a greater proportion of U.S. students complete secondary school than in most of the other countries participating in this phase of TIMSS. Thus, the vast majority of U.S. young people are not being compared only to an elite in other countries. Furthermore, in TIMSS, the general pattern was that countries with higher proportions of young people enrolled in and completing secondary school outperformed countries with lower proportions. The decentralized nature of decision-making about curriculum did not explain the poor performance of U.S. students. Some countries with decentralized decision-making outperformed us and some did not. The same was true of countries with centralized decision-making. Finally, while U.S. students on average were about a half a year younger than the average for all 21 countries, the age differential is not a major factor contributing to our poor performance. Not only is the age differential relatively small (and it is even less in the advanced assessments), countries in which the average age of the students was similar to or younger than the U.S. also outperformed us.

Among the other achievement findings drawn from the TIMSS:

- In comparison with their international counterparts, U.S. students performed better in science than in mathematics at all three grade levels;
- Among U.S. students, there is no significant gender gap in mathematics at any grade level for the general populations tested. However, in fourth-grade and twelfth-grade science, and in twelfth-grade advanced mathematics and physics, male students performed better than female students.
- At grade 4, 16 percent of U.S. students would be in the international top 10 percent in science; at grade 8, 13 percent;
- In mathematics, 9 percent of U.S. fourth-graders would be in the international top 10 percent in mathematics, compared to 5 percent of eighth-graders.

### ***Lessons From TIMSS***

While TIMSS has given us information on our international standing, it is most valuable in telling us what factors are related to high achievement in schools. The overarching message is that there is no easy solution or single nostrum that will magically increase our nation's performance. Indeed, TIMSS shows us that many of the cure-alls recommended in the past are not associated with high performance in all nations. For example, more seat time in math and science, more homework, and less television have often been recommended as methods for increasing student performance.

These strategies may indeed be effective in the case of individual students or schools, yet TIMSS has shown us another perspective. Comparisons of eighth-grade students, teachers, and classrooms in the U.S., Japan, and Germany have been particularly revealing. For example, U.S. eighth graders already spend more seat time in math and science classes than students in Japan and Germany. Japan outperforms us at this grade level, while Germany does not, so this shows that more seat time is not necessarily a magic tonic. With respect to homework, U.S. eighth-grade teachers already assign more homework, spend more class time discussing it, and are more likely to count it toward grades than teachers in Japan. Japanese eighth graders also watch just as much TV as students in the U.S. The most recent TIMSS also found that the relatively poor performance of U.S. twelfth-grade students is not related to hours spent on homework, the use of calculators or computers, time spent watching television or working at a paid job, or to attitudes toward mathematics and science.

These and other TIMSS findings show us that there is no single easy answer to achieving high performance in mathematics and science. But the TIMSS and other NCES data sources do suggest some problems in U.S. mathematics and science education that may help explain our relatively low achievement at the higher grade levels. These data suggest that three issues are worth our attention: curriculum, coursetaking, and teacher preparation.

First, both the mathematics and science curricula in American high schools have been criticized for their lack of coherence, depth, and continuity—for covering too many topics at

the expense of in-depth understanding. As a result, our secondary school curricula leave American students with a more limited opportunity to learn than their counterparts have in other countries. For example, while most other countries introduce algebra and geometry in the middle grades, in the U.S. only 25 percent of students take algebra before high school. The TIMSS also demonstrated the relative "slowness" of our curricula. The study found that the topics on the twelfth-grade general knowledge mathematics assessment were covered by the ninth grade in the U.S., but by the seventh grade in most other countries. The topics on the general science assessment were covered by the eleventh grade in the U.S., but by the ninth grade in most other countries.

Students' exposure to challenging mathematics and science content is further limited by their coursetaking behavior. Despite some recent increases in academic coursetaking, fully 90 percent of all U.S. high school students stop taking mathematics before getting to calculus. Even among college-bound seniors, 52 percent have not taken physics, 48 percent have not taken trigonometry, and 77 percent have not taken calculus; almost one-third (31 percent) had not taken four years of mathematics. Among 1994 high school graduates, only 9 percent had taken calculus and 24 percent had taken physics.

Finally, courses and curricula do not teach themselves. At the most basic level, the education system relies on knowledgeable, well-trained teachers to convey the information students need to learn. What teachers do not know, they cannot teach. And our data suggest that considerable percentages of our mathematics and science teachers have not been adequately exposed to the information they teach. Figure J shows that in 1993-94, 28 percent of public high school (grade 9-12) mathematics teachers and 18 percent of public high school science teachers were teaching out-of-field (that is, without a major or minor in their subject). Within science sub-fields, 31 percent of life science (biological/life sciences) teachers and 55 percent of physical science (chemistry, physics, earth science, and physical science) teachers lacked a major or minor in their sub-field. In addition, 24 percent of mathematics teachers and 17 percent of science teachers lacked state certification in their teaching field.

In short, TIMSS does dispel myths, but more importantly, it shows us our own education system in clearer perspective. In our quest for factors related to better student performance, TIMSS encourages us to focus on rigorous content, focused curriculum, good teaching, and good training for teachers. TIMSS has shown us that the typical U.S. eighth-grade mathematics class usually discusses material taught at the seventh-grade around the world. Compared to those in Japan, our mathematics teachers tend to focus on teaching specific math skills, rather than higher-level mathematical problem solving. For example, U.S. eighth-grade math teachers are more likely to merely state rather than explain mathematical concepts. Further, our curriculum includes more topics, and our teachers are more frequently interrupted by loudspeakers and other outside agents, while they are teaching than are teachers in Japan and Germany. Our teachers also lack a one or two year apprenticeship in teaching before they become teachers, as is the case in these two other countries. Clearly TIMSS shows us that while it may not be easy, important change is needed to help our nation continue to improve its performance.

## *International Comparisons of Reading*

In 1991, the IEA Reading Literacy Study assessed the reading literacy of fourth-graders (in 27 countries) and ninth-graders (in 31 countries). The underlying framework for this assessment paralleled the NAEP framework in that it too defined reading in terms of three text types – narrative, expository and document. In contrast to the NAEP Reading Report Card, this study painted a more positive picture of the reading literacy of American students.

- American fourth-graders were outperformed only by Finland; U.S. students performed about the same as students from Sweden, while outperforming students from 24 other nations.
- American ninth-graders' performance was equivalent to that of students from 15 other nations; Americans outperformed students from 14 nations, while only the students from Finland did better than our students.

Considering only those countries that were then part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the study's findings indicate that:

- Among fourth-graders the reading performance of about 60 percent of U.S. students meets or exceeds the OECD average on two scales – narrative (which corresponds roughly with the NAEP “reading for a literary experience” scale), and expository (which corresponds roughly with the NAEP “reading to be informed” scale). About 70 percent of American fourth graders meet or exceed the OECD average on the third IEA reading scale – documents (which roughly corresponds with the NAEP “reading to perform a task” scale).
- The comparative advantage of American ninth-grade students was not as great as that of the fourth graders. Between 52 and 55 percent of U.S. ninth-graders met or exceeded the OECD average on the three scales.
- Most groups of American students, even the most disadvantaged, outperform the OECD reading average, with only a few exceptions – black students in both grades and students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade whose parents did not complete high school do not consistently meet or exceed the OECD average.

The difference between the NAEP view of America's fourth, eighth, and twelfth-grade students' reading proficiency and that emerging from the IEA data may be attributed to two very important differences in these assessments. First, there are distinct differences in the way that the data are benchmarked. IEA reporting is based on comparisons of student performance across countries, while much of NAEP reporting is based on student performance against a desired standard defined by NAGB. Second, the IEA test mainly asks students to recognize details and to make simple inferences and literal interpretations while the NAEP test goes further, i.e., requiring students to identify themes to detect the author's point of view, to make larger inferences, and to state a position with supporting citations from the text. These differences in benchmarking and in test rigor raise important questions. Primarily, we must consider what benchmarks are reasonable for our society. One way to

examine this issue is to look at achievement or proficiency data in relation to important outcome measures, as we will discuss next.

### ***International Perspective on Labor Force Proficiency***

Literacy has been viewed as one of the fundamental tools necessary for successful economic performance in industrialized societies. As society becomes more complex and low-skill jobs continue to disappear, concern about adults' ability to use written information to function in society continues to increase. Within countries, literacy levels are affected both by the quality and quantity of the population's formal education, as well as by participation in informal learning activities.

The most recent international adult literacy data (1996) demonstrate that the U.S. appears most similar to New Zealand and the United Kingdom in the overall distribution of literacy skills. (See Figure K.) These three countries had close to 20 percent of their adult population at both the high and low ends of the literacy scale (Level 1 and Levels 4 and 5). In contrast, the performance of our European counterparts was concentrated in the middle literacy levels, with at least two-thirds of the adult population in the Netherlands, Switzerland (both French and German speaking) and Germany at Literacy Levels 2 or 3. While Sweden tended to have the greatest concentration at the higher end of the scale, Poland's adults were concentrated at the lower end.

In the United States, as you might expect, workers with higher adult literacy scores are unemployed less and earn more than workers with lower literacy scores. Unemployment rates are especially high for workers in the two lowest levels of literacy—levels 1 and 2—on each of the three literacy scales. For these workers, the unemployment rate ranges from 12 percent for workers with level 2 quantitative literacy to nearly 20 percent for those with level 1. Unemployment rates for individuals in the two highest literacy levels—levels 4 and 5—are less than 6 percent.

Workers with high literacy scores earn more than other workers do, on average (Figure L). On the prose scale, for example, full-time workers in level 3 earn a mean weekly wage 50 percent higher than that of their counterparts in level 1. Those in level 5 earn a weekly wage 71 percent higher than the wage of those in level 3. Thus, academic skills do make a difference in both earnings and employability.

### **III. Changes in Student Behavior Since *A Nation at Risk***

In addition to reviewing changes in student achievement since *A Nation at Risk*, as well as our comparative international educational standing, it is instructive to look at other significant changes in the educational landscape since the publication of this seminal work. Three are especially worthy of note: the decline in the high school dropout rate, an increase in the educational aspirations and college attendance rates of high school seniors, and increases in the academic course load of high school students. Each of these changes indicate noteworthy positive responses to what was called for in *A Nation at Risk*.

### ***Dropping Out of School***

There has been a reduction in the drop out rate since *A Nation at Risk*. Most of this decline occurred during the 1980s, and was especially pronounced for blacks. Over the last decade, 300,000 to 500,000 students in grades 10 through 12 left school each year without successfully completing a high school program. In October 1996, nearly 3.6 million 16- to 24-year-old youth were not enrolled in a high school program and lacked a high school credential. These young adults accounted for 11 percent of the 32 million 16- to 24-year-olds in the United States. Nevertheless, this 1996 dropout rate was three points lower than the 1982 dropout rate of 14 percent. And, the dropout rate for Black youth during this period fell from 18 to 13 percent.

The dropout rates of 16-to-24-year-olds Hispanics remained at levels substantially higher than the dropout rates experienced by their white and black peers (Figure M). And, in contrast to the decline among black and white 16-to-24-year olds, the dropout rates for Hispanics has not changed significantly since 1982. In 1996, 29 percent of Hispanics were not enrolled in school and had not completed high school; however this percentage includes young immigrants who came to the United States without high school credentials and never enrolled in a U.S. school. The dropout rate for Hispanic immigrants aged 16- to 24-years-old was 44 percent, compared to the dropout rate for first-generation Hispanics born in the United States, which was 17 percent (Figure N).

### ***Educational Aspirations and College Attendance***

One of the most dramatic changes taking place since *A Nation at Risk* is that the hopes of high school seniors for the future increasingly include more education. In 1992, 69 percent of seniors said that they hoped to graduate from college, compared with 39 percent of 1982 seniors. Moreover, 33 percent said they hoped to earn a postgraduate degree as compared with 18 percent in 1982. The proportion of minority students aspiring to postgraduate degrees was about the same, or higher, than for whites. Not surprisingly, these higher student aspirations have been accompanied by substantial increases in actual college attendance. The proportion of high school graduates going directly on to college rose from 51 percent in 1982 to 65 percent in 1996.

### ***Coursetaking Patterns in High School***

One of the important elements in the recommendations in *A Nation at Risk* was to increase the academic course load of high school students. Since the release of that report, most states have raised course requirements for high school graduation and most states have mandated student-testing standards. As a result, both college-bound and non-college-bound students now take more academic courses than their counterparts did a decade before. In 1982, the average high school graduate completed 2.6 Carnegie units in mathematics and 2.2 units in science. By 1994, the average number of Carnegie units completed had risen to 3.4 in mathematics, and 3.0 units in science. Foreign language units rose from 1.0 to 1.8, and coursework in English and social studies also increased. The increase in the average units completed means that more students are now taking advanced mathematics courses, such as calculus, which was completed by 9 percent of the 1994 graduates compared to 5 percent of the 1982 graduates. Similarly, the proportion of graduates completing a physics course rose from 14 percent in 1982 to 24 percent in 1994 (Figure O).

*A Nation at Risk* recommended that high school students complete a "New Basics" curriculum that included a minimum number of courses in the core academic areas of English (4), Mathematics (3), Science (3), and Social Studies (3). Since the release of these "New Basics" recommendations, high school graduates have taken more courses overall, particularly academic courses. The proportion of students completing the "New Basics" core curriculum in English, mathematics, science, and social studies has increased; and greater percentages are taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses. In 1982, 14 percent of high school graduates earned the credits recommended in *A Nation at Risk*; by 1994, 50 percent had done so. The percentage of graduates who have completed the more extensive recommendations for college-bound students, which include the "New Basics," plus 2 years of foreign language instruction and a half-year of computer science, rose from 2 percent in 1982 to 25 percent in 1994.

Even though we cannot establish a cause and effect relationship, it is interesting to compare the average mathematics and science performance of 17-year-olds, as measured by our National Assessment of Education Progress, and the increase in course taking. The mathematics performance of 17-year-olds rose by 7 points between 1982 and 1994, which roughly equates to about 2/3 of the typical grade to grade progress. This increase compares closely to the rise of .8 average units of mathematics completed by high school graduates. The science performance of 17-year-olds rose by 11 points between 1982 and 1994, compared to an average increase of .9 science units completed by high school graduates.

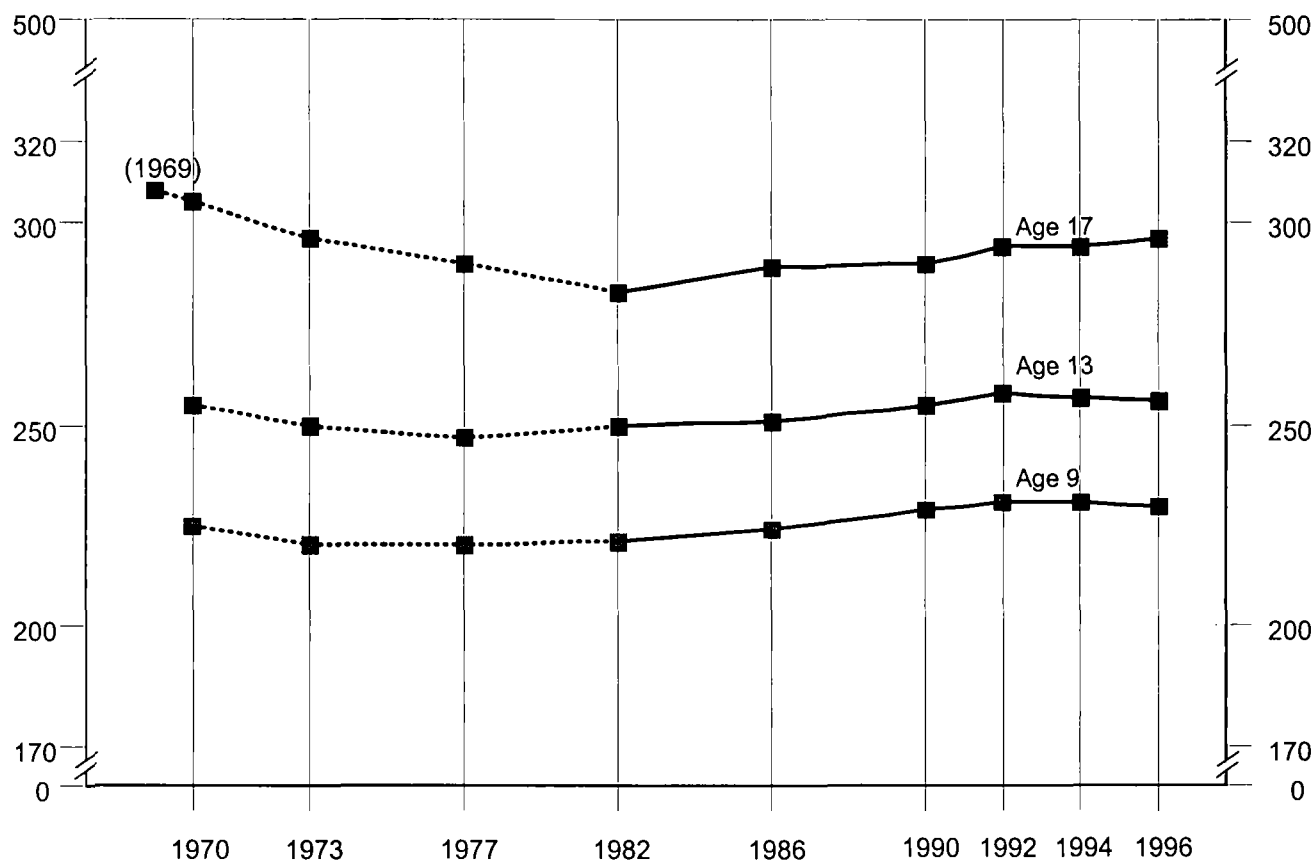
## **Conclusion**

Whatever else one might argue is the legacy of *A Nation at Risk*, it clearly signaled the recognition of *educational performance* as a national concern, an issue of national importance. In times like this, Federal statistical agencies, such as the National Center for Education Statistics, play a critical role.

First, they provide the data that researchers and statistical analysts need. As demonstrated by the numbers presented here, there are large differences in how well students do -- across time, across countries, and sometimes across groups. It falls typically to researchers to untangle these relationships, to separate educational inputs from outputs, and to identify the processes that contribute most powerfully to student performance. Second, statistical agencies aid policymakers in a more direct manner -- by sounding alarms when problems arise or issues emerge that deserve public attention. Informing policymakers with data that clarify where problems exist and what issues are most pressing is one of the Federal government's most vital roles.

**Figure A. Trends in Average Scale Scores for the Nation: 1969–70 to 1996**

# **SCIENCE**



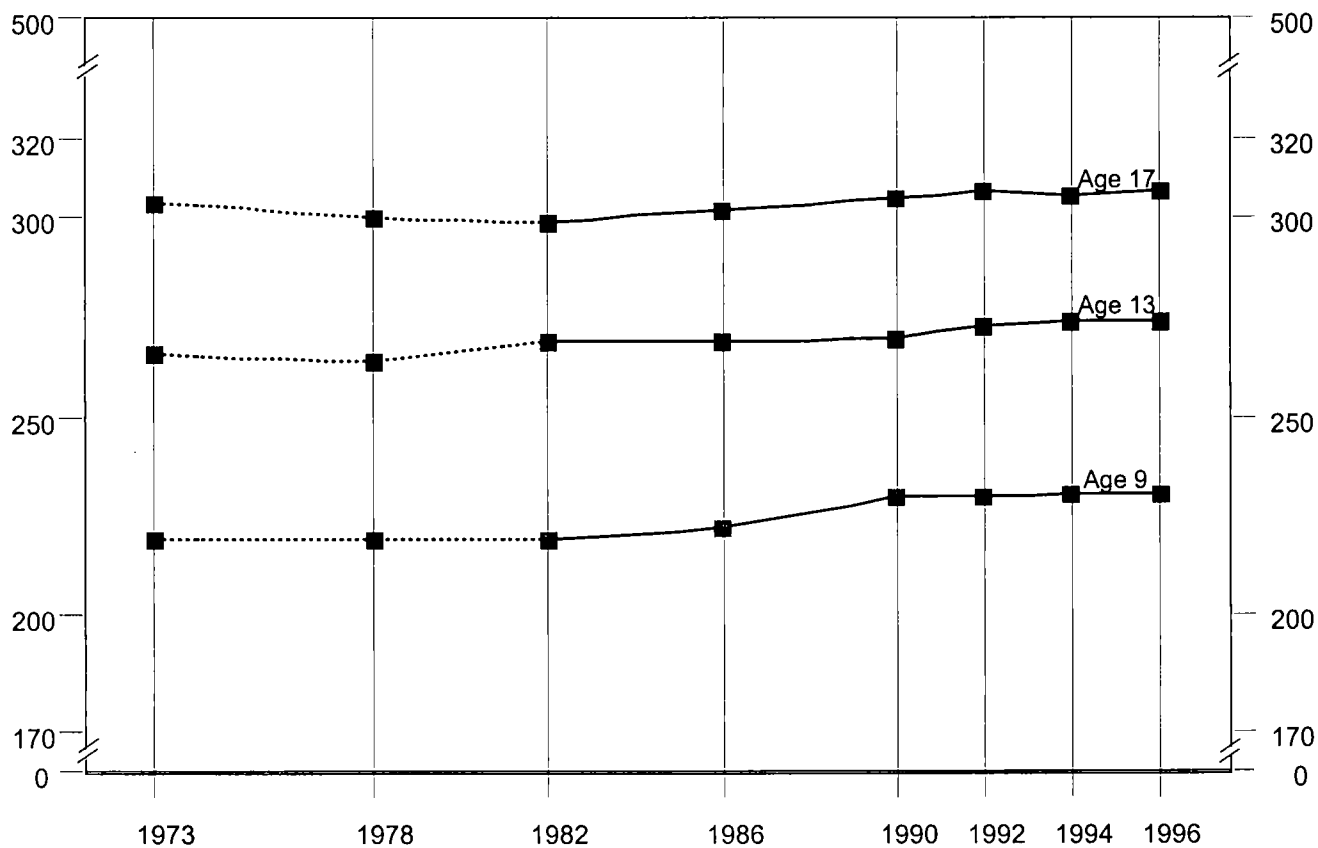
1970 1973 1977 1982 1986 1990 1992 1994 1996

|          |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ■ Age 17 | 305 | 296 | 290 | 283 | 289 | 290 | 294 | 294 | 296 |
| ■ Age 13 | 255 | 250 | 247 | 250 | 251 | 255 | 258 | 257 | 256 |
| ■ Age 9  | 225 | 220 | 220 | 221 | 224 | 229 | 231 | 231 | 230 |

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1996 *Long-Term Trend Assessment*.

**Figure B. Trends in Average Scale Scores for the Nation: 1973 to 1996**

# **MATHEMATICS**

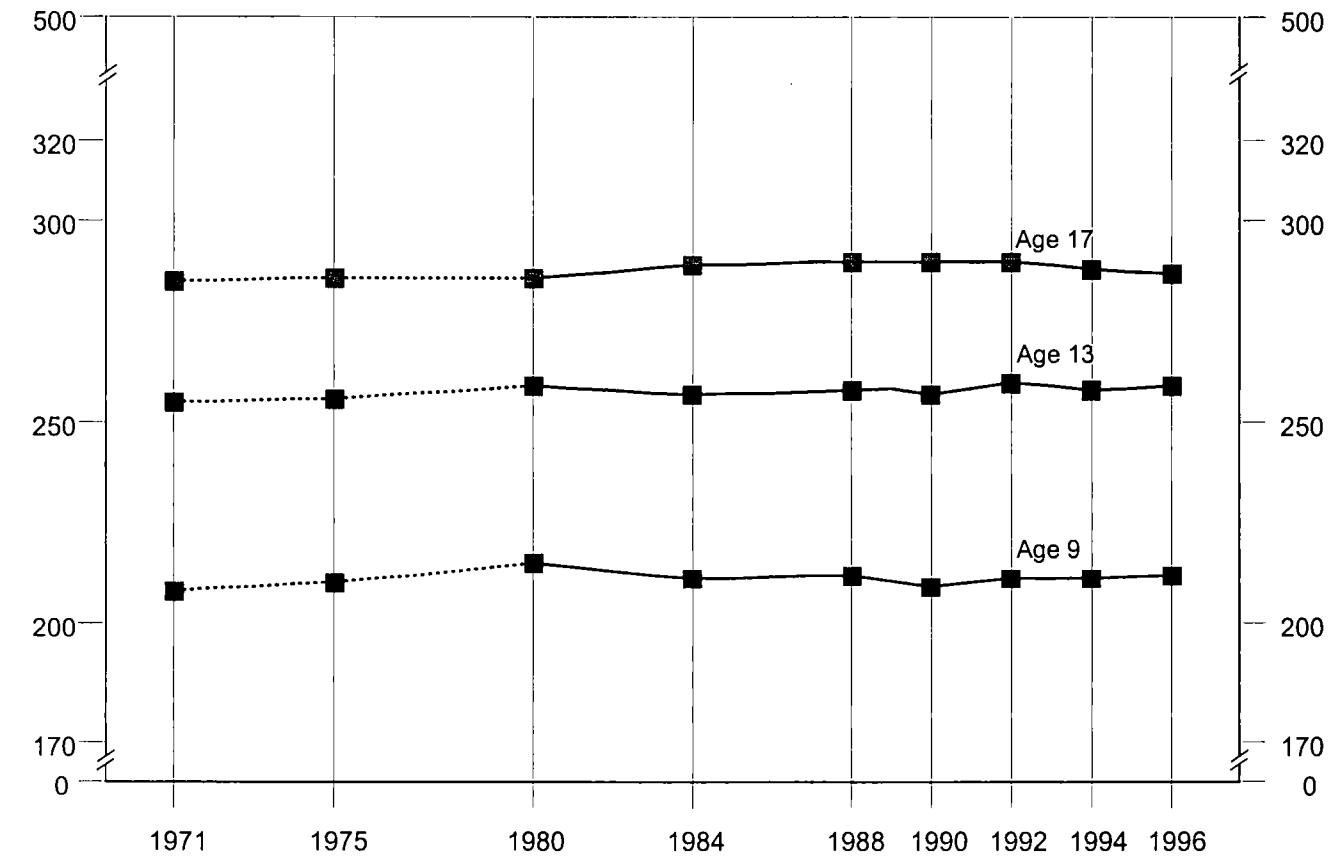


|          | 1973 | 1978 | 1982 | 1986 | 1990 | 1992 | 1994 | 1996 |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| ■ Age 17 | 304  | 300  | 299  | 302  | 305  | 307  | 306  | 307  |
| ■ Age 13 | 266  | 264  | 269  | 269  | 270  | 273  | 274  | 274  |
| ■ Age 9  | 219  | 219  | 219  | 222  | 230  | 230  | 231  | 231  |

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1996 Long-Term Trend Assessment.

**Figure C. Trends in Average Scale Scores for the Nation: 1971 to 1996**

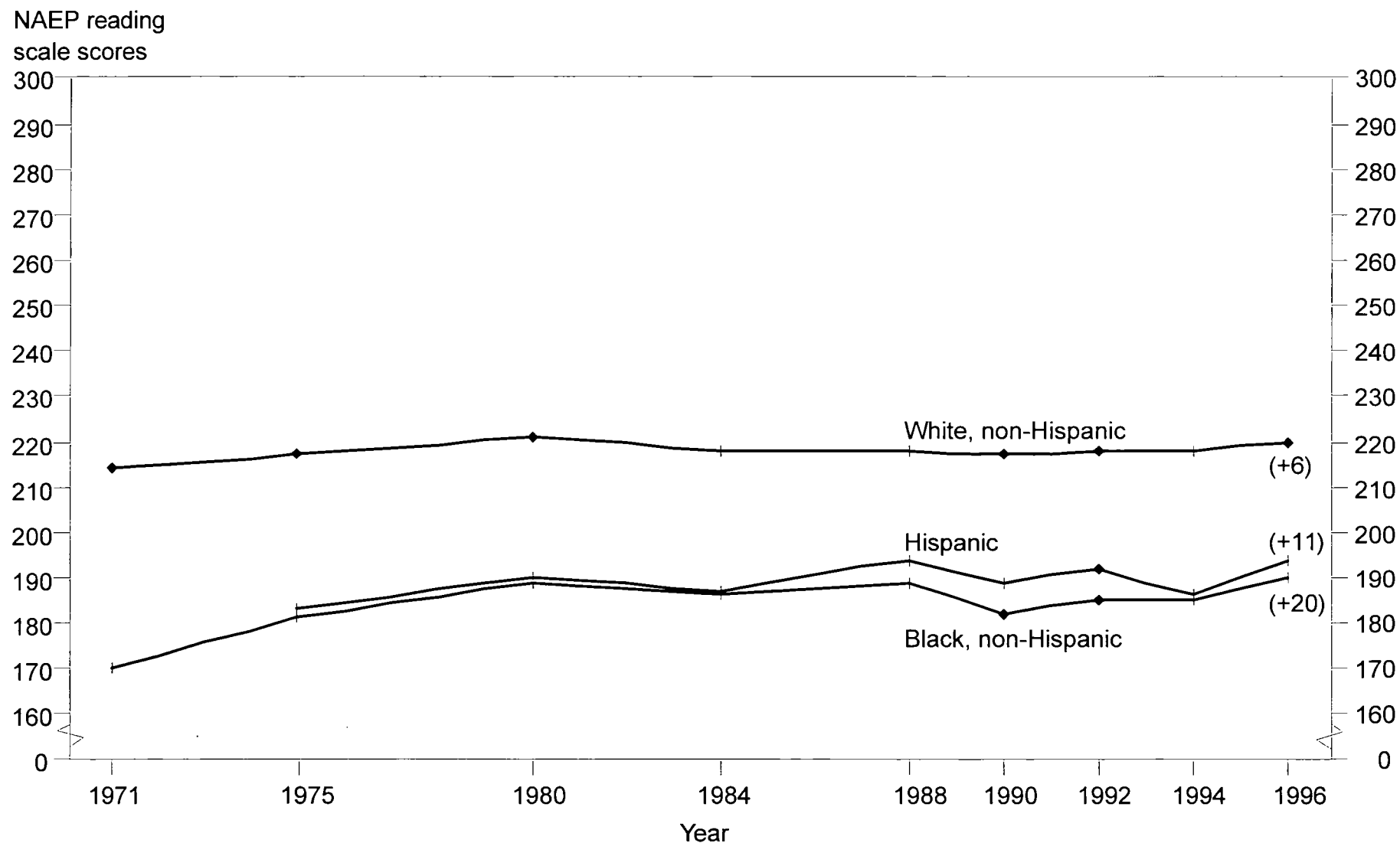
**READING**



|          | 1971 | 1975 | 1980 | 1984 | 1988 | 1990 | 1992 | 1994 | 1996 |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| ■ Age 17 | 285  | 286  | 286  | 289  | 290  | 290  | 290  | 288  | 287  |
| ■ Age 13 | 255  | 256  | 259  | 257  | 258  | 257  | 260  | 258  | 259  |
| ■ Age 9  | 208  | 210  | 215  | 211  | 212  | 209  | 211  | 211  | 212  |

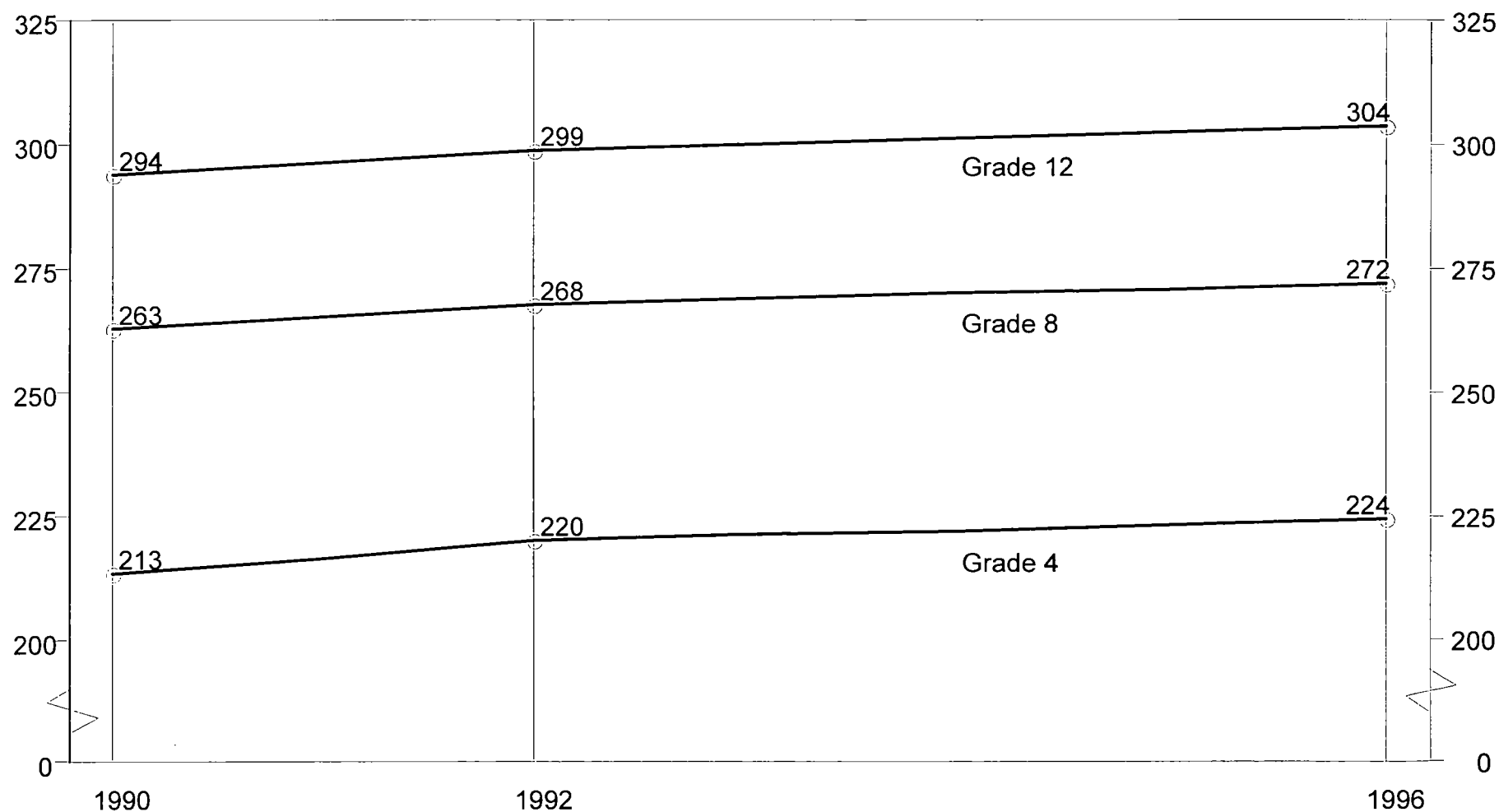
SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1996 Long-Term Trend Assessment.

**Figure D. Trends in Average Reading Scale Scores for 9-year-olds, by Race/ethnicity: 1971–1996**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, *NAEP 1996 Trends in Academic Progress*.

**Figure E. Average Mathematics Scale Scores: 1990, 1992, and 1996**



\* Indicates a significant difference from 1990.

+ Indicates a significant difference from 1992.

## Figure F. State Improvement in Mathematics Achievement

**States Showing Statistically Significant Improvement in Average  
Mathematics Performance, and in the Percentage of Students  
Performing At or Above Two Designated Achievement Levels  
(Both "Basic" and "Proficient")**

### Grade 4 (1992 to 1996): 7 states

Colorado  
Connecticut  
Indiana  
North Carolina  
Tennessee  
Texas  
West Virginia

### Grade 8 (1992 to 1996): 3 states

Michigan  
North Carolina  
West Virginia

### Grade 8 (1990 to 1996): 23 states

|            |                |
|------------|----------------|
| Arkansas   | Minnesota      |
| Arizona    | Nebraska       |
| California | New Mexico     |
| Colorado   | New York       |
| Delaware   | North Carolina |
| Florida    | Oregon         |
| Kentucky   | Rhode Island   |
| Hawaii     | Texas          |
| Indiana    | West Virginia  |
| Iowa       | Wisconsin      |
| Maryland   | Wyoming        |
| Michigan   |                |

**Figure G. U.S. Mathematics and Science Performance at a Glance**

| <b>How did U.S. Students Compare with the international Average in...?</b> | <b>At Grade 4?<br/>(26 nations)</b> | <b>At Grade 8?<br/>(41 nations)</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

|                     |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|
| Mathematics overall | Above | Below |
|---------------------|-------|-------|

|                 |       |       |
|-----------------|-------|-------|
| Science overall | Above | Above |
|-----------------|-------|-------|

**Mathematics Content Areas:**

|                                                |       |       |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Data representation, analysis, and probability | Above | Above |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|

|          |       |       |
|----------|-------|-------|
| Geometry | Above | Below |
|----------|-------|-------|

|               |       |   |
|---------------|-------|---|
| Whole numbers | Above | X |
|---------------|-------|---|

|                              |       |   |
|------------------------------|-------|---|
| Fractions and proportionally | Above | X |
|------------------------------|-------|---|

|                                    |       |   |
|------------------------------------|-------|---|
| Patterns, relations, and functions | Above | X |
|------------------------------------|-------|---|

|                                           |       |   |
|-------------------------------------------|-------|---|
| Measurement, estimation, and number sense | Below | X |
|-------------------------------------------|-------|---|

|                            |   |      |
|----------------------------|---|------|
| Fractions and number sense | X | Same |
|----------------------------|---|------|

|         |   |      |
|---------|---|------|
| Algebra | X | Same |
|---------|---|------|

|             |   |       |
|-------------|---|-------|
| Measurement | X | Below |
|-------------|---|-------|

|                 |   |       |
|-----------------|---|-------|
| Proportionality | X | Below |
|-----------------|---|-------|

**Science Content Areas:**

|               |       |       |
|---------------|-------|-------|
| Earth Science | Above | Above |
|---------------|-------|-------|

|              |       |       |
|--------------|-------|-------|
| Life Science | Above | Above |
|--------------|-------|-------|

|                                                |       |       |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Environmental issues and the nature of science | Above | Above |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|

|                  |       |   |
|------------------|-------|---|
| Physical science | Above | X |
|------------------|-------|---|

|           |   |      |
|-----------|---|------|
| Chemistry | X | Same |
|-----------|---|------|

|         |   |      |
|---------|---|------|
| Physics | X | Same |
|---------|---|------|

**What Percentage of U.S. Students Would Be in the International Top Ten Percent In...?**

|  | <b>At Grade 4?</b> | <b>At Grade 8?</b> |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
|--|--------------------|--------------------|

|             |    |    |
|-------------|----|----|
| Mathematics | 9% | 5% |
|-------------|----|----|

|         |     |     |
|---------|-----|-----|
| Science | 16% | 13% |
|---------|-----|-----|

Above = U.S. average performance is higher than the average of participating nations at that grade.

Below = U.S. average performance is lower than the average of participating nations at that grade.

Same = U.S. average performance not significantly different than the average of participating nations at that grade.

X = Separate content area score not reported for this grade level.

SOURCE: Third International Mathematics and Science Study, *Pursuing Excellence: A Study of U.S. Twelfth-Grade Mathematics and Science Achievement in International Context*.

Figure H.

### Average Mathematics General Knowledge Performance

| Nations with average scores significantly higher than the U.S. |         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Nation                                                         | Average |
| (Netherlands)                                                  | 560     |
| Sweden                                                         | 552     |
| (Denmark)                                                      | 547     |
| Switzerland                                                    | 540     |
| (Iceland)                                                      | 534     |
| (Norway)                                                       | 528     |
| (France)                                                       | 523     |
| New Zealand                                                    | 522     |
| (Australia)                                                    | 522     |
| (Canada)                                                       | 519     |
| (Austria)                                                      | 518     |
| (Slovenia)                                                     | 512     |
| (Germany)                                                      | 495     |
| Hungary                                                        | 483     |

| Nations with average scores not significantly different from the U.S. |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Nation                                                                | Average    |
| (Italy)                                                               | 476        |
| (Russian Federation)                                                  | 471        |
| (Lithuania)                                                           | 469        |
| Czech Republic                                                        | 466        |
| <b>(United States)</b>                                                | <b>461</b> |

| Nations with average scores significantly lower than the U.S. |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Nation                                                        | Average |
| (Cyprus)                                                      | 446     |
| (South Africa)                                                | 356     |

International Average = 500

### Average Science General Knowledge Performance

| Nations with average scores significantly higher than the U.S. |         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Nation                                                         | Average |
| Sweden                                                         | 559     |
| (Netherlands)                                                  | 558     |
| (Iceland)                                                      | 549     |
| (Norway)                                                       | 544     |
| (Canada)                                                       | 532     |
| New Zealand                                                    | 529     |
| (Australia)                                                    | 527     |
| Switzerland                                                    | 523     |
| (Austria)                                                      | 520     |
| (Slovenia)                                                     | 517     |
| (Denmark)                                                      | 509     |

| Nations with average scores not significantly different from the U.S. |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Nation                                                                | Average    |
| (Germany)                                                             | 497        |
| (France)                                                              | 487        |
| Czech Republic                                                        | 487        |
| (Russian Federation)                                                  | 481        |
| <b>(United States)</b>                                                | <b>480</b> |
| (Italy)                                                               | 475        |
| Hungary                                                               | 471        |
| (Lithuania)                                                           | 461        |

| Nations with average scores significantly lower than the U.S. |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Nation                                                        | Average |
| (Cyprus)                                                      | 448     |
| (South Africa)                                                | 349     |

International Average = 500

NOTE: Nations not meeting international sampling and other guidelines are shown in parentheses.

SOURCE: Third International Mathematics and Science Study, *Pursuing Excellence: A Study of U.S.*

*Twelfth-Grade Mathematics and Science Achievement in International Context.*

Figure I.

### Average Advanced Mathematics Performance of Advanced Mathematics Students

| Nations with average scores significantly higher than the U.S. |         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Nation                                                         | Average |
| France                                                         | 557     |
| (Russian Federation)                                           | 542     |
| Switzerland                                                    | 533     |
| (Australia)                                                    | 525     |
| (Denmark)                                                      | 522     |
| (Cyprus)                                                       | 518     |
| (Lithuania)                                                    | 516     |
| Greece                                                         | 513     |
| Sweden                                                         | 512     |
| Canada                                                         | 509     |
| (Slovenia)                                                     | 475     |

| Nations with average scores not significantly different from the U.S. |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Nation                                                                | Average    |
| (Italy)                                                               | 474        |
| Czech Republic                                                        | 469        |
| (Germany)                                                             | 465        |
| <b>(United States)</b>                                                | <b>442</b> |
| (Austria)                                                             | 436        |

| Nations with average scores significantly lower than the U.S. |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Nation                                                        | Average |
| None                                                          |         |

International Average = 501

### Average Physics Performance of Advanced Science Students

| Nations with average scores significantly higher than the U.S. |         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Nation                                                         | Average |
| Norway                                                         | 581     |
| Sweden                                                         | 573     |
| (Russian Federation)                                           | 545     |
| (Denmark)                                                      | 534     |
| (Slovenia)                                                     | 523     |
| (Germany)                                                      | 522     |
| (Australia)                                                    | 518     |
| (Cyprus)                                                       | 494     |
| (Latvia)                                                       | 488     |
| Switzerland                                                    | 488     |
| Greece                                                         | 486     |
| (Canada)                                                       | 485     |
| France                                                         | 466     |
| Czech Republic                                                 | 451     |

| Nations with average scores not significantly different from the U.S. |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Nation                                                                | Average    |
| (Austria)                                                             | 435        |
| <b>(United States)</b>                                                | <b>423</b> |

| Nations with average scores significantly lower than the U.S. |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Nation                                                        | Average |
| None                                                          |         |

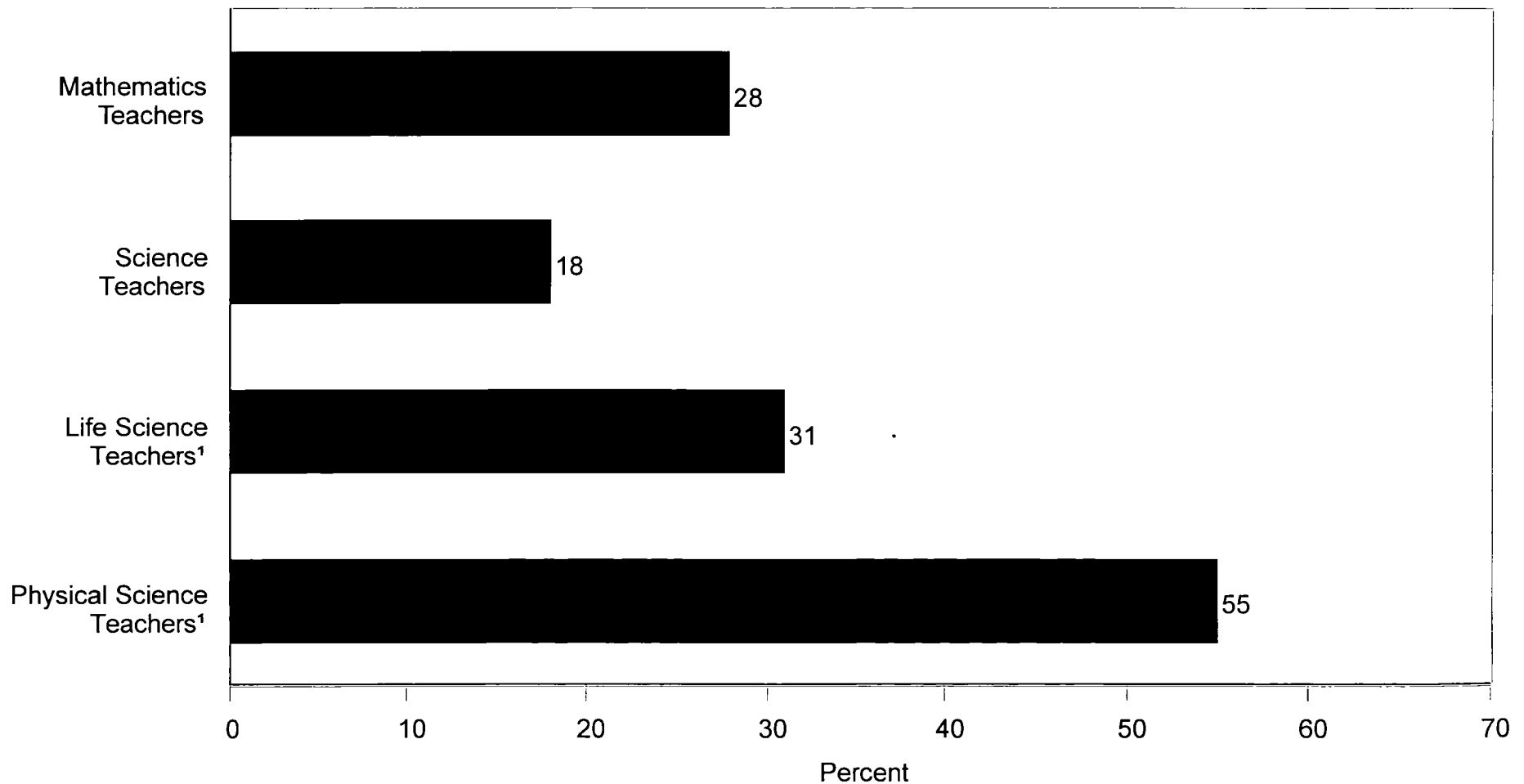
International Average = 501

NOTE: Nations not meeting international sampling and other guidelines are shown in parentheses.

SOURCE: Third International Mathematics and Science Study, *Pursuing Excellence: A Study of U.S.*

*Twelfth-Grade Mathematics and Science Achievement in International Context.*

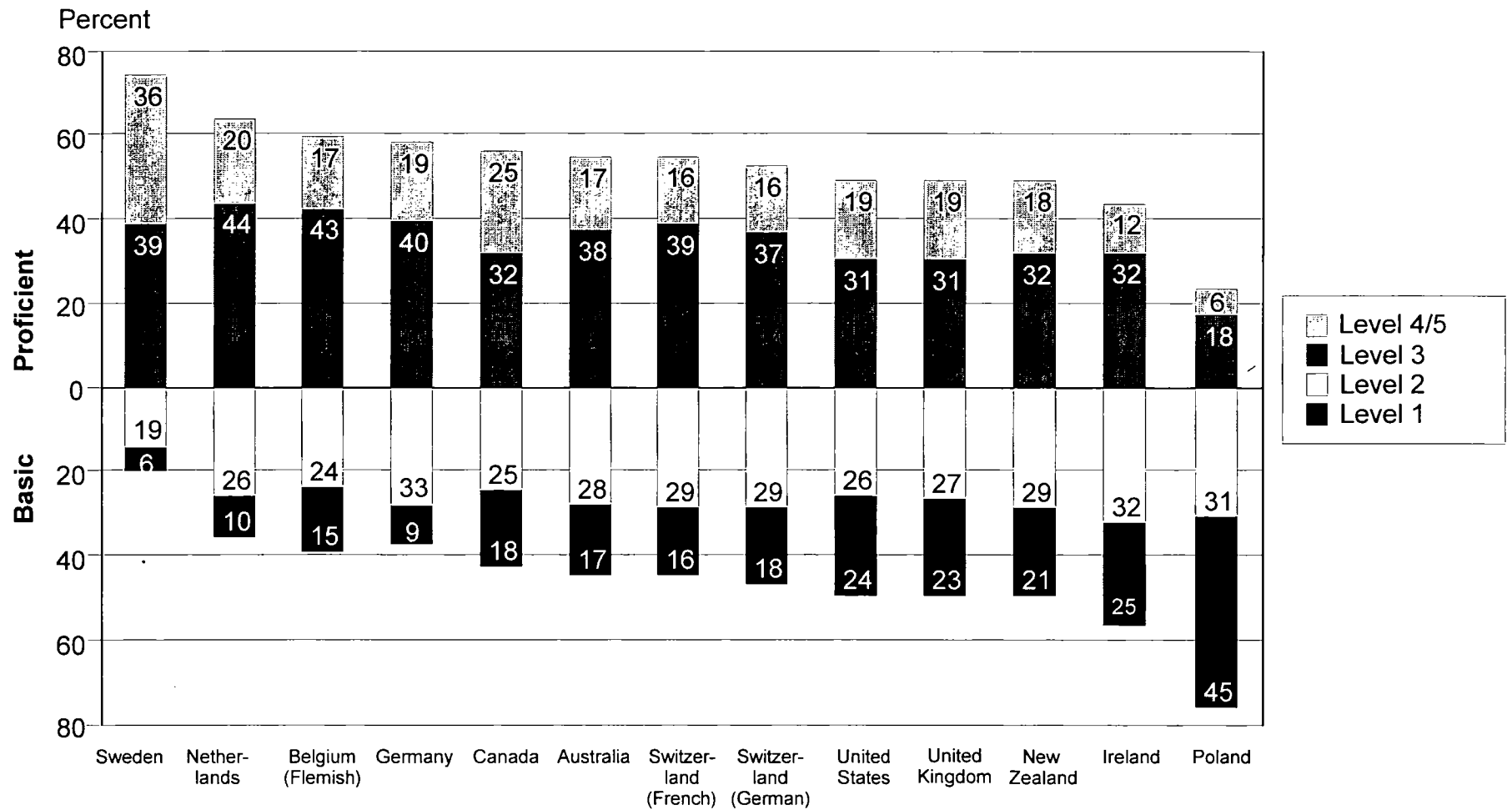
**Figure J. Percentage of Public High School (grade 9–12) Mathematics and Science Teachers Without a Major or Minor in Their Field**



<sup>1</sup> These percentages represent teachers without a major or minor in their respective science sub-field.

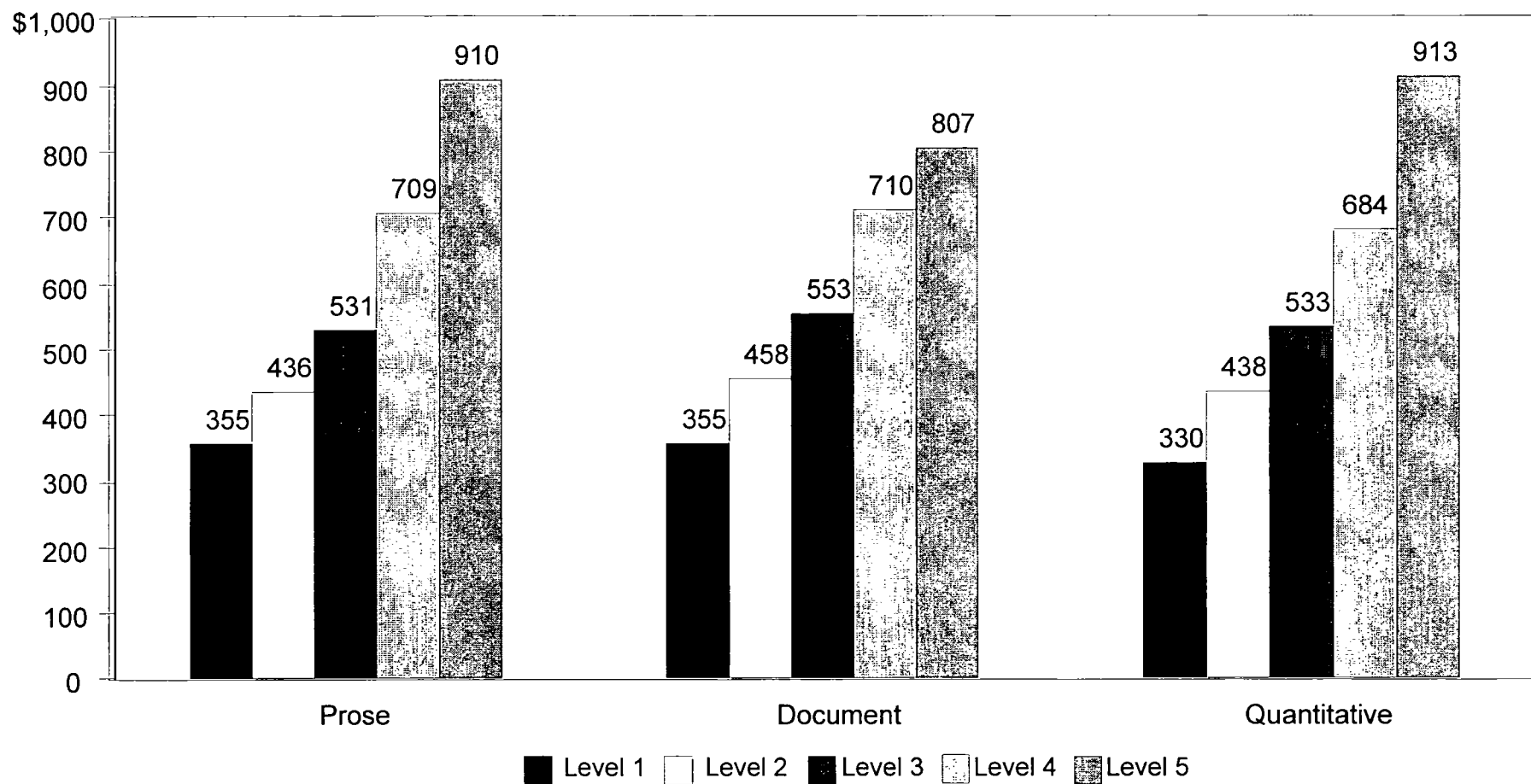
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, 1993–94 (Teacher Questionnaire).

**Figure K. National Document Literacy Levels, Percentage of Adult Population  
Age 16 to 65, All Nations: 1994 and 1996**



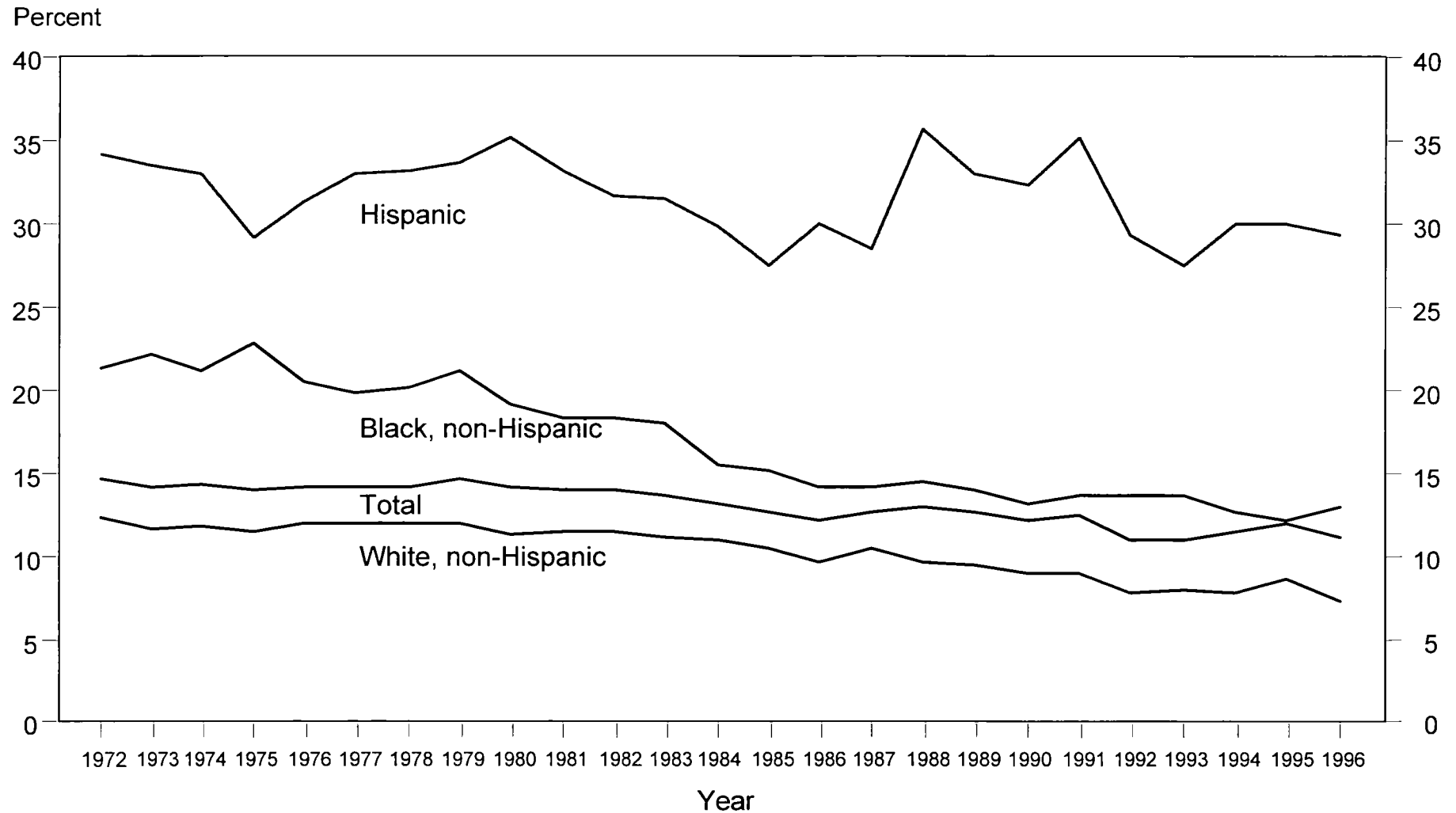
SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and Statistics Canada.

**Figure L. Mean Weekly Earnings of Full-time Workers, by Proficiency Level on Three Literacy Scales: 1992**



SOURCE: National Adult Literacy Survey.

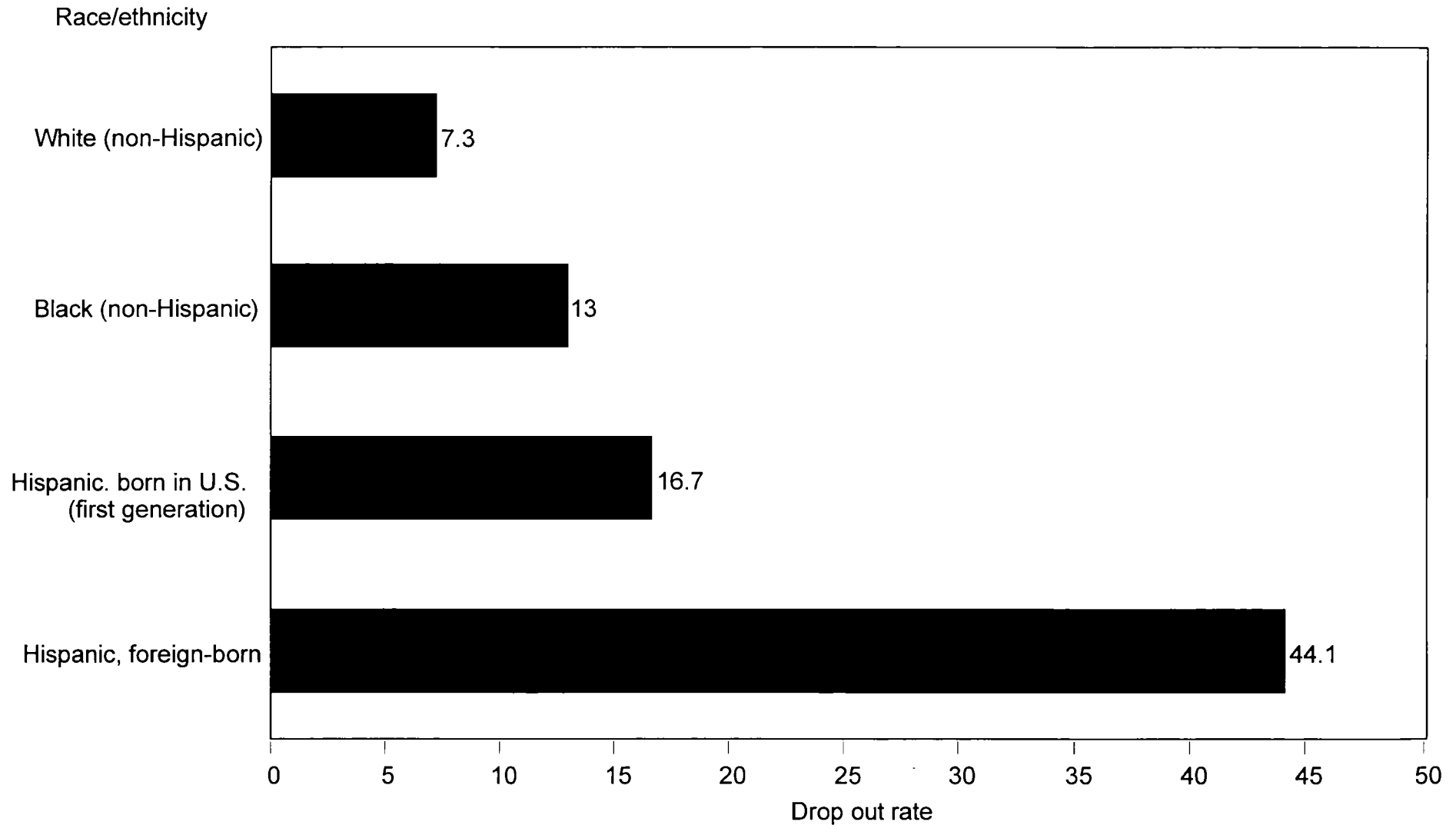
**Figure M. Percent of 16-to 24-year-olds Who are Dropouts, by Race/Ethnicity:  
October 1972–96**



\*The status dropout rate measures the proportion of individuals who are dropouts at any one given time, regardless of when they dropped out of school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1996*, (based on the October Current Population Surveys).

**Figure N. Percent of 16- to 24-year-old Dropouts, by Race/Ethnicity: October 1996**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1996* (based on the October Current Population Surveys).

# Promising Results, Continuing Challenges: Final Report of the National Assessment of Title I

## Executive Summary (Part 1 of 3)

### Context for Title I

#### ***TITLE I-HELPING DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN MEET HIGH STANDARDS***

"SEC. 1001. DECLARATION OF POLICY AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE."

"(a)(1) The Congress declares it to be the policy of the United States that a high-quality education for all individuals and a fair and equal opportunity to obtain that education are a societal good, are a moral imperative, and improve the life of every individual, because the quality of our lives ultimately depends on the quality of the lives of others."

First enacted in 1965 as a "War on Poverty" program, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) [P.L. 103-382] now provides over \$8 billion <sup>(1)</sup> per year to fund system-wide supports and additional resources for schools to improve learning for students at risk of educational failure. The program's central objective is to support state and local efforts to ensure that all children reach challenging standards by providing additional resources for schools and students who have farthest to go in achieving the goal.

**Title I is intended to help address the greater educational challenges facing high-poverty communities by targeting extra resources to school districts and schools with the highest concentrations of poverty**, where academic performance tends to be low and the obstacles to raising performance are the greatest. Ninety-five percent of the nation's highest poverty schools (those with 75 percent or more students eligible for free- or reduced price lunch) participate in Title I. While the highest poverty schools make up almost 15 percent of schools nationwide, they account for 46 percent of Title I spending. About three-fourths (73) percent of Title I funds go to schools with 50 percent or more students eligible for free- or reduced price lunch. <sup>(2)</sup>

**Fully 99 percent of Title I dollars go to the local level.** School districts use 90 to 93 percent of their Title I funds for instruction and instructional support—most often in reading and math. Although Title I accounts for a relatively small percentage of total funding for elementary and secondary education (just under 3 percent), the program plays a significant role in supporting local education improvement efforts. It provides flexible funding that may be used for supplementary instruction, professional development, new computers, after-school or other extended-time programs, and other strategies for raising student achievement.

**Title I also provides supplemental assistance to children who face unique educational barriers.** These include children who come from families with low literacy, the children of migrant agricultural workers, and children who are neglected or delinquent. The children of parents with poor literacy skills are less likely to receive early literacy training at home or to be enrolled in a preschool program, which increases the risk of school failure. Migrant children have families who move frequently to pursue agricultural work—and thus must change schools frequently—which has a detrimental effect on their achievement. Neglected or delinquent students are extremely educationally disadvantaged; most are incarcerated in state juvenile and adult correctional facilities and have experienced numerous disruptions in their education.

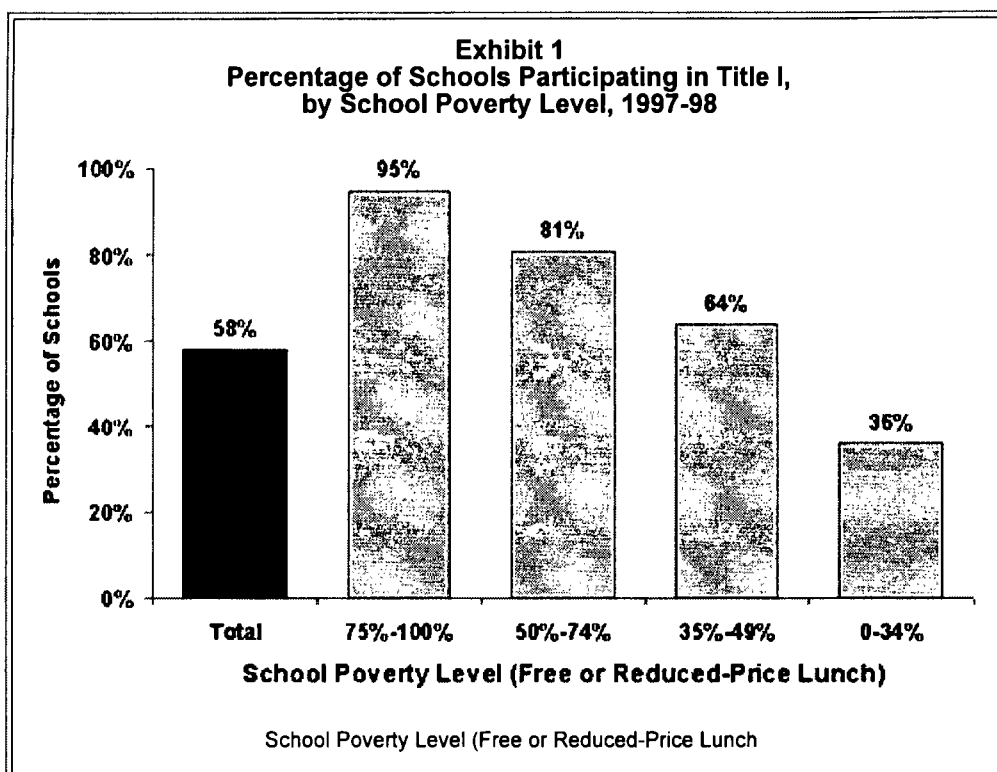


Exhibit reads: Almost all of the highest-poverty schools (95 percent) receive Title I funds, compared with 36 percent of the lowest-poverty schools. Source: U.S. Department of Education, unpublished tabulations from the *Follow-Up Survey of Education Reform*.

**Title I reaches over 11 million students enrolled in both public and private schools—about two-thirds of whom are in elementary grades 1-6.** The percent of students in middle and secondary schools remains a small proportion of those served overall. <sup>(3)</sup>

Minority students participate at rates higher than their proportion of the student population. African American students represent 28 percent of Title I participants, 30 percent are Hispanic, 36 percent are non-Hispanic white, and the remaining 5 percent are from other ethnic/racial groups. <sup>(4)</sup>

Among those served by the Title I Part A program (local education agency program) are about 167,000 private school children, close to 300,000 migrant children, and over 200,000 children identified as homeless. Title I services are also available to about 2 million students with limited English proficiency, almost one fifth of all students served and growing in number, and 1 million students with disabilities.<sup>(5)</sup>

In 1996-97, Even Start served (Part B) some 48,000 children and almost 36,000 adults. Over 580,000 migrant children were served under the Migrant Education Program (Part C), and 200,000 neglected or delinquent youth were served in the Title I Part D program for neglected or delinquent youth.<sup>(6)</sup>

### **The 1994 Reauthorization of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

The 1994 reauthorization of ESEA, along with the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, introduced a new federal approach built around a framework of standards-driven reform. Challenging standards for all students would promote excellence and equity, and better link Title I along with other federally-supported programs to state and local reform efforts. As the largest single federal investment in elementary and secondary education, the reauthorized Title I adopted each of the key principles outlined in the legislation:

- Support states in setting high standards for all children—with the elements of education aligned, so that they are working in concert to help all students reach those standards

- Focus on teaching and learning, through upgrading curriculum, accelerating instruction, and providing teachers with professional development to teach to high standards
- Provide flexibility to stimulate school-based and district initiatives, coupled with responsibility for student performance
- Create links among schools, parents, and communities
- Target resources to where the needs are greatest

Six years ago, the U.S. Department of Education reported to Congress on the effectiveness of the program as it operated as Chapter 1. That report, *Reinventing Chapter 1: The Current Chapter 1 Program and New Directions*, which drew from the Prospects longitudinal study, concluded that in order for the program to effectively support all students in meeting challenging standards, fundamental change was required. Indeed, as the prior National Assessment of Chapter 1 found, Chapter 1 programs reinforced low expectations of the students they served by providing students with remedial instruction and holding them to lower academic standards than other students.<sup>(7)</sup>

- Different expectations were clearly evident for students in high- and low-poverty schools. Indeed, when measured against a common test, an "A" student in a high-poverty school would be about a "C" student in a low-poverty school.<sup>(8)</sup>
- Program-supported services pulled most Chapter 1 students out of their regular classrooms for program-supported services, adding an average of only 10 minutes of instructional time per day, and often failing to relate to the rest of the student's educational experience.<sup>(9)</sup>
- Chapter 1 did not contribute to high-quality instruction, and often relied on teachers' aides who lacked educational credentials required to deliver high-quality instruction.<sup>(10)</sup>
- Chapter 1 had not kept pace with the growing movement, across the country, toward the establishment of challenging standards and assessments. Therefore, weaknesses in instruction were compounded by minimum competency assessments that tested primarily low-level skills.<sup>(11)</sup>

The reauthorized Title I legislation coupled flexibility in the use of resources with attention to accountability for results. Providing flexibility in tandem with performance accountability is the centerpiece of Title I, and an overall focus of the National Assessment of Title I. The National Assessment also examines the implementation of key Title I provisions at the state, district and school levels.

## **The Mandate for a National Assessment of Title I**

The final report of the National Assessment of Title I responds to Congress' mandate to examine the progress of students served by the program and implementation of key provisions, and suggests strategies for improved policies or changes in statutory requirements.

Key issues addressed include:

- The performance of students in high-poverty schools and low-performing students, the prime beneficiaries of Title I services
- The implementation of systems designed to support schools in helping students meet high standards, including the establishment of systems of challenging standards and assessments, the role of Title I in holding schools accountable for results, and targeting of Title I funds and the allocation and use of resources in states, districts and schools
- The implementation of Title I services at the school level, including strategies for providing challenging curriculum and instruction in high-poverty Title I schools, uses of schoolwide and

targeted assistance approaches for providing services in Title I schools, qualifications of and support for staff (including aides) in Title I high-poverty schools, and Title I support for partnerships with families

- The implementation of additional Title I services targeted at special populations, including Part A Services to Students Enrolled in Private Schools, Even Start (Part B), Migrant Education Program (Part C), and Services to Neglected or Delinquent Children (Part D)

The National Assessment of Title I also reports progress on key indicators identified for the Title I program in response to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) [P.L. 103-62], which requires that agencies establish performance goals and track indicators for every program. These indicators address improved achievement for students enrolled in high-poverty schools, increases in the number of Title I schools using standards-based reform and effective strategies to enable all children to reach challenging standards, and accelerated state and local reform efforts and assistance to Title I schools.

The National Assessment of Title I benefited from the involvement of an Independent Review Panel composed of representatives of state and local education agencies and private schools, school-level staff, parent representatives, education researchers, and policy experts. The Panel, mandated under Sections 1501 and 14701 of the ESEA, has met three to four times a year since May 1995. It has defined issues for the National Assessment of Title I and the companion *Report on the Impact of Federal Education Legislation Enacted in 1994* to address. Panel members have also participated in reviews of study plans, data analysis, and draft text for both reports.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Progress in the Performance of Students in High-Poverty Schools

The impact of standards-based reform is beginning to be seen in improved achievement among students in high-poverty schools and among low-performing students—who are the primary recipients of Title I services.

### *Performance on National Assessments of Reading*

Since 1992, prior to the reauthorization of Title I, national reading performance has improved for 9-year-olds in the highest-poverty public schools, (those with 75 percent of more low-income children) regaining ground lost in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Scores on the long-term trend assessment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) of 9-year olds in high-poverty public schools increased 8 points (close to one grade level) between 1992 and 1996 (Exhibit 2).

A - Students in Private  
B - Even Start  
C - Migrant  
D - Negl Delinquent Children

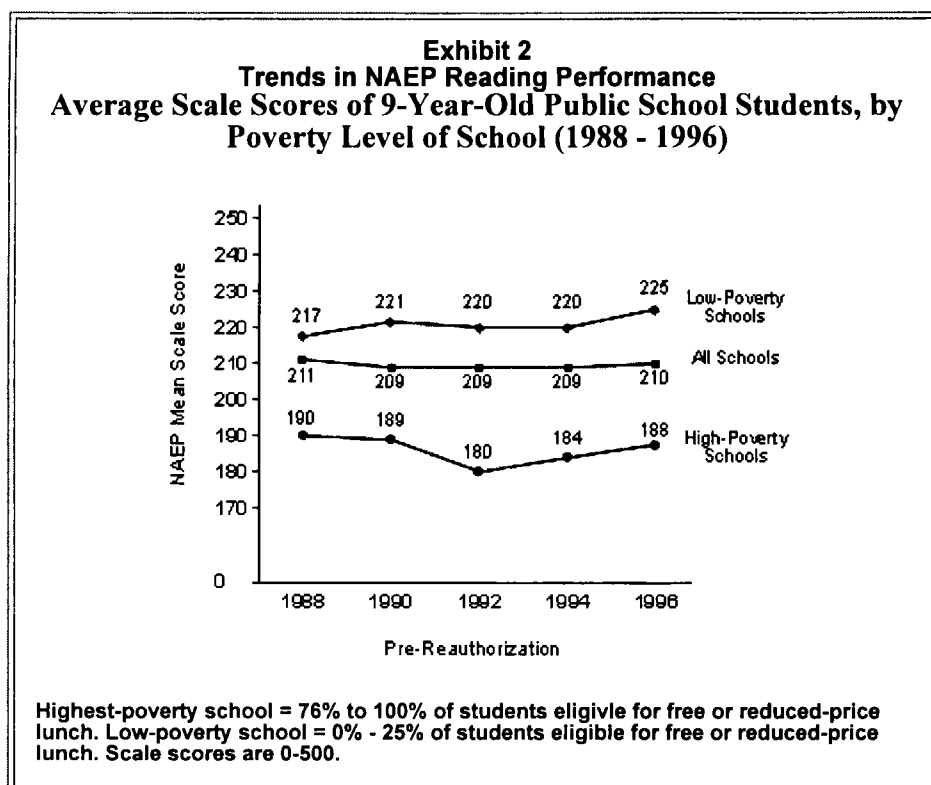


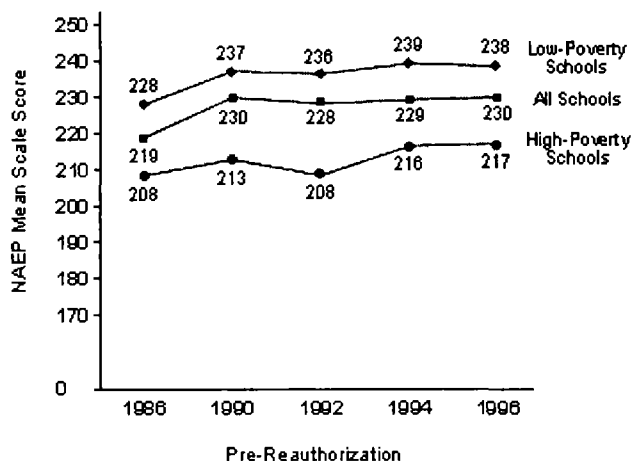
Exhibit reads: The average reading scale scores of 9-year-old students in high-poverty schools dropped in 1992 but have increased since then. Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, NAEP Reading Trends, unpublished tabulations, 1998

**Among the lowest achieving public school 4th graders—those most likely to be served by Title I—there were fairly substantial improvements in reading between 1994 and 1998.** Results of the Main NAEP reading assessment showing substantial gains for low achievers—9 points among the bottom 10 percent and 5 points among the bottom 25 percent—compared to the stable performance of other percentile groups, suggest that it was the performance of the lowest achievers that raised the national average of all fourth graders.

#### *Performance on National Assessments of Mathematics*

**Math achievement has improved nationally, especially among students in the highest-poverty public schools.** NAEP scores on the long-term trend assessment show an increase of about 10 points for all 9-year olds from 1986 through 1996 (Exhibit 3).

**Exhibit 3**  
**Trends in NAEP Mathematics Performance**  
**Average Scale Scores of 9-Year-Old Public School Students, by**  
**Poverty Level of School (1988 - 1996)**



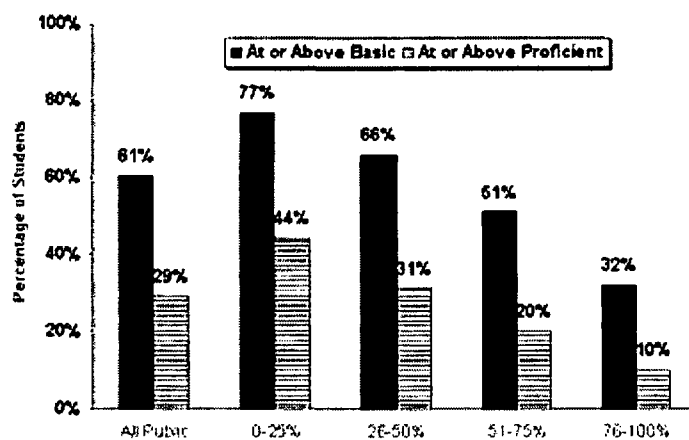
Highest-poverty school = 76% to 100% of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Low-poverty school = 0% - 25% of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Scale scores are 0-500.

Exhibit reads: The average mathematics scale scores of 9-year-old students in the highest-poverty schools dropped in 1992 but have increased since then. Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, NAEP Mathematics Trends, unpublished tabulations, 1998.

**Math scores from the main NAEP assessment also improved substantially among public 4th grade students in the lowest percentiles of performance—those most typically targeted for Title I services.** The main NAEP assessment shows that from 1990 to 1996, the average performance of the lowest achieving students improved steadily. NAEP scores of the lowest 25 percent improved by 8 points.

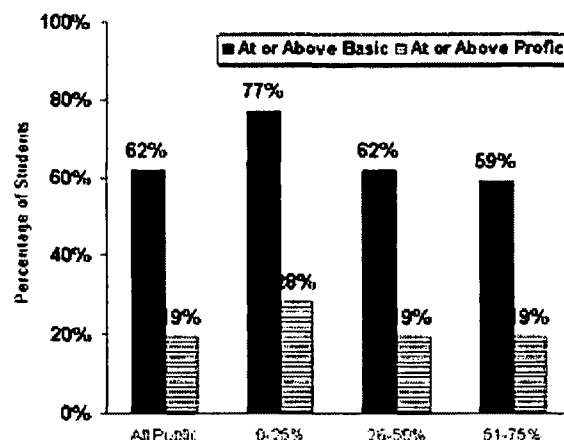
**However, a substantial achievement gap remains between students in the highest and lowest poverty schools.** In 1998, 32 percent of students in the highest-poverty schools met or exceeded the NAEP Basic level in reading, about half the rate nationally of students in public schools. In math, 42 percent of students in the highest poverty schools scored at or above the NAEP Basic level in 1996, compared with 62 percent in all public schools (Exhibits 4 and 5).

**Exhibit 4**  
**NAEP 4th-Grade Reading**  
 Percentage of Public 4th Graders Scoring At or Above Basic Level and Proficient Achievement Levels, by Poverty Level of School



Poverty Level of School

**Exhibit 5**  
**NAEP 4th-Grade Math**  
 Percentage of Public 4th Graders Scoring Above Basic Level and Proficient Achievement Levels, by Poverty Level of School



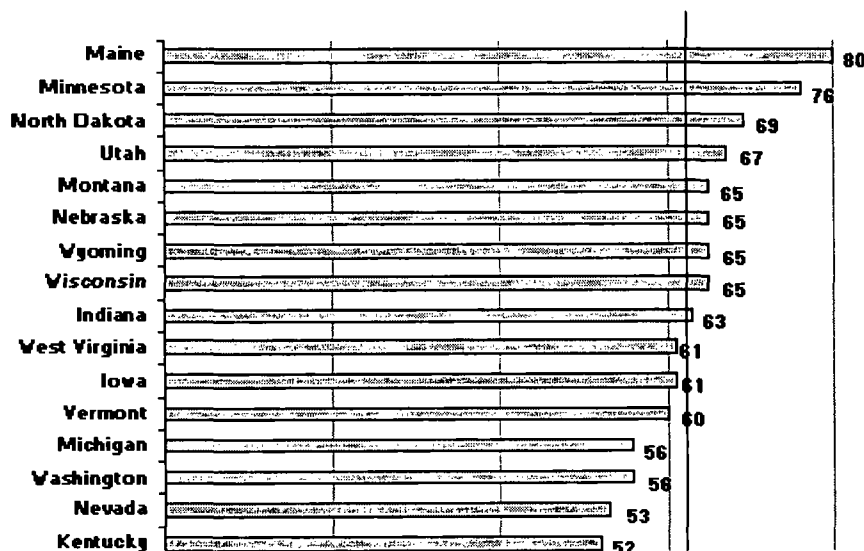
Poverty Level of School

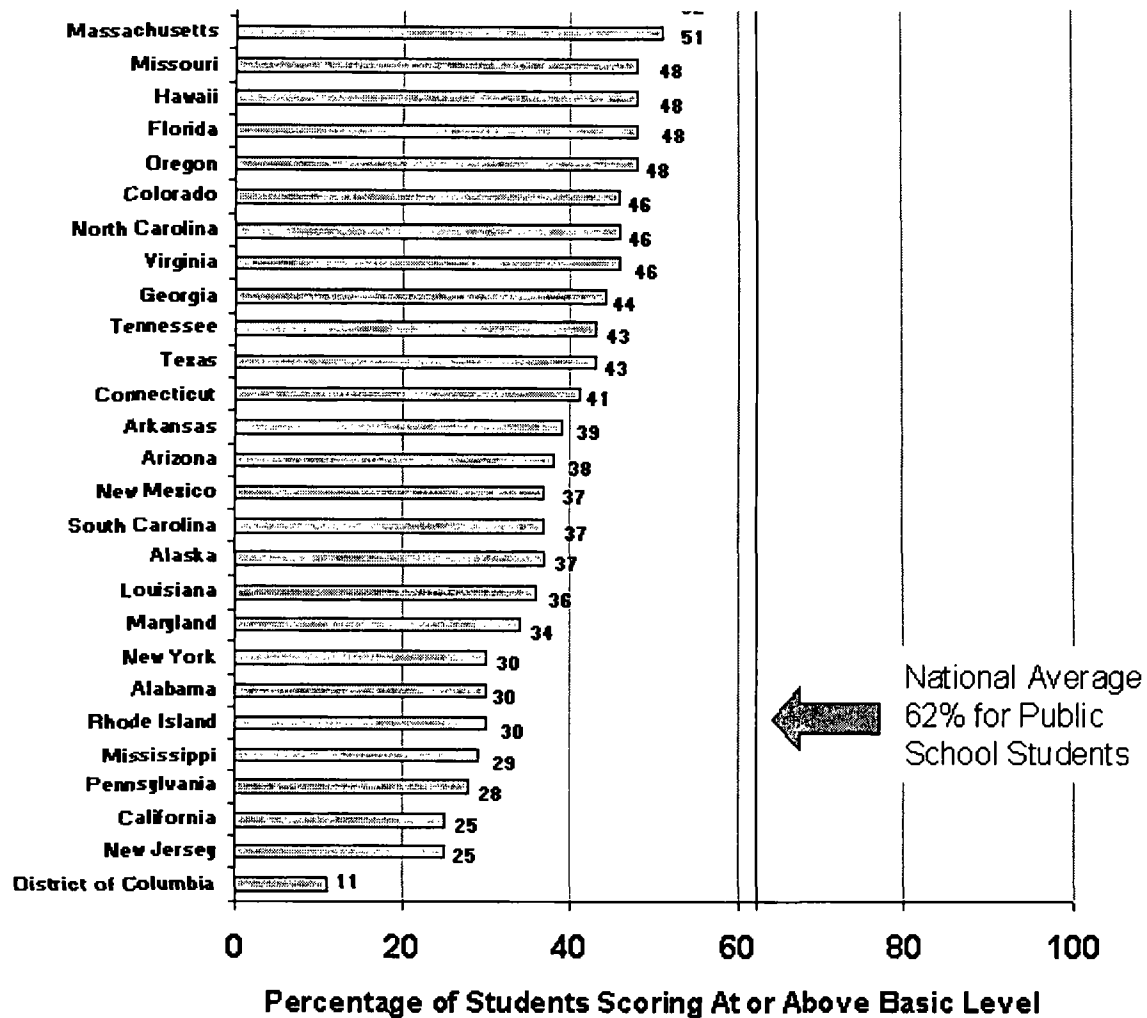
Exhibits read: In 1998, 61 percent of students attending public schools performed at or above the Basic level in reading and in 1996, 62 percent of all 4th-graders scored at or above the Basic level in math.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, Main NAEP Reading and Mathematics, unpublished tabulations, 1999.

Despite the nationwide gap in performance, the percent of fourth-grade students enrolled in highest-poverty public schools achieving at or above the Basic level exceeded the national average in 9 states—indicating that it is possible to bring these students to high levels of achievement.

**Exhibit 6**  
**State NAEP 4th-Grade Mathematics, 1996**  
 Percentage of Students in the Highest-Poverty Public Schools Performing At or Above Basic Level, by State





Highest-poverty school = 76% to 100% of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch

Exhibits reads: In Maine 80 percent of 4th graders who attended the highest-poverty schools scored at or above the Basic level in math. Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Education Progress, State NAEP Mathematics, unpublished tabulations, 1998.

### *Performance on State and District Assessments*

Trends in student performance based on the assessments of individual states and districts provide an additional perspective for measuring the progress of students in high-poverty areas.

**Three year trends reported by states and districts show progress in the percentage of students in the highest-poverty schools meeting state and local standards for proficiency in mathematics and reading.** Among states and large urban districts that provided three-year trend data for students in high-poverty schools, progress overall is positive. Due to changes in state assessment systems to comply with Title I legislation, few states can currently provide three-year trend data on students in high-poverty schools. Results from 13 large urban districts are presented to show trends in student performance in areas in which poverty and educational challenges are most highly concentrated. Districts profiled are among the largest in the country; have student populations that are at least 35 percent minority and 50 percent eligible for free/reduced price lunch; serve high concentrations of limited English proficient students; are geographically diverse; and have at least three years of achievement data on the same

assessment in reading and math for elementary and middle school students. As with states, these are among those that provided data (which were available in fall/early winter 1998).

- The achievement of elementary school students in the highest-poverty schools improved in 5 of 6 states reporting three year trends in reading and in 4 of 5 states reporting trends in mathematics. Students in Connecticut, Maryland, North Carolina, and Texas made progress in both subjects.<sup>(12)</sup>
- Ten of 13 large urban districts showed increases in the percentage of elementary students in the highest-poverty schools who met district or state proficiency standards in reading or math. Six districts, including Houston, Miami-Dade County, New York, Philadelphia, San Antonio and San Francisco made progress in both subjects.

-###-

---

[\[Highlights\]](#)   [\[Executive Summary \(Part 2 of 3\)\]](#)



[Return to Elementary and Secondary Education with Title I](#)

mail to [esed@ed.gov](mailto:esed@ed.gov)

---

*Last update March 4, 1999 (pjk).*

# Promising Results, Continuing Challenges: Final Report of the National Assessment of Title I

## Executive Summary (Part 2 of 3)

---

### Title I Support for Systems Designed to Support Schools in Helping Students Meet High Standards

#### *Development of Standards and Assessments and the Role of Title I*

Challenging standards of learning and assessments that ensure shared expectations for all children are key policy drivers in Title I. Indeed, support for the establishment of systems of standards and assessments under Title I, as well as the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, are consistent with a key purpose of the program, as outlined in the statute: "to enable schools to provide opportunities for children served to acquire the knowledge and skills contained in the challenging State content standards and to meet the challenging State performance standards developed for all children."

In addition to requiring states to establish and use systems of standards and aligned assessments to guide expectations for what children should be expected to know and do, Title I has required that states develop criteria for tracking the student performance of schools and districts participating in the program. By the 1997-98 school year, each state was to have adopted challenging content standards, in at least reading and math, that specify what all children are expected to know and be able to do, and challenging performance standards that describe students' mastery of the content standards. By the year 2000-2001, states are also to adopt or develop student assessment systems that are aligned with standards in at least reading/language arts and math.

**States are making significant progress in developing content standards, but progress is considerably slower with respect to developing performance standards according to the timeline set forth in the statute.**

- Forty-eight states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have met the requirement for developing content standards in the core subjects of reading and math. One remaining state is approving its districts' standards; the other state has a waiver to extend the deadline to develop state standards. Federal assistance is credited with providing financial incentives and support that helped states adopt standards (Exhibit 7).
- Less than half the states had approved performance standards by 1998. Variability in the rigor of standards is a concern, given the lack of evidence that states have benchmarked standards against common criteria, such as NAEP (Exhibit 8).

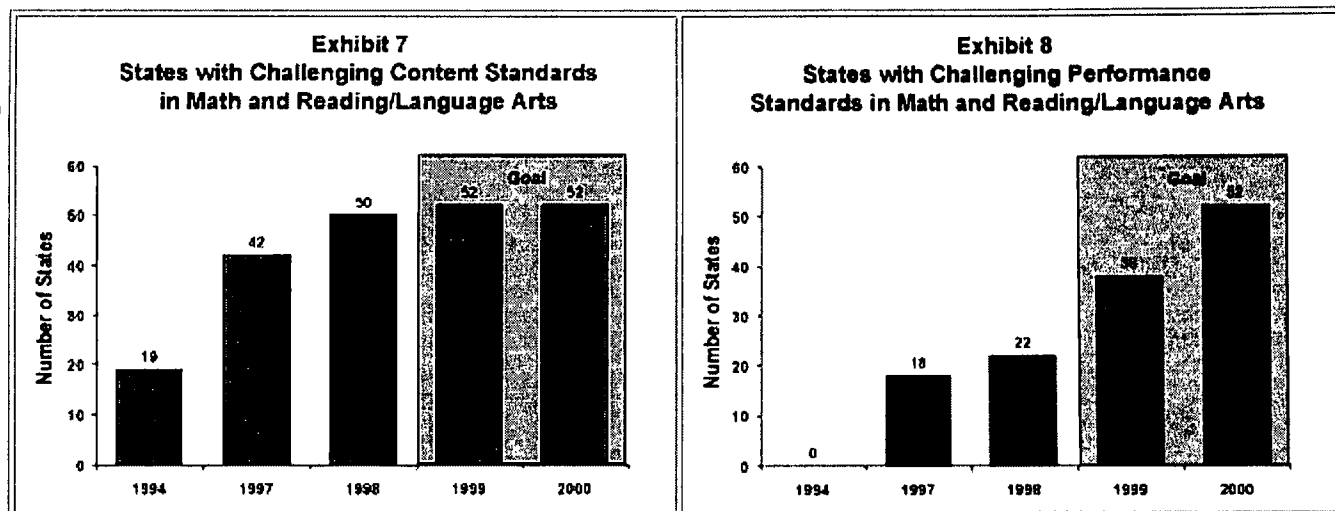


Exhibit reads: In 1994, 19 states reported having challenging content standards in reading and math. Source: Council of Chief State School Officers, Status Report: State Systemic Education Improvements (Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers, August 1995); U.S. Department of Education, unpublished analysis of state plans required under Sec. 1111.

**States are not required to have assessment systems (which reflect standards) and include all students until 2000-2001. However, progress in their development is worth noting.**

- According to an independent review of state plans submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in 1997, 14 states had in place transitional assessment systems linked to state content standards.<sup>(13)</sup>
- Additionally, a sizeable number report student achievement based on state assessment data according to categories established in the statute. For the 1996-97 school year, of the 48 states, plus DC and Puerto Rico, that reported student achievement data through the Title I Performance Report, 21 disaggregated results by school poverty levels, 12 reported results for low-income students, 19 provided data for limited English proficient students, and 16 reported achievement of migrant students.<sup>(14)</sup>

**Issues regarding assessment of special populations are among the greatest challenges reported by states in developing their assessment systems.** The review of state practices in determining school and district progress found that most states (43) had at least partially developed policies or procedures for assessing all students but only 28 provided some evidence that these policies or procedures were being implemented.<sup>(15)</sup>

### ***The Role of Title I in Holding Schools Accountable for Performance and Supporting Improvement Efforts***

Title I is intended to be linked to state accountability so that states will hold Title I schools to the same high standards for performance expected for all schools. Under Title I each state is required to develop criteria for determining a standard of adequate yearly progress for districts and schools participating in Title I based on the state assessment and other measures. Title I schools and districts that fail to make adequate yearly progress are to be identified for improvement. Schools identified for improvement are to receive support and assistance from states and districts. Those schools and districts that continue to fail to make progress are subject to corrective actions. The performance of districts and schools under Title I is to be publicly reported and widely shared.

**States are making progress in implementing the accountability provisions of Title I, although full implementation of accountability under Title I is not required until final assessments are in place**

**in the 2000-2001 school year.** But states are also facing real challenges as they transform their educational systems into higher performing, results-based systems.

- States have developed transitional measures for defining school and district progress under Title I, but there are concerns about the rigor of the measures. An independent review of state plans documented that only half of all states have set standards for measuring progress based on students reaching a proficient level of performance, rather than only a minimum level of competency. Most states do not have a specified timeline for having all students meet expectations. <sup>(16)</sup>
- There is considerable variation across states in the identification of Title I schools in need of improvement. In Texas, only 1 percent of Title I schools were identified for improvement in 1996-97. In New Mexico and Washington D.C., over 80 percent of Title I schools were identified for improvement. <sup>(17)</sup>
- Although there is variation in the number and percentage of Title I schools identified for improvement across the states, evidence suggests that states are identifying their neediest schools. Schools identified for improvement tend to serve a greater proportion of poor students and have a larger minority enrollment.
- A recent study of accountability in large urban districts finds that Title I has been a "model and an instigator" for standards-based reform and efforts to track student progress and improve schools. <sup>(18)</sup> Nationally, 14 percent of districts report that Title I is driving reform in their districts as a whole to a great extent. Fifty percent of small poor districts and 47 percent of large poor districts report that Title I is driving reform to a great extent. <sup>(19)</sup>

**A key concern is the extent to which identification of schools for improvement under Title I is integrated with the accountability systems states are putting in place for all schools.**

- While there is considerable overlap between schools identified for improvement under Title I and other state or local mechanisms, states report that they are having difficulty integrating the Title I requirements with their own systems. Parallel systems are operating in many states, with only 23 state Title I directors reporting that the same accountability system is used for Title I as for schools in their state.
- Research shows that state accountability systems that are "closer to home" are of greater value to educators and have more immediate consequences to schools and districts.

**Recent findings suggest that state and Title I accountability requirements are helping states, districts, and schools focus more on the use of data for school improvement.**

- Research on accountability in 12 states and 14 districts found a remarkably high level of attention paid to using data to inform decisionmaking. The study found that while outcome data was being required to be used for school improvement planning, many districts were going beyond requirements of the law to use this performance data to identify and develop strategies for staff development and curriculum improvement that address gaps in performance. <sup>(20)</sup>

**The capacity of state school support teams to assist schools in need of improvement under Title I is a major concern.**

- The State Improvement Grants that would have provided additional resources for the operation of school support teams were not funded in reauthorization. Although the main task for state school support teams has been to assist schoolwide programs, their charge also includes providing assistance to schools in need of improvement. In 1998, only 8 states reported that school support teams have been able to serve the majority of schools identified as in need of improvement. In 24 states, Title I directors reported more schools in need of assistance from school support teams than Title I could assist. <sup>(21)</sup>

- Among schools that reported in 1997-98 that they had been identified as in need of improvement, less than half (47 percent) reported that they had received additional professional development or assistance as a result.<sup>(22)</sup>

### ***Targeting Title I Resources to Districts and Schools Where the Needs are Greatest***

**Historically, Title I funds were spread thinly to most districts and a large majority of schools, undermining the program's capacity to meet the high expectations set by policymakers.** The previous Chapter 1 formula and within-district allocation provisions spread funds to virtually all counties, 93 percent of all school districts, and 66 percent of all public schools, yet left many of the nation's poorest schools unserved. The 1994 reauthorization changed the allocation provisions in an effort to improve the targeting of Title I funds on the neediest districts and schools. In addition, Congress has recently increased the proportion of Title I funds appropriated for Concentration Grants in an effort to direct a greater share of the funds to higher-poverty districts and schools.

**Changes in the allocation formula and procedures, enacted in the 1994 amendments, have had little effect on targeting at the state, county, and district levels, but substantial impact on within-in district targeting.** Almost all (95 percent) of the highest-poverty schools (75 percent or more poverty) received Title I funds in 1997-98, up from 93 percent in 1993-94. Funding for low-poverty schools (less than 35 percent poverty) declined from 49 percent to 36 percent over the same period. Nearly all (93 percent) highest-poverty secondary schools received Title I funds in 1997-98, up from 61 percent in 1993-94 (Exhibit 9).

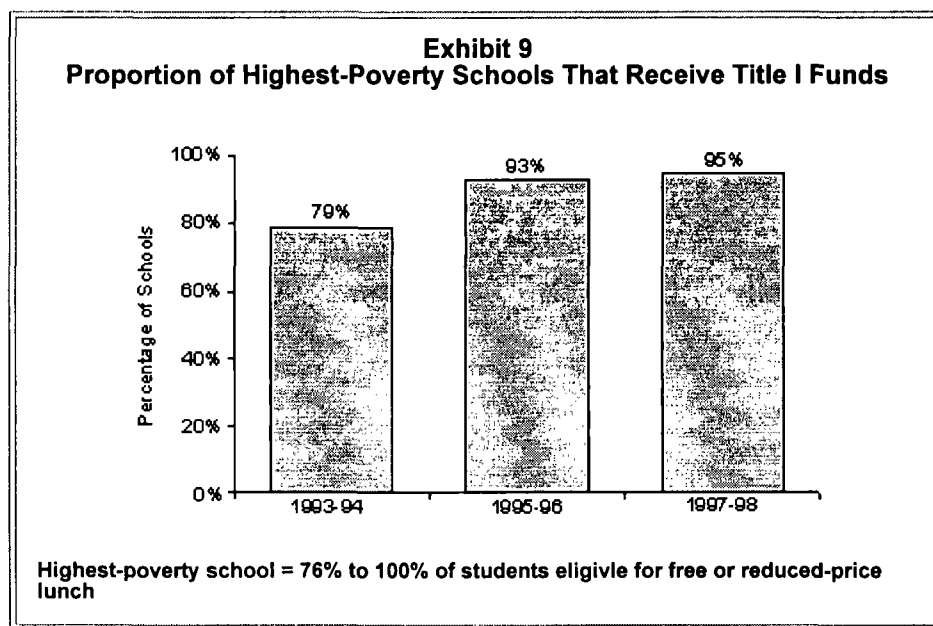


Exhibit reads: The percentage of highest-poverty schools receiving Title I funding rose from 79 percent in 1993-94 to 95 percent in 1997-98. Source: U.S. Department of Education, Study of Title I Within-District Targeting (forthcoming).

**Nearly all Title I funds are allocated to local school districts.** States distribute 99 percent of their Title I funds to school districts and retain only 1 percent for administration, leadership, and technical assistance to districts and schools.<sup>(23)</sup> Over 90 percent of Title I funds are used for instruction and instructional support—much higher than the percentage of state and local funds (62 percent).<sup>(24)</sup> Title I funds allocated to school districts in FY 1999 amounted to \$720 per poor child.

Although Title I accounts for a relatively small percentage of total funding for elementary and secondary education (about 3 percent), the program plays a significant role in supporting local education improvement efforts. It provides flexible funding that may be used for supplementary instruction,

professional development, new computers, after-school or other extended-time programs, and other strategies for raising student achievement. For example, Title I funds used for technology amounted to roughly \$240 million (about 37 percent of total federal support for technology). Title I funds used for professional development amounted to about \$200 million in 1997-98 (about 29 percent of total federal support for professional development).<sup>(25)</sup>

**Title I funds may help equalize resources for high- and low-poverty schools.** Title I provides additional support in districts and schools with greater needs, which often receive fewer resources from state and local sources. For example, Title I funds purchased an average of 3.3 computers in the highest-poverty schools in 1997-98 (27 percent of the new computers), compared to 0.6 computers in low-poverty schools. High-poverty schools' use of Title I funds for technology helped to compensate for the fact that they received fewer computers from state or local funds (4.8 computers, versus 12.4 in low-poverty schools).<sup>(26)</sup>

**Increases in targeting have increased the number of high-poverty schools served but have not necessarily increased the intensity of services.** In a sample of 17 large urban districts, the average size of school allocations remained unchanged from 1994-95 to 1996-97, indicating that the growth in total funding and redirection of some funds away from low-poverty schools were used to increase the number of high-poverty schools served rather than to increase the intensity of services in those schools.

## **Title I Services at the School Level**

### ***The Context for Standards-Based Reform***

**There is evidence of progress for students in high-poverty schools where staff members focus on challenging standards and strategies that help students achieve them.** Preliminary findings from the Longitudinal Evaluation of School Change and Performance (LESCP), a study of instructional practices in 71 high-poverty schools found that—

- Fourth-graders were likely to make better progress in reading if their teacher gave them more total exposure to reading in the content areas and opportunities to talk in small groups about what they had read.
- Additionally, teachers who used a curriculum that reflected National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards had students with higher gains in mathematics.
- Students who started the year as low achievers could be helped to gain more skill in problem solving in mathematics when their teachers deliberately emphasized understanding and problem solving with them.

**Principals are reporting an increased use of content standards to guide curriculum and instruction in their schools.** The proportion of Title I principals who reported using content standards to guide curriculum and instruction to a great extent increased substantially from approximately half in 1995-96 to approximately three-quarters in 1997-98. Recent findings from a study of high-performing, high-poverty schools carry this relationship one step further, finding that implementing such reforms is associated with higher student performance. The study found that in high-performing, high-poverty schools, 80 percent of principals reported using standards extensively to design curriculum and instruction and 94 percent reported using standards to assess student progress.<sup>(27)</sup>

**However, most teachers do not feel very well-prepared to use standards in the classroom.** In 1998, only 37 percent of teachers in schools with 60 percent poverty or greater reported that they felt very well prepared to implement state or district curriculum and performance standards. This sense of preparedness is a key factor in predicting student outcomes, according to the LESC study of 71 high-poverty Title I schools. The LESC found that teachers' reported preparedness in both subject matter and instructional strategies had a positive relationship with student growth.<sup>(28)</sup>

The LESC also found that district reform policy had an influence on teachers' familiarity with

standards-based reform and their implementation of such reform in their classrooms. Teachers in higher-reform districts were more likely than their peers in lower-reform districts to be familiar with content and performance standards and assessments and their curriculum was more likely to reflect the standards.<sup>(29)</sup>

Another factor that may contribute to a teacher's sense of preparedness is professional development. **In 1998, public school teachers, regardless of the poverty level of their school, spent a limited amount of time in professional development, although they did focus on topics that supported standards-based reform.** Most teachers are not participating in intensive or sustained training—two essential characteristics of effective professional development. Given the relationship found between teacher preparedness and student achievement, this is a troubling finding. Over half (55 percent) of all teachers in high-poverty schools reported spending less than 9 hours per year on training in the content areas. Over two-thirds (70%) of teachers in high-poverty schools reported receiving less than 9 hours per year of professional development related to content and performance standards.

### ***Title I Support for Standards-Based Reform***

**Schools are making better use of delivery models that integrate Title I with the regular academic program.** Reliance on the pull-out model (instruction outside of the regular classroom) has decreased, while in-class models (instruction in the regular classroom), schoolwide programs, and extended-time instruction have all increased. Use of the in-class model has increased dramatically since the years prior to reauthorization. In 1991-92, for example, 58 percent of Title I schools used the in-class model<sup>(30)</sup> and its use increased to 83 percent in the 1997-98 school year.<sup>(31)</sup> In 1991-92, 74 percent of Title I schools used a pull-out model<sup>(32)</sup> and 68 percent did in 1997-98.<sup>(33)</sup> However, in 1997-98, over half (57 percent) reported using both of these approaches.<sup>(34)</sup>

**Title I paraprofessionals are widely used, particularly to provide instruction.** In the 1997-98 school year, 84 percent of principals in high-poverty schools reported using aides, as contrasted with 54 percent in low-poverty schools.<sup>(35)</sup> Although very few aides had the educational background necessary to teach students, almost all (98 percent) were either teaching or helping to teach students.<sup>(36)</sup> Over three-fourths of aides (76 percent) spent at least some of this time teaching without a teacher present.<sup>(37)</sup>

**Schoolwide programs have the potential to help integrate Title I resources in standards-based reform at the school level.** Recent findings show that schoolwide programs are more likely to use a strategic plan and to use models of service delivery that better integrate Title I into the larger educational program. Strategic plans allow Title I services to be considered within the broader context of a school's reform goals, and can provide a framework for better integration of Title I within the regular academic program. In addition, principals in schoolwide programs reported less use of the pull-out model than targeted assistance programs, as would be expected. They were also more likely to report using extended time programs.

**Less than half of Title I schools offer extended learning time programs, although the percentage of schools offering extended time has increased from 9 to 41 percent since the last reauthorization.** However, few students participate in these programs. In all the high-poverty schools offering before- and after-school and weekend instructional programs, an average of 16 percent of students participate. In all Title I schools offering such programs, an average of 12 percent of students participate.<sup>(38)</sup> In high-poverty schools offering summer programs, 16 percent of students participate and in all Title I schools offering summer programs, 25 percent of students participate.<sup>(39)</sup>

**Recent research on effective schools has found that such schools use extended time learning in reading and mathematics to improve learning and achievement.<sup>(40)</sup>** In a recent study of higher-success and lower-success elementary schools in Maryland, researchers found that the more successful schools were seeing consistent academic gains as a result of extended day programs.<sup>(41)</sup> In another study of high-performing, high-poverty schools, 86 percent of the schools extended time for reading and 66 percent extended instructional time in mathematics.<sup>(42)</sup>

**Recent evidence indicates that secondary schools are making progress in implementing service delivery models that are less stigmatizing and better integrated with the regular academic program.** Secondary students are still served in pull-out settings, but not as commonly as elementary students. Moreover, in the schools that do provide pull-out services, it appears to be one of several models of service delivery. In addition to improving Title I delivery strategies, secondary schools are making progress in implementing standards-based reform. Title I services in secondary schools provide supplementary services in support of schools' efforts to enable students to achieve high standards. Most secondary school principals reported using content standards to a great extent in reading (75 percent at the middle school level and 62 percent at the high school level) and mathematics (72 percent at the middle level and 65 percent at the high school level).<sup>(43)</sup> Case studies of 18 secondary schools engaged in school improvement suggest that state and local accountability systems are prompting reform, and that Title I generally serves to support these reform efforts. In states and districts with high-stakes accountability systems, both core academic instruction and supplementary assistance provided through Title I are often geared toward preparing students to pass state or district assessments.<sup>(44)</sup>

## **Title I Support for Partnerships with Families, Schools and Communities to Support Learning**

**Title I supports for parent involvement and family literacy.** The federal role in supporting parent involvement can be catalytic, focusing schools on engaging parents to support learning and participate in school activities and decisions. Principals and teachers identify the lack of parent involvement as a significant barrier to improvement and see the need to engage parents to achieve reform, especially in high-poverty schools. The new Title I school-parent compacts can bring schools and parents together around their shared responsibilities, but they need sustained support. Although the percent of Title I schools with school-parent compacts rose from 20 percent in 1994 to about 75 percent in 1998, there remain 25 percent with no parent agreements. A substantial majority of schools—especially those serving high concentrations of low-income children—do find compacts helpful in promoting parent involvement, especially higher poverty schools, but principals continue to identify lack of parent involvement as one of their major reform barriers.<sup>(45)</sup>

Additionally, the Even Start family literacy program has shown results in working with very needy families, but it needs to strengthen the intensity and quality of services to achieve better performance.

## **Special Title I Services**

### ***Title I Services to Students Attending Private Schools***

**Reauthorization and recent court rulings have affected the participation of private school students in Title I.** Federal law requires that students in private schools be afforded an opportunity to participate in Title I equal to students in public schools, and the services provided to them must also be equitable. Reauthorization in 1994 changed the allocation of Title I resources for these services, linking it to the number of low-income students residing in attendance areas instead of the level of educational need. The overturning of the *Aguilar v. Felton* decision in June 1997 (Felton had restricted service locations for students in religiously-affiliated schools) adds considerable flexibility to districts' options for providing Title I services to eligible students enrolled in private schools.

- Surveys have shown that the number of private school participants has declined by about 6 percent since the 1994 reauthorization, from 177,000 in 1993-94 to 167,000 in 1996-97.

**Most Title I administrators and private school representatives agree that they have established positive working relationships, but report differently about who is actually involved in consultation and about the topics that are discussed.** For example, Title I administrators in at least 80 percent of districts say that they consulted with either a private school principal or representative of a private school organization on most issues, but substantially fewer private school representatives report such consultation.

Almost all districts that serve eligible private school students provide them with supplementary

academic instruction. A preliminary review of the experiences of nine large urban districts indicates that they are taking advantage of the opportunity to provide instructional services on religiously affiliated school premises. However, Title I administrators in these districts also report that they continue to provide at least some of the instructional services in neutral sites on or near the school grounds, with several of the districts relying more heavily on these facilities than others.

### ***Title I, Part B, Even Start Family Literacy Program***

**The Even Start program (Title I, Part B) provides support to states and local grantees for family literacy programs intended to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy in low-income families.** The program is designed to support high-quality, intensive instructional programs of adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education.

**The national evaluation has documented that Even Start projects successfully target services toward families who are most in need, and that participating families consistently make gains on measures of literacy.**

- At least 90 percent of families participating in 1996-97 had incomes at or below the federal poverty level and 85 percent of the adults had not earned a high school diploma or GED.
- In 1995-96, the gap between scores of Even Start children and those for a national norms group was reduced by two-thirds in one year.
- Adult participants also made gains on tests of adult literacy. Parents also showed moderate gains on a measure of the home environment for literacy, gains not found in a control group of parents in a study of the Comprehensive Child Development Program.

**Working with such needy families poses challenges to providing intensive services and engaging families over an extended period of time.** Research has shown that service intensity and duration can contribute to better outcomes. While Even Start projects have increased the amount of instruction they have offered in all core service areas over time, only about 25 percent of all projects meet or exceed the Department's performance indicator for the number of service hours offered in the three core instructional components.

### ***Title I, Part C, Migrant Education Program***

**The (Title I, Part C) Migrant Education Program (MEP) provides formula grants to states for supplemental education and support services for the children of migrant agricultural workers and fishers.** Reauthorization established a priority for services for migratory children whose education has been interrupted during the school year and who are failing, or at risk of failing, to meet their states' content and performance standards. According to 80 percent of principals of schoolwide programs, migrant students who fail to meet their state's performance standards have the highest priority for instructional services.

**MEP summer-term and extended-time projects play an important role in the education of migrant students.** Summer projects provide continuity of instruction for migrant students, who experience a great deal of educational disruption. Over the last decade, summer projects have grown faster than the regular program, and they now serve approximately 60 percent of the number of students served during the regular-term. The number of summer participants increased from 220,800 in the 1995-96 school year to over 283,000 in 1996-97.

**Effective coordination at the state level can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of services to migrant children.** Consortia arrangements designed to reduce administrative costs and increase information sharing across states have grown since reauthorization.

- As of August 1998, the Department had approved consortium arrangements involving 32 states, an increase from 15 states in FY 1995.

- Two years after the elimination of the Migrant Student Records Transfer System, most states and school districts rely on mail, telephone, and fax to transfer records for migrant students.

***Title I, Part D, Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk of Dropping Out***

The Title I, Part D program is intended to serve neglected and delinquent children and youth, often in juvenile and adult correctional facilities. The 1994 reauthorization made several major changes to the Title I, Part D program. One change was increasing the number of hours each week for instruction to help enable students to meet challenging academic standards. The reauthorized program also offered institutions the option of operating institutionwide programs, modeled after Title I schoolwide programs, to help ensure that students' needs are being met in a coherent and coordinated manner.

**Although states report that they are building facilities' capacity to implement institutionwide programs, few facilities have implemented them.** More than half of the states provided technical assistance on whole school improvement, yet only 9 percent of N or D facilities are institutionwide programs. Moreover, states and institutions need to work on collecting appropriate data and using it to inform program improvement. Institutions are generally unable to collect comprehensive data on students' educational experiences and transition to further education or employment.

-###-

---

[Executive Summary (Part 1 of 3)]



[Executive Summary (Part 3 of 3)]



Return to Elementary and Secondary Education with Title I

mail to [esed@ed.gov](mailto:esed@ed.gov)

---

*Last update March 2, 1999 (jls).*

# Promising Results, Continuing Challenges: Final Report of the National Assessment of Title I

## Executive Summary (Part 3 of 3)

---

### FUTURE OPTIONS FOR TITLE I

#### Stay the Course: Maintain an Emphasis on Challenging Standards for All Students

Gains by students in the nation's highest poverty schools, coupled with evidence that aligning instruction with challenging standards can substantially increase student achievement, point to the need to stay the course of focusing instruction on challenging standards for all students. Though there has clearly been progress in implementing standards at all levels, full implementation in classrooms across the country has yet to be accomplished. States, districts, and schools need to continue to implement standards that challenge all students to achieve at high levels, and to align curriculum, teaching, and assessments with those standards. Reauthorization should address the continuing challenges that limit Title I's capacity to be a stimulus and support for better results for our nation's at-risk students.

#### "Targeted High-Performance School Grants" to Strengthen the Highest-Poverty Schools

**The continuing weak performance of the highest-poverty schools, those with poverty in excess of 75 percent, remains as one of America's most pressing educational problems.** Although all Title I schools need additional resources and assistance, the highest-poverty schools are the neediest not only in terms of their populations served, but also in terms of the progress they must make to improve their current performance. In these schools, seven out of every ten children are currently achieving below even the basic level of reading.

**Reauthorization should focus on the extraordinary needs of the highest-poverty schools to improve teaching and learning for our most at-risk students, while holding these schools accountable for continuous improvement in student results.** If these grants were to target an additional \$1.3 billion, or about 15 percent of current Title I funds, they would be sufficient when combined with current Title I funds and a 25 percent local match to enable the highest-poverty schools to:

- Support a schoolwide model program of their choosing that is backed by evaluation evidence of effectiveness. Schools could carry out intensive programs aimed at improving early reading as in the Reading Excellence Act program, run a program to start their middle school students thinking about college and planning for their futures as in GEAR UP, or a combination of such approaches.
- Within three years, achieve a ratio of modern multimedia computers to students of 5:1, a long-term national target and a goal that is especially important in high poverty communities where children lack the home access to computers available in higher income areas.
- Provide a high-quality after-school instructional program for 50 percent of all students, up from the current 12 percent.
- Reduce class sizes in the early grades to 21 students per teacher, midway from current levels to the long-term national goal of 18 students.

#### In turn,

- Recipient schools would commit to continued progress in improving student outcomes as defined through annual outcome and service improvement targets. These would be described in a peer-reviewed schoolwide plan. Schools would annually report progress against outcome and service performance objectives with the plan and reports.

- States and districts would need to commit to assisting their highest poverty schools. States and districts would work with their schools to identify resources from all sources that could be combined for meaningful, concerted school reform. Districts would review their schools' planning and implementation and offer peer reviewers to work with the schools on a sustained basis. They would also share performance data, research on effective approaches, and information across schools engaged in reform.
- The highest-poverty schools would also be the highest priority for assistance from all federally supported technical assistance providers. Comprehensive regional assistance centers and other technical assistance providers would place these schools at the head of the line for support, concentrating their efforts where they could do the most good.

These monies would raise the average amount of Title I funds that the highest-poverty schools receive annually by 50 percent to an estimated \$336,000 for each school. These new monies could go out under the current formulas to states and districts for their schools with poverty rates of 75 percent or higher. If states lack schools in the highest poverty category, they would receive a minimum grant to be spent on their most impoverished schools.

The resources to support the Targeted High-Performance School Grants could come from increases in Title I funding and an off-the-top set-aside for these schools in related federal programs such as 21st Century Learning Communities, Reading Excellence Act, Technology Literacy Challenge Fund, GEAR UP and Class Size Reduction. A set-aside of one-third of the FY 2000 monies from these five programs for these highest poverty schools would provide about \$990 million under the Administrations FY 2000 budget request. The remainder to bring the total to \$1.3 billion could come from channeling the \$320 million proposed increase in Title I funding to these new grants.

Targeting additional funds to schools with high concentrations of low-income students has advantages over targeting on low performance. First, high-performing, high-poverty schools should not be penalized for their progress. Nor should low-performing schools be rewarded for a lack of effort. High-performing schools need support, recognition, and encouragement to sustain their gains. In addition, targeting funds on the basis of poverty is consistent with the process for allocating funds currently and would not require a different mechanism.

### **Strengthen Instruction**

**Progress in using Title I to support improved instructional practices at the school-level remains limited by the continued use of paraprofessionals who provide instruction-particularly in the highest-poverty Title I schools.** Paraprofessionals in high-poverty schools tend to have less formal education than those in low-poverty schools, and they are often assigned to teach-sometimes without a teacher present. While many paraprofessionals have invested large amounts of time and effort working in Title I schools, and are an important part of the school community, it is imperative that priorities for their services be based solely on the needs of students. **Phasing out** their use in instruction and promoting their use as parent liaisons or in administrative functions should be a priority.

**Reauthorization should also support the establishment of career ladder programs for paraprofessionals, so that those desiring to become credentialed would be supported in doing so.** These programs could include what some districts are doing already, based on recent survey data.

**Reauthorization should include resources for the development of ongoing consumer guides on effective practices.** Schools are moving toward adopting curriculum and whole school reform models to frame their improvement efforts. However little independent research has been conducted to evaluate the efficacy of comprehensive school reform models and better understand the conditions under which they can succeed. The federal government should make such research and evaluation of comprehensive model programs a priority through systematic study and annual reporting in a consumer guide. To ensure the integrity and independence of model appraisal, a quasi-governmental agency might be established to oversee the integrity of the evaluation process and reporting of results. This information would enable schools to become better-educated consumers in selecting and implementing models most likely to fit

their circumstances and contribute to improved results.

## **Strengthen Parent Involvement**

The general direction of Title I parent involvement policies and compacts on supporting learning is consistent with research, but options that would strengthen implementation include:

- Having schools report annually on measurable indicators of the effectiveness of parent involvement, as reflected in their own policies and compacts.
- Consolidating or coordinating parent involvement provisions across all elementary and secondary programs that have them to form one uniform parent provision. Such programs include Title I; Even Start Family Literacy; Education of Migratory Children; Parental Information and Resource Centers; Impact Aid; Education for Homeless Children and Youth; Magnet Schools; 21st Century Community Learning Centers; Indian Education; Technology for Education; and Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities.
- Strengthening parent involvement activities in the early elementary grades in the areas of supporting reading and family literacy and in the middle and high school grades to encourage students to take challenging courses.

## **Focus on Accountability**

**The use of school profiles designed to report school results and progress has been shown to be a powerful tool for accountability and school improvement. However, profiles often do not effectively reach parents and community members.** They tend to be difficult to read, even for the well-educated parent. They are also limited in their scope of information, with few school report cards presenting information on teacher quality or student rates of progress. Also schools are limited by a lack of comparable statewide or national information on what they are able to accomplish. The federal government should facilitate state and local school district efforts to provide coherent, comparative information on school progress to their communities.

**The reauthorization should also ensure that accountability provisions identify schools in need of improvement based on the best measures available to states and districts-regardless of whether their final assessment systems are in place.** Schools already identified for improvement, should remain so; time should not be lost as a result of reauthorization in identifying and reaching schools with the greatest needs.

**Reauthorization should address eliminating dual accountability systems.** For Title I to be an effective lever for improvement, it needs to be aligned and supportive of the systems states are creating.

**Finally, Congress and those responsible for implementing and supporting Title I programs should recognize that state and local systems of standards, assessments and accountability are in flux and are likely to keep changing over time.** Even established systems such as those in Kentucky and Kansas, which were forerunners in the development of aligned systems of standards and assessments, have revised their efforts to reflect priorities of their state legislatures and boards. The law should recognize this and offer states and districts the flexibility to continue to implement measures of school accountability under these conditions.

## **SUMMARY**

***This National Assessment of Title I has examined the program in the context of the burgeoning standards-based reform movement in states and school districts. Though there has clearly been progress in implementing standards at all levels, full implementation in classrooms across the country has yet to be accomplished. The new directions proposed for reauthorization are designed to help speed up standards implementation, to help all children achieve at high levels. Reauthorization should address the continuing challenges that undercut Title I's capacity to be a stimulus and support***

*for better results for our nation's at-risk students.*

###

[Executive Summary (Part 2 of 3)]



Return to Elementary and Secondary Education with Title I

mail to [esed@ed.gov](mailto:esed@ed.gov)

*Last update March 2, 1999 (jls).*



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

## FAX TRANSMITTAL

TO:

Nella Tarden -Mary Burdett - ~~PH. 8~~

PHONE:

FAX:

456-2878690-8425

FROM:

Julie Green

PHONE:

401-30216

FAX: (202) 401-0596

PAGE(S) TO FOLLOW:

14 + survey

MESSAGE:

after school info

## CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This transmission is intended for and restricted to the named addressee only. It may contain confidential and/or privileged information. If you receive this transmission in error, you are notified that you are prohibited from reading, copying, or disseminating the transmission. Please call (202) 401-3000 to arrange for return of any transmission sent in error. Thank you.

 **UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION****NEWS**

FOR RELEASE: September 24, 1998

Contact: Julie Green (202) 401-3026

**Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by  
U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley  
After-School Press Conference**

Thank you. From everything I've heard so far this morning, it is clear to me that after-school is one of the hottest issues in American education today.

The "normal" school day usually begins about 8:30 and ends at 3. But do we really think that children's minds work about 6-1/2 hours a day? Nothing could be further from the truth. We know that children's minds are working all the time, and we must give these young minds as many positive opportunities to grow and learn as we can. That is why I am so delighted that the national poll conducted by the Mott Foundation found that 93 percent of all Americans want to make daily after-school programs available to all children.

What I find so striking is that every segment of society seems to favor enhanced after-school programs. This includes Republicans, Democrats, and independents; people who live in cities and rural areas; and parents and non-parents alike.

I have not seen so much support for any idea since sliced bread. President Clinton, Vice President Gore, and I have long recognized that providing parents with after-school activities for their children is a safe and smart idea.

After-school programs can help students to strengthen basic skills and explore new skills, like the arts and technology, in a safe haven. After-school programs can strengthen families and keep working parents from worrying; they can keep communities more secure and help them fight crime; and they can make the school the thriving center of the community.

That is why the Clinton Administration has called for raising federal support from \$40 million to \$200 for after-school programs. This would allow us to develop or enhance after-school programs in 4,000 schools affecting 500,000 children. I note that the Mott poll shows that the overwhelming majority of Americans think that this is the right kind of activity for the federal government to do, since it is done in partnership with schools, parents, and community organizations.

I want to thank the Mott Foundation and Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates and the Tarrance Group for helping to bring this issue to the attention of the American people. Their work has already triggered widespread interest.

- MORE -

That is why today, I am announcing a new media partnership to support and encourage after-school enrichment programs. "People" Magazine, NBC, the Entertainment Industry Foundation, the Ad Council, the Mott Foundation, and the U. S. Department of Education are all joining forces to reach out to the public and encourage quality after-school programs. Leeza Gibbons will serve as one of our several celebrity spokespersons.

I also want to thank everyone at Hine Junior High School for their hospitality. This includes DC Superintendent, Arlene Ackerman; Principal, Bennie Adams, and all the children who have come out to see us.

If America is to lead the world in the 21st century, we've got to modernize schools and schooling. Keeping all the learning resources locked up after school hours and during the summer months just makes no sense. Today, we have taken an important step toward expanding learning time for America's young people and preparing them for the difficult challenges of the 21st century.

Thank you all very much.

###



CHARLES STEWART  
MOTT FOUNDATION

# NEWS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11 am, SEPT. 24, 1998

## POLL FINDS OVERWHELMING SUPPORT FOR AFTERSCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS TO KEEP KIDS SAFE AND SMART

A new national poll found that Americans overwhelmingly endorse the expansion of afterschool programs, including 80 percent who said they would be willing to raise their taxes to offer programs to children.

The poll found strong support for afterschool programs across party lines and among parents and non-parents. Ninety-three percent of all respondents said they favor making safe, daily enrichment programs available to all children.

A bipartisan polling team comprised of Lake Snell Perry & Associates and The Tarrance Group of Washington, D.C., conducted the survey of 800 registered voters nationwide on Aug. 17-20.

The poll – the most comprehensive ever done on this issue – was funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation of Flint, Michigan. The Mott Foundation has pledged to spend \$55 million over the next five years to provide training, technical assistance and evaluation support to the U.S. Department of Education's new 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers initiative and other afterschool programs.

"We are delighted to discover that Americans across the country share our belief that the hours after school are just as important as the time children spend in school," said William S. White, Chairman of the Mott Foundation. "Afterschool programs are an important first step in the process of changing not only how we educate our children, but also how we – school and community – come together to ensure their success."

Eighty percent of those surveyed said they would be willing to use additional federal or state tax dollars to fund afterschool programs in their community at a cost of \$1,000 per child, even if it raised their individual tax bills by \$10 a year. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

-more-

**Mott Afterschool Poll Findings - Page 2**

"The need and demand for high-quality afterschool programs is tremendous," said U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley. "From every state in the nation, from large cities to small rural areas, parents, teachers and children say they need before and afterschool programs to help keep young people in safe places, out of trouble and engaged in positive learning opportunities."

The poll found that voters view a lack of parental involvement and discipline as the biggest problems facing children, and consider safe, affordable afterschool programs to be part of the solution.

Underlying the strong support for afterschool programs by parents and non-parents alike is concern about safety and lack of supervision. When asked what they think about the hours after school, Americans surveyed said they are most worried about children being alone and unsupervised, followed by peer influence and time spent watching television. Only 4 out of 10 believe their communities offer programs to address this need.

In addition to providing supervision and safety, these programs are seen by respondents as a way to provide youth with access to computers and technology, provide opportunities to learn and master new skills, prepare children for a productive future, create excitement about learning, and provide tutoring.

The survey revealed strong support for afterschool programs similar to those funded by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program and a recently enacted \$50 million a year initiative in California. Both initiatives provide grants to school districts -- working in close partnership with community organizations -- to provide children with safe, enriching learning opportunities and more individualized attention before and after the traditional school day.

The poll found that Americans view the responsibility for setting up afterschool enrichment programs as shared by parent groups, community organizations, local governments and school districts. They agreed that the responsibility for paying for the programs should be shared by parents and federal, state and local governments.

To compare rural communities with urban, additional polling was done in Iowa and Washington, D.C., with few differences found. Both urban and suburban parents and citizens want afterschool programs to be available to the youth in their communities. Rural respondents say the biggest problem for parents is finding afterschool programs, while finding affordable programs tops the concerns of urban respondents.

-more-

**Mott Afterschool Poll Findings - Page 3**

The Mott Foundation is a private philanthropy founded in 1926 in Flint, Michigan, by automotive pioneer Charles Stewart Mott. The Mott Foundation is committed to supporting projects that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society.

More details about the poll can be found by visiting the Mott Web site at [www.mott.org](http://www.mott.org).

**For more information, contact:**

Celinda Lake  
Lake Snell Perry and Associates  
Phone: 202-776-9066

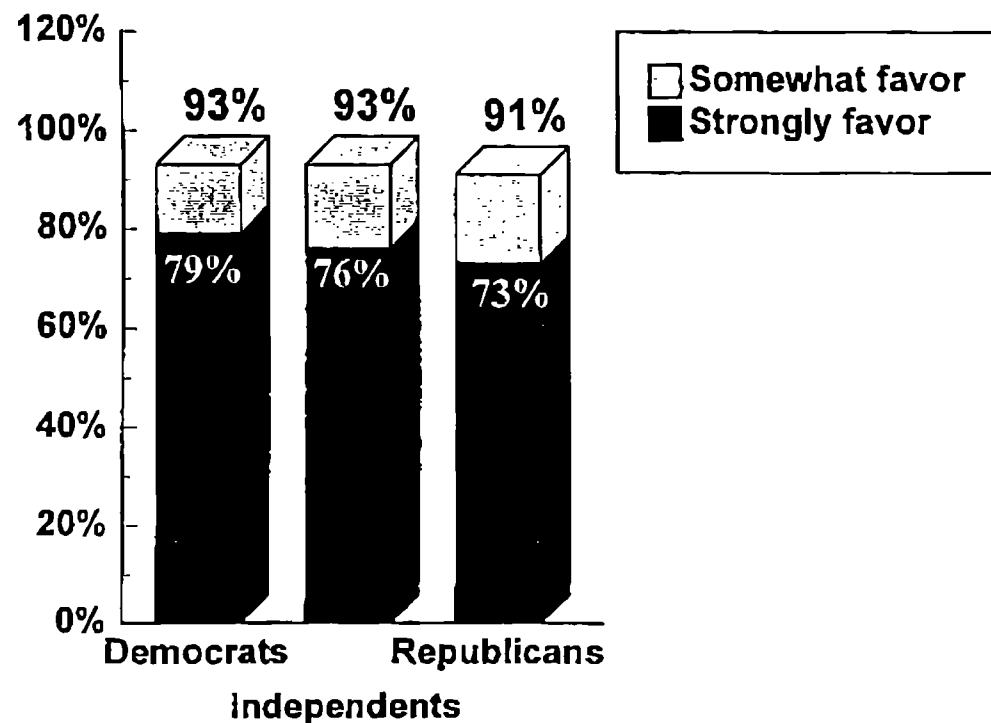
David Sackett  
The Tarrance Group  
Phone: 703-684-6688

Judy Y. Samelson  
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
Phone: 810-238-5651

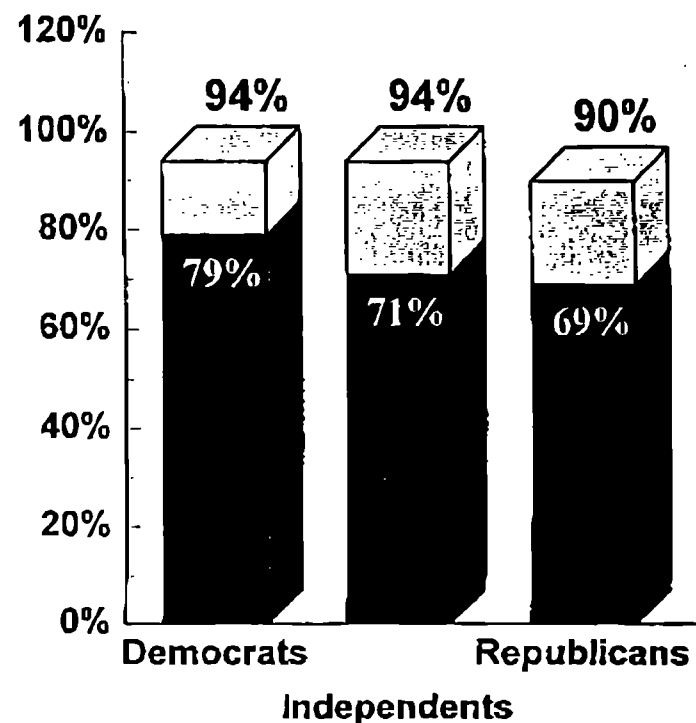


**At least nine out of ten voters across all three political parties favor providing school-based after school programs both in their community and to all children, with strong intensity behind these views.**

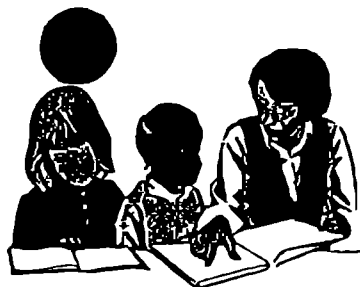
**\*Do you favor or oppose providing school-based enrichment programs during after school hours in your community?**



**\*Do you favor or oppose making daily after school programs available to all children?**

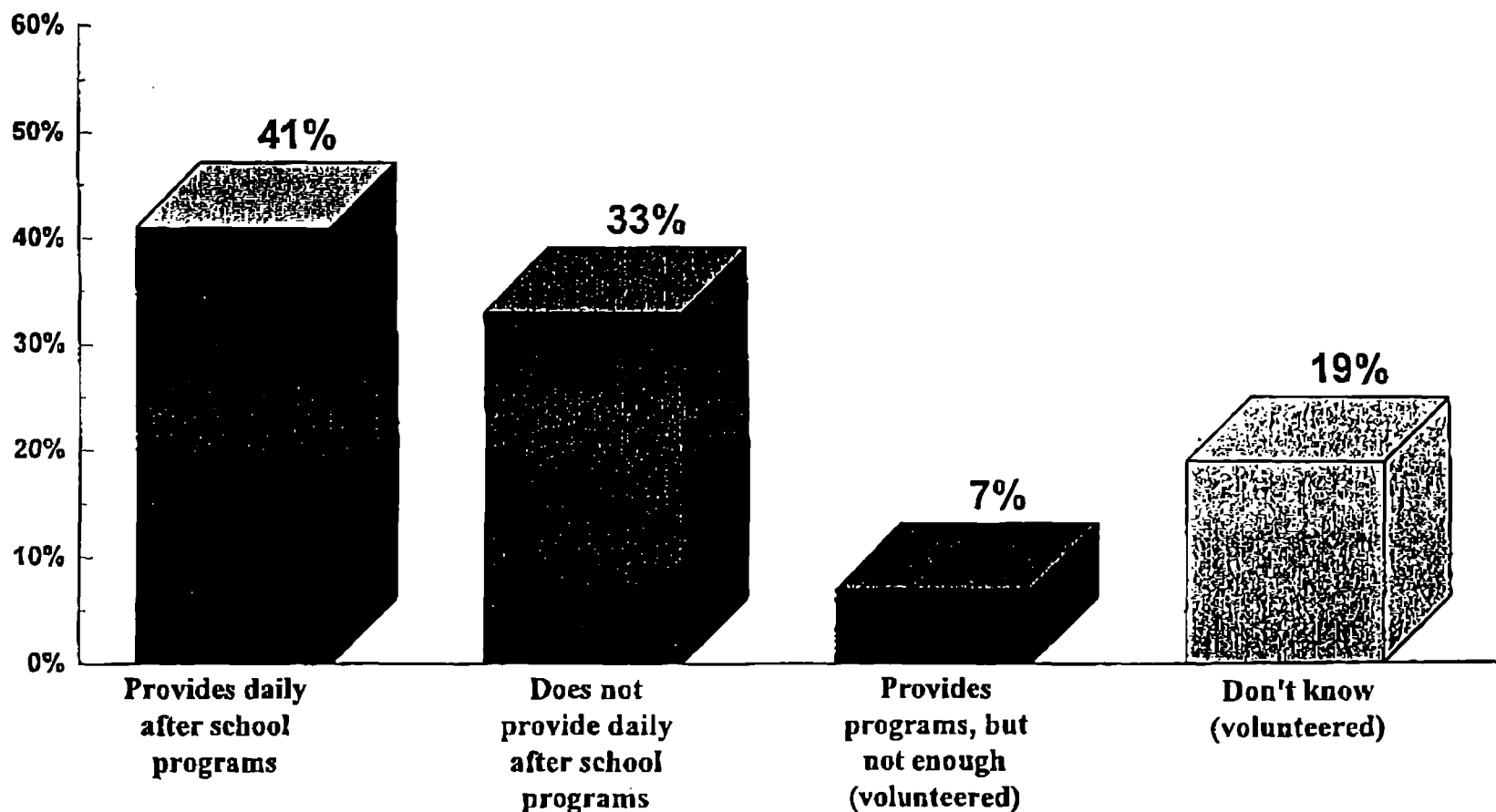


**\*Asked of only half the respondents**



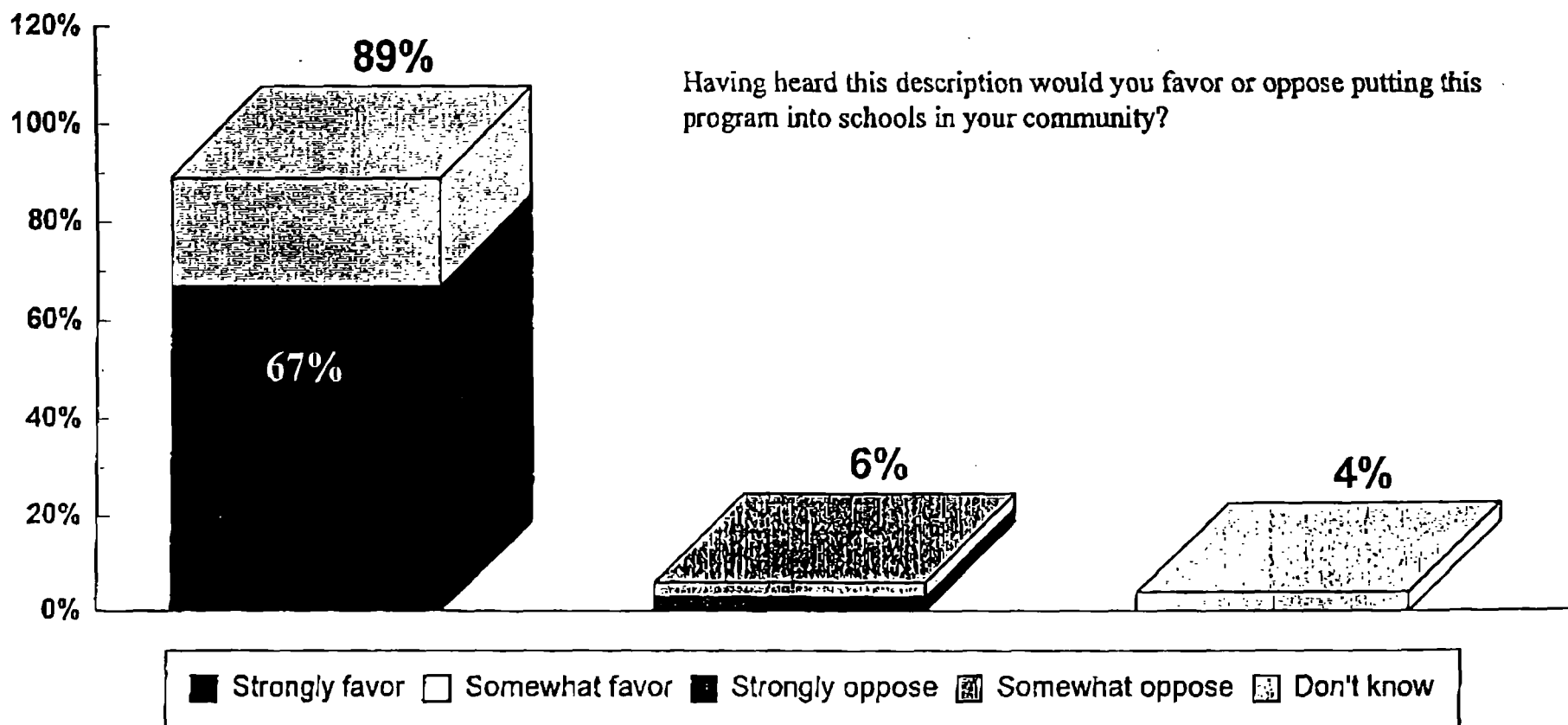
## Only four in ten voters say their community currently provides daily after school programs.

Does your community currently provide daily after school programs or does it not provide daily after school programs?





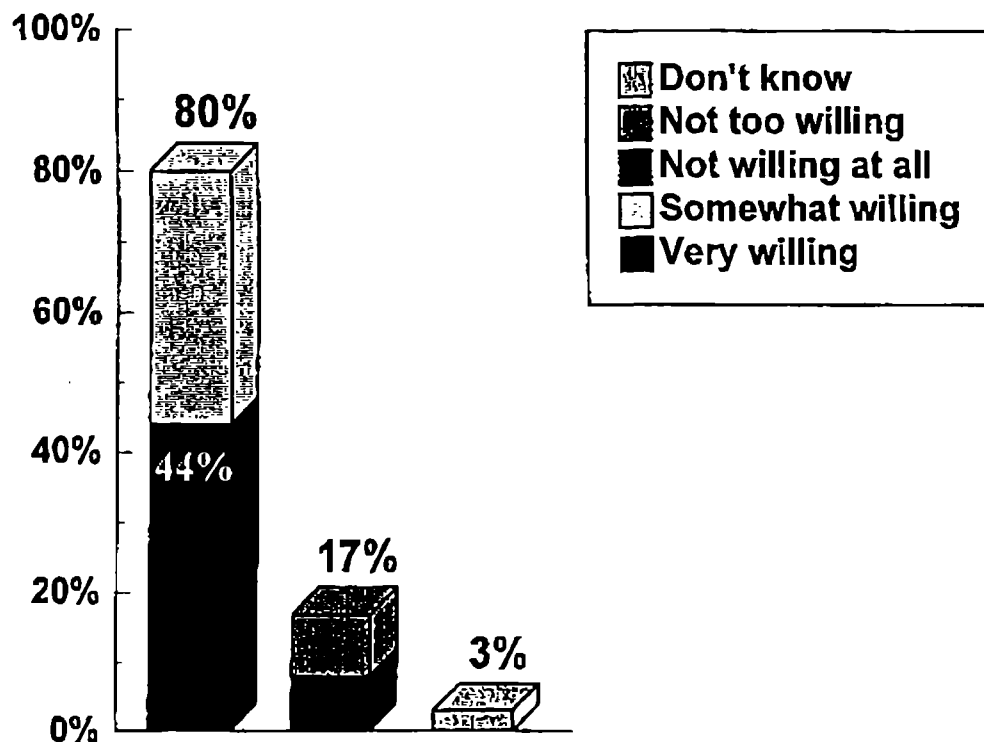
Voters overwhelmingly favor an after school program in public school buildings after hearing the description, with a full two-thirds favoring it strongly. Strong majorities of every demographic group strongly favor this program.



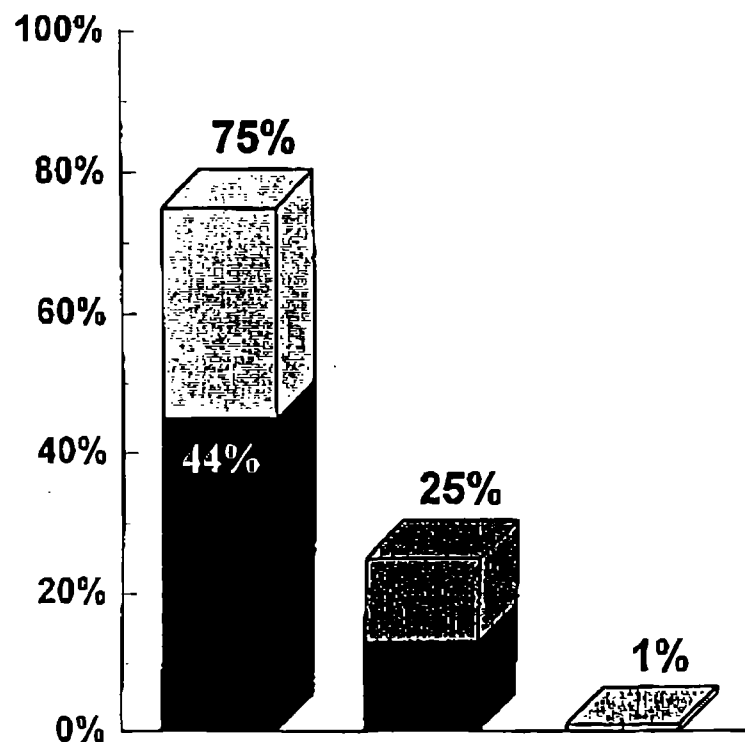


In addition, more than seven in ten voters are willing to pay to make these programs available, with over four in ten voters saying they are very willing. Slightly more voters are willing to pay \$10 more in taxes a year for programs in their community than are to make programs available to all children, but the intensity remains.

\*This program will cost \$1,000 per child, per school year, how willing would you be to use additional federal or state taxpayer money to put these school-based programs in your community even if it raises your taxes \$10 a year?



\*This program will cost \$1,000 per child, per school year, how willing would you be to use additional federal or state taxpayer money to make these programs available to all children even if it raises your taxes \$10 a year?

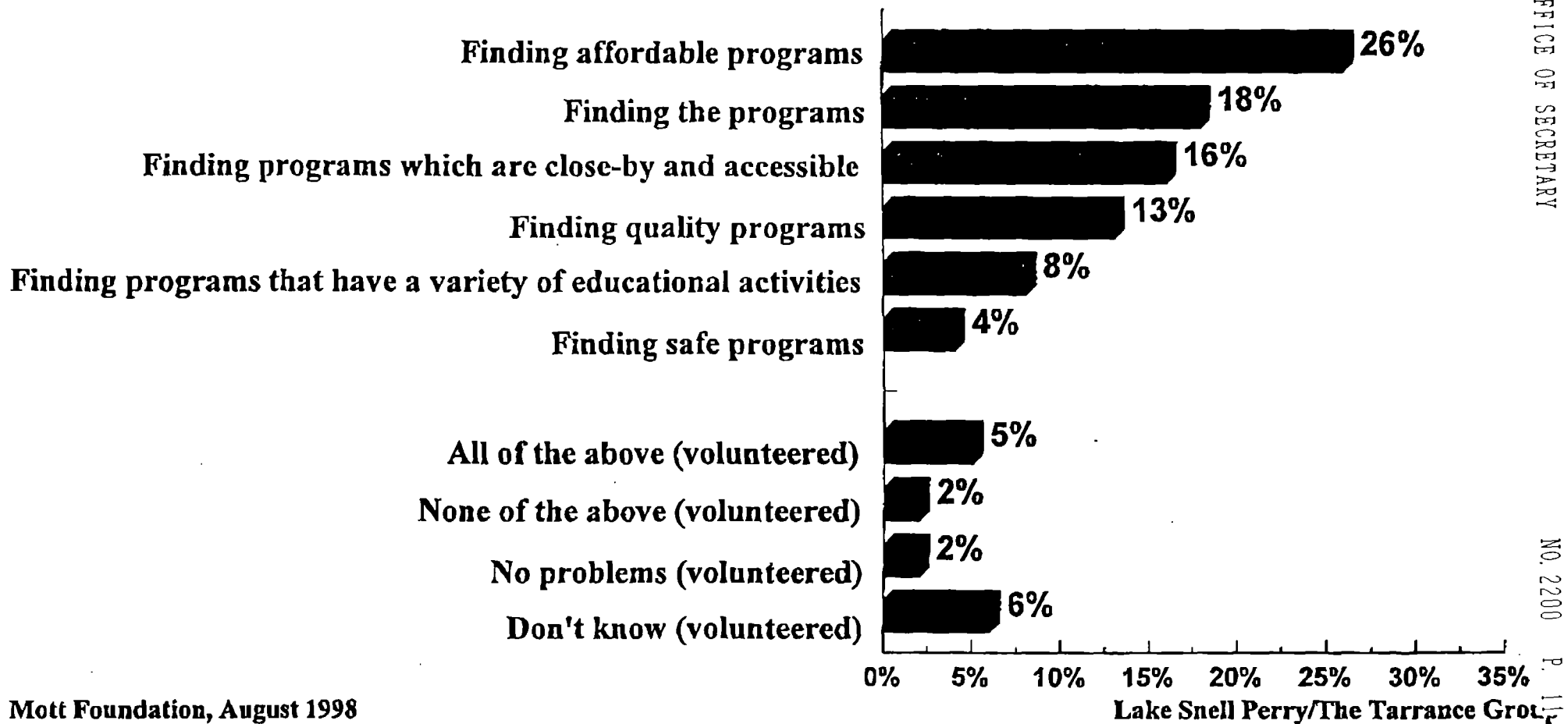


\*Asked of only half the respondents



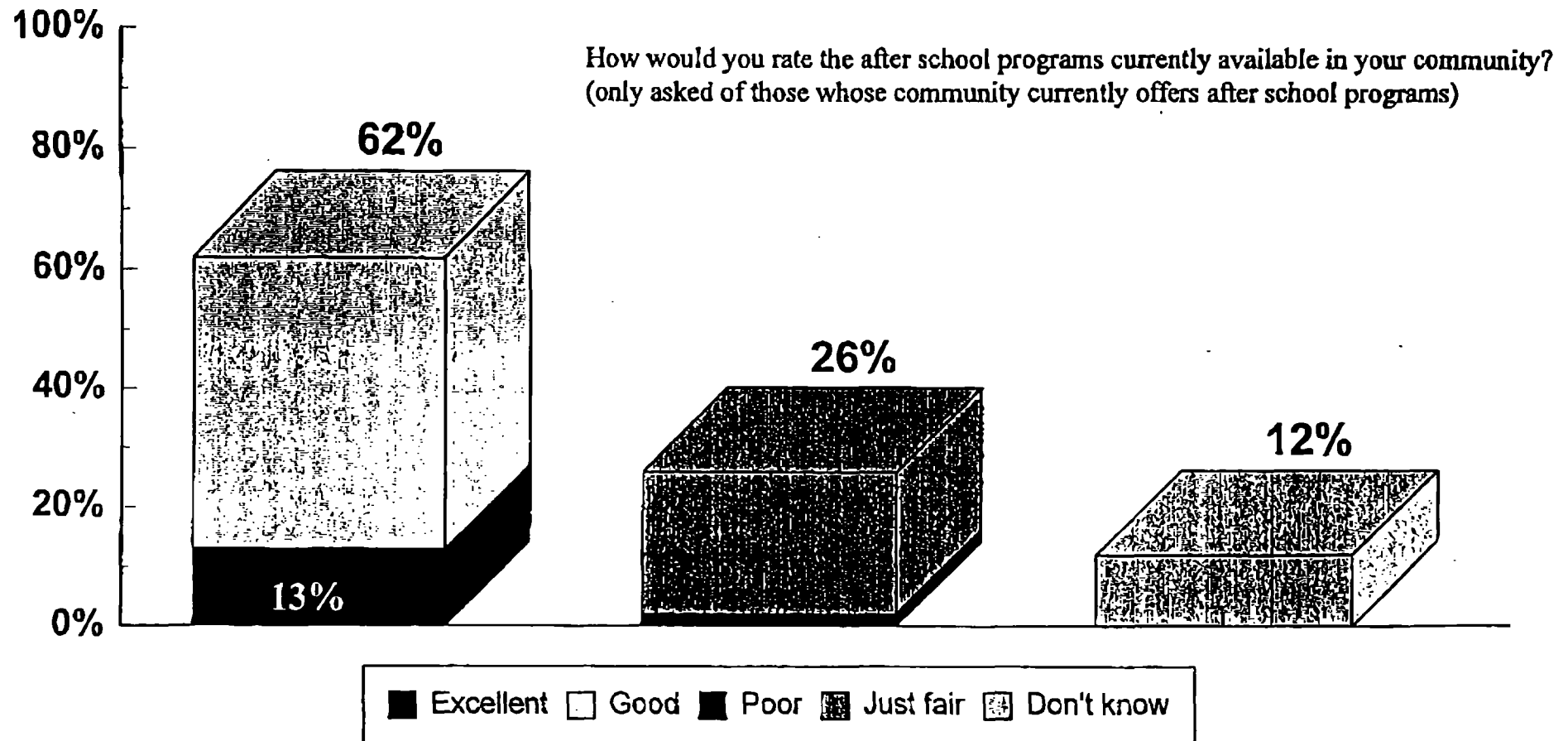
Voters believe parents have the most problems finding affordable programs, finding the programs, and finding programs that are close-by and accessible.

Which of the following would you say is the biggest problem facing parents in your community when it comes to after school programs?





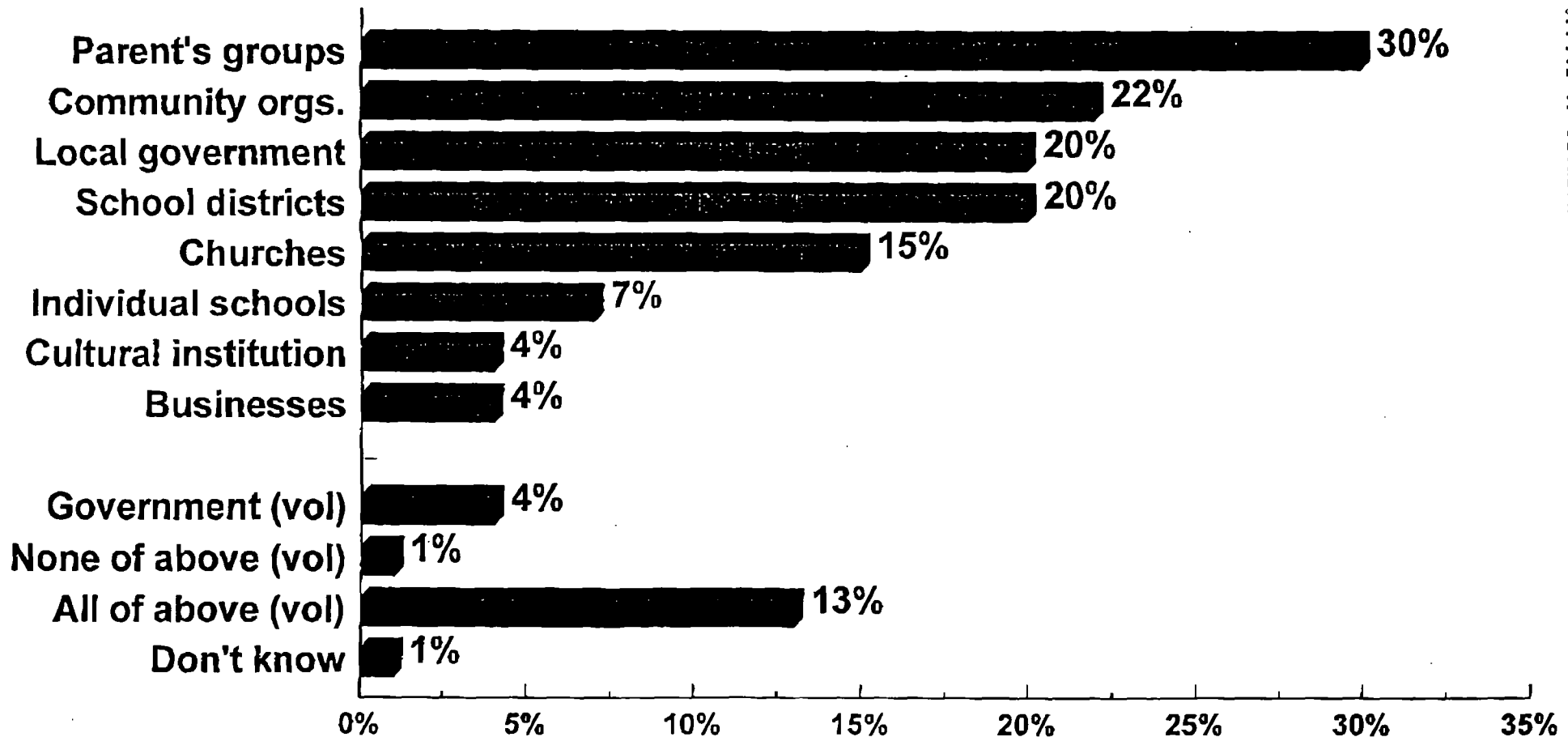
Of those who currently have after school programs in their communities, more than six in ten say the programs are excellent or good. However, a quarter of voters say the quality of their programs is just fair or poor. No demographic group rates programs more negatively than positively.





Voters believe that parent's and community groups, local government, schools districts, and churches should be the most responsible for setting up after school programs.

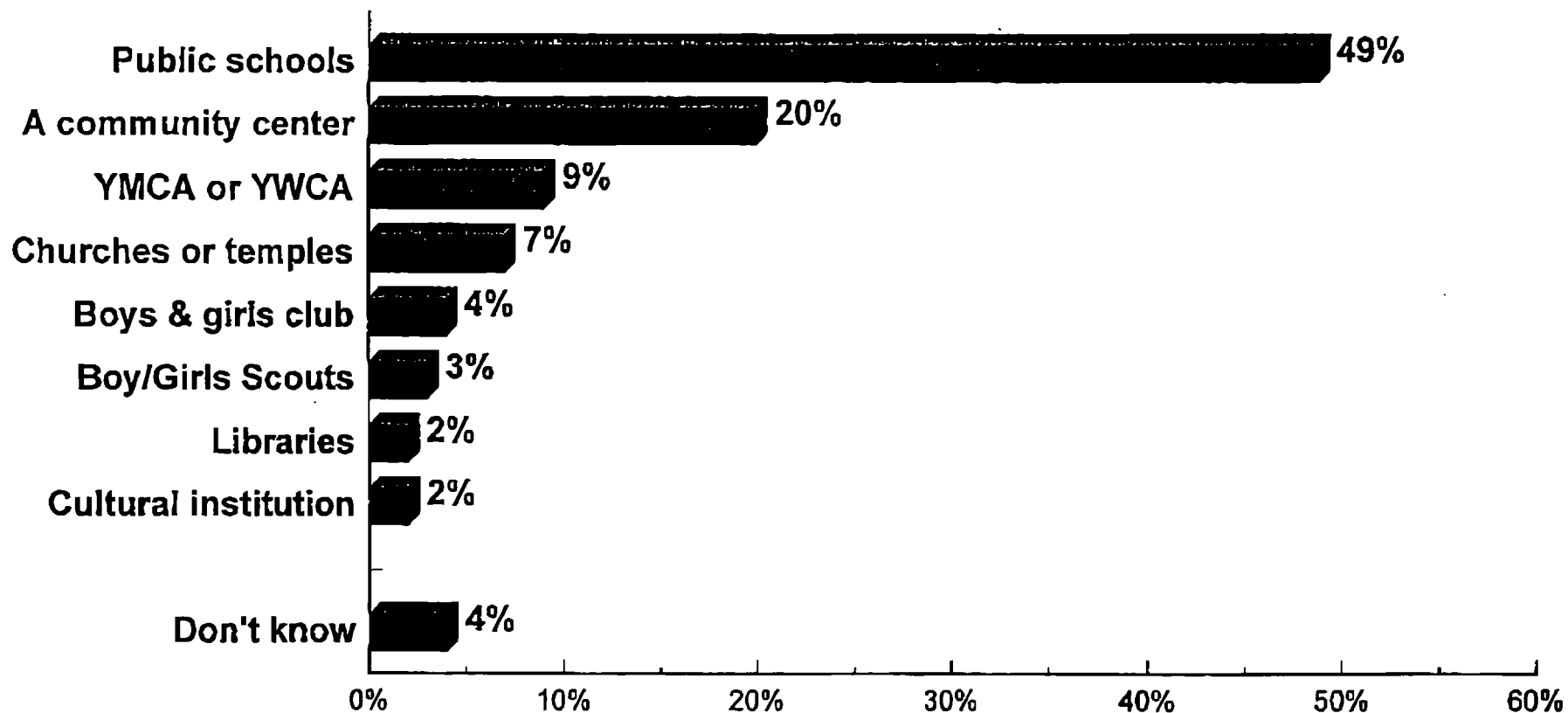
Of the following, who do you think should be responsible for setting up after school programs in your community? (multiple responses)



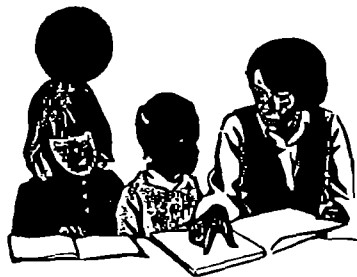


# Nearly half of voters want these programs to take place in public schools, followed by community centers.

Where would you most want to see after school programs take place?

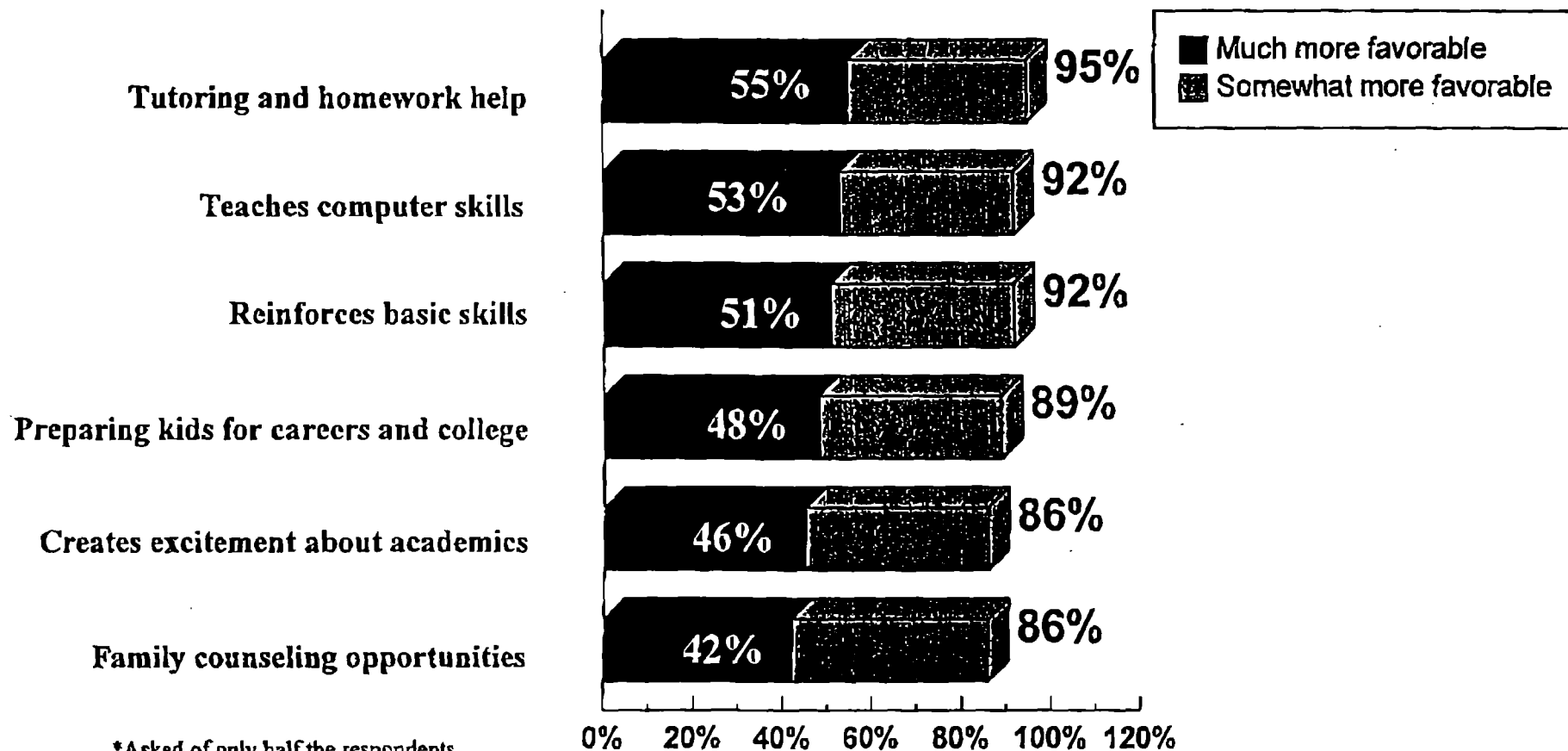


Rural Iowa is less likely to favor using school buildings (39%) than their urban counter part in DC (47%)



**A majority of voters are much more favorable towards a program that includes tutoring and homework help, teaches computer skills, and reinforces basic skills.**

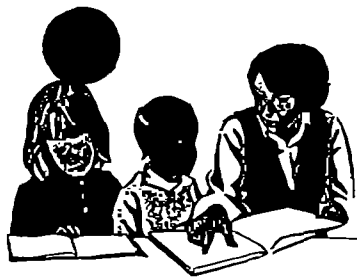
\*Now I am going to read you a list of activities which may be included in after school programs and I want you to tell me if you would be more or less favorable towards an after school program which includes that activity.



\*Asked of only half the respondents

Mott Foundation, August 1998

Lake Snell Perry/The Tarrance Group



# Voters see an abundance of results from after-school programs. Voters see the results of after-school programs in both society and in the individual development of the child.

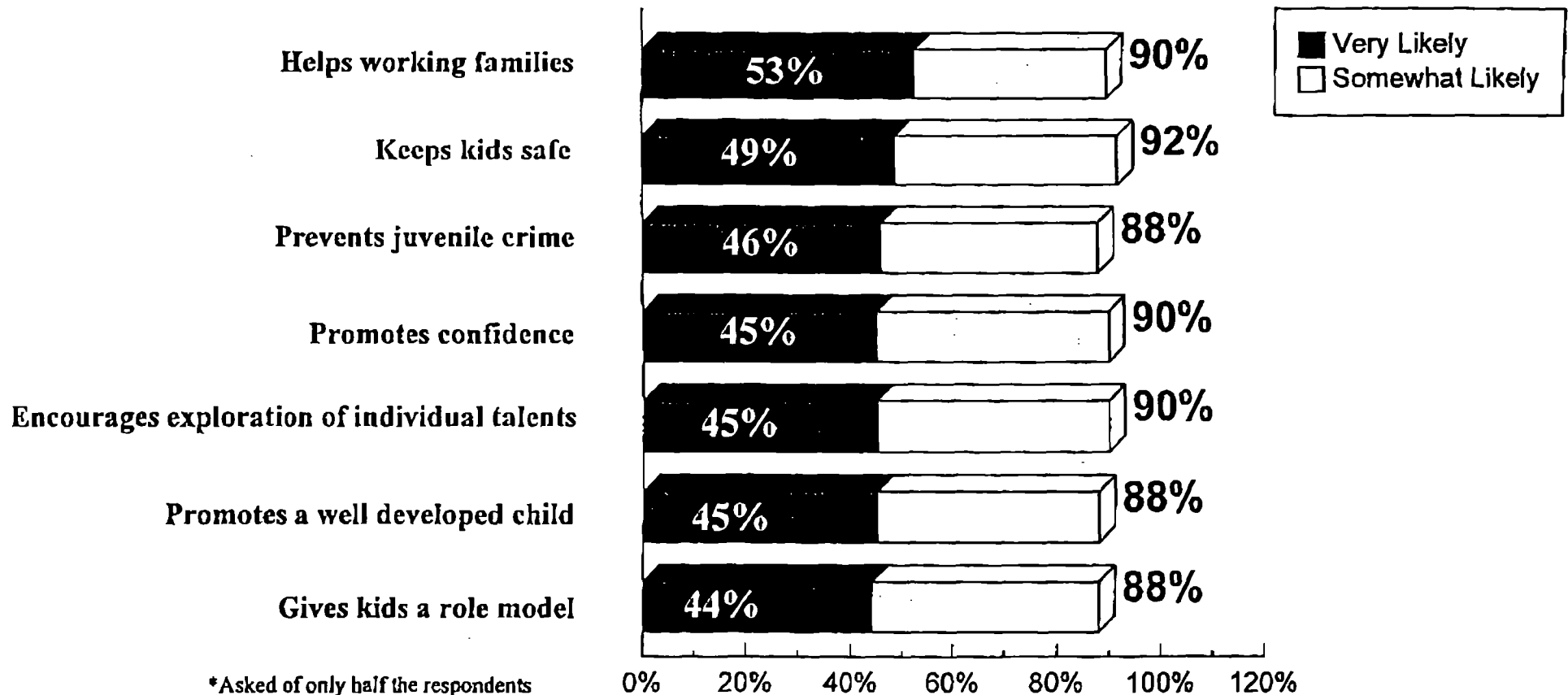
SEP. 24, 1998 9:35AM

OFFICE OF SECRETARY

NO. 2200

P. 16

\*Now I am going to read to you a list of items that could result from an after school program. After each item, please tell me how likely you think that will happen as a result of a student attending a school-based after school program --very likely to happen, somewhat likely to happen, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely to happen.



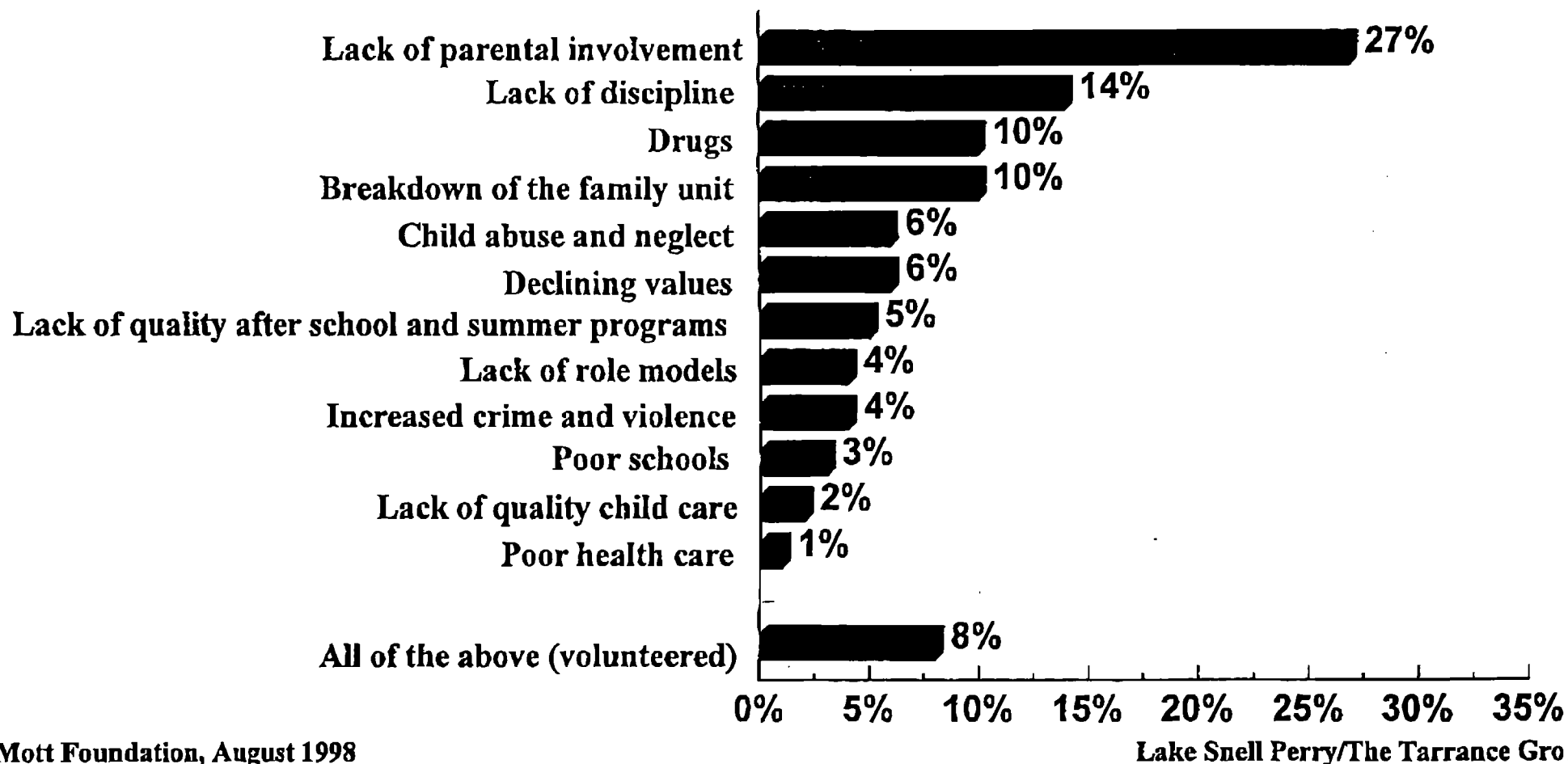
Mott Foundation, August 1998

Lake Snell Perry/The Tarrance Group



# The lack of parental involvement and discipline, drugs and the breakdown of the family unit are the biggest problems facing children today, according to voters.

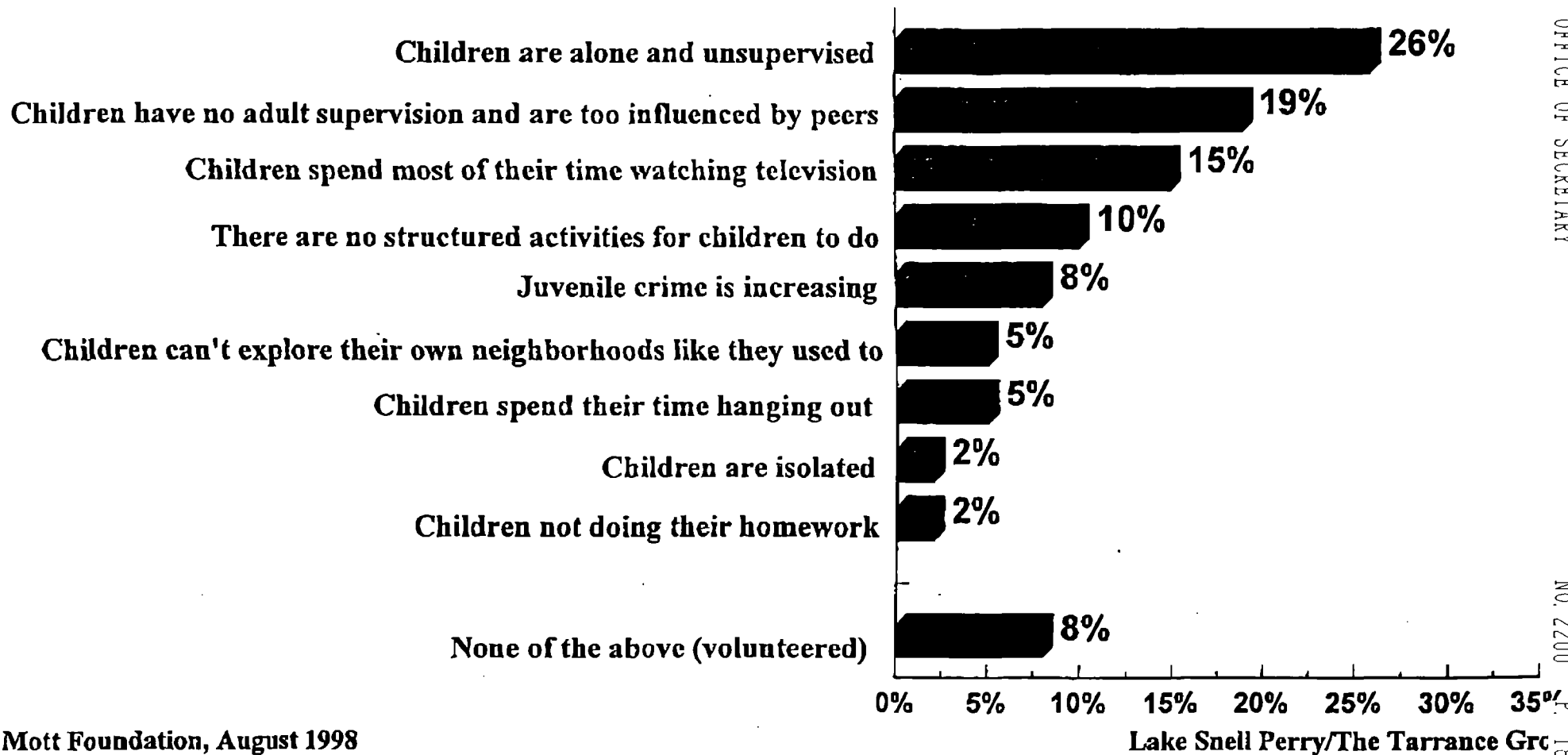
Now I'm going to read you a list of problems facing children, please tell me which of the following would you say is the biggest problem currently facing children in your community?





When thinking of after school hours, voters worry most that children are alone and unsupervised and secondly, that children are too influenced by their peers.

Thinking specifically about the time children spend after school hours, of the following what worries you most about this time after school?



THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 3, 1994

SPEECH OF THE FIRST LADY  
AT NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION CONVENTION  
New Orleans, Louisiana

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you for that warm welcome. Thank you for all that you have done and are doing every single day across this country for our children. Thank you for your leadership at the local, state and national level on behalf of education and other issues that affect our children and our nation's future. Thank you, Keith Geiger, for your leadership and for your commitment to making this country be what it should be for our children. And thank you all for honoring me with the Mary Hatwood-Futrell\* Award that Keith delivered.

I was honored to receive it and very pleased to have a chance to visit with Keith recently when he came to the White House to deliver it on behalf of the NEA. I am also delighted to be here with all of your officers and your wonderful staff in Washington. And I'm pleased that I could bring with me one of your former staff members, Debra Delee\*, who is now doing an excellent job at the Democratic National Committee.

I was fortunate enough to view the video that you just saw, and it was a little difficult for me seeing again the faces of the people whom I have met; particularly the children who read their letters about health care. And I was very pleased that you had a chance also to see their faces and to hear their words and to know how deep their concerns are.

But you know that because you see children on a daily basis. You understand that our nation's obligation to improve the health and education of our people is not simply an economic or political imperative. It is a moral imperative. It speaks to our basic humanity and who we are as a people.

And that is why, with your help, this President has proposed a comprehensive agenda to safeguard the future of America's children. And I want for a minute just to focus on what you and the President and supportive members of Congress have already accomplished, particularly in the field of education.

If we think back to two years ago when my husband was running for president, and when he came and spoke to many of you, we did not believe then that we would have 3 million new jobs as we do today, 18 months into a new administration. We did not believe then that we would begin to get our fiscal house in order and see the kind of decline in the deficits that is real and absolutely putting us on the right track. We did not believe then we would see the list of legislative accomplishments that were listed on the video ranging from beginning to get some control over handguns in this country through the Brady bill and the ban on assault weapons.

We did not think we would have the kind of legislative achievements that someone who told you, as my husband did, that he wanted to be the education president, could achieve in a relatively short period of time. But the record speaks for itself, and despite

often people's attempts to deny or distort what you and this administration are accomplishing.

Finally, if you are, as I am, a believer that the truth wins out, then the truth is winning in America and will continue to win on behalf of the people of this country.

The President promised a lifelong learning system. And with only a few months to go in the 103rd Congress, look at what has already been achieved to realize that vision. The Corporation for National and Community Service will be placing 20,000 young people in our communities and our neighborhoods to do national service starting this fall, thanks to you and your support for national and community service.

We have reformed the Head Start program and reauthorized it. And because of that, we will, if we see our reauthorization through and achieve the appropriations we require, many thousands more young children having a chance for a real head start for their educational experience.

We have with your help and guidance achieved a landmark piece of educational legislation with the Goals 2000 education legislation to educate America. It is a piece of legislation that does not tell you from the top of Washington what you should be doing in your classrooms and in your schools. It sets goals and standards, but then, because of this President's belief that the best solutions for education reside in the interactions between children and their teachers and among teachers working together, it says you figure out how to achieve these standards. You are the real experts in education in America.

But let me warn you -- there are forces at work in this country who do not believe in you and do not believe in our children and do not believe this country should have goals for our education system that you and our children achieve together. Those forces want to undo the work that is represented in Goals 2000. I ask you to stand firm for the President's vision that this country can achieve goals because we have dedicated educators, concerned parents, and students who want to learn and can do so if given the encouragement.

This President's vision has already resulted in the School to Work Opportunities Act. What a great piece of legislation, that again, you helped achieve. For too long, the children who do not go on to college, the forgotten half who do not share the kind of final educational experience that most of us in this hall do, carrying our four-year degrees out of our colleges, for too long those young people have been ignored by our education and social systems. And it is finally time, and this President understands it, when we hold out a hand to young people who want the additional skills and training, not every person has to go to college to be a success. Let's give success to these young people who can serve their country and their families.

And for all who do want to go on to college, one of the most important pieces of legislation that has been passed in 50 years was passed in this Congress again, thanks to the President's vision and to your help. We finally now have cut through the red tape, the bureaucracy, the extra administrative costs, to create a system that will permit direct lending for college loans to the young people who need them in order to go on to college to realize their own personal dreams.

That is what has been achieved, and I do not know any

president or any secretary of education or any group of people who are concerned about education as you are, who have more to be proud of because of what has been achieved. But we face two more legislative challenges before Congress adjourns.

First, we have to complete work on the reform and reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It has passed the House of Representatives; it awaits action in the full Senate.

And we also have to work to create support for the Reemployment Act of 1994 which will give workers an alternative to what we now call the unemployment system. We don't need an unemployment system in America. We need a reemployment system in America.

And, finally, we face the challenge of funding adequately the education and training reforms such as Head Start and Goals 2000 that has already been passed in the Congress. We understand, and my husband understands, because he was the first president in many years to present a responsible budget with trustworthy numbers. He was the first president to present three budgets in a row with declining deficits for the first time since Harry Truman was president.

So he understands what it means to be fiscally responsible, but he also understands that within those fiscal restraints, there is no better investment than to invest in the education and training of all of our children from preschool all the way through their working lives. And we need your help to make that happen.

So much has been accomplished despite the naysayers, despite the pessimists, despite those who deny reality. But we still have a long way to go before we can honestly say we have created an environment where no child will be left behind, where every child will be given the kind of security and education and health care that that child needs. But we are beginning to put together not only the vision but the structure to make that happen so that our children will be better educated, they will be safer, they will be able, if we pass the crime bill once and for all after seven years of trying to, walk to school in safety again, to play in parks in safety again.

But as part of that vision that the President has talked about, we know that too many of our children come to school every day without adequate health care. Too many of our children face problems because of health in their families where the families are not secure or able to provide for their children. Health care should be, must be, can be a right for every American if we act and we act now.

All of you know, because you see the children of our country, why we are struggling so hard to achieve what is called universal coverage, what the President calls guaranteed insurance for every American. You see the stories. Every one of you, whether you're a teacher, administrator, a cafeteria worker, a school bus driver, or anyone else who works to keep our schools going every day, you have a story that you could tell.

I have more stories than I wish I had. I have been privileged for more than 25 years to work on behalf of children's needs. I have been in and out of schools and hospitals, in and out of homes and community centers. I have looked into the eyes of far too many children whose health needs are not being met. I have listened to far too many parents who tell me how they cannot manage to meet their own children's health needs.

I don't want to have to keep hearing these stories. I don't want to have to keep receiving the now more than 1 million letters from children and mothers and fathers that I have read. And yet, I know that the struggle to insure every American is far from over, despite how much progress we have made toward that goal. In many respects, it is now just beginning as we move to the House and Senate floors with bills that will guarantee health care coverage and have to fight through the opposition to that goal.

I want to speak for just a few minutes about what we should be trying to achieve. You understand it. The NEA and many of you in your local and state affiliates have supported health care reform, and I am very grateful. It has made a difference. But now we must redouble our efforts. Because, as with any significant piece of social legislation, you will face very strong and organized opposition.

I heard Keith say, as in so many ways, Eleanor Roosevelt was here before I. She was here before most of us. In her persistent articulation of what needs to be fixed in America, she pricked our consciences. It has been said that what she did was to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.

And that is what makes her live in our memories and why she is such an example to millions of people all over the world today. Because she used her position of privilege, her position to speak out on behalf of those who had no voice. You must do the same. You must join with the President, me, all of us in Washington who are trying to give voice to the literally millions and millions of Americans for whom this debate over health care reform is not apolitical issue, not an abstract, academic discussion, but literally a matter of life or death.

Who are these Americans? How do we think about them? I suggest you look to your right, your left, in front of you and behind you. Because the Americans of whom I speak are all of us. There is not one of us who has the security in this, the greatest of all countries and economies, that we will have health insurance at an affordable price when we need it at any time in our lives now and into the future. For too many Americans, they are one job away from not having health security. They are one divorce away from not having it. They are one illness or accident away. No one in America except the very rich are secure. And that is wrong. Every American deserves health security.

This debate will come down to whether or not the Congress of the United States is able to hear and see the problems in front of their eyes and extend health insurance coverage to every American or whether they will hear the well-organized voices of opposition. But that is the way it has always been. Think back. At every point when we were attempting to provide security for every American, we heard the same arguments against doing that. Social security was an issue in the eyes of the opposition that would bankrupt America, would make people lazy, give them no incentive to work to save for their old age. Every argument you hear today was heard then 60 years ago. Thankfully, we had members of Congress who heard and acted on what they saw in front of their eyes -- namely, that older people in America deserve to have their retirements secure.

And then 30 years later, we face the same opposition with Medicare. Medicare was going to absolutely destroy our American way of life, destroy American medicine and our health care system. Thankfully, we had leadership that saw what was happening with older Americans and acted to provide them with health security. We've

heard the same arguments when it comes to the minimum wage. Oh, my goodness, if you raise the minimum wage, no businesses will be able to continue. Small business will be bankrupted. There will be no opportunities for economic expansion.

Again, the opposition was wrong and the people who care about what happens to ordinary, average working, middle-class Americans were right. And what we have to do is to build on social legislation like social security, Medicare, the minimum wage, all of which made America stronger to make sure we give universal health care coverage to every American because that will make America stronger as well.

Now during the next weeks, people will say, well, we don't really need universal coverage. We can get by without it. Well you know that that is just not the case. Universal coverage is essential to help control and contain health care costs. Without it, those of you in this hall who have health insurance will continue to subsidize people who do not. You will continue to pay for those whose employers and those employees do not pay for themselves. That is not fair.

If you have everyone in the system, you can begin to make sure that costs do not get shifted from the uninsured and the underinsured to those of us with insurance. That is the kind of system that will make it possible for us to take care of more people, to emphasize primary and preventive health care, to make sure that we retain choice because we will have a system in which individuals will get to choose who their doctor is, to make sure that what we do will put us on a firm financial footing for the future.

And yet there will be those who say, no, we cannot do this. It will not work. Let me suggest to you there's a very simple set of questions to ask. Those who say universal coverage will not work, ask them if they want to repeal social security or Medicare. Ask them if they're willing to give up on what those two programs have done to make Americans secure. If you hear from members of Congress that they do not believe that hard-working, middle-class Americans should have health insurance coverage, ask them then why they have figured out a way to give members of Congress guaranteed, affordable health care coverage.

Some members of Congress do not like it when I say that. They do not like it when I suggest that you ask your member of Congress, especially those who are not in favor of universal coverage, why they can do it for themselves and not for your neighbors, friends and relatives. But for those members of Congress who are fighting hard to give Americans what they have which is guaranteed, affordable health care coverage, make sure they know that you will recognize their commitment and help support them in the battles to come.

If you strip away all of the rhetoric, what you have basically are several camps of opponents. You have opponents who ideologically do not believe that we should extend health care coverage to every American. I respect that position, but I think they are dead wrong, and they are not living in the real world that you and I see every single day.

There are opponents of health care reform who are concerned that health care reform, especially building on our employer-employee system, will cost jobs. Remind them that that was the same argument used against social security, Medicare, and the minimum wage, and it never, ever was proved to have any effect. What we are asking for is health security for everyone in a private system

where the employers and the employees bear their fair share. That is an American solution to the health care system problem that we confront in our country.

And finally, there are opponents, who for their own political purposes, do not want this president to continue the success he has enjoyed for the last 18 months. They want to turn back the clock to a time when the rich were taken care of, the poor were subsidized, but everybody in the middle was basically left out. This president ran for the presidency because he was sick and tired of everybody in this country who works hard for a living, plays by the rules, makes a contribution, being forgotten in Washington. And that is why he has worked so hard to change this national agenda.

But unless Americans understand what is at stake in this health care debate and how many issues are wrapped up in it, then the opponents will think they have a free ride, that they can continue to be negative, they can continue to say no, they can continue to feed gridlock and partisanship when what this country needs is to move beyond politics as usual, to move beyond partisan rhetoric. Health care is not a political issue. When you look in the eyes of a sick child, you are not looking at a Republican or a Democrat, you are looking at an American who deserves to be taken care of.

And so as we leave this hall, as you finish your assembly in a few days, please take home to every corner of this great country why you personally and why the NEA and why a majority of Americans favor universal coverage. In every single poll that has been done, more than 70 percent of Americans know what is right -- that is, universal coverage built on employer-employee system that contains costs.

And explain to your friends and neighbors that this is not just an economic issue -- although it is that -- it is because we are spending more money than we need to on our health care system. We can do better. We can actually extend care to more people if we are more efficient and careful and if we emphasize primary and preventive health care and begin to convince people that the emergency room is not their family doctor. We can save money and do a better job.

And tell your friends and neighbors that it's also a social issue. You know sometimes people say, and I know they write about me, they say, you know, I get so intense, I get so serious, you know, all of that. I really do have a sense of humor. I promise. But it's hard for me to be humorous about the problems I see in the health care system. I don't know how to make a joke out of the stories that I've heard. I don't know how anyone can ignore what all of us see. This is a social problem that needs to be resolved. It is not fair -- (Tape ends.)

News



Site Index



latimes.com

A SECTION

HELP

Your Dream Rental is  
only a Click Away...



Friday, March 19, 1999

## Latino Dropout Rate Declines, Offering Hope

■ Education: Percentage with high school diplomas rises slightly.  
Statistics have been cause for alarm.

By MELISSA HEALY, Times Staff Writer

**W**ASHINGTON--A year after a commission of experts called the high school dropout rate among Latinos "shockingly and unacceptably high," the proportion of adult Latinos with high school diplomas inched upward, the Education Department reported Thursday.

From 1996 to 1997, the percentage of Latinos ages 18 to 24 who have completed high school crept from 61.9% to 66.7%. In the same period, the proportion of 16- to 24-year-old Latinos who said that they had dropped out of high school edged downward from 29.4% to 25.3%.

For educators intent on stemming the early departure of Latino students from school, the development provided a thin ray of hope. But they warned that the improvement is too small to be statistically significant and that the new figures fall far short of marking a reversal in a dismal dropout pattern for Latino high school students.

Walter G. Secada, a University of Wisconsin professor who has written extensively on the subject, said that the changes could be "a statistical hiccup" unless they are sustained over a longer time.

"That lowering of the dropout rate is not much variation," said Secada. "I want to wait and see a decrease over more than a year before I'll break out the champagne. One year barely deserves a bottle of water."

Over the last 25 years, the dropout rate for Latinos has been 2.5 times higher than that for African Americans and 3.5 times higher than for non-Latino whites. In California, where Latinos account for more than 30% of the population, their low rate of high school completion has helped drive the high-school graduation rate among 18- to 24-year-olds to a level below those of 48 other states and the District of Columbia.

Statewide, the data released Friday by the Education Department show that 80.6% of the state's 18- to 24-year-olds are either completing high school or have already done so. Only Louisiana and Nevada had lower levels, with 80.4% in

ADVERTISEMENT

Increase Your Income

what's  
new?

Louisiana and 76.6% in Nevada.

By a separate measure announced Thursday in the same report, however, California has made some improvements in driving down the number of students who leave high school early. During the 1995-96 year, the latest year for which such statistics are available, the state reported that 3.9% of all students in grades nine through 12 had quit school short of graduation. That was down from 4.4% in the 1994-95 school year and 5.3% in 1993-94.

The causes of the educational gap between Latinos and other ethnic and racial groups are unclear. Latinos on average have lower incomes and English-language proficiency than other racial and ethnic groups and are more likely to be recent immigrants. But none of these differences alone explains the difference in dropout rates.

Last year's report of the Hispanic Dropout Project galvanized a nationwide movement to reverse the trend. In addition, the Clinton administration has earmarked federal funds and created special programs to address the high rate of school failure among Latinos. As a result, from Los Angeles to New York to Texas, educators are focusing attention on programs that work to keep Latinos enrolled.

One of them is the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, which started in San Antonio in 1984 and has spread to cities such as Atlanta, Chicago and Washington. The program recruits Latino middle school students who are considered at high risk of dropping out to become tutors to Latino elementary school children, in effect making them role models for younger Latinos.

The dropout rate among the Valued Youth tutors has been 2%, compared with about 12% for children from comparable backgrounds who have not participated. Secada, who has surveyed dropout prevention programs across the country, lauded Lennox Middle School, part of an independent school system near Los Angeles International Airport, for its efforts to keep Latino students engaged.

Asked if there is a secret to keeping Latino students in school, Lennox Principal Michael D. Griffith stressed the importance of high expectations. "They need to see themselves as important in your eyes."

Copyright 1999 Los Angeles Times. All Rights Reserved

Search the archives of the Los Angeles Times for similar stories about: [DROPOUTS](#), [HIGH SCHOOLS -- UNITED STATES](#), [STUDENTS](#), [HISPANICS -- UNITED STATES](#), [STATISTICS](#). You will not be charged to look for stories, only to retrieve one.

---

News



Site Index



---

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS**

---

Findings from  
**THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION 1995**



**THE EDUCATIONAL  
PROGRESS OF  
HISPANIC STUDENTS**



---

**U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement**

**NCES 95-767**

---

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Richard W. Riley  
*Secretary*

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

Sharon P. Robinson  
*Assistant Secretary*

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Jeanne E. Griffith  
*Acting Commissioner*

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

The purpose of the Center is to collect and report "... statistics and information showing the condition and progress of education in the United States and other nations in order to promote and accelerate the improvement of American education."—Section 402(b) of the National Education Statistics Act of 1994 (20 U.S.C. 9001).

September 1995

*The text in this booklet was written by Thomas M. Smith of the Data Development Division of NCES and appears in **The Condition of Education, 1995**. Steven G. Klein of MPR Associates, Inc. adapted the content to this format, Andrea Livingston and Karen Singson edited the text, and Leslie Retallick and Lynn Sally designed the graphics and layout.*

---

## THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS OF HISPANIC STUDENTS

Education has always been seen as one means of upward mobility, especially for those who are socially and economically disadvantaged. Hispanic children are likely to be at an educational disadvantage relative to whites for several reasons, including a greater likelihood of living in poverty and lower average levels of parental education.<sup>1</sup> A larger percentage of Hispanic students also attend disadvantaged schools where the overall academic and supporting environments are less conducive to learning.<sup>2</sup> In addition, a much higher proportion of Hispanics than non-Hispanics are foreign born, meaning that Hispanic children are less likely to hear or speak English at home and are more likely to have limited English proficiency.

Although limited data availability often leads researchers to treat Hispanics as if they were a homogeneous group, the U.S. Hispanic population is diverse. The three largest Hispanic subgroups are Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans. Recent immigrants from Central and South America constitute a fourth group. These subgroups are concentrated in different parts of the United States, their economic circumstances vary, and the timing of their immigration differs. In this fourth publication in the series of *Findings from The Condition of Education*, overall trends for the U.S. Hispanic population are provided, with breakouts for the largest Hispanic subpopulations where data permit.

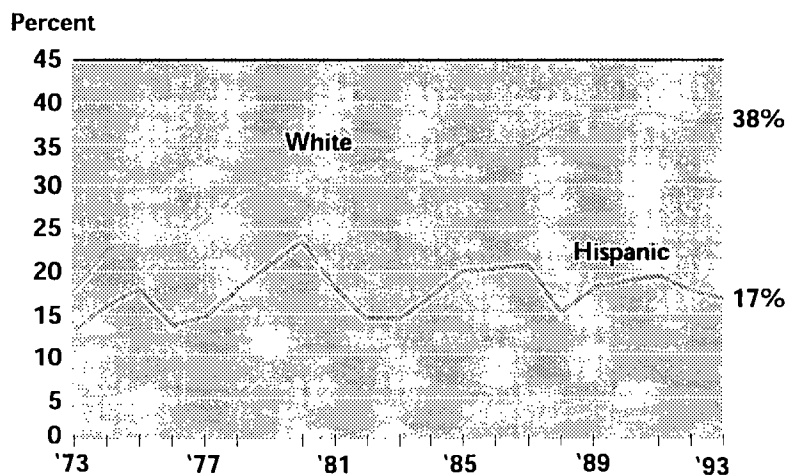
Both Hispanics and whites have made important educational gains over the past two decades (see, for example, No. 1 in this series, "High School Students Ten Years After *A Nation At Risk*"). In many regards, however, Hispanics trail their white counterparts with respect to educational access, achievement, and attainment, although some of these differences have narrowed over time. Outlined below are some examples of the educational differences between Hispanics and whites with respect to preschool attendance, demographics, academic achievement, dropout rates, school climate, parental involvement, course-taking patterns, educational aspirations, college attendance and completion, labor market outcomes, and adult literacy levels.

## PRESCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- **Hispanic children start elementary school with less preschool experience than white children, and this gap has widened over time.**

Hispanic and white children differ greatly in their extent of participation in education before kindergarten. Several federal programs, such as Head Start, a popular program for disadvantaged preschoolers, were launched to give children from low-income families an early start in education. Yet, despite these programs, fewer Hispanic children are enrolled in preschool than white children, and the gap has widened over time. In 1993, 17 percent of Hispanic 3- and 4-year-olds were in preschool programs compared to 38 percent of white children. Since the mid-1970s, white enrollment rates in preschool have increased more than 10 percentage points, while Hispanic enrollment rates have fluctuated, with the rate in 1993 approximating that in 1973.

**3- and 4-year-olds  
enrolled in prekindergarten**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

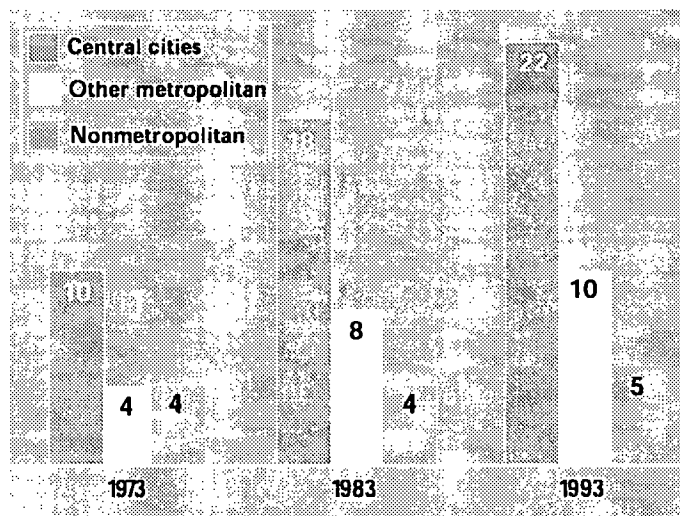
## ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

### DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Hispanic children are the fastest growing ethnic group in public schools.**

The percentage of students in elementary and secondary public schools who are Hispanic has doubled over the last two decades. Enrollment of Hispanic students increased from less than 6 percent of total public enrollment in 1973 to nearly 12 percent in 1993. This demographic change has been most pronounced in central cities and other metropolitan areas.

#### Percentage of public school students who are Hispanic



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

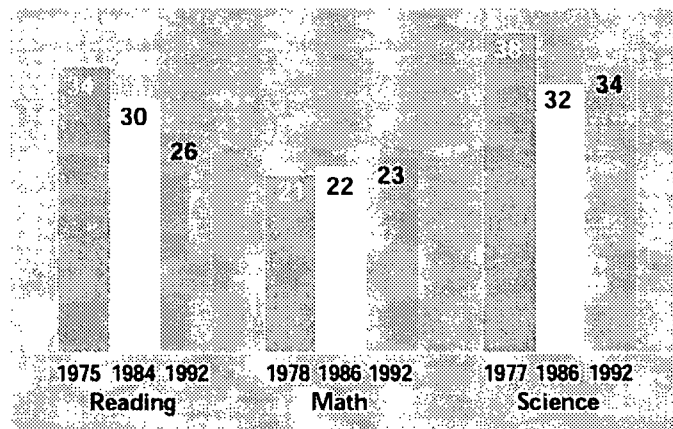
Furthermore, the ethnic isolation of Hispanic students has risen. For example, between 1968 and 1992, the percentage of Hispanic students attending schools that were 90–100 percent minority increased from 23 to 34 percent.<sup>3</sup>

## ACHIEVEMENT

- Although gaps in the academic performance of Hispanic and white students appear as early as age 9 and persist through age 17, some of these gaps have narrowed over time.

As early as age 9, differences can be seen in the academic performance of Hispanic and white students. Academic proficiency in reading, mathematics, and science, as measured at age 9 by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), is lower for Hispanic children than for white children. Although scores for Hispanic 9-year-olds have increased in mathematics and science over the past 15–20 years, there has been little change in the gap between the scores of white and Hispanic 9-year-olds over this time period.

**Hispanic-white gaps in reading, mathematics,  
and science for 9-year-olds  
(in scale points)**



SOURCE: NCES, National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Although the achievement gap between Hispanic and white 13-year-olds has narrowed greatly in mathematics and science since the late 1970s, a large gap remains in these subjects, as well as in reading. For example, in 1992, the average mathematics proficiency scores of Hispanic 13-year-olds fell about midway

between the average proficiency scores of white 9- and 13-year-olds. This gap suggests that, on average, Hispanic children's level of math skills may be as much as 2 years behind that of their white peers by age 13—a deficiency that they will carry with them into high school. The size of the gap was similar in reading and was even larger in science, with Hispanic 13-year-olds scoring at about the same level as white 9-year-olds.

| Average proficiency scores |       |        |        |          |        |        |
|----------------------------|-------|--------|--------|----------|--------|--------|
| Subject and year           | White |        |        | Hispanic |        |        |
|                            | Age 9 | Age 13 | Age 17 | Age 9    | Age 13 | Age 17 |
| Reading                    |       |        |        |          |        |        |
| 1975                       | 217   | 262    | 293    | 183      | 232    | 252    |
| 1984                       | 218   | 263    | 295    | 187      | 240    | 268    |
| 1992                       | 218   | 266    | 297    | 192      | 239    | 271    |
| Mathematics                |       |        |        |          |        |        |
| 1978                       | 224   | 272    | 306    | 203      | 238    | 276    |
| 1986                       | 227   | 274    | 308    | 205      | 254    | 283    |
| 1992                       | 235   | 279    | 312    | 212      | 259    | 292    |
| Science                    |       |        |        |          |        |        |
| 1977                       | 230   | 256    | 298    | 192      | 213    | 262    |
| 1986                       | 232   | 259    | 298    | 199      | 226    | 259    |
| 1992                       | 239   | 267    | 304    | 205      | 238    | 270    |

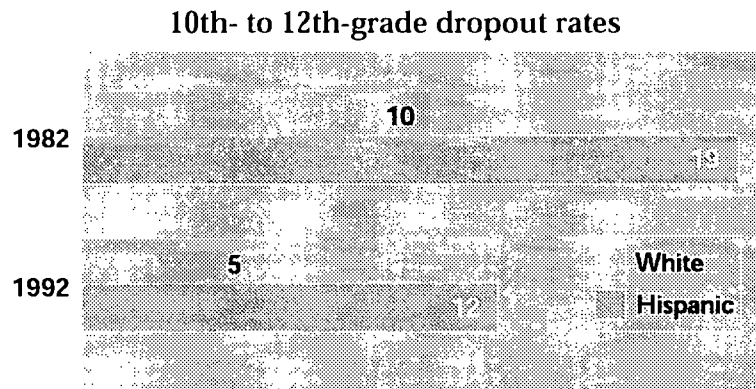
SOURCE: NCES, National Assessment of Educational Progress.

At age 17, NAEP scores indicate a large gap in reading, mathematics, and science achievement between whites and Hispanics. The Hispanic-white gap in reading and mathematics, however, has narrowed over time. For example, in 1975, average reading proficiency among Hispanics at age 17 was well below that of 17-year-old whites, and even below that of 13-year-old whites. In 1992, the proficiency gap had fallen by one-third, such that 17-year-old Hispanics were now reading at about the same level as that of 13-year-old whites. Most of these gains in reading were made by 1984, however. While the gap between the mathematics scores of Hispanic and white 17-year-olds also remains large, Hispanic students continue to make proficiency gains.

## PROGRESS IN SCHOOL

- **Dropout rates among Hispanic high school students are declining.**

Although the dropout rate is still considered high by many educators, the 10th- to 12th-grade dropout rate among Hispanics was substantially lower in 1992 than it was a decade earlier.<sup>4</sup> However, dropout rates for Hispanics are still much higher than for whites. The reasons that both Hispanics and whites gave for leaving school were more often school-related than job- or family-related concerns. Three out of 10 Hispanic female dropouts reported leaving school because they were pregnant, about the same proportion as white females.<sup>5</sup>



SOURCE: NCES, High School and Beyond Study and the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988.

With a lower proportion of Hispanic high school students dropping out, one might expect the percentage of 16- to 24-year-old Hispanics who have not completed high school or earned a GED (the status dropout rate) to have declined. However, there was no measurable decline in the status dropout rate for Hispanics between 1972 and 1992.<sup>6</sup> This may be due, in part, to high dropout rates for Hispanics before 10th grade,<sup>7</sup> and high immigration rates for less educated Hispanic young adults who may never enter U.S. schools.

- **Dropping out is strongly related to the length of time a Hispanic family has lived in the United States and to the family's country of origin.**

In 1989, 43 percent of Hispanic 16- to 24-year-olds born outside the 50 states and the District of Columbia had not completed high school or earned a GED. The status dropout rates for first-generation and at least second-generation Hispanic Americans were considerably lower (17 percent and 24 percent, respectively). It should be noted, however, that Hispanic dropout rates are still double those of non-Hispanics when the length of residency in the United States is taken into account. In other words, high status dropout rates among Hispanics are not just a problem associated with recent immigration.<sup>8</sup>

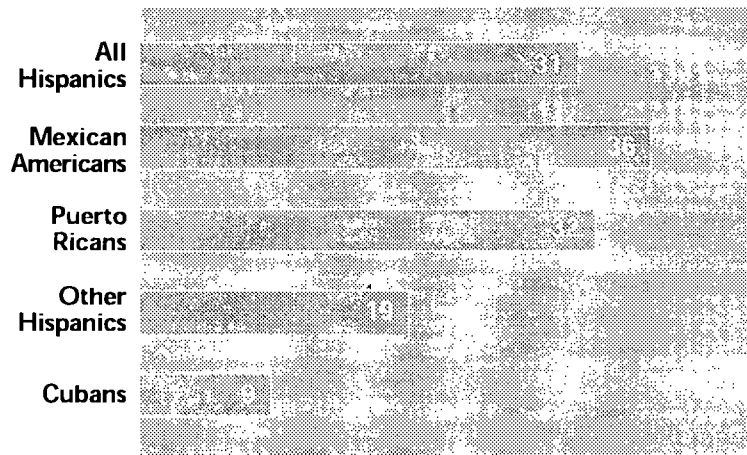
**Status dropout rates among 16- to 24-year-olds: 1989**

| Recency of migration                | Total | Hispanic | Non-Hispanic |
|-------------------------------------|-------|----------|--------------|
| Total                               | 13%   | 31%      | 10%          |
| Born outside the 50 states and D.C. | 29    | 43       | 8            |
| First generation                    | 10    | 17       | 6            |
| Second generation or more           | 11    | 24       | 11           |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Compared to the status dropout rate for all 16- to 24-year-old Hispanics in 1989, the dropout rates for Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans were similar. However, the dropout rates for Cubans and "other Hispanics" (including Central and South Americans) were much lower.

### Status dropout rates for persons aged 16–24



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Mexican Americans made up about 64 percent of the Hispanic population in 1989, and about 74 percent of all Hispanic dropouts in this age group. Among Mexican Americans born elsewhere, the dropout rate was 55 percent; this subgroup accounted for about 48 percent of all Hispanic dropouts.<sup>9</sup>

### LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- **Hispanic seniors are more likely than their white peers to experience learning disruptions, but have similar attitudes about discipline and teaching quality in their schools.**

Research indicates that a safe and orderly school environment is key to effective learning. A student's achievement can be affected by the degree to which the school maintains such an environment. In 1992, Hispanic seniors were more likely than white seniors to report that disruptions by other students interfered with their learning, that fights often occurred between different

racial/ethnic groups, and that they did not feel safe at their school. Furthermore, Hispanics were almost three times as likely as whites to report that there were many gangs in their school. Hispanics were no less likely than whites, however, to report that in their school “discipline is fair,” the “teaching is good,” and that “teachers are interested in students.”

**12th-graders’ attitudes about school climate: 1992**

| Statements about school climate                           | Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with statement |          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------|
|                                                           | White                                                | Hispanic |
| Teachers are interested in students                       | 82                                                   | 84       |
| Teaching is good                                          | 85                                                   | 89       |
| Discipline is fair                                        | 68                                                   | 75       |
| Disruptions by other students interfere with my learning  | 31                                                   | 40       |
| I don’t feel safe at this school                          | 9                                                    | 15       |
| Fights often occur between different racial/ethnic groups | 21                                                   | 32       |
| There are many gangs in school                            | 13                                                   | 36       |

SOURCE: NCES, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988.

- **Hispanic-white differences in degree of parental involvement are not large; however, they do vary by the type of involvement.**

The degree to which parents are involved in their children’s education is also crucial to effective schooling. Although the vast majority of eighth-grade students reported in 1988 that they talked to their parents about school, Hispanic eighth-graders were slightly less likely than their white peers to talk with their parents about selecting classes, school activities, or class studies.

Similar percentages of Hispanic and white students had parents who checked their homework and limited their going out with friends. Hispanic eighth-graders, however, were more likely than their white counterparts to report that their parents had limited their television viewing and that their parents had visited their classes.

**Percentage of eighth-graders  
reporting parental involvement: 1988**

| Type of involvement            | White | Hispanic |
|--------------------------------|-------|----------|
| Talked about:                  |       |          |
| selecting classes              | 87    | 82       |
| school activities              | 92    | 86       |
| class studies                  | 89    | 84       |
| Checked homework               | 90    | 90       |
| Limited TV viewing             | 63    | 67       |
| Limited going out with friends | 89    | 89       |
| Spoke with teacher/counselor   | 59    | 57       |
| Visited classes                | 26    | 34       |

SOURCE: NCES, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988.

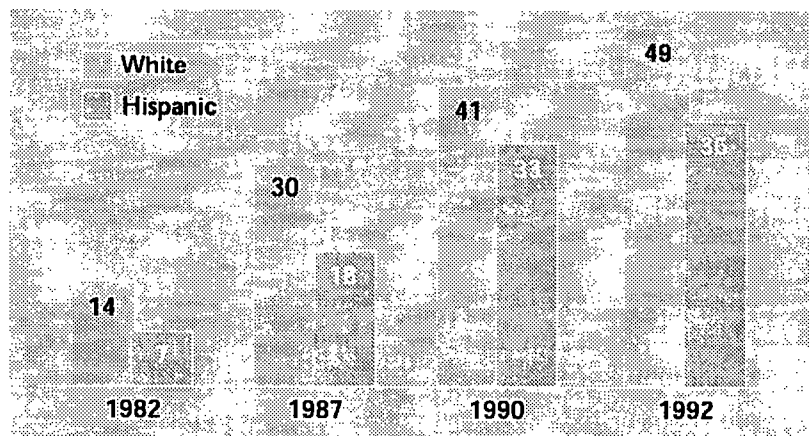
Parents of both Hispanic and white 12th-grade students in 1992 were equally likely to be contacted by school personnel regarding the academic performance of their child (56 percent and 53 percent, respectively). However, parents of Hispanic children were less likely to be asked to volunteer at school than white parents (39 percent and 59 percent, respectively).<sup>10</sup>

## CURRICULUM

- Both Hispanic and white high school graduates are following a more rigorous curriculum than they were a decade ago.

Both Hispanic and white graduates of the class of 1992 took, on average, four more academic courses than did their counterparts a decade earlier. In 1992, Hispanic and white high school graduates had, on average, earned a similar number of total course units (24 each) and academic units (17 and 18, respectively).<sup>11</sup> Hispanic graduates were, however, less likely than their white counterparts to have taken the core curriculum (4 units of English and 3 units each of science, social studies, and mathematics) recommended in *A Nation At Risk*.<sup>12</sup>

Percentage of high school graduates taking the number of courses in English, science, social studies, and mathematics recommended in *A Nation At Risk*



SOURCE: NCES, High School and Beyond Transcript Study; 1987 and 1990 NAEP High School Transcript Studies; and National Education Longitudinal Study Transcripts, 1992.

- **Hispanic high school graduates are less likely than their white counterparts to take advanced science and mathematics courses, but are just as likely to take foreign language courses.**

Between 1982 and 1992, the percentage of both Hispanic and white high school graduates who took advanced mathematics and science courses increased dramatically. In 1992, Hispanic graduates were more likely than white graduates to have taken remedial mathematics, just as likely to have taken Algebra I, and less likely to have taken geometry, Algebra II, or trigonometry than were white graduates. Although similar percentages of Hispanic and white graduates took biology, Hispanics were less likely to have taken chemistry, physics, or a combination of biology, chemistry, and physics. However, Hispanic college-bound graduates were just as likely as their white peers to have taken at least 2 years of a foreign language in high school (72 percent and 75 percent, respectively).<sup>13</sup>

**Percentage of high school graduates  
taking selected courses**

| Mathematics and<br>science courses | 1982  |          | 1992  |          |
|------------------------------------|-------|----------|-------|----------|
|                                    | White | Hispanic | White | Hispanic |
| Remedial mathematics               | 27.0  | 48.5     | 14.6  | 24.2     |
| Algebra I                          | 84.0  | 66.8     | 94.0  | 92.5     |
| Geometry                           | 53.9  | 29.0     | 72.6  | 62.9     |
| Algebra II                         | 40.5  | 22.5     | 59.2  | 46.9     |
| Trigonometry                       | 13.8  | 6.8      | 22.5  | 15.2     |
| Calculus                           | 5.0   | 1.6      | 10.7  | 4.7      |
| Biology                            | 80.1  | 73.2     | 93.5  | 91.2     |
| Chemistry                          | 34.7  | 16.7     | 58.0  | 42.6     |
| Physics                            | 15.3  | 5.5      | 25.9  | 15.7     |
| Biology, chemistry, and physics    | 11.2  | 3.7      | 22.6  | 12.8     |

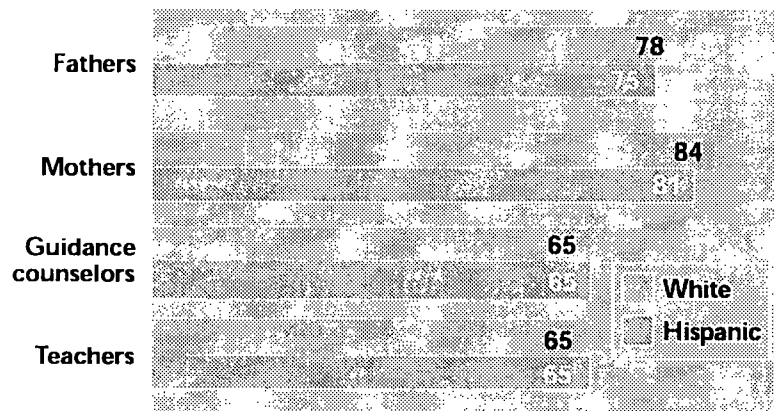
SOURCE: NCES, High School and Beyond Transcript Study and National Education Longitudinal Study Transcripts, 1992.

## EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

- On average, Hispanic students have lower educational aspirations than white students, despite having college recommended to them at similar rates.

In 1990, 14 percent of Hispanic sophomores aspired to a high school diploma or less, compared to 9 percent of white sophomores. Forty-seven percent of Hispanic sophomores aspired to a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 61 percent of whites.<sup>14</sup>

### Percentage of 1990 high school sophomores for whom college attendance was recommended after high school



SOURCE: NCES, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988.

Hispanic sophomores in 1990, however, were just as likely as whites to have teachers and guidance counselors recommend college attendance. Hispanic sophomores were also about as likely to have their parents advise them to attend college as their white counterparts.<sup>15</sup>

## POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

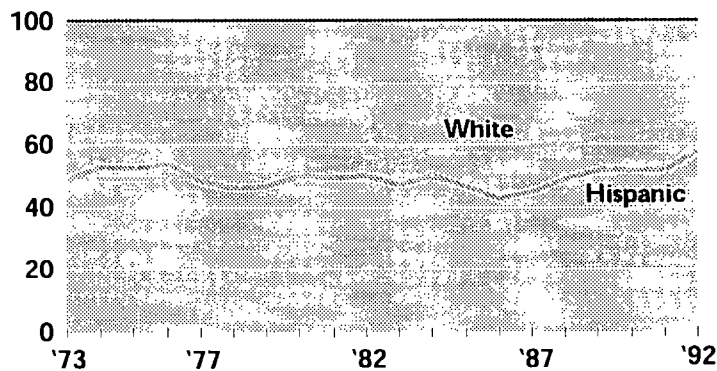
### ENROLLMENT

- Although Hispanic students have lower educational aspirations than whites and drop out at higher rates, the college transition rates for Hispanic and white high school graduates are similar.

The percentage of Hispanics enrolling in college in October following high school graduation was 58 percent in 1992, a difference that is statistically indistinguishable from the college transition rate for white high school graduates.

#### High school graduates enrolled in college the October following high school graduation

Percent (3-year average)



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

Hispanic students accounted for nearly 7 percent of the total enrollment at colleges and universities in 1992. At 2-year public colleges, Hispanic students made up nearly 10 percent of total enrollment, compared to nearly 5 percent at 4-year colleges and universities.<sup>16</sup>

- **Hispanic and white degree recipients concentrate in different fields of study at both the associate's and bachelor's degree levels.**

In 1991, at the associate's degree level, Hispanic men were slightly less likely than white men to major in other technical/professional fields, but were more likely to major in arts and sciences. Hispanic women were more likely than white women to earn associate's degrees in the arts and sciences and in business, but were less likely to earn degrees in health-related fields. Between 1987 and 1991, differences in the fields studied by Hispanics and whites at the associate's degree level narrowed for men and widened for women.<sup>17</sup>

At the bachelor's degree level, in 1991, Hispanics were more likely than whites to major in social and behavioral sciences and were less likely to major in technical/professional fields. Overall, Hispanic-white differences in the fields studied at the bachelor's degree level narrowed between 1977 and 1991, although almost all of the decrease occurred between 1977 and 1985.<sup>18</sup>

**Percentage of  
bachelor's degrees conferred**

| Field of study                                | 1977  |          | 1991  |          |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|----------|-------|----------|
|                                               | White | Hispanic | White | Hispanic |
| Total degrees                                 | 100.0 | 100.0    | 100.0 | 100.0    |
| Humanities and social/<br>behavioral sciences | 33.7  | 41.6     | 33.3  | 36.7     |
| Humanities                                    | 16.2  | 19.0     | 16.3  | 17.4     |
| Social/behavioral sciences                    | 17.5  | 22.6     | 17.0  | 19.3     |
| Natural sciences                              | 10.0  | 8.2      | 6.2   | 6.2      |
| Life sciences                                 | 5.9   | 5.3      | 3.4   | 4.1      |
| Physical sciences                             | 2.5   | 1.8      | 1.5   | 1.1      |
| Mathematics                                   | 1.6   | 1.2      | 1.3   | 1.0      |
| Computer sciences and<br>engineering          | 5.8   | 5.3      | 8.6   | 9.7      |
| Computer sciences                             | 0.7   | 0.5      | 2.0   | 2.5      |
| Engineering                                   | 5.1   | 4.8      | 6.6   | 7.2      |
| Technical/professional                        | 50.5  | 44.9     | 51.8  | 47.4     |
| Education                                     | 15.5  | 16.3     | 11.1  | 9.6      |
| Business and management                       | 16.5  | 13.9     | 22.9  | 21.4     |
| Health sciences                               | 6.4   | 4.6      | 5.5   | 4.7      |
| Other technical/<br>professional              | 12.1  | 10.1     | 12.3  | 11.7     |

SOURCE: NCES, IPEDS/HEGIS surveys of degrees conferred.

- **Hispanic-white differences in postsecondary persistence vary by initial degree objective.**

Among beginning students whose goal in 1989–90 was a vocational certificate, a lower percentage of Hispanic students had completed one by early 1992 than had white students (32 versus 53 percent). Among beginning students who sought an associate's degree, however, Hispanic students were far more likely to have been continuously enrolled or to have reenrolled after an interruption in 1992 than their white counterparts (72 versus 53 percent). The persistence rates of Hispanic and white students pursuing bachelor's degrees were similar over this period, although whites were more likely than Hispanics to have been continuously enrolled.<sup>19</sup>

- **Hispanics are about half as likely as their white peers to complete 4 years of college, and this gap has not diminished over time.**

Although Hispanics and whites have similar college persistence rates, young adult Hispanics in general have much lower college attainment rates than do young adult whites. In 1994, slightly more than one-half of Hispanic high school graduates 25–29 years old had completed at least some college, compared to nearly two-thirds of their white counterparts. In addition, about 13 percent of Hispanic high school graduates in this age group had earned a bachelor's degree or more, compared to 30 percent of whites. These gaps in the educational attainment rates of Hispanics and whites did not close between 1971 and 1994.

**Percentage of 25- to 29-year-old high school graduates  
completing 1 or more or 4 or more years of college**

| Year | 1 or more years         |          | 4 or more years              |          |
|------|-------------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------|
|      | White                   | Hispanic | White                        | Hispanic |
| 1971 | 44.9                    | 30.6     | 23.1                         | 10.5     |
| 1976 | 53.8                    | 36.3     | 29.3                         | 12.7     |
| 1981 | 51.2                    | 39.6     | 26.3                         | 12.5     |
| 1986 | 52.3                    | 42.9     | 28.1                         | 15.3     |
| 1991 | 54.9                    | 42.2     | 29.7                         | 16.3     |
|      | Some college<br>or more |          | Bachelor's degree<br>or more |          |
| 1994 | 62.7                    | 51.5     | 29.7                         | 13.3     |

NOTE: Beginning in 1992, the Current Population Survey changed the questions it used to obtain the educational attainment of respondents.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys.

- **Hispanics who do complete college take longer, on average, than do whites.**

Of 1990 college graduates, 60 percent of Hispanic students completed in 5 or fewer years, compared to 72 percent of white students. Taking longer to graduate may result from changing schools or majors, stopping out, or taking a reduced course load for financial, academic, or personal reasons. The additional time in college can be costly to the individual, as it delays entrance into the full-time labor market.<sup>20</sup>

**Percentage of 1990 college graduates completing the  
baccalaureate degree within various years of starting college**

| Race/<br>ethnicity | 4 or fewer<br>years | 5 or fewer<br>years | 6 or fewer<br>years | More than<br>6 years |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| White              | 44.4                | 71.6                | 81.5                | 18.5                 |
| Hispanic           | 31.1                | 60.3                | 72.9                | 27.1                 |

SOURCE: NCES, Recent College Graduates surveys.

- **Baccalaureate degree attainment of Hispanics varies by sex.**

Hispanic women earn substantially more bachelor's degrees than Hispanic men, although the number of degrees earned by both groups has increased since the early 1980s. The number of degrees earned by Hispanic men increased by 50 percent between 1981 and 1991, while the number earned by Hispanic women increased by 86 percent.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, the number of degrees earned by white men increased by 2 percent over the same time period, while the number earned by white women increased by 22 percent.

**Bachelor's degrees conferred  
(numbers in thousands)**

| Year | Male  |          | Female |          |
|------|-------|----------|--------|----------|
|      | White | Hispanic | White  | Hispanic |
| 1977 | 438.2 | 10.3     | 369.5  | 8.4      |
| 1981 | 406.2 | 10.8     | 401.1  | 11.0     |
| 1985 | 405.1 | 12.4     | 421.0  | 13.5     |
| 1987 | 406.8 | 12.9     | 435.1  | 14.1     |
| 1989 | 407.1 | 13.9     | 452.6  | 16.0     |
| 1991 | 415.5 | 16.2     | 488.6  | 20.5     |

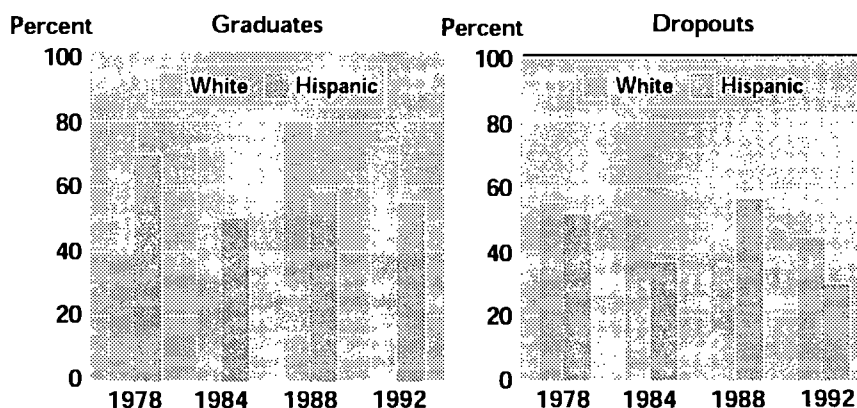
SOURCE: NCES, IPEDS/HEGIS surveys of degrees conferred.

## LABOR MARKET OUTCOMES

- **Employment and earnings rates rise with educational attainment for both Hispanics and whites, but are lower for Hispanics than for whites with the same amount of education.**

In 1992, more than one-half (54 percent) of recent Hispanic high school graduates not enrolled in college were employed, compared to slightly less than one-third (29 percent) of Hispanic recent dropouts. Yet, white graduates not enrolled in college were far more likely than Hispanic graduates not enrolled in college to be employed.

### Employment rates for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college and for recent high school dropouts



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

Earnings among 25- to 34-year-old Hispanics, particularly Hispanic females, show that the incentive to pursue additional education is sizable. For example, in 1993, Hispanic males with 9–11 years of schooling earned 27 percent less than Hispanic male high school graduates; those with a bachelor's degree earned 60 percent more. Hispanic females with 9–11 years of schooling earned 30 percent less than their counterparts with a high school diploma; those with a bachelor's degree earned 82 percent more.<sup>22</sup>

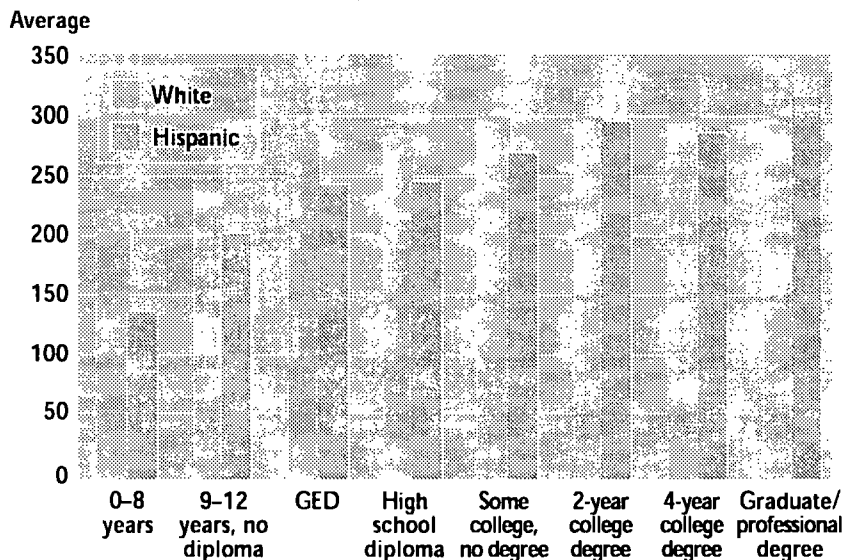
Between 1981 and 1993, the earnings advantage of completing college increased for both Hispanics and whites. However, Hispanic-white differentials in earnings exist at each level of educational attainment. For example, white male college graduates 25–34 years old earned 23 percent more in 1993 than did Hispanic male college graduates of the same age; similarly, white female college graduates 25–34 years old earned 14 percent more than their Hispanic counterparts over the same period.<sup>23</sup>

## ADULT LITERACY

- **Hispanics have lower literacy levels than whites overall and whites with similar levels of education, but the gaps are smaller for younger adults than for older ones.**

Large gaps exist between the literacy skills of Hispanics and whites both within and across levels of education. On the National Adult Literacy Survey, Hispanics scored at levels that were similar to whites with less education. In 1992, for example, Hispanics with a 4-year college degree had prose literacy scores resembling those of whites with a high school diploma. However, the gap in literacy between Hispanics and whites is less for 16- to 24-year-olds than for 25- to 64-year-olds.<sup>24</sup> The differences in the labor market opportunities of Hispanics and whites noted above may be related to the differences in the literacy levels of both groups at similar levels of educational attainment.

**Prose literary scores of adults: 1992**



SOURCE: NCES, National Adult Literacy Survey, 1992.

## SUMMARY

In summary, Hispanic children are less likely to be enrolled in preprimary education. Gaps in reading, mathematics, and science achievement appear at age 9, and persist through age 17, although some of these gaps have narrowed over time. Hispanic students are no less likely than white students to have their parents involved in their schooling, although Hispanic students are in some cases more likely to face a disorderly school environment than their white peers. Both Hispanic and white high school graduates are following a more rigorous curriculum than they were a decade ago. Hispanic graduates are less likely, however, to have taken advanced science and mathematics courses in high school than their white counterparts, but are just as likely to have taken foreign languages. Even though they have lower educational aspirations than whites, Hispanic students are about as likely as whites to make the immediate transition from high school to college. However, educational attainment levels are lower among Hispanic than white young adults. For Hispanics, educational attainment is positively associated with employment and earnings, although earnings and employment rates are lower for Hispanics than for whites with the same amount of education. Among adults, Hispanics have lower literacy levels than whites, both in general and at similar levels of educational attainment.

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Hispanic children are much more likely to experience poverty than white children. In 1992, 39 percent of Hispanic children lived in families with an income level below the poverty line, compared to 16 percent of white children. See *The Condition of Education, 1994*, 132, based on Current Population Reports, series P-60, "Poverty in the United States: . . .," various years.

<sup>2</sup>Samuel S. Peng, Dean Wright, and Susan T. Hill. *Understanding Racial-Ethnic Differences in Secondary School Science and Mathematics Achievement* (NCES 95-710). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, D.C.: February 1995.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 1992; and U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey, 1968.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1993*. Washington, D.C.: 1994, table 21.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, table 19.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, figure 4.

<sup>7</sup>Hispanics in the 8th-grade class of 1988 were almost twice as likely as their white counterparts to drop out between 8th and 10th grade: 9.6 and 5.2 percent, respectively. See *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1993*, table 18.

<sup>8</sup>Mary Frase. *Are Hispanic Dropout Rates Related to Migration?* U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, D.C.: 1992, table 1.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>*The Condition of Education, 1995*, 353, based on the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988.

<sup>11</sup>*The Condition of Education, 1994*, 72, based on the High School and Beyond Transcript Study; 1987 and 1990 NAEP High School Transcript Studies; and National Education Longitudinal Study Transcripts, 1992.

<sup>12</sup>The panel's recommendation of 0.5 units in computer science is not included in this description.

<sup>13</sup>*The Condition of Education, 1994*, 78, based on the High School and Beyond Transcript Study and National Education Longitudinal Study Transcripts, 1992.

<sup>14</sup>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *America's High School Sophomores: A Ten Year Comparison*. Washington, D.C.: 1993, table 6.1.

<sup>15</sup>*The Condition of Education, 1994*, 36, based on *America's High School Sophomores: A Ten Year Comparison*; *High School and Beyond*, 1980; and National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 and 1990.

<sup>16</sup>*The Condition of Education, 1995*, 139, based on IPEDS/HEGIS surveys of fall enrollment.

<sup>17</sup>*The Condition of Education, 1994*, 84, based on IPEDS/HEGIS surveys of degrees conferred.

<sup>18</sup>*The Condition of Education, 1994*, 86, based on IPEDS/HEGIS surveys of degrees conferred.

<sup>19</sup>*The Condition of Education, 1994*, 42, based on the Beginning Postsecondary Student Longitudinal Survey, 1992.

<sup>20</sup>*The Condition of Education, 1993*, 27, based on Recent College Graduates surveys.

<sup>21</sup>*The Condition of Education, 1994*, 88, based on IPEDS/HEGIS surveys of degrees conferred.

<sup>22</sup>*The Condition of Education, 1995*, 292–94, based on U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*The Condition of Education, 1994*, 66, based on *Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the Results of the National Adult Literacy Survey*, 1993.

For more information, see the following NCES publications:

*The Condition of Education, 1995.* Washington, D.C.: 1995.

*The Condition of Education, 1994.* Washington, D.C.: 1994.

*Digest of Education Statistics, 1994.* Washington, D.C.: 1994.

*Dropout Rates in the United States: 1993.* Washington, D.C.: 1994.

*America's High School Sophomores: A Ten Year Comparison.*

Washington, D.C.: 1993.

Other ***Findings from The Condition of Education:***

No. 1: *High School Students Ten Years After A Nation At Risk*

No. 2: *The Educational Progress of Black Students*

No. 3: *America's Teachers Ten Years After A Nation At Risk*

No. 5: *The Educational Progress of Women*

No. 6: *The Cost of Higher Education*

## Issues in Focus

---

## The Educational Progress of Black Students

by Jennifer Sable, Pinkerton Computer Consultants, Inc.

Over the past two decades, students have made important gains in educational achievement and attainment. For example, more high school students are taking core courses (*Indicator 28*, 1996), and more are taking high-level courses in those subjects. More high school students are taking Advanced Placement (AP) examinations (*Indicator 27*); fewer high school students are dropping out (*Indicators 6 and 22*); and more students are attending college after they complete high school (*Indicator 7*).

While these gains are positive, they reflect only averages. When the data are broken out by students' racial/ethnic backgrounds, significant differences emerge between white and black students. Black children are likely to be at a social and economic disadvantage compared to whites for various reasons, including having parents with lower average levels of education and experiencing a greater likelihood of living with only one parent. These differences contribute to a greater likelihood of living in poverty. Because education-related gaps between racial/ethnic groups may have implications for individuals long after they have completed their formal education, it is important to examine where in the educational process these differences occur, and what factors may contribute to these differences. The reductions or increases that have occurred in the sizes of these gaps provide measures of the educational progress that black students have made in recent years in preparing for their futures and the future of American society.

### Family characteristics

The family environment in which a child lives has an impact on many aspects of that child's life, including school performance.

- Black children are more likely than white children to live in poverty, to live in single-parent households, and to live in urban areas.

Certain family characteristics, such as family structure and poverty level, are associated with increased risk for dropping out of high school or not attending college after high school graduation.<sup>1</sup> Also attributable to differences in family characteristics are some differences in academic achievement.<sup>2</sup> Children from poor families have lower than average achievement and higher than average dropout rates. In 1995, one out of five children lived in poverty, but the average ranges widely across racial/

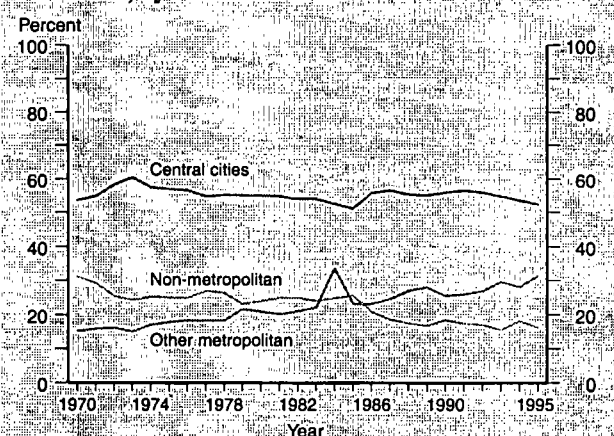
ethnic groups. Among black and white children, the proportions living in poverty (about 42 and 11 percent, respectively) have remained stable or declined since 1980.<sup>3</sup>

Like poverty, living in a single-parent family is also a risk factor for academic difficulties. The percentage of children who live with two parents declined among all racial/ethnic groups between 1970 and 1996. However, black children were much more likely to live in single-parent households during this period than white children were.<sup>3</sup>

Where children live and attend school also is related to their risk factors for educational achievement. Recent research shows that students who attend urban schools are more likely to encounter problems that hinder achievement and attainment than those who attend schools in other areas.<sup>4</sup>

The majority of all blacks attending grades 1–12 in the United States live in central cities. As shown in figure 1, in 1995, 53 percent lived in central cities and 31 percent lived in the suburbs. In contrast, the majority of white students lived in the suburbs (23 percent lived in central cities and 54 percent lived in suburban areas).<sup>5</sup> While the majority of all blacks live in central cities, the proportion who live in the suburbs is raising (see figure 1).

**Figure 1. Percentage of students in grades 1–12 who were black, by residential location: 1970–95**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, "Level of Enrollment Below College for Persons 3 to 24 Years Old, by Control of School, Metropolitan Status, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin," various years and October Current Population Surveys.

Teachers at schools located in central cities are more likely to report that the following are serious problems in their schools than teachers at schools located in urban fringe and rural areas: lack of parental involvement, alcoholism and drug abuse by parents, student apathy, poor nutrition among students, drug abuse by students, poor health among students, and student pregnancy (*Indicator 48*). Other problems that occur more frequently in urban schools are student behavior problems, such as absenteeism, classroom discipline, weapons possession, and student feelings of not being safe in school.<sup>6</sup> Problems such as these may distract students living in central cities from achieving their academic goals and place them at risk for academic failure.

- *The educational attainment level of parents of black children has increased substantially since the 1970s.*

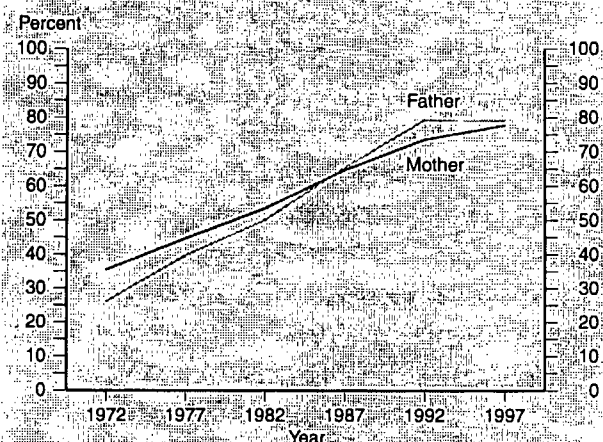
In general, higher levels of parental education are associated with positive educational outcomes, such as enrollment in preprimary education (*Indicator 1*), participation in early literacy activities (*Indicator 2*), parental participation in children's school-related activities (*Indicator 49*), and enrolling in college immediately after completing high school (*Indicator 9*). Between 1972 and 1997, the educational attainment of mothers and fathers of black 15- to 18-year-olds increased. During this period, the percentages of both mothers and fathers of black children who had high school diplomas, some college, and bachelor's degrees or higher increased.

Due to the rapid increase in the percentages of mothers and fathers of black 15- to 18-year-olds who earned high school diplomas between 1972 and 1997, the gap in high school education attainment rates between those mothers and fathers and that of mothers and fathers of white 15- to 18-year-olds narrowed. For example, by 1997, 78 percent of mothers and 79 percent of fathers of black 15- to 18-year-olds had attained at least a high school diploma, up from 36 and 26 percent for mothers and fathers, respectively, in 1972 (see figure 2 and *Indicator 44*). These trends in parental education levels may have contributed to the increasing levels of educational attainment and achievement of black students in the past 20 years.<sup>2</sup>

- *Many parents of black students are involved in their children's education.*

Parents can help their children learn in school by attending school events and helping them with their homework. Many parents of black children attend

**Figure 2. Percentage of black 15- to 18-year-olds whose mother's and father's educational attainment was at least a high school diploma: 1972-97**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys.

meetings at their children's school. For example, in 1996, 86 percent of black students had parents who reported attending a general meeting at their child's school, and 87 percent had parents who reported attending a scheduled meeting with their child's teacher. Additionally, almost half of black students had parents who reported helping their child with homework three or more times per week, compared with 35 percent of white students (*Indicator 49*).

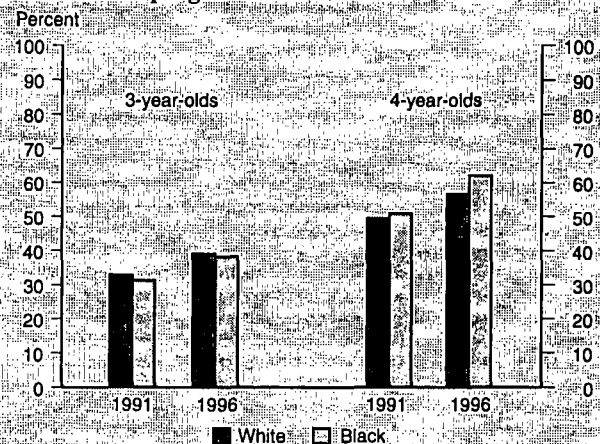
While certain aspects of black children's family environments related to educational success are good or have improved in recent years, black children are still generally at a disadvantage for educational success compared to white children based on family socioeconomic status (*Indicators 1, 2, 5, 44, and 49*).

### Preprimary education

- *White and black children have similar rates of participation in preprimary education. However, at age 4 (prior to entering kindergarten) there are differences in literacy and numeracy skills and participation in literacy activities in the home.*

Participating in early childhood programs, such as Head Start, nursery school, and prekindergarten, can better prepare a child to enter first grade. During the early 1990s, the preprimary program participation of both white and black children increased so that by 1996 similar percentages of white and black 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in center-based programs (see figure 3 and *Indicator 1*).

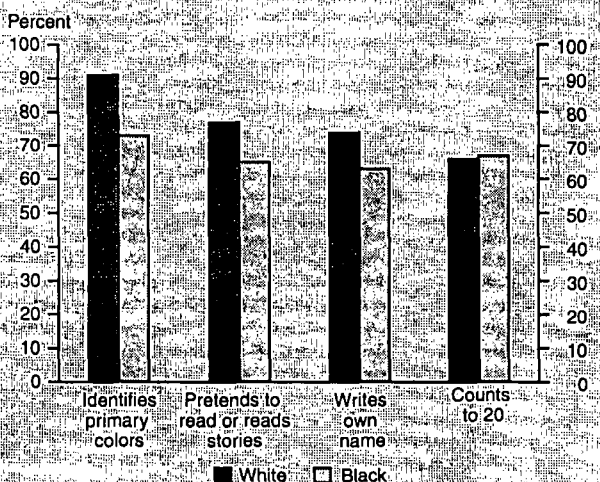
**Figure 3. Percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in center-based programs: 1991 and 1996**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1991 (Early Childhood Education File) and 1996 (Parent and Family Involvement in Education File).

While black and white children have similar participation rates in preprimary education, blacks are generally behind whites in demonstrating early literacy skills. Emerging developmental skills of literacy and numeracy, such as recognizing letters of the alphabet, counting to 20 or more, writing first names, and identifying the colors red, blue, yellow, and green by name, vary across racial/ethnic groups (see figure 4). In 1993, 4-year-old blacks were equally likely as 4-year-old whites to be able to count to 20 or more, but were less likely to be able to perform the other activities listed.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 4. Percentage of 4-year-old preschoolers with reported signs of emerging literacy and numeracy skills: 1993**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Approaching Kindergarten: A Look at Preschoolers in the United States*, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1995.

Other literacy activities that provide children with valuable developmental experiences include being read to at home and visiting the library with a family member. Family participation in these activities may promote learning and the development of literacy skills for the child. In 1996, over 80 percent of children ages 3–5 were read to or told a story in the past week by a parent or family member, and 38 percent had visited a library in the past month. While many black children participated in these early literacy activities, white children ages 3–5 were more likely to have participated in all of these activities than black children (*Indicator 2*). These differences in literacy activity participation rates, coupled with differences in family background and other factors, may contribute to the differences seen in the emergence of early literacy skills.

## Achievement

- *Gaps in the academic performance of black compared with white students measured at age 9 persist through age 17. However, the gaps in reading, mathematics, and science have narrowed over time.*

While the achievement levels of blacks in reading, mathematics, and science remain behind those of whites in 1996, the performance of black students on the NAEP achievement tests in these subject areas has increased over time, both in terms of absolute achievement levels and in comparison with whites.

In 1971, black 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds trailed their white counterparts in reading proficiency scores by 44, 39, and 53 points, respectively. These scoring differences mean that black 17-year-olds had an average reading proficiency score that was lower than that of white 13-year-olds. By 1996 these gaps had narrowed to 30, 31, and 29 points, indicating that black 17-year-olds had an average reading proficiency that was equal to that of white 13-year-olds.

In mathematics proficiency, a gap of 35 points existed between black and white 9-year-olds in 1973 (the first year of assessment), while gaps of 46 and 40 points existed between blacks and whites for 13- and 17-year-olds, respectively. As with average reading proficiency, these scoring differences mean that black 17-year-olds performed below the level of white 13-year-olds, while black 13-year-olds had an average mathematics proficiency that was similar to that of white 9-year-olds. By 1996 these gaps had narrowed to 25 points for 9-year olds, 29 points for 13-year-olds, and 27 points for 17-year-olds. The reductions in black-white proficiency score dif-

ferences have been similar in science and still in the same positive directions between 1973 and 1996. There are no consistent trends in writing score differences between blacks and whites between 1984 and 1996 (*Indicators 16, 18, and 19*).<sup>8</sup> Despite these gains, the levels of black academic achievement, as measured on the NAEP assessments, remain behind those of white students in all four subjects (see table 1).

**Table 1. Average proficiency scores: 1996**

|             | Age 9 |       | Age 13 |       | Age 17 |       |
|-------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
|             | White | Black | White  | Black | White  | Black |
| Reading     | 220   | 190   | 267    | 236   | 294    | 265   |
| Mathematics | 237   | 212   | 281    | 252   | 313    | 286   |
| Science     | 239   | 202   | 266    | 226   | 307    | 260   |
| Writing     | 216   | 182   | 271    | 242   | 289    | 267   |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *NAEP 1996 Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1997; Mathematics, 1969 to 1996; Reading, 1971 to 1996; Writing, 1984 to 1996, 1998.*

As indicated by the similarity of these proficiency score differences across subjects by age, most of the amounts by which black students are behind white students at age 17, they are behind at age 9 (see table 2). In reading and mathematics the amounts by which black students are behind at age 17 are essentially the same as they are at age 9. In science blacks are 9 score points further behind at age 17, as compared to 37 points they were behind at age 9. In writing black students increase their scores by 13 points at age 17 relative to white students compared to the 35 points they were behind at grade 4. This suggests the importance of preprimary and early primary education for black students.

**Table 2. Average differences in proficiency scores between blacks and whites: 1996**

|             | Age 9   | Age 13  | Age 17   |
|-------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Reading     | 29      | 31      | 30       |
| Mathematics | 27      | 29      | 35       |
| Science     | 37      | 40      | 47       |
|             | Grade 4 | Grade 8 | Grade 11 |
| Writing     | 35      | 29      | 22       |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *NAEP 1996 Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1997; Mathematics, 1969 to 1996; Reading, 1971 to 1996; Writing, 1984 to 1996, 1998.*

- *Black children are more likely to show early academic and behavioral problems than their white counterparts.*

Children who experience behavioral or academic problems early in school may be more likely to re-

quire more individual time with the teacher, to disrupt the classroom environment for other students, and to experience similar problems later in school. Research has confirmed that students who have been suspended from school are at higher risk for other poor school outcomes, including dropping out of school (*Indicator 48, 1997*). In 1995, black first- and second-graders were more likely than their white counterparts to have their parents report that they had behavioral or academic problems (*Indicator 3, 1997*). By 8<sup>th</sup>-grade, black students were more likely than white students to have ever been suspended from school. These differences still existed after controlling for differences in socioeconomic status—within each SES quartile, black students were suspended at higher rates than their white counterparts (*Indicator 48, 1997*).

- *Black students differ from white students not only in test score performance but in how they spend their time outside of school in learning, community service, or other developmental activities.*

In addition to academic achievement as measured by test scores, the way in which students spend their time outside of school provides indications of the extent and quality of their personal and educational development. The way in which students spend their summer vacations is one indication of how much of their free time students devote to learning activities. In summer 1996, black students in grades 1–12 were more likely to attend summer school than white students (*Indicator 5*). Some students attend summer school to retake subjects failed during the academic year, to improve basic skills, or if they are older, to take high school or college-level courses for credit. The relatively large proportion of black students attending summer school may indicate that black students are retaking classes or improving basic skills, but it may also indicate an interest in taking advanced classes and strengthening academic skills during the summer.

Students may also pursue community service in their free time. In addition to personal and community benefits, participation in community service may help students be more competitive when applying to college. Many schools examine students' participation in extracurricular and other activities as well as their academic achievement. In 1996, 49 percent of students in grades 6–12 participated in community service activities; 26 percent participated on a regular basis and 23 percent participated once or twice. In grades 6–12, white students were more likely (53 percent) than black students (43 percent) to report participating in community service (*Indicator 25*).

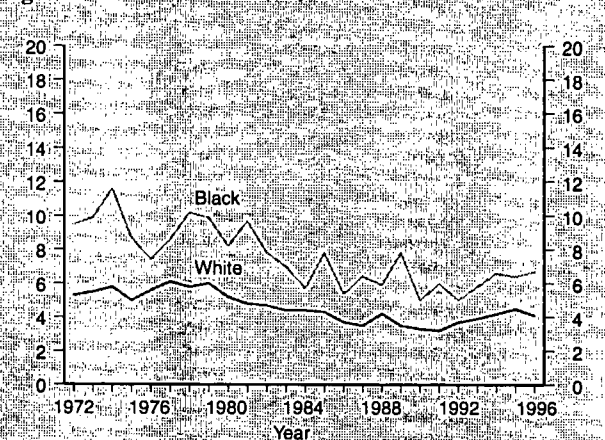
## Progress in school

- *Black students are more likely than white students to repeat a grade. However, white and black students who were retained one grade or more were equally likely to drop out of school.*

Students who repeat grades are at greater risk of dropping out of school. In 1995, black young adults ages 16–24 were more likely than white young adults of the same age to have repeated one or more grades (19 compared with 12 percent for blacks and whites, respectively). However, black and white young adults who had been retained were about equally likely to drop out of school.<sup>9</sup>

Students who drop out of school have fewer opportunities to succeed in the work force and to assume a fully functional place in society than those who complete high school. The percentage of students who were in grades 10–12 the October of one year who were not enrolled again the following year and had not graduated from high school is known as the event dropout rate. Between 1972 and 1996, black students in grades 10–12, ages 15–24, were more likely than white students of the same age and grade to drop out of school as defined by the event dropout rate (see figure 5). However, during this period, the dropout rates for both black and white students decreased, and the gap between the dropout rates for black and white students narrowed. In 1996, 7 percent of blacks students ages 15–24 had dropped out of school in the past year during grades 10–12, while 4 percent of whites ages 15–24 dropped out then (*Indicator 6*).

**Figure 5. Event dropout rates for those in grades 10–12, ages 15–24**

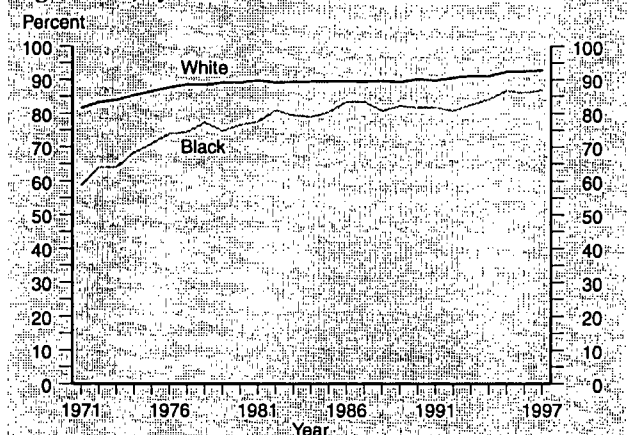


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1996* (based on the October Current Population Surveys).

A broader perspective on the high school dropout problem can be seen by looking at the percentage of young adults in the population ages 25–29 who have graduated from high school or completed a GED or other high school equivalency certificate.

The percentage of the black 25- to 29-year-old population who have completed high school has risen markedly in the past 25 years from 59 percent in 1971 to 87 percent in 1997 (see figure 6). During the same period, the rate of high school completion among 25- to 29-year-old whites has increased from 82 to 93 percent. Therefore, the gap in high school completion between blacks and whites has narrowed in the past 25 years from 23 to 6 percent, as measured at ages 25–29. In relative terms, the black rate of high school completion is now 94 percent of the white rate. While this difference of 6 percent remains educationally important, the smaller gap means that the overall rates of black and white high school participation and completion were nearly equivalent in 1997. The difference in completion rates between Hispanics and whites is much larger (*Indicator 22*).

**Figure 6. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who completed high school, by race: March 1971–97**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *March Current Population Surveys*.

- *Black students are taking more advanced courses in the 1990s than in the 1980s.*

In general, blacks and all other students are following a more rigorous curriculum and taking more advanced courses than they were a decade ago. Students who take rigorous academic course loads during high school have higher educational achievement than those who take a less rigorous curriculum independent of their social background.<sup>10</sup> Students with higher levels of academic achievement are also more likely to attend college

within 2 years following graduation independent of their social background (*Indicator 9, 1997*). Social background remains an important factor affecting student achievement and college enrollment, but taking rigorous courses has strong independent effects.<sup>11</sup>

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* recommended that all students seeking a high school diploma enroll in the "New Basics" curriculum, a core curriculum composed of 4 years of English, and 3 years each of social studies, science, and mathematics. The percentages of both black and white high school graduates who have earned the minimum 13 credits of these core courses have increased similar amounts between 1983 and 1994, but whites remain more likely than blacks to meet the requirements of the New Basics. In 1994 the proportions of blacks and whites earning the minimum New Basics were 45 and 54 percent, respectively, while in 1982 they were 12 and 16 percent, respectively (*Indicator 28, 1996*).

- *More black students are taking Advanced Placement examinations than ever before.*

Overall, higher proportions of students are taking Advanced Placement (AP) examinations. The AP examination is associated with a demanding academic curriculum. By participating in the AP program, high school students may acquire college credit for their knowledge of college-level subjects. Between 1984 and 1996, the number of students who took AP examinations increased substantially from 50 to 131 students per 1,000 12<sup>th</sup>-graders. The num-

**Table 3. Number of students who took AP examinations (per 1,000 12<sup>th</sup>-graders): 1984-96**

| Year | Total | Race  |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
|      |       | White | Black |
| 1984 | 50    | 48    | 8     |
| 1985 | 59    | 60    | 11    |
| 1986 | 64    | 62    | 12    |
| 1987 | 66    | 63    | 13    |
| 1988 | 81    | 82    | 21    |
| 1989 | 88    | 92    | 20    |
| 1990 | 100   | 103   | 26    |
| 1991 | 103   | 107   | 25    |
| 1992 | 109   | 112   | 26    |
| 1993 | 117   | 115   | 31    |
| 1994 | 115   | 116   | 32    |
| 1995 | 125   | 125   | 37    |
| 1996 | 131   | 133   | 32    |

SOURCE: The College Board, Advanced Placement Program, National Summary Reports, various years (Copyright © 1996 by the College Entrance Examination Board. All rights reserved.). U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

ber of examinees increased for both sexes and all racial/ethnic groups during this period. The black rate increased from 8 to 32 students per 1,000 and the white rate went from 48 to 133 students in the same period (*Indicator 27*).

### Postsecondary education

- *Black high school completers are less likely than whites to enroll in college and complete a baccalaureate degree.*

While the overall rates of high school enrollment and completion have become more similar for blacks and whites, differences in educational participation rates remain in the postsecondary years. Between 1971 and 1997 the rates at which both black and white high school completers attend college have been rising, but the black rate has remained behind the white rate by a nearly constant amount (*Indicator 22*).

In 1997, 68 percent of white high school completers ages 25-29 had completed some college or more compared to 54 percent of blacks, or about 69 percent of the white rate.<sup>12</sup> This is an absolute difference of 14 percentage points. In 1971, 45 percent of white high school completers and 31 percent of black high school completers had completed one or more years of college (a 14 percentage point difference). The black rate of high school completers attending college was about 79 percent of the white rate in 1997—a ratio that has been slowly rising from 69 percent in 1971. In contrast the black rate of high school completion was 94 percent of the white rate in 1997 (*Indicator 22*).

A somewhat different picture emerges for the completion of bachelor's degrees. As in the case of attending at least some college or more, both the black and white rates of completing a bachelor's degree are rising. But unlike the case of some college, the white rate is rising somewhat faster than the black rate, so the absolute difference between the black and white rates of attaining a bachelor's degree is slightly rising. Instead of closing, as in the case of high school completion, or remaining the same, as in the case of attending some college, the gap between percentages of the black and white populations completing a bachelor's degree is widening. The increases in the black and white rates of completing a bachelor's degree have been such that the black rate has remained about one half of the white rate for the past 20 years.

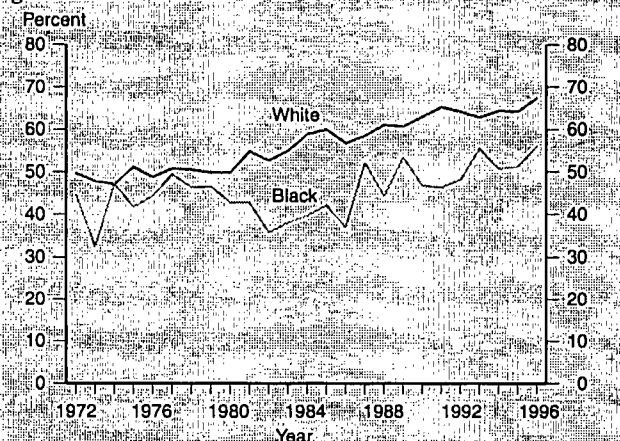
Between 1971 and 1997, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-old black high school completers finishing four

or more years of college education rose from 12 percent in 1971 to 16 percent in 1997. The white rate increased from 23 percent of high school completers in 1971 to 35 percent in 1997. Thus, the difference in the black and white rates was 12 percent in 1971 and 19 percent in 1997 (*Indicator 22*).

- *Blacks are less likely than whites to enroll in college immediately after completing high school.*

One reason that blacks are less likely to attend college and complete bachelor's degrees is that they are less likely than whites to enroll in college immediately after graduating from high school. Most people who ever attend college enroll immediately after high school graduation.<sup>13</sup> In 1996, 56 percent of black high school completers compared to 67 percent of white high school completers enrolled in college the October following their completion of high school (see figure 7). The difference between the black and white rates is growing (*Indicator 7*).

**Figure 7. Percentage of high school graduates ages 16–24 who were enrolled in college the October following graduation: October 1972–96**



SOURCE: U.S. Department Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

Blacks also take longer to complete bachelor's degrees than whites. In 1992–93, 60 percent of whites bachelor's degree recipients had earned their degrees within 5 years of graduating from high school, while 49 percent of blacks had done so.<sup>14</sup> In 1994, 58 percent of whites who enrolled in a 4-year institution five years earlier had received their bachelor's degrees compared to 44 percent of blacks.<sup>15</sup>

- *Black high school graduates are less likely to be qualified to attend a 4-year college than white graduates. However, when matched for levels of college qualification, blacks enroll in a 4-year college at similar rates to whites.*

Other possible explanations for lower college enrollment among black students compared to white students may be that black students are less able to afford college (*Indicator 13*, 1996) or are less well prepared to enter higher education. In order to enter higher education, students must follow a series of steps that will increase their chances of college admission and enrollment. These steps include following a rigorous high school curriculum, taking aptitude tests such as the SAT or ACT, and applying to college. Additionally, students must demonstrate minimum levels of achievement in such measures as GPA and ACT or SAT scores. In 1992, white high school graduates were more likely to be college qualified (as measured by a 4-year college qualification index based upon GPA, senior class rank, and other measures) than their black counterparts. Among college-qualified high school graduates, blacks took steps toward college admission and enrolled at 4-year institutions at comparable rates to whites (*Indicator 8* and supplemental note to *Indicator 8*).

- *The proportion of bachelor's degree recipients who earned degrees in computer science was higher for blacks than for whites.*

The choice of a college major affects the employment opportunities available to students once they have completed their education. Today's increasingly technological society requires more training in science and technology in the nation's work force. Since 1977, a higher proportion of black bachelor degree recipients than white recipients earned degrees in social and behavioral sciences, though these proportions of black degree recipients have been declining. In contrast, a higher proportion of white bachelor degree recipients earned degrees in natural sciences than did blacks. However, since 1987, the proportion of blacks earning bachelor's degrees who earned their degrees in computer and information sciences was higher than that of whites (*Indicator 29*).

### Adults and work force outcomes

- *Black adults are more likely to perform at lower literacy levels than white adults are.*

The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), designed to profile the English literacy of adults in the United States, found that in 1992 black adults were more likely than white adults to perform at the lowest 2 of the 5 literacy levels designated by the survey. Lower literacy levels are associated with lower levels of educational attainment, higher rates of unemployment, lower earnings, and higher pov-

erty rates. For example, on the document proficiency scale, which is one of three scales of the assessment, 79 percent of blacks compared to 43 percent of whites were at level 2 of the scale or below. The document literacy scale measures the ability to find and use information from schedules, graphs, forms, and other kinds of practical information displays encountered in the home or on the job. The average proficiency scores of blacks and whites on this scale (230 and 280, respectively) differed by 50 points, or about one proficiency level.<sup>16</sup>

Differences in the educational levels of the black and white populations along with other factors may explain some of these differences in the average literacy scores between the black and white populations. When level of education is taken into account, the 50 point difference in average scores on the document scale between the black and white populations is reduced by 25 percent, or about one fourth of a proficiency level. Similar reductions were found in the other two scales of the NALS assessment, which are prose and quantitative reasoning. Other important factors explaining parts of the remaining differences in the average scores of blacks and whites in the population may be differences between the two populations in age, occupation, and socioeconomic status.<sup>16</sup>

■ *At similar levels of educational attainment, employment and earnings generally are greater for whites than for blacks.*

Employment rises with educational attainment in the population as a whole and for blacks and whites, but at most levels of educational attainment the employment of blacks is less than the employment of whites (*Indicator 31*). Among recent high school drop outs 45 percent of whites and 22 percent of blacks were employed in 1996. Among recent high school graduates not enrolled in college, 69 percent of whites and 42 percent of blacks were employed (*Indicator 30*). At the baccalaureate level, 95 percent of white male bachelor's degree recipients ages 25–34 were employed full time, year round in 1997, and 87 percent of black recipients were so employed. Furthermore, the unemployment rate among black male college graduates in this same cohort was 7.4 percent and 1.6 percent among whites in 1997.<sup>17</sup>

Earnings follow the same pattern. When matched on levels of educational attainment, whites earn more than blacks (see table 4).

**Table 4. Median annual earnings (in 1997 constant dollars) of full-time year round wage and salary workers ages 25–34, by sex, race, and highest education level: 1994–1996**

| Highest education level | Men      |          | Women    |          |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|                         | White    | Black    | White    | Black    |
| Grades 9–11             | \$21,513 | \$17,395 | \$15,532 | \$12,732 |
| High school diploma     | 26,446   | 21,026   | 19,323   | 16,486   |
| Some college            | 29,279   | 26,219   | 23,141   | 21,180   |
| Bachelor's degree       | 38,813   | 30,922   | 31,085   | 26,953   |

NOTE: Median earnings were calculated based a pool of all three years of data, from 1994–1996.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys.

While higher levels of educational attainment are associated with higher employment and income levels, educational attainment is not the only factor that determines levels of employment and income. In 1994–96, the median annual earnings of 25- to 34-year-old white male 4-year college graduates were \$7,400 higher than their black counterparts, while the difference for females was \$3,900.

When matched on level of educational attainment, blacks are also more likely to receive welfare than whites (*Indicator 34*).

## Summary

In a competitive society that demands an informed populace and a highly skilled workforce, educational achievement and attainment are becoming increasingly important for those who wish to actively participate and achieve. Black students have made many gains in educational access, achievement, and attainment in the past 20 years. While higher proportions of black children are at risk for failure in school than white children due to socioeconomic factors, achievement scores have increased among black students over the past 20 years. More black high school students are taking challenging Advanced Placement examinations, and more black students are completing high school and attending college than ever before.

In addition to the promising gains made by black students in recent years, many gaps that have existed between blacks and whites have narrowed. For example, the gaps in levels of parental education levels between blacks and white students have decreased since the 1970s. Black students are catching up to white students in many NAEP assessments, and the dropout rate for black students

has decreased faster than the rate for white students, narrowing the difference between the event dropout rates between these groups.

Despite these advances, sizeable differences between white and black students remain in terms of educational achievement and attainment. White students continue to have higher levels of educational achievement than black students do, and reap greater rewards from their educational experiences once their formal education is completed. Whites are still more likely to be employed and to earn more money when matched on educational attainment with blacks. These differences suggest that factors other than educational attainment may contribute in important ways to the differences in outcomes observed between whites and blacks. At least some of the differences appear to be linked to differences in family income, individual student achievement, and parental education.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Confronting the Odds: Students at Risk and the Pipeline to Higher Education*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>2</sup> Jencks, Christopher, Marshall Smith, Henry Acland, Mary Jo Bane, David Cohen, Herbert Gintis, Barbara Hines, and Stephan Michelson, *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America*, New York, NY: Basic Books, 1972; Grissmer, Sheila, Natanaj Kirby, Mark Berends, Stephanie Williamson, *Student Achievement and the Changing American Family*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1994.
- <sup>3</sup> Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well Being*, 1998.
- <sup>4</sup> *Education Week Special Reports*, "Quality Counts 1998, The Urban Challenge: Public Education in the 50 States," 1998.
- <sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Urban Schools: The Challenge of Location and Poverty*, Washington, DC, 1996.
- <sup>6</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, *School Enrollment-Social Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1995*, Washington, DC, 1997, table 5.
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Approaching Kindergarten: A Look at Preschoolers in the United States*, Washington, DC, 1995.
- <sup>8</sup> See also U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *NAEP 1996 Trends in Academic Progress*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1995*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>10</sup> Lee, Valerie E., David Burkam, Todd Chow-Hoy, Becky A. Smerdon, and Douglas Gevert, "High School Curriculum Structure: Effects on Course-taking and Achievement in Mathematics for High School Graduates," Working Paper, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC, August 1998.
- <sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Access to Postsecondary Education for the 1992 High School Graduates*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>12</sup> "Some college or more" includes earning an associate degree or vocational certificate, or a bachelor's or advanced degree.
- <sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Indicator of the Month*, "Subbaccalaureate Persistence and Attainment," Washington, DC, October 1997.
- <sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *A Descriptive Summary of 1992-93 Bachelor's Degree Recipients 1 Year Later*, Washington, DC, 1996.
- <sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Descriptive Summary of 1989-90 Beginning Postsecondary Students: 5 Years Later*, Washington, DC, table 20.
- <sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Adult Literacy in America*, Washington, DC, 1993.
- <sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys, Washington, DC, 1997.

## The Educational Progress of Hispanic Students

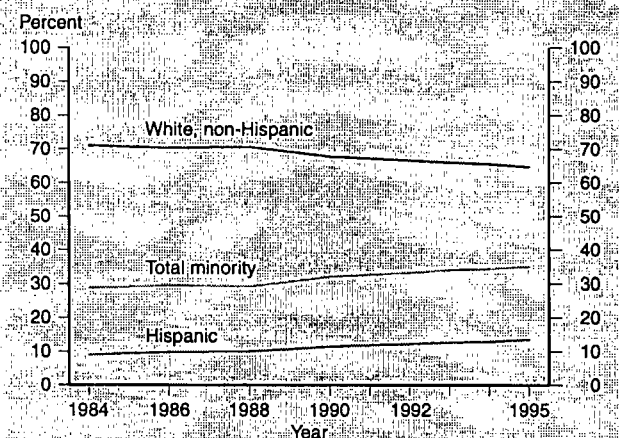
By Jennifer Sable and Janis Stennett, Pinkerton Computer Consultants, Inc.

In order to prepare American students for the types of jobs that will be available in the future, schools and parents need to work together to ensure that all students acquire the academic skills necessary to compete.<sup>1</sup> As the Hispanic population grows, the successful transition of Hispanic youth from school to work and active engagement in American society becomes more important for the Nation.

Racial and ethnic diversity in the United States has grown dramatically in recent years, and the growth of the Hispanic population has been a major contributor to this diversity. The Hispanic population has increased more rapidly than any other racial or ethnic group, growing from 9 percent of the child population in the United States in 1980 to 14 percent in 1996. Predictions indicate that by the year 2020, more than 20 percent of the children in the United States will be Hispanic.<sup>2</sup>

The increase in the Hispanic population in the United States, and the resulting rise in the enrollment of Hispanic students, has contributed to an 11 percentage point increase in minority enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools between 1976 and 1995. In 1976, Hispanic students made up 6 percent of the student population at public elementary and secondary schools. By 1995, the proportion of Hispanic students rose 8 percentage points, reaching 14 percent, the largest increase of any minority group (table 43-1).

**Figure 1. Percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary school: 1984-95**



NOTE: Data for 1992-95 are from the Common Core of Data (CCD) survey. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey, 1984, 1986, 1988, and 1990; National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1992; and *Digest of Education Statistics*, 1995 and 1996, table 44, and 1997, table 45.

In general, the educational achievement and attainment of Hispanics has been lower than that of whites. Since Hispanics account for a growing percentage of the general U.S. and public school population, it has become increasingly important to understand the educational experiences and transitions to the labor force of Hispanics. Understanding the differences in educational experiences between Hispanics and whites, and how these differences have changed over time, provides an overview of the educational progress of Hispanics in the United States.

It should be noted that although limited data availability often leads researchers to treat Hispanics as if they were a homogeneous group, the U.S. Hispanic population is diverse. The three largest Hispanic subgroups are Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans. Recent immigrants from Central America and South America constitute other, smaller groups. These subgroups are concentrated in different parts of the United States, their economic circumstances vary, and the timing of the immigration differs. In this analysis, overall trends for the U.S. Hispanic population are provided, as data are usually not available for these subpopulations.

### Family characteristics and parent's involvement in education

A child's family characteristics and home environment have implications for many aspects of a child's life, including academic experiences. Children who live in poverty, in single-parent homes, or whose parents have low levels of educational attainment are at greater risk for dropping out of high school, not achieving at higher levels, and not attending postsecondary institutions. As differences between whites and Hispanics in these family background characteristics change, the educational progress of Hispanics compared to whites can be expected to change.

- Both the likelihood of living in poverty and with a single parent increased among Hispanic children.

The number of Hispanic youth under age 18 living below 100 percent of the poverty line has increased from 33 percent in 1985 to 40 percent in 1996. In contrast, the percentage of white children living in poverty has decreased slightly from 12 percent in 1990 to 10 percent in 1996.<sup>3</sup> The percentage of His-

panic 15- to 18-year-olds living with one parent increased from 23 percent in 1972 to 33 percent in 1997, while the percentage of whites in the same age range living with one parent increased from 12 to 22 percent (*Indicator 44*).

- *The levels of parental education among Hispanic children have increased.*

Higher levels of parent education are generally associated with positive educational outcomes and experiences, such as participation in preprimary education and not dropping out of high school. The parental education levels of Hispanic students ages 15 to 18 nearly doubled in the past 25 years. For example, in 1997, 45 percent of mothers and 46 percent of fathers of Hispanic 15- to 18-year olds had at least a high school diploma or GED, up from 24 percent of mothers and fathers in 1972. The increase for white students has been from 68 to 64 percent of mothers and fathers having a high school diploma or GED in 1972 to 92 and 90 percent, respectively, having these credentials in 1997 (*Indicator 44*).

- *Many parents of Hispanic children are actively involved in their children's educational activities.*

Parents' involvement in their children's education is another way through which the family influences educational experiences. Parent participation in their children's education is evidenced by their involvement in school-related issues and activities. In 1996, parents of Hispanic children were equally or more involved in education-related activities that directly influenced their children than were parents of white children. For example, parents of Hispanics were as likely as parents of whites to attend general school meetings, and more likely to help their children with homework during the week than parents of white children. However, parents of Hispanic children were less likely than parents of white children to participate in school activities that did not directly influence their child's education, such as attending a school event, acting as a volunteer, or serving on a committee (*Indicator 49*).

### Issues of limited English proficiency

The ability to speak and read English, a problem which is not unique to the Hispanic population, is a concern for many. Spanish-speakers may have difficulty with English because they have had limited opportunities to use English. For example, Hispanic students may speak English only at school, while speaking Spanish at home and outside of school. Difficulties in speaking and reading English

places students at risk for academic failure. In fact, Hispanic students who speak Spanish are more likely to drop out of high school than peers who speak only English.

Between 1979 and 1989, the percentage of Spanish speakers age 5 and older increased 65 percent in the United States. In 1989, more than 14 million people in the United States spoke Spanish. Of those who spoke languages other than English, 58 percent spoke Spanish. Of these Spanish speakers, almost half reported having difficulty speaking English.<sup>4</sup>

The limited English proficiency of many Hispanics is likely to serve as an important impediment to success in the educational careers and employment outcomes of Hispanic youths. Knowing the pervasiveness of this problem is important for understanding the differences that exist between Hispanics and other racial and ethnic groups in terms of educational participation, progress, and achievement.

### Preprimary education

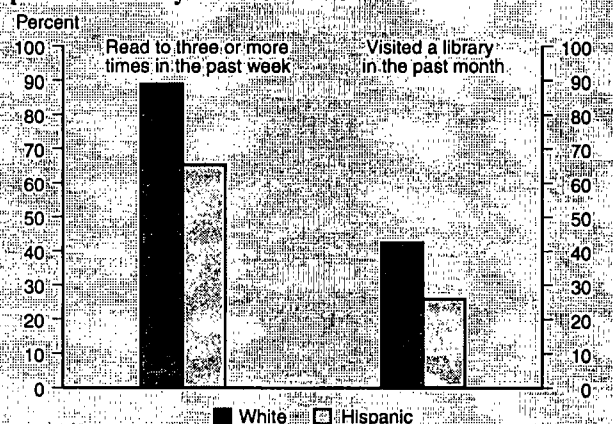
Research has shown that a quality preschool experience is an important indicator of student success. Preprimary education prepares children for school by teaching learning and socialization skills.<sup>5</sup>

- *The preprimary educational experiences of Hispanic children differ from those of whites. Hispanic 3- and 4-year-olds are less likely to participate in preprimary education than their white peers, and are less likely to participate in early literacy activities.*

One form of preprimary education is organized preprimary programs, such as Head Start or pre-kindergarten. In 1996, about 22 percent of Hispanic 3-year-olds were enrolled in such preprimary programs compared to 40 percent of whites. Among 4-year-olds, 45 percent of Hispanics and 59 percent of whites were enrolled. Among 5-year-olds of normal kindergarten age, these differences largely disappeared: Hispanic enrollment rates, including kindergarten enrollment, were similar to the enrollment rates of white 5-year-olds (*Indicator 1*).

Preprimary educational opportunities are fostered in the home environment as well as in preprimary programs. In 1996, Hispanic children, ages 3-5, were less likely to have been read to in the past week or to have visited a library in the past month than white children (*figure 2 and Indicator 2*). This lack of early reading experience can create learning deficits for Hispanic youngsters.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 2. Percentage of children ages 3–5 who participated in various literacy activities with a parent or family member: 1996**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1996 (Parent and Family Involvement in Education File)

### Academic performance of Hispanic students

- *Hispanic students score lower than white students in national assessments of reading, writing, mathematics, and science proficiency, but their performance has improved in some areas since 1975.*

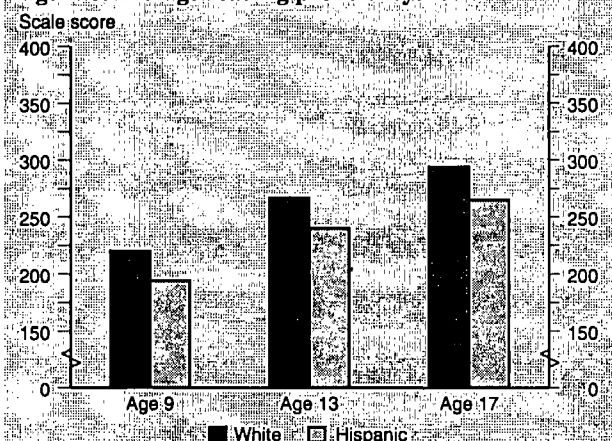
Developing reading skills at an early stage is important to future educational success. Once behind in reading proficiency, a student risks having difficulty with other aspects of the curriculum, and a continued lag behind other peers in reading skills as the student gets older. In 1996, at age 9, Hispanic students had an average reading scale score of 194 while white students had an average score of 220 (*Indicator 16*).

There is evidence that the majority of reading skills are mastered by age 13, which is generally when reading is taught in school as an explicit subject for the most part.<sup>7</sup> In 1996, Hispanic reading scores differed by 46 points between ages 9 and 13, compared to 25 points between ages 13 and 17. The Hispanic-white differences in reading scores were about the same at all three age levels: 26 points at age 9, 27 points at age 13, and 30 points at age 17. At age 17, Hispanic students were reading at levels similar to white 13-year-olds (*Indicator 16*).

These scoring differences between Hispanics and whites mean that the average Hispanic score is below that of the average student by about 25 to 30 points. On average, the reading scores of all 13-year-old students in 1996 were about 50 points higher than their reading scores as 9-year-olds in 1992. The extent to which these large differences may be attributable to recent immigration or lan-

guage difficulties is unknown. Also, students whose English proficiency is judged not to be appropriate for the NAEP tests are excluded from taking them.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 3. Average reading proficiency: 1996**

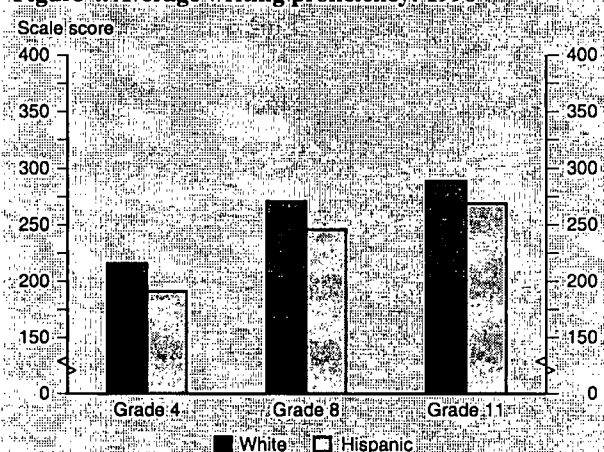


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1996; Mathematics, 1973 to 1996; Reading, 1971 to 1996; Writing, 1984 to 1996, 1997.*

While Hispanics score at proficiency levels below those of white students at all ages, there was a slight improvement in the average reading proficiency scores of 9-year-old Hispanics between 1975 and 1996. However, there was no similar improvement for 13- and 17-year-old Hispanics in reading proficiency (*Indicator 16*).

The NAEP writing proficiency scores of white and Hispanic 4<sup>th</sup>-, 8<sup>th</sup>-, and 11<sup>th</sup>-graders exhibited similar patterns as reading proficiency scores. In 1996, white 4<sup>th</sup>-grade students outperformed Hispanic 4<sup>th</sup>-grade students in writing proficiency by 25 scale

**Figure 4. Average writing proficiency: 1996**

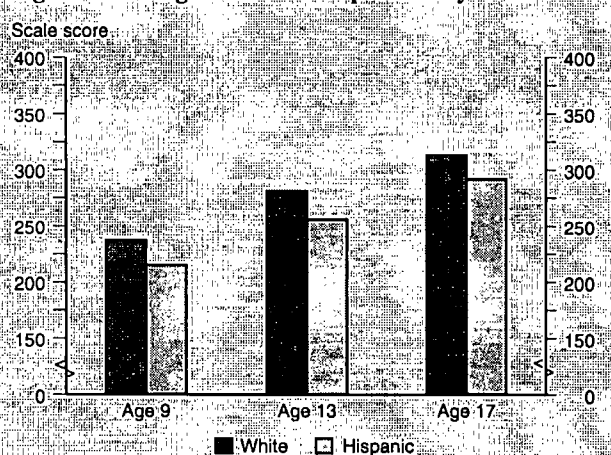


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1996; Mathematics, 1973 to 1996; Reading, 1971 to 1996; Writing, 1984 to 1996, 1997.*

points. As Hispanic and white students grew older, the writing scale scores of Hispanics remained lower than those of whites. Hispanic 11<sup>th</sup>-graders performed at a level similar to white students in 8<sup>th</sup>-graders, similar to the pattern with the reading proficiency scores. There have been no significant increases or decreases in performance on the NAEP writing proficiency scale for Hispanic or white 4<sup>th</sup>- or 8<sup>th</sup>-graders between 1984 and 1996 (*Indicator 17*). Again, students whose English proficiency is judged not appropriate for the NAEP tests are excluded from taking them.<sup>9</sup>

Patterns in the NAEP mathematics proficiency scores were similar to the average reading and writing scores in 1996 in most, but not all, respects. White students outperformed Hispanic students at each age level (figure 5). The major difference is that unlike reading and writing, the average mathematics proficiency scores of both white and Hispanic students increased between 1973 and 1996 at all age levels. The scores of Hispanic 13- and 17-year-olds increased at a faster rate than those of white students, causing the performance gaps to narrow over this period.

**Figure 5. Average mathematics proficiency: 1996**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1996; Mathematics, 1973 to 1996; Reading, 1971 to 1996; Writing, 1984 to 1996, 1997*.

As in mathematics, the science proficiency scores of both Hispanic and white students increased between 1977 and 1996 at both ages 9 and 13 (*Indicator 19*). Unlike in mathematics, there was no improvement among 17-year-old whites or Hispanics. The gaps in science performance between Hispanics and whites also did not narrow between 1977 and 1996, and Hispanic-white differences at age 9 had not decreased by age 17.

## Progress in school

- *Hispanics are taking more rigorous high school courses, and more Hispanic students are participating in the AP program than in the past.*

In the past Hispanic students have been commonly "tracked" into general high school courses that satisfied only the most basic requirements for earning a high school diploma, but did not prepare students to attend 4-year colleges or rigorous technical schools. This general high school curriculum also did not prepare students for good entry-level jobs in high-technology industries if the student chooses not to pursue a postsecondary education.<sup>10</sup>

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* recommended that all high school students seeking a high school diploma take a more rigorous core curriculum called the "New Basics." This curriculum consists of 4 years of study in English, and 3 years each in mathematics, science, and social studies. In 1982, 7 percent of Hispanic high school graduates earned the units to meet this curriculum. By 1994, this percentage was six times higher, with 44 percent of Hispanic high school graduates earning the units for the "New Basics" curriculum. White graduates are still more likely to have met the course area requirements of the "New Basics" than Hispanics (*Indicator 28, Condition 1996*). However, Hispanics are just as likely as whites to have completed the more rigorous requirements recommended for college-bound students, which included foreign languages and computer science.<sup>11</sup>

Another way to assess the rigor of a student's high school curriculum is to examine participation in the Advanced Placement (AP) program which offers college-level courses to high school students. Satisfactory performance on an AP examination (usually a score of 3 or higher on a 5 point scale) will often allow the examinee to earn college credit. Between 1984 and 1996, the number of Hispanic students who took AP examinations per 1,000 12<sup>th</sup>-graders increased from 24 to 74. For Hispanics, the rate of 74 students per 1,000 AP examination takers is about half the rate of 133 per 1,000 students for whites. Between 1984 and 1996, whites were more likely to take AP examinations than Hispanics, but the gap between the races has decreased. In 1996, Hispanics taking the AP examination were three times as likely as whites to take a foreign language AP examination (*Indicator 27*).

- *Hispanic students are less likely to complete high school than white students. The rates of not completing are highest among immigrants and those with limited English-language proficiency.*

The differences in high school completion between Hispanics and whites ages 16–24 are substantial. In 1996, the dropout rate for white young adults was 7 percent compared to 29 percent for Hispanic young adults.<sup>12</sup> Immigration and English language use and proficiency are all associated with this difference between the two groups.

Foreign-born Hispanic students are at a much greater risk of not completing high school than native-born students. The status dropout rate (defined as a proportion of young adults ages 16–24 who are not enrolled in school and do not have a high school credential) is about two times higher for Hispanic migrants than for Hispanic young adults born in the 50 states and DC (46 versus 18 percent). Many Hispanic youths migrating to the U.S. do not enroll in school, but seek employment instead. They may be deterred from enrolling by language, economic, and cultural differences.<sup>13</sup> Those who never enroll in high school may account for about one-half of the higher dropout rate for Hispanics. In contrast, Hispanics who had ever enrolled in U.S. schools had a status dropout rate of 20 percent.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 1. Percentage distribution of the 16- to 24-year-old population and percentage who were dropouts: 1995**

| Race/ethnicity and place of birth | Percentage of the population | Dropout rate |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Total                             | 100.0                        | 12.0         |
| Born in U.S.                      | 89.4                         | 9.9          |
| Foreign-born                      | 10.6                         | 29.1         |
| White, non-Hispanic               | 67.9                         | 8.6          |
| Born in U.S.                      | 65.6                         | 8.6          |
| Foreign-born                      | 2.3                          | 7.5          |
| Hispanic                          | 13.9                         | 30.0         |
| Born in U.S.                      | 7.9                          | 17.9         |
| Foreign-born                      | 5.9                          | 46.2         |

NOTE: Details may not add to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

The likelihood of not completing high school is also related to language use in the home and English-language proficiency. In 1995, for example, the status dropout rate for Hispanics speaking Spanish at home, who were ever enrolled in U.S. schools, and who spoke English "well," was 19 percent compared to 33 percent for their peers who did not speak English "well."<sup>15</sup>

Due to immigration and the higher dropout rates for Hispanics born in the United States, the overall percentage of the Hispanic, young adult population, ages 25–29 who have completed high school through receiving a diploma or other certificate of

high school equivalency is less than that of whites. These rates are 93 percent for whites and 62 percent for Hispanics in 1997. The high school completion rate for Hispanics shows no consistent trend since the early 1980s, while the high school completion rate for whites has increased (*Indicator 22*).

## College enrollment

- *Total Hispanic enrollment in postsecondary education is increasing rapidly, primarily because of the growing proportion in the total population, rather than an increase in the rate at which Hispanic high school completers are entering college.*

Enrollment in colleges and universities has become increasingly diverse since the mid-1970s as the total numbers of different minorities enrolling have increased faster than the enrollment of whites. Much of this increased diversity is due to the rapid growth of Hispanic enrollment, which nearly tripled between 1976 and 1995 from .4 to 1.1 million students (fall enrollment).<sup>16</sup> Because of this growth, Hispanic enrollment rose from 4 percent of all students in 1976 in postsecondary education to 8 percent in 1995. As shown in table 2, more Hispanic students have enrolled in community colleges than in 4-year colleges by a substantial amount, and the proportion has increased since 1976.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 2. Percentage of all Hispanic and white (non-Hispanic) students in 2-year versus 4-year institutions**

| Type of institution and race/ethnicity of student | Year |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
|---------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
|                                                   | 1976 | 1980 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995* |
| 4-year                                            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| White                                             | 66.1 | 63.8 | 63.1 | 61.8 | 62.0 | 62.6 | 63.0 | 63.2  |
| Hispanic                                          | 45.2 | 45.9 | 45.8 | 44.2 | 42.9 | 43.7 | 44.3 | 44.4  |
| 2-year                                            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| White                                             | 33.9 | 36.2 | 36.9 | 38.2 | 38.0 | 37.4 | 37.0 | 36.8  |
| Hispanic                                          | 54.8 | 54.1 | 54.2 | 55.8 | 57.1 | 56.3 | 55.7 | 55.6  |

\* Preliminary data.

NOTE: Details may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Fall Enrollment in Colleges and Universities" surveys; and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Fall Enrollment" surveys.

Nearly all of this growth in total Hispanic enrollments reflects rapid growth in the total numbers of Hispanic high school completers in the U.S. population and not increases in the rates at which Hispanic high school completers are continuing on into postsecondary education. The percentages of Hispanic high school completers ages 18–24 attend-

ing college has not changed since the early 1980s, while the rate for whites has grown. In 1996, 34 percent of Hispanic high school completers ages 18–24 were enrolled in college, compared to 45 percent of their white peers. In 1980, the enrollment rates were about the same, with 30 percent of Hispanics and 32 percent of whites enrolled (*Indicator 9*).

A large part of the growing gap between the percentages of Hispanics and white high school completers ages 18–24 who are enrolled in college reflects faster growth in the percentages of white high school completers who immediately enroll in college the following fall (*Indicator 7*). In 1996, 51 percent of Hispanic and 67 percent of white youth went to college immediately after completing high school, compared to 52 percent of Hispanics and 50 percent of whites in 1980 (*Indicator 7*).

- *Hispanic students may be less prepared or qualified to attend a 4-year college than white students. Additionally, college-qualified Hispanics are less likely to take steps toward college admission and enrollment than whites.*

Differences in college preparedness or qualifications may help to explain why Hispanics enroll in college at lower rates than their white peers. In order to have access to a 4-year college, students must complete a series of steps that will increase their chances for admission and enrollment. Students must be academically prepared to attend a 4-year college; this includes successfully following a rigorous high school curriculum and taking college admission tests such as the SAT. Students must also apply to college and enroll if accepted. In 1992, Hispanic high school graduates were less likely to be “college qualified” (as determined by a 4-year college qualification index, see the supplemental note to *Indicator 8*) than white high school graduates. Moreover, given that they were college-qualified, Hispanic high school graduates were less likely to take steps toward college admission or to enroll at a 4-year institution after high school than white high school graduates (*table 8-1* and *Indicator 8*).

### Subject studied in college

Once enrolled in college, Hispanics to some extent pursue different courses of study than their white peers. The choice of a college major affects the types of jobs graduates are prepared to take once they complete their education. Now more than ever, college graduates need skills in science and technology to be competitive in the job market. Examining differences in the racial and ethnic distribution of bachelor’s degrees conferred by field of study can

be used to predict differences in employment and earnings between Hispanics and whites.

- *Hispanics are more likely than whites to earn bachelor’s degrees in business and in computer and information sciences.*

In 1995, Hispanic students were more likely than white students to earn bachelor’s degrees in humanities, the behavioral and social sciences, computer and information sciences, engineering, or business management. White students were more likely to major in natural sciences, engineering technologies, education, and health sciences. These patterns of degrees earned are evident in the Hispanic to white concentration ratios in the fields of business management and computer and information sciences (concentration ratios measure the extent to which the major fields of study differ between two population groups). The Hispanic to white concentration ratios increased to greater than 1.0 in these two fields between 1977 and 1995, indicating that Hispanics are increasingly more likely to earn degrees in these two fields than whites. In contrast, the Hispanic to white field concentration ratio decreased considerably in the education field (*Indicator 29*).

### Postsecondary attainment

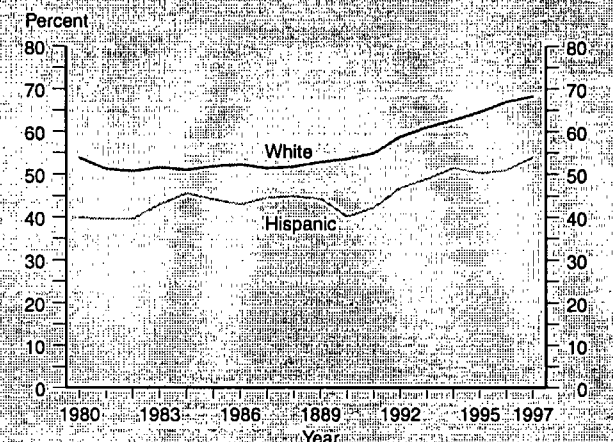
- *The postsecondary educational attainment of Hispanics has increased since the 1970s.*

Completion of postsecondary education has become increasingly important as the demand for education beyond the completion of high school has increased in the labor market.

The percentages of 25- to 29-year-old whites and Hispanic high school completers who have also finished some college or higher<sup>18</sup> have increased between 1980 and 1997, as compared to no increase in the previous decade. In 1997, 68 percent of white high school completers and 54 percent of Hispanic completers had completed some college or higher, while in 1980 the corresponding figures were 54 percent of white and 40 percent of Hispanic completers (*Indicator 22* and *figure 7*).

The percentages of 25- to 29-year-old white and Hispanic high school completers who have finished 4 or more years of college have not increased as rapidly (see *figure 8*). The proportion of Hispanic high school completers finishing 4 years of college has increased from 13 percent in 1981 to 18 percent in 1997. For whites, the increase rose from 28 percent in 1980 to 35 percent in 1997. Thus, the rate at which Hispanic high school completers attain 4 or more

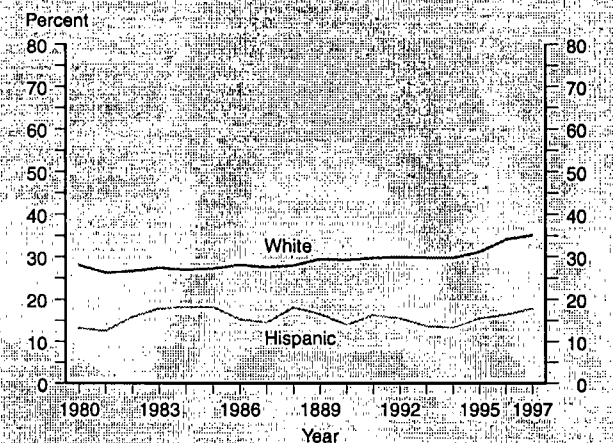
**Figure 7. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-old high school completers who completed 1 or more years of college**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys.

years of postsecondary education relative to white high school completers remains about half the rate of the whites.

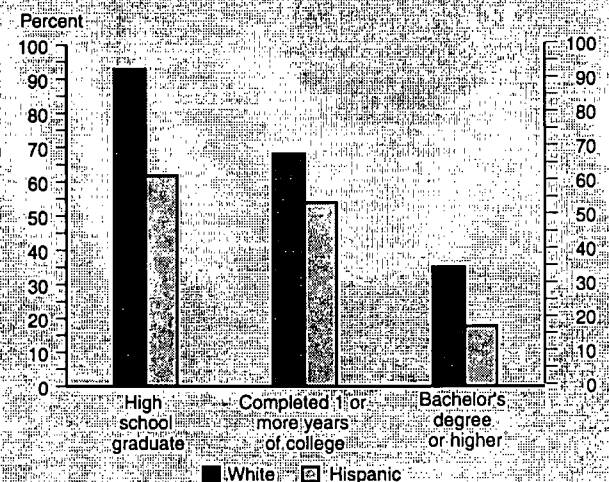
**Figure 8. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-old high school completers who completed 4 or more years of college**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys.

As shown in figure 9, the rate of postsecondary attainment is substantially lower for Hispanics when computed on the basis of the entire Hispanic population, rather than on the number of high school completers. Among those ages 25-29, the rate of completing some college or higher declines from 54 percent of Hispanic high school completers to 33 percent of all Hispanics, while the rate of completing a bachelor's degree or more declines from 18 percent of high school completers to 11 percent of Hispanics.

**Figure 9. Percentage of Hispanic and white 25- to 29-year olds who complete different levels of education, March 1997**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys.

In summary, while there have been some gains in the percentages of Hispanics pursuing and completing higher education, they remain behind whites in attaining this level of education.

### Relationship of education and labor market outcomes

Attaining higher levels of education increases one's employment opportunities by enhancing knowledge, ability to learn, work-related skills, and job readiness. Successful employment leads to better overall opportunities for young adults by giving them the opportunity to gain valuable work experience and on-the-job training.<sup>19</sup>

■ *With comparable levels of education, Hispanics generally are less likely to be employed and to earn less than whites.*

Among both high school completers not enrolled in college and high school dropouts, Hispanics are less likely to be employed than their white peers. For example, 1995, 71 percent of white high school graduates not enrolled in college and 43 percent of Hispanic high school graduates were employed. Among school dropouts, 52 percent of whites and 44 percent of Hispanics were employed (*Indicator 30*).

However, as these figures indicate, Hispanic high school dropouts were about as likely to be employed as high school graduates.

As shown in table 3, both Hispanic men and women earn less than white men and women at every level of educational attainment.

**Table 3. Median annual earnings (in 1997 constant dollars) of full-time, year-round wage and salary workers ages 25–34, by sex, race, and highest educational level: 1994–96**

| Highest education level | Men      |          | Women    |          |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|                         | White    | Hispanic | White    | Hispanic |
| Grades 9–11             | \$21,513 | \$16,510 | \$15,532 | \$13,699 |
| High school diploma     | 26,446   | 21,118   | 19,323   | 17,708   |
| Some college            | 29,272   | 25,361   | 23,141   | 21,412   |
| Bachelor's degree       | 38,813   | 34,400   | 31,085   | 29,090   |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys.

### Summary

There has been some progress in education for Hispanics. More Hispanic students are taking rigorous high school course loads and there has been some increase in the rates at which Hispanic high school completers are completing some college or more. The educational levels of the parents of Hispanic students are rising and many parents of Hispanic students are actively involved in their children's education. However, Hispanic students in the United States are still at great risk for academic failure and the subsequent labor market outcomes associated with such failure.

In particular, limited language skills are correlated to the high dropout rates for Hispanic youth. The

extent to which these language skills impinge on Hispanic achievement test performance is largely unknown, but it is certainly a contributing factor to the test performance gaps. An indication of this is that students with low English proficiency are less likely to achieve basic levels of reading and mathematics than students of the same socioeconomic status with medium or high English proficiency.<sup>20</sup>

The rates of high school completion among Hispanics remains much lower than that of whites, reflecting the continued immigration of Hispanics to the United States. So far, the rigorous high school course loads being taken by Hispanic students have not translated into rising rates of college enrollment immediately following high school completion. Rates of completing at least some college within 10 years of leaving high school are rising among Hispanic high school completers and have reached three-quarters of the white rate, but rates of completing 4 or more years of college education remain only half the rate of whites.

When all Hispanics in the population are factored in, including those who have not completed high school, the percentages of Hispanics completing any level of postsecondary education fall considerably further behind the rates of whites, and are showing little improvement. These low rates of postsecondary completion mean continuing difficulties for the Hispanic population in fully participating in areas of the economy where higher levels of education are needed, employment is expanding, and wages are higher.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> National Education Goals Panel, *The National Education Goals Report: Building a Nation of Learners*, Washington, DC, 1996.
- <sup>2</sup> Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*, Washington, DC, 1998.
- <sup>3</sup> Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*, Washington, DC, 1998.
- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Language Characteristics and Schooling in the United States. A Changing Picture: 1979 and 1989*, Washington, DC, 1993.
- <sup>5</sup> Field, T. 1991, "Quality Infant Day-care and Grade School Behavior and Performance." *Child Development*, 62, p. 863-870; and, Howes, C., 1988 "Relations between Early Child Care and Schooling." *Developmental Psychology*, 24(1), 53-57.
- <sup>6</sup> Espinosa, Linda M. "Hispanic Involvement in Early Childhood Programs" (ERIC Digest ED382412), 1995.
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *NAEP 1996 Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1996, Mathematics, 1973 to 1996, Reading, 1971 to 1996, and Writing, 1984 to 1996*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Inclusion of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students in Large-Scale Assessment: A Summary of Recent Progress*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Inclusion of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students in Large-Scale Assessment: A Summary of Recent Progress*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>10</sup> President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, *Our Nation on the Fault Line: Hispanic American Education*, September 1996.
- <sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1997*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1996*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1995*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1995*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1995*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1997*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1997*, Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>18</sup> "Some college or more" includes an associate degree or vocational degree, and a bachelor's or advanced degree.
- <sup>19</sup> Zemsky, Robert, "Skills and the Economy: An Employer Context for Understanding the School-to-Work Transition," Alan Lesgold, Michael J. Feuer, and Allison Black, eds. *Transitions in Work and Learning: Implications for Assessment*, National Academy Press: Washington, DC, 1997.
- <sup>20</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Language Characteristics and Academic Achievement: A Look at Asian and Hispanic Eighth Graders in NELS:88*, February 1992. Students with limited English proficiency who were judged unable to complete the NELS:88 achievement tests were excluded from this analysis.

## College Access and Affordability

by Susan P. Choy, MPR Associates, Inc.

Postsecondary education generates both individual and public benefits. College graduates with a bachelor's degree earn substantially more than those with only a high school education,<sup>1</sup> and attending college enriches students' lives in other ways that are long lasting and extend to the next generation.<sup>2</sup> Society benefits from an educated population as well. In recent years, there has been evidence that education requirements for all types of occupations are growing, and that the fastest growing occupations are those that require postsecondary training.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, many believe that increased participation in postsecondary education is crucial to maintaining a competitive position in the global economy.<sup>4</sup>

Federal and state governments encourage participation in postsecondary education and have tried to reduce price barriers so that postsecondary education is accessible. State subsidies to public institutions allow them to charge tuition that is substantially below the actual cost of education, while federal (and sometimes state) grant, loan, and work-study programs help provide financially needy students with the up-front money they need to invest in postsecondary education. Many institutions increase accessibility through their own financial aid and scholarship programs. The extent of public subsidies, the nature of the laws and regulations that determine who is eligible for financial aid, and the amount of funding provided for financial aid programs all greatly affect the affordability of postsecondary education for students from various income groups, and thus, their access to its benefits.

Reflecting the benefits of postsecondary education and the policies and programs that increase accessibility, high school completers are enrolling at record rates, and substantial numbers of older adults are enrolling as well.<sup>5</sup> Although interest in postsecondary education is growing, rising tuition and fees have generated considerable public concern.<sup>6</sup> This raises a series of important questions: To whom is postsecondary education accessible and to what extent is accessibility related to income? How much does attending postsecondary education cost students? How affordable is postsecondary education? How are students and their families coping with the price of attendance? What impact do their financing strategies have on their educational experiences? Some of the statistical evidence available to address these questions from a national perspective is summarized here.

This essay examines the extent to which the financial aid system promotes access to postsecondary education by equalizing income differences. It does not address the effects of other factors such as low employment rates or a robust economy on enrollment, nor does it examine the sensitivity of different income groups to price, the types of aid available, or differences in access by race/ethnicity. For information about trends of enrollment in higher education, see the other two essays in this series: "The Educational Progress of Black Students" and "The Educational Progress of Hispanic Students."

### Access to postsecondary education

Increasingly, high school students are being advised to go to college, and growing numbers are taking that advice. However, not all high school completers have the same access. Some of the characteristics associated with higher rates of enrollment are related to income, suggesting that the price of attending is a barrier. However, certain attitudes and behaviors appear to be factors as well.

- *Increasingly, high school students are being advised to go to college.*

The proportions of high school sophomores whose teachers, counselors, and parents encouraged them to go to college increased dramatically between 1980 and 1990. High school sophomores in 1990 were twice as likely as their counterparts in 1980 to report that their teachers and guidance counselors recommended that they go to college (table 1). In 1990, more than half of even the lowest performing sophomores (those scoring in the lowest quartile on mathematics and reading tests) were advised to attend.

**Table 1. Percentage of high school sophomores who reported being advised to attend college by various adults: 1980 and 1990**

| Recommended by     | All students |      | Lowest test quartile* |      |
|--------------------|--------------|------|-----------------------|------|
|                    | 1980         | 1990 | 1980                  | 1990 |
| Father             | 59           | 77   | 40                    | 60   |
| Mother             | 65           | 83   | 48                    | 65   |
| Guidance counselor | 32           | 65   | 26                    | 56   |
| Teacher            | 32           | 66   | 28                    | 57   |

\* Composite mathematics, reading, and vocabulary performance.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *America's High School Sophomores: A Ten Year Comparison, 1980-1990*, p. 47.

---

## Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

---

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

---

Divider Title: Child Abuse

hibc

# CURRENT TRENDS IN CHILD ABUSE REPORTING AND FATALITIES:

## THE RESULTS OF THE 1997 ANNUAL FIFTY STATE SURVEY

**Ching-Tung Wang, Ph.D., Principal Researcher**

**Deborah Daro, D.S.W., Director**

*Prepared by:*

*The Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research,  
a program of the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse*

*Working Paper Number 808*

*Suggested Donation \$5.00*

NCPA  
332 S. Michigan Avenue  
Suite 1600  
Chicago, IL 60604  
(312) 663-3520

## OVERVIEW

Concern for the welfare of children, particularly those who are abused or neglected, has been longstanding among public and private social service agencies, professionals, and the general public. Legislation which defines child abuse and determines the appropriate role for child welfare agencies has been a part of state statutes for over 20 years. In 1974, the Federal government adopted a more direct role in child abuse policy with the passage of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (P.L. 93-247). Although the passage of this legislation established a set of uniform operating standards with respect to the identification and management of child abuse cases, individual states continue to determine definitions of maltreatment, investigative procedures, service systems and data collection procedures. Consequently, limited information is readily available on the scope of the child abuse problem and the availability of resources nationwide.

To provide the field with these data, the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse (NCPA) began collecting detailed information from all fifty states and the District of Columbia on the number and characteristics of child abuse reports, the number of child abuse fatalities, and changes in the funding and scope of child welfare services in 1986. This report summarizes the findings from the most recent survey. These data represent the only available estimates of the number of children reported and substantiated as victims of maltreatment and the number of child abuse fatalities nationwide for 1997.<sup>1</sup>

## SURVEY QUESTIONS

In February of 1998, NCPA's National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research sent a letter to the federally appointed liaisons for child abuse and neglect in each state and the District of Columbia requesting their support for this annual survey. A brief questionnaire accompanied the letter outlining the specific areas of interest including the following topics:

- ☐ the actual number of children reported as alleged victims of child maltreatment during 1995, 1996 and 1997;
- ☐ the number of substantiated and indicated victims for 1995, 1996 and 1997;
- ☐ the factors accounting for any observed changes in reporting levels during the past year;
- ☐ the number of reported and substantiated cases by type of maltreatment (e.g., physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment);
- ☐ other characteristics of this population such as the number of cases involving children in foster care and day care;
- ☐ the number of confirmed child abuse fatalities reported for 1995, 1996 and 1997;
- ☐ the characteristics of the child protective services reporting and case management systems;
- ☐ the level of funding for child protective service agencies; and
- ☐ agency attitudes toward policy reforms and pending legislation.

The state liaisons were contacted by telephone to obtain the above information though some replied in writing. All state liaisons except Maine and Nevada provided some data as requested in the survey by early April, 1998. Of the 49 respondents, 35 knew or were able to project their child abuse reporting statistics for 1997 and 29 respondents gave 1997 statistics with respect to child abuse fatalities. Forty-seven respondents answered at least some general questions on their state's child welfare practices.

## Estimating Procedures

A major obstacle preventing a direct count of the number of children reported and substantiated for maltreatment is the wide variation among states' data collection procedures. For example, while all states were asked to provide the number of children reported for maltreatment, ten states could not do so. Such states typically record reports by incidents or families rather than children. For this reason, the term "report," as used in this paper, covers all possible methods of counting (i.e., child, incident, family, referral or case). In addition, twenty-seven states count only investigated reports of child abuse and neglect while another twenty count all reports made to child protective services. With respect to the type of reporting year, twenty-three states based their numbers on calendar year whereas another twenty-five states used fiscal year. Finally, thirty-five states could only provide duplicate numbers of children reported for maltreatment. This means that if a child is reported for child abuse and neglect more than once in a year, the child would be counted more than once in the total number of children having contact with the system.

Such procedural variations preclude simply adding all reports for a grand total. Therefore, in order to arrive at an estimate of the number of children reported in a year period, we calculate the percentage change in reported children for those states providing these numbers. For the other states, we calculate the percentage change in reports under the assumption that the rate of change in these states is similar to the rate of change observed in those states providing more complete statistics. We then compute the mean change of all states with reporting data. Finally, we take the last count of reported children conducted in 1986 by the American Association for Protecting Children (AAPC, 1988) as the baseline number and multiply this number (2,086,000) by the mean percentage change in reports observed each year between 1987 and 1997.

We encounter similar problems in determining the number of children confirmed as victims of child maltreatment. First, many states define the number of substantiated reports as opposed to the number of children, creating the same methodological problems discussed above. Second, the amount of initial screening of child abuse reports impacts the overall substantiation rate, with the states documenting all calls to their reporting system (i.e., formal reports and non-reports) generally showing lower substantiation rates. In addition, states have different standards for determining whether or not maltreatment occurred, with some states requiring evidence of actual harm to a child and other states simply requiring evidence of potential harm. This survey asked respondents to provide the number of substantiated and indicated victims and the substantiation rate (including indicated cases) for the prior three years. We calculated an average national substantiation rate from each state's substantiation rate without attempting to standardize these figures. In this paper, the term "substantiated" includes indicated cases as well.

In the past, the procedure to estimate the number of child maltreatment fatalities confirmed by child protective services (CPS) agencies had been more straightforward. First, we would calculate the percentage of the total U.S. child population living in those states which were able to provide us current fatality data. We then used the total number of fatalities reported by these states to project a national estimate, based on the assumption that the rate of fatalities in the reporting states was comparable to the rate occurring in the non-reporting states.

Unfortunately, this year only 29 states were able to provide us child abuse fatality data for 1997, a far smaller number of states than had provided these data in the past. In addition, this pool of states included a greater proportion of relatively small states than had been true in the past. For example, California, New York and Florida, three states which had routinely provided these data, were all unable to generate 1997 statistics by our reporting deadline. Because our respondent sample does not accurately reflect the full range of states, any estimate based on this sample would generate an unreliable and potentially inflated national figure. Consequently, in this year's report, our discussion is limited to the trends observed in the number of child abuse fatalities within the reporting states.

## SPECIFIC FINDINGS

### Reporting and Substantiation Rates

To obtain an estimate of both the total caseload for CPS agencies nationwide and recent caseload changes encountered by these agencies, all liaisons were asked to provide the number of children reported and substantiated as victims of child maltreatment. Table 1 presents the annual percentage change in state child maltreatment reports between 1992 and 1997.

In 1997, an estimated 3,195,000 children were reported to CPS agencies as alleged victims of child maltreatment. This figure is based on information collected from 35 states which indicated that each state averaged a 1.7% increase in reports between 1996 and 1997<sup>2</sup> (Table 1). Nationwide, the rate<sup>3</sup> of children reported for child abuse or neglect increased 4% during this period, from 45 per 1,000 children in 1992 to 47 per 1,000 in 1997. Overall, the total number of reports nationwide has increased 41% since 1988.

The national increase in children reported between 1996 and 1997 is somewhat higher than the increase observed between 1995 and 1996. Overall, 17 states reported increases in the number of reports received last year, down from 18 states which reported increases in the 1996 survey. Of these 17 states, six experienced increases of 10% or more. Among them, Arizona had a 35% increase which, according to its state liaison, was primarily due to a new centralized reporting system utilizing a single hotline. Delaware's state liaison speculated that the 27% increase in reports observed in their state is likely due to a

highly publicized child abuse related death that occurred in January 1997. In contrast, sixteen respondents noted actual or expected declines in their reports. Two states, Alaska and Rhode Island, reported virtually no change.

Looking across the past five years, only two states, Delaware and Oklahoma, have experienced consistent annual increases while none of the states have experienced consistent declines. These patterns underscore the variability in reporting statistics over time and the sensitivity of this system to changes in social, political and administrative conditions or procedures.

As shown in the bottom half of Table 1, 15 out of every 1,000 U.S. children were substantiated as victims of child maltreatment in 1997, similar to the rate reported in the prior three years. The 1997 rate is based on data from 35 states averaging a 33% substantiation rate. States which could not provide a substantiation rate for any of these years include California, Maine, Nevada, North Dakota and West Virginia. In 1997, substantiation rates ranged from a low of 10% in Kansas to a high of 56% in Kentucky. Using the 33% average substantiation rate, an estimated 1,054,000 children were substantiated as victims of child abuse and neglect in 1997, a 5% increase over the number accepted to CPS caseloads in 1996.

## Factors Accounting for Reporting Changes

To help determine whether changes in reporting rates represent an actual increase/decrease in child abuse or merely reflect a more accurate assessment of the problem, we asked each liaison to name the two most significant factors which accounted for the reporting trends in their state. While these answers are not based on quantitative data, they give a descriptive appraisal of those factors CPS administrators consider the most relevant.

All of the 17 states with an increase responded to this question. Nine (or 53%) of the responding states attributed the rise in reports to **increased public awareness** through media and education of the reporting system which made the public as well as the mandated reporters more aware of their responsibility to report suspected child maltreatment. **Reporting system changes** such as centralized intake, more effective intake assessments, the use of standardized screening tools, and newly implemented data systems represented the next most common response, cited by five (or 29%) of the responding states. In addition, four states also cited **substance abuse** as a major contributor to growth in reports.

With respect to the decline in reports, twelve of the sixteen states with an actual decrease in reports gave an explanation for their decline. The major factor, indicated by four (or 33%) of the responding states, was more appropriate understanding on the part of the public regarding when to file a child abuse report. Changes in data system including the establishment of a centralized intake and referral unit, more accurate evaluations of reports, new computer systems, and creation of the new Department of Children's Services was mentioned by four (or 33%) of the responding states as a significant factor for leading to a more accurate use of the child abuse reporting system and resulting in lower number of reports.

## Case Characteristics

### *Breakdown by Type of Abuse*

To provide appropriate prevention and treatment services, it is necessary to determine the prevalence of different types of maltreatment as well as other characteristics of the CPS caseload. Each state liaison was asked to provide a breakdown of all reported and substantiated cases by type of maltreatment for 1996 and 1997. Five categories were provided: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment and other. Twenty-one states provided reporting data for both years while 30 states gave a breakdown for substantiated cases for both years. Although most of the states were able to provide data using the above-mentioned categories, a few states did not distinguish emotional maltreatment from neglect while three states included sexual abuse in the category of physical abuse.

As Figure 1 indicates, neglect represents the most common type of reported and substantiated form of maltreatment. In 1997, 22 states provided the following breakdown for reported cases: 52% involved neglect, 26% physical abuse, 7% sexual abuse, 4% emotional maltreatment and 11% other. For substantiated cases, 31 states gave the following breakdowns: 54% neglect, 22% physical abuse, 8% sexual abuse, 4% emotional maltreatment and 12% other. Compared to the reported cases, the substantiated cases contain a slightly higher percentage of neglect and a slightly lower percentage of physical abuse cases. Similar to the pattern observed in the past three years, these two distributions are almost identical. However, it is noted that "other" has become a bigger category in 1997 for both reported and substantiated cases than in previous years. This reflects that states are using more detailed systems in classifying types of child maltreatment. For example, behaviors included under the "other" category are abandonment, multiple types of maltreatment, imminent risk, medical and educational neglect, substance and alcohol abuse, dependency, threat of harm, and lack of supervision or bizarre discipline.

In the 1980's and early 1990's, the greatest difference between the reported and substantiated distributions involved sexual abuse and neglect cases. Overall, substantiated cases tended to include a larger percentage of sexual abuse and a lower percentage of child neglect than was observed in the larger pool of all reports. The similarity in the distribution of reported and substantiated cases in terms of primary type of abuse suggest that type of abuse, alone, may not be as critical a factor as in the past in determining whether a case will be substantiated. Neglect cases are now as likely to be substantiated as cases

involving other forms of maltreatment.

The types of cases most frequently reported to child protective services have undergone some shift in the past eleven years, potentially reflecting a change in the type of cases professionals and the public are willing to report to CPS and the classification systems used by child welfare systems in describing the reports they do receive. One of the most interesting shifts suggested by these patterns is the decline in the proportion of reported cases involving child sexual abuse, as summarized in Figure 2. While such cases represented 16% of all reports in 1986, this percentage has gradually declined over the years. In the most recent survey, sexual abuse cases were only 7% of all reports. To a certain extent, the rapid increase in the number of reported cases of child sexual abuse observed in the mid to late 1980's reflected the increased awareness and attention to a form of maltreatment which had been virtually ignored prior to this time. Child welfare agencies across the country were inundated with cases, many of which had involved several years of ongoing abuse. After over ten years of attention to this problem, it is possible that the reservoir of cases involving years of abuse have been so reduced such that child welfare is less burdened with such cases. Further, improvements in professional practice and the rapid expansion of child assault prevention services have produced an environment in which cases are identified closer to the onset of the abuse.

Whatever the reason, the decline in the percentage of reported cases involving child sexual abuse coupled with the changes in the pattern of substantiated cases noted above has resulted in a continued downward trend in the number of sexual abuse cases currently on CPS caseloads. Looking at the absolute number of child sexual abuse cases substantiated by the 30 states which are able to provide us this information for both reporting periods, the number of such cases dropped 3% between 1996 and 1997. Nationwide, we estimate that approximately 84,320 new cases of child sexual abuse were accepted for service last year. While significantly lower than the absolute number of cases accepted in the first part of this decade, this number is far higher than the 10,000 to 20,000 cases of child sexual abuse cases served in the 1970's and early 1980's. It underscores the substantial threat to child well being represented by this form of maltreatment.

### Day Care/Foster Care

Reports of child maltreatment involving day care centers and foster care homes attract a great deal of attention from the media and the general public. Such publicity has created the perception that abuse is common place in these out-of-home settings. However, this perception seems out of line with reality (Finkelhor, Williams & Burns, 1988). According to the 18 states that provided this statistic for 1997, about 3% of confirmed abuse cases occurred in day care centers, foster care, or other institutional care settings. These figures have been consistent over the past eleven years.

### Primary Presenting Problems

Families reported for child maltreatment often display a number of problems which can contribute to their likelihood for engaging in abusive behavior. Identifying these problems is a first step toward prevention. To assess whether specific patterns are shared by families on CPS caseloads across the country, respondents were asked to describe the major problems presented by their caseloads. Forty-one state liaisons responded to this question with 88% (36 states) naming **substance abuse** as one of the top two problems exhibited by families reported for maltreatment. This percentage is higher than those reported in previous years, 76% in 1996, 81% in 1995, and 76% in 1994, suggesting that after several years of some improvement, substance abuse is again surfacing as a primary contributor to child maltreatment.

The second most frequently cited problem area noted by the respondents involved **poverty and economical strains**. Twenty-one liaisons (51%) indicated that their clients lack financial and transportation resources, face problems of inadequate housing and unemployment, and often have limited community resources and support. Sixteen liaisons (39%) also reported that issues of **parental capacity and skills** were common problems experienced by families involved in child maltreatment. More specifically, the parents in these families often lack specific parenting skills due either to various mental health problems, poor understanding of a child's normal developmental path or young maternal age. Finally, eleven liaisons (27%) reported that a significant percentage of their adult clients struggle with **domestic violence** and often present their own history of battering.

### Services to Abusive Families

A critical question concerns what happens to the child or family after a case has been substantiated. One study found that CPS social workers did not provide any service in almost 60% of the agency's confirmed cases (Meddin & Hansen, 1985) while a review of New York cases found that almost 56% of all indicated cases are closed the same day they are officially substantiated (Salovitz & Keys, 1988).

Indeed, despite the emphasis on family preservation embedded in the Public Law 96-272, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, a recent analysis of child welfare caseload dynamics found a dramatic decrease in the number of children receiving child welfare services between 1977 and 1994. An estimated one million children were being served on March 1, 1994 compared to 1.8 million children on April, 1977. The major decrease was in children who received services while living at home. The number of children who received services at home declined from 1,244,400 in 1977 to 497,100 in 1994. Comparable numbers of children were in foster care placement in both years, 543,000 in 1977 and 502,000 in 1994.

(US-DHHS, 1997). This decline reflects a child welfare system that has evolved from a broader based social service system into a system primarily serving abused and neglected children and their families. Despite the good intentions of reformers, this service system is increasingly relying upon foster care placement to protect children from harm. While 30% of the children served by the system in 1977 were placed in foster care, that percentage has risen to 50% today.

In the current survey, only 21 states could provide an estimate as to the percentage of substantiated cases which received CPS services. Figures ranged from 6% to 100% with an average of 70% receiving some type of service. This figure is the same as that reported in 1996. While this level of service is notable given the increased number of reports, approximately 316,200 confirmed cases of child abuse received no services to remedy the negative consequences of maltreatment.

Of those who did receive services, family focused services including preventive, protective and support services was reported as the most common type of intervention offered by the responding agencies. Twenty state liaisons (57%) stated that they provided parent aid, parenting education, homemaker and child care services to their clients. The second most common intervention was case management and social casework services, provided by 29% of the respondents (10 states). In addition, 9 states (26%) reported that they offered individual or family counseling to families on their caseload.

## Child Maltreatment Fatalities

One of the greatest tragedies is the death of a child from abuse or neglect. Although such deaths are relatively infrequent, the rate of child maltreatment fatalities confirmed by CPS agencies has risen steadily over the past eleven years.

As shown in Table 2, only 29 states were able to provide fatality data for 1997. Since data from these states comprises less than half of the U.S. population under eighteen years of age, we are unable to project a national fatality statistics for 1997. Based on the twenty-five states which reported fatalities for both 1996 and 1997, there is a 8% decrease in child maltreatment related fatalities (from 572 in 1996 to 527 in 1997). Of these 25 states, fifteen observed decline during this period. However, at the time of the survey, eight of these states indicated that they still had some number of deaths under investigation. Extensive investigative procedures and the increasing use of formal death review teams to examine all of the evidence pertaining to these cases has resulted in formal confirmation occurring several months, and in some cases years, after a child has died. Consequently, we believe the actual number of deaths for 1997 will increase as more of these investigations are completed. For these reasons, these data should be viewed as estimated.

To better understand how and why child abuse fatalities occur, we examined three characteristics of these deaths for the past three years: 1) involvement of the victim with CPS agencies, 2) type of maltreatment leading to death, and 3) the ages of the child victims. Table 3 presents the results.

According to information from at least 16 states, 41% of the children who died between 1995 and 1997 had prior or current contact with CPS agencies. This substantial percentage may reflect the fact that many states only investigate deaths of children with current or prior CPS contact, thereby ensuring that a high percentage of the reported deaths will involve such children. On the other hand, the inability of child welfare agencies to provide sufficient services to all victims or to conduct comprehensive investigations of all reports most likely contribute to this pattern. At least 20 states were able to report the type of maltreatment which caused the child's death. These percentages remained fairly stable over the years. Between 1995 and 1997, 44% died from neglect, 51% died from abuse, while 5% died as a result of multiple forms of maltreatment. Young children remain at high risk for loss of life. Based on data from all three years, this study found that 78% of these children were under the age of five while an alarming 38% were under the age of one at the time of their death. CPS Policies and Reforms

The ability of the child protection system to respond to the continued increase in reports and child abuse fatalities largely depends on the resources available. The amount of funding CPS agencies receive dictates whether reports get investigated, victims receive services or efforts are made to prevent maltreatment before a family enters the system. In this section, we investigate not only changes in child welfare budgets, but plans for spending future resources designed to prevent child abuse.

Compared to 1996, there was improvement in state funding for child protective services in 1997. Eighteen out of 32 states (56%) reported an increase in resources between 1996 and 1997. Only one state, Hawaii, reported budget cuts. While the remaining 13 states maintained stable funding, this funding level often prohibited needed staff or service enhancements, particularly in the area of child abuse prevention. Though 18 states reported an increase in funding, this did not necessarily translate into more staff. In 1997, eleven (38%) of the responding states increased the number of case managers, thirteen states (45%) hired new investigatory staff, and 10 states (34%) were able to enlarge their supervisory staff. Only nine states had sufficient resources to expand service capacity in all three areas.

In 1993, all states were provided new funding for child welfare intervention and prevention services when Congress approved the Federal Family Preservation and Support Services Program. As part of this legislation, states were required to initiate a comprehensive planning process to determine how best to allocate these revenues, growing from a 1995 appropriations level of \$60 million to over \$900 million by 1998. When asked how the state is allocating these new

resources, thirty-five state liaisons indicated that, on average, 54% of the funds are being allocated to family support services (with responses ranging from 22% to 100%), while 41% of the funds are being allocated to family preservation (responses ranged from 0% to 75%). Finally, an average of 5% is being allocated to other programs or to other activities such as administration, training, technical assistance and ongoing planning. Sixteen of the responding states (47%) indicated that their program money was not used for any specific target population, whereas more than a quarter of the responding states (26%) used the money to populations who are thought to be at high risk for child maltreatment, including teen mothers, substance abuse parents, families experiencing domestic violence, and families in poverty. Another 7 states (21%) responded that the decisions on what populations to serve were made at the county, community, or local district levels rather than by their agencies.

This allocation pattern is comparable to findings from a Government Accounting Office review of spending patterns under this legislation conducted in late 1996. This review found that all states had established a specific action plan and that most were using the funding to partially support funding for services to new populations, specifically those families at risk who had not yet abused or neglected their children. In the last two years, states budgeted 56% of their service dollars to family support and 44% to family preservation. GAO analysts concluded that the somewhat greater emphasis on family support services reflects priorities established through state and community planning efforts (GAO, 1997). Equally plausible, however, is the growing frustration many in state government have felt with the limited utility of family preservation services and their exclusive focus on those families who are on the verge of losing their children to the foster care system. The family support concept of engaging families prior to the onset of maltreatment strikes many in the child welfare system as a more productive point of intervention.

To assess the future availability of other prevention services, the survey asked respondents some questions regarding home visiting services. The National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse has launched a nationwide prevention initiative called Healthy Families America (HFA) to provide home visiting services to parents of newborns. The purpose of HFA is to ensure that all new parents, particularly those at high risk for child maltreatment, get off to a good start. As of January 1998, this initiative had resulted in the establishment of 270 pilot programs in 38 states and the District of Columbia. Most other states have established task forces to explore the development of these efforts. Respondents were asked whether they had heard of this initiative and if their state CPS agency was involved in HFA. While the vast majority (88%) of the 42 states that responded had heard of HFA, only 23 respondents stated that they were involved in this initiative through planning, funding, collaborative effort, and providing training, evaluation, and support.

## Legislative Trends

Of the 34 state administrators who responded to questions regarding the impacts of emerging legislation on their operations, ten states (30%) cited the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 as the most significant legislative event of last year. A key feature of this legislation is the continued funding of the Family Preservation and Support Initiative through FY 2001. Under this legislation, Federal funding for family preservation and support will be provided to the states at the following levels: \$275 million in FY 1999; \$295 million in FY 2000; and \$305 million in FY 2001. In addition, twenty of the respondents (59%) listed individual state legislative initiatives as having the greatest impact on their program. Among the issues most commonly cited in these legislative efforts were changes in kinship care policy, new procedures for investigating and screening child abuse reports, and new guidelines governing the termination of parental rights and the use of foster care. Only four respondents (12%) felt none of the legislative changes occurring at the Federal or state level had measurable impacts on their daily operations.

Respondents also were asked to gauge the actual or potential impact of Federal welfare reform (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families --TANF) on child welfare caseloads or procedures. Only four of the 43 state administrators (9%) responding to this question reported an actual impact on child abuse reports, all of whom reported a slight increase in the number of reports. Most administrators said that it was far too early in the policy cycle to determine the impacts of welfare reform on reporting practices. Several noted that until the time limits for receiving welfare are reached for a significant number of current recipients, they anticipate seeing little if any change in the number or characteristics of child abuse reports. To minimize any potential negative impacts, however, a third of the respondents indicated that greater attention is being paid to implementing child abuse prevention strategies. Among the prevention services cited by respondents are expanded day care services; more comprehensive assessments of a family's needs at the time a report is filed; specialized prevention services for unwed, teen mothers and women involved in substance abuse; and school-based prevention services.

In addition to using existing child welfare funding to support these services, about one-third of the respondents also are utilizing the maintenance of effort (MOE) funds available as a result of Federal policy governing the implementation of TANF. In order to ease the transition from welfare to work, states are required to sustain spending levels at 80% of their FY 1994 allocations regardless of the size of their welfare caseload. Common usage of this money includes the expansion of child care, job training efforts and other family support services, as noted by our respondents. Similarly, about one-quarter of the states reported the use of the newly authorized State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to expand the availability of school-based health programs, well-baby health care, childhood immunizations, and other public health initiatives targeted to newborns and their parents.

## CONCLUSION

Child abuse reports continue to climb at a steady rate despite the absence of significant new funding to states for investigation or service provision. In 1997, the number of child abuse reports rose 1.7%, exceeding 3.1 million. A similar increase in the number of substantiated cases also occurred, with over one million new cases entering child protective service caseloads last year. For the fourth consecutive year, the proportion of cases involving various forms of maltreatment were almost the same among the reported and substantiated cases, suggesting that a greater number of neglect cases and fewer child sexual abuse cases entered the system in 1997 as compared to in the 1980's and early 1990's. Of those cases that were substantiated, approximately 70% received some form of service.

Although available data suggest a possible decrease in the total number of child abuse fatalities, the number of these cases continue to be disturbing. Looking across the past three years, 41% of these fatalities involved children who had current or prior contact with local child protective service agencies. The vast majority of these cases (78%) involved children under the age of five and more than one third were under the age of one (38%). Despite the increased implementation of child death review committees and administrative attention to the issue of child abuse fatalities, it is not certain that a consistent and meaningful decline in this issue is being realized.

While 56% of the respondents indicated that their agency had experienced increased state funding between 1996 and 1997, these increases were relatively small and may well be offset by the decline in funding expected from Federal sources. Further, changes in welfare policy at both the Federal and state levels are expected to have impacts on both the number of families in need of supportive services as well as on the overall rate of maltreatment.

---

## ENDNOTES

1. In 1989, the federal government established the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) which is a voluntary data collection and analysis system on child maltreatment. NCANDS is designed to collect summary and case level data from all states on an annual basis. NCANDS first report is entitled Working Paper 1: 1990 Summary Data Component, (April, 1992).
2. Several states updated their reporting figures for 1995 and 1996. This survey reflects these revisions. As a result, the annual percentage change and total estimated child reports for these years differ from the figures published in the 1996 annual fifty state survey. The more recent statistics have greater reliability. To calculate the estimated number of reported child victims between 1987 and 1997, we take the last actual count of child victims conducted in 1986 by AAPC (1988) and multiply by the average state percentage change in reports. For example, in 1986 there were 2,086,000 children reported for maltreatment. This number multiplied by 1.03 (representing the 3% increase in reports between 1986 and 1987) equals 2,157,000, the estimated number of children reported in 1987.
3. The rates for reports and fatalities between 1985 and 1989 are based upon population estimates from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1058, State Population and Household Estimates: July, 1989, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1990. The rates for 1990 to 1992 are based upon population estimates from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1992 (112th Edition), Washington, DC, 1992. The rates for 1993 and 1994 are based on population estimates from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Book, 1995. The rates for 1995 to 1997 are based on population estimates from U.S. Bureau of the Census, online at <http://www.census.gov/population/estimates/state/96agesex.txt>, April 1997.

---

## REFERENCES

American Association for the Protection of Children. (1988). *Highlights of official child neglect and abuse reporting - 1986*. Denver, CO: American Humane Association.

Finkelhor, D., Williams, L., and Burns, N. (1988). *Nursery crimes: Sexual abuse in day care*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Government Accounting Office (GAO). (1997). *Child welfare: States' progress in implementing family preservation and support services*. (GAO/HEHS-97 February).

Meddin, J. and Hansen, I. (1985). The services provided during a child abuse and/or neglect case investigation and the barriers that exist to service provision. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 9, 175-182.

Salovitz, B. and Keys, D. (1988). Is Child Protective Service still a service? *Protecting*

*Children, 5(2), 17-23.*

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau. (1997). *National study of protective, preventive and reunification services delivered to children and their families.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.



About NCPCA  
Program  
Research  
Chapters  
Education  
Advocacy

Special Features  
Parenting Tips  
Youth Focus  
Prevention Packet  
Info

Resources  
Child Abuse Facts  
Reprint Form

What You Can Do  
NCPCA Events  
Contacting NCPCA  
Work@NCPCA

- 🔍 [Press Release](#)
- 🔍 [New—Current Trends in Child Abuse and Reporting Fatalities:  
The Results of the 1997 Annual Fifty State Survey](#)
- 🔍 [2-Page Current Statistics on Child Abuse](#)
- 🔍 [Public Opinion Poll - 1998 Survey](#)
- 🔍 [Office Equipment and Furniture Donation Needed!](#)

Copyright©1998 National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse. All rights reserved.  
 This file was last modified on Tuesday, 05-May-98 09:20:58 CDT

**Table 1**  
**Child Abuse and Neglect Reports - Annual Percentage Change**

| STATE                | 92-93            | 93-94 | 94-95 | 95-96 | 96-97              |
|----------------------|------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------------|
| Alabama              | -7               | -2    | -4    | 2     | -3C                |
| Alaska               | 27               | 5     | -1    | -7    | 0C                 |
| Arizona              | 7                | -4    | -3    | -7    | 35C                |
| Arkansas             | 3                | 5     | -4    | 11    | 9R                 |
| California           | 7                | 1     | 4     | 0     | NA                 |
| Colorado             | -9               | 3     | 1     | -1    | NA                 |
| Connecticut          | 24               | 1     | 34    | 4     | -7C                |
| Delaware             | 2                | 8     | 14    | 14    | 27R                |
| District of Columbia | NA               | -2    | DNR   | -3    | -4C                |
| Florida              | -10              | 2     | 4     | 8     | 1C                 |
| Georgia              | 8                | 5     | 3     | -9    | NA                 |
| Hawaii               | -3               | 9     | -8    | 5     | 16C                |
| Idaho                | 21               | 19    | -1    | -11   | 2R                 |
| Illinois             | -4               | 9     | 2     | -10   | -5C                |
| Indiana              | 13               | -2    | 15    | -3    | -17C               |
| Iowa                 | 10               | 4     | 5     | 6     | -2C                |
| Kansas               | 12               | 37    | -10   | 11    | -3C                |
| Kentucky             | 3                | 3     | 6     | -4    | -19 <sup>c</sup> C |
| Louisiana            | 2                | -3    | 1     | 1     | 1C                 |
| Maine                | NA (+)           | -1    | -5    | 4     | DNR                |
| Maryland             | NA (+)           | NA    | 2     | 6     | 2R                 |
| Massachusetts        | 5                | 4     | -1    | 5     | 2C                 |
| Michigan             | 2                | 2     | 0     | 2     | 1R                 |
| Minnesota            | 7                | -6    | -4    | -3    | NA                 |
| Mississippi          | 0                | -2    | NA    | -1    | -3R                |
| Missouri             | 7                | 1     | 0     | -2    | 7C                 |
| Montana              | 1                | -5    | 2     | -2    | NA                 |
| Nebraska             | 3                | 1     | -8    | 4     | -1C                |
| Nevada               | -10              | 6     | -5    | 7     | DNR                |
| New Hampshire        | -11 <sup>a</sup> | -1    | -7    | 9     | 4C                 |
| New Jersey           | -37 <sup>b</sup> | -10   | -8    | 29    | NA                 |
| New Mexico           | -8               | 7     | 5     | 2     | NA                 |
| New York             | 2                | -9    | 0     | 11    | NA                 |
| North Carolina       | 23               | 1     | 0     | 1     | 6C                 |
| North Dakota         | 10               | 2     | NA    | NA    | NA                 |
| Ohio                 | -2               | 1     | DNR   | NA    | NA                 |
| Oklahoma             | 9                | 32    | 14    | 3     | 18C                |
| Oregon               | -2               | 5     | 1     | -8    | 14R                |
| Pennsylvania         | -4               | -5    | 2     | -2    | NA                 |
| Rhode Island         | 3                | 0     | 7     | -6    | 0C                 |
| South Carolina       | 14               | 28    | 11    | -12   | -6C                |
| South Dakota         | -2               | -1    | NA    | NA    | -14C               |
| Tennessee            | 7                | 5     | 9     | 0     | -7C                |
| Texas                | 4                | -2    | -1    | -12   | 4R                 |
| Utah                 | 2                | 4     | 2     | -14   | 10R                |

**Table 1**  
**Child Abuse and Neglect Reports - Annual Percentage Change**

| STATE                     | 92-93 | 93-94 | 94-95 | 95-96 | 96-97 |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Vermont                   | -6    | -8    | -8    | -2    | NA    |
| Virginia                  | 2     | -2    | 1     | -7    | -5C   |
| Washington                | 1     | 3     | 5     | -5    | -4C   |
| West Virginia             | .7    | -4    | NA    | NA    | NA    |
| Wisconsin                 | 3     | -3    | NA    | 2     | NA    |
| Wyoming                   | -20   | 27    | NA    | 9     | -1R   |
| Average Percentage Change | +2.0% | +3.6% | +1.7% | +0.5% | +1.7% |

| Estimated Number of Children Reported for maltreatment | 1988      | 1989      | 1990      | 1991      | 1992      | 1993      | 1994      | 1995      | 1996      | 1997      |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                                        | 2,265,000 | 2,435,000 | 2,559,000 | 2,684,000 | 2,909,000 | 2,967,000 | 3,074,000 | 3,126,000 | 3,142,000 | 3,195,000 |
| Per 1,000 U.S. Child                                   | 35        | 38        | 40        | 42        | 45        | 45        | 46        | 46        | 46        | 47        |

| Average Indicated/ Substantiated Rate                   | 1993      | 1994      | 1995      | 1996      | 1997      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                                         | 34%       | 33%       | 33%       | 32%       | 33%       |
| Est. # of children confirmed as victims of maltreatment | 1,009,000 | 1,014,000 | 1,032,000 | 1,005,000 | 1,054,000 |
| Per 1,000 U.S. Children                                 | 15        | 15        | 15        | 15        | 15        |

DNR Did not respond to survey.

NA Not available.

NA ( ) Indicates direction of expected change, i.e. (-) decrease, (+) increase.

C Change in # of children reported between 1996 and 1997.

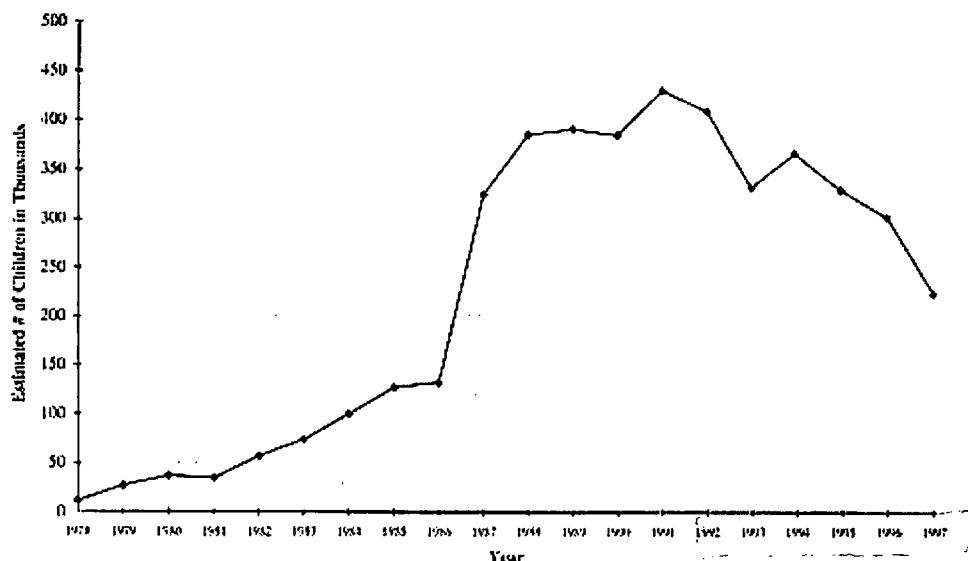
R Change in # of reports (e.g., families, incidents or reports) between 1996 and 1997.

a A change in intake policy as of October 1992 resulted in a decrease in assessments involving out-of-household perpetrators during subsequent years.

b New Jersey instituted a coding change in January 1993 which led to the precipitous drop in cases.

c Reported numbers are lower due to the implementation of a new computer system.

Figure 2  
Estimated Number of Children Reported for Sexual Abuse



Source:  
1978-1986: American Humane Association  
1987-1997: NCPCA



**About NCPCA**  
[Program](#)  
[Research](#)  
[Chapters](#)  
[Education](#)  
[Advocacy](#)

**Special Features**  
[Parenting Tips](#)  
[Youth Focus](#)  
[Prevention Packet](#)  
[Info](#)

**Resources**  
[Child Abuse Facts](#)  
[Reprint Form](#)

**What You Can Do**  
[NCPCA Events](#)  
[Contacting NCPCA](#)  
[Work@NCPCA](#)

- ② [Press Release](#)
- ② [New--Current Trends in Child Abuse and Reporting Fatalities:  
The Results of the 1997 Annual Fifty State Survey](#)
- ② [2-Page Current Statistics on Child Abuse](#)
- ② [Public Opinion Poll - 1998 Survey](#)
- ② [Office Equipment and Furniture Donation Needed!](#)

Copyright©1998 National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse. All rights reserved.  
This file was last modified on Monday, 04-May-98 12:02:41 CDT

**Table 2**  
**Child Abuse and Neglect Related Fatalities**

| STATE                | 1985 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995  | 1996  | 1997 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|-------|-------|------|
| Alabama              | NA   | 25   | 18   | 23    | 20P   | 19P  |
| Alaska               | NA   | NA   | NA   | NA    | NA    | 1    |
| Arizona              | NA   | 24   | 23   | 26P   | 13    | 13   |
| Arkansas             | 9    | 9    | NA   | 3     | 9     | NA   |
| California           | 18   | 49   | 63   | 135R* | 135R* | NA   |
| Colorado             | 12   | 28P  | 29   | 20    | 20P   | NA   |
| Connecticut          | 6    | 5    | 7    | 5     | 7     | 6    |
| Delaware             | 2    | 1    | 3    | 4     | 12    | 2    |
| District of Columbia | NA   | 13P  | NA   | 4P    | 6     | 6    |
| Florida              | NA   | 63   | 71   | 68    | 49    | NA   |
| Georgia              | NA   | 12   | 26   | 16    | 23    | NA   |
| Hawaii               | 1    | 2    | 2    | 1     | 4     | 1P   |
| Idaho                | 5    | 10   | 14R  | 14    | 11    | 5    |
| Illinois             | 53   | 78   | 82   | 98    | 83    | 91P  |
| Indiana              | 29   | 38   | 56   | 44    | 43    | 46   |
| Iowa                 | 9    | 13   | 8    | 18    | 14    | 11   |
| Kansas               | 16   | 7    | 9    | 4     | NA    | 11   |
| Kentucky             | 10   | 20   | 29   | 24    | 22    | 17   |
| Louisiana            | 50   | 28   | 19   | 18    | 25    | 11P  |
| Maine                | 0    | 7    | 5P   | 3P    | 2P    | DNR  |
| Maryland             | 8    | 29   | NA   | NA    | NA    | NA   |
| Massachusetts        | 13   | 10   | 3    | 11    | 5     | NA   |
| Michigan             | NA   | NA   | NA   | NA    | NA    | NA   |
| Minnesota            | 6    | 14   | 6    | 9     | 8     | NA   |
| Mississippi          | NA   | 15P  | 15   | 12    | 12    | 8P   |
| Missouri             | 25   | 48   | 59   | 46    | 37    | 38P  |
| Montana              | 2    | 1    | 7    | 11    | 5     | 3    |
| Nebraska             | 2    | 4    | 1    | 1     | 1     | 4R   |
| Nevada               | 6    | 8    | 9    | 4     | 17    | DNR  |
| New Hampshire        | NA   | NA   | NA   | 1     | NA,P  | 1    |
| New Jersey           | 21   | 28P  | 34   | 31    | 20    | NA   |
| New Mexico           | 10   | 6    | NA   | 7     | 7     | NA   |
| New York             | 63   | 92   | 65   | 63    | 61P   | NA   |
| North Carolina       | 4    | 40   | NA   | 43S   | 43S   | 45S  |
| North Dakota         | 0    | 2    | 0    | 0     | NA    | 1P   |
| Ohio                 | NA   | 65   | 116  | NA    | NA    | NA   |
| Oklahoma             | 16   | 23   | 31   | 34    | 29    | 42   |
| Oregon               | 8    | 11   | 33   | 36    | 30    | NA   |
| Pennsylvania         | 34   | 54   | 53   | 61    | 33    | NA   |
| Rhode Island         | 5    | 5    | 2    | 7     | 4     | 3    |
| South Carolina       | 21   | 32   | 22   | 7     | 7     | NA   |
| South Dakota         | 4    | 5    | 2    | 2     | 2     | 3P   |
| Tennessee            | NA   | 15   | 12   | 25    | 32    | 9    |
| Texas                | 113  | 111  | 102  | 98    | 110   | 104  |
| Utah                 | 8    | 8    | 8    | 12    | 11    | 7    |

**Table 2**  
**Child Abuse and Neglect Related Fatalities**

| STATE                  | 1985            | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997  |
|------------------------|-----------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Vermont                | 1               | 2    | NA   | 0    | 1    | NA    |
| Virginia               | 14              | 43   | 27   | 27   | 25   | 29    |
| Washington             | 27              | 30   | 17   | 17R  | 9R   | NA    |
| West Virginia          | NA              | 5    | NA   | NA   | NA   | NA    |
| Wisconsin              | 10              | 20   | 11   | NA   | 32   | NA    |
| Wyoming                | 3               | 2    | 2    | 4    | 1    | 4P    |
| Total Fatalities       | 644             | 1160 | 1101 | 1097 | 1040 | 542   |
| <b>% of Child</b>      |                 |      |      |      |      |       |
| Population Under 18    | 80.7            | 97.7 | 95.6 | 87.3 | 87.6 | 41.2  |
| <b>Total Projected</b> |                 |      |      |      |      |       |
| Fatalities Nationwide  | 798             | 1187 | 1152 | 1259 | 1185 | CNC ? |
| Per 100,000 Children   | 1.30            | 1.73 | 1.81 | 1.86 | 1.74 | CNC ? |
| % Change 1985-1996     | ----- 34% ----- |      |      |      |      |       |

P Not final #'s as some cases are still pending. For example, Louisiana has 17 deaths still under review for 1997.

NA Not available.

R Reported fatalities only.

S Suspected fatalities only.

DNR Did not respond to survey.

CNC Cannot calculate due to lack of enough available data.

a Estimated reported fatalities only.



About NCPCA  
Program  
Research  
Chapters  
Education  
Advocacy

Special Features  
Parenting Tips  
Youth Focus  
Prevention Packet  
Info

Resources  
Child Abuse Facts  
Reprint Form

What You Can Do  
NCPCA Events  
Contacting NCPCA  
Work@NCPCA

② Press Release

② New--Current Trends in Child Abuse and Reporting Fatalities:  
The Results of the 1997 Annual Fifty State Survey

② 2-Page Current Statistics on Child Abuse

② Public Opinion Poll - 1998 Survey

② Office Equipment and Furniture Donation Needed!

**Table 1**  
**Public Attitudes Toward Parent Behaviors (in percentage)**

|                                                                                                                  | 1998 | 1997 | 1996 | 1995 | 1994 | 1993 | 1992 | 1991 | 1990 | 1989 | 1988 | 1987 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>How often do you think physical punishment of a child leads to injury to the child?</b>                       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Very often / often                                                                                               | 30   | 32   | 33   | 32   | 38   | 38   | 36   | 31   | 35   | 35   | 33   | 40   |
| Occasionally                                                                                                     | 35   | 36   | 37   | 36   | 34   | 35   | 38   | 44   | 37   | 35   | 38   | 31   |
| Hardly ever / never                                                                                              | 19   | 18   | 23   | 22   | 22   | 20   | 20   | 18   | 19   | 21   | 23   | 24   |
| Not sure                                                                                                         | 9    | 7    | 7    | 10   | 6    | 7    | 6    | 7    | 9    | 8    | 6    | 5    |
| <b>How often do you think repeated yelling and swearing leads to long-term emotional problems for the child?</b> |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Very often / often                                                                                               | 75   | 76   | 78   | 75   | 74   | 79   | 74   | 75   | 76   | 73   | 71   | 73   |
| Occasionally                                                                                                     | 14   | 15   | 14   | 16   | 17   | 14   | 17   | 18   | 15   | 18   | 18   | 17   |
| Hardly ever / never                                                                                              | 5    | 4    | 7    | 6    | 7    | 5    | 7    | 5    | 6    | 6    | 8    | 7    |
| Not sure                                                                                                         | 3    | 2    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 2    | 2    |
| <i>Number of respondents (n)</i>                                                                                 | 1250 | 1253 | 1274 | 1263 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 |



**About NCPCA**  
[Program](#)  
[Research](#)  
[Chapters](#)  
[Education](#)  
[Advocacy](#)

**Special Features**  
[Parenting Tips](#)  
[Youth Focus](#)  
**Prevention Packet**  
[Info](#)

**Resources**  
[Child Abuse Facts](#)  
[Reprint Form](#)

**What You Can Do**  
[NCPCA Events](#)  
[Contacting NCPCA](#)  
[Work@NCPCA](#)

- ② [Press Release](#)
- ② [New—Current Trends in Child Abuse and Reporting Fatalities:  
The Results of the 1997 Annual Fifty State Survey](#)
- ② [2-Page Current Statistics on Child Abuse](#)
- ② [Public Opinion Poll - 1998 Survey](#)
- ② [Office Equipment and Furniture Donation Needed!](#)

Copyright©1998 National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse. All rights reserved.

This file was last modified on Wednesday, 29-Apr-98 16:40:57 CDT

Table 2  
Parental Discipline Practices  
(Percent Responding Yes)

|                                | 1998 | 1997 | 1996 | 1995 | 1994 | 1993 | 1992 | 1991 | 1990 | 1989 | 1988 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Denying Privileges             | 79%  | 78%  | 77%  | 79%  | 79%  | 79%  | 81%  | 75%  | 72%  | 73%  | 71%  |
| Confine in Room                | 59   | 54   | 54   | 59   | 59   | 55   | 52   | 57   | 52   | 57   | 53   |
| Insult or Swear                | 37   | 42   | 35   | 40   | 45   | 44   | 44   | 44   | 39   | 49   | 53   |
| Spank or Hit                   | 45   | 46   | 42   | 47   | 49   | 52   | 52   | 51   | 50   | 60   | 62   |
| Failed to Meet Emotional Needs | 49   | 53   | ---  | ---  | ---  | ---  | ---  | ---  | ---  | ---  | ---  |
| n                              | 433  | 470  | 445  | 470  | 474  | 468  | 445  | 480  | 460  | 513  | 490  |



About NCPCA  
Program  
Research  
Chapters  
Education  
Advocacy

Special Features  
Parenting Tips  
Youth Focus  
Prevention Packet  
Info

Resources  
Child Abuse Facts  
Reprint Form

What You Can Do  
NCPCA Events  
Contacting NCPCA  
Work@NCPCA

- ② [Press Release](#)
- ② [New--Current Trends in Child Abuse and Reporting Fatalities:  
The Results of the 1997 Annual Fifty State Survey](#)
- ② [2-Page Current Statistics on Child Abuse](#)
- ② [Public Opinion Poll - 1998 Survey](#)
- ② [Office Equipment and Furniture Donation Needed!](#)

Copyright©1998 National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse. All rights reserved.  
This file was last modified on Wednesday, 29-Apr-98 16:40:57 CDT

**TABLE 3**  
**Public Perception of How Much They Can Do To Prevent Child Abuse**  
**(In Percentages)**

|                    | 1998 | 1997 | 1996 | 1995 | 1994 | 1993 | 1992 | 1991 | 1990 | 1989 | 1988 | 1987 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>PARENTS</b>     | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    |
| A lot/some         | 73   | 70   | 73   | 68   | 68   | 71   | 77   | 68   | 68   | 77   | 80   | 76   |
| Only a little      | 18   | 22   | 19   | 21   | 21   | 20   | 17   | 24   | 22   | 18   | 14   | 19   |
| Nothing            | 5    | 6    | 4    | 6    | 6    | 7    | 4    | 6    | 6    | 4    | 4    | 4    |
| <i>n =</i>         | 433  | 470  | 445  | 470  | 474  | 468  | 445  | 480  | 460  | 513  | 490  | 500  |
| <b>NON-PARENTS</b> | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    |
| A lot              | 54   | 59   | 55   | 52   | 55   | 56   | 57   | 51   | 52   | 54   | 55   | 55   |
| Only a little      | 30   | 25   | 28   | 30   | 28   | 26   | 29   | 31   | 31   | 26   | 30   | 25   |
| Nothing            | 11   | 12   | 13   | 14   | 13   | 15   | 11   | 14   | 12   | 14   | 10   | 13   |
| <i>n =</i>         | 817  | 781  | 829  | 793  | 776  | 782  | 809  | 770  | 790  | 737  | 760  | 750  |
| <b>FULL SAMPLE</b> | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    |
| A lot              | 61   | 63   | 61   | 58   | 61   | 61   | 64   | 57   | 58   | 63   | 66   | 66   |
| Only a little      | 26   | 24   | 25   | 27   | 26   | 24   | 25   | 28   | 27   | 22   | 24   | 24   |
| Nothing            | 9    | 9    | 10   | 11   | 10   | 12   | 9    | 11   | 10   | 10   | 8    | 8    |
| <i>n =</i>         | 1250 | 1253 | 1274 | 1263 | 1250 | 1250 | 1254 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 |



About NCPCA  
Program  
Research  
Chapters  
Education  
Advocacy

Special Features  
Parenting Tips  
Youth Focus  
Prevention Packet  
Info

Resources  
Child Abuse Facts  
Reprint Form

What You Can Do  
NCPCA Events  
Contacting NCPCA  
Work@NCPCA

- 📄 [Press Release](#)
- 📄 [New--Current Trends in Child Abuse and Reporting Fatalities:  
The Results of the 1997 Annual Fifty State Survey](#)
- 📄 [2-Page Current Statistics on Child Abuse](#)
- 📄 [Public Opinion Poll - 1998 Survey](#)
- 📄 [Office Equipment and Furniture Donation Needed!](#)

Copyright©1998 National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse. All rights reserved.  
This file was last modified on Wednesday, 29-Apr-98 16:40:57 CDT

TABLE 4  
Took Personal Action to Prevent Child Abuse  
(Percentage responding yes)

|             | 1998 | 1997 | 1996 | 1995 | 1994 | 1993 | 1992 | 1991 | 1990 | 1989 | 1988 | 1987 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|             | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    |
| PARENTS     | 36   | 36   | 38   | 34   | 36   | 35   | 37   | 37   | 32   | 39   | 35   | 32   |
| NON-PARENTS | 19   | 20   | 21   | 18   | 21   | 20   | 20   | 20   | 17   | 15   | 18   | 17   |
| FULL SAMPLE | 25   | 26   | 27   | 24   | 27   | 25   | 26   | 27   | 23   | 25   | 25   | 23   |
| n =         | 1250 | 1253 | 1274 | 1263 | 1250 | 1250 | 1254 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 |



About NCPCA  
Program  
Research  
Chapters  
Education  
Advocacy

Special Features  
Parenting Tips  
Youth Focus  
Prevention Packet  
Info

Resources  
Child Abuse Facts  
Reprint Form

What You Can Do  
NCPCA Events  
Contacting NCPCA  
Work@NCPCA

- 🔍 [Press Release](#)
- 🔍 [New--Current Trends in Child Abuse and Reporting Fatalities:  
The Results of the 1997 Annual Fifty State Survey](#)
- 🔍 [2-Page Current Statistics on Child Abuse](#)
- 🔍 [Public Opinion Poll - 1998 Survey](#)
- 🔍 [Office Equipment and Furniture Donation Needed!](#)

Copyright©1998 National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse. All rights reserved.  
This file was last modified on Wednesday, 29-Apr-98 16:40:57 CDT

**Table 5**  
**Home Visitation and Other Supports for New Parents**

|                                                                                                                                                   | 1998 | 1997 | 1996 | 1995 | 1994 | 1993 | 1992 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b><u>Service Utilization</u></b>                                                                                                                 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Percentage of families with children under 18 receiving home visitation services                                                                  | 9%   | 7%   | 10%  | 11%  | 8%   | 6%   | 7%   |
| Percentage of families with children under one receiving home visitation services                                                                 | 20%  | 12%  | 22%  | 15%  | 11%  | 17%  | 7%   |
| <b><u>Service Intensity</u></b>                                                                                                                   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| One visit only                                                                                                                                    | 58%  | 44%  | 59%  | 41%  | 49%  | 60%  | 66%  |
| Multiple visits                                                                                                                                   | 38%  | 53%  | 35%  | 56%  | 51%  | 40%  | 31%  |
| <b><u>Public Support/Approval Letters</u></b>                                                                                                     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Percent of those receiving service who found it useful                                                                                            | 75%  | 79%  | 72%  | 80%  | 84%  | 73%  | 69%  |
| Percent of those without children under 18 in the home who perceive home visitation services as potentially useful to them and families like them | 71%  | 73%  | 73%  | 75%  | 77%  | 71%  | N.A. |
| Percent of parents who perceive home visitation as a "good idea"                                                                                  | 73%  | 73%  | 76%  | 74%  | 80%  | 70%  | N.A. |
| Percent of parents who perceive home visitation as a "bad idea"                                                                                   | 17%  | 17%  | 16%  | 16%  | 12%  | 21%  | N.A. |
| Percent of those without children under 18 living in the home who support Government funding for home visitation services                         | 72%  | 70%  | 65%  | 67%  | 67%  | 65%  | 69%  |
| Percent of parents who support Government funding for home visitation services                                                                    | 79%  | 77%  | 75%  | 80%  | 84%  | 79%  | 82%  |



**About NCPCA**  
[Program](#)  
[Research](#)  
[Chapters](#)  
[Education](#)  
[Advocacy](#)

**Special Features**  
[Parenting Tips](#)  
[Youth Focus](#)  
[Prevention Packet](#)  
[Info](#)

**Resources**  
[Child Abuse Facts](#)  
[Reprint Form](#)

**What You Can Do**  
[NCPCA Events](#)  
[Contacting NCPCA](#)  
[Work@NCPCA](#)

- ② [Press Release](#)
- ② [New--Current Trends in Child Abuse and Reporting Fatalities:  
The Results of the 1997 Annual Fifty State Survey](#)
- ② [2-Page Current Statistics on Child Abuse](#)
- ② [Public Opinion Poll - 1998 Survey](#)
- ② [Office Equipment and Furniture Donation Needed!](#)

Copyright©1998 National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse. All rights reserved.  
 This file was last modified on Wednesday, 29-Apr-98 16:40:57 CDT

Table 8

## Utility of Various Neighborhood Attributes in Rearing Children

|                                     | Percentage rating feature as "necessary" part of helping parents raise child |                   |              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Attributes                          | Parent Sample                                                                | Non-parent Sample | Total Sample |
| Good schools                        | 96%                                                                          | 95%               | 95%          |
| Accessible schools                  | 61%                                                                          | 59%               | 60%          |
| Safe communities                    | 97%                                                                          | 96%               | 96%          |
| Other families with children nearby | 76%                                                                          | 71%               | 73%          |
| Convenient shopping                 | 68%                                                                          | 57%               | 60%          |
| Play areas for children             | 93%                                                                          | 90%               | 91%          |
| Structured activities for children  | 91%                                                                          | 85%               | 87%          |
| Public library                      | 95%                                                                          | 92%               | 93%          |



About NCPA  
Program  
Research  
Chapters  
Education  
Advocacy

Special Features  
Parenting Tips  
Youth Focus  
Prevention Packet  
Info

Resources  
Child Abuse Facts  
Reprint Form

What You Can Do  
NCPA Events  
Contacting NCPA  
Work@NCPA

- 🔍 [Press Release](#)
- 🔍 [New—Current Trends in Child Abuse and Reporting Fatalities:  
The Results of the 1997 Annual Fifty State Survey](#)
- 🔍 [2-Page Current Statistics on Child Abuse](#)
- 🔍 [Public Opinion Poll - 1998 Survey](#)
- 🔍 [Office Equipment and Furniture Donation Needed!](#)

Copyright©1998 National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse. All rights reserved.  
 This file was last modified on Wednesday, 29-Apr-98 16:40:57 CDT