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AUTHOR Carnevale, Anthony P.

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ABSTRACT

By the time today's eighth graders reach age 28-29,
approximately 66% will have had some kind of postsecondary education or
training. There has been a dramatic upward shift in the education and skill
requirements for all occupations. Access to higher education has become the
threshold for career success. Elite managerial and professional jobs, which
are the highest-paid jobs, go primarily to people with bachelor's degrees.
The good jobs held by crafts workers, technicians, clerical workers, and
others go mainly to people with some college but no degree. The less-skilled,
lowest-paid jobs go to less-educated workers, many of whom are in transition
to more skilled jobs or are combining work and schooling. Although average
earnings for women are still lower than average earnings for men, the
correlation between education and earnings has increased dramatically for
both genders in the past 2 decades. The jobs that employ the most skilled
workers are growing the fastest. The most skilled students are more likely to
attain higher levels of education. A strong high school curriculum lowers the
hurdles to college graduation at every socioeconomic status, especially for
minorities. Social capital factors, such as parental expectations, also play
a strong role in educational attainment. (Contains 37 figures.) (MN)
Help Wanted...College Required

2001 Business-Education Partnerships Conference, Chicago, Illinois
January 8-9, 2001

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Anthony P. Carnevale
By the Time Eighth Graders Reach Age 28-29, About 66% Will Have Had Some Kind of Post-High-School Education or Training

Out of 3.1 million eighth graders in 1988...

...2.3 million (74%) graduated from high school in 1992.

At graduation, only 1.5 million (66% of those who graduated) aspired to a bachelor's degree...

1.3 million high school graduates (56%) had the minimum academic preparation needed to enroll in college...

1.2 million (52%) took the SAT and/or ACT...

...and 1.1 million (47%) applied to a four-year institution.

By 1994, only 0.9 million (40%) had enrolled in a four-year institution...

...And about 0.8 million (35%) had enrolled in a less-than-four-year institution.

By 2002, when they are age 28-29, about 1.2 million (39% of eighth-graders) will have completed some post-high-school education or training but not a B.A....

...about 0.7 million (24% of eighth-graders) will have completed a B.A....

...and about 0.1 million (3% of eighth-graders) will have completed an advanced degree.

Education, Occupations, and Careers

- There has been a dramatic upward shift in the education and skill requirements for all occupations.

- Access to higher education has become the threshold for career success.
FIGURE 2
The Occupational and Earnings Hierarchy
Average earnings of prime-age workers in 1998

Male: $26,466
Female: $15,670

Male: $22,812
Female: $13,132

---

Managers and business professionals

Male: $64,267
Female: $38,318

Managers and business professionals

High-tech

Male: $65,352
Female: $32,891

High-tech

Education and health care professionals

Male: $42,331
Female: $31,541

Education and health care professionals

Skilled blue collar and related

Male: $30,108
Female: $25,128

Skilled blue collar and related

Clerical and related

Male: $32,532
Female: $31,307

Clerical and related

Less-skilled blue collar

Male: $26,466
Female: $15,670

Less-skilled blue collar

Sales and less-skilled service jobs

Male: $22,812
Female: $13,132

Sales and less-skilled service jobs

FIGURE 3
Education and Occupation, 1959–1997
Percentage of total employment

More than two-thirds of workers in growing, good-paying occupations have postsecondary education:

- Office Jobs
- Hospital/Classroom Jobs
- High-Tech Jobs

Only one-third of workers in these declining or low-paying occupations have postsecondary education:

- Low-Skilled Services Jobs
- Factory Jobs
- Farm Jobs

FIGURE 4
Most Jobs Now Require
Educational Attainment Beyond High School

Percentage of prime-age workers in each educational category

In 1973...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not complete high school</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished high school</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's or advanced degree</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By contrast, in 1998...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not complete high school</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished high school</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate's degree</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's or advanced degree</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among managers and business professionals, the percentage of workers with only a high school diploma fell by close to 50% while the percentage of those with some college or a college degree rose substantially. In 1973...

- 9% of all workers had not completed high school
- 33% had finished high school and stopped there
- 21% had some college but no degree
- and 38% had a bachelor's or advanced degree

In 1998...
- 2% of all workers had not completed high school
- 18% had finished high school and stopped there
- 19% had some college
- 8% had an associate's degree
- and 52% had a bachelor's or advanced degree

High-tech workers followed a similar pattern. In 1973...

- 7% of all workers had not completed high school
- 31% had finished high school and stopped there
- 21% had some college but no degree
- and 42% had a bachelor's or advanced degree

In 1998...
- 1% of all workers had not completed high school
- 14% had finished high school and stopped there
- 19% had some college
- 15% had an associate's degree
- and 52% had a bachelor's or advanced degree

FIGURE 6
Education and Health Care Professions Have Always Had High Educational Requirements

Percentage of prime-age workers in each educational category

In 1973...
- 4% of all workers had not completed high school
- 14% had finished high school and stopped there
- 13% had some college but no degree

and 70% had a bachelor’s or advanced degree

In 1998...
- 1% of all workers had not completed high school
- 6% had finished high school and stopped there
- 7% had some college
- 11% had an associate’s degree

and 77% had a bachelor’s or advanced degree

Among skilled blue-collar and related professions, the percentage of workers who were high school dropouts fell by more than two-thirds, while the percentage of workers with some college or a college degree more than doubled. In 1973...

36% of all workers had not completed high school
46% had finished high school and stopped there
12% had some college but no degree
and 5% had a bachelor's or advanced degree

In 1998...
11% of all workers had not completed high school
41% had finished high school and stopped there
22% had some college
10% had an associate's degree
and 16% had a bachelor's or advanced degree

The same thing happened among clerical and related professions. In 1973...

14% of all workers had not completed high school
62% had finished high school and stopped there
18% had some college but no degree
and 7% had a bachelor's or advanced degree

In 1998...
4% of all workers had not completed high school
42% had finished high school and stopped there
28% had some college
11% had an associate's degree
and 15% had a bachelor's or advanced degree

FIGURE 8
Even Among the Less-Skilled Professions, Educational Attainment Is Becoming More Important

Percentage of prime-age workers in each educational category

Among less-skilled blue-collar and related professions, the percentage of workers who were high school dropouts fell by nearly half, while the percentage of workers with some college or a college degree tripled. In 1973...

- 60% of all workers had not completed high school
- 34% had finished high school and stopped there
- 5% had some college but no degree
- and 2% had a bachelor’s or advanced degree

In 1998...

- 27% of all workers had not completed high school
- 50% had finished high school and stopped there
- 14% had some college
- 5% had an associate’s degree
- and 4% had a bachelor’s or advanced degree

The same was true among sales and less-skilled service professions. In 1973...

- 47% of all workers had not completed high school
- 43% had finished high school and stopped there
- 7% had some college but no degree
- and 3% had a bachelor’s or advanced degree

In 1998...

- 22% of all workers had not completed high school
- 45% had finished high school and stopped there
- 18% had some college
- 6% had an associate’s degree
- and 9% had a bachelor’s or advanced degree

Earnings in Elite, Good, and Less-Skilled Jobs

- Elite managerial and professional jobs are the highest-paid jobs and they go primarily to people with bachelor’s degrees. Thirty million of all prime-age workers are in these jobs. Average earnings are $59,000 for men and $34,000 for women.

- Good jobs held by crafts workers, technicians, clericals, and others are well-paid jobs, paying an average of $37,000 for men and $22,000 for women. They go mainly to people who have some college but no degree.

- Less-skilled jobs in retail, personal services, and other minimally skilled occupations are the low-wage jobs, paying an average of $25,000 for men and $13,000 for women. The category includes machine operators, salesclerks, janitors, and hotel workers. Few of these workers have college degrees; most are in transition to more skilled jobs or are combining work and schooling.
FIGURE 9
The Vast Majority of Elite and Good Jobs
Are Now Held by People with at Least Some College
Percentage of prime-age workers in 1998

Of those workers in elite jobs...
- 26% have graduate degrees
- 37% have bachelor's degrees
- 9% had an associate's degree
- 14% have some college
- 12% have completed high school only
- 1% are high school dropouts

While among workers in good jobs...
- 3% have graduate degrees
- 14% have bachelor's degrees
- 11% had an associate's degree
- 25% have some college
- 40% have completed high school only
- 7% are high school dropouts

And among workers in less-skilled jobs...
- 1% have graduate degrees
- 6% have bachelor’s degrees
- 6% had an associate’s degree
- 16% have some college
- 48% have completed high school only
- 24% are high school dropouts

FIGURE 10

As Educational Requirements Increase, the Earnings Difference between Elite, Good and Less-Skilled Jobs Is Growing, Especially for Men

Earnings of prime-age workers (30-59 years old) in 1996 dollars

$80,000 $80,000

$60,000 $60,000

$40,000 $40,000

$20,000 $20,000

1959 1979 1998

Male Workers

1959 1979 1998

Female Workers

FIGURE 11

Although Minorities and Women Have Made Gains in Their Shares of Elite Managerial and Professional Jobs, Non-Hispanic Whites Still Hold the Largest Share

Percentage of prime-age workers (30-59 years old)

FIGURE 12

There Is Greater Equality between Majority and Minority Populations in the Share of Good Jobs

Percentage of prime-age workers (30-59 years old)

Male Workers

100% 100%
80% 80%
60% 60%
40%
20%

1959 1979 1998

Whites
Hispanics
Blacks

Female Workers

100% 100%
80% 80%
60% 60%
40%
20%

1959 1979 1998

FIGURE 13

Minorities—Especially Black Women—Have Reduced Their Share in the Least Skilled and Lowest Paid Jobs, But Nearly Half Remain in This Category

Percentage of prime-age workers (30-59 years old)

Earnings and Educational Attainment

- For both men and women, the degree to which earnings vary with education has increased dramatically in the last two decades.

- Earnings for men who do not have at least a bachelor's degree are lower now than they were in 1979.

- Earnings for women have increased across the board, but remain lower than those for men.
FIGURE 14

Earnings Depend Increasingly on Educational Attainment

Earnings of prime-age workers (30-59 years old) in 1996 dollars

FIGURE 15
Among Hispanic Men, Earnings Have Dropped for Those Without College Degrees

Earnings of prime-age workers (30-59 years old) in 1996 dollars

FIGURE 16

Earnings for African Americans Have Increased Across the Board, But Have Nearly Doubled for Those with Bachelor’s or Advanced Degrees

Earnings of prime-age workers (30-59 years old) in 1996 dollars

FIGURE 17
Among White Men, Only Those with Bachelor’s or Advanced Degrees Have Significantly Increased Their Earnings

Earnings of prime-age workers (30-59 years old) in 1996 dollars

FIGURE 18
81% of Workers With Associate's Degrees (or Some College) Earn the Same as Workers With Bachelor's Degrees

Share of workers, by education and 1997 earnings

68% of workers with bachelor's degrees earn more than $36,000, compared with 49% of workers with associate's degrees (or some college).

51% of workers with associate's degrees (or some college) earn less than $36,000, compared with 32% of workers with bachelor's degrees.

FIGURE 19
Among All Groups—And Most Notably Among African Americans—
The High School Dropout Rate Has Dropped Dramatically

Percentage of prime-age workers (30-59 years old)

FIGURE 20
For Whites and for Hispanic Women, The Percentages of Workers Who End Their Schooling with a High School Diploma Has Dropped As Well

Percentage of prime-age workers (30-59 years old)

FIGURE 21
For All Groups, The Most Dramatic Gains Are in the Shares of Workers Who Have at Least Some College...

Percentage of prime-age workers (30-59 years old)

FIGURE 22

...Followed Closely by the Shares of Workers Who Complete a College Degree

Percentage of prime-age workers (30-59 years old)

Male Workers

60% 60%

40% 40%

20% 20%

0

1959 1979 1998

Whites

Blacks

Hispanics

Female Workers

60% 60%

40% 40%

20% 20%

0

1959 1979 1998

All Groups Have Also Increased Their Rate of Attaining Advanced Degrees, But the Percentage of Workers Who Do So Is Still Low

Percentage of prime-age workers (30-59 years old)

- 60% Whites, 40% Blacks, 20% Hispanics
- 60% Male Workers, 40% Female Workers

FIGURE 24
Among Hispanic Adults, U.S.-Born Tend to be Better Educated than Foreign-Born

Both Educational Credentials and Skill Levels Affect Earnings

Average annual earnings of year-round workers age 16-64 in 1998 dollars

When Skill Level Is...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Advanced/Superior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>Advanced/Superior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Male Workers

- Postgraduate Work
- Bachelor's Degree
- Some College/AA Degree
- High School Diploma
- Failed to Finish High School

Female Workers

- $80,000
- $60,000
- $40,000
- $20,000

The Growing Demand for College-Level Skills Through 2008

- The jobs that employ the most skilled workers are growing the fastest.

- These jobs are also the ones that pay the most.
FIGURE 26
The Jobs That Employ the Most Skilled Workers Are Growing the Fastest...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1: Minimal Skills</td>
<td>17.1-19.0</td>
<td>1.9 million</td>
<td>Janitors, cleaners, maids, and building service workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dropout)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Groundskeepers, gardeners, nursery workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hand packers and packagers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vehicle washers and equipment cleaners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2: Basic Skills</td>
<td>34.7-38.9</td>
<td>4.3 million</td>
<td>Cashiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Below-average high school graduate)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Truck drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nursing aides, orderlies, attendants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Health aides, except nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3: Competent Skills</td>
<td>52.6-60.0</td>
<td>7.3 million</td>
<td>Sales workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Some postsecondary)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>General office clerks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Registered nurses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal care and home health aides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correctional institution officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4/5: Advanced/ Superior Skills</td>
<td>36.2-43.0</td>
<td>6.8 million</td>
<td>Computer system analysts and scientists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Bachelor's degree or more)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>General managers, top executives, and other managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social and recreation workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers, secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Computer programmers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FIGURE 27

...And Paying the Most

*Annual earnings of year-round workers in 1998*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Level</th>
<th>1998 Annual Earnings</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1: Minimal Skills</strong></td>
<td>$22,800</td>
<td>$15,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Dropout)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2: Basic Skills</strong></td>
<td>$30,600</td>
<td>$19,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Below-average high school graduate)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3: Competent Skills</strong></td>
<td>$38,200</td>
<td>$23,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Some postsecondary)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 4/5: Advanced/ Superior Skills</strong></td>
<td>$53,100</td>
<td>$33,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Bachelor's degree or more)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 28
Moving Up the Ladder

The notion that the U.S. economy is producing too many low-wage service jobs is often overstated. Low-skilled, low-earnings occupations employ large proportions of young workers who eventually complete their education and move into higher-skilled, higher-paying jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Skill Level</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Less than Age 25</th>
<th>Age 25 or Greater</th>
<th>Median Annual Earnings*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Services, except protective and household</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>$16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>74.6%</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Private households</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Farming, forestry, and fishing</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>Administrative support, including clerical</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>Protective support</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>Technicians and related support</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>$34,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic/Competent</td>
<td>Precision production, craft, and repair</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>89.2%</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Transportation and material moving</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>$29,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Professional specialty</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>Executive, administrative, and managers</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes only full-time, year-round workers.

Skills and Educational Attainment

The most skilled students are more likely to attain higher levels of education.
FIGURE 29
The Most Skilled Students Are More Likely to Attain Higher Levels of Education...
Educational attainment by 1992 (age 27-28)

Among students whose test scores were in the top quartile of their high school senior class:
- Less than 1% dropped out of high school
- 27% earned only a high school diploma
- 5% earned a vocational certificate
- 8% earned an associate's degree
- 49% earned a bachelor's degree
- 12% earned an advanced degree

Among students whose test scores were in the third quartile of their high school senior class:
- 3% dropped out of high school
- 51% earned only a high school diploma
- 11% earned a vocational certificate
- 11% earned an associate's degree
- 22% earned a bachelor's degree
- 3% earned an advanced degree

Among students whose test scores were in the second quartile of their high school senior class:
- 6% dropped out of high school
- 61% earned only a high school diploma
- 15% earned a vocational certificate
- 9% earned an associate's degree
- 9% earned a bachelor's degree
- 1% earned an advanced degree

Among students whose test scores were in the bottom quartile of their high school senior class:
- 20% dropped out of high school
- 61% earned only a high school diploma
- 12% earned a vocational certificate
- 4% earned an associate's degree
- 3% earned a bachelor's degree
- Less than 1% earned an advanced degree

FIGURE 30

...And This is True for Hispanic Students...

Educational attainment by 1992 (age 27-28)

Among Hispanic students whose test scores were in the top quartile of their high school senior class:
Less than 1% dropped out of high school
- 36% earned only a high school diploma
- 10% earned a vocational certificate
- 7% earned an associate's degree
- 36% earned a bachelor's degree
- 10% earned an advanced degree

Among Hispanic students whose test scores were in the third quartile of their high school senior class:
- 4% dropped out of high school
- 52% earned only a high school diploma
- 9% earned a vocational certificate
- 10% earned an associate's degree
- 24% earned a bachelor's degree
- 1% earned an advanced degree

Among Hispanic students whose test scores were in the second quartile of their high school senior class:
- 8% dropped out of high school
- 60% earned only a high school diploma
- 11% earned a vocational certificate
- 13% earned an associate's degree
- 7% earned a bachelor's degree
Less than 1% earned an advanced degree

Among Hispanic students whose test scores were in the bottom quartile of their high school senior class:
- 27% dropped out of high school
- 58% earned only a high school diploma
- 11% earned a vocational certificate
- 3% earned an associate's degree
- 2% earned a bachelor's degree
Less than 1% earned an advanced degree

FIGURE 31
...And Black Students...
Educational attainment by 1992 (age 27-28)

Among Black students whose test scores were in the top quartile of their high school senior class:
Less than 1% dropped out of high school
- 33% earned only a high school diploma
- 5% earned a vocational certificate
- 6% earned an associate's degree
- 42% earned a bachelor's degree
- 13% earned an advanced degree

Among Black students whose test scores were in the third quartile of their high school senior class:
Less than 1% dropped out of high school
- 50% earned only a high school diploma
- 15% earned a vocational certificate
- 7% earned an associate's degree
- 25% earned a bachelor's degree
- 3% earned an advanced degree

Among Black students whose test scores were in the second quartile of their high school senior class:
Less than 1% dropped out of high school
- 58% earned only a high school diploma
- 21% earned a vocational certificate
- 8% earned an associate's degree
- 11% earned a bachelor's degree
- 2% earned an advanced degree

Among Black students whose test scores were in the bottom quartile of their high school senior class:
- 16% dropped out of high school
- 61% earned only a high school diploma
- 14% earned a vocational certificate
- 4% earned an associate's degree
- 5% earned a bachelor's degree
- 1% earned an advanced degree

Among Asian and other students whose test scores were in the top quartile of their high school senior class:
Less than 1% dropped out of high school
19% earned only a high school diploma
5% earned a vocational certificate
8% earned an associate's degree
45% earned a bachelor's degree
21% earned an advanced degree

Among Asian and other students whose test scores were in the third quartile of their high school senior class:
4% dropped out of high school
53% earned only a high school diploma
7% earned a vocational certificate
5% earned an associate's degree
22% earned a bachelor's degree
9% earned an advanced degree

Among Asian and other students whose test scores were in the second quartile of their high school senior class:
5% dropped out of high school
62% earned only a high school diploma
11% earned a vocational certificate
7% earned an associate's degree
13% earned a bachelor's degree
2% earned an advanced degree

Among Asian and other students whose test scores were in the bottom quartile of their high school senior class:
15% dropped out of high school
62% earned only a high school diploma
16% earned a vocational certificate
4% earned an associate's degree
3% earned a bachelor's degree
1% earned an advanced degree

FIGURE 33

...And White Students

*Educational attainment by 1992 (age 27-28)*

Among White students whose test scores were in the top quartile of their high school senior class:
- Less than 1% dropped out of high school
  - 26% earned only a high school diploma
  - 5% earned a vocational certificate
  - 8% earned an associate’s degree
  - 49% earned a bachelor’s degree
  - 11% earned an advanced degree

Among White students whose test scores were in the third quartile of their high school senior class:
- 3% dropped out of high school
  - 51% earned only a high school diploma
  - 11% earned a vocational certificate
  - 11% earned an associate’s degree
  - 22% earned a bachelor’s degree
  - 2% earned an advanced degree

Among White students whose test scores were in the second quartile of their high school senior class:
- 7% dropped out of high school
  - 62% earned only a high school diploma
  - 14% earned a vocational certificate
  - 9% earned an associate’s degree
  - 8% earned a bachelor’s degree
  - Less than 1% earned an advanced degree

Among White students whose test scores were in the bottom quartile of their high school senior class:
- 22% dropped out of high school
  - 61% earned only a high school diploma
  - 10% earned a vocational certificate
  - 4% earned an associate’s degree
  - 2% earned a bachelor’s degree
  - Less than 1% earned an advanced degree

Other Influences on Educational Attainment

- A strong high school curriculum lowers the hurdles to college graduation for students at every socioeconomic status, especially minorities.

- Social capital factors—such as parental expectations—also play a strong role in educational attainment.
A Strong High School Curriculum Lowers the Hurdles to College Graduation for Students at Every Socioeconomic Status...

Percentage of students completing a bachelor's degree

With the “most rigorous” curriculum...

Highest SES
86% complete bachelor's degrees
79% complete bachelor's degrees
79% complete bachelor's degrees
66% complete bachelor's degrees

Lowest SES
62% complete bachelor's degrees

With a “challenging” curriculum...

Highest SES
76% complete bachelor's degrees
60% complete bachelor's degrees
59% complete bachelor's degrees
61% complete bachelor's degrees

Lowest SES
42% complete bachelor's degrees

With a “less demanding” curriculum...

Highest SES
51% complete bachelor's degrees
43% complete bachelor's degrees
38% complete bachelor's degrees
25% complete bachelor's degrees

Lowest SES
29% complete bachelor's degrees

FIGURE 35

...Especially for Minorities

Percentage of students completing a bachelor's degree

Blacks

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<td>All Students</td>
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Asians

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Whites

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<td>86%</td>
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FIGURE 36
Parental Expectations Concerning Education
Vary with Socioeconomic Status

Percentage of parents of 12th graders who expected at least a bachelor's degree

Lowest SES
Middle-Lowest
Middle-Upper
Highest SES

FIGURE 37
Parenting Factors that Affect College-Going of At-Risk Students

More at-risk students whose parents expected them to get a B.A. degree or higher went to college...
78%
...than did those whose parents expected them to get some postsecondary education...
56%
...or those whose parents expected them to earn a high school diploma or less.
25%

More at-risk students whose parents discussed school very frequently with them enrolled in college...
82%
...than did those whose parents' school discussions with them were only moderately frequent...
68%
...or those whose parents had few or no school discussions with them.
55%

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