

School Enrollment in the United States: 2006

Issued August 2008

Population Characteristics

P20-559

This report discusses school enrollment levels and trends in the population aged 3 and older based on data collected in 2006 by the U.S. Census Bureau in the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Current Population Survey (CPS).¹ Historically, the CPS has been the only data source used to produce school enrollment reports. This is the first report to show data from the ACS, supplemented with CPS data where they provide better information. The ACS has a larger sample size and will provide statistics for small levels of geography, which are reasons why it is used as a main source of enrollment data.

Highlights of the report are:

- In 2006, compared with the enrollment distribution of 2000, there were more students in college and high school and fewer in nursery, kindergarten, and elementary school. This reflects change in the composition of school enrollment by age.
- High school dropouts constituted 11 percent of the population aged 18 to 24 years old. States with the highest concentration of dropouts are predominantly located along the entire southern border of the United States.
- More women than men are enrolled in college, and this has been true since 1979. Women have also become the majority of graduate students.

¹ For information on the differences between the ACS and CPS estimates, see Shin, Hyon, 2007, *A Comparison of Estimates on School Enrollment From the ACS and the CPS: 2003*, Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, and accompanying tables and figures, available from the Web page <www.census.gov/acs/www/AdvMeth/Papers/Papers1.htm>.

- Diversity plays a prominent role among the school population, with differences apparent by geography. In the Western region of the United States, native non-Hispanic Whites were the minority among students enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth grade.
- Also in the Western region of the United States, over one-third of students enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth grade spoke a language other than English at home.

THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY AND THE CURRENT POPULATION SURVEY: TWO SOURCES OF SCHOOL ENROLLMENT DATA

The American Community Survey is the cornerstone of the government's effort to keep pace with the nation's ever-increasing need for timely and relevant data about population and housing characteristics. The ACS, part of the Census Bureau's reengineered 2010 Census program, looks at a wide range of social, economic, and housing characteristics for the population by a multitude of demographic variables. The ACS is used to provide annual data on more than 7,000 areas, including all congressional districts as well as counties, cities, metro areas, and American Indian and Alaska Native areas with a population of 65,000 or more. In 2008, the Census Bureau will release 3-year estimates from the ACS for areas with populations larger than 20,000. It will release 5-year estimates for all geographic areas down to the

Current Population Reports

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tract level beginning in 2010. The ACS surveys information from about 3 million addresses, or 2.5 percent of the nation's population each year. In contrast with the CPS, the ACS is administered to the entire domestic population, including those living in institutions and other group quarters. In this respect, data from the ACS are highly comparable with data collected in Census 2000 and earlier decennial censuses.² The ACS asks respondents throughout the entire calendar year whether they were enrolled in regular school at any time in the 3 months before the interview. The survey also asks whether each person attended public school or private school, and in what grade or level the person was enrolled. Tables from the ACS about school enrollment can be accessed through the American FactFinder on the Census Bureau's Web site at <factfinder.census.gov>.

The Current Population Survey surveys approximately 72,000 housing units each month. Unlike the ACS, the reference population is the civilian noninstitutionalized population, so that people living in institutions are not included. While the sample size is not sufficient to describe small geographic areas, the CPS is designed to meet reliability requirements for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Estimates of school enrollment from the CPS are based on a special supplement administered each October since 1956, allowing the construction of a time series of trends for school enrollment. The supplement on school enrollment

² Other differences between the ACS and Census 2000 affect comparisons of school enrollment. One of the most important is the reference time of data collection, which is the 3 months preceding collection (which occurs year-round) in the ACS but is fixed to the time preceding April 1 in the census. This difference especially affects comparisons of enrollment by age.

asks detailed questions of children aged 3–14 and people 15 and older. Twenty questions are asked, gathering information on single year of enrollment, enrollment status and level for the previous year, whether respondents go to school full-time or part-time, whether they attend a 2-year or 4-year institution, whether they are obtaining any vocational training, and what year they received their most recent degree. Tables about students and school enrollment from the CPS can be found on the Census Bureau's Web site at <www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/school.html>.

To learn more about the differences between the ACS and CPS see the comparison grid at the end of this report.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

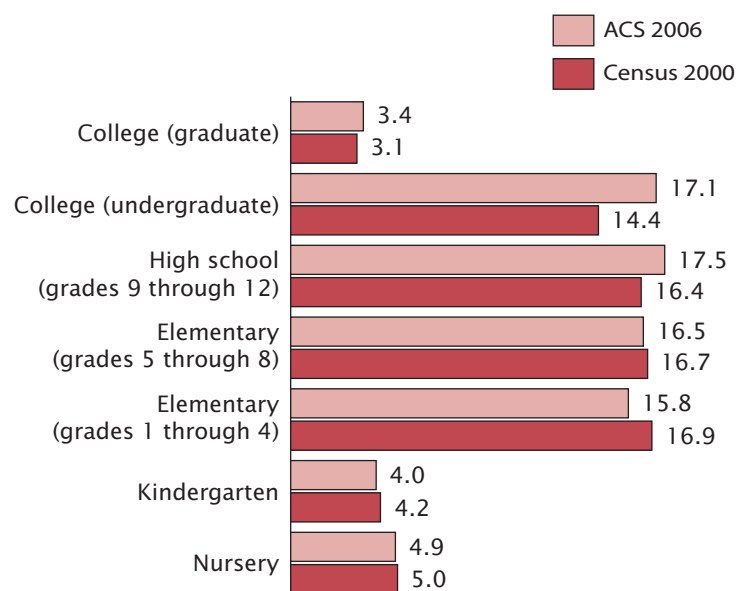
Due to its sample size the ACS is used in this section to describe

overall school enrollment in the United States. In 2006, 79.1 million people aged 3 and older were enrolled in school (Figure 1).³ Of the total, 8.9 million were enrolled in nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten. More than one-half, 49.8 million, of the enrolled population in 2006 was enrolled in grades 1 through 12. A total of 20.5 million were enrolled in college or graduate school.

Enrollment in 2006 was higher than at the time of Census 2000, when

³ The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. The CPS estimates total enrollment at 75.2 million. The difference in enrollment totals between the ACS and the CPS can be explained in part by differences in sampling size, coverage of the institutionalized population, and wording of questions.

Figure 1.
Number of Students Aged 3 and Older Enrolled in School by Level of Enrollment, 2000 and 2006
(In millions)



Note: See <www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/accuracy2006.pdf> for further information on the accuracy of the data.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and 2006 American Community Survey.

76.6 million people were enrolled in school. The increase was not even across all levels of school, however. Higher levels of school showed an increase in enrollment, while early elementary grades showed a decline. For example, college undergraduate enrollment grew from 14.4 million in 2000 to 17.1 million in 2006. Enrollment in grades 1 through 4 fell from 16.9 million in 2000 to 15.8 million in 2006. These changes ran parallel to a shift in the age distribution, which showed an increase in the population 18 to 21 years old and a drop in the population aged 6 to 11.⁴

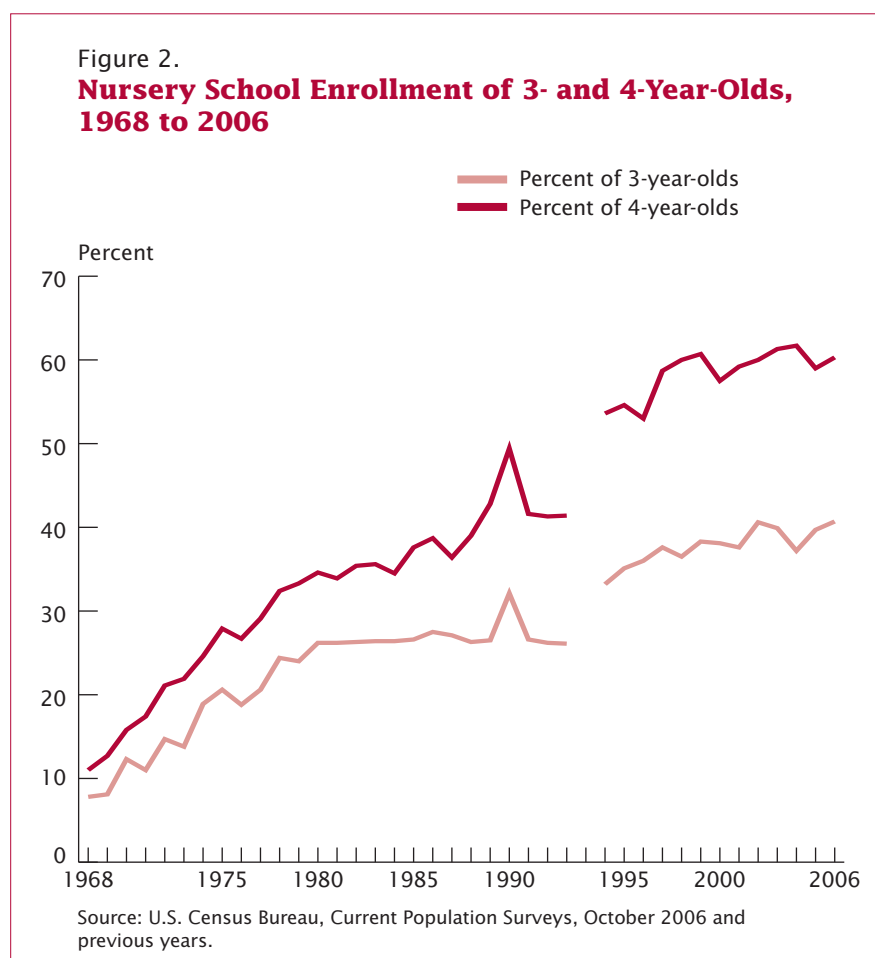
The percentage of children aged 10 to 14 who were enrolled in school was at 98 percent or higher in 2006. Increases have been observed in school enrollment rates at younger and older ages.⁵ The next section examines the enrollment in nursery school; the following sections examine high school and the transition to college.

NURSERY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

It is helpful to use the CPS to look at nursery school enrollment because its data allow for examination of historical trends. In 2006, 4.7 million children aged 3 and over were enrolled in nursery

⁴ Calculations of changes from April 2000 to July 2006 are taken from NC-EST2006-ALLDATA: Monthly Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: April 1, 2000, to July 1, 2006 (with short-term projections to dates in 2007). Source: Population Estimates Program, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. Release Date: May 17, 2007.

⁵ The percentage of 5- and 6-year-olds enrolled in school, for example, increased from 58 percent to 95 percent from 1947, the first year for which consistently reported CPS data are available, to 2005. The percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds enrolled in school increased from 68 percent to 95 percent from 1947 to 2005.



school or preschool.⁶ Over half of students enrolled in nursery school were 4 years old and most of the rest were 3 years old. Children 5 and older made up 12 percent of nursery school students.

The rate of nursery school attendance by 3- and 4-year-olds has increased over the years. In 1968, 11 percent of 4-year-olds were enrolled in nursery school or preschool (Figure 2). By 1980, the percentage had increased to 35 percent. During this same period, nursery school or preschool enrollment of 3-year-olds went from 8 percent to 26 percent. From 1980 to 1993, the rate of enrollment did not climb for 3-year-olds, who

⁶ The estimate of 4.7 million children in nursery school was taken from the CPS. The ACS estimates a slightly larger number of children (4.9 million).

remained at 26 percent, while the percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled in nursery school increased from 35 percent to 41 percent. In 1994, the Census Bureau changed question wording and collection procedures, making comparisons with prior years somewhat tenuous. The nursery school enrollment rates of both 3- and 4-year-olds increased from 1994 to 2006—from 54 to 60 percent for 4-year-olds and from 33 percent to 41 percent for 3-year-olds.⁷

HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

The ACS is used in this section because of its geographic detail, which is an important component

⁷ The apparent increases in nursery school enrollment rates for 3- and 4-year-olds from 2000 to 2006 in Figure 2 (CPS data) are not statistically significant.

to the discussion of high school dropouts.⁸ In 2006, 3.3 million people, or 11 percent of people aged 18 to 24, were high school dropouts. In this report the dropout rate is the proportion of 18- to 24-year-olds not enrolled in school who do not have a high school degree.

This dropout rate shows geographic variation. The lack of high school completion was higher in

⁸ "Dropouts" include all those who are not enrolled in high school or lower grades and do not have a high school diploma. This includes immigrants and others who may not have "dropped out" from a U.S. school because they never attended one. Davis and Bauman estimate that 23 percent of U.S. dropouts attended foreign schools (Davis, Jessica and Kurt Bauman, 2006, "The Contribution of Foreign Schools to Educational Attainment in the United States," presented at the annual meetings of the Population Association of America (March)).

some of the states close to the southern border of the United States than in the rest of the country in 2006 (Figure 3). Louisiana and Mississippi, along the Gulf Coast, and Arizona and New Mexico, in the Southwest, were among the seven states with dropout rates at or above 14 percent.⁹ The other three were Georgia (near but not directly on the Gulf Coast), Nevada (near but not on the Southwest border), and Texas (on both the Gulf Coast and the Southwest border).

States with low dropout rates included some of those in the upper Midwest and in New England. For example, the two states

⁹ Alabama and Delaware had status dropout rates that were not statistically different from 14 percent, although the point estimates for these states were below 14.

with dropout rates at or below 5 percent among 18- to 24-year-olds were North Dakota (upper Midwest) and New Hampshire (New England).

TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

An advantage of the CPS data is that questions are asked about enrollment in the previous year, allowing the tracking of changes in enrollment from year to year. This section uses the CPS to examine the transition from high school to college. In 2006, the majority (58 percent) of high school graduates aged 16 to 21 were enrolled in college (Table 1). Not all were enrolled full-time in 4-year colleges. Full-time students in 4-year colleges were 38 percent of all high school graduates in the 16 to 21 years age range; full-time students

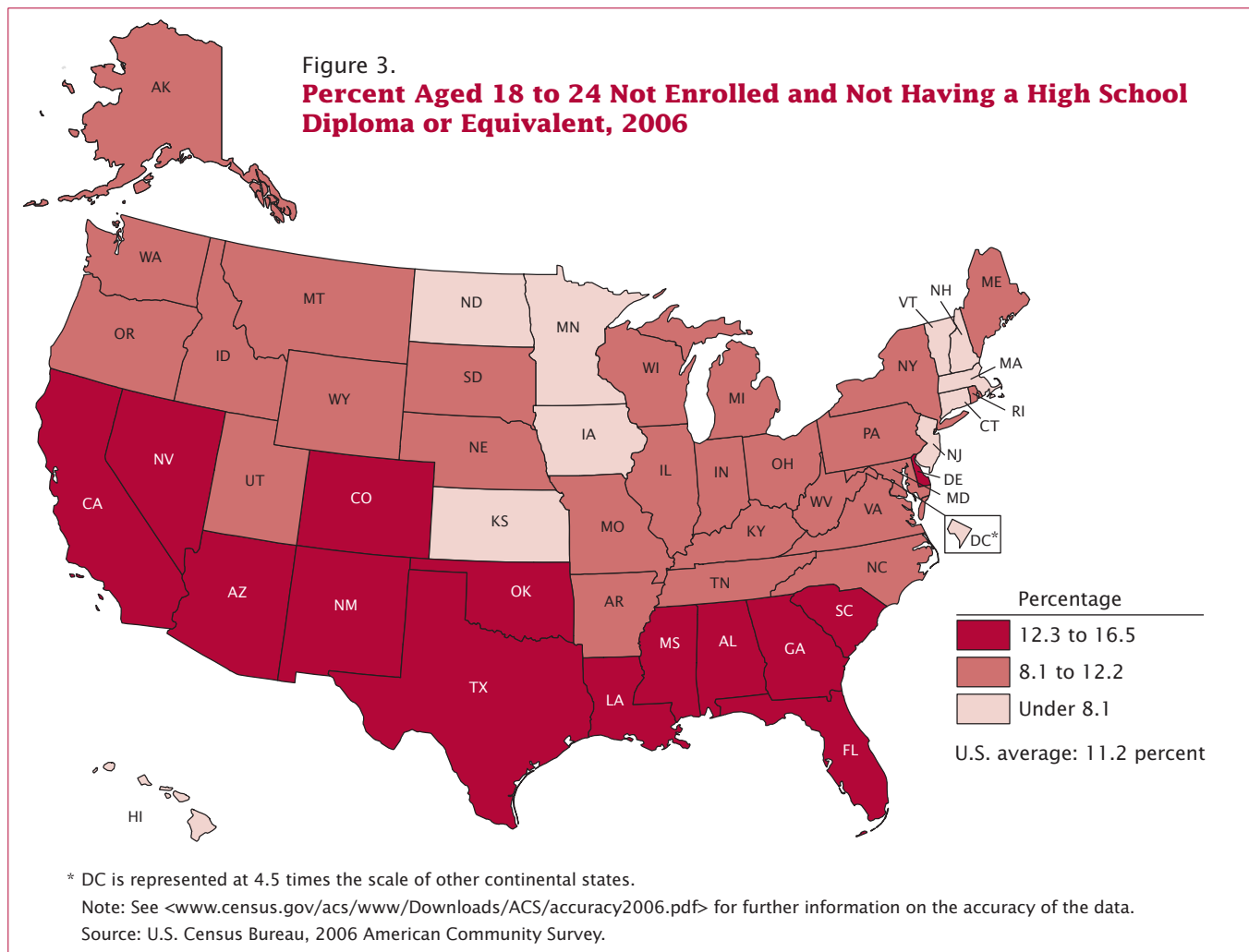


Table 1.
College Enrollment of High School Graduates Aged 16 to 21 by Race and Ethnicity: 2006

(Numbers in thousands and percents)

Characteristic	Enrolled					
	Total	Total	2-year institution		4-year institution	
			Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Total	12,528	57.6	13.1	3.0	38.4	3.2
Graduated this year	2,437	66.5	21.8	3.0	39.5	2.1
Enrolled last year	5,847	84.8	15.5	4.1	60.2	5.0
Not enrolled last year	4,244	15.0	4.8	1.3	7.6	1.2
Total						
White alone	9,909	58.2	13.2	2.9	38.5	3.5
White alone, non-Hispanic	8,254	60.8	13.3	2.5	41.8	3.3
Black alone	1,713	48.9	13.0	2.7	31.1	2.0
Asian alone	534	78.6	12.0	2.1	61.4	3.0
Hispanic (any race)	1,785	45.3	12.3	5.5	23.5	4.1
Graduated This Year						
White alone	1,942	67.3	23.2	3.0	39.1	1.9
White alone, non-Hispanic	1,624	69.1	23.1	2.4	41.5	2.1
Black alone	300	55.2	22.0	2.7	26.7	4.0
Asian alone	123	82.1	7.3	3.3	71.5	—
Hispanic (any race)	345	58.2	22.0	5.8	29.3	1.2
Enrolled Last Year						
White alone	4,689	84.6	15.1	3.8	60.1	5.6
White alone, non-Hispanic	4,069	85.8	14.6	3.1	63.3	4.7
Black alone	676	84.6	18.5	5.5	58.3	2.4
Asian alone	327	89.7	13.1	1.2	70.6	4.9
Hispanic (any race)	673	78.0	17.1	9.8	40.6	10.4
Not Enrolled Last Year						
White alone	3,278	14.9	4.6	1.5	7.4	1.4
White alone, non-Hispanic	2,561	15.8	4.8	1.5	7.7	1.8
Black alone	736	13.5	4.3	0.3	8.2	0.8
Asian alone	85	30.5	14.1	4.7	10.6	1.2
Hispanic (any race)	768	10.9	3.5	1.6	5.9	—

— Represents or rounds to zero.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2006.

in 2-year colleges were 13 percent. Six percent of 16- to 21-year-old high school graduates were enrolled part-time—about 3 percent in 4-year colleges and 3 percent in 2-year colleges.¹⁰

Of the population aged 16 to 21 enrolled in 2005, the majority continued in school during 2006. Two-thirds (66 percent) of the 2.4 million 16- to 21-year-olds who graduated from high school during 2006 were attending college in October of that year, thus continuing their enrollment. Eighty-five

¹⁰ The percentage of 16- to 21-year-old high school graduates enrolled part-time in 4-year colleges (3 percent) was not statistically different from the percent enrolled part-time in 2-year colleges (3 percent).

percent of people aged 16 to 21 who were enrolled in college in 2005 remained enrolled in October 2006. On the other hand, of people 16 to 21 years who were not enrolled in 2005, 15 percent were enrolled in 2006.

Enrollment levels differed by race and ethnicity. Seventy-nine percent of Asian-alone 16- to 21-year-old high school graduates were enrolled in college, compared with 61 percent of the non-Hispanic White-alone population, 49 percent of the Black-alone population, and 45 percent of the Hispanic population of this age.¹¹ Research on

¹¹ Federal surveys now give respondents the option of reporting more than one race.

Therefore, two basic ways of defining a race group are possible. A group, such as Black, may be defined as those who reported Black and no other race (the race-alone or single race concept) or as those who reported Black regardless of whether they also reported another race (the race-alone-or-in-combination concept). The body of this report (text, figures, and tables) shows data for people who reported they were the single race White, people who reported the single race Black, and people who reported the single race Asian. Use of the single-race populations does not imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches.

Because Hispanics may be any race, data in this report for Hispanics overlap slightly with data for the Black population. Based on the 2006 CPS October supplement, 3.1 percent of the Black-alone population and 1.6 percent of Asian-alone population aged 3 and over were Hispanic. Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population and the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population are not shown in this report because of their small sample size.

The enrollment levels of Blacks (49 percent) and Hispanics (45 percent) were not statistically different from each other.

differences in college education by race and Hispanic origin points to three important aspects. First, race and Hispanic-origin groups vary in their rate of entry into college. Second, the groups vary in their persistence in college. Third, the characteristics of the college vary by group.¹² All three aspects are evident in the data presented in Table 1.

Asian-alone 16- to 21-year-old high school graduates fared better than their non-Hispanic White-alone counterparts in most aspects. Asian-alone high school graduates were more likely to go directly to college than were non-Hispanic White-alone high school graduates (82 percent versus 69 percent). For both Asians and Whites, those who had been enrolled in the previous year were likely to be enrolled again in the current year (90 percent of Asian-alone students, 86 percent of non-Hispanic White-alone students—estimates that are not statistically different). A larger share of Asian-alone than of non-Hispanic White-alone 16- to 21-year-old high school graduates were enrolled full-time in 4-year institutions (61 percent and 41 percent, respectively).

Black-alone and Hispanic high school graduates had a lower probability of going directly to college than non-Hispanic White-alone high school graduates (55

percent for Black alone, 58 percent for Hispanic, 69 percent for non-Hispanic White alone).¹³ Among those who were enrolled in the previous year, all groups had a tendency to return (85 percent for Black alone, 78 percent for Hispanic, 86 percent for non-Hispanic White alone).¹⁴ Especially notable was the variation in type of school attended. The percentage enrolled in a 2-year college was not statistically different among non-Hispanic White-alone, Black-alone, Asian-alone, and Hispanic 16- to 21-year-old high school graduates. By contrast, enrollments in 4-year colleges differed among non-Hispanic White-alone students and each of the other groups.¹⁵

Both Asian-alone and Hispanic groups include relatively large numbers of the foreign born (see the section on “Diversity of the School Population” in this report). In calculations not shown here, the effect of excluding the foreign born was examined.¹⁶ Enrollment patterns of Asians were largely unchanged when only native-born Asians were examined. The overall enrollment rate of Asian-alone 16- to 21-year-old high school graduates remained at 79 percent. The patterns of Hispanics, on the other hand, changed. Overall enrollment of native Hispanic 16- to 21-year-olds was 52 percent, compared with a rate of 45 percent for all Hispanic 16- to 21-year olds.

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

The CPS is used to discuss college enrollment because of its historical data series, which is particularly useful when looking at gender patterns of enrollment. Overall enrollment in college and graduate school increased from 15.3 million to 17.2 million from 2000 to 2006. This increase is a departure from much of the previous decade, which saw little change in college enrollment. (The estimate of 15.3 million enrolled in 2000 was not statistically different from the 15.0 million observed in 1994.)¹⁷

Partly fueling the recent increase was continued growth in the college enrollment of women. Prior to the late 1970s, most college students were men (Figure 4). In 1971, for example, men were 58 percent of the population enrolled in undergraduate college and 70 percent of those enrolled in graduate school. In 2006, by contrast, women made up 56 percent of undergraduate students and 59 percent of students in graduate school.¹⁸

A turning point came in 1979, which was the first time that women became a majority of students in undergraduate college. By 1990, women had become a majority of those in graduate school (in 1987, the estimated women’s percentage started to exceed 50 percent, but it was not

¹² For an overview of group differences in college entry and completion, see U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2005, *The Condition of Education 2005*, NCES 2005-094, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, Section 3, Indicator 22. Also see Kao, Grace and Jennifer S. Thompson, 2003, “Racial and Ethnic Stratification in Educational Achievement and Attainment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 2003, 29: 417–42. For a discussion of institutional selectivity and other characteristics see Karen, David, 2002, “Changes in Access to Higher Education in the United States: 1980–92,” *Sociology of Education*, 75 (July): 191–210.

¹³ The difference between Black (55 percent) and Hispanic (58 percent) students enrolling in college directly after high school graduation is not statistically significant.

¹⁴ The difference between Black alone (85 percent) and non-Hispanic White alone (86 percent) enrollment was not statistically significant.

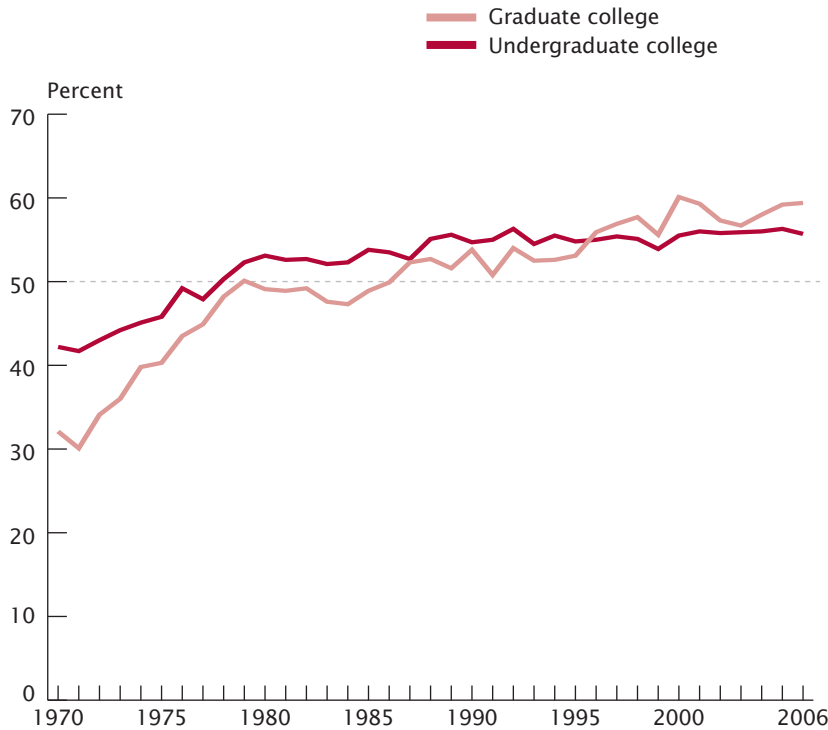
¹⁵ Asian students had the highest enrollment rate in 4-year colleges followed by White, Black, and Hispanic students.

¹⁶ See the appendix tables included with this report on the Web site <<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/school.html>>.

¹⁷ Census 2000 shows enrollment of 17.5 million in college, undergraduate and graduate combined—higher than the 15.3 million reported in CPS that year. ACS estimates for 2006 are also higher than CPS estimates—20.5 million and 17.2 million, respectively.

¹⁸ In 2006, CPS data show the percentage of women exceeded the percentage of men enrolled in college for most age groups. In the 65 and older age group, there was not a significant difference between the percentage of men and women enrolled in college. For all other age groups, the percentage of women exceeded the percentage of men enrolled in college.

Figure 4.
Trend in Women's Enrollment in Undergraduate and Graduate College, 1970 to 2006



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys, October 2006 and previous years.

statistically higher until 1990). In 1998, another turning point came, when the percentage of graduate students who were women first exceeded the percentage of undergraduate students who were women. This produced a reversal from the situation in the earlier period, when men made up the majority of undergraduate students and an even larger share of graduate students.

DIVERSITY OF THE SCHOOL POPULATION

Detailed information on geography, race, Hispanic origin, and nativity make the ACS the ideal data source for examining the diverse nature of today's students. In 2006, schools

in the United States contained students from a variety of backgrounds and races. Nonetheless, the majority of the student population (58 percent) was native-born non-Hispanic White (Table 2). The largest minority groups among the enrolled native population were Blacks (14 percent) and Hispanics (14 percent). The foreign born made up 7 percent of the total student population.

Native-born non-Hispanic Whites made up a larger share of college students than of students at the nursery school/kindergarten level or in grades 1 through 12. Native-born Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics were a smaller portion of students in college than in nursery school,

kindergarten, or grades 1 through 12. Foreign-born students, perhaps due to temporary migration to attend U.S. colleges, were more prevalent at the college level than at lower levels.

Across regions of the country, native-born Blacks were most prevalent in the South, where they made up 23 percent of students below the college level and 20 percent of students in college or graduate school. The West had the highest prevalence of Asian-alone and Hispanic students, both native-born and foreign-born. Native-born Asians made up 6 percent of students in nursery school through grade 12. They also composed 5 percent of college students in the West. In the West, native-born Hispanics made up 31 percent of the nursery school through grade 12 population and 15 percent of college students. Foreign-born Asians and Hispanics made up 2 percent and 5 percent, respectively, of students in nursery school through twelfth grade, and made up 7 percent and 6 percent, respectively, of students in college in the West. The West was the only region where native-born non-Hispanic Whites were in the minority among students in nursery school through twelfth grade.

Language spoken at home is measured by the Census Bureau for the population 5 years of age and older. Of students in this age group in 2006, 21 percent spoke a language other than English at home. This finding does not mean that these students did not speak English. Of this 21 percent, 16 percent reported that they spoke English "very well," while 5 percent reported speaking "less than very well."

Table 2.

Level of School and Region of Residence by Race, Nativity, Language, and Ability to Speak English: 2006

(Numbers in thousands and percents)

Characteristic	United States				Northeast		Midwest		South		West	
	Total	Nurs- ery school or kindergarten	Grades 1 to 12	Col- lege ¹	Nurs- ery school through grade 12	Col- lege ¹	Nurs- ery school through grade 12	Col- lege ¹	Nurs- ery school through grade 12	Col- lege ¹	Nurs- ery school through grade 12	Col- lege ¹
All students aged 3 and over	79,122	8,914	49,757	20,451	10,314	3,900	12,972	4,614	21,378	6,948	14,007	4,989
Race and Hispanic Origin by Nativity												
Native born	92.8	97.6	94.2	87.3	94.4	84.1	96.8	92.2	95.2	89.4	92.3	82.4
White alone	65.7	66.5	65.2	66.6	68.0	67.7	75.1	77.6	62.1	63.3	59.4	60.3
White alone, non-Hispanic	58.5	56.9	57.2	62.3	63.3	64.9	72.2	76.0	53.5	58.4	44.2	53.1
Black alone	14.1	14.6	15.0	11.9	13.7	9.2	13.1	9.7	23.0	19.9	5.2	4.8
Asian alone	2.8	3.6	2.8	2.5	3.3	2.5	1.6	1.3	1.6	1.3	5.8	5.4
Hispanic (any race)	14.3	18.5	16.0	8.3	12.3	6.3	6.8	3.4	14.3	7.8	31.2	15.1
Foreign born	7.2	2.4	5.8	12.7	5.6	15.9	3.2	7.8	4.8	10.6	7.7	17.6
White alone	2.9	1.0	2.6	4.4	1.9	5.0	1.4	2.6	2.3	4.1	3.5	6.0
White alone, non-Hispanic	1.3	0.5	0.9	2.7	1.3	3.8	0.8	2.1	0.6	2.0	0.9	3.4
Black alone	0.9	0.2	0.5	1.9	1.0	3.7	0.3	1.1	0.6	2.4	0.2	0.7
Asian alone	1.9	0.7	1.1	4.4	1.4	5.1	0.7	3.1	0.7	2.8	1.6	7.4
Hispanic (any race)	3.0	1.0	3.1	3.4	1.8	3.0	1.3	1.3	2.8	3.4	4.9	5.8
Students aged 5 and over	75,287	5,079	49,757	20,451	9,567	3,900	12,178	4,614	19,970	6,948	13,122	4,989
Language Spoken at Home												
Speaks only English at home	79.4	79.9	79.4	79.2	79.6	76.9	88.8	87.2	82.5	82.2	66.0	69.2
Speaks other language ...	20.6	20.1	20.6	20.8	20.4	23.1	11.2	12.8	17.5	17.8	34.0	30.8
Language Spoken												
Spanish	13.5	14.6	14.8	10.1	11.3	8.6	6.8	4.8	13.7	10.2	26.2	16.0
Other Indo-European languages	3.3	2.5	2.8	4.7	5.6	7.8	2.3	3.8	1.9	3.8	2.4	4.5
Asian/Pacific languages	2.9	2.3	2.2	4.6	2.5	4.9	1.3	2.8	1.3	2.7	4.4	8.9
All other languages	1.0	0.8	0.8	1.4	1.0	1.7	0.8	1.4	0.5	1.2	1.1	1.5
English Speaking Ability												
Very well	15.5	11.5	15.7	16.1	15.9	17.8	8.2	9.5	12.9	14.1	25.3	23.6
Less than very well	5.1	8.6	4.8	4.8	4.5	5.3	2.9	3.2	4.6	3.7	8.7	7.2

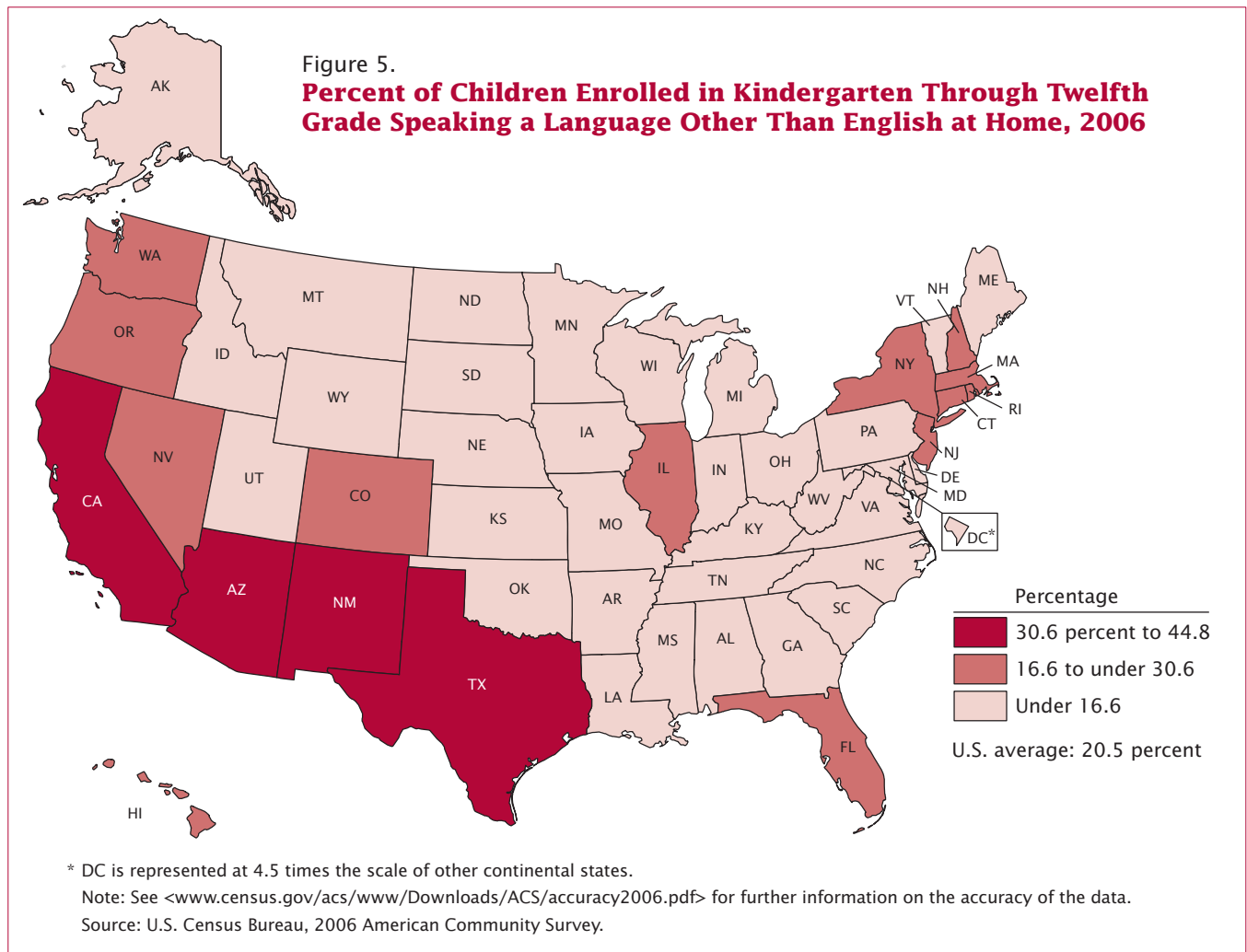
¹Undergraduate or graduate school.Note: See <www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/accuracy2006.pdf> for further information on the accuracy of the data.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey.

California had the highest percentage of enrolled students speaking a language other than English at home, with 44.8 percent (Figure 5). Texas (34.5 percent), New Mexico (34.1 percent), and Arizona (31.7 percent) had the next highest percentages of students speaking a language other than English at home (Texas and New Mexico were not statistically significantly different). At the opposite end were Mississippi (2.7 percent) and West Virginia (3.0 percent) statistically tied for the lowest percentage of enrolled students speaking a language other than English at home.

Unlike the distribution of foreign-born students, which was higher at the college level, speakers of languages other than English were just as prevalent at lower grades. Foreign-born students made up 13 percent of college students, but only 2 percent of students in nursery school and kindergarten and 6 percent of students in grades 1 through 12. By contrast, students speaking a language other than English in their homes made up 21 percent of college students, 20 percent of students in nursery school and kindergarten, and 21 percent of students in grades 1 through 12.

The West was the region where non-English speakers were most prevalent. Just over one-third of students below the college level in the West spoke a language other than English at home. The predominant language was Spanish, spoken at home by 26 percent of all nursery school through twelfth-grade students in the West region and 16 percent of college students. Asian languages were spoken by 4 percent of students in nursery school through twelfth grade and 9 percent of students in college.



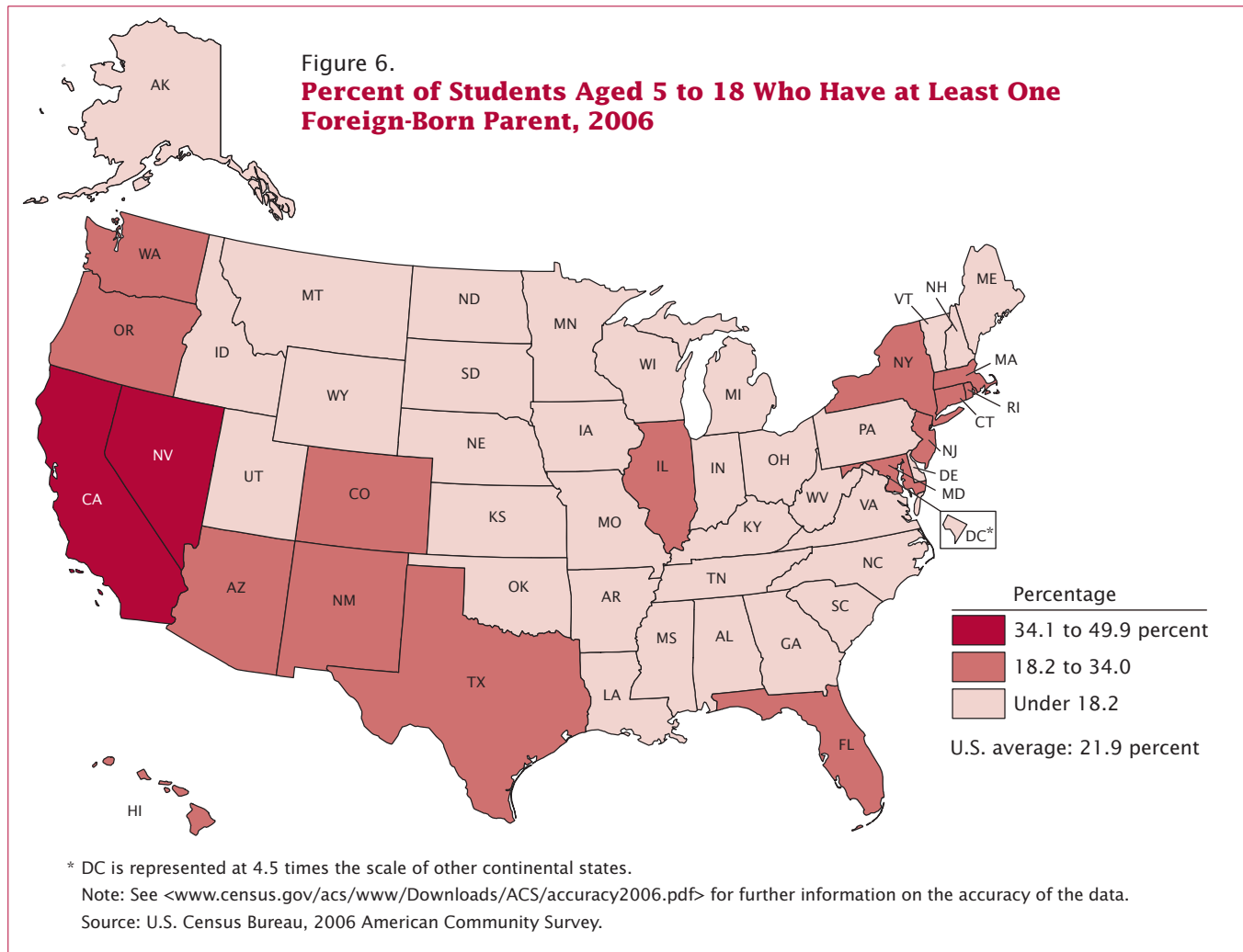
Several western states also had high concentrations of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade who had at least one foreign-born parent (Figure 6). Half of all kindergarten through twelfth-grade students in California (49.9 percent) and 36 percent in Nevada had at least one foreign-born parent. Several states, including New York, Florida, Texas, Arizona, New

Jersey, and Hawaii, also had at least one-quarter of their kindergarten through twelfth grade students with at least one foreign-born parent.

As with students who spoke a language other than English at home, larger proportions of students with at least one foreign-born parent lived in the West, Southwest, East Central states, and Florida. Two

states showed notable differences. In New Mexico, 34 percent spoke a language other than English at home, while 22 percent of students had one or more parents who were foreign born. In Hawaii, the pattern went the opposite way, with 26 percent of students having at least one foreign-born parent and 17 percent speaking a language other than English at home.

Figure 6.
Percent of Students Aged 5 to 18 Who Have at Least One Foreign-Born Parent, 2006



SOURCES OF THE DATA

Most estimates in this report are from the 2006 American Community Survey (ACS), the 2006 October supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), and Census 2000. Some estimates are based on data obtained by the CPS in earlier years.

The population represented (the population universe) in the October 2006 ACS includes both the household and the group quarters populations (that is, the resident population). The group quarter's population consists of the institutionalized population (such as people in correctional institutions or nursing homes) and the noninstitutionalized population (most of whom are in college dormitories).

The population represented (the population universe) in the School Enrollment Supplement to the October 2006 CPS is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. The institutionalized population, which is excluded from the population universe, is composed primarily of the population in correctional institutions and nursing homes (91 percent of the 4.1 million institutionalized people in Census 2000).

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling error and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90-percent

confidence level. This means the 90-percent confidence interval for the difference between estimates being compared does not include zero. Nonsampling error in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and classified. To minimize these errors, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures in sample selection, the wording of questions, interviewing, coding, data processing, and data analysis.

The final ACS population estimates are adjusted in the weighting procedure for coverage error by controlling specific survey estimates to independent population controls by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to over- or undercoverage, but biases may still be present, for example, when people who were missed differ from those interviewed in ways other than sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources. For information on sampling and estimation methods, confidentiality protection, and sampling and nonsampling errors, please see the "2006 ACS Accuracy of the Data" document located at <www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/accuracy2006.pdf>.

The CPS weighting procedure uses ratio estimation whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but biases may still be present when people who are missed by the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources. Further information on the source of the data and accuracy of the estimates, including standard errors and confidence intervals, can be found at <www.census.gov/apspd/techdoc/cps/cpsoct06.pdf> or by contacting John Finamore of the Demographic Statistical Methods Division via e-mail at <dsm�.source.and.accuracy@census.gov>.

MORE INFORMATION

Detailed tabulations, related information, and historic data are available on the Internet at the School Enrollment page on the Census Bureau's Web site at <www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/school.html>.

For additional questions or comments, contact Jessica W. Davis at 301-763-2464 or via e-mail at <jessica.w.davis@census.gov>.

Appendix Table A.

Comparison of Census Bureau Data Sources on School Enrollment

Survey Characteristics	American Community Survey	Current Population Survey
Geographic scope	Annual estimates of the nation, regions, states, congressional districts, and geographies of 65,000 or more. Three-year estimates for places of 20,000 or more (available starting in 2008). Five-year estimates of areas as small as census tracts (available starting in 2010).	National estimates and estimates of selected characteristics for regions and states.
Periodicity of collection	Every year.	Every year.
Timeliness	Released year after collection cycle.	Released year after collection cycle.
Sample size	Annual sample of about 3 million addresses. Data are collected from about one-twelfth of the sample each month.	The school enrollment data come from October CPS supplement, which is based on a sample of about 72,000 addresses.
Data collection method	Mail, telephone, and personal-visit interviews for the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. About half the responses are obtained by mail. The ACS is a mandatory survey.	Telephone and personal-visit interviews for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The CPS is a voluntary survey.
Questionnaire item(s)	The ACS asks respondents every month, "At any time in the last 3 months, has this person attended regular school or college?" The respondent is asked what grade or level this person attended.	In the month of October, the CPS asks a detailed and extensive list of questions about school enrollment in the current and past year. There are separate questions for adults 15 years and older and for children 3–14 years old.
Unique measures/data	ACS enrollment data can be produced at the national level and very small levels of geography.	The CPS provides data regarding single-year enrollment, enrollment status and level for the previous year, whether the respondent goes to school on a full-time or part-time basis, whether they attend a 2-year or a 4-year institution, whether they are obtaining any vocational training, what year they received their postsecondary degree, and whether they received a GED (general educational development test-based certification).
Technical issues	ACS statistics on school enrollment are based on interviews conducted during the entire year.	CPS statistics on enrollment are based on interviews conducted in October.
Population universe	The ACS includes the resident population of the United States, including household and group quarters populations.	The CPS includes the civilian noninstitutionalized population and Armed Forces personnel living off post or with their families on post.
Tables available/detail	ACS school enrollment tables can be accessed through American FactFinder (S1401, B14001, B14002, B14003, B14004, B14005, and B14006) showing school enrollment for the nation and smaller geographies by characteristics such as age, sex, educational attainment, and poverty status.	Detailed table package consists of 8 tables with school enrollment for the nation shown by characteristics such as age, race, sex, family income, type of college, employment status, and vocational course enrollment.
Sampling error information	Only for published tables.	Can be computed by data user.
Historical data	The ACS began in 1996 in a limited number of test sites and began national implementation in 2000.	Enrollment data from the CPS have been gathered since 1947.
Public use file	Yes.	Yes.
Electronic accessibility	Tables—American FactFinder. Public use files through DataFerrett.	Tables—School Enrollment home page. Public use files through DataFerrett.

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