Trends in Education Statistics

Recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics examines trends in public school enrollment, student achievement in history and civics, and student perceptions about school safety.

**Elementary School Enrollment**

Elementary enrollment is expected to be at near-record levels this fall. About 38.8 million children will be enrolled in pre-kindergarten through grade 8 in 2007, including 34 million children in public schools and 4.8 million in private schools. Public elementary school enrollment rose by 21 percent between 1984 and 2002. After a lull in enrollment growth between 2003 and 2005, elementary enrollment began rising again, with increases in both 2006 and 2007. An additional 1.3 million elementary students are expected in public schools by 2012, reflecting a 4 percent increase compared with this fall.

However, there have been significant differences in elementary school enrollment changes among the states. In general, enrollment growth in public schools has been strongest in the southern states, and slowest in the Northeast. In contrast to the national pattern, enrollments in the western and southern states did not decrease between 2002 and 2007. Enrollment in the West is expected to show an increase of 0.2 percent between 2002 and this fall, and an additional increase of 4 percent by 2012. Enrollment in the southern region is expected to show an increase of 3 percent by this fall compared with 2002, and to increase a further 7 percent by 2012. Although enrollment in the Midwest is expected to show a decrease of about 3 percent this fall, it is expected to increase by about 1 percent by 2012. The Northeast is expected to show a decline of about 5 percent between 2002 and 2007, which is anticipated to slow to a decrease of about 1 percent between 2007 and 2012.

**Preprimary Enrollment**

Enrollment rates of 3- to 5-year-olds in preprimary programs rose between 1995 and 2005; however, most of this increase occurred during the late 1990s. In 2005, 41 percent of 3-year-olds were enrolled in a preprimary school program, compared with 36 percent enrolled in 1995. Similarly, the proportion of 4-year-olds rose from 62 percent to 66 percent.

In contrast, the proportion of 5-year-olds enrolled (86 percent in 2006) did not change appreciably during the period. However, there were substantial increases in the proportion of 4- and 5-year-old students who enrolled in full-day programs between 1995 and 2005. In 2005, 50 percent of 4-year-olds were in full-day programs compared with 43 percent in 1995. The proportion of 5-year-old students in full-day programs rose from 50 percent in 1995 to 68 percent in 2005.

**After-school Programs**

In 2005, about 43 percent of K-8 students participated in at least one after-school activity. Of these students, 31 percent participated in sports, 20 percent in religious activities, 18 percent in arts (e.g., music, dance, or painting), 10 percent in scouts, 8 percent in community service, 7 percent in academic activities (e.g., tutoring), and 6 percent in school clubs.

A greater percentage of females than males were involved in arts (24 percent vs. 12 percent), school clubs (7 percent vs. 5 percent), community service (9 percent vs. 7 percent), religious activities (21 percent vs. 18 percent), and scouts (11 percent vs. 9 percent). However, a greater percentage of males than females participated in sports (34 percent vs. 28 percent).

**History and Civics Achievement**

There was an overall improvement in fourth graders’ knowledge of U.S. history between 1994 and 2006, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The percentage of fourth graders performing at the basic level or higher increased from 64 percent in 1994 to 70 percent in 2006. However, there was no significant change in the percentage of students at or above the proficient level. This improvement in average scores in U.S. history primarily was driven by increases among lower-performing students.

Due to increases in the performance of black and Hispanic students between 1994 and 2006, the gaps
between black and white students and between Hispanic and white students narrowed, although differences were still apparent. In 2006, 46 percent of black fourth graders and 49 percent of Hispanic fourth graders performed at the basic or higher level, compared with 84 percent of white fourth graders. The increases in student performance were reflected by improvements in students’ knowledge of democracy, world role, and technology; however, there was no improvement in fourth graders’ knowledge of cultural themes in U.S. history.

Fourth graders have also shown improvements in their knowledge of civics in recent years. The percentage of students performing at the basic level or higher in civics rose from 69 percent in 1998 to 73 percent in 2006. Black, Hispanic, and white fourth graders improved their performances during this period. The performance increase among Hispanic students was larger than the increase among white students so that the gap in their performances narrowed between 1998 and 2006.

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Student Perceptions of School Safety
While secondary schools were more likely to report violent crimes than elementary schools, crime and misbehavior can lead younger students to feel that some areas of their schools are unsafe. In 2005, 8 percent of sixth graders compared with 1 percent of 12th graders avoided certain places at school. Students in urban areas were more likely to report avoiding places and being attacked compared to students in suburban or rural schools. In general, 12- to 18-year-old students were less likely (6 percent) to report a fear of being attacked at school or on the way to or from school in 2005 than they were in 1995 (12 percent).

However, middle school students remained more likely to report a fear of being attacked compared with older students. For example, 10 percent of sixth graders, compared with 6 percent of ninth graders and 3 percent of 12th graders reported a fear of being attacked. Students in urban schools were more likely to report a fear of being attacked than students in suburban or rural schools.

Bullying is another problem that is more prevalent among middle school students than older students. In 2005, 37 percent of sixth graders compared with 28 percent of ninth graders and 20 percent of 12th graders reported that they had been bullied at school. Public school students were more likely to report being bullied than private school students. In contrast to avoiding places or fear in traveling to or from school, there were no apparent differences in rates of bullying among urban, suburban, and rural school students.
Percent of 6th to 12th graders who avoided places at school, or reported being bullied at school, by grade: 2005

![Graph](image-url)


**Internet Use**

By 2005, nearly all public elementary schools had Internet access. The proportion of elementary classrooms with Internet access has reached a high level as well. In 2005, 93 percent of elementary school classrooms had Internet access compared with 76 percent in 2000. Elementary schools (about 474 students on average) had an average of 124 computers, and about 96 percent of these computers were connected to the Internet. On average, there were about four elementary school students per computer with a connection to the Internet.

**School Finances**

Expenditures for public elementary and secondary schools have more than kept pace with inflation and increases in student enrollment. On average, public schools in the country spent $8,701 per student during the 2004-2005 school year. This average increased by 11 percent, after adjusting for inflation between 1999-2000 and 2004-2005. The distribution of school expenses remained relatively stable over this time period. About 61 percent of the budget was spent on instruction in 2004-2005. Other major categories of school spending included operation and maintenance (10 percent), school district and school administration (8 percent), student support services (5 percent), and instructional staff services (5 percent).

There have been increases in school funding from all government sources. In 2004-2005, about 9 percent of school funds came from the federal government, 47 percent came from state governments, and 44 percent came from local governments. Between 1999-2000 and 2004-2005, funds from state sources per student increased by 5 percent, after adjustment for inflation, while local revenues per student rose by 13 percent. Although federal revenues per student remain substantially lower than revenue per student from states and local governments, federal revenues have risen more rapidly. Between 1999-2000 and 2004-2005, federal revenue per student increased by 40 percent.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

More detailed statistics on education are available from *The Condition of Education, Digest of Education Statistics*, and other reports prepared by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and available from ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398, or online at [http://oeri4.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html](http://oeri4.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html). Further information on education statistics may be obtained from NCES at [http://nces.ed.gov](http://nces.ed.gov).
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