

High School Dropouts 2006-07 Massachusetts Public Schools

The annual high school dropout report represents a snapshot of those students who dropped out of school in any given year. The data contained in this dropout report reflect one year of dropout data across grades nine through twelve and not a particular cohort of students across four years. This report provides annual dropout data to education leaders to develop and strengthen dropout prevention programs in the state. To serve this purpose well, the Department has made several refinements to the dropout calculations over the past few years. Some of these refinements, summarized below, make it difficult to make year-to-year comparisons.

Please note that the Department has also calculated and released graduations rates for the 2006 and 2007 cohorts that provide a more complete picture of the outcomes of high school students in Massachusetts. It is important to keep in mind that the dropout data contained in the graduation rate reports is a cohort dropout rate and shows the cumulative effect of students dropping out over four years. The graduation rate reports can be viewed at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/>.

In the 2006-07 school year, 11,436 or 3.8 percent of students in grades nine through twelve dropped out of school.

Table 1: State Dropout Trends: 1998-99 to 2006-07

	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Total HS Enrollment	258,026	265,795	271,700	273,912	281,939	288,329	293,399	296,511	298,033
Number of Dropouts	9,188	9,199	9,380	8,422 ¹	9,389	10,633	11,145	9,910	11,436
Dropout Rate	3.6%	3.5%	3.5%	3.1%	3.3%	3.7%	3.8%	3.3%	3.8%

The fluctuation in dropout rates between 2004-05 and 2006-07 can be attributed to two significant modifications to Massachusetts' data collection in the Student Information Management System (SIMS).

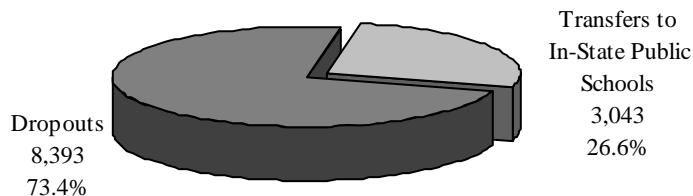
In the **2005-06** school year, the Department began to cross-reference SIMS data with the General Educational Development (GED) Testing Service database. In prior school years, the Department relied solely on district notification regarding students who received their GED. As a result, the Department more accurately tracks students who drop out of high school and then earn a GED therefore decreasing the number of students who are considered final dropouts. In 2005-06 school year, the number of students reported as having earned a GED by October 1, 2006 was 1,253 compared to less than 100 in the 2004-05 school year. This refinement provides a more complete count of students who achieved a high school credential that was not possible in prior school years. Hence, part of the perceived 0.5 percentage point decrease in the dropout rate from 2004-05 (3.8%) to 2005-06 (3.3%) can be attributed to our ability to identify students who earned a GED and remove them from the dropout count.

In the **2006-07** school year, the Department modified the SIMS data element, *Enrollment Status at Time of Data Collection*. The change provides the Department with more comprehensive information on dropouts and transfers to help inform policy and programmatic decisions. In prior years, districts would report the number of students who indicated that they were transferring to another district and the Department excluded them from the dropout calculations. The new expanded dropout and transfer codes provide additional information to the Department on students' plans after leaving the district. Those students who were coded as a transfer to an in-state public school with no record of re-enrollment in another school district before

¹ Due to changes in the Student Information Management System (SIMS) summer dropouts were not included in the dropout count, therefore resulting in an underreported rate.

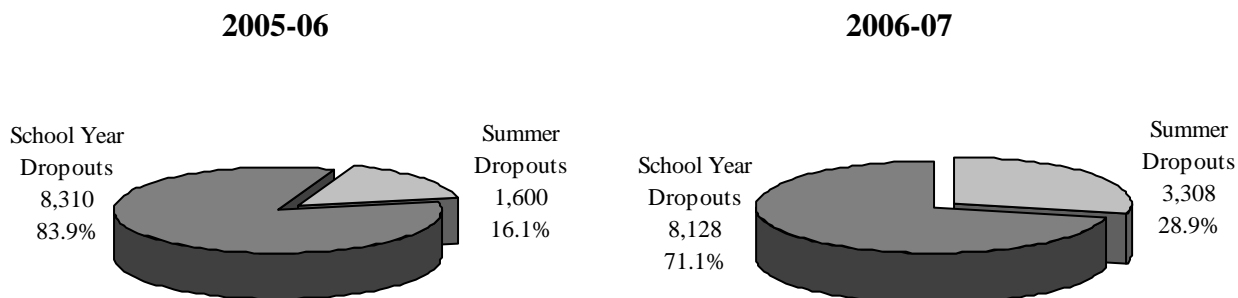
October 1, 2007 are now considered to be dropouts. The 0.5 percentage point increase in the dropout rate from 2005-06 (3.3%) to 2006-07 (3.8%) can be attributed to the Department’s ability to determine the students who actually transfer. In fact, absent this refinement, the dropout rate for 2006-07 would have been lower than the prior year.

Figure 1: Final Enrollment Status of the 2006-07 Dropout Count



The final dropout count is based on two groups of students; summer and school year dropouts. Summer dropouts were reported in the October 1, 2006 SIMS submission as a dropout or a transfer to an in-state public school (with no record of re-enrollment) prior to the beginning of the school year, whereas school year dropouts were reported as either a dropout or as a transfer to in-state public (with no record of re-enrollment) during the school year. The number of summer dropouts increased in 2006-07 by 1,708 students as compared to the 2005-06 summer dropout count. The Department attributes the increase in the summer dropout count primarily to the previously mentioned data collection changes in the 2006-07 school year.

Figure 2: Comparison of the Summer and School Year Dropouts Composing the Total Dropout Counts in 2005-06 and 2006-07



Beginning with the class of 2003, the Department required students to meet or exceed the “Needs Improvement” threshold of both the English Language Arts and Mathematics sections of the grade ten Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) to receive a Competency Determination (CD) in order to graduate from high school with a diploma. Students who did not pass the grade ten MCAS had the opportunity to pass the MCAS through re-test opportunities before their scheduled graduation date. Among both grade eleven and grade twelve dropouts, 60.8 percent had earned a CD before dropping out of school.

Table 2: Dropout Rates and Percent of Dropouts Among Competency Determination (CD) Earners and Students without a CD

Grade	CD Status	Number of Enrolled Students	Number of Dropouts	Dropout Rate	Percent of Dropouts
11	With CD	67,365	1,283	1.9%	49.4%
	Without CD	5,308	1,316	24.8%	50.6%
12	With CD	65,234	1,988	3.0%	71.5%
	Without CD	2,385	793	33.2%	28.5%
Total	With CD	132,599	3,271	2.5%	60.8%
	Without CD	7,693	2,109	27.4%	39.2%

Table 3: Annual Dropout Data for Selected Demographics: 2006-07

		Total HS Enrollment	Number of Dropouts	Annual Dropout Rate	Percent of all Dropouts
Grade	9 th	82,320	3,229	3.9%	28.2%
	10 th	75,421	2,827	3.7%	24.7%
	11 th	72,673	2,599	3.6%	22.7%
	12 th	67,619	2,781	4.1%	24.3%
Race/ Ethnicity	Asian	13,468	347	2.6%	3.0%
	Black	25,974	1,653	6.4%	14.5%
	Hispanic	37,190	3,372	9.1%	29.5%
	Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	3,644	152	4.2%	1.3%
	Native American	822	40	4.9%	0.3%
	Native Hawaiian	495	21	4.2%	0.2%
Gender	White	216,440	5,851	2.7%	51.2%
	Female	146,763	4,822	3.3%	42.2%
	Male	151,270	6,614	4.4%	57.8%

Beginning in the 2003-04 school year, in compliance with the National Center for Education Statistics reporting guidelines, summer dropouts were applied to the grade in which they failed to enroll. Therefore, students who completed grade eight but did not enroll in grade nine were included in the analysis as grade nine summer dropouts.

Table 4: Comparison of Summer Dropouts and School Year Dropouts by Grade

		Number of Dropouts	Total Grade Dropouts	Percent of Grade Dropouts	
Grade	9	Summer	955	3,229	28.6%
		School Year	2,274		70.4%
	10	Summer	704	2,827	24.9%
		School Year	2,123		75.1%
	11	Summer	499	2,599	19.2%
		School Year	2,100		80.8%
12	Summer	1,150	2,781	41.4%	
	School Year	1,631		58.6%	

The most significant change in the annual dropout rate was among grade nine students with an increase from 3.0 percent in 2005-06 to 3.9 percent in 2006-07. The Department attributes the majority of this increase to the number of students who completed eighth grade and who were coded as a transfer to an in-state public school and failed to enroll in grade nine.

Although the rates for both Native American and Native Hawaiian students decreased in the 2006-07 school year, it important to note that these groups were more prone to rate fluctuations due to the smaller number of enrolled students than the other race/ethnicity categories.

Table 5: Annual Dropout Rates for Selected Demographics: 2002-03 to 2006-07

		2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Grade	9th	2.6%	2.6% ²	3.0%	3.0%	3.9%
	10th	3.6%	3.7%	3.7%	3.3%	3.7%
	11th	3.7%	4.0%	4.1%	3.3%	3.6%
	12th	3.5%	4.8%	4.7%	3.9%	4.1%
Race/ Ethnicity	Asian	2.5%	2.7%	2.6%	2.2%	2.6%
	Black	5.7%	6.3%	6.3%	6.8%	6.4%
	Hispanic	7.4%	8.2%	9.1%	7.9%	9.1%
	Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	-	-	-	2.8%	4.2%
	Native American	4.8%	6.4%	5.4%	5.4%	4.9%
	Native Hawaiian	-	-	-	7.0%	4.2%
	White	2.6%	2.8%	2.8%	2.3%	2.7%
Gender	Female	2.8%	3.1%	3.2%	2.8%	3.3%
	Male	3.9%	4.3%	4.4%	3.8%	4.4%

Table 6: Annual Dropout Data for Special Populations: 2006-07

		Total HS Enrollment	Number of Dropouts	Annual Dropout Rate	Percent of all Dropouts
Special Education	Special Education	44,257	2,550	5.8%	22.3%
	General Education	253,776	8,886	3.5%	77.7%
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	LEP	10,997	1,139	10.4%	10.0%
	Non LEP	287,036	10,297	3.6%	90.0%
Low-Income	Low-Income	76,780	4,449	5.8%	38.9%
	Non Low-Income	221,253	6,987	3.2%	61.1%

² In the 2003-04 school year, the Department removed the data for students expected to enroll in grade nine due to an incomplete data collection. The Department presumes that if the grade eight missing students were included in the summer dropout count, the grade nine dropout rate in 2003-04 might be slightly higher.

Table 7: Annual Dropout Rates for Special Populations: 2002-03 to 2006-07

		2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Special Education	Special Education	4.6%	5.4%	5.6%	5.1%	5.8%
	General Education	3.1%	3.4%	3.5%	3.0%	3.5%
LEP	LEP	6.1%	7.6%	9.3%	9.5%	10.4%
	Non LEP	3.2%	3.5%	3.6%	3.1%	3.6%
Low-Income	Low-Income	5.1%	5.7%	6.4%	5.5%	5.8%
	Non Low-Income	2.8%	3.1%	3.0%	2.6%	3.2%

Table 8: Annual Dropout Rates by School Type 2002-03 to 2006-07

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Regular/Comprehensive Academic Schools (299)³	3.4%	3.7%	3.7%	3.4%	3.7%
Vocational-Technical Total (39)	3.1%	3.2%	3.0%	2.2%	2.6%
City/Town (10)	6.8%	7.2%	6.0%	4.7%	5.5%
Regional/County/Independent (29)	2.0%	2.1%	2.3%	1.5%	1.8%
Charter Schools (28)	4.3%	5.6%	6.1%	4.2%	6.4%
Schools Located in Cities⁴ (144)	5.2%	5.7%	6.1%	5.5%	5.9%
Schools Located in Towns (222)	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%	1.6%	1.9%

The state dropout rate masks the wide disparity in individual school annual dropout rates, specifically the number of schools that have dropout rates below the state rate. The following chart illustrates the distribution of school dropout rates.

Table 9: Annual Dropout Rates Among Schools: 2002-03 to 2006-07⁵

<i>Number of Schools Included</i>	2002-03		2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Annual Rate										
0	38	12	17	5	11	3	20	6	10	3
0.1 – 1.0	65	20	70	21	74	22	88	26	65	19
1.1 – 2.5	82	26	81	25	90	27	97	29	101	30
2.6 – 5.0	80	25	85	26	94	28	71	21	93	28
5.1 – 7.5	23	7	37	11	23	7	26	8	33	10
7.6 – 10.0	15	5	17	5	15	4	8	2	12	4
10.1 and above	18	6	23	7	29	9	29	9	30	9

³ Represents the number of schools in the category in the 2006-07 school year.

⁴ As defined by the incorporation status within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

⁵ Only includes schools with enrollment of 75 students or more as dropout rates for schools with low enrollments are overly sensitive to small variations.