

High School Dropouts 2007-08 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 2008 cohort 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 2007-08 school year, 9,959 or 3.4 percent of students in grades nine through twelve dropped out of school.

Table 1: State Dropout Trends: 1999-00 to 2007-08

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Total HS Enrollment	265,795	271,700	273,912	281,939	288,329	293,399	296,511	298,033	295,937
Number of Dropouts	9,199	9,380	8,422 ¹	9,389	10,633	11,145	9,910	11,436	9,959
Dropout Rate	3.5%	3.5%	3.1%	3.3%	3.7%	3.8%	3.3%	3.8%	3.4%

The Department did not make any major changes to the Student Information Management System (SIMS) data collection in the 2007-08 school year. However the fluctuation in dropout rates between 2004-05 and 2006-07 can be attributed to two significant modifications. These modifications in the dropout calculation provide more comprehensive information on dropouts to help inform policy and programmatic decisions.

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 the **2006-07** school year, the Department modified the SIMS data element, *Enrollment Status at Time of Data Collection*. 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 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 October 1st of the following school year are now considered to be dropouts.

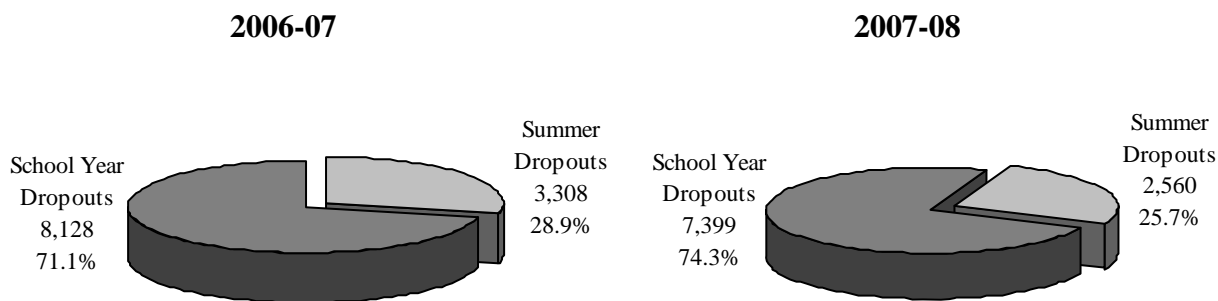
¹ Due to changes in the Student Information Management System (SIMS) summer dropouts were not included in the analysis, therefore resulting in an underreported dropout count.

Table 2: Final Enrollment Status of the 2007-08 Dropout Count

Code	Final Enrollment Status	Number of Dropouts	Percent of all Dropouts
Transfer	Transfer to an in-state public school (with no record of re-enrollment)	1,998	20.1%
Dropout	Enrolled in a non-diploma granting adult education program	1,407	14.1%
	Entered Job Corps	240	2.4%
	Entered the military	25	0.3%
	Incarcerated, district is no longer providing educational services	96	1.0%
	Left school due to employment	407	4.1%
	Confirmed dropout - plans unknown	3,298	33.1%
	Student's status/location unknown	2,488	25.0%
Total Dropout Count		9,959	100%

The final dropout count is based on two groups of students; summer and school year dropouts. Summer dropouts were reported in the October 1, 2007 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. For 2007-08, the percentage of summer dropouts decreased while the percentage of school year dropouts increased compared to the 2006-07 dropout count.

Figure 2: Comparison of the Summer and School Year Dropouts Composing the Total Dropout Counts in 2006-07 and 2007-08



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 3: Comparison of 2007-08 Summer Dropouts and School Year Dropouts by Grade

			Number of Dropouts	Total Grade Dropouts	Percent of Grade Dropouts
Grade	9	Summer	527	2,402	21.9%
		School Year	1,875		78.1%
	10	Summer	657	2,663	24.7%
		School Year	2,006		75.3%
	11	Summer	439	2,374	18.5%
		School Year	1,935		81.5%
	12	Summer	937	2,520	37.2%
		School Year	1,583		62.8%

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, 61.5 percent had earned a CD before dropping out of school.

Table 4: 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	67,996	1,230	1.8%	51.8%
	Without CD	4,282	1,144	26.7%	48.1%
12	With CD	66,594	1,782	2.7%	70.7%
	Without CD	2,136	738	34.6%	29.2%
Total	With CD	134,590	3,012	2.2%	61.5%
	Without CD	6,418	1,882	29.3%	38.5%

Table 5: Annual Dropout Data for Selected Demographics: 2007-08

		Total HS Enrollment	Percent of HS Enrollment	Number of Dropouts	Annual Dropout Rate	Percent of all Dropouts
Grade	9 th	79,558	26.9%	2,402	3.0%	24.1%
	10 th	75,371	25.5%	2,663	3.5%	26.7%
	11 th	72,278	24.4%	2,374	3.3%	23.8%
	12 th	68,730	23.2%	2,520	3.7%	25.3%
Race/ Ethnicity	Asian	13,564	4.6%	274	2.0%	2.8%
	Black	26,257	8.9%	1,527	5.8%	15.3%
	Hispanic	38,198	12.9%	3,171	8.3%	31.8%
	Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	4,092	1.4%	145	3.5%	1.5%
	Native American	851	0.3%	62	7.3%	0.6%
	Native Hawaiian	326	0.1%	22	6.7%	0.2%
	White	212,649	71.9%	4,758	2.2%	47.8%
Gender	Female	145,529	49.2%	4,290	2.9%	43.1%
	Male	150,408	50.8%	5,669	3.8%	56.9%

Although the rates for both Native American and Native Hawaiian students increased in the 2007-08 school year, it is 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. Dropout rates for all other selected demographic populations decreased compared the 2006-07 school year.

Table 6: Annual Dropout Rates for Selected Demographics: 2003-04 to 2007-08

		2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Grade	9	2.6% ²	3.0%	3.0%	3.9%	3.0%
	10	3.7%	3.7%	3.3%	3.7%	3.5%
	11	4.0%	4.1%	3.3%	3.6%	3.3%
	12	4.8%	4.7%	3.9%	4.1%	3.7%
Race/ Ethnicity³	Asian	2.7%	2.6%	2.2%	2.6%	2.0%
	Black	6.3%	6.3%	6.8%	6.4%	5.8%
	Hispanic	8.2%	9.1%	7.9%	9.1%	8.3%
	Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	-	-	2.8%	4.2%	3.5%
	Native American	6.4%	5.4%	5.4%	4.9%	7.3%
	Native Hawaiian	-	-	7.0%	4.2%	6.7%
	White	2.8%	2.8%	2.3%	2.7%	2.2%
Gender	Female	3.1%	3.2%	2.8%	3.3%	2.9%
	Male	4.3%	4.4%	3.8%	4.4%	3.8%

Table 7: Annual Dropout Data by Race/Ethnicity and Gender: 2007-08

		HS Enrollment	Percent of HS Enrollment	Number of Dropouts	Annual Dropout Rate	Percent of all Dropouts
Asian	Female	6,571	2.2%	105	1.6%	1.1%
	Male	6,993	2.4%	169	2.4%	1.7%
Black	Female	12,985	4.4%	670	5.2%	6.7%
	Male	13,272	4.5%	857	6.5%	8.6%
Hispanic	Female	18,861	6.4%	1,419	7.5%	14.2%
	Male	19,337	6.5%	1,752	9.1%	17.6%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	Female	1,972	0.7%	56	2.6%	0.6%
	Male	2,120	0.7%	89	4.5%	0.9%
Native American	Female	438	0.1%	31	7.1%	0.3%
	Male	413	0.1%	31	7.5%	0.3%
Native Hawaiian	Female	162	0.1%	11	6.8%	0.1%
	Male	164	0.1%	11	6.7%	0.1%
White	Female	104,392	35.3%	1,998	1.9%	20.1%
	Male	108,257	36.6%	2,760	2.5%	27.7%

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.

³ In the 2005-06 school year, the Department changed the race/ethnicity categories to comply with the federal Office of Management and Budget reporting guidelines.

Table 8: Annual Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender: 2003-04 to 2007-08

		2003-04	2004-05		2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Asian	Female	2.0%	2.2%		2.1%	2.4%	1.6%
	Male	3.5%	3.0%		2.3%	2.8%	2.4%
Black	Female	4.9%	5.2%		5.5%	5.1%	5.2%
	Male	7.6%	7.5%		8.1%	7.6%	6.5%
Hispanic	Female	7.0%	7.7%		6.8%	8.1%	7.5%
	Male	9.4%	10.4%		9.0%	10.0%	9.1%
Multi-Race, Non- Hispanic	Female	-	-		2.2%	3.5%	2.6%
	Male	-	-		3.5%	4.9%	4.5%
Native American	Female	5.0%	3.9%		4.9%	4.1%	7.1%
	Male	7.8%	6.9%		5.8%	5.7%	7.5%
Native Hawaiian	Female	-	-		4.6%	3.3%	6.8%
	Male	-	-		9.2%	5.1%	6.7%
White	Female	2.3%	2.4%		1.9%	2.3%	1.9%
	Male	3.3%	3.2%		2.6%	3.1%	2.5%

Table 9: Annual Dropout Rates for Special Populations: 2007-08

		Total HS Enrollment	Percent of HS Enrollment	Number of Dropouts	Annual Dropout Rate	Percent of all Dropouts
Special Education	Special Education	44,448	15.0%	2,429	5.5%	24.4%
	General Education	251,489	85.0%	7,530	3.0%	75.6%
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	LEP	10,802	3.7%	953	8.8%	9.6%
	Non LEP	285,135	96.3%	9,006	3.2%	90.4%
Low- Income	Low-Income	78,802	26.6%	4,369	5.5%	43.9%
	Non Low-Income	217,135	73.4%	5,590	2.6%	56.1%

In the 2007-08 school year, dropout rates for all subgroups within the special populations category decreased compared to the 2006-07 school year. The most significant change was among LEP students with a decrease of 1.6 percent.

Table 10: Annual Dropout Rates for Special Populations: 2003-04 to 2007-08

		2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Special Education	Special Education	5.4%	5.6%	5.1%	5.8%	5.5%
	General Education	3.4%	3.5%	3.0%	3.5%	3.0%
LEP	LEP	7.6%	9.3%	9.5%	10.4%	8.8%
	Non LEP	3.5%	3.6%	3.1%	3.6%	3.2%
Low- Income	Low-Income	5.7%	6.4%	5.5%	5.8%	5.5%
	Non Low-Income	3.1%	3.0%	2.6%	3.2%	2.6%

Table 11: Annual Dropout Rates by School Type 2003-04 to 2007-08

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Regular/Comprehensive Academic Schools (306)⁴	3.7%	3.7%	3.4%	3.7%	3.1%
Vocational-Technical Total (39)	3.2%	3.0%	2.2%	2.6%	2.2%
City/Town (10)	7.2%	6.0%	4.7%	5.5%	5.0%
Regional/County/Independent (29)	2.1%	2.3%	1.5%	1.8%	1.4%
Charter Schools (31)⁵	5.6%	6.1%	4.2%	6.4%	7.7%
Schools Located in Cities⁶ (166)	5.6%	5.8%	5.3%	5.7%	5.3%
Schools Located in Towns (210)	2.0%	1.9%	1.6%	1.9%	1.6%

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 12: Annual Dropout Rates Among Schools: 2003-04 to 2007-08⁷

	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
<i>Number of Schools Included</i>	330		336		339		344		355	
<i>Annual Rate</i>	#	#	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
0	17	5	11	3	20	6	10	3	18	5
0.1 – 1.0	70	21	74	22	88	26	65	19	85	24
1.1 – 2.5	81	25	90	27	97	29	101	30	101	28
2.6 – 5.0	85	26	94	28	71	21	93	28	73	21
5.1 – 7.5	37	11	23	7	26	8	33	10	30	8
7.6 – 10.0	17	5	15	4	8	2	12	4	10	3
10.1 and above	23	7	29	9	29	9	30	9	38	11

⁴ Represents the number of schools in the category in the 2007-08 school year.

⁵ Represents all charter schools with enrollment in grades nine through twelve, including those whose primary mission is to serve at-risk students

⁶ As defined by the incorporation status within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

⁷ Only includes schools with enrollment of 75 students or more as dropout rates for schools with low enrollments are overly sensitive to small variations.