**High School Dropouts 2015-16**

**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.

Please note that the Department has also calculated and released graduation rates for the 2016 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 2015-16 school year, 5,523 or 1.9 percent of students in grades nine through twelve dropped out of school.

 **Table 1: State Dropout Trends: 2005-06 to 2015-16**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2005-06** | **2006-07** | **2007-08** | **2008-09** | **2009-10** | **2010-11** | **2011-12** | **2012-13** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** |
| **Total HS Enrollment** | 296,511 | 298,033 | 295,937 | 292,372 | 290,502 | 289,161 | 287,055 | 287,506 | 287,478 | 288,934 | 289,583 |
| Number of Dropouts | 9,910 | 11,436 | 9,959 | 8,585 | 8,296 | 7,894 | 7,051 | 6,248 | 5,746 | 5,346 | 5,523 |
| Dropout Rate | 3.3% | 3.8% | 3.4% | 2.9% | 2.9% | 2.7% | 2.5% | 2.2% | 2.0% | 1.9% | 1.9% |

The Department did not make any major changes to the Student Information Management System (SIMS) data collection in the 2015-16 school year. However, fluctuation in dropout rates between 2004-05 and 2006-07 can be attributed to two significant methodological modifications that were made. These modifications in the dropout calculation have remained in the methodology and 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 2014, the Department transitioned to the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) and has continued to rely on that database to gather accurate information on high school equivalency earners.

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 considered to be dropouts.

**Table 2: Final Enrollment Status of the 2015-16 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) | 1,271 | 23.0% |
| **Dropout** | Enrolled in a non-diploma granting adult education program | 792 | 14.3% |
| Entered Job Corps | 156 | 2.8% |
| Entered the military | 1 | 0.0% |
| Incarcerated, district is no longer providing educational services | 33 | 0.6% |
| Left school due to employment | 267 | 4.8% |
| Confirmed dropout - plans unknown | 1,466 | 26.5% |
| Student’s status/location unknown | 1,537 | 27.8% |
| **Total Dropout Count** | **5,523** | **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, 2015 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 2015-16 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 2015-16 school year. In 2015-16, the percentage of summer dropouts increased by 4% percentage points while the percentage of school year dropouts decreased as compared to the 2014-15 dropout count.

**Figure 2: Comparison of Summer and School Year Dropouts**

**Composing the Total Dropout Counts in 2014-15 and 2015-16**

**2014-2015 2015-2016  **

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 2015-16 Summer Dropouts and School Year Dropouts by Grade**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Number of Dropouts** | **Total Grade Dropouts** | **Percent of Grade Dropouts** |
| **Grade** | 9 | **Summer** | 357 | 1,427 | 25.0% |
| **School Year** | 1,070 | 75.0% |
| 10 | **Summer** | 372 | 1,384 | 26.9% |
| **School Year** | 1,012 | 73.1% |
| 11 | **Summer** | 325 | 1,244 | 26.1% |
| **School Year** | 919 | 73.9% |
| 12 | **Summer**  | 631 | 1,468 | 43.0% |
| **School Year** | 837 | 57.0% |

Beginning with the class of 2010, the Department required students to meet the following requirements to earn a Competency Determination (CD) in order to graduate from high school[[1]](#footnote-1):

1. Meet or exceed the Proficient threshold scaled score of 240 on the English Language Arts and Mathematics grade 10 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests, or (b) meet or exceed the Needs Improvement threshold scaled score of 220 on the English Language Arts and Mathematics grade 10 MCAS tests and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan.

2. Meet or exceed the Needs Improvement threshold scaled score of 220 on the Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS test

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, 60.1 percent had earned a CD by meeting the standard 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 | 66,434 | 594 | 0.9% | 47.7% |
|  | **Without CD** | 4,440 | 650 | 14.6% | 52.3% |
|  | **12** | With CD | 67,019 | 1,037 | 1.5% | 70.6% |
|  | **Without CD** | 2,279 | 431 | 18.9% | 29.4% |
|  | **Total** | With CD | 133,453 | 1,631 | 1.2% | 60.1% |
|  | **Without CD** | 6,719 | 1,081 | 16.1% | 39.9% |

**Table 5: Annual Dropout Data for Selected Demographics: 2015-16**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total HS Enrollment** | **Percent of HS Enrollment** | **Number of** **Dropouts** | **Annual** **Dropout Rate** | **Percent of all Dropouts** |
| **Grade** | **9th** | 76,475 | 26.4% | 1,427 | 1.9% | 25.8% |
| **10th** | 72,936 | 25.2% | 1,384 | 1.9% | 25.1% |
| **11th** | 70,874 | 24.5% | 1,244 | 1.8% | 22.5% |
| **12th** | 69,298 | 23.9% | 1,468 | 2.1% | 26.6% |
| **Race/****Ethnicity** | **African American** | 26,253 | 9.1% | 848 | 3.2% | 15.4% |
| **Asian** | 17,318 | 6.0% | 118 | 0.7% | 2.1% |
| **Hispanic** | 48,331 | 16.7% | 2,198 | 4.5% | 39.8% |
| **Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic** | 7,094 | 2.4% | 169 | 2.4% | 3.1% |
| **Native American** | 676 | 0.2% | 26 | 3.8% | 0.5% |
| **Native Hawaiian** | 285 | 0.1% | 8 | 2.8% | 0.1% |
| **White** | 189,626 | 65.5% | 2,156 | 1.1% | 39.0% |
| **Gender** | **Female** | 143,041 | 49.4% | 2,079 | 1.5% | 37.6% |
| **Male** | 146,542 | 50.6% | 3,444 | 2.4% | 62.4% |

The annual dropout rates for African American and Hispanic students increased slightly for the first time in more than five years. The rates for grades ten through twelve also increased 0.1 percentage point each from 2014-15, while the grade nine rate remained unchanged for the second year in a row. The male rate increased by 0.2 percentage points and the female rate did not fluctuate from 2014-15.

**Table 6: Annual Dropout Rates for Selected Demographics: 2008-09 to 2015-16**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2008-09** | **2009-10** | **2010-11** | **2011-12** | **2012-13** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** |
| **Grade** | **9** | 2.8% | 2.8% | 2.6% | 2.3% | 2.0% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 1.9% |
| **10** | 2.9% | 3.0% | 2.8% | 2.5% | 2.2% | 2.0% | 1.8% | 1.9% |
| **11** | 2.7% | 2.6% | 2.7% | 2.4% | 2.2% | 2.0% | 1.7% | 1.8% |
| **12** | 3.1% | 3.1% | 2.9% | 2.6% | 2.4% | 2.1% | 2.0% | 2.1% |
| **Race/****Ethnicity** | **African American** | 5.6% | 5.1% | 4.8% | 4.5% | 3.9% | 3.5% | 3.0% | 3.2% |
| **Asian** | 1.7% | 1.6% | 1.8% | 1.5% | 1.1% | 1.0% | 0.7% | 0.7% |
| **Hispanic** | 7.5% | 7.4% | 7.0% | 6.1% | 5.4% | 4.9% | 4.4% | 4.5% |
| **Multi-Race, Non- Hispanic** | 3.4% | 3.2% | 2.5% | 2.6% | 2.5% | 2.3% | 2.4% | 2.4% |
| **Native American** | 4.3% | 3.8% | 3.4% | 4.5% | 4.2% | 2.8% | 3.4% | 3.8% |
| **Native Hawaiian** | 3.8% | 5.3% | 4.4% | 4.3% | 4.4% | 3.6% | 2.7% | 2.8% |
| **White** | 1.8% | 1.8% | 1.7% | 1.5% | 1.3% | 1.2% | 1.1% | 1.1% |
| **Gender** | **Female** | 2.5% | 2.4% | 2.3% | 2.0% | 1.7% | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.5% |
| **Male** | 3.4% | 3.3% | 3.2% | 2.9% | 2.6% | 2.4% | 2.2% | 2.4% |

**Table 7: Annual Dropout Data by Race/Ethnicity and Gender: 2015-16**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **HS** **Enrollment** | **Percent of HS Enrollment** | **Number of** **Dropouts** | **Annual** **Dropout Rate** | **Percent of all Dropouts** |
| **African American** | **Female** | 12,976 | 4.5% | 325 | 2.5% | 5.9% |
| **Male** | 13,277 | 4.6% | 523 | 3.9% | 9.5% |
| **Asian** | **Female** | 8,703 | 3.0 % | 50 | 0.6% | 0.9% |
| **Male** | 8,615 | 3.0% | 68 | 0.8% | 1.2% |
| **Hispanic** | **Female** | 23,453 | 8.1% | 792 | 3.4% | 14.3% |
| **Male** | 24,878 | 8.6% | 1,406 | 5.7% | 25.5 % |
| **Multi-Race, Non- Hispanic** | **Female** | 3,639 | 1.3% | 82 | 2.3% | 1.5% |
| **Male** | 3,455 | 1.2% | 87 | 2.5% | 1.6% |
| **Native American** | **Female** | 327 | 0.1% | 10 | 3.1% | 0.2% |
| **Male** | 349 | 0.1% | 16 | 4.6% | 0.3% |
| **Native Hawaiian** | **Female** | 148 | 0.1% | 1 | 0.7% | 0.0% |
| **Male** | 137 | 0.0% | 7 | 5.1% | 0.1% |
| **White** | **Female** | 93,795 | 32.4% | 819 | 0.9% | 14.8% |
| **Male** | 95,831 | 33.1% | 1,337 | 1.4% | 24.2% |

**Table 8: Annual Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender: 2008-09 to 2015-16**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2008-09** | **2009-10** | **2010-11** | **2011-12** | **2012-13** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** |
| **African American** | **Female** | 4.5% | 4.3% | 4.1% | 3.5% | 3.0% | 2.7% | 2.3% | 2.5% |
| **Male** | 6.6% | 5.8% | 5.5% | 5.4% | 4.7% | 4.2% | 3.7% | 3.9% |
| **Asian** | **Female** | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.5% | 1.3% | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.5% | 0.6% |
| **Male** | 2.1% | 1.9% | 2.1% | 1.7% | 1.4% | 1.2% | 0.9% | 0.8% |
| **Hispanic** | **Female** | 6.4% | 6.5% | 6.0% | 5.3% | 4.5% | 4.0% | 3.8% | 3.4% |
| **Male** | 8.5% | 8.3% | 8.0% | 6.8% | 6.2% | 5.8% | 5.0% | 5.7% |
| **Multi-Race, Non- Hispanic** | **Female** | 2.9% | 2.8% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 2.2% | 1.7% | 2.2% | 2.3% |
| **Male** | 4.0% | 3.6% | 3.2% | 3.3% | 2.9% | 3.0% | 2.7% | 2.5% |
| **Native American** | **Female** | 3.0% | 2.9% | 2.9% | 4.6% | 4.0% | 2.1% | 3.3% | 3.1% |
| **Male** | 5.7% | 4.8% | 3.8% | 4.5% | 4.3% | 3.5% | 3.5% | 4.6% |
| **Native Hawaiian** | **Female** | 3.1% | 2.5% | 3.6% | 3.2% | 3.4% | 2.1% | 2.8% | 0.7% |
| **Male** | 4.5% | 8.0% | 5.1% | 5.2% | 5.2% | 5.1% | 2.7% | 5.1% |
| **White** | **Female** | 1.5% | 1.4% | 1.3% | 1.2% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.9% |
| **Male** | 2.1% | 2.1% | 2.0% | 1.8% | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.4% | 1.4% |

Rate changes from 2014-15 were inconsistent among the racial/ethnic groups. For instance, the rate for African American males and females increased by 0.2 percentage points each, while the Hispanic male rate increased by 0.7 percentage points and the same group’s female rate dropped by 0.4 percentage points, the largest decrease among the major groups. The rates for white male and female students remained unchanged from 2014-15.

**Table 9: Annual Dropout Rates for Special Populations: 2015-16**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total HS Enrollment** | **Percent of HS Enrollment**  | **Number of** **Dropouts** | **Annual** **Dropout Rate** | **Percent of all Dropouts** |
| **Students with Disabilities** | **Students with Disabilities** | 45,551 | 15.7% | 1,425 | 3.1% | 25.8% |
| **Students without Disabilities** | 244,032 | 84.3% | 4,098 | 1.7% | 74.2% |
| **English Language Learner****(ELL)** | **ELL** | 16,406 | 5.7% | 1,084 | 6.6% | 19.6% |
| **Non ELL** | 273,177 | 94.3% | 4,439 | 1.6% | 80.4% |
| **Economically Disadvantaged[[2]](#footnote-2)** | **Economically Disadvantaged** | 67,601 | 23.3% | 2,802 | 4.1% | 50.7% |
| **Non Economically Disadvantaged** | 221,982 | 76.7% | 2,721 | 1.2% | 49.3% |
| **High Needs** | **High Needs** | 109,522 | 37.8% | 4,026 | 3.7% | 72.9% |
| **Non-High Needs** | 180,061 | 62.2% | 1,497 | 0.8% | 27.1% |

**Table 10: Annual Dropout Rates for Special Populations: 2008-09 to 2015-16**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2008-09** | **2009-10** | **2010-11** | **2011-12** | **2012-13** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** |
| **Students with Disabilities** | **Students with Disabilities** | 5.0% | 4.7% | 4.6% | 3.6% | 3.3% | 3.3% | 3.5% | 3.1% |
| **Students without Disabilities** | 2.6% | 2.5% | 2.4% | 2.2% | 1.9% | 1.7% | 1.6% | 1.7% |
| **English Language Learner (ELL)** | **ELL** | 8.5% | 8.5% | 7.9% | 6.9% | 6.5% | 6.3% | 5.7% | 6.6% |
| **Non ELL** | 2.7% | 2.6% | 2.5% | 2.3% | 2.0% | 1.8% | 1.6% | 1.6% |
| **Low-Income** | **Low-Income** | 5.0% | 4.7% | 4.8% | 4.4% | 3.8% | 3.5% | - | - |
| **Non Low-Income** | 2.1% | 2.0% | 1.8% | 1.5% | 1.3% | 1.1% | - | - |
| **Economically Disadvantaged** | **Economically Disadvantaged** | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3.3% | 4.1% |
| **Non Economically Disadvantaged** | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1.4% | 1.2% |
| **High Needs** | **High Needs** | - | - | 3.1% | 4.1% | 3.8% | 3.5% | 3.4% | 3.7% |
| **Non-High Needs** | - | - | 2.4% | 1.2% | 0.9% | 0.7% | 1.0% | 0.8% |

Dropout rates increased from 2014-15 among most special populations. Student with disabilities, however, had a reduction of 0.4 percentage points.

**Table 11: Annual Dropout Rates by School Type 2008-09 to 2015-16**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2008-09** | **2009-10** | **2010-11** | **2011-12** | **2012-13** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** |
| **Regular/Comprehensive** **Academic Schools (322)[[3]](#footnote-3)** | 3.0% | 2.9% | 2.8% | 2.5% | 2.2% | 2.0% | 1.8% | 1.9% |
| Vocational-Technical Total (37) | 1.9% | 1.8% | 1.6% | 1.4% | 1.1% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 0.9% |
|  City/Town **(8)** | 5.1% | 5.0% | 4.4% | 3.8% | 2.7% | 2.5% | 2.4% | 2.1% |
|  Regional/County/Independent **(29)** | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.6% | 0.6% |
| **Charter Schools (45)[[4]](#footnote-4)**  | 3.8% | 5.3% | 4.2% | 3.3% | 3.8% | 3.5% | 3.5% | 3.3% |
| **Schools Located in Cities[[5]](#footnote-5) (191 )** | 4.8% | 4.7% | 4.5% | 3.9% | 3.4% | 3.2% | 2.8% | 3.0% |
| **Schools Located in Towns (213)** | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.2% | 1.1% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.8% |

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: 2009-10 to 2015-16[[6]](#footnote-6)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2009-10** | **2010-11** | **2011-12** | **2012-13** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** |
| *Number of Schools Included* | 354 | 354 | 355 | 358 | 363 | 364 | 371 |
| AnnualRate | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** |
| **0** | 11 | 3 | 12 | 3 | 21 | 6 | 31 | 9 | 26 | 7 | 30 | 8 | **30** | **8** |  |
| **0.1 – 1.0** | 107 | 30 | 129 | 36 | 121 | 34 | 124 | 35 | 150 | 41 | 151 | 41 | **159** | **43** |
| **1.1 – 2.5** | 104 | 29 | 102 | 29 | 105 | 30 | 116 | 32 | 106 | 29 | 104 | 29 | **101** | **27** |
| **2.6 – 5.0** | 70 | 20 | 54 | 15 | 58 | 16 | 49 | 14 | 42 | 12 | 39 | 11 | **38** | **10** |
| **5.1 – 7.5** | 29 | 8 | 24 | 7 | 17 | 5 | 12 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 13 | 4 | **9** | **2** |
| **7.6 – 10.0** | 9 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 1 | **7** | **2** |
| **10.1 and above** | 24 | 7 | 26 | 7 | 26 | 7 | 24 | 7 | 27 | 7 | 22 | 6 | **27** | **7** |

1. Data in this section can only be compared to tables from 2010; data from years prior to 2010 is not comparable because of this policy change. Additional information on the Competency Determination standards can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr30.html?section=03>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In the 2014-15 school year, the Department began determining income status using the Economically Disadvantaged indicator and discontinued use of the Low Income indicator. For more information, please see: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/ed.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Represents the number of schools in the category in the 2015-16 school year. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Represents all charter schools with enrollment in grades nine through twelve, including those whose primary mission is to serve at-risk students [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. As defined by the incorporation status within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Only includes schools with enrollment of 75 students or more as dropout rates for schools with low enrollments are overly sensitive to small variations. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)