**High School Dropouts 2020-21**

**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 school year 2020-21 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore dropout data may not be fully comparable to previous years.

The Department has also calculated and released graduation rates for the 2021 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 2020-21 school year, 4,297 or 1.5 percent of students in grades nine through twelve dropped out of school.

**Table 1: State Dropout Trends: 2010-11 to 2020-21**

| **2010-11** | **2011-12** | **2012-13** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** | **2017-18** | **2018-19** | **2019-20** | **2020-21** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total HS Enrollment** | 289,161 | 287,055 | 287,506 | 287,478 | 288,934 | 289,583 | 290,080 | 291,139 | 291,096 | 290,201 | 288,358 |
| Number of Dropouts | 7,894 | 7,051 | 6,248 | 5,746 | 5,346 | 5,523 | 5,172 | 5,408 | 5,186 | 4,501 | 4,297 |
| Dropout Rate | 2.7% | 2.5% | 2.2% | 2.0% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 1.8% | 1.9% | 1.8% | 1.6% | 1.5% |

**Table 2: Final Enrollment Status of the 2020-21 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) |  1,187 |  27.6% |
| **Dropout** | Enrolled in a non-diploma granting adult education program |  449 |  10.4% |
| Entered Job Corps |  34 |  0.8% |
| Entered the military |  1 |  0.0% |
| Incarcerated, district is no longer providing educational services |  7 |  0.2% |
| Left school due to employment |  335 |  7.8% |
| Confirmed dropout - plans unknown |  1,334 |  31.0% |
| Student’s status/location unknown |  950 |  22.1% |
| **Total Dropout Count** |  **4,297** |  **100.0%** |

The final dropout count is based on two groups of students; summer and school year dropouts. Summer dropouts were reported in the October 1, 2020 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 2020-21 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 2020-21 school year. In 2020-21, summer dropouts represented nearly one-third of all dropouts (31.3%) while the remaining were school year dropouts (68.7%).

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

**Composing the Total Dropout Counts in 2019-20 and 2020-21**

 **2019-2020 2020-2021**

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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 2020-21 Summer Dropouts and School Year Dropouts by Grade**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **Number of Dropouts** | **Total Grade Dropouts** | **Percent of Grade Dropouts** |
| **Grade** | 9 | **Summer** | 353 | 835 |  42.3% |
| **School Year** | 482 |  57.7% |
| 10 | **Summer** | 326 | 1,153 |  28.3% |
| **School Year** | 827 |  71.7% |
| 11 | **Summer** | 262 | 1,146 |  22.9% |
| **School Year** | 884 |  77.1% |
| 12 | **Summer**  | 402 | 1,163 |  34.6% |
| **School Year** | 761 |  65.4% |

**Table 4: Annual Dropout Data for Selected Demographics: 2020-21**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total HS Enrollment** | **Percent of HS Enrollment** | **Number of Dropouts** | **Annual Dropout Rate** | **Percent of all Dropouts** |
|  |  |  |
| **Grade** | **9th** | 73,353 | 25.4% | 835 | 1.1% | 19.4% |  |
| **10th** | 72,925 | 25.3% | 1,153 | 1.6% | 26.8% |  |
| **11th** | 71,581 | 24.8% | 1,146 | 1.6% | 26.7% |  |
| **12th** | 70,499 | 24.4% | 1,163 | 1.6% | 27.1% |  |
| **Race/****Ethnicity**      | **African American** | 26,866 | 9.3% | 483 | 1.8% | 11.2% |  |
| **Asian** | 19,486 | 6.8% | 59 | 0.3% | 1.4% |  |
| **Hispanic** | 60,738 | 21.1% | 1,918 | 3.2% | 44.6% |  |
| **Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic** | 9,789 | 3.4% | 133 | 1.4% | 3.1% |  |
| **Native American** | 704 | 0.2% | 24 | 3.4% | 0.6% |  |
| **Native Hawaiian** | 252 | 0.1% | 5 | 2.0% | 0.1% |  |
| **White** | 170,523 | 59.1% | 1,675 | 1.0% | 39.0% |  |
| **Gender** | **Female** | 141,213 | 49.0% | 1,479 | 1.0% | 34.5% |  |
| **Male** | 146,833 | 51.0% | 2,804 | 1.9% | 65.5% |  |

**Table 5: Annual Dropout Rates for Selected Demographics: 2013-14 to 2020-21**

| **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** | **2017-18** | **2018-19** | **2019-20** | **2020-21** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **9th** | 1.9% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 2.0% | 1.7% | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.1% |
| **10th** | 2.0% | 1.8% | 1.9% | 1.6% | 1.7% | 1.8% | 1.5% | 1.6% |
| **11th** | 2.0% | 1.7% | 1.8% | 1.8% | 1.9% | 1.8% | 1.4% | 1.6% |
| **12th** | 2.1% | 2.0% | 2.1% | 1.8% | 2.2% | 1.9% | 1.8% | 1.6% |
| **Race/****Ethnicity** | **African American** | 3.5% | 3.0% | 3.2% | 2.9% | 2.9% | 2.6% | 2.2% | 1.8% |
| **Asian** | 1.0% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.3% |
| **Hispanic** | 4.9% | 4.4% | 4.5% | 4.2% | 4.5% | 4.3% | 3.5% | 3.2% |
| **Multi-Race, Non- Hispanic** | 2.3% | 2.4% | 2.4% | 1.7% | 1.9% | 1.8% | 1.6% | 1.4% |
| **Native American** | 2.8% | 3.4% | 3.8% | 4.0% | 2.6% | 2.7% | 2.6% | 3.4% |
| **Native Hawaiian** | 3.6% | 2.7% | 2.8% | 2.2% | 0.0% | 2.3% | 1.2% | 2.0% |
| **White** | 1.2% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 1.0% |
| **Gender** | **Female** | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.5% | 1.4% | 1.5% | 1.4% | 1.3% | 1.0% |
| **Male** | 2.4% | 2.2% | 2.4% | 2.1% | 2.2% | 2.1% | 1.8% | 1.9% |

**Table 6: Annual Dropout Data by Race/Ethnicity and Gender: 2020-21**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **HS Enrollment** | **Percent of HS Enrollment** | **Number of Dropouts** | **Annual Dropout Rate** | **Percent of all Dropouts** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **African American** | **Female** | 13,080 | 4.5% | 154 | 1.2% | 3.6% |  |
| **Male** | 13,780 | 4.8% | 329 | 2.4% | 7.7% |  |
| **Asian** | **Female** | 9,701 | 3.4% | 19 | 0.2% | 0.4% |  |
| **Male** | 9,780 | 3.4% | 40 | 0.4% | 0.9% |  |
| **Hispanic** | **Female** | 29,202 | 10.1% | 638 | 2.2% | 14.9% |  |
| **Male** | 31,494 | 10.9% | 1,274 | 4.0% | 29.7% |  |
| **Multi-Race, Non- Hispanic** | **Female** | 4,932 | 1.7% | 47 | 1.0% | 1.1% |  |
| **Male** | 4,835 | 1.7% | 86 | 1.8% | 2.0% |  |
| **Native American** | **Female** | 355 | 0.1% | 8 | 2.3% | 0.2% |  |
| **Male** | 349 | 0.1% | 16 | 4.6% | 0.4% |  |
| **Native Hawaiian** | **Female** | 126 | 0.0% | 3 | 2.4% | 0.1% |  |
| **Male** | 126 | 0.0% | 2 | 1.6% | 0.0% |  |
| **White** | **Female** | 83,817 | 29.1% | 610 | 0.7% | 14.2% |  |
| **Male** | 86,469 | 30.0% | 1,057 | 1.2% | 24.7% |  |

**Table 7: Annual Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender: 2013-14 to 2020-21**

| **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** | **2017-18** | **2018-19** | **2019-20** | **2020-21** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **African American** | **Female** | 2.7% | 2.3% | 2.5% | 2.3% | 2.3% | 2.1% | 1.6% | 1.2% |
| **Male** | 4.2% | 3.7% | 3.9% | 3.6% | 3.5% | 3.0% | 2.8% | 2.4% |
| **Asian** | **Female** | 0.9% | 0.5% | 0.6% | 0.4% | 0.5% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.2% |
| **Male** | 1.2% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 0.7% | 0.8% | 0.6% | 0.7% | 0.4% |
| **Hispanic** | **Female** | 4.0% | 3.8% | 3.4% | 3.4% | 3.7% | 3.5% | 2.9% | 2.2% |
| **Male** | 5.8% | 5.0% | 5.7% | 5.0% | 5.3% | 5.1% | 3.9% | 4.0% |
| **Multi-Race, Non- Hispanic** | **Female** | 1.7% | 2.2% | 2.3% | 1.3% | 1.5% | 1.7% | 1.2% | 1.0% |
| **Male** | 3.0% | 2.7% | 2.5% | 2.2% | 2.3% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 1.8% |
| **Native American** | **Female** | 2.1% | 3.3% | 3.1% | 3.2% | 1.8% | 2.3% | 2.7% | 2.3% |
| **Male** | 3.5% | 3.5% | 4.6% | 4.9% | 3.4% | 3.2% | 2.4% | 4.6% |
| **Native Hawaiian** | **Female** | 2.1% | 2.8% | 0.7% | 1.5% | 0.0% | 2.4% | 0.8% | 2.4% |
| **Male** | 5.1% | 2.7% | 5.1% | 2.7% | 0.0% | 2.2% | 1.5% | 1.6% |
| **White** | **Female** | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 0.7% | 0.7% |
| **Male** | 1.5% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.2% | 1.3% | 1.2% | 1.1% | 1.2% |

**Table 8: Annual Dropout Rates for Special Populations: 2020-21**

| **Total HS Enrollment** | **Percent of HS Enrollment**  | **Number of** **Dropouts** | **Annual** **Dropout Rate** | **Percent of all Dropouts** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Students with Disabilities** | **Students with Disabilities** | 48,272 | 16.7% | 1,029 | 2.1% | 23.9% |
| **Students without Disabilities** | 240,086 | 83.3% | 3,268 | 1.4% | 76.1% |
| **English Language Learner****(ELL)** | **ELL** | 20,710 | 7.2% | 1,209 | 5.8% | 28.1% |
| **Non ELL** | 267,648 | 92.8% | 3,088 | 1.2% | 71.9% |
| **Economically Disadvantaged[[1]](#footnote-1)** | **Economically Disadvantaged** | 97,041 | 33.7% | 2,779 | 2.9% | 64.7% |
| **Non Economically Disadvantaged** | 191,317 | 66.3% | 1,518 | 0.8% | 35.3% |
| **High Needs** | **High Needs** | 131,626 | 45.6% | 3,504 | 2.7% | 81.5% |
| **Non-High Needs** | 156,732 | 54.4% | 793 | 0.5% | 18.5% |

**Table 9: Annual Dropout Rates for Special Populations: 2013-14 to 2020-21**

| **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** | **2017-18** | **2018-19** | **2019-20** | **2020-21** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Students with Disabilities** | **Students with Disabilities** | 3.3% | 3.5% | 3.1% | 3.3% | 3.4% | 3.1% | 2.6% | 2.1% |
| **Students without Disabilities** | 1.7% | 1.6% | 1.7% | 1.5% | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.4% | 1.4% |
| **English****Learner (ELL)** | **ELL** | 6.3% | 5.7% | 6.6% | 6.5% | 7.6% | 7.1% | 5.6% | 5.8% |
| **Non ELL** | 1.8% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.2% | 1.2% |
| **Low- Income** | **Low-Income** | 3.5% | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Non Low-Income** | 1.1% | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Economically Disadvantaged** | **Economically Disadvantaged** | - | 3.3% | 4.1% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 3.8% | 3.1% | 2.9% |
| **Non Economically Disadvantaged** | - | 1.4% | 1.2% | 1.1% | 1.2% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.8% |
| **High Needs** | **High Needs** | 3.5% | 3.4% | 3.7% | 3.5% | 3.6% | 3.5% | 2.9% | 2.7% |
| **Non-High Needs** | 0.7% | 1.0% | 0.8% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.5% |

**Table 10: Annual Dropout Rates by School Type 2013-14 to 2020-21**

|  | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** | **2017-18** | **2018-19** | **2019-20** | **2020-21** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Regular/Comprehensive** **Academic Schools (319)[[2]](#footnote-2)** | 2.0% | 1.8% | 1.9% | 1.7% | 1.9% | 1.8% | 1.5% | 1.5% |
| Vocational-Technical Total (36) | 1.0% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 0.7% | 0.6% | 0.5% |
| City/Town **(7)** | 2.5% | 2.4% | 2.1% | 1.7% | 1.8% | 1.1% | 1.2% | 0.7% |
| Regional/County/Independent **(29)** | 0.7% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.4% | 0.4% |
| **Charter Schools (49)[[3]](#footnote-3)**  | 3.5% | 3.5% | 3.3% | 3.3% | 3.0% | 3.4% | 2.8% | 2.0% |
| **Schools Located in Cities[[4]](#footnote-4) (193 )** | 3.2% | 2.8% | 3.0% | 2.8% | 2.9% | 2.7% | 2.2% | 2.0% |
| **Schools Located in Towns (211)** | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 0.9% |

|  | **2014-15** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** | **2017-18** | **2018-19** | **2019-20** | **2020-21** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Number of Schools Included* | 364 | 371 | 368 | 369 | 367 | 366 | 366 |
| AnnualRate | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** |
| **0** | 30 | 8 | 30 | 8 | 29 | 8 | 34 | 9 | 36 | 10 | 30 | 8 | **32** | **9** |
| **0.1 – 1.0** | 151 | 41 | 159 | 43 | 170 | 46 | 167 | 45 | 178 | 49 | 191 | 52 | **180** | **49** |
| **1.1 – 2.5** | 104 | 29 | 101 | 27 | 87 | 24 | 88 | 24 | 78 | 21 | 85 | 23 | **94** | **26** |
| **2.6 – 5.0** | 39 | 11 | 38 | 10 | 41 | 11 | 42 | 11 | 43 | 12 | 31 | 9 | **31** | **8** |
| **5.1 – 7.5** | 13 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 12 | 3 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 | **7** | **2** |
| **7.6 – 10.0** | 5 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 | **3** | **1** |
| **10.1 and above** | 22 | 6 | 27 | 7 | 25 | 7 | 24 | 7 | 23 | 6 | 22 | 6 | **19** | **5** |

**Table 11: Annual Dropout Rates Among Schools: 2014-15 to 2020-21[[5]](#footnote-5)**

1. 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-1)
2. Represents the number of schools in the category in the 2020-21 school year. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Represents all charter schools with enrollment in grades nine through twelve, including those whose primary mission is to serve at-risk students [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. As defined by the incorporation status within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)