

*Public Secondary School
Dropouts*

*in Pennsylvania
2004-05*

Report
to the
General Assembly

*Public Secondary School
Dropouts*

*in Pennsylvania
2004-05*

*Compiled
by*

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OVERVIEW

Act 49 of 1987 requires the Secretary of Education to provide the General Assembly with an annual report on public school dropouts in Pennsylvania. The purpose of this report is to document the actual number of students who drop out each year and to provide various characteristics about these students. The type of data collected about each dropout consists of the reason for dropping out, race, gender, age, grade, academic program, post-dropout activity and whether the dropout was classified as any of the following: economically disadvantaged, migrant, English language learner or special education. The term "dropout," as used in this publication, refers to a student who, for any reason except death, leaves school before graduation without transferring to another school/institution. This report also details information about students who are enrolled in state-funded dropout prevention programs. Specific characteristics and data about these students and an evaluation of the overall success of these programs are also provided.

The focus of this report is school year 2004-05. Specifically, it includes information on all students who dropped out during the 12-month period from October 1, 2004, to September 30, 2005. This report also provides details about the Successful Students' Partnership (SSP) and the related Education Mentoring Initiative for the 2004-05 school year.

For 2004-05, 500 school districts, 10 comprehensive area vocational-technical schools (AVTSs), 85 charter schools, and four consortium-operated alternative high schools were surveyed for dropouts. Although the dropout rates for the consortium-operated alternative high schools are relatively high, it must be noted that their students are at high risk of dropping out. Once they drop out, their enrollment slots may be refilled throughout the year. However, the dropout rate methodology uses the total number of dropouts over a 12-month period divided by enrollments on a single day, October 1. Because of the high turnover rate at the consortium-operated alternative high schools, their dropout rate may be inflated.

Pennsylvania is taking steps to better align the state's high school data indicators with the rest of the nation. In 2005, Governor Rendell joined with governors from all 50 states in signing the National Governors Association's (NGA) Graduation Counts Compact. As part of this compact, governors signed on to use a standard graduation rate based on a four-year cohort model. The Department will be able to create this calculation for 9th graders in 2007-08 who will be the class of 2011. More information is available at www.nga.org under Center for Best Practices/High Schools.

Questions regarding the information on 2004-05 dropouts included in Part 1 should be addressed to the Division of Data Services at (717) 783-6755. Any questions regarding the SSP/Education Mentoring in Part 2 should be addressed to the Bureau of Community and Student Services at (717) 783-3755.

HIGHLIGHTS 2004-05

- Since the passage of Act 49 of 1987, the annual dropout rate has ranged from a high of 3.4% in 1988-89 to a low of 1.9% in 2003-04 and 2004-05.
- The dropout rate remained the same at 1.9% while secondary enrollments continued to increase.
- The annual dropout rates and their one-year changes by racial/ethnic category were:
 - 1.5% (-1.6) for American Indian/Alaskan Natives
 - 1.7% (+0.1) for Asian/Pacific Islanders
 - 4.2% (+0.2) for blacks
 - 4.9% (-0.3) for Hispanics
 - 1.3% (stayed the same) for whites.
- Of the 599 local education agencies (LEAs) surveyed, about 47% had an annual dropout rate that was less than 1.0%.
- The 2004-05 Successful Students' Partnership Initiative served 1,230 students in 13 school districts grades K to 12; 395 of those students were in grade nine.
- Under the 2004-05 Education Mentoring Initiative, a total of 44 mentoring projects were funded serving 1,210 students in 113 school buildings within 45 school districts.

PART 1

PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPOUTS

Pennsylvanians have historically had a vested interest in both our educational system and the students who are served by that system. A good education is a keystone in our modern technological society and an ingredient that contributes to a fulfilling and successful life. Today's labor market, because of technological advances, has created a demand for a highly skilled labor force. A minimum requirement for entry into this changing labor market is a high school diploma.

Many potential problems face young adults who withdraw from school prior to graduation. Historically, compared with high school graduates, more dropouts are unemployed and those dropouts who do find employment earn far less money than high school graduates. This earning gap is significant when applied over an individual's working lifetime. Jobs available to dropouts tend to be unstable and have limited opportunities for advancement.

PDE has collected the same dropout data elements since 1986-87. This data collection also supports the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) process of developing a national database of public school dropout rates. With the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, beginning with the 2001-02 dropout data, PDE collected four additional data elements: economically disadvantaged, migrant, English language learner (ELL) and special education.

HOW DROPOUT RATES ARE MEASURED

The dropout problem can be measured by different rates. One of the two most widely used is the "cohort" rate, which generally requires tracking a given class or cohort of students over time (for example, from grade 9 to grade 12). It measures the cumulative impact of dropouts over a number of years.

The other is the annual or "event" rate. This rate, which is used by Pennsylvania and NCES, measures the proportion of students enrolled who drop out during a single school year. An annual rate is important because it reveals how many students are leaving school each year and how each year's rate compares with previous ones.

RECENT TRENDS

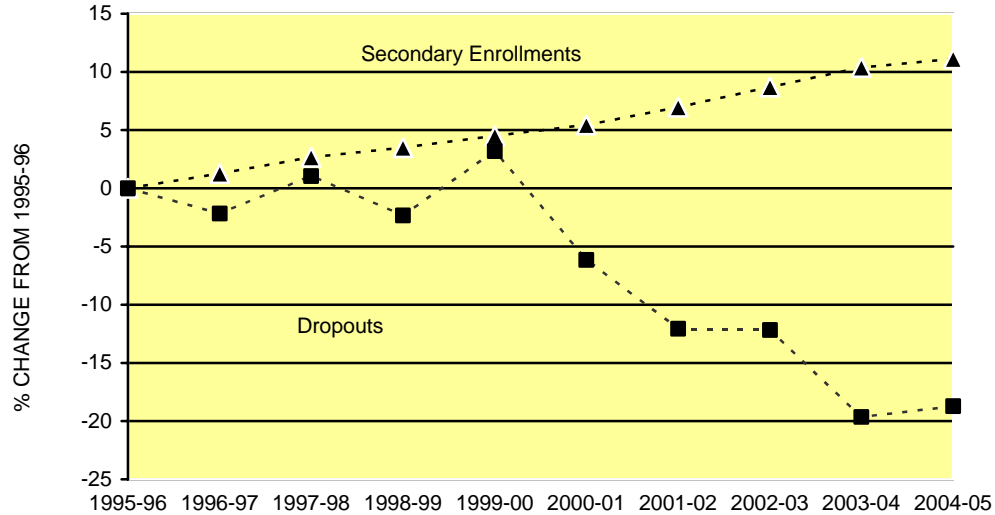
Throughout the past decade, secondary enrollments increased annually. This development is predicted to continue into the immediate future. The number of dropouts has fluctuated during this period, increasing in 1997-98, 1999-00 and 2004-05; and decreasing in 1996-97, 1998-99, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04. During the last ten years, the dropout rate has ranged from a high of 2.7% in 1995-96 to a low of 1.9% in 2003-04 and 2004-05. These rates are all below the high of 3.4% in 1988-89.

TABLE 1
ANNUAL DROPOUT DATA
1995-96 THROUGH 2004-05

	DROPOUTS	SECONDARY ENROLLMENTS	DROPOUT RATE
1995-96	21,135	794,516	2.7
1996-97	20,675	804,662	2.6
1997-98	21,356	815,697	2.6
1998-99	20,644	822,243	2.5
1999-00	21,806	830,214	2.6
2000-01	19,836	837,758	2.4
2001-02	18,584	849,994	2.2
2002-03	18,560	863,771	2.1
2003-04	16,986	877,021	1.9
2004-05	17,178	882,908	1.9

FIGURE 1

PERCENT CHANGE IN DROPOUTS AND SECONDARY ENROLLMENTS
1995-96 THROUGH 2004-05



DROPOUTS FOR 2004-05

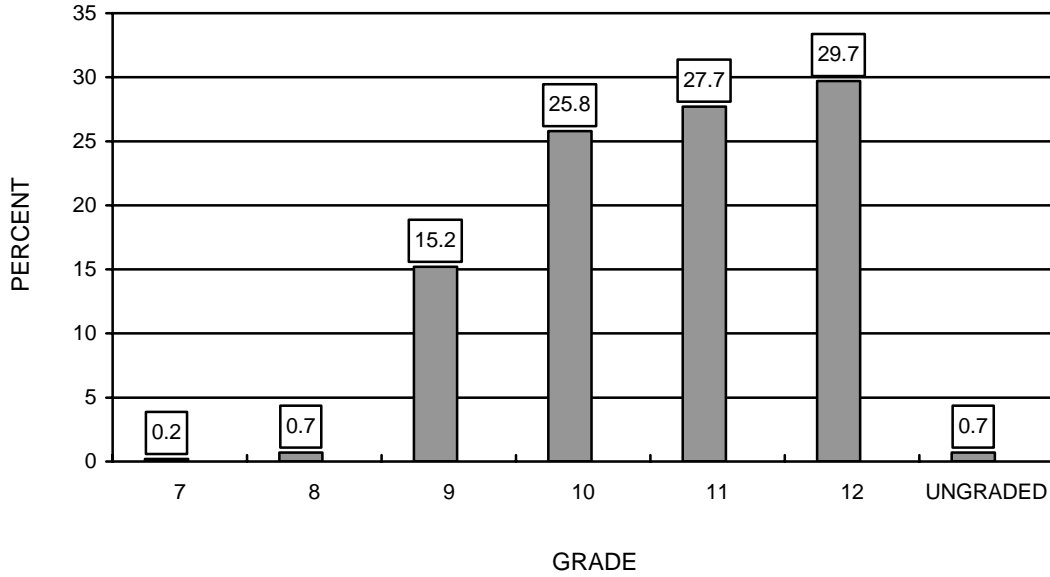
The percentage of dropouts increased from 2003-04 in grades 9 and 12; decreased in grades 7, 8, 10 and 11; and remained unchanged in ungraded. The largest increase occurred in grade 12, from 28.5% in 2003-04 to 29.7% in 2004-05, while the largest decrease occurred in grade 10 from 26.5% to 25.8% for the same period. Dropout statistics for the current year are presented in the ensuing tables and graphs.

TABLE 2

DROPOUTS BY GRADE AND GENDER
2004-05

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	%
TOTAL	9,940	7,238	17,178	100.0
Grade 7	23	21	44	0.2
Grade 8	68	48	116	0.7
Grade 9	1,488	1,132	2,620	15.2
Grade 10	2,599	1,825	4,424	25.8
Grade 11	2,806	1,952	4,758	27.7
Grade 12	2,888	2,207	5,095	29.7
Ungraded	68	53	121	0.7

FIGURE 2
DROPOUTS BY GRADE
2004-05



Over 83% of dropouts occurred in grades 10, 11 and 12. When considering age, over 74% of the dropouts were 17 or 18 years of age.

TABLE 3
DROPOUTS BY AGE AND GENDER
2004-05

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	%
TOTAL	9,940	7,238	17,178	100.0
Age:				
12-14	75	79	154	0.9
15	87	102	189	1.1
16	554	488	1,042	6.1
17	3,798	3,044	6,842	39.8
18	3,592	2,390	5,982	34.8
19-21	1,834	1,135	2,969	17.3

Table 4 provides a profile about the reasons students drop out of school. When analyzing this data, two caveats must be addressed. First, the Philadelphia City School District, the largest in the state, generally does not keep records on why students drop out. Second, many students do not grant school authorities an exit interview. Therefore, this table shows data for the six known reasons and excludes "other," which includes unknown reasons. Because of this exclusion, Table 4 contains data on about 51% of all dropouts.

The most prevalent dropout reasons continued to be: "disliked school," "wanted to work" and "academic problem." The largest percentage increase occurred in the category "disliked school," with 45.1% in 2004-05 compared to 41.1% in 2003-04. Offsetting this increase is the decrease reported for "academic problem," which fell from 20.0% to 17.0% of the known reasons.

TABLE 4
DROPOUTS BY PROGRAM AND REASON
2004-05

	PERCENTAGES				
	Total	Academic or College Prep	Vocational/ Technical	Exceptional	General
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Academic Problem	17.0	21.1	17.1	7.2	17.2
Behavioral Problem	7.5	6.4	9.2	11.8	6.7
Disliked School	45.1	45.3	42.6	54.0	44.6
Child Care, Marriage or Pregnancy	6.3	5.9	6.7	8.0	6.0
Wanted to Work	21.4	19.0	22.5	17.1	22.3
Runaway or Expelled	2.7	2.3	1.9	1.9	3.2

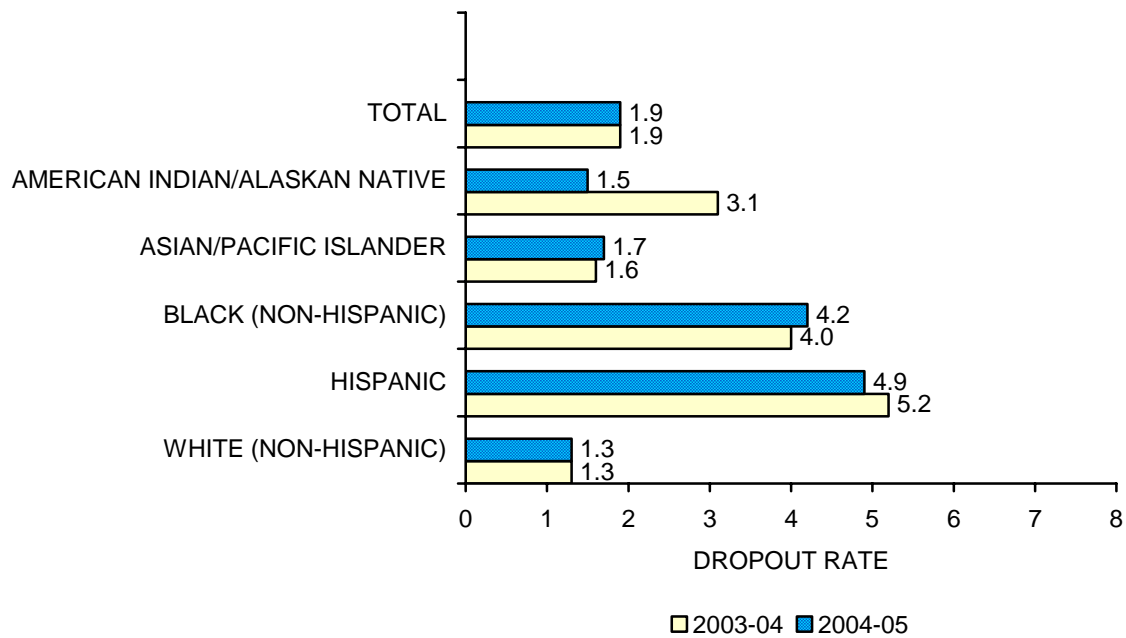
Note: 1. Based on data for about 51% of all dropouts. Excludes dropout reason "other."
2. Exceptional program includes all exceptional students not reported in one of the other programs.

Table 5 contains 2004-05 dropouts and secondary enrollments for all racial/ethnic categories. Compared to 2004-05, Figure 3 shows that the dropout rate for American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Hispanics declined, while Asian/Pacific Islanders and blacks increased, and whites remained constant. The 2004-05 Hispanic dropout rate was still the largest at 4.9%, followed by black at 4.2%. Blacks and Hispanics comprised 14.8% and 5.1% of secondary enrollments, but had a disproportionate 32.5% and 13.1% of the dropouts, respectively.

TABLE 5
DROPOUTS AND ENROLLMENTS BY RACE AND GENDER
2004-05

	SECONDARY ENROLLMENTS	DROPOUTS			DROPOUT RATE
		Male	Female	Total	
TOTAL	882,908	9,940	7,238	17,178	1.9
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	1,188	7	11	18	1.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	19,728	216	125	341	1.7
Black (Non-Hispanic)	132,016	3,150	2,431	5,581	4.2
Hispanic	45,921	1,252	1,013	2,265	4.9
White (Non-Hispanic)	684,055	5,315	3,658	8,973	1.3

FIGURE 3
ANNUAL DROPOUT RATES BY RACE
2003-04 AND 2004-05



In trying to analyze data by post-dropout activity in Table 6, a problem similar to reasons for dropping out in Table 4 was encountered. Post-dropout activities were reported for about 44% of the 17,178 dropouts. Again, many LEAs do not compile complete data on this subject.

Blue collar worker was the most frequent post-dropout activity. When comparing post-dropout activities by race, different distributions were apparent.

TABLE 6
POST-DROPOUT ACTIVITY BY RACE
2004-05

	PERCENTAGES					
	Total	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black (Non-Hispanic)	Hispanic	White (Non-Hispanic)
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Homemaker	4.8	0.0	8.3	5.2	3.2	4.9
Military	1.1	0.0	2.1	1.3	0.8	1.1
White Collar Worker	1.3	0.0	6.3	0.9	0.4	1.5
Blue Collar Worker	31.8	12.5	20.8	20.7	61.3	29.6
GED or Other Education	30.3	62.5	35.4	39.8	16.4	30.7
Service Worker	15.2	12.5	16.7	10.0	7.8	16.8
Unemployed	15.5	12.5	10.4	22.1	10.1	15.4

Note: Based on about 44% of all dropouts. Excludes "other" activity.

Dropout rates decreased for the four consortium-operated alternative high schools by 0.1 percentage points to 45.5%. The number of charter schools increased from 76 to 85 while their dropout rate decreased by 1.7 percentage points to 2.7%. Dropout rates for comprehensive AVTSs and school districts remained the same at 3.2% and 1.9%, respectively.

Although the dropout rate for the consortium-operated alternative high schools appears to be quite high, it must be noted that these schools possess some unique traits. Their students are at high risk of dropping out and many are attending school while working full time. The methodology of calculating dropouts must be examined to truly understand these high dropout rates. The total number of dropouts was counted for the 12-month period from October 1, 2004, to September 30, 2005, but the total secondary enrollment was obtained from secondary enrollments on October 1, 2004 (a snapshot view). After a student drops out from a consortium-operated alternative high school, another candidate may refill their enrollment slot during the school year. Because of this turnover, the dropout rate for these schools may be inflated.

TABLE 7
DROPOUTS BY CATEGORY OF INSTITUTION
2004-05

	NUMBER SURVEYED	SECONDARY ENROLLMENTS	DROPOUTS			DROPOUT RATE
			Male	Female	Total	
TOTAL	599	882,908	9,940	7,238	17,178	1.9
Charter Schools	85	21,345	276	296	572	2.7
Comprehensive AVTSs	10	6,952	129	96	225	3.2
Consortium-Operated Alternative High Schools	4	277	74	52	126	45.5
School Districts	500	854,334	9,461	6,794	16,255	1.9

Note: 1. Data for the nine comprehensive AVTSs in the Philadelphia City School District are listed with the data for school districts.
2. Dropout rates for the consortium-operated alternative high schools may be inflated because their students are at high risk of dropping out, and once they drop out, their enrollment slot may be refilled by another candidate during the school year.

FIGURE 4

PUBLIC SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES BY COUNTY
2004-05

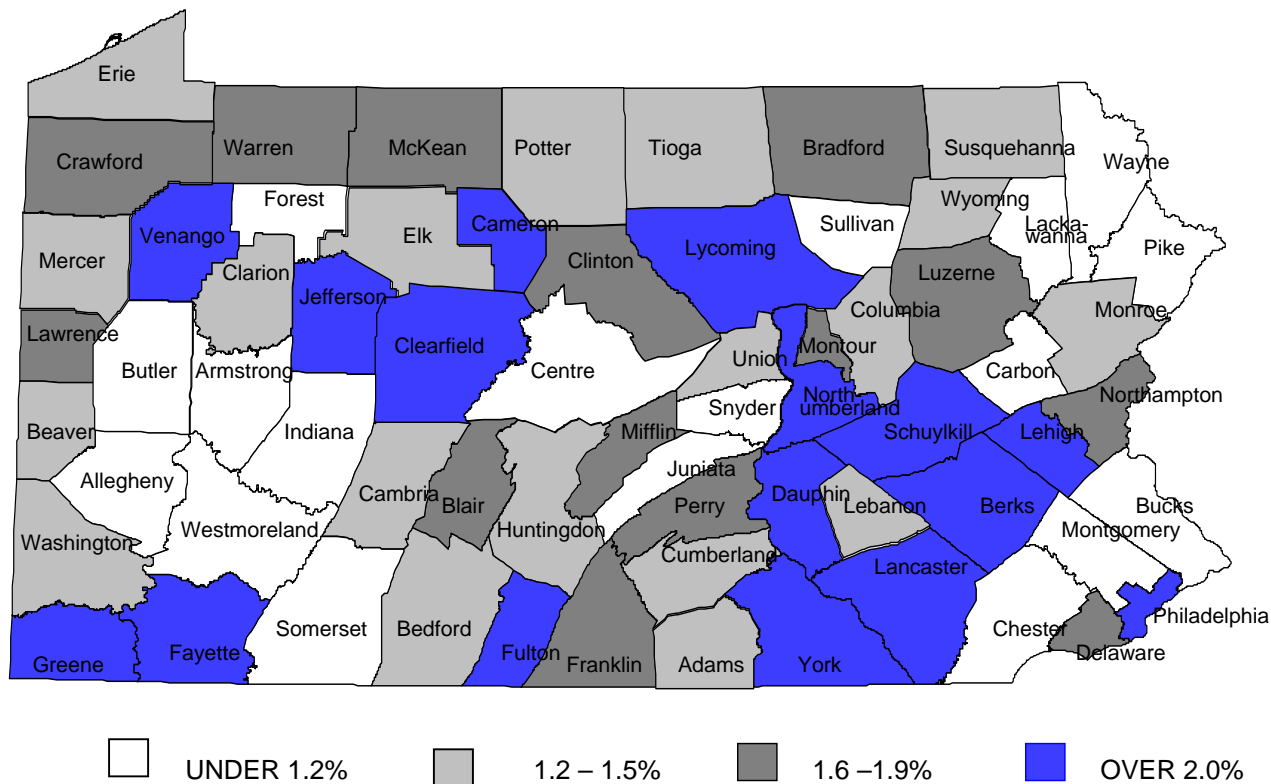


Figure 4 and Table 8 show that 16 counties had a dropout rate higher than the state average of 1.9% (Berks, Cameron, Clearfield, Dauphin, Fayette, Fulton, Greene, Jefferson, Lancaster, Lehigh, Lycoming, Northumberland, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, Venango and York). On the other hand, 18 counties (Allegheny, Armstrong, Bucks, Butler, Carbon, Centre, Chester, Forest, Indiana, Juniata, Lackawanna, Montgomery, Pike, Snyder, Somerset, Sullivan, Wayne, and Westmoreland) had dropout rates of less than 1.2%. Both urban and rural counties appear on the lists of counties with low and high rates. However, the largest number of dropouts are located in the larger, more urban areas.

TABLE 8
PUBLIC SCHOOL DROPOUTS BY COUNTY
2004-05

	SECONDARY ENROLLMENTS	DROPOUTS			DROPOUT RATE
		Male	Female	Total	
TOTAL	882,908	9,940	7,238	17,178	1.9
Adams	7,335	73	26	99	1.3
Allegheny	83,271	418	338	756	0.9
Armstrong	5,470	41	20	61	1.1
Beaver	15,325	109	74	183	1.2
Bedford	3,998	29	19	48	1.2
Berks	32,347	419	282	701	2.2
Blair	9,431	91	75	166	1.8
Bradford	5,451	57	39	96	1.8
Bucks	45,615	219	126	345	0.8
Butler	13,295	77	58	135	1.0
Cambria	9,364	64	48	112	1.2
Cameron	503	8	3	11	2.2
Carbon	4,493	15	15	30	0.7
Centre	7,391	38	26	64	0.9
Chester	33,509	137	89	226	0.7
Clarion	3,457	29	18	47	1.4
Clearfield	7,079	81	60	141	2.0
Clinton	2,425	24	21	45	1.9
Columbia	5,536	38	35	73	1.3
Crawford	5,474	56	42	98	1.8
Cumberland	14,313	134	78	212	1.5
Dauphin	18,883	235	178	413	2.2
Delaware	35,684	353	269	622	1.7
Elk	2,235	21	11	32	1.4
Erie	20,290	166	128	294	1.4
Fayette	9,729	133	82	215	2.2
Forest	389	0	0	0	0.0
Franklin	8,821	98	60	158	1.8
Fulton	1,101	14	12	26	2.4
Greene	2,935	38	27	65	2.2
Huntingdon	2,952	26	16	42	1.4
Indiana	5,764	45	17	62	1.1
Jefferson	3,230	46	21	67	2.1
Juniata	1,609	7	10	17	1.1
Lackawanna	13,388	75	59	134	1.0
Lancaster	33,871	460	367	827	2.4
Lawrence	7,270	69	51	120	1.7
Lebanon	8,818	68	67	135	1.5
Lehigh	24,221	316	258	574	2.4
Luzerne	20,778	194	138	332	1.6
Lycoming	8,972	123	102	225	2.5
McKean	3,677	43	22	65	1.8
Mercer	9,540	77	66	143	1.5
Mifflin	3,192	32	19	51	1.6
Monroe	16,646	157	68	225	1.4
Montgomery	50,994	258	176	434	0.9
Montour	1,303	12	10	22	1.7
Northampton	22,398	258	174	432	1.9
Northumberland	6,642	107	92	199	3.0
Perry	3,567	44	24	68	1.9
Philadelphia	96,575	3,252	2,448	5,700	5.9
Pike	2,712	13	5	18	0.7
Potter	1,448	13	7	20	1.4
Schuylkill	9,549	114	94	208	2.2
Snyder	2,704	11	10	21	0.8
Somerset	5,724	22	23	45	0.8
Sullivan	397	2	1	3	0.8
Susquehanna	4,007	28	25	53	1.3
Tioga	3,254	25	15	40	1.2
Union	2,185	23	6	29	1.3
Venango	4,772	63	44	107	2.2
Warren	3,109	31	23	54	1.7
Washington	14,901	107	90	197	1.3
Wayne	4,812	33	22	55	1.1
Westmoreland	27,418	183	123	306	1.1
Wyoming	2,179	17	9	26	1.2
York	33,181	371	277	648	2.0

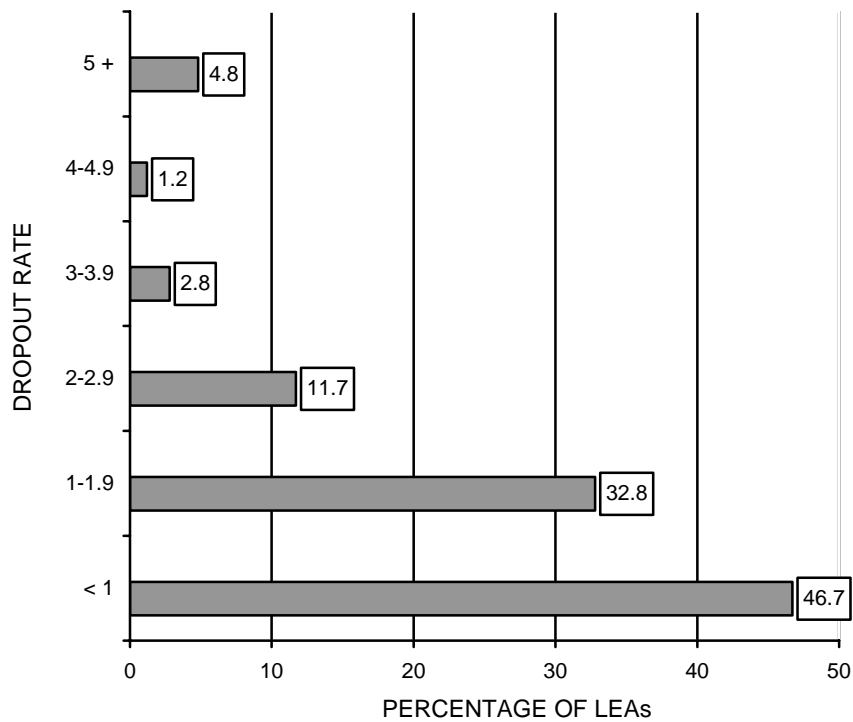
TABLE 9
SPECIAL POPULATION DROPOUTS BY RACE
2004-05

	ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	MIGRANT	ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER	SPECIAL EDUCATION
TOTAL	6,146	68	610	3,556
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	7	0	0	4
Asian/Pacific Islander	96	7	89	18
Black (Non-Hispanic)	2,153	1	64	1,021
Hispanic	1,192	54	402	417
White (Non-Hispanic)	2,698	6	55	2,096

This is the fourth year data was collected on economically disadvantaged, migrant, English language learner, and special education students for No Child Left Behind purposes. The dropout rate for all special population students increased. Of the total 17,178 dropouts for 2004-05, there were 6,146 economically disadvantaged, 3,556 special education, 610 English language learner, and 68 migrant students. The largest special population dropout category was economically disadvantaged, which consisted of 56.1% minorities.

Figure 5 points out that, statewide, many LEAs have a very low dropout rate. Only 129 of the 599 LEAs had a dropout rate equal to, or higher than, the state average of 1.9%.

FIGURE 5
LEA DROPOUT RATES
2004-05



CONCLUSION

The dropout rate remained at 1.9%; compared to the prior year, a review of the 2004-05 data indicates that the total number of dropouts increased by 192 while secondary enrollments increased by 5,887 which produced a stable dropout rate. On a county basis, dropout rates ranged from a low of 0.0% in Forest County to a high of 5.9% in Philadelphia County. Secondary enrollments are projected to continue to grow through 2005-06. Pennsylvania continues throughout the years making progress in reducing the dropout rate, but still had 17,178 dropouts.

PART 2

SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS' PARTNERSHIP: A STATEWIDE DROPOUT PREVENTION INITIATIVE

The Successful Students' Partnership (SSP) is a statewide dropout prevention initiative authorized by Pennsylvania Act 49 of 1987. The program, administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, grew out of a concern over the significant amount of Pennsylvania youth who leave school every year without a high school diploma. The intent of the initiative is to provide funds to school districts with high numbers of dropouts (those with a dropout rate which is greater than the state average) to develop and design local resources and strategies to meet their unique needs.

The SSP Program provides funding to schools/school districts for the development and expansion of dropout prevention, truancy reduction and other programs to assure the successful education of all students. All SSP activities must support and augment academic achievement, doing everything possible to ensure participating students meet state and local standards in core content areas, such as reading, math and science. SSP brings together educators, community resources, parents, business resources and prevention strategies to address absenteeism/truancy, academic failure, and school dropouts to reduce or eliminate the negative impact on students as well as the community. The specific goals of the SSP Initiative are a reduction in student dropout rates; and an increase in student levels of academic achievement.

Successful Students' Partnership programs must:

- have a well-defined mission targeted at potential dropout students to increase their attendance and academic performance in school; and
- be broad-based initiatives involving home, community and school to provide a comprehensive program.

To meet these requirements, Successful Students' Partnership programs must coordinate and collaborate closely with school and community resources such as: prevention programs, intervention programs, Title I services, Student Assistance Teams, social service agencies, neighborhood groups, parents and other stakeholders to support student academic success. Programs activities include:

- academic coursework;
- remedial education;
- other courses required for graduation;
- anti-truancy and attendance improvement strategies;
- peer mediation and conflict resolution programs;
- mentoring;
- involvement of parents and guardians of youth enrolled in dropout prevention programs;
- partnerships with businesses; vocation education and school-to-work transition;
- programs of employment and training and related services, counseling and assessment;
- human, social and community services; and/or
- public information and outreach activities.

During the 2004-05 school year, 13 Pennsylvania school districts received grants under the Successful Students' Partnership Initiative. School districts with SSP programs received amounts ranging between approximately \$9,800 and \$40,000 (Table 10).

TABLE 10

SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH SSP PROGRAMS
AND GRANT AMOUNTS, 2004-05

<u>SCHOOL DISTRICT</u>	<u>GRANT AMOUNT</u>
TOTAL	\$463,387
Bethlehem Area	40,000
Big Beaver Falls Area	40,000
Everett Area	40,000
Lancaster	39,025
Milton Area	40,000
New Kensington-Arnold	37,600
Norristown Area	39,950
Oil City Area	40,000
Tamaqua Area	17,221
Upper Adams	9,803
Washington	40,000
Western Wayne	39,788
Wilkesburg Borough	40,000

During the 2004-05 school year, 1,230 students from kindergarten to 12th grade benefited from specific programs and activities targeted toward increasing the academic success of children and youth at risk. The greatest number of students served (395) was in the ninth grade. The program served 703 male and 527 female students. From 1998 through the 2004-05 grant year over 26,469 children and youth have been served through specific activities focused on school success.

TABLE 11

SSP STUDENT ENROLLMENT
BY GRADE LEVEL, 2004-05

<u>SCHOOL DISTRICT</u>	<u>GRANT AMOUNT</u>
TOTAL	1,230
Kindergarten	0
Grade 1	35
Grade 2	47
Grade 3	49
Grade 4	0
Grade 5	0
Grade 6	28
Grade 7	61
Grade 8	58
Grade 9	395
Grade 10	323
Grade 11	131
Grade 12	103

Examples of SSP program successes in the 2004-05 program year include:

1. The number of participating students who increased their grade point average was 417 between 2003-04 and 2004-05.
2. The number of participating students who were promoted at the end of the 2004-05 school year was 993 (80.7% of all 1,230 participants).
3. Among students in grade 12, 90 graduated (87.4% of 103 seniors).
4. Participants were absent on average for 12.97 days during 2004-05; a slight decrease from 13.52 days from the previous year.* †

Examples of SSP successes at the individual school district level include:

1. Bethlehem Area School District's students again experienced academic improvement, fewer discipline referrals, increased school attendance, and reduced failure/dropout rates. The district strengthened and expanded their school/business/community partnerships which increased the availability of supports for students – including greater opportunities for real-life educational experiences outside the classroom walls.
2. In the Big Beaver Falls Area School District, five of the six students participating in the mentoring component graduated, including one pregnant female student who delivered during the school year. Four of those five graduates applied to attend two-year vocational schools.
3. In the Everett Area School District, all of the students participating in the mentoring program were promoted to the next grade level. Of the 16 students that participated in the Dropout Recovery Program, 14 graduated - including four who chose to go on to higher education after receiving their high school diploma.
4. The School District of Lancaster exceeded their dropout prevention goal by keeping 97% of the participating students in school. The district also doubled their success rate in promoting students from grade 9 to grade 10.
5. In the Milton Area School District, the number of senior high students that failed one or more classes was reduced; school attendance improved; and 31% fewer students were expelled, suspended out of school or assigned to in-school suspension. The first year of the availability of the Learning Facilitator and academic support program was viewed very positively by participating students and the instructional staff. Many students commented that they would have "given up" entirely if the Learning Facilitator had not been there to encourage them and assist them in managing their academic workload.
6. In the New Kensington-Arnold School District, more than half of the high school students who received additional support were able to strengthen their mastery of standards enough to improve their grades by one letter grade. The district formed a partnership with the local Penn State University campus to provide tutors. One student who had dropped out was re-enrolled and through supportive services provided through this grant earned a 'B' in Algebra by the end of the year.
7. Participating students in the Norristown Area School District experienced much success in improving their skills through the use of the Compass Learning System on the district's network; they were also able to understand the direct connection between improving their skills and improving their performance on standardized tests.
8. The Oil City Area School District served 1st through 3rd graders by providing an after-school program. In the first semester of the year, 72% of the participating students showed academic progress; in the second semester 70% of the students improved from the pre-test to the post-test.
9. One student participating in the Tamaqua Area School District in the S.T.A.R.S. (Students Taking Academic Reinforcement Sessions) for the second year, who was absent over 14 days in the 2003-04 school year, had perfect school attendance during 2004-05.
10. In the Upper Adams School District all but one of the 7th-8th graders participating in the Homework Club were promoted to the next grade. One middle school special needs student that attended the Homework Club consistently struggled with completing homework assignments. Her parents were very supportive and wanted her to be successful, but they had difficulty helping her effectively at home. The Homework Club improved her academic performance by helping her prepare for tests, thereby improving her grades in the inclusion classes.

11. A Washington School District student participating in the dropout prevention activities was named "Juvenile of the Year" through a competitive state-wide award program coordinated by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission. Eighty percent of the high school students participating in the Academically Customized Education program or the Alternative Education program completed the required credits to earn their high school diploma. Six of the seven high school seniors who entered the summer program earned their diplomas.
12. Through facilitation of a homework/tutor room for 6th-12th graders in Western Wayne School District five students raised their grade point average by 3 points; one student raised his average by 6 points. An average of 35 students accessed the homework/tutor room daily, with many receiving this academic support up to four times per week.
13. In the Wilkinsburg Borough School District a truancy abatement program served 28 students with excessive tardies and absenteeism.

**EDUCATION MENTORING:
A STATEWIDE DROPOUT PREVENTION INITIATIVE**

A portion of the dropout prevention funding during the 2004-05 school year funded a total of 44 Education Mentoring (EM) projects which served students at-risk. The grant amounts ranged from \$9,868 to \$20,000. The Education Mentoring Program provides funding to community-based organizations for the development and expansion of programs that link public school students in grades K-12 with caring, supportive adults. Act 30 of 1997, which created the Education Mentoring Program, underscores the General Assembly's finding that large numbers of students need additional support in order to be successful in school, graduate and become productive citizens.

Research shows that youth who engage in sustained one-on-one relationships with positive adult mentors show increased academic achievement and are less likely to drop out of school. It is thus the intent of Act 30 to promote the development of educational mentoring programs that provide trusted adults as role models for at-risk children and youth. These programs are aimed at improving school attendance and performance, and peer and family relationships. During that year, 1,082 mentors assisted 1,210 children and youth in grades K through 12 in 113 school buildings in 45 school districts. Among these students, 507 were in grades seven and higher (Table 3). Since the initiative began in 1998 through the 2004-05 grant year, more than 10,346 children and youth have been served through specific activities focused on school success.

TABLE 12

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS
BY GRADE LEVEL, 2004-05

GRADES	STUDENTS
TOTAL	1,210
Kindergarten	26
Grade 1	57
Grade 2	104
Grade 3	115
Grade 4	151
Grade 5	118
Grade 6	132
Grade 7	168
Grade 8	90
Grade 9	97
Grade 10	71
Grade 11	42
Grade 12	39

Source: Education Mentoring 2004-05 Annual Summary Dataset.

Examples of the statewide successes of EM program efforts during the 2004-2005 program year include:

- Grantees reported average gains in GPA among *all* students in grades K through 12 between 2003-04 and 2004-05 -- from 1.96 to 2.07, respectively (Table 13).*
- Among students in *grades seven and higher*, the average GPA gain between 2003-04 and 2004-05 was 1.59 to 1.91, respectively (Table 13).^{1 2 *}
- Across all grade levels, 476 mentees (about 39 percent of total mentee enrollment) increased their grade point average (GPA) between the 2003-04 and the 2004-05 school years. Among students in grades seven and higher, *all* students increased their GPAs.
- At the end of the 2004-05 school year, 1,130 (97 percent) of the 1,171 mentees in grades K-11 were promoted. Thirty-one of 39 seniors (79.5%) graduated at the end of the 2004-05 school year.
- 273 mentees improved their school attendance rate between 2003-04 and 2004-05. Mentees were absent, on average, 7.36 days in 2003-04 and 8.14 days in 2004-05; a slight increase.^{† *}

TABLE 13
AVERAGE GPA SCORES AMONG GRANTEES
BY GRADE LEVELS SERVED, 2004-05

		# Grantees Reporting ^b	Min	Max	Mean	SD
All Grades K-12	2003-04 GPA	34	0	3.29	1.96	.92
	2004-05 GPA	37	0	3.54	2.07	.98
Seventh and Higher Grades ^a	2003-04 GPA	14	0	2.80	1.59	.98
	2004-05 GPA	14	0	3.20	1.91	.97

Source: Education Mentoring 2004-05 Annual Summary Dataset.

a. Grantees who served mentees only in grades seven and higher are included in this group.

b. Not all grantees submitted valid GPA data, particularly in cases where EM grantees work with younger students who do not receive a GPA.

Some unique examples of individual success stories in the 2004-05 Education Mentoring Program include:

1. Alternative Community Resource Program, Johnstown – A 15 year old pregnant teen did not drop out despite the odds against her in breaking a three-generation family history of early pregnancy. As she began the mentoring program she became more conscientious about finishing high school. She began to attend school regularly, eat healthy meals and improved her academic performance. The pregnant teen, her family and the baby's father (who began attending the agency's teen fatherhood program) voiced that "none of this would have happened if they would not have participated in the mentoring program."
2. BBBS of Lebanon County, Lebanon – In November the agency received a referral from an elementary school teacher regarding a new student in her 2nd grade class. The student needed to improve in the areas of self-confidence, academic performance and working up to her academic potential. The student's mentor went to the school one to four times per week before lunch to work with her on math and spelling, the two areas with which the student was struggling. By the end of the school year the teacher wrote that the mentor "did an exceptional job with the mentee" and that the mentee "bloomed this year." The teacher reported that the student greatly improved in the areas

* Tests of statistically significant differences among these data underestimate the true independence of means because student level data are aggregated to the grantee level. That is, grantees supply *summary* absentee and GPA data only. *Student*-level measures would greatly enhance the analysis and be more likely find significant differences. Tests of effect sizes are also improved with student level data.

† The absentee rates are weighted by the total number of mentees per grantee.

¹ GPA data for students in grades seven and higher are more accurate because many elementary students receive grades on scales quite different from a 0-4 GPA scale.

² Nine grantees did not submit 2003-04 or 2004-05 GPA data, particularly in cases where EM grantees work with younger students who do not receive a GPA.

- of self-confidence, expression of feelings, utilization of school resources, and academic performance.
3. Catholic Social Services/BBBS of the Bridge, Wilkes-Barre – A socially isolated 16 year old wheelchair bound 10th grader with cerebral palsy was matched with a high school senior student. The two met several times a week during a study hall period and played games and talked. The mentee's learning support aid reported that the tenth grader developed better social skills and increased confidence in his ability to interact with other students.
 4. The Center Foundation/Young Parents Support Network, Media – A young parent who had a baby at the age of 13 joined the mentoring program in 2002. With the support of her mentor her grade point average increased each year – prior to entering the program, her GPA was 1.5 and when she graduated 103rd out of 281 in her class, her GPA was 2.204. The mentee was accepted at Delaware County Community College to study criminal justice.
 5. Communities in Schools of the Lehigh Valley, Easton – Mentee A progressed during the year from a shy, uncommunicative, non-participatory girl to a young lady eager to speak her mind and take leadership with her peers.
 6. Methodist Services for Children and Families, Philadelphia – One of the 2nd grade mentees with a learning disability and well below level in both reading and math comprehension was matched with a high school student. While the mentor had some difficulty initially in building a relationship with the mentee, there was a gradual and then consistent transformation of the mentee from highly introverted and afraid to participate in the classroom to a student who was eager to go to the board and participate in group activities.

The Education Mentoring Initiative data *suggest* that program participation is related to GPA improvement, particularly among students in grades seven and higher. Nonetheless, the mentees' improved GPAs reduce their likelihood to drop out of school.³ Continued training and technical assistance to grantees to strengthen their programs in areas such as volunteer recruitment, school-community partnerships and improved data collection methods will sustain the program's work to improve participants' academic performance.

³ For instance, see, Barrington, Byron L., and Bryan Hendricks. "Differentiating Characteristics of High School Graduates, Dropouts, and Nongraduates." THE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH 82,6 (July/August 1989): 309-19. EJ 398 453.

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

CHARTER SCHOOL - An independent public school established and operated under a charter from the local board of school directors and in which students are enrolled or attend. A charter school must be organized as a public nonprofit corporation. Charter schools are exempt from most state mandates except those insuring the health, safety and civil rights of students.

COHORT RATE - A rate that measures the proportion of a single group of students who drop out over a period of time.

COMPREHENSIVE AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL (AVTS) - A school that enrolls secondary students and provides a total educational program and services for both specialized career and technical education and academic education.

COMMONWEALTH SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA - A diploma issued by the Department of Education to Pennsylvania residents who successfully passed the GED test, or who completed one year or 30 semester hours of college work.

CONSORTIUM-OPERATED ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL - A school formed as a result of a special program jointure which enrolls high-risk students or students who previously dropped out. A special program jointure is an entity established by the boards of school directors in two or more school districts, with approval of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, under Sections 1701-1709 of the Public School Code of 1949, as amended.

DROPOUT - A student who, for any reason other than death, leaves school before graduation without transferring to another school/institution.

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED - A student who utilizes the free/reduced lunch program at their school.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) - A student whose first language is not English and who is in the process of learning English.

EVENT RATE - An annual rate that measures the proportion of students enrolled who drop out during a single school year.

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS – Those who are eligible for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or who are gifted as set forth in Chapter 342 of the Special Education Standards.

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED) CERTIFICATION - A high school equivalency certification obtained through achievement of satisfactory scores on comprehensive tests that measure the educational development of students who have not completed their formal high school education.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) - The average obtained by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of credits earned.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) - A board of education or other legally constituted local school authority having administrative control and direction of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district or political subdivision in a state, or any other public educational institution or agency having administrative control and direction of a career and technical education program.

MIGRANT - A child who is, or whose parent or spouse is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a migrating dairy worker, or a migratory fisher, and who, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain or accompany such parent or spouse, in order to obtain, temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work (a) has moved from one school district to another; (b) in a State that is comprised of a single school district, has moved from one administrative area to another within such district.

RACIAL/ETHNIC CATEGORIES - Categories used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. These categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. However, no person may be counted in more than one racial/ethnic category.

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent or the Pacific Islands. This includes people from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, Samoa, India and Vietnam.

BLACK (NON-HISPANIC) - A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa (except those of Hispanic origin).

HISPANIC - A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

WHITE (NON-HISPANIC) - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa or the Middle East (except those of Hispanic origin).

SPECIAL EDUCATION - Students who are eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and who have Individualized Education Program (IEPs)(excluding "gifted"); an IEP means a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a team meeting in accordance with the regulations governing special education programs in PA. The IEP specifies the individual educational needs of the child and what education and related services are necessary to meet the needs.

APPENDIX B

SOURCES

1. Electronic Dropout/Graduate Report (EDGR)
2. Public School Enrollment Report (ESPE)
3. *Enrollment Projections by Grade to 2010-11*, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Data Services
4. Education Mentoring 2004-05 Annual Summary Dataset