

Findings From *The Condition of Education 2009*: Student Educational Progress Shows Modest Gains

Enrollment in America's elementary and secondary schools continues to rise to all-time highs, and younger learners continue to show gains in educational achievement over time. The overall achievement levels of secondary school students have not risen over time, but there are some increases in the percentages of students entering college after high school and earning a postsecondary credential, according to *The Condition of Education 2009* report released today by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

"This report allows us to take a big-picture look at the condition of American education," said NCES Acting Commissioner Stuart Kerachsky. "What we see are some improvements, such as higher math and reading scores for 4th- and 8th-graders, but persistent challenges remain in educating a growing and increasingly diverse population."

The Condition of Education is a congressionally mandated report that provides an annual portrait of education in the United States. The 46 indicators included in this year's report cover all aspects of education, from early childhood through postsecondary education and from student achievement to school environment and resources.

Among the report's other findings:

- Public elementary and secondary enrollment is projected to increase to 54 million in 2018. Over the period of 2006 to 2018, the South is projected to experience the largest increase (18 percent) in the number of students enrolled.
- Between 1972 and 2007, the percentage of public school students who were White decreased from 78 to 56 percent. This decrease largely reflects the growth in the number of students who were Hispanic, particularly in the West.
- The average reading and mathematics scores on the long-term trend National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) were higher in 2008 than in the early 1970s for 9- and 13-year-olds; scores for 17-year-olds were not measurably different over the same period.
- In 2005–06, about three-quarters of the 2002–03 freshman class graduated from high school with a regular diploma.
- The rate of college enrollment immediately after high school completion increased from 49 percent in 1972 to 67 percent by 1997, but has since fluctuated between 62 and 69 percent.
- About 58 percent of first-time students seeking a bachelor's degree or its equivalent and attending a 4-year institution full time in 2000–01 completed a bachelor's degree or its equivalent at that institution within 6 years.
- The percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds completing a bachelor's degree or higher increased from 17 to 29 percent between 1971 and 2000 and was 31 percent in 2008.
- Women accounted for 57 percent of the bachelor's degrees and 62 percent of all associate's degrees awarded in the 2006–07 academic year.

NCES is the statistical center of the Institute of Education Sciences in the U.S. Department of Education. The full text of *The Condition of Education 2009* (in HTML format), along with related data tables and indicators from previous years, can be viewed at <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe>.