

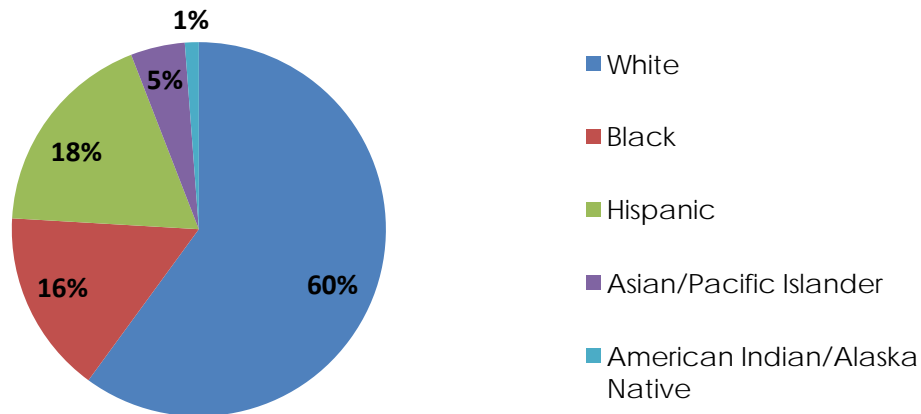
High Schools in the United States

By Jessica Agus, National High School Center at AIR

The Students

- ◆ 14,892,153 students **attended** public high school in 2008–09.¹
- ◆ 3,019,361 students **graduated** from public high school in 2009.²
- ◆ 4,125,000 students are **projected to enroll** in public high school **as freshmen** in 2010–11.³
- ◆ **Enrollment** in public high schools **rose 11%** from 1999 to 2009. In contrast, elementary school enrollment rose 4% during that period.⁴
- ◆ About **229,000** students **enrolled in public charter secondary schools** in 2007–08.
- ◆ About **16,742,000** students **enrolled in public secondary schools**, including middle schools and high schools, in 2007–08.⁵

Demographic Distribution of Public Secondary School Students, 2007-2008



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2009.⁵

Students with Disabilities

- ◆ 2,895,923 students, ages 12–17 years, were served under the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B** in 2007.⁶
- ◆ 12.5% of **public** secondary students and 7.9% of **private** secondary students had an **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** in 2007–08.⁷
- ◆ The **most common disability** served under the IDEA was **specific learning disability** (39% of all students, ages three to 21, served in 2007–08). The **second most common disability** was **speech or language disability** (22% of all students served in 2007–08).⁸

English Language Learners

- ◆ The number of K–12 students who were **Limited English Proficient (LEP)** rose to 4,985,000 in 2006, an **increase of 650,000** since 2004.⁹
- ◆ 21% of all students, ages 5–17 years, **spoke a language other than English** at home in 2008. This is an **increase from 9%** in 1979.¹⁰
- ◆ In 2008, **75%** of LEP students who spoke English with difficulty and spoke another language at home **identified Spanish** as their native language.¹¹
- ◆ English language learner (ELL) students scored an average of **40% below** their peers on **literacy** portions of the high school exit exams in 2005.¹²

The Schools

- ◆ 24,426 **public secondary schools** existed in the United States in 2007–08.¹³
- ◆ The average number of **students per secondary school** was **706** in 2007–08.¹³
- ◆ The **student/teacher ratio** for public secondary schools was **12 to 1** in 2008–09.¹⁴
- ◆ 2,120 **high schools** were identified as **in need of improvement** in 2005–06. These schools represent **12%** of all U.S. high schools.¹⁵
- ◆ 58% of high schools offer **at least one Advanced Placement (AP) class**.¹⁶

High School Student Achievement

- ◆ The average score of 12th-grade students on the **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading** assessment in 2009 was **2 points higher** than the average score in 2005, but **4 points lower** than in 1992.¹⁷

- ◆ In 2005, **46%** of U.S. 12th-grade students scored **“below basic”** on the **NAEP national science** scale, **18%** scored **“proficient”** or above, and **2%** scored **“advanced.”**¹⁸
- ◆ **93%** of high school students reported that they worked on **homework** outside of school in 2007.¹⁹
- ◆ **798,629** (or 26.5%) public school students from the graduating class of 2009 took an **AP exam** at some point in high school.²⁰
- ◆ **1,569,000** U.S. high school graduates in the class of 2010 took the **ACT.**²¹
- ◆ **1,597,329** college-bound seniors in the class of 2010 took the **SAT.**²²

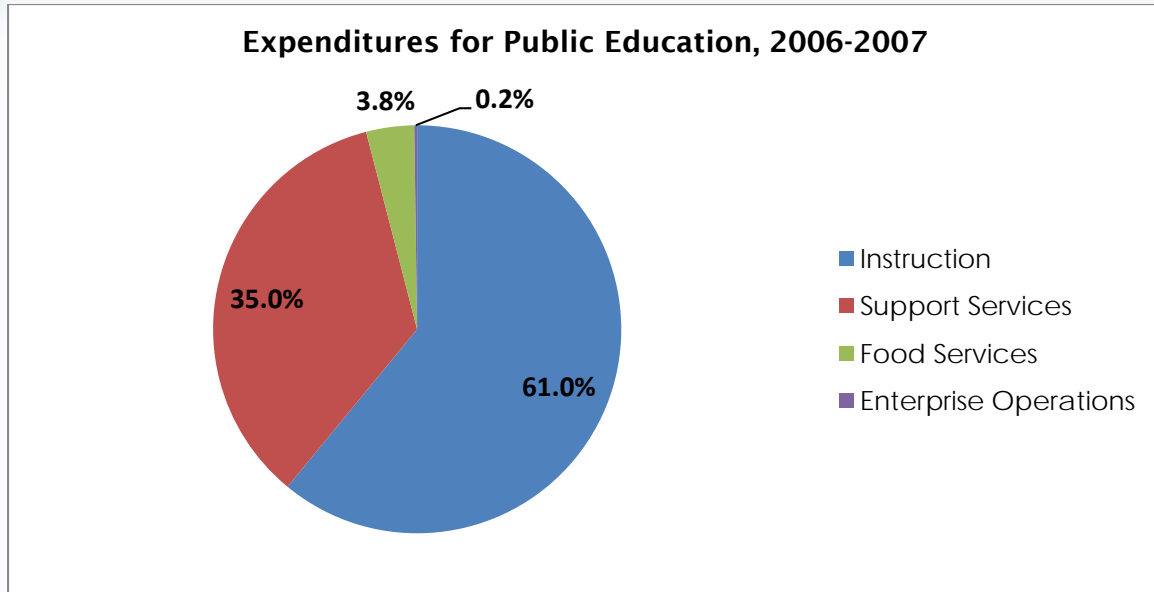
Average 2010 SAT Scores of College-Bound Seniors, by Subject and Ethnicity,²³ and Average 2010 ACT Composite Test Scores²³

Race/Ethnicity	SAT Critical Reading Score, 2010	SAT Math Score, 2010	SAT Writing Score, 2010	SAT Composite Test Score, 2010	ACT Composite Test Score, 2010
White/Caucasian	528	536	516	1,580	22.3
Black/African American	429	428	420	1,277	16.9
Mexican or Mexican American	454	467	448	1,369	18.6 ²⁴
Puerto Rican	454	452	443	1,349	
Other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American	454	462	447	1,363	
Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander	519	591	526	1,636	23.4
Average across all student groups	501	516	492	1,509	21.0

Source: The College Board (2010)²³ and ACT (2010)²⁴

School Funding

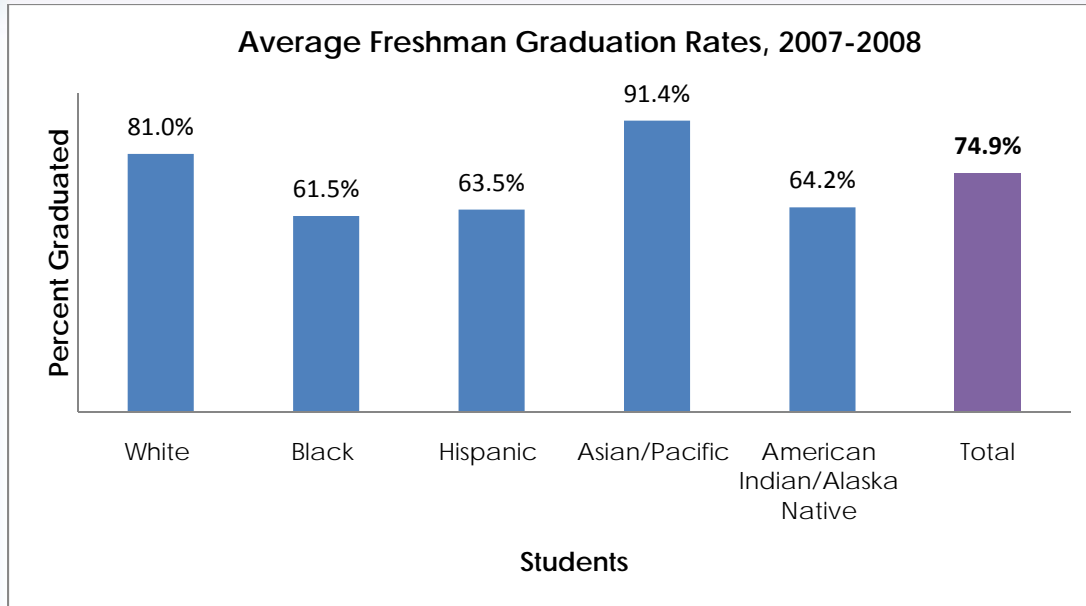
- ◆ **Expenditures** for **public education** in 2006–07 totaled approximately **\$476,825,866.**²⁵
- ◆ On average, **\$9,683** was spent **per pupil** in fall enrollment in 2006–07.²⁶
- ◆ Expenditures for all elementary and secondary education represented **4.6%** of the **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** in 2008. This percentage has remained relatively constant since 2001,²⁷ but it has **doubled since 1949.**²⁸



Source: National Center for Education Statistics²⁹

High School Graduation Rate

- ◆ 3,273,250 students are **expected to graduate** from high school in 2010–11; 2,962,400 from **public** high schools and 310,850 from **private** high schools.³⁰
- ◆ 74.9% of U.S. freshmen who began public high school in 2004 **graduated** in 2007–08.³¹
- ◆ 2,965,286 students **graduated from public** high school in 2007-08.³²
- ◆ 306,610 students **graduated from private** high school in 2006-07.³²
- ◆ 57% of **students with disabilities** earned a regular school **diploma** in 2005–06. This is an **increase of 14%** from 1996–97.³³
- ◆ 221,306 of students served under **IDEA, Part B, graduated** in 2007.³⁴



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2009.³²

- ◆ The **dropout rate** for all U.S. public schools in 2008 was **8%**. This rate is down from 14% in 1980.
- ◆ The **dropout rate** in 2008 for **white** students was **4.8%**, down from 11.4% in 1980. The **dropout rate** for **black** students was **9.9%** in 2008, a drop from 19.1% in 1980. The **dropout rate** for **Hispanic** students was **18.3%** in 2008, a decrease from 35.2% in 1980.³⁵

High School Graduation Requirements

- ◆ **26 states** have current or planned mandatory high school **exit exams**.³⁶
- ◆ **19 states** offer **alternative pathways** to graduation for students who fail exit exams.³⁷
- ◆ **70%** of ACT-tested high school students in 2009 took or planned to take a **Core Curriculum**, which includes 4 years of English and 3 years of science, math, and social studies.³⁸
- ◆ Students who completed a **Core Curriculum** scored an average of **151 points higher** on the **SAT** in 2010.³⁹

Transitions from High School to College

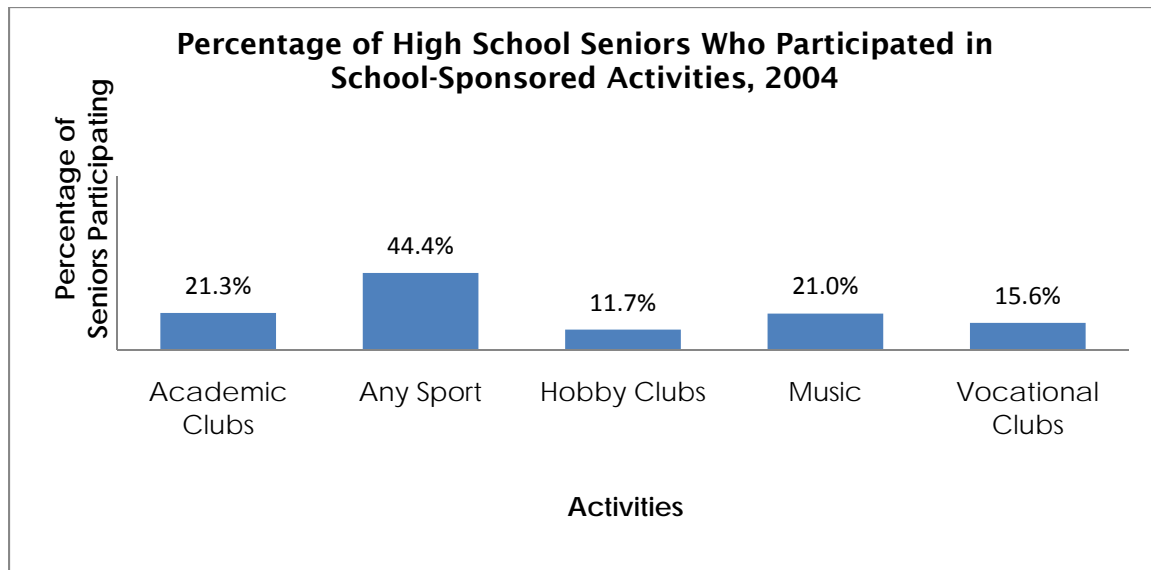
- ◆ 2,922,000 students are expected to enroll as first-time college freshmen in 2010.⁴⁰

High School Graduates Who Directly Enrolled in College, by Subgroup

Students, by Subgroup	Percentage of 2009 Graduates Who Directly Enrolled in College
Women	74%
Men	66%
Asian	92%
White	69%
Black	69%
Hispanic	59%
Total	70%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010⁴¹

Extracurricular Activities



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2010.⁴²

Endnotes

¹ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Common Core of Data (CCD). (2010). *State nonfiscal survey of public elementary/secondary education*. 2008–09, Version 1a. Statistic is derived from Table 1. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/snf200708/tables.asp>.

² The College Board. (2010). *The 6th annual AP® report to the nation: Class of 2009 data. Appendix B: AP program data at a glance*. Princeton, NJ: The College Board. Retrieved from http://www.collegeboard.com/html/aprtn/pdf/ap_report_to_the_nation_program_data_at_a_glance_app_b.pdf.

³ U.S. Department of Education, NCES, CCD. *State nonfiscal survey of public elementary/secondary education*, 1993–94 through 2006–07; and National Elementary and Secondary Enrollment Model, 1972–2006. (This table was prepared November 2008.) Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/projections2018/tables/table_03.asp

⁴ U.S. Department of Education, NCES. (2010). *Digest of Education Statistics: 2009*. (NCES 2010-013). Washington, DC: NCES. <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/index.asp>.

⁵ NCES defines a secondary school as: "A school comprising any span of grades beginning with the next grade following an elementary or middle school (usually 7, 8, or 9) and ending with or below grade 12. Both junior high schools and senior high schools are included." U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). (2009). *Public school questionnaire, 2007–08* and *Public teacher questionnaire, 2007–08*. (This table was prepared October 2009.) Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_100.asp.

⁶ This data references only the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Data Analysis System (DANS), OMB #1820-0043: "Children with Disabilities Receiving Special Education Under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act," 2007. Retrieved from http://www.ideadata.org/TABLES31ST/AR_1-1.htm.

⁷ U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). (2008). *Public school, BIE school, and private school data files, 2007–08*. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009321/tables/sass0708_2009321_s12n_02.asp.

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⁹ Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students. (2008). *Biennial report to Congress on the implementation of the Title III State Formula Grant Program, school years 2004–06*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/title3biennial0406.pdf>.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS). (2008). *1979 and 1989 November supplement and 1992, 1995, and 1999 October supplement, and American Community Survey (ACS), 2000–2008*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/charts/chart05.asp?popup=true>.

¹¹ Number reflects elementary and secondary public school students. Aud, S., Hussar, W., Planty, M., Snyder, T., Bianco, K., Fox, M., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., & Drake, L. (2010). *The condition of education 2010* (NCES 2010-028). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (IES), NCES. page 32. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010028.pdf>.

¹² Center on Education Policy. (2005). *States try harder, but gaps persist: High school exit exams 2005*. Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy. As cited in Koelsch, N. *Improving literacy outcomes for English language learners in high school: Considerations for states and districts in developing a coherent policy framework*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, National High School Center. Retrieved from http://www.betterhighschools.org/docs/NHSC_AdolescentS_110806.pdf.

¹³ NCES defines a secondary school as: "A school comprising any span of grades beginning with the next grade following an elementary or middle school (usually 7, 8, or 9) and ending with or below grade 12. Both junior high schools and senior high schools are included." U.S. Department of Education, NCES, CCD. *Public elementary/secondary school universe survey, 2007–08*. (This table was prepared September 2009.) Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_099.asp.

¹⁴ Sable, J., & Plotts, C. (2010). *Public elementary and secondary school student enrollment and staff counts from the Common Core of Data: School year 2008–09* (NCES 2010-347). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, NCES. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/snf200708/>.

¹⁵ The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) identifies a school as "in need of improvement" if it does not meet the annual performance targets in mathematics and reading set by the state for two consecutive years. Carlson LeFloch, K., Martinez, F., O'Day, J., Stecher, B., & Taylor, J. (2007, October). *State and local implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, Vol. III—Accountability under NCLB: Interim report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development; Policy and Program Studies Service. As cited by Stullich, S., Eisner, E., & McCrary, J., Policy and Program Studies Service, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, *National assessment of Title I final report—Vol. I: Implementation*, prepared for IES. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pdf/20084012_rev.pdf.

¹⁶ Handwerk, P., Tognatta, N., Coley, R. J., & Gitomer, D. H. (2008). *Access to success: Patterns of advanced placement participation in U.S. high schools*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. Retrieved from <http://www.nocheating.org/Media/Research/pdf/PIC-ACCESS.pdf>.

¹⁷ The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a series of standardized exams created and managed by the U.S. Department of Education. Assessments are given nationally in mathematics, reading, science, writing, the arts, civics, economics, geography, and U.S. history with the goal of comparing student achievement across the country and across time. NCES. (2010). *The nation's report card: Grade 12 reading and mathematics 2009 national and pilot state results*(NCES 2011-455). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, IES. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2009/2011455.pdf>.

¹⁸ According to the U.S. Department of Education, "Basic denotes partial mastery of the knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work. Proficient represents solid academic performance. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter. Advanced signifies superior performance." Table 140. Average science scale scores and percentage of 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-graders attaining science achievement levels, by selected student characteristics and percentile: 1996, 2000, and 2005. U.S. Department of Education, NCES, NAEP Data Explorer. (This table was prepared November 2006.) Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde>. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_140.asp.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Education, NCES, *Parent and family involvement in education survey of the National Household Education Surveys Program* (PFI-NHES:2003 and 2007). (This table was prepared June 2008.) Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_157.asp.

²⁰ The College Board. *Number of students who took an AP exam in high school: 2008–09. AP report to the nation*. Data uploaded on 06/15/2010. Retrieved from <http://www.collegeboard.com/html/aprtn/index.html>.

²¹ACT. (2010). Number of ACT-tested high school graduates by race/ethnicity, 2006–2010. In: *The condition of college and career readiness, 2010*. Iowa City, IA: American College Testing. Retrieved from http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/cccr10/page_3.html.

²² The College Board. (2010). *2010 College-bound seniors: Total group profile report*. Retrieved from <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/2010-total-group-profile-report-cbs.pdf>.

²³ ACT. (2010). ACT scores over time by race/ethnicity. In: *The condition of college and career readiness, 2010*. Iowa City, IA: American College Testing.

http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/cccr10/page_7.html.

²⁴ ACT identifies one category as "Hispanic" and does not distinguish between origins.

²⁵ U.S. Department of Education, NCES. *Biennial survey of education in the United States, 1919–20 through 1949–50; Statistics of state school systems, 1959–60 and 1969–70; Revenues and expenditures for public elementary and secondary education, 1979–80*; and Common Core of Data (CCD), *National public education financial survey, 1989–90 through 2006–07*. (This table was prepared May 2009.) Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_175.asp.

²⁶ U.S. Department of Education, NCES. *Statistics of state school systems, 1969–70; Revenues and expenditures for public elementary and secondary schools, 1979–80*; and Common Core of Data (CCD), *National public education financial survey, 1989–90 through 2006–07*. (This table was prepared May 2009.) Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_185.asp.

²⁷ The percentage dropped to 4.5 from 2005–06 and then returned to 4.6%.

²⁸ U.S. Department of Education, NCES. *Biennial survey of education in the United States, 1929–30 through 1949–50; Statistics of state school systems, 1951–52 through 1969–70; Revenues and expenditures for public elementary and secondary education, 1970–71 through 1986–87*; Common Core of Data (CCD), *National public education financial survey, 1987–88 through 2006–07*; Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), *Financial statistics of institutions of higher education, 1965–66 through 1985–86; 1986–87 through 2006–07* Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), *Finance survey (IPEDS-F:FY87–99)*, and Spring 2002 through Spring 2008. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_026.asp?referrer=list.

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³⁰ "Graduates are those students who are reported as diploma recipients." U.S. Department of Education, NCES, CCD. *State nonfiscal survey of public elementary/secondary education, 1994–95 through 2006–07; Private school universe survey (PSS), selected years, 1993–94 through 2005–06*; and *National elementary and secondary high school graduates model, 1972–73 through 2005–06*. (This table was prepared November 2008.) Retrieved from

http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/projections2018/tables/table_24.asp.

³¹ "The AFGR (Average Freshman Graduation Rate) provides an estimate of the percentage of high school students who graduate on time. The rate uses aggregate student enrollment data to estimate the size of an incoming freshman class and counts of the number of diplomas awarded four years later. The incoming freshman class size is estimated by summing the enrollment in 8th grade in one year, 9th grade for the next year, and 10th grade for the year after, and then dividing by three. The averaging is intended to account for prior year retentions in the 9th grade." (Statistics do not include South Carolina.) Stillwell, R. (2010). *Public school graduates and dropouts from the Common Core of Data: School year 2007–08* (NCES 2010-341). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, IES, NCES.

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³² U.S. Department of Education, NCES. *Private school universe survey (PSS), various years, 1997–98 through 2007–08*. (This table was prepared June 2009.) Retrieved from

http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_062.asp.

³³ Gourley, B. (2009). *Mental health, substance abuse, and dropping out: A quick stats fact sheet*.

Washington, DC, American Institutes for Research, National High School. Retrieved from

http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/NHSC_MentalHealthFS.pdf

³⁴ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) database. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_110.asp.

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³⁶ Zhang, Y. (2009, November). *State high school exit exams: Trends in test programs, alternate pathways and pass rates*. Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.cep-dc.org/document/docWindow.cfm?fuseaction=document.viewDocument&documentid=297&documentFormatId=4558>.

³⁷ "Alternate pathways to graduation" are ways for general education students to graduate without passing regular exit exams by demonstrating mastery of high school-level content in a different way, such as passing an alternative assessment, or compiling a portfolio of classroom work. Zhang, Y. (2009, November). *State high school exit exams: Trends in test programs, alternate pathways and pass rates*. Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.cep-dc.org/document/docWindow.cfm?fuseaction=document.viewDocument&documentid=297&documentFormatId=4558>.

³⁸ Percent of graduates who took a core curriculum by race/ethnicity. In: ACT. (2010). *The condition of college and career readiness, 2010*. Iowa City, IA: American College Testing. Retrieved from http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/cccr09/page_4.html

³⁹ The College Board (2010). SAT® performance by core curriculum participation. In: *2010 College-bound seniors results underscore importance of academic rigor*. Princeton, NJ: The College Board. Retrieved <http://www.collegeboard.com/press/releases/213182.html>.

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of Education, NCES. [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#), (IPEDS-EF:92-99), *Fall enrollment survey*, and *Spring 2001 through Spring 2007*; and *Enrollment in degree-granting institutions model*, 1980-2006. (This table was prepared January 2009.) Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/projections2018/tables/table_10.asp.

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⁴² U.S. Department of Education, NCES, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94). *Third follow-up, 1994*; and Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/04), *First follow-up, 2004*. (This table was prepared December 2009.) Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_156.asp.