

# HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

## What does this indicator measure?

*High School Dropouts* measures by district, the (1) annual dropout rate which is the number of 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who leave school prior to graduation in any one school year, as a percentage of total high school enrollment, and (2) the cumulative dropout rate, which is the number of all 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who have left school prior to graduation, as a percentage of the graduating class. Students leaving school before ninth grade are not counted in this measure.

Cumulative rates are higher than annual rates because they include all of the students in a given age range who have dropped out of school, regardless of when they last attended school.

## Why is this indicator important?

Currently, there is a crisis in the nation's graduation rates, with a Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI) of only 68%.<sup>1</sup> Since the No Child Left Behind Act was passed in 2002, high school graduation rates have received more national attention. Graduating from high school is an important milestone in an individual's life, and it is also a measurement of how well a school system is performing.<sup>2</sup> In order for the U.S. to be economically competitive, a well educated workforce is needed.

## High School Dropouts and Family Economic Security

Dropping out of high school has severe and lifelong financial consequences.

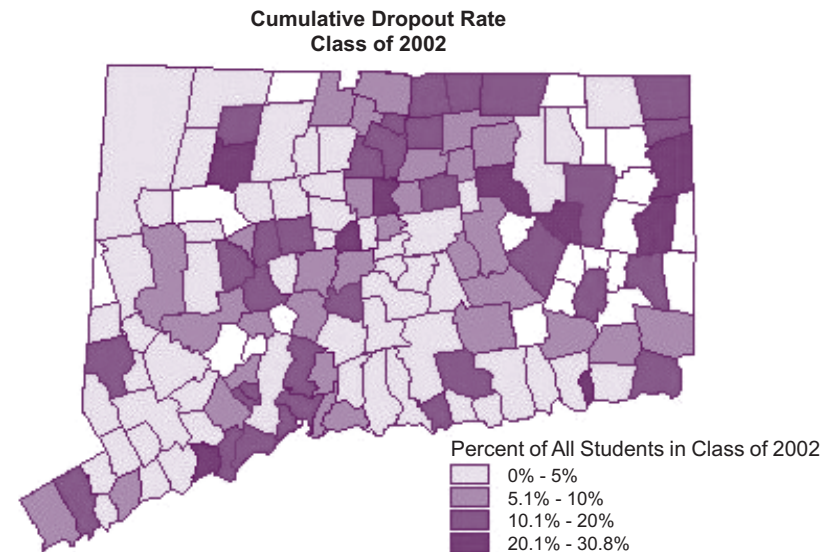
- ▶ A high school dropout has a far lower earning potential than a high school graduate. The average annual income of a high school dropout nationally is \$18,900, while a high school graduate earns \$25,900.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Not having a high school diploma leads to decreased employment options and higher unemployment. The 2002 unemployment rate for high school dropouts was 8.4%, while the rate was 5.3% for high school graduates.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ High school dropouts are more likely to live in poverty, to receive government assistance, and to be involved in crime.<sup>5</sup>

## How are Connecticut children faring?

Overall, the Connecticut dropout rate is relatively low. However, studies show that urban school districts with high poverty and higher proportions of minority students have higher dropout rates than other districts.<sup>6</sup> This trend can be seen in Connecticut, as the cumulative dropout rate is highest in New London (31%), Bridgeport (31%), Hartford (30%), and New Britain (29%).

## What can be done: Dropout prevention

- ▶ Children's dropout rates increase each time a child moves. Thus, homeownership programs can help to reduce the dropout rate.<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ Programs are needed to help at-risk students stay in school. Students with low attendance, low grades, disabilities, and those who are older than the average age at the start of ninth grade are at increased risk of dropping out. Many approaches are possible to improve the dropout rate, such as counseling, mentoring, and changes in curriculum. Additionally, schools need teachers who are able to teach students with a history of school failure.<sup>8</sup>
- ▶ Programs that increase literacy levels and support positive physical, emotional, and cognitive development are needed while children



are young. Studies show that high-quality preschool experiences increase educational attainment.<sup>9</sup>

- ▶ Access to health care can help, starting with prenatal care. Students who were low-birthweight babies are significantly more likely than other students to drop out of school.<sup>10</sup>
- ▶ Parenthood is a leading cause of dropping out of school among teenage girls.<sup>11</sup> Programs to help teen mothers obtain a diploma are needed, as well as teen pregnancy prevention programs.

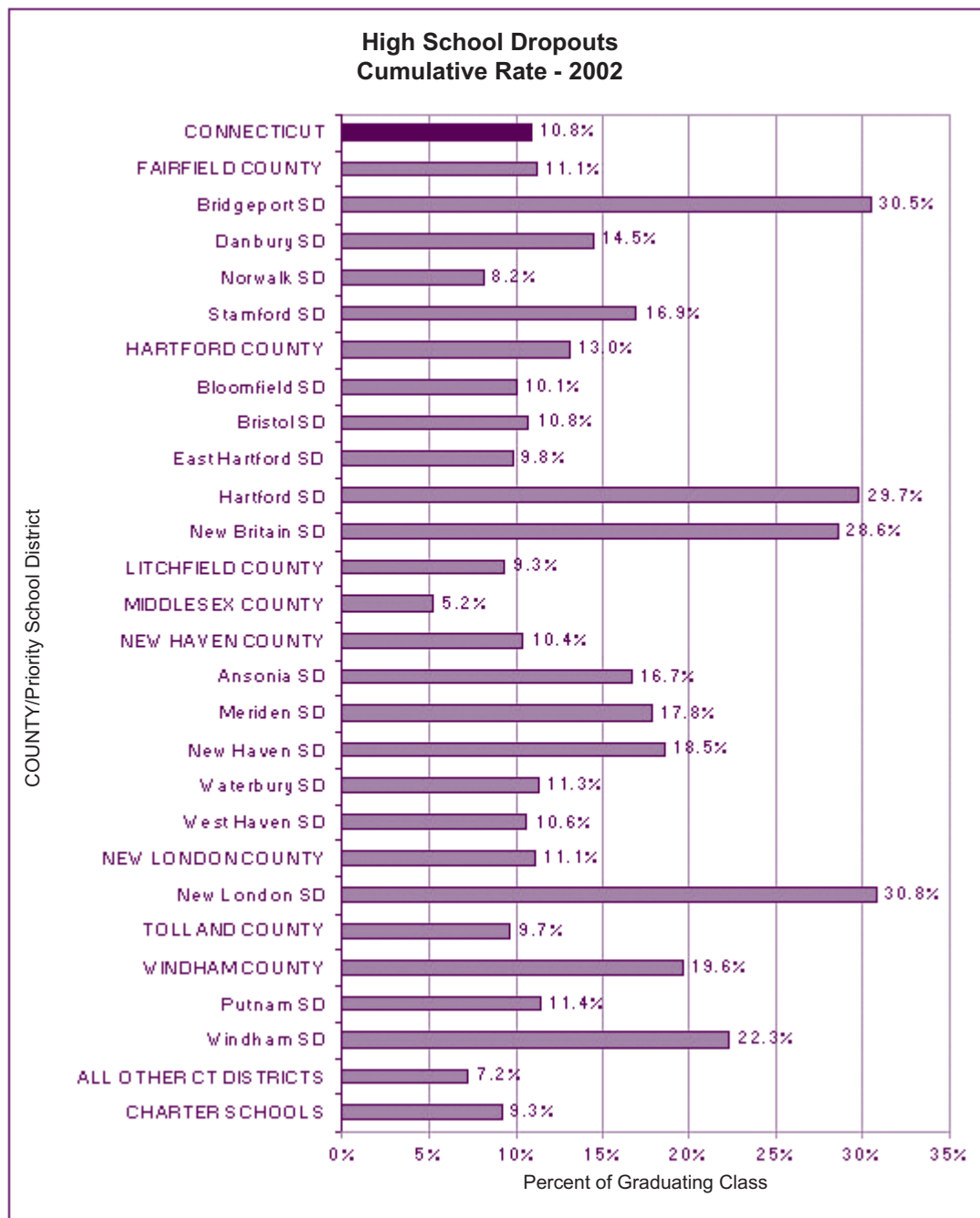
Many school systems across the nation have made considerable efforts to reduce their high school dropout rates. Houston, for example, has undertaken a complete overhaul of the entire school system, not just its high schools. It has seen a large decrease in dropout rates and a significant rise in test scores.<sup>12</sup> Connecticut needs to establish immediate interventions in order to encourage high school completion.

**Where can I get more information?**

More information can be found using the following sources:

- ▶ The Urban Institute, at: [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)
- ▶ Child Trends, at: [www.childtrendsdatabank.org](http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org)
- ▶ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, at: [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org)

Additionally, teens having difficulty in school can visit Operation Graduation, a website that provides help with homework, addiction, college applications, and gang violence, at: [www.operationgraduation.com](http://www.operationgraduation.com).



High School Dropouts																
District Name	Annual Dropouts 2002			Class of 2002	Cumulative Dropouts 2002			District Name	Annual Dropouts 2002			Class of 2002	Cumulative Dropouts 2002			
	9th -12th Graders	#	%		#	%	9th -12th Graders		#	%	#		%			
<b>Fairfield County</b>	36,479	956	2.6%	9,176	1,023	11.1%										
Bethel SD	925	5	0.5%	257	8	3.1%	Newtown SD	1,364	11	0.8%	318	7	2.2%			
Bridgeport SD	4,873	424	8.7%	1,509	460	30.5%	Norwalk SD	3,072	82	2.7%	831	68	8.2%			
Brookfield SD	838	5	0.6%	202	9	4.5%	Redding SD	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Danbury SD	2,669	101	3.8%	751	109	14.5%	Ridgefield SD	1,345	7	0.5%	298	12	4.0%			
Darien SD	873	2	0.2%	195	3	1.5%	Shelton SD	1,565	27	1.7%	398	36	9.0%			
District No. 9	789	3	0.4%	171	3	1.8%	Sherman SD	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Easton SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Stamford SD	4,013	110	2.7%	880	149	16.9%			
Fairfield SD	2,054	12	0.6%	509	18	3.5%	Stratford SD	2,172	54	2.5%	504	66	13.1%			
Greenwich SD	2,290	39	1.7%	498	36	7.2%	Trumbull SD	1,751	45	2.6%	422	6	1.4%			
Monroe SD	1,181	1	0.1%	300	3	1.0%	Weston SD	578	0	0.0%	137	0	0.0%			
New Canaan SD	967	6	0.6%	251	7	2.8%	Westport SD	1,226	12	1.0%	278	10	3.6%			
New Fairfield SD	889	6	0.7%	219	7	3.2%	Wilton SD	1,045	4	0.4%	248	6	2.4%			
<b>Hartford County</b>	40,220	1,017	2.5%	11,351	1,477	13.0%										
Avon SD	770	0	0.0%	176	0	0.0%	Hartland SD	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Berlin SD	1,024	17	1.7%	290	21	7.2%	Manchester SD	2,172	28	1.3%	580	63	10.9%			
Bloomfield SD	765	26	3.4%	238	24	10.1%	Marlborough SD	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Bristol SD	2,793	36	1.3%	715	77	10.8%	New Britain SD	2,720	189	6.9%	840	240	28.6%			
Canton SD	458	0	0.0%	122	1	0.8%	Newington SD	1,337	7	0.5%	351	12	3.4%			
District No. 8	926	13	1.4%	240	16	6.7%	Plainville SD	823	4	0.5%	222	9	4.1%			
District No. 10	727	2	0.3%	161	3	1.9%	Rocky Hill SD	668	0	0.0%	175	6	3.4%			
East Granby SD	236	2	0.8%	57	5	8.8%	Simsbury SD	1,428	11	0.8%	362	5	1.4%			
East Hartford SD	2,373	66	2.8%	714	70	9.8%	Southington SD	2,116	35	1.7%	523	37	7.1%			
East Windsor SD	433	20	4.6%	91	15	16.5%	South Windsor SD	1,403	18	1.3%	366	24	6.6%			
Enfield SD	2,118	65	3.1%	547	62	11.3%	Suffield SD	674	12	1.8%	171	15	8.8%			
Farmington SD	1,236	10	0.8%	325	13	4.0%	West Hartford SD	2,858	61	2.1%	711	61	8.6%			
Glastonbury SD	1,777	9	0.5%	471	8	1.7%	Wethersfield SD	1,083	15	1.4%	257	19	7.4%			
Granby SD	584	5	0.9%	143	13	9.1%	Windsor SD	1,462	48	3.3%	404	50	12.4%			
Hartford SD	4,667	288	6.2%	1,939	576	29.7%	Windsor Locks SD	589	30	5.1%	160	32	20.0%			
<b>Litchfield County</b>	7,632	147	1.9%	1,946	181	9.3%										
Barkhamsted SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	New Hartford SD	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Canaan SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	New Milford SD	1,401	3	0.2%	286	8	2.8%			
Colebrook SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Norfolk SD	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Cornwall SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	North Canaan SD	-	-	-	-	-	-			
District No. 1	565	8	1.4%	134	5	3.7%	Plymouth SD	508	13	2.6%	165	23	13.9%			
District No. 6	396	3	0.8%	111	4	3.6%	Salisbury SD	-	-	-	-	-	-			
District No. 7	692	3	0.4%	150	3	2.0%	Sharon SD	-	-	-	-	-	-			
District No. 12	358	8	2.2%	84	8	9.5%	Thomaston SD	347	9	2.6%	101	9	8.9%			
District No. 14	767	7	0.9%	200	1	0.5%	Torrington SD	1,272	66	5.2%	335	82	24.5%			
Kent SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Watertown SD	913	22	2.4%	285	34	11.9%			
Litchfield SD	401	3	0.7%	91	0	0.0%	Winchester SD *	12	2	16.7%	4	4	100.0%			
<b>Middlesex Co.</b>	5,805	79	1.4%	1,524	80	5.2%										
Chester SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	East Haddam SD	302	5	1.7%	85	7	8.2%			
Clinton SD	657	28	4.3%	183	27	14.8%	East Hampton SD	495	4	0.8%	142	3	2.1%			
Cromwell SD	467	1	0.2%	108	3	2.8%	Essex SD	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Deep River SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Middletown SD	1,170	9	0.8%	334	10	3.0%			
District No. 4	508	25	4.9%	138	18	13.0%	Old Saybrook SD	463	0	0.0%	99	3	3.0%			
District No. 13	563	4	0.7%	135	4	3.0%	Portland SD	297	1	0.3%	72	1	1.4%			
District No. 17	587	1	0.2%	157	2	1.3%	Westbrook SD	296	1	0.3%	71	2	2.8%			

High School Dropouts													
District Name	Annual Dropouts 2002			Cumulative Dropouts 2002			District Name	Annual Dropouts 2002			Cumulative Dropouts 2002		
	9th -12th Graders	#	%	Class of 2002	#	%		9th -12th Graders	#	%	Class of 2002	#	%
<b>New Haven Co.</b>	33,643	844	2.5%	9,294	966	10.4%							
Ansonia SD	637	36	5.7%	120	20	16.7%	Milford SD	2,035	35	1.7%	517	53	10.3%
Bethany SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Naugatuck SD	1,620	48	3.0%	468	47	10.0%
Branford SD	1,136	20	1.8%	265	18	6.8%	New Haven SD	4,902	256	5.2%	1,501	278	18.5%
Cheshire SD	1,453	15	1.0%	374	19	5.1%	North Branford SD	664	9	1.4%	162	6	3.7%
Derby SD	384	11	2.9%	110	13	11.8%	North Haven SD	1,011	22	2.2%	247	17	6.9%
District No. 5	1,504	15	1.0%	357	13	3.6%	Orange SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
District No. 15	1,131	26	2.3%	326	18	5.5%	Oxford SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
District No. 16	340	0	0.0%	-	-	-	Seymour SD	1,035	24	2.3%	273	26	9.5%
East Haven SD	1,168	8	0.7%	293	19	6.5%	Wallingford SD	2,065	23	1.1%	569	25	4.4%
Guilford SD	1,170	3	0.3%	312	11	3.5%	Waterbury SD	3,554	105	3.0%	1,127	127	11.3%
Hamden SD	1,986	76	3.8%	567	65	11.5%	West Haven SD	1,725	28	1.6%	555	59	10.6%
Madison SD	936	11	1.2%	217	5	2.3%	Wolcott SD	868	11	1.3%	224	10	4.5%
Meriden SD	2,319	62	2.7%	657	117	17.8%	Woodbridge SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>New London Co.</b>	9,428	275	2.9%	2,461	274	11.1%							
Bozrah SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Montville SD	807	16	2.0%	204	18	8.8%
Colchester SD	768	9	1.2%	164	9	5.5%	New London SD	695	93	13.4%	289	89	30.8%
District No. 18	441	5	1.1%	104	3	2.9%	North Stonington SD	284	4	1.4%	94	8	8.5%
East Lyme SD	1,117	13	1.2%	259	13	5.0%	Norwich SD *	121	52	43.0%	39	25	64.1%
Franklin SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Preston SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
Griswold SD	668	19	2.8%	177	31	17.5%	Salem SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
Groton SD	1,351	9	0.7%	332	13	3.9%	Sprague SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lebanon SD	567	7	1.2%	145	15	10.3%	Stonington SD	690	13	1.9%	159	16	10.1%
Ledyard SD	1,047	27	2.6%	278	27	9.7%	Voluntown SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lisbon SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Waterford SD	872	8	0.9%	217	7	3.2%
<b>Tolland County</b>	5,728	132	2.3%	1,406	136	9.7%							
Andover SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mansfield SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bolton SD	287	5	1.7%	60	3	5.0%	Somers SD	475	20	4.2%	109	13	11.9%
Columbia SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Stafford SD	560	14	2.5%	173	18	10.4%
Coventry SD	552	24	4.3%	141	32	22.7%	Tolland SD	798	15	1.9%	183	17	9.3%
District No. 19	1,190	16	1.3%	280	13	4.6%	Union SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ellington SD	616	3	0.5%	127	7	5.5%	Vernon SD	1,250	35	2.8%	333	33	9.9%
Hebron SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Willington SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Windham County</b>	3,773	189	5.0%	1,136	223	19.6%							
Ashford SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Plainfield SD	754	45	6.0%	260	58	22.3%
Brooklyn SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pomfret SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
Canterbury SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Putnam SD	435	16	3.7%	123	14	11.4%
Chaplin SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Scotland SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
District No. 11	222	12	5.4%	63	7	11.1%	Sterling SD	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eastford SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Thompson SD	370	10	2.7%	126	24	19.0%
Hampton SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	Windham SD	1,003	50	5.0%	305	68	22.3%
Killingly SD	989	56	5.7%	259	52	20.1%	Woodstock SD *	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Charter Schools</b>	652	11	1.7%	248	23	9.3%	<b>Regional Ed Ctrs</b>	897	24	2.7%	-	-	-
<b>Other Schools</b>	3,829	116	3.0%	1,023	129	12.6%	<b>Voc Tech Schools</b>	10,910	101	0.9%	3,138	114	3.6%
<b>CONNECTICUT</b>	158,996	3,891	2.4%	42,650	4,626	10.8%							

**Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> The CPI was developed by the Urban Institute in order to estimate the likelihood that a ninth grader will complete high school with a diploma (not a GED) in four years.
- <sup>2</sup> Swanson, C. (2004). *A Statistical Portrait of Public High School Graduation, Class of 2001*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- <sup>3</sup> Day, J. D., & Newburger, E. (2002). *The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.
- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2003). *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.
- <sup>5</sup> Child Trends Data Bank. (n.d.). *Dropout Rates*. Retrieved on March 26, 2004, from [www.childtrendsdatabank.org](http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org)
- <sup>6</sup> Swanson, C. (2004).
- <sup>7</sup> Weissbourd, R. (1996). *The Vulnerable Child: What Really Hurts America's Children and What We Can Do about It*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- <sup>8</sup> Shore, R. (2003). *KIDS COUNT Indicator Brief: Reducing the High School Dropout Rate*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation; and Orthner, D. K., & Randolph, K. A. (1997). *Linkage Between Welfare Employment Assistance and Child Educational Outcomes*. Little Rock: Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services.
- <sup>9</sup> *The Carolina Abecedarian Project: Early Learning, Later Success: The Abecedarian Study*. (n.d.) Retrieved on December 7, 2001, from <http://www.fpg/unc.edu/~abcl/>; and Behrman, R. E. (Ed.). (1995). *The Future of Children: Long-Term Outcomes of Early Childhood Programs*. 5 (3). Los Altos, CA: The David and Lucile Packard Foundation.
- <sup>10</sup> Shore, R. (2003).
- <sup>11</sup> National Campaign to End Teen Pregnancy. (2004). *Fact Sheet: Why the Education Community Cares About Preventing Teen Pregnancy*. Washington, DC.
- <sup>12</sup> Gutfield, R. (2002). *Paul Revere Rides Again: Inside the Remarkable Rise of the Houston Public Schools*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, ADVOCASEY 4(1).

**High School Dropouts****Source:**

Connecticut Department of Education. (2001-2002 school year data).

**Methodology:**

The annual number of 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who leave school prior to graduation as a percentage of students enrolled in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and the cumulative number of 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who leave school prior to graduation as a percentage of the graduating class by district. Students leaving school before ninth grade are not counted in this measure. Regional School Districts serve students from surrounding towns. Some regional districts serve students from kindergarten through grades six or eight, some districts serve grades six or eight through twelve, and some districts serve all students.

**Key:**

- \* = Contains data for those districts where most or all high school students attend endowed and incorporated academies. Specifically, Norwich students attend Norwich Free Academy, Winchester students attend the Gilbert School, and Woodstock students attend Woodstock Academy.
- = Not reported

**What we need to know**

- Percent of teens who are high school dropouts by town
- Annual number of children who dropout before 9th grade
- Effect of No Child Left Behind on dropout rate by school district