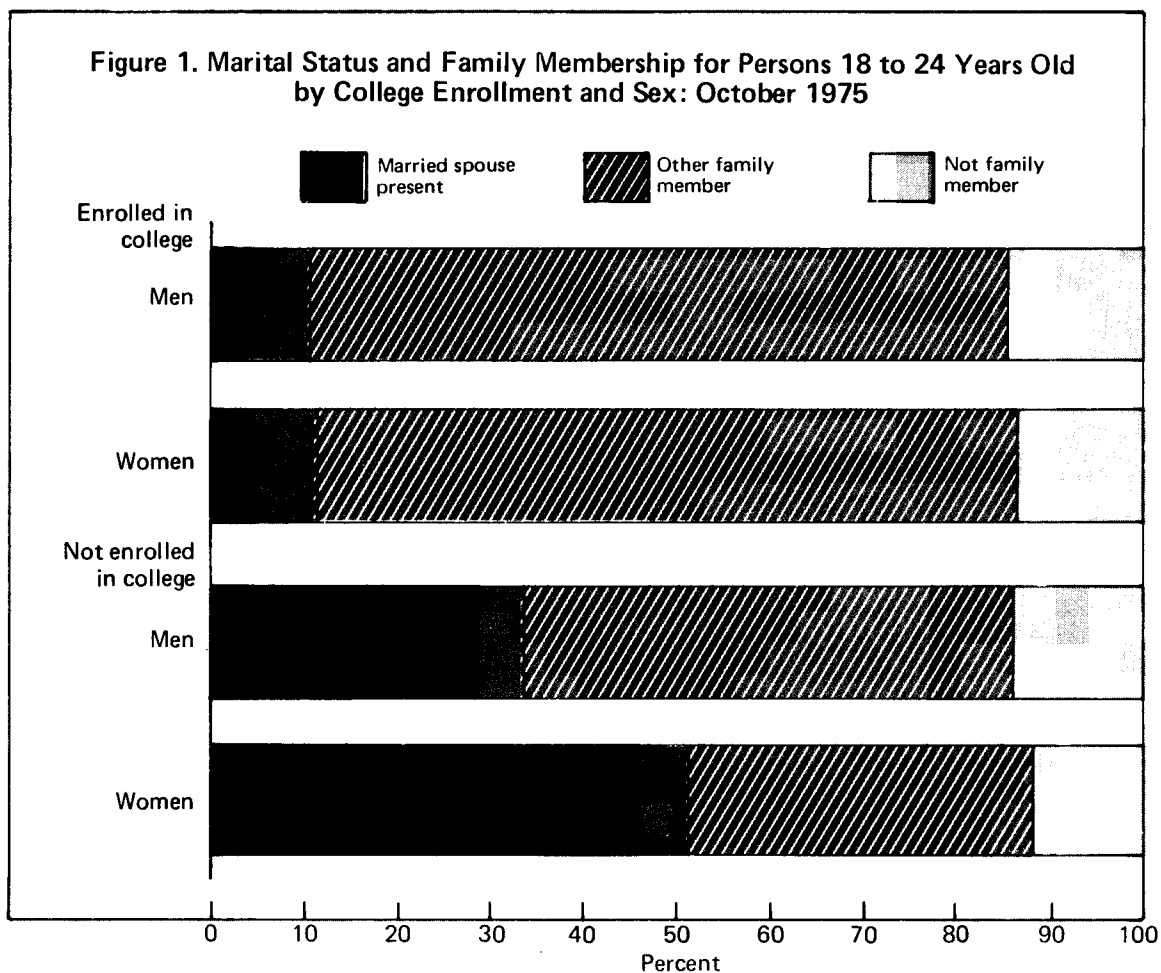


Population Characteristics

Series P-20, No. 303
 Issued December 1976

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT—SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS: OCTOBER 1975

Figure 1. Marital Status and Family Membership for Persons 18 to 24 Years Old by College Enrollment and Sex: October 1975



U.S. Department of Commerce
 BUREAU OF THE CENSUS





U.S. Department of Commerce

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Population Characteristics

Series P-20, No. 303
 Issued December 1976

School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1975

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School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1975

INTRODUCTION

This report presents an analysis of data for October 1975 from the Current Population Survey on recent changes in school and college enrollment. School enrollment patterns in 1975 for students attending nursery school through college by demographic and socioeconomic characteristics such as age, race, sex, marital status, living arrangements, and family income level are presented in statistical tables. Persons in the Armed Forces and inmates of institutions are not included in the figures shown in the statistical tables.

Changes by level of school. In October 1975 about 61 million persons 3 to 34 years old were enrolled in school—a rise of about 710,000 students in one year (table A). In addition, 1.2 million persons 35 years old and over were in school. In the past year, the number of students under 35 in college increased by 870,000¹ or 10 percent, but the number enrolled in elementary schools continued the decline that has been occurring throughout the 1970's. Enrollment in grades 1 through 8 declined by 680,000, a decrease of 2 percent between 1974 and 1975.

¹Not significantly different from the increase in total enrollment.

Elementary school enrollment peaked around 1970 at about 34.0 million, but by 1975 it had dropped to 30.4 million, about the same level as in the early 1960's. Changes in elementary enrollment reflect the changing age distribution of the population of the United States. The total population increased by about 4 percent since 1970, whereas the population of elementary school age, those 6 to 13 years old, decreased by 10 percent. Elementary school enrollment declined by the same proportion since virtually all children in this age group are enrolled.

The decrease of 3.5 million students in elementary school between 1970 and 1975 reflects earlier declines in birth levels rather than reductions in enrollment rates. High schools experienced an increase of 1 million students in the same period. However, because smaller birth cohorts are moving through the school system, high schools will experience a reduction in enrollment unless large decreases occur in the proportion of students dropping out of high school. There has not been a significant change in the drop-out rate between 1970 and 1975, and there is no basis for expecting change in the immediate future. College attendance may also begin to decline in the 1980's when the smaller birth cohorts reach college age, if the age specific enrollment rates do not increase greatly.

Table A. School Enrollment of the Population 3 Years Old and Over, by Level: October 1970 to 1975

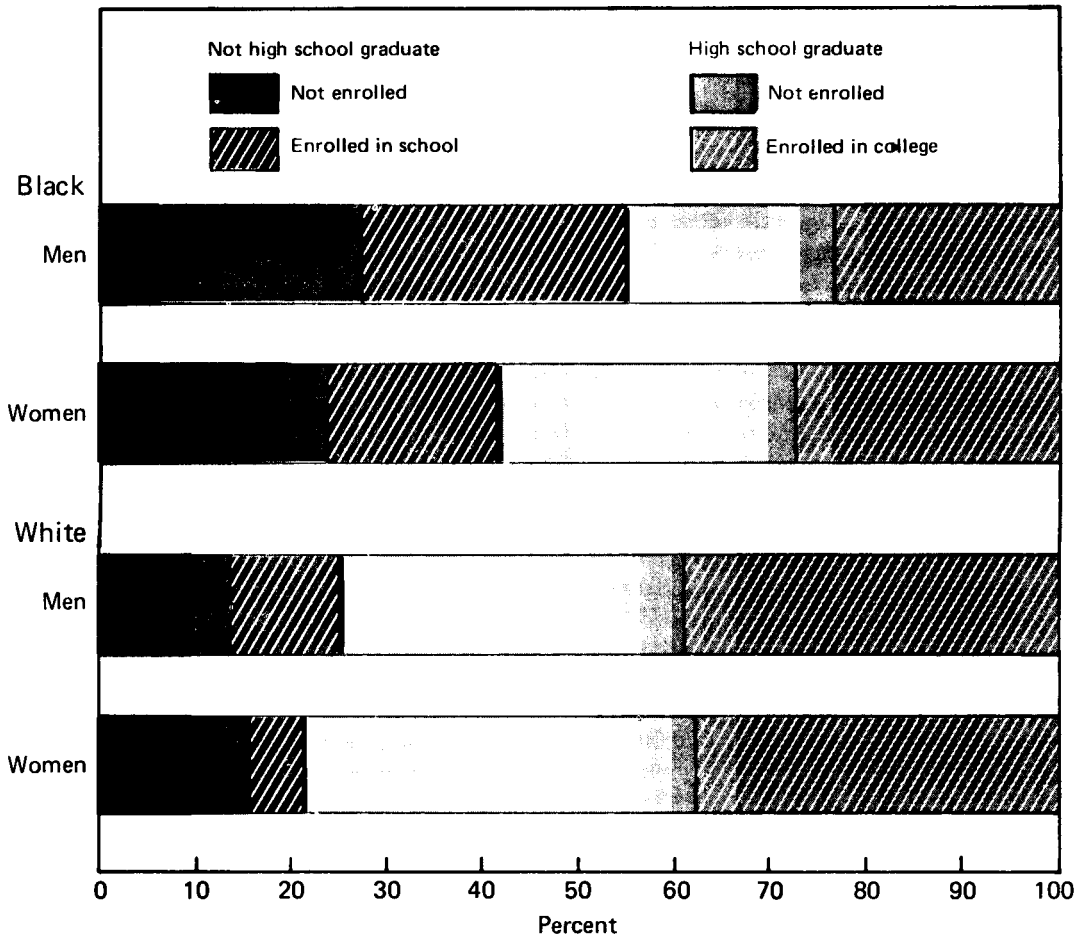
(Numbers in thousands)

Age and level	1975	1974	1970	Percent change, 1970-75
3 TO 34 YEARS OLD				
Total enrolled.....	60,969	60,259	60,357	1.0
Nursery school.....	1,748	1,607	1,096	59.5
Kindergarten.....	3,393	3,252	3,183	6.6
Elementary school.....	30,446	31,126	33,950	-10.3
High school.....	15,685	15,447	14,715	6.6
College.....	9,697	8,827	7,413	30.8
35 YEARS OLD AND OVER				
Total enrolled.....	1,242	1,103	(NA)	(X)
College.....	1,183	1,025	(NA)	(X)

NA Not available.

X Not applicable.

Figure 2. Enrollment Status of 18- and 19-Year-Olds by Educational Attainment, Race, and Sex: October 1975



Black college enrollment. There were 426,000 more Black students in college in 1975 than in 1970, an increase of about 80 percent in 5 years. White college enrollees increased by about one-fourth in the same period.

The educational level of Blacks was still significantly below that for Whites in 1975. For example, the proportion of Whites 25 to 29 years old who were college graduates was twice as high as the corresponding proportion for Black young adults (23 percent compared with 11 percent)², even though since 1970 the proportional increase in the number of college graduates 14 and over has been greater for Blacks than for Whites (65 percent increase compared with 33 percent). The educational level of Blacks is lower partially because a substantial proportion of young Black persons do not complete high school and therefore are not eligible for college. In fact, at ages 18 and 19 many young Blacks are still attending high school—22 percent compared with 8 percent of Whites. Another 25 percent of Blacks at these ages were not enrolled in school and had not yet graduated from high school in 1975, whereas only 15 percent of Whites were high school dropouts (table 1

and figure 2). For the educational level of Blacks to rise to that of Whites in the future, the initial change will have to occur in the proportion completing high school. (In 1975, 14 percent of Whites and twice that proportion of Blacks 25 to 29 years old had not completed high school and were not enrolled in school.) In the past a smaller proportion of Black high school graduates entered college, but in 1975 the proportion of Black high school graduates 18 and 19 years old enrolled in college was about equal to that of Whites (about 50 percent enrolled).

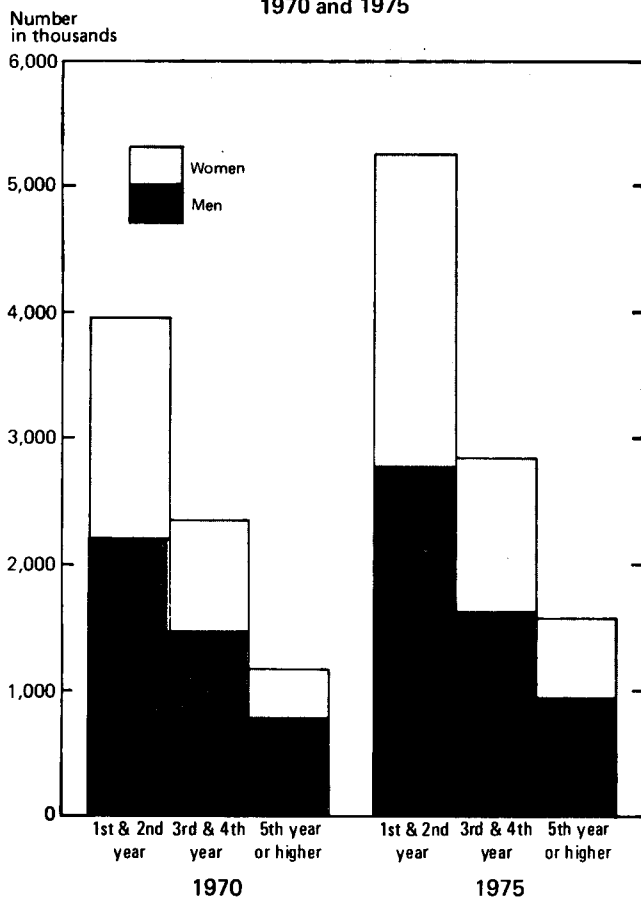
Although increases have occurred since 1970 in the number of Blacks enrolled in college, a large proportion of Blacks who enter college at the freshman level do not graduate. Nevertheless, there is some evidence from the October 1975 survey that further gains are being made by Blacks; they have risen from 5 percent of the college seniors in 1970 to 8 percent in 1975. The data show that not only are more Blacks entering college, but they are also remaining in school longer. A difference remains, however, between the proportion of freshmen and seniors who are Black (at the 94 percent level of confidence)—table 5.

²U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 295, "Educational Attainment: March 1975."

Graduate school enrollment. College enrollment of persons under 35 years old increased by close to one-third

(31 percent) from 1970 to 1975. The increase in enrollment was larger in the entering levels, freshmen and sophomores, and among graduate students (table B and figure 3) than among juniors and seniors.

Figure 3. College Enrollment of the Population 14 to 34 Years Old by Level and Sex: October 1970 and 1975



Although graduate enrollment is only one-sixth of total college enrollment, 1.6 million students 20 to 34 years old were attending graduate and professional schools in 1975; this level was 40 percent above that in 1970. Many students leave college to enter the labor force each year, while others continue their education into graduate school in order to obtain more marketable skills which may give them a better competitive advantage.

The substantial increase in graduate school enrollment since 1970 was the result of about a 50-percent rise in the number of 20-to-34-year-old college graduates rather than an increase in the proportion of college graduates choosing to go on to graduate school. This large increase in the number of college graduates was due to a 21 percent increase in the number of persons in the age group, between 1970 and 1975 (the result of the late 1940's and early 1950's "baby boom"), and at the same time, an increase in the proportion of persons completing 4 years of college (from 14 to 17 percent of the age group).

Women in college. From 1970 to 1975 the increase in the number of women enrolled in college was substantially larger than that for men (table C). Women increased their enrollment by about 44 percent, whereas men increased theirs by about 21 percent. In 1975, women made up half of all freshmen but lower proportions of other undergraduate classes (table 5). This finding indicates a higher discontinuation rate for women than men, although the gap has narrowed. These developments coincide with other social and economic changes that have occurred recently among women such as marrying later, having fewer children, increased participation in the labor force, and continuing to work after children are born.³ In recent years, more women have been remaining in the labor force and making economic use of their education.

³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 58, "A Statistical Portrait of Women in the U.S."*

Table B. College Enrollment of the Population 14 to 34 Years Old by Level: October 1975 and 1970

(Numbers in thousands)

College level	1975	1970	Percent change, 1970-75
Total, college enrollment.....	9,697	7,413	30.8
Undergraduate enrollment.....	8,108	6,274	29.2
1st and 2nd year.....	5,262	3,951	33.2
3rd and 4th year.....	2,846	2,323	22.5
Graduate enrollment.....	1,590	1,140	39.5
Men.....	949	774	22.6
Women.....	640	366	74.9

The large increase in female enrollment was partially accounted for by the substantial rise in the number of older women attending college. The number of women 25 to 34 years old in college more than doubled from 1970 to 1975, while the number of women students under 25 years old increased by about 30 percent. This change elevated older women from 14 to 22 percent of all college women under 35 years old (table C). The increase in enrollment of older women, who were more likely to be married than young women, contributed to the rise in the proportion of married women attending college (from 3 to 5 percent). On the other hand, the proportion of single (including separated, divorced, or widowed) women enrolled remained at about 27 percent. The increased accessibility of two-year colleges may account for older women and married women increasing their college participation rates.

Undergraduate enrollment of women increased by about two-thirds in two-year colleges and by about one-third in four-year colleges from 1970 to 1975. About a third of all undergraduate women were in two-year colleges in 1975. A higher proportion of married women than single women in their first 2 years of college were enrolled in two-year colleges. Also women 20 to 34 years old in the first 2 years of college were more likely to be in two-year colleges, whereas younger female students were more likely to attend four-year colleges.

Among women, the total number of freshmen in two-year colleges is about the same as the number of freshmen

in four-year colleges. However, two-thirds of the freshmen who entered college right after high school attended four-year colleges; three-fourths of the freshmen who delayed college entrance at least 5 years after graduating from high school were in two-year colleges. This was true for men as well as women.

Although women, in previous years, were more likely than men to graduate from high school, they were less likely to enter college or finish once entered. In the early 1960's, close to one-third of the female high school graduates 25 to 34 years old had attended college and less than half of those graduated. Among male high school graduates of the same age, almost half attended college and somewhat more than half of the men who attended completed 4 years. By 1975 for both men and women 25 to 34 years old, the proportion who had attended college increased substantially, and the college completion rate for women rose to about half but was still less than that for men.⁴ College graduation is usually necessary to obtain entrance into the highest levels of professional and managerial occupations. Persons with some years of college, but without a completed degree, were more like high school graduates who did not attend college than college graduates in their income and occupation according to 1970 census data. Of former college students without degrees only about

⁴U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 274 "Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1973 and 1974" and No. 295 "Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1975".

Table C. College Enrollment of the Population 16 to 34 Years Old by Age and Sex: October 1975 and 1970

(Numbers in thousands)

Sex and age	1975		1970		Percent change, 1975-70
	Number enrolled	Percent enrolled	Number enrolled	Percent enrolled	
Men, 16 to 34 years.....	5,336	16.9	4,401	16.9	21.2
16 and 17 years.....	122	2.9	130	3.4	-6.2
18 and 19 years.....	1,426	36.7	1,346	40.2	5.9
20 and 21 years.....	1,256	34.0	1,083	40.9	16.0
22 to 24 years.....	1,011	19.7	902	20.6	12.1
25 to 29 years.....	1,025	12.7	684	10.6	49.9
30 to 34 years.....	496	7.5	256	4.8	93.8
Women, 16 to 34 years.....	4,354	13.0	3,013	10.5	44.5
16 and 17 years.....	163	4.0	130	3.4	25.4
18 and 19 years.....	1,517	36.7	1,248	34.6	21.6
20 and 21 years.....	1,058	26.6	774	22.3	36.7
22 to 24 years.....	668	12.0	452	8.9	47.8
25 to 29 years.....	590	6.9	255	3.7	131.4
30 to 34 years.....	357	5.0	154	2.6	131.8

one-fifth of the workers in their mid-twenties were employed in professional occupations compared with over three-fifths of college graduates.

There is evidence in the 1975 survey of enrollment that women are remaining in college longer and are more likely to be enrolled at higher levels than in the past (table D). A higher proportion of college seniors were women, for example, in 1975 than in 1970—44 percent compared with 37 percent. Also, women made up a significant proportion of graduate students in 1975. In the first year of graduate school, women were about half of all students.⁵ In the second and higher years they constituted only about one-third, but significantly more than the 22 percent 5 years earlier. Not all changes suggest a rapid growth in the number of women obtaining advanced degrees, however. For example, a smaller proportion of the women graduate students than men were attending full time.

Family membership of college students. During the past 5 years, the proportion of young adults 18 to 24 years old who were married and living with their spouse decreased, and during the same period the proportion of young adults who were not members of families increased. Table E presents data on family membership and marital status of college students and those not enrolled in college. It shows that the proportion of 18-to-24-year-olds married and living with their spouse has declined for persons enrolled and those not enrolled in college. The proportion of persons who were independent of families has increased for both groups, and the proportion of all 18-to-24-year-olds

⁵ Not significantly different from the proportion of college seniors or the proportion of first year graduate students in 1970.

who were part of their parents' household has not changed significantly since 1970. These data indicate that in the mid-1970's young persons were less likely to marry and more likely to be independent of families.

A question has arisen concerning the interpretation of data which show that more college students are becoming independent of their families. The question arises because Federal programs which provide economic assistance to college students based on the financial status of the family may have encouraged an increasing number of students to state that they were independent of their parents in order to receive grant money. In fact, a higher proportion of young persons were reported as being on their own and not family members in 1975 than in 1970, a shift from 9 to 13 percent. This change has occurred among college students and others alike; there seems to be little difference in the proportion of each group not in a family. Therefore, it appears that requirements of new grant programs had little to do with the changes in family status of students.

College students 18 to 24 years of age were more likely to be members of their parents' households than were others of the same age—about three-fourths versus less than one-half (Many unmarried college students were living away from their families while attending school but were still counted as part of their parents' households in the survey) table E and figure 1. There is some evidence that in the past 5 years, the proportion of students who were members of their parents' households has decreased slightly. In fact, among college students under 25 years of age the increase in independent persons was associated with decreases in both the proportion of students who were married with spouse present and the proportion who were part of their parents' households. Among those not in college, there was a decrease of 6.5 percentage points in the

Table D. College Enrollment of the Population 14 to 34 Years Old by Level, Type of School, and Sex: October 1975 and 1970

(Numbers in thousands)

College level	Men			Women		
	1975	1970	Percent change, 1970-75	1975	1970	Percent change, 1970-75
Total, college enrollment....	5,342	4,401	21.4	4,355	3,013	44.5
Undergraduate enrollment ¹	4,393	3,627	21.1	3,715	2,646	40.4
Two-year college.....	1,412	1,001	41.1	1,148	691	66.1
Four-year college.....	2,793	2,525	10.6	2,400	1,852	29.6
1st and 2nd year.....	1,326	1,206	10.0	1,264	1,038	21.8
3rd and 4th year.....	1,467	1,319	11.2	1,136	814	39.6
Graduate enrollment.....	949	774	22.6	640	366	74.9
1st year.....	392	340	15.3	352	244	44.3
2nd year and over.....	557	434	28.3	288	122	136.1

¹Includes persons who did not report type of college.

proportion who were married and living with their spouses but increases in the proportions of persons who were members of parents' households and those who were not family members.

Therefore, overall, the increase in the departure of young college students from their parents' households to live independently is not very different from that for others of the same age who are not college students.

Table E. Marital Status and Family Membership of Persons 18 to 24 Years Old by College Enrollment Status and Sex: October 1975 and 1970

Year, enrollment status, and sex	Total number (thousands)	Total (percent)	In primary family		Not in primary family
			Married, spouse present	Other family member	
1975					
Total.....	26,387	100.0	34.6	52.4	13.0
Men.....	12,724	100.0	27.0	58.8	14.2
Women.....	13,663	100.0	41.7	46.5	11.9
Enrolled in college.....					
Men.....	6,935	100.0	10.8	75.7	13.5
Men.....	3,693	100.0	10.4	75.0	14.5
Women.....	3,243	100.0	11.2	76.4	12.4
Not enrolled in college.....					
Men.....	19,452	100.0	43.1	44.1	12.8
Men.....	9,031	100.0	33.8	52.2	14.1
Women.....	10,421	100.0	51.2	37.2	11.7
1970					
Total.....	22,552	100.0	40.2	51.2	8.5
Men.....	10,385	100.0	32.5	58.9	8.5
Women.....	12,167	100.0	46.9	44.6	8.5
Enrolled in college.....					
Men.....	5,805	100.0	13.3	78.2	8.5
Men.....	3,331	100.0	15.1	76.9	8.1
Women.....	2,474	100.0	11.0	80.0	9.1
Not enrolled in college.....					
Men.....	16,747	100.0	49.6	41.8	8.5
Men.....	7,054	100.0	40.7	50.5	8.5
Women.....	9,693	100.0	56.1	35.5	8.3

EXPLANATION OF POPULATION ESTIMATES

In order to obtain estimates of the characteristics of the civilian noninstitutional population at the time the Current Population Survey is taken, weighted sample results of the survey are inflated using the most recent postcensal population estimates as bases. The base for inflation factors used with the October 1972 to 1975 surveys was the 1970 Census of Population; all previous years (since 1961) have been based on the 1960 Census of Population. A comparison of October 1971 survey data based on the 1960 census with revised data using the 1970 census as a base, shows the 1970-based estimates for all ages under 12 years old to be smaller than the

1960-based estimates. In comparing data based on different census years, it is important to consider the effect of weighting procedures. Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 260, appendix table B shows school enrollment data by age, sex, and level for October 1971 based on the 1970 census figures.

RELATED REPORTS

Advance data on school enrollment for October 1975 were presented in Series P-20, No. 294. Statistics on school enrollment for October of the years prior to 1975 have been published in other reports in Series P-20. See back cover for list.

Data on college plans of high school seniors for October 1975 were presented in "College Plans of High School Seniors: October 1975," **Current Population Reports**, Series P-20, No. 299. Data on nursery school and kindergarten enrollment for October 1974 were published in DHEW Publication No. (NCES) 76-147, "Preprimary Enrollment: October 1974" by the National Center for Education Statistics. A report on the relationship between preprimary enrollment of children and labor force participation of mothers from the years 1967 to 1975 is being prepared by the Bureau of the Census.

Statistics on school enrollment for cities, standard metropolitan statistical areas, States, regions, and the United States appear in reports of the decennial censuses. Detailed statistics on school enrollment by age and socio-economic characteristics for regions and the United States are presented in Subject Reports of the 1970 census, especially in PC(2)-5A, School Enrollment.

Figures on school enrollment from the October Current Population Survey differ from decennial census data for reasons in addition to the difference in the dates. In the first place, the survey data exclude the institutional population and members of the Armed Forces. These two groups were included in the census. Second, there were

differences in field work. The small group of Current Population Survey enumerators were more experienced and had more intensive training and supervision than the large number of temporary census enumerators and may have more often obtained more accurate answers from respondents. Third, the census was taken in April and relates to enrollment since February 1, whereas the surveys were taken in October and relate to enrollment in the current term. This difference in months of the year affects not only the extent of school enrollment (through "drop-outs" during the school year, etc.) but also the level of school in which persons of a given age are enrolled.

Data from school systems. Information on college enrollment is also collected and published by Federal, State, and local governmental agencies, and by independent research organizations. This information is generally obtained from reports of school systems and institutions of higher learning, and from other surveys and censuses. These data are only roughly comparable with data collected by the Bureau of the Census by household interviews, however, because of differences in definitions, subject matter covered, and enumeration methods. The census data are subject to sampling variability, which may be relatively large where numbers for specific age or population groups, or for given school categories, are small.