

**Population Characteristics**

Series P-20, No. 429

**School Enrollment—  
Social and Economic  
Characteristics of  
Students:  
October 1986**



U.S. Department of Commerce  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

---

## Acknowledgments

This report was prepared in the Education and Social Stratification Branch, under the general direction of **Paul M. Siegel**, Chief. **Brenda R. Jeffries** contributed to table preparation, and **Andrea E. Adams** conducted the statistical review of the text. Survey operations and data processing were coordinated by **Kathleen P. Creighton**, Demographic Surveys Division. Sampling review and appendix C were provided by **Lloyd Hicks**, Statistical Methods Division. **Robert Kominski**, Education and Social Stratification Branch and **Signe Wetrogen**, Population Projections Branch, Population Division, reviewed the contents of the report. Overall direction was provided by **Arthur J. Norton**, Assistant Chief, Population Division. Data collection was conducted by Bureau of the Census interviewers under the overall direction of **Stanley D. Matchett**, Chief, Field Division.

The staff of Publication Services Division, **Walter C. Odom**, Chief, performed publication planning, design, composition, editorial review, and printing planning and procurement. **Linda H. Ambill** performed publication coordination and editing.

CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

---

**Population Characteristics**

Series P-20, No. 429

---

Issued August 1988

**School Enrollment-  
Social and Economic  
Characteristics of  
Students:  
October 1986**

By Rosalind R. Bruno



**U.S. Department of Commerce**  
**C. William Verity, Secretary**  
**Donna F. Tuttle, Deputy Secretary**  
**Robert Ortner, Under Secretary**  
for Economic Affairs

**BUREAU OF THE CENSUS**  
**John G. Keane, Director**

---

# Contents

---

	Page
Introduction .....	1
Highlights .....	1
Trends in elementary and high school enrollment.....	1
Trends in college enrollment.....	2
 <b>TEXT TABLES</b>	
A. School enrollment of persons 3 years old and over by level: October 1986, 1985, and 1981 .....	1
B. College students 14 years old and over by level, type of college, full-time status, and race: October 1986 .....	4
 <b>FIGURE</b>	
1. Black and White population 5 to 13 years old: 1960 to 2000 .....	3
 <b>DETAILED TABLES</b>	
1. Enrollment status for persons 3 to 34 years old, by age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, and Mexican origin: October 1986 .....	5
2. Enrollment status for persons 3 to 34 years old by residence, age, race, Hispanic origin, and Mexican origin: October 1986 .....	9
3. Level of enrollment for persons 3 to 34 years old by control of school, residence, sex, race, Hispanic origin, and Mexican origin: October 1986.....	14
4. Level of enrollment for persons 3 years old and over, by age and sex: October 1986 .....	18
5. Attendance status for nursery school and kindergarten students 3 to 6 years old by level and control of school, residence, age, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1986 .....	19
6. Attendance status for college students 16 to 34 years old by sex, age, residence, year and control of college, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1986 .....	21
7. Enrollment status in 1985 for persons 14 to 24 years old by educational attainment, age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1986.....	23
8. Year of high school graduation for persons 16 to 34 years old by educational attainment, enrollment status, sex, and race: October 1986.....	27
9. Enrollment rates for persons 3 to 34 years old by age, race, Hispanic origin, and region: October 1986 .....	31
10. Marital status for persons 14 to 34 years old by level and status of enrollment, attendance status, age, sex, and race: October 1986 .....	32
11. Enrollment status of primary family members 3 to 34 years old by educational attainment of family householder, level and control of school, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1986 .....	35

12.	College attendance of primary family members 18 to 24 years old, by family income, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1986.....	42
13.	Enrollment status for primary family members 18 to 24 years old by family income, control of school, marital status, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1986 .....	44
14.	Enrollment status for primary family members 3 to 17 years old by family income, level and control of school, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1986 .....	49
15.	Single grade of enrollment and high school graduation status for persons 3 to 34 years old by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1986 .....	54
16.	Modal grade of enrollment for persons 3 to 21 years old by race, sex, age, and Hispanic origin: October 1986 .....	60
17.	Persons 35 years old and over by enrollment and attendance status, labor force status, marital status, sex, and race: October 1986.....	63
18.	Enrollment of college undergraduates 14 to 34 years old by type of college, residence, age, and sex: October 1986.....	64
19.	Attendance status of college undergraduates 16 to 34 years old by sex, age, type, year, and control of college, and residence: October 1986 .....	65
20.	Year of high school graduation for college undergraduates 16 to 34 years old by type and year of college and sex: October 1986 .....	67
21.	Enrollment status in 1985 for college undergraduates 14 to 24 years old by type of college, educational attainment, age, and sex: October 1986.....	68
22.	College undergraduates 14 to 34 years old by region and type of college: October 1986 .....	69
23.	Marital status of college undergraduates 14 to 34 years old by type of college, attendance status, age, and sex: October 1986.....	70
24.	Undergraduate attendance status of primary family members 14 to 34 years old by educational attainment of family householder and type and control of college: October 1986 .....	71
25.	Undergraduate enrollment status for primary family members 18 to 24 years old by family income, marital status, type and control of college, and sex: October 1986 .....	72

## APPENDIXES

A.	Supplementary tables .....	73
B.	Definitions and explanations.....	91
C.	Source and reliability of the estimates .....	97

## APPENDIX TABLES

A-1.	Year of college in which enrolled for college students 14 years old and over by type of school, full-time status, race, Hispanic origin, and sex: October 1986 ....	75
A-2.	School enrollment of persons 3 to 34 years old, by level and control of school, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1955 to 1986 .....	78
A-3.	Percentage of persons 3 to 34 years old enrolled in school, by age, sex, and race: October 1955 to 1986 .....	80
A-4.	Age distribution of college students 14 years old and over, by sex: October 1947 to 1986 .....	83
A-5.	Persons 14 to 34 years old, by high school graduate status, college enrollment, attainment, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1967 to 1986 .....	85
A-6.	College enrollment of persons 14 to 34 years old, by sex, race, and Hispanic origin: October 1965 to 1986 .....	87
A-7.	College enrollment of students 14 to 34 years old, by type of college, attendance status, age, and sex: October 1970 to 1986.....	88

A-8.	Civilian college enrollment by sex and Armed Forces participation for males 18 to 24 years old: October 1960 and 1965 to 1986 .....	90
C-1.	Generalized standard errors for estimated numbers of persons: Total or White ...	101
C-2.	Generalized standard errors for estimated numbers of persons: Black and Hispanic .....	102
C-3.	Generalized standard errors for estimated percentages: Total or White .....	102
C-4.	Generalized standard errors for estimated percentages: Black and Hispanic .....	103
C-5.	Parameters and factors to be used for school enrollment characteristics for direct computation of standard errors.....	103

# School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1986

## INTRODUCTION

This report presents detailed tabulations of data on school enrollment in October 1986 and summary time series of data collected since the inception of the survey. The data are from the October school enrollment supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data on school enrollment of the civilian non-institutional population have been collected in the CPS annually since 1946 and regularly reported in this publication series. School enrollment data are shown by the following person and school characteristics: age, race, Hispanic origin, sex, marital status, family income, education of householder, metropolitan residence, level and grade of school, full-time attendance status, public/private school, and two-year/four-year college.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Some of the highlights of the data presented are:

- In October 1986, there were 60.1 million persons ( $\pm 0.5$ )<sup>1</sup> enrolled in school.
- No level of school shown in this report demonstrated a significant change in enrollment from 1985 to 1986.
- Over 5 years (1981-1986) preprimary enrollment grew by one-fourth (24.8 percent  $\pm 4.7$ )
- In the same period, elementary and high school enrollment declined by about 3 percent ( $\pm 1.1$ ).
- Total college enrollment was not different in 1986 from any year since 1981, even though the traditional college-age population has declined.
- Black elementary school enrollment decreased less than White enrollment since the peak elementary enrollment year, 1970. The Black elementary school-age population will increase proportionately more than the comparable White population during the next decade.

<sup>1</sup>The data in this report are from a sample of the population and, therefore, are subject to both nonsampling and sampling error. The number in parentheses is equal to 1.6 times the standard error of the estimate. This gives the 90-percent confidence interval when added to and subtracted from the estimate. A complete discussion of confidence intervals and standard errors is in appendix C.

In 1986, there were 60.1 million persons enrolled in school, including 12.4 million college students and 6.5 million children enrolled in preprimary school. There were no changes in enrollment since 1985 at any level shown in table A. Between 1981 and 1986, preprimary enrollment increased by about one-fourth and elementary school and high school enrollment declined, while college did not change significantly.

## TRENDS IN ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Increased population and an increased enrollment rate contributed to a significant rise in preprimary enrollment from 1981 to 1986. Annual variations in elementary school enrollment have been nearly exclusively determined by demographics—changes in the numbers of births in previous years and to a lesser extent, immigration and mortality. At the elementary level, although larger cohorts have entered lower grades, they have not yet affected the total figures for elementary school because enrollment in the upper grades has declined. By 1986, the first through third grades exhibited significant gains in enrollment, from their lowest levels in the early 1980's. The larger cohorts will begin to affect high school enrollment figures in the early 1990's.

**Table A. School Enrollment of Persons 3 Years Old and Over by Level: October 1986, 1985, and 1981**

(In thousands)

Level	1986	1985	1981
Total <sup>1</sup> .....	60,062	59,780	59,858
Nursery school .....	2,553	2,491	*2,058
Kindergarten .....	3,961	3,815	*3,161
Elementary school ...	27,121	26,866	*27,795
High school <sup>1</sup> .....	14,025	14,084	*14,717
College <sup>1</sup> .....	12,402	12,524	12,127

\*Significantly different from the figure for 1986, at the 90 percent level of confidence.

<sup>1</sup>Includes persons 35 years old and over, not shown in most detailed tables.

The picture was slightly different for separate race and ethnic groups. Although for Whites there has not been a significant increase in elementary enrollment,

the number of Black and Hispanic students in elementary school in 1986 was significantly above the figure two years earlier<sup>2</sup> (table A-2).

The population changes which have influenced elementary school enrollments over time have been different for Whites and Blacks. Since 1970, the year of the highest elementary school enrollment, the proportional decline in Black elementary school enrollment was smaller than that for Whites because the proportional population decline was less for Blacks than for Whites (figure 1). Both groups experienced decreases in birth rates, but the rate for Blacks remained higher than that for Whites. From 1970 to 1986, White elementary school enrollment declined by 24 percent and Black enrollment declined by 11 percent. Different trends are projected for the future size of each group. Because of likely continued higher fertility rates among Blacks, the increase in the elementary school-age population will be proportionately greater for Blacks than for Whites. According to latest population projections, from 1986 to 1998 (projected to be the next peak year for the elementary school age population), the White population 6 to 13 years old will rise by 14 percent but the Black population will increase by 24 percent.<sup>3</sup> By 1998, when the elementary school-age population reaches a new peak of 31 million, there will be a new all-time-high number of Black elementary school-age children. The size of the Black population 6 to 13 years old will be about 15 percent larger than in the last peak year, 1970. For Whites, the new peak will be about 12 percent lower than the 1970 figure. Even with the greater proportional increase among Blacks than Whites, Blacks will increase only slightly as a proportion of the total population in the age group, from 15.6 in 1986 to 16.7 in 1998 (they were 13.6 percent in 1970).

## TRENDS IN COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

Demographic changes have had a significant influence on college enrollment also: beginning in the late 1960's, increases in the young college age population, brought about by the maturing of the baby boom cohort, contributed substantially to the increased college student population. As that cohort (born 1947 to 1961) began to move out of the traditional college

ages, to be replaced by smaller cohorts, it was popularly expected that college enrollment would decrease. It has not happened.

The total number of college students in 1986 was not significantly different from that in any year since 1981 (table A-4). This stability can be attributed, in part, to the increased enrollment of older students (25 years old and over) who increased by 11 percent from 1981 to 1986, which resulted primarily from the increase in the older population. The number of younger students enrolled did not change significantly, because enrollment rates increased concurrently with the population decline. Since 1981, the 18- to 24-year-old population declined by about 2.5 million persons, but the number of college students of that age did not change significantly. The proportion of the age group enrolled in college rose 2 percentage points, to 28 percent, from 1981 to 1986. Even in the youngest age group, 18- and 19-year-olds, whose population declined by about 13 percent since 1981, the number enrolled in 1986 was not different from that in any year since 1975.

The college enrollment rate of high school graduates did not change significantly in the decade preceding the survey. Table A-5 shows that the proportion of 18- to 24-year-old high school graduates enrolled in college (34 percent) was not significantly different from the proportion enrolled in 1976. For Blacks, on the other hand, the proportion declined to 28.6 percent in 1986, from 33.5 percent 10 years earlier. Much of the decrease for Blacks can be attributed to the increase in the proportion of youths completing high school but not a concurrent rise in the proportion of the age group attending college.

The picture of undergraduate college enrollment in the 1980's contradicts the traditional concept of full-time enrollment in a four-year college. Only half of all undergraduates were attending four-year colleges full time in 1986 (table B). A little more than one-third of undergraduates were enrolled in two-year colleges (split about evenly between full time and part time) and about one-eighth were enrolled in four-year colleges part time.

Larger shares of Hispanics than Whites or Blacks attended two-year colleges and attended part time in 1986 (table B). About 45 percent of Hispanic undergraduates, compared with 36 percent of Whites and 31 percent of Blacks, attended two-year colleges. The proportions attending part time were 41, 33, and 29 percent, respectively. Among young undergraduates (under 25 years old), 62 percent of Whites and 65 percent of Blacks (not significantly different from each other) but only 45 percent of Hispanics were full-time students in four-year institutions.

Twice the proportion of White students as Blacks were reported to be graduate students (20 percent vs.

<sup>2</sup>Beginning in 1985, estimates were based on revised survey weighting procedures which included separate population controls for persons of Hispanic origin. The new technique increased the Hispanic population counted in the survey and consequently increased reported Hispanic enrollment. Any change in Hispanic figures from 1984 to 1985 which were not also evident for other groups must be viewed with caution because of the change in weighting procedures.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No 952, *Population Projections by Age, Race, and Sex: 1983 to 2020.*

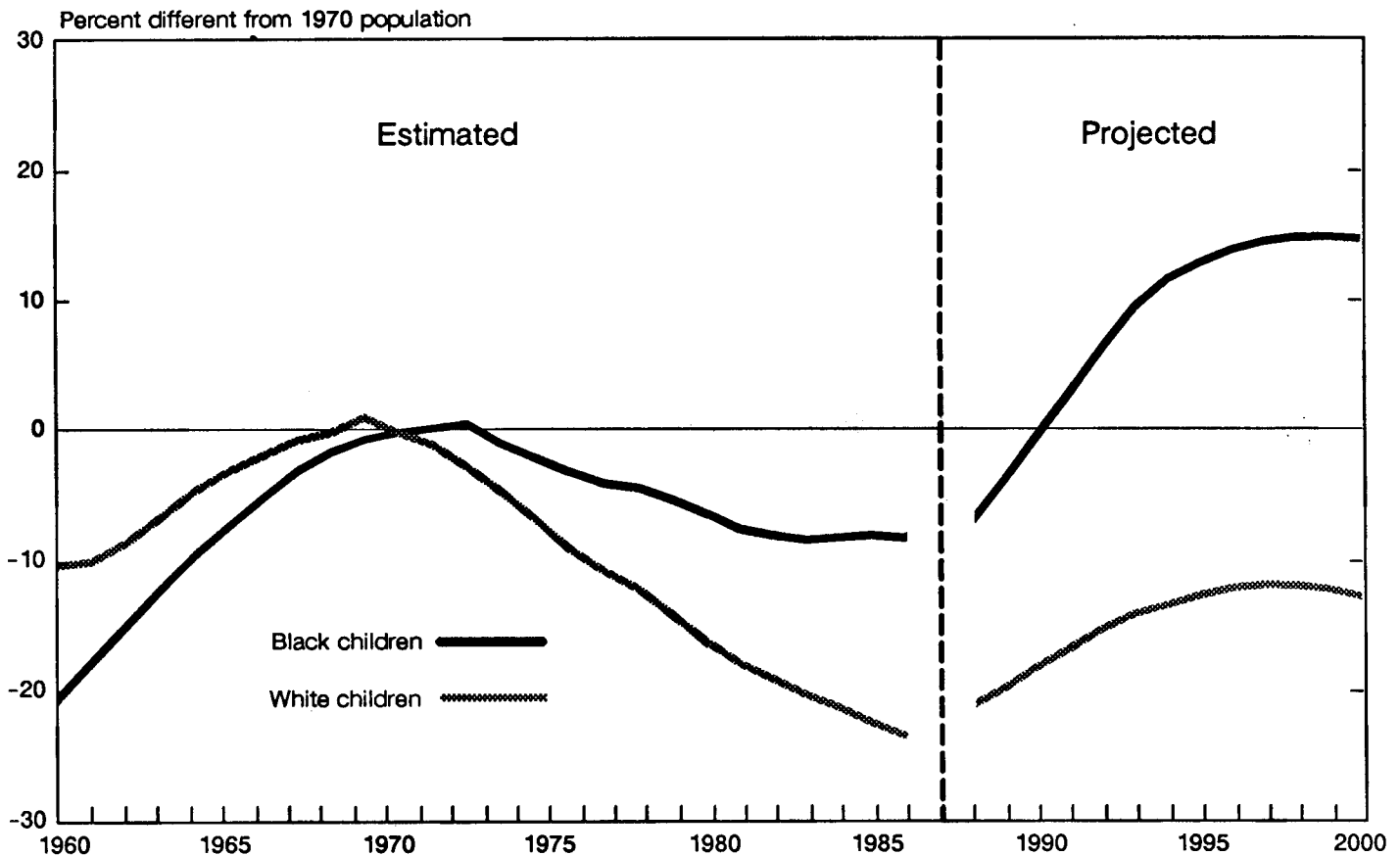


11 percent) in 1986. Blacks were 12 percent of undergraduates, but only 6 percent of all graduate students. Among graduate students, Whites and Blacks were not significantly different in the proportion who attended full time, however (table B).

Thirty-nine percent of both White and Black students were 25 years old and over. The majority of older students were undergraduates—61 percent of

White students and 80 percent of Blacks. Among both Whites and Blacks, older undergraduates were more likely than young undergraduates to attend two-year colleges. Half of older White undergraduates attended two-year colleges compared with 29 percent of younger undergraduates. Among Blacks, the figures were 42 percent and 25 percent. Among Hispanics, half or nearly half of both older and young students attended two-year colleges in 1986.

Figure 1.  
Black and White Population 6 to 13 Years Old: 1960 to 2000



**Table B. College Students 14 Years Old and Over by Level, Type of College, Full-time Status and Race:  
October 1986**

(Numbers in thousands)

Age, status, and race and Hispanic origin	All students	Undergraduates					Graduate students
		Total	Percent				
			Total	2-year college	4-year college	Not reported	
<b>14 years and over</b>							
All races .....	12,401	10,037	100.0	34.8	62.0	3.1	2,365
Full time .....	7,899	6,825	68.0	16.3	49.6	2.1	1,074
Part time .....	4,502	3,212	32.0	18.6	12.4	1.1	1,291
White .....	10,497	8,399	100.0	35.8	61.1	3.0	2,097
Full time .....	6,574	5,664	67.4	18.6	48.9	1.9	911
Part time .....	3,922	2,735	32.6	19.2	12.3	1.1	1,187
Black .....	1,324	1,179	100.0	30.5	65.2	4.2	145
Full time .....	914	839	71.2	16.0	51.9	3.3	74
Part time .....	410	339	28.8	14.5	13.3	0.9	71
Hispanic (of any race) .....	763	657	100.0	45.2	51.4	3.2	106
Full time .....	445	386	58.8	20.2	36.8	1.7	58
Part time .....	318	271	41.2	25.0	14.6	1.5	47
<b>14 to 24 years</b>							
All races .....	7,613	7,038	100.0	28.2	68.7	3.1	575
Full time .....	6,360	5,908	83.9	18.4	62.9	2.6	452
Part time .....	1,254	1,129	16.0	9.8	5.8	0.5	124
White .....	6,426	5,930	100.0	29.1	67.9	3.0	496
Full time .....	5,355	4,981	83.7	18.9	62.2	2.5	393
Part time .....	1,072	969	16.3	10.2	5.6	0.6	102
Black .....	820	776	100.0	24.7	71.3	3.9	45
Full time .....	699	671	86.5	17.3	65.2	3.9	28
Part time .....	123	107	13.8	7.5	6.1	-	16
Hispanic (of any race) .....	455	438	100.0	43.6	53.4	3.0	17
Full time .....	330	317	72.4	25.1	44.5	2.5	13
Part time .....	126	122	27.9	18.5	8.9	0.5	4

Note: See table A-1 for greater detail for students 14 years and over.