



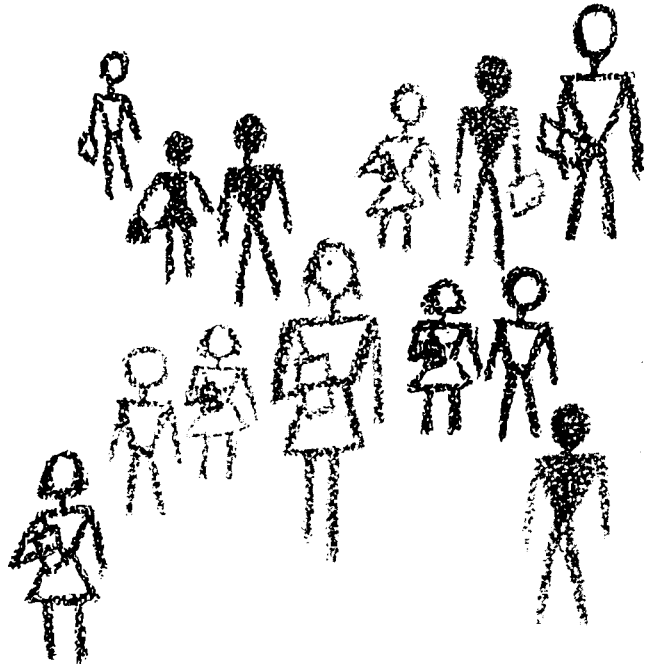
CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

Population Characteristics

Series P-20, No. 452

by
Robert Kominski
and
Stephanie Roodman

School Enrollment— Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1989



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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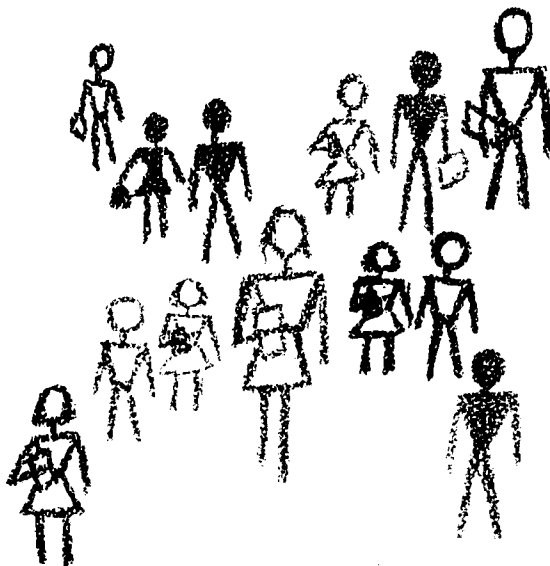
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U.S. Department of Commerce

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School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1989

(Note: The estimates in this report do not reflect the results of the 1990 Census. The Current Population Survey (CPS) estimates are based on population controls from the 1980 census which have been updated for changes in the population since that time. In addition, the CPS and the 1990 census used different procedures for collecting and processing the data.)

INTRODUCTION

This report presents detailed tabulations of data on school enrollment of the civilian noninstitutional population in October 1989. It also includes summary time series of data collected since the beginning of the survey. The data are from the October school enrollment supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data on school enrollment have been collected annually in the CPS since 1946 and reported in this publication series. The data cover enrollment in "regular school", which includes nursery school, kindergarten, elementary school, high school, and college and professional school. Data are shown by the following characteristics: age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, marital status, family status, family income, education of the householder, labor force status, metropolitan residence, region, and mother's labor force status and education (for preprimary enrollment). Also, the following enrollment characteristics are shown: level and grade of school, public/private school, full-time and part-time attendance status, and two-year/four-year college. Vocational school enrollment is shown separately.

Revisions in edit and tabulation processing have improved data quality, but have made the data beginning with 1987 not strictly comparable to data from earlier years. The previous processing procedures were used from 1967 to 1986. Time series tables in appendix A show two data entries for 1986 which permit comparisons of results according to each set of processing procedures.

HIGHLIGHTS

(Figures shown in parentheses define 90-percent confidence intervals. For details of calculation see "Appendix B, Source and Accuracy of the Estimates.")

- In October 1989, 61.5 (± 0.7) million persons were enrolled in regular school - nursery school through college. About 59.2 (± 0.5) million of these persons were between the ages of 3 and 34.

- The number of persons in nursery school or kindergarten was 6.7 (± 0.1) million, which was not statistically different from the 6.6 (± 0.1) million enrolled in the fall of 1988.
- Elementary school enrollment (grades 1-8) stood at 28.7 (± 0.2) million persons, up from 28.2 (± 0.2) million one year earlier.
- High school enrollment totalled 12.9 (± 0.1) million persons, a statistically significant change from the 13.1 (± 0.1) million in 1988.
- The annual high school dropout rate (from grades 10-12) for 1989 was 4.5 (± 0.6) percent, not statistically different from the 1988 rate of 4.8 (± 0.6) percent.
- The number of persons enrolled in college totalled 13.2 (± 0.3) million, which was not different from the 13.1 (± 0.3) million enrolled one year before. About 2.1 (± 0.1) million of current college students were over age 34.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN 1989

Preprimary Enrollment

About 54.6 percent of children ages 3 to 5 years old (6,026,000) were enrolled in preprimary school in the fall of 1989. Figure 1 shows the level of preprimary enrollments since 1970. Of the 39.1 percent of children 3 or 4 years old who were in school, most were in nursery school (2.6 million of 2.9 million total enrollees). Given the availability of public kindergarten in all states, most 5 year olds were enrolled in school (91.8 percent), the majority in kindergarten (79.2 percent). There is no difference in preprimary enrollment levels for Whites (55 percent) and Blacks (54.2 percent), but the level for Hispanic children (who can be of any race) was significantly lower (41.6 percent).

A large difference in nursery school enrollment is observed when examined across family income groups. Table A shows that 22.6 percent of young children (ages 3 to 4)

Table A. Enrollment of Children 3 and 4 Years Old in Nursery School by Family Income and Race: October 1989

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000 to \$39,999	\$40,000 and over
TOTAL				
All Races	7,405	2,629	2,516	1,862
Enrolled in nursery school	2,563	595	829	977
Percent enrolled	34.6	22.6	32.9	52.5
Percent public	31.3	60.5	25.3	16.1
Percent private	68.7	39.5	74.7	83.9
WHITE				
Total children	6,014	1,834	2,224	1,662
Enrolled in nursery school	2,128	407	724	884
Percent enrolled	35.4	22.2	32.6	53.2
Percent public	27.1	53.6	23.9	16.1
Percent private	72.9	46.4	75.8	83.9
BLACK				
Total children	1,045	650	226	100
Enrolled in nursery school	327	158	84	44
Percent enrolled	31.3	24.3	37.2	44.0
Percent public	57.8	77.8	42.9	(B)
Percent private	42.2	22.8	59.5	(B)
HISPANIC ORIGIN¹				
Total children	850	482	227	84
Enrolled in nursery school	162	63	43	39
Percent enrolled	19.1	13.1	18.9	46.4
Percent public	51.9	(B)	(B)	(B)
Percent private	48.8	(B)	(B)	(B)

¹May be of any race.

Table B. Full- and Part-Day Enrollment of Children 3 and 4 Years Old in Nursery School by Mother's Labor Force Activity and Race: October 1989

(Numbers in thousands)

Enrolled in nursery school	Mother in labor force	Mother not in labor force	Enrolled in nursery school	Mother in labor force	Mother not in labor force
TOTAL			BLACK		
Total enrolled	1,542	890	Total enrolled	203	88
Percent enrolled	37.7	31.3	Percent enrolled	35.6	24.2
Full day	675	128	Full day	164	39
Percent full day	43.8	14.4	Percent full day	80.8	44.3
WHITE			HISPANIC ORIGIN¹		
Total enrolled	1,276	767	Total enrolled	88	70
Percent enrolled	37.9	32.8	Percent enrolled	22.6	17.0
Full day	485	76	Full day	52	19
Percent full day	38.0	9.9	Percent full day	59.1	(B)

Note: Includes only those children living with their mother.

¹May be of any race.

from families with income less than \$20,000 were enrolled in nursery school, compared to 32.9 percent for children from families with income between \$20,000 and \$39,999. Children from families with income \$40,000 and above had the highest level of nursery school enrollment (52.5 percent).

Of the 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in nursery school, 801,000 (31.3 percent) were in public school, while 1,762,000 (68.7 percent) attended private school. Family income appears strongly associated with patterns of public and private nursery schooling. Children from families with high income are more likely to attend private school, while those from lower income families are more likely to enroll in public systems. Three-fifths of the nursery school students from families with income less than \$20,000 attended public school, as opposed to less than one-fifth of those from families with income over \$40,000.

There continues to be some question as to whether nursery school acts as child care. As table B shows, the children of women in the labor force were slightly more likely to be enrolled in nursery school than those of women who were not (37.7 versus 31.3 percent). More substantial, however, is the difference in the use of full-day nursery school. About 44 percent of nursery school students with a mother in the labor force were full-day, compared to just 14 percent of nursery school students whose mother was not in the labor force. However, while nursery school and full-day enrollments are higher for the children of mothers employed or looking for work, the majority of 3 and 4 year old children are not enrolled in nursery school at all, regardless of whether their mother is in the labor force or not.

Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment

There were 28.7 million persons enrolled in elementary school (grades 1 through 8) in the fall of 1989. Given the near universal nature of schooling for young persons, the number of persons enrolled in elementary school closely parallels the size of the population between 6 and 13 years of age, as shown in Figure 2. During the 1970's and early 1980's, elementary school enrollments fell, following the general decrease in the size of the 6 to 13 year old population. In the past few years, however, this has changed, as both the population and enrollments have risen. The plot of middle-series projections for children ages 6 to 13 indicates that school enrollments may continue to rise over the next several years.¹

Most elementary school students attend public institutions, as the top panel of table C shows. In the fall of 1989, about 9.7 percent of all elementary school students ages 3 to 17 were in private schools, but the data indicate that private school enrollment is more likely for children from

families with higher family income. Whereas 5 percent of children from families with income less than \$20,000 attended private school, 15 percent of those from families with income of \$40,000 or more did so.

In the fall of 1989, about 12.9 million persons were enrolled at the high school level (grades 9 through 12). Figure 3 shows the strong correspondence between high school enrollments and the population between the ages of 14 and 17. During the last five years, the number of persons in high school fell as the size of the population ages 14 to 17 also dropped. Middle-series projections of 14 to 17 year olds indicate that high school enrollments will rise over the next few years, if enrollment rates remain the same.

Public institutions account for most high school enrollments, with just 6.6 percent of secondary students attending private schools. The bottom half of table C shows public and private high school enrollment levels by income, race and Hispanic origin groupings. As with primary school, there is a relationship between family income and private school enrollment. About 3.1 percent of children from lower income (less than \$20,000) families attended private high school, compared to 10.1 percent from higher income families.

High School Dropouts

During the one year period from October 1988 to October 1989, about 404,000, or 4.5 percent, of all students in the 10th, 11th or 12th grade dropped out of high school.² While this overall national dropout rate is considerably lower than the level of 6.7 percent just ten years earlier (see table A-3), variation among different subpopulations is apparent.

The data in table D show that the high school dropout rate of 3.9 percent for Whites is significantly lower than the Black rate of 7.7 percent. Across family income groups there are also differences in the dropout rate. While 8 percent of high school students from families with income below \$20,000 dropped out of high school, just 1.1 percent of those from families with incomes of \$40,000 or more left school before graduation.

A different measure of high school dropouts is the proportion of persons who are no longer enrolled and have not completed high school. This "dropout pool" measure is to some extent a summary of the year-to-year dropout rates (and reenrollment) over the life of a cohort. Data from Table 1 show that among persons ages 18 to 24 years old, 3.6 million (14.4 percent) were high school dropouts. Men had a slightly higher proportion of dropouts than women (15.7 vs. 13.2 percent). Blacks had a slightly higher level than Whites (16.4 vs. 14.1 percent), while the level for Hispanics was 37.7 percent.

¹Current Population Report, Series P-25, No. 1018, Projections of the Population of the United States by Age, Sex, and Race: 1988 to 2080.

²The annual high school dropout rate was first presented in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 413, School Enrollment Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1983. Details of its calculation are presented in that report, as well as in Appendix B, Definitions and Explanations, of this report.

Table C. Public and Private Elementary and High School Enrollment of Primary Family Members 3 to 17 Years Old by Income, Race, and Hispanic Origin: October 1989

(Number in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000 to \$39,999	\$40,000 and over
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL				
All Races				
Total enrolled	28,131	9,582	9,210	7,630
Percent public	90.3	95.0	90.1	85.0
Percent private	9.7	5.0	9.9	15.0
White				
Total enrolled	22,475	6,436	7,943	6,834
Percent public	89.4	94.2	89.5	85.0
Percent private	10.6	5.8	10.5	15.0
Black				
Total enrolled	4,458	2,698	985	456
Percent public	95.0	97.4	94.1	84.6
Percent private	5.0	2.6	6.1	15.4
Hispanic Origin¹				
Total enrolled	3,166	1,696	915	353
Percent public	94.1	97.1	93.3	85.3
Percent private	5.9	3.0	6.7	14.7
HIGH SCHOOL				
All Races				
Total enrolled	11,280	3,228	3,606	3,609
Percent public	93.4	97.0	94.3	89.9
Percent private	6.6	3.1	5.7	10.1
White				
Total enrolled	9,088	2,145	3,031	3,264
Percent public	92.5	96.6	93.7	89.6
Percent private	7.5	3.5	6.2	10.4
Black				
Total enrolled	1,744	951	449	187
Percent public	97.9	97.9	97.3	98.4
Percent private	2.1	2.1	2.7	1.6
Hispanic Origin¹				
Total enrolled	1,028	506	310	131
Percent public	95.8	97.4	96.8	90.1
Percent private	4.2	2.6	3.2	9.9

¹May be of any race.

Table D. Annual High School Dropout Rates: October 1989

Characteristic	Rate	Characteristic	Rate
Total	4.5	Family income less than \$20,000	8.0
Male	4.5	Family income between \$20,000 and \$39,999	3.6
Female	4.5	Family income greater than \$40,000	1.1
White	3.9	10th grade	3.2
Black	7.7	11th grade	3.8
Hispanic origin ¹	7.7	12th grade	6.9

¹May be of any race.

College Enrollment

In October 1989, 13,180,000 persons were enrolled in colleges across the nation. Figure 4 shows the level of college enrollments since 1972, along with the number of persons ages 18 to 24, the "traditional" college age group. While this traditional college age population declined by 2.7 million persons in the past ten years, the number of college students rose by 1.8 million, largely reflecting the increase in college enrollment by persons ages 25 and older.

Table E details some of the basic characteristics of college students in 1989; these data illustrate the diverse nature of the college population. As can be seen in the age detail, 39.4 percent of all college students were age 25 or older; 16 percent were over age 34. Women accounted for 54.9 percent of college students. There were 10.7 million students enrolled at the undergraduate level, and 66 percent of them were enrolled in four-year institutions. The majority of students (64.1 percent) were enrolled full-time, and 78.1 percent were enrolled in a public college or university. Finally, 61.6 percent of all college students were employed either full- or part-time.

For many persons, college enrollment must be negotiated among forces such as employment, cost and many life-cycle factors. Table F shows the proportion of students attending full-time at two-year and four-year institutions, by the age of the student. In general, a much larger proportion of students at four-year schools attend full-time, but there is also a strong relationship between age and full-time attendance. While 91.9 percent of traditional age college students in four-year schools are attending full-time, just 18.9 percent of persons age 35 or older in two-year schools are full-time.

Another closely related factor in college attendance is the employment status of the individual. As the table G shows, 47.4 percent of all full-time students held a job,

usually as a part time worker. By contrast, 87.1 percent of students attending school part-time were working, and the majority of these persons held a full-time job. While for some persons the level of involvement at school may influence the degree of labor force activity, for other persons full-time work may be the determining force in the amount of time one can devote to school.

DATA FILES AVAILABLE

The time series tabulations of enrollment shown in Tables A1 through A6 in Appendix A are now available on two floppy diskettes. The tables are available as either six ASCII print files, or six LOTUS 1-2-3 © files (version 2.1). Users wishing to purchase files should specify which data format they prefer (ASCII or LOTUS), include a check for \$25 (make checks payable to "Commerce-Census") and send to:

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USER COMMENTS

We are interested in your reaction to the usefulness of the information presented here and to the content of the questions used to produce these results. We welcome your recommendations for improving our survey work. If you have suggestions or comments, please send them to:

Current Survey Comments
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Table E. Characteristics of the College Population: October 1989

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total population	Enrolled in college	Type of school			Percent full time	Percent public school	Percent employed		
			2-year college	4-year college	Graduate school			Total	Full time	Part time
Total	190,143	13,180	3,627	7,034	2,520	64.1	78.1	61.6	32.1	29.5
Male	90,694	5,950	1,464	3,266	1,219	68.3	76.5	60.8	33.3	27.5
Female	99,449	7,231	2,163	3,768	1,300	60.8	79.4	62.3	31.0	31.2
White	162,262	11,243	3,064	6,001	2,179	63.2	77.9	63.8	33.0	30.9
Black	21,625	1,287	417	729	142	68.3	81.0	47.2	28.4	18.8
Hispanic origin ¹	14,302	754	359	318	76	60.1	86.7	65.5	37.3	28.2
15 to 19 years old	17,381	3,249	1,048	2,202	-	92.0	79.0	45.7	8.1	37.6
20 to 21 years old	6,828	2,570	557	1,972	40	87.2	76.1	53.3	13.7	39.5
22 to 24 years old	11,072	2,168	467	1,191	509	69.0	78.5	63.3	30.8	32.5
25 to 34 years old	42,849	3,081	880	1,041	1,161	38.3	76.2	75.4	54.1	21.3
35 years and older	112,014	2,112	676	628	809	26.0	81.4	74.5	60.4	14.1

¹May be of any race.

Table F. Full-time Enrollment by Age and Type of College: October 1989

(Numbers in thousands)

Age	All colleges		2-Year colleges		4-Year colleges		Graduate school	
	Total students	Percent full time	Total students	Percent full time	Total students	Percent full time	Total students	Percent full time
Total	13,180	64.1	3,627	47.6	7,034	79.5	2,520	45.2
15 to 24 years old	7,987	84.2	2,072	67.0	5,365	91.9	549	74.3
25 to 34 years old	3,081	38.3	880	23.9	1,041	42.7	1,161	45.2
35 years and over	2,112	26.0	676	18.9	628	33.9	809	25.7

Table G. Employment Status by Full-time/Part-time Enrollment and Type of College: October 1989

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	All colleges	2-year colleges	4-year colleges	Graduate schools
Full-time students	8,455	1,725	5,589	1,140
Percent employed	47.4	57.5	43.6	50.4
Percent full time	9.4	13.6	6.9	15.1
Percent part time	38.0	43.9	36.8	35.3
Part-time students	4,725	1,902	1,444	1,380
Percent employed	87.1	84.2	86.1	92.2
Percent full time	72.7	68.9	69.3	81.4
Percent part time	14.4	15.3	16.8	10.8

Figure 1.

Nursery School and Kindergarten Enrollment: 1970 to 1989

(In thousands)

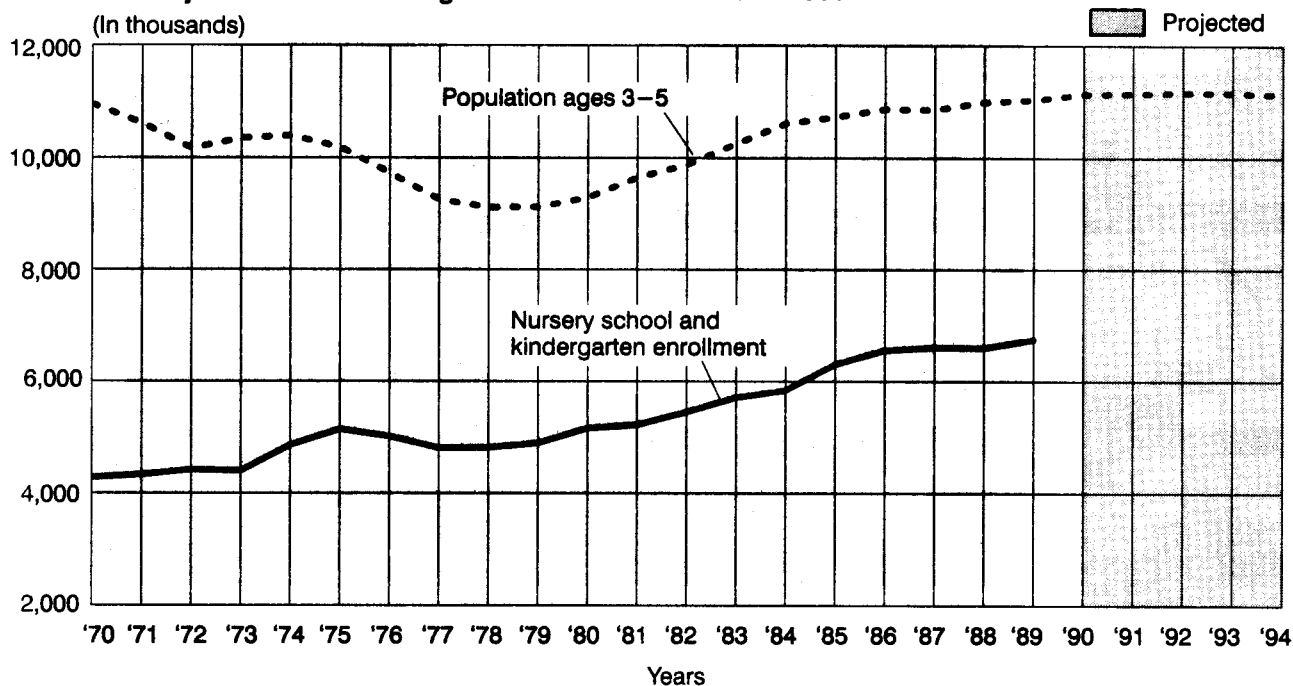


Figure 2.

Elementary School Enrollment: 1970 to 1989

(In thousands)

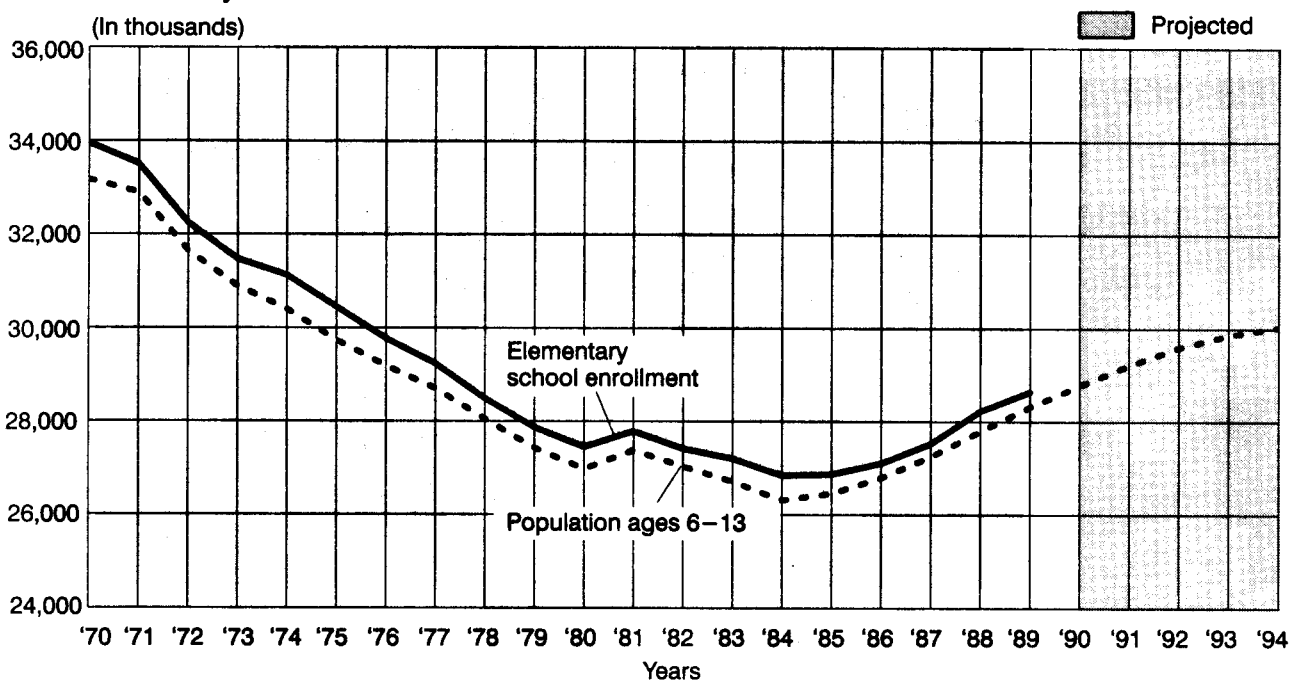


Figure 3.
High School Enrollment: 1970 to 1989
 (In thousands)

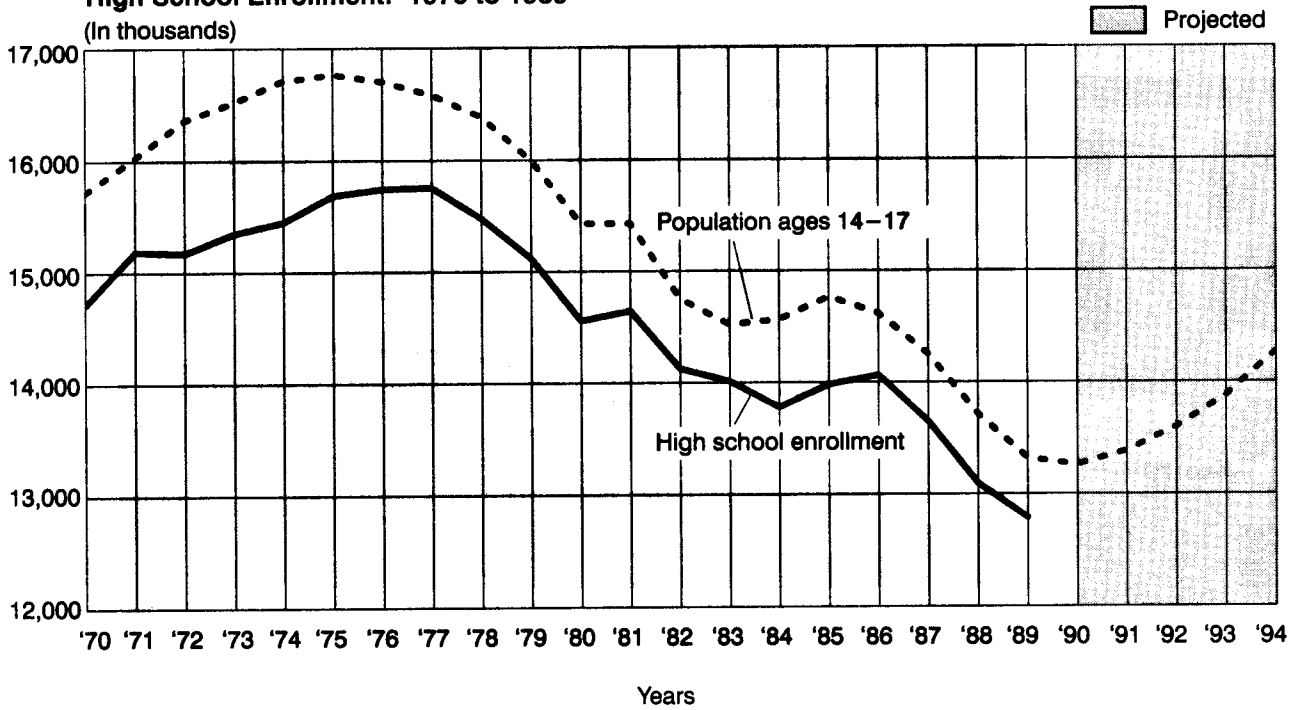


Figure 4.
College Enrollment: 1972 to 1989
 (In thousands)

