

## High School Dropouts 2015-16 Massachusetts Public Schools

The annual high school dropout report represents a snapshot of those students who dropped out of school in any given year. The data contained in this dropout report reflect one year of dropout data across grades nine through twelve and not a particular cohort of students across four years. This report provides annual dropout data to education leaders to develop and strengthen dropout prevention programs in the state.

Please note that the Department has also calculated and released graduation rates for the 2016 cohort that provide a more complete picture of the outcomes of high school students in Massachusetts. It is important to keep in mind that the dropout data contained in the graduation rate reports is a cohort dropout rate and shows the cumulative effect of students dropping out over four years. The graduation rate reports can be viewed at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/>.

In the 2015-16 school year, 5,523 or 1.9 percent of students in grades nine through twelve dropped out of school.

**Table 1: State Dropout Trends: 2005-06 to 2015-16**

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
<b>Total HS Enrollment</b>	296,511	298,033	295,937	292,372	290,502	289,161	287,055	287,506	287,478	288,934	289,583
Number of Dropouts	9,910	11,436	9,959	8,585	8,296	7,894	7,051	6,248	5,746	5,346	5,523
Dropout Rate	3.3%	3.8%	3.4%	2.9%	2.9%	2.7%	2.5%	2.2%	2.0%	1.9%	1.9%

The Department did not make any major changes to the Student Information Management System (SIMS) data collection in the 2015-16 school year. However, fluctuation in dropout rates between 2004-05 and 2006-07 can be attributed to two significant methodological modifications that were made. These modifications in the dropout calculation have remained in the methodology and provide more comprehensive information on dropouts to help inform policy and programmatic decisions.

In the **2005-06** school year, the Department began to cross-reference SIMS data with the General Educational Development (GED) Testing Service database. In prior school years, the Department relied solely on district notification regarding students who received their GED. As a result, the Department more accurately tracks students who drop out of high school and then earn a GED therefore decreasing the number of students who are considered final dropouts. In 2014, the Department transitioned to the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) and has continued to rely on that database to gather accurate information on high school equivalency earners.

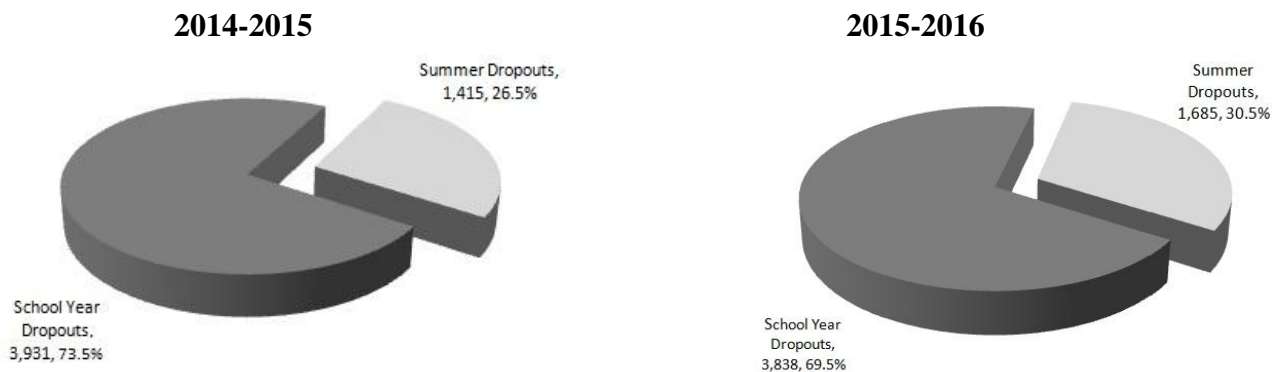
In the **2006-07** school year, the Department modified the SIMS data element, *Enrollment Status at Time of Data Collection*. In prior years, districts would report the number of students who indicated that they were transferring to another district and the Department excluded them from the dropout calculations. The expanded dropout and transfer codes provide additional information to the Department on students' plans after leaving the district. Those students who were coded as a transfer to an in-state public school with no record of re-enrollment in another school district before October 1st of the following school year are considered to be dropouts.

**Table 2: Final Enrollment Status of the 2015-16 Dropout Count**

Code	Final Enrollment Status	Number of Dropouts	Percent of all Dropouts
Transfer	Transfer to an in-state public school (with no record of re-enrollment)	1,271	23.0%
Dropout	Enrolled in a non-diploma granting adult education program	792	14.3%
	Entered Job Corps	156	2.8%
	Entered the military	1	0.0%
	Incarcerated, district is no longer providing educational services	33	0.6%
	Left school due to employment	267	4.8%
	Confirmed dropout - plans unknown	1,466	26.5%
	Student's status/location unknown	1,537	27.8%
<b>Total Dropout Count</b>		<b>5,523</b>	<b>100%</b>

The final dropout count is based on two groups of students; summer and school year dropouts. Summer dropouts were reported in the October 1, 2015 SIMS submission as a dropout or a transfer to an in-state public school (with no record of re-enrollment) prior to the beginning of the 2015-16 school year, whereas school year dropouts were reported as either a dropout or as a transfer to in-state public (with no record of re-enrollment) during the 2015-16 school year. In 2015-16, the percentage of summer dropouts increased by 4% percentage points while the percentage of school year dropouts decreased as compared to the 2014-15 dropout count.

**Figure 2: Comparison of Summer and School Year Dropouts Composing the Total Dropout Counts in 2014-15 and 2015-16**



Beginning in the 2003-04 school year, in compliance with the National Center for Education Statistics reporting guidelines, summer dropouts were applied to the grade in which they failed to enroll. Therefore, students who completed grade eight but did not enroll in grade nine were included in the analysis as grade nine summer dropouts.

**Table 3: Comparison of 2015-16 Summer Dropouts and School Year Dropouts by Grade**

			Number of Dropouts	Total Grade Dropouts	Percent of Grade Dropouts
<b>Grade</b>	9	Summer	357	1,427	25.0%
		School Year	1,070		75.0%
	10	Summer	372	1,384	26.9%
		School Year	1,012		73.1%
	11	Summer	325	1,244	26.1%
		School Year	919		73.9%
	12	Summer	631	1,468	43.0%
		School Year	837		57.0%

Beginning with the class of 2010, the Department required students to meet the following requirements to earn a Competency Determination (CD) in order to graduate from high school<sup>1</sup>:

1. Meet or exceed the Proficient threshold scaled score of 240 on the English Language Arts and Mathematics grade 10 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests, or (b) meet or exceed the Needs Improvement threshold scaled score of 220 on the English Language Arts and Mathematics grade 10 MCAS tests and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan.
2. Meet or exceed the Needs Improvement threshold scaled score of 220 on the Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS test

Students who did not pass the grade ten MCAS had the opportunity to pass the MCAS through re-test opportunities before their scheduled graduation date. Among both grade eleven and grade twelve dropouts, 60.1 percent had earned a CD by meeting the standard before dropping out of school.

**Table 4: Dropout Rates and Percent of Dropouts Among Competency Determination (CD) Earners and Students without a CD**

Grade	CD Status	Number of Enrolled Students	Number of Dropouts	Dropout Rate	Percent of Dropouts
11	With CD	66,434	594	0.9%	47.7%
	Without CD	4,440	650	14.6%	52.3%
12	With CD	67,019	1,037	1.5%	70.6%
	Without CD	2,279	431	18.9%	29.4%
Total	With CD	133,453	1,631	1.2%	60.1%
	Without CD	6,719	1,081	16.1%	39.9%

<sup>1</sup> Data in this section can only be compared to tables from 2010; data from years prior to 2010 is not comparable because of this policy change. Additional information on the Competency Determination standards can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr30.html?section=03>.

**Table 5: Annual Dropout Data for Selected Demographics: 2015-16**

		Total HS Enrollment	Percent of HS Enrollment	Number of Dropouts	Annual Dropout Rate	Percent of all Dropouts
<b>Grade</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	76,475	26.4%	1,427	1.9%	25.8%
	<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>	72,936	25.2%	1,384	1.9%	25.1%
	<b>11<sup>th</sup></b>	70,874	24.5%	1,244	1.8%	22.5%
	<b>12<sup>th</sup></b>	69,298	23.9%	1,468	2.1%	26.6%
<b>Race/ Ethnicity</b>	<b>African American</b>	26,253	9.1%	848	3.2%	15.4%
	<b>Asian</b>	17,318	6.0%	118	0.7%	2.1%
	<b>Hispanic</b>	48,331	16.7%	2,198	4.5%	39.8%
	<b>Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic</b>	7,094	2.4%	169	2.4%	3.1%
	<b>Native American</b>	676	0.2%	26	3.8%	0.5%
	<b>Native Hawaiian</b>	285	0.1%	8	2.8%	0.1%
	<b>White</b>	189,626	65.5%	2,156	1.1%	39.0%
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	143,041	49.4%	2,079	1.5%	37.6%
	<b>Male</b>	146,542	50.6%	3,444	2.4%	62.4%

The annual dropout rates for African American and Hispanic students increased slightly for the first time in more than five years. The rates for grades ten through twelve also increased 0.1 percentage point each from 2014-15, while the grade nine rate remained unchanged for the second year in a row. The male rate increased by 0.2 percentage points and the female rate did not fluctuate from 2014-15.

**Table 6: Annual Dropout Rates for Selected Demographics: 2008-09 to 2015-16**

		2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
<b>Grade</b>	<b>9</b>	2.8%	2.8%	2.6%	2.3%	2.0%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%
	<b>10</b>	2.9%	3.0%	2.8%	2.5%	2.2%	2.0%	1.8%	1.9%
	<b>11</b>	2.7%	2.6%	2.7%	2.4%	2.2%	2.0%	1.7%	1.8%
	<b>12</b>	3.1%	3.1%	2.9%	2.6%	2.4%	2.1%	2.0%	2.1%
<b>Race/ Ethnicity</b>	<b>African American</b>	5.6%	5.1%	4.8%	4.5%	3.9%	3.5%	3.0%	3.2%
	<b>Asian</b>	1.7%	1.6%	1.8%	1.5%	1.1%	1.0%	0.7%	0.7%
	<b>Hispanic</b>	7.5%	7.4%	7.0%	6.1%	5.4%	4.9%	4.4%	4.5%
	<b>Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic</b>	3.4%	3.2%	2.5%	2.6%	2.5%	2.3%	2.4%	2.4%
	<b>Native American</b>	4.3%	3.8%	3.4%	4.5%	4.2%	2.8%	3.4%	3.8%
	<b>Native Hawaiian</b>	3.8%	5.3%	4.4%	4.3%	4.4%	3.6%	2.7%	2.8%
	<b>White</b>	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%	1.5%	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	2.5%	2.4%	2.3%	2.0%	1.7%	1.6%	1.5%	1.5%
	<b>Male</b>	3.4%	3.3%	3.2%	2.9%	2.6%	2.4%	2.2%	2.4%

**Table 7: Annual Dropout Data by Race/Ethnicity and Gender: 2015-16**

		HS Enrollment	Percent of HS Enrollment	Number of Dropouts	Annual Dropout Rate	Percent of all Dropouts
African American	Female	12,976	4.5%	325	2.5%	5.9%
	Male	13,277	4.6%	523	3.9%	9.5%
Asian	Female	8,703	3.0 %	50	0.6%	0.9%
	Male	8,615	3.0%	68	0.8%	1.2%
Hispanic	Female	23,453	8.1%	792	3.4%	14.3%
	Male	24,878	8.6%	1,406	5.7%	25.5 %
Multi-Race, Non- Hispanic	Female	3,639	1.3%	82	2.3%	1.5%
	Male	3,455	1.2%	87	2.5%	1.6%
Native American	Female	327	0.1%	10	3.1%	0.2%
	Male	349	0.1%	16	4.6%	0.3%
Native Hawaiian	Female	148	0.1%	1	0.7%	0.0%
	Male	137	0.0%	7	5.1%	0.1%
White	Female	93,795	32.4%	819	0.9%	14.8%
	Male	95,831	33.1%	1,337	1.4%	24.2%

**Table 8: Annual Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender: 2008-09 to 2015-16**

		2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
African American	Female	4.5%	4.3%	4.1%	3.5%	3.0%	2.7%	2.3%	2.5%
	Male	6.6%	5.8%	5.5%	5.4%	4.7%	4.2%	3.7%	3.9%
Asian	Female	1.3%	1.3%	1.5%	1.3%	0.9%	0.9%	0.5%	0.6%
	Male	2.1%	1.9%	2.1%	1.7%	1.4%	1.2%	0.9%	0.8%
Hispanic	Female	6.4%	6.5%	6.0%	5.3%	4.5%	4.0%	3.8%	3.4%
	Male	8.5%	8.3%	8.0%	6.8%	6.2%	5.8%	5.0%	5.7%
Multi-Race, Non- Hispanic	Female	2.9%	2.8%	1.9%	1.9%	2.2%	1.7%	2.2%	2.3%
	Male	4.0%	3.6%	3.2%	3.3%	2.9%	3.0%	2.7%	2.5%
Native American	Female	3.0%	2.9%	2.9%	4.6%	4.0%	2.1%	3.3%	3.1%
	Male	5.7%	4.8%	3.8%	4.5%	4.3%	3.5%	3.5%	4.6%
Native Hawaiian	Female	3.1%	2.5%	3.6%	3.2%	3.4%	2.1%	2.8%	0.7%
	Male	4.5%	8.0%	5.1%	5.2%	5.2%	5.1%	2.7%	5.1%
White	Female	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%
	Male	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%	1.8%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%

Rate changes from 2014-15 were inconsistent among the racial/ethnic groups. For instance, the rate for African American males and females increased by 0.2 percentage points each, while the Hispanic male rate increased by 0.7 percentage points and the same group's female rate dropped by 0.4 percentage points, the largest decrease among the major groups. The rates for white male and female students remained unchanged from 2014-15.

**Table 9: Annual Dropout Rates for Special Populations: 2015-16**

		Total HS Enrollment	Percent of HS Enrollment	Number of Dropouts	Annual Dropout Rate	Percent of all Dropouts
Students with Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	45,551	15.7%	1,425	3.1%	25.8%
	Students without Disabilities	244,032	84.3%	4,098	1.7%	74.2%
English Language Learner (ELL)	ELL	16,406	5.7%	1,084	6.6%	19.6%
	Non ELL	273,177	94.3%	4,439	1.6%	80.4%
Economically Disadvantaged <sup>2</sup>	Economically Disadvantaged	67,601	23.3%	2,802	4.1%	50.7%
	Non Economically Disadvantaged	221,982	76.7%	2,721	1.2%	49.3%
High Needs	High Needs	109,522	37.8%	4,026	3.7%	72.9%
	Non-High Needs	180,061	62.2%	1,497	0.8%	27.1%

**Table 10: Annual Dropout Rates for Special Populations: 2008-09 to 2015-16**

		2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Students with Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	5.0%	4.7%	4.6%	3.6%	3.3%	3.3%	3.5%	3.1%
	Students without Disabilities	2.6%	2.5%	2.4%	2.2%	1.9%	1.7%	1.6%	1.7%
English Language Learner (ELL)	ELL	8.5%	8.5%	7.9%	6.9%	6.5%	6.3%	5.7%	6.6%
	Non ELL	2.7%	2.6%	2.5%	2.3%	2.0%	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%
Low-Income	Low-Income	5.0%	4.7%	4.8%	4.4%	3.8%	3.5%	-	-
	Non Low-Income	2.1%	2.0%	1.8%	1.5%	1.3%	1.1%	-	-
Economically Disadvantaged	Economically Disadvantaged	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.3%	4.1%
	Non Economically Disadvantaged	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.4%	1.2%
High Needs	High Needs	-	-	3.1%	4.1%	3.8%	3.5%	3.4%	3.7%
	Non-High Needs	-	-	2.4%	1.2%	0.9%	0.7%	1.0%	0.8%

Dropout rates increased from 2014-15 among most special populations. Student with disabilities, however, had a reduction of 0.4 percentage points.

<sup>2</sup> In the 2014-15 school year, the Department began determining income status using the Economically Disadvantaged indicator and discontinued use of the Low Income indicator. For more information, please see: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/ed.html>.

**Table 11: Annual Dropout Rates by School Type 2008-09 to 2015-16**

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
<b>Regular/Comprehensive Academic Schools (322)<sup>3</sup></b>	3.0%	2.9%	2.8%	2.5%	2.2%	2.0%	1.8%	1.9%
<b>Vocational-Technical Total (37)</b>	1.9%	1.8%	1.6%	1.4%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%
City/Town (8)	5.1%	5.0%	4.4%	3.8%	2.7%	2.5%	2.4%	2.1%
Regional/County/Independent (29)	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%
<b>Charter Schools (45)<sup>4</sup></b>	3.8%	5.3%	4.2%	3.3%	3.8%	3.5%	3.5%	3.3%
<b>Schools Located in Cities<sup>5</sup> (191)</b>	4.8%	4.7%	4.5%	3.9%	3.4%	3.2%	2.8%	3.0%
<b>Schools Located in Towns (213)</b>	1.4%	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%

The state dropout rate masks the wide disparity in individual school annual dropout rates, specifically the number of schools that have dropout rates below the state rate. The following chart illustrates the distribution of school dropout rates.

**Table 12: Annual Dropout Rates Among Schools: 2009-10 to 2015-16<sup>6</sup>**

	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
<i>Number of Schools Included</i>	354		354		355		358		363		364		371	
<b>Annual Rate</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>0</b>	11	3	12	3	21	6	31	9	26	7	30	8	<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>0.1 – 1.0</b>	107	30	129	36	121	34	124	35	150	41	151	41	<b>159</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>1.1 – 2.5</b>	104	29	102	29	105	30	116	32	106	29	104	29	<b>101</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2.6 – 5.0</b>	70	20	54	15	58	16	49	14	42	12	39	11	<b>38</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5.1 – 7.5</b>	29	8	24	7	17	5	12	3	8	2	13	4	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>7.6 – 10.0</b>	9	3	7	2	7	2	2	1	4	1	5	1	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>10.1 and above</b>	24	7	26	7	26	7	24	7	27	7	22	6	<b>27</b>	<b>7</b>

<sup>3</sup> Represents the number of schools in the category in the 2015-16 school year.

<sup>4</sup> Represents all charter schools with enrollment in grades nine through twelve, including those whose primary mission is to serve at-risk students

<sup>5</sup> As defined by the incorporation status within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

<sup>6</sup> Only includes schools with enrollment of 75 students or more as dropout rates for schools with low enrollments are overly sensitive to small variations.