



Education and People of Color

By Progress 2050

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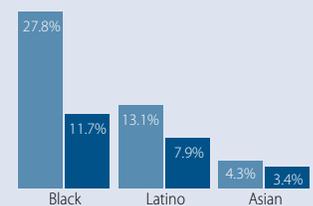
Education is a key rung on the ladder of opportunity and, as such, is an important way for people of color to level the playing field. In the past few decades, there has been significant progress toward this attainment, including increased preschool enrollment, lower high school dropout rates, and increased postsecondary education enrollment. Women of color have made particularly strong educational gains, enrolling in higher education at higher rates than their male counterparts.¹ As the Baby Boomer generation nears retirement, the U.S. economy needs future generations of highly educated and highly skilled workers.

- Children of color are the majority in our public school system.** In fall 2014, for the first time in the United States, the overall number of Latino, African American, and Asian American students surpassed the number of non-Hispanic white students in public K-12 schools. Today, children of color make up 50.3 percent² of U.S. public K-12 students, driven largely by the significant growth in the Latino population and, to a lesser degree, the steady rise in the number of Asian American children.
- The percentage of 3- and 4-year-old children of color who attend some form of preschool is on the rise.** In 2013, 45.4 percent of 3- and 4-year-old Hispanic children were enrolled in preschool,³ an increase from 41.6 percent in 2011.⁴ In 2013, 57.2 percent of 3- and 4-year-old black children were enrolled in a preschool program,⁵ an increase from 53.1 percent in 2012.⁶ In 2013, 57.5 percent⁷ of 3- and 4-year-old Asian American children were enrolled in preschool, an increase from 54.1 percent⁸ in 2012.
- Students of color between ages 16 and 24 have seen a dramatic decrease in their percentages of high school dropouts.** In 2000, the dropout rate was 27.8 percent⁹ for Latino students and 13.1 percent¹⁰ for black students, while the white student dropout rate was only 6.9 percent.¹¹ In 2003, the first year for which data on Asian American students were available, their dropout rate was 4.3 percent.¹² By 2013, however, the dropout rate of Latino students fell to 11.7 percent,¹³ black students' dropout rate fell to 7.9 percent,¹⁴ and Asian American students' dropout rate fell to 3.4 percent.¹⁵ While Latino and black students continue to experience higher dropout rates than their white and Asian American counterparts, it is clear that the dropout rate is moving in the right direction.

Children of color currently make up more than half of K-12 students



Dropout rates for students of color decreased dramatically from 2003 to 2013



- **Latino and African American students have made great strides when it comes to postsecondary education enrollment.** In 2003, approximately 1,714,000 Latinos were enrolled in college.¹⁷ By 2013, that number had risen to approximately 3,219,000 Latinos.¹⁸ In 2003, approximately 2,144,000 African Americans were enrolled in college.¹⁹ By 2013, that number had risen to 2,857,000 African Americans.²⁰
- **Women of color are enrolling in higher education at higher rates than their male counterparts.** As of 2013, 68.9 percent²¹ of Latinas ages 15 to 24 who completed high school enrolled in college the following fall, compared with 50 percent²² of Latinos. Sixty percent²³ of black women ages 15 to 24 who completed high school enrolled in college the following fall, compared with 53 percent²⁴ of black men. White women ages 15 to 24 who completed high school enrolled in college the following fall at a rate of nearly 70 percent,²⁵ while their male counterparts enrolled in college at a rate of 67.7 percent.²⁶ Eighty percent²⁷ of Asian American women ages 15 to 24 who completed high school enrolled in college the following fall, compared with 77 percent²⁸ of Asian American men.
- **Students of color are increasing their college completion rates.** Between 1996 and 2007, the graduation rate for Latinos increased by 7 percent.²⁹ Nearly 30 percent³⁰ of Latinos who started college in 2007 graduated, compared with about 23 percent³¹ who enrolled in 1996. Asian and Pacific Islander students have also seen a significant increase in college graduation rates. The percent of Asian and Pacific Islander students who enrolled in college and eventually graduated increased from 37.5 percent³² in 1996 to 46.2 percent³³ in 2007. It is projected that by 2020, 20 percent³⁴ of all adult black males will have completed college.

Endnotes

- 1 Bureau of the Census, *Table 7. Enrollment Status of High School Graduates 15 to 24 Years Old, by Type of School, Attendance Status, and Sex: October 2013* (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013), available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/school/data/cps/2013/tables.html>.
- 2 National Center for Education Statistics, *Table 203.50. Enrollment and percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity and region: Selected years, fall 1995 through fall 2023* (U.S. Department of Education, 2013), available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_203.50.asp.
- 3 Bureau of the Census, *Table 1. Enrollment Status of the Population 3 Years Old and Over, by Sex, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, Foreign Born, and Foreign-Born Parentage: October 2013* (U.S. Department of Commerce), available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/school/data/cps/2013/tables.html> (last accessed April 2015).
- 4 Bureau of the Census, *Table 1. Enrollment Status of the Population 3 Years Old and Over, by Sex, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, Foreign Born, and Foreign-Born Parentage: October 2011* (U.S. Department of Commerce), available at <https://www.census.gov/hhes/school/data/cps/2011/tables.html> (last accessed April 2015).
- 5 Bureau of the Census, *Table 1. Enrollment Status of the Population 3 Years Old and Over, by Sex, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, Foreign Born, and Foreign-Born Parentage: October 2013*.
- 6 Bureau of the Census, *Table 1. Enrollment Status of the Population 3 Years Old and Over, by Sex, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, Foreign Born, and Foreign-Born Parentage: October 2012* (U.S. Department of Commerce), available at <https://www.census.gov/hhes/school/data/cps/2012/tables.html> (last accessed April 2015).
- 7 Bureau of the Census, *Table 1. Enrollment Status of the Population 3 Years Old and Over, by Sex, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, Foreign Born, and Foreign-Born Parentage: October 2013*.
- 8 Bureau of the Census, *Table 1. Enrollment Status of the Population 3 Years Old and Over, by Sex, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, Foreign Born, and Foreign-Born Parentage: October 2012*.
- 9 Child Trends, “High School Dropout Rates” (2014), available at <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=high-school-dropout-rates>.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Richard Fry and Paul Taylor, “Hispanic High School Graduates Pass Whites in Rate of College Enrollment” (Washington: Pew Hispanic Center, 2013), available at http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2013/05/PHC_college_enrollment_2013-05.pdf.
- 17 Bureau of the Census, *Table 10. Type of College and Year Enrolled for College Students 15 Years Old and Over, by Age, Sex, Attendance Status, Race, and Hispanic Origin: October 2003* (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2005), available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/school/data/cps/2003/tables.html>.
- 18 Bureau of the Census, *Table 5. Type of College and Year Enrolled for College Students 15 Years Old and Over, by Age, Sex, Race, Attendance Status, Control of School, and Enrollment Status: October 2013* (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2005), available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/school/data/cps/2013/tables.html>.
- 19 Bureau of the Census, *Table 10. Type of College and Year Enrolled for College Students 15 Years Old and Over, by Age, Sex, Attendance Status, Race, and Hispanic Origin: October 2003*.
- 20 Bureau of the Census, *Table 5. Type of College and Year Enrolled for College Students 15 Years Old and Over, by Age, Sex, Race, Attendance Status, Control of School, and Enrollment Status: October 2013*.
- 21 Bureau of the Census, *Table 7. Enrollment Status of High School Graduates 15 to 24 Years Old, by Type of School, Attendance Status, and Sex: October 2013.*”
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 National Center for Education Statistics, *Table 326.10. Graduation rate from first institution attended for first-time, full-time bachelor’s degree-seeking students at 4-year postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity, time to completion, sex, control of institution, and acceptance rate: Selected cohort entry years, 1996 through 2007* (U.S. Department of Education, 2014), available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_326.10.asp.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ivory A. Toldson and Chance W. Lewis, “Challenge the Status Quo” (Washington: Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, 2012), available at <http://www.cbcfinc.org/oUploadedFiles/CTSQ.pdf>.