



At-risk and dropout student facts and figures

In America, our youth face challenges with equal opportunity for employment due to the increasing requirements many employers have placed upon obtaining higher education. And because of a much more global economy, students not only compete with each other, but also with students from many emerging countries for the same jobs. However, the nation faces many challenges with its “one size fits all” education model as far too many students fail to earn a high school diploma.

“Silent Epidemic” is a term used to describe the nation’s dropout rates. The problem lies not with the students or educators, but with the challenge of accommodating a student who cannot learn in a traditional education system.



On a national level, more than one million students will drop out of high school. Rather than making small changes to the traditional education system, a more “outside-the-box” approach can result in a dramatic drop in students who fail to earn a high school diploma and continue their academic and professional development.

- *Every 29 seconds an American high school student gives up on school, creating more than 1 million American high school students who drop out every year.*
- *Nearly one-third of all public high schools students—and nearly one half of all African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans—fail to graduate from public high schools with their class. Of those who graduate, only half have the skills they need to succeed in college or work.*
- *There are nearly 2,000 high schools in the U.S. with low graduation rates, and in more than 20 cities, 75 percent or more students attend public high schools where graduating is less than a 60 percent proposition.*
- *The dropout problem is likely to increase substantially through 2020 unless significant improvements are made.*
- *Dropouts are more likely than high school graduates to be unemployed, in poor health, living in poverty, on public assistance, single parents with children who drop out high school, and nearly completely missing from the civic lives of their communities.*



- *Dropouts earn \$9,200 less per year than a high school graduates and about \$1 million less over a lifetime than college graduates.*
- *Dropouts were more than three times more likely than college graduates to be unemployed in 2004 and twice as likely as high school graduates to slip into poverty.*
- *Dropouts are more than eight times as likely to be in jail or prison as a high school graduate.*
- *The government would reap \$45 billion in extra tax revenues and reduced cost of public health, of crime and justice, and in welfare payments if the number of high school dropouts among 20 – years’ olds in the U.S. today, which includes more than 700,000 high school dropouts, were cut in half.*



- *The same demographic factors correlated with academic risk in general are also correlated with the characteristics of students who drop out. These include being from a low-income family, being a minority, being male, being from a single-parent family, having limited English ability, having learning or emotional disabilities, moving frequently, and being overage for grade level.*
- *Students who take on adult roles, such as parenting or working a substantial number of hours, are more likely to drop out.*
- *Students who have struggled academically – receiving low or failing grades, scoring poorly on tests, repeating grades, falling behind on credits required for graduation – are more likely to drop out.*
- *There is currently between 900 and 1,000 high schools in the country in which graduating are at best a 50/50 proposition. In 2,000 high schools, a typical freshman class shrinks by 40% or more by the time the students reach their senior year. This represents nearly one in five regular or vocational high schools in the U.S. that enroll 300 or more students.*
- *Finally, students who exhibit signs of being disengaged from school are more likely to drop out. These students have poor attendance rates, are less likely to be involved in extracurricular activities, act out in the classroom, and have poor relationships with teachers and peers.*

“According to John Hopkins University, 51.1 % of Florida’s high schools’ have become dropout factories – schools where no more than 60 % of the freshmen actually graduate” (Banfanz). The affect on Florida’s economy is jaw-dropping and the facts put it all into perspective:



- *Florida would save almost \$1.5 billion in healthcare costs over the course of the lifetimes of each class of dropouts had they earned their diplomas.*
- *Florida households would have almost \$4.5 billion more in accumulated wealth if all heads of households had graduated from high school.*

- *Almost \$15 billion would be added to Florida’s economy by 2020 if students of color graduated at the same rate as white students.*
- *If Florida’s high schools graduated all students ready for college, the state would save almost \$194 million a year in community college remediation costs and lost earnings.*
- *Florida’s economy would see a combination of savings and revenues of more than \$506 million in reduced crimes spending and increased earnings each year if the male high school graduations rate increased by just 5%.*



Although there is no single risk factor that can be used to accurately predict who is at-risk of dropping out, researchers have correlated certain types of student characteristics with students who drop out:

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