

MAJOR TRENDS FACING NORTH CAROLINA

IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR STATE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA



Effect of High School Dropouts on the Work Force of the Future

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**University of North Carolina Tomorrow
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The Effect of High School Dropouts
On the Work Force of the Future**

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Brief Introduction of Trends

The issue of high school dropouts should be one of major concern to the state, to most of the regions in the state and to local communities; because these students are the workforce of the future. Dropping out of high school increases the probability of lower pay, decreased job mobility, involvement in crime, involvement in substance abuse and pregnancy. So, instead of contributing to the economic growth of the region and the state, many dropouts wind-up costing the local community, the region and the state in not only money but in all social services and the loss of human resources and future labor power. In 2000, according to *Focus Adolescent Services* the United States' high school completion rate slipped to 10th place in the world; while from 1999 to 2004 there has been an increase in gang related activity in practically every state in the continental United States.

Major Trends Impacting North Carolina

According to The Annie E. Casey's publication *Kids Count 2003*: North Carolina has an 11% high school dropout rate.

New Jersey, North Dakota and Wisconsin have the lowest at 4% www.kidscount.org, provides information on children

Arizona and Louisiana have the highest at 12%.

According to *Focus Adolescent Services* more than one in four Hispanic high school students drop out.

Almost half the students who leave school; leave by the eighth grade.

Hispanics are twice as likely as African Americans to dropout, whites and Asians are least likely to drop out

(Trends Child Data Bank, 2005).

There is a nation wide increase in the number of gangs and gang membership (Hayes, 2005).

A. Characteristics of Dropouts

More than half the dropouts leave by the tenth grade, 20% quit by the eighth grade, and 3% drop out by the fourth grade.

Nearly twenty-five percent changed schools two or more times.

Almost 20% were held back a grade.

Almost one-half missed at least 10 days of school, one third cut class at least 10 times.

Eight percent spent time in a juvenile home or shelter

One-third were put on in-school suspension, suspended, or put on probation, and more than 15% were either expelled or told they could not return.

Twelve percent ran away from home.

(Focus Adolescent Services, 2000)

B. Earnings and Opportunities for Dropouts

Recent high school dropouts will earn \$200,000 less than high school graduates.

They will earn \$800,000 less than college graduates, the latter and former are referring to over a life time.

Dropouts make up nearly half the heads of households on welfare.

Dropouts make up nearly half the prison population.

- Each teen birth in North Carolina costs taxpayers approximately \$18,000.

Teens who are academically behind are three to five times more likely than their peers to become pregnant as teenagers.

Fifty percent of all teen mothers drop out of school and never return.

Reduction of early pregnancy in and of itself is desirable. Teen parents are less likely to finish high school and thus are more likely to remain in low paying jobs and have difficulty supporting their families.

Teen moms frequently do not marry the father of the baby. The poverty rate for families headed by a female is consistently higher compared to the poverty rate among married couple families.

Teen fathers are 40% less likely to graduate than their peers who do not father children.

Families headed by teen mothers are seven times more likely than other families to live below the poverty level.

High school drop outs are three times more likely than college graduates to be unemployed.

The costs in terms of child abuse and child neglect as well as cost for public assistance programs such as Medicaid, WIC and Food Stamps are also greatly affected.

Births to young teens translate into higher medical costs due to health related problems, short and long term, for themselves and for their babies.

Studies also indicate there is a higher incidence of birth defects, learning and behavior disorders among babies born to teens (Focus Adolescent Services, 2000).

Trends in North Carolina

Data from the Annie Casey Foundation lists North Carolina 45th with Mississippi with an 11% high school drop out rate. The highest being Louisiana and Arizona with a 12%

dropout rate. The lowest states are New Jersey, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

According to The Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Kids Count 2006*: out of the 115 counties in the state of North Carolina, Cumberland County schools ranks 72, at a 64.7% graduation rate.

The highest graduation rate in the state was Chapel Hill Carrboro at 90.2%.

The lowest graduation rate in the state-Lexington City-43.7%

In 2003-2004, North Carolina enrolled 386,190 students in grades 9-12 during this period 20,025 dropped out, only eight other states had more dropouts (*Event Dropout Rates*)

According to *Trends Child Data Bank 2004* for all dropouts ages 16-24 males were 11.6 per 100, females 9.0; 56.8 of all dropouts were males and 43.2 were females (nation-wide).

Based upon the Governor's Crime Commission's Gang Survey of 2004 in 1999 there were 332 gangs in the State of North Carolina with a total membership of 5,068. In 2004 the number of gangs jumped to 387 with a total membership of 8,517. The ages ranged from 8-50, with the highest concentration of members being in the 16 to 24 age group, the next highest in the 13-15 age group.

African Americans accounted for 102 or 26.4% of the gang.

Hispanics accounted for 86 or 22.2% of the gangs.

Mixed Groups account for 61 or 15.8% of the gangs (Hayes, 2005).

NC RELEASES FIRST FOUR-YEAR COHORT GRADUATION RATE

All Students	68.1 percent
Female	72.4 percent
Male	63.9 percent
Asian	74.1 percent
Black	60.0 percent
Hispanic	51.8 percent
Multi-Racial	65.2 percent
Native American	51.1 percent
White	73.6 percent
Economically Disadvantaged	55.3 percent
Limited English Proficient	54.6 percent
Students with Disabilities	49.9 percent

Sixty-eight percent of first-time high school ninth graders in 2002-03 graduated in four years or less, according to the first four-year cohort graduation rate presented to the State Board of Education today.

Since the fall of 2002, North Carolina public school officials have been keeping a careful accounting of each ninth grader as he or she moves through high school. The goal of this record keeping – a four-year cohort graduation rate – provides the state with its first actual count of how many students graduate with a diploma in four years. A fifth-year cohort graduation rate will be reported for this group this summer at the same time that the four-year cohort for the 2003-04 ninth grade group is reported.

North Carolina educators have been eager to have this information since 2002 when the federal No Child Left Behind legislation began requiring states to begin reporting the cohort rate. Today's report provided four-year cohort graduation rates for each of the state's 405 regular and charter public high schools, for each of the 115 school districts and for the state overall.

Results show a range of four-year cohort rates.

"High school graduation is a primary measure of school success," said State Board of Education Chairman Howard Lee. "The high school graduation rate has been a long-standing problem in North Carolina and in the United States. Our rate is not where we want it to be, but we welcome today's information to help us clearly see the challenges ahead and to affirm the importance of the high school reform agenda in North Carolina as we continue working toward a day when all North Carolina students will graduate from high school ready for success in the 21st century."

While 68 percent is the current four-year cohort graduation rate, that does not mean that 32 percent of the students have dropped out of school. A total of 5,413 students were known to still be enrolled in high school at the end of the year and did not receive a diploma. Given that approximately 15 percent of ninth graders are retained each year, some of those students likely will graduate in five years or more.

North Carolina education policy provides a conservative definition of high school graduates. Students who leave public high school for a community college GED or adult high school program are counted as dropouts under state policy. Also, the cohort graduation rate does not capture students with disabilities who complete the 12th grade but do not qualify for a standard diploma and instead earn a Certificate of Achievement or Graduation Certificate. In addition, school officials are not allowed to tag a student as having transferred to another public or private high school until the receiving school requests the student's records.

State Superintendent June Atkinson, who began her career as a high school teacher, said that there are many efforts underway to help strengthen the high school experience for all students. "We have not been waiting for the release of this number. We have known from earlier statistical estimates and anecdotes that our high schools need to be re-invented and that work is already underway" (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2007).

Impact on University of North Carolina

Enrollment issues pertaining to Blacks and Hispanics

Female college attendance increasing

Males - fewer than their percentage in the general population

Absence of males on campuses (Vickers, 2006).

Under prepared for college drop out and return

Older when either return to school or when enter college

Do online but under prepared of do online not being on campus lessens the potential of gaining the soft skills that industry needs, those choosing on-line given data probably most in need of these skills.

More college students need to work in order to pay tuition, thus time is taken from studying and gaining the benefit of interacting with other students and faculty and enjoying the benefit of college life.

Trends focus on how UNC should respond

Students dropping out of high school in the state are a serious problem (See Appendix 1).

Particular attention needs to be paid to the Hispanic and Black populations both in elementary and high school. Even though this brief focuses on high school drop outs, it is critical to implement the suggestions to follow as a means of recruiting and retaining students.

The elementary, high school and university systems should provide:

Training in Hispanic culture, basic Spanish language and its use in the elementary, high school and university classroom.

Outreach and tutoring programs to elementary, high schools and University students focusing on Hispanics and Blacks.

Out reach programs to students placed in juvenile homes, shelters and on probation

Intervention programs for schools, parents and students who have the characteristics of possible dropouts.

The Hispanic population is increasing on campus; thus activities and the atmosphere, or ambiance needs to be more welcoming to Hispanics and Blacks. This includes the presence of Hispanic faculty, male and female in courses other than Spanish language courses.

There are an increasing number of African American students attending college with more from Africa and the Caribbean, bringing different cultural orientations; but being lumped together with African Americans. In non HBCU's there needs to be an increase in Black faculty in all areas of concentration.

Many students are first generation college students and from parents who might have dropped out of high school and have little knowledge of the requirements/process to be admitted to college and the true benefit of a college education.

The question is not which comes first, gang membership or dropping out of school. Many youths who drop out become gang members and those who are in school and are members of a gang dropout. The issue is to reach these youth early in their educational life to keep them in school; yet interventions need to be in place at all levels of the K-12 experience.

University of North Carolina System President Erskine Bowles is quoted in an article published on the web (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2007) as saying: "For every 100 eighth-graders, 58 graduate high school, 38 attend college, 28 return for a second year and 18 graduate from college."

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Appendix 1

North Carolina School Districts Cohort Graduation Rate, 2006