



RESEARCH BRIEF

Research Services

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Research Services
Assessment and Data Analysis

Dropout and Graduation Rates 2004-05

The District conducts a *cross-sectional* analysis of student dropouts annually; it examines dropout rates among students enrolled in various grades at one point in time. A *longitudinal* analysis, also conducted annually, tracks a group of students in the same grade or cohort over a period of several years. Each method addresses a different aspect of how many students are dropping out of school. This research brief provides information on the cross-sectional and longitudinal dropout rates and longitudinal graduation rates for 2004-2005.

Dropout Definitions

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) currently defines a dropout as a student who: (1) voluntarily removes himself or herself from the school system before graduation; (2) has not met the relevant attendance requirements of the school district, or the student's whereabouts are unknown; (3) has withdrawn from school but has not transferred to another public or private school; (4) has withdrawn from school because of hardship; or (5) is not eligible to attend school because of reaching the maximum age for an exceptional student program.

Cross-Sectional Dropout Rate

The methodology used to determine cross-sectional dropout rate divides the number of students in grades 9 through 12 who are classified as dropouts by the total number of students in grades 9 through 12 in attendance at any time during the school year. The cross-sectional dropout rate is expressed as a percentage of the membership for the entire school year. The dropout rate for 2004-2005 across grades 9-12 was **4.9** percent. Table 1 includes a breakdown of the rates by grade and across grades for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005.

Table 1
Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005

Grade	2003-2004			2004-2005		
	2004 All Year Membership	No. of Dropouts	Dropout Rate	2005 All Year Membership	No. of Dropouts	Dropout Rate
9	39,827	2,434	6.1%	36,726	1,927	5.2%
10	30,769	1,852	6.0%	33,176	1,676	5.1%
11	23,988	1,311	5.5%	25,204	1,146	4.5%
12	23,583	1,175	5.0%	24,034	1,122	4.7%
9 - 12	118,167	6,772	5.7%	119,140	5,871	4.9%

The observed cross-sectional dropout rates are slightly lower this year across all grade levels. Although this would suggest some improvement in dropout prevention, the numbers are still substantially above the trends before last year. The increase in the last two years in the dropout rate may be attributable to a refinement in the procedure used to follow students that are withdrawn to the Adult Education Program. For the first time during the 2003-2004 school year, students withdrawn to the adult program were cross-referenced during both semesters to determine whether the students had enrolled in a course. Students who were not found to be actively enrolled in a course were assigned a non-attendance withdrawal code which defines the child as a dropout. It is difficult to determine how much the refinement of these procedural changes has contributed to the apparent decrease in dropout rates for 2004-2005.

Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates by Gender

Table 2 includes a breakdown of the rates by gender and grade for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. Consistent with previous local and national findings, female students were categorized as dropouts/truants less frequently than were male students. Specifically, the rate for 2004-2005 for female students in grades 9-12 was 4.0 percent. The rate for 2004-2005 for male students in grades 9-12 was 5.8 percent.

Table 2
Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 by Gender

Grade	Female		Male	
	2003-2004	2004-2005	2003-2004	2004-2005
9	4.6	4.0	7.4	6.3
10	4.5	4.2	7.4	5.9
11	4.4	3.6	6.5	5.5
12	4.4	4.2	5.6	5.2
9 - 12	4.5	4.0	6.9	5.8

Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates by Ethnic/Racial Background

White, Non-Hispanic students were categorized as dropouts less frequently than were either Hispanic or Black, Non-Hispanic students (Table 3). In examining the rate for White, Non-Hispanic students, it can be seen that the dropout rate for this group was 3.8 percent for grades 9-12 for 2004-2005. For Hispanic students, the rate for grades 9-12 was 4.7 percent for 2004-2005; and for Black, Non-Hispanics, the rate for students in grades 9-12 was 6.1 percent for 2004-2005.

Table 3
Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity

Grade	White, Non-Hispanic		Black, Non-Hispanic		Hispanic	
	2003-2004	2004-2005	2003-2004	2004-2005	2003-2004	2004-2005
9	4.0	4.9	7.8	6.3	5.7	4.9
10	4.7	3.4	7.4	6.1	5.7	4.9
11	3.7	3.3	7.0	5.4	5.2	4.5
12	3.9	3.2	6.6	6.5	4.5	4.2
9 - 12	4.1	3.8	7.3	6.1	5.4	4.7

Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for Exceptional Student Education Programs

Given that grade level designations for exceptional students do not necessarily correspond to those used for other students, rates by program and across programs have been provided without regard to grade levels (Table 4). Please note that categories are differentiated by primary exceptionality and include students with a specific exceptionality, whether enrolled in an appropriate program or not. For the 2004-2005 school year, the cross-sectional dropout rate across all exceptional student education programs (excluding gifted) for all grades was 1.7 percent.

Table 4
Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for
Exceptional Student Education Programs, All Grades

Exceptional Student Education Program	2003-2004		2004-2005	
	Feb. 2004 ESE Membership	Dropout Rate	Feb. 2005 ESE Membership	Dropout Rate
Educable Mentally Handicapped (EMH)	2,653	3.0	2,548	2.0
Trainable Mentally Handicapped (TMH)	1,167	4.7	1,149	1.8
Physically Impaired - (also includes traumatic brain injured and other health impaired)	2,103	1.0	2,353	0.6
Speech Impaired	3,636	0.3	3,496	0.1
Language Impaired	667	0.2	664	0.2
Hearing Impaired	510	1.8	501	1.0
Visually Impaired	159	1.9	150	0.7
Emotionally Handicapped	3,680	4.9	3,564	3.9
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	24,879	2.4	24,287	1.8
Profound Mentally Handicapped (PMH) - (also includes Autistic, Dual Sensory, and Severely Emotionally Handicapped)	3,501	2.2	3,547	1.7
Developmentally Delayed	1,358	0.0	1,409	0.0
Established Conditions	17	0.0	16	0.0
Gifted	25,105	0.1	25,380	0.1
Total	69,435	1.5	69,064	1.1
Total Excluding Gifted	44,330	2.3	43,684	1.7

Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students

The dropout rate for grades 9-12 students classified as ESOL Levels 1-4 was 7.5 percent for 2004-2005 (Table 5).

Table 5
Cross-Sectional Dropout Rates for LEP Students

Grade	2003-2004			2004-2005		
	All Year ESOL 1-4 Membership	No. of LEP Dropouts	LEP Dropout Rates	All Year ESOL 1-4 Membership	No. of LEP Dropouts	LEP Dropout Rates
9	3,903	280	7.2%	3,362	201	6.0%
10	3,132	256	8.2%	2,961	227	7.7%
11	1,963	184	9.4%	2,027	172	8.5%
12	1,481	146	9.9%	1,427	120	8.4%
9 - 12	10,479	866	8.3%	9,777	720	7.4%

Longitudinal Dropout and Graduation Rates

The longitudinal analysis tracks a single class over its high school career and retrospectively determines the proportion that dropped out and the proportion that graduated. The rates are reported as a percentage of the cohort group. As the cohort group advances through high school, withdrawals are dropped from the cohort group and transfers-in are added in. This report focuses on two cohort groups: the students who started 9th grade in October 2000 (normally scheduled to graduate in June 2004) and the students who started 9th grade in October 2001 (normally scheduled to graduate in June 2005). The 2000 cohort was tracked an extra 5th year and the resultant 5-year dropout and graduation rates are reported separately.

The 4-year dropout rate increased from 13.5 percent to 13.9 percent between the 2000 and 2001 cohort groups (Table 6). The 4-year graduation rate decreased from 59.2 percent to 57.8 percent between the 2000 and 2001 cohort groups. The 5-year rates for the 2000 cohort group showed a slight decrease in dropouts and a 4.3 percent increase in graduates over their 4-year period.

Table 6
Longitudinal Dropout and Graduation Rates
for the 2000 Cohort and the 2001 Cohort Groups

Cohort	Final Cohort	No. of		No. of	
	Membership	Dropouts	Rate	Graduates	Rate
2000-2004 (4-year)	26,724	3,616	13.5	15,814	59.2
2000-2005 (5-year)	26,724	3,597	13.5	16,959	63.5
2001-2005 (4-year)	27,334	3,808	13.9	15,802	57.8
Change in 4-year Rate			0.4		-1.4

Longitudinal Dropout and Graduation Rates by Ethnic/Racial Background

White, Non-Hispanic students had higher graduation rates than Hispanic students, who, in turn, had higher graduation rates than Black, Non-Hispanic students (Table 7). Although changes in dropout rates were slight, this is the first year in many years that the dropout rate for Hispanics exceeded that for Black, Non-Hispanics. The changes in dropout and graduation rates may be attributable to the refined procedures for following students that are withdrawn to the Adult Education Program. While graduation rates statewide have consistently increased over the past seven years, M-DCPS graduation rates have been increasing over the past four years with a decline in 2004-05 (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Graduation Rates for M-DCPS and the State

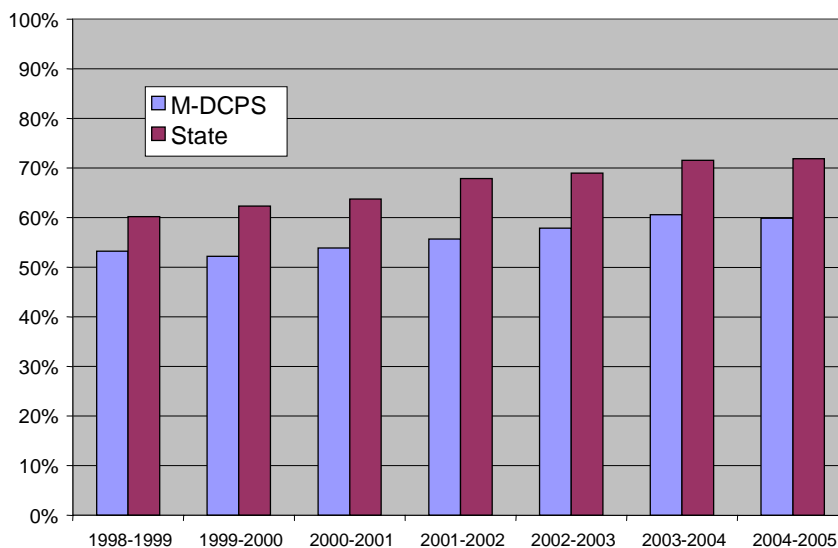


Table 7
Longitudinal Dropout and Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity
for the 2000 Cohort and the 2001 Cohort Groups

Cohort	White, Non-Hispanic	Black, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic
2000-2004 (4-year) Dropout Rate	12.2	14.2	13.6
2000-2004 (4-year) Graduation Rate	73.1	49.5	61.1
2001-2005 (4-year) Dropout Rate	12.1	13.8	14.6
2001-2005 (4-year) Graduation Rate	70.8	48	59.6
Change in 4-year Dropout Rate	-0.1	-0.4	1
Change in 4-year Graduation Rate	-2.3	-1.5	-1.5

Summary

Cross-Sectional Dropout Rate

- The cross-sectional dropout rate for 2004-2005 for grades 9-12 was **4.9%**. This was a decrease from the 2003-2004 dropout rate of 5.7%. The decrease in the dropout rate may be attributable to a refinement in the procedure used to follow students that are withdrawn to the Adult Education Program.
- Consistent with previous local, state, and national findings, female students were categorized as dropouts less frequently than were male students. Specifically, the rate for male students for 2004-2005 was **5.8** percent (grades 9-12). The rate for female students was **4.0** percent (grades 9-12).
- White, Non-Hispanic students were categorized as dropouts less frequently than were either Hispanic or Black, Non-Hispanic students. Specifically, the 2004-2005 rate for White, Non-Hispanic students was 3.8 percent (grades 9-12); for Hispanic students the rate was 4.7 percent (grades 9-12); and for Black, Non-Hispanic students the rate was **6.1** percent (grades 9-12).

Longitudinal Dropout and Graduation Rate

- The longitudinal 4-year dropout rate for the 2001-2005 cohort group increased from 13.5 percent (2000-2004) to 13.9 percent (2001-2005). The longitudinal 4-year graduation rate for the 2001-2005 cohort group decreased from 59.2 percent (2000-2004) to 57.8 percent (2001-2005).
- The longitudinal 4-year 2001-2005 dropout rate for White, Non-Hispanic students was 12.1 percent; for Hispanics students the rate was 14.6 percent; and for Black, Non-Hispanic students the rate was 13.8 percent. The longitudinal 4-year 2001-2005 graduation rate for White, Non-Hispanic students was 70.8 percent; for Hispanic students the rate was 59.6 percent; and for Black, Non-Hispanic students the rate was 48 percent.