

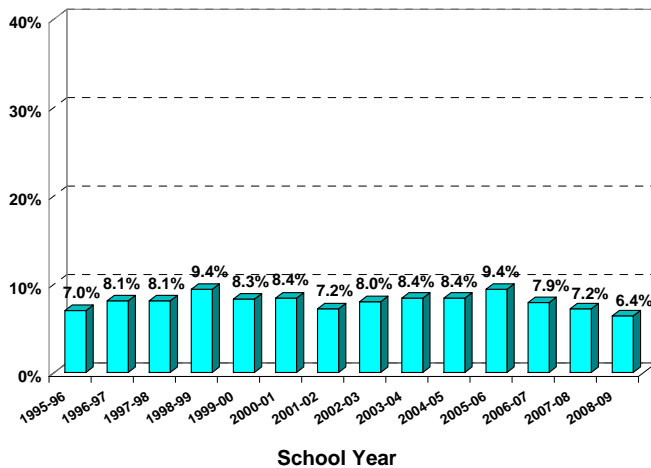
Q and A

Boston Public Schools 2008-2009: Student Dropout

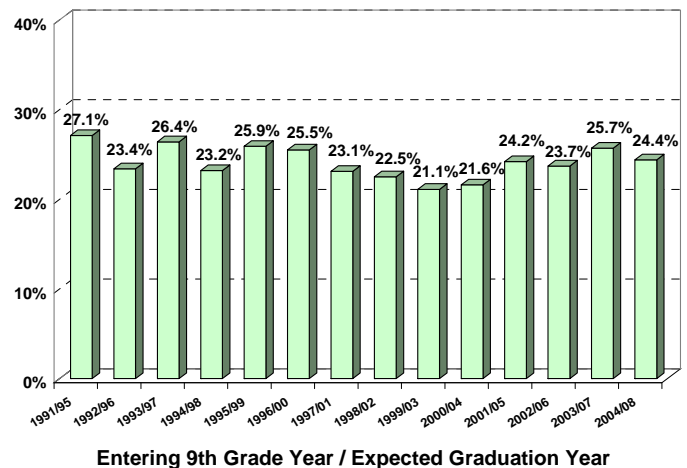
This document presents answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about student dropout in the Boston Public Schools. As defined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) and the National Center for Education Statistics, a student is considered to be a dropout at the end of the school year if he or she is not in school, has not graduated, and has not transferred to another school system*.

How Have Systemwide Dropout Rates Varied Over Time?

Annual Dropout Rates* Systemwide: Grades 9-12



Ninth Grade Cohort Dropout Rates Systemwide



- The annual rate analysis answers the question, “How many students in grades 9-12 drop out in one year?”
- The 9th–12th grade annual dropout rate in 2008-2009 (6.4%) represents a 0.8 percentage point decrease from the previous year, and is the lowest rate the district has seen since 1995-96.
- Although the dropout rate has fluctuated from year to year, data for the past three years suggest a downward trend.

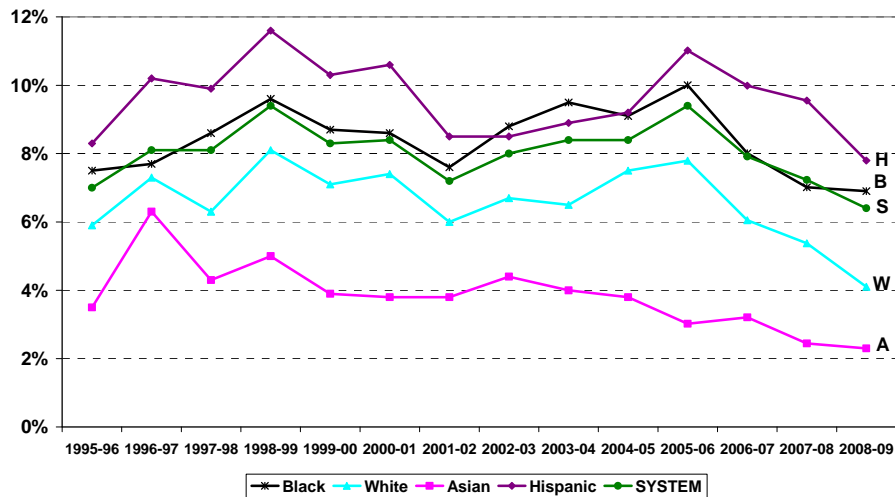
- The cohort rate analysis answers the question, “Of the students who entered the BPS as 9th graders, what proportion dropped out over the next five years?”
- Compared to the previous cohort, the 9th grade cohort dropout rate decreased 1.3 percentage points to 24.4% for the 2004/08 cohort.
- The cohort dropout rate has declined substantially since its high point of 39.6% for the students in the 1983/1987 cohort.

Note: Final annual dropout rates are reported in this document. These final dropout rates differ from the June rates shown in the School Report Cards because they account for changes in student status between June and the following October. This is done to conform with MA DESE guidelines. It should be noted that from the SY2003-04 onward, the student status reported in the next school year October 1 Student Information Management System (SIMS) is used for the adjustment rather than identified by school personnel via a survey as done in the previous years. Also, beginning with SY2006-07, BPS Student Discharge Codes have been changed to align with the enrollment status codes used by the MA DESE’s SIMS.

* Starting from SY2006-07, students who died or were expelled are excluded from the population instead of being counted as other loss. Caution should be made when comparing data from 2006-07 and later with data from earlier years.

How Have System Wide Dropout Rates Varied Over Time by Racial/Ethnic Group?

Annual Dropout Rate by Racial/Ethnic Group:
1995-96 through 2008-09



	Black	White	Asian	Hispanic	SYSTEM
1995-96	7.5%	5.9%	3.5%	8.3%	7.0%
1996-97	7.7%	7.3%	6.3%	10.2%	8.1%
1997-98	8.6%	6.3%	4.3%	9.9%	8.1%
1998-99	9.6%	8.1%	5.0%	11.6%	9.4%
1999-00	8.7%	7.1%	3.9%	10.3%	8.3%
2000-01	8.6%	7.4%	3.8%	10.6%	8.4%
2001-02	7.6%	6.0%	3.8%	8.5%	7.2%
2002-03	8.8%	6.7%	4.4%	8.5%	8.0%
2003-04	9.5%	6.5%	4.0%	8.9%	8.4%
2004-05	9.1%	7.5%	3.8%	9.2%	8.4%
2005-06	10.0%	7.8%	3.0%	11.0%	9.4%
2006-07	8.0%	6.1%	3.2%	10.0%	7.9%
2007-08	7.0%	5.4%	2.4%	9.6%	7.2%
2008-09	6.9%	4.1%	2.3%	7.8%	6.4%

- The district saw its lowest annual dropout rate in 2008-09 over the fourteen-year period since 1995-96 for students of all racial/ethnic groups.
- Over the one-year period between 2007-08 and 2008-09, dropout rates for every group saw a decline. Hispanic students saw the greatest improvement, with a reduction of almost 2 percentage points in their dropout rate.

How Do Dropout Rates Vary by Racial/Ethnic Group and Gender?

Annual Dropout Rate by Racial/Ethnic Group and Gender: Grades 9-12, 2008-2009

	Overall		Male		Female	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Black	6.9%	574	8.4%	355	5.4%	219
White	4.1%	109	5.4%	73	2.8%	36
Asian	2.3%	41	2.6%	24	1.9%	17
Hispanic	7.8%	520	9.7%	328	5.9%	192
TOTALS**	6.4%	1,264	7.9%	787	4.9%	477

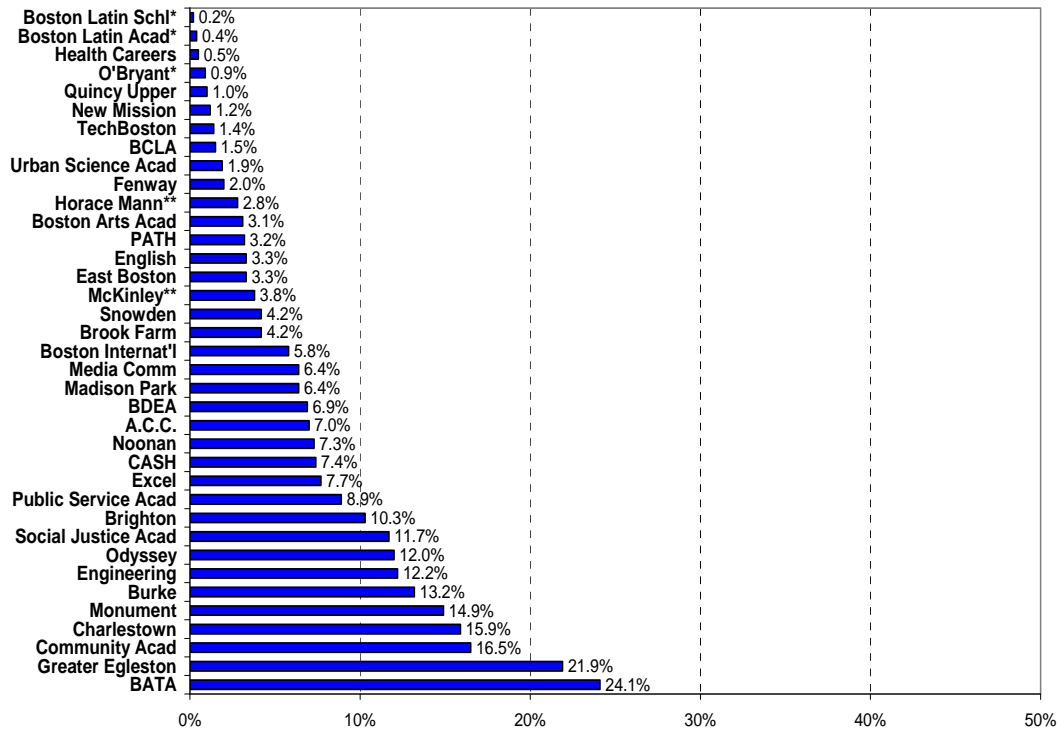
** Totals include 7 Native American and 13 Multiracial dropouts who are not shown separately by gender.

- Overall, more males than females dropped out.
- The dropout rate is lowest among Asian female students and highest among male Hispanics.
- Gender differences are slightly more pronounced among Hispanic and Black students.

Q and A Boston Public Schools 2008-2009: Student Dropout

How do Dropout Rates Differ Across Schools/Programs?

Annual Dropout Rate by School: Grades 9-12, 2008-09



- Dropout rates vary substantially across schools/programs.
- Dropout rates range from a low of 0.2% to a high of 24.1%.
- School enrollments in grades 9-12 ranged from 36 to over 1,600.

* Examination School ** Special Needs School. Note: Students who dropped out are attributed to the last school to which they were assigned.

How do Dropout Rates Vary Across Neighborhoods?

- Dropout rates vary substantially according to where students live.
- The percentage of dropouts varies from a low of 2.9% in West Roxbury to a high of 9.3% in Grove Hall.
- There is also considerable variation in the number of students from each neighborhood who attend Boston Public Schools.

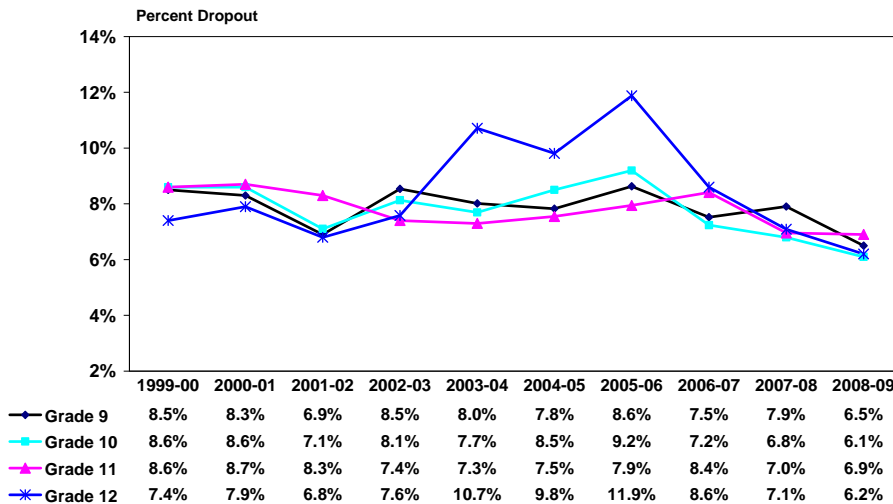
Annual Dropout Rate by Neighborhood (Zip Code): Grades 9-12, 2008-2009			
	Percent	Number	Students in Neighborhood
Allston	4.4%	12	272
Back Bay/Kenmore*	5.7%	21	370
Boston Central**	3.2%	9	282
Brighton	6.2%	35	567
Charlestown	7.7%	28	362
Codman Square	7.5%	193	2588
East Boston	3.5%	54	1564
Fields Corner	6.6%	76	1145
Grove Hall	9.3%	158	1694
Hyde Park	4.6%	60	1316
Jamaica Plain	5.1%	43	839
Mattapan	6.8%	95	1404
Roslindale	4.9%	64	1294
Roxbury	8.4%	125	1480
Roxbury Crossing	6.9%	41	592
South Boston	8.0%	66	828
South End	8.2%	52	636
Uphams Corner	6.2%	109	1767
West Roxbury	2.9%	17	596

* 02115, 02116, 02215, 02199
 ** 02108 through 02111, 02113, 02114, 02210 (Downtown, West End, North End, Chinatown)

Q and A Boston Public Schools 2008-2009: Student Dropout

How do Dropout Rates Vary Across Grade Levels?

Annual Dropout Rates by Grade Level: 1999-00 to 2008-09



- Dropout rates across grade levels have fluctuated over the years.
- 2008-09 had the lowest dropout rate over this 10-year period for all grade levels.
- Compared to 2007-08, the dropout rates for every grade declined; the differences ranged from a low of 0.1 percentage point in grade 11 to a high of 1.4 percentage points in grade 9.

How do Dropout Rates Differ Between Competency Determination (CD*) Earners and Students without a CD?

- Students without a CD are more likely to drop out than students with a CD.
- Among those who dropped out, only 7% of juniors had earned a CD, but about 57% of seniors had already earned a CD.
- The data suggest that not earning a CD may be more of a factor in the dropout decisions of juniors than of seniors.

2008-09 Dropout Rates and % of Dropouts Among CD Earners and Students without a CD

Grade	CD Status	Total Enrollment	# of Dropouts	Dropout Rate	% of All Dropouts
11 (Class of 2010*)	With CD	1,834	21	1.1%	6.9%
	Without CD	2,538	282	11.1%	93.1%
12 (Class of 2009*)	With CD	4,540	185	4.1%	56.9%
	Without CD	677	140	20.7%	43.1%

* To earn a CD, students in the classes of 2003–2009 were required to earn a scaled score of 220 (*Needs Improvement*) or higher on the grade 10 MCAS ELA and Mathematics tests. Beginning with the class of 2010, in order to earn a CD, students must **either** earn a scaled score of at least 240 (*Proficient or Advanced*) on both the grade 10 MCAS ELA and Mathematics tests, **or** earn a scaled score between 220 and 238 on both tests and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP). In addition, students must earn a scaled score of at least 220 (*Needs Improvement*) on one of the high school Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) tests.

How do Dropout Rates Vary Among Special Populations?

2008-09 Dropout Rates and % of Dropouts for Special Populations

	Total Enrollment	# of Dropouts	Dropout Rate	% of All Dropouts
Special Education	3,617	332	9.2%	26.3%
Non-Special Education	16,018	932	5.8%	73.7%
LEP	2,814	175	6.2%	13.8%
Non LEP/FLEP	16,821	1,089	6.5%	86.2%
Low-Income	12,724	628	4.9%	49.7%
Non Low-Income	6,911	636	9.2%	50.3%

- Students with disabilities are more likely to drop out of school than their non-SPED peers.
- The dropout rate for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students was slightly lower than for Non-LEP students. This represents a significant change since 2006-07, with a decrease of 4.2 percentage points.
- Student dropout does not appear to be associated with low-income status. Among all dropouts in 2008-09, about half were not from low-income families.

Boston Public Schools

Annual Dropout by Racial/Ethnic Group and Systemwide: 1981-1982 through 2008-2009: Grades 9-12*

	Black		White		Asian		Hispanic		Native American		Multiracial		Systemwide	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
2008-2009#	6.9%	[574/8315]	4.1%	[109/2654]	2.3%	[41/1808]	7.8%	[520/6628]	9.9%	[7/71]	8.2%	[13/159]	6.4%	[1264/19635]
2007-2008#	7.0%	[608/8668]	5.4%	[150/2790]	2.4%	[44/1799]	9.6%	[626/6552]	10.3%	[7/68]	8.8%	[12/137]	7.2%	[1447/20014]
2006-2007#	8.0%	[727/9075]	6.1%	[171/2825]	3.2%	[59/1838]	10.0%	[642/6427]	4.1%	[3/73]	8.1%	[8/99]	7.9%	[1610/20337]
2005-2006****	10.0%	[965/9648]	7.8%	[234/3003]	3.0%	[55/1821]	11.0%	[670/6081]	10.1%	[7/69]	9.3%	[5/54]	9.4%	[1936/20676]
2004-2005****	9.1%	[887/9789]	7.5%	[226/3029]	3.8%	[69/1806]	9.2%	[510/5551]	8.1%	[6/74]	--	[1/5]	8.4%	[1699/20254]
2003-2004***	9.5%	[932/9845]	6.5%	[197/3036]	4.0%	[75/1864]	8.9%	[463/5201]	9.7%	[7/72]	-	-	8.4%	[1674/20018]
2002-2003***	8.8%	[872/9932]	6.7%	[203/3033]	4.4%	[82/1855]	8.5%	[404/4774]	11.4%	[8/70]	-	-	8.0%	[1569/19664]
2001-2002***	7.6%	[756/9923]	6.0%	[185/3065]	3.8%	[73/1924]	8.5%	[395/4629]	9.1%	[7/77]	-	-	7.2%	[1416/19618]
2000-2001***	8.6%	[824/9625]	7.4%	[225/3059]	3.8%	[71/1883]	10.6%	[469/4416]	7.2%	[5/64]	-	-	8.4%	[1594/19052]
1999-2000***	8.7%	[839/9624]	7.1%	[221/3103]	3.9%	[72/1862]	10.3%	[451/4394]	8.2%	[5/61]	-	-	8.3%	[1588/19044]
1998-1999***	9.6%	[899/9337]	8.1%	[254/3153]	5.0%	[92/1840]	11.6%	[498/4288]	10.9%	[6/55]	-	-	9.4%	[1749/18673]
1997-1998***	8.6%	[781/9088]	6.3%	[194/3094]	4.3%	[76/1769]	9.9%	[416/4188]	13.5%	[7/52]	-	-	8.1%	[1474/18191]
1996-1997***	7.7%	[683/8890]	7.3%	[227/3096]	6.3%	[113/1794]	10.2%	[421/4140]	8.2%	[4/49]	-	-	8.1%	[1448/17969]
1995-1996***	7.5%	[649/8626]	5.9%	[182/3102]	3.5%	[62/1796]	8.3%	[325/3925]	13.0%	[7/54]	-	-	7.0%	[1225/17505]
1994-1995**	9.7%	[822/8501]	7.2%	[220/3055]	5.4%	[99/1837]	10.4%	[393/3773]	7.0%	[3/43]	-	-	8.9%	[1537/17209]
1993-1994**	8.1%	[682/8412]	8.6%	[274/3192]	4.3%	[81/1880]	10.3%	[382/3697]	22.4%	[11/49]	-	-	8.3%	[1430/17230]
1992-1993**	9.0%	[745/8319]	8.5%	[284/3328]	3.4%	[65/1888]	10.6%	[379/3567]	21.4%	[12/56]	-	-	8.7%	[1485/17158]
1991-1992**	9.5%	[787/8323]	8.5%	[281/3313]	7.4%	[140/1898]	13.1%	[451/3448]	11.8%	[6/51]	-	-	9.8%	[1655/17033]
1990-1991**	10.3%	[848/8199]	7.6%	[251/3292]	4.8%	[88/1816]	13.5%	[432/3211]	10.0%	[6/60]	-	-	9.8%	[1625/16578]
1989-1990**	10.3%	[833/8118]	9.2%	[319/3485]	5.6%	[98/1753]	13.8%	[409/2971]	15.3%	[9/59]	-	-	10.2%	[1668/16386]
1988-1989	11.2%	[929/8330]	10.7%	[406/3799]	4.7%	[76/1628]	14.7%	[412/2808]	10.0%	[7/70]	-	-	11.0%	[1830/16635]
1987-1988	13.5%	[1145/8502]	13.0%	[541/4156]	6.3%	[97/1545]	17.7%	[481/2713]	16.4%	[12/73]	-	-	13.4%	[2276/16989]
1986-1987	13.4%	[1167/8735]	14.3%	[659/4621]	8.0%	[123/1536]	18.0%	[482/2678]	17.6%	[13/74]	-	-	13.9%	[2444/17644]
1985-1986	14.4%	[1293/8963]	14.9%	[738/4944]	9.4%	[140/1496]	18.9%	[493/2605]	15.6%	[10/64]	-	-	14.8%	[2674/18072]
1984-1985	17.0%	[1637/9644]	16.9%	[923/5465]	9.7%	[150/1542]	22.9%	[582/2537]	20.0%	[13/65]	-	-	17.2%	[3302/19253]
1983-1984	15.4%	[1500/9711]	16.5%	[922/5582]	12.2%	[175/1440]	19.8%	[470/2379]	31.3%	[25/80]	-	-	16.1%	[3092/19192]
1982-1983	14.3%	[1433/10008]	16.3%	[1033/6333]	11.8%	[172/1462]	16.8%	[377/2238]	11.9%	[10/84]	-	-	15.0%	[3025/20125]
1981-1982	11.5%	[1161/10073]	13.3%	[936/7047]	13.4%	[195/1456]	15.2%	[325/2139]	13.9%	[11/79]	-	-	12.6%	[2628/20794]

* Transfers from BPS are excluded from these analyses. Dropout rates, number of dropouts, and total populations are shown for each group.

** New methods of counting and reporting dropouts were introduced in 1991-1992 to conform to new guidelines from the Massachusetts Department of Education (MA DOE) and the National Center for Educational Statistics. In order to present consistent historical data, the dropout data were recalculated back to 1989-1990 according to the new methods. The impact of the changes was relatively small (less than one percentage point), but the changes do mean that the data for years before 1989-1990 are not directly comparable with the data from more recent years. Note: Effective in 1993-1994, the discharge code '28' ("Special Services", such as commitment to DYS with participation in an approved educational program) is no longer considered a dropout discharge code.

*** For annual rate data from 1995-1996 on, BPS accounts for "returned dropouts" who re-enroll by the following October 1 or process a request to transfer out of the system. 1995-1996 and later data are therefore not directly comparable with data from earlier years.

**** Beginning from 2004-05, students who turn age of 22 are counted as "Other Loss" rather than dropouts. Also, as a result of the revised federal government's reporting categories on student race codes, "Multiracial" category is added. "Multiracial" refers to any student with multiple non-Hispanic race/ethnic codes. Dropout rate is not reported if a student group has fewer than 10 students.

Beginning with SY2006-07, death and expulsion are also excluded from the analyses. In addition, updated student discharge codes were implemented to be aligned with the enrollment status codes used by the MA DOE's SIMS. Hence, caution should be made when comparing data from 2006-07 and later with data from earlier years.

Boston Public Schools

Dropout by Racial/Ethnic Group for 9th Grade Cohorts: 1979/83 through 2004/08

	Black		White		Asian		Hispanic		Native American		Systemwide	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
2004/08***	24.1%	[472/1959]	19.9%	[137/687]	11.8%	[47/398]	31.2%	[404/1295]	**	[2/14]	24.4%	[1062/4353]
2003/07***	27.9%	[561/2011]	21.5%	[145/673]	9.9%	[42/426]	29.8%	[365/1226]	**	[6/16]	25.7%	[1119/4352]
2002/06***	24.9%	[519/2087]	17.6%	[117/665]	7.3%	[28/384]	31.0%	[330/1063]	**	[3/12]	23.7%	[997/4211]
2001/05***	26.1%	[540/2067]	21.0%	[140/666]	9.5%	[39/409]	28.2%	[291/1031]	**	[3/20]	24.2%	[1013/4193]
2000/04***	23.8%	[459/1932]	17.6%	[114/646]	7.6%	[29/380]	25.0%	[245/979]	**	[6/15]	21.6%	[853/3952]
1999/03*	20.7%	[422/2036]	19.9%	[141/707]	10.7%	[42/394]	26.9%	[256/953]	**	[5/17]	21.1%	[866/4107]
1998/02*	23.3%	[451/1939]	20.9%	[139/665]	8.0%	[32/402]	28.4%	[260/914]	**	[3/13]	22.5%	[885/3933]
1997/01*	24.1%	[456/1889]	18.3%	[121/662]	10.7%	[40/374]	29.4%	[266/906]	**	[4/12]	23.1%	[887/3843]
1996/00*	25.2%	[460/1822]	22.2%	[142/641]	12.3%	[43/350]	33.4%	[303/907]	**	[4/9]	25.5%	[952/3729]
1995/99*	27.3%	[498/1821]	21.6%	[148/686]	14.6%	[55/378]	31.3%	[268/855]	**	[4/13]	25.9%	[973/3753]
1994/98*	23.9%	[417/1744]	21.0%	[139/661]	9.2%	[31/338]	29.1%	[239/821]	**	[3/9]	23.2%	[829/3573]
1993/97*	27.3%	[458/1678]	24.1%	[142/588]	12.0%	[39/324]	32.7%	[242/471]	**	[2/9]	26.4%	[883/3340]
1992/96*	25.9%	[415/1602]	20.8%	[144/692]	11.5%	[39/338]	25.7%	[189/736]	**	[6/14]	23.4%	[793/3382]
1991/95*	26.2%	[447/1703]	25.4%	[178/702]	12.3%	[41/334]	37.3%	[269/721]	**	[4/11]	27.1%	[939/3471]
1990/94*	26.6%	[422/1585]	27.2%	[182/670]	13.7%	[39/285]	33.8%	[230/680]	**	[7/12]	27.2%	[880/3232]
1989/93*	25.6%	[408/1593]	25.2%	[174/691]	13.3%	[44/332]	38.8%	[264/680]	**	[6/11]	27.1%	[896/3307]
1988/92*	28.9%	[490/1698]	27.7%	[220/794]	9.9%	[34/343]	36.4%	[220/604]	**	[8/15]	28.1%	[972/3454]
1987/91*	31.0%	[515/1663]	29.0%	[238/822]	15.2%	[53/348]	40.5%	[244/602]	**	[9/19]	30.7%	[1059/3454]
1986/90*	33.5%	[608/1814]	31.3%	[287/916]	17.4%	[58/333]	39.9%	[252/631]	**	[8/15]	32.7%	[1213/3709]
1985/89*	31.6%	[577/1825]	33.3%	[337/1013]	17.8%	[53/297]	44.2%	[275/622]	**	[4/14]	33.0%	[1246/3771]
1984/88*	35.6%	[699/1964]	37.9%	[447/1180]	20.7%	[63/305]	48.5%	[311/641]	**	[9/18]	37.2%	[1529/4108]
1983/87*	37.0%	[719/1942]	40.8%	[468/1147]	22.7%	[68/299]	53.8%	[314/584]	**	[9/16]	39.6%	[1578/3988]
1982/86*	38.8%	[819/2111]	40.6%	[516/1271]	24.3%	[72/296]	49.1%	[272/554]	**	[7/19]	39.7%	[1686/4251]
1981/85*	36.5%	[794/2175]	40.0%	[606/1514]	29.3%	[79/270]	49.9%	[254/509]	**	[10/19]	38.8%	[1743/4487]
1980/84*	35.2%	[834/2370]	38.4%	[628/1636]	21.6%	[54/250]	48.3%	[243/503]	**	[4/16]	36.9%	[1763/4775]
1979/83*	33.0%	[720/2179]	33.5%	[574/1712]	12.9%	[26/202]	42.5%	[214/504]	**	[4/7]	33.3%	[1538/4614]

* The beginning (9th grade) year (for September) is shown along with the expected year of graduation for the cohort. Dropout rates, number of dropouts, and total populations are shown for each group.

** The numbers of Native Americans are too small to permit reliable comparison of percentages.

**** From 2004-05 and onward, students who turned 22 are counted as "Other Loss" rather than dropouts. Also, as a result of the revised federal government's reporting categories on student race codes a new, "Multiracial" category, is added. "Multiracial" refers to any student with multiple non-Hispanic race/ethnic codes. Since the cohort dropout rate is reported by 9th grade race/ethnicity code, the "Multiracial" category was not used before SY2004-05.

Note: In 1991-1992 and again in 1995-1996 there were changes in the procedures for counting dropouts which were introduced to conform to guidelines from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the National Center for Educational Statistics. Because of the specifics of how cohorts are defined, these changes had a very small impact on cohort dropout rates. For practical purposes, the data across all years are essentially comparable.