



FACTS ABOUT YOUTH WHO DROPOUT

When thinking about GED and curriculum program design to target learners, ages 16-24, an understanding of the reasons why youth drop out is essential. In local and national surveys, the following school and personal trends emerge as factors that youth identify for reasons that they dropped out of school (Schwartz, 1995).

- Didn't like school, in general, or the school they were attending;
- Were failing, getting poor grades, or couldn't keep up with school work;
- Didn't get along with teachers and/or students;
- Had disciplinary problems, were suspended, or expelled;
- Didn't feel safe in school;
- Didn't feel like they "fit in";
- Got a job, had a family to support, or had trouble managing both school and work;
- Got married, got pregnant, or became a parent;
- Had a drug or alcohol problem;
- Lacked involvement from parents/guardians;

Regional and national data suggest trends on who is at most risk of dropping out (Schwartz, 1995; Lehr, Johnson, Bremer, Cosio & Thompson, 2004):

National Trends

- Students in large cities are twice as likely to leave school before graduating than non-urban youth;
- More than half the students who drop out leave by the tenth grade, 20% quit by the eighth grade, and 3% drop out by the fourth grade;
- Students who drop out are more likely
 - to be male and/or;
 - from low-income families and/or;
 - from non-English speaking backgrounds and/or;
 - to have a disability and/or;
 - from families in which the parents are unemployed;
- More than one in four Hispanic youth drop out, and nearly half leave by the eighth grade
- Hispanics are twice as likely as African Americans to drop out. White and Asian American students are least likely to drop out.

Pathways to Success by 21

Local Trends

Massachusetts Department of Education district and statewide data provide comparison information for dropout rates and 4-year cohort graduation rates for 2005-2006:

Massachusetts Drop Out & Graduation Rates Grades 9-12 2005-2006

	Drop Out Rate	4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate
Massachusetts	3.3%	79.9%
Springfield	8.3%	51.2%
Holyoke	11.6%	49.4%
Chicopee	6%	62.5%

Massachusetts Department of Education's 4-Year Graduation Rate for the 2006 Cohort data is consistent with national trends that indicate that males, African American and Hispanic are more likely to drop out than females, White and Asian American students (MA Department of Education School and District Profiles).

Massachusetts Department of Education GED testing data provides additional information regarding youth ages 16-24. In 2006, 71% of people who took the GED in Massachusetts were between the ages of 16-24. The statewide GED graduation rate was 65%, with Springfield and Holyoke testing centers ranging from 47%-65% (Mechem & Derfler 2007).