

Important Facts on America's Disconnected Youth



- 32% of American students never graduate from high school! ¹
- Only half of all students of color graduate high school.² There are approximately 1,000 American cities in which graduating is at best a 50/50 proposition. ³
- The situation is especially dismal for students in our nation's largest high-poverty urban districts, as a third of all students graduate.⁴ The lowest high school graduation rates (33%) are concentrated in 300 schools in the 35 largest U.S. cities. ⁵
- Those who have dropped out of school are at high risk of incarceration. 65% of all young adults incarcerated did not finish high school. ⁶
- More than 5.4 million youth (ages 16 – 24) are not in school and do not have a job. ⁷
- Teens are finding it harder than ever to find a job. Only 36% of 16-19 year olds are working. Let alone black teens are working. ⁸ This is the lowest employment rate for teens in 57 years since this data was collected. ⁹
- Work experiences in high school increases the likelihood of graduation from high school relative to those who do not work at all. ¹⁰
- Researchers have identified the cohorts of youth who rarely make a successful transition to adulthood. These are the 14-17 year old adolescents that do not complete high school, or are deeply involved in the justice system, or are young, unmarried mothers, or in a foster placement. ¹¹
- Additional investment in all levels of education is critical however, federal funding is particularly low for high schools. The U.S. provides \$6 billion for Head Start, \$11 billion in Title 1 funds for K-8 and Pell Grants for college students yet only \$1 billion is available for high school students. ¹²
- Investments in disconnected youth have declined by more than two-thirds. In 1979, the Department of Labor spent \$6 billion for employment training for youth (\$15 billion in today's dollars). Today, that investment is only \$1 billion.

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- 1 Manhattan Project http://www.manhattan-institute.org/cr_31.pdf
 - 2 Harvard Civil Rights Project <http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/news/pressreleases/dropout05.php>
 - 3 Urban Institute
<http://www.urban.org/Template.cfm?Section=ByAuthor&NavMenuID=63&template=/TaggedContent/ViewPublication.cfm&&>
 - 4 Johns Hopkins University http://www.csos.jhu.edu/tdhs/rsch/Locating_Dropouts.pdf
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/pubs/power/policy_brief.htm
 - 5 <http://www.hewlett.org/NR/rdonlyres/60C17B69-8A76-4F99-BB3B-84251E4E5A19/0/FinalVersionofDisconnectedYouthP>
 - 6 <http://www.nupr.neu.edu/2-03/jobless.html>
 - 7 <http://www.nupr.neu.edu/7-04/unemployment.shtml>
 - 8 http://www.nyec.org/Teen_Employment_jan_2005.pdf
 - 9 http://www.nyec.org/Summer_2004_Job_Outlook.pdf
 - 10 http://www.ytfg.org/documents/connectedby25_OOS.pdf
 - 11 <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/ProgressReportOnAmericanHS.pdf>
 - 12 Alan Zuckerman, "The More Things Change, The More They Stay the Same: The Evolution and Devolution of Youth Er Programs" a chapter in *Youth Development: Issues, Challenges and Directions*, Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia, P/ page 313partment of Labor
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