

[Education Week's blogs](#) > High School & Beyond

# High School Poverty, Minority Enrollment, Undermine College Progress, Study Finds

By [Catherine Gewertz](#) on October 27, 2016 4:25 PM | [No comments](#)

Students who attend high-poverty schools or schools with high minority enrollments are far less likely to enroll in college, and less likely to complete degrees than their more advantaged peers, according to a new set of data released Thursday.

The fourth annual "[High School Benchmarks](#)" report from the National Student Clearinghouse offers numbers and charts for what most educators already know about how concentrations of disadvantage influence educational outcomes.

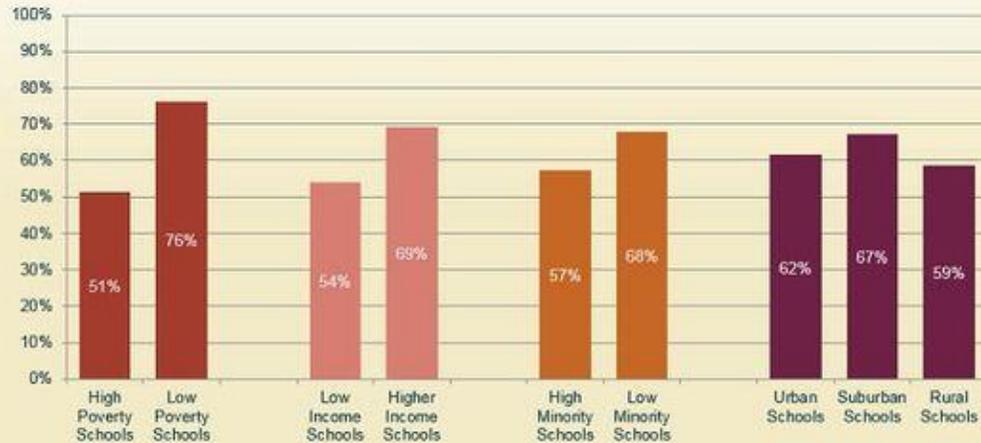
The findings examined a huge pool of students: 5 million, more than one-quarter of all graduating high school seniors each year. But it was drawn from a voluntary sample: schools that pay about \$425 to participate in the Clearinghouse's Student Tracker system. That participation allows schools to put their students' progression into a national context. But the participants skew toward urban schools with higher minority and low-income populations.

The National Student Clearinghouse analyzed student outcomes by the level of minority enrollment, and by their schools' location (urban, suburban, rural), but it looks in particular at how concentrations of poverty affect those outcomes. That allows you to see the differing impact of schools where at least half the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch ("low-income schools") and those where at least 75 percent qualify for that benefit ("high poverty" schools).

Here's how those factors affect college enrollment rates the fall after students graduate from public, non-charter high schools:



## College Enrollment Rates in the First Fall after High School Graduation, Class of 2015

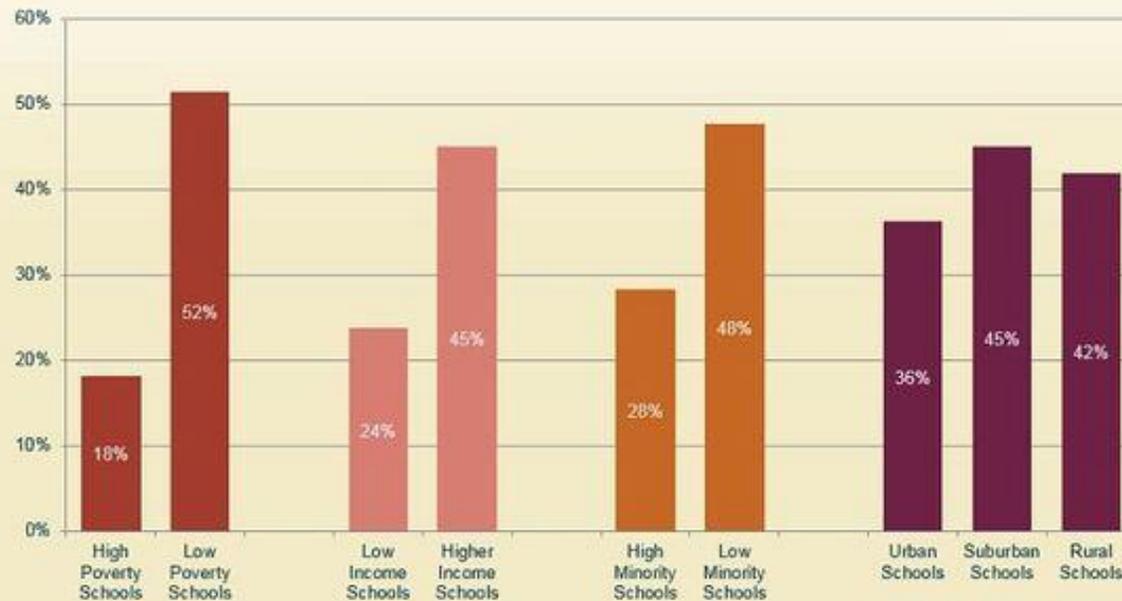


Students from high-poverty, higher-minority and lower-income schools who enrolled in college were less likely to stick around for the second year, compared with those from lower-minority and wealthier schools, too.

The outlook gets grimmer six years after high school graduation. By then, only 18 percent of the students from schools with the highest concentrations of poverty finish college, compared with 52 percent of those from schools with the lowest concentrations of poverty. (These figures reflect the completion rates of all students, not just those who went on to college.)



## College Completion Rates Six Years after High School Graduation, Class of 2009



The report also examines the rate of completion of college degrees in STEM fields, and finds that students from schools with higher concentrations of poverty or racial minorities are less likely to complete such degrees than their peers from wealthier, lower-minority schools.