

What's at Stake

The Dropout Crisis for Girls: What You Should Know

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One in every four girls
does not graduate with
her class in four years
– if she graduates
at all.

The numbers are even worse for girls of color.

2005-06 dropout rates for girls:

- 49% of Native American/Alaskan Native female students
- 43% of Black female students
- 41% of Hispanic female students

Female high school dropouts face:

- Particularly poor employment prospects
- Especially low earnings potential
- Greater need to rely on public support programs

High school dropouts also face:

- Poor health status and less access to health insurance
- Higher risk of teen pregnancy

One in two female high school dropouts aged 25-64 is unemployed.

In 2006, adult women
without a high school
diploma earned on
average only about
\$15,500 a year...

\$6,000 less annually
than women *with* a high
school diploma.

In 2009, the federal
poverty level for a
family of three was
\$18,310.

The wage gap between men and women is the largest among high school dropouts.

Female high school dropouts earn only 63% of what male high school dropouts earn, or about \$9,100 less annually.

High school graduates
are 40% less likely to
need TANF and 19%
less likely to have to
rely on food stamps.

Girls today represent
only 15% of students
taking classes in
traditionally male, and
higher-paid, fields.

This statistic is virtually unchanged from their representation in trade and industrial classes in 1977.

That under-
representation is
mirrored in disciplines
like the hard sciences
and engineering.

Women receive fewer
than **one-fifth** of the
bachelors' degrees
awarded in
engineering.

Nationally, girls make up 87% of students in training for traditionally female, lower-paying jobs.

Adults without a high school diploma are more likely to die prematurely from diseases such as cardiovascular disease and cancer.

42% of high school
dropouts lack health
insurance

vs.

only 9% of non-elderly
college graduates.

According to a recent study, 40% of female dropouts surveyed gave birth before age 20.

Each year 750,000
adolescent females in
the U.S. become
pregnant.

Teen pregnancy rates
are far higher in the
U.S. than in most other
developed countries.

Students need
comprehensive,
medically accurate, and
age-appropriate sex
education.

Title IX contains basic non-discrimination principles – including, that **schools cannot discriminate on the basis of pregnancy and must treat pregnancy and all related conditions like any other temporary disability.**

To improve graduation rates, policymakers and schools must:

- Fund research on effective interventions for boys and girls
- Improve data collection and reporting

To improve graduation rates,
policymakers and schools
must also:

- Assist with efforts to prevent teen pregnancy
- Provide better support for pregnant and parenting students
- Ensure that girls are encouraged and not discriminated against in school programs and activities.

For more information
about the dropout crisis
for girls, please visit our
website:

www.nwlc.org/dropout

Report by NWLC

When Girls Don't Graduate, We All Fail: A Call to Improve High School Graduation Rates for Girls

www.nwlc.org/dropout

Report by NWLC and MALDEF

Listening to Latinas: Barriers to High School Graduation

www.nwlc.org/listening

What's at Stake

The National Women's Law Center's video series, **What's at Stake**, offers insights into many of the issues facing women and families today.

www.nwlc.org/whatsatstake