

Hispanic Dropout Numbers Soar

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WASHINGTON (AP)--The number of Hispanics who dropped out or never attended high school surged by over 50 percent in the 1990s, especially in the South and West where many schools were overwhelmed as they tried to accommodate the fast-growing Spanish-speaking population.

The changing demographics present a tough task, particularly to small-town and rural school administrators who must find money in their tight budgets to hire bilingual staffers and develop new programs to teach newly arrived students who may not have a good grasp of English.

In 2000, approximately 1.56 million U.S. residents ages 16 to 19 were not high school graduates and not enrolled in school.

Of the total, nearly 34 percent, or more than 528,000, were Hispanic. That's up from 22 percent, or nearly 346,000, of the 1.59 million total in 1990.

The dramatic change in the percentage is due partly to the overall growth in the Hispanic population during the 1990s to 35.3 million, rivaling blacks as the nation's largest minority group. Hispanics represented nearly 16 percent of all 16- to 19-year-olds in 2000, regardless of educational background, up from 11 percent in 1990.

While the number of Hispanic dropouts and those who never attended high school grew by nearly 53 percent, the overall population of Hispanic youths of that age grew by about 45 percent.

"For some, it may not be that they are dropping out of school, but rather that people are coming here and not going to school to begin with," said Jennifer Day, an education analyst with the Census Bureau.

Nationally, dropout rates decreased slightly over the decade: the 1.56 million dropouts in 2000 represented nearly 10 percent of the total population of 16- to 19-year-olds, regardless of educational status. In 1990, the 1.59 million dropouts were over 11 percent of the older teens then.

Among all Hispanics ages 16 to 19, about 21 percent, did not graduate from high school or were not enrolled in school, down slightly from nearly 21.6 percent in 1990. Among blacks of that age, the dropout rate was 12 percent, down from 14 percent. For whites, it was just below 7 percent, down from 9 percent.

However, when looking at just dropouts, Hispanic representation increased, while the percentages that were black declined from 18 percent to 17 percent. Among whites, it decreased from 58 percent to 44 percent.

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The preceding Associated Press article appeared in local newspapers several weeks ago indicating that nationally; Hispanic high school dropout rates, especially in the South and West, are up more than 22 percent in the past 10 years.

The article goes on to say this is due partly to the overall growth in the Hispanic population during the 1990s and the possibility that Hispanic immigrants are not attending school.

Another possibility, which is only inferred in the article, is that the changing demographics have put a burden on "small-town and rural schools that may not have the money to provide the necessary bilingual programs to teach newly arrived Hispanic students who do not have a good grasp of the English language. This, the article insinuates, exacerbates the dropout rates.

The attached study and analysis provides information for Merced County that is not consistent with the U.S. Census Bureau's claims.

The Hispanic or Latino dropout rate in Merced County, during the 2000-2001 school year, was 4.1 percent compared to the statewide rate of 3.8 percent. Both rates are far lower than the reported figures in the news article.

Merced County's 10-year Hispanic one-year dropout rate has steadily decreased from a high of seven percent during the 1991-1992 school year to a low of 2.2 percent in the 1998-1999 school year. Although the rate increased during the 1999-2000 year, the rate dropped again this past year to a reported 3.8 percent.

However, the study does point up some statistics that should be noted:

- **Population age 18 to 24 - 2000 Census - Less than High School Education - Merced County - 35.4%**
- Population age 18 to 24 - 2000 Census - Less than High School Education - California - 29.3%
- Population age 18 to 24 - 2000 Census - Less than High School Education - U.S. - 25.3%

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 - Population age 16-19 - 1990 Census - Non H.S. Graduates Percent of Total Population - U.S. - 11.1%
 - Population age 16-19 - 2000 Census - Non H.S. Graduates Percent of Total Population - U.S. - 5.8%
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 - Population age 16-19 - 1990 Census - Hispanic Non H.S. Grad % of Total Population - U.S. - 2.4%
 - Population age 16-19 - 2000 Census - Hispanic Non H.S. Grad % of Total Population - U.S. - 1.9%
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 - Population age 16-19 - 1990 Census - Hispanic Non H.S. Grad % of Total Non H.S. Grads - U.S. - 21.8%
 - Population age 16-19 - 2000 Census - Hispanic Non H.S. Grad % of Total Non H.S. Grads - U.S. - 33.6%

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 - **Population age 25 and over - 1990 Census Hispanic % of Total Population - California - 22.3%**
 - Population age 25 and over - 1990 Census Hispanic Non H.S. Grad % of Total Hispanic Population - California - 14.8%

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 - **Population age 25 and over - 1990 Census Hispanic % of Total Population - Merced Co. - 27.1%**
 - Population age 25 and over - 1990 Census Hispanic Non H.S. Grad % of Total Hispanic Population - Merced Co. - 17.4%

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- Population age 25 and over - 2000 Census Hispanic % of Total Population - **California - 32.4%**
 - Population age 25 and over - 2000 Census Hispanic Non H.S. Grad % of Total Hispanic population - **California - 45.1%**

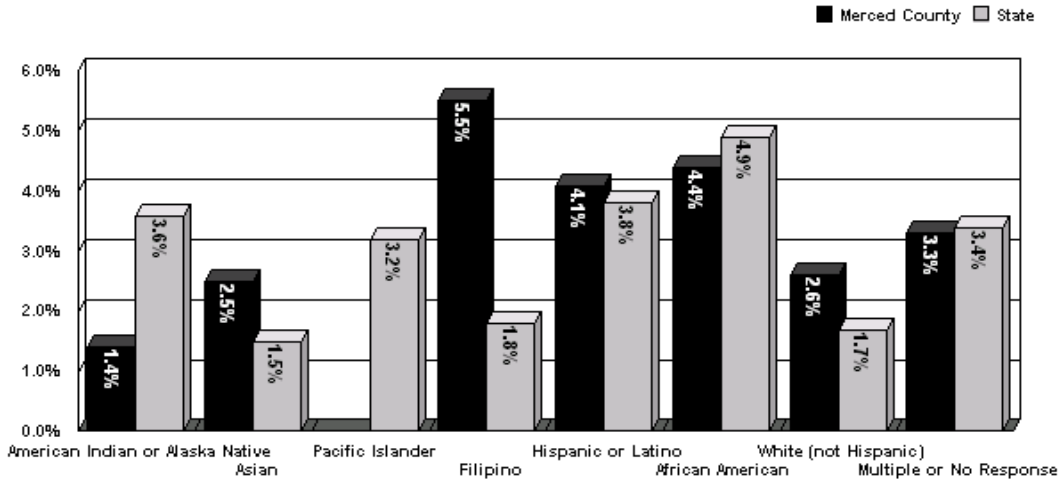
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- Population age 25 and over - 2000 Census Hispanic % of Total Population - **Merced Co. - 45.4%**
 - Population age 25 and over - 2000 Census Hispanic Non H.S. Grad % of Total Hispanic Population - **Merced Co. - 44.2%**

Merced County has a combined dropout rate higher than the State of California and one that is far lower than that of the nation; however, since the 1990 Census, the number of non-high school graduates has decreased while the number of Hispanic non-high school graduates has increased.

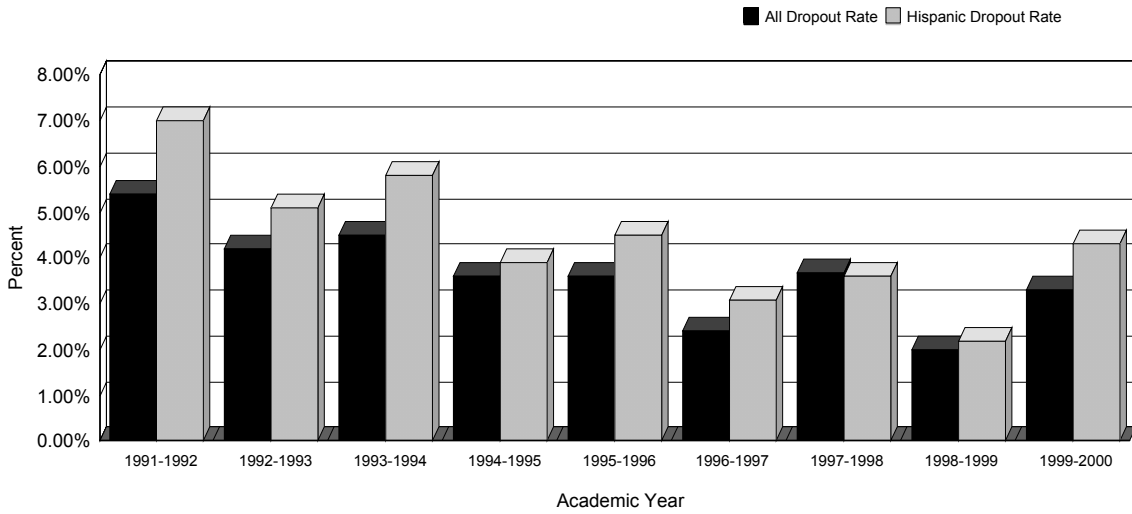
On the other hand, while the percent of Hispanics increased by 31 percent in California, the percent of increase of Hispanic non-high school graduates was more than 67 percent. Over the same period of time, Merced County experienced a 40 percent increase in Hispanic population but only slightly more than a 60 percent increase in the percent of Hispanic non-high school graduates.

Included, for your review are pertinent statistics in chart and graph form, which provide the basis for this analysis.

**Dropouts as a Percent of Enrollment (Grades 9-12) in California Public Schools
by County by District and Ethnic Group, 2000-01**



Merced Co. 10-Year Dropout Rate



Dropouts as a Percent of Enrollment (Grades 9-12) in California Public Schools		States Total Population		State Total Population		County Total Population			
by County by District and Ethnic Group, 2000-01		Hispanic	281,421,906	Percent Hispanic	33,871,648	Percent Hispanic	210,554	Percent Hispanic	
			35,238,481	12.52%	10,969,132	32.38%	95,610	45.41%	
MERCED COUNTY									
District Name	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Pacific Islander	Filipino	Hispanic or Latino	African American	White (not Hispanic)	Multiple or No Response	Total
DOS PALOS					11 (2.3 %)		2 (0.9 %)		
GUSTINE UNIFIED					16 (7.6 %)		10 (3.8 %)		
HILMAR UNIFIED				3 (150.0 %)	4 (3.3 %)	3 (42.9 %)	13 (1.9 %)		
LE GRAND UNION HIGH					3 (0.5 %)		1 (1.8 %)		
LOS BANOS UNIFIED				1 (7.1 %)	31 (2.9 %)	2 (2.5 %)	4 (0.5 %)		
MERCED CO. OFFICE OF EDUCATION		11 (16.2 %)			128 (25.7 %)	12 (16.2 %)	63 (24.9 %)		
MERCED UNION HIGH	1 (1.7 %)	29 (1.9 %)			102 (2.6 %)	13 (2.9 %)	49 (1.6 %)	2 (100.0 %)	
County Total	1	40		4	302	30	145	2	524
Dropouts as a Percent of Enrollment	1.4%	2.5%		5.5%	4.1%	4.4%	2.6%	3.3%	
State Total	576	2,356	373	875	24,976	7,118	11,366	259	47,899
Dropouts as a Percent of Enrollment	3.6%	1.5%	3.2%	1.8%	3.8%	4.9%	1.7%	3.4%	
Population Enrolled Grades 9-12		14,848,628		2,122,098		16,739			
Percent of Total Population		5.28%		6.27%		7.95%			

WIA Enrolled Youth Demographics		Percent of		Percent of		Documented	
Race	Number	Total	Limited English	Total	Aliens	Total	
Assian Indian	18	1.10%	7	38.9%	6	33.3%	
Cambodian	1	0.06%	0		1	100.0%	
Chinese	2	0.12%	1	50.0%	0		
Filipion	0	0.00%	0		0		
Guamanian	0	0.00%	0		0		
Hiwaiian	0	0.00%	0		0		
Japanese	2	0.12%	0		0		
Korean	2	0.12%	0		0		
Laotian	23	1.40%	7	30.4%	12	52.2%	
Samoan	4	0.24%	0		0		
Vietnamese	1	0.06%	0		0		
Other Pacific Islander	10	0.61%	2	20.0%	3	30.0%	
Other Asian	247	15.04%	69	27.9%	83	33.6%	
Black - African American	136	8.28%	3	2.2%	0		
Hispanic or Lation	929	56.58%	96	10.3%	158	17.0%	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	13	0.79%	0		0		
White	254	15.47%	4	1.6%	1	0.4%	
Total	1,642		189	11.5%	264	16.1%	