

Graduation Matters in Missouri FACT SHEET

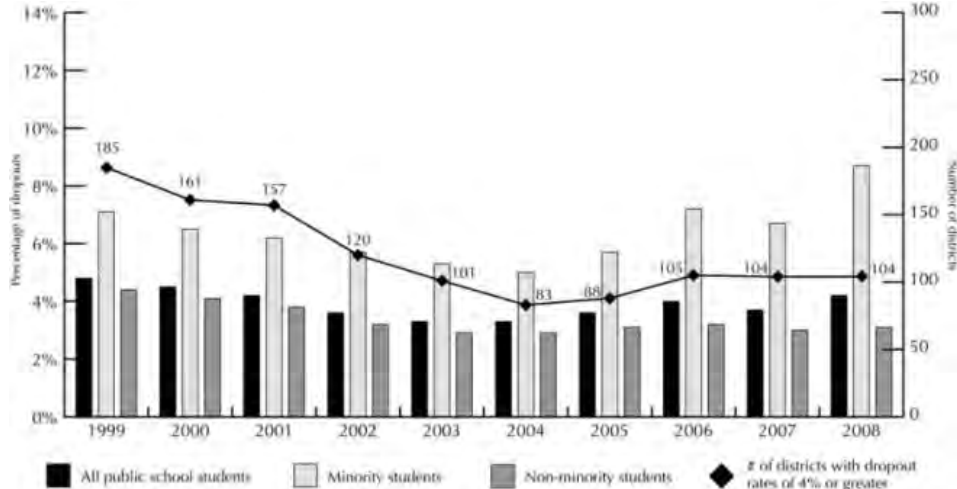
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Information about dropout prevention is available on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Web site at www.dese.mo.gov/dropoutprevention/index.html

“Graduation Matters in Missouri” slogan

“Graduation Matters in Missouri” is a new slogan, released at the 2009 Missouri Dropout Prevention Summit, to emphasize the importance of high school graduation at a time when the state’s dropout rate has been creeping upward.

School Dropout Statistics



After falling for close to a decade, Missouri’s dropout rate reached a low in 2003 of 3.3 percent of students. But in the following five years, the annual rate began ticking back up and was at 4.2 percent for the 2007-08 school year. The rate for minority students increased in 2008 to 8.7 percent, up from 6.7 percent in 2007. Breakout data show a larger decrease in the dropout rate for minority students between 1999 and 2004 than for non-minority students. The overall dropout rate has increased from a low of 3.3 percent in 2003 to 4.2 percent in 2008. The number and percentage of school districts with a 4-percent or higher dropout rate had been decreasing from 270 districts (60 percent) in 1995 to a low of 83 districts (18 percent) in 2004. In 2008, 104 districts (23 percent) had a dropout rate in excess of 4 percent.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s 2008 Strategic Plan includes the goals of decreasing the state’s annual dropout rate to 3 percent by 2010 and increasing to 96 percent by 2010 the number of high school graduates entering postsecondary education, employment or the military.

- [Missouri’s annual dropout rate statistics, 2004-2008](#)

Dropout Prevention Programs and Strategies

Many districts already have improvement plans in place to address graduation rates and dropout rates. A number of speakers at the statewide summit described their successes and shared information to help neighboring districts to better address graduation and dropouts.

- [Programs and Strategies](#)
- [Dropout Prevention Summit Recording and other information](#)

Camdenton High School

One school having success with lowering dropout rates is Camdenton High School. Two years ago, Camdenton began implementing a broad range of interventions for students who were struggling, such as in-school tutoring and meetings with a team of advisors, said Brian Henry, assistant superintendent for the district. The school saw its dropout rates go from 4.3 percent for the 2006-2007 school year to 2.3 percent for 2007-2008. Last school year, Camdenton added credit recovery during the school day, a program that allows students to make up credits through online courses. The district also has an alternative school, which provides educational programs for students at-risk of dropping out for various reasons, from chronic illness to attendance problems.

St. Louis School District

The St. Louis School District is optimistic a number of new programs, now in their second year of implementation, will soon help reduce its dropout rate. Programs include credit recovery for students who are getting behind early in their academic careers, which allow them to make up credit afterschool with focused teacher instruction. Another program targeting older at-risk students allows them to earn credit while attending school a partial day and balancing essential work and/or family commitments. In addition, the school's "Fresh Start" program, an approved Missouri Option program, is designed to help at-risk students age 17 and above earn their high school diplomas while balancing work and half-day school.

Southeast Missouri United Way

In February 2009, the United Way of Southeast Missouri began an effort to determine where its community wants to see its graduation rates over a specified period of time. It is bringing together a group of key community leaders from public schools, Southeast University, law enforcement and juvenile justice, area Chambers of Commerce, the business community, elected officials, the faith community, mental health, early childhood, and the media to review data and national research and to identify objectives with strategies and approaches all focused on improving the graduation rate and the readiness of our youth to enter college, trade schools, or the work force. The result will be a mobilization plan that will identify specific strategies the community will take to improve the outlook for its youth. The Education Solutions Team's goal is to bring the graduation rate issue to a community level realizing that helping youth be successful is far beyond the responsibility of just the schools or the social sectors.

Change to the Compulsory Attendance Age

The Missouri legislature passed a law effective August 28, 2009, to set the compulsory attendance age at seventeen years of age or upon having successfully completed sixteen credits toward high school graduation.

- [Senate Bill 291](#)

House Speaker Appoints Task Force on Dropout Prevention

Missouri House Speaker Ron Richard (R-Joplin) announced last month the creation of the Task Force on Dropout Prevention. The task force is charged with researching the state's dropout rate and finding solutions to decrease the number of Missouri kids that drop out of school.

- [House Communications - News](#)

Upcoming Events

Kansas City Dropout Prevention Summit, October 5, 2009

- [More information](#)

For more information, see [Dropout Prevention Summit fact sheet](#) (pdf).