



DROPOUTS

Overview:

MetroWest high school dropouts are similarly challenged to those of other towns in the state. This report lists the personal consequences of dropping out of school as well as the significant impacts on demand for services seen at the state and local government levels. The 2009 estimated net fiscal burden of dropouts versus those who complete high school is quite remarkable.

Making the Connection: Report of the Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission

Geography: State

Year: Issued October, 2009

Website: www.mass.gov

Key Findings:

- Dropouts are less likely to have a job and those who do earn less, on average, than high school graduates. Roughly half (55 percent) of Massachusetts dropouts ages 16 to 64 were employed in 2005, compared with three-quarters (74 percent) of high school graduates. Dropouts who were employed earned almost \$10,000 less per year, on average, than high school graduates.
- Massachusetts dropouts are less likely to have health insurance than those with more education, and are more likely to depend on Medicaid or Medicare for their coverage. Only 20 percent of all Massachusetts dropouts had health insurance coverage through an employer. Over half of all Massachusetts dropouts have publicly funded health care through Medicaid or Medicare.
- Dropouts are more likely to depend on public assistance. Over one quarter (27 percent) of Massachusetts dropouts were dependent on cash public assistance of some kind, compared with 15 percent of high school graduates and seven percent of bachelor's degree holders.
- Dropouts, especially young men and young Black men, are more likely to be incarcerated. Twice as many male dropouts than high school graduates were incarcerated in 2000. Dropouts make up the majority (70 percent) of jail and prison populations in Massachusetts. Further, according to some estimates, juvenile offenders who become career criminals incur millions of dollars over a lifetime in public costs associated with emergency response, investigation, and criminal justice.
- Over his or her lifetime, the average high school dropout in Massachusetts will impose a net fiscal burden of nearly \$118,124 in cash and other benefits (such as food stamps, healthcare, childcare, and housing subsidies) on state and federal taxpayers. In comparison, the average high school *graduate* will contribute \$319,043 more in taxes than he or she will receive from the state and federal government in the form of subsidies and services. Therefore, the gap between the fiscal impact of a high school graduate and a high school dropout is \$437,167.11