

CRIME Doesn't Pay, but DIPLOMAS Do!

Every year approximately 1.3 million students – **THAT's 7,000 every school day** – do not graduate from high school as scheduled.

About 75 percent of America's state prison inmates, almost 59 percent of federal inmates, and 69 percent of jail inmates did not complete high school. (Note: In most Southern states these percentages are higher.) Dropouts are more than eight times as likely to be in jail or prison as high school graduates. (www.silentepidemic.org, 2008). A male high school graduate with a D average is fourteen times more likely to become incarcerated than a graduate with an A average (Arum & Beattie, 1999).

About 47 percent of drug offenders do not have a high school diploma or GED (Harlow, 2003).

Dropouts from the class of 2004, alone, will cost the nation more than \$325 billion in lost wages, taxes, and productivity over their lifetimes (Rouse, 2005).

The difference in lifetime earnings between a person with a high school diploma and a person without a diploma is estimated to be at least \$260,000 (Rouse, 2005), and about one million less than a college graduate (Doland, 2001).

“...a 2005 study by the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research...found that households headed by a high school graduate accumulated 10 times more in assets than those headed by high school dropouts” (*Alliance for Excellent Education*, February 2007). The

research brief is online at

<http://www.all4ed.org/publications/hiddenbenefits.pdf>

“The high school diploma is the bare minimum credential necessary to have a fighting chance...in the workforce” (*ASCD Brief*, 2007).

The U. S. spent almost \$50 billion in incarceration costs in 2004 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005).

The U. S. spends an average of \$9,644 a year to educate a student (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004).

The average cost per inmate is approximately \$25,000. In some states the cost is over \$30,000 per prisoner per year.

State prison inmates without a high school diploma and those with a GED were more likely to be repeat offenders than those with a diploma (Harlow, 2003).

Of white males who graduated from college, only 1 percent were incarcerated in 2000 (Raphael, 2004). Of black males who graduated from high school and went on to attend some college, only 5 percent were incarcerated in 2000 (Raphael, 2004).

Ninth grade retention is the biggest risk factor for dropping out of high school.

There is evidence that a large percentage of dropouts academically could successfully complete their high school studies (see “The Silent Epidemic” report funded by Bill Gates). “...surprisingly, gifted students drop out at the same rates as non-gifted kids – about 5% of both populations leave school early in life. Later in life, according to the scholarly *Handbook of Gifted Education*, up to one-fifth of dropouts test in the gifted range” (Cloud, 2007).

Students who enter Grade 9 two or more years behind grade level in math and literacy have only a 50/50 chance of on-time promotion to Grade 10.

A one year increase in average education levels would reduce arrest rates by 11 percent. About 23 percent of the difference in incarceration rates between black and whites would be eliminated by raising the average education levels of blacks to the same level as that of whites (Lochner & Moretti, 2001).

“If all students in the class of 2006 had graduated on time, the nation’s economy would have gained an additional \$309 billion in income over their lifetimes, concludes a report by the Washington-based Alliance for Excellent Education. According to the U. S. Census Bureau, high school graduates in 2004 earned almost \$10,000 more than those who did not graduate from high school. Also, dropouts are more likely to be unemployed, go to prison, and seek government assistance – all factors that drain the economy” (*Education Week*, 2007). “The High Cost of High School Dropouts: What the Nation Pays for Inadequate High Schools” is online at <http://www.all4ed.org/files/HighCost.pdf>

“Increasing the number of high school graduates could reap big economic benefits for the United States, a policy brief by the Alliance for Excellent Education says. The nation could save \$17.1 billion in lifetime health costs if every student in the class of 2006 graduated from high school, according to the brief. Health-care costs are highest for those with the least education, so the brief calculated savings by looking at lifetime Medicaid costs and health expenditures for those without insurance and the number of students who drop out of high school” (*Education Week*, 2006). From “Healthier and Wealthier: Decreasing Health Care Costs by Increasing Educational Attainment, available online at <http://www.all4ed.org/files/HandW.pdf>

A ten percent increase in the male graduation rate would reduce murder and assault arrest rates by about 20 percent, motor vehicle theft by 13 percent, and arson by 8 percent (Moretti, 2005).

A one percent increase in high school graduation rates would save approximately \$1.4 billion in costs associated with incarceration costs, or about \$2,100 for each male high school graduate (Lochner & Moretti, 2001).

Canady, November, 2008 – Crime vs. Diplomas!

Dropout References

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- The Silent Epidemic. *Statistics and Facts About High School Drop out Rates*. Retrieved from <http://www.silentepidemic.org/resources/policymakers.htm>
- Also see *Ending the Silent Epidemic; The Silent Epidemic – The 10-Point Plan; Resources for Educators; Resources for Policymakers*

Other Resources:

- National Education Association. *NEA's Plan for Reducing the School Dropout Rate*. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/presscenter/actionplan1.html>
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