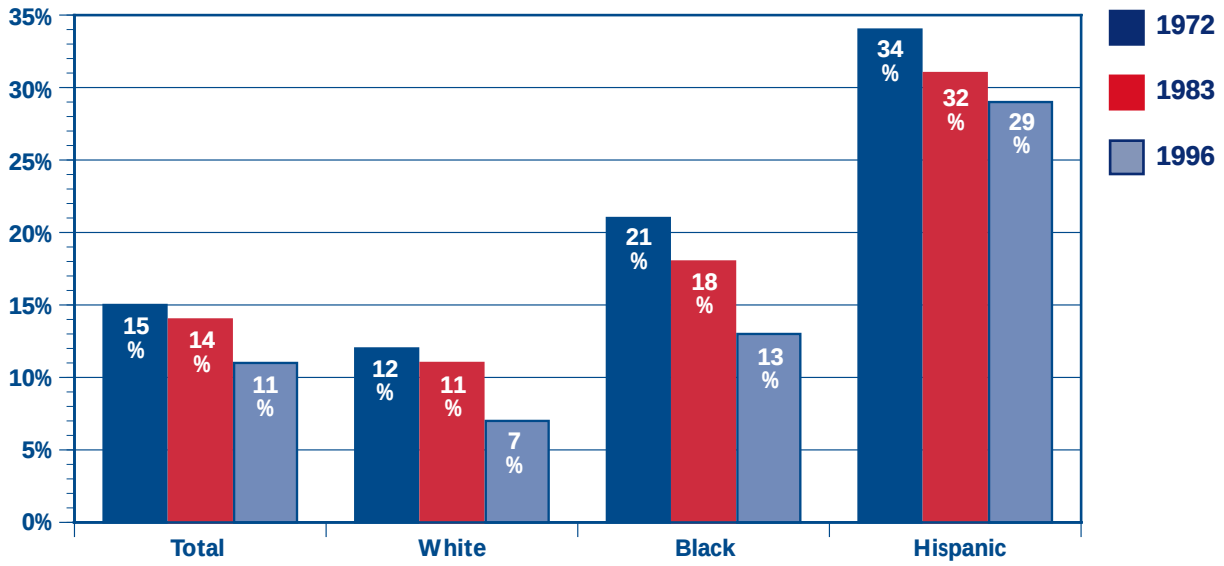
Did you know?

FEWER STUDENTS ARE DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL.

THE FACTS

Two-thirds of the public believes that the dropout rates of high school students are increasing and are far greater than they were 25 years ago *(1997 Phi Delta Kappa-Gallup Poll)*. In fact, today dropout rates are lower than they were in the early 1970's and 1980's, with the most marked decline occurring among Black youths.

Percentage of 16- to 24-Year–Olds Who Were Not Enrolled in School, Had Not Completed High School or a GED
By Race/Ethnicity, 1972, 1983, and 1996



Note: This chart reflects the status dropout rate, meaning that it displays the percentage of the U.S. population ages 16-24 who were not enrolled in school, had not completed high school, and did not possess a general education development (GED) certificate.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics 1997*, and *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1996.*

NEXT STEPS

The job market in the United States has changed since the early 1970's such that those without a high school education are unlikely to secure a well-paying job or have a well-paying career. Indeed, some economists predict that in the future the only way to have a well-paying job and career will be to complete some study beyond high school. More attention needs to be paid to ensuring that all students at least obtain a high school credential.

THE CENTER ON EDUCATION POLICY is the independent advocate for public education and for more effective public schools. The Center works to help Americans better understand the role of public education in a democracy and the need to improve the academic quality of public schools. We do not represent any special interests. Instead, we try to help citizens make sense of the conflicting opinions and perceptions about public education and create the conditions that will lead to better public schools. The Center receives its funding from charitable foundations such as The Pew Charitable Trusts, The George Gund Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, and Phi Delta Kappa International.

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