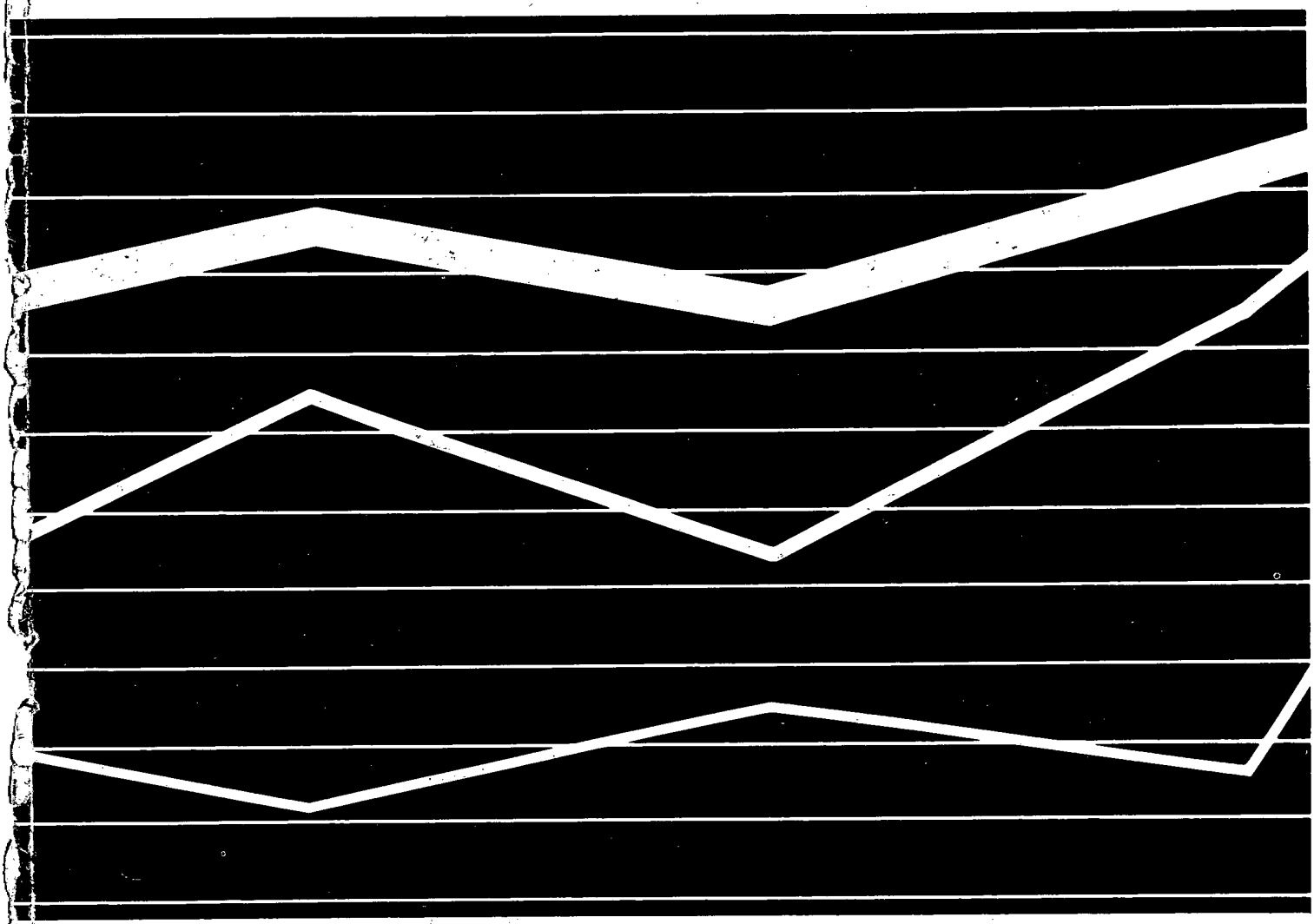
Center for Education Statistics

0-12
1

Trends in Elementary and Secondary Public School Enrollment



Issue Paper

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

Declassified and Approved For Release 2013/01/02 : CIA-RDP90-00530R000300620007-9

This report is reprinted from *The Condition of Education,* 1986 edition, published by U.S. Department of Education's Center for Education Statistics (CES). Copies of *Condition* are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. To order, send a check or money order for $13 and refer to stock number 065-000-00276-1.

Center for Education Statistics

"The purpose of the Center shall be to collect and disseminate statistics and other data related to education in the United States and in other nations. The Center shall . . . collect, collate, and from time to time, report full and complete statistics on the conditions of education in the United States; conduct and publish reports on specialized analyses of the meaning and significance of such statistics; . . . and review and report on education activities in foreign countries,"—Section 406 (b) of the General Education Provisions Act, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1221e–1).

Trends in Elementary and Secondary Public School Enrollment

by Phillip Kaufman

Overview

Public school enrollment declined across the Nation from the record levels of the late 1960's and early 1970's as the postwar baby-boom generation moved through and out of the educational system. However, their children—the baby boomlet—are now entering the nation's schools, reversing the enrollment declines of the past 15 years. Yet, the composition of the next generation of school-children will be considerably different than that of the baby-boom generation. National demographic and sociological changes of the past 20 years will be reflected in the characteristics and home backgrounds of the nation's school-children.

This paper examines recent enrollment trends and changes in the composition of the student body in elementary and secondary public schools at both the State and national levels. Future trends and their possible implications for the Nation's schools are also discussed. The major findings are:

Enrollment trends

- At the national level, elementary enrollment, which has been declining since 1970, will begin to increase in 1986. Secondary enrollment, which started to decrease in 1976, is projected to begin rising in 1991.
- The baby boomlet will produce a much smaller bulge of students moving through the school system than resulted from the postwar baby boom. Unless there is a dramatic upturn in birth rates, there will be another decline in enrollment as this age cohort leaves the public schools.
- Past enrollment patterns have exhibited considerable variation across the States, and this is likely to continue in the future. Some States may continue to experience enrollment declines while others may have large increases.
- The greatest gains are expected in the West and Southwest. Smaller increases are likely in the Southeast, while the Northeast and Midwest are apt to have further enrollment declines.

Student composition trends

- The proportion of minority students, particularly Asian and Hispanic students, has been increasing in recent years.
- If present trends in fertility rates and immigration continue, minority students are likely to constitute an even larger share of students in the future.
- The percentage of non-English-language background children has been rising and will increase further if present patterns continue into the next decade.
- Poor children and children from single-parent families represent growing proportions of the Nation's school-children.
- States vary considerably in the extent to which these national trends are reflected within their schools. In general, the Southeastern States have the largest concentrations of poor and minority students, while the Southwestern States and California have the highest proportions of language-minority students.

Implications of enrollment trends

- The upturn in enrollment will mean that different challenges will face many administrators and policymakers in the late 1980's and the 1990's than in the 1970's and early 1980's, challenges associated with growth rather than retrenchment.
- Because of variations in enrollment trends within and between States, there will be considerable variation across States and localities in the challenges they will face. Some districts may be forced to take steps such as ambitious building programs or double sessions to accommodate growing numbers of students, while other districts will still be closing schools.
- In responding to the impact of enrollment increases, decisionmakers must take into account the fact that the increase may be short-lived, at least in those areas where it is primarily

the result of the baby boomlet, rather than migration and immigration.

Implications of student body changes

- In recent years a growing proportion of the Nation's students come from single-parent families, from families in poverty, and from language minority backgrounds. These characteristics may place children "at risk" with regard to educational achievement.

- If current trends in fertility and divorce rates, immigration, and out-of-wedlock pregnancies continue, these groups of "at-risk" children may constitute an even larger proportion of all students in the future.

- These children and the growth in their number are not evenly distributed among the States and localities. In some school districts, particularly large urban districts, such children are already in the majority.

- Serving the educational needs of these children will be a major challenge to the Nation's schools in coming years.

- Some critics of the education reform movement have suggested that many of the reforms currently being implemented may work to the disadvantage of "at-risk" students.

- Supporters of the reform movement point out that "second-generation" reforms are addressing the issue of how to serve students with special needs.

Data

This report is based primarily on annual data from the Bureau of the Census' Current Population Survey (CPS) October School Enrollment Supplement and the Common Core of Data (CCD) from the Center for Statistics, formerly the National Center for Education Statistics, of the U.S. Department of Education. The data on minority enrollment come from surveys conducted by the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

Enrollment Trends

National enrollment trends

On the national level, school enrollment declined steadily through the 1970's and early 1980's as the large postwar birth cohort moved through and out of the educational system. Elementary school (K-8)[1] enrollment reached a record high in 1969, while secondary school (9-12) enrollment peaked in 1975-76 (Figure 1). By 1984 elementary enrollment was down 17 percent from the 1969 high and secondary enrollment was down 14 percent from the record high.

As of fall 1986, however, elementary school enrollment will again begin to increase nationally, as more and more offspring of the postwar generation begin to attend school.[2] The annual number of births in the United States, which had been declining since 1960, began to rise in 1976 and is projected to continue increasing through 1987 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1984). The increased number of births has resulted in a new cohort of children that will swell the ranks of elementary school students well into the 1990's. As this cohort ages, secondary enrollment will begin to rise in 1991.[3]

Local and regional enrollment trends

Past enrollment trends have displayed considerable variation across regions and the same will be true in the future. Figure 2 shows the general pattern of combined elementary and secondary enrollment increases and decreases from 1980 to 1984.

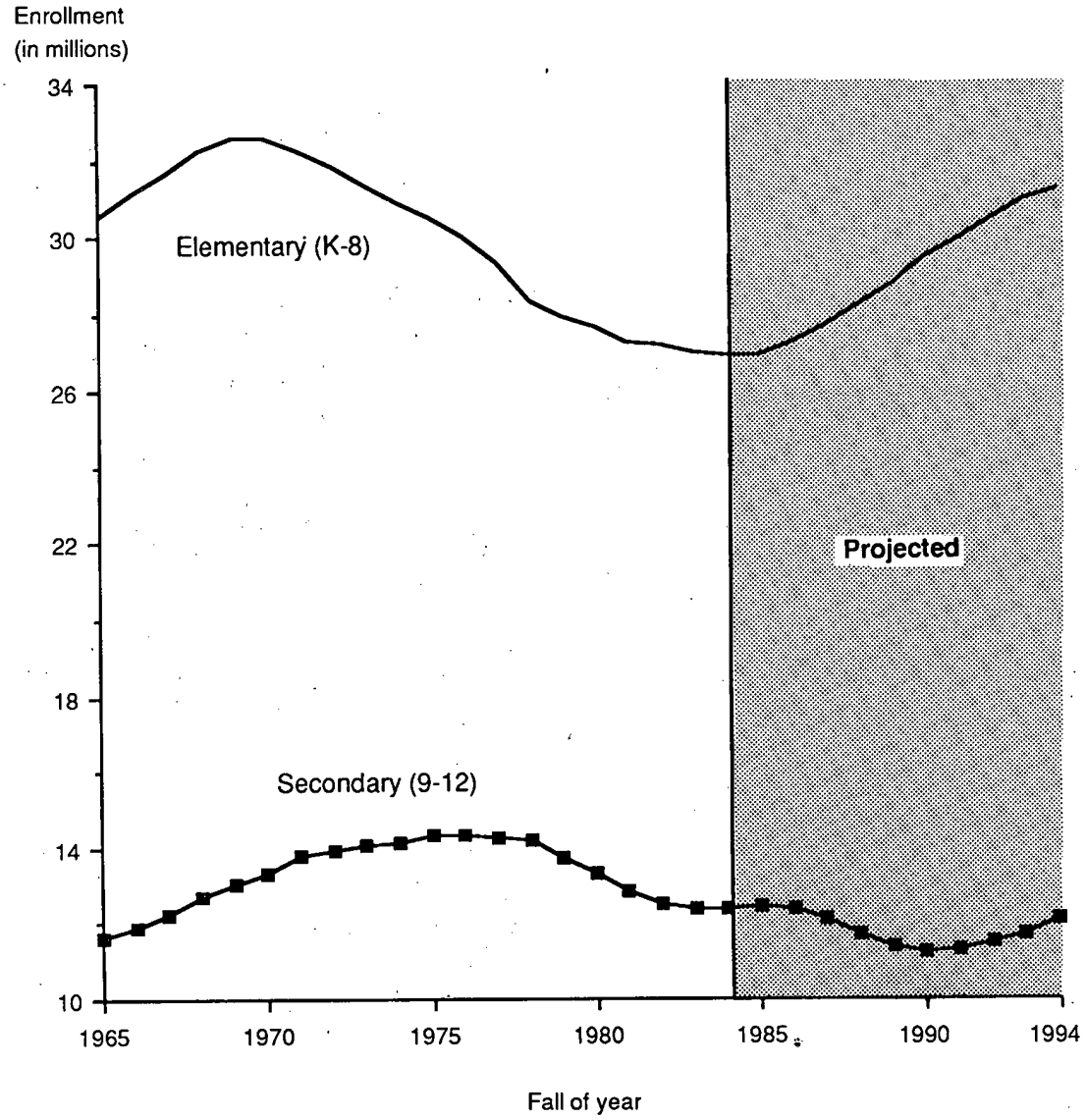
- Enrollment losses characterized the North Central and Northeastern States, the old industrial region of the country, and also characterized most of the Southeastern States.

- Enrollment increases were typical of the West and Southwest.

The coming growth in the number of students will not uniformly affect every State and school district. Some States will experience enrollment increases, while others will have further declines or stable enrollment. If the recent past holds any clues to the future, the States in the West generally will be the ones with the largest enrollment gains, and the States in the Northeast and North Central regions will continue to lose students.

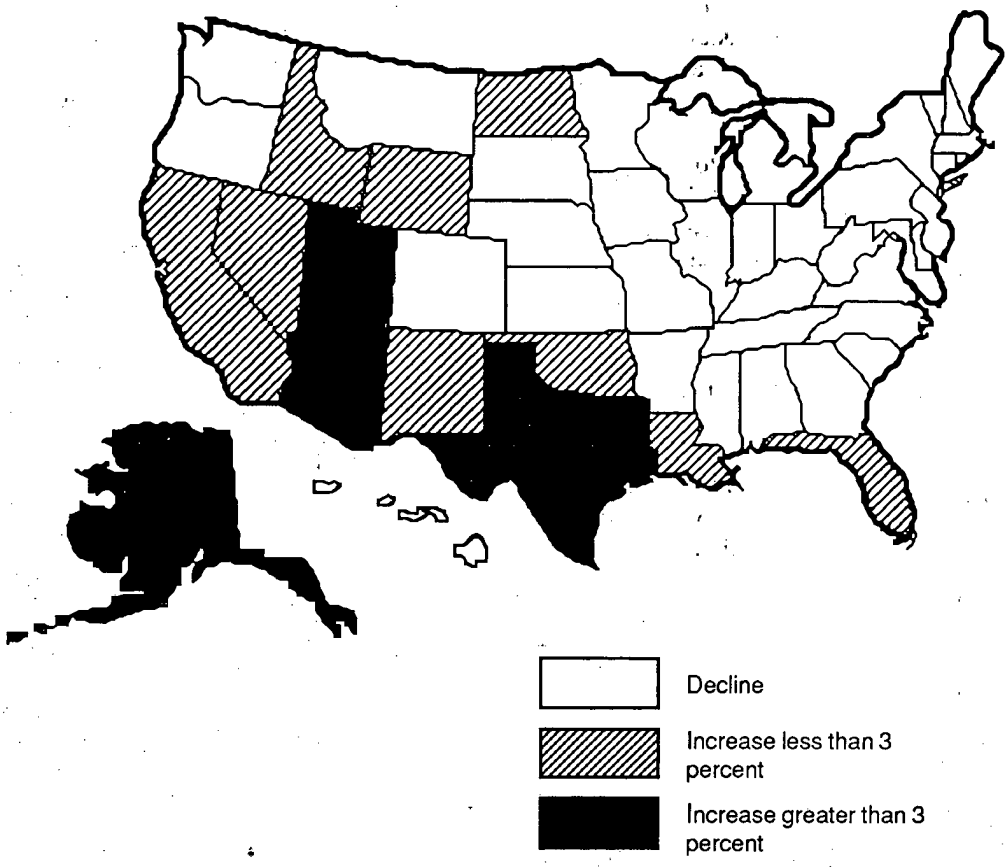
Based on 1980 Census data on key variables such as migration, fertility, and age distribution of the popu-

FIGURE 1 -- Public school enrollment: 1965 to 1994



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Center for Statistics, unpublished tabulations.

FIGURE 2 -- Change in public school enrollment between 1980 and 1984



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Center for Statistics, unpublished tabulations.

lation, State projections were developed for the number of school-age children through the year 2000 (Masnick & Pitkin, 1982).

- The Mountain and Pacific States are projected to experience growth in their school-age populations because of higher fertility rates and immigration from other regions (Figure 3).

- Although Figure 2 shows that enrollments in the West South Central and East South Central States have recently been declining, these States are projected to have increased enrollments by the year 2000.

- Large declines in school-age children are projected for the North Central and Mid-Atlantic States: 10 to 30 percent in the North Central States and 30 to 40 percent in the Mid-Atlantic States.

Projections have also been developed for the number of high school graduates for each region of the country (McConnell & Kaufman, 1983).

- By the turn of the century in the Western Region, 19 percent more students will graduate from high school than graduated in 1981.

- By the year 2000 the Northeastern Region will graduate 30 percent fewer students per year than in 1981.

If current population, migration, and enrollment patterns persist, the West will experience large increases in pupils. Many school districts in that region will be trying to find enough classrooms and books for their students. At the same time, school closures and other problems associated with diminished enrollments will continue to affect school districts in the old industrial Northeast and North Central States.

Trends in the Composition of the Student Body

Racial/ethnic mix

While nationally the student population is still overwhelmingly white, the proportion of minority students has been rising, from 24 percent to almost 27 percent between 1976 and 1980 (U.S. Department of Education, 1984).[4] However, there was considerable variation in the enrollment trends for individual minority groups (Table 1).

- Asians were the most rapidly expanding group of minority students between 1976 and 1980. The number of Asian students increased by 40 percent during that period.

- The number of Hispanic students also increased considerably (13.2 percent).

- The number of black students decreased 5 percent between 1976 and 1980. However, the total number of students declined even faster, so that the proportion of black students increased slightly over the period.

Part of the increase in enrollment for Asians and Hispanics came as a result of recent immigration. In addition, a large part of the increase in Hispanic enrollment came as a result of continued higher fertility rates for Hispanic women: 86.1 live births per 1000 women age 18 to 44 in 1984 as opposed to 64.4 per 1000 for non-Hispanic women (U.S. Department of

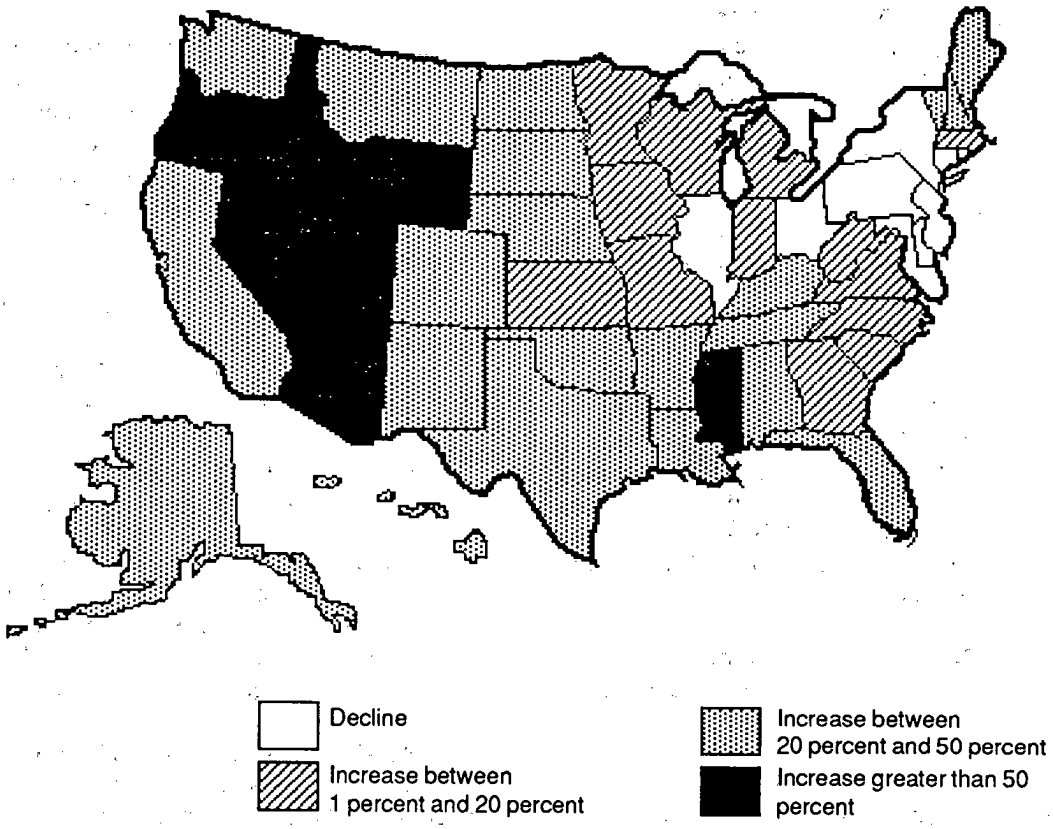
Table 1

Public elementary and secondary enrollment, by race/ethnicity: 1976 to 1980

Racial/ ethnic group	1976		1978		1980	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
White	33,229,249	76.0	31,509,927	75.3	29,180,415	73.3
Total minority	10,484,562	24.0	10,318,400	24.7	10,652,212	26.7
Black	6,773,690	15.5	6,578,047	15.7	6,418,194	16.1
Hispanic	2,807,452	6.4	2,825,229	6.8	3,179,285	8.0
Asian	535,158	1.2	585,667	1.4	749,003	1.9
American Indian	368,262	0.8	329,430	0.8	305,730	0.8

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, unpublished tabulations, 1984.

FIGURE 3 -- Projected change in school-age population between 1985 and 2000



SOURCE: Masnick and Pitkin, *Cohort Projections of School-age Population for States and Regions: 1985 to 2000.*

Commerce, 1985a). (Comparable rates for Asian women are not available.) While family size for non-Hispanics has declined, the tradition of relatively large families among Hispanics has continued.

State patterns. As was the case with total enrollment, the impact of increased minority enrollment is likely to be felt more in some States than in others (Figure 4). In general, States with traditionally high proportions of minority students, especially Hispanic and Asian students, generally had increases in the proportion of minority enrollment between 1976 and 1980. In States with traditionally low minority enrollment, the proportion of such students was stable or declined during the same period. For example:

- In California, minority enrollment grew from 34.9 percent to 42.9 percent between 1976 and 1980.
- Minority enrollment in Texas increased from 41.8 percent to 45.9 percent over that period.
- In contrast, North Dakota's minority enrollment dropped from 6.2 percent to 3.5 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 1984).

Local patterns. Minority students and the growth in their numbers are unevenly distributed among school districts. Many urban districts in particular have undergone large increases in minority enrollment and have sizable proportions of minority children. For example:

- From 1970 to 1982 the proportion of minority enrollment in the public schools doubled in the cities of Seattle (from 20 to 48 percent), San Diego (25 to 50 percent), and Portland, Oregon (12 to 27 percent).
- Boston's proportion of minority enrollment nearly doubled during the same period (36 to 70 percent).
- Minority enrollment in Los Angeles grew from 50 percent in 1970 to 78 percent in 1982.
- Other large urban districts experienced similar increases.
- By 1982 four cities—Atlanta, the District of Columbia, Newark, and San Antonio—had minority enrollment over 90 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 1985a).

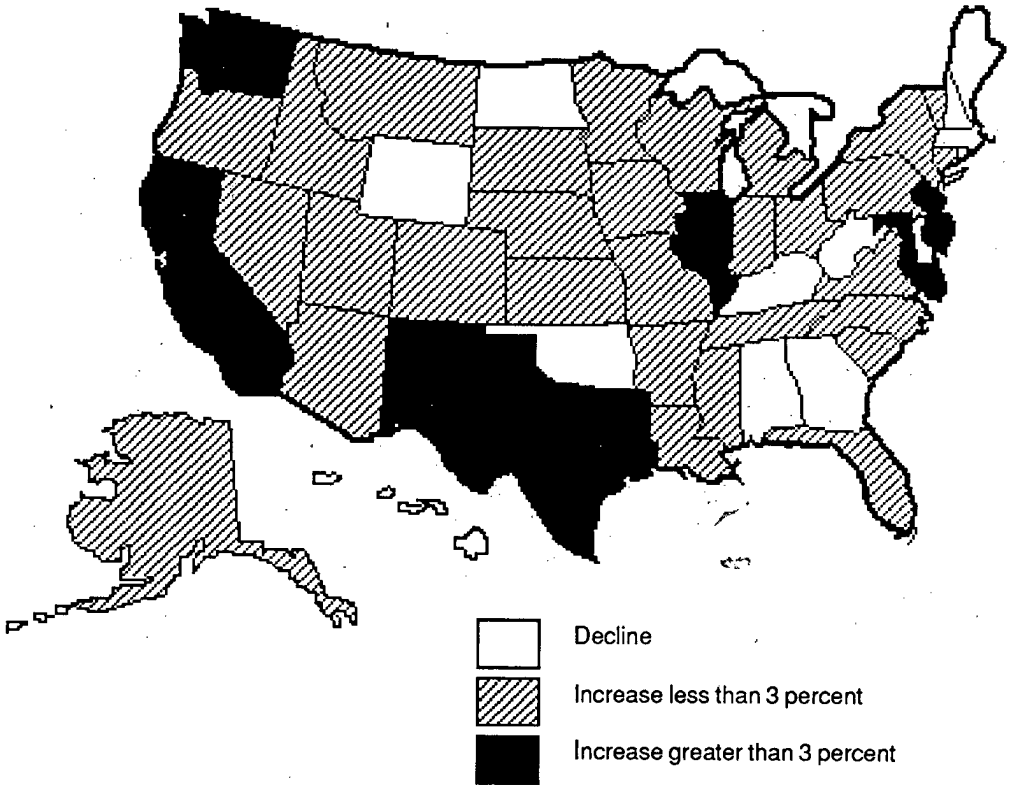
Non-English-language background

The number of Asian and Hispanic students is growing, and many of these students come from homes where English is not the primary language. Furthermore, many children from non-English-language backgrounds (NELB) have limited proficiency in English (LEP). (See the Glossary to this paper for a full definition of these terms.) Between 1976 and 1982 the number of children under 18 from households whose primary language was not English (NELB) increased 27.3 percent. During the same period the number of language-minority children with limited English proficiency (LEP)[5] grew 10.3 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). Projections developed in 1981 show the total number of LEP children ages 5 to 14 increasing 16.7 percent between 1980 and 1990, and increasing 41.7 percent between 1980 and 2000 (U.S. Department of Education, 1981).[6]

State patterns. Nationally, in 1980 the proportion of children from non-English-language background was 9.6 percent, but the proportion varied considerably among the States (Figure 5).

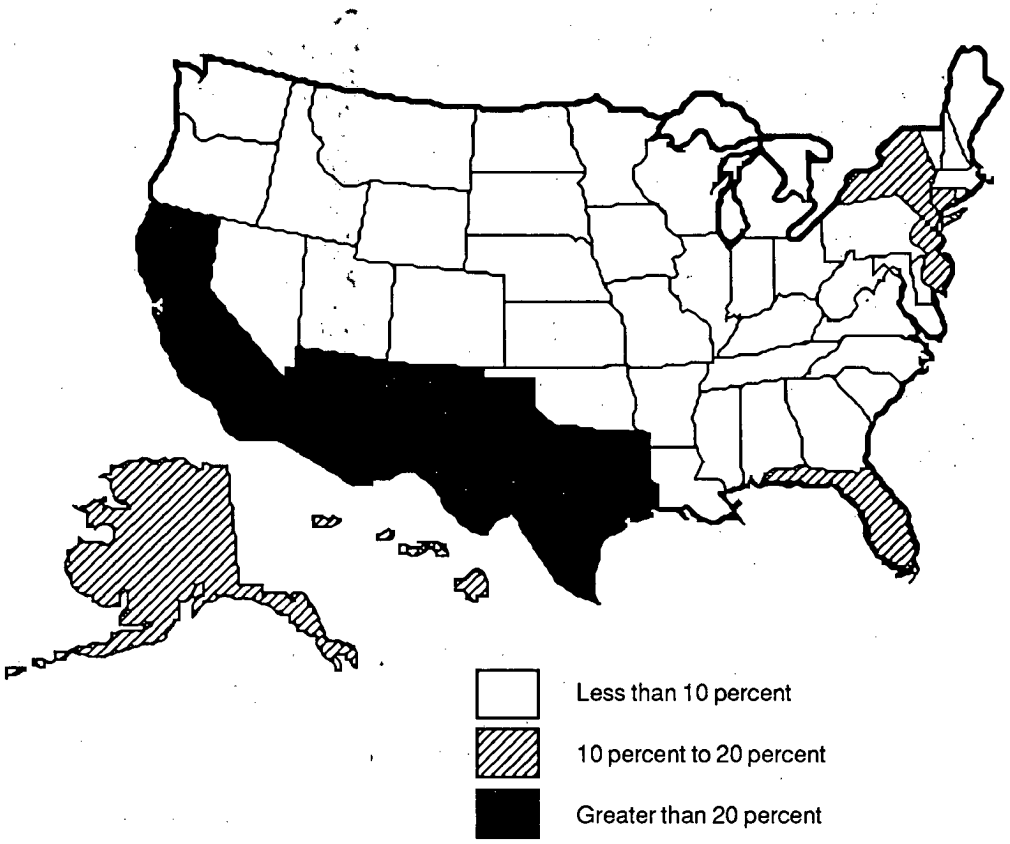
- Several Western States—New Mexico (36.5 percent in 1980), Texas (25.6 percent), California (22.9 percent), and Arizona (22.4 percent)—had the highest proportions of NELB children.
- The States in the New York metropolitan area also had high proportions of such children: New York (13.4 percent), New Jersey (17.2 percent), and Connecticut (11.0 percent).
- Most other States had relatively few such children (less than 5 percent).
- States in the Southeast (with the exception of Florida) generally had the lowest proportions of NELB children in 1980 (Sherman & Salganik, 1986).
- By 2000 the largest increases in the number of NELB children are projected in several Western States, with Texas and California projected to have the largest gains, 65.1 percent and 44.5 percent, respectively (U.S. Department of Education, 1981).

FIGURE 4 -- Change in minority enrollment between 1976 and 1980



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, unpublished tabulations.

FIGURE 5 -- Non-English-language background children as a percent of the 5- to 17-year-old population: 1980



SOURCE: Sherman and Salganik, *State Education Service Requirements Index.*

Poverty

The poverty rate for all persons and for children under 18 in 1969 was approximately half what it had been a decade earlier. In 1959 about one in four children lived in poverty; by 1969 the rate had dropped to one in eight (Table 2). The proportion of all persons living in poverty continued to decrease through the 1970's, but the proportion of poor children increased 16 percent between 1969 and 1979. In the early 1980's the poverty rate rose dramatically, to 15.2 percent for all persons and 21.3 percent for children in 1983. The number of poor children increased by more than 3 million between 1979 and 1983. Since 1983, the number and percentage of poor children has fallen somewhat, but remain well above the 1979 levels.

While in absolute numbers most poor children are white, black and Hispanic children are more likely to live in poverty.

- Among poor children, whites outnumber blacks two to one and non-Hispanics outnumber Hispanics by six to one.
- In 1983 one of every six (17 percent) white children was poor.
- Almost two of every five (39 percent) Hispanic children and one of every two (47 percent) black children were living in poverty in 1983 (Congressional Research Service, 1985).

State patterns. National aggregate poverty figures mask the varied incidence of poverty in individual States (Table 3).

- The poverty rates for children ages 5 to 17 in Southeastern States are almost twice those for States in other regions of the country. In 1979 when the national poverty rate for children was 16.0 percent, almost a third of the children in Mississippi (30.4 percent) were living in poverty, and several other States had between a fifth and a fourth of their school-age population living in poverty—Louisiana (23.5 percent), Alabama (23.6 percent), Arkansas (23.4 percent), and Kentucky (21.6 percent) (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1983).
- The States with the lowest proportion of poor children (8 to 12 percent) tended to be located in the West and Midwest.
- Differences in poverty rates among regions decreased between 1969 and 1979. The proportion of poor children generally decreased in the Southeast and increased in other regions during the 1970's.

Family structure

During the 1950's, American families with school-age children generally had two parents living at home. Today family structure displays much more diversity. It has been estimated that 59 percent of the children born in 1983 will live with only one parent at some point before reaching the age of 18 (Norton & Glick, 1986). This estimate reflects both high divorce rates and an increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.

There has been a steady increase in the number of female-headed families, from 9 percent of all fami-

Table 2

Proportion of persons and children living below the poverty level: 1959 to 1985

	Percent below poverty level								
	1959	1969	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
All persons	22.4	12.1	11.7	13.0	14.0	15.0	15.2	14.4	14.0
Related children (in families) under 18	26.9	13.8	16.0	17.9	19.5	21.3	21.8	21.0	20.1
	Number below poverty level (In thousands)								
	1959	1969	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
All persons	39,490	24,147	26,072	29,272	31,822	34,398	35,303	33,700	33,064
Related children (in families) under 18	17,208	9,501	9,993	11,114	12,068	13,139	13,427	12,929	12,483

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1985,* 1986.

Table 3

Poverty rates for children under 18, by State: 1969 and 1979

Region/State	Percent below poverty level 1969	1979	Region/State	Percent below poverty level 1969	1979
United States	15.1	16.0	South	23.5	19.6
			Delaware	12.3	15.6
Northeast	10.9	15.5	Maryland	11.5	12.5
Maine	14.5	15.8	District of Columbia	23.1	27.0
New Hampshire	7.9	9.4	Virginia	18.0	14.9
Vermont	11.5	13.9	West Virginia	24.3	18.5
Massachusetts	8.8	13.1	North Carolina	23.6	18.3
Rhode Island	11.7	13.6	South Carolina	28.7	21.0
Connecticut	7.8	11.4	Georgia	24.1	21.1
New York	12.7	19.0	Florida	19.2	18.5
New Jersey	9.2	14.1	Kentucky	24.9	21.6
Pennsylvania	10.9	13.9	Tennessee	24.6	20.6
			Alabama	29.3	23.6
Midwest	10.6	13.0	Mississippi	41.3	30.4
Ohio	10.0	13.2	Arkansas	31.3	23.4
Indiana	9.3	11.9	Louisiana	30.0	23.5
Illinois	11.0	14.9	Oklahoma	19.7	15.7
Michigan	9.4	13.3	Texas	21.7	18.7
Wisconsin	8.9	10.4			
Minnesota	9.5	10.2	West	12.9	14.2
Iowa	10.1	11.5	Montana	13.3	13.8
Missouri	14.9	14.6	Idaho	12.7	14.3
North Dakota	15.9	14.3	Wyoming	11.8	7.7
South Dakota	18.9	20.0	Colorado	12.7	11.5
Nebraska	12.2	12.1	New Mexico	26.7	22.1
Kansas	12.0	11.4	Arizona	17.9	16.5
			Utah	10.6	10.7
			Nevada	9.1	10.0
			Washington	9.8	11.5
			Oregon	10.8	12.0
			California	12.7	15.2
			Alaska	14.7	12.1
			Hawaii	10.3	13.0

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *U.S. census of the population, 1970,* Vol. 1 (PC70-1-C), 1973 and *U.S. census of the population, 1980,* Vol. 1, Chapter C (PC80-1-C), 1983.

lies with children under 18 in 1959 to nearly 23 percent in 1984 (Congressional Research Service, 1985). In 1984 60 percent of black families were headed by a single parent (94 percent of these by the mother) (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1985b).

The sharp increase in the proportion of poor children is partly a function of the rising number of female-headed households. Average earnings for full-time female workers were only $18,088 in 1985, and more than a third (34 percent) of all female-headed households were below the poverty line in 1985 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1986a). The "feminization of poverty" has resulted in women *and children* now accounting for 77 percent of all persons in poverty, with children under 18 accounting for 39 percent of the total.

Implications

This paper has two broad themes. One is the coming round of rising public school enrollments due primarily to the baby-boomlet phenomenon. The second is the changing demographic profile of the Nation's students. These two developments have broad implications for educational policy at local, State, and national levels.

Implications of enrollment increases

As the "echo" of the postwar baby-boom generation passes through the schools, many school districts will have to cope with the problems associated with rising enrollment. The experiences of States and school

districts already dealing with rising enrollment may provide an indication of what those areas with future enrollment increases may face.

- In Utah, where total enrollment increased 7 percent from 1980 to 1984, Governor Bangerter is advocating year-round schooling, double sessions, and other measures to manage the "tidal wave" of students moving into the public schools (Lindsey, 1986).

- In California, the school board of the Los Angeles City School District, in an attempt to accommodate an annual increase of 14,000 students, has recently eliminated the traditional summer vacation and has gone to a year-round schedule in some schools ("Schools in Los Angeles," 1986).

One dimension of enrollment increases will be an increased demand for teachers. As enrollment begins to rise and the present teaching force ages, the number of new teachers who must be hired each year will increase from 115,000 new teachers in 1981 to 215,000 new teachers in 1992. Between 1986 and 1992, 1.3 million new teachers will be hired nationwide (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986).

As the baby-boom generation moves out of the childbearing years, the annual number of births is expected to recede again. Another downturn in public school enrollment will follow.

- The expected increases in pupils in the 1980's and 1990's will be proportionately and numerically much smaller than those associated with the original baby boom.

- The responses of States and school districts to increased enrollment will need to take into account the fact that in many places the increases will be relatively modest and transitory.

- In some States and school districts net migration will make a major contribution to enrollment increases. Enrollment may continue to expand in these places.

Exact predictions of when and where the impact of the coming enrollment increases will be felt are problematic. Such predictions are dependent on local conditions. Nevertheless, many States and localities will feel pressures from increasing enrollment in the near future and some may have to institute in their jurisdictions measures similar to those taken recently in Los Angeles and Utah.

However, the surge in school enrollment will pass over some States and school districts altogether. If recent trends continue, while the Mountain and Sunbelt States experience enlarged school registrations, districts in the North Central and Northeastern States may still be managing retrenchment as their enrollments continue to decline.

In addition, enrollment trends may vary even within districts. Areas within a district may experience large enrollment increases while other areas in the same district are experiencing enrollment declines. This may be particularly true in large suburban school districts adjacent to large cities. In these districts, schools may be closed in older areas close to the city while schools are being built at the same time in areas away from the city's core.

Implications of demographic changes

Unlike the enrollment increases, changes in the demographic makeup of the student body appear to be a longer term phenomenon. Unless there are major changes in the underlying social and demographic trends,

- A large proportion of the children enrolled in the public schools will have one or more of the following characteristics: poverty, non-English-language background, and single-parent families, which may place them "at risk" in terms of success in the educational system, and

- The increase in the "at-risk" population will not be short-lived but is expected to continue into the 21st century (Hodgkinson, 1985; "A population in motion," 1986).

Children in poverty. One aspect of the changing demographic composition of the Nation's student body is the substantial increase in the number and proportion of children living in poverty. Researchers from many disciplines have reached the common conclusion that poverty has deleterious effects on the home environment, which in turn has a major impact on educational achievement (Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks et al., 1972). Ravitch (1983) has summarized some of the early research on the educational effects of poverty:

> Compared to the middle-class home, the poor home (has) few books, toys, games, or objects to stimulate the child's visual and auditory senses. Compared to middle-class parents, who (have) leisure time and education, poor parents (have) less time to read to, talk to, and interact with their children in ways that (promote) their acquisition of language skills and (encourage) their curiosity (p. 151).

Research has indicated that poor children start school less ready to learn than their peers and fall farther behind as they progress through school (Congressional Research Service, 1985).

The increase in the number and proportion of poor children means:

- More children enrolling in school from the kinds of home environments associated with low educational achievement; and
- An increased need for policies and practices appropriate to poor and disadvantaged children, particularly in districts with large increases in such children.

Non-English-language-background students.—The increase in the proportion of Hispanic and Asian students will result in a student body more culturally and linguistically heterogeneous than has existed in recent decades. Such heterogeneity provides an opportunity for enriching the educational experience of all students.

However, increased cultural and linguistic diversity will also pose challenges to the Nation's schools.

- Districts with large numbers of limited-English-proficient students may be hard pressed to ensure that all of them become fluent in English.
- The problem will be most severe for those districts and schools with high proportions of language-minority enrollments *and* a highly heterogeneous language-minority enrollment. For example, in one elementary school in Oakland, California, 14 different languages are spoken in the course of a normal school day ("The war of the words," 1985).

Family structure. As the American family and social structure have changed, the schools have been asked to assume more responsibility not only for the education of students, but also for their general health and welfare. These added responsibilities, what some have called the "service curriculum" (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985), reflect the schools' attempt to address unmet developmental needs seen as prerequisites to educational attainment.

- With many American families fragmented and unable (or unwilling) to supply many of these developmental needs, more students may require the offerings contained in the "service curriculum" than ever before.

In addition, with the increase in the number of women in the workforce and the number of single parents, the availability of after-school and before-school child care services has become an important issue for a growing proportion of parents. Families with working mothers may turn to the private sector to supply child care services, increasing the squeeze on already tight family budgets. Alternatively, demand may escalate for the public schools to provide custodial care, with or without an educational component, thereby increasing the burden on local school districts. Many districts now offer these before- and after-school child care services. Furthermore, the National Conference of State Legislatures cited child care services (along with early-childhood education) as the "most significant new areas of legislative activity in education in 1985" ("Early childhood education," 1985).

These developments also have implications for school attendance patterns. Some districts have taken the position that they can better serve the needs of many families by allowing greater within-district flexibility for parents in the choice of a public school for their child.

- The availability of school-based child care services may affect the choice of a school.
- There is increasing interest in "workplace schools," where the child is enrolled in a school near the parent's workplace rather than in the neighborhood school (Hoachlander & Choy, 1984). Prince George's County, Maryland has such workplace schools as a part of its overall desegregation plan ("P.G. considering," 1985).

A population at risk?

There has been a substantial increase in recent years in the number and proportion of the Nation's school-children coming to school from backgrounds that increase the probability that they will not do well in

school. The increase in the number of children "at risk" is especially salient for the current educational reform movement, which some have claimed will exacerbate the problems of such students (Howe, 1985). This reform movement, triggered in part by several national commission reports, is intended to promote "excellence" and increase the achievement of the Nation's students in part by raising standards and requirements.

- Critics have argued that the reforms do not pay adequate attention to the educational needs of "at-risk" students, but instead are aimed at the average or above-average pupil.

- Furthermore, some observers have suggested that the recommendations for more homework, more demanding courses, longer school hours, and more tests, as currently implemented by States and school districts, are likely to have a negative effect on many "at-risk" students. If such students are unable to meet these stiffer requirements, they may experience an even greater sense of failure and dissatisfaction with school, become discouraged, and drop out (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1985).

Supporters of the reform movement reply that raising standards and requirements will benefit everyone, particularly the "at-risk" population, which is least well served by the current system. While agreeing that the original focus of the reform movement was primarily the achievement of the average and above-average child, advocates of reform maintain that the movement is now facing the "second-generation" problems of how to serve students with special needs (Cordes, 1985), or "how to harness [the reform movement's] dominant homogenizing impulses to the reality that people are not all alike" (Finn, 1985).

Summary

In the next decade, as in the past, an aggregate national picture of public elementary and secondary education will be insufficient to guide policymakers. Trends within individual States and locations will determine the decisions of State and local policymakers. States that experience large enrollment increases will be beset by one set of problems, while States with enrollment declines will face another set. Meeting and conquering these problems will be the challenge of the next decade for many school districts.

Many States will be confronted with another challenge as well: a student body composed of growing proportions of at-risk children— those from poor families, from language-minority backgrounds, and from single-parent families. Unlike the transient problems associated with temporarily increased enrollments, the problems connected with these long-term demographic changes may be a more durable feature of education in the United States for the next few decades.

Footnotes

[1]The Department of Education's Center for Statistics (CS) collects data from schools that offer at least a first grade class. Therefore CS estimates of school enrollment include most kindergarten and some nursery school enrollment and exclude preprimary enrollment in schools that do not offer first grade.

[2]Total elementary and secondary enrollment increased in 1985, due to an increase in secondary enrollment. However, secondary enrollment is projected to decline again for 1986 through 1990.

[3]The projections used here are based upon data from the Department of Education's Center for Statistics and demographic data from the Bureau of the Census. Projections of enrollments in elementary and secondary schools are based on a grade-retention or cohort-survival method. This is one of the most commonly used projection methods and is based on the entrance of 6-year-olds into first grade and their subsequent progress through elementary and secondary schools as determined by grade-retention rates. For more details on the precise methodology used in these projections, see *Projections of Education Statistics to 1992-93* (U.S. Department of Education, 1985b).

[4]Counts of Hispanic students are determined in different ways in the two basic data sources used in this paper. The Census Bureau considers Hispanic background an ethnic, not a racial category. Individuals are classified on both ethnicity—Hispanic or non-Hispanic, and race—white, black, Asian, American Indian or other. Because Hispanics are included in the racial categories, comparisons cannot be drawn between whites, blacks, and Hispanics using published Bureau of the Census data since the first two groups both include Hispanics. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) student data are collected on the basis of mutually exclusive categories, so that it is possible to compare Hispanics with white non-Hispanics and black non-Hispanics using those data.

Unfortunately, OCR collects such data on an irregular basis, while annual student counts are available from Census' October Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data from the 1984 OCR survey were not yet available at the time this paper was written. Therefore more recent data on enrollment by race/ethnicity are available from CPS than are reported here. In 1981 CPS data showed that 16.4 percent of school enrollment was comprised of black children and 8.7 percent of school enrollment was comprised of children of Spanish origin. In 1985, black and Spanish origin children comprised 17.0 and 10.1 percent of school enrollment respectively (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1986b). However, because of the problems outlined above and the fact that State data are not available from CPS, only OCR data are used in the body of this paper.

[5]Limited-English-proficient estimates include all children from language-minority backgrounds scoring below specified cutoffs on special tests of English proficiency.

[6]Estimates of the number of children who require special language services are calculated in a variety of ways. The divergence in estimates is partially due to differences in the definitions used, and partially due to different measures of critical variables (such as "sufficient limitation in English" and "dependence on a non-English language"). See Barnes & Milne (1981) for a full discussion of these estimates. Furthermore, the accuracy of specific predictions of the future number of language-minority children is problematic for a variety of reasons. The recent volatile influxes of Indochinese and Cuban refugees indicate the difficulty in making accurate long-term projections. These data are presented here as an indication of general trends that can be used with some confidence, not as precise predictions. The estimates are also based on relatively old data (the 1976 Survey of Income and Education, conducted by the Bureau of the Census).

Appendix

Technical Note

Precise projections of the future composition of the school-age population are generally not available. Few attempts have been made because there are too many unknowns to be able to make accurate predictions of the number of poor, minority, or limited-English proficient children in the year 2000. Included in the unknowns are reliable estimates of current parameters, particularly for language-minority children, as well as estimates of future parameters, such as birth and immigration rates. When projections for population groups are made, one must use them with caution (as has been done in this paper).

However it is possible to look at general trends over time, such as the last 20 years, and make limited inferences about the composition of the future school-age population. For example, based on the increase in the number of children living in poverty from 1960 to 1985, and on trends in birth rates, it is reasonable to assume that the next generation is likely to have high proportions of poor children. This is the approach followed in this paper; with caveats such as "if current demographic trends continue," etc., limited inferences have been made about the nature of the coming school-age population.

Glossary

Non-English-language background (NELB). Persons of any age whose usual or second individual language, usual or second household language, or mother tongue is other than English, whether or not they usually speak English.

Limited-English proficient (LEP). Persons of non-English-language background (as defined above) who are also limited in English proficiency. Limited English proficiency has been determined by a language test, the Language Measurement and Assessment Inventories, and statistically linked to a larger non-tested population by a set of census-type questions.

Reliability of Estimates

All comparisons cited in the text are statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. This means that the difference between two sample estimates is greater than 1.96 times the standard error of the difference.

Table A1

Standard errors for Table 2: Proportion of persons and children living below the poverty level: 1959 to 1985

	Percent below poverty level								
	1959	1969	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
All persons	0.35	0.21	0.20	0.22	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.22
Related children (in families) under 18	0.62	0.38	0.42	0.48	0.49	0.51	0.52	0.51	0.50
	Number below poverty level (in thousands)								
	1959	1969	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
All persons	475	420	433	485	504	519	524	515	511
Related children (in families) under 18	353	275	282	317	330	343	346	340	335

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1985,* 1986.

References

Barnes, R., & Milne, A. (1981). *Size of the eligible language minority population*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy. (1986). *A Nation prepared*. New York: Carnegie Corporation.

Coleman, J., Campbell, E., Hobson, C., McPartland, J., Mood, A., Weinfeld, F., & York, R. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Congressional Research Service. (1985). *Children in poverty*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Cordes, C. (1985, December). Finn: Anti-department, but pro-research. *APA Monitor*.

Early-childhood education: States already on the move. (1985, October 16). *Education Week*.

Finn, C. (1985, October). *Educational reform in the United States: Trends and issues*. Speech presented to the International Seminar on Educational Reform, Tokyo, Japan.

Hoachlander, E., & Choy, S. (1984, September). Work-based attendance: A new approach to expanding parental choice in education. *Phi Delta Kappan*.

Hodgkinson, H. L. (1985). *All one system: Demographics of education—Kindergarten through graduate school*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc.

Howe, H. (1985). Giving equity a chance in the excellence game. In B. Gross and R. Gross (Eds.), *The great school debate*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc.

Jencks, C., Smith, M., Acland, H., Bane, M. J., Cohen, D., Gintis, H., Heyns, B., & Michelson, S. (1972). *Inequality*. New York: Harper & Row.

Lindsey, R. (1986, February 2). In Utah, the baby boom is turning into a classroom crunch. *New York Times*.

Masnick, G., & Pitkin, J. (1982). *Cohort projections of school-age populations for States and regions: 1985 to 2000*. Paper prepared for the School Finance Project. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

McConnell, W., & Kaufman, N. (1983). *High school graduates: Projections for the fifty States*. Denver: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

Natriello, G., McDill, E., & Pallas, A. (1985, September). School reform and potential dropouts. *Educational Leadership*.

Norton, A., & Glick, P. (1986, January). One parent families: A social and economic profile. *Family Relations*.

P.G. considering "work-place" schools as desegregation spur. (1985, July 8). *Washington Post*.

A population in motion. (1986, March 14). *Education Week*.

Powell, A. G., Farrar, E., & Cohen, D. K. (1985). *The shopping mall high school*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Ravitch, D. (1983). *The troubled crusade*. New York: Basic Books.

Schools in Los Angeles plan year-round class schedules. (1986, July 7). *Washington Post*.

Sherman, J., & Salganik, L. (1986). *State education service requirements index*. Washington, DC: Pelavin Associates.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1973). *U.S. census of the population*, Vol. 1 (PC701C). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1983). *U.S. census of the population*, Vol. 1. (PC80-1-C). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1984). *Population estimates and projections* (Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 917). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1985a). *Fertility of American women, June 1983*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1985b). *Household and family characteristics: March 1984* (Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 398). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1986a). *Money income and poverty status of families and persons in the United States: 1985* (Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 154). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1986b). *School enrollment—Social and economic characteristics of students: October 1985* (Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 409). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1981). *Projections of non-English language background and limited English proficient persons in the United States to the year 2000*. Washington, DC: Author.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1985a). *The condition of education, 1985 edition*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1985b). *Projections of education statistics to 1992-93*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (1984). Unpublished data.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (1986). Unpublished tabulations.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation. (1983). Unpublished tabulations.

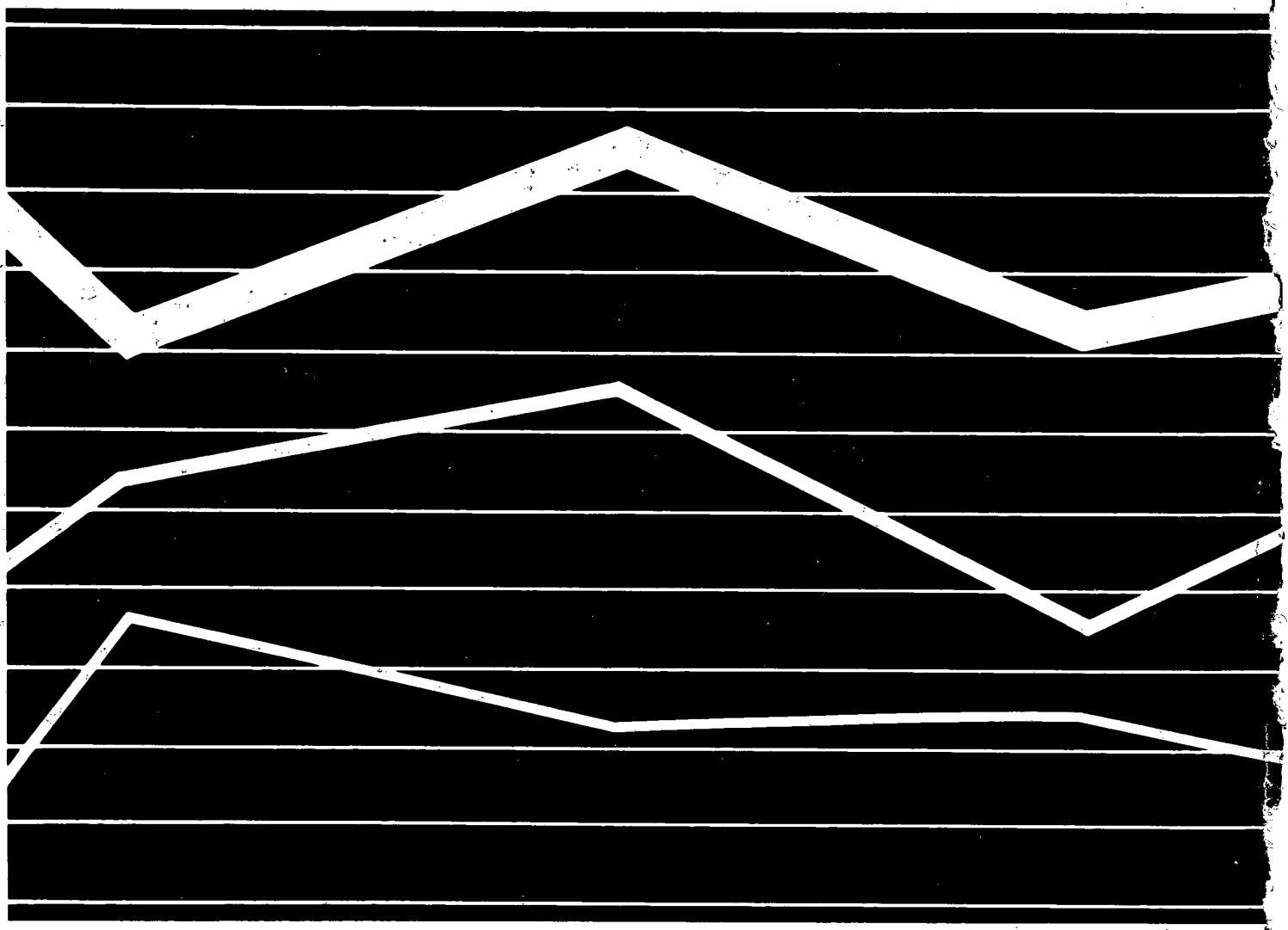
The war of the words. (1985, July 8). *Washington Post*.

*U.S. Government Printing Office : 1987 - 176-443/60272

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20208

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, $300

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ED 395
SPECIAL FOURTH CLASS
RATE – BOOK



CS 87-425