

Table 2. Dropout rate and percentage distribution of dropouts from the sophomore class of 2002, by demographic characteristics: Spring 2004

Demographic characteristic	Dropout rate	Percent of dropouts	Percent of sophomores
Total	6.6	100.0	100.0
Sex			
Male	7.4	56.2	50.5
Female	5.9	43.8	49.6
Race/ethnicity ¹			
American Indian	4.7 !	0.7 !	1.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.2	2.0	4.2
Black	9.8	21.2	14.4
Hispanic	11.2	27.2	15.9
White	4.8	44.0	60.3
More than one race	8.0	4.9	4.3
Age ²			
15 and below	2.6	18.2	44.2
16	6.7	52.0	49.0
17 and above	27.6	29.8	6.8
Native language			
Non-English	10.2	21.3	13.3
English	5.7	78.7	86.7

! Interpret data with caution. Standard error is more than one third as large as estimate.

¹ Asian/Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian, Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. All race categories exclude Hispanic or Latino origin.

² Age as calculated on March 1, 2002, which is the midpoint for data collection.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002), "Base Year and First Follow-up, 2002–04."

Dropout rates differed by the age of the respondent as well. Ages were calculated as of March 1, 2002, when the students were sophomores. Younger sophomores may have skipped a grade or started school as a child earlier than others, and older sophomores may have been held back or started school later. A plurality of sophomores (49 percent) were age 16, with 44 percent being 15 years old or younger and 7 percent being 17 years or older. Older students dropped out at higher rates than younger students: of those who were 15 years old or younger as sophomores, 3 percent were dropouts 2 years later, compared to a 7 percent dropout rate for 16-year-old sophomores (table 2). Of the students ages 17 or older as sophomores, 28 percent left school early. Among dropouts, 30 percent were ages 17 or older.

Finally, those whose native language was English stayed in school at higher rates than those for whom English was a second language. Six percent of those whose native language was English were dropouts in spring 2004, compared to 10 percent of those for whom English was a second language. This dropout rate for nonnative English speakers is higher than the overall rate of 7 percent. Most dropouts (79 percent) were native English speakers.