



# Dropouts in America: Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis

*Gary Orfield*

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Only half of our nation's minority students graduate from high school along with their peers. For many groups Latino, black, or Native American males graduation rates are even lower. As states hasten to institute higher standards and high-stakes tests in the effort to raise student achievement, this situation is likely to worsen, particularly among minority students. Yet this educational and civil rights crisis remains largely hidden from public view.

The dropout problem is far worse than statistics indicate. Many states and districts simply do not count those students who fail to receive diplomas as dropouts. Even the hardest-hit urban districts report dropout rates of only 5-10 percent.

In *Dropouts in America*, The Civil Rights Project reveals the scope of this hidden crisis, reviewing the most recent and accurate data on graduation and dropout rates, exploring the reasons that young people drop out of school, and presenting the most promising models for helping high school students graduate with their peers. *Dropouts in America* is a call to action for educators, advocates, and policymakers alike, and an invaluable resource for those concerned with equal rights and the quality of American education.

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