Perspectives on Education in the United States

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Studying in the United States?

Education has in America's whole history been the major hope for improving the individual and society.

~ Gunnar Myrdal

Snapshots of Education in the USA

Secondary School Diploma or less.....54 %

Some college or Univ. study, no degree.....25 %

Undergraduate degree (BA or BS).....13.1 %

Graduate or Professional degree.....
...7.2 %

Primary and Secondary Education

Total U.S. Population.....255,078,000
U.S. Population in grades 1-12.....42,816,000
Total instructional staff.....3, 140,000
Total expenditures.....$253,859,000,000
Students in public Schools*.....89 %
Students in "low-tuition private schools.....9.5

Fact or fiction?

1. Harvard College was founded before American Independence.

True - 1636

Fact or fiction?

Massachusetts established one of the world's first universal and compulsory free schools.

TRUE

Fact or fiction?

By 1900, there were almost 1000 institutions of higher education in the U.S.

TRUE

Fact or fiction?

The United States has a national system of education.

FALSE

Local control

15, 300 school districts

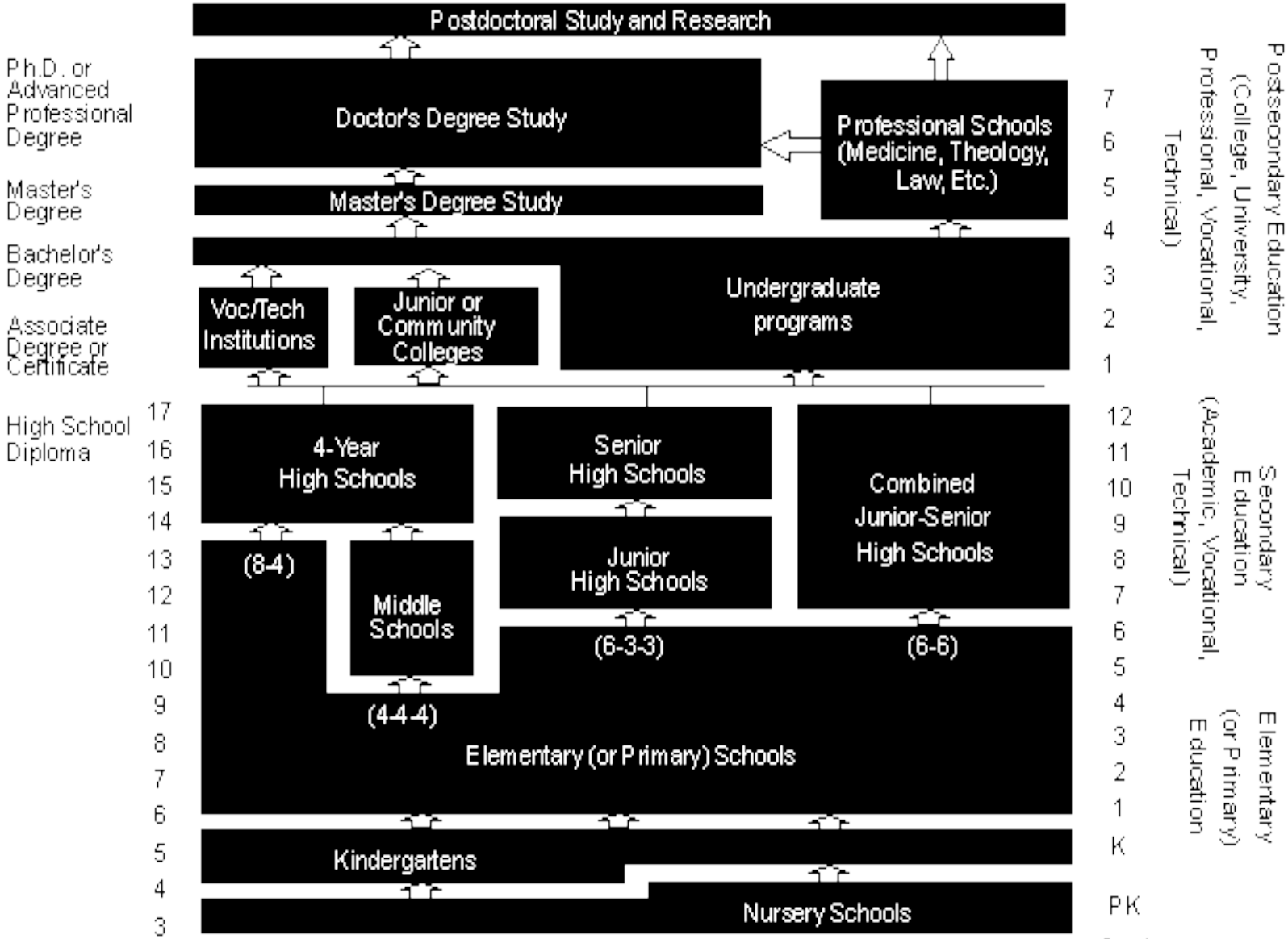
47% secondary school funds from state

46% local funds

6% federal funds (1990)

Graduation Standards

Expenditures per pupil



NOTE.–Adult education programs, while not separately delineated above, may provide instruction at the elementary, secondary, or higher education level.
Chart reflects typical patterns of progression rather than all possible variations.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Fact or fiction?

Curricula is nearly uniform from one student to the next within the class of the same middle or high school.

FALSE

Representative School schedules Student A

9th grade: general science, algebra, civics, reading, band, PE

10th grade: biology, plane geometry, social studies, composition, band, PE

11th grade: health, industrial arts I, survey of literature, band, study hall, PE

12th grade: industrial arts II, American government, public speaking, band, study hall, PE

Representative School schedules Student B

9th grade: general science, algebra, world geography, composition, Spanish I, PE

10th grade: biology, plane geometry, world history, survey of literature, Spanish II, PE

11th grade: chemistry, advanced algebra, American history, American literature, computer programming, PE

12th grade: advanced chemistry, solid geometry and trigonometry, problems of democracy, English literature, Spanish literature, PE

Fact or fiction?

G.P.A. stands for Grade Point Average.

TRUE

Grade Point Average

Letter Grade	Numerical Value	Number of Credits	Total
A	4.0	3	12
B	3.0	3	9
C	2.0	3	6

27 divided by 9 = 3.0 GPA

Fact or fiction?

College, *University*, and *Institute* are all different ways of saying the same thing in American higher education.

TRUE

Higher Education

- **16 million students pursue postsecondary education in the United States**
- **1.4 million of those are international students**
- **Over 6,500 colleges and universities**
- **2.4 million university degrees awarded in 2000-2001**

Higher Education in the USA

Total undergraduate students.....12,262,000
Graduate students.....1,721,000
Professional degree students.....295,000
Foreign students.....455,000
Students in Public institutions.....80 %
Students in Private institutions.....20 %

U.S. public colleges & universities.....605
U.S. private colleges & universities.....1610
U.S. public 2-year colleges.....1036
U.S. private 2-year colleges.....437
Annual expenditures, public.....$109,309,541.000
Annual expenditures, private.....$64,041,076,000

Fact or fiction?

You cannot study biology or medicine at a liberal arts college.

FALSE

Fact or fiction?

73% of all colleges still find it necessary to offer remedial classes for entering students.

TRUE

Fact or fiction?

A characteristic of both public and private universities in the U.S. is autonomy from governmental regulation.

TRUE

Fact or fiction?

The majority of student financial aid is provided by the U.S. government.

TRUE/FALSE

Fact or fiction?

The average American college graduate leaves school with over $45,000 in student loan debt.

FALSE

Costs of Study in the U.S. (1996)

Average annual tuition & fees,
public inst.....$2689

Average annual tuition & fees,
public 2 yrs.....$1194

Average annual tuition & fees,
private inst..$11,522

Your score . . .

How savvy are you about study in the U.S.A.?

Contemporary Issues in Education

- No Child Left Behind
- Standardizing
- Fairness and Inequality
- Funding
- Competitiveness

The greatest challenge America faces to realizing our entire vision is the challenge of giving every child in this country a world-class education.... This means first, not only high standards, but high expectations and high levels of accountability of students, parents, schools, and teachers and communities....

If we don't do it now, how can we preserve the American Dream for people who are responsible enough to work for it?...Meeting the challenge will not be easy. There is no quick fix; there is no single proposal that will magically give all our children the education that they need and deserve.... Ultimately, the magic of education is what goes on in the class, between the teachers and the students -- hopefully, supported at home by the parents.

~ Former President Bill Clinton

Some Resources

U.S. State Department
educationusa.state.gov

Overviews of the U.S. Education System
www.edupass.org

EducationUSA Centre in Tartu
http://www.ut.ee/ameerika