



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

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Back to School in Pennsylvania 2011

PENN STATE HARRISBURG – School bells are ringing across the Commonwealth signaling the end of summer vacation. Back-to-school time stirs up a number of mixed emotions for children. Some eagerly anticipate the start of a new year and all its promise, while others dread the return to school buses, packed lunches, and homework. Parents, on the other hand, have a much more uniform reaction to the news – pure joy!

Pre-K to 12 Enrollment

Pennsylvania public schools had a total enrollment of 1,781,206 students during the 2010-2011 academic year, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. In the state's public schools, the racial and ethnic diversity is greater than that of the total population. Minority students accounted for 28.8 percent of the students in the 2010-2011 scholastic year, but only made up 20.5 percent of Pennsylvania's total population in 2010. Minority is defined as anyone who indicated that they were either Hispanic or a race other than white alone.

The total enrollment of non-public schools totaled 276,527 students during the 2010-2011 school year. These students were served by 2,955 private and non-public schools.

Back to School Shopping

School children will have no problem finding the perfect outfit for that all important first day of school. Pennsylvania ranked fifth in the nation with 5,993 clothing and clothing accessories stores in 2009, according to the 2009 County Business Patterns. The Commonwealth's clothing and clothing accessories stores employed 62,274 people and had an annual payroll of \$964.8 million. Once the clothes shopping is finished it is time for a new hairdo. In 2009, Pennsylvania was home to 226 barber shops, and 4,817 beauty salons. Barber shops and beauty salons employed 748 and 27,456 people, respectively, according to the 2009 County Business Patterns.

Back to School

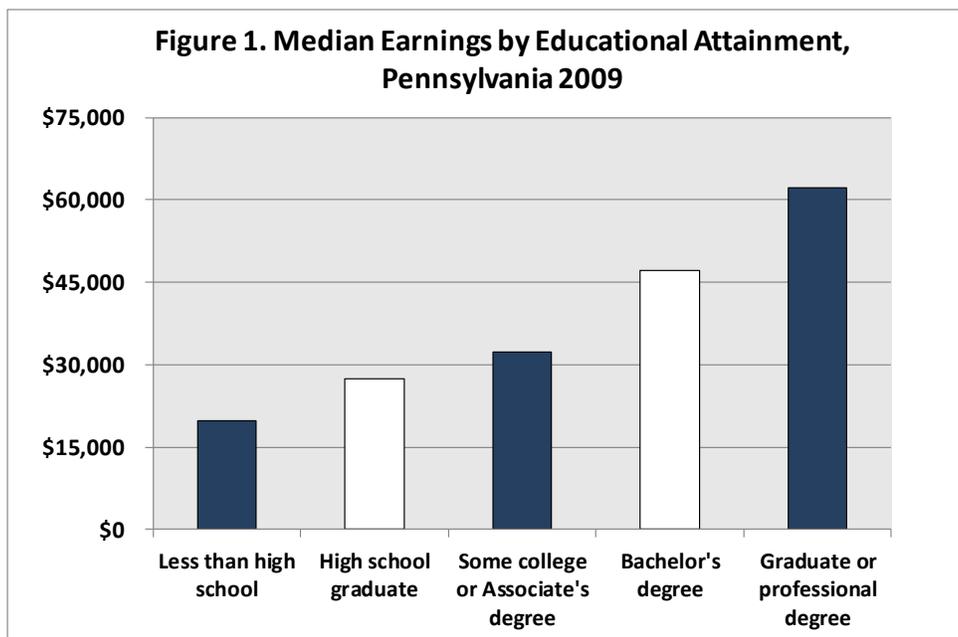
The 1986 comedy film, *Back to School*, follows a wealthy, but uneducated Thornton Meloni who decides to join his son at college to prove to him the importance of education. Along the way, Thornton falls into the common freshman plight of partying too much and studying too little, but recovers in time to pass for the semester. Surely, the more than 150,000 Pennsylvanians 35 years and over enrolled in college or graduate school in 2009 have avoided such pitfalls. Overall, a

total of 886,642 Pennsylvanians were enrolled in college or higher in 2009. Women make up the majority of college and graduate school students (57.7 percent).

Pennsylvania is world renowned for its institutions of higher education. The Commonwealth has the 3rd largest number of colleges and universities in the United States (257), providing prospective college students ample opportunity to find their ideal school.

The Benefits of Staying in School

Increased educational attainment is a significant predictor of financial success: Pennsylvanians with a bachelor's degree or higher on average earned nearly \$20,000 more than those with a high school diploma alone. The median earnings of Pennsylvanians with a Bachelor's degree was \$47,150 in 2009, while an individual with a high school diploma alone earned \$27,335. A graduate or professional degree boosts median earnings to more than \$62,000 per year (see Figure 1). Moreover, the poverty rate is just 3.5 percent for persons with a Bachelor's degree, but jumps to 10.7 percent for high school graduates and 23.4 percent for high school dropouts.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's expert in demographics and Census datasets. To request custom American Community Survey data tables or maps, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center at 717.772.2710.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census; 2009 American Community Survey; 2009 County Business Patterns; The Pennsylvania Department of Education.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's official source for population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's National State Data Center Program.

Editors: For additional data, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center's State Capital Office at 717.772.2710 or for faculty comment on this topic, contact Penn State Harrisburg's Public Information Office at 717.948.6029.

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