

Student Mobility

DEFINITION

Student mobility is the number of students who either enrolled in or withdrew from Rhode Island public schools during the 2007-2008 school year divided by the total school enrollment numbers.

SIGNIFICANCE

Families move for a variety of reasons that may include changes in household structure, parental employment status, cost of housing, health, dissatisfaction with neighborhood conditions or to improve the overall quality of family life.¹

Nationally, 14% of school-age children moved between 2006 and 2007.² Mobility can adversely affect children's academic performance. Changing schools disrupts learning and can result in children missing parts of the core curriculum.³ Delays in the transfer of student records often present challenges for administrators in correctly placing students in classes. This problem can be particularly damaging for students with special needs or behavior problems who may not receive needed services in a timely manner.⁴

High mobility rates in a school can also negatively impact non-mobile students because teachers often slow curriculum progress and spend extra time helping new students "catch up."⁵ The higher the mobility in a school, the more often teachers have to interrupt, change or completely abandon current

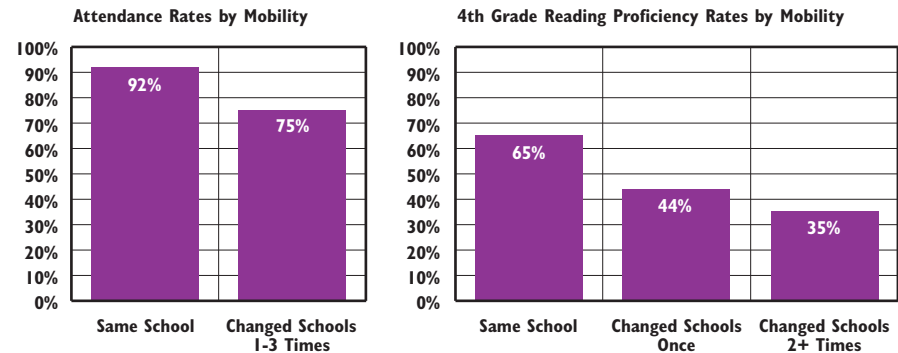
lessons. Teachers in these schools must also spend more time helping new students adjust to new rules and addressing their social concerns.⁶

Students who move more frequently are more likely to have lower test scores and grade point averages and are less likely to graduate from high school than their peers.^{7,8} Mobility also has a strong relationship to child well-being, particularly for at-risk families. Frequent moves are correlated with negative outcomes such as depression and drug and alcohol use.⁹ Children who move three or more times are 60% more likely to repeat a grade and 80% more likely to be expelled or suspended than their less-mobile peers.¹⁰

Nationally, children under age five are more likely to move than older children. Individuals living in low-income households and individuals in renter households are more mobile than higher-income people and people who own their own homes.¹¹ Black and Hispanic children are more mobile than their White peers.¹²

The overall school mobility rate for Rhode Island was 16% for the 2007-2008 school year. There was significant variation across school districts, from a high of 28% in Providence to a low of 2% in the Foster and Foster-Glocester Districts. The core cities have a significantly higher mobility rate (26%) than schools in the remainder of the state (10%).¹³

School Mobility and Education Outcomes in Rhode Island, 2006-2007 School Year



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Data Warehouse, 2006-2007 school year.

◆ Rhode Island students who change schools mid-year are absent more often than students who do not change schools. Rhode Island students who did not change schools had a 92% attendance rate, compared with 75% for those who changed schools between one and three times during the 2006-2007 school year.¹⁴

◆ Children who change schools mid-year also perform worse on standardized tests than children who have not experienced school mobility. During the 2006-2007 school year in Rhode Island, 65% of fourth grade children who did not experience mobility were proficient in reading on the state assessments, compared with 44% of students who moved once and 35% of students who moved twice or more.¹⁵

Residential Mobility among Rhode Island Children

◆ In 2007 in Rhode Island, 15% of children ages five to 19 changed residency at least once during the previous year, with the majority (8%) moving within the same county, 1% moving across a county line within Rhode Island, 5% moving from a different state, and 1% moving from abroad.¹⁶

◆ Individuals living below the federal poverty threshold were more likely to change residency in Rhode Island in 2007 than individuals with higher incomes. Twenty-seven percent of the Rhode Island population living below the poverty threshold moved during 2007, compared with 10% of people with higher incomes.¹⁷

Table 38.

Student Mobility Rates, Rhode Island, 2007-2008 School Year

SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	ENROLLED WHOLE YEAR	CHILDREN ENROLLED & EXITED DURING YEAR	STABILITY RATE	MOBILITY RATE
Barrington	3,528	3,408	126	97%	4%
Bristol-Warren	3,632	3,334	312	92%	9%
Burrillville	2,754	2,505	262	91%	10%
Central Falls	3,955	2,955	1,075	75%	27%
Charlho	3,967	3,541	457	89%	12%
Coventry	5,660	5,295	401	94%	7%
Cranston	11,445	10,185	1,353	89%	12%
Cumberland	4,972	4,794	178	96%	4%
East Greenwich	2,500	2,363	148	95%	6%
East Providence	6,164	5,497	721	89%	12%
Exter-West Greenwich	2,053	1,913	159	93%	8%
Foster	282	260	23	92%	8%
Foster-Glocester	1,572	1,535	38	98%	2%
Glocester	615	604	11	98%	2%
Jamestown	544	480	64	88%	12%
Johnston	3,480	3,077	429	88%	12%
Lincoln	3,632	3,302	345	91%	9%
Little Compton	332	312	20	94%	6%
Middletown	2,597	2,213	415	85%	16%
Narragansett	1,554	1,429	129	92%	8%
Newport	2,482	1,972	557	79%	22%
New Shoreham	163	129	37	79%	23%
North Kingstown	4,714	4,364	381	93%	8%
North Providence	3,437	3,113	348	91%	10%
North Smithfield	1,992	1,824	195	92%	10%
Pawtucket	10,100	7,877	2,407	78%	24%
Portsmouth	3,134	2,846	318	91%	10%
Providence	28,851	21,491	8,083	74%	28%
Scituate	1,841	1,737	107	94%	6%
Smithfield	2,691	2,536	167	94%	6%
South Kingstown	3,923	3,535	419	90%	11%
Tiverton	2,148	1,988	167	93%	8%
Warwick	11,860	10,553	1,428	89%	12%
West Warwick	4,040	3,373	729	83%	18%
Westerly	3,511	3,156	387	90%	11%
Woonsocket	7,080	5,499	1,713	78%	24%
Charter Schools	1,930	1,863	68	97%	4%
State-Operated Schools	2,387	1,510	1,102	63%	46%
UCAP	155	126	31	81%	20%
Core Cities	56,508	43,167	14,564	76%	26%
Remainder of State	100,697	91,828	9,545	91%	9%
Rhode Island	161,677	138,494	25,310	86%	16%

Calculating School Mobility and Stability Rates

◆ Mobility rates are calculated by adding all children who entered any school within the school district to all those who withdrew from any school in the district and dividing the total by the total enrollment for that school district.

◆ Stability rates measure the number of children who attended the same school the entire school year in a school district. The stability rate is calculated by dividing the number of children enrolled the whole year at the same school in the school district by total enrollment for that school district.

◆ Total enrollment for each district is cumulative over the course of the school year.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008.

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2007-2008 School Year.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

References

- ¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2007 Annual Social and Economic Supplement. *Table 23: Reason for move, by sex, age, race and Hispanic origin, relationship to householder, educational attainment, marital status, nativity, tenure, poverty status, and type of move (all categories): 2006 to 2007.*
- ² U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2007 Annual Social and Economic Supplement. *Table 1: General mobility, by race and Hispanic origin, region, sex, age, relationship to householder, educational attainment, marital status, nativity, tenure, and poverty level: 2006-2007.*
- ^{3,5,7} American Youth Policy Forum. (2002). *Forum Brief: Addressing the causes and consequences of high student mobility: The role of school systems and communities.* Retrieved December 18, 2007 from www.aypf.org/forumbriefs/2002/fb030102.htm
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- ¹¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2007. Table S0701.
- ¹² *Trends in the well-being of America's children and youth.* (2003). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.
- ¹³ Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2007-2008 school year.
- ^{14,15} Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Data Warehouse, 2006-2007 school year.
- ¹⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2007. Table B07001.
- ¹⁷ U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2007. Table B07012.