

As Latinos Make Gains in Education, Gaps Remain

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After lagging behind other Americans in education for generations, Latinos have significantly narrowed the gap, and last year they passed a milestone, with new Hispanic high school graduates more likely than their white counterparts to go directly to college, according to a new study.

In an era of rising high school completion and college attendance over all, Latinos have made larger gains than other groups, the Pew Research Center [reported Thursday](#), in a study based on data collected by the Census Bureau. By several measures, young Latinos have achieved parity with blacks in educational attainment.

But serious disparities remain, with Hispanic students less likely than Asians, whites or blacks to attend four-year colleges or go to school full time.

As recently as 2000, fewer than half of Latinos enrolled in college within months of finishing high school. But in 2012, the figure was 69 percent, compared with 84 percent for Asians, 67 percent for whites and 63 percent for blacks.

“This is the maturation of a big second generation among Latinos — native born, and educated in American schools,” said Richard Fry, the lead author of the report. He noted [survey results](#) showing that Latinos were more likely than white students to say that a college degree is essential to get ahead in life.

Among the major demographic groups, Latinos remain the likeliest to drop out of high school, but that rate dropped by half in just a dozen years. Among people 16 to 24 surveyed last fall, 14 percent of Latinos had neither finished high school nor were attending school, compared with 28 percent in 2000. In the same period, the dropout rate fell to 7 percent from 13 percent among blacks, and to 5 percent from 7 percent among whites.

But that commonly used definition of dropouts includes many Hispanic immigrants who did not go to school in the United States, Mr. Fry said. Among people who were in school a

year earlier — a narrower definition that captures fewer immigrants — the Hispanic dropout rate in 2012 was significantly lower, comparable to that among blacks.

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