

An analysis of Education Department data conducted by Johns Hopkins researchers for The Associated Press shows that about 1,700 schools nationwide are eligible for the "dropout factory" label. That means their senior class is made up of 60 percent or fewer of the kids who entered as freshman. While some transferred, most dropped out, according to the researchers. The data looks at senior classes for three years in a row to make sure local events like plant closures aren't to blame for the low retention rates. The highest concentration of dropout factories is in large cities or in high-poverty rural areas. Most of the schools have high minority populations.

Map View

All Dropout Factories

Roll over a state for broad details. Click o

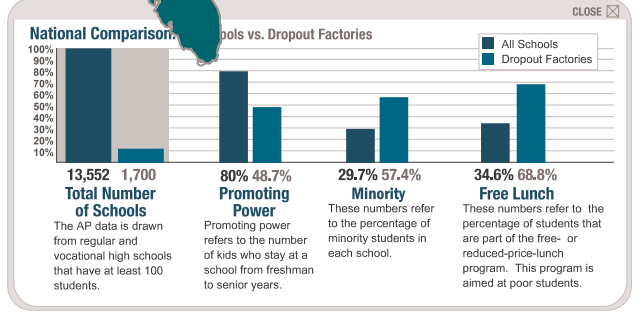
What is a "Dropout Factory"?

CLOSE

The dropout factory label refers to schools that have senior classes with 60 percent or fewer of the students who started there as freshmen, says Robert Balfanz, a Johns Hopkins University researcher who coined the term. Somewhere along the way, these schools have lost at least 40 percent of the class. There are about 1,700 regular or vocational high schools nationwide that fit that description, according to an analysis of Education Department data conducted by Johns Hopkins researchers for The Associated Press. That's about 12 percent of all such schools.

More than 20%

CLOSE



NOTE: The AP data is drawn from 13,552 regular and vocational high schools with at least 100 students with an entering freshman and a senior class, and promoting power data for 2004, 2005, and 2006. Some alternative schools that are not designed to graduate students but offer them short-term placement may have been miscoded and included in this federal database. Promoting power refers to the retention rate of students from freshman to senior year. The researchers note that there may be local explanations or reasons why some of these schools' promoting power may differ from state-reported graduation rates.