

Section 6

Societal Support for Learning





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Summary: Societal Support for Learning

This section looks at the contributions, both financial and otherwise, that society and its members—individuals, families, employers, and other organizations outside of school—make to support education. Thus, this section explores traditional issues about financial support for education as well as issues about the amount of time and attention parents devote to their children's learning; the degree of support that exists in the community, workplace, and other settings for learning; and the consistency of cultural messages about the value of knowledge and learning.

Traditional issues about financial support focus on the amount of funding for education and use school finance data (in particular school expenditures) as one measure of social support for education. Debate exists among education researchers as to the effect of differences in funding on school performance or student outcomes. There is no debate, however, that there are marked differences in funding—in “how,” “to whom,” “from whom,” and “how many” dollars are distributed among public and private educational institutions. The finance indicators in this section measure these types of differences and look at the relationships between these differences and certain aspects of communities (e.g., region, poverty rates, and types of families residing in the commu-

nity) as well as certain student populations (e.g., children in certain categories of concern, such as minority status, poverty status, and other at-risk factors).

One consideration in the section is how revenues from public and private sources are distributed among public and private institutions in the education system at the elementary/secondary and postsecondary levels. For example, the tuition paid by college students to attend a public college or university is a private investment being made by the student, or the student's family, in education that is delivered by a public institution. The sum of this and many other allocation mechanisms determines the extent to which postsecondary education is publicly or privately funded and delivered by public or private institutions.

The resources and support that children receive outside of school from individuals, families, and other organizations can complement, reinforce, and add to their school or college learning experiences. Unfavorable conditions at home, school, or in the community may hamper children's ability to learn in school. Comparisons by family characteristics, such as the level of family income or parental education, help illustrate the relationship between family background and support for their child's learning.



Community Support

Parents' Attitudes Toward Schools

In 1999, half of all children in grades 3–12 had parents who reported that they were “very satisfied” with their child’s school, their child’s teachers, the school’s academic standards, and the school’s order and discipline.

Parents’ opinions of their children’s schools provide an indicator of the perceived relative health of U.S. education. Examining parents’ level of satisfaction with schools can help to define perceived problems within America’s schools.

The percentage of children in grades 3–12 with parents who reported they were “very satisfied” with their child’s school decreased from 56 percent in 1993 to 53 percent in 1999. In contrast, the percentage of those with parents who reported they were very satisfied with their child’s teachers, the school’s academic standards, and the school’s order and discipline remained similar (see supplemental table 40-1).

In 1993, the percentage of children with parents who were very satisfied with their child’s school, the school’s academic standards, and the school’s order and discipline was higher as household income increased. This relationship was not evident in 1999. The percent-

age of children with parents who were very satisfied with these three areas in 1999 was higher for those with the highest and lowest family income levels than for those at the middle income levels.

In 1993, Black children in grades 3–12 were less likely than their White peers to have parents who reported that they were very satisfied with their child’s school, child’s teachers, the school’s academic standards, and the school’s order and discipline. However, between 1993 and 1999, the percentages of White children with parents who reported being very satisfied decreased, while the percentages of Black children with very satisfied parents remained similar. Due to these changes, the percentages of White and Black children with very satisfied parents were similar in 1999. Among all racial/ethnic groups in 1999, Hispanic children had the highest percentage of parents who were very satisfied with the four areas assessed (see supplemental table 40-1).

NOTE: The categories for family income are current dollars, which have not been adjusted for inflation. Caution should be exercised in comparing satisfaction levels between 1993 and 1999. Data include both public and private school students in grades 3–12.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), “School Safety and Discipline” survey, 1993 and “Parent Interview” survey, 1999.

ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL: Percentage of children in grades 3–12 whose parents were very satisfied with their schools, by family income: 1993 and 1999



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Note 1
Supplemental Table 40-1



Public Financial Support

International Comparisons of Expenditures for Education

U.S. expenditures on primary and secondary education rank high compared with the expenditures of other countries. U.S. spending on postsecondary education is the highest of all the OECD countries.

A country's investment in education can be measured by its per student expenditures for education from both public and private sources, expressed in absolute terms. When making international comparisons of expenditures for education from both public and private sources, it is also useful to measure expenditures as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). Doing so allows a cross-national comparison of expenditures relative to countries' abilities to finance education.

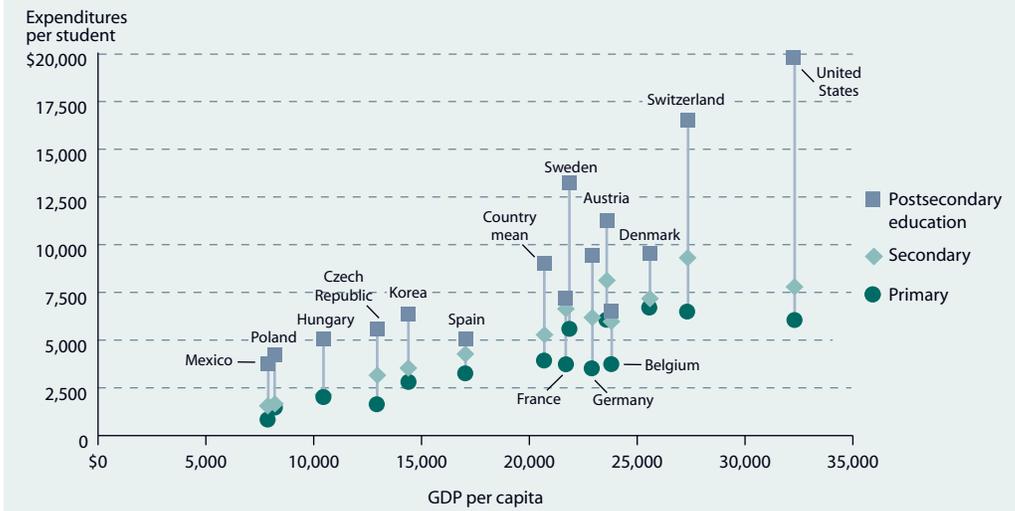
There is a positive relationship between per student expenditures at all levels of education and GDP per capita (OECD 2001). In 1998, wealthier countries, on average, spent more per student for primary, secondary, and postsecondary education than did less wealthy countries as measured by GDP per capita. Annual expenditures per student at the primary level among members of the OECD ranged from \$863 in Mexico to \$6,713 in Denmark. At the secondary level, the range was from \$1,438 in Poland to \$9,348 in Switzerland. U.S. spending on primary and secondary education ranked high compared with the OECD countries, \$6,043 and \$7,764 at the primary and secondary levels, respectively. Only Austria and Switzerland spent more per student than the United States at both the primary and secondary levels. Denmark also spent more per student than the United States at the primary level (see supplemental table 41-1).

In relative terms, the percentage of GDP spent on primary education ranged from 0.7 percent in Germany to 2.3 percent in Poland. The United States spent 1.7 percent of GDP at the primary level, the same percentage as Mexico and Switzerland and a lower percentage than that of only Denmark, Poland, and Sweden (1.8, 2.3, and 2.1 percent, respectively). At the secondary level, relative expenditures varied as well (from 1.1 percent in Poland to 3.2 percent in Austria). The United States spent 2.0 percent of GDP at this level, a lower percentage than that of 13 OECD countries and a slightly lower percentage than the OECD average (2.2 percent).

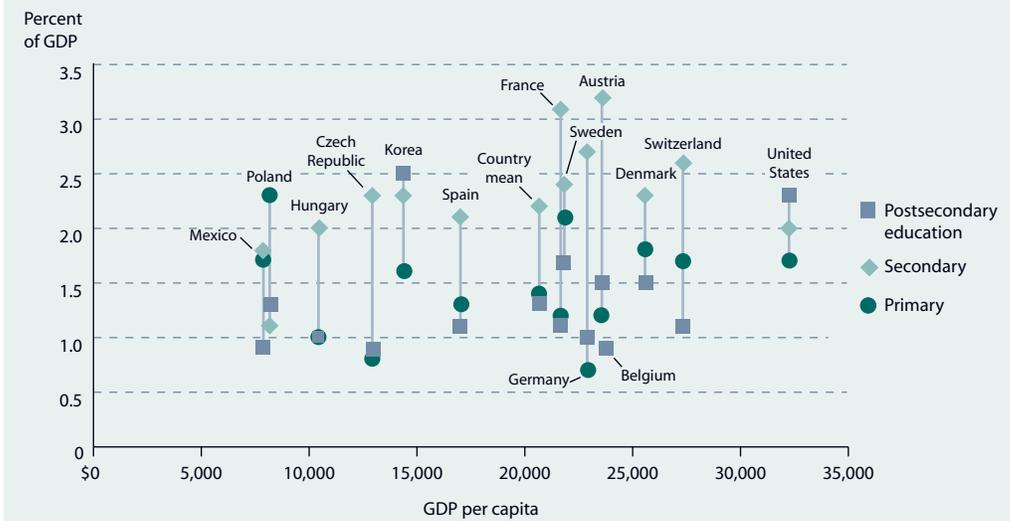
Expenditures per student for postsecondary education varied considerably among the OECD countries in 1998 although variations in the duration and intensity of postsecondary education among countries make comparisons difficult (OECD 2001). At \$19,802 per student, U.S. expenditures were higher than those of any other OECD country and more than twice those of 16 OECD countries. Among other OECD countries, expenditures ranged from \$3,800 in Mexico to \$16,563 in Switzerland. In relative terms, the United States and Korea spent 2.3 and 2.5 percent, respectively, of their GDP on postsecondary education. Canada, Finland, Iceland and Sweden also had high spending levels, with 1.7 percent or more of GDP devoted to postsecondary education.



INTERNATIONAL EXPENDITURES FOR EDUCATION: Educational expenditures per student in relation to GDP per capita, by level of education for selected OECD countries: 1998



INTERNATIONAL EXPENDITURES FOR EDUCATION: Educational expenditures as a percentage of GDP, by GDP per capita and level of education for selected OECD countries: 1998



NOTE: Per student expenditures are calculated based on public and private full-time-equivalent (FTE) enrollment figures and expenditures from both public and private sources where data are available. Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) indices are used to convert other currencies to U.S. dollars. Within-country consumer price indices are used to adjust the PPP indices to account for inflation because the fiscal year has a different starting date in different countries.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Center for Educational Research and Innovation. (2001). *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators, 2001*.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
 Supplemental Note 7
 Supplemental Table 41-1
 OECD 2001



Public Financial Support

Public Effort to Fund Education

At the elementary and secondary education level, public revenue per student has increased since the mid-1970s. At the postsecondary level, public revenue per student has fluctuated within a narrow band without showing a consistent increase since the mid-1970s.

Public support for education can be assessed by measuring the level of public investment per student and the collective effort in the aggregate. This indicator discusses both measures, using public revenue per student as an index of average public resources available to support students, and total public revenue for education as a percentage of total personal income as an index of collective effort. The second index can be interpreted either as a measure of the financial responsibility borne by the public to provide for education or as a measure of *affordability* that gauges how much investment per student the public provides relative to its capacity to make such support available (see *Supplemental Note 13*).

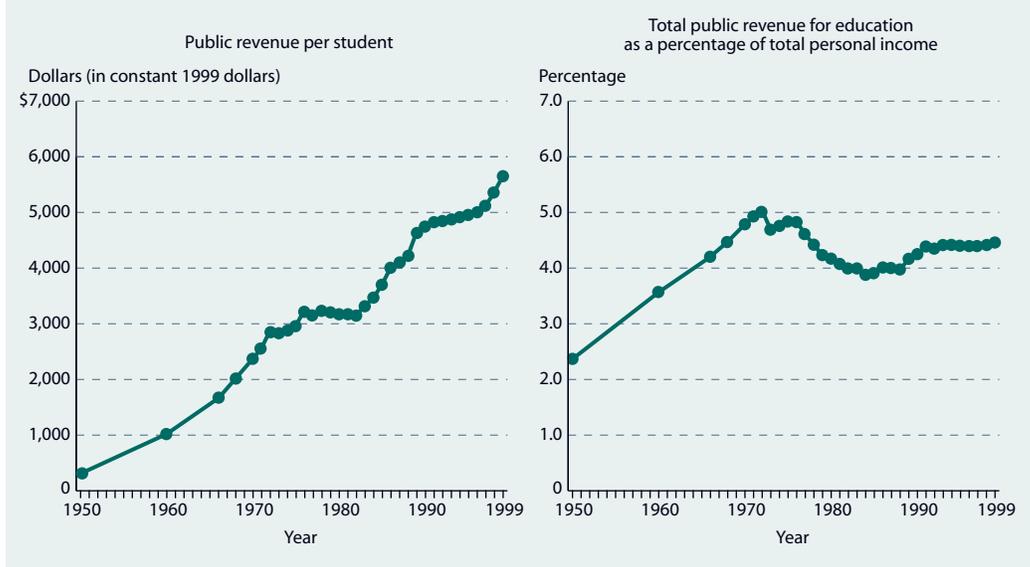
Public revenue per student at the elementary/secondary level has generally increased between 1950 and 1999. This reflects the generally greater increase in total public revenue in inflation-adjusted dollars for elementary/secondary education than in enrollments between 1950 and 1999. These changes in public revenue per student have not coincided with the patterns in the index of collective effort for elementary/secondary education. Public revenue for elementary/secondary education as a percentage of total personal income increased from 1950 until the first half of the 1970s. This percentage then generally declined until the late 1980s, recovered some of its value through the early 1990s, and remained relatively constant through 1999 (see supplemental tables 42-1 and 42-2).

The patterns in public revenue per student for postsecondary education between 1950 and 1996 differ from those for elementary/secondary education. After rising from 1950 to the mid-1970s, public revenue per student has fluctuated within a relatively narrow band of values ranging from \$3,200 to \$4,000 (see supplemental table 42-1). The lack of a consistent increase in public revenues per student since the mid-1970s has coincided in part with a general increase in private effort. Between 1980 and 1996, tuition and fees charged to students by public degree-granting institutions increased their share of total current fund revenues from 13 to 19 percent, while state appropriations as a share of total current fund revenue for public degree-granting institutions decreased from 45 to 33 percent (see supplemental table 42-3).

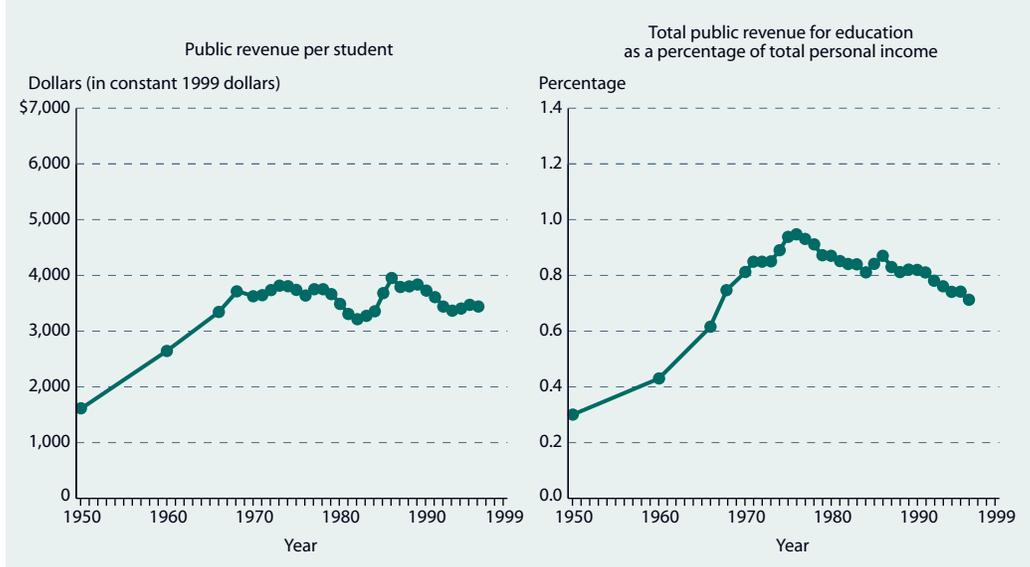
After showing an increasing trend from 1950 to the mid-1970s, public revenue for postsecondary education as a percentage of total personal income generally declined until 1996. The decrease in the index was mostly brought about by differing growth patterns for its components: between 1976 and 1996, total personal income increased in all but 2 years, while total public revenue for postsecondary education actually declined in 10 of these years. In fact, the latter effect has been more apparent since the 1990s, with public revenue for postsecondary education declining in 5 of the 7 years between 1990 and 1996 (see supplemental tables 42-1 and 42-2).



PUBLIC FINANCIAL SUPPORT: Indicators of public effort to fund elementary and secondary education: Selected years 1950–99



PUBLIC FINANCIAL SUPPORT: Indicators of public effort to fund postsecondary education: Selected years 1950–99



NOTE: Public funds for postsecondary education may be used at many types of institutions, both publicly and privately controlled. Enrollment in both publicly and privately controlled institutions is included. For more information about the calculation of the indexes, see *Supplemental Note 13*. All values for total public revenue for education at both the elementary and secondary and postsecondary levels are in 1999 constant dollars. See *Supplemental Note 13* for information on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES. (2002). *Digest of Education Statistics 2001* (NCES 2002-134); (2001) *Digest of Education Statistics 2000* (NCES 2001-034); (various years: 1964–1997) *Digest of Education Statistics*; (1993) *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait* (NCES 93-442).



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
 Supplemental Note 13
 Supplemental Tables 42-1,
 42-2, 42-3



Public Financial Support

Change in Public School Revenue Sources

Traditional differences in the proportion of local funding to state and federal funding generally persist across the United States, though changes have occurred in the West and Midwest.

Local funding and control of public education may be seen as essential to maintaining public commitment to local schools and ensuring that education reflects community values and aspirations. Moreover, the more local funding a school district receives, the less vulnerable it is to funding shortfalls during economic recessions because local property taxes are relatively stable compared with sales and income taxes, which states generally rely upon to fund school districts (Monk and Brent 1997). However, reliance on local funding can lead to inequities in the financing of education because of differences in local wealth. Over the years, these conflicting factors and concerns have resulted in different proportions of state and local funding among the states.

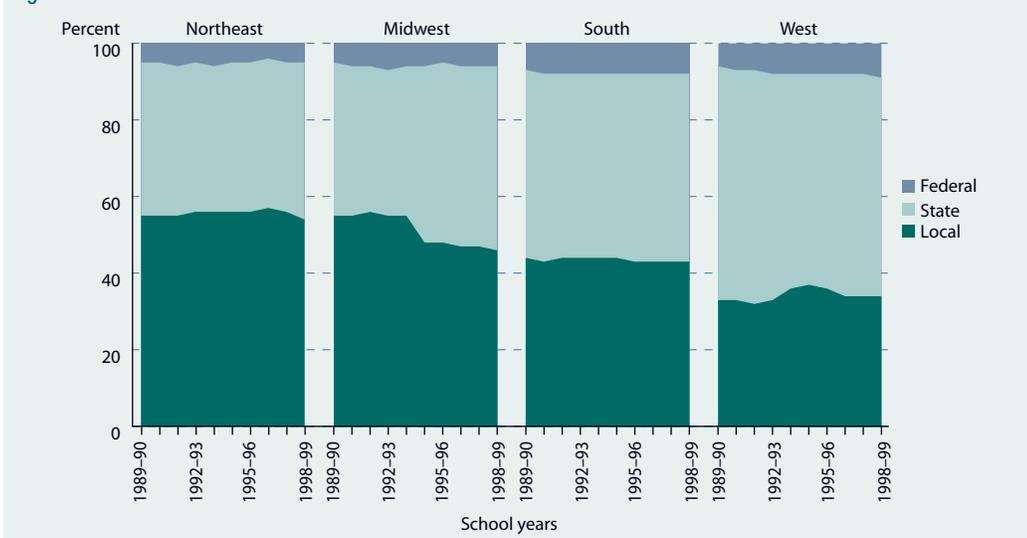
The proportion of total revenue from local sources decreased slightly between 1989–90 and 1998–99 (from 47 to 44 percent) (see supplemental table 43-1). The proportion of revenue from federal and state sources increased slightly during this period (from 6 to 7

percent and from 47 to 49 percent, respectively).

Increases in the proportion of revenue from local sources occurred between 1989–90 and 1998–99 in the West, where schools have historically relied more on state than local funding. The only substantial decrease in local funding occurred in the Midwest, where local funding dropped from 55 percent in 1993–94 to 48 percent in 1994–95 and has remained at the lower level since then. This decrease coincides with a reduction of the local property tax in Michigan. The decrease in local funding in the Midwest was also accompanied by a large increase in state funding.

In the Northeast and South, no shifts in funding were observed. Historic funding differences, whereby the Northeast relied to a greater degree on local funding than the South and West, persisted.

CHANGE IN REVENUE SOURCES: Percentage distribution of total revenues for public elementary and secondary schools, by region and revenue source: 1989–90 to 1998–99



NOTE: Supplemental Note 1 identifies the states in each region and Supplemental Note 13 provides information on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). See Supplemental Note 13 for more information on revenue types.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Common Core of Data (CCD), National Public Education Financial Survey Data, 1989–90 to 1998–99.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Notes 1, 13
Supplemental Table 43-1
NCES 98–210; Monk and
Brent 1997





Private Financial Support

Net Price of College Attendance

One definition of the “net price” of college attendance is the amount that students pay with their own or borrowed funds after taking any grants received into account. Net price varies by the type of institution students attend and by family income.

The price of college attendance, including tuition and fees, room and board, books, and other expenses, can affect a student’s access to college. Some students receive grants from federal, state, institutional, or private sources to help pay these expenses (see supplemental table 44-1). Students are responsible for the difference between the total price of attendance and grants, which is called the “net price.” Students cover this amount with their own financial resources, help from their families, or borrowing.

The price of attendance for dependent, full-time, full-year undergraduates varies by type of institution. In 1999–2000, the average price of attendance was \$24,600 at private not-for-profit 4-year institutions, compared with \$12,500 at public 4-year institutions and \$8,600 at public 2-year institutions. The average net price of attendance—total price reduced by any grant aid—was \$17,800 at private not-

for-profit 4-year institutions, \$10,600 at public 4-year institutions, and \$7,600 at public 2-year institutions. Grants are generally need based, so taking into account total price and family financial resources, the net price of attendance is less for low- and lower middle-income students than for upper middle- and high-income students at public or private 4-year institutions.

Among other strategies, students can use loans and employment to pay the net price. The average amount that students borrowed in 1999–2000 ranged from \$3,600 at private not-for-profit 4-year institutions, \$2,000 at public 4-year institutions, and about \$400 at public 2-year institutions. On average, students from private not-for-profit 4-year institutions and students from public 2-year institutions contributed the most from earnings and students from public 4-year institutions, the least.

NOTE: Limited to students who attended only one institution. Averages include zero values. Table entries are rounded to the nearest \$100. Income categories are described in *Supplemental Note 12*. In 1999–2000, 49 percent of all undergraduates were considered financially dependent for financial aid purposes, and 58 percent of dependent students were enrolled full time, full year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:2000).

PRICE OF ATTENDING AND AID: Average price of college attendance and student financial aid for dependent full-time, full-year undergraduates, by type of institution and family income: Academic year 1999–2000

Type of institution and family income	Tuition/fees	Total price	Grants	Net price	Student loans	Student earnings
Total	\$7,100	\$15,100	\$3,100	\$12,000	\$2,200	\$3,700
Public 4-year	4,400	12,500	1,900	10,600	2,000	3,500
Low income	3,900	11,800	3,900	7,900	2,300	3,700
Lower middle	4,200	12,200	2,000	10,200	2,200	3,700
Upper middle	4,500	12,700	1,200	11,500	2,200	3,800
High income	4,900	13,200	1,000	12,200	1,400	3,100
Private not-for-profit 4-year	16,100	24,600	6,800	17,800	3,600	5,300
Low income	13,200	20,900	8,700	12,200	4,000	4,600
Lower middle	15,700	24,300	8,100	16,200	4,100	5,300
Upper middle	16,400	25,000	7,000	17,900	4,000	5,900
High income	18,000	26,800	4,500	22,300	2,700	6,200
Public 2-year	1,600	8,600	1,000	7,600	400	5,700
Low income	1,600	8,400	2,300	6,100	400	4,900
Lower middle	1,800	8,700	700	8,000	600	6,300
Upper middle	1,700	8,700	400	8,300	300	5,200
High income	1,500	8,700	300	8,400	200	6,800



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Notes 9, 12
Supplemental Table 44-1