



Florida Information Note

Education Information & Accountability Services

Selected Gender Comparisons among Students in Florida's Public Schools, 2003-04

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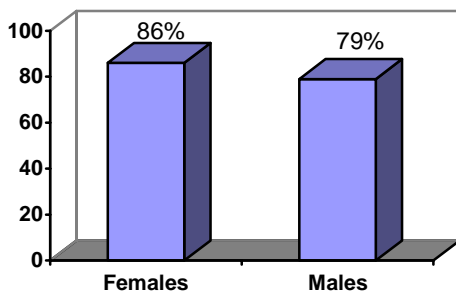
Introduction:

During the last three decades, nationwide efforts to implement equal educational opportunities have been accompanied by greater educational attainment among girls and women. The most notable changes have occurred at the postsecondary level, where females are more likely than males to enter college and attain a bachelor's degree.¹ Females also make up the majority of graduate students, however are still underrepresented in first-professional programs.² Gender differences in college majors also persist, with females still predominant in lower paying fields such as education, and males more likely to earn degrees in engineering, physics, and computer science.³ The differences between males and females in specific areas of academic and social development from elementary through secondary levels provide insight to such contrasts in adult gender groups. The following sections provide comparisons among males and females in Florida's public schools.

Readiness to Start School:

Among Florida's children entering Kindergarten in fall 2003, females were generally more prepared to enter school than males. For the 2003-04 school year 86 percent of females met the state's standards for readiness to attend kindergarten, versus 79 percent for males.

Fall 2003, Percentage Ready for Kindergarten



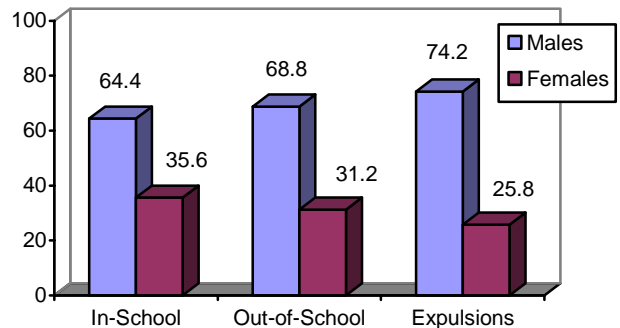
Nationally, males and females begin school with similar preschool experiences, although females may have an advantage in early literacy participation experiences and

are more likely than males to demonstrate early literacy skills.⁴

Disciplinary Data:

In general, girls are considerably less likely than boys to have major disciplinary problems. For 2003-04, 3.7 percent of female students enrolled any time during the year in grades K-12 received in-school suspensions, compared to 6.6 percent for males. Of all students who received in-school suspensions, 64.4 percent were male (171,523 out of 266,196). Similarly, 68.8 percent of students who received out-of-school suspensions were male (166,271 out of 241,639). In addition, males accounted for 74.2 percent of expulsions (729 out of 983) in 2003-04.

Suspensions and Expulsions, 2003-04
Percentage of Totals by Gender



Non-Promotion Rates and Dropout Rates:

In 2003-04, 9.6 percent of all males in grades K-12 were classified as non-promotions. This is substantially higher than the percent of female non-promotions (6.4 percent). Likewise, the dropout rate for 2003-04 was higher for males (3.2 percent) than for females (2.6 percent).

2003-04	K-12 Non-promotions	Dropout Rate
Males	9.6%	3.2%
Females	6.4%	2.6%

¹⁻⁴ National Center for Education Statistics. Trends in Educational Equity of Girls and Women, NCES 2000-030.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Program Enrollment:

Males are much more likely than females to be enrolled in ESE programs. In 2003-04, 513,733 students were enrolled in ESE programs. Of these students, 63.9 percent were males and 36.1 percent were females. For certain ESE program areas, males and females are equally represented; however, a significant disparity exists for other program areas. Membership for selected ESE program areas is shown below.

ESE Program Area, 2003-04	Females	Males
Specific Learning Disabled	31.4%	68.6%
Speech Impaired	33.7%	66.3%
Emotionally Handicapped	20.2%	79.8%
Language Impaired	37.6%	62.4%
Visually Impaired	44.7%	55.3%
Autistic	16.4%	83.6%
Developmentally Delayed	29.3%	70.7%
Severely Emotionally Disturbed	18.5%	81.5%
Total ESE Programs	36.1%	63.9%

Note, however, that males accounted for over half (50.1 percent) of the students in gifted programs.

Comparative Performance on Standardized Tests:

On the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), females tend to score higher than males in reading but not in math.

Percent Scoring Level 3 or Higher*

FCAT 2004	Reading		Math	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Grade 4	68	72	67	61
Grade 8	42	47	55	58
Grade 10	33	35	65	61

* Figures do not include students with unreported gender.

On the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), however, males tend to score higher than females on the verbal subtest as well as on the mathematics subtest.

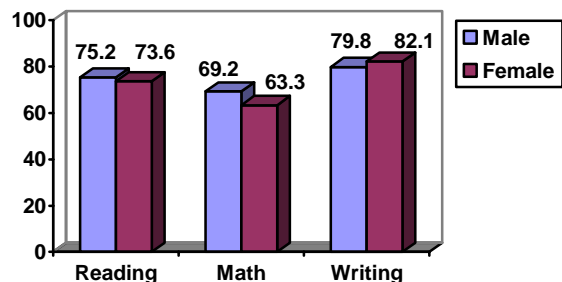
2004 SAT Scores	Mathematics	Verbal
Florida Males	517	501
Florida Females	484	497

While males scored higher than females on the SAT subtests, particularly in mathematics, more of the examinees for this college entrance exam were female (54.6% female vs. 45.4% male). These figures parallel national findings that female high school seniors tend to have higher educational aspirations than their male peers, and are more likely than males to enroll in college during the fall immediately following graduation from high school.⁵

Graduates and Performance on the Common Placement Test:

Of the 125,046 Florida public school students receiving standard diplomas in 2003-04, 52.3 percent were female. Among students entering a Florida community college or state university in 2003-04, a higher percentage of males passed college placement tests (CPT) in reading and mathematics, while a higher percentage of female examinees passed the writing placement exam.

Performance on the CPT, 2003



Conclusion:

In Florida, and at the national level, females are generally more prepared than males to enter school, are less likely to manifest behavioral problems or to have developmental problems, and are more likely to enter college. At the same time, males show no relative deficiency in test-taking abilities at the secondary level and beyond, and they continue to perform better than females in mathematics. Overall, females are now doing as well as or better than males on many indicators of educational achievement, and large gaps that once existed have been eliminated or have significantly decreased.

⁵ National Center for Education Statistics. Trends in Educational Equity of Girls and Women, NCES 2000-030.