

Patterns and Trends in Grade Retention Rates in the United States, 1995-2010

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Although it may be consequential for a number of important educational and socioeconomic outcomes, we currently know relatively little about the rate at which students are made to repeat grades. We build on Hauser, Frederick, and Andrew's (2007) measure of grade retention using data from the 1995 through 2010 Current Population Surveys. We make technical improvements to their measure; provide more recent estimates; and validate the measure against several external criteria. Our estimates describe striking disparities in grade retention rates by sex, race/ethnicity, geographic locale, and students' socioeconomic circumstances. We conclude by describing how our measures might be used to model the impact of economic and policy contexts on grade retention rates.

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