

**Disparities in Transition to High School:
An Evaluation of Rurality, Race and Ethnicity Composition, and Mobility
at the Unified School District Level in the US**

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Educational attainment plays an increasingly important role in selecting people into different social layers in a schooled society. The transition to high school is a critical stage in students' educational trajectory and well-being in later life. However, comprehensive analysis of high school dropouts at the school district level is still lacking. This study builds up a panel data from American Community Survey (ACS) 2009, 2013, and 2018 to examine the relationship between high school dropout rates and a series of social factors at the unified school district level. The empirical results suggest that there is no significant difference in dropout rates between rural school districts and urban school districts. However, race and ethnicity compositions are closely associated with high school dropout rates. The white-dominated school district has a significantly lower high school dropout rate, while the percentage of Hispanics is positively associated with high school dropout. The results also reveal that geographical mobility is positively associated with high school dropout rates; less mobile school districts tend to have lower high school dropout rates. These results highlight the importance of considering racial disparities and migration effects in determining the successful transition to high school.