

## 4.2 Education

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Data on respondents' educational activities, attitudes, and status are obtained in questions on schooling. These grade-appropriate questions ask about the respondent's educational experience prior to high school, in high school, and in college. Additional questions focus on school-based training programs in which the respondent participates. Finally, the school and transcript surveys gathered data about the schools in the NLSY97 sample areas and the academic records of NLSY97 respondents.

Table 1 summarizes the *NLSY97 User's Guide* subtopics available in this section and any global universe restrictions affecting those subtopics. Users should note that certain questions or groups of questions within a subtopic may have additional restrictions. Please consult the NLSY97 questionnaire and codebook for more information on particular questions.

*User Notes:* Before reading the topic-specific sections on education, researchers should understand key differences between the round 1 and subsequent surveys, as well as the structure of the school roster in the data from rounds 2–5. The remainder of this introductory section summarizes this important information.

4.2 Table 1. Education Subtopics and Universe Restrictions

NLSY97 User's Guide Subtopic	Round 1 Universe (Age as of 12/31/96)	Round 2 Universe (Age as of 12/31/96)	Round 3 Universe (Age as of 12/31/96)	Rounds 4-5 Universe (Age as of 12/31/96)
4.2.1 College Experience	all ages; enrolled in college	all ages; enrolled in college	all ages; enrolled in college	all ages; enrolled in college
4.2.2 Educational Status & Attainment	all ages	all ages	all ages	all ages
4.2.3 School-Based Learning Programs	all ages; not yet enrolled in college	all ages; currently enrolled in school or college	all ages; currently enrolled in school or college	all ages; currently enrolled in school or college
4.2.4 School Experience	all ages; enrolled in school	all ages; enrolled in school	all ages; enrolled in school	all ages; enrolled in school
4.2.5 School & Transcript Surveys				
School Surveys	1996: all high schools in NLSY97 sample areas	—	2000: all high schools in sample areas and any other attended by a respondent in round 2	—
Transcript Survey	—	—	all respondents graduated from high school or age 18 and not enrolled in high school, and signed permission form	—

Note: See section 4.2.2, "Educational Status & Attainment," for the definition of "enrolled."

**Round 1 Questionnaire Administration**

In round 1, if the youth respondent had not attended college, the schooling section of the youth questionnaire collected information about the school currently or most recently attended by the youth. Thus, the experience questions described in section 4.2.4, “School Experience,” applied only to one middle or secondary school attended by the youth. If the respondent had attended college, the questionnaire permitted the collection of information about all colleges attended, not just the current or most recent college. However, no respondents had attended more than one college as of the round 1 interview date. Therefore, in effect all respondents provided information only about their current or most recent school, regardless of whether that institution was a K-12 school or a college. In addition, if the respondent’s current or most recent school was a college, or if the respondent had completed grade 12 and was not currently enrolled, the survey asked a set of retrospective questions regarding the respondent’s classes and grades in high school, as well as attainment of a high school diploma or GED. Figure 1 shows the information gathered in the round 1 schooling section.

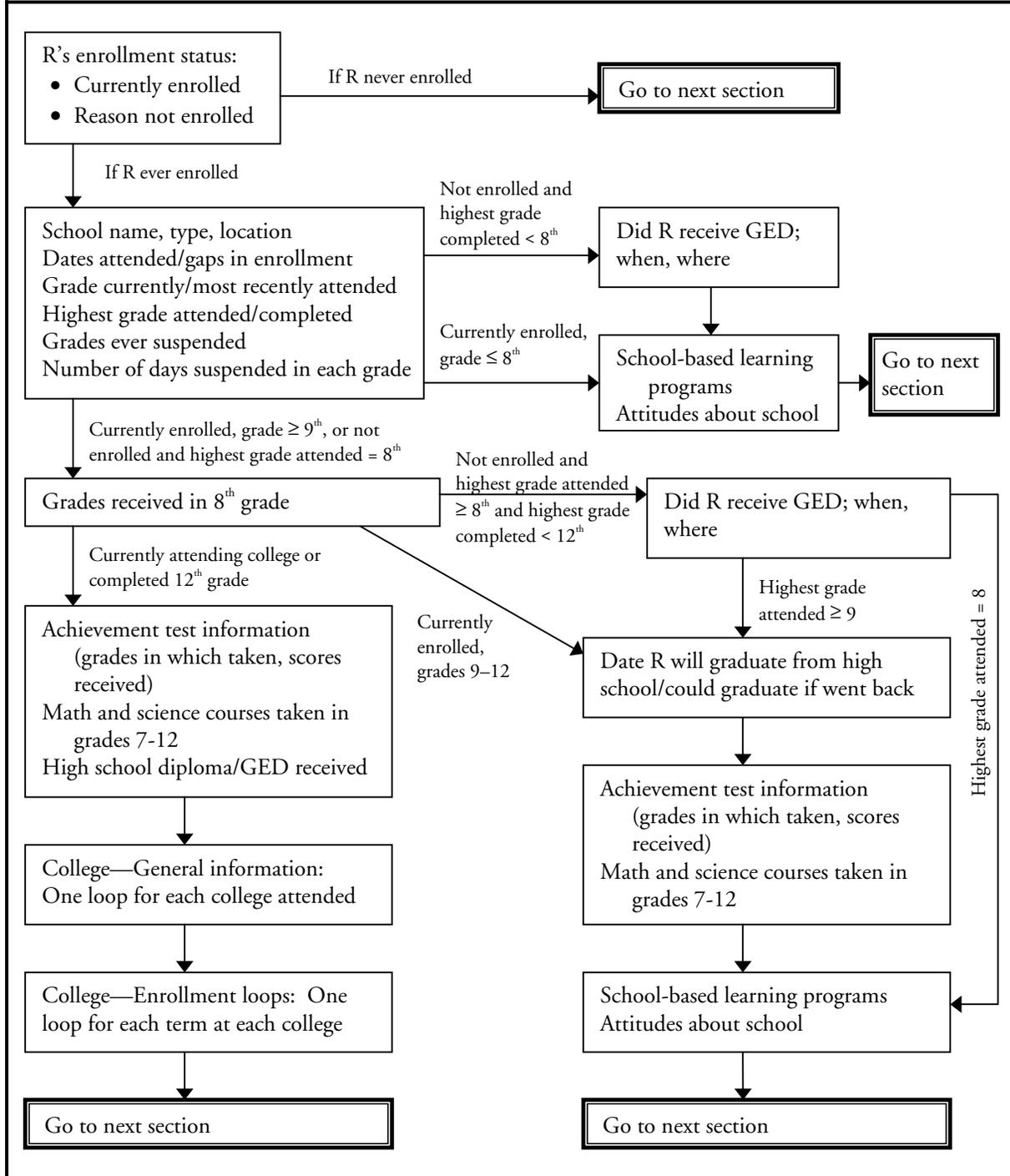
For youths with a parent interview, this school-specific information is supplemented by retrospective data about the youth’s schooling. The parent reports information about all schools attended by the youth since 7<sup>th</sup> grade and answers questions about gaps in enrollment of one month or more. These data are described in section 4.2.4, “School Experience,” but are not reflected in Figure 1.

**Questionnaire Administration in Subsequent Rounds**

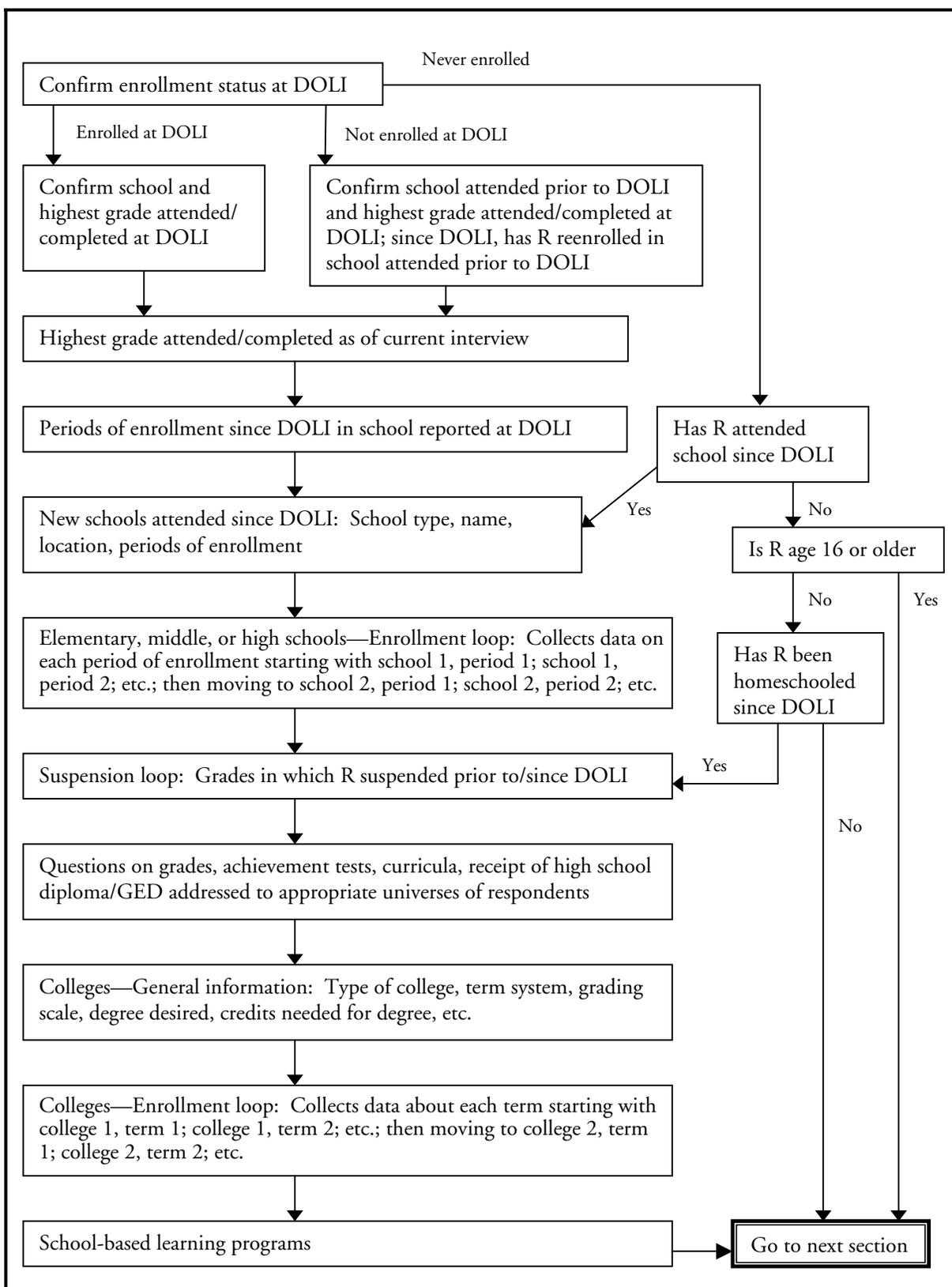
In round 2, the schooling section of the youth questionnaire was redesigned using a retrospective format; the same format was used for rounds 3–5. Rather than asking only about the respondent’s current or most recent school, this section recorded information about all schools the respondent had attended since the last interview. The section first referred to the school (current or most recent) reported by the youth at the time of the last interview and then collected information about all schools attended since that date. The names of these schools and the dates they were attended by the respondent are organized on the NEWSCHOOL roster (school names are not released to the public). This roster also contains variables indicating the reason the respondent left the school; the level of the school (elementary, middle/junior high, high school, college); the type of school (for example, public or private); and the interview during which the school was first reported (that is, in round 1, round 2, etc.). Finally, each school is assigned an identification number (NEWSCHOOL\_PUBID) so that users can tell if a respondent attended the same school in more than one round. These variables do not let users identify multiple respondents attending the same school. After the roster was created, the survey proceeded to ask about the respondent’s experiences at each high school or college. More information about the creation and use of rosters in the survey is provided in section 3.2 of this guide.

Figure 2 summarizes the flow of the round 2 schooling section; the section in subsequent rounds is very similar. Note that “DOLI” is an abbreviation for the phrase “date of last interview.”

4.2 Figure 1. Round 1 Schooling Section



4.2 Figure 2. Rounds 2–5 Schooling Section



The NEWSCHOOL roster, a list of the respondent's schools, was a new feature of the round 2 schooling section and was used again in later rounds. For each school attended since the previous interview, this roster contains the dates of up to three periods of enrollment at each school, the level of school attended, and the round in which the school was first reported. More information is provided in chapter 3 about the way rosters are constructed during the interview and how researchers can use rosters in analyses.

**Data hint** →

The roster is the best source of information for dates of enrollment and school level. Roster items should be used rather than the raw data items whenever possible.

During the interview, at the beginning of the schooling section, the roster is constructed so that the school reported at the last interview date is school #01. If the respondent now reports not attending that school at the date of last interview (that specific school was never attended or the attendance stopped prior to the date of last interview), then the school is deleted from the current round's roster.

The rest of the roster contains data about additional schools attended since the last interview date in the order that the respondent reported them. All of the youth's schools are included on the same list, regardless of whether they are K-12 schools or colleges. Thus, variables for college #05 may actually refer to the first college attended by the youth, not the fifth college attended. During the interview, check items at the beginning of the set of high school questions and the beginning of the set of college questions identify the school level and send the respondent down the correct path for each school attended. For example, the college check item (question YSCH-25144A) will have a value of "1" if the school was a college and a value of "0" otherwise; a value of "1" sends the respondent to the first college question, and a value of "0" skips the respondent past all the college questions for that school. Thus, all respondents with a school in a given roster position will have data for the initial check item in each series of questions, regardless of the school level. Table 2 below demonstrates the implications of the roster numbering system.

**Data hint** →

Users who wish to examine only K-12 schools or only colleges should use the roster variables called "school code" (question name NEWSCHOOL\_SCHCODE.xx) to separate the two levels of institutions.

4.2 Table 2. School Numbers in the NEWSCHOOL Roster

Question topic	School #01	School #02	School #03
<b>Respondent 1: Has attended 1 high school and 2 colleges since the last interview</b>			
School level	High school	College	College
Roster items (Qname NEWS_)	Valid data for "School #01"	Valid data for "School #02"	Valid data for "School #03"
High school questions	Valid data for "School #01"	No data except initial check	No data except initial check
College questions	No data except initial check	Valid data for "College #02" (the youth's 1 <sup>st</sup> college)	Valid data for "College #03" (the youth's 2 <sup>nd</sup> college)
<b>Respondent 2: Has attended 1 high school and 1 college since the last interview</b>			
School level	High school	College	—
Roster items (Qname NEWS_)	Valid data for "School #01"	Valid data for "School #02"	—
High school questions	Valid data for "School #01"	No data except initial check	—
College questions	No data except initial check	Valid data for "College #02" (the youth's 1 <sup>st</sup> college)	—
<b>Respondent 3: Has attended 3 high schools and no colleges since the last interview</b>			
School level	High school	High school	High school
Roster items (Qname NEWS_)	Valid data for "School #01"	Valid data for "School #02"	Valid data for "School #03"
High school questions	Valid data for "School #01"	Valid data for "School #02"	Valid data for "School #03"
College questions	No data except initial check	No data except initial check	No data except initial check
<b>Respondent 4: Has attended 2 colleges and no high schools since the last interview</b>			
School level	College	College	—
Roster items (Qname NEWS_)	Valid data for "School #01"	Valid data for "School #02"	—
High school questions	No data except initial check	No data except initial check	—
College questions	Valid data for "College #01" (the youth's 1 <sup>st</sup> college)	Valid data for "College #02" (the youth's 2 <sup>nd</sup> college)	—

### 4.2.1 College Experience

The NLSY97 contains a number of questions that gather information about the college experiences of respondents. Topics include characteristics of enrollment, such as the degree sought, credits required, and financial aid, and characteristics of the respondent's attendance during each term, including tuition, major, and remedial classes taken.

*Youth Questionnaire.* For each college attended, the respondent reports the total number of credits he or she earned at that college, as well as the number he or she earned from sources outside that college (e.g., another college, placement test, or college course(s) taken during high school). The respondent then states the type of diploma or degree sought (e.g., associate, vocational, bachelor's) and the total number of credits the college requires to graduate with that degree. The surveys also ask whether each school was public or private; the term system of the school (i.e., semester, quarter, trimester, or other); and the grading scale used to figure students' grade point average (GPA).

After establishing the dates of each term attended, the surveys enter a loop that asks a set of questions about each term. Respondents state the number of course credits taken, the number of credits earned, whether they attended full- or part-time, their GPA, and their primary and secondary majors. The NLSY97 also gathers information on any remedial English, writing, or math classes the respondent may have taken during that term and the total number of hours per week that these classes met.

The survey records information about college costs, although the exact questions have varied. In round 1, respondents first stated the annual tuition and fees for a full-time student. Both in-state and out-of-state rates were reported for publicly supported institutions. Within the term-specific loop, respondents who were attending part-time stated the amount of tuition and fees for that number of credits in that term, and all respondents were asked about the cost of room and board in each term. In rounds 2–5, the annual tuition and fees question was dropped. Questions in the term-specific loops asked respondents to report the amount of tuition and fees for the number of credits taken by the youth. Round 2 also asked about the cost of room and board for each term.

Finally, the respondent is questioned about source(s) of financial aid received during his or her tenure at each college. Non-institutional sources include loans from relatives or friends. Follow-up questions on these sources ask the youth to state the amount he or she was not expected to repay and the amount owed as of the interview date. The youth is also questioned on the amount of financial assistance received from institutional sources such as grants or scholarships, loans, work-study, or employer assistance. Respondents state the amount received from these sources as well as the amount owed to the government from subsidized or other types of loans. Finally, each youth is asked to state the amount that he or she paid toward college expenses using earnings or savings.

In addition, the round 1 survey asked each respondent who reported college enrollment to state the total number of years he or she attended any 2-year colleges and any 4-year colleges and the total number of different colleges attended by the round 1 interview date.

In rounds 2–5, respondents who had earned a degree by the survey date reported the type of degree (e.g., associate, bachelor’s, master’s) and the month and year it was received. Currently enrolled college students also answered the question series on school-to-work programs; see section 4.2.3, “School-Based Learning Programs,” for more information.

*User Notes:* Researchers should refer to the introduction of the “Education” section for a description of the structure of the schooling section in each round of the survey.

**Data hint** →

The school roster organizes information about each school in a matrix of data. The roster variables should be used rather than the raw data in analyses. See the introduction to the “Education” section and section 3.2 of this guide for more information on rosters.

*Parent Questionnaire* (round 1). If any home-schooled youth was age 16 or older at the time the parent was interviewed, the round 1 survey gathered data from the parent on whether the youth had ever enrolled in and received credit for college courses and, if so, the specific years that this occurred.

*Created Variables.* Two created variables, CV\_ASSOC\_CREDITS and CV\_BA\_CREDITS, calculate the fraction of credits toward an associate’s or bachelor’s degree that each respondent attending college has earned as of each round’s interview date. If the respondent has completed an associate’s or bachelor’s degree, the variables CV\_AA\_DEGREE and CV\_BA\_DEGREE provide the date that the degree was received in a continuous month format (see section 4.4, “Event History”). Additionally, all colleges are coded with an Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) code to facilitate the extraction of additional data about the institution; these codes are available only on the restricted-use Geocode CD.

*Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:* NLSY79 respondents have provided information on their major field of study in college, the total number of credits earned at each college attended, and the amounts of educational loans. The NLSY79 Young Adults report their college major, financial aid information, and degree sought, as well as answer a series about their college application process. Young Women and Young Men have stated their major field of study, cost of tuition, and financial aid received. Major field of study and the number of hours and weeks attended since the last interview have been collected from the Mature Women. Older Men simply stated the year they last attended college and the highest degree they received. Consult the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort’s *User’s Guide* for more information.

*Survey Instruments:* Questions on college experience are found in the schooling section (YSCH) of the *Youth Questionnaire* and in section PC8 of the round 1 *Parent Questionnaire*.

*Related User's Guide Sections*

- 4.2.3 School-Based Learning Programs
- 4.8.1 Assets & Debts

*Main Areas of Interest*

- College Experience
- Created Variables

*Supplemental Areas of Interest*

- Achievement Tests
- Assets & Debts
- Common Variables
- Ed. Status & Attainment
- School Characteristics
- School Experience

## **4.2.2 Educational Status & Attainment**

Information on NLSY97 respondents' educational experiences is collected in each survey year. This section reviews the primary types of school enrollment, attendance, and attainment data available.

### **Enrollment**

The round 1 *Youth Questionnaire* gathered information on the respondent's enrollment status. Because the fielding period included summer vacation, the survey determined enrollment status through a number of questions. Each respondent was first asked about his or her current enrollment status. Those on summer vacation reported whether (1) they were currently enrolled in summer school, (2) on break from a regular school, or (3) not attending summer school. Respondents who were enrolled at the time of the survey, those on break who reported being enrolled in the spring of 1997, and those who were in summer school and reported being enrolled during the 1996–97 academic school year were classified as “enrolled.” All other respondents were classified as “non-enrolled” (e.g., interviewed during the school year and not enrolled, on break and not enrolled in the spring of 1997, in summer school and not enrolled during the 1996–97 academic year).

In later rounds, the schooling section began by confirming and correcting the enrollment status data collected during the previous round. The survey then proceeded through a series of questions similar to round 1 that determined enrollment status. However, because the field period was during the school year, determination of enrollment status did not need to include consideration of attendance in summer school.

In each survey, those who report a gap in enrollment are questioned about their reason for leaving school and the date at which this separation occurred. All respondents are asked for the name of their current or most recent school and the type of school (e.g., public, parochial, private). The respondent then verifies the location of the primary or secondary school from a list of school names and addresses called the School Finder.<sup>1</sup>

*Created Variables.* A created enrollment status variable summarizes the youth's responses to the questions described above. This single variable, CV\_ENROLLSTAT, informs the user about whether the respondent is enrolled; whether enrolled respondents are in grades 1–12 or in a 2- or 4-year college or graduate program; and what level of degree or diploma (or GED certificate) non-enrolled respondents have obtained. A second variable (CV\_SCHOOL\_TYPE) lists whether the school currently or most recently attended by the respondent (if primary or secondary) is public, private, parochial, or of some other

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<sup>1</sup> The School Finder is a record of the names and addresses of primary and secondary schools located in the United States. This information is taken from the “National Education Database,” provided under copyright by Quality Education Data, Inc., and is not released to the public.

type. Additional created variables provide information on the student/teacher ratio, CV\_STUDENT\_TEACHER\_RATIO, and the school size, CV\_SCHOOL\_SIZE.

### **Attendance**

*Youth Questionnaire.* If enrolled since date of last interview, respondents are surveyed about gaps within enrollment. These questions ask for gaps since the last interview and the reason respondents left school when each enrollment period ended. Respondents are also asked whether they have ever been suspended from school and the grade level(s) in which this occurred. For each reported incident, the surveys collect information on the duration of the suspension. In rounds 2–5, the survey also asked for retrospective information about any suspensions during the period before the previous interview if the information had not been reported by the respondent in that survey. In round 1, respondents in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade or lower were also questioned about the number of days they were absent from school during the fall 1996 term.

*Parent Questionnaire* (round 1). In the round 1 survey, the responding parent answered questions on whether the youth ever missed a month or more of school since the 7<sup>th</sup> grade (not including summer vacation). For each absence, follow-up questions collected information on the length of the gap, the grade level(s) in which this occurred, and the reason for that absence. Additional information was gathered on whether an NLSY97 youth ever skipped or repeated a grade level. If the responding parent indicated that a youth had either skipped or repeated a grade level, he or she was asked to state the grade level before and after the change. If the parent reported a youth in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or higher, he or she was asked whether that youth had ever taken an academic class during a school break. If so, the responding parent was surveyed on the reason for that class.

*Created Variables.* The total number of grades, through high school, that the youth has ever repeated (CV\_GRADES\_REPEAT\_EVER) and the total number of grades that the youth has ever skipped (CV\_GRADES\_SKIPPED\_EVER) are included in the data file as created variables. Similar information is also available per year using created variables CV\_GRADES\_REPEAT\_YR and CV\_GRADES\_SKIPPED\_YR.

### **Attainment**

The *Youth Questionnaire* asks all respondents to state the highest grade level attended and the highest grade level completed. Beginning in round 2, data from the previous round are confirmed or corrected and information since date of last interview is then collected. If a respondent is currently enrolled in high school, information is collected on the date he or she expects to graduate.

Round 1 respondents who were either enrolled in college, or who were not enrolled but reported their highest grade level attended as 8<sup>th</sup> grade or higher, were asked whether they had received a high school

diploma. In subsequent rounds, this question was addressed to respondents who listed their highest grade completed as 12<sup>th</sup> or more or who had attended college. After establishing that a respondent received a high school diploma, both surveys asked for the date the degree was received and the name of the high school where the degree was earned. The respondent then verified the school’s location as provided in the School Finder, which is a list of K-12 schools in the United States and their corresponding addresses. Respondents who reported earning a GED were surveyed on the date and the state where the GED was earned. A follow-up question established the type of program (e.g., job training, adult education, child care program) used to earn the GED. If the respondent reported college enrollment, college-specific information was collected on the type of diploma or degree sought (e.g., associate, bachelor’s). Because some respondents report their GED in the youth training section of the survey, users are encouraged to use the CV\_GED variable to obtain more complete information on GED receipt and the date of receipt. Additional questions on training programs that helped the respondent earn a GED are described in section 4.10, “Training.”

*Created Variables.* Several created variables summarize attainment information. A single variable, CV\_HGC\_EVER, provides the highest grade completed as of the survey date for each respondent. Similar information is available by year using CV\_HGC\_YR. CV\_HIGHEST\_DEGREE\_EVER gives the highest degree received as of the survey date. This information is also available by year using CV\_HIGHEST\_DEGREE\_YR. Using a continuous month format, the variables CV\_GED and CV\_HS\_DIPLOMA list the month the GED and high school diploma were received.

*User Notes:* Researchers should refer to the introduction of the “Education” section for a description of the structure of the schooling section in each round of the survey.

*Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:* Enrollment status in the past year, current enrollment status, highest grade attended and completed, and degrees and diplomas received have been collected for all cohorts except the Older Men. Respondents in the Older Men cohort provided information on their highest grade completed and highest college degree received. For more details about specific survey years in which these data were gathered, refer to the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort’s *User’s Guide*.

*Survey Instruments:* Questions on educational status and attainment are found in the schooling section (YSCH) of the *Youth Questionnaire* and section PC8 of the round 1 *Parent Questionnaire*.

<i>Related User’s Guide Sections</i>	<i>Main Areas of Interest</i>	<i>Supplemental Areas of Interest</i>
4.2.1 College Experience	Created Variables	College Experience
4.2.4 School Experience	Ed. Status & Attainment	Common Variables
4.2.5 School & Transcript Surveys		School Characteristics School Experience

4.4 Event History  
4.10 Training

### 4.2.3 School-Based Learning Programs

Respondents are asked about school programs that help students learn about the world of work. In round 1, all respondents who had attended secondary school reported whether the school had a day when adults came to talk about their jobs. Those who reported a highest grade attended of 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade were then asked about their participation in any school-based learning programs.

These questions were repeated in subsequent rounds, although the universes were slightly different. Respondents currently enrolled in high school first answered the question about adult speakers on a career day. Then, all respondents enrolled at the date of interview at any level were asked about their participation in school-based learning programs. Table 1 lists the types of school-based learning programs included in the NLSY97, along with a short description of each.

**4.2.3 Table 1. Definitions of School-Based Learning Programs**

Program	Definition
Career Major	A coherent sequence of courses based upon an occupational goal.
Cooperative Education	Students alternate or parallel their academic and vocational studies with a job in a related field.
Internship/ Apprenticeship	Students work for an employer for a short time to learn about a particular industry or occupation.
Job Shadowing	A student follows an employee for one or more days to learn about an occupation or industry.
Mentoring	A student is paired with an employee who assesses his or her performance over a period of time, during which the employee helps the student master certain skills and knowledge.
School-Sponsored Enterprise	The production of goods or services by students for sale or use by others. Enterprises typically involve students in the management of a project.
Tech-Prep	A planned program of study with a defined career focus that links secondary and post-secondary education.

The surveys ask for the characteristics of the most recent program, including the type of program, the number of days or weeks spent at a work site, and the number of hours per day or week spent at the work site. If the respondent was paid for participating in the program, he or she is asked to give the rate of pay. Other questions include whether the respondent took any classes at the work site and whether the employer wrote an evaluation of him or her.

*Survey Instruments:* Data on school-based learning programs are collected in the schooling section (YSCH) of the *Youth Questionnaire*.

*Related User's Guide Sections*  
4.2.5 School & Transcript  
Surveys  
4.10 Training

*Main Area of Interest*  
School-Based Learning

*Supplemental Areas of Interest*  
Jobs & Employers  
School Experience

#### 4.2.4 School Experience

The NLSY97 surveys gather detailed high school data, including each respondent's course of study, classes, and grades. Created variables, as well as information from the round 1 parent survey, supplement this collection. In addition, round 1 respondents enrolled in grade 12 or lower during the fall of 1996 were asked a series of questions about their experiences at school during the fall of 1996. These questions included the number of times they had something of value stolen from them at school, someone threatened to hurt them, they got into a physical fight at school, or they were late for school without an excuse.

##### High School Experience

*Youth Questionnaire.* For respondents who report attending the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or higher, data are collected on the course of study in high school (e.g., college prep, vocational technical). Respondents are also surveyed on the types of math, science and other (e.g., computer programming, word processing, home economics) courses they have taken, or are currently taking, in the 7<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> grades. In round 1, respondents were also asked whether each math and/or science course they reported was an honors course.

The NLSY97 also questions respondents who attended the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or higher, or who are no longer enrolled and last attended the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, on the overall marks they received in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade (e.g., mostly As, about half As and Bs). Those who are enrolled in college or who are no longer enrolled in a regular school are surveyed on the overall marks they received from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

*Parent Questionnaire* (round 1). During round 1, the responding parent was surveyed on the schools that the youth attended since the 7<sup>th</sup> grade (including home schooling) and gaps in enrollment of one month or more. Additional educational information included the youth's enrollment in Head Start.

*Created Variables.* The created variable CV\_SCH\_ATTEND\_YR summarizes the total number of schools the respondent has attended from the 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades as of each round's survey date. An additional created variable (CV\_SCHOOL\_TYPE) determines whether the respondent's current or most recent school is public, private, parochial, or some other type of school.

*User Notes:* Researchers should refer to the introduction of the “Education” section for a description of the structure of the schooling section in each round of the survey.

In round 1, the CV\_SCH\_ATTEND\_EVER variable was created using information from the parent questionnaire only. Youths whose parents reported the youth's current grade as sixth or lower are coded as 0; youths with no parent interview are coded as -4. In round 2, the CV\_SCH\_ATTEND\_EVER variable was created using information from the round 2 youth interview (about the period between round 1 and round 2) combined with the round 1 created variable. Youths with no parent interview and youths whose parents incorrectly reported their grade in school as less than 7 may have an undercount of the number of schools attended, because their information is based on the period since the round 1 interview. Subsequent rounds follow the method of creating the round 2 variable.

**Data hint** →

The school roster organizes information about each school in a matrix of data. The roster variables should be used rather than the raw data in analyses. See the introduction to the "Education" section and section 3.2 of this guide for more information on rosters.

**Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:** For the NLSY79, information on grades and courses taken in high school is available through the 1980–83 Transcript Surveys. Respondents have also reported their high school curriculum. Data are recorded for the Children of the NLSY79 on participation in Head Start, grades repeated, and characteristics of the school and curriculum. The Original Cohort respondents provided information on the type of their high school curriculum; however, coding categories for curricula were quite different for these cohorts. Mature and Young Women also listed types of mathematics courses taken in high school. For more information, consult the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide*.

**Survey Instruments:** Questions on school experiences are found in the schooling section (YSCH) of the *Youth Questionnaire* and section PC8 of the round 1 *Parent Questionnaire*.

**Related User's Guide Sections**

- 4.2.1 College Experience
- 4.2.5 School & Transcript Surveys

**Main Areas of Interest**

- Created Variables
- School Experience

**Supplemental Areas of Interest**

- College Experience
- Common Variables
- Ed. Status & Attainment
- Household Characteristics
- Time Use

### **4.2.5 School & Transcript Surveys**

To provide a more complete picture of respondents' educational experiences, data collected during the regular survey have been supplemented with two special surveys. School surveys conducted in 1996–97 and 2000–01 provide data about high schools in the areas where NLSY97 respondents live. Transcripts collected in 1999–2000 give information about the classes taken by NLSY97 youths, as well as other related aspects of their high school experiences. Although much of this information cannot be released in the public use data set due to confidentiality concerns, the data that are available will help researchers to examine the school-to-work transition in greater detail. See the detailed descriptions below for more information about access to these data.

#### **School Surveys**

In the winter of 1996–97, all high schools in the 147 NLSY97 primary sampling units with a 12<sup>th</sup> grade, or nearly 7,400 schools, received the first *School Survey* questionnaire. This survey focused on institutional-level attributes such as school policies and management, as well as student-level experience data. This self-administered instrument asked principals (or their proxies) to provide detailed data on the characteristics of the school, the staff, and the student body. Additional information on the school's general practices, graduation policies, and school-to-work programs was also solicited. Seventy-two percent of the schools responded to either the complete school survey or to a shorter critical items questionnaire.

A second school survey was conducted in the winter of 2000–01. All vocational high schools and high schools with a 12<sup>th</sup> grade in the 147 NLSY97 primary sampling units were included in the survey. Additionally, if an NLSY97 respondent attended a school during round 2 that was not in one of the sampling areas, the school was included in the sample if it met the grade-level requirements. Over 9,600 total schools received *School Survey* questionnaires. Seventy-one percent of the schools completed a *School Survey* questionnaire, either by mail or with an interviewer by telephone.

Due to “births” and “deaths” of schools between 1996 and 2000 and nonresponse in 1996, not all schools in the primary sampling unit areas are present in the data for both years. The retention rate of 1996 schools into the 2000 survey was 74.2 percent (3,900 of 5,253).

The next paragraphs first describe the data collected in 1996–97 and then discuss the questions asked in 2000–01. The content of the 2000 questionnaire overlapped significantly with the 1996 instrument. However, many questions were reworded slightly, and the revised structure of the questionnaire gave less prominence to school-to-work subjects. To reduce the time burden, questionnaire items from the 1996 instrument were modified to encourage respondents to provide approximate values rather than requiring them to consult administrative records for exact figures.

*1996 survey.* After identifying the type of school (e.g., comprehensive public, Catholic parish, other religious affiliation) and the grade level(s) served by the school, administrators were questioned about school characteristics. Specifics included the length of the school day, the number of days of instruction per year, and the school's facilities (e.g., a library, a health clinic, a computer center, a drug and alcohol prevention program). The survey also collected detailed information about teachers, such as the proportion of full-time to part-time staff; the proportion with a graduate degree; and the staff's racial, ethnic, and gender composition.

School administrators were next asked about the average daily attendance rate, the total enrollment, and the racial, ethnic, and gender composition of the student body. This section of the survey solicited information on the opportunities available to students, such as the type of courses, the course levels, and the programs offered (e.g., remedial math or English, gifted and talented, job placement, summer school). In addition, detailed data were gathered on the 1996 graduating class (e.g., the percentage of students who took the SAT I/ACT, the average score on the SAT I/ACT). Questions were also asked about the requirements for graduation, such as the total number of credits, the number of credits in a subject, or a standardized test score.

Another section of the school survey gathered information on the number of reported incidents of gang activity, vandalism, weapons possession, and student use of alcohol or drugs on school property. In addition, the administrators were asked to rate the amount of influence wielded by certain groups (e.g., state department of education, various school district officials, principal, teachers, parent association) on issues such as establishing the curriculum, hiring full-time teachers, and spending the school's budget.

Finally, the 1996 survey collected information on the general student requirements for enrollment in a number of school-based learning programs (e.g., career major, cooperative education). Information about the provision of school-based learning programs complements questions in the *Youth Questionnaire* that ask the respondents about their enrollment in these programs. See section 4.2.3, "School-Based Learning Programs," for definitions of the various types of programs.

*2000 survey.* The second *School Survey* instrument began with questions about the school and its overall offerings: grade levels, school type, tuition, program offerings, computer and other facilities, and sources of federal funding. Faculty-related questions asked about the number of teachers with different education and experience levels, any staff development requirements, basic demographics, and the salary schedule. Questions about the student body captured basic demographics, special education and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) enrollments, and remedial and accelerated program offerings, as well as percentages of students involved in such activities as athletics, truancy, and illegal activities. The instrument also asked about the academic requirements of the high school's curriculum and academic outcomes of its graduates.

The career preparation section began with items about how schools help students prepare for careers, how schools support teachers in professional development, and how enrollments have changed in various career preparation programs since the 1994–95 school year. A battery of questions asked about the existence of, enrollment in, duration of, and targeting of several different career preparation programs: apprenticeship, job shadowing, internships, career major/pathway, career academy, school sponsored enterprise, cooperative education, and tech-prep. Most of these programs are also included in section 4.2.3, “School-Based Learning Programs.”

*User Notes:* Due to the detailed nature of the information collected in the two school surveys, use of this data set is restricted to researchers meeting confidentiality requirements. Interested users should contact BLS at [NLS\\_Info@bls.gov](mailto:NLS_Info@bls.gov) for more information concerning these procedures.

### **Transcript Survey**

Transcript survey data come directly from high school transcripts secured from youths’ high schools after respondents are no longer enrolled as high school students. In 1999–2000, transcripts were obtained and processed for 1,417 youths who had graduated from high school or had reached age 18 and were no longer attending high school. Additional transcript collections are planned for future rounds as more respondents graduate from high school or become age-eligible. School registrars provided a copy of the transcript that the high school maintained, a course catalog (if available), and indicated whether the student was designated for such programs as bilingual education, special education, or gifted/talented programming.

When the transcripts were received from the schools, survey staff coded the information they contained into a standard format. The resulting created variables comprise a history of the respondent’s terms in school, courses taken, and other academic indicators.

There are several different types of variables in the transcript data file. First, at the school level the variable TRANS\_SCH\_CAT reports whether a course catalog was received from the school to aid in coding. The highest number of schools reported for any respondent is 12, so this variable is repeated 12 times. This course catalog variable also functions as the identification number of the school. During the coding process described below, each school attended by a respondent was assigned an ID number between 1 and 12, with the school that provided the transcript always listed as school #01. These numbers were used in variables that report which school the respondent attended in each term—for example, if a respondent has a value of 4 for term 1, then he or she attended school #04 in the course catalog variables. This ID number does not link to any variables in the main data file.

Second, the transcript file includes information about the respondents that is not associated with a specific term or course. For example, these variables present test scores on a variety of achievement tests (ACT, PSAT, SAT I, SAT II, AP), information on absences and tardies, the student's school completion status, and dates of enrollment. Variables also indicate whether the respondent participated in programs such as gifted, bilingual, or special education.

A number of variables refer to the respondent's terms of enrollment. For up to 18 terms, these items report the beginning and ending dates of the term, the way in which the school year is divided (such as a season, semester, entire year, or another system), the academic year of the term, the respondent's grade level that term, and the number of credits earned. A variable listing the school the respondent attended during that term can be linked to the course catalog variable as described above.

Finally, the transcript file provides details about each course appearing on a student's high school transcript. Course-specific variables include the course code from the Revised Secondary School Taxonomy (SST-R), the grade earned in the course, and the credit value of the course. Because schools use many different grading systems, the course grades were converted into a standard scale that can be compared across respondents. A series of variables called "Recoding Status of Grade" indicates how the grade earned variable for each course was created. This process is described in more detail in appendix 11 of the *NLSY97 Codebook Supplement*.

*Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:* School surveys have been conducted for the NLSY79, Children of the NLSY79, the Young Women, and the Young Men. Each of these surveys has recorded information on the school's total enrollment, number of books in the school library, qualifications of the staff, and ethnic/racial composition of the faculty and students. The NLSY79 and Children of the NLSY79 surveys also asked about the school's grading system and average daily attendance.

Transcript surveys have been conducted for the NLSY79 and for the Children of the NLSY79. These surveys have included information on course subject matter, enrollment dates, and grades earned. For more precise details about the content of each survey, users should consult the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide*.

*Survey Instruments:* School-level data were collected from schools using the *School Survey* instruments. Transcript variables were created from the respondents' school transcripts as provided by the individual schools.

*Related User's Guide Sections*

4.1.1 Achievement Tests

4.2.3 School-Based Learning Programs

*Main Area of Interest*

Transcript Survey

4.2.4 School Experience