

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children releases report spelling out dire economic consequences for students who drop out of school

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Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children released a report Thursday that spells out the dire economic consequences for students who drop out of school.

The study did not give financial statistics specific to McKean County because of the low population numbers here; however, the general statistics show earnings and employment are directly linked to the amount of education a person possesses.

"Statewide 10 percent of high school dropouts were unemployed in 2007. Dropouts were three times as likely to live in poverty than youth who attended some college or earned an associate's degree," according to Kathy Geller Myers, communications director for the agency.

"In today's high-tech world, securing a high school diploma is a must but far too many Pennsylvania children fail to graduate," said Joan L. Benso, president and chief executive officer of the agency.

"Earnings and access to employment are directly linked to the amount of education a person possesses," Myers said.

"In Pennsylvania, young people who drop out of school can expect their annual earnings to be less than half those of a college graduate with a bachelor's degree," she said, adding that amount is roughly \$19,000 for dropouts versus \$45,000 for a college graduate. "Many students don't consider the long-term repercussions of dropping out such as increased unemployment, less earning potential, poverty and reliance on public assistance."

The report does give a list of graduation rates for each county in the 2006-07 school year as compared to the ninth grade enrollment of 2003-04.

For the Bradford Area School District, the report lists 283 students enrolled in ninth grade as compared to 207 students graduating three years later, which is a Pennsylvania Department of Education graduation rate of 88.1 percent. From that number of graduates, 147 students planned to further their education.

For the Kane Area School District, the report lists 101 students enrolled in ninth grade and 84 students graduating three years later, which is a PDE graduation rate of 88.4 percent. From that number, 70 graduates planned to further their education.

For the Otto-Eldred School District, the numbers were 72 in ninth grade and 61 graduating three years later, which is a PDE graduation rate of 84.7 percent. Forty students planned to continue on to higher education.

In the Port Allegany School District, there were 92 students in ninth grade and 85 who graduated three years later, which is a 97.7 percent graduation rate according to PDE guidelines. Of the graduates, 51 planned to seek higher education.

In the Smethport Area School District, there were 90 students in ninth grade and 86 who graduated in 2007, leading to a PDE graduation rate of 96.6 percent. Of the graduates, 54 planned to continue their education.