

Boys in Crisis How Boys Are Falling Behind Academically

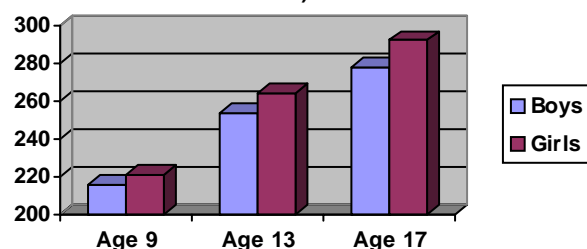
Ask a random group of people who needs more support and help to improve their school performance—boys or girls—and chances are that most people will answer, “girls.” But the fact of the matter is that specialized efforts to reach out and boost girls’ achievement have had incredible success in boosting girls’ academic performance. Meanwhile, boys, lacking their own special advocates and champions, have slipped further and further behind, opening a new achievement gap that threatens the futures of millions of young men.

The Boy Crisis

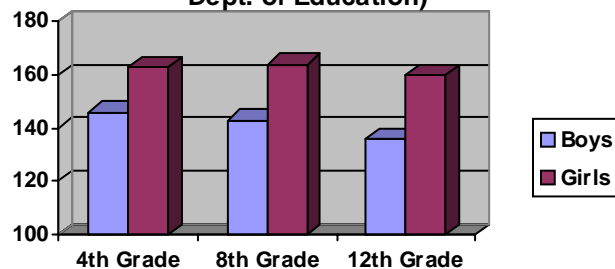
The scope of the boy crisis is broad, but the information available makes it clear that the boy crisis is not an isolated academic problem, but part of a more disturbing social trend that is marginalizing boys and impeding their success.

- According to national reading and writing assessments (measured by the US Department of Education), the gap between boys and girls, already noticeable in fourth grade, leaves boys (on average) more than 10 points behind girls in reading proficiency and 24 points behind in writing proficiency by twelfth grade. Contrast this with the 3-4 point differential in scores on math and science test. (A differential that has resulted in numerous efforts to help girls close that particular achievement gap.)
- In 2002, 33% of 12th grade males scored below basic literacy proficiency in reading tests—compared to only 20% of females. In the 2002 writing proficiency tests, *among 12th grade students with a parent who graduated from college*, 27% of boys scored below basic writing proficiency—compared to only 9% of girls.
- Though boys continue to outnumber girls when it comes to participation in high school sports, they are greatly outnumbered in every other extracurricular activity, from student government to student newspapers and academic clubs, suggesting that boys are not as fully engaged in their high school experience.
- By the time they reach 12 years of age, boys are almost twice as likely to have repeated at least one grade. Boys also comprise the majority of permanent high-school dropouts.
- Boys are approximately three times as likely to be diagnosed with ADHD or ADD, and are diagnosed with learning disabilities and behavioral disorders at a rate nearly twice that of girls. One study found

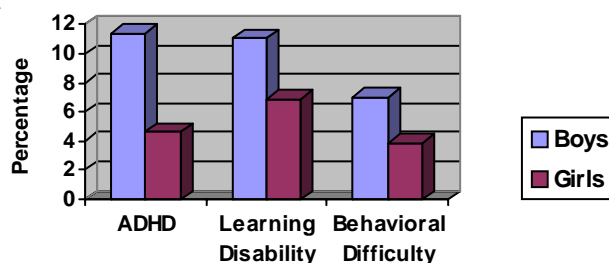
Average Reading Scale Scores, by Gender on Long-Term Trend Nat'l. Assessment of Educational Progress, 2004(Source: US Dept. of Education)



2002 National Writing Assessment, Average Score by Gender (Source: US Dept. of Education)



Percentage of Children, age 5-17 with ADHD, Learning Disability, or Behavioral Difficulties, By Gender



that boys are referred for possible ADHD/ADD ten times as often as girls, leading some to speculate that normal boy behavior is sometimes misunderstood as disordered.

- Boys commit suicide at a rate approximately 3.5 times that of girls.
- Boys are more likely to report disliking school, feeling that their schoolwork is meaningless, that their classes are dull, and that their school lessons will not be important later in life.
- More boys than girls report being the victim of a crime while at school, being the victim of bullying, carrying or being threatened or injured by a weapon in school, being in a physical fight on school property, using alcohol while in school, and using or distributing an illegal drug on school property.
- In 2004, 57% of all college undergraduates were women—a number that is expected to increase as fewer young men enter college. In 2001, only 60% of male high school graduates were enrolled in college by October, compared to 64% of female graduates. Moreover, once in college, women are less likely to withdraw from school without completing their degree.