



***“In an increasingly knowledge-based society, education is becoming the key to an individual’s development and well-being.”***

## QUALITY OF LIFE



### Education

#### *Why is this important?*

Student performance is measured through three indicators: 1) test scores for eighth grade, 2) high school dropout rates, and 3) percent of high school graduates completing courses required for the University

of California (UC) or California State University (CSU) entrance. In an increasingly knowledge-based society, education is becoming the key to an individual's development and well-being. High school dropouts are severely disadvantaged in competing for quality jobs. Performance on the third indicator reflects the potential level of success in pursuing college education by high school graduates.

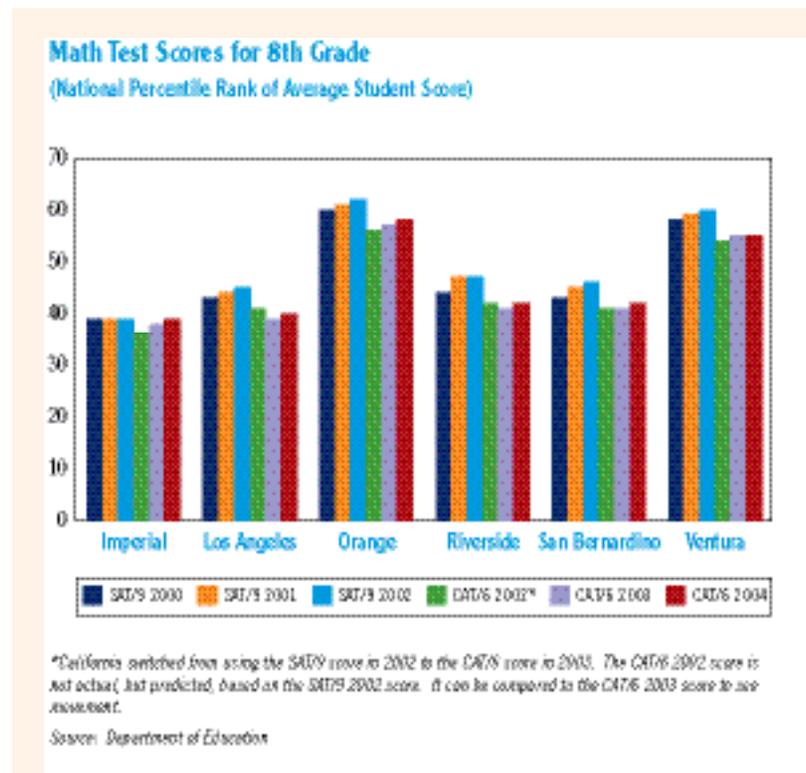


### How are we doing?

In 2004, the 8<sup>th</sup> graders (graduating class of middle schools) in the region continued to perform below the national median in reading and math test scores except in Orange and Ventura counties (Figures 63 and 64). Between 2003 and 2004, there were slight improvements in math scores throughout the region relative to the nation. However, reading scores remained the same during the period. Test scores are affected by several factors including student/teacher ratio. It should be noted that California continues to have the second highest student/teacher ratio in the nation.

Between 2003 and 2004, dropout rates for high schools decreased in Imperial, Orange and Riverside counties. However, dropout rate in San Bernardino County has been increasing continuously since 2000. In 2004, both Los Angeles (19 percent) and San Bernardino (17 per-

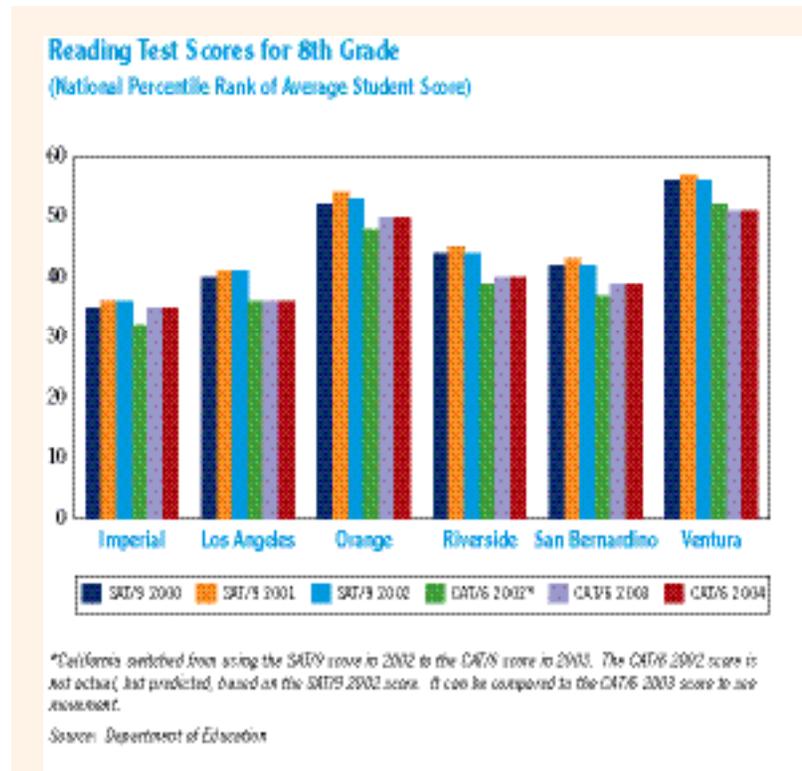
Figure 63



cent) counties experienced much higher dropout rates than the state average (13 percent). The dropout rate also increased slightly at the state level between 2003 and 2004. Within the region, Imperial and Ventura counties achieved the lowest dropout rates at 4 percent (Figure 65). It should be noted that in the 2002-2003 school year, the California Department of Education started using the National Center for Education Statistics dropout rate criteria.

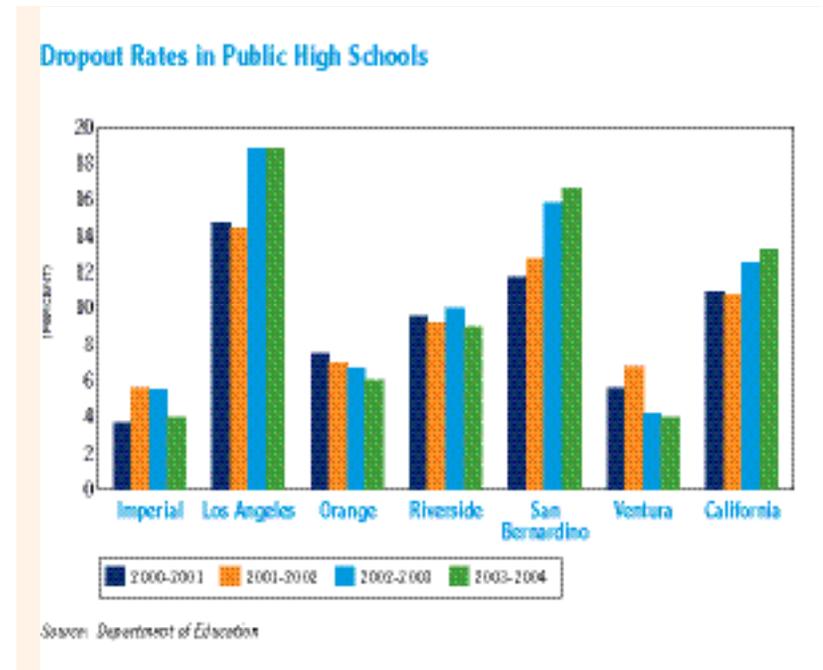
African American and Hispanic high school students across the region, when compared with their White and Asian peers, had significantly higher dropout rates (Figure 66). The disparity was most

Figure 64



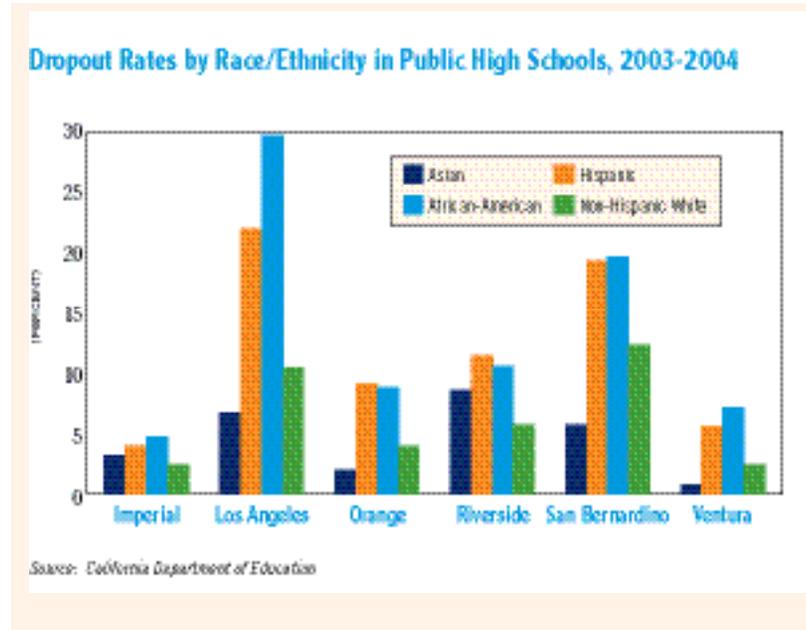
pronounced in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. For example, in 2004, the dropout rate for African American students in Los Angeles County reached 30 percent, and Hispanic students with 22 percent compared with 10 percent for non-Hispanic Whites and 7 percent for Asians.

Figure 65



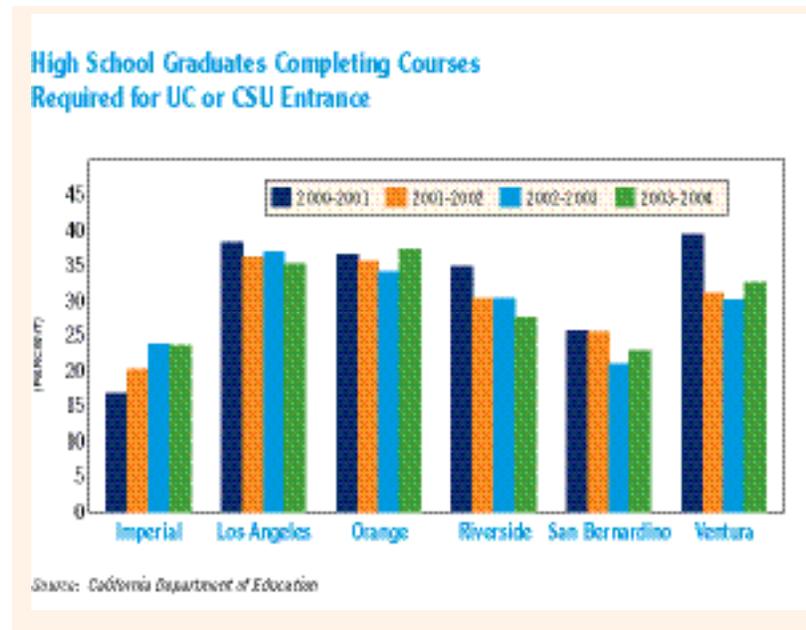
Within the region, the dropout rates for African American and Hispanic high school students were comparable except in Los Angeles County. This is different from the national trend in which Hispanic students had the highest dropout rate. Asian students generally had the lowest dropout rates.

Figure 66



As to the percentage of high school graduates completing courses required for University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU) entrance, while Orange, San Bernardino and Ventura made noticeable progress in 2004, both Los Angeles and Riverside counties experienced lower performance. More importantly, when comparing

Figure 67



2004 with 2000, only Imperial and Orange counties made some improvements. In 2004, every county in the region had less than 40 percent of high school graduates complete courses required for UC or CSU entrance (Figure 67).

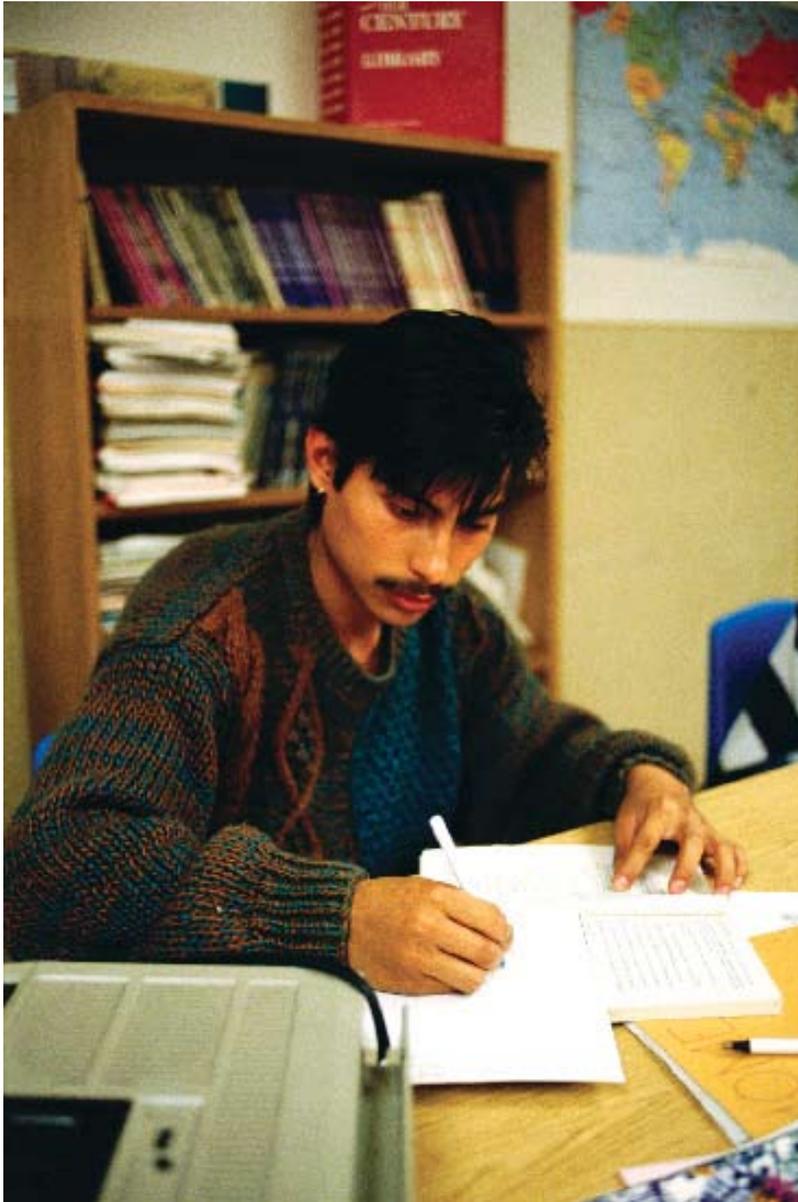
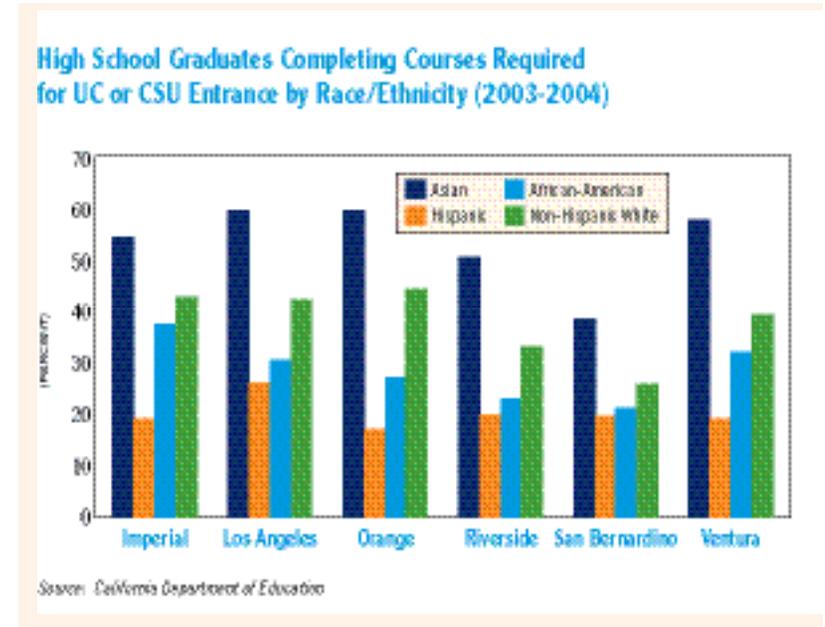


Figure 68



There were also similar patterns of racial and ethnic disparities in the region (Figure 68). In each of the six counties in the region, Asian students consistently had the highest percentage in completing courses required for UC or CSU entrance, while Hispanic students consistently had the lowest. For example, while 60 percent of Asian graduates in Orange County completed courses required for UC or CSU entrance, only 45 percent of the non-Hispanic White students, 28 percent of the African students and 18 percent of the Hispanic students achieved the same. Among Hispanics, two-year community colleges are the most frequently used institutions of higher education.

Recent Studies found that in California there are significant increases in educational attainment from first-generation immigrants to their second-generation adult children (aged 25 to 49).<sup>1</sup> For all ethnic



groups, while 38 percent of the first-generation parents did not complete a high school education, only 10 percent of their second-generation adult children failed to do so. For Mexican immigrants, who are among the least educated populations in the U.S, the second generation has been making impressive progress. While only 25 percent of Mexican immigrant parents received at least a high school diploma, 86 percent of their second-generation adult children did. In addition, only 3 percent of Mexican immigrant parents received at least a bachelor's degree while 12 percent of their second-generation adult children did. Despite the dramatic progress, second-generation Mexican adult children still lagged significantly behind White second-generation descendants with 34 percent receiving at least a bachelor's degree.

In 2004, there were slight improvements from 2003 in educational attainment. *Between 2000 and 2004, there were more noticeable improve-*

*ments in the region following national trends. During this period, the percentage of adults with at least a high school degree increased from 74 to 77 percent while the percentage of adults with at least a bachelor's degree increased from 25 to 27 percent. Nevertheless, among the nine largest metropolitan regions, the SCAG region remained in last place in the percentage of adults (77 percent) with at least a high school diploma, and 2<sup>nd</sup> to last for at least a Bachelor's degree (27 percent).<sup>2</sup>*

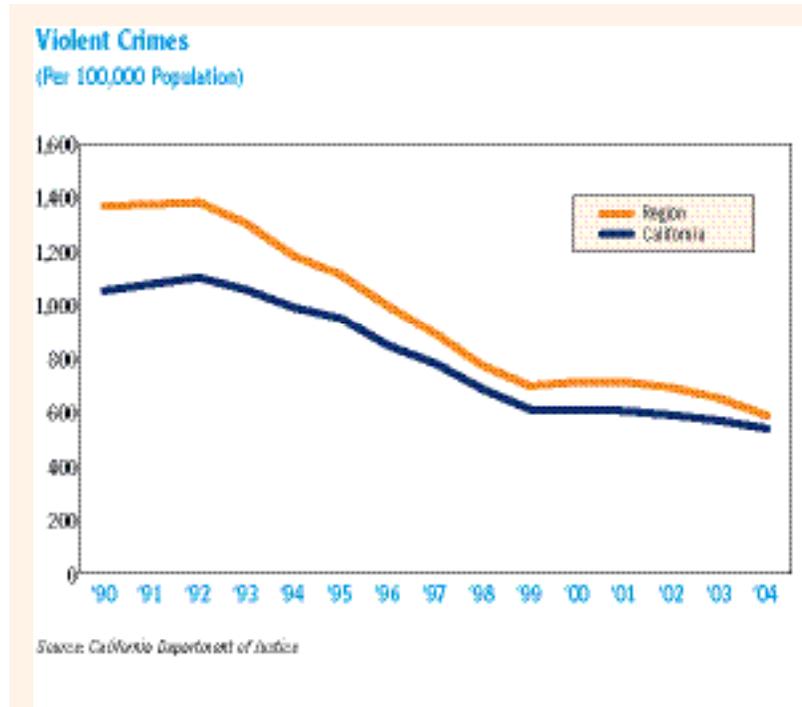
## Public Safety

### *Why is this important?*

Crime-related activities consume an enormous amount of valuable social and economic resources. The social costs are substantial if less quantifiable, including pain and suffering of crime victims and their



Figure 69



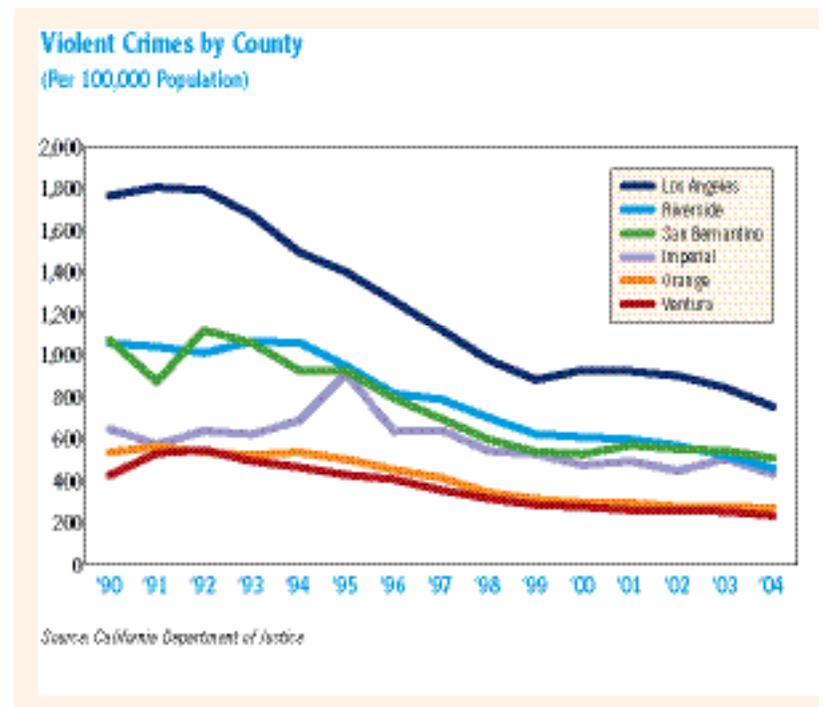
families and weakening of community cohesion. The economic costs include loss of productivity due to death or disability resulting from crime, medical costs, and loss of property values in neighborhoods with high crime rates.

*How are we doing?*

**Violent Crimes**

*In 2004, the violent crime rate in the region declined by almost 10 percent from 2003, larger than the 6 percent reduction during the previous period. At the state level, violent crime declined by about 5 percent between 2003 and 2004 (Figure 69). Violent crime rates in both the region and the state peaked in 1992 and have been declining since then, except for a*

Figure 70



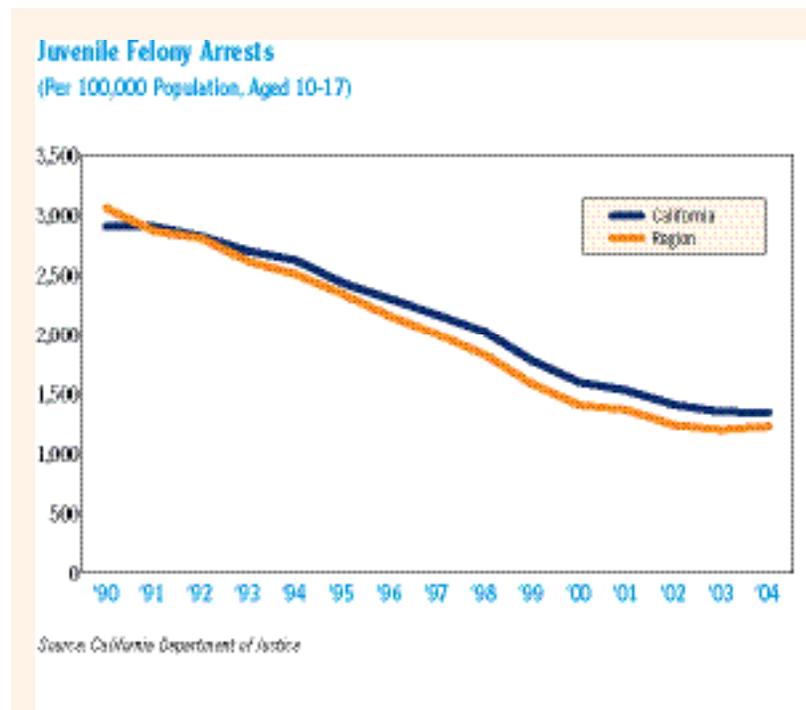
slight increase in 2000. In 2004, violent crime rate in the region was only about 43 percent of the 1992 level. In addition, though the region continued to have a higher violent crime rate than the state, the gap has also been narrowing.

Violent crimes include four types: homicides, forcible rapes, robberies and aggressive assaults. In 2004, among the 105,861 violent crime incidents, 64,864 (or 61 percent) were aggravated assaults, 35,422 (34 percent) were robberies, 4,267 were forcible rapes (4 percent) and 1,414 (1 percent) were homicides. *From 2003 to 2004, both the total numbers as well as crime rates declined across all four types of violent crimes. During this period, the total number of homicides in the region decreased*

slightly from 1,428 to 1,414. Los Angeles County continued to account for almost three-quarters of the total homicides in the region.

Every county in the region achieved a reduction of the violent crime rate in 2004 (Figure 70). The reduction was most significant in Imperial County (-14.4 percent) and Riverside County (-11.3 percent). Almost three-quarters of the violent crimes took place in Los Angeles County. Ventura and Orange counties consistently had the lowest rates in violent crimes in the region.

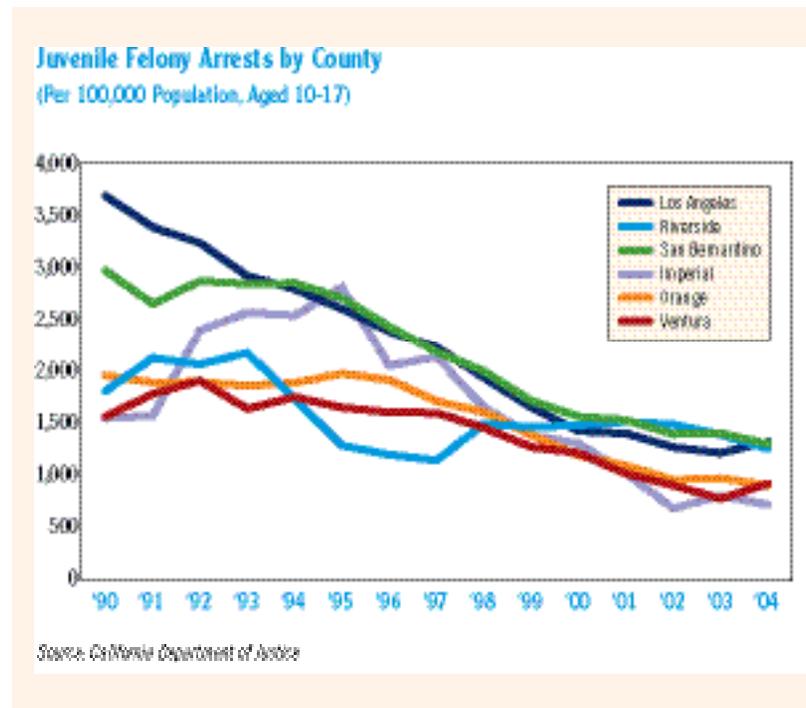
Figure 71



### Juvenile Felony Arrests

A juvenile felony offense is defined as a crime that is punishable by death or imprisonment for those aged 10 to 17. From 2003 to 2004, the juvenile felony arrest rate in the region increased by about 2 percent, in contrast to the trend of continuous decline between 1990 and 2003. At the state level, juvenile felony arrest rate in 2004 remained almost the same as in the previous year (Figure 71).

Figure 72



*Within the region, juvenile felony arrest rates increased significantly in Ventura County (18 percent) and Los Angeles County (9 percent). The other four counties, however, achieved significant reductions ranging from 7 percent in San Bernardino County to 11 percent in Imperial County. San Bernardino County had a similar juvenile felony arrest rate as Los Angeles in 2004, reversing circumstances of a decade ago in which it had much lower rates than Los Angeles County.*

In 2004, the region had 27,912 juvenile felony arrests. Among them, 5,733 arrests (or 21 percent) were for burglary, 4,923 arrests (18 percent) for theft (including motor vehicles) and another 4,598 arrests (or 16 percent) for assault. In addition, 3,066 arrests (or 11 percent) were for drug law violation. More than three quarters of the total juvenile arrests were males.

## Hate Crimes

The number of hate crime events and victims in the region declined by about 8 percent between 2003 and 2004, following a 12 percent reduction during the previous period. Hate crimes can be in the form of violent crimes (64 percent) or property crimes (36 percent).<sup>3</sup> As to the motivations for hate crimes, statewide data indicated that about 65 percent of the events in 2004 were due to race/ethnicity/national origin bias followed by about 19 percent for sexual orientation bias and 15 percent for religious bias. About 30 percent of the hate crimes events took place around residences, another 30 percent on highways/streets, and 10 percent in schools/colleges.

The year 2001 was the peak year in hate crimes in the last five years due primarily to the September 11 terrorist attacks. Within the region, Los Angeles County experienced disproportionately higher hate crime incidences. For four consecutive years, about 70 percent of all hate crime events and victims were in Los Angeles County.