

Knocking at the College Door Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, 1992-2022

FLORIDA

At over 3.3 million, the nation's graduating class of 2007-08 is projected to be history's largest. In fact, 2007-08 will mark the last year in an era of continuous growth in the nation's production of high school graduates, a period that reaches back to 1994. Over that time, the number of graduates swelled by 35.7 percent. In 2008-09, however, our country will begin a protracted period during which its production of high school graduates is expected to stagnate, assuming existing patterns persist. The number of graduates nationally will dip slightly over the next several years before growth resumes at a slower pace around 2015. Ultimately, projections indicate that between 2004-05 (the last year of available actual data) and 2021-22, the number of high school graduates will grow by approximately 265,000, or 8.6 percent.

The national data obscure significant variations in this picture at the regional and state levels, however. Regionally, in the decade leading up to 2004-05, the number of high school graduates grew the fastest in the West at 34 percent, with the South growing by 23.5 percent, the Northeast by 20.7 percent, and the Midwest by 14.2 percent. But the regions face very different futures in the years to come. The South will see the most growth in its production of high school graduates, at about 9 percent by 2014-15; and the West's numbers will climb by 7.1 percent. But the number of graduates produced in the Northeast and the Midwest will decline – by 6.1 and 3 percent, respectively.

Figure 1. Percent Change in Graduates from Public and Nonpublic High Schools Between 2004-05 and 2014-15

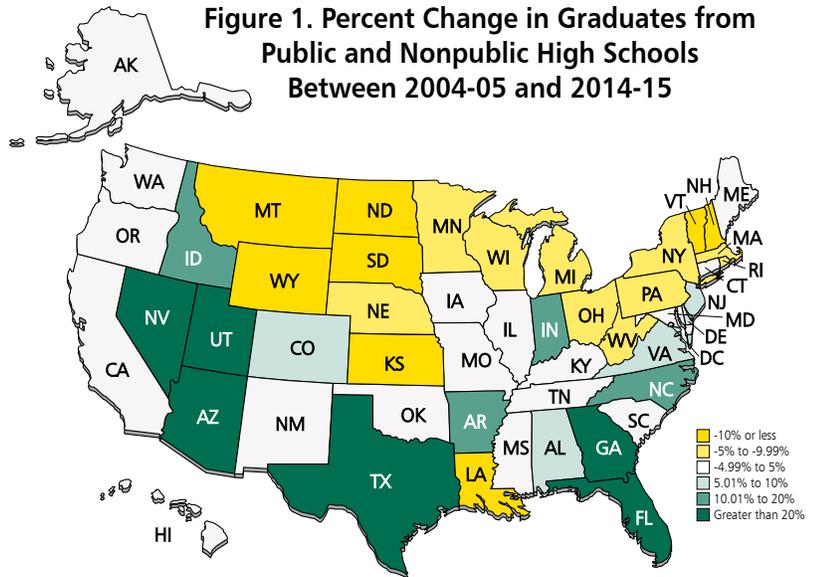
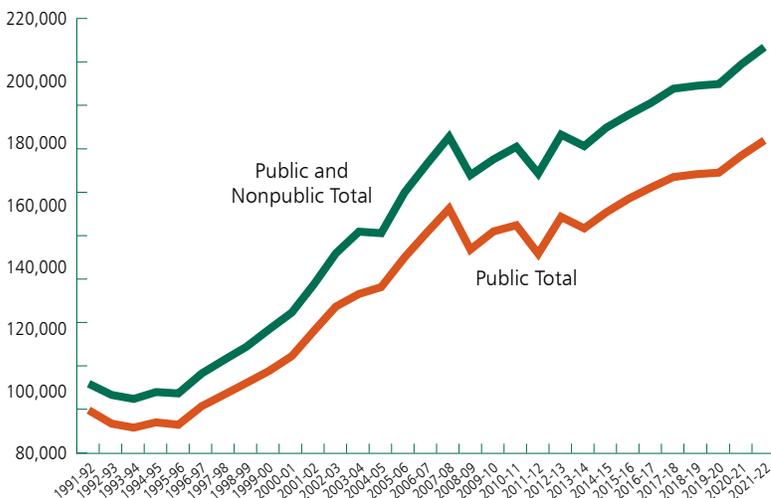


Figure 2. Florida High School Graduates 1991-92 to 2004-05 (Actual), 2005-06 to 2021-22 (Projected)



As with the national view, the regional picture masks considerable variation at the state level (Figure 1). Florida produced over 51,000 more graduates in 2004-05 than it did a decade earlier, an increase of 51.3 percent. Projections indicate that Florida will continue growing rapidly, although at a slightly reduced pace, assuming existing patterns of high school completion and migration continue. The state projects to produce nearly 35,000 more high school graduates a decade after 2004-05, an increase approximately equal to 23 percent.

Florida was among the states with extremely rapid growth in its production of high school graduates between 1991-92 and 2004-05, the most recent year of actual data from public schools (Figure 2). In 2004-05, 133,318 students graduated from public high schools in Florida, a number that included 39,644 more graduates than were produced in 1991-92, representing growth of 42.3 percent. Nonpublic schools in the state added an estimated 17,327 in 2004-05, which itself was about 8,600 more than graduated in 1991-92. Of the state's total number of

high school graduates each year, nonpublic schools produced an estimated 13 percent, on average. However, along with much of the rest of the nation, Florida is poised to enter a new period characterized by much more stagnant growth in the production of high school graduates. After reaching a peak in 2007-08 at nearly 182,000, Florida will see fluctuations in the number of high school graduates each year through 2013-14, assuming a continuation of existing patterns of enrollment, progression, and completion. Between 2004-05 and 2007-08, the number of high school graduates is forecast to climb by 20.7 percent, but between then and 2013-14, it is projected to slide by about 1.6 percent. Growth will resume beginning the following year, with total graduates reaching nearly 211,000 at the end of the projected period.

The racial/ethnic composition of Florida's public high school graduating classes will continue to show substantial diversification over the coming decade and beyond (Figure 3). In 1994-95, White non-Hispanics accounted for 62.1 percent of the graduates from public high schools. A decade later, that proportion had fallen to 57.9 percent. The next decade will see further declines in the share of public high school graduates who are White non-Hispanic, and the state's public high school graduating class is forecast to become "majority-minority" (when minority graduates outnumber White non-Hispanic graduates) in 2013-14. By 2014-15, the proportion of White non-Hispanic graduates will be approximately 48.7 percent.

These changes are roughly comparable to the experience of states all over the country. Although the magnitude may differ substantially, the nation as a whole is undergoing sweeping changes in the racial/ethnic composition of its population. In Florida, as in other states, the big changes are the result of rapid growth in the number of Hispanic high school students and graduates coupled with stagnation or declines in the numbers of White non-Hispanic graduates. While international immigration has contributed to the growth of the Hispanic population, signs of the continuing demographic shift are evident

in data showing a dramatic increase in the number of Hispanic births, which is due in part to higher fertility rates among Hispanic women. Domestic in-migration accounts for a significant portion of the growth in other races/ethnicities as well, as Florida is attracting new residents from other states.

Figure 3. Composition of Florida's Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity 2004-05 (Actual), 2009-10 and 2014-15 (Projected)

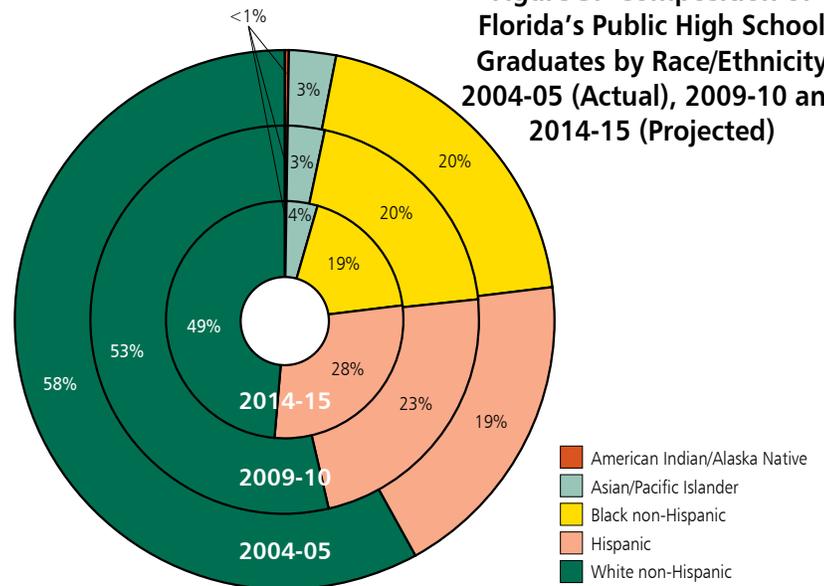
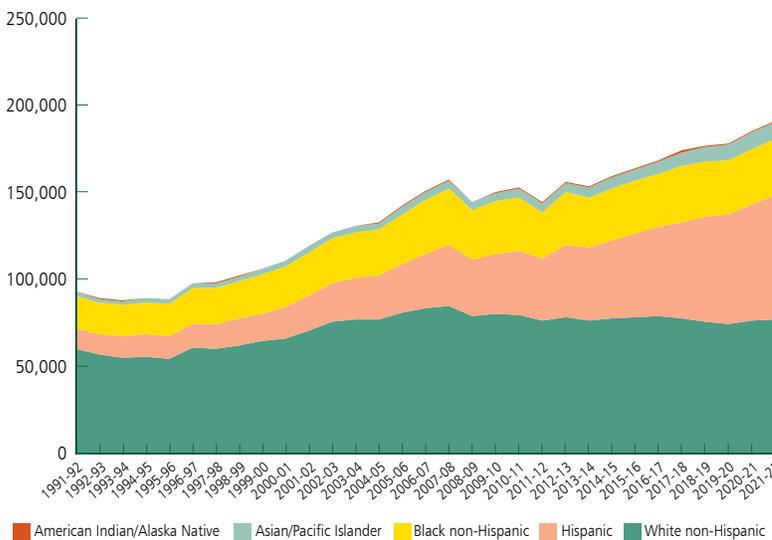


Figure 4. Florida High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity 1991-92 to 2004-05 (Actual), 2005-06 to 2021-22 (Projected)



Hispanic graduates from public schools in Florida numbered 25,330 in 2004-05, but within a decade they are projected to number 45,178, an increase of 78.4 percent (Figure 4). In Florida this rate of growth is almost matched by projected increases among Asian/Pacific Islander graduates, who numbered 3,724 in 2004-05 and are poised to climb above 6,500 (76 percent) in 2014-15. Meanwhile, Black non-Hispanics will see an increase of 11.2 percent above their 2004-05 level of 26,569; and White non-Hispanics will see only modest growth over the same timeframe: an increase of less than 1 percent. Finally, American Indian/Alaska Native graduates numbered 551 in 2004-05. Projections indicate strong but uneven growth of about 16 percent among graduates of that group by 2014-15.

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