

# Knocking at the College Door

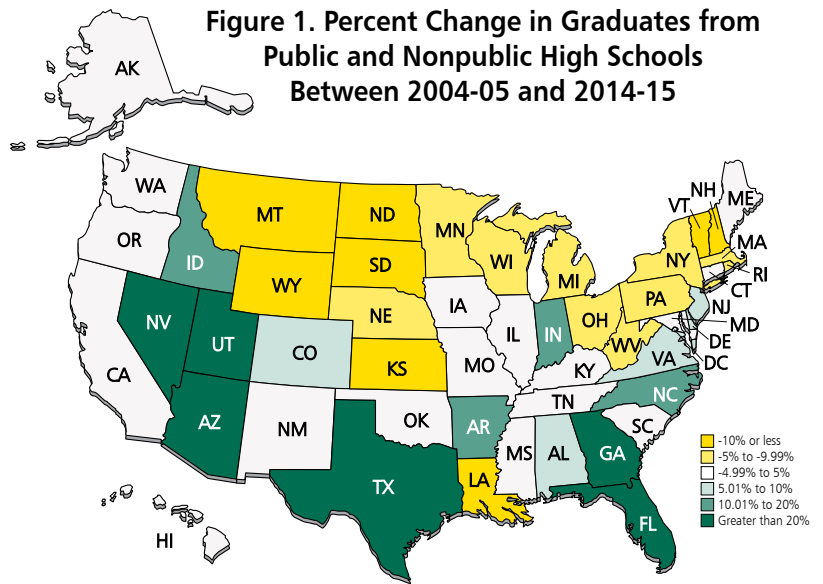
## Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, 1992-2022

# IDAHO

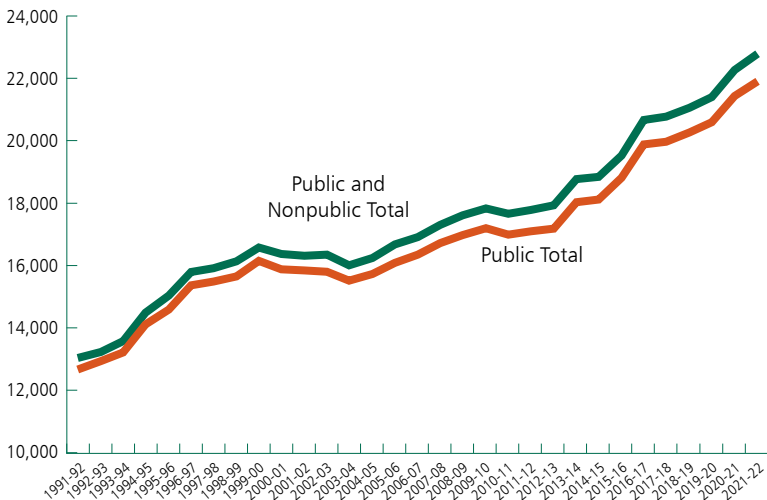
At over 3.3 million, the nation's graduating class of 2007-08 is projected to be history's largest. In fact, 2007-08 will mark the last year in an era of continuous growth in the nation's production of high school graduates, a period that reaches back to 1994. Over that time, the number of graduates 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.

As with the national view, the regional picture masks considerable variation at the state level (Figure 1).



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



Idaho produced 1,744 more graduates in 2004 than it did a decade earlier, an increase of 12 percent. Projections indicate that Idaho will continue growing, assuming existing patterns of high school completion and migration continue. The state projects to produce about 2,600 more high school graduates in the decade after 2004-05, an increase of nearly 16 percent.

Idaho experienced rapid growth in its production of high school graduates between 1991-92 and 1999-2000, followed by a slight slowdown through 2003-04 (Figure 2). In 2004-05, the most recent year for which actual data were available, 15,768 students graduated from public high schools in Idaho, 3,034 more graduates than were produced in 1991-92, representing growth of 23.8 percent. Nonpublic schools do not play a substantial role in Idaho's production of graduates, but they added an estimated 528 in 2004-05, which was 175 more than graduated in 1991-92. Of the state's total number of high school graduates each year, nonpublic schools produced an estimated 3 percent, on average.

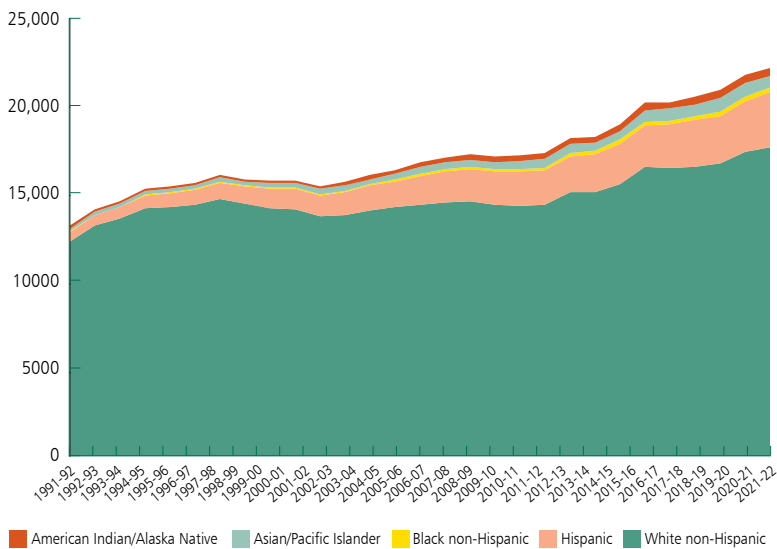
Unlike much of the rest of the nation, Idaho won't see its production of high school graduates stagnate or decline. Instead, Idaho's growth curve is expected to continue uninterrupted throughout the projected period. Initially, Idaho can anticipate manageable growth, lasting until 2012-13, during which time the number of high school graduates is projected to rise by about 1,650 over the 2004-05 level (10.1 percent). Thereafter, the state projects to enter a period of more rapid growth, possibly adding nearly 5,000 graduates by 2021-22 (27 percent), ultimately reaching about 23,000 total graduates.

In addition, the racial/ethnic composition of Idaho's public high school graduating classes will show substantial diversification over the coming decade and beyond (Figure 3). In 1994-95, White non-Hispanic graduates accounted for 93.8 percent of the graduates from public high schools. A decade later, that proportion had dropped to 88.3 percent. The next decade in Idaho will see further declines in the share of public high school graduates who are White non-Hispanic, with projections indicating it will reach 82.9 percent by 2014-15.

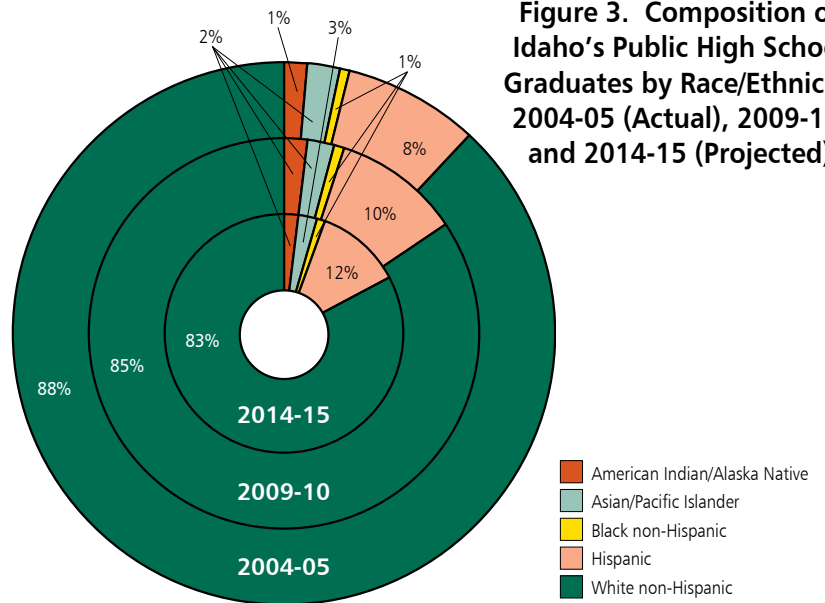
These changes are roughly comparable to the experience of states all over the country. Although the magnitude may differ substantially, the nation as a whole is undergoing sweeping changes in the racial/ethnic composition of its population. In Idaho, as in other states, the big changes are mainly the result of rapid growth in the number of Hispanic high school students and graduates. However, unlike most other states, in Idaho, the numbers of White non-Hispanic graduates and those from all other races/ethnicities are also projected to rise.

Hispanic graduates from public schools in Idaho numbered 1,260 in 2004-05, but within a decade they are projected to number 2,131, an increase of 69.1 percent (Figure 4). In Idaho this is not even the fastest rate of growth, as the number of Black non-Hispanic graduates is projected to climb by 109.4 percent over the same period. Even American Indians/Alaska Natives will see a faster rate of increase, at 74.9 percent.

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



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



But because the number of Black non-Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native graduates in 2004-05 was relatively low, at just 88 and 203, respectively, their growth will not have as significant an impact as that of the Hispanic population. Meanwhile, White non-Hispanics will also see more modest growth in their numbers over the same timeframe, with projections showing an increase from 13,921 in 2004-05 to 15,194 in 2014-15, or 9.1 percent. Finally, the rate of increase in Asian/Pacific Islander graduates is projected to be substantial, at 59.8 percent, with their numbers rising from 296 in 2004-05 to 473 a decade later.

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