

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

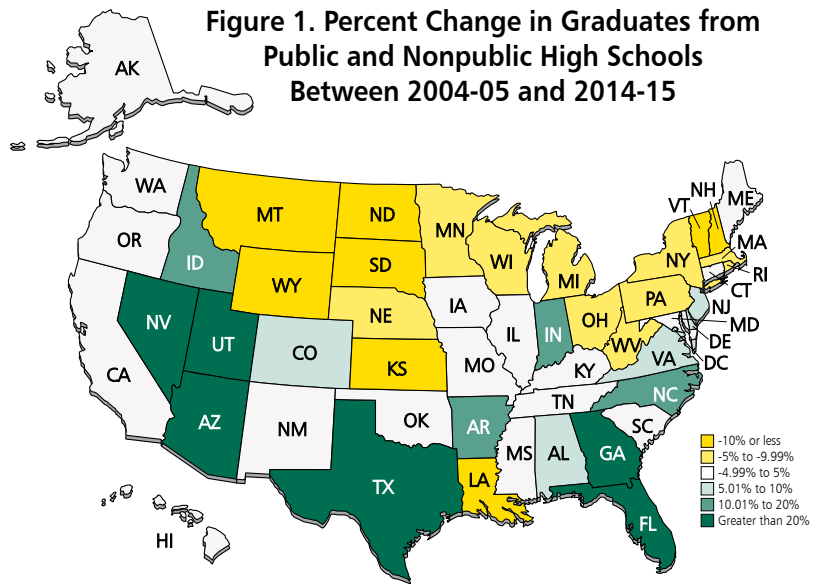
## VIRGINIA

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.

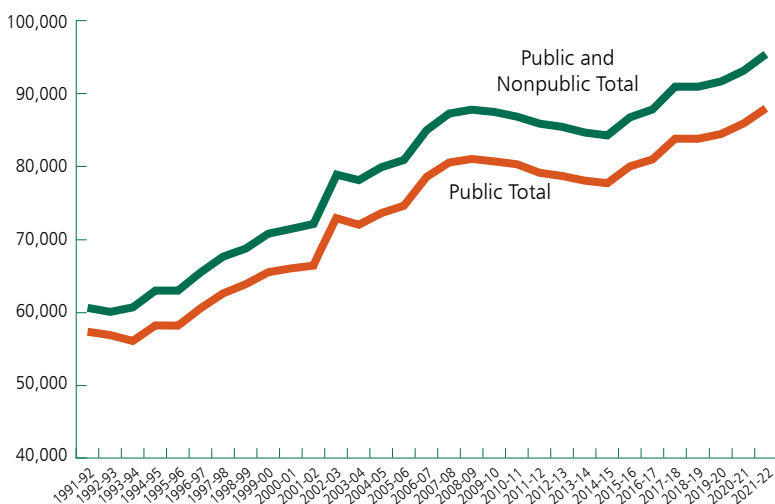
The national data obscure significant variations in this picture at the regional and state levels, however. Regionally, in the decade leading up to 2004-05, the number of high school graduates grew the fastest in the West at 34 percent, with the South growing by 23.5 percent, the Northeast by 20.7 percent, 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).

Virginia produced nearly 17,000 more graduates in 2004-05 than it did a decade earlier, an increase of 27 percent. However, projections indicate that the state will experience slowing growth in its production of high school graduates in the years ahead, assuming existing patterns of high school completion and migration continue. The state projects to have about 4,400 more high school graduates in 2014-15 than in 2004-05, a increase of about 5.5 percent. However, projections indicate that 2014-15 will be far from the most productive year for the state; Virginia is projected to have more graduates in the eight academic years before 2014-15 and all the years that follow.



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



Virginia experienced rapid growth in its production of high school graduates between 1991-92 and 2004-05, the last year for which actual data were available (Figure 2). That year, 73,667 students graduated from public high schools in the state, 16,329 more graduates than were produced in 1991-92, which represented growth of 28.5 percent. Nonpublic schools in Virginia contributed an additional estimated 6,304 graduates in 2004-05, and

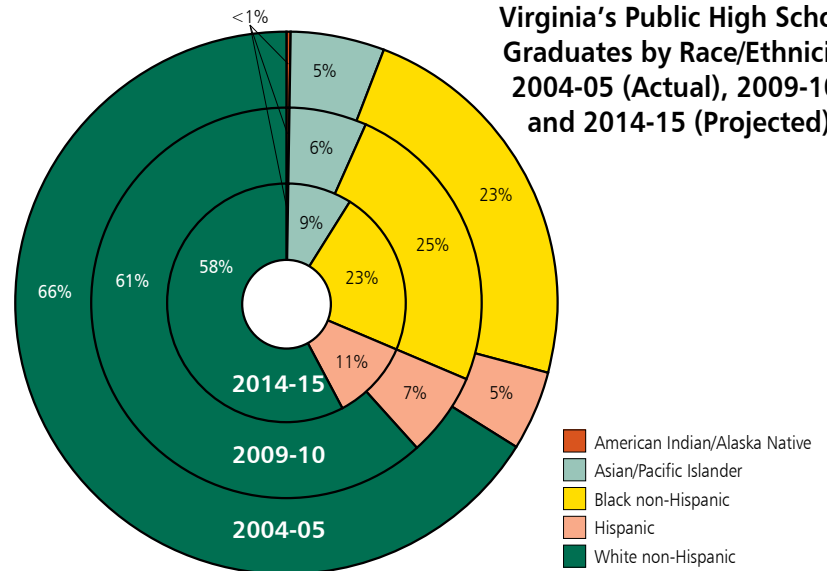
their production level is expected to grow modestly in the years ahead. Of the state's total number of high school graduates each year, nonpublic schools produced an estimated 8 percent, on average.

Along with much of the rest of the nation, Virginia is poised to enter a new period characterized by much more stagnant growth or declines in the production of high school graduates. After peaking at over 81,000 in 2008-09, the state will begin a brief period of diminishing production in the number of public high school graduates through 2014-15, assuming a continuation of existing patterns of enrollment, progression, and completion. During that timeframe, the number of public high school graduates is forecast to dip by 4.1 percent. Thereafter, it is projected to begin a strong recovery that boosts the number of high school graduates to just above 88,000 by 2021-22.

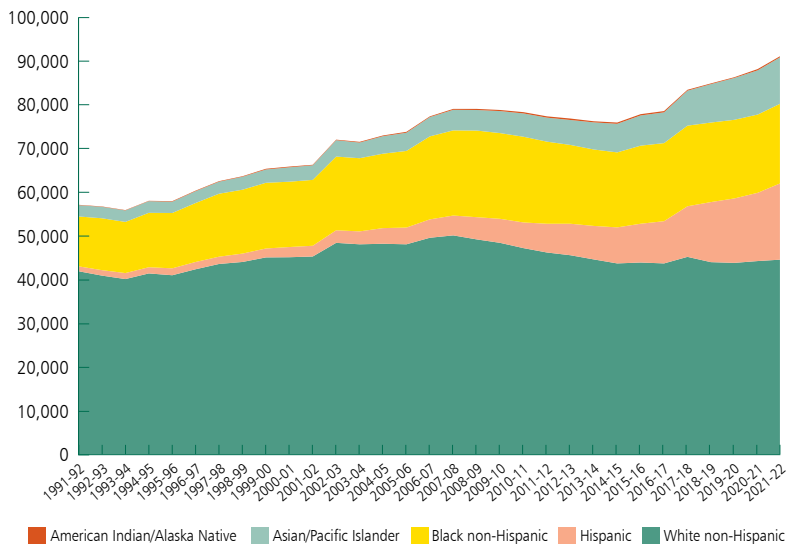
The racial/ethnic composition of Virginia's public high school graduating classes will continue to show diversification over the coming decade and beyond (Figure 3). In 1994-95, White non-Hispanics accounted for 71.5 percent of the graduates from public high schools. A decade later, that proportion had dropped to 66.1 percent. But the next decade will see accelerating declines in the share of public high school graduates who are White non-Hispanic, with projections indicating it will reach 57.7 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 Virginia, 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 a shrinking number of White non-Hispanics in the educational pipeline. Growth in the number of Asians/Pacific Islanders is also an important factor in Virginia's shifting demographic picture. While immigration has contributed to the growth of these populations, 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 a higher fertility rate among Hispanic women.

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



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



Hispanic graduates from public schools in the state numbered 3,556 in 2004-05, but within a decade they are projected to number over 8,200, an increase of more than 130 percent (Figure 4). The number of Asian/Pacific Islander graduates is projected to climb by more than 2,500 above its 2004-05 level of 4,013. Growth is also expected among graduates from Black non-Hispanic descent, but it will peak by 2008-09 after climbing by about 16 percent; by 2014-15 their number won't be much different from the 2004-05 level of 17,042. Meanwhile, the number of White non-Hispanic graduates is forecast to fall 9.3 percent from its 2004-05 level of 48,428. Finally, American Indian/Alaska Native graduates are also expected to see their ranks grow rapidly over the same timeframe, though their numbers will remain relatively small. They will see growth of about 72 percent above the 178 who graduated in 2004-05.

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