

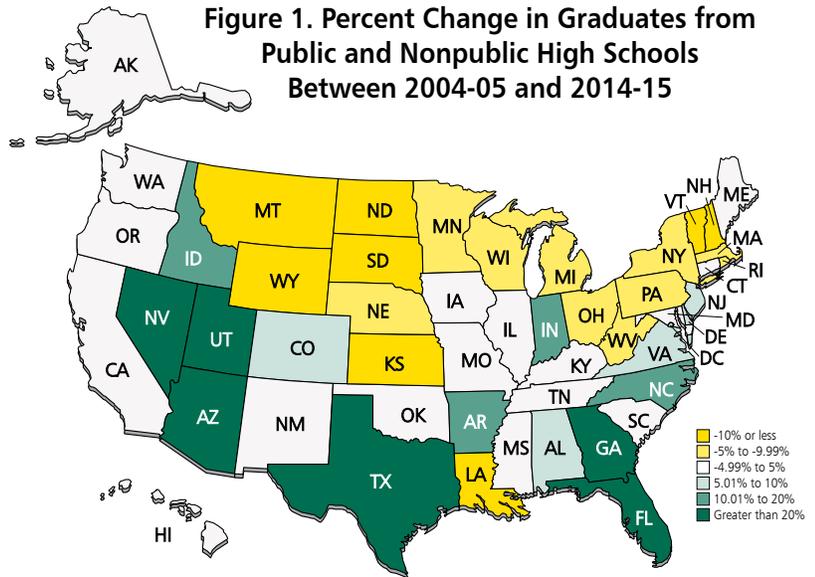
Knocking at the College Door Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, 1992-2022

NEW MEXICO

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.

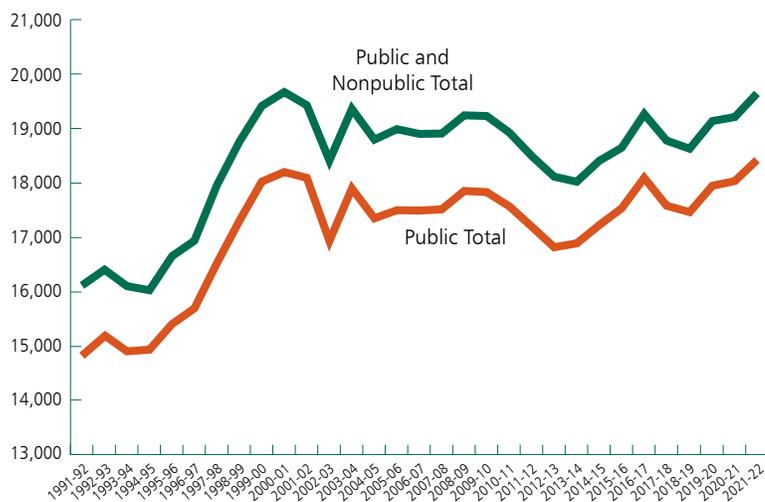
The national data obscure significant variations in this picture at the regional and state levels, however. Regionally, in the decade leading up to 2004-05, the number of high school graduates grew the fastest in the West at 34 percent, with the South growing by 23.5 percent, the Northeast by 20.7 percent,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



As with the national view, the regional picture masks considerable variation at the state level (Figure 1). New Mexico produced 2,770 more graduates in 2004-05 than it did a decade earlier, an increase of 17.3 percent. Projections indicate that New Mexico has entered a period in which its level of high school graduates will not change substantially from one year to the next, assuming existing patterns of high school completion and migration continue. However, the state projects to produce nearly 400 fewer high school graduates in the decade after 2004-05, a decrease equal to about 2 percent.

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



New Mexico experienced rapid growth in its production of high school graduates between 1991-92 and 2000-01. Thereafter, the state entered a period of uneven change that is expected to last through 2009-10 (Figure 2). By 2004-05, the last year for which actual data were available, its public high schools had produced 17,353 graduates. Despite the slowdown that started in 2001-02, the state had increased the number of public high school graduates by 2,529 over the 1991-92 level, or by 17.1 percent. Nonpublic schools in the state graduated an estimated 1,439 in 2004-05. Of the state's total number

of high school graduates each year throughout the actual and projected timeframe, nonpublic schools produced an estimated 7 percent, on average.

While much of the rest of the nation is poised to enter a period characterized by much more stagnant growth in the production of high school graduates, New Mexico has already been experiencing stagnation in its number of graduates. Beginning in 2009-10, the number of graduates is forecast to diminish through 2013-14, assuming a continuation of existing patterns of enrollment, progression, and completion. In that span, the state is projected to lose over 1,200 graduates, a slide of about 6.4 percent. In subsequent years, moderate but uneven growth is projected to resume.

The racial/ethnic composition of New Mexico's public high school graduating classes will continue to show substantial diversification over the coming decade and beyond (Figure 3). A state where the public high school graduating class was "majority-minority" (where minority graduates outnumber White non-Hispanic graduates) in 1994-95, New Mexico will see the proportion of graduates who are from minority backgrounds continue to climb. In 1994-95, White non-Hispanics accounted for 44.3 percent of the graduates from public high schools. A decade later, that proportion had dropped to 39.6 percent. By 2014-15, it will reach 31.1 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. Only a few states, like New Mexico, already produce graduating classes that are majority-minority. But as in many other states, the big changes in New Mexico 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. While immigration has contributed to the growth of the Hispanic population, signs of the continuing demographic shift is 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 New Mexico's Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity 2004-05 (Actual), 2009-10, and 2014-15 (Projected)

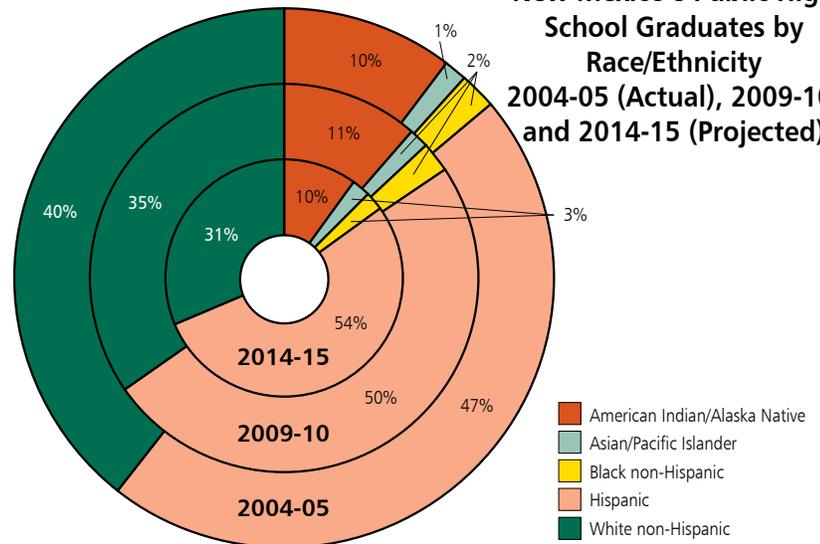
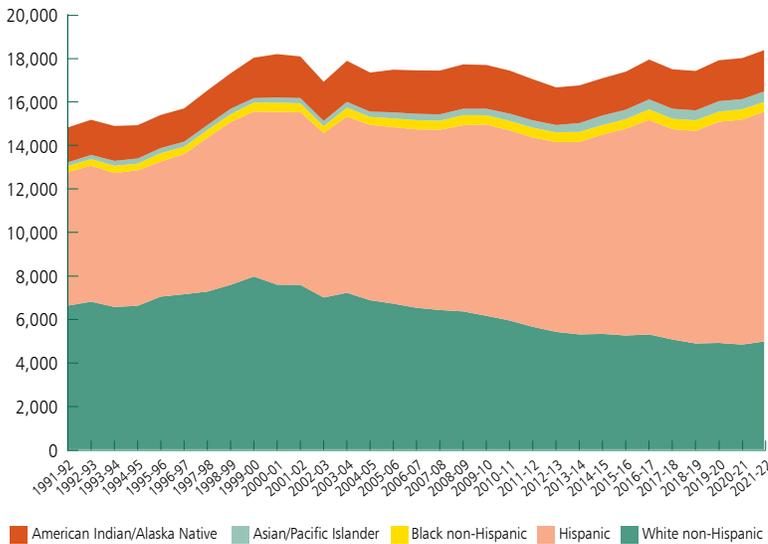


Figure 4. New Mexico High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity, 1991-92 to 2004-05 (Actual), 2005-06 to 2021-22 (Projected)



The number of Hispanic graduates from public high schools in New Mexico surpassed the number of White non-Hispanic graduates for the first time in 2000-01. By 2004-05, Hispanic graduates numbered 8,074, compared to 6,867 White non-Hispanic graduates. Within a decade Hispanic graduates are projected to number 9,176, an increase of 13.7 percent, while White non-Hispanic graduates will fall 22.5 percent to 5,319 (Figure 4). In percentage terms, between 2004-05 and 2014-15, Asians/Pacific Islanders and Black non-Hispanics are expected to be the fastest growing racial/ethnic groups for public high school graduates. In that span, the number of graduates of Asian/Pacific Islander descent will increase by 190 (76.4 percent), and graduates of Black non-Hispanic descent will climb by 76 (20.9 percent). American Indians/Alaska Natives comprise the third largest proportion of graduates in New Mexico. Their numbers will climb through 2008-09, and then will fall; by 2014-15, graduate numbers in this group are projected to be down by 77 (4.3 percent) from their 2004-05 level.

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