

Knocking at the College Door

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

NEW HAMPSHIRE

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).

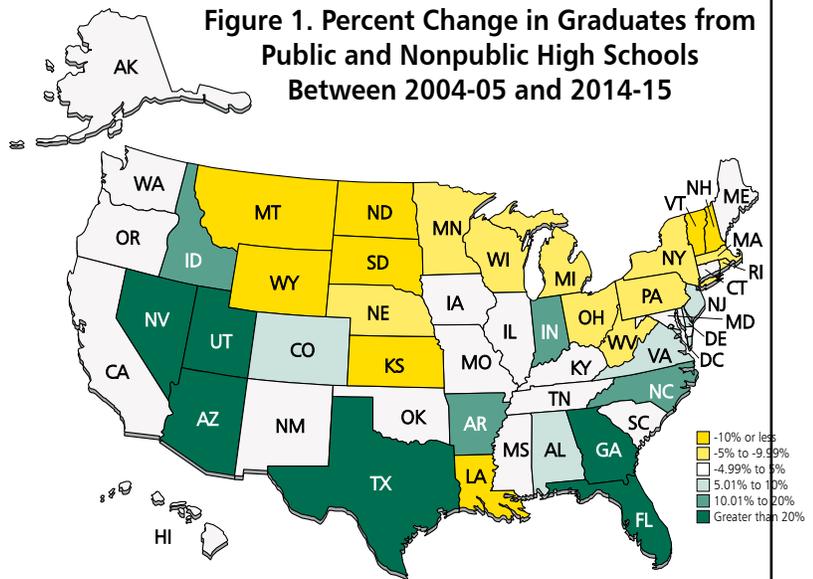
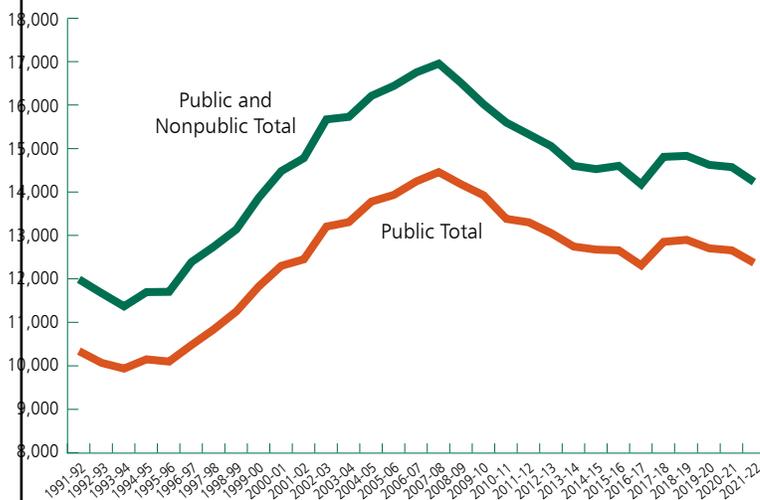


Figure 2. New Hampshire High School Graduates 1991-92 to 2004-05 (Actual), 2005-06 to 2021-22 (Projected)



New Hampshire produced about 4,500 more graduates in 2004-05 than it did a decade earlier, an increase of 38.6 percent. Projections indicate that the state's number of graduates will grow though 2007-08 before beginning a sustained and substantial decline, assuming existing patterns of high school completion and migration continue. New Hampshire projects to produce about 750 more high school graduates in 2007-08 than it did in 2004-05, an increase equal to about 4.6 percent.

New Hampshire was among the states with 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, 13,775 students graduated from public high schools in the state, 3,630 more graduates than were produced in 1994-95, representing growth of 35.8 percent. Nonpublic schools in the state graduated an estimated 2,453 in 2004-05, which was about 900 more than graduated a decade earlier. Of New Hampshire's total number of high school graduates each year, nonpublic schools produced an estimated 14

percent, on average. But projections indicate that nonpublic schools' production of graduates will slip even faster than that of public schools in the years ahead.

Along with much of the rest of the nation, New Hampshire is poised to enter a new period characterized by much more stagnant growth or declines in the production of high school graduates. After reaching a peak in 2007-08 at just over 14,450, the state will see a mostly uninterrupted decline in the number of public high school graduates through 2016-17, assuming a continuation of existing patterns of enrollment, progression, and completion. During that timeframe, the number of high school graduates is forecast to drop by over 2,100 (14.8 percent). Subsequently, projections indicate that production will continue declining, with a brief reprieve in 2017-18.

A state with a relatively homogeneous population, New Hampshire's public high school graduating classes will diversify over the coming decade and beyond (Figure 3). In 1994-95, White non-Hispanics accounted for 96.5 percent of the graduates from the state's public high schools. A decade later, that proportion had dropped only slightly, to 95.1 percent. By 2014-15, the proportion of White non-Hispanics will have fallen to under 89 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. The big changes are the result of a shrinking number of White non-Hispanics in the educational pipeline. In New Hampshire, this trend is coupled with rapid growth in the number of minority students and graduates.

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

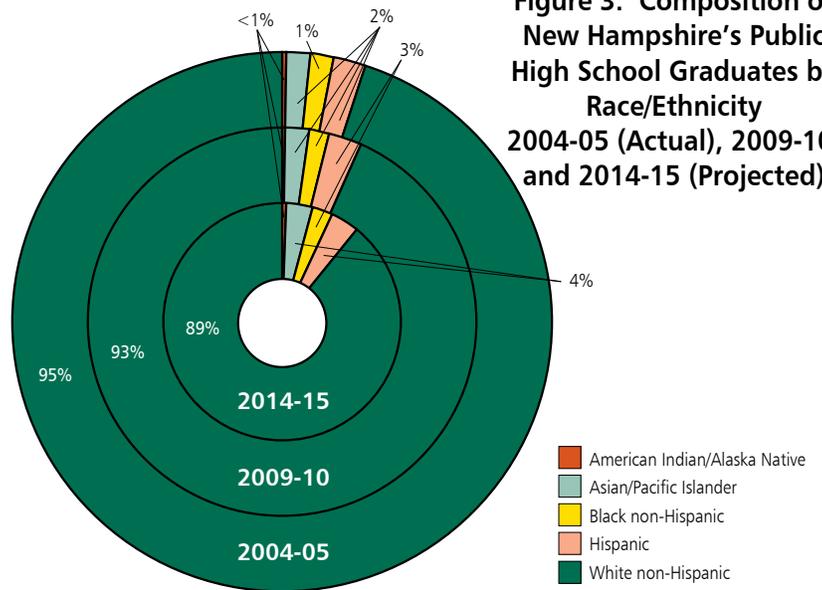
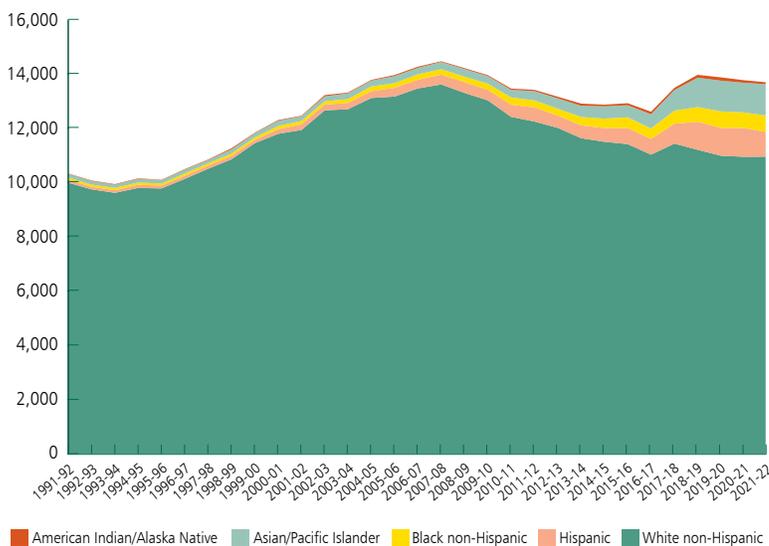


Figure 4. New Hampshire High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity, 1991-92 to 2004-05 (Actual), 2005-06 to 2021-22 (Projected)



The number of White non-Hispanic graduates from public schools in the state, who numbered 13,104 in 2004-05, will slip by more than 1,600 (12.3 percent) by 2014-15 (Figure 4). Meanwhile, Hispanic graduates are projected to double in number over the same timeframe; they accounted for 257 in 2004-05. The percentage increase among Black non-Hispanics will be roughly equivalent, as they climb from 173 to about 350. Asians/Pacific Islanders will also see growth of about 115 percent from a 2004-05 level of 209.

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