

# Knocking at the College Door

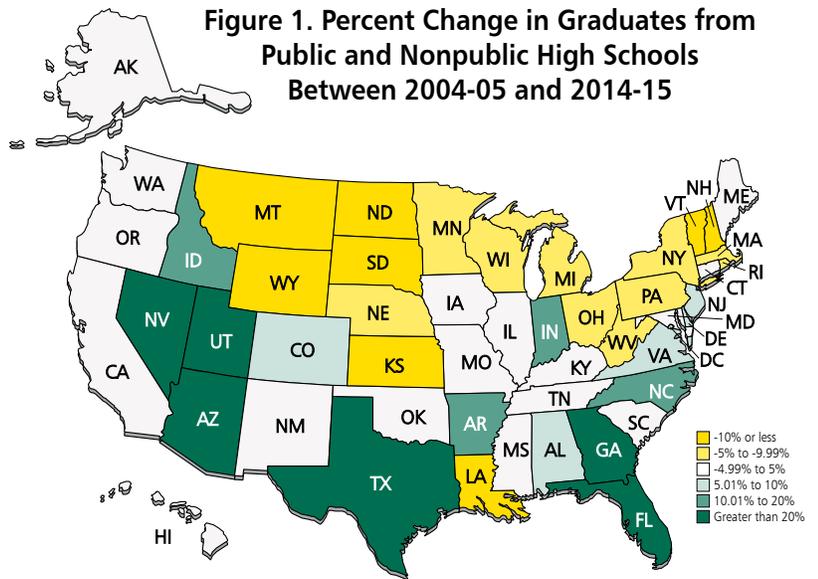
## Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, 1992-2022

# HAWAII

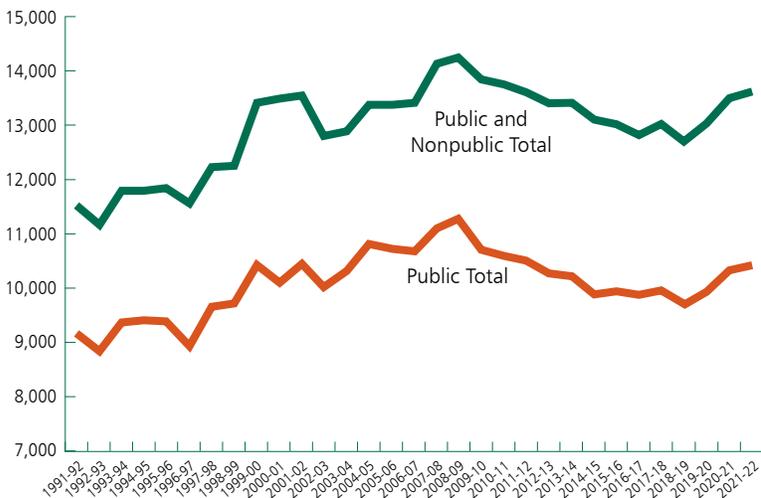
At over 3.3 million, the nation's graduating class of 2007-08 is projected to be history's largest. In fact, 2007-08 will mark the last year in an era of continuous growth in the nation's production of high school graduates, a period that reaches back to 1994. Over that time, the number of graduates 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. Hawaii High School Graduates 1991-92 to 2004-05 (Actual), 2005-06 to 2021-22 (Projected)**



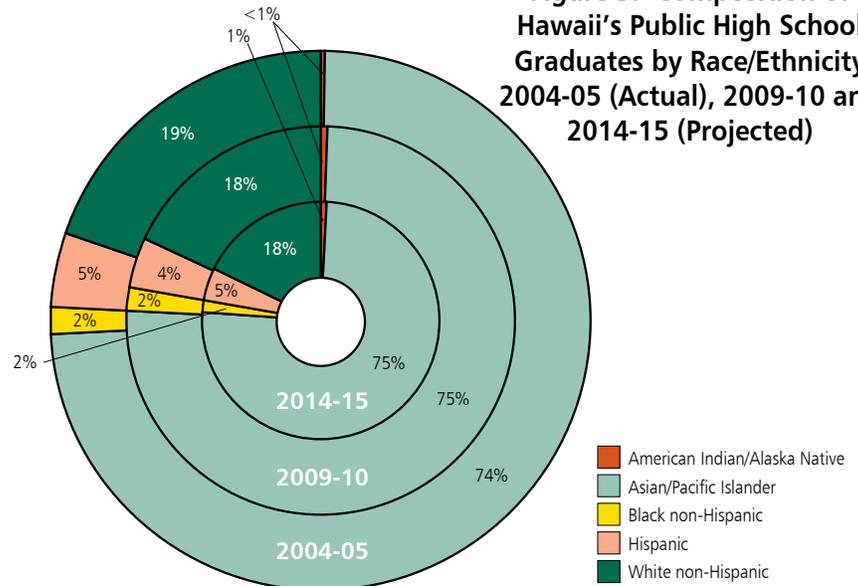
Hawaii produced about 1,580 more graduates in 2004 than it did a decade earlier, an increase of 13.4 percent. Projections indicate that Hawaii will see relatively little change in its production of high school graduates in coming years, assuming existing patterns of high school completion and migration continue. The state projects to produce about 260 fewer high school graduates in the decade after 2004-05, an decline equal to about 2 percent.

Hawaii experienced a period of uneven growth in its production of high school graduates between 1991-92 and 2004-05, which marks the most recent year of actual data from public schools (Figure 2). In 2004-05, 10,813 students graduated from public high schools in Hawaii, 1,653 more graduates than were produced in 1991-92, representing growth of 18 percent, although the increase over the period was unsteady from one year to the next. Nonpublic schools in the state added an estimated 2,561 in 2004-05, which itself was about 200 more than graduated in 1991-92. Of the state's total number of high school graduates each year,

nonpublic schools produced an estimated 22 percent, on average.

Along with much of the rest of the nation, Hawaii 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 2008-09 at 14,253, Hawaii will see its number of high school graduates decrease each year through 2016-17, assuming a continuation of existing patterns of enrollment, progression, and completion. Between 2004-05 and 2008-09, the number of high school graduates is forecast to climb by 6.6 percent, but between then and 2016-17, it is projected to slide back by about 10 percent. All of this decline is projected to occur in the public sector, however, as nonpublic schools in Hawaii are forecast to increase their production of graduates, adding more than 650 between 2004-05 and 2014-15. A growth pattern for graduates from both sectors will resume beginning the following year, with total graduates reaching about 13,600 at the end of the projected period.

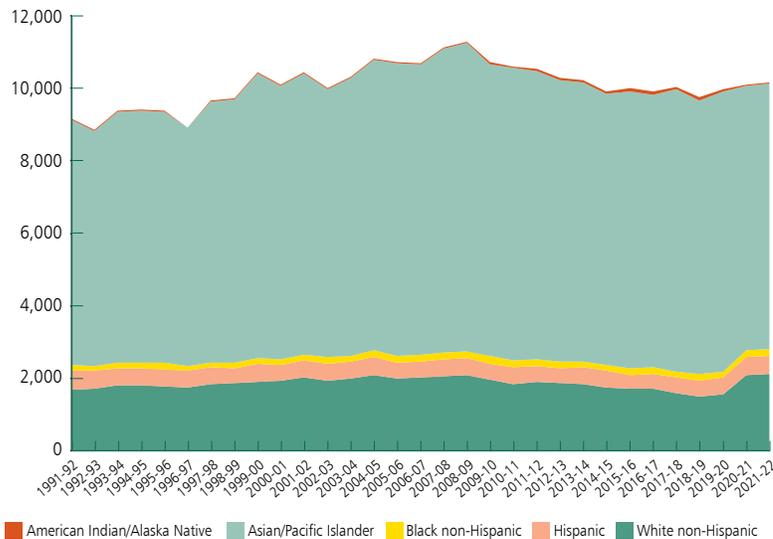
**Figure 3. Composition of Hawaii's Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity 2004-05 (Actual), 2009-10 and 2014-15 (Projected)**



The racial/ethnic composition of Hawaii's public high school graduating classes is unlike any other state's, with the majority of graduates being of Asian/Pacific Islander descent. Additionally, whereas most other states can anticipate rapid diversification, Hawaii is projected to see little significant change in the racial/ethnic proportions of its graduating classes (Figure 3). From 1991-92 through 2004-05, Asian/Pacific Islanders accounted for about three-quarters of the public high school graduates, a proportion that is projected to increase only slightly in the years ahead. Meanwhile, Hispanic graduates in Hawaii, who are not a particularly large group anyway, will see small decreases, making Hawaii the only state in the nation with a negative forecast for that race/ethnicity. The number of White non-Hispanic high school graduates is also expected to fall.

Although Asian/Pacific Islander public graduates are growing their overall share slightly, their total numbers will fall. They accounted for 8,003 graduates in 2004-05 but within a decade they are projected to have declined to 7,461, a decrease of 6.8 percent (Figure 4). The number of Black non-Hispanic graduates will remain essentially unchanged over the same period; and American Indian/Alaska Natives will see growth, though they only accounted for 44 graduates in 2004-05. Meanwhile, White non-Hispanic graduates are forecast to decline from 2,094 in 2004-05 to 1,751 in 2014-15, a 19.6 percent drop; and Hispanic graduates will fall from 489 to 449 (8.2 percent).

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



These projections indicate that Hawaii may be largely insulated from the sweeping demographic changes in its public schools that are confronting other states in the coming years. Yet it is noteworthy that the state's production of high school graduates appears to be shifting toward the nonpublic sector. This trend should be carefully monitored for how it may affect the racial/ethnic composition of all high school graduating classes statewide, given the evidence that students attending nonpublic schools nationally are disproportionately White non-Hispanic.

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