

A STATISTICAL PROFILE OF NEW YORK'S K-12 EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

Race, Income, and Religion

Ray Domanico

Senior Fellow and Director, Education Policy



MI

About the Author



Ray Domanico is a senior fellow and director of education policy at the Manhattan Institute. His career has spanned the public and nonprofit sectors, in research and advocacy roles. Most recently, Domanico was director of education research at New York City's Independent Budget Office, where he led a team tasked with studying and reporting on the policies and progress of America's largest public school system. Previously, he served as senior education advisor to IAF Metro NY, where he worked with local leaders and educators to design and support a small group of new district high schools and charter elementary schools. Domanico began his career in research positions in the New York City school system, and he has taught graduate-level courses in educational research and policy analysis at Brooklyn College and Baruch College.

Domanico holds an MPP (master of public policy) from the University of California, Berkeley.

Contents

Summary and Discussion	5
Implications for Public Policy.....	6
A Statistical Profile of New York’s K–12 Educational Sector	7
Endnotes.....	15



A STATISTICAL PROFILE OF NEW YORK'S K-12 EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

Race, Income, and Religion

Summary and Discussion

Public controversies about education in New York typically leave out discussion about the private—religious and independent—schools that educate nearly 20% of students in New York City and more than 10% of students in the rest of the state. This report uses publicly available data from the New York State Education Department¹ and the U.S. Census Bureau² to describe the importance of these schools to the overall educational enterprise of the city and state. Four themes emerge from the data presented in this brief:

Demographic change. There are 300,000 fewer students in New York State today than there were in the school year 2000–01, with the decline being much greater outside New York City. Further disaggregation of the data, not shown here, indicates that the percentage enrollment decline in the four counties closest to New York City is only slightly higher than the decline in the city, but the decline upstate is much greater than the city's or its suburbs. Racial and ethnic change is evident in this decline. Statewide, there were 482,000 fewer white students than there were in 2000–01. The number of black students has declined by 175,000. These declines were partially offset by increases in the number of Hispanic (179,589) and Asian (88,792) students.

Statewide, private schools have experienced a 16% decline in enrollment since 2000–01; the decline has been less within the city (12%) than outside the city (21%). Statewide, enrollment in Catholic schools has declined by 49% while enrollment in Jewish schools is up by 62.6%. Independent schools (Dalton, Brearley, Horace Mann, etc.) have grown by 10.9%. Jewish schools are now the largest group of private schools in the state and educate more students than do charter schools.

New York City is more diverse than its public schools. The city's public schools are largely (83.9%) nonwhite. But 171,791 white students, 52% of all white students in the city, attend private schools. Black families are the group second most likely to seek schools outside the public district schools; 20.6% of the city's black students are in public charter schools, and 8.8% are in private schools. Public district schools outside the city have become much more diverse since 2000–01: 38% of students are nonwhite, compared with 21.8% in 2000–01. Though white students are in the majority in private schools, these schools also serve a diverse group of students. In the city, one-third of all private school students are nonwhite; outside the city, that figure is 24%.

Private schools defy generalization. New York City has much higher enrollment in private schools than the rest of the state. The census estimates that 19.4% of the city's schoolchildren attend private schools, compared with 10.5% of the students in the rest of the state. In the city, private schools serve both wealthy and lower-income communities. In city census tracts with a median family income of \$250,000 and above, 61.8% of all students are enrolled in private schools, though a very small percentage of the school-age population lives in such wealthy census tracts. Of the private school students in the city, 69.5% reside in census tracts where median family income is below \$100,000. In these census tracts combined, 15.9% of students are enrolled in private schools. There are a small number of modest- to lower-income districts

outside the city with high private school enrollment; these tend to be home to large concentrations of orthodox Jewish families and the Jewish schools that serve them.

Not all public schools serve heterogeneous populations. Outside New York City, wealthy enclaves have emerged over time, largely in the surrounding suburbs, particularly in Nassau and Westchester Counties. Of the school districts in the rest of the state with a median family income of \$150,000 and above, 85.4% of students are enrolled in local public district schools. These wealthy suburban school districts are somewhat homogeneous with respect to family income—in districts with median incomes above \$250,000, 13.4% of all families have incomes below \$100,000. In districts with median incomes of \$200,000–\$249,999, 17.2% of all families fall below the \$100,000 level. High-income districts outside the city are also homogeneous with regard to education and race. In the highest-income school districts, 84.3% of the adults, age 25 and older, have bachelor's degrees or higher; in the poorest districts, 22.8% do so. The highest-income districts are 81.2% white and 11% Asian; 5.1% of residents are black or Hispanic. In the lowest-earning school districts, 53.2% are white, 4.4% are Asian, and 38.5% are black or Hispanic.

Implications for Public Policy

Whether provided by the public or private sector, schooling gives benefits to students and parents as well as to the broader society. The reliance of American democracy on a well-educated citizenry is well understood. Private schools provide this benefit as much as public schools do.

Most families understand that the higher the general educational attainment of their children, the more

prosperous, healthier, and successful they are likely to be. Thus, families have a direct incentive to find the best education for their own children so that they may reap the benefits themselves. This is true for families that enroll their children in the best public-school districts as well as for families that seek private or religious schools for their children. For families with the means, there are two common paths to school quality in and near New York City. Wealthy city families can avail themselves of the city's more exclusive private schools, at a high cost of tuition. Wealthy suburban families can effectively buy in to a quality public education by purchasing homes in affluent communities with high-performing public schools.

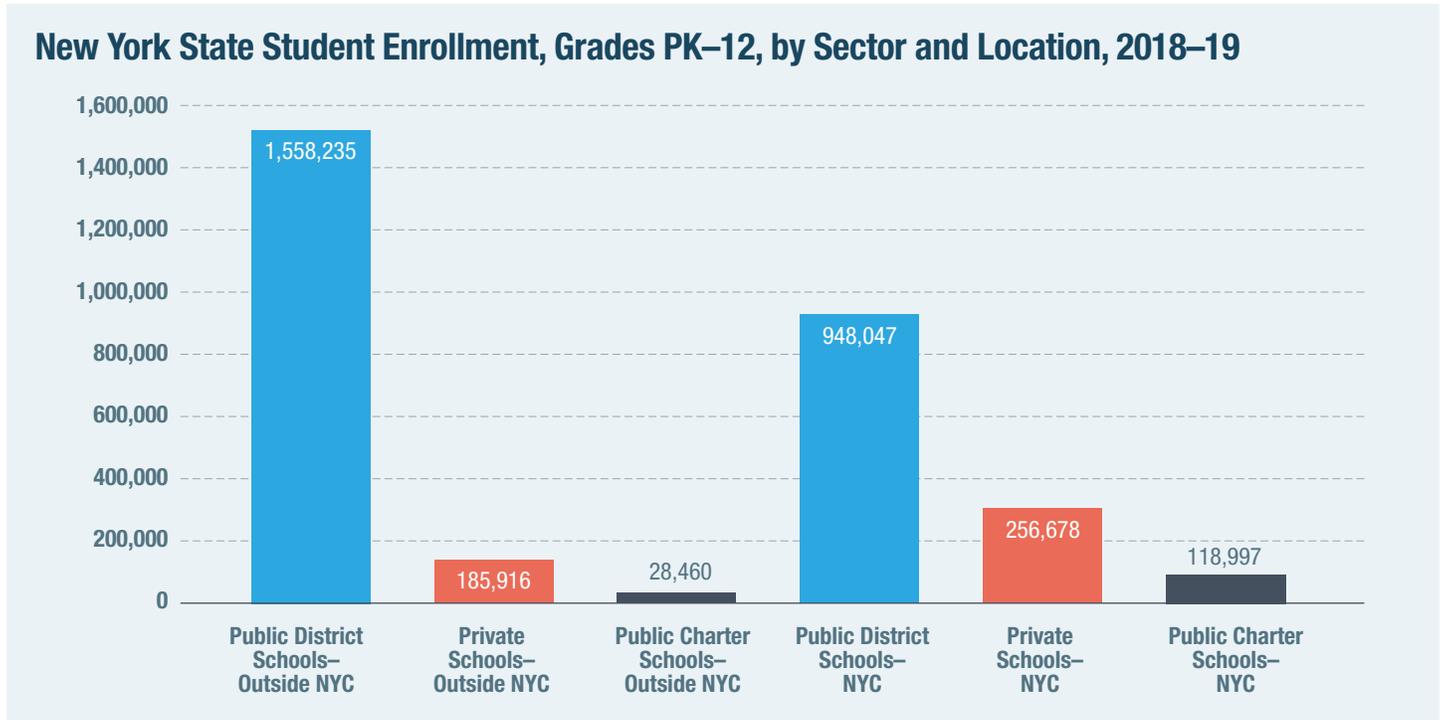
The availability of alternatives to New York City's public school system serves as a natural check on the ability of that system to seek redistributive outcomes, such as the elimination of selective high schools or gifted programs in pursuit of greater racial diversity. Similarly, official hostility to high-achieving public charter schools might drive parents of color to private or suburban schools in pursuit of greater educational opportunity. The growth of charter schools has largely been fueled by the choices of such parents seeking high-performing schools. If parents of any background come to believe that the system is working against the well-being of their own children, those with the means have viable alternatives, both inside and outside the city.

Religious schools exist on a different dimension from exclusive private schools. Here, parents seek education for their children grounded in their own culture and faith traditions. Religious schools are often tradition-bound and resistant to the rapidly changing social and educational norms that some perceive in public schools. This was true of Catholic schools in their heyday, and it is true of orthodox Jewish schools today. Ongoing debate about the appropriateness of public funding of religious schools, or tuition tax credits for religious school scholarships, will likely focus on the different approaches to family values and educational content.

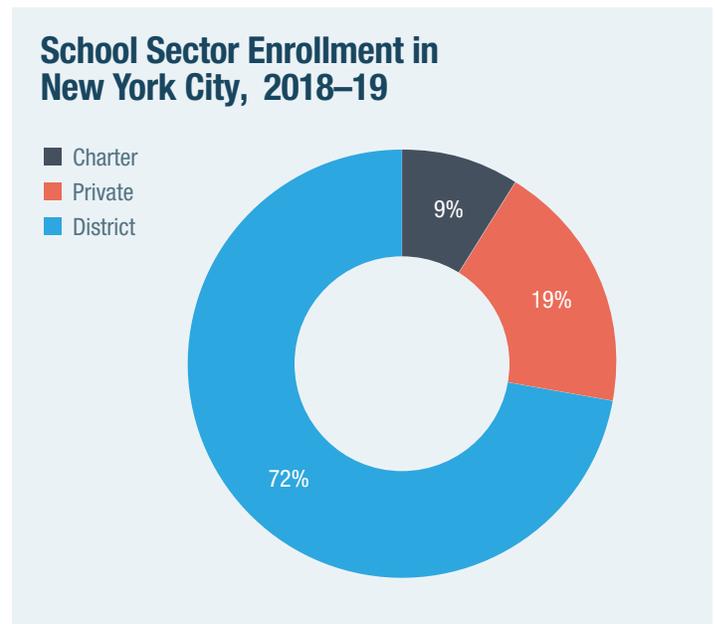
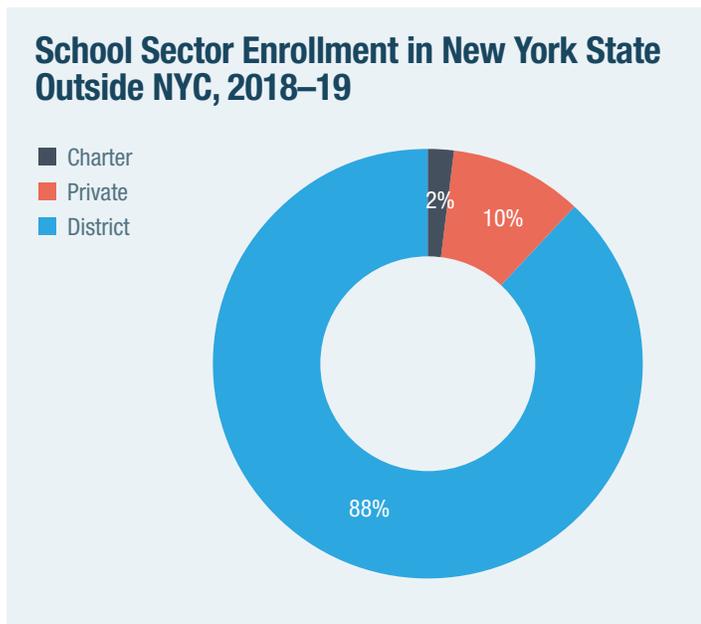


A Statistical Profile of New York’s K-12 Educational Sector

Three times as many students were enrolled in private (religious and independent) schools (442,594) in New York State than in public charter schools (147,457):



Families in New York City are more likely to seek alternatives to the district’s traditional public schools, with more than a quarter of students in private or public charter schools. Outside the city, almost 88% of students attend traditional public district schools:



The number of students attending public district schools as well as private schools has declined in New York State since 2000–01. Charter school enrollment has grown dramatically. Enrollment declines in district schools have been steeper outside New York City during this period:

School Enrollment by Sector, New York State and New York City, 2001–19

School Year	District Schools: NYC	District Schools: Outside NYC	Charter Schools: NYC	Charter Schools: Outside NYC	Private Schools: NYC	Private Schools: Outside NYC	State Total: All Sectors
2000–01	1,066,516	1,792,614	1,821	2,528	291,723	235,398	3,390,600
2003–04	1,044,472	1,799,168	5,849	8,770	284,894	224,925	3,368,078
2006–07	999,150	1,767,825	15,639	11,512	276,710	207,537	3,278,373
2009–10	991,312	1,710,688	32,048	14,474	268,011	197,411	3,213,944
2012–13	985,388	1,641,891	58,493	19,463	267,938	193,877	3,167,050
2015–16	980,197	1,592,863	94,334	23,285	265,997	193,295	3,149,971
2018–19	948,047	1,558,235	118,997	28,460	256,678	185,916	3,096,333
Change 2001–2019	(118,469)	(234,379)	117,176	25,932	(35,045)	(49,482)	(294,267)
Percent Change	-11.1%	-13.1%	6434.7%	1025.8%	-12.0%	-21.0%	-8.7%

Private schools in New York serve a different population than do public district and charter schools. Two-thirds of the students in New York City's private schools are white; outside the city, more than three-quarters of private school students are white:

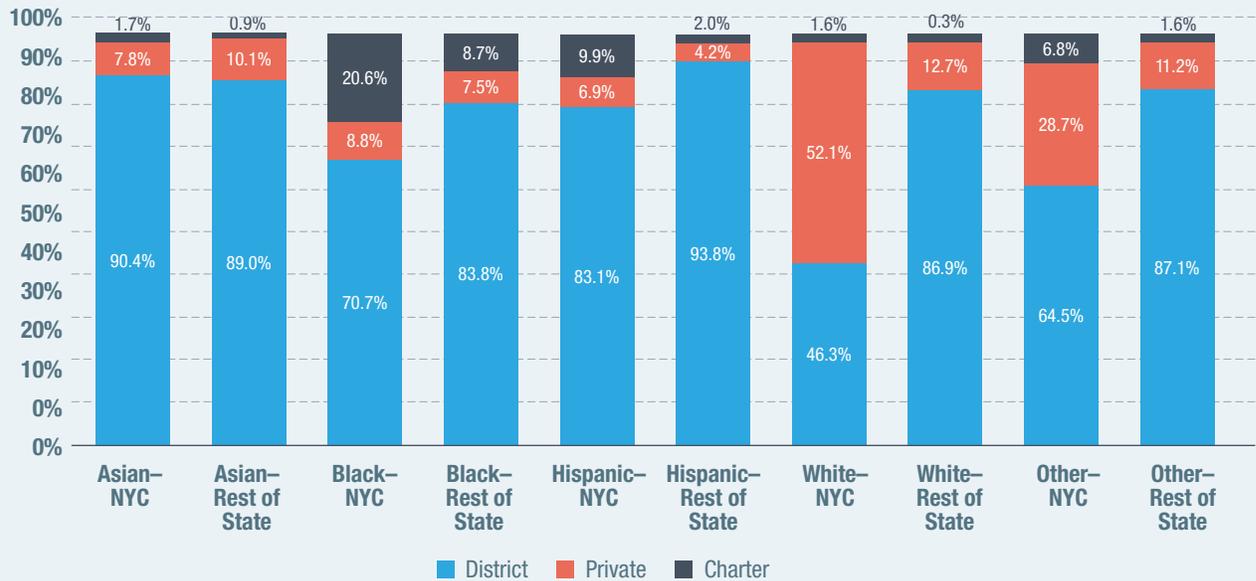
Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Students by Location and Sector, 2018–19

Location/Sector		White	Hispanic	Black	Asian	Other
New York City	Public District Schools	16.1%	40.9%	22.3%	18.0%	2.7%
	Private Schools	66.9%	12.6%	10.2%	5.7%	4.5%
	Public Charter Schools	4.3%	39.0%	51.7%	2.7%	2.3%
Rest of New York State	Public District Schools	62.1%	18.5%	10.2%	5.5%	3.7%
	Private Schools	76.1%	7.0%	7.7%	5.2%	4.0%
	Public Charter Schools	13.7%	21.7%	57.8%	2.9%	3.9%
State Total—All Sectors		46.6%	25.0%	15.8%	9.2%	3.4%

More than half the white students in New York City attend private schools and most of the remainder, 46.3%, attend district schools. Outside the city, 86.9% of white students are enrolled in district schools. Black families are the group second most likely to seek placements other than in the city's district schools. Outside the city,

83.8% of black students are in district schools. Asian families are the most “loyal” to district schools in the city and in the rest of the state:

School Enrollment by Sector, Race, and Location, 2018–19



The racial makeup of New York schools has changed since 2001. Statewide, in all sectors combined, the number of white students is down by more than 25%. The number of black students has declined even more dramatically. The loss of white students has occurred almost exclusively outside New York City; white enrollment in New York City is up modestly. Black enrollment has declined in both the city (-30.7%) and outside the city (-18.4%). Asian and Hispanic enrollment is growing across the state, dramatically so in the areas outside New York City:

Change in Enrollment 2000–01 to 2018–19, by Race and Location

All Sectors Combined	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Total
New York City, 2000–01	140,451	431,344	455,321	329,221	1,360,060
New York City, 2018–19	188,163	298,938	466,895	329,746	1,323,722
Change	47,712	(132,406)	11,574	525	(36,338)
	34.0%	-30.7%	2.5%	0.2%	-2.7%
Outside NYC, 2000–01	54,880	232,574	139,963	1,595,390	2,030,540
Outside NYC, 2018–19	95,960	189,686	307,978	1,112,307	1,772,611
Change	41,080	(42,888)	168,015	(483,083)	(257,929)
	74.9%	-18.4%	120.0%	-30.3%	-12.7%
State Total, 2000–01	195,331	663,917	595,284	1,924,611	3,390,600
State Total, 2018–19	284,123	488,624	774,873	1,442,000	3,096,333
Change	88,792	(175,293)	179,589	(482,611)	(294,267)
	45.5%	-26.4%	30.2%	-25.1%	-8.7%

Change in Enrollment, 2001–19, by Race, Location, and Sector

Change 2001-19		Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Total
New York City	Public District Schools	45,534	(160,527)	(15,490)	(10,054)	(118,469)
	Public Charter Schools	3,181	60,251	45,958	5,070	117,176
	Private Schools	(1,003)	(32,130)	(18,894)	5,509	(35,045)
Outside New York City	Public District Schools	38,106	(48,155)	160,036	(434,734)	(234,379)
	Public Charter Schools	831	14,500	6,042	3,473	25,932
	Private Schools	2,143	(9,233)	1,937	(51,822)	(49,482)
State Total		88,792	(175,293)	179,589	(482,611)	(294,267)

Student enrollment in private schools is very high in high-income areas. Even so, close to 70% of private school students are in areas with a median income below \$100,000. Outside New York City, wealthy families are likely to be located in high-income school districts, and they enroll their children in public schools rather than in private schools. Even so, a significant number of students are enrolled in private schools in low-income school districts. (All data in the next five charts are derived from the five-year estimates of the 2017 American Community Survey and therefore reflect the average of data drawn during 2013–17):

School Enrollment in New York City by Family Income and Census Tract

Income Range in Census Tracts	Total Enrollment	Students in Private Schools	# of Families in Census Tracts	Distribution of Annual Family Income			
				Families Below \$50K	Families \$50K–\$99.9K	Families \$100K–\$199.9K	Families \$200K and Above
\$250K and above	17,093	61.8%	32,653	6.6%	9.0%	18.2%	66.2%
\$200K—\$249.9K	27,311	59.6%	59,203	8.2%	10.6%	26.4%	54.9%
\$150–\$199.9K	35,139	44.9%	73,248	11.8%	13.2%	33.7%	41.3%
\$100–\$149.9K	116,474	30.9%	202,083	18.0%	23.8%	39.2%	19.1%
\$50–\$99.9K	587,643	18.0%	826,418	34.5%	33.2%	25.6%	6.6%
Below \$50K	537,054	13.7%	572,934	64.6%	23.3%	10.1%	2.0%
Grand Total	1,320,714	19.5%	1,766,539	40.1%	26.9%	22.4%	10.7%

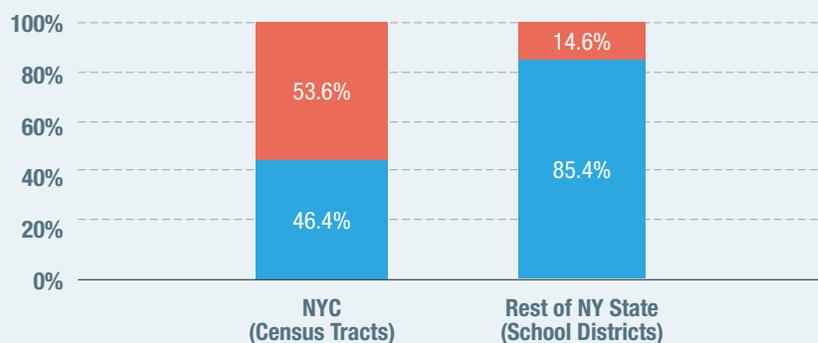


School Enrollment in the Rest of New York State by Family Income and School District

Income Range in Census Tracts	Total Enrollment	Students in Private Schools	# of Families in Census Tracts	Distribution of Annual Family Income			
				Families Below \$50K	Families \$50K–\$99.9K	Families \$100K–\$199.9K	Families \$200K and Above
\$250K and above	9,613	16.4%	9,051	5.1%	8.3%	19.8%	66.8%
\$200K–\$249.9K	21,251	17.6%	22,051	6.7%	10.5%	25.5%	57.3%
\$150–\$199.9K	80,939	13.6%	105,612	10.0%	16.6%	34.9%	38.6%
\$100–\$149.9K	639,326	15.4%	886,150	14.9%	25.1%	39.8%	20.1%
\$50–\$99.9K	1,071,438	12.9%	1,574,812	31.5%	35.8%	27.0%	5.7%
Below \$50K	174,528	14.7%	201,604	56.9%	28.0%	12.9%	2.1%
Grand Total	1,997,095	13.9%	2,799,280	27.0%	30.9%	30.3%	11.9%

Enrollment in Public and Private Schools in Areas with Average Family Income \$150K and Above, New York City and the Rest of New York State

Public School
Private School



Across the state, higher-income areas tend to have much higher adult educational-attainment levels than do lower-income areas. They also tend to include more white and Asian families than other communities:

New York City Census Tracts: Demographic Characteristics

Income Range in Tracts	Adults 25 and Over		Racial Distribution—All Residents			
	HS Grad or Higher	Bachelor's or Higher	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
\$250K and above	97.8%	83.4%	77.2%	1.8%	11.1%	6.7%
\$200–\$249.9K	97.5%	83.6%	76.1%	2.6%	11.0%	7.5%
\$150–\$199.9K	96.2%	78.7%	69.1%	4.1%	13.2%	10.1%
\$100–\$149.9K	91.5%	51.0%	61.3%	9.5%	13.3%	13.3%
\$50–\$99.9K	82.9%	32.8%	29.7%	25.9%	16.8%	24.0%
Below \$50K	68.6%	19.6%	13.4%	25.7%	11.9%	47.0%
Total	81.1%	36.5%	32.1%	21.7%	14.3%	28.9%



New York State School Districts Outside New York City: Demographic Characteristics

Income Range in Tracts	Adults 25 and Over		Racial Distribution—All Residents			
	HS Grad or Higher	Bachelor's or Higher	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
\$250K and above	98.2%	84.3%	81.2%	0.7%	11.0%	4.4%
\$200–\$249.9K	96.9%	77.9%	79.9%	1.8%	10.3%	5.6%
\$150–\$199.9K	95.8%	63.5%	74.6%	3.4%	12.6%	7.2%
\$100–\$149.9K	92.9%	44.6%	72.3%	6.7%	6.4%	12.5%
\$50–\$99.9K	89.0%	27.8%	76.9%	7.6%	2.4%	10.7%
Below \$50K	82.6%	22.8%	53.2%	27.0%	4.4%	11.5%
Total	90.0%	34.4%	73.5%	8.7%	4.2%	11.1%

In New York State as a whole, and in New York City, Jewish schools educate more students than schools of any other religious affiliation. There are many more students enrolled in Jewish schools in New York State as a whole than are enrolled in public charter schools. Outside New York City, Catholic schools serve more students than Jewish schools:

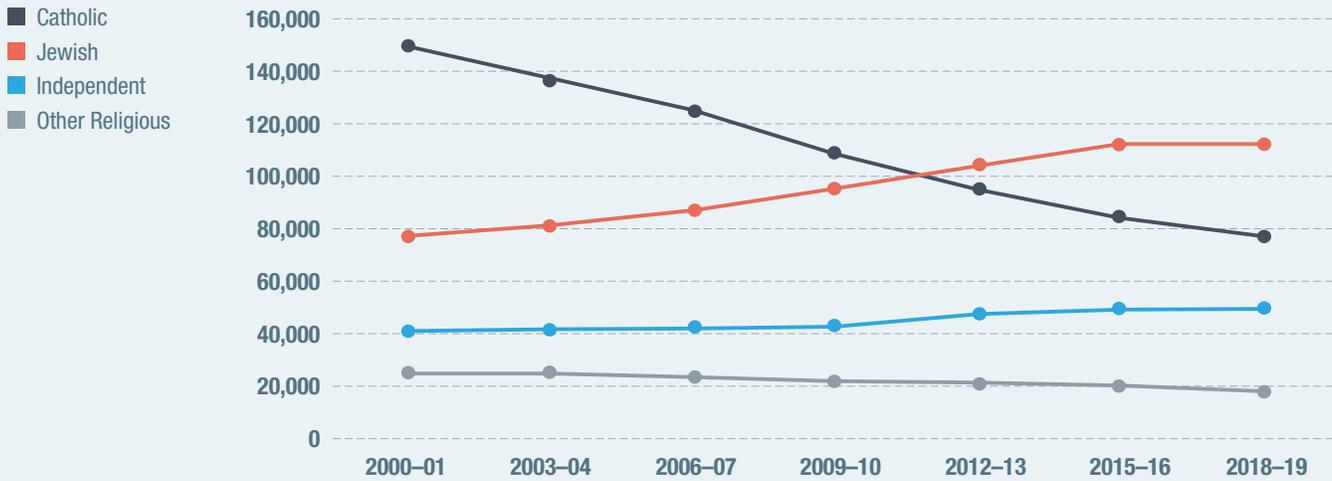
Student Enrollment in Private Schools, 2018–19

Affiliation	New York State		New York City		Rest of NY State	
All Private Schools:	442,594	100.0%	256,678	100.0%	185,916	100.0%
Jewish	170,368	38.5%	111,970	43.6%	58,398	31.4%
Catholic	149,062	33.7%	77,025	30.0%	72,037	38.7%
Independent	87,841	19.8%	49,544	19.3%	38,297	20.6%
Other*	35,323	8.0%	18,139	7.1%	17,184	9.2%

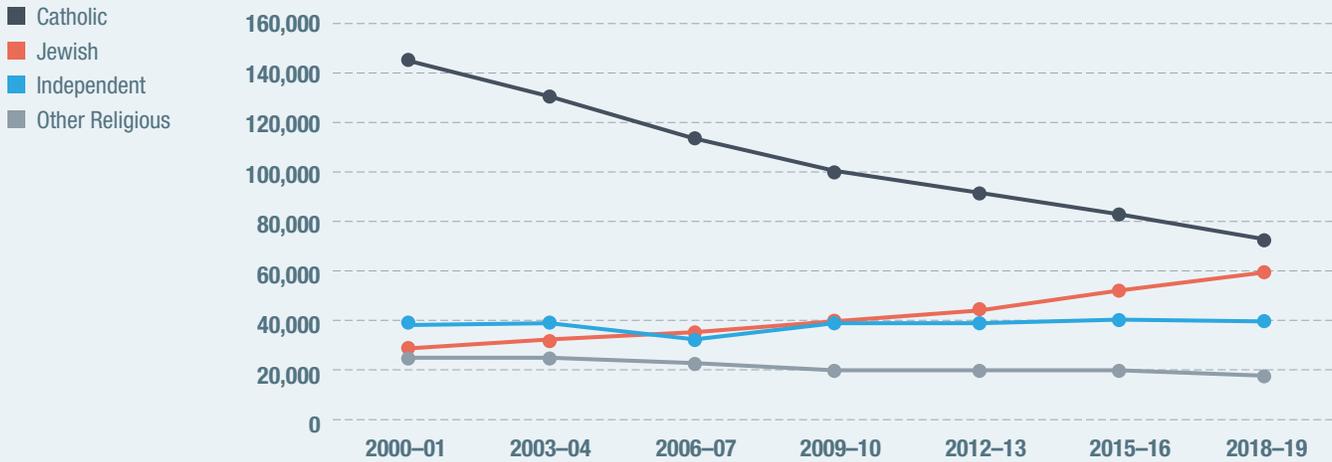
*Includes schools with 11 different affiliations, including Christian Fundamentalist, Lutheran, Muslim, Mennonite, Baptist, etc.

Student enrollment in New York City and State private schools has changed dramatically since 2000–01. In those 18 years, enrollment in Catholic schools in the city and the rest of the state has dropped by half; and Jewish schools have grown by 46.3% in the city and 106.7% in the rest of the state:

Private School Enrollment in New York City, 2001–19, by School Type



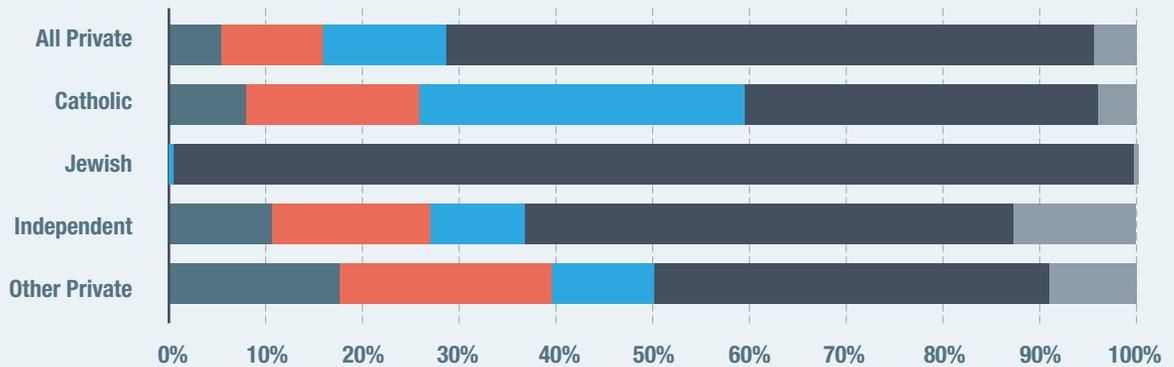
Private School Enrollment in New York State (Outside the City), 2001–19, by School Type



Students enrolled in Jewish schools (New York City and State) are almost exclusively white. Schools of other affiliations serve more mixed populations. In New York City's Catholic schools, black and Hispanic students constitute more than half of all students. Outside the city, 70% of the students in Catholic schools are white:

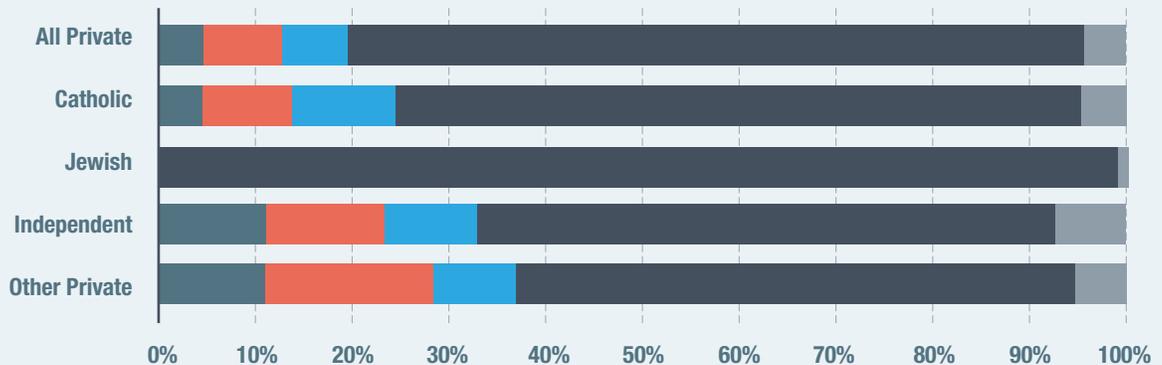
Racial/Ethnic Enrollment by Private School Affiliation: New York City, 2018–19

	All Private	Catholic	Jewish	Independent	Other Private
Asian	5.7%	8.1%	0.1%	10.5%	17.5%
Black	10.2%	18.0%	0.1%	16.4%	22.2%
Hispanic	12.6%	33.1%	0.2%	9.8%	10.1%
White	66.9%	36.7%	99.4%	50.2%	40.8%
Other	4.6%	4.1%	0.1%	13.1%	9.4%



Racial/Ethnic Enrollment by Private School Affiliation: New York State Outside New York City, 2018–19

	All Private	Catholic	Jewish	Independent	Other Private
Asian	5.2%	4.7%	0.1%	11.3%	11.1%
Black	7.7%	9.1%	0.0%	12.3%	17.5%
Hispanic	7.0%	10.7%	0.2%	9.6%	8.7%
White	76.0%	70.8%	98.8%	59.5%	57.7%
Other	4.1%	4.6%	0.9%	7.3%	5.0%



Endnotes

- ¹ New York State Education Department, Information and Reporting Services, Nonpublic School Enrollment and Public School Enrollment.
- ² U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder.

