

Characteristics of Traditional Public, Public Charter, and Private School Teachers

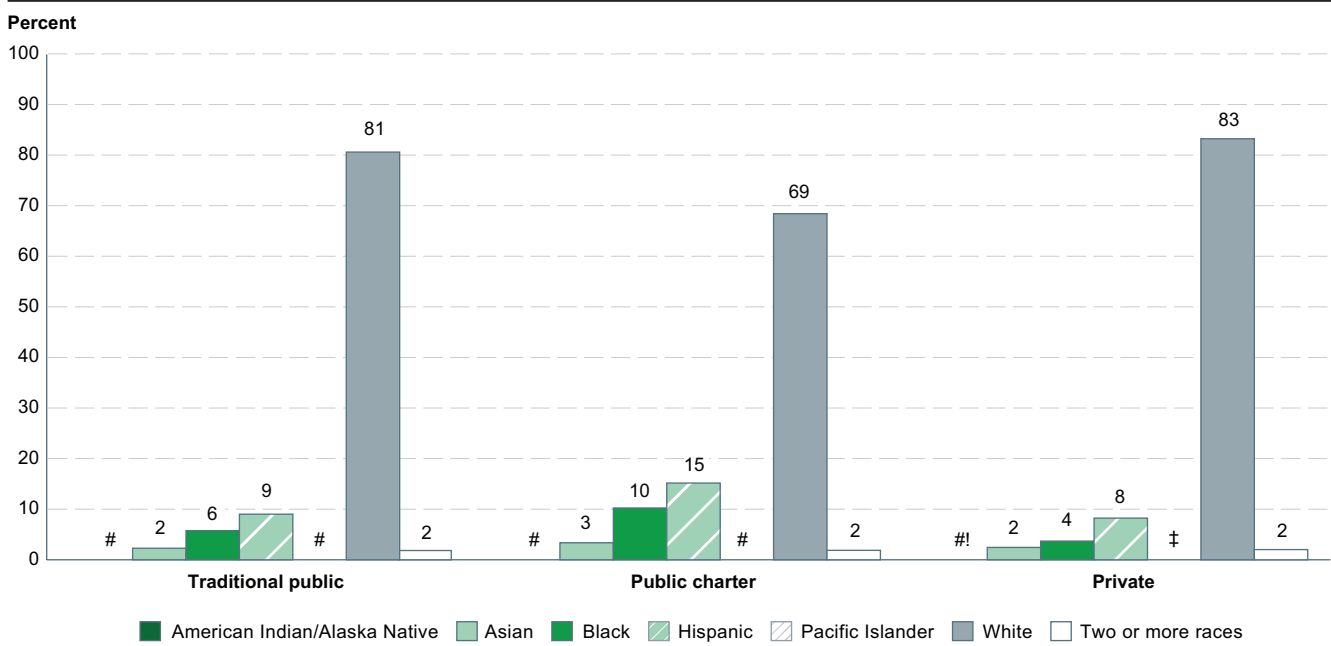
In the 2020–21 school year, the percentage of teachers who had completed a postbaccalaureate degree as their highest degree (including a master’s degree, an education specialist degree or certificate, or a doctor’s degree) was higher for traditional public school teachers (62 percent) than for public charter and private school teachers (51 and 50 percent, respectively).

In the 2020-21 school year, there were 3.5 million full-time and part-time traditional public school teachers, 251,000 public charter school teachers, and 466,000 private school teachers.¹ Compared to the 2017-18 school year—the most recent prior data collection—the number of public school teachers was higher in 2020-21. The number of traditional public school teachers was 5 percent higher than in 2017-18 (3.3 million), and the number of public charter school teachers was 22 percent higher than in 2017-18 (206,000). In contrast, the number of

private school teachers was 8 percent lower in 2020-21 than in 2017-18 (509,000).² This indicator describes the demographic characteristics, years of experience, and educational attainment of traditional public, public charter, and private school teachers in 2020-21. This indicator also compares the percentage of traditional public and public charter school teachers by certification type. For more information on public school teachers, including comparisons over time, please see indicator “[Characteristics of Public School Teachers](#).”

Teacher Demographics and Experience

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of teachers in traditional public, public charter, and private elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity: School year 2020–21



Rounds to zero.

! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

‡ Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.

NOTE: Excludes teachers who teach only prekindergarten. Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time teachers rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent teachers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), “Public School Teacher Data File” and “Private School Teacher Data File,” 2020–21. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 209.10 and 209.21.

Characteristics of Traditional Public, Public Charter, and Private School Teachers

In the 2020-21 school year, the racial/ethnic composition of the elementary and secondary teacher population varied by school type.

The percentage of teachers who were White was

- highest for private school teachers (83 percent); and
- lowest for public charter school teachers (69 percent).

The percentage of teachers who were Hispanic was

- highest for public charter school teachers (15 percent); and
- not measurably different for traditional public school teachers compared to private school teachers (9 and 8 percent, respectively).

The percentage of teachers who were Black was

- highest for public charter school teachers (10 percent); and
- lowest for private school teachers (4 percent).

Chapter: 2/Preprimary, Elementary, and Secondary Education

Section: Teachers and Staff

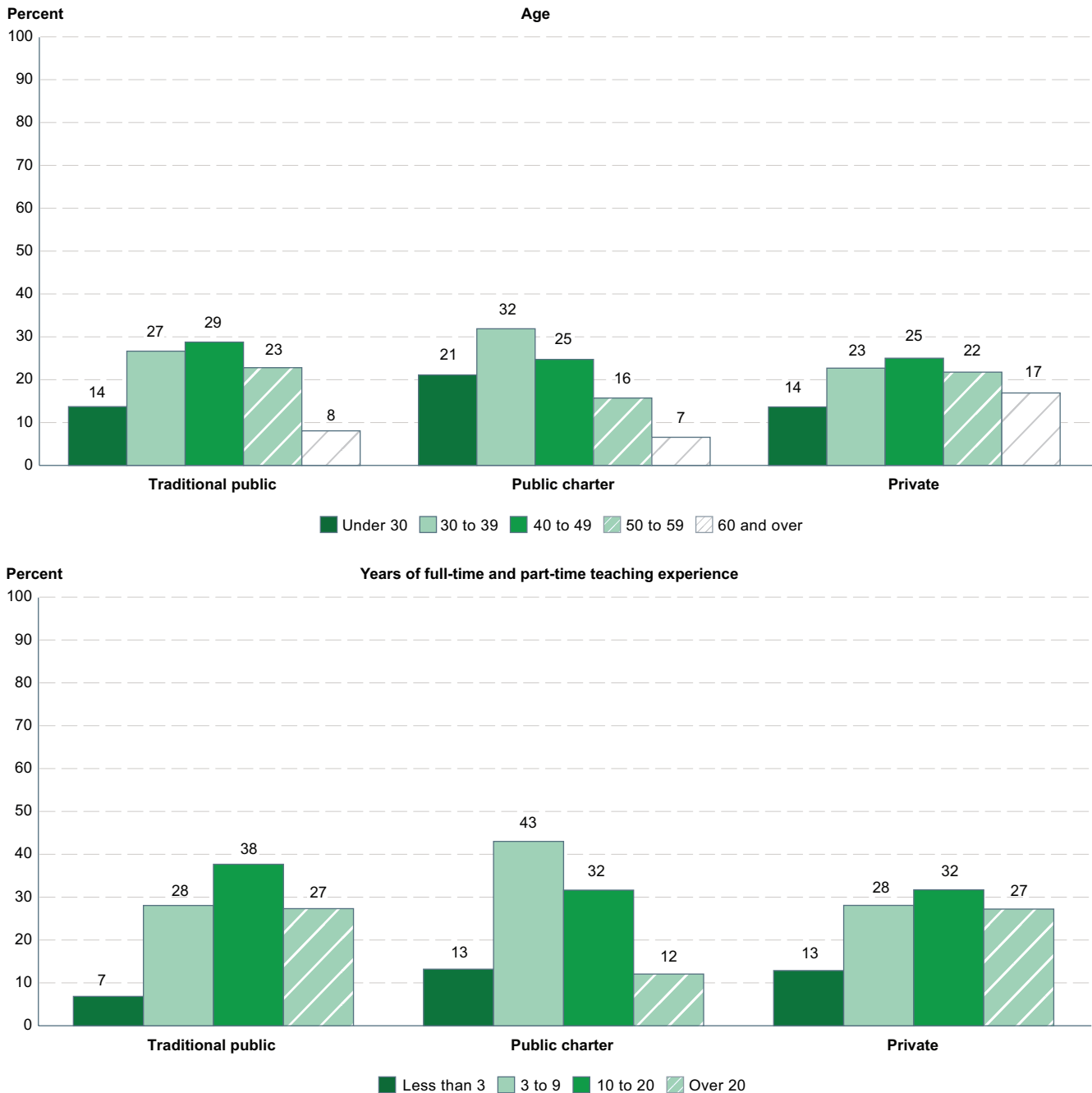
The percentage of teachers who were Asian was

- higher for public charter school teachers (3 percent) than traditional public school teachers (2 percent); and
- not measurably different for private school teachers compared to teachers at other school types.

The following racial/ethnic groups made up 2 percent or less of elementary and secondary teachers at all three types of schools:

- American Indian/Alaska Native;
- Pacific Islander;³ and
- those of Two or more races.

Figure 2. Percentage distribution of teachers in traditional public, public charter, and private elementary and secondary schools, by age and years of full-time and part-time teaching experience: School year 2020–21



NOTE: Excludes teachers who teach only prekindergarten. Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time teachers rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent teachers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), “Public School Teacher Data File” and “Private School Teacher Data File,” 2020–21. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 209.10 and 209.21.

Characteristics of Traditional Public, Public Charter, and Private School Teachers

The public charter school teacher workforce was younger than the traditional public and private school teacher workforces in school year 2020-21. Generally, charter schools had higher percentages of their workforces in the age categories under 40 and lower percentages in the age categories 50 and over, compared with traditional public and private school teachers. For instance, the percentage of teachers under 30 was

- highest for public charter school teachers (21 percent); and
- not measurably different for traditional public school teachers compared to private school teachers (14 percent each).

Conversely, the percentage of teachers who were 60 or over was

- lowest for public charter school teachers (7 percent); and
- highest for private school teachers (17 percent).

Chapter: 2/Preprimary, Elementary, and Secondary Education **Section:** Teachers and Staff

In keeping with their younger age, the public charter school teacher workforce had less teaching experience than the traditional public and private school teacher workforces in school year 2020-21. The majority of charter school teachers had less than 10 years of experience, while the majority of traditional public and private school teachers had 10 years of experience or more. For instance, the percentage of teachers with 3 to 9 years of experience was

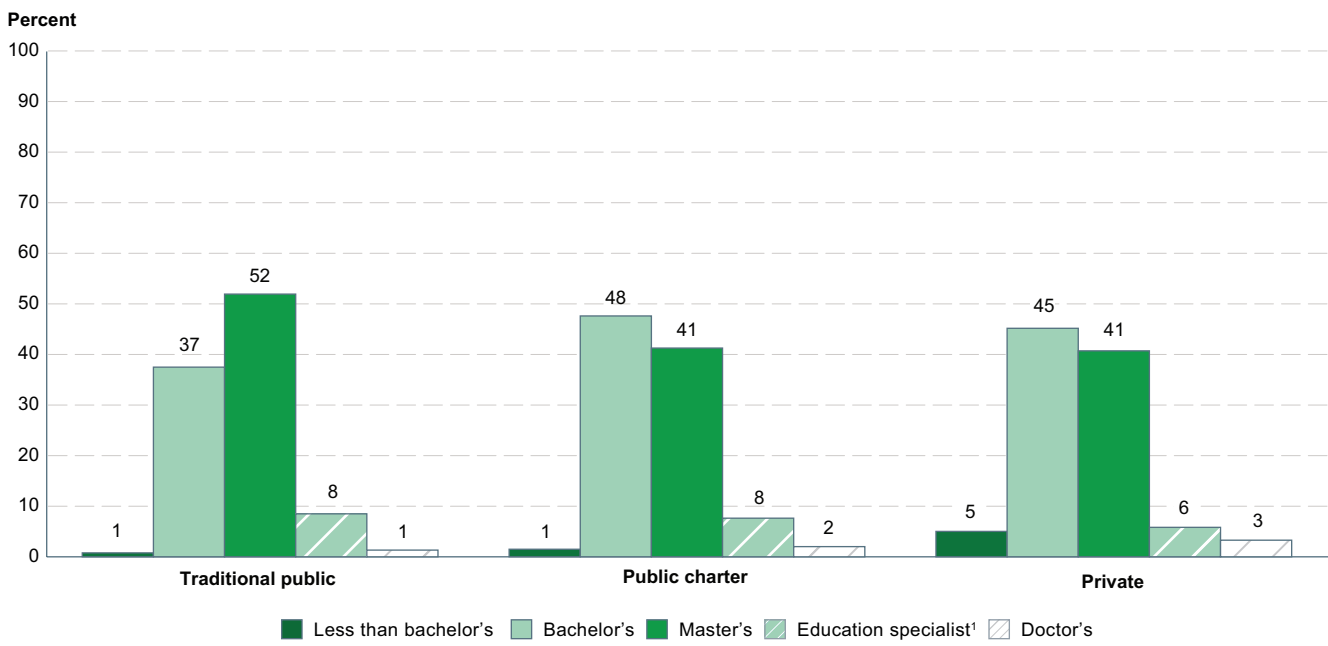
- highest for public charter school teachers (43 percent); and
- not measurably different for traditional public school teachers compared to private school teachers (28 percent each).

Conversely, the percentage of teachers with over 20 years of experience was

- lowest for public charter school teachers (12 percent); and
- not measurably different for traditional public school teachers compared to private school teachers (27 percent each).

Teacher Education Level and Certification

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of teachers in traditional public, public charter, and private elementary and secondary schools, by highest degree earned: School year 2020–21

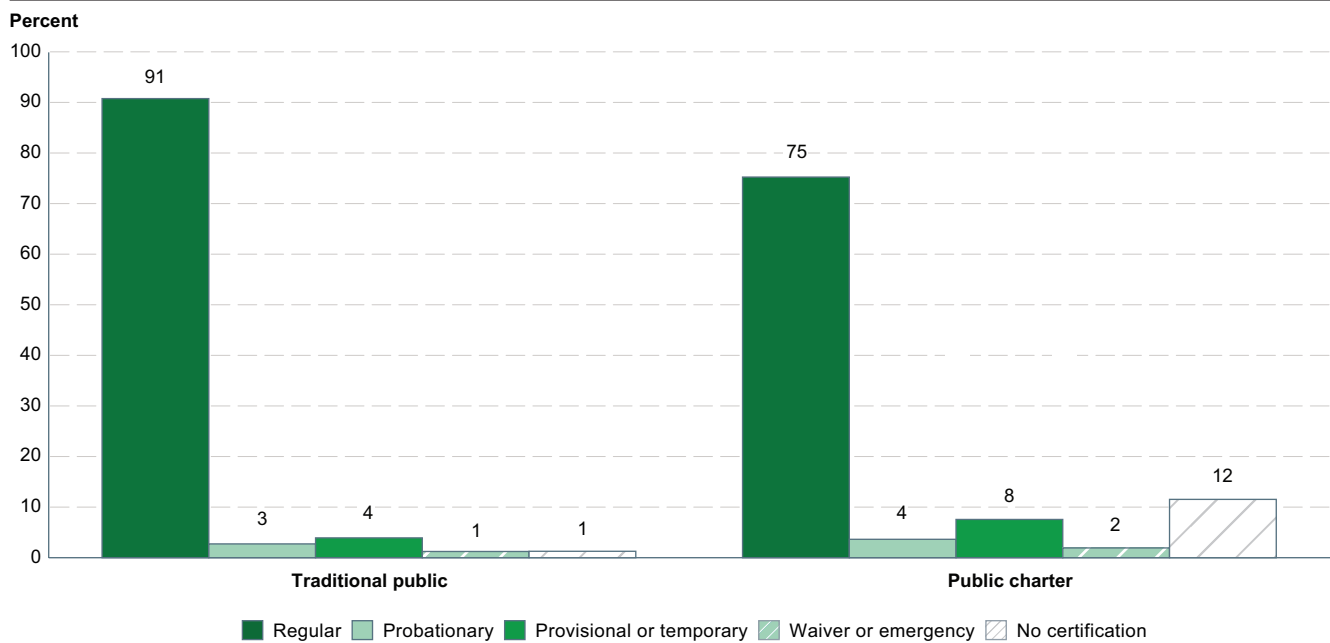


¹ Education specialist degrees or certificates are generally awarded for 1 year's work beyond the master's level. Includes certificate of advanced graduate studies. NOTE: Excludes teachers who teach only prekindergarten. Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time teachers rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent teachers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Teacher Data File" and "Private School Teacher Data File," 2020–21. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 209.10 and 209.21.

In the 2020-21 school year, the percentage of teachers who had completed a postbaccalaureate degree as their highest degree⁴ (including a master's degree, an education specialist degree or certificate,⁵ or a doctor's degree) was higher for traditional public school teachers (62 percent) than for public charter and private school teachers (51 and 50 percent, respectively). This was driven by the higher

percentage of traditional public school teachers with a master's degree (52 percent for traditional public vs. 41 percent each for public charter and private schools). However, the percentage of teachers with doctor's degrees was lowest in traditional public schools (1 percent) and highest in private schools (3 percent).

Figure 4. Percentage distribution of teachers in traditional public and public charter elementary and secondary schools, by certification type: School year 2020–21



NOTE: Excludes teachers who teach only prekindergarten. Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time teachers rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent teachers. Certification type refers to certification of teachers to teach in the state where they are currently teaching. A teaching certificate is probationary if all requirements have been satisfied except completion of a probationary period. It is provisional or temporary if additional coursework, student teaching, or passage of a test is required to obtain regular certification. It is a waiver or emergency certificate if a certification program must be completed to continue teaching. Data on certification type are not available for private school teachers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), “Public School Teacher Data File,” 2020–21. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 209.21.

Data on teaching certification were available for traditional public and public charter school teachers.⁶ In the 2020–21 school year, a higher percentage of traditional public school teachers than of public charter school teachers held a regular certification (91 vs. 75 percent). Lower percentages of traditional public school teachers

than of public charter school teachers held all other types of certifications, or had no certification, including

- a probationary certification (3 vs. 4 percent);
- a provisional or temporary certification (4 vs. 8 percent);
- a waiver or emergency certification (1 vs. 2 percent); and
- no certification (1 vs. 12 percent).

Endnotes:

¹ Excludes teachers who taught only prekindergarten. These numbers are based on sample survey data and could differ from those based on other sample surveys or universe surveys.
² For projections on the number of new teachers to be hired by the year 2030, please see *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 208.20.
³ The percentage of private school teachers who were Pacific Islander did not meet reporting standards in 2020–21 and thus is excluded from this analysis.
⁴ Discussion of teachers’ degrees refers to teachers’ highest level of education attained.

⁵ Education specialist degrees or certificates are generally awarded for 1 year’s work beyond the master’s level. Includes certificate of advanced graduate studies.
⁶ Refers to certification of teachers to teach in the state where they are currently teaching. A teaching certificate is probationary if all requirements have been satisfied except completion of a probationary period. It is provisional or temporary if additional coursework, student teaching, or passage of a test is required to obtain regular certification. It is a waiver or emergency certificate if a certification program must be completed to continue teaching.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 209.10, 209.21, and 209.22

Related indicators and resources: [Characteristics of Elementary and Secondary Schools](#); [Characteristics of Public School Teachers](#); [Private School Enrollment](#); [Public Charter School Enrollment](#); [Public School Enrollment](#); [School Choice in the United States: 2019](#)

Glossary: Bachelor’s degree; Doctor’s degree; Education specialist/professional diploma; Educational attainment; Master’s degree; Private school; Public charter school