

Public School Enrollment

From school years 2010–11 through 2021–22, public elementary and secondary school enrollment is projected to increase by 7 percent from 49.5 to 53.1 million students, but with changes across states ranging from an increase of 22 percent in Alaska to a decrease of 15 percent in the District of Columbia.

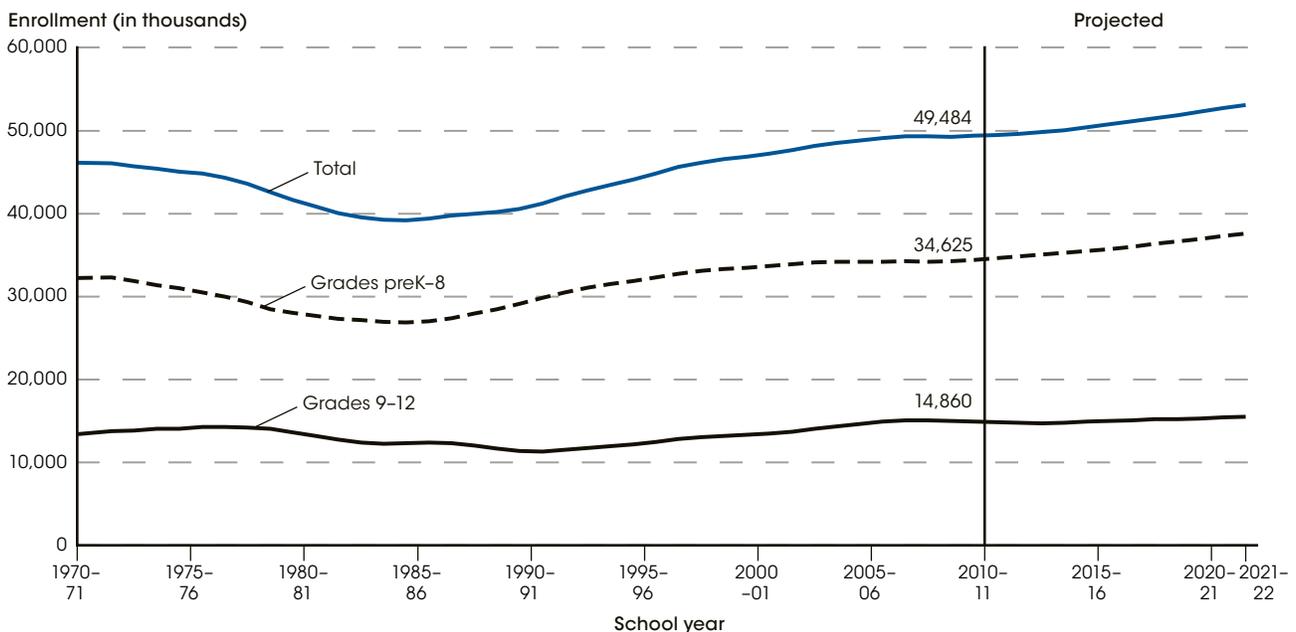
In school year 2010–11, some 49.5 million students were enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools. Of these students, 34.6 million were enrolled in prekindergarten (preK) through grade 8, and 14.9 million were enrolled in grades 9 through 12.

Public school enrollment declined during the 1970s and early 1980s and rose in the latter part of the 1980s. Enrollment continued to increase throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. By school year 1997–98, public school enrollment had reached 46.1 million students and had surpassed its early 1970s peak. Between 2000–01 and 2006–07, public school enrollment increased by 2.1 million students, reaching 49.3 million students in school year 2006–07 where it remained until 2008–09. Total public school enrollment reached 49.5 million in 2010–11. From 2010–11 to 2021–22, total public school

enrollment is projected to increase by 7 percent to 53.1 million (2021–22 is the last year for which projected data are available).

Enrollment trends in grades preK–8 and 9–12 have differed over time as successive cohorts of students have moved through the public school system. For example, enrollment in grades preK–8 decreased throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, while enrollment in grades 9–12 generally decreased in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. Enrollment in grades preK–8 increased from 1985–86 through 2003–04 and fluctuated between 34.2 million and 34.6 million between 2003–04 and 2010–11. Public school enrollment in grades preK–8 is projected to increase from 34.6 million in 2010–11 to an estimated 37.6 million in 2021–22, reflecting an increase of 9 percent in 2021–22. Public school enrollment in grades

Figure 1. Actual and projected public school enrollment in grades prekindergarten (preK) through 12, by grade level: School years 1970–71 through 2021–22

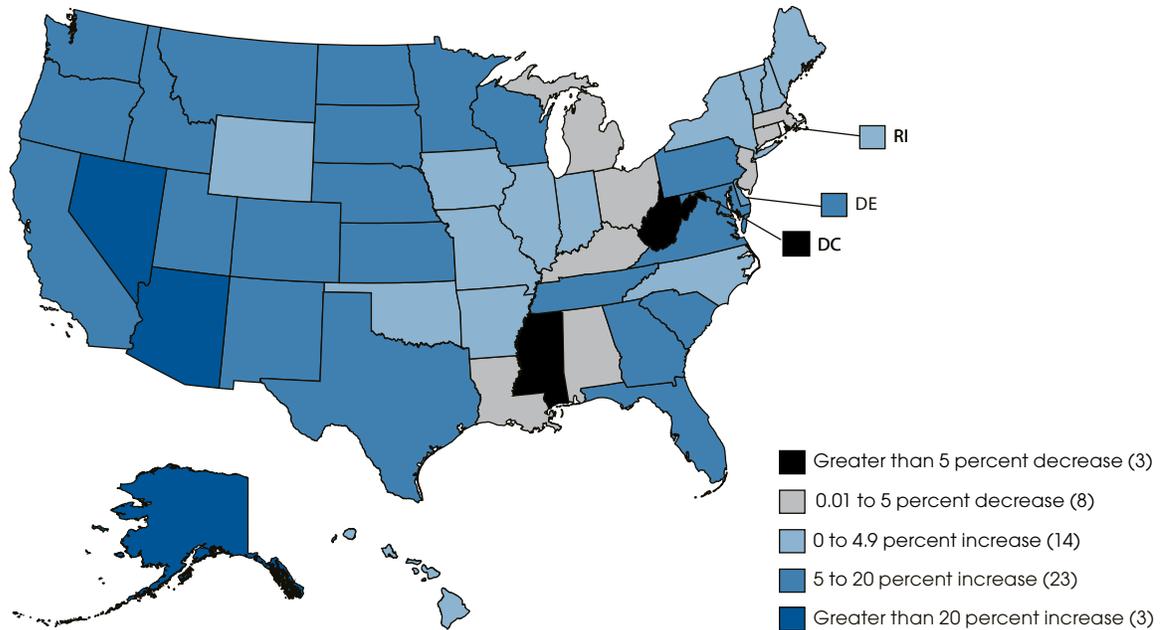


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Statistics of Public Elementary and Secondary Day Schools, 1970–71 through 1984–85; Common Core of Data (CCD), “State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education,” 1985–86 through 2010–11, and National Elementary and Secondary Enrollment Model, 1972–2010; Projections of Education Statistics to 2021. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 36.

9–12 increased from 1991–92 through 2007–08, but declined through 2010–11 and is projected to continue declining through 2012–13. From 2013–14 through 2021–22, enrollment in grades 9–12 is projected to

increase, and it is projected to surpass its 2007–08 level by 2021–22. Overall, public school enrollment in grades 9–12 is projected to increase 4 percent between 2010–11 and 2021–22.

Figure 2. Projected percent change in public school enrollment in grades prekindergarten (preK) through 12, by state or jurisdiction: Between school years 2010–11 and 2021–22



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD). "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2010–11; and Public State Elementary and Secondary Enrollment Model, 1980–2010. Projections of Education Statistics to 2021. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 36.

Public school enrollment in grades preK–12 increased in 41 states from 1989–90 to 2010–11, with the greatest increases occurring in Nevada and Arizona (134 and 76 percent, respectively). During that period, total enrollment declined in nine states and the District of Columbia. From 2010–11 to 2021–22, Alaska, Nevada, and Arizona are projected to see the greatest percentage increases in total enrollment (22, 21, and 20, respectively). The District of Columbia is projected to see the largest percentage decrease in total enrollment over the same time period (15 percent).

From 2010–11 to 2021–22, the changes in public elementary and secondary enrollments are projected to

differ among the states. Reflecting the larger national enrollment increase expected at the preK–8 than at the grade 9–12 level, 43 states are expected to have enrollment increases at the preK–8 level between 2009–10 to 2021–22, while 36 states are expected to have increases at the grade 9–12 level. In grades preK–8, enrollment is projected to increase by more than 20 percent in Alaska, Nevada, Arizona, and Washington but decrease by 11 and 13 percent, respectively, in the District of Columbia and West Virginia. Enrollment in grades 9–12 in Texas is expected to increase by more than 20 percent, while enrollment in these grades in the District of Columbia is projected to decrease by 20 percent or more.

Reference table: *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 36

Glossary: Elementary school, Secondary school, Prekindergarten, Public school