

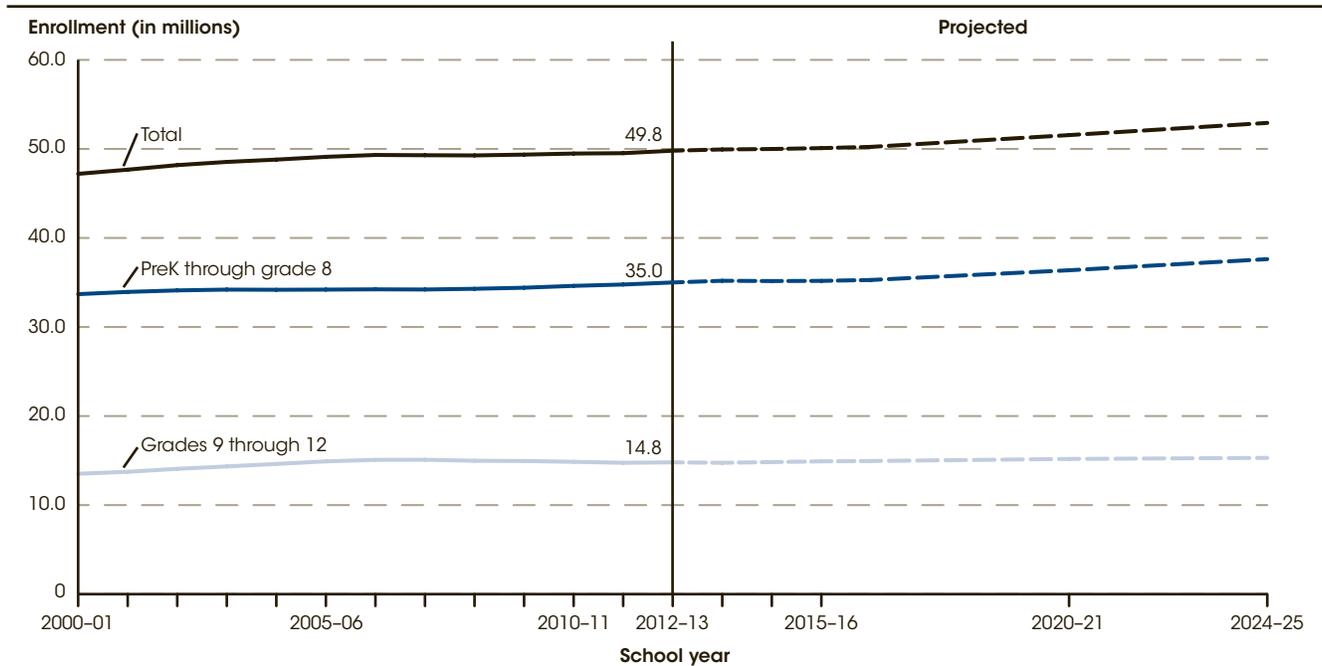
# Public School Enrollment

*From school years 2012–13 through 2024–25, overall public elementary and secondary school enrollment is projected to increase by 6 percent (from 49.8 million to 52.9 million students), with changes across states ranging from an increase of 26 percent in Nevada to a decrease of 11 percent in West Virginia.*

Public school enrollment changes are largely reflective of demographic changes in the population. This indicator discusses overall changes in public school (including both traditional public school and public charter school) enrollment as well as changes in public school enrollment within grade levels and by state. In school year 2012–13, some 49.8 million students were enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools. Of these students, 70 percent (35.0 million) were in prekindergarten (preK) through grade 8 and 30 percent (14.8 million) were in grades 9 through 12.

Following a decline in the 1970s and early 1980s, enrollment began rising in the latter part of the 1980s and continued to increase throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Between 2000–01 and 2012–13, public school enrollment increased by 2.6 million students, reaching a total of 49.8 million students. From 2012–13 to 2024–25 (the last year for which projected data are available), total public school enrollment is projected to increase by 6 percent, to 52.9 million students.

**Figure 1. Actual and projected public school enrollment in prekindergarten (preK) through grade 12, by grade level: School years 2000–01 through 2024–25**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2000–01 through 2012–13; and State Public Elementary and Secondary Enrollment Projection Model, 1980 through 2024. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, tables 203.20, 203.25, and 203.30.

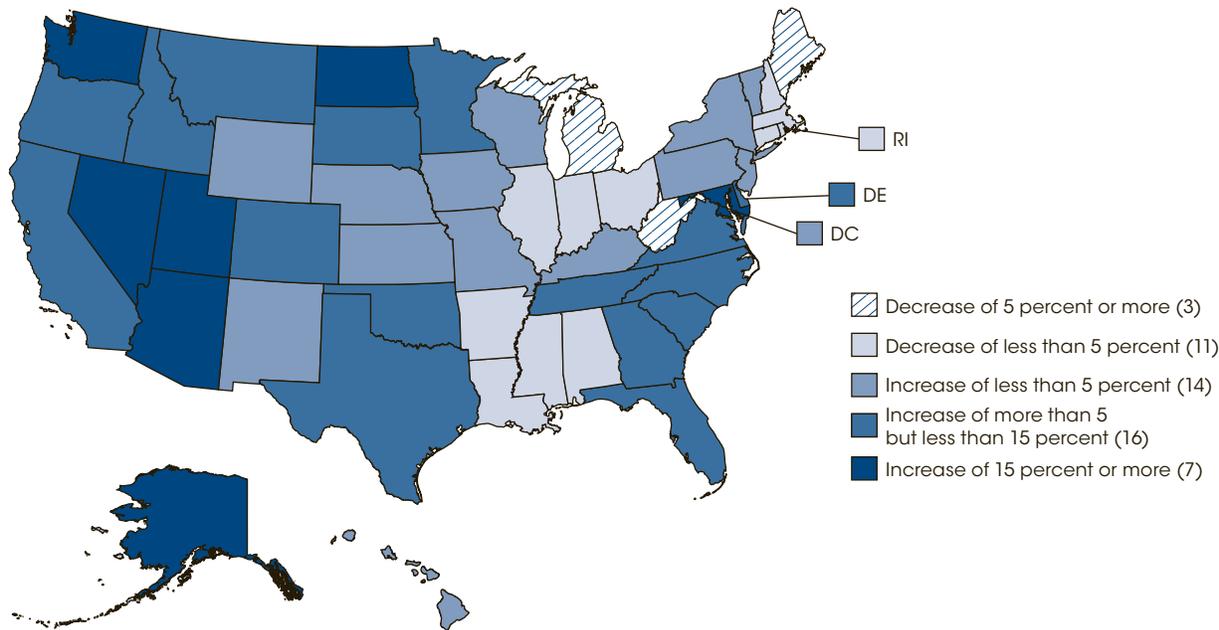
Enrollment trends in preK through grade 8 and grades 9 through 12 have differed over time as successive cohorts of students have moved through the public school system. For example, enrollment in preK through grade 8 decreased throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, while enrollment in grades 9 through 12 generally did not begin to decrease until the late 1970s and continued to decrease

further into the 1980s than enrollment in preK through grade 8 did. Enrollment in preK through grade 8 started to rise in the latter part of the 1980s and continued to rise throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Between 2000–01 and 2012–13, enrollment in preK through grade 8 increased by 1.3 million students, reaching a total of 35.0 million students. Public school enrollment in preK

through grade 8 is projected to increase to 37.6 million students in 2024–25, an increase of 7 percent over 2012–13. After declining in the 1980s, public school enrollment in grades 9 through 12 began to increase again in 1990–91. Despite a period of decline from 2008–09 through 2011–12, the years from 2000–01 to 2012–13 saw an overall 9 percent increase in enrollment in grades 9 through 12, which resulted in a total of 14.8 million students in 2012–13. Between 2012–13 and 2024–25, enrollment in grades 9 through 12 is projected to increase by 4 percent, to 15.3 million students.

Public school enrollment in preK through grade 12 increased in 32 states and the District of Columbia from 2000–01 to 2012–13, with the largest increases occurring in Nevada, Utah, Texas, and Arizona (31, 27, 25, and 24 percent, respectively). During this period, total enrollment declined in the other 18 states, with the largest decreases occurring in Vermont and Maine (12 and 10 percent, respectively).

**Figure 2. Projected percentage change in public school enrollment in prekindergarten through grade 12, by state: Between school years 2012–13 and 2024–25**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), “State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education,” 2012–13; and State Public Elementary and Secondary Enrollment Projection Model, 1980 through 2024. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 203.20.

Changes in total enrollment are also projected to vary across states from 2012–13 to 2024–25. For example, West Virginia is projected to see the largest percentage decrease in total enrollment (11 percent), while Nevada, North Dakota, and Arizona are projected to see the largest percentage increases (26, 23, and 21 percent, respectively). Nevada and Arizona were also among the states with the largest percentage increases from 2000–01 to 2012–13. Changes in public school enrollment are projected to differ by state at the elementary and secondary school levels from 2012–13 to 2024–25. Reflecting the larger national enrollment increase expected at the elementary school level during this period, 37 states and the District

of Columbia are expected to have enrollment increases in preK through grade 8, compared with increases for 33 states and the District of Columbia in grades 9 through 12. In preK through grade 8, enrollment is projected to increase by more than 20 percent in Nevada, Arizona, and Alaska, but it is projected to decrease by more than 10 percent in West Virginia. Enrollment in grades 9 through 12 is expected to increase by more than 20 percent in North Dakota and Utah, but it is projected to decrease by 10 percent or more in New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island, and Michigan.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, tables 203.20, 203.25, and 203.30; tables ESE 70 through ESE 89 at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/AnnualReports/historicaltables.asp>.

**Related indicators:** Enrollment Trends by Age (indicator 6), Charter School Enrollment (indicator 9), Private School Enrollment (indicator 10), Characteristics of Traditional Public and Public Charter Schools (indicator 16), Teachers and Pupil/Teacher Ratios (indicator 19)

**Glossary:** Elementary school, Prekindergarten, Public school or institution, Secondary school