

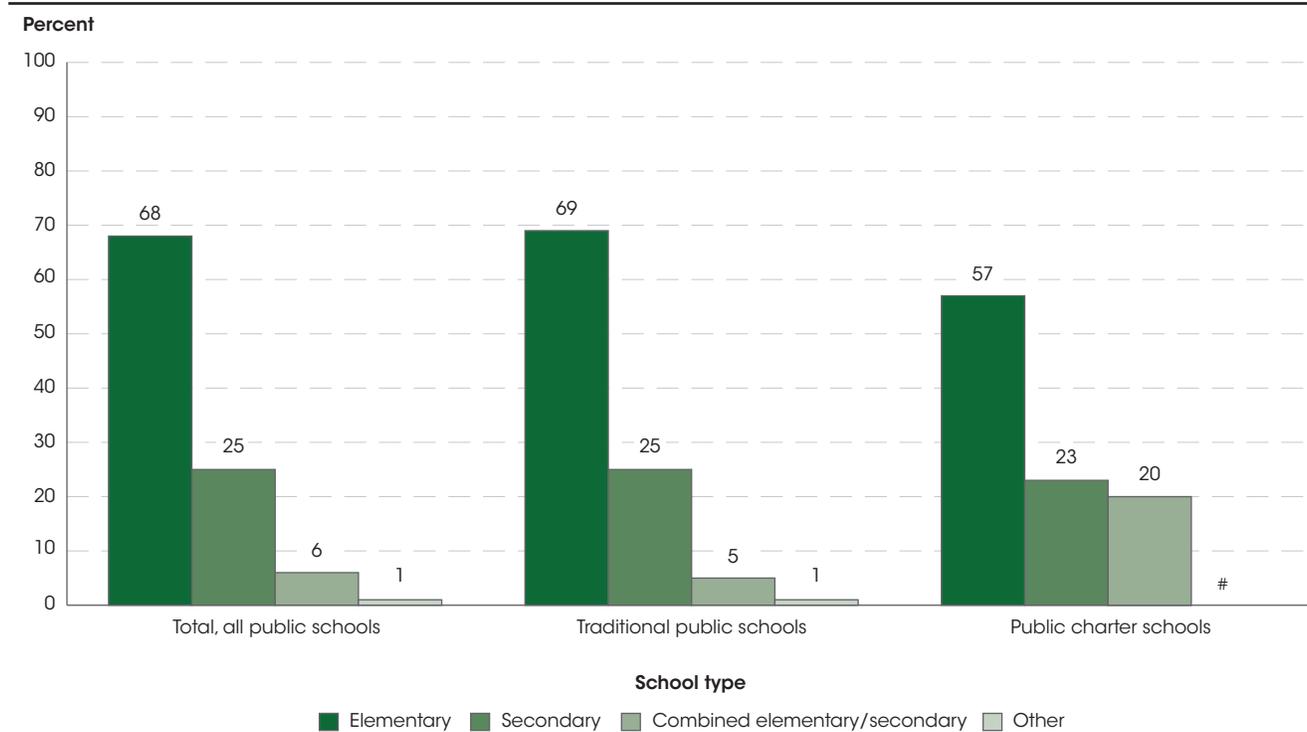
Characteristics of Traditional Public Schools and Public Charter Schools

High-poverty schools, in which more than 75 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Program, accounted for 25 percent of all public schools in 2014–15. In that year, 24 percent of traditional public schools were high-poverty compared with 36 percent of public charter schools.

In school year 2014–15, there were 98,180 public schools in the United States, including 91,430 traditional public schools and 6,750 public charter schools. The total number of public schools was higher in 2014–15 than in 2004–05, when there was a total of 96,510 public schools, which included 93,110 traditional public schools and 3,400 public charter schools. Between school years

2004–05 and 2014–15, the percentage of all public schools that were traditional public schools decreased from 96 to 93 percent, while the percentage that were charter schools increased from 4 to 7 percent. See indicator [Public Charter School Enrollment](#) for additional information about charter schools and charter school legislation.

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of traditional public schools and public charter schools, by school level: School year 2014–15



Rounds to zero.

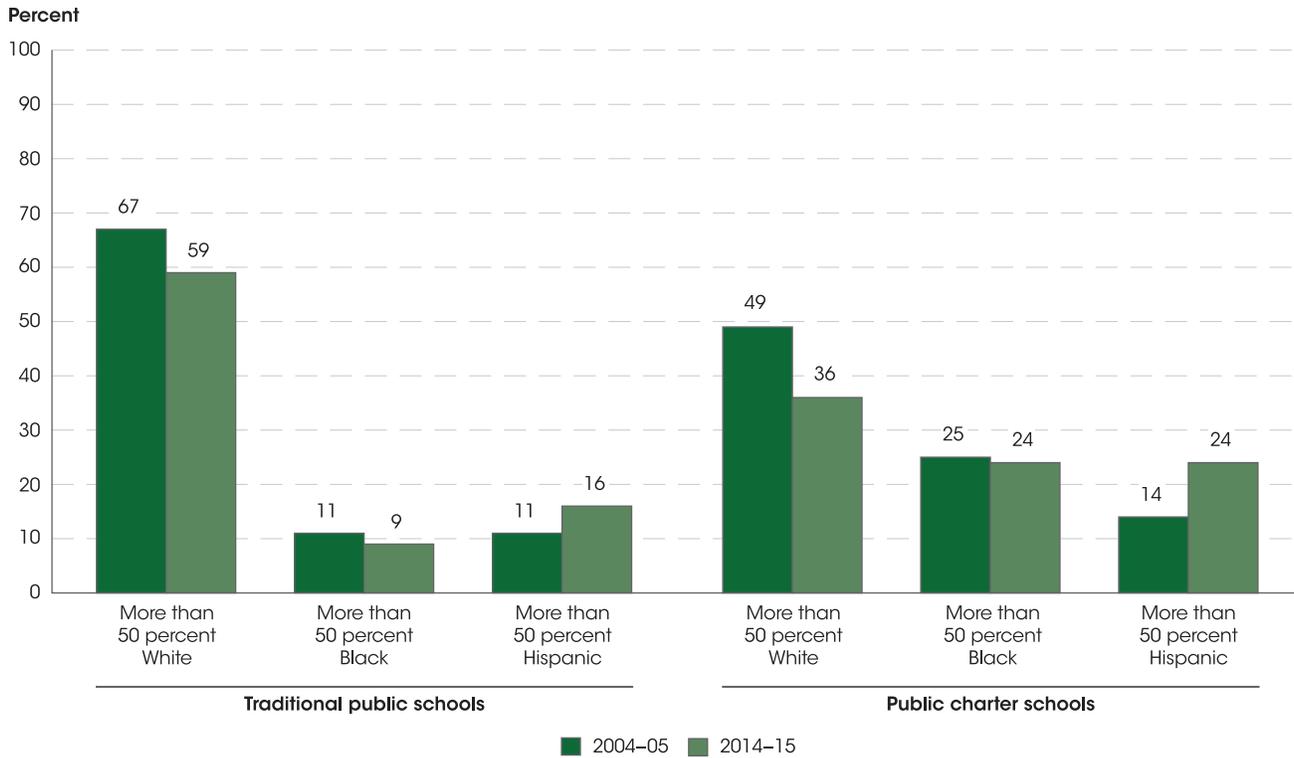
NOTE: "Elementary" includes schools beginning with grade 6 or below and with no grade higher than 8. "Secondary" includes schools with no grade lower than 7. "Combined elementary/secondary" includes schools beginning with grade 6 or below and ending with grade 9 or above. "Other" includes schools not classified by grade span. Detail may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2014–15. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 216.30.

Over two-thirds of traditional public schools (69 percent) were elementary schools in school year 2014–15 versus 57 percent of public charter schools. The percentages of traditional public and public charter schools that were secondary schools were similar at 25 and 23 percent,

respectively. By contrast, 5 percent of traditional public schools in 2014–15 were combined elementary/secondary schools¹ compared with 20 percent of public charter schools.

Figure 2. Percentage of traditional public schools and public charter schools, by racial/ethnic concentration: School years 2004–05 and 2014–15

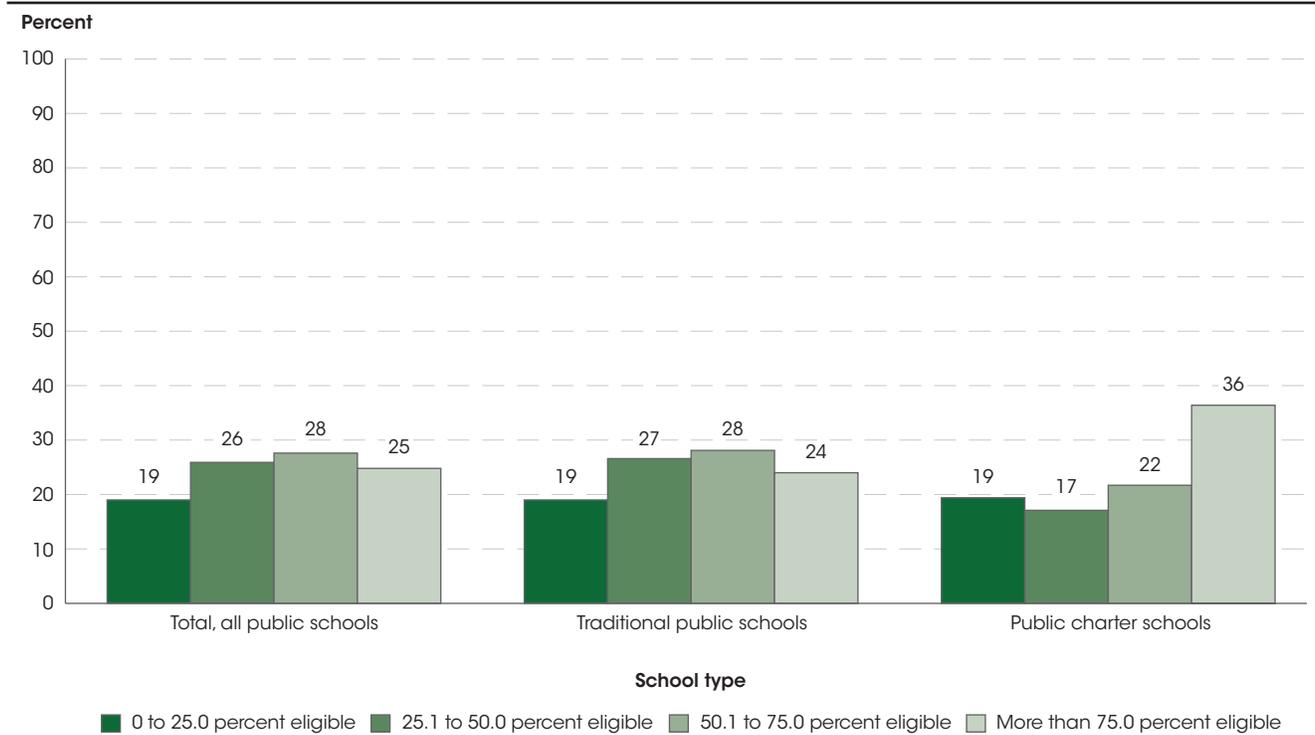


NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2004–05 and 2014–15. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 216.30.

In school year 2014–15, in 59 percent of traditional public schools more than half of students were White. In 9 percent of traditional public schools more than half of students were Black and in 16 percent more than half of students were Hispanic. In comparison, 36 percent of charter schools had more than 50 percent White enrollment, 24 percent had more than 50 percent Black enrollment, and 24 percent had more than 50 percent Hispanic enrollment. For both traditional public and public charter schools, the percentages of schools that had more than 50 percent White enrollment or more than

50 percent Black enrollment were lower in 2014–15 than in 2004–05, while the percentage of schools that had more than 50 percent Hispanic enrollment was higher in 2014–15 than in 2004–05. These shifts reflect, in part, general changes in student demographics. Between 2004 and 2014, the percentage of children ages 5 to 17 who were White decreased from 59 to 53 percent, the percentage who were Black decreased from 15 to 14 percent, and the percentage who were Hispanic increased from 18 to 24 percent (see *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 101.20).

Figure 3. Percentage of traditional public schools and public charter schools, by percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch: School year 2014–15

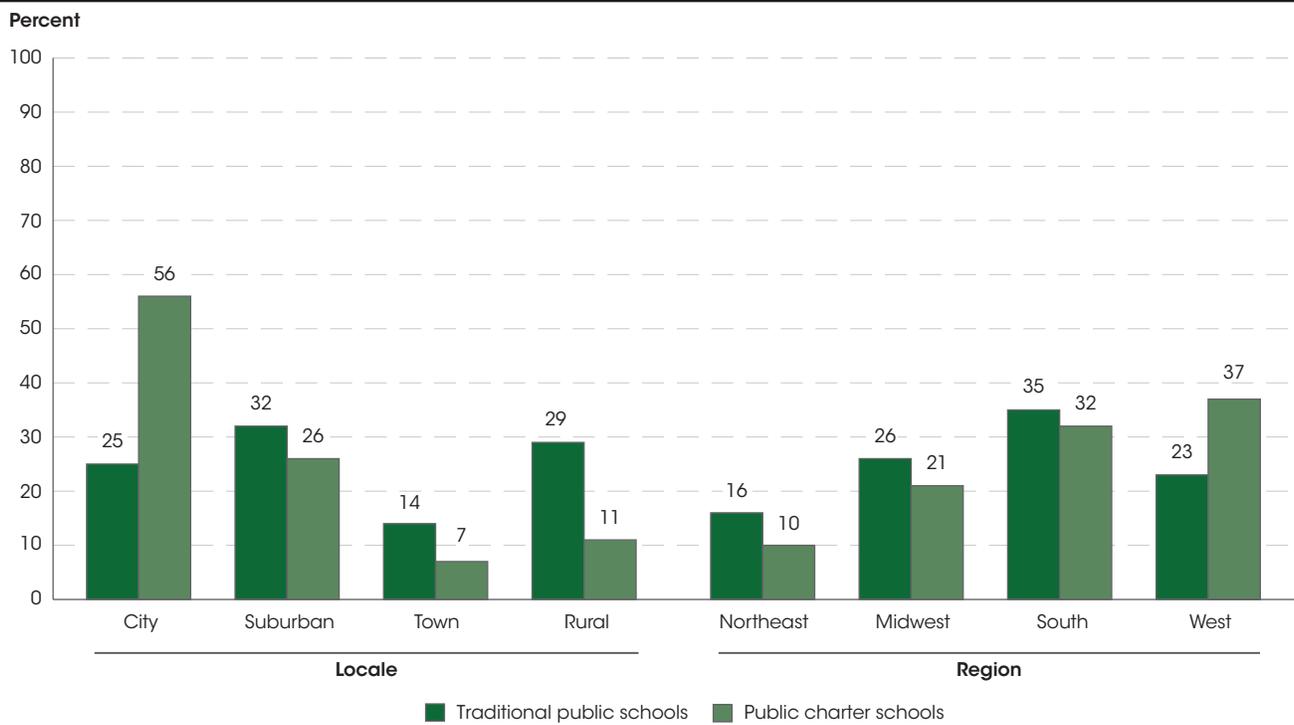


NOTE: The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program. To be eligible for free lunch under the program, a student must be from a household with an income at or below 130 percent of the poverty threshold; to be eligible for reduced-price lunch, a student must be from a household with an income between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty threshold. The category “missing/school does not participate” is not included in this figure; thus, the sum of the free or reduced-price lunch eligible categories does not equal 100 percent.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), “Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey,” 2014–15. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 216.30.

High-poverty schools, in which more than 75 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) under the National School Lunch Program, accounted for 25 percent of all public schools in 2014–15. In that year, 24 percent of traditional public schools were high-

poverty compared with 36 percent of public charter schools. In contrast, low-poverty schools, in which less than 25 percent of students qualify for FRPL, accounted for 19 percent of all public schools, as well as of traditional public schools and public charter schools, in 2014–15.

Figure 4. Percentage distribution of traditional public schools and public charter schools, by school locale and region: School year 2014–15



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2014–15. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 216.30.

In school year 2014–15, a higher percentage of public charter schools were located in cities and a smaller percentage were located in all other locales compared to traditional public schools. During this school year, 56 percent of public charter schools were located in cities compared to 25 percent of traditional public schools. In contrast, 11 percent of public charter schools were in rural areas compared to 29 percent of traditional public schools.

public schools in the region in school year 2014–15, while the percentages of public charter schools located in all other regions were lower than the percentages of traditional public schools. About 23 percent of traditional public schools were located in the West compared with 37 percent of public charter schools. In contrast, 16 percent of traditional public schools were located in the Northeast compared with 10 percent of public charter schools.

The percentage of public charter schools located in the West was higher than the percentage of traditional

Endnotes:

¹ Combined elementary/secondary schools are schools beginning with grade 6 or below and ending with grade 9 or above.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 101.20; *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, tables 216.20 and 216.30

Related indicators and resources: Elementary and Secondary Enrollment, Public Charter School Enrollment, Racial/Ethnic Enrollment in Public Schools, Concentration of Public School Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Glossary: Combined school, Elementary school, Enrollment, Free or reduced-price lunch, Geographic region, Locale codes, National School Lunch Program, Private school, Public charter school, Public school or institution, Racial/ethnic group, Secondary school, Traditional public school