

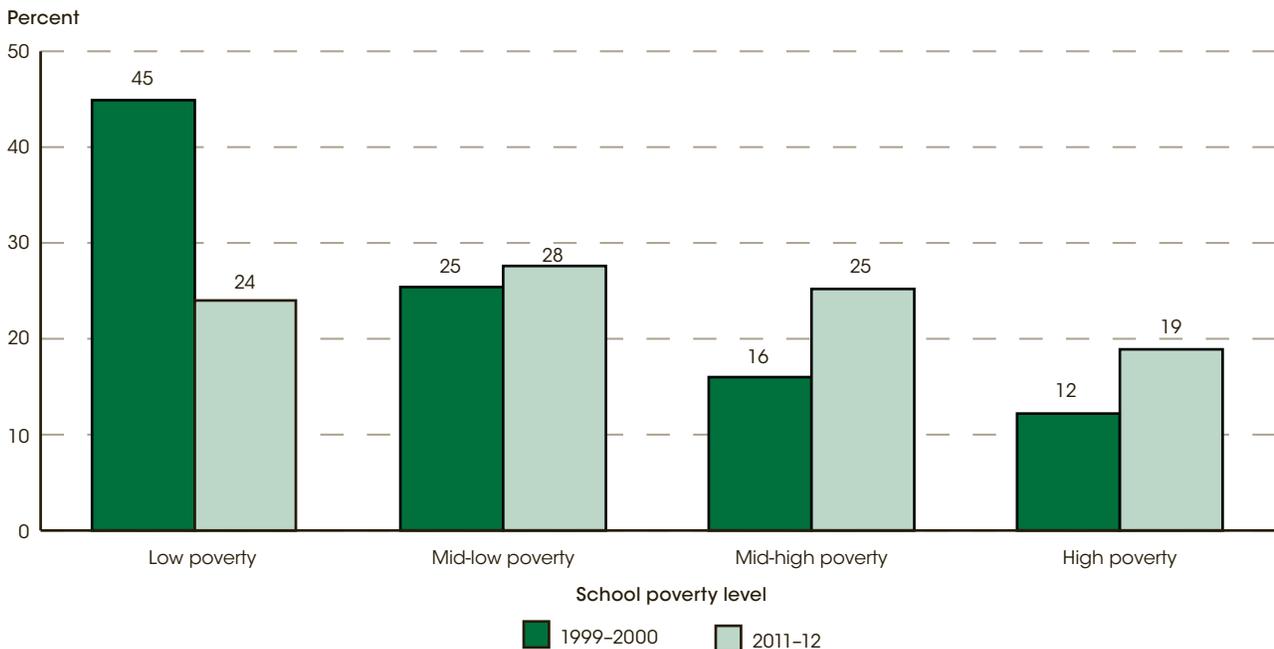
## Concentration of Public School Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

*In school year 2011–12, some 19 percent of public school students attended a high-poverty school, compared with 12 percent in 1999–2000. In 2011–12, some 28 percent of public school students attended a low-poverty school, compared with 45 percent in 1999–2000.*

The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) under the National School Lunch Program provides a proxy measure for the concentration of low-income students within a school. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those from families with incomes that are above 130 and up to 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price

meals. In this indicator, public schools (including both traditional and charter) are divided into categories by FRPL eligibility. A low-poverty school is defined as a public school where 25 percent or less of the students are eligible for FRPL, and a high-poverty school is defined as a school where more than 75 percent of the students are eligible.

**Figure 1. Percentage distribution of public school students, by school poverty level: School years 1999–2000 and 2011–12**



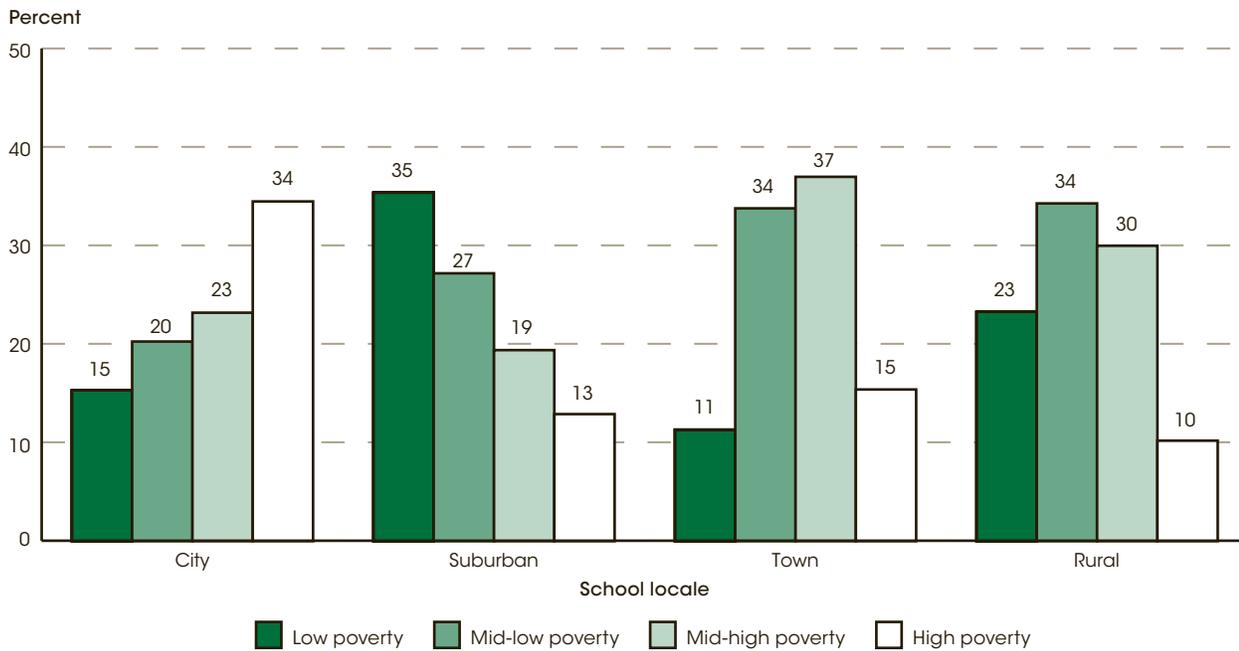
NOTE: This figure does not include schools for which information on free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) is missing or schools that did not participate in the National Student Lunch Program (NSLP). The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program. To be eligible for free lunch under 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. High-poverty schools are defined as public schools where more than 75.0 percent of the students are eligible for FRPL, and mid-high poverty schools are those schools where 50.1 to 75.0 percent of the students are eligible for FRPL. Low-poverty schools are defined as public schools where 25.0 percent or less of the students are eligible for FRPL, and mid-low poverty schools are those schools where 25.1 to 50.0 percent of the students are eligible for FRPL. Detail may not sum to totals 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," 1999–2000 and 2011–12. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 216.30.

Among public school students, the percentage of those attending high-poverty schools was greater in 2011–12 than it was over a decade ago: 19 percent of public schools students attended a high-poverty school in 2011–12, compared with 12 percent in 1999–2000. The increase in the percentage of children who are eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program may have been influenced by a number of factors, including

more systematic identification of eligible children as well as an increase in the actual rate of child poverty. In 2011, some 21 percent of children under the age of 18 were living in poverty, compared with 16 percent in 2000. In addition, a smaller percentage of public school students attended a low-poverty school in 2011–12 (24 percent) than in 1999–2000 (45 percent).

**For more information, see the Reader's Guide and the Guide to Sources.**

**Figure 2. Percentage distribution of public school students, by school locale and school poverty level: School year 2011-12**



NOTE: This figure does not include schools for which information on free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) is missing or schools that did not participate in the National Student Lunch Program (NSLP). 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. High-poverty schools are defined as public schools where more than 75.0 percent of the students are eligible for FRPL, and mid-high poverty schools are those schools where 50.1 to 75.0 percent of the students are eligible for FRPL. Low-poverty schools are defined as public schools where 25.0 percent or less of the students are eligible for FRPL, and mid-low poverty schools are those schools where 25.1 to 50.0 percent of the students are eligible for FRPL. Detail may not sum to totals 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," 2011-12. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 216.60.

The distribution of schools across poverty concentration varied by school locale (i.e., city, suburb, town, or rural). In school year 2011-12, over one-third (34 percent) of students attending city schools were in a high-poverty school, compared with 10 percent of students attending rural schools, 13 percent of students attending suburban schools, and 15 percent of students attending town schools. On the other hand, the percentage of students

attending suburban schools who were in a low-poverty school (35 percent) was more than three times as large as the percentage of students attending town schools who were in a low-poverty school (11 percent). The percentage of students attending suburban schools who were in a low-poverty school was also higher than the percentages of students attending city and rural schools who were in a low-poverty school (15 and 23 percent, respectively).

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, tables 102.50, 216.30, and 216.60

**Glossary:** Free or reduced-price lunch, National School Lunch Program, Public school or institution