

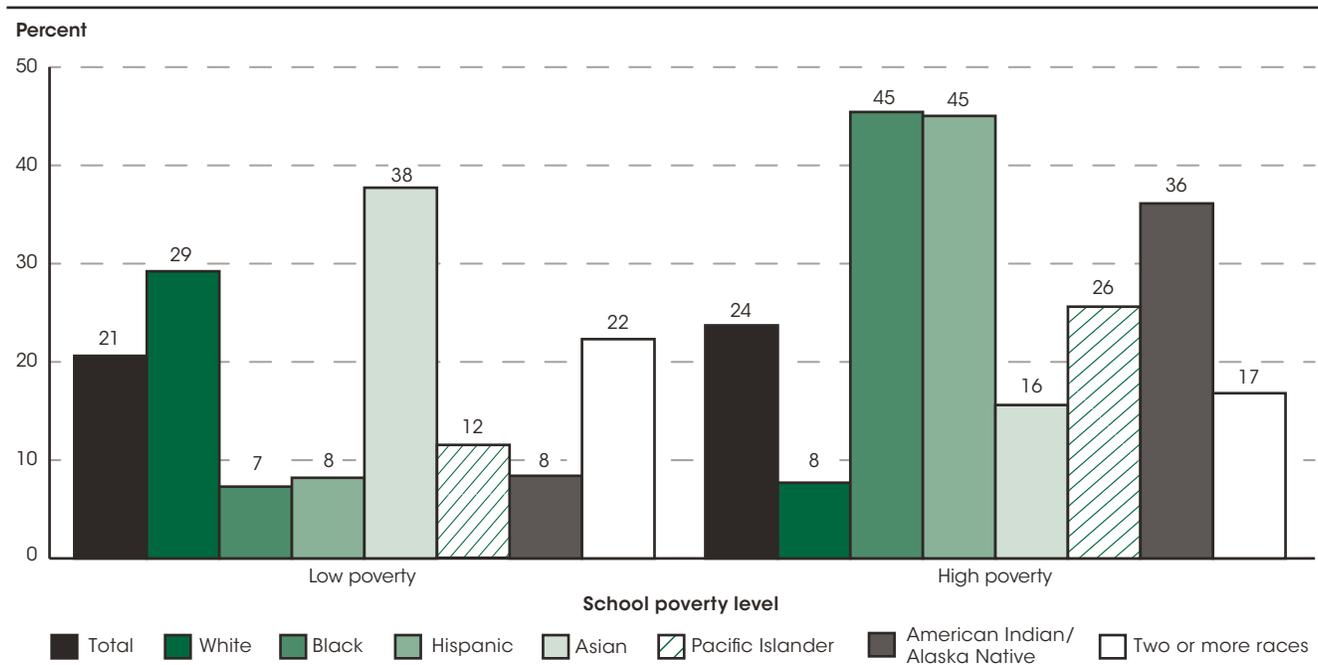
## Concentration of Public School Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

*In school year 2012–13, higher percentages of Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students attended high-poverty public schools than did Pacific Islander students, students of Two or more races, Asian students, and White students (ordered by descending percentages).*

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 between 130 percent and 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. 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. In school year 2012–13, some 21 percent of public school students attended low-poverty schools, and 24 percent of public school students attended high-poverty schools.

**Figure 1. Percentage of public school students in low-poverty and high-poverty schools, by race/ethnicity: School year 2012–13**

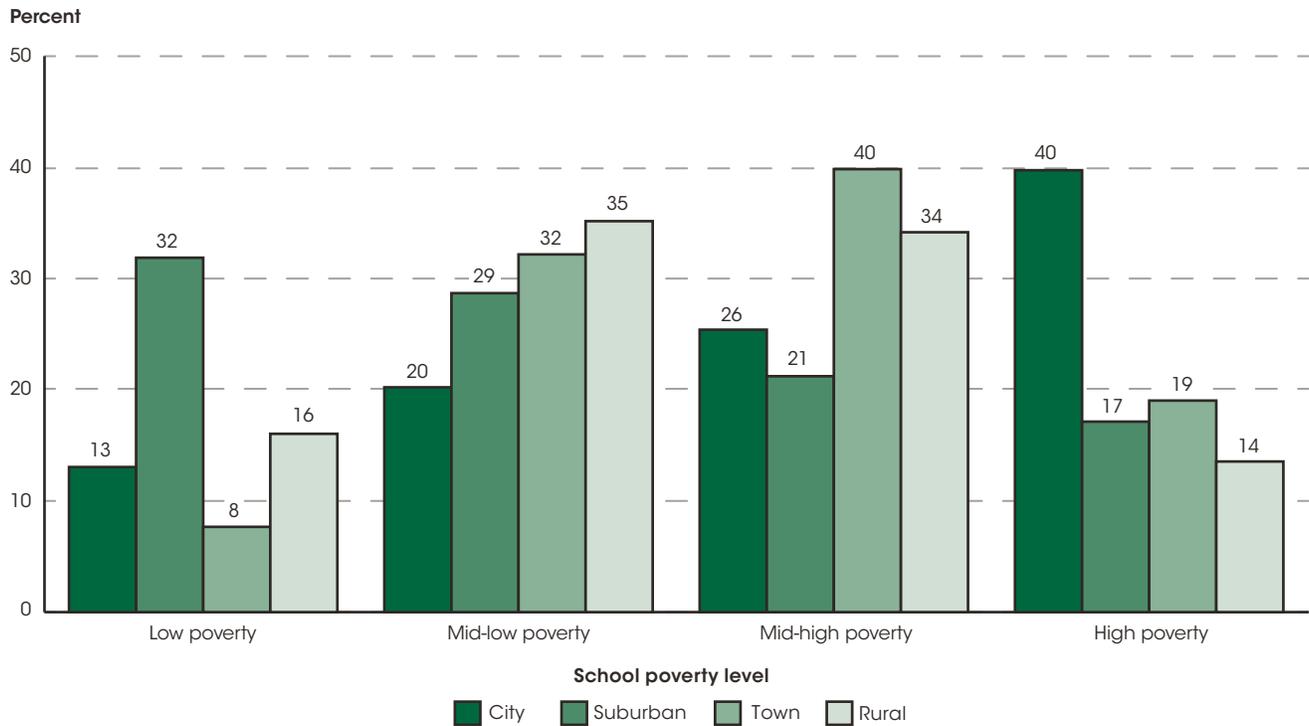


NOTE: High-poverty schools are defined as public schools where more than 75.0 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL), and low-poverty schools are defined as public schools where 25.0 percent or less of the students are eligible for FRPL. Race categories exclude persons 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," 2012–13. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 216.60.

The percentages of students in low-poverty and high-poverty schools varied by race/ethnicity. In school year 2012–13, higher percentages of Asian students (38 percent), White students (29 percent), and students of Two or more races (22 percent) attended low-poverty public schools than did Pacific Islander (12 percent), American Indian/Alaska Native (8 percent), Hispanic

(8 percent), and Black (7 percent) students. In contrast, higher percentages of Black (45 percent), Hispanic (45 percent), and American Indian/Alaska Native (36 percent) students attended high-poverty public schools than did Pacific Islander students (26 percent), students of Two or more races (17 percent), Asian students (16 percent), and White students (8 percent).

Figure 2. Percentage of public school students, by school poverty level and school locale: School year 2012-13



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 School Lunch Program (NSLP). The NSLP 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," 2012-13. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 216.60.

The distribution of schools at different poverty concentrations varied by school locale (i.e., city, suburb, town, or rural). In school year 2012-13, some 40 percent of students attending city schools were in a high-poverty school, compared with 14 percent of students attending rural schools, 17 percent of students attending suburban schools, and 19 percent of students attending town schools. In contrast, the percentage of students attending suburban schools who were in a low-poverty school (32 percent) was about four times as large as the

corresponding percentage of students attending town schools (8 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 (13 and 16 percent, respectively). In addition, a majority (65 percent) of students attending city schools were in a high-poverty or mid-high poverty school while a majority (61 percent) of students attending suburban schools were in a low-poverty or mid-low poverty school.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, tables 216.30 and 216.60; *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 216.30

**Related indicators:** Children Living in Poverty (indicator 5)

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