

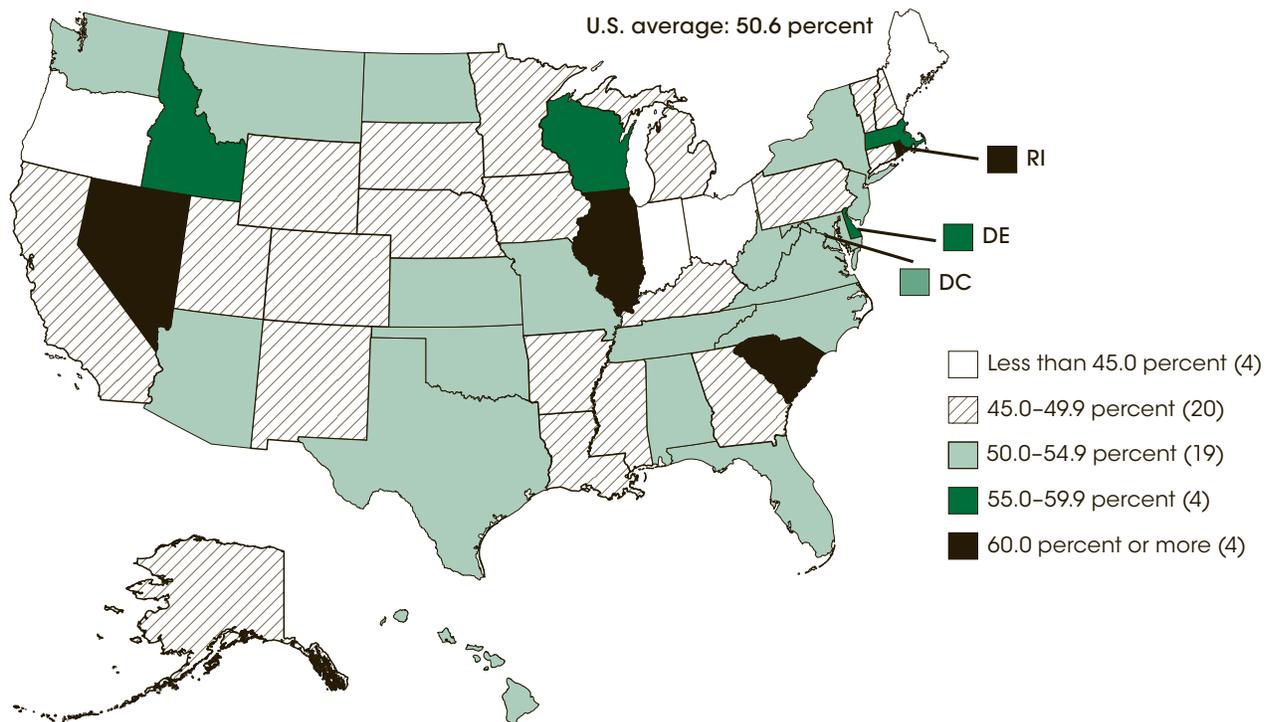
## Teachers and Pupil/Teacher Ratios

*Of the 6.1 million staff members in public elementary and secondary schools in fall 2011, some 3.1 million, or 51 percent, were teachers. For public schools, the pupil/teacher ratio fell from 26.9 pupils per teacher in 1955 to 17.9 in 1985, and then further declined to 15.3 in 2008. In the most recent years, the pupil/teacher ratios in 2010 and 2011 (both at 16.0) were higher than the ratio in 2009 (15.4).*

Of the 6.1 million staff members in public elementary and secondary schools in fall 2011, some 3.1 million, or 51 percent, were teachers. In addition, there were 0.7 million instructional aides, who made up about 12 percent of total staff. Between fall 2001 and fall 2011, there was not a significant increase in the percentage of staff who were teachers. The share of staff that were

teachers was about half (51 percent), while the percentage of staff who were instructional aides increased slightly, from 11 to 12 percent. By comparison, in fall 1969 teachers represented 60 percent of public school staff, and instructional aides represented 2 percent of public school staff.

**Figure 1. Teachers as a percentage of staff in public elementary and secondary school systems, by state: Fall 2011**



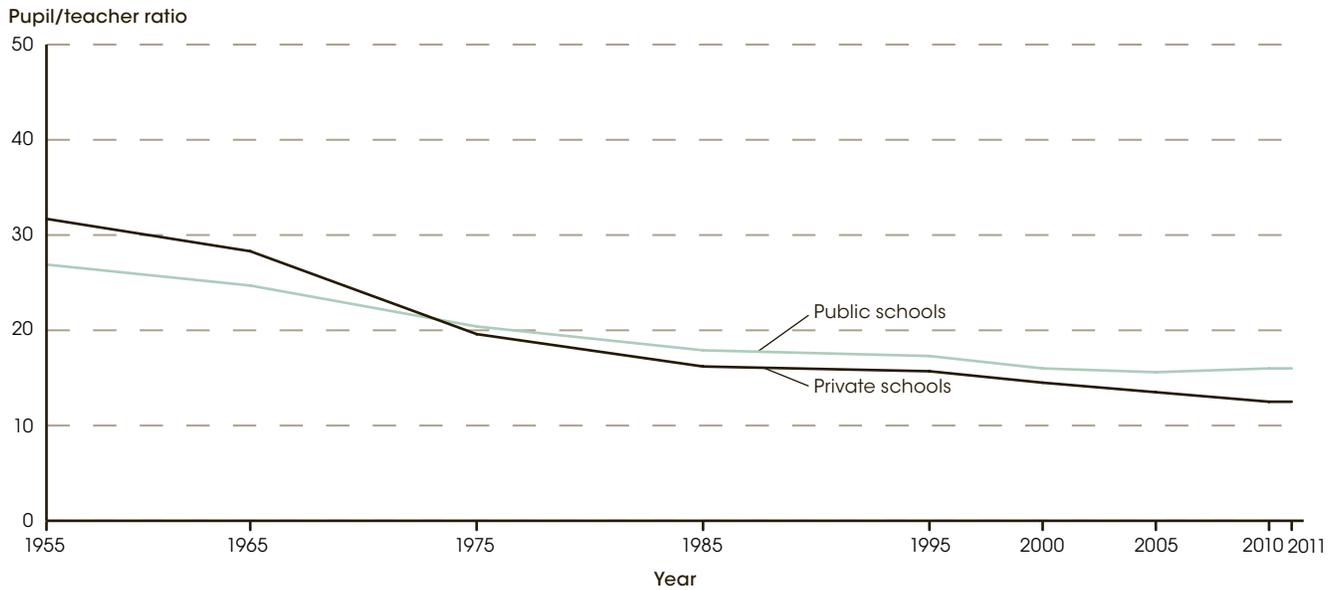
NOTE: The U.S. average includes imputations for underreporting and nonreporting states. The calculations of teachers as a percentage of staff for Alaska, California, Illinois, Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, and West Virginia include imputations for underreporting.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2011–12. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 213.40.

In most states, between 45 and 55 percent of public school staff were teachers in 2011. There were, however, four states where teachers made up less than 45 percent of public school staff (Maine, Indiana, Oregon, and

Ohio) and eight states where they made up more than 55 percent of public school staff (Wisconsin, Delaware, Massachusetts, Idaho, Rhode Island, Illinois, Nevada, and South Carolina).

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

**Figure 2. Public and private elementary and secondary school pupil/teacher ratios: Selected years, fall 1955 through fall 2011**



NOTE: Data for teachers are expressed in full-time equivalents (FTE). Data for private schools include prekindergarten through grade 12 in schools offering kindergarten or higher grades. Data for public schools include prekindergarten through grade 12. The pupil/teacher ratio includes teachers for students with disabilities and other special teachers. Ratios for public schools reflect totals reported by states and differ from totals reported for schools or school districts. Some data have been revised from previously published figures. Data for private schools are estimated for 2010.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Statistics of Public Elementary and Secondary Day Schools, 1955–56 through 1980–81*; Common Core of Data (CCD), “State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education,” 1981–82 through 2011–12; and Private School Universe Survey (PSS), 1989–90 through 2011–12. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 208.20.

The number of students per teacher, or the pupil/teacher ratio, has been generally decreasing for more than 50 years at both public and private schools. In fall 1955, there were 1.1 million public and 145,000 private elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States. By fall 2011, these numbers had nearly tripled for both public school teachers (to 3.1 million) and private school teachers (to 421,000). However, proportional increases in student enrollment were smaller over this period: from 31 million to 50 million public school students (a 61 percent increase) and from 4.6 million to 5.3 million private school students (a 15 percent increase).

For public schools, the resulting decline in the pupil/teacher ratio was concentrated in the period between 1955 and 1985. During this period, the public school pupil/teacher ratio fell from 26.9 to 17.9. Over the next 23 years, the public school pupil/teacher ratio declined to 15.3 in 2008. In the most recent years, the pupil/teacher ratios in 2010 and 2011 (both at 16.0) were higher than the ratio in 2009 (15.4). The private school pupil/teacher ratio decreased more steeply over the period of 1955 to 2011, from 31.7 teachers per pupil to 12.5. Consequently, the pupil/teacher ratio has been lower for private schools than for public schools since 1972.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, tables 208.20, 213.10, and 213.40