

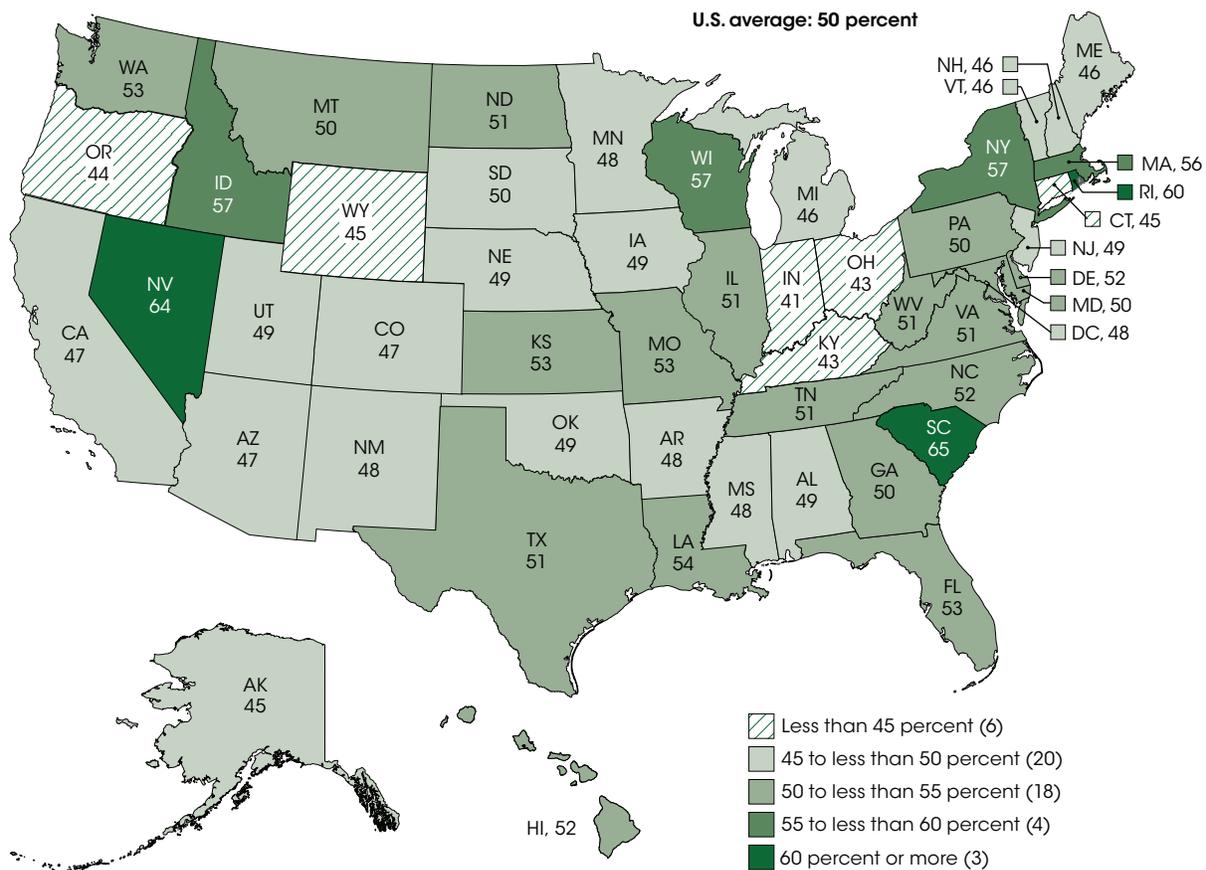
Teachers and Pupil/Teacher Ratios

Of the 6.3 million staff members in public elementary and secondary schools in fall 2014, approximately half (3.1 million) were teachers. The pupil/teacher ratio in public schools declined from 15.8 in 2004 to 15.3 in 2008. The pupil/teacher ratio then rose, reaching 16.1 in 2014.

Of the 6.3 million staff members in public elementary and secondary schools in fall 2014, approximately half (3.1 million) were teachers. There were 749,000 instructional aides, such as teachers' assistants, who made up another 12 percent of total staff.¹ The composition of public school staff has changed little in recent years. For example, between fall 2004 and fall 2014, the percentage of staff members who were teachers decreased

by 1 percentage point (from 51 to 50 percent), and the percentage of staff members who were instructional aides increased by less than 1 percentage point (12 percent in both 2004 and 2014). By comparison, in fall 1969 teachers made up 60 percent of public school staff and instructional aides made up 2 percent of public school staff.

Figure 1. Teachers as a percentage of staff in public elementary and secondary school systems, by state: Fall 2014

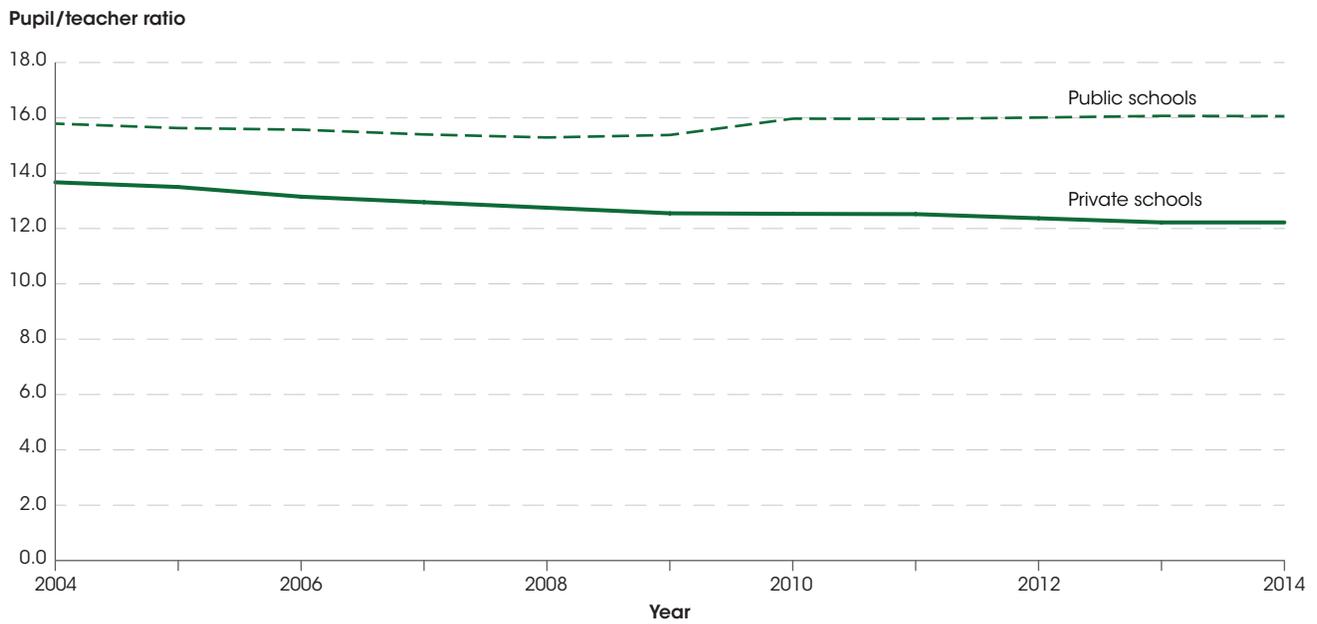


NOTE: The U.S. average includes imputations for underreporting and nonreporting states. The calculations of teachers as a percentage of staff for Alaska, California, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, Ohio, Utah, West Virginia, and Wisconsin include imputations to correct for underreporting. Categorizations are based on unrounded percentages.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2014-15. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 213.40.

Teachers constituted between 45 and 55 percent of public school staff in 37 states and the District of Columbia in 2014.² There were, however, six states where teachers made up less than 45 percent of public school staff (Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Oregon, Connecticut, and

Wyoming) and seven states where teachers made up more than 55 percent of public school staff (Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Idaho, New York, Rhode Island, Nevada, and South Carolina).

Figure 2. Public and private elementary and secondary school pupil/teacher ratios: Fall 2004 through fall 2014

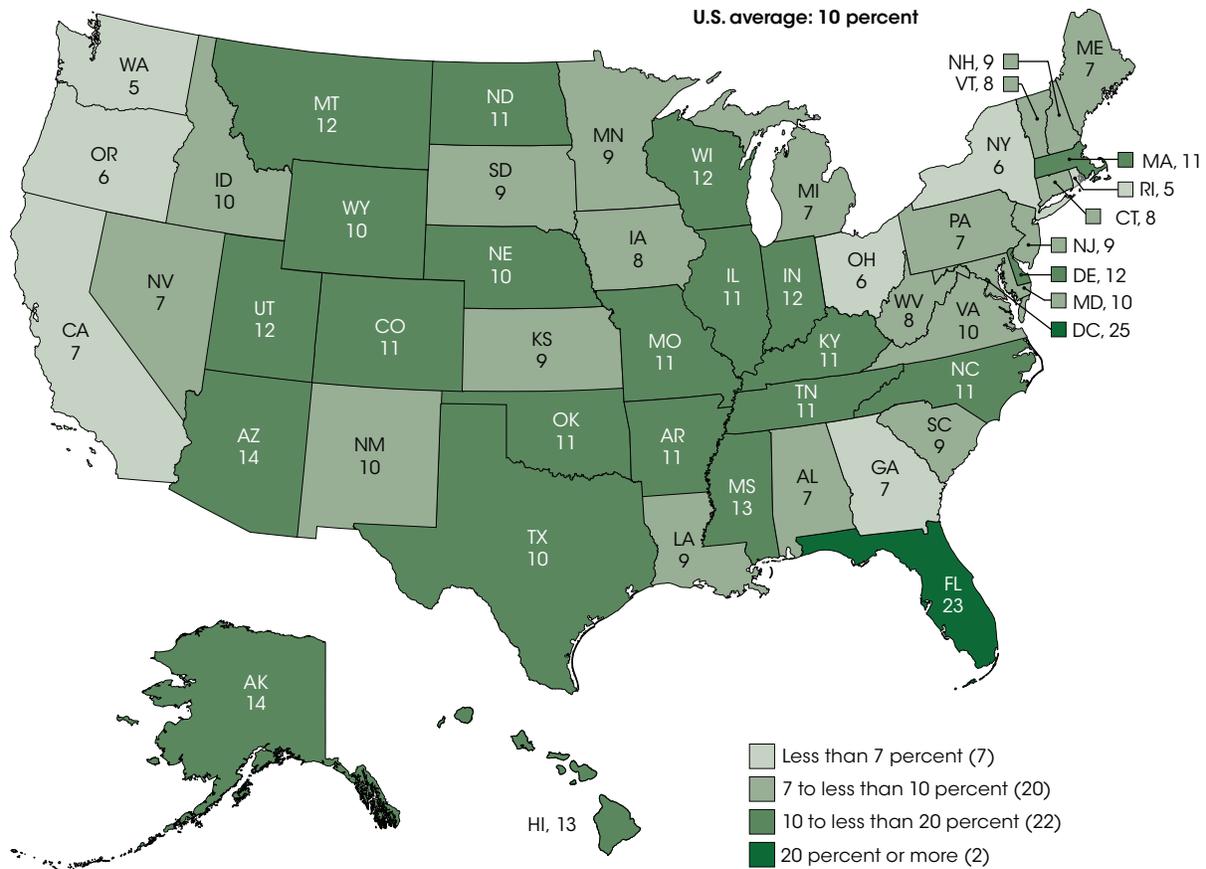


NOTE: Data for teachers are expressed in full-time equivalents (FTEs). Data for public schools include prekindergarten through grade 12. Data for private schools include prekindergarten through grade 12 in schools offering kindergarten or higher grades. The pupil/teacher ratio includes teachers for students with disabilities and other special teachers. Ratios for public schools reflect totals reported by states and differ from totals reported by schools or school districts. Some data have been revised from previously published figures. Data for private schools are projected for 2014.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2004-05 through 2014-15; and Private School Universe Survey (PSS), 2004-05 through 2014-15. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 208.20, and *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 208.40.

The number of students per teacher, or the pupil/teacher ratio,³ has generally decreased since 1955 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 2014, these numbers had nearly tripled to 3.1 million for public school teachers and to 436,000 for private school teachers.⁴ However, increases in student enrollment were proportionately smaller over this period: from 30.7 million to 50.3 million public school students (a 64 percent increase) and from 4.6 million to

5.3 million private school students (a 16 percent increase). Among public schools, the pupil/teacher ratio fell from 26.9 in 1955 to 15.8 in 2004. The ratio continued to decline until 2008, when it was 15.3. In the years after 2008, however, the pupil/teacher ratio rose, reaching 16.1 in 2014. The private school pupil/teacher ratio decreased more steeply (from 31.7 to 12.2 students per teacher) between 1955 and 2014 than did the public school ratio. The pupil/teacher ratio has been lower for private schools than for public schools since 1972.

Figure 3. Percentage of public elementary and secondary school teachers who had less than 2 years of teaching experience, by state: 2011–12



NOTE: The number of years of teaching experience includes the current year and any prior years teaching in any school, subject, or grade. Does not include any student teaching or other similar preparation experiences. Categorizations are based on unrounded percentages.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, "2011–12 Classroom Teachers Estimations." See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 209.25.

The Civil Rights Data Collection reports information on years of teaching experience for all public elementary and secondary school teachers. Of the 3.1 million public school teachers in 2011–12, some 310,000 teachers, or 10 percent, had less than 2 years of teaching experience. In 42 states, between 7 and 20 percent of public school teachers had less than 2 years of teaching experience. However, in seven states (Rhode Island, Washington, Oregon, New York, Ohio, California, and Georgia), less than 7 percent of public school teachers had less than 2 years of teaching experience, and in Florida and the District of Columbia, more than 20 percent of public school teachers had less than 2 years of teaching experience. Six percent of public school teachers overall were in their first year of teaching in 2011–12, ranging from 2 percent in Pennsylvania to 19 percent in Florida.

Data on public school teachers' licensing and certification are also available from the Civil Rights Data Collection. Overall, 97 percent of public elementary and secondary school teachers in 2011–12 met all licensing certification requirements of the state in which they taught. In 20 states, more than 99 percent of public school teachers in 2011–12 met all state licensing certification requirements. In another 18 states, between 97 and 99 percent of public school teachers met all state licensing certification requirements. However, in Florida and the District of Columbia, less than 90 percent of public school teachers met all state licensing certification requirements.

Endnotes:

¹ Other types of staff members include school district administrative staff, principals and assistant principals, librarians, guidance counselors, and support staff.

² Categorizations in this indicator are based on unrounded percentages.

³ The pupil/teacher ratio measures the number of students per teacher. It reflects teacher workload and the availability of teachers' services to their students. The lower the pupil/teacher

ratio, the higher the availability of teacher services to students. The pupil/teacher ratio is not the same as class size, however. Class size can be described as the number of students a teacher faces during a given period of instruction. The relationship between these two measures of teacher workload is affected by a variety of factors, including the number of classes a teacher is responsible for and the number of classes taken by students.

⁴ Data for private schools are projected for 2014.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 208.20; *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 209.25; *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, tables 208.20, 208.40, 213.10, and 213.40

Related indicators and resources: Elementary and Secondary Enrollment, Private School Enrollment

Glossary: Elementary school, Private school, Public school or institution, Pupil/teacher ratio, Secondary school