

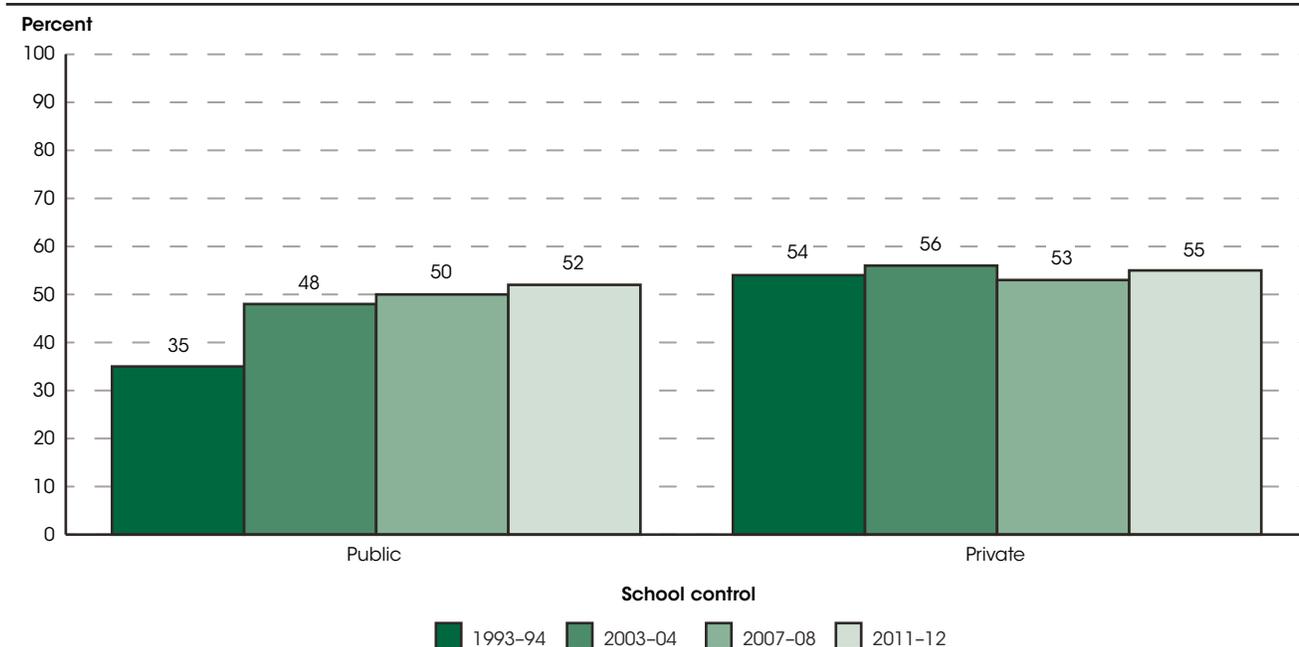
## Characteristics of School Principals

*Between 1993–94 and 2011–12, the percentage of public school principals who were female increased from 35 to 52 percent. During this same period, the percentage of public school principals with 20 or more years of experience as a principal decreased from 11 to 5 percent.*

During the 2011–12 school year, elementary, secondary, and combined schools in the United States employed 115,500 principals. The change in the number of public schools between 2007–08 (98,900) and 2011–12 (98,300) was less than 1 percent; there was no measurable change in the number of public school principals between those years. The number of private schools also was lower in 2011–12 than in 2007–08 (26,200 vs. 28,200), and there was a correspondingly lower number of private school principals in 2011–12 than in 2007–08 (25,700 vs. 28,000).

Public schools in 2011–12 had a larger average number of students (520 students) than did private schools (171 students). This enrollment size difference may affect the nature of the duties for public and private school principals. For example, in 2011–12, a higher percentage of private school principals than of public school principals were currently teaching in addition to serving as principal (36 vs. 4 percent). Of the 75,800 elementary school principals that year, 81 percent were at public and 19 percent were at private schools. At the secondary level there were 23,100 principals—89 percent at public and 11 percent at private schools.

**Figure 1. Percentage of female public and private school principals: Selected years, 1993–94 through 2011–12**

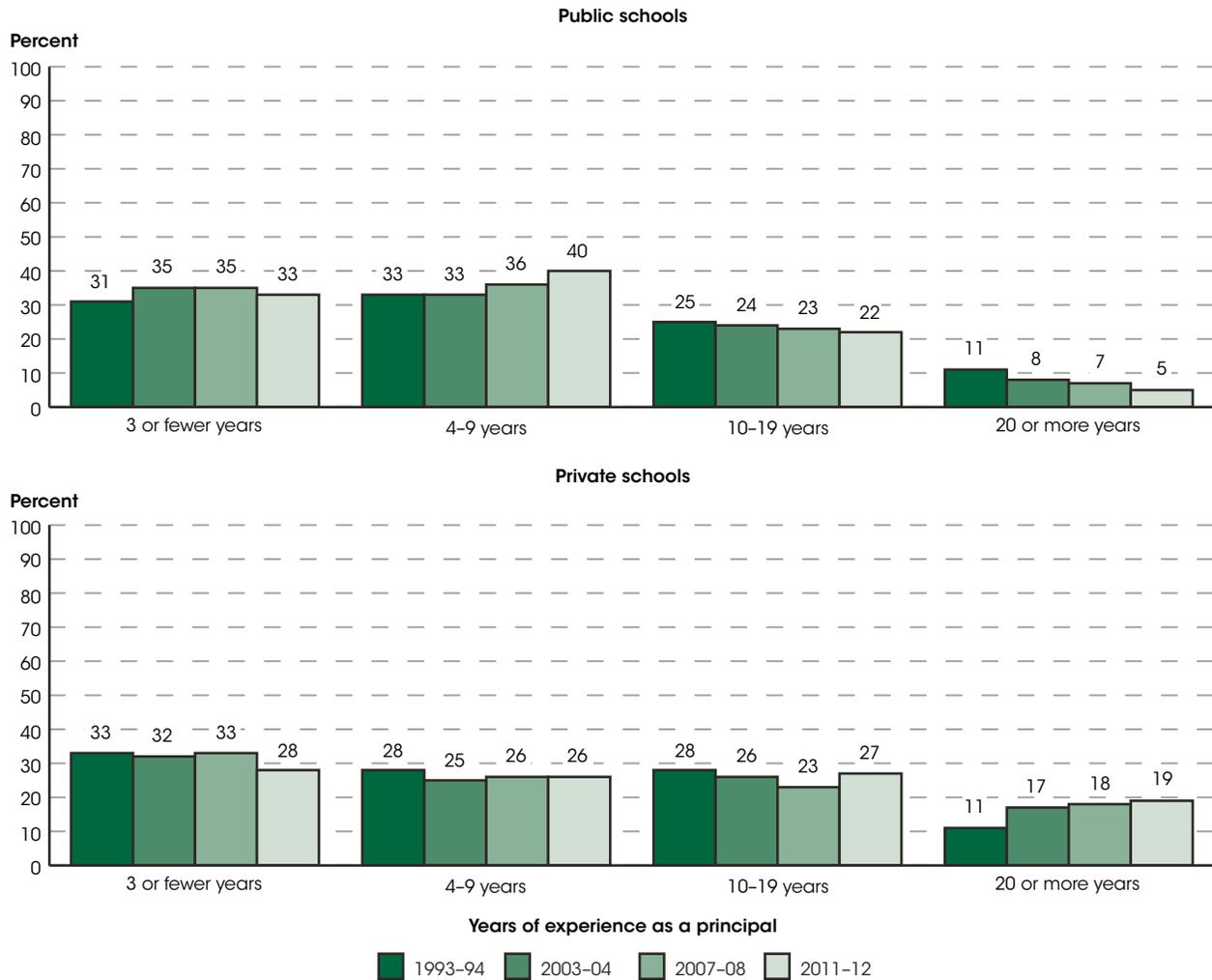


NOTE: Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time principals rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent principals.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Principal Data File" and "Private School Principal Data File," 1993–94, 2003–04, 2007–08, and 2011–12. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 212.08.

The percentage of public school principals who were female increased between 1993–94 and 2011–12, although the majority of this increase occurred between 1993–94 and 2003–04. The percentage of female principals in 2011–12 (52 percent) was higher than the percentage in 2003–04 (48 percent) and higher than the percentage in 1993–94 (35 percent). However, there was

no measurable difference between the 2007–08 and the 2011–12 percentages of female public school principals. In contrast to the increase in female public school principals between 1993–94 and 2011–12, there was no measurable change in the percentages of female private school principals between 1993–94 and 2011–12.

Figure 2. Percentage distribution of public and private school principals, by years of experience as a principal: Selected years, 1993-94 through 2011-12

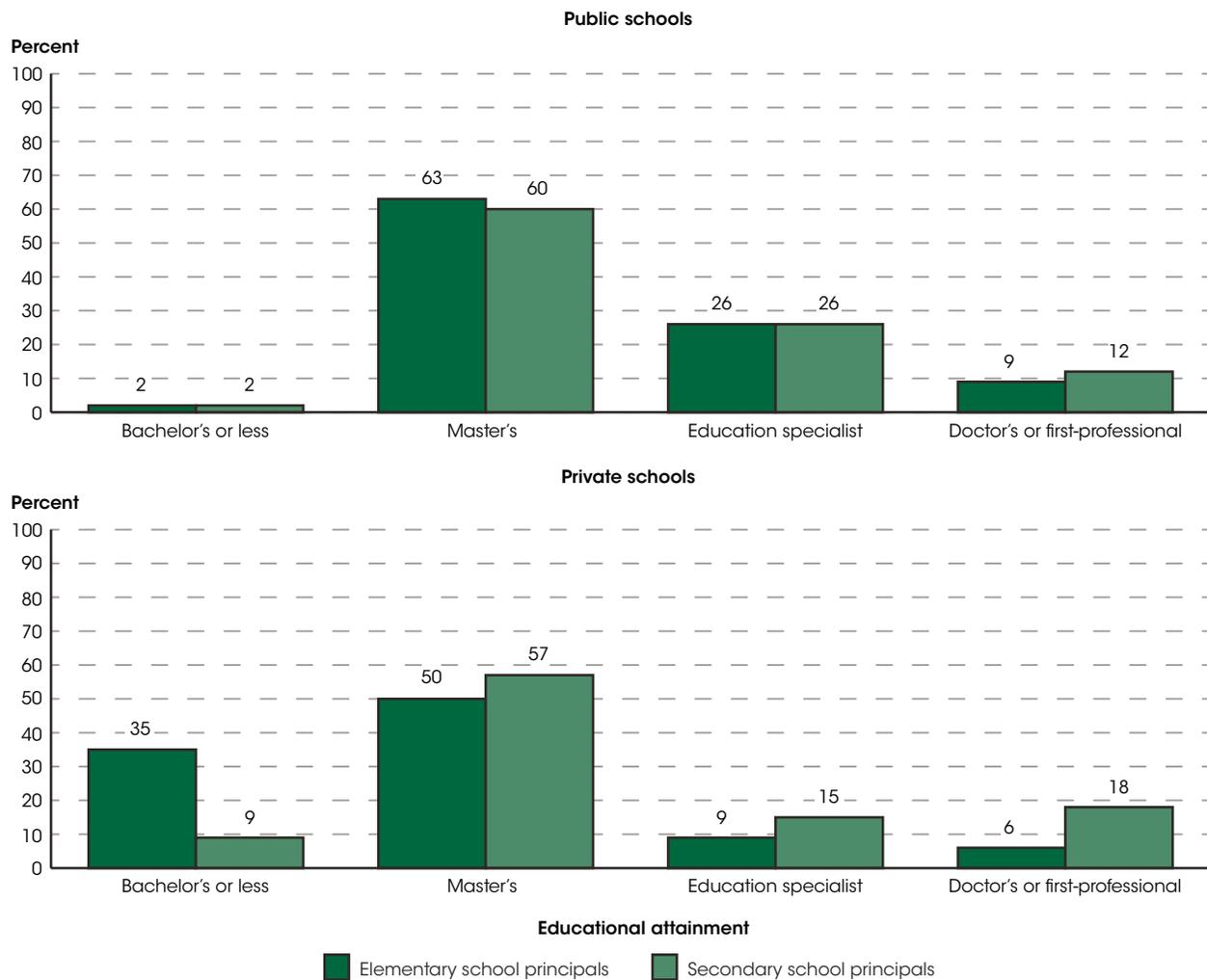


NOTE: Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time principals rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent principals.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Principal Data File" and "Private School Principal Data File," 1993-94, 2003-04, 2007-08, and 2011-12. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 212.08.

Experience levels of public and private school principals have changed over time. Between 1993-94 and 2011-12, the percentage of public school principals with 20 or more years of experience as a principal decreased from 11 to 5 percent. Over the same time period, the percentage of private school principals with 20 or more years of experience as a principal increased from 11 to 19 percent. The percentage of public school principals with 3 or fewer years of experience as a principal was higher in 2011-12 than in 1993-94 (33 vs. 31 percent). Conversely, the percentage of private school principals with 3 or fewer years of experience as a principal was lower in 2011-12 than in 1993-94 (28 vs. 33 percent).

In general, private school principals had more years of experience as a principal than public school principals. In 2011-12, a higher percentage of public school principals than of private school principals had 3 or fewer years of experience (33 vs. 28 percent) or 4 to 9 years of experience (40 vs. 26 percent) as a principal. On the other hand, a lower percentage of public school principals than of private school principals had 10 to 19 years of experience (22 vs. 27 percent) or 20 or more years of experience (5 vs. 19 percent) as a principal in 2011-12. Previous teaching experience also differed between public and private school principals in 2011-12. For example, a lower percentage of public school principals than private school principals had 3 or fewer years of teaching experience (4 vs. 26 percent).

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of public and private school principals, by educational attainment: 2011–12



NOTE: Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time principals rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent principals. Education specialist degrees or certificates are generally awarded for 1 year's work beyond the master's level. Includes certificate of advanced graduate studies.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Principal Data File" and "Private School Principal Data File," 2011–12. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 212.10.

The level of educational attainment of public and private school principals also differed. In 2011–12, lower percentages of both public elementary and public secondary school principals (2 percent each) than of their private school counterparts (35 and 9 percent, respectively) held a bachelor's degree or lower level of education. At the elementary school level, a higher percentage of public school principals than of private school principals held a master's degree (63 vs. 50 percent), but at the secondary level, the apparent difference between the percentages of public (60 percent) and private school principals (57 percent) holding a master's degree was not significant. Similarly, a higher percentage of public school than of private school principals at the elementary level held a doctor's or first-professional degree (9 vs. 6 percent), but there was no measurable difference between the percentages of public and private school principals at the secondary level holding a doctor's degree or first-professional degree. A higher percentage of both public elementary and public secondary school principals (both 26 percent) than of their private school

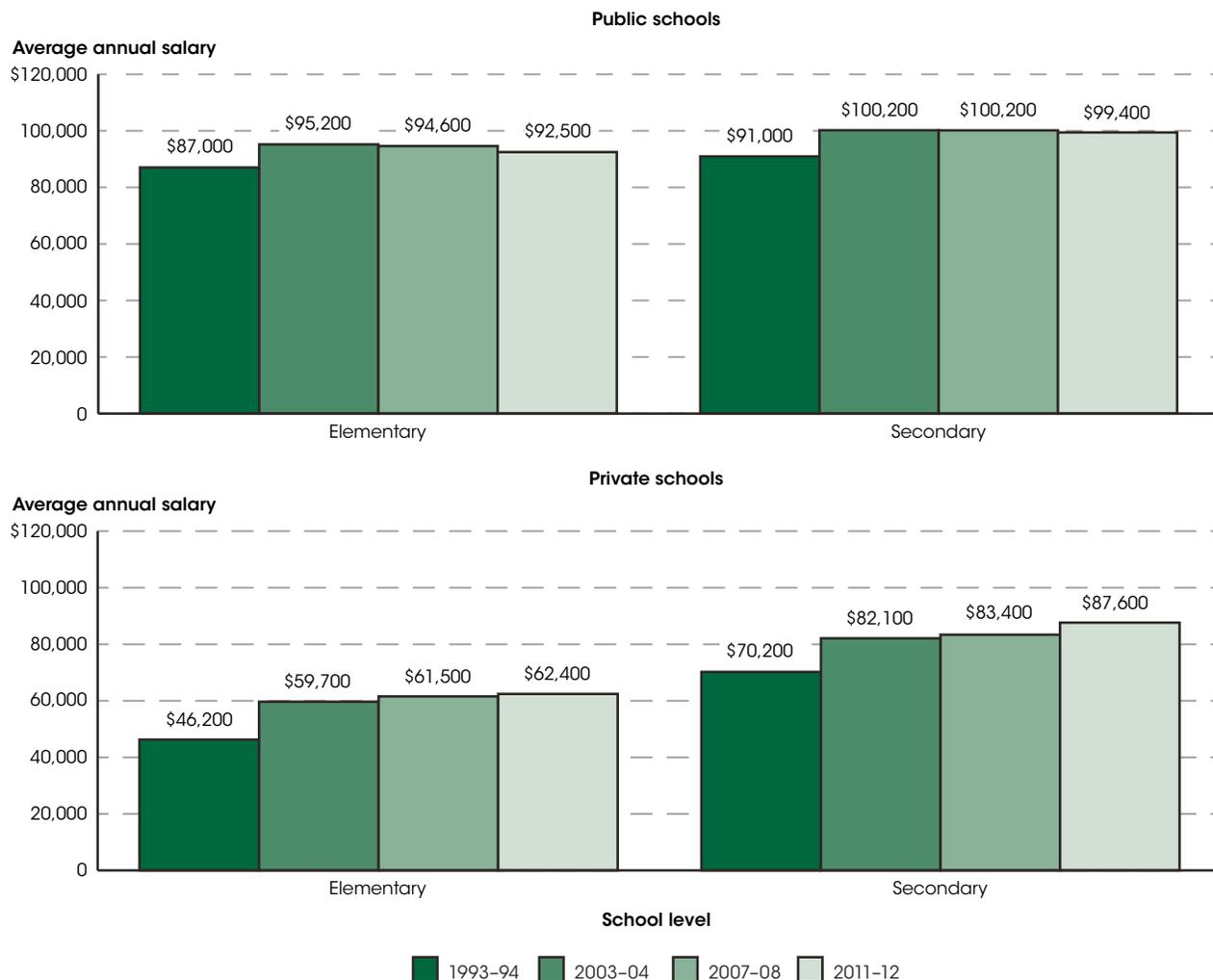
peers (9 and 15 percent, respectively) held an education specialist degree.

In terms of public schools, some differences in educational attainment were found between elementary and secondary school principals. For instance, a higher percentage of elementary school principals than of secondary school principals held a master's degree (63 vs. 60 percent); however, a higher percentage of secondary school principals than of elementary school principals held a doctor's or first-professional degree (12 vs. 9 percent). At private schools, a higher percentage of secondary school principals than of elementary school principals held a doctor's or first-professional degree (18 vs. 6 percent) or an education specialist degree (15 vs. 9 percent). In comparison, a higher percentage of private elementary school principals than of their counterparts at the secondary level had a bachelor's degree or lower level of education (35 vs. 9 percent). There was no measurable difference between the percentages of elementary and secondary school principals who held a master's degree.

In 2011–12, a majority of public school principals were White (80 percent), while 10 percent were Black and 7 percent were Hispanic. From 1993–94 to 2011–12, the racial/ethnic composition of public school principals changed; for example, the percentage who were White decreased from 84 to 80 percent, while the percentage who were Hispanic increased from 4 to 7 percent. For private school principals, some similarities regarding

racial/ethnic composition were observed. In 2011–12, a majority of private school principals were White (87 percent), while 7 percent were Black and 3 percent were Hispanic. From 1993–94 to 2011–12, for instance, the percentage of White private school principals decreased from 92 to 87 percent, while the percentage of Black private school principals increased from 4 to 7 percent.

**Figure 4. Principals' average annual salaries at public and private schools, by school level: Selected years, 1993–94 through 2011–12**



NOTE: Average annual salaries are reported in constant 2013–14 dollars based on the Consumer Price Index, prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, adjusted to a school-year basis.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Principal Data File" and "Private School Principal Data File," 1993–94, 2003–04, 2007–08, and 2011–12. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 212.10.

At public schools, the average annual salary for principals was lower in 2011–12 than in 2007–08 (\$93,500 vs. \$95,200, in constant 2013–14 dollars) but higher in 2011–12 than in 1993–94 (\$88,200, in constant 2013–14 dollars). (For ease of comparison, all annual salaries in this indicator are reported in constant 2013–14 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index [CPI]). The same pattern was observed for public school principals at the elementary level. At public secondary schools, there was no measurable difference between the average annual salary for principals in 2007–08 and in 2011–12; at these schools, however, the average annual salary for principals was higher in 2011–12 (\$99,400) than in 1993–94 (\$91,000). In 2011–12, public secondary school

principals received higher salaries, on average, than public elementary school principals (\$99,400 vs. \$92,500).

At private schools, the average annual salary for principals increased from \$51,500 in 1993–94 to \$67,400 in 2011–12; these increases were seen at both the elementary and secondary levels. For example, the average annual salary for private elementary school principals increased from \$46,200 in 1993–94 to \$62,400 in 2011–12. For private secondary school principals, the average annual salary also increased during the same time period, from \$70,200 to \$87,600. In 2011–12, private secondary school principals received higher salaries than private elementary school principals (\$87,600 vs. \$62,400).

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**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, tables 205.50, 212.08, 212.10, and 216.45; *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, tables 205.40 and 214.10; Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) web table ([http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112\\_2015502.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112_2015502.asp))

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**Glossary:** Elementary school, Private school, Public school, Secondary school