

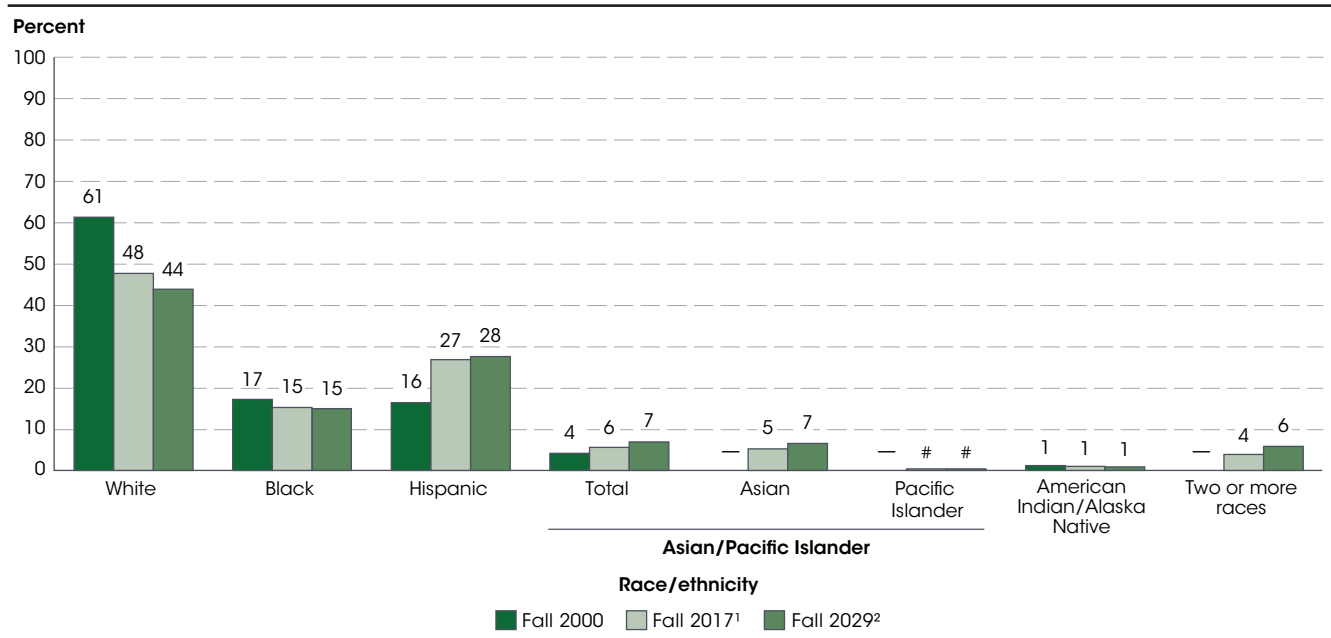
# Racial/Ethnic Enrollment in Public Schools

*Between fall 2000 and fall 2017, the percentage of public school students who were White decreased from 61 to 48 percent, and the percentage of students who were Black decreased from 17 to 15 percent. In contrast, the percentage of public school students who were Hispanic increased from 16 to 27 percent during the same period.*

Total enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools increased from 47.2 million students to 50.7 million students between fall 2000 and fall 2017, and is projected to continue increasing to 51.1 million students

in fall 2029 (the last year for which projected data are available). In addition, racial/ethnic distributions of public school students across the country have shifted.

**Figure 1. Percentage distribution of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity: Fall 2000, fall 2017, and fall 2029**



— Not available.

# Rounds to zero.

<sup>1</sup> Includes imputations for prekindergarten enrollment in California and Oregon.

<sup>2</sup> Data for fall 2029 are projected.

NOTE: Prior to 2008, separate data on students who were Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two or more races were not collected; data for students who were Asian included students who were Pacific Islander, and students of Two or more races were required to select a single category from among the offered race/ethnicity categories (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native). Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary and Secondary Education," 2000–01 and 2017–18; and National Elementary and Secondary Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity Projection Model, 1972 through 2029. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 203.50.

In fall 2017, of the 50.7 million students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, 24.1 million were White, 7.7 million were Black, 13.6 million were Hispanic, 2.8 million were Asian/Pacific Islander (2.6 million were Asian and 185,000 were Pacific Islander), half a million were American Indian/Alaska Native, and 2 million were of Two or more races. Between fall 2000 and fall 2017, the percentage of students who were White decreased from 61 to 48 percent, and the number of White students decreased from 28.9 million to 24.1 million. Similarly, the percentage of students who were Black decreased from 17 to 15 percent, and the

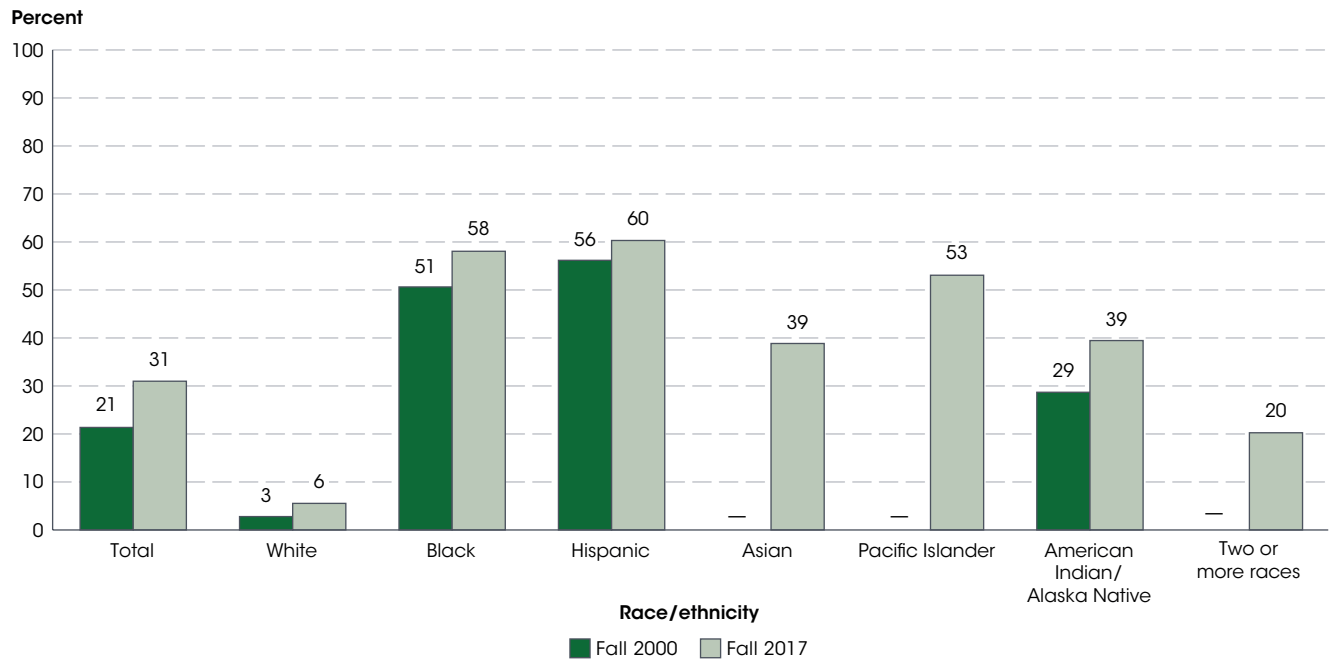
number of Black students decreased from 8.1 million to 7.7 million. In contrast, the percentage of students who were Hispanic increased from 16 to 27 percent during the same period, and the percentage of students who were Asian/Pacific Islander<sup>1</sup> increased from 4 to 6 percent. In both fall 2000 and fall 2017, American Indian/Alaska Native students accounted for 1 percent of public elementary and secondary enrollment. Between fall 2008 (the first year data on students of Two or more races were collected)<sup>2</sup> and fall 2017, the percentage of students who were of Two or more races increased from 1 to 4 percent.

Between fall 2017 and fall 2029, the percentage of public elementary and secondary students who were White is projected to continue decreasing (from 48 to 44 percent). In contrast, the percentage of students who were Asian/Pacific Islander is projected to continue increasing (from 6 to 7 percent), as is the percentage of students who were of Two or more races (from 4 to 6 percent). Additionally, the percentage of students who were Hispanic is projected to be higher in fall 2029 than in fall 2017 (28 vs. 27 percent). The percentage of students who were Black is projected to remain at 15 percent in fall 2029. Similar to fall 2017, American Indian/Alaska Native students are projected to account for 1 percent of public elementary and secondary enrollment in fall 2029.

Changes in the racial/ethnic distribution of public school enrollment between fall 2000 and fall 2017 differed by state. In all 50 states, the percentage of students enrolled

who were White was lower in fall 2017 than in fall 2000, with the difference ranging from 24 percentage points in Nevada to 3 percentage points in Mississippi. However, in the District of Columbia, the percentage of public school students who were White was 7 percentage points higher in fall 2017 than in fall 2000. Across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, the percentage of students who were Hispanic was higher in fall 2017 than in fall 2000; the difference was largest in Nevada (17 percentage points) and smallest in Vermont and West Virginia (1 percentage point each). The percentage of public school students who were Black was higher in fall 2017 than in fall 2000 in 17 states; all differences were 4 percentage points or less. In the remaining 33 states and the District of Columbia, the percentage of public school students who were Black was lower in fall 2017 than in fall 2000; the largest difference occurred in the District of Columbia (16 percentage points).

**Figure 2. Percentage of public elementary and secondary school students enrolled in schools with at least 75 percent minority enrollment, by student’s race/ethnicity: Fall 2000 and fall 2017**



— Not available.

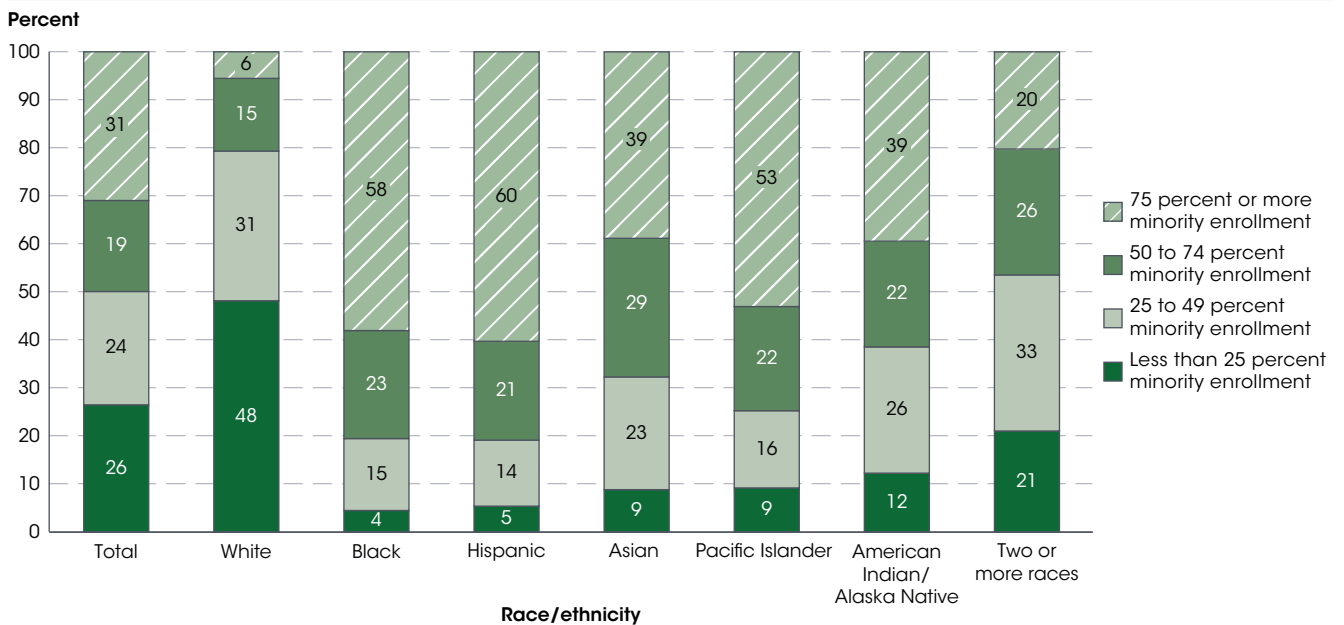
NOTE: Minority students include students who were Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and of Two or more races. Prior to 2008, separate data on students who were Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two or more races were not collected; data for students who were Asian included students who were Pacific Islander, and students of Two or more races were required to select a single category from among the offered race/ethnicity categories (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native). Data reflect racial/ethnic data reported by schools. Excludes 2000 data for Tennessee because racial/ethnic data were not reported. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2000-01 and 2017-18. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 216.50.

The extent to which minority students attend public schools with nonminority students has changed over time. In fall 2017, about 31 percent of all public school students were enrolled in schools where minority students<sup>3</sup> comprised at least 75 percent of the student population; this was higher than the corresponding percentage in fall 2000 (21 percent). The percentages of White, Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students

enrolled in these schools increased from fall 2000 to fall 2017.<sup>4</sup> The percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native students in such schools increased by 11 percentage points, from 29 percent in fall 2000 to 39 percent in fall 2017. Increases in enrollments in these schools for the remaining racial/ethnic groups ranged from 3 percentage points for White students to 7 percentage points for Black students.

**Figure 3. Percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary school students, by student's race/ethnicity and percentage of minority enrollment in school: Fall 2017**

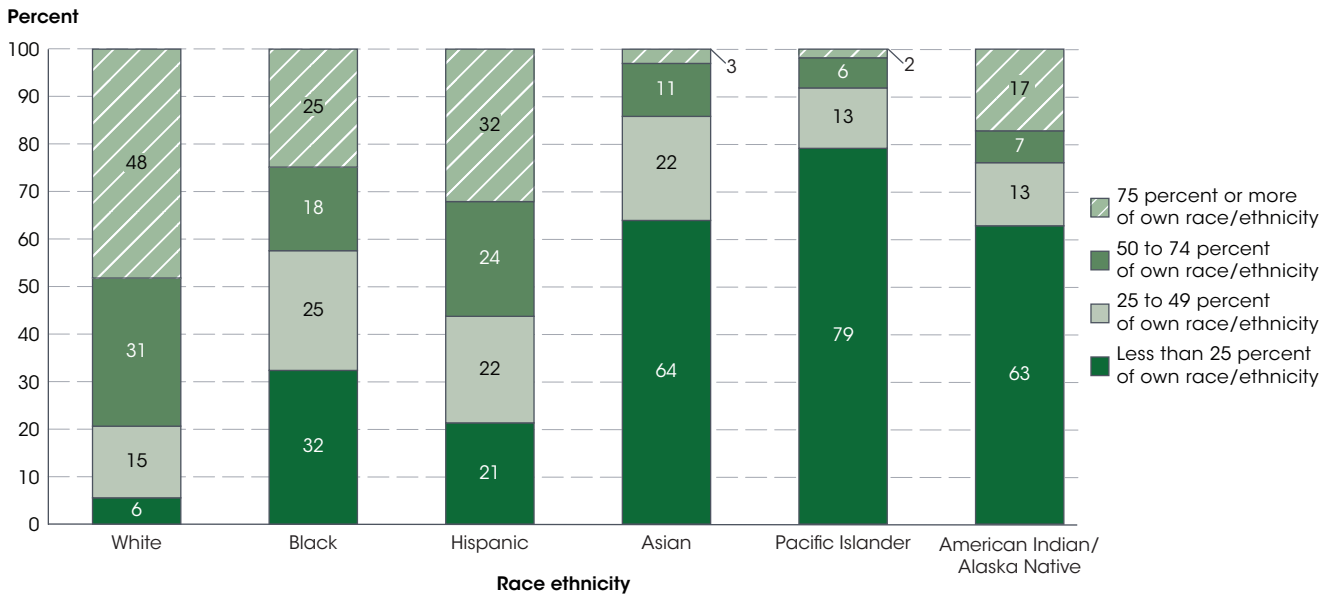


NOTE: Minority students include students who were Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and of Two or more races. Data reflect racial/ethnic data reported by schools. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2017-18. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 216.50.

As noted in the preceding paragraph, in fall 2017, approximately 31 percent of public elementary and secondary students attended public schools in which the combined enrollment of minority students was at least 75 percent of total enrollment. More than half of Hispanic (60 percent), Black (58 percent), and Pacific

Islander (53 percent) students attended such schools. In contrast, less than half of American Indian/Alaska Native students (39 percent), Asian students (39 percent), students of Two or more races (20 percent), and White students (6 percent) attended such schools.

**Figure 4. Percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary school students, by student's race/ethnicity and percentage of own racial/ethnic group enrolled in the school: Fall 2017**



NOTE: Data for Two or more races are omitted from this figure; 99 percent of students of Two or more races were enrolled in schools where less than 25 percent of the students were of their own race. Data reflect racial/ethnic data reported by schools. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2017–18. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 216.55.

Examining the enrollment data for individual racial/ethnic groups can yield more detailed insights on school enrollment patterns. These data show the extent to which students attend public schools with peers of the same racial/ethnic group. In fall 2017, some 48 percent of White students were enrolled in public schools that were predominantly composed of students of their own race (i.e., 75 percent or more of enrollment was White), while 6 percent of White students were enrolled in schools in which less than a quarter of the students were White. About 25 percent of Black students were enrolled in public schools that were predominantly Black, while 32 percent of Black students were enrolled in schools

in which less than a quarter of the students were Black. Similarly, 32 percent of Hispanic students were enrolled in public schools that were predominantly Hispanic, while 21 percent were enrolled in schools in which less than a quarter of the students were Hispanic. In comparison, lower percentages of students who were of Two or more races (less than 1 percent), Pacific Islander (2 percent), Asian (3 percent), and American Indian/Alaska Native (17 percent) were enrolled in public schools that were predominantly composed of students of their own racial/ethnic group. Instead, more than half of students of these races were enrolled in public schools in which less than a quarter of the students were of their own race.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Separate data on students who were Asian and Pacific Islander were not available in fall 2000. Prior to 2008, data for students who were Asian included students who were Pacific Islander.  
<sup>2</sup> Prior to 2008, separate data on students of Two or more races were not collected; these students were required to select a single category from among the offered race/ethnicity categories (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native).

<sup>3</sup> Minority students include students who were Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and of Two or more races.  
<sup>4</sup> Students who were Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two of more races are not included in the trend analysis since prior to 2008 separate data on these racial/ethnic groups were not collected.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, tables 203.50, 203.70, 216.50, and 216.55

**Related indicators and resources:** [Characteristics of Elementary and Secondary Schools](#); [Public Charter School Enrollment](#); [Public School Enrollment](#); [Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups](#)

**Glossary:** Elementary school; Enrollment; Public school or institution; Racial/ethnic group; Secondary school