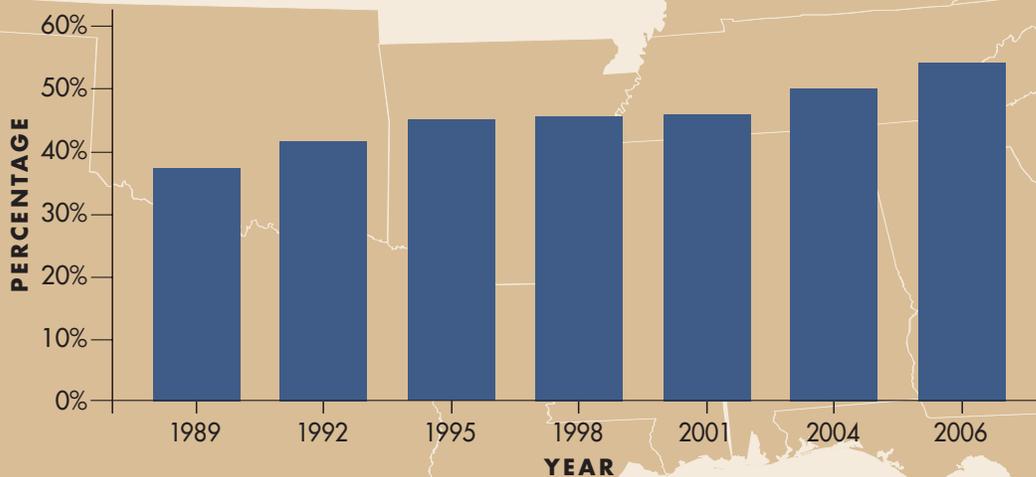


A New Majority

Low Income Students in the South's Public Schools



The Southern Education Foundation

The Southern Education Foundation (SEF), www.southerneducation.org, is a nonprofit organization comprised of diverse women and men who work together to improve the quality of life for all of the South's people through better and more accessible education. SEF advances creative solutions to ensure fairness and excellence in education for low income students from preschool through higher education.

SEF develops and implements programs of its own design, serves as an intermediary for donors who want a high-quality partner with whom to work on education issues in the South, and participates as a public charity in the world of philanthropy. SEF depends upon contributions from foundations, corporations and individuals to support its efforts.

SEF'S VISION

We seek a South and a nation with a skilled workforce that sustains an expanding economy, where civic life embodies diversity and democratic values and practice, and where an excellent education system provides all students with fair chances to develop their talents and contribute to the common good. We will be known for our commitment to combating poverty and inequality through education.

SEF'S TIMELESS MISSION

SEF develops, promotes and implements policies, practices and creative solutions that ensure educational excellence, fairness and high levels of achievement among African Americans and other groups and communities that have not yet reached the full measure of their potential. SEF began in 1867 as the Peabody Education Fund.

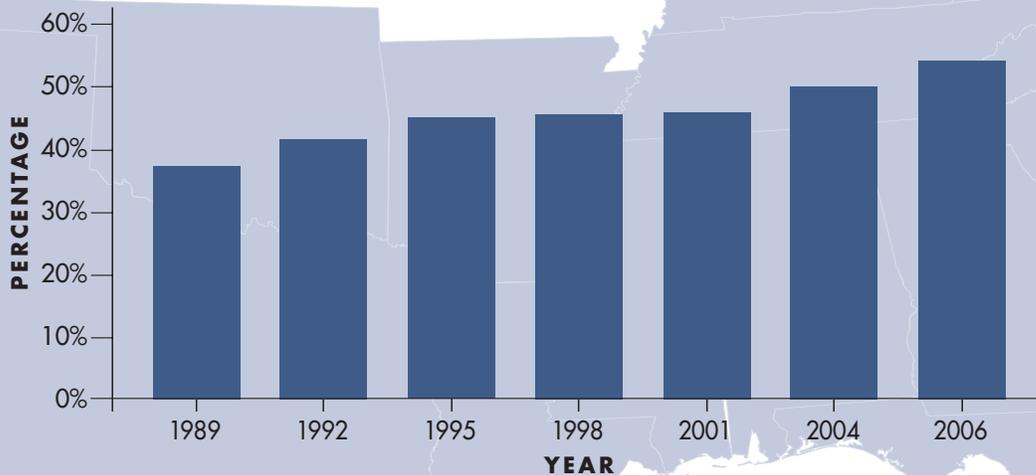
CREDITS

A New Majority: Low Income Students in the South's Public Schools is a SEF special 140th anniversary report. Other SEF reports and publications can be found at www.southerneducation.org.

This report was prepared and written by Steve Suitts, SEF Program Coordinator. Caycie Dix assisted with data development and displays. Mary Sommers of Typographic Solutions designed the report.

A New Majority

Low Income Students in the South's Public Schools



SEF
SINCE 1867

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The electronic version of *A New Majority: Low Income Students in the South's Public Schools* is available without charge at www.southerneducation.org.

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PREFACE

The year 2007 marks the 140th year of continuous efforts by the Southern Education Foundation (SEF) to improve Southern education quality and opportunity for *all* of the region's people, especially those whose life chances are hobbled by poverty. SEF has played a critical role in the South's long circuitous march toward realizing the American Dream of freedom from want through education. SEF's programs of research, policy analysis and development, consensus and public-will building, educational outreach, and technical assistance provision have helped the region begin to address old patterns of education inequality and inequity.

Progress has been made. As shackles of the past have been removed, the region's economy has expanded; old patterns of out-migration have been replaced by in-migration; and antiquated ideas and practices related to race have declined. A new more democratic and inclusive culture built on respect for diversity and recognition of the interdependence of all Southerners has begun to take hold.

Still, this is no time for complacency. In this research report, *A New Majority: Low Income Students in the South's Public Schools*, SEF explains why. For the first time in more than 40 years, the South is the only region in the nation where low income children constitute a majority of public school students — 54 percent. This report chronicles the growth over time in the number of low income students, long-standing patterns of underinvestment in public education, and the consequences of that underinvestment.

The message in the report is simply stated: *Poverty and lack of a good education beget poverty and inequality.* The South is in the throes of a self-perpetuating vicious cycle.

Already home to 40 per cent of the nation's poor people, most of whom lack the skills to earn livable wages in the emergent technology- and information-driven global economy, the South urgently needs not only to improve but also to *transform* its public education systems. No one can seriously believe that the future will be bright when public school students, as a group, are dropping out in record numbers, failing to achieve to high standards, lacking in counseling, health and other services, going to college in small numbers, and failing disproportionately to graduate from college.

This is a crisis of first order of magnitude! Transforming the public education afforded to low income students — the new majority today — should be a priority of commensurate magnitude, so that tomorrow these students will not expand a dreaded “under class,” with all of the negative connotations the term implies. Today's low income students can become, if we do what is necessary now to dramatically improve public education systems, tomorrow's sophisticated, engaged, and prosperous contributors to the skills-driven global economy.

The choice is ours. Will the people of the South and their leaders ignore the emergence of the new majority and the lessons of history? Or will the region do what is right to transform public education resources and patterns of access for the new majority? That is the question and the challenge.

Lynn Huntley
President
Southern Education Foundation
November 2007

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND



The South has always had a disproportionately large number of low income children to educate. At the end of the Civil War, the South possessed an overwhelming population of destitute and uneducated children. This population consisted of the Black children of former slaves and the White children of the region's plain folk. For several years the South had relatively few schools for these children to attend.¹ In 1871, six years after the war's end, only 20 per cent of African American children and 40 per cent of White children of school age in 11 Southern states were enrolled in school. Most attended classes for only a few months each year. By way of contrast, almost 70 per cent of the nation's white children in 1871 attended public schools for a school term almost twice as long as the South's school year.²

During the years bridging the Civil War and the 20th century, each Southern state endured persisting, often violent race- and class-based struggles over the American rights of equality and opportunity, including basic questions about education and democracy. Would Southern states establish accessible public schools for all children? Where would public schools be built and whose children would benefit? And, how could the Southern states build adequate educational systems for most children when most Southerners had relatively little wealth or income with which to finance public schools?³

By 1890, Southern states had made substantial, if imperfect, progress in establishing public education. The South enrolled approximately 60 per cent of all school-age children, including half of all Black children. This gain compared with an enrollment rate of 71 per cent among the nation's white children.⁴

Southern states had far fewer resources to build and maintain schools for vast numbers of low income students. In 1890, average wealth in the South ranged from a low of \$352 per person in Mississippi to a high of \$631 in Kentucky. No Southern state equaled even half the per capita wealth of Rhode Island, New York, or California. The national average wealth per person in 1890 was \$1,036.⁵

During the early decades of the 20th century, new manufacturing businesses rapidly expanded the South's agriculture-based economy, and the region's towns and cities developed a growing middle class of merchants, managers, doctors, lawyers, and salesmen. This enlarged the South's per capita wealth and income while reducing the number of low income families and students in the region. Yet even this progress left the South with the nation's largest percentage of low income households and students, especially low income African Americans.⁶

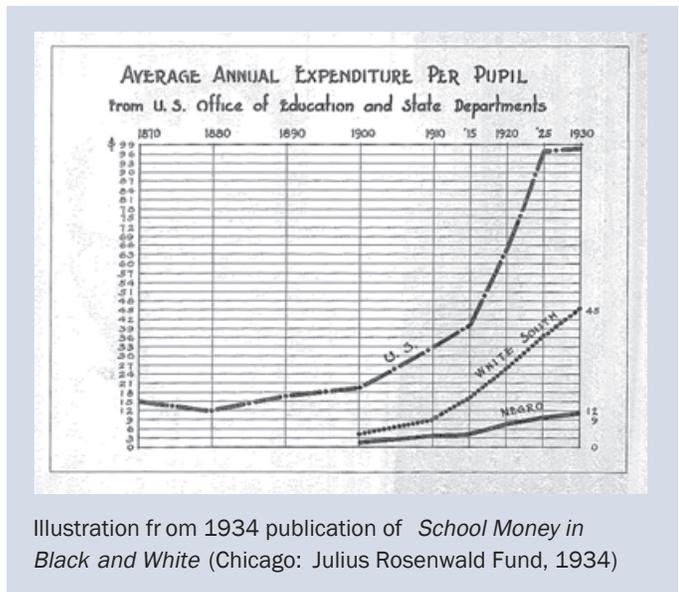


Illustration from 1934 publication of *School Money in Black and White* (Chicago: Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1934)

The South's public schools emerged in the early 20th century with a majority of low income students attending schools with vastly uneven educational resources between states and within states. In 1930, the nation as a whole spent on average \$97 per child for public education. The average expenditure in the 10-state South was only \$37 per child. That included an average of \$45 per White child and \$12 per Black child. School funds also differed widely by state within the region. South Carolina, for example, spent only \$38 to educate the average White student but an average of only \$6.65 for every African American child.

Racial disparities in the South's school funding were always the largest, but many Southern states also spent tax dollars for education unequally on the basis of class among white students. For example, in 1930 Alabama spent \$16.34 to educate each White child in Winston County but spent \$51.10 per pupil for each White student in Dallas County.⁷

The Great Depression of the 1930s threw millions of workers off farms and out of jobs across the South. The nation's economic collapse increased the number of low income Black and White children and a large number of public schools in the South were closed. The Depression also caused severe cutbacks in per pupil expenditures. The average expenditure in the South dropped from \$37 per student in 1930 to \$27 per pupil in 1934.

New Deal policies and programs began to increase the South's per capita income in the late 1930s, and that growth escalated with the World War II economy in the 1940s. In addition, a significant number of low income families, especially African American families, left the South. As a result, the number of low income students in the region's elementary and secondary schools started a steady decline. During this era, Black children were about four times more likely than White children to live in low income households, and the South was home to as many as two-thirds of the nation's low income African American children. The South also had a majority of low income White children, the nation's highest share.⁸

Between 1940 and 1960, the nation made substantial gains in reducing the number of low income persons, as per capita income grew in every region of the country. Southern states enjoyed a share of the national economic expansion and, in turn, increased educational attainment throughout the region. With growth of both income and education, the South's low income population declined significantly during this period, although the region's African American children were in households that saw the least progress.⁹

In 1959 the U.S. Census Bureau began to measure and report on low income persons as well as persons living in "poverty" across the nation.¹⁰ That year 26 per cent of the nation's children under the age of 18 were in poverty, including 20 percent of the nation's White children and 64 percent of the nation's Black children. There were no regional estimates for low income persons in 1959 although historical correlations suggest that close to a majority of the school-age children in the South were in households living below the recently defined American poverty line.¹¹ Certainly, by contemporary standards, a substantial majority of the school children in the South remained "low income" at the end of the 1950s.

Throughout most of the 1960s, the number and percentage of low income children in Southern public schools declined among both Blacks and Whites, as did the percentage of persons in poverty. By 1967, the percentage of low income children in the South and the nation had declined to unmatched levels.¹² Indeed, somewhere between 1959 and 1967, it is likely that for the first time since public schools were established in the South, low income children no longer constituted a majority of students in the South's public schools.

DEFINING THE SOUTH'S GEOGRAPHY

The Southern Education Foundation includes 15 states in its standard definition of the South (see the listing of states in the "South" and other U.S. regions in the Appendix), but in name and in fact there are many Souths. Another oft-used definition includes only the 11 states that formed the Confederacy during the Civil War. The U.S. Census Bureau reports data for a 16-state South that includes Delaware, although it is very hard to find a native of that state who self-identifies as a Southerner. Past and present scholars also have used definitions of the South that generally include from 9 to 15 states. Despite these lingering differences about the South's exact geography, these 8 states are almost always considered to be a part of any definition of the South: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

This trend in the South came to a halt in 1970 when the percentage of low income children leveled off and remained essentially constant over five years. In 1975 the trend lines for low income students in the South and across the nation began to creep upward. After 1980, the Reagan Administration convinced Congress to enact large federal cutbacks in anti-poverty programs, and the numbers of low income children in the South started to rise sharply. Responding to demands for change from public interest groups, Congress restored some anti-poverty and national assistance funding in the mid-1980s, and the South's percentage of low income students dipped somewhat. But the percentages remained high because of the effects of a recession.¹³

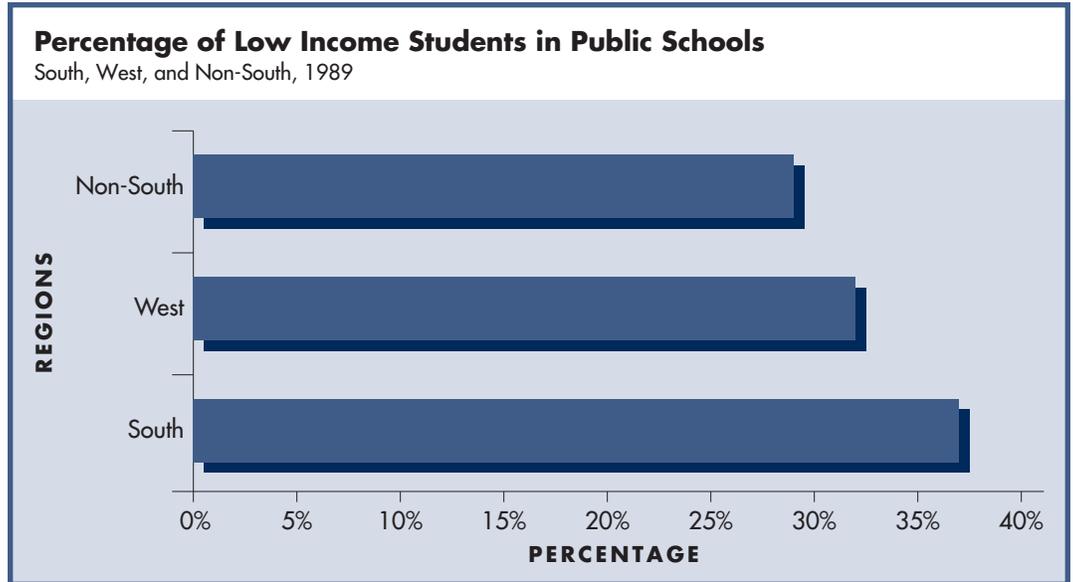
RECENT TRENDS: 1989–2003

At the end of the 1980s, 37 percent of the students attending the South's public schools from kindergarten through the twelfth grade belonged to low income households. They were children in families with incomes of 185 per cent or less of the poverty level — with a monthly income of less than \$1,527 for a family of three in 1989.¹⁴ Western states (ranging from Alaska to New Mexico) had the second largest proportion with

32 percent. In the rest of the country, 29 percent of the students in public schools were from low income families. The 15 Southern states had the largest percentage of low income students among the nation's regions.

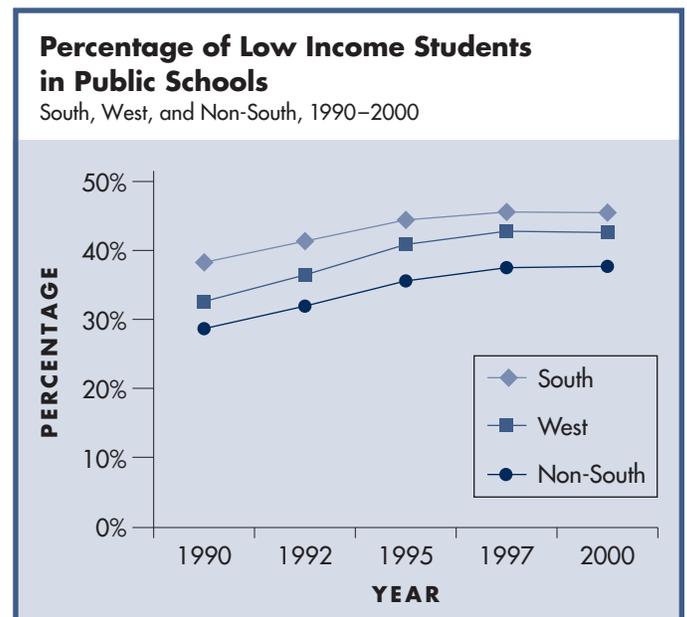
In 1989, Mississippi was the only state in the nation with a majority of low income students. It had 59 percent. Louisiana ranked second with 49 percent. On the other end of the spectrum, only 11 percent of New Hampshire's students were from low income families — the smallest share of any state.

During the first half of the 1990s, the number and percentage of students who were eligible for free or reduced school lunches in public schools grew throughout most of the nation and its regions (see Appendix for listing of states by region). The West showed the largest increases: low income students grew from 32 percent to 41 percent by 1995. Still, Southern states continued to lead the national trend. By 1995, low income students were 45 percent of the South's public school students. Every



region experienced a steady increase in the percentage of low income students in this five-year period, but the Midwest had the lowest level at 30 percent.

The growth of the nation's low income students slowed but persisted over the last half of the 1990s. By 2000, 41 percent of the entire nation's public school population was low income. The South continued to lead the nation in low income students with 46 percent, and the per cent-

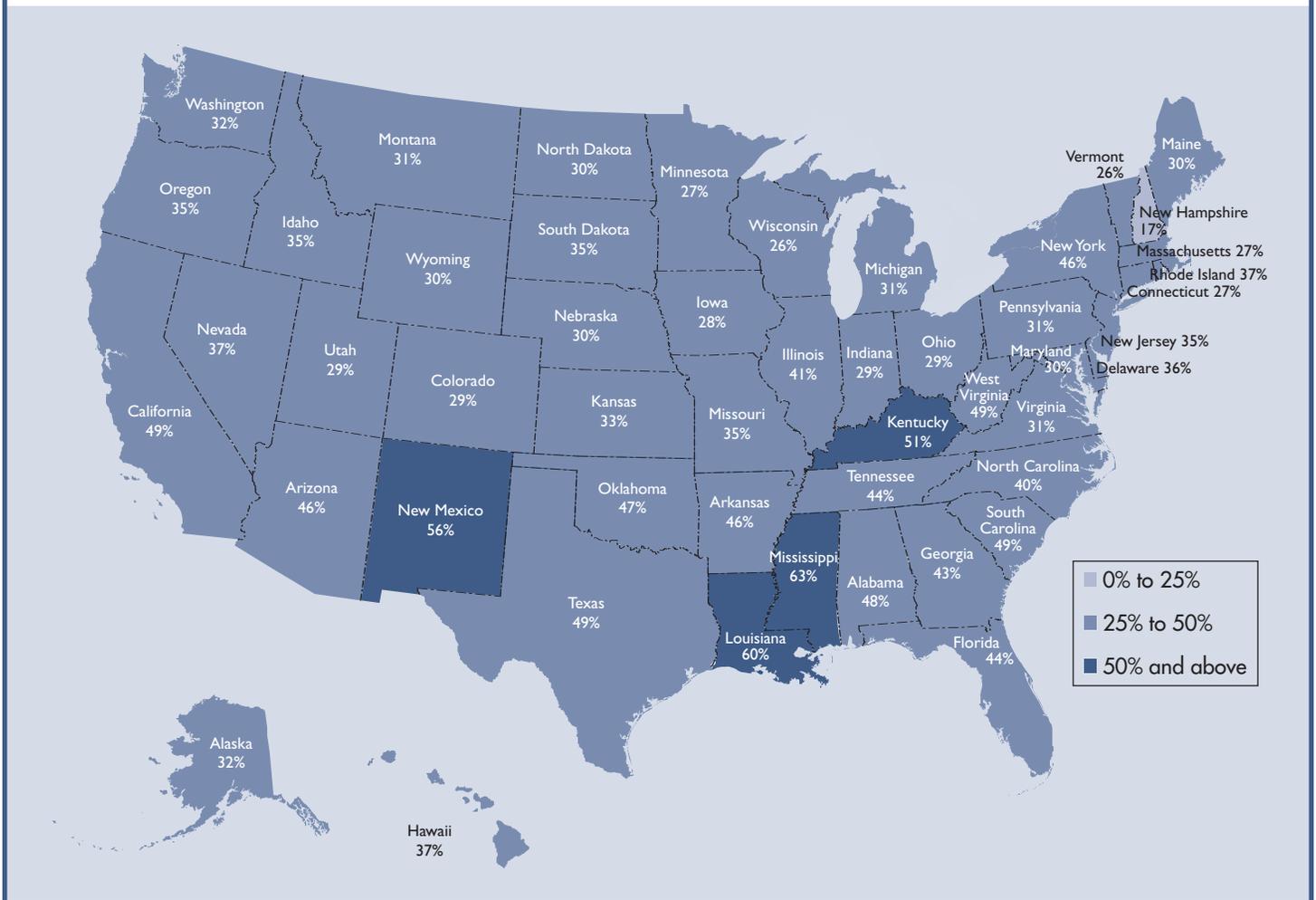


age in Western states had increased more rapidly to 43 percent. The Midwest experienced only a 2 percentage point increase in low income students, who were 32 percent of the region's public school population at the end of the decade.

In 2000, New Hampshire remained the state with the nation's smallest proportion of low income students — 17 percent of the state's public school population. At the other end of the spectrum, there were four states — three in the South — that now had a majority of low income students in public schools: Mississippi (63 percent), Louisiana (60 percent), New Mexico (56 percent), and Kentucky (51 percent).

From 2000 through 2003, the Northeast experienced a small, temporary decline in the percentage of low income students. The number dropped from 36 percent in 2000 to 34 percent in 2003 — the first real decline in the percentage of low income students in any region since 1989. The percentages in the West remained virtually unchanged during these years. In contrast, the South's percentage of low income students increased from 46 percent in 2000 to 48 percent in 2003.

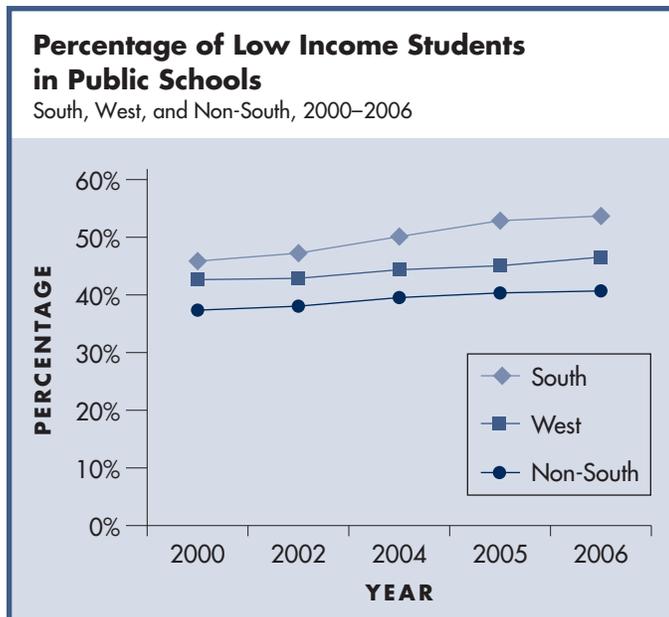
Low Income Students in Public Schools, 2000



CURRENT TRENDS: 2004–2006

For the last three years, low income students have constituted a majority of the South's public school children. In the 2004-2005 school year, 50 per cent of the South's school children became eligible for free or reduced lunch in the public schools. In the 2005-2006 school year, the number increased to 53 per cent, and, in the school year ending in the summer of 2007, 54 per cent of the South's public school students were from low income households.

Today, for the first time in more than 40 years, the South is the only region in the nation where low income children constitute a majority of public school students. At the same time, low income students have become a substantial proportion of public school enrollment across the nation. For forty-one percent of the public school students outside the South were from low income families in the 2006-2007 school year. In the West, the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch stood at 47 percent, the second highest rate among U.S. regions.



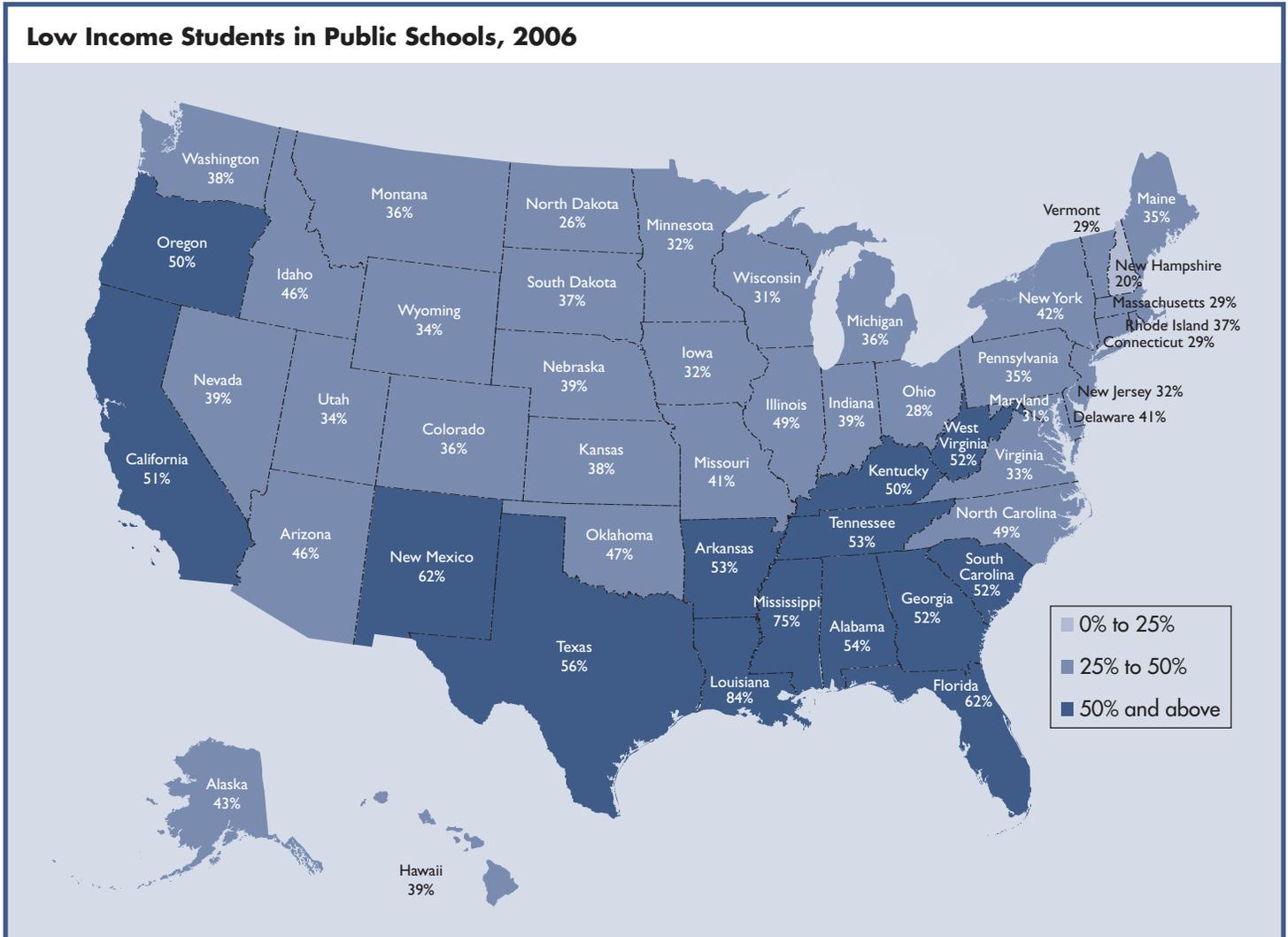
Beginning in the 2004-2005 school year, for the first time, 10 states showed a majority of low income students in the public schools. Nine of these 10 states were in the South: Mississippi (65 per cent), Louisiana (63 per cent), Texas (54 per cent), Florida (54 per cent), Oklahoma (54 per cent), South Carolina (52 per cent), Alabama (52 per cent), West Virginia (51 per cent), and Arkansas (50 per cent). The only non-Southern state in 2004 was New Mexico, ranked third in the nation with 59 per cent of low income students.

In the following school year, 12 Southern states had low income students as a majority of public school children with the addition of Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, each with 50 per cent. The only other state with a majority of low income students was New Mexico, with 61 per cent.

In the 2006-2007 academic year (the latest reported year), when the region's low income student population climbed to a record-high of 54 per cent, 11 states in the South had a majority of low income students.¹⁵ Other states outside the South also developed a majority of low income students. California had a majority of low income students – 51 per cent – for the first time in the state's modern history. Also, Oregon reported for the first time a majority of public school students eligible for free and reduced lunch. New Mexico showed a continued increase. Sixty-two per cent of its public school students were from low income households in the 2006-2007 school year.

If current trends continue during the next couple of years, additional Southern states will have a new majority of low income students in their public schools. The percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch in North Carolina has almost doubled since 1989. In the 2006-2007 school year, the North Carolina rate stood at 49 per cent and can potentially reach 50 per cent as early as the 2007-2008 school year. Recently Oklahoma's population of low income students has ranged from 47 percent to 51 per cent. This state will likely have a majority of low income students that will persist into the next couple of years. In fact, barring dramatic, unforeseen changes, every state in the South, except Maryland and

Low Income Students in Public Schools, 2006



Virginia, will have a majority of low income students in its public schools within the next few years. And at current rates of growth, each state's new majority will enlarge over time.

Some states outside the South also will probably reach a majority of low income students in public schools in the near future. Illinois has had a huge increase in the percentage of low income students during the last two decades. Beginning with 29 per cent in 1989, Illinois had 49 percent of its public school enrollment eligible for free and reduced lunch in the 2006-2007 school year. Illinois will probably have a majority of low income students in public schools within the next couple of years.

In addition, three Western states — Arizona (46 per cent), Idaho (46 per cent), and Alaska (43 per cent) — have had significant growth in the numbers of low income students during the last two decades. These states may develop a majority of low income public school children within the next three to five years. New York (42 per cent) and Delaware (41 per cent) are the other two states that had low income students in 2006-07 at more than 40 per cent of public school enrollment.

FACTORS BEHIND CURRENT TRENDS

There is no single explanation behind current trends, but three factors — demography, economy, and history — help to explain the new majority in the South’s public schools and the increase in low income students in public schools across the nation during the last two decades. These three influences often interact differently by degree and by geography among states and within regions, but together they help to explain the overall direction of current trends.

DEMOGRAPHY: In recent decades, many states have experienced a higher rate of population growth among Latino and African American children, who statistically are more likely than White children to be born into a low income household. The increase in Latino children appears an especially significant factor in the growth of low income children in Florida, Texas, Georgia, and North Carolina within the South and in New Mexico, California, and a few other states outside the South. Immigration plays a role in this growth, but high birth rates of the American-born Latino children is a primary factor. Similarly, a high birth rate among African Americans has contributed to the increase in low income students, especially in the Deep South.¹⁶

ECONOMY: Some states like Mississippi, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Arkansas have had persistently high rates of under employment that have contributed to increased numbers of low income households. Southern states also have recently experienced higher rates of unemployment due to global changes in the economy. In most U.S. regions, and especially in the South, there has been a decline in the real value of wages and family incomes during the last few years. This downturn in wages and real income has helped to fuel an increase in the number of low income students in Southern states.¹⁷

HISTORY: Deep South states and Southern Appalachian states have a history of persistently high levels of poverty. Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, and South Carolina have had the nation’s largest shares of children near poverty since the Census Bureau started keeping count, as have West Virginia and Kentucky. Even after the 1960s when anti-poverty programs substantially reduced poverty, there remained a large percentage of low income students in these states. In 1989, for example, all of these states had at least 35 per cent of their public school enrollment eligible for free or reduced lunch, and most had more than 40 per cent. In effect, after the number of low income households dipped below a majority in the South, progress was limited in these states. From one generation to another, these Southern states have never been very far from having a low income majority among public school students.¹⁸

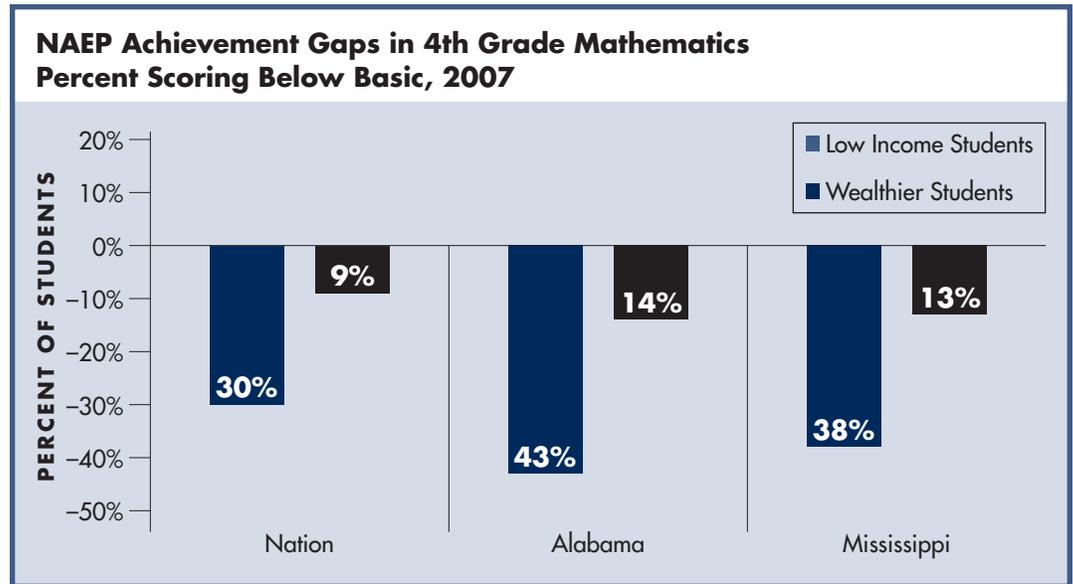
IMPLICATIONS OF CURRENT TRENDS

Several significant implications and consequences may arise from the fact that the South now has a new majority of low income students enrolled in public schools, but none is more far-reaching and central to the future of the Southern states and the nation than the challenge to improve educational achievement and attainment.

Low income students in Southern states are behind wealthier students by almost all measures of educational progress within their own states and they often have not performed academically as well as other low income students elsewhere in the country. Yet, it is only in the South where low income students are now the largest group of public school students.

As a group, low income students receive the least early childhood education. Too often these students start behind in school and never catch up. Low income students score significantly below wealthier students on every national test score at every age. For instance, in the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests for fourth and eighth grades, average scores in both mathematics and reading showed that low income students remain 20 to 30 points behind students not eligible for free and reduced lunch. Viewed another way, 30 percent of the low income students scored “below basic” while only 9 percent of the nation’s wealthier students scored that low in fourth-grade math scores.

In several Southern states the achievement gap for low income students is often wider than the same gap on a national scale. In Alabama, for example, low income students scored considerably below the nation’s average

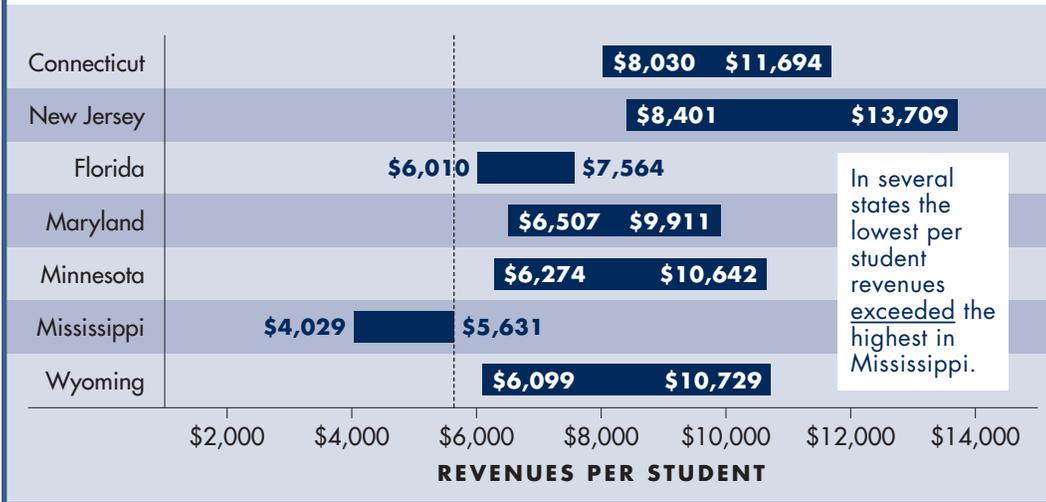


low income student in fourth-grade mathematics. For thirty-three percent of Alabama’s low income students scored “below basic” on the 2007 NAEP fourth-grade mathematics test in comparison with only 14 percent of the state’s wealthier students. Similarly, in Mississippi, 38 percent of low income students scored “below basic” on the same test while 13 percent of the higher-income students scored at that low level.¹⁹

Low income students also have higher rates for dropping out of high school and lower rates for college attendance and college graduation. In 2005, for example, approximately 39 percent of all 18- to 24-year-olds in the United States were in college, but only 25 percent from low income families were participating in college. Every Southern state with a majority of low income students in public schools in 2005 had college participation rates for low income students that were lower than the national average.²⁰

Inadequate K-12 Funding

Range of School Districts' Per Student Revenues By State, 1999–2000



Source: Taken from "What Research Says About Unequal Funding for Schools in America"; National Center for Educational Statistics, Common Core of Data

spent in their *lowest* per pupil expenditures. Also, the South provides the nation's smallest amounts of need-based aid to assist the low income students who do graduate from high school and have a chance to attend college.

These trends have emerged in the region that already has the nation's largest education deficit. The South has the nation's highest percentage of persons 25 years of age and older without a high school diploma and the country's lowest rates of adults with a college degree.

The South's challenges are made even greater by the fact that Southern states provide the least educational resources to their low income students. The South has the lowest per pupil expenditures in the nation. In 2000, for example, Mississippi's highest per pupil expenditures did not even match many states' lowest student expenditure. That year, public school districts in Mississippi with the state's *highest* per pupil expenditures spent less per child than school districts in more than 20 other states

Therefore, the South's educational challenge is this: how to advance the education of a new majority of low income students in public schools when these students lag far behind, receive the least educational support in the nation, and come from a region with the largest population of adults lacking a high school or college education.

The response to this challenge will not be easy, but it will be all-important in determining the South's quality of life over the next two generations.

The South has a new majority of low income students in the public schools for the first time in more than 40 years. Low income students are now a majority of the public school enrollment in 11 of 15 Southern states. Soon, all but 2 states in the South will probably have a new majority of low income students.

In three non-Southern states, New Mexico, California, and Oregon, students eligible for free and reduced lunch are also a majority of the public school enrollment in 2006-07. Given current trends, the public schools in the West will probably emerge with a majority of low income students within the next five to seven years.

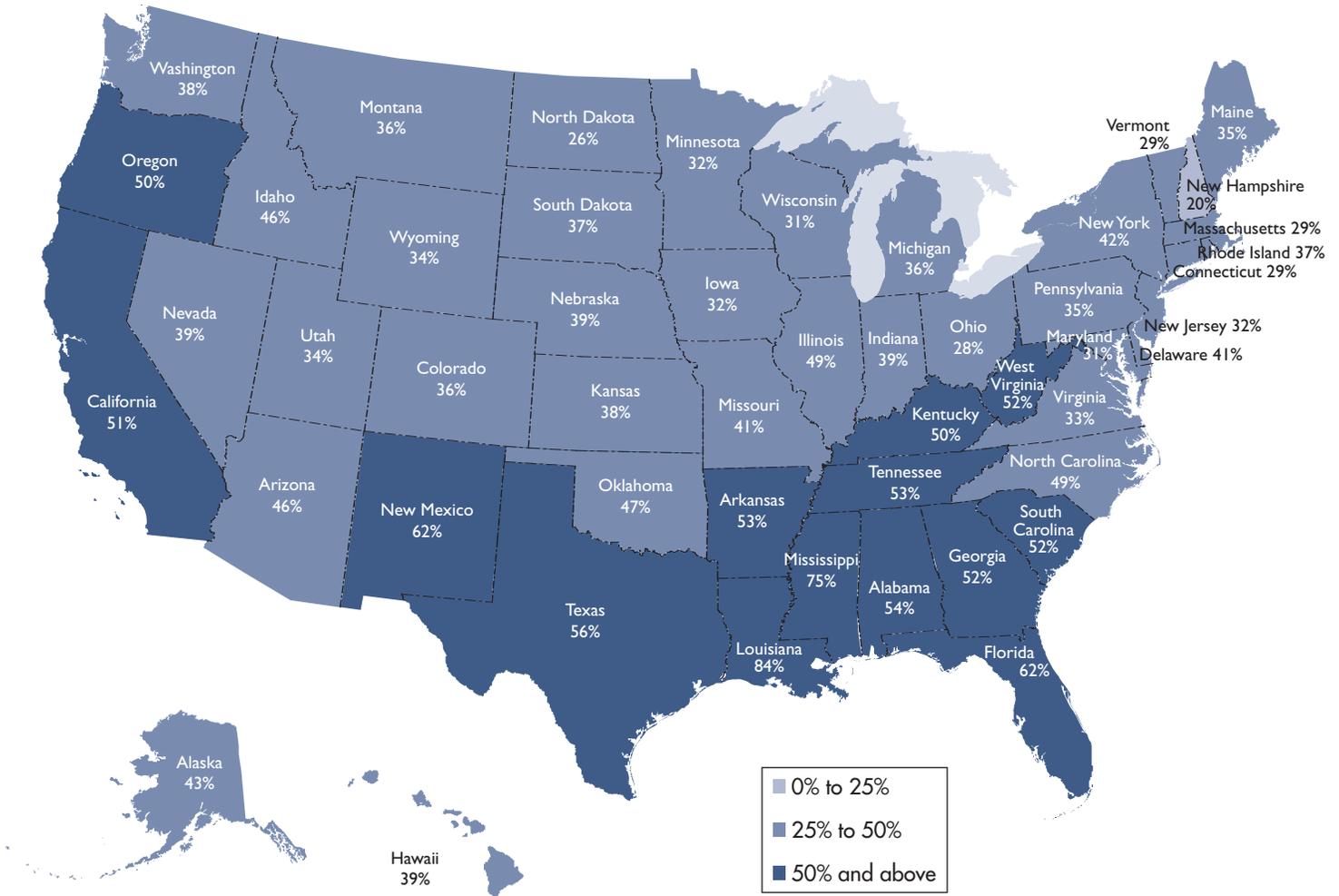
Since almost three-fifths of all the nation's public school children reside in Southern and Western states, these two regions guide the national pattern and explain why low income students currently constitute as much as 46 percent of U.S. public school enrollment. If recent rates of growth continue in the South and the West and in two other large states, Illinois and New York, the United States could have a majority of low income students in public schools within the next 10 years.

Currently the South alone faces the implications and consequences of having a new majority of low income students in its public schools. As the region with the

nation's largest current deficit in education among adults, the South also faces a new global economy that requires higher skills and knowledge from all who seek a decent living. In this brave, new world, the people and policymakers of Southern states must realize that continuing the current, uneven level of educational progress will be disastrous. They must understand more fully that today their future and their grandchildren's future are inextricably bound to the success or failure of low income students in the South. If this new majority of students fails in school, an entire state and an entire region will fail simply because there will be inadequate human capital in Southern states to build and sustain good jobs, an enjoyable quality of life, and a well-informed democracy. It is that simple.

While it is true that needy and destitute children always have been a large part of Southern education over the last 140 years, today, more than ever before, the region's future hinges on the fate of these low income students — the South's new majority. How the Southern states recognize and address this new majority is the most important challenge that the region and perhaps the nation will face in the early 21st century.

Low Income Students in Public Schools 2006



Nation	46%
South	54%
Non-South	41%

Low Income Students in Public Schools, 2006–2007

Divisions and States	Total Public School Enrollment	Percentage of Low income Students	Divisions and States	Total Public School Enrollment	Percentage of Low income Students
NORTHEAST	8,534,228	36%	SOUTH	18,010,223	54%
Connecticut	550,114	29%	Alabama	751,385	54%
Delaware	124,168	41%	Arkansas	474,338	53%
Maine	197,392	35%	Florida	2,695,714	62%
Massachusetts	985,577	29%	Georgia	1,609,498	52%
New Hampshire	206,862	20%	Kentucky	713,706	50%
New Jersey	1,284,819	32%	Louisiana	680,991	84%
New York	3,081,443	42%	Maryland	873,735	31%
Pennsylvania	1,849,689	35%	Mississippi	513,705	75%
Rhode Island	155,930	37%	North Carolina	1,431,914	49%
Vermont	98,234	29%	Oklahoma	634,638	47%
MIDWEST	11,330,667	36%	South Carolina	737,653	52%
Illinois	1,943,117	49%	Tennessee	911,403	53%
Indiana	1,050,574	39%	Texas	4,510,372	56%
Iowa	527,691	32%	Virginia	1,178,523	33%
Kansas	506,842	38%	West Virginia	292,648	52%
Michigan	1,765,200	36%	WEST	11,481,053	47%
Minnesota	885,063	32%	Alaska	104,625	43%
Missouri	969,931	41%	Arizona	988,978	46%
Nebraska	296,372	39%	California	6,163,162	51%
North Dakota	104,740	26%	Colorado	724,950	36%
Ohio	2,222,326	28%	Hawaii	182,777	39%
South Dakota	136,769	37%	Idaho	232,208	46%
Wisconsin	922,042	31%	Montana	145,579	36%
			Nevada	438,731	39%
			New Mexico	338,238	62%
			Oregon	552,019	50%
			Utah	496,706	34%
			Washington	1,029,107	38%
			Wyoming	83,973	34%
			NATION *	50,107,899	46%

*Totals for the nation include the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

¹This report presents only a brief general review of the history and presence of low income students in the South's public education and is obviously not an analysis of the role of race, class, and segregation in Southern public education. Also, the report does not attempt to examine issues and challenges related to migrant, immigrant and newcomer populations in the public schools. These and related topics may be addressed in future SEF publications. SEF's website, www.southerneducation.org, contains information about several issues related to these topics.

²Rupert B. Vance, *All These People: The Nation's Human Resources in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1945), 407-8. Vance defined the "Southeast" as 10 states of the Old Confederacy (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia), excluding Texas but including Kentucky. For a glimpse at the different definitions of the South and Southeast, see sidebar entitled "Defining the South's Geography."

³James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 4-32; C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 396-428; Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem in Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), 887-93. Also, see Barnas Sears, *Objections to public schools considered: remarks at the annual meeting of the trustees of the Peabody education fund* (Boston: John Wilson and Son, 1875).

⁴Vance, *All These People*, 407, 417; I. A. Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South: Social Change and Cultural Persistence 1880-1915* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 426-31.

⁵Steve Suitts, *The Southern Origins of America's Education Inequality* (Atlanta: Southern Education Foundation, forthcoming, 2008); see generally Wickliffe Rose, *School Funds in Ten Southern States* (New York: Peabody Education Fund, 1909), 7-40.

⁶Gavin Wright, *Old South New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy since the Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 39-47; Vance, *All These People*, 417.

⁷Vance, *All These People*, 417; Charles S. Johnson, *Statistical Atlas of Southern Counties: Listing and Analysis of Socio-Economic Indices of 1104 Southern Counties* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 197, 54, 47. Also see: *School Money in Black and White* (Chicago: Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1934) and William H. Skaggs, *The Southern Oligarchy: An Appeal in Behalf of the Silent Masses of Our Country Against the Despotism of the Few* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1924), 167-188.

⁸Vance, *All These People*, 417, 420-36; James T. Patterson, *America's Struggle against Poverty, 1900-1985* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 78-96, 101; J. Wayne Flynt, *Dixie's Forgotten People: The South's Poor Whites* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 93-115; Southern Regional Council, "Wanted: An Educated South," *New South* 2, no. 3 (March, 1947): 36, 19-22.

⁹Patterson, *America's Struggle*, 101; Herman P. Miller, "Changes in Income Distribution in the United States," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 46, no. 256. (December 1951): 438-41.

¹⁰At different eras over the decades, the terms "low income" and "poverty" have defined both the same population and different populations. By definition, both are relative terms. See Herman P. Miller, "The Dimensions of Poverty," in Ben B. Seligman, editor, *Poverty As a Public Issue* (New York: The Free Press, 1965), 1-51. Usually, "poverty" relates to persons with incomes that are below what is thought to be necessary to provide a level of minimally adequate sustenance and livelihood in a specific society. "Low income" relates generally to persons whose incomes are at the bottom ranks of family and per capita income. In recent years, "low income" has come to be used statistically to define persons whose income is 185 percent of poverty to 200 percent of current poverty levels. This report generally uses the term in modern times to mean 185 percent of poverty.

¹¹U.S. Census Bureau, *Poverty in the United States, 1959-1966* (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, Series P-60, No. 54, May 31, 1968); *Poverty in the United States, 1959-1968* (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, Series P-60, No. 68, December 31, 1969).

¹²U.S. Census Bureau, *Characteristics of the Low Income Population, 1970* (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, Series P-60, No. 81, November 1971); *Supplemental Report on Low Income Population, 1966-1972* (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, Series P-60, No. 95, July 1974).

¹³Steve Suits, *Patterns of Poverty* (Atlanta: Southern Regional Council, 1984); Steve Suits, *Public Assistance and Poverty* (Atlanta: Southern Regional Council, 1985); Steve Suits, "The Rising Tide of Poverty," *Southern Changes* 7, no. 1, (1985): 5-8; U.S. Census Bureau, *Poverty in the United States, 1988 and 1989* (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, Series P-60, No. 171, June 1991), 4.

¹⁴Since 1989, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has maintained data by state on the numbers of students approved for free or reduced-priced lunches (FRL) under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This data forms the basis of the analysis of low income students from 1989 until 2007. NSLP began in 1947 but participation and eligibility varied widely during most of the first three decades of the program's operation. See "The National School Lunch Act: Statutory Difficulties and the Need for Mandatory Gradual Expansion of State Programs," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 125, no. 2 (December 1976): 415-43. Since the late 1980s, NSLP has had almost universal participation and uniform eligibility among U.S. public schools. Today, as in the recent past, FRL income eligibility has been generally set at 135 percent of poverty for a free lunch and up to 185 percent of poverty for a reduced-priced lunch. In 2007, these standards would include children for free lunch if they live in a household with three persons whose annual household income is \$22,231 or less and for reduced-price lunch if their household income is \$31,765 or less. See "Child Nutrition Programs — Income Eligibility Guidelines," *Federal Register* 72, no. 38 (February 27, 2007).

¹⁵Oklahoma dropped slightly below 50 percent. On the other hand, there were especially large increases in 2006-2007 in the numbers of students eligible for free and reduced lunches in Mississippi and Louisiana due to Hurricane Katrina. While this event-driven increase will decline in coming years, hurricane recovery will not occur quickly nor will it alter the current trends where Mississippi and Louisiana maintain large majorities of low income students, and the Southern region stays above 50 percent.

¹⁶See *New Latino South: The Context and Consequences of Rapid Population Growth* (Washington: Pew Hispanic Center, July 26, 2005), 9-13, 33-41; see also *Hispanic Population: Brief: Census 2000 Brief* (Washington: U.S. Census Bureau, May, 2001); Jesse McKinnon, *The Black Population in the United States: March 2002*. (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, Series P20-541, Washington, D.C., 2003); "Births: Final Data for 2004," *National Vital Statistics Reports*, Vol. 55, No. 1, September 26, 2006.

¹⁷See chapter 7 in Lawrence Mishel, Jared Bernstein, and Sylvia Allegretto, *The State of Working America: 2006/2007* (Washington: Economic Policy Institute, 2006); Marie-Claire Guillard, "Proportions of Workers in Selected Pay Ranges, By Region and State," *Monthly Labor Review* 126, no. 9 (September 2003); Preston Quesenberry, "Globalization Drives Persistent Inequality: The Climate for Workers in the U.S., 1997," *Southern Changes* 19, no. 3-4 (1997): 3-20.

¹⁸One factor that has not been a major influence on these recent and current trends is private school enrollment. While it had a sizeable effect in the 1970s, there is no statistical evidence of any appreciable growth in private school enrollment in the South that would determine significantly the low income trends in public schools. From 1997 to 2003, for example, the South saw a growth of about 140,000 students enrolled in private schools and a growth of more than 1.2 million students in public schools. For every one student in private schools in the South in 2003, there were 10 students in public schools. In addition, there are some suggestions that part of the growth in the South's private schooling today includes the enrollment of a larger, more significant share of lower income students. See "Trends in Private School Enrollment," *The Condition of Education 2007*, National Center for Education Statistics online at <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2007/section1/indicator04.asp#info>. Home schooling was also not a factor since in 2003 there were only little more than one million home-schooled students across the United States. See Table 227 in "Students Who Are Home-schooled by Selected Characteristics: 2003," *Statistical Abstract 2007* online at <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/07s0227.xls>.

¹⁹*The Nations Report Card Reading 2007: National Assessment of Education Progress at Grades 4 and 8* (Washington: National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 2007-496, 2007); *The Nations Report Card Mathematics 2007: National Assessment of Education Progress at Grades 4 and 8* (Washington: National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 2007-494, 2007).

²⁰"College Participation Rates for Students from Low Income Families by State 1992-93 to 2004-05," *Postsecondary Education Opportunity*, no. 176 (February 2007); see also "National School Lunch Program Participation by State FFY1993 to FFY2005," *Postsecondary Education Opportunity*, no. 165 (March 2006).

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