

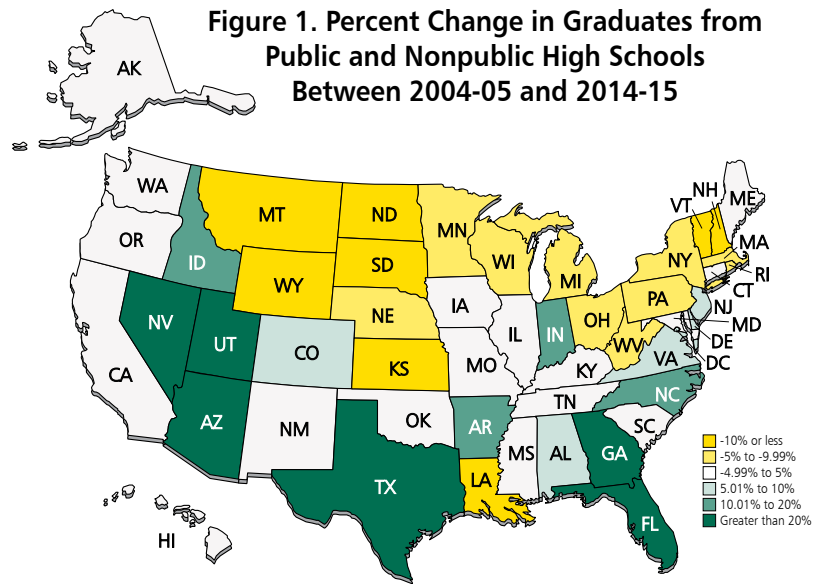
Knocking at the College Door Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, 1992-2022

MAINE

At over 3.3 million, the nation's graduating class of 2007-08 is projected to be history's largest. In fact, 2007-08 will mark the last year in an era of continuous growth in the nation's production of high school graduates, a period that reaches back to 1994. Over that time, the number of graduates swelled by 35.7 percent. In 2008-09, however, our country will begin a protracted period during which its production of high school graduates is expected to stagnate, assuming existing patterns persist. The number of graduates nationally will dip slightly over the next several years before growth resumes at a slower pace around 2015. Ultimately, projections indicate that between 2004-05 (the last year of available actual data) and 2021-22, the number of high school graduates will grow by approximately 265,000, or 8.6 percent.

The national data obscure significant variations in this picture at the regional and state levels, however. Regionally, in the decade leading up to 2004-05, the number of high school graduates grew the fastest in the West at 34 percent, with the South growing by 23.5 percent, the Northeast by 20.7 percent, and the Midwest by 14.2 percent. But the regions face very different futures in the years to come. The South will see the most growth in its production of high school graduates, at about 9 percent by 2014-15; and the West's numbers will climb by 7.1 percent. But the number of graduates produced in the Northeast and the Midwest will decline – by 6.1 and 3 percent, respectively.

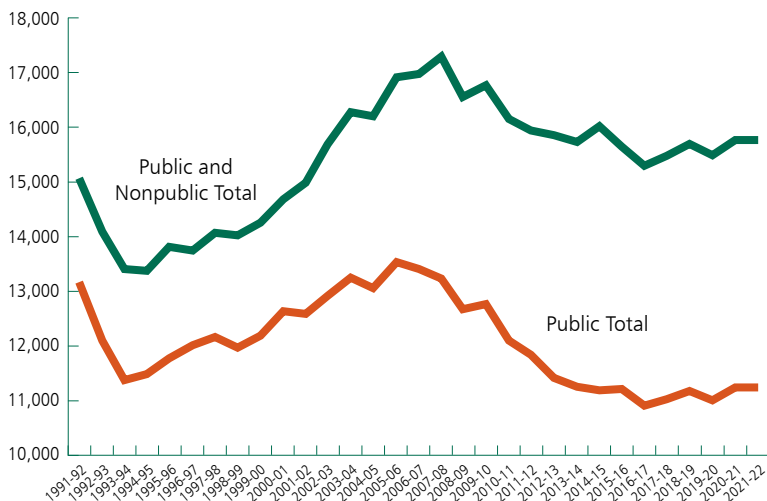
As with the national view, the regional picture masks considerable variation at the state level (Figure 1). Maine produced



about 2,800 more graduates in 2004-05 than it did a decade earlier, an increase of 21 percent. Projections indicate that the state will experience a decrease in its production of high school graduates starting in 2007-08, assuming existing patterns of high school completion and migration continue. The state projects to have about 180 fewer high school graduates a decade after 2004-05, a decrease of about 1 percent.

Maine experienced mostly uninterrupted increases in its production of high school graduates between 1994-95 and 2004-05, the last year for which actual data were available (Figure 2). That year, 13,077 students graduated from public high schools in Maine, 1,576 more graduates than were produced in 1994-95, which represented growth of 13.7 percent. Nonpublic schools in the state contributed an estimated 3,138 graduates in 2004-05, 1,235 more than they produced in 1994-95, and their production is projected to grow in the coming years. Of the state's total number of high school graduates each year, nonpublic schools produced an estimated 15

Figure 2. Maine High School Graduates 1991-92 to 2004-05 (Actual), 2005-06 to 2021-22 (Projected)



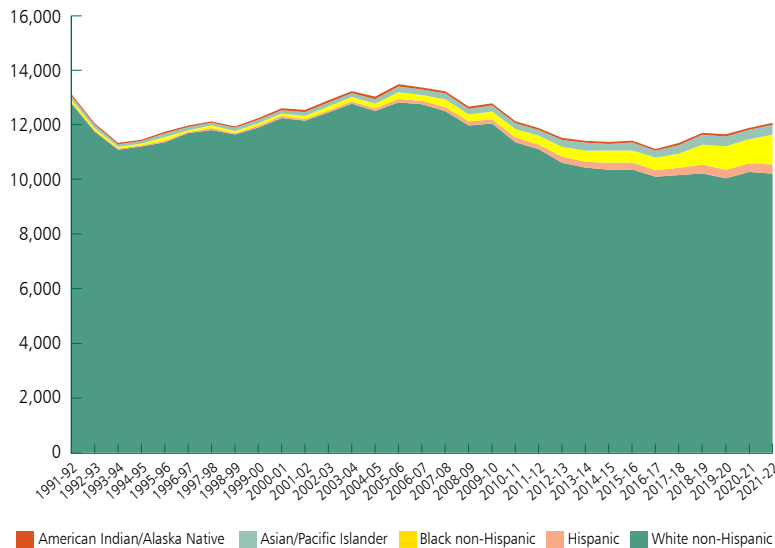
percent, on average. But with expected decreases in public school graduates, that share is projected to increase significantly in the years ahead.

Along with much of the rest of the nation, Maine is poised to enter a new period characterized by much more stagnant growth or declines in the production of high school graduates. After reaching a peak in 2005-06 at 13,539, Maine will see enter a period of diminishing numbers of public high school graduates for most years through 2016-17, assuming a continuation of existing patterns of enrollment, progression, and completion. During that timeframe, the number of high school graduates is forecast to fall by more than 2,600 (19.3 percent). Thereafter, production of graduates from public schools is projected to hover just over 11,000 throughout the remainder of the projection period.

The racial/ethnic composition of Maine’s public high school graduating classes will show gradual diversification over the coming decade and beyond (Figure 3). In 1994-95, White non-Hispanics accounted for 97.8 percent of the graduates from public high schools. A decade later, that proportion had dropped slightly, to 96 percent. The next decade will see further declines in the share of public high school graduates who are White non-Hispanic, with projections indicating it will reach 91.1 percent by 2014-15.

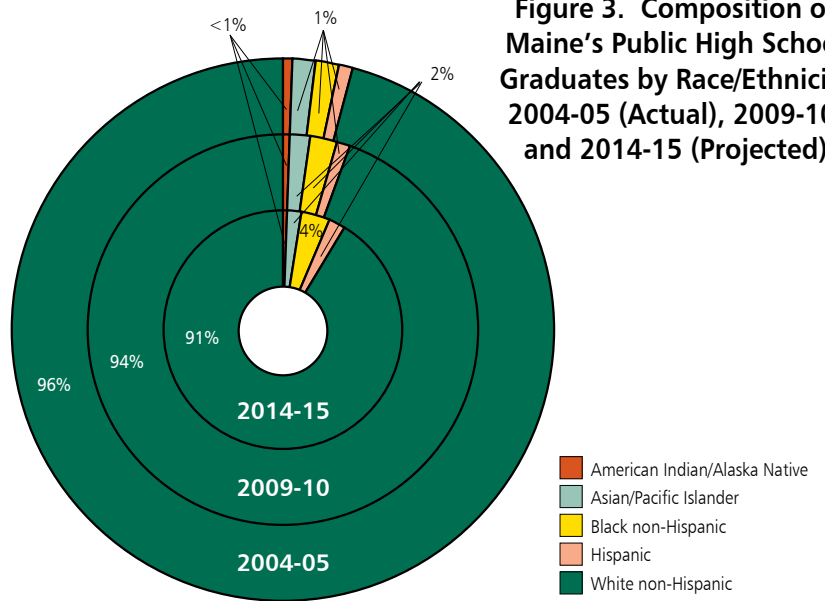
These changes are roughly comparable to the experience of states all over the country. Although the magnitude may differ substantially, the nation as a whole is undergoing sweeping changes in the racial/ethnic composition of its population. The big changes are the result of a shrinking number of White non-Hispanics in the educational pipeline. In Maine, these changes are accompanied by increases in minority groups, especially Hispanics, Black non-Hispanics, and Asians/Pacific Islanders.

Figure 4. Maine High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity 1991-92 to 2004-05 (Actual), 2005-06 to 2021-22 (Projected)



Projecting changes in the numbers of minority graduates in Maine is especially prone to potential error given the small size of these groups; a slight change can make an apparently large difference in the projected percentage change. Nevertheless, Hispanic graduates from public schools in the state numbered just 92 in 2004-05, but within a decade they are projected to number 252, an increase of 174 percent (Figure 4). The number of Black non-Hispanic graduates will steadily increase as well, adding 283 (164 percent growth) to the 2004-05 number, which was 173. Graduates of Asian/Pacific Islander descent are forecast to increase by 37 percent in 2014-15 over the 172 they numbered in 2004-05. Meanwhile, White non-Hispanics will likely see their numbers fall rapidly, with projections showing a decline from 12,552 in 2004-05 to about 10,400 in 2014-15, a 17 percent drop.

Figure 3. Composition of Maine’s Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity 2004-05 (Actual), 2009-10, and 2014-15 (Projected)



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