

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

MICHIGAN

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).

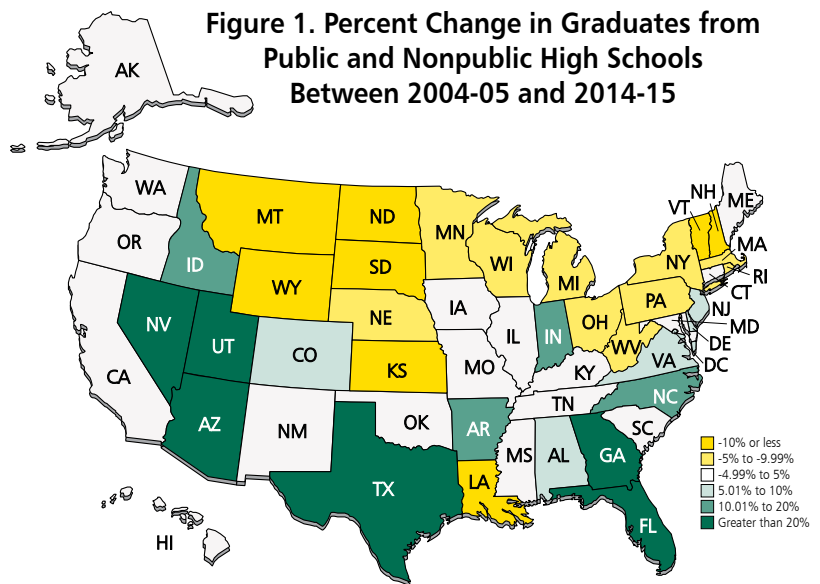
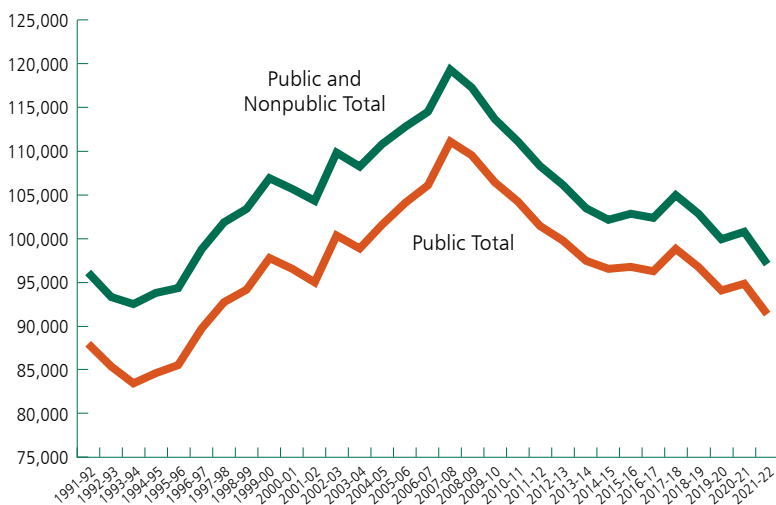


Figure 2. Michigan High School Graduates 1991-92 to 2004-05 (Actual), 2005-06 to 2021-22 (Projected)



Michigan produced about 17,000 more graduates in 2004-05 than it did a decade earlier, an increase of 18.2 percent. Projections indicate that the state's number of graduates will grow though 2007-08 before beginning a sustained and substantial decline, assuming existing patterns of high school completion and migration continue. Michigan projects to produce about 8,600 more high school graduates in 2007-08 than it did in 2004-05, an increase equal to about 7.8 percent.

Michigan was among the states with rapid growth in its production of high school graduates between 1991-92 and 2004-05, the most recent year of actual data from public schools (Figure 2). In 2004-05, 101,582 students graduated from public high schools in the state, 13,826 more graduates than were produced in 1991-92, representing growth of 15.8 percent. Nonpublic schools in the state graduated an estimated 9,175 in 2004-05, which was about 900 more than graduated in 1991-92. Of Michigan's total number of high school graduates each year, nonpublic schools produced an estimated 9 percent,

on average. Projections indicate that nonpublic schools' production of graduates will slip even faster than public schools in the years ahead.

Along with much of the rest of the nation, Michigan 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 2007-08 at just over 111,000, the state will see a sharp decline in the number of public high school graduates each year through 2014-15, assuming a continuation of existing patterns of enrollment, progression, and completion. During that timeframe, the number of high school graduates is forecast to drop by over 14,600 (13 percent). Subsequently, projections indicate that production will continue declining after a brief reprieve in 2015-16 through 2017-18.

The racial/ethnic composition of Michigan's public high school graduating classes will continue to diversify over the coming decade and beyond (Figure 3). In 1994-95, White non-Hispanics accounted for 83 percent of the graduates from the state's public high schools. A decade later, that proportion had dropped slightly to 81.3 percent. By 2014-15, the proportion of White non-Hispanics will have fallen to under 76 percent.

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. In Michigan, as in other states, the big changes are the result of rapid growth in the number of Hispanic high school students and graduates, coupled with a shrinking number of White non-Hispanics in the educational pipeline. While immigration has contributed to the growth of the Hispanic population, signs of the continuing demographic shift are evident in data showing a dramatic increase in the number of Hispanic births, which is due in part to a higher fertility rate among Hispanic women.

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

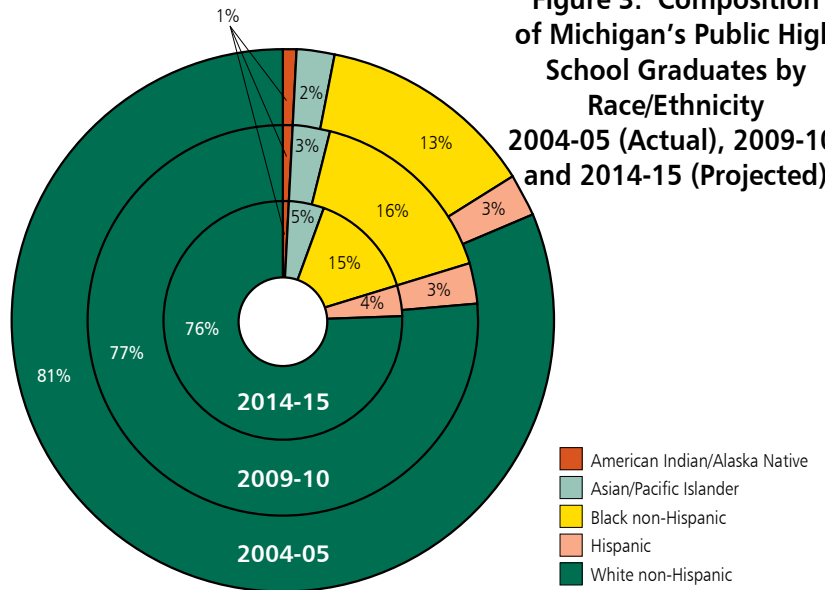
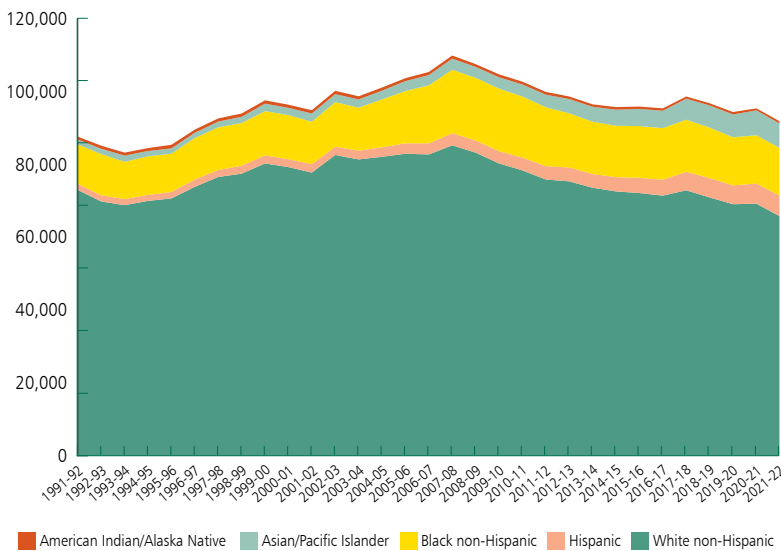


Figure 4. Michigan High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity 1991-92 to 2004-05 (Actual), 2005-06 to 2021-22 (Projected)



Hispanic graduates from public schools in the state numbered 2,575 in 2004-05. But within a decade Hispanic graduates are projected to increase by about 51.5 percent to around 3,900 (Figure 4). Growth among Asians/Pacific Islanders will also be substantial over the same time span, rising by 84.4 percent over their 2004-05 level of 2,383. After experiencing considerable growth initially, the number of Black non-Hispanic graduates will, by 2014-15, climb by about 900 (7 percent) over its level in 2004-05, when it was 13,129. Meanwhile, the number of White non-Hispanic graduates will slip by about 11.5 percent from its 2004-05 level of 82,259. Finally, American Indians/Alaska Natives, which accounted for 836 graduates in 2004-05, are projected to see a reduction of about 20 percent over the same span.

For more information, contact: Dolores Mize, Vice President, Public Policy and Research, 303.541.0221, dmize@wiche.edu; or Brian Prescott, Senior Research Analyst, Public Policy and Research, 303.541.0255, bprescott@wiche.edu. To view the full publication or to place an order for a bound copy, visit our website at www.wiche.edu/policy.