**Public School Enrollment and Demographics**

### DEFINITION

Public school enrollment and demographics is the total number of students enrolled in Rhode Island public schools on October 1.

### SIGNIFICANCE

Education is a lifetime process that begins at birth and continues throughout a child’s life into adulthood. Racial, ethnic, and income gaps in educational attainment have been well-documented throughout the country. Research has shown that there are three clusters of factors that have an impact on student achievement: school factors, factors related to connections between home and school, and factors that exist before and beyond school (including health, nutrition, and non-school academic supports).1

On October 1, 2018, there were 143,247 students enrolled in Rhode Island public schools in preschool through grade 12, a decrease of 1% from 145,342 on October 1, 2008.2

Of these 143,247 Rhode Island public school students, 29% (41,461) were attending schools in the four core cities (communities with the highest child poverty rates), 64% (91,441) were attending schools in the remaining districts, and the remaining 7% (10,345) attended charter schools, state-operated schools, or the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Project (UCAP). There were an additional 16,153 Rhode Island students attending private and parochial schools (including out-of-state schools) and 1,648 students were home-schooled.3

In October 2018, there were 62,499 students in grades K-5; 33,057 in grades 6-8; and 44,975 in grades 9-12. There were 2,716 children enrolled in preschool classrooms in Rhode Island public schools.4 During the 2018-2019 school year, 1,080 children received services from State Pre-K programs in 18 public school classrooms and 42 community-based center classrooms.5

In October 2018, 57% of Rhode Island public school students were non-Hispanic White, 26% were Hispanic, 9% were Black, 3% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 4% were Multi-Racial, and 1% were Native American. In October 2018, 47% of public school students in Rhode Island were low-income (students who were eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program).6

Rhode Island schools are also diverse in terms of students with disabilities and students who are English Language Learners. During the 2018-2019 school year, 15% of Rhode Island public school students were receiving special education services and 9% were English Language Learners (ELLs).7

### The Condition of Public School Buildings

- The condition of school facilities impacts the learning and behavior of students and teachers and is also an important indicator of equity. A year-long assessment commissioned by RIDE found that only 12.4% of school buildings were judged to be in good to average condition and forecasted $627.6 million in high-priority construction and repairs needed to address building safety and code compliance issues. The statewide cost to bring all school buildings into ideal condition was estimated at $2.2 billion.8

- The average age of school buildings in the United States is 42 years old. In Rhode Island, the average age of school buildings is 56 years old. After 30 years, a school facility’s systems are past their useful life. The cost for renewing schools in Rhode Island over the next five years is estimated to be $793.5 million.9

- In Rhode Island, elementary schools have the majority of building deficiencies. The estimated cost to address all deficiencies is nearly $880 million for elementary schools and nearly $760 million for high schools.10

- On November 6, 2018, Rhode Island voters approved a $250 million state bond for school renovation and new construction over the next five years.11

![Rhode Island Public School Enrollment by Low-Income Status, Race and Ethnicity, October 1, 2018](image-url)

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, October 1, 2018.

- In October 2018, 20% of students enrolled in the four core cities were White, compared with 77% in the remainder of the state, and 82% of students enrolled in the four core cities were low-income compared with 29% in the remainder of the state.12
## Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education, Public School Enrollment in preschool through grade 12 as of October 1, 2018.

Preschool includes students enrolled in half-day or full-day preschool through the public school district (primarily preschool special education classrooms). The Rhode Island State Pre-K program served 1,080 children in 18 public school classrooms and 42 community-based center classrooms in 2018-2019. Elementary includes students in kindergarten through 5th grade, middle includes 6th through 8th grades, and high includes 9th through 12th grades.

Children are counted as low-income if they are eligible for a Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program.


UCAP is the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

Students from Little Compton attend high school in Portsmouth. Jamestown students can choose to attend high school in Narragansett or North Kingstown.

Students enrolled in state-operated schools, charter schools, and UCAP are not counted in totals for the four core cities or for the remainder of the state, but they are included in the Rhode Island state totals.

### References