

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, 2016, there were 142,142 students enrolled in Rhode Island public schools in preschool through grade 12, a decrease of 4% from 148,474 on October 1, 2007.

Of the 142,142 Rhode Island public school students in October 2016, 29% (41,419) were attending schools in the four core cities (communities with the highest child poverty rates), 65% (91,811) were attending schools in the remaining districts, and the remaining 8,912 attended charter schools, state-operated schools, or the Urban

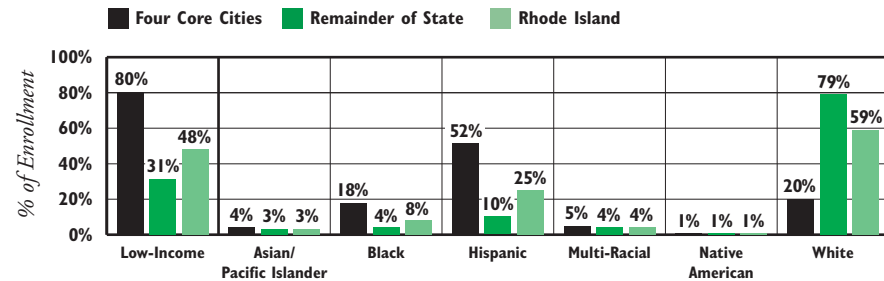
Collaborative Accelerated Project (UCAP). There were an additional 16,892 Rhode Island students attending private and parochial schools (including out-of-state schools) and 1,639 students were home-schooled.²

In October 2016, there were 63,659 students in grades K-5, 32,714 in grades 6-8, and 43,271 in grades 9-12. There were 2,498 children enrolled in Rhode Island public preschool classrooms. During the 2016-2017 school year, 995 children received services from state Pre-K programs in 15 public school classrooms and 41 community-based centers.^{3,4}

In October 2016, 59% of Rhode Island public school students were non-Hispanic White, 25% were Hispanic, 8% were Black, 3% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 4% were Multi-Racial, and 1% were Native American. In October 2016, 48% of students in Rhode Island were low-income (students who were eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program).⁵

Rhode Island schools are also diverse in terms of students with disabilities and students who are English Language Learners. During the 2015-2016 school year, 14% of Rhode Island public school students were receiving special education services and 7% were English Language Learners (ELLs).⁶

Rhode Island Public School Enrollment by Low-Income Status, Race and Ethnicity, October 1, 2016



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, October 1, 2016.

◆ In October 2016, 20% of students enrolled in the four core cities were White, compared with 79% in the remainder of the state, and 80% of students enrolled in the four core cities were low-income compared with 31% in the remainder of the state.⁷

The Changing Makeup of Rhode Island Public Schools

◆ On October 1, 2016, almost half (48%) of Rhode Island public school students were low income (eligible for free or reduced price lunch), up from 38% on October 1, 2007.⁸

◆ Over the past decade, Rhode Island schools have become more diverse. On October 1, 2016, 59% of students enrolled in Rhode Island public schools were non-Hispanic White, a decrease from 69% on October 1, 2007. On October 1, 2016, 25% of students enrolled in Rhode Island public schools were Hispanic, an increase from 18% on October 1, 2007.⁹ Despite the increasing diversity of Rhode Island public schools, Hispanic students continue to be concentrated in high-poverty, minority schools. During the 2011-2012 school year, 40% of Latino students were enrolled in Rhode Island public schools with 90-100% minority students, while 24% of Latino students were enrolled in majority White (over 50%) Rhode Island public schools.¹⁰

◆ On October 1, 2016, 8,129 (6%) Rhode Island public school students were enrolled in charter schools, including district charter schools, up from 2,995 (2%) on October 1, 2007.¹¹ Part of the recent increase in charter school enrollment can be attributed to the fact that a moratorium on charter schools put in place by the 2004 General Assembly was lifted in 2008.¹²

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Table 42. Rhode Island Public School Enrollment by Grade and Demographic Groups, October 1, 2016

SCHOOL DISTRICT	ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL*				ENROLLMENT BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS							TOTAL ENROLLMENT
	PRE-SCHOOL	ELEMEN-TARY	MIDDLE	HIGH	% LOW-INCOME	% ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER	% BLACK	% HISPANIC**	% NATIVE AMERICAN	% MULTI-RACIAL	% WHITE	
Barrington	25	1,402	797	1,131	6%	6%	1%	3%	<1%	4%	86%	3,355
Bristol Warren	60	1,483	761	914	33%	2%	2%	5%	<1%	4%	87%	3,218
Burrillville	45	944	566	786	34%	1%	1%	3%	<1%	2%	92%	2,341
Central Falls	102	1,307	505	675	81%	1%	15%	65%	2%	3%	13%	2,589
Chariho	72	1,334	734	1,130	19%	1%	1%	3%	2%	3%	91%	3,270
Coventry	113	2,003	1,106	1,491	33%	1%	1%	4%	<1%	2%	92%	4,713
Cranston	61	4,533	2,467	3,354	37%	9%	5%	26%	1%	4%	56%	10,415
Cumberland	80	2,001	1,134	1,353	23%	3%	3%	10%	<1%	2%	81%	4,568
East Greenwich	43	1,057	680	724	6%	6%	1%	6%	<1%	4%	84%	2,504
East Providence	71	2,473	1,202	1,492	56%	2%	12%	5%	1%	8%	71%	5,238
Exeter-West Greenwich	66	665	405	518	13%	1%	1%	4%	<1%	<1%	93%	1,654
Foster	0	265	0	0	18%	<1%	0%	3%	0%	<1%	96%	265
Foster-Glocester	0	0	482	665	17%	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	1%	96%	1,147
Glocester	9	538	0	0	13%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	1%	95%	547
Jamestown	25	293	164	6	10%	2%	<1%	0%	0%	2%	95%	488
Johnston	76	1,448	772	894	47%	3%	4%	18%	<1%	1%	74%	3,190
Lincoln	104	1,281	756	861	25%	3%	3%	6%	<1%	1%	86%	3,002
Little Compton	9	147	90	0	12%	1%	<1%	1%	0%	2%	96%	246
Middletown	18	1,036	492	645	33%	4%	6%	12%	1%	7%	70%	2,191
Narragansett	56	516	330	424	20%	2%	1%	3%	1%	4%	89%	1,326
New Shoreham	0	49	31	40	18%	1%	0%	16%	0%	2%	81%	120
Newport	61	1,007	483	647	65%	2%	14%	26%	2%	13%	42%	2,198
North Kingstown	91	1,559	959	1,438	22%	2%	1%	6%	1%	3%	87%	4,047
North Providence	80	1,565	865	983	44%	3%	12%	19%	<1%	4%	61%	3,493
North Smithfield	40	738	426	503	17%	2%	1%	7%	<1%	3%	87%	1,707
Pawtucket	165	4,606	2,228	1,985	69%	1%	27%	29%	1%	6%	35%	8,984
Portsmouth	33	945	565	921	14%	1%	2%	5%	<1%	2%	90%	2,464
Providence	335	11,256	5,384	7,008	86%	5%	17%	64%	1%	4%	9%	23,983
Scituate	11	517	350	427	18%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	96%	1,305
Smithfield	45	1,047	552	740	14%	2%	1%	5%	<1%	4%	89%	2,384
South Kingstown	92	1,277	783	959	17%	2%	2%	4%	3%	5%	85%	3,111
Tiverton	27	832	425	557	32%	1%	2%	1%	<1%	2%	93%	1,841
Warwick	232	3,966	2,132	2,794	37%	4%	2%	9%	<1%	4%	80%	9,124
West Warwick	69	1,671	764	970	49%	2%	5%	13%	1%	2%	77%	3,474
Westerly	98	1,237	661	869	33%	3%	1%	8%	1%	6%	80%	2,865
Woonsocket	53	2,951	1,300	1,559	73%	6%	10%	33%	<1%	5%	46%	5,863
Charter Schools	24	3,688	1,222	2,090	67%	2%	14%	55%	1%	4%	24%	7,024
State-Operated Schools	7	22	15	1,702	65%	1%	14%	41%	1%	6%	37%	1,746
UCAP	0	0	126	16	95%	4%	21%	61%	3%	0%	11%	142
Four Core Cities	655	20,120	9,417	11,227	80%	4%	18%	52%	1%	5%	20%	41,419
Remainder of State	1,812	39,829	21,934	28,236	31%	3%	4%	10%	1%	4%	79%	91,811
Rhode Island	2,498	63,659	32,714	43,271	48%	3%	8%	25%	1%	4%	59%	142,142

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education, Public School Enrollment in preschool through grade 12 as of October 1, 2016.

*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 995 children in 15 public school classrooms and 41 community-based centers in 2016-2017.

*Elementary includes students in kindergarten through 5th grade, middle includes 6th through 8th grades, and high includes 9th through 12th grades.

**Hispanic students can be of any race.

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

State-operated schools include: Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center, William M. Davies Jr. Career & Technical High School, DCYF, and the Rhode Island School for the Deaf.

Charter Schools include: Achievement First Rhode Island, Beacon Charter High School for the Arts, Blackstone Academy, Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy, The Compass School, Paul Cuffee Charter School, The Greene School, Highlander Charter School, Hope Academy, International Charter School, Kingston Hill Academy, The Learning Community, RISE Prep Mayoral Academy, Rhode Island Nurses Institute Middle College, Segue Institute for Learning, Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy, South Side Elementary Charter School, Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts, and The Village Green Virtual Public Charter School.

UCAP is the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program.

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

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

¹ Barton, P. E. & Coley, R. J. (2009). *Parsing the achievement gap II*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

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