

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, 2015, there were 142,014 students enrolled in Rhode Island public schools in preschool through grade 12, a decrease of 6% from 151,619 on October 1, 2006.

Of the 142,014 Rhode Island public school students in October 2015, 29% (41,454) were attending schools in the four core cities (communities with the highest child poverty rates), 65% (92,402) were attending schools in the remaining districts, and the remaining 8,158 attended charter schools, state-operated schools, or the Urban

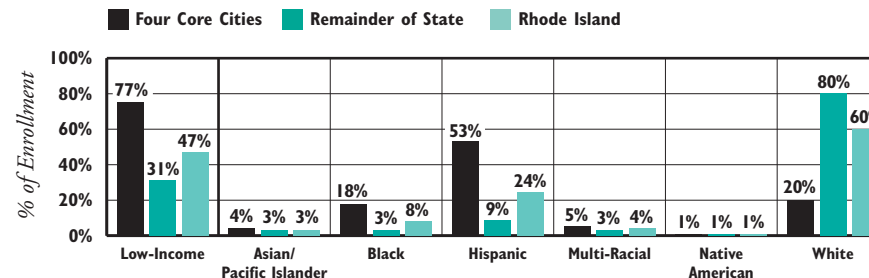
Collaborative Accelerated Project (UCAP). There were an additional 13,495 Rhode Island students attending private and parochial schools (including out-of-state schools) and 1,693 students were home-schooled.²

In October 2015, there were 63,884 students in grades K-5, 32,809 in grades 6-8, and 42,871 in grades 9-12. There were 2,450 children enrolled in preschool in Rhode Island public schools.³ The Rhode Island State Pre-K program served 594 children in 2015-2016, including 54 in three public school classrooms and the remainder in community-based centers.⁴

In October 2015, 60% of Rhode Island public school students were non-Hispanic White, 24% were Hispanic, 8% were Black, 3% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 4% were Multi-Racial, and 1% were Native American. In October 2015, 47% 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 2014-2015 school year, 15% of Rhode Island public school students were receiving special education services and 7% were receiving English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual education services.⁶

Rhode Island Public School Enrollment by Low-Income Status, Race and Ethnicity, October 1, 2015



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, October 1, 2015.

◆ In October 2015, 20% of students enrolled in the four core cities were White, compared with 80% in the remainder of the state, and 77% 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, 2015, almost one-half (47%) of Rhode Island public school students were low-income (eligible for free or reduced price lunch), up from 33% in 2006.⁸

◆ Over the past decade, Rhode Island schools have become more diverse. On October 1, 2015, 60% of students enrolled in Rhode Island public schools were non-Hispanic White, a decrease from 69% on October 1, 2006. On October 1, 2015, 24% of students enrolled in Rhode Island public schools were Hispanic, an increase from 18% on October 1, 2006.⁹ Hispanic students continue to be concentrated in 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%) schools.¹⁰

◆ On October 1, 2015, 7,316 (5%) Rhode Island public school students were enrolled in charter schools, including district charter schools, up from 2,812 (2%) on October 1, 2006.¹¹ Part of the increase in charter school enrollment is due to a moratorium on charter schools put in place by the 2004 General Assembly that was lifted in 2008.¹²

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Table 39. Rhode Island Public School Enrollment by Grade and Demographic Groups, October 1, 2015

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	24	1,416	843	1,045	6%	6%	1%	3%	<1%	3%	87%	3,328
Bristol Warren	44	1,588	764	932	33%	2%	2%	1%	1%	4%	91%	3,328
Burrillville	44	990	596	753	30%	1%	1%	3%	<1%	2%	93%	2,383
Central Falls	165	1,368	457	667	81%	1%	12%	72%	1%	4%	10%	2,657
Chariho	83	1,258	752	1,144	20%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	92%	3,237
Coventry	136	1,957	1,143	1,514	33%	1%	1%	4%	<1%	2%	92%	4,750
Cranston	84	4,549	2,527	3,281	45%	8%	5%	25%	1%	4%	58%	10,441
Cumberland	90	1,989	1,141	1,332	24%	3%	3%	10%	<1%	2%	82%	4,552
East Greenwich	47	1,025	638	745	6%	5%	1%	5%	<1%	4%	85%	2,455
East Providence	90	2,475	1,167	1,550	54%	6%	9%	4%	1%	7%	73%	5,282
Exeter-West Greenwich	57	633	423	525	13%	1%	1%	3%	0%	<1%	94%	1,638
Foster	0	277	0	0	22%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	98%	277
Foster-Glocester	0	0	470	685	18%	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	1%	96%	1,155
Glocester	4	541	0	0	13%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	97%	545
Jamestown	23	306	162	5	9%	2%	1%	<1%	0%	3%	93%	496
Johnston	77	1,470	783	887	48%	3%	4%	17%	<1%	1%	75%	3,217
Lincoln	97	1,257	762	896	26%	2%	3%	6%	<1%	1%	88%	3,012
Little Compton	0	141	102	0	14%	1%	<1%	1%	0%	1%	97%	243
Middletown	20	1,059	544	664	28%	4%	6%	12%	<1%	7%	71%	2,287
Narragansett	51	550	300	420	19%	1%	1%	2%	1%	5%	89%	1,321
New Shoreham	0	44	33	36	16%	3%	0%	12%	0%	2%	84%	113
Newport	59	1,028	471	615	64%	2%	16%	25%	2%	12%	43%	2,173
North Kingstown	82	1,540	971	1,424	22%	2%	1%	4%	1%	3%	88%	4,017
North Providence	93	1,587	878	1,004	40%	3%	10%	20%	<1%	3%	63%	3,562
North Smithfield	37	721	459	512	18%	2%	1%	6%	<1%	2%	88%	1,729
Pawtucket	110	4,734	2,142	2,036	76%	1%	26%	31%	1%	6%	35%	9,022
Portsmouth	26	974	579	901	14%	2%	2%	4%	<1%	2%	90%	2,480
Providence	275	11,512	5,418	6,662	79%	5%	17%	64%	1%	4%	9%	23,867
Scituate	11	551	341	463	19%	1%	1%	1%	0%	<1%	97%	1,366
Smithfield	47	1,048	550	745	14%	2%	1%	5%	<1%	3%	89%	2,390
South Kingstown	110	1,331	796	1,012	22%	2%	2%	4%	3%	4%	84%	3,249
Tiverton	26	829	434	554	31%	1%	2%	1%	<1%	2%	94%	1,843
Warwick	193	3,965	2,146	2,836	33%	3%	2%	9%	<1%	3%	82%	9,140
West Warwick	62	1,662	742	1,019	49%	2%	5%	13%	1%	2%	77%	3,485
Westerly	92	1,282	662	872	35%	3%	1%	7%	2%	6%	81%	2,908
Woonsocket	64	2,992	1,312	1,540	72%	6%	10%	32%	<1%	5%	46%	5,908
Charter Schools	23	3,215	1,164	1,868	73%	2%	14%	54%	1%	4%	25%	6,270
State-Operated Schools	4	20	18	1,705	63%	1%	14%	41%	1%	6%	37%	1,747
UCAP	0	0	119	22	81%	2%	16%	72%	1%	6%	3%	141
Four Core Cities	614	20,606	9,329	10,905	77%	4%	18%	53%	1%	5%	20%	41,454
Remainder of State	1,809	40,043	22,179	28,371	31%	3%	3%	9%	1%	3%	80%	92,402
Rhode Island	2,450	63,884	32,809	42,871	47%	3%	8%	24%	1%	4%	60%	142,014

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education, Public School Enrollment in preschool through grade 12 as of October 1, 2015.

*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 serves 594 children in 2014-2015, including 54 in three public school classrooms and the remainder in community-based centers.

*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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