



Research Brief

* THE COMMONWEALTH'S OFFICIAL SOURCE OF POPULATION AND ECONOMIC STATISTICS *

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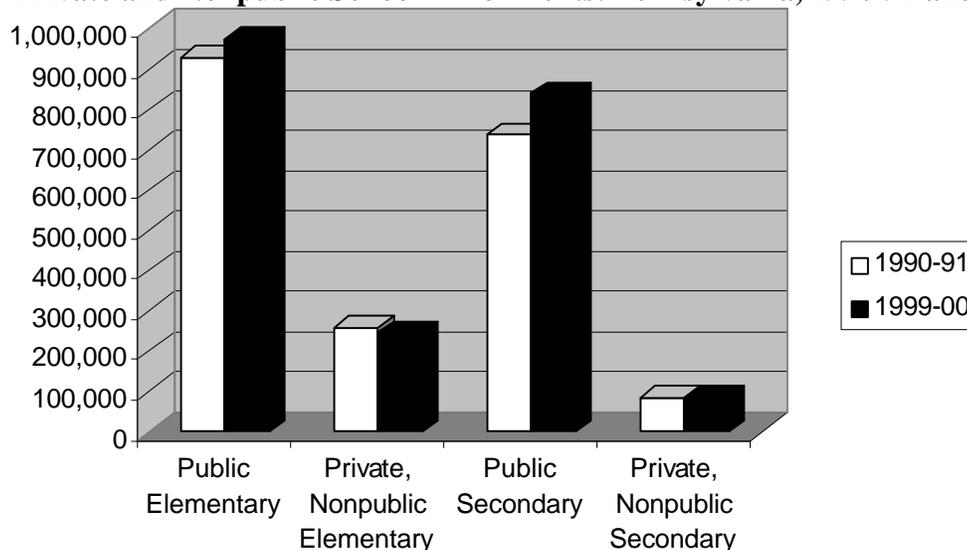
Back to School in Pennsylvania

MIDDLETOWN, Pa— In the 1999-00 academic year, Pennsylvania public, private, and nonpublic schools had a total enrollment of 2,147,736 students, a 6.7 percent increase from the 1990-91 year. These students represent 500 school districts and 5,705 schools.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center at Penn State Harrisburg reports that while 57 percent of the schools were public, 85 percent of the students attended public schools, according to the Division of Data Services, Pennsylvania Department of Education. This breaks down to 80 percent of elementary students and 91 percent in secondary schools. Total enrollment in public schools rose 8.9 percent in the past 10 years but private and nonpublic enrollment dropped by 3.9 percent.

In the last year however, total enrollment experienced its first decline of the decade, a slight fall of 56 students. Although secondary enrollment increased by 8,393, elementary enrollment fell by 8,449.

Public and Private and Nonpublic School Enrollments: Pennsylvania, 1990-91 and 1999-00



Of the 2,477 private and nonpublic schools in the Commonwealth, one fourth were secular, 28 percent were Catholic and the remainder had non-Catholic religious affiliations. Only 10 percent of the private and nonpublic students attended secular schools while 65 percent attended Catholic schools. The single Missionary Alliance school had only 12 students.

In the state's public schools, the racial and ethnic diversity is slightly greater than the United States Census Bureau estimates for the total population. Seventy-nine percent of the students were white non-hispanic in the 1999-00 scholastic year as was 86 percent of Pennsylvania's total population in 1998. Fifteen percent of the enrollment was black non-hispanic compared to the state's total black population of 9.7 percent. And hispanics were 4.2 percent of public school enrollment and 2.6 of the population.

Current enrollment is also more diverse than it was ten years ago. In 1990-91, minorities comprised 18.4 percent of elementary and 16.5 percent of secondary enrollments, whereas in 1999-00, they accounted for 22.9 and 19.2 percent respectively.

A look at enrollments at the county level shows that Cameron County had 100 percent of its students enrolled in public schools as opposed to private and nonpublic. Susquehanna and Pike Counties followed with 99.6 and 99.0 percent. Montgomery County had the least with only 73.4 percent in public schools, and was followed by Delaware County (74.5 percent) and Elk County (75.1 percent).

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the Commonwealth's official source of population and economic statistics and services. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's national State Data Center Program.

Editors: For additional data, contact Amy Jonas at the Data Center's State Capital Office, (717) 772-2710, or for faculty comment on this topic contact the Penn State Harrisburg's Public Information Office, (717) 948-6029.

Sources of Information: United States Census Bureau

Division of Data Services, Pennsylvania Department of Education