Status of Education in Rural America

NCES 2007-040

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ies NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
Institute of Education Sciences

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HIGHLIGHTS

In 2006, NCES released a new classification system to make the reporting of locale data consistent across its various surveys and to be more precise in its classification of rural areas. This report brings together data from NCES and Census surveys and applies the new classification system to create a series of indicators on the status of education in rural America. The data used in these indicators are drawn from the most recent versions of NCES's Common Core of Data (CCD), Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), and Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). Additional information on the methodology and the datasets used in this report can be found in appendix B. More detailed information on the new NCES urban-centric locale classification system can be found in the section "Measuring Rural Education."

The main findings of this report are summarized below, by chapter:

Demographics

- In 2003–04, over half of all operating school districts and one-third of all public schools were in rural areas; yet only one-fifth of all public school students were enrolled in rural schools. (*Indicator 1.1*)
- In 2003–04, a larger percentage of public school students in rural areas (10 percent) attended very small schools (schools with fewer than 200 students) than public school students in towns (3 percent), suburbs (1 percent), or cities (1 percent). (*Indicator 1.2*)
- The percentage of White public school students in rural areas was larger than that in any other locale. The same was true for American Indian/Alaska Native public school students. However, the percentages of public school students in rural areas who were Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander were smaller than those in any other locale. (*Indicator 1.3*)
- A larger percentage of public school students in the South and the Midwest were enrolled in rural schools (28 and 25 percent, respectively) than in the Northeast and the West (16 and 13 percent, respectively) in 2003–04. (*Indicator 1.4*)
- In 2005, about 50 percent of children in rural areas between the ages of 3 and 5 at-

tended a center-based preprimary program, such as a daycare center, Head Start program, preschool, nursery school, or prekindergarten. This was less than the national rate (57 percent). (*Indicator 1.5*)

- In 2003–04, about 6 percent of rural students were enrolled in private schools, which was less than the national rate (11 percent). (*Indicator 1.6*)
- In 2004, the percentage of children living in poverty or below 185 percent of the poverty threshold in rural areas (35 percent) was smaller than that in towns (46 percent) or cities (47 percent), but larger than that in suburban areas (28 percent). (*Indicator 1.7*)
- Rural public schools overall had a smaller percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in 2003–04 (38 percent) than public schools in cities and towns (53 and 43 percent, respectively). The percentage of public school students in rural remote areas attending a moderate-to-high poverty school (45 percent) was higher than the percentages in all other locales except large and midsize cities (66 and 49 percent). (*Indicator 1.8*)
- In 2003–04, larger percentages of Black and American Indian/Alaska Native public school students in remote rural areas attended moderate-to-high poverty schools (87 and 79 percent, respectively) than in large cities (78 and 62 percent, respectively). (*Indicator 1.9*)
- A smaller percentage of public school students in rural areas were identified as limited English proficient (LEP) than in any other locale in 2003–04 (2 vs. 5–14 percent). (*Indicator 1.10*)
- There was little variation between the percentage of public school students with an Individual Education Program (IEP) in rural areas (13 percent) and the percentages in other locales (12–14 percent) in 2003–04. (*Indicator 1.11*)
- In 2003, greater percentages of students in rural areas than students in cities had parents who attended a school event (74 vs. 65 percent) or served as a volunteer or on a committee (42 vs. 38 percent). In addition, a larger percentage of students in rural areas had parents who reported taking their children to an athletic event outside of school than students in cities and suburbs (42 vs. 34 and 38 percent, respectively). (*Indicators 1.12* and *1.13*)
- In 2004, the percentages of school-age children in rural areas with a mother or father whose highest educational attainment was a high school diploma (33 and 36 percent, respectively) were higher than the comparable percentages for children in cities (26 and 24 percent, respectively) and suburbs (25 and 24 percent respectively). (*Indicator 1.14*)
- In all locales a larger percentage of high school students in 2003 had parents who expected their child's highest educational attainment to be a bachelor's degree than any other level of attainment. The percentage of rural students whose parents expected their highest educational attainment to be less than a bachelor's degree (42 percent) was larger than the percentages of students in cities and suburban areas (30 and 25 percent, respectively). (*Indicator 1.15*)

Outcomes

- A larger percentage of rural public school students in the 4th- and 8th-grades in 2005 scored at or above the *Proficient* level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading, mathematics, and science assessments than did public school students in cities at these grade levels. However, smaller percentages of rural public school students than suburban public school students scored at or above the *Proficient* level in reading and mathematics. (*Indicators 2.1–2.3*)
- In 2004, the high school status dropout rate among 16- to 24-year-olds in rural areas (11 percent) was higher than in suburban areas (9 percent), but lower than in cities (13 percent). (*Indicator 2.4*)
- The *averaged freshman graduation rate* for public high school students was higher during the 2002–03 school year in rural areas (75 percent) than in cities (65 percent), but lower than in towns and suburban areas (76 and 79 percent, respectively). (*Indicator 2.5*)

- A larger percentage of teenagers in rural areas than in suburban areas were neither enrolled in school nor employed in 2004 (6 vs. 4 percent). (*Indicator 2.6*)
- College enrollment rates for both 18- to 24-year olds and 25- to 29-year olds were generally lower in rural areas than in all other locales in 2004. (*Indicator 2.7*)
- A smaller percentage of rural adults than suburban adults in 2005 took work-related courses (24 vs. 30 percent) or courses for personal interest (18 vs. 23 percent), and a smaller percentage of rural adults than adults in cities and suburban areas participated in part-time college or university credential programs (3 vs. 6 percent each). (*Indicator 2.8*)
- The percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree as their highest level of educational attainment in 2004 was lower in rural areas (13 percent) than the national percentage (17 percent). (*Indicator 2.9*)
- Regardless of educational attainment, persons in rural areas generally had higher median earnings in 2004 than those in cities and towns (when adjusted to reflect regional cost differences), but lower median earnings than those in suburban areas. (*Indicator 2.10*)
- The unemployment rate for adults ages 25 to 34 was lower in rural areas (6.7 percent) than in cities (8.0 percent) and towns (8.3 percent), and the unemployment rate for adults ages 35 to 64 was lower in rural areas (4.5 percent) than in all other locales (4.8–6.4 percent). (*Indicator 2.11*)

Resources for public schools

- Rural public schools tended to receive a smaller percentage of their revenues in 2003–04 from federal sources (9 percent) than city public schools (11 percent), but a larger percentage than suburban public schools (6 percent). (*Indicator 3.1*)
- Adjusted current public school expenditures per student were higher in rural areas in 2003–04 ($8,400) than in cities ($8,100), suburbs ($7,900 each), and towns ($8,400). (*Indicator 3.2*)
- In rural areas, as well as nationally, a larger percentage of public schools reported being underenrolled (69 percent of rural schools) than overenrolled (13 percent of rural schools) in fall 2005. The percentage of public schools reporting severe underenrollment in rural areas (33 percent) was greater than in all other locales (12–18 percent). (*Indicator 3.3*)
- In 2002–03, the percentage of public high school students attending schools offering dual credit courses was similar in rural areas (76 percent) to the percentages in cities and suburbs, while the percentage of public high school students attending schools offering Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses or programs was lower in rural areas (69 and 1 percent, respectively) than in cities (93 and 8 percent) and suburbs (96 and 7 percent). (*Indicator 3.4*)
- The number of public school students per instructional computer with Internet access in school was lower in rural areas (3.0 to 1) in 2005 than in suburban (4.3 to 1) and city (4.2 to 1) schools. (*Indicator 3.5*)
- Rural public schools generally had fewer pupils per teacher (15.3) than public schools in other locales (15.9–16.9) in 2003–04. (*Indicator 3.6*)
- Racial/ethnic minorities account for a smaller percentage of public school teachers in rural schools (8 percent) than in schools in all other locales (12–29 percent) in 2003–04. (*Indicator 3.7*)
- In 2003–04, teachers in rural public schools averaged more years of experience (14.5 years) than teachers in city public schools (13.6 years). (*Indicator 3.8*)
- In general, smaller percentages of public school teachers in rural areas than across the nation as a whole reported problems as "serious" and behavioral problems as frequent (occurring at least once a week) in their schools in 2003–04. (*Indicator 3.9*)
- Generally, a larger percentage of public school teachers in rural areas than in other locales reported being satisfied with the teaching conditions in their school in 2003–04, though a smaller percentage of

rural public school teachers than suburban public school teachers reported being satisfied with their salary. (*Indicator 3.9*)

- Public school teachers in rural areas earned less ($43,000), on average, in 2003–04 than their peers in towns ($45,900), suburbs ($45,700), and cities ($44,000), even after adjusting for geographic cost differences. (*Indicator 3.10*)
- In 2003–04, public schools in rural areas experienced the greatest difficulty filling teacher vacancies in the fields of English as a second language (ESL) and foreign languages. Apart from these fields, the percentage of public schools in rural areas that reportedly could not fill teacher vacancies was not measurably different from the percentages in other locales. (*Indicator 3.11*)
- In public schools, the average number of students per counselor, social worker, school psychologist, and special education instructional aide was lower in rural areas in 2003–04 than in cities at both the elementary and secondary levels. (*Indicator 3.12*)

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Measuring Rural Education

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in its authorizing legislation is charged with the task of reporting information on issues surrounding education by "urban, rural, suburban districts, and other population characteristics, when such disaggregated information will facilitate educational and policy decisionmaking."[1] To further this aim, NCES has developed a new classification system to make the reporting of locale consistent across its various surveys, as well as improve upon previous systems. This report marks the first use of the new classification system across NCES surveys to describe elementary and secondary education in rural settings and other locales.

Rural education has been the focus of a sizable volume of recent research, which has examined rural schools' student achievement, finances, cultural diversity, responses to special needs students, distance education programs, crime rates, and staff recruitment and retention (Imazeki and Reschovsky 2003; McClure and Reeves 2004; Nelson 2004; RosenKoetter, Irwin, and Saceda 2004; Smith, Hill, Evans, and Bandera 2000; Wenger and Dinsmore 2005; Williams 2005). However, the ability to compare findings across this research, and as a result, the potential usefulness of this research, is hampered by the lack of a single, uniform definition of "rural."

To help address this problem and improve rural education reporting, NCES worked with the Census Bureau to create new measures of locale based on improved geocoding technology and the 2000 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) definitions of metro areas that rely less on population size and county boundaries than proximity of an address to an urbanized area. Released in 2006, the new measures or *locale codes* are assigned to each school according to the school's physical longitude and latitude. Thus, these new locale codes make school data more consistent, accurate, and useful to policymakers, researchers, and educators concerned with rural education issues.

This report presents various education indicators, using the 2006 locale codes, to provide a more comprehensive description of the current condition of rural education. The report's focus is on elementary and secondary schools, although a few indicators look at postsecondary enrollment and adult education and attainment to provide a context for student expectations and opportunities. This report does not examine trends. Rather, most indicators report data from the school year 2003–04 or calendar year 2004, the first year of data that include the new locale codes. Data from prior years were not recoded in order to

[1] U.S. Code, Title 20, Chapter 76, Subchapter 1, Part C, Sec. 9543 (a)(3); P.L. 107-279, Part C, Sec. 153 (a)(3).

examine trends. The data apply to the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The New Classification System

The new urban-centric classification system has four major locale categories—city, suburban, town, and rural—each of which is subdivided into three subcategories. Cities and suburbs are subdivided into the categories small, midsize, or large; towns and rural areas are subdivided by their proximity to an urbanized area into the categories fringe, distant, or remote (see exhibit A). These twelve categories are based on several key concepts that Census uses to define an area's urbanicity: *principal city*, *urbanized area*, and *urban cluster*. A principal city is a city that contains the primary population and economic center of a metropolitan statistical area, which, in turn, is defined as one or more contiguous counties that have a "core" area with a large population nucleus and adjacent communities that are highly integrated economically or socially with the core. Urbanized areas and urban clusters are densely settled "cores" of Census-defined blocks with adjacent densely settled surrounding areas. Core areas with populations of 50,000 or more are designated as urbanized areas; those with populations between 25,000 and 50,000 are designated as urban clusters. For more information on

Exhibit A. NCES's urban-centric locale categories, released in 2006

Locale	Definition
City	
Large	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more
Midsize	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000
Small	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 100,000
Suburban	
Large	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of 250,000 or more
Midsize	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000
Small	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population less than 100,000
Town	
Fringe	Territory inside an urban cluster that is less than or equal to 10 miles from an urbanized area
Distant	Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area
Remote	Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles from an urbanized area
Rural	
Fringe	Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster
Distant	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster
Remote	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster

SOURCE: Office of Management and Budget (2000). Standards for Defining Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas; Notice. *Federal Register* (65) No. 249.

urbanized areas and urban clusters, see http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html. Rural areas are designated by Census as those areas that do not lie inside an urbanized area or urban cluster.

NCES has classified all schools into one of these twelve categories based on schools' actual addresses and their corresponding coordinates of latitude and longitude. Not only does this mean that the location of any school can be identified precisely, but also that distance measures can be used to identify town and rural subtypes. Unlike the previous classification system that differentiated towns on the basis of population size, the new system differentiates towns and rural areas on the basis of their proximity to larger urban centers. This key feature allows NCES to identify and differentiate rural schools and school districts in relatively remote areas from those that may be located just outside an urban center.

The choropleth map (see exhibit C) shows the proportion and location of the Census-defined locales in the United States. Differences in locale type are indicated by color. Cities are red, suburban areas are orange, and towns are yellow. Rural areas are represented by varying shades of green: the lightest green indicates fringe rural areas, medium-green indicates distant rural areas, and the darkest green indicates remote rural areas. For the purposes of this map, locales are presented at the level of Census blocks (not by schools or school districts), giving an overall view of the relative concentrations and arrangement of the various locales across the country.

Impact of New Classification System

Expanding the school locale codes to twelve categories allows for a greater degree of precision in identifying schools according to their distance from an urban area and the population density of the location, yet it does not cause an enormous shift in the number or percentage of public elementary and secondary schools that are classified as rural. Overall, about 6 percent of these schools were affected by the reclassification: 2,878 schools were newly designated as rural, and 2,418 formerly rural schools were placed in a nonrural category (see exhibit B). The net change was a 0.5 percentage point increase in the total number of public schools classified as rural in the United States; however, there were larger shifts within the rural category, as 8 percent of public schools formerly classified as rural were no longer considered rural in the new system. Also, the number of students enrolled in public schools classified as rural increased 1 percent, by 337,000. Aside from providing the benefit of a more accurate classification for these schools, the distinguishing benefit of this classification system lies in its ability to distinguish between schools in fringe, distant, and remote rural areas.

Exhibit B. Comparison of number and percentage of public elementary and secondary schools and students classified as rural under the former metro-centric classification system and under the new urban-centric classification system: 2003–04

Characteristic	All locales	Rural under former system	Rural under new system	Unchanged (rural in both systems)	No longer classified as rural	Newly classified as rural	Net increase
Number of schools	95,726	29,517	29,977	27,099	2,418	2,878	460
Percentage of							
All schools	100.0	30.8	31.3	28.3	2.5	3.0	0.5
Former rural schools	†	100.0	101.6[1]	91.8	8.2	†	†
Number of students (in thousands)	48,354	9,971	10,308	8,851	1,120	1,457	337
Percentage of							
All students	100.0	20.6	21.3	18.3	2.3	3.0	0.7
Students formerly classified as rural	†	100.0	103.4[1]	88.8	11.2	†	†

† Not applicable.
[1] This percentage, which represents the number under the new system divided by the number under the former system, is over 100 percent because the new classification system increased the total number classified as rural.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Locale Code File," 2003–04.

The new classification system allows for the collection and reporting of high-quality data across the range of rural locales (and other locales) with greater consistency and integrity. At present, all NCES national surveys are able to report findings for the major locale designations (i.e., city, suburb, town, and rural). Larger surveys, such as the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), and universe datasets, such as the Common Core of Data (CCD), are also able to report breakouts for the various subcategories—including fringe, distant, and remote rural areas. Where possible, those data are included in this report.

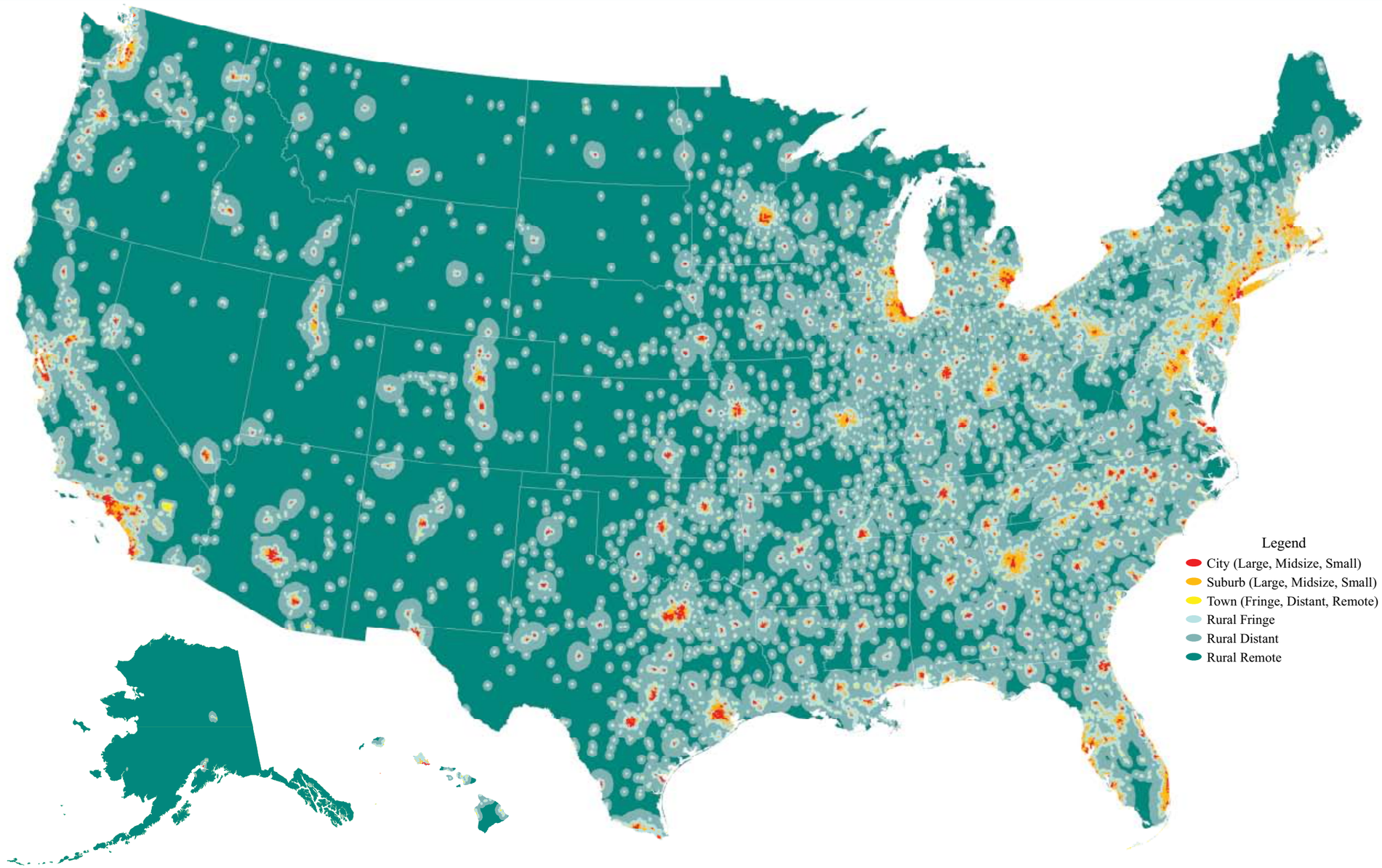
Organization of the Report

This report is the first national effort to report on a variety of educational variables using the new locale codes. It is organized into three chapters: demographics, outcomes, and resources for public schools. The demographic information that is presented in the first chapter describes the number of schools and students in rural areas and examines some of the characteristics of those students and schools, including race/ethnicity, poverty status, the use of a language other than English as a primary language, and the degree of parental involvement in education.

The outcomes chapter of this report highlights student achievement data in reading, mathematics, and science. It also provides dropout rates, high school completion rates, and college enrollment rates, as well as employment rates and earnings of adults. The final chapter focuses on public school resources, including federal and state revenues, computer access, pupil/teacher ratios, and indicators of teacher characteristics from the most recent Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS).

Using the most recent data from the surveys already mentioned and other national surveys—including the CCD, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), and the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS)—this report sets new standards in the breadth of information provided and in the consistency of the metrics used to highlight the condition of rural education. It is meant to serve as a foundation for further discussion and future research on the educational characteristics and developments unique to rural schools as well as those shared with other locales in America.

Exhibit C. Rural, town, suburban, and city locales in the United States: 2003–04



NOTE: Different locale types are represented by area shading. These shaded areas connect U.S. Census block and block groups of the same locale type; they are not intended to represent population density or land contours. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) works with the U.S. Census Bureau to assign a locale type to all public and private elementary and secondary schools in the nation. These locale assignments are included in NCES data and analytic products, and they are widely used by researchers and program administrators to investigate how conditions of education vary across geographic areas.

The locale typology relies on three core concepts: urbanized areas, urban clusters, and principal cities. Urbanized areas and urban clusters are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and based on population data from Census 2000. These urban areas are constructed from collections of densely settled census blocks and block groups. Urban areas with a population of 50,000 or more are designated as urbanized areas, and those with a population less than 50,000 but greater than 2,500 are designated as urban clusters. Principal cities are a component of Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSA) defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). These entities were previously known as central cities, and they identify municipalities (and some unincorporated areas) within a CBSA that are primary population and economic centers. For more information on urbanized areas and urban clusters, see http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html. Rural areas are designated by Census as those areas that do not lie inside an urbanized area or urban cluster. The NCES locale typology includes four basic classifications. Each classification includes three subtypes.

City: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city.
Suburb: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area.
Town: Territory inside an urban cluster.
Rural: Territory defined as rural by the Census Bureau. Rural territory that is within 5 miles of an urbanized area, as well as rural territory within 2.5 miles of a town is classified as Fringe. Rural territory that is between 5 and 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is between 2.5 and 10 miles from a town is identified as Distant. Rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from a town is classified as Remote.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Geographic boundaries and names are based on TIGER/Line 2004. Principal cities are based on CBSA component revisions issued by OMB in December 2005.

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1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The indicators in this chapter profile rural school systems, rural students in poverty or with disabilities, and parental support and school involvement in rural areas. The indicators highlight the fact that rural public school systems in the United States constitute over half of all school districts and one-third of all public schools, yet enroll only one-fifth of all public school students *(indicator 1.1)*. Rural public school systems predominate in the South and Midwest *(indicator 1.4)*.

Rural public school systems differ from those in other locales in terms of the population they serve. Greater proportions of rural public students are White and are enrolled in small schools than public school students in cities or suburban areas *(indicators 1.2 and 1.3)*. A smaller proportion of students in rural areas than in cities or towns live near or below the poverty threshold *(indicator 1.7)*. However, poverty is concentrated in remote rural areas, where American Indian/Alaska Native and Black public school students disproportionately attend moderate-to-high poverty schools *(indicators 1.8 and 1.9)*. A smaller percentage of rural public school students are limited English proficient than public school students in other locales *(indicator 1.10)*. The percentage of rural public school students identified as having disabilities is similar to other locales *(indicator 1.11)*.

Rural students' parents do not differ markedly from those in other locales on several indicators. For example, parents in rural areas enroll their children in preprimary programs at similar rates to parents in towns, but at lower rates than parents in suburbs and cities *(indicator 1.5)*. The percentages of rural students whose parents attend school events and volunteer are similar to those of students in suburban areas and towns, but higher than those of students in cities *(indicator 1.12)*. However, a smaller percentage of students in rural areas than in cities have parents who are high school dropouts, and a smaller percentage of students in rural areas than in suburban areas have a parent with a bachelor's degree *(indicator 1.14)*. Also, while a larger percentage of students in all locales have parents who expect them to attain a bachelor's degree than any other level of educational attainment, a greater proportion of rural students than students in cities and suburbs have parents who expect them to attain less than a bachelor's degree *(indicator 1.15)*.

1.1. Public elementary and secondary students, schools, and districts

In 2003-04, over half of all operating school districts and one-third of all public schools were in rural areas, more than in any other locale. However, fewer students were enrolled in public schools in rural areas than in suburbs or cities.

In 2003–04, some 96,000 public elementary and secondary schools, located in 14,000 school districts, served over 48 million students in the United States (table 1.1). The distribution of districts, schools, and students across locales highlights some key differences in the size and nature of education in rural America, compared to education in towns, suburbs, and cities.

In 2003–04, more than half of all operating school districts were located in rural areas (56 percent), while 20 percent of districts were located in suburban areas, 18 percent in towns, and 6 percent in cities (figure 1.1). About one-third of all U.S. public schools were located in rural areas (30,000), more than in suburbs (27,000), cities (25,000), or towns (15,000). Fewer students, however, were enrolled in public schools in rural areas than in suburbs and cities. Public schools in rural areas enrolled 10 million students compared to 17 million in suburban areas and 15 million in cities.

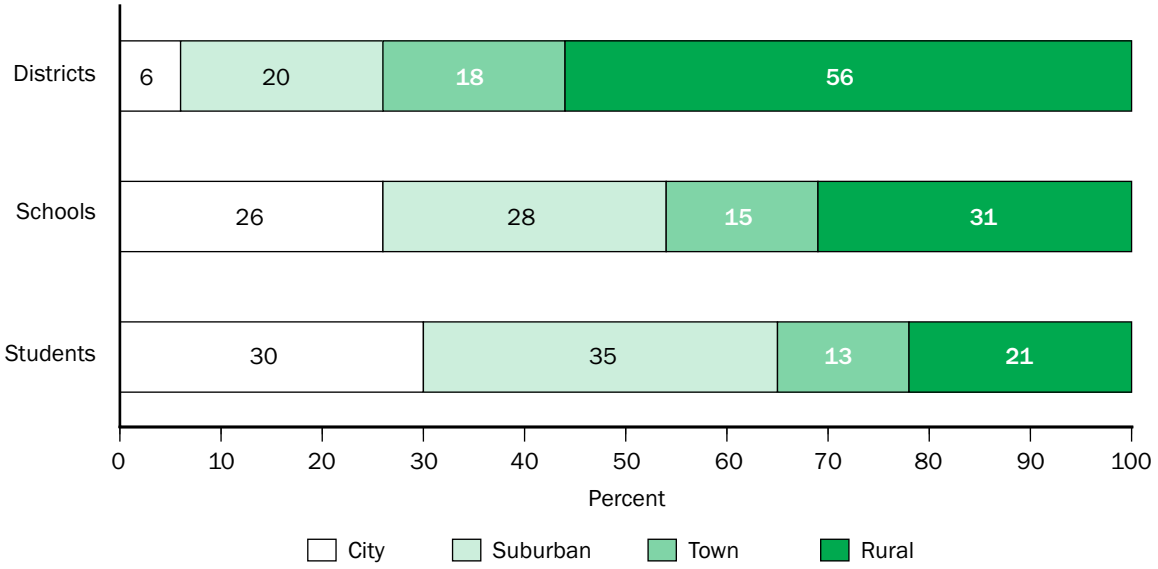
Rural areas located close to or on the fringe of urbanized areas, referred to as "fringe rural," differed from rural areas located further from urbanized areas, referred to as "distant rural" and "remote rural," in their proportions of districts, schools, and students (see the introductory section "Measuring Rural Education" for detailed descriptions of these locale types). Public schools in fringe rural areas enrolled a larger percentage of all students (11 percent) than public schools in distant rural (7 percent) and remote rural (3 percent) areas. However, the percentage of all school districts located in fringe rural areas (11 percent) was smaller than that in distant rural (22 percent) and remote rural (23 percent) areas (see table A-1.1 for a comparison of all locale types).

Table 1.1. Number and percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary districts, schools, and students, by locale: 2003–04

Locale	Districts	Schools	Students
	Number		
Total	**14,076**	**95,726**	**48,353,523**
City	831	24,597	14,685,209
Suburban	2,800	26,589	17,137,511
Town	2,572	14,563	6,222,788
Rural	7,873	29,977	10,308,015
Fringe	1,568	10,176	5,305,303
Distant	3,062	11,036	3,438,256
Remote	3,243	8,765	1,564,456
	Percentage distribution		
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
City	5.9	25.7	30.4
Suburban	19.9	27.8	35.4
Town	18.3	15.2	12.9
Rural	55.9	31.3	21.3
Fringe	11.1	10.6	11.0
Distant	21.8	11.5	7.1
Remote	23.0	9.2	3.2

NOTE: Schools with no reported enrollment are included in school totals but excluded from student totals. Rural areas are located outside any urbanized area or urban cluster. Urbanized areas are densely settled areas containing at least 50,000 people. Urban clusters are densely settled areas with a population of 2,500 to 49,999. Fringe rural areas are 5 miles or less from an urbanized area or 2.5 miles or less from an urban cluster. Distant rural areas are more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, or more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster. Remote rural areas are more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster. For more details on Census-defined areas, see http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey" and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2003–04.

Figure 1.1. Percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary districts, schools, and students, by locale: 2003–04



NOTE: Schools with no reported enrollment are included in school totals but excluded from student totals. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey" and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2003–04.

1.2. Public elementary and secondary schools and students, by school level and size

In 2003–04, a larger percentage of rural students attended small or very small public schools than students in other locales.

Across the United States in the 2003–04 school year, 31.2 million students were enrolled in 65,800 public elementary schools, 15.8 million students were enrolled in 22,800 public secondary schools, and 1.3 million students were enrolled in 5,400 public combined schools (data not shown). In rural areas, 6.4 million students were enrolled in 18,700 public elementary schools, 3.4 million students in 8,800 public secondary schools, and 0.5 million students in 2,000 public combined-level schools (tables 1.2a and A-1.2). At both the elementary and secondary level, the number of students attending rural public schools (6.4 million and 3.4 million, respectively) was larger than the number attending public schools in towns (3.9 million and 2.1 million), but smaller than the numbers attending public schools in suburbs (11.2 million and 5.6 million) and in cities (9.7 million and 4.5 million).

In 2003–04, about two-thirds of public schools in rural areas enrolled less than 400 students, and less than one-half of a percent enrolled 2,000 or more students (table 1.2b). In contrast, in cities and suburbs, roughly two-thirds of public schools enrolled more than 400 students and 3 percent of public schools enrolled 2,000 or more students. In towns, about half of public schools enrolled more than 400 students.

Table 1.2a. Number of public schools and students, by locale, school level, and size of school: 2003–04

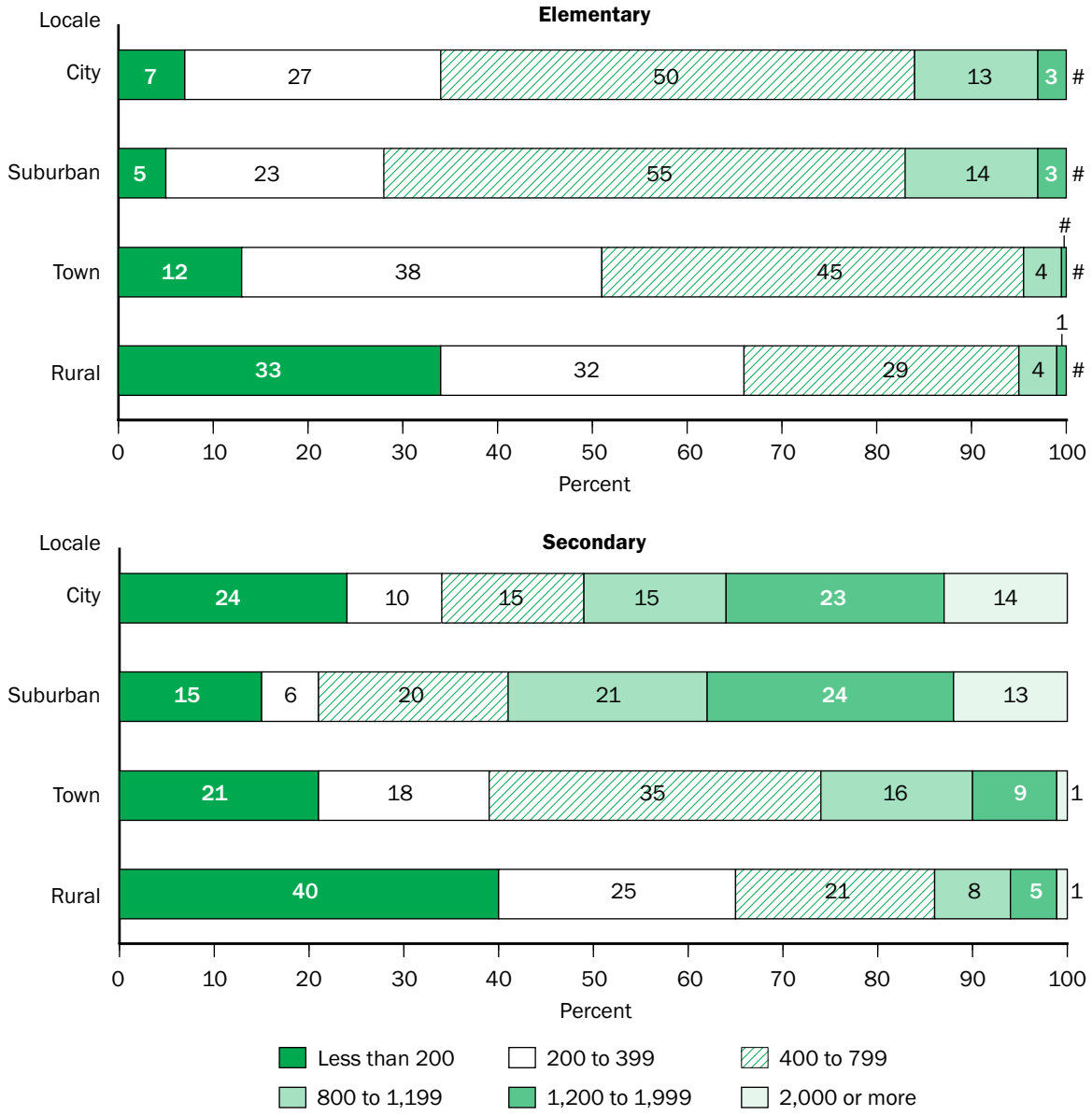
	City		Suburban		Town		Rural	
School type and size	Schools[1]	Students	Schools[1]	Students	Schools[1]	Students	Schools[1]	Students
Total	**24,597**	**14,685,209**	**26,589**	**17,137,511**	**14,563**	**6,222,788**	**29,977**	**10,308,015**
Less than 200	3,379	307,082	2,546	227,312	2,537	215,016	10,741	1,054,676
200 to 399	5,476	1,692,541	4,952	1,565,377	4,311	1,320,478	8,509	2,507,251
400 to 799	9,741	5,543,548	11,911	6,799,659	5,595	3,089,494	7,621	4,206,179
800 to 1,199	3,003	2,865,051	3,913	3,754,859	1,050	994,048	1,502	1,427,856
1,200 to 1,999	1,621	2,460,362	1,895	2,865,691	368	539,794	576	850,139
2,000 or more	689	1,816,625	746	1,924,613	28	63,958	106	261,914
Elementary	17,872	9,680,751	19,746	11,228,185	9,427	3,945,264	18,713	6,350,574
Less than 200	1,276	143,539	999	115,711	1,150	134,798	6,238	658,658
200 to 399	4,784	1,492,887	4,486	1,428,917	3,577	1,090,698	6,006	1,772,698
400 to 799	8,876	5,028,258	10,777	6,103,564	4,196	2,273,652	5,492	3,009,603
800 to 1,199	2,269	2,137,088	2,786	2,635,028	422	384,652	789	735,058
1,200 to 1,999	545	773,880	598	839,904	44	59,417	121	170,184
2,000 or more	44	105,099	43	105,061	1	2,047	2	4,373
Secondary	4,671	4,530,123	5,330	5,619,275	3,975	2,154,449	8,806	3,447,777
Less than 200	1,077	90,898	792	59,451	796	51,615	3,395	318,317
200 to 399	439	126,721	325	97,633	666	209,516	2,071	608,977
400 to 799	658	399,950	1,025	632,407	1,318	768,505	1,785	1,005,751
800 to 1,199	662	659,444	1,070	1,064,602	611	593,214	635	619,280
1,200 to 1,999	1,021	1,603,767	1,265	1,975,522	321	476,242	430	643,335
2,000 or more	629	1,649,343	692	1,789,660	24	55,357	102	252,117
Combined	1,546	441,425	1,072	262,256	792	112,462	2,027	494,292
Less than 200	897	62,901	614	41,935	518	24,001	970	68,792
200 to 399	208	59,731	119	33,180	59	17,505	422	122,972
400 to 799	189	106,688	100	58,857	77	45,010	337	186,966
800 to 1,199	72	68,519	54	52,330	16	15,257	78	73,518
1,200 to 1,999	54	81,403	31	48,357	3	4,135	25	36,620
2,000 or more	16	62,183	10	27,597	3	6,554	2	5,424

[1] Total includes schools not reporting enrollment or grade level.

NOTE: Enrollment counts exclude schools with no reported enrollment. 1,749 schools and 86,690 students with no reported grade level are not separately shown. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding or because of schools with no reported grade level that are not separately shown.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

Figure 1.2a. Percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary schools, by level, locale, and size of school: 2003–04



Rounds to zero.
NOTE: Excludes schools with no reported enrollment and 1,749 schools with no reported grade level are not separately shown. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

Generally, a larger percentage of rural students than students in other locales were enrolled in very small public schools. At the elementary level, the percentage of students in rural areas attending public schools with an enrollment below 200 (10.4 percent) was about three times as large as the percentage in towns (3.4 percent), about 7 times as large as the percentages in cities (1.5 percent), and about 10 times as large as the percentage in suburbs (1.0 percent).

At the secondary level, similar differences were found, with the percentage of students in rural areas attending public schools with enrollments of less than 200 (9 percent) being more than three times larger than the percentages in cities, suburbs, and towns (ranging from 1 to 2 percent). Conversely, the percentage of students in rural areas attending public schools with enrollments of 2,000 or more (7 percent) was less than in cities (36 percent) and suburbs (32 percent), though greater than in towns (3 percent).

Larger numbers of public combined schools (schools having a grade below 7th grade and a grade above 8th grade) and public combined school students were found in rural areas (2,000 schools and 494,000 students) than in each of the other locales (800–1,500 schools and 112,000–441,000 students). While few differences were seen across locales in the distribution of combined school students across school sizes, a smaller percentage of public combined school students in rural areas attended schools with 1,200 or more students than in cities, suburbs, and towns (9 percent vs. 33, 29, and 10 percent, respectively).

Table 1.2b. Percentage distribution of public schools and students, by locale, school level, and size of school: 2003–04

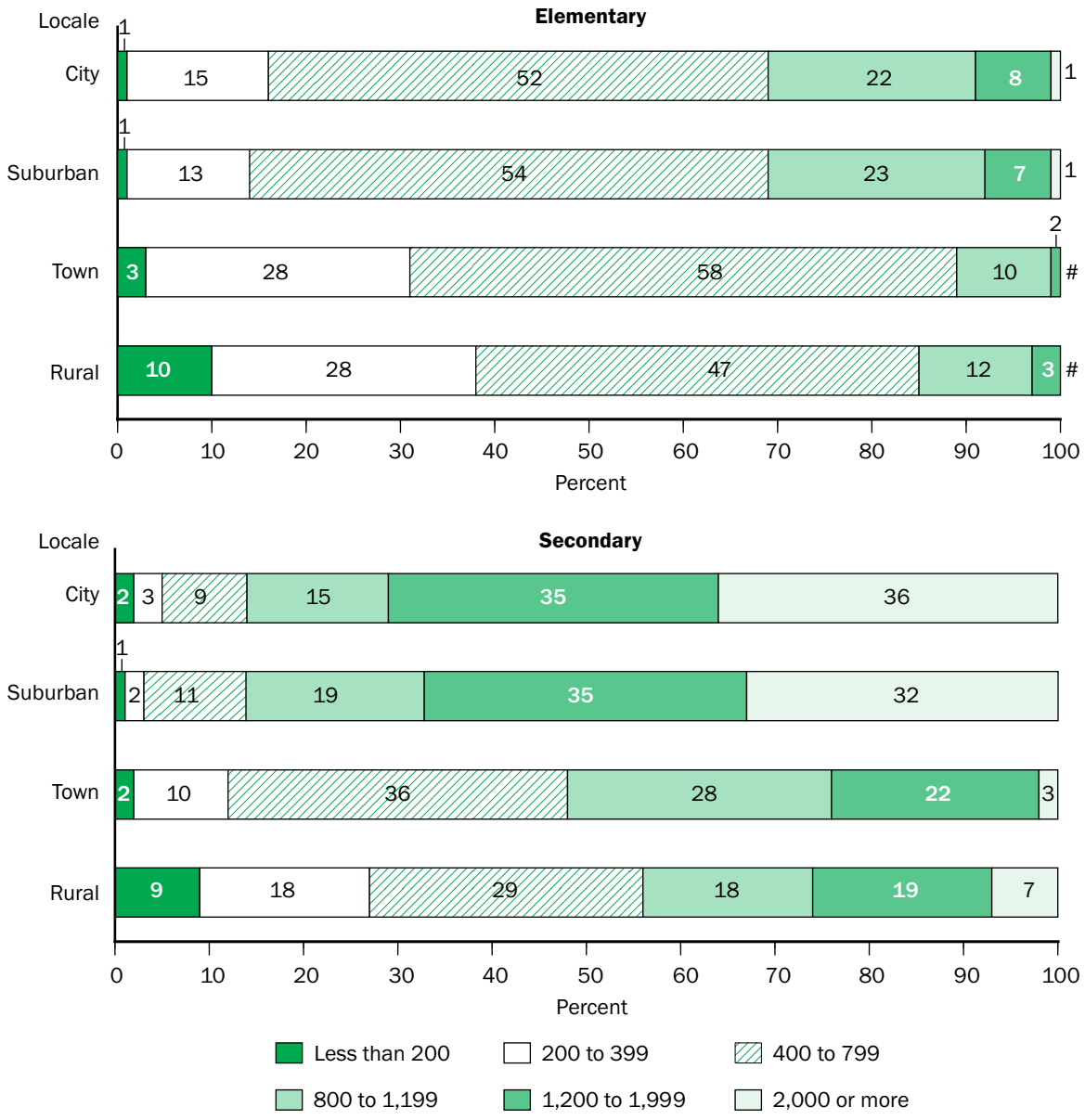
	City		Suburban		Town		Rural	
School type and size	Schools	Students	Schools	Students	Schools	Students	Schools	Students
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Less than 200	14.1	2.1	9.8	1.3	18.3	3.5	37.0	10.2
200 to 399	22.9	11.5	19.1	9.1	31.0	21.2	29.3	24.3
400 to 799	40.7	37.7	45.9	39.7	40.3	49.6	26.2	40.8
800 to 1,199	12.6	19.5	15.1	21.9	7.6	16.0	5.2	13.9
1,200 to 1,999	6.8	16.8	7.3	16.7	2.6	8.7	2.0	8.2
2,000 or more	2.9	12.4	2.9	11.2	0.2	1.0	0.4	2.5
Elementary	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 200	7.2	1.5	5.1	1.0	12.2	3.4	33.5	10.4
200 to 399	26.9	15.4	22.8	12.7	38.1	27.6	32.2	27.9
400 to 799	49.9	51.9	54.7	54.4	44.7	57.6	29.5	47.4
800 to 1,199	12.8	22.1	14.2	23.5	4.5	9.7	4.2	11.6
1,200 to 1,999	3.1	8.0	3.0	7.5	0.5	1.5	0.6	2.7
2,000 or more	0.2	1.1	0.2	0.9	#	0.1	#	0.1
Secondary	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 200	24.0	2.0	15.3	1.1	21.3	2.4	40.3	9.2
200 to 399	9.8	2.8	6.3	1.7	17.8	9.7	24.6	17.7
400 to 799	14.7	8.8	19.8	11.3	35.3	35.7	21.2	29.2
800 to 1,199	14.8	14.6	20.7	18.9	16.4	27.5	7.5	18.0
1,200 to 1,999	22.8	35.4	24.5	35.2	8.6	22.1	5.1	18.7
2,000 or more	14.0	36.4	13.4	31.8	0.6	2.6	1.2	7.3
Combined	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 200	62.5	14.2	66.2	16.0	76.6	21.3	52.9	13.9
200 to 399	14.5	13.5	12.8	12.7	8.7	15.6	23.0	24.9
400 to 799	13.2	24.2	10.8	22.4	11.4	40.0	18.4	37.8
800 to 1,199	5.0	15.5	5.8	20.0	2.4	13.6	4.3	14.9
1,200 to 1,999	3.8	18.4	3.3	18.4	0.4	3.7	1.4	7.4
2,000 or more	1.1	14.1	1.1	10.5	0.4	5.8	0.1	1.1

Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Excludes schools with no reported enrollment. 1,749 schools and 86,690 students with no reported grade level are not included in the calculations of these percentage distributions. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

Figure 1.2b. Percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary students, by level, locale, and size of school: 2003–04



Rounds to zero.
NOTE: 86,690 students in schools with no reported grade level are not separately shown. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

1.3. Public school students, by race/ethnicity

A greater proportion of public school students in rural areas were White or American Indian/Alaska Native than in towns, suburbs, or cities, and a smaller proportion of public school students in rural areas were Black, Hispanic, or Asian/Pacific Islander than in towns, suburbs, or cities.

In the 2003–04 school year, 58 percent of all public elementary and secondary school students in the nation were White, 17 percent were Black, 19 percent were Hispanic, 4 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native (table 1.3). In rural areas, 78 percent of public school students were White, 10 percent were Black, 8 percent were Hispanic, 2 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 3 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native.

The percentage of these students who were White was higher in rural areas (78 percent) than in cities (35 percent), suburban areas (62 percent), and towns (72 percent) (figure 1.3). Conversely, the percentages of these students in rural schools who were Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander were lower than the corresponding percentages in cities, suburban areas, and towns. A higher percentage of these students in rural areas were American Indian/Alaska Native than in cities, suburbs, and towns (1 to 2 percent).

Within rural areas, a lower percentage of these students in rural fringe areas were White (74 percent) than in remote rural (79 percent) and distant rural (83 percent) areas. A greater proportion of students attending public schools in fringe rural areas were Black (12 percent), Hispanic (10 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (2 percent) than in distant rural and remote rural areas. However, 7 percent of these students attending schools in remote rural areas were American Indian/Alaska Native, compared with 1 percent in fringe rural areas and 2 percent in distant rural areas.

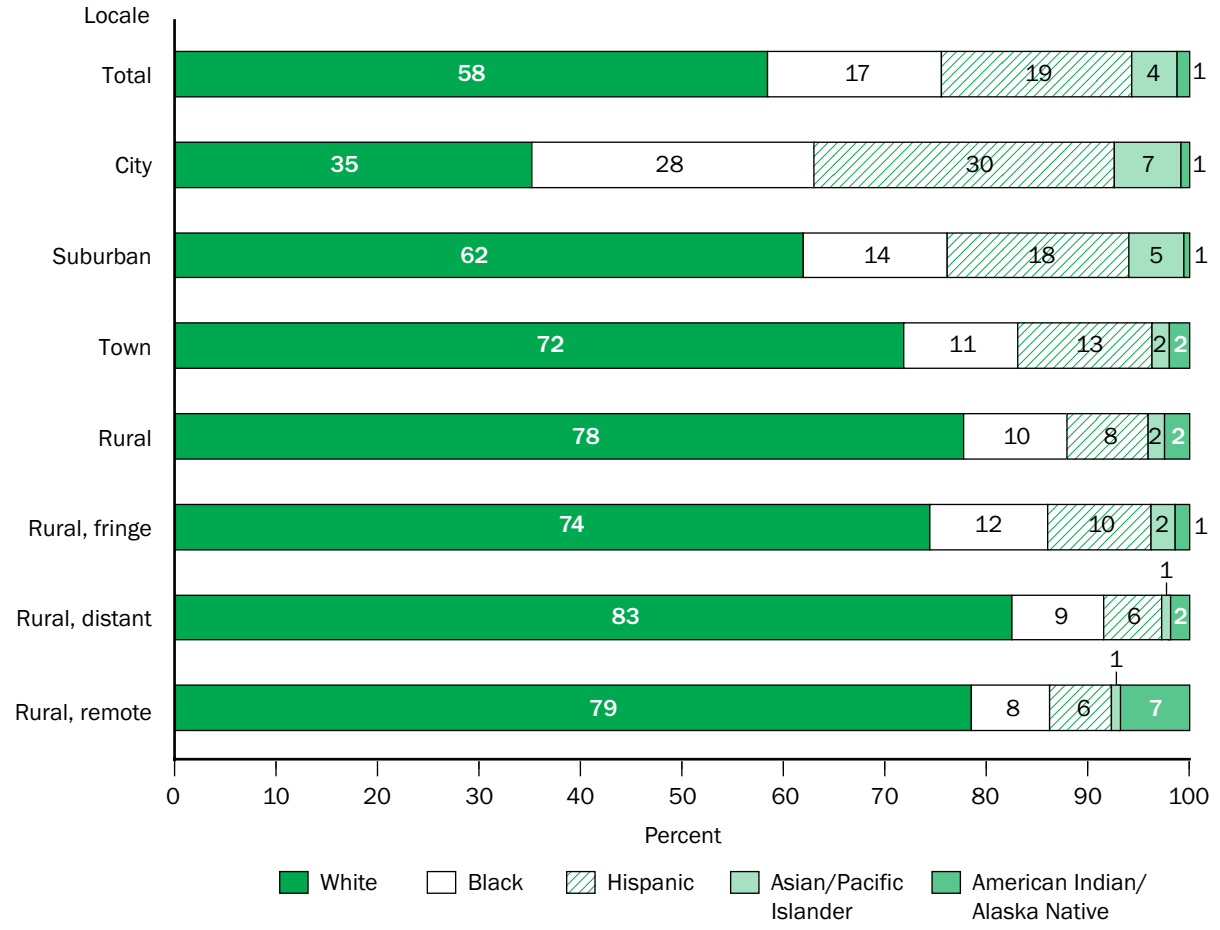
Table 1.3. Number and percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary students, by race/ethnicity and locale: 2003–04

Locale	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native
			Number			
Total	**47,277,389**	**27,612,086**	**8,089,204**	**8,883,272**	**2,107,001**	**585,826**
City	14,358,734	5,049,347	3,998,670	4,243,922	945,856	120,939
Suburban	16,899,108	10,466,158	2,397,357	3,032,308	909,026	94,259
Town	6,058,054	4,352,994	679,916	803,520	99,898	121,726
Rural	9,961,493	7,743,587	1,013,261	803,522	152,221	248,902
Fringe	5,115,917	3,806,283	596,189	519,923	122,728	70,794
Distant	3,309,673	2,731,320	299,375	188,831	20,284	69,863
Remote	1,535,903	1,205,984	117,697	94,768	9,209	108,245
			Percentage distribution			
Total	**100.0**	**58.4**	**17.1**	**18.8**	**4.5**	**1.2**
City	100.0	35.2	27.8	29.6	6.6	0.8
Suburban	100.0	61.9	14.2	17.9	5.4	0.6
Town	100.0	71.9	11.2	13.3	1.6	2.0
Rural	100.0	77.7	10.2	8.1	1.5	2.5
Fringe	100.0	74.4	11.7	10.2	2.4	1.4
Distant	100.0	82.5	9.0	5.7	0.6	2.1
Remote	100.0	78.5	7.7	6.2	0.6	7.0

NOTE: Enrollment counts exclude schools with no reported enrollment. Race/ethnicity information was not reported for 1,076,134 students. Race/ethnicity categories exclude persons of Hispanic origin unless otherwise specified. Rural areas are located outside any urbanized area or urban cluster. Urbanized areas are densely settled areas containing at least 50,000 people. Urban clusters are densely settled areas with a population of 2,500 to 49,999. Fringe rural areas are 5 miles or less from an urbanized area or 2.5 miles or less from an urban cluster. Distant rural areas are more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, or more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster. Remote rural areas are more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster. For more details on Census-defined areas, see http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

Figure 1.3. Percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary students, by race/ethnicity and locale: 2003–04



NOTE: Enrollment counts exclude schools with no reported enrollment. Race/ethnicity information was not reported for 1,076,134 students. Race/ethnicity categories exclude persons of Hispanic origin unless otherwise specified. Rural areas are located outside any urbanized area or urban cluster. Urbanized areas are densely settled areas containing at least 50,000 people. Urban clusters are densely settled areas with a population of 2,500 to 49,999. Fringe rural areas are 5 miles or less from an urbanized area or 2.5 miles or less from an urban cluster. Distant rural areas are more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, or more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster. Remote rural areas are more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster. For more details on Census-defined areas, see http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

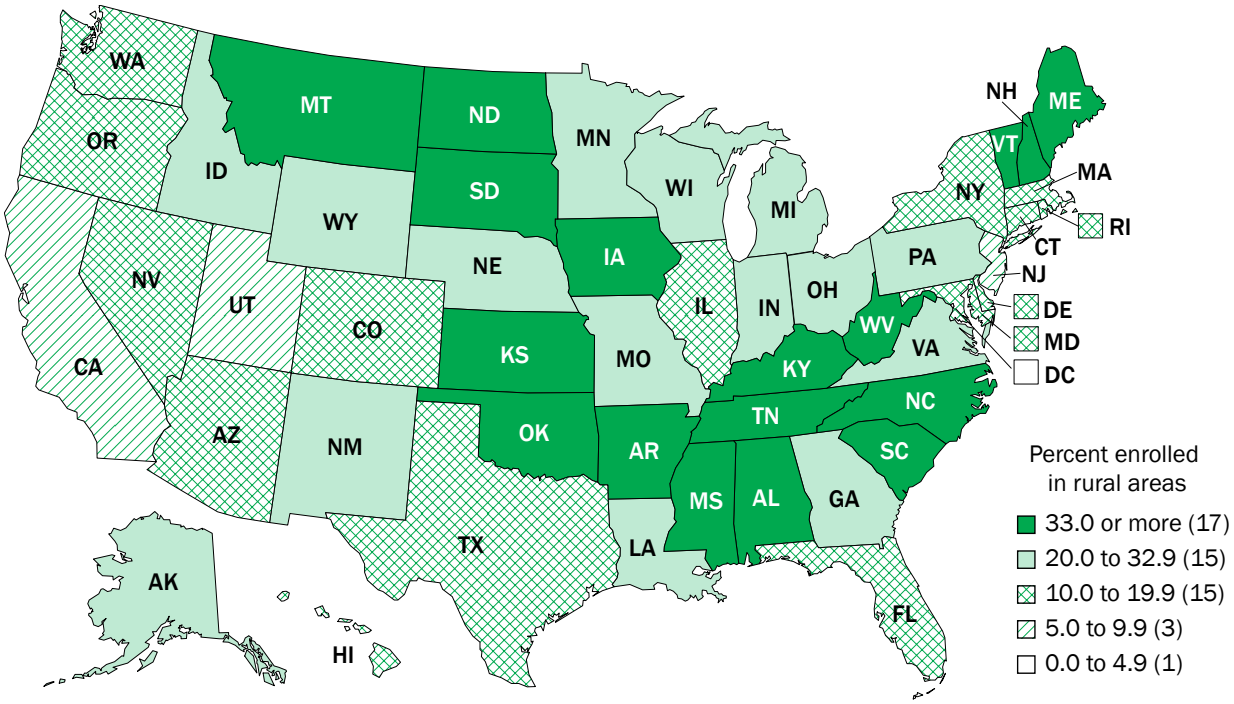
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

1.4. Elementary and secondary public school students, by region and state

A greater proportion of public school students in the South and the Midwest were enrolled in rural schools in 2003–04 than in the Northeast and the West.

In 2003–04, among all regions the South had the largest percentage of public school students enrolled in rural schools (28 percent), followed by the Midwest (25 percent), Northeast (16 percent), and West (13 percent) (table 1.4). Looking at individual states, Maine and Vermont had more than 50 percent of their public school students enrolled in rural schools (53 percent each), while Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Dakota, and West Virginia each had over 40 percent of their public school students enrolled in rural schools (41–47 percent).

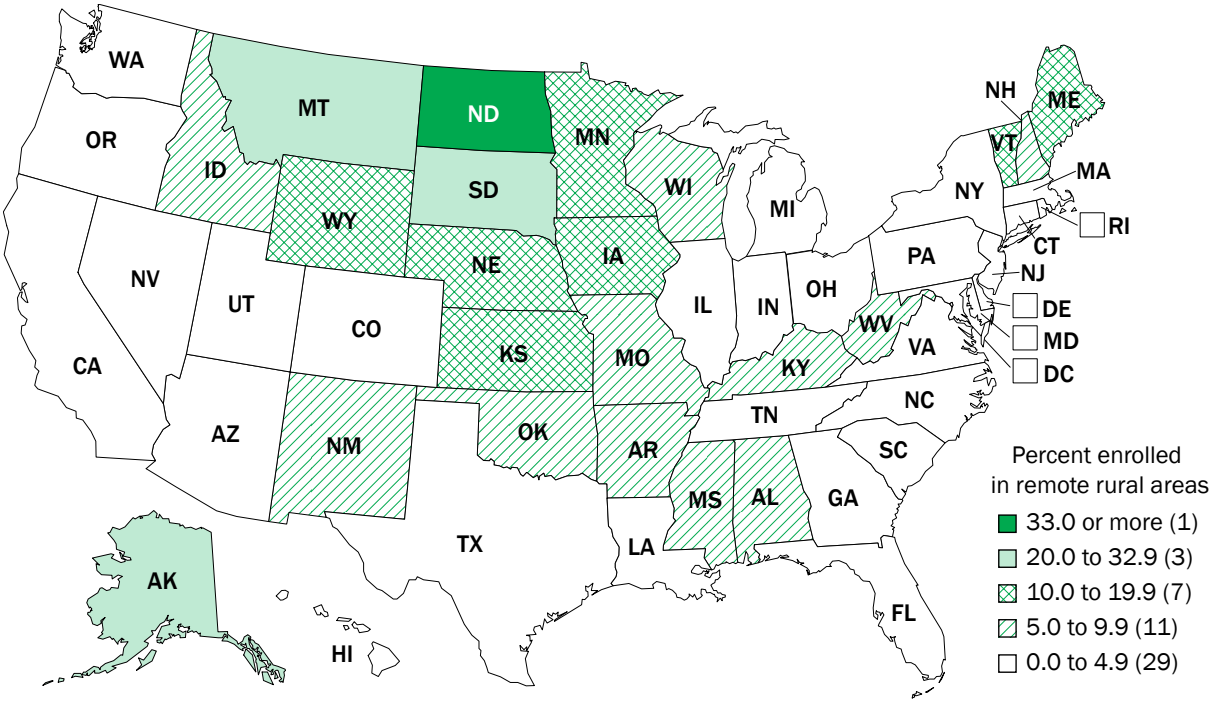
Figure 1.4a. Percentage of public elementary and secondary students enrolled in schools in rural areas, by state and District of Columbia: 2003–04



NOTE: Numbers in parentheses in the legend represent the number of states in each category.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

The percentage of public school students enrolled in remote rural areas differed across the regions of the country (table A-1.4). The Midwest had the largest percentage of students enrolled in remote rural areas (5 percent), followed by the South (3 percent), West (3 percent), and the Northeast (1 percent). In the states, North Dakota and South Dakota had more than 30 percent of their public school students enrolled in remote rural schools (35 and 32 percent, respectively), while Alaska, Montana, Nebraska, Vermont, and Wyoming each had 15 percent or more of their public school students enrolled in remote rural schools (15–24 percent).

Figure 1.4b. Percentage of public elementary and secondary students enrolled in schools in remote rural areas, by state and District of Columbia: 2003–04



NOTE: Numbers in parentheses in the legend represent the number of states in each category. Rural areas are located outside any urbanized area or urban cluster. Urbanized areas are densely settled areas containing at least 50,000 people. Urban clusters are densely settled areas with a population of 2,500 to 49,999. Remote rural areas are more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster. For more details on Census-defined areas, see http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

Table 1.4. Percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary students, by locale, region, and state and District of Columbia: 2003–04

Region and state	City	Suburban	Town	Rural
Total	**30.4**	**35.4**	**12.9**	**21.3**
Northeast	27.2	48.9	8.0	15.9
Connecticut	27.4	54.3	4.6	13.7
Maine	11.6	12.6	22.3	53.4
Massachusetts	20.8	66.0	2.5	10.7
New Hampshire	15.0	32.9	18.1	34.0
New Jersey	9.9	78.6	2.1	9.4
New York	43.7	35.5	7.8	13.0
Pennsylvania	21.4	44.4	13.5	20.7
Rhode Island	32.8	51.9	2.6	12.7
Vermont	6.6	10.8	29.8	52.9
Midwest	26.3	32.0	17.1	24.6
Illinois	31.9	44.8	11.5	11.7
Indiana	27.9	24.1	17.7	30.3
Iowa	26.2	9.4	28.1	36.3
Kansas	25.0	13.4	27.7	33.8
Michigan	27.0	37.9	12.5	22.6
Minnesota	22.0	30.5	21.4	26.0
Missouri	19.2	30.7	20.1	30.0
Nebraska	33.6	11.6	23.7	31.2
North Dakota	26.8	7.7	20.5	45.0
Ohio	21.7	39.0	15.0	24.4
South Dakota	24.7	0.9	30.4	43.9
Wisconsin	29.2	22.7	20.2	27.8
South	28.0	30.7	13.6	27.7
Alabama	23.3	16.5	14.7	45.6
Arkansas	25.2	10.0	24.2	40.6
Delaware	16.0	47.8	20.2	15.9
District of Columbia	99.8	0.0	0.0	0.2[1]
Florida	25.1	55.8	5.6	13.5
Georgia	15.4	39.8	12.8	31.9
Kentucky	13.7	20.4	23.3	42.6
Louisiana	32.0	20.9	18.5	28.7
Maryland	16.1	60.8	6.1	17.0
Mississippi	11.5	11.2	30.4	46.8
North Carolina	25.3	15.7	14.0	45.0
Oklahoma	21.3	19.4	25.2	34.1
South Carolina	12.3	30.5	17.7	39.5
Tennessee	30.5	17.6	16.1	35.8
Texas	45.7	24.1	12.7	17.5
Virginia	25.1	39.3	7.7	27.9
West Virginia	13.4	15.9	26.3	44.4
West	40.0	36.3	11.2	12.6
Alaska	40.3	3.8	23.1	32.9
Arizona	50.8	21.4	10.7	17.2
California	44.8	41.1	6.6	7.5
Colorado	35.6	35.3	11.7	17.4
Hawaii	24.4	33.7	22.0	19.9
Idaho	29.1	15.6	24.5	30.8
Montana	21.9	2.6	35.8	39.8
Nevada	43.7	34.6	8.0	13.6
New Mexico	32.8	12.8	29.0	25.4
Oregon	31.2	23.8	27.7	17.4
Utah	19.2	57.6	14.1	9.1
Washington	27.6	44.0	12.1	16.3
Wyoming	24.0	1.6	42.6	31.8

[1] These students are funded by the District of Columbia public school system, but attend school outside of the District.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003-04.

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1.5. 3- to 5-year-olds in preprimary programs

In 2005, about half of children in rural areas between the ages of 3 and 5 attended a center-based preprimary program such as a daycare center, Head Start program, preschool, or prekindergarten.

Nationwide, 57 percent of 3- to 5-year-olds were enrolled in center-based preprimary programs[2] in 2005 (table 1.5). In rural areas, the percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in such programs (50 percent) was lower than the national rate (57 percent) and lower than the rates for children in suburban areas (63 percent) and cities (58 percent). There was no measurable difference between the enrollment rates for children in rural areas and towns.

Across the United States in 2005, a greater percentage of children in families with incomes at or above the poverty threshold than children in families with incomes below the poverty threshold were enrolled in preprimary programs (60 vs. 47 percent). Among rural children, the apparent difference in enrollment rates between children living at or above the poverty threshold (52 percent) and children living below the poverty threshold (39 percent) was not statistically significant due to large standard errors.

The number of hours children attended center-based preprimary programs varied. Nationally, a greater percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds attended preprimary programs less than 30 hours a week than attended preprimary programs 30 hours or more a week (35 vs. 21 percent). The same relationship held true for children in rural areas (33 vs. 16 percent) (figure 1.5).

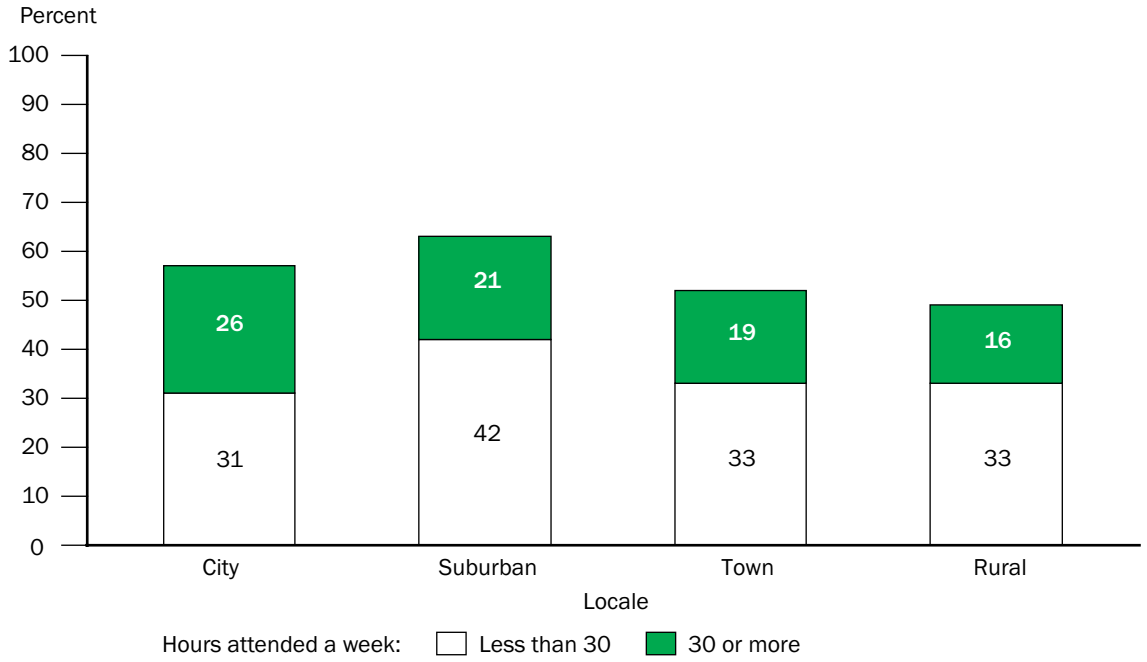
Table 1.5. Percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in center-based preprimary programs, by poverty status, hours of attendance, and locale: 2005

Locale and hours of attendance	All[1]	At or above the poverty threshold	Below the poverty threshold
Total	**57.1**	**59.9**	**47.2**
City	57.6	60.0	52.1
Suburban	63.4	66.3	46.0
Town	52.2	53.9	46.9
Rural	49.6	52.3	38.9 !
Attends less than 30 hours a week	**35.4**	**38.3**	**25.3**
City	31.0	33.0	26.1
Suburban	41.8	45.1	21.7 !
Town	33.5	35.0	29.0 !
Rural	33.0	35.0	25.3 !
Attends 30 hours or more a week	**21.4**	**21.4**	**21.5**
City	26.3	26.7	25.5
Suburban	21.3	21.0	23.6
Town	18.7	18.9	17.9 !
Rural	16.4	17.2	13.6 !

! Interpret with caution.
[1]Total includes 3 cases with an unknown locale code.
NOTE: Estimates are based on children who have yet to enter kindergarten. Center-based programs include day care centers, Head Start program, preschool, prekindergarten, and other early childhood programs. For comparison of poverty definitions, see appendix B. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and because not all respondents reported number of hours.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), "Early Childhood Program Participation" survey, 2005.

[2] The National Household Education Survey: 2005 Early Childhood Program Participation (ECPP-NHES:2005) Interview classifies early childhood care and programs into three categories: relative care, nonrelative care, and center-based programs. For rates of attendance in center-based programs, respondents were asked if the child was "attending a day care center, preschool, prekindergarten, or (Early) Head Start program." For more information on the ECPP-NHES:2005, see http://www.nces.ed.gov/nhes/pdf/early/2005_ecpp.pdf.

Figure 1.5. Percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in center-based preprimary programs, by locale and hours of attendance: 2005



NOTE: Excludes 3 cases with an unknown locale code. Estimates are based on children who have yet to enter kindergarten. Center-based programs include day care centers, Head Start program, preschool, prekindergarten, and other early childhood programs.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), "Early Childhood Program Participation" survey, 2005.

1.6. Private schools

In 2003–04, about 6 percent of rural students were enrolled in private schools, over half of them in non-Catholic, religious schools. In contrast, 11 percent of students nationally were enrolled in private schools, the largest percentage of whom (41 percent) were enrolled in Catholic schools.

In 2003–04, some 34,700 private schools across the United States enrolled 6.1 million elementary and secondary students (or 11 percent of all students) (tables 1.6a and 1.6b). In rural areas, 6,700 private schools enrolled 622,000 prekindergarten through 12th-grade students (or 6 percent of all rural students). For the purposes of this analysis, private schools are categorized as *Catholic*; *non-Catholic religious*; and *nonsectarian schools*.

In cities, suburban areas, and towns, the largest percentage of private school students were enrolled in Catholic schools (42–48 percent), followed by non-Catholic religious schools (33–39 percent), and then nonsectarian schools (13–23 percent) (figure 1.6). In rural areas, however, 55 percent of private school students attended non-Catholic religious schools, compared with 27 percent attending nonsectarian schools and 18 percent attending Catholic schools. Rural areas were the only locale where Catholic schools did not enroll the largest proportion of private school students.

Table 1.6a. Percentage distribution of elementary and secondary students, by control of school and locale: 2003–04

			Private			
Locale	All	Public	Total	Catholic	Non-Catholic religious	Non-sectarian
Total	**100.0**	**88.8**	**11.2**	**4.6**	**4.1**	**2.5**
City	100.0	85.0	15.0	6.7	5.0	3.3
Suburban	100.0	87.5	12.5	5.3	4.3	2.9
Town	100.0	93.3	6.7	3.2	2.6	0.9
Rural	100.0	94.3	5.7	1.0	3.1	1.5

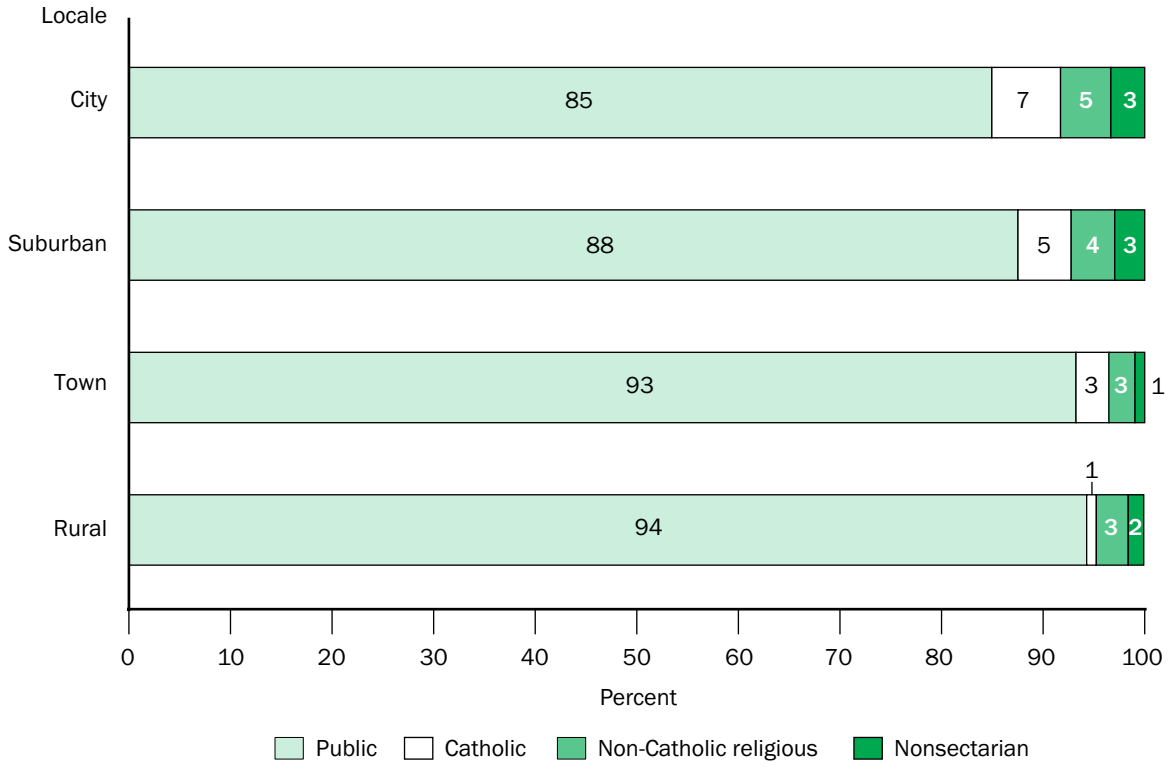
NOTE: Includes kindergarten-terminal schools, in which the highest grade is kindergarten. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Private School Universe Survey (PSS), 2003–2004; Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

Table 1.6b. Number and percentage distribution of private elementary and secondary students and schools, by control of school and locale: 2003–04

	Elementary and secondary students				Schools			
Locale	Total	Catholic	Non-Catholic religious	Non-sectarian	Total	Catholic	Non-Catholic religious	Non-sectarian
	Number							
Total	**6,099,000**	**2,520,000**	**2,228,000**	**1,351,000**	**34,700**	**8,000**	**15,500**	**11,100**
City	2,592,000	1,160,000	867,000	565,000	12,100	3,400	4,600	4,100
Suburban	2,440,000	1,032,000	848,000	560,000	12,500	2,900	4,700	4,900
Town	446,000	214,000	175,000	57,400	3,400	1,100	1,700	590
Rural	622,000	114,000	339,000	169,000	6,700	650	4,500	1,600
	Percentage distribution							
Total	**100.0**	**41.3**	**36.5**	**22.2**	**100.0**	**23.2**	**44.7**	**32.1**
City	100.0	44.8	33.4	21.8	100.0	28.1	38.0	33.9
Suburban	100.0	42.3	34.8	23.0	100.0	23.2	37.6	39.2
Town	100.0	47.9	39.2	12.9	100.0	31.7	50.7	17.6
Rural	100.0	18.3	54.5	27.2	100.0	9.7	66.7	23.6

NOTE: Includes kindergarten-terminal schools, in which the highest grade is kindergarten. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Private School Universe Survey (PSS), 2003–04.

Figure 1.6. Percentage distribution of elementary and secondary students, by control of school and locale: 2003–04



NOTE: Includes kindergarten-terminal schools, in which the highest grade is kindergarten. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Private School Universe Survey (PSS), 2003–2004; Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

1.7. Children in poverty

The proportion of children living near or below the poverty threshold in rural areas was smaller than in towns or cities, but larger than in suburban areas in 2004.

Using annual household incomes collected by the American Community Survey (ACS), households in poverty are defined as those having an annual income below the poverty threshold (for a comparison of poverty definitions see appendix B). In 2004, 18 percent of children under the age of 18 were living in families below the poverty threshold, while 19 percent were living in families between the poverty threshold and 185 percent of the poverty threshold (table 1.7).

The percentage of children under the age of 18 in rural areas who were living in families in poverty (15 percent) was smaller than in cities and towns (25 percent each) (figure 1.7). However, a larger percentage of rural children lived in poverty than suburban children (15 vs. 13 percent). These same patterns were found for children under the age of 5 and for children ages 5 to 17 (table 1.7), as well as for families headed by a married couple, a single mother, and a single father (table A-1.7).

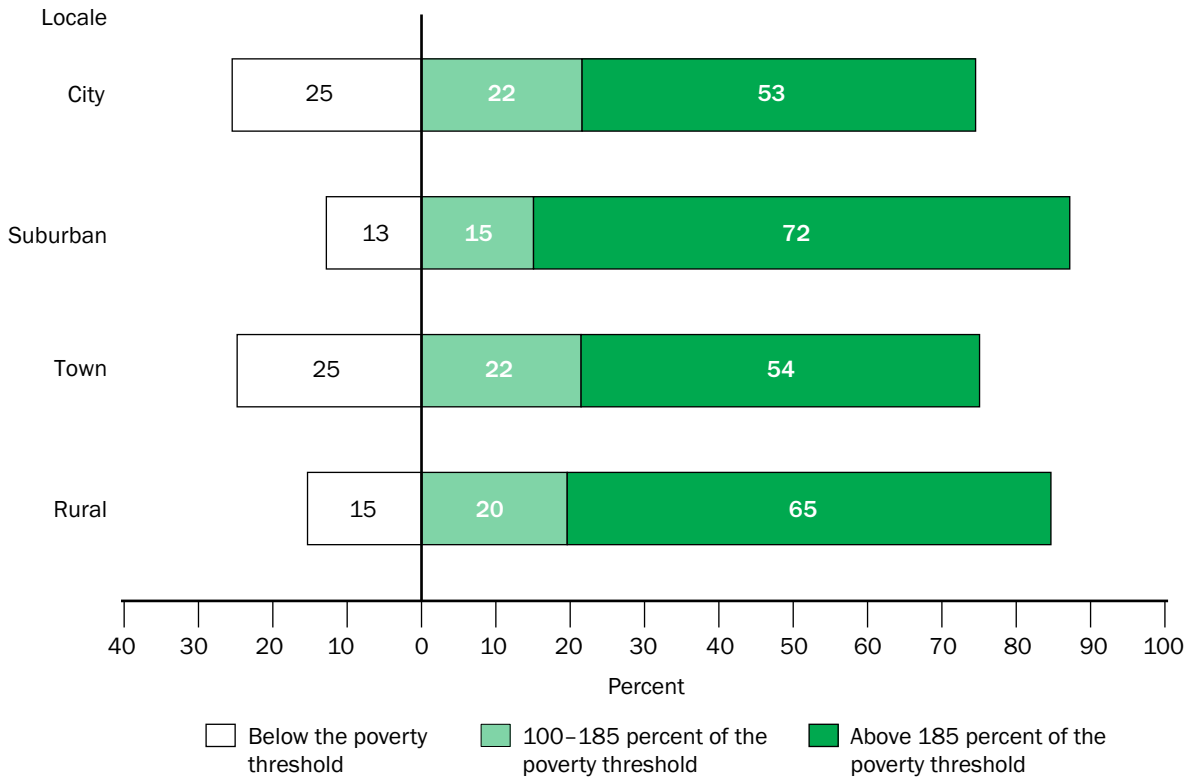
Widening the focus to include children living in families below 185 percent of the poverty threshold, including those living in poverty, reveals similar patterns. The percentage of children under the age of 18 in rural areas who were living in families at or below 185 percent of the poverty threshold (35 percent) was smaller than in cities (47 percent) or towns (46 percent), but larger than in suburban areas (28 percent) (figure 1.7). These same patterns were detected among children under the age of 5 and children between ages 5 and 17.

Table 1.7. Percentage distribution of children under 18 living in families, by poverty level, age group, and locale: 2004

Age group and locale	Total	Below the poverty threshold	100–185 percent of the poverty threshold	Above 185 percent of the poverty threshold
Total	**100.0**	**18.4**	**18.7**	**62.8**
City	100.0	25.4	21.7	52.9
Suburban	100.0	12.7	15.1	72.2
Town	100.0	24.8	21.5	53.6
Rural	100.0	15.3	19.6	65.1
0–4	**100.0**	**21.0**	**19.5**	**59.5**
City	100.0	27.9	21.7	50.4
Suburban	100.0	14.6	16.0	69.4
Town	100.0	27.8	22.0	50.2
Rural	100.0	17.3	21.0	61.7
5–17	**100.0**	**17.5**	**18.5**	**64.1**
City	100.0	24.3	21.7	54.0
Suburban	100.0	12.0	14.7	73.3
Town	100.0	23.7	21.4	55.0
Rural	100.0	14.7	19.1	66.2

NOTE: For comparison of poverty definitions, see appendix B. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2004, previously unpublished data.

Figure 1.7. Percentage distribution of children under 18 living in families, by poverty level and locale: 2004



NOTE: For a comparison of poverty definitions, see appendix B. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2004, previously unpublished data.

1.8. Students eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch in public schools

In 2003–04, rural public schools had a larger proportion of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch than suburban public schools, but had a smaller proportion of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch than public schools in cities or towns. The percentage of public school students in rural remote areas attending a moderate-to-high poverty public school was higher than the percentages in all other locales except large and midsize cities.

During the 2003–04 school year, 41 percent of public elementary and secondary school students nationwide were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (table 1.8). In rural areas, the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (38 percent) was lower than the national percentage. It was also lower than the percentage in both cities (53 percent) and towns (43 percent), but was higher than in suburban areas (31 percent).

Using the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch as a proxy for the poverty level within a school (for a comparison of poverty definitions see appendix B), *moderate-to-high poverty* schools are defined, for the purposes of this analysis, as schools with more than 50 percent of students eligible. Using this definition—combining the last two columns of table 1.8 to include "51 to 75 percent" and "more than 75 percent" eligible schools—35 percent of students nationwide attended moderate-to-high poverty public schools. The percentage of students in rural areas attending moderate-to-high poverty public schools (30 percent) was less than the national percentage. The percentage of rural students attending these schools was lower than the percentage in both

Table 1.8. Number and percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary students, by percentage of students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and locale: 2003–04

Locale	Number and percent eligible for free or reduced-price lunch	10 percent or less	11–25 percent	26–50 percent	51–75 percent	More than 75 percent
				Number		
Total	**43,126,448**	**6,449,924**	**8,862,597**	**12,557,762**	**8,769,074**	**6,487,091**
City	12,809,572	1,095,406	1,691,884	3,162,898	3,136,954	3,722,430
Suburban	15,549,796	3,946,797	4,026,236	3,883,089	2,259,610	1,434,064
Town	5,627,799	336,839	1,082,265	2,202,499	1,417,805	588,391
Rural	9,139,281	1,070,882	2,062,212	3,309,276	1,954,705	742,206
Fringe	4,748,997	900,458	1,262,186	1,494,091	802,882	289,380
Distant	2,973,841	147,550	667,832	1,195,216	698,936	264,307
Remote	1,416,443	22,874	132,194	619,969	452,887	188,519
				Percentage distribution		
Total	**40.7**	**15.0**	**20.6**	**29.1**	**20.3**	**15.0**
City	52.9	8.6	13.2	24.7	24.5	29.1
Suburban	31.4	25.4	25.9	25.0	14.5	9.2
Town	42.9	6.0	19.2	39.1	25.2	10.5
Rural	37.9	11.7	22.6	36.2	21.4	8.1
Fringe	32.5	19.0	26.6	31.5	16.9	6.1
Distant	41.1	5.0	22.5	40.2	23.5	8.9
Remote	49.6	1.6	9.3	43.8	32.0	13.3

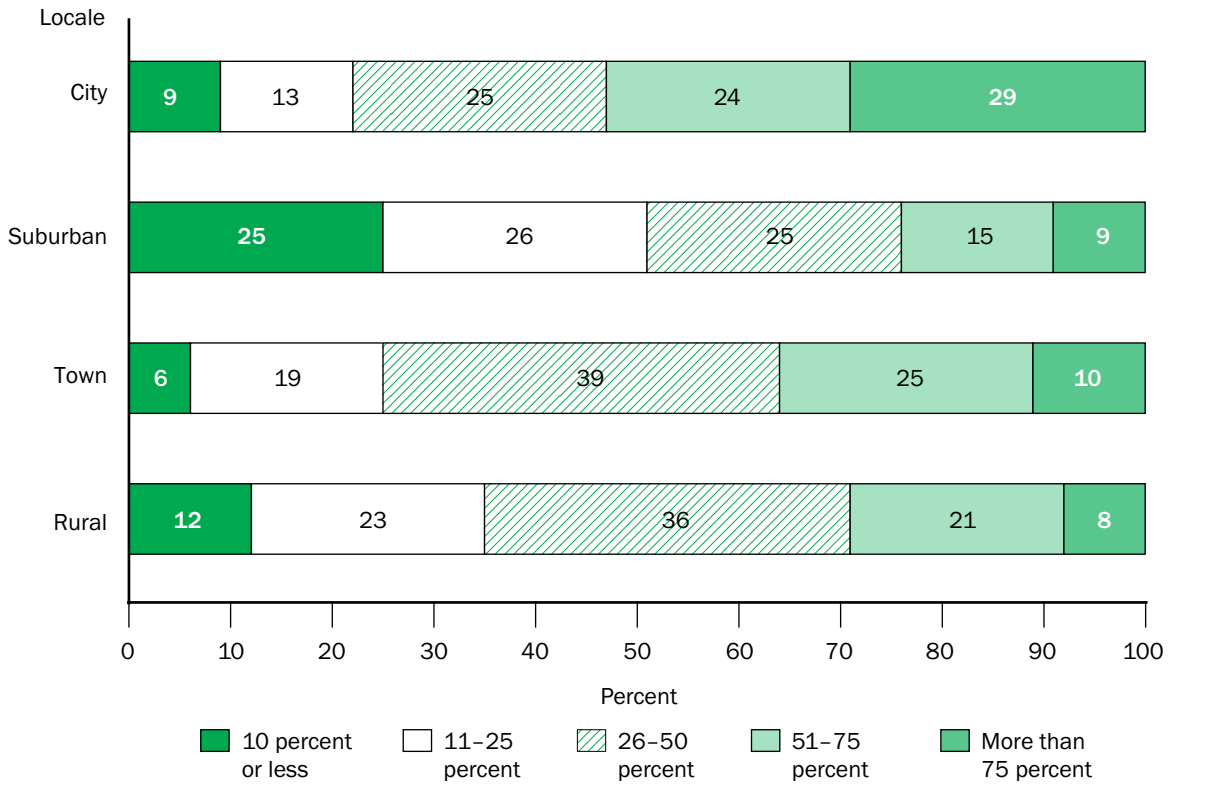
NOTE: The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program. To be eligible, a student must be from a household with an income at or below 130 percent of the poverty threshold for free lunch or between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty threshold for reduced-price lunch. Approximately 13,704 schools did not report information on the number of students eligible for a free or reduced-price school lunch. Therefore, this information is missing for 5,227,075 students. For a comparison of poverty definitions, see appendix B. Rural areas are located outside any urbanized area or urban cluster. Urbanized areas are densely settled areas containing at least 50,000 people. Urban clusters are densely settled areas with a population of 2,500 to 49,999. Fringe rural areas are 5 miles or less from an urbanized area or 2.5 miles or less from an urban cluster. Distant rural areas are more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, or more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster. Remote rural areas are more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster. For more details on Census-defined areas, see http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

cities (54 percent) and towns (36 percent), but was higher than the percentage of students in suburban areas (24 percent) (figure 1.8).

Within rural areas, however, the percentage of students attending moderate-to-high poverty public schools varied markedly. Specifically, 45 percent of students in remote rural areas attended moderate-to-high poverty public schools, compared with 32 percent in distant rural areas and 23 percent in fringe rural areas.

Comparing the percentages of students attending moderate-to-high poverty public schools in rural fringe and rural remote areas to other, nonrural, locales further highlights the differences occurring within rural areas. The percentage of students attending moderate-to-high poverty public schools in rural fringe areas (23 percent) was lower than the percentage of students attending such schools in suburban areas (24 percent). On the other hand, only large cities and midsize cities had larger percentages of students attending moderate-to-high poverty public schools than remote rural areas (66 and 49 percent vs. 45 percent) (table A-1.8).

Figure 1.8. Percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary students, by percentage of students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and locale: 2003–04



NOTE: The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program. To be eligible, a student must be from a household with an income at or below 130 percent of the poverty threshold for free lunch or between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty threshold for reduced-price lunch. Approximately 13,704 schools did not report information on the number of students eligible for a free or reduced-price school lunch. Therefore, this information is missing for 5,227,075 public school students. For a comparison of poverty definitions, see appendix B. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

1.9. Concentrations of poverty in public schools, by race/ethnicity

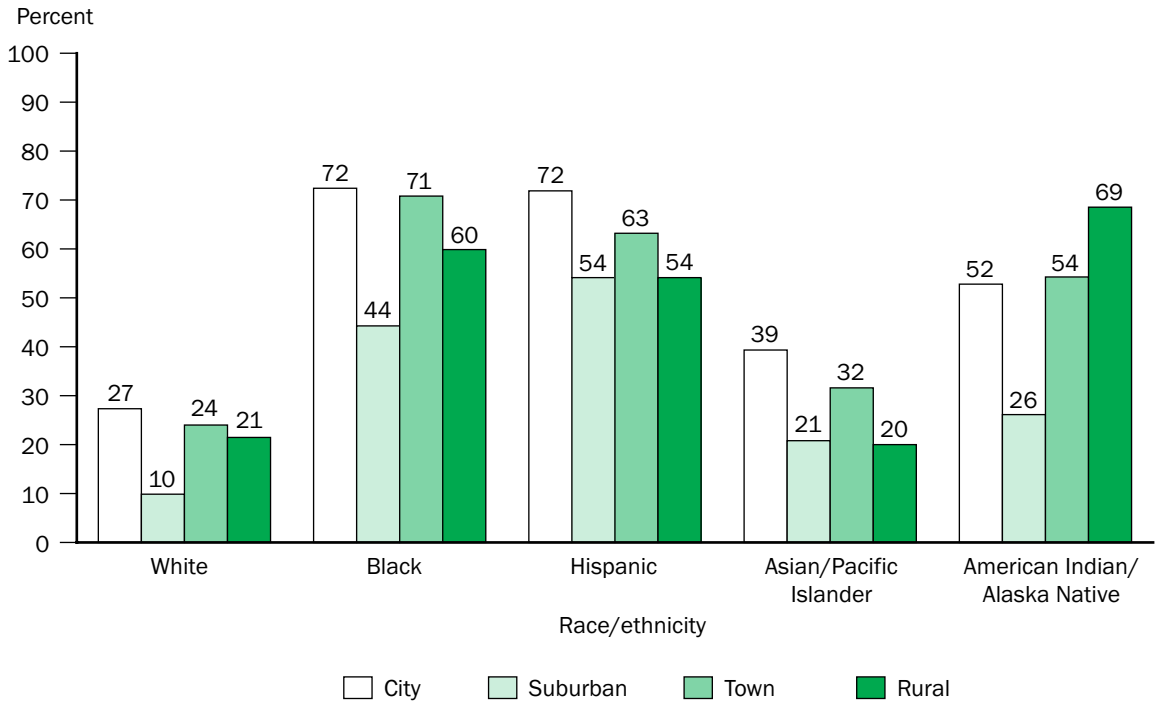
In rural areas, greater percentages of Hispanic, Black, and American Indian/Alaska Native public school students than White or Asian/Pacific Islander public school students attended a moderate-to-high poverty school in 2003–04. This was particularly true for remote rural areas; for instance, larger proportions of Black and American Indian/Alaska Native public school students attended such schools in remote rural areas than in large cities.

Using the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch as a proxy for the concentration of low-income students within a school (for a comparison of poverty definitions see appendix B), *moderate-to-high poverty schools* are defined, for the purposes of this analysis, as schools with more than 50 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Approximately 15.3 million public school students nationwide (or 35 percent of all public school students) attended moderate-to-high poverty schools in 2003–04 (tables 1.9a and 1.9b).

Nationally, 63 percent of Hispanics, 62 percent of Blacks, 55 percent of American Indians/Alaska Natives, 29 percent of Asians/Pacific Islanders, and 19 percent of Whites attended moderate-to-high poverty public schools (table 1.9b). A similar pattern was detected in rural areas, where more than half of American Indian/Alaska Native (69 percent), Black (60 percent), and Hispanic (54 percent) students were enrolled in moderate-to-high poverty public schools, compared with less than a quarter of White (21 percent) and Asian/Pacific Islander students (20 percent).

When comparing the detailed rural locales (fringe, distant, and remote) with other detailed locales (such as large, midsize, and small cities), higher percentages of Black and American Indian/Alaska Native public school students in remote rural areas were enrolled in moderate-to-high poverty schools (87 and 79 percent, respectively) than their peers in large cities (78 and 62 percent) (table A-1.9). Furthermore, approximately half of all Black public school students and nearly half of all American Indian/Alaska Native public school students (45 percent) in remote rural areas were enrolled in high-poverty schools (schools with more than 75 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch), compared with the 5 percent of White public school students in remote rural areas who attended high-poverty schools.

Figure 1.9. Percentage of public school students in moderate-to-high poverty schools, by race/ethnicity and locale: 2003–04



NOTE: Figures are percentages of students in schools where over 50 percent of students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program. To be eligible, a student must be from a household with an income at or below 130 percent of the poverty threshold for free lunch or between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty threshold for reduced-price lunch. Approximately 13,704 public schools did not report information on the number of students eligible for a free or reduced-price school lunch. Therefore, this information is missing for 5,227,075 public school students. Race/ethnicity categories exclude persons of Hispanic origin unless otherwise specified. For a comparison of poverty definitions, see appendix B.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003–04.

Table 1.9a. Number of public elementary and secondary students, by percentage of students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, locale, and race/ethnicity: 2003–04

Locale and race/ethnicity	Total	10 percent or less	11–25 percent	26–50 percent	51–75 percent	More than 75 percent
Total[1]	**43,126,448**	**6,449,924**	**8,862,597**	**12,557,762**	**8,769,074**	**6,487,091**
White	24,987,584	5,168,192	6,896,451	8,286,731	3,724,458	911,752
Black	7,315,144	305,887	685,995	1,788,696	2,176,850	2,357,716
Hispanic	8,235,502	494,403	761,638	1,787,306	2,335,214	2,856,941
Asian/Pacific Islander	1,889,010	424,107	416,154	499,207	343,537	206,005
American Indian/Alaska Native	542,303	27,605	66,010	148,963	161,613	138,112
City[1]	12,809,572	1,095,406	1,691,884	3,162,898	3,136,954	3,722,430
White	4,637,765	677,307	1,116,813	1,578,646	875,556	389,443
Black	3,447,262	79,127	189,718	681,491	1,033,738	1,463,188
Hispanic	3,771,510	192,344	222,873	649,379	1,015,661	1,691,253
Asian/Pacific Islander	797,841	134,381	140,345	209,352	173,038	140,725
American Indian/Alaska Native	109,972	6,029	15,329	31,063	28,817	28,734
Suburban[1]	15,549,796	3,946,797	4,026,236	3,883,089	2,259,610	1,434,064
White	9,404,426	3,262,751	3,004,301	2,212,009	748,679	176,686
Black	2,230,834	176,705	363,596	704,198	568,604	417,731
Hispanic	2,897,626	224,624	394,428	712,177	791,008	775,389
Asian/Pacific Islander	851,559	251,364	218,474	204,901	124,582	52,238
American Indian/Alaska Native	89,413	12,559	23,975	29,510	16,030	7,339
Town[1]	5,627,799	336,839	1,082,265	2,202,499	1,417,805	588,391
White	3,962,573	289,969	970,464	1,752,415	813,830	135,895
Black	652,334	10,846	29,511	150,344	252,363	209,270
Hispanic	786,228	25,939	50,482	212,690	285,319	211,798
Asian/Pacific Islander	96,008	5,462	17,681	42,556	23,221	7,088
American Indian/Alaska Native	112,694	3,434	11,062	37,156	38,809	22,233
Rural[1]	9,139,281	1,070,882	2,062,212	3,309,276	1,954,705	742,206
White	6,982,820	938,165	1,804,873	2,743,661	1,286,393	209,728
Black	984,714	39,209	103,170	252,663	322,145	267,527
Hispanic	780,138	51,496	93,855	213,060	243,226	178,501
Asian/Pacific Islander	143,602	32,900	39,654	42,398	22,696	5,954
American Indian/Alaska Native	230,224	5,583	15,644	51,234	77,957	79,806
Fringe[1]	4,748,997	900,458	1,262,186	1,494,091	802,882	289,380
White	3,475,402	781,466	1,054,729	1,131,458	440,524	67,225
Black	577,770	34,998	86,142	172,342	183,788	100,500
Hispanic	504,549	45,486	73,840	135,806	142,024	107,393
Asian/Pacific Islander	116,134	31,475	34,682	31,938	15,006	3,033
American Indian/Alaska Native	63,745	3,892	9,008	19,380	20,594	10,871
Distant[1]	2,973,841	147,550	667,832	1,195,216	698,936	264,307
White	2,409,257	137,365	625,868	1,053,066	509,171	83,787
Black	290,903	3,768	16,042	66,943	95,432	108,718
Hispanic	183,116	4,213	16,388	52,397	65,025	45,093
Asian/Pacific Islander	18,769	1,213	4,058	6,701	4,674	2,123
American Indian/Alaska Native	67,301	736	4,374	14,085	23,771	24,335
Remote[1]	1,416,443	22,874	132,194	619,969	452,887	188,519
White	1,098,161	19,334	124,276	559,137	336,698	58,716
Black	116,041	443	986	13,378	42,925	58,309
Hispanic	92,473	1,797	3,627	24,857	36,177	26,015
Asian/Pacific Islander	8,699	212	914	3,759	3,016	798
American Indian/Alaska Native	99,178	955	2,262	17,769	33,592	44,600

[1] Includes other racial/ethnic groups not separately shown.

NOTE: The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program. To be eligible, a student must be from a household with an income at or below 130 percent of the poverty threshold for free lunch or between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty threshold for reduced-price lunch. Approximately 13,704 public schools did not report information on the number of students eligible for a free or reduced-price school lunch. Therefore, this information is missing for 5,227,075 public school students. For a comparison of poverty definitions, see appendix B. Race/ethnicity categories exclude persons of Hispanic origin unless otherwise specified. Rural areas are located outside any urbanized area or urban cluster. Urbanized areas are densely settled areas containing at least 50,000 people. Urban clusters are densely settled areas with a population of 2,500 to 49,999. Fringe rural areas are 5 miles or less from an urbanized area or 2.5 miles or less from an urban cluster. Distant rural areas are more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, or more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster. Remote rural areas are more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster. For more details on Census-defined areas, see http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey" 2003–04.

Table 1.9b. Percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary students, by percentage of students in school eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch, locale, and race/ethnicity: 2003–04

Locale and race/ethnicity	Total	10 percent or less	11–25 percent	26–50 percent	51–75 percent	More than 75 percent
Total[1]	**100.0**	**15.0**	**20.6**	**29.1**	**20.3**	**15.0**
White	100.0	20.7	27.6	33.2	14.9	3.6
Black	100.0	4.2	9.4	24.5	29.8	32.2
Hispanic	100.0	6.0	9.2	21.7	28.4	34.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	100.0	22.5	22.0	26.4	18.2	10.9
American Indian/Alaska Native	100.0	5.1	12.2	27.5	29.8	25.5
City[1]	100.0	8.6	13.2	24.7	24.5	29.1
White	100.0	14.6	24.1	34.0	18.9	8.4
Black	100.0	2.3	5.5	19.8	30.0	42.4
Hispanic	100.0	5.1	5.9	17.2	26.9	44.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	100.0	16.8	17.6	26.2	21.7	17.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	100.0	5.5	13.9	28.2	26.2	26.1
Suburban[1]	100.0	25.4	25.9	25.0	14.5	9.2
White	100.0	34.7	31.9	23.5	8.0	1.9
Black	100.0	7.9	16.3	31.6	25.5	18.7
Hispanic	100.0	7.8	13.6	24.6	27.3	26.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	100.0	29.5	25.7	24.1	14.6	6.1
American Indian/Alaska Native	100.0	14.0	26.8	33.0	17.9	8.2
Town[1]	100.0	6.0	19.2	39.1	25.2	10.5
White	100.0	7.3	24.5	44.2	20.5	3.4
Black	100.0	1.7	4.5	23.0	38.7	32.1
Hispanic	100.0	3.3	6.4	27.1	36.3	26.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	100.0	5.7	18.4	44.3	24.2	7.4
American Indian/Alaska Native	100.0	3.0	9.8	33.0	34.4	19.7
Rural[1]	100.0	11.7	22.6	36.2	21.4	8.1
White	100.0	13.4	25.8	39.3	18.4	3.0
Black	100.0	4.0	10.5	25.7	32.7	27.2
Hispanic	100.0	6.6	12.0	27.3	31.2	22.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	100.0	22.9	27.6	29.5	15.8	4.1
American Indian/Alaska Native	100.0	2.4	6.8	22.3	33.9	34.7
Fringe[1]	100.0	19.0	26.6	31.5	16.9	6.1
White	100.0	22.5	30.4	32.6	12.7	1.9
Black	100.0	6.1	14.9	29.8	31.8	17.4
Hispanic	100.0	9.0	14.6	26.9	28.2	21.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	100.0	27.1	29.9	27.5	12.9	2.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	100.0	6.1	14.1	30.4	32.3	17.1
Distant[1]	100.0	5.0	22.5	40.2	23.5	8.9
White	100.0	5.7	26.0	43.7	21.1	3.5
Black	100.0	1.3	5.5	23.0	32.8	37.4
Hispanic	100.0	2.3	9.0	28.6	35.5	24.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	100.0	6.5	21.6	35.7	24.9	11.3
American Indian/Alaska Native	100.0	1.1	6.5	20.9	35.3	36.2
Remote[1]	100.0	1.6	9.3	43.8	32.0	13.3
White	100.0	1.8	11.3	50.9	30.7	5.4
Black	100.0	0.4	0.9	11.5	37.0	50.3
Hispanic	100.0	1.9	3.9	26.9	39.1	28.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	100.0	2.4	10.5	43.2	34.7	9.2
American Indian/Alaska Native	100.0	1.0	2.3	17.9	33.9	45.0

[1] Includes other racial/ethnic groups not separately shown.

NOTE: The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program. To be eligible, a student must be from a household with an income at or below 130 percent of the poverty threshold for free lunch or between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty threshold for reduced-price lunch. Approximately 13,704 public schools did not report information on the number of students eligible for a free or reduced-price school lunch. Therefore, this information is missing for 5,227,075 public school students. For a comparison of poverty definitions, see appendix B. Race/ethnicity categories exclude persons of Hispanic origin unless otherwise specified. Rural areas are located outside any urbanized area or urban cluster. Urbanized areas are densely settled areas containing at least 50,000 people. Urban clusters are densely settled areas with a population of 2,500 to 49,999. Fringe rural areas are 5 miles or less from an urbanized area or 2.5 miles or less from an urban cluster. Distant rural areas are more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, or more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster. Remote rural areas are more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster. For more details on Census-defined areas, see http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey" 2003–04.

1.10. Public school students with limited English proficiency

A smaller proportion of public school students in rural areas were identified as limited English proficient (LEP) than in any other locale in 2003–04.

During the 2003–04 school year, 3.8 million public school students in the United States were identified as limited English proficient (LEP), meaning they did not use English as their primary language or had limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English (table 1.10). Those students made up 8 percent of the total student population, but among rural students, LEP students made up 2 percent of the student population—the lowest percentage of all locales.

LEP students constituted a larger percentage of the public school student population in cities (14 percent) than in suburban areas (7 percent), towns (5 percent), or rural areas (2 percent). Of all LEP students in the United States, 52 percent attended public schools in cities, while 34 percent attended public schools in suburban areas, 9 percent in towns, and 6 percent in rural areas.

Locale	Percentage of public school students who were identified as LEP
City	14
Suburban	7
Town	5
Rural	2

Of the four major U.S. regions, the West had the largest percentage of LEP students (18 percent), followed by the South (6 percent), the Northeast (5 percent), and the Midwest (4 percent). In each region besides the Midwest, rural public schools enrolled a lower percentage of LEP students than public schools in any other locale. In the Midwest, however, there was no measurable difference between the percentages of LEP students in town and rural public schools. In the Midwest, South, and West, the proportions of LEP students in town and rural public schools were higher than in the Northeast.

LEP students often do not speak English at home. In 2004, some 19 percent of children ages 5–17 spoke a language other than English at home and 5 percent of children these ages had difficulty speaking English (table A-1.10). The percentages of children in rural areas who spoke a language other than English at home (7 percent) and who had difficulty speaking English (2 percent) were lower than those for children in cities (29 and 9 percent, respectively), suburban areas (19 and 5 percent, respectively), and towns (12 and 3 percent, respectively).

Within each racial/ethnic group (except within the American Indian/Alaska Native group, where no measurable difference was observed), smaller percentages of children ages 5–17 in rural areas than in cities spoke a language other than English at home or spoke English with difficulty.

Table 1.10. Number and percentage of public school students who were identified as limited English proficient (LEP), by locale and region: 2003–04

Locale and region	Number of LEP students	Percent of students	Percentage distribution of LEP students
Total	**3,809,000**	**8.0**	**100.0**
City	1,970,000	13.9	51.7
Suburban	1,277,000	7.4	33.5
Town	332,000	5.3	8.7
Rural	230,000	2.4	6.0
Northeast	**391,000**	**4.8**	**100.0**
City	218,000	10.9	55.7
Suburban	158,000	3.9	40.5
Town	9,100 !	1.2	2.3 !
Rural	5,500 !	0.4 !	1.4 !
Midwest	**389,000**	**3.6**	**100.0**
City	183,000	6.4	47.0
Suburban	150,000 !	4.4	38.5
Town	29,000	1.5	7.4
Rural	28,000	1.1	7.1 !
South	**1,030,000**	**6.0**	**100.0**
City	510,000	10.0	49.4
Suburban	348,000	6.4	33.7
Town	86,000 !	3.9	8.3 !
Rural	89,000	2.0	8.6
West	**1,997,000**	**18.0**	**100.0**
City	1,059,000	25.1	53.0
Suburban	621,000	14.3	31.1
Town	209,000	14.9	10.5
Rural	108,000	9.7	5.4

! Interpret with caution.
NOTE: Does not include prekindergarten, postsecondary, or adult education students. Limited English proficient (LEP) refers to students whose native or dominant language is a language other than English and whose difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language is sufficient enough as to deny them the opportunity to learn successfully in an English-only classroom. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, "Public School Questionnaire," 2003–04.

1.11. Public school students with disabilities

Across locales, there was little variation in 2003–04 in the percentage of public school students identified with disabilities that were addressed through an Individual Education Program (IEP).

In 2003–04, approximately 6.1 million public school students across the United States were identified with disabilities that were addressed through an Individual Education Program (IEP) (table 1.11). This number represented about 13 percent of the total number of public school students. An IEP is required for all public school students with an identified disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA). IDEA is intended to "support states and localities in protecting the rights of, meeting the individual needs of, and improving the educational outcomes of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families" (U.S. Department of Education 2006).

Locale	Percentage of public school students with IEPs
City	13
Suburban	12
Town	14
Rural	13

Generally, there was little variation among the percentages of public school students with an IEP in the different locales (the percentages ranged from 12 to 14 percent). The percentages of such students in towns and rural areas who had an IEP (14 and 13 percent, respectively) were higher than in suburban areas (12 percent).

Table 1.11. Number and percentage of public school students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs), by locale: 2003–04

Locale	Number of public school students	Number of students with IEPs	Percent of public school students	Percentage distribution of students with IEPs
Total	**47,360,000**	**6,081,000**	**12.8**	**100.0**
City	14,196,000	1,811,000	12.8	29.8
Suburban	17,257,000	2,133,000	12.4	35.1
Town	6,324,000	875,000	13.8	14.4
Rural	9,583,000	1,262,000	13.2	20.8

NOTE: Does not include prekindergarten, postsecondary, or adult education students. An IEP is required for all students with an identified disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, "School Questionnaire," 2003–04.

1.12. Parental participation in school-related activities

In 2003, greater percentages of rural students had parents who attended a school event or served as a volunteer or on a committee than did students in cities, while a smaller percentage of rural students than suburban students had parents who attended a general school meeting.

In 2003, the National Household Education Survey (NHES) asked parents of elementary and secondary public and private school students about their participation in four school-related activities since the beginning of the school year: attending a general school meeting, attending a scheduled meeting with their child's teacher, attending a school event, and serving as a volunteer or on a committee. In all locales, over 80 percent of students had parents who reported that they attended a general meeting, and most students (between 65 and 78 percent in all locales) had parents who reported that they attended a scheduled meeting with a teacher and attended a school event (table 1.12 and figure 1.12). The least commonly reported activity (under 50 percent in all locales) was serving as a volunteer or on a committee.

In all locales, higher percentages of students in kindergarten through 5th grade had parents who reported participating in each type of school-related activity than did students in 6th through 12th grades, with one exception. No significant difference was found between the percentage of students in kindergarten through 5th grade and the percentage of students in 6th through 12th grades in towns whose parents reported attending a school event.

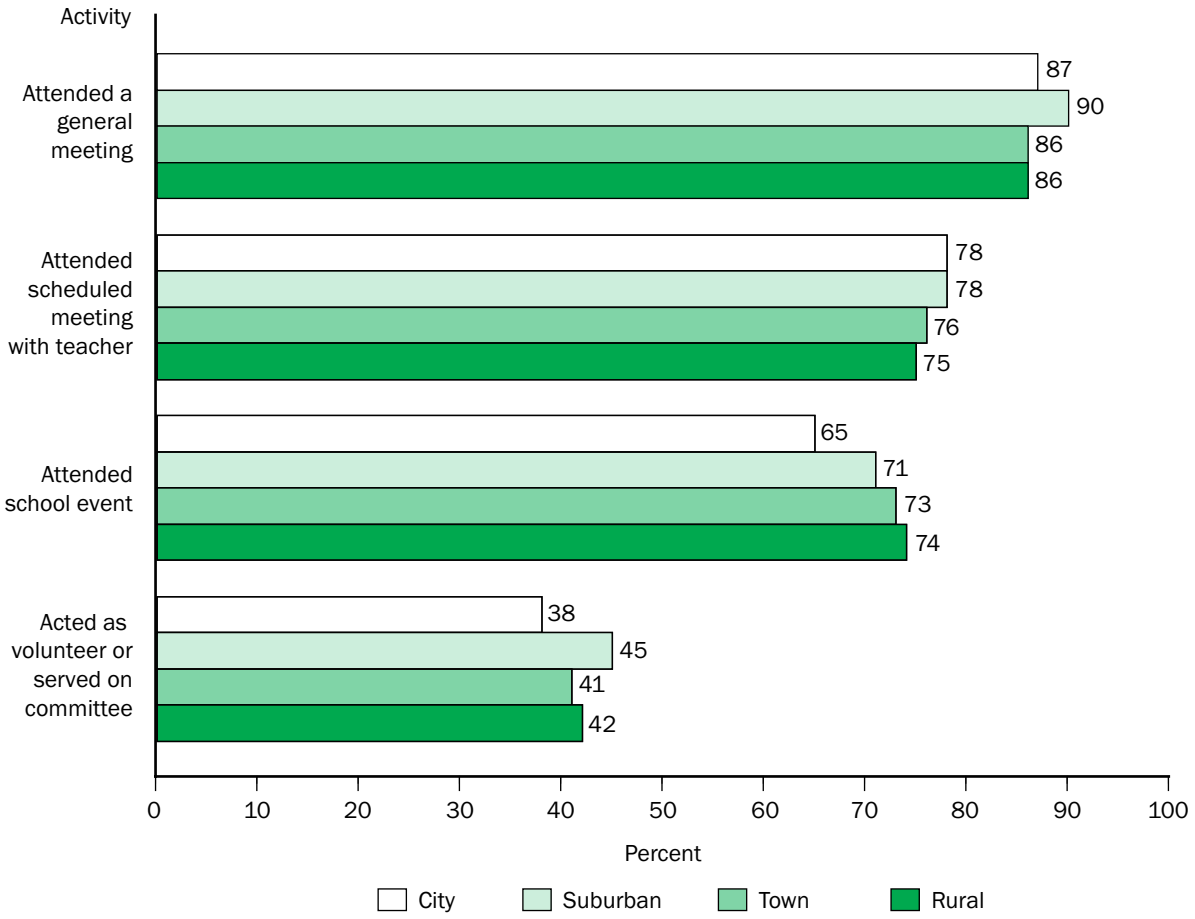
A higher percentage of students in rural areas had parents who reported serving as a volunteer or on a committee (42 percent) than did students in cities (38 percent) (table 1.12 and figure 1.12). A higher percentage of rural students also had parents who reported attending a school event (74 percent) than did students in cities (65 percent). No measurable differences were detected between rural areas and suburbs and towns in the percentages of students whose parents participated in these two activities. The percentage of rural students with parents who reported attending a general school meeting (86 percent) was less than the percentage of suburban students with parents who reported doing so (90 percent), but was not measurably different than the percentage of students in towns and cities with parents who reported doing so. No measurable differences were found between the percentages of students in each locale with parents who reported attending a scheduled meeting with a teacher.

Table 1.12. Percentage of public and private elementary and secondary students whose parents reported participation in school-related activities, by selected school activity, grade level, and locale: 2003

Grade and locale	Attended general meeting	Attended scheduled meeting with teacher	Attended school event	Acted as a volunteer or served on a committee	Indicated involvement in any of the four activities
Total	**87.7**	**77.0**	**70.0**	**41.7**	**95.1**
City	86.7	77.9	64.8	37.8	94.4
Suburban	90.0	77.5	71.3	44.8	95.5
Town	85.5	75.9	72.6	40.8	94.4
Rural	85.9	75.4	73.8	42.4	95.7
K–5	**93.3**	**91.2**	**75.4**	**52.3**	**98.3**
City	91.5	90.3	70.8	46.7	97.8
Suburban	96.0	93.3	77.3	58.9	99.1
Town	90.3	88.2	75.0	45.6	96.4
Rural	92.9	90.5	79.1	52.3	98.4
6–12	**82.7**	**64.7**	**65.3**	**32.5**	**92.4**
City	82.4	66.6	59.3	29.7	91.3
Suburban	84.7	63.6	65.9	32.2	92.3
Town	81.4	65.5	70.5	36.8	92.8
Rural	80.5	63.8	69.8	34.8	93.6

NOTE: Excludes 1,193,461 homeschooled students, or 2.3 percent of all K–12 students.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), "Parent and Family Involvement in Education" survey, 2003.

Figure 1.12. Percentage of public and private elementary and secondary students whose parents reported participation in school-related activities, by selected school activity and locale: 2003



NOTE: Excludes 1,193,461 homeschooled students, or 2.3 percent of all K-12 students.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), "Parent and Family Involvement in Education" survey, 2003.

1.13. Family outings

In 2003, a greater proportion of students in rural areas had parents who reported taking their children to an athletic event outside of school than students in cities and suburbs. A smaller percentage of students in rural areas and towns than students in cities and suburbs had parents who reported taking their children to a library or visiting a zoo or aquarium.

In 2003, the National Household Education Survey (NHES) asked parents of elementary and secondary public and private school students about their participation in certain activities outside of school and home. Nationally, 44 percent of elementary and secondary school students had parents who reported visiting a library with their children in the past month; 38 percent had parents who reported attending an athletic or sporting event; 35 percent had parents who reported going to a play, concert, or live show; 20 percent had parents who reported visiting an art gallery, museum, or historical site; and 12 percent had parents who reported visiting a zoo or aquarium (table 1.13). In rural areas, 42 percent of students had parents who reported attending an athletic event with their children; 38 percent had parents who reported visiting a library; 34 percent had parents who reported going to a play, concert, or live show; 15 percent had parents who reported visiting an art gallery, museum, or historical site; and 8 percent had parents who reported visiting a zoo or aquarium (figure 1.13).

A larger percentage of rural students (42 percent) than suburban students (38 percent) and city students (34 percent) had parents who reported attending athletic events with their children. There were no measurable differences between the percentage of students in rural areas (34 percent) with parents who reported taking their children to a play, concert, or live show and the percentages of students in cities (35 percent), suburbs (36 percent), and towns (34 percent) with parents who reported attending these events. No measurable differences existed between the percentages of students in rural areas and students in towns whose parents reported participating in any of the selected activities.

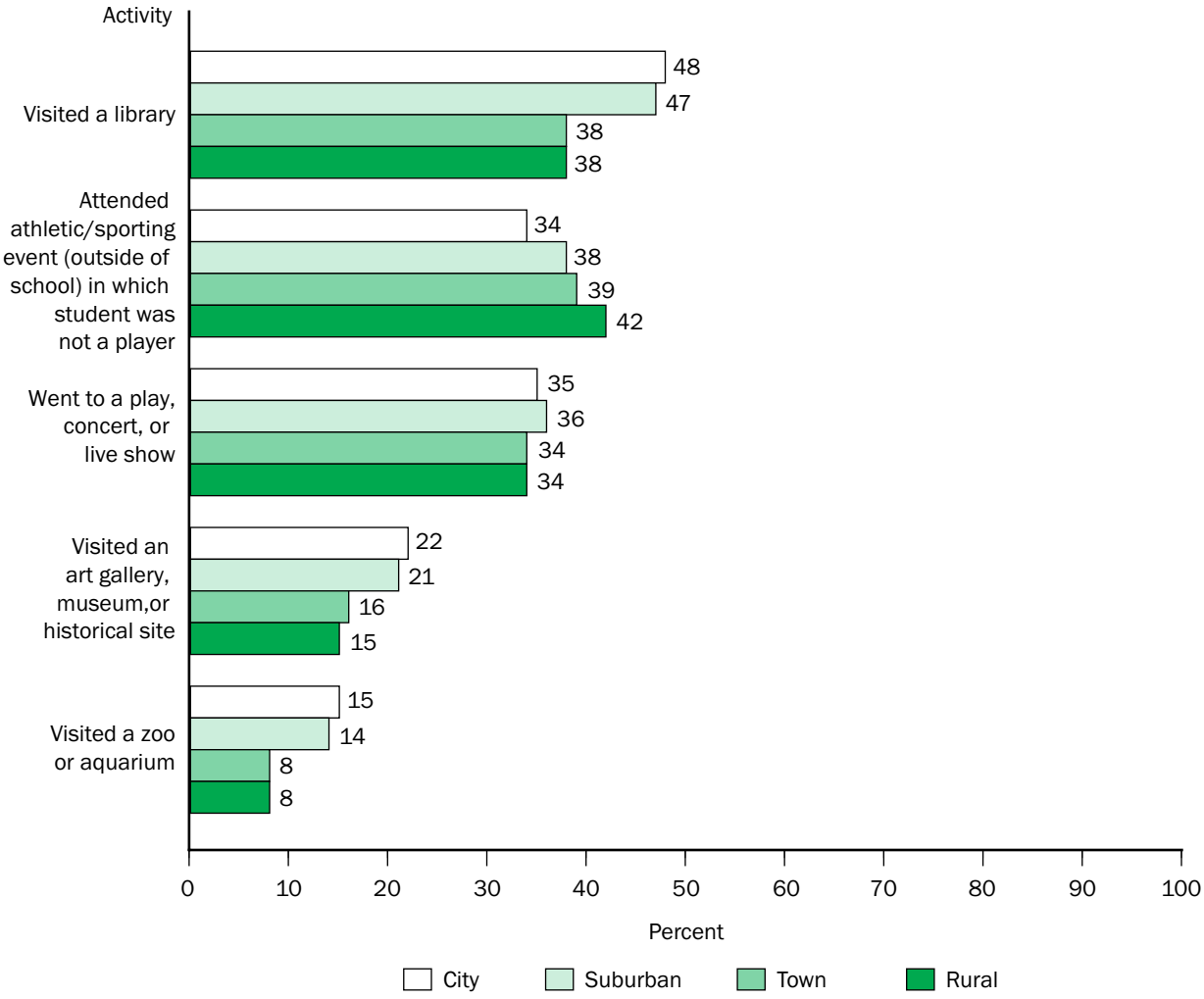
A smaller percentage of students in rural areas and towns had parents who reported visiting a library with their children (38 percent in both areas) than students in cities (48 percent) and suburban areas (47 percent). A lower percentage of students in rural areas (15 percent) also had parents who reported having visited an art gallery, museum, or historical site with their children than students in suburbs (21 percent) or cities (22 percent). Similarly, a lower percentage of students in rural areas (8 percent) had parents who reported having visited a zoo or aquarium with their children, compared with students in suburbs (14 percent) and cities (15 percent).

Table 1.13. Percentage of public and private elementary and secondary students whose parents reported outings with their children in the past month, by selected activity and locale: 2003

Locale	Visited a library	Attended an athletic/ sporting event (outside of school) in which child was not a player	Went to a play, concert, or live show	Visited an art gallery, museum, or historical site	Visited a zoo or aquarium
Total	**44.3**	**37.5**	**35.0**	**19.7**	**12.2**
City	47.8	33.8	35.4	22.4	15.4
Suburban	47.0	37.8	35.6	21.5	13.6
Town	37.9	39.0	34.3	15.6	8.0
Rural	37.8	41.8	33.9	15.0	7.5

NOTE: Includes students that are homeschooled.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), "Parent and Family Involvement in Education" survey, 2003.

Figure 1.13. Percentage of public and private elementary and secondary students whose parents reported outings with their child in the past month, by selected activity and locale: 2003



NOTE: Includes students that are homeschooled.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), "Parent and Family Involvement in Education" survey, 2003.

1.14. Parents' educational attainment

In 2004, a larger percentage of school-age children in rural areas had a mother or father who completed high school as their highest level of educational attainment than their peers in cities and suburbs. The percentage of school-age children with a mother or father with a bachelor's degree as their highest attainment was lower in rural areas than in suburban areas.

In 2004, some 11 percent of school-age children (ages 6–18) in rural areas had mothers who did not have a high school diploma (or its equivalent), 33 percent had mothers whose highest educational attainment was a high school diploma (or its equivalent), 35 percent had mothers whose highest attainment was some college or an associate's degree, and 21 percent had mothers who had completed a bachelor's degree or higher (table 1.14 and figure 1.14).

The percentage of school-age children whose mothers did not complete high school was smaller in rural areas (11 percent) than in cities (21 percent) or towns (16 percent). The percentage of these children whose mothers had a bachelor's degree as their highest educational attainment was smaller in rural areas (15 percent) than in suburban areas (22 percent), higher in rural areas than in towns (14 percent), and similar in rural areas and cities.

In contrast, the percentage of school-age children whose mothers' highest educational attainment was high school completion was larger in rural areas (33 percent) than in suburban areas (25 percent) and cities (26 percent). This same pattern was observed for children whose mothers' highest attainment was some college or an associate's degree.

Across locales, the percentage of school-age children whose fathers did not complete high school was lower in rural areas (13 percent) than in cities (20 percent) and towns (15 percent), while the percentage in rural areas was higher than in suburban areas (11 percent). A higher percentage of rural children had fathers who completed a high school diploma (or equivalent) as their highest level of attainment (36 percent) than children in suburban areas (24 percent), cities (24 percent), and towns (31 percent).

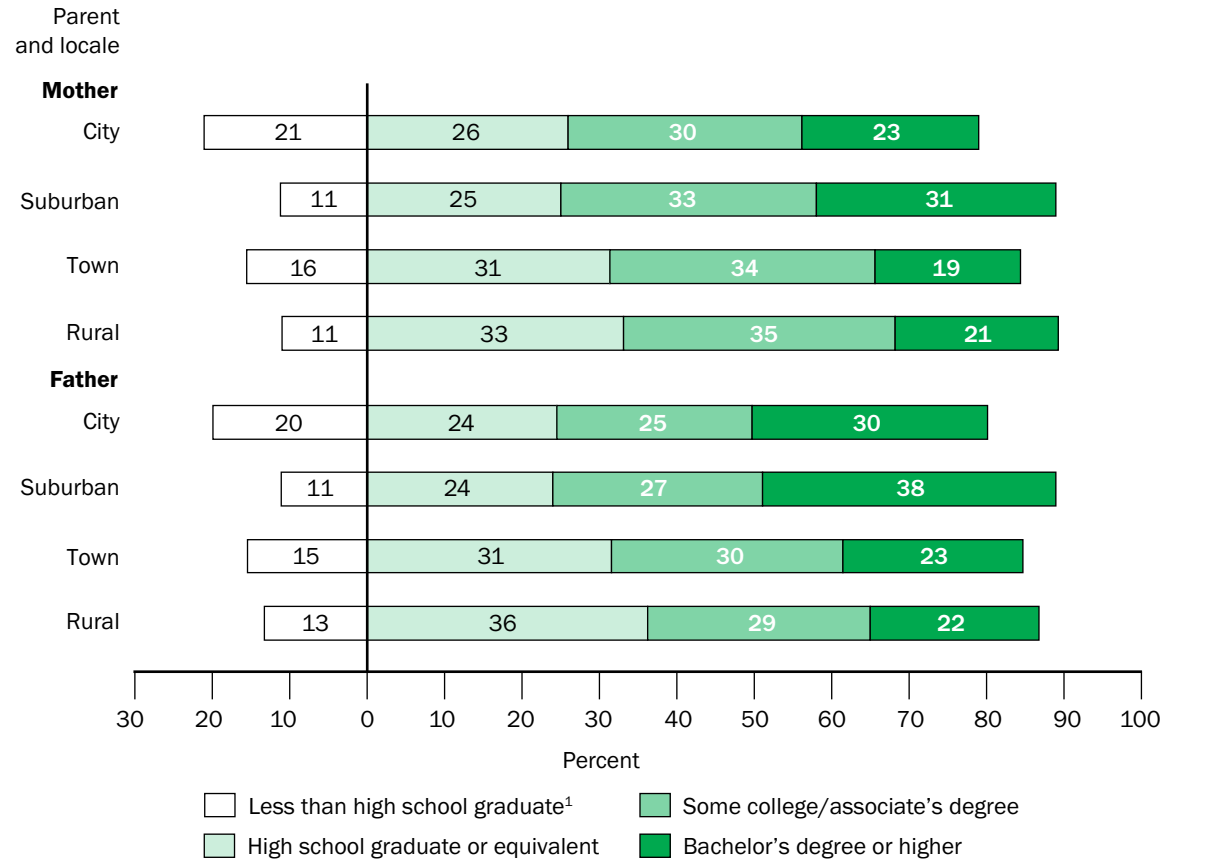
The percentage of school-age children whose fathers had completed some college or an associate's degree as their highest attainment was greater in rural areas (29 percent) than in cities (25 percent) and suburban areas (27 percent). In contrast, a lower percentage of rural children had fathers who completed a bachelor's degree (14 percent) than suburban children (23 percent) and children in cities (18 percent). No differences were detected between children in rural areas and towns in the percentages of children whose fathers had completed these levels of educational attainment as their highest attainment.

Table 1.14. Percentage distribution of children ages 6 to 18, by parents' highest level of education and locale: 2004

			High school diploma or equivalent or higher					
						Bachelor's degree or higher		
Parent and locale	Total	Less than high school diploma or equivalent[1]	Total	High school diploma or equivalent	Some college/ associate's degree	Total	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Mother								
Total	**100.0**	**14.5**	**85.5**	**27.6**	**32.8**	**25.1**	**17.6**	**7.5**
City	100.0	21.1	78.9	25.9	30.2	22.8	15.6	7.2
Suburban	100.0	11.2	88.8	24.9	33.0	30.9	21.7	9.2
Town	100.0	15.6	84.4	31.3	34.2	18.8	13.6	5.2
Rural	100.0	11.0	89.0	33.0	35.1	21.0	15.0	6.0
Father								
Total	**100.0**	**14.4**	**85.6**	**27.8**	**27.3**	**30.6**	**18.7**	**11.9**
City	100.0	20.0	80.0	24.4	25.2	30.4	17.7	12.7
Suburban	100.0	11.1	88.9	23.9	27.1	37.8	22.8	15.0
Town	100.0	15.5	84.5	31.5	29.8	23.3	15.0	8.3
Rural	100.0	13.3	86.7	36.1	28.8	21.8	14.3	7.4

[1] Includes parents currently enrolled in high school.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2004, previously unpublished data.

Figure 1.14. Percentage distribution of children ages 6 to 18, by parents' highest level of education and locale: 2004



[1] Includes parents currently enrolled in high school.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2004, previously unpublished data.

1.15. Parental expectations of educational attainment

While a larger percentage of high school students in all locales in 2003 had parents who expected their child's highest educational attainment to be a bachelor's degree than any other level of attainment, a greater proportion of rural students than students in cities and suburbs had parents who expected their child's highest attainment to be less than a bachelor's degree.

In 2003, the National Household Education Survey (NHES) asked parents of elementary and secondary public and private school students about their educational expectations for their children. Nationally, a larger percentage of students had parents who reported that they expected their child's highest level of educational attainment to be a bachelor's degree (39 percent) than the percentage of students whose parents reported that they expected their child's highest level of educational attainment to be a graduate or professional degree (30 percent), completion of 2 or more years of college (16 percent), a high school diploma (8 percent), and attendance at a vocational or technical school after high school (7 percent) (table 1.15). Less than one percent of students in all locales had parents who expected their child to receive less than a high school diploma. In rural areas, the ranking of parental expectations mirrored the national rates: the largest percentage of students had parents who expected their child to complete a bachelor's degree (37 percent), followed by a graduate or professional degree (21 percent), 2 years or more of college (20 percent), a high school diploma (11 percent), and attendance at a vocational or technical school (10 percent).

There were no measurable differences between the percentage of rural students with parents expecting their child's highest attainment to be a bachelor's degree (37 percent) and the percentages of students with parents having similar expectations in cities (36 percent) and towns (39 percent); however, the percentage of rural students having parents with such expectations was lower than the percentage of suburban students (37 vs. 41 percent) (figure 1.15). A smaller percentage of rural students also had parents who reported expecting their child to earn a graduate or professional degree as their highest level of attainment (21 percent) than students in cities or suburban areas (both 34 percent). As with all other levels of parental educational expectations, no measurable differences were found in the percentages of students in rural areas and towns with parents who expected their child to attain a graduate or professional degree.

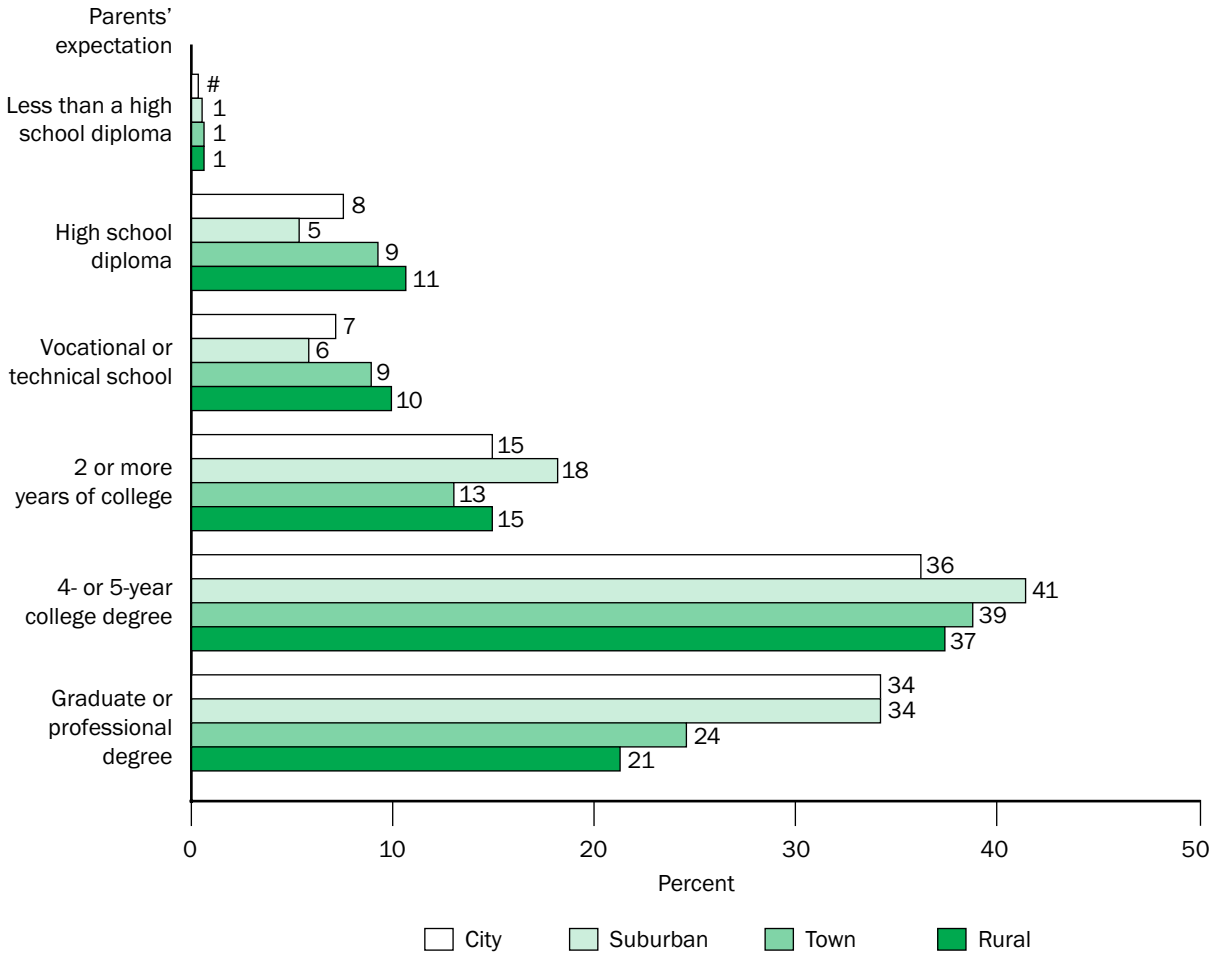
A greater percentage of students in rural areas had parents who reported expecting their child to complete high school as their highest level of educational attainment (11 percent) than students in cities (8 percent) or suburban areas (5 percent). This pattern was also true among students with parents who reported expecting their child's highest attainment to be 2 or more years of college (20 percent for rural vs. 15 and 13 percent for cities and suburban areas, respectively) or attendance at a vocational or technical school (10 percent vs. 7 and 6 percent, respectively).

Table 1.15. Percentage distribution of public and private elementary and secondary students, by parents' expectations for child's highest educational attainment and locale: 2003

Locale	Less than a high school diploma	High school diploma	Vocational or technical school	2 or more years of college	4- or 5-year college degree	Graduate or professional degree
Total	**0.5**	**7.5**	**7.4**	**15.7**	**38.6**	**30.3**
City	0.3 !	7.5	7.1	14.9	36.1	34.1
Suburban	0.5 !	5.3	5.8	13.0	41.3	34.1
Town	0.6 !	9.2	8.9	18.1	38.7	24.5
Rural	0.6 !	10.6	9.9	20.4	37.3	21.2

! Interpret data with caution.
NOTE: Includes students who are homeschooled.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), "Parent and Family Involvement in Education" survey, 2003.

Figure 1.15. Percentage distribution of public and private elementary and secondary students, by parents' expectations for child's highest educational attainment and locale: 2003



Rounds to zero.
NOTE: Includes students who are homeschooled.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), "Parent and Family Involvement in Education" survey, 2003.

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