

The Rapid Growth and Changing Complexion of Suburban Public Schools

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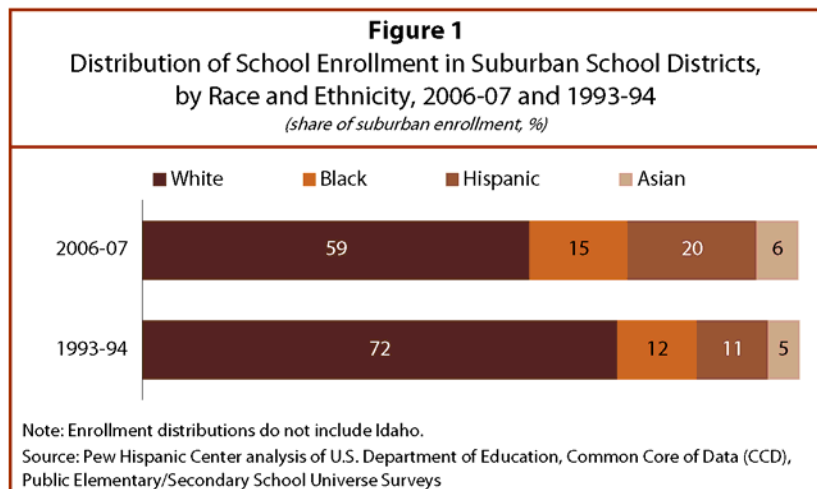
Executive Summary

The student population of America’s suburban public schools has shot up by 3.4 million in the past decade and a half, and virtually all of this increase (99%) has been due to the enrollment of new Latino, black and Asian students, according to a Pew Hispanic Center analysis of public school data. Once a largely white enclave, suburban school districts in 2006-07 educated a student population that was 41% non-white, up from 28% in 1993-94 and not much different from the 44% non-white share of the nation’s overall public school student population. At the same time, suburban school districts have been gaining “market share”; they educated 38% of the nation’s public school students in 2006-07, up from 35% in 1993-94.

The most potent driver of all these trends has been the near doubling of the Latino share of suburban school district enrollment—to 20% in 2006-07, from 11% in 1993-94. Over this same time period, the black share grew to 15% from 12% and the Asian share rose slightly, to 6% from 5%. Overall, white students made up just 59% of the enrollment in suburban public schools in 2006-07, down from 72% in 1993-94.

The movement of minority students into suburban schools has had the overall effect of slightly reducing levels of ethnic and racial segregation throughout the nation’s 93,430 public schools. However, trends vary for different minority groups, community types, school districts and, especially, individual schools. For example, despite the sharp rise in the racial and ethnic diversity of suburban district enrollments overall, there has been only a modest increase in the racial and ethnic diversity of student populations at the level of the individual suburban school.

These findings are based on an analysis of the most recent available enrollment figures for the nation’s public schools. The National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education collects this information and also classifies school districts as being suburban, city or town/rural districts.



School-Level Diversity in the Suburbs

In 2006-07, the typical white suburban student attended a school whose student body was 75% white; in 1993-94, this same figure had been 83%. So at a time when the white share of student enrollment in suburban school districts was falling by 13 percentage points (from 72% in 1993-94 to 59% in 2006-07), the exposure of the typical white suburban student to minority students in his or her own school was growing by a little more than half that much—or 8 percentage points.

Meantime, the typical black suburban school student in 2006-07 attended a school that was 34% white, down from 43% white in 1993-94. The typical Hispanic suburban student attended a school that was 31% white, down from 40% white in 1993-94. And the typical Asian suburban school student attended a school that was 48% white, down from 55% white in 1993-94. Thus, suburban minority students' exposure to white students has declined since 1993-94, reflecting the overall lower proportion of white students in suburban district enrollments.

Looking at the exposure of minority suburban students to their own racial or ethnic group rather than to whites, a different pattern emerges for Hispanics than for blacks or Asians.

Suburban Hispanic students are increasingly attending schools whose student bodies have a high percentage of Hispanics. In 2006-07, the typical suburban Hispanic student attended a school that was 49% Latino, up from 42% Latino in 1993-94. By contrast, there was little change during this period in the levels of racial isolation of black and Asian suburban students. In 2006-07, the typical suburban black student attended a school that was 44% black, up only slightly from 43% black in 1993-94, and the typical suburban Asian student attended a school that was 23% Asian, down slightly from 24% Asian in 1993-94.

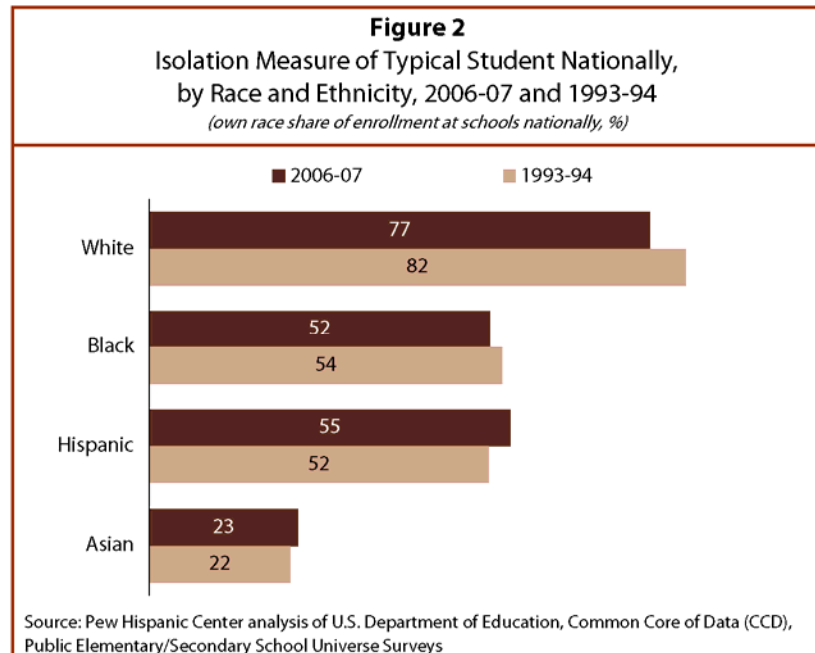
The National Perspective

The movement of minority students into suburban school districts since 1993-94 has had an impact on national trends in minority student isolation. Nationally, the typical black student in 2006-07 attended a school that was 52% black, down from 54% black in 1993-94. This modest decline is partly attributable to the fact that a greater share of black students are now educated in suburban schools, where they tend to be less isolated than in city schools. Nationally, the typical Hispanic student in 2006-07 attended a school that was 55% Hispanic, up from 52% Hispanic in 1993-94. The increase in Hispanic isolation nationally would have been even greater in the absence of the shift of Hispanic students out of city school districts and into suburban areas. Nationally, the typical Asian student in 2006-07 attended a school that was 23% Asian, up from 22% in 1993-94.

When it comes to increases in public school student enrollment, the suburbs are where most of the action has been over the past decade and a half. Since 1993-94, two-thirds of the 5.1 million increase in public school enrollment nationwide has occurred in suburban school districts. In 1993-94, city school districts educated a majority of the nation's minority students. That is no longer the case. City school districts educated

47% of the nation's Hispanic students in 2006-07, down from 54% in 1993-94. Similarly, city school districts educated 48% of the nation's black students in 2006-07, down from 54% in 1993-94. In addition, a declining share of the nation's Asian students are educated in city school districts. The movement out of city schools has nearly exclusively been suburban school districts' gain because the share of the nation's minority students educated in town/rural school districts has been stagnant or has declined.

Overall, suburban schools are much closer in racial and ethnic makeup to the nation's public school population as a whole than are city schools, which tend to be disproportionately minority, or rural and town schools, which tend to be disproportionately white. The typical minority student in a city school has fewer white classmates than does a peer who attends a suburban school. In 2006-07, the enrollment of a city school attended by the typical black or Hispanic student was about 20% white and 80% minority. Most of the minority students in these schools were students of the same race/ethnicity as themselves. The typical city black student attended a school with 60% black enrollment, and the typical city Latino student went to a school with 63% Hispanic enrollment. These levels of racial/ethnic isolation are significantly above those of their peers educated in suburban school districts. Minority students in town and rural school districts tend to have more exposure to white students than do minority students in suburban school districts. The typical town/rural black student attended a school with 47% white enrollment, and the typical town/rural Hispanic student attended a 43% white school. However, minority students in town/rural school districts tend not to be less isolated than their suburban peers. The typical town/rural black student



attended a school with 44% black enrollment, and the typical town/rural Latino student went to a school with 47% Hispanic enrollment. Asian students in town/rural school districts are less isolated than their suburban counterparts. The typical town/rural Asian student attended a school with 5% Asian enrollment, compared with the 23% Asian proportion of suburban schools attended by Asian students.

The Dissimilarity Index: Another Measure of School Segregation

This report examines the changing levels of exposure that minority students have to themselves and to white students, and the changing levels of exposure that white students have to themselves and to minority students. Such isolation/exposure indexes are a commonly used research tool, but they are not the only way researchers measure school segregation. Another widely used measure is the dissimilarity index, which gauges the evenness of the spread of students across the schools in a school district. Formally, it is the proportion of a student group that would have to change schools for all schools in the district to have the same proportion of the group as the district-wide average.

To see if we would find patterns consistent with those of our isolation/exposure analysis, we tabulated the dissimilarity index for all suburban districts and used it to examine the degree of segregation within a particular school district (not a larger geographic area such as a metropolitan area).

We found that trends in the suburban school district dissimilarity index are fairly similar to the trends in the isolation measure reported above. For black and Asian students, there was a small decline in suburban school district segregation from 1993-94 to 2006-07, according to the dissimilarity measure. For Hispanic students, suburban school segregation has increased since 1993-94. These trends are based on the average of the dissimilarity index across suburban school districts. There are, of course, individual suburban districts whose change in the dissimilarity index does not mimic the overall trend.

For each minority group, the level of segregation tends to be greater in city school districts than in suburban school districts, according to the dissimilarity index.

Across all school districts in America (city and suburban as well as town/rural), the dissimilarity index indicates that district-level segregation has declined since 1993-94 for black, Hispanic and Asian students. Part of this decline, again, is due to the change in the geographic locus of minority education since 1993-94. Suburban school districts tend to be less segregated than city school districts, and an increasing share of each minority student group is being educated in suburban school districts.

In addition to examining the trend over all suburban school districts, this report examined changes since 1993-94 in individual suburban school districts. The analysis examined the fastest-growing suburban school districts in terms of minority enrollment. On the basis of the dissimilarity index, the suburban school districts with the highest levels of racial/ethnic segregation are also noted.

About this Report

This report analyzes the most recent enrollment information available for the nation's 93,430 public schools. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education compiles the information. The school district figures are derived by summing the reported enrollment of the district's public schools. A school is considered city, suburban or town/rural if NCES classifies its school district as in a city, suburban or town/rural locale. All schools in a district are assigned the same geographic locale. The NCES designates a school district as being in either a city, suburban or town/rural locale on the basis of Census Bureau information on population size, urbanized areas and rural/urban definitions. In the 2006-07 school year, there were 3,259 suburban school districts.

A Note on Terminology

The terms "Latino" and "Hispanic" are used interchangeably in this report. The Hispanic, white, black, Asian and American Indian student populations are mutually exclusive, and students of "white," "black," "Asian" and "American Indian" racial origin refer to non-Hispanics in those racial categories. The term "minority students" refers to all non-white students and comprises black, Hispanic, Asian and American Indian students.

Following Census Bureau terminology, "Northeast" refers to school districts in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. "Midwest" refers to school districts in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. "South" refers to school districts in Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. "West" refers to school districts in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington.

The term "school district" is used generically and refers to any public local education agency that enrolls students. This includes regular school districts as well as administrative and service agencies and state- and federally operated agencies.

About the Author

Richard Fry is a senior research associate at the Pew Hispanic Center. He has recognized expertise in the analysis of U.S. education and demographic data sets and has published more than 35 articles and monographs on the characteristics of

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1. The Growth and Diversification of Suburban School Enrollments

Much of the recent growth in the nation's public school enrollment has occurred in suburban school districts. Since 1993-94, public school enrollment has grown by 5.1 million students (Table 1). Suburban school districts have educated an additional 3.4 million students, so suburban schools have accommodated two-thirds of the enrollment increase.

School District	2006-07		1993-94		Increase
	Student Enrollment	Share (%)	Student Enrollment	Share (%)	
City	14,808,370	31	13,800,267	32	1,008,103
Suburban	18,297,674	38	14,882,399	35	3,415,275
Town/rural	15,056,190	31	14,331,800	33	724,390
Total	48,162,234	100	43,014,466	100	5,147,768

Notes: Based on 49 states and the District of Columbia. Idaho did not report students by race/ethnicity in the 1993-94 school year. The National Center for Education Statistics designates the locale of school districts. The 1993-94 "town/rural" figures also include about 400,000 students whose school district locale could not be identified.

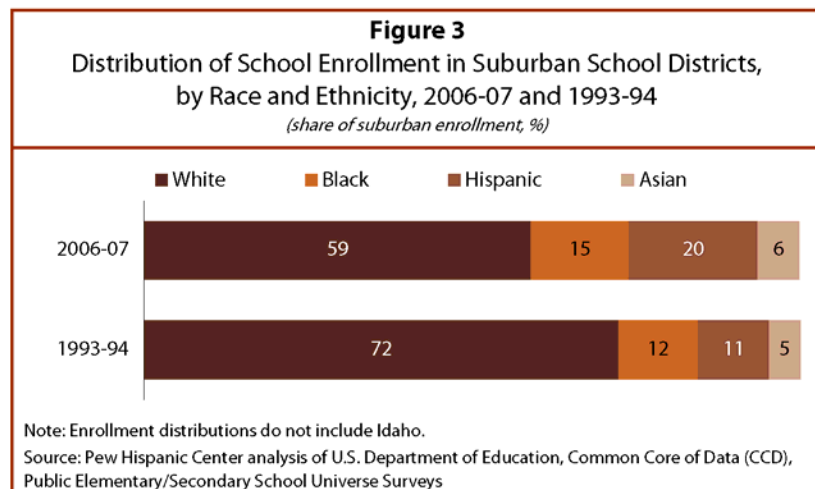
Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys

The growth in suburban education has had the effect of reducing the share of public school students enrolled in either a city school district or a town and rural district. Suburban schools educated 38% of the nation's students in 2006-07, an increase from 35% in 1993-94. City school districts educated 31% of the nation's students, down from 32% in 1993-94. Town/rural school districts also have lost share since 1993-94. The growth of the suburban share of enrollments reflects at least two documented trends among the wider U.S. population. First, among people living in metropolitan areas, a growing share reside in the suburbs ([Frey, 2001](#)). Second, since 1990, a growing share of the nation's population resides in metropolitan areas (Fischer and Tienda, 2006). The latter trend is consistent with the decline in the proportion of students educated in town and rural school districts.

The growth in enrollment at the nation's 3,259 suburban school districts is almost entirely due to minority students. Minority enrollment in suburban school districts increased by 3.4 million students since 1993-94 (an 82% increase). Suburban white enrollment levels have remain unchanged compared with 1993-94. White enrollment in both city school districts and town and rural districts has declined since 1993-94 (Appendix B Table B1).

The minority enrollment growth has markedly changed the racial/ethnic makeup of suburban school districts considered as a whole. The white share of the suburban student population has declined from 72% in 1993-94 to 59% in 2006-07 (Figure 3). All the major minority racial/ethnic groups have increased their suburban representation. The Asian share of suburban enrollment increased a percentage point since 1993-94. Black students constitute 15% of suburban enrollments, up from 12% in 1993-94. Much of the growth in suburban enrollments is due to increased Hispanic enrollment. Suburban Hispanic enrollment increased by 2 million students since 1993-94 and Hispanics were 20% of suburban enrollment in 2006-07, an increase from 11% in 1993-94.

The fact that whites are a declining fraction of suburban students likely reflects more than just the larger demographic changes that have occurred in the population. As Table 2 shows, the white share of the school-age population fell by at most 11 percentage points since 1993 (from 69% to 58%).¹ Among the nation's entire public school students, enrollment of white students fell by at most 10 percentage points (from 66% to 56%). In suburbia, though, the white share of public school enrollments fell by 13 percentage points. So racial/ethnic diversification has been particularly acute in suburban school districts.



¹ The population figures reported in Table 2 are based on Census Bureau surveys. In January 2003, the Census Bureau altered its question on racial self-identification to permit respondents to report more than one race. No attempt is made in Table 2 to “bridge” the old and new racial classifications, and hence the 1993 population figures are not entirely comparable to the 2007 figures. It is likely that some of the children who reported themselves as “white” in 1993 were more than one race and would not have selected “white alone” if the survey had permitted more options. Hence the 11 percentage point fall in the share reporting as “white” in Table 2 is likely an upper-bound estimate of the decline in children reporting as “white alone.”

Table 2
Composition of Public School Enrollments and U.S. Populations, by Race and Ethnicity, 2007 and 1993

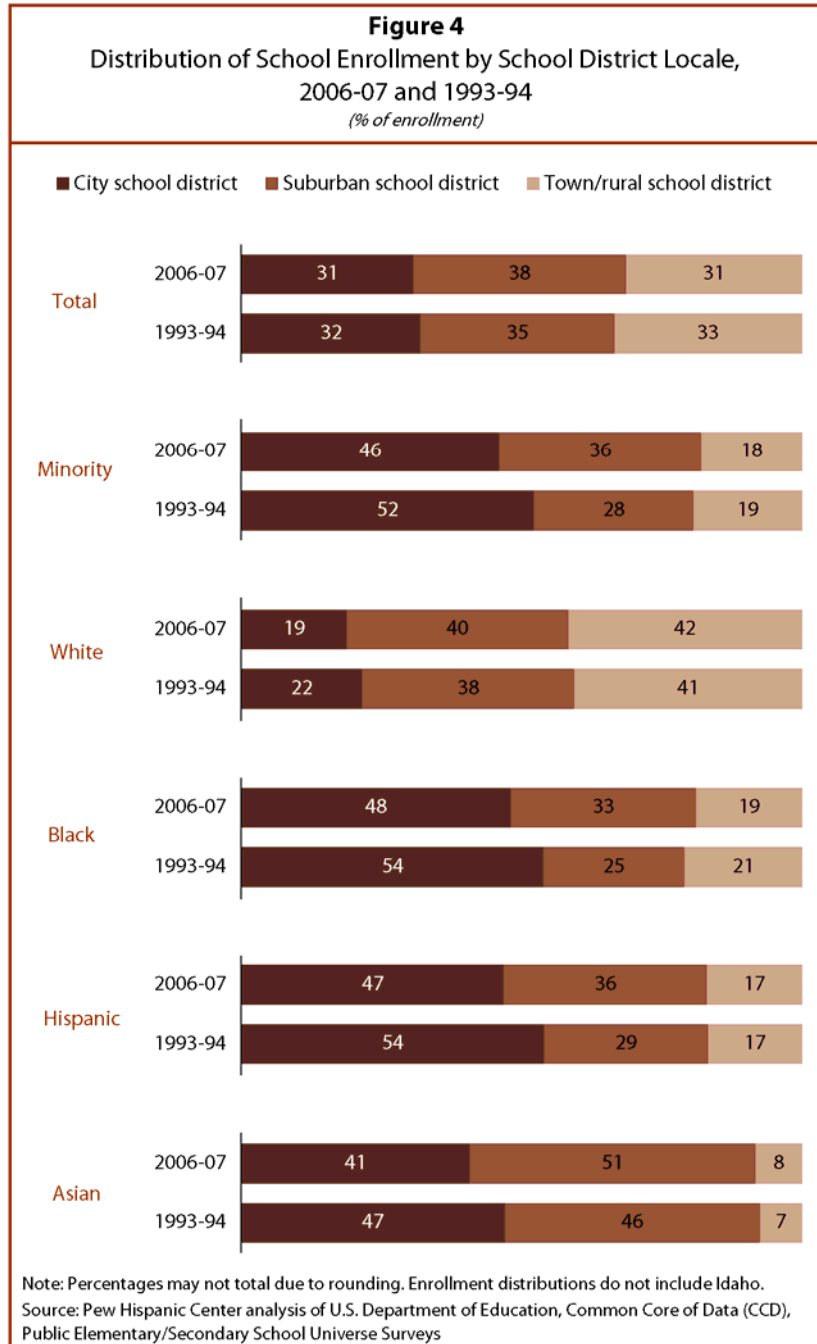
	PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN SUBURBAN SCHOOLS		PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT		SCHOOL AGE POPULATION		U.S. POPULATION	
	2006-07	1993-94	2006-07	1993-94	2007	1993	2007	1993
	White	59	72	56	66	58	69	66
Black	15	12	17	17	15	16	12	12
Hispanic	20	11	21	13	19	11	15	9
Asian	6	5	5	4	4	3	5	3
American Indian	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Non-Hispanic Other	--	--	--	--	3	0	1	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Percentages may not total due to rounding. Population distributions include Idaho. Enrollment distributions do not include Idaho.
Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of March 1993 and 2007 Current Population Surveys for the population counts and U.S. Department of Education, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys for public school enrollments.

Note as well that suburban school districts have lost some of their distinctiveness. In 1993-94, whites made up two-thirds of the nation’s public school population. In the suburban districts, though, whites accounted for 72% of enrollments. Increasingly, suburban districts resemble the nation as whites comprise 56% of enrollments nationally. Suburban districts are only slightly more white, with whites comprising 59% of suburban enrollments.

2. Suburban Schools in Minority Education

Suburban schools have become increasingly important educators of the nation’s minority student populations. In 1993-94, city school districts educated a majority of black and Hispanic students (Figure 4). Although the number of minority students enrolled in city school districts has increased, by 2006-07 city school districts educated less than half of minority student populations. In 2006-07, suburban schools educated 51% of the nation’s Asian students, 36% of the Hispanic students and 33% of the black students. For each minority student population, the share of students educated in suburban schools has significantly increased.



3. Minority Students and Suburban School Districts

The analysis above examined student enrollments in the entire suburban sector of public education. However, every individual suburban school district experienced minority student growth slightly differently. The average suburban school district experienced large growth in its minority student enrollment. Among the 2,281 suburban school districts that were in operation in both 1993-94 and 2006-07 and that had at least 1,000 students in 1993-94, minority student enrollment of the average district grew by 150% (Figure 5). White enrollment in the average suburban district did not grow over the 13-year period. The typical suburban district's Hispanic enrollment nearly quadrupled. Its black student population more than tripled, and its Asian enrollment more than doubled. These very high minority student population increases partly reflect the extremely high growth among some unusual suburban districts. But half of the suburban districts (with at least 1,000 students in 1993-94) experienced minority student growth of at least 93%, or a near doubling of their minority student enrollment.

As a result of the rapid growth in minority students and flat growth among white students, 287 of the nation's 2,808 suburban school districts have become majority-minority school districts since 1993-94.

Table 3 reports the 25 fastest-growing suburban school districts in terms of black enrollment. In Tables 3 to 5, growth is measured in terms of percentage growth in the student population. Very large growth rates are obtained because most of the school districts had very small minority student enrollments in 1993-94 (though they had at least 1,000 students *in toto* in 1993-94). Some suburban school districts experienced larger gains of minority students in absolute numbers, but because they had larger numbers in 1993-94, their percentage gains do not rank particularly high.

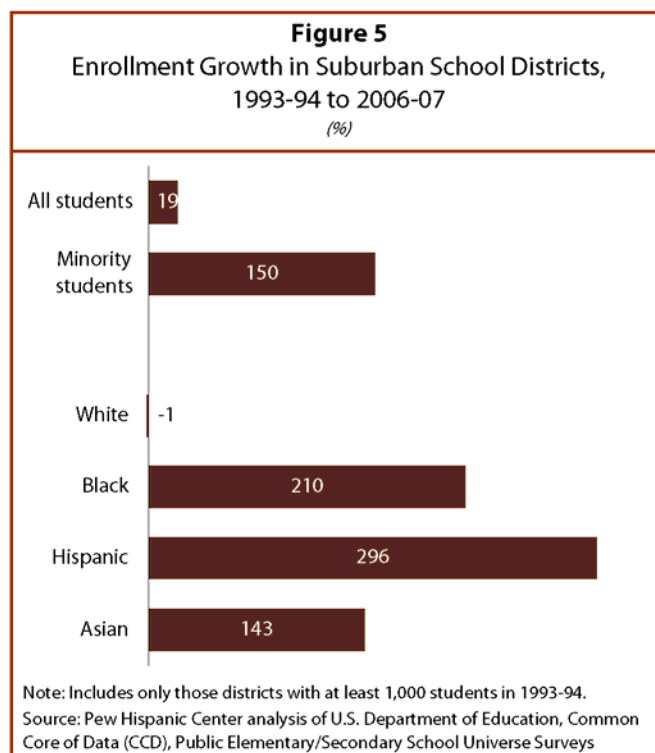


Table 3
25 Suburban Education Agencies with Largest Black Enrollment Growth Rate, 1993-94 to 2006-07

Suburban Education Agency	Metro Area	Rank	BLACK STUDENT ENROLLMENT	
			1993-94	2006-07
Minooka CCSD 201	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	1	2	151
Brownsburg Community Sch Corp	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	2	6	423
Frisco ISD	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	3	39	2,633
Canal Winchester Local	Columbus, OH	4	8	517
Berwyn North SD 98	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	5	5	302
Allen Park Public Schools	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	6	1	53
Altoona	Eau Claire, WI	7	1	53
Avon Community School Corp	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	8	12	585
Bendle Public Schools	Flint, MI	9	3	131
Southbridge	Worcester, MA	10	1	43
Berwyn South SD 100	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	11	2	84
South Lake Schools	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	12	11	458
Wylie ISD	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	13	34	1,413
Greenwood Community Sch Corp	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	14	2	79
Shakopee Public School District	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	15	8	316
Grain Valley R-V	Kansas City, MO-KS	16	2	72
Standard Elementary	Bakersfield, CA	17	1	34
Fleetwood Area SD	Reading, PA	18	2	68
Brentwood Union Elementary	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	19	16	542
Ridgeland SD 122	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	20	3	96
Gloucester City	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE	21	2	63
Clawson City School District	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	22	4	124
Evergreen Park Esd 124	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	23	13	393
Madison Public Schools (Oakland)	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	24	14	416
Oak Lawn-Hometown SD 123	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	25	3	88

Note: Rank among the 2,281 suburban local education agencies that had at least 1,000 students in 1993-94.
Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys

The vast majority (18) of the fastest-growing suburban districts in terms of black enrollment are in the Midwest. Almost a quarter of them are in Chicago's suburbs. Districts in suburban Detroit and suburban Indianapolis have also experienced rapid growth in black enrollment.

The fastest-growing Hispanic (Table 4) and Asian (Table 5) suburban school districts are less concentrated in the Midwest and include some Southern school districts. Several school districts in suburban Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville experienced hyper-growth in their Hispanic student populations since 1993-94. Among Asian suburban students, numerous school districts in the Dallas-Fort Worth and Atlanta metro areas are among the 25 fastest-growing suburban school districts.

Table 4
25 Suburban Education Agencies with Largest Hispanic Enrollment Growth Rate, 1993-94 to 2006-07

Suburban Education Agency	Metro Area	Rank	HISPANIC STUDENT ENROLLMENT	
			1993-94	2006-07
Minooka CCSD 201	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	1	2	448
Loudon County School District	Knoxville, TN	2	3	342
Shakopee Public School District	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	3	11	712
Decatur City	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	4	1	38
Smithfield	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	5	1	37
Canal Winchester Local	Columbus, OH	6	1	36
Riverside SD	Scranton—Wilkes-Barre, PA	7	2	72
Lenoir City School District	Knoxville, TN	8	9	323
Avon Community School Corp	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	9	10	348
Francis Howell R-III	St. Louis, MO-IL	10	12	401
Brownsburg Community Sch Corp	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	11	5	166
Shelby County	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	12	50	1,651
Salem City Pblc Schs	Roanoke, VA	13	2	65
Tarrant City	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	14	2	57
Desoto Co School Dist	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	15	50	1,334
Zionsville Community Schools	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	16	4	99
Rotterdam Mohonasen Central School District	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	17	2	49
Noblesville Schools	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	18	10	240
Gresham-Barlow SD 10j	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	19	86	2,046
Henderson County	Evansville, IN-KY	20	4	94
South-Western City	Columbus, OH	21	73	1,709
North Fond du Lac	Fond du Lac, WI	22	3	69
Rutherford County School Dist	Nashville-Davidson—Murfreesboro—Franklin, TN	23	108	2,441
Westfield-Washington Schools	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	24	13	289
Mount Healthy City	Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	25	3	66

Note: Rank among the 2,281 suburban local education agencies that had at least 1,000 students in 1993-94.
Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys

Table 5
25 Suburban Education Agencies with Largest Asian Enrollment Growth Rate, 1993-94 to 2006-07

Suburban Education Agency	Metro Area	Rank	ASIAN STUDENT ENROLLMENT	
			1993-94	2006-07
Frisco ISD	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	1	10	2,388
Wylie ISD	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	2	12	622
Rensselaer City School District	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	3	1	45
De Soto	Kansas City, MO-KS	4	3	133
Hamtramck Public Schools	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	5	26	863
Cherokee County	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	6	16	520
Minooka CCSD 201	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	7	1	31
Mason City	Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	8	35	979
Clark-Pleasant Com School Corp	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	9	9	250
Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	10	13	336
Spartanburg 05	Spartanburg, SC	11	8	204
West Clark Community Schools	Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	12	1	25
Buford City	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	13	2	45
Carroll ISD	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	14	20	430
Grain Valley R-V	Kansas City, MO-KS	15	1	21
Sherwood SD 88j	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	16	8	166
West De Pere	Green Bay, WI	17	2	41
Scarborough School Department	Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME	18	4	80
Shakopee Public School District	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	19	33	610
Carrollton School District	Saginaw-Saginaw Township North, MI	20	7	129
Brentwood Union Elementary	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	21	38	697
Allen ISD	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	22	86	1,517
Marion School District	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	23	4	70
Avondale Elementary District	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	24	6	100
Newton County	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	25	11	172

Note: Rank among the 2,281 suburban local education agencies that had at least 1,000 students in 1993-94.
Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys

Minooka elementary school district in suburban Grundy County, Illinois, is an example of an atypical district in that it has experienced very rapid growth in all student populations. It was among the fastest-growing 25 suburban school districts among black, Hispanic and Asian students. These very high growth rates partly result from its having educated very few minority students in 1993-94.

Its white student population also more than doubled. Nonetheless, since 1993-94 its minority students have increased from less than 1% of student enrollment to more than 20%.

Table 6
Minooka CCSD 201 Student Enrollment, 2006-07 and 1993-94

	2006-07	1993-94	Increase (%)
White	2,529	1,047	142
Minority	635	5	12,600
Black	151	2	7,450
Hispanic	448	2	22,300
Asian	31	1	3,000
American Indian	5	0	--
Total	3,164	1,052	201

Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys

4. Racial and Ethnic Interaction in Suburban Schools

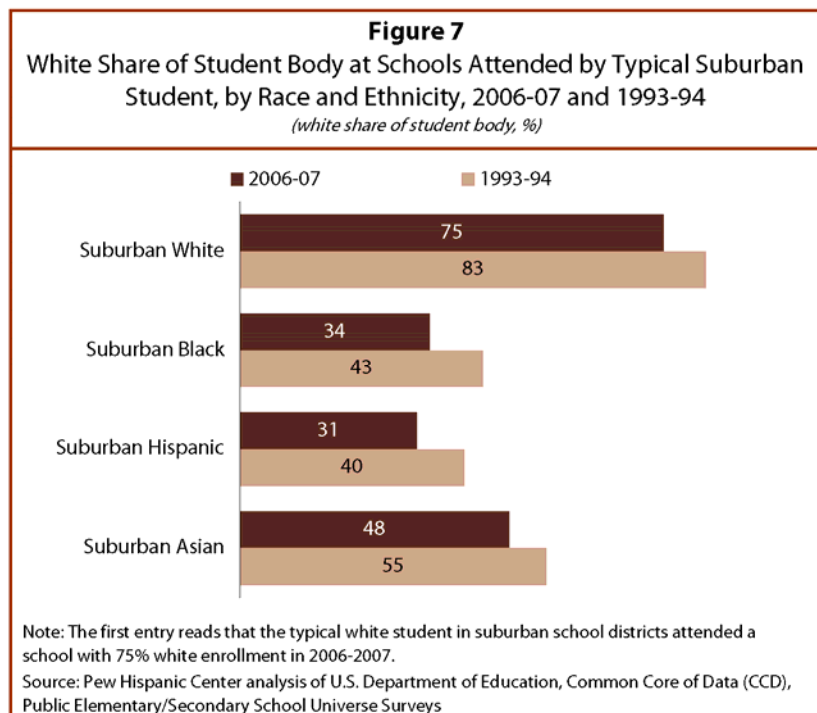
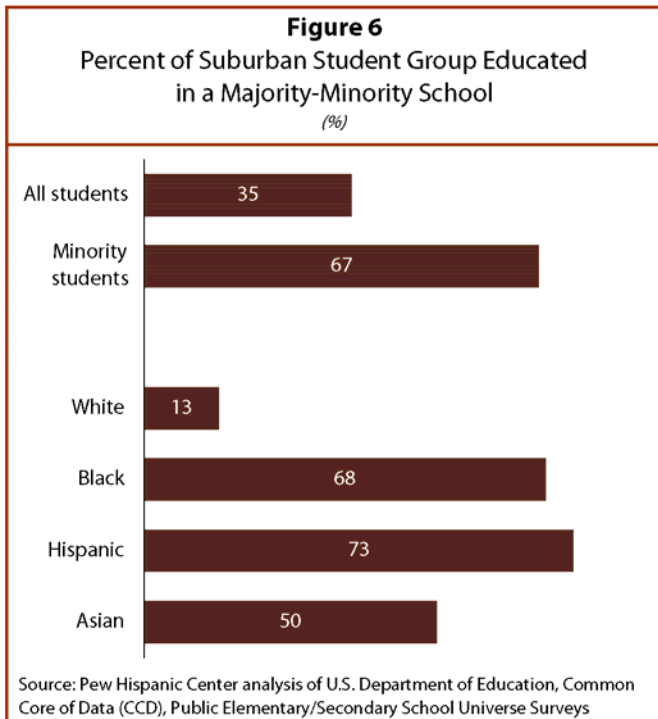
Though there has been a marked diversification of many of the nation's suburban school districts, this does not necessarily mean that suburban students are experiencing greater racial/ethnic interaction at the level of the individual school. Such interaction depends on which schools (and classrooms) suburban students of differing race/ethnicities attend. If suburban schools are highly segregated, with whites attending one set of schools and minority students a different set of schools, then minority student growth will not result in suburban white students attending schools with greater proportions of minority students and will not increase the exposure of white students to non-white students. To assess the degree to which suburban students of differing race/ethnicities share the same schools, we can examine the share of students who attend suburban majority-minority schools. Minority students in suburban school districts tend to be highly concentrated in majority-minority schools. In 2006-07, more than two-thirds of suburban minority students attended a majority-minority school (Figure 6). Majority-minority schools educated 68% of suburban black students, 73% of suburban Hispanic students and 50% of suburban Asian students. Suburban majority-minority schools educated 13% of suburban white students. Thus the bulk of suburban white students attend schools that educate relatively few minority students.

The Import of School Racial/Ethnic Diversity

The extent of interracial and interethnic contact in American schools has been a landmark educational and social policy issue for decades. Broadly, at least three reasons have been advanced for why enhanced interracial and interethnic contact might be beneficial (Clotfelter, 2004). First, schools differ in their levels of resources and the quality of their teachers. They vary in the size of their student bodies, pupil-to-teacher ratios, per-pupil spending and curriculum offerings, as well as the training, turnover and experience of their instructional staff. When students of different racial/ethnic background do not attend the same schools, the potential exists that they also may not attend the same type of schools, i.e., schools of similar quality and level of resources. Though enhanced interracial interaction is not the only remedy to address differences in school quality, racial differences in school quality (at least at the school level, though not necessarily at the classroom level due to academic tracking policies) cannot exist if schools are racially balanced. Second, aside from differential access to school quality, the racial composition of schools may matter in and of itself. That is, there may exist "peer effects," or minority students' learning may benefit from having high-achieving peers. This is not asserting that minority students per se are low-achieving students because of their race/ethnicity. Rather it acknowledges that minority status is correlated with lower measured achievement (perhaps because of lower levels of parental education, lower academic expectations and other factors), and high test-scoring peers (who, on average, are white) may directly enhance student learning. In short, classmates may matter. Some evidence suggests that racial imbalances in peers have significant effects on minority student achievement (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2006; [Harris, 2006](#)). Third, in regard to the general principle of the desirability of racial/ethnic mixing in public schools, public opinion surveys reveal that adults by large margins support having America's racial/ethnic mix represented in the student bodies of public schools ([Elam, Rose and Gallup, 1996](#)).

Booming minority student growth in suburban school districts has increased the exposure of suburban white students to minority students. In 2006-07, the typical suburban white student attended a school that had 75% white enrollment. In 1993-94, the typical suburban white student attended a school whose white enrollment was 83% (Figure 7). Since 1993-94, suburban white students have become less exposed to white students and more exposed to minority students. Note, however, that the presence of minority students in the suburban schools attended by whites (25%) is much lower than the overall representation of minority students in suburban school districts (41%). And while the overall presence of minority students in suburban school districts has grown by 13 percentage points (from 28% to 41%), the exposure of the typical suburban white student to minority students has grown by only 8 percentage points (from 17% to 25%). In short, suburban school district racial/ethnic diversification has not led to a commensurate increase in the exposure of suburban white students to minority students.

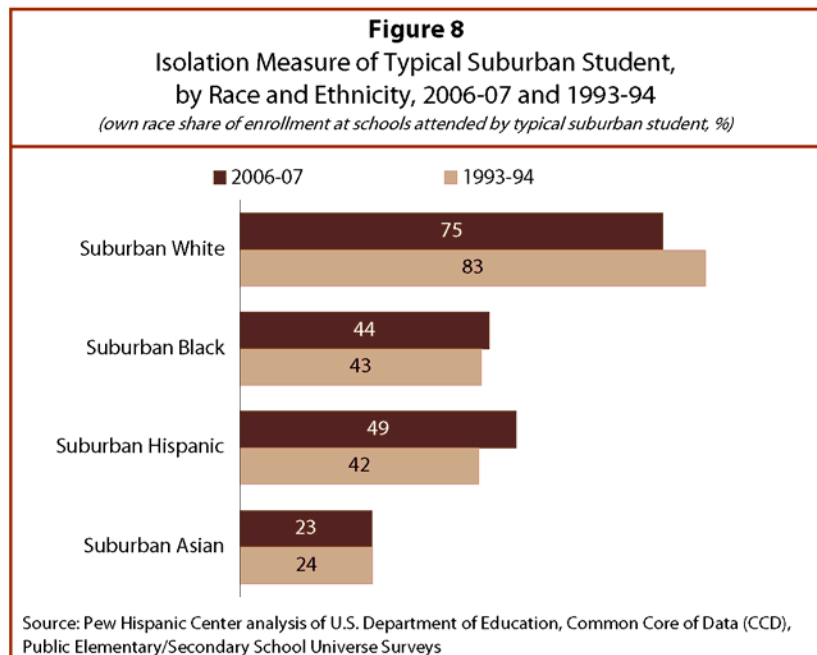
Though suburban white students' exposure to minority students has not increased to the extent that the change in the aggregate racial/ethnic distribution might suggest, suburban white students' exposure to minorities has increased more than that of the typical white student nationally. Town and rural school districts are the largest educators of white students (Figure 4),



and white students in those districts have less exposure to minority students (attending 85% white schools) than do white students in suburban schools (attending 75% white schools). Reflecting the role of town and rural schools, the typical white student nationally attended a school that was 77% white in 2006-07, down from 82% white in 1993-94 (Appendix B Table B2). So suburban white students' exposure to minority students has increased more than the typical white students' exposure to minority students nationally.

Though minority students have less exposure to white students in 2006-07 than in 1993-94 (Figure 7) does not necessarily mean that they are increasingly isolated in suburban schools. That is, suburban minorities need not necessarily be attending schools with students of the same race/ethnicity as themselves. Aggregate enrollment figures indicate substantial growth of suburban Hispanic students and, at the school level, suburban students of any racial/ethnic identity increasingly tend to have Hispanic classmates. Suburban black student isolation has only slightly increased. In 2006-07, the typical suburban black student attended a school that was 44% black, up from 43% black in 1993-94 (Figure 8). Suburban Asian students have experienced a small decline in isolation. In 2006-07, the typical suburban Asian student attended a school that was 23% Asian, down from 24% Asian in 1993-94. Suburban Hispanic student isolation has significantly increased. In 2006-07, the typical suburban Hispanic student attended a school that was 49% Hispanic, an increase from 42% Hispanic in 1993-94.

For black and Hispanic students, suburban schooling increasingly resembles their schooling nationally. In 1993-94, suburban black and Hispanic students were less isolated in suburban schools than they were nationally. In 1993-94, the typical suburban black student attended a school with 43% black enrollment. Across the nation, the typical black student attended a school that was 54% black (reflecting the preponderance of black students in city school districts in 1993-94). As suburban school districts have gained market share among black students, black isolation has diminished nationally, from the typical

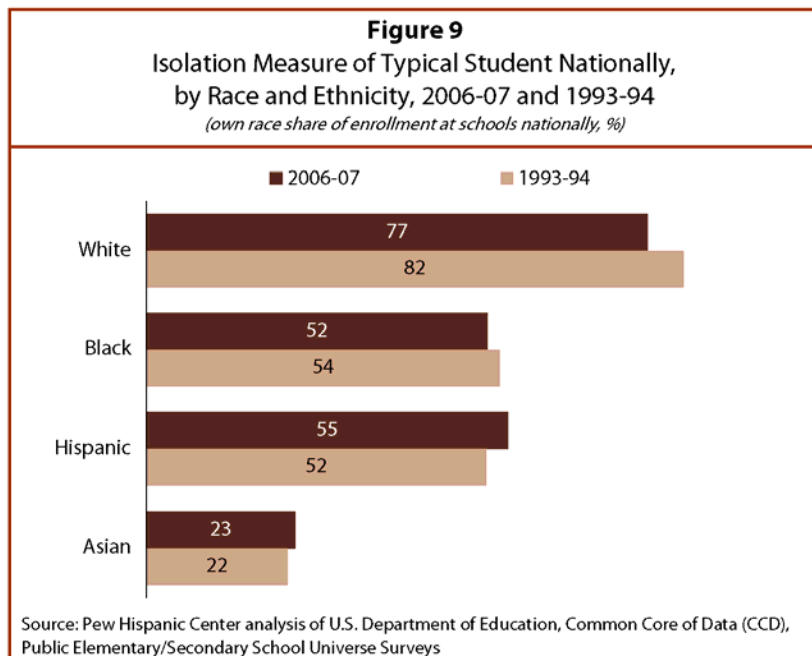


black student nationally attending a 54% black school in 1993-94 to a 52% black school in 2006-07 (Figure 9).² Because suburban black isolation has slightly increased, suburban schooling for black students has lost some of its distinctiveness in terms of lesser isolation relative to public schools elsewhere. Hispanic students have become more isolated nationally, but the increase in suburban Hispanic isolation exceeded the national increase, so that, again, the difference in Hispanic isolation between suburban schools and schools nationally has diminished.

One of the most commonly used measures of school segregation is the dissimilarity index, which measures the evenness of the spread of students across schools in a school district. It ranges from 0 (complete integration) to 1 (complete segregation). Specifically, the index is the fraction of students in a group that would have to change schools for all schools in a district to

have the same percent of that group as the school district overall. The index is usually calculated for areas that have at least a minimum population threshold. Table 7 reports an average of the dissimilarity index across school districts. Each school district needed to have at least 1,000 students of the particular group to be included in the average.

An important facet of this analysis is that it is only capturing the evenness of students within a school district. School segregation is often measured at the metropolitan level ([Logan, Stowell and Oakley, 2002](#); Reardon and Yun, 2001). A metropolitan area often encompasses numerous counties and many school districts. Segregation across an entire metropolitan area can be decomposed into segregation between districts and within districts. This analysis measures segregation only within school districts.



² Recent trends in black student isolation in public schools are sensitive to the measure used. The share of black students in nearly all-minority public schools has increased since 1993-94 ([Fry, 2007](#)). And black students increasingly attend schools with a greater proportion of minority students. But, nationally, they do not increasingly attend schools with a greater proportion of black students.

On the basis of the dissimilarity index, black suburban school segregation appears to have diminished since 1993-94. The suburban black value of the dissimilarity index declined from 0.37 in 1993-94 to 0.35 in 2006-07. Suburban Hispanic students appear to have become less evenly dispersed across schools in their districts. The suburban Hispanic value of the dissimilarity index increased from 0.28 in 1993-94 to 0.30 in 2006-07. Suburban Asian school segregation declined from 0.26 in 1993-94 to 0.25 in 2006-07, according to the dissimilarity index.

Although the isolation measure and dissimilarity index are capturing different dimensions of school segregation,³ they generally present a consistent trend for understanding recent changes in the composition of suburban schooling. Suburban Hispanic students are increasingly less evenly spread across the schools of many suburban school districts, and suburban Hispanic students increasingly have less potential contact with non-Hispanic students. For Asian and black suburban students, there has not been a large change in their exposure to students of other race/ethnicities or in their dispersion across suburban school districts. Like all suburban students, Asian and black students have less opportunity to interact with white students.

At the district level, black students tend to be the most segregated minority group (according to the dissimilarity index), and the school districts with the highest measured levels of segregation tend to be in the South and Midwest (Table 8). Districts in Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Atlanta and Baltimore display high levels of black segregation in 2006-07. The 25 most segregated black school districts in the country also include numerous districts in the Chicago area and two in St. Louis. The most segregated Hispanic school districts (Table 9) tend to be in the West and Midwest. Six of the most Hispanic segregated districts are in the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana metropolitan area, and two are in the San Diego area. Five districts in the Chicago area demonstrate high levels of Hispanic segregation. Virtually all of the 25 most segregated Asian suburban school districts (Table 10)

Table 7
School Segregation Index by School District Locale, by Race and Ethnicity, 2006-07 and 1993-94

School District	2006-07			1993-94		
	Black Students	Hispanic Students	Asian Students	Black Students	Hispanic Students	Asian Students
City	0.44	0.38	0.33	0.47	0.41	0.36
Suburban	0.35	0.30	0.25	0.37	0.28	0.26
Town/rural	0.27	0.21	0.24	0.27	0.18	0.19

Note: The dissimilarity index (D) is a basic measure of the spatial evenness of a student population in a school district. It is the percentage of students of one group who would have to attend a different school to get a perfectly even proportion of students of that group across all schools in a school district. It ranges from 0 (racial/ethnic balance) to 1 (complete segregation). The dissimilarity index is computed for each school district. This table shows the weighted average of the index for school districts of each locale, where the weight is the number of students of the group in the school district. Only school districts that had at least 1,000 students of the group are included in the weighted average.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys

³ See [Iceland, Weinberg and Steinmetz \(2002\)](#) for a recent discussion of alternative methods of measuring segregation.

are in the South and West. Numerous school districts in the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana area and other metro areas in California report higher levels of Asian dissimilarity. In the South, Asian students are unevenly spread among schools in suburban school districts of Atlanta, Houston and Washington, D.C.

Table 8
25 Suburban Education Agencies with Highest Black Segregation, 2006-07
(among local education agencies with at least 1,000 black students in 2006-07)

Suburban Education Agency	Metro Area	Rank	Dissimilarity Index
Maywood-Melrose Park-Broadview 89	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	1	0.79
East Allen County Schools	Fort Wayne, IN	2	0.77
Dekalb County	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	3	0.74
East St Louis SD 189	St. Louis, MO-IL	4	0.72
Fulton County	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	5	0.70
West Memphis School District	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	6	0.66
Dade	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	7	0.66
Bremen Chsd 228	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	8	0.65
Sewanhaka Central High School District	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	9	0.64
Ouachita Parish School Board	Monroe, LA	10	0.62
Henrico Co Pblc Schs	Richmond, VA	11	0.61
W Harvey-Dixmoor PSD 147	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	12	0.55
Charleston 01	Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville, SC	13	0.55
Lafourche Parish School Board	Houma-Bayou Cane-Thibodaux, LA	14	0.54
Harford County Public Schools	Baltimore-Towson, MD	15	0.54
Baltimore County Public Schools	Baltimore-Towson, MD	16	0.53
Hazel Park City School District	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	17	0.53
Prairie-Hills Esd 144	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	18	0.52
Bellwood SD 88	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	19	0.51
Broward	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	20	0.51
Palm Beach	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	21	0.51
Kanawha County Schools	Charleston, WV	22	0.50
Hazelwood	St. Louis, MO-IL	23	0.50
Knox County School District	Knoxville, TN	24	0.50
Prince George's County Public Schools	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	25	0.49

Note: Rank among the 449 suburban local education agencies that had at least 1,000 black students in 2006-07.
Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys

Table 9
25 Suburban Education Agencies with Highest Hispanic Segregation, 2006-07
(among local education agencies with at least 1,000 Hispanic students in 2006-07)

Suburban Education Agency	Metro Area	Rank	Dissimilarity Index
Maywood-Melrose Park-Broadview 89	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	1	0.74
Dekalb County	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	2	0.67
Lennox Elementary	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	3	0.59
Washingtonville Central School District	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY	4	0.57
Prince George's County Public Schools	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	5	0.57
Dade	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	6	0.54
Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	7	0.54
Newhall Elementary	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	8	0.53
Cusd 300	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	9	0.53
Berkeley SD 87	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	10	0.52
Bellwood SD 88	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	11	0.51
Desert Sands Unified	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	12	0.50
Rowland Unified	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	13	0.49
J S Morton HSD 201	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	14	0.49
Hacienda La Puente Unified	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	15	0.48
Escondido Union Elementary	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	16	0.47
Boulder Valley School District No. Re2	Boulder, CO	17	0.47
Lewisville ISD	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	18	0.46
Montebello Unified	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	19	0.46
Fulton County	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	20	0.46
Progreso ISD	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	21	0.46
South-Western City	Columbus, OH	22	0.46
Olathe	Kansas City, MO-KS	23	0.45
Encinitas Union Elementary	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	24	0.45
Red Clay Consolidated School District	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	25	0.45

Note: Rank among the 514 suburban local education agencies that had at least 1,000 Hispanic students in 2006-07.
Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys

Table 10
25 Suburban Education Agencies with Highest Asian Segregation, 2006-07
(among local education agencies with at least 1,000 Asian students in 2006-07)

Suburban Education Agency	Metro Area	Rank	Dissimilarity Index
Montebello Unified	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	1	0.67
Dekalb County	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	2	0.56
Pasadena ISD	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	3	0.55
Fulton County	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	4	0.53
Hacienda La Puente Unified	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	5	0.52
Rowland Unified	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	6	0.50
Fort Bend ISD	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	7	0.42
Chino Valley Unified	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	8	0.42
Knox County School District	Knoxville, TN	9	0.41
Lodi Unified	Stockton, CA	10	0.40
Chula Vista Elementary	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	11	0.40
North Clackamas SD 12	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	12	0.39
Dade	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	13	0.38
Henrico Co Pblc Schs	Richmond, VA	14	0.36
Prince George's County Public Schools	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	15	0.36
Jefferson Union High	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	16	0.35
Marysville Joint Unified	Yuba City, CA	17	0.35
Baltimore County Public Schools	Baltimore-Towson, MD	18	0.35
Garden Grove Unified	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	19	0.35
El Monte Union High	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	20	0.34
Round Rock ISD	Austin-Round Rock, TX	21	0.34
Greenville 01	Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, SC	22	0.34
Jersey City	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	23	0.34
Frederick County Public Schools	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	24	0.33
Garland ISD	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	25	0.33

Note: Rank among the 214 suburban local education agencies that had at least 1,000 Asian students in 2006-07.
Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys

The Prince George's County public school system outside Washington, D.C., is a large suburban school district that has relatively high measured levels of segregation of each of its black, Hispanic and Asian student populations.

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Appendix A: Data Source

The enrollment figures are based on the National Center for Education Statistics Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey files ([NCES, 2008a](#)). This is an annual census of the nation's public schools conducted by the U.S. Department of Education in cooperation with the state education agencies. All public schools (regular, vocational, special education and others) are included in this analysis as long as they reported enrollments by race and ethnicity. In school year 1993-94, Idaho did not report public school enrollments by race/ethnicity. To conduct a pristine comparison of enrollments over time, schools in Idaho are omitted from the analysis. School year 1993-94 was utilized as the starting point for the analysis because prior to that even more states did not report enrollments by race/ethnicity.

A public school is classified as city/suburban/town-rural on the basis of the locale of its local education agency in 2006-07. All public schools are operated by a local education agency, and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) classifies local education agencies as serving city, suburban, town or rural locales ([NCES, 2008b](#)). The analysis uses the new locale codes in the 2006-07 Public Local Education Agency Survey file (the annual census of local education agencies also compiled by the NCES). NCES uses Census Bureau data on population density and proximity to urbanized areas to assign the locale of schools and local education agencies.

Public schools in 1993-94 were geographically classified by their 2006-07 local education agency locale. This is straightforward for most of the 83,000 public schools that were in operation in 1993-94. However, about 1,800 of those schools were run by local education agencies that ceased to exist by 2006-07. The 2006-07 locale of these schools and students could not be determined. These students were included in the 1993-94 counts, and they were allocated to the town/rural category. About 400,000 students (representing less than 1% of public school enrollment in 49 states and the District of Columbia) were in schools whose 2006-07 locale could not be determined.

Appendix B: Additional Tables

	Total	White	Minority	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian
School district: 2006-07							
City	14,808,370	5,117,077	9,691,293	3,983,425	4,648,508	927,964	131,396
Suburban	18,297,674	10,727,187	7,570,487	2,727,757	3,576,844	1,161,786	104,100
Town/rural	15,056,190	11,282,352	3,773,838	1,561,525	1,677,320	185,775	349,218
Total	48,162,234	27,126,616	21,035,618	8,272,707	9,902,672	2,275,525	584,714
Share in cities (%)	31	19	46	48	47	41	22
Share in suburbs (%)	38	40	36	33	36	51	18
School district: 1993-94							
City	13,800,267	6,152,785	7,647,482	3,866,044	2,951,145	728,003	102,290
Suburban	14,882,399	10,712,940	4,169,459	1,798,065	1,599,273	703,459	68,662
Town/rural	14,331,800	11,517,984	2,813,816	1,496,033	910,633	114,159	292,991
Total	43,014,466	28,383,709	14,630,757	7,160,142	5,461,051	1,545,621	463,943
Share in cities (%)	32	22	52	54	54	47	22
Share in suburbs (%)	35	38	28	25	29	46	15

Notes: Based on 49 states and the District of Columbia. Idaho did not report students by race/ethnicity in the 1993-94 school year. The National Center for Education Statistics designates the locale of school districts. The 1993-94 "town/rural" figures include about 400,000 students whose school district locale could not be identified.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys

	WHITE SHARE OF ENROLLMENT AT SCHOOLS ATTENDED BY THE AVERAGE...			
	White Student	Black Student	Hispanic Student	Asian Student
School district: 2006-07				
City	61	20	18	33
Suburban	75	34	31	48
Town/rural	85	47	43	69
Nationwide	77	29	27	44
School district: 1993-94				
City	69	25	22	39
Suburban	83	43	40	55
Town/rural	88	48	44	71
Nationwide	82	34	31	48

Note: The first entry reads that the typical white student in city school districts attends a school with 61% white enrollment.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Surveys