

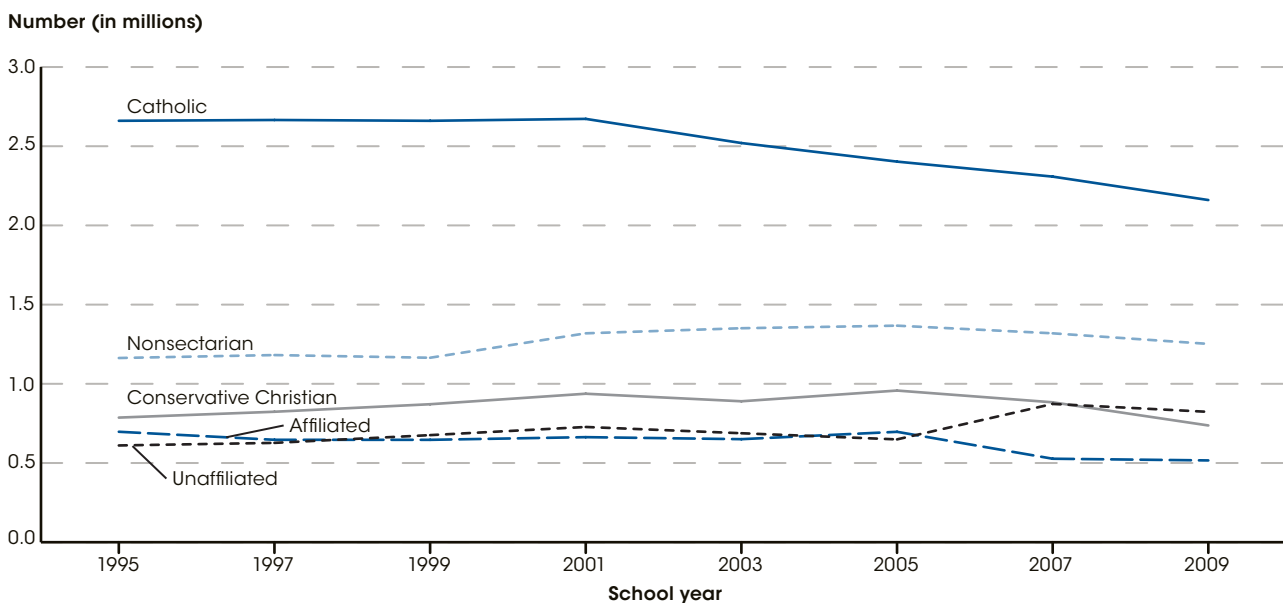
## Private School Enrollment

*Private school enrollment in prekindergarten through grade 12 increased from 5.9 million in 1995–96 to 6.3 million in 2001–02 then decreased to 5.5 million in 2009–10. Some 10 percent of all elementary and secondary school students were in private schools in 2009–10.*

Private school enrollment in prekindergarten through grade 12 increased from 5.9 million in 1995–96 to 6.3 million in 2001–02 then decreased to 5.5 million in 2009–10, excluding prekindergarten students who were enrolled in private schools that did not offer at least one

grade of kindergarten or higher. Some 10 percent of all elementary and secondary school students were in private schools in 2009–10, which was lower than the percentage in 1995–96 (12 percent).

**Figure 1. Number of private school students in prekindergarten through grade 12, by school type: Various school years, 1995–96 through 2009–10**



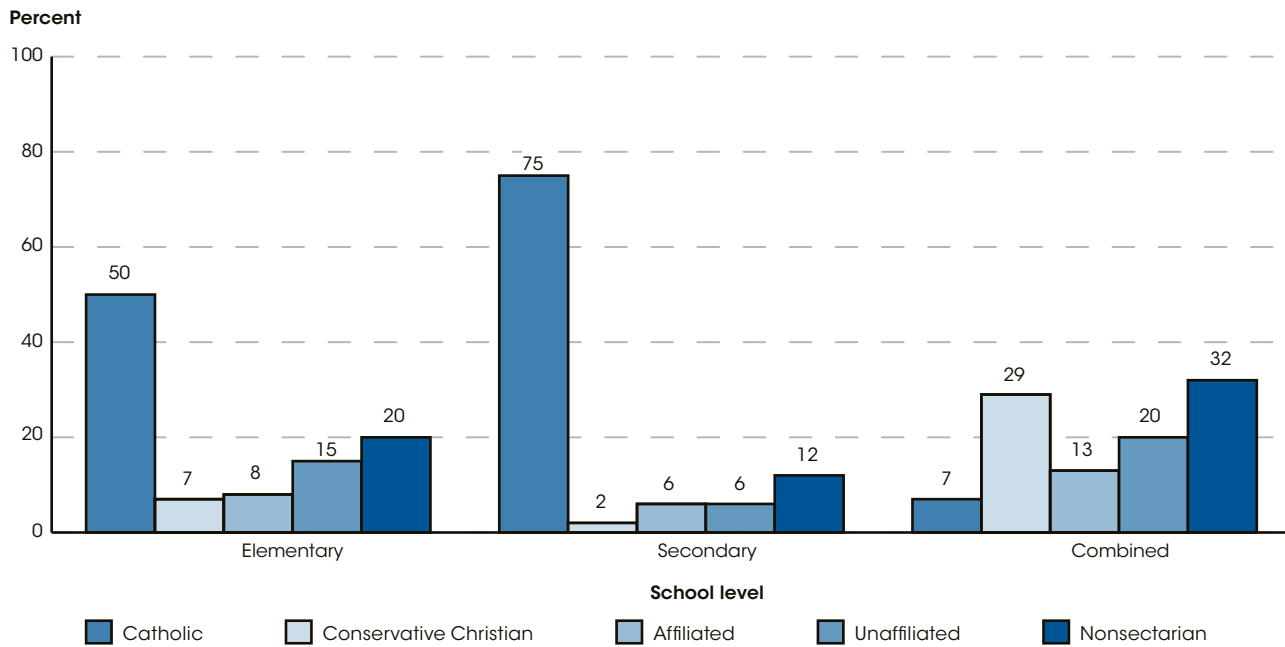
NOTE: Prekindergarten students who are enrolled in private schools that do not offer kindergarten or higher grades are not included in this analysis. *Catholic schools* include parochial, diocesan, and private Catholic schools. *Affiliated religious schools* have a specific religious orientation or purpose but are not Catholic. *Unaffiliated schools* have a more general religious orientation or purpose but are not classified as Conservative Christian or affiliated with a specific religion. *Nonsectarian schools* do not have a religious orientation or purpose. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Private School Universe Survey (PSS), various years, 1995–96 through 2009–10. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 68.

Between 1995–96 and 2005–06, Catholic schools maintained the largest share of total private school enrollment. However, the percentage of all private school students enrolled in Catholic schools decreased from 45 percent in 1995–96 to 39 percent in 2009–10. The number of students enrolled in Catholic schools in 2009–10 was higher than the number of students enrolled in other religious schools. The decrease in Catholic school enrollment was due to a decline in the number of students enrolled in parochial schools (those run by a parish, not by a diocese or independently). The numbers of students enrolled in Conservative Christian (schools with membership in at least one of four associations:

Accelerated Christian Education, American Association of Christian Schools, Association of Christian Schools International, or Oral Roberts University Education Fellowship) and Affiliated (“Other religious” schools not classified as Conservative Christian with membership in at least 1 of 11 associations) schools also were lower in 2009 than in 1995. In contrast, the number of students enrolled in Unaffiliated schools, meaning schools that have a more general religious orientation or purpose but are not classified as Conservative Christian or affiliated with a specific religion, increased 35 percent from 611 thousand in 1995–96 to 823 thousand in 2009–10.

For more information, see the Reader’s Guide and the Guide to Sources.

Figure 2. Percent distribution of private school enrollment, by school type and level: 2009–10



NOTE: Prekindergarten students who are enrolled in private schools that do not offer kindergarten or higher grades are not included in this analysis. *Elementary schools* are schools classified as elementary by state and local practice and composed of any span of grades not above grade 8. *Combined schools* are schools that encompass instruction at both the elementary and the secondary levels; includes schools starting with grade 6 or below and ending with grade 9 or above. *Secondary schools* are schools comprising any span of grades beginning with the next grade following an elementary or middle school (usually 7, 8, or 9) and ending with or below grade 12. Both junior high schools and senior high schools are included. *Catholic schools* include parochial, diocesan, and private Catholic schools. *Affiliated religious schools* have a specific religious orientation or purpose but are not Catholic. *Unaffiliated schools* have a more general religious orientation or purpose but are not classified as Conservative Christian or affiliated with a specific religion. *Nonsectarian schools* do not have a religious orientation or purpose. Ungraded students are prorated into preK–8 and 9–12 enrollment totals. 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), 2009–10. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 69.

In 2009–10, most private secondary school students were enrolled in Catholic schools (75 percent). Of the remaining students, 2 percent were enrolled in Conservative Christian schools, 6 percent each were enrolled in Affiliated and Unaffiliated religious schools, and 12 percent were enrolled in Nonsectarian, or non-religious, schools. Similarly, more private elementary school students were enrolled in Catholic schools than in any other school type (50 percent). In contrast to the large percentage of private school students enrolled in Catholic secondary and elementary schools, Catholic students made up the minority of private school students enrolled in combined schools, at only 7 percent.

In 2009–10, the percentage of all students who were enrolled in private schools was higher in the Northeast (14 percent) than in the Midwest (11 percent), the South (9 percent), and the West (8 percent). The percentage of

students enrolled in private schools was lower in 2009–10 than in 1995–96 in all four regions.

There were differences in attendance by school type within racial/ethnic groups. Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native students and students of two or more races all had higher percentages of students attending Catholic schools than other religious or nonsectarian schools. In contrast, there was a higher percentage of Black students attending other religious schools than attending Catholic schools. White and Pacific Islander groups had higher percentages of students attending Catholic schools than nonsectarian schools. However, the percentages of White and Pacific Islander students attending Catholic schools were not measurably different from the percentages attending other religious schools.

**Reference table:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, tables 67, 68, 69

**Glossary:** Prekindergarten, Private schools