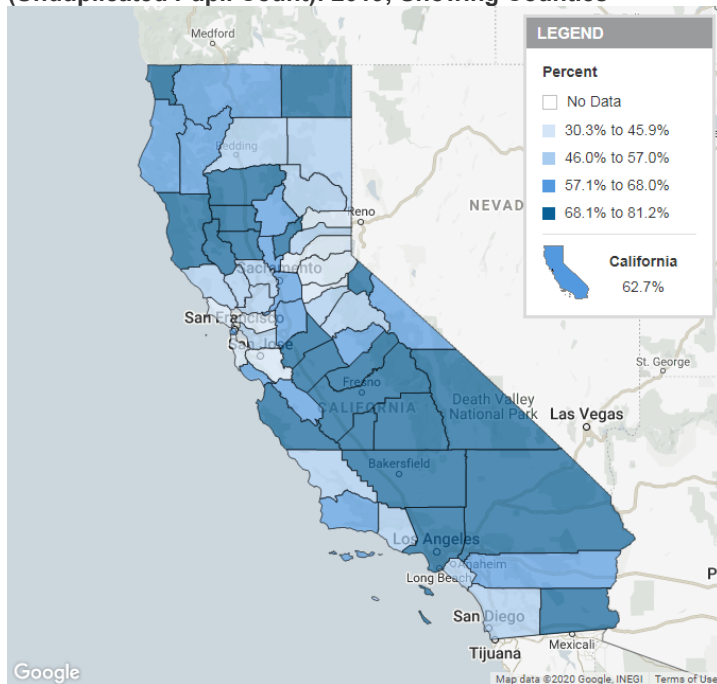


Demographics of California Schoolchildren

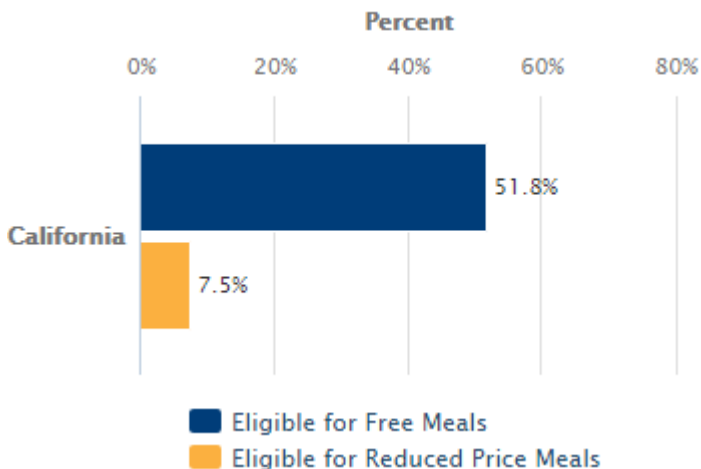
Percentage of High-Need Students Among Public School Enrollees (Unduplicated Pupil Count): 2019; Showing Counties



Definition: Percentage of K-12 public school students enrolled on census day who are eligible for free or reduced price school meals, are English Learners, or are foster youth (e.g., on census day in the 2019 school year, 62.7% of California public school enrollees were high-needs students).

Data Source: California Dept. of Education, [California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System \(CALPADS\) Unduplicated Pupil Count \(UPC\) Source Files \(Sept. 2019\)](#).

Student Eligibility for Free or Reduced Price School Meals: 2020



Definition: Percentage of students ages 5-17 enrolled on census day, by eligibility to receive free or reduced price school meals (e.g., on census day in the 2020 school year, 51.8% of California students were eligible to receive free school meals).

What It Is

Kidsdata.org offers data on student demographics as numbers and percentages at the national, state, county, and school district levels:

- [Total school enrollment](#) overall and by [race/ethnicity](#)
- [Students receiving special education services](#) overall, [by primary disability](#), and [by race/ethnicity](#)
- [High-need students](#)—i.e., those who are eligible for free or reduced price school meals, are English Learners, or are foster youth—as reported in the Unduplicated Pupil Count
- [Students eligible for free or reduced price school meals \(FRPM\)](#), along with [students by FRPM eligibility status](#) (eligible for free meals, eligible for reduced price meals, and not eligible)
- [English Learners \(ELs\)](#), [students by EL Status](#) (Spanish-speaking ELs, ELs with a primary language other than Spanish, and non-ELs), and [ELs by most common primary languages](#) statewide
- [Students eligible for the Migrant Education Program](#)

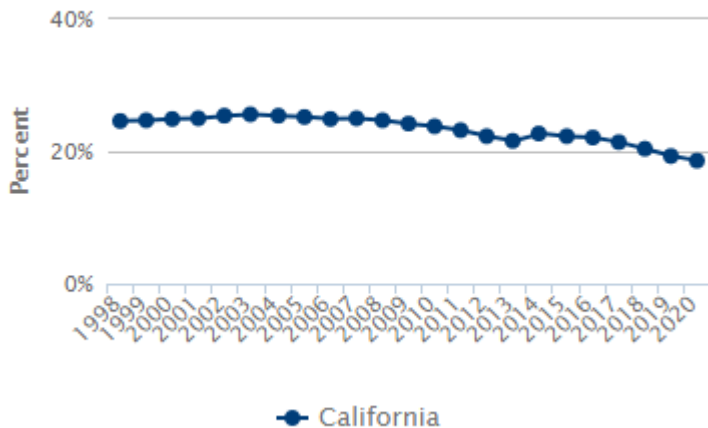
Why This Topic Is Important

Student demographic trends are useful for projecting potential needs and planning school and community services. California's public school system is charged with serving an extremely large and diverse student body. The state has the largest public school population and the only minority white student body in the nation. Approximately 6 in 10 California students face socioeconomic challenges related to family income, homelessness, living in a migratory household, or involvement with the foster care system; nearly 1 in 5 have limited English language proficiency; and more than 1 in 8 have disabilities for which they receive special education services. Disadvantaged children typically need additional support to achieve their academic potential. For example, programs providing free or reduced price school meals, migrant education supports, and other services offer critical assistance to students in need.

How Children Are Faring

Data Source: California Dept. of Education, [Student Poverty FRPM Data](#) (Jul. 2020).

Percentage of English Learners Among Public School Enrollees



Definition: Percentage of public school students who, on census day, speak a language other than English at home and lack English language speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills necessary to succeed in regular instructional programs (e.g., on census day in the 2020 school year, 18.6% of California students were identified as English Learners)

Data Source: California Dept. of Education, [English Learners by Grade and Language](#) (Jul. 2020).

Percentage of Students Receiving Special Education Services, by Primary Disability: 2019

California	Percent
Autism	15.1%
Deaf	0.4%
Emotional Disturbance	3.2%
Hard of Hearing	1.7%
Intellectual Disability	5.5%
Learning Disability	37.8%
Orthopedic Impairment	1.2%
Speech or Language Impairment	20.7%
Traumatic Brain Injury	0.2%
Visual Impairment	0.4%
Multiple Disability	0.9%

Definition: Percentage of public school students receiving special education services, by primary disability type (e.g., among California students enrolled in special education in 2019, 15.1% were enrolled for autism).

Data Source: California Dept. of Education, [Special Education Division](#) custom tabulation; National Center for Education Statistics, [Digest of Education Statistics](#) (Jun. 2020).

The demographics of California's schoolchildren have changed in recent decades. In 1994, 37% of the state's 5.3 million K-12 students were Hispanic/Latino, 42% were white, and 9% were African American/black. In 2020, a majority (55%) the 6.1 million students served were Hispanic/Latino, 22% were white, and 5% were African American/black.

Nearly 800,000 California children and youth ages 0-22—13% of all students—received special education services in 2019. Autism, learning disabilities, and speech/language impairments were the most common primary disabilities among students in special education in 2019, accounting for nearly three-quarters (74%) of special education enrollment.

In 2019, high-needs students—i.e., those who are eligible for free or reduced price school meals, are English Learners, or are foster youth—made up 63% of K-12 students statewide. Across local areas with data, percentages ranged from 30% to 81% for counties and from less than 3% and to more than 99% for school districts.

More than 59% of California schoolchildren ages 5-17—over 3.5 million students—were eligible for free or reduced price school meals in 2020, up from 51% in 2007. Fewer than 500,000 students (8%) were eligible for reduced price meals, meaning their family incomes were between 130%-184% of their federal poverty guideline. By comparison, more than 3 million students (52%) were eligible for free meals, meaning either their family incomes were below 130% of their federal poverty guideline, they participated in the CalFresh or CalWORKS programs, they were eligible for the Migrant Education Program, they were homeless, or were foster youth.

Students with limited English language proficiency—English Learners—accounted for 19% California's student body in 2020, down from 25% in 1998. Spanish consistently has been the most common primary language among English Learners statewide and in virtually all counties with data. Following Spanish, the state's most common primary languages among English Learners are Vietnamese and Mandarin.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic:
<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/103/student-demographics/summary>



More Data: www.kidsdata.org

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