



Center for Public Education



Back-to-School Statistics: Students in Urban Public Schools

AN **nsba** PUBLICATION

Define Urban

City, Suburban, and Town are Urban (vs. Rural). ([Source](#))

Students in Urban Schools

IDEA: In 2019, 6.1 million students with disabilities attended urban schools (15% of enrollment in towns and 14% in cities and suburban areas, respectively).

Enrollment: In 2021, 39.1 million students (80% of all K-12 students) attended public schools in nonrural areas, i.e., cities, suburbs, or towns. ([Source](#))

English Language Learners (ELs): In 2020, 4.3 million students were ELs in urban schools (14% of enrollment in cities, 10% in suburban areas, and 7% in towns).

Children Living in Poverty: In 2019, 1 in 5 children ages 5-17 lived in poverty in cities and towns (21%, respectively, and 12% in suburban areas). ([Source](#))



Minority Students: In 2021, 23.3 million students were non-White (73% of city, 55% of suburban, and 40% of town school students). Hispanic students were the largest racial/ethnic minority group, followed by Black students.

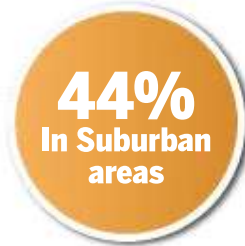
Free and Reduced-Price Lunch:

In the fall of 2021, 9.2 million students attended urban schools in which more than 75% of students in school were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, including:

- City: 48% of Black and 50% of Hispanic students.
- Suburban: 24% of Black and 31% of Hispanic students.
- Town: 44% of Black and 34% of Hispanic students. ([Source](#))

Urban Schools in the U.S.

Number of Urban Schools: In 2021, there were 70,574 public elementary and secondary schools



Pupil/Teacher Ratio: In 2021



Average School Size: In 2021



(Source)



Teachers in Urban Schools

Teacher Demographics:

White teachers comprised 69% of urban school teachers and 90% of rural ones, reflecting the broader racial and ethnic makeup of America's communities. Hispanic, Black, and Asian teachers made up larger shares of the teaching force in city schools (14%, 12%, and 3%, respectively) than in rural ones. ([Source](#))

Teacher Turnover:

In the 2021–2022 school year, teacher turnover was highest (12% to 14%) in urban districts, high-poverty districts, and districts serving predominately students of color. ([Source](#))



Number of Full-Time Teachers:

About 2.5 million full-time teachers work in urban public schools, according to the most recently available national data. ([Source](#))



Teacher Shortages:

In August 2022, about 95% of urban schools were looking for teacher candidates to fill in their teacher vacancies for the 2022-23 school year. ([Source](#))



Revenues and Expenditures

Total Revenue Amounts in Unadjusted Dollars: In the 2018-19 school year, urban schools received approximately \$663 billion from federal, state, and local sources. ([Source](#))

**City schools
received
approximately**



**Suburban
schools received
approximately**



**Schools in
towns received
approximately**



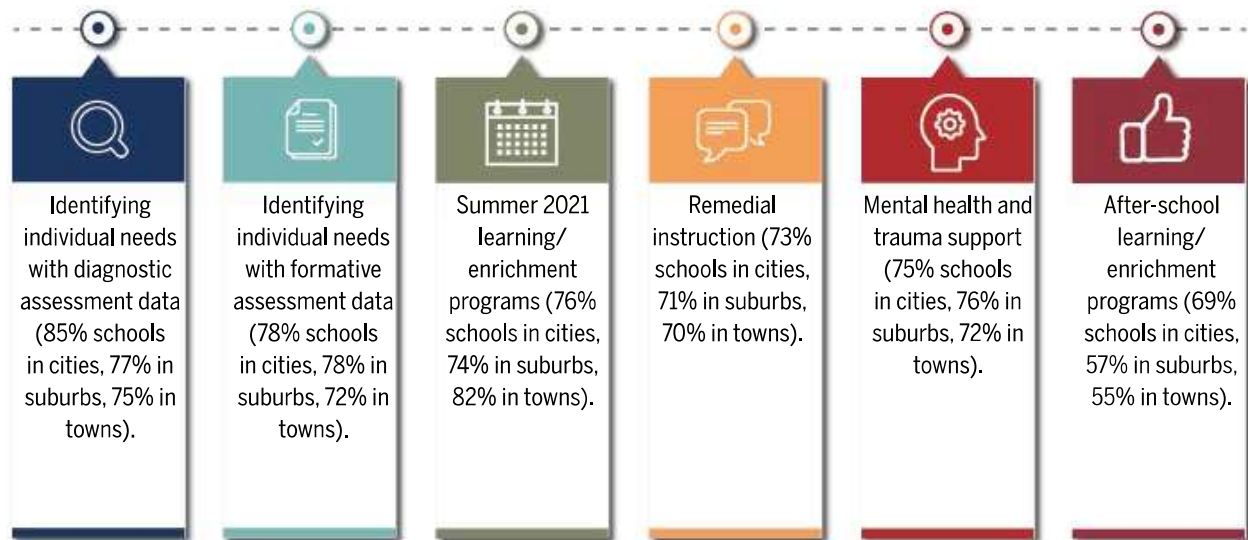
Geographically Adjusted Current Expenditure: In the 2018-19 school year, per-student spending was \$13,478 in city schools, \$13,289 in suburban schools, and \$13,792 in schools located in towns (vs. \$14,312 in rural schools). ([Source](#))

(Note: The 2018-19 school year data are the most recently available federal data.)

Learning Recovery

Learning Loss Caused by the Disruption of the COVID-19 Pandemic: At the end of the 2021-22 school year, 58% of public schools in cities, 40% in suburbs, and 40% in towns reported that at least 1 in 4 students were behind grade level. ([Source](#))

Learning Recovery Support: To support their students' pandemic-related learning recovery, public schools implemented a variety of strategies during the 2021–22 school year. The following were some of the most reported strategies used to support pandemic-related learning recovery in urban schools:



Mental Health

Seeking Mental Health Services: In April 2022, approximately 70% of urban schools (vs. approximately 60% of rural schools) reported that the percentage of students who had sought mental health services from school had increased since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

Programs: In April 2022, 79% of city schools, 72% of suburban schools, and 61% of schools in towns reported having a specific program for social and emotional learning.

Capacity: In April 2022, only 32% of city school officials, 31% of suburban school officials, and 40% of school officials in towns felt that their school was able to provide mental health services to all students in need effectively.

[\(Source\)](#)

About CPE

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) believes that accurate, objective information is essential to building support for public schools and creating effective programs to prepare all students for success. As NSBA's research branch, the Center for Public Education (CPE) provides objective and timely information about public education and its importance to the well-being of our nation. Launched in 2006, CPE emerged from discussions between NSBA and its member state school boards associations about how to inform the public about the successes and challenges of public education. To serve a wide range of audiences, including parents, teachers, and school leaders, CPE offers research, data, and analysis on current education issues and explores ways to improve student achievement and engage support for public schools.

About NSBA

Founded in 1940, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) is a non-profit organization representing state associations of school boards and the Board of Education of the U.S. Virgin Islands. Through its member state associations that represent locally elected school board officials serving millions of public school students, NSBA advocates for equity and excellence in public education through school board leadership. We believe that public education is a civil right necessary to the dignity and freedom of the American people and that each child, regardless of their disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or citizenship, deserves equitable access to an education that maximizes their individual potential.

For more information, visit [nsba.org](https://www.nsba.org).

