



C A P S O

California's Private Schools: A Portrait of Enrollment – 2003-2004

Table of Contents

Schools and Students	3
For-Profit and Non-Profit Schools	3
Secular and Religious Schools	4
Elementary and Secondary Schools.....	4
Private School Enrollment by County	6
Student-Teacher Ratio	8
Changes from 2002-03 to 2003-04	9

List of Tables

1. Non-Profit and For-Profit Private Schools in California	3
2. Enrollment in Non-Profit and For-Profit Private Schools	3
3. Secular and Religious Schools by For-Profit and Non-Profit Status.....	4
4. Enrollment in Secular and Religious Schools	4
5. Enrollment in Secular and Religious Schools by Grade Level Classification	5
6. Private School Enrollment by Grade Level	5
7. Net Changes in Enrollment by Grade: 2002-03 to 2003-04.....	5
8. Total Private School Enrollment by County	6
9. Average Private School Enrollment by County	7
10. Private School Enrollment by County: 2002-03 to 2003-04.....	8
11. Student-Teacher Ratio – All Private Schools: 2002-03 to 2003-04	8
12. Student-Teacher Ratio by For-Profit and Non-Profit Status: 2002-03 – 2003-04.....	9
13. Student-Teacher Ratio by Religious and Secular School Orientation: 2002-03 – 2003-04	9
14. Number of Schools and Total Enrollment: 2002-03 – 2003-04	9
15. Schools and Enrollment by For-Profit and Non-Profit Status: 2002-03 – 2003-04	9
16. Schools and Enrollment by Religious and Secular Orientation: 2002-03 – 2003-04.....	10

Schools and Students¹

In the 2003-2004 academic year, the state of California counted 3,751 private schools enrolling a total of 599,605 students in grades Kindergarten through twelve. More than one of every four schools offering instruction in grades K-12 in the state of California is a private school. On average, private schools enroll 160 students. This figure varies considerably, however, when different school types are taken into account.

For-Profit and Non-Profit Schools

69.4% of all private schools in California are constituted as non-profit entities (Table 1).² The remaining 30.6% operate on a for-profit basis. As a percentage of the total, the number of non-profit private schools increased 1.4% from the preceding year.

Private schools that operate on a non-profit basis enroll substantially more students, on average, than for-profit private schools. The average enrollment among non-profit schools is more than three times that of for-profit schools (204 students compared to 60). The difference in median³ enrollment is more pronounced, with a non-profit school enrollment midpoint (138 students) that is six times greater than that of for-profit schools (23 students).

Table 1. Non-Profit and For-Profit Private Schools in California		
	Number	Percentage
Non-Profit Schools	2,602	69.4%
For Profit Schools	1,149	30.6%
Total	3,751	100%

As is shown in Table 2, 85% of all private schools operating on a for-profit basis enroll fewer than 100 students. Of all private schools enrolling 200 or more students, 93% are non-profits. Among private schools with enrollments exceeding 500 students, 94% operate on a not-for-profit basis.

Table 2. Enrollment in Non-Profit and For-Profit Private Schools		
Enrollment	Number of Schools	
	Non-Profit	For-Profit
<100	1,094	976
100-199	456	89
200-499	830	71
500-999	177	12
>1000	45	1
	Total Student Enrollment	
	Non-Profit	For-Profit
	530,159 (88%)	69,446 (12%)

¹ All numerical information contained in this report, unless otherwise noted, is derived from affidavit data submitted to the California Department of Information.

² Non-profit private schools typically incorporate as tax-exempt organizations in accordance with Section 501 (C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code or operate under the aegis of a non-profit parent (most often a religious) organization.

³ The median is the point at which exactly half the scores or values in a given distribution fall above and below.

Secular and Religious Schools

Table 3. Secular and Religious Schools by For-Profit and Non-Profit Status			
	For-Profit	Non-Profit	Column Total
Secular	678	637	1,316
Religious	471	1,965	2,436
Row Total	1,149	2,602	3,751

64.9% of all private schools in California are religious schools and the remaining 35.1% are secular in orientation (Table 3). The data also reveal that by a slight majority, secular private schools (52%) tend to operate on a for-profit basis, while the vast majority of religious schools (81%) operate as non-profit entities.

Table 4. Enrollment in Secular and Religious Schools		
Enrollment	Number of Schools	
	Secular	Religious
<100	970	1,100
100-199	163	382
200-499	153	748
500-999	24	165
>1000	5	41
	Total Student Enrollment	
	Secular	Religious
	124,805 (21%)	474,800 (79%)

Religious schools tend to enroll more students than secular schools (Table 4). While comprising just under 2/3 of all private schools, religious students account for nearly 80% of the total private school enrollment. The average religious school enrollment (195 students) is twice that of private, secular schools (95). The median religious school enrollment (125 students) is more than three times that of secular schools (40).

Elementary and Secondary Schools

It is not possible to classify all private schools into distinct categories on the basis of grade level. This is so because private schools offer a great many combinations of lowest and highest grades offered. There are schools that offer grades Kindergarten through grades 2, or 3, or 4, as well as schools that offer grades 4, 5, 6, or 7 through grade 12. For the purpose of examining distributive tendencies, Table 5 classifies schools into one of the following three categories:

- *Elementary Schools* Schools offering grades K-8 (1,119 schools)⁴
- *Secondary Schools* Schools offering grades 9-12 (204 schools)
- *Comprehensive Schools* Schools offering grades K-12 (778 schools)

Collectively, 2,101 schools match one of these grade level classifications and enroll a total of 475,707 students, accounting for 56% of all private schools in California and 79% of the total private school K-12 enrollment.

⁴ The provision of grades K-8 is modal for California's private schools.

The figures in Table 5 show that 53% of the students attending sampled secular schools and 57% of the students attending religious schools were enrolled in schools offering grades K-8. The differential between secular and private school enrollment widens considerably at the secondary school level with 19% of all religious school students enrolled in schools offering grades 9-12 compared to 7% of all students enrolled in secular private schools.⁵

GRADE LEVELS	ENROLLMENT		
	Secular	Religious	Total
Elementary	38,986	227,763	266,749
Secondary	5,469	77,387	82,856
Comprehensive	29,337	96,765	126,102
TOTAL	73,792	401,915	475,707

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Enrollment	58,338	51,021	49,461	48,718	47,591	46,970	48,877	48,281	47,549	39,926	38,011	34,928	33,584	593,255

Table 6 presents a breakdown of enrollment by grade level.

Table 7 provides a summary of year-to-year net enrollment growth or attrition by grade level.

As was the case in 2002-03, there exists a generally inverse relationship between grade level and attrition, with the highest incidence of attrition occurring at the lower primary grades (K-2). Attrition reverses in the middle grades (6-8), producing an aggregated *increase* in enrollment. The aggregated increase expands in grades 9-12.

Grades	Net Change in Enrollment 2001-2002 to 2002-2003	Net Change as % of Prior Year's Enrollment
K	- 2,232	- 4%
1	- 1,975	- 4%
2	- 2,071	- 4%
3	- 1,180	- 2%
4	- 934	- 2%
5	- 1,724	- 4%
6	- 836	- 2%
7	- 155	- 0.3%
8	+ 1,111	+ 2%
9	- 616	- 2%
10	- 69	- 0.2%
11	- 85	- 0.2%
12	+ 1,251	+ 4%
TOTAL	- 9,488	- 2%

⁵ That secular schools account for only 16% of student enrollments in this sample of schools (compared with 21% of total private school enrollments), suggests that variability in grade level configurations is somewhat greater among the state's secular private schools.

⁶ In addition to the figures appearing in this table, 3,468 students were enrolled in ungraded elementary schools and 2,882 were enrolled in ungraded secondary schools.

Private School Enrollment by County

As might be expected, the majority of California's private schools are located in the state's most populous counties. California's eight largest counties⁷ (Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino, Santa Clara, Riverside, Alameda and Sacramento) are home to 68% of all private schools and 72% of the state's total private school enrollment.

Sixteen counties experienced an increase in the number of private schools situated within their boundaries from the prior year; twenty-eight counties showed a decrease, and thirteen counties reported the same number of schools as in 2002-03.⁸

Twenty six counties experienced an increase in private school enrollment from the prior year; thirty counties showed a decrease, and one county reported the same enrollment as in 2002-03.

Table 8. Total Private School Enrollment by County					
County	No. of Schools	Enrollment	County	No. of Schools	Enrollment
Alameda	170	29,082	Orange	305	57,638
Alpine	0	0	Placer	25	2,232
Amador	3	163	Plumas	2	141
Butte	26	1,882	Riverside	161	22,074
Calaveras	2	107	Sacramento	146	20,254
Colusa	1	108	San Benito	9	741
Contra Costa	108	18,998	San Bernardino	196	21,229
Del Norte	3	189	San Diego	260	41,985
El Dorado	20	1,322	San Francisco	109	24,356
Fresno	49	5,918	San Joaquin	55	8,729
Glenn	4	154	San Luis Obispo	25	2,818
Humboldt	11	694	San Mateo	73	16,127
Imperial	10	1,898	Santa Barbara	42	6,082
Inyo	1	32	Santa Clara	170	35,569
Kern	60	6,078	Santa Cruz	32	4,913
Kings	8	1,193	Shasta	23	2,667
Lake	11	467	Siskiyou	7	163
Lassen	4	135	Solano	31	5,711
Los Angeles	1,161	203,896	Sonoma	63	7,012
Madera	11	482	Stanislaus	45	5,669
Marin	39	6,572	Sutter	8	855
Mariposa	3	46	Tehama	4	419
Mendocino	16	912	Trinity	1	14
Merced	26	1,863	Tulare	22	2,723
Modoc	3	41	Tuolumne	7	573
Mono	2	46	Ventura	94	15,355
Monterey	22	4,547	Yolo	14	2,006
Napa	27	3,049	Yuba	5	375
Nevada	16	1,301	TOTAL	3,751	599,605

⁷ By population.

⁸ Sierra County contained no private schools in 2003-04, or in the preceding year.

While the majority of private school enrollment is concentrated in the state's most populous counties, the highest *average enrollments* exist elsewhere. In Table 9, the five counties with the highest average private school enrollments (per-school) are highlighted. Only one of the five (Santa Clara) is among the state's eight most populous counties.

Average enrollment per-private-school increased in 36 (63%) counties, a finding that suggests consolidation in light of a 2.3% decline in the total number of private schools and 1.2% of K-12 private school enrollment, respectively, from the prior year.

The data in Table 10 show that among counties with private school enrollments exceeding 10,000 students, Alameda, Orange and Ventura achieved the highest percentage gains in enrollment, respectively, while Sacramento, San Mateo and Santa Clara experienced the greatest declines.

Table 9. Average Private School Enrollment by County			
County	Average Enrollment Per Private School	County	Average Enrollment Per Private School
Alameda	171.1	Orange	189.0
Alpine	0.0	Placer	89.3
Amador	54.3	Plumas	70.5
Butte	72.4	Riverside	137.1
Calaveras	53.5	Sacramento	138.7
Colusa	108.0	San Benito	82.3
Contra Costa	175.9	San Bernardino	108.3
Del Norte	63.0	San Diego	161.5
El Dorado	66.1	San Francisco	223.4
Fresno	120.8	San Joaquin	158.7
Glenn	38.5	San Luis Obispo	112.7
Humboldt	63.1	San Mateo	220.9
Imperial	189.8	Santa Barbara	144.8
Inyo	32.0	Santa Clara	209.2
Kern	101.3	Santa Cruz	153.5
Kings	149.1	Shasta	116.0
Lake	42.5	Siskiyou	23.3
Lassen	33.8	Solano	184.2
Los Angeles	175.6	Sonoma	111.3
Madera	43.8	Stanislaus	126.0
Marin	168.5	Sutter	106.9
Mariposa	15.3	Tehama	104.8
Mendocino	57.0	Trinity	14.0
Merced	71.7	Tulare	123.8
Modoc	13.7	Tuolumne	81.9
Mono	23.0	Ventura	163.4
Monterey	206.7	Yolo	143.3
Napa	112.9	Yuba	75.0
Nevada	81.3		

Table 10. Private School Enrollment by County: 2002-2003 to 2003-2004							
County	2002-2003 Enrollment	2003-2004 Enrollment	Percentage Change	County	2002-2003 Enrollment	2003-2004 Enrollment	Percentage Change
Alameda	27,916	29,082	+4.2	Orange	55,624	57,638	+3.6
Alpine	0	0	0.0	Placer	2,408	2,232	-7.3
Amador	159	163	+2.5	Plumas	187	141	-24.6
Butte	1,922	1,882	-2.0	Riverside	21,655	22,074	+1.9
Calaveras	115	107	-7.0	Sacramento	23,157	20,254	-12.5
Colusa	107	108	+1.0	San Benito	748	741	-1.0
Contra Costa	18,717	18,998	+1.5	San Bernardino	21,778	21,229	-2.5
Del Norte	231	189	-18.9	San Diego	43,361	41,985	-3.2
El Dorado	1,248	1,322	+5.9	San Francisco	25,200	24,356	-3.3
Fresno	6,085	5,918	-2.7	San Joaquin	8,318	8,729	+4.9
Glenn	124	154	+24.2	San Luis Obispo	2,862	2,818	-1.5
Humboldt	329	694	+111.0	San Mateo	17,476	16,127	-7.7
Imperial	1,873	1,898	+1.3	Santa Barbara	6,265	6,082	-2.9
Inyo	36	32	-11.1	Santa Clara	37,782	35,569	-5.9
Kern	6,241	6,078	-2.6	Santa Cruz	4,937	4,913	-.5
Kings	1,159	1,193	+2.9	Shasta	2,749	2,667	-3.0
Lake	451	467	+3.5	Siskiyou	179	163	-8.9
Lassen	113	135	+19.5	Solano	5,539	5,711	+3.1
Los Angeles	206,901	203,896	-1.5	Sonoma	7,237	7,012	-3.1
Madera	535	482	-9.9	Stanislaus	5,183	5,669	+9.4
Marin	6,425	6,572	+2.3	Sutter	725	855	+17.9
Mariposa	57	46	-19.3	Tehama	456	419	-8.1
Mendocino	921	912	-1.0	Trinity	14	14	0.0
Merced	1,859	1,863	+ .2	Tulare	2,646	2,723	+2.9
Modoc	58	41	-29.3	Tuolumne	451	573	+27.1
Mono	45	46	+2.2	Ventura	14,954	15,355	+2.7
Monterey	4,893	4,547	-7.1	Yolo	2,028	2,006	-1.1
Napa	2,958	3,049	+3.1	Yuba	281	375	+33.5
Nevada	1,298	1,301	+ .2	TOTAL	607,025	599,605	-1.2

Teacher-Student Ratio

Small class sizes and low teacher-to-student ratios have long been a hallmark of private schooling. As shown in Table 11, teacher-to-student ratios remained stable at 13.7 fulltime teachers-per-student.

Table 11. Student-Teacher Ratio - All Private Schools: 2002-03 and 2003-04.		
	2002-03	2003-04
Students	607,025	599,605
Teachers	44,199	43,823
Students-Per-Teacher	13.7	13.7

The number of students-per-teacher is significant lower in schools operating on a for-profit basis (Table 12). Indeed, the student-teacher ratio in for-profit schools was 45% lower (than non-profit schools) in 2002-03 and 46% lower in 2003-04. Even when for-profit schools with enrollments of fewer than 200 students are excluded, the average number of students-per-teacher is 9.9.

	2002-03		2003-04	
	For-Profit Schools	Non-Profit Schools	For-Profit Schools	Non-Profit Schools
Students	75,217	531,808	69,446	530,159
Teachers	9,076	35,123	8,606	35,217
Students-Per-Teacher	8.3	15.1	8.1	15.1

When compared with religious schools, the number of students-per-teacher is lower in schools with a secular orientation by a factor of 30% (Table 13). Both religious and secular schools witnessed a modest decrease in their student-to-teacher ratios from 2002-03 to 2003-04, most likely associated with teacher retention in light of minor drops in enrollment.

	2002-03		2003-04	
	Religious Schools	Secular Schools	Religious Schools	Secular Schools
Students	478,590	128,435	474,800	124,805
Teachers	31,976	12,223	31,785	12,038
Students-Per-Teacher	15.0	10.5	14.9	10.4

Changes from 2002-03 to 2003-04

While total private school enrollment declined 1.2% from the prior year (Table 14), 78% of the decrease is attributable to shrinkage in for-profit schools (Table 15). The number of for-profit private schools decreased 6.6% from 2002-03 to 2003-04, while their total enrollment dropped 7.7%. At the same time, the corresponding figures for non-profit private schools remained stable, with declines in both the number of schools and total enrollment amounting to less than one-half-of-one-percent. Moreover, while a decrease in the total number of non-profit schools was accompanied by an increase in average (remaining) per-school enrollment, there was no corresponding consolidation in the for-profit sector, where average enrollment per-school *dropped*.

	2002-03	2003-04	Net Change
Schools	3,844	3,751	-93 (2.4%)
Enrollment	607,025	599,605	-7,420 (1.2%)

	2002-03		2003-04		Net Change	
	Schools	Enrollment	Schools	Enrollment	Schools	Enrollment
For-Profit	1,231	75,217	1,149	69,446	-82 (6.6%)	-5,771 (7.7%)
Non-Profit	2,613	531,808	2,602	530,159	-11 (0.4%)	-1,649 (0.3%)

It is reasonable to conjecture that non-profit private schools are generally better positioned to survive periods of widespread economic instability than are their for-profit counterparts. For one, non-profit private schools are often affiliated with organizational networks that provide or facilitate various modalities of

support. Three-quarters of all non-profit private schools are of a religious nature. These schools often find support from communities of shared faith that extend well beyond the families of currently enrolled students. In a similar vein, many long-established independent non-profit schools with secular orientations have succeeded in cultivating fervent support from alumni and other patrons who share a commitment to the preservation of the distinctive philosophies, traditions, accomplishments and contributions identified with these schools. Finally, non-profit entities generally enjoy the advantage of tax-deductibility associated with contributions to their scholarship programs, operating and endowment funds.

Another reasonable inference is this: small schools are more likely to become *proportionately* smaller in times of widespread economic instability than are large schools – and most small schools (with enrollments of fewer than 50 students) are for-profit entities.

Within the universe of non-profit private schools, enrollments in religiously-oriented schools remained more stable than enrollments in schools describing themselves as secular. In 2003-04, enrollment in the latter category declined 2.8% from the preceding year, while the drop in enrollment among religiously-oriented schools was less than 1%.

	2002-03		2003-04		Net Change	
	Schools	Enrollment	Schools	Enrollment	Schools	Enrollment
Religious	2,481	478,590	2,436	474,800	-45 (1.8%)	-3,790 (0.8%)
Secular	1,364	128,435	1,315	124,805	-49 (3.6%)	-3,630 (2.8%)

In 2002-03, significant increases in high school enrollment (grades 9-12) mitigated correspondingly significant decreases in primary grade (K-5) enrollment. In 2003-04, the rate of attrition decreased in elementary grades, but grew at the high school level. Enrollment at the key ninth grade level fell 2% in 2003-04, following a 6% increase the prior year. Thus, proportionately fewer students entered private high schools in 2003-04 than in 2002-03. It may be surmised that the cumulative effects of a lagging California economy coupled with the rising cost of secondary education underpin this finding. Should economic factors remain stable, demographic projections point to renewed growth in high school enrollments during the period extending from 2004 to 2011.

About CAPSO...

The California Association of Private School Organizations is California's oldest, largest and most inclusive consortium of private school organizations. Collectively, CAPSO's affiliates serve nearly 80% of the state's private school students in grades K-12, their teachers, administrators, trustees and families.

CAPSO provides a coherent voice for California's private schools while championing the independence, excellence and diversity that have long been the hallmarks of private education.