



School Organization

This report covers public education in kindergarten through 12th grade. Its data came from 246 public schools in seven school districts and cover School Year 1996-97. Although Hawaii’s public schools can be loosely classified as elementary, intermediate, or high schools, the ranges of grades in schools vary considerably. The school patterns of grade level organization during the 1996-97 school year are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Grade Level Organization of Hawaii’s Public Schools, 1996-97

Urban areas are served by elementary, middle or intermediate, and high schools. Multi-level schools (K-8, 7-12, and K-12) serve rural areas or specialized populations

GRADE LEVELS INCLUDED												
K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
37 schools, median size: 576 pupils						16 schools, median size: 798 pupils			26 schools, median size: 1,786 pupils			
Linapuni School, 231 pupils								13 schools, median size: 1,012 pupils				
						Kohala High & Intermediate School, 622 pupils						
127 schools, median size: 584 pupils							9 schools, median size: 1,041 pupils					
8 schools, median size: 603 pupils												
Pa`auilo Elementary & Intermediate School, 255 pupils												
7 schools, median size: 299 pupils												

Generally, schools that have wider grade ranges (K-8, K-12, or 7-12) serve rural areas. The exception is Kula Kaiapuni ‘O Anuenue, the Hawaiian Immersion School in Honolulu. The prevailing pattern of school organization in urban areas has three levels: elementary schools with grades K-5 or K-6, intermediate or middle schools with grades 6-8 or 7-8, and high schools with grades 9-12. In addition to the “regular” schools, there are three special program centers that are not organized by grades. Student information for the special centers is included in the data reported below; but some data, such as test scores, are not appropriate for these units and are not included in this report.²

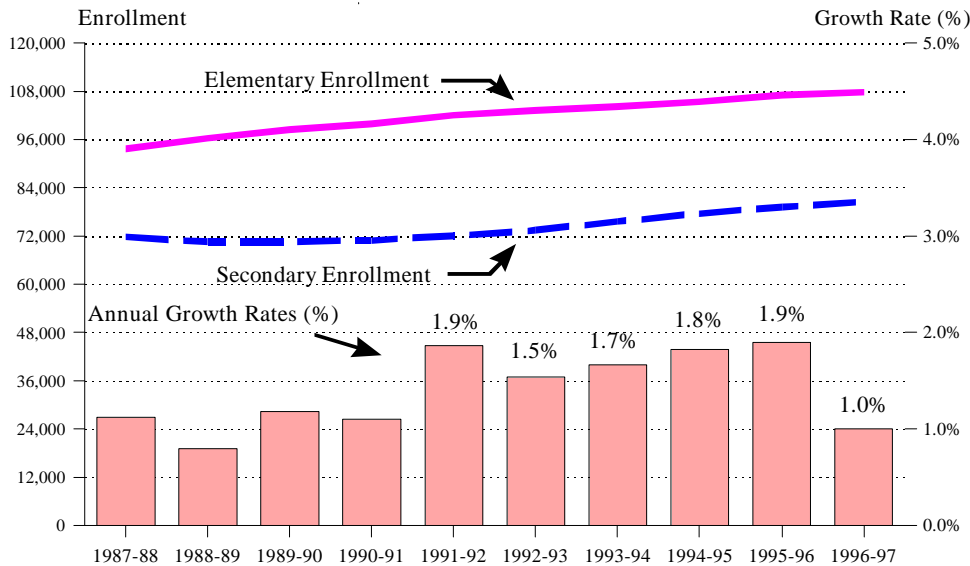
Students Enrollment

As clearly shown in **Figure 2** (next page), Hawaii’s public school enrollments are growing. Enrollment in elementary grades has been increasing throughout the last nine years. Secondary school enrollments were decreasing in the late 1980s, but they apparently “bottomed out” in 1990 and should grow steadily for the remainder of this decade.

Grade-by-grade enrollment data indicate that the current peak enrollment was in first grade in 1996-97. The number of births in Hawaii (Appendix, Table 6) increased steadily until 1991 and then began to decline. It may take several years for overall enrollment to reach its peak, but enrollment growth is slowing.



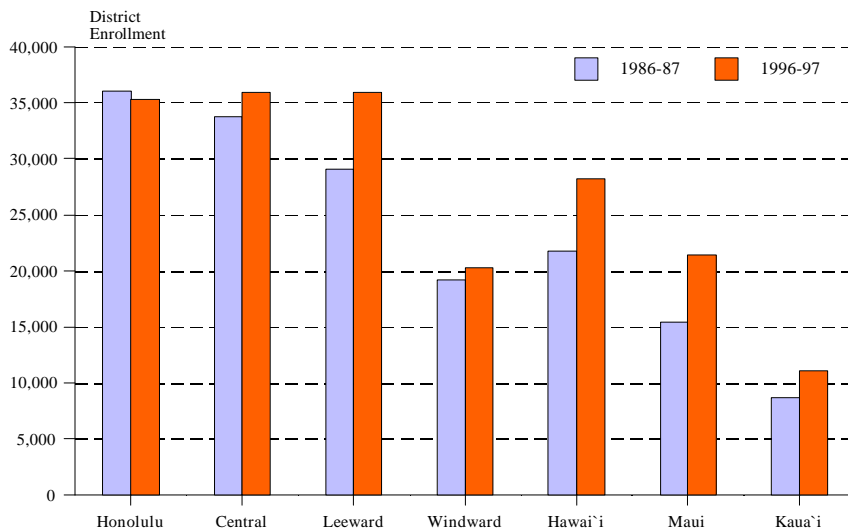
Figure 2. Public School Enrollment in Hawaii, 1987-88 to 1996-97



Hawaii's public school enrollments have been growing throughout the decade. Only the last year shows signs of growth tapering off.

In addition to overall enrollment growth, there has been a marked shifting in the geographical distribution of Hawaii's student population. How enrollment has changed in the seven districts over the last decade is shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3. Enrollment in 1986-87 and 1996-97, by District



Public school enrollment growth is not evenly distributed. Hawaii, Leeward, and Maui Districts have been the source of most of the recent growth.

While Honolulu District's enrollment has nearly regained its 1986-87 level, Leeward District's enrollment has increased by over 6,800 students, Hawaii District's by almost 6,500, and Maui District's by over 6,000. This means that the need for facilities is greater than indicated by overall enrollment alone. We cannot accommodate the new students enrolling for school in Leeward Oahu with the excess classrooms available in East Honolulu. If we fail to plan for population shifts that we know will take place and that may even be *intended* (e.g., Kapolei), we shall experience local overcrowding of facilities and inequities of opportunity that favor

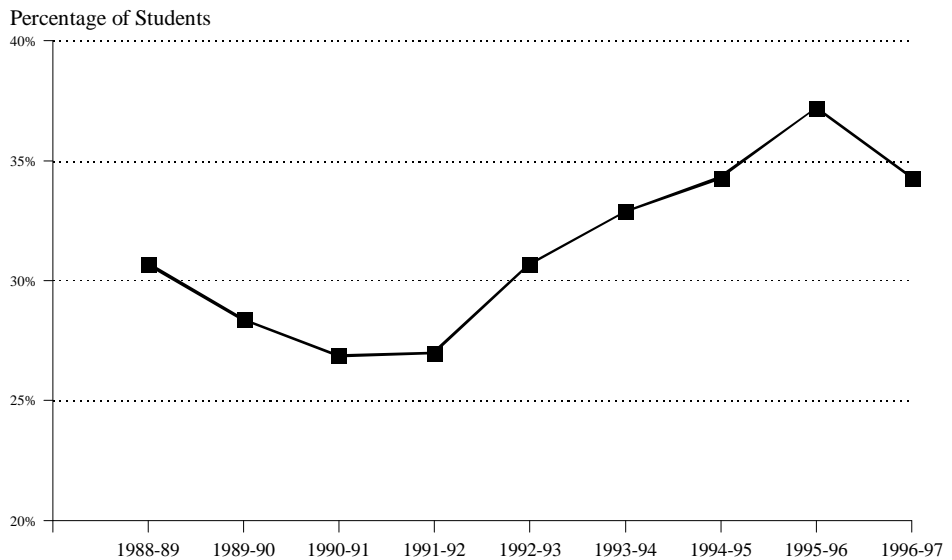


students in stable or declining areas over those in regions experiencing rapid growth.

Special Needs There are three student subpopulations that are of special concern. These are students from poor economic circumstances (those who receive school lunch subsidies), students with limited English proficiency, and students who need special education services. The growth in the numbers of Hawaii's students receiving lunch subsidies over the last eight years is presented in **Figure 4**.

The percentage of students receiving lunch subsidies dropped unaccountably by 3% in 1996-97 after 4 successive years of increases.

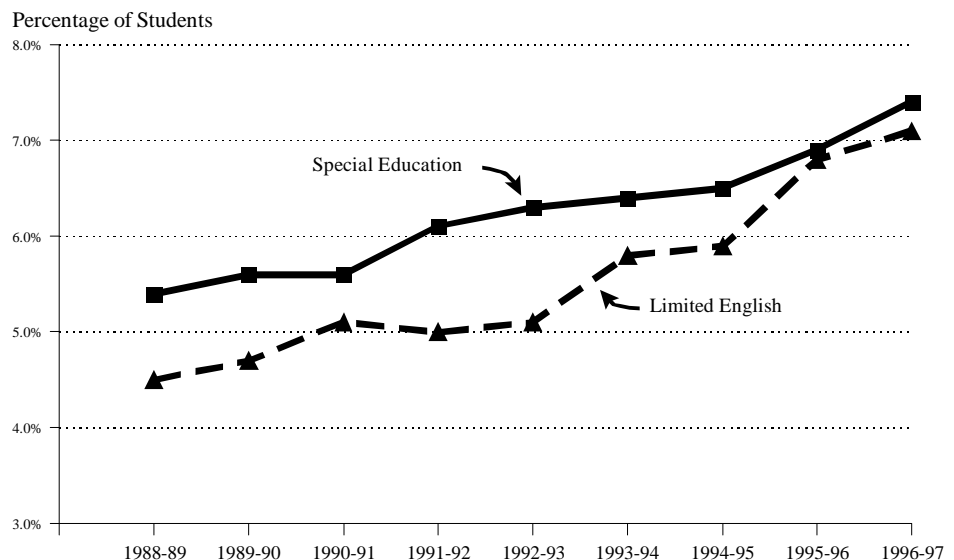
Figure 4. Students Receiving Lunch Subsidies, 1988-89 to 1996-97



The numbers of students needing special education services and the numbers of students with limited English proficiency are shown in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5. Special Education and Limited English Students

The percentages of special education and limited English students have been increasing throughout the last decade.



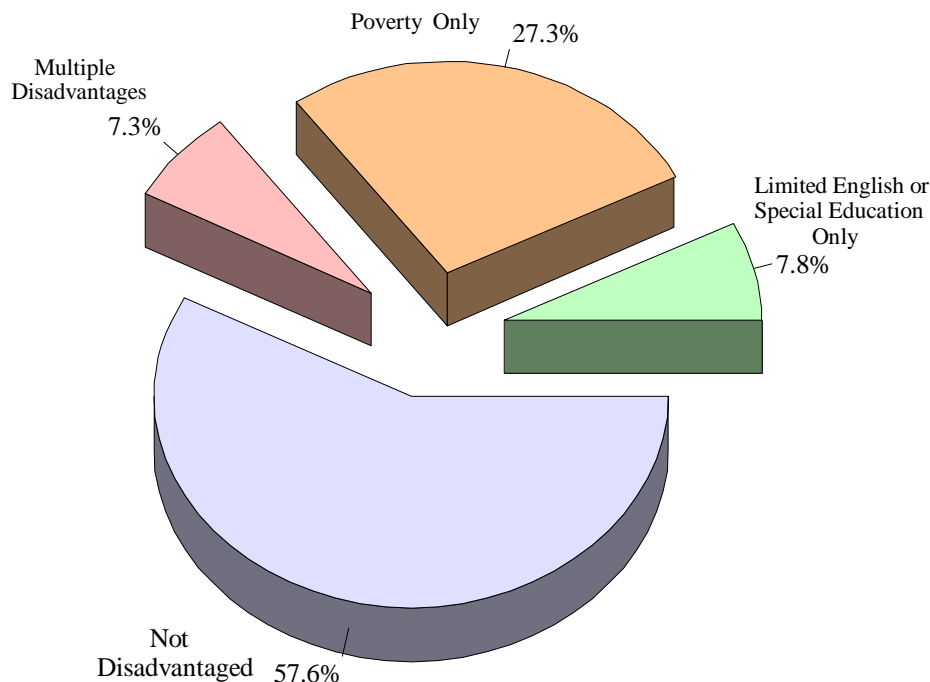


It is readily apparent from **Figures 4 and 5** that all three groups of children with special needs are growing. The extent of that growth has major implications for public education. Since the 1988-89 school year, overall enrollment increased by 11.4 percent while:

- ! The number of students who receive lunch subsidies has increased by nearly 25 percent;
- ! The number of students needing special education services has increased by over 50 percent; and
- ! The number of students who have limited English proficiency has increased by almost 75 percent.

Put simply, the numbers of students most in need of special services are increasing much more rapidly than is the population of students at large. This means that the task facing the public schools is steadily becoming more difficult and more costly. Students in each of these categories of special need represent an educational task and responsibility that is more demanding than that of educating a typical English-speaking, middle-class child of average intellect and ambition. Children from impoverished families tend to start school already behind their peers in academic development. The seriousness of the increasing prevalence of disadvantage among Hawaii's public school students is clear from **Figure 6**.

Figure 6. Disadvantages Affecting Hawaii's Public School Students



Children who come to public school without some element of disadvantage now barely constitute a majority of the student population. Students with educational disadvantages are now over 40% of our students.

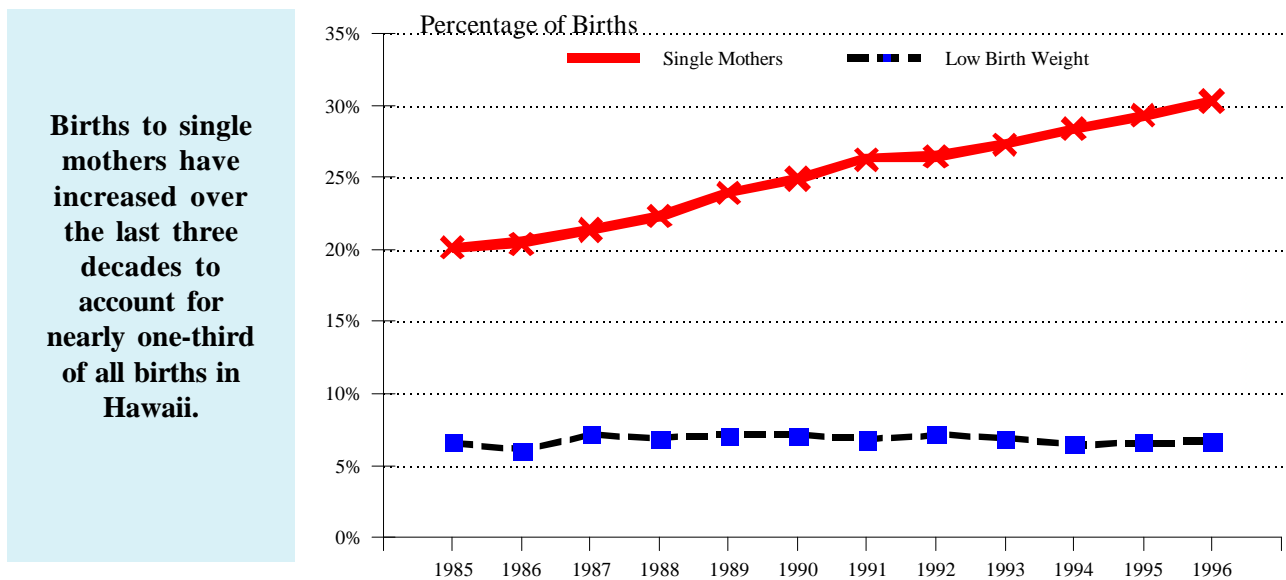
A bare majority of Hawaii's public school students do not bring with them at least one of these three types of educational disadvantage. The growth in the numbers of disadvantaged students in Hawaii's school population presents a particular chal-



lenge to the State’s schools in view of the rising expectations that the public has for what schools can achieve and the State’s continuing fiscal problems. Disadvantaged students require services that are more costly than the norm, and in many cases these students are “entitled” to whatever services are required to meet their specific needs. It will be challenging indeed to meet the needs of Hawaii’s students, both advantaged and disadvantaged, with the increasingly restricted funding that the State has and is willing to devote to public education.

Two birth statistics that are likely predictors of special needs among school-aged children are the incidence of low birth weight—under 2,500 grams (5.5 lb.)—and births to single mothers. The incidence of low birth weight is associated with a number of health and developmental problems in young children. Births to single mothers reflect weak family structure and especially the likelihood that the children will grow up poor. Data on these two indicators are given in **Figure 7**. The data (Appendix, Table 6) indicate a fairly stable proportion of children with low birth weight but steadily growing numbers and proportions of children born to single mothers. The 1996 rate of births to single mothers in Hawaii (30.3%) was over three times what it was in 1970 (9.6%).³

Figure 7. Incidence of Low Birth Weight and Births to Single Mothers



Births to single mothers have increased over the last three decades to account for nearly one-third of all births in Hawaii.

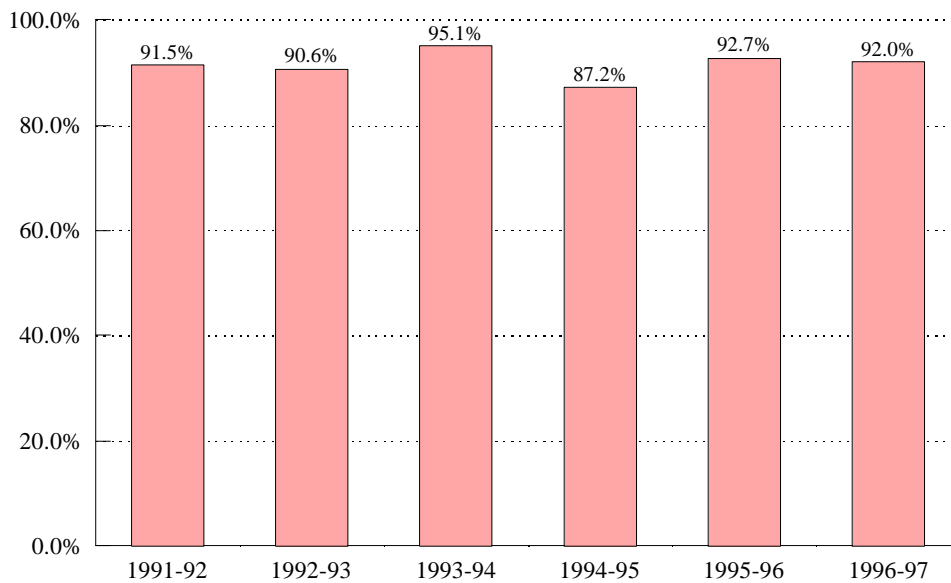
Student Transiency

Hawaii’s students are not exceptionally mobile. Although we do not have comparison data from other states, we do have estimates of the proportion of Hawaii’s students who were enrolled in the same school for the entire year.⁴ These proportions for the last six school years are shown in **Figure 8**. In 1996-97, individual schools had from 65% to over 99% of their students for the full school year. There was little variation among types of schools in the proportions of year-round students; statewide averages for elementary, intermediate, multi-grade and high schools were all between 91% and 94%. The most significant factor influencing students’ transiency is the demanding lifestyle of military parents; 8 of the 10



schools with less than 80% of their students enrolled year-round were schools serving military housing areas.⁵ The exceptions were Olomana School, at which students are expected to be transient, and Ni‘ihau School which had fewer than 30 students enrolled. Altogether, 92.9% of Hawaii’s students were enrolled in the same school all year.

Figure 8. Students Enrolled in the Same School All Year



Most schools have over 90% of their students enrolled for the entire school year. Almost all the schools with less than 80% of their students enrolled for the entire year serve military housing areas.

Hawaii’s public schools have a very diverse population of students. Like the State’s population as a whole, students come from a much wider set of ethnic backgrounds than is commonly encountered in the mainland United States. While Hawaii’s teachers are also more ethnically diverse than their mainland counterparts, as a group they are both less diverse and ethnically different than their students. The proportions of students and teachers from different ethnic groups are shown in **Figure 9**.

Student and Teacher Ethnicity

The ethnic differences reflected in **Figure 9** are simply the product of Hawaii’s changing demography. The State’s teaching population represents the demography and educational opportunities of a generation or more earlier than the one currently enrolled in the State’s public schools. A very substantial part of the challenge facing Hawaii’s public schools and teachers is to reach across differences of background and culture to make educational and economic opportunity real for those who will be Hawaii’s citizens of the 21st Century.



The ethnic differences between Hawaii's student population and that of its teachers reflect Hawaii's changing demography. The student population is becoming increasingly diverse

Figure 9. Ethnicity of Hawaii's Students and Teachers

