

The Midwest will lag all other regions of the country in the production of high school graduates in the next decade, and most states will experience decline.

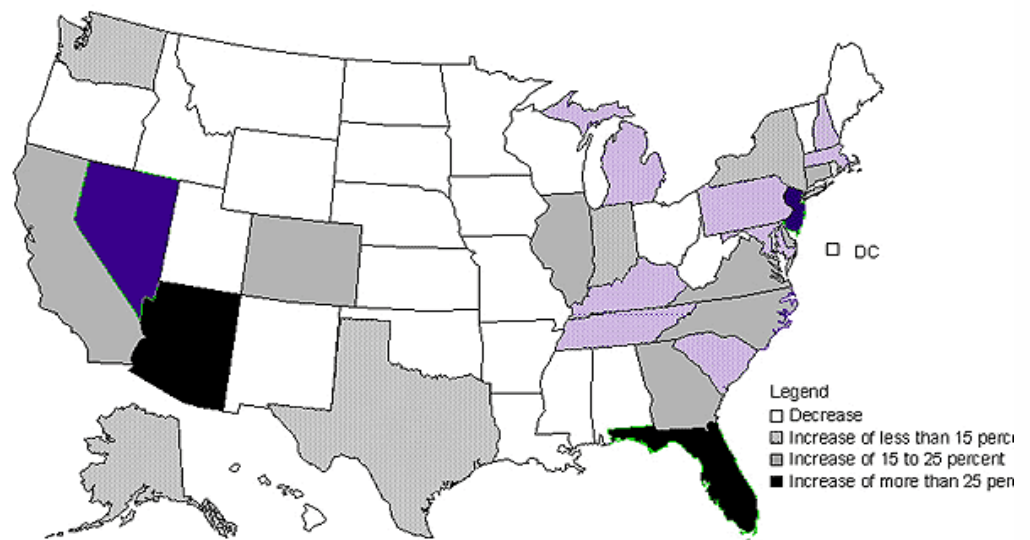
Midwest High School Graduate Forecast Challenging

The number of high school graduates nationally will rise by more than 9% between 2000 and 2012. That increase, in turn, provides the basis for an optimistic long-term forecast for higher education. However, the growth in high school graduates will not be evenly distributed across the country, and colleges located in the Midwest, particularly those reliant on traditional-age students, will face an increasingly challenging enrollment marketplace throughout the foreseeable future. The data that follow summarize key demographic trends that will influence the enrollment future of institutions in the Midwest, including the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University.

The National Outlook

- In total, the number of public high school graduates nationally is expected to rise by 9.2% between 2000 and 2012. Nearly all of the change will occur between 2000 and 2007. Comparatively little growth will occur between 2007 and 2012, when the number of high school graduates nationally is expected to rise by just 2%.
- Changes in the number of high school graduates will vary dramatically by state and region. Similar to trends at work in the 1990s, the number of graduates will continue to grow fastest in western and southern states. Between 2000 and 2012, the number of high school graduates will rise by almost 17% in the west and by 11% in the south. The fastest growth will occur in Nevada (71%), Arizona (38%), California (23%), Florida (27%), Virginia (24%), and North Carolina (22%).
- The Midwest faces a more challenging environment than any other region of the country. The number of high school graduates in the region will grow by just .2% between 2000 and 2012, and is expected to actually decline between 2007 and 2012. Among Midwestern states, only Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana will experience growing numbers of graduates. All other states in the region, including Minnesota, will experience declines, the sharpest occurring in North Dakota (-29%), South Dakota (-26%), Nebraska (-10%), and Iowa (-6%). Minnesota is expected to experience the smallest decline in high school graduates among Midwestern states.

Percent Change in Public High School Graduates by State, 2000 to 2012



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, May 2002

Minnesota Trends

- Between 1992 and 2003, the number of high school graduates in Minnesota grew by 25%, rising from 49,000 to nearly 62,000 (a figure still significantly below the peak years of baby boom generation). The increase in high school graduates in the state will come to an abrupt end in spring 2004, when the number of high school graduates will peak at 63,300. After 2004, the number of graduates in the state will begin a slow and long period of decline. Between 2004 and 2012, the number of high school graduates in the state will fall by 5%.
- The overall change masks significant variation by region within the state. Between 2004 and 2012, the number of graduates is expected to increase by 3% in the Twin Cities and by 4% in East Central Minnesota (including the St. Cloud area). Every other region will experience falling numbers of graduates, many of them significant. The number of high school graduates will fall by almost 18% in northern Minnesota and by 20% in southwestern Minnesota.
- In total, high school graduates increasingly will be concentrated in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. In 2003, Twin Cities area high schools produced 49% of all high school graduates in the state. By 2012, the Twin Cities area will produce 55% of all graduates in the state.
- All of the net decline in high school graduates in Minnesota to 2010 will occur among white, non-Hispanic students. The number of white graduates will decline by more than 11% between 2003 and 2010. At the same time, the number of high school graduates of color will continue to grow rapidly, increasing by 45% between 2003 and 2010. By 2010, graduates of color will make up 20% of all high school graduates in Minnesota, compared to just 7% in 1990.

Implications

Demography is not destiny, but it has important implications for the enrollment future of the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University:

- Given the population shift from Greater Minnesota to the Twin Cities, the colleges will have to increase their enrollment and market share in the seven-county metropolitan area. This fall, 46% of all new entering Minnesota resident students came from the Twin Cities, the highest percentage since fall 2000. Twin Cities' area students have never comprised more than half of all new entering Minnesota students at CSB/SJU.
- Both to achieve our national enrollment goals and to counteract the decline in high school graduates in the region, the colleges likely will have to develop new secondary markets outside of the Upper Midwest. Attracting a more national student body will be challenging. Despite popular or marketed images to the contrary, most colleges are regional and most college students attend school close to home. Only 18% of all private college students in the country travel more than 500 miles to attend college and nearly half travel less than 100 miles.
- The colleges will have to clearly address issues of distinction and distinctiveness in a shrinking and competitive regional marketplace. Competition for high achieving students already is keen and will surely intensify as their numbers either stabilize or decline in Minnesota and the surrounding states.

For additional information, please contact Jon McGee at 5287 or at jmcgee@csbsju.edu. If you would like to read past issues of *Trends*, please visit our website at <http://www.csbsju.edu/institutionalresearch/Trends/trends.htm>.