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U.S.

Percentage of Poor Students in Public Schools Rises

By MOTOKO RICH JAN. 16, 2015

Just over half of all students attending public schools in the United States are now eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, according to a new analysis of federal data.

In a report released Friday by the Southern Education Foundation, researchers found that 51 percent of children in public schools qualified for the lunches in 2013, which means that most of them come from low-income families. By comparison, 38 percent of public school students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches in 2000.

According to the report, which analyzed data from the National Center for Education Statistics, a majority of students in 21 states are poor. Close to two-thirds of those states are in the South, which has long had a high concentration of poor students. In Mississippi, for example, close to three-fourths of all public school students come from low-income families.

But the West also has a large and growing proportion of low-income students. Arizona, California, Hawaii and Nevada have high rates of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

Children who are eligible for such lunches do not necessarily live in poverty. Subsidized lunches are available to children from families that earn up to \$43,568, for a family of four, which is about 185 percent of the federal poverty level.

The number of children eligible for subsidized lunches has probably increased in part because the federal Agriculture Department now allows

schools with a majority of low-income students to offer free lunches to all students, regardless of whether they qualify on an individual basis or not.

Still, it is clear that public schools are educating higher numbers of low-income children, and the trend has been going on for much longer than the period that started with the most recent recession.

Steve Suitts, vice president of the Southern Education Foundation, which is based in Atlanta, noted that an increasing number of low-income immigrant families were moving to regions where they had not gone before.

Students from such families tend to arrive at school with different needs from those from middle-class and affluent families. They may have more medical problems or behavioral issues and need extra academic help. Unlike their wealthier peers, they do not have the benefit of music lessons, private sports leagues, tutoring or trips to cultural events, and their schools are left to fill in the gaps.

“We in no way are providing schools and teachers in schools with what it takes to educate low-income students today, as they continue to become a huge part of the school population,” Mr. Suitts said.

The Obama administration has indicated that it plans to request an additional \$1 billion in 2016 for the program that funnels money to schools with high percentages of poor students.

“Now more than ever, it is critical that we as a country ensure schools have the resources and support necessary to prepare every student — no matter his or her ZIP code — for college, careers and life,” said Dorie Nolt, a spokeswoman for the federal Education Department. Critics of federal education policy say that there is too narrow a focus on academic standards and testing as the way of measuring whether poorer students are getting equal opportunities. Lily Eskelsen García, president of the National Education Association, suggested that policymakers look at schools in the wealthiest communities as models of what all schools should offer.

“Just tell me what you provided for those kids, that those parents said was absolutely crucial for my kids to succeed in life,” Ms. Eskelsen García said.

“That includes good athletics and arts departments, too, I’ll bet you. So make

that school the benchmark.”

Recognizing the increase in low-income students in California, Gov. Jerry Brown instituted a new funding formula two years ago for state dollars directed to public schools. Now, schools get a much higher proportion of per-pupil funding for students who are from low-income families, in foster care or learning English.

School administrators in districts that already have a high proportion of poor students say they have to think of many services that educators in wealthier districts do not.

An increasing number of school districts now also serve dinner to students. In Cleveland, where the vast majority of the school district’s 39,000 students are poor, Eric Gordon, chief executive of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, said that most schools there have regular programs to send food home with students and that the district has staff members who help homeless families find places to stay.

When he was a principal in a much wealthier district, Mr. Gordon said, he never had to worry about any of these issues. Now, he said, as more districts have to serve poor students, he worries there will not be enough taxpayer money to help everybody.

“The first-ring suburban communities around us are facing the impacts of poverty,” Mr. Gordon said. Now federal funding “has to be spread over more communities with more poverty.”

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Rise in Percentage of Poor Students in Public Schools

This was to be an AI.

For the first time in no less than 50 years, a majority of U.S. state funded school understudies originate from low-salary families, as per another investigation of 2013 government information, a measurement that has significant ramifications for the country. The movement of a larger part poor understudy populace implies that in government funded schools, a becoming number of youngsters begin kindergarten officially trailing their more special associates and seldom, if at any point, make up for lost time. They are more averse to have help at home, are less as often as possibly presented to improving exercises outside of school, and are more inclined to drop out and never go to school. It likewise implies that training arrangement, subsidizing choices, and classroom guideline must adjust to the destitute kids who touch base at school every day.

are Greater parts of the student in 21 states are poor. Near to 66% of those states is in the South, which has long had a high centralization of poor understudies. In Mississippi, for instance, near to three-fourths of all state-funded school *students* (understudies) originate from low-pay families. At the same time, the West likewise has a substantial and becoming the extent of low-salary understudies. Children who are qualified for such snacks don't essentially live in destitution. The quantity of youngsters qualified for financed snacks has most likely expanded to some degree in light of the fact that the Government Agriculture Department now

Sentence structure, word choices confusing

permits schools with a majority of low-salary understudies to offer free snacks to all understudies, paying little mind to whether they qualify on an individual premise or not. Still, it is clear that government funded schools are instructing higher quantities of low-wage kids, and the pattern has been continuing for any longer than the period that began with the latest subsidence.