DECEMBER 2023

# BELIEVING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

## A Demographic and State-level Analysis of Public Charter School and District Public School Enrollment Trends


AUTHORS:

**Drew Jacobs**
Senior Director
*Policy, Research, and Evaluation*

**Debbie Veney**
Senior Vice President
*Communications and Marketing*



NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



# INTRODUCTION

With the pandemic largely in the rearview mirror, many things have returned to normal. Enrollment in public schools has not. However, enrollment in one type of public school—charter schools—has continued to grow. In fact, charter schools are the only piece of public school education experiencing consistent growth. Furthermore, that growth is meaningful. The charter sector gained slightly more than 72,000 students from 2021-22 to 2022-23—and has gained more than 300,000 students since 2019-20. Meanwhile, district public schools have been unable to recover the 1.5 million students they lost during the pandemic.

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools has been monitoring pandemic-related enrollment trends since September 2021, when we published ***Voting with their Feet: A State-Level Analysis of Public Charter School and District Public School Trends***. In this report, we found that, based on interim data from 2019-20 to 2020-21, charters enrolled nearly 240,000 new students, while district public schools lost more than 1.4 million students.

Last year, we published ***Changing Course: Public School Enrollment Shifts During the Pandemic***, in which we examined enrollment data from 2019-20 to 2021-22. We found that, after the initial enrollment boom for charter schools during the first full school year of the pandemic, and massive enrollment decline for district public schools, enrollment numbers more or less stayed put, with both charter schools and district public schools showing essentially flat one-year enrollment from 2020-21 to 2021-22. There appeared to be an "adjustment" that occurred during the pandemic, resulting in a permanent shift. Most students who left never returned to their neighborhood public schools.

Data in this report suggest the shift away from district public schools into other educational options has endured.[1] Charter schools remain a popular choice for families. Enrollment between 2021-22 and 2022-23 increased again, while district enrollment remains essentially flat for the second year in a row—which is something we should be very concerned about.

Many families are leaving public education altogether. District enrollment is down, and the vast majority of students who might have gone to district schools haven't necessarily found an educational home in charter schools. So, where have they gone, and why?

When there is a public school opportunity, such as a local charter school, parents will take it, but these opportunities are limited. Though legislative victories in several statehouses helped create better conditions for charter school expansion over the past few years, in many states, charter schools still face barriers to growth. Charter schools are also challenged by funding disparities and perennial struggles to access, afford, and renovate school buildings. District public schools are therefore far more likely to lose students to homeschooling, microschools, or private schools than to charter schools.

This issue is much larger than "charter schools vs. district schools." In decades past, families who could not afford to live in a certain neighborhood or pay private school tuition had to accept the only option available—their neighborhood public school—even if it wasn't what they wanted. Those days are gone. Families have discovered choice, and they like it.

But what happens when millions of students no longer attend public schools? And what happens when public education dollars leave the system entirely? Along with those dollars, we also lose comparability, transparency, and accessibility across all schools. And this raises new questions about student academic achievement and performance, as well as how to assess these measures.

This is also an issue of equity; every child in this country is entitled to a great public education. Clearly, many families don't think what they are being offered is working for them. Is there a way to get these families back and restore their faith in public education? We believe charter schools can help. These innovative public schools are an important part of the public education ecosystem.

# THE ONLY PART OF PUBLIC EDUCATION THAT IS GROWING

Year over year, growth in charter schools continues. In the most recent school year, from 2021-22 to 2022-23, we saw a 2% year-over-year growth rate for charter schools, while district school enrollment remained flat. In practical terms, this means charter school enrollment increased by 72,241 students (or 2.02%) while district public school enrollment increased by only 7,458 students (or 0.02%) nationwide. Looking at raw numbers, charter schools enrolled nearly ten times the number of new students as district schools in the last school year. This represents meaningful growth for charter schools, especially considering that charter schools only serve 7.5% of the nation's public school students.

It also represents a continuing trend for districts, which have been losing students for many years. The slow leak of declining enrollment in many districts became a nationwide gush in 2019. Our major finding is that, from 2019 to 2023, charter schools experienced a nearly 9% growth rate, gaining 300,411 students, while district schools have lost 3.5% of their enrollees, or 1,524,491 million students.

Additionally, nearly every state has gained charter students since 2019-20. Over the past four years, 40 of 42 states included in our analysis saw an increase of students enrolling in charter schools. These enrollment increases range from 35 students in Virginia and Wyoming to 67,148 students in Texas. Sectors vary in size, so it's important to look at the percentage change, where we see a range as well: from a 0.29% increase in Massachusetts to a 94.7% increase in Iowa. Two states, Arkansas and Illinois, saw charter enrollment decreases, of about 885 and about 3,769, respectively. However, in both of these instances, the enrollment losses were lower than those seen in all other public schools—a 2.52% enrollment loss for charters in Arkansas, compared to a 6.11% enrollment loss for district public schools, and a 5.94% enrollment loss for charters in Illinois, compared to a 6.2% loss for district public schools. In 37 out of 41 states, enrollment growth in charter schools also outpaced state population trends. There were four states (Arkansas, Hawaii, Illinois, and Utah) where charter enrollment growth was less than school-aged population growth.

Conversely, all other public schools (non-charters) lost students in nearly every state. While Idaho and Utah saw enrollment increases of 2,660 and 6,642, respectively, almost every other state saw enrollment losses in the public non-charter sector. From 2019-20 to 2022-23, 40 out of 42 states included in our analysis lost students in public district schools. These enrollment losses ranged from 906 students in Washington, D.C., to 320,636 students in California. We see a range in percentage change, as well, from a 0.79% loss in Delaware to a 6.84% loss in New York. We also note that, in 41 of 41 states, enrollment growth in district public schools was lower than state population growth or decline. Simply put, the enrollment patterns can't be attributed to people moving in or out of states.

The big question, then, is ***why?***

Some answers might be found in our 2022 report ***Never Going Back: An Analysis of Parent Sentiment***.[2] We commissioned The Harris Poll to conduct a national survey of parents that found that those who chose to send their children to public charter schools did so because charter schools exhibited characteristics of higher quality instruction (54%), smaller school and class sizes (47%), and better safety (47%). And in general, parents value choice—93% agree one size doesn't fit all in education. More than 1 in 4 parents are school-type switchers, and 86% of them want options for their children other than the district school they are zoned for or assigned to attend.

We also found that teachers agree with parents. In our recent report ***Listen to Your Teacher: An Analysis of Teacher Sentiment on the State of Public Education***,[3] we commissioned The Harris Poll to conduct a survey of public school teachers. We found that about 4 in 5 of them agree that public school choice is important for both families and teachers, and more than two thirds agree that having more than one type of public school option is a good thing.

## TABLE 1: STATE-LEVEL ENROLLMENT IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND NON-CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS (SY 2019-20 TO 2020-21)

| State | 2019-20 Charter Enrollment | 2019-20 Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2020-21 Charter Enrollment | 2020-21 Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 19-20 to 20-21 Charter Change | 19-20 to 20-21 Non-Charter Public Change | 19-20 to 20-21 % Charter Change | 19-20 to 20-21 % Non-Charter Public Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALASKA | 7,066 | 125,511 | 8,196 | 122,198 | 1,130 | (3,313) | 15.99% | -2.64% |
| ARIZONA | 213,820 | 936,986 | 232,249 | 880,007 | 18,429 | (56,979) | 8.62% | -6.08% |
| ARKANSAS | 35,115 | 444,317 | 40,596 | 424,164 | 5,481 | (20,153) | 15.61% | -4.54% |
| CALIFORNIA | 675,374 | 5,487,627 | 690,657 | 5,311,866 | 15,283 | (175,761) | 2.26% | -3.20% |
| COLORADO | 127,213 | 786,010 | 132,215 | 750,984 | 5,002 | (35,026) | 3.93% | -4.46% |
| CONNECTICUT | 10,806 | 512,857 | 10,940 | 498,123 | 134 | (14,734) | 1.24% | -2.87% |
| DELAWARE | 16,366 | 124,485 | 16,910 | 121,513 | 544 | (2,972) | 3.32% | -2.39% |
| DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA | 43,518 | 51,037 | 43,942 | 49,890 | 424 | (1,147) | 0.97% | -2.25% |
| FLORIDA | 329,219 | 2,529,733 | 341,594 | 2,450,093 | 12,375 | (79,640) | 3.76% | -3.15% |
| GEORGIA | 66,026 | 1,703,595 | 71,511 | 1,658,455 | 5,485 | (45,140) | 8.31% | -2.65% |
| HAWAII | 11,877 | 167,454 | 12,213 | 162,491 | 336 | (4,963) | 2.83% | -2.96% |
| IDAHO | 25,364 | 286,627 | 31,576 | 279,077 | 6,212 | (7,550) | 24.49% | -2.63% |
| ILLINOIS | 63,462 | 1,876,391 | 62,742 | 1,790,757 | (720) | (85,634) | -1.13% | -4.56% |
| INDIANA | 46,796 | 1,004,255 | 49,691 | 984,090 | 2,895 | (20,165) | 6.19% | -2.01% |
| IOWA | 132 | 517,189 | 123 | 506,533 | (9) | (10,656) | -6.82% | -2.06% |
| LOUISIANA | 87,506 | 632,306 | 87,670 | 611,955 | 164 | (20,351) | 0.19% | -3.22% |
| MAINE | 2,188 | 178,148 | 2,455 | 170,019 | 267 | (8,129) | 12.20% | -4.56% |
| MARYLAND | 22,680 | 886,734 | 23,366 | 859,172 | 686 | (27,562) | 3.02% | -3.11% |
| MASSACHUSETTS | 47,978 | 900,850 | 48,578 | 862,887 | 600 | (37,963) | 1.25% | -4.21% |
| MICHIGAN | 147,484 | 1,302,966 | 149,599 | 1,254,694 | 2,115 | (48,272) | 1.43% | -3.70% |
| MINNESOTA | 62,751 | 830,452 | 65,987 | 806,096 | 3,236 | (24,356) | 5.16% | -2.93% |
| MISSISSIPPI | 2,128 | 463,466 | 2,674 | 439,861 | 546 | (23,605) | 25.66% | -5.09% |
| MISSOURI | 25,113 | 892,175 | 25,330 | 863,618 | 217 | (28,557) | 0.86% | -3.20% |
| NEVADA | 57,894 | 442,966 | 61,690 | 424,943 | 3,796 | (18,023) | 6.56% | -4.07% |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE | 4,228 | 171,940 | 4,545 | 163,364 | 317 | (8,576) | 7.50% | -4.99% |
| NEW JERSEY | 55,604 | 1,320,225 | 57,480 | 1,285,960 | 1,876 | (34,265) | 3.37% | -2.60% |
| NEW MEXICO | 27,437 | 303,802 | 29,364 | 287,496 | 1,927 | (16,306) | 7.02% | -5.37% |
| NEW YORK | 159,214 | 2,479,735 | 170,509 | 2,388,655 | 11,295 | (91,080) | 7.09% | -3.67% |
| NORTH CAROLINA | 118,597 | 1,419,142 | 127,125 | 1,368,256 | 8,528 | (50,886) | 7.19% | -3.59% |
| OHIO | 107,601 | 1,684,454 | 119,605 | 1,619,781 | 12,004 | (64,673) | 11.16% | -3.84% |
| OKLAHOMA | 45,988 | 657,662 | 81,739 | 612,374 | 35,751 | (45,288) | 77.74% | -6.89% |
| OREGON | 38,247 | 544,414 | 46,273 | 514,644 | 8,026 | (29,770) | 20.98% | -5.47% |
| PENNSYLVANIA | 146,556 | 1,627,193 | 169,252 | 1,575,473 | 22,696 | (51,720) | 15.49% | -3.18% |
| RHODE ISLAND | 10,088 | 133,469 | 10,547 | 128,637 | 459 | (4,832) | 4.55% | -3.62% |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | 39,417 | 747,652 | 47,566 | 719,253 | 8,149 | (28,399) | 20.67% | -3.80% |
| TEXAS | 336,900 | 5,157,026 | 365,930 | 5,005,633 | 29,030 | (151,393) | 8.62% | -2.94% |
| UTAH | 77,582 | 589,276 | 79,179 | 586,127 | 1,597 | (3,149) | 2.06% | -0.53% |
| VIRGINIA | 1,218 | 1,296,794 | 1,267 | 1,251,485 | 49 | (45,309) | 4.02% | -3.49% |
| WASHINGTON | 3,024 | 1,132,353 | 3,617 | 1,080,919 | 593 | (51,434) | 19.61% | -4.54% |
| WISCONSIN | 44,703 | 810,256 | 50,861 | 779,074 | 6,158 | (31,182) | 13.78% | -3.85% |
| WYOMING | 631 | 93,201 | 609 | 91,329 | (22) | (1,872) | -3.49% | -2.01% |
| **TOTAL** | **3,344,911** | **43,252,731** | **3,577,972** | **41,741,946** | **233,061** | **(1,510,785)** | **6.97%** | **-3.49%** |



## TABLE 2: STATE-LEVEL ENROLLMENT IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND NON-CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS (SY 2020-21 TO 2021-22)

| State | 2020-21 Charter Enrollment | 2020-21 Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2021-22 Charter Enrollment | 2021-22 Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 20-21 to 21-22 Charter Change | 20-21 to 21-22 Non-Charter Public Change | 20-21 to 21-22 % Charter Change | 20-21 to 21-22 % Non-Charter Public Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALASKA | 8,196 | 122,198 | 7,648 | 122,794 | (548) | 596 | -6.69% | 0.49% |
| ARIZONA | 232,249 | 880,007 | 230,816 | 902,183 | (1,433) | 22,176 | -0.62% | 2.52% |
| ARKANSAS | 40,596 | 424,164 | 37,063 | 417,460 | (3,533) | (6,704) | -8.70% | -1.58% |
| CALIFORNIA | 690,657 | 5,311,866 | 678,057 | 5,214,183 | (12,600) | (97,683) | -1.82% | -1.84% |
| COLORADO | 132,215 | 750,984 | 135,241 | 751,276 | 3,026 | 292 | 2.29% | 0.04% |
| CONNECTICUT | 10,940 | 498,123 | 11,056 | 498,969 | 116 | 846 | 1.06% | 0.17% |
| DELAWARE | 16,910 | 121,513 | 17,201 | 123,062 | 291 | 1,549 | 1.72% | 1.27% |
| DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA | 43,942 | 49,890 | 44,899 | 49,035 | 957 | (855) | 2.18% | -1.71% |
| FLORIDA | 341,594 | 2,450,093 | 361,939 | 2,471,240 | 20,345 | 21,147 | 5.96% | 0.86% |
| GEORGIA | 71,511 | 1,658,455 | 69,242 | 1,671,570 | (2,269) | 13,115 | -3.17% | 0.79% |
| HAWAII | 12,213 | 162,491 | 12,097 | 159,503 | (116) | (2,988) | -0.95% | -1.84% |
| IDAHO | 31,576 | 279,077 | 29,204 | 286,955 | (2,372) | 7,878 | -7.51% | 2.82% |
| ILLINOIS | 62,742 | 1,790,757 | 61,089 | 1,771,359 | (1,653) | (19,398) | -2.63% | -1.08% |
| INDIANA | 49,691 | 984,090 | 50,073 | 986,552 | 382 | 2,462 | 0.77% | 0.25% |
| IOWA | 123 | 506,533 | 149 | 510,510 | 26 | 3,977 | 21.14% | 0.79% |
| LOUISIANA | 87,670 | 611,955 | 88,292 | 601,800 | 622 | (10,155) | 0.71% | -1.66% |
| MAINE | 2,455 | 170,019 | 2,516 | 170,721 | 61 | 702 | 2.48% | 0.41% |
| MARYLAND | 23,366 | 859,172 | 24,104 | 857,367 | 738 | (1,805) | 3.16% | -0.21% |
| MASSACHUSETTS | 48,578 | 862,887 | 48,399 | 863,130 | (179) | 243 | -0.37% | 0.03% |
| MICHIGAN | 149,599 | 1,254,694 | 150,673 | 1,247,678 | 1,074 | (7,016) | 0.72% | -0.56% |
| MINNESOTA | 65,987 | 806,096 | 66,595 | 803,911 | 608 | (2,185) | 0.92% | -0.27% |
| MISSISSIPPI | 2,674 | 439,861 | 2,921 | 439,067 | 247 | (794) | 9.24% | -0.18% |
| MISSOURI | 25,330 | 863,618 | 25,853 | 872,345 | 523 | 8,727 | 2.06% | 1.01% |
| NEVADA | 61,690 | 424,943 | 63,944 | 428,394 | 2,254 | 3,451 | 3.65% | 0.81% |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE | 4,545 | 163,364 | 4,938 | 163,682 | 393 | 318 | 8.65% | 0.19% |
| NEW JERSEY | 57,480 | 1,285,960 | 58,777 | 1,280,626 | 1,297 | (5,334) | 2.26% | -0.41% |
| NEW MEXICO | 29,364 | 287,496 | 30,160 | 286,646 | 796 | (850) | 2.71% | -0.30% |
| NEW YORK | 170,509 | 2,388,655 | 173,188 | 2,332,329 | 2,679 | (56,326) | 1.57% | -2.36% |
| NORTH CAROLINA | 127,125 | 1,368,256 | 132,909 | 1,370,859 | 5,784 | 2,603 | 4.55% | 0.19% |
| OHIO | 119,605 | 1,619,781 | 115,937 | 1,641,367 | (3,668) | 21,586 | -3.07% | 1.33% |
| OKLAHOMA | 81,739 | 612,374 | 59,755 | 638,941 | (21,984) | 26,567 | -26.90% | 4.34% |
| OREGON | 46,273 | 514,644 | 42,639 | 510,373 | (3,634) | (4,271) | -7.85% | -0.83% |
| PENNSYLVANIA | 169,252 | 1,575,473 | 163,625 | 1,575,827 | (5,627) | 354 | -3.32% | 0.02% |
| RHODE ISLAND | 10,547 | 128,637 | 11,418 | 127,418 | 871 | (1,219) | 8.26% | -0.95% |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | 47,566 | 719,253 | 49,410 | 731,821 | 1,844 | 12,568 | 3.88% | 1.75% |
| TEXAS | 365,930 | 5,005,633 | 377,320 | 5,049,962 | 11,390 | 44,329 | 3.11% | 0.89% |
| UTAH | 79,179 | 586,127 | 77,750 | 596,601 | (1,429) | 10,474 | -1.80% | 1.79% |
| VIRGINIA | 1,267 | 1,251,485 | 1,278 | 1,250,692 | 11 | (793) | 0.87% | -0.06% |
| WASHINGTON | 3,617 | 1,080,919 | 4,598 | 1,081,851 | 981 | 932 | 27.12% | 0.09% |
| WISCONSIN | 50,861 | 779,074 | 49,678 | 779,465 | (1,183) | 391 | -2.33% | 0.05% |
| WYOMING | 609 | 91,329 | 630 | 91,992 | 21 | 663 | 3.45% | 0.73% |
| **TOTAL** | **3,577,972** | **41,741,946** | **3,573,081** | **41,731,516** | **(4,891)** | **(10,430)** | **-0.14%** | **-0.02%** |

## TABLE 3: STATE-LEVEL ENROLLMENT IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND NON-CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS (SY 2021-22 TO 2022-23)

| State | 2021-22 Charter Enrollment | 2021-22 Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2022-23 Charter Enrollment | 2022-23 Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 21-22 to 22-23 Charter Change | 21-22 to 22-23 Non-Charter Public Change | 21-22 to 22-23 % Charter Change | 21-22 to 22-23 % Non-Charter Public Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALASKA | 7,648 | 122,794 | 8,401 | 122,811 | 753 | 17 | 9.85% | 0.01% |
| ARIZONA | 230,816 | 902,183 | 232,663 | 892,632 | 1,847 | (9,551) | 0.80% | -1.06% |
| ARKANSAS | 37,063 | 417,460 | 34,230 | 417,161 | (2,833) | (299) | -7.64% | -0.07% |
| CALIFORNIA | 678,057 | 5,214,183 | 685,553 | 5,166,991 | 7,496 | (47,192) | 1.11% | -0.91% |
| COLORADO | 135,241 | 751,276 | 137,722 | 745,542 | 2,481 | (5,734) | 1.83% | -0.76% |
| CONNECTICUT | 11,056 | 498,969 | 10,897 | 498,919 | (159) | (50) | -1.44% | -0.01% |
| DELAWARE | 17,201 | 123,062 | 18,223 | 123,507 | 1,022 | 445 | 5.94% | 0.36% |
| DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA | 44,899 | 49,035 | 46,392 | 50,131 | 1,493 | 1,096 | 3.33% | 2.24% |
| FLORIDA | 361,939 | 2,471,240 | 382,367 | 2,488,140 | 20,428 | 16,900 | 5.64% | 0.68% |
| GEORGIA | 69,242 | 1,671,570 | 69,874 | 1,681,294 | 632 | 9,724 | 0.91% | 0.58% |
| HAWAII | 12,097 | 159,503 | 12,116 | 156,518 | 19 | (2,985) | 0.16% | -1.87% |
| IDAHO | 29,204 | 286,955 | 29,692 | 289,287 | 488 | 2,332 | 1.67% | 0.81% |
| ILLINOIS | 61,089 | 1,771,359 | 59,693 | 1,760,053 | (1,396) | (11,306) | -2.29% | -0.64% |
| INDIANA | 50,073 | 986,552 | 51,122 | 985,016 | 1,049 | (1,536) | 2.09% | -0.16% |
| IOWA | 149 | 510,510 | 257 | 511,070 | 108 | 560 | 72.48% | 0.11% |
| LOUISIANA | 88,292 | 601,800 | 90,949 | 594,657 | 2,657 | (7,143) | 3.01% | -1.19% |
| MAINE | 2,516 | 170,721 | 2,726 | 171,181 | 210 | 460 | 8.35% | 0.27% |
| MARYLAND | 24,104 | 857,367 | 23,974 | 865,997 | (130) | 8,630 | -0.54% | 1.01% |
| MASSACHUSETTS | 48,399 | 863,130 | 48,115 | 865,620 | (284) | 2,490 | -0.59% | 0.29% |
| MICHIGAN | 150,673 | 1,247,678 | 150,486 | 1,240,623 | (187) | (7,055) | -0.12% | -0.57% |
| MINNESOTA | 66,595 | 803,911 | 67,890 | 802,129 | 1,295 | (1,782) | 1.94% | -0.22% |
| MISSISSIPPI | 2,921 | 439,067 | 3,245 | 437,040 | 324 | (2,027) | 11.09% | -0.46% |
| MISSOURI | 25,853 | 872,345 | 25,488 | 871,081 | (365) | (1,264) | -1.41% | -0.14% |
| NEVADA | 63,944 | 428,394 | 68,771 | 420,826 | 4,827 | (7,568) | 7.55% | -1.77% |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE | 4,938 | 163,682 | 5,530 | 161,827 | 592 | (1,855) | 11.99% | -1.13% |
| NEW JERSEY | 58,777 | 1,280,626 | 60,186 | 1,292,194 | 1,409 | 11,568 | 2.40% | 0.90% |
| NEW MEXICO | 30,160 | 286,646 | 30,973 | 284,058 | 813 | (2,588) | 2.70% | -0.90% |
| NEW YORK | 173,188 | 2,332,329 | 175,065 | 2,310,156 | 1,877 | (22,173) | 1.08% | -0.95% |
| NORTH CAROLINA | 132,909 | 1,370,859 | 140,905 | 1,378,133 | 7,996 | 7,274 | 6.02% | 0.53% |
| OHIO | 115,937 | 1,641,367 | 116,220 | 1,640,610 | 283 | (757) | 0.24% | -0.05% |
| OKLAHOMA | 59,755 | 638,941 | 50,716 | 650,542 | (9,039) | 11,601 | -15.13% | 1.82% |
| OREGON | 42,639 | 510,373 | 41,577 | 510,803 | (1,062) | 430 | -2.49% | 0.08% |
| PENNSYLVANIA | 163,625 | 1,575,827 | 161,909 | 1,578,852 | (1,716) | 3,025 | -1.05% | 0.19% |
| RHODE ISLAND | 11,418 | 127,418 | 12,149 | 125,303 | 731 | (2,115) | 6.40% | -1.66% |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | 49,410 | 731,821 | 49,486 | 739,745 | 76 | 7,924 | 0.15% | 1.08% |
| TEXAS | 377,320 | 5,049,962 | 404,048 | 5,114,312 | 26,728 | 64,350 | 7.08% | 1.27% |
| UTAH | 77,750 | 596,601 | 78,732 | 595,918 | 982 | (683) | 1.26% | -0.11% |
| VIRGINIA | 1,278 | 1,250,692 | 1,253 | 1,262,089 | (25) | 11,397 | -1.96% | 0.91% |
| WASHINGTON | 4,598 | 1,081,851 | 4,831 | 1,073,508 | 233 | (8,343) | 5.07% | -0.77% |
| WEST VIRGINIA | — | 250,899 | 1,248 | 248,801 | 1,248 | (2,098) | 100.00% | -0.84% |
| WISCONSIN | 49,678 | 779,465 | 48,982 | 773,822 | 696 | (5,643) | -1.40% | -0.72% |
| WYOMING | 630 | 91,992 | 666 | 90,974 | 36 | (1,018) | 5.71% | -1.11% |
| **TOTAL** | **3,573,081** | **41,982,415** | **3,645,322** | **41,989,873** | **72,241** | **7,458** | **2.02%** | **0.02%** |



## TABLE 4: STATE-LEVEL ENROLLMENT IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND NON-CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS (SY 2019-20 TO 2022-23): OVERALL ENROLLMENT TRENDS

| State | 2019-20 Charter Enrollment | 2019-20 Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2020-21 Charter Enrollment | 2020-21 Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2021-22 Charter Enrollment | 2021-22 Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2022-23 Charter Enrollment | 2022-23 Non-Charter Public Enrollment | Four Year Charter Change | Four Year Non-Charter Public Change | % Charter Change | % Non-Charter Public Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALASKA | 7,066 | 125,511 | 8,196 | 122,198 | 7,648 | 122,794 | 8,401 | 122,811 | 1,335 | (2,700) | 18.89% | -2.15% |
| ARIZONA | 213,820 | 936,986 | 232,249 | 880,007 | 230,816 | 902,183 | 232,663 | 892,632 | 18,843 | (44,354) | 8.81% | -4.73% |
| ARKANSAS | 35,115 | 444,317 | 40,596 | 424,164 | 37,063 | 417,460 | 34,230 | 417,161 | (885) | (27,156) | -2.52% | -6.11% |
| CALIFORNIA | 675,374 | 5,487,627 | 690,657 | 5,311,866 | 678,057 | 5,214,183 | 685,553 | 5,166,991 | 10,179 | (320,636) | 1.51% | -5.84% |
| COLORADO | 127,213 | 786,010 | 132,215 | 750,984 | 135,241 | 751,276 | 137,722 | 745,542 | 10,509 | (40,468) | 8.26% | -5.15% |
| CONNECTICUT | 10,806 | 512,857 | 10,940 | 498,123 | 11,056 | 498,969 | 10,897 | 498,919 | 91 | (13,938) | 0.84% | -2.72% |
| DELAWARE | 16,366 | 124,485 | 16,910 | 121,513 | 17,201 | 123,062 | 18,223 | 123,507 | 1,857 | (978) | 11.35% | -0.79% |
| DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA | 43,518 | 51,037 | 43,942 | 49,890 | 44,899 | 49,035 | 46,392 | 50,131 | 2,874 | (906) | 6.60% | -1.78% |
| FLORIDA | 329,219 | 2,529,733 | 341,594 | 2,450,093 | 361,939 | 2,471,240 | 382,367 | 2,488,140 | 53,148 | (41,593) | 16.14% | -1.64% |
| GEORGIA | 66,026 | 1,703,595 | 71,511 | 1,658,455 | 69,242 | 1,671,570 | 69,874 | 1,681,294 | 3,848 | (22,301) | 5.83% | -1.31% |
| HAWAII | 11,877 | 167,454 | 12,213 | 162,491 | 12,097 | 159,503 | 12,116 | 156,518 | 239 | (10,936) | 2.01% | -6.53% |
| IDAHO | 25,364 | 286,627 | 31,576 | 279,077 | 29,204 | 286,955 | 29,692 | 289,287 | 4,328 | 2,660 | 17.06% | 0.93% |
| ILLINOIS | 63,462 | 1,876,391 | 62,742 | 1,790,757 | 61,089 | 1,771,359 | 59,693 | 1,760,053 | (3,769) | (116,338) | -5.94% | -6.20% |
| INDIANA | 46,796 | 1,004,255 | 49,691 | 984,090 | 50,073 | 986,552 | 51,122 | 985,016 | 4,326 | (19,239) | 9.24% | -1.92% |
| IOWA | 132 | 517,189 | 123 | 506,533 | 149 | 510,510 | 257 | 511,070 | 125 | (6,119) | 94.70% | -1.18% |
| LOUISIANA | 87,506 | 632,306 | 87,670 | 611,955 | 88,292 | 601,800 | 90,949 | 594,657 | 3,443 | (37,649) | 3.93% | -5.95% |
| MAINE | 2,188 | 178,148 | 2,455 | 170,019 | 2,516 | 170,721 | 2,726 | 171,181 | 538 | (6,967) | 24.59% | -3.91% |
| MARYLAND | 22,680 | 886,734 | 23,366 | 859,172 | 24,104 | 857,367 | 23,974 | 865,997 | 1,294 | (20,737) | 5.71% | -2.34% |
| MASSACHUSETTS | 47,978 | 900,850 | 48,578 | 862,887 | 48,399 | 863,130 | 48,115 | 865,620 | 137 | (35,230) | 0.29% | -3.91% |
| MICHIGAN | 147,484 | 1,302,966 | 149,599 | 1,254,694 | 150,673 | 1,247,678 | 150,486 | 1,240,623 | 3,002 | (62,343) | 2.04% | -4.78% |
| MINNESOTA | 62,751 | 830,452 | 65,987 | 806,096 | 66,595 | 803,911 | 67,890 | 802,129 | 5,139 | (28,323) | 8.19% | -3.41% |
| MISSISSIPPI | 2,128 | 463,466 | 2,674 | 439,861 | 2,921 | 439,067 | 3,245 | 437,040 | 1,117 | (26,426) | 52.49% | -5.70% |
| MISSOURI | 25,113 | 892,175 | 25,330 | 863,618 | 25,853 | 872,345 | 25,488 | 871,081 | 375 | (21,094) | 1.49% | -2.36% |
| NEVADA | 57,894 | 442,966 | 61,690 | 424,943 | 63,944 | 428,394 | 68,771 | 420,826 | 10,877 | (22,140) | 18.79% | -5.00% |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE | 4,228 | 171,940 | 4,545 | 163,364 | 4,938 | 163,682 | 5,530 | 161,827 | 1,302 | (10,113) | 30.79% | -5.88% |
| NEW JERSEY | 55,604 | 1,320,225 | 57,480 | 1,285,960 | 58,777 | 1,280,626 | 60,186 | 1,292,194 | 4,582 | (28,031) | 8.24% | -2.12% |
| NEW MEXICO | 27,437 | 303,802 | 29,364 | 287,496 | 30,160 | 286,646 | 30,973 | 284,058 | 3,536 | (19,744) | 12.89% | -6.50% |
| NEW YORK | 159,214 | 2,479,735 | 170,509 | 2,388,655 | 173,188 | 2,332,329 | 175,065 | 2,310,156 | 15,851 | (169,579) | 9.96% | -6.84% |
| NORTH CAROLINA | 118,597 | 1,419,142 | 127,125 | 1,368,256 | 132,909 | 1,370,859 | 140,905 | 1,378,133 | 22,308 | (41,009) | 18.81% | -2.89% |
| OHIO | 107,601 | 1,684,454 | 119,605 | 1,619,781 | 115,937 | 1,641,367 | 116,220 | 1,640,610 | 8,619 | (43,844) | 8.01% | -2.60% |
| OKLAHOMA | 45,988 | 657,662 | 81,739 | 612,374 | 59,755 | 638,941 | 50,716 | 650,542 | 4,728 | (7,120) | 10.28% | -1.08% |
| OREGON | 38,247 | 544,414 | 46,273 | 514,644 | 42,639 | 510,373 | 41,577 | 510,803 | 3,330 | (33,611) | 8.71% | -6.17% |
| PENNSYLVANIA | 146,556 | 1,627,193 | 169,252 | 1,575,473 | 163,625 | 1,575,827 | 161,909 | 1,578,852 | 15,353 | (48,341) | 10.48% | -2.97% |
| RHODE ISLAND | 10,088 | 133,469 | 10,547 | 128,637 | 11,418 | 127,418 | 12,149 | 125,303 | 2,061 | (8,166) | 20.43% | -6.12% |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | 39,417 | 747,652 | 47,566 | 719,253 | 49,410 | 731,821 | 49,486 | 739,745 | 10,069 | (7,907) | 25.54% | -1.06% |
| TEXAS | 336,900 | 5,157,026 | 365,930 | 5,005,633 | 377,320 | 5,049,962 | 404,048 | 5,114,312 | 67,148 | (42,714) | 19.93% | -0.83% |
| UTAH | 77,582 | 589,276 | 79,179 | 586,127 | 77,750 | 596,601 | 78,732 | 595,918 | 1,150 | 6,642 | 1.48% | 1.13% |
| VIRGINIA | 1,218 | 1,296,794 | 1,267 | 1,251,485 | 1,278 | 1,250,692 | 1,253 | 1,262,089 | 35 | (34,705) | 2.87% | -2.68% |
| WASHINGTON | 3,024 | 1,132,353 | 3,617 | 1,080,919 | 4,598 | 1,081,851 | 4,831 | 1,073,508 | 1,807 | (58,845) | 59.76% | -5.20% |
| WEST VIRGINIA | — | 261,633 | — | 252,357 | — | 250,899 | 1,248 | 248,801 | 1,248 | (12,832) | | -4.90% |
| WISCONSIN | 44,703 | 810,256 | 50,861 | 779,074 | 49,678 | 779,465 | 48,982 | 773,822 | 4,279 | (36,434) | 9.57% | -4.50% |
| WYOMING | 631 | 93,201 | 609 | 91,329 | 630 | 91,992 | 666 | 90,974 | 35 | (2,227) | 5.55% | -2.39% |
| **TOTAL** | **3,344,911** | **43,514,364** | **3,577,972** | **41,994,303** | **3,573,081** | **41,982,415** | **3,645,322** | **41,989,873** | **300,411** | **(1,524,491)** | **8.98%** | **-3.50%** |

# A Closer Look at New Jersey

New Jersey is home to some of the highest-performing public charter schools in the country. Over the past four school years, enrollment in charter schools increased by 8.24%, or more than 4,000 students, while enrollment in district schools declined. Even more families are eager for an opportunity to attend a charter school, as evidenced by strong parent demand. And yet, in 2022, a number of high-performing public charter schools were denied the opportunity to expand to serve more students. One school, Achievers Early College Prep in Trenton, was cut off at a single grade—9th grade—and blocked from completing their high school, ultimately leaving these students educationally homeless. Other schools, like Uncommon Schools-North Star Academy in Newark, one of the finest schools in the country, were prevented from expanding to serve more students despite massive wait lists.

Based on these denials, the New Jersey charter community sprang into action. Led by the New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association, the charter school community and their supporters embarked on a campaign to get decision makers to approve more seats for schools with proven records of success the following school year. Through direct meetings with the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), the Governor's Office, elected officials, community organizations, and key allies, these high-performing schools made the case to key stakeholders. Parents and students attended rallies, wrote op-eds, met with local officials, and participated in a paid media campaign telling their stories. The entire charter school community also participated in a collective call-to-action highlighting data that was undeniable—public charter schools are knocking it out of the park, and parents who choose these schools must be supported.

In 2023, the NJDOE approved 100% of high-quality public charter school expansion requests, a huge win for students and families in the Garden State. Overall, 2,300 new charter seats were approved!





# CHARTER LAWS ARE PAVING THE WAY FOR GROWTH

Charter enrollment isn't the only thing on the rise—we've also seen an impressive number of legislative gains over the past four years. Charter school advocates have continued their work in statehouses across the country, making progress in red, blue, and purple states, oftentimes in ways that showed that, despite heavy politicization, bipartisan support for charter schools remains firmly in place.

The legislative gains came in many different forms. Some paved the way for charter schools to expand and provide more access to families and communities, while others strengthened the quality of new and existing schools alike. The positive developments in the law led to positive developments on the ground and increased charter enrollment in states that made legislative progress.

New Mexico saw big wins in both 2022 and 2023. In 2022, the state passed a new facilities funding law, and in 2023, advocates beat back a growth cap. Ultimately, the state saw 13% growth for charter enrollees over four years, while district schools lost almost 7% of students.

Idaho also helped charter schools in two different ways. First, charter schools now have more flexibility in finding teachers who can fulfill the needs of distinct education programs and students in their schools. The state also created a $50 million revolving loan fund to help new and recently established public charter schools obtain lower interest rates on loans, allowing more taxpayer dollars to stay in the classroom instead of being redirected toward high-interest facility loans. This led to 17% growth for charter schools over four years, versus just 1% growth for districts.

Indiana also notched a number of major victories. The existing charter school grant was raised to $1,400 per student from $1,250 per student. Additionally, $25 million was allocated to a newly established capital grant fund to assist charter schools with facility costs. Over the past four years, Indiana has seen 9% growth for charters, while district schools lost 2% of enrollment.

# A Closer Look at Texas

For the third straight year since the start of the pandemic, families in the Lone Star State continued to flock to charter schools. Texas has long enjoyed a strong charter school sector. Although some states saw a slight charter school enrollment decline during the second school year of the pandemic, Texas has consistently led the pack. Total enrollment increased by 27,000 students in 2022-23—a rate of growth about seven times higher than that of all public schools statewide.

The story of such striking parent demand is a Texas two-step.

It starts with an incredible diversity of charter school missions and models. Educators have risen to the challenge of meeting children's needs across one of the nation's largest, fastest-growing states—transforming Texas into a hub for creativity and forward-thinking solutions.

Charter schools focused on preparation for high-demand careers have flourished. Students at Vanguard Academy charter schools in the Rio Grande Valley, for example, explore their professional interests starting in the 7th grade—and can choose from more than 20 Career and Technical Education programs that include courses at local community colleges.

One hundred percent of last year's graduating seniors met the state's college and career readiness standards, illustrating why Vanguard is such a popular option for families. The schools' enrollment has doubled since 2017.

Texas is also home to a growing number of charter schools that specialize in supporting students with disabilities—which have proven overwhelmingly popular. Thrive Center for Success, which opened in 2022, provides a haven to children on the autism spectrum.

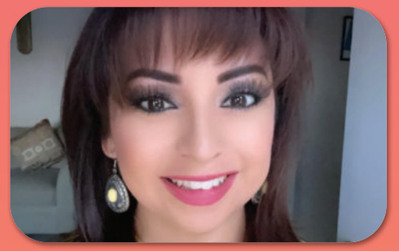
In a letter to school leaders, one mom described the transformative impact that had on her son, who was previously bullied in a more traditional setting.

> *"My son walks in now with so much confidence in the mornings. I often have to remind him to give me a hug as he is excited to start his day and get to class," she wrote. "I feel like I have finally found a school that understands... Being able to see your child bloom is a feeling that is indescribable."*

There's a second huge reason communities continue embracing charter schools in Texas: They get results for students from all backgrounds. In 2022, seven of the 10 top-rated public school districts in the state were charter schools—and the data shows they boost literacy, accelerate academic gains, and increase college enrollment rates.

The impact is especially pronounced for traditionally underserved students such as English language learners (ELLs). About 1 in 3 students at Texas charter schools are ELLs, who make up one of the fastest-growing student populations in the state.

If Texas public charter schools were their own state, their ELL students would rank #1 in the U.S. for performance on the NAEP reading exams for 4th and 8th graders in 2022. That success resonates with families—and it's fueled by caring educators empowered to support them.



Brenda Alcantar, a teacher at Premier High School in El Paso, started a club for her ELL students called Mi Amigos. Students go on field trips, share meals, participate in game nights, and attend college and career fairs together. Ms. Alcantar also organizes events for families to help them share in—and support—the students' success.

> *"I have a student who came after COVID, with little to no English, and she passed her STAAR exam on the first try," she said. "If students feel confident, they feel welcomed, they feel like, 'OK, I can make mistakes and I can come back from that... then the academics will come on their own."*

Susie Spencer, part of the Parent Advocacy Leadership program of the Texas Public Charter Schools Association (TPCSA), testified before the House Public Education Committee in March 2023. She shared her story in order to illustrate why the Texas Legislature should allow public charter schools to grow in communities where families need them.

Here's an excerpt from her testimony:

> *"I am an adoptive mom of two amazing children. They attend School of Science and Technology (SST) in Corpus Christi, and I wanted to share our experience with a public charter school. Five years ago, we adopted our kids, and my husband and I promised ourselves, the state of Texas, and especially these two sweet kids that we would provide them a safe and loving home—a forever family. We set about providing them the best opportunities to be themselves. SST is open to anyone, regardless of where you live in town. My son got in right away in kindergarten, but there was a waitlist for pre-K. So my daughter stayed home a year until she, too, could go to kindergarten at SST. They've been there for over four years now, and SST has become an important partner in our children's care. They've provided all the resources they need in a school environment to help them feel safe enough to learn. SST has helped our kids to thrive, not just survive. Having more than one public school we could attend helped us find this right fit, and we want the same for other families, too."*



# RURAL COMMUNITIES SEE BENEFITS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

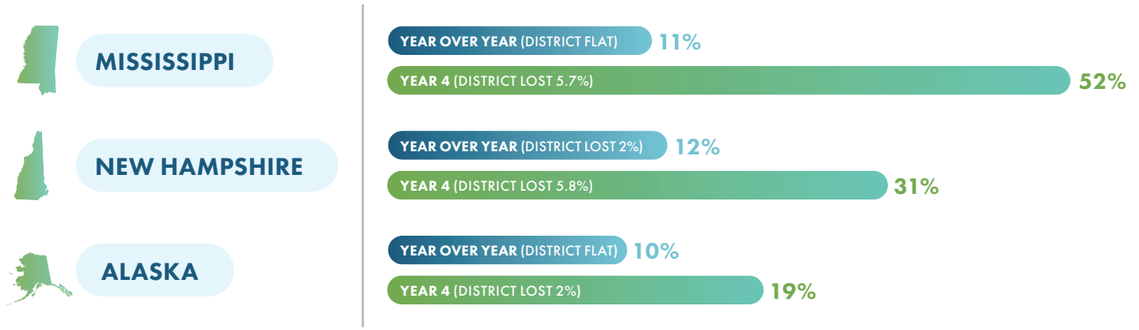
Around the country, a small and growing number of charter schools are serving rural communities and less densely populated areas. For many, charter schools may call to mind the challenges and opportunities of urban education—and rural charter schools do face the same challenges as their urban counterparts. But rural charter schools often have even fewer resources and community services, due to their smaller populations and geographic isolation. For these same reasons, though, rural charter schools often serve as community hubs and may play an even larger part in overall community wellbeing in many rural areas. In fact, charter schools play a vital role in meeting the educational needs of students in rural communities in many different ways.[4]

Some rural charter schools open to fill gaps in a community's existing public school options or to offer specific academic programs that were not previously available, such as career and technical education. Charter schools may also bring innovative school models to communities that historically only had access to one type of public school. Models could include one-room schoolhouses, Montessori practices, project-based learning, blended learning, STEM curriculum, classical education, and language or cultural immersion. These charter schools might also have the flexibility to serve students facing exceptional challenges, such as those involved with the juvenile justice system, those who are pregnant or parenting, or those who are in foster care or experiencing homelessness.

Other rural charter schools, such as those serving Native students, may be designed to meet the specific cultural and language needs of the community. Especially in remote rural areas, charter schools serve relatively more Native students. Schools designed to serve American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian populations drive a disproportionate number of the cultural and language immersion schools located in rural areas (30%). For tribal communities that bear the weight of generations of historical trauma, ownership over schools is critical, and charter schools can offer a different type of local control.

Still other charter schools meet needs by providing education at a location and frequency that is more accessible to students who may have to travel long distances to attend school.

## Recent Growth of Charter Schools in Rural Areas by State or Region




Although Alabama is not included in this report because data were not available in time for inclusion, it is worth noting that more than a quarter of Alabama's charter schools are considered rural and enrollment in all of Alabama's 10 charter schools continues to grow.

## CHARTER SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS, STATE DATA, 2020-2021

| State | % of Students in Charter Schools | # of Students in Charter Schools | % of Charter Students in Rural Charter Schools | # of Students in Rural Charter Schools | % of All Public Students in Rural Public Schools | # of Students in Rural Public Schools | Total Public School Enrollment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALASKA | 5.8% | 7,405 | 7.2% | 530 | 28.6% | 36,387 | 127,286 |
| ALABAMA | 0.3% | 1,984 | 26.2% | 519 | 39.9% | 288,712 | 722,903 |
| ARKANSAS | 6.0% | 28,346 | 20.0% | 5,657 | 36.2% | 170,984 | 472,460 |
| ARIZONA | 19.0% | 204,461 | 10.9% | 22,244 | 11.7% | 126,127 | 1,076,545 |
| CALIFORNIA | **10.2%** | **595,477** | **8.6%** | **51,448** | **6.5%** | **382,179** | **5,857,326** |
| COLORADO | 13.9% | 120,924 | 13.1% | 15,896 | 15.6% | 134,953 | 867,320 |
| CONNECTICUT | 2.2% | 10,936 | 0.8% | 85 | 11.4% | 56,621 | 497,411 |
| DELAWARE | 12.2% | 16,902 | 16.6% | 2,808 | 21.2% | 29,267 | 138,092 |
| DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA | 44.3% | 39,311 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 88,699 |
| FLORIDA | 12.4% | 339,026 | 12.1% | 41,134 | 13.2% | 359,348 | 2,726,677 |
| GEORGIA | 3.3% | 56,990 | 16.7% | 9,545 | 28.9% | 494,969 | 1,711,496 |
| HAWAII | **6.6%** | **11,698** | **44.7%** | **5,226** | **10.4%** | **18,259** | **175,914** |
| IDAHO | 7.1% | 20,543 | 30.5% | 6,258 | 32.3% | 93,043 | 287,883 |
| ILLINOIS | 3.3% | 62,334 | 0.4% | 237 | 11.0% | 207,917 | 1,885,706 |
| INDIANA | 4.1% | 41,678 | 5.3% | 2,213 | 28.8% | 294,972 | 1,024,645 |
| IOWA | **0.02%** | **123** | **64.2%** | **79** | **35.4%** | **176,351** | **497,668** |
| KANSAS | **0.1%** | **407** | **80.3%** | **327** | **29.9%** | **141,078** | **471,376** |
| KENTUCKY** | — | — | — | — | 37.7% | 247,638 | 656,240 |
| LOUISIANA | 12.0% | 81,460 | 11.0% | 8,985 | 28.1% | 191,022 | 680,455 |
| MAINE | 1.1% | 1,774 | 45.9% | 815 | 53.5% | 89,267 | 166,789 |
| MARYLAND | 2.7% | 23,653 | 1.6% | 376 | 13.7% | 120,611 | 882,554 |
| MASSACHUSETTS | 5.3% | 48,578 | 2.1% | 1,037 | 8.9% | 80,524 | 908,008 |
| MICHIGAN | 9.6% | 131,079 | 10.5% | 13,781 | 21.2% | 209,368 | 1,371,499 |
| MINNESOTA | 6.9% | 59,346 | 12.7% | 7,563 | 23.0% | 198,133 | 863,208 |
| MISSISSIPPI | 0.6% | 2,674 | 0.0% | 0 | 48.1% | 213,975 | 444,731 |
| MISSOURI | 2.9% | 25,269 | 0.0% | 0 | 27.9% | 245,041 | 878,097 |
| MONTANA* | — | — | — | — | 37.6% | 54,679 | 145,329 |
| NEBRASKA* | — | — | — | — | 28.8% | 93,470 | 324,776 |
| NEVADA | **12.1%** | **57,479** | **13.2%** | **7,589** | **8.0%** | **38,044** | **476,131** |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE | 2.4% | 4,059 | 16.7% | 677 | 34.9% | 58,430 | 167,480 |
| NEW JERSEY | 4.3% | 57,486 | 3.0% | 1,711 | 7.8% | 104,363 | 1,342,172 |
| NEW MEXICO | 8.2% | 26,119 | 12.8% | 3,356 | 26.7% | 85,652 | 320,447 |
| NEW YORK | 6.6% | 170,509 | 0.4% | 746 | 11.1% | 285,842 | 2,578,888 |
| NORTH CAROLINA | 8.1% | 120,649 | 27.8% | 33,491 | 37.2% | 557,069 | 1,495,897 |
| NORTH DAKOTA* | — | — | — | — | 45.0% | 53,051 | 117,983 |
| OHIO | 5.0% | 80,105 | 0.3% | 268 | 23.8% | 380,901 | 1,603,561 |
| OKLAHOMA | 2.3% | 14,726 | 6.0% | 883 | 32.6% | 204,325 | 627,702 |
| OREGON | **5.7%** | **30,178** | **47.8%** | **14,433** | **15.5%** | **81,968** | **527,602** |
| PENNSYLVANIA | 6.7% | 108,275 | 2.0% | 2,190 | 18.6% | 301,241 | 1,623,049 |
| RHODE ISLAND | 7.5% | 10,302 | 9.8% | 1,012 | 10.0% | 13,761 | 137,164 |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | 4.9% | 36,914 | 20.4% | 7,543 | 34.5% | 206,593 | 756,167 |
| SOUTH DAKOTA* | — | — | — | — | 45.2% | 65,242 | 144,287 |
| TENNESSEE | 4.6% | 44,741 | 1.9% | 831 | 30.7% | 300,417 | 979,758 |
| TEXAS | 7.9% | 423,222 | 7.6% | 32,205 | 19.7% | 1,052,259 | 5,344,772 |
| UTAH | **11.4%** | **75,910** | **17.4%** | **13,209** | **14.2%** | **95,179** | **668,621** |
| VIRGINIA | **0.1%** | **1,266** | **27.3%** | **346** | **25.3%** | **317,238** | **1,251,627** |
| VERMONT* | — | — | — | — | 55.0% | 43,258 | 78,661 |
| WASHINGTON | 0.3% | 3,614 | 0.0% | 0 | 12.6% | 135,252 | 1,074,485 |
| WEST VIRGINIA** | — | — | — | — | 42.9% | 108,877 | 253,930 |
| WISCONSIN | 4.7% | 38,383 | 10.2% | 3,916 | 23.7% | 193,919 | 818,023 |

*States with no charter school law
**States with new charter school laws
In highlighted states, more than 25% of charter school students are in rural areas.
In bolded states, charter schools serve the same proportion or more of rural students as students nationwide.



## STATES WHERE CHARTER SCHOOL SERVE THE SAME PROPORTION OR MORE OF RURAL STUDENTS AS STUDENTS STATEWIDE

| State | % of Rural Students in Charter Schools | % of Students in Charter Schools |
|---|---|---|
| HAWAII | 28.6% | 6.6% |
| NEVADA | 19.9% | 12.1% |
| OREGON | 17.6% | 5.7% |
| UTAH | 13.9% | 11.4% |
| CALIFORNIA | 13.5% | 10.2% |
| WYOMING | 0.9% | 0.7% |
| KANSAS | 0.2% | 0.1% |
| VIRGINIA | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| IOWA | 0.04% | 0.02% |

# Growing Along with Private School Choice in Arizona and Florida

As established earlier in this report, charter school enrollment growth does not fully explain where students are going when the family chooses not to enroll the child in a district school. As private school choice has increased significantly over the past few years, it begs the natural question of how private school vouchers and Educational Savings Accounts might affect charter school enrollment.

The charter school sector is closely watching states that adopted universal ESAs for a sense of what might lie ahead. Arizona is an interesting case study. It is the only state to have achieved the watermark of 20% charter school enrollment. As more and more families have taken advantage of the ESAs, charter school enrollment has not declined. Rather, charter school enrollment increased 8.8% over the past four years. Breaking that down by year, there was a big bump during the first full school year after the pandemic, followed by a small dip the next year and a modest increase last year.

Interestingly, even with universal ESAs in Arizona, enrollment in private schools did not see an explosion. Many families who take advantage of ESAs do so for two reasons: 1) Their children are already in private school, and they are now are opting into a financial benefit to help defray the cost; and 2) They are interested in exploring homeschooling or microschool options and now have a boost in funding to make these options richer and more feasible.

Charter school demand remains strong, and early indicators suggest that, in most states and cities where there is space, families will still choose them. When the local district public school is not working for a student, there is a benefit to families in exploring other options. Sometimes that will mean a charter school, and sometimes it might mean financial support from public dollars to explore another option.

Overall, charter school enrollment has not declined, and demand has not subsided for these unique public schools, even in the midst of private school choice expansion.

In Florida, there is a more mature array of public and private school options, which have included means-tested voucher programs and a robust charter school sector. Last year, the Sunshine State added universal ESAs to the repertoire of choice options. Demand for charter schools has not changed with the introduction of a universal ESA program. In fact, charter school enrollment has continued to grow steadily over the past four years. It appears that having more choices is working for parents, and there is enough room for all types of choice.

# A LOOK AT THE RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF ENROLLMENT

This year, we were able to examine data for White, Black, and Hispanic students in 26 of 42 states included in our analysis.[5] All three groups are continuing to choose charter schools—and, in some cases, charter school enrollment growth is even outpacing expected numbers based on population growth trends.

Hispanic students make up the fastest-growing community in charter schools, increasing by almost 14% since 2019; based on our subpopulation analysis of 26 states, the overall number of Hispanic students in charter schools increased by 13.92%, or 150,134 students, from 2019-20 to 2022-23. In 22 of 26 states studied, Hispanic enrollment growth in charter schools outpaced the statewide charter enrollment gain. In Texas, for example, charter schools saw a statewide increase of 45,577 Hispanic students, or 21.89%, from 2019-20 to 2022-23. During the same period, the overall charter enrollment for all groups grew by 19.93% in Texas. This means that Hispanic students are driving enrollment growth at a higher rate than White and Black students in Texas. This is also true nationally; the charter sector saw an overall increase of 8.98% but a 13.92% increase for Hispanic students in our 26-state analysis. Enrollment for Hispanic school-aged students in charter schools also outpaced their population growth trends in 22 of 26 state studied, while enrollment growth in district public schools underperformed state population trends in 13 of 26 states. Overall, Hispanic student enrollment at district schools remains flat. Since 2019, in the same 26 states studied, district public schools gained only 35,669 Hispanic students, or 0.33%.

Charter school enrollment growth for Black students has continued at more than 6% since 2019. Most states, 18 of 26 studied, gained Black students in the charter sector—a total of 40,658 students, or 6.26%. In 17 of 26 states, enrollment growth in charter schools outpaced state population trends for the Black school-aged population. Meanwhile, in 21 of 26 states, district schools lost Black students—a total of 212,489 Black students, or 4.68%. And in all 26 states studied, enrollment growth in district public schools underperformed state population trends for the Black school-aged population.

White students are the most likely to leave public education entirely. While the number of White charter school students in our 26-state subgroup increased by 15,229, or 1.66%, from 2019-20 to 2022-23, almost 1.2 million White students have left district schools since 2019—a loss of 7.76%, or 1,141,788 students. This translates to nearly three quarters of the total enrollment loss—1.5 million students—across all 42 states in our study. White students, therefore, are driving district enrollment losses. This also holds true at the state level. For example, during the pandemic, Arizona saw a 4.73% decline in district public school enrollment. During that same period, White student enrollment in Arizona district schools decreased by 11.84%. In California, White student enrollment is down 15% in district schools and 10% in charter schools. In most states, White student enrollment growth in charter schools also underperformed statewide charter enrollment growth. This is a sign that parents of White students are availing themselves of other educational opportunities, and public education—at both district and charter schools—must explore what it will take to better serve these students.

## TABLE 5: STATE-LEVEL ENROLLMENT IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND NON-CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR WHITE STUDENTS (SY 2019-20 TO 2022-23)

| State | 2019-20 White Charter Enrollment | 2019-20 White Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2020-21 White Charter Enrollment | 2020-21 White Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2021-22 White Charter Enrollment | 2021-22 White Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2022-23 White Charter Enrollment | 2022-23 White Non-Charter Public Enrollment | White Pandemic Charter Change | White Pandemic Non-Charter Public Change | % White Charter Change | % White Non-Charter Change | % Overall Charter Change | % Overall Non-Charter Public Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALASKA | 4,577 | 57,780 | 5,318 | 56,123 | 4,930 | 56,762 | 5,363 | 56,586 | 786 | (1,194) | 17.17% | -2.07% | 18.89% | -2.15% |
| ARIZONA | 88,089 | 345,675 | 96,730 | 315,534 | 90,316 | 315,443 | 88,294 | 304,750 | 205 | (40,925) | 0.23% | -11.84% | 8.81% | -4.73% |
| ARKANSAS | 17,572 | 272,153 | 20,279 | 258,110 | 18,635 | 253,959 | 16,350 | 251,503 | (1,222) | (20,650) | -6.95% | -7.59% | -2.52% | -6.11% |
| CALIFORNIA | 183,441 | 1,198,296 | 185,586 | 1,119,37 | 172,746 | 1,067,728 | 163,952 | 1,011,959 | (19,489) | (186,337) | -10.62% | -15.55% | 1.51% | -5.84% |
| COLORADO | 64,571 | 418,480 | 67,783 | 395,509 | 68,461 | 391,661 | 69,042 | 383,471 | 4,471 | (35,009) | 6.92% | -8.37% | 8.26% | -5.15% |
| CONNECTICUT | 648 | 265,969 | 695 | 252,394 | 683 | 246,474 | 683 | 240,404 | 35 | (25,565) | 5.40% | -9.61% | 0.84% | -2.72% |
| FLORIDA | 100,555 | 954,097 | 102,559 | 914,310 | 107,911 | 913,829 | 111,241 | 902,919 | 10,686 | (51,178) | 10.63% | -5.36% | 16.14% | -1.64% |
| GEORGIA | 23,759 | 655,261 | 24,264 | 624,925 | 22,726 | 616,987 | 22,945 | 605,532 | (814) | (49,729) | -3.43% | -7.59% | 5.83% | -1.31% |
| INDIANA | 15,977 | 682,308 | 17,321 | 662,926 | 16,733 | 657,863 | 16,797 | 649,167 | 820 | (33,141) | 5.13% | -4.86% | 9.24% | -1.92% |
| IOWA | 90 | 385,152 | 82 | 375,091 | 82 | 374,415 | 178 | 370,285 | 88 | (14,867) | 97.78% | -3.86% | 94.70% | -1.18% |
| LOUISIANA | 17,419 | 298,391 | 17,910 | 286,849 | 18,059 | 278,672 | 18,168 | 271,422 | 749 | (26,969) | 4.30% | -9.04% | 3.93% | -5.95% |
| MAINE | 2,281 | 152,540 | 2,447 | 144,718 | 2,516 | 144,738 | 2,479 | 145,818 | 198 | (6,722) | 8.68% | -4.41% | 24.59% | -3.91% |
| MASSACHUSETTS | 12,619 | 536,014 | 12,452 | 503,736 | 12,236 | 495,359 | 11,867 | 484,501 | (752) | (51,513) | -5.96% | -9.61% | 0.29% | -3.91% |
| MICHIGAN | 47,906 | 903,021 | 49,809 | 864,134 | 48,965 | 853,282 | 48,632 | 840,977 | 726 | (62,044) | 1.52% | -6.87% | 2.04% | -4.78% |
| MINNESOTA | 23,941 | 554,572 | 25,003 | 530,583 | 24,418 | 524,819 | 24,603 | 517,695 | 662 | (36,877) | 2.77% | -6.65% | 8.19% | -3.41% |
| NEVADA | 20,893 | 135,673 | 21,223 | 124,031 | 20,454 | 122,817 | 20,559 | 117,716 | (334) | (17,957) | -1.60% | -13.24% | 18.79% | -5.00% |
| NEW JERSEY | 3,827 | 574,232 | 3,976 | 547,259 | 3,991 | 532,594 | 3,951 | 522,108 | 124 | (52,124) | 3.24% | -9.08% | 8.24% | -2.12% |
| NEW YORK | 9,441 | 1,094,088 | 10,000 | 1,043,351 | 10,076 | 1,014,359 | 10,083 | 993,280 | 642 | (100,808) | 6.80% | -9.21% | 9.96% | -6.84% |
| NORTH CAROLINA | 61,498 | 653,548 | 65,026 | 622,464 | 65,980 | 611,812 | 67,782 | 602,933 | 6,284 | (50,615) | 10.22% | -7.74% | 18.81% | -2.89% |
| OKLAHOMA | 22,251 | 314,999 | 37,152 | 290,097 | 24,890 | 298,321 | 20,024 | 298,709 | (2,227) | (16,290) | -10.01% | -5.17% | 10.28% | -1.08% |
| OREGON | 28,776 | 329,481 | 34,706 | 303,822 | 31,607 | 298,387 | 30,420 | 295,680 | 1,644 | (33,801) | 5.71% | -10.26% | 8.71% | -6.17% |
| PENNSYLVANIA | 45,927 | 1,090,218 | 59,106 | 1,046,760 | 53,363 | 1,036,786 | 51,059 | 1,023,438 | 5,132 | (66,780) | 11.17% | -6.13% | 10.48% | -2.97% |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | 23,777 | 367,248 | 28,091 | 346,098 | 27,825 | 350,306 | 27,963 | 349,178 | 4,186 | (18,070) | 17.61% | -4.92% | 25.54% | -1.06% |
| TEXAS | 43,768 | 1,438,286 | 46,589 | 1,376,163 | 46,357 | 1,379,019 | 48,861 | 1,365,952 | 5,093 | (72,334) | 11.64% | -5.03% | 19.93% | -0.83% |
| UTAH | 54,527 | 437,023 | 54,411 | 432,739 | 51,964 | 436,138 | 51,399 | 430,449 | (3,128) | (6,574) | -5.74% | -1.50% | 1.48% | 1.13% |
| WASHINGTON | 1,134 | 594,454 | 1,456 | 549,797 | 1,757 | 540,650 | 1,798 | 530,739 | 664 | (63,715) | 58.55% | -10.72% | 59.76% | -5.20% |
| **TOTAL** | **919,264** | **14,708,959** | **989,974** | **13,986,900** | **947,681** | **13,813,180** | **934,493** | **13,567,171** | **15,229** | **(1,141,788)** | **1.66%** | **-7.76%** | **8.98%** | **-3.50%** |

**Legend:** In the table above, the green shading shows the places where the population of White students enrolled in district or charter schools outpaced population of White students in the state. In these states, White students drove enrollment gains. The red shading shows where enrollment growth for White students was slower than population growth—this does not mean enrollment growth was negative. It was simply slower than population growth.

## TABLE 6: SUMMARY OF ENROLLMENT TRENDS FOR WHITE STUDENTS IN CHARTERS AND DISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

| DATAPOINT | WHY IT MATTERS | CHARTERS | DISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOLS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall enrollment change 2019-20 to 2022-23 | Shows national student enrollment trends | +15,229 (+1.66%) | -1,141,788 (-7.76%) |
| Number of states with **enrollment gain** for White students | Provides a picture of state-to-state enrollment trends | 19 of 26 (losses in AR, CA, GA, MA, NV, OK, UT) | None |
| Number of states where **enrollment** for White students **outperforms** the statewide trend | Provides information about **where this subpopulation's movement is driving enrollment gains or where losses are less severe than the statewide loss** | 4 of 26 (CT, IA, LA, PA) | 1 of 26 (AK) |
| Number of states where **enrollment** for White students **underperforms** the statewide trend | Provides information about **where this subpopulation's movement is driving enrollment losses or where enrollment gains are lower than the statewide average** | 22 of 26 (AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, FL, GA, IN, ME, MA, MI, MN, NV, NJ, NY, NC, OK, OR, SC, TX, UT, WA) | 25 of 26 (AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IL, IN, IA, LA, ME, MA, MI, MN, NV, NJ, NY, NC, OR, PA, SC, TX, UT, WA) |

## TABLE 7: STATE-LEVEL ENROLLMENT IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND NON-CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR BLACK STUDENTS (SY 2019-20 TO 2022-23)

| State | 2019-20 Black Charter Enrollment | 2019-20 Black Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2020-21 Black Charter Enrollment | 2020-21 Black Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2021-22 Black Charter Enrollment | 2021-22 Black Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2022-23 Black Charter Enrollment | 2022-23 Black Non-Charter Public Enrollment | Black Pandemic Charter Change | Black Pandemic Non-Charter Public Change | % Black Charter Change | % Black Non-Charter Change | % Overall Charter Change | % Overall Non-Charter Public Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALASKA | 80 | 3,277 | 113 | 3,089 | 98 | 2,983 | 113 | 2,843 | 33 | (434) | 41.25% | -13.24% | 18.89% | -2.15% |
| ARIZONA | 12,617 | 49,136 | 13,578 | 44,114 | 15,030 | 49,153 | 15,472 | 48,461 | 2,855 | (675) | 22.63% | -1.37% | 8.81% | -4.73% |
| ARKANSAS | 10,328 | 84,461 | 10,658 | 80,585 | 9,796 | 75,602 | 9,307 | 75,022 | (1,021) | (9,439) | -9.89% | -11.18% | -2.52% | -6.11% |
| CALIFORNIA | 49,811 | 274,685 | 49,859 | 259,968 | 48,713 | 250,055 | 46,988 | 226,160 | (2,823) | (48,525) | -5.67% | -17.67% | 1.51% | -5.84% |
| COLORADO | 7,507 | 34,047 | 7,760 | 32,660 | 7,870 | 32,339 | 8,076 | 32,122 | 569 | (1,925) | 7.58% | -5.65% | 8.26% | -5.15% |
| CONNECTICUT | 6,177 | 58,012 | 6,266 | 56,234 | 6,201 | 55,934 | 5,973 | 55,597 | (204) | (2,415) | -3.30% | -4.16% | 0.84% | -2.72% |
| FLORIDA | 64,126 | 554,666 | 65,481 | 535,545 | 68,313 | 534,111 | 70,949 | 530,369 | 6,823 | (24,297) | 10.64% | -4.38% | 16.14% | -1.64% |
| GEORGIA | 30,492 | 612,786 | 33,933 | 597,040 | 33,761 | 600,584 | 34,117 | 603,661 | 3,625 | (9,125) | 11.89% | -1.49% | 5.83% | -1.31% |
| INDIANA | 20,002 | 113,930 | 20,464 | 112,453 | 20,374 | 113,740 | 20,390 | 115,212 | 388 | 1,282 | 1.94% | 1.13% | 9.24% | -1.92% |
| IOWA | 2 | 33,587 | 3 | 33,108 | 4 | 33,635 | 17 | 34,507 | 15 | 920 | 750.00% | 2.74% | 94.70% | -1.18% |
| LOUISIANA | 58,906 | 247,693 | 57,859 | 238,713 | 57,121 | 233,168 | 58,209 | 228,396 | (697) | (19,297) | -1.18% | -7.79% | 3.93% | -5.95% |
| MAINE | 55 | 7,005 | 53 | 6,926 | 55 | 7,160 | 45 | 5,688 | (10) | (1,317) | -18.18% | -18.80% | 24.59% | -3.91% |
| MASSACHUSETTS | 14,439 | 72,524 | 14,709 | 70,330 | 14,571 | 70,300 | 14,128 | 71,400 | (311) | (1,124) | -2.15% | -1.55% | 0.29% | -3.91% |
| MICHIGAN | 73,087 | 183,698 | 71,794 | 176,196 | 72,599 | 175,592 | 71,929 | 176,223 | (1,158) | (7,475) | -1.58% | -4.07% | 2.04% | -4.78% |
| MINNESOTA | 17,600 | 83,179 | 18,899 | 82,547 | 19,464 | 81,924 | 19,854 | 82,042 | 2,254 | (1,137) | 12.81% | -1.37% | 8.19% | -3.41% |
| NEVADA | 6,997 | 50,573 | 7,470 | 50,227 | 8,025 | 52,357 | 8,729 | 51,721 | 1,732 | 1,148 | 24.75% | 2.27% | 18.79% | -5.00% |
| NEW JERSEY | 23,828 | 177,191 | 27,180 | 171,652 | 27,059 | 169,597 | 26,521 | 168,918 | 2,693 | (8,273) | 11.30% | -4.67% | 8.24% | -2.12% |
| NEW YORK | 82,498 | 356,450 | 86,830 | 335,007 | 86,603 | 318,756 | 86,130 | 305,836 | 3,632 | (50,614) | 4.40% | -14.20% | 9.96% | -6.84% |
| NORTH CAROLINA | 30,969 | 345,189 | 34,030 | 339,614 | 35,407 | 338,585 | 37,303 | 338,097 | 6,334 | (7,092) | 20.45% | -2.05% | 18.81% | -2.89% |
| OKLAHOMA | 5,929 | 53,128 | 8,725 | 47,006 | 6,680 | 48,644 | 5,879 | 49,273 | (50) | (3,855) | -0.84% | -7.26% | 10.28% | -1.08% |
| OREGON | 619 | 12,557 | 811 | 12,210 | 801 | 11,930 | 842 | 12,140 | 223 | (417) | 36.03% | -3.32% | 8.71% | -6.17% |
| PENNSYLVANIA | 62,075 | 194,505 | 65,794 | 186,674 | 65,327 | 183,819 | 64,767 | 182,765 | 2,692 | (11,740) | 4.34% | -6.04% | 10.48% | -2.97% |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | 9,814 | 247,228 | 12,186 | 238,061 | 13,744 | 236,675 | 13,147 | 236,218 | 3,333 | (11,010) | 33.96% | -4.45% | 25.54% | -1.06% |
| TEXAS | 59,583 | 631,652 | 63,911 | 615,483 | 65,013 | 627,431 | 68,923 | 636,033 | 9,340 | 4,381 | 15.68% | 0.69% | 19.93% | -0.83% |
| UTAH | 1,207 | 8,118 | 1,292 | 8,027 | 1,280 | 7,712 | 1,228 | 7,710 | 21 | (408) | 1.74% | -5.03% | 1.48% | 1.13% |
| WASHINGTON | 913 | 49,474 | 964 | 49,202 | 1,223 | 50,273 | 1,283 | 49,848 | 370 | 374 | 40.53% | 0.76% | 59.76% | -5.20% |
| **TOTAL** | **649,661** | **4,538,751** | **680,622** | **4,382,671** | **685,132** | **4,362,059** | **690,319** | **4,326,262** | **40,658** | **(212,489)** | **6.26%** | **-4.68%** | **8.98%** | **-3.50%** |

**Legend:** In the table above, the green shading shows the places where the population of Black students enrolled in district or charter schools outpaced population of Black students in the state. In these states, Black students drove enrollment gains. The red shading shows where enrollment growth for Black students was slower than population growth—this does not mean enrollment growth was negative. It was simply slower than population growth.

## TABLE 8: SUMMARY OF ENROLLMENT TRENDS FOR BLACK STUDENTS IN CHARTERS AND DISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

| DATAPOINT | WHY IT MATTERS | CHARTERS | DISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOLS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall enrollment change 2019-20 to 2022-23 | Shows national student enrollment trends | +40,658 (+6.26%) | -212,489 (-4.68%) |
| Number of states with **enrollment gain** for Black students | Provides a picture of state-to-state enrollment trends | 18 of 26 (losses in AR, CA, CT, LA, ME, MA, MI, OK)) | 5 of 26 (gains in IN, IA, NV, TX, WA) |
| Number of states where **enrollment** for Black students **outperforms** the statewide trend | Provides information about **where this subpopulation's movement is driving enrollment gains or where losses are less severe than the statewide loss** | 11 of 26 (AK, AZ, GA, IA, MN, NV, NJ, NC, OR, SC, UT) | 11 of 26 (AZ, IN, IA, MA, MI, MN, NV, NC, OR, TX, WA) |
| Number of states where **enrollment** for Black students **underperforms** the statewide trend | Provides information about **where this subpopulation's movement is driving enrollment losses or where enrollment gains are lower than the statewide average** | 15 of 26 (AR, CA, CO, CT, FL, IN, LA, ME, MA, MI, NY, OK, PA, TX, WA) | 15 of 26 (AK, AR, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, LA, ME, NJ, NY, OK, PA, SC, UT) |



## TABLE 9: STATE-LEVEL ENROLLMENT IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND NON-CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR HISPANIC STUDENTS (SY 2019-20 TO 2022-23)

| State | 2019-20 Hispanic Charter Enrollment | 2019-20 Hispanic Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2020-21 Hispanic Charter Enrollment | 2020-21 Hispanic Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2021-22 Hispanic Charter Enrollment | 2021-22 Hispanic Non-Charter Public Enrollment | 2022-23 Hispanic Charter Enrollment | 2022-23 Hispanic Non-Charter Public Enrollment | Hispanic Pandemic Charter Change | Hispanic Pandemic Non-Charter Public Change | % Hispanic Charter Change | % Hispanic Non-Charter Change | % Overall Charter Change | % Overall Non-Charter Public Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALASKA | 478 | 9,361 | 561 | 8,942 | 528 | 9,158 | 601 | 9,267 | 123 | (94) | 25.73% | -1.00% | 18.89% | -2.15% |
| ARIZONA | 85,290 | 437,171 | 89,520 | 415,786 | 96,142 | 436,619 | 98,801 | 437,002 | 13,511 | (169) | 15.84% | -0.04% | 8.81% | -4.73% |
| ARKANSAS | 4,647 | 59,901 | 6,376 | 57,106 | 5,598 | 57,915 | 5,645 | 58,843 | 998 | (1,058) | 21.48% | -1.77% | -2.52% | -6.11% |
| CALIFORNIA | 352,306 | 3,028,892 | 361,695 | 2,958,605 | 360,439 | 2,930,821 | 365,705 | 2,919,083 | 13,399 | (109,809) | 3.80% | -3.63% | 1.51% | -5.84% |
| COLORADO | 42,912 | 267,060 | 43,850 | 258,008 | 45,327 | 260,835 | 46,291 | 262,448 | 3,379 | (4,612) | 7.87% | -1.73% | 8.26% | -5.15% |
| CONNECTICUT | 3,314 | 136,686 | 3,430 | 137,108 | 3,534 | 143,268 | 3,571 | 148,740 | 257 | 12,054 | 7.75% | 8.82% | 0.84% | -2.72% |
| FLORIDA | 143,876 | 843,016 | 151,671 | 823,786 | 162,141 | 842,300 | 174,785 | 869,322 | 30,909 | 26,306 | 21.28% | 3.12% | 16.14% | -1.64% |
| GEORGIA | 6,605 | 288,547 | 7,269 | 288,252 | 6,670 | 299,678 | 6,604 | 310,155 | (1) | 21,608 | -0.02% | 7.49% | 5.83% | -1.31% |
| INDIANA | 7,353 | 126,966 | 8,304 | 127,193 | 9,037 | 131,883 | 9,855 | 135,677 | 2,502 | 8,711 | 34.03% | 6.86% | 9.24% | -1.92% |
| IOWA | 32 | 59,158 | 29 | 59,116 | 47 | 61,528 | 40 | 63,892 | 8 | 4,734 | 25.00% | 8.00% | 94.70% | -1.18% |
| LOUISIANA | 7,751 | 52,406 | 8,197 | 52,516 | 9,199 | 55,672 | 10,290 | 59,764 | 2,539 | 7,358 | 32.76% | 14.04% | 3.93% | -5.95% |
| MAINE | 51 | 4,446 | 50 | 4,468 | 58 | 4,822 | 81 | 5,482 | 30 | 1,036 | 58.82% | 23.30% | 24.59% | -3.91% |
| MASSACHUSETTS | 16,849 | 188,118 | 17,211 | 186,034 | 17,274 | 193,271 | 17,618 | 203,179 | 769 | 15,061 | 4.56% | 8.01% | 0.29% | -3.91% |
| MICHIGAN | 14,242 | 104,099 | 14,714 | 103,034 | 15,231 | 105,380 | 15,458 | 107,697 | 1,216 | 3,598 | 8.54% | 3.46% | 2.04% | -4.78% |
| MINNESOTA | 7,091 | 80,869 | 7,356 | 80,874 | 7,761 | 83,840 | 7,943 | 86,992 | 852 | 6,123 | 12.02% | 7.57% | 8.19% | -3.41% |
| NEVADA | 19,755 | 194,641 | 21,905 | 189,934 | 23,837 | 191,454 | 26,767 | 189,877 | 7,012 | (4,764) | 35.49% | -2.45% | 18.79% | -5.00% |
| NEW JERSEY | 23,888 | 393,154 | 21,884 | 391,167 | 23,139 | 401,596 | 23,264 | 419,632 | (624) | 26,478 | -2.61% | 6.73% | 8.24% | -2.12% |
| NEW YORK | 58,513 | 684,236 | 63,402 | 665,939 | 65,523 | 657,598 | 67,240 | 659,655 | 8,727 | (24,581) | 14.91% | -3.59% | 9.96% | -6.84% |
| NORTH CAROLINA | 13,626 | 273,262 | 15,238 | 270,627 | 16,806 | 280,766 | 18,652 | 290,626 | 5,026 | 17,364 | 36.89% | 6.35% | 18.81% | -2.89% |
| OKLAHOMA | 11,076 | 116,743 | 17,441 | 111,903 | 14,910 | 119,740 | 14,129 | 124,847 | 3,053 | 8,104 | 27.56% | 6.94% | 10.28% | -1.08% |
| OREGON | 4,900 | 133,373 | 5,945 | 131,156 | 5,774 | 132,338 | 5,825 | 134,103 | 925 | 730 | 18.88% | 0.55% | 8.71% | -6.17% |
| PENNSYLVANIA | 26,357 | 197,291 | 30,133 | 196,917 | 30,492 | 206,287 | 31,227 | 217,013 | 4,870 | 19,722 | 18.48% | 10.00% | 10.48% | -2.97% |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | 3,360 | 81,833 | 4,125 | 83,110 | 4,447 | 89,343 | 4,801 | 95,528 | 1,441 | 13,695 | 42.89% | 16.74% | 25.54% | -1.06% |
| TEXAS | 208,233 | 2,685,879 | 227,412 | 2,604,901 | 236,071 | 2,616,756 | 253,810 | 2,657,161 | 45,577 | (28,718) | 21.89% | -1.07% | 19.93% | -0.83% |
| UTAH | 15,349 | 102,137 | 16,459 | 102,934 | 17,407 | 109,060 | 18,577 | 113,377 | 3,228 | 11,240 | 21.03% | 11.00% | 1.48% | 1.13% |
| WASHINGTON | 498 | 271,523 | 608 | 267,202 | 810 | 274,274 | 906 | 277,075 | 408 | 5,552 | 81.93% | 2.04% | 59.76% | -5.20% |
| **TOTAL** | **1,078,352** | **10,820,768** | **1,144,785** | **10,576,618** | **1,178,202** | **10,696,202** | **1,228,486** | **10,856,437** | **150,134** | **35,669** | **13.92%** | **0.33%** | **8.98%** | **-3.50%** |

**Legend:** In the table above, the green shading shows the places where the population of Hispanic students enrolled in district or charter schools outpaced population of Hispanic students in the state. In these states, Hispanic students drove enrollment gains. The red shading shows where enrollment growth for Hispanic students was slower than population growth—this does not mean enrollment growth was negative. It was simply slower than population growth.

## TABLE 10: SUMMARY OF ENROLLMENT TRENDS FOR HISPANIC STUDENTS IN CHARTERS AND DISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

| DATAPOINT | WHY IT MATTERS | CHARTERS | DISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOLS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall enrollment change 2019-20 to 2022-23 | Shows national student enrollment trends | +150,134 (+13.92%) | +35,669 (+0.33%) |
| Number of states with **enrollment gain** for Hispanic students | Provides a picture of state-to-state enrollment trends | 24 of 26 (losses in GA and NJ) | 18 of 26 (losses in AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, NV, NY, TX) |
| Number of states where **enrollment** for Hispanic students **outperforms** the statewide trend | Provides information about **where this subpopulation's movement is driving enrollment gains or where losses are less severe than the statewide loss** | 22 of 26 (AK, AZ, AR, CA, CT, FL, IN, LA, ME, MA, MI, MN, NV, NY, NC, OK, OR, PA, SC, TX, UT, WA) | 25 of 26 (AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IN, IA, LA, ME, MA, MI, MN, NV, NJ, NY, NC, OK, OR, PA, SC, UT, WA) |
| Number of states where **enrollment** for Hispanic students **underperforms** the statewide trend | Provides information about **where this subpopulation's movement is driving enrollment losses or where enrollment gains are lower than the statewide average** | 4 of 26 (CO, GA, IA, NJ) | 1 of 26 (TX) |

## TABLE 11: POPULATION TRENDS FOR SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN COMPARED TO ENROLLMENT TRENDS

| State | 2019 Population Ages 5-17 | 2020 Population Ages 5-17 | 2021 Population Ages 5-17 | 2022 Population Ages 5-17 | 2019 to 2022 School Aged Population Change | % Charter Change | % Non-Charter Public Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALASKA | 129,260 | 128,982 | 129,828 | 129,718 | 0.35% | 18.89% | -2.15% |
| ARIZONA | 1,212,617 | 1,221,668 | 1,196,029 | 1,194,004 | -1.53% | 8.81% | -4.73% |
| ARKANSAS | 512,598 | 513,422 | 515,576 | 516,730 | 0.81% | -2.52% | -6.11% |
| CALIFORNIA | 6,510,534 | 6,480,854 | 6,470,554 | 6,378,263 | -2.03% | 1.51% | -5.84% |
| COLORADO | 927,448 | 925,452 | 919,988 | 906,555 | -2.25% | 8.26% | -5.15% |
| CONNECTICUT | 545,495 | 539,361 | 554,884 | 549,423 | 0.72% | 0.84% | -2.72% |
| DELAWARE | 149,412 | 150,195 | 153,471 | 154,361 | 3.31% | 11.35% | -0.79% |
| DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA | 82,937 | 85,288 | 83,972 | 85,376 | 2.94% | 6.60% | -1.78% |
| FLORIDA | 3,093,827 | 3,115,727 | 3,143,894 | 3,189,550 | 3.09% | 16.14% | -1.64% |
| GEORGIA | 1,850,643 | 1,852,406 | 1,875,754 | 1,878,578 | 1.51% | 5.83% | -1.31% |
| HAWAII | 213,199 | 211,778 | 219,737 | 217,726 | 2.12% | 2.01% | -6.53% |
| IDAHO | 332,850 | 337,195 | 347,842 | 350,121 | 5.19% | 17.06% | 0.93% |
| ILLINOIS | 2,071,657 | 2,050,449 | 2,076,146 | 2,039,790 | -1.54% | -5.94% | -6.20% |
| INDIANA | 1,150,105 | 1,151,021 | 1,167,795 | 1,164,977 | 1.29% | 9.24% | -1.92% |
| IOWA | 532,305 | 532,977 | 540,523 | 538,289 | 1.12% | 94.70% | -1.18% |
| LOUISIANA | 787,367 | 785,375 | 790,301 | 781,673 | -0.72% | 3.93% | -5.95% |
| MAINE | 185,550 | 184,788 | 187,186 | 186,154 | 0.33% | 24.59% | -3.91% |
| MARYLAND | 974,588 | 975,040 | 1,000,926 | 996,745 | 2.27% | 5.71% | -2.34% |
| MASSACHUSETTS | 997,468 | 989,708 | 1,006,002 | 993,838 | -0.36% | 0.29% | -3.91% |
| MICHIGAN | 1,577,769 | 1,567,674 | 1,587,278 | 1,573,270 | -0.29% | 2.04% | -4.78% |
| MINNESOTA | 952,481 | 955,228 | 968,472 | 964,036 | 1.21% | 8.19% | -3.41% |
| MISSISSIPPI | 515,315 | 511,470 | 508,771 | 503,543 | -2.28% | 52.49% | -5.70% |
| MISSOURI | 1,004,103 | 1,003,851 | 1,013,017 | 1,011,303 | 0.72% | 1.49% | -2.36% |
| NEVADA | 508,810 | 512,924 | 514,883 | 515,534 | 1.32% | 18.79% | -5.00% |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE | 192,079 | 190,045 | 192,094 | 189,980 | -1.09% | 30.79% | -5.88% |
| NEW JERSEY | 1,425,878 | 1,420,584 | 1,487,852 | 1,477,654 | 3.63% | 8.24% | -2.12% |
| NEW MEXICO | 356,025 | 353,766 | 354,313 | 349,485 | -1.84% | 12.89% | -6.50% |
| NEW YORK | 2,902,357 | 2,880,029 | 2,981,078 | 2,930,071 | 0.95% | 9.96% | -6.84% |
| NORTH CAROLINA | 1,694,774 | 1,699,579 | 1,693,741 | 1,698,389 | 0.21% | 18.81% | -2.89% |
| OHIO | 1,889,827 | 1,884,283 | 1,912,244 | 1,901,129 | 0.60% | 8.01% | -2.60% |
| OKLAHOMA | 697,217 | 700,004 | 706,076 | 709,475 | 1.76% | 10.28% | -1.08% |
| OREGON | 638,866 | 639,732 | 640,543 | 630,914 | -1.24% | 8.71% | -6.17% |
| PENNSYLVANIA | 1,937,932 | 1,931,653 | 1,970,331 | 1,953,260 | 0.79% | 10.48% | -2.97% |
| RHODE ISLAND | 149,441 | 148,087 | 153,121 | 151,212 | 1.19% | 20.43% | -6.12% |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | 820,243 | 826,629 | 824,138 | 831,989 | 1.43% | 25.54% | -1.06% |
| TEXAS | 5,415,221 | 5,466,225 | 5,510,705 | 5,553,699 | 2.56% | 19.93% | -0.83% |
| UTAH | 684,369 | 687,543 | 701,110 | 698,534 | 2.07% | 1.48% | 1.13% |
| VIRGINIA | 1,360,259 | 1,362,955 | 1,382,242 | 1,379,417 | 1.41% | 2.87% | -2.68% |
| WASHINGTON | 1,206,319 | 1,215,831 | 1,229,177 | 1,220,744 | 1.20% | 59.76% | -5.20% |
| WEST VIRGINIA | 267,082 | 265,115 | 266,362 | 263,925 | -1.18% | | -4.90% |
| WISCONSIN | 937,247 | 932,245 | 942,346 | 933,007 | -0.45% | 9.57% | -4.50% |
| WYOMING | 98,898 | 99,306 | 99,365 | 98,774 | -0.13% | 5.55% | -2.39% |

**Legend:** In the table above, red indicates states where changes in enrollment numbers were lower than changes in population for school-aged students. The green shading shows where school enrollment numbers exceeded population changes for school-aged children. Stated differently, in most states the rate of charter school enrollment growth was higher than population growth or decline.



## TABLE 12: WHITE, BLACK, AND HISPANIC SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN POPULATION TRENDS COMPARED TO ENROLLMENT TRENDS

| State | White 5-17 Change 2019 to 2022 | % White Charter Change | % White Non-Charter Change | Black 5-17 Change 2019 to 2022 | % Black Charter Change | % Black Non-Charter Change | Hispanic 5-17 Change 2019 to 2022 | % Hispanic Charter Change | % Hispanic Non-Charter Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALASKA | -0.75% | 17.17% | -2.07% | 1.41% | 41.25% | -13.24% | 7.43% | 25.73% | -1.00% |
| ARIZONA | -2.96% | 0.23% | -11.84% | 6.39% | 22.63% | -1.37% | -0.40% | 15.84% | -0.04% |
| ARKANSAS | 0.02% | -6.95% | -7.59% | -0.26% | -9.89% | -11.18% | 5.56% | 21.48% | -1.77% |
| CALIFORNIA | -3.47% | -10.62% | -15.55% | -4.10% | -5.67% | -17.67% | -1.66% | 3.80% | -3.63% |
| COLORADO | -3.30% | 6.92% | -8.37% | 1.06% | 7.58% | -5.65% | -1.04% | 7.87% | -1.73% |
| CONNECTICUT | -1.17% | 5.40% | -9.61% | 5.01% | -3.30% | -4.16% | 8.28% | 7.75% | 8.82% |
| FLORIDA | 2.47% | 10.63% | -5.36% | 2.80% | 10.64% | -4.38% | 4.77% | 21.48% | 3.12% |
| GEORGIA | -0.70% | -3.43% | -7.59% | 2.70% | 11.89% | -1.49% | 5.23% | -0.02% | 7.49% |
| INDIANA | -0.04% | 5.13% | -4.86% | 4.51% | 1.94% | 1.13% | 5.49% | 34.03% | 6.86% |
| IOWA | 0.05% | 97.78% | -3.86% | 7.89% | 750.00% | 2.74% | 6.39% | 25.00% | 8.00% |
| LOUISIANA | -0.60% | 4.30% | -9.04% | -2.14% | -1.18% | -7.79% | 14.97% | 32.76% | 14.04% |
| MAINE | -0.16% | 8.68% | -4.41% | 10.01% | -18.18% | -18.80% | 13.92% | 58.82% | 23.30% |
| MASSACHUSETTS | -2.31% | -5.96% | -9.61% | 4.82% | -2.15% | -1.55% | 5.13% | 4.56% | 8.01% |
| MICHIGAN | -1.24% | 1.52% | -6.87% | 1.99% | -1.58% | -4.07% | 2.99% | 8.54% | 3.46% |
| MINNESOTA | -0.79% | 2.77% | -6.65% | 10.49% | 12.81% | -1.37% | 4.01% | 12.02% | 7.57% |
| NEVADA | -1.71% | -1.60% | -13.24% | 8.59% | 24.75% | 2.27% | 1.68% | 35.49% | -2.45% |
| NEW JERSEY | 1.74% | 3.24% | -9.08% | 5.90% | 11.30% | -4.67% | 9.63% | -2.61% | 6.73% |
| NEW YORK | -0.30% | 6.80% | -9.21% | -0.21% | 4.40% | -14.20% | 3.25% | 14.91% | -3.59% |
| NORTH CAROLINA | -1.28% | 10.22% | -7.74% | 0.43% | 20.45% | -2.05% | 5.50% | 36.89% | 6.35% |
| OKLAHOMA | 0.88% | -10.01% | -5.17% | 2.83% | -0.84% | -7.26% | 8.07% | 27.56% | 6.94% |
| OREGON | -2.17% | 5.71% | -10.26% | 2.01% | 36.03% | -3.32% | 1.97% | 18.88% | 0.55% |
| PENNSYLVANIA | -0.76% | 11.17% | -6.13% | 2.72% | 4.34% | -6.04% | 9.64% | 18.48% | 10.00% |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | 1.89% | 17.61% | -4.92% | -1.45% | 33.96% | -4.45% | 10.31% | 42.89% | 16.74% |
| TEXAS | 0.92% | 11.64% | -5.03% | 6.39% | 15.68% | 0.69% | 1.90% | 21.89% | -1.07% |
| UTAH | 1.38% | -5.74% | -1.50% | 3.27% | 1.74% | -5.03% | 6.01% | 21.03% | 11.00% |
| WASHINGTON | -0.96% | 58.55% | -10.72% | 6.02% | 40.53% | 0.76% | 5.26% | 81.93% | 2.04% |

**Legend:** In the table above, the green shading shows the places where a racial group of students enrolled in district or charter schools outpaced the population of that racial group of students in the state. In these states, the green shading shows when particular racial groups of students drove enrollment gains. The red shading shows where enrollment growth for a racial group of students was slower than population growth—this does not mean enrollment growth was negative. It was simply slower than population growth. This table offers a way to compare enrollment trends for White, Black, and Hispanic students, showing which racial groups drove enrollment in each state.

# RIGHTSIZING AFTER THE PANDEMIC

Our 2021 enrollment report revealed a huge spike in charter enrollment, and last year's report showed essentially flat enrollment, so we were curious what the results would look like with a fourth year of data. It seems that charter enrollment is rightsizing, or optimizing, post-pandemic, given that conditions are starting to return to normal—or, maybe, a new normal.

Some of the shifts track with the policy changes due to COVID. During the pandemic, states like Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Utah experienced a large increase in charter school enrollment, led by students at virtual charter schools. In our report ***Voting with Their Feet***, we acknowledged that some, but not most, of the enrollment growth in the charter sector was due to full-time virtual charter schools. During the second year of the pandemic, as we expected, states with large full-time virtual charter school enrollment saw charter school enrollment declines when students were able to return to brick-and-mortar schools (even though some families did decide to stay with full-time virtual schools because they'd discovered that such schools were a good fit for their students).

In these situations, the enrollment loss makes sense—but it's important to keep in mind the bigger picture, which is that public charter school enrollment has increased by more than 2% this year, even though many families left full-time virtual schooling for in-person alternatives.

## Rightsizing in Pennsylvania and Oklahoma

During the pandemic, Oklahoma charter schools saw a record spike in enrollment during the 2020-2021 school year. It was the largest increase in the country. Since then, the state has seen steady declines in charter school enrollment. This was anticipated because the spike was largely due to virtual school enrollment, and now that brick-and-mortar schools have reopened, most students have returned to physical school buildings, and enrollment numbers leveled off.

A similar pattern can be found in Pennsylvania. After a spike one year, and decline the following year, Pennsylvania is now posting enrollment gains again. This growth reflects brick-and-mortar enrollment and ongoing parent demand for these unique public schools.



# CONCLUSION

The public charter sector is an important part of public education. Further, charter schools are the only part of public education that is growing—and, in some cases, growing more rapidly than population growth trends can explain. We believe in public education and want every student in every community to have a high-quality public school option. To the extent that option is not available, parents have shown us they are willing to do whatever it takes to ensure their children are in educational environments where they are safe, supported, and thriving academically. Our challenge in the public education space is to better understand what makes families want to select a particular type of school and to create learning environments that meet their needs. It's clear that, for many families, the type of public education that fits their family's needs can be found at a charter school. Through the data outlined in this report, they are telling us that. We must listen to them.

Charter schools serve important functions in communities across the country, whether those communities are rural or urban, big or small, remote or connected. Charters also serve students from many different demographic groups—and every one of those students is entitled to an excellent public education.

We must help make a high-quality public education more accessible to more families and remove barriers.

# METHODOLOGY

## DATA METHODS

In July and August 2023, the National Alliance contacted SEA officials in all states and territories with charter schools to identify enrollment data for charter schools compared to other public, non-charter schools. As of the writing of this report, 42 states have been identified where there was data from the SEA to make a clear determination about the total statewide enrollment figures for charter schools compared to district public schools during the 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 school years. At the time of this report, data was unavailable or incomplete for Alabama, Guam, Kansas, Puerto Rico, and Tennessee. West Virginia opened its first charter schools in 2022-23, so charter data is included for that year and district public data is included for 2019-20 to 2022-23. Below are some important notes regarding the calculation of figures contained in this report.

- **Sourcing.** For each state, the source of the data, date the data was accessed, and any relevant notes regarding how statewide figures were calculated are provided below. In this report, for the purposes of reliability and consistency, figures provided by SEAs were used. We also asked for all four years of data and made corrections to the data retroactively if any changes existed. Since we ask for "fresh data" from SEAs each year for all years of the analysis, there are changes in the enrollment figures for some states as compared to the two previous reports NAPCS has published. This is a state data quirk—some SEAs never update enrollment data once it is collected, while others will continue to improve and refine this data months and years after it is collected.

- **Fall Counts Preferred.** The process for counting students varies from state to state. However, most states have a Fall, or October 1, count, and this is the preferred count figure in instances where there were either Spring or monthly counts. There are instances in the report where a yearly count or Spring count is used. Information on specifics can be found in the Data Notes by State section of this report.

- **District Public School Enrollment Figures.** In many instances, the National Alliance performed simple calculations to arrive at totals for public charter schools compared to all other public schools in the state (district public schools). The calculations started with statewide public school enrollment totals, subtracted total charter school enrollment, and arrived at district school figures for each year. More details on the calculation methods can be found in the endnotes.

- **Cautionary Note.** As mentioned above, enrollment figures are calculated in many ways. As such, other researchers, media outlets, and individuals may arrive at slightly different numbers based upon calculation methods. The National Alliance's goal was to 1) source data from publicly available sources and make the sourcing transparent and 2) keep calculation methods simple so they could be reliable and easily understood.



# DATA NOTES BY STATE

**Alaska:** "School Enrollment Totals for all Alaskan Schools" and "School Enrollment Totals by Ethnicity for all Alaskan Public Schools", Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, accessed July 11, 2023, https://education.alaska.gov/data-center. The author contacted officials at the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development for clear and reliable lists of Alaska charter schools in 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23. ADEED officials responded with this information. Using this information, the author was able to download school-level enrollment data, tag charter schools, and parse charter enrollment from all other non-charter public enrollment. Subgroup information was available in data files with no suppression.

**Arizona:** "Annual Enrollment Reports - Type by Grade Tab" and "Annual Enrollment Reports – Type by Ethnicity Tab", Arizona Department of Education, accessed July 11, 2023, https://www.azed.gov/accountability-research/data/. Files provide statewide enrollment as well as enrollment by school type and grade level. Here we include the provided figures for charter schools and subtract the charter figures from the Arizona total enrollment to arrive at a non-charter public figure for the 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2022-23. For the 2021-22 school year, the Arizona total enrollment figure was unavailable, so the author summed all non-charter public school values for the non-charter total. These reports include the number of students enrolled on the October 1 reporting date. The Type by Ethnicity tab provided statewide totals for subgroups included in our analysis.

**Arkansas:** "Custom Data Report", Arkansas Department of Education, accessed July 11, 2023, https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov/. Arkansas Department of Education officials referred the National Alliance to the ADE's "MySchoolInfo" website where users can create custom data reports. The author was able to create a custom data report with charter and non-charter school flags as well as access robust data on subgroup enrollment.

**California:** "Enrollment by Ethnicity for Charter and Non-Charter Schools", California Department of Education Data Quest, accessed July 14, 2023, https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrCharterEth.aspx?cds=00&agglevel=state&year=2021-22. This report displays the annual K-12 public school enrollment by student subgroup and overall for charter schools and district public schools for the selected report level (state, county, district, or school) and year. Annual enrollment consists of the number of students enrolled on Census Day (the first Wednesday in October).

**Colorado:** "PK-12 Race/Ethnicity and Gender by Grade and School", Colorado Department of Education, accessed July 14, 2023, https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/pupilcurrent. Officials from the Colorado Department of Education referred the National Alliance to the aforementioned data files as well as "Charter Schools by District" (https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/chartAuthDist.asp) to identify charter schools and calculate enrollment totals. Data files contained robust subgroup data with no suppression.

**Connecticut:** "Student Counts by School and Race/Ethnicity", Connecticut Department of Education, accessed June 28, 202, https://edsight.ct.gov/SASStoredProcess/guest?_year=2019-20&_district=All+Districts&_school=All+Schools&_subgroup=Race+&_program=%2FCTDOE%2FEdSight%2FRelease%2FReporting%2FPublic%2FReports%2FStoredProcesses%2FEnrollmentReport_SiteCore&_select=Submit. Enrollment files for Connecticut do not have a charter flag, however, charter schools have a school/district code that begins with "26, 27, 28, or 29". Using this assumption, which was confirmed by Connecticut partners, the author was able to calculate charter enrollment totals compared to non-charter public enrollment totals. Subgroup data was available in Connecticut and subject to minimal suppression (enrollments fewer than 5 for a given subgroup are suppressed) so data for Connecticut was included in the subpopulation analysis.

**Delaware:** "Annual Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Reports," Delaware Department of Education, accessed July 15, 2023, https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/1495. District public school and charter school summaries were used to calculate enrollment figures. The author combined regular education and special education totals in enrollment reports to arrive at total figure for each sector in each year. Statewide totals include Dover Air Force Base. Data for subgroups was not available in these reports.

**District of Columbia:** "School Year Enrollment Audit Report Data – District Summary Tab", District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education, accessed July 15, 2023, https://osse.dc.gov/enrollment. Data files provide both a charter school and district public school breakout. Audited public enrollment figures from fall count data were used in this calculation. Subgroup enrollment data was not available for all four years included in our analysis.

**Florida:** "Survey 2: Fall Students Enrolled by Charter Status," Florida Department of Education EdStats Data Portal, accessed July 14, 2023, https://knowyourdatafl.org/views/PK12-Enrollment/ENROLLMENTMAP?:showAppBanner=false&:display_count=n&:showVizHome=n&:origin=viz_share_link&:isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&:embed=y. The main map page contains data by year for statewide enrollment figures in charter and non-charter schools. The demographics tab provides robust subgroup data.

**Georgia:** "Data Request to the Georgia Department of Education," Georgia Department of Education, received July 15, 2023. The National Alliance received enrollment data files directly from the Georgia Department of Education for both overall enrollment and for the subpopulation analysis. Publicly available files do not have a robust charter flag.

**Hawaii:** "Annual Enrollment Press Releases with Downloadable Statewide Enrollment Files," Hawaii State Department of Education, accessed July 15, 2023. 2019-20 data: https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/2019-20-enrollment.aspx; 2020-21 data: https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/2020-21-enrollment.aspx. 2021-22 data: https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/2021-22-enrollment-figures-for-public-and-charter-schools.aspx#:~:text=Hawaii%20Public%20Schools&text=Enrollment%20at%20Hawaii's%20public%20and,%E2%80%94%20a%20difference%20of%201.7%25. 2022-23 data: https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/2022-23-Enrollment.aspx#:~:text=Enrollment%20at%20Hawai%CA%BBi's%20public%20and,%E2%80%94%20a%20difference%20of%201.7%25. Data files for each year contain charter school and district public school breakouts.

**Idaho:** "Historical State by Grade Enrollment" (for statewide public totals) and "Charter School Historical Enrollment by Year" (for charter totals), Idaho State Department of Education, accessed July 15, 2023, https://www.sde.idaho.gov/finance/#attendance. The author used statewide enrollment totals to calculate non-charter public figures.
Illinois: "Fall Enrollment Counts," Illinois State Board of Education, https://www.isbe.net/pages/fall-enrollment-counts.aspx, accessed July 12, 2023. ISBE officials were unable to provide the National Alliance with subpopulation breakouts via publicly available files due to heavy suppression. Files reflect Fall enrollment counts for each school year.

**Indiana:** "School Enrollment by Ethnicity and Free/Reduced Price Meal Status," Indiana Department of Education, accessed July 12, 2023, https://www.in.gov/doe/it/data-center-and-reports/. The author submitted a data request to the Indiana Department of Education. IDOE officials directed the National Alliance to the aforementioned website and provided the following note on how to best identify charter schools in the dataset: "There isn't a charter flag in the file, but Charter Corp IDs would be those at the end of the file above 8665 (with the exception of 9100 which is Dept of Corrections, not a charter). There are also two charters below that number: 8635 and 8655."

**Iowa:** "PreK-12 Enrollments by Grade, Race, and Gender", Iowa Department of Education, https://educateiowa.gov/data-reporting/education-statistics-pk-12#Student_Enrollment, accessed on July 13, 2023.

**Louisiana:** "October Multi Stats", Louisiana Department of Education, accessed on July 14, 2023, https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/student-attributes. Pulled October (fall) counts for each year. Leveraged the "charter type" flag in the data to calculate a total for charters/non-charters. Identified charter schools as any school that had a flag of Type 1-Type 5 (six total classifications). Files contained robust and unsuppressed subpopulation data for all four years of the analysis.

**Maine:** "Data Request to the Maine Department of Education," Maine Department of Education, received on July 13, 2023. The National Alliance contacted the Maine Department of Education for overall and subgroup charter enrollment figures. MDE officials provided the National Alliance with customized data files for 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23.



**Maryland:** "Data Request to the Maryland State Department of Education", Maryland State Department of Education, received on July 1, 2023. The National Alliance submitted a data request to the Maryland State Department of Education requesting charter and non-charter enrollment totals at the school-level for 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23. MSDE officials provided this information directly to the National Alliance. Subpopulation information was not provided.

**Massachusetts:** "Enrollment By Race/Gender Report (School)," Massachusetts Department of Education, accessed July 11, 2023, https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/enrollmentbyracegender.aspx. The National Alliance contacted the Massachusetts Department of Education for charter / non-charter enrollment data. The MDE provided the National Alliance with a link to the aforementioned data files and a custom directory of schools that allowed the author to distinguish charter schools from all other public schools.

**Michigan:** "Student Count Enrollment Files" Michigan Department of Education Michigan School Data Portal, accessed July 15, 2023, https://www.mischooldata.org/k-12-data-files. Files contain a code for charter schools, which are called public school academies in Michigan. Total enrollment figures were calculated for public school academies, and this figure was then subtracted from statewide total enrollment to derive district public school figures.

**Minnesota:** "State/District/School/County Enrollment," Minnesota Department of Education, accessed June 28, 2023, https://public.education.mn.gov/MDEAnalytics/DataTopic.jsp?TOPICID=2. Per the Minnesota Department of Education, charter schools are categorized as a Type 07 district (https://public.education.mn.gov/MDEAnalytics/Summary.jsp). Using annual enrollment files, totals were calculated for all Type 07 districts (charter schools) and subtracted from statewide public school total to get district public school figures.

**Mississippi:** "Enrollment by Grade", Mississippi Department of Education, accessed July 7, 2023, https://newreports.mdek12.org/. The National Alliance contacted the Mississippi Department of Education requesting charter and non-charter enrollments. The MDE directed the National Alliance to the link above noting that "the Charter Districts are (1425, 2505, 2515, 2525, 2535, 2545, 2555, and 4225)." Further, the MDE noted that subgroup data would not be robust due to suppression therefore Mississippi is not included in that portion of the analysis.

**Missouri:** "Building Enrollment 1991-2022" and "Preliminary Enrollment Changes 2022-23," Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, accessed on July 22, 2023, https://apps.dese.mo.gov/MCDS/home.aspx. The National Alliance reached out to the Missouri Department of Education and officials directed the National Alliance to the files listed above. Further, officials noted that "the fourth digit of a charter's district code will be a 9" and the author used this information to parse charters from non-charters.

**Nevada:** "Enrollment for Nevada Public Schools", Nevada Department of Education, accessed on July 5, 2023, https://doe.nv.gov/DataCenter/Enrollment/. The National Alliance sent an official request to the Nevada Department of Education requesting enrollment data. NDE responded with the link referenced above and provided the National Alliance with school directory files to accurately identify charter schools. Nevada has both state sponsored charters and LEA sponsored charters. Both sets of charters are included in the charter total for the purposes of this analysis

**New Hampshire:** "District Fall Enrollments," New Hampshire Department of Education, accessed July 6, 2023, https://my.doe.nh.gov/iPlatform/Report/DataReportsSubCategory?reportSubCategoryId=9. Data files contain a charter school breakout figure. Author calculated district public school enrollment using statewide public school totals.

**New Jersey:** "Fall Enrollment Reports," New Jersey Department of Education, accessed July 15, 2023, https://www.nj.gov/education/doedata/enr/. Data files separate charter schools from other LEAs. Author took charter school totals and subtracted from statewide public school enrollment to arrive at district public school figures.

**New Mexico:** "Enrollment by District by Location by Grade", New Mexico Department of Education, accessed June 28, 2023, https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/information-technology/stars/. The National Alliance contacted the New Mexico Department of Education and was referred to files listed on the website above. Enrollment files provide a charter indicator and the author calculated figures for charters and all other public non-charters to arrive at values for New Mexico.

**New York:** “School Enrollment – Race and Ethnic Origin” New York State Department of Education Information and Reporting Services, accessed July 14, 2023, http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/enroll-n-staff/home.html. Per the New York State Department of Education, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22 data is considered final, and 2022-23 data is considered preliminary.

**North Carolina:** “Pupils in Membership by Race and Sex” and “Charter and Regional School Membership by Race and Sex,” North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, accessed July 13, 2023, http://apps.schools.nc.gov/ords/f?p=145:15:::NO::: and http://apps.schools.nc.gov/ords/f?p=145:73:::NO:::. The National Alliance reached out the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for enrollment information and was provided the two links above. The first link provided pupil membership information for all public non-charter schools and the second link provides similar information for charter schools.

**Ohio:** “Fall Enrollment Headcount: October Public District and Buildings,” Ohio Department of Education, accessed July 14, 2023, http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Frequently-Requested-Data/Enrollment-Data. Data files do not provide a total figure and contain heavy suppression across most reporting categories, so the author summed male and female student data to arrive at a total for both charter schools and district public schools. The author used the tab “fy22_hdcnt_cs” tab for charter school data.

**Oklahoma:** “State Public Enrollment Totals: School Site Totals,” Oklahoma State Department of Education, accessed July 15, 2023, https://sde.ok.gov/documents/state-student-public-enrollment. Data files include charter school specific data, and the author calculated district public school figures by subtracting charter school enrollment from total statewide public school enrollment.

**Oregon:** “Fall Membership Enrollment Reports”, Oregon Department of Education, accessed July 19, 2023, https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/students/Pages/StudentEnrollment-Reports.aspx. The National Alliance contacted the Oregon Department of Education for enrollment data. ODE referred the National Alliance to the enrollment files listed above and provided the National Alliance with school directory files that allowed us to identify charter schools in the dataset.

**Pennsylvania:** “Public School Enrollment Reports,” Pennsylvania Department of Education, accessed July 14, 2023, https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Enrollment/Pages/PublicSchEnrReports.aspx. Enrollment data files for Pennsylvania contain a flag for charter schools. The author calculated a district public school figure by subtracting the charter school total from statewide total in each year.

**Rhode Island:** “Data Request to the Rhode Island Department of Education”, Rhode Island Department of Education, received on August 2, 2023. The National Alliance submitted a data request to the Rhode Island Department of Education requesting charter and non-charter enrollment totals at the school-level for 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23. RIDE officials provided enrollment data files and a charter directory – using this information, the National Alliance was able to construct files that allowed us to parse charter and non-charter enrollment data.

**South Carolina:** “Active School Headcounts”, South Carolina Department of Education, accessed on July 6, 2023, https://ed.sc.gov/data/other/student-counts/active-student-headcounts/. The National Alliance submitted a formal data request to the South Carolina Department of Education. In response, SCDOE directed the National Alliance to the link above containing enrollment data. In addition, SCDOE officials told the National Alliance that charter schools can be identified using the “School ID” column with the following information: “If the School ID starts with 4701 or 4801, or if the 5th digit is a 6 (e.g., 0405601), it is a charter school.” Using this information, the National Alliance identified charter and non-charter schools to construct enrollment counts.

**Texas:** “Texas Education Agency PEIMS Standard Reports Student Enrollment Report: Statewide District Totals by Gender” and “Texas Education Agency PEIMS Standard Reports Student Enrollment Report: Statewide District Totals by Ethnicity”, Texas Education Agency, accessed on July 14, 2023, https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/adste.html. Texas data is subject to heavy suppression. To work around this, the National Alliance used Statewide District Totals by Gender for overall charter / non-charter enrollment figures. For our subpopulation analysis, we used a similar file but by Ethnicity to ascertain subgroup data. Note: minor suppression existed in the data included in our subgroup analysis but data was available for nearly every school.



**Utah:** “Fall Enrollment by Demographics and Grade Levels,” Utah State Board of Education, accessed July 14, 2023, https://schools.utah.gov/data/reports?mid=1424&tid=4. Utah’s data has clear demarcation of charters versus non-charter public.

**Virginia:** “Fall Membership Reports”, Virginia Department of Education, accessed July 18, 2023, https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/buildatable/fallmembership. The author contacted the Virginia Department of Education but did not receive a response. Last year, VDOE officials provided the author with a list of charter schools in Virginia. Using these lists as well as information available about 2022-23 charter schools in Virginia, the author manually identified charter schools in the dataset to construct enrollment figures.

**Washington:** “Data Request to the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction,” Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, received July 14, 2023. The National Alliance received custom enrollment files from the WA OSPI in response to our request for charter and non-charter enrollment data.

**West Virginia:** “Enrollment by County & Grade”, West Virginia Department of Education, accessed August 15, 2023, https://zoomwv.k12.wv.us/Dashboard/dashboard/2056. 2022-23 is the first year that West Virginia enrolled students in charter schools and these schools were easy to identify in the data provided by the state.

**Wisconsin:** “WISEdash Public Portal Enrollment Data” (for total public school enrollment) and “Charter Enrollment buy School” (for total charter school enrollment), Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, accessed July 15, 2023. Total public enrollment: https://wisedash.dpi.wi.gov/Dashboard/dashboard/18110; total charter school enrollment: https://dpi.wi.gov/parental-education-options/charter-schools/current. The author used statewide public school totals to calculate a public charter school figure.

**Wyoming:** “Fall Enrollment Summary by School by Grade” and “Wyoming Charter Schools List”, Wyoming Department of Education, accessed July 19, 2023, https://edu.wyoming.gov/data/statisticalreportseries-2/ and https://edu.wyoming.gov/for-district-leadership/school-programs/charterschools/. The National Alliance submitted a formal data request to the Wyoming Department of Education. WDE officials provided the link above for enrollment figures by year and shared with the National Alliance the names of the five charter schools currently operating in Wyoming.

# END NOTES

[1] This report is based on data available to the National Alliance as of October 2023. Further, it analyzes only the 42 states where charter schools exist and data were available for four consecutive school years. One caveat is West Virginia, which is included in the report opening its first charter schools in the 2022-23 school year. Public charter school enrollment from 2019-20 to 2022-23 grew in 40 out of 42 states included in our analysis. Two states, Arkansas and Illinois, saw modest charter enrollment decreases. During the same period, district public schools lost enrollment in 40 out of 42 states. Two states, Idaho and Utah, saw modest enrollment increases in, district public schools. This year’s report does not include data for Alabama, Guam, Kansas, Puerto Rico, and Tennessee, or any states that do not have public charter schools.

[2] For more information on ***Never Going Back: An Analysis of Parent Sentiment in Education***, please see: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED625440.pdf

[3] For more information on ***Listen To Your Teacher: An Analysis of Teacher Sentiment on the State of Public Education***, please see: https://publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Listen-To-Your-Teacher-An-Analysis-of-Teacher-Sentiment-on-the-State-of-Public-Education.pdf

[4] For more information on ***Charter Schools in Rural Areas***, please see: http://publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/2023-Paper_Charter-Schools-in-Rural-Areas.pdf

[5] We were not able to include the other 16 states for two primary reasons: heavy data suppression due to too few students in racial categories, or the data source we obtained from the state education agency did not include this information. Tables 5, 7, and 9 present state-level enrollment data for White students, Black students, and Hispanic students respectively. Taken together, these racial groups account for approximately 90% of charter school students. Data collection for other racial groups was heavily suppressed due to the low numbers. Tables 6, 8, and 10 summarize the data and compare trends for each subgroup to the state’s overall enrollment trend for charter and district public schools.