



Download the full report: www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/2023statecharterschoolscoloradoannualreport

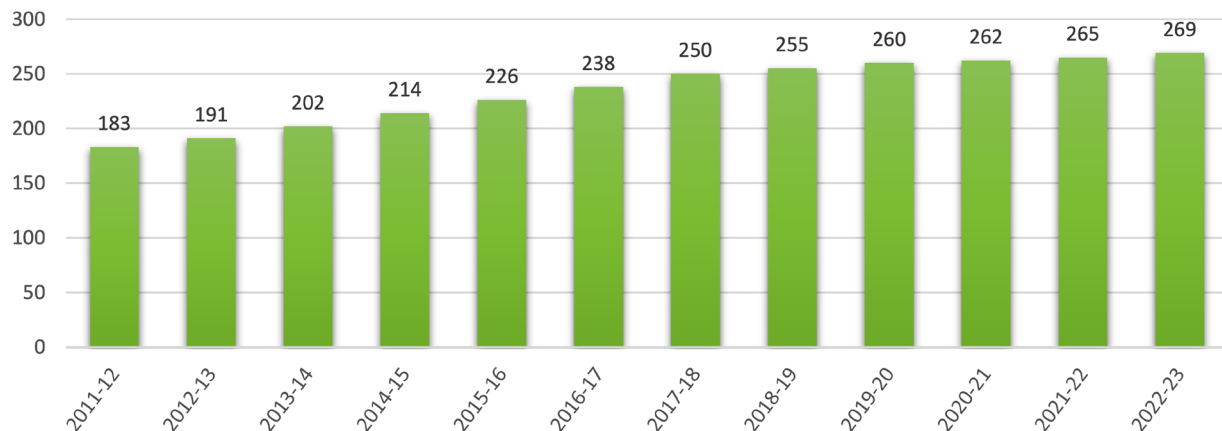
This report was created in accordance with §22-30.5-113, C.R.S., which requires reporting to the Governor and to the house and senate committees on education on the state of charter schools in Colorado. Following the passage of S.B. 23-287, the report frequency has been increased and will now be annual. As part of this report, the statute specifies that charter performance should also consider the performance of charter school students relative to the performance of disaggregated student groups.

Methodology

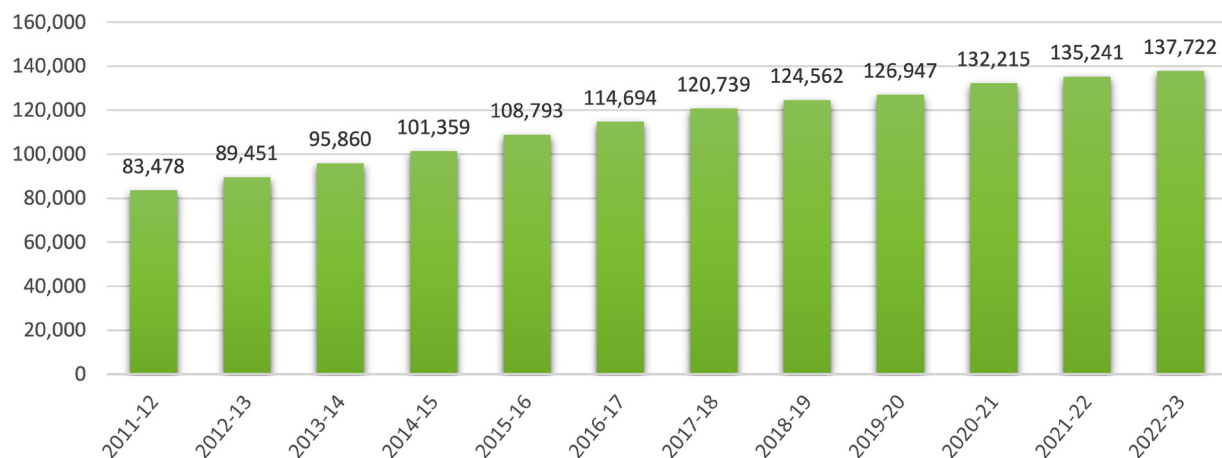
The analyses in this report provide information about the charter school sector in Colorado in alignment with the requirements of the statute. All data utilized for quantitative analyses are gathered from data maintained by CDE. The report relies on the following publicly available data sets:

- Graduation Rates: www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/gradratecurrent
- Mobility: www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/mobility-stabilitycurrent
- School/District Staff Statistics: www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/staffcurrent
- Pupil Counts: www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/pupilcurrent
- School Directory: www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/yr_directory

Charter Schools in Operation by Year



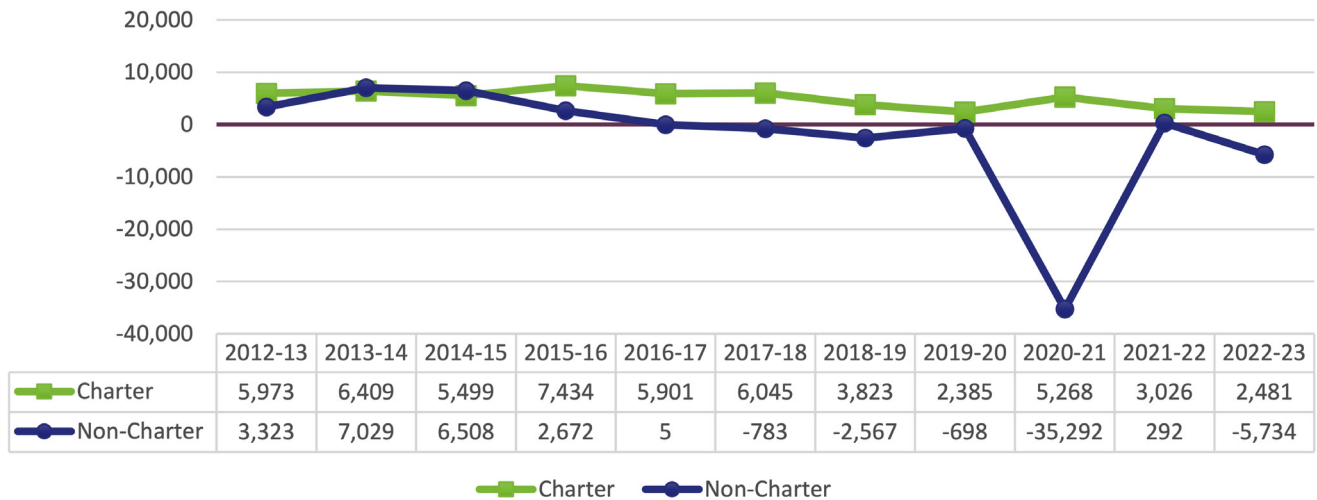
Charter School Enrollment by Year





The speed of growth in charter school enrollment has slowed since 2011-12, but enrollment has continued to stay positive. The speed of non-charter growth began to slow in 2014-15 and enrollment in non-charters began a numeric decline in 2017-18. Non-charter schools have experienced declines every year since then, except for a slight uptick in 2021-22. Overall, the state has seen enrollment increases over the twelve-year period shown in Figure 4 except for school years 2020-21 and 2022-23.

Change in Enrollment from Previous Year

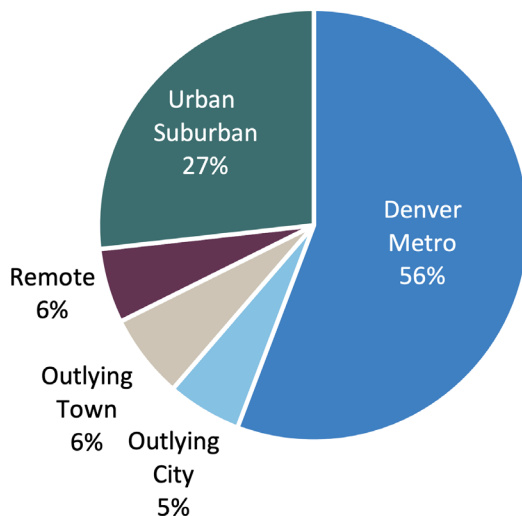


Geographic Location

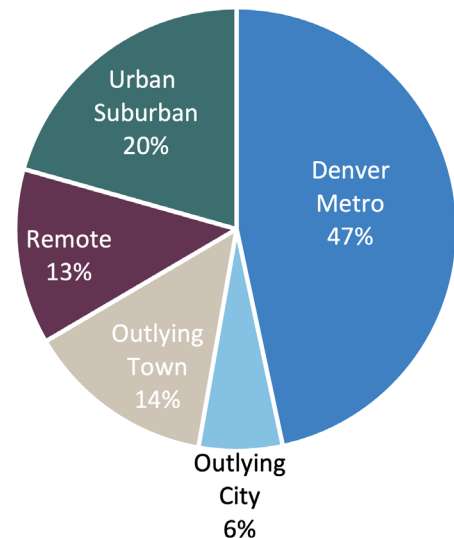
The Colorado Department of Education classifies school districts, Boards of Cooperative Services (BOCES), and schools in Colorado into five main geographic categories: Denver Metro, Urban-Suburban, Outlying City, Outlying Town, and Remote. Both district-managed schools and charter-managed schools have substantial presence in each geographical location; however, the distributions between each vary.

Over half of charter schools in the state are in the Denver Metro region, with the next highest concentration found in urban-suburban regions. Both settings also have a higher relative share of charter schools than non-charter schools. These trends are generally consistent with prior years, although there has been a slight increase in the proportion located in Denver Metro, offset by a decline in those located in urban-suburban areas.

Charter School Settings in 2022-23



Non-Charter Settings 2022-23





Characteristics of Colorado Charter Schools

Colorado charter schools have the autonomy to choose an educational model that meets their mission and vision for educating students. These models can encompass Core Knowledge, STEM, Montessori, and more, while their geographic setting spans from rural, urban, and other types. Furthermore, their governance structures can be Single Site, Charter Management Organization, Education Management Organization, Network or Collaborative. Enrollment sizes and grade configurations vary greatly throughout Colorado.

Educational Model	Number of Schools
Alternative Education	13
Arts Integration	8
Career and Technical Education	3
Classical	31
College Prep	26
Community School	9
Core Knowledge	58
Dual Language/Language Immersion	8
Early College	12
Expeditionary	12
Experiential	3
Gifted and Talented	2
Health and Wellness	2
Montessori	14
Online	13
Other (Gifted/Academic Challenged, Military)	3
Personalized Learning	18
Project Based	13
STEAM/STEM	15
Traditional	6
Waldorf	4

Education models range from schools that hold a belief that students need to be taught a foundation of knowledge in a structured way to contribute meaningfully to society (classical, core knowledge, etc.) to models that are guided by a belief that children construct their own knowledge and that the school's role is to provide opportunities for students to gain understanding through hands-on activities (Montessori, expeditionary learning, etc.). Other education models may be driven by a more targeted focus around student needs or skill-driven focus, such as STEM, performing arts, or post-secondary and workforce readiness. Also, charter schools operate many of the state's Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) as well as about one-quarter of the state's multi-district online schools.

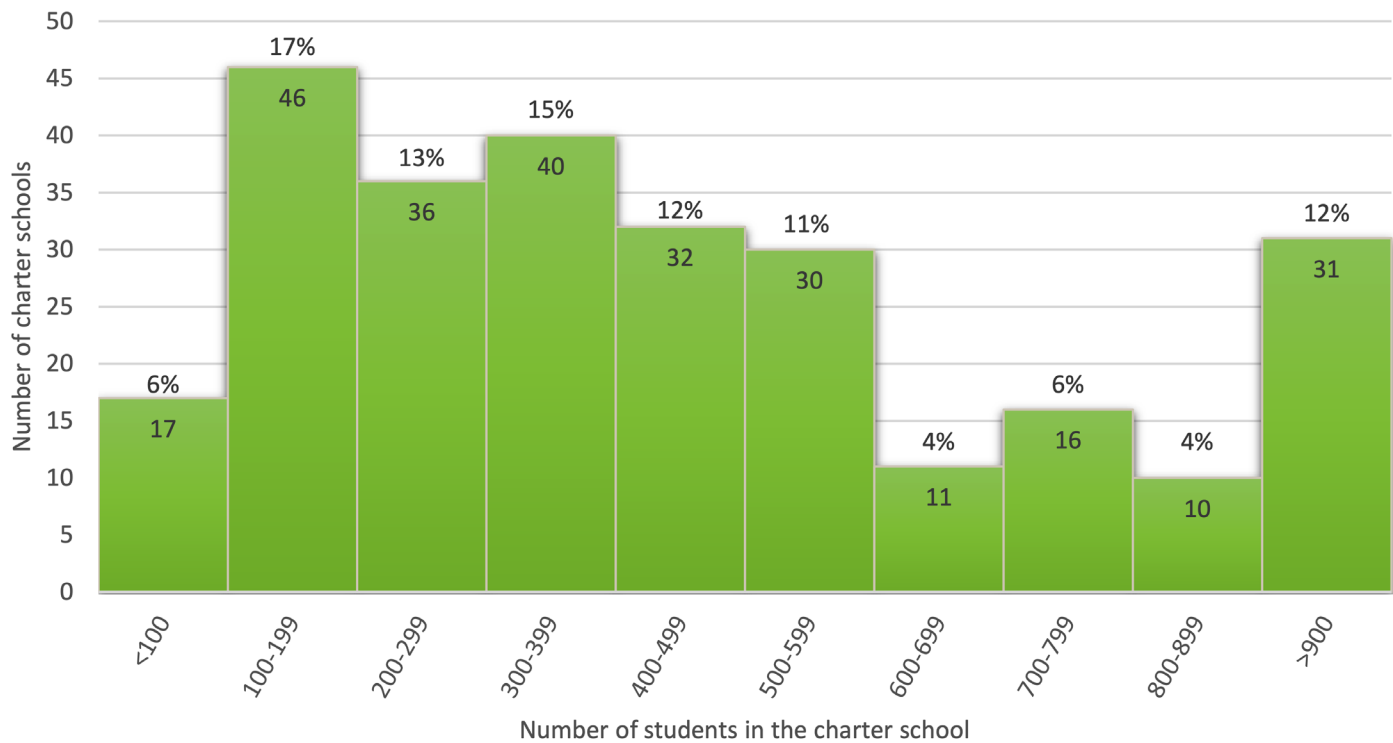
Understanding the wide range of educational models found in Colorado is essential for gaining insights into the state's charter schools. It is also helpful in appreciating the diverse viewpoints of teachers, parents, and students involved in the charter school community. The above table offers a broad summary of the educational models seen within Colorado charter schools as reported by the authorizer and/or school website. It is worth noting that there is no fixed method for categorizing educational models, and schools may adjust model designs over time.



Size

Colorado charter schools exhibit significant variation in terms of size, ranging from schools serving fewer than 100 students to schools with over 5,000 students. The figure below provides an overview of the distribution of charter schools based on their total enrollment for the 2022-23 school year.

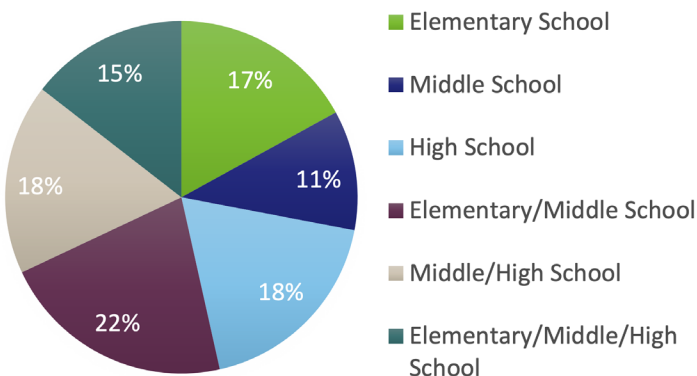
Distribution of 2022-23 Charter Schools by Size



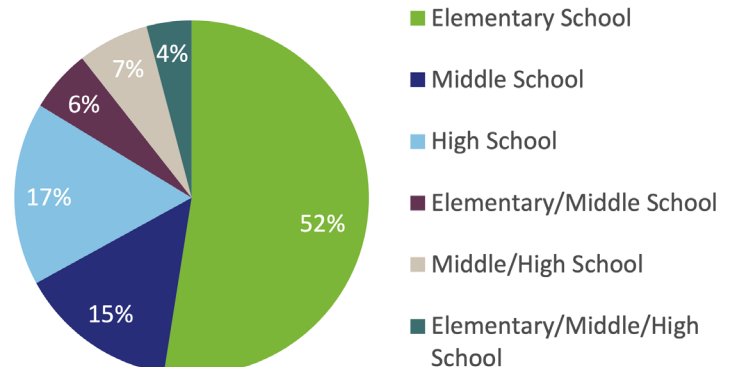
Grade Level Configuration

Charter schools operate with a wide range of grade configurations. In the 2022-23 school year, over half of charter schools, specifically 55%, served students across more than one traditional education level. For instance, these schools may encompass elementary and middle school grades or middle and high school grades, or all three levels. In contrast, only 17% of non-charter schools serve multi-level configurations.

Charter School Grade Configuration



Non-Charter School Grade Configuration





Legislative Action

While the operation of charter schools in Colorado is largely governed by the Colorado Charter Schools Act, there are also numerous other state laws that impact charter schools. This report summarizes legislation of note passed between 2019 and 2023 that has impacted both authorizers and charter schools during this time.

S.B. 23-287 PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCE

Per Pupil Funding: Funding for the 2023-24 school year increased by \$598.25, for a total amount of \$8, 076.41.

Charter Legislative Report: Increased the frequency of the charter report from a triannual to annual cycle.

Public Entity: Charter schools, including charter networks and charter collaboratives, were officially designated as public entities. Consequently, they are now required to submit specific documentation to formalize this status. Members of local charter school boards must undergo an oath of office and submit the necessary paperwork to the division of Local Affairs.

CSI Mill Equalization: CSI has generally experienced regular increased appropriations into the state mill levy equalization fund. In 2023, the General Assembly voted to fully fund this account. Thus, moving forward, CSI schools will be funded consistent with this policy.

Charter School Capital Assistance Fund: An increase of over \$10 million in the Charter School Capital Assistance Fund.

Other Important Legislation

S.B. 21-157 MORAL OBLIGATION PROGRAM

This bill increased the cap on the state's "Moral Obligation Program" by \$250M which has supported charter schools with accessing lower interest rates for building facilities. By increasing the cap, the Colorado Educational and Cultural Facilities Authority (CECFA) is able to support qualified charter schools with accessing lower-interest bond financing for school construction.

H.B. 22-1294 SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES IN CHARTER SCHOOLS

Prior to the passage of this bill, school districts in Colorado – not the charter schools authorized by those districts – were one of the only allowable "administrative units," or AUs, for purposes of supervising special education delivery in charter schools.

H.B. 22-1294 allows interested groups of charter schools to seek AU status from the state. It also allowed individual charter schools to move from a district-administered AU to a CSI-administered AU.

Some key provisions of the bill included:

- Ability for charter schools to weigh their lottery more favorably for students with disabilities.
- Ability for charter school collaboratives to seek an alternative AU designation.
- Ability for charter schools to join CSI's AU for special education purposes only, while remaining a district-authorized charter school.

H.B. 23-1025 CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATIONS TIMELINE

This bill expanded the standard application window under statute to 18 months instead of 12 months. Due to this expanded window schools can still open in the school year as planned to allow additional time due to possible unforeseen challenges, including appeals.

The CDE 2023 Triennial Report is one of the most comprehensive statistical reviews of Colorado K-12 education programs available. This highlight document holds but a fraction of its content. The full Triennial Report is invaluable reading for anyone looking to deepen their understanding of the complexities of the current Charter School/Non-Charter School landscape.

Download the full report: www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/2023statecharterschoolscoloradoannualreport

