

Fiscal Highlights

School Choice in Utah: Charter School Enrollment and District of Residence - Ben Leishman

How many students in Utah opt to enroll in a charter school? Where in the state do charter school students come from? Which school districts have the highest percentage of resident students attending a charter school? These questions are often asked by lawmakers while discussing charter school funding or policy issues.

Each fall, an informal group of economists, statisticians, and analysts come together to evaluate the fall enrollment reports submitted by public schools throughout Utah and develop school enrollment projections for the next school year. This group, called the Common Data Committee, includes representatives from the Legislative Fiscal Analyst's Office, the Utah State Office of Education, and the Governor's Office of Management and Budget. Part of this process includes reviewing district of residence information for students enrolled in charter schools.

In fall 2014, reports show that 61,435 students enrolled in a charter school. This is approximately 9.9 percent of the total public school enrollment in Utah. Projections indicate that this percentage may increase to 10.7 percent in fall 2015.

Every school district, except Piute, has at least one resident student attending a charter school. When looking at percentage of total enrollment, 16 school districts have fewer than two percent of resident students attending a charter school. These school districts are concentrated in the more rural areas of the state. Ten school districts, mostly along the Wasatch Front and Washington County, have more than 10 percent of resident students attending a charter school. Currently, Jordan School District has the highest at 15.1 percent.

The table below provides detail on the actual fall enrollment reported in fall 2014 by resident school district and percentage of resident students attending a charter school. The table also provides the projections for fall 2015.

Public Education: Fall Enrollment by School District of Residence
Fall 2014 Actual Enrollment Compared to Fall 2015 Projected Enrollment
(Darker Shading = Higher Percentage of Resident Students Attending a Charter School)

School District	Fall 2014 Actual Enrollment				Fall 2015 Projected Enrollment				Projected Change in Fall Enrollment 2014 to 2015		
	District	Charters	Total	Charters as % Total	District	Charters	Total	Charters as % Total	District	Charters	Total
	Alpine	73,570	8,624	82,194	10.5%	75,003	9,346	84,349	11.1%	1,433	722
Beaver	1,516	17	1,533	1.1%	1,474	18	1,492	1.2%	-42	1	-41
Box Elder	11,238	724	11,962	6.1%	11,255	805	12,060	6.7%	17	81	98
Cache	16,457	1,543	18,000	8.6%	16,658	1,561	18,219	8.6%	201	18	219
Canyons	33,676	3,234	36,910	8.8%	33,815	3,432	37,247	9.2%	139	198	337
Carbon	3,384	505	3,889	13.0%	3,337	516	3,853	13.4%	-47	11	-36
Daggett	174	1	175	0.6%	155	1	156	0.6%	-19	0	-19
Davis	69,139	8,165	77,304	10.6%	68,865	9,288	78,153	11.9%	-274	1,123	849
Duchesne	5,170	51	5,221	1.0%	5,255	84	5,339	1.6%	85	33	118
Emery	2,281	70	2,351	3.0%	2,225	75	2,300	3.3%	-56	5	-51
Garfield	926	12	938	1.3%	932	13	945	1.4%	6	1	7
Grand	1,456	142	1,598	8.9%	1,515	144	1,659	8.7%	59	2	61
Granite	67,660	7,783	75,443	10.3%	67,502	8,629	76,131	11.3%	-158	846	688
Iron	8,814	758	9,572	7.9%	9,034	645	9,679	6.7%	220	-113	107
Jordan	51,806	9,244	61,050	15.1%	51,251	10,356	61,607	16.8%	-555	1,112	557
Juab	2,322	26	2,348	1.1%	2,312	41	2,353	1.7%	-10	15	5
Kane	1,193	13	1,206	1.1%	1,171	15	1,186	1.3%	-22	2	-20
Logan	5,965	854	6,819	12.5%	6,041	861	6,902	12.5%	76	7	83
Millard	2,852	10	2,862	0.3%	2,773	26	2,799	0.9%	-79	16	-63
Morgan	2,766	72	2,838	2.5%	2,837	90	2,927	3.1%	71	18	89
Murray	6,415	299	6,714	4.5%	6,440	335	6,775	4.9%	25	36	61
Nebo	31,393	3,597	34,990	10.3%	32,087	3,820	35,907	10.6%	694	223	917
North Sanpete	2,385	39	2,424	1.6%	2,346	56	2,402	2.3%	-39	17	-22
North Summit	1,004	26	1,030	2.5%	1,013	27	1,040	2.6%	9	1	10
Ogden	12,350	2,099	14,449	14.5%	11,851	2,670	14,521	18.4%	-499	571	72
Park City	4,739	443	5,182	8.5%	4,778	456	5,234	8.7%	39	13	52
Piute	302	0	302	0.0%	286	0	286	0.0%	-16	0	-16
Provo	16,600	1,514	18,114	8.4%	16,893	1,696	18,589	9.1%	293	182	475
Rich	478	5	483	1.0%	481	6	487	1.2%	3	1	4
Salt Lake	23,615	3,075	26,690	11.5%	23,752	3,182	26,934	11.8%	137	107	244
San Juan	3,022	20	3,042	0.7%	3,050	19	3,069	0.6%	28	-1	27
Sevier	4,609	40	4,649	0.9%	4,551	70	4,621	1.5%	-58	30	-28
South Sanpete	3,140	25	3,165	0.8%	3,092	44	3,136	1.4%	-48	19	-29
South Summit	1,510	47	1,557	3.0%	1,525	48	1,573	3.1%	15	1	16
Tintic	259	1	260	0.4%	259	1	260	0.4%	0	0	0
Tooele	13,873	1,384	15,257	9.1%	13,970	1,404	15,374	9.1%	97	20	117
Uintah	7,912	122	8,034	1.5%	7,565	678	8,243	8.2%	-347	556	209
Wasatch	5,959	367	6,326	5.8%	6,143	377	6,520	5.8%	184	10	194
Washington	27,118	3,460	30,578	11.3%	27,463	3,461	30,924	11.2%	345	1	346
Wayne	482	6	488	1.2%	470	7	477	1.5%	-12	1	-11
Weber	31,188	3,018	34,206	8.8%	31,269	3,107	34,376	9.0%	81	89	170
Total	560,718	61,435	622,153	9.9%	562,694	67,410	630,104	10.7%	1,976	5,975	7,951

Source: Enrollment Projections, Fall 2014. Common Data Committee. Utah State Office of Education.