



LEGISLATIVE  
RESEARCH &  
GENERAL COUNSEL

# Charter School Satellite Authorization

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# Terms

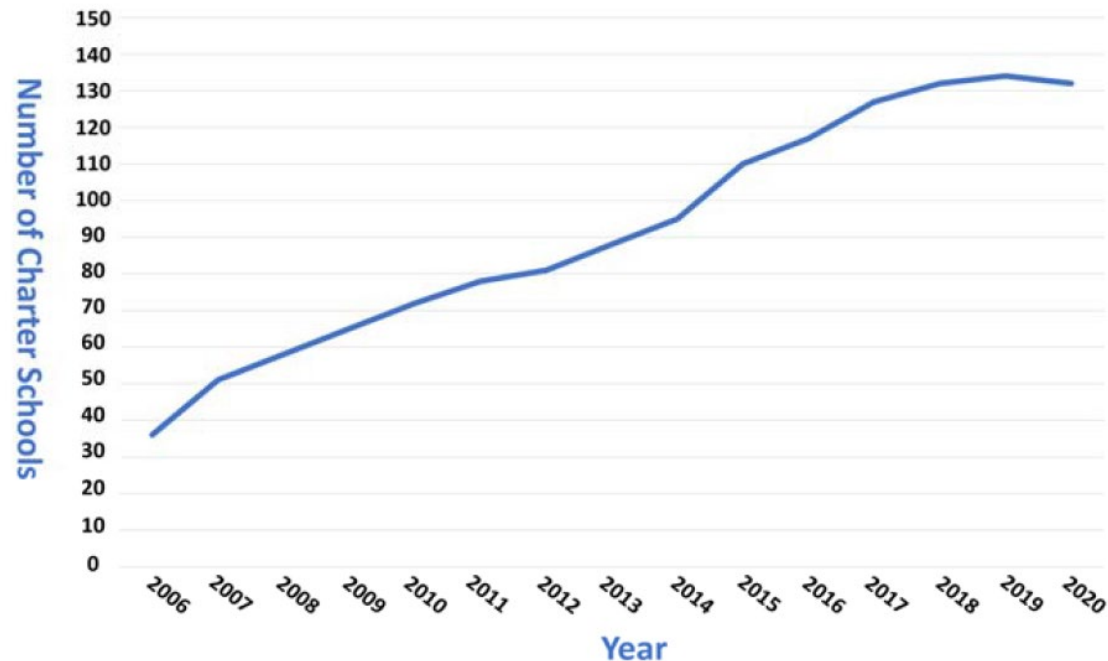
- **Charter school** – A tuition-free school that is publicly-funded but governed by an independent board. The goal is to offer parents and students choices and to allow educators freedom to innovate. A charter school is held accountable to a contract (“charter”) with its authorizer.
- **Charter school authorizer** – An entity approved by the Legislature to approve/deny charter school applications. An authorizer also manages and monitors their charter schools’ performance, viability, and compliance.

The following entities are eligible to authorize charter schools:

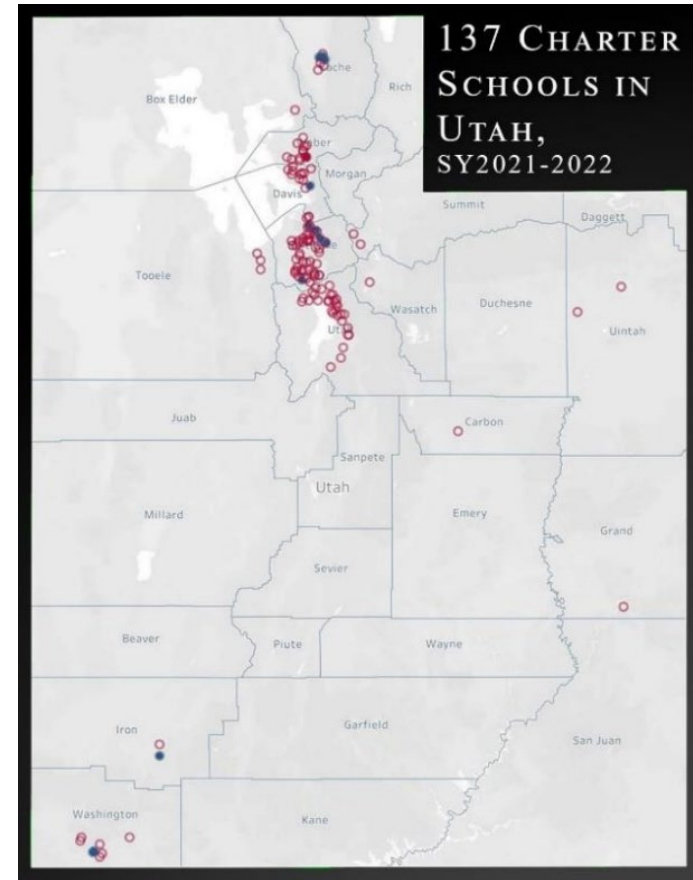
- the State Charter School Board;
  - a local school board; or
  - a board of trustees of an institution of higher education.
- **Satellite charter school** – A charter school affiliated with an operating charter school, which has the same charter school governing board and a similar program of instruction but has a different school number than the affiliated charter. (53G-5-303)



# Charter Schools in Utah



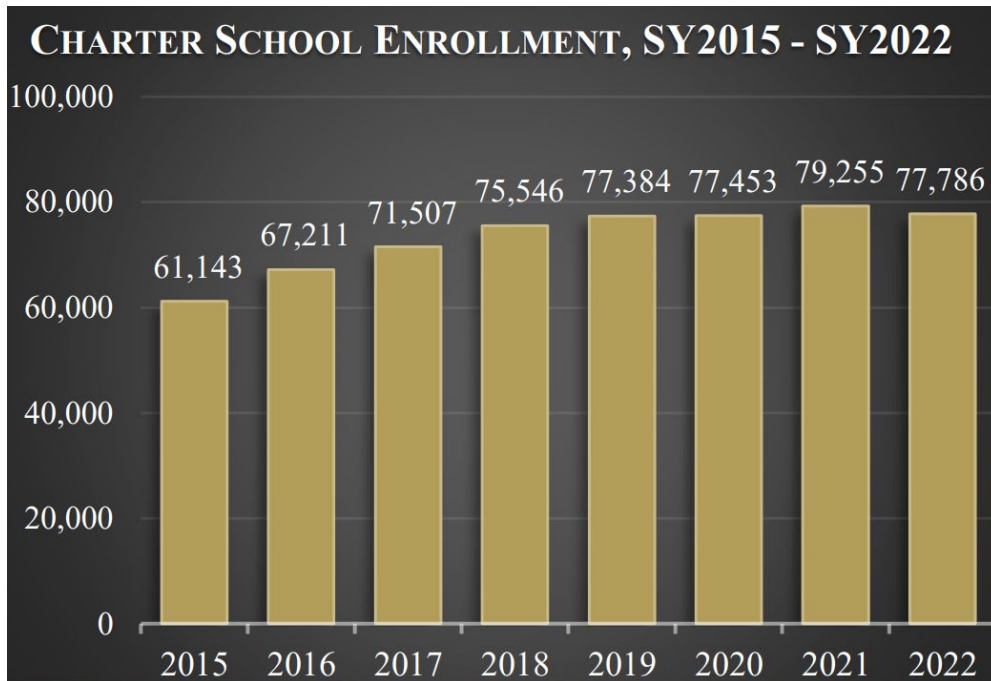
Source: Office of the Legislative Auditor General, 2021



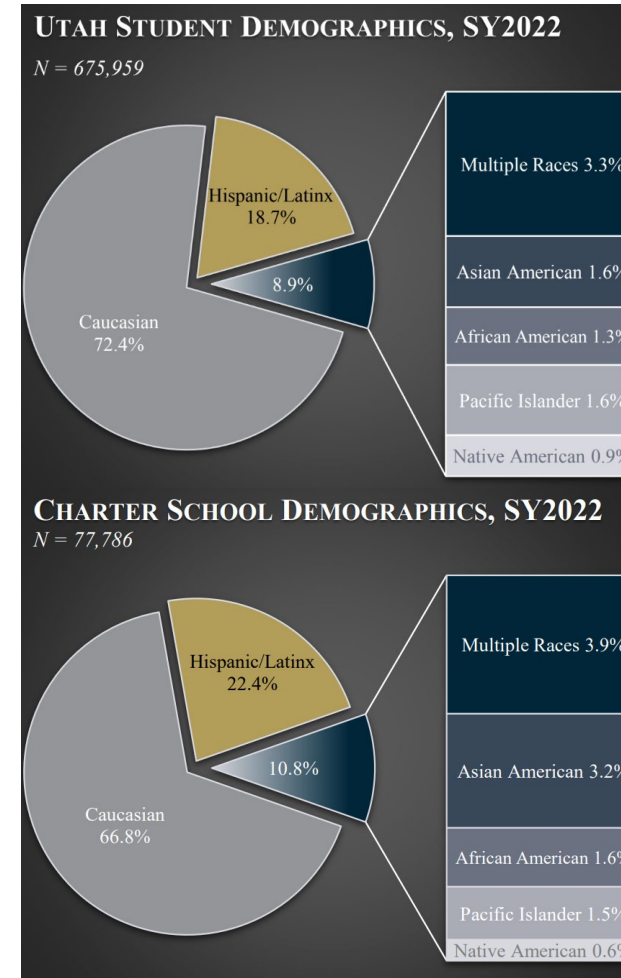
Source: State Charter School Board, 2022



# Enrollment and Demographics



Source: State Charter School Board, 2022

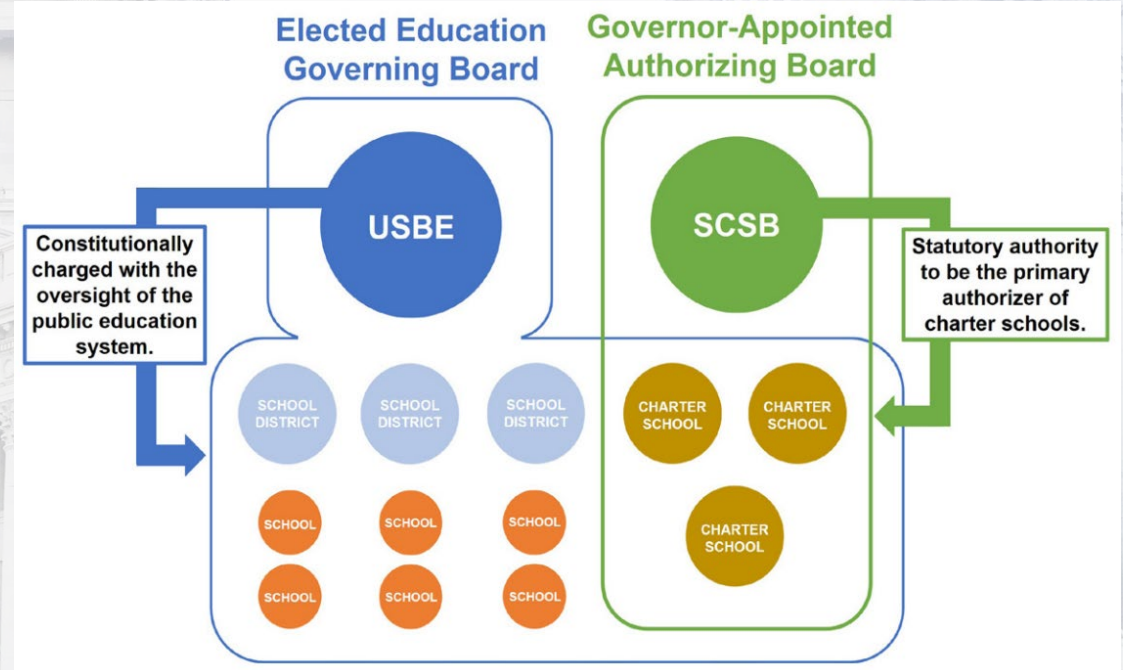


Source: State Charter School Board, 2022



# State-Level Charter School Governance

- **Utah State Board of Education** – An elected, 15-member board that oversees public education
- **State Charter School Board** – A 7-member, governor-appointed board created in 2004 to authorize, oversee, and support charter schools



Source: Office of the Legislative Auditor General, 2021

# Legislative History

- **H.B. 419 Charter School Revision (2014)**
  - Required charter school authorizers to establish certain requirements, processes, and standards relating to charter school applications
- **H.B. 313 Public School Revisions (2018)**
  - Required the Utah State Board of Education to adopt rules establishing minimum standards for charter school application or compliance
  - Gave final authority to approve/deny charter schools to authorizers instead of the Utah State Board of Education



# Rules for Satellite Authorization

- R277-552-7 lists the factors an authorizer must consider when reviewing a request for a charter school satellite, including:
  - compliance with laws, regulations, and rules;
  - academic performance;
  - financial viability; and
  - market demand for a satellite school.
- Some charter school advocates have argued that the following rule regarding academic performance is especially onerous:
- R277-552-7(2)(c): “All schools operating under the governance of the existing charter school are performing:
  - i. consistent with or above the charter school’s stated academic goals; or
  - ii. if no student performance goals have been established, above the standardized student assessment measures of other *comparable nearby schools*” [emphasis added]



# Questions for Consideration

- General: Should charter schools be held to the same standards for expansion as district schools?
- Specific: How, if at all, should rule R277-552-7(2)(c) be amended or interpreted differently?

# Questions?

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