

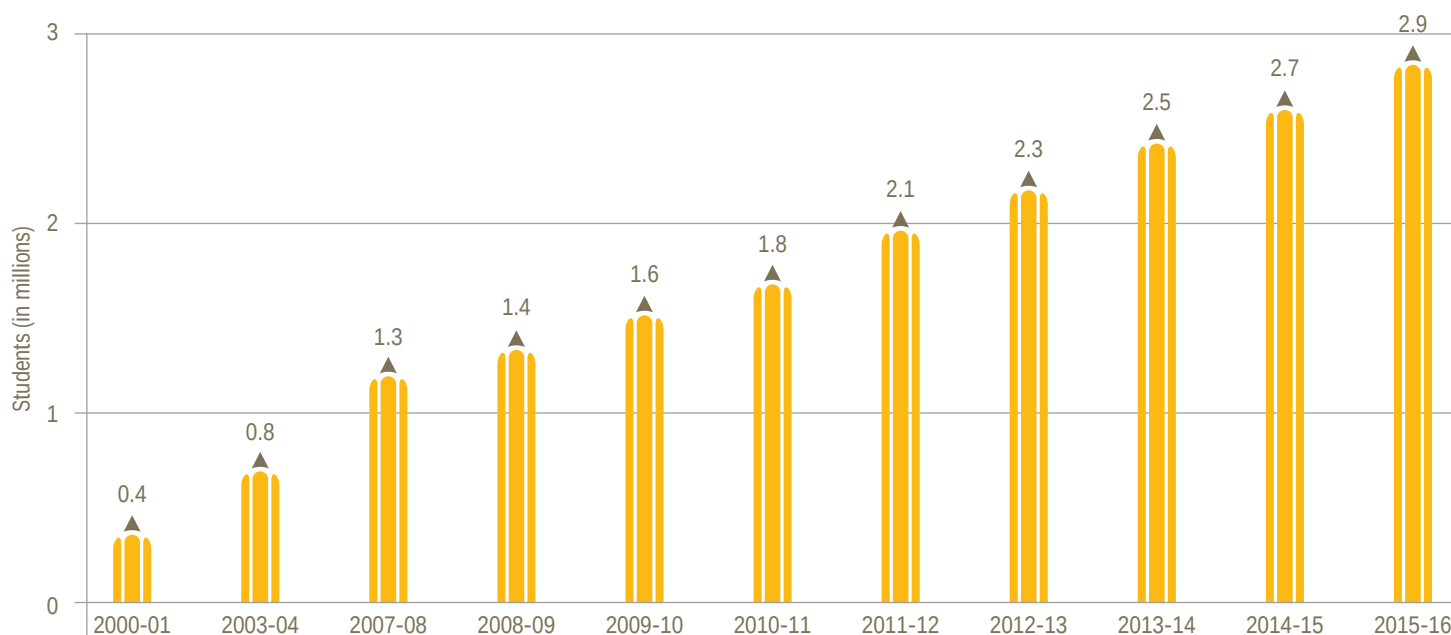
A CLOSER LOOK AT THE CHARTER SCHOOL MOVEMENT

Charter Schools, Students, and Management Organizations, 2015-16

During the 2015-16 school year, more than 400 new charter public schools opened.¹ An estimated 250,000 additional students are attending charter public schools in the 2015-16 school year compared with the previous year.² With the addition of these new charter schools and students, there are now more than 6,800 charter public

schools enrolling an estimated 2.9 million students throughout the country. Enrollment in charter public schools has grown sixfold in the past 15 years. The estimated 9 percent growth in charter public school enrollment between fall 2014 and fall 2015 demonstrates continued parental demand for high-quality educational options.

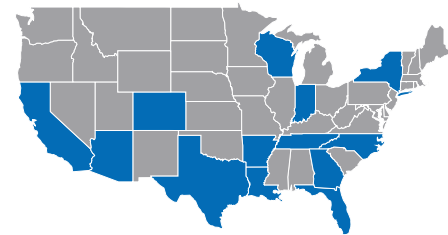
Enrollment in Charter Schools, 2000-01 through 2015-16



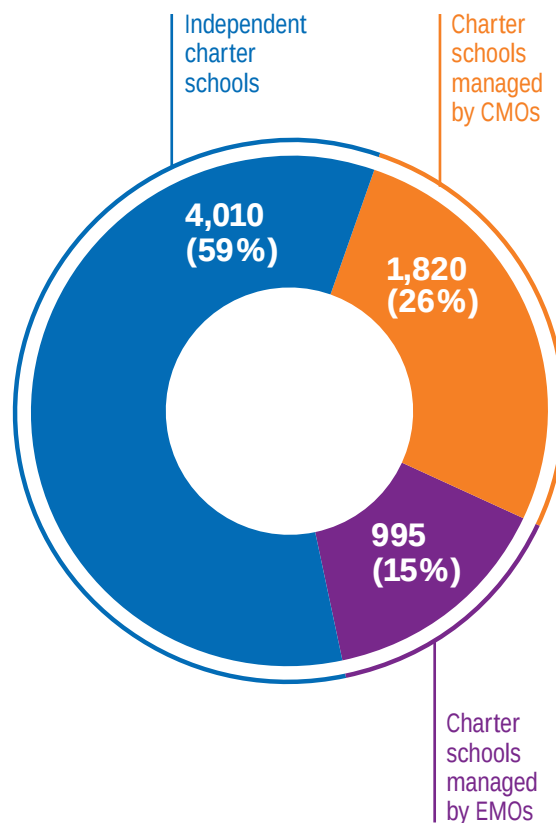
A Closer Look at the Charter School Movement

Charter schools can be independent, single-site schools or they can be part of a network of schools run by a management organization. These management organizations are typically nonprofit, and are referred to as charter management organizations (CMOs). Some states also allow for-profit companies to manage charter schools and these are referred to as education management organizations (EMOs). Of the approximately 6,825 charter schools in operation this year, nearly 60 percent are independent schools. Of the remaining schools, about two-thirds are managed by CMOs and one-third are managed by EMOs.

California opened the most new charter public schools in fall 2015. The states with 10 or more new charter public schools and estimated additional students served in 2015-16 are listed in the following table.



Charter Schools by Management Type, 2015-16

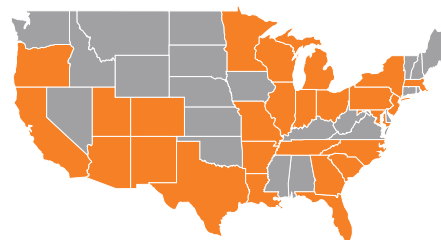


States with the Highest Number of New Charter Schools, 2015-16

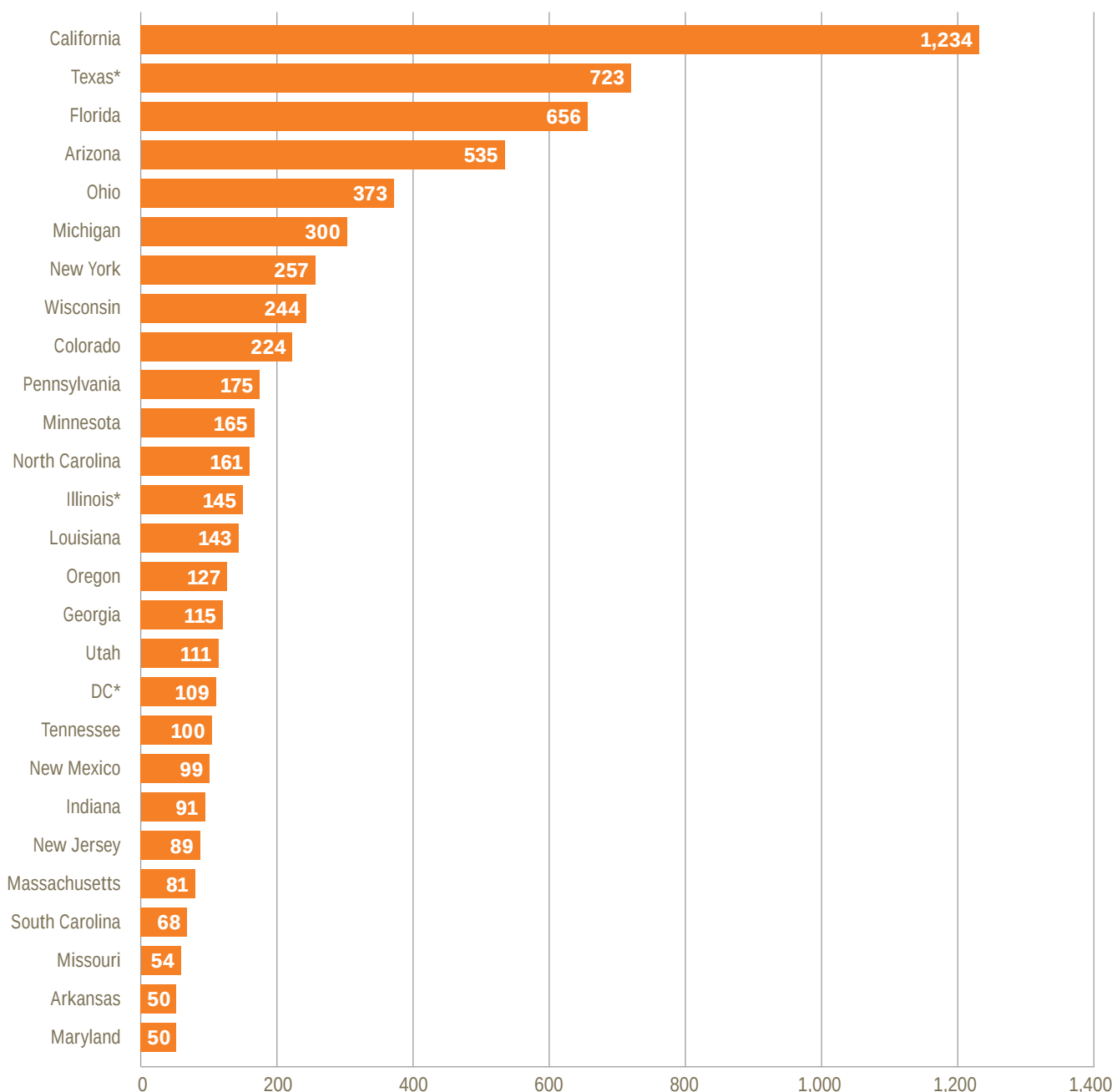
State	New Charter Schools	Additional Students
California	80	36,100
Texas	53	17,200
Florida	38	31,900
Tennessee	20	10,700
Arizona	19	17,000
Colorado	15	10,200
Indiana	15	2,900
North Carolina	15	11,900
Wisconsin	13	1,600
New York	12	19,300
Georgia	11	7,000
Louisiana	11	10,400
Arkansas	10	7,000

A Closer Look at the Charter School Movement

There are now 27 states with at least 50 operating charter public schools and nearly 20 states with 100 or more charter schools.



States with at Least 50 Charter Schools, 2015-16



* Number denotes campuses, rather than charters.

Number of Charter Schools

A Closer Look at the Charter School Movement

Number of Charter Schools and Estimated Number of Charter School Students, 2015-16

While the charter public school movement saw many new schools open last year, 272 charter schools ceased operation. These schools closed for a variety of reasons, including low enrollment, financial concerns, and low academic performance. The charter public school model gives charter schools the freedom to be more innovative, while being held accountable for improving student achievement. The school closures provide evidence that the accountability part of the charter school model is being upheld.

The states with the largest number of charter public school closures include the following:

- Florida: 35 schools closed
- California: 32 schools closed
- Arizona: 30 schools closed
- Texas: 15 schools closed (62 campuses)
- Wisconsin: 14 schools closed

Of the 272 schools that closed last year, 53 percent were independent, 34 percent were managed by a CMO, and 13 percent were managed by an EMO.

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools promotes meeting the demand for high-quality school options and encouraging well-planned school openings. We also support authorizers setting and enforcing high performance standards. The continued annual growth in both charter public schools and students is positive evidence of a strong and growing movement.

State	New Charters, Fall 2015	Closed Charters, Spring 2015	Net Gain Charters, 2015-16	Total Charter Schools, 2015-16	Charter School Growth %	Estimated Enrollment, 2015-16	Charter School Student Growth %
AK	1	0	1	28	4%	6,700	8%
AR	10	4	6	50	14%	23,700	42%
AZ	19	30	-11	535	-2%	177,600	11%
CA	80	32	48	1,234	4%	581,100	7%
CO	15	5	10	226	5%	108,800	7%
CT	2	0	2	24	9%	8,900	11%
DC*	4	5	-1	115	-1%	39,000	3%
DE	5	2	3	27	13%	14,400	15%
FL	38	35	3	656	0%	282,500	13%
GA	11	12	-1	115	-1%	82,800	9%
HI	1	1	0	34	0%	11,000	6%
IA	0	0	0	3	0%	300	-3%
ID	1	0	1	48	2%	21,100	3%
IL*	3	6	-3	145	-2%	64,400	3%
IN	15	6	9	91	11%	40,300	8%
KS	0	1	-1	10	-9%	2,800	5%
LA	11	6	5	143	4%	80,100	15%
MA	2	0	2	81	3%	40,300	8%
MD	4	1	3	50	6%	19,000	11%
ME	1	0	1	7	17%	1,500	75%
MI	7	9	-2	300	-1%	149,100	3%
MN	9	2	7	165	4%	48,200	6%
MO	3	1	2	68	3%	20,800	5%
MS	2	0	2	2	—	200	—
NC	15	5	10	161	7%	82,000	17%
NH	3	0	3	26	13%	3,200	24%
NJ	4	2	2	89	2%	44,600	18%
NM	3	1	2	99	2%	25,700	13%
NV	2	0	2	38	6%	34,000	17%
NY	12	4	8	257	3%	125,800	18%
OH	8	13	-5	373	-1%	132,000	7%
OK	7	1	6	35	21%	20,000	17%
OR	5	4	1	127	1%	31,500	5%
PA	4	5	-1	175	-1%	141,200	6%
RI	3	0	3	28	12%	7,200	13%
SC	3	2	1	68	1%	31,300	16%
TN	20	0	20	100	25%	33,300	48%
TX*	53	62	-9	723	-1%	282,900	6%
UT	3	1	2	111	2%	64,800	6%
VA	2	0	2	9	29%	1,200	41%
WI	13	14	-1	244	0%	44,800	4%
WY	0	0	0	4	0%	500	6%
Total	404	272	132	6,824	2%	2,930,600	9%

* Data for D.C., Illinois, and Texas represent campuses, rather than charters. In those three places, a single charter can be held for multiple campuses.

A Closer Look at the Charter School Movement

Methodology

- Data for this report were collected by contacting state departments of education and charter school organizations in each state to determine how many new schools opened last fall (2015) and how many schools closed during or after the last school year (2014-15).
- Enrollment estimates are determined by using a three-year average growth rate for schools that have been opened for more than three years. Two-year average growth rates were used for schools that have been opened for only three years, unless the first two years were not typical. For example, a school may open with only 50 students and then add several grades the following year. Although that school may have quadrupled its enrollment, it is not reasonable to assume that such a rate would continue. In those cases, the statewide average three-year growth rate was used. The statewide average growth rate was also used for schools that had been open for only one year. Schools that opened in fall 2015 were assumed to have enrollment equal to the average size of new charter schools in their state over the past three years.
- Enrollment data for Arizona, California, Colorado, D.C., Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, and Missouri were provided by the state charter school association, rather than estimated.
- Determination of the management status of each school was done on a school-by-school basis. The management companies were determined to be nonprofit or for-profit based on their tax status.

ENDNOTES

1 To calculate the number of charter public schools, the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools contacts state departments of education and state charter school associations each year to collect information on the charter public schools that opened for the first time in the fall and those that ceased operation during or after the previous academic year.

2 The number of students attending charter public schools in the current academic year is estimated based on the net number of additional charter schools and the average number of new charter school students for the previous three years for each state, school-level growth trends for charter schools operating for at least three years, and statewide one- and two-year growth trends for charter schools that have been operating for only one or two years. In some cases, states were able to provide actual data.