



# Minnesota Charter and District School Demographics and Trends

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For the 2001-2002 to 2022-2023 School Years

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## Executive Summary

For the past two decades, since 2002, the Center for School Change (CSC) has compiled and analyzed demographic data from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) regarding K-12 public school enrollment in the state's district and chartered public schools. This endeavor aims to contribute to informed public discourse. All population counts are derived from October enrollment data reported to MDE, accessible through the [Data Center](#). We extend our gratitude to MDE staff and the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools for their invaluable assistance.

The CSC does not assert that district public schools or chartered public schools are inherently 'better' overall. In our testimony, reports, and newspaper columns, we advocate for educators, families, and policymakers to utilize multiple measures when assessing school effectiveness. Furthermore, we advocate for the broader adoption of the faculty, programs, and policies of the most effective public schools in Minnesota, irrespective of governance.

This report specifically focuses on K-12 enrollment patterns and demographics, excluding Pre-Kindergarten or Early Childhood Education enrollment. As the information in this report reveals, charter enrollments and demographics exhibit considerable variation. It would be a mistake to generalize about individual Minnesota chartered public-school K-12 enrollment. *Additionally, since 2019, the Minnesota Department of Education no longer provides exact counts or percentages for schools serving over 90% of low-income students, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities. Unfortunately, this results in an undercount of these student groups in this report, marked with an asterisk.*

Importantly, this report does not address school effectiveness; instead, it highlights several trends observed over the last 21 school years:

### *Statewide Data:*

- Statewide, K-12 enrollment in public schools, including district and charter sectors, increased slightly from 841,697 (2001-02) to 846,192 (2022-23).
- Statewide, Minnesota K-12 charter enrollment has increased by over 600% from 10,162 in 2001-2002 to 67,227 in 2022-2023.
- During the same 2001-2022 to 2022-2023 period, statewide traditional district public school K-12 enrollment declined from 831,535 to 778,965 (a decrease of 6.74%).
- Statewide, and in Minneapolis charters enroll a higher percentage of students from low-income families, students of color, and English Language Learners. In St Paul, charters enroll a higher percentage of students of color and English Language Learners, and within one percent of the percentage of BIPOC students (69.97% in charters, 70.97% in St Paul District).
- The enrollment of students with disabilities in traditional districts is 16.18% and, in chartered schools, 14.98%, a difference of 1.20%.
- Enrollment in chartered public schools has increased from 1% to 7.94% of total K-12 Minnesota public school enrollment.
- K-12 Charter enrollment has grown in Minneapolis and St Paul over the last decade. K-12 enrollment in both urban districts has declined over the last decade.

- Minneapolis public charter school enrollment 1,921 (2001-2002) to 15,100 (2022-2023).
- Minneapolis Public School's enrollment 47,658 (2001-2002) to 28,297 (2022-2023).
- St. Paul public charter school enrollment 3,598 (2001-2002) to 16,701 (2022-2023).
- St. Paul Public Schools enrollment 43,714 (2001-2002) 31,124 (2022-2023).

Over the last twenty years, there has been a decline of thousands of students from low-income families and students of color enrolled in Minneapolis and St. Paul and an increase of thousands of these students in the charter public school sector.

1. *In Minneapolis, comparing the 2001-2002 and 2022-2023 school years:*

- As of 2022-23, charters in Minneapolis enrolled, on average, a substantially higher percentage of BIPOC students, students from low-income families, and students whose native language is not English. Minneapolis Public School District enrolled, on average, a slightly higher percentage of students with special needs.
- K-12 enrollment in Minneapolis charters increased from 1,921 to 15,100.
- K-12 district enrollment in Minneapolis declined from 47,658 to 28,297.
- Enrollment of students from low-income families in Minneapolis decreased from 31,910 to 16,113.
- Enrollment of students from low-income families in the Minneapolis charter sector increased from 1,579 to 11,139.
- Enrollment of BIPOC students in Minneapolis traditional districts decreased from 35,054 to 17,464.
- Enrollment of BIPOC students in the charters located in Minneapolis increased from 1,726 to 11,113.

2. *In Saint Paul, comparing the 2001-2002 and 2022-2023 school years:*

- As of 2022-23, charters in Saint Paul enrolled, on average, a slightly higher percentage of students from low-income families, and students whose native language is not English. SPPS enrolled, on average, a slightly higher percentage of students with special needs and BIPOC students.
- K-12 enrollment in charters located in Saint Paul increased from 3,598 to 16,701.
- K-12 enrollment in Saint Paul traditional schools decreased from 43,714 to 31,124.
- K-12 enrollment in Saint Paul charters of students from low-income families increased from 2,683 to 11,686.
- K-12 enrollment in Saint Paul traditional school of students from low-income families decreased from 28,524 to 22,090.
- K-12 BIPOC enrollment in charters located in Saint Paul increased from 2,993 to 13,501.
- K-12 BIPOC enrollment in Saint Paul traditional schools decreased from 30,102 to 24,329.

In conclusion, this comprehensive analysis of K-12 enrollment data in Minnesota's public schools reveals dynamic shifts in the educational landscape over the past two decades. The transformative surge of 600% in K-12 charter enrollment stands out against the backdrop of modest statewide enrollment growth and declining traditional district public school enrollment.

Charter schools, particularly in Minneapolis and St. Paul, play a crucial role in serving a diverse student demographic, often enrolling higher percentages of students from low-income families, students of color, and English Language Learners compared to traditional districts. Additionally, the observed differences in enrollment of students with disabilities between traditional districts and charter schools highlight the nuanced landscape. As chartered public-school enrollment has reached nearly 8% of the total K-12 public school population, it underscores the growing impact and choice these schools provide to students and families. This emphasizes the pivotal role of charter schools in addressing the needs of diverse student populations and contributing to the evolving landscape of educational choices within the state.



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**Minnesota Statewide Public Education K-12 Demographics**

Minnesota Student Demographics 2001-2023 (K-12)										
Year	Statewide Totals	Fall Enrollment	Free & Reduced Meal	% Free & Reduced Meal	Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	% LEP	Special Education (SpEd)	% SpEd	Total Students of Color or American Indians	% Students of Color or American Indians
2001-2002	Charter Schools	10162	5644	55.54%	1298	12.77%	1212	11.93%	5292	52.08%
	Statewide	831535	218369	26.26%	46665	5.61%	99418	11.96%	147977	17.79%
2002-2003	Charter Schools	12131	6634	54.68%	1575	12.99%	1473	12.14%	6149	50.69%
	Statewide	824723	223588	27.11%	49699	6.03%	100450	12.18%	153751	18.64%
2003-2004	Charter Schools	14246	8097	56.84%	2227	15.63%	1715	12.04%	7484	52.53%
	Statewide	817793	228500	27.94%	51280	6.27%	101237	12.38%	159493	19.50%
2004-2005	Charter Schools	17544	9515	54.23%	2828	16.12%	2205	12.57%	9177	52.30%
	Statewide	809787	236123	29.15%	54001	6.67%	101311	12.51%	164234	20.00%
2005-2006	Charter Schools	20616	11436	55.47%	4030	19.55%	2550	12.37%	10804	52.41%
	Statewide	818381	240384	29.37%	53635	6.55%	101361	12.39%	171423	20.95%
2006-2007	Charter Schools	23689	12649	53.90%	5055	21.34%	2880	12.16%	12368	52.21%
	Statewide	804557	244544	30.39%	56654	7.04%	102456	12.73%	176220	21.90%
2007-2008	Charter Schools	28026	15123	53.90%	5861	20.91%	3324	11.86%	15059	53.73%
	Statewide	796757	246933	30.99%	56765	7.12%	103313	12.97%	179239	22.50%
2008-2009	Charter Schools	32776	17538	53.51%	6148	18.76%	3913	11.94%	16861	51.44%
	Statewide	789642	252709	32.00%	57046	7.22%	103255	13.08%	186647	23.64%
2009-2010	Charter Schools	35375	19529	55.21%	7002	19.79%	4401	12.44%	17694	50.02%
	Statewide	787327	293062	37.22%	61164	7.77%	108286	13.75%	205066	25.05%
2011-2012	Charter Schools	39129	21868	55.89%	7066	18.06%	5100	13.03%	19978	51.06%
	Statewide	785729	285659	36.36%	56918	7.24%	105467	13.42%	196499	25.01%
2012-2013	Charter Schools	41604	23602	56.73%	8228	19.78%	5306	12.75%	21310	51.22%
	Statewide	780915	290537	37.20%	56595	7.25%	102725	13.15%	200295	25.65%

MINNESOTA CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS

2013-2014	Charter Schools	43929	24383	55.51%	8897	20.25%	5733	13.05%	23112	52.61%
	Statewide	792278	297617	37.56%	59615	7.52%	106539	13.45%	215290	27.17%
2014-2015	Charter Schools	47741	26308	55.11%	8895	18.63%	6108	12.79%	25750	53.94%
	Statewide	794321	296701	37.35%	57974	7.30%	107003	13.47%	222511	28.01%
2015-2016	Charter Schools	50811	28091	55.29%	10428	20.52%	6542	12.88%	28170	55.44%
	Statewide	797931	295440	37.03%	58343	7.31%	108650	13.62%	230833	28.93%
2016-2017	Charter Schools	53960	29,465	54.61%	10293	19.08%	7078	13.12%	31554	58.48%
	Statewide	801907	292711	36.50%	57061	7.12%	111248	13.87%	246539	30.74%
2017-2018	Charter Schools	56297	30556	54.28%	11106	19.73%	7617	13.53%	33314	59.18%
	Statewide	805863	289204	35.89%	58977	7.32%	114632	14.22%	254831	31.62%
2018-2019	Charter Schools	58951	30746*	52.15%*	12414*	21.06%*	8370*	14.20%*	35433	60.11%
	Statewide	805887	283188	35.14%	60806	7.55%	118127	14.66%	260107	32.28%
2019-2020	Charter Schools	61944	33035*	53.33%*	13374*	21.59%*	9119*	14.72%*	38019	61.38%
	Statewide	806055	277248	34.40%	61644	7.65%	121634	15.09%	266592	33.07%
2020-2021	Charter Schools	65420	32996*	50.44%*	13768*	21.05%*	9459*	14.46%*	40478	61.87%
	Statewide	785345	239848	30.54%	58986	7.51%	120353	15.32%	267676	34.08%
2021-2022	Charter Schools	65971	33507*	50.79%*	15188*	23.02%*	9424*	14.29%*	41605	63.07%
	Statewide	782648	233520	29.84%	61476	7.85%	122295	15.63%	270865	34.61%
2022-2023	Charter Schools	67227	39988*	59.48%*	15545*	23.12%*	10074*	14.98%*	42668	63.47%
	Statewide	778965	325617	41.80%	63891	8.20%	126048	16.18%	275278	35.34%

2022-2023	Total Statewide K-12 Enrollment	846,192	365,605	43.21%	79,436	9.39%	136,122	16.09%	317,946	37.57%
	Total Charter K-12 Enrollment	67,227	39,988	59.48%	15,545	23.12%	10,074	14.98%	42,668	63.47%
	Total State Minus Charter Enrollment	778,965	325,617	41.80%	63,891	8.20%	126,048	16.18%	275,278	35.34%

**Minneapolis District and Charter K-12 Enrollment Demographics**

Minneapolis Student Demographics 2001-2023 (K-12)										
Year	District or Charter	Fall Enrollment	Free & Reduced Meal	% Free & Reduced Meal	Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	% LEP	Special Education (SpEd)	% SpEd	Total Students of Color or American Indians	% Students of Color or American Indians
2001-2002	Minneapolis Charter	1921	1579	82.20%	356	18.53%	187	9.73%	1726	89.85%
	Minneapolis District	47658	31919	66.98%	11563	24.26%	6177	12.96%	35054	73.55%
2002-2003	Minneapolis Charter	2681	2071	77.25%	400	14.92%	225	8.39%	2400	89.59%
	Minneapolis District	45551	30825	67.67%	11094	24.36%	5970	13.11%	33888	74.40%
2003-2004	Minneapolis Charter	3412	2718	79.66%	759	22.25%	284	8.32%	2983	87.43%
	Minneapolis District	42909	29208	68.07%	9839	22.93%	5703	13.29%	31624	73.70%
2004-2005	Minneapolis Charter	4177	3333	79.79%	1166	27.91%	376	9.00%	3692	88.39%
	Minneapolis District	39902	27256	68.31%	9286	23.27%	5467	13.70%	29365	73.59%
2005-2006	Minneapolis Charter	5555	4652	83.74%	2064	37.16%	547	9.85%	5067	91.22%
	Minneapolis District	37930	25333	66.79%	8909	23.49%	5307	13.99%	27280	71.92%
2006-2007	Minneapolis Charter	6460	5206	80.59%	2491	38.56%	594	9.20%	5444	84.27%
	Minneapolis District	36337	23879	65.72%	8495	23.38%	5242	14.43%	26020	71.61%
2007-2008	Minneapolis Charter	7755	6145	79.24%	2619	33.77%	674	8.69%	6408	82.63%
	Minneapolis District	34314	21909	63.85%	7797	22.72%	5170	15.07%	24043	70.07%
2008-2009	Minneapolis Charter	9351	6874	73.51%	2435	26.04%	812	8.68%	6944	74.26%



MINNESOTA CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS

	Minneapolis District	33886	21621	63.81%	7495	22.12%	5199	15.34%	24187	71.38%
2009-2010	Minneapolis Charter	10909	9647	88.43%	4014	36.80%	1513	13.87%	9471	86.82%
	Minneapolis District	33555	21791	64.94%	7391	22.03%	5444	16.22%	23218	69.19%
2011-2012	Minneapolis Charter	11125	8480	76.22%	2815	25.30%	1296	11.65%	8458	76.03%
	Minneapolis District	33503	21922	59.73%	7575	22.61%	5517	16.47%	21893	65.35%
2012-2013	Minneapolis Charter	10188	8447	82.91%	3801	37.31%	1223	12.00%	8641	84.82%
	Minneapolis District	34387	22604	65.73%	8457	24.59%	5621	16.35%	22309	64.88%
2013-2014	Minneapolis Charter	9537	7697	80.71%	3677	38.56%	1135	11.90%	8179	85.76%
	Minneapolis District	35373	22936	64.84%	8297	23.46%	5678	16.05%	23738	67.11%
2014-2015	Minneapolis Charter	12315	8084	65.64%	3125	25.37%	1398	11.35%	8882	72.12%
	Minneapolis District	35505	22721	63.99%	8455	23.81%	5572	15.69%	24184	68.11%
2015-2016	Minneapolis Charter	11711	8814	75.26%	3637	31.06%	1437	12.27%	8845	75.53%
	Minneapolis District	35782	22350	62.46%	8609	24.06%	5458	15.25%	24044	67.20%
2016-2017	Minneapolis Charter	12783	9245	72.32%	3614	28.27%	1506	11.78%	9876	77.26%
	Minneapolis District	35534	21901	61.63%	7896	22.22%	5405	15.21%	23455	66.01%
2017-2018	Minneapolis Charter	13080	9824	75.10%	4093	31.29%	1710	13.07%	10194	77.94%
	Minneapolis District	35292	21031	59.59%	7563	21.43%	5380	15.24%	23240	66.46%
2018-2019	Minneapolis Charter	12913	8889*	68.84%*	3766*	29.16%*	1808*	14.00%*	9859	76.35%

MINNESOTA CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS

	Minneapolis District	34467	19515	56.62%	7074	20.52%	6054	17.56%	22266	64.60%
2019-2020	Minneapolis Charter	15179	10560*	69.57%*	4215*	27.77%*	2127*	14.01%*	11624	76.58%
	Minneapolis District	33507	18424	54.99%	6350	18.95%	5271	15.73%	21051	62.83%
2020-2021	Minneapolis Charter	15525	10425*	67.15%*	3896*	25.10%*	2244*	14.45%*	11063	71.26%
	Minneapolis District	31841	16992	53.37%	5674	17.82%	5538	17.39%	20054	62.98%
2021-2022	Minneapolis Charter	15071	10175*	67.51%*	4334.06*	28.76%*	2183*	14.48%*	11227	74.49%
	Minneapolis District	29253	14054	48.04%	5079	17.36%	4508	15.41%	18004	61.55%
2022-2023	Minneapolis Charter	15100	11139*	73.77%*	4383*	29.03%*	2301*	15.24%*	11113	73.60%
	Minneapolis District	28297	16113	56.94%	5154	18.21%	5065	17.90%	17464	61.72%

2022-2023	Total Minneapolis K-12 Enrollment	43,397	27,252	62.80%	9,537	21.98%	7,366	16.97%	28,577	65.85%
	Total Minneapolis Charter K-12 Enrollment	15,100	11,139*	73.77%*	4,383*	29.03%*	2,301*	15.24%*	11,113	73.60%
	Total Minneapolis Public Schools District Enrollment	28,297	16,113	56.94%	5,154	18.21%	5,065	17.90%	17,464	61.72%

## Saint Paul District and Charter K-12 Enrollment Demographics

St. Paul Student Demographics 2001-2023 (K-12)										
Year	District or Charter	Fall Enrollment	Free & Reduced Meal	% Free & Reduced Meal	Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	% LEP	Special Education (SpEd)	% SpEd	Total Students of Color or American Indians	% Students of Color or American Indians
2001-2002	St. Paul Charter	3598	2683	69.53%	942	24.41%	346	8.97%	2993	77.56%
	St. Paul District	43714	28524	65.25%	14319	32.76%	6187	14.15%	30102	68.86%
2002-2003	St. Paul Charter	4087	2799	68.49%	1135	27.77%	434	10.62%	3119	76.32%
	St. Paul District	43413	28259	65.09%	14865	34.24%	6434	14.82%	30400	70.03%
2003-2004	St. Paul Charter	4521	3073	67.97%	1272	28.14%	464	10.26%	3412	75.47%
	St. Paul District	41933	27559	65.72%	14257	34.00%	6731	16.05%	30033	71.62%
2004-2005	St. Paul Charter	4788	3152	65.83%	1277	26.67%	589	12.30%	3542	73.98%
	St. Paul District	40554	28046	69.16%	15201	37.48%	6789	16.74%	29530	72.82%
2005-2006	St. Paul Charter	5085	3283	64.56%	1574	30.95%	959	11.70%	3599	70.78%
	St. Paul District	40647	28845	70.96%	14494	35.66%	6309	15.52%	29904	73.57%
2006-2007	St. Paul Charter	5578	3424	61.38%	1720	30.84%	634	11.37%	3882	69.59%
	St. Paul District	40034	27848	69.56%	16101	40.22%	6330	15.81%	29664	74.10%
2007-2008	St. Paul Charter	6137	3622	59.02%	1588	25.88%	759	12.37%	3968	64.66%
	St. Paul District	39050	27615	70.72%	14618	37.43%	6193	15.86%	29209	74.80%
2008-2009	St. Paul Charter	8051	4725	58.69%	1789	22.22%	1160	14.41%	4999	62.09%
	St. Paul District	38560	26627	69.05%	15478	40.14%	6046	15.68%	28934	75.04%
2009-2010	St. Paul Charter	9092	5319	58.50%	1926	21.18%	1171	12.88%	5511	60.61%
	St. Paul District	37324	27494	73.66%	13641	36.55%	5860	15.70%	28172	75.48%
2011-2012	St. Paul Charter	9014	6138	68.09%	2744	30.44%	1041	11.55%	6415	71.17%
	St. Paul District	37063	27145	73.24%	13514	36.46%	5874	15.85%	28200	76.09%
2012-2013	St. Paul Charter	11296	7352	65.08%	2912	28.78%	1225	10.85%	7211	63.84%
	St. Paul District	37061	27261	73.56%	10957	29.56%	5731	15.46%	28945	78.10%
	St. Paul Charter	11888	7509	63.16%	3073	25.85%	1333	11.21%	8089	68.04%

MINNESOTA CHARTER AND DISTRICT SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS

2013-2014	St. Paul District	37066	27241	73.49%	12424	33.52%	5545	14.96%	28603	54.63%
2014-2015	St. Paul Charter	12874	8293	64.42%	3128	24.30%	1481	11.50%	9005	69.95%
	St. Paul District	37084	26906	72.55%	13011	35.09%	5207	14.04%	29371	79.20%
2015-2016	St. Paul Charter	13308	8724	65.55%	3886	29.20%	1464	11.00%	9749	73.25%
	St. Paul District	36869	26105	70.80%	11725	31.80%	5122	13.89%	29344	79.59%
2016-2017	St. Paul Charter	13236	8730	65.96%	3772	28.50%	1491	11.26%	10058	75.95%
	St. Paul District	36278	25463	70.19%	11315	31.19%	4812	13.26%	28648	78.97%
2017-2018	St. Paul Charter	14022	9208	65.66%	4088	29.15%	1652	11.78%	10767	76.78%
	St. Paul District	36087	24584	68.12%	11403	31.60%	4813	13.34%	28630	79.34%
2018-2019	St. Paul Charter	15512	10323*	66.55%*	4848 *	31.25%*	1855*	11.96%*	12198	78.64%
	St. Paul District	35581	23439	65.88%	10714	30.11%	5791	16.28%	28195	79.24%
2019-2020	St. Paul Charter	15796	10247*	64.87%*	4833*	30.60%*	1969*	12.46%*	12432	78.70%
	St. Paul District	34722	23127	66.61%	10305	29.68%	4995	14.39%	27357	78.79%
2020-2021	St. Paul Charter	16429	9730*	59.22%*	5139*	31.28%*	2032*	12.37%*	12994	79.90%
	St. Paul District	33735	221145	65.64%	9726	28.83%	5744	17.03%	26794	79.42%
2021-2022	St. Paul Charter	16586	10524*	63.45%*	5590*	33.70%*	1994*	12.02%*	13173	79.42%
	St. Paul District	32390	19979	61.68%	9495	29.31%	4623	14.27%	25549	78.88%
2022-2023	St. Paul Charter	16701	11686*	69.97%*	5834*	34.93%*	2083*	12.47%*	13501	80.84%
	St. Paul District	31124	22090*	70.97%*	8944*	28.74%*	5475*	17.59%*	24329	78.17%

2022-2023	Total Saint Paul K-12 Enrollment	47,825	33,776	70.62%	14,778	30.90%	7,558	15.80%	37,830	79.10%
	Total Saint Paul Charter K-12 Enrollment	16,701	11,686*	69.97%*	5,834*	34.93%*	2,083*	12.47%*	13,501	80.84%
	Total Saint Paul Public Schools District Enrollment	31,124	22,090*	70.97%*	8,944*	28.74%*	5,475*	17.59%*	24,329	78.17%