



Philadelphia Public School Enrollment, 2014-15 to 2024-25

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Key Findings

- As of October 1, 2024, overall enrollment in Philadelphia public schools was 198,299 students. Of that number:
 - 117,956 students were enrolled in District and Alternative schools.
 - 114,529 students were enrolled in District schools.
 - 3,427 students were enrolled in Alternative schools.
 - 63,964 students were enrolled in Philadelphia Charter schools.
 - 14,252 students were enrolled in Cyber Charter schools.
 - 2,127 students were enrolled in Other school categories.
- From 2014-15 to 2024-25:
 - District school enrollment decreased by 12.0% (15,546 fewer students).
 - Alternative school enrollment increased by 3.1% (103 more students).
 - Philadelphia Charter school enrollment decreased by 0.5% (337 fewer students).
 - Cyber Charter school enrollment increased by over 2500% (13,705 more students).
- As of October 1, 2024, Spanish was the most common non-English language spoken at home, as reported by families of students in District schools. The number of District students whose families reported that they speak Portuguese at home has increased rapidly since the 2021-22 school year, surpassing the number of Mandarin Chinese speakers as the second most common non-English language spoken at home in 2024-25.

Introduction

This brief provides information about enrollment patterns for K-12 students in Philadelphia’s public schools.¹ The analyses focus on enrollment changes with respect to governing sector (District, Philadelphia Charter, Cyber Charter, Alternative, or Other²), admission type (catchment, citywide, or criteria-based), and student demographics, based on data from the October 1 Enrollment Snapshot for each year indicated, unless stated otherwise.

¹ For school and grade-level enrollment Open Data files, please visit: philasd.org/opendata

² The schools in the “Other” category include Non-Philadelphia Charter schools, Non-Public Special Education schools, and IU26 schools.

Definitions

Sectors

District school – Schools governed and operated by the School District of Philadelphia (SDP)

Alternative school – Schools designed to address the needs of out-of-school youth, students who are significantly at risk for dropping out, and students who are subject to disciplinary transfer or expulsion

Charter school – Schools that operate through a “charter,” or a formal, written agreement, with the School District of Philadelphia and Philadelphia Board of Education

- **Philadelphia Charter school** – Charter schools that operate from a physical space in the city of Philadelphia and provide full-time, traditional, in-person instruction

- **Cyber Charter school** – Charter schools that provide full-time web-based instruction

Other – Schools that are Non-Philadelphia Charters, Non-Public Special Education schools, or Intermediate Unit #26 (IU26) schools

SDP High School Admission Types

Catchment school – District schools that have a neighborhood attendance boundary and give admission priority to those students whose primary residence is located within the boundary

Citywide school – District schools that admit Philadelphia students regardless of the location of the students’ primary residence

Criteria-based schools (formerly special admission schools) – District schools that have eligibility requirements related to attendance, course grades, standardized test scores, and in some cases, auditions or project-based presentations

Research Questions

Questions guiding the analysis analyses in this brief include:

1. What are the student enrollment trends by sector from the 2014-15 school year to the 2024-25 school year?
2. What are the grade level student enrollment trends for District and Charter schools between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years?
3. What are the enrollment trends among student demographic groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, home language, English Learner status, Individualized Education Plan status) between the 2014-15 and 2024-25 school years?
4. What are the high school enrollment trends for District schools with different admission types between the 2014-15 and 2024-25 school years?
5. Which schools had the largest increases and decreases in enrollment between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years?

Findings

As of October 1, 2024, overall enrollment in Philadelphia public schools was 198,299 students. Enrollment in District and Alternative schools was 117,956 students (114,529 District school students and 3,427 Alternative school students), enrollment in Philadelphia Charter schools was 63,964 students, and an additional 14,252 students were enrolled in Cyber Charter schools. The remaining 2,127 students were enrolled in schools in the Other category.

Overall, Philadelphia public school enrollment decreased between 2014-15 and 2024-25. During this time period, enrollment was highest in 2019-20, with 205,778 students (Figure 1), and then steadily decreased through 2023-24. The increase in public school enrollment from 2023-24 to 2024-25 marks the first year-to-year increase in enrollment since the 2018-19 to 2019-20 school years.

Overall Philadelphia Public School Enrollment

Enrollment decreased in most school sectors between the 2014-15 and 2024-25 school years. Cyber Charter schools were the only sector with consistent increases in enrollment over that period.

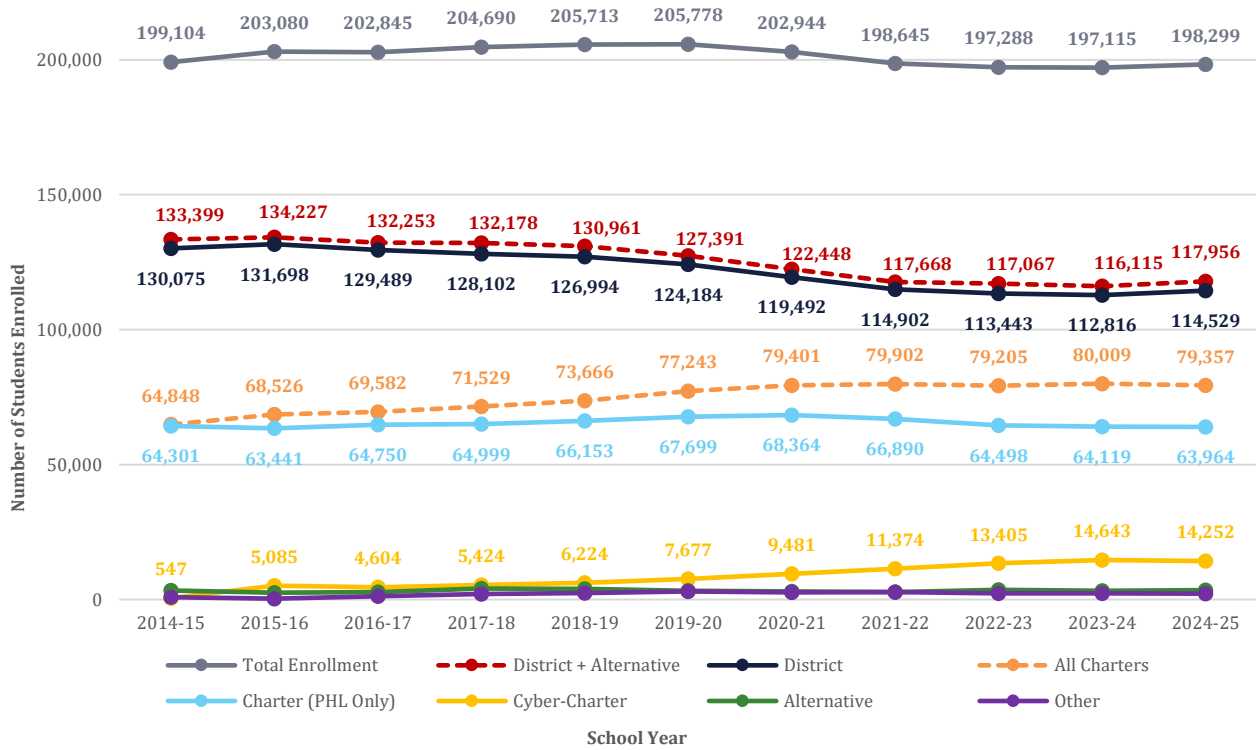
Overall enrollment in Philadelphia public schools decreased by less than 1% (805 students) from 2014-15 to 2024-25. Enrollment grew from 199,104 students in 2014-15 to 205,778 students in 2019-20. Since 2019-20, however, enrollment decreased consistently until the 2023-24 school year when the enrollment count was 197,115. The 2024-25 school year saw a year-over-year increase to 198,299 students, which marks the first such increase in enrollment since 2019-20.

Enrollment in District K-12 schools has decreased by 15,546 students (-12.0%) since 2014-15, from 130,075 students in 2014-15 school year to 114,529 in the 2024-25 school year. Student enrollment decreased from the 2016-17 school year through 2023-24. Student enrollment in the 2024-25 school year, however, brought an increase of 1,713 students compared to the 2023-24 school year (+1.5%).

Philadelphia Charter school enrollment grew from 64,301 students to 68,364 students between the 2014-15 and 2020-21 school years, but decreased in each subsequent year to 63,964 students in 2024-25 (-6.4%). Alternative school enrollment increased by 103 students since the 2014-15 school year, an increase of 3.1%. Cyber Charter schools saw their enrollment increase from 547 students in 2014-15 to 14,252 in 2024-25, an increase of 2,505%, but for the first time since 2014-15, Cyber Charter enrollments decreased by 2.7% from 2023-24 to 2024-25 (391 students).

For the first time in five years, overall Philadelphia public school enrollment increased, growing by 1,184 students between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years (Figure 1). District school enrollment increased by 1,713 students, an increase of 1.5%. Philadelphia Charter school enrollment decreased by 155 students, a decrease of 0.2%. Alternative school enrollment increased by 128 students (+3.1%). Cyber Charter school enrollment decreased by 391 students (-2.7%).

Figure 1. Number of students enrolled in public schools in Philadelphia by sector, 2014-15 through 2024-25



Source: Qlik October 1 Enrollment Snapshot App Details Table, accessed November 4, 2024

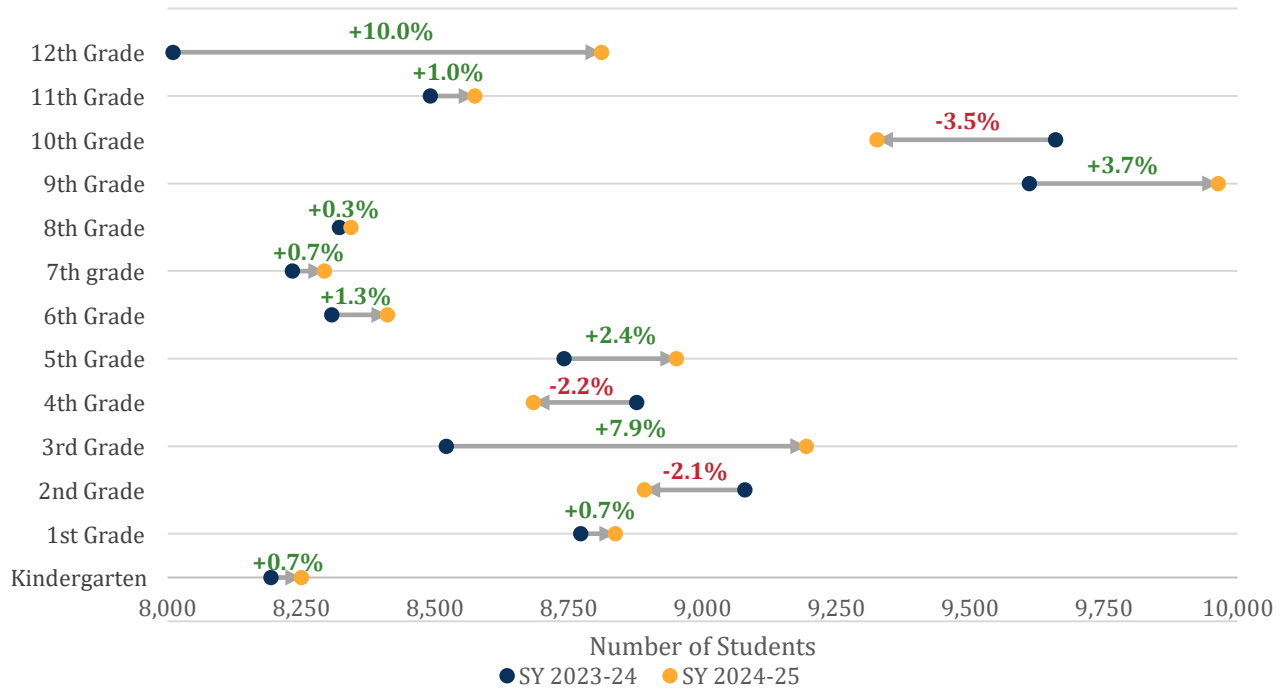
Note: The vertical axis indicates the total number of students enrolled in each category of public school from the 2014-15 academic year to the 2024-25 academic year.

Enrollment Changes by Grade Level in District and Alternative Schools from 2023-24 to 2024-25

Enrollment increased year-over-year in most grade levels in District and Alternative schools between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years.

Enrollment in District schools increased for most grade levels (Figure 2 and Table 1). While enrollment from 2023-24 to 2024-25 increased by 1.5% for District schools overall, the increases across grade levels were different. The enrollment increases were greatest for grade 12 (+10.0%), grade 3 (+7.9%), grade 9 (+3.7%), and grade 5 (+2.4%). Grade 6 enrollment increased by 1.3%, grade 11 enrollment increased by 1.0%, and enrollment in kindergarten and grades 1, 7, and 8 increased by less than 1%. The largest decrease in grade level enrollment was 3.5% for grade 10. Grade 2 and grade 4 enrollment decreased by 2.1% and 2.2% respectively.

Figure 2: Number and Percent Change in Student Enrollment by Grade Level in Philadelphia District Schools from 2023-24 to 2024-25



Source: Qlik October 1 Enrollment Snapshot Report Library, accessed November 4, 2024

How to read this figure: Each horizontal line on this figure represents a grade level, with grade 12 at the top and kindergarten at the bottom. On each horizontal line, the dots on each end represent grade-level enrollment by grade level for 2023-24 (navy dot) and 2024-25 (yellow dot). The line indicates the size of the change in enrollment, and the arrow and percent above the line indicate whether there was an increase or decrease in enrollment. For example, in 2023-24, grade 2 enrollment was just over 9,000 students (navy dot). In 2024-25, grade 2 enrollment was approximately 8,900 student students (yellow dot). This is a decrease of 2.1%.

Table 1: Number of students in District schools by grade level, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Grade Level	SY 2023-24	SY 2024-25	Year-Over-Year Change
12	8,010	8,811	+10.0%
11	8,491	8,574	+1.0%
10	9,660	9,326	-3.5%
9	9,611	9,964	+3.7%
8	8,321	8,343	+0.3%
7	8,233	8,293	+0.7%
6	8,307	8,411	+1.3%
5	8,741	8,951	+2.4%
4	8,877	8,684	-2.2%
3	8,521	9,194	+7.9%
2	9,079	8,891	-2.1%
1	8,772	8,837	+0.7%
Kindergarten	8,193	8,250	+0.7%
Total	112,816	114,529	+1.5%

Source: Qlik October 1 Enrollment Snapshot Report Library, accessed November 4, 2024

Enrollment in Alternative schools from 2023-24 to 2024-25 increased for all grade levels except grade 12 (Table 2). Grade 7 alternative school enrollment increased the most from 2023-24 to 2024-25 (+34.1%) followed by grade 11 enrollment (+27.6%), and grade 6 enrollment (+20.0%). The only decrease in Alternative school enrollment was for grade 12, which decreased by 16.3% (1,338 in 2023-24 to 1,120 in 2024-25).

Table 2. Number of students in Alternative schools by grade level, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Grade Level	SY 2023-24	SY 2024-25	Year-Over-Year Change
12	1,338	1,120	-16.3%
11	733	935	+27.6%
10	709	776	+9.4%
9	361	421	+16.6%
8	76	80	+5.3%
7	41	55	+34.1%
6	20	24	+20.0%
Total	3,299*	3,427*	+3.9%

Source: Qlik October 1 Enrollment Snapshot Report Library, accessed November 4, 2024

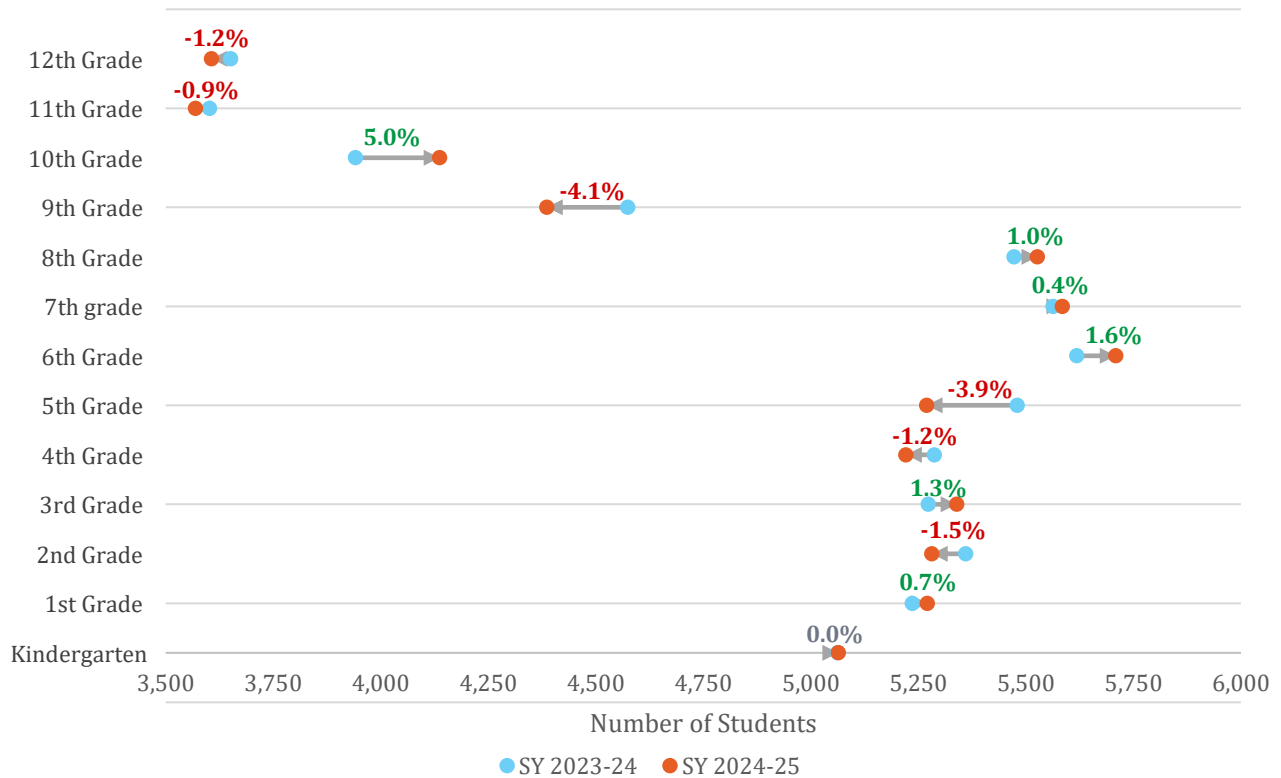
*Grades with fewer than 20 students have been excluded (grades 3, 4, and 5).

Enrollment Changes by Grade Level in Philadelphia Charter and Cyber Charter Schools from 2023-24 to 2024-25

Enrollment decreased in most Cyber Charter schools and in about half of Philadelphia Charter schools.

While year-over-year grade level enrollment in Philadelphia Charter schools increased in multiple grades, enrollment increases for grades 1, 7, and 8 were 1% or smaller (Table 3 and Figure 3). The largest enrollment increase was for grade 10, which grew 5.3%, from 3,941 students in 2023-24 to 4,137 students in 2024-25. Grade 6 enrollment also increased by 1.6%. Enrollment in grades 2, 4, 11, and 12 each decreased by 1–1.5% for Philadelphia Charter schools, while grades 5 and 9 saw larger decreases of around 4%.

Figure 3. Number of students enrolled in Philadelphia Charter schools by grade level, 2023-24 and 2024-25



Source: Qlik October 1 Enrollment Snapshot Report Library, accessed November 4, 2024

How to read this figure: Each horizontal line on this figure represents a grade level, with grade 12 at the top and kindergarten at the bottom. On each horizontal line, the dots on each end represent grade-level enrollment by grade level for 2023-24 (blue dot) and 2024-25 (yellow dot). The line indicates the size of the change in enrollment, and the arrow and percentage above the line indicate whether there was an increase or decrease in enrollment. For example, in 2023-24, grade 9 enrollment was approximately 4,600 (blue dot). In 2023-24, grade 9 enrollment was approximately 4,400 students (yellow dot). This is a decrease of 4.1%.

Table 3. Changes in Philadelphia Charter school enrollment by grade level, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Grade Level	SY 2023-24	SY 2024-25	Year-Over-Year Change
12	3,651	3,606	-1.2%
11	3,602	3,569	-0.9%
10	3,941	4,137	+5.0%
9	4,574	4,386	-4.1%
8	5,472	5,527	+1.0%
7	5,563	5,585	+0.4%
6	5,618	5,709	+1.6%
5	5,480	5,269	-3.9%
4	5,287	5,221	-1.2%
3	5,273	5,339	+1.3%
2	5,360	5,281	-1.5%
1	5,236	5,271	+0.7%
Kindergarten	5,062	5,064	+0.0%
Total	64,119	63,964	-0.2%

Source: Qlik October 1 Enrollment Snapshot Report Library, accessed November 4, 2024

Enrollment in Cyber Charter schools decreased for all grade levels from grade 1 through grade 10, though enrollment increased for students in kindergarten, grade 11, and grade 12 (Table 4). The largest enrollment increase was in kindergarten at 10.8% (+26 students), followed by an 8.3% increase in grade 11 enrollment (+154 students) and a 1.2% increase in enrollment for grade 12 (+36 students). Enrollment decreased most sharply in grade 2 (-22.1%), followed by decreases in grade 1 (-12.4%), grade 4 (-11.0%), grade 6 (-9.7%), grade 7 (-7.7%), and grade 9 (-5.6%). Among other grades whose enrollment decreased, enrollment in grade 5, 8, and 10 saw smaller decreases of about 2%, and grade 3 enrollment decreased by less than 1% (a difference of three students).

Table 4. Change in Cyber Charter school enrollment by grade level, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Grade Level	SY 2023-24	SY 2024-25	Year-Over-Year Change
12	2,882	2,918	+1.2%
11	1,866	2,020	+8.3%
10	1,865	1,823	-2.3%
9	1,527	1,442	-5.6%
8	1,203	1,178	-2.1%
7	1,092	1,008	-7.7%
6	885	799	-9.7%
5	741	726	-2.0%
4	680	605	-11.0%
3	591	588	-0.5%
2	611	476	-22.1%
1	459	402	-12.4%
Kindergarten	241	267	+10.8%
Total	14,643	14,252	-2.7%

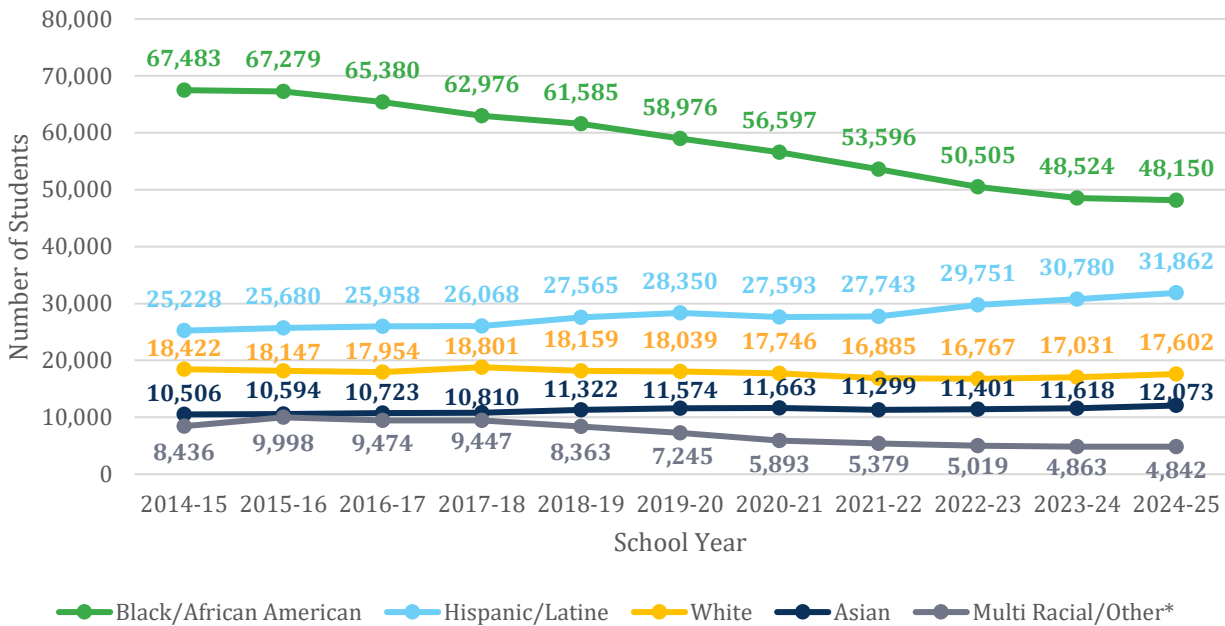
Source: Qlik October 1 Enrollment Snapshot Report Library, accessed November 4, 2024

District School Enrollment Demographics

In District schools, enrollment of Black/African American students consistently decreased between 2014-15 and 2024-25, while enrollment of Hispanic/Latine students increased. Enrollment of White and Asian students was relatively stable.

From 2014-15 to 2024-25, Black/African American student enrollment decreased by 19,333 students, a 28.6% decrease (Figure 4). White and Multi Racial/Other student enrollment also decreased during that period; enrollment of White students decreased by 820 students (-4.5%) and the number of multi racial students and students of other racial or ethnic backgrounds decreased by 3,594 (-42.6%). The number of enrolled Asian students increased by 1,567 students (+14.9%) between the 2014-15 and 2024-25 school years, and Hispanic/Latine student enrollment increased by 6,634 (+26.3%) students over that same period.

Figure 4. Number of students in District schools by race/ethnicity, 2014-15 through 2024-25



Source: Qlik October 1 Enrollment App Snapshot Details Table, accessed December 18, 2024

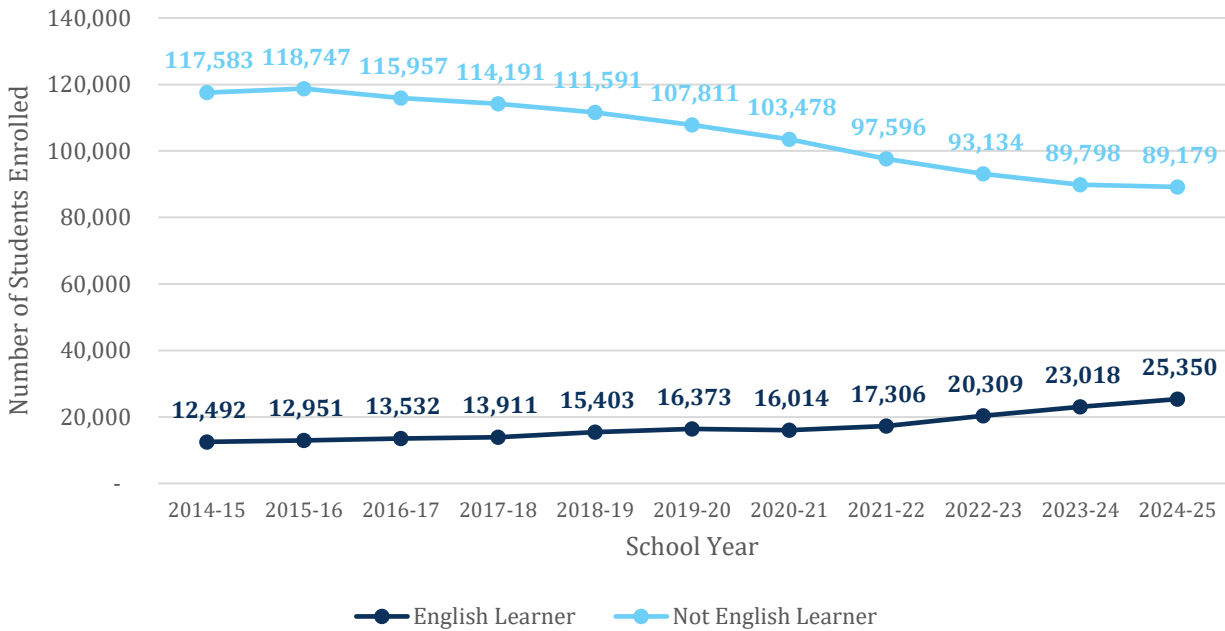
*Includes students from the Native American/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ethnic groups

The number of English Learners increased in District schools between 2014-15 and 2024-25, while enrollment of students who are not English Learners decreased.

English Learners (ELs) are students in the School District of Philadelphia who take the WIDA English proficiency screener and receive a composite score that identifies them as ELs. Since the 2014-15 school year, the number of students who are English Learners has more than doubled in District schools, from 12,492 students to 25,350 (+102.9%), while the number of students who are not English Learners has decreased by 28,404 students (-24.2%; Figure 5). The number of enrolled ELs grew

consistently between the 2014-15 and 2019-20 school years. After a small drop in 2020-21, the number of EL students increased by 9,336 students between 2020-21 and 2024-25, which was a more steeply increasing trend than the pre-2019 increases. In the 2014-15 school year, English Learners made up 9.6% of students enrolled in District schools, which increased 12.5 percentage points to 22.1% in 2024-25.

Figure 5. Number of students enrolled in District schools by English Learner status, 2014-15 through 2024-25



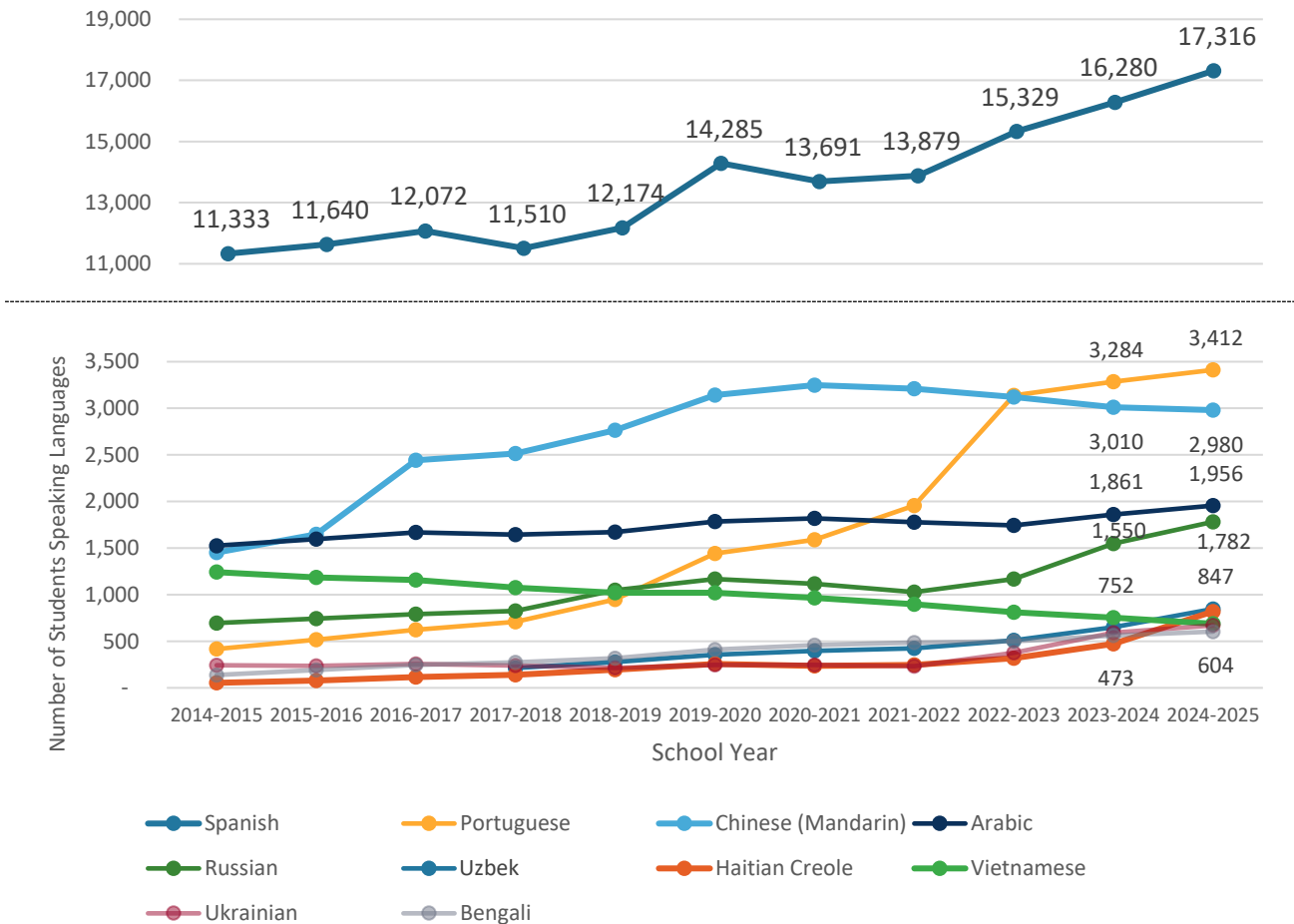
Source: Qlik October 1 Enrollment App Snapshot Details Table, accessed December 18, 2024

In District schools, the number of students who reported Spanish as their home language increased between 2014-15 and 2024-25. After Spanish, Portuguese was the second most-reported home language other than English in 2024-25.

The top ten home languages of District students in the 2024-25 school year as reported by parents were Spanish (17,316 students), Portuguese (3,412 students), Mandarin Chinese (2,980 students), Arabic (1,956 students), Russian (1,782 students), Uzbek (847 students), Haitian Creole (820 students), Vietnamese (688 students), Ukrainian (670 students), Bengali (604 students), and Tajik (571 students) (Figure 6). There were 17,316 students whose home language was Spanish in the 2024-25 school year, up from 11,333 in 2014-15. The number of students whose home language was Portuguese grew from 417 in 2014-15 to 3,412 in 2024-25. More District students reported Russian, Uzbek, Ukrainian, and Tajik as their home languages, with many of those increases occurring since the 2021-22 school year. Additionally, students reported more Arabic, Haitian Creole, and Bengali since 2014-15—1,956 students spoke Arabic, 820 students spoke Haitian Creole, and 604 students spoke Bengali in the 2024-25 school year. Students speaking Mandarin Chinese decreased to 2,980 students in 2024-25 school year after reaching a peak of 3,249 students during the 2020-21 school year, an

8.2% decrease during that time. The number of District students reporting Vietnamese as a home language decreased by 44.6%, from 1,242 students in 2014-15 to 688 in 2024-25.

Figure 6. Top ten non-English languages reported by District students as Home Language, 2014-15 through 2024-25

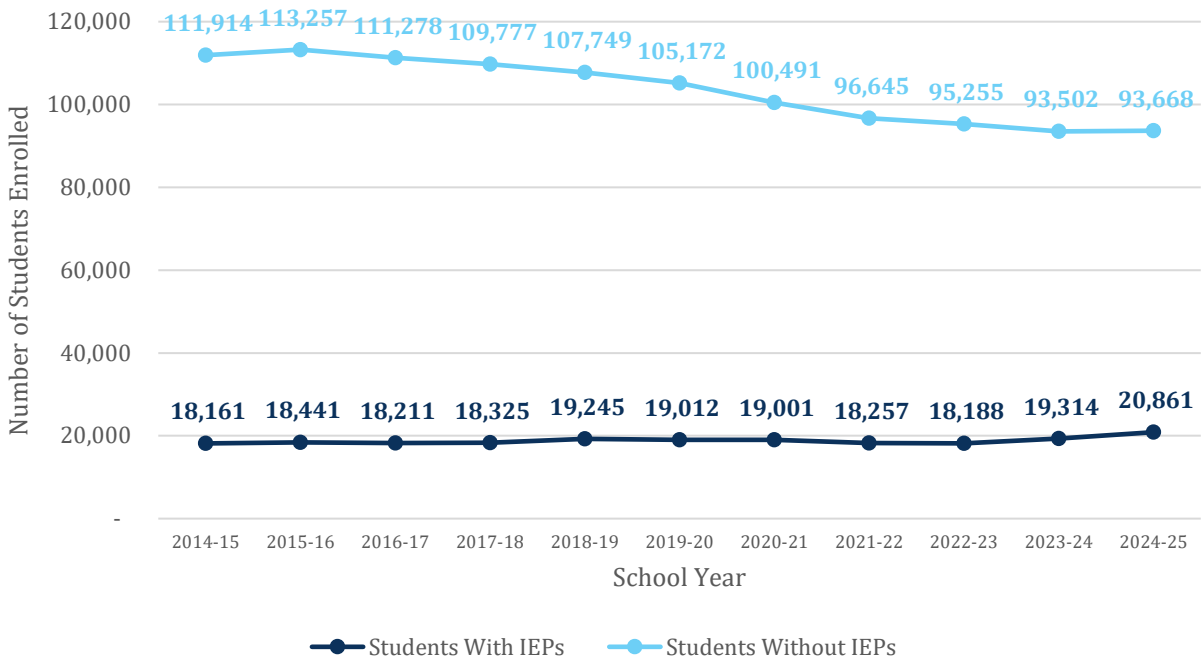


Source: Qlik October 1 Enrollment App Snapshot Details Table, accessed December 18, 2024

In District schools, enrollment of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) increased between 2014-15 and 2024-25, while enrollment for students without IEPs decreased over the same period.

From 2014-15 to 2024-25, there was an increase of 2,700 students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in District schools (Figure 7). Over the same time period, the number of students without IEPs decreased from 111,914 to 93,668, a 16.3% difference (-18,246 students). Students with IEPs made up 18.2% of District enrollment in the 2024-25 school year.

Figure 7. Number of District students by Special Education status, 2014-15 through 2024-25



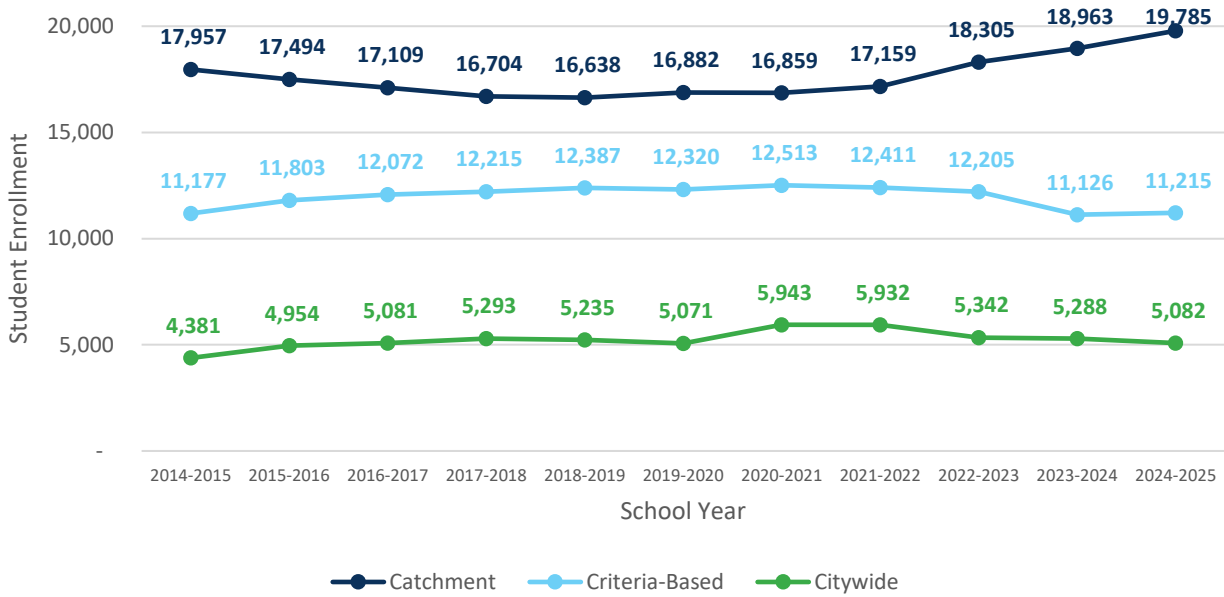
Source: Qlik October 1 Enrollment App Snapshot Details Table, accessed December 18, 2024

District High School Enrollment by Admission Type

Enrollment in catchment high schools increased between 2020-21 and 2024-25, while enrollment in criteria-based and citywide high schools decreased over the same period.

District high schools have three types of admission: catchment, citywide, and criteria-based (see Box 1 for definitions of each). Between 2014-15 and 2024-25, enrollment in catchment and citywide high schools increased, while criteria-based enrollment changed very little (Figure 8). Looking at trends from more recent years, catchment high school enrollment increased from 16,859 in the 2020-21 school year to 19,785 students in 2024-25, an increase of 2,926 students (+17.4%). Enrollment in criteria-based schools decreased consistently during that time, from 12,513 students in the 2020-21 school year to 11,126 students in 2023-24. In the 2024-25 school year, enrollment in criteria-based schools saw a slight increase to 11,215 students. Enrollment in citywide high schools decreased from 5,943 students during the 2020-21 school year to 5,082 students in 2024-25, a 14.5% decrease.

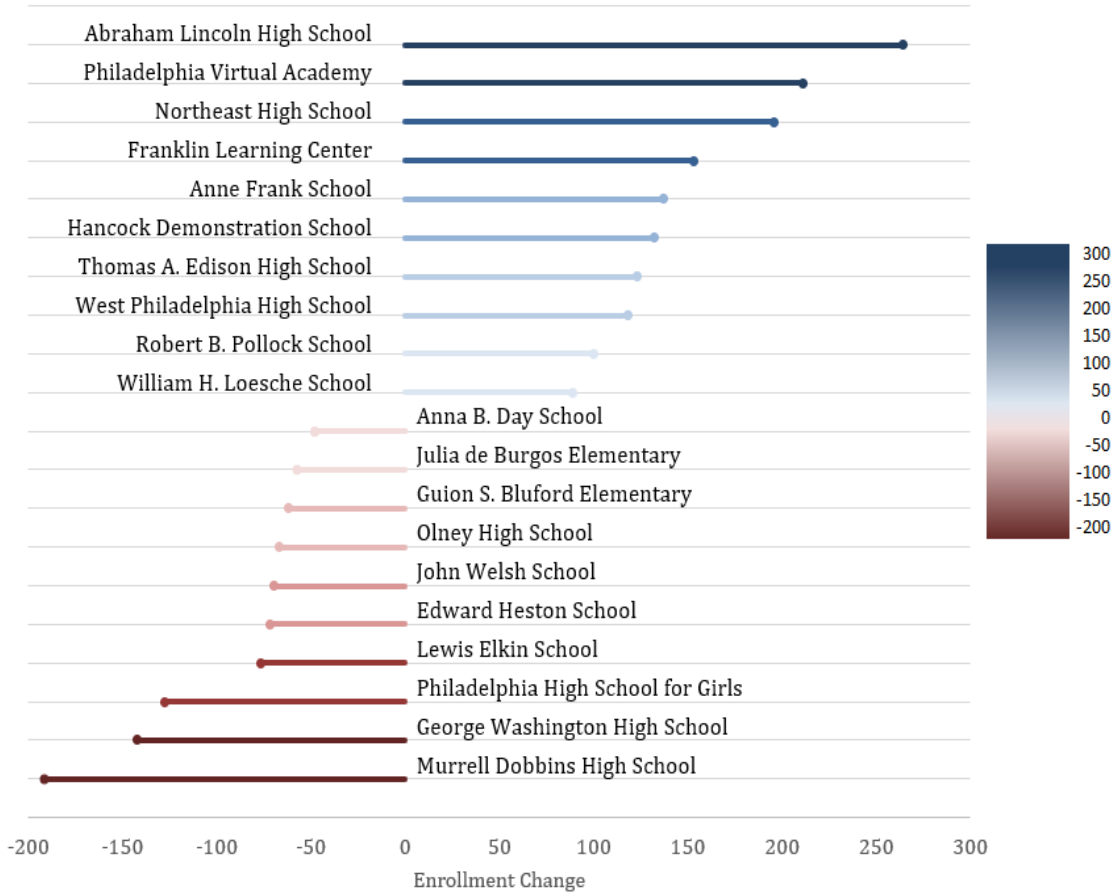
Figure 8. Number of Students Enrolled in District Schools by Admission Type, Grades 9-12, 2014-15 through 2024-25



District Schools with the Largest Enrollment Changes from 2023-24 to 2024-25

At the school level, Abraham Lincoln High School saw the greatest year-over-year increase in the number of students enrolled, growing by 264 students between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years (Figure 9). Murrell Dobbins High School saw the largest decrease in the number of students, with enrollment falling by 192 students. Overall, the enrollment increases in schools with the ten largest changes (+1,523 students) greatly outnumbered the enrollment decreases among the ten schools with the largest changes (-814 students). Thomas M. Pierce School saw the largest proportional increase in enrollment, growing by 43.7%, from 190 students to 273 students (Figure 10). John Welsh School’s enrollment saw the largest proportional decrease, falling by 27.3%, from 256 students to 186. Other schools had smaller enrollment shifts.

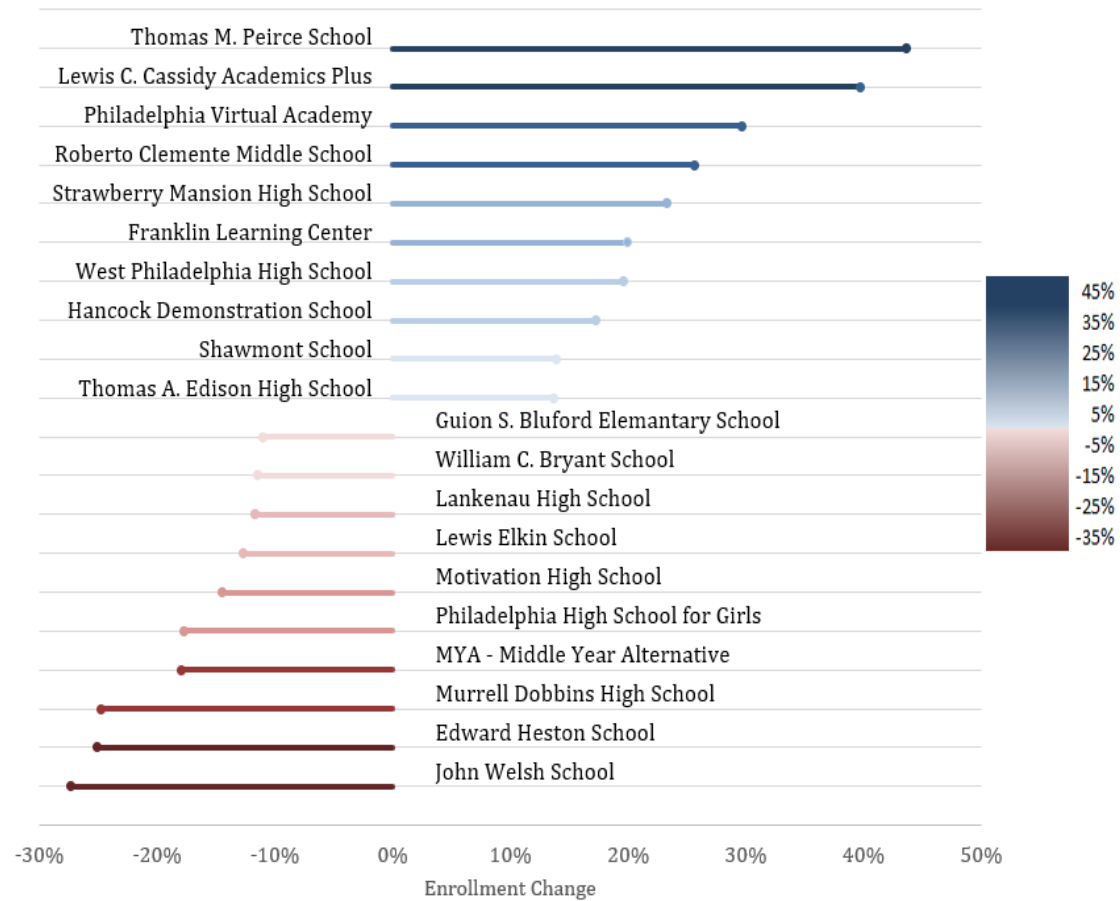
Figures 9. Top ten schools with the largest increases and decreases in year-over-year enrollment between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years, by change in number of students enrolled



Source: October 1 Enrollment Snapshot Report Library, accessed November 4, 2024

How to read this figure: Each bar corresponds to a school on the vertical axis. The horizontal axis indicates the change in enrollment from 2023-24 to 2024-25. Schools with a decrease in enrollment have red bars, while schools with an increase in enrollment have blue bars. The larger the change, the darker the color of the bar.

Figure 10. Top ten schools with the largest increases and decreases in year-over-year enrollment between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years, by percent change in total enrollment



Source: October 1 Enrollment Snapshot Report Library, accessed November 4, 2024

How to read this figure: Each bar corresponds to a school on the vertical axis. The horizontal axis indicates the change in enrollment from 2023-24 to 2024-25. Schools with a decrease in enrollment have red bars, while schools with an increase in enrollment have blue bars. The larger the change, the darker the color of the bar.

Summary

From the 2023-24 to 2024-25 school years, enrollment increased in most grades in District schools, with the greatest increase occurring for grade 12. Alternative school enrollment increased by 3.1%, and Cyber Charter school enrollment decreased by 2.7%. Year-over-year enrollment in Philadelphia Charter schools either decreased or made gains of less than 2% in elementary and middle school grades, and dropped in most high school grades as well. Cyber Charter school enrollment dropped in all grades except for kindergarten, grade 11, and grade 12. Between the 2014-15 and 2024-25 school years, overall enrollment in Philadelphia public schools decreased by less than 1%. Enrollment in District schools decreased by 12.0%. Enrollment in Philadelphia Charter schools decreased by less than 1%. High school enrollment by admission type showed increased enrollment across all three admissions categories: catchment, citywide, and criteria-based schools. Catchment school enrollment, however, has been on the rise since the 2020-21 school year, while criteria-based and citywide schools have seen net decreases in enrollment over that time period.