



Charting the Rise of Public School Choice in Colorado

AUGUST 2025



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Colorado continues to lead the nation in offering families access to public school choice.

For over two decades, the state's open enrollment policies have enabled families to select the public schools that best meet their children's needs, regardless of home address. Today, Colorado families can choose from a broad range of public education options, including open enrollment within and across districts, charter schools, magnet programs, online schools, and innovation schools. This report presents updated analyses and insights on Colorado's open enrollment landscape as a follow-up to Ready Colorado's 2018 Open Doors, Open Districts report. The report examines trends by enrollment type, geography, accountability ratings, and demographics to better understand who is accessing school choice and how.



Quick Look at Key Findings



Overall Trends: *Participation in open enrollment has been increasing over time.*



Intra-District Choice: *Most families accessing choice options are choosing a different school but staying within their district.*



Inter-District Choice: *About half as many families are crossing district boundaries to access another school.*



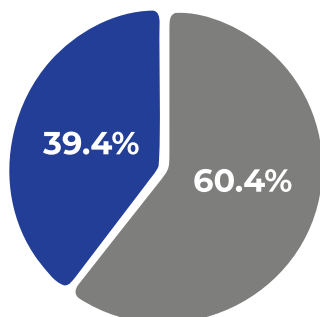
Charter Schools: *Families are attracted to charter schools for their specialized programs, flexible learning environments, and strong academic focus.*



Online Schools: *Online schools have become increasingly popular since COVID-related remote learning.*

Colorado PK-12 Student Enrollment by Enrollment Type

SY24-25



- Inter- and Intra-District Enrollment
- Resident District Enrollment

Source: Colorado Department of Education Data Request; Includes public charter, online, and homeschool enrollment; excludes non-resident, non-choice enrollment

Trends in Open Enrollment Participation

In the 2024-25 school year, 39.4% of all PK-12 public school students — more than 347,000 children — are enrolled in a school other than their zoned neighborhood school.

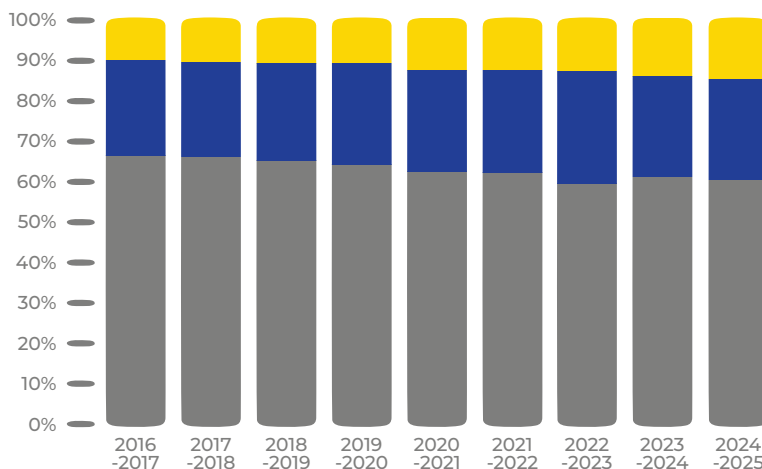
Open Doors, Open Districts provided a peek into public school population trends in 2016-17; since then, the number of families choosing inter- and intra-district choice options has been increasing year over year. About 26%, or approximately 230,000 PK-12 students, are enrolled in a different district-run or charter school within their resident district from the one they are assigned, while 13%, or approximately 118,000 PK-12 students, are enrolled across district lines using open enrollment.

Colorado PK-12 Student Enrollment Trends

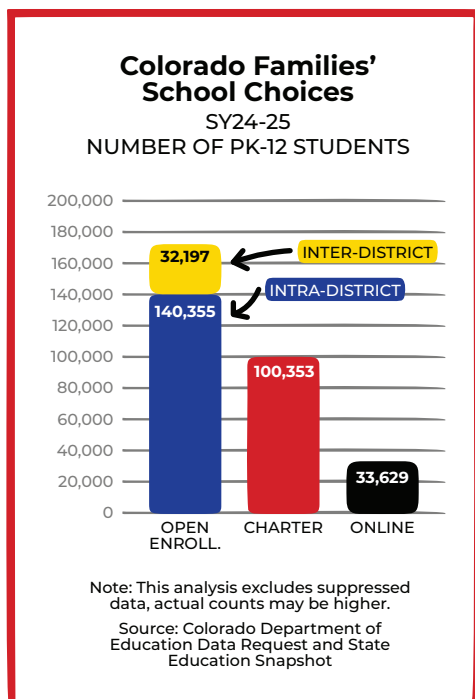
STUDENT YEAR 2016-2017 TO STUDENT YEAR 2024-2025

- Inter-District Enrollment
- Intra-District Enrollment
- Resident District Enrollment

Source: Colorado Department of Education Data Request; Includes public charter, online, and homeschool enrollment; excludes non-resident, non-choice enrollment



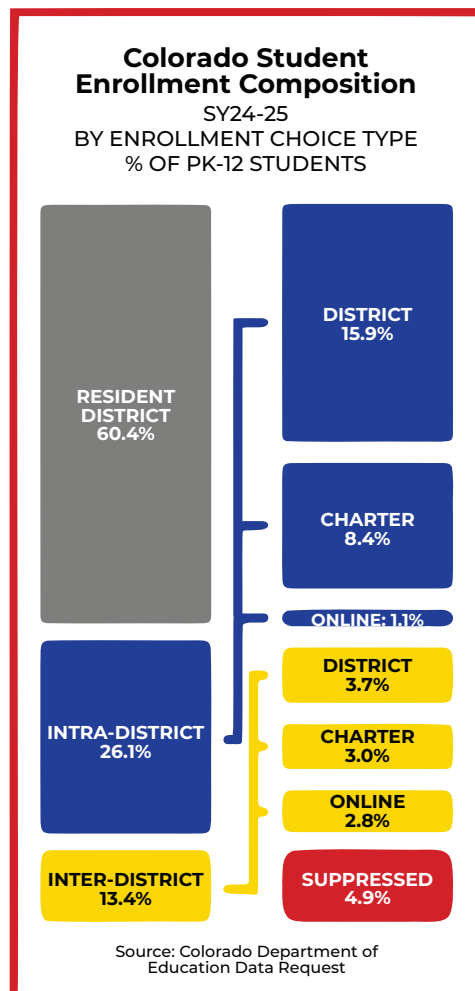
When charter and online choice are separated out from overall open enrollment calculations, charter school enrollment represents the second-highest share of PK-12 choice enrollment in the state.



Persistent Barriers

Families across Colorado are proactively searching for schools that better align with their needs — whether through specialized programs, academic performance, or flexible models. Yet despite the success and popularity of school choice in Colorado, persistent barriers continue to limit equitable access. These include a lack of transportation, confusing or inaccessible information, cumbersome application and reapplication processes, and opaque seat availability reporting. Some school districts have developed innovative solutions to lower these barriers, but broader policy reforms are needed. At the state level, lawmakers have the opportunity to revise policies and create conditions that ensure all families — not just those with the time, knowledge, or resources — can take full advantage of Colorado's school choice system.

Ready Colorado believes educational freedom means more than the right to choose — it means having the ability to make that choice. As participation in school choice remains high and stable, the state must work to remove systemic barriers and ensure every Colorado family can access the educational opportunities that best support their children's success.



INTRODUCTION

Colorado's commitment to school choice empowers families to choose the public schools that best meet their children's needs, regardless of geography.

In the two decades since the state's nation-leading open enrollment legislation passed, Colorado families have been able to choose from a diverse range of school options — including open enrollment within and across districts, charter schools, magnet programs, single- and multi-district online schools, and innovation schools. Although not analyzed within this report, families across the state can also choose private schools and homeschooling.

State data on public school choice demonstrates that more and more, families are choosing a school outside of their residential assignment. **In the 2024-25 school year, almost 40% of students participated in public school choice**, whether by crossing district boundaries or by selecting a different school within their home district — part of a consistent upward trend in open enrollment participation. This robust participation underscores a clear and persistent demand for educational options and a need to make sure that all families have access to those choices.



Families across Colorado are opting to enroll their students beyond their neighborhood public schools for a variety of reasons including access to higher-performing schools, participation in specialized programs, proximity to parents' workplaces, safety concerns, and cultural alignment. No matter a family's reason, the state's long-standing open enrollment policy has allowed families to exercise their right to select the right public school for their child's needs.

Despite the benefits of the system, significant barriers continue to impede access to school choice. These barriers include limited transportation, unclear and inaccessible information on the basics of school choice, complex application and re-application processes, and opaque seat availability reporting. Some districts have implemented innovative solutions to reduce barriers for families and ensure fair access to choice — and state policymakers can help by revising state laws to allow for widespread improvements to the system.

TABLE 1
KEY DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Open Enrollment	A policy established through Colorado’s Public Schools of Choice Act that allows students to attend public schools outside of their assigned neighborhood or school district, space permitting. ¹
School Choice	The broad set of programs and policies that allow families to select educational options beyond traditional public schools assigned by residential zones. These options may include public charter schools, magnet schools, private schools, homeschooling, and virtual schools. ²
Zoned School	The public school to which a student is assigned based on their residential address.
Intra-District Choice	A type of open enrollment that allows families to enroll their children in a district-run public school or charter school outside their zoned school but within the same district. Also referred to as “within-district choice.”
Inter-District Choice	A type of open enrollment that allows families to enroll their children in a district-run public school or charter school located in a different school district. Also referred to as “choicing in” or “across-district choice.” Families who choose to enroll in a different district from their zoned district are also referred to as “choicing out” of that zoned district.
Brick-and-Mortar Schools	Refers to non-online schools where students receive in-person instruction for at least a portion of the school day. This term is used in the report to denote instances where the analysis focuses on choices that require physical travel to a school building.

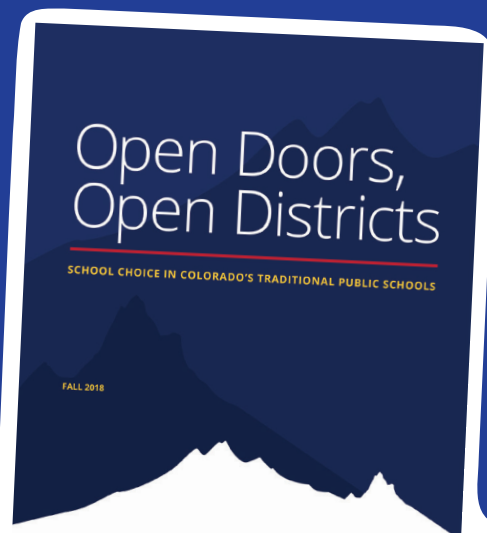
In 2018 Ready Colorado released a policy brief entitled *Open Doors, Open Districts* to inform Colorado policymakers, education stakeholders, and the public about the state's open enrollment system. That report used original data analysis to share insights on how and where choice options are being accessed across the state. **In the 2016-17 school year, 33.1% of PK-12 public school students exercised school choice.³ Since then, that share has steadily increased and now 39.4% of families use inter- or intra-district open enrollment to find the best school for their child.** The following updated analyses and insights are intended to support the state's understanding of the strengths of school choice, as well as the remaining challenges.

At Ready Colorado, we believe that true educational freedom requires not only the right to choose but also the practical ability to act on that choice. As we reflect on the successes of Colorado's open enrollment policy, we must also confront — and address — the systemic obstacles that hinder its full realization. This report will offer updated analyses on the state of open enrollment in Colorado's public schools, including deep dives into enrollment trends by choice option, geographic setting, accountability rating, and demographics. The report is purposeful in analyzing traditional, brick-and-mortar school choice separately from charter or online school choice (where applicable), in order to show the range of options available and potential decisions families are making. Analyses on homeschooling and private school choice are excluded. By understanding who is accessing public school choice options, where access is most prevalent, and how families and students learn about the options available to them, the state can better understand how policy shifts can maximize open enrollment's potential and ensure that all families have genuine access to the educational opportunities they deserve.

Want to read the original
Open Doors, Open Districts
report from Fall of 2018?



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KEY FINDINGS

School choice is central to how families navigate public education in Colorado. In the 2024-25 school year, nearly 40% of students were enrolled in a school other than their assigned neighborhood school, whether by crossing district boundaries or by selecting a different school within their home district. This widespread participation reflects both a strong demand for educational options and a growing culture of choice across diverse communities — urban, suburban, and rural alike. Patterns in enrollment reveal that families are choosing schools for many different reasons including unique program offerings, higher perceived quality, preferred geography, and better fits for their children's unique needs, including online learning and charter options. Importantly, these choices are concentrated in districts that meet or exceed state performance benchmarks, suggesting that access to high-quality instruction is a key driver of choice. As Colorado continues to lead nationally in open enrollment, these trends highlight the importance of understanding not just how many families are accessing choice but also where families are choosing to go and why.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS



ENROLLMENT TRENDS:

Participation in open enrollment has been increasing over time

- In SY24-25, over 347,000, or 39.4% of PK-12 students, are enrolled in schools other than the one to which they are assigned based on their home address.
- *Open Doors, Open Districts* provided a peek into public school population trends in 2016-17 and, since then, families choosing all inter- and intra-district choice options have been increasing year over year.⁴



INTRA-DISTRICT CHOICE:

Most families accessing choice options are choosing a different school but are staying within their district

- In SY24-25, 26.1%, or approximately 230,000 PK-12 students, are enrolled in a different district-run school or charter school within their resident district from the school they are assigned.
- The top five districts with the highest number of intra-district, brick-and-mortar enrollment are Denver Public Schools, Jeffco Public Schools, Douglas County School District, St. Vrain Valley Schools, and Greeley-Evans District 6. Notably, these districts are all located in urban-suburban or Denver Metro settings.
- The top five districts with the highest percentage of intra-district, brick-and-mortar enrollment are Mapleton Public Schools, Denver Public Schools, Greeley-Evans District 6, Widefield School District 3, and Colorado Springs Schools D11.⁵ Notably, these districts are all located in urban-suburban or Denver Metro settings.
- The top districts with the highest number and percentage of intra-district brick-and-mortar enrollment have all received at least an *Accredited With Improvement Plan* accountability rating or higher by the state.



INTER-DISTRICT CHOICE:

About half as many families are crossing district boundaries to access another school

- In SY24-25, 13.4%, or approximately 118,000 PK-12 students, are enrolled across district lines using open enrollment.
- The top five districts receiving the highest number of students choosing in to brick-and-mortar schools (including charter schools) are District 49, Denver Public Schools, Academy District 20, 27J Schools, and Jeffco Public Schools. Notably, these districts are all located in urban-suburban or Denver Metro settings.
- The top five districts with the highest percentage of students choosing in to brick-and-mortar schools (including charter schools) are Sargent School District, Branson School District, Julesburg School District, Mountain Valley School District RE-1, and Prairie School District RE-11J. Notably, these districts are all located in remote or outlying town settings.
- The top districts with the highest number and percentage of students choosing in to brick-and-mortar schools have all received at least an Accredited With Improvement Plan accountability rating or higher by the state.
- Some districts experience higher volumes of students choosing out from their district. Those with the highest number of students leaving include Colorado Springs Schools D11, Adams 12 Five Star Schools, Denver Public Schools, Aurora Public Schools, and Jeffco Public Schools.
- Districts with the highest percentage of students leaving relative to their enrollment are Elbert School District 200, Cotopaxi Consolidated Schools, Cripple Creek-Victor School District, Centennial School District R-1, and Agate School District No. 300. Adams County School District 14, the only non-remote district setting in the group, rounds out this list.



CHARTER SCHOOLS:

Families are attracted to charter schools for their specialized programs, flexible learning environments, and strong academic focus

- GOAL Academy (District 49), American Academy (Douglas County School District), The Classical Academy Charter (Academy District 20), University Schools (Greeley-Evans District 6), and Banning Lewis Ranch Academy (District 49) are the charter schools with the highest enrollment (K-12). GOAL Academy is an online school, while the other schools on that list are brick and mortar.
- Since 2017, enrollment in charter schools has increased in comparison to declining district school enrollment.⁶



ONLINE SCHOOLS:

Online schools have become increasingly popular since COVID-related remote learning

- District 49, Byers School District 32-J, Education Reenvisioned BOCES, 27J Schools, and Douglas County RE-1 enroll the highest number of online students (K-12) through either single- or multi-district online schools.⁷

This report uses data requested from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), as well as publicly available data from CDE Education Statistics, to update our understanding of how, where, and by whom school choice is being used across the state of Colorado. We also conducted interviews with district leaders and focus groups with families to learn more about the implementation of open enrollment and its impact on families' access to the best-fit school. The following section shares detailed findings from the quantitative and qualitative analyses to reflect trends, strengths, and gap areas in Colorado's open enrollment model.

COLORADO ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY RATINGS

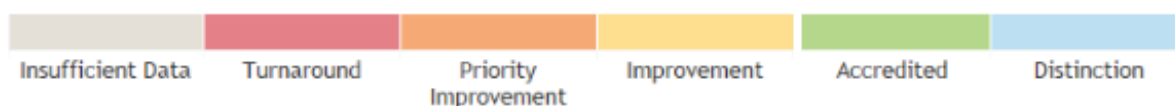


Each year, Colorado schools and districts receive performance ratings, evaluated by measuring student achievement and academic growth on state assessments, graduation and dropout rates, college entrance exam scores, and college enrollment data. The evaluations are presented publicly as District Performance Frameworks (DPFs) and School Performance Frameworks (SPFs). DPFs include five accreditation ratings and SPFs include one of four ratings.⁸

School Ratings

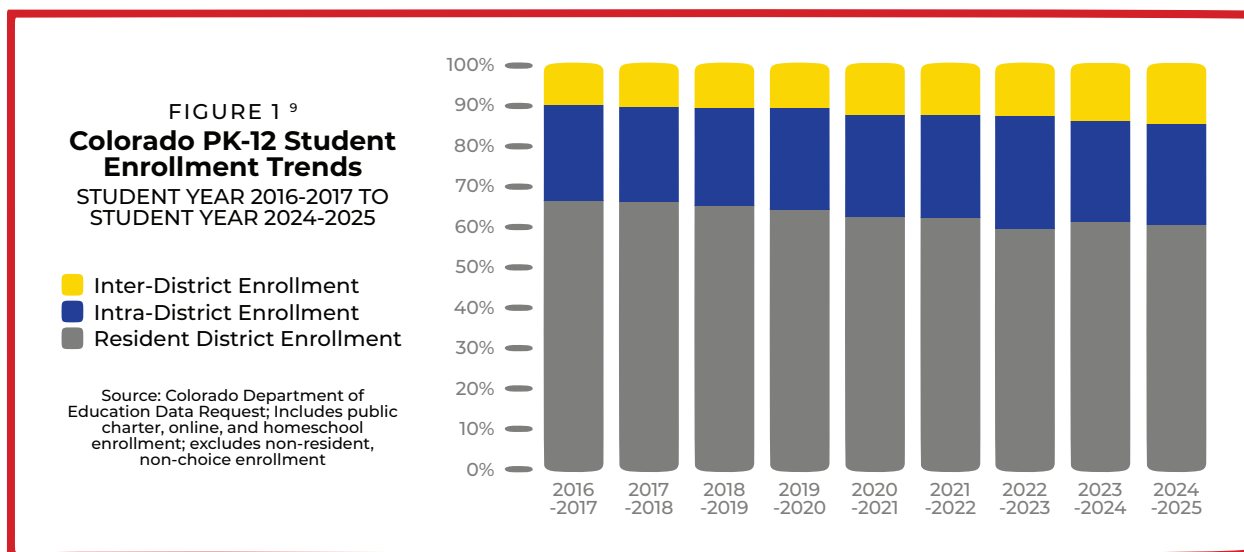


District Accreditation Ratings

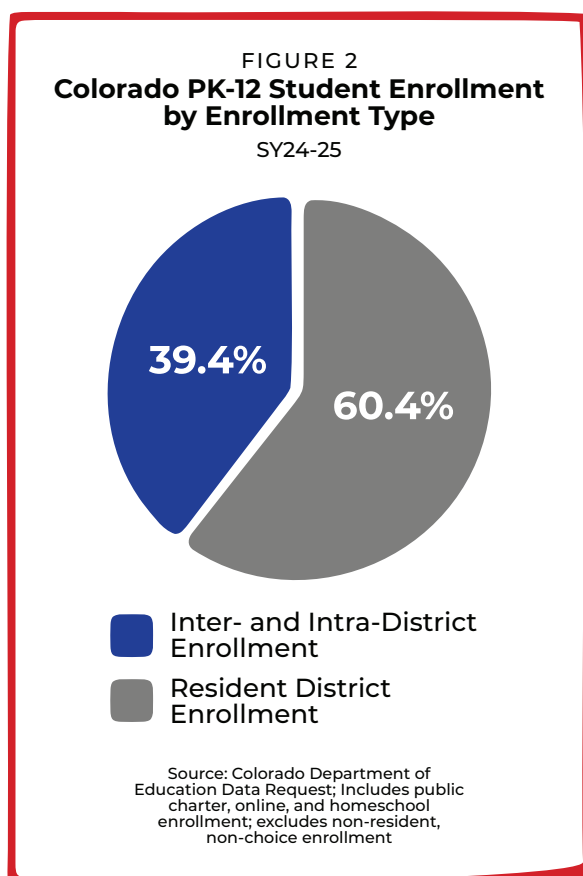


Participation in school choice and open enrollment has been steadily increasing in Colorado

Open enrollment participation in Colorado has been steadily increasing (Figure 1). This trend includes an increase and then slight dip between SY22-23 and SY23-24 — perhaps due to post-pandemic shifts in enrollment. Intra-district enrollment has consistently made up a larger portion of overall open enrollment in the state. Choosing a different school within district boundaries is more common than crossing into another district. While resident enrollment has decreased over time, students enrolled in their zoned schools make up the majority of overall enrollment.



In the current school year, 39.4% of all PK-12 student enrollment is composed of intra- and inter-district enrolled students (Figure 2). This percentage is second only to the SY22-23 composition, at 40%. This means that over one-third of all public school students attend a school outside of their zoned school, whether in the same district or across district lines.



While 60% of students still attend their zoned schools, a growing share are actively opting for alternatives, reflecting families' desire for greater choice and flexibility. Intra-district enrollment continues to lead the way, suggesting that many families are seeking better-fit options close to home rather than crossing district boundaries. When charter and online enrollment are separated out from overall open enrollment calculations, charter school enrollment represents the second-highest share of PK-12 choice enrollment in the state (Figures 3 and 4).

As participation in school choice remains high and relatively stable, Colorado's education landscape will likely continue evolving to meet demand for accessible, high-quality, and diverse learning environments.

FIGURE 3
Colorado Families' School Choices

SY24-25
NUMBER OF PK-12 STUDENTS

Note: This analysis excludes suppressed data, actual counts may be higher.

Source: Colorado Department of Education Data Request and State Education Snapshot

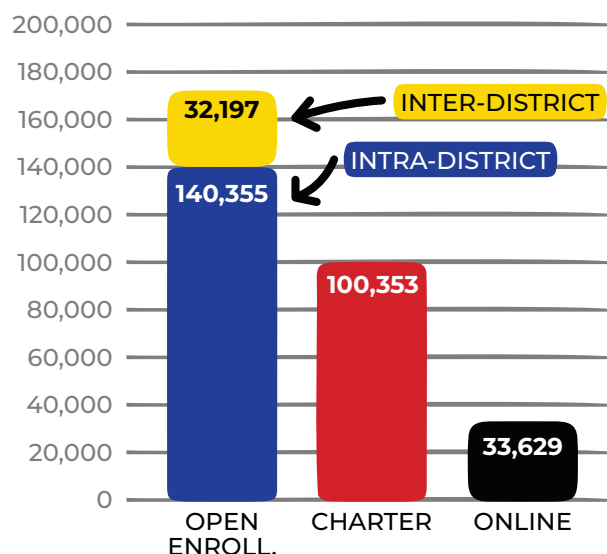
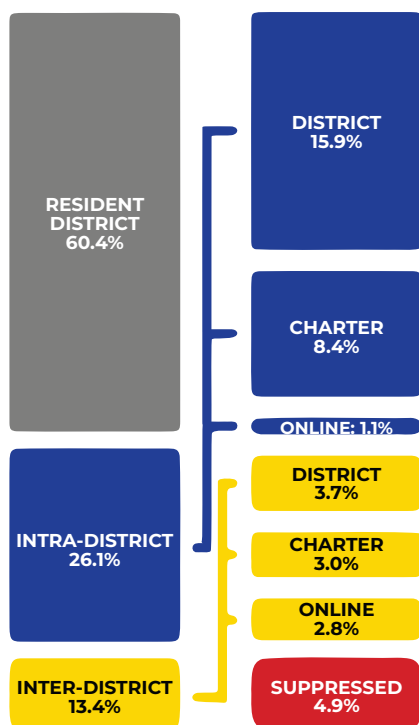


FIGURE 4
Colorado Student Enrollment Composition
SY24-25
BY ENROLLMENT CHOICE TYPE
% OF PK-12 STUDENTS



Source: Colorado Department of Education Data Request

Families pursuing options outside of their zoned school are more likely to attend a different school within their same district

Intra-district enrollment makes up 26.1% of all PK-12 student enrollment in SY24-25. The districts with the highest brick-and-mortar intra-district student enrollment numbers, mostly located in the Denver Metro area, include Denver Public Schools, Jeffco Public Schools, Douglas County School District, St. Vrain Valley Schools, and Greeley-Evans District 6 (Table 2). These districts have all received at least an Accredited With Improvement Plan accountability rating by the state.

TABLE 2
Top Five Districts for Brick-and-Mortar Intra-District Choice Enrollment
SY24-25 | K-12 | Includes Charter Schools | Excludes Homeschools and Online Schools

District Name	District Setting	2024 Accountability Rating	Total Enrollment (K-12)	Intra-District Enrollment	Intra-District Percent Enrollment
Denver Public Schools	Denver Metro	Accredited With Improvement Plan	84,725	30,827	36.4%
Jeffco Public Schools	Denver Metro	Accredited	72,001	21,599	29.9%
Douglas County School District	Denver Metro	Accredited	58,489	16,263	27.8%
St. Vrain Valley Schools	Denver Metro	Accredited	17,366	8,841	28.7%
Greeley-Evans District 6	Urban-Suburban	Accredited With Improvement Plan	22,441	8,152	36.3%

Source: Colorado Department of Education Data Request (District and State Level) and 2024 Final District Ratings¹⁰

The districts with the highest percentage of brick-and mortar intra-district student enrollment include Mapleton Public Schools, Denver Public Schools, Greeley-Evans District 6, Widefield School District 3, and Colorado Springs Schools D11 — all either Denver Metro or urban-suburban settings (Table 3).¹¹

TABLE 3
Top Five Districts for Percentage Brick-and-Mortar Intra-District School Choice Enrollment

SY2024-2025 | K-12 | Includes Charter Schools | Excludes Online Schools and Homeschools

District Name	District Setting	2024 Accountability Rating	Total Enrollment (K12)	Intra-District Enrollment	Intra-District Percent Enrollment
Mapleton Public Schools	Denver Metro	Accredited With Improvement Plan	6,444	3,890	60.4%
Denver Public Schools	Denver Metro	Accredited With Improvement Plan	84,725	30,827	36.4%
Greeley-Evans District 6	Urban-Suburban	Accredited With Improvement Plan	22,441	8,152	36.3%
Widefield School District 3	Urban-Suburban	Accredited With Improvement Plan	8,673	2,904	33.5%
Colorado Springs Schools D11	Urban-Suburban	Accredited With Improvement Plan	21,761	7,019	32.3%

Source: Colorado Department of Education Data Request (District and State Level) and 2024 Final District Ratings¹²

When the state's 15 largest school districts are removed from this analysis, Mapleton Public Schools, Widefield School District 3, Lewis-Palmer School District 38, Westminster Public Schools, and Woodland Park School District have the highest percentage of brick-and-mortar intra-district choice.¹³

In Mapleton Public Schools, the schools with the highest intra-district enrollment numbers include York International, Explore PK-8, Monterey Community School, Achieve Academy, Meadow Community School, and Clayton Partnership School. Families may be more likely to access school choice in urban-suburban districts like Mapleton Public Schools, Greeley-Evans District 6, and Denver Public Schools, where a wider array of educational options and specialized programs exist within the same district. In Mapleton Public Schools specifically, high intra-district enrollment at specialized schools — including those offering CTE coursework, Expeditionary Learning, and STEM pathways — suggests that families are actively selecting schools that align with their preferences for academic focus or school culture. This trend is catalyzed by the district's 100%-choice model, meaning there are no pre-zoned assignments. Families may choose to enroll in their closest neighborhood school or choose from a wide variety of school models at any school in the district (see District Deep Dive: Mapleton Public Schools).

DISTRICT DEEP DIVE: MAPLETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



DISTRICT BACKGROUND:

Mapleton Public Schools, located in the Thornton/North Denver area of unincorporated Adams County, enrolls 7,095 students in the district's 19 schools.¹⁴ Mapleton is a 100%-choice district, meaning all families have to choose a school and are not automatically enrolled in their neighborhood school. The district decided to pursue this model in the early 2000s as a part of a district reinvention that included designing and then intentionally building schools to offer meaningfully different learning models.¹⁵ Because this approach has been in place for many years, choice is embedded in the fabric of the schooling experience and the community.¹⁶ The district serves students in small-by-design, brick-and-mortar schools and one K-12 online school and implements many different learning models throughout its schools, including Big Picture, STEM, Expeditionary Learning, and Dual Language.¹⁷ The district also offers multiple graduation pathways.¹⁸



OPEN ENROLLMENT PROCESS:

Families are asked to rank their top three school choices on the enrollment application, which is reviewed carefully to align placements with each student's needs and interests. While placement depends on factors like space, grade-level openings, and overall capacity, most students are placed in their first-choice school.¹⁹



COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:

The district encourages families to use their Welcome Center to learn more about choice options and the enrollment process.²⁰ The district holds school tours and open house events.²¹ The district also has a School Finder tool that helps families discover schools, grade levels served, school models, programs, and more.²²



TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS:

Mapleton provides transportation for all students living within the district (living one or more miles from the school of choice), doing away with the limitations of the “neighborhood school.”²³

If the state’s 15 largest school districts are removed from the analysis, the districts with the highest brick-and-mortar intra-district enrollment numbers are Mapleton Public Schools, Thompson School District, Widefield School District 3, Harrison District 2, and Pueblo School District 60 (Table 4). Removing the 15 largest school districts from the analysis highlights that intra-district enrollment is not just a big-district phenomenon — it also plays a significant role in mid-sized and smaller districts. These districts are often outside the core Denver Metro area and may be using school choice to offer families alternatives in the face of varying school performance or specialized program availability.

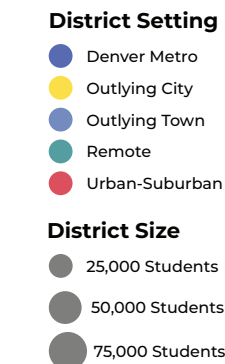
TABLE 4
Top Five Small Districts for Intra-District Choice Enrollment
SY24-25 | K-12 | Includes Charter Schools | Excludes Online Schools and Homeschools

District Name	District Setting	2024 Accountability Rating	Total Enrollment (K-12)	Intra-District Enrollment	Intra-District Percent
Mapleton Public Schools	Denver Metro	Accredited With Improvement Plan	6,444	3,890	60.4%
Thompson School District	Urban-Suburban	Accredited	14,233	3,299	23.1%
Widefield School District 3	Urban-Suburban	Accredited With Improvement Plan	8,673	2,904	33.5%
Harrison District 2	Urban-Suburban	Accredited With Improvement Plan	12, 203	2,506	20.5%
Pueblo School District 60	Urban-Suburban	Accredited With Improvement Plan	12,996	2,334	17.9%

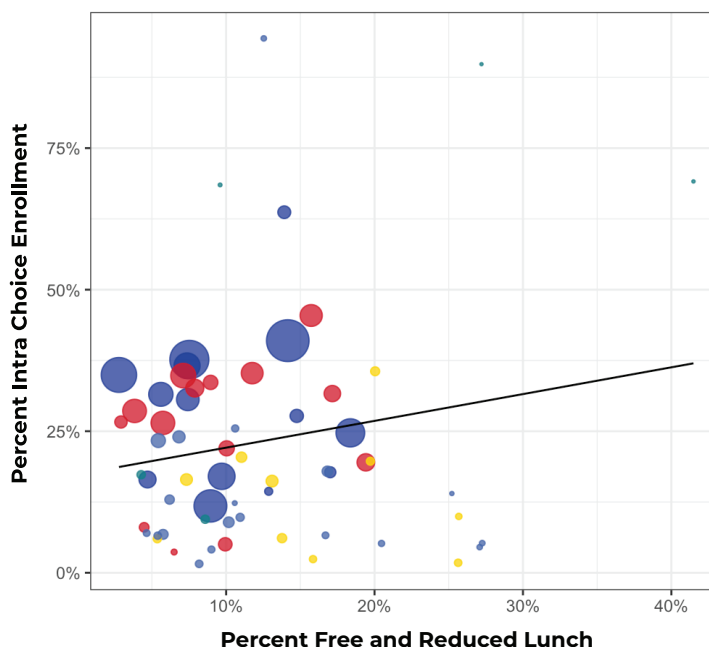
Source: Colorado Department of Education Data Request (District and State Level) and 2024 Final District Ratings²⁴

When analyzing the relationship between a district’s student poverty rate and the percentage of students enrolled in a school of choice, a slight increase in school choice enrollment is observed as the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) increases (Figure 5). This suggests that higher student poverty in a district may be associated with slightly higher rates of intra-district choice enrollment. However, the lack of a strong correlation is itself notable and may reflect the plurality of reasons parents choose particular schools — factors such as instructional model (e.g., STEM focus) may play a larger role in intra-district choice than poverty-related factors, particularly when geographic distance is less of a constraint. Since larger districts tend to offer more choice options, the size of the school district may confound the observed correlation between FRPL rate and intra-district choice enrollment.

FIGURE 5
**Intra-District Enrollment
by District Free and
Reduced Lunch Rate**



Source: Colorado Department of
Education Data Request and LEA
Enrollment Data



Intra-district enrollment continues to be a major driver of school choice in Colorado, accounting for over one-quarter of all PK-12 enrollment in SY24-25. While it is most prevalent in large, urban-suburban districts like Denver Public Schools and Jeffco Public Schools, it also plays a meaningful role in mid-sized and smaller districts, signaling its relevance beyond just the state's largest systems. Families are taking advantage of in-district options to access specialized programs, better academic fits, or schools that align more closely with their values or needs.

Large districts attract the most out-of-district students

Inter-district enrollment makes up 13.4% of all PK-12 student enrollment in SY24-25. Districts with the highest number of students “choicing in” to brick-and-mortar schools — meaning coming from outside of the district — include District 49, Academy District 20, Denver Public Schools, Harrison District 2, and 27J Schools (Table 5). Each of these districts are located in urban-suburban or Denver Metro settings. These districts have all received at least an Accredited With Improvement Plan accountability rating by the state.

TABLE 5
Top Five Receiving Districts for Brick-and-Mortar Inter-District Choice
SY24-25 | K-12 | Includes Charter Schools | Excludes Online Schools and Homeschools

District Name	District Setting	2024 Accountability Rating	Total Enrollment (K-12)	Inter-District Enrollment	Inter-District Percent
District 49	Urban-Suburban	Accredited	24,987	8,017	32.1%
Academy District 20	Urban-Suburban	Accredited With Distinction	25,443	3,972	15.6%
Denver Public Schools	Denver Metro	Accredited With Improvement Plan	84,725	4,149	4.9%
Harrison District 2	Urban-Suburban	Accredited With Improvement Plan	11,840	2,458	20.8%
27J Schools	Denver Metro	Accredited With Improvement Plan	22,883	2,692	11.8%

Source: Colorado Department of Education Data Request (District and State Level) and 2024 Final District Ratings ²⁵

If online schools are added to the analysis, Byers School District 32-J appears on the list due to the district's large multi-district online schools. If the state's 15 largest districts are removed from the analysis, Harrison District 2, Pueblo County School District 70, Littleton Public Schools, Cheyenne Mountain School District 12, and Englewood Schools make up the top five receiving districts.

The five districts with the highest percentage of students choosing in to brick-and-mortar schools from outside the district are Sargent School District, Branson School District, Julesburg School District, Mountain Valley School District RE-1, and Prairie School District RE-11J (Figure 6). All of these districts are in remote or outlying town settings. These districts have all received at least an Accredited With Improvement Plan accountability rating by the state.

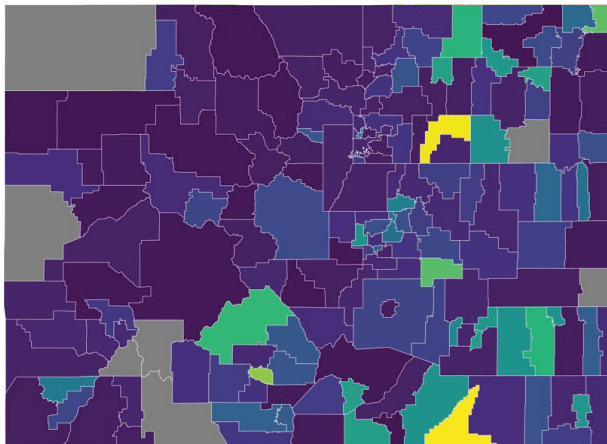
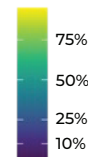
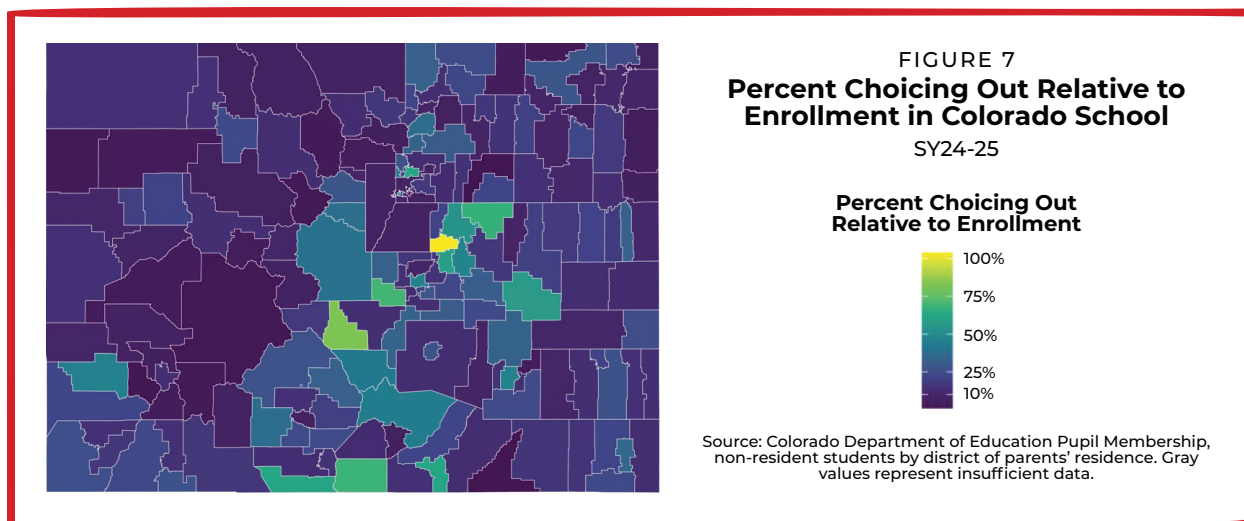


FIGURE 6
Percent Inter-District Enrollment in Colorado School Districts
SY24-25

Percent Inter-District Enrollment



Source: Colorado Department of Education Pupil Membership, non-resident students by district of parents' residence. Gray values represent insufficient data.



When Colorado families pursue an option outside of their geographic district, they are “choicing out.” Colorado Springs Schools D11, Adams 12 Five Star Schools, Denver Public Schools, Aurora Public Schools, and Jeffco Public Schools have the highest number of students choicing out of their district and into another. Among the districts with the highest percentage of students choicing out relative to their enrollment are Elbert School District 200, Cotopaxi Consolidated Schools, Cripple Creek-Victor School District, Centennial School District R-1, and Agate School District No. 300 (Figure 7). Right outside of the top five list, Adams County School District 14 is the only Denver Metro area district with a high percentage of enrollment choicing out. On this list, both Centennial School District R-1 and Adams County School District 14 have been identified as Accredited With Priority Improvement Plan, signaling low performance and requiring state support and oversight.

When analyzing the relationship between a district’s student free and reduced-priced lunch rate and the percentage of students choicing out of a district (relative to enrollment), higher-poverty districts are more likely to see students choice out to another district. Figure 8 suggests that families in higher-poverty districts may be seeking perceived or actual improvements in academic quality or better-funded programs in neighboring districts. However, even though the trend indicates a general pattern, it should not be interpreted as evidence of a direct causal link between poverty and choice-out behavior. Rather, it suggests that socioeconomic status may be one of several factors influencing families’ decisions, alongside geographic isolation, educational quality, and access to alternative options.

FIGURE 8
Choosing Out Rate by District
Free and Reduced Lunch Rate

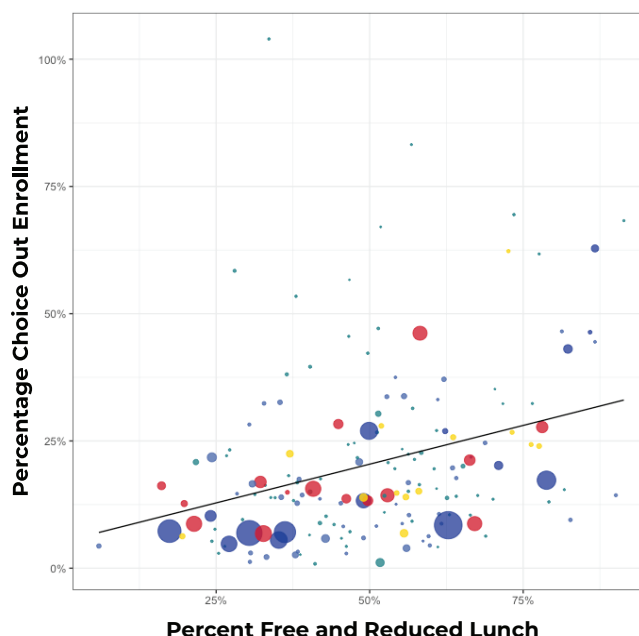
District Setting

- Denver Metro
- Outlying City
- Outlying Town
- Remote
- Urban-Suburban

District Size

- 25,000 Students
- 50,000 Students
- 75,000 Students

Source: Colorado Department of
Education LEA Enrollment Data, SY24-25



Taking a look at the free and reduced-price lunch rates in the districts with the highest percentage of students choosing out, the data suggest a connection between poverty and student mobility (Table 6). Higher poverty levels, as indicated by FRPL rates, are generally associated with higher rates of students choosing to leave their home district, particularly in remote areas. Districts like Centennial School District R-1 and Cripple Creek-Victor School District, both with FRPL rates above 70%, see over two-thirds of their students opting out. However, the district with the highest choice-out rate, Elbert School District 200 (104%), has a relatively low FRPL rate, indicating that factors beyond poverty — such as school quality, size, or available programs — also influence enrollment decisions. Overall, while poverty is a strong predictor of choice-out behavior, it interacts with other local conditions that shape families' decisions.

TABLE 6
Districts With the Highest Percentage of Students Choicing Out
Relative to Enrollment | PK-12 | SY2024-2025 | Includes Online and Charter Schools

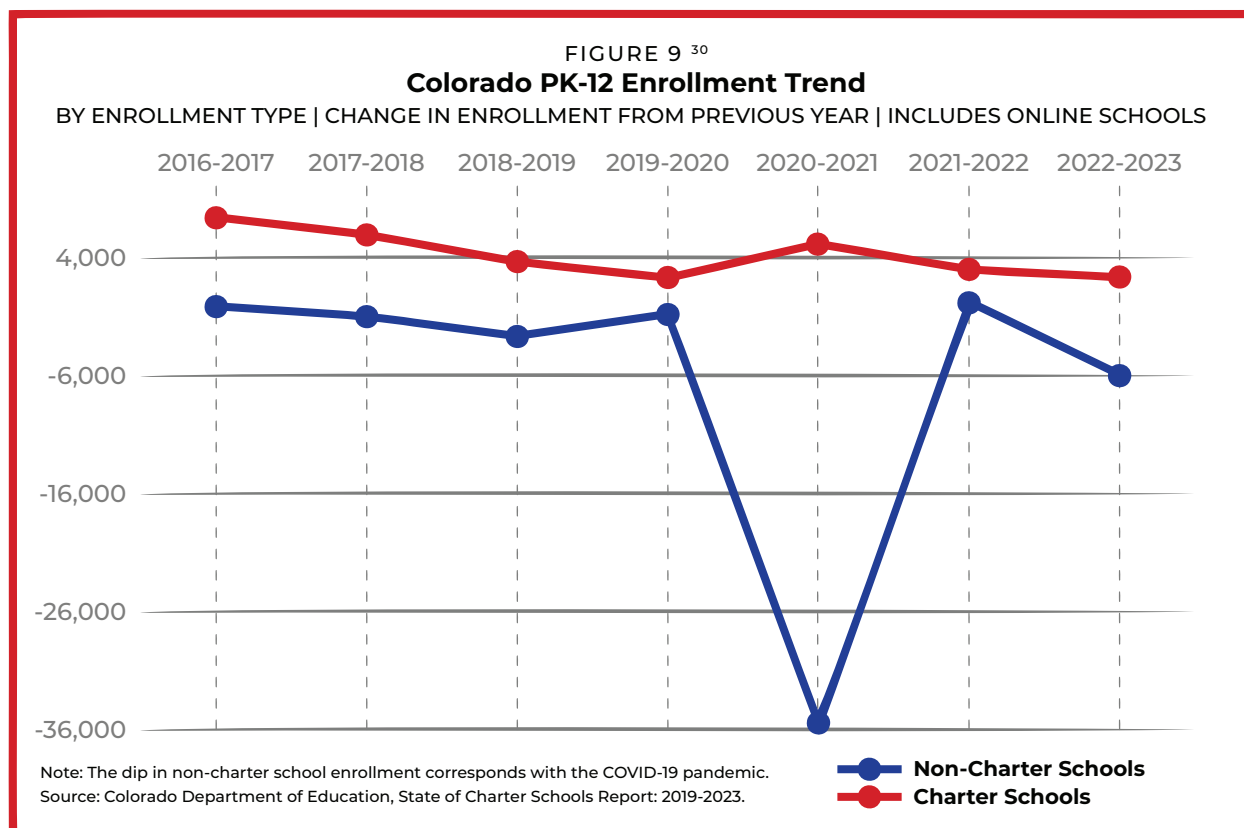
District Name	District Setting	2024 Accountability Rating	Total Enrollment (K12)	Choice Out Enrollment	Choice Out Enrollment Percent	FRPL Rate
Elbert School District 200	Remote	Accredited	277	288	104.0%	33.6%
Cotopaxi Consolidated Schools	Remote	Accredited	155	129	83.2%	56.8%
Cripple Creek-Victor School District	Remote	Accredited With Improvement Plan	298	207	69.5%	73.5%
Centennial School District R-1	Remote	Accredited With Priority Improvement Plan	186	127	68.3%	91.4%
Agate School District No. 300	Remote	Insufficient State Data	85	57	67.1%	51.8%

Source: Colorado Department of Education Data Request (District and State Level) and 2024 Final District Ratings ²⁶

Inter-district enrollment in Colorado reflects families' willingness to cross district boundaries to access schools that better meet their students' needs. Higher-performing districts with specialized programs — whether in urban-suburban hubs like Denver Public Schools and District 49 or in small, remote districts — are attracting students with offerings such as career and technical education, dual language instruction, and flexible online learning. The consistent draw of online schools also underscores families' desire for options that accommodate unique learning needs and life circumstances. At the same time, patterns of students choicing out of lower-performing districts suggest that school quality and academic reputation play a significant role in families' decision-making, reinforcing the importance of accountability and access in Colorado's school choice ecosystem.

Families are drawn to charter schools for specialized programs, adaptable learning environments, and academic rigor

Many families in Colorado are choosing charter schools. Since 2017, enrollment in charter schools has increased in comparison to declining district school enrollment.²⁷ Charter schools have seen positive enrollment increases year-over-year (Figure 9).²⁸ This is likely in part because they offer greater flexibility to meet students' unique needs. Today, enrolling in a charter school is the second-most popular choice for Colorado families — behind only intra-district enrollment — with more than 130,000 students enrolled in charter schools in the 2024-25 school year. Colorado's top-enrolling charter schools reflect a diverse range of models and programming, from online and alternative learning paths to STEM, liberal arts, and college-preparatory programs.²⁹



Online school enrollment surged post pandemic

When it comes to accessing online schools, Colorado families have both multi-district and single district options to choose from, and online schools can be operated by district-run schools, charter schools, or BOCES. Online schooling has become more popular across the state in recent years. After the rise in remote learning due to COVID-19, families have continued to pursue online schooling options. Enrollment in online schools rose in Colorado by 50% between Fall 2018 and Fall 2021, and families whose students thrived in a virtual setting have multiple options enabled by choice.³¹ In fact, of all district-run and charter schools, four of the top five receiving schools for inter-district choice are multi-district online schools.

Colorado law limits how many students a single-district online school can enroll from outside its home district — only up to 10% of its enrollment or 100 students, whichever is fewer.³² In contrast, multi-district online schools go through a special approval process that allows them to serve students from multiple districts. Because of these regulations, the online schools with the highest number of inter-district enrollment are typically multi-district schools. The only brick-and-mortar school on the list of top receiving schools for inter-district choice is Boulder Valley School District's Broomfield High School.

TABLE 7
Individual Schools with the Highest Number of Inter-District School Choice Enrollment
SY2024-2025 | K-12 | Includes Online and Charter Schools

District Name	School Name	2024 Accountability Rating	Total Enrollment (K12)	Inter-District Enrollment	Inter-District Percent Enrollment
District 49	COAL Academy	AEC: Performance Plan	6,693	6,456	96.5%
Byers School District 32-J	Astravo Online Academy High School	Insufficient State Data	2,750	2,749	100%
27J Schools	Colorado Connections @ 27J	Improvement Plan	2,042	1,933	94.7%
Douglas County School District	HOPE ONLINE LEARNING ACADEMY CO-OP	AEC: Performance Plan	1,307	1,257	96.2%
Boulder Valley School District	Broomfield High School	Performance Plan	1,694	841	49.6%

Source: Colorado Department of Education Data Request (District and State Level) and 2024 Final District Ratings³³

Families and students are still facing persistent barriers to accessing choice options

Colorado's open enrollment law puts families in the driver's seat when it comes to choosing the best public school for their child, regardless of where they live. It ensures that parents can request enrollment in any public school across the state, so long as space is available and the student meets any specific program requirements.³⁴ This law sends a clear message: a family's ZIP code should never limit their access to a great education, whatever that means for them.

Under this law, districts and schools are expected to welcome non-resident students unless the school is at capacity, the student doesn't meet program-specific criteria, or there are valid disciplinary concerns.³⁵ Importantly, districts cannot charge tuition for students enrolling through open enrollment, and they must treat in-district and out-of-district applicants fairly. Schools must also make their open enrollment policies public and provide clear, accessible information to families.³⁶

Limited transportation options hinder families' ability to pursue school choice

While open enrollment opens doors, it doesn't guarantee entry to every school. Additional transportation is not guaranteed — families may be responsible for getting their child to and from a chosen school.³⁷ In the 2018 Open Doors, Open Districts report, transportation was identified as one of the biggest barriers families face when trying to access open enrollment.³⁸ The report noted that, for many, getting a child to a school outside their neighborhood isn't just about choice — it's about logistics. Long commutes can clash with work schedules, and in areas without reliable public transit, open enrollment becomes out of reach for families who don't have a clear way to get their child to school each day.

Seven years after our original report, transportation remains a barrier to accessing open enrollment. Some districts, like Greeley-Evans District 6 or St. Vrain Valley Schools, do not offer any sort of transportation and clearly note that the responsibility falls solely on the parent or guardian.³⁹ Other districts, like Durango 9-R or Littleton Public Schools, have limited seats available on existing bus routes for open-enrolled students. Families must fill out an application for a first-come, first-served seat. However, those seats may not always be guaranteed if resident ridership increases over the year.⁴⁰ In Mapleton Public Schools, families living within the district boundaries are provided transportation to their school of choice.⁴¹

Without transportation, families may be unable to access the school that meets all their needs because they are too far from home to provide safe and reliable transportation.⁴² Family members shared, “The school of choice option is so limited; transportation is a big challenge — and so it looks like we have an option, but it feels like a catch-22.”⁴³ This lack of transportation is just one hurdle that families face in accessing open enrollment opportunities. Many of the other hurdles come before and during the application process.

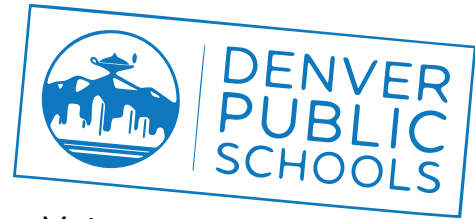
Complicated application processes and opaque public information leave families out of choice options

Even before families apply for open enrollment, accessing reliable and easy-to-understand information remains one of the most significant barriers to exercising school choice in Colorado. For parents new to the K-12 system, from low-income backgrounds, or who don’t speak English at home, the process is especially confusing and often inaccessible. One parent put it plainly: “There are not a lot of resources out there for parents just starting in school who don’t really know how to navigate the system.”⁴⁴ Another shared, “For families that don’t speak English, they don’t understand how to access school choice and options — it’s overwhelming to know where to start and who to talk to.”⁴⁵ Without clear outreach, translated materials, and targeted support, too many Colorado families are left on the sidelines of a system intended to offer them options.

Many families shared that they learned about choice options through word of mouth. Trusted friends or community members sharing anecdotes about their schools or the open enrollment process is one of the primary ways families gather information. One parent shared, “We had a friend whose kids went to this school for a few years, and they recommended it for us, so we ended up going there.”⁴⁶ Families also discuss concerns with school environments and learn from one another about the reputation of schools. For instance, one parent reflected on the importance of school safety, saying, “Safety is a big thing — if a school has a reputation for bullying or that kids are showing up with guns or drugs, you won’t send your kids there — moms talk to each other.”⁴⁷ In addition to word of mouth, families rely on proven

metrics like teacher turnover, test scores, and other publicly available data to help evaluate choice options and attend school tours, open houses, and welcome centers to learn more about a school's culture.⁴⁸

DISTRICT DEEP DIVE: DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS



DISTRICT BACKGROUND:

Denver Public Schools (DPS) serves 90,450 students in 198 schools in the Denver Metro area — Colorado's largest school district.⁴⁹ The district offers a variety of school options, including charter schools and innovation schools. DPS maintains several enrollment zones where resident students are guaranteed enrollment to multiple schools, enhancing access to high-performing schools and transportation options.⁵⁰



OPEN ENROLLMENT PROCESS:

Denver has a well institutionalized and publicized open enrollment system that views school choice as a valuable tool to empower families to find educational environments aligned with their unique needs and aspirations. Families select schools based on a range of factors — including academic performance, special programs, proximity, and school leadership — highlighting the personalized nature of these decisions. With a majority of families getting a seat at their first- or second-choice school, DPS sees high satisfaction with the system, suggesting that families are accessing options that reflect their priorities.⁵¹ This system has remained consistent for many years, and the district conducts robust public outreach to ensure parents are aware of their choice options.⁵²

The SchoolChoice process involves two rounds, and applications are completed online via the DPS Parent Portal or the SchoolChoice website. Round 1, held from mid-January to mid-February, allows families to rank up to 12 schools and guarantees placement at the student's neighborhood or zone school, with notifications sent in late March.⁵³ Round 2, which runs from April through late summer, is first come, first served and offers seats only if space is available, with students added to waitlists in order of application time.⁵⁴



COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:

The SchoolChoice website is the central hub for enrollment information, featuring application timelines and the School Finder tool to explore school options. Families can also consult annual Enrollment Guides — available online and in print — or contact Enrollment Services directly by phone or email for personalized support.

For multilingual families, DPS offers specialized English Language Development programs and provides interpretation services and translated materials in the district's top languages.⁵⁵

Low-income families can access mobile-friendly tools to help navigate their school options, while bilingual support is available through the SchoolChoice team.⁵⁶

Students with disabilities receive individualized assistance from the Exceptional Student Services team during school transitions to ensure appropriate placement.⁵⁷



TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS:

When families participate in SchoolChoice, transportation is not guaranteed if a student enrolls outside their boundary school or zone — though limited options like the Success Express shuttle, RTD passes for high schoolers, and enrollment zone routes may be available, and transportation exceptions can be requested through the Parent Portal.⁵⁸

Beyond information, the open enrollment process itself is inconsistent across the state and often needlessly complex. Each district — and sometimes individual schools — sets its own rules, timelines, and requirements. That means families have to navigate a patchwork of websites, deadlines, and forms just to exercise their right to choose. Some districts use online applications, while others use paper applications that must be delivered in person.⁵⁹ “Timelines and when you can apply are challenges — the deadlines are all different,” one parent said.⁶⁰ “If there isn’t a school fair, you can miss your chance to enroll.”⁶¹ Others shared how some schools fail to communicate that families need to reapply every year: “[Some schools] never clearly advise you that you have to apply each year... it was only other parents that told me that it isn’t continuous.”⁶² And for families juggling jobs, childcare, or lack of transportation, the process can feel like a full-time job.

On top of these hurdles, many families are left guessing when it comes to whether their child even has a shot at getting into a particular school. Districts are not required to add seats or expand capacity to make room for additional out-of-zone students, leaving limited room for non-resident students. Few schools clearly share how many seats are open or who gets priority — creating a system that feels more like a gamble than a choice. “Schools don’t provide information about seat availability. That makes it difficult to know whether their children have a high or low chance at enrolling,” one parent explained.⁶³ For those families without existing connections to school staff or other families, the process can feel like an insider’s game, “Word of mouth, I think that still applies — there’s no transparency for us to confirm why any kid got into the school.”⁶⁴ This lack of transparency and clarity creates a system where families face uncertainty, making the enrollment process feel more challenging and less accessible.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE STATE AND LOCAL POLICY

As Colorado continues to lead the nation in school choice, it is crucial to acknowledge that there are still opportunities to refine and expand the accessibility of these systems. The state's goal should be to better serve families' needs, provide them with useful information about schools and enrollment options, and open opportunities to all students. With these guiding principles in mind, the following recommendations aim to improve the open enrollment process and empower families to make the best choices for their children.



The state can make policy improvements to enable accessibility of public school choice options

Align Enrollment Processes

First, ensuring a consistent and streamlined enrollment process is vital to increasing access and fairness for all families. By aligning enrollment windows and timelines across districts, Colorado can reduce the confusion and pressure that parents face when navigating multiple deadlines, ultimately allowing them to make decisions based on the best fit for their child rather than being driven by bureaucratic constraints. We made this recommendation in our 2018 report, and we are still advocating for shared enrollment windows within and across districts.

In 2018, we suggested that the “state could also require districts to make their policies, deadlines, and processes clearly accessible on their websites in a single place with specific minimum required information.”⁶⁵ Ensuring families have access to clear, centralized information on school choice options will improve transparency and make the process more accessible. Findings from a recently published report by the Colorado Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights support increased transparency in enrollment and assignment procedures and relevant information about schools.⁶⁶ Much of this recommendation can be tackled at the district level, but the state can play a role in setting universal standards for publishing information.

Address Barriers to Transportation

Additionally, we recommend addressing barriers to transportation, ensuring that all families have access to reliable and equitable transportation options, including students attending charter schools and those in need of support

to attend higher-performing schools. Colorado should eliminate restrictive transportation laws and regulations, including current policies that enable districts to limit families' transportation options without clear justification.⁶⁷ The state can also promote innovation in transportation through dedicated grant funding — a recommendation that also appeared in the state's recent school transportation modernization task force.⁶⁸ Convening collaborative communities of practice among districts to brainstorm and implement transportation alternatives and partnerships can enable such innovation. The state can also incentivize using cutting-edge technology and third-party providers to improve the efficiency and flexibility of school transportation systems to serve more students.

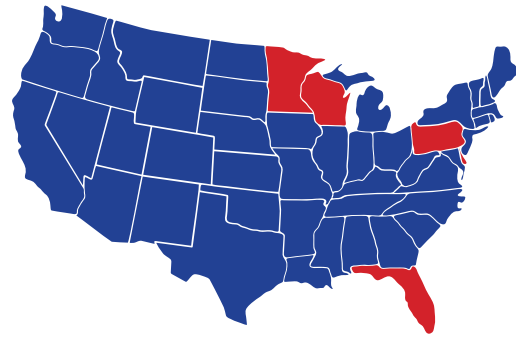
Serve All Students Well

The state should encourage schools of choice to commit to reflecting the diversity of their surrounding community and serving traditionally underserved groups of students, including multilingual learners and students with disabilities. Many charter schools are explicitly committed to student diversity in their mission or design and typically have achieved a certain level of diversity within their actual enrollment. These schools often prioritize providing transportation, even with limited revenues, to achieve their enrollment and diversity goals. District features like geographic size, the level of segregation across communities, and the distance between communities shape choice systems and the transportation services needed to provide equitable access to schools.

To further reduce segregation and inequitable access, the state should follow the recommendations of the Colorado Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and encourage districts to redraw school attendance boundaries at least every four years with a focus on civil rights, increase funding for student transportation, and implement controlled choice policies that reserve spots for non-neighborhood students.⁶⁹ Ready Colorado believes that having our schools of choice reflect the diversity of the state of Colorado is a worthy and achievable goal.⁷⁰

EXEMPLAR POLICIES FROM OTHER STATES

Colorado can enhance its open enrollment policy and practices at the state level by adopting similar initiatives to the exemplars from other states.



FLORIDA:

- **Transportation Support:** The state provides travel stipends for K-8 students attending public schools outside their residential zones, addressing transportation barriers that can hinder school choice.⁷¹ The state also allows parents to pay for eligible transportation costs through their education savings accounts.
- **Transparency and Reporting Requirements:** Districts must publicly report the number of available open enrollment seats on a regular basis.⁷²



WISCONSIN:

- **Transportation Support:** The state reimburses parents who are eligible for free and reduced lunch up to a certain amount in mileage expenses.⁷³
- **Transparency and Reporting Requirements:** Each year, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction releases a report on open enrollment applications, student transfers, and denial rates, giving policymakers a full picture of how the program is working. These reports are publicly available on DPI's website.⁷⁴ Oklahoma and Kansas are the only other states that are required by law to publish basic open enrollment information.⁷⁵



PENNSYLVANIA:

- **Transportation for Charter School Students:** Under state law, school districts must provide transportation for students attending charter and non-public schools if the school is either located within the district or within 10 miles of the district's boundary, as measured by the nearest highway or public road (a provision commonly known as the "10-mile rule").⁷⁶



DELAWARE:

- **Streamlined Application Information:** The Delaware Department of Education offers a standard online and paper application form and process information all in one place on its website.⁷⁷



MINNESOTA:

- **Single Application:** The state has a single open enrollment application for students who are choosing inter-district enrollment.⁷⁸

Districts can also improve how they support families' access to choice options

While state policy plays a critical role in shaping the framework for school choice, local school districts are on the front lines of implementation and have an opportunity to improve how families experience open enrollment.

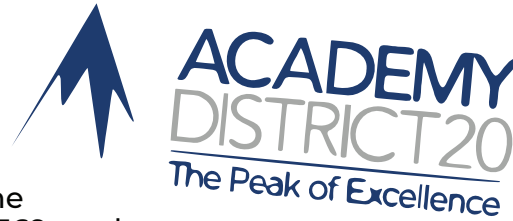
Improve Transparency for Families

One of the most important areas districts can act on is transparency. Families need clear, accessible information about their options, and districts should take steps to ensure that all parents, regardless of language or background, can understand the process. This includes publishing school choice materials in multiple languages, maintaining easy-to-navigate websites, and distributing printed information in highly visible community spaces like doctors' offices, libraries, and playgrounds.

Creating community liaison roles that provide in-person support in various languages would go even further, especially for families without internet access or digital literacy. As one parent noted, "Not everyone can read and write even in their first language," and navigating an online form on a phone should not be the barrier that keeps a child from the right school.⁷⁹

Prioritize Stability for Students

Districts can also take meaningful steps to prioritize stability and access for students. Policies that allow students to remain at a chosen school through key transitions, such as from elementary to middle school, can offer families peace of mind and reduce disruptions. Stability during times of transition can ensure that students are focused on learning, rather than adjustment stress, and automatic re-enrollment helps with that. Automatic re-enrollment also eliminates the burden on parents to remember deadlines and complete paperwork and, instead, allows them to focus on engagement with the school community.⁸⁰

**DISTRICT DEEP DIVE:
ACADEMY DISTRICT 20****DISTRICT BACKGROUND:**

Academy District 20, located in the Colorado Springs area, enrolls 26,569 students within the districts' 39 schools. The district is Accredited With Distinction by CDE and has maintained that rating for many years.⁸¹ In addition to traditional public schools, the district operates two online schools, a homeschool academy, a natural science school, and an alternative school. The district also authorizes two charter schools.⁸²

District 20 views school choice as a way to provide families with access to unique educational opportunities that align with students' interests and career goals. With specialized programs like automotive studies, aerospace, and graphic design offered at different high schools, families can select the best fit for their children's interests and career aspirations. The district also sees choice as a tool to enable students from less-advantaged backgrounds to benefit from high-quality, well-resourced schools. Overall, school choice is seen as both a means of personalization and expanded access within a strong academic environment.⁸³

**OPEN ENROLLMENT PROCESS:**

The School Choice Window opens in early January and closes in mid-March.⁸⁴ The application process is entirely online. Each application is evaluated based on the same criteria to ensure that every applicant has an equal opportunity, regardless of when they submit their application.⁸⁵

**STABILITY IN TRANSITIONS:**

Students — both in and out of district — must apply for School Choice to attend a school other than their assigned one. Once accepted, they can continue within that strand of schools without reapplying, unless they are out-of-district and transitioning between school levels (elementary to middle or middle to high school), in which case a new application is required.

**COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:**

The district's School Choice website offers an overview of the school choice process.⁸⁶ The district also holds Information Nights for families to learn more about school choice.⁸⁷ The district has a dedicated marketing and communications team that conducts family outreach through multiple strategies, such as social media, billboards, and mailings.⁸⁸

**TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS:**

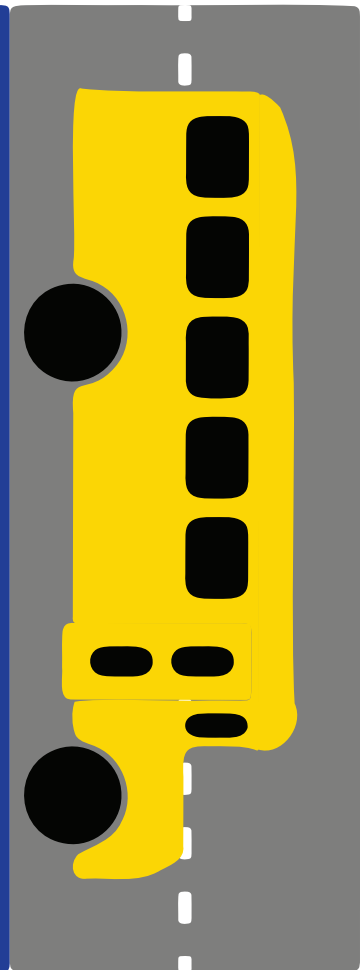
Academy District 20 provides satellite bus stops, typically near neighborhood elementary schools, for School Choice students, though these stops may change annually and are not guaranteed to be within walking distance or supervised.⁸⁹ The district warns families that School Choice transportation may involve ride times of up to 75 minutes, mixed-grade riders, and supervised transfers between buses. Transportation can be requested for neighborhood school students living outside their walk zone and for K-8 School Choice students residing within the district.⁹⁰

Coordinate Transportation Options

While large-scale transportation policy changes may be a state responsibility, districts can take the lead in coordinating bus routes across neighborhoods or collaborating with nearby districts to offer shared drop-off points. For example, districts can adopt innovative solutions, such as partnering with rideshare services like HopSkipDrive. This type of partnership is already used in Adams 14's Bright Rides program providing door-to-door transportation for choice students, especially those traveling between districts or to specialized programs.⁹¹ Districts could also replicate Mapleton Public Schools' intra-district transportation approach and offer transportation to students pursuing intra-district choice who live too far away to walk. Academy District 20's system satellite bus stops is another approach that can reduce the amount of driving families need to do to get their child to school. These kinds of local efforts can remove real obstacles and help more families take full advantage of the choices available to them. By taking proactive steps, districts can ensure that the promise of school choice is a reality for more families.

Every Student Deserves a Ride to Opportunity

In 2022, House Bill 22-1395, which proposed the creation of a Colorado Transportation Innovation Fund, won broad, bipartisan support in the House Education Committee—but stalled in appropriations. The policy goal was bold: to spark innovative transit solutions and expand safe, reliable transportation for public school students—including those attending schools of choice. Recognizing that transportation challenges vary widely across districts, a statewide task force of district leaders and community representatives recently voted unanimously to urge lawmakers to revisit the legislation. Their conclusion is clear: a one-size-fits-all approach won't cut it. Instead, collaboration and creative solutions will drive the future of student transportation in Colorado and ultimately open more doors for students and families.



CONCLUSION

Families across the state are actively seeking out schools that offer a better fit, whether that means a specialized program, a higher-performing campus, or a more flexible model like online or charter education. The data also tells us something more: access to quality is often tied to access to choice. Districts with the highest rates of open enrollment participation —inter- and intra-district — consistently have higher performance ratings. That should raise important questions about equity, access, and how we ensure every family — not just those in high-performing districts — can benefit from Colorado’s culture of choice.

While the open enrollment law itself leads the nation, it’s clear that effective implementation matters just as much as the policy itself. That includes removing unnecessary barriers, improving communication with families, and ensuring students who opt in to new schools have stability throughout their schooling experience. Districts play a crucial role in this work. From publishing transparent enrollment timelines in multiple languages to coordinating transportation options that make choice truly accessible, local education leaders have the tools — and the responsibility — to deliver on the promise of open enrollment. The state, too, has a role to play in providing better data, spotlighting innovation, and removing outdated regulations that limit student opportunity. As Colorado continues to lead on school choice, the state must continuously improve upon its policy implementation and guide districts to do the same.

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The views and opinions expressed in this report are solely those of the author and should not be interpreted to reflect the views of the organizations or individuals acknowledged above.

About the Author

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About Ready Colorado

Ready Colorado is a nonprofit working to improve education in Colorado. We promote all forms of school choice and advocate for a more student- and family-oriented education system.

www.ReadyColo.org

ENDNOTES

¹ “Public Schools of Choice,” Colorado Department of Education, [https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Open-Enrollment.pdf](https://www.cde.state.co.us/choice/openenrollment#:~:text=The%20Public%20Schools%20of%20Choice,District%20and%20BOCES%20Web%20Sites; Micah Ann Wixom, What Is the Issue and Why Does It Matter?, Policy Snapshot: Open Enrollment (Education Commission of the States, January 2019), <a href=).

² “What Is School Choice?,” EdChoice, <https://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/>.

³ Luke Ragland and Craig Hulse, *Open Doors, Open Districts: School Choice in Colorado’s Traditional Public Schools* (Ready Colorado, 2018), <https://readycolo.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ODODfinal.pdf>.

⁴ Ragland and Hulse, *Open Doors, Open Districts: School Choice in Colorado’s Traditional Public Schools*.

⁵ Note: This analysis removed three districts — Buena Vista R-31, Walsh RE-1, and Deer Trail 26J — due to potential errors in how the districts have coded their enrollment. Moffat 2 removed due to low school number (two).

⁶ Yesenia Robles and Kae Petrin, “As Colorado’s District-Run Schools Shrink and Charters Grow, Their Demographics Are Converging,” Chalkbeat, April 1, 2025, <https://www.chalkbeat.org/colorado/2025/04/01/charter-school-enrollment-grows-despite-drops-for-district-run-schools/>.

⁷ Note: This data is K-12, not PK-12, due to varying populations in data sets provided by CDE.

⁸ “District and School Performance Frameworks,” Colorado Department of Education, <https://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworks>.

⁹ Note: This figure excludes non-resident, non-choice enrollment data, which makes up 0.1% of all enrollment.

¹⁰ Note: This data is K-12, not PK-12, due to varying populations in data sets provided by CDE.

¹¹ Note: This analysis removed three districts — Buena Vista R-31, Walsh RE-1, and Deer Trail 26J — due to potential errors in how the districts have coded their enrollment. Moffat 2 removed due to low school number (two).

¹² Note: This data is K-12, not PK-12, due to varying populations in data sets provided by CDE.

¹³ Note: This analysis removed three districts — Buena Vista R-31, Walsh RE-1, and Deer Trail 26J — due to potential errors in how the districts have coded their enrollment. Moffat 2 removed due to low school number (two).

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¹⁷ “Enroll in Mapleton,” <https://www.mapleton.us/students-families/welcome-center-enrollment>.

¹⁸ *Pathways to Success: Graduation and Beyond 2024-25* (Mapleton Public Schools.), https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1721235736/mapletonus/p0peiuvyim3dioergkvb/PathwaystoSuccess_2024-25_ENG.pdf.

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²⁰ “Clayton Partnership School,” Mapleton Public Schools, <https://clayton.mapleton.us/enroll/welcome-center-home>.

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²³ “Our District,” Mapleton Public Schools, <https://www.mapleton.us/about-us/about-us>.

²⁴ Note: This data is K-12, not PK-12, due to varying populations in data sets provided by CDE.

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³² Colorado Revised Statutes § 22-30.7-103.

³³ Note: This data is K-12, not PK-12, due to varying populations in data sets provided by CDE.

³⁴ Colorado Revised Statutes § 22-36-101, https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/choice/download/openenrollment_2009.pdf.

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³⁶ Colorado Revised Statutes § 22-36-101, https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/choice/download/openenrollment_2009.pdf.

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