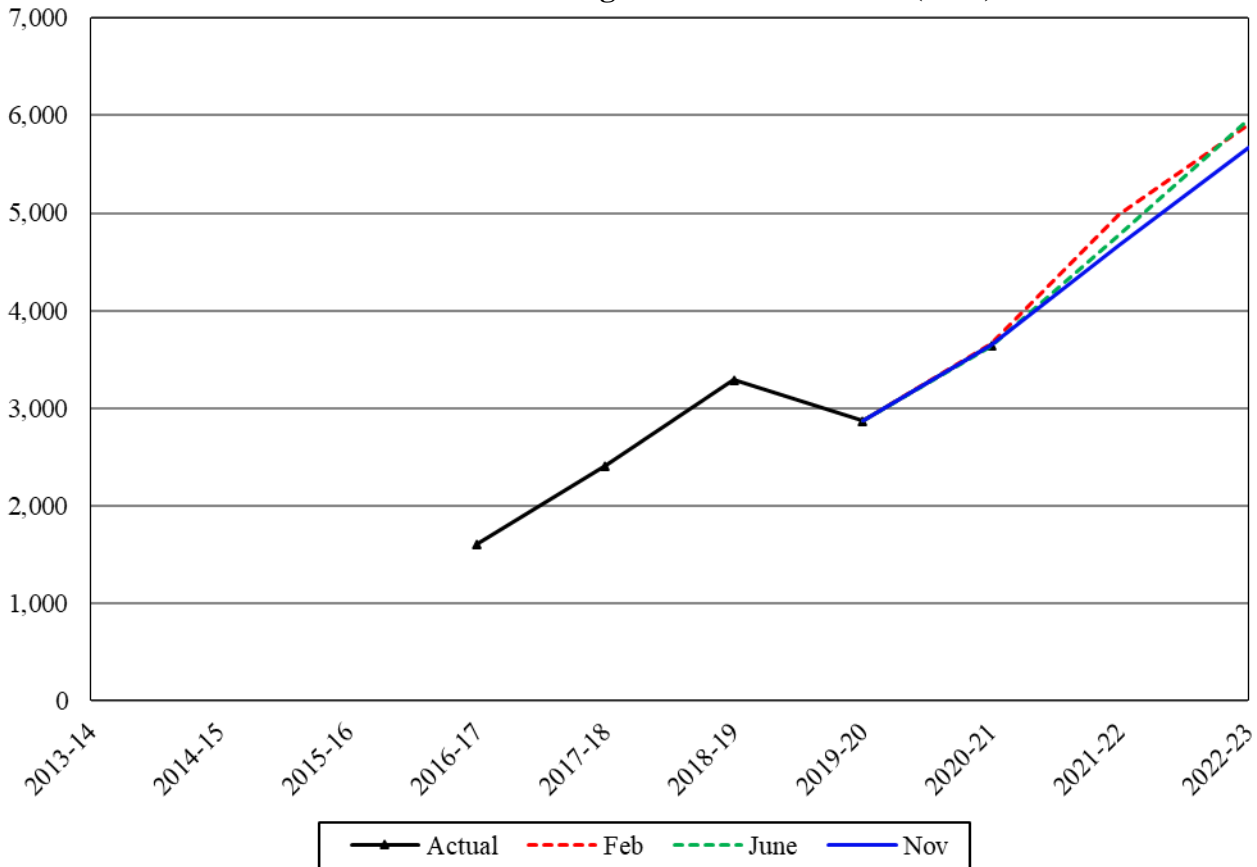


Charter Schools Enrollment

Caseload Forecast Council
November 9, 2021

Charter Schools Average Annual Enrollment (FTE)



The charter school forecast includes grade-level enrollments, special education, and bilingual education. The CFC’s current charter school forecast dates to the 2016 legislative session, when ESSB 6194 re-established charter schools as an educational system operating separately from the common school system. The Washington State Charter School Commission (WA CSC) and the Spokane School District (SSD) are the only approved authorizers of charter schools.

Forecast Comparisons (Academic Year Averages)

| Academic Year | Feb-21 Forecast | Jun-21 Forecast | Nov-21 Forecast | Feb to Nov Difference | Percent Difference | Jun to Nov Difference | Percent Difference |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 2021-22 | 4,985 | 4,781 | 4,669 | -316 | -6.3% | -112 | -2.3% |
| 2022-23 | 5,909 | 5,967 | 5,668 | -241 | -4.1% | -299 | -5.0% |

The November 2021 forecast is, on average, 279 students or 5.1 percent lower than the February forecast, and 205 or 3.8 percent lower than the June forecast for the 2021-23 Biennium.

Forecast Contact:
Paula Moore
360-664-9376
paula.moore@cfc.wa.gov

Tracking the Current Forecast

| | Jun-21 Forecast | Actual | Variance | Percent Variance |
|--------|--------------------|--------|----------|---------------------|
| Sep-21 | 4,825 | 4,711 | -114 | -2.4% |
| Oct-21 | 4,779 | 4,647 | -132 | -2.8% |

Actuals for the 2021-22 school year are tracking 2.6 percent below the June forecast, primarily due to programs experiencing lower than projected enrollment, particularly at the secondary level. Many spring enrollment fairs were held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Academic Year Caseload Change

| | Academic Year | Caseload | Change from Prior Year | Percent Change |
|----------|------------------|----------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Actual | 2013-14 | | | |
| | 2014-15 | | | |
| | 2015-16 | | | |
| | 2016-17 | 1,603 | 1,603 | |
| | 2017-18 | 2,408 | 804 | 50.2% |
| | 2018-19 | 3,286 | 878 | 36.5% |
| | 2019-20 | 2,866 | -420 | -12.8% |
| | 2020-21 | 3,644 | 778 | 27.2% |
| Forecast | 2021-22 | 4,669 | 1,025 | 28.1% |
| | 2022-23 | 5,668 | 999 | 21.4% |

Charter schools are still in an implementation and growth period in Washington State. The enrollment initially grew through 2018-19, then declined in 2019-20 due to the closure of four charter schools. An additional school announced a closure at the end of 2020-21. Collectively, in 2020-21 charter schools expanded. Three new schools opened, serving 316 new students. In 2021-22, 5 additional schools opened, adding an estimated 625 students. Two more schools will open in 2022-23, serving 287 students. These new schools are funded on their budgeted, not actual, enrollment for the first year of operation. The only exception would be if schools delay opening or close mid-year.

Charter school enrollment growth is forecasted to continue in 2021-22 and 2022-23 as the currently established and new charters expand grade levels served.

Risks to the Forecast

The risks to the charter school forecast are high. New schools vary in their success rates of enrollment and scale-up. Another risk is overly optimistic enrollment and expansion plans from authorized charter schools. COVID-19 adds additional risk to the forecast as it may temporarily change the operations for some schools and impact charters' expansion and/or opening plans.