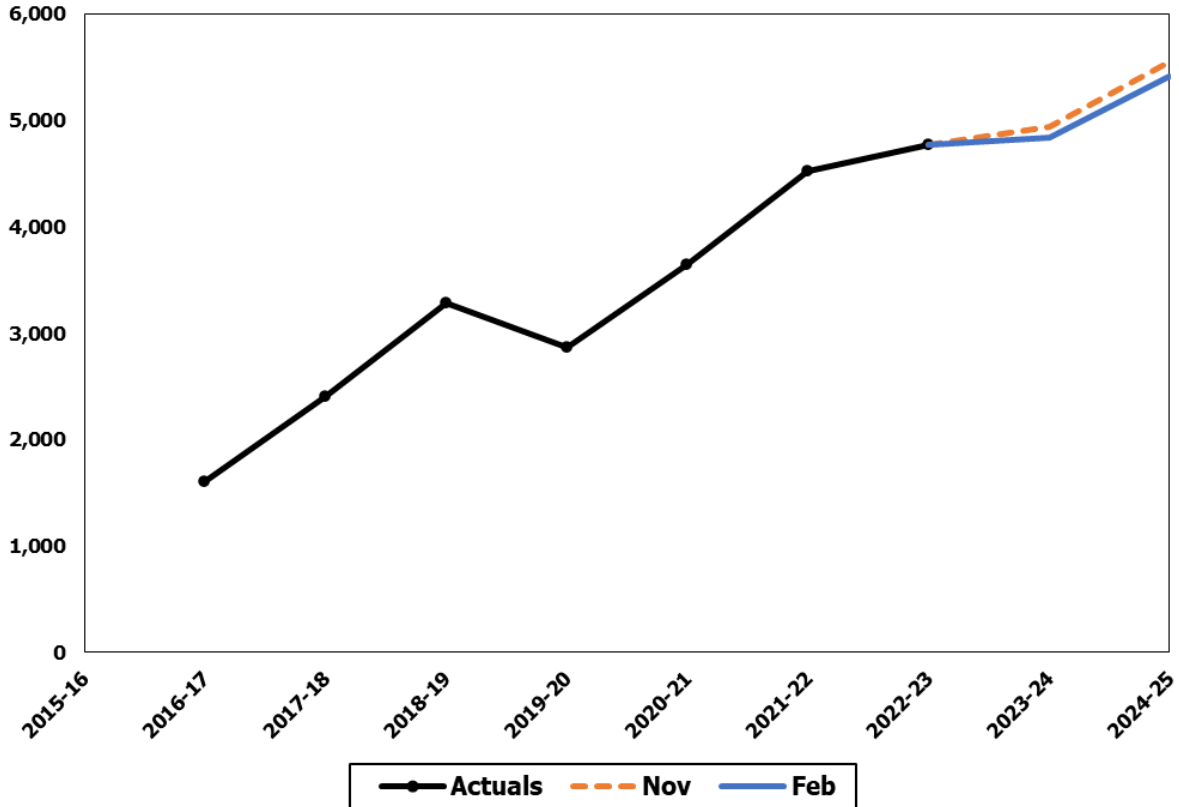


Charter Schools Average Annual Enrollment (FTE)



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	Nov-23 Forecast	Feb-24 Forecast	Nov to Feb Difference	Percent Difference
2023-24	4,939	4,836	-103	-2.1%
2024-25	5,552	5,409	-143	-2.6%

The February 2024 forecast is, on average, 123 students or 2.3 percent lower than the November 2023 forecast for the 2023-25 Biennium.

Tracking the Current Forecast

Month	Nov-23		Variance	Percent
	Forecast	Actual		Variance
Nov-23	4,952	4,842	-111	-2.2%
Dec-23	4,935	4,825	-110	-2.2%
Jan-24	4,905	4,796	-109	-2.2%

Actuals are tracking, on average, 110 students or 2.2 percent below the November forecast. Enrollment declines at two schools accounts for 73 percent of the variance.

Academic Year Caseload Change

	Academic Year	Caseload	Change from Prior Year	Percent Change
Actual	2015-16			
	2016-17	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	779	27.2%
	2021-22	4,520	876	24.0%
	2022-23	4,766	246	5.4%
Forecast	2023-24	4,836	70	1.5%
	2024-25	5,409	573	11.8%

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. Enrollment then grew an average of 26 percent in 2020-21 and 2021-22 as eight new schools opened during this period. Overall growth for 2022-23 slowed as enrollment came in lower than forecast, particularly in high schools.

Slower growth is forecasted for the 2023-25 biennium. Two schools opened in 2023-24, serving 175 students. Two charters have been approved to add additional grade levels in 2024-25, adding 95 students to the caseload. Additionally, schools that opened in 2020-21 and 2021-22 also plan to continue to add grade levels, increasing their enrollment.

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.