

Philadelphia Public School Enrollment, 2022-23

Many staff in the Office of Evaluation, Research, and Accountability contributed to the information that appears in this brief. Staff in the District Performance Office helped prepare the data files used for analysis, and major writing contributions were made by Hannah Barton and Ebru Erdem, Ph.D.

Key Findings

- As of October 1, 2022, total enrollment in Philadelphia public schools was 197,288.
- There were 113,443 students enrolled in District schools, 64,498 students enrolled in Philadelphia Charter schools, 13,405 students enrolled in Cyber Charter schools, 3,624 students enrolled in Alternative schools, and 2,318 students enrolled in Other schools.
- Since the 2014-15 academic year, enrollment in District schools has decreased by 13%, and enrollment in Philadelphia Charter schools has increased by under 1%, while enrollment in Cyber Charter schools has increased by over 2,000%, and enrollment in Alternative schools has increased by 9%.
- Since 2014-15, Black/African American student enrollment in District schools has decreased by 16,978 students, while Hispanic/Latino student enrollment has increased by 4,523 students.
- From 2014-15 to 2022-23, District school enrollment of students whose home language is Spanish or Portuguese increased.

Introduction

This brief provides information about enrollment patterns for students in grades K-12 in Philadelphia's public schools.¹ The analyses in this brief focus on changes in numbers of enrolled students with respect to governing institution/sector (District, Philadelphia Charter, Cyber Charter, Alternative, or Other²), admission type (Neighborhood, Citywide, or Criteria-Based), and student demographics, based on data from the October 1 enrollment snapshot for each academic year indicated, unless stated otherwise.³

¹ For Open Data files on school-level enrollment, sorted by school and grade level, please visit:

https://www.philasd.org/performance/programsservices/open-data/school-information/#school_enrollment

² These schools include non-Philadelphia Charter schools, non-public special education schools, and IU26 schools.

³ Note that, on March 13, 2020, the School District of Philadelphia closed all facilities and pivoted to virtual instruction in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Schools continued with virtual and later hybrid instruction until the start of the 2021-22 academic year. For more information on the School District of Philadelphia's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, visit: <https://www.philasd.org/schoolstart2020/>

Definitions

Sectors

District School – Schools governed and operated by the School District of Philadelphia.

Charter School – Public schools that operate through a “charter,” or a formal, written agreement, with the local school board. In Philadelphia, the Board of Education (BOE) has that authority.

Philadelphia Charter School – Charter schools that operate from a physical space in the city of Philadelphia and provide full-time, traditional, in-person instruction (when not affected by Covid-19 school closures).

Cyber Charter School – Charter schools that provide full-time web-based instruction.

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.

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

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 their respective attendance zones.

Citywide School – Schools that admit Philadelphia students regardless of the location of their primary residence.

Criteria-Based Schools (formerly Special Admission Schools) – 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 analyses in this brief include:

1. How did student enrollment change by sector (District, Alternative, Philadelphia Charter, Cyber Charter, and Other) from the 2014-15 academic year to the 2022-23 academic year?
2. How did grade-level student enrollment change from 2021-22 to 2022-23, and from 2014-15 to 2022-23?
3. How did District enrollment change among student demographic groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, English Learner status, and home language) from 2014-15 to 2022-23?
4. How has enrollment changed among high schools of different admission types from 2014-15 to 2022-23?
5. Which schools had the largest increases and decreases in enrollment from 2021-22 to 2022-23?

Key Findings

Philadelphia public school enrollment has declined over the three years since the Covid-19 pandemic began, resulting in 2022-23 enrollment levels that are similar to 2014-15 (Figure 1). Of the five sectors, District schools have consistently had the highest student enrollment, with about twice the number of enrolled students as Philadelphia Charter schools. District school enrollment has been decreasing since 2015-16, and Philadelphia Charter school enrollment has been decreasing since 2020-21. From 2014-15 to 2022-23, enrollment in District schools declined by a total of 13%, while enrollment in Philadelphia Charter schools remained steady. Enrollment in Alternative, Cyber Charter, and Other schools increased between 2014-15 and 2022-23.

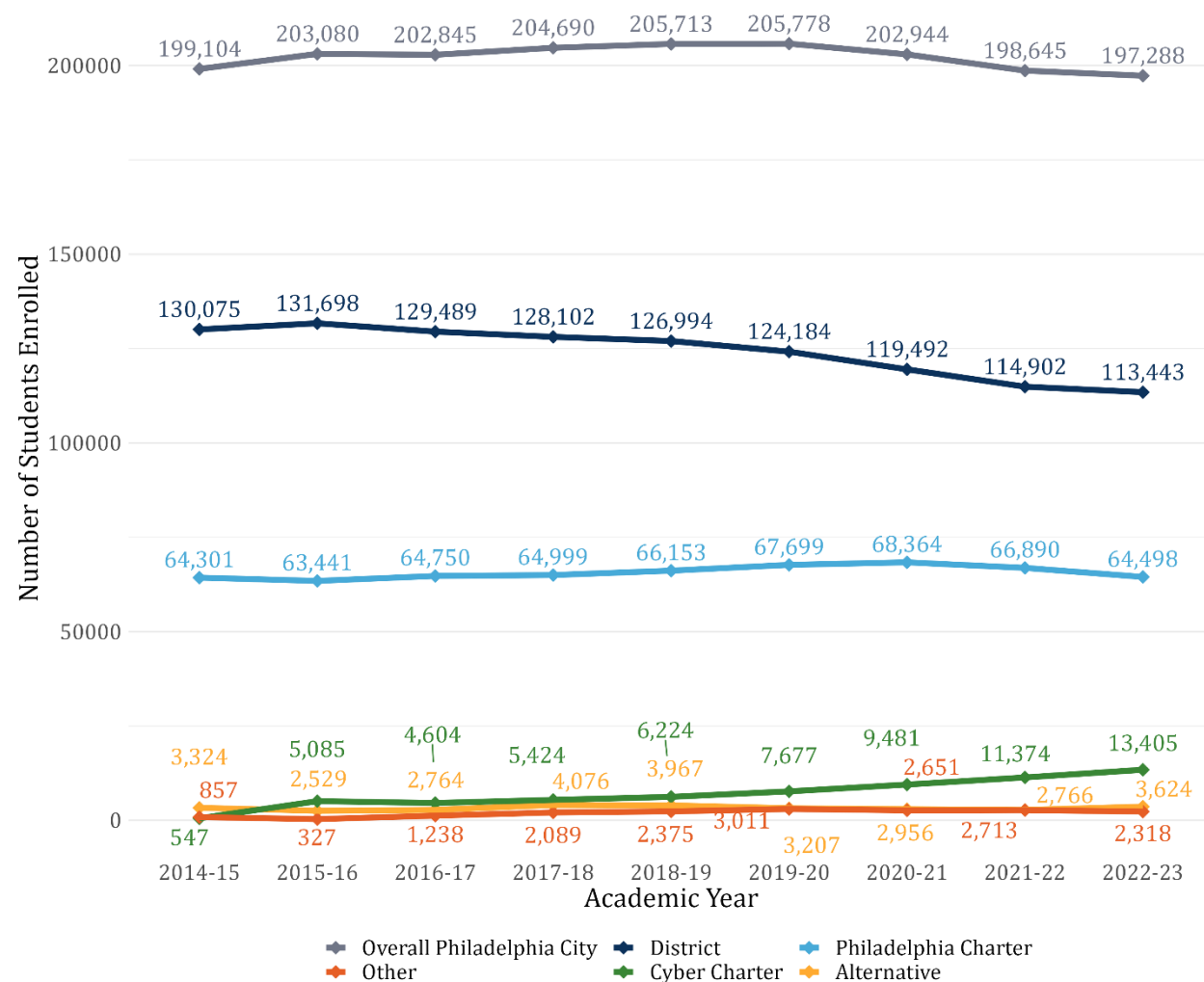
Overall Philadelphia Public School Enrollment

From 2014-15 to 2022-23, enrollment at Charter and Alternative schools stayed relatively stable, while District school enrollment decreased by 13% and Cyber Charter school enrollment increased by 2,350%.

Overall enrollment in Philadelphia public schools decreased by a total of 1% (1,816 students) from 2014-15 to 2022-23, starting at 199,104, climbing as high as 205,778 in 2019-20, and ending at 197,288 (Figure 1). Three years of enrollment gains from 2016-17 to 2019-20 were followed by three years of even greater losses from 2019-20 to 2022-23. Looking at trends by sector, District school enrollment decreased by 16,632 students since 2014-15, a drop of 13%. Philadelphia Charter school enrollment has remained relatively stable since 2014-15, with 64,301 students enrolled in 2014-15 compared to 64,498 students in 2022-23. Cyber Charter schools had 547 students enrolled in 2014-15 and 13,405 students in 2022-23, an increase of 2,350%, while Alternative school enrollment increased by 9%, from 3,324 students in 2014-15 to 3,624 in 2022-23. Enrollment in schools in the Other category increased from 857 in 2014-15 to 2,318 in 2022-23.

Year-over-year, total enrollment in Philadelphia public schools decreased from 198,645 students in 2021-22 to 197,288 in 2022-23 (Figure 1). District enrollment decreased by less than 1%, from 114,902 students in 2021-22 to 113,443 students in 2022-23. Charter school enrollment decreased by 3%, from 66,890 students in 2021-22 to 64,498 students in 2022-23. By comparison, both Alternative and Cyber Charter schools experienced increases in enrollment from 2021-22 to 2022-23. Alternative school enrollment increased by 31%, from 2,766 students in 2021-22 to 3,624 students in 2022-23, and Cyber Charter enrollment increased by 18%, from 11,374 students in 2021-22 to 13,405 students in 2022-23. Enrollment in schools in the Other category decreased by 15%, from 2,713 students in 2021-22 to 2,318 students in 2022-23, and is at the lowest enrollment since 2017-18.

Figure 1. Number of students enrolled in public schools in Philadelphia by sector, 2014-15 through 2022-23



Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 21, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

Note: The vertical axis indicates total number of students enrolled in each of the five categories from the 2014-15 academic year to the 2022-23 academic year.

Philadelphia public school enrollment decreased in most grade levels from 2021-22 to 2022-23, but increased in 1st, 10th, and 12th grades.

Most grade levels saw a decrease in enrollment between 2021-22 and 2022-23. However, there were increases in enrollment in grades 1, 10, and 12. Grades 1 and 10 both had 5% increases: 1st grade grew from 14,275 in 2021-22 to 14,944 in 2022-23, and 10th grade grew from 15,352 in 2021-22 to 16,187 in 2022-23 (Table 1). In general, enrollment declined in grades 2-9 by 1 to 3%. The largest decrease was seen in 11th grade: there were 14,650 students enrolled in 2021-22, which

dropped to 14,090 in 2022-23, a decline of about 4%. Kindergarten had the smallest decrease, with 17 fewer students in 2022-23 than 2021-22 (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of students enrolled in public schools in Philadelphia in 2021-22 and 2022-23, by grade level

Grade Level	Student Enrollment in 2021-2022	Student Enrollment in 2022-2023	Percent Change
Kindergarten	13,614	13,597	0%
1	14,275	14,944	+5%
2	14,912	14,481	-3%
3	15,089	14,844	-2%
4	15,228	15,010	-1%
5	15,295	14,995	-2%
6	15,243	14,930	-2%
7	15,485	15,083	-3%
8	15,608	15,273	-2%
9	16,715	16,471	-1%
10	15,352	16,187	+5%
11	14,650	14,090	-4%
12	14,466	15,065	+4%

Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Subgroup Comparisons* Sheet, retrieved on November 21, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

School District of Philadelphia Enrollment

This section explores 2022-23 enrollment trends in District and Alternative schools and analyzes enrollment changes in these sectors compared to past years.

District School Enrollment

District school enrollment by grade level followed a similar pattern to Philadelphia public schools overall, with the exception of 12th grade.

Across District schools, grade-level enrollment patterns were similar to Philadelphia public schools overall. There was a general decrease across all grades from 2021-22 to 2022-23 (114,902 students to 113,443 students). Enrollment in grades 1 and 10 increased, while enrollment in other grades decreased. 10th grade had the largest increase of 7%, from 9,182 students in 2021-22 to 9,869 students in 2022-23, and 1st grade had a 6% increase from 8,458 students in 2021-22 to 9,004 students in 2022-23 (Table 2). 11th grade had the largest decrease, from 8,403 students in 2021-22 to 7,990 students in 2022-23, a decline of 5%.

Table 2. Number of students enrolled in District schools 2021-22 and 2022-23, by grade level

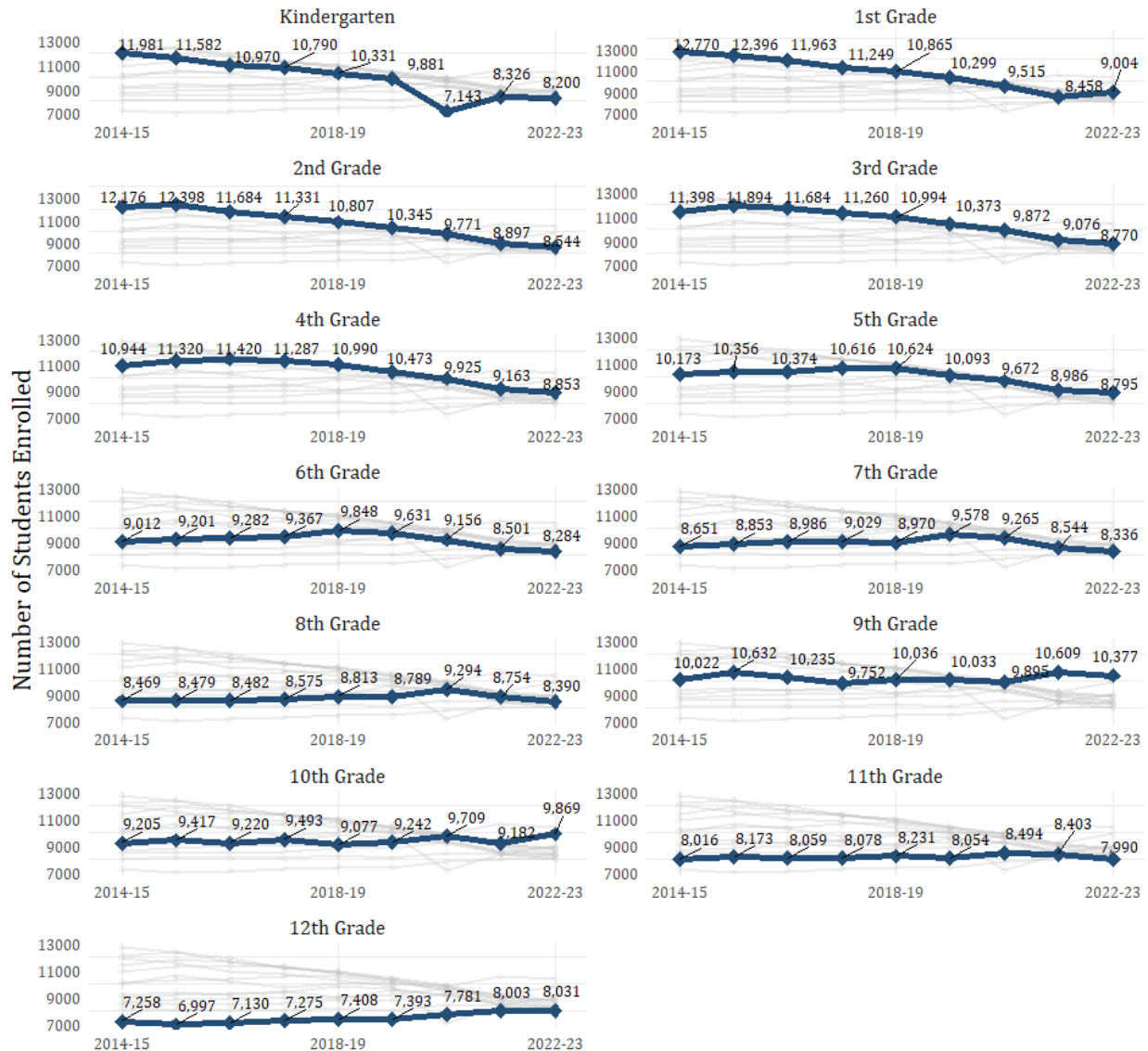
Grade Level	Student Enrollment in 2021-2022	Student Enrollment in 2022-2023	Percent Change
Kindergarten	8,326	8,200	-2%
1	8,458	9,004	+6%
2	8,897	8,544	-4%
3	9,076	8,770	-3%
4	9,163	8,853	-4%
5	8,986	8,795	-2%
6	8,501	8,284	-3%
7	8,544	8,336	-2%
8	8,754	8,390	-4%
9	10,609	10,377	-2%
10	9,182	9,869	+7%
11	8,403	7,990	-5%
12	8,003	8,031	0%

Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 21, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

From 2019-20 to 2020-21, a year that was heavily impacted by Covid-19, the number of Kindergarten and 1st grade students in District schools decreased.

There were noticeable drops in Kindergarten and 1st grade enrollment during Covid-19. Kindergarten enrollment went from 9,881 students in 2019-20 to 7,143 in 2020-21, but rose to 8,326 in 2021-22. 1st grade enrollment went from 10,299 students in 2019-20 to 9,515 students in 2020-21, and dropped again to 8,458 in 2021-22 before increasing to 9,004 students in 2022-23 (Figure 2). Kindergarten enrollment from 2014-15 to 2022-23 decreased by 3,781 students, while 1st grade enrollment went down by 3,766, 2nd grade by 3,632, and 3rd grade by 3,124. While lower grades saw overall decreases since 2014-15, enrollment trends in middle school grades remained relatively steady, and there were increases in high school grades. From 2014-15 to 2022-23, 9th grade saw a net increase of 355 students, 10th grade increased by 664, and 12th grade increased by 773.

Figure 2. Number of students enrolled in District schools from 2014-15 to 2022-23, by grade level



Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 30, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

Alternative School Enrollment

Unlike District schools, Alternative school⁴ enrollment increased from 2021-22 to 2022-23, growing from 2,766 students to 3,624, an increase of 31%. No grades saw a decrease in enrollment. The largest grade-level increase was in 8th grade, with 170% more students in 2022-23 than 2021-22 (from 30 to 81 students) (Table 3). The smallest percentage increase was 17% in 11th grade, from 783 students enrolled in 2021-22 to 920 students enrolled in 2022-23. When considering proportional changes in student enrollment among Alternative schools, it should be noted that large percentage changes, both positive and negative, are likely attributable to smaller counts of enrolled students.⁵

Table 3. Number of students enrolled in Alternative schools 2021-22 and 2022-23, by grade level

Grade Level	Student Enrollment in 2021-2022	Student Enrollment in 2022-2023	Percent Change
7	21	38	+81%
8	30	81	+170%
9	343	489	+43%
10	634	764	+21%
11	783	920	+17%
12	934	1,304	+40%

Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 21, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

Note: Student enrollment counts for grades K-6 were omitted from Table 3 due to sample sizes being less than 20. The total student enrollment numbers in 2021-22 and 2022-22 include the number of enrolled students in grades K-6.

⁴ Within the Alternative school sector, there are two categories: schools that are run by the District and schools that are run by contracted partnerships. In this brief, both District-run and contract-run alternative schools are included in the Alternative category. For more information, please visit <https://www.philasd.org/performance/programsservices/alternative-education-progress-reports/>

⁵ For example, there were 137 more students enrolled in Alternative schools at the Grade 11 level in the 2022-23 than in the year prior, which translates into an increase of 17 percent. Comparatively, an increase of 51 students enrolled in these schools at the Grade 8 level in the years examined shows up as a 170 percent increase. The smaller student population in Grade 7 and 8 makes smaller changes in the number of students seem more radical when represented in percentages.

Charter School Enrollment

This section explores 2022-23 enrollment trends in Philadelphia Charter and Cyber Charter schools and analyzes enrollment changes in these sectors compared to past years.

Philadelphia Charter School Enrollment

From 2021-22 to 2022-23, enrollment in most grade levels decreased in Philadelphia Charter schools, but Kindergarten, 1st, and 4th grade enrollment increased.

The largest decreases in Philadelphia Charter school enrollment from 2021-22 to 2022-23 were in 9th, 11th, and 12th grade. 11th grade enrollment in Philadelphia Charter schools dropped from 4,308 to 3,615 students, a decrease of 16% (Table 4). 9th grade enrollment saw a decrease of 10%, while 12th grade dropped by 8%. Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 4th grade saw increases from 2021-22 to 2022-23. Kindergarten enrollment increased from 4,916 to 5,098 students, a rise of 4%, 1st grade enrollment increased by 3%, and 4th grade enrollment increased by 2%.

Table 4. Number of students enrolled in Philadelphia Charter schools 2021-22 and 2022-23, by grade level

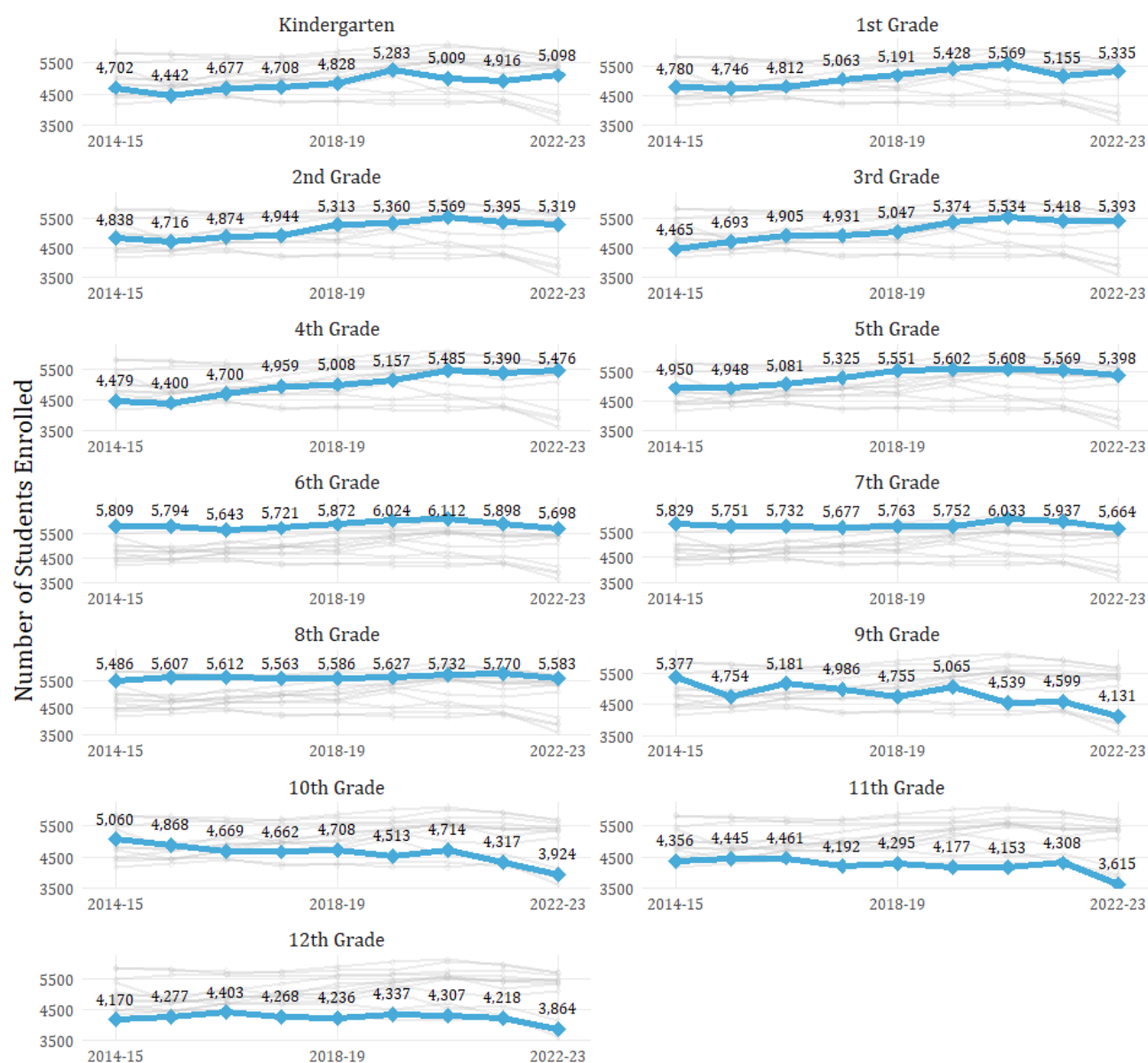
Grade Level	Student Enrollment in 2021-2022	Student Enrollment in 2022-2023	Percent Change
Kindergarten	4,916	5,098	+4%
1	5,155	5,335	+3%
2	5,395	5,319	-1%
3	5,418	5,393	0%
4	5,390	5,476	+2%
5	5,569	5,398	-3%
6	5,898	5,698	-3%
7	5,937	5,664	-5%
8	5,770	5,583	-3%
9	4,599	4,131	-10%
10	4,317	3,924	-9%
11	4,308	3,615	-16%
12	4,218	3,864	-8%

Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 21, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

Philadelphia Charter school enrollment of 1st-5th grade students has steadily increased since 2014-15, while enrollment in high school grades has declined.

Enrollment of students in grades 1-5 increased from 2014-15 to 2022-23, with the largest growth in 3rd and 4th grades (increases of 928 and 997 students respectively) (Figure 3). On the other hand, high school enrollment decreased steadily since 2014-15. Ninth grade enrollment decreased by 1,246 students, and 10th grade enrollment decreased by 1,136 students.

Figure 3. Number of students enrolled in Philadelphia Charter schools from 2014-15 to 2022-23, by grade level



Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 30, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

Cyber Charter School Enrollment

Enrollment in most grade levels increased in Cyber Charters from 2021-22 to 2022-23. High school grades had the largest increases, while enrollment of students in lower grades at Cyber Charters decreased.

Since 2021-22, high school grade levels had the largest percentage increases in Cyber Charter school enrollment compared to other grades. 12th grade had the largest increase overall of 42%, from 1,311 students in 2021-22 to 1,866 students in 2022-23 (Table 5). Kindergarten and 1st grade were the only grades whose enrollment decreased.

Table 5. Number of students enrolled in Cyber Charter schools 2021-22 and 2022-23, by grade level

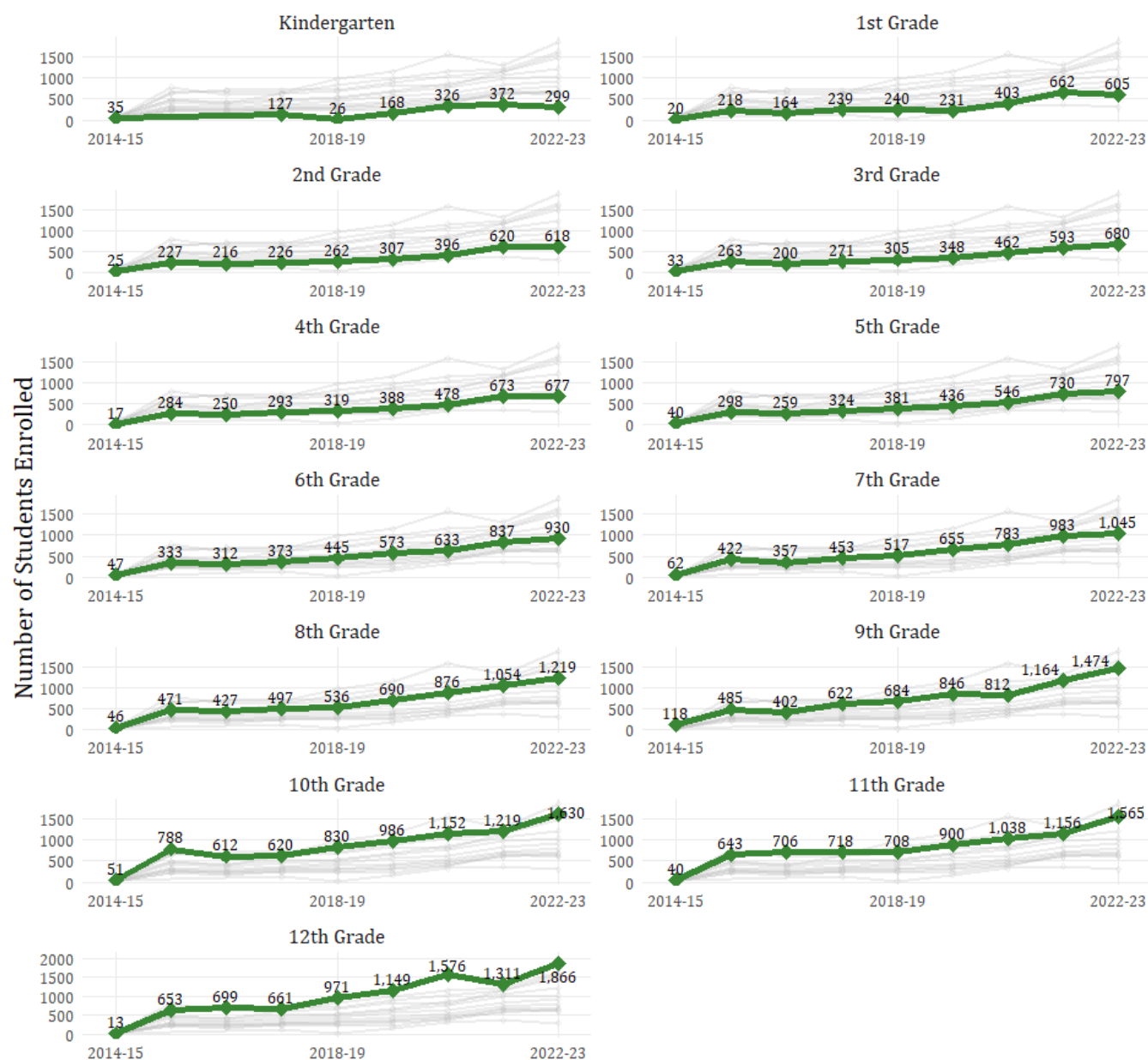
Grade Level	Student Enrollment in 2021-2022	Student Enrollment in 2022-2023	Percent Change
Kindergarten	372	299	-20%
1	662	605	-9%
2	620	618	0%
3	593	680	+15%
4	673	677	+1%
5	730	797	+9%
6	837	930	+11%
7	983	1,045	+6%
8	1,054	1,219	+16%
09	1,164	1,474	+27%
10	1,219	1,630	+34%
11	1,156	1,565	+35%
12	1,311	1,866	+42%

Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 21, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

Since 2014-15, enrollment has increased in Cyber Charter schools across all grades, particularly in high school grades.

Because Cyber Charter school enrollment was very low in 2014-15, the number of students has increased by over 100% for all grades since then. While the increase has been steady for most grades, there was a greater rise in enrollment at the high school level, especially after 2019-20, likely due to Covid-19. Although 12th grade was the only grade level to see a decrease in enrollment in 2021-22, it still had the largest increase (717 students) from 2019-20 to 2022-23 (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Number of students enrolled in Cyber Charter schools from 2014-15 to 2022-23, by grade level



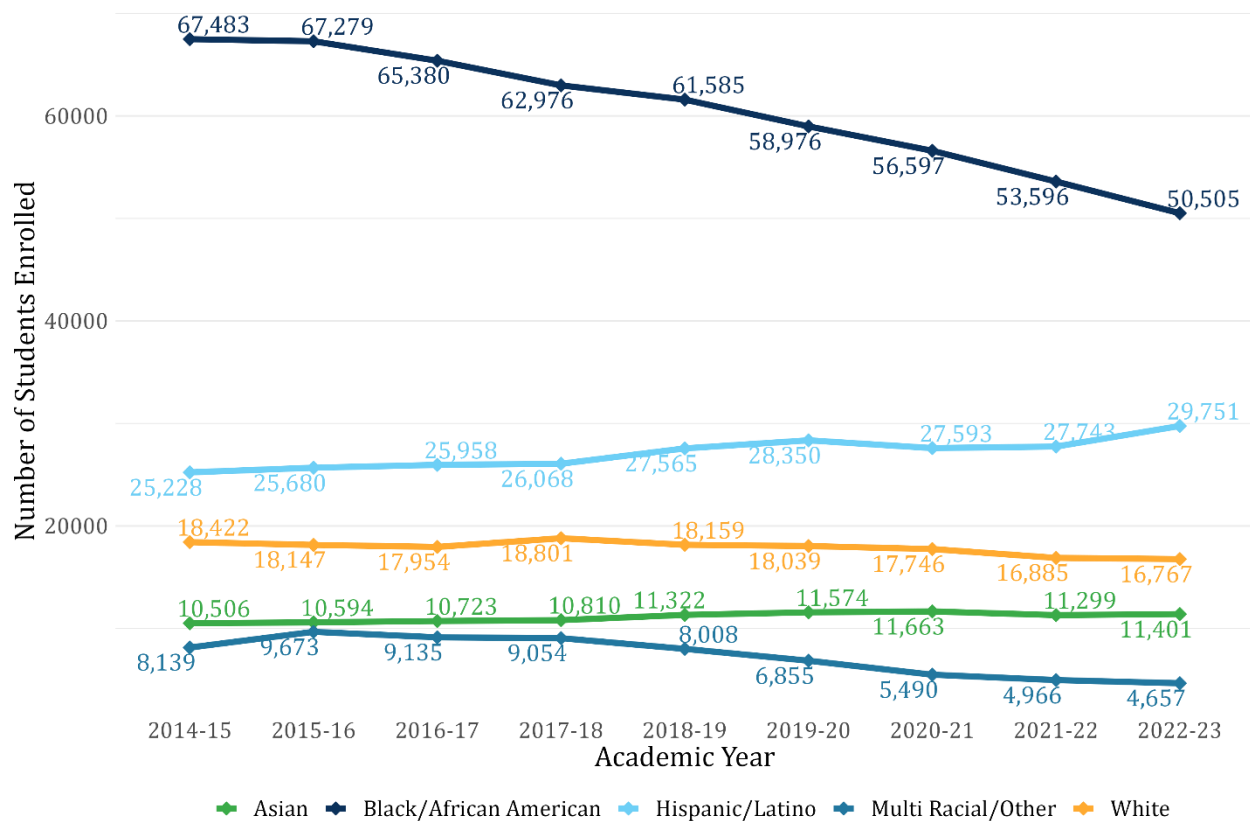
Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 30, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

District School Enrollment Demographics

In District schools, enrollment of Black/African American students decreased consistently from 2014-15 to 2022-23. Enrollment was stable for Asian and White students, and enrollment of Hispanic/Latino students increased.

From 2014-15 to 2022-23, enrollment of Black/African American students decreased from 67,483 to 50,505, a decline of 16,978, or 25% (Figure 5). White and Multi-Racial/Other student enrollment also decreased: enrollment of White students decreased by 1,655 (9%) and enrollment of Multi-Racial students decreased by 3,482 (43%) (Figure 5). In comparison, Hispanic/Latino student enrollment increased by 4,523 students, or 18%, and Asian student enrollment increased by 895 students, or 9% (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Number of students enrolled in District schools from 2014-15 to 2022-23, by race/ethnicity



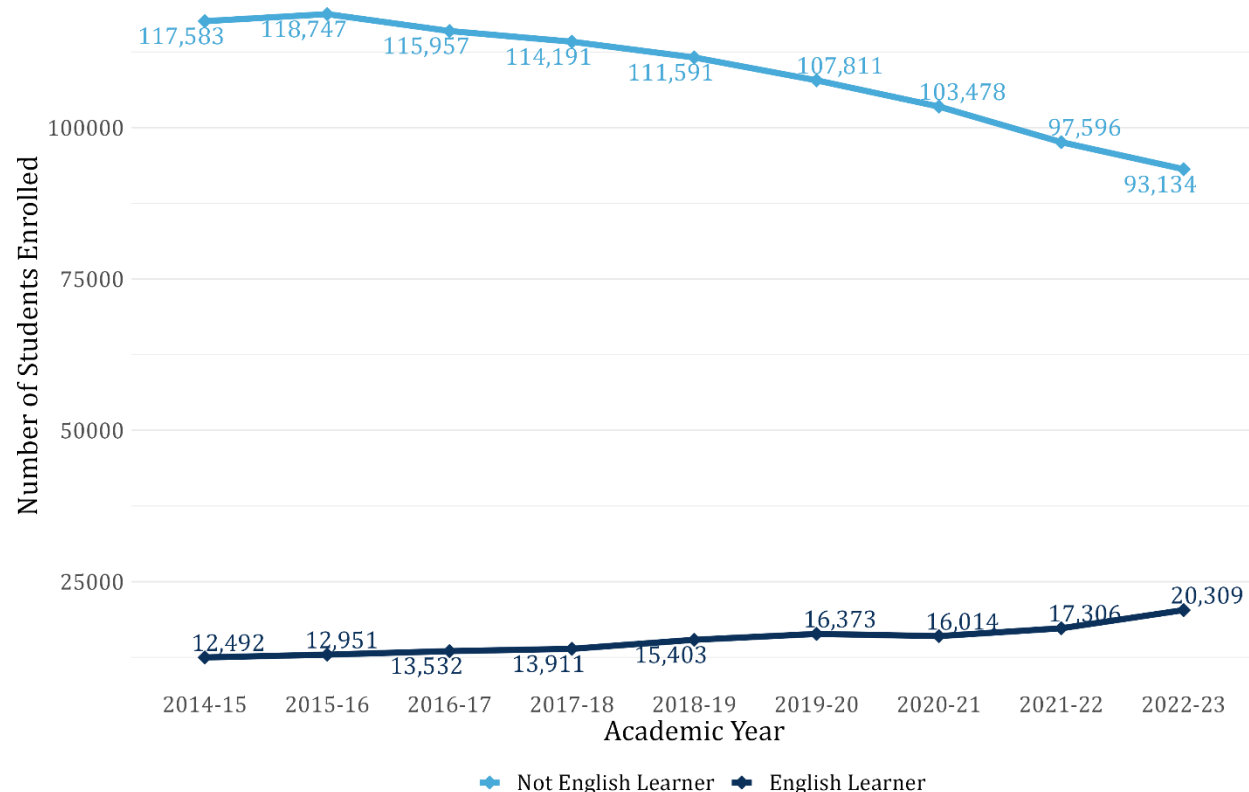
Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 30, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

Note: Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native and American Indian/Alaska Native student groups are under 1% of total students enrolled, and therefore are not included in this graph.

In District schools, the number of students who are English Learners increased since 2014-15 while enrollment of students who are not English Learners decreased.

Enrollment of students who are English Learners increased by 63%, and enrollment of students who are not English Learners decreased by 21% from 2014-15 to 2022-23. The decrease of non-English Learners is consistent with the overall pattern of enrollment decline in District schools.

Figure 6. Number of students enrolled in District schools from 2014-15 to 2022-23, by English Learner Status⁶



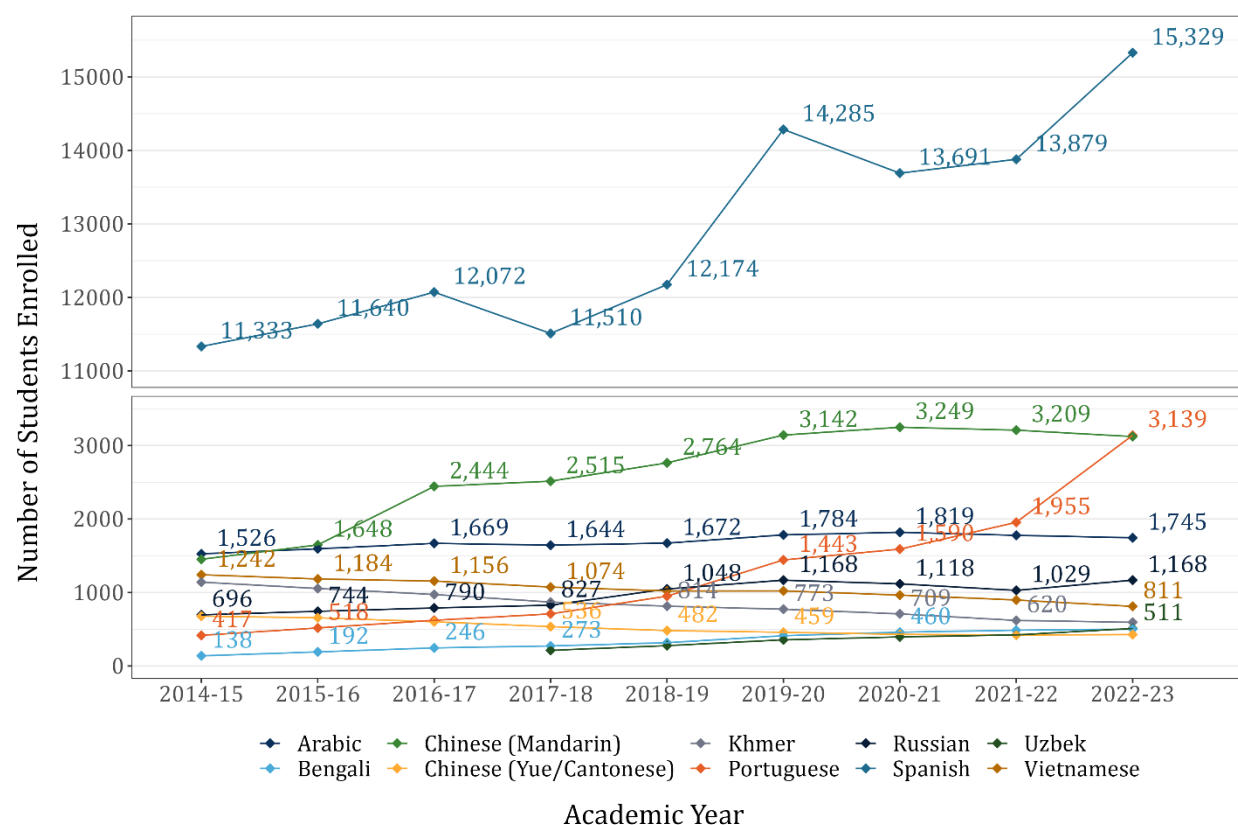
Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 30, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

⁶ To see further research on linguistic diversity from the Office of Research and Evaluation, visit: <https://www.philasd.org/research/category/equity/english-learners-els/>

In District Schools, the number of students whose home language is Spanish or Portuguese increased since 2014-15.

Enrollment of students whose home language is Spanish rose from 11,333 in 2014-15 to 15,329 in 2022-23, a 35% increase (Figure 7). Enrollment of students whose home language is Portuguese also grew from 417 students in 2014-15 to 3,139 in 2022-23, an increase of over 600%. This increase is especially pronounced after 2019-20. The number of students whose home languages are Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, Bengali, and Uzbek also increased, while the number of students with Khmer, Yue/Cantonese, and Vietnamese as home languages decreased (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Number of students enrolled in District schools from 2014-15 to 2022-23, by non-English Home Language



Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 30, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

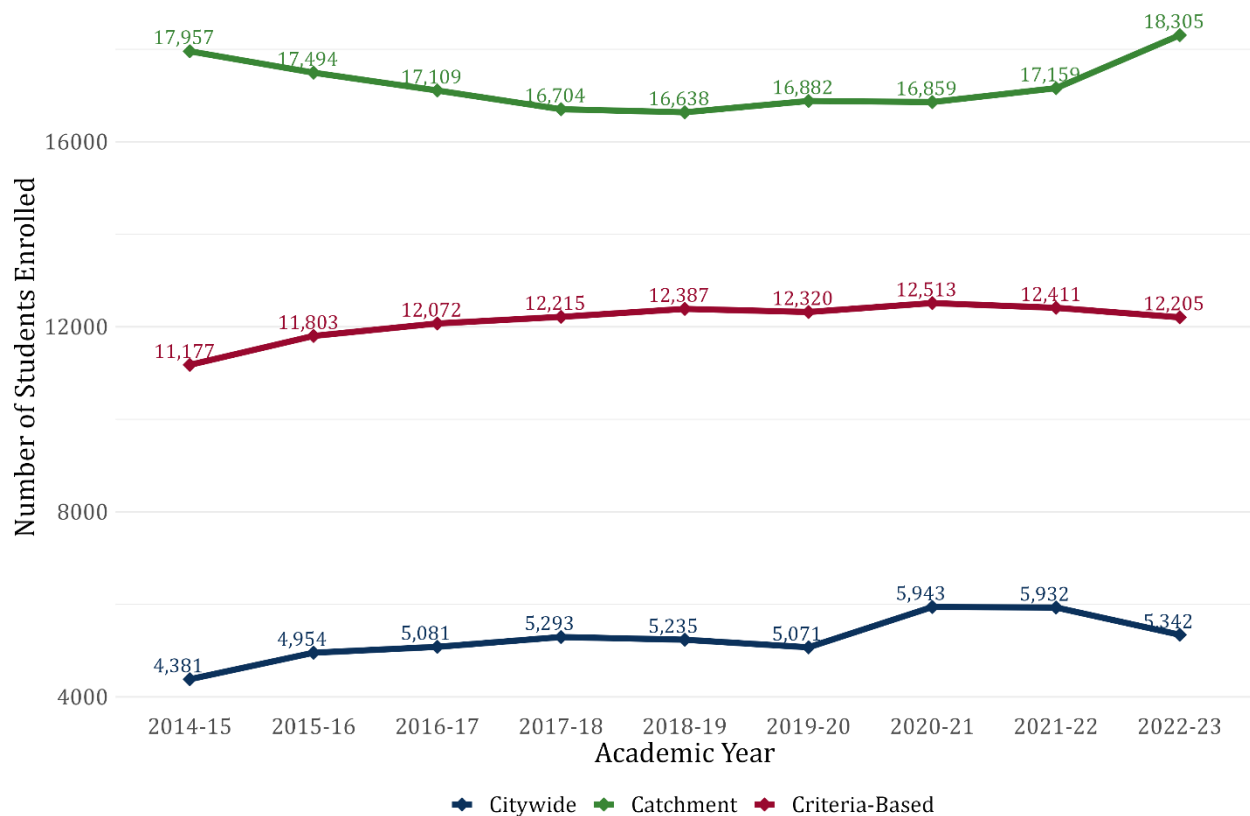
Note: There is a break in the y-axis between 4,000 and 11,000 students in order to fit all lines in one graph.

District High School Enrollment by Admission Type

Enrollment in Catchment high schools has increased since 2020-21, while enrollment in Criteria-Based and Citywide high schools has decreased since 2020-21.

District high schools serving grades 9-12 vary by admission type and fall into three main categories: Catchment, Citywide, and Criteria-Based. While overall enrollment in District high schools increased from 2014-15 to 2022-23, trends have been different by admission type. Catchment high school enrollment decreased from 17,957 in 2014-15 to 16,638 in 2018-19, but increased by 1,667 students (10%) from 2018-19 to 2022-23 (Figure 8). Overall, enrollment in Catchment high schools has increased by 2% and is at its highest level since 2014-15. Enrollment in Criteria-Based high schools increased from 11,177 students in 2014-15 to 12,205 students in 2022-23, an increase of 9%. However, enrollment has been decreasing since 2020-21. Citywide high school enrollment also increased overall since 2014-15, from 4,381 students to 5,342 students in 2022-23, but declined in the two years since 2020-21.

Figure 8. Number of students enrolled in District high schools from 2014-15 to 2022-23, by admission type

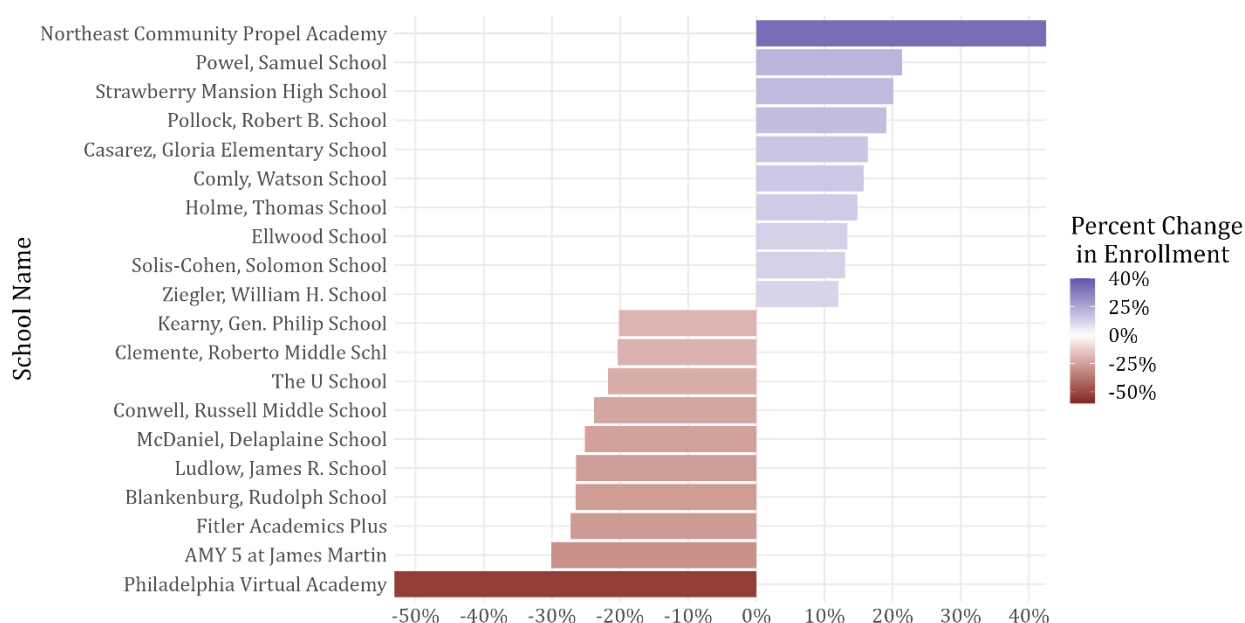


Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 30, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

District Schools with the Largest Enrollment Changes from 2021-22 to 2022-23

Northeast Community Propel Academy had the largest percent increase in enrollment from 2021-22 to 2022-23, with an increase of 518 students, or 43% (Figure 9).⁷ The next nine schools with the largest increases saw their enrollment grow by 10-21%. The Philadelphia Virtual Academy had the largest decrease in enrollment from 2021-22 to 2022-23, with a decrease of 1022 students, or 53%.⁸ The next nine schools with the largest decreases saw their enrollment decline by 20-30%.

Figure 9. District schools with the highest percentage changes in enrollment change from 2021-22 to 2022-23



Source: Qlik Enrollment App: *Enrollment: Details* Sheet, retrieved on November 30, 2022. This data is based on the October 1st snapshot.

How to read this figure: Each bar corresponds to a school on the vertical axis. The horizontal axis indicates the percentage change in enrollment from 2021-22 to 2022-23. Schools with a decrease in enrollment (negative percentage change) are red, while schools with an increase in enrollment (positive percentage change) are in blue. The larger the percentage change, the darker the color of the bar.

⁷ Northeast Community Propel Academy was a new school in the 2021-22 school year with grades K-7. 8th grade was added in the 2022-23 school year, which accounts for the increase in enrollment.

⁸ The Philadelphia Virtual Academy's enrollment has been largely impacted by Covid-19. Enrollment increased from 637 students in 2020-21 to 1,925 students in 2021-22. Although there was a decrease in enrollment in 2022-23, levels are still higher than pre-Covid enrollment.

Conclusions

Overall, Philadelphia public school enrollment decreased by 1% (1,816 students) from 2014-15 to 2022-23. Since the 2014-15 academic year, enrollment in District schools has decreased by 13%, and enrollment in Philadelphia Charter schools has increased by under 1%, while enrollment in Cyber Charter schools has increased by over 2000%, and enrollment in Alternative schools has increased by 9%.

While the analysis showed a slight decrease in overall student enrollment, trends varied by grade level. Lower grades in District schools saw overall decreases since 2014-15, but enrollment trends in middle school grades remained steady, and there were increases in high school grades.

Philadelphia Charter school enrollment of 1st-5th grade students has been steadily increasing since 2014-15, while enrollment in high school grades has declined overall, while Cyber Charter and Alternative school enrollment has increased at all grade levels.

From 2014-15 to 2022-23, enrollment of Black/African American students in District schools decreased consistently. Enrollment was stable for Asian and White students, and enrollment of Hispanic/Latino students increased. Students whose home language is Spanish or Portuguese has increased as the overall English Learner population has increased. After years of decline, enrollment in Catchment high schools has been increasing since 2020-21.