

8-31-2022

Public Charter and District Public Schools in the Mountain West, 2019-2021

Zachary Billot

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, zachary.billot@unlv.edu

Kristian Thymianos

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, kristian.thymianos@unlv.edu

Vanessa Booth

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, vanessa.booth@unlv.edu

Caitlin J. Saladino

Brookings Mountain West & The Lincy Institute, caitlin.saladino@unlv.edu

William E. Brown Jr.

Brookings Mountain West, william.brown@unlv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/bmw_lincy_k12



Part of the [Early Childhood Education Commons](#), [Education Policy Commons](#), [Elementary Education Commons](#), and the [Public Policy Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Billot, Z., Thymianos, K., Booth, V., Saladino, C. J., Brown, W. E. (2022). Public Charter and District Public Schools in the Mountain West, 2019-2021. *K-12 Education Fact Sheet No. 6* 1-3.

Available at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/bmw_lincy_k12/6

This Report is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Report in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Report has been accepted for inclusion in K-12 Education by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

UNLV | THE LINCY INSTITUTE & BROOKINGS MOUNTAIN WEST

PUBLIC CHARTER AND DISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST, 2019-2021

K-12 Education Fact Sheet No. 6 | August 2022

Prepared by: Zachary Billot, Kristian Thymianos, Vanessa Booth, Caitlin J. Saladino, and William E. Brown, Jr.

PURPOSE:

This fact sheet explores data from the *National Alliance for Public Charter Schools* (NAPCS) report, “Voting With Their Feet: A State-Level Analysis of Public Charter School and District Public School Trends.”¹ Specifically, we examine enrollment trends for district public schools and public charter schools in the Mountain West (Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah) for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.

ABOUT THE DATA:

Using data collected from each state’s Department of Education, Debbie Veney and Drew Jacobs of NAPCS analyze state level variation in public charter school and district public school enrollment between the 2019-2020 & 2020-2021 school years. The original report examined 42 states excluding those without public charter school or states without sufficient data on public charter school enrollment.

Enrollment totals for district public schools are calculated by gathering statewide district public school enrollment totals and subtracting total public charter school enrollment. Most states count students with enrollment figures during the fall, but some states do a yearly count or a spring count. Specific information about how data are collected by individual states can be found in the source document.²

KEY FINDINGS:

1. All Mountain West states experienced an increase in public charter school enrollment and a decrease in district public school enrollment between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.
2. Among Mountain West states, the decline in the number of students attending district public schools exceeded the increase in the number of students attending public charter schools.
3. Arizona experienced the largest variation in both public charter schools and district public school enrollment in the Mountain West with a loss of 56,979 district public school students (-6.08% change) and a gain of 18,429 public charter school students (8.62% change).
4. Utah experienced the smallest variation in enrollment changes in the Mountain West, with a loss of 3,149 district public school students (-0.53% change) and a gain of 1,597 public charter school students (2.06% change).
5. Colorado, Nevada, Utah, and New Mexico had an increase in public charter school enrollment less than the national average of 7% between the 2019-2020 & 2020-2021 school years.

¹ Veney, Debbie, Jacobs, Drew. Voting with their feet: A state Level Analysis of public charter school and district public school trends, *National Alliance for Public Charter Schools*, September 2021. https://www.publiccharters.org/sites/default/files/documents/2021-09/napcs_voting_feet_rd6.pdf

² Ibid

Table 1 shows enrollment changes for public charter schools and district public schools for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. Each Mountain West state experienced an increase in charter school enrollment and a decrease in district public school enrollments from the 2019-2020 to 2020-2021 school years. Arizona had the largest increase in public charter school enrollment at 18,429 and the largest decrease in district public school enrollment at 56,979. Utah had the lowest increase in public charter school enrollment at 1,597 and the lowest decrease in district public school enrollment. Every Mountain West state experienced an increase in public charter school enrollment less than the national average of 7.00%, except Arizona (8.62%). All Mountain West states experienced a decrease in district public school enrollment more than the national average (-3.30%) except for Utah (-0.53%).

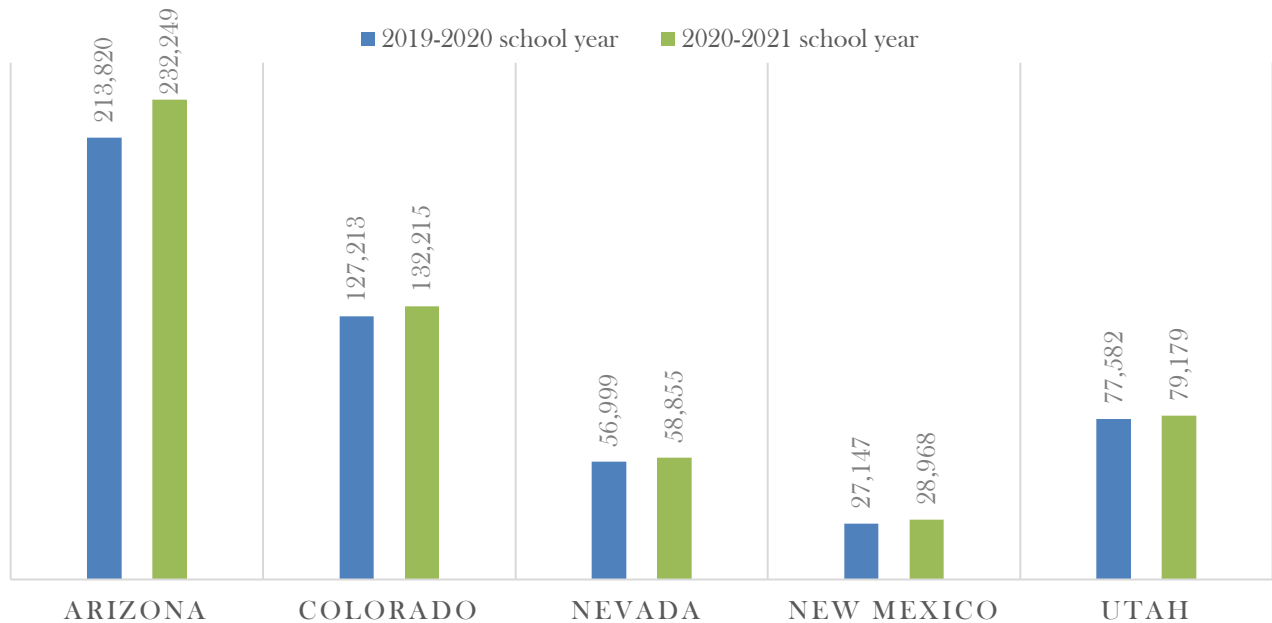
Table 1: Public Charter & District Public School Enrollment Changes, 2019-2020 & 2020-2021

State	Public Charter School Change	District Public School Change	% Public Charter School Change	% District Public School Change
<i>National</i>	<i>237,000</i>	<i>-1,450,000</i>	<i>7.00%</i>	<i>-3.30%</i>
Arizona	18,429	-56,979	8.62%	-6.08%
Colorado	5,002	-35,026	3.93%	-4.46%
Nevada	1,856	-16,083	3.26%	-3.62%
New Mexico	1,821	-14,645	6.71%	-4.95%
Utah	1,597	-3,149	2.06%	-0.53%

*Adapted from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools' "Voting with their Feet" 2021

Figure 1 shows enrollment numbers during the 2019-2020 & 2020-2021 school years for public charter schools in the Mountain West. All Mountain West states experienced an increase in public charter school enrollment from the 2019-2020 school year to the 2020-2021 school year. Arizona saw the largest increase in public charter school enrollment (+18,429 students), and Utah saw the smallest increase in enrollment (+1,597 students).

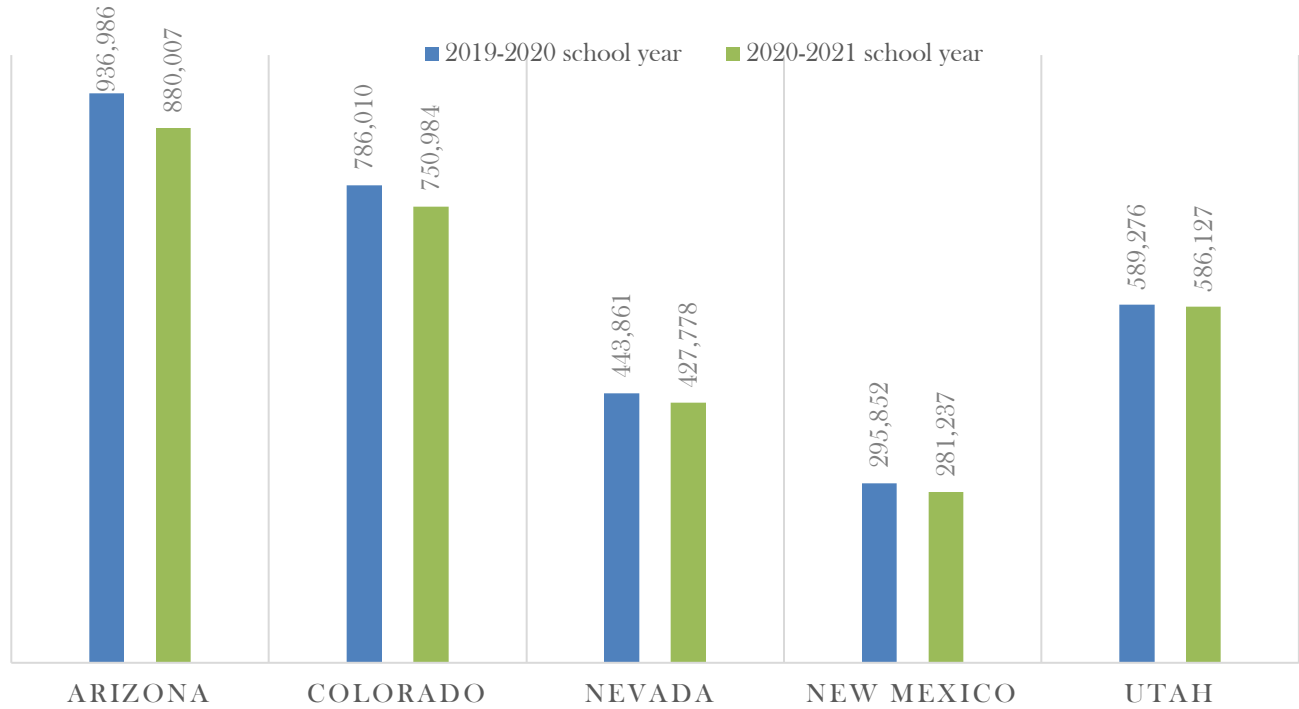
Figure 1: Public Charter School Enrollment in the Mountain West, 2019-2020 & 2020-2021



*Adapted from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools' "Voting with their Feet" 2021

Figure 2 shows enrollment change in district public schools during the 2019-2020 & 2020-2021 school years. Every Mountain West state experienced a decrease in district public school enrollment from the 2019-2020 school year to the 2020-2021 school year. Arizona experienced the largest loss of students (-56,979), and Utah saw the smallest loss of students (-3,149).

Figure 2: District Public School Enrollment in the Mountain West, 2019-2020 & 2020-2021



*Adapted from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools' "Voting with their Feet" 2021