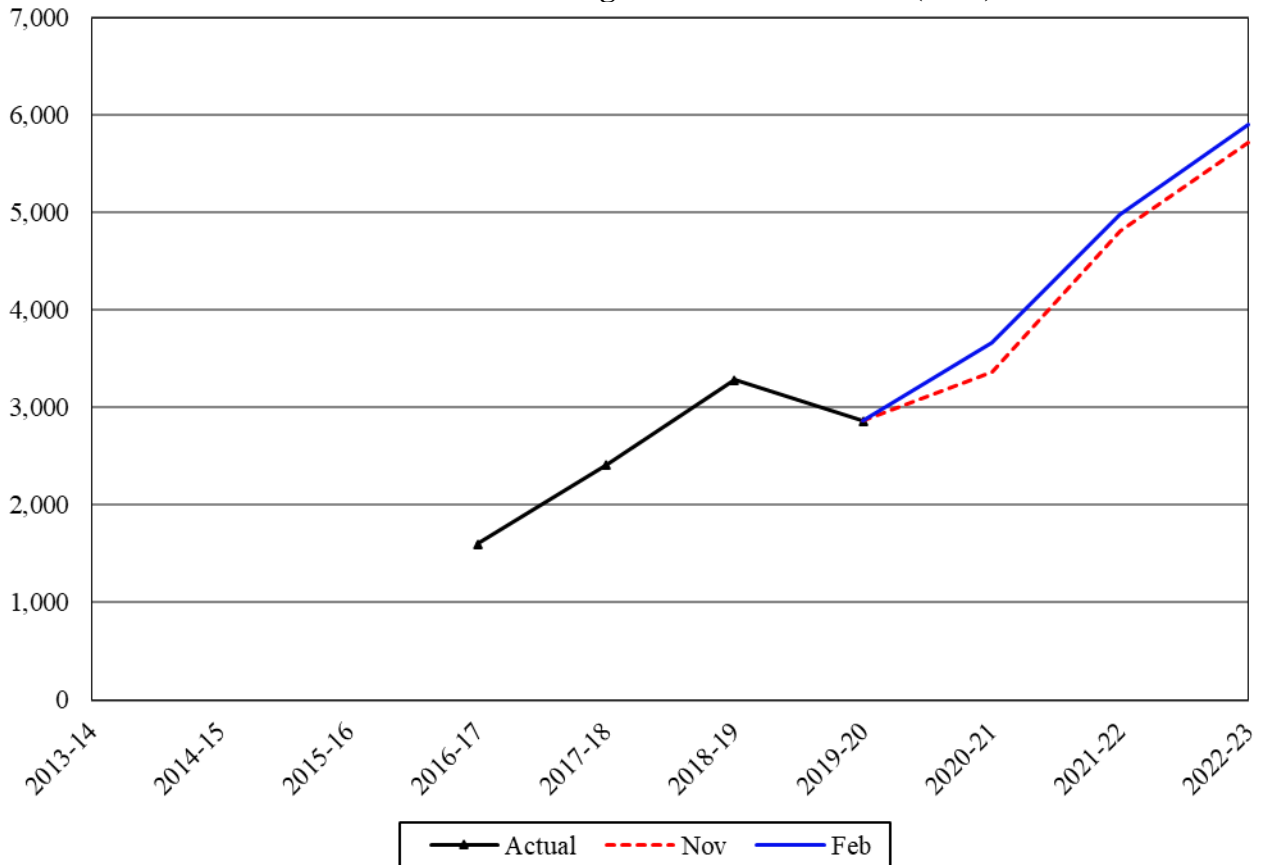


Charter Schools Enrollment

Caseload Forecast Council
February 12, 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 at this time.

Forecast Comparisons (Academic Year Averages)

Academic Year	Nov-20 Forecast	Feb-21 Forecast	Nov to Feb Difference	Percent Difference
2020-21	3,373	3,663	290	8.6%
2021-22	4,806	4,985	179	3.7%
2022-23	5,719	5,909	190	3.3%

Compared to the November forecast, the February forecast is higher by 8.6 percent for the 2020-21 academic year. In the 2021-23 Biennium, the February forecast will be 3.5 percent higher than the November forecast.

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

Tracking the Current Forecast

	Nov-20 Forecast	Actual	Variance	Percent Variance
Oct-20	3,460	3,613	153	4.4%
Nov-20	3,432	3,628	196	5.7%
Dec-20	3,429	3,625	196	5.7%
Jan-21	3,392	3,622	230	6.8%

Actuals for the first four months of the 2020-21 school year are tracking 5.7 percent above forecast. This is due to a technical error in the November forecast.

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%
Forecast	2020-21	3,663	797	27.8%
	2021-22	4,985	1,322	36.1%
	2022-23	5,909	924	18.5%

Charter schools are relatively new and 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. However, in the 2020-21 academic year charter schools are expanding. Three new schools opened, serving 316 new students. Additionally, in the 2021-22 academic year, 6 additional schools will be opening, adding an estimated 848 students. One additional school will open in 2022-23, serving 35 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 an additional risk to the forecast as it may disrupt the operations for some schools and may impact opening plans for newly authorized schools.