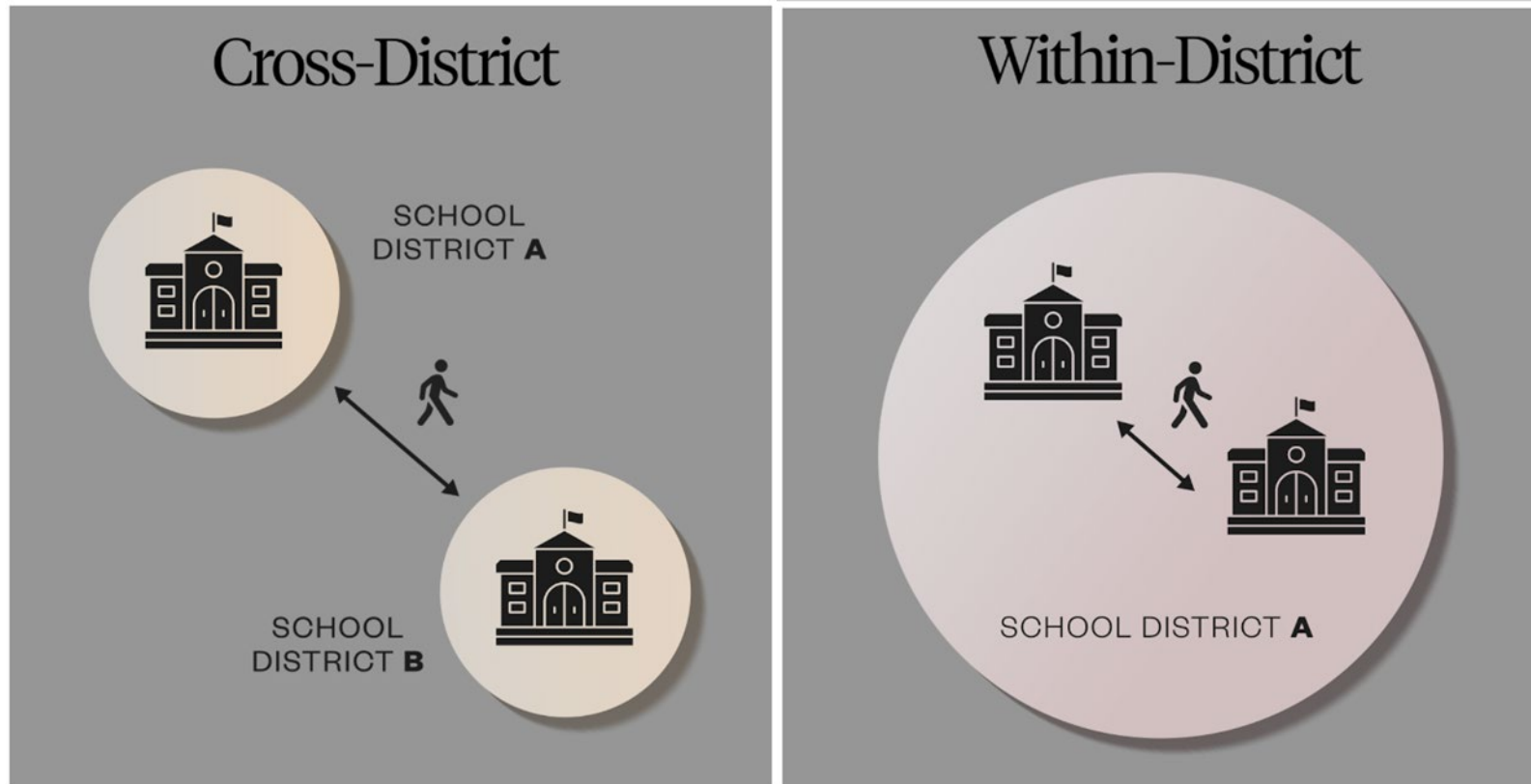


Public Schools without Boundaries: 2025

A review of the latest research and data, states' open enrollment rankings nationwide, and looking forward to 2026.

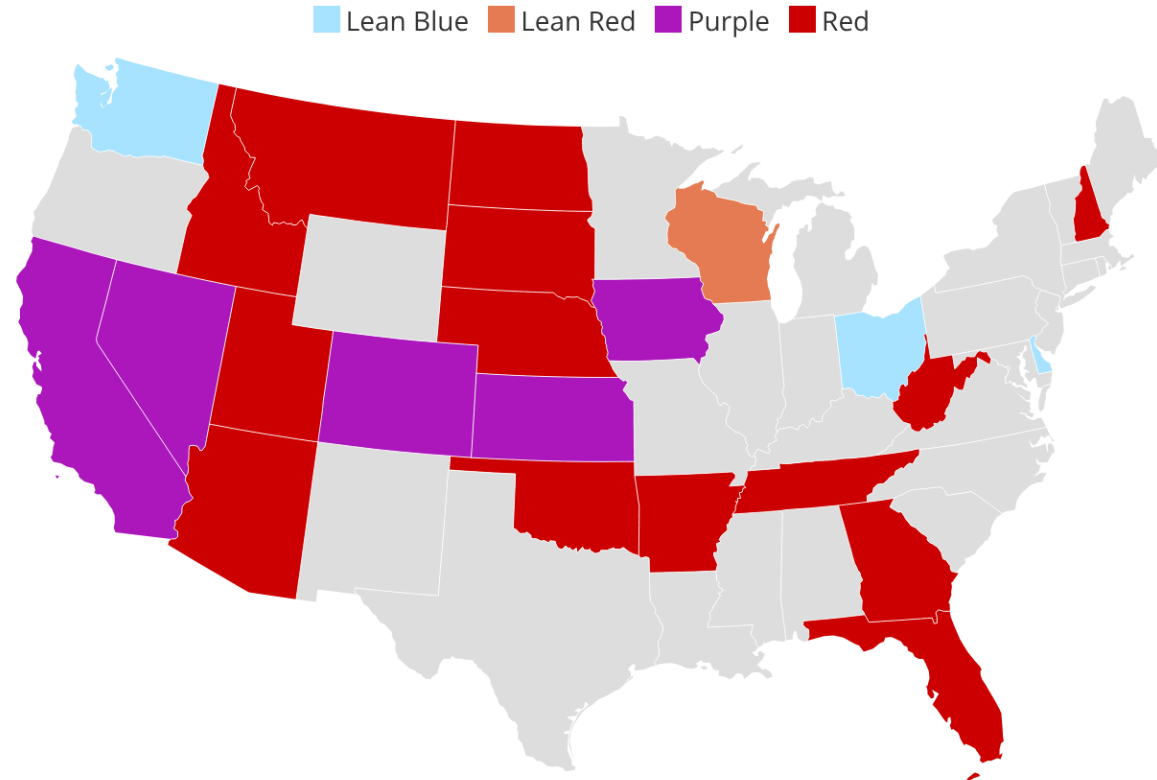




Types of open enrollment



Party Control in states with robust open enrollment laws



If a single party controlled both chambers and the executive office, the state was categorized as Blue or Red. If one party controlled the executive office and a chamber, the state was categorized as Lean Blue or Red. If a single party controlled both chambers, but not the executive office, the state was categorized as Purple.

Map: Reason Foundation • Source: Ballotpedia and Reason Foundation

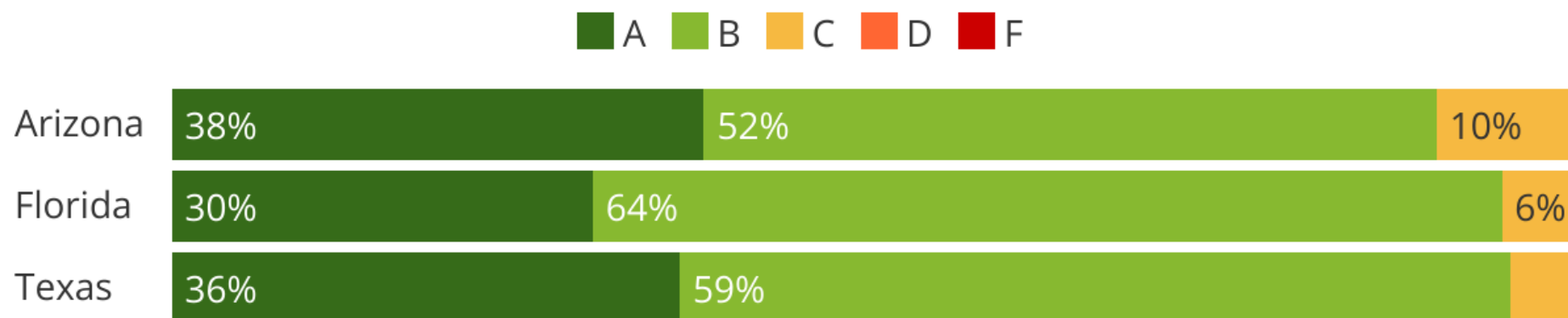
Part 1: An overview of the research and data

- Why students use open enrollment
- How many students use open enrollment?
- Participation by locale



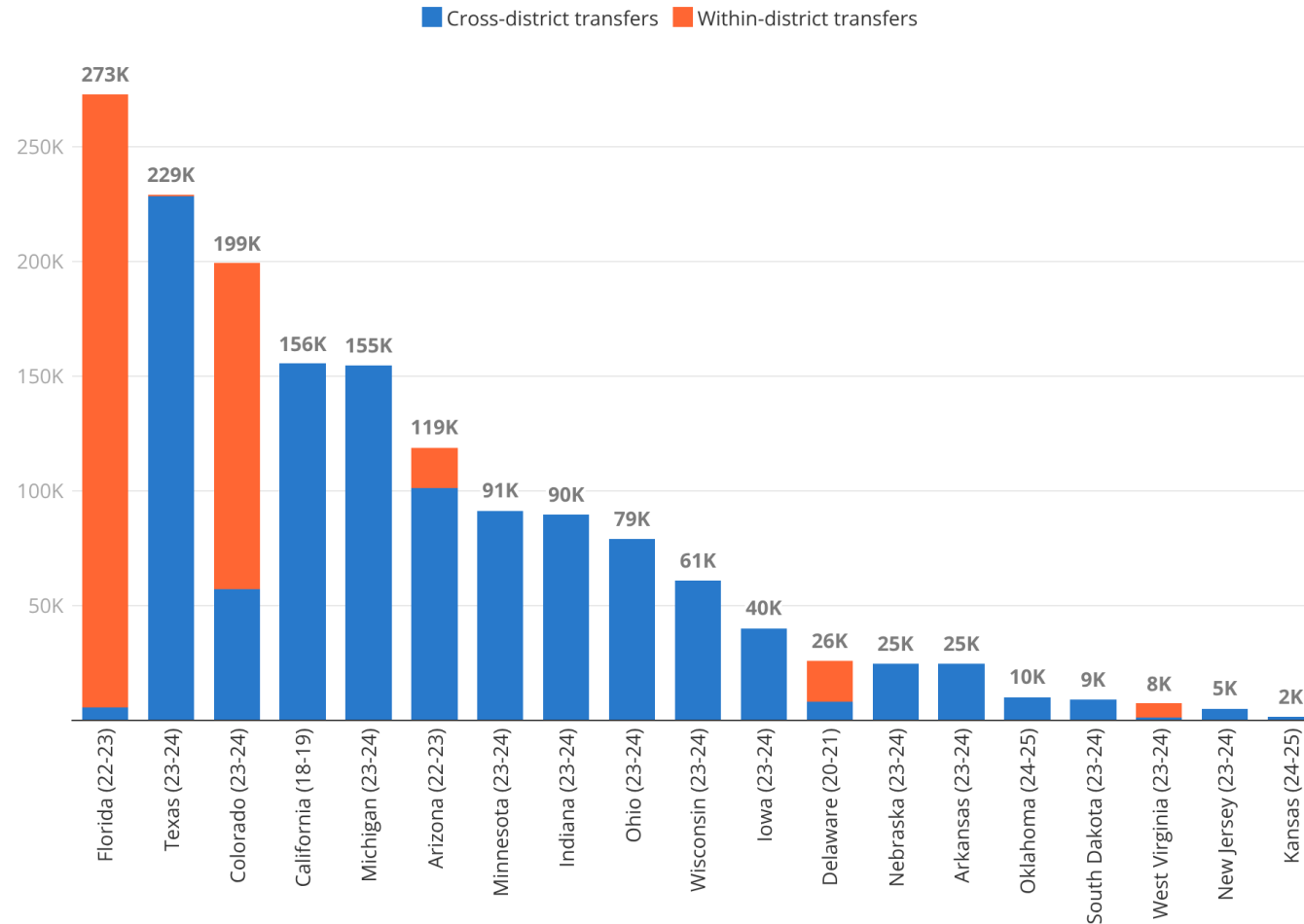
Why students use open enrollment

- Students tend to transfer to better school districts



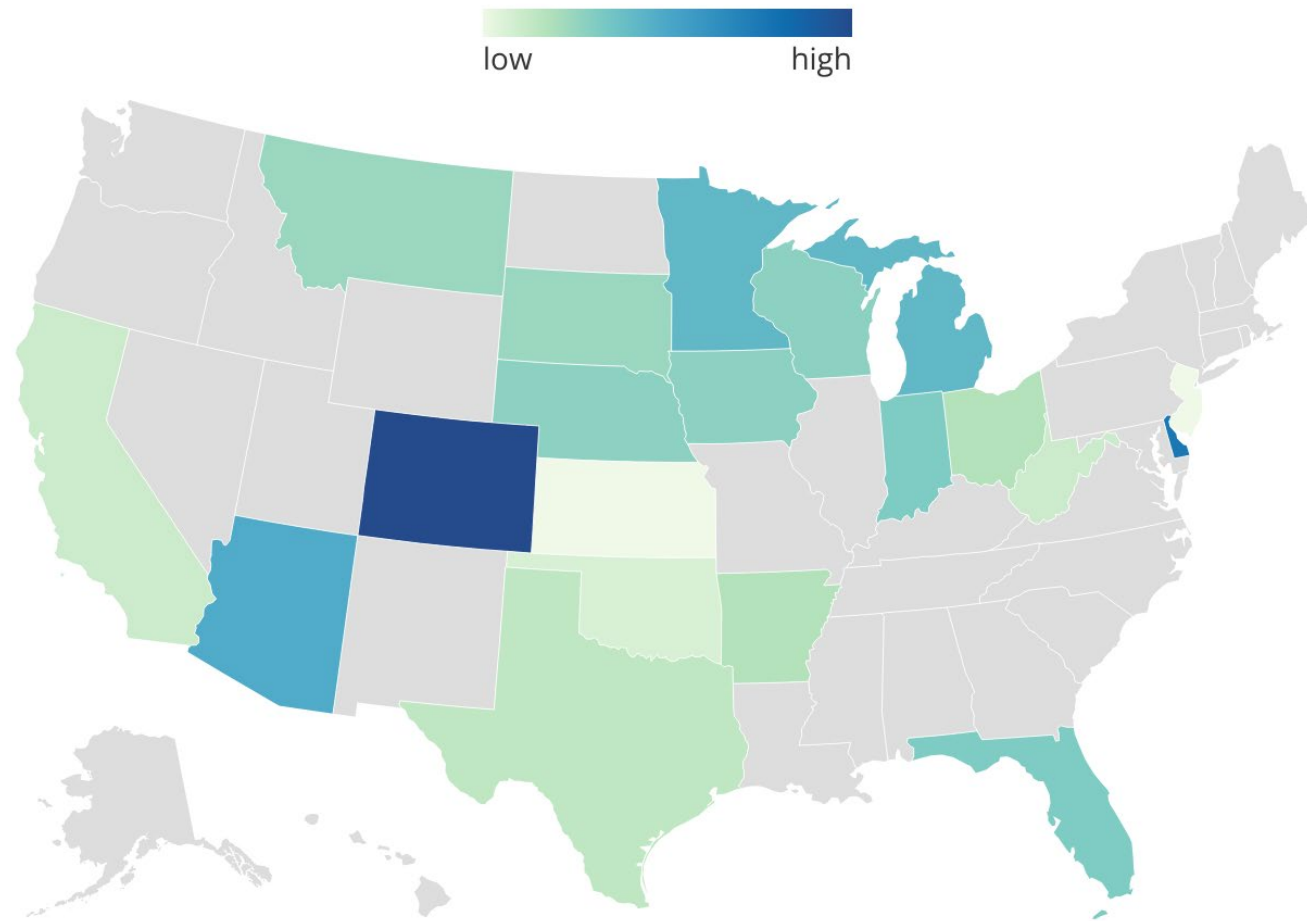
Note: Texas' data did not include grades for several districts that received nearly 17,000 transfer students or 7% overall, since the districts data was still under review by the SEA. This data is not included in the chart. Sources available in Part 6: Methodology.

More than 1.6 million students used open enrollment in 19 states



Note: Within-district transfer data was only available in Florida, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, Delaware, and West Virginia. State education agencies in other states did not track this data. Sources available in Part 6: Methodology.

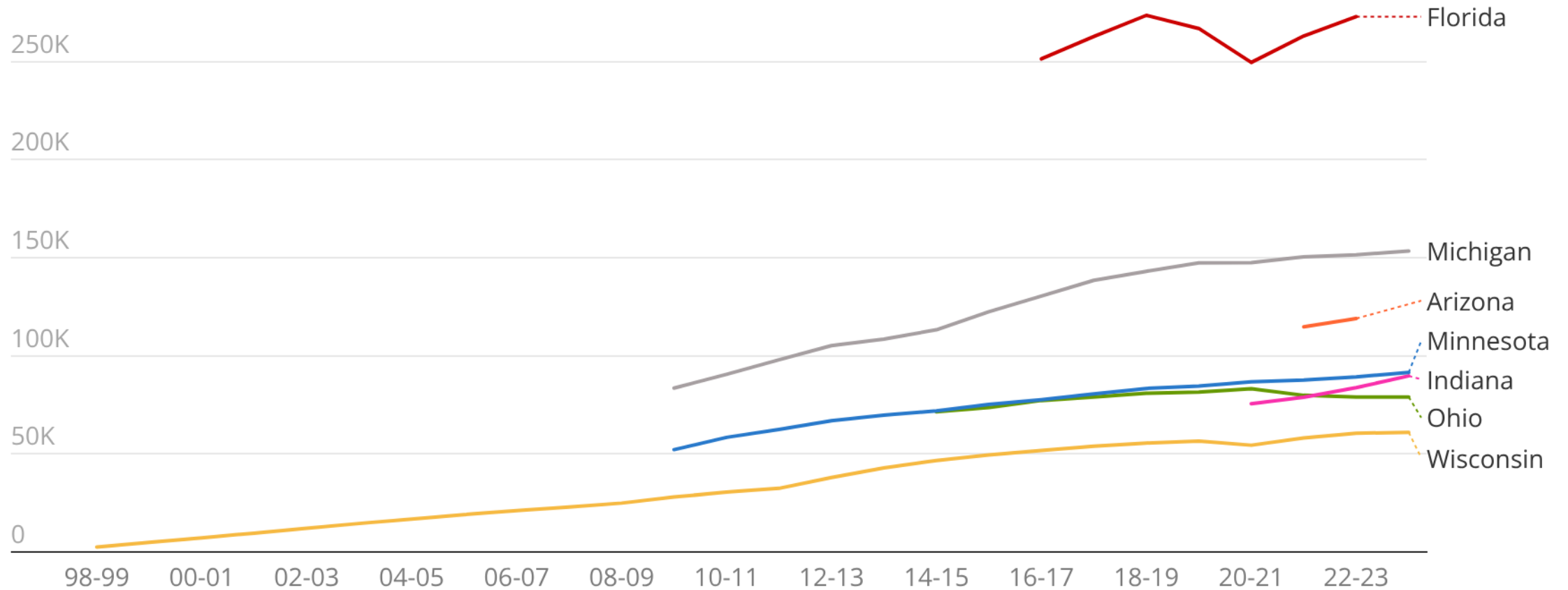
Students used open enrollment at the highest rates in Colorado, Delaware, and Arizona



Map: Reason Foundation



Open enrollment growth in seven states



Sources available in Part 6: Methodology.



Many rural districts benefit from open enrollment

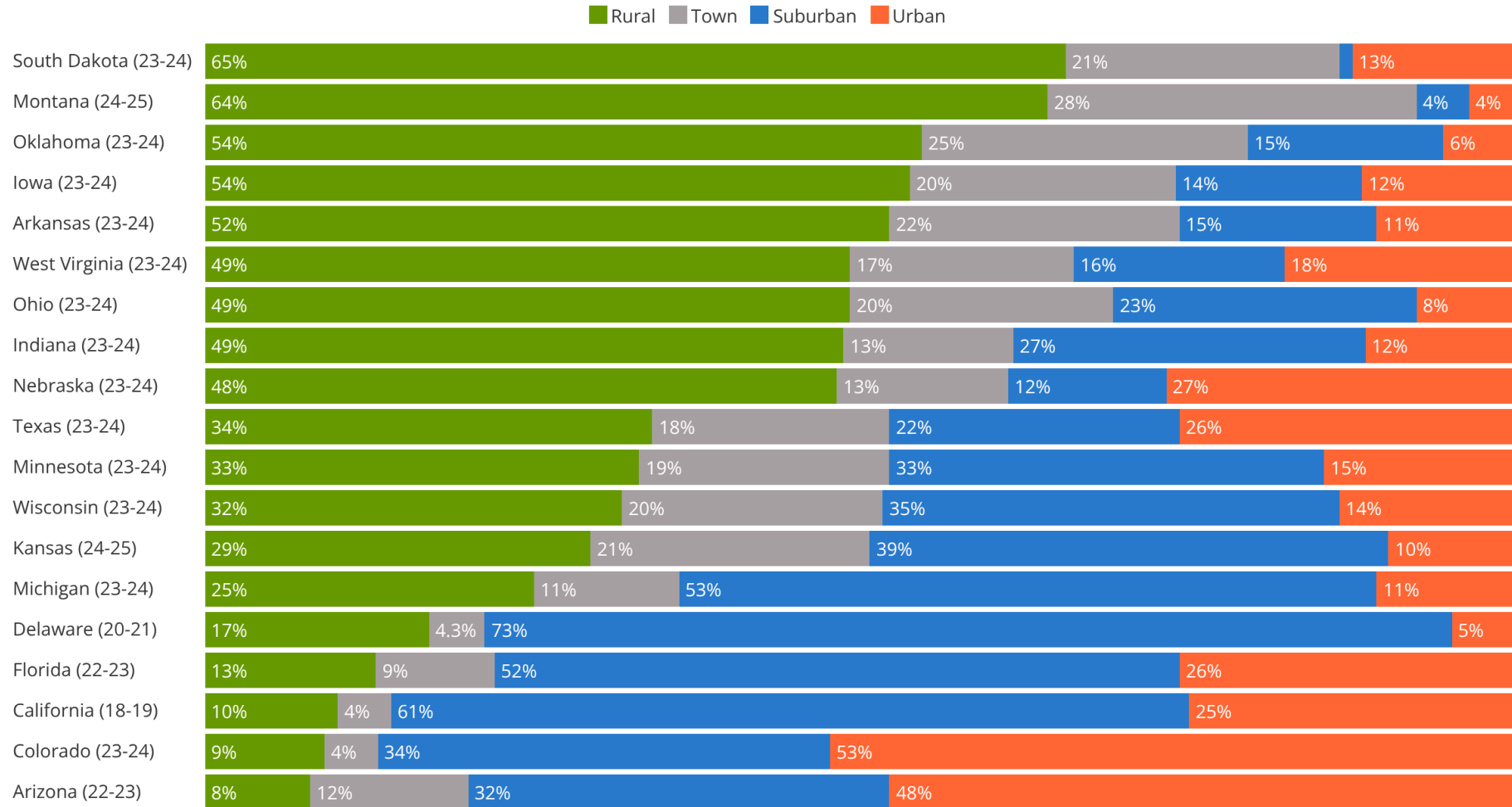


Chart: Reason Foundation • Source: State education agencies and the National Center for Education Statistics

Part 3: The state of play of open enrollment nationwide

- Why policy design matters
- Which states have strong laws

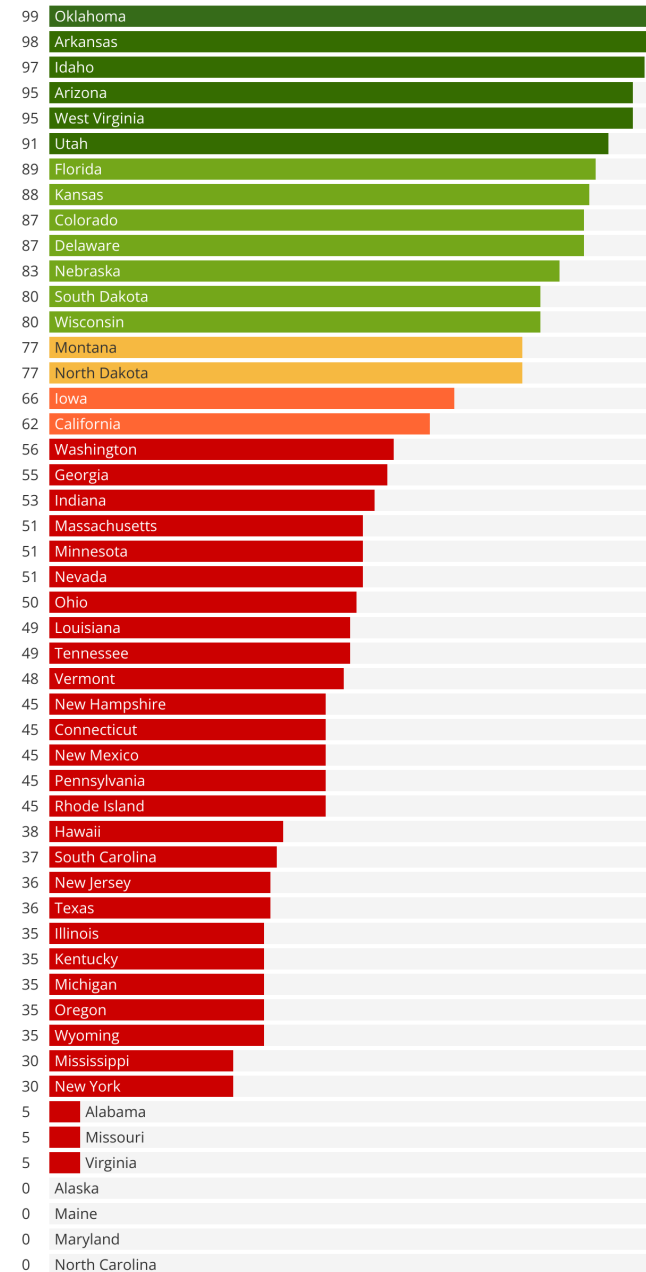


Reason Foundation's open enrollment best practices

Best Practice	Score
#1 Statewide cross-district open enrollment	60
#2 Statewide within-district open enrollment	15
#3 School districts free to all students	10
#4 School districts open to all students	5
#5 Transparent SEA reports	4
#6 Transparent district reporting	4
#7 Transfer applicants can appeal rejected applications	2
Total Points	100
Final Grade	A+

2025 rankings

- Oklahoma has the best open enrollment law
- Arkansas is a close second
- Idaho gets third place
- Alaska, Maine, Maryland, and North Carolina rank dead last



Part 3: Looking forward with Alaska

- How Alaska can improve
- Examples from other states



How Alaska can improve open enrollment

- Robust cross-district open enrollment laws can succeed even in states with many rural districts.
 - Montana's rural districts gained about 1 student on net per district
 - North Dakota's rural districts gained about 7 students on net per district
- Some states, like Nevada, with opt to strengthen their within-district options
 - 88% of Nevada students reside in just two school districts
 - 74% of Alaska students reside in non-rural districts

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