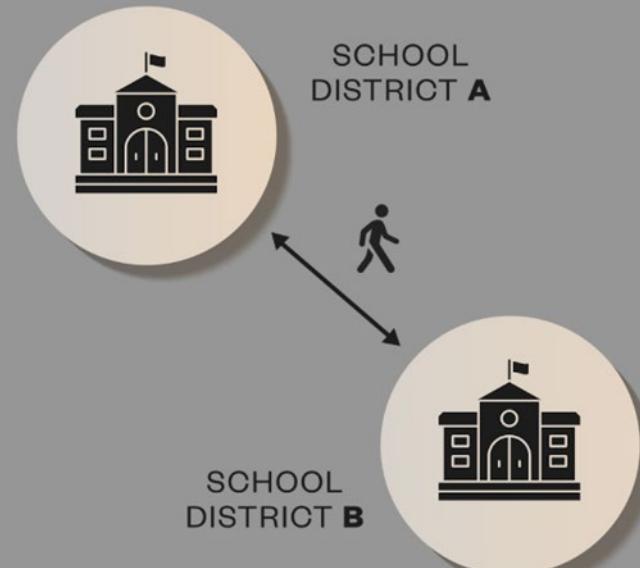


Public Schools without Boundaries: 2025

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



Cross-District



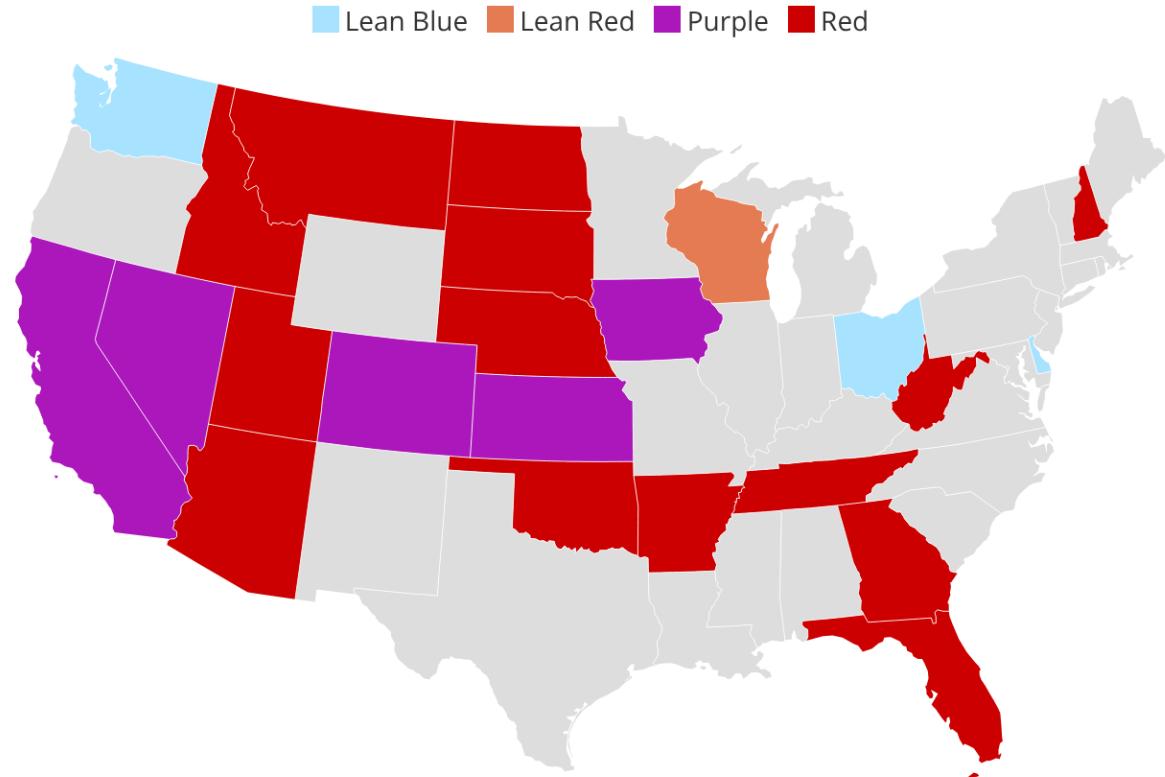
Within-District



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

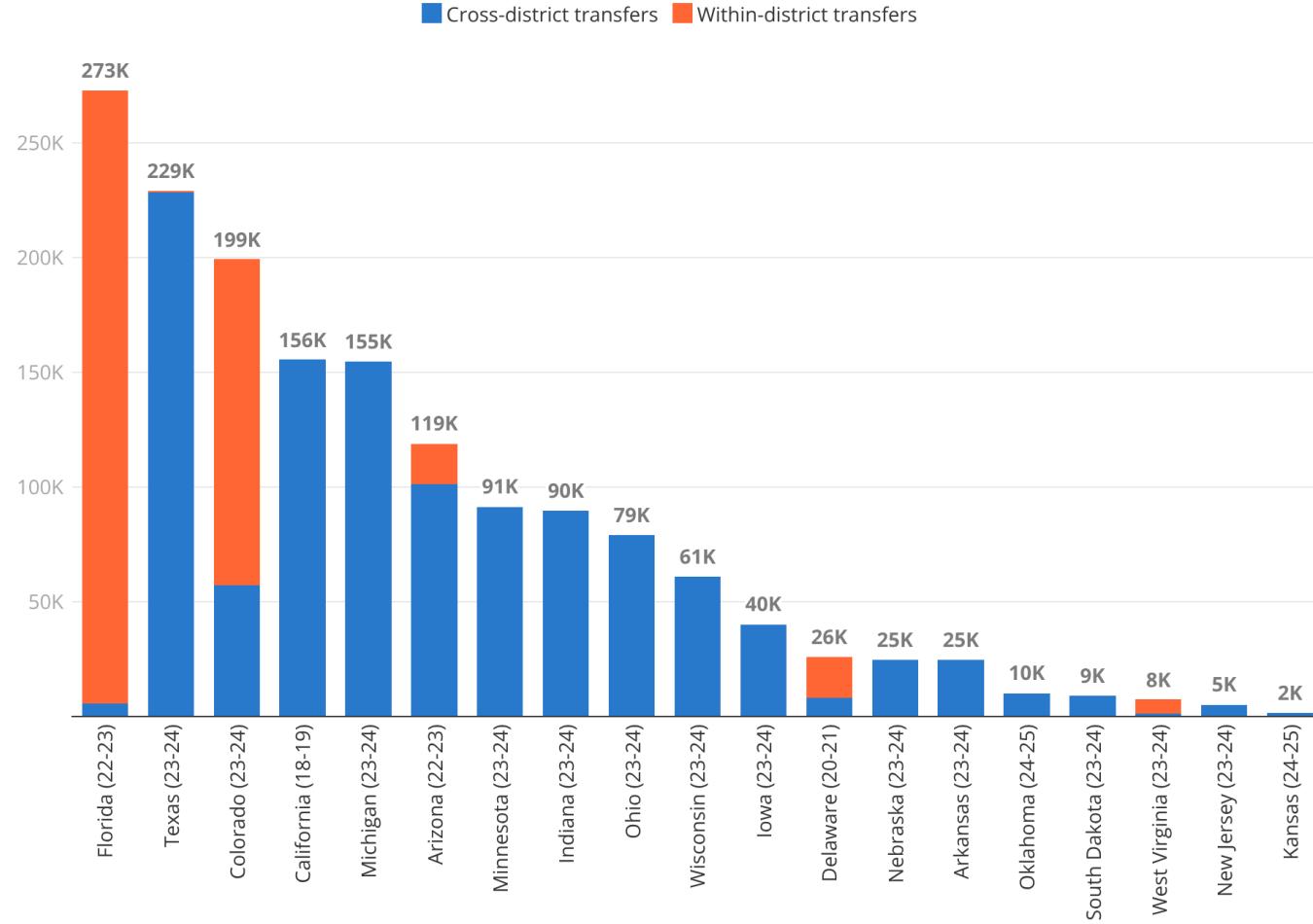


- Students tend to transfer to better school districts



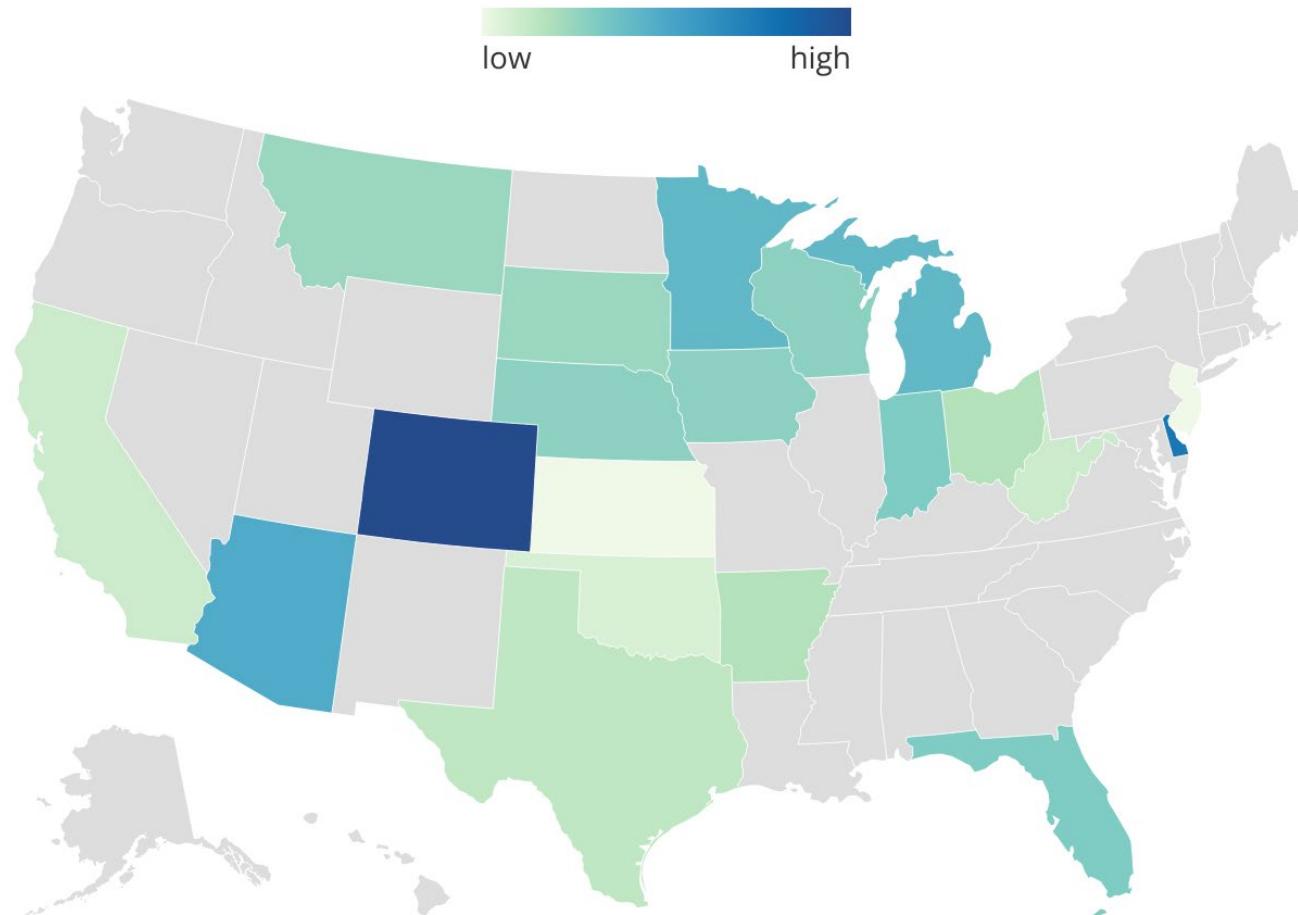
Note: Texas' data did not include grades for several districts that received nearly 17,000 transfer students or 7% overall, since the districts data was still under review by the SEA. This data is not included in the chart. Sources available in Part 6: Methodology.

More than 1.6 million students used open enrollment in 19 states



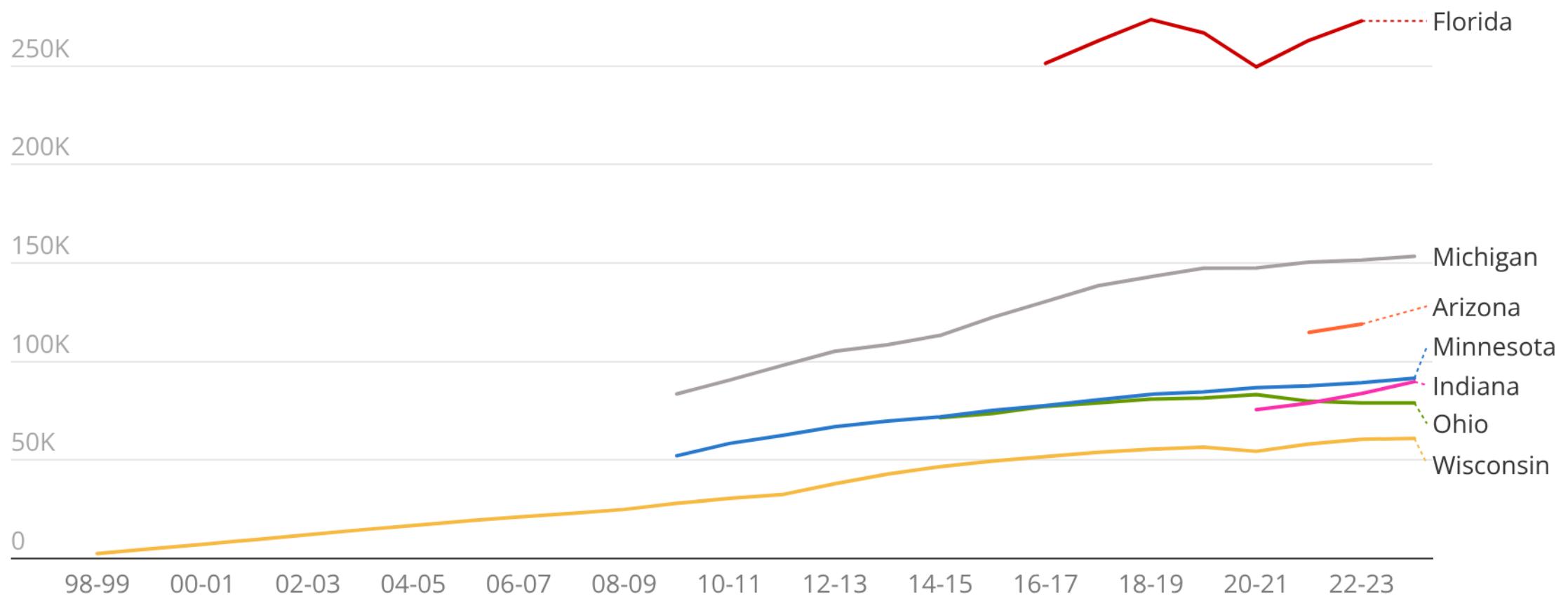
Note: Within-district transfer data was only available in Florida, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, Delaware, and West Virginia. State education agencies in other states did not track this data. Sources available in Part 6: Methodology.

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



Map: Reason Foundation

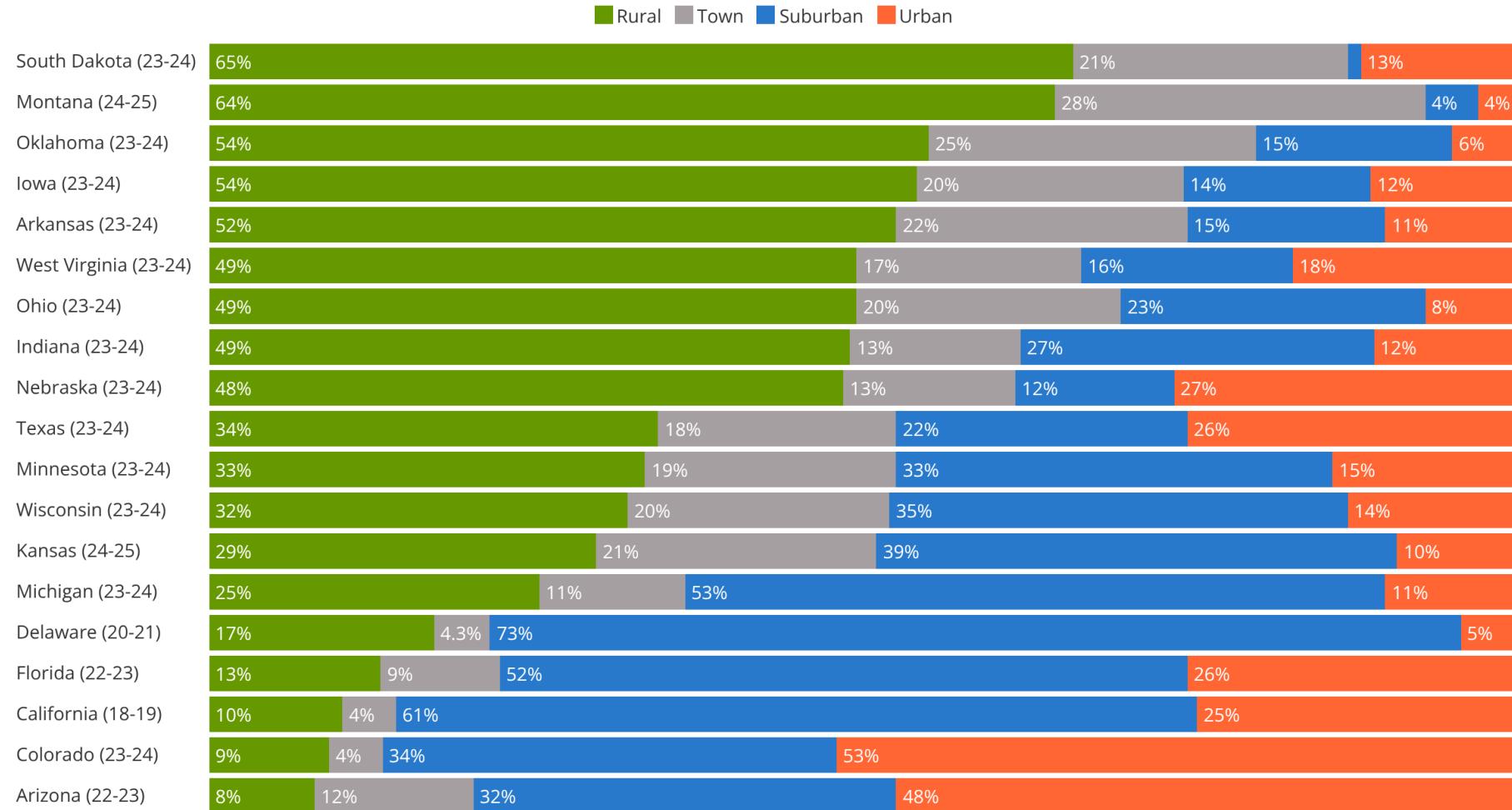
Open enrollment growth in seven states



Sources available in Part 6: Methodology.



Many rural districts benefit from open enrollment



Part 3: The state of play of open enrollment nationwide

- Why policy design matters
- Which states have strong laws

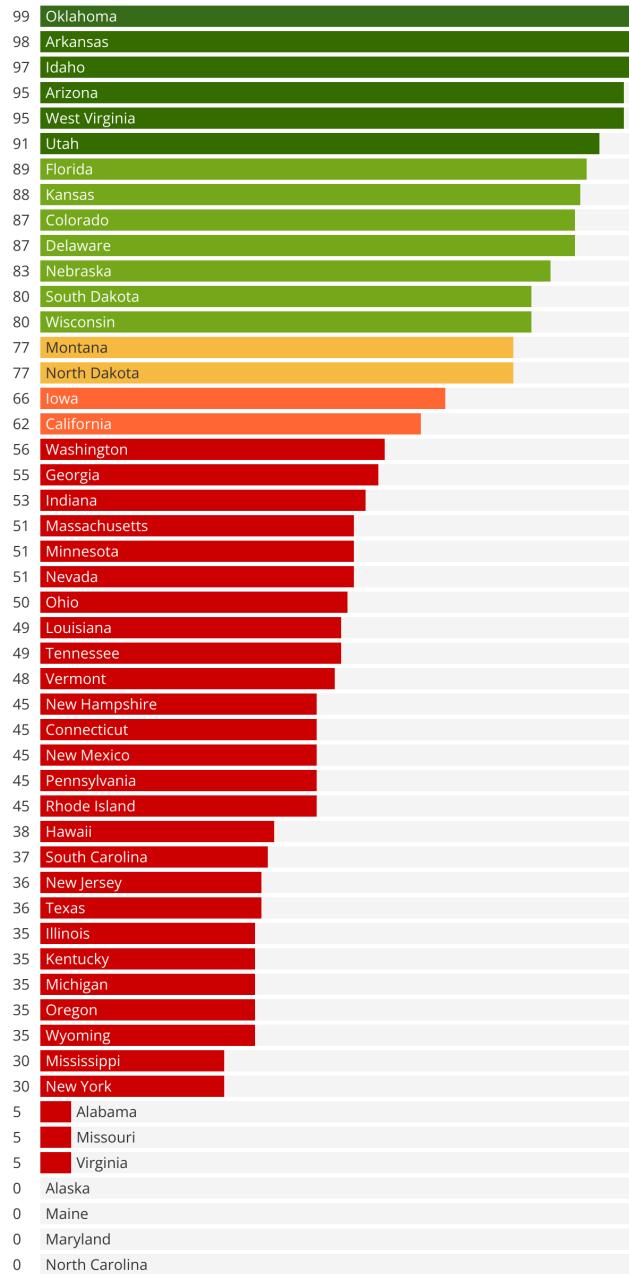
Reason Foundation's open enrollment best practices



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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