



Strategic Plan Priority | System Design

Goal: School and district structures and systems adapt to meet the evolving needs of the student population and community as a whole. Students are prepared to adapt as needed to fully participate in the world beyond the classroom.

Private Schools

PREPARED FOR THE MARCH 2020 BOARD MEETING

Information Item

The State Board of Education launched the private school application for the 2020-2021 school year on March 2, 2020. The application includes numerous improvements over prior application processes. This memo summarizes major private school requirements.

Synopsis:

Private schools serve over 84,000 Washington students in grades P-12 and over 75,000 students in grades K-12. For reference, public schools enroll over 1,100,000 students in grades K-12. There are 522 private schools and over 2,300 public schools operating in the 2019-2020 school year. See appendix for charts on enrollment.

Washington law establishes a regulatory framework for private schools to apply to the State Board of Education for approval based on minimum requirements necessary to ensure health and safety of students. Private schools are required to offer the same number of credits in the same subject areas as those required for public school students, but assessments are not required for students enrolled in private schools.

The Legislature has given SBE a limited role in oversight of private schools. RCW 28A.195.010 states that “the legislature hereby recognizes that private schools should be subject only to those minimum state controls necessary to ensure the health and safety of all the students in the state and to insure a sufficient basic education to meet usual graduation requirements.” (Note

this exact language, unamended, has been in statute since it was first added in 1974. See, 1974 ex.s. c 92 § 2.)

The following are minimum requirements of private schools per RCW 28A.195.010 that are addressed in the private school application. To ensure effective oversight, schools must provide an assurance that they meet all state requirements described below. In addition, they are asked to provide additional information on health and fire inspections, staffing, enrollment, physical and contact information, and school leadership/ownership.

- The minimum school year for instructional purposes is at least either 180 school days or a school-wide annual average total instructional hour offering of 1,000 hours for students enrolled in grades one through 12 and at least 450 hours for students enrolled in kindergarten.
- On each school day, pupils enrolled in the school are provided the opportunity to be engaged in educational activity planned by and under the direction of the staff, as directed by the administration and/or governing board.
- All classroom teachers hold appropriate Washington State certification or qualify for one of the exceptions to the certification requirement.
- Measures have been taken to safeguard all permanent records against loss or damage through either the storage of such records in fire-resistant containers or facilities or the retention of duplicates in a separate and distinct area.
- The physical facilities of the school are adequate to meet the program offered, and all school facilities and practices are in substantial compliance with reasonable health and fire safety standards, and substantiated by current inspection reports of appropriate health and fire safety officials which are on file in the chief administrator's office, and available upon request.
- The school's curriculum includes instruction in sufficient units for meeting State Board of Education graduation requirements, as set forth in chapter 180-51 WAC.

- The school or its organized district maintains up-to-date policy statements related to the administration and operation of the school or district.
- The school does not engage in a policy of racial segregation or discrimination.
- The initial attendance of every student is conditioned on presentation of immunization records.

The following are notable recent improvements or changes to the private school approval process.

- **Save function:** An option for users to save an incomplete application so they could return later was added.
- **Enrollment and staffing report:** In an effort to streamline processing of enrollment and staffing information, the State Board of Education is collecting October 1, 2019 enrollment information and 2019-2020 staffing information during the application process for the 2020-2021 school year. The reporting fields are nearly identical to the prior reporting fields in the Educational Data System (EDS).
- **Health and fire inspections:** In this 2020-2021 school year application, only schools that are new, moving location, or have undergone a major renovation will need to submit documentation of fire and health inspections. Other renewing schools will be required to indicate they have these records on file.
- **Certificate of compliance upload:** At the end of the application, private schools are asked to upload a Certificate of Compliance Signature Page. By signing this document, school officials will certify that in the school is in compliance with all requirements.
- **Additional campus info:** Schools with additional campuses will be able to still apply with one application. However, to ensure that individual school buildings are being correctly identified, State Board staff have assigned unique building codes to each of the additional campuses.
- **Certificates of approval:** Certificates of approval will be posted to the State Board of Education private schools web page as soon as

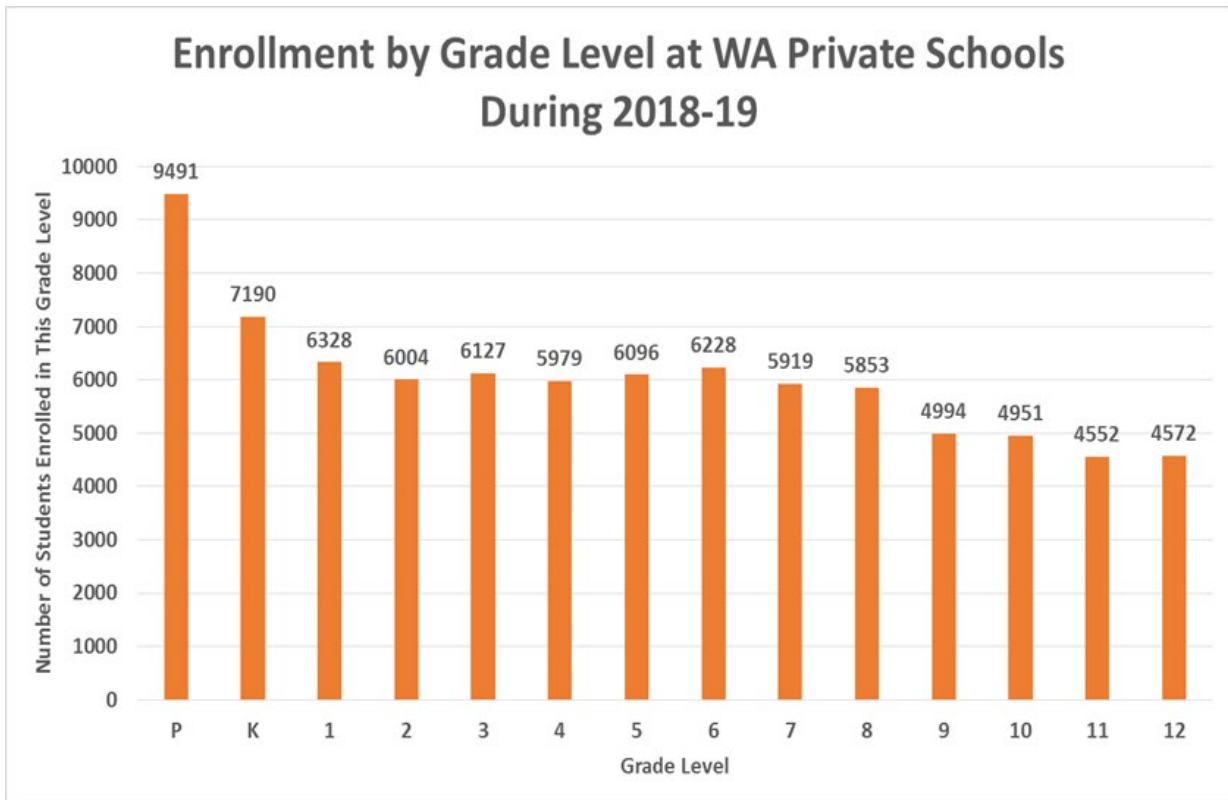
possible after approval. This document demonstrates to the public that you are a private school approved by the State of Washington.

Business Items:

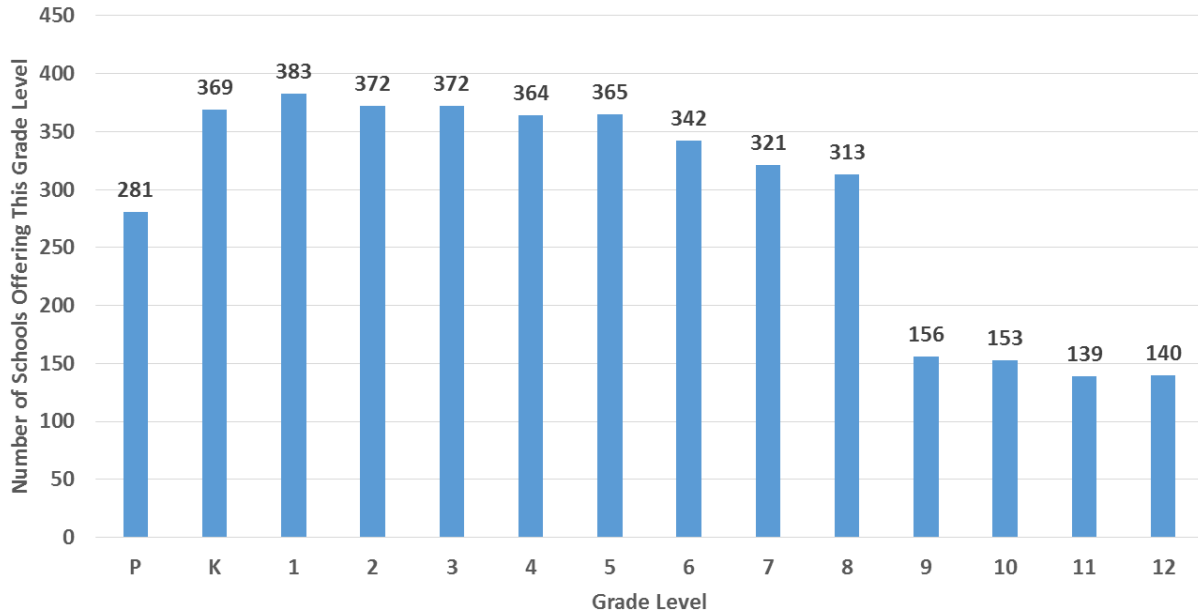
- Not applicable

Appendix:

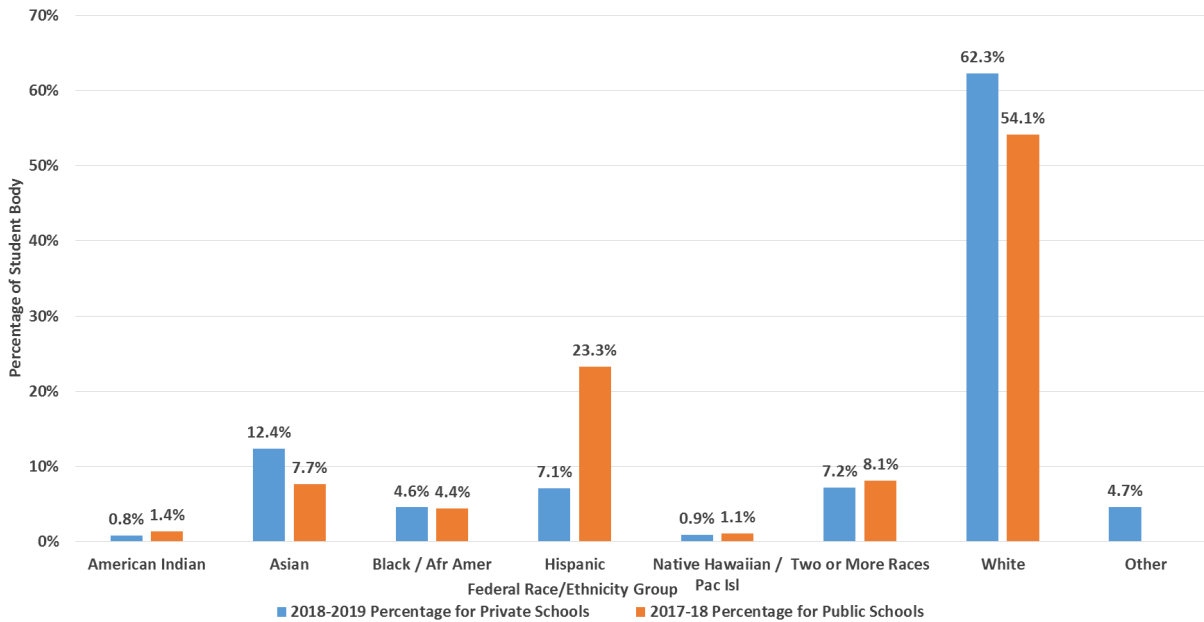
Washington state private schools serve over 84,000 students. The following charts provide information on the enrollment, grade levels offered, and demographics of private schools. Note that some private schools offer preschool programs but there are many other early learning providers in the state that are not also private schools.



Grade Levels Offered at WA Private Schools During 2018-19



Difference Between Demographics of Private School Enrollment Compared to Public School Enrollment



This chart uses the most recent data available for public schools from 2017-18 and for private schools from 2018-19.