

# Detroit K-12 Education System Overview

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2025, Detroit will elect a new mayor. Mayoral candidates have already weighed in on educational issues facing the city and its residents. Detroit PEER has released a series of briefs to address important issues impacting K-12 students and their families that are under the mayor's purview, such as housing, transportation, and neighborhood conditions. The purpose of this brief is to provide background information about Detroit's K-12 students and school system, as well as the mayor's role in Detroit education. The data reported in this brief are from the 2023-24 school year.

## **HOW MANY STUDENTS LIVE IN DETROIT?**

Around 106,000 public school students live in Detroit. (There are likely around 10,000 school-aged children in Detroit who attend a private school, and thousands more who are homeschooled, though information about these students are not included in the state's public datasets.) The demographics of Detroit students reflect those of the city's residents at large. About 80% of public school students living in Detroit are Black and about 12% are Hispanic; about 90% are identified as "economically disadvantaged."

## **WHERE DO DETROIT STUDENTS GO TO SCHOOL?**

Only about 78,000 of the public school students who live in Detroit (about 73%) go to school in the city. Of those, about 48,000 attend school in the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) and about 30,000 attend a Detroit charter school. The remaining 29,000 students or so (about 27%) go to school outside of the city, attending either a traditional public school in the suburbs through inter-district choice or a charter school located in the suburbs. (Notably, about 7,000 public school students who live outside the city attended a school in Detroit.)

## **HOW MANY SCHOOLS ARE IN DETROIT, AND HOW MANY DISTRICTS OPERATE IN DETROIT?**

There are about 185 K-12 public schools located in Detroit—104 schools in DPSCD and 81 charter schools. The city's charter schools, however, are run by 56 separate charter districts and are authorized by 10 different public entities (universities, community colleges, or DPSCD itself).

### **WHAT IS THE MAYOR'S ROLE IN DETROIT EDUCATION?**

Detroit's mayor does not directly manage the city's public schools. DPSCD schools are governed by the district's elected school board. Each charter school district is governed by a separate board that is appointed by their authorizer. Still, the city's mayor can influence children's educational opportunities, experiences, and outcomes in a number of important ways. City policies and resources related to early childhood care and education, housing, transportation, health, neighborhood conditions, employment, out-of-school opportunities and recreation all shape the conditions for learning that impact students.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION ON KEY EDUCATIONAL ISSUES AND THE MAYOR'S ROLE IN THEM, TAKE A LOOK AT OUR OTHER FACT SHEETS:**

- [Transportation](#): The City of Detroit can help strengthen the infrastructure for school transportation and improve conditions for students on the way to school.
- [Housing](#): The City of Detroit can help create more affordable housing and coordinate with schools to reduce housing instability.
- [Neighborhoods](#): The City of Detroit can help strengthen neighborhood conditions for families with school-aged children.