



CHARTER SCHOOL 101

WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?

Charter schools are tuition-free public schools that are open to all students. They serve children from all backgrounds, including many whose individual needs aren't met by a traditional one-size-fits-all system.

Public charter schools serve **more than 320,000 students statewide** and give Texas parents the opportunity to find the learning environments that work for their students. Charter schools are held to strict financial and academic accountability standards in exchange for the freedom to be creative, flexible, and responsive to the needs of their communities.

WHO WE SERVE

In Harris County, public charter schools enroll 64,581 students. Compared to district schools, charters serve a higher percentage of Black students, Hispanic students, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students.

PERCENTAGE OF DEMOGRAPHICS SERVED IN CHARTERS AND ISD IN HARRIS COUNTY:

DEMOGRAPHIC	CHARTER	ISD
Black	24%	18%
Asian	3%	6%
Hispanic	65%	56%
Other	5%	3%
White	3%	18%
Low Income	84%	65%
ELL	35%	26%
Special Education	7%	10%

STUDENT OUTCOMES IN HOUSTON

Charter schools in Houston are providing a high-quality education to help every student succeed.

Public charter schools are sending children to college at higher rates than traditional public schools, with **59% of Harris County charter graduates enrolling in college**, compared to 49% of graduates from Houston Independent School District (HISD).

Overall, Houston area charter school graduates, especially Black, Hispanic, and low-income students, have higher rates of college, career and military readiness.

OUTCOMES ACROSS TEXAS

This isn't just happening in Houston Charter schools across Texas are delivering great outcomes for students. Although public charters enroll about 7% of all public-school students in Texas, they make up **67% of the state's A-rated districts.**

Public charters in Texas are sending **4% more (58%) of their students to college than traditional public schools**, and the difference is especially stark for economically disadvantaged students (60% vs. 44%), students with special needs (43% vs. 23%), and english learners (48% vs. 28%). If all Texas public school graduates had the same college enrollment rates as charters in 2018, then traditional public schools would have sent over 12,000 more students to college.

STAAR is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state's student testing program based on state curriculum standards. Charter schools are helping traditionally under-served students thrive. For example: **Black students at charters outperform their non-charter peers** on every tested subject. And academic growth is steadier and higher for low-income students who enroll at charter schools.

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSTON AREA CHARTER SCHOOL AND HISD GRADUATES READY FOR COLLEGE, CAREER, AND MILITARY BY DEMOGRAPHIC:

DEMOGRAPHIC	HARRIS CO. CHARTERS	HISD
All	81%	63%
Black	66%	52%
Hispanic	84%	63%
Low Income	83%	60%
Special education	83%	67%

Once they get to college, public charter graduates in Harris County are succeeding. Public charter school graduates are **completing college at a 10% higher rate than those from traditional public schools.** This means that hundreds more low-income students are enrolling in college every year.

PERCENTAGE OF LOW-INCOME STUDENTS AT CHARTERS AND ISD THAT ACHIEVE MASTERS GRADE LEVEL SINCE 2015:

YEAR	MGL % CHARTER	MGL % ISD
2015	34%	30%
2016	34%	28%
2017	38%	34%
2018	42%	39%
2019	45%	41%