

**AUSTIN** — Today, the Texas Charter Schools Association (TCSA) released a new report on student enrollment and waitlist numbers for public charter schools in the greater Austin area, revealing that while 25,035 students are currently enrolled in a local charter school, 9,973 students continue to languish on waitlists.

The report, Charter School Enrollment and Demand, developed by TTM Analytics, provides cleaned, de-duplicated waitlist data for Austin-area charter schools, giving an accurate count of students enrolled, of those in the applicant pool, and of those on waitlists due to a limited number of open seats available for enrollment. The report's data was collected from a study of 50 greater Austin area charter school campuses educating more than 90 percent of the total charter school student population. Its findings demonstrate a significant demand for public charter schools among Austin families.

“More and more families in Austin are seeking out a quality public education at public charter schools because they know that charter schools put their students’ needs first by giving them the time and personal attention they need to learn,” said Starlee Coleman, CEO of the Texas Charter Schools Association. “Unfortunately, the demand for public charter schools remains substantially higher than the number of seats available. We all know a one-size-fits-all approach to education doesn’t work, which is why it is crucial to begin clearing the roadblocks preventing every student from accessing the high-quality education they deserve.”

The report factors in raw enrollment and waitlist data from the 2018-2019 school year from 50 participating charter schools in the Austin area. The data shared by each charter school contained the names and addresses of students enrolled, students that were accepted into the school but declined enrollment, and students that remained on the waitlist. By cross-referencing the student records of all 50 charter schools, TTM Analytics was able to determine the number of students on more than one charter school waitlist and to de-duplicate the lists.

“Student waitlist data is not public data, so access of this type is rare,” said Toni Templeton, Ph.D., Principal Data Analyst at TTM Analytics. “I’m glad we had the opportunity to provide deduplicated waitlist data to parents and students in the Austin area, and provide school leaders with a better understanding of the composition of waitlists.”

Each year, families across Austin faced with schools that are unable to meet the needs of their children seek better options by applying to public charter schools. Due to a limited number of charter school seats available, many families are unable to enroll their students in the schools of their choice and must pin their hopes on charter school lotteries. Students who do not receive a seat through a lottery end up on waitlists.

“I’ve witnessed the moving experience of parents finally getting the call that their students have been accepted, relieved because they have waited to get their kid into a quality school for so long,” said John Armbrust, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Austin Achieve Public Schools. “I can’t wait for a time when every family in Austin feels the same joy, and their children get the high-quality public-school education they deserve.”

“My daughter has been on the waitlist for four years and we’re trying again for a fifth time this year. And while it’s frustrating and exasperating at times, we’ve decided it’s important to wait it out,” said Aimee Molién, mother of two children and on the waitlist at Meridian School. “I know having my child attend a public charter school will give her the tools and skills she’ll need for success and at the end of the day, that’s all I’ve ever wanted.”

“Interest in and demand for charter schools has never been greater. Parents in Austin and across Texas want to give their children the best education possible—an education that prepares them for success in college and in life. Families in Austin are making it clear that public charter schools are providing the type of education they want for their children. Instead of putting up roadblocks that prevent families from enrolling their children in the right school for them, we should be expanding access to quality education,” said Coleman.

There are a number of actions that can be taken to meet the demand for public charter schools and ensure all Austin students are able to enroll in schools that meet their needs, including:

- Districts can offer empty or underused space to charter schools rather than closing campuses. Public charter schools can use this space to provide unique, effective programming and serve more Austin families at no additional costs to taxpayers.
- The Texas Legislature can equalize funding between district and public charter schools, so charter schools could expand and serve more students. Public charter schools currently only receive an average of \$200 per student for facilities, while traditional public schools receive, on average, \$1,300 per student.
- The Texas Education Agency (TEA) can streamline its approval process for proven charter schools that want to expand and serve more students. If a public charter school has been operating for several years and is performing well, TEA should remove red tape and barriers, so they can open new campuses.

[Click here to read the full report: Charter School Enrollment & Demand: An Analysis of Austin Area Charter School Waitlists & Enrollment](#)

### **About the Texas Charter Schools Association**

The Texas Charter Schools Association (TCSA) was created in 2008 to unify, support, and grow the charter movement. TCSA represents 90 percent of the 675 public charter schools in Texas, serving more than 272,000 students. For more about the TCSA, visit [txcharterschools.org](http://txcharterschools.org).

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