



Leadership Prep School, Frisco

Texas Public Charters Use Discipline Practices that Keep Students in School

BY TIMOTHY MATTISON, Ph.D.
AND MICHELLE AGUILAR



Cedars International Academy Schools, Austin

Public charter schools in the Lone Star State disciplined fewer students (7.2% of their students) in 2018-19 than traditional public school districts (10.5%), rates which are similar to past years. Texas public charters also assigned 50% fewer in-school suspensions, which stands in stark contrast to national averages.

According to a 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report, charter school suspensions nationwide exceeded rates in traditional public schools. That is not the case in Texas.

Discipline data from the Texas Education Agency show that in 2018-19, **Texas public charter schools maximized classroom time for students by reducing exclusionary discipline practices such as in-school suspensions.** On average, public charter schools in Texas assigned in-school suspensions to 50% fewer students than traditional public schools.

Of particular note, **Texas public charter schools assigned in-school suspensions to 6% fewer special education students.** Special education students have historically been over-represented in disciplinary populations. When schools suspend fewer special education students, these children receive more direct instruction time and can more fully access the accommodations in their Individualized Education Plans.

Public schools assign in-school and out-of-school suspensions for minor discipline offenses, such as skipping class, chronic tardiness and persistent classroom disruptions. Schools assign serious consequences, such as expulsion, for major offenses, including drug possession and aggravated assault.

One explanation for these lower rates of in-school and out-of-school suspensions at charters could be that they are using restorative practices more often than ISDs. Restorative practices include language and interactions that encourage inclusion, equity, respect, acceptance, trust, accountability, honesty, empathy and collaboration. Restorative practices also focus on building, maintaining and repairing relationships. In 2019, more than 40% of Texas public charters reported that they use restorative practices.

Another possible contributing factor is that Texas public charter schools have more teachers of color in the classroom. **Charter schools have nearly double the rate of Hispanic teachers and four to five times as many Asian and Black teachers compared with ISDs.**¹ Studies show that teachers of color interpret the “misbehavior” of children of color differently than white teachers, which leads to fewer discipline consequences;² and that teachers of color are better able to deescalate behavior situations with children of color.³

1. TEA, 2018-2019 Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR).
2. Halberstadt, A. G., Castro, V. L., Chu, Q., Lozada, F. T., & Sims, C. M. (2018). Preservice teachers' racialized emotion recognition, anger bias, and hostility attributions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 54*, 125-138.
3. Monroe, C. R. (2006). Misbehavior or misinterpretation? Closing the discipline gap through cultural synchronization. *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 42*(4), 161-165.

Texas Public Charters Assign ISS to Fewer Students Overall

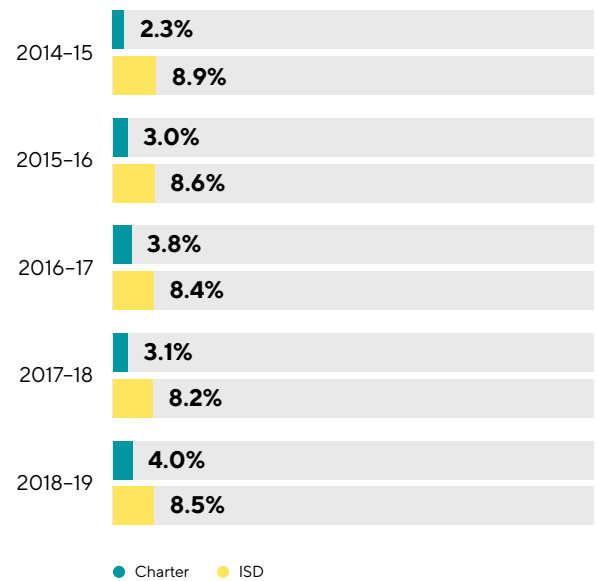
When schools assign ISS, they place students in isolation from their friends and classmates for one to three days. Students are given classwork, but often miss the direct instruction that enables them to complete their work.

For the past five years, public charter schools have assigned ISS to an average of at least 5% fewer students per year than traditional public schools.

This means that public charter students are 50% less likely than those at traditional public schools to be assigned ISS.

Texas public charter schools' more judicious use of ISS allows students to maximize instructional time, which increases students' likelihood of long-term academic success.

ISS Assignment to All Students



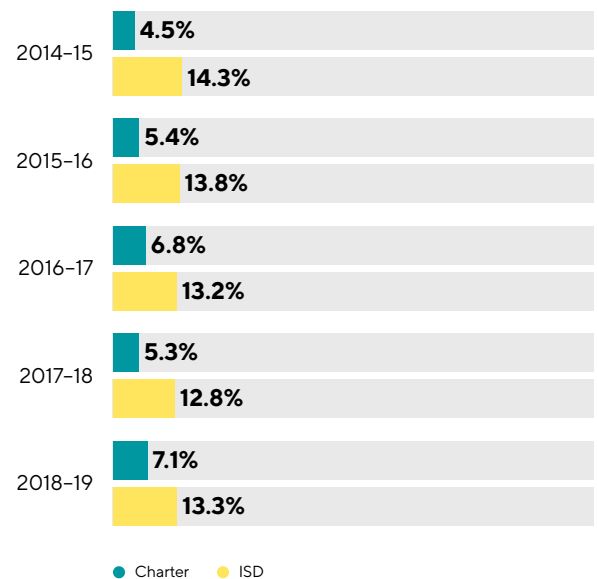
Texas Public Charters Assign ISS to Fewer Special Education Students

Data demonstrate that Texas public charters are finding ways to address minor code of conduct violations, such as chronic tardiness, that keep students in class. This is especially critical for special education students, whose progress can often depend on inclusion in general education classes.

Texas public charters have assigned ISS to an average of 6% fewer of their special education students for the past five years. **This means that Texas public charters assign 40% fewer ISS to special education students than traditional public schools.**

Many special education students have historically been excluded from general education classrooms, making it harder for them to develop social skills necessary to function in their communities upon graduation. [In a previous policy brief](#), we found that charters are significantly more likely than ISDs to meet the state's target for including students with disabilities in general education classrooms for at least 80% of the school day.

ISS Assignment to Special Education Students





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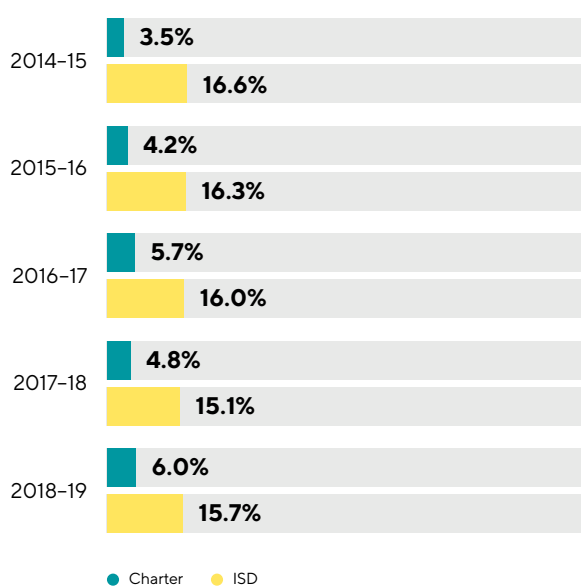
Texas Public Charters Assign ISS to Fewer Black and Hispanic Students

The differences in ISS assignment between Texas public charters and traditional public schools becomes even more dramatic when analyzing rates by race and ethnicity. For the past five years, Texas public charters have assigned ISS to 9% – 13% fewer Black students than traditional public schools. **This means that Black students in Texas public charters are three to four times less likely to be assigned**

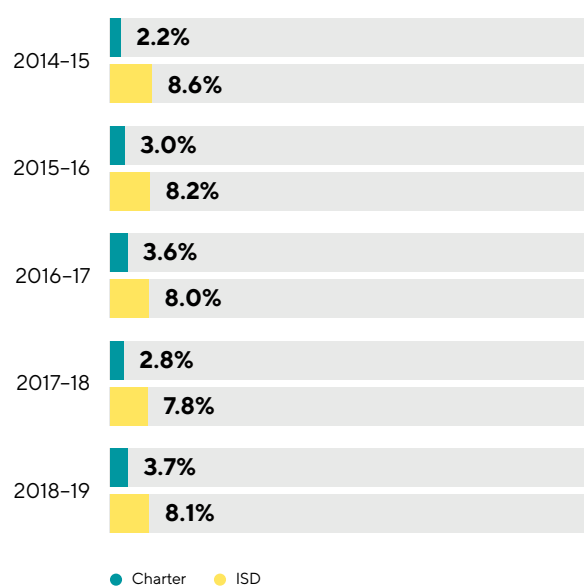
ISS than their peers in traditional public schools.

Texas public charters have similarly assigned ISS to 4% – 6% fewer Hispanic students than traditional public schools. **This means that Hispanic students in Texas public charters 50% less likely to be assigned ISS than in traditional public schools.**

ISS Assignment to Black Students



ISS Assignment to Hispanic Students

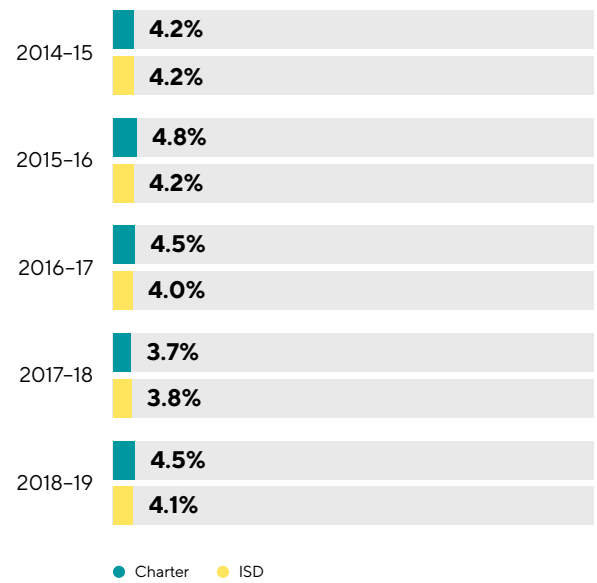


Texas Public Charters and ISDs Assign OSS at Similar Rates

When schools assign OSS, students must remain off school grounds for one to three days. Students are still responsible for their classwork, but as with ISS, many do not receive direct instruction. This is important, because a student misses 420 minutes of instruction per day when a school assigns OSS.

For the past five years, Texas public charters and traditional public schools have assigned OSS at approximately the same rates. However, as the section below demonstrates, **Texas public charters assign OSS to children of color at lower rates than traditional public schools.**

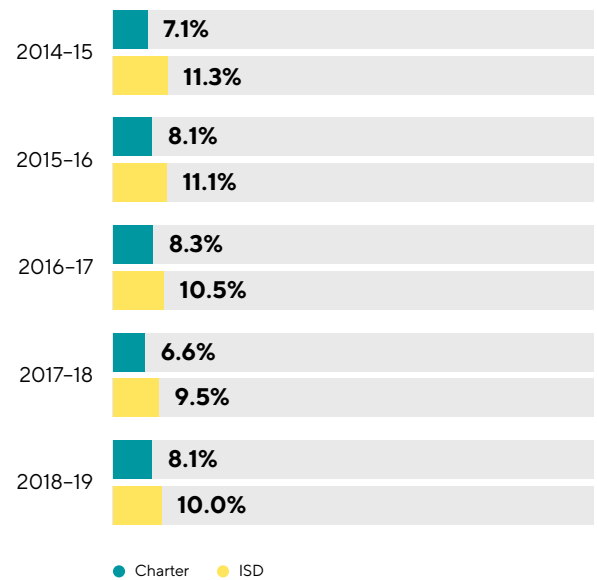
OSS Assignment to All Students



Texas Public Charters Assign OSS to Fewer Black Students

For the past five years, **Texas public charters have assigned OSS to an average of 2% - 3% fewer Black students than traditional public schools.** This difference has a couple of important implications. First, Texas public charters are either more effectively preventing suspension-worthy offenses among Black students or more effectively managing code of conduct violations by Black students with alternative discipline practices such as restorative justice. Second, Texas public charters are helping to reverse the trend of over-representation of Black students in school discipline populations.

OSS Assignment to Black Students

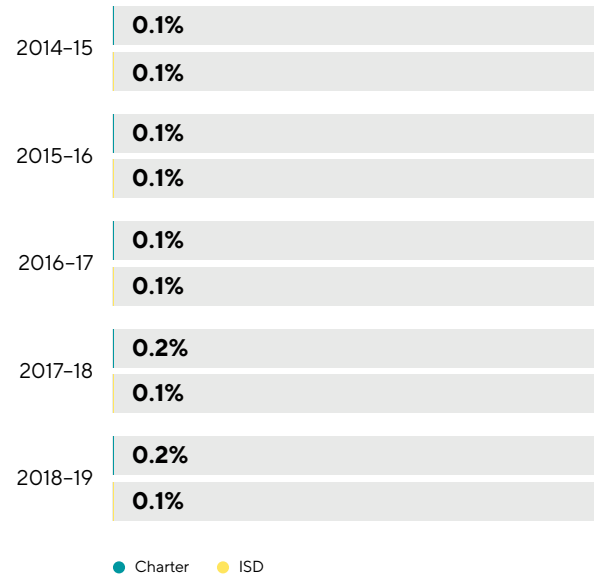


Texas Public Charters and ISDs Expel Students at Similar Rates

Texas public charters and traditional public schools both assign permanent expulsion for behavior so extreme that it puts the lives of other students in danger and poses a threat to student learning. However, schools often expel students as a last resort only after assigning other serious consequences and seeing no behavior change. **Expulsion rates are incredibly low at both public charter and traditional public schools.**

Traditional public schools can also assign students with serious offenses to Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement (DAEP) programs. DAEP assignments are a less permanent form of expulsion that can last up to a full school year depending on the seriousness of the offense. Public charters do not receive dedicated funding for DAEP and only one public charter in the state, YES Prep, has such a program. Therefore, **if we combine expulsion and DAEP rates, traditional public schools remove students from school for serious offenses at a rate of 1.6% – 16 times higher than public charters.**

Expulsion as % of All Students



Gateway College Preparatory High School, Georgetown

NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

The statistics appearing in this research brief are based on the following three Texas Education Agency (TEA) data sources: TEA's Discipline Reports and PEIMS Standard Reports from 2014-15 to 2018-19, and TEA's Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR). TEA's Discipline Reports provided counts of the number of students who received certain discipline consequences (e.g. ISS, OSS, etc.) by school district. We obtained TEA's 2014-15 to 2018-19 Discipline Reports data through a public information request in February 2019. TEA's PEIMS Standard Reports provided data on student enrollment. We accessed district enrollment data from PEIMS Standard Reports through the following website: https://tea.texas.gov/Reports_and_Data/Student_Data/Standard_Reports/PEIMS_Standard_Reports. Finally, we obtained 2018-2019 student and teacher demographic data from TEA's Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) at <https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/2019/index.html>.

The percentages in this research brief, e.g. discipline population, the percentage of students assigned ISS, etc., resulted from a three step process. First, TEA calculated the total number of public charter students who received each discipline consequence, e.g. ISS, OSS, etc., by year from 2014-15 to 2018-19. TEA then calculated the total number of traditional public school students who received each discipline consequence, by year from 2014-15 to 2018-19. Second, we calculated the total public charter enrollment and then the total traditional public school enrollment, by year from 2014-15 to 2018-19. Third, we divided the total number of public charter students who received each discipline consequence by the total enrollment of public charter students statewide, by year from 2014-15 to 2018-19. We also divided the total number of traditional public school students who received each discipline consequence by the total enrollment of traditional public school students statewide, by year from 2014-15 to 2018-19. Last, to find the percentage of students and teachers by demographic we calculated the average rates by district.

If readers have any questions about the statistics or statements in this brief they may contact Dr. Timothy Mattison at tmattison@txcharterschools.org. Dr. Mattison is TPCSA's Director of Policy and Research.

HOW TO CITE THIS RESEARCH BRIEF IN APA FORMAT:

Mattison, T. & Aguilar, M. (2020). Texas Public Charter School Discipline Practices. *Texas Public Charter Schools Association, Research Brief No. 3.*



3801 South Capital of Texas Highway • Suite 330 • Austin, Texas 78704
advocacy@txcharterschools.org • ph. 512-584-8272

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