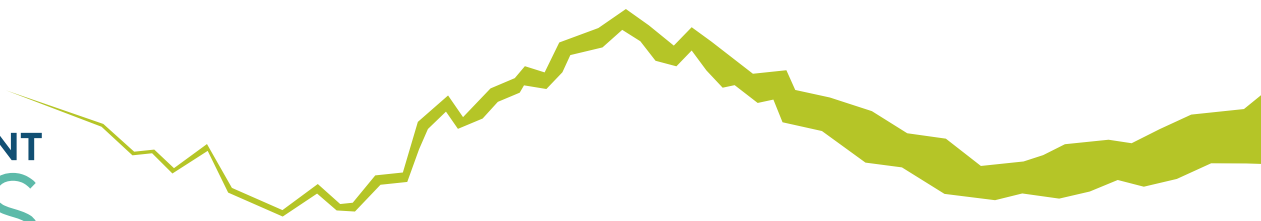


TEXAS' HIDDEN ACHIEVEMENT GAPS



“Top” Schools are Leaving Children of Color Behind

Even at the “best” traditional public school districts (ISDs)—those graded A or B by the Texas Education Agency—students of color have worse academic outcomes than their White peers, often by shockingly wide margins. These gaps have lasted for decades.

KEY FINDINGS

- At the average A or B rated district school, White students are more likely than Black students to meet grade-level standards **by more than 24 percentage points**.
- There are nearly 700 schools with an A or B grade where the gap is **double** that—at least 48 percentage points.
- The gap is particularly pronounced in science, where the average gap between White students and Black students at A and B rated schools is **34 percentage points**.
- At the average A or B-graded campus, White students are more likely than Hispanic students to meet grade-level standards **by 10 percentage points**.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR POLICY

Critics of public charter schools want to block public charter schools from opening within the boundaries of “high-performing” ISDs. They argue that students in highly-rated districts already have the schools they need.

The evidence says otherwise. Policymakers should allow public charter schools to continue making the public education system more fair.

White-Black Achievement Gaps at Top-Rated Schools by Metro Area

Metro Area	# Campuses Graded A or B	Avg. Rate of Students Meeting Grade Level Standards		Avg. Gap for the Metro Area	Gap at Average Campus
		White Students	Black Students		
Austin	67	67.6%	43.8%	23.8%	25.2%
Dallas / Ft. Worth	116	65.2%	46.1%	19.1%	12%
San Antonio	23	64.4%	46.9%	17.5%	16.3%
Houston	118	64.1%	46.7%	17.4%	7.4%
Statewide	4,516	61.7%	41.9%	19.8%	24.4%

White-Hispanic Achievement Gaps at Top-Rated Schools by Metro Area

Metro Area	# Campuses Graded A or B	Avg. Rate of Students Meeting Grade Level Standards		Avg. Gap for the Metro Area	Gap at Average Campus
		White Students	Hispanic Students		
Austin	67	67.6%	53%	14.6%	15.9%
San Antonio	23	64.4%	53%	11.4%	2.5%
Dallas / Ft. Worth	116	65.2%	54.3%	10.9%	0%
Houston	118	64.1%	53.3%	10.8%	4.3%
Statewide	4,516	61.7%	51.8%	9.9%	9.9%

Texas Public Charter Schools are Closing Achievement Gaps

In every subject, Texas public charters have smaller achievement gaps between White students and their peers of color. This is true even when comparing all public charters with only A and B-graded ISD campuses.

At public charters:

- White-Black achievement gaps are **10 to 25 percentage points smaller**
- White-Hispanic achievement gaps have been **reversed** in Science, Math, Social Studies, and Writing
- Hispanic students are actually achieving at **slightly higher levels** than their White peers in these subjects

Statewide Average White-Black Achievement Gap

	All Subjects	Science	Math	Reading	Social Studies	Writing
ISD Campuses Graded A or B	24.4%	34.4%	26%	25.7%	32.9%	25%
All Public Charter Schools	15.2%	9.9%	10.1%	10.4%	12.2%	2.7%

Statewide Average White-Hispanic Achievement Gap

	All Subjects	Science	Math	Reading	Social Studies	Writing
ISD Campuses Graded A or B	9.9%	34.4%	8.5%	7.9%	10.2%	6.1%
All Public Charter Schools	7.9%	9.9%	-5.3%	1.6%	-4.7%	-7.2%

WHAT EXPLAINS PUBLIC CHARTERS' SUCCESS?

1 Students of color in public charters have better access to **teachers of color**.

2 Students of color in public charters get **more instructional time** because administrators suspend them less often.

3 Students of color in public charters attend **smaller than average campuses** where it is easier to build relationships with teachers and school leaders.

4 Students of color in public charters are surrounded by more **college-bound classmates** who promote a culture of achievement.