

# Allow Weighted School Lotteries for Disadvantaged Students

## The Problem

Public charter schools currently must hold random admissions lotteries when the number of students who apply exceeds the number of available seats. Charter schools are not allowed to prioritize educationally disadvantaged students, such as English learners and special education students, in admissions. This means many of these students are unable to enroll in public charter schools because they aren't selected in the random lottery, even if a charter might be the best fit for them. Data shows that English learners and special education students who attend public charter schools are twice as likely to attend college.

## The Solution

Allow public charter schools and ISD schools to use weighted lotteries so that students who are English learners, have special education needs, or are educationally disadvantaged have a better chance of attending the public school that is right for them. Public charter schools in 29 states use weighted lotteries in some form, and many schools report success in using them to serve more educationally disadvantaged students.

## HB 2391 will:

- Authorize both public charter schools and ISD schools to use "weighted" admissions lotteries that set aside a certain percentage of seats for educationally disadvantaged students – increasing the likelihood these students receive seats at schools that will set them up for success.
- Help more students attend the school that best meets their individual needs.

"Because my son has Autism and ADHD, my top priority was the quality of education he would receive. After looking at other schools, I chose YES Prep charter school. At YES Prep, the teachers showed him support and patience. He was given speech therapy, modified studies, and he learned social skills. The school took him to visit both in-state and out-of-state colleges. To build his skills he did community service at an animal shelter and the YMCA. He even worked at the school coffee shop. YES offered a theater study where he flourished, and it helped him decide his career. Thanks to YES Prep charter school my son, Seth, is attending Houston Community College with a major in film editing."

ANDREA AMADOR  
*parent*