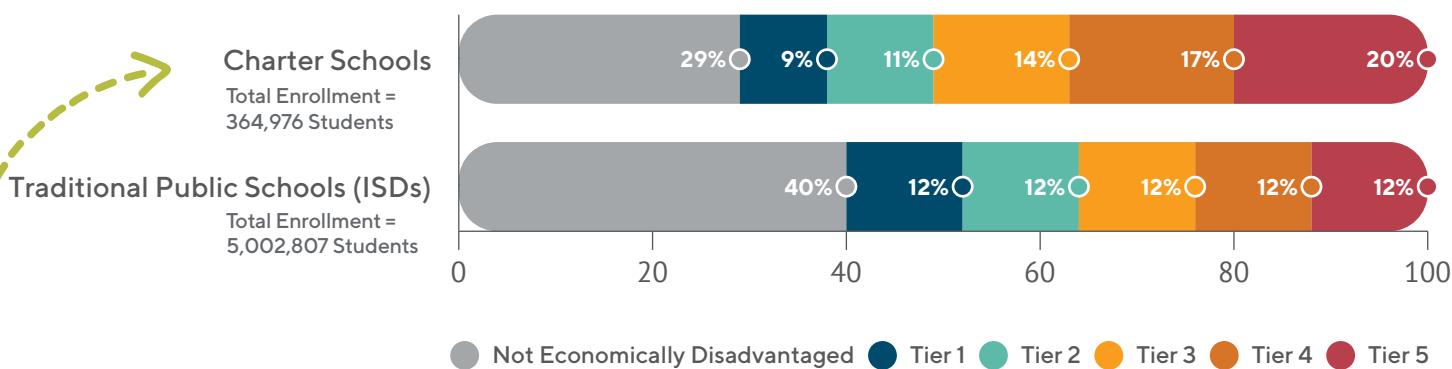


# The Lowest-Income Texas Families Are Choosing Public Charters

Poverty prevents millions of Texans from meeting their basic needs for food, shelter and healthcare. And it impacts children even more acutely than adults. Alarmingly, the Lone Star State had the 10th-highest child poverty rate in the country in 2019 at 21.1%. Our lowest-income students need access to public schools that can fully support them. Many are choosing to attend public charter schools—where they're thriving.

## Socioeconomic Census Block Tiers for Economically Disadvantaged Students: 2020–21



The data shows us that public charter schools serve not only a **higher rate of economically disadvantaged** students overall, but also a larger share of students from the most **profoundly disadvantaged** neighborhoods.

Tier	Median Household Income	% Home Ownership	% Single Parent	Educational Attainment Score <sup>3</sup>
Tier 1	\$114,358	89%	11%	70%
Tier 2	\$68,724	75%	19%	60%
Tier 3	\$52,944	64%	27%	54%
Tier 4	\$40,507	54%	37%	48%
Tier 5	\$28,705	37%	53%	42%

## A Closer Look at Poverty in Texas Public Schools

Traditionally, we've measured the economic disadvantage of students at a given public school using the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

This statistic doesn't tell the whole story. As a recent Stanford study<sup>1</sup> pointed out: "*The experiences of children living in families with incomes just below the poverty line are likely quite different from those living in extreme poverty.*"

Fortunately, Texas' innovative use of Census block group data<sup>2</sup> to capture more detailed information about student neighborhoods gives us visibility into the true depth of poverty between schools. This data categorizes students into five "tiers" of economic disadvantage based on where they live, where Tier 5 represents the highest-need students.

1. See: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5615613/>

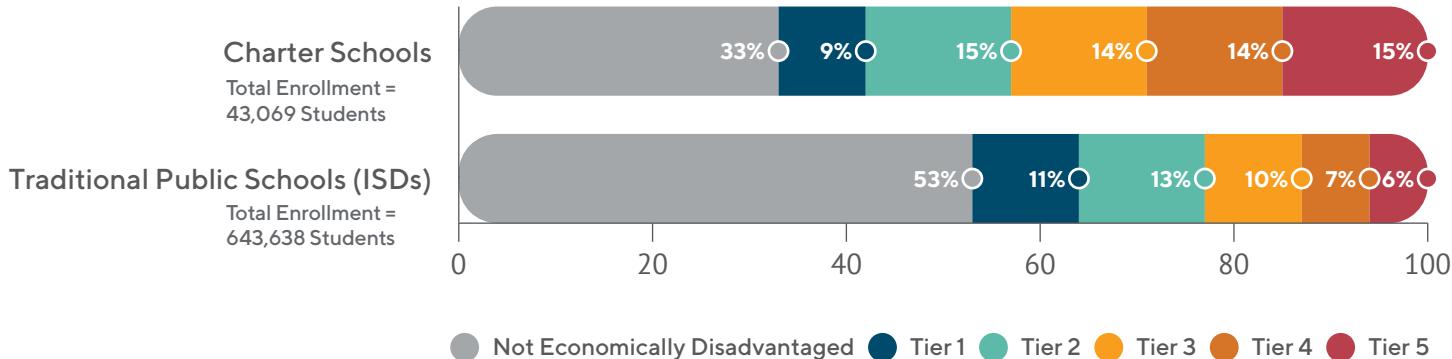
2. An explanation of this data and more details can be found here: <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/HB%203%20Master%20Deck%20Final.pdf>

3. Educational attainment scores reflect the level of education completed by adults, with higher weights assigned to more education, based on U.S. Census data

# At Central Texas Public Charter Schools, Low-Income Students Thrive

At Central Texas charter schools, 29% of students are from the lowest-income neighborhoods – compared to 13% at all other public schools. Central Texas charter schools are helping these students thrive by supporting them academically, helping them discover and explore their passions, and providing deeply personalized support.

## Socioeconomic Census Block Tiers for Economically Disadvantaged Students 2020-21 CENTRAL TEXAS REGION



According to a study by Stanford University,<sup>4</sup> low-income students at Austin public charter schools made more academic progress than their peers statewide—reading gains equivalent to having 62 extra days of learning and math gains equivalent to 50 extra days.

Here are two ways public charter schools in Central Texas help these students succeed:



Charter schools in Central Texas look out for the whole child – and that includes supporting families. At **Austin Achieve Public Schools**, families have access to guidance counseling and social services on campus. They receive free bi-weekly meal kits with high-nutrition fruit, vegetables, and meats. And they can participate in lecture series at no cost on topics such as financial literacy.

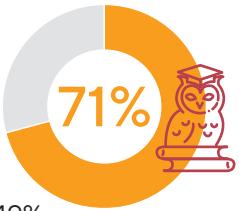
Central Texas public charter schools also provide opportunities for the community's littlest learners – closing potential achievement gaps before they start. At **Cedars Academy** in Austin, 100% of pre-K students were from low-income households in 2020-21 and 100% left the program prepared academically for kindergarten. Through imaginative play, students began developing language skills and experimenting with scientific concepts.

### Across the state:

Charter schools receive  
**\$700**  
less per pupil

Despite serving a higher rate of the lowest-income students, **Texas public charter schools receive an average of \$700 less per pupil than traditional public schools**. They are stretching every dollar to provide even more support for these students.

In 2019, 59% of Texas public charter school high school students met the criterion for college readiness in math, compared with 49% in traditional public schools. In that same year, **71% of Texas public charter school high school students met the criterion for college readiness in reading**, compared with 61% in traditional public schools.



4. See City Study 2021: Austin here: <https://credo.stanford.edu/city/austin-tx/>