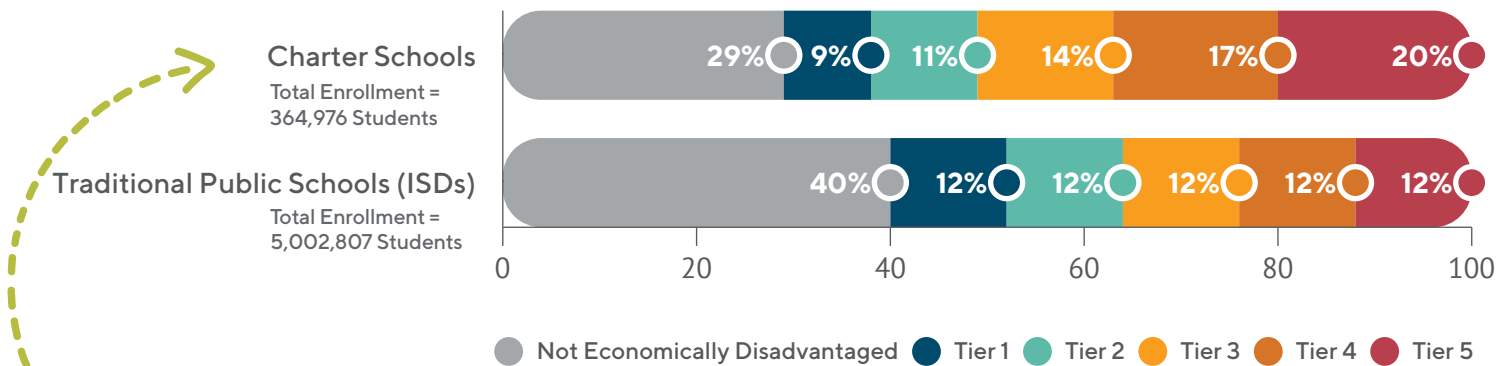


The Lowest-Income Texas Families Are Choosing Public Charters

Poverty prevents millions of Texans from meeting their basic needs for food, shelter and healthcare. And it impacts children even more acutely than adults. Alarming, 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 who are the most **profoundly disadvantaged**.

Tier	Median Household Income	% Home Ownership	% Single Parent	Educational Attainment Score ³
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 study¹ 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 data² 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

Public Charter Schools Are Giving Low-Income Students Hope

Texas public charter schools are helping more of the state's lowest-income students thrive by supporting them academically, helping them discover and explore their passions, and providing deeply personalized support.



That includes students like **Trayvion Newton**, the 2021 salutatorian from Legacy Preparatory Charter Academy - Mesquite West. Trayvion lived with his mother in a homeless shelter when he was younger — a dark period in his life.

But at school, educators helped him forge his identity as a “creative, innovative, and curious scholar.” He thrived — becoming president of the student council, captain of the robotics club, and excelling in the classroom.

Public charter school communities also look out for the whole child. That includes forging close connections with families and advocating on behalf of broader community needs, so that obstacles to learning outside of school can be nimbly and urgently addressed.

For example: At Compass Rose Public Schools, based in San Antonio, educators quickly helped connect families with resources to help navigate the pandemic and last year's Winter Storm Uri — both of which led to lost wages, housing insecurity and other challenges. Compass Rose was also among many charter schools that partnered with a local food bank to distribute meals.

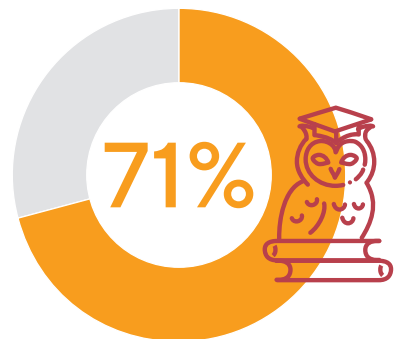
“I remember the days of my life where times weren't as bright or successful. I recall the dingy white walls, stale musty smells, and old worn furniture from when I was seven years old. I was forced to get up at 5:00 a.m., frightened of showering in a public bathroom with strangers... Despite the fact that this was a terrible moment in my life, I refuse to let it define who I am; a creative, innovative, and curious scholar.”

TRAYVION NEWTON

Legacy Preparatory Charter Academy 2021 salutatorian

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.