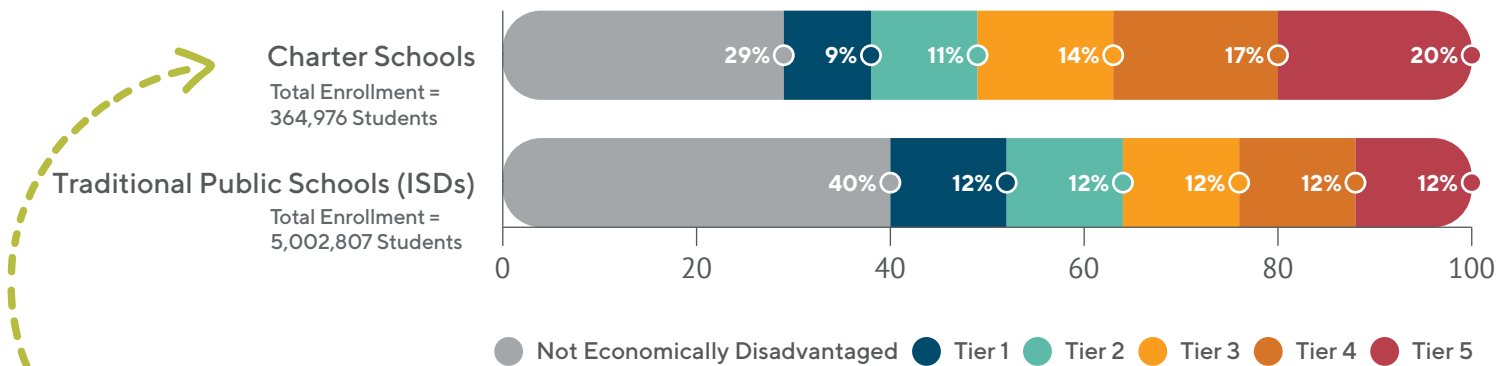


The Lowest-Income Texas Families Are Choosing Public Charters

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 from the most **profoundly disadvantaged** neighborhoods.

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/>

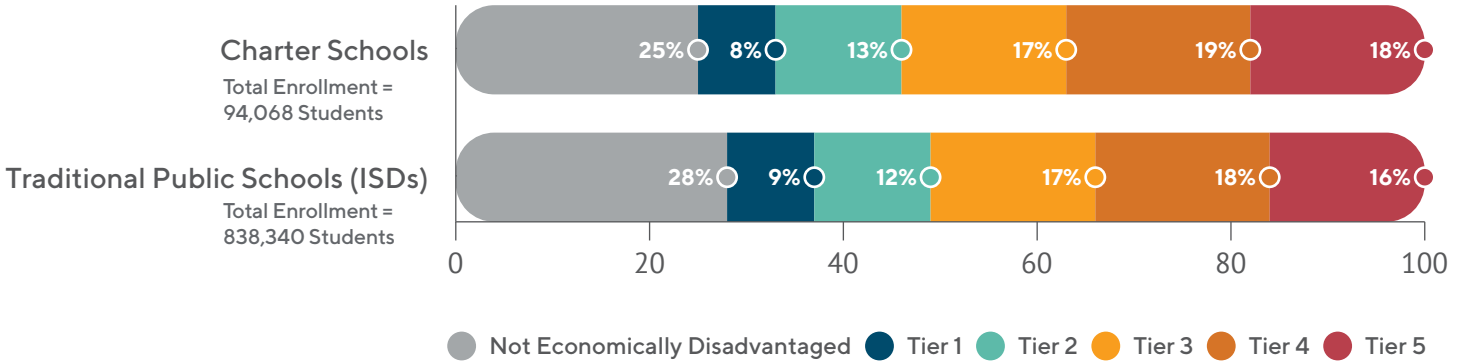
2. An explanation of this data and more details can be found here: <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/HB%203%20Master%20Deck%20Final.pdf>

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

At South Texas Public Charter Schools, Low-Income Students Thrive

At South Texas charter schools, 37% of students are from the lowest-income neighborhoods — compared to 34% at all other public schools. South Texas charter schools are helping more of 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 SOUTH TEXAS REGION



Charter schools in South Texas look out for the whole child — and that includes supporting families. At **Compass Rose Public Schools**, based in San Antonio, educators quickly helped connect their community with resources to help navigate the pandemic and 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.

Educators at **Vanguard Academy** — whose seven campuses located near the US-Mexico border are among the highest-performing in Texas — use creative instructional methods to help students from low-income neighborhoods excel. For example: Vanguard’s blended learning approach to math has been so successful that the Texas Education Agency awarded the district a Math Innovation Zone grant.

“Charter schools like Vanguard Academy get to work collaboratively with parents to make sure all students and young people get out of poverty,” said Superintendent Dr. Narciso Garcia. “We place children, young people, and families first.”

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.

