

Annual Dropout and Longitudinal Graduation Rates in Texas Charter Schools, 2009-2016

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In the 2015-16 school year, the annual dropout rate for grades 9-12 was 5.7 percent for charter school districts compared to 1.7 percent for traditional school districts and the state average of 2.0 percent. The longitudinal graduation rate for the Class of 2016 was 61.8 percent for charter districts compared to 90.4 percent for traditional school districts and the state average of 89.1 percent.

About 15.2 percent of Texas students in grades 9-12 in 2015-16 were educated in charter schools compared to 84.8 percent in traditional school districts. A total of 81,256 of Texas' 1.5 million high school students in grades 9-12 attended charter schools operated by 121 charter districts running about 281 charter school campuses.

Brief Background of Charter Schools in Texas

Since the authorization of charter schools in Chapter 12 of the Texas Education Code in 1995, Texas has awarded 325 open-enrollment charters, 171 of which were operational in 2015-16 (see box at right). By definition, charter schools are publicly-funded educational institutions that are given greater flexibility and exemptions from some instructional and academic policies and rules but are required to maintain fiscal and academic accountability (Texas Education Code, Chapter 12, Section 12.054).

Chapter 12 of the Texas Education Code authorizes four classes of charter schools: (1) Home-rule school district charters (Subchapter B); (2) campus or campus program charters (Subchapter C); (3) open-enrollment charters (Subchapter D); and (4) college or university or junior college charters (Subchapter E). Multiple charter schools can be operated by a single charter recipient.

The charter schools in Texas are mostly classified as open-enrollment charters. For the 2015-16 school year, Texas awarded its 22nd generation of open-enrollment charter schools (see box on Page 36). With the passage of Senate Bill 2 in 2013, the authorizer of open-enrollment charter schools was changed from the State Board of Education (SBOE) to the Texas Education Commissioner.

Section 12.101 (b-1) of Chapter 12 set forth the maximum number of open-enrollment charters that could be granted by the commissioner. These specifications included the following:

- (1) 215 charters through the fiscal year ending August 31, 2014;
- (2) 225 charters beginning September 1, 2014;

Status of Open-Enrollment Charters, 2017

Status	Count
Total Awards	325
Total Closures	149
Default Closures	54
Revocations	36
Expirations/Non-Renewals	18
Voluntary Closures	95
Surrenders/Returns	52
Consolidations	43
Active Charters	176
Active but not operating	5
Operational Charters	171

Source: Texas Education Agency, Division of Charter School Administration
Intercultural Development Research Association, 2017.

See the full report:
**Texas Public School
Attrition Study 2016-17**

<https://budurl.me/IDRAatrnr17w>

Includes resources and
infographics

Open-Enrollment Charters Awarded, 1996-2017

Generation	Year	Total Awards
First	1996	20
Second	1997	41
Third	1998-99	109
Fourth	2000	19
Fifth	2000	5
Sixth	2000	16
Seventh	2001	13
Eighth	2002	2
Ninth	2003	6
Tenth	2004	5
Eleventh	2005	13
Twelfth	2006	11
Thirteenth	2007	13
Fourteenth	2008	9
Fifteenth	2010	7
Sixteenth	2011	8
Seventeenth	2012	8
Eighteenth	2013	3
Nineteenth	2014	5
Twentieth	2015	5
Twenty-First	2016	2
Twenty-Second	2017	5
Total		325

Source: Texas Education Agency, Division of Charter School Administration

Intercultural Development Research Association, 2017.

Annual Dropout Rate, Grade 9-12, Charters and Traditional Districts

	Students		Dropouts		Annual Dropout Rate
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Charters					
2009	42,681	3.1	5,098	13.2	11.9%
2010	54,023	3.7	4,528	13.6	8.4%
2011	57,166	3.9	3,838	11.7	6.7%
2012	60,861	4.1	4,634	13.5	7.6%
2013	64,537	4.3	4,462	14.1	6.9%
2014	69,562	4.5	4,276	13.6	6.2%
2015	75,939	4.8	4,218	13.7	5.6%
2016	81,256	5.0	4,654	15.2	5.7%
Traditional Districts					
2009	1,313,568	96.9	33,622	86.8	2.6%
2010	1,398,489	96.3	28,738	86.4	2.1%
2011	1,413,551	96.1	29,018	88.3	2.1%
2012	1,424,003	95.9	29,689	86.5	2.1%
2013	1,438,908	95.7	27,084	85.9	1.9%
2014	1,460,211	95.5	27,138	86.4	1.9%
2015	1,494,505	95.2	26,659	86.3	1.7%
2016	1,531,718	95.0	26,045	84.8	1.7%
State					
2009	1,356,249	100	38,720	100	2.9%
2010	1,377,330	100	33,235	100	2.4%
2011	1,394,523	100	32,833	100	2.4%
2012	1,407,697	100	34,285	100	2.4%
2013	1,428,819	100	31,509	100	2.2%
2014	1,454,842	100	31,384	100	2.2%
2015	1,495,294	100	30,853	100	2.1%
2016	1,537,216	100	30,683	100	2.0%

Note: The counts for charters and traditional districts do not add to state count because some students may have attended more than one district but was counted only once in the state total. Percentage totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: Texas Education Agency, Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16

Intercultural Development Research Association, 2017.

- (3) 240 charters beginning September 1, 2015;
- (4) 255 charters beginning September 1, 2016;
- (5) 270 charters beginning September 1, 2017;
- (6) 285 charters beginning September 1, 2018; and
- (7) 305 charters beginning September 1, 2019.

The application for the 23rd generation of open-enrollment charters for the 2017-18 school year was opened for September 15 and September 22. Thirteen charters were up for renewal for 2017-18.

Grade 9-12 Annual Dropout Data

TEA collects and reports annual dropout data for traditional public schools and charter schools. Summary data are included in its annual publication, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools*. For the 2015-16 school year, the annual dropout rate for grade 9-12 charter schools was 5.7 percent, a decrease of 0.1 percentage points from 2014-15. Of the 81,256 students enrolled in grades 9-12, a total of 4,654 dropped out of school in 2015-16.

The annual dropout rate in charter schools was 11.9 percent in 2008-09 and 15.2 percent in 2015-16. The annual dropout rate in traditional public schools was 2.6 percent in 2008-09 and 1.7 percent in 2015-16.

Grade 9-12 Longitudinal Graduation Data

Based on data from TEA, the ninth grade four-year longitudinal graduation rates for charter school students ranged from a low of 35.3 percent in 2008-09 to a high of 61.8 percent in 2015-16 (see graphs at right and table on Page 38). During

this same period, the rates in traditional public schools ranged from a low of 82.4 percent in 2008-09 to a high of 90.4 percent in 2015-16.

For the Class of 2016 in charter schools, 61.8 percent were reported as graduates, 16.9 percent were reported as continuing in schools, 1.9 percent were reported as receiving a GED, and 19.4 percent were reported as school dropouts. In traditional public schools, 90.4 percent were reported as graduates, 3.6 percent as continuing, 0.4 percent as GED recipients, and 5.5 percent as dropouts. The state summary for both types of schools combined showed that for the Class of 2016, 89.1 percent were reported as graduates, 4.2 percent as continuing, 0.5 percent as GED recipients, and 6.2 percent as dropouts.

Performance Data

After over two decades of charter school presence in Texas, the results show that, in the area of student performance, charters have a greater percentage of “improvement required” schools than traditional public schools. According to the 2016 TEA accountability ratings, nearly one out of every 10 charter operators (9.8 percent) received “improvement required” ratings compared to only one out of every 25 public school districts (3.8 percent) (see table on Page 39).

Nearly one out of every five charter campuses (22.9 percent) failed to achieve “meet standard” or the lower “alternative standard,” compared to about one of every 25 traditional public schools (see table on Page 40).

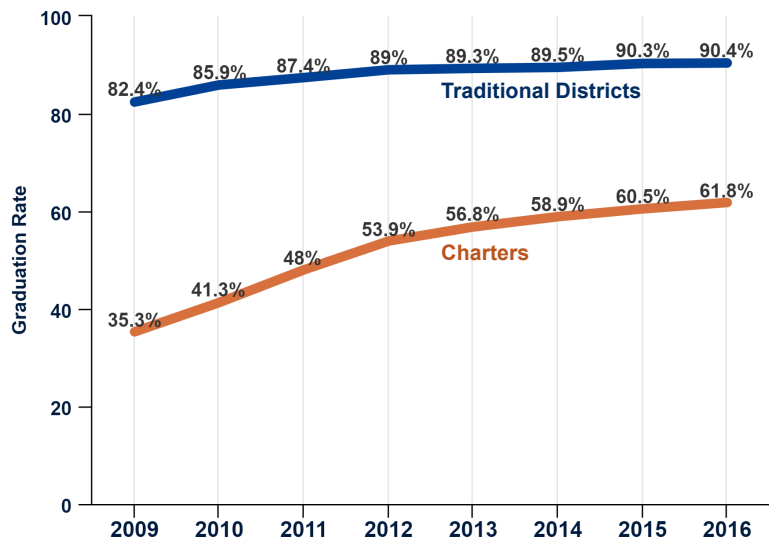
These results are relatively consistent over the last four years.

Summary

Publicly funded open-enrollment charter schools have been in operation in Texas since 1996, following the Texas Legislature’s passage of Chapter 12 of the Texas Education Code. Charter schools have higher annual dropout rates and lower four-year graduation rates than traditional public schools. While some charter schools serve some of the students in highest need, analysis of TEA data for 2016-17 statewide reveals that there is very little difference in the percentage of students served who are considered at risk of dropping out: 50 percent in traditional schools compared to 52 percent in charter schools.

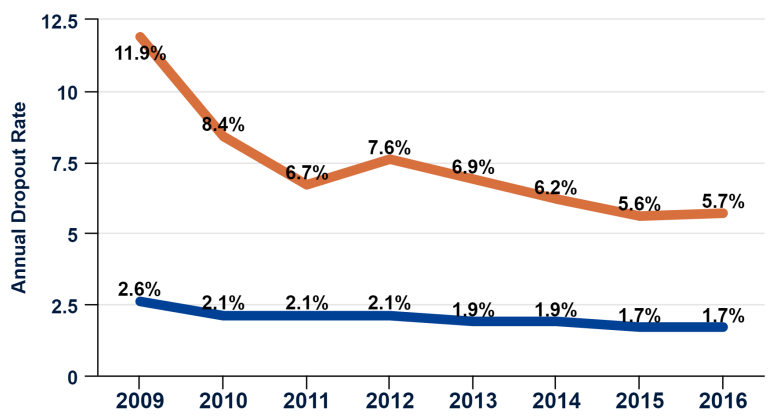
In October 2015 under the new federal administration, the State of Texas received a large

Grade 9 Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation Rates



Note: Percentage totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Data source: Texas Education Agency, Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16. Intercultural Development Research Association, 2017.

Grade 9 Four-Year Longitudinal Dropout Rates



Note: Percentage totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Data source: Texas Education Agency, Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16. Intercultural Development Research Association, 2017.

Grade 9 Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation and Dropout Rates, Class of 2009 to Class of 2016

	Number in Class	Graduated Number	Rate (%)	Continued Number	Rate (%)	Received GED Number	Rate (%)	Dropped Out Number	Rate (%)
Charters									
2009	11,741	4,145	35.3	3,119	26.6	785	6.7	3,692	31.5
2010	11,285	4,658	41.3	2,664	23.6	718	6.4	3,245	28.8
2011	11,685	5,605	48.0	2,551	21.8	701	6.0	2,828	24.2
2012	11,678	6,297	53.9	2,200	18.8	653	5.6	2,528	21.6
2013	13,005	7,387	56.8	2,293	17.6	545	4.2	2,780	21.4
2014	13,678	8,058	58.9	2,201	16.1	480	3.5	2,939	21.5
2015	14,366	8,685	60.5	2,382	16.6	386	2.7	2,913	20.3
2016	15,741	9,733	61.8	2,662	16.9	295	1.9	3,051	19.4
Traditional Districts									
2009	296,686	244,355	82.4	23,548	7.9	3,619	1.2	25,164	8.5
2010	302,794	259,974	85.9	19,868	6.6	3,209	1.1	19,743	6.5
2011	307,903	268,957	87.4	17,206	5.6	2,755	0.9	18,985	6.2
2012	305,080	271,481	89.0	13,550	4.4	2,545	0.8	17,504	5.7
2013	313,579	281,911	89.9	12,667	4.0	2,147	0.7	18,854	6.0
2014	319,608	286,182	89.5	12,286	3.8	2,102	0.7	19,038	6.0
2015	325,260	293,577	90.3	11,631	3.6	1,608	0.5	18,444	5.7
2016	334,943	302,872	90.4	12,100	3.6	1,412	0.4	18,559	5.5
State									
2009	308,427	248,500	80.6	26,667	8.6	4,404	1.4	28,856	9.4
2010	314,079	264,632	84.3	22,532	7.2	3,927	1.3	22,988	7.3
2011	319,588	274,562	85.9	19,757	6.2	3,456	1.1	21,813	6.8
2012	316,758	277,778	87.7	15,750	5.0	3,198	1.0	20,032	6.3
2013	328,584	289,298	88.0	14,960	4.6	2,692	0.8	21,634	6.6
2014	333,286	294,240	88.3	14,487	4.3	2,582	0.8	21,977	6.6
2015	339,626	302,262	89.0	14,013	4.1	1,994	0.6	21,357	6.3
2016	350,684	312,605	89.1	14,762	4.2	1,707	0.5	21,610	6.2

Source: Texas Education Agency, Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16

Intercultural Development Research Association, 2017.

Accountability Ratings for Traditional School Districts and Charter Districts

Rating	2013		2014		2015		2016	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
School Districts, Including Charter Districts								
Met Standard/Alternative Standard	1,140	92.8	1,107	90.2	1,152	94.5	1,137	94.2
Met Standard	1,105	90.0	1,073	87.4	1,120	91.9	1,107	91.7
Met Alternative Standard	35	2.9	34	2.8	32	2.6	30	2.5
Improvement Required	76	6.2	110	9.0	55	4.5	57	4.7
Not Rated	11	0.9	10	0.8	12	1.0	12	1.0
Not Rated: Data Integrity Issues	1	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.1
Total	1,228	100.0	1,227	100.0	1,219	100.0	1,207	100.0
School Districts, Excluding Charter Districts								
Met Standard/Alternative Standard	979	95.4	949	92.6	983	96.0	983	96.0
Met Standard	979	95.4	949	92.6	983	96.0	983	96.0
Met Alternative Standard	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Improvement Required	46	4.5	76	7.4	39	3.8	39	3.8
Not Rated	1	0.1	0	0.0	2	0.2	1	0.1
Not Rated: Data Integrity Issues	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.1
Total	1,026	100.0	1,025	100.0	1,024	100	1,024	100.0
Charter Districts								
Met Standard/Alternative Standard	161	79.7	158	78.2	169	86.7	154	84.2
Met Standard	126	62.4	124	61.4	137	70.3	124	67.8
Met Alternative Standard	35	17.3	34	16.8	32	16.4	30	16.4
Improvement Required	30	14.9	34	16.8	16	8.2	18	9.8
Not Rated	10	5.0	10	5.0	10	5.1	11	6.0
Not Rated: Data Integrity Issues	1	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	202	100.0	202	100.0	195	100	183	100.0

Source: Texas Education Agency, Comprehensive Biennial Report on Texas Public Schools, 2014 and 2016
Intercultural Development Research Association, 2017.

award from the U.S. Department of Education to expand the state's charter school and school privatization programs. Texas received a grant award of \$38,034,535 for the first and second year with total expected funding of \$59,164,996 over a three-year period (from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, October 2017). Through the grant, the State of Texas plans the expansion of 115 new charter schools. With this expansion, watchful eyes must intensify the review of accountability data for both charter schools and traditional schools.

Resources

- IDRA. (July 21, 2017) Keeping the Public in Public Education, testimony presented for the Senate Education Committee (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association).
- Texas Education Agency. Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency).
- Texas Education Agency. Texas Charter Schools, webpage (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency). https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Schools/Charter_Schools/
- Texas Education Agency. Four-Year Graduation and Dropout Data, Class of 2016, District and Campus-Level

Data (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency).
Texas Education Agency. Annual Dropout Data, 2015-2016, District and Campus-Level Data (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency).

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Accountability Ratings for Traditional Schools and Charter Schools

Rating	2013		2014		2015		2016	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
School Districts, Including Charter Districts								
Met Standard/Alternative Standard	7,207	84.2	7,285	85.0	7,476	86.5	7,684	88.6
Met Standard	6,987	81.7	7,041	82.1	7,206	83.3	7,435	85.7
Met Alternative Standard	220	2.6	244	2.8	270	3.1	249	2.9
Improvement Required	768	9.0	733	8.5	603	7.0	445	5.1
Not Rated	579	6.8	555	6.5	567	6.6	542	6.2
Not Rated: Data Integrity Issues	1	<0.1	1	<0.1	0	0.0	2	<0.1
Total	8,555	100.0	8,574	100.0	8,646	100.0	8,673	100.0
Campuses, Excluding Charter Campuses								
Met Standard/Alternative Standard	6,828	85.3	6,865	86.0	7,004	87.2	7,199	89.5
Met Standard	6,699	83.7	6,723	84.2	6,836	85.1	7,048	87.6
Met Alternative Standard	129	1.6	142	1.8	168	2.1	151	1.9
Improvement Required	670	8.4	636	8.0	537	6.7	382	4.7
Not Rated	505	6.3	484	6.1	492	6.1	461	5.7
Not Rated: Data Integrity Issues	1	<0.1	1	<0.1	0	0.0	2	<0.1
Total	8,003	100.0	7,986	100.0	8,033	100.0	8,044	100.0
Charter Campuses								
Met Standard/Alternative Standard	379	68.7	420	71.4	472	77.0	485	77.1
Met Standard	288	52.2	318	54.1	370	60.4	387	61.5
Met Alternative Standard	91	16.5	102	17.3	102	16.6	98	15.6
Improvement Required	98	17.8	97	16.5	66	10.8	63	10.0
Not Rated	74	13.4	71	12.1	75	12.2	81	12.9
Not Rated: Data Integrity Issues	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	552	100.0	588	100.0	613	100.0	629	100.0

Source: Texas Education Agency, Comprehensive Biennial Report on Texas Public Schools, 2014 and 2016

Intercultural Development Research Association, 2017.