



Is Texas Getting a Good Return on Charter Schools?

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The Texas Latino Education Coalition (TLEC) is a collaborative of organizations and individuals that focus specifically on critical educational issues in Texas and to improve the state of education for Latino students in public schools.

Charter Schools Underperform

The Texas legislature created charter schools in 1995, in part, to improve student learning and to encourage different and innovative learning methods (TEC § 12.001). After 20 years of the Texas charter school “experiment,” the results show that student learning has not improved as a result of charter 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).
- Nearly one out of every four charter campuses (29.9 percent) failed to achieve the “met standard” or the lower “alternative standard,” or were not rated compared to fewer than one out of every 10 public school campuses (10.5 percent).

These results are relatively consistent over the last four years (See 2016 TEA Accountability State Summary, <https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/account/2016/statesummary.html>).

Charter Schools Drain Over \$2 Billion from Public Education

In spite of the dismal performance of charters, over the last 10 years, the Texas Legislature has increased its funding for charter operators from \$200 million to over \$2 billion. Because charter operators have no local tax bases, the state provides 100 percent of funding for maintenance and operations (M&O). This contrasts to the state providing only between 5 percent and 62 percent of funding for Texas urban school districts located in the cities where a substantial number of charter schools exists (estimates based on TEA Spreadsheet produced September 2016).

State Funding of Public Schools and Charter Schools			
Name	Local M&O Collections	M&O State Funding	Percent M&O State Funding
Austin ISD	\$978,564,227	\$348/WADA	5%
Dallas ISD	\$989,869,584	\$1303/WADA	22%
Fort Worth ISD	\$322,331,413	\$3192/WADA	52%
Houston ISD	\$1,605,682,265	\$471/WADA	8%
San Antonio ISD	\$153,431,547	\$3,626/WADA	62%
Charter Schools	\$0	\$5,856/WADA	100%

Charter Schools are Privately-Operated, not Publicly-Operated

Unlike traditional public schools, charter schools are privately operated. While charter schools are identified as “public” schools in statute, private citizens do not elect a local school board. Instead, private operators dictate local policies through their charter.

Every Texas Student Deserves a Well-Supported Local Public School

The best way to support public schools is through equitable and adequate funding for public schools, which must have public oversight and must not divert limited funds to private interests. TLEC asks the legislature to critically review each measure filed this session that would further expand charter schools, including:

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