

# TEXAS CHARTER A ACCOUNTABILITY R

2021–2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Executive Summary

## Background

The first charter schools were established in the United States in 1991 to provide students with a tuition-



Academic Readiness (STAAR®) exams; graduation rates; college, career, and military readiness (CCMR); and Texas Education Agency (TEA) accountability domain scores and overall ratings.

### Attrition Rates

For the purposes of this report, the attrition rate is defined as the percentage of students enrolled in the fall of 2021 who did not return to the same campus in the fall of 2022. Attrition rates for this report were calculated using student-level data provided by TEA.

SBOE-authorized charter school campuses reported higher attrition compared with their matched traditional public school campuses overall (23% vs. 21%) and at each school level: 23% vs. 22% at elementary school campuses; 21% vs. 19% at middle school campuses; and 27% vs. 19% at high school campuses. ISD-authorized charter school campuses also reported higher attrition than matched traditional public school campuses overall (26% vs. 20%). Attrition at ISD-authorized elementary charter school campuses was lower than matched traditional elementary public school campuses (21% vs. 22%) and was higher at middle school campuses (22% vs. 17%) and high school campuses (34% vs. 18%).

### STAAR Results

Analyzed in this report are the percentages of students achieving the Approaches Grade Level standard and Masters Grade Level standard on STAAR-Reading and STAAR-Mathematics exams taken by elementary and middle school students in Grades 3 through 8, the STAAR-Algebra I end-of-course (EOC) exam taken by middle and high school students, and the STAAR-English I and English II EOC exams taken by middle and high school students.

At SBOE-authorized charter school campuses, 67% of students taking the STAAR-Mathematics exams and 76% of students taking the STAAR-Algebra I EOC exam met the Approaches Grade Level standard, compared with 68% of students taking the STAAR-Mathematics exams and 75% of students taking the STAAR-Algebra I EOC exam at matched traditional public school campuses. Lower percentages of students achieved the Masters Grade Level standard on STAAR-Mathematics exams (16% vs. 19%) and the STAAR-Algebra I EOC exam (24% vs. 26%) at SBOE-authorized charter school campuses compared with matched traditional public school campuses. For the STAAR-Reading/English Language Arts (ELA) exams, a higher percentage of students in Grades 3 through 8 at SBOE-authorized charter school campuses achieved the Approaches Grade Level standard on the STAAR-Reading exams (77% vs. 75%), STAAR-English I EOC exam (67% vs. 64%), and STAAR-English II EOC exam (72% vs. 71%) than students at matched traditional public school campuses. A higher percentage of students at SBOE-authorized charter school campuses achieved the Masters Grade Level standard on STAAR-Reading exams (31% vs. 29%) and lower percentages achieved the Masters Grade Level standard on the STAAR-English I EOC exam (10% vs. 11%) and STAAR-English II EOC exam (8% vs. 9%) compared with matched traditional public school campuses.

At ISD-authorized charter school campuses, 59% of students achieved the Approaches Grade Level standard on STAAR-Mathematics exams, compared with 65% of students at matched traditional public school campuses, and 75% of students achieved the Approaches Grade Level standard on the STAAR-Algebra I EOC exam, compared with 71% at matched traditional public school campuses. A lower percentage of students at ISD-authorized charter school campuses achieved the Masters Grade Level standard on STAAR-Mathematics exams (13% vs. 14%) and a higher percentage achieved the Masters Grade Level standard on the STAAR-Algebra I EOC exam (25% vs. 21%) than matched traditional public school campuses. For STAAR-Reading exams, 70% of students achieved the Approaches Grade Level standard at ISD-authorized charter school campuses, compared with 73% of students at matched traditional public school campuses. Higher percentages of students at ISD-authorized charter school

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campuses achieved the Approaches Grade Level standard on the STAAR-English I EOC exam (73% vs. 60%) and STAAR-English II EOC exam (78% vs. 67%) than at matched traditional public school campuses. Equal percentages of students at ISD-authorized charter school campuses and matched traditional public school campuses achieved the Masters Grade Level standard on STAAR-Reading exams (26%), while higher percentages of students at ISD-authorized charter school campuses achieved the Masters Grade Level standard on the STAAR-English I EOC exam (11% vs. 7%) and STAAR-English II EOC exam (9% vs. 6%) compared with matched traditional public school campuses.

### Graduation Rates

SBOE-authorized charter school campuses evaluated under standard accountability provisions had a four-year longitudinal graduation rate of 97%, compared with matched traditional public school campuses, which had a rate of 92%. The four-year longitudinal graduation rate at ISD-authorized charter school campuses was 91%, the same as matched traditional public school campuses. Additionally, four-year longitudinal graduation rates for campuses evaluated under alternative education accountability (AEA) provisions were examined; the graduation rate at SBOE-authorized charter school campuses was 67%, compared with 88% at their matched traditional public school campuses. For ISD-authorized charter school campuses evaluated under AEA provisions, the graduation rate is masked due to the limited number of schools (one) operating under these provisions and was thus ineligible for this analysis.

### College, Career, and Military Readiness Outcomes

Under TEC § 39.053(c) (2022), for accountability purposes, high school graduates can demonstrate readiness for college, a career, or the military through a number of achievements outlined in detail in Appendix A.

SBOE-authorized charter school campuses reported higher percentages of graduates on three CCMR outcomes compared with their matched traditional public school campuses: 42% of graduates from SBOE-authorized charter school campuses met Texas Success Initiative (TSI) college readiness benchmarks in both reading and mathematics, compared with 39% from matched traditional public school campuses; 31% of graduates from SBOE-authorized charter school campuses met the criterion score on an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) exam in any subject, compared with 18% from matched traditional public school campuses; and 5% of special education graduates from SBOE-authorized charter school campuses graduated under an advanced diploma plan, compared with 4% from matched traditional public school campuses. For all other CCMR outcomes, matched traditional public school campuses reported higher percentages of CCMR graduates.

ISD-authorized charter school campuses reported the same or higher percentages of graduates for all except two CCMR outcomes when compared with matched traditional public school campuses. A lower percentage of graduates from ISD-authorized charter school campuses met the criterion score on an AP or IB exam in any subject area (18% vs. 19%), and a lower percentage of graduates from ISD-authorized charter school campuses completed individualized education programs (IEP) and workforce readiness (1% vs. 2%) than matched traditional public school campuses. ISD-authorized charter school campuses and matched traditional public school campuses reported equal percentages of graduates earning a Level I or Level II certificate in any workforce education area (1%), completing an OnRamps dual enrollment course, and qualifying for at least three hours of college credit (6%). For all other CCMR outcomes, ISD-authorized charter school campuses reported higher percentages of CCMR graduates than matched traditional public school campuses.

### TEA Accountability Domain Scores

Under the Texas Accountability Rating System, campuses are scored in three domains—Student Achievement, School Progress (Academic Growth and Relative Performance), and Closing the Gaps—and



was used to identify demographically similar traditional public school campuses as the matched set for comparison, inferences regarding the performance of charter schools relative to traditional public schools cannot be made using this report. In order to suggest the performance of one type of school is consistently better or worse than another, statistical tools controlling for observed and unobserved characteristics influencing performance would need to be in place and inferential statistical analysis employed. Additionally, careful interpretation of the comparisons with COE-authorized and ISD-authorized charter school campuses provided in this report is necessary because of the small number of campuses in each category.

For the purposes of this report, charter schools and their respective campuses are categorized by their original authorizer. Campus or campus program charter schools are reported as ISD-authorized charter schools. Open-enrollment and college, university, or junior college charter school campuses are reported as SBOE-authorized or COE-authorized, depending on the year in which the charter schools were authorized; the COE replaced the SBOE as the state charter authorizer for open-enrollment charter schools in 2013. Since then, campus expansions for charters originally authorized by the SBOE are approved by the COE.

Because of the award of new charters and the expansion of existing charters, this report should be carefully compared with previously published Texas Charter Authorizer Accountability reports. Since 2012, the state of Texas has phased in a new standardized test, STAAR, and performance standards and created a new accountability rating system. The gradual phase-in of the new test and the current accountability system should be taken into consideration when comparing the results of this report to previous reports. Additionally, each year, new charter schools are authorized and new charter school campuses are opened and closed. Thus, Texas Charter Authorizer Accountability reports from two different years contain different subsets of charter schools, and results should be compared with caution. As a final note, although the passage of SB 2 in 2013 resulted in a policy process change in charter school authorization, the reader is cautioned against attributing differences presented in this report solely to this change. Rather, differences may be attributable to other changes occurring over time, such as differences in the charter school applicant makeup, other process changes, and/or changes in leadership at the charter schools—none of which could be accounted for within the scope of this report.