



Specialized Charter Schools for Students with Disabilities

OCTOBER 8, 2024

With the regulatory flexibility afforded to charter schools comes their ability to offer specialized programs by, for example, focusing on a particular pedagogical model or academic content area.

CHARTERS CAN ALSO FOCUS specifically on educating students with disabilities. In this brief, we use the term “specialized charter schools” to refer to charter schools that primarily or entirely focus on educating students with disabilities.

While these specialized charter schools provide families access to programs tailored to specific needs, some policymakers and education stakeholders worry that these programs may not provide sufficient access to general educational settings and meaningful inclusion for students with disabilities.¹ As discussed in Brief #3, the IDEA requires that students with disabilities are educated in the “least restrictive environment,” which both the law and research presume is a general education classroom.

In this final brief we explore the characteristics of the 176 charter schools with a specific focus on students with disabilities.

In this final of six briefs analyzing data from the U.S. Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), covering the 2020–21 school year, we explore the characteristics of the 176 charter schools with a specific focus on students with disabilities. This group, representing 2.3% of charter schools nationwide, is heavily concentrated in a handful of states and is particularly focused on students identified as having autism, emotional disturbances, and intellectual disabilities. With students in these schools spending significantly less time in general education settings, student experiences in specialized charters are fundamentally different in important ways from the experiences of students with disabilities in charter schools on the whole.



¹ Rhim, L. M. (2018, December 13). *Choice and specialization are important levers for parents of students with disabilities*. Flypaper (The Thomas B. Fordham Institute). <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/commentary/choice-and-specialization-are-important-levers-parents-students-disabilities>

The Center for Learner Equity (CLE) is committed to catalyzing student success and eradicating the complex, pervasive, and systematic barriers that prevent students with disabilities from accessing quality educational opportunities and choices, robust support, and inclusive environments. We accomplish this through research, advocacy, coalition formation, and capacity building with national, state, and local partners.

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), maintained and released biennially by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) since 1968, publishes data on leading indicators related to access and barriers to education opportunities from early childhood through grade 12. With each biennial release, CLE analyzes similarities and differences in student populations and student experiences in public charter schools and traditional public schools for students with disabilities. Understanding these national-level data supports success for students with disabilities without regard to educational setting and placement.

The findings shared in this brief are based on data reported in the 2020–2021 CRDC, collected from 97,575 schools. This report uses a data-cleaning methodology that selected a sample of these schools. For more information about the methodology used in these briefs, including a data file and accompanying instructions, [see our methodology brief here](#).

Students with disabilities receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and both or neither of those laws. Unless otherwise noted, statistics in this brief refer to students eligible to receive services under IDEA.

Key Takeaways

- ✓ The number of specialized charter schools slightly decreased from 185 in 2017–2018 to **176** in 2020–2021, representing 2.3% of the 7,568 charter schools in the U.S.
- ✓ 51.7% of specialized charter schools found in the CRDC were in three states: **Florida** (39), **Ohio** (32), and **Texas** (20). Together, specialized charter schools in these three states enrolled 9,656 students, 40.3% of total enrollment in all specialized charter schools.
- ✓ A total of 23,956 students were enrolled in specialized charter schools in 2021, representing 3.6% of charter school students with disabilities and 0.7% of all charter school students. While enrollment of all students in charter schools has more than doubled since 2012, the percentage of students with disabilities in specialized charter schools has remained steady.
- ✓ Specialized charters reported a larger proportion of white students with disabilities and a smaller proportion of Latine students with disabilities enrolled than all charter schools nationally. This gap appears to be closing over time.
- ✓ A larger proportion of students with disabilities in specialized charter schools were identified as having autism, emotional disturbances, and intellectual disabilities than in charter schools generally.
- ✓ The proportion of students with disabilities who spend 80% of the day or more in a general education setting (what the CRDC calls “regular class”) was substantially smaller in specialized charter schools (30.3%) than in charter schools overall (83.1%).
- ✓ The proportion of students with disabilities who received at least one out-of-school suspension was higher in specialized charter schools (2.0%) than in charter schools overall (1.4%). As noted in Brief #4, suspensions across school and student types were substantially lower during the 2020–21 school year.



Key Questions for Policymakers and Researchers

- 1** While the percentage of students with disabilities in specialized charter schools has remained relatively consistent since 2012, the number of students with disabilities in these schools has more than doubled. What draws families to enroll students in specialized charter schools? What types of information are families provided in order to make an informed decision?
- 2** The majority of specialized charter schools do not focus on a single category of disability, and serve students across multiple disability categories. How do services in these schools vary from similar services provided in non-specialized charter schools or traditional public schools?
- 3** Why do some states – particularly Florida, Ohio, and Texas – have significantly more specialized charter schools than others? What state policies, local organizational trends, or other factors might explain this development?
- 4** CRDC data shows substantially fewer specialized charter school students spend their time in inclusive settings than charter school students with disabilities overall. How can specialized charter schools partner with other public schools, both traditional public and charter, to ensure their students have access to general education settings and to regular interaction with non-disabled peers?
 - What does a “general education” setting look like and consist of in a specialized charter environment, and who are the peers with whom students with disabilities have access?
- 5** Despite overall declining suspension rates in 2020–21, out-of-school suspension rates for specialized charter schools remained high for students with disabilities.
 - What explains the differences in discipline rates between these schools and charter schools overall?
 - Would disciplinary policy reforms or changes to school culture and climate practices help students in specialized charters spend more time in the classroom?
- 6** Are students with disabilities who enroll in charter schools that focus solely or primarily on students with a particular disability outperforming their peers enrolled in less specialized settings?

What Are Specialized Charter Schools?

In this brief, we use the term “specialized charter schools” to refer to charter schools that primarily or entirely focus on educating students with disabilities. Charter schools by their nature are often given the flexibility to tailor their programs in a variety of ways: for example, by focusing on career and technical education or offering a dual language program. This brief focuses exclusively on specialized charters that focus on educating students with disabilities.

We identified specialized charter schools in three ways:

- Schools that self-identify as charter schools with a special education focus, with at least 25% of students qualifying for services under IDEA, or
- Charter schools with at least 50% of students qualifying for services under IDEA, regardless of their identification as a special education school.
- Additional schools included based on prior knowledge, research by CLE, identification by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS), or research conducted on other charter schools where at least 25% of students qualified for services under IDEA.

Although 44 states had charter schools in the 2020–2021 CRDC, only 23 states, including the District of Columbia, had specialized charter schools.

These criteria identified 176 total schools operating in 2020–21, of which 174 had data available in the CRDC. While LEAs and charter school systems may represent their data in a variety of ways (for example, some systems may list out separate campuses or grade bands, while others may include these as a single data point) this list includes all relevant schools with a unique identifier (or “COMBOKEY”) listed in the CRDC.

Although 44 states had charter schools in the 2020–2021 CRDC, only 23 states, including the District of Columbia, had specialized charter schools. While CLE has made every attempt to identify all specialized charter schools, limitations to our methodology mean this list may not be exhaustive.

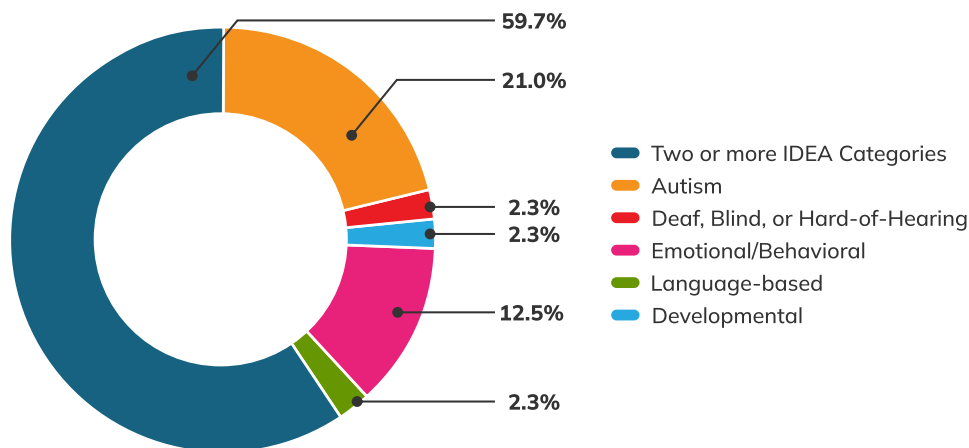


1. Schools by Disability Category and State

CLE collected language from the websites of each of the 176 schools studied here and categorized each school to understand the specific disability categories on which they aim to focus. The largest group of schools — 59.7% — do not specialize in a single disability category; that is, they focus on two or more categories identified by the IDEA. This figure represents a decline of 7.9% when compared with CRDC data on specialized charter schools in 2018.

The largest category of charters specializing in a single disability grew substantially since 2018. Schools for students with autism represent 21% of specialized charter schools overall, an increase of 7.5% since 2018. Other disability categories — including the 12.5% of specialized charter schools educating students identified as having an emotional or behavior-related impairment — remained largely consistent since 2018.

Figure 1. Specialized Charter Schools by Specialization (2021)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

Although 44 states had charter schools in the 2020–2021 CRDC, only 23 states had operational specialized charter schools. More than half of specialized charter schools are located in three states: Florida, Ohio, and Texas.

Different state-level policies and organizational conditions likely account for the predominance of specialized charters in each of the states. In Florida, “controlled open enrollment” policies may allow students greater access to specialized charters than in other states. In Ohio, most specialized charter schools are affiliated with one charter management organization: Summit Academy. In Texas, over half of specialized charter schools are operated in partnership with foster care agencies, rehabilitation centers, residential facilities, maternity homes, and juvenile detention centers.

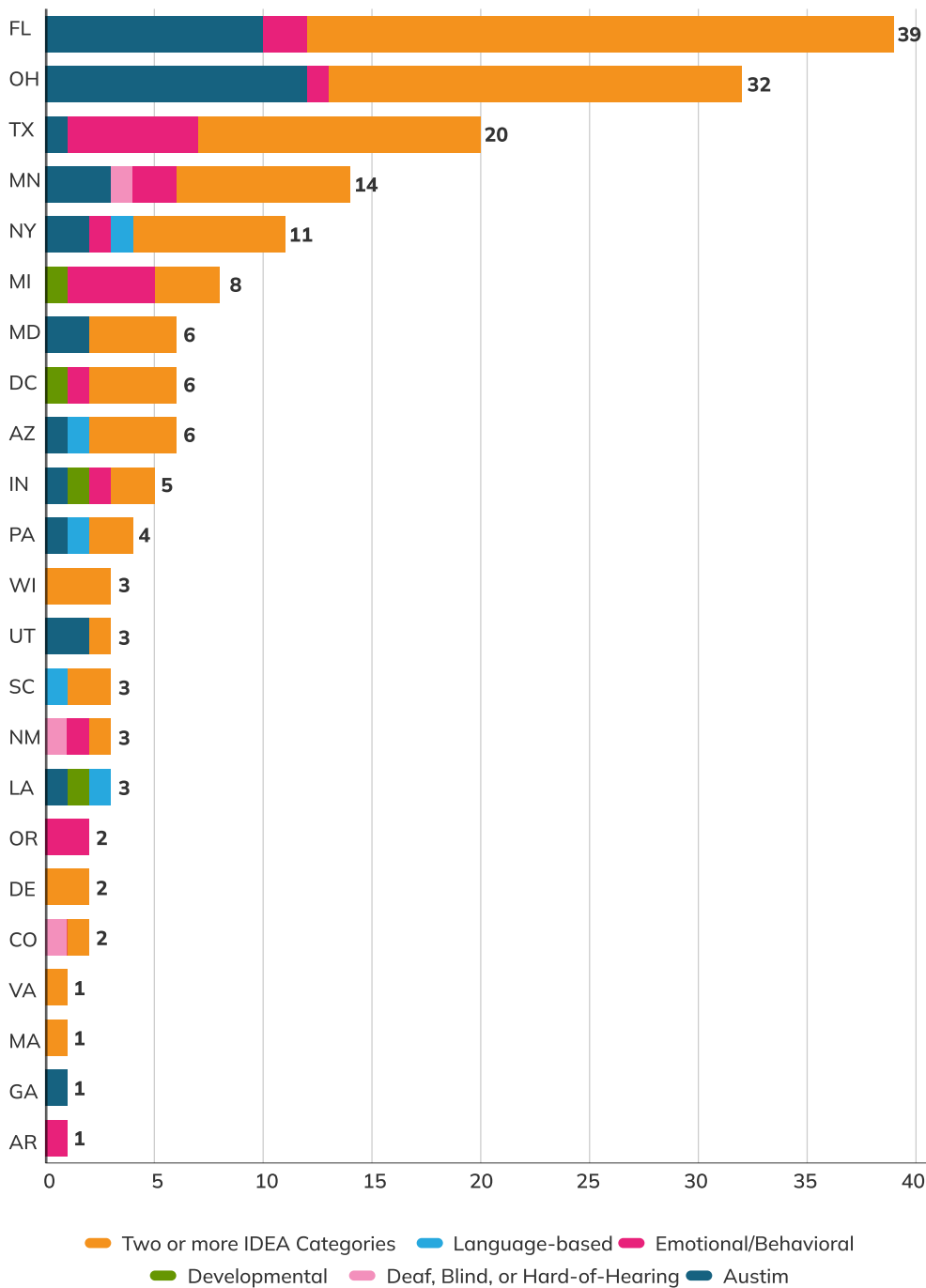
Table 1. Specialized Charter Schools by State

State	2017–18			2020–21		
	# of Specialized Charter Schools	Total Enrollment	IDEA Enrollment	# of Specialized Charter Schools	Total Enrollment	IDEA Enrollment
Florida	48	4,460	3,780	39	5,533	4,948
Ohio	30	3,380	2,119	32	2,992	2,067
Texas	26	1,223	627	20	1,131	576
Minnesota	14	1,454	765	14	1,482	918
New York	7	2,079	1042	11	3,585	1,546
Michigan	8	681	242	8	588	226
Arizona	10	1,461	627	6	909	502
District of Columbia	5	975	606	6	1,488	772
Maryland				6	1,078	915
Indiana	5	816	438	5	636	429
Pennsylvania	4	428	275	4	633	404
Wisconsin	4	330	118	3	96	62
Utah	3	1,606	1,142	3	1,876	1,390
New Mexico	2	420	177	3	243	107
South Carolina	2			3	301	242
Louisiana	1	320	114	3	514	315
Colorado	3	277	129	2	156	96
Delaware	1	319	197	2	270	147
Oregon	1	38	10	2	31	9
Georgia	2	284	161	1	264	121
Virginia	2	74	51	1	24	24
Arkansas				1	37	15
Massachusetts				1	89	34
North Carolina	2	138	47			
New Hampshire	2	120	39			
California	1	151	40			
Idaho	1	517	161			
Tennessee	1					

Five states from our list of specialized charter schools in 2017–18—California, Idaho, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Tennessee—no longer have any specialized charter schools on our list. While some of these schools closed, most have been removed because the majority of their students no longer qualify for services under IDEA. Two states—Arkansas and Massachusetts—were added to the list, either because a new charter school opened or enrollment percentages changed.

Specialized charter schools in each state also focused on different areas of disability. In Florida, a larger percentage of schools than average – 69.2% – focused on two or more categories identified by IDEA. In Ohio, 12 of 32 specialized charter schools – 37.5% – focused specifically on autism. In Michigan, 4 of 8 specialized charters – half – focused on students identified as having an emotional or behavioral-related impairment.

Figure 2. Geographic Locations and Focus Areas of Specialized Charter Schools (2021)



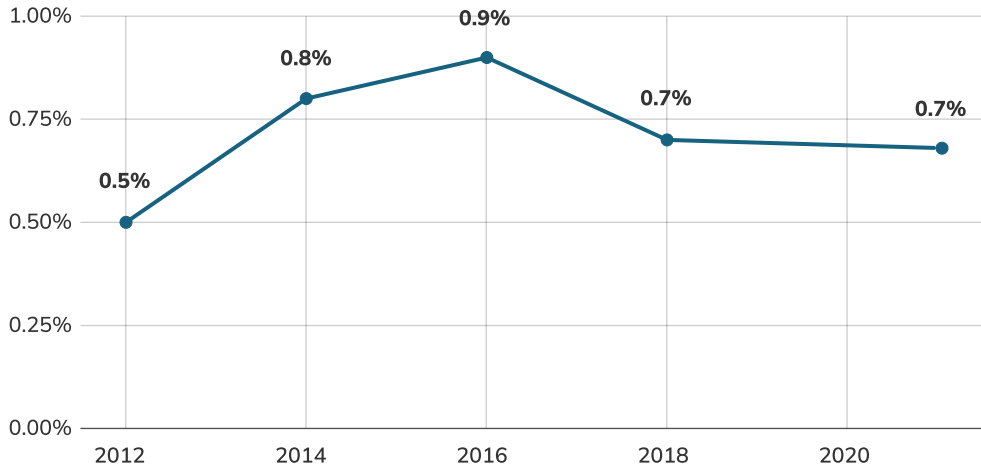
2. Enrollment

From 2012 to 2021, student enrollment in specialized charter schools more than doubled to 23,956 students (0.7% of all charter school students). Of those students, 15,865 were identified as eligible for services under IDEA, making up 3.6% of all charter school students identified as eligible for services under IDEA. While the number of students with disabilities enrolled in specialized charters has increased considerably, the percentage of charter students with disabilities enrolled in specialized charter schools is equivalent to 2012 levels.

Table 2: Enrollment of Students in Specialized Charter Schools Over Time as a Percent of Total Charter School Enrollment (2012–2021)

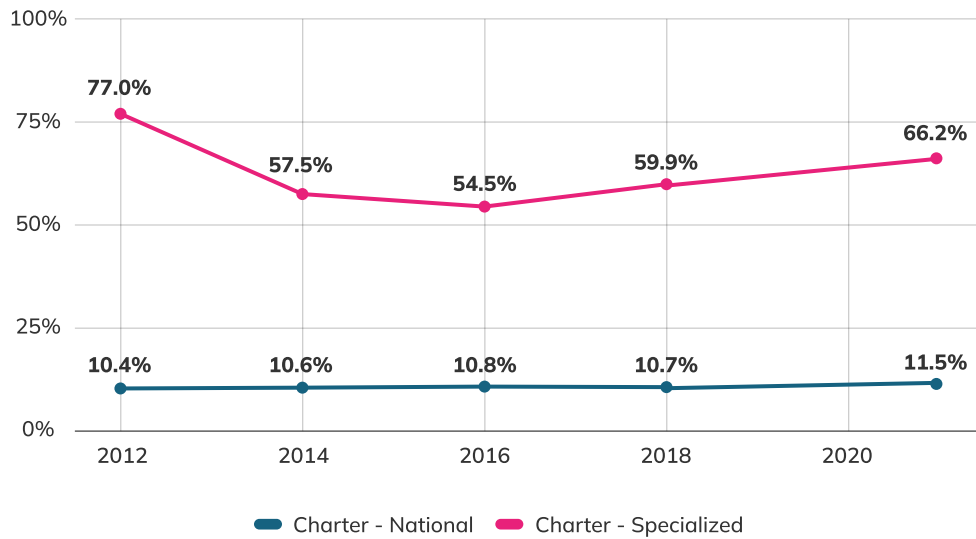
	2012	2014	2016	2018	2021
Total Enrollment	9,009 (0.50%)	19,662 (0.8%)	23,248 (0.9%)	21,551 (0.7%)	23,956 (0.7%)
IDEA Enrollment	6,940 (3.6%)	11,313 (4.60%)	12,672 (4.30%)	12,907 (3.90%)	15,865 (3.60%)
504 Enrollment	114 (0.40%)	407 (0.90%)	611 (1.00%)	494 (0.60%)	859 (0.80%)

Figure 3. Percentage of Enrollment in Specialized Charter Schools Over the Entire Charter Sector Enrollment Over Time (2012–2021)



On average, 66.2% of students in specialized charter schools are eligible for services under IDEA, compared to 11.5% of students in charter schools overall.

Figure 4. Percentage of Students with Disabilities Enrolled in Specialized Charter Schools Over Time (2012–2021)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.



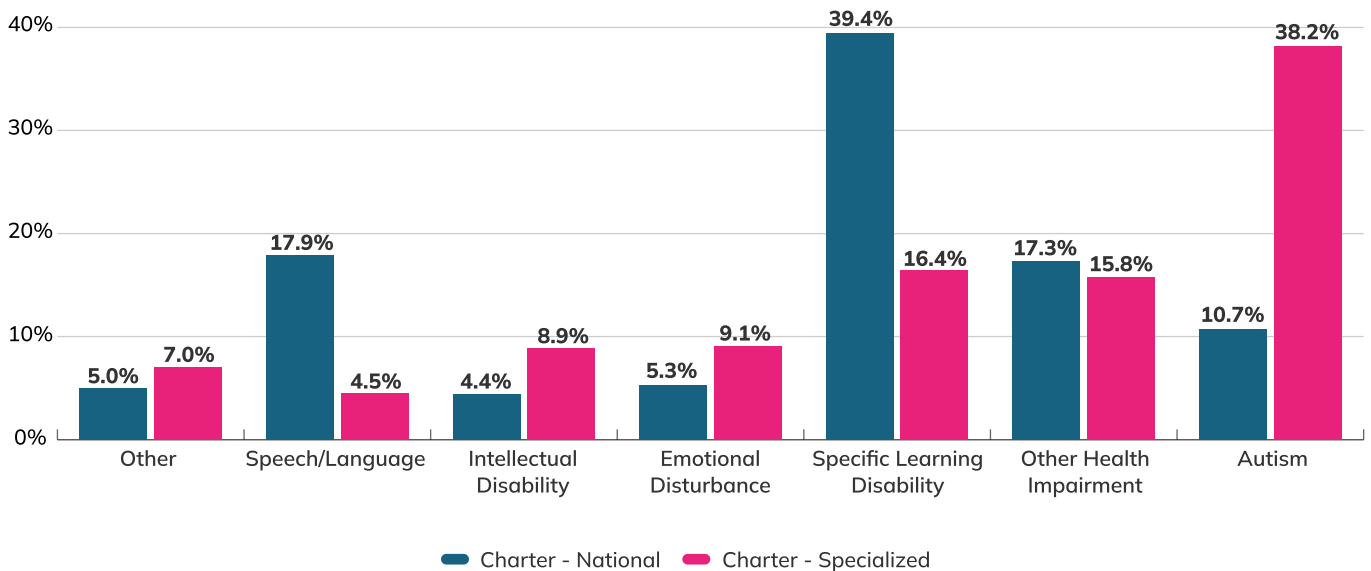


Enrollment by Primary Disability

Specialized charter schools enrolled a significantly higher proportion of students with autism (38.2%) than charter schools overall (10.7%). Specialized charters also enrolled slightly higher proportions of students identified as having intellectual disabilities (8.9%), an emotional or behavioral-related impairment (9.1%), and low incidence disabilities (7.0%).

However, specialized charter schools enroll a significantly lower proportion of students identified as having a specific learning disability (16.4% vs. 39.4%) or identified as having a speech/language impairment (4.5% vs. 17.9%).

Figure 5. Percentage of Students Enrolled in Different Disability Categories in Specialized Charter Schools (2021)

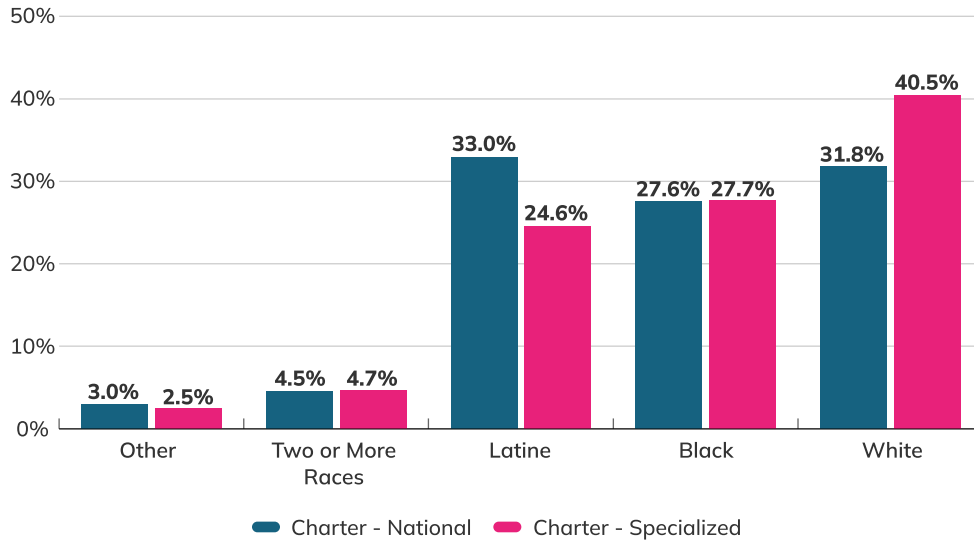


Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Specialized charter schools have a greater proportion of students with disabilities identified as white than charter schools overall (40.5% vs 31.8%). On the other hand, specialized charters have a smaller proportion of Latine students with disabilities (24.6% vs 33%). Other racial and ethnic demographics were similar between both types of schools.

Figure 6. Proportion of Students with Disabilities by Race by Charter Type (2021)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

3. Placement in Less Restrictive Environments

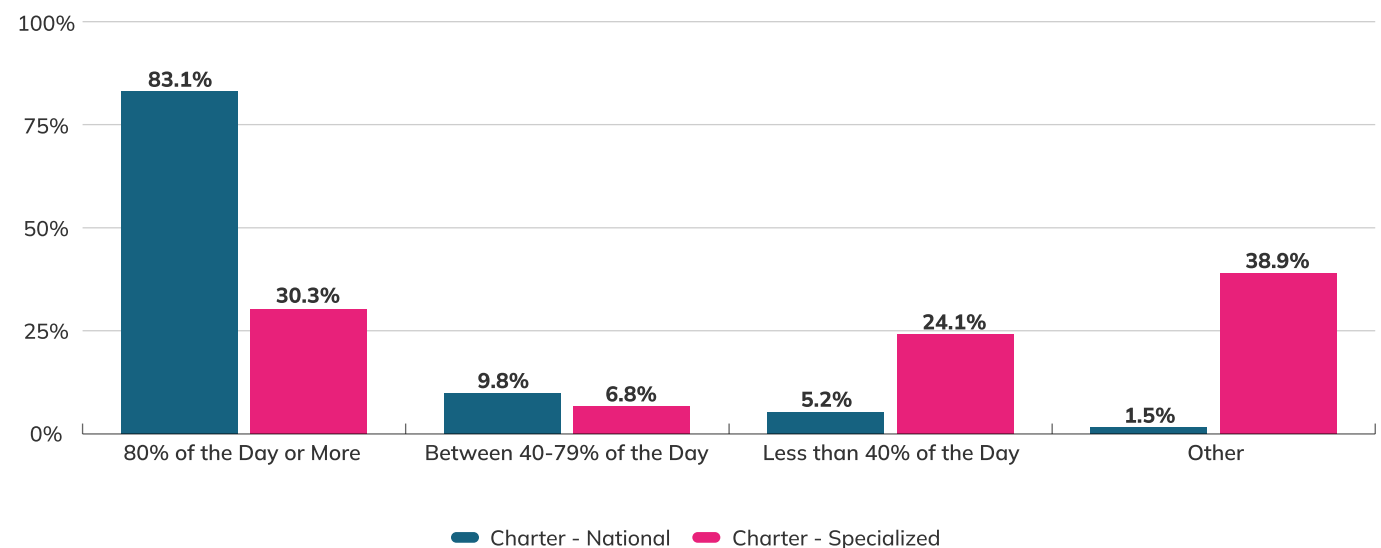
As we write in Brief #3, students with disabilities’ access to inclusive environments with their non-disabled peers is both a requirement of the law and a best practice articulated in educational research. IDEA requires that students with disabilities are educated in the “least restrictive environment,” presumptively defined as a general education classroom alongside non-disabled peers unless a student’s individualized needs suggest a more restrictive environment.

Educating students with disabilities in more inclusive environments has been found to improve their academic achievement and skills acquisition, improve communication skills and social interaction, and increase self-confidence.²

By nature of their design, specialized charter schools may be less able to provide an inclusive environment to students. In specialized charter schools, 30.3% of students with disabilities spent 80% of the day or more in general education settings, compared to 83.1% of students with disabilities in charters overall.

Students in specialized charters were more likely to spend less than 40% of their time in general education settings, and much more likely to spend their time in other settings, including separate schools, parental placement in private schools, correctional facilities, hospital/homebound placements, and residential facilities.

Figure 7. Percentage of Students with Disabilities in Different Placements in Specialized Charter Schools (2021)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

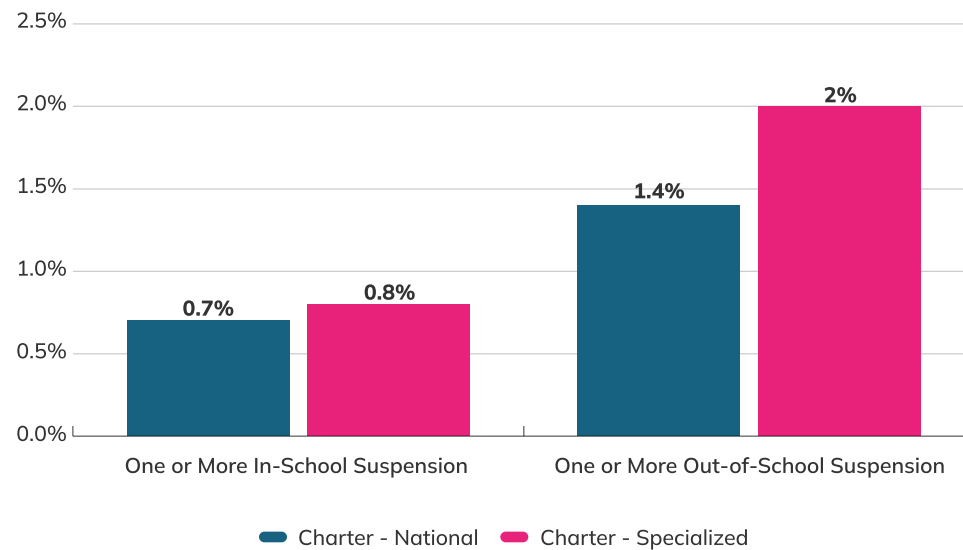
² Wehmeyer, M. L., Shogren, K. A., & Kurth, J. (2021). *The state of inclusion with students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the United States*. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 18(1), 36–43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jppi.12332>

4. Suspensions

Historically, students with disabilities have faced greater rates of discipline than students without disabilities. This often leads to students with disabilities losing more instructional time compared with their peers. While suspension rates in 2020–21 were significantly impacted by a variety of factors (see brief #4 for more information), significant numbers of students with disabilities faced suspensions across both charter and traditional public schools.

In specialized charter schools, 2% of students received at least one out-of-school suspension in 2020–21, compared to 1.4% of students with disabilities in charter schools overall. Rates of in-school suspensions were comparable between the groups: 0.8% of students with disabilities in specialized charter schools received one or more in-school suspensions, compared to 0.7% in charter schools overall.

Figure 8. Percentage of Suspensions among Students with Disabilities in Specialized Charter Schools (2021)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.



Appendix

2020–2021 List of Specialized Charter Schools³

State	School Name	City	Focus	Grades	Total Enrollment	% of Enrolled SWDs
AR	Hope Academy of NW Arkansas	Bentonville	Emotional/Behavioral	K-3	37	41%
AZ	Sweetwater School	Glendale	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	483	33%
AZ	Kelly EDP Program	Mesa	Two or more IDEA Categories	1-9	36	100%
AZ	Sequoia Deaf School	Mesa	Deaf, Blind, or Hard-of-Hearing	K-12	57	98%
AZ	Arizona Autism Charter School	Phoenix	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-5	146	84%
AZ	Arizona Autism Charter School Upper School Campus	Phoenix	Autism	6-11	137	83%
AZ	Northern Arizona Academy For Career Development Taylor	Taylor	Two or more IDEA Categories	10-12	50	28%
CO	Rocky Mountain Deaf School	Denver	Deaf, Blind, or Hard-of-Hearing	PK-12	69	100%
CO	Justice High Charter School	Lafayette	Two or more IDEA Categories	8-12	87	31%
DC	Bridges PCS	Washington	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK-5	403	36%
DC	Kingsman Academy PCS	Washington	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-12	283	43%
DC	Maya Angelou PCS - High School	Washington	Emotional/Behavioral	9-12	179	34%
DC	Monument Academy	Washington	Two or more IDEA Categories	5-8	88	44%
DC	St. Coletta of Greater Washington	Washington	Developmental	Ungraded	243	100%
DC	The Children's Guild DC PCS	Washington	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	292	55%
DE	Positive Outcomes Charter School	Camden	Two or more IDEA Categories	7-12	112	64%
DE	Gateway Lab School	Wilmington	Two or more IDEA Categories	3-8	158	47%

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³ School name, city, state, and focus area were identified through data gathering by CLE, while all other fields are drawn from U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

State	School Name	City	Focus	Grades	Total Enrollment	% of Enrolled SWDs
FL	Achievement Academy	Bartow	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK	151	81%
FL	Gulfstream L.I.F.E. Academy	Boynton	Two or more IDEA Categories	12	64	92%
FL	Easter Seals Child Charter School, Daytona Beach	Daytona Beach	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK	88	100%
FL	The Einstein School	Gainesville	Two or more IDEA Categories	2-8	101	73%
FL	South Florida Autism Charter School	Hialeah	Autism	K-12	239	97%
FL	The Learning Academy at the Els Center of Excellence	Jupiter	Autism	9-12	117	99%
FL	The Learning Center at The Els Center of Excellence	Jupiter	Autism	PK-8	134	99%
FL	UCP Osceola Charter School	Kissimmee	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK-5	193	79%
FL	Victory Ridge Academy	Lake Wales	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK-12	276	97%
FL	Palm Beach School for Autism	Lake Worth	Autism	PK-12	371	99%
FL	Ed Venture Charter School	Lantana	Two or more IDEA Categories	10-12	70	99%
FL	Waypoint Charter Academy	Madison	Emotional/Behavioral	5-12	13	77%
FL	Early Beginnings Academy Civic Center	Miami	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK-4	130	99%
FL	Phoenix Academy of Excellence	Miami	Emotional/Behavioral	8	23	52%
FL	Pepin Academies Pasco	New Port Richey	Two or more IDEA Categories	3-12	323	99%
FL	Access Charter	Orlando	Autism	6-12	135	100%
FL	Aspire Academy Charter	Orlando	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-5	91	34%
FL	Princeton House Charter	Orlando	Autism	PK-5	125	100%
FL	UCP Bailes Community Academy	Orlando	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	330	50%
FL	UCP Charter	Orlando	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK-5	175	77%
FL	UCP East Orange/ Bailes Early Childhood Academy	Orlando	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK	92	84%
FL	UCP Pine Hills Charter	Orlando	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK-5	178	51%

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State	School Name	City	Focus	Grades	Total Enrollment	% of Enrolled SWDs
FL	UCP Transitional Learning Academy High Charter	Orlando	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-12	145	99%
FL	Chautauqua Charter School	Panama City	Two or more IDEA Categories	12	39	95%
FL	Capstone Academy	Pensacola	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK	19	100%
FL	Seagull Academy	Riviera	Two or more IDEA Categories	7-12	38	97%
FL	UCP Seminole Child Development	Sanford	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK-2	129	81%
FL	St. Johns Community Campus	St Augustine	Two or more IDEA Categories	10-12	40	98%
FL	Therapeutic Learning Center	St Augustine	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK	14	93%
FL	The Hope Academy for Autism	Stuart	Autism	3-6	31	100%
FL	The Hope Charter Center for Autism	Stuart	Autism	PK-2	24	100%
FL	Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence	Tampa	Autism	PK-12	141	98%
FL	Pepin Academies	Tampa	Two or more IDEA Categories	3-12	817	100%
FL	Focus Academy	Temple Terrace	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	97	99%
FL	Believers Academy	West Palm Beach	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	107	99%
FL	Connections Education Center of The Palm Beaches	West Palm Beach	Autism	PK-8	77	100%
FL	Potentials Charter School	West Palm Beach	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	31	100%
FL	UCP West Orange Charter	Winter Garden	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK-5	166	74%
FL	Language And Literacy Academy for Learning	Winter Haven	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK-12	199	99%
GA	Tapestry Public Charter School	Atlanta	Autism	6-12	264	46%
IN	Damar Charter Academy	Indianapolis	Developmental	K-12	194	98%
IN	Dynamic Minds Academy	Indianapolis	Autism	K-12	109	99%
IN	The Hope Academy	Indianapolis	Emotional/Behavioral	9-12	21	43%
IN	Canaan Community Academy	Madison	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-6	144	33%

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State	School Name	City	Focus	Grades	Total Enrollment	% of Enrolled SWDs
IN	Options Charter School –Noblesville	Noblesville	Two or more IDEA Categories	Ungraded	168	45%
LA	Louisiana Key Academy	Baton Rouge	Language-based	1-8	404	51%
LA	The Emerge School for Autism	Baton Rouge	Autism	K-2	47	100%
LA	Opportunities Academy	New Orleans	Developmental	12	63	100%
MA	Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School	Lowell	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	89	38%
MD	Frances Fuchs Early Childhood Center	Beltsville	Autism	PK	249	77%
MD	James E. Duckworth Regional Center	Beltsville	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-12	105	97%
MD	Chapel Forge Early Childhood Center	Bowie	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK	227	81%
MD	H. W. Wheatley Early Childhood Center	Capitol Heights	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK	261	81%
MD	Kenmoor Early Childhood Center	Landover	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK	122	92%
MD	C. Elizabeth Rieg Regional Center	Mitcheville	Autism	K-12	114	100%
MI	Rising Stars Academy	Center Line	Two or more IDEA Categories	Ungraded	N/A	N/A ⁴
MI	Macomb Academy	Clinton Township	Developmental	12	51	100%
MI	Clara B. Ford Academy	Dearborn Heights	Emotional/Behavioral	6-12	91	42%
MI	Lighthouse Academy – South	Grand Rapids	Two or more IDEA Categories	3-12	114	53%
MI	Lighthouse Academy – Waalkes	Grand Rapids	Emotional/Behavioral	8-12	48	25%
MI	Lighthouse Academy – Eagle Village	Hersey	Emotional/Behavioral	5-12	56	48%
MI	Virtual Learning Academy of St Clair County	Port Huron	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	206	11%
MI	Fostering Leadership Academy	Redford	Emotional/Behavioral	6-8	22	73%
MN	Schoolcraft Learning Community Charter School	Bemidji	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	167	25%
MN	Pease Academy	Bloomington	Emotional/Behavioral	10-12	27	33%
MN	Minnesota New Country Elementary	Henderson	Emotional/Behavioral	K-6	86	34%

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⁴ Rising Stars Academy does not appear in the 2020–21 CRDC, but is listed in the U.S. Department of Education’s Common Core of Data as a special education-focused charter school.

State	School Name	City	Focus	Grades	Total Enrollment	% of Enrolled SWDs
MN	Minnesota New Country School	Henderson	Two or more IDEA Categories	7-12	129	36%
MN	Minnesota Internship Center - Downtown Campus	Minneapolis	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	117	26%
MN	Spero Academy	Minneapolis	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-6	135	91%
MN	Lionsgate Academy - Minnetonka	Minnetonka	Autism	7-12	153	93%
MN	Rochester Beacon Academy	Rochester	Autism	6-12	171	73%
MN	Metro Deaf School	Saint Paul	Deaf, Blind, or Hard-of-Hearing	PK-12	113	100%
MN	Lionsgate Academy - Lynx Program	Shoreview	Autism	8-12	24	100%
MN	Lionsgate Academy - Shoreview	Shoreview	Two or more IDEA Categories	7-12	142	96%
MN	Lionsgate Academy Aim	Shoreview	Two or more IDEA Categories	12	34	100%
MN	Northern Lights Community School	Warba	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-12	104	38%
MN	Dream Technical Academy	Willmar	Two or more IDEA Categories	7-12	80	30%
NM	Albuquerque Sign Language Academy	Albuquerque	Deaf, Blind, or Hard-of-Hearing	K-12	110	59%
NM	Los Puentes Charter	Albuquerque	Emotional/Behavioral	7-12	133	32%
NM	Robert F. Kennedy High Charter School	Albuquerque	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-12	N/A	N/A ⁵
NY	Neighborhood Charter School - Bronx	Bronx	Two or More IDEA Categories	K-2	212	29%
NY	New Visions Aim Charter High School II	Bronx	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	233	43%
NY	NYC Autism Charter School Bronx	Bronx	Autism	Ungraded	29	100%
NY	New Dawn Charter High School	Brooklyn	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	329	41%
NY	Broome Street Academy Charter High School	New York	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	330	27%
NY	John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter School	New York	Emotional/Behavioral	9-12	347	47%
NY	Neighborhood Charter School of Harlem	New York	Two or More IDEA Categories	K-8	672	33%
NY	New York City Autism Charter School	New York	Autism	1-9	41	98%

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⁵ Data for Robert F Kennedy High Charter School is listed as “missing” in the 2020–21 CRDC.

State	School Name	City	Focus	Grades	Total Enrollment	% of Enrolled SWDs
NY	Opportunity Charter School	New York	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-12	445	65%
NY	Bridge Preparatory Charter School	Staten Island	Language-based	1-3	157	64%
NY	John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School	Staten Island	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-12	790	39%
OH	Steel Academy	Akron	Two or more IDEA Categories	7-12	125	48%
OH	Summit Academy Elementary School – Akron	Akron	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-5	87	72%
OH	Summit Academy Middle School – Akron	Akron	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-8	62	79%
OH	Summit Academy Secondary School – Akron	Akron	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	69	87%
OH	Summit Academy Community School for Alternative Learners – Canton	Canton	Autism	K-8	110	49%
OH	Summit Academy Secondary School – Canton	Canton	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	71	63%
OH	Tomorrow Center	Cardington	Emotional/Behavioral	7-12	98	50%
OH	Summit Academy Community School – Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	76	80%
OH	Summit Academy Transition High School – Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Autism	9-12	58	79%
OH	Oakstone Community School	Columbus	Autism	4-12	78	100%
OH	Summit Academy Community School – Columbus	Columbus	Autism	K-5	53	53%
OH	Summit Academy Middle School - Columbus	Columbus	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-8	40	68%
OH	Summit Academy Transition High School – Columbus	Columbus	Autism	9-12	51	76%
OH	Westwood Preparatory Academy	Columbus	Two or more IDEA Categories	3-12	146	70%
OH	Summit Academy Community School – Dayton	Dayton	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	69	80%

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State	School Name	City	Focus	Grades	Total Enrollment	% of Enrolled SWDs
OH	Summit Academy Transition High School – Dayton	Dayton	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	120	73%
OH	Summit Academy Community School for Alternative Learners – Lorain	Lorain	Autism	K-5	72	53%
OH	Summit Academy School – Lorain	Lorain	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-12	82	79%
OH	Summit Academy Secondary School – Middletown	Middletown	Two or more IDEA Categories	7-12	90	76%
OH	Summit Academy Community School for Alternative Learners – Middletown	Middletown	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-6	73	66%
OH	Summit Academy Community School – Painesville	Painesville	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	32	75%
OH	Summit Academy Community School – Parma	Parma	Autism	1-12	141	70%
OH	Autism Model School	Toledo	Autism	2-12	112	100%
OH	Hope Learning Academy of Toledo	Toledo	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	56	73%
OH	Summit Academy Community School – Toledo	Toledo	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-12	114	72%
OH	The Autism Academy of Learning	Toledo	Two or more IDEA Categories	1-12	50	100%
OH	Summit Academy School for Alternative Learners – Warren Middle & Secondary	Warren	Autism	8-12	81	79%
OH	Summit Academy Community School – Warren	Warren	Autism	K-7	96	59%
OH	Summit Academy Community School for Alternative Learners – Xenia	Xenia	Autism	K-12	168	72%
OH	Summit Academy Secondary School – Youngstown	Youngstown	Two or more IDEA Categories	8-12	184	59%
OH	Summit Academy – Youngstown	Youngstown	Autism	K-7	193	60%
OH	Foxfire Intermediate School	Zanesville	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	135	52%

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State	School Name	City	Focus	Grades	Total Enrollment	% of Enrolled SWDs
OR	Harmony Academy	Lake Oswego	Emotional/Behavioral	10-12	26	27%
OR	Olalla Center	Newport	Emotional/Behavioral	2-5	5	40%
PA	Dr. Robert Ketterer Charter School	Latrobe	Two or more IDEA Categories	7-12	172	60%
PA	Spectrum Charter School	Monroeville	Autism	8-12	36	97%
PA	New Academy Charter School	Pittsburgh	Two or more IDEA Categories	Ungraded	114	48%
PA	Provident Charter School	Pittsburgh	Language-based	2-8	311	68%
SC	Pattison's Academy for Comprehensive Education	Charleston	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-12	40	98%
SC	Lakes and Bridges Charter School	Columbia	Language-based	1-7	180	68%
SC	Meyer Center for Special Children	Greenville	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK-2	81	100%
TX	Cedar Crest	Austin	Emotional/Behavioral	6-12	72	31%
TX	Helping Hand	Austin	Emotional/Behavioral	2-6	24	79%
TX	Pathways 3H Campus	Austin	Emotional/Behavioral	6-11	31	81%
TX	SJRC Texas	Austin	Emotional/Behavioral	6-12	30	33%
TX	Texas Neurorehabilitation Center	Austin	Two or more IDEA Categories	4-11	56	93%
TX	Trinity Charter School – Krause Campus	Austin	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-12	67	34%
TX	Trinity Charter School – Spring Campus	Austin	Two or more IDEA Categories	8-11	14	36%
TX	Trinity Charter Schools – Fort Worth Campus	Austin	Two or more IDEA Categories	8-10	7	43%
TX	The University of Texas Charter School at The Settlement Home for Children	Austin	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-12	36	44%
TX	Trinity Charter School – Brenham	Brenham	Two or more IDEA Categories	8-12	30	40%
TX	Trinity Charter School – Canyon Lake	Canyon Lake	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-11	43	58%
TX	The University of Texas Charter School at Pathfinder Camp	Driftwood	Emotional/Behavioral	5-10	19	58%
TX	New Horizons	Goldthwaite	Two or more IDEA Categories	1-11	63	60%
TX	Hill Country Youth Ranch	Ingram	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-12	96	60%

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State	School Name	City	Focus	Grades	Total Enrollment	% of Enrolled SWDs
TX	Big Springs Charter School	Leakey	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-12	122	31%
TX	The Foundation School for Autism – San Antonio	Lewisville	Autism	PK-1	29	100%
TX	Trinity Charter School – Pegasus	Lockhart	Two or more IDEA Categories	5-12	153	42%
TX	Depelchin Children's Center	Richmond	Two or more IDEA Categories	2-7	14	86%
TX	Ki Charter Academy	San Marcos	Emotional/Behavioral	1-12	169	49%
TX	Trinity Charter School – Reclaim Academy	Tyler	Two or more IDEA Categories	Ungraded	56	55%
UT	Spectrum Academy – North Salt Lake	North Salt Lake	Autism	K-12	838	87%
UT	Spectrum Academy – Pleasant Grove	Pleasant Grove	Autism	K-12	621	86%
UT	Pinnacle Canyon Academy	Price	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-12	417	32%
VA	Richmond Career Education & Employment	Richmond	Two or more IDEA Categories	10-12	24	100%
WI	Lakeland Star Academy	Minocqua	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	32	81%
WI	Treffert Way for the Exceptional Mind	North Fond Du Lac	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-7	45	53%
WI	New Horizons for Learning	Shorewood	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	19	63%





About the Center for Learner Equity (CLE)

CLE is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that students with disabilities have equitable access to high-quality public education. CLE provides research, policy analysis, coalition building, and technical assistance to a variety of stakeholders nationwide.

Mission

We are committed to catalyzing student success and eradicating the complex, pervasive, and systematic barriers that prevent students with disabilities from accessing school choice, educational opportunities, quality support, and inclusive environments.

Vision

All students with disabilities are respected, learning, and thriving.

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